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Secular Evidence in the Visual Art of Bagan

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ABSTRACT

The monumental architecture and plastic arts of Bagan are directly related to the religious dedications. Within three or four centuries, the style and significance of Bagan visual art works was gradually progressed, compromising between indigenous and exotic ways of craftsmanship. The first phase of Bagan art work can be correlated with Pala style and the traces of Indic art and architecture. The second phase can be measured with the lofty monuments and changing spatial arrangement of the urban plan. The third phase of Bagan is more distinctive with the clustering of small monuments and complexes of Buddhist monasteries. The fourth phase is the monuments after decline of Bagan dynastic power. The four phases of Bagan visual arts each contain secular evidence of Bagan. Most Bagan visual art emphasized religious themes and elite society. Secular evidence can also be seen in epigraphy such as slaves, relatives, artisans, office staff. In visual art, there are three categories: (1) architecture; (2) sculpture and (3) painting. The transitions in artistic style contain information of secular ways of life in Bagan. In this study, the household archaeology of Bagan is defined from secular depictions in the plastic arts.

Keywords: Secular, Plastic art, Architecture, Painting, Sculpture

1. Introduction

Bagan studies are mostly concerned with the Buddhist canonical evidences. During the fifty years of Bagan studies, religious evidences have been studied to have information about Bagan Buddhist societies and urbanization. Architecturally the most buildings are concerning the Buddhist religious dedications with the exception of palaces and city walls.

To know the Bagan, there are a lot of stone inscriptions and ink glosses about the donation and the donors. Some were inscribed the Buddhist jataka and texts. No more secular writing about Bagan societal factors can be seen. A few scripts can rarely be found as the names on the brick. Exceptionally the large quadrangular stone inscriptions were inscribed about the ceremony of king Klancaksa's palace construction in details about social classes including this ceremony.

Deciphering the Bagan inscriptions can give some information about rural and ordinary people concerning the secular ways of life in Bagan Period. Although the kings' and elites' donations were mostly inscribed, the evidences of farmers, labourers, craftsmen and serfs were usually involved as the donated belongings.¹ So, epigraphic evidences show the traces of Bagan daily life in secular ways.

According to the epigraphic evidences, Bagan people could follow the kings' political ways founded by the references of religious dedications. Most of the people involved in the list of donation as serfs, craftsmen and chiefs to maintain the donated properties. Secularity of Bagan society could not be drawn on the murals and records of royal and religious dedications. On the other hand, the secular ways of life can be traced with the references of visual and epigraphic

¹ Than Tun 2005

evidences if the depiction of Jatakas and the donations will be studied by the methods of visual and plastic art works.

Secularity found in the Inscriptions of Bagan Period

The stone inscriptions found in Bagan Periods are different within the three hundred years. In Early Bagan Period (10th -11th century AD), the stone inscriptions were very large size of stone pillars. The famous inscriptions are those of King Klancacsa_ Palace Inscriptions, Shwezigon Inscriptions, Pyay Shwesandaw Inscription, Kyaik Tha Lan Inscription.

The thematic information of Early Bagan Period can tell about ordinary people of early Bagan dynasty. For instance, the Shwezigon inscriptions show the suffering of the people in wartime and the rehabilitation for the people who were frightening and poverty. Pyay Shwesandaw Inscription shows the international relationship from Bagan to Cylon (Sri Lanka) and India (Bodhgaya). In this relationship, the secular information can be seen as the craftsmen sent to Bodhgaya and the Chola king changed to be Buddhist.²

In 12th century, the inscriptions were smaller. For example, Shwe Gu Gyi inscriptions that were permanently fitted in the interior wall; Sulamani inscription was the quadrangular stone pillar; Dhammarajaka inscription was the sand stone slab in medium size. The large numbers of inscriptions are abundantly found in Late Bagan Period. The architectural arrangement and writing system were prominently transformed in 12th-13th century AD.³

In 13th century, the well-known inscriptions of King Klaswa were evolved as the secular description for the Bagan people to follow the rules and penalties. It is called Klaswa's Edict. It shows the 13th century Bagan challenges that the crime of stealing was dynamic.

