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CONTENTS

A Mobile Phone? Yes, I Want One! A Royal City? Yes, I Want One! How International Technology Met Local Demand in the Construction of Myanmar's First Cities, 1800 Years Ago.

Bob Hudson

[***Abstract***]

In the modern world, we can share information and new products as quickly as an email can be sent, or a parcel can be loaded onto an aircraft. But the brick-walled urban centres that sprung up in Myanmar around 150 CE suggest that ancient people could be just as excited about new information and products, even though the transmission of data and cultural objects followed a different path. These huge resource-intensive cities, inspired by the walled cities of India, were not built in sequence, as has been generally assumed, but in the same period. Once the Royal City arrived, the chiefly families of early First Millennium Upper Myanmar just *had* to have one.

Keywords: Myanmar, Burma, archaeology, urbanism.

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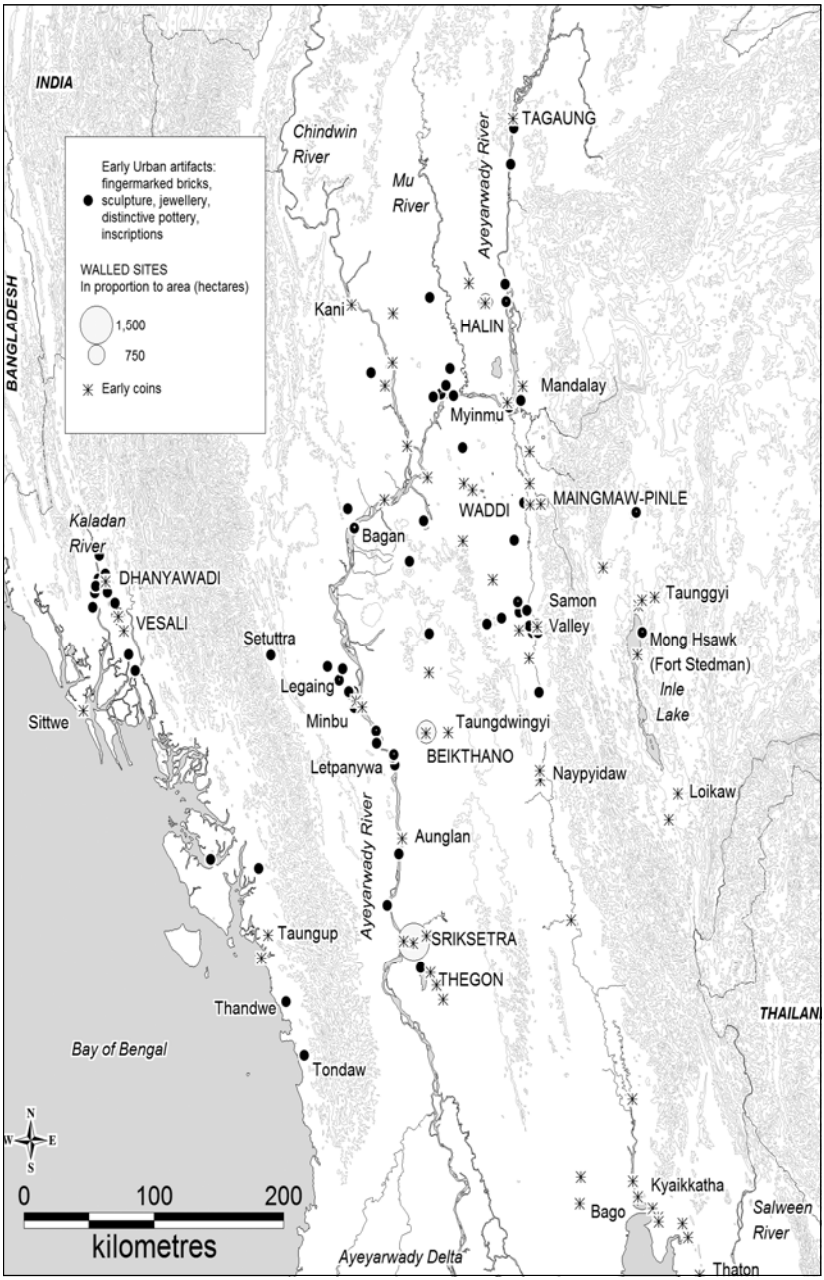

Figure 1. Upper Myanmar: Early Urban centres and finds of Early Urban artifacts.

I. Introduction

Early in the First Millennium CE, an expanding Iron Age population and new technologies and socio-political concepts coincided with the appearance of brick-walled cities in Upper Myanmar's Ayeyarwady valley, and on the Kaladan floodplain on Myanmar's west coast, in what is now Rakhine (Arakan) state <Figure 1>. The nomination in 1996 of three of the walled cities to the United Nations Educational Cultural and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Tentative List stated that Beikthano, Halin and Sriksetra "were built from the 1st to 9th centuries AD" (Department of Archaeology 1996). This reflected the academic consensus at the time, and remains what we might call the popular view, as presented, for example, on Wikipedia (Wikipedia 2014).

It is not in doubt that Myanmar's walled settlements were occupied during the First Millennium CE. There is an extensive literature that looks at their structure and contents (Aung Thaw 1972; Gutman 1976; Luce 1985; Stargardt 1990; Aung Thaw, Myint Aung *et al*. 1993; Aung Myint 1998, 1999; Gutman 2001; Nai Pan Hla 2011; Moore 2012). This paper presents a new hypothesis on the chronology of the cities, proposing that while monument construction and cultural activities occurred over many centuries, wall construction took place over a limited period of time, around the 1st to 3rd centuries CE. This burst of activity was an expression of power and authority by independent local leaders who were influenced by Indic notions of merit accumulated from past lives, and consequently of the worthiness of rulers to rule, and to live in appropriately worthy surroundings.

Such rulers may have been encouraged by descriptions of fortified cities in Indian texts such as the *Ramayana* or the Buddhist *Milindapanha* (Schlingloff 2013: 11-16), or in handbooks of royal governance that were eventually compiled as the *Arthasastra*: "in the absence of forts, the treasury is to the enemy, for it seems that for those who own forts, there is no destruction" (Shamasastry 1915: 469). Perhaps traders or travelling monks had brought stories of the 60 or more enclosed urban settlements that were operational throughout the Indian

subcontinent by the early centuries CE, cities which "for ordinary inhabitants, as well as for elites, provided economic security at all times and physical security when needed" (Smith 2006: 119-123).

Further examples of the value of enclosed settlements in the 1st to 3rd century CE period came from China, where wealthy landowners responded to weakening central control by building fortresses across the country (Elv in 1973: 33-34). The news of this new style of living reached people in Myanmar who were well used to incorporating aspects of neighbouring cultures.

II. Archaeological Background

Around 70,000 years ago, modern *homo* sapiens followed the coast of South and Southeast Asia from Africa to eventually reach Australia. On the way, some of these explorer-settlers moved up the river valleys, leaving genetic traces in the modern populations of places such as India and Myanmar (Oppenheimer 2004, 2012). In Myanmar, the focus of our story, they left stone tools as evidence of their movement across the landscape (de Terra, Movius *et al.* 1943). The hunter-gatherer lifestyle (Moore 2007, Chapter 2) eventually merged or coexisted with agriculture (Bellwood 2005). By 4,500 years ago, people living at Halin, which much later became one of the walled cities, were making incised earthenware, a class of pottery identified with Southeast Asian agriculturalists (Hudson and Nyein Lwin 2012). From this period we begin to get a glimpse of individuals, not just of their tools and pottery. At Halin the people who were adding agriculture to their survival strategy buried their dead in a systematic way.

While a grave is a specific kind of cultural deposit, it is not merely a window on death rituals. It can be, as we often kindly say today at funerals, a celebration of life. In the graves at Halin, we see evidence of characteristics we can recognise in modern societies, such as the ownership of beautiful, useful or significant objects, and social differentiation.

III. Deer, Snake and Cowrie Headdress: Social Status in a Stone-age Cemetery

The residents of an ancient village, site HL 30 at Halin, accumulated more than a metre of potsherds and ash during their period of residence. They were probably unaware that the skeletons of at least 37 people had been directly below them. In the walls of excavation trenches, we detect the outline of postholes the villagers had dug to support their houses, but none of the holes seem to have reached the burials below. We can see two consistent elements of human behaviour in these archaeological strata. In digging the post holes 30 or 40 centimetres down, nobody went to any more trouble than they needed to. And in throwing away their rubbish, the same principle applied. At the upper habitation level of HL 30, the debris of daily life accumulated. But ancient villages in Myanmar, as distinct from cemeteries, leave behind relatively little cultural information. Modern villagers who go hunting for treasure in these old sites will often talk of the "poor man's layer" they have to dig through to find the earlier "rich man's layer". This is the case at HL 30. It is in the earlier level, the Neolithic cemetery, that we begin to read some individual stories.

We know from charcoal just above the cemetery that the burials date to a period some time before 1070 to 1240 BCE (OZM353 2935±30 BP). Some skeletons wear bone or stone bracelets. Some are accompanied by a polished stone adze. Three of the burials are strongly differentiated. One person was buried with a set of deer antlers. One had a snake skeleton between the legs, too neatly placed to be accidental. Could they be indicators of hunting prowess, or perhaps even nicknames or titles acquired through that prowess: the Provider of Deer Meat, the Conqueror of Snakes?

A third skeleton has an accumulation of cowrie shells at the top of the head, probably a headdress. Cowries were a common trade item in prehistoric times. These marine shells must have travelled a minimum of 400 kilometres from the Indian Ocean to reach Halin. At the feet of this skeleton is a

painted pot containing two half-shells from a freshwater bivalve shellfish <Figure 2>. Every skeleton in the cemetery, however poorly supplied otherwise with grave goods, was accompanied by a bivalve shell. The community shared a belief related to the shells that was significant enough to make them part of every funeral. These are not just local traditions. In a Neolithic cemetery at Ban Non Wat in Thailand, a body was entombed with cowrie earrings, while others were accompanied by painted pots and bivalve shells (Higham 2014: 112-117), indicating that trade goods such as cowries, and behaviours such as the use of a pot and bivalves in a funeral ritual, travelled long distances. Examples of the pot and bivalve shell combination were also found in a burial at NyaungGon, in Myanmar's Samon Valley, which dates perhaps to the 4th century BCE, suggesting that this tradition was as long-lived as it was widespread (Pautreau, Coupey *et al.* 2010: 146).

Figure 2. Painted pot with bivalve shells, Halin, HL 30, Neolithic cemetery

IV. Jewellery and Feasting in Bronze Age Halin

By the time the bronze age came to Halin, from around the 11th century BCE going on regional comparisons (Higham 2014: 137), we begin to see some major social differences in grave goods, and a new tradition, the provision of large quantities of food. In excavation HL 29 (these Halin excavations are so far unpublished, and my data comes directly from working on the sites with my Myanmar colleagues) we often see a rectangular outline in the soil, suggesting coffins that have long since rotted away. Each cavity contained between a dozen and thirty or more pots, which we assume had been filled with food, perhaps the remains of a funeral feast for the mourners, or supplies for the afterlife. The quantity of food used in the funeral ritual suggests that these people were capable of producing a surplus well beyond their daily needs.

Many skeletons here wear polished stone rings ontheir arms. There are a few bronze axeheads and spearheads. The bivalve shell and pot combination is seen again. A bowl with perforated pillars inside is a type found across Myanmar which has been classified as alcohol distillation equipment (Win Maung 2003). Two of the 48 excavated burials feature substantial personal ornamentation: arms loaded with bone or shell rings and bronze bracelets, layers of tiny perforated shells that seem to have been used to decorate cloth as modern people might use sequins, cowries, and beads made from semi-precious stones <Figure 3>.

Figure 3. Bronze Age wealth, Halin HL 29: shells, stone beads, bracelets.

Charles Higham has suggested, on the basis of similar excavations in Thailand, that "the desirability of owning and displaying bronzes contributed significantly to the rise of social elites" (Higham 2014: 194). While the bronzes we excavate are coated with green copper oxide, in their original state, perhaps regularly polished by their proud owners, they would have shone like gold.

V. The Iron Age Turning Point

Iron appears in Southeast Asia from the 5th century BCE, on the current evidence (Higham 2014: 197), and the few available Iron Age radiocarbon dates from Myanmar bear this out (Pautreau 2007 87-90; Pryce, Coupey *et al*. 2013). Economic growth and consequent expansion of trade is reflected in Myanmar in grave goods such as stone beads, glass, and bronzes (Lankton, Dussubieix *et al*. 2006; Moore 2007: 85-127; Pautreau, Coupey *et al*. 2010). Between 300 BCE and 300 CE, trade linked the broader area of Southeast Asia with India and China, new political and religious ideas spread along with trade items, village communities grew into large centres, and agriculture intensified. Iron, rice and trade were integral to state formation (Higham 2014: 271-348). Upper Myanmar was a participant in these changes.

VI. Basic Principle of Leadership: Take Care of the Followers

A potent symbol appears in Myanmar from around 200 BCE. This is a bead in the shape of a crouching feline, usually made from the semi-precious stone carnelian, perforated to wear on a cord. The form seems to be modelled on the bronze tally tiger of the Qin Emperor of China (Cheng and Cheng 1993: 193), but with a local variant: the tiger is usually carrying a baby tiger in its mouth <Figure 4>.

Figure 4. The Qin Emperor's bronze tiger (above) and a Samon Valley version in carnelian. Detail (right) shows the baby tiger carried in the mouth.

This modification of a regional symbol of power is an indication of the way information was passing down the trade routes of the time. We might also read into it something about the nature of leadership. Around 300 examples of these beads have been found, mainly in the Samon Valley, the area I have proposed previously as a key source of population expansion in the Early Urban period. Ambitious local leaders moved from the Samon region where centuries-old village chiefdoms had no room to expand, to found settlements inspired by new ideas and technology from India (Hudson 2005b).

VII. The Construction of the Cities

In India's Early Historic period, from the 3rd century BCE to the 4th century CE, there were more than 60 walled cities, whose inhabitants grew grain, and domesticated animals such as sheep and cattle. Key architectural features were ramparts with associated ditches, towers and gates (Yule and Böhler 2004; Deloche 2007: 3-47; Yule 2008a, 2008b; Schlingloff 2013). Politically, these were "regional dynasties with shifting allegiances that resulted in restructured power balances nearly every

generation" (Smith 2006: 100). There was no need for a "state level of political organization, only an initial impetus for settlement, some level of highly visible labour investment, and a sustainable social network" (Smith 2003: 273).

In Myanmar the indigenous population, expanding demographically and economically, adopted some of these social and architectural characteristics. A defining feature of this cultural change is the construction of settlements enclosed by brick walls, with entry controlled by corridor gates that curved inward into the city, frequently with rooms or alcoves in the gates that suggest permanent administrative functions (Aung Myint 1998). The adaptations from India were highly selective. Walled settlements in India were usually less than two square kilometres (Schlingloff 2013: 49), while in Myanmar, the areas were up to 14 square kilometres, suggesting low density occupation that probably included agriculture within the walls. Due to a fortunate act of violence we have a convincing group of radiocarbon dates for wall construction at one of the Myanmar settlements, Halin.

VIII. Halin

An attack on the city and the burning of at least five of its gates <Figure 5>, which were not repaired or used again, was not fortunate for the inhabitants, of course, but it was valuable to archaeology. The burnt timber was preserved as charcoal. Wood buried under the ground in a monsoon climate will rot away to become part of the soil, but carbon pieces can last many centuries. While the charcoal from Halin does not tell us when the attack on the city took place, it does tell us the age of the wood at the time when trees were cut down and used to build the city gates. On the assumption that the brick walls and gates were built simultaneously with the wooden doors and superstructure, the radiocarbon dates show a construction period between 120 and 250 CE (Hudson 2012).

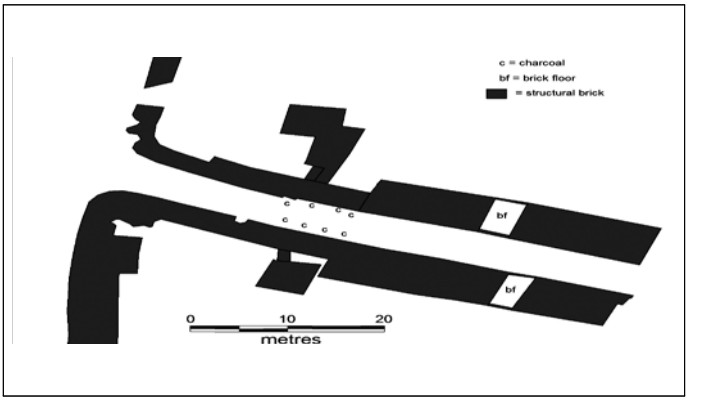

Figure 5. Plan: brick corridor gate at Halin, HL 33, excavated in 2011. Charcoal is from the destruction of the wooden gate and gatehouse at some unknown time.

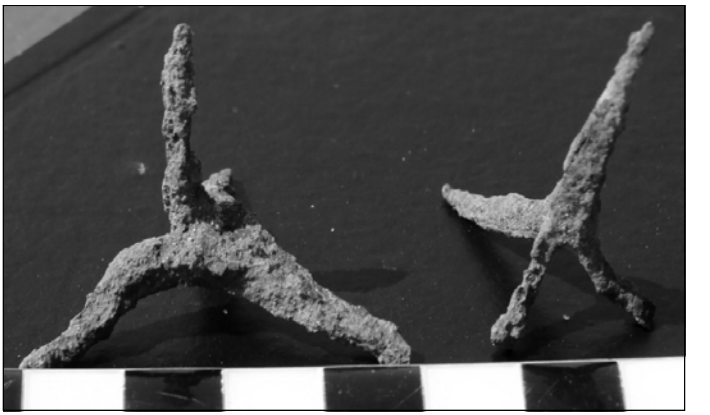

Figure 6. Caltrops excavated at gate HL 31, Halin, 2010. Scale in centimetres.

Caltrops <Figure 6> were found during recent excavations at Halin. These four-sided iron spikes, which always have one part pointing upward to penetrate the feet of humans or animals, were known to the ancient Romans and were also found at the walled city of Sisulpalgarh in India, at a level dated to the period 200-350 CE (Khan 2003: 126-127). We have no way of knowing whether they were placed at Halin by the defenders or

the attackers.

Early bricks in Myanmar are often marked with finger strokes, put on while the clay is still wet. These markings were also used in India and Thailand (Moore 2007: 134). Among more than 500 marked bricks recovered from the debris of three gates excavated at Halin since 2010, 2% bear what may be Indian letters or numbers <Figure 7>.

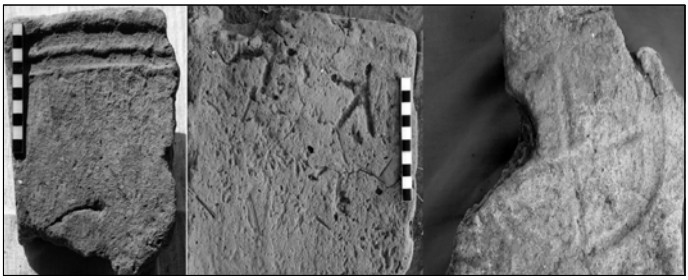

Figure 7. Bricks from the 120-250 CE gates at Halin. Fingermarks (left), letter *a* (centre), number 90 (right).

Among the clearest examples, one appears to be incised with the Brahmi vowel *a* which was used in India around the first Century CE (Dani 1963: 37). Another brick is marked in fingerstrokes with the 2nd century CE symbol for the number 90 (Smith, David Eugene and Karpinski 1911). This is further evidence that India was the source of inspiration for the construction of the city. The presence of letters and numbers on bricks from a context dated between the 1st and 3rd centuries also suggests that literacy in Myanmar can be dated back at least to this period.

IX. Beikthano

While the dating of the construction of Halin is convincing, we need to consider circumstantial evidence for the origin of the walls at the other cities. At Beikthano, a brick building, BTO 32,

containing cremation urns and located outside the city walls, has charcoal from a fire dated to between 60 and 220 CE. The layer of ash is in just one part of the building. It is too widespread for a kitchen fireplace, but too contained to be debris from a destructive building fire. The likeliest prospect is that the ash and charcoal was from cremations. Burial urns are also found in the building. The 60-220 CE period is when the building was functioning. This for now is the earliest absolute date range for the city. Beikthano was also operational at the same time as Halin became operational (Hudson 2012). A painted cremation urn excavated at this site shows the continued use at Beikthano of a symbol used as coffin decoration (Moore 2007: 109) in Iron Age burials in the Samon valley <Figure 8>. They may have adopted new ideas, but they did not necessarily throw the old ones away.

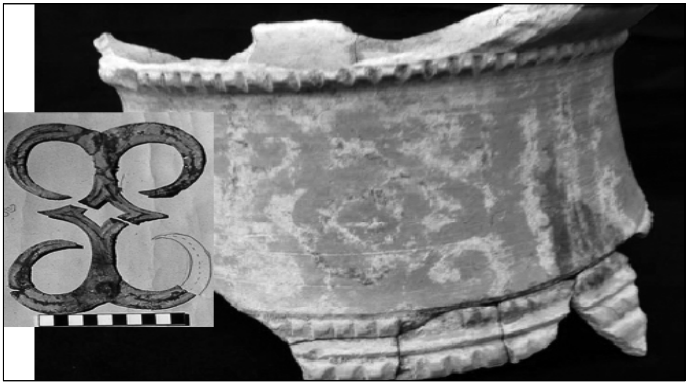

Figure 8. An earthenware cremation urn from Beikthano, 60-220 CE, repeats the motif of a Samon Valley coffin decoration (insert).

X. Sriksetra

he earliest radiocarbon date for Sriksetrais for the period 50-200 CE, from charcoal at the lower level of a deposit of iron slag in the centre of the city. We can suggest that the city was operational in this period. Sriksetra went through several construction phases. An inner wall was overwhelmed by annual

flooding from nearby hills and an eight-kilometre wall and brick-lined drainage channel was built. This channel was also eventually overcome by siltation, and in two places, we can still see the remains of later brick entranceways built on topof silt-filled corridor gates (Hudson 2007; Hudson and Lustig 2008 ; Hudson 2012). The majority of artworks from the early urban period come from Sriksetra.

XI. Maingmaw-Pinle.

The dual name of this site is used because when it was revealed to be an ancient city in the 1970s it was known as Maingmaw, after a village within the walls. More recently, archaeologists have called it Pinle, after a nearby fortress of the 11th–13th century Bagan period. Like Sriksetra, it has two clear phases of wall construction. A circular wall inside has been enclosed by a larger oblong wall (Sein Maung Oo 1981; Nyunt Han, Aung Kyaing *et al*. 2006). Several buildings have recently been excavated outside the east wall. They share decorative elements with buildings at Beikthano and Sriksetra. The outer wall also has a corridor gate. The city area is under intensive rice production, which makes a search for any possible underground structures difficult. Maingmaw-Pinle would be an ideal candidate for investigation via airborne laser scanning (Lidar) technology (Daukantas 2014).

XII. Dhanyawadi and Vesali

These walled sites on Myanmar's west coast, in the floodplain of the Kaladan River, have been dated on the basis of artifacts found in the cities, and in the region generally, to the 4th to 8th centuries CE (Gutman 1976, 2001; Singer 2008; Shwe Zan 2010). The Royal City hypothesis does not argue against the attribution of artworks, inscriptions and coins to this period. It suggests that the brick walls and corridor gates (Hudson 2005a) might belong to a separate period, the 1st to 3rd century, when the three

largest cities on the central plains, Halin, Beikthano and Sriksetra, were also operational.

XIII. Other Walled Sites: Tagaung, Waddi and Thegon

Tagaunghas three walls, each abutting the Ayeyarwady River. Distinctive local cremation and pottery traditions set Tagaung apart from the sites described above (Moore 2008). A radiocarbon date range of 710-940 CE (OZH969 120030 BP) for a cremation burial confirms activity in the early urban period, but based on the available evidence Tagaung does not have an archaeological claim to the Royal City period.

Waddi, a circular walled site west of Maingmaw-Pinle, has fingermarked bricks, stone beads and early coins, thus it comes within the Royal City purview. Thegon, south of Sriksetra, has a similar assemblage, though it is largely covered by modern villages (Aung Myint 1999: 49-63 & 89-97), So far there has been little archaeological investigation of either.

XIV. If the Walls Were Built at the Same Time, What Happened Next?

If we consider that the walls with corridor gates were built in the proposed 1st to 3rd century Royal Cities period, we have an explanation as to why so many buildings at Beikthano, Maingmaw -Pinle and Sriksetra were constructed outside the city walls, and why so many artifacts and inscriptions on the west coast (including the Sanskrit *ye dhamma hetu* formula, which was often a dedicatory element of a Buddhist monument) are found a long way away from the walled cities. The need to live within city walls had become less pressing.

Each city had a central elite complex. The followers would have lived and probably kept animals and grown crops within the outer wall, as indicated by habitation remains at Sriksetra

that date between 680-890 CE (Hudson 2012). Contrary forces would have pulled at the population. There would have been a need for more space, due to a combination of internal population growth and the inevitable attraction of new followers to the economic and physical security of the urban site. Inertia, due to the resources already invested, would have continued to hold people to their ancestral home. But subsequent generations of the leadership, as well as the followers, would have been less dedicated than the founders to staying within the enclosure. The walled city, as a physical representation of the power of the leaders, was replaced as a focal point for the society by religious monuments. Many were built in or near the walled cities, but as a monument was significant because of the relics it enshrined, it could be built anywhere (Hudson 2004: 148-153).

This was no great challenge to the leaders. They simply changed their method of expressing their dominance over the populace by becoming the principal donors of religious buildings. Sri Prabhuvarma did so at Sriksetra. We know this from his KhinBa pagoda, whose relic chamber survived into the 20th century (Duroiselle 1927). The aristocrats of Bagan did the same in the better recorded 11th to 13th century empire period (Ma Tin Win 2009).

At Sriksetra, the majority of cremation burials are outside the walls, and indeed more resources were used outside the walls than inside them for monument construction during the life of the city (Hudson 2007; Hudson and Lustig 2008). More of the Dhanyawadi period artworks on display in the museum at Dhanyawadi were found in the hinterland of the city than within the walls, according to my reading of the museum acquisition records. Some of these pieces came from Selagiri Hill, on the Kaladan River, a spot advantageous to trade. They have been dated to the 6th or 7th century (Gutman 2001: 49-52). The Royal City hypothesis suggests there is no need to relate them to the construction period of the walled site, nine kilometres away.

A map of archaeological finds from the early urban period <Figure 1> shows that they are spread up and down the river

systems. They do not cluster around the walled cities, as you might expect if the cities functioned as "central places"in the manner proposed for the earth-embankment sites in Central Thailand in the same period (Mudar 1999). In Upper Myanmar, there are three areas which have an accumulation of "early urban" materials, such as distinctive "Pyu" gold jewellery, stamped Buddhist votaries and fingermarked bricks, butthey have no brick walls. These are Myinmu and Minbu, on the Ayeyarwady River, and the Samon Valley <Figure 1>. We should expect these artifacts to date after the period of wall construction, when the urge to surround a settlement with walls had dissipated. Local chiefs may well have continued to appropriate Indian political and religious notions to enforce their position as leader, but these notions no longer included the construction of a royal city. At Myinmu someone left behind a magnificent gold *makhara* bracelet, which is now in the National Museum in Yangon <Figure 9>. This might have been just as much a symbol of wealth and authority in its time and place as the ownership of a walled city had been in the 1st to 3rd millennium.

Figure 9. Gold *makhara* (mythical animal) bracelet from Myinmu. Width 9 cms.

G.H Luce suggested thaton the basis of Buddhist and Vaishnavite artworks, Sriksetra had been founded in the 7th century (Luce 1985: 48-52). The Royal City hypothesis, informed by radiocarbon dates that were not available to Luce, has the

city functioning centuries earlier than this. This does not mean artworks must necessarily be redated, but there is now a broader chronological range to set them in, and this may help resolve some anomalies. One significant find at Sriksetra, a stone with warriors holding symbols of Vishnu and devotees guarding an aniconic Buddhist throne, may go back to the time of the construction of the city (Gutman and Hudson 2014, in press).

XV. Summary

The ancient people of Myanmar were as interested in new ideas and objects as modern people are, and made similar economic decisions. If we like it, need it and can afford it, we will try to acquire it. Exotic goods were traded long before the Iron Age, in a society where burial inclusions suggest that some people were much wealthier than others. The example of a mobile phone today was contrasted with the example of an Indian fortified city in the early First Millennium as something that people quickly and simultaneously found out about, liked the idea, and saw a benefit in allocating resources to it. In the case of the walled city, the followers gained economic and physical security, while the leaders who instigated construction reinforced their position in the social hierarchy.

Once built, the cities followed individual trajectories depending on local circumstances. Halin was eventually attacked and its gates, so significant to its founders, were put permanently out of commission (Myint Aung 1970; Hudson 2012). Charcoal that dates to a range between 380and 540 CE was found under the debris of two of the gates at Beikthano (Hudson 2012), suggesting that the city lasted at the very least until after this period. Clay stamps and intaglios at Sriksetra suggest continuing contact with India and beyond (Middleton and Wilkins 2005). Silver coins were made using Indian-derived and indigenous symbols by some, but not all, of the walled cities, and perhaps by other instigators. Thousands of examples have been found. Coins suggest the operation of local minting authorities between

the 4th and 9th centuries (Than Htun 2007; Mahlo 2012).

XVI. Testing the Theory.

A hypothesis is only valuable if it can be tested; otherwise it is merely an opinion. The periodisation of walls other than those at Halin could be directly helped by radiocarbon dating, but the ancients did not always light a fire where it would do the most good for future archaeologists. The sun-dried bricks used in the early Myanmar cities were not heated enough to date by thermoluminescence. Further excavation of walls and gates, and perhaps advances in dating technology, might provide some more direct evidence of the age of the walls.

The weight of archaeological evidence for cultural continuity amid selective adaptation of concepts or technologies that have come down the trade routes, not just in Myanmar but across Southeast Asia, as Higham (2014: 271-277) has pointed out, means that we can cast aside the once-popular idea that a new ethnic group came to Myanmar from "somewhere else" and began building cities. This is not to say that individual travellers might not have had an influence on the indigenous people who had always been so open to anything new that might bring them a benefit. Great value could have come from monks "accompanying traders and bringing in objects of power and protection, such as relics and images as well as a literary tradition in the forms of magical chants in sacred languages and also written texts" (Swearer 2013: 120). Are there new ways to reconcile Chinese and Indian historical sources and Buddhist literary traditions to illuminate the process of information transfer in Myanmar's 1st to 3rd century period?

An immediate way to test the Royal City hypothesis is to apply a "what if" scenario. If the walls of the ancient cities are assumed to have been built in the 1st to 3rd century CE period, does the data from history, archaeology, numismatics, art history, palaeography and other disciplines that can be applied to the study of life in First Millennium CE Myanmar make more sense or less?

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The Pagan-Period and the Early-Thai Buddhist Murals: Were They Related?

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[***Abstract***]

Flourishing in the Central Dry Zone of Burma during a period from the mid-eleventh to the late-thirteenth century A.D., the historical kingdom of Pagan was one of the major Buddhist centers in Southeast Asia. The significance of Pagan as an important pilgrimage site of the region, where numerous relics of the Buddha were enshrined, had been maintained until long after the fall of its civilization. It is evident that the artistic influences of Pagan, particularly in the architectural and decorative domains, had been transmitted to various other Buddhist civilizations in the area. This study provides a detailed analysis on the relationships between the mural tradition of Pagan and those of its neighboring civilizations in Thailand—of the Ayutthayā, Lānnā and Sukhothai schools —dating from after the Pagan Period in the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century.

Surprisingly, as the analysis of this study has suggested,

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such relationships seemed to be trivial, more on a minor stylistic basis than on substantial ideological and iconographic grounds. They suggest that transmission of the complex idea and superb craftsmanship of the mural tradition would not have been maintained adequately at Pagan after its civilization, probably due to the lack of royal patronage. It would have been extremely difficult for foreign pilgrims who visited Pagan after its dynastic period to appreciate the surviving murals of this lost tradition in terms of their complex programs and associated symbolism. Also, there had been a new center of the Sinhalese Buddhism firmly established in the Martaban area of lower Burma since the mid-fourteenth century that outcompeted Pagan in terms of supplying the new Buddhist ideas and tradition. Its fame spread wide and far among the Buddhist communities of Southeast Asia. Later, these Buddhist communities also established direct contact with Sri Lanka. The Sukhothai murals and the Ayutthayā murals in the crypt of Wat Rātchaburana, dating from the fourteenth/fifteenth century, show obvious Sri Lankan influence in terms of artistic style and Buddhist iconography. They could be a product of these new religious movements, truly active in Southeast Asia during that time.

Keywords: Pagan murals, early Thai murals, past Buddhas, Buddha's biography, Mahāthāt Rātchaburī, Wat Rātchaburana

I. Introduction

Flourishing in the Central Dry Zone of Burma between the eleventh and thirteenth century was the historical kingdom of Pagan. The proto-history of Pagan, however, extended back in time to well before the tenth century, as supported by some legendary accounts (Luce 1969 Vol. 1: page no.) and recent archaeological excavations (Hudson, Nyein Lwin and Win Maung (Tanpawady) 2001: 48-74; Hudson et al. 2002: 9-21). The historical period of Pagan began sometime during the mid-eleventh

century with the reign of one of its greatest kings, Aniruddha, whose name is found inscribed on a number of Buddhist votive-tablets discovered at Pagan and various other places in Burma, proposed to be under his sovereignty (Luce 1969 Vol. 1: 15-18; Vols. 2 & 3, plates 4-14). Pagan had enjoyed its civilization until the Mongols' conquest over its capital in A.D. 1287, followed by political unrest within the state (Than Tun 1988a: 103-114).

Being one of the most powerful Buddhist states of medieval Southeast Asia, Pagan during the peak of its civilization was linked into a wider trans-regional network of Buddhism by adopting the belief based primarily on the Pāli treatises from the Mon Country in Lower Burma and then directly from Sri Lanka (Luce, Vol. 1: 38-40), a center of Theravādin Buddhism, as well as the artistic tradition and Buddhist iconography from northern India. The latter cultural zone had its spiritual center in the Buddhist perception located at Bodhgayā, where the Buddha was enlightened. Establishment at Pagan in the early thirteenth century of an almost exact replica of the main sanctuary of Bodhgayā attested the importance of this holy site in the Pagan perception (Strachan 1989: 99-100). This could have meant transferring the sacredness of Bodhgayā into Pagan in the symbolic sense, given that this most holy Buddhist site, at that time, had fallen into ruin under attacks of the Muslim invaders. As a stronghold of Theravādin Buddhism in Southeast Asia—which was linked, at least in a symbolic sense, with the spiritual center of the Buddhist World—Pagan would have inspired other Buddhist traditions of the area in both the spiritual and materially artistic aspects. Even until long after the fall of its civilization in the late thirteenth century, Pagan still maintained its status as a "sacred" site, where numerous holy relics of the Lord Buddha had been enshrined, with its fame spreading wide and far. Attesting to this are several contemporary inscriptions recording the donations to the religion found at Pagan and associated with pilgrimage activities there after the dynastic period (see examples in Tun Nyein 1899; Luce and Ba Shin, 1961: 330-7). Influences of the Buddhist arts spreading from

Pagan to its neighboring contemporaneous and later civilizations have been detected—in the architectural and decorative domains—at Haripuñjaya, Lānnā, Sukhothai and Ayutthayā, in the present-day Thailand. The first was an early-Mon kingdom while the latter three belonged to early Thai.

Buddhist murals dating from the late-eleventh to the thirteenth century are found adorning the interior of numerous hollow pagodas or "cave temples" (in Burmese "gu-hpaya") that densely dotted the arid plain of Pagan. The murals illustrate various schemes of the Buddhist narratives—*Jātakas*, stories of the past Buddhas, life's episodes of Buddha Gotama, cosmological scenes, etc. (Bautze-Picron 2003; Poolsuwan 2014a)—under certain standard programs which provided complex symbolism for the temple (Poolsuwan 2012: 377-97). Later Pagan-Period murals, dating from the thirteenth century, slightly predated early Buddhist murals found in Thailand—of the Lānnā, Sukhothai and Ayutthayā Schools—dating from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Unfortunately, no surviving example has existed to represent ancient Buddhist murals from Haripuṇjaya in northern Thailand, with its civilization considerably overlapping that of Pagan. Early Thai murals adorned the interior of the religious structures of various types: the Khmer-inspired brick tower (prāng); the hollowed pagoda; the relic chamber within a stupa or a tower; and, the man-made meditation cave. Quite interesting is how the Pagan and the early-Thai murals were related. Did the Pagan tradition heavily influence the development of these early-Thai Buddhist murals? This study provides a detailed comparison—on the ideological, iconographic, and stylistic grounds—between these two groups of murals, with the pattern of their relationship elucidated and explained in the socio-religious context of the Buddhist networks in ancient Southeast Asia.

II. Murals illustrating numerous Buddhas

Illustration of numerous Buddhas of the past constituted one of

the major narrative themes in the Pagan mural tradition. The theme is called "narrative" because of its association with some accounts provided on these Buddhas in several Pāli canonical and post-canonical texts. Past Buddhas were portrayed in the Pagan murals under three main schemes: the innumerable Buddhas; the 24 previous Buddhas (chronologically including the following: Dīpaṅkara, Koṇḍañña, Maṅgala, Sumana, Revata, Sobhita, Anomadassī, Paduma, Nārada, Padumuttara, Sumedha, Sujāta, Piyadassī, Atthadassī, Dhammadassī, Siddhattha, Tissa, Phussa, Vipassī, Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa) who preceded Gotama, the present Buddha; and, the 28 Buddhas, with the three Buddhas who preceded Dīpaṅkara in the same world cycle (Taṇhaṅkara, Medhaṅkara and Saraṇaṅkara) and Gotama incorporated into a set together with the 24 previous Buddhas already mentioned.

