



# ความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างจิตรกรรมฝาผนังพม่า กับจิตรกรรมฝาผนังสยามและล้านนา ระหว่างคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 17 ถึงต้นคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19

คริสตอฟ มูนิเยร์ - กัยยาร์ด

นักศึกษาระดับดุษฎีบัณฑิต มหาวิทยาลัยปารีส - ซอร์บอนน์

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## บทคัดย่อ

เป็นเวลาไม่ถึง 20 ปีภายหลังการเสียกรุงศรีอยุธยาแก่พม่าในปี ค.ศ. 1767 การปฏิวัติด้านการเขียนภาพได้เกิดขึ้นที่พุกาม ดังหลักฐานในโบราณสถานต่างๆ หลังหนึ่ง ซึ่งรวบรวมนวัตกรรมใหม่ๆ กว่าสิบลักษณะซึ่งได้เกิดขึ้นเป็นเวลา 150 ถึง 50 ปีมาแล้วในงานจิตรกรรมฝาผนังสยามเข้าไว้ด้วยกัน ภาพจิตรกรรมฝาผนังในโบราณสถานดังกล่าว คือ อานันดาโอวจาวัง เสร็จสมบูรณ์ในปี ค.ศ. 1786 รวมทั้งจิตรกรรมฝาผนังในอุโบสถอุปลาตีเตยซึ่งกำหนดอายุอยู่ใน ค.ศ. 1794 และจิตรกรรมฝาผนังของกัมมะจาวัง อุ พยา และเฉว่จาวัง อุ พยา กำหนดอายุใน ค.ศ. 1790 จนสิ้นสุดทศวรรษที่ 1800 สามารถจัดตั้งเป็นกลุ่มจิตรกรรมที่มีลักษณะสอดคล้องกันซึ่งผู้เขียนได้ขนานนามว่า “แบบอานันดา”

ในต้นคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19 เทคนิควิธีการและคุณค่าความงามแบบใหม่ในงานจิตรกรรมฝาผนังเหล่านี้ได้แพร่กระจายออกไปนอกพุกาม ขณะที่ธรรมเนียมนิยมในการเขียนภาพแบบพม่าก็ยังคงรักษาไว้ได้อย่างเข้มแข็งในระดับพื้นฐาน หากพิจารณาถึงอิทธิพลเชิงมโนทัศน์ นวัตกรรมแบบสยามเหล่านี้ซึ่งเริ่มต้นขึ้นเป็นครั้งแรกที่อานันดาโอวจาวัง ได้กลายเป็นตัวแปรในระดับรากฐานต่อการปฏิบัติงานจิตรกรรมฝาผนังพม่า ทั้งยังยอมรับการพัฒนาอย่างรวดเร็วเกี่ยวกับหนึ่งในบรรดาการเปลี่ยนแปลงราวกับละครที่สลับนับตั้งแต่ยุคพุกาม เป็นต้นมา นั่นคือการเปลี่ยนจากภาพเล่าเรื่องพระพุทธเจ้า มาสู่ภาพเล่าเรื่องสังคมชาวพุทธ ดังหลักฐานที่พบในงานจิตรกรรมฝาผนังนับตั้งแต่ครั้งแรกของคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18

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# 17<sup>th</sup> To Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Burmese Murals in Relation to Murals of Siam and Lan Na.

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## Abstract

Less than twenty years after the 1767 conquest of Ayutthaya by the Burmese, a pictorial revolution occurred at Pagan, evident in a single monument that embodies a series of more than ten innovations found between 150 and 50 years earlier in Siamese murals. Achieved in 1786, the murals of this monument, the Ananda Ok-kyauing, together with the 1794 murals of the Upali Thein and the 1790 - 1800's murals of the Kamma Kyaung U Phaya and Mingala Shwe Kyaung U Phaya, constitute a coherent group defined as 'Anandian' by the author.

These new technical means and aesthetics then spread outside Pagan at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Burmese pictorial

tradition remained strongly committed to its fundamentals. In regards to conceptual influence, these Siamese innovations initiated at the Ananda Ok-kyauung were a radical factor in the evolution of Burmese murals. They allowed the rapid development of one of the most dramatic changes since the Pagan period: the shift from the depiction of the Buddha to the depiction of Buddhist society, first witnessed in murals from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**Keywords:** mural painting, Burma, Siam, Lan Na, 18<sup>th</sup> century, influence, style



## In search of the origins of a pictorial revolution

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This article is a revised and augmented version of the booklet I distributed following my paper at the 2010 International Burma Studies Conference, held at the Université de Provence in Marseille, France. It was through the opportunity of living in Thailand and Burma for seventeen years that the idea of writing a paper on Burmese murals in relation with the pictorial traditions of Siam and Lan Na<sup>1</sup> was able to occur to me. While in Thailand my research focused on Buddhist caves, only a few of which have murals, but during this time I did see quite a number of murals in monuments throughout the kingdom. When later on I started to study Burmese murals, those Siamese murals were still in my mind. They looked so different, though, that I was surprised to learn that a Siamese influence on Burmese murals had already been considered by several scholars.

This revised version of my booklet is based on surveys carried out in the Mandalay - Monywa - Magway area of over a hundred monuments with 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century murals.<sup>2</sup> They have become the core of my forthcoming article titled "Revolution and Legacy:

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<sup>1</sup> Siam refers to present Central Thailand, Lan Na to present Northern Thailand.

the Siamese Innovations in the 1786 Murals of the Ananda Ok-kyauing in Pagan, Burma".

It was through the reconfigured dating of the Loka Aung Mye Zedi Daw Gyi in Khinmun murals that the importance of the Ananda Ok-Kyaung was recently confirmed in my research. For over forty years, the alleged date of 1756 from the damaged inscription on the eastern porch of this monument has been considered fact by scholars without a careful analysis of the numerals and of the style and iconographic motifs of the murals. For these scholars, the murals of the Loka Aung Mye preceded the murals of the Ananda Ok-kyauing by thirty years, dated by a clear inscription of 1786. In fact, it is the contrary. The murals of the Loka Aung Mye post-date those of the Ananda Ok-kyauing by thirty years: they do not date from 1756, but from 1816.<sup>3</sup> This reassessment will be dealt with in a detailed manner in a second forthcoming article titled "Dating Burmese Murals: Misjudgements from a Wrong Date.

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<sup>2</sup> This field work was done by a team consisting of Alexey Kirichenko, a Russian historian and epigraphist from the State University of Moscow, Aung Kyaing, former vice-director of the Department of Archaeology in Myanmar, Jean Philippe Forst, a former photograph at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and myself, a PhD candidate in art history at Paris IV-La Sorbonne and founder of Microscope (a non-profitable association regulated by the French 1901 law, whose purpose is to study Asian murals and to make the results of this study as widely available as possible).



The Case of the Loka Aung Mye Zedi Daw Gyi in Khinmun, Monywa District.” This reassessment of time has another consequence: the murals from the Loka Aung Mye do not pre-date but post-date by 49 years the 1767 fall of Ayutthaya and the consequent deportation of its population to Upper Burma, which led to a series of innovations in various fields - innovations that, regarding murals, the Ananda Ok-kyang embodies.

