Painting and Performance
Wayang bèbèr scroll. Archives Internationales d’Ethnographie, 16 (1903), taf. 18.2.
Painting and Performance

CHINESE PICTURE RECITATION AND ITS INDIAN GENESIS

Victor H. Mair
To Li-ching
and the memory of
Wang Hsiu-chih
It seems that national honour would suffer if it were obliged to recognise the least influence from the neighbours. Love of the country, like love of God, can degenerate to stupid fanaticism; it would be necessary in order to satisfy the maniacs of chauvinism, that all arts, all sciences, all discoveries, all inventions should have grown out of the privileged soil that has had the honour to bear them.

_Sylvain Lévi,_
*L’Inde et le Monde* (1928).
_Cited and translated by C. L. Fabri,_
“Mesopotamia and Early Indian Art,” p. 245.
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In two other works I dealt with a genre of Chinese popular literature known as pien-wen (“transformation texts”). During the course of my research for Tun-huang Popular Narratives (1983) and T’ang Transformation Texts (1988), I gradually came to realize that written pien-wen were derived from an oral tradition of storytelling with pictures and that this tradition had Indian antecedents.

Several considerations made it advisable to issue this material as a separate work. In the first place, the earlier studies were primarily Sinological and literary in character. By contrast, the subject matter for this book has to do mainly with folk art and culture outside of China. Because of the paucity of data on picture recitation in China, I have had to supplement the available historical and anecdotal evidence with information drawn from parallel traditions elsewhere. It did not seem a wise approach to bore scholars interested only in Chinese popular literature with hundreds of pages about picture recitation in India, Indonesia, Iran, and elsewhere. At the same time, the information assembled here is too important for students of folklore and folklife generally to be hidden away in a specialist’s monograph. Naturally, I hope that Sinologists will be enticed to look into these pages and that folklorists will be sufficiently curious about pien-wen to consult T’ang Transformation Texts.

One of the chief purposes of this book is to put in historical and social context the unique and inestimably precious Chinese picture-scroll which depicts the contest between Śāriputra and the Six Heretics and which is preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Pelliot manuscript 4524). This scroll has already, most deservedly, received the careful attention of Akiyama Terukazu, who has written an exacting set of articles dealing with its artistic aspects. Nicole Vandier-Nicolas has published a beautiful facsimile, for which all students of Chinese
popular literature must remain eternally thankful, and has also contributed a study of the sources for the story in the form of a booklet that accompanies the facsimile. I have myself made a complete translation of the corresponding text, which has been published in Tun-huang Popular Narratives. Hence it will not be necessary to spend a great deal of time describing the Śāriputra scroll itself, since that has already been done satisfactorily elsewhere.

The nature of this investigation has, of necessity, been wide-ranging and has led me into areas where I do not normally specialize. Even though I have striven hard to achieve competence in all of the languages and fields touched upon in this book, the task is larger than any single individual can handle with ease. It is only the intellectually compelling nature of the undertaking that drove me to complete these investigations in spite of the obvious and seemingly awesome difficulties. Hence I must beg the forgiveness of Sanskritists, Tibetologists, Arabicists, Persianists, Turkologists, and experts on Indonesia, Central Asia, and Japanese literature and art who will undoubtedly find some technical points upon which to differ. Fortunately, numerous individuals have offered me generous assistance at crucial moments, which has enabled me to amend various deficiencies and avoid potentially embarrassing pitfalls. William Hanaway provided me with full and fascinating details of Iranian picture recitation and corrected my Persian transcriptions. A. D. H. Bivar also helped me with specific Iranian narratives. Metin And was extremely generous in providing me with references to Turkic materials. Ruth Allee supplied information about Chinese art history, Craig Clunas did so for Chinese prints, and Lore Sander for Central Asian art history. The late and much lamented M. Mohandessi told me about ṣūrat-khwān and The Threepenny Opera, a good indication of the astonishing breadth of his learning. In matters Arabic, I was fortunate to be assisted by Kevin Reinhart, Roger Allen, and Adnan Haydar. My former colleague Barbara Ruch deserves not only my own thanks for much sage advice but those of all who are interested in medieval illustrated narratives for her vigorous advancement of this field.

It was my privilege to meet Bambang Gunardjo, director of the Museum Wayang in Jakarta, when he was travelling through this country under the auspices of the JDR 3rd Fund. I was also able to correspond with D. C. H. Subandono of the Konervatari Karawitan in Surakarta who sent me two magnificent cloth paintings in the wayang bèbèr style. I would, too, like
to thank Dr. Singgih Wibisono of Jakarta-Selatan and two of my former students, Diana Borden and William Crawford, who visited him during a trip to Indonesia and asked him numerous questions on my behalf.

Marie Adams and Isabel Shaw took time out from their work in the Peabody Museum of Harvard University to tell me about batik and wayang kulit. Harrison Parker not only answered many of my queries about the state of wayang today but gave me free access to his rich collection of contemporary Indonesian art. The fine collection of Indian picture-storytelling materials belonging to Henry and Joan Ferguson of Interculture Associates was also kindly opened to my inspection. Hsieh Sheng-pao 謝生保, librarian of the College of Education in Chiu-ch’üan, Kansu, spent several long sessions going over numerous details of western Kansu pao-chüan and showing me his precious collection of texts. Lucy L. Lo, curator of the Far Eastern Art Seminar at Princeton University, graciously replied to several of my questions about the Tun-huang photographic archives there. Joseph C. Miller, Jr., of the University of Pennsylvania and John D. Smith of the University of London were thoroughly generous in sharing with me the results of their excellent research on the par tradition. I wish particularly to thank Joseph C. Miller, Jr., for allowing me access to his rich collection of audio and video tapes, unpublished manuscripts, printed materials, photographs, and par paintings. He also kindly spent many hours helping me clear up hundreds of small details concerning picture performance traditions in Rajasthan. Among those to whom I am most deeply indebted is Anne Pellowski, director of the Information Center on Children’s Cultures of the United States Committee for UNICEF, who possesses an incredible wealth of knowledge about all forms of storytelling from around the world. Stella Kramrisch and Michael Meister offered expert guidance in matters relating to Indian art. Dan Ben-Amos and Maxine Belmont Weinstein kept me abreast of developments in folklore and folklife studies. Eugen Weber directed me to interesting topics from recent French and German history that are related to my research. I would, further, like to express my appreciation to participants of the Conference on Rādhā and the Divine Consort, held at the Center for the Study of World Religions (Harvard University) June 15–18, 1978, especially Brenda Beck, Norvin Hein, Barbara Stoler Miller, and Charlotte Vaudeville, who responded to my queries on storytelling with pictures in present-day India. Likewise, I am grateful to Valentina
Stache-Rosen and Jyotindra Jain for their letters on the same subject. I am delighted that, just as this book was going to press, the Institute for Medieval Japanese Studies at Columbia University sponsored a “Workshop on Painting Recitation” (November 14–15, 1987). The entire weekend was most stimulating and informative. I was particularly pleased to learn that Peter Chelkowski, Susan Slyomovics, Brooks McNamara, Sal Murgiyanto, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and others are actively engaged in various historical and theoretical aspects of research on this emerging field. Jonathan Chaves lent me much appreciated support by being one of the few Sinologists who recognize the importance of Indian performing arts for the development of Chinese folk literature. Alfredo Cadonna tracked down an elusive Italian source and arranged to have a copy sent to me. My colleagues Ludo Rocher, Barbara Ruch, V. S. Rajam, Frank Korom, George Cardona, Masatoshi Nagatomi, Peter Gaeffke, and Wilhelm Halbfass each read various portions of this book in draft and offered much helpful advice. Ann Cheng kindly offered to help with the preparation of the index and the proofreading. Finally, I would like to thank Damaris Kirchofer, editor at the University of Hawaii Press, for the meticulous care with which she prepared my somewhat intractable manuscript for publication and for her unfailingly kind and cordial manner in handling all aspects of its production.

The National Endowment for the Humanities contributed to the completion of this long project by awarding me a Summer Stipend in 1984. I am deeply grateful for this support from the Endowment.

While happy to acknowledge the munificent assistance received from others, I take full responsibility for all statements made and facts put forth in this book. The special nature of the work presented herein has required consultation with experts in many areas. The granting of such help should not be construed as an endorsement of any of the interpretations or positions here advanced, for these are entirely my own.

It has been my primary intention throughout this book to offer as much raw data as possible. Naturally, it is impossible to present factual matter in a connected discourse without adopting some sort of interpretation. The interpretive framework for this study is what might be called the “Indian hypothesis.” This hypothesis is only one attempt to make sense of the mass of evidence that has been brought together here. It is offered in the spirit of honest scholarly debate, and I welcome alternative schemes for bringing order to the material
presented herein. It is even conceivable that some who reject a priori any suggestion of diffusionism may deny out of hand all possibility of Indian influence upon the other traditions of picture recitation that are discussed. I wish to reemphasize that what is important to me is the evidence concerning picture recitation that I have laboriously accumulated during the past dozen years, not any hermeneutical scheme which may be brought to bear upon it. During the past decade and more, I have diligently and painstakingly pursued every lead concerning picture recitation that came to my attention. May the information from throughout history and around the world assembled here be of some small use to my colleagues in a variety of fields!
Key Terms

bänkelsang  German storytelling with pictures; also called moritat and several other names.

bhopo  Rajasthani picture-storyteller.

dalang  Indonesian shadow play performer and picture storyteller.

etoki  Japanese “picture explanation.”

paṛ , paṭ , paṭa , parda , etc.  Varieties of Indian and Iranian picture-storytelling. The literal meaning of these words, all of which are related, is “[painting on a] cloth.”

pien  Chinese Buddhist technical term meaning “change,” “transform,” “strange happening,” etc. During the T’ang and Five Dynasties periods, it was also used as the name of a literary genre (pien or pien-wen) dealing with manifestations and appearances as well as the designation of a type of visual art (pien or pien-hsiang) dealing with the same subjects.

wayang  word (literally meaning “shadow”) used in Southeast Asia to designate a wide variety of theatrical performances.
## Major Chinese Dynastic Periods

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A Note on Transcription Schemes and Method of Reference

In dealing with numerous languages, some of them not very well known in the West and others of them dead for at least a thousand years, it is inevitable that various systems of romanization for transcribing them will be encountered. Where conflicts have occurred among the various authorities consulted, I have endeavored to regularize them according to a single scheme. Occasional discrepancies in usage may survive, however, and this is usually a result of the precise quotation of sources or variations due to dialectical differences and linguistic change over time. Even with Mandarin Chinese, which is no longer considered an “exotic” language, there are enormous difficulties involved in any attempt to achieve consistency in transcription. The standard chosen for this work is that traditionally accepted by scholars working in the field of Sinology, a modified version of the Wade-Giles system. Isolated instances of other transcriptions do occur but are restricted to proper names, quoted material, and the like.

The method of source citation employed in the text and in the notes also requires a few words of explanation. For the convenience of those who might not be familiar with some of the languages that are used herein, an English translation is usually provided in the text. In the notes, however, works are normally identified by a shortened form of the original title. To avoid unnecessary use of Chinese characters (i.e., fang-k’uai-tzu, “tetragraphs”) both in the text and in the notes, except for technical terms, proper names, and so forth in the Introduction and rarely elsewhere, they have largely been restricted to the Bibliography. The reader who needs to know the characters for a given East Asian title is thus encouraged to consult the Bibliography when necessary. In the text, references to Tun-huang manuscripts are preceded by abbreviations that indicate their repository, as follows: P refers to numbered Pelliot manu-
scripts from Tun-huang in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; PK refers to numbered manuscripts from Tun-huang in the Peking National Library; and S refers to numbered Stein manuscripts from Tun-huang in the British Museum, London.
Painting and Performance
Introduction

This book is the outgrowth of a more than decade-long study of a genre of Chinese popular literature known as pien-wen 變文 (“transformation texts”). Pien-wen, which date from the T’ang period (618–906), are extremely important in the history of Chinese literature—especially fiction and drama—because they are the first extended vernacular narratives in China. There has, however, been a great deal of confusion and controversy concerning pien-wen since they were discovered at Tun-huang (in the far northwestern province of Kansu) around the beginning of this century. The usual explanation is that pien-wen were the promptbooks of Buddhist monks, which they referred to when giving lectures or sermons. Available evidence drawn from various sources, however, indicates clearly that pien storytellers were primarily lay entertainers rather than monks and that some of them were women. The contents of pien-wen were both secular and religious (chiefly Buddhist).

Both in the pien-wen themselves and in contemporary historical writings, there are subtle indications that this literary genre derived from a type of oral storytelling with pictures called simply chuan-pien 轉變 (literally, “turning transformation [picture scrolls],” hence, “performing transformations”). 1 “Transformation” here ultimately refers to the illusory manifestation or representation of Buddhist figures. A full understanding of the term can only be gained by reference to such Indic notions as nirmāṇa, vikurvāṇa, rddhi prātih ārya, and so forth, all of which refer to miraculous powers of manifestation and all of which were translated into Chinese expressions that included the graph for pien. 2 Essentially, it was the task of the artist to represent these manifestations on paper or silk, or in wall-paintings, in which case they may be called pien-hsiang 變
The pien storyteller would then use the pien-hsiang as an illustrative device during his performance. To “perform a transformation” thus signifies the realization or animation by the storyteller—through various devices of his stock in trade—of the transformational figures and scenes on a picture-scroll.

Unfortunately, because transformation picture recitation in China was basically a folk tradition, there are very few details about it in the historical record, which naturally was the product of elite society. Only one uniquely precious picture-scroll has survived, Pelliot Tun-huang manuscript 4524 (see Plate I for detail) in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. This is a depiction of the contest of supernatural powers between Buddha’s disciple, Śāriputra, and the chief of the heretics, Raudrākṣa. Although we must be infinitely grateful that sheer chance has allowed for the survival of this scroll, it is tantalizingly mysterious in that it has been cut off from the performance context in which it was once employed.

There exist transformation text manuscripts that relate the same story as the picture-scroll. They are Stein manuscripts 5511 and 4398 verso in the British Library and a manuscript formerly belonging to Hu Shih (胡適), the whereabouts of which in China are now uncertain. These three manuscripts are entitled “Transformation Text on the Subjugation of Demons” or the like. Where the transformation texts are a typically Indian combination of prose (spoken) and verse (sung)—the so-called “prosimetric” or “chantefable” form—the picture-scroll (P4524) has only the verse portions on its back. A host of questions assails us about the relationship between the transformation texts and the transformation picture-scroll. Were the transformation texts used as promptbooks or aides-mémoire for picture recitations? Why does the picture-scroll carry only the sung portions of the text? Who were the performers of these transformations? What was their social status? And so on.

Due to the disappointingy meager accounts of transformation performances in China, P4524 and all the problems surrounding it might well remain forever suspended in perplexing limbo. To break through such an impasse, I have adopted in this book a radical research strategy. In order to fill in the abysmal gaps in our knowledge of Chinese picture recitation, I have sought for information drawn from analogous genres in India, Indonesia, Japan, Iran, Turkey, Italy, Germany, and many other countries. The results have been surprisingly sat-
satisfying. Whereas I initially had hoped merely to supplement the Chinese record with evidence from parallel traditions elsewhere, organic linkages among a number of these traditions have emerged. This is more than I bargained for originally, but it is pleasant by-product nonetheless.

Yet, the focus of my efforts has always been on P4524. Standing in splendid isolation, this T’ang period picture-scroll must once have been a part of a widespread and flourishing tradition. The aim of the remainder of this introduction is to document from scattered sources the survival of picture recitation in China after the T’ang period. While some of the material presented is fragmentary and other evidence is hypothetical, it should be sufficient to demonstrate that—in spite of orthodox negligence and even opposition—popular religious and secular storytelling with illustrative devices never entirely died out until the second half of this century. For all we know, it may still continue in some hidden corner of China’s vast territory. My fondest hope is that this book might stimulate those who are aware of its existence to provide fuller documentation of this fascinating subject.

Although transformation (pien) performances proper seem gradually to have died out during the Sung period (960–1277), storytelling with pictures persisted under other names. This is borne out by the writings of Ma Huan, a Chinese Muslim who was secretary to the renowned Ming dynasty admiral, Cheng Ho (鄭和), and who travelled with him to Southeast Asia. Among his reports for the year 1416 is the following passage about Java:

They have a class of men who make drawings on paper of such things as men, birds, beasts, eagles, or insects; [these drawings] resemble scroll-pictures; for the supports of the picture they use two wooden sticks, three ch’ih [feet] in height, which are level with the paper at one end only; sitting cross-legged on the ground, the man takes the picture and sets it up on the ground; each time he unrolls and exposes a section of the picture he thrusts it forward towards his audience, and, speaking with a loud voice in the foreign language, he explains the derivation of this section; [and] the crowd sits round and listens to him, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying, exactly as if the narrator were reciting one of our expository tables [p’ing-hua].
On the basis of these observations, Gustave Schlegel induces that Indonesian wayang bèb èr (storytelling with pictures) had a greater antiquity than wayang purwa (shadow puppets) (see Chapter 3). “If the Wàyang purwa (or scenic shades) were played in Java in A.D. 1416, Ma Hoan, the most exact Chinese ethnographer of Java, would not have failed to notice it. But he only speaks of the Wayang bèb èr, a long picture between two wooden cylinders, and which is unrolled (amb èb èr) as the dalang, or representator, goes on with his explanation.” 9 Schlegel suggests that this passage logically implies that there must have been a common Indian source for the Chinese and Indonesian traditions of storytelling with pictures. In slightly different form, this passage may also be found in Kung Chen’s (fl. 1430–1434) A Record of Foreign Nations across the Western Ocean, under the heading “Kingdom of Java” (爪哇國). 10 Here and in Ma Huan’s original account, it is clear that wayang bèb èr has been directly compared by the Chinese observers to the popular genre known as “expository tale” (p’ing-hua 平話 or 評話). This comparison is of the utmost significance and cannot be stressed too strongly, for it offers compelling grounds for the belief that Yüan and Ming expository tales (p’ing-hua) were originally a type of picture-storytelling, a fact that modern scholarship has heretofore failed to realize. If we may assume that printed expository tales derived from the sort of oral expository tales mentioned by Ma Huan and Kung Chen, as appears likely, then the origin of the format of printed expository tales (serial narrative pictures on the top portions of the pages and text below) becomes plain. In addition, we gain from these accounts evidence of the existence and nature of wayang bèb èr in the early part of the fifteenth century. Furthermore, because of our knowledge of the form of transformation picture-scrolls, it is possible to say with some assurance on the basis of this passage that expository tales (p’ing-hua) were the direct descendants in the Yüan period (1260–1368) of transformation storytelling. We might even go so far as to say simply that p’ing-hua was essentially pien with a Sinicized name.

There exists a series of “five fully illustrated expository tales” for which we have precise information concerning date and provenance. 11 On the title page of the last of these five, called “New Fully Illustrated Expository Tale on the Story of the Three Kingdoms” (新全相三國志平話), the time of publication is given as falling between the years 1321–1323. Four of the five tales are identified as having been published by Mr. Yü of Chien-
The probable existence of a “Serially Illustrated Expository Tale on the Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh” (吳越春秋連像平話) leads one to imagine that there must have been a tradition of telling this long story with pictures.¹² The Tun-huang story of Wu Tzu-hsü, a hero of the Warring States period in the struggles between the kingdoms of Wu and Yüeh, might then be considered as a development from that tradition in which the illustrations were dropped and the “Serially Illustrated Expository Tale on the Spring and Autumn Annals of Wu and Yüeh” as one in which they were retained.

There are many manuscripts in India that are illustrated and arranged in a format similar to p’ing-hua. I mention here only the Vasantavilāsa in the Freer Gallery, executed in 1451. This text consists of eighty-four painted panels on a cloth scroll in a vertical format. The alternating portions of text seem to have been added after the paintings were completed in the spaces that were left for them. The size and arrangement indicate that the Vasantavilāsa was intended for private reading.¹³ With printed p’ing-hua, the text appears to be primary and the pictures illustrative of it.¹⁴ But in terms of the evolution of this genre of popular literature, the evidence is compelling that the emphasis was originally on the pictures and that the “texts” were oral explanations of them.

Yü Yüeh (1821–1906), in A Record of Whiling away the Summer to Its Very End, has a section entitled “Picture Explanations that Have the Form of Expository Tales” (圖說如平話體例).¹⁵ From this section we can verify somewhat the similarity between expository tales and transformations. There still existed in Yü’s time engraved copies of Yang Tung-ming’s (楊東明, 1548–1624) “Pictures of the Starving People of Honan” (河南飢民圖). Yang had originally presented the pictures to the emperor during the Wan-li years (1573–1619). There were altogether fourteen pictures, the first thirteen of which each had an attached explanation (各繫以說). The last picture was of the artist himself presenting a petition and had this label: “The person who is gazing expectantly toward the Emperor and kowtowing is [titles omitted] ... Yang Tung-ming” (這望闕叩頭的就是...楊東明).
It is highly significant, as Yü himself points out, that the explanations were all written in the colloquial language (諸說皆俚俗之語). Yü further mentions a *Classification of Teachings for the Family* (教家類纂) by one Hsüeh Meng-li (薛夢李), also of the Ming period, which had pictures with explanations such as, “This person standing inside the door is so-and-so of such-and-such a dynasty, etc.” (這一箇門內站的人是某朝某人，云云). Here, too, the labels were written in the colloquial language. Yü suspects (疑) that this is the form of the expository tales that were so popular during the Ming period.

It is essential that more intensive research be carried out on the expository tale to determine whether any other Chinese sources allude to the fact that it was originally a type of picture-storytelling. In other words, the early expository tale now needs to be investigated as an oral performing art rather than as the genre of written popular literature into which it later developed. A type of expository tale did, of course, survive as an oral performing art into the twentieth century but does not employ illustrations. Yet, even with the presently available evidence, we may say that early expository tales had an organic relationship to transformations. Thus

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Orally Performed} & \text{Orally Performed} & \text{Orally Performed} \\
\text{Transformation} & \text{Expository Tale} & \text{Expository Tale} \\
(pien) & (p’ing-hua) & \text{Without Pictures} \\
\text{Transformation Text} & \text{Written Expository Tale} \\
(pien-wen)
\end{array}
\]

That the tradition of storytelling with pictures survived in China after the nominal demise of transformations and transformation texts is evident from other sources as well. The fifty-sixth chapter of the *Complete Story Telling of Yüeh Fei* (Shuo Yüeh ch’üan chuan, 說岳權傳) begins with an account of the appearance on the battlefield of a new and formidable Chin (金) general named Ts’aao Ning (曹甯) and describes how the Sung warriors are unable to defeat him. Wang Tso (王佐, b. 1126), who had previously infiltrated the Chin army through the ruse of cutting off one of his arms and presenting it to the enemy commander-in-chief, Wu-chu (兀朮, d. 1148), as a sign of his allegiance and who is now posing as a storyteller called “Wretched One” (苦人兒), learns of this unfortunate (for the Sung) development.  

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But let us tell how Wang Tso, who was startled when he heard of this matter in the Chin encampment, came before Lu Wen-lung’s (陸文龍) camp. He went into the tent and saw Wen-lung, who asked him, “Wretched One, which stories are you going to tell again today?”

“Today I have an extremely good story,” replied Wang Tso. “But you must have all of these contemptible barbarians go out so that Your Honor may listen to it alone.”

Wen-lung ordered all of his attendants to go out. When Wang Tso saw that all of the contemptible barbarians had indeed gone out, he took out a picture (一幅畫圖) and presented it to Wen-lung saying, “Would Your Honor please look at the picture first, then I’ll tell the story.”

Wen-lung received it and took a look. He saw that it was a story in pictures (一幅畫圖事). There was one person in the picture whom he seemed to recognize as resembling his father, the prince. He also saw a dead general and a dead woman in a big hall. He also saw a small boy crying beside the baby of that woman. He also saw that there were many barbarian soldiers painted in the picture.

His Honor spoke: “What story is this, Wretched One? I don’t understand. You come and tell it to me.”

“Please just move a bit to the side, Your Honor, so that it will be easier for me to tell the story as I point at the picture. This place (所在) is the state of Lu-an in the central part of China. The old gentleman who is dead occupied the position of governor and was named Lu Teng. This dead woman is Madame Hsieh. This is their son, whose name is Lu Wen-lung.”

“Wretched One,” asked Lu Wen-lung, “how is it that he, too, is called Lu Wen-lung?”

“You just keep on listening,” answered Wang Tso. “The state of Lu-an was ravaged by the soldiers of this Prince of Ch’ang-p’ing, Wu-chu. This Lu Wen-lung’s father died out of loyalty to his country and his mother died in defense of her chastity. Wu-chu saw that their son, Lu Wen-lung, was very young so he ordered a wet nurse to carry him safely. He took him to a foreign country and recognized him as his own son. Today it has already been thirteen years! Not only does he not take revenge for his true father, he calls the enemy his father. How can this not be upsetting?!”

“Wretched One,” said Lu Wen-lung, “it is obvious that you are talking about me.” 17
On the Peking Opera stage, the story is known as “Eight Great Hammers” (*Pa ta ch’ui, 八大錘*), “The Armless Storyteller” (*Tuan-pi shuo-shu, 斷臂說書*), and by other names. Wang Tso in these versions usually brings with him a series of pictures, which he hangs on the wall to illustrate his story.

