

# National Heritage of Colour *parabikes* Collected in the Universities' Central Library

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## Introduction

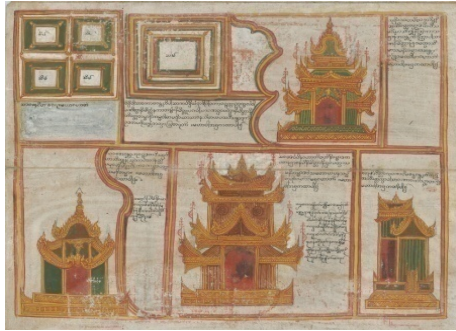
Universities' Central Library is the largest collection of colour *parabike* in Myanmar. The colour *parabikes* being submitted are unique because they are primary resources that are original and complete. Among the 4000 *parabikes* collected at UCL, the 16 colour *parabikes* that have been selected are the most outstanding ones. Moreover, they are extremely rare. The earliest manuscript dates back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. All of the manuscripts are still in good condition. They have already been digitized and the public has been given free access to them. These collections have been studied by international scholars for many years. The illustrations are (1) The Life of the Buddha, (2) *The Waithanthayar Jataka* (Vessantara Jataka), (3) A Buddhist Ordination Hall, (4) 100 Maids of Honor of the Royal Palace, (5) A Donation Made by King Mindone (Myanmar era 1206 – 1222), (6) Taming a Wild Elephant, (7) A Tournament on Horseback, (8) The 31 Planes of Existence, (9) The Structure and Plans of Palaces, (10) A Sign of the Sky, Earth, and a Wood, (11) Training the Royal Elephant, (12) A Polo Tournament, (13) A Donation (Myanmar era 1236-1251), (14) Treaties of Cabalistic Squares and Astrology, (15) A Map of the Royal Palace, and (16) Paddy Fields Adopted by the Minister of Land Surveying. The colours used in the illustrations use red, orange, black, green, blue, yellow, white, pink, and some other bright colour that are very attractive. Moreover, the paints used are natural dyes without any chemicals. As a result they are still in very good condition. There 16 colour *parabikes* should be registered as part of the memory of the world because of their importance as historical documents reflecting social customs of Myanmar, because of their artistic value, and as documents connected with Myanmar religion. These *parabikes* have already been digitized and given free access online.

## History

We collect *parabike* manuscripts by purchasing them and through donating. These manuscripts were collected starting 1964. In 1977, Dr. Ragavan, who was the expert in preservation of ancient literature from UNESCO and Chief Librarian of UCL Dr. Thaw Kaung hunted for antique *parabike* in Mandalay, Sagine, Monwar, Pokklu, Pagan, Nyaung Oo, Magwae, Taung Twin Gee, Pyi, Bithano, Mhoza city. In 2004 and 2017, Chief Librarian of UCL Daw Tin Phone New and library staffs hunted for antique *parabike* in Pokklu and Magwae in

Upper Myanmar. They received these *parabike* as donation from some well wisher. But they had to buy some. In this way UCL can collect these manuscripts.

## 1. Buddhist Ordination Hall



28 Leaves, 50cm x 20cm, White *Parabike*, *Konboun* period

In this *parabike*, picture of the ordination hall design in accordance with *vinaya*, was drawn in 1884. In addition, type of ordination hall such as near the bank, in the villages, top of mountains, in caves were drawn. Moreover, advantages and disadvantages of location of ordination hall are illustrated by drawing.

## 2. Donation (Myanmar era 1236 – 1251)



58 Leaves, 54cm x 20cm, White *Parabike*, *Konboun* period

This *parabike* drawn colourful of donation by public with their expense from 1236 to 1251 ME. For example: Donation of Umbrellas, food wearing, alms (rice) etc. to Sanghas, Renovation of bridge and Monestary and restoration of Shew Kyat Yat hill crumpling as a donation. Colourful picture of ear-boring ceremony of Ma Oo Zun in 1240-ME.

### 3. Donation of King *Mindone* (Myanmar era 1206 – 1222)



46 Leaves, 56cm x 23cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun*g period

Picture of King *Mindone* donation of betle, medicine, and pickled tea leave during the compendium of *Thit Sant Sayardaw's* cadaver. Donation of milk, *yaku*, *monk's* bowls, and offer meals to monks are also drawn. Offering of clothes to Brahmin and nuns, amnesty of prisoner and death sentence, offering of provisions to monks, renovate the ruined temples and ordination hall, were also drawn.

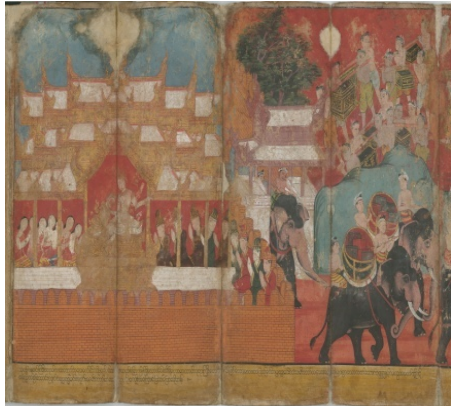
### 4. 100 Maids Honor of Royal Palace



68 Leaves, 55cm x 26cm, White *Parabike*, *Konboun*g period

In this *parabike*, illustrations of male and female *nats*, mountains, animals, 101race, 100 types of paddy, 100 kinds of fishes, grades of gold, 27 asterism, 100 flowers, fruits, birds, and 100 maids were presented.