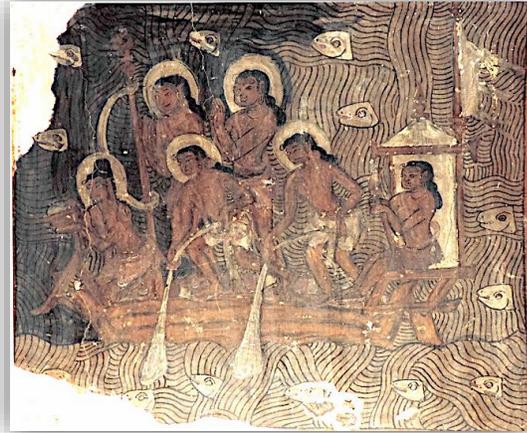
The First Phase_ incipient & initial stages of Early Bagan Period

In Early Bagan Period, the secular evidences extracted from the murals of temple no. 1026, located in the Lokananda sanctuary, show the depiction of the fishing boat with the fishermen rowing and pulling the fishnet. It represents to the fisherman of Bagan Period. The fishermen used sailboat to make fishing. It is together with the rear seat for handler.

² Chit Thein 1965

³ Naing Pan Hla 2011

Fishermen pulling the fishnet in the river



At the top of the mast, the globular pot is fitted up and the *hamsa* motif can be seen. At the hull, the chieftain is sitting on knees to give offertory for praying something. In the womb of the sailboat, two standing men are in worshipping position *namaskara mudra*. They could follow the chieftain's praying on boat.

The men pulling the fishnet are also standing on the womb of sailboat. Behind them, a man is sitting on the seat to steer the rudder. The hairstyle is different between the chieftain and the followers or serfs in this mural. The sash can be seen as the popular fashion for the Bagan people. Although this scene could be the narration of Buddhist text, the

portraying represented the nature of fishermen and their practices. In the depiction, 13 heads of fishes, two fishnets and waving line represented to the water are symbolic for the fishermen life.

Rowers



In this scene, two rowers are found and the chieftain is sitting between them.

The boat could be used for the water transportation. It is not so much different from the modern villagers' boat. But the rowers are sitting inside the womb and the chieftain or the passenger is on the cushion.

In contrary, due to the depiction of trees and men in the background, if it is a jataka scene, the chieftain could be Bodhisattva. The water transportation could be very important role for the Bagan people to connect the remote areas along the Ayeyarwady River. For instance, *Salé* is located on the riverbank in 30 miles away from the

south of Bagan. In this place, there are many Buddhist monuments totally similar to those of 12th-13th century Bagan Period.



Dancer with sword

Sword dance can be found in the plinth of the Buddhist image enshrined in the Abeyadana temple. Due to the dark room has not too much lighting inside the temple, the colours of murals are well preserved.

The dancer is male and wearing upper blouse and lower loincloth. The earring plug is big in rounded shape. The costume design is mostly 'indianized' and they used black and white colours. The sword is small and grasped by left hand. The right hand gesture is represented to pay loving kindness. It can be suggested that the Early Bagan dancers were essential to support the donation of Buddhist temple.

The drummers are also found in the murals. The drummers are not only indigenous people but also

exotic.



Figure - Dancing drummers found in the murals of Abeyadana temple⁴

Jataka reliefs showing the daily life of Bagan people

In relief sculpture, Buddhist Jataka are the majority of portraying concepts. Although the thematic information is totally depending on the Buddhist text, the depiction of the reliefs can give a lot of traceable evidences of Bagan people and their social and rural life of Bagan.

There are four monuments that the terracotta reliefs can be found as Early Bagan style. The first one is Shwesandaw Stupa that the terracotta reliefs were decorated on the terraces. Now these reliefs had been removed and preserved in Bagan Archaeological Museum. The second and third are twin monuments of West and East Phet Leik temples, located nearby the riverbank. The Buddhist jataka was enshrined in both sides of the corridors inside the monuments. The superstructure can be seen as the Sinhalese type stupa. Additionally, the glazed plaques of

⁴ Aung Kyaing 2010: 123-124

jataka reliefs can also be found in Shwezigon stupa. But Shwezigon jataka reliefs are not so much legible.

To extract the secular evidences from Bagan visual art works, the Buddhist jataka reliefs are valuable to know how Bagan peoples were portrayed in their ways of life. Although the religious themes were represented, the details of the depicted objects are clearly concerned with the rural and ordinary peoples.

The jataka no. 108, Bahiya Jataka, is depicted that men, women and infant are sitting on the pedestals under the toddy palm tree. This jataka relief plaque was brought from West Phet Leik to Shwesandaw Stupa in the previous time.⁵ The story says about king made the fat and

badly dressed woman his chief queen. Then, their son became a universal monarch.⁶ In this scene, there is a courtyard including toddy palm trees and the people are relaxing.