The Hall of the Seven True [Masters of the northern Taoist tradition] (七真殿), also called Double Yang [Heaven] Hall (重陽殿) after the Taoist master Wang Ch’ung-yang (王重陽), in the Palace of Eternal Joy (永樂宮), a Taoist temple in Shansi, was constructed in the year 1252. Judging from their style, the wall-paintings inside of it are also from approximately the same period. On its north wall is a very interesting scene (Plate II) which shows a man using a picture of a skeleton to lecture to some onlookers, probably about death. It is highly reminiscent of the *modus operandi* of the Indian picture showman known as a *yamapattaka* (see Chapter 1). This indicates that there existed, in the Yuan period, storytelling or at least lecturing with pictures, although we do not know by what name it was called except in the case of the expository tales (*p’ing-hua*). It is also something of a mystery how the Taoists came to employ this technique. Many of the motifs of the paintings at the Palace of Eternal Joy, it should be mentioned, though in a Taoist setting are of Buddhist origin. For example, the flying devas (飛天) in the niche on the northern wall of the Hall of the Pure Trinity (三清殿) are Buddhist in their iconography.

The original of the celebrated scroll-painting “Picture of Spring Festival by the River” (*Ch’ing-ming shang-ho t’u, 清明上河圖*) is generally recognized as depicting life in the Northern Sung capital of Kaifeng. Naturally, some of the later versions of it depart from an entirely authentic representation of the Sung but they are still worthy of consulting critically. There are many other paintings of a similar nature that ought to be examined thoroughly by students of Chinese literature, not only for evidence of storytelling with pictures but for all types of oral performance, including drama.

In section ten of the White Cloud Hall copy (白雲堂本) of the “Picture of Spring Festival by the River,” which dates from the Yuan period, we can see what is either a puppet show or a picture-storytelling session. Above the curtain or picture are two black objects that may be the supports for the cloth hanging or, if a puppet show, the caps of the puppets themselves. The Yuan Secret Treasure copy (元秘府本), which is in the same tradition as the White Cloud Hall copy, unmistakably has a puppet
show in the equivalent position. No matter which it is, on the White Cloud Hall copy there is a man dressed in white standing just to the left of the cloth who appears to be holding a pointer. This, as we know from various Indian, Tibetan, and Japanese traditions, is one of the standard marks of a picture-storyteller. The cloth is quite large; in real life it would be approximately 5 feet square. A sizable crowd (at least a dozen or more made up of all ages) has gathered. Others standing by the side are pointing in the direction of the performance as though they too would like to watch it.

Also, in section thirteen of the White Cloud Hall copy, we see a man carrying a very large picture, perhaps of a temple. There is an associate behind him with a box on his back who seems to be holding out a platter into which someone is depositing a donation. There are other copies of the “Picture of Spring Festival by the River” in which there is a scene (center top) where a man has set up a picture board with six human figures on it. He has attracted quite a gathering of people about him. He may be a physiognomist or picture-explainer.

The Ming period copy of the “Picture of Spring Festival by the River” in the Metropolitan Museum of Art includes an interesting detail (see Plate III) that may have something to do with picture-storytelling. We see a band of musicians who precede a kowtowing monk or priest. The monk wears a patch robe exactly like that of the actor-priests in Taiwanese religious folk-drama, and he holds what seems to be a begging cup at the end of a stick. A boy is carrying a large painting of what appears to be a temple or castle. Following him is a man who has a box on his back that is of the same shape and dimensions as a wayang bèb èr kotak (wooden box or chest). It seems likely that it is used to store other scrolls and paraphernalia owned by the band. The box-carrier is also directing the attention of people standing by to the picture. It is possible that the group is engaged in raising funds for the temple and that they are telling stories of its founding. Or they may be trying to gather an audience for a performance of some sort. Whatever the exact nature of their enterprise, they are surrounded by spectators, including some ecstatic children.

Altogether, there are at least thirty-seven known versions of the “Picture of Spring Festival by the River” extant. There are dozens of other pictures from the T’ang, Sung, Yüan, and Ming periods that depict in detail scenes of daily life. An exhaustive examination of these paintings is certain to be rewarding for the student of popular entertainment in these periods.
There is a “detached canto” (san-ch’ü 散曲) by the sixteenth-century Ming poet and painter Ch’en To (陳鐸, courtesy name Ta-sheng 大聲, nom de plume Ch’iu-pi 秋碧), which sheds a great amount of light on a number of issues that are central to this book. Since the poet’s works are hard to find outside of China, I shall translate the poem in its entirety:

**Man of the Way**

To the tune “Fragrance Fills the Court”

They call him “foul face,”
And he styles himself a Buddhist;
But who ever heard of a master
Going door to door asking whether
people want to make vows on the sūtras,
And spending the whole night long without sleep?
He wears a long cotton shirt that he
trails after him as though it were a monk’s robe,
Hangs high in the halls of old families
sacred images he has [had] made;
When he finishes proclaiming
the “[Precious] Scroll on the *Diamond Sūtra,*”
It’s inevitable that he’ll ask for some vegetarian food.
But he’s only interested in getting something to eat,
He’s not after money.

It is obvious that the poet does not consider this individual to be a proper monk. At the same time, however, the “man of the way” clearly has religious pretensions. As we shall see over and over again in the course of this study, he is the sort of layman-entertainer who inhabits a niche in society that lies between the sacred and the secular. In many cases, such persons are essentially beggars and this seems to be the case with the “man of the way.” This poem is also important in that it makes a connection between the recitation of precious scrolls (pao-chüan 寶卷) and displayed illustrations. Precious scrolls, popular didactic tales in typically Indian prosimetric form dating primarily from after the Yüan period and dealing with Buddhist themes, are commonly accepted by scholars as having derived from transformation texts (pien-wen). This is the first evidence that, like oral transformation (pien) performances, they too could be presented in conjunction with pictures or other types of images.
The data provided in Ch'en To's poem are both sharpened and confirmed by information I obtained on an August 1985 research trip to Chiu-ch’üan (“Wine Springs,” 酒泉) prefecture in the province of Kansu, northwest China. Pao- chüan are still being performed (nien [“recited”] 念) in the towns and villages surrounding the cities of Wu-wei (武威), Chang-yeh (張掖), and Chiu-ch’üan. Close to Tun-huang and spread out along the Kansu Corridor beneath the shadow of the snow-capped Ch’i-lien (祁連, Richthofen) Range, a tradition of prosimetric storytelling that bears many similarities to oral pien survives to this day. Because the performance aspects of western Kansu pao-chüan have not been reported on in any language, a rather extensive discussion is warranted here.

In the first place, it should be noted that it has become exceedingly difficult to make contact with western Kansu pao-chüan performers since the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949 and particularly after the consolidation of power by the Communist authorities there in the early fifties. There are fifty-three different pao-chüan known to have been performed in that area up until the mid-eighties. All of them, including superficially secular ones such as “Precious Scroll on Herding Sheep” (牡羊寶卷), which deals with the period of the Tibetan occupation of the Kansu Corridor, and “Precious Scroll on the Girl from the Secluded Apartments” (閨閣女寶卷), have a pronounced religious content. This is, of course, even more so the case with overtly Buddhist pao-chüan, such as that on the filial saint Maudgalyāyana (Mu-lien 目連) rescuing his mother from the sufferings of the underworld, and pao-chüan on various Taoist deities. Because of their religious aspects, after 1949 it became unlawful to perform or publish pao-chüan in western Kansu. The genre persisted in outlying areas, however, until the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the late sixties and early seventies when its practitioners were ruthlessly persecuted and their texts confiscated and destroyed. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, there has been a modest revival outside of the larger cities where the authorities do not exercise rigorous, constant control. Still, it is impossible to publish the texts of the pao-chüan for distribution and sale. Hence those who wish to obtain a text for themselves often make handwritten copies from manuscripts owned by friends and acquaintances. In spite of the ideological turmoil of the last half-century, an underlying current of Buddhist piety strongly persists in the Kansu Corridor. For those individuals who identify themselves as Buddhists, it is a virtue
to keep pao-chüan texts at home and to sponsor their recitation. Hence much of the activity connected with pao-chüan is now secretive.

Before 1949, pao-chüan performances were extremely popular in western Kansu. The usual time for their presentation was at the New Year’s and other festivals. They were often also put on in conjunction with temple fairs. Watching a pao-chüan performance was considered to be a form of entertainment, like going to see a local drama, but there was always an implicit religious message. The performers, however, were by no means monks or other types of religious personages. They were—and still are to this day—invariably peasants who learned how to relate the pao-chüan from other lay practitioners.

The pao-chüan performer is not a full-time professional. His main income derives from his agricultural pursuits. Nevertheless, when he does present a pao-ch üan for a group of interested villagers who invite him for that purpose, he is given a good meal and other gifts, including perhaps small amounts of money. Within a certain circuit, the pao-ch üan performer is itinerant. Also, like many other storytellers we shall encounter in this study, he has a low level of literacy. Most of the western Kansu pao-ch üan storytellers today are over fifty years old but there are a few excellent ones in their mid-twenties. Barring unforeseen social disruption, the tradition does not seem to be in immediate danger of extinction.

The most striking new discovery about the western Kansu pao-ch üan reciters is that, before the advent of the People’s Republic, they customarily used pictures in conjunction with their performances. It is now apparent that some western Kansu pao-ch üan performances were originally a type of picture recitation. The pictures were large colored paintings on cloth that could be rolled up for easy transportation. The performer would hang them on the outer wall of a building facing the street and point to relevant spots on them as he told his tale. The most common paintings depicted the various tortures of hell. These could be used in conjunction with virtually any of the pao-ch üan to show what happens to those who go against the moral lessons they proffered. The paintings were not divided by lines into sections but did portray a continuous sequence of narrative events.

One scholar who has been studying western Kansu pao-ch üan performances for many years reports having witnessed a monk from the Bell Tower Temple in Chiu-ch’üan pointing at narrative wall-paintings in the main hall of the temple and
telling the story of the pilgrimage of the T’ang monk Hsüan-tsang to India in search of scriptures. His prosimetric rendering was for the edification of visitors to the temple and devotees who attended its fairs. Another observer has provided a more detailed account of performances in Wu-wei. Every year during the fifth [lunar?] month, a lotus fair would be held there under the sponsorship of the local chamber of commerce. Large cloth paintings would be hung up on walls at four or five places inside the city. The paintings depicted heaven, hell, the cycle of life and death (saṁsāra), and so forth. A storyteller would stand on a table in front of his display with a precious scroll in one hand and a wooden stick in the other, reciting and singing while pointing at the scenes on the painting. The listeners, who were of both sexes and all ages, would surround the storyteller but felt free to come and go as they pleased. The people of Wu-wei referred to this type of illustrated narrative performance as “explaining morality books” 講善書. 35

Virtually all of the pao-chüan picture-scrolls were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and the performers still do not consider it safe enough to begin using such conspicuous paraphernalia at the present time.

Pao-ch üan performers in Ts’ang County (滄縣), Hopei province, used similar sets of paintings. In fact, according to my informant, they still own one nearly complete set, which is missing only a single scroll out of the original ten. The Ts’ang County pao-ch üan performers called their set of hanging scrolls “Land and Water” (水陸) (see Color Plate 9). Like the Kansu picture-scrolls, they depicted various scenes in hell, more specifically, the horrors of the ten courts of Yama’s (god of the underworld) purgatory. The Ts’ang County performers were part of a branch of the White Lotus Sect (白蓮教) known as the Gate of Heaven and Earth (天地門). This association shows the cultic, folk religious nature of such popular Buddhist literature. It is likely that the sets of scrolls were called “Land and Water” because the pao-ch üan performances originally formed an integral part of the Land and Water Ceremony (水陸齋) in which sacrificial food was offered to watery sprites and terrestrial ghosts.

Aside from the pictorial element, the western Kansu pao-ch üan performance consists of spoken and sung portions uttered alternately by the performer. The audience joins in at certain points to repeat homiletic phrases of the storyteller (compare “Buddhaputra” or “Jinaputra” [佛子, literally, “Son of Buddha”]
as repeated in some Tun-huang popular narratives). The verse is normally decasyllabic (3–3–4 syllables) and is sung to a number of fixed lyric tunes, about half of which are specific to western Kansu. Some of the songs, such as “Tune of the Five Hours” (五更調), are traceable directly back to Tun-huang cantos. The usual verse introductory formula of the pao-chüan performer is “This truly is a case of...” (可真是...), or a variant thereof, though it is seldom written into the text. Short, pentasyllabic verse, which is chanted, occurs at major breaks in the text. The next prose section which follows is introduced by the formulaic expression “Now it is said that...” (卻說). No musical instrumentation of any sort is employed.

The western Kansu pao-chüan texts date from the Ming to the present day. Except for very recent copies written with fountain pens, it was usual for them to be done by brush on poor quality paper and sewn up with thread in booklet form. The general appearance of many of these texts is strikingly similar to Tun-huang pien-wen. More than one scribe may be involved in copying a single pao-chüan. Corrections and interlinear additions abound. Orthographic errors are very common, as is inevitable with individuals of low literacy. For example, 只 may be written for 這; 占 for 展; 與 for 於 and so forth. Vulgar forms of characters (眷 for 卷; 啭 for 叫; etc.) are also frequent. Other types of nonstandard language usage are met with (e.g., 大失一驚 instead of 大吃一驚).

Where multiple copies of a single text exist, they are never identical and may even have entirely different titles. Each storyteller adapts the story to his own style and the scribes who copy the texts likewise feel free to modify the story according to their tastes and level of literacy. There is a brisk business in copying pao-chüan because even individuals who are totally illiterate believe that good fortune accrues to families who keep these texts in their homes and who help to sponsor their recitation.

The usual prelude of western Kansu pao-chüan is a heptasyllabic quatrain inviting people of all types to come and hear the storyteller’s tale (... 老小男女听卷來). After that, the pao-chüan proper begins in the following highly formulaic fashion: “Now it is said that these karmic consequences and their origins (i.e., this tale) took place during such-and-such a period (卻說這段因果出在XX年間), at such-and-such a place, involved so-and-so, and comprised such-and-such major events.” Many of these pao-
chüan have a fictional setting in T’ang times. The entire text usually ends with a pentasyllabic quatrain extolling the virtues of the pao-chüan:

If someone should come to request (borrow) this scroll,
Please read it in your home;
No matter whether man or woman,
Remember it firmly in your heart.

有人來請（i.e.,借）卷，
請在家中念，
不論男共女，
勞記在心間。

Judging from the obvious correspondences in form and content between Tun-huang pien-wen of the ninth century and western Kansu pao-chüan of the twentieth century, they are probably related representatives of a single popular Buddhist tradition of oral narrative that also has written derivatives. Much research remains to be done on western Kansu pao-chüan. Because of the political circumstances, it is somewhat risky, both for the scholars and the performers involved, to provide a full account of this genre. There are dedicated persons, however, who are proceeding cautiously, and there is good reason to hope for a multivolume publication giving edited texts and other acceptable material to be issued within a decade.

According to the Notes on the Origins of Events and Things (事物紀原), probably written sometime between 1068 and 1085, during celebrations of the Ghost Festival (中元節, middle of the seventh lunar month) “painted representations of Maudgalyāyana saving his mother are displayed” (陳目連救母畫像). Though the text does not say so directly, it is conceivable that these paintings were derived from T’ang period transformation tableaux. In any event, this practice surely must have had a T’ang precedent, for in the Extensive Register of Great Tranquility (太平廣記), citing Tales from Proclamation Chamber (Hsüan shih chih, 宣室志), we read of a sacrificial offering for souls suffering in purgatory (盂蘭) that was placed amidst banners, streamers, and images (像) during the Ghost Festival. Such images and dramatic skits on the Maudgalyāyana theme from the same period provide a link between T’ang transformation performance and Ming oral recitations of precious scrolls (pao-chüan).
In the mid-Ch’ing period (1644–1911), there was still a large number of p’ing-hua performers active in Yangchow. Li Tou’s list of entertainers on the pleasure boats there names two individuals who still seem to have used pictures while narrating their expository tales. They are Kao Chin-kung (高晋公) with his “Picture of Five Virtues” (五美圖) and Ts’ai T’ien-heng (曹天衡) with his “Picture of Good and Evil” (善惡圖). 39 Hsü K’o, writing near the end of the Ch’ing, tells of a strum-lyric (t’an-tz’u 弹詞) performer in a Wu-hsi (無錫) teashop who “could explain the picture of the five moral obligations” (能說五義圖). 40

It is an intriguing phenomenon that about 10 percent of traditional strum lyrics had titles that ended with the word “picture” (t’u 圖). 41 This is such a high percentage that it cannot be accounted for by chance. Nor can it be adequately explained by the fact that in some of these strum lyrics, a picture actually figures as a motif or key object of the plot, for in many others pictures are not found as plot devices. Similar titles ending with the word “picture” also occur when the same stories are presented in a wide variety of local dramatic traditions and performing arts (songs, drum songs, precious scrolls, and plays 42 ). Some of the variant strum-lyric titles are particularly suggestive. The “Picture of Ten Beauties” (十美圖) is also called “Recitation of the Picture on the Affinities of Ten Beauties, Augmented with Illustrations” (增像十美圖詠) and “Illustrated Recitation on the Affinities of Ten Beauties” (繪圖十善緣詠). 43 The “Picture of Harmonious Joy” (合歡圖) is associated with texts entitled “Picture of Harmonious Joy, Finely Illustrated” (繡像合歡圖), “A Complete Account of the Picture of Nine Beauties, Finely Illustrated” (繡像九美圖全傳), “Recitation of the Picture about Affinity amidst Laughter, Newly Augmented” (新増笑中緣圖詠), and “Explanation of the Picture about Affinity amidst Laughter” (笑中緣圖說). 44 Some of these titles can only be satisfactorily understood as referring to illustrations that have narrative qualities. There must be some deep reason for this predilection for pictures in these popular narrative and dramatic genres. It is not inconceivable that this propensity constitutes vestigial evidence of an old tradition of picture recitation that goes back through oral expository tales to the oral antecedents of transformation texts.

Other survivals of storytelling with pictures that I know of include a Mongolian picture-book, without any written text, that shows Maudgalyāyana’s descent into hell to rescue his mother.
This late nineteenth-century work is said to derive from narrative picture-scrolls that were used in China (ultimately Tibet and India) for storytelling. After many years of searching, I have recently succeeded in documenting the existence of picture reciters during the Ch‘ing period. These were called sellers of t‘u-er 圖兒 (Peking colloquial for “picture”). They would collect strange tales from all over and compose texts based on them. Then they printed sheets with pictures showing the events described in the tales. Their supply of pictures in hand, they would go along the street calling out to the residents. Those who were attracted by the tales might be persuaded to buy one of the pictures. The resemblance to the modus vivendi of the earliest German picture reciters is striking (see Chapter 5).

Also current in the nineteenth century and into the first half of the twentieth century were the peepshows known as “Western Scenes” (Hsi-yang ching 西洋景), “Western Lake [i.e., Marvellous] Scenes” (Hsi-hu ching 西湖景), “Pulling Foreign Picture-Cards” (la yang p‘ien 拉洋片), “Pulling Big Picture-Cards” (la ta-p‘ienr 拉大片儿), “Pulling Big Picture-Leaves” (la ta-P‘ien 拉大篇), and “Pulling Big Pictures” (la ta-hua 拉大畫). “Pulling” in each case is a reference to the fact that the pictures were attached to a string that the operator would pull on to bring a new picture into view. As he did so, small cymbals fixed to the box would sound. An American work of 1800 describes one peepshow in these words: “The Chinese show-man produces a succession of pictures to the perspective glass, by means of small strings, and relates a story and description of each subject as he presents it.” Other effects were possible. One informant told me that in a telling of the “Story of the White Snake” (白蛇傳), the operator was able to produce the illusion of a waterfall. One painting of a peepshow depicts tiny puppets housed in a stage on top of the box. Through a system of windows, lenses, and mirrors the movements of the puppets could be combined with the scenes inside the box. Another painting (see Figure 9) depicts a scene from the tale of the heroine Meng Chiang-nü 孟姜女, also popular at Tunhuang. The picture, which is displayed above the peepshow box, is being pointed at with a little stick by the showman. It would appear that, in these two instances, the puppets and the pictures served as drawing cards to entice customers to look inside the box. Bystanders could enjoy the puppets and the pictures, but if they wanted to see the mechanical and optical wonders
inside the box, they had to pay. What the peepshow amounted to, in essence, was a technological advance (probably imported from abroad) over puppetry and picture recitation. Yet not only was the showman unwilling to abandon his puppets or pictures in favor of the peepshow, he cleverly put them to good use in combination with the new and more sophisticated type of folk entertainment.

These peepshows were shown mostly at temple fairs and in the entertainment centers of the north part of China. The operator usually provided only minimal identification of the various scenes, some of which were pornographic. He would attract customers by yelling out, “Hey! Take a look inside!” (嗨!往里瞧/觀!). A few of the operators offered fuller commentaries and would sing while beating a drum or give prose explanations as they manipulated a pointer inside the box; others both sang and narrated in prose. Chinese peepshows came in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Regardless of their appearance, it is curious that not only is the technique similar to the Iranian *shahr-i farang* but the names in both cases make explicit reference to the foreign (hence marvellous) origin of the pictures. (see Chapter 5).

The Czech scholar and Sinologist Jaroslav Průšek had knowledge of picture-storytelling in China during the Second World War. After a brief discussion of *pien-wen* and *pien-hsiang* as narrative and illustration, he asks the questions, “Was not the same method used, perhaps, in the narration of historical tales? Did the storyteller perhaps show pictures to which he gave a commentary?” And he answers:

The illustrations in the historical books and perhaps in others too could have been the form in which these pictures survived, and when the illustrations also disappeared, the notes to them may have survived in the form of these summaries of the action. The term *p'ing-hua* would then have been very apt for what the storyteller was doing, “commenting on and explaining” his pictures. The use of pictures when stories were being told still existed in China during the last war.

I consider Průšek’s remarks on this subject brilliantly suggestive and illuminating. In 1957, American Sinologist Patrick Hanan came upon a picture-storyteller at the Heavenly Bridge
(T’ien-ch’iao, 天橋) entertainment district in Peking. His series of pictures was attached to vertical rollers and the subject was a war, perhaps the Russo-Japanese conflict.

Sketchy reports have also been made of an apparently defunct form of picture recitation from Fukien province called “high platform” (kao-t’ai 高台). Since kao-t’ai performers were last known to be active only in remote hilly areas, very little information concerning them is available. All that may be said now of kao-t’ai is that it entailed the use of large narrative illustrations which were suspended behind the storyteller. It is also interesting to note that Fukienese historians of the performing arts refer to kao-t’ai as a “fossilized” form of storytelling, implying (in accordance with local tradition) that it was a very early type of narrative recitation.

Even more recent information on this subject is to be found in Gary Seaman’s 1977 films showing Chinese hell screens and the dramas enacted before them in Taiwan. These films are important for their documentation of the survival in Taiwan of the use of pictures in the performance of Buddhist oral narrative. The dramas take place in conjunction with funeral ceremonies and are performed in front of a temporary altar erected especially for this purpose. The altar consists of hanging narrative picture-scrolls. On the pictures are brief inscriptions in cartouches that describe the scenes depicted. It is noteworthy that the dramas enacted are the same as the stories depicted on the hanging scrolls (e.g., the T’ang monk Hsüan-tsang’s pilgrimage to the West to retrieve Buddhist scriptures and Maudgalyāyana’s passage through the underworld to rescue his mother; journeys seem particularly well-suited for this kind of format). The actors who perform them even attempt to dress exactly like the figures they represent in the paintings. One definitely feels from watching these miniature plays that they represent an effort to animate the still pictures in front of which they are presented. It is known that Indian picture-storytellers such as the bhopo in Rajasthan do not simply recite their stories but also resort to a certain amount of music, gesture, and dance to vivify their presentation. One might imagine that the T’ang transformation performers, too, employed such talents in bringing to life their transformation scrolls or tableaux. It is, further, extremely important to note that the actors, though they may dress like Buddhist monks or saints during the performance, neither claim nor pretend to be such when they are off-stage and not acting. They are laymen whose profession is
to perform religious drama when they are called upon to do so. This is also in agreement with available data concerning the tellers of transformations during the T'ang period.

Another point of similarity between the Taiwanese Buddhist performances in front of pictures and other Asian picture-stor(ytelling traditions is that the actors travel around with their scrolls wrapped up and tied in bundles. Except for the fact that they now carry them on the backs of their motorcycles rather than on their own backs, their appearance could almost be described as a twentieth-century version of the Central Asian portraits from Tun-huang that I have speculated might represent itinerant pien performers. 60

These hanging scrolls are called by the actors sip-tien-chhatla (“pictures of the ten courts [of Hell]”) but are more usually abbreviated as simply chhatla (“paintings”). 61 It is interesting to observe, however, that they also sometimes refer to them as oe angga 畫公仔 (literally, “painted dolls”), the same word as is used for “comic strips,” while shadow figures may be called angzai 廷仔 (“babies”). 62 This would seem to indicate that no sharp distinction is made between narrative illustrations (whether in panel or scroll form) and puppets of various types. This is in accord with one of the major theses of this study.

From eighth-century Tun-huang to twentieth-century Taiwan, Chinese picture recitation has travelled an enormous distance through great stretches of time. But that is to be expected for a genre that found its original impetus in faraway India more than a millennium before it reached Tun-huang, that cultural crossroads of Central Asia.
1

Picture-Storytelling in Ancient India

We have seen in the Introduction that transformation performances were a type of picture-storytelling, that their prosimetric form and ontological presuppositions point to an Indian origin, and that they were normally performed by lay entertainers rather than monks. We must now turn to an investigation of their probable early Indian antecedents.