The innumerable Buddhas normally exist in the Pagan murals, particularly in those of the thirteenth century, with their small figures seated *vajrāsana*, either in *dhammacakka* or *māravijaya* gesture, and arranged in various geometric and other artistic designs to decorate the temple's walls and ceiling <Figure 1>. Their existence normally accompanies a set of the 24 or 28 Buddhas, portrayed in the murals of the same temple, with seated figures of the latter occupying a prime location of the mural spaces, i.e. at an eye level of the shrine's walls or at the topmost part of the walls where a broad space was provided for the murals <Figure 2>. Each of the 24 or 28 Buddhas is normally provided with the mural and/or inscription narrating his biographical details, which are located immediately below the Buddha figure. He is sometimes accompanied by his chief disciple in the gesture of worship. As a rule, The Buddha is always depicted in the murals as greater in size to signify his elevated status.

Figure 1. Numerous past Buddhas, arranged in a geometric design, in the thirteenth century murals at the Pagan temple 539 (Tayok-pyi-hpaya-gyi).

Figure 2. Past Buddhas (Dīpaṅkara, Koṇḍañña, Maṅgala and Sumana) of the 28 Buddhas set, the shrine murals of the Pagan temple 447 (Le-myet-hna-hpaya).

The murals of the Pagan tradition normally illustrate the biography of each of the 28 Buddhas, comprising of the following episodes: the presence of his parents in a palace, his luxurious life in a palace, his renunciation using a specific vehicle, the

"Tonsure", and his austerity practice before enlightenment <Figure 3>. Exceptions are for the first three Buddhas of the set, with each of them accompanied by a scene of monk assembly, located below his figure. Examples of this mural program can be found in the Pagan temple 447 (Le-myet-hna-hpaya) and several others. An inscription accompanying each past Buddha usually described the following records: his name, his body height, the length of his life, and the type of the Bodhi-tree under which he was enlightened. The murals accompanying a set of the 24 Buddhas usually illustrate the episode of each Buddha when he provided the Bodhisatta, Buddha Gotama in his previous lives, a prophecy for his enlightenment to come. Again, the Bodhisatta is depicted in the mural attending the Buddha, with the size of his figure much smaller than that of the Buddha, who presides in the scene. Portraying human figures in the mural scene in different sizes according to their hierarchy had been one of the major characteristics constantly preserved in the mural tradition of the Pagan Period. Examples of the 24 Buddhas illustrated in the murals under this narrative theme can be found in Pagan temples 539 (Tayok-pyi) and 585 <Figure 4>.

Figure 3. Biographical details of Buddha Paduma portrayed below his figure, in the shrine murals of the Pagan temple 447 (Le-myet-hna-hpaya).

Figure 4. Buddha Koṇḍañña providing a prophecy for the enlightenment to come of the Bodhisatta, the universe king Vijitāvī, the Pagan temple 539 (Tayok-pyi-hpaya-gyi).

Most likely to be the immediate literary sources for biographical details of the 28 or 24 Buddhas narrated in the Pagan murals are the accounts provided in several Pāli canonical and post-canonical sources: the *Buddhavaṃsa* and its commentary, the *Madhuratthavilāsinī* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 73); and the *Nidānakathā* section of the commentaries of the *Jātakas* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982, Vol. 55: 2-153; Jayawickrama 1990) and the *Apadāna* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982, Vol. 70: 12-185). These early Pāli texts provide detailed biographies for only the last 24 previous Buddhas who issued prophecies for the enlightenment of the Bodhisatta. Each Buddha is provided with the following records: the caste he belonged to; the names of his city, parents, wife, son and palaces; the type of vehicle for his renunciation; the length of his austerity practice;

the variety of his enlightenment tree; his chief monk- and nun-disciples; his monk-escort; the number of major assemblies of his disciples; his height; his longevity; and other minor details. The names of the first three Buddhas (of the 28 Buddhas set)—whose existence predated Dīpaṅkara and who did not provide prophecies for future enlightenment of the Bodhisatta—are mentioned in the *Buddhavaṃsa* text, but without their detailed biographies accounted for in the text. Omission in the Pagan murals of the illustration of the biographical details of these first three Buddhas of the set could have been based on these Pāli accounts.

Stories of the innumerable Buddhas, with their representations found in the Pagan murals accompanying a set of the 24 or 28 Buddhas, can find their immediate literary source in one of the post-commentary Pāli texts, the *Sotattagī-nidāna*, compiled by Culla-Buddhaghosa, probably in Sri Lanka (Culla Buddhaghosa Thera 1983). Unfortunately, the exact date of compilation of this old Pāli treatise is not known. The text describes previous existences of Gotama when he was a Bodhisatta, concerning his intention of attaining the Buddhahood and his encounters with the innumerable past Buddhas and then the 28 Buddhas that followed. The names of these 28 Buddhas are the same as given above.

As described in the *Sotattagī*, the Bodhisatta's first intention of achieving enlightenment was happened during his existence as a hermit teacher; he jumped off a cliff to sacrifice himself to be the meal of a starving tigress about to swallow her own cub[1]). The same intension was repeated in his following existences: as a ship's captain, when he rescued his mother from a shipwreck by carrying her and swimming patiently across the ocean; and, as a king, when he experienced his inability to control a tamed elephant which ran away and went into a forest searching for a much-desired female elephant. The text also describes a story of

1) This account is similar to what found in the older Sanskrit source, *Jātakamālā* (Āryaśūra 2010: 3-12), suggesting that *Sotattagī* was probably compiled in the atmosphere associated with the Sanskrit-based Buddhism, probably in the Abayagiri-vihāra monastic establishment of Sri Lanka.

the Bodhisatta, in this case a princess, on her encounter with Dīpaṅkara Buddha (during his previous existence as a monk-disciple of Buddha Purāṇa Dīpaṅkara), and the latter on his encounter with Purāṇa Dīpaṅkara Buddha, who provided him a prophecy for his future enlightenment. Some of these early episodes of the Bodhisatta are depicted in the Pagan-Period murals of the thirteenth century in temple 69 at Sale <Figure 5>. The murals offer a proof that the *Sotattagī* text was certainly known in the Buddhist context of the Pagan Period.

Figure 5. Early existences of Gotama as a Bodhisatta from temple 69 at Sale. From left to right: the Bodhisatta (a hermit teacher) jumping off a cliff to sacrifice his body for a starving tigress; the Bodhisatta (a ship's captain) saving his mother from the shipwreck; and the encounter of the Bodhisatta (a princess) with Dīpaṅkara Buddha in his previous existence, and the latter with Purāṇa Dīpaṅkara Buddha.

Also described in *Sotattagī* are encounters of the Bodhisatta with a large number of the past Buddhas: 125,000 to whom the Bodhisatta's intention for future enlightenment was demonstrated by wishing; and, 387,000 to whom his intention was expressed by vowing. These Buddhas did not yet provide prophecies for future enlightenment to the Bodhisatta and their existences predated the world cycle in which the first of such prophecies was issued to him by Dīpaṅkara Buddha. As already mentioned, there were three Buddhas preceding Dīpaṅkara in that world cycle who did not provide the prophecies to the Bodhisatta. This has made the total number to 512,003 (125,000+387,000+3) for the Buddhas to whom the Bodhisatta had expressed his intention for future enlightenment prior to the existence of Dīpaṅkara. Interestingly,

some biographical details of the first three Buddhas who immediately preceded Dīpaṅkara in the same world cycle, not accounted for in the earlier Pāli texts, are also given in the *Sotattagī*. The information provided on these three Buddhas in the text concerns the names of their parents and the varieties of their enlightenment trees. The same information found recorded in the inscriptions accompanying the figures of these three Buddhas in the murals of the Pagan temple 447 (Ba Shin 1962: 159-60), established in A.D. 1223 (Tun Nyein 1899: 103-4), also confirms usage of the text as one of the literary sources for the Pagan murals. It is therefore likely that the innumerable Buddhas commonly seen in the Pagan murals could have represented, in the literary context of the *Sotattagī*, the enlightened ones whom the Bodhisatta had encountered prior to the world cycle in which he first obtained the prophecy for his future enlightenment.

Illustrating a number of Buddhas in repetitive fashion is one of the major characteristics also found in early Thai Buddhist murals. The probably oldest surviving example of the kind is found adorning the shrine of the main tower (prāng) of mixed Khmer-Thai style at the Mahāthāt Rātchaburī. The tower has been stylistically dated to the fourteenth century (Woodward 1975: page no.), i.e. after the Pagan Period; the murals could be contemporaneous with the tower that houses them. The Mahāthāt Rātchaburī murals illustrate numerous Buddhas arranged in stacked-rows on all sidewalls of the square shrine of the tower <Figure 6>. The number of Buddhas on each wall exceeds 28. At the middle of the west wall of the shrine is a larger figure of the Buddha portrayed as seated *vīrāsana* under the Bodhi-tree; he is accompanied symmetrically on both sides by rows of standing disciples worshipping him. Each Buddha of the murals is portrayed seated *vīrāsana* in the *māravijaya* pose. He wears a monastic robe leaving his right shoulder bare. The Buddhas belonging to the same row are essentially identical. Differences are observed between rows in terms of facial features and decorative backgrounds of the Buddha figures. In some rows, the Buddhas are accompanied by the disciples, all portrayed with no obvious size-hierarchy.

Figure 6. Numerous Buddhas portrayed in the fourteenth century murals of the Mahāthāt-Rātchaburī, central Thailand.

No clear distinction is observed among these numerous Buddhas of the Mahāthāt Rātchaburī murals to confirm that they belong to the two different sets of past Buddhas as normally observed in the Pagan murals, i.e. the innumerable Buddhas and the 28 or 24 Buddhas, in accordance with the *Sotattagī* account. Also, neither inscriptions nor murals are found accompanying these Buddhas to describe their biographical details. Other Ayutthayā murals of a comparable pattern to the Mahāthāt Rātchaburī murals, in terms of illustrating numerous Buddhas, are also found in the shrine of the main tower at Wat Phrarām, Ayutthayā, dating from the second half of the fourteenth century (Leksukhum and Chayawatana 1981: 39).

Depiction of the clearly identifiable 24 Buddhas according to the Pāli texts can find its earliest representation in the Thai murals of central Thailand in the crypt inside the main tower of Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā. The temple and its main tower, as well as the crypt murals inside the latter, could be dated according to a later chronicle to A.D. 1424 (Klangphittaya 1967: 446). The Buddhas of the set are chronologically depicted in the murals, in complete agreement with the *Buddhavaṃsa* account, along a single row on top of the crypt walls <Figure 7>. Below the row of the previous Buddhas are mural depictions of various life episodes of the Buddha that we shall describe their details in the next section. Each previous Buddha—seated in meditation on his simple throne with recessed waist, under the Bodhi-tree—has his name inscribed on the lower part of the throne in exact

agreement with *Buddhavaṃsa*. Each Buddha is accompanied by the Bodhisatta, Gotama in his previous existence, who received a prophecy for future enlightenment from him. Depicted along rims of the four niches, on sidewalls of the crypt, is a set of small figures of numerous Buddhas <Figure 8>. They were portrayed identical in seated posture without inscriptions describing their names and biographies. The existence in the crypt murals of the two sets of previous Buddhas—i.e., the 24 and the innumerable Buddhas—reminds us of their association with the *Sotattagī* account. It was also a characteristic shared by the Burmese murals of the Pagan Period.

Figure 7. The first six Buddhas of the 24 past Buddhas set, top row, east wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Each of the 24 *Buddhavaṃsa* Buddhas in the crypt murals is portrayed seated *vīrāsana* in meditation gesture on a lotus flower, which is located on a low throne with recessed waist. The oval-shaped halo surrounds his body. No size-hierarchy is observed between figures of the Buddha and the Bodhisatta. All these characteristics deviated from the style commonly observed in the Burmese murals of the Pagan Period. On the other hand, they show more affiliation with the common style and pattern that had long been preserved in the mural tradition of Sri Lanka[2]. Local characteristics observed in the Buddhas of the crypt murals at Wat Rātchaburana include the presence of *uṣṇīṣa*, not commonly shown in the Sri Lankan arts for the Buddha, and the

2) The Buddha seated in *vīrāsana* meditation pose is most common in the Sri Lankan Buddhist iconography. See several examples of the Sri Lankan Buddhist murals, from the Anuradhapura Periods to later periods, that show the mentioned characteristics in Bandaranayake (2006).

radiance of a lotus-bud shaped figure located above the *uṣṇīṣa*, in contrast with the flame-like shaped figure normally adopted in the Sri Lankan prototype.

Figure 8. Past Buddhas depicted along rims of the niches on sidewalls of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Association between the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana and Sri Lankan art is also confirmed in some of the narrative murals on the Crypt walls below the row of the 24 previous Buddhas. Most obvious is the Buddha during his meditation retreat in the second week after enlightenment at Animisa cetiya <Figure 16>. The Buddha of the scene is standing and gazing without blinking at his enlightenment throne under the Bodhi-tree. He puts both of his hands on his chest with palms completely inward; his ankles are crossed. His whole body is surrounded by a curved halo. This hand gesture of the standing Buddha can find its definite prototype in the Buddhist arts of Sri Lanka, for example, the well-known Gal-vihāra stone sculpture, dating from the twelfth century (Devendra 1956: 126-136; Prematilleke 1966: 61-66). A similar curved halo surrounding the Buddha is also commonly found in the Buddhist murals of Sri

Lanka from the Anuradhapura Period onwards (Bandaranayake 2006: 80). Another piece of evidence is a depiction in the crypt murals of a Buddha's footprint enshrined on top of the mountain, which is most likely representing the well-known and highly-revered Buddhapāda on top of the Sumanakūṭa Mountain in Sri Lanka <Figure 26>. It was included in a set of the sixteen holy sites (Soḷosmasthāna) usually depicted in the Buddhist murals of the island.

Early murals from the Lānnā Kingdom in northern Thailand are found adorning the crypt inside the main stupa and the man-made meditation cave at Wat Umong-Therachan, Chiang Mai. Building a man-made meditation cave at Wat Umong would have been an influence from Pagan, where numerous earlier examples had existed. According to a later chronicle, the cave was constructed during the reign of King Kue Nā in the second half of the fourteenth century (Penth 1981: 30-42). The cave murals of Wat Umong are merely decorative, showing the designs proposed to be associated with the older Pagan pattern (Jongjitngam 1998: 67-90) and the contemporaneous Chinese motifs found in the late Yuan and early Ming porcelains (Krairiksh 1995: 173).

Providing an exact dating of the main stupa of Wat Umong is extremely difficult. Architecturally, the stupa shows obvious affiliation with an older Pagan prototype, for example, the Sapada-zedi (Pagan monument 187), dating from the twelfth century (Pichard 1992: 292-3). No consensus has yet been arrived at whether the building was originally constructed during the reign of King Mang Rai in the late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century, according to a later chronicle (Leksukhum 1995: 101), or was an addition to the temple compound during the reign of King Muang Kaeo in the early sixteenth century (Poolsuwan 1996: 60-64). The murals of the crypt inside this main stupa, which were certainly contemporaneous with the original construction of the stupa, have been discovered accidentally after local treasure hunters broke into the crypt a few decades ago. The crypt was then sealed up again, soon after a survey of its interior was made, fortunately with some photographs of the murals taken.

According to the survey information (Laohasom 1998: 15-24), the crypt is cubic in shape. Adorning all its sidewalls are murals illustrating numerous Buddhas. They were portrayed as identical in the *māravijaya* pose, in stacked rows, without inscriptions or narrative murals accompanying their figures. The number of the Buddhas has been estimated to be 28 only on the east wall of the crypt, where the murals were best preserved. Whether they really represent the 28 *Buddhavaṃsa* Buddhas remains a question since they could be as well a part of the larger set including the Buddhas portrayed under the same pattern on other crypt walls. The Buddhas of the murals show some characteristics associated with the classic Lānnā and Ayutthayā styles (Leksukhum 1995: 232-4; Poolsuwan 1996: 60-64). The presence of the Ayutthayā influence in the murals may suggest their association with the tradition of illustrating innumerable Buddhas, as evident at Mahāthāt Rātchaburī and Wat Phrarām, probably spreading from central Thailand to the Lānnā kingdom.

The Illustration of numerous Buddhas is evident in the Sukhothai murals found in one of the hollow pagodas at Wat Chedī-ched-taeo, Srīsatchanālai, Sukhothai, possibly dated to the mid-fourteenth century (Griswold 1967: 43). These Buddhas were portrayed in the murals in their *māravijaya* posture, with worshipping devotees accompanying them (Leksukhum 2006: 132, figs. 123 & 124). No obvious size-hierarchy is observed between the figures of the Buddhas and the devotees. Each devotee wears a crown of conical shape, decorated with ornamental rings. All these figures have a curved halo surrounding their heads. The designs of the crowns and halos show definite Sri Lankan influence. The total number of the Buddhas in the Wat Chedī-ched-taeo murals could not be accurately estimated due to poor condition of the murals, although the iconography might suggest their representation of the 24 Buddhas who provided prophecies for the Bodhisatta, also portrayed accompanying them. The narrative theme of the 24 Buddhas had gained popularity in both the Sri Lankan and the Pagan mural traditions. Closer stylistic affiliation of the Sukhothai murals with those of Sri Lanka than Pagan, however, suggests inclination to the first

tradition. The other Sukohthai murals illustrating numerous Buddhas, which have almost completely disappeared, were found in a hollow pagoda at Wat Khao-yai, Srīsatchanālai, and in the tunnel inside the brick wall of the image house (*mondop*) at Wat Sī Chum, Sukhothai (Leksukhum 2006: 131).

III. Murals narrating the biography of Gotama Buddha

Life stories of Gotama, the present Buddha, constituted one of the main narrative themes in the mural tradition during the Pagan Period (circa eleventh to thirteenth centuries AD). Adorning the interior of the Pagan temple 1605 (Patho-hta-mya) are the oldest murals of the theme surviving at Pagan. The temple and its murals have been dated by Luce (1969, Vol. 1: 302-3) to the late eleventh century, based upon the usage of Sinhalese reference sources and Old Mon captions for the mural narration[3]. The murals in the ambulatory corridor of the temple describe, in a chronological order, a complete biography of Buddha Gotama from his nativity to mahāparinibbāna (Luce 1969 Vol. 1: 302-9; Poolsuwan 2014a). The early episodes of Gotama in his last existence narrated in the murals were based principally on a particular Pāli source, the *Nidānakathā* section of the *Jātakas* commentary (Luce 1969, Vol. 1: 302-9). The text accounts for detailed episodes of Gotama in his previous existences as a Bodhisatta, receiving prophecies for his enlightenment to come from the 24 previous Buddhas, and in his last existence up to the third year after his enlightenment, when he received the donation of the Jetavana Monastery from the rich man of Sāvatthī, Anāthapiṇḍika (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 55: 2-153). The latter part of the account was an immediate reference source for the murals of the ambulatory corridor of the Pagan temple 1605. The shrine murals of the same temple illustrate episodes of the Buddha when he preached various

3) The Patho-hta-mya temple is, however, mentioned in later Burmese chronicles for its construction by Caw Rahan in the 10th century(Pe Maung Tin and Luce 1960: 54).

Suttas and laid down the *Vinaya* rules for the Saṅgha and his other miscellaneous episodes, which were not necessarily arranged chronologically; all were based on the Pāli canonical and commentary sources (Luce 1969 Vol.1: 302-9).

The narrative themes of the Buddha's life illustrated in the murals of the early Pagan Period —i.e., a chronological series from the Jātaka-nidāna, the Buddha's preaching various *suttas* and laying down the *Vinaya* rules, and some other miscellaneous episodes which are not necessarily chronologically arranged—can also be seen in temple 1323 (Myinkaba Kubkyauk-gyi), dating from the first half of the twelfth century (Luce 1969 Vol. 1: 373-83). The narrative themes of the Buddha preaching various *suttas* and of his miscellaneous episodes are portrayed in the corridor murals of the Pagan temple 1192 (Naga-yon-hpaya), probably dating from the late eleventh century (Luce 1969 Vol. 1: 311-21). Another early example of the Pagan murals illustrating the Buddha preaching various *suttas* and laying down the *Vinaya* rules, in close agreement with the Sinhalese Pāli Canon, is also found at the Pagan temple 374 (Alopyi-hpaya) (Luce 1969 Vol. 1: 388-91), tentatively dated to the first half of the twelfth century.

A more variety of Buddha's episodes, also based upon the Pāli sources, was illustrated in the Pagan murals of the thirteenth century. Following are a few examples: illustrations found in monuments 539 and 664 of the Buddha demonstrating a twin miracle at the beginning of the third week after enlightenment, according to the *Atthasālinī* text (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 75: 7-39), instead of at the beginning of the second week, as described in the *Nidānakathā* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 55: 124-5) <Figure 9>; depictions found in monuments 482, 585 and others of the incomparable donation Asadisadāna, provided to the Buddha and his 500 disciples by King Pasenati and his Queen, Mallikā, as described in a commentary of the *Dhammapada* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 42: 262-9) <Figure 10>; the Buddha taking a boat trip to Vesāli, where he preached *Rattana-sutta*, according to a commentary of the *Rattana-sutta* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 39: 219-75), found in the murals of the Pagan temples 482, 585 and others

<Figure 11>; a depiction found in the murals of temple 585 of a child, Piyadassī, the Great King Asoka in his previous existence, donating a handful of earth-dust for alms to Buddha Gotama, as described in *Lokapaññatti*, an old Pāli text probably compiled in Sri Lanka or Burma (Saddhammaghosa Thera 1985: 96-97) <Figure 12>.

Figure 9. Twin miracles of the Buddha at the beginning of the third week after his enlightenment (left), and his preaching of the *Abhidhamma* on the Tāvatiṃsa Heaven (right), west wall, north vestibule, the Pagan temple 539 (Tayok-pyi-hpaya-gyi).

Figure 10. Asadisadāna (the incomparable donation), provided to the Buddha and his 500 disciples by King Pasenati, ambulatory corridor, the Pagan temple 539 (Tayok-pyi-hpaya-gyi).

Figure 11. Boat trip of the Buddha to Vesāli, east wall, south vestibule, the Pagan temple 585.

Figure 12. A child, Piyadassī, the king Asoka in his previous existence, offering a handful of dust for alms to Buddha Gotama, the Pagan temple 585

Another narrative theme of the Buddha's biography which had gained much popularity in the Pagan mural tradition since the mid-twelfth century onwards describes the "Eight Great Miracles" of the Buddha at different localities within the "Middle Country" of Jambudīpa, the Southern Great Continent. The Pagan iconography of these Buddha's episodes shows close affiliation with its prototype in the Buddhist art of northern India during the Pāla Dynasty. The original Indian set of the miracles of the Buddha comprises the following: the Nativity at Lumbinī, the enlightenment in the shade of the Bodhi-tree at Bodhgayā; the first sermon at Varanasi; the twin miracles at Sāvatthi; the descent from the Tāvatiṃsa Heaven at Saṅkassa; the taming of the Nālāgiri elephant at Sāvatthi; the monkey's donations to the Buddha at Vesāli; and the Mahāparinibbāna at Kusinārā. Modification from the Indian prototype is observed particularly for the monkey's donation scene in which the elephant in service to the Buddha was also included, most likely for the scene to represent the *Pārileyya* episode of the Buddha at Kosambī, as described in a commentary of the *Dhammapada* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 40: 78-93). The Buddha left the disunited Saṅgha of Kosambī to stay in solitude at Rakkhita Forest, where he was served by the monkey and the mighty elephant. The other Buddha episodes of the set can readily be found in other Pāli texts[4].

Scenes of the "Eight Great Miracles" of the Buddha are distributed in the Pagan murals either on the back wall of the shrine surrounding a halo depicted on the back wall behind the principal Buddha image (Pagan temples 1580, 2103 and 2157) <Figure 13> or in the vestibules at locations surrounding the principal Buddha image of the temple's shrine (Pagan temples

4) These reference sources are as follows: nativity, enlightenment and preaching of the first sermon from the *Jātaka-nidāna* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982, Vol. 55: 2-153); yamaka-pāṭihāriya and descent of the Buddha from Tāvatiṃsa Heaven from the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982, Vol. 42: 287-322); Buddha's taming of the Nālāgiri elephant in *Cūlavagga of the Vinayapiṭaka* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982, Vol. 9: 296-99); and, the mahāparinibbāna lengthily detailed in the Mahāparinibbānasutta (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982, Vol. 13: 233-36).

447, 534, 539, 664, 676 and others). As a rule, the enlightenment of the Buddha under the Bodhi-tree, already signified by the principal Buddha image of the shrine, is omitted in the mural representation of the Buddha's miracles.

Figure 13. the "Eight Great Miracles" of the Buddha depicted behind the principal Buddha image, the Pagan temple 2157

Usually found accompanying the "Eight Great Miracles" scenes of the Buddha in the thirteenth century murals at Pagan are scenes of the Buddha's retreat in the vicinity of the Bodhi-tree during the "Seven Weeks" immediately after his enlightenment. The Buddha stayed during his first week on his

enlightenment throne under the Bodhi tree. In the second week, he stood, at Animisa-cetiya, gazing without blinking at the enlightenment throne under the Bodhi-tree. The Buddha walked in meditation all through the third week at Ratanacaṅkama-cetiya. He meditated in the "Jewel House", Ratanaghara, created by the gods, in the fourth week. During the fifth to seventh weeks, he stayed respectively at the Ajapala-nigrodha, Mucalinda and Rājāyatana trees. The "Seven Weeks" scenes are always located on the inner side of the vestibule walls closer to the shrine while those of the "Eight Great Miracles" on the outer side of the same walls <Figure 14>. The Buddha's episode during his first-week retreat at the Bodhi-tree, represented by the principal Buddha image of the shrine, is omitted in this mural representation. Scenes of the Buddha's episodes at the other six stations were arranged in a layout of the temple, in such a manner that represents their directions from the Bodhi-tree, symbolized by the enshrinement of the principal Buddha image at the center of the shrine. This has created the symbolism for the Pagan temple to represent the Middle Country of Jambudīpa, with its center at the Bodhi-tree surrounded in the inner circle by the stations of the Buddha's retreat and in the outer circle by the localities of his "Eight Great Miracles" (Poolsuwan 2012: 377-97).

Figure 14. the Twin Miracle vis-à-vis the Buddha's retreat during the second week after enlightenment, east wall, north vestibule, the Pagan temple 539 (Tayok-pyi-hpaya-gyi).

Illustration of biographical details of Gotama is evident in the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā, below the row of the 24 previous Buddhas already described in previous section. Portrayed in two tiers on the crypt walls are scenes of a complete biography of Gotama in his last existence. On the east wall of the crypt are scenes of his early life-episodes, three in the upper tier and four in the lower one. Each scene is contained within a rectangular frame. The middle scene of the upper tier, the largest scene on the wall, portrays the Buddha seated in meditation under the Bodhi-tree and accompanied symmetrically on both sides by several divinities <Figure 15>. This could represent the Buddha's enlightenment and his meditation retreat during the following week. To the left of the enlightenment scene in the same tier is probably a scene of the Buddha's nativity which has been much eroded. To the right of the enlightenment scene, in the same row, is a scene of the Buddha's meditation in the second week after enlightenment at Animisa-cetiya; the Buddha in standing pose is gazing at the enlightenment throne under the Bodhi-tree and performing the hand gesture, already described, which is closely associated with the Sri Lankan iconography <Figure 16>. Scenes on the lower tier of the wall comprise, from left to right, the following episodes of the Buddha: his conception into the womb of Queen Maya <Figure 17>; unidentifiable episodes due to decay state of the mural; Channa and the horse Kanthaka in sorrow after leaving the Bodhisatta <Figure 18>; and the miraculous existence of the four treasure troops at the time of the Bodhisatta's birth (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 55: 90) <Figure 19>.

Figure 15. Buddha's enlightenment and his meditation in a week following, east wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā

Figure 16. The second-week retreat at Animisa-Cetiya, east wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā

Figure 17. Conception of the Bodhisatta into the womb of Queen Māyā, east wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Figure 18. Sorrowing Channa and Kanthaka after leaving the Bodhisatta, east wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Figure 19. The four treasure troops spontaneously in existence at the Bodhisatta's birth, east wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Scenes of the Buddha's retreat from the third to the seventh weeks after enlightenment are portrayed on the south wall of the crypt. Their order is not strictly chronological along the tiers. The other three scenes on the same wall, each illustrating the Buddha in his seated posture and accompanied by devotees, could not be clearly identified on the iconographic ground for their narrations.

Three of the eight narrative scenes on the west wall of the crypt can be identified for their representation of the Buddha's miraculous episodes: his first sermon <Figure 20>, his taming of the Nālāgiri elephant <Figure 21> and the Buddha with the Pārileyya elephant attending him <Figure 22>. Although, these three episodes of the Buddha, together with the Buddha's nativity and enlightenment in the murals of the east wall, belong to a set of the "Eight Great Miracles" of the Buddha, there is no clue, on the iconographic ground, that the other scenes of the set were also provided in the crypt murals. In the *Pārileyya* scene, only the elephant is portrayed accompanying the Buddha, in agreement with one of the Pāli canonical sources, the *Vinaya-Mahāvagga* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982, Vol. 7: 449-94). This contrasts with the Pagan iconography for the same Buddha's episode in which both the elephant and monkey are attending the Buddha,

according to another Pāli text, a commentary of the *Dhammapada* (Mahāmakutarājavidyālaya 1982 Vol. 40: 78-93) <Figure 23>.

Figure 20. First sermon, west wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Figure 21. Taming the Nālāgiri elephant, west wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Figure 22. Pārileyya, the Buddha is served by the mighty elephant, west wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

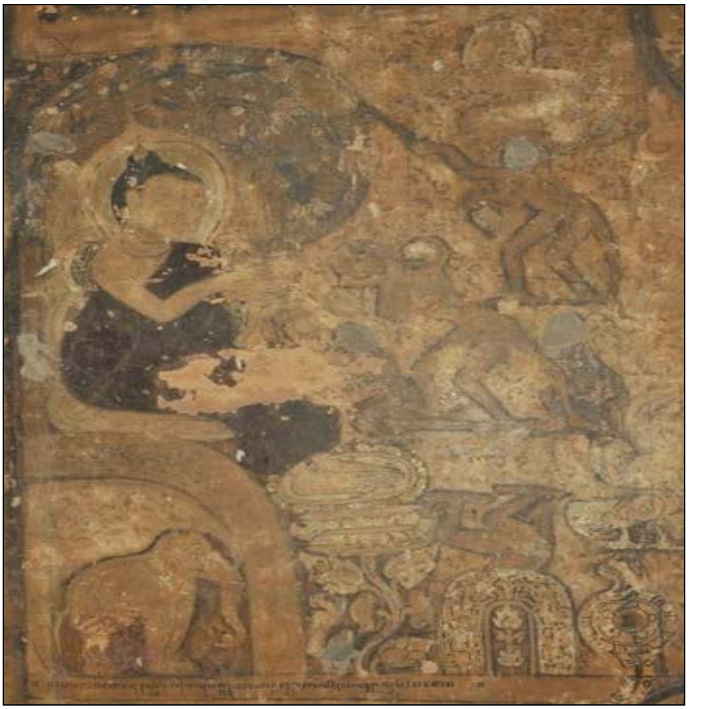

Figure 23. Pārileyya, the Buddha is served by the monkey and the mighty elephant, the Pagan temple 600 (Maung-yon-gu).

Among the seven scenes on the north wall of the crypt, only three can be identified for their narrations. The middle scene of the upper tier illustrates the Buddha's mahāparinibbāna <Figure 24>. Probably the Buddha taming Āḷavaka demon is depicted in the first scene of the lower tier <Figure 25>. The third scene of the same tier depicts a Buddha's footprint enshrined on top of the mountain, most likely representing the Buddhapāda on top of the Sumanagūṭa Mountain in Sri Lanka <Figure 26>, which, according to the *Mahāvaṃsa* text (Geiger 1912: 8), came from the Buddha himself.

Figure 24. The Buddha's mahāparinibbāna, north wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Figure 25. Taming Āḷavaka demon, north wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Figure 26. The Buddha's footprint on top of the Sumanagūṭa Mountain in Sri Lanka, north wall of the crypt, Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā.

Overall, the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana narrate a complete biography of Gotama Buddha from his conception to mahāparinibbāna based on the Pāli sources—i.e. the *Nidānakathā* of a commentary of the *Jātakas* and others—a phenomenon also observed in the Pagan murals. However, marked differences on other aspects between these early-Thai and the Pagan-Period murals do not suggest intimate relationship between the two groups of murals. In contrast to the Pagan tradition, no size hierarchy is obviously demonstrated in the crypt murals between figures of the Buddha and those of the devotees. The size hierarchy of the figure of the Buddha portrayed vis-à-vis that of the Nālāgiri or the *Pārileyya* elephant is much more pronounced in the Pagan murals than in the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana. The arrangement of a complete set of the "Seven Weeks" scenes in the crypt murals does not suggest its direct association with the Pagan pattern, in which the first-week episode of the Buddha, represented by enshrinement of the Buddha symbol at the center of the shrine, is surrounded by scenes of his retreat at the other six stations. Also, the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana do not illustrate a complete set of the Pagan's "Eight Great Miracles" of the Buddha, with the enlightenment of the Buddha represented by his symbol at the center of the shrine. The iconography of the Pārileyya scene of the Wat Rātchaburana murals, portraying the elephant attending

the Buddha without the monkey included in the scene, was based on a different Pāli source from that which the Pagan iconography of the scene was adapted for. Lastly, the enlightenment scene of the crypt murals shows the Buddha seated in meditation pose under the Bodhi-tree and attended by several divinities, in contrast to the Pagan scene of the Buddha's episode in which the Buddha seated in *māravijaya* under the Bodhi-tree is attended by only two gods, i.e. Brahmā holding a parasol and Sakka blowing his auspicious conch trumpet, Vijayuttara <Figure 27>. These two gods could not be identified in the enlightenment scene of the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana.

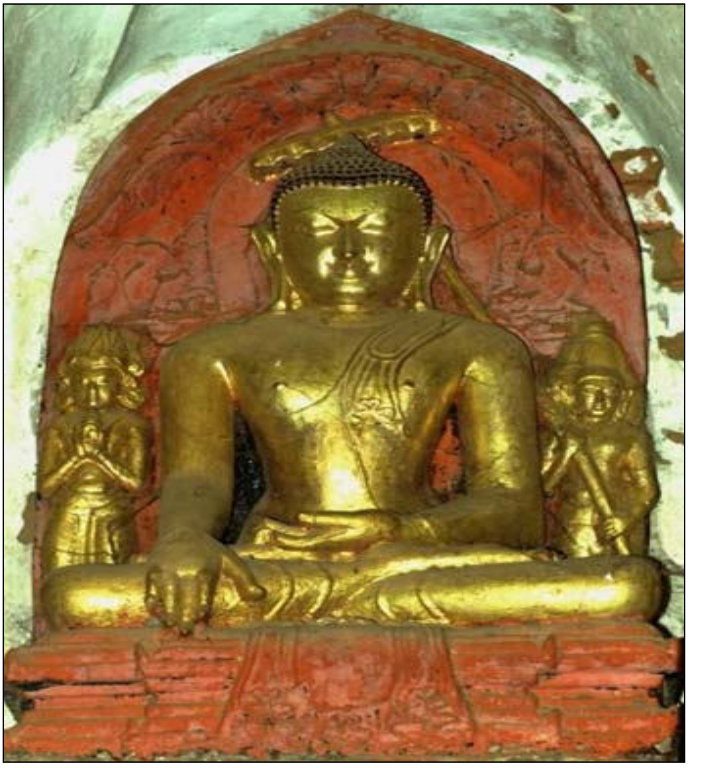

Figure 27. The Buddha's enlightenment in the Pagan iconography. He is accompanied by Brahmā holding a parasol and Sakka blowing his auspicious conch trumpet, Vijayuttara, the Pagan temple 2171 (Ananda-gu-hpaya-gyi).

On the other hand, the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana demonstrate much more affiliation with the art style and iconography from Sri Lanka, as seen, for example, in the characteristics of the 24 previous Buddhas, the iconography of the Buddha in the Animisa scene and the depiction in the murals of one of the most sacred site of Sri Lanka, the Buddhapāda on top of the Sumanakūṭa Mountain. It is interesting to note that the tradition of adorning the sealed crypt, inside a stupa, with the Buddhist symbols had been constantly preserved in the Buddhist culture of Sri Lanka. It could have served as a progenitor for execution of the crypt murals at Wat Rātchaburana. The crypts adorned with murals have been discovered in the excavations of several important stupas in Sri Lanka, for example, Mihintaḷē dating from the eighth century A.D., Mahiyaṅgana from the ninth to eleventh century A.D. and Sutiyaghara from the twelfth century A.D. (Bandaranayake 2006: 73-79). Also contained in the *Mahāvaṃsa* text, compiled in Sri Lanka during the fifth century A.D., is a description of the Buddhist symbols for interior decorating of the crypt of the Great Stupa at Anurādhapura, constructed by King Duṭṭagamaṇi (Geiger 1912: 198-208). Found depicted in the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana, which are in agreement with the *Mahāvaṃsa* account, are the following Buddhist narratives: the episodes of the Buddha during his "Seven-Weeks" retreat after enlightenment; his first sermon; his encounter with the Nālāgiri elephant; his encounter with the demon Āḷavaka; the mahāparinibbāna; the Jātaka stories (depicted in the crypt murals inside the niches and on the lowest part of the crypt walls); and the early life episodes of the Buddha before the enlightenment. This may suggest that the design of the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana was based on the Sri Lankan text and tradition. The strong Sri Lankan influence observed in the crypt murals of Wat Rātchaburana could have been a result of direct contact between Sri Lanka and Ayutthayā during the first half of the fifteenth century. Such contact is evident by the arrival at Ayutthayā during the mid 1420s of a group of monks who had their higher ordination in the Mahāvihāra lineage of Sri Lanka (Ratanapaññā Thera 1968). This was about the time the Wat Rātchaburana was established. They launched the

upasampadā (ordination) of the new Sinhalese lineage at Ayutthayā, in which *Mahāthera* Sīlavisuddhi, the tutor of the chief queen of king Boromarājā II of Ayutthayā (A.D. 1424-48), the founder of Wat Rātchaburana, and another *thera* named Saddhammakovida received their higher ordination.