Although several academic works deal with the Siamese influences in Burmese culture following the 1767 fall of Ayutthaya, i.e. in relation to dance, drama and music, (Christie and Hla Pe 1956; Singer 1989, 1995, 1999; Thaw Kaung 2002) the two Burmese chronicles that describe the campaign contain no data on the resettlement<sup>4</sup> (Maung Maung Tin 2004; Tun Aung Chain 2005). Regarding murals, statements are only general with the exceptions of the works by Abhakorn and Sooksawasdi, Likhitwisedkul and Green. My main objective was not to go as far as establishing a direct link between the murals of a given Burmese monument

<sup>3</sup> At the end of my paper at Marseille, I detailed my dating of the murals of the Loka Aung Mye Zedi Daw Gyi, as from 1816 and not 1756, by enhancing their kinship with early 19<sup>th</sup> century murals from Lan Na, by explaining the correct reading of the damaged Burmese digits of the inscription, and by finally confirming the 1816 date in regards of the men’s tattoos similar with those of the 1813 murals of the Shwe Pwinlin Myat Swat Phaya in Pakokku.

<sup>4</sup> I thanks Alexey Kirichenko for having provided me this information.

and the murals of a given Siamese monument, it was to trace the Burmese murals embodying Siamese features and to date these features in order to evaluate if the innovations found in the 1780 - 1800's Burmese murals at Pagan could come from Siam or not. The Lan Na pictorial tradition was part of this research, as its kinship with Burmese murals was evident from the 19<sup>th</sup> century: but were there any earlier murals in Lan Na that could have influenced the 1780 - 1800's Burmese murals?

First, I searched if there were Burmese murals embodying Siamese innovative features earlier than the 1786 Ananda Ok-kyang murals. In this initial phase, I realised that there was no mural from the existing Burmese styles that integrated any of these innovations.<sup>5</sup> It was a phenomenon limited to Pagan, to less than ten monuments, with the Ananda Ok-kyang embodying more than any other.

The case of the 1787 murals of the Shwe Gutha at Amarapura gave more credit to this assumption: the treatment of the tree of the birth scene (33)<sup>6</sup> shows a Siamese influence, but it remains

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<sup>5</sup> Regarding the innovations in the murals of the Maha Thein Daw Gyi in Sagaing, see footnote 30. However, these murals do not belong to any of the Burmese styles of the late 17<sup>th</sup>- mid 18<sup>th</sup> century period during which they were executed.

<sup>6</sup> Numbers in parenthesis refer to the numbers of the illustrations.





an isolated iconographic motif, while at the Ananda Ok-kyang, completed a year earlier the whole pictorial program is concerned. Clearly, the Siamese influence must be traced from the Ananda Ok-kyang and from the Anandian group of murals at Pagan. I coined the terms 'Anandian style' and 'Anandian group' to stress how this new style emerged at once in a given monument at a given time. This is crucial to understand the very nature of both Anandian and post-Anandian murals, i.e. to identify how, at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a second phase of pictorial innovation in murals took place.<sup>7</sup>

My second finding was that these Burmese murals embodying Siamese innovative features could not have been the work of Lan Na painters, because there are no known Lan Na murals from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> It then remained to trace these innovations in Siamese murals and to define the time gap with their appearance in the Burmese context at the Ananda Ok-kyang. I was surprised by the technical advance of

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<sup>7</sup> See " 3.5 The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan. Nature of the Anandian murals: a formula ? "

<sup>8</sup> I am not presenting the isolated case of the murals of the viharn of the Wat Phra That Lampang Luang at Lampang, because their dating of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is not convincing - but I need further analysis in situ to check if my conclusion made from photos is correct or not.

the Siamese pictorial tradition: i.e. the perspective found in the Wat Mai Prachumphon at Ayutthaya was between 150 and 130 years earlier than its first appearance at the Ananda Ok-kyang. My hypothesis is that it is due to the early integration of Chinese painters in the Siamese pictorial tradition: the rocks and trees in the murals of the Wat Mai Prachumphon are precisely of a Chinese inspiration.

My last finding was that these innovations by the Anandian group of murals at Pagan in the 1780 - 1800's was followed, as mentioned above, by a phase of spread of this new trend of pictorial rendering in and outside Pagan at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. by the 1813 murals of the Shwe Pwinlin at Pakokku.

## Scholar Review

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There is no mention of any of Siamese influence in Burmese murals in 1967 ရှေးရိုးမြန်မာဝန်ချီ, Tin Lwin's 1974 article, Ono Toru and Inoue Takao's 1978 pioneering opus, and Khin Maung Nyunt, Sein Myo Myint and Ma Thanegi's 2006 book. When Klaus Wenk wrote in 1977 about the murals at the Sulamani saying *"More than other paintings in Pagan they demonstrate clearly the influence of contemporary Thai art"* he did not give any explanation (Wenk 1977, 1: 25)



As he was writing about folkloristic and genre scenes, this may be what he had in mind. Aye Myint illustrates a Yodaya flower design dated of 1885 - 1920, but does not trace its origin (Aye Myint 1993, 87 - 88). Andrew Ranard (Ranard 2009, 320: endnote 32) mentions only what Jane Terry Bailey suggested in 1978: changes that occurred in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in some Pagan murals may have been inspired by Siamese painters following the fall of Ayutthaya and the consequent deportation of its population. But the only case that Bailey mentions, i.e. the similarity between the depiction of Mount Meru at the Ananda Ok-kyang and on an 18<sup>th</sup> century Siamese lacquered cabinet is not convincing: at the Ananda Ok-kyang, Sakka, his three-headed elephant Eravana, the deities in their respective pavilion, the lake Anotatta and the four great rivers are not depicted - while they are on the Siamese lacquered cabinet (Bailey 1978, 43, 61: fig.24).<sup>9</sup>

Abhakorn and Sooksawasdi's 2006 work (Abhakorn and Sooksawasdi 2005 and 2006) was the first to deal in details with the murals of a particular monument: the Maha Thein Daw Gyi at Sagaing. Among elements that led them to conclude that

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<sup>9</sup> I am not rejecting the possible kinship between the depiction of the Meru at the Ananda Ok-kyang and the Siamese painting, but closer examples to the Ananda Ok-kyang version should be searched for.

its mural paintings "should be considered as an evidence of an Ayutthayan presence in Sagaing" (Abhakorn and Sooksawasdi 2006, 90) is a huge *sinthao* - a zigzag band used in 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries Siamese painting - on the whole width of the entrance wall that delimitates the painted depiction of a Buddha seated on a throne (8, 9). This throne "with four posts and nine spires known as *busabok* or *mondop* in Thai [...] is accompanied on its flanks by regalia, multi-tiered umbrellas and parasols in the style of the central part of Thailand, as well as hanging flags (*tung*) in the northern styles [...] The *busabok* throne itself clearly shows the structure of wood sculpture characteristic of the late Ayutthaya period. It has extra bases above the main base that is slightly curved in the shape of an "elephant's stomach." Each level is decorated with a set of rather large decorated triangles known as *krachang* in Thai art". (Abhakorn and Sooksawasdi 2006, 93 - 94) Among other stylistic and iconographic similarities between the Maha Thein Daw Gyi and Siamese murals, they mention birds and squirrels in the floral decorative sections. While they found that the composition of the entrance wall is close to 1734 murals of the Wat Ko Keo Suttharam in Phetchaburi, the style of the *sinthao* would point to an earlier date more in reference to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century murals of Wat Chong Nonsi in Bangkok.