F. W. Thomas, discussing daily life under the Mauryas (325–184 B.I.E. [Before International Era]), indicates that picture-storytelling was already a common entertainment then: “The king provides in amphitheatres constructed for the occasion dramatic, boxing, and other contests of men and animals, and also spectacles with displays of pictured objects of curiosity—no doubt the private showman with his pictures of Hades, etc., was also active—, and not seldom the streets were lighted up for festivals and it was not penal to stir abroad.”

Let us now see exactly what sort of evidence for the existence of picture showmen in early India there is which would allow Thomas to make this surmise.

The renowned sixth- or fifth-century B.I.E. grammarian Pāṇini speaks of the objects or images by which one may earn a living but not through sale of them (V. 3. 99 of his Sūtras). Various commentaries on the text, beginning as early as Vāmana’s K āśik ā in the seventh century, generally agree that Pāṇini was referring to images of gods made by a low order of Brahmans (devalaka). They earned their living by carrying a picture of the god Śiva or some other god from door to door and begging from people. The commentaries make the very fine point that such pictures had different names when intended for sale and when used for exhibition, as in storytelling.

Perhaps the most important reference to storytelling with pictures in ancient India is that in the Mahābh āṣya of Patañjali. This work, also a grammatical treatise, was written sometime
Heinrich Lüders was of the opinion, and went far toward proving, that this passage from the Mahābhāṣya on śaubhika included a reference to picture showmen or, more particularly, to shadow players. 7 He also tried to show that these representations were ultimately related to the ancient origin of Indian drama proper. A. B. Keith, however, took vehement exception to Lüders’ views on the subject, trying to establish an origin for Indian theater more akin to that of Greek drama. 8 Yet neither
are the details of Keith’s highly technical argument concerning this particular passage clear nor is his conclusion convincing. What is more, the research of the vast majority of reputable authorities (e.g., Albrecht Weber, Alfred Hillebrandt, Moriz Winternitz, Richard Pischel, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sten Konow, and K. M. Varma⁹), while differing on details, supports the main thrust of Lüders’ exposition.

There has been a tremendous amount of controversy on whether śaubhika were picture showmen or shadow players. Arguments on this point are unnecessary, however, for they may well have been both. There is a close relationship between the techniques of picture recitation and shadow plays. This is borne out by abundant evidence presented in other chapters of this book, particularly those on Indonesia and modern India (see Chapters 3 and 4). Asian folk entertainers, furthermore, often specialized (and still do) in several closely related genres. Hence Lüders’ scholarly efforts to prove that the word śaubhika in the Mahābhāṣya passage under consideration refers to the shadow play may also, with appropriate modifications and provisos, be used to document the early existence of picture-storytelling. In my estimation, Lüders has perhaps erred in stressing too heavily that the type of illustrated narration Patañjali described was necessarily the shadow play. Similarly, K. M. Varma is unduly definite in claiming that śaubhika were puppeteers. Winternitz’s opinion that picture reciters were meant seems more judicious, especially in light of the mention of citra (“picture”). Indeed, there is now sufficient evidence available to demonstrate conclusively that some śaubhika were definitely picture showmen or that they at least performed in concert with the latter.

We may begin with a brief discussion of the etymology of the word śaubhika and its cognates in other languages. In Pāli, the equivalent term is sobhiya, “a sort of magician or trickster; clown.”¹⁰ The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit equivalent for śaubhika is śobhika, which Edgerton quite correctly defines as “shadow-playman.”¹¹ In his Sanskrit-English Dictionary, Monier-Williams cites saubhika, “a juggler [i.e., an illusionist]” and indicates that it is related to śaubhika, which he says is a kind of actor.¹² Sobhanika, likewise a kind of actor, is obviously also related to this group of words. All of them go back to a root śubh, “to appear; flash; flit; shine; look like; adorn.”¹³

The word saubhika/ śobhika occurs in the Mahāvastu, the oldest Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit text (some portions date to the second century B.I.E. while other may be as late as the
fourth century i.e.) among a list of entertainers who came to see the Buddha when he paid a visit to Kapilavastu. As translated by J. J. Jones, the list reads: “All the musicians were there, namely, jugglers, court bards, actors, dancers, athletes, wrestlers, tambourine-players, clowns [(?) → picture storytellers, śobhika], tumblers, tam-tam players, buffoons, dvisvalas, reciters, pañcavaṭukas, singers, dancers, comedians, performers on the drum, trumpet, tabour, kettle-drum, cymbal, flute, and the guitar and the lute—all gathered at the palace gate.” 14 In order to understand more precisely the types of performers with whom the śobhika is classed in the Mahāvastu, the following enumeration and commentary are valuable:

Category I. The gāndharvika (musicians and players on various musical instruments):

1. chakrika (the discus-holders or wheel-players, who exhibit tricks by discus or wheel);
2. vaitālika (the court-minstrels whose duty is to awaken kings, princes, or chiefs at dawn with music and song);
3. naṭa (the actors or gesticulators);
4. narttaka (the dancers);
5. rilla (the players of a particular instrument; or cymbal-players, prize-fighters; drummers, if the reading be jhalla);
6. malla (the athletes, wrestlers, performers of gymnastic exercises);
7. pāṇi-svarika or pani-svanika? (the players of musical instruments through hands, or the palm-strikers, the players clapping their palms);
8. śobhika (clowns wearing decorations [?]; jugglers [by which the commentator means “illusion-makers”], if the reading be saubhika);
9. laṅghika (tumblers doing acrobatic feats, performers of leaping, jumping, or mounting exercises by means of bamboos and ropes);
10. kumbha-tūṇika (has the word anything to do with players with jars and quivers?);
11. velambaka (exhibitors of pendulous, hanging, or oscillating exercises; if the reading be viḍambaka, the meaning is performers of mimicries);
12. *dvistala-bhāṇaka* (meaning obscure; perhaps the word is *dvistrika-bhāṇaka*, a kind of reciters or proclaimers who amuse others by uttering the same thing in two or three sounding ways);
13. *pañcavaṭuka* (obscure; perhaps players playing with five young chaps);
14. *gāyanaka* (singers);
15. *bhāṇḍavika* (players of a musical instrument called *bhāṇḍa*, or those given to buffooneries);
16. *bherī-śaṁkha-mṛidaṅga-paṭahika* (music-players through kettle-drums, conches or trumpets, tabors, and war-drums);
17. *tūṇava-panava-veṇu-vallakī-ekadaśī-vīna-vādaka* [players on the musical instruments called *tūṇava* (meaning obscure), *panava* (small drums or tabors), *veṇu* (flutes or pipes), *vallakī* (a kind of lute or guitar), *ekadaśī* (is it any one-stringed instrument?), and *vīṇā* (the famous Indian lute) and many other *vādyaka* (players on musical instruments)];
18. *guṇavarta* (those who play with ropes);
19. *tāṇḍavika* (the performers of *tāṇḍava* or frantic or violent dance of Śiva);
20. *chetayika* (obscure; does it mean men who can produce emotions in others’ mind[s] by words or gestures?; and
21. *gaṇikā* (harlots or courtesans who used to attend these parties of musicians).\(^{15}\)

Among the ancient tales about former incarnations of the Buddha known as the Jātaka, in number 545 (*Vidhurapāṇḍita-jātaka*), we find the following passage, which includes the Pali equivalent of *śaubhika*, also in the context of a group of entertainers;

“See drums and tabours, conchs, tambours and tambourines and all kinds of cymbals, created in the jewel.

“Cymbals, and lutes, dance and song well executed, musical instruments and gongs, behold created in the jewel.

“Jumpers and wrestlers too are here, and a sight of jugglers [more literally, “conjurers and illusionists” *māyā āk ār ā ca sobhiyā* and royal bards and barbers, behold created in the jewel.”\(^{16}\)

Here there is no question about what sort of showmen the *śaubhika* were, since they are matched with *māyākārā*. This latter term worked its way into classical Indian dramaturgy with
the meaning “stage conjurations.” See, for example, the treatise on the art of the theater, the Nāṭyaś āstra, attributed to Bharata-muni, 23.209–210: “One should release missiles on the stage with skill or with skill and cleverness [m āy ākrtena].” 17

A cognate of śaubhika is also to be found in the following list of entertainments from the Pāli text entitled Brahma-j āla sutta, under the section entitled “Minor Details of Mere Morality”:

11. “Or he might say: ‘Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to the injury of seedlings and growing plants whether propagated from roots or cuttings or joints or buddings or seeds—Gotama the recluse holds aloof from such injury to seedlings and growing plants.’

12. “Or he might say: ‘Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to the use of things stored up; stores, to wit, of foods, drinks, clothing, equipages, bedding, perfumes, and curry-stuffs—Gotama the recluse holds aloof from such use of things stored up.’

13. “Or he might say: ‘Whereas some recluses and Brahmans, while living on food provided by the faithful, continue addicted to visiting shows, that is to say,

(1) Nautch dances (nakkam).
(2) Singing of songs (gītam).
(3) Instrumental music (vāditam).
(4) Shows at fairs (pekham).
(5) Ballad recitations (akkhānam).
(6) Hand music (pānis saram).
(7) The chanting of bards (vetālam).
(8) Tam-tam playing (kumbhathūnam).
(9) Fairy scenes [picture-storytelling] (sobhana-garakam).
(10) Acrobatic feats by Kandālas (Kand āla-vamsa dhopanam).
(11) Combats of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, cocks, and quails.
(12) Bouts at quarterstaff, boxing, wrestling.
(13–16) Sham-fights, roll-calls, manoeuvres, reviews—Gotama the recluse holds aloof from visiting such shows.’” 18

Painting and Performance
We see that the sobhanagarakam is here classed with various types of prosimetric recitation (akkhānam cf. Sanskrit ākhy āna, “story”), song, dance, acrobatics, and other performances. Otto Franke, though writing as long ago as 1913, offers much information on how to interpret this difficult word. He begins by listing some of the variants (sobhanak ārakam, sobhanakarakam, sobhanagaranam, sobhaṇakam, sobhaṇagaṃ, sobhaṇakaraṃ), then proceeds to deflate the early notion that it had something to do with scenes of the city of Gandharva. He cites a Pāli commentary that links sobhanagarakam and paṭibhānacittaṃ, a word that obviously has to do with pictures on cloth to be used in connection with recitation. In one text, paṭibhānacittaṃ occurs in a context which shows that it has crowd-gathering power. Franke finally refers to the Jātaka text just discussed and points out that, as the word sobhana garakam occurs here in the Brahma-jāla sutta, so does sobhiya occur there in close juxtaposition with vetāla (Sanskrit and Pāli for “demon[-bard]”). It remains only to mention in regard to this passage from the Brahma-jāla sutta that Gautama stayed away from such activities. The implication is not that all people should avoid attendance at such shows, only that the religious professional who is supported by faithful laymen because of his spiritual function in the community should.

Somadeva Sūri’s tenth-century commentary on the word śaubhika in the Nītivākya (55) makes it virtually certain that we are here dealing with the ancestor of both Indonesian wayang bèb èr and Chinese transformation scrolls. My crude translation is as follows: “One who displays at night various sorts of individual beings by means of a screen made up of sticks and cloth” (Kṣapāy ām kān ṃaṇ ṃaṇaṃ évavara nena n ān āvidhan āmarū-padarśī). It is also worth remembering that the word paṭ, literally, “[painting on a] cloth,” figures in this definition because, as we shall see in Chapter 4, it is the designation used for picture-storytelling in many modern Indian languages. And we shall see later in this chapter that it forms a part of the Sanskrit word for picture-storytelling of the horrors of hell.

In the medieval sectarian monastic rules known as the Mūlasarvāstivādavāda (45), there is a sentence that may be used to demonstrate that, in at least one case, p’u 鋪 (literally, “spread” or “layout”—the numerary adjunct or classifier for pien-hsiang [“transformation tableaux”]) means precisely paṭ. The Chinese translation says “You may paint one layout of a Buddha image and send it to that king” (可畫一鋪佛像)
The Sanskrit original reads “Send as a gift an image of the Tathāgata painted on cloth.” (Tathāgatapratim āṁ paṭe likh āpayitv ā pr āḥṛtam anupreṣaya). It is most interesting that what was a noun in Sanskrit has become a numerary adjunct in Chinese even though the overall meaning of the sentence is conveyed fairly literally.

The Sanskrit word paṭ may originally have had a non-Aryan source; compare, for example, Tamil putṭam (“cloth”) and Telugu pach’chadamu (“a particular kind of cotton cloth”). The usual Chinese transliteration for paṭ is 鈔吒 (“woven cloth or silk”). In Newari (the language of a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal), the word for paṭ(a) is paubhā. In Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, the equivalent of paṭ(a) is ras bris or ras ri mo (“design on cotton”). These and related words in other languages all mean “[religious icon, often with narrative content, painted on an expanse of] cloth.” This is precisely the meaning of Chinese p’u when it first begins to appear in popular Buddhist contexts.

It has been established firmly that there could be several scenes on one p’u. This is in perfect accord with what is known of religious picture-storytelling from other Indian and Indian-influenced traditions. That a single “layout” or “setup” (i.e., p’u 鋪) could have more than one scene is indicated by examination of the illustrated Śāriputra scroll (P4524) which, even in its present fragmented condition, has six. We shall also see that Central Asian wall-paintings clearly demonstrate that one paṭ could have at least four scenes. And I have already shown in the Introduction that indirect evidence for Sung picture-storytelling indicates that one layout could have more than one scene on it.

The final passage containing a reference to śaubhika that I should like to discuss is found in the Śikṣāsamuccaya, a compendium of Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine dating to around the seventh century. As translated by Cecil Bendall and W. H. D. Rouse, the passage—which deals with the abilities and good works of holy beings who remain on earth to help save sentient beings—reads as follows:

By miracles manifesting the supernatural power of the Tathāgata, by their power over form on all sides, they convert all beings by transformation that comes from their supernatural power. They walk the earth working the world’s good by all kinds of ways and means; like a lotus unsoiled in the water they go doing
pleasant and gracious things; they are poets and kings of poets, they are actors and dancers, musicians and wrestlers, fakeers, cleaners[?] (a mistranslation of śobhika in the Sanskrit text), dancers, robbers[?], jugglers [i.e., illusionists], showing these many shapes, they become villagers, guides, and charioteers, they become traders, merchants, householders, kings, courtiers, chaplains, messengers, learned physicians, men versed in the scriptures; they become great trees in the forest, herbs, treasures of immortal jewels, the wishing-gem, trees that give all desires, guides to those that go astray. 28

The corresponding Chinese text, while written entirely in heptasyllabic verse and not a literal translation, actually follows the Sanskrit fairly faithfully. 29 By now giving the original Sanskrit and citing the equivalent Tibetan translation, I would like to focus on the particular line in this passage that contains the important word śobhika. 30 The order of prthu and rūpa in the Sanskrit text has been reversed to match the Tibetan. Since the Chinese is not an exact rendering, it has been impossible to make explicit correspondences in all cases. In spite of the obvious difficulty of the passage (printed on p. 24), it is clear that śobhika appears here in company with various types of showmen, in particular those who create appearances.

There was also a class of performer known as aindrājālika ("magician," listed as a synonym of śaubhika in the ca. twelfth-century Buddhist dictionary of Puruṣottamadeva entitled Hārāvali) who were illusionists. 35 They were nomadic puppeteers and magicians who performed acrobatic feats as well. The Gupta king Harṣa, who assumed the throne in 606, described a performance of an aindrājālika in the fourth act of his play Ratnāvalī. 36 As described by Harṣa, the aindrājālika was a conjuror who carried a bunch of peacock feathers (picchikā) as his attribute. The feathers may have been used to point at various scenes on narrative pictures.

Although this is not the place to go into any great detail regarding the evidence presented, I believe that the studies of Winternitz, Hillebrandt, Lüders, Konow, Jacob, and especially Pischel have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt (if I may be permitted to use that expression in this context) that there existed in ancient India—from a date not long after the śaubhika—both shadow plays and puppet plays. It is likely that the shadow play existed already in the first century B.I.E., since there is a reference to rupparūpakāṃ in the Pāli Therīg āth ā ("Hymns of the Elder Nuns"). 37 This may be compared to a ref-
ference to *rupōpajīvana* in the twelfth book of the *Mahābhārata* (12.194, 11.5–6). The seventeenth-century commentator Nilakaṇṭha offers the following explanation of the term: “*Rupōpajīvana* is known in the south as *jalamaṇḍa pikā*. In it, after a thin cloth has been spanned, the doings of kings, ministers, etc., are brought before the eyes by means of figures of leather.”

There is a cave at Sitābeṅgā (on Rāmgarh Hill in the former Surgujā State, Central Provinces—22°53’N. × 82°55’E.) that, according to a second-century B.C.E. inscription therein, was meant for the representation of works of poetic art. It is not clear, however, whether it was intended to be used for recitations, shadow plays, or real drama. One very intriguing feature of this small cave-theater, however, is the pair of holes near the entrance that are cut deep into the stone floor. It is not known whether these holes were meant to receive poles that supported curtains or that displayed narrative pictures. Pischel has cited the word *lenaśobhikā* (“house” or “cell” *śobhikā*), which led him to suggest that *śaubhika* may have performed in caves while utilizing artificial illumination.

Coomaraswamy has provided positive evidence for the existence of the shadow play in South India and Ceylon during the twelfth century. This is in the Buddhist chronicle of Ceylon known as the *Mahāvamsa* (more specifically, its continuation in the *Cūlavamsa*), 66.133: “Amongst the many Tamils and others
(employed as spies) he (Gajabāhu II, r. 1137-53 [I.E.]) made such as were practiced in dance and song, to appear as showmen of leather figures (camma-rūpa) and the like.” 41 As with the śaubhika and other types of picture-storytellers in early India, we notice the value for a king in the employment of these showmen, who have high mobility, as spies.

There is a reference to a picture showman in the first act of Viṣākhadatta’s play Mudrār ākṣasa (The Minister’s Seal) that is invaluable not only because it proves the widespread nature of this profession even after about the sixth century but also because it tells us much about the method of operation of its practitioners. 42 He is called a yamapāṭṭaka, that is, someone who displays yamapaṭa (“pictures [probably on cloth scrolls or hangings of the rewards and punishments to be experienced in the realm] of Yama, [God of the Underworld]).” It is most noteworthy that the yamapāṭṭaka is actually Cāṇakya’s (minister of the founder of the Maurya empire, Candragupta) spy, Nipuṇaka. 43 Remarking that some men earn their livelihood by means of discoursing on the very same Yama who slays all men, Nipuṇaka gains entrance to the home of Candanadāsa (friend of a minister who is hostile to Cāṇakya). He is described as dancing about in the characteristic manner of an actor and remarks, “I’ll sing my songs while showing a picture of Yama (yamapaṭam darśayan gītāni g āy āmi).” 44

It is significant in terms of showing social standing that the words of the song that Nipuṇaka sings are in the vernacular Prakrit:

\[
\text{Paṇamaha Jamassa caLaṃe} \\
\text{kim kajjam devaehi anñehim |} \\
\text{Eso khu aññabhattanam} \\
\text{harai jiam caḍapadaṇta m ||}
\]

Bow down at the feet of Yama,
No use, bowing to all gods but Yama.
Know ye, oh men of Yama,
He visibly killeth, the unrelenting god,
Devotees of gods other than Yama.

The more highly literary Sanskrit equivalent would be:

\[
\text{Praṇamāhi Yamasya carane,} \\
\text{kim kāryaṃ daivatair anyaiḥ |}
\]
After the spy has completed his mission, he reports to Cāṇakya: “Spreading out the Yama scroll, I commenced my ballad (jama-padaṃ pasāria pūttohmi gīdāiṃ g āiduṃ).”

This tradition of picture-storytelling about hell has continued into this very century. But, in his *Beast and Man in India*, John Lockwood Kipling remarked on the degenerate state of *yamapaṭṭaka* in the late nineteenth century:

One of the most popular pictures sold at fairs is a composition known as *Dharmrāj*, a name of *Yāma* [sic], the Hindu Pluto, and also used broadly for justice. The judge is enthroned and demon executioners bring the dead to receive their doom. The river of death flows on one side of the picture and those go safely across who hold a cow by the tail, while others are torn by terrible fishes. Citragupt, the clerk or recording angel of *Yāma*, considered to be the ancestor of the *Kayasth* or clerkly caste, sits in an office with account books exactly like those of a Hindu tradesman, and according to the record of each soul, punishments or rewards are given. For, as a popular native saying has it,—“God looks out of the window of heaven and keeps account.” *Duts* or executioners torture offenders, while the blest sail upwards in airborne chariots. 45

References to spies adopting the guise of picture showmen in order to facilitate their movements can be found in even earlier literature than *Mudrārākṣasa*. There is, in fact, a description of such a ploy in Kautilya’s famous handbook of politics and economics called *Arthaśāstra* (ca. 321 to 296 B.I.E.). As translated by Shamasastri, the relevant passage from Book 7, Chapter 17 (entitled “Making Peace and Breaking It”), reads thus:

Whoever is rising in power may break the agreement of peace. Carpenters, and other spies, attending upon the prince (kept as a hostage) and doing work under the enemy, may take away the prince at night through an underground tunnel dug for the purpose. Dancers, actors, singers, players on musical instruments, buffoons, court-bards, swimmers, and saubhikas(?), previously set about the enemy, may continue under his service and may indirectly serve the prince. They should have the privilege of
entering into, staying in and going out of, the palace at any
time without rule. The prince may therefore get out at night
disguised as any one of the above spies.  

Following Johann Meyer’s German translation, I would prefer
to render “swimmers” as “ropedancers” and “saubhikas” as
“conjurors,” “illusionists,” or “picture showmen.”  Regardless
of the difficulties in understanding individual words in this
passage, there can be no question whatsoever that śaubhika
were understood by Kauṭilya to be entertainers and that they
were employable as spies.

The Jains believe that the father of the leader of the Ājīvikas
(an ascetic, unorthodox sect that arose about the same time as
Jainism and Buddhism), Gosāla Maṅkhaliputra (d. 493 B.I.E.[?]),
was an itinerant picture showman. As interpreted by the Jains,
the name literally means “He who was born in a cowshed, the
son of a wandering beggar and picture showman.” Maṅka (or
nakha, as they are sometimes called) were wandering ascetics
who showed pictures of suffering in hell and told stories about
them. They are mentioned in Jain texts with other entertainers
such as actors, dancers, storytellers, and so on. The Antagaḍa-
dasāo (date unknown), for example, lists actors, dancers, rope-
walkers, wrestlers, boxers, jesters, reciters, jumpers, ballad-
singers [lāsaga], story-tellers, pole-dancers, picture-showmen
[maṅkha], pipers, lute-players, and clappers. The Aupapātika-
sūtra (third to fifth centuries[?]) mentions maṅkha together
with dancers, actors, rope-dancers, wrestlers, jumpers, mimes,
storytellers, ballad-singers or buffoons, fortune-tellers, ac-
robats, musicians, attendants, and bards (māgaha). Hemacandra
(1088–1172) later defined maṅkha as māgaha, but since both of
these occur in the Aupapātika-sūtra list, we know that they
were not identical. Be that as it may, these environ-
ments parallel exactly those in which śaubhika are found.

The reasoning behind the Jain interpretation of Gosāla
Maṅkhaliputra’s name is given in the Bhagavatī-sūtra, which
dates, perhaps, from as early as the third century B.I.E. but
no later than the end of the fifth century I.E. Following the
original form of manuscript pagination, the passage is found in
15.1, leaves 1204–1205:

A maṃkha, known by the name of Maṃkhali, was Gosāla’s
father.... Then it happened that while, on a certain occasion,
Maṃkhali-Maṃkha travelled from village to village, wandering
about hither and thither, together with his wife, who was blessed
with maternity, dressing himself in the garb of a maṃkha with a picture-board in his hands, he wended his way toward the place where the cow-pen of the Brahmīn Gobahula was, and having arrived there, took shelter in this cow-pen, throwing off (getting down) his baggage and arraying it in a corner thereof.  

Gosālāssa Maṃkaliputtassa Maṃkhaliṇī ṣāmī pit ā hotth ā.... Taṇṇam se Maṃkha-Maṃkha-ṇāmaṃ ... bharī āe guvinie saddhim cittaphalaga-hattthagae Maṃkhattanenam app ānam bh āvem āñe puvvāṇupuvvām c āram āñe g ām āṅug āmaṃ dui-jjāmane....

The account goes on to say how he went from house to house collecting alms and named his son “Cow-pen-man” (Gośāla) because he was born there. The Bhagavatī-śūtra (15.1, leaf 1206) not only claims that Gośāla’s father, Maṅkhali, was a picture-storyteller by profession but that Gośāla himself adopted the same profession when he grew to manhood and could make his own decisions. The crucial understanding of maṅkha as “a kind of beggar who extracts alms by showing pictures of deities which he carries about with him” was, however, not firmly established until the composition of the Sanskrit tīkā (“commentary”) on the Bhagavatī-śūtra of Abhaya Deva (ca. 1050).  

A. F. Rudolf Hoernle, in his translation of the Uvāsagadas āo (“the ten [chapters on the duties] of the lay Jain adherent”—of uncertain date but containing parts that go back at least to the first century I.E.), cites the Sanskrit commentary on the word maṅkha which states that it means citraphalaka- vyagarakara- bhikṣu-viśeṣa, a “kind of beggar that tries to extract alms from the charitable by showing them pictures of deities which he carries about with him.” Hoernle goes on to say that “In the present day in Bengal such beggars usually carry small pictures or representations of such deities as Shītalā, the goddess of small-pox, or Olābībī, the goddess of cholera, etc. In Pūri they carry pictures of Jagannāth, and greatly pester the pilgrims to that shrine.”  