## 5. Life of Buddha



50 Leaves, 46.5cm x 20cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun* period

The pictures of bathing in the *Mingalar Lake*, resting on the stone mat, informing the birth of son *Yahula*, to prince *Thaddada* from Royal palace are also drawn.

## 6. Map of Royal Palace



170 Leaves, 53cm x 24.5cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun* period

In this colour *parabike*, the following illustrations of various a royal palace and building are drawn: illustration of Royal Palace established by Nyoung Yan Min Taya in 963, illustration of Royal Palace established by Thar Lon Min Taya in 996, illustration of Royal Palace established by Aloung Min Taya Gye in 1115, illustration of Royal Palace established by Sin Phyu Shin Min Taya Gee in 1127, illustration of Royal Palace in labyrinth and illustration of tower palace in depository for gold...etc.

## 7. Paddy Fields adopted by Minister of Land Surveying , *Maha Min Kyaw Yarzar*



58 Leaves, 52cm x 20cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun* period

This is a picture of paddy fields, adopted the Minister of Land Surveying, Ma ha Min Kyaw Yaza. At that time paddy lands are measured not by length and width but by number of see ding. For example, paddy fields cover 400 seeding.

## 8. Polo Tournament



8 Leaves, 47cm x 19 cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun* period

This is a colourful painting parabike depicting the King Queen who are enjoying the match playing a small ball with a stick ,riding on the horse back.

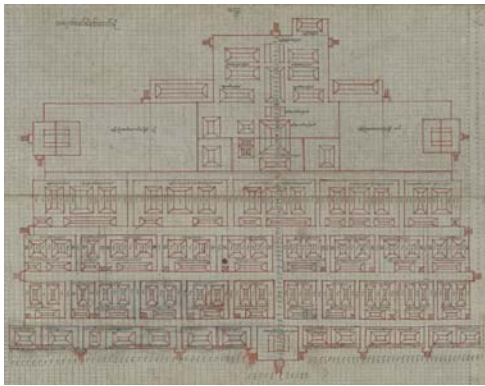
## 9. Sign of Sky, Earth, Wood



92 Leaves, 50.5cm x 20cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun*g period

This parabike interprets omens by the figures of constellations, stars, sun, moon, clouds and rainbows. For example, Figure of cloud shows the forms of cow presents well being. Black cloud cast over the sky means fairly well rain, poor health as a consequence. If the shape fish appears on the moon, man may exterminate same race. All the enemies will be defeated when comet appear the North from. Using wood with equal size from top to stem for building house may conquer the entire foe.

## 10. Structures and Plans of Palaces



58 Leaves, 54cm x 20cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun*g period

Plans of Amarapu, Easten side of Mandalay Hill, Southen garden, Northen garden and Royal palaces are drawn in colours.

## 11. Taming the Wild Elephant



4 Leaves, 47cm x 19cm , White *Parabike* ,*Konboun*g period

In this *parabike*, picture of lure wild elephant into a keddah was drawn.

## 12. 31 Planes of Existence



48 Leaves, 43cm x 15cm, Black *Parabike* *Konboun* period

In this *parabike*, describe about the 31 Planes of existence each pictures was drawn.

## 13. Tournament on Horseback



4 Leaves, 47cm x 19cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun* period

In this *parabike*, picture of 37 styles of horse riding and spear throwing by member of royal cavalry were drawn.

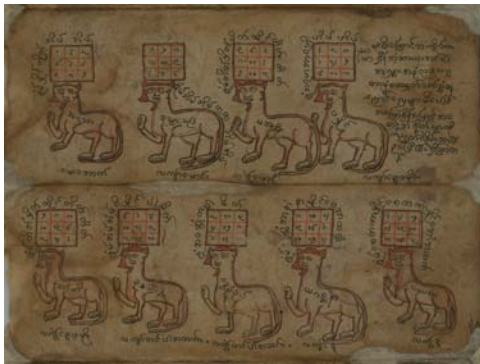
## 14. Training of Royal Elephant



8 Leaves, 47cm x 18.5 cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun* period

It illustrates the combating training of Royal elephants.

## 15. Treaties of Cabalistic Square and Astrology



48 Leaves, 36.5cm x 11.5 cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun* period

This parabike is a treaty, which indicates prediction of constellation with their shape and characters with drawings. For example: When four constellation of “Hay” become dim, Kingdom will be ruined. These treaties also indicate the drawing of cabalistic square with their effects. For example: Cabalistic square as a charm.



## 16. *Waithanthayar Jataka*



32 Leaves, 53cm x 25.5cm, White *Parabike* , *Konboun*g period

In the past Life of Buddha, before he becomes enlighten one; King *Waithanthayar* is in last life as human. In this *parabike*, the story of *Waithanthayar* is illustrated. They are from donation of white elephant to donation of his son and daughter to a Brahmin *Suzaka* .

### **Digitization**

The colour *parabikes* are collected and digitized in UCL. Digitized copies are allowed for public access and they are already uploaded for online free access. These colour *parabikes* are at risk form climate conditions. They are kept in cabinets. These 16 *parabikes* have been digitized and already gives free access online. We would like to get the training on preservation by means of digitizing to meet the international standard.

### **Conclusion**

Colour *parabikes* are unique. They rare only are source in Myanmar. There is no alternative for them. They are original and primary sources. Many researchers and students have to study them. It is used as a reference by not only by local but also by foreign scholars to study the culture, history, architecture, arts, literature and life style in Myanmar. We are going to continue digitizing the rest *parabikes* and give free access online. We are going to make people aware of the value of *parabike* through social media like radio, TV and journals.