Luce (OBEP, III, Plate 85.c)

How Bagan people were staying in their sedentary villages could be inspired in this depiction. The conversation was alive by the family members or colleagues or relatives. In the story, they were very happy and living together because their son will be a great king. So the portraying represented the pleasant life of the people.

Massage

Jataka no. 312, Kassapamandiya Jataka, shows the relationship between the old father and two sons. This jataka plaque was moved from West Phet Leik to Shwezigon Stupa in the previous time.⁷

The three ascetics_ the old father and two sons_ are living together and the elder sons the Bodhisattva served the old father and younger brother in the rural area very remote from the town or city.

In the scene, the style of furniture and building can be seen as the most common design of Bagan Period. Then, a man is serving massage on the pedestal.



⁵ Luce 1970: plate 85.c

⁶ Aung Nyunt Win 2008: 156-157

⁷ Luce 1970



Period.

Beautiful lady

This is jataka no. 527 (530)⁸, Umadanti Jataka, from the West Phet Leik Stupa. In this relief, the lady *Umadanti* is distinctively proportionate in the standing position.

This portrait could be supporting to consider the lady of the Early Bagan Period. The anatomy and ornaments are very harmonious. Then, this relief is portrayed by realistic view and detail workmanship. The hairstyle, earring, sash, garland and garment are represented to the lady who living in Early Bagan Period. According to the jataka story, the lady Umadanti was the most beautiful lady and she is a daughter of the banker. It shows the nature of lady who could be referred to the fashion of Early Bagan



Bullock Cart

Bullock cart is very important and useful for the rural area until now. It can still be found in modern villages and rural area.

The bullock cart and the sailboat were essential for the transportation and carrying capacity of ancient societies. Sometimes the people decorated their cart and boat to use in particular festival or ceremony. On the other hand, these vehicles showed the properties of the social classes in villages.

The bullock cart described in this jataka relief is represented to the Nandivisala Jataka, no. 28. The story says that the Bodhisattve was an ox very strong and perfect in his vicinity. His master the

Brahmin commended him to draw 100 carts for a wager. While the Brahmin spoke with harsh words to the ox, he lost the bet because the ox refused to draw the carts. Then, the Brahmin won the bet by saying polite words to the ox. The ox carts can simply be seen as the rural style without ornamentations.

In this scene, 100 bullock carts were depicted and the shape of flowers represented the polite words. It shows that the type of wheel fixed in the cart is not spoke wheel like those of modern cart.

⁸ Umadanti Jataka is no. 527 in modern text; but the sequence of jataka in West Phet Leik stupa has three more jatakas_ no. 497, 498, 499_ after jataka no.496. Therefore, jataka no. 527 become no. 530 due to 3 was added.



Beggars, rich man and donation

This jataka relief is not included in the 547 jataka series from Khuddaka Nikaya. Velama Jataka could be found in *cariyapitaka*.

The story says the rich man gave the beggars some money. In this scene, the beggars queued for money and the rich man is holding the bundle of coins to give them.

The lower level of social classes can also be studied in this scene. In donation event, the people queued for getting the donated objects. Bagan society was undoubtedly enjoying the donation ceremony.

In the ancient time, the donating could be the essential for every month or year because the ordinary people needed to collect the audiences

from other places of the remote area. The relatives, colleagues, business partners, and some other various people could be collected in donation ceremony to make conversation about political, economic, and other social problems or news. It can still be found in modern village society until now. Almost all of the villagers, even in modern time, usually try to make donation event whenever they get profit after harvesting time.



Farmer

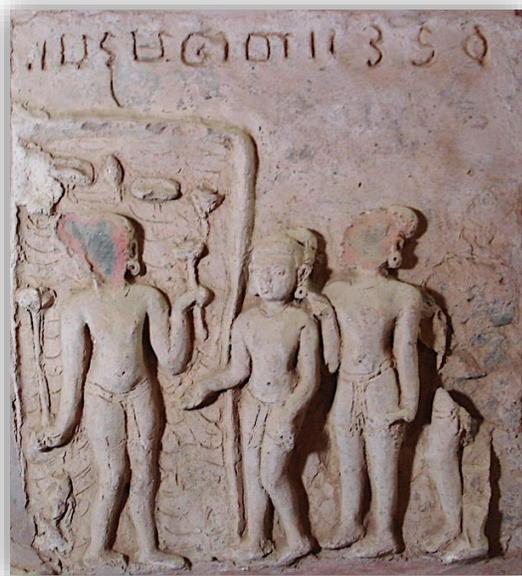
Kudala Jataka, Jataka no. 70, is very popular among the Myanmar people because it was written in the syllabus for Middle School textbook. Now this relief plaque is from the West Phet Leik and they were terracotta reliefs without glaze coating.