Hoernle further mentions that the maṅkha was a person of very low caste. The Jain penchant for the use of pictures in religious discourse was still prominent in 779 I.E. when Uddyotana-Suri wrote his Kuvalayamālā, a long prosimetric novel in Prakrit, at Jabalipura (Jabor) in Rajasthan. In the twenty-ninth chapter thereof, he describes an elaborate scroll painting on cloth called
the *Saṃsāra-cakra-paṭa* ("Cloth[-painting] on the Cycle of Transmigration," which might well have been rendered into Chinese as 輪轉變一鋪) and its mode of use:

"In the country of Lāṭa, known for its dresses and *deśa-bhāṣās* [dialects], there ruled a mighty king, Śimha by name, of whom I, Bhānu, have been the eldest son, addicted rather too much to painting. One day a teacher showed me a painted scroll presenting what he called the Saṃsāra-cakra and depicting all that was there on the earth. He explained pointing out with a stick that the various regions were hell, human world and heaven. With excessive sin one gets misery in hell; with excessive merit one gets pleasures in heaven; with a little merit and plenty of sin one is born as a subhuman being, and with plenty of merit and a little sin one is born as a man: everywhere, however, there is misery. A king with great sin to his credit goes to hell. A king with hunting paraphernalia only earns sin. Here was a thief suffering awfully for his deeds. The cultivators were ill treating the beasts of burden and causing injury to one-sensed beings; and they alone had to suffer for their sins. One carried only *puṇya* [merit] and *pāpa* [sin] with him, and left everything behind, on the eve of death. Young men enjoyed various pleasures, and they were painted on the scroll. Similarly, men in various professions and positions, proud of this and that, were depicted, with the consequences of their acts etc. In the subhuman world there were the various beasts and birds, killing each other. Then there were painted the scenes in hells, and also those in heavens. Lastly, there was the picture of Liberation which is characterised by eternal bliss…. When he unfolded the scenes of this Saṃsāra-cakra, I could realize the despicable character of the worldly life; and I told him that he must be a god or so coming from heaven, with this scroll, having some definite purpose in mind. Then there was another picture the details of which he explained thus: ‘Here in the town of Campā ruled the king, Māharatha. Dhanadatta was a rich merchant; from his wife Devī he had two sons: Kulamitra and Dhanamitra. Soon after their birth, the father died; and the mother urged them to do some business and earn their living. They practised varied professions and tried their hands at different arts and crafts; but they proved failures everywhere, with no earnings to their credit. They decided, at last, to commit suicide; and when they were about to jump down a mountain peak, a divine voice prevented them from being rash. It was the admonition of a great saint in the vicinity who knew their plight and who advised them sympathetically to…"
take to renunciation, so that they would never be born poor again but would get heavenly happiness and liberation. Both of them entered the order, practised austerities, and were born in heaven. Thence one was born as Bhānu, the son of Simha, i.e., yourself; and I, the teacher or painter, am the second. I have come here to enlighten you.’ Hearing this, I, Bhānukumāra, fell into a swoon, and on coming to my senses, found in that teacher a brilliant god who reminded me of our earlier births and urged me to accept renunciation with a view to attaining eternal bliss. On hearing this, I pulled out five handfuls of hair, received the ascetic’s equipment (rayaharāṇa, muhapottiya, and paḍīggaṭa), and left the park to the great consternation of my friends etc. who rushed to the king. The god brought me here.”

By the time this novel was written, picture explanation was apparently no longer solely a low-caste occupation. Note that in Uddyotana-Suri’s description of the painting, there is little indication of a connected narrative. This would have made it less appropriate as a device for entertaining others and begging from them.

Yet there is very strong evidence in the Vaḍḍārādhane, an early tenth-century collection of Kannada stories attributed to Śivakōṭyācārya, that picture-storytelling was still enormously popular in the marketplace. There we read of a Brahman named Somaśarmā who is taking his daughter, Nāgaśrī, to renounce the vows she had made to a Jain teacher. On the way, they see a man being led to the stake, and Nāgaśrī asks her father why. Somaśarmā consults the city-guard and then tells his daughter that the man who is going to be executed is named Vainayika. His crime was that of depicting three stories on canvas and conspiring to steal rice from merchants while telling them to the people in the marketplace. To give an idea of the types of stories told by picture showmen in ninth-century India, I quote the three tales of Vainayika as related by Somaśarmā to Nāgaśrī.

In the town of Kauśambī, there was a rich merchant named Sumitra. One day, his son Vasumitra had a snake-bite and was taken to the cemetery, supposed to have been dead. But a snake-charmer, Garuḍanābhi, promised them to save his life the next morning and advised Sumitra to keep some guards there till then. The merchant appointed four guards. At night, amongst the four
guards, one stole and brought a sheep, another brought fuel, the third brought fire and the fourth, meanwhile, guarded the body of Vasumitra. All the four baked the sheep and ate it. In the morning, Garuḍanābhi, by his spells, brought Vasumitra’s body back to life. The merchant rewarded the four guards in the presence of many people with four boxes each containing a thousand dīnār as. One of them denied having received such a box. The merchant complained to the King that a box of his containing a thousand dīnār as had been stolen. The King ordered the city-guard to find the thief. The city-guard, not being able to find out the thief, came home with the four guards and kept himself in great distress. His shrewd daughter, Sumati, seeing him in that condition, learnt the cause and assured him that she would find the culprit the very next day. That night she remained by the side of the four guards and narrated them a story:

In the town of Pāṭaliputra there was a merchant, Sudatta, who had a daughter, Sudāmā. Once, as she bathed in the river Gaṅgā, she found herself in the grip of a crocodile and appealed for help to Dhanadatta, her maternal uncle’s son, who was on the bank. He rescued her on the condition of giving him whatever he would ask. He just wished to have a look at her in her bridal dress and adornment. She promised. Later, on the day of her wedding, remembering her promise, she dressed and was going at midnight, to her maternal uncle’s son’s shop, when a thief stopped her and demanded the ornaments on her body. She promised to give them to him after a little while, when she had attended to some urgent household business, and asked him to wait there alone. As she was walking along, the city-guard blocked her way suspecting her to be a base woman. With a similar promise to him, she moved on, only to face a demon advancing to swallow her. Him also she made the same promise and proceeded. The thief, the city-guard and the demon followed her to find out about her errand. She went to the shop where her relative was sleeping and appeared before him according to her promise. He appreciated her honesty and advised her to return home immediately. The three learnt this from outside and returned quickly to their respective places to wait for her. The bride, while returning, offered herself first to the demon to eat. The demon appreciated her truthfulness and allowed her to proceed home without fear. The city-guard and the thief also reacted similarly. The bride, thus, reached home safe.

"Now, amongst the four, who is the best?" Sumati questioned the four guards. One who had killed the sheep said the demon was the best; he who had guarded the body of Vasumitra marked the city-guard as the best; the fire-bringer expressed Dhanadatta as
the best; and the fuel-bringer and stealer of the box of a thousand dināras pointed to the thief as the best. Then Sumati was convinced that the last guard was the culprit and, a little later, when all were asleep, she roused him and told him in confidence that she loved him and that if he had gold sufficient to make ornaments for her, she would marry and accompany him. He, being pleased, took her away and gave her the box with the thousand dinār as. She made it over to her father, who handed over the box as well as the culprit to the King.

Narrating such picture tales, O Nāgaśrī, Vainayika stole the paddy of the listening sellers. Now I will tell you another story narrated by him:

In the town of Dharmapura, there was a merchant, Nāgadatta, who had a servant named Vaināka. One day, as he ploughed a sugar-cane plot, he found hidden wealth and wished to make it his own. In order to test his wife, he pretended to be pregnant and told her about his pregnancy on the condition she should not disclose it to anybody. But she did disclose the strange news, so that all the ladies in the town came to know it soon.

Then Somaśarmā told Nāgaśrī the third story:

An old woman, Gambhīrā, of Haripuri had a daughter named Harini, who was married to Vasudatta, a merchant of the town of Jayanta. Harini was pregnant and longed for sweets. Gambhīrā prepared some sweets and left for her daughter’s town. On the way she happened to meet eight robbers. To escape from them, she stopped one of them, pretended that he resembled her own son, who had left home twelve years back, and then as a mark of her joy invited all of them to her daughter’s house for dinner and rest for the night. She took them to her daughter’s house, arranged for their bath, had them served with hot gruel, and then raised the alarm from the top of the house crying “Thieves! Thieves!” Alarmed by the treachery of Gambhīrā, all of them ran away. But she, with the conviction that her victims would burgle her daughter’s house that night, kept herself alert, armed with a sword. The thieves did come and cut a hole in a wall of the house, and as one of them attempted to enter through it, the watchful Gambhīrā cut off his nose with her sword. He, pretending difficulty in getting through, came out and asked a colleague to get in. His nose too was cut. Thus all of them had their noses cut. Leaving that place, they committed burglary in the house of a sorcerer, stole his box and carried it to the cemetery. They also stole a sheep, which one of them killed and started cooking it while the others slept nearby. The thief, who was cooking, opened the box, found the sorcerer’s robe, mask etc., put them on and
stood by the side of the fire. The sleeping thieves awoke, looked at him and, taking him for a demon, ran away. He, too, taking the meat followed them in fun. After covering some distance, he threw away the robe and the mask, gave his identity to his partners and distributed the meat which they all ate and went ahead together. After some days, Gambhīrā started for her home early in the morning. After covering some distance, she, with fear of robbers, climbed a banyan tree. By this time the same robbers arrived and one of them climbed the same tree to see if there were any travellers at a distance. He saw the old woman and enquired who she was. She told him that she was the deity residing in that tree. He asked her whether she would accept him as his spouse. She agreed to do so on the condition that he should keep a piece of meat with his tongue in her mouth. As he did so she strongly bit his tongue and consequently he, raising the alarm, fell to the ground. Then all of them started running away, when Gambhīrā announced that they should keep in the cavity of the tree the eighth part of each of their booties; otherwise, she would swallow them. Every day the robbers kept the eighth part of their booty there and Gambhīrā secretly came and took it away. Thus the old woman ruled the band of robbers.

Painting picture tales of this kind on canvas and explaining them to the people, Vainayika stole paddy in the market-place. Another, Vaika, measured sixty ballas of paddy as twenty while the sellers listened to the stories narrated by him. A third, Vyomaka, remaining in an underground room, collected paddy through a hole with the result that the measured corn appeared little in quantity. Thus, these three together stole paddy in the market-place. One day, Jagadgrha, the chieftain of Kauśala, who had gone to sell his paddy to Campānagara, found out the treachery of the trio and complained to the King, by whose order these three were being led to the stake. 60

The connection of picture-storytelling with disreputable and underprivileged types is not surprising in light of evidence brought together from other times and places. For example, similar descriptions from the T’ang period show that such performances in China were also held outside of temples by popular entertainers and were enormously captivating to the audience. 61
In the *Aṭṭhasālinī* (commentary on the *Dhamma-saṅgaṇi* [“compendium of dharmas”]), the eminent explicator of Pāli texts, Buddhaghoṣa (fl. fourth century C.E. [?]), examines the relationship between *citta* (“consciousness”) and *citra* (“variegated,” hence, “picture”):

How is consciousness (i.e., mind) capable of producing a variety or diversity of effects in action? There is no art in the world more variegated than that of painting. In painting, the painter’s masterpiece [caraṇa] is more artistic than the rest of his pictures. An artistic design occurs to the painters of masterpieces that such and such pictures should be drawn in such and such a way. Through this artistic design there arise operations of the mind (or artistic operations) accomplishing such things as sketching the outline, putting on the paint, touching up, and embellishing. Then in the picture known as the masterpiece is effected a certain (central) artistic figure. Then the remaining portion of the picture is completed by the work of planning in mind as, “Above the figure let this be; underneath, this; on both sides, this.” Thus all classes of arts in the world, specific or generic, are achieved by the mind. And owing to its capacity thus to produce a variety or diversity of effects in action, the mind, which achieves all these arts, is itself artistic like the arts themselves.


There is a long discourse by the Buddha in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya* (Kindred Sayings) that dwells on the same “masterpiece” or “show-piece” of which Buddhaghoṣa spoke. The
passage is interesting, furthermore, for the explicit comparison it draws between the work of the painter and the ability of the mind to create illusory worlds. However, I cite here only a brief portion from the middle of the discourse that is important because of a commentary written on it to which I shall refer momentarily:

“Brethren, have ye ever seen a picture which they call a ‘show-piece?’”
“Yes, lord.”
“Well, brethren, this so-called show-piece is thought out by mind. Wherefore, brethren, mind is even more diverse than that show-piece.

“Wherefore, brethren, again and again must one regard one’s own mind thus: ‘For a long time this mind has been tainted by lust, by hatred, by illusion.’ By a tainted mind, brethren, beings are tainted. By purity of mind beings are made pure.”

Buddhaghoṣa’s commentary on this passage in his Sāratthapakāṣinī explains why these “master-pieces” or “show-pieces” are referred to as caraṇa (“rambling”) by saying that

There are Brahmin sectaries whose general name is Nakha. They having a (movable or portable) picture-gallery made, roam about with it, exhibiting thereupon (apparently upon the outer faces of the four piece-boards serving as walls) the various kinds of representation of happy or woeful states of existence according to good or bad destinies, and causing the labels to be inscribed to the effect: “Having done this deed, one attains to this state.” “Having done that, one attains to that state.” Thus showing different destinies, they wander about with these pictures.

This constitutes virtually incontrovertible proof that there were itinerant picture showmen in Buddhaghoṣa’s day.
There is also a difficult passage in the Pāli *Psalms of the Brethren* (CCLXII, Tālapuṭa, 1129), which may refer to the same sort of itinerant illusion-maker:

Nay now, thou shalt not dupe me as of old
Time after time, again, ever again,
Like mountebank showing his little masque [cāraṇikaŋ];
Thou playest guileful tricks with me,
As with a lunatic.
Tell me, my heart, wherein am I at fault? 65

Barua has summarized and analyzed some of what can be gleaned from the literature concerning the closely related types of early picture-storytellers under the following ten headings:

1. That these sectaries were Brahmins by caste and known by the name of Nakha;
2. That they wandered about in the country, taking with them movable or portable picture-galleries with pictures drawn and exhibited thereupon;
3. That they entertained as well as instructed the people with the aid of these pictorial representations;
4. That they delineated the pictures of destinies after death, of happy or woeful states of existence in different celestial abodes or infernal regions, publicly demonstrating the Doctrine of Karma, promulgating the Theory of Rebirth and proving the existence of Paraloka or World-beyond;
5. That they inscribed separate labels indexing contents of the depicted scenes;
6. That painting was just one of the arts whereby they tried to inculcate their doctrines and secured support of the people;
7. That their institution existed also in the time of Buddhaghoṣa;
8. That there can be no doubt that the Maṃkhas [sic] referred to in the Jaina Bhagavati-Sūtra and its commentaries and the Nakha-Brāhmaṇa-pāsaṇḍikas referred to in Buddhaghoṣa’s Sārattha-Pakāsinī were representatives of one and the same institution;
9. That here one may trace the origin and antiquity of the Indian folk-art, Paṭacitra, which, as a means of popular instruction, developed side by side with ballad-recitation and similar art of narration or story-telling. The subject-matters changed according to exigencies of time and according to needs of the teaching to be imparted; and
10. That these pictures contained continuous representations of successive stages in the progress of a story in order to have a scenic effect. 66

There are two passages in the poet Bāṇa’s account of King Harṣa, Harṣa carita, that give a vivid account of picture-storytelling in seventh-century India. The first is a simile: “Like those who depict infernos [yamapaṭṭikaḥ], loud singers paint unreal- ities on the canvas of the air [ambara].” 67 The second is a full description of a lively street scene, which I shall quote in full:

No sooner had he [Harṣa] entered than in the bazaar street amid a great crowd of inquisitive children he observed an Inferno- showman [yamapaṭṭaka], in whose left hand was a painted canvas stretched out on a support of upright rods and showing the lord of the dead mounted on his dreadful buffalo. Wielding a reed-wand [ś arakaṇḍena] in his other hand, he was expounding the features [vyatikaram] of the next world, and could be heard to chant the following verse:

Mothers and fathers in thousands, in hundreds children and wives
Age after age have passed away: whose are they, and whose art thou?
Māt ā-pitr-śahasr āṇi, putra-d ār ā-śat āṇi ca |
Yuge yuge vyatītāni, kasya te, kasya v ā bhavān? 68

Here is a real picture showman, one who is not masquerading in that guise as did the spy in Viśākhadatta’s Mudr ār ākṣasa. The performer seems to be holding a painted canvas in his left hand and pointing to it with a reed wand held in the right hand. This would resemble in format the modern Rajasthani Ramdālā type of picture-storytelling (see Chapter 4). C. Sivaramamurthi quotes this passage from the Harṣa-carita and remarks that “During temple festivals in South India there are always picture-showmen who carry yamapātaś in one form or another for the amusement of children and their own living.” 69 This tells us something about the who, what, when, why, and where of yamapāta. All of the available evidence indicates that the situation was not very different for transformation performances in China.
In the short play Dūtavākya that is based on incidents from the Mahā bhārata, also attributed to Bāṇa, Duryodhana, the enemy of the Pāṇḍava brothers, asks that a citrapaṭa (“painted cloth”) be spread out in front of him. On it are depicted ten different scenes that constitute a narrative sequence dealing with the mistreatment of Draupadī, wife of the Pāṇḍavas, by Duḥśāsana (a son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra). Each scene is first described in prose with the following formula: “This (eṣa) is [the place/time/scene where/when] XXX [happens],” or “Here XXX [happens].” This is then followed by a verse passage emphasizing some aspect of the scene. The same is then repeated for the next scene. 70 The formal parallels to transformation texts cannot be ignored. Before the verse sections of transformation texts, there is a consistent formula: “the place [where] XXX [happens], how shall I present it?” 71

The first act of the Uttararāmacarita (Rāma’s Later History), written by Bhavabhūti, who flourished in the closing years of the seventh century, is entitled “Citradarśana [A Seeing of Pictures].” To divert the mind of the sorrowing Sitā, Lakṣmaṇa has had an artist (perhaps named Arjuna) paint the life of Rāma, her lord. 72 As they observe the pictures (vīthicitra), Lakṣmaṇa explains them to her. 73 Here is a case of the absorption by the elite (if only in a dramatic setting) of a folk practice.

In the section of the Jain hagiographical text known as the Triṣaṣṭiśalākā- puruśacarita (“Lives of Sixty-Three Excellent Men,” written by Hemacandra at the request of King Kumārapāla sometime between 1160 and 1172) 74 dealing with Rṣabha’s (the first tīrthakaṅkara [“preparer of the path”]) sixth incarnation, there is a passage in which pictures are similarly used to reveal with great effect past events in an individual’s life (here actually a former life):

One day Śrīmatī had gone to a pleasure-garden, and her nurse, named Paṇḍitā, seized a favorable opportunity and spoke to her privately: “You are like my life to me; I am like your mother. There is no reason for lack of confidence between us. Tell me, daughter, why you have taken to silence. Make your grief easier by sharing it with me. When I know your grief, I shall proceed to the business of curing it. For a treatment of an unknown disease is not right.” She then told Paṇḍitā an exact account of her former life, like a man making confession to a good guru. Having represented Śrīmatī’s story on canvas by pictures, Paṇḍitā, learned in strategy, went quickly to display it outside. It was the birthday of the Cakrin Vajrasena and for this occasion
many kings came there. After she had painted the canvas clearly, Paṇḍitā spread it out on the highway, and stood like the strong desire of Śrīmatī. Some who knew the scriptures praised the painted heaven, Nandiśvara, etc., in it which agreed with the description in the scriptures. Other laymen, nodding their heads, described the images of the holy Arhats one by one. Looking repeatedly with side-long glances, some, who had experience in the arts, praised constantly the purity of line. Others described the colors, black, white, yellow, blue, red, etc., that made the canvas look like a twilight-cloud.

Just then King Durdarśana’s son, who was fittingly named Durdānta, came there. He looked at the canvas with circumspection for a moment, fell on the ground in a pretended faint, and got up like one who has regained consciousness. Questioned by the people as to the reason for his fainting, after he had got up, he told a story giving a false account. “Some one has painted on the canvas the incidents of my former birth, and at the sight of it here the recollection of the birth took place. I am the god Lalitāṅga, and Svayamprabhā was my goddess. All this agrees exactly with what is painted here on the canvas.” Then Paṇḍitā asked him, “If that is so, sir, then tell what this composition on the canvas is. Explain it with your finger.” He said, “This is Mt. Meru. This is the city Paṇḍarīkinī.” Again asked about the name of the muni, he said he had forgotten the name. Again asked, “Who is this king, surrounded by ministers? Who is this woman ascetic?” he replied, “I do not know their names.” Recognized as a deceitful person, he was addressed by her with ridicule: “O son, this account of your former birth agrees exactly with this. You are Lalitāṅga, sir; and Svayamprabhā is your wife. Now as a result of karma she is a lame girl in Nandigrāma. From recollection of her former birth, she painted her own life and gave me the canvas when I went to Dhātakīkhaṇḍa. I have searched for you out of compassion for her, lame as she is. So, come to Dhātakīkhaṇḍa. I shall lead you to her presence. Pitiable in separation from you, she lives in grief. Console at once your wife dearer than life in a former birth, O son.” When Paṇḍitā became silent after speaking thus, the deceitful man was ridiculed by his own friends. “Oh, there is fruition of your merit from this acquisition of a jewel of a woman.” “By all means this lame girl must be approached and supported.” Then Prince Durdānta, his face pale from embarrassment, (looking) like a piece of goods that has been left after a sale, went elsewhere.
Then Vajrajaṅgha came from the city Lohārgala, saw the events painted in the picture, and swooned. Fanned with fans, sprinkled with water, he got up. Recollection of his former birth took place, as if he had just come from heaven. Questioned by Paṇḍitā, “Why did you swoon, O Prince, when you saw this painting?” Vajrajaṅgha said: “This painting is the life of my wife and myself in a former birth, madam. When I saw it, I fainted. This is the holy heaven Īśāna, and this the palace Śrīprabha. Here am I named Lalitāṅga, and that is my wife, Svayamprabhā. Here in Dhātakīkhaṇḍa, having descended in Nandigrāma, she, named Nirnāmikā, was born in the house of a poor man. Here she has ascended Mt. Ambaratilaka and begun fasting before Muni Yugandhara. Here I have gone to show myself to her. She died devoted to me and was born again as Svayamprabhā. Here in Nandīśvara I am engaged in worshipping the images of the Jinas, and here, going from there to other tīrthas [pilgrimage places], I have fallen. Here, I think, my wife also is falling. Here is Svayamprabhā, alone, poor, pitiable. I think she is here. Remembering her former birth she painted that. For certainly one person does not know what has been experienced by another.” Paṇḍitā agreed, and went to Śrīmatī and told her everything—a remedy for healing the arrow-wound in her heart. 75

We have seen in the Introduction that a similar device was used to reveal the past of an adopted boy in a popular Chinese play and novel set in the Sung period.

In the quasi-historical-biographical Jain work Prabandhacintāmani, (Wishing-Jewel of Stories), completed by Merutuṅga in 1306, there are mentioned pratimādhāriṇ (“those who carry pictures”). 76 I have not been able to find any additional references to this particular type of performer and so cannot describe them in greater detail.

From a passage in the ancient epic Mahābhārata, it is apparent that entertainers like śaubhika and puppet-players generally had an abyssmally low social position in early India:

“Parācara [i.e., Parāśara] said,—In the Brāhmaṇa, wealth acquired by acceptance of gifts, in the Kshatriya that won by victory in battle, in the Vaishya that obtained by following the duties laid down for his order, and in the Cudra that earned by serving the three other orders, however small its measure, is worthy of praise, and spent for the aquisition of virtue is productive of great benefits. The Cudra [i.e., Śūdra] is said to be the constant servitor of the three other classes. If the Brāhmaṇa, pressed for a
living, betakes himself to the duties of either the Kshatriya or the Vaiçya, he does not fall off from righteousness. When, however, the Brâhmana betakes himself to the duties of the lowest order, then does he certainly fall off. When the Cudra is unable to obtain his living by service of the three other orders, then trade, rearing of cattle, and the practice of the mechanical arts are lawful for him to follow. Appearance on the boards of a theatre and disguising oneself in various forms, exhibition of puppets, the sale of spirits and meat, and trading in iron and leather, should never be taken up for purposes of living by one who had never before been engaged in those professions every one of which is regarded as censurable in the world. It hath been heard by us that if one engaged in them can abandon them, one then acquires great merit.”

Later, when we discuss the social position of modern Indian picture showmen, it will be helpful to keep this passage in mind.
Painting and Performance
2
The Transmission of Picture Recitation through Central Asia

The question that confronts us now is just how did the Indian picture-storytelling traditions make their way into China? It is not enough to say the obvious—that they came in the wake of Buddhism. We must try to provide conclusive evidence of the path and means of transmission. We shall also be concerned in this and succeeding chapters with the issue of who was responsible for transmitting prosimetric picture-storytelling to China. We may begin by demonstrating that the narrative material for one specific transformation was first encountered by Chinese Buddhists in Central Asia.