IV. Discussion

The importance of Pagan as one of the major Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Southeast Asia did not come to an end at the twilight of its civilization in the late thirteenth century. There is evidence that religious activities had continued at Pagan until well after its dynastic period, although probably at a more limited scale than during the peak of its civilization (Than Tun 1988a: 103-16; for donation inscriptions after the Pagan Period found at Pagan see Tun Nyein 1899). Restorations of some major Buddhist monuments of Pagan had been the meritorious duties of later Burmese kings (Stadtner 2005: 26). Pilgrims from various other Buddhist lands visited the holy monuments at Pagan, as evident, for example, in the case of the *Mahāthera* from the Lānnā Kingdom who made several such visits and donations to maintain the Shwe-zigon Pagoda at Pagan (Luce and Ba Shin 1961: 330-7).

Inspirations from Pagan are evident in the arts and architectures of several of its neighboring civilizations. Usage of the Pagan style *clec* in stucco adornment of the niches could be observed in several Haripuñjaya, Lānnā and Sukhothai religious structures—for example, the Kūkut Pagoda in Lamphun dating from the twelfth century, the main Pagoda of Wat Pāsak in Chiang Rāi dating from the fourteenth century, and some Sukhothai pagodas at Wat Chedi-ched-taew dating from the mid-fourteenth century (Leksukhum 1995: 37 and 179; 2006: 54-55). The radiating arch technique used in construction of religious buildings would have spread from Pagan to gain its popularity in medieval Lānnā from the fourteenth century onwards. Building a man-made meditation cave at Wat

Umong-Therachan in Chiang Mai, probably in the fourteenth century, would have been under influence of the Pagan prototype. Also proposed as the inspirations from Pagan and found in central Thailand are some stucco motifs at Prāng-sam-yod and Mahāthāt Lopburī, dating from the thirteenth century (Poolsuwan 1996: 19-20), and the existence of a stupa finial crowning the roof of an entrance passage into the main stupa or tower, as seen at Wat Prasrīsanphet and Wat Rātchaburana, Ayutthayā, dating from the fifteenth century (Leksukhum 2007: 55).

Surprisingly, as the investigation of this article has suggested, influences of the Pagan tradition on development of the early Thai murals—of the Ayutthayā, Sukhothai, and Lānnā schools—seemed to be trivial and mostly on minor stylistic basis (as found, for example, in the cave murals at Wat Umong, Chiang Mai) rather than on the more substantial ideological and iconographic grounds. Several of the early Thai murals show much more affiliation, on the other hand, with the artistic style and iconography from Sri Lanka. The phenomenon would reflect the nature of the religious relationship between Pagan, after its dynastic period, and other Buddhist centers of Southeast Asia.

The Pagan Kingdom did not lose its glory suddenly and entirely after its capital was conquered by the Mongols in A.D. 1287. Attempt was made from the Yuan Court to restore the royal lineage at Pagan under the Mongol's sovereignty (Than Tun 1988a: 103-14). Internal weakness, due to conflicts within the royal court and loss of control over the fertile agricultural area at Kyauk-se to the Shans, would have accounted for rapid deterioration of the Pagan's power during the course of the fourteenth century (Than Tun 1988a: 103-14). The cease of royal patronage on religious activities and learning would have made the intellectual atmosphere of the Buddhist community at Pagan deteriorated considerably. Also, during the mid-fourteenth century, a new Buddhist center was established for the Sinhalese Order at Martaban in Lower Burma. It out-competed Pagan in terms of providing the Buddhist education, ordinations, and trans-cultural networks. Its fame spread wide and far among the Buddhist communities of Southeast Asia, who later established direct

contacts with Sri Lanka themselves (Jayawickrama 1978: 84-85). The Sukhothai murals of Wat Chedī-ched-taeo and the Ayutthayā murals of Wat Rātchaburana showing obvious Sri Lankan influences could have been a product within the milieu of religious affinities with Sri Lanka. It is important to note that Central Burma, where Pagan is located, was a backwater for movements of this new Sinhalese Buddhist order during a period from the fourteenth to the fifteenth century due to the growth and prosperity in the area of the local Buddhist sect, the *Arañ* (Than Tun 1988ab; Poolsuwan 2014b). Probably only in the aspect of its being a "sacred land" worthy of pilgrimage, that Pagan, after its dynastic period, could have its religious significance maintained and recognized in broader setting of the religious network of Southeast Asia.

Pagan murals were executed under complicated designs and narrations, based on various Pāli literary sources, and were associated with the complex symbolism unique to the Pagan culture. This suggests that their artists belonged to a learned community, with their knowledge and artistic skills systematically passed on from generation to generation. Without the maintenance of such intellectual atmosphere in a long run—probably due to lack of royal patronage and resources since the early fourteenth century onwards—the complicated knowledge and artistic skills that formed the Pagan mural tradition had to come to terms with their eventual decline.

Foreign pilgrims who visited Pagan had their devotions rather limited by time and interest to the sacred Buddhist sites of the area, normally regularly maintained, which are much fewer in number than thousands of the ordinary ones left unattended after the Pagan Period. Usually, in these rather neglected temples could be found the original murals of the Pagan Period which had escaped whitewashing generously provided in repeated restorations of the temples. Although existing at Pagan, these original murals would not have attracted much attention of foreign pilgrims, who brought back with them some inspirations from Pagan. Also, without appropriate explication, pilgrims after the Pagan Period would have had a hard time appreciating the

meaning of the murals of this lost tradition. The situation might be different in case of the temple architectures and their other simpler decorations that could attract the attention of foreign viewers more instantly. This may partly explain why transmission of the artistic influences from Pagan into its neighboring Buddhist civilizations was truly selective, between the mural tradition on one hand and the architectural and other decorative domains on the other.

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Hindu Iconography in Bagan

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[*Abstract*]

This study focuses on the iconography of Hindu deities in Bagan period. As a country in Southeast Asia, Myanmar received her culture from Indianized culture. As aforesaid, sailors, traders, and settlers brought with them Brahmanism and Buddhism into Myanmar. A possibility is that local chiefs or the rulers invited Brahmans to conduct coronations, weddings, and burials in Brahmanical rites as they will much impressed by the Brahmanical thoughts and beliefs. Accordingly, Brahmanic icons as objects of worship are found quite in number of places, especially in Thaton, Bago, Vesali, Sriksetra, Bagan and Kawgoon. Apart from Buddhist iconography, the Brahmanic icons of various sects can be found in Bagan. Brahmanic deities are illustrated with Buddhist painting, which is a characteristic of Baganreligious iconography. Most of the scenes on Hinduism are to be found in NatlaungKyaung, Nanpaya and Shwesandaw Pagoda. Myanmar people, however, knowingly or unknowingly ignore some features of

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Indian deitiesand eventually the iconsare found in various places in Bagan.

Keywords: Hindu deities, Hinduism, Natlaung Kyaung, Nanpaya, Shwesandaw

I. Introduction

Myanmar in history had its culture Indianized. The essential elements of Hindu culture were absorbed by the peoples, as the kingdoms, both big and small, were being established throughout the region (Majumdar 1955: 21). The Indianization most probably took place in the 2nd century B.C., and it can even date further back, from time the land of Myanmar was peopled by the Pyu in the Ayeyarwady valley and by the Mon in Lower Myanmar.

The Brahmanism that came to Myanmar was represented by the two important sects—Sivaism and Vaishnavism. Brahmanical influence is seen in certain ancient place names in both Upper and Lower Myanmar. Among the Pyu cities, the City of Vishnu (Beikthano) was in ancient times used to refer to old Pyay or Hmawza, obviously a centre of Vaishnavite influence (Ray 1932: 8). Beikthano embodies Indian cultural influence vividly, honoring Vishnu, is the Hindu High God of Brahmanism, and consequently making Vaishnavism flourish (Than Tun 2000: 1). From this period, a gradual influx of Indian cultural influence may be observed in, religion, art, architecture, statecraft and social structure, though there was no adaption of the caste system.

Though they were not missionaries, sailors, traders, and settlers brought with them Brahmanism and Buddhism into Myanmar. A more likely possibility is that local chiefs or the rulers invited Brahmans to conduct coronations, marriage and burials in Brahmanical rites as they were much impressed by the Brahmanical thoughts and beliefs (Than Tun 2005: 35). These and numerous other similar references clearly indicate the existence of a considerable number of Brahmans in Myanmar courts—as priests, astrologers, and experts in house-building all

occupying positions of influence and importance. The Brahmanical community have their own gods whom they worship in accordance with their own religious rites. In these localities where the Indian element was permanently entrenched, either by a more vigorous commercial exchange or by settlement, it was likely that their gods have been housed in temples there. The advent of Brahmanism in Myanmar happened much earlier than that of Buddhism. Accordingly, Brahmanic icons as objects of worship are found in quite a number of places, especially in Lower Myanmar where it seems that the faith had a firm place in the local populace of Mon people. Brahmanic icons were found in Thaton, Bago, Vesali, Srikshetra, Bagan, and Kawgoon.

Apart from Buddhist iconography with its origins in India and connections with Hindu and Jain, the Brahmanic icons of various sects can be found in Bagan. The old Vedic gods of Indra, *Sūrya*, and so on, made their appearances in Bagan. The same is also true for other figures present in all arts of Bagan—Deva, Yaksa, Gandharva, Naga, Garuda, Kirtimuka, Makara, and Vyala. The Goddess *Lakshmī*, the consort of Vishnu, bathed by elephants, was a fertility emblem common to Vaishnavism and Buddhism and Jainism (Hillebrandt 1990: 243). Kyanzittha, claiming to be incarnation of Vishnu, was one of the most pious Buddhists who was said to have stood within the walls of Bagan. Shiva is not prominent in Myanmar, but was considered supreme in North Rakhine for centuries (Luce 1970: 203).

II. Iconography of Vishnu

According to Hindu cosmogony, which has been largely borrowed by Buddhism, the god Vishnu rested from his labors on the coils of the Ananta Serpent, and the self-same Serpent encircles the foot of Mount Meru, the centre of the Universe (Taw Sein Ko 1920: 347). Vishnu as Ishvara is named *Nārāyana*, and represented as reclining upon the serpent *Sheshanāga*, who rests on the cosmic ocean. Brahmā is then born from a lotus that springs from *Nārāyana's* navel. The ten avatars of Vishnu are the

ten forms assumed by him, for the establishment of righteousness when need arises. These incarnations are *Matsya* (fish), *Kurma* (Tortoise), *Varāha* (Boar), *Narasimha* (man-lion), *Vāmana* (Dwarf), *Parashu-Rāma*, *Das'aratharāma*, Krishna, the Buddha, and Kalki, who is yet to come (Coomaraswamy 1964: 10).

Vishnu sits on Garuda. He has one face and four or more arms. On his right, he holds an arrow, a rosary, a club; on his left, he holds a hide, a cloth, and a rainbow. He also holds a cakra (wheel) and *gadā* (mace). The cakra symbolizes the rotation of the world, the Wheel of Dhamma, the Wheel of Time, and the Wheel of the Planets. His *Vāhara*garuda is the mind pervading the bodies of all creatures. This is a popular theme in Nepal, North India, Cambodia, Champa and Java, but not in South India. His *S'aṅkha*conch represents the sky, his cakra the air, his *gadā* the light, and his padma- lotus the water (Gupta 1972: 29).

The earliest Vaishnavite tradition in Myanmar is connected with Srikshetra, located five miles South-East of Pyay and about 180 miles north-west of Yangon. At Srikshetra, two of the oldest statues of Vishnu, stood on the shoulders of his winged vāhana, Garuda. He has four arms, his upper pair of hands holding the discus (Cakra) and the conch (*S'aṅkha*). The lower right hand holds a fruit in front of the body, the lower left holds the Club (*gadā*). The two sculptures are quite different in style. The one found by General de Beylie' in the garden of the Pyay Deputy Commissioner is a thin, rectangular slab of soft sandstone, carved in bold relief. It presents Vishnu and his consort *Lakshmī* standing side by side, the female figure on a double lotus. What remains of the slim, soft, and supple figures has been maintained, but the stone is generally broken from top and bottom, with both heads are missing. Vishnu on the left wears a short natural loincloth and twisted waistband, anklets, and many bracelets. *Lakshmī* has only two hands, her raised right hand holding a bunch of lotus stems, her left hanging by her side with long, straining, and sinuous fingers. The garuda is embellished with scales below the waist, its tail-feathers and wings outspread. According to Dr. Ray, the figure is graceful and

characteristic of the south Indian Pallava in style. He dates the image to about 8 century A.D. (Luce 1970: 216). A similarly-themed figure of Vishnu riding the celestial Garuda was also found in Ngu Hanh Son, Da Nang Province, Central Vietnam. It is dated early 9th century. Garuda kneels, firmly clasping Vishnu's legs. Two of the four hands are intact, displaying the conch and earth sphere. Garuda is birdlike except for the human arms that secure his divine passenger; his lower torso and legs are feathered. A necklace is his only adornment, apart from some patterning at the edges of his wings (Guy 2014: 154).

Meanwhile, in Kalagankon mound, two sandstone sculptures were found. One slab represents the four-armed Vishnu standing on a mutilated Garuda (Aung Thaw 1978: 28). His tasseled loin-cloth, ribbed with beads and volutes, is quite unlike the softly folded dhoti of the previous sculpture. The whole figure is austere, heavy with ornament, but realistically Pyu (Luce 1970: 216).The other depicts Vishnu reclining on the serpent Ananta. Three lotus flowers stem from the navel of Vishnu. On each lotus is a seated the figures of Brahmā, Vishnu, and Shiva (Aung Thaw 1978: 28). It dates to 8 century A.D.

At Thaton, two slabs of reddish sandstone bear in bold relief the figure of Vishnu reclining on the serpent Ananta. Kawgoon cave has Vishnu sleeping cross-legged on *S'esa* with *Lakshmī* at his feet. The three Gods, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Shiva sit on lotus thrones above. It dates back to 9 century A.D. (Than Tun 2000: 8). At Bagan, a standing bronze image of Vishnu measuring about one foot in height was found of good workmanship in a field at Myinkaba. The god with four arms stands erect on double lotus. His raised right and left hands hold respectively the discus and the conch. The lower right hand is held out before the body in *abhayamudrā*, the lower left palm rests on the top of the mace (Luce 1970: 218). Dr. Ray notes its stiff rigid modeling, hard facial expression, and its simple and crude workmanship by way of its flame-epaulettes, distended earlobes, and its locally-made cast. It dates back to not earlier than the later half of the 13century A.D. (Ray 1932: 45-47) <Figure 1>.

Figure 1. Vishnu at Bagan Museum
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 448

A small sandstone image of the four-armed Vishnu measuring eight inches high, seated in *padmāsana* on lotus was found in Bagan Museum. The god wears a pointed crown. His upper right hand holds the Wheel, his upper left possibly the Club. The two hands before the body may hold a fruit and the Conch <Figure 2>. A weathered stone fragment of Vishnu found in Shwegugyi temple at Bagan shows the crowned head and torso of a four-armed god <Figure 3>. The figure is similar to several old images of Vishnu found at Srikshetra (Luce 1970: 218).

Figure 2. Vishnu at Bagan Museum
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 417a

Figure 3. Vishnu at Shwegugyi Temple
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 417b

A stone slab sculpture of Vishnu reclining on the serpent Ananta was unearthed from the debris covering the floor of a small square Buddhist shrine west of Mimalaung-kyaung temple. Exchange between Bagan and north and south India is evidenced not only by Buddhist art and architecture but also by the presence of a temple dedicated to Vishnu, the Nathlaungkyaung. It was probably built during the 11th century by the Indian settlers (Aung Thaw 1978: 73-75). A Tamil inscription discovered at Myinkaba records the building of a porch and a door at a Vishnu temple at Bagan by a native of Malaimandalam belonging to the guild of merchants from different parts of the country. The exterior portion of the building, together with the porch, is lost. Each side of this brick pillar, being high and deep,is provided with an alcove, the main one facing East (Anoanyous: 2005: 26).

Above the height of about 6½ feet from the cement floor, there is a faintly painted plaster with lotus stalk in relief, branching outwards and supporting two double lotus thrones. The one on the left is emptied except for the mark of a halo. The one on the right holds a four-armed god with a crown of braided hair, seated in *padmāsana*, a mallet in his upper left hand, and a knife in the lower. In the centre was probably another four-armed deity, holding a conch. The ten intertwining snake-tails below the right side of the recess, suggests that the main image in the temple was another Vishnu *Anantas'ayin*, in the act of creating the universe. The main image of the god sleeping on the Ananta serpent with his head to the left, is now lost because of treasure hunters. Little remains of the figures except the Shiva on the upper right, the top left hand of Vishnu seated in the center, and the lotus throne and halo of Brahmā on the left <Figure 4>. The central Vishnu stone statue seated on a Garuda, which Phayre also found lying on the floor, and which had now been taken to Berlin, came from the upper niche on the right(Luce 1970: 219). This configuration of Garudāsana is not found in Chola art, but occurs, in various figures, in the Pala art of Bihar and Bengal, where Vishnu often sits, albeit with one leg pendant on a throne over Garuda's shoulders. His vertical

Garuda has more similarities with Khmar rather than the Indian models, and is closest to those found on the lintels from the 10th and 11th century Khmar sites, sharing their power and strength (Gutman et al. 2012: 8) <Figure 5, 6>.

Figure. 4. Vishnu reclining on Serpent Ananda at Nathlaung Kyaung

Figure 5. Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

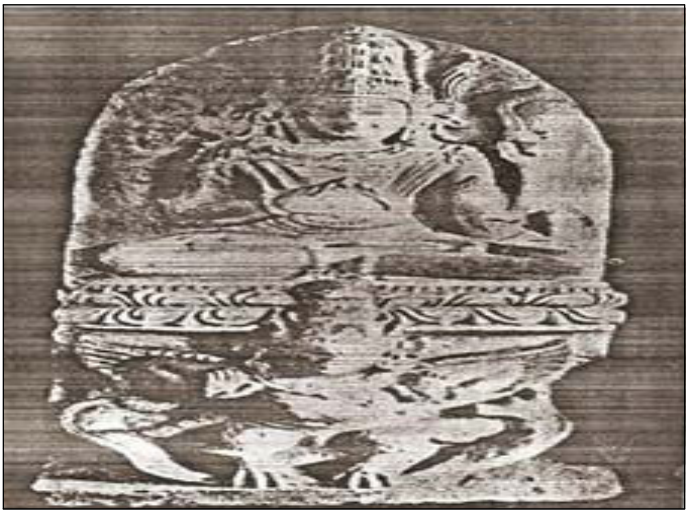

Figure 6. Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 147a

On the three other sides of the inner corridor, set in shallow niches, are three brick images of the standing four-armed god. The image on the southern section seems to embody at least three of the usual attributes: *cakra*, *s'aṅkha* and *gadā*. All these walls were once covered up to the roof with paintings, now difficult to read from below the whitewash. U Mya said that all the paintings represent seated figures of Vishnu with his devotees. Some attributes may be distinguished from the images such as the presence of, the cakra, conch, lotus, club, or sword. Some of the Vishnu images have four hands, while the other two are distinguished by marks discernible only with the presence of four hands. The devotees are ascetics wearing beards and moustaches, with hair tied up into two knots, one on each side above the ear. Each ascetic is seated with the legs folded on one side, and a hand raised in the *namaskāramudrā* facing the fire in a salver before him (Duroiselle 1930-34: 193) <Figure 7>. So the few depictions of Vishnu from Bagan, Srikshetra, and the Kawgoon caves near the Mon capital of Thaton show Vishnu with a mitred headdress in the Pala style of the 11th century, and in the fashion of the Vishnu avataras at the Nathlaung Kyaung.

Figure 7. The Standing four-armed Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

Only the inter wall of the outer corridor of the temple is left. It contains ten niches rounded at the top: four on the east side and two each on the south, west, and north sides near the corners. Their chief purpose is to house stone reliefs showing the Avataras of Vishnu, Preserver of the Universe. The series starts from the center of the eastern section, with the worshipper keeping his right side to the temple as he makes the circuit (Luce 1970: 221). According to the southern recension of the *Mahābhārata*, the Ten incarnations are the Fish (Representing the beginning of life), the Tortoise (Representing a human embryo just about to grow tiny legs and a huge belly), the Boar (Representing a human embryo which is almost ready), Manusiha or the Man-Lion (Representing a new born baby-hairy and cranky, bawling and full of blood—and is regarded as the greatest

and most powerful avatar), the Dwarf (Representing a young child), *Paras'uRāma* (Representing both an angry young man and a grumpy old man simultaneously), *Dās'arathiRāma* (Representing a married man with children; Lord Rama is considered a Purna avatar, which means he is a full incarnation of Vishnu), *BalaRāma* (the Elder brother of Lord *Krishna*), Buddha, and Kalki (Coomaraswamy 1964: 10). At present, there are only seven stone sculptures in these ten niches. If we number the niches 1 to 10, the Avataras in the order given above also as 1 to 10, we find a fair degree of correspondence at the beginning.

The Preserver Vishnu appeared in the form of a great fish and rescued Manu, the progenitor of the new human race. Manu was chosen on account of his great piety in an age of depravity. Various accounts of the flood are given. The Puranic accounts tell us that besides Manu, the seven Divine Risis along with their wives were also saved, and they populated the world afterwards. Vishnu appears as half-tortoise, half-fish, and half-man, with the lower part being that of a fish. He has four hands. In two, he holds the conch and the wheel, while the other two hands are giving and protecting of benefit by way of the *mudrās*. He is wearing a kiritamukuta and other usual ornaments. The sculpture is missing (Gupta 1972: 29).

Vishnu descends in the form of a Tortoise to support Mt. Mandara, which the Asuras, in their search for ambrosia, were using as a churning rod to churn the ocean. Vishnu is shown as half-tortoise and half-man, the lower half being that of tortoise. He carries in two hands the conch and the wheel, while the other two hands are in giving and protection gestures. The sculpture is missing (Luce 1970: 221).

Vishnu descends in the form of the boar that saved the earth-goddess from the waters of the flood or in the form of a lion, when he struck down an impious king who dared to question his universal divinity (Rowland 1954: 26). The sculpture is on the south sector near the southeast corner. The boar is seen with *Prthivī* on his left shoulder <Figure 8>.

Figure 8. The Boar, avatar of Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

The atheist demon *Hiranyakas'ipu* (Gold Cushion) ill-treats his son *Prahtāda* for praising Vishnu. *Hiranyakas'ipu* asks where Vishnu is. His son replies that the god is everywhere, even in the palace-pillar. Furious, the demon kicks the pillar. The Man-Lion emerges and tears him to pieces. Brahmā had not granted the demon to slain by man nor animal. The sculpture is on the south face near the southwest corner (Luce 1970: 221) <Figure 9>.

Figure 9. The Man-Lion, avatar of Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

The origins of *Vāmana* incarnation can be traced to the distinction of Vishnu, of conquering Heaven and Earth by his immense strides. The demon Bali, priding himself of his dominion over the three worlds, was outstripped by Vishnu, who appeared before him in the form of a dwarf holding a *kamanhdhalu*. In a sort of a contest, Bali boasted of being able to conquer as much land as he could pace in three steps: the dwarf, expanding himself, deprived him of heaven and earth in two steps, but left him the sovereignty of the lower regions (Williams 1951: 723). The *Vāmana* sculpture is shown on the west sector near the southwest corner <Figure 10>.

Figure 10. Vāmana, avatar of Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

Figure 11. Vāmana, avatar of Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

Balarāma Halāyudha features the weapon-holding elder brother of Krishna. He was also called Haladhara, carrying a peculiar weapon shaped like a ploughshare. The sculpture is on the west part near the northwest corner (Luce 1970: 221) <Figure 11>.

R*āmacandra, Dās'arathiRāma*, son of *Dasāratha,* the King of Ayodhyā was the hero of the *Rāmāyana.* In order to recover his faithful wife *Sītā,* he advanced southwards, killed the demon *Rāvanha* and subjugated his followers, the *Rākshasas* and tells the story of the barbarous aborigines of the south. *Rāma* stands dehanche. His right hand holds an arrow and left hand is a bow. He wears a Kiritamukuta. The sculpture is on the north side near the northwest corner (Williams 1951: 262) <Figure 12>.

Figure 12. Rāmacandra, avatar of Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

Vishnu was born as *Parasurāma* for the sole purpose of the extermination of Kastriyavarna. In the history of early India, a long and intense power struggle between the Brahmanas and the Kastriya as they raced for supremacy (Gupta 1972: 32). *Parasurāma* stands on a lotus throne flanked by two full-blown lotuses. It is

crowned by a usual headdress and it is adorned with usual ornamental decorations. The body stands erect but the head is slightly slanted towards the right. Each of the two hands, hold respectively a staff-like object, perhaps a *khadhga* or sword raised upwards, and an axe, resting on the left shoulder (Ray 1932: 41). The sculpture is found in the north sector near the northeast corner <Figure 13>.

Figure 13. Parasurāma, avatar of Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

The adoption of Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu may be traced with the desire of the Brahmans to effect a compromise with Buddhism. Buddha has curly hair, and his feet and palms carry the lotus marks. He is usually depicted as graceful, calm and serene. Buddha is also seated on a lotus throne wearing a yellow robe. The lobes of his ears must be pendant. The hands are supposed to be in the gesture of blessing and providing protection (Gupta 1972: 32). The sculpture is supposed to be found near the north corner of the east sector but is now missing.

Kalki, who is yet to appear at the close of the fourth or Kali age, stands for final destruction of the wicked, the

reestablishment of righteousness upon the earth, the renovation of all creation, and the restoration of a new age of purity. According to some, he will be revealed coursing the skies, on a white horse, holding a drawn sword blazing like a comet. The figure of the horse plays an important role in this incarnation, that it has also yielded the name *As'vāvatāra* (Williams 1911: 108). He has face of a horse and a body of a man as in the ordinary Vishnu image. He holds a conch, wheel, sword, and shield. While riding a horse, he carries a bow and an arrow. But Dr. Ray has rightly argued that there is in this final niche a sculpture of *Sūrya*, the Sun God (Ray 1932: 45). N.K. Bhattasali remarks that the images of the Sun-god are a plenty in Eastern Bengal, next only to those of Vishnu. The Varmans and the Senas, who followed the Buddhist *Pālas*, specifically called themselves Saura, i.e, worshippers of the Sun-God (Luce 1970: 222) <Figure 14>.

Figure 14. Sūrya, avatar of Vishnu at Nathlaung Kyaung

III. Iconography of Shiva

The third in the Hindu Trinity is Shiva. He is a severe and terrible god of destruction who moves his devotees by fear rather than love. Shiva is euphemistic. His name is propitious and used as a deprecating and complimentary title for the god of terror. In Sanskrit, it means "The Auspicious One" or "relating to the God Shiva". The term in Sanskrit also refers to one of the principal sects of Hinduism. In Tamil, Shiva means the supreme one or Red.

Shiva is best conceived as the Dancer, whose dance is Evolution, Continuance, and Involution, and also as the Great *Yogī*, chief of ascetics, absorbed in contemplation through the *Himālayan* forests with *Pārvatī* and the bull Nandi. Shiva and *Pārvatī* have two sons, Ganes'a and *Kārttikeya*, gods of wisdom and war, respectively (Coomaraswamy 1964: 10-11). Shiva is *Nivrtti* and *S'akti* is *Pravrtti* and in the ultimate state they remain in a union of oneness. From the cosmological standpoint, Shiva is said to be the Bindu (his White color suggests comparison with the seed or semen) and *S'akti* is Rakta (his Red color suggests the comparison with the ovum). This Bindu and Rakta unite together to produce the principle of I-ness or egoism (Dasgupta 1958: 99-100).

Temples dedicated to Shiva and erected for his worship did certainly exist, possible near modern Thaton as well as in Bagan. Shiva images have also been discovered in many places in Myanmar. Coins bearing Saivite symbols have been found in several districts, especially in Rakhine where a Saivite dynasty of a long line of Kings held fort for a long time (Ray 1932: 51). The Great Chronicle mentions the name of *Canhdī, Parames'varaDurgâ* and Shiva or *Mahes'vara* along with other divinities in the foundation of the city of Hmawza (Pe Maung Tin et al. 1960: 14).

In Rakhine, some coins may be found on the obverse of the figure of a recumbent, humped bull, which comes with a legend narrated above it in *Nāgarī* characters; on the reverse may be seen the trident of Shiva with garlands hanging from the

outer blades. On the reverse are some symbols of the sun and moon. The *Nāgarī* legend can respectively be read as *Vammacandra, Prīticandra, Prhticandra* and *Vīracandra*. The names are obviously Indian and the symbols Saivite. It is thus reasonable to conjecture that the Candra dynasty of the kings of Rakhine, who ruled from c. 400 A.D to c. 1000 A.D., belonged to the Brahmanical fold and were evidently followers of the cult of Shiva (Ray 1932: 52).

The excavation at *Vesāli* yielded a broken statue resting on a pillar, and showing a double lotus throne with *Dūrgā*, consort of Shiva, visible from the waist downwards, standing with right foot and with a trident proudly planted on the *mahishâsura*, the Buffalo Demon, whom she has slain (Duroiselle 1921: 19). Ray dates C. 6-7 A.D. (Ray 1932: 62).

At Srikshetra, signs of Sivaism are scarcely to be found. "The end of a stone trident from a bas-relief, and the four arms of a statue of Shiva near a fragment of a statue of the Buddha" are found near Yahanda Gu. Duroiselle reported the discovery in Kalagangon of a *laṅga*, 14 inches in height, an indisputable proof of the existence of Sivaism in Pyay, alongside Vishnuism and Buddhism (Duroiselle 1927: 182). Dr. J. A. Stewart found two yoni stones at the site excavation near the palace site of Bago, east of Hintha ridge (Stewart 1917: 16-17). A small laterite yoni may also be seen, with spout and groove and an incised circle in the solid centre at the Khemathiwun monastery near Kyaik Khauk pagoda, south of Thanlyin (Luce 1970: 214).

At Thaton, a stone with a tapered rectangle arching to a peak, was once regarded as the grandest stone relief in Myanmar. It measures 4 feet in height and 2 feet and 4 inches in length. Dr. Ray calls it Shiva and his consort *Pârvatī* (Ray 1932: 57-58). Besides the lotus pedestal of the God's *vāhana*, the Bull Nandi crouches under his right foot, facing the Buffalo-demon *mahishâsura* under his left knee. The god, with his head coiffed and mitred within a magnet-nimbus leaning to the left, sits in a pose of strenuous ease or *ardhaparyaṅkâsana*. Four massive arms branch out like limbs of a swastika. The upper left hand holds

the mallet, the upper right, probably the trident; the lower right holds the rosary, while the lower left, the citrus fruit. The snake garland falls his left shoulder. Against his left thigh sits *Pārvatī*, holding a yaktail flywhisk, her chin pressed between his two arms. The whole design of the weighting of the left bottom corner, the tense diagonal of the head, the zigzag energy of upper arms and knee, the fluid fall of snake-thread, lower arms and thighs is masterly (Luce 1970: 214-215). It dates 9-10 century A.D, and is in Orissan Style (Ray 1932: 79) <Figure 15>.

Figure 15. Stone Slab of Shiva, in bold relief from Thaton
Source: Ray 1932, Pl. XV

At Bagan, a badly damaged image of Shiva was exposed by flood on the riverbank, close to a tank west of Shweonhmin monastery, Myinpagan. Duroiselle says that it is seated in the *Sukhâsana* on a stylized lotus placed on the pedestal. The right leg is pendent, the foot resting on a small figure lying on its side, which seems to be *Apasmāra*. This enables us to identify the image as that of a form of Shiva. It has four hands. The stone measures 2 feet and 4 inches, and one feet 6 inches with a thickness about 9½ inches (Duroiselle 1929: 112) <Figure 16>. Dr. Ray thinks the upper right hand holds the trident, and the lower left the rosary. He confirms that the male figure that lies

prostrate under his right foot is the *apasmārapurusha* known only in South India as associated with Shiva. The *apasmārapurusha* was the symbol of Dirt (mala) (Ray 1932: 60-61). Coomaraswamy says that the scene has been depicted as early as the pre-*Kushāna* times, 1 century B.C., on the *GudhimallamS'ivaliṅgam* at North Arcot. In later times Shiva *Natharāja* is commonly shown dancing on it (Coomaraswamy 1927: 39).

Figure 16. Shiva at Shweonhmin monastery at Myinpagan
Source: Ray 1932, Pl. XVII

At Bagan Museum, the standing four-armed statue of Shiva found by Crawfurd in 1826 and by Phayre in 1853, used to lay on the floor of Nathlaung kyaung. The attributes were clear—trident and mallet in the upper right and left hands, sword and

mace in the lower ones. It is crowned of braided hair, *jathāmukutha*. The image is much disfigured, but its Indian anklets are visible, and beneath the feet is an animal broken, probably representing a bull. The image is that of Shiva (Luce 1970: 215). Dr. Ray comments that it is carved out of grey soft sandstone in bold and round relief. Its form and execution is distinctly South Indian, and may on stylistic grounds be dated not earlier than 12 century A.D. The presence of elaborate ornamental details is a characteristic feature of late mediaeval sculptures, and the static heaviness invariably remains one that is South Indian, especially Cola (Ray 1932: 59-60, 82) <Figure 17>.

Figure 17. Shiva at Bagan Museum

Pictures of Shiva can be found at the south wall of the inner ambulatory of Abeyadana temple. In one picture, the god wearing a dhoti sits with one knee raised and the other flat, but the upper part of his body wears no cloth, with hairs upright resembling a crown. He wears a snake bracelet and snake anklet, while on its neck dangles rosaries and a skull garland. In another picture, his hair is done and on his wrists, some bangles

and a bead of skull. The god only wears loin-cloth. The extraordinary feature of this image is the god taking a female corpse on his back, suggesting the painter's familiarity with the mythology of Shiva. The central figure in these pictures are Shiva, and the corpse on the god's back may that be of a consort (Mya 1968: 81-84).

At the same level to that of the pictures of Shiva, on the south wall of Abeyadana, is a picture of Karli Devi, the consort of Shiva. She sits cross-legged, with her six hands holding an arrow, scimitar, ring, sword, and a skull. She wears a garland of skulls around her neck. The other picture has a figure standing on the lying figure below. This painting can be found at the west end of the south wall. The standing figure is that of Karli Devi, the lying figure on which she stood must be that of the God Shiva. However, the discovered Buddha images along with the paintings of Shiva and his consort in Abeyadana temple forming a whole, looks like that of the Elura and Ajanta caves of India where we can find Buddha images side by side, with the sculpturing of Hindu gods (Mya 1968: 85-86).

IV. Iconography of Brahmā

The supreme Brahmā is properly only an object of internal knowledge, never an object of external worship except through secondary manifestations. Brahma and Brahmā are two different deities. Brahma is the one Eternal Spirit, who first created the waters, and deposited within them a seed which became a golden egg from which sprang Brahmā. Brahma is an Ineffable Essence and cannot be represented by means of material objects, while Brahmā, a member of the Hindu Triad, can be so represented. The worship of Brahmā was evidently in vogue in India in Vedic times. Brahmā's worship appears to have taken place during the interval that may have elapsed between the composition of the Vedas and the Upanishads, and the compilation of the Purānas, for in these last works no mention occurs of either rites, ceremonies, festivals, temples, or holy

places being dedicated to Brahmā. There were also no recorded legends to attest and magnify his divine power (Taw Sein Ko 1918: 171-172).

In post-Vedic times, Brahmā is the positive aspect of creation. A four-headed Brahmā in Indian art is in the Vishnu *Anantas'ayin* sculpture at the *Das'âvatāra* temple at Deogarh which dates back to circa 600 A.D. The subject of the Creation or rather the Re-creation of the world by Vishnu was popular from the 6th century onwards in India, and from the 7th to the 11th century in Myanmar. In the intervals of creation, Vishnu sleeps on the Endless World Serpent *S'esha*, the sole survivor of the previous world. At Deogarh he sleeps with his head to the right, but in Myanmar, always to the left. From his navel issues the lotus, which supports Brahmā above him. In Myanmar, the lotus always branches to form thrones for the Hindu Trinity, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Shiva. With them, Brahmā sits always to the left, with Vishnu at the centre and Shiva to the right (Luce 1970: 211).

Four stone sculptures are extant in Myanmar. The first one was taken from Srikshetra, Kalagangon, and it measures 15½ inches in height and 14½ inches in length at the base. Dr. Ray dates the image to circa 8th century A.D. The two stone sculptures are found at Thaton. The first one is a stone relief with three *ste'le'* at the top, measuring 3½ feet and 1 feet and 10 inches. The sculpture dates back to circa 9th century A.D. The other one is a broader stone relief, and it measures 4½ feet and 3 feet. It also dates back to circa 9th century A.D. (Ray 1932:28, 31-33). The last one was from Kawgoon cave, and it measures 4 feet 7 inches in height, 2 feet 7 inches in length, and 9 inches in thickness (Anoanyous 1958: 64).

The fifth stone sculpture found in the main image niche of the Vishnu temple at Nathlaung kyaung, is made of brick and plaster from the early Bagan. But nothing of it remains except the Shiva above, one hand of Vishnu, the lotus seat and halo of Brahmā and the ten twisted tailends of the endless serpent, below on the right. On the Srikshetra and the broader Thaton,

Brahmā has four arms on the relief. Elsewhere he has only two, and the poses and attributes varying. He generally sits cross-legged in *padmāsana*, but in the broad Thaton relief, he sits in *ardhaparyaṅkâsana*, right knee raised. His crown is usually and correctly the crown of braided hair *jathāmukutha*, but on the narrower Thaton relief, it is that of the pointed *kirīthamukutha* (Luce 1970: 211) <Figure 18>.