The story says that the farmer could give up his working and tried to become a recluse. But he could not throw his hoe that he usually wished to get back again and again. Finally, he threw successfully and he could not take it again. It means he also win his craving attached to the hoe.

In this scene, the figure of farmer was portrayed in the actions of grasping his hoe and throwing to the river. It shows the rural life of farmer.

In the depiction of farmer, the tattoo can be seen in his thighs and the lower garment is as very short loincloth. In Bagan Period, the depiction of ploughing can usually be seen in both of terracotta and glazed relief sculptures. Like this jataka depiction, there are some more jataka plaques that the traces of farming and ploughing work.

Villagers plucking the lotus blossoms



The villager plucking the lotus blossoms is standing beside the lotus pond. They are wearing loincloth altogether. The bare torso represented the bathing.

The story, Paduma Jataka, no. 261, says that the villagers met the leper while they are plucking the lotus blossoms. Some are avoiding from him but a villager who is Bodhisattva did not avoid him and tried to give him the lotus he plucked.

This scene shows the traces of Bagan people who living in the rural area. Most of the villagers are still in bare torso. The upper garment or blouse can only be seen in festival or ceremonial season. Although the Bodhisattva was villager in this jataka, the portraying is simply known as the affinity of the villager of Bagan Period. Even in the inscription, the ordinary people could not be widely inscribed but their names and relatives. So, depending

on the plastic art works of Bagan artisans, the trait of Bagan people can also be recognized in the comparison with the human figures depicted on the reliefs.

Barber

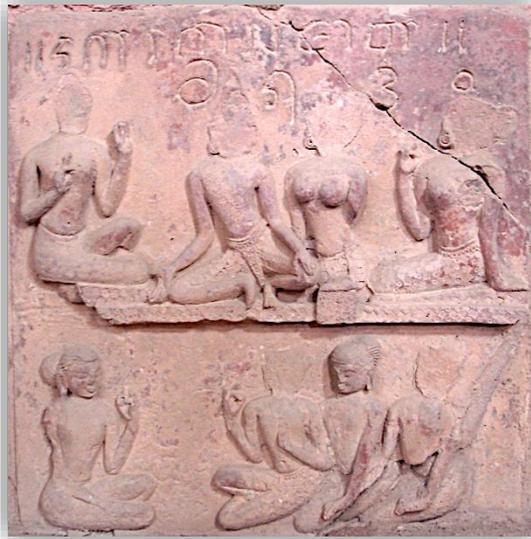


There is only trace to know barber who takes care of the kings knot or hair style. In the scene, barber is holding the twizer to pull the white hairs out.

The story, Mekhadeva Jataka, no. 9, says the relationship between king and his barber. In this scene, a tool of barber is for making hairstyle can be seen.

In this jataka story, the king went to the forest to make a recluse after his barber found the white hair from his head. This theme could not easily be portrayed without a twizer of barber. The king is sitting on the pedestal and the servant is sitting on knees to pay respect. The barber is standing behind the king and cleaning the hair knot of the king. The

secular idea of barbers and his twizer is distinctively found in this relief.



Rich man's family

Dakarakkhasa Jataka, no. 520 (517), is related to the story of Mahosadha Jataka, no. 545. This scene shows the conversation of people in a particular event like wedding ceremony. It looks like the rich man's family and the attires are distinctively significant in ornaments and design. The hand gesture in this relief figures represents that they are discussing.

The couple sitting in the middle could be husband and wife. This scene looks like the reception by the bride and bridegroom. In the depiction, the foreground is portrayed at the lower row and the background is upper row. The audiences could be portrayed in foreground and the donors are in the background or the upper row. In epigraphic evidences, the rich man can be known as

*kun than*⁹ and almost all of the donations were associated to the king, queen, nobleman, rich man, princes, etc.



Impalement of the prisoner

Kamavilapa Jataka, no. 297, is concerning the people who extremely enjoyed in passion. In this scene, the prisoner was impaled while his wife and another person are staying together.