It has been shown that, "popular Buddhist literature was well known to the people of Khotan." 1 The Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish (Hsien-yü ching 賢愚經; translated into Chinese in 445 I.E. 2), which is the most important of the sources for the Śāriputra transformation text, was itself initially heard by Chinese ears in Khotan. We are fortunate in having a nearly contemporaneous account of precisely the circumstances under which this occurred. The Col lected Notes on the Formation of the Tripiṭaka (出三藏記集, ca. 506-512) by Seng-yu 僧祐 (445-518) describes in fascinating detail the origin of the Chinese text:

The śramaṇa of Ho-hsi ["West of the River." i.e., Kansu] Śakya T’an-hsüeh, Wei [var. Ch’eng]-te, and others, altogether eight monks, made up their minds to travel afar in search of sacred texts. At the Great Temple (Mahāvihāra) 3 in Khotan, they happened upon a Quinquennial Assembly (Pañcavarsa [or vārṣika] pariṣad 4). In Chinese this is "Great Assembly of Everyone [that is Held] Every Five Years." [At such assemblies,] the various scholars of the Tripiṭaka would each expound upon the jewels of the Law. They would preach the sūtras and lecture on the vinaya,
teaching according to their own profession. 5 [T’an]-hsüeh and the other monks, in accord with the circumstances, divided up to listen. Then they practiced the Indo-Iranian sounds with enthusiasm and broke [var. analyzed] them into [equivalent] Chinese meanings. They thought carefully as they translated and each wrote down what he had heard. When they returned to Karakhoto, they assembled [it all] into a single work. After that, they crossed the shifting sands and brought [the book] back to Liang-chou 凉州.6

The sūtra was subsequently (in the first part of the ninth century) translated into Tibetan by Č’os-grub (法成) of Kansu. 7 The filiation of the text is thus as follows: India → Khotan → Turfan → Kansu (China) → Tibet.

Willi Baruch has brought to our attention the widespread existence of a Maitreya cult in Central Asia that is known from artistic and literary remains. 8 Among these is an extremely important text for our study of the Central Asian parallels to transformations, transformation texts, and transformation tableaux, namely, the Uighur version (Maitrisimit) of the drama Maitreyasamiti (Meeting with Maitreya). The Uighur text was found at Sängim near Turfan by Albert von Le Coq, who explored the area for the Berlin Academy of Sciences during the first two decades of this century. According to one of the colophons, this translation into Old Turkish was from an original in the language of Karashar (To .Lefti tili, i.e., “Tocharian”; the speakers of this language preceded the Uighurs in the Tarim Basin) that was written in the form of a prosimetrical dramatic narrative. 9 According to Paul Demiéville, the Uighur follows the Tocharian closely.10 A Khotanese (a middle Iranian language) version, on the other hand, is all in verse. One of the colophons to this version provides the interesting information that the copyist was assisted by a spiritual master named Puṇyabhadra.

As Sylvain Lévi has shown, the “Tocharian A” Maitreyasamiti-nāṭaka, discovered by the German expedition in the region of Karashar at a place called Shortchouq, has “comme tant d’autres œuvres de la même région, le caractère d’une légende dramatique où la récitation chantée et la forme dialoguée alternent...” 11 According to Lévi, this genre is designated by the Sanskrit word nāṭaka (“dance, drama”) as is indicated in the colophons of the Maitreya samita. The sections of this drama, which carry the name nipāt or nipānt (any connection to par, pāṭ, etc.?), end with a sort of stage direction:
Icār poṇsā = Sanskrit niṣkrāntāḥ sarve ("no one remains on stage; exeunt omnes"). The eleventh chapter, for example, ends thus: "|| Icār pons || Maitreyasamiti nāṭakaṃ Guru darśaṃ ēkāṃ śākṣapint nip āṃt ār- || Everyone exits; Ends the 11th chapter with the name (darśan (‘display’ or ‘showing’) [of the Teacher] from the drama Maitreyasamiti.

Formulas such as praveśakkār (Sanskrit praveśakaḥ samāptaḥ, "the intermezzo finishes"), too, are unmistakable. What is perhaps even more remarkable is that the Maitreyasamiti-nāṭaka and the Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish, the ancestor of the transformation on Śāriputra and the Six Heretics, bear so many similarities of content and detail that it is impossible to believe they are unrelated.

Annemarie von Gabain, in her studies of the Uighur kingdom of Chotscho between the years 850–1250, has discussed the dramatic nature of Maitrisimit and its performance in conjunction with displayed pictures:

In its Old Turkish version, Maitrisimit is the beginning of theatrical art. At a public festival in the temple, the faithful gathered on the fifteenth day of the first month to worship the holy places. They confessed, presented material, spiritual, and symbolic offerings, performed liturgical celebrations for the salvation of the dead, and in the evening they listened to edifying stories or they took pleasure in looking at pictures that were displayed and in watching gifted mimes and elocutionists who, apparently with different roles assigned to each other, put on some such work as Maitrisimit or a scholarly discourse between a master and his students. These religious texts for delivery were not canonical, but they were composed by authorities on the śastra (doctrinal disquisitions) with the aim of attracting the people to the holy teaching through examples from life and with the stimulus of all sorts of magnificent displays.

Elsewhere, von Gabain has spoken more directly of the textual authority for her reference to the use of pictures during performance. The Tocharian version of Maitrisimit, though designated by the Sanskrit word nāṭaka ("drama"), seems rather to have been intended more for narrative recitation. In one of the colophons to the Uighur version, the recitation is said to be held supposedly during the Feast of the New Moon. The im-
portant word körünč (“sight, scene”) occurs, which, according to von Gabain, in this context could mean illustration and/or pantomimic performance to accompany a recitation narrative:

When our colophon speaks of a körünč, it must be referring to some sort of pictorial object. For example, in Bhadra’s Choice in Marriage ([Müller], “Uigurica II,” p. 22 at the bottom), we find: öz öz k örün č läg ül ük qaliylar i nda y iy ılılar “they assembled on their respective display pedestals.” And somewhat later: brahmadat i iligning körünčlügi qayu ārki “which then is the show-piece about Brahmadatta?”

Von Gabain’s analysis has prompted Demiéville to make the brilliant suggestion that körünč corresponds to pien-hsiang. Before attempting to find some textual authority for this correspondence, a closer examination of körünč is necessary.

körünč is a Uighur deverbal noun meaning “vision, apparition, spectacle, show, pageant, sight, scene, play, something to be viewed, aspect of something.” Etymologically, it should mean “appearance” or the like, but in Xākānī (a type of Turkish from the eleventh century and later) it seems to have a more active force. This suggests that it might, in some cases, be understood as meaning “that which is made to appear” or “that which has been conjured up.” The verbal root for körünč is körün, which is the reflexive form of kör-. It means “to be visible, to appear, to let oneself be seen.” 20 An important related word is the denominal verb körünče, meaning “to display, make a show of (something).” 21 Another related word is körün üş, meaning “to meet, have audience, etc.” 22 Some additional paronymous Uighur words are körk (“something visible; shape; form”—usually represents Sanskrit rūpa, “form”); körkin (“manifestation, used for the form or shape of a deity which the worshipper longs to see); körktürü (“to cause to be seen); and körtgür- (“to show”). 23 Compare also modern Turkish görünüš (“view; aspect; appearance”) and east Turkish körün ("image; picture"). 24 Another interesting bit of information is that kör-，“to see,” has an old etymological connection with kō: z, “eye.” 25 Lastly, the Turkish-Arabic dictionary of Maḥmūd al-Kāšgarī, Dīwān Luğāti ’l-Turk, written in the third quarter of the eleventh century, defines körünç (kızünç on the manuscript) as al-qawmu’l-nazzāra ilâ šy (“a crowd of spectators at something”).
Could this be a reference to some kind of fantasy show? In any event, it is plain that Old Turkish \( \sqrt{kör} \) is well within the range of meaning of T’ang Buddhist pien.

According to Şinasi Tekin, there occurs in most of the Uighur Jatakasin, either at the beginning of the story or in the middle where a new episode is supposed to begin, some such formula as: “The following event must be imagined in the land of Magadha, the village Andayagiri.” The formula also occurs in the Uighur version of the Maitrisimit.

Now this type of formula must have a special meaning. Such an introduction would not make much sense if the text were intended to be read silently. These formulas are intelligible only if we consider the text that follows (namely, the entire Jātaka or a section of it) as one that was to be recited aloud or possibly performed by actor-monks during religious festivities. During these performances, portraits of the figures to be activated (Bodhisattvas or other Buddhist deities) or pictures of various scenes might have been used. The basis of this assumption is the Uighur word körünč (literally, “something to look at or to watch,” “spectacle”), which seems to be the functional equivalent in this context of Sanskrit nāṭaka (“dance,” “drama,” or “show”), by which the Tocharian version of Maitrisimit calls itself.

A passage from the Suvarṇaprabhāsa[uttamar āja]-sūtra (“Golden Splendor Sūtra,” 金光明最勝王經, translated into Chinese during the sixth century and twice later) allows us to gain a better understanding of the word körünč. Although there exists a Sanskrit text of this sūtra, because of obvious differences with it, both the Chinese and Uighur versions discussed here must have been translated from a different Sanskrit text. The corresponding passage in the Sanskrit would be expected to be found between chapter 5 (“On Emptiness”) and chapter 6 (“On the Four Great Kings”). Unfortunately, it is not and so we will be unable to establish an exact equivalence between körünč and a given Sanskrit word. But the passage is worth studying in some detail for the light it shines on the relationship between Uighur körünč and its Chinese parallel, huan 幻—“illusion” in this particular passage. A single sentence will illustrate this relationship: “antaġ yîlvi/ning tözîn tüpin y(i)ma atürdîg bîlîr/lâr ... birök ol körünč/tä”; Tekin renders this as “although they recognize precisely the root and the ground of that sort of enchantment....” The matching Chinese sentence
in the translation of I-ching 義淨 (637–713, the famous monk who spent twenty years in India, half of them at the Nālandā monastery) is “understands the root of illusion” (了於幻本).  

It must be noted, however, that the Chinese word huan does not consistently correspond to the Uighur körünč throughout the passage. Evidently, the translators of both texts were not absolutely rigorous in their renderings. And, in general, the Chinese is laconic while the Uighur is prolix. For this reason, the two words may be spoken of as parallels rather than equivalents. What is important, none the less, about the overall match between huan and körünč is that it proves that körünč, in Uighur Buddhist usage, not only means “sight or appearance” but, more exactly, “illusory sight or appearance.” This brings us even closer to the meaning of pien in Chinese Buddhist contexts when we recall that there existed the Sanskrit present middle participle vikurvamāṇa (i.e., vikurvāṇa, “transforming [i.e., manifesting] illusions”) and that it was rendered into Chinese as pien-huan 變幻. Here we find pien and huan linked together in the same expression.

Another passage from the Uighur translation of the Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra helps us to gain a still clearer understanding of the Buddhist understanding of √kör−. In his etymological dictionary of Turkish, Gerard Clauson quotes a sentence from it (64.6) that reads as follows: yarukluğ körkdeşlerin orun orun sayu koğu yarlikap. 33 He renders this as “[The Buddhas] deign to show their shining replicas in all places.” The equivalent sentence in the Chinese translation of I-ching is “manifested various bodies; these are named transformation bodies (i.e., nirmānakāya)” (現種種身，是名化身). 34 Now nirmānakāya is sometimes also rendered in Chinese as pien-hua shen 變化身. Hence we may once again conclude that √kör− is well within the range of meanings covered by Buddhist pien.

The Uighur version of the Śrī-parivarta (chapters 16 and 17 on the goddess Śrī, who brings wealth) of the Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra includes references to the painting and worship of the image (körk) of a deity, here Ratnapuspa Buddha:

If anyone, from day to day should [make a wish,] saying “Would that my harvests grow greater! Would that my wealth increase! Would that my granaries grow full!,” then they with devout and faithful hearts, making a new house and besmearing the ground
with ox-dung, let them paint my *image* [應畫我像] inside there artistically and well with decorations and adornments [cf. Sanskrit *vaidûryasuvvarnaratna- kusumaprabhâsaśrîgunasâgara*, literally, “an ocean full of such splendors as lapis lazuli, gold, gems, and flowers”].

And again let him worship my *image* [供養我像] with other [offerings of] incense, flowers, and food and drink.  

As a final note on this text, it is most intriguing that there are Tun-huang manuscripts that point to the existence of transformation tableaux (*paṭa*, if you will) on the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamarāja-sūtra* itself. The manuscript designated P4690 has the title “One Layout on the Surpassing King of Golden Light” (金光明最勝王一舖). More remarkable still, P3425 has the title “Inscription for One Layout of a Transformation Tableau on [the King of] Golden Light” (金光明變相一舖銘; last character added later). It was composed by Chang Ch’iu, Mandarin of the Ninth Degree, Fourth Class, Who is Serving as the Military Adjudicator for Sha-chou and Provisionally in the Post of Censor for External Investigations (將仕郎撮沙洲軍事判官守監察→御史張球撰上). The inscription on P3425 is not a narration of the content of the sūtra but praise of the painting itself and those responsible for it. It tells how the “Tāṭhāgata manifests his appearance” (如來現其有相) and then goes on to describe how this is captured by the painter. Unfortunately, neither of the “layouts” mentioned on P4690 or P3425 survives.

There exists a Uighur translation of the biography of the famous Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-tsang (596–664), which has been studied by von Gabain. 36 It was translated from Chinese directly into Uighur by Singqu Sāli Tutung, who hailed from Bīşbalîg and was the same person who translated the *Suvarṇaprabhāsā- sūtra* into Uighur. 37 The Uighur version of the biography dates from the second quarter of the tenth century. 38 In it, among the materials mentioned by Hsüan-tsang as having been gathered by him in India, are körklärin, translated by von Gabain as *Bildnisse* (“images” or “pictures”). 39 The matching Chinese word is *hsiang* 像 (cf. 40 相).

Included in the biography are two extremely valuable letters written to Hsüan-tsang by Indians, the first from Jñānaprabhâ (智光) and the second from Prajñādeva (慧天). Both are also in the Uighur translation, so we have here the very interesting situation of texts that were originally written in a Sanskrit lan-
guage, then translated into Chinese, and finally translated into Uighur from the Chinese. The translator was thoroughly conversant with Buddhist technical terminology in both Chinese and Uighur so that, in places where the Chinese is obscure, we may rely upon the Uighur for help in understanding it, and vice versa.

What is most significant for our purposes is that there occurs in the second letter a reference to pien. The crucial line in Chinese is 我慧天苾芻今造佛大神變讚頌. This has been rendered into English by Li Yung-hsi as, “‘I, Bhikṣu Prajñādeva, have composed a stanza in praise of the great divine powers of the Buddha....’” The Uighur text has mn prtyadiwi toyn tngri ritiwid körünč qīlu yrliqamīšin šlok tayšut yaratīp. Von Gabain renders this as “After I, the monk Prajñādeva, had composed a poem about the view which the most divine Buddha deigned to have with regard to the Ṛgveda....” Her understanding of ritiwid körünč as “Anschauung ... des Ṛgveda” is open to question. The Chinese simply has ta shen-pien 神變, which means “great(ly) miraculous transformation.” The expression shen-pien may render Pāli iddhā or sappāṭi-hāriyo dhammo; Sanskrit prātihārya; and Tibetan rnam par sprul pa. All of these expressions have to do with the ability of a Buddha or Bodhisattva to manifest himself in various forms for the instruction of all living beings. Compare also shen-pien hsiang 神變相, “sign or mark of spiritual transformation” (mahā nimittaṃ prātihāryam). It is a commonplace to attribute such powers to a Buddha, and there is no reason to seek a different interpretation of the Chinese here. I suggest that the Uighur ritiwid may quite possibly refer back to Sanskrit rddhi (“supernatural powers”), which would bring it in perfect harmony with the Chinese. In any event, there would appear to be no justification for bringing up the Ṛgveda. As for körünč, it clearly means a “manifestation” of a deity, here specifically the Buddha. Hence, the Uighur translator must have understood ta shen-pien as signifying something made visible through manifestation. It is both the epiphany and the artistic rendering of the epiphany. This could hardly refer to anything other than pien-hsiang. Furthermore, there are so many examples of “eulogies” (Sanskrit stotra and kārikā) on pien-hsiang that the notion here seems perfectly logical and acceptable.

The Twelve Deeds of Buddha, a rare example of early Mongolian Buddhist literature, is the translation of a Tibetan original compiled by C’os-kyi ‘Od-zer (fl. 1294–1307). The Mon-
The Mongolian translation is by a Saskya monk named Šes-rab Seṅ-ge. In addition to Mongolian, he knew Tibetan, Uighur, and probably Chinese, but not Sanskrit. The nature of this text affords clear evidence of a Mongolian Buddhist literary tradition that was only indirectly related to the Sanskrit one.

The Mongolian text (end of fol. 51v), as translated by Nicholas Poppe, has a passage that reads: “From the north came the Bodhisattva called ‘King of Arrangements,’ and by magic, made visible a picture of the land of all the Buddhas.” The Mongolian word for “picture” here is körüg, which goes back to the important Uighur word körünč. The Sanskrit version of the parallel passage in the Lalitavistara (a miraculous biography of the Buddha in the Tuṣita heaven before his descent to earth as Śākyamuni), as translated from the French rendition of Foucaux, reads as follows:

Next, in the northern region, Sūryāvarttā—the part of the world belonging to the Tathāgata Candrasūrya-jihmi-karanaprabha—a Bodhisattva Mahāsattva [perfected Bodhisattva] named Vyūharāja, stimulated by the light of the Buddha-field, surrounded and preceded by an incalculable host of Bodhisattvas, approaching the site of the bodhimanda [the platform of intelligence] and the place of the Bodhisattva, in order to pay homage to him, caused to be seen within the extent of the maṇḍala [circle] of lapis lazuli everything there is within the ten directions of space and all parts of the world, the configurations of the qualities of the Buddha-fields. Whereupon, some Bodhisattvas spoke thus: “Why are there such configurations?”

And from the middle of all these configurations, this gāthā [stanza] was heard:

—He whose body has through many repetitions been purified by merit and by knowledge; whose language has been purified by his vows, his austerities, and the True Law; whose spirit has been well purified by modesty, renunciation, gentleness, and mildness; that very one who approached the king of trees, ‘twas the chief of the Śākyas who was honored.

The Mongolian version is so highly condensed that it is impossible to determine exactly how individual words in it correspond to those in the Sanskrit. Yet we may say that the Sanskrit lacks any word meaning “picture,” and, furthermore, the visualization of the King of Arrangements (Vyūharāja) was but a part of the larger worship area which is designated as a maṇḍala.
The Chinese translation by Divākara (613–687) follows the Sanskrit fairly closely. As such, the word pien does not appear in it as an equivalent of körüg. It is clear, however, that embedded in the parallel Chinese text is the notion of the manifestation of a scene through the exercise of supernatural power. The usual Chinese title for the Lalitavistara (literally, “sport-extension”) is Fang-kuang ta chuang-yen ching (方廣大莊嚴經) (literally, “broad greatly adorned mahāvyūha sūtra”). It is interesting to note that an alternate Chinese title for this text is the Sūtra of the Play of Supernatural Spirit (Shen-t’ung yu-hsi ching, 神通遊戲經). Shen-t’ung yu-hsi (神通遊戲) is one Chinese translation of the Sanskrit word vikrīḍita (cf. √kriḍ, “to play”). In Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, this word may mean something like “miracle, exhibition of supernatural power.” Another Chinese translation of vikrīḍita is shen-pien 神變 (“supernatural transformation”). In essence, the entire Lalitavistara is a disquisition on the playful—yet instructive—transformational manifestation of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, which is a key to our understanding of the concept of Chinese Buddhist pien and Uighur Buddhist körünč.

There exists a fragment of the Uighur version of the Lotus Sūtra that can further help us to understand the Buddhist meaning of √kör-. This is from the Samantamukhaparivarta Avalokiteśvara-vikurvāṇanirdeśa section (24), which describes the thirty-three apparitions (or appearances or manifestations, 三十三身) of Avalokiteśvara. In each case where the Chinese text has hsien 現 ... shen 身, the Uighur reads körkîn körtkürü (“to cause the [X] manifestation to be seen”) where körk(in) means “manifestation” or “form” and kör tkür(û) is “to cause to be seen.” It is patently clear from this section that √kör- implies the manifestation of the body of a deity. This, again, brings it well within range of Chinese pien, Sanskrit nirmāṇa, and a host of other Buddhist terms having to do with transformational manifestation.

The most important and clearest proof of Indie storytelling with pictures in Central Asia is the celebrated wall-painting from Māyā-Höhle II at Kyzil (Plates IV and V). The painting depicts the intelligent and faithful minister Varṣākāra (行雨大臣) showing King Ajātaśatru, a fervent patron of Buddhism, a cloth that illustrates four major events in the Buddha’s life: (1) his mother, Māyā, giving birth to him in the park at Lumbinî; (2)
withstanding the onslaught of Mārā’s hosts beneath the Tree of Enlightenment; (3) turning the Wheel of the Law during his first sermon at the Deer Park in Benares; and (4) entering nirvāṇa in the sāl grove at Kuśinagara. The purpose of employing this device was to break the news of the Buddha’s death to the king as gently as possible. The wall-painting shows King Ajātaśatru taking a bath in butter which, it is intended, will help to calm him.

Records of the German explorers in Central Asia during the early part of this century indicate that the scene was actually a common one in the remains of Buddhist monuments encountered there. Its profound significance for understanding the nature of narrative has, regrettably, largely been ignored by most students of Chinese literature. The existence of this story in the canon and its tradition of representation in wall-paintings provides a firm link between Indian picture-storytelling and Chinese transformation performances. Since the majority of the known wall-paintings depicting it date from the sixth and seventh centuries (the middle period of painting in the Kyzil area), the slightly later appearance in China of picture-storytelling begins to make some sense. This constitutes reliable evidence that the use of pictures painted on cloth as storytelling aids was widespread in Central Asia during the first half of the T’ang period and just before it. The fact that this scene is described in precise detail in a Mūlasarvāstivādin text further proves that this practice had an Indian prototype.

In the Mūlasarvāstivādavinayakṣudrakavastu, we find textual confirmation of this iconographical theme (the disclosure of the Buddha’s nirvāṇa to King Ajātaśatru) that is important for the study of the form of transformation texts. According to this account, Ajātaśatru’s minister, Varṣākāra, has a series of paintings made in which the major events of the Buddha’s life, ending with the parinirvāṇa, are portrayed. Varṣākāra plans to use the paintings as a basis for explaining to the king, one after the other, these turning-points in the Buddha’s life (即依次第而為陳說). Later in the same passage, it is stated even more explicitly that “Varṣākāra thereupon explained for the king [the major events in the Buddha’s life], one after another, the same as in the paintings” (彼即次第為王陳說一如圖畫). The word for “explain” here in the parallel Tibetan passage is the usual bṣad-pa, which does not help us to throw any light on what the original Sanskrit for erh-wei ch’en-shuo 而為陳說 (“thereupon explained”) may have been. What is
extremely important to note, however, is that we have here identified, in a Buddhist text translated from Sanskrit, the occurrence of part of the transformation text pre-verse formula in the context of explaining a series of pictures.

Less positive confirmation of a tradition of picture-storytelling in Central Asia is the recovery of numerous narrative paintings in various formats. One, in particular, that has attracted my attention, is a fragmentary painting (Plate VI) from Tun-huang with Uighur inscriptions that identify the scenes thereon. Since these inscriptions have not previously been studied, it may be worthwhile to give them here. The fragments with writing on them, numbered from top to bottom and from left to right, read as follows:

1.

A. ... ['w] (d)wzwp nyz[β 'ny] ...  
B. ... [tnkry tnkry] sy 'ynč' ty[p]  
or: [tyts]sy  
[yrlyg'dy] ...  
C. ... [twrt] (t)wqwm[pyš "zwn ...]...  
A. ... having led ... passion (= kleśa) ...  
B. ... [God of Gods or His Master]  
... [deigned] to speak  
C. ... [creatures] ... [which are in four]  
forms of existence [and in five forms of life]

2. 'y/...  
3. ... /tdy ... y(wz) ...  
... /p...  
... did ... face/one hundred ...  
... doing ...  
... /q' k'lwrday ...  
... /k p'k'...  

... he (they) brought...  
... the Lord (prince)

5. ... /y' βyz'r...  
bad persons

6. ... (y)typ ...  
having disappeared  
or: ['] (y)typ ...  
having provided ...

7. ... kwyrks[wz]...  
... /k ...
... ugly ones ...

8. ... /yr/ ...
   pwlywr ... twyrkč’ ...
   twyrlywk kwyrk/...
   typ ywyrwk ’wn’r ...
   It is [in such and such] ...
   In Turkish (language), the
   meaning comes out (i.e.,
   it means): “… [number] kinds
   of pictures […] and [...]”

9. ... /(y)t ... /r

The final translated lines would seem to indicate that the inscribed pictures are derived from another Buddhist tradition and language. Note the occurrence of the important word körk (kwyrk) in the eighth sentence. It is possible that we have here a Uighur version of a transformation tableau expressly identified as such. Were it not for the fragmentary nature of the manuscript we might also know the equivalent word in some other language.