Orawin Likhitwisedkul's 2010 work, which includes the Maha Thein Daw Gyi in Sagaing, also deals with the murals of the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya at Minbu. In this place, she mentions an inscription in Siamese written under a Burmese caption in the cartouche of text. Located at the bottom of a wall, this fragmented inscription, which seems to relate to the name of one of the eight hells, fits with the usual location of such pictorial scenes<sup>10</sup> (Likhitwisedkul 2010, 73 - 74).

In her 2001 PhD and 2008 article (Green 2001, 1: 65 - 66; 2008, 241 - 242) Alexandra Green mentions, although shortly and without referring to any particular Siamese monument, wide registers, use of multiple perspectives, narratives set in landscapes, amorous scenes, use of gold leaf, and the addition of contextual material in Burmese murals instantiating Siamese influence. In her 2011 article, which deals at length with the issue, she states in the section titled "Stylistic Ideas from Ayutthaya" that "gold leaf was not used in Burmese murals until the Konbaung era (1752 - 1885) [...] making the resettlement of central Thai artists into Burma after 1767 a more likely source" (Green 2011, 341). But, this is true only for the fourth of the four different kinds of use

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<sup>10</sup> I came to know this book after my paper, and since I have had no opportunity to go back to Minbu to study myself the Siamese inscription.

of gold in Burmese murals and which is not limited to its late 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century use: earliest gold Burmese murals date from the late 17<sup>th</sup> - early 18<sup>th</sup> century and are not related to the Siamese pictorial tradition.<sup>11</sup>

## Typology of Burmese murals with a Siamese influence

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The typology of the Burmese murals influenced by the Siamese pictorial tradition is difficult to define. While adoptions of the innovative elements of the Siamese pictorial tradition are limited in some monuments to only an isolated iconographic motif (33) or to a single technical feature not understood in its genuine function (10 - 12), the murals of the Maha Thein Daw Gyi, of the Anandian group and of the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya embody Siamese innovations at such an extent that it may be more appropriated to speak of a direct transfer rather than of an influence. An importation at such a scale could have been substantiated by the presence of Siamese painters in Burma, by Burmese painters

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<sup>11</sup> As gold murals were not part of the 2010 paper given at Marseille, they have not been included here. The author will publish an article on them in the 2014 issue of Mural Art. Studies on mural paintings in Asia.



returning from Siam or having had contacts with Siamese painters, or by the use of Siamese painted manuscripts brought in Burma.

The subtlety lies in the different natures of the murals whose Siamese features are ‘dominant.’ The Maha Thein Daw Gyi in Sagaing and the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya in Minbu, for instance, despite belonging to different periods and styles, have numerous references in Central Thailand, unlike the Anandian murals. There is nonetheless a common point to these Burmese murals with dominant Siamese features: Burmese ‘hands’ can be found, i.e. in the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya (see 20, 23). It remains to be known if Siamese painters came to Burma and to which extent they would have been involved in the execution of these murals. This seems a reasonable hypothesis given the amount of scenes concerned, the mastering of new technics, for example the partial perspective and the bird’s-eye view, the detailed iconographic features both of the narratives and decorative sections. Were these innovations as simulated between the 1767 - 1780’s years at Mandalay, the royal capital, before being put into practice at Pagan ? This would then explain the hybrid nature of the Anandian murals - though still a hypothesis at this stage of the research.

The murals of the Maha Thein Daw Gyi, executed between the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, illustrate how a

new style does not necessarily lead to a significant transformation of the pictorial landscape of that period. This would give credit to the 1767 deportation of the Ayutthayan population as a determinant factor to the radical and wide changes involving the core of the power - the royalty - while the earlier Maha Thein Daw Gyi would have been only part of a minor or marginal social phenomenon. It remains, however, to evaluate if some of its decorative patterns may have been adopted then diffused in contemporary Burmese murals, whether Burmese hands were involved in some sections of its program, i.e. the lotus rosaces of its ceiling.

The Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik at Ywa Thit Gyi near Sagaing, with its inscription in Burmese referring to "Yodaya", illustrates likely a version of what was considered as a style in vogue at that time. Did not Symes mention - although to a much later date - "*a painting on glass, executed by a Siamese artist*" in the service of King Bodawpaya, and Crawford murals that were "*called "Siamese paintings" by the Burmans*"? (Symes 1800, 346 - 347; Crawford 1829, 162). Judging by the features of Siamese origin found in the murals of proto-Konbaung style of the Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik, it is clear that Burmese painters had visual sources, that these Siamese innovative features were transmitted - the examples I





have highlighted are fairly specific (27 - 30). From the point of view of transmission, I would put together the Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik, the Shwe Gutha and the Phaya 1 of the Shwe Kyut Hmaw complex at Ma U: Burmese murals incorporating Siamese features selected randomly (?) and sometimes not properly understood and thus deviated from their genuine Siamese function.

As for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century murals of the second phase, defined as post-Anandian, they emerged from the initial Anandian phase. Nonetheless, they integrate some innovations, mostly regarding the iconography, not yet found in Anandian murals: the influence of the Siamese painting following the initial Anandian phase continued during the second phase - a phase to which, however, the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century murals of the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya are not related to - in the same way as those from the Maha Thein Daw Gyi are not related with the Anandian ones.

## Commented plates

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Murals with a *sinthao* were first presented in the 2010 paper at Marseille because the *sinthao* is a unique feature of the Siamese painting. The concerned Burmese murals are presented in chronological order: the Maha Thein Daw Gyi at Sagaing (late 17<sup>th</sup>- mid 18<sup>th</sup> century), then the Phaya 1 from the Shwe Kyut Hmaw complex at Ma U (late 18<sup>th</sup>- early 19<sup>th</sup> century) and finally the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya at Minbu (middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

They are followed by the inscription with "Yodaya" of the Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik at Ywa Thit Gyi. The remaining sections deal with the Ananda Ok-kyauung, the Anandian group of murals and the post-Anandian murals executed in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, a short section illustrates the differences and kinship between Burmese, Siamese and Lan Na murals. The Shwe Gutha is commented on and illustrated in relation to the innovations of the Ananda Ok-kyauung in the context of the contemporary Burmese styles.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This is an order that I would reconsider for a publication in a book version of this paper. I would follow the order of my typology and would include the murals of the viham of the Wat Phra That Luang Lampang at Lampang.



While the most important monuments concerning the early Anandian phase are illustrated here, those of the second phase (which involves a significant part of the Burmese mural production of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) are obviously represented by only a few, i.e. the Yot Son Phaya and the Kun Daung Phaya at Amyint (see "3. Spread of the Anandian style and iconography").