The impalement for the prisoners can be found in Early Bagan context. In 13th century, Bagan king was Klaswa who founded the edicts. In his edicts, there were many kinds of penalties for the prisoners who stole something. The distinctive fact is that these edicts were founded only for the thieves.¹⁰

⁹ Than Tun 2006

¹⁰ Nyein Maung 1982:111-114

Mariners



This depiction is related to the mariner who sailed over the sea. The jataka name is Suparaka Jataka, no. 463 and this scene shows the sailboat that the people used in Bagan Period.

The costume design of the people sitting on boat is completely better than that of villagers. The mariners could also be rich by the trading and serving to the royal family. In this story, the king respected to the old mariner because he could condemn the various kinds of vehicles as such elephant, horse, chariot, ship, boat though he was totally blind. There is unusual person who working on the sea ship. So, the major portraying is the big sailing ship.

The Second Phase_ Transitional Stage or Middle Bagan Period

Since the reign of King Klanacsa, Bagan dynasty could be faced the challenges of warfare¹¹ and reintegration of Bagan urbanization was lead by King Cañsu I or Alongsithu. Then, the successor King Cañsu II or Narapatisithu continued to lead the Bagan dynasty in 12th century.

The green glazed reliefs are fixed into the pockets of the terraces of Ananda temple and Dhammarajaka stupa. The 12th century monuments are very splendor more than those of Early and Late Bagan Period. But the artistic and grandeur remains of Bagan monuments can mostly be found as 12th century architecture. There are Shwegu Gyi, Thebyinnyu, Sulamani, Dhammarajaka, Gawdawpalin, etc.



Ploughing

Kiccanakkhana Jataka, no. 56, is the story of the farmer who got golden pieces by ploughing. In this relief, the portraying of ploughing scene can be seen in detail. The big tree in the background represented the land owned by him. Likewise, the villagers still demarcate their land boundary with the trees and creek as boundary.

According to this scenic view of ploughing, the modern villagers still work in their traditional ways of cultivation in Bagan Period. Although the modern farmers use machinery or heavy equipment in their agricultural process, some rural areas can be seen as the traditional equipment and ways of ploughing.

The farmers working in the dry cultivation of Bagan vicinity can be compared with that of relief plaques. They used 1 to 4 teeth of plows fixed in the wooden trunk. The oxen are dragging

¹¹ Shwezigon Kyansittha Inscription, Chit Thein

this ploughing equipment with their withers. To get the tiny furrows, the farmer adjusts the teeth of plows.



Figure. Modern farmer use the traditional ways of ploughing in Bagan area (taken by Pyiet Phyo Kyaw, May, 2017)



Farmer

Dhammarajaka stupa is significant as the new design of 12th century architecture in Bagan. But the superstructure could only be similar to those of Shwezigon stupa.

The relief plaques are depicted the themes of Buddhist jataka. But the composition and portraying subject are directly related to the daily life of Bagan people.

In this Kudala Jataka, Jataka no. 70, the farmer is ploughing with his simple hoe. In this scene, the two trees are depicted to represent the demarcation of the ploughing land. The farmers who worked in Bagan peri-urban could not be so much important because the

availability of water was very limited and they totally depended on the rainwater. Then, they could not work wet cultivation and work only in dry cultivation for bean, pea, sesame, groundnut, chickpeas, tur, millet, corn, onions.

Bird catcher



Bird catcher can be seen in the jataka reliefs; the story says the relationship between birds and the bird catcher. The name and number of jataka cannot be legible.

To know the bird catcher, the bird and loop trap are portrayed. In the recent time, the modern bird catchers use this loop trap that can still be found in Bagan. The standing man holding the bird is the bird catcher in this scene. The loop is a bird trap.

Hunter



The hunter who shot the deer with an arrow was portrayed in Kantina Jataka, no. 13.¹² The story is about the couple of deer_ stag and doe and the hunter. In the scene of relief, the hunter shot an arrow to the stag in front of the doe under the tree. The theme is that the stag was slaughtered because of craving for doe. The hunter is holding the bow and the arrow is straight through the stag's chest.

Conch blower and warriors



This relief depiction shows the warriors and the conch blower in front of the king. The figures of warrior that are holding the swords and shield can be seen as being ready to attack the enemy. At the middle of relief plaque, the standing man is blowing the conch.