Figure 18. Brahmâ at Kalagan-kon Mound Kawgoon cave, Thaton and Bagan
Source: Ray 1932, P1. V

The finest representations of Brahmā in Myanmar, eight altogether, are to be seen in the Nanpaya, on the south of the Manuha temple at Myinpagan. The four richly carved stone pillars supporting the centre of the interior form a sort of ban open shrine around the central pedestal, which is now empty. It may have borne a life-size standing bronze image of the Buddha. The figure of Brahmā is engraved on the inner side of the pillar and therefore each pillar has two Brahmās in relief. The Brahmā is in relief on the side of stone bricks. The side or thickness of the brick is only 3 inches and the brick are laid very closely. The figure is wrought on a rectangular plane of 52 inches by 49 inches. There are altogether sixteen layers of brick for one figure (Tin Tin Win 2002: 3-4). Each Brahmā is seated in *ardhaparyaṅkâsana* within a lovely forest of lotus, each two hands sustaining two of

the flowers. The pose of hands and the lotus forest are strikingly like those of the Brahmā pair in the porch paintings of Myinkaba Kubyaukkyi. The gods in the paintings however sit in *padmâsana* with their head erect and their arms symmetrical. In the Nanpaya, one knee is raised on which the elbow rests. The head with its gorgeous tower of braided hair and double-lotus finial gently leans that way. The flattened knee is always toward the centre, the outer knee raised, the supported elbow slightly higher than the other. The faces are more flexible in their eternal calm and posture <Figure 19 a, b>.

Figure 19 a. Brahmā at Nanpaya

Figure 19 b. Brahmā at Nanpaya

Figure 20. Brahmā at Myebontha Payahla Temple
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 251

The Myebontha Payahla temple was built in early 12th century, northeast of Shwesandaw. On the four sides of the central block are recesses with colossal brick and stucco carvings of the Four Scenes, mounted on enormous thrones. Inset in the thrones are long rows of solemn stone Brahmās. Each Brahmā with a pyramid of braided hairs at cross-legged on lotus mats in *padmāsana*, each hands in *namaskāramudrā* with foliages all around him (Luce 1970: 212) <Figure 20>.

The Brahmā figure was found on the wall of the Theinmazi temple. In an attitude of adoration, he sits on a cushion depicting the heads of mythical monsters. The figure is robust and well-developed, but the hands are somewhat attenuated, as they indicate a person's high stature. There is a halo round the head of the figure. The picture appears to show that there are four legs represented as being folded in an attitude of adoration. He wears a crown surmounted by a high peak, which is surrounded by six lower ones, and has four eyes, two nose and two mouths, and holds some conical flowers in both hands to be offered at the shrine. The multiplicity of eyes, noses, mouths, hands, and legs is a common oriental symbolism to indicate superhuman might and power (Taw Sein Ko 1920: 313-314).

V. Iconography of other deities

The *Ganes'a*, the elephant-headed god is the son of Shiva and *Pārvati*, and the god of wisdom and of obstacles. He is represented as a short fat man with a protuberant belly, frequently riding on a rat or attended to denote his sagacity has the head of an elephant. He has four hands holding the parasu, laddus, tooth, and lotus. *Ganes'a* is an age-old Hindu god. The Rig Veda mentions Ganaptai twice, but referred to Brihaspati, not *Ganes'a.* In the *Boudhāyana DhamaSūtra,* Ganapati is referred to as Vighna, *Vināyaka* and so on. In the course of his assimilation into Aryan worship, *Ganes'a's* character changed. From being an evil and inauspicious deity, he became an auspicious one (Gupta 1972: 48). As the Remover of obstacles, he was also called

Vināyaka, from which his Old Myanmar name, *Mahāpinaypurhā* is derived (Luce 1970: 205). According to tradition, the original name of Anawrahta's Shwesandaw is *Mahapeinnè*, and it is sometimes called the Ganesh temple after the elephant headed Hindu god (Aung Thaw 1978: 75) *Ganes'a* and other Hindu divinities were placed at the corners of the different pyramidal stages as guardian deities of the Buddhist shrine. The stone figures of Hindu deities were placed originally at the corners of the five terraces of the Shwesandaw <Figure 21>. They symbolically guard, the ascent of Mt. Meru with the *Cūlāmanicetiya* of *TāvatiÑsa* at the summit (Luce 1970: 205).

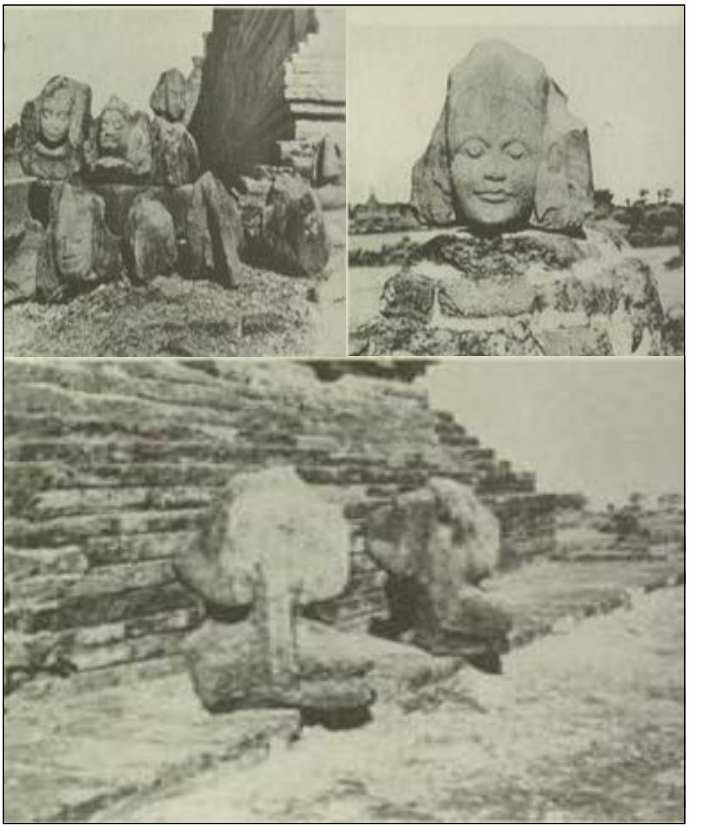

Figure 21. Ganes'a and other divinities at Shwesandaw (Mahapeinnè)
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 84 b, c, e

Both the Indian community of traders and merchants and nearby Buddhists took to *Ganes'a* as they dealt with everyday life. When Indian traders and merchants began to move towards the countries beyond the seas in the wake of trade and commerce, it was natural that they would take with them their favorite god. In Myanmar, especially in the deltaic regions, small images of *Ganes'a*, more or less roughly executed, have been found in considerable number. They are all of a very modest size, and crude in execution. At Bagan, *Ganes'a* came to be the most favorite god among people who engaged in commerce, and who crossed to Myanmar from the other side of Bay of Bengal (Aung Thwin 1976: 137-138).

A photograph of a crowned *Ganes'a* seated beside Brahmā was found by F.O. Oertel who took it from Phayre Museum. Dr. Ray mentions two stone images of *Ganes'a* in the Yangon Museum, one with six arms, the other with the usual four. The four-armed figure is represented as if dancing on his two slim legs but is really seated. The two upper hands hold a discus and noose, while the two lower hold the vilva fruit and the trunk. The other is seated in *padmâsana* and has six hands (Ray 1932: 67).

At Bagan, small single images of *Ganes'a* are fairly common, and are found in relic-chambers together with Buddhist images. They are made of stone, mica, bronze, baked clay, and white plaster. Usually, the crowned god sits in *padmâsana*, but sometimes the right knee is raised. The belly is present but sometimes not, bulging. Both tusks, if any, are shown. The god has usually four hands, and the upper ones may hold the Hook, Cakra, Fruit, or Conch; the lower may support the trunk or belly, but sometimes, the lower right hand holds a rosary, which hangs touching the earth. The best-preserved image, from a mound west of Somingyi pagoda, has three creatures on the pedestal- a Tortoise on the left, a Fish on the right, and a Mongoose in the front (Luce 1970: 206) <Figure 23>. The most interesting figure of Ganes'a was found in Guthonlon pagoda at Kyauksauk near Bagan. It is made of bronze and 1 feet 7 inches in height. A curious feature of this bronze image is that the figures have their

eyes covered with their hands <Figure 22 a, b>. In Bagan such images were used by magicians in working charms of different kinds (Duroiselle 1936-37: 166).

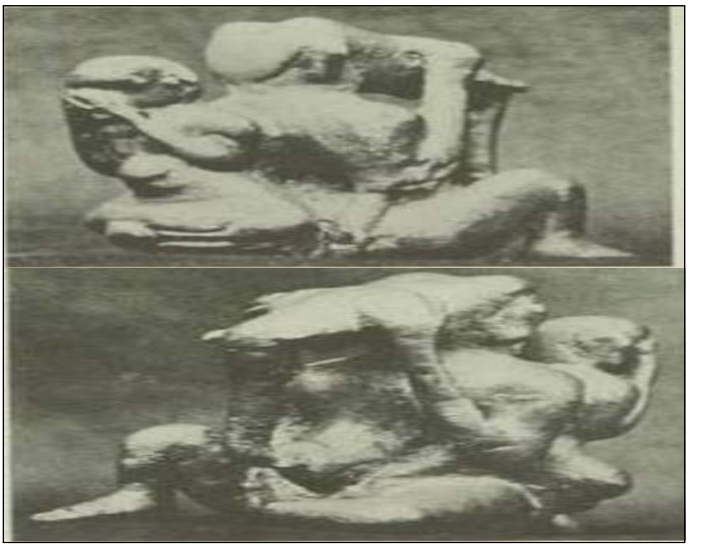

Figure 22 a, b. Ganes'a at Guthonlon Pagoda
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 89 f, g

Figure 23. Ganes'a at Somingyi Pagoda
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 89 a

Sūrya was an important solar deity in early Vedic period. In Vedic mythology, the sun is sometimes depicted with one horse, sometimes seven, but in ancient Indian iconography, always four. At *Bhājā* and *Bodhgayā*, *Sūrya* is attended by his women, shooting arrows with their bows. At the *Pāla* relief of *Amrhita* of the British Museum, *Sūrya* as depicted to have seven horses only appeared in the 10century. In the 11th century, *Sūrya* is depicted as moving threateningly with bow and arrow on the pedestal, with the winged charioteer *Aruṇa* in the centre and *Ūshā* and *Pratyūsha* on the extreme right and left (Luce 1970: 209).

The sun-god has not been seen in any Buddhist temple in Myanmar. There are two *Sūrya* icons discovered in Myanmar—the one of the north Indian type at Shinngedettaung hill in the southeast of Mrohaung in Rakhine, and the other one, of the South Indian type at the east end of the outer corridor of Nathlaunggyaung in Bagan.

The Rakhine stone dates to about 8th century A.D by Duroiselle (Duroiselle 1923: 28). Dr. Ray dates it 7th or 8th century A.D, but in another it dates 6th-7th century A.D. Duroiselle says that the reverse of the stone is filled with writings in north Indian Gupta characters, dating to about the 8th century A.D. Dr. Ray adds that it is in Sanskrit, and the palaeography of the record dates it to the earlier half of the 8th century A.D. (Ray 1932: 70, 92). The sculpture depicts on the obverse face, *Sūrya* riding his chariot drawn by seven horses. The horse in the centre is facing outward, and is placed in a niche that is in the shape of a horseshoe. The figure of the Chariot-driver is missing. The principal figure is much defaced, but enough of it remains, showing two hands both lifted up to the level of the shoulder, each carrying a circular or round object. It has a high headdress, large earlobes, and a necklace, and is flanked on either side by what remains of a small standing figures, which looks female. The one on the right is carrying a bow, and that on the left, a staff or an arrow. These two small figures probably represent the two goddesses, Ushā and Pratyushā (Luce 1970: 208-209) <Figure 24>.

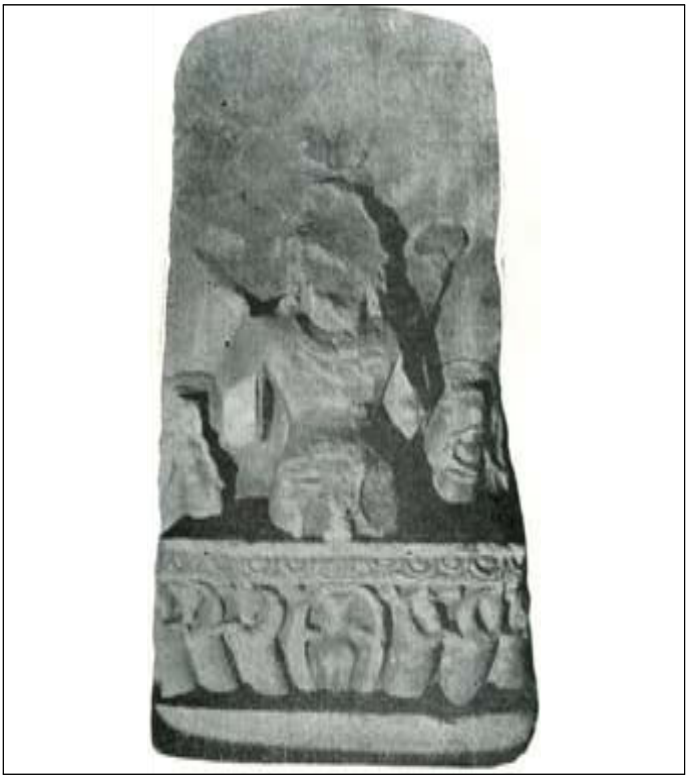

Figure 24. Sūrya at Rakhine
Source: Ray 1932, Pl. XIX

At Bagan, *Sūrya* can be seen in the last niche of Nathlaunggyaung, on the right hand side of the entrance steps. Duroiselle describes it bas is standing on a lotus flower from which two other smaller ones spring. The arms are placed close to the body, which is bent upwards at the elbows, and with each hand holding a lotus bud on a level with the shoulders. It wears a crown, its distended earlobes hang down and touch the shoulders under the weight of the large ear-ornaments. It has bracelets, armlets, and anklets, its lower garment is tucked up and reaches as far as the knees. Lines showing the folds are visible. This also represents one of Vishnu's Avataras (Duroiselle 1912-13: 138) <Figure 25>.

Figure 25. Sūrya at Nathlaung Kyaung

Dr. Ray remarked precisely for this reason that it is not one of the avataras of Vishnu, but seems to be an image of *Sūrya* of the South Indian type. The position of the two hands as well as the lotus buds held in one line with the shoulders is a significant indicator. No less significant is the number of the hands, which is a distinctive feature of South Indian *Sūrya* images, as well as the strictly erect standing posture. *Sūrya* in South India does not generally wear boots nor ride a horse-drawn chariot. Dr. Ray stresses the very intimate relation of Vishnu with the Vedic Sūrya. In the Vedas, Sūrya is never a supreme god, but is always identified with the sun. The idea that Vishnu is the sun appears to be still maintained in the worship of the Sun as Sūrya Nārāyana (Ray 1932: 42-43).

Srī or *Lakshmī* is the goddess of wealth and prosperity. If Vishnu accompanied by Bhu or Sarasvati, Saravati inevitably keeps with Srī. When she appears alone with Vishnu, she is called *Lakshmī*. Though *Lakshmī* is a more senior wife of Vishnu, independent sculptures of her is very rare. Srī has two hands, and she holds a srifala and a lotus. She is accompanied by two female chauri bearers and two or four elephants carrying ghatas. As *Lakshmī*, she is represented with two, four, or eight hands. If she has two hands, she holds conch and lotus; if four,

she holds the wheel, conch, lotus and mace, or the mahālunga, lotus, or the lotus and vessel of ambrosia; if eight, she holds bow, mace, arrow, lotus, wheel, conch, wooden pestle, and goods (Gupta 1972: 56).

Srī appears first in the middle of the top of the south torana of Sanchi, 1st century B.C. She stands on a full-blown lotus with elephants to her left and right, pouring water over her head. If *Srī* is depicted with an elephant, she is called *Gaja-Lakshmī*. In the late 1st century B.C., *Srī* appears again on the tympanum at the entrance to the Cetiya cave at Manmoda Hill, Junna north of Poona. Earlier about 100 B.C. *Srī* appears on a tympanum-doorway at the Jaina cave, Anantagumphā, at Khandagiri in Orissa. *Srī*as an architectural form is originally a fertility emblem. When she entered the world of old Mon culture, the goddess Srī became the symbol of fortune and splendor, which was also adapted in the Old Myanmar. By way of the Kyanzittha inscription, we come to know that she occupies her place in the top center of the arch pediment, (Duroiselle 1919: IX) when her elephants transformed into floral arabesques in Bagan temples. We can find some of the finest representations of Srī on the window exteriors of Nanpaya, where she sits in every apex, her arms drooping and outspread, holding lotus stalks (Luce 1970: 287) <Figure 26>.

Fig. 26. Srī at Nanpaya
Source: Luce 1970, Pl. 123b

A remarkable figure of Vishnu and his consort *Lakshmī* standing side by side was found by General de Beylie in the garden of Pyay Deputy Commissioner. It is a thin rectangular slab of soft sandstones, carved in bold relief, bearing the standing figures of Vishnu with his consort *Lakshmī* by his right side (Luce 1970: 216). The stone is broken from top and bottom with both heads are missing. But what remains of the slim, soft and supple figures of Vishnu standing on a Garuda and with *Srī* on a double lotus, is wonderfully clean and distinct. Vishnu on the left wears a short natural loincloth and twisted waistband. He has anklets and many bracelets. *Srī*has two hands only, holding a bunch of lotus flowers in her raised right hand. Hanging on her left side is her long, straining, sinuous hands. A defaced garuda is embellished with scales below the waist and tail feathers and wings outspread (Aung Thaw 1978: 28). It is quite unorthodox to find a stone sculpture where Vishnu and *Laksh*mī stand side by side. Also remarkable is the fact that this Vishnu standing on a Garuda is found in Myanmar alone. The image is dated to about 8th century A.D. (Ray 1932: 24-27) <Figure 27>. No separate image of *Srī*or *Lakshmī* image is to be found in Myanmar as an object of worship, but only as an architectural decoration which we can find everywhere on temples.

Figure 27. Srī (or) Lakshmī at Pyay Museum

VI. Conclusion

The religious influence of Indians who traded in the region made it possible for Brahmanical culture, and its elaborate paraphernalia of rites and rituals, gods and goddesses and myths and legends, penetrate Southeast Asian countries, especially Myanmar. The people of Myanmar are racially Mongoloid, but the culture professedly Hindu and Buddhist. Various aspects of Myanmar culture is of Indian origin. It is true that certain traces of Brahmanical rites and rituals, myths and traditions, have come to be interwoven into the texture of the social and religious life of the country. Hindu ideas influenced Bagan administration and politics. In other words, the political ideology of the Kings, who were at the apex of the Bagan society, was greatly influenced by Hindu ideology. In Myanmar it tolerated Brahmanical rituals and ceremonies presided over by Brahman priests, but never allowed Brahmanical gods to trespass its own sacred precincts.

We have just made a bare outline of the Brahmanical iconography from about the beginning of the Christian era right down to the fall of the Bagan dynasty at the close of the 13th century. Bramanic icons worshipped by the Indians of Bagan would have been taken by migrant Indians themselves. Later, they would produce Bramanic icons locally in Myanmar. Eventually, they built Hindu temples for their worship. The prototypes came from India and S'rilanka and to a lesser extent from Tibet and China. Myanmar people, however, knowingly or unknowingly, ignore some features of Indian deities and eventually the icons are found in various places in Bagan.

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Construction of Cham Identity in Cambodia

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[*Abstract*]

Cham identities which are socially constructed and multilayered, display their markers in a variety of elements, including homeland attachment to the former Kingdom of Champa, religion, language and cultural traditions, to mention a few. However, unlike other contemporary diasporic experience which binds the homeland and the host country, the Cham diaspora in Cambodia has a unique pattern as it seems to have no voice in the political and economic spheres in Vietnam, its homeland. The relations between the Cham in Cambodia and Vietnam seem to be limited to cultural heritages such as Cham musical traditions, traditional clothing, and the architectural heritage. Many Cham people have established networks outside Cambodia with areas of the Muslim world, like Malaysia, Indonesia, southern Thailand and the Middle Eastern countries. Pursuing education or training in Islam as well as working in those countries,

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especially Malaysia has become a way for the Cham to widen their networks and increase their knowledge of particularly, Islam. Returning to Cambodia, these people become religious teachers or *ustadz* (Islamic teachers in the *pondok* [Islamic boarding school]). This has developed slowly, side by side with the formation of their identity as Cham Muslims. Among certain Cham, the absence of an ancient cultural heritage as an identity marker has been replaced by the Islamic culture as the important element of identity. However, being Cham is not a single identity, it is fluid and contested. Many scholars argue that the Cham in Cambodia constitute three groups: the Cham Chvea, Cham, and Cham Bani (Cham Jahed). The so-called Cham Jahed has a unique practice of Islam. Unlike other Cham who pray five times a day, Cham Jahed people pray, once a week, on Fridays. They also have a different ritual for the wedding ceremony which they regard as the authentic tradition of the Cham. Indeed, they consider themselves pure descendants of the Cham in Vietnam; retaining Cham traditions and tending to maintain their relationship with their fellow Cham in Central Vietnam. In terms of language, another marker of identity, the Cham and the Cham Jahed share the same language, but Cham Jahed preserve the written Cham script more often than the Cham. Besides, the Cham Jahed teaches the language to the young generation intensively.

This paper, based on fieldwork in Cambodia in 2010 and 2011 will focus on the process of the formation of the Cham identity, especially of those called Cham and Cham Jahed.

Keywords: Cham identity, homeland, cultural tradition, religion, language, Diaspora, Cambodia

I. Introduction.

Cham people have been residing in Cambodia for a long time. Originally from the Kingdom of Champa in Central Vietnam, they migrated to Cambodia in several stages. When the Kingdom of

Champa was defeated by Vietnam in 1693, Cham people moved to countries like Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Early migrations to Cambodia took place from the end of the 16th to the early 17th centuries. Cham people have close connections with people in other countries of Southeast Asia, especially in Malaysia. Transnational networks have been established and these seem to follow old patterns of relationships. The Islamic world, an important channel for transnational networking, has equally influenced the contemporary construction of Cham identity in Cambodia, especially of those who are known to be Cham.

This paper utilized the anthropological, economic, and historical approaches in order to understand the Cham identity in Cambodia. For data collection and analysis, we employed the qualitative data analysis method, such as the semi-structured in-depth interviews with Islamic leaders; mufti; ustadz in *pondok* (Islamic boarding school) or mosques; and Cham communities in Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, and Kampong Chhnang. Moreover, we also carried out observations of on-going activities of the Cham in Kampong Cham and the Cham Jahed groups in Kampong Chhnang, especially during the carrying out of the ritual of Cham Jahed marriage in order to understand each step of the ritual. Field works in Cambodia were conducted twice in June 2010 and June 2011.

We will discuss several issues: the influences of Islam and Cham networking on the Cham identity and the cultural traditions of the Cham people. If we touch upon the formation of identity in general, it has been widely argued that cultural identity is not fixed, but is socially constructed (for example, Kipp 1993; Eriksen 1993; Kahn 1995; Wang 2007; Maunati 2011b; Maunati 2012a, etc). Concepts of identity and identity itself are often argued as the result of a dynamic interplay between context and construct. For example, Eriksen (1993) has pinpointed some of the processes involved in the historical construction of Indian identities who migrated to Mauritius and Trinidad. In each case, the subsequent identity was different and thus works against the notion of an "essential" form of Indian ness. Besides, the construction of identity has often involved multi-representations. Barth, for

example, has highlighted the complex array of 'authorities', including religious leaders, government officials, Balinese politicians, and anthropologists involved in representation of 'the Balinese' (Vickers 1989: 127-8). In a similar vein, part of the historical and dynamic quality of culture is that people reflect upon formal representations—especially those that derive from powerful parties—and incorporate them into their own image of themselves: for example, the Minangkabau villager known as Joel Kahn to de Jong, a Dutch authority on Minangkabau culture (Kahn 1980). Both Kahn (1995) and Saunders (1993) also emphasize that scholars have influenced the construction of identity. Here, Saunders (1993) notes that the image of Borneo has partly been taken from the image of Borneo depicted by travelers and scholars. Indeed, the degree of negotiation among different representations in the processes of cultural construction may be more complicated and far greater than first thought since identity itself is fluid depending on certain situations and contexts.

Moreover, discussing the Hakka Diaspora in Taiwan, Wang (2007: 875) argues that the integration of the Hakka in the process of the formation of a new "Multicultural Taiwan" identity as the Taiwanese national identity has been somewhat dynamic and complicated. The Hakka have also been in a situation of having a contested identity. Wang states:

> Taiwanese Hakka identity is fluid and complex, reflecting an amalgam of different issues including national identity conflicts, the blurring of ethnic boundaries, and changing political conditions. Their identity remains diverse and multiple (Wang 2007: 886).

Indeed, many scholars have argued that diasporic people are often in circumstances of keeping multi and contested identities (Kivisto 2001; Wang 2007; So 2013). So (2013: 1) emphasises on the identity construction and integenerational relations of the Cham diaspora in Malaysia and Thailand. She

finds that the Cham people are not only able to preserve their cultural identity, but also to adjust with mainstream society and continue to establish network with their predecessor country and other countries (So 2013: 11).

The markers of cultural identity may originate in a presumed distinctiveness of religion, language, and tradition. Overlapping may occur among different ethnic groups. Indeed, the construction of cultural identity is complex partly because it is a product of history. Cultural identity itself is changeable depending on the context and on the power and vested interests at play. Bayer (2009), who illustrates by way of two approaches—constructivism and primordialism the formation of identity, and questions the end of construction in situations where certain groups use primordial elements for their markers of identity for certain periods. Indeed, one must be aware of such debates when we talk about the process of the construction of identity, especially in understanding the process of transforming certain existing markers of identity which are believed to be the markers of identity of an ethnic group. Indeed, the elements of markers of identity could change though the group remains the same. The processes of identity construction have involved many representations and are complicated. Clearly, the Cham identity of Cambodian is constructed and contested through a long historical context as well as contemporary representations.

II. Cultural Identity of the Cham in Cambodia

Like other ethnic group identities, such as that of the Dayak (Maunati 2000) or of the Hakka (Wong 2007), Cham identity is both fluid and a product of historical and contemporary construction. Historically, Cham people have transformed themselves through their conversion from animism to Hinduism to Buddhism to Islam.

> Cham religion has gone through several shifts over the centuries. Their most ancient beliefs were in a "Mother Goddess". The "Earth Mother" image is an ancient one that

ties the people to the soil, and is an agriculturally oriented icon in an agriculturally based society. During the late third century and fourth century, through relationship with Indian traders, there was a conversion to Hinduism, most notably, the Hindu gods Shiva, Brahma, and Vishnu. Gradually there was also a rise of Mahayana Buddhism. Finally there was a gradual conversion to Islam over a period of several centuries. This likely began at about the time the first Cham immigrated to Cambodia to take sanctuary in the 15th century. The Cham of Vietnam, who are mainly Hindu, practice a form of Shaioita Brahmanism. Despite the strong, early influence of Hinduism, the lives of the common people of Champa centered around ancestor worship, fertility cults and hero worship. Islam arrived in Cambodia via India and Malaysia. Those living in the rural areas mixed Islam with their indigenous culture and animistic elements, resulting in folk Islam. The spiritual centre for the Cham Muslims of Cambodia is Chur-Changvra near Phnom Penh. In Cambodia, there are a few Islamic groups such as Chang Veng, *Imam* San, Da'wa and Wahhabiyya. The Chang Veng group of villages tends to mix more Malay words with their vocabulary than those from the Imam San group of villages. This is because of their strong connections with, and support received from, Muslims in Malaysia. The Imam San group has fewer connections with the outside Muslim world because of their stance on animistic traditions that are unacceptable to fundamental Muslims. The Da'wa is a missionary movement from a variety of Islamic countries outside Cambodia. Visiting groups of Da'wa missionaries can be seen in Cham villages of Cambodia today. They travel from village to villages preading their beliefs and normally preach in village mosques where they also live during their stay. The Wahhabiyya is also a missionary movement similar to the Da'wa in that they also preach a more fundamentalist type of Islam (Available in http://www.omf.org/omf/us/peoples_and_places/people_groups/cham_of_cambodia).

Even though, the Cham people in Cambodia are associated with Islam, they do not have a single identity because in terms of religious practices, the Cham people are divided into at least two groups: the Cham who pray five times each day and the Cham Jahed who pray on Fridays only. In the past, they could have been the same group who practiced a similar religious ritual.

It is in relation to such issues that the construction of Cham identity is important to be explored. As has been reported in the first year of fieldwork (Maunati 2011a), interviews with several informants in Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham Province show that Cham people have been divided into two groups according to their praying practices—those that pray five times daily and those that only pray on Fridays. During our second fieldwork in July 2011, we found this to be true: the Cham Jahed people who reside in Kampong Chhnang pray only on Fridays. Both groups speak Cham, but they have different practices in praying and other rituals. If we look at the language element, both groups can be categorized as the Cham of Cambodia, but if we look at the other aspects, there clearly are differences.

The Cham in Cambodia are today are often associated with Islam but differentiating the Muslim Cham from other Muslims in Cambodia seems to be a challenging work since Cham identifcation may not just be determined through religion. Malays have also identified themselves as Muslims, thus there must be something else that may identify Cham people. Muslims do not necessarily practice the same rituals, thus, Islam may not be a sufficient identity marker.

Collins (2009) reports the history of Cham and their identities in his *History of Cham*:

> The Cham were originally a people of an ancient kingdom located along the central coast of Vietnam called Champa. Champa was a wealthy maritime nation in frequent contact with China. The ancient Cham civilization was divided geographically into four regions, one being Quang-nam,

> where Dong-doung is located was considered the Champa holy land. Other regions were Amaravati to the North, Vijaya (present day Bihn-dinh), and Panduranga in the South (Collins 2009).

Indeed, the homeland Kingdom of Champa has been a case in point for both the Cham and Cham Jahed. Even though they claim being descendants of the Kingdom of Champa, Cham Jahed often insist that they practice a "pure" or more "authentic" tradition. Authenticity is also a product of construction.

Any discussion of the constructed nature of culture and cultural identity must squarely address the issue of authenticity and the status of tradition. As Hoben and Hefner (1991) observe, tradition is often quite untraditional (Wood 1993: 58).

The concept of tradition itself is subject to change. Handler and Linnekin outline a shift from "a "naturalistic" to a "symbolic" conception of tradition" (Wood 1993: 57). Drawing on Handler and Linnekin,[1] Wood points out that "naturalistic" concepts of tradition have assumed that tradition is an objective entity, "a core of inherited culture traits whose continuity and boundedness are analogous to that of a natural object" (Wood 1993: 57). He notes that "Handler and Linnekin insist in contrast that tradition is always symbolically constructed in the present, not a 'thing' handed down from the past" (Wood 1993: 58). Moreover, Wood points out that:

> ...the definition of what is traditional in culture, the specification of links between an invented present and an imagined past, is constantly being symbolically recreated and contested. There is no objective, bounded thing that we can identify as 'traditional culture' against which to measure and judge change. What is defined as traditional culture, both for the past and for the present, is constantly being

1) Handler and Linnekin (1984: 273)

reformulated (Wood 1993: 58).

In his analysis of Minangkabau society, Kahn (1993) argues that the aspects that seem to be traditional are often modern responses. Rationality as a characteristic of modernity is evident in the trade sector of the Minangkabau, but communal life remains the stronghold of Minangkabau women and traditional customs. Authenticity is often a product of social construction.

The Cham are a minority in Cambodia. Osman(2010) reports that the Cham constituted of 500.000, around 4 percent of the total population (13.6 millions) and mostly resided in Kampong Cham province. According to Collins (2009), if we look at the livelihoods of the Cham in Cambodia, they people were engaged in various agricultural endeavors, especially wet and dry rice farming. They also engaged in the cultivation of crops like maize, tobacco, castor-oil plants, peanuts, beans, and vegetables. They also domesticated animals, hunted, and fished. Along the riverbanks of the Mekong, Bassac and Tonle, the Cham were mostly fishermen, but cattle traders and butchers could also be found amongst them.

In a similar vein, we noticed that the Cham people engaged in many different types of work. In several villages along the Mekong riverbank in Kampong Cham Province, we found the Cham engaged in fishing while women make fishing nets sold in the markets or to the people who order them. We also found that certain Cham also work in rubber planting, especially those residing in Kampong Cham. Small-scale traders could also be found in many different villages in Kampong Cham, selling clothes, groceries, fish, vegetables and prepared food. They trade either in the traditional markets or along the main roads of their villages. The stereotype of Cham being fishermen begins to change as some of these people get engaged in other various jobs. Nevertheless, Cham people, especially those living on the riverbanks, are indeed focused on fishing for their livelihoods.

A few Cham have also been actively involved in politics. It seems the clear-cut division of occupation between Cham and

Khmer has been slightly changed as stated by a scholar from Phnom Penh during an interview:

> In the past, Cham were mostly fishermen who were also engaged in agriculture. The Khmer, who comprise the majority of Cambodia, have been engaging in many different jobs. The Khmer Rouge has made Cham or Khmer victims. In terms of work, the Cham have also expanded to do what previously was only done by the Khmers. The difference between the groups after the Khmer Rouge has become blurred. Windows have opened for the Cham as well.

Indeed, his statement seems to be proven because nowadays we can find Cham people in the capital city, Phnom Penh, engaged in politics and working for the government. In an interview, Mr. Arifin, who has been a CPP (Cambodian People's Party) member of the Senate for several years, told us that the position of the Cham in the government and political parties has been improving. One Cham public figure was the advisor of Hun Sen. Another public figure has been a member of the CPP as well.

In terms of the political participation of the Cham, according to several informants, the Cham have opportunities to join in political activities, including participation in political parties. A few "elite" Cham support the Party in power. According to a Cham informant, it has been proven advantageous for them to be close to the government. The question of whether or not they struggle for the improvement of the lives of the Cham people is another matter. To some informants, the positions of Cham government officials are not clear as they still need to prove themselves first.

In an interview, a Khmer scholar agrees that today, the Chams have the opportunity to be involved in politics. Previously, the Cambodian people are at large divided by way of their ethnicities, and even of their occupations. It was hard for the

minorities like the Chams to engage in government work in a structure dominated by the Khmer. Cham rebellions had added to the difficulty for the Cham to find jobs. The coming of the Khmer Rouge transformed the people of Cambodia when every ethnic group was pressured to have no religion and to be one identity, including the Khmers, the Cham, the Chinese and others. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge, the people of Cambodia—regardless of their ethnicities—started to rebuild the country. Freedom is given to the Cham to practice their own religion as well as to participate in politics (Maunati 2013). Chams also earned their liberty to express their identity and to use their language. The following are the experiences of the Chams in different sites—KM 8 of Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham Province and Kampong Chhnang.

III. The Cham of the Outskirtsof Phnom Penh

In the KM 8, we found a big, 2-level brick mosque. The first level is provided for men, and the second, for women. This mosque is special because women have a place here to pray. Many mosques in Cambodia do not provide a particular place for women.

Many people in this locality have visited Malaysia, to work, study, or for business purposes. A middle-aged Cham lady whose business involves air tickets, stationery, and photocopying services told us that the Cham have a close connection with Malaysia. She explained that she wears clothes like the Malay women, *baju kurung,* and covers her head with a scarf. According to her, the Cham ladies in the area generally wear the same things the Malay ladies do. Many Chams went to Malaysia to study Islam like one *ustadz*, an Islamic teacher. This follows a pattern that has existed for generations. Muslim students from Cambodia have traditionally pursued their higher religious studies in Kelantan, Trengganu and Patani in South Thailand. Apart from this, young people also found Malaysia a suitable place to since the people in that area understands Islamic tradition. Indeed, Malaysia is a

place of hope.

Many informants told us that the Cham's material cultures had disappeared largely due to the destruction of their places of dwelling or Kampong during the Khmer Rouge. The Cham lady we interviewed can still recall how her family had to move out from their house, and how everybody was forced to flee from Phnom Penh. Many families were separated. Many were killed. She wept as she recalled the Cham people who used to be her neighbors. The long suffering in the rice fields during the Khmer Rouge compelled them not to concern themselves with their traditions since both cultural and religious practices were strictly prohibited. Today, after the years of repression, they tend to associate with universal Islamic symbols in decorating their houses. Arabic calligraphy or pictures of the Ka'bah adorn the walls of the houses of Cham families.

That Cham lady also told us that their community tried to rebuild their kampong after they returned to it along the riverbanks of Tonle Sap in KM 8. She had gone to Phnom Penh in 1979, but the memory of suffering haunted her. She still trembled as she retold the story of the Pol Pot period. Her husband and their neighbors had rebuilt the kampong, working together in relocating their houses. In the beginning, they simply built huts, and then slowly built properly elevated wooden houses. These elevated houses keeps the families safe from floods that often occur. The population, mostly from Kampong Cham, have been living there for generations. Though there are newcomers too. Although they have been allowed to reside along the riverbanks of Tonle Sap, they have no legal land certificates. According to an informant, the Cambodian government does not issue land certificates for lands along on the riverbank. The people have never been asked to move out from the settlement, while certificates for the lands on the other side of the street have been given out (Maunati 2011a; 2013).

In KM 8, Cham people are engaged in different types of jobs, like fishing, small trading, tuc-tuc driving, motodop work, and so forth. Many Cham people have worked in Malaysia as

garment factory workers and workers in other industries due to difficulty to find jobs in Cambodia (Maunati 2012b; Sari 2012). They also went to Islamic schools there. Effendy (2006) notes that sharing a similar language and culture have been the main reasons for Cham people to work in Malaysia or Indonesia. To the Cham of Cambodia, religious practice is often the important reason behind their coming to Malaysia, especially since they could pray during the afternoon, in the middle of working hours. Practicing Islamic rituals is obviously an important marker of identity for the Cham of Cambodia (Maunati 2013).