### 1.1 The *sinthao*: a feature of 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Siamese painting



1. Manuscript.



2. Banner.



3. Lacquered cabinet.



4. Movable painting.

*Sinthao* is a Thai technical term that designates a jagged or zigzag band separating the different parts of a painting. It is found in illustrated manuscripts (1), painted banners (2), lacquered cabinets (3), movable paintings (4) and mural paintings (5 - 7, 16, 17c).



## 1.2 The sinthao in 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Siamese murals



5. Wat Mai Prachumpon, 1629-56.



6. Wat Chong Nonsi, late 17th c.



7. Wat Pathumwanaram, 1851-68.

The earliest known use of sinthao in Siamese painting may be the one at Wat Mai Prachumpon (5). In the murals at Wat Chong Nonsi, several sinthaos are used in the composition of the 3 m. high x 2.50 m. wide panels located under the register

of the Buddhas of the past (6). They differentiate the moments and plans of the narrative, while highlighting the monuments and the main character: here, the Brahma Narada (flying on a white background in the lower right section, see also ill. 19, 20). From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the painters managed to organize their large compositions without *sinthao*, but they continued to use it to highlight groups or particular scenes by filling the space delimited by the *sinthao* with a different color, the result being often dramatic (7).

### 1.3 The *sinthao* in Burmese murals

#### Case study 1 – the Maha Thein Daw Gyi at Sagaing



8. General view of the entrance wall with the *sinthao*. Late 17<sup>th</sup> - mid 18<sup>th</sup> century.



9. Detail of the sinthao framing the painted Buddha image.

The sinthao being a distinctive feature of Siamese painting not found in other Asian murals, it is exceptional to find it in Burma. Together with this one at Sagaing - the earliest (8, 9) - there are several at Ma U (10, 12) and Minbu (13). Together with the detailed shape of the throne in the Buddha image, which is similar to the Siamese thrones for Buddha statues, stylistic and iconographic details like the squirrels and birds among the floral patterns are also found in various murals of Central Thailand (see "Scholarship").

## 1.4 The sinthao in Burmese murals

Case study 2 - the Phaya 1 from the Shwe Kyut Hmaw complex at Ma U



10. *Sinthao (right) and polyfoilded outline (left).*



11. *Polyfoilded outline instead of a sinthao.*



12. *Sinthao behind Siddhattha (left) and outline behind Mara (right). Late 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

These murals were executed at Ma U in the late 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the region at the confluence of the Chindwin and





the Irrawaddy. Despite the presence of at least three *sinthaos*, these murals of proto-Konbaung style are likely the work of a Burmese painter or workshop. The *sinthao* is used here like a polyfoiled outline - an ubiquitous component of the Burmese pictorial narrative tradition (17b, 53) since the Pagan period. Obviously, the *sinthao* cannot function in the 50 to 70 cm. high Burmese registers as it did in 2 to 3m. high panels in Siam (6). Illustrations 10 and 11 show how the *sinthao* and the polyfoiled outline can be substituted without affecting the composition: the *sinthao* has lost its identity by replacing occasionally the sinuous polyfoiled outline by a zig-zag line. As for the polyfoiled outline in illustration 10, its pattern is similar to that of the *sinthao*.

### 1.5 The *sinthao* in Burmese murals

#### Case study 3 - the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya at Minbu



13. Buddha seated under the Bodhi tree. Wut Gyi Gu Phaya, c. middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



14 (detail of 13). Celestial being.



15. (detail of 13). Green and red flames of the Buddha's aura.



16. Celestial being, Wat Mai Prachumphon, 1629 - 56.

The Wut Gyi Gu Phaya at Minbu<sup>13</sup> houses several *sinthaos*. This one (13) is demarcating the Buddha seated under the Bodhi tree from Sakkas (?) and Brahmas (?) (14). This use of the *sinthao* is found in Siamese murals at Wat Mai Prachumphon (16), Wat Ko Keo Suttharam or Wat Chaithit. The green and red flames of the Buddha's aura (15) are also typical of 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Siamese murals. By its iconographic and stylistic references (16), this scene is very likely the work of a Siamese painter.

<sup>13</sup> The *cella* of the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya has murals of a rather conservative late 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century proto-Konbaung style of a completely different inspiration, technique and lay-out. Murals with a strong Siamese influence commented and illustrated here (13 - 15, 17, 18, 20, 23) are located in the large corridor around the *cella*.



## 1.6 The *sinthao* in Burmese murals

### Case study 3 - the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya at Minbu



17a) Detail of 17.



17b) Burma (detail of 53).



17c) Siam.



17. Hybridsinthao. Wut Gyi Gu Phaya, c. middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



18. Polyfoiled outline. Wut Gyi Gu Phaya, c. middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the hybrid *sinthao* (17) the usual zigzag band has been replaced by an undulating band (17a) that refers to the Burmese polyfoilded outline (17b). Its ‘teeth’(17a), however, are a reminder of the teeth of some 19<sup>th</sup> century Siamese *sinthaos* (17c). Siamese and Burmese painters seem to have worked together at the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya, as also shown by the polyfoilded outline (18) whose symmetry echoes that of *sinthaos* outlining backgrounds (6, 9). However, these are exceptions: the *sinthao* did not find its place in the Burmese painting tradition.



19. Wat Suwannaram, Thonburi, 20. Wut Gyi Hu Phaya, c. middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century  
 1825 - 1850.



23. Detail of 20.

21, 22. Early 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century Burmese headgears of a divinity.

The Burmese version in the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya of a well-known iconographic motif of Siamese murals (the Brahma Narada descending on earth to convert King Angati) shows the Burmanisation (20) of a Siamese model (19).<sup>14</sup> While the red and green decorative patterns are of a Siamese inspiration, the headgear (23) is clearly Burmese (21, 22). The fact that these murals are captioned in Burmese confirms their Siamo-Burmese nature, which is echoed by the Siamese inscription at the bottom of a wall (Likhitwisedkul 2010, 73 - 74).

<sup>14</sup> The version from the Wat Suwannaram (19) is shown here not to point out a direct link with the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya, but only to illustrate one of the many versions found in Siamese murals. A seven baht stamp with this motif has even been issued recently by the post-office of Thailand.

## 2. "Yodaya" in an inscription at Ywa Thit Gyi



24. ရီတရာ(ဝေထ)န်ဘံလို့ရေသွ် *Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik, Ywa Thit Gyi, c. 1790 - 1810.*



25. *Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik, Ywa Thit Gyi, c. 1790 - 1810.*



26. *Pavilion of Somdet Phra Buddha Kosachan, Ayutthaya, 1688 - 1702.*



ရိုတရာ(ဝေထ)န်ဟံလိုရေသ် is the only known inscription within a monument with Burmese murals referring to Yodaya (24). No singular and straight forward translation is possible. The two equally valid translations are “Painted in the style of Yodaya [way-htan]” and “Painted by Yodaya Way Htan Han Lo.” The only things clear are that "Yodaya" most likely means Siam, and that "yay-de" means painted.<sup>15</sup> The depiction of the scene in a bird's-eye view (25) likely has a Siamese provenance: it appears in Siamese murals in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century at the Pavilion of Somdet Phra Buddha Kosachan (26).