It is certain that the technique of picture recitation had made its way to the western heartland of the Turkish-speaking world by the end of the sixteenth century and probably long before that. In his account of life in Istanbul, Evliyā Efendi (ca. 1611–1660) provides this fascinating description of a group known as “Painter Fortunetellers” (Fáljián Músavirán):

The most famous of them was Khoja Mohammed Chelebí, who had a shop at Mahmúd Páshá. He was an old man who had seen and had the honour of speaking to Sultán Súleimán. He filled his shop with the pictures and figures of all the aforesaid heroes and knights drawn with the pen on coarse paper, for the use of the passengers who stopped at his shop, in order by looking at these pictures, to get a soothsaying in favour of their wishes, viz.: whether there would be war or peace, whether Yúsúf or Züleica, Mejnún or Leila, Ferhád or Sherín, Wirka or Yulsháh would yield to amorous desires. The painter consulted to this end the pictures of these heroes and fair dames, and delivered his answers in comical verses, which raised immense laughter. With these figures he obtained his living. Sometimes he carried them to the Emperor, and at the public procession passed as chief of these painter-soothsayers exhibiting his pictures. The prophecies of these soothsayers are delivered in ridiculous words, accompanied by comical gestures.
The particular reciter here described had largely ceased to be an itinerant and had received the patronage of the emperor himself. Nonetheless, he had not abandoned his mantic and titillative functions that betray his origins in a folk tradition.

A seventh-century wall-painting recovered from the Knight’s Cave at Kirish (twenty-five miles east-northeast of Kucha) consists of narrative panels of scenes from the Buddhist parable, Mahāprabhāsa-avadāna. A Tocharian inscription running in a band along the top reads, according to K. Schmidt, “recited to him in (great) detail the... Jātaka: Because of an elephant he (scil. King Mahāprabhāsa) renounced the world (and) attained prophecy.” This demonstrates a close connection between oral tales based on the Jātakas and narrative pictures depicting them. It also exemplifies the role of the Tocharians as bearers of Indie culture across Central Asia. Another band with an inscription in Tocharian runs across the bottom of these scenes, but the pictures to which it refers have been too badly damaged to be identified.

Let us now consider the cultural configuration of Central Asia during and before the T’ang period so as to understand how Indian motifs and techniques could be transmitted through it to China and remain relatively intact. Pavel Poucha has simply said that “In Turkestan Indian culture was prevalent. Central Asiatic literature of the first thousand years [i.e.] was essentially Buddhistic; also Buddhistic influences are found in the Uiguric manicheism [sic]. In Central-Asiatic languages, especially in the Tokharic, there are a great number of Indian words.” But the Buddhist culture that came through Central Asia to Tun-huang, as René Grousset has observed, was not simply a product of Indian civilization. It was also, among other things, Graeco-Buddhist and Irano-Buddhist in nature. This is understandable when we consider the types of individuals who were responsible for cultural exchange in Central Asia. As Liu Man-tsai explains, “Traders, missionaries, envoys, and soldiers, who passed through Kucha, were also bearers of culture, and so there arose a syncretism that was evident in art.”

Central Asia’s ties with the rest of the world became especially intense during the fifth to seventh centuries due to the expansion of international trade along the Great Silk Route. The Sogdians were prominently involved in transmitting elements of various cultures along this route. As a result, the Sogdian language developed an elaborate Buddhist vocabulary. In narrative art, the Sogdians employed the technique of the “continuous pictorial epic,” to use Guitty Azarpay’s term. She
defines it as referring “to the use of a continuous sequence of individual scenes of secular and epic interest, in which identical persons appear in episodes or events separated in time.”

This is the same technique used in virtually all picture-telling traditions. Buddhism had penetrated Sogdiana by the first centuries of the International Era. By the early eighth century, however, Arab armies had largely crushed this civilization, causing its function as a transmitter of West Asian and South Asian culture to the rest of Central Asia and points east to diminish.

Perhaps the greatest of all cultural amalgams operating in Central Asia was Manichaeism. Because it may have direct bearing on the fondness for pictures in popular Chinese Buddhism, it is important to examine certain aspects of this tradition in some detail.

Manichaeism was founded by a third-century Parthian of royal ancestry named Mani who was born in Babylonia in 216. He announced that he was a prophet in the year 240. The religion spread slowly from its West Asian base until, sometime around 600, the Uighurs were exposed to it by Sogdians who traded along the Silk Road. It made its initial appearance in China in 675 and the first missionary arrived in 694. This was brought about through the conquest of eastern Turkistan by the Chinese and the consequent re-establishment of the caravan routes to West Asia. In 731, a Manichaean bishop (Aṣfādān) was ordered by the Chinese emperor to compose a catechism of his religion. He produced, in response, a compendium informing the authorities of Manichaean doctrines, scriptures, and discipline. The result was a mixture of Taoism, Buddhism, and true Manichaeism arrived at through an effort to gain acceptance. Apparently, the combination was effective, for in 732, an edict was announced that granted freedom of worship to the Manichaean religion and it began to spread with great success.

The next important event in the history of Manichaeism in China was the establishment in 744 or 745 of a huge khanate in northern Mongolia that extended from the Ili River in the west to the Yellow River in the east with its capital at Karakorum. Upon the establishment of this empire, the Uighurs became the dominant force on the northern border of China. The Eastern Turks, whom they replaced, had always been determined enemies of the Chinese, but the Uighurs were well disposed to forming alliances with the T’ang government and, indeed, were instrumental in suppressing the rebellion of Rokhshan (An Lu-
Upon the formal conversion of their king, Bögü Khan (Mou-yü 牟羽, r. 760–780), to Manichaeism in 762, it became the official religion of the Uighurs. But, when the Uighur khanate was destroyed by the Kirghiz Turks in 840, Manichaeism was much weakened and survived only in a few spots in eastern Turkistan. And, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Mongol invasion of Genghis Khan finished it off entirely in the area of the former Uighur khanate. In China proper, Manichaeism had already been proscribed from 843, very soon after the fall of the Uighur khanate. Traces of it did remain, however, as an independent religion in scattered areas (particularly within Fukien along the southeast Chinese coast and its hinterlands) until as late as the fourteenth century. And elements of Manichaeism also survived as an ideological force within secret societies until the seventeenth century.

We should note that, as with so many foreign religions in China, it was in the mid-ninth century that a strong reaction against Manichaeism occurred.

A curious phenomenon that deserves our scrutiny is the fact that the period of the flourishing of transformations throughout China is approximately the same as that of the flourishing of Manichaeism. If this is not simply a coincidence, we may explain the relationship between the two as centering on one or both of the following factors: (1) a mutual emphasis on pictures; and (2) a period of optimum conditions for the spread of foreign cultural elements in China. The propensity in Manichaeism for the use of pictures in worship is so pronounced that I am tempted to call the Manichaeans “the people of the picture.” Pictures even figured prominently in Manichaean doctrine. In their study of the Manichaean catechism of July 16, 731, G. Haloun and W. G. Henning discovered the central importance of “The Drawing 大門荷翼 (The Great Men-ho-i)”: 

This is mentioned at the end of the list of the “seven scriptures,” in such a way as to suggest that in importance it is on a level with the whole set of the books; “there are seven parts, together with a drawing,” “the seven great scriptures and the (one) drawing,” and in the caption “the canon of scriptures and the drawing.” It is at any rate clear that the “Drawing” is not a written book, but literally a drawing or picture, perhaps a set of drawings or pictures. This item in the list of the sacred works has its precise counterpart in the Coptic books, where the Eิกών is named immediately after the seven scriptures.... Polotsky ... took the right view
in suggesting that this Eἰκών was a Bilderbuch [picture book], a kind of Tafelband [table volume] to illustrate Mani’s teachings. The Chinese document confirms this view ....

Antonio Forte, in explicating the words T’u ching 圖經 (“Sacred Book with illustration [s]”) from a Manichaean document dated the year 1120, confirms this interpretation:

Without doubt, it is a question of a work corresponding to the Eἰκών of the Coptic texts, to the Parthian Ārdhang, to the Ertenk of Persian literature. The title in its Chinese transcription, men-ho-i 門荷翼, is mentioned in the Cathecism of 731 with the Chinese gloss Ta erh tsung t’u 大二宗圖 (Great Illustration of the Two Principles). In the same document, designated simply as t’u 圖, it is placed after the seven ching (“scriptures”) in the list of Māni’s works. Here it is obviously being considered as constituting part of the [Manichaean] canon. Polotsky has already observed that the Eἰκών must have been a Bilderbuch, a sort of Tafelband to illustrate the doctrine of Māni. Henning, in the second appendix to the translation of the Catechism by Haloun, has affirmed the correctness of Polotsky’s thesis. Our present text definitively clarifies the question since T’u ching literally means Scripture with Illustrations, precisely the Bilderbuch of which Polotsky spoke.

In the Chinese translation of the Manichaean hymn-cycle known as the Huwīdagmān (“Fortunate for Us”), we find the following two lines:

All from the living language and marvelous words,
The transformations of the host of saints are revealed thereby.
皆從活語妙言中
聖眾變化緣斯現

While it is most unfortunate for us that the fragmentary original Parthian and the Old Turkish version both lack this particular passage, from the Chinese translation alone we are assured that Manichaean doctrine considered the inhabitants of the Light World 明界 (i.e., Paradise) to be manifested through evocative transformation. Similarly, in the Chinese folk Buddhist tradition, the performer of transformations endeavored to call forth the appearance of spirits and demons by means of his phantasmal pictures and enchanting speech.
The most intense period of Manichaean activity in China was during the Epochal Beginning (K’ai-yüan) reign period (713–741). As we have already seen, this is precisely the time when the transformation tradition seems to solidify. On the other hand, in Lu Yu’s (1125–1210) “Statement of Itemized Responses” (條對狀), certain prohibitions proposed against the activities of the Manichaens in the Fukien area also indicate a connection between the so-called “Doctrine of Light” (明教) and the demise of pien-wen. These include punishments for those who “paint images of demons and publish the absurd scriptures of Manichaism.” 86 This linkage of extraordinary pictures and unauthorized texts is a constant theme of official attacks on Manichaism in China. I propose, then, that we may explain the period of the rise and fall of pien representations as being partially related to the fate of Manichaism. 87 For this proposal to be at all credible, however, it is necessary to demonstrate that there was a broad exchange of ideas and terms between Buddhism and Manichaeism. The last-known mention of pien (in the probable sense of “transformational narrative picture”) is in a clearly Manichaean context. 88 The Manichaean inputs to the development of the millennial White Lotus secret sect of apocryphal Buddhism that arose around the end of the Yüan period are too obvious to require discussion here. But the Buddhist influences on Manichaeism in Central Asia and in China are even more apparent.

The Buddhicizing tendency experienced by Manichaeism in China is graphically evident in a memorial dating from the year 1120 where “images of deities” and “names of deities” are written Fo-hsiang 佛像 (“images of Buddha”) and Fo-hao 佛號 (“names of Buddha”), respectively. 89 The same document also refers to such highly Buddhist-sounding texts as Sacred Book of Parents (Fu-mu ching 父母經), 90 “Gāthā [stanza] of the Seven Hours” (Ch’i-shih chieh 七時偈), and “Painting of the Buddha of Marvelous Water” (Miao-shui fo cheng 妙水佛幀). This Buddhicization of Manichaean terminology did not begin in China but has clear precedents from an earlier period in Central Asia. 91

In this connection, it is important to keep in mind the key role of Iranian languages in cultural exchanges carried out in Central Asia. From at least the seventh century, Sogdian was the lingua franca in large areas of western and northern Central Asia until it was replaced by another Iranian tongue, Persian. 92 The people of the important Central Asian Buddhist kingdom of Khotan also spoke an Iranian language and had close con-
tacts with the Chinese in Tun-huang. There was a great mixing of cultures in Central Asia such that artistic, religious, literary, linguistic, and other influences from various sources were liable to lose their “purity.” Thus Buddhism in Central Asia absorbed Iranian elements and Manichaeism in Central Asia assimilated Indic components. The resultant amalgams, in turn, had a decisive impact on the development of Buddhism and Manichaeism in China.

We may conclude, at this stage of our inquiry, that the technique of prosimetric storytelling with pictures was Indian by birth, that it was fostered by Buddhicized Iranian uncles and Turkish aunts, and that it was adopted by Chinese parents.
In Indonesia, virtually all types of dramatic representation are referred to by the name wayang. In simplest terms, wayang derives from a root that means "shadow." Mantle Hood paraphrases this word as "materialized silhouettes." The performance of wayang has also been beautifully rendered as a "shadows forth." This matches closely the Chinese Buddhist conception of pien a type or transformational realization used in religious instruction. Eventually, the word wayang evolved to the point that, in some Southeast Asian languages, it had largely lost the original meaning of "shadow" and denoted simply "theater." In Malay, for example, the verb wajangkan(me) is defined as "to act out tales on the stage; to bring someone on the stage." All Indonesian and most Southeast Asian theater, regardless of its actual format, has intimate links to the world of "shadows."

The statement that wayang means "shadow," therefore, must be qualified in the sense that it refers not so much to the technique of illumination from behind to throw a shadow on a screen as it does to the phantasmagorical appearances presented before the eyes of the beholder. Hence picture-scrolls, puppets, shadows, and dancers can all legitimately be referred to as wayang. The illusory effect is enhanced by the fact that most such performances were given at night, in caves or in rooms without windows, and illuminated solely by flickering lamps or candles. It is probable that the invention of the genuine shadow play was prompted by the chance observation in such a setting that back illumination was more suggestive and mystifying than was front illumination.

A similar course of development (i.e., phantasm → shadow play) may have occurred in the early Sung period in China. There are many expressions in Chinese having to do with
umbras (e.g., ying-pi 影壁, “shadow wall”; ying-shen 影神, “shadow spirit”; ying-tien 影殿 or ying-t’ang 影堂, “hall of shadows”; ying-shih 影事, “insubstantial things”; ying-kung 影供, “worship of an image”; ying-hsien 影現, “shadowy manifestation”; and ying-hsien 影現, “shadowy manifestation”), which bespeak primarily psychical rather than optical phenomena. It should be noted that the majority of these expressions are Buddhist. Perhaps the Sung expression ying-hsi 影戲 (literally, “shadow play”) stands at the transitional stage between the psychical and the optical. 5

The similarities that exist between Indonesian wayang and Chinese pien may in part be due to certain, common Indian ontological presuppositions that were operative in their development. Indian inputs were essential for the formation of pien, and it is even more obvious that wayang owes an enormous debt to Indian storytelling and theater. 6

It is significant that the shadow play was originally found not in Indonesia as a whole but exclusively on the islands of Java, Bali, and Lombok where Hindu influence was most pervasive and enduring. 7 The classical form of Javanese shadow theater, furthermore, uses material that is exclusively Indian (chiefly from the Mahābhārata). On these grounds alone, it would be arbitrary to rule out, a priori, the possibility of Indian influence on wayang. The most succinct demonstration of the Indian origin of wayang (through epigraphical, thematic, and chronological means) is that provided by the historian R. C. Majumdar. 8 The Indian origin of wayang is also affirmed by many other scholars too numerous to mention. 9 Moreover, this influence was not restricted to the world of the theater. According to Mantle Hood, “The greatest stimulus to Javanese and Balinese art forms and the inspiration for their continuance and development is the Hindu literature of the Mahabharata and Ramayana.” 10

It is known that South Asian influence began to be felt in Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia from at least the first century I.E. The widespread Indianization of Burma, Siam, Indonesia, and the Indo-Chinese coast followed not long after, in the third and fourth centuries, reaching a peak in the fourth and fifth centuries. As George Coedès has said, however, “The history of the expansion of Indian civilization to the east has not yet been told in its entirety.” 11 Thus, although we do not know all the details of precisely how the tradition of Indian storytelling with pictures was transmitted to Indonesia, evidence for the organic relationship of the two is massive.
When the Chinese pilgrim I-ching journeyed to India in 671 and again upon his return to China in 685, he stopped at the great Buddhist center in the capital of the South Sumatran kingdom of Śrīvijaya. The first time he stayed only six months, studying Sanskrit, but on his second sojourn he spent four years copying and translating sūtras. After a brief return to Canton in 689, he went back to Śrīvijaya and remained there until 695. There were resident at Śrīvijaya more than a thousand monks, scholars, and pilgrims engaged in the study and translation of Sanskrit texts. Given an establishment of this magnitude, it is easy to imagine the cultural impact that Buddhism made in Indonesia during this period. It would seem not to be a coincidence that this was the very time when pien storytelling was becoming prominent in China and shortly before the period of the known historical development of wayang in Indonesia.

There are many different types of wayang, among them the following:

1. Wayang bèbèr ("unfolding/unrolled shadows") are usually long, horizontal scrolls upon which are painted a series of sequentially related scenes. As the narrator unrolled the scroll for the audience to see, speaking and chanting, he would recite the narrative that explained or complemented the illustrations. The scrolls were about 20 inches in width and 2½ to 3 yards long. Altogether six to eight scrolls were required for an entire story. Occasionally the pictures would be painted on the leaves of a book and shown to small audiences. An alternative name for wayang bèbèr is wayang karèbèt ("fluttering wayang"). This brings to mind the many early variant forms for the character pien that had the radical shan ("feathery decorations"). An understanding of wayang bèbèr is crucial for reconstructing many hitherto unknown features of Chinese pien and p’ing-hua.

2. Wayang purwa or wayang kulit ("leather shadows") is the classical shadow theater of Indonesia, which employs flat leather (hide) puppets and a screen (kelir of white fabric. It deals with the early period of history (wayang purwa literally means "old shadows").

3. Wayang tal are puppets made of palm leaf. They were known from ca. 1147 in the Memenang kingdom of East Java.

4. Wayang gedog differs from wayang purwa chiefly in its repertoire, focusing on the history of the kingdom of Majapahit (1293–1520).
5. Wayang keruc[h]il or klitik 17 (“little shadows”) is a type of puppet-shadow that uses flat, painted wooden figures. Its subject is usually the history of the kingdom of Kediri (1042–1222). The puppets are intricately carved in relief and then painted. The certain evolution of this form from the shadow play proper can be deduced by the retention of a screen with a square opening in the center through which the puppets were originally shown. Later the screen was done away with but the puppets still had leather arms and had exactly the same profile as did the leather shadow figures of wayang purwa and wayang gedog and, indeed, of the printed figures on wayang bèbèr.

6. Wayang golek are fully three-dimensional puppets so realistic that they look like miniature human beings. They are carved out of wood and wear cloth dress. They stand about 1½ feet in height. 18

7. Wayang topeng (“mask shadows”) is a type of dance-pantomime performed by masked actors. In effect, the masks turn the human actors into puppets. It is essential to note that the actors speak the dialogue for themselves but then move about in silence while a narrator (dalang) explains what is being portrayed. (In Bali, only the servants, who wear half-masks, talk; the aristocrats are silent throughout.) The fact that a narrator is present in wayang topeng has important positive implications for the thesis that Chinese drama developed out of oral narrative.

8. Wayang wong (Javanese) or wayang orang (Indonesian) (“human shadows”) allows the dancers to dispense with their masks. Yet they continue to make themselves up to appear as though they were puppets. The dancer-actors, furthermore, maintain a masklike expression throughout the performance, intentionally adopting puppetlike poses and mimicking the two-dimensional movements of shadow figures. 19 As with wayang topeng, the narrator recites and chants all but the dialogue. The repertoire is drawn from the Mahâbhârata and Râmâyana. The first references to wayang orang are only about 150 years old. 20 It is clear that “human shadows” are posterior to “unfolding shadows” and “leather shadows.”

9. Wayang gambar hîdup (“living picture’ shadows”) or wayang gelap (“dark shadows”) are the cinema. 21
These various forms of wayang are arranged in what, from my research into the subject, appears to be the rough chronological progression of their development. For all of the various types of wayang except wayang topeng, wayang wong, and of course, wayang gambar hīdup, the narrator-speaker is the dalang. In wayang topeng and wayang wong, as noted above, the dalang narrates the actions but leaves the dialogue and the movements to the actors themselves. With wayang gambar hīdup, the dalang has become the director and sound track, so to speak.

Having come full circle, we see that the cinema is essentially an electrified wayang bèb èr; that is, an “electric shadow scroll.” As the Chinese say, film is a series of “electric shadows” (tien-ying). Harold Forster noticed the cinematographic potential of such serial narrative illustrations when he visited the Surakarta (Solo) Museum in Central Java. “The exhibit that most struck me was the Wayang B èb èr, a long scroll covered with a series of heroic scenes that was unwound like a primitive cinema.” The parallel stages in the development of Chinese theater can easily be traced: T’ang pien scroll, Sung ying-hsi (影戲 “shadow play”), k’uei-lei (傀儡 “puppet show”), jou-k’uei-lei (肉傀儡“flesh/human [?] puppets”), and genuine human theater, retaining vestiges of shadow and puppet theater from the late Sung on.

One type of wayang I did not enter in the list is wayang tengul because I am unsure of its earliest occurrence. Tengul means “rag doll” in Javanese but wayang tengul may also signify a single narrative picture placed on an easel or frame for storytelling. In evolutionary terms it must be considered one of the very earliest types.

Some form of wayang existed in Indonesia from as early as 840 i.e., for in the Old Javanese charter on copper plates from Jaha issued in that year by Mahārāja Śrī Lokapāla for the freehold at Kuti, three kinds of performers (atapukan, ar-inggit, and abañol) are mentioned together with “servants of the inner apartments hailing from Champa, Kalinga, Aryya, Ceylon, Cola, Malabar, and Karnataka.” Aside from the Indian place names, what is most significant about this passage is the occurrence of the word aringgit. As Claire Holt explains in a note, “Ringgit is the term used in the eleventh-century Old Javanese poem Ardjuna Wiwaha for a leather-carved shadow-puppet; this meaning has been retained in modern ‘High’ Javanese (kromo). The front veranda of Javanese houses, within the inner doorway of which the wayang screen is customarily installed, and which
thus serves as a place for shadowplay performances, is called *paringgitan.* Thus we see that *ringgit* in modern polite speech is still used for *wayang.* Etymologically it refers to the human head or that of a puppet or sometimes the relief of a human head on a coin.  

The next earliest evidence of *wayang* is from a Central Javanese stone inscription issued by King Balitung (r. 898–910) and dated the equivalent of May 4, 907. It states that, on the occasion of the designation of a freehold for the benefit of a monastery, some sort of *wayang* was performed (*mawayang*). The name of the story was *Bimmaya Kumara* and it was very likely about the Bhīma in the *Mahābhārata.* Since the performance was said to be for *tyan* (“the public,” probably short for *tyan tani,* “the common people”), this indicates that early *wayang* was not an elite form of entertainment.

In his *Arjuna-vivāha* (“Marriage of Arjuna,” 5.9.1–2), the Old Javanese poet Kanva (first half of eleventh century) has an elderly rṣi (“ascetic”), who is in reality the god Indra, say: “There are people who look at the *wayang* (*ringgit*) and cry and are distressed. They have stupid notions, for really they know already that it is chiselled leather that acts and speaks (*valulang inukir molah angucap*).”

Another early reference to *wayang* is in the *Tantu Panggèlaran,* dating from around 1500 but including many older stories. The Lady Umā has so infuriated the Lord Guru that he curses himself and becomes a rākṣasa (“demon”) who wishes to consume the entire world. To avert such a catastrophe, Īśvara, Brahmā, and Viṣṇu descend to earth and perform *wayang* (*avayang*): “They had an operating-box [*panggung*] and a screen, chiselled leather constituted their *wayangs* (*mapanggung makèlir sira, valulang inukir makavayang nira*).”

*Wayang* is also mentioned several times between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries in the elegant court literature of various kingdoms in East Java. “Clearly,” as James Brandon says, “*wayang kulit* was a well-established form of theatrical expression at the courts of east Javanese princes as early as one thousand years ago, suggesting that shadow theater must have been known in Java many hundreds of years before this.”

It should not be imagined that the development from one stage of the theater to the next led to the extinction of the former. Quite the contrary, all stages—once invented—continued to survive and prosper or slowly decline. Nor should it be imagined that the process of development was absolutely unilinear and abrupt between each stage. The rela-
tionship between one stage and any other stage does not preclude the fact that other influences might be operative as well. For example, dolls, funerary images, dance, storytelling, written literature, lyric poetry, and so on, all played a role in the formation of puppet theater. But the immediate ancestor—at least insofar as can be demonstrated in the Indonesian case—was the shadow play.

There can be little doubt that, in Indonesia, the puppet theater developed from the shadow play. We know, for example, that when night performances of wayang purwa or wayang gedog continued into the day, the screen would sometimes be taken down so that the audience could see the figures directly as gaily colored puppets rather than as shadows. These two theaters, furthermore, have an identical repertoire. Puppet shows themselves have superfluous accessories that indicate their evolution from an older type of performance behind a screen that was originally used for shadows. This can be seen in the occasional practice of retaining a frame with a cloth screen. The puppets are shown through a square opening cut into the screen. Sometimes only the frame itself is kept. This practice of using the two-dimensional flat surface of the shadow play screen in conjunction with three-dimensional puppets is consonant with the statement of one Indian scholar that the word chāya (Sanskrit for “shadow”) can refer both to shadow figures and to puppets. The major distinction between these two forms of entertainment is that puppeteers (and picture showmen) can operate in open daylight when necessary, whereas shadow players can not.