To support the notion of Islam as the marker of Identity of the Cham, Maunati (2011a; 2013) reports the Head of the Mufti of Cambodia as saying:

> Cham people are not Khmer, but 'Malay Champa', who originally came from the Kingdom of Champa in Central Vietnam that was defeated by Vietnam in 1471. After that the Cham people migrated to many places, including Cambodia and parts of the Indonesian archipelago especially Aceh, Java, and Sumatra, and Singapore. In Cambodia, there was only a small number of Cham people. At that time and until now, the kings of Cambodia have received us with open hands. We Cham could also practise our religion, Islam, freely until now (Maunati 2011a; Maunati 2013).

Indeed, many informants told us that although freedom of religion exists, the support of the state in religious affairs is limited. According to the Chairman of the Mufti, the entity was reinstalled by the Prime Minister on 7 April 2000, and has many sections, including mosque matters, Islamic teaching, *baitulmah*, marriage, social matters, etc. There are also in place *majelis syuro* (council) and *majelis ketua fatwa* (council of advisory elders). In essence religious activities, whether Islamic or Buddhist, are not restricted, yet not fully supported by the state. To the Cham, there are two problems: the Al Quran has not been translated into Cham or Khmer languages and religious

books are generally not available (Maunati 2013).

IV. The Cham of Kampong Cham

The Cham people have been residing in Kampong Cham for a long time since they migrated to Cambodia. Cham people can be found in many areas of the Kampong Cham Province. Near the city, there are many Cham living on the banks of the Mekong where they can catch a boat or alternately use the bridge to reach the city. In Kampong Cham city we could hear the *Adzan* (call to prayer for Muslims) and see a mosque on the other side of the river.

Like people in KM 8, many informants in Kampong Cham found it very hard to pinpoint their traditional culture. When asked, they often referred to the clothing, rituals, and the other aspects of Malay culture. Besides, they also refer to Islamic matters to show their identity. Through observation and interviews, we found that Malay clothes are their everyday clothes. Women usually wear *baju kurung* (long sleeved dresses) with *tudung* (ready to wear head scarves). However, the old ladies in the kampong mostly prefer to wear *krama* (khmer scarf) rather than *tudung*. As many people have been to Malaysia, a woman who used to live there informed us that they follow Malay ways since they are Muslims like the Malays. Those trained in Malaysia concur that Malay influence is indeed great. *Kompas* reports that some Chams from Cambodia pursued further studies in Malaysia (e.g. in Kelantan and Malacca) and Indonesia, with some well-off Cham, even sending their children to Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Friday, 10 December 2010: 59).

The influence of the Malay culture is clearly connected with the development assistance from the Malaysian government. Sari's study in 2011 reveals that the Malaysians have given large grants to support the Islamic Institute at Boeng Kak Mosque in Phnom Penh and provided some scholarships for Cham students to pursue higher education in both Malaysian and Cambodian universities. The Malaysian government aid also supports a

women's center and clinic at KM 7, in the middle of Cham-Chvea communities found along National Route 5, north of Phnom Penh. The Malaysian government has supplied the women's center with sewing machines and looms to provide livelihood for Muslim women. The association also provides training for women in family health practices and Malay language to increase female literacy and to improve access to contemporary books in Malay (Sari 2013). Moreover, the Malaysian government clearly respond to humanitarian crisis by assisting impoverished members of a Muslim minority who had suffered during the recent Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. Furthermore, Malaysia has been involved in the institutionalization of Islam since the early 1970s and in providing development aid to the Cambodian Muslims from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s (Bruckmayr 2003). Hence, the role of Malays in spreading the Islamic faith has probably been the most significant feature of recent historical change and cultural relations in Cambodia.

Apart from Malay culture, we found a different perspective on culture in Kampong Cham itself. Maunati (2013) notes that one public figure originally from Kampong Cham, Mr. Ibrahim, also sought Cham roots by looking at the Cham culture in Central Vietnam apart from the use from the obvious Malay influences. He has attempted to introduce Cham culture through traditional musical instruments, songs, and dance to the Cham in Kampong Cham. Mr. Ibrahim told us that it has been hard to introduce the cultural traditions of fellow Chams from Vietnam to Cambodian Chams due to differences in interpretating Islam. In this case, some Cambodian Cham believed that the musical instruments, traditional songs, and dance were not suitable for good Muslims. Therefore, they have not been eager to accept them. This is despite the fact that Mr. Ibrahim introduced these traditions as "authentic" Cham culture passed on from generation to generation. Nevertheless, the Kingdom of Champa located in Central Vietnam has been referred to by the Cham people in Cambodia as their place of descent. The associations with the Kingdom of Champa has been deemed important for Cham identity, especially in differentiating it from the Muslims and the

Khmer. The Cham's practice of praying five times in a day, for instance, is a slightly different Islamic interpretation. Many influences, like Malaysian, Middle Eastern, as well as other Islamic streams, have also contributed varying interpretations. Additionally, men and women have specific relations to mosques. In many mosques in Kampong Cham, women are not allowed to pray, like those in the outskirts of Kampong Cham city. In KM 8, however, women are allowed to pray in the mosque in the second floor. In a village in Kampong Cham, we also observed many young girls studying religion in the mosque after school. There seems to be no singular way of characterizing Cham identity.

It is common for diasporic peoples to look for their identity by searching for their origins. For example, Eriksen (1993) discusses Indians in Mauritius and Trinidad who looked for their identity and yielded different kinds of identities. The Cham, as mentioned, look to both the Kingdom of Champa, as well as the Islamic world. The difference primarily is in the practice of Friday prayer and five-times-a-day prayer. The Cham of Kampong Cham and Phnom Penh seem to be looking to their Islamic roots more since the fall of Pol Pot and after reclaiming religious liberties. In the Pol Pot period, the informants recall, Cham people could not practices Islam, to the extent that they were even forced to deny their beliefs by eating pork and not praying. The Malay appearance is partly one of their identities in today's Cham society. Some Cham have also looked to Cham culture in Vietnam. This easily reminds us of the Indians in Mauritius and Trinidad noted by Eriksen (1993).

For the Cham who pray five times a day, being identified as Muslim also means dreaming to make a pilgrimage to Mecca (Maunati 2013). However, they need to get enough funding to do so. *Kompas* reports on Cambodian Muslims in Roka village, and says that in Kampong Cham only six people were able to perform the pilgrimage that year (Friday, 10 December 2010: 59). It is projected that the number will rise to the following year since performing the pilgrimage is still expensive for the Cham. Several Cham public figures, however, have performed the pilgrimage. Having a title of haj (*haji*) yields high respect in the

Cham community in Kampong Cham. According to some informants, there were cases where the Cham people were funded by Middle Eastern institutions to perform the pilgrimage with the expectation that they would follow the Islamic teachings of the funding institutions.

Kampong Cham exemplifies current religious freedom in the country. In our observations and interviews, we were informed that the Cham have not been disturbed in practicing their religious rituals. Funding in the name of religion has also been around though not everybody enjoys such funding. An informant from Kampong Cham, a teacher at an Islamic boarding school, told us that the elite Cham who receive funding only distribute it among their groups. He explained that his salary as a teacher comes from Malaysian donations kept in Phnom Penh. One of the teachers goes to Phnom Penh to claim the salary and the cost of travel is shouldered by all the teachers. His salary is 50 Malaysian Ringgit (around USD 16) per month (Maunati 2013).

In a village in Kampong Cham Province, we found different wedding rituals as expressions of Cham culture. We observed a wedding ceremony held by a Cham family which was rather similar to that of the Khmer community in terms of venue decoration and wedding clothes. This is different from that of the Malay culture adopted by many Cham (Maunati 2013). The decoration of the venue was very colorful, in bright shades of pink, red, green, and yellow. We obseved similar decoration in the Khmer parties along the way to the Cham community. The guest receptionists, mostly young girls, also dressed like Khmer women, wearing black silk tops and silk skirts and no veils to cover their hair.

V. The Cham Jahed of Kampong Chhnang

As mentioned earlier, in terms of identity, Cham people are not a singular entity. In fact, the Cham Jahed (Cham Bani) in Cambodia have unique practices of religious rituals. The most crucial one is that of only praying once a week, every Friday at

noon. We observed their prayers on a Friday during our study in Kampong Tralach, Orussey Keo, Kampong Chhnang Province. Their leader emphasized that Friday prayer was the most important religious practice for the group. Sokhom (2009: 60-61) reportst hat in terms of religious ritual, especially praying, Cham can be divided into three groups: (1) the Cham who use the Cham language and Khmer and consequently use the Malay and Arabic texts as the foundation for religion. They follow Sunni teaching, pray five times a day, and are open to new ideas and influences from the Middle East and Malaysia; (2) the Jahed-Imam San which is known as the *Kom Jumat* (from the Malay language, which mean "Friday group"), referring to the tradition of praying only once a week, on Fridays. They reside in several areas like Oudong, Pursat and Battambang and follow their ancestors' tradition by utilizingthe Cham language for their holy teaching and other texts; and lastly, (3) the Group of Chvea-Khmer Islam, a group of Muslim Cham who cannot speak Cham. They speak Khmer and Malay and are ashamed to be called Chvea, being aware of the negative connotation of the Malay and Javanese origins of their practice. They follow Sunni teaching and pray fivetimes a day.

If we follow Sokhom's explanation, these practices are different from that of the Chams who reside in KM 8 of Phnom Penh and in some villages in Kampong Cham, categorized under the first group who pray five times a day. We visited the Cham Jahed, the second group which keeps the tradition of praying on Fridays, in Kampong Chhnang province. They also believe that their practices is "authentic" coming down from their ancestors. We also found that the Cham Jahed have close relations with the Cham of Vietnam. They even practice similar rituals: both pray on Fridays only. Cham identity is indeed contested.

Many scholars have argued that identity is fluid and constructed (Eriksen 1993; Kahn 1995; Wong 2007; Maunati 2012a). Eriksen clearly notes that identity is contested, depending on the context and situation. Based on our research in Cambodia, the Cham and Cham Jahed are clearly of the same origin but have developed slightly different traditions. This is a

kind of indication that identity is a product of social and historical construction. Nevertheless, there emerge questions: Is there any end to such construction? Is there any stopping point or will it continue to be constructed? Bayar (2009) believes that while there is a process of construction in the beginning, primordial elements have been important as markers of identity and will stay for a certain time. We believe that the markers of identity are dynamic and subject to change. Therefore the process of construction and reformulation may continue due to certain interests and contexts. The Cham Jahed is acase in point.

The Cham Jahed have a different identity from the Cham who pray five times a day, though they are both considered Chams of Cambodia. The Cham who pray five times a day, however, are not necessarily a single entity since they also have different orientations; some tend towards the Malays of Malaysia, while others tend towards the Middle East. According to several informants, Middle Eastern countries have paid serious attention to the Cham of Cambodia by providing funding or scholarships to Islamic boarding schools. The Mufti of Cambodia has the duty to control such activities in order to avoid any misuse of the funding, especially for terrorist activities. Indeed, the Mufti makes sure that the Cham do not fall into the trap of terrorist networks (Maunati 2013). Terror networks could jeopardize the freedom to practice religion. Some are concerned with the radicalism that may influence the Cham who pray five times a day; there is less concern with the Cham Jahed because their different practices, for one, is quite challenging to displace. Some informants retored that there have been efforts to pursuade the Cham Jahed to reform their practices of prayer by sending some of them to perform the haj pilgrimage. Informants however, say that this has not altered their practice altogether.

For centuries, the Cham have maintained strong relations with fellow Muslims, as evidenced by pilgrimages to Mecca and by their sending of students to Malaysia, South Thailand, and Egypt. Today, various international Muslim movements can be found among Cambodian Cham-the reformist "Wahhabism" from the Middle East; the "Dawa" or "Tabligh" proselytism from India,

and smaller movements such as the "Ahmaddiya" from Indonesia. Many of these have been met with enthusiasm. According to Osman (2010), this is because most of the missionaries from abroad hold the view that Cambodian Cham Muslims do not adhere sufficiently to Islam and thus are in need of purification. Each Muslim sect from outside Cambodia wants the Cham to accept its theology. The Cham are told that their traditional practices are not very pure and that they must now adopt other ones which are the purest. Some yield and accept the new practice. Each group considers itself the best practitioner of Islam.

Based on our observation and interviews, the Cham Jahed are indeed unique in both their prayers, wedding rituals and other aspects of the practice. We observed and participated in a Friday prayer and a wedding ceremony in Kampong Chhnang. Maunati (2013) notes thatmost men prayed in the mosque, while women did not. Women came to the mosque to bring different kinds of food to serve to everybody in the mosque. Most men wore all-white trousers/sarong, a shirt, and a Cham Jahed head covering. A few did not wear white but wore the striped Khmer head-scarf called *krama*. During the actual praying, some men did not pray, but sat inside the mosque behind those who did, while women did not enter the mosque but stayed in the verandah instead. Women mostly wore black blouses, though some wore colorful dresses with the Khmer traditional scarf of plaid or stripes in red, black, white, etc. It seems that there is no strict tradition in to wearing the Cham Jahed traditional scarf; they even have the option of wearing the Khmer scarf. Also, Cham Jahed believed that black blouses for women is a long-time tradition. In our visit, the women arrived at the mosque carrying food on decorated trays that are placed on top of their heads. Each woman brought something different: fried bananas, oranges, glutinous rice, fruits, vegetables, meat, fried sweet potatoes, crackers, sweet corn, grapefruits, etc. The reason for bringing food is to gain merit or blessings (Maunati 2013). According to Mr Ibrahim of the Cham, he went to Vietnam many times and found similar patterns between Cham Jahed and

the Cham of Central Vietnam, especially in rituals and the food-serving traditions for women. He showed us a photo of some Cham of Vietnam with similar but more colorful trays.

In the Friday prayers we observed and listened to at a mosque window, an *imam* lead the prayers on stage and chanted in Cham language. After praying, people stayed for lunch in the mosque verandah and partook of the food brought by women. The *imam* sat in the middle of the verandah near the entry to the mosque. Men sat in two parallel lines facing one other. The women's duty was to serve the food before they formed a circle to have their own lunch two to three meters away from.

For the leader of the Cham Jahed, the *Imam* Kai Team, the Cham of Vietnam have the same tradition. He said: "Cham Jahed are the authentic Cham; we follow the traditions of our ancestors originating in Vietnam." The Cham Jahed mostly lives in groups, like those in Kampong Chhnang. Thise proximity and intimacy has something to do with the rituals to be performed together. They have to be accessible to each other. According to informants from both the Cham and the Cham Jahed, some people who have begun to pray five times a day moved to other places, like the main road of Kampong Chhnang or onto the city where could practice like other Chams. They also practice different rituals from the Cham Jahed. In an interview with the five-times-a-day prayer adherent and owner of a Muslim restaurant on the main road of Kampong Chhnang, we were told that many young Cham Jahed have converted to praying five times due to the influence of the Cham practitioners and the prevalent openness to Chams, as well as intermarriages (Maunati 2013). Trankell and Ovesen (2004), in their article on the Cham Jahed, report that the older generation of the Cham Jahed is concerned with conversion of many young people to praying five times a day. Indeed, this has been happening, but to the *Imam*, the number of Cham Jahed who follow and maintain their traditions in general is still significant. He told us of the assistance of the United States in publishing books and establishing the Cham Cultural Centre so that the Cham Jahed could continue to maintain and learn these traditions, including

the Friday ritual. He showed us several books ready to be distributed to the followers, friends, and benefactors (Maunati 2013). This has been a powerful strategy in keeping the followers who have been challenged by many parties. Those parties have used many methods to change the traditions.

Besides Friday praying, there are many other unique traditions among the Cham Jahed. For example, while the other Cham have imitated the Malay customs in the wedding ceremony and wedding clothing, the Cham Jahed people have their own styles of which they are proud. A brief example of a wedding ceremony which usually takes at least two days can be illustrated as follows: Early in the morning, in the groom's home, women prepare various traditional foods, particularly the fermented fish called (*prohok* in the Cham language), and *penong* (snack made of glutinous rice), and other foods like young bamboo shoot sand fish. In this ritual *prohok* must be served. During the first day, early in the morning, the bride and groom visited their family graves to receive blessing from their ancestors. In the afternoon, a group of men led by a religious leader prayed for the well-being of both. After this ritual, the bride, leaning on the shoulders of her parents, walked around the house, followed by the people present there. The bride's side holds a party for family and friends. The following day, the main ritual of the wedding (*ijab kobul*) was held. The presentation of the couple sitting on stage is performed in the bride's house. There is much preparation in the morning before the arrival of the groom at the bride's house. During this time, an elderly woman was joined by several young women in preparing three carved silver bowls (*phau* in the Cham language) containing cigarettes; betel leaves (*la* in the Cham language); and lime and betel nuts to be sent to the groom's family as presents. In effect, the elderly woman, deemed wise in knowing such rituals, was teaching the younger generation how to prepare the gift as part of the Cham Jahed traditions. When the bowls were filled, three young boys dressed as girls came to pick them up. The bride, in traditional bridal dress and complete make-up, sat in her wedding room decorated with colorful materials while several young boys beat drums and

sang. A man, an expert in religion, offered prayers and advice while a drum was beaten (Maunati 2013).

In the early afternoon, the ritual started with the arrival of the groom in a litter (*tandu* in the Malay language) equipped with an umbrella. The idea is to present him as king of the day. Men were ready to offer prayers and to conduct the actual marriage ceremony between the bride's representative and the groom in the yard of the bride's house. The groom stayed under a straw roof where men sat on mats. In front of the religious leader (*penghulu* in the Malay language), the father of the bride "married" the groom with his daughter, while all present stood to bear witness. The dowry of 666,000 Real was presented. The number 6 is very important since it represents the 6th pillar of faith (*rukun iman* in the Malay language). The dowry is pegged at number 6 and ranges between 60,000 to 600,000 Real in area. The bride waited in her wedding room, staying on the platform that was to become the matrimonial bed. After the ritual, there was a procession for the meeting of the groom and the bride. The groom walked on a mat since traditionally, he is not supposed to walk on the soil. Before the groom ascended the steps to the bride's house, an elderly woman washed his feet with waters of three kinds: natural water, clove-wood scented water, and flower water. The idea behind this ritual is to clear any bad spirits. She also poured yellow rice (*brahuyi*) on the soil for fertility, accompanied by prayers. The bride and groom met in the front of the wedding room then sat side by side on the platform (Maunati 2013).

This tradition has been maintained in order to keep the purity of the Cham Jahed and strengthen their identity. In this time of conversions to "pure"Islamic practices, the challenge for the Cham Jahed is to keep their unique traditions like praying on Fridays only and rituals like wedding ceremonies.

VI. Conclsuion

Clearly, the Chams are not of a single identity. For instance, the

Chams who pray five times a day are also may be oriented towards the practices coming from Malaysia or the Middle East. Middle Eastern countries have also developed different streams. Therefore, if we look at Cham identity through the notion of Islam, it is indeed contested. The explication of the identity of the Chams in general is complicated as identity is a work-in-progress.

Bayar (2009) who question the end of construction seems to be right that in certain situations, a group uses primordial elements as markers of identity. This seems to be continously contested and reconstructed due to certain influence, like rapid global influences. With the Islamic world widely influencing the Cham from all sides, identity will surely yield different streams. Therefore, Cham culture may be reconstructed, but with different markers of identity.

Additionally, the argument of Eriksen (1993) that identity is stronger when a group is under threat seems to be still relavant here because in the case Cham Jahed, the use of the local language in translating their holy book aspires to strengthen identity in the face of influences and transnational Islamic financial aid. The Cham Jahed relies on the young generation to continue their tradition. It is therefore important to make sure that the young generation understands their tradition. The holy book in their language is indeed strategic way to face the outside influences.

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Postmodern Vietnamese Literature

Le Huy Bac

[***Abstract***]

This study explores postmodernism in Vietnamese literature. While there has been much dispute among critics regarding postmodernism in Vietnamese literature, postmodernism is now thought to be something that cannot be denied. Vietnamese postmodernism has Vietnamese characteristics and is strongly influenced by American literature. The structure of some Vietnamese short stories is similar to that of some American writers. In the writings of Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard and Ihab Hassan, for example, we find out many characteristics which are ascribed to postmodern Vietnamese literature. We propose the use of the term 'Lao Tzu discourse'which is to include the main concepts of postmodernism such as chaos, nothingness and fragmentation. We propose that postmodern Vietnamese Literature appeared in the 1940s with the collection, *Fall Spring Poems* (1942), and is also seen with the prose of Nguyen Khai and Nguyen Minh Chau in the 1980s, and the drama written by Luu Quang Vu in the 1980s. There now exists a large group of postmodern Vietnamese writers, like Le Dat, Thanh

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Thao, Bao Ninh, Cao Duy Son, Nguyen Ngoc Tu and Nguyen Binh Phuong, among others.

Keywords: Vietnam; Vietnamese postmodernism; Postmodernism; Lao Tzu discourse; Keyboard writing.

I. Introduction.

It cannot be denied that there is a Vietnamese postmodern literature. As Vietnam shifts to integrate into the world, there is a national desire to create a good reputation in fields ranging from economics to science to literature. The appearance of postmodern literature is indisputable. The question is who is calling it postmodern literature?

II. Literature review

2.1. 'Pen writing' or 'keyboard writing'?

Regarding postmodernism in literature in the past (Lyotard 1979; Jameson 1991; Hutcheon 2002), many in Vietnam opposed it claiming that is was some sort of nonsense of the Western research community and many feel that it was not in keeping with the aesthetics that were encouraged in our literatures. Others very cautiously suggested that postmodern elements did exist in the artistic creations of our countrymen. However, it is now said that postmodernism can be found in Vietnamese literature after the 1986 reform came about, and perhaps a bit earlier.

Material conditions point that Vietnam is in a juncture of postmodernity because of the public access to computers and the internet. Those who have gone "digital" are willing to spend most of their day living in the imaginary world on the screen (including TV) (Baudrillard 1983), and it can be said that in this respect Vietnam is not much different from developed countries. Computers have affected most aspects of human life. This

technology has set forth a series of "postmodernist" reactions in economics, philosophy, politics, etc.. It could be said that most living writers in Vietnam are of the postmodern era because they use computers to write. Few writers write their material by hand nowadays. It would accurate to say that "writing" is almost always "typing", and "pen writing" should be changed to "keyboard writing."

In Vietnam, literary products have tended to be postmodernist when written through the computer. Writers today can now copy, paste, erase, etc., thus writing is no longer the same as it was in the past. Nowadays, writers do not think with pen in hand placing each word in linear time on paper, creating perhaps comprehensible jottings and sentimental pieces following the classical Aristotelian organic unity of effect. "Keyboard thinking" is leaping along with each letter that is typed with rapid progression from phrase to phrase, each passage being cut and pasted quite easily. This has the effect of allowing the author to feel connected to the phenomena. "Keyboard thinking" allows the experience of *verfremdungseffekt* (intermittent) which approaches rule in a liberal manner. "Keyboard writing" uses discontinuous rather than adjacent penmanship, which is random and makes use of chaos rather than order.

Of course, the role of writers and storytellers is now entirely different. Those who are postmodern are intellectual and versatile. They arrange things so well that they do not seem to be creative and the blatant fabrications in fiction is not obvious. A limited narrator is one who says what he knows honestly, concealing what is generally fictional. As a result, we can see the difference between that of the writings of postmodernists with that of "traditional" writers. One might think that with such a difference, the new form would be shunned or even boycotted. Those writers who follow the old ways of thinking consider literary changes to be haphazard, arbitrary, and bordering on anarchy. The struggle will last until the new form is strong enough to supersede the old.

At this time the new—postmodern literature—is gradually

ascending the throne and confirming its position in our country, and writers who are in good form today are no longer engaged in "seamless paper thinking". Their discourse is illusory and they create a chaotic sequence of words in the narration demonstrating their use of "keyboard thinking" (for example, *The Sorrow of War* by Bao Ninh). Their characters have multiple appearances and their lives are oftentimes fragmented. Their plot suddenly mutates and there is no story (*Sitting* by Nguyen Binh Phuong is one example), or there is countless petty discourse intends to show that creativity is superior to gossip; life is sacrificed to chaos. The nature of literature is to tell a fabricated version of the truth, and existence is a text or form of discourse that is "walking about where it wants", meeting the readers' wants. Sometimes, it appears as a funny parody, or a festive situation.

Is Vietnamese postmodern literature an import, is it a domestic evolution? It is both, of course. Vietnam is backward compared to other countries and learning from the foreign literature cannot be denied. In Vietnam, postmodern literature has penetrated local culture. Most Vietnamese writers can perceive the spirit of postmodernism but not its structure or voice. While *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez was first translated into Vietnamese in the 1980s, it was not until the 2000s that *The Old Dead Children* by Nguyen Binh Phuong was written. This novel used the same dual structure [a story in reality (Liem's family) and a myth about his ancestors related to the preservation and use of treasure] and contained sexual themes. But one can see the difference between the two writers by the rough and swaggering voice of the barren, poor midlander of Vietnam. *The Old Dead Children* may be the best work of this "keyboard writing".

Similarly, *The Crystal Messenger* (1988) by Pham Thi Hoai, embodies similarities with *The Tin Drum* (Gunter Grass), by way of its unusual characters, Oscar and Be Hon. This does not mean that Vietnamese literature ranks lower; it does reflect the Vietnamese postmodern writers' use of foreign techniques. We can see the closeness in structure (a type of nonstructure) when comparing *God's Opportunities* (1999) by Nguyen Viet Ha and

Soul *Mountain* (1989, translated into Vietnamese in 2002) by Gao Xingjian. Personally, I found the structure of Nguyen Viet Ha's book better than that of Gao Xingjian's in the way of storytelling and building characters.

In fact, Nguyen Minh Chau admits to imitating Gabriel Garcia Marquez in the way he reproduced and processed his images. And he did produce magical elements in his excellent story *Giat Market*. But the philosophy of his book, which was not oriented towards "loneliness" as in Marquez's work, has been called "paralysis of awareness" because when people get accustomed to slavery as Khung's cow, absolute freedom is quite undesirable. One intended message is that those who are blind and dumb do not know the way, even though the path was previously been mapped out by others.

As with romantic literature, postmodern Vietnamese literature is also a multi-component mixed solution. Classical, modern and postmodern elements are all to be found. This is the identity of Vietnamese postmodernism.

2.2. Is 'uniqueness' postmodern?

Each literary era boasts of trademark uniqueness. *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) was, for example, unique at the time of Renaissance though in later years would lose its uniqueness. *Inspiration in Autumn*by Du Fu (712-770) was excellent and unique in the Chinese middle ages. *Chi Pheo* by Nam Cao (1915-1951) was unique in the Vietnamese modern period of 1930-1945. A rule of literature is constantly to create uniqueness and later on displace it. Literature is poor when it does not transform. It may as well be considered dead.

In general, we usually consider uniqueness as a quality that defines a classic. This however does not follow because each period has its own unique style. Nothing is generally unique forever.

Postmodernism in Vietnam establishes its own aesthetic of uniqueness. It should be noted that many writers now write in

the modern style rather than the postmodern style. Some of these writers are artists who write to express their inner selves, in the style and manner of old expressions. In this context, anyone who does not write in the postmodern style is lazy, unable to engage in innovative thinking, or someone who wants to write something "popular" for the monetary reward. Such writers are not expected to be innovative. They choose to follow fixed paths.

A unique living writer today is Nguyen Ngoc Tu (1976-). Though this "keyboard" writer has just produced some collections of short stories, it is through *The Endless Field* that she joined the ranks of the greatest Vietnam writers. Making her work unique is her reworking of a famous story about a field that was full of magic but very familiar to readers. It seems that in each of the Vietnamese people remains a field of unconsciousness, a depth of the soul where they empathize, feel happiness, and suffer in these fields of a thousand years. Nguyen Ngoc Tu has clearly created a new style of writing, a certain postmodernist "uniqueness".

Many feel that the best Vietnamese novel of the twentieth century is *The Sorrow of War* by Bao Ninh (1952-). Ninh associated the feeling of sadness with war, death, and destruction, while many Vietnamese writers of his time insisted on a more positive engagement. He was, of course, immediately criticized. This opposing view did not deny that the war was fought to unify the country. He depicted soldiers' lives which was often hidden. For this, Bao Ninh made a new view of history. The immense loss and sadness of victory provided a new dimension to the experience. Obviously, victory brought joy. But the aftermath also compelled for a collective reflection on the physical and emotional damage brought by the war. This is a uniquely postmodernist perspective in Vietnamese literature.

When it comes to postmodern writing, most researchers around the world take note of unique innovations, and these are sometimes extreme. For example, Donald Barthelme (1931-1989) presented something unique with his short story *The Glass*

Mountain in which he numbered each sentence. Postmodern literature has innovative features which have specific cultural and individual markers and it is also associated with cryptic-ness and challenge. Because of this, any "cryptic" literary phenomenon would always be labeled as postmodern. In contrast, anything that is understandable would not be called postmodern. This is true for the most part, but not absolutely. A unique phenomenon is considered postmodern if it meets the following criteria.

2.3. Lao Tzu discourse: ‘nature’, ‘chaos’, ‘games’

Lao Tzu (5th-4th century BCE) taught people to "live naturally" (Forbes, A.; Henley, D., 2012) but he did not mention some things about "chaos" or "games". However, if we "live naturally", we will inevitably be confronted with the two aforementioned principles as the nature of nature is "chaos" and also follows "game" rules. When referring to the basic principles of postmodern philosophy, we use in this discussion the *Lao Tzu discourse*.

Postmodernism is associated with innovation and there is no repetition within its creative subject. So, "innovation" itself has a criterion that could be called postmodern. However, innovation in literature does not meet all the time any of the four criteria: the *world is chaotic, life is nothing, life is a text, existence is a game*. These four are our basic presuppositions of what the postmodern is.

Actually, no postmodern work satisfies all four categories and if it meets just one of the four, that work can be called postmodern. Postmodern writers follow "nature" in feeling and reasoning. Conspicuous expression is not there in the narrative process. Whether the narrative is in the third or first person, postmodern narrators try to resign overall and eventual voice. Their discourse is what is most used by characters in the story. They become witnesses but at the same time hesitate in expression.

"Self-dialogue" is the method most often used by narrators

in postmodern storytelling. But that method always has the characteristic of trying to betray itself. A discourse which does not use a "dual voice" is not likely to be postmodern. This narrative often creates parody, irony, or humor in the text. Laughter in postmodern literature is self-depreciating laughter. It is both awakening and reflective.

Nguyen Huy Thiep's short stories contain a lot of this parodic laughter. He is a master Vietnamese writer of postmodern short stories. "Keyboard" Thiep (1950-) is good at using reflexive laughter to wake and warn people about shortcomings and mistakes which could be avoided. Thiep's parodic images are of kings, generals, and workers from history, literature, and life.

Respecting the chaos of the world, writers look at life as it is. The natural movement of life will answer for itself in all situations. In postmodernity, artists intervene to make the situation more complicated. Modern artists are seen as using the process of participation in order to stabilize the chaos. We call this process *Confucius discourse*. Meanwhile, as mentioned, the postmodern aesthetic process is to be described as *Lao Tzu discourse*. Accordingly, chaos was natural for all existence so no intervention is taken to escape it. Artists cannot and should not be involved. Postmodern writers have done this well. Characters in their novels are built up from fragments, a lack of coherence being the tradition. They deny any unique brightness. They decentralize characters and do not build 'nail characters' to hang, hook the other characters onto. Each character has a destiny and dependence only because of their selection.

With *Decentralization* and *multi-subjectivity*, the postmodern is influenced by the ideas of "chaos" and "games". According to postmodern writers, life is always chaotic in nature and order is only temporary, and always has its "rules". Meeting both requirements, any literary work can stand in *Lao Tzu discourse*.

Poetry pioneered in the postmodernist territory. If Dadaism (known mostly through poetry from 1916 to 1922) was considered as the beginning of postmodernism (Hassan 1998: 591), the germ

of postmodern poetry in Vietnam was New Poetry (Han Mac Tu, 1912-1940, as an example). It was not until the second generation that postmodernism was really revealed in the poetry of Hoang Cam (1922-2010), Tran Dan (1926-1997) and Le Dat (1929-2008). In the collection of poems *Shadow of Words*, the poem of the same title by Le Dat, endeared many readers. Yet few people feel that they know what that poem means. It is generally known that the poem employs the complex intertextuality of love stories, stories of loss, separation, and desire of happiness

Being apart, now I can see you

As a small young childhood

You gone white full bent missed frame

Rainy seasons few clouds of fall

Restless garden in season blossoms go away

You are still around but where are you

Afternoon at Au Lau

shadow of words shakes bridge standing

Now postmodern poetry is essentially a continuation of surrealistic poetry. Dadaism poetry was so innovative and reckless that it ignored the ability of readers to understand it, and so it died at a young age. However, Surrealistic poetry which was born later (after 1924) has had long-lasting vitality.

Postmodernism in Vietnamese literature at present is not notable because there are so few good Vietnamese writers. In fact, there has never yet been an excellent postmodern Vietnamese writer. However, it is felt that there does exist a Vietnamese type of postmodern literature.

It should be noted that in current Vietnamese literature, only modern writing is easily published and available to the public. Most of readers like stories which are exciting and

coherent, or are about human effort overcoming all obstacles. Few have an interest in reading creative works which only suggest.

Happily, although there are few progressive Vietnamese writers, there is a perceived ongoing evolution of aesthetic thinking. Over the decades, some familiar names may be listed—Nguyen Khai (1930-2008), Nguyen Minh Chau (1930-1989), Le Dat; and a next generation writers Nguyen Huy Thiep, Bao Ninh, Luu Quang Vu (1948-1988), Nguyen Quang Thieu (1957-), Pham Thi Hoai (1960-), Cao Duy Son (1956-), Ta Duy Anh (1959-), Nguyen Binh Phuong (1965-), and Nguyen Ngoc Tu. Their works are considered to be the best of Vietnamese literature over the last three decades.

Cao Duy Son is known for *Old House on the Spring*. The story was written in the minimalist style of American postmodernists such as Raymond Carver (1939-1988) and Tobias Wolff (1945-). The story focuses on a teacher's loneliness and unhappiness (a typical Raymond Carver's character). He spent all his life devoted to benevolence, righteousness, and beauty but eventually he was left with nothing. The plot is not unusual, but the way it was told is wonderful. In addition, the story contained highly iconic images. Besides being a teacher he was also an intellectual and a normal man in certain circumstances. Because it is not presented clearly, it is pleasurable for postmodern readers who found themselves to be respected and to have a voice in creative literature.

2.4. When did Vietnamese postmodern literature first appear?

It is difficult to answer this question. Different researchers have different opinions on this. Personally, when I compared earlier domestic literature with foreign literature to attempt discovering the distinguishing characteristics of Vietnamese literature, I came to think that Nguyen Khai was a pioneer in the field of innovative prose from modern literature to postmodernism. This can be seen when looking at his transition from epic inspiration to normal life inspiration. Along with that process, there is the

transformation of the central role: from the images of the soldiers who praise the movement romantically (*Conflict, 1959-1962; Peanut Season, 1960*) to the little civilian touched with satire, irony, nostalgia (*Meeting at the End of Year, A Hanoi Person*). The conversion process is revealed in the titles of the stories. Nguyen Khai made his postmodern project more pronounced with his *It is God Who Smiles* in 2003. Although this is a memoir describing his writing life, it shows that his vision is no longer as robust as it used to be.

In the world of poetry, postmodernism was embraced by Le Dat and Hoang Cam. There was also a group of surrealists who composed a collection titled *Fall Spring Poems* (1942). Due to the distinctive nature of the poetry, it is considered to be an innovative and pioneering verbal art form. What poetry achieved was followed by narrative and drama. The said "games" philosophy in postmodern creativity is expressed in poetry very clearly. The poems had its own rules. We live in time, and time is transparent, with no beginning and no end. We know that people and everything depend on time but there has perhaps been no one who has paid attention to the color of time. It was not until Doan Phu Tu (1910-1989) wrote *The Color of Time* that we learned the time has its color, has a wealth of tone, has variations by itself.

Vietnamese drama is extremely weak with only a few names that can be mentioned: Doan Phu Tu, Nguyen Huy Tuong (1912-1960) and Luu Quang Vu. Vietnamese people are good at poetry. Poetry appears everywhere. There is always poetry at any time. Poetry exists with farming, fighting, love, forlornness, and even with quarrels. The Vietnamese cannot live without poetry. Therefore, Vietnamese's poetry is fairly good. It's always at the top of the list of Vietnamese art forms but drama could be said to be at the bottom of that list. The Vietnamese drama of Nguyen Huy Tuong is a historical achievement and Luu Quang Vu was a noted postmodern dramatist. Unfortunately, he died young.

Nguyen Khai, Nguyen Minh Chau, Thanh Thao (1946-), and

other "keyboard writers" will have no invariant ego as artist but they did have accomplishments in each different period, each realizing the plight, the beauty and the happiness in life. It should be noted that changing the creative look did not mean turning ones back on the past. It is simply a new awareness, a new integration into the mainstream of a new form of artistic thinking in response to the changes of the country and humanity.

2.5. Chaos in "The General Retires"

Chaos is one of the key concepts of postmodernism. Researchers use it as a core criterion to distinguish the postmodern sense of modernity. This feature is easily seen in any postmodern literary works. While many writers present chaos through the structure and imagery, Nguyen Huy Thiep has shown chaos at once in the title of his short story *The General Retires*.

Chaos, in the sense that it is something disordered and not a rule or inconsistency, is a combination of many differences that are not subject to the judgment of others. In *The General Retires*, the general, the son, and the daughter-in-law are all aware of an existing chaos. The general is fiercely opposed to this state of being. The daughter-in-law calls the status quo "chaos" but she accepts the general's view and adjusts to his ideas. Meanwhile, the general's son gets a western education and is does accept the concept and existence of "chaos".