<sup>15</sup> Tentative reconstitution and translation by Alexey Kirichenko. The modern spelling would be: ယိုးဒယား(ဝေထ)န်ဟံလိုရေသ်. The inscription is located at the bottom of the decorative section of the ceiling of the entrance porch. If it is a signature it would be one of the earliest, as there are no known such signatures for the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century murals – with the exception of one at Myitche, that may date from the late 17<sup>th</sup> - early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The practice for a painter to mention his name in a dated inscription spread during the colonial period, i.e. in 1900 - 30's murals at Powin Taung.

## 2.2 "Yodaya" in an inscription at Ywa Thit Gyi



27. Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik, Ywa Thit Gyi, c. 1790 - 1810.



28. Pavilion of Somdet Phra Buddha Kosachan, Ayutthaya, 1688 - 1702.



29. Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik, Ywa Thit Gyi, c. 1790 - 1810.



30. Wat Ko Keo Suttharam, Phetchaburi, 1734.





Two iconographic features refer to Siamese murals: the crenels in the shape of Thai *sema*<sup>16</sup> (27, 28) and the European hat in shape of ∞ (29, 30). However, these murals do not look Siamese at all. Their eight narrow 30 cm. - high superimposed registers, labelled with long captions, follow the Burmese tradition while Siamese murals have 2 to 3 m. - high scenes, not labelled with extensive captions, often not labelled at all. Moreover, the murals of the Laung U Hmaw, like those of the Shwe Gutha (32), have still features of the Nyaungyan final style such as for the depictions of Brahma and Sakka.

### 3.1 The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan

#### The situation in Burmese murals from 1768 to 1782



31. Lokhamangin Phaya, Monywe, 1782.

<sup>16</sup> *Semas* are stone tablets in the shape of a Bodhi leaf used to demarcate ordination halls.

What happened in Burmese murals between 1767, the date of the alleged deportation of a large population from Ayutthaya to Upper Burma, and 1786, the date of the completion of the murals at the Ananda Ok-kyauung? Neither in the 1768 murals at the Thitaw Kyauksa Gu at Pagan (located on the platform of the Shwezigon) nor in the 1780 murals in cave no. 538 at Powin Taung or in the 1782 murals of the Lokhamangin Phaya at Monywa (31) is there a trace of any foreign influence or innovation. The Nyaungyan final style (1730/40 - 1770/80) has led to the proto-Konbaung style (1740/50 - 1800/10) characterized by persisting Nyaungyan features.



### 3. The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan Innovations at the Ananda Ok-kyauing in relation with Siamese murals\*

<i>Innovations</i>	First known appearance in Siamese murals <sup>17</sup>	First known appearance in Burmese murals
<i>Lay - out</i>		
<i>Wide registers</i>	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> c. Wat Chong Nonsi <sup>18</sup> 1 section: 2.50 m. x 1 m. - 1.80 m.	1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung 1 panel: 2 m. x 0.90 m.
<i>Technique</i>		
<i>Perspective of landscape</i>	1629 - 1656 Wat Mai Prachumphon	1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung
<i>Bird's-eye-view</i> <sup>19</sup>	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> c. Wat Chong Nonsi	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> - mid 18 <sup>th</sup> c. Maha Thein Daw Gyi 1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung
<i>Foreshortening</i>	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> c. Wat Chong Nonsi	1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung
<i>People from back</i>	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> c. Wat Chong Nonsi	1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung
<i>Iconography</i>		
<i>Private life in buildings</i>	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> c. Wat Chong Nonsi	1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung
<i>Dense group around a center</i>	1734 Wat Ko Keo Suttharam	1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung
<i>Style</i>		
<i>Chinese style rocks and trees</i>	1629 - 1656 Wat Mai Prachumphon	1786 Ananda Ok-Kyaung

\* of which I have selected but a few

<sup>17</sup> The aim is to give a time frame, not to point out a particular monument: earlier murals than those given in this column would only give more credit to the fact that the Siamese pictorial tradition was technically ahead of the Burmese one.

<sup>18</sup> John Listopad dates the murals of Wat Chong Nonsi either from last years of the reign of King Narai (1656 - 1688), either from the reign of King Phetracha (1688 - 1703): "I use the building in the Temiya Jataka with its depiction of drunken and immoral behavior [ill. 42, 63 in the present paper] which corresponds to the home of the Persian Ambassador at Lopburi that was taken over by the French after his departure, who probably inspired the debauch portrayed in this scene. This would place it at the earliest at the end of the reign of King Narai, or most likely during the reign of his successor King Phetracha." Personal communication, 2012/09/27.

<sup>19</sup> While an innovation such as the bird's-eye view seems to have been used in the earlier murals of the Maha Thein Daw Gyi, its spread seems nonetheless linked to the Anandian group of murals. See footnote 6 and "Note on the earliest known bird's-eye view in Burmese murals" before the bibliography.

A series of innovations appear at once for the first time in Burmese murals at the Ananda Ok-kyauung in 1786. These innovations deal with lay-out, technique, iconography and style. They cannot come from LanNa murals because there are no known Lan Na murals from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (See footnote 9) and thus suggest a possible derivation (the Lan Na painting of this period is represented by only two painted banners). These innovations can only come from the Siamese pictorial tradition where they appear for the first time between 150 and 50 years before their first appearance in Burma.



### 3. The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan Innovations at the Ananda Ok-kyauing in the context of contemporary Burmese styles

#### *Historical periods*

-----1752-----	-----1781-----	-----1846/53-----	-----1885
Nyaungyan	Early Konbaung	Mid-Konbaung	Late Konbaung

#### *Styles\**

|1730/40 - 1770/80|

Nyaungyan final

|1770/80 - 1790|

Nyaungyan late final

|1740/50-----1800/10|

Proto-Konbaung (2 or 3 sub-groups)

|1780/1786 - 1800/10|

Anandian

|1810/20 - 30/40|

post-Anandian

\* Only styles from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are given here. As for the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only the post-anandian style is given: other styles are currently under analysis.

When the core of this revolution materialized, the stylistic context was already rich and complex. It consisted of the Nyaungyan final, Nyaungyan late final and proto-Konbaung styles. The Siamese features embodied by the Anandian group were not adopted unanimously by all Burmese painters - and when it was the case, it was to different degrees. The murals of the Shwe Gutha illustrate this complexity: while the tree of the birth scene of the Siddhattha (33) is close with the depiction of trees in the Ananda Ok-kyang (51) and logically with trees of the post-Anandian style (53), it is the only such feature found in the Shwe Gutha. Its murals belong to the proto-Konbaung style that bears a strong Nyaungyan influence (32) while regarding fashion they are rooted in the Konbaung period: i.e. the long dress of the women (33).