Wayang kulit (a collective expression for wayang purwa and wayang gedog) may be explained in evolutionary terms as the detachment from the surface of the bèb èr scroll of the figures in the illustrated narrative. The impulse for this modification is easily understood, since it is an obvious improvement that allows the figures to move about to a certain degree instead of remaining completely fixed as in the wayang bèb èr. One of the reasons for the gradual transformation from shadow play to puppet play was the practice by some members of the audience of sitting behind the screen and hence seeing the shadow figures as essentially flat puppets. The desire to perform plays during the day would also account for the impulse to show them directly to the audience. It is logical that there would then develop a need to paint the figures more elaborately and also to add some depth and modeling to them. The transition from puppet to actor imitating puppet is also under-
standable as an experimental innovation to improve the verisimilitude of the representation. But it must be emphasized strongly that, through all of these later technical modifications, the shape and costuming of the wayang b èb èr figures persisted.

One observer’s comments on the common origins of several different types of illustrative materials used in conjunction with Indian and Thai folk performances lend support to the thesis that all forms of wayang are evolutionally related:

Whether the shows of the Citrakathīs are exhibitions of cut-out pictures or of fixed paintings on paper or some other material, and whether the text is dramatic dialogue or epic recital, both sorts of entertainment have apparently sprung from the same root. In the Siamese shadow play, Nang, with its immovable leather pictures representing complete scenes and with its accompanying epic narrative, we have an artistic variety intermediate between both possibilities. 34

Similar transitional forms of fiction and drama were present in India and also developed in China. 35 These remarks also remind us that Indian influence was by no means geographically restricted to Indonesia. Prince Dhani Nivat, discussing Siamese dramatic art and music, states that, as with other Southeast Asian cultures, they are “obviously Indian in origin.” 36 Writing more than a hundred years before, John Crawfurd pointed to a similar conclusion: “The Siamese drama bears, in almost every particular, so close a resemblance to that of the Javanese, that it is impossible not to suspect that both had a common origin.” 37

Indian shadows and picture-storytelling seem, in several cases, to have passed through Indonesia to the other countries of Southeast Asia. For example, the nang 38 of Thailand, though of Indian origin, reached Siam via Srivijaya. Because it offers so many interesting parallels to Indian, Indonesian, and Chinese “shadows,” nang is worth discussing in more detail.

The Thai shadow play is first mentioned in the 1458 Palatine Law 39 of King Boromatrailokanath, which makes it posterior to its Indonesian relatives. The most impressive feature of the nang figures is their enormous size. 40 The manipulators of these huge shadow tableaux (some of the puppets are composite, including more than one character or a single character with a certain amount of background) require two large rods or poles to hold them erect. These life-size or even slightly larger
Shadow figures are intricately carved and colorfully painted. It is most interesting to note that they may be shown behind or before a screen (called khōn in the latter case) and with or without artificial illumination. Nang performances usually begin before dusk so that, in the course of an evening, all four possibilities might be utilized. Furthermore, the manipulator adopts poses that complement the scene or figure depicted in leather that he holds. For example, when he is holding the figure of Sukrīṕ, the monkey, he makes simian movements. If he holds the figure of a demon king, he displays a demonic attitude by spreading his legs very wide. If he is holding Rāma, he takes a manly stance; if Sidā, he shows a feminine bearing. We have, then, an unusual transitional form of theater that is, at one and the same time, illustrated tableau, shadow play, puppet play, and dance. The nang is living proof, as it were, of the unity of the narrative and dramatic arts.

The nang was also to be found in the Khmer empire. It is known to have existed there at some time during the Angkor period (802-1432), which places it in the same time-frame for development as the Thai, Indonesian, and Chinese shadow plays. The earliest form was called nang sebek or sebek thorn (“large leather figures”). The dancers alternate acting before and behind the screen. In the latter case, they merge with giant leather shadow figures. This is another fascinating re-enactment of the evolutionary development of human theater from shadows and puppets. Still more fascinating is the fact that the entire nang sebek performance is “an attempt to animate the sculptures” of Baphuon (eleventh century) and Angkor Wat (thirteenth century). As Jacques Brunet so aptly puts it, nang sebek are narrative “bas-reliefs that come to life.”

In terms of its relationship to other shadow theaters, we should note that nang narration abounds in archaisms that are difficult, if not impossible, to understand. And, like wayang bèb èr or wayang kulit, the figures are grouped and stored according to “sets” that make a full complement for the narration of an entire story.

From an invocation to be used for the Thai shadow play on the Rāma epic that is recorded on manuscript PL42 in the University of Edinburgh library, it is possible to gain some understanding of the self-image of the narrator-manipulator. The manuscript, incidentally, is written in the script and orthographic style of the Ratanakosin period (1782-1850).
By magical power He appears to scatter the guts out on the ground. 
By magic He causes them suddenly to fall and die. 
Then the possessed ones are transformed, 
Becoming once more the subjects of the Great Lord. 43 

The crucial word in this passage is phlaeň, which means “to create the illusion of doing something without actually doing it; magical illusion; to produce effects by magic.” The correspondence with Chinese popular Buddhist pien is obvious. Also compare the Thai expression phlaeň ṛ ḍdhī (“to manifest magical power”), which is a precise equivalent of Chinese hsien or hua-ch’u [shen-] pien 現（化出）神變. Another related expression is braḥ phlaeñe, which are “the gods or shadow-play figures of the gods.” We should remember that the Chinese popular Buddhist conception of pien referred both to the transformational manifestation of a deity and to the representation of that manifestation by artist, sculptor, or storyteller. 

There is a whole complex of words in several other languages that relate to the matter of magical manifestation during a theatrical performance. What is most remarkable about the Thai word phlaeň is that it must actually be cognate with Chinese pien (“change, transform”). 44 Paul Benedict notes Chinese pli̭an > pian and cites Thai *plian from an earlier *pliyan (cf. also Indonesian *liyan). 45 The Cambodian word phlêng (“to be disguised or transformed”) 46 appears to be cognate as well. Also to be considered is Vietnamese bông (“shadow, image, reflection, [performance of a] shaman”), 47 which has not hitherto been identified as a Sino-Vietnamese word but which I should like now to propose as possibly having a connection with Chinese pien. 48 Finally, the connection with Malaysian bayang (“shadow, illusion, reflection”) and thence to wayang (“drama,” itself derived from the word for “shadow”) seems assured. 49 

The evolution of wayang has by no means ended. Harrison Parker, a collector of wayang artifacts, once showed me some of his kreasi baru (“new creations”). These are inventions of
various new wayang formats mostly intended for private reading. One told a portion of the Rāmāyana and consisted of fourteen narrow bamboo strips (approximately 17 inches by 1¾ inches). Each strip was divided into two scenes so that there were altogether twenty-eight scenes depicted, slightly more than in the usual wayang bèb èr set of twenty-four. The strips each had two holes in them like the ancient Indian sūtra leaves and were threaded onto two strings. The text for each scene was written on the back of the strip directly behind it but upside-down so that it would be easy to flip back and forth between illustration and explanation. The artist signed himself Ida Bagus Sugata and the writer Ida Bagus Rai Buda. It was dated 5/9/76. Regardless of the format, all of the kreasi baru retain the same, ancient figures as were found on wayang b èb èr.

One common trait of all early forms of wayang is their presentation in a religiously charged atmosphere. Still today, the religious antecedents of wayang are obvious. According to Claire Holt, even in performances of shadow plays on secular themes,

The dalang never fails to lay down some offerings of rice and flowers floating in a water-filled bowl and to light some incense with a short prayer before he opens the play. Sometimes he holds the puppets over the rising smoke of incense and with an incantation propitiates the magically potent personages they embody: bringing down to earth deities and semidivine beings in name and image is not free from danger. The sacred nature of the shadow play and its magic efficacy are still strongly felt not only by the officiant dalang, but by the people as well.50

Thus, to understand them fully, it is essential to keep in mind that the origins of all types of “shadow” plays (including wayang b èb èr and pien) are largely religious. In trying to imagine the quality of an ancient performance of these genres, we must not lose sight of the fact that both the performer and his audience believed explicitly that the gods (con)descended to manifest themselves during the course of the evening. Admittedly, the craftsmen who made and painted the scrolls, hangings, and puppets are to be given credit for their assistance in bringing about the desired manifestations—as are the dalang and the pien teller. But a truly successful performance awaited the pleasure of the gods to come and be present, animating the paper, leather, and pigment. It is for this reason that each
shadow play session was preceded by serious and elaborate religious ritual. Such invocations survive vestigially in secular literature as preludes, prefaces, and interspersed poems.

Not only were religious motives operative in the successful performance of a shadow play, they were the very basis for the invitation to the player on a given occasion. Thus wayang was often performed in conjunction with various rites de passage. “A performance of wayang is prescribed in ceremonials at important stages in the life of the Balinese like children’s anniversaries, the coming of age of girls, teeth filings, marriages, cremations, and temple feasts.” While the various types of wayang, particularly in later centuries, admittedly have always possessed a certain quality of entertainment, they were traditionally bound up with exorcism, propitiation, and the invocation of fertility. It is natural that the usual time for their performance was in conjunction with crisis rites and ceremonial gatherings.

The very apparatus used in the various wayang, too, was considered to be sacred. For example, in wayang b èb èr, the box in which the scrolls were kept, or in wayang kulit the chest (called kotak, this is also the name for a set of figures) for the shadow figures, was an object of reverence. As such, it was thought to have healing and purifying powers. Indian picture-storytellers entertain precisely the same beliefs regarding the boxes in which they keep their paintings. Hence handling the wayang figures or scrolls is a sacred task:

In the ritual of the Balinese ḍalaṅ, the wayangs are frequently spoken of as the Divine Puppets (sañ hyaṅ Riṅgit) and they—together with the palm-leaf book Dharmma Pavayaṅan (wayang teaching)—are the object of worship on the day Tumpěk Vayaṅ. Naturally these Divine Puppets are considered to act in the wayang-play. The ḍalaṅ performs some ritual before the play and awakens the Puppets by knocking on the large wooden box in which he keeps his wayangs, before taking them out.

When the story is finished, there is also an elaborate religious ritual for ending the wayang show and returning the shadow figures to their box.

Inge Orr’s description of the sacred nature of Indian puppets is revealing in this regard for the light it sheds on the attitude of virtually all Asian picture, shadow, and puppet showmen toward their apparatuses:
In the North of India, to this day, the Rajasthani puppeteer, apart from claiming divine origin for his hereditary caste, believes that his puppets are other-worldly beings; they are sacred objects. When a puppet is broken and beyond repair, he will not simply throw it away. Rather, he will let if float down one of India’s sacred rivers, back to its heavenly origin.

Traditionally the Rajasthani puppet does not speak in a human voice, but rather in a kind of whistle to indicate its supernatural origin. Also their faces are painted in an exaggerated, stylized way with overly large eyes and features, again to reveal them as other-worldly beings.  

In China, from at least the eleventh century, performers who worked articulated puppets made them speak in a shrill, nasal voice.  

Another indication of the religious foundations of wayang is the presence of a mysteriously symbolic figure at crucial points in the story. In wayang kulit, this most important puppet is the [ke] kayon (meaning “tree,” as it is sometimes called in Java) or gunungan (meaning “mountain,” as it is called in Java, Bali, and elsewhere in Indonesia). This figure actually represents a tree superimposed upon a mountain and has the most profound symbolic significance for wayang. It is both the tree of life and the sacred mountain. The dalang places it behind the screen at the beginning and end of the performance and between each scene. In wayang bèb èr, the kayon is painted onto the scroll at appropriate narrative “moments” or “loci.”  

In Greek literature, the motif of tree (usually the oak) and rock occurs frequently, perhaps the best known instance being Hesiod’s Theogony, 35:

ἀλλὰ. τί τι μοι ταῦτα περὶ δρόνον ἢ περὶ πέτρην.

“But what are all these things to me, these things about the tree and the rock?”

The usual interpretation of these symbols is that they are somehow related to speech. The gist of the line seems to be something like “I should stop beating around the bush and return to the main theme.” The function of the line, then, is to mark a division of the narrative. The parallel with the visual im-
agery of the tree and rock borders between episodes on picture-
storytelling scrolls and the *kayon* of *wayang* is tantalizingly
suggestive.

E. T. Kirby justly mentions, in connection with the *kayon*,
shamanistic inspiration: “Ascent of the ‘mystic mountain,’ like
ascent of the tree, is a factor in Siberian shamanism; both rep-
resent the ‘axis mundi’ along which the spirit moves in trance
travel.”

Watching the tree-mountain begin its slow, gentle mo-
tions at the center and gradually increase in speed until it is
dancing and fluttering across the flickeringly lit expanse of the
entire screen—now next to the surface and clear, now kept
apart from it and hence hazy—the viewer becomes transfixed
and drawn into the dynamic symbolism of the *kayon*. He
enters the trance world of the *dalang* (shaman). What, in effect, the
presence of the *kayon* seems to achieve is the establishment of
sacred space; its movements envelop the audience in the flow
of sacred time. In one of the performances of *wayang kulit* that
I watched, the *dalang* also placed two treelike objects at either
side of the screen during the enactment of each scene.

Paul Wheatley, in discussing ancient religious thinking about
“sacrality (which is synonymous with reality),” illuminates the
importance of a central, creative force:

> Before territory could be inhabited, it had to be sacralized, that is
cosmicized. Its consecration signified its “reality” and, therefore
sanctioned its habitation; but its establishment as an imitation
of a celestial archetype required its delimitation and orientation
as a sacred territory within the continuum of profane space.
This could be effected only in relation to a fixed point, namely
the village, city, or territory of the particular group, whence the
sacred *habitation* necessarily took its birth (unsanctified, that
is[,] “unreal” territory being uninhabitable), and whence it spread
outwards in all directions. This central point, this focus of creative
force, was thus quintessentially sacred, and as such the place
where communication was likely to be effected most expeditiously
between cosmic planes, between earth and heaven on the one
hand, and between earth and the underworld on the other. And
through this point of ontological transition passed the axis of
the world, normally symbolized by a pillar (*universalis columna*),
a tree, vine, or other plant (the Tree of Knowledge in both its
Semitic and Mayan hierophanies; the *Chien-mu*, Yggdrasil; the
shaman’s sapling) or, most commonly of all, a mountain (Mount
Meru of Indian mythology).
Although Wheatley is here discussing the siting of ancient cities, his remarks can be directly applied to the use of the kayon in establishing the time and space for a performance of shadows. Symbolically, the kayon creates the ontological ground for the realization of the narrative.

The Turkish shadow play also places a kayon-like figure called gösterme in the center of the screen before the performance begins. Often referred to in English as a “showpiece,” the gösterme sets the cosmic framework for the play. It may consist of various fantastic shapes, frequently with tree imagery interwoven. In Burmese theatrical performances, whether by puppets or by living actors, a branch or banana leaf is stuck in the middle of the circular space that serves as a stage. In both the Turkish and the Burmese cases, as with the wayang, the symbolical significance is that of establishing the axis mundi of the world of the play.

Given that the religious dimensions of the various wayang loom so large, we should expect that the performers who present them would be possessed of certain priestlike qualities. Such is, indeed, the case with the dalang, for he is widely recognized to be a sort of shaman. No one is quite certain of the meaning of the word dalang. One scholar believed that it implied “creativity,” which, if true, is certainly an appropriate characterization for a shadow performer. Another thought that it signified “itinerant [performer].” If so, this is in perfect conformity with our understanding of the mode of operation of picture-storytellers in all the areas influenced by Indian tradition that we have been examining. A common understanding of the word, however, is that it simply means “shaman,” and the dalang is, in fact, often referred to by the latter name (dukun).

The most thorough work on the social and economic status of the dalang are the studies by Amin Sweeney of Malaysian performers. A succinct statement of some of his findings is the following:

Very few dalangs live entirely on their incomes from the wayang, and those who attempt to do so have a meagre existence during the rainy season when they are forced to live on what has been saved during the wayang season, and this is seldom much. The great majority of dalangs and all the musicians have a secondary occupation, and where the dalang does not enjoy much success, the wayang will be his secondary occupation. Secondary occupations fall into two categories: the magico-religious and the
The "secular" secondary occupation of the majority is tending their patches of land, usually paddy-field. The other type of secondary work, which may be done in conjunction with a secular occupation, is that connected with magico-religious practices. Thus, approximately half of Kelantanese dalangs, though less of the younger generation, practise in their spare time as bomoh (folk practitioners).

The wayang is not always a mere entertainment in the Western sense, and the dalang has a dual role in society: entertainer and spirit medium, of which the former predominates: the dalang may perform between two hundred and three hundred shows in a year of which it is unlikely that more than one or two will be held primarily for purposes other than entertainment.

Hence, the dalang is an entertainer, an exorcist, and much more besides, combined in one person. Above all, he views himself as engaged in a holy and mystical task. In a handbook for dalang translated by C. Hooykaas, we read such instructions as, "When taking up the betel quid, use the formula: BELIEVE: I am God Creator Who performs invisibly...." There are also Sanskritic mantra dealing with the matter of complete illusion: "UM UM MAN prayojanam lilā śuddha ya namah." The dalang believes in his own tremendous power for, as he says, "I am Viśeṣa Śakti, obliterating, annihilating, destroying, exorcising all sorrows and afflictions, all sufferings and obstacles, impurities and all kinds of misfortunes, exorcising evil words and evil dreams, so that the perfect state of coming into existence will be restored." There follows a long list of the ailments to be cured, including hobbling, squinting, having a square body, deafness, deformed sexual organs, having a skin like an elephant’s hide, and so forth. The dalang is a spirit medium and medical practitioner who is fully effective only when he enters a state of trance.

In a wayang bèb èr performance the dalang would enter the arena in a special costume but, after the first picture was unrolled, he would bare the upper part of his body. Throughout the rest of the performance, the dalang remained out of sight and reappeared at the end only after he had put on his jacket. That is why it was necessary in wayang bèb èr to have two sets of scroll holders. Before one scroll was finished and had to be removed, a second would be set up behind it. Because the dalang functioned as an officiating priest or shaman, to have shown his face to the audience would have broken the magic web of illusory experience it was his purpose to weave.

Indonesian Analogues
The shamanistic function of the dalang is also made clear by Tyra de Kleen in her description of the pre-performance procedures that were required of him:

In ancient times, before the Lakon [Story] began, the Dalang had to shut himself up in a little closet specially reserved for the purpose, where he had an interview with the Dewas or gods, who were going to manifest themselves. He burnt incense to them; and, inhaling its scented smoke, he intoxicated himself until he went into an ecstasy and then received into his body the spirits which were going to use him as their medium.  

Without attempting to draw any conclusions regarding the development of literary genres, Claire Holt noticed that “there are striking parallels between the qualifications demanded of a dalang and those that were required, on one hand, of the Indian sutradhara, director and producer of classical drama and, on the other, of a shaman who officiates today in a Dayak community of Central Borneo.”

In discussing the techniques and abilities of the dalang, Mantle Hood outlined some of the means used to “enhance the supernatural impression of the performance”:

He must know all the levels of the Javanese language: the ancient poetic tongue Kawi, classical Javanese, two levels of low Javanese, three levels of high Javanese, and special vocabularies reserved for the royal courts and for the gods. He must develop a wide range of voice changes in order to accommodate the appropriate personification of the different characters. He must possess a great memory in order to retain the forms and intricacies of many plots. He must be skilled in weaving topical humor—sometimes light, sometimes ribald, but always funny—into his stories, for it is the touches of contemporary invention that make the wayang kulit the most popular and liveliest of arts.

But this is only the beginning. The dalang must also keep the lamp burning at the proper level of illumination, direct the orchestra, strike the box for punctuation, fire bursts of arrows across the screen and control dozens of figures. In the performances of wayang kulit that I watched, it seemed impossible that a single human being could perform all these tasks and possess so many abilities. But having gone around to the back of the screen to peek, I found that he was indeed capable of
virtually superhuman achievements. A full performance, by the way, lasts from eight o’clock in the evening until six o’clock the next morning—without intermission.

R. A. Kern noted, in the wayang bèbèr performance he attended, the use of many Old Javanese words not intelligible to the audience. In wayang kulit, as many as seven different linguistic levels—each indicating a different degree of politeness, the highest being reserved for the most exalted beings and gods—might be employed. The dalang speaks, sings, and chants a mixture of Sanskrit, Old Javanese (kawi), special forms of address normally used only in the palace, and colloquial language but most often speaks in High Javanese (krama) and Low Javanese (ngoko). Perhaps the only way to duplicate fully the effect of this linguistic stratification for English-speaking audiences would be to use a combination of Latin, Anglo-Saxon, “King’s English,” standard midwestern “American,” as well as various dialects and argots. I experienced a marvelous approximation of the intended effect during an evening of shadow puppet theater presented at Harvard University by Donald Case and Robert Moran on April 24, 1977. The voice of the puppeteer was electronically altered and modulated so that at times it was fully understandable, at other times was only barely intelligible, and at still other times was completely unintelligible even though it sounded somehow slightly familiar. At times the voice was high-pitched and staccato, at other times low-pitched and drawn-out. It is curious that I did not object to the portions I could not understand because they seemed to contribute to the atmosphere of illusion in which I was immersed.

Another possible reason for the use of different dialects and levels of speech in wayang is explained by Paul Thieme at the same time that he explains their use in Sanskrit drama:

Prakrit language as a vehicle of literary expression is found in Sanskrit literature proper in the plays. Here different persons speak in different dialects, the geographical distinctions of the dialects being treated (in a manner not quite true to life) as distinctions of social level. This rather strange practice seems to point to the origin of Sanskrit drama as a shadow play, such as is still found in parts of southern India and flourishes in Java. In a shadow play it was of course necessary to find a means of distinguishing clearly between the speeches of the different actors, which were actually spoken by one person, the sîtradhara (holder of threads), as the “theater director” is still called in Sanskrit.
In the wayang tradition, one way in which the exalted language of the noble characters is made somewhat more understandable to the audience is through the repetition of parts of their speeches in simpler language by characters who are followers or servants. Finally, there is also the sheer mystery surrounding a sacred language which makes the retention of unintelligible passages in folk and popular literature desirable in certain cases.

As anthropologist S. J. Tambiah has made clear, it is not always necessary that words be understood in order for them to be religiously efficacious. Specifically with regard to villages in northeast Thailand, he says

There are some conspicuous paradoxes in the communication system of Buddhist ritual. The view is emphatic that the Pali chants should be recited aloud and that through listening to them the congregation gains merit, blessings and protection. Yet the sacred Pali words as such are not understood. The chants are of course not nonsensical—they expound matters of Buddhist doctrine, the noble truths of detachment and conquest of life, victorious episodes in the Buddha’s life, which have no direct relation to the everyday concerns of village life. 77

Elsewhere, Tambiah has noted that, during Buddhist sermons, it is evident from their behavior that the audience does not listen intently. 78 For the village monk, the important thing is the act of reciting, not any direct feedback from the audience. For the audience, the event is more important than the person enacting it. A similar situation formerly obtained in the Roman Catholic Church where people who understood next to nothing of Latin preferred to hear it used during the mass. Sweeney, too, has reported that certain passages of rhythmic prose (called bilangan or uchap) in western Siamese shadow plays are not even understood by the dalang himself. 79 The dalang also will sometimes utter meaningless syllables, words, and phrases, which gives him time to think.

Whether rationally intelligible or not, the words employed by the dalang are extremely important. Holt described the potent atmosphere-creating capability of the sung parts of the narrative:

The dalang’s chants, suluks, provide the audience with the highest esthetic enjoyment, especially if a dalang has a good voice. They are ritual incantations raised to the level of a high art.
They fill the whole atmosphere around the wayang play, envelop it by a swell of sacred words and sounds that nothing can penetrate or dispel. They can create an emotionally warm or chilling atmosphere; project the “inner voices” of a hero; forebode the clouds of gathering disaster; convey the longings of a lovelorn heart or the lamentations of sorrow and bereavement. Suluks intervene when a situation is pregnant with doubts and dangers. They are also chanted by the dalang at the appearance and disappearance of certain heroes and at transitions from one scene to another.

According to Tjan Tjoe Siem, some suluk, especially those derived from Bharata Yuddha (Great War of the Bharatas) are so sekti (charged with magical power) that only a sekti-endowed person (i.e., a priestlike or godlike individual) may recite them. This means that the dalang alone can safely utter such suluk. The Lord Iśvara himself, it should be noted, is considered the first dalang.

All of this has important implications for the question of the origin and development of the theater in Indonesia and elsewhere. E. T. Kirby has written a highly stimulating book entitled Ur-Drama: The Origins of the Theatre in which he rejects James Frazer’s concept of theater as developing from fertility myths and William Ridgeway’s contrasting hypothesis that theater originated in the worship of the dead. Kirby suggests, instead, that shamanistic performances are the ultimate source of drama: “it is shamanism as it is most rigorously defined which has almost invariably been the antecedent of established theatre forms.” That shamanism could develop into theater, contends Kirby, is due to the fact that it is founded upon the manifestation of supernatural presences. “Shamanistic ritual is unlike rites-of-passage or other forms of what may be called ceremonial ritual in that it depends upon the immediate and direct manifestation to the audience of supernatural presence, rather than its symbolism.” The natural corollary of attempts to manifest spiritual presence is the effort to represent it artistically or theatrically. This theory of the ultimate source of theater is very much in agreement with what Wang Kuo-wei and L. C. Hopkins expressed in their studies of Shang period thauma-turgical dancing.

There are many other dramatic elements in shamanistic performances, says Kirby. The shaman prefers to work in a small, darkened room that is dimly illumined. The flickering light powerfully contributes to the desired effect that spiritual presences have actually been evoked. The aim of the shaman is to produce
phantasms or apparitions for his audience. Hence he utilizes whatever means possible to create an aura of magical illusionism and hallucinatory perceptions. Skillful use of sound effects of all sorts have been reported by numerous observers of such performances. Often the walls of the room or tent are said to shake and rumble. Screams and raucous snorting fill the air; stones and wood seem to tumble about. And, as I have myself witnessed in Nepal, the shaman can adopt simultaneously two or more personae that carry on dialogue with each other in different voices.