Being aware to the contemporary life, Nguyen Huy Thiep didn't choose to give his story the titles of *The General in the Battlefield* or *The General Goes to War*. Instead he chose *The General Retires*. This title says a lot. Immediately, readers will form a mental picture of the old general. His gestures will no longer be imposing and must show only a helplessness and bitterness before the world that is moving quickly in a way that is completely different from that of the past. The problems the general faces are not about war and death but about living, and yet the general's concern is not about his life but that of his descendants.

When talking about "generals", we might imagine a bright, central position from which a majestic general is leading everybody. But this story is about a retired general. This means he has no power and no strength. There has been a dissolution of power. This dissolution in a life parallels narratives in earlier chronicles of epic works. Quite importantly, with the dissolution of power, moral values which are no longer appropriate cease to exist.

The general's name is Thuan. The narrator presents his background clearly: "My father, Thuan, was the oldest son of the Nguyen family. In our village, the Nguyens are a very large family with more male descendants than just about anyone except for maybe the Vus. My grandfather was a Confucian scholar, who, later in life, taught school. He had two wives. His first wife died a few day after giving birth to my father, forcing my grandfather to take another step" (Thiep 2003: 38). Even with that, the general's life isn't presented seamlessly. Mainly, the general is portrayed a short time after he retired.

The title *The General Retires* implies that this is the story of a general who has retired, lost all power and lives in a "labyrinth" of life. But he experiences few problems related to actual retirement. A few events are presented quite simply: At the age of 70 (a high age) the general left the army to return to a house which he built eight years previously in a suburban village. His wife had been senile. The general's son, the narrator "I" named Thuan (and this name is mentioned only once) did the telling. He was 37 years old, married, and he had two daughters, Vi and Mi. His daughter-in-law named Thuy, was a doctor in the maternity hospital. The general's material life was prosperous in a time of renewal in the country. Shortly after he went home, the general's wife died. The general wanted to do the housework but his daughter-in-law would not let him. Later, the general visited his former unit and died on the battlefield. His body was buried in a martyrs' cemetery somewhere in Cao Bang.

According to this sequence of events we will see a picture

of a general that is not unlike that of other retired generals. Accustomed to living a military life, the general is seen as having a loving wife and children, and he shows that he can feel the suffering of his servants by wanting to do manual work with them. He wanted to live as an equal to everyone (he gave his clothing away to all equally), he did not accept crime (an event about a fetus) and he had his own view of what is an unethical action (Thuy has an affair with Khong). In short, even after he retired the general continued to be a shining example of morality.

However, he himself is a tragic person. The tragedy derives from his unfamiliarity with the community and the chaotic movement of life. It can be said that the general embodies infinite loneliness. Throughout his life he lived in self lessness for a noble ideal, but when he went to live in the village, the general found himself to be "outside of life". In peacetime, society has its own criteria and people have different goals. As is shown in the work, in peacetime people wish to get rich and acquire material things, and people lose those qualities that were once thought to be good.

The general's helplessness is expressed wherever he goes and with whoever he forms a relationship. That is, of course, except on the battlefield, which has been a full life for him. It is no coincidence that the narrator has the general sacrificing his body on the battlefield. Death in battle also carries postmodern nuances, and thus no one knows the reason for the general's death or the manner of his death. This is completely different from traditional epic narratives. In *The General Retires,* only a few words are written about the general's death as family members receive the news. Avoiding a grand narrative of death is a method of postmodern writers. If anyone compares the events in this story with the nation's history he can not know whether his death is related to France, the United States,or China. The death of the general is really a tantalizing sociological reading.

Blurring the death, the narrator does not focus on causes

or events or the funeral (this is how solemn epic narratives treated heroes), showing that praise for the community is not the main object of this work. Here we can say that Nguyen Huy Thiep is one of the first Vietnamese writers to reject the use of epic in prose. Rather, he poses and solves problems of postmodern individuals.

This view reflects national social rules. During the war, "community" as the ideal always comes first. Before the time of death, before the moment when one has a choice between freedom or death, a true patriot has only one option and that is to die for national independence and freedom—"my death for my country". In peacetime, life is no longer so simple. Earning a living and competing in the activities of daily life causes human factors to emerge. The "community" does not have a single supreme principle. In peacetime, people have a great many options, and personal choices tend to be pragmatic, and benefiting only the individual. However, their choices, positive or negative, depend on how they perceive and assess. If they are embedded in a community, people will have few options and their thinking must conform to local ideals. When living with personal criteria, a wider variation in lifestyle and goals is possible. This manner lifestyle creates chaos in society. In this context it is extremely difficult to find a voice of unity. The general speaks with the voice of power and ideals. The general's son doesn't speak with the same voice. The general's daughter-in-law speaks in yet a different kind of voice, and the children's different still. All of these create the chaos, the "multi-voice" within a house that has "the shape of a barracks" but is not a barracks.

So, there is an implicit conflict between the principles: the first is harmony and equality which is of the general while the other is the practical calculations of postmodern people. As a result of this conflict, we can see that Nguyen Huy Thiep had come to feel the validity of new principles in a new age, that of postmodernity.

The subjects of postmodernism, the "grand narratives" (such

as living principles and moral and aesthetic models, terms formulated by F. Lyotard), which were legitimate in social life, have now become obsolete. This is a very important aspect of postmodern awareness. Once an issue is accepted in a community, it becomes a criteria against which everything else can be evaluated. With postmodernists, there is no absolute right or wrong and there is no one thing that is legitimate. There is the risk that once everyone in the community speaks in a perpetual discourse, it will be the only standard of the time. Such discourse can easily penetrate into the unconscious and become an unconscious power. Consequently, there comes to be little criticism within a society and growth and stability are hard to attain.

Therefore, postmodernists continuously break away with grand narratives. In this case, development within society, literature, and the arts occurs on the boundary of grand narrative innovations, and during the shift between petit and grand narratives.

Returning the time of Nguyen Huy Thiep's composition, we could see that Vietnam was undergoing a comprehensive renovation of the economy, science and technology, along with arts and culture. In addition, Vietnam has been importing many foreign products and ideas to raise local living standards. This process has created many crossroads in lifestyle and in the perception of human beings. So, people have come to accept a new aesthetic criteria—a postmodern criteria, and this is gradually being legitimized in the lives of everybody.

In this context, Nguyen Huy Thiep chose a daring way that soon became mainstream in Vietnamese literature: the vision, the feeling, and the writing of postmodernism. An important problem of humans in post-war times is experienced by the general who has lost the untouched majesty of an eagle with wings spread in the open sky. This happened simply because the general grew to be old and power was transferred to another generation. When a command economy shifts to that of a market economy, a new style of management is needed, along with a new way of

thinking and living. The general's descendants were able to adapt to the new reality.

Only the general's situation is pitiful. When a society makes a sudden shift from a command economy to a market economy, the people of that society will focus on this new possibility: *earning money*. Hence the villa (a prior symbol of beauty) that the general built after a lifetime of hard battle was transformed into a garden-pond-barn used to raise and sell dogs, fish, and plants (the income being the new kind of beauty). The general's family lives on the resource of the garden. Thuy is a householder, so her voice is full of power. She is like a *general* in that house. Women took the throne and so many paradoxical things happened. Thuy committed adultery and her husband did not dare say or do anything. He wandered through the streets as he waited for his wife to finishing her liaison to go home. In addition, Thuy told people that they should dig up jars in the pond to show her absolute power in the general's house. It should be noted that Thuy is a doctor and therefore an educated person. This is a time when more women are educated. With knowledge and money one has strength and power, and Thuy has both. In this case the story could be renamed *Thuy, the King or Female King*.

Thuy and her husband's generation seem to enjoy life, but the generation of the general thinks that it is disordered. Especially bad is the relationship between Thuy and Khong. The general says to his son, "You're meek. And that's because you can't stand to live alone" (Thiep 2003: 55). There is serious dialogue between the general and those of the following generations. When a granddaughter innocently asked him about the words of a song, "The road to the battlefield is beautiful at this time of year, Grandfather?"the general shouts. "Your mother! Know-it-all!" (Thiep 2003: 56). Of course, the general doesn't abuse the grandchildren who are very innocent. Instead he criticizes the author who wrote the song or the teacher who put the song into his grandchildren's mind. The problem here is not about who is right or wrong—it is about perception. The general sees the differences in society after the war is over. He doesn't

like it but he can't do anything about it. The new society is operating with its own discourse, not unifying chaos but with chaos being commonplace.

A characteristic of postmodern literature is the listing of events with dizzying speed. Narrators show events and the readers receive and absorb. If the readers don't think, they can not understand the works. So, in the postmodern time, reading is synonymous with creating. Reading can no longer be enjoyed leisurely, heart to heart, as it could before. One can no longer trust the author to spell everything out clearly in his work. In the flowing lines of numerous events, we get many things to think about.

Thuy is a doctor at the maternity hospital where abortions are done and the fetuses are fed to the dogs. This is so shocking that even people who have a good imagination find it hard to accept. However, this could happen in real life and this reappears in the story obsessively. I do not know how many doctors do this (only a few?) but Nguyen Huy Thiep presents this detail in this story to show a moral difference in postmodern times. The writer has made a legend of the "difference" in human life.

Or when telling a story about a poet named Khong, the narrator uses only the name *Khong* (in Vietnamese the name means *Confucius*) but behind that there is a terrible collapse of an idol. The name makes readers think of Confucius, the sage and founder of Confucianism, a humanist who specializes in kindness, wisdom, and faith. One line that he is famous for is *Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself*. But now, the narrator tells of the poet Khong who charmed the other's wife, and he gives him a job that smells—"he worked at the fish sauce factory" (Thiep 2003: 54). By associating these things in the readers' mind, this serves to disgrace the saint.

In a poetic manner, the narrator dwells on the 'I' who was almost cuckolded by the wife (or had been cuckolded) and gives bitter comments about the randomness and irony of fate. "I went to the library to borrow some books as an experiment. I read

Lorca, Whitman, etc. I vaguely felt that exceptional artists are frighteningly lonely. Suddenly, I saw that Khong was right. I was only pissed off that he was so ill-bred. Why didn't he show his poems to somebody else besides my wife?" (Thiep 2003: 55). "The dedoublement" appears in this review, the narrator admits it *right* on the one hand, and abuses *ill-bred* on the other hand. It is a state of postmodern sense. The spokesman isn't going to disadvantage of himself by criticizing an opponent. So judgements are not from one view but from many views. The multi-value point of view is also an expression of postmodern chaos.

Returning to the general's loneliness, the house that he spent money to build was designed to be half villa and half barrack. A balance between the two was, of course, alien to him. The nature of strangeness lies in the difference between *unique* and *multiple*. The general's mansion is inhabited, but it became a cluttered mess. It was a good place to run a business rather than a place for an old person.

By looking at the relationships of the neighbors, the reader can also see that things are topsy-turvy. They suggest solitude. The general's villa is far from a rural area but it is not near a city. This type of chaotic space is neither familiar nor unfamiliar. A multipolarity is also seen in people's relationships. The relationships of the general and the children with his relatives have not gone well. Because he was so far away for so long, memory of him in the villagers' minds are only that of a proud general. Meanwhile, the relationship between Thuy, who takes the rich person's view, and Bong, a poor person, is quite complex. Bong rants, "Damn those intellectuals! They look down on working people. If I didn't respect his father, I'd never knock on their door" (Thiep 2003: 43), but whenever needing money he'd come by to borrow. Thus, what the characters do and what they say does not match. This has created a "fragmentary" nature in the character with loneliness being the inevitable result.

In the story, the general isn't the only one feel lonely—even the narrator, who is considered to be a trendy intellectual. He exclaims, "I felt very lonely. My children also seemed lonely. And

so did the gamblers. And so did my father" (Thiep 2003: 51). But loneliness of the "I" seems to be temporary. His words came after the death of his mother. But the biggest threat is to the kids. When Mi and Vi saw Bong open the dead grandmother's mouth to put money into it (following the superstition that the dead need money to carry them to the afterlife), Mi asked her father, "Why do you still have to pay for the ferry after you've died? Why were coins put in Grandmother's mouth?" Vi said: "Father, does it have to do with the saying, 'Shut your mouth, keep the money'?". I was crying: "You kids won't understand," I said. "I don't understand myself. It's all superstition." Vi said, "I understand. You need a lot of money in this life. Even when you're dead" (Thiep 2003: 51). The dialogue between the 14-year old child and the 12-year-old child shows the face of the times. In peacetime, people have come to pay more attention to money and every family wants to have more money. The two children view life through an innocent child's eyes and they say things that adults feel that they should not say.

To think a little further, we see that Vi's questions make metaphors about the way of living (Shut your mouth and keep the money) and the *object of daily life* (to obtain more money). That is a way of life that is completely foreign to the general who is somewhat of an intellectual like "I" who seems to spend his days buried in scientific topics. As a result, the more strange a person feels, the more chaotic life seems to get. He would have a hard time taking part in daily life and he'd find it difficult to find his direction in society. Feeling strange among people comes from not having the same voice as the majority of people. That must be true throughout the history of mankind.

The story has created a labyrinth for human perception. The funeral scene of the general's wife had wrapped in it the tragi-comedy of fate and the variety and polyphony of life: "My house was only five hundred meters from the cemetery, but if you took the main road through the village gate it would be two kilometers. On the small road it wasn't possible to push a hearse so the coffin had to be carried on the pallbearers'shoulders. There were thirty of them taking turns, with many men my wife

and I didn't recognize. They carried the coffin casually, as if it were a most natural thing to do, as if they were carrying a house-pillar. They chewed betel nuts, smoked, and chattered as they walked. When they rested, they stood and sat carelessly next to the coffin. One man, who was all sprawled out, said, "It's so cool here. If I weren't busy, I'd sleep here until nightfall." Bong said, "I beg you guys. Hurry up so we can all go home and eat" (Thiep 2003: 51). There is a panache and slowness of modern men as well as an innocence of postmodern people. The death, a tragic loss for the family, is to strangers only a death like any other and the funeral work that they are doing is just common work, too.

Above we mentioned that the general was somewhat unfamiliar to the children. Now, we will discuss something that is an Eastern characteristic. The general had only two granddaughters and that was thought to be a tragedy. His son had no sons. The narrator did not explain this but, in the Eastern way of thinking, when a man has no son, the family will likely not be able to care for the older generation and there is a meaningless sense of striving. In addition, when the general asked his granddaughters to bring him some easy-to-read books, he was told that there were no easy-to-read books there. This indicates that the general was feeling loneliness. The house was not for him, and life was not for him. His place was on the battlefield and he fell down on it. This was the first death of a soldier in Vietnamese postwar literature of postwar to have occurred without fighting.

But this is not unreasonable. Soldiers have difficulty adapting to post-war life and, even when they are alive they seem to have died. The general's death was also legendary, perhaps a metaphor for the death of a lifestyle to show the transformation of people. A new generation is born while the intense wars have being fought, and values change as life changes.

Thuy became a general. Thuy represents that which is postmodern. It is important that Thuy has accepted the changes

of the new era in her life. In this work, Thuy is a dedoublement character, a peculiar kind of postmodern character. Thuy's bad behavior as exemplified in the story of fetus, her affair with Khong, and her indifference to the death of her husband's mother, show a variation of a way of life which is practical and existential. But readers can not deny that Thuy has virtues. The general disliked dogs and so she stopped feeding them, she gave money to Co and his daughter so they could move his wife's grave, and she gave money to Bong too. But behind these good deeds there is a subtle coldness associated with the postmodern lifestyle. It is also a fact that Thuy hesitated before she made a decision. Thuy is unhappy that her husband's father did not like the way she got her money. Thuy regrets the relationship she had with Khong. Thuy did not like when her husband gave money to Bong. The woman who felt many moods also experienced many emotions. She is an active person. In this view, Thuy suffers the most and is a typical example of a postmodern person.

The main reason for her turmoil is that Thuy helped support the family. In this role, Thuy is thorough. In the house, everything large and small is managed by Thuy. The husband was only a shadow figure. When mourning the mother, or when there was anything to be solved, the "I" always had to rely on Thuy to do it. That is completely contrary to custom of "respecting men" in Vietnamese tradition. Thuy has really become the "king" of the story.

Nguyen Huy Thiep has addressed "respecting women" in his writings. His heroines are always brilliant, albeit they are very small in a busy life. Nguyen Huy Thiep seems to believe in women who live in a vast, chaotic and disorderly life. Reading *The General Retires*, we can see that besides the hustle-bustle of life, there seems to be ground water flowing which is forming a new criterion for life. That flow gets a good deal of its energy from Thuy. The woman has many mistakes (according to the traditional view) but at the same time she is also a person who proposes the beginning of postmodernism for a new era of the nation.

After the general retired the world did not have a "king" anymore. The unstableness of values and lifestyles proposed a neutral solution between the old and the new, between right and wrong, and between good and bad. A world without kings shows the chaos of that era and it asserts new values which are similar to the old values in that existence is both independence and dependence, with each breaking the other. Of course there will be no principles or ultimate truths in the realm without a king of chaos. However, chaos would be a premise for a new order, one which would be better and more useful.

Ⅲ. Conclusion

It is time to declare that there does exist postmodern Vietnamese literature for otherwise we are just "ourselves" of several decades ago. In the context of the "love materials" of today, spiritual values are overlooked (literature in Vietnamese schools and life reflects this lack) so postmodern literature has difficulty finding a favorable place in today's Vietnamese life. Postmodern literature is only read by highly educated people because of its intellectual nature. It is a matter of taste—who seeks this experience and knowledge. To appreciate something more than the mundane, readers must wish to grow and expand, to wish to read the unknown, and to be able to explore and understand their own feelings. "The knowing" of postmodern literature is democratic and autonomous. Without that, there is no land to live for even unique, invaluable literary works.

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The Commanding Amigo and Its Spirit Embodiment: An Inquiry into the Relationship between Manobo-Visayan *Compadrazgo* Social Relationship in the "Modern" Manobo Cosmology and Ritual

Jose S. Buenconsejo

[***Abstract***]

The entry of the logging industry in the once heavily forested riverine middle Agusan Valley where aboriginal Manobos live meant the entry of the material practice of wage labor into this out-of-the-way place. Wage labor converted the once relatively isolated, subsistence animist Manobos into laborers of the expanding capitalist regime. A symptom of modernity, this wage labor also accompanied the coming of Visayan settlers (also loggers paid by wage) who introduced indigenous Manobos the *compadrazgo* social relationship. This friendly relationship across ethnic identities legitimated social ties and is a social material practice represented in recent bilingual Manobo possession rituals where the Visayan spirit is incarnated along with Manobo spirits. To understand the idea behind spirit embodiment, I explore Manobo ritual as mimesis or poeisis. This representation is shaped by concrete material realities as much as these realities, in turn, are reconfigured by ritual practice. In the older Manobo cosmology, which is based on subsistence economy

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and dependent on the forest and rivers, individuals have an externalized self (as manifest in the idea of twin soul), in which the inner vital principle is co-extensive with a spirit double in cosmos. Manobos imitate the perceived workings of nature in ritual so as to control them in times of illnesses. In contrast, the mimesis of the Visayan spirit is based on a different political economic set up with its attendant asymmetrical interpersonal relationship. By symbolically representing the Visayan patron as friend, Manobos are able to negotiate the predicament of their subalternity in local modernity.

Keywords: compadrazgo, cosmology, ritual, mimesis, poeisis

Agusan Manobos liken the experience of participating in their spirit-possession ritual as collective dreaming. They feel euphoric, suddenly become open to others, and are enthused in attending ritual enactments where their individual wills are absorbed by group consensus. During ritual, they become absolutely agreeable to collective decisions, following the spirit voices that are incarnated in the medium's body, which stands as a symbol of authority or of customary law, even as, at the same time, they feel disputatious in dialogues with spirits from which they learn the causes of things. They do rituals with a sense of duty, holding them with a sense of compulsion and urgency, especially in times of sicknesses and crises, when prior consultations with religious specialists (*baylanen*), who envoice their spiritguides, make it clear that there is a need for it.

Manobos call their ritual "hinang" ("to make," parallel to the classical Greek concept of poeisis), which emphasizes the active or participative dimension of their social selves."[1)] To make" means to collectively produce a culturally-specific form, a ritual, which conjures a "picture" (a *mimema*) in the minds of

1) Mimesis is the "reception of mental images," while poeisis refers to the "production of objects intended to create mental images." The former is "passive,' the latter is "active" but both entail one another (Sörbom 2002: 24-25).

the Manobos, of their relationship to things outside of society, of their interpersonal ties with relatives and neighbors, or of connections to nature and the cosmos. Borne of their imaginative faculty, ritual as image (*mimesis*), however, is not a mere set of objects, speech, song, and movements to be heard and seen in performance that impresses in the mind of the participants. It is something felt bodily and vividly for Manobo ritual is a concrete, multi sensorial performance moment. From their epistemological standpoint, *to make a dream image of human-human and human-nature relationships is to invite participants to enter a mode of reality where contacts with the extraordinary or spirit world is affirmed.*

As it shall be shown, the kinds of ritual that the Manobos make are bound to a common purpose of controlling the relationships between humans and the forces of nature (embodied in the form of spirits) or its elements (embodied in tangible objects that are displayed and manipulated as symbols in ritual). Ritual is intentioned and purposive for it attempts to divine the causes of things with a view of remaking the unfathomable harmonious workings of nature that were "disturbed" or about to be disturbed by human activities. In anthropological parlance, one can call the dream-like mental image or representation of Manobo ritual as "magical" for it is about *practical effects* that come about as humans control the state of nature in ritual,[2] bargaining with the incarnated spirits not to cause further harm despite human intrusions. In a way, the mimetic nature of Manobo ritual bespeaks its fundamental role as a technology for getting into reality at close range, a capacious means for configuring what must have been into what should be (Taussig 1993: 19-32).

2) I draw here on an aspect of Maussian theory of magic that states that magic is practical, i.e., it is done to achieve tangible effects. However, Agusan Manobo possession ritual is also religious in nature because it concerns belief in the supernatural, embodies morality, and is held in public. Recent theorists have extended the Maussian notion of magic such as Taussig who, discussing Jean Rouch's ethnographic film Les *maîtres fous* (1953), see film technology as "magical" (as cited in Huggan 1997-98: 98).

This control is sensitive to the flow of time or is contingent. A wish for safe travel, for example, demands a prophylactic waving of a chicken (and, therefore, the use of this ritual object that is sacrificed and eaten after ritual event and manipulation of the spirit of the wind) so as to make it appear that the impending future is secured from a most unlikely incident of illness and death. In occasions when an undesirable human behavior had already caused harm through spirit-caused illness, Manobo ritual becomes a space to redress human wrong doings and therefore restore ideal human-to-nature relationships that have tangible effects on human relations. Manobo ritual, specifically the elaborate one, entails animal sacrifice and ends up with the feeding of spirits and a commensal meal. In short, a representation that is magically efficacious, Manobo ritual is an artifice of culture, something made-up or constructed; it is a product of a human creativity in actively apprehending reality so as to influence its outcomes.

The motivation for producing Manobo ritual is, of course, the Manobo faculty of the imagination. Manobos say that this need is often passively revealed to mediums in individual dreams or in spirit incarnations in ritual, which, as mentioned already, are dreamlike. Given the fact that Manobos hold their rituals for some very specific purposes, generally on the need to acquire favors from nature such as health and auspicious human activities, Manobos believe that *there is no gap between the mimetic representation that they make and the things in nature that this mimesis (imitation) represents*. It is not that they see the gesture of possession in the medium as a mere pictorial "mental image," but believe that the form and shape of those images, when ritually manipulated by the appropriate human agent at a correct moment, do have the actuality of unleashing power inherent in the objects ritually manipulated.[3] The belief of a real spirit truly incarnating or infusing in the medium's body after the rhetorical invocations is not felt as an illusion, but is always considered felicitous to external reality. Thus, if feeding a crocodile icon with

3) I discussed this proposition in another paper "Causation and the concept of agency in Agusan Manobo Ritual."

palm fronds (so as to prevent evil from eating human society) is a representation of the human desire not to be harmed by nature, Manobos do not distinguish the crocodile icon (a replicated mimema) to its referent. Even a replica of the crocodile can really eat up human beings.[4)]

In short, I argue in this paper that, for the Manobos, the concept of mimema is *both form and substance* and this, in turn, cannot be isolated from the magical actuality that, when acted upon, becomes a representation that it always embodies. This is the belief in the mimetic correspondence between the image and its represented where the medium/form and matter/substance are inseparable. Another way of stating this is that form is always already congealed with substance. This Southeast Asian belief departs radically from the classical Greek-Roman understanding of mimesis in which the mimema or representation is just a "make-believe," i.e., understood as icons that are separate from the real or their referent-objects (Sörbom). To investigate this argument, I address the following theoretical questions.

1) As a representation, how can it proven that the Manobo ritual *mimema* has a substantive link to objects in the Manobo cosmos?

2) What does this belief tell us about Manobo ideology on nature and on self-other relationships, which is linked, in turn, to the idea of Manobo society?

3) How does Manobo ritual, as a socially constructed imagination, configure the really real Visayan settler hegemony?

To make my interpretation coherent, my discussion on mimesis will revolve around the theme of the *relationship between self and the world through signs*. I shall offer an interpretation of the meanings of a specific ritual tukajan and of rituals in general that are so central to Manobo cosmology. An

4) See Buenconsejo, "Spirit of the Act."

understanding of Manobo cosmos would include exploring notions of self-other relationships that Manobo ritual represents as both mental image and embodied/indicative ritual expression. As mimetic image, ritual harnesses the natural power that inherently accompanies ritual performance as a social action. After establishing this, I shall present the recent local history of the place, particularly detailing the Visayan regional domination of the research area so as to demonstrate how the attendant asymmetrical political relation is embodied in the paternalistic *amigo* (friend) spirit who advises subaltern Manobos.

I. The Manobo concept of Externalized Person (Utow) in the Manobo Cosmos: Life (Ginhawa), Dream, and Death (Umagad)

Manobos think of a self that is in constant interaction with external entities of the world such as with all kinds of spirits (bound and unbound), souls of animals and plants, and souls of departed relatives. Even then, the self's doing-in-the-world is believed to have an awesome power for it can coerce the physical force of the cosmos, e.g., as in one's disorderly non-conventional illogical behavior which brings about the *anit* (lightning and thunder). As in spirit possession rituals, spiritual agencies of nature continually affect humans. Some are beneficial as in receiving grace (*pamaja*), while most are harmful to humans when they are smelled (*hangkos*), touched (*dagpi*), and seen. In short, the Manobo idea of self is one construed as existing in a world of resemblance where animate things of that world are in sympathies with one another and they can affect other things multidirectionally; thus, the many prohibitions. The act of planting made by a pregnant woman, for example, can influence the foetus inside her womb by virtue of her activity of growing a plant that is competing with her own body's nourishing of its foetus. Likewise, Manobos believe that forces inherent in two similar things, e.g., often clashes. This was the case of two sick siblings who were advised to be separated from each other

because each of their ginhawa (vital principle) was affecting the other. The Manobo self therefore is not an autonomous bounded entity in the world with its enduring essence but an entity that resembles all other entities in that world. Just as spirits can unbind themselves to enter human bodies, even shift shapes as in witches, human beings too have a capacity to break the boundaries of the body and hence transgress the inner and outer dimensions of the embodied self. In the ensuing exposition, I explore the multi-dimensionality of the Manobo self, which is made up of inner and outer components that are capable of movement across the domains of the cosmos.

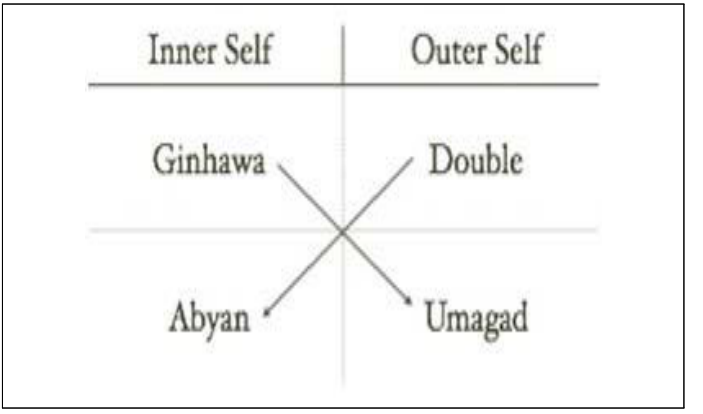

Figure 1. The Manobo Concept of Externalized Self

1.1 Ginhawa

Manobos call the vital principle of life inside the body, *ginhawa* (breath). This is a holistic concept, subsuming (1) physiology, (2) emotion, (3) thought, and (4) will. In <Table 1> below, one can see the multi dimensionality of the Manobo concept. In the right column of the table, I list the specific senses or references to the term "ginhawa" as they were uttered in different contexts of speaking. In the table, the word is used to mean physical breath (see first row), as feeling (2nd row), as inner will (3rd row), and as thinking (4th).

Table 1. Denotations to the word *ginhawa*

Enunciative context	Actual statement	Sense
1) Story: Old woman approaching orphaned siblings and asking for food saying	Please give me a little food. *Apasi new ubag.* There's breath of mine which is poor. *Kæ ginhawaku' nmayetey.*	physiological
2) Story: narrator describing how sad the rejected wife of Ujahay was	Her breath was supposed to be heart broken. *Te ginhawa din pedem pagsubu din.*	emotional
3) Ritual excerpt: Sacrificer explaining to ritual officiant or sacrificer about his mistake	I warned them, but I didn't allow my will indeed. *Kabeye ku kandan, peru wada man isugut ginhawa ku.*	agentive (Will)
4) Story: Narrator describing the breath of the policeman as he was seeing the dying Juan.	"Eh," said the policeman, a policeman indeed, *"E," kagi't ka pulis, ne gajed ne pulis,* (who was) figuring out his breath there. *matik-matik ma't diya ginhawa din.* It was known. *Nama-an man te kuwa.*	rational (mind/thought)
Ritual excerpt: Ritual interpreter explaining the misunderstanding among patients being "diagnosed" by edium	Perhaps there was misunderstanding among you. *Siguru medu-en mge diperensya new.* Your "breath" had grievances. *Migsawa te ginhawa new.*	*rational (mind/thought)

1.2 Umagad

In addition, ginhawa is not bound to the body since birth; it is a detachable element, like a spirit or a soul of the cosmos, which can involuntarily or voluntarily move on its own. In the state of detachment or un-awareness such as in dreams, illness, and death, the ginhawa becomes another term, *umagad* (soul), a word that, I argue, does not differ in substance from the

ginhawa, but only in its state, i.e., the ginhawa is inside the body, while the umagad is outside of it. (See the arrow from upper left pointing to lower right in the figure above). That said, one can say that the umagad is an “alternate” term for ginhaw a.[5] Below are locutions that support my interpretation. These statements were culled from a recorded ritual performance. In the first, a ritual participant recounts his dream about a woman who killed a black dog and this speaker reflects on his thought using the word "umagad" (and not ginhawa) because he was in a dream state (read: his self was not in its usual place, which is inside the body). In the second and third locutions, the ritual interpreter describes the ill state of the patients, using the word "umagad" (not ginhawa) to mean the "souls" of the patient. In the last statement, the ritual officiant hails the soul of a dead relative.

Table 2. Denotations of the word umagad

Enunciative context	Actual statement	State
1) A ritual participant getting the “floor” of the ritual conversation to speak about his dream.	I dream about a woman who was black, *Migtaga-inep a behi ku ne ma-itum,* who got angry at me regarding (the person) *nabeyu ku'n kanay dew* who killed the black dog. *hinta't migtigbas te kan iduq ne ma-itum.* My soul was able to say *Naka-iling isab te umagad ku ne*	The person or umagad in a **dream state.**
2) Ritual interpreter explaining to the sick patient about the cause of her illness	Eh, you were tied, your soul. *Eh, pighiketan kad ku'n te kuwa, nu umagad.*	The person or umagad in an **ill state.**

5) Like the Christian Visayans' “All Soul’s Day,” Manobos also spend an effort in remembering the umagad of dead relatives annually.

Enunciative context	Actual statement	State
3) Ritual interpreter speaking to the possessed medium after the spirit revealed (*nawnagen*) the image of catching the patient's soul	But Sabuya_n caught them, *Peru nasakpan ni Sabuya_n,* because this one has been chosen. *kay si-e sabu-uk iyan napili-an.* The soulwascaughtindeed. *di nasakpan da te umagad.* It was already going there (i.e., place of death). *Egpatideg en man pedem diya.*	The person or umagad in an **ill state.**
4) Ritual officiant invoking the souls of the dead	Pity, I'm kneeling in front of *Adangay, migyuhud a't atubangan* of Iya Ibing's soul, *(clears throat) umagad ni Iya Ibing,* especially (because she is) our grandparent, *ne mahilabi ka man te mge apuq ta,* including your soul Teryo. *hastasikunaTeryo.*	**Souls of the dead**

The English words "breath" for "spirit" and "soul" do not make this distinction, i.e., between entities of the body that are either inside or outside of it. Nor does the common, or what seems to be a Christian, understanding of the Filipino ethnopsychology about ginhawa and *kaluluwa* (the equivalent of the Manobo umagad), the former being located in the liver and the latter as "head soul" (Salazar). Based on the principle of detachability and fluidity of Manobo self's components, ginhawa does not co-exist at the same time. Unlike Christian Filipino ethnopsychology in which kaluluwa is the 'head soul' or is the substance of conscience, the Manobo concept of self, to re-iterate, is not interiorized, which does not mean Manobos do not have a capacity for self-awareness. In fact, guilt and wrong doings are admitted in public, in rituals that validate the socio-centric definition of individual lives. John Garvan, e.g., lists the many types of "trial by ordeal" in which the truth of guilt is established. For the Manobos, ginhawa or life is all there is inside the body, the seat of which is the liver.

1.3 Dungan (spirit double)

Connecting this permeability of the self, which has both inner and outer realms, to the right column of the paradigm (i.e., Figure 1 above), Manobos also believe that each living person has inherent linkages with nature in the form of a spirit-double who resides outside of oneself but is connected to the self's inner core by default. This elusive spirit double (in nature) of a person is referred to in <Table 3> below, which is a recorded excerpt of ritual performance. The ritual participant, a woman, discloses that she no longer does the obligation to hold rituals in remembrance of her spirit helpers. The ritual interpreter accepts this statement about her forgetfulness, but then assures the woman that she has always been accompanied by her spirit-double and that is why real men still lust for her. The sponsor of this specific ritual, who happens to be the mother of this woman, reveals that this spirit resides in a tree, using the word "dungan" (or spirit-double).

Table 3. Excerpt of ritual where concept of spirit-double is articulated

Excerpt from conversation among three ritual participants:	
Woman: I no longer remember the ritual obligation, child, since no resources are available to me.	*Wada ku'd man, utuq, demdema kan, su wada'g paka-apjew kanay.*
Ritual Interpreter: Correct. But you had always been accompanied there. That is why you desire	*Lagi. Peru du-en da ikew pirmi da'g duma-duma. Purhisu kaliyag*
the men.	*ka'g kuwa te mge yukes.*
Ritual sponsor: Wow! (Like a) 14-year old (teen-ager)! Together with that tree "double" in Waloe.	*Yati! 14 years old!* ***Dungan*** *te kan bænu diya't Walo.*
Ritual Interpreter: Indeed. Inherited (the lustful behavior).	*Iyan. Pamaka-irhinsya. (laughs)*
Woman: Why is that (lustful spirit) still seen?	*Nekey man kankatæ-an pad man?*

In everyday life, Manobos do not spend much time idly speculating about the invisible double that any person has, not until it is believed to bother the self, i.e., by giving the host person unease, sometimes very frequently and intensely.

Stemming from nature, this concept of spirit-double connected to a person at infancy is further evidence of the concept of the world of resemblance in which society and nature mimetically corresponds to and which is co-extensive to each other. No ritual can be so vivid a support to this interpretation than the *tukajan*, which is held for the benefit of an infant. In this example, I show evidence that ritual objects as icons do have substantial links to their actual referents in external reality.

1.4 Tukajan

Tukajan is done to a young infant during periods when it is misbehaving, e.g., when it is always crying, a symptom of which —Manobos believe—is caused by irritations made the bound spirit of the skyworld who "owns" infants called Manda-it. The difficult-to-please infant undergoes this ritual for it is believed that the spirit-double of the baby is now signalling (with the consent of Manda-it, the owner of the twin-soul) that it wishes to connect with the ginhawa of the real infant, thus causing the baby to be prone to crying and tantrums. Manobos verbalize that the purpose of the ritual is *to register the existence of the baby in the spirit world, an idea that is consistent with the idea of mimetic correspondence among things in the cosmos being explained in this essay.* In the ritual, the pairing of the baby's ginhawa to its inherent counterpart in the world of nature, the baby's *twin-soul, its double*, is made. Despite the separateness of the body of the child and the body of the spirit-double, they are inherently linked to each other in Manobo perception.

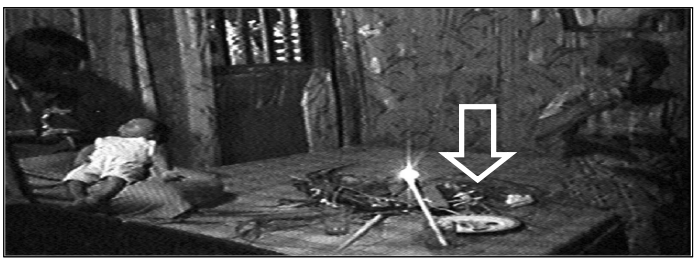

Plate 1. Tukajan ritual. (Still photo from video documentation by the author)

In this ritual, the parents of the baby (left) seek the services of herbalist (right), oftentimes the midwife who assisted in the childbirth, and who then collects different plant species (at the center in the photo), the physical attributes of which will be magically or metaphorically transferred in the ritual proceedings to the two anthropomorphic carvings on tubers. (pointed out in the photo)[6] These are the main objects of this type of ritual and they represent the real baby and its double. The ritual officiant talks to these icons in front of the real baby (being carried by his or her mother) and to its invisible counterpart in the cosmos or external reality. The icons are magically wiped with various species of plants so that the perceived characteristics are metaphorically transferred to the tuber representations that are believed to affect the real infant in actual world. A domesticated chicken is then sacrificed and the ritual officiant feeds the twin-figures with a mixture of rice, charcoal, and chicken blood, all of which are vital substances of human existence: rice for individual health, charcoal for earth (as all life leads to death), and sacrificial blood as a symbol of the spirit world that a person has to contend with in life. While feeding the icons of twin-souls with mixed substances, the officiant speaks to them as if alive, even chiding them to obey the feeder by tickling them, a representation of domestication or the incorporation of the baby's life to both society and nature. The icons are then placed in a ritual salver together with that plants and the representation of the sacrificial chicken. This is suspended on a bamboo pole outside the house for the spirits to see, an act recognizing or affirming the existence of the individual into the world of human society and nature spirits. These objects are signs that register the embeddedness of self in the world.