32, 33. Deity, birth of Siddhattha. Shwe Gutha Myat Swat Phaya, Amarapura, 1787.



### 3. The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan New means for existing concepts



34. Couple at a window. *Taungbi Pitakat-taik, Pagan, 1705.*



35. Ladies. *Mingala Shwe Kyaung U Phaya, Pagan, c. 1790 - 1800.*



36. *Ananda Ok-kyaung, Pagan, 1786.*



37. Couple at a window. *Yot Son Phaya, Amyint, c. 1810 - 1830.*

While the Anandian revolution brought in innovations, it does not mean a clean sweep of the existing styles. Scenes of a loving and sexual nature existed already in the 1705 murals of the Taungbi Pitakat-taik at Pagan, but, by being confined to openings

without depth, the notion of intimacy in a private space was not successfully conveyed (34). The 1786 Anandian revolution gave these motives and themes a new dimension by opening the insides of the buildings (35, 36, 37, 40, 43). The use of interiors in the Ananda Ok-kyang was pure jubilation (36) and it became contagious (56). The perception of movement flowing between the exterior and the interior reached a theatrical and almost musical dimension at a fascinating degree of interaction. The painters even played with the shape of the mirrors and the frames of the doors and windows to create continuity in the composition through visual echoes (35, 36). They went as far as to suggest a further inner space out of the visual field by depicting figures from their back, suggesting another space to the imagination (36). It is almost as if all of a sudden the Byzantine icons had led place to the *Meninas* of Velasquez.





### 3.5 The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan Nature of the Anandian murals : a formula?

This revolution, echoed at different degrees in the Burmese murals of the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, shaped an important part of the pictorial production of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Revolution is meant here by the suddenness of this change. Firstly, because some of these innovations are traced around 150 years earlier in Siam than in Burma, secondly, because while some other innovations are traced only 50 years earlier in Siam, they appeared at once in the Ananda Ok-kyauing (with the exception of the murals of the Maha Thein Daw Gyi for the bird's-eye view - see footnotes 6 and 30).

These pictorial innovations reflect a larger cultural phenomenon that occurred in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Upper Burma. This is corroborated by the fact that while some of these innovations already existed in a few late 15<sup>th</sup> - early 16<sup>th</sup> century Burmese murals,<sup>20</sup> for example the partial perspective found in the Kyanziththa Umin at Pagan, they did not spread and were not adopted - while the partial perspective found in the Ananda

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<sup>20</sup> When a pictorial technique has been ignored for more than two centuries, I consider its reappearance in a new monument and its subsequent spread as an innovation.

Ok-kyang became the norm, even in what may be considered as murals of a rather conservative style. Without the Anandian murals, the early 19<sup>th</sup> century murals of the Shwe Pwinlin at Pakokku (54, 61), of the Yot Son Phaya (37, 52, 55, 56) and of the Kun Daung Phaya (53) at Amyint, to cite only but a few, would never have existed in their current form.

From the 1780's - 1800's, the evolution of the Burmese mural tradition can be understood only through the identity of the Anandian group of murals. While such outstanding masterpieces have been made by some of the best painters of that time, to my knowledge there are no similar murals in Thailand - unlike for the Maha Thein Daw Gyi and the Wut Gyi Gu Phaya. It is somehow puzzling that the Anandian murals embody a series of characteristics of the Siamese pictorial tradition, as if they were a unique formula tailored to Burma, a hybridization satisfying the will to absorb a new and technically more advanced pictorial tradition. The fact that there is no *sinthao* in the Anandian murals would give credit to this. These murals merging two different traditions may be the result of a concerted aesthetic choice. To cite only but a few of the points sustaining this approach, let us consider the panel:



- The panels at the Ananda Ok-kyauing appear as a compromise between the much wider panels of Siam, i.e. at Wat Chong Nonsi, and the registers of the Burmese narrative tradition. The panels of the Ananda Ok-kyauing are much shorter than those of Siam, but higher than the average Burmese registers.

- The panels at the Ananda Ok-kyauing are laid-out into registers: the visual unity of the program is Burmese, but the format for each narrative is that of a panel.

- The readings of the narratives inside each panel are extensive, while Siamese panels are shortly captioned or often not captioned at all.

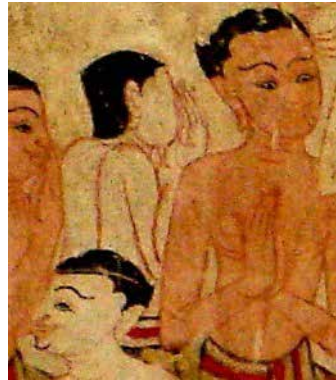
In fact, the mural of the Ananda Ok-Kyaung are stylistically close to later Lan Na murals such as the murals of the Wat Phra Singh in Chiang Mai (66,67) - but such murals are yet not known in LanNa for the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.6 The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan Innovations in Anandian murals

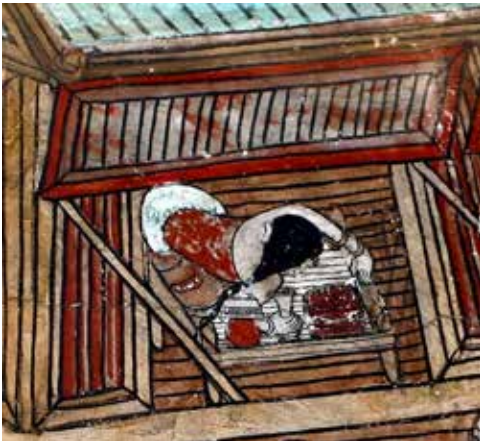
Foreshortening



People from back



38, 39. Earliest known appearance in Siamese murals: Wat Chong Nonsi, Bangkok, late 17<sup>th</sup> century.



40, 41. Earliest known appearance in Burmese murals: Ananda Ok-kyang, Pagan, 1786.



### 3.7 The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan Innovations in Anandian murals

Bird's-eye-view, private life inside a building



42. Earliest known appearance in Siamese murals: Wat Chong Nonsi, Bangkok, late 17<sup>th</sup> century.



43. Earliest known appearance in Burmese murals: Ananda Ok-kyaung, Pagan, 1786 - considering the spread of this technic (see footnotes 6, 30 and 32).

A dense crowd around a center



44. Wat Ko Keo Suttharam, Phetchaburi, 1734.



45. Ananda Ok-kyang, Pagan, 1786. 46. Upali Thein, Pagan, 1794.

In all three scenes, a dense group of people surround a circular area where two boxers (44) and two dancers (45) are performing,



or where a Bodhisatta is seated (46). In the Chinthe U Phaya at Aneint, whose murals are dated from 1738 or 1748 by a damaged inscription, the orchestra is surrounded by a polyfoilded outline that limits it to the musicians and to the dancers: there is no such group gathering around a center as in the previous scenes.