This relief was glazed over the terracotta and decorated in Dhammarajaka pentagonal stupa.

Ananda Murals

Ananda temple has many visual art works in both of interior and exterior architecture. There are glazed reliefs of Buddhist jataka, wooden and sand stone high reliefs of Buddha's Biography and jataka

¹² Aung Nyunt Win, 2008, pp. 20-21

murals. Before ASI¹³ made a project of chemical cleaning on the whitewashed walls, no more murals can be seen in Ananda temple. Now, the murals of Ananda are very important for Bagan



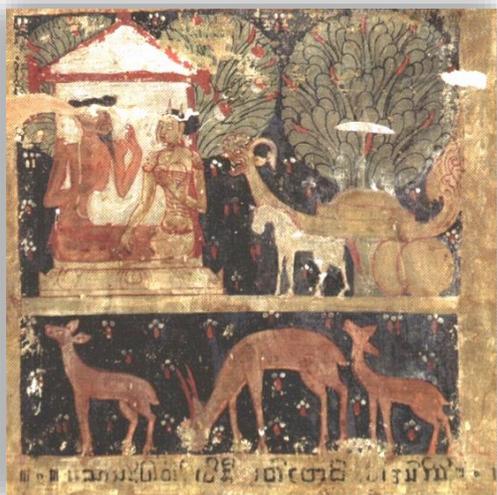
studies as well as the art history of Bagan.

The mural lost the colour and ink glosses due to the lime wash. Therefore, the lineal composition can only be seen as the Buddhist narrative depictions. In these depictions, the architectural features can clearly be studied that the big and high roof has one or two tiers and sometimes two stories building can be found. The buildings are made of timber structure. The background of the mural has the trees as landscape.

The human figures are varied in many posture and attitudes. Some are static and some are in action. The social classes can also be seen as king, queen, ministers and servants. The posture of the human figures is very realistic more than others. The actions of human figure are in walking, standing, sitting, reclining, turning, banding and worshipping. The style of composition and human figures could be different from the Early Bagan murals, e.g., Pathotharmya, Myinkapa Gubyauk Gyi, Nagayone, etc.

¹³ Archaeological Survey of India

Horse Cart and Nudity



Lawkahteikpan temple is different in portraying murals. Although the size of temple is small, the murals decorated inside the temple are grander.

The murals are more illustrative in portraying objects. To get secular objects, the portraying of jataka stories give many clues of Bagan rural or ordinary people and their ways of life.

The Jataka no. 526, Nilinika Jataka, is mentioned to know the beautiful horse cart. Nilinika is the name of the pretty lady who lured the recluse to share sex. In this scene, the lady was portrayed with the transparent cloth to be likely nudity. Her horse cart is very beautiful in detail. The symbols of stag and does are represented to the theme of this story.¹⁴



Figure - People playing the bronze gong in the murals of Lawkahteikpan temple¹⁵

The Third Phase_ Final Stage or Late Bagan Period

In 13th century, the Late Bagan period was totally transformed in monumental architecture and murals. The stucco reliefs were also changed to be more dynamic composition. The detail workmanship can be seen in Late Bagan monuments. Additionally, the size of monuments was smaller and they were built as the cluster also known as pagoda or monastery complex. Inside the smaller chamber of temple, murals were painted on the entire walls and ceiling or vault.

On the other hand, the large monuments were built, in 13th century, as Mingalazedi Stupa, Thitsawaddy Temple, Tayokepyae Temple and Htelominlo Temple. The glazed reliefs of jataka are found in the terraces of Mingalazedi. There are the beautiful green glazed reliefs. Sometimes the yellow and cream colour glaze can also be found in the reliefs and tiles. Some glazed plaques are selected to extract the secular objects. The four selected reliefs are described with their significance of the secular evidences as follow_

¹⁴ Aung Nyunt Win, 2008, p.694

¹⁵ Aung Kyaing, 2010, p.252



Trader and Beekeeper

Jataka no. 366, Kumba Jataka

Beekeeper is on the tree.

Trader is on the ox cart.



Hunter and Dog

Jataka no. 469, Mahakanha Jataka

Hunter grasps the dog leash in left hand and bow in right hand.

Dog is in posture of barking.



Carpenter and his son

Jataka no. 44, Makasa Jataka

The father carpenter is making sawn wood for building house.

The son carpenter is holding the axe behind his father.

The story says that the foolish son hit the fly resting on his father' head with the axe.