6) The material of the twin replica is non-edible (for it is not possible for the ritual officiant to "cannibalize" one's own children).

Plate 2. Ritual officiant feeding the twin-figure in the Tukajan ritual. (Still photo from video documentation by the author)

II. Enchantment or Spirits of the Old Environment

As Manobos grow up in a world filled with animate things—harm-inducing (sagman) environmental spirits, bloodthirsty ones, fickle-minded souls of departed relatives—some spirits, for mysterious reasons, are attracted to certain individuals, especially those who have a quiet and melancholic demeanor. Just as in the cause of tukajan in which the spirit-double desires to be coupled with the self's ginhawa, the attraction of nature spirit to the individual is dangerous for it yields illness on the part of person whose body becomes a host to a foreign entity. As in many cases, the person's spirit double harms the person and frequency of contact can range from mild to severe, the latter demanding that a mature and practicing medium is consulted to minister the divinatory ritual called *suyad*, which discerns the wants of the spirit double. Depending on the intensity of spirit-harm done, suyad is held through the years to fully appease the double's "desire" (*kiham*). In some instances, however, what causes the affliction are the spirit-familiars previously "owned" by dead relatives, and, in this case, those family-owned spirit-familiars

(*diwata*) are inherited from a previous generation. [See arrow from upper right pointing to lower left in Figure 1 above).

A "spirit-desired" person normatively becomes a medium later on in life, learning the lore, techniques, and practices of healing in "public" as he or she undergoes treatment in the divinatory rituals serially done for many years. Thus, to be a person in Manobo society is to be a consistent participant in Manobo rituals that, as it should be clear by now, is a mimetic representation of the Manobo cosmos or nature. What Manobo ritual effectively articulates is the concept of a non-interiorized self in which subjectivity is constantly renewed through ritual symbolizations in public. It is for this reason that ritual is coached as a social obligation. It is, in fact, as most rituals elsewhere, an external instrument or a technology necessary for validating one's identity. Ritual fosters a sense of belongingness and puts an individual into a social category in the cosmos or community.[7)]

Ritual interpreters whom I interviewed about this matter mention that a sick person begins to incarnate spirit symptoms, manifesting them first in dance in the early years of the healing period, and then, through singing, which happens only at the end of the healing period. Thus, a metamorphosis of the body of a sick person materializes. Song is heard as a voice of the spirit in the medium's body when it is finally "befriended" or "domesticated" to speak. A spirit-possession ritual, the most complex of all Manobo rituals, re-lives the mimetic transformation of a spirit, once hostile, but now invading the medium's body as a compassionate being.

In possession rituals, the ritual intermediary invokes the presence of a spirit familiar to incarnate in the medium's body so it can divine the causes of illness and misfortune. The Manobo term "hinang" (to make) is synonymous with the act of

7) Anthropologists of religion distinguish between modes of articulation and individual identity, between that borne in ritual and that which is formed through conscience and sincerity. See Adam Seligman, *Ritual and Its Consequences.*

the medium trembling or *yana-an*, a symptom of spirit incarnation, which is accompanied by the spirit's voice singing *tud-om*. This enchanting song is the indexical icon, a mimetic sign of the spirit's presence as it transcends its spiritual sphere to become human-like in the beginning of the act of possession. In my research, I found out that different kinds of spirits emanate from the medium's body as proofs of what are taking place in various moments in the ritual performance as it unfolds. In my research, I analyzed complete ritual discourses in order to find out the underlying pattern of the appearances of the singing spirit. This spirit appears at the onset of possession. The male elder spirit soon follows, incarnating during the time when the pig sacrifice is about to be killed. This spirit, depicting its status as once a warrior, dances around the sacrifice before killing the animal. Manobos narrate that the harm done to the animal substitutes for the patience's illness, thus the animal's death functions in a symbolic exchange in which customary justice is exercised. In the part of the ritual before the commensal meal, the spirit of cooked offerings appears as the mimetic gesture of demonstrating the dwelling of happiness as food is received by the spirit and shared to participants, both spirits and humans. The singing spirit is associated with human compassion and is heard in critical moments as a gesture of expressing pity. No wonder, its being heard in the beginning of the ritual marks the transformation of the spirit's alterity into an identity, resembling humans who take pity on each other.

If the enchanting song represents the world of Manobos whose landscape was once heavily forested, the present world shared with the Visayan settlers spells another real social world. In the next section, I shall explore how the Visayans have encroached Manoboland, especially during the logging boom of the 1950s to 1960s, bringing with it the silencing of the enchanted Manobo ritual voice-in-song and the introduction of another form of human sociability and culture that corresponded with the local modern hierarchical Visayan-Manobo society. It is this context that led to the emergence of a hybrid Manobo ritual.

III. Manobo Experience of Visayan Modernity, Compadrazgo Social Relations, and its Embodiment in Hybrid Manobo Ritual

Manobos have had contacts with coastal peoples who speak Butwano and Cebuano languages deep in their local history. Their land used to be guarded from encroachments of Muslims in the South who were known to have abducted people for slave trade, by a Spanish fort in Linao (now called Bunawan) built sometime in the 18th century (Schreurs). Proof of this is the incorporation of the 18th century Spanish popular dance music *fandango*, which is still in the repertory of struck bamboo zither music (Buenconsejo 2008). In late 19th century, settlements were trading posts formed that went hand in hand with the Spanish effort to evangelize the natives to Catholic religion. The Spanish colonial government adopted the strategy of bringing with them Christian-baptized coastal people (*binenyagan*) whose sedentarized lives enticed the native population to live in what the Spanish officials called *reduccion* that later evolved into towns. It was this colonial history of cross-cultural encounter between coastal Filipinos and inland "pagans" that transformed Manobo culture. From this encounter, Manobos learned to build two houses, one along the market roads leading to the Visayanized settlements and one in the forest where their gardens are located and where traditional rituals are still performed. This colonial encounter continued into the 20th century, but the most radical changes that transformed Manobo landscape came as a result of massive in-migration of Visayan peoples who worked in logging camps from 1950s to 1960s. In the following, I provide details into inland-seacoast commerce because this forms the political-economic context by which to understand the embodiment of the Visayan spirit friend *amigo*.

In May 1947, a Butwano-speaking native from Talacogon named Demokrito O. Plaza (nicknamed “D.O.”) inherited the logging concession in Loreto.[8] He inherited it from his uncle Mr.

8) Coastal natives with whom the in lander Manobos have traded presumably before the Visayans came and who speak an entirely different language called

Osin, who could not manage the concession because he was then busy with local politics (see Viacrucis; Severino).[9] D.O. enlisted the help of the Manobos in Mamba-os to survey the land concession of the forested interiors and concession borderlands and enticed them to cut the trees for him in *exchange for household goods*. At this time D.O., aged 26, was already an experienced trader in the lower parts of Agusan River, having worked as a storekeeper (tinderu) in a coastal town, later as a cutter of logs near Talacogon (where he originated), a farmer of rice, corn and tobacco in Prosperidad, and finally as a river trader. He paddled upriver to buy rice, corn and other farm products to sell in Butu-an downriver. In turn, he bought goods in Butu-an which were needed in the upriver towns. He earned enormous profits as a go-between in this trafficking of farm products inland and manufactured goods from the coast.

During the early phase of D.O.'s logging operations (1947-1956), when no mechanical instruments were available, logging work was difficult. The only extension of the Manobo's "manpower" was the carabaos (lined up together in as much as a group of seven), which dragged the trees to "landings" called "skids." Some trees along the banks were simply brought down *tumbatubig* (Ceb. phrase meaning "felling the tree on water"), drifting in the river current to the "landings" where they are collected.[10] There the logs were tied together with iron bands before they were ready to be floated further downstream to the main "log pond" in Sabang Kawayanan. These logging techniques continue to the present day. In the past, D.O. Plaza measured the logs in cubic meters and paid the Manobos involved for their logging labor.

Butwanon which is now going extinct due to Visayan hegemony.

9) Severino reports in his article that some Manobos believed D.O to be a Manobo because he can speak Manobo. He pointed out how D.O. "cultivated" this myth.

10) Some of the tree species cut were apitong, molave, lawa-an, lanipaw, narra, nangilan, and bay-ang.

Plate 3. Logs floated downstream for the market (Photo by Charles Buenconsejo)

In 1953, D.O. Plaza established a logging base in Mamba-os (originally in Bahayan, Trento in 1952), where the main operations of his logging enterprise were to be supervised.[11] This was not the only logging camp in Loreto. Plaza had stations in Johnson and Binukayan, deep in the forested interior. Furthermore, many other logging camps were established about the same time and later. The base in Mamba-os was to survive until 1975, and Manobos in Poblacion have vivid memories of the place, some working there from mid 1950s to mid 1970s. For this base D.O. brought with him hundreds of workers from the Eastern Visayan region and neighboring provinces in Mindanao. In 1967 alone, the logging base in Mamba-os had 1,672

11) At around the same D.O. had already began diversifying into river transportation, which transported passengers to and fro Butu-an and the river towns. In 1954, he acquired a "department store" in Butu-an where D.O.'s employees bought their necessities, in effect multiplying D.O.'s profits: D.O. gave "wages" to his employees who then "return" them by buying goods from his own store and paying for the rides in his river launches. When D.O.'s logging company mechanized, he also instituted the D.O. Plaza Enterprises which was, in fact, the engineering service component of his logging instruments, but which also made new launches thus expanding his river transportation business more. Later on, he had buses plying the national highway, a sawmill in Butu-an. He had also expanded into real estate in Cebu and bought a cement plant in the same province, then one of only two cement companies in the country. Some of this cement was exported to the U.S.A.

employees. According to an interviewee who worked in the payroll department of this logging camp during that time, around 75 percent of the workers were Manobos. They constituted the "unskilled" work force, while the remaining 25 percent"white collar" jobs in the logging stations were given to Visayans.

Even earlier, in 1956, some 2,000 workers were said to be employed by D.O. This estimate is probably exaggerated, but it reveals that the logging industry was already in full swing at that time (for the "official" data regarding Philippine sawn log exports, see Severino 31). "Manpower logging" required a tight-knit coordination of many men and carabaos. In 1956, D.O. mechanized his operations and bought from Japan noisy machines that cut, pulled, and dragged logs into the vehicles. In March 1958 (just a few years after gaining the Japanese capital), D.O. Plaza's log production had soared to seven million board feet a month (Viacrucis 60). This frenzied deforestation was to be sustained for many years, well into the 1960s. In that decade, the Plazas were said to be exporting some 10,000 cubic meters of wood out of Butu-an, earning as much as 80 million pesos over the decade (Severino 32). In 1967 alone, the logging base in Mamba-os had 35 dump trucks (some can still be seen abandoned there, together with the cemented flooring of some of the buildings of the camp), 28 trailer-trucks, 31 trucks, and six yarders. Some of D.O.'s boats, totaling 40, pulled the logs accumulated in Sabang Kawayanan all the way to Butu-an where some "saw logs" were processed for plywood and timber while the prized, hardwood "round logs" went to Japan.

The establishment of the D.O. logging base in Mamba-os created a different form of exchange between Manobos and Visayans. It created a kind of trading *which looked more like "employment" or alienated labor, where Manobos now sold their labor like commodities*, unlike in the days of older plain trading, where Manobos cut logs and exchanged these with household goods that D.O. had in Sabang Kawayan.[12] However, the new

12) This was the older trade relationship when the Manobos bartered their abaca hemp with the Visayans for household goods in the past.

mode of exchange did not simply supplant the older barter-like trading. The two forms existed side by side and the barter form is still very much in existence in Loreto today, where isolated individuals are "contracted" by merchants in Butu-an to cut trees for them in exchange for money.[13]

Along with this concept of alienated or commodified Manobo labor came a growing Manobo desire for Visayan goods. While a small volume of trade items in the past resulted in the procurement of the inexpensive household items listed above, during the 1960s, ready-to-wear jeans, t-shirts, and battery-operated phonographs were deducted from Manobo salaries in exchange for more "luxurious" goods. Today, of course, electronic amplifiers and microphones are exchanged for such labor.

Indeed, a profound social and material transformation accompanied the entry of Visayan capital into the research area (beginning in the 1950s). Many of the logging personnel whom D.O. brought with him to the logging camp opted to remain in the area after the company closed operations during the mid 1970s. But by that time, the town was already established and looked roughly the way it does today. An intricate government bureaucracy had already established itself, supporting services such as public education, health clinics, and the always-present military operations of the state. Coveted positions in this bureaucracy went to the Visayan logging workers who stayed behind, predictably enough, because the government institutions could not have existed without the technology of writing that the outsiders practiced. Even during the 1960s, of course, the government bureaucracy included Manobos who had acquired the necessary educational capital needed to enter civil service. But since the Visayans brought these institutions, the number of

13) In fact, this is the very problem that is happening in areas near Kasapa (where forest cover is still available) right now. Instead of selling their logs to Sta. Inez—which has the full legal right to the logs because of a timber license agreement (TLA)—isolated individuals preferred selling them directly to merchants in Butu-an who are willing to pay for them at a higher price. This disadvantages the management of Sta. Inez because the cuttings are illegal from the company's point of view, i.e., they should have gotten of the logs in the first place.

Manobo workers has been historically few and continues to be low today. The Visayans comprise the majority of the present local elite, and almost all of them know how to read and write. Literate Visayans contrast with most of the inland Manobos, particularly those living outside the town center, whose culture is still primarily oral. Literacy is therefore a very palpable material sign of "modernity" which Manobos in town use to differentiate themselves from other indigenous, "savage" groups in the mountains. Along with literacy, Manobos in town look into the imported notion of civility and new ways of behaving in a public space.

In terms of sociability, friendships or non-kin ties between Manobos and Visayans evolved from the cross-cultural encounter just mentioned. This social relation is fostered by the Catholic religion itself in which sacraments given to new members of the church are witnessed by their *parents with their friends, neighbors, and peers*. This social system of friendship is called compadrazgo and is validated in Christian rituals like baptism and marriage where parents of the celebrants normatively seek the role of godparenthood as *ninong* (Spanish: padrinos) and *ninang* (madrinas) the children of their friends, co-workers, and neighbors.[14] In some instances, prospective godparents themselves would volunteer to assume the position.

Biological and godparents call each other *kumpare* or *kumare*, a naming relationship that hails reciprocal, affective, moral bonds among them, however non-enduring the relations may be, and thus creating a social network in a community that cross-cuts blood-based kin grouping. Compadrazgo is glossed in Philippine Studies as "ritual kinship" because, unlike consaguinous and affinal ties, the relation is expressed in the

14) There is a rich literature on this topic on social organization in Philippines Studies, which has been mostly theorized during the 1970s using the then dominant structuralist-functionalist framework. The more recent study by Paul Matthews (1994) is interesting because it characterizes the system as fluid and highlights the study from a more processual standpoint such as using the concept of performance theory and symbolic exchange of shared children that creates social order in a peasant community in Surigao.

said Christian rituals that are highlighted with feasting, drinking, and fellowship.

Dominant in lowland Christian Filipino culture throughout, but with varying degrees of instrumentality elsewhere in the Philippines, the system that I observed and documented in Agusan Manobo clearly fosters mutual-help between rich and poor families, an instrumental social function that does not, of course, exclude moral rights and social obligations to the interpersonal relations. The fortunate families are sought after by the less fortunate ones so as to gain access to money and other resources in times of need and employment in the local bureaucracy, while the latter would reciprocate by readily accepting requests for assistance of labor for their better off counter parts, especially during fiestas and other needs. This system lends an appearance of solidarity despite the seething material gap between rich and poor in terms of access to resources that characterize social life in Agusan del Sur or elsewhere in the Philippines.

Herein lies the productive force of rituals to reconfigure the contradictions of the material world or reality.[15] Christian ritual of the compadrazgo relations in Agusan del Sur masks the true political asymmetry by simulating social harmony in peoples' lives despite the cultural and material gaps. And this masking is also evident in the hybrid type of Agusan Manobo ritual where a Visayan-speaking spirit is incarnated. It is interesting to note that this spirit is addressed as *amigo* (friend) and noticeably comes from the body of an officiating Manobo medium that is bilingual, having lived in a place populated by Visayans who are neighbors and friends.[16] To compare, the spirits in the older Manobo pantheon of spirit familiars embody the once-enchanted world in

15) For a recent extensive discussion on this issue, see Seligman, Ritual and its *Consequences.*

16) This type of Manobo ritual is characterized by the use of guitar simulating the gong-and-drum pair, different ritual offerings that correspond to the Visayan spirit identity which does not drink sacrificial pig's fresh blood raw, but drinks fresh egg instead and smokes cigarettes. See Buenconsejo, *Songs and Gifts at the Frontier.*

which Manobo subsistence is based (rotational swidden farming, occasion hunting, and frequent fishing). In contrast, the amigo spirit is an embodiment of the new Visayan-dominated social order. The male elder of the past—appearing during the killing of the animal sacrifice—is an icon to customary justice and symbolic exchange of blood sacrifice. In contrast, the amigo appears like a Visayan friend of the compadrazgo who offers paternalistic commands and offers Christian morality.

Below is an excerpt of a ritual dialogue with the Visayan spirit, who is addressed as amigo, which is a non-kin term. In this excerpt, the Visayan spirit speaks in Visayan but the ritual interpreter speaks Manobo. In conversational lines before [F], the medium remembers the wrongdoing of bringing the patients to the hospital within the proscribed three-day period after an initial healing ritual, which was not complete (it had no sacrificial altar outside the house). The medium informs the patients that they were punished since they were not, after all, cured in the hospital. The medium then asserts that spirit helpers are not Satan's creation. Mention of this Christian concept of evil brings the topic of judgment day in [F]. The medium speaking the Visayan spirit's voice uses the Visayan term "maymay," which refers to the act of advising that nags. This is evident in the following statements in which the medium repeats the topic of the patients' family's wrongdoing. The amigo spirit therefore has a commanding presence and, unlike the Manobo male elder—addressed as grandfather and is appeased with blood sacrifice—the amigo spirit is a mimesis of Visayan authority, which may remind of Visayan patrons—the priest, the logging company boss, the local leader, the school teacher—whose opinions are respected in day-to-day life.

Medium: That my friend will be good that, but...in those past days my friend,	*Kana amigu ma-ayu ra man kana, peru...kadtung nag-agi amigu nga*
they trespassed.[17]	*adlaw, naglapas sila.*
Ritual Interpreter or Intermediary:	*Sayup man silakay, wala may urder*

They made a mistake, since they didn't have any order	*nila*
to bring the sick to the hospital. They were given three days to stay put.	*nga i-adtu sa huspital. Gitagalan pa sila ugtulu ka adlaw*
Medium: It's necessary my friend.	*Kinahanglan amigu.*
If this (spirit helper) will no longer assume responsibility, my friend,	*Kung dili na kini amigu,*
Ritual Interpreter: If they surrender, that is the time	*Kung musurindir siya, kana ayha pa,*
when the spirits will suggest that they can bring the patients there.	*kay motudlu man sila nga i-adtu didtu.*
But since Brother Narciso made a mistake, that is why, that is their	*Peru kay nakalapas man si Pare Narciso, ma-u na nga, ma-u na'y ilang*
Medium: That was punished my friend! That happened so they will realize. Indeed.	*Kana gisilutan, amigu! nga kana gipa-ila. Ma-u kana.*
Patient's grandmother: Correct, the sick were brought to the hospital instead.	*Lagi, nasi ing-andiya't huspital.*
The Visayans are against this, (like) this ritual.	*Kuntra't mge bisaya, anged te si-e.*
Medium: That...what happened? Here.	*Nga gi-unsa kana? Kini.*
Audience: (The ritual) can be contemplated upon, can be made.	*Masud-ung, mabuhat.*
Medium: This (ritual), ritual my friend. Because there was no...what was that?	*Kini, buhat-buhat amigu. Kay walay ...unsa kadtu?*
(The ritual) wasn't complete in preparation there my friend.	*walay mga kumplitu amigu diha kaninyu.*
Hhm, this one wasn't there. None of this.	*Hhm, kini wala pa. Wala kini.*
Ritual Interpreter: Yes, since they should have been done together.[18)]	*U kay unta dungan na sila.*
Medium: If they were only together, some results could have been seen.	*Kung kana na, na-a nay makita.*
There should have been an altar here.[19)]	*Na-ay balay-balay diri ba.*

Then this will be completely done together here...the pig.	*Unya kumpletu magdungan kini...babuy.*
But we my friend, (we ask for) nothing. We don't need, we'll just help.	*Peru kami amigu, wala. Dili kami magkinahanglan, basta mutabang kami.*
Hhm. We'll help as long as we can. What will that do? These spirits my friend,[20]	*Hhm. Mutabang kami kutub sa mahimu. Mu-unsa kana? Kini amigu mga engkantu,*
those are not from Satan. Huh! In fact, my friend, those evil spirits and what else?	*dili nga kana mga Satanas. Huh! Gani man, amigu, kanang mga da-utan ug mga unsa kana?*
Ritual Interpreter: (Bad) Mind.	*Huna-huna.*
F	
Medium: That's it, my friend. But they were advised, my friend,[21]	*Kana amigu. Peru gimaymayan sila, amigu,*
that they won't make that, since the judgement day of God is near already. Huh.	*nga dili buhatun kana, kay du-ul na ang paghukum sa Ginu-u amigu. Huh.*
[clipped] That's it. We know, my friend, since we always visit (human beings).	*Ma-u kana. Kami nasayud kami amigu, kay kanunay kami nagbisita.*
Ritual Interpreter: They said that they always visit there.	*Kanunay daw sila nagbisita didtu sa.*
Medium: Those who ask for pity, my friend, no matter what mistakes, my friend,	*Kanang magpakilu-uy amigu, bisan unsa'y kasaypanan amigu,*
we don't...what is that?	*wala kami... nag-unsa kana?*
Ritual Interpreter: Hhm, they will still, will still help, will still be received by the	*Hhm, nagku-an gihapun, nagtabang gihapun, gidawat gihapun sa mga*
Companions. Sometimes	*kasama. Usahay.*
Medium: (referring to the patients' parents) They made a mistake. They brought them there (to the hospital),	*Sila nakasayup. Gisulud nila didtu,*
Without us knowing my friend. But this one made a mistake,[22]	*nga wala kami masayud amigu. Peru nasayup kini,*
that this friend came here in order to get the herbs/medicines in order	*nga nag-anhi pa dinhi kini si amigu nga mukuha'g tambal nga para*

to...what's that?	*mu...unsa kadtu?*
Ritual Interpreter: In order to place them on the patients' body supposedly, but when they came back	*Para idapat unta, peru pagbalik nila*
Patient's Father: In order that the sick will be able to defecate. That was why,	*Para maka-indes iyan. Kaling man,*
this tried hard, your posses see[23]. I also made a mistake.	*naningkamot si-e, pigbeyesan new. Nasayep a man iyan isab.*
Indeed we met on the way to the hospital. I was able to reach the hospital first,	*Nahitagbu da man gajed. Naka-unasi-e lang gamay diya't huspital,*
before she got out of the place there (where she gathered herbs). Yet it was a good day,	*adesir kandin makayegwa duten. Peru madejew da man isab,*
the sound of the turtle dove was favorable.	*te kuwa din limuken.*

IV. Summary and Conclusion

From the exploration above, I discussed the crucial role of Manobo cultural imagination in "imitating" or making copies of the real into a sign that, in turn, configures that reality, the sign's referent. This mimetic sign, in complex form, is multisensorial ritual, a man-made product (*hinang in Manobo or*

17) Medium reminds of the ritual taboo violation again.
18) The interpreter is suggesting here that the preparations for the rituals of the *Inajew* and the personal spirit, Sul__an, should have been planned simultaneously.
19) Referring to the simulated house where food offerings are placed for the spirits. See *Songs and Gifts*, Chapter 3.
20) The medium uses the term *engkantu*, because the spirit speaking in the medium is Visayan.
21) Medium reminds of the previous advice given by the spirits that the patients should not have gone to the place where they got ill.
22) Medium expresses that she herself also made a mistake; she should have not assumed the responsibility to cure the patients. After all, the patients' family did not trust her.
23) Referring to medium's effort to cure.

buhat-buhat in Visayan) that represents Manobo relationships with spirit-filled nature and society. Everyday practices of swidden agriculture, gathering of forest products, fishing, occasional hunting, and travels in the Manobo cosmos always potentially carries risks of offending the environmental spirits and Manobo rituals are the very means of controlling these inexplicable supernatural forces that bring illness and death. Rather than the mere mirroring of this external reality or its impressing an image into one's mind (*mimema*), I have shown that rituals create—by way of poetic imagination—that reality by imposing a constructed social order into it. They produce the ideology of self-other relationships that is the basis of the concept of the externalized self.

Manobos exhibit their understanding of themselves in ritual, which is put to good use when spirits identities are inverted so that they become human-like in ritual, expressing pity on humans. The transformation of nature-as-other into the image of one's self is also best observed in *tukajan* ritual where the twin-soul is fed with food to domesticate the foreign entity into a cultural being. The idea of magic operates here because, by acting on the sign/representation of the real, the Manobos get to influence that reality.

In short, mimesis is taken up not as a mere pictorial mental mage of nature but a *poetic sign that truly incarnates a spirit substance in a ritual performance*. Unlike classical Greek concept of mimesis as "make believe," ritual is "magical" for the Manobos in two senses: 1) it is real because what is seen in ritual is "true" (i.e., the image has a substantial link to the cosmos, a belief in a world of resemblance), and 2) because, in Maussian terms, ritual has practical efficacies that spirit incarnations indicate and bring about.

In Manobo ritual, it is *the spirit-substance that enables the materialization of dialogue between humans and spirits*. Through this self-other conversation, humans are able to negotiate with spirits about causes of illnesses, just as they are able to name and domesticate the twin soul in *tukajan*. This exchange of

words between selves and others is also paralleled with the symbolic exchange of death with life in elaborate versions of Manobo ritual, thanks to a sacrificial animal victim, a surrogate, which mediates the gap between nature and society. It is important for us to appreciate that this mimetic mind is more pronounced in a group of people who have depended upon nature's gifts for its survival.

But what happened in a context when survival meant no longer the hunts and fruits of the forest, but exchanging one's sweat or labor—death (to invoke Braudillard)—for the modern abstract paper money that the Visayan settlers had brought with them inland and that Manobos now depend on survival?

I discussed in the second part of this essay the Visayan settler Christian *compadrazgo* friendship relation that reconfigured social relationships between Manobos and Visayans into amity or social harmony despite the material gaps between those who have the means and the have-nots in the research area. It is most likely that the Manobos had incorporated the imported non-kin rituals of compadrazgo since the 1950s with less effort because compadrazgo, being associated with food, drinking, and merry making, is irresistible. Ritual feasting that solidifies interpersonal Christian ritual kinship relation is an easy ingredient to legitimate the new social order.

The incarnation of the Visayan spirit in the hybrid Manobo ritual bespeaks the same impulse in which Manobo social experience of the dominant coastal Visayan culture is contained and talked to across difference. This is an efficacy of magic again in the Maussian mode. The other—the Visayan spirit—is incarnated, addressed as a friend who is forced to respond. Embodying a local colonial history, this spirit is clearly a mimesis of the current political economy. What is demanded in the present mixed Manobo-Visayan community with hybrid modern culture is no longer blood sacrifice that is pertinent to the previous world of hunting-gathering culture. Instead, present hybrid Manobo ritual constitutes a representation that simulates friendship ties and social harmony, reconfiguring the actual

contradictory asymmetrical exploitative economic set-up of alienated or commodified labor.

Herein lies the power of ritual; at the level of symbols, it is at ease with ambiguities and is at home to norms and ideals. At least for now, hybrid Manobo ritual is able to reproduce a social order—the Manobos experiencing life in a Visayan-dominated local modern world. In this essay, Manobo ritual is not an unchanging practice but has responded to culture change. It had gained new meanings and transformed itself. Indeed it must adapt to the vicissitudes of the modern cosmos, which unleashes spirits that are really substantially rooted and linked to material world.

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Archipeligiality as a Southeast Asian Poetic in Cirilo F. Bautista's *Sunlight on Broken Stones*

Louie Jon A. Sanchez

[***Abstract***]

Archipeligiality, a concept continuously being developed by the scholar, is one that attempts to articulate the Filipino sense of place as discoursed in/through its literatures. As a country composed of 7,107 islands, the very fragmentation and division of the country, as well as its multiculturality and multilinguality, have become the very means by which Filipino writers have "imagined" so to speak—that is, also, constructed, into a singular, united frame—the "nation." This, the author supposes, is an important aspect to explore when it comes to discoursing the larger Southeast Asian imagination, or poetic, as similar situations (i.e. Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore), may soon compel for a comparative critico-literary perspective. This paper continues this exploratory "geoliterary" discourse by looking at a Filipino canonical work in English by Cirilo F. Bautista, the epic *The Trilogy of Saint Lazarus*, the title of which already signals a geographic allusion to the first map-name granted by the Spanish colonizer to the Philippines in the region, and consequently the first signification

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of the country's subjected existence in the colonial imagination. The work, published between 1970 and 1998, is composed of three parts: *The Archipelago*, *Telex Moon,* and *Sunlight on Broken Stones*, which won the 1998 Philippine Independence Centennial Literary Prize. In these epics, notions of Philippine history and situation were discoursed, and Filipino historical figures were engaged in dialogue by the poet/the poet's voice, with the end of *locating* the *place* [where history and time had brought it; or its direction or trajectory as a nation, being true to the Filipino maxim of *ang di lumingon sa pinanggalingan, di makararating sa paroroonan* (the one who does not look back to his origins would not reach his destination)]. of the Philippines not only in the national imagination, but in this paper, in the wider regional consciousness. The paper proposes that the archipelagic concept is an important and unique characteristic of the Southeast Asian situation, and thus, may be a means to explicate the clearly connected landscapes of the region's imagination through literature. This paper focuses on *Sunlight on Broken Stones.*

Keywords: Cirilo F. Bautista, epics, Sunlight on Broken Stones, Southeast Asia

I. Understanding Archipeligiality

The notion of archipeligiality in the Philippine literary tradition stems from this scholar's position that a more comprehensive account of literary histories—as well as individual texts—must be used to fully foreground the locality of the tradition—or traditions, if we may so. To begin with, the Filipino nation exists in an archipelagic condition that compels for a more critical and encompassing revaluation, particularly in the practice of Philippine literary history and evaluation. In this project, the scholar attempts to propose a perspective grounded on the idea of geography as metaphorically "writing about the earth," about the land, and consequently, the nation. The word's Greek

etymology, *geographia* is seen in this context as being more than just a "description", that is, a topography of the terrain; geography here is to be seen as the very practice of writing itself, located and locating its utterance in the conditions of place. This framework directs the scholar in the pursuit of further providing a reconstructive method of Philippine literary history and assessment that responds to the vicissitudes of earlier efforts, particularly at assessing marginality and including the "marginalized" literatures of the Philippine regions. In this paper, archipeligiality will be used to chart a poetics that may be comparatively expanded to the rest of Southeast Asia. As a region of various island and landmass formations, Southeast Asia—its countries—embodies similar historical experiences and even creative world views and expressions. In the subject of this study, *The Trilogy of Saint Lazarus* by the Filipino epic poet Cirilo F. Bautista—composed of *Sunlight on Broken Stones* (1998), *Telex Moon* (1981), and *The Archipelago* (1970)—the literary work is being read as depicting a peculiarly Southeast Asian experience, while illustrating a *poiesis* of the Philippines using the material of its geographical fragmentariness and the continuing problematization of the "necessary fiction" of the nation, to borrow from Caroline Hau (2001). Archipeligiality here is to be used to analyze not only how the epic "makes", or in the Heideggerian sense, "brings forth" the country by way of singularizing, harmonizing, the plurality of voices, singing a psychologically sequenced Philippine history; it would also be used to interpret how the work asserts its being *located* in the experience and realities of the larger world of Southeast Asia by being a geographic part of it.

The word archipelago has a very compelling past to trace. Its two Greek roots combined, *arkhi* and *pelagos,* connote rule or dominion over the seas. Its Aegean roots relate it with the chains of islands in the Greek peninsula and evoke the epical and legendary adventures that once traversed its seas. The archipelago's meaning of being "studded by islands" elucidates the geographical configuration of the term, which also in itself embodies the histories of violent conquests and imperial pasts. What could basically be *formed* from this preliminary critical

etymology is the geohistoric form of the concept, which particularly characterizes various archipelagic cultures around the globe, and consequently molds located consciousness and worldviews. Southeast Asia, as one archipelagic area, interestingly epitomizes the same geohistoric conditions. This region, historically, has been conquered by the powers that be from the Western World. The geographic dividedness has been utilized by colonialism not only to divide the imperial loot and create boundaries of domination, but also to situate in the consciousness of the subjected peoples an internalized marginality. This is precisely the case with the Philippines, which boasts of more than 7000 islands (though just half of Indonesia's more than 13,000), and which has manifested through history, various crises in keeping its nationhood intact, amidst challenges of often opposing cultural idiosyncrasies, linguistic diversity, and political heterogeneity. The tumultuous history of the Philippines is in here being related to the geographic make up of the country, where divide and conquer was challengingly carried out, from the era of the Spanish *reduccion,* and the epoch of American "benevolent assimilation", to the Second World War and the short-lived institution of the Japanese "Asia for Asians" ideology, and the eventual emergence of national "freedom". For Philippine literature, this geohistoric diegesis had become the trope since the early days of colonialism, and the problematique of constantly locating the self in dividedness and fragmentation had become from then on the primal creative project, as seen in various Philippine literary works and movements. This postulation builds on the nesological perspectives introduced by Antonis Balasopoulos (2008), particularly on his notions of "apartness" (2008: 12) and "seismic discontinuities that emerge in the interplay between the historical destruction of spatial contiguity and the spatial dispersion of the concept of historicity", (21-22) which may be usefully applied in the context of Philippine and Southeast Asian archipeligialities.

To ground the discourse is the singular response of the archipelagic framework, and we exercise this "grounded" discourse in interpreting not only the work but also its geographical

position. Aware of the long isolation of individual Southeast Asian literatures from the rest of region (as in the countries themselves), the scholar proposes the concept of archipeligiality, or archipelagic discourse in literature, as a way of re-placing the literatures in its rightful ground as a discursive location of respective and larger imagined communities. The scholar uses the rather poststructuralist tick of the dash (-) between the words not only to emphasize a revision on how we read and value, for instance, Philippine Literature in the context of Southeast Asia. The emphasis now is also *on the place*, and the re-placement of this body of literature is but a reconfiguring of its discourses in the archipelago of national and even regional imaginings. There is really a need to re-place and not merely open the imaginative discourse in the larger geographics and geopoetics of the Philippine and Southeast Asian context, by way of tracing the history of beginnings, studying high points, problematizing traditions, and explaining the revisions of the contemporary, and even the new. The framework introduces the historical contexts of the "development" of the literary body, and accounts for occasional utterances, its located imaginings, which also condition its perspectives, consciousness, and thought process. Our archipelagic discourse is governed not only by time, but also by space. Our framework sees the "development" (ideally, a movement *in time,* in history) both horizontally and vertically, which means that while the body of works themselves compose the definition of a movement compelled by historical factors, the works themselves constitute a grounded perspective from which they stand, from where they are rooted, or are still rooting.

The archipeligiality of the Philippines could never be completely severed from its Southeast Asian context. It is an erroneous gesture to rend it, to begin with. The Philippines, as part of what Barbara Watson Andaya (2014) described as "maritime Southeast Asia", is connected to the whole region by way of "connected coasts and neighboring islands", that basically opened "smaller zones where people shared similar languages and were exposed to the same religious and cultural influences." For instance, the Southeast Asian seas, to Andaya "a second

feature" to the maritime group and the rest of the region, is an important facet of life and history in the Philippines. It is a space by which borders and networks were forged, and where despite the colonial experience of "insularized" Philippines, a certain Asian-ness flowed back and forth in all its territories. It is also a space that in the beginning, was "a world forged by the natural landscapes of sea and sky (and the islands) not regarded as isolated or obscure places," quoting Heidi Gloria (2014), who continued her characterization of the region as composed of lands and islands similar to "stepping stones in a pond, as familiar as the four points of the compass and made to invite rather than impede man's discovery of other worlds" (Gloria 2014: 3). Meanwhile, the early hero-intellectuals of the Philippines involved themselves in this claim of Asian-ness, or at least in the words of Resil B. Mojares (2013), "Malayness". It had been part of "Filipino self-representation," Mojares noted, particularly in the "late nineteenth century", when the need for an "identity claim" was historically in vogue, as was politically deployed (Mojares 2013: 126) for the causes of the Propaganda Movement. Jose Rizal participated in it, *locating* himself and his confreres in a particular imagined community, when all of them "began to write themselves and their "nation." In their discovery of Malayness—the primary strain of Southeast Asian discourse which the Filipino intellectuals practically trail-blazed—the likes of Rizal developed "local awareness", in light of an apparent "loss of memory". The Filipino intellectuals who all went to Spain—and some of them creatively "utilized" by Bautista as personae in his epic—immersed themselves in "European" material and discourses about the region to help them situate themselves as they "struggled with the contradictions of being both object and subject of a scholarship heavily compromised by Europe's dominating position in the world" (128). "While Filipino intellectuals claimed that they were Malay," Mojares wrote, "they also asserted they were a separate and distinct kind of Malay" (130). The way to nationhood for Filipino intellectuals—of *illustrados* or the enlightened—was indeed, the region, however unstable it is "as a category." As "(n)ationalism required a shared identity and name" during the era, the intellectuals perceived that

any labeling of sorts was to inevitably claim "a "unity" denied by Spanish and European authors who characterized the inhabitants of the Philippines as an "anarchy" of tribes and races" (132-133). Such is the meaningfulness of calling themselves, not only Filipino, but also Malay—and by extension, Southeast Asian. Both moves assert national heritage and a significant "Malay core" which cumulatively built the initial ideas of a Southeast Asian region.