### 3.8 The 1786 pictorial revolution at Pagan

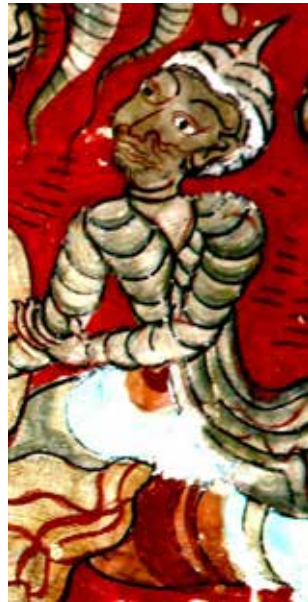
#### The Anandian identity

Ananda Ok-kyang, 1786.



47.

Mingala Shwe Kyaung  
U Phaya, Pagan,  
c. 1790 - 1800.



48.

Ananda Ok-kyaug, 1786.

Mingala Shwe Kyaung  
U Phaya, Pagan,  
c. 1790 - 1800.



49.



50.

The innovations and stylistic trends of the Ananda Ok-kyaug are found in other murals at Pagan at a slightly later date. Some painters seem to have worked on several of these murals. To reflect this consistency, I called them the Anandian style group of murals - which defines the first Konbaung style. They include murals at the 1786 Ananda Ok-kyaug, 1794 Upali Thein and 1790 - 1800's Kamma Kyaung U Phaya and Mingala Shwe Kyaung U Phaya.





### 3.9 Spread of the Anandian style and iconography The Chinese landscape



51. Ananda Ok-kyang, 1786.



52. Yot Son Phaya, Amyint, c. 1810 - 1830.



53. Kun Daung Phaya, Amyint, c. 1810 - 1830.

The Anandian style embodies a new aesthetic that eventually spread over the general area of the sites. One of its main characteristics is its strong Chinese influence. There was a Chinese influence in Burmese murals before 1786, but it was limited to disseminated motifs, i.e. flowers or clouds. Beyond 1786, Chinese influence is expressed in the depiction of the landscape - and through depth-of-field, the landscape provides the setting and organization for the components of the scenes. This mastering in Siamese murals of the first half of 17<sup>th</sup> century (Wat Mai Prachumphon) explain why complex scenes, such as a procession in a forest, were already depicted at that time.

### 3.10 Spread of the Anandian style and iconography

#### The terraces - multiplications of the horizontal planes



54. Shwe PwinlinMyat Swat Phaya, Pakokku, 1813.



55. Yot Son Phaya, Amyint, c. 1810 - 1830.

In Nyaungyan murals, even in classic and final styles, the horizontal planes were not developed: when people were depicted in a building, it was with a red background without any spatial continuity (34). Now, with the bird's-eye view, there is a multiplication of the horizontal planes and particularly of the terraces. As an open private space evokes the location of a given action clearer and more naturally than any outline, the terrace gives to the scene a depth that converges towards the intimacy of the inside of the rooms, while it includes also the building in its environment. For narratives, this is both a new motif and a new technical means revealing numerous relationships and activities never depicted before.

### 3.11 Spread of the Anandian style and iconography Openings and privacy - multiplications of the vertical planes



56 (continuation of 55). Yot Son Phaya, Amyint, c. 1810 - 1830.

The inside of the buildings is filled with an intense private life. Each opening is used as the frame of a distinct tableau: a mother and her child, a couple etc. It demonstrates how painters enjoy this new style, and how, genre scenes were disseminated in the whole of the composition. As the scenes are partially depicted they lead to a suggestive and thus imaginative space. This is new.



### 3.12 Spread of the Anandian style and iconography

#### The Thuyaung tree



57. Ananda Ok-kyaung, Pagan, 1786.<sup>21</sup>

58. Shinbin Poppayon Phaya, Sinbyugyun, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Ananda Ok-kyaung would house the earliest known depiction of the Thuyaung tree in Burmese murals (57) that is then found in the 19<sup>th</sup> century murals at Amyint, Myitche, Pakhangyi, Salingyi, Sinbyugyun (58) etc. The depiction of this tree ripe with maiden, called Nariphon in Thai (nari = woman, phon = fruit) may have been imported from Siam together with the series of innovations already discussed.

<sup>21</sup> Detail of a copy on cloth of the mural. Special thanks to Lilian Handlin who commissioned the painting and provided me her photos.

### 3.13 Spread of the Anandian style and iconography Stairways and cock fighting



59, 60. Dog at the bottom of a stairway, cocks fighting on a roof. Upali Thein, Pagan, 1794.



61. Cocks fighting at the bottom of a stairway. Shwe Pwinlin Myat Swat Phaya, Pakokku, 1813.



62. Cocks fighting. Loka Aung Mye Zedi Daw Gyi, Khinmun, 1816.



#### 4.1 Differences between Burmese and Siamese murals

##### The expression of love and desire



63. Wat Chong Nonsi, Bangkok, late 17th c.



64. Taungbi Pitakat-taik, Pagan, 1705.



65. Wat Phumin, Nan, late 19th c.

Unlike Siam and Isarn (Northeastern Thailand) murals such as this one from Wat Chong Nonsi (63), which depicts a sexual intercourse watched upon by onlookers (see footnote 29), those from Burma have no sexually explicit scenes. Both Burmese and Lan Na murals depict gallantry - nothing more than a kiss or a soft embrace (64, 65).

## 4.2 Kinship between Burmese and Lan Na murals The expression of love and desire



66. Ananda Ok-kyaung, Pagan, 1786.



67. Wat Phra Singh, Chiang Mai, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Love, desire and consent are suggested and channelled through eye expressions and gestures.





#### 4. Kinship between Burmese and Lan Na murals Elderly women and pensive ladies



68. *Yot Son Phaya, Myitche, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

69. *Wat Buak Khrok Luang, Chiang Mai, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

70. *Wat Phra Singh, Chiang Mai, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*



71. *Thaman Gyin Phaya, Salingyi, 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

72. *Wat Nong Bua, Nan, late 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

It is still difficult to determine if the kinship between Burmese and Lan Na murals is due to historical and cultural similarities or to pictorial influences. The pensive ladies have, in both cases, a philtrum: a vertical groove in the upper lip. Philtrum is very rarely depicted, but it is found at the Ananda Ok-kyang.

## Epilogue

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The Siamese innovations embodied in the Ananda Ok-kyang murals were adopted and spread to a large number of sites and monuments throughout Upper Burma. These new technical means and aesthetics, partly stemming from Chinese influence, involve lay-out, technique, iconography and style. However, the Burmese tradition remained strongly committed to its fundamentals, which are radically different from, and even opposed, to those of the Siamese painting tradition: the lay-out of the narratives into registers did not disappear, although the registers became wider; the polyfolded band outlining scenes remained and even became larger (53); and registers continued to be labelled with long captions that even increased in size. Even when wide panels were adopted, they never reached a 2 to 3 m. height, as in Siam.



The fact that the *sinthao*, ubiquitous to the Siamese painting, has not been adopted by Burmese painters indicates how the Siamese and Burmese painting traditions are different. To adopt the *sinthao* would have implied the disappearance of the registers and of the polyfoilded band outlining scenes: the very salient features of the identity of the Burmese mural tradition.