Drinkers and Wiseman

Jataka no. 53, Punnapati Jataka



Two drinkers are sitting on knees with the liquor pot. Wiseman or Rich man is standing in front of the drinkers and talking that he knew they made this liquor pot with poison.



Figure - The pot and two drinkers in the murals of Jataka no. 53, Punnapati Jataka
It is from the Thayanbu temple.

The Fourth Phase_ Late Bagan Period



In Bagan, there are many remains of architectural and artistic evidences after decline in power of the Bagan dynasty. The monuments and visual arts of post Bagan Period are also found in Bagan area. For example, the murals of Taungbe Pitakat Taik (Library) and Upali Sima are associated to the Nyaung Yan Period. The ladies of Nyaung Yang Period can be seen in the murals of

Taungbi Pitakat Taik (Library). The costume and hairstyle were portrayed in detail and the architectural design is prominent. The colour scheme of the murals was changed into contrast

and complementary colours of red and green. In this mural, the ladies could be elite or royal class. The portraying of vehicle, regalia and ornamentations are in detail.

Secular Evidences found in Painting and Sculpture

In this study of secularity of Bagan Period, the list of monuments is mentioned depending on the field trip and the visual art works are very useful to know how Bagan art works can support the study of secular factors extracted from the Buddhist narrative scenes. The tentative list of monument is as follow_

1. **Early** Bagan monuments that the secular ways of life can be traced are Pathotharmya temple, East and West Phet Leik temples, Myinpyagu temples, Nagayon temple, Abeyadana temple, Shwesandaw stupa, and Shwezigon stupa.
2. **Middle** Bagan monuments are Ananda temple, Gubyaukgyi temple, Lawkahteikpan, Dhammarajaka stupa.
3. **Late** Bagan monuments are Laymyathnar temple, Pharathonsu temple, Nandapyinnya temple_ Mingalazedi stupa.
4. **Post** Bagan monuments or murals are that of Sulamani temple, Upali Sima, Taungbi Oak Kyaung (Library) and Ananda Oak Kyaung.

The secular evidences could tentatively be extracted from the study of 550 Jataka depictions. They are listed to make dataset for further studies and given codes as follow_

- 1.1. Man/boy (Mb)
- 1.2. Woman/lady (Wl)
- 1.3. Children/baby (Cb)
- 1.4. Clothes/costume designs/foot wares (Cf)
- 1.5. Households/ utensils (Hu)
- 1.6. Pets/animals (Pa)
- 1.7. Landscape/rural/village/trees (Lt)
- 1.8. Staffs/royal/leaders (Srl)
- 1.9. Serfs/labours (Sl)
- 1.10. Furniture (F)
- 1.11. Vehicles/cart/boat/dragged animal (Vda)
- 1.12. Tools/ devices/ weapons (Tdw)
- 1.13. Rural architecture (Ra)
- 1.14. Sellers/Merchants (Sm)
- 1.15. Elite/Scholars (Es)

Conclusion

The visual cultural objects can give some evidences to know the contemporary of time and space. To know the Bagan Period, there are two ways such as written records and visual art. Sometimes epigraphy can be useful to know the concrete information. But the visual art objects are also valuable to get knowledge about Bagan people in short time. Language could be barrier in different time and space. But the visual objects can solve the difficulty of this barrier.

From Early to Post Bagan Period, the thematic information of jataka stories was mostly depending on the Buddhist texts. In Early Bagan Period, the jataka reliefs of West Phet leik are different from the later jataka numbers. They tried to make full of 550 jataka by adding three more jatakas. The significant factor of early jataka reliefs is making terracotta relief without glaze coating. For the murals, the early jataka scenes can be found in Nagayon temple. The Buddhist jataka themes were not so much changed through many periods. But the portraying and composition methods could be changed and changeable in artistic objects depending on their contemporaneous situation.

The secularity of Bagan art and architecture is very controversial because almost all of the remains of Bagan cultural objects are dramatically related to the Buddhist context. But some clues can be extracted from the illustrations of visual art. For instance, the traces of ploughing technique can be studied with the evidences found in the jataka reliefs. Likewise, there are many evidences of carpenters, vehicles, rural life, hunter, barber, drinkers, impalement and the clothes of lady and gentlemen, etc. For the further study, the 15 items of secular objects can tentatively be listed to make dataset in near future. Finally, secular study of the Bagan civilization can begin to define settlement and household archaeology.

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