While the framework may comparatively be applied, at once, to other archipelagic situations—this we never doubt—this discussion only seeks to pursue the Philippine case as *synecdochic* of the Southeast Asian condition. Wide waters may divide the nations of the region, but it is assumed that there persists an "inter-national" connection, as illustrated previously. The Southeast Asian map, as an observed phenomenon, shows intimacies amidst divisive seas, brought about by theorized landmass connections, cultural closeness, and linguistic equivalence, among others. Geography, the discipline, is being fully tapped in order to culturally cartograph this region, always on the cusp of change. The Philippines, long considered by some quarters as more Western than Oriental, would stand as an ideal case to illustrate the effect and affect of an archipelagic state in the isolated and insular consciousness of a people—a people *separated* from each other by waters, which also consequently separated them, geographically speaking, from other peoples of the region, with whom they have been closely trading in more ways than one. In this connection, the paper also critically recovers the meanings of the Greek word *poiesis,* which etymologically pertains to making, to crafting, or to expand the meaning further, to imagining. A poetics—the explication of ways of imagining—is entirely being made possible in this geoliterary reading process, where the terrain and the territorial in bodies of writing are manifested. In Filipino, the closest word to characterize poetics is *paglikha*, the root of which is *likha*, to create. The word however is potent to also cast out the colonial spectre in the power of objectification of maps—since to be "mapped out" so to speak in the time of conquest is to be

imagined, to be relocated *as subject* in the colonial mind. In the Noceda and Sanlucar *Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala* (1860), the entry for the word primarily pertains to religious idols, the very vessels of domination and the displacement of the once widespread animist and paganist beliefs of the locals. The additional entry however makes for an interesting turn as it points to a constitution of presencing, of existence or being. With a pre-fix "nag+", it becomes *tenerla* in Spanish, "magkaroon nito" in Tagalog. *Paglikha* as ethos of the *poeisis* proves to be a re-presencing, re-locating (as in, finding what had been lost) perspective, in an environment afflicted by what the scholar will illustrate as archipelagic fragmentality, the sense of being dispersed by way of the geographic state. Filipino philosopher and map enthusiast Leovino Ma. Garcia (2013) consummately articulates this reconfigured world view—which may also be applied to various archipelagic conditions. "Maps," he wrote, "help us find our place in the world. They do not only point out where we are and where we want to go but they also tell us who we are. Maps instruct us about our history and identity. They provide us with a memory and a destiny. Maps give us a sense of self-esteem."

The map as a wellspring of self-esteem brings us essential ideas about the Southeast Asian map—the region as global entity —being a source of shared histories, meanings, and connections. Nowadays, at the heart of the region's concerns are the parallel claims to several island groups in the West Philippine Sea or the more popularly called South China Sea. In contemporary times, Southeast Asia as a big archipelago found itself in a volatile situation, as the bigger, more powerful Chinese mainland joined into the fray to assert its historical possession of some disputed islands in the said waters. The linguistic turn that is from "South China Sea" to "West Philippine Sea" reiterates not only a renewed geographic awareness in Philippine diplomacy but also a metaphorical "remapping" of ideas, especially in the face of threats and coercion. Also compelling to be examined is the coming integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) community in 2015, which must be seen as not merely

strategically economic and political, but more so, ideational. The threats from China is but merely one that pushes for a "remapping" of sorts, which to say the least contemplates on the kind of solidarity this region can create if the nations only banded together. "Remapping" in the end is but one strategy of recovering self-esteem, faith in the self, that is, since it provides both geographic, and in effect, cognitive form to what we are. "Remapping" is a peculiarly archipelagic gesture, especially in moments when one is confronted with the impossibility, the paradox of gathering together what is difficultly *situated* as geographically disintegrated from the start. The need for a remapping is nothing but a participation in the "composition of location", in the sense articulated by Homi K. Baba (1990). Remapping is also one that takes part in the important but "ambivalent" tactic of "narrating" the nation by way of "textual strategies, metaphoric displacements, subtexts, and figurative stratagems," still quoting Bhaba. To remap, that is, to relocate one's position and *positionality* may help re-order the marginality, minoritization of the disintegrated, and brings it to the fore by tapping it as another powerful site of meaning. In a similar way, remapping recalls what Heidegger once described as a *presencing* in the midst of boundary making. The act of remapping, in different levels, reiterates the "building, dwelling, thinking" of groups or societies. As text, to remap as recovering the self-esteem of a nation—or a group of nations—not only reinstates the form by which an individual or groups of nations may understand and internalize what it means to value selfhood. It also provides the necessary re-narration of identity, which usually takes the form of artifacts or texts of culture.

II. Bautista's Oeuvre in the Philippine Literary Tradition

And this is not lost on Bautista, born in 1941, a major Filipino poet writing in English who hails from the Sampaloc district of the Philippine capital of Manila. He is the author of several books of poems—*Tinik sa Dila* (Tongue's Torment 2003), *Kirot ng Kataga* (Pain in Phrase 1995), *Sugat ng Salita* (Wound in Words

1985), *Summer Suns* (1963); criticism—*The House of True Desire* (2011), *Words and Battlefields: A Theoria on the Poem* (1998), *Breaking Signs: Lectures on Literature and Semiotics* (1990); as well as a tome of fiction, *Stories* (1990); and a novel, *Galaw ng Asoge* (The Movement of Mercury 2004). Bautista himself embodies an archipelagic character of Philippine writing—he is bilingual, while in better times, dabbling into various genres of literary writing. Bilinguality—and even multilinguality—best characterize the condition of the Filipino writer as one who contends with imaginatively addressing the archipelagic and diverse nation and nationhood. As wordsmith, Bautista best exemplifies what Gemino Abad (1994) constitutes as the "native clearing" of sorts in Philippine writing in English, as he had made his poetic crusade the reinstatement of "words to their position in the social imagination." He carried this out by employing his two languages—English and Filipino—in the public sphere to "make sure that the language of our soul is never going to be corrupted by the ignorant and the malicious," quoting the critical assessment of Marjorie M. Evasco (Bautista 2006: xliii). For a good number of years, he kept a popular literary column for the *Panorama Magazine* of the *Manila Bulletin*, dispensing of critical commentaries on books, writing issues, and creative musings for an "imagined" general readership, and recently collected in the book *The House of True Desire*. This gesture popularized his efforts, and in the same breadth conjured a more useful national address while putting poetry and literature at the forefront of discussions. He also spent most of his time teaching at the De La Salle University, Manila, where he retired as a University Fellow, mentoring young writers and literary scholars in the Literature Program. His most important work is, of course, *The Trilogy,* which was aptly considered by the critic Isagani R. Cruz (2003) as an "obra maestra", a masterpiece that best illustrates a "national imagination" uniquely interpreting "the past, the present, and the future of our nation." Cruz, in Filipino, elaborates his reading of the epic as one that employs the trope of the Biblical Lazarean "resurrection", where myriad deaths actually transform into infinite resurrections, and the Rizalian *morir es descansar* is also,

at once remembered: "Ayon kay Bautista, ang nakaraan ay isang serye ng kamatayan at muling pagkabuhay, kung kaya't ang kasalukuyan na panandaliang pagkahimlay ay tiyak na susundan ng muling pagkabuhay. Sa kabuuan ng kasaysayan, paulit-ulit tayong namamatay, at paulit-ulit tayong nabubuhay" (Cruz 2003: 193)[1]. This "particular sense of history", as described by Evasco, sweepingly amends, "in the process, the concept of the epical structure," and also delineates a poetic worldview that tends to "sight" and "site" (that is, to locate) the sense of the archipelagic. When Bautista wrote that his ultimate predilection was to "shape the past", it may be read that he was not only referring to the historicity of the past, as it were, in his own writings. The spatiality, the location of the event or events of Philippine history also comes into being, and *The Trilogy* at large self-reflexively locates itself in the realm of the Philippine archipelagic universe, proposing "re-views" of individuals and voices which crafted the archipelagic world. In this sense, we may understand Bautista's significant oeuvre as one that maps by way of poetry, the significant Philippine national form and formations.

As a matter of discussion, it must be reiterated that literature is perceived in this paper as one that participates, not only in mapping, but in a "remapping" of nations, in the same way that the Rizalian novels *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* attempted to *point where we are and where we want to go* during its time. It is important to note that geography, as a discipline of mapping, provides vantage points from which we could view the earth, and sense its wholeness. However, to merely see the idea of the map, or geography at large, in this manner is rather myopic. *A failure to see* seems to be present if a map, or mapping, is not to be discerned as a site of inculcation and contestation—inculcations of location and located-ness, for instance, or the critical interrogations of the perspective *doing* the location or positioning. As both acts of

1) This scholar's English translation: "According to Bautista, our past is a series of deaths and resurrections, thus our present which is a momentary respite is definitely to be followed by a rising again. In the course of our history, we die again and again, and we resurrect, again and again."

inscription, writing and mapping provide spaces for fictionalizing and the imagination. Both disciplines employ positions—for the depicted and seer, for the one that which is committed on paper and the one who undertakes the interpretive task of viewing. In the archipelagic, postcolonial state of the Philippines, literature may be seen as a "remapping" of sorts, since its traditions are particularly rich in anti-colonial (and even anti-neocolonial) sentiments, *repositioning* the country from subjugation to liberation—a response, clearly, to colonial positionings. In the same vein, the geographic field of cartography may provide stimulating insights into the affinities being illustrated here. To cartograph is to master the representation of the world and to evoke by way of cognition, an understanding of the world by way of the visual representation. Thus, it is not far-fetched to juxtapose geography with literature, since both operate with the same functions. The meaning only expands when the circumstances of these "cartographies" or "writings" are to be considered. Interestingly, Bautista practices this move of "remapping" the Philippines by way of his epic *The Trilogy,* which encompasses more than 50 years of an illustrious career as a poet and major voice in Philippine literature. The epic, which is written in various modern poetic forms and manners, spans the beginnings of Philippine history up to the contemporaneous People Power Revolution that toppled the 20-year Marcos dictatorship in 1986. Bautista's *poeisis* is historical to say the least, but the gesture of recalling the colonial name of the country already signals the geographic turn. In *relocating* the utterance to the memory of the Islas de San Lazaro, the name first given by explorers to this archipelagic discovery of the Philippines, the poet attempted to capture the geographic moment as a juncture of reconfiguring, probing the past.

In his own words, Bautista relates the geographic turn of his project as one that tackles "the development of the Filipino soul from the very start of Philippine history to the twentieth century." He recalls the importance of the allusion to the aforementioned historical circumstance: the "sighting" of the Philippine archipelago on the feast of Saint Lazarus, "known for

his concern for the plight of the lepers, and (who) founded a hospital for their care" (Bautista, 2001: ix). Thus, the name, which today also summons notions of otherness evoked by the *othered* Lazarus, the figure who was re-called from the dead, and one traditionally and hagiographically associated with a centuries-long most dreaded disease. The word used by the poet, "sighted", proclaims a geographic moment in colonial history, one that signals subjugated presencing in the vision of the colonial mind. The first registration of the presence of the islands—though the chroniclers admit to their sense of loss and disorientation while on the conquest—happened during this dramatic moment of recognition. That indeed they have seen land beyond the boundaries they know positions them as "discoverers" of this new territory, as meriting the dominion that comes with the act of naming. With this assumption, the epic begins recollecting the past by making "a poem out of history." The epic poet reiterates one important craft concept that may readily be associated with that of a project, that of "remapping". In his foreword to the collected epics, he quipped quite pronouncedly that his project was meant "to reconfigurate (history through) artistic and aesthetic means so that the product emerges as a pleasurable interpretation of history (without) contradicting history or distorting it". His method is "fictionalizing", that is bringing the story "to a level of reality beyond itself, to stretch, harmonize, and forge its elements to a believable discourse". Such is also a powerful method that counters the initial geographic and colonial sighting or marginal presencing of history, where the voice of the *indio*, the subject under conquest, is primarily suppressed. The poet uses voices—legions of them—to haunt the beholder of the sight and of the institutor of the site of colonialism. In a heteroglossic way, Bautista turned away from the Bakhtinian assignment of the epic as monolithic and reconstitutes it in the Philippine and in the Southeast Asian context as one that harmonizes the "narrative out of many voices." The voices, as metonymic of the island experience, come together in "their cogitations, explications, justifications, and interpretations of the significant realities that affected their time and milieu in connection with the nation's struggle for selfhood and freedom."

In his epical remapping, Bautista "re-sights" (and *re-cites*, re-chants an essence into being) the nation by allowing these voices to relate "story or several stories... (that) merge and submerge with each other in interrogative and confirmative moods" (x). In an astute way, the poet synaesthetically combines the sense of sight and hearing to critically re-cartograph, relocate the nation.

There are interesting finds in this project of relocation and re-cartography. A geopoetic close reading of Bautista's ending "literary cartography", *Sunlight on Broken Stones*, the subject of our paper—which also begins the comprehensive estimation of the *Trilogy*—shows the very complexity of the archipelagic condition. The trope of broken stones here, and these broken stones as often smeared with blood all throughout the book, signals the consequences of geographic fragmentedness and disunity, of fragmentality that seems to compel for the laying of heroic lives through and through, and symbolic of the Filipino offering in the name of the nation. The recurring image of the broken stones besmeared by blood relocates the utterance in an archipelagic condition that is typified by constant bloody national struggle, and itself represents not only the aforementioned discord but also the brokenness the nation-in-progress had to undergo all throughout its history. The narrative framework of the epic covered Philippine history "from the 1800s to the present," capturing the "complexity and profundity of the Philippine experience, especially that part concerned with the Revolution" (Bautista, 2000: xi). The narrative voices however blur into the time frame and ambiguously speak of their respective dilemmas signaling the same state of fragmentedness and archipelagic rupture. However, the voices, *as one*, are far from breaking up, as they are all "harmonized into one" by the poetic moment of the epic. Interestingly, the Aegean archipelagic root of the epic here is being recalled, only that there is no singular seer "who has seen it all." The canonical, and colonial Homeric voice is dismantled in the epic—its Western idea and aesthetic—to tap into the possibilities of a Filipino—and by extension, a Southeast Asian—method of epical worlding. Homeric time, first

and foremost, is gloriously dismantled, as the epic only aspires to begin and close the narrations within the idea of cycles, without the aid of a prefigured muse. "(L)ove/ contemplates the world by/ constructing pedals/ for nationhood," invokes the persona in the beginning of the epic, and this same voice ends the body of narratives with "love/ contemplates the world/ by nurturing the engine/ of nationhood," signaling meaningful conveyance. While there is clearly the presence of the fragmented state of the archipelago, the poet conditioned the reading for a possibility of movement, of a sweeping regard for each piece of the islands, for each location. Inconceivable unity is rendered here as a metaphor for vastness, a vastness that deserves to be voyaged by the controlling pilgrim epic voice. The voice unilaterally called on the memory of heroes, the ordinary Filipino, as well as other figures and villains, in its attempt to metaphorize the image of the wheel, a symbol of transport and mobility, as one that makes the movement, the revolution, for independence.

III. A closer reading of the epic

The 32 cantos embody voices that argue about their participation in the relocation, remapping of the Philippines. The epic's description succinctly characterizes these voices that include "the poet, the nation, its heroes—political rulers, churchmen, everyday people—and even some objects in human embodiment." In most cases, the cantos of the epic are quite challenging to penetrate, as they tend to be hermetic and in an archipelagic sense *insulated* from the rest of the body epic. This form undertaken by the epic dramatizes insularity—that is, detachment from the entire corpus—though the individual discourses bleed into one another, in more ways than one. For one, the epic poem—written in cinquains (five verses in a stanza)—uses connecting words in last canto and first canto lines, successively. This aspect shades into the geographic discourse as reflecting the very solitary experience of island and archipelagic living, while at the same time embodying connexion. This observation may make us read each voice as islands separated from each other, attempting

to hear out each other in a way that would join and gather each of them together. This gesture is one cartographic attempt at piecing together presences and drawing up located utterances that could otherwise only yield mere cacophony. "We would not turn then/ to the essences, or juggle chimeras/ and chimpanzees for jubilees or parades," the collective persona utters in the Canto 2," in California, where desires burn, or in/ Cavite weeping for one's moonglow or dead/ in the other's false catacomb." As the persona in the second canto problematizes the role of art in the epic's project of national recovery, the word is re-positioned as a talisman of sorts in charting, collecting the tenors of voices crafted by the gesture of writing. As a cartographer of the nation, the task of the writer is once recalled: that is to remember, and *re-member* the bits and pieces of the national fragment, despite the deplorable presences of colonizer and the fellow citizen, both inflicting torment on the poetic voice all throughout history:

> ...Between the white masters
> who broke his soul and his brown brothers who break
> his heart, his biography crawls painfully,
> a cut worm. And yet, as he crawls, he carries
> on his back his people's dream of nationhood,
> their sins and desperations, as if flogging
> him were not enough, as if he could not die. (lines 120-125)

Admittedly, there is difficulty in ascertaining the identity of the speakers of the cantos—one significant marker of reading—and what we proposed, by way of readerly speculation, is but an explication of the artifice of the poem, in the light of our geographic perspective. Within the cantos themselves, one could observe that the speakers, as re-presentation of the archipelago and island insulation, are embodiments themselves of what we initially called as fragmentality. We have explained the term earlier on as *the sense of being dispersed by way of the geographic state,* but clearly, it is more than what it seems. Dispersal is the basic drama of each speaker—from the

persona-"epic chanter" himself, down to the historic figures he recalls. Each of them experiences various forms of dispersal that afflict the connected selves in a way that particularizes their experiences in an archipelagic environment in a particular regional-geographic context. In Canto 3, for instance, we hear of an assassin-persona, attentive to his work, but at the same time attending to a fragmented self as he blurts out: "To cross the thin line between Self and Selfless/ requires no great deed." In Canto 4, a persona-witness makes his case by saying that "his bones sing like a book" and that he walks "on a strand of cobwebbed memory," writing with blood throbbing "with the wounds of ages". "(T)ouch/ my words and my biography falls apart:/ dig into my breast and I have no heart," the persona continues, as his song combines with Canto 5, where he treads a landscape of death, painted by a metaphorical "painter" who "draws what we refuse to see." It goes on and on, the voice, becoming one and another, one and the *other,* but the method in the archipelagic madness is spelled out to clarify a critique, an archipelagic poetics: "Along this shore, down/ the sand where the seagulls move like humans, I/ mark it (the country), I dissect it like so much meat on/ the slab, I stab the ether of its soul, I/ brand it, I criticize its blood." The country, as national body, one that is afflicted, is recalled from the very words of Rizal, who in the *Noli*, offered that same body at the steps of the temple of the gods for healing. "The thousand ills that isolate these Islands," continues the persona in the same canto, "from decent humanity can thus be probed,/ and if fortune be kind, healed to perfection." From the legions, the identity-less speaker resolves to recover "my name", wishing not "to feel again the terror of waking up/ in heavy despair," because of *misplacing* it ("I have misplaced/ my name"). An archipelagic poetics, once described by Oscar V. Campomanes (1995) as a "repossession of a "poetically projected base" in his work on Philippine National Artist for Literature NVM Gonzales and Filipino-American writing, is also a resituation in "current critiques of nationalism," one that is also undertaken by the epic in its myriad, *misplaced* selves. What Campomanes interpreted as Gonzales' imagining of "a nation of fluid, shifting communities whose tendencies toward

decentering and pluralism provide the kernels for powerful autocritiques of grand narratives—narratives whose nationalist ambitions we now see in border-skirmishes, ethnic cleansing, white-supremacist movements, and corrupt bureaucratic state structures" (in Gonzales, 1995: xvi) is also applicable to the appreciation of Bautista's voices in fragmentality, where consciousness may be dispersed and yet resists the impossibility of recovery and integration.

There is also in archipelagic fragmentality, not a negation, but a confirmation of the present, of a *presence*. The form of Bautista's epic, as artifice, is one that provides symphony to the cacophonous speaking out of the fragmented, archipelagic voices. This is what lends it a certain solidity or composition in its writing—the epic in itself as the map to the wholeness of the speech acts. The formal strain however is but merely *the tip of the island,* so to speak, since the *presence* being pointed at here is the *re-presencing*, representation of the islands themselves, as crafted and imagined by the personae. In each voice, a consciousness exists, worlding the islands where time past and time present move in and out of the landscape quite fluidly, like the epic voices that change masks at every movement and turn of the cantos. The paradox of the fragmentality of the voices—their island consciousness deemed dispersed—is that they still have the capacity to execute the project of remapping by courageously and candidly evoking, not the picture of perfection of archipelagic living (its paradisical tropicality often seen in the institution of tourism), but its blood-soiled brokenness. The primary image of the bloodied broken stones, set to sparkle as sunlight hits them, towards the end of the epic, is but a device that relocates the vision to the state of fragmentation that anticipates resurrection, by way of national wholeness. This is a response to what seems like an awareness of what could possibly happen if the country—as represented by the consciousness-in-legion—would not be shaken by this defamiliarizing, demystifying method of worlding this sense of the tropics: "A sleeping country learns nothing from nightmares,/ but builds whimsical roads to the fabulous—/ it would like to say, in critical moments, "When I

talked to Peshawar," or, "in Persia,/ metal birds sing" (Canto 6) It does not know other things." The epic creates a landscape of death and decay, where imperiousness rule, and mass ignorance abounds. The hegemonic center, the one that must hold everything together, is in a sorry state of confusion, a reflection of the innermost turmoils of the speakers who attempt a cohesive address that could possibly bring forth some sense of order: "What is there to say, even now? Manila/ slumbers in the bedrock of its ruins, dreams/ in the night politic/ ...This living city// of the dead dares the living to die, to hold/ what cannot be owned and, renouncing all, cling/ only to the beauty before the fall, sounds/ of navies cluttering the waves, spices, slaves,/ dancing women who would wreck the court,/ letters// for gods and devils, cannon balls" (Canto 12). This portion explains the epic's veering away from chronology, itself, the very means by which national history has been *lined,* that is bordered, and colonially lineated. The epic may as well be read in the manner executed by the poet, but an apt and closer way of reading it is by piecing together the cantos' variously located utterance—typically modernist, and postmodernist to a certain extent, but definitely nonlinear. As the islands, are juggled, "all seven// thousand of them, with the peasants, laborers,/ and clerks clinging to their edges like frightened/ fleas," the crafted archipelagic space admits the past to comingle with the present to tell the tale, as it "must be told," as "it keeps us on our feet, it is our common// heritage" (Canto 13). In time, a world of vegetation, or a possibility of flourishing again, is sought and returned to in the epic, "a last grope for greenery" (Canto 17), despite the destructive occurrence of the pyroclastic mud that alludes to the eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippine island of Luzon in 1991. A nameless persona speaks of this memory which reminded him of a wretchedness that "shames" him: "The volcano said/ what we feared to hear, that lahar eats out heart's// verges and erases love from the map" (Canto 16). Natural destruction finds itself again sweeping the archipelago as memories of tempests speak out a powerful history: "Water deprives but does not/ succor, it girds the earth with gore that weakens/ the will of magistrates and regents. It slaps/ with

sudden terror even seagulls sitting/ on riggings, waiting for briny scraps to eat" (Canto 28). In these lines, among others, the Philippines as a country and as one located in the Southeast Asian region, is recreated to take its place as a kind of volatile landscape, conditioned by history and the changing times. It is also re-placed in the center of a seascape's squall, where it recovers in geographic detail, how it is formed rather tangentially, by its own location—the Pacific "ring of fire"—which paradoxically fragmentalizes the earth, though relating the nations along its path by way of often collectively experienced destructive tectonic and volcanic activity.

However, also present in this fragmented environment is a constant spectre of the tyrant figure being exorcised by the collective speech acts of the personae. The tyrant figure is the main torment that practically makes for the continued disintegration of the nation, an archipelagic trope that may well speak for the authoritarian experiences of other Southeast Asian nations. This tyrant figure is allowed to speak, to voice out, his own way of making sense of history, a strategy of discoursing the spectral consciousness and laying it bare. Contextually, it speaks of Ferdinand Marcos, the strongman who in the epic boasts of being "fated to rule/ forever" (Canto 8), as he narcissistically internalizes his heroic myth of being bemedalled and honored for his nobility and valor. "(A)re they not/ the categorical imprimatur on/ my legitimacy?" he asks, in Canto 8, as he laments on his being deposed after bearing "on my shoulders", "the land (which) became my own," as "the lone true keeper/ of its truth, though my shoulders have kept bleeding/ these past twenty one years." He voices out the pain of his exile, mocking the "woman/ who cannot wield a speech (but yet) wields a promise of/ paradise." It is quite interesting to note that the tyrant figure in exile speaks here, "talking to the waves," in archipelagic Hawai'i, his soil of dispersal, intoning the voice of duplicitous compassion in a time of national "disenchantment." In a latter canto, he speaks again, perhaps addressing the nation, as he finds in himself all rights to righteousness, waxing ironic as he makes claims of comparison: "The illness of government/ I have known pale in

comparison to this,/ even in my darkest violence, even/ in my fictive benevolence, requiring/ extreme measures for concomitance" (Canto 19). He again pokes fun at this successor, that "four-eyed woman/ who thought she was democracy's gift to all,/ (and) who stuttered through speechcraft and stumbled against/ her own legitimacy". "(She) would not consent to have my corpse carried to my rightful earth," he cries, while confessing in the long run, that "(a)ll over my land, bloodstains on broken stones/ portray an apology for a fractured/ destiny." The fracture, as resonant to the archipelagic image, seems to depict the historic ruptures that the tyrant's regime, as highpoint of Philippine oppression, had inflicted on the national body. Tyranny as an archipelagic moment in Philippine history attempts to consolidate powers, which in the long run were reclaimed by the people through the 1986 Revolution at the Epifanio delos Santos Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the capital, the city littered by "paper torn from telephone books" (Canto 11). The spectral presence of the tyrant figure made him an embodiment of previous fracturing episodes in the life of the Filipino people. In re-narrating a "history of feeling", the voices in the epic cast out the demon of oppression by "striking back", by responding to the dark voice who is definitely "much at fault," and who has muddled the lives of people by instilling disciplining paranoia: "But you assign your police/ to disturb even our dreams, we have nowhere/ to hide" (Canto 11). In a collective tenor, the persona irreverently shows the tyrant a bright image of street dissent to fully shroud his power with confetti-as-word, properly exorcising this Philippine historical phantasm then and now, aside from the use of the popular "finger politics" (the popular "L" hand sign which means "laban" or "fight", adopted by oppositionists in 1986):

> ...Because we are blind, we convey
> our protest through paper—cut paper yellow
> and white—swirling and twirling mutely in air,
> words ripped apart, thrown out, bumping and jostling
> each other in the breeze, looking sadly at
> each other, as they fall to the ground. (lines 981-986)

The epic at its core is comic, and as the explication of the ending suggests, the brightness of a future is to be anticipated despite the fact that the "the words in my (persona's) pen swim/ in blood, clamber over the pool and fly to all corners" (Canto 9). The sun here, and morning, tropes of the hope and resurrection of which Philippine culture is immersed upon by way of the *Pasyon* as articulated by Reynaldo Ileto (1979), return as positive primal images of the archipelagic tropics of the Philippines, while the instances of voicing muse on identity and a motherland, in their many forms and names. "They will not see me shake my head as I pace," a ruminative persona utters, as he continues walking along "the seashore in meaningless meditation." The rumination, it seems, bears this utterance, the epic, which retells the biography of a nation, "in newer words." "I will/ compel the sirens to give me back my Name," the persona ends, recalling not only the memory of Aegean sea nymphs who sang of forgetfulness but also of the junctures of collective historical forgetting, long lamented in Philippine cultural discourse. Part of the response of this epic's fragmentality—that is, the critical exposition of the discontinuities of consciousness—is the calling out of the voices of main heroes who had played important roles in the most important epochs of revolutions. The leader of the *Katipunan* (the Collective) Andres Bonifacio in Canto 14 makes himself heard, "ready for war,/ having sworn on the skull of Rizal to say/ what must be said". As if recounting his last moments after being summarily executed in a mountain in the Southern Luzon Island, he recalls how the very fragmentary state of the country became the very reason for his demise. He sings of regionalism, the country's gravest affliction, and *re-members*, in a way, the presence of his life and wholeness, his "flesh", which is "prologue to pain that he," Emilio Aguinaldo, his executioner and first president of the republic, "will not write about in his journal." Bonifacio speaks in synechdoches here, referring to himself with seeming corroboration on his being figuratively and literally mangled in death. Historically, his bones were never found, and he puts on his words the very paradox of his own heroic absent-presencing, of his own tragic fragmentation: "I am so full/ of death I cannot die, so full of sorrow. I cannot grieve

over all bastards who/ were rolled into unnamed graves,/ their legacy/ the silence of hardened earth, food for maggots,/ and colonial history." Rizal, for his part, sings oracular and geographic in Canto 30, while performing what was perceived in history as Bonifacio's task in the associated "revolutionary" efforts of both heroes: "Wake up!" I whispered to them as I walked past/ trees and flowers and fresh mounds of earth..." He speaks on the eve of his execution in the said Canto, and in the succeeding Canto 31, the penultimate part of the epic, where his voice blurs once again with that of other hero voices, revealing that the "(t)ime has come." "They (the people) will see/ calamity's corpses redrawing the map/ of servitude with no kindness to spare, each/ line and convolution livid with passion,/ with pulsating liveliness, with gunpowder." Recalling the mythic tearing of the residence certificates led by Bonifacio, he again mentions the important act of *renaming* the country as a form of renewal and archipelagic collectivity: "We must name/ our world anew, throw its tinsels and tassels/ away, burn the rubbish that clogs our reason,/ and begin all over again." Renaming was one important gesture Bonifacio undertook as a revolutionary leader when he introduced a name that collectively possessed the national idea—"Katagalugan", a name after the language and ethnicity of the dominant Tagalog region, but that which was conceptually a comprehensive reference to all nationals of Filipinas, despite regional origin or linguistic background. Rizal in the epic seems to agree with this grand design and narrative, and even admonishes everyone, particularly the ones who participated in the Propaganda Movement to "act like heroes."

Rizal, "the mapmaker," as instituted in the beginning and ending cantos of the epic poem, is emblematically canonized as the paragon of Filipino heroism in the epic. While the voices were legion, they all fused into one, that of Rizal's, whose shoes —a surprising metonymic turn towards the end of the epic—were described as showing "the way with facts and maps" (Canto 31). His blood smears the broken stones of the country, and he rises Christ-like, redeeming his fellowmen and finally awaiting how history is about to turn "brown under the white sun," the primary

archipelagic image which the *Noli* foretold to be one that must be welcomed in the name of the ones who had fallen in darkness. The collective persona praises the work of Rizal and that of others, announcing how everyone "cleared a space// for new banners and icons," and "rearranged/ the landscapes for our sunrise." The "wretched of the earth" (this was Bonifacio doing a Frantz Fanon in Canto 30) in one voice emphasized their oneness with the heroic voices in the penultimate canto, after a century of being "disenfranchised, disentitled," declaring "our ageless claim to selfhood though we were still/ that time selfless." The last two cantos illustrate once more the blurring qualities of this archipelagic fragmentality, where difference and otherness are boldly dismantled to fully accommodate the "many selves /seeking each other's arms for/ that one National Embrace!" Having clearly followed Rizal's footsteps, the "text of nationhood" was accomplished through the epic, and the body poetic that is the poem became a map telling them "where to go and how to be wise," filling their days with "sunrise, sunrise, sunrise." This "text of nationhood" however was not accomplished without struggle, as seen in metapoetic moments where the epic refers to itself as almost useless, shocking the nation "page by page/ with images of hunger and carnage, though// you portray them in colors" (Canto 13). In ascribing potency to the spirit of Rizal as one that binds the archipelagic pieces together, the epic also remembers the task of the poem and the office of the poet as one that similarly aspires for the restoration of national dignity and integration. The epic empowers itself by looking at the national condition in history with discerning estrangement, a perspective that shows "fragments of my lost loves, so that if/ I sang about its fruits and pendants, the men/ who nourished its pillars, it was because it/ gave me poems and maps to sweeten my tongue// and points directions." In critically and sweepingly accounting for the ills of the nation—from the time of the *conquista* to the era of the diasporic Overseas Filipino worker—the epic as witness provides an unflinching look at the *locations* of a country coming to terms with its nationhood and its place in the global sphere—something that is particularly celebrated when this epic won first prize in the Philippine Centennial

Literary Awards in 1998.

III. Conclusion

Finishing the epical arch, this scholar elects one important *fragment* of the epic—and we use it here to illustrate the very archipeligiality of the body poetic of the works of Cirilo F. Bautista, recently proclaimed by the Philippine government as National Artist for Literature—as the core of the archipelagic fragmentality that best characterizes *Sunlight on Broken Stones* as the closing book of the trilogy, and as one that finally *locates* the Philippines as a fragmented nation that wills its own salvation. The poem, "Third World Geography", published as a stand-alone lyric in Bautista's book *Believe and Betray: New and Collected Poems*, can originally be found in Canto 22 of the *Sunlight* where a persona ruminates on a steady national decay and pain, while listening to "music in the wind's absence, pondering victory's lexicon/ in the boneyard of remembrance." The canto utters the fragment of the epic and the manner of parables draws up a Philippine map that is almost revolting to see:

> ...A country
> without miracles sits heavy on the map,
> counting banana trees rotting in the sun.
> The man watching over it has commandeered
> all hopes, crammed them in a sack, tied it loose end.
> He goes around carrying it on *his* back.
>
> When asked what is inside, he whispers, "Nothing.
> Just a handful of feathers, just a handful
> of feathers." That is how light the burden of
> governance is, any tyrant can turn it
> into a figure of speech. Inspired, you kneel

on parched ground and pray for rice. But only
the burning wind catches your word and eats it. (lines 2105-2117)

Quite interestingly, the poet in his new version revises the fragment, making it more succinct and powerful. As a poet who considers only writing "one poem" in his lifetime, Bautista has always been bent on intertextualizing himself in several occasions, as if calling the attention of his readers to the amalgamation of his otherwise separate texts. When he revises the fragment in the newer version, by changing some words here and there, he dramatizes the connexion and resituates the reading experience in a perspective that clearly witnesses the unfolding of a larger poetic terrain, one that has been critically examined and re-cartographed by way of a faithful reorientation to history. When he adds a commentary towards the end of the stand-alone lyric, he repossesses the sharpness of an archipelagic consciousness to carry out a remapping of sorts, unfolding his map where "new worlds assemble before/ his very eyes, faster than he could untie// the banana-wrapped rice, worlds whose pedigree must be superior to common learning,/ which are not burdened by taxes, wars, rising/ prices, old age, volcanic eruptions, whose/ rulers hold their tongue and tend the greenery" (Canto 23):

The country without miracles
tries to get up from the page,
but the bold ink and sharp colors
hold it down.

"Third World Geography" as one fragment embedded in *Sunlight*'s Canto 22 is but a critical resituation of the country—in an allegorical fashion—in the place we call today as the "Global South", which is in a more ways than one, a First World *positioning* and assignment of many Southeast Asian countries—a perceived "politically correct" manner of marginalization in the era of globalization and the upcoming ASEAN integration. The

country already waxes tragic, being one that is not scant of "miracles", and admits to its difficulty of getting "up from the page." The use of the implied metaphor of the map here makes reverberating statements about national ills from within, and without. It also speaks about institutions and structures that "hold it down" by way of geopolitical or geoeconomic subjections. The "bold ink and sharp colors" in the lyric amends Bautista's earlier position regarding the archipelagic condition. It may as well be the situation of other Southeast Asian nations which archipelagically dream that everyone finally "get(s) up from the page", that a new and liberating geography is written soon.

By way of recapitulation, this paper attempted to launch a geoliterary appraisal of the epic trilogy of Cirilo F. Bautista, beginning with end of this major Filipino work, *Sunlight in Broken Stones*. The method is meant to retrace the archipelagic consciousness of the poet as he embarked on this monumental undertaking of giving poetic form to the nation in fragmentality. Regionally, this fragmentality may be related to what the historian Anthony Reid (2010) described as state-aversion, where societies have "a low sense of ethnie nationalism," and where they perceive "themselves as extremely various, with different dialects and customs in each river valley, and a common sense of themselves only in relation to extremes of outside pressure" (46). The "ethnie" here, "a group which imagines itself kin," is an operative term that is at the core of Bautista's project of recovering and *re-covering* (that is of geographically synthesizing) the country in its variousness, even in the imaginative realm. When Reid described Southeast Asia as "state-averse", he seems to resound what may be considered as the complex quality of Bautista's archipelagic utterance and collection, by way of the epics, written in contemporaneous times when the nation was undergoing several forms of redefinitions. The reading of the Bautista epics is in many ways too, an exploration of a Southeast Asian poetics, especially if we consider the shared resistance of Southeast Asian peoples towards imperial machinations and encroachments that led to each of their relegation into subjection. The implied "ethnie-zation", then, may be regarded as

the response to colonialism, and must be valued as an important term in understanding the entity of the larger Southeast Asian region as a newly developed substance "of new communities of belonging," (44) where "felt" or emotional histories are of primal importance, and where "the base metal of empire would have (been) transmuted into the gold of nationhood." Writing is in itself alchemical, and Reid's formulation embodies Bautista's epical gesture as distinctly Southeast Asian, articulating sites of separateness, struggles, and solidity.

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