Regarding concepts, the Siamese innovations initiated at the Ananda Ok-kyauṅ enabled a rapid development of one of the most dramatic changes since the Pagan period: the shift from the depiction of the Buddha to the depiction of the Buddhist society. If this depiction of Buddhist society started to develop in murals from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, mainly through the iconography of the gatekeepers of the gates and of their wives and acolytes (Munier-Gaillard 2010), it was limited to the marginal spaces of the narration: without partial perspective and bird's-eye view it could not develop more than it did - and it occupied already the foreground.

From the typological point of view, a distinction should be made between the highly Siamicized murals of the Maha Thein Daw Gyi and Wut Gyi Gu Phaya, the hybrid murals probably resulting from a concerted formula of the Anandian group, as well as with

the proto-Konbaung style murals borrowing some innovative features of the Shwe Gutha, Laung U Hmaw and Phaya 1 at Ma U. The first two kinds simply a transfer: either of painters, either of illustrated manuscripts or any kind of mobile paintings or iconographic catalogues if they did exist. Those of the third kind are more part of a vogue or new stylistical trend.

As for the question of the influence of Lan Na murals on Burmese murals: a better question would be of the influence of Burmese murals on Lan Na murals, because the known production of Lan Na murals indicates a hiatus from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or even to the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Then, the nature of the kinship between the Burmese and Lan Na painting traditions remains to be defined: similarity or influence?



## Chronological list of monuments with murals mentioned in the paper

Siam (Central Thailand)		
Wat Mai Prachumphon	Ayutthaya	1629 - 1656
Wat Chong Nonsi	Bangkok	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> c.
Pavilion of Somdet Phra Buddha Kosachan, Wat Buddhaisawan	Ayutthaya	1688 - 1702
Wat Ko Keo Suttharam	Phetchaburi	1734
Wat Chaithit	Thonburi	1825 - 1850
Wat Pathumwanaram	Bangkok	1851 - 1868
Burma (Myanmar)		
Taungbi Pitakat-taik	Pagan, no. 1969*	1705
Maha Thein Daw Gyi	Sagaing	Late 17 <sup>th</sup> - mid 18 <sup>th</sup>
Thitaw Kyauksa Gu	Pagan, no. 22	1768
Cave 538	Powin Taung	1780
Lokhamangin Phaya	Monywe	1782
Ananda Ok-kyauung	Pagan, no. 2162	1786
Shwe Gutha	Amarapura	1787
Upali Thein	Pagan, no. 2121	1794
Kamma Kyaung U Phaya	Pagan, no. 2003	c. 1800 - 1810
Mingala Shwe Kyaung U Phaya	Pagan, no. 2007	c. 1800 - 1810
Laung U Hmaw Pitakat-taik	Ywa Thit Gyi	c. 1790 - 1810
Phaya 1, Shwe Kyut Hmaw complex	Ma U	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> - early 19 <sup>th</sup>
Kun Daung Phaya	Amyint	c. 1810 - 1830
Yot Son Phaya	Amyint	c. 1810 - 1830
Shwe Pwinlin Mya Saw Phaya	Pakokku	1813
Loka Aung Mye Zedi Daw Gyi	Khinmun	1816
Nat Kyaung Pitakat-taik	Pagan, no. 62	1824
Yot Son Phaya	Myitche	1 <sup>st</sup> half of 19 <sup>th</sup>
Thaman Gyin Phaya	Salingyi	1 <sup>st</sup> half of 19 <sup>th</sup>
Shinbin Poppayon Phaya	Sinbyugyun	1 <sup>st</sup> half of 19 <sup>th</sup>
Wut Gyi Gu Phaya	Minbu	c. middle of the 19 <sup>th</sup>
Lanna (Northern Thailand)		
Wat Buak Khrok Luang	Chiang Mai	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 19 <sup>th</sup>
Wiharn Lai Kham, Wat Phra Singh	Chiang Mai	2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the 19 <sup>th</sup>
Wat Phumin	Nan	Late 19 <sup>th</sup>
Wat Nong Bua	Nan	Late 19 <sup>th</sup>

\* Numbering of Pagan monuments according to Pichard 1992 - 2001.

### Note on the earliest known bird's-eye view in Burmese murals

Following a recent visit to the Maha Thein Daw Gyi in Sagaing, and encountering the fragments of a roof and a rampart with crenels depicted under a row of seated Buddhas, in what was probably a narrative section (that has now completely vanished except these two fragments and, on the opposite wall, the summit of a prang), I would like to reconsider the first known occurrence of the bird's-eye view in Burmese murals as originating not from the Ananda Ok-kyauing in Pagan, but from the Maha Thein Daw Gyi in Sagaing.

Although the building has vanished, its roof (73) is clearly depicted as part of a bird's-eye view or view from above: this kind of perspective, in relation with the visual field, depicts the horizontal plane of the scene as if it was rising (42, 43). The angle of the rampart shows also the same view from above and its oblique projection (74).

According to their stylistical features, the murals of Maha Thein Daw Gyi are earlier than those from the Ananda Ok-kyauing - thus, these fragments of roof and rampart would be the earliest known examples of a bird's-eye view in Burmese murals. In this case, it would remain to understand why the bird's-eye view



did not spread from the Maha Thein Daw Gyi as it did from the Ananda Ok-kyaugand Anandian murals from Pagan to Pakokku and Amyint, for instance (54 - 56).

My last point concerns the Siamese features of the Maha Thein Daw Gyi and the Anandian murals. While these murals are different in their conception - Anandian murals embodying many more innovations, but in a more Burmese format - the bird's-eye view in Burmese murals do, as far as we know, originate from the Siamese painting.

The seradical differences between the Maha Thein Daw Gyi and the Ananda Ok-kyaug may further indicate an absent historical linkage between the two and that the lack of adoption of Maha Thein Daw Gyi innovations were reduced because they were not part of a major historical and cultural movement, unlike the Ananda Ok-kyaug.



73, 74. Maha Thein Daw Gyi, Sagaing. Late 17<sup>th</sup> - mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

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## Photographs

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**\* Information on photographs 1, 2 - 4, 7, 69 and 72:**

1\* : from a manuscript with illustrations of tales of the last ten lives of the Buddha-to-be and of real and mythical animals, 1725 - 1775. Central Thailand. Paint, gold and ink paper. This photograph can be seen in: *Past Lives of the Buddha. Wat Si Chum - Art, Architecture and Inscriptions*, Peter Skilling (ed.), 2008, p.74 (3.22).

2 - 4\* : these three photographs can be seen in Nancy Tingley's *Doris Duke. The Southeast Asian Art Collection*, 2003, p.58: plate 33, p.72: plate 49, p.64: plate 40.

7\* : from No Na Paknam, *Mural Paintings of Thailand Series. Wat Pathumwanaram*, 1996, detail of plate 80 - 81.

69\* : from No Na Paknam, *Mural Paintings of Thailand Series. Wat Buak Khrok Luang*, 2001, detail of plate 22.

72\* : from Sone Simatrang, *The Structure of Lan Na Mural Paintings*, 2 vol., 1983, detail of front cover, vol. 2.

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