It is no coincidence that the customary time for performing shadow plays and telling stories with pictures has always been at night. The flickering flame of the oil lamp, the dancing shadows, and otherwise all-pervading darkness contribute to the success of bringing to life the phantasmagoric illusions that embody the narrative. One should also remember that, in a cave, it is perpetual night. This may well have something to do with the great vogue for Buddhist narrative wall-paintings in caves.

Lucile Hoerr Charles has offered abundant additional evidence of the theatrical nature of shamanistic performances. She states that, before a curing session, publicity is often circulated so that an eager audience can be assembled. The setting chosen for the session is impressive, as is the lighting. The shaman dons a costume and applies makeup. He or she may also require the help of “stage” assistants. “Theatrical measures and paraphernalia throughout heighten the emotional quality of the seance and powerfully assist the shaman’s psychotherapeutic function.” 86 At the end of his performance, he may collapse from exhaustion. But the effort is well spent for the audience has been entertained, enlightened, comforted, or strengthened in their faith. The patient may gain renewed confidence and hope in his struggle with whatever afflicts him.

John Beattie and John Middleton have also stressed “the degree to which spirit mediumship is, or may be, no more—and no less—than a kind of drama, differing perhaps in the degree of involvement (or dissociation) of the actors, but essentially a theatrical performance.” 87

In Salteaux Ojibwa Indian seances, “Each pawágan [‘dream visitor,’ i.e., ‘spiritual being’], upon entering the tent, usually sings a song and sometimes he names himself. If it is the master of the moose, for instance, the spirit may say ‘mozèzinikázwíän (moose I am called).’” 88 The naming of a character by himself upon stepping onto the stage is well known in Chinese theater.
from puppet-plays to Yüan drama. Two other aspects of Salteaux shamanism are, first, that their “conjuring is always done after sunset” and, second, that the Salteaux word for conjuration is kosábαndamowin, which implies an act of visualization. It is most remarkable that the Midéwewin (“Grand Meditation Society”) of the Ojibwa who lived in the area between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Superior also used narrative picture-scrolls beginning from the late eighteenth century. Selwyn Dewdney says that they were used in “tutorial shamanism” that had an emphasis on healing.

Francis Huxley has discussed shamanism in a manner that can be applied directly both to wayang and to pien performances:

The art is that of illusion. All shamans impersonate the forces they experience; they are excellent ventriloquists, and can imitate the cries of birds and animals. They pantomime their ascent to the heavens and their search for the spirits that are responsible for illness and well-being. They are expert conjurers and can produce powerful stage effects—such as shaking the huts in which they hold their séances as if by an unseen agency, and making footsteps sound around the walls. By such means they fascinate their audience into a willing suspension of disbelief, and turn private fantasies into common property.

Their stagecraft sometimes includes the use of masks, puppets, trees with ropes stretched between them to represent the world axis and the heavens, even a turning platform on which novices are seated in order to become giddy and fall prey to the spirits. Although such tricks and props encourage charlatans, they are at bottom devices necessary for the staging of the transformation scene, at which time, the inner and outer stages are experienced as one. The shaman is in any case a transformer.... We are hardly in a position to describe what reality is experienced by means of such transformations. All we can say is that they are to be thought of as mysteries, and that mysteries are to be shown and not explained. Whatever is mysterious finds its natural home in the theatre, and what is played out is, of course, the myth.

Huxley’s references to transformations display an uncanny perceptivity of the craft of the shamanistic performer.

Lucile Hoerr Charles has listed a number of words that are synonyms of or closely related to “shaman.” Among them are medicine man, healer, practitioner, doctor, theurgist, leech, herbalist, physician-herbalist, magician, white magician, con-
jurer, sorcerer, witch doctor, witch, wizard, priest, lama, diviner, seer, medium, wiseman, and juggler. It is obvious that many of these “professions” also have to do with entertainment. To this list, we may definitely add dalang and probably śaubhika as well as the performer of pien.

In a discussion of the ritualistic nature of early Chinese theater, van der Loon has pointed to its shamanistic origins: “The dramatic forms of evocation and expulsion are complementary and probably derive from a religious tradition that can best be termed China’s shamanistic substratum.” Rituals calling on ancestral and other benign spirits for advice and assistance, on the one hand, and ceremonies for driving out evil specters and placating disembodied, dissatisfied souls of the deceased, on the other, have from the earliest periods of recorded history been the principal forms of religious activity in Chinese society. At their center was the necromantic, histrionic practitioner who both enlivened and purified the community. It is no accident that there has always been a close connection between the theater and the temple in China.

Given that shamans or their counterparts in most societies function as folk priests and that shadow play and picture-scroll performers are essentially shamans who serve the community at large, the origins of these early forms of dramatic representation in popular religious ceremonies become evident. The popular origins of theater are also borne out by the fact that many of the most important technical terms of Indian dramaturgy have a Prakritic (i.e., vernacular) source rather than a Sanskritic (i.e., classical) one. This, too, would seem to indicate that drama came originally from the common people rather than from the elite. Moreover, of all types of theatrical presentation, none is simpler, more portable, and closer to the people—in short, more “primitive”—than picture recitation. In no tradition of picture recitation that I have investigated has there been any indication that the performers of analogues to pien were full-fledged priests or monks. Quite the contrary, they are usually either lay persons or part-time religious professionals; all except the European practitioners display shamanistic traits to varying degrees. Hence, a congruence of evidence is presented that leads to the conclusion that the early teller of pien must also have displayed shamanistic tendencies.

For our purposes, as I mentioned above, by far the most important of the various types of Indonesian dramatic presentation is wayang bèbèr. Its history and performance characteristics shed much light on the probable configuration of Chinese
storytelling with pictures during the T’ang and later periods. Just as pien appears to stand at the beginning of the historical development of shadow and puppet theater in China, so does wayang bèbèr in Indonesia. According to James Brandon, wayang bèbèr was known at the courts of the successive East Javanese kingdoms of Mataram-Kediri (929–1222), Singosari (1222–1292), and Majapahit (1293–ca. 1520). But with the invention (or introduction), elaboration, and sophistication of the shadow play proper, wayang bèbèr began to fade in popularity. By the fifteenth century, it had become mainly an entertainment for children, much of the aura of ritual surrounding it having been lost. Furthermore, many of the rules connected with its performance were being forgotten.

In 1630, the king of Mataram in Central Java decreed that wayang bèbèr could no longer be used as a medium of performance for the magically powerful play “The Birth of Kala” (Mur wakala or Purwakala), the monopoly rights having passed to wayang kulit dalang.

By the time Western scholars arrived in Indonesia, wayang bèbèr had already become quite rare. Thus the performances described by G. A. J. Hazeu and R. A. Kern at the beginning of this century were considered to be something of a curiosity. Before this century was half gone, according to Claire Holt, wayang bèbèr was nearly extinct:

I met a wayang bèbèr dalang who may well have been the last of his kind in Java, with his old scrolls and his small group of musicians, in 1937, in the village of Gedompol in the Patjitan region of South Java. He had six scrolls, each divided into four scenes, painted on what seemed to be a sort of bark-cloth paper, badly frizzled at the edges and darkened by age to brownish-yellow tints. They were perhaps more than a hundred years old. To my knowledge no one produces wayang bèbèr scrolls any more.

An even more recent report comes from Mrs. K. R. T. Kusumbroto, who saw an extremely rare wayang bèbèr performance near Pacitan (i.e., Patjitan), south Central Java, in 1962. Though several scrolls were still in the hands of the few dalang then alive, the art had degenerated to such an extent that they were incapable of fitting sections of their narratives to the appropriate scenes on the scrolls.

The government, however, has been making an active attempt to revive the form. Although it can no longer be considered to be truly authentic because the old lineages of transmission of the art have been irrevocably broken, high schools,
museums, conservatories, and academies are all engaged in training individuals who can paint wayang bèbèr scrolls and others who can tell stories with them. Wayang bèbèr has even been experimented with as a medium of mass communication to take government propaganda into the villages. But none of the new breed of storytellers can truly be considered as dalang because they do not pretend to function as true shamans.

One of the old, surviving “shamans” (i.e., wayang bèbèrdalang), Bapak Sarnèn, hails from the village of Gedombol north of Pacitan. He was able to trace back his professional lineage to the tenth generation. Traditional wayang bèbèr, that is wayang bèbèr transmitted from master to disciple rather than taught in the academies as is now being done, persists only in the Pacitan area, but even there it is evidently no longer really a living tradition.

The early wayang bèbèrdalang were itinerant. They would travel about from village to village carrying their scrolls on their backs just as the picture-storytellers in Rajasthan still do. The usual apparatus for a wayang bèbèr performance consisted of a set of long strips of paper on which were depicted a series of scenes forming the content of a given narrative in the repertoire. Generally, a complete story consisted of six scrolls, each with four strips or “arrays” (adegan) for a total of twenty-four. Each scroll was fastened at either end to a thin, wooden stick (seligi) that protruded above and below the paper. When not being shown, the pictures were rolled up onto one of these sticks. The entire set of pictures was stored together in a long, narrow wooden box (averaging about 4 feet long by 6 inches wide by 1 foot high), which was also used during the performance. One of the long sides of the box (carved with a rough outline of the head of Kāla, patron deity of the dalang) would be placed so as to face the spectators. On the box, at a distance of about 2½ feet from each other, were two pairs of wooden holders in which to place the thin wooden sticks of the scrolls. In this fashion, the scroll could be rolled from one end to the other while the dalang recited his narrative (see the frontispiece). There were two sets of holes so that, when changing scrolls, the dalang would never be exposed to the view of the audience. Before he finished the first scroll, he would set up another one behind it. He would then take down the scroll in front and subsequently move the back scroll up to the front, leaving the rear set of holes free to insert the sticks of the next scroll. It is essential to note that, when the picture is thus displayed, it is called a kelir. This is the same word used to des-
ignite the screen of a shadow play. Hence, we have persuasive evidence that illustrated scrolls for narrative storytelling and shadow plays are fundamentally and organically related to each other.

The entire wayang bèb èr apparatus was considered to be very holy. It was kept carefully wrapped in cloths to protect it. Because of the sacred power with which the apparatus was imbued, the dalang took elaborate precautions in preparing for a given performance. He would make offerings and prayers to initiate his proceedings and, each time he set up a new picture, he would smear the sticks with boreh (cosmetic paste). The whole apparatus was the hereditary possession of the family of a dalang but only the latter had the exclusive right to use it. The apparatus was both a pusaka ("heirloom") and a pĕpunkden ("object of devotion"). One night each week, incense would be burned near the box, which had a special place reserved for it in the dalang's house. If dust accumulated in the bottom of the box, it would be ceremonially thrown into a river from time to time. 104

The usual musical instrumentation for a wayang bèb èr performance appears to have been a single rēbab (i.e., rebec). 105 In one wayang bèb èr production at the beginning of this century, however, the dalang was accompanied by a gamelan ("orchestra") consisting of four instruments (rēbab, kěndang, gong, kĕtoek/kĕnong). 106 This instrumentation is far more elaborate than any known elsewhere for storytelling with pictures and reflects the relatively high cultural status of some individual wayang bèb èr dalang as compared to their counterparts in India, China, Japan, and elsewhere.

That wayang bèb èr did not necessarily employ picture-scrolls only as the format of the illustrated scenes is attested by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, who witnessed performances in Java sometime before 1816: "Another representation of this nature is that of the adventures of Ménak Jing'ga and Dámar Wúlan, which are exhibited, but not very commonly, by means of drawings on folded pieces of strong paper, while the Dálang repeats the story and furnishes dialogue to the characters. This is termed wāyang b éber." 107 This is in conformity with the situation regarding Japanese etoki ("picture explanation") where we shall see (in Chapter 5) that a large variety of formats were used for the illustrations.
Having thus examined the nature of wayang b èb èr, we can readily see that this form of picture-storytelling is virtually identical in its general configuration to pien scrolls. We may now, therefore, turn to a more detailed discussion of the similarities between the two.

Perhaps the best place to begin this explicit comparison is by looking more intensely at the word b èb èr itself. In Indonesian, it means “unfold, unroll.” In Javanese, b èb èr means “spread, opened out.” This immediately calls to mind Chinese p’u 鋪 (“spread out”), which is so often used in connection with pien and which I have shown (in Chapter 1) to be functionally equivalent to Sanskrit paṭ in contexts of Buddhist painting. Thus we may say with a fair degree of confidence that b èb èr is related by its very name to the Indian picture-storytelling tradition. Considering the transformationally shadowy world of pien, we might almost suppose that wayang b èb èr means *pien-p’u and, hence, *nirmāṇa-paṭ or the like. One modern Indian name for picture recitation, in fact, is virtually the exact equivalent of wayang bèbèr. That is chāyā- paṭṭi, which means literally “shadow cloth.”

We have seen that, altogether, the usual wayang bèbèr consisted of twenty-four “strips” or scenes. This is in approximate conformity with the number of scenes we would expect for the complete set of narrative illustrations that might have accompanied the Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana transformations. Like pien, wayang was (and is) prosimetric in form. The spoken narration (kanda or kotjap ing pagedogan [literally, “spoken inside the house”]) alternates with the suluk (“poetic recitatives”), which are in Old Javanese and are frequently so transformed by oral tradition that the words are incomprehensible. As Holt describes them, the suluk “are captivating melodies which create a special mood, obliterating reality; the suluks are the magic carpets on which the audience can float from scene to scene.” One can only imagine wistfully whether the verses of pien performances functioned similarly. Several aspects of the suluk, however, do point to an organic relationship with the verse portions of pien and, by extension, to their Indian ancestors. The suluk are: (1) The most rigidly standardized part of oral wayang texts; (2) certainly the oldest parts; and (3) in most cases are not fully intelligible to the dalang himself.

Neither from my informants nor from any historical or scholarly account have I ever learned that a text of any sort was used in conjunction with the actual performance of wayang bèb
On the bottom of some wayang b èb èr paintings there are brief inscriptions describing the scene depicted. These, however, are a recent innovation and are not found on early wayang b èb èr scrolls. They derive from a literate tradition and do not accurately reflect the story as told by the dalang in performance. This usage may be considered as analogous to the verses on the back of P4524 and the cartouches on narrative wall-paintings at Tun-huang. There also existed skeleton outlines of the various narratives that were called lakon (in polite Javanese, lampahan). Lakon means “course (of events or action)” and is an organized listing of successive scenes (djedjer) and “arrays” or “stances” (adegan). These outlines were referred to as lakon regardless of whether they were actually written down or not. The lakon were common to all forms of wayang and were not restricted to wayang b èb èr. All of this helps us to understand the descriptions of entertainments in Hangchow during the Southern Sung, which state that the “story-roots (話本 hua-pen, i.e., stories)” of shadow-players and history-tellers were virtually the same. Some dalang also kept handbooks called pakem, which were synopses of stories in the form of short plots. Wayang texts of any sort seem to have been little used in Bali, and full lakon have only come to be committed to writing in recent times.

James Brandon has studied the relationship between oral narrative and written text in Indonesian wayang. From his discussion may be drawn some illuminating parallels with Chinese popular literary traditions:

A dalang could remember scores of lakon because they were structured according to standard scenes. As in oral literature everywhere in the world, there were stock expressions and formula phrases which, once learned, were used again and again. The extent of formula phrases in wajang kulit has not been examined in detail, but it appears to be very considerable indeed. Descriptions of characters and of kingdoms are replete with standard expressions, and the long opening section of the first djanturan [narration introducing a major scene; intoned to pitch and rhythm of soft background music] is repeated by a dalang almost verbatim…. There are set patterns of greeting in audience scenes and fixed forms of insult which a warrior hurls at his opponent prior to combat.
Eventually the stories of well-known lakon were written down, scene by scene, in pakem, or "performance guides." The first known pakem date from only a few hundred years ago. In recent years a number have been published. The written form of a wayang play, therefore, is not an original work intended for the stage, as is a play script in the West. Rather, it is shorthand record of the way a lakon already has been performed, perhaps for decades or centuries. The briefest form of pakem, called pakem balungan or "bone guide," contains only the barest plot outline. A nine-hour play takes up one or two printed pages in a book of pakem balungan, each scene being described in two or three sentences. A pakem gantjaran, literally "prose guide," runs ten to fifteen printed pages and contains the important plot action of a play. The third type of pakem is the very complete pakem padalangan, or "guide-for-the-dalang," in which most narration and some dialogue is written out and action, music, songs, and sound effects indicated. Dalang may read this longest form, but in spite of its name it is not intended for use in performance; for the most part, pakem padalangan are written for the general public.

Normally when a dalang performs he works from one of the shorter forms of pakem. It may be published, but more likely is handwritten, handed down from father to son or copied from the notebook of one’s teacher (guru). In a few minutes time a skilled dalang can glance at a brief pakem and refresh his memory on the sequence of scenes required for a lakon.

It is worth reiterating that written forms of picture-storytelling texts (both with pien and wayang) are later developments in oral traditions.

The illustrated pien scroll (P4524) and wayang bèb èr scrolls are not artistically identical. Given the different cultural contexts in which they were found, it would be naive to expect that they would be. One of the most noticeable differences is the distinctive shape of the Indonesian human figures, which does, however, have clear affinities with certain Indian character traits (long arms are “handsome,” the jester is enormously rotund, etc.). Also, the background of P4524 is almost empty while that of wayang b èb èr scrolls is densely packed with stylized landscapes. In this respect, again, the Indonesian exemplars seem more closely related to their Indian prototypes (at least insofar as they can be discerned from their twentieth-century survivors). Perhaps this more pronounced similarity may be explained by the fact that the Indian importation into Indonesia would have been more direct, since it followed a sea
route. In the Chinese case, there was much more opportunity and scope for adaptation, since the main path of transmission was over an enormous stretch of land. Hence, narrative picture-scrolls reached China only by stages, literally travelling from oasis to oasis across the great Central Asian deserts. Yet, in spite of all the differences that it is natural to expect, there are striking similarities between the rare picture-scrolls used to illustrate oral narratives that survive in China and in Indonesia.

In both P4524 and wayang b èb èr scrolls, the protagonists and the antagonists are divided into two opposing camps, the forces of good on the right, those of evil on the left. In the wayang tradition, the right side is called tengen (“positive”) and the left side kiwo (“negative”). 121 In the Tun-huang wall-paintings as well, Vimalakīrti (the Mahāyāna Buddhist exemplar of a wise and virtuous layman) always is positioned on the right side during his colloquies with others. It is, furthermore, worthy of note that on both P4524 and wayang b èb èr scrolls, the various supporters and followers of the main “actors” are also depicted. The king, too, appears as a sort of judge, and so do a number of others who witness the contest. This calls to mind G. M. A. Hanfmann’s remark concerning the device of showing “spectators” in ancient Greek narrative art. These, he says, are “figures that do not physically participate in the major action but provide a responsive framework and a commentary on the story, somewhat after the manner of the chorus in the Greek drama. They create an emotional foil to the physical exertions of the protagonists, a sort of human landscape.” 122 It is curious that, in both wayang bèb èr and on P4524, a distinctive technique is employed to provide continuity to the flow of the narrative sequence between individual scenes. I am speaking of the fact that, while the spectators in both are mostly involved with the main action of the scene of which they themselves are components, there are always one or two who either look ahead to the next scene that appears on the scroll or look back to the preceding one. This is an ingenious and effective method for creating the effect of narrative continuity that borders on the cinematographic. It is also evidence for the relatedness of the two forms.

One other unmistakable sign of the consanguinity between pien and wayang b èb èr is the tree-mountain (kayon or gunungan) painted on the latter to divide up the pictorial narrative into sections. Each of the scenes on P4524 (see Color Plate 1) is also divided by trees and/or mountains from those that precede and follow it. I have observed similar divisions on Japanese nar-
rative scrolls, whether used in *etoki* or not. That this particular separating device of mountains and trees could have developed independently in such widely separated areas is beyond ready credibility. When we consider that the identical device was employed in many Indian narrative illustrations, it becomes difficult not to speak of diffusion. The device was so common, in fact, that it was even utilized when only a single scene was painted on each of successive leaves of illuminated manuscripts. Here there is no need to divide the narrative sequence into discrete “moments” (*shih* 時) or “loci” (*ch’u* 處).

This peculiar iconographical feature of *wayang bèb èr* and *pien* picture-scrolls could not likely have been a mere coincidence and is best explained by reference to their common Indian origin.

The artistic and functional similarities between *wayang bèb èr* and the illustrated *pien* scroll are so compelling that we can only assume one of three possibilities: (1) the form was invented in China and spread to Indonesia; (2) it was invented in Indonesia and travelled to China; or (3) it was invented in some third country and went from there both to China and to Indonesia. The first two possibilities are ruled out by the knowledge of the nonindigenousness of the narrative picture-scroll in both China and Indonesia. This leaves only the third possibility, and it is obvious that the third country involved is India.
In Chapter 1 we learned that storytelling with pictures was popular in India from a period well before the beginning of the International Era. In this chapter, we shall see that these traditions have continued right up to the present day. A respectable amount and quality of ethnographic research was carried out on Indian picture showmen during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century. Because this material is invaluable in its own right and is essential for comparative purposes to supplement our meager knowledge of T’ang picture showmen, and further because it is relatively inaccessible, I shall cite extensive passages that bear directly on the subject of our inquiry.

One group in Mysore state for which there is fairly abundant documentation, is the Killekyāta (also called Killikiater, Killiketar, Kiliket, Katabu, Katbu, and numerous other variants). According to L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer,

The Killekyātas are a wandering tribe of picture showmen found scattered all over the State. They are also known locally as Shillekyatas, Bombe Ātadavaru. Another section of them who fish in rivers are known as Burude Bestas, i.e., Bestas or fisherman using dry gourds when swimming in water for fishing. Killekyāta means a mischievous imp, kille meaning mischievous, and kyāta, imp, or a crooked fellow. Wherever they give their shows after the usual offering of prayers to Ganapati and Sarasvati, they exhibit a doll of fantastic appearance, jet black in colour, with tilted nose, dishevelled hair, flowing beard, protruding lips, potbelly and crooked hands and legs. This figure, which is known as the Killekyāta, is accompanied by its wife Bangarakka, equally hideous in appearance. Both these figures represent the buffoons of the performance, and keep the audience amused with rude jests and indecent jokes. The whole exhibition has come to be
known as the play of Killekyāta, and the name has thence passed
to the caste itself. With reference to this profession, they are
also known as marionette dancers, Bommalātavallu in Telugu,
and Togalu- bombevāru in Kannada. Another section have al-
together given up this trade, and taken to fishing, and they are
on that account styled Burude Bestas. They style themselves Dā-
tyēru, but the origin of this term cannot be traced. In the ad-
joining districts of the Bombay Presidency, they are known by the
name of Katbus....

The characteristic occupations of the caste are marionette
shows and fishing. They play various scenes of the Rāmāyaṇa
and Mahābhārata, the former being more in demand. The dolls
are cut out of goat’s skin and painted in gaudy colors. They are
made of several pieces cut separately and joined together with
wires, and various motions and postures are caused by dexterous
manipulation behind the curtain with the aid of thin bamboo
splits. The actions of the figures are made to correspond to the
story as recited by the showman in prose and doggerel. For the
minor class of showman, the stage is made of screens of kamblis
and white cloths borrowed of a washerman. The showman alone
sits inside, and uses both hands for moving the dolls. A woman
sitting outside produces low shrill music with a reed sounded on
the back of a flat dish of bell-metal. The words of the play are
cruelly conceived, and are often fit only for a low class audience.
The stage of the Dodda Bombe Atadavaru, on the other hand,
is built on a raised platform, and decorated with plantain and
mango leaves. It is spacious enough to accommodate within its
curtains the whole troupe, furnished with fiddle, drum, cymbals,
etc. The text is taken from recognised books on the epics, and
the players, including women, are all literate. The women do the
singing, while the men show the pictures over the curtain. The
play begins at about 10 P.M. and continues the whole night. The
performance is enlivened by the appearance, on the scene at in-
tervals, of the buffoons, a Killekyāta and his wife in fantastic garb,
whose part sometimes borders on indecency. When the perfor-
mance is over, the whole party go to every house in the village
and get presents in kind, in addition to the lump sum collected
by the whole village. Besides, during the enactment of the play,
they demand and obtain presents of cloths and other articles from
the spectators. It is considered auspicious for rains and crops to
have these shows about the harvest time, and in certain places,
Killekyātas are entitled to customary annual fees for their ser-
vices....
The major fishing section have better plays borrowed from standard renderings of the Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata, and also employ marionettes with separate joints, so that the action of the play may be more effectively exhibited. They have also a better appointed stage, large enough to accommodate all the actors and musicians. The minor showmen composing the other division have a much cruder apparatus, and the singer of the party, generally a woman, has to sit outside the booth, her instrument being a reed fixed on the back of a bell-metal dish with a base of wax, on which she produces a shrill monotonous sound, by the friction of both her hands. This is accompanied by a drum. The plays enacted by these are also of very poor style, very coarse in language and sentiment.....

The Killekyātas are a wandering tribe, and live outside the villages in sheds constructed of arched bamboos covered with mats. Though they profess to be Kshatriyas, they are looked upon as very low in the social scale. But some of the Bombē section [i.e., subtribe or subcaste] have, on account of their education, earned a respectable position, and are received even by Brāhmans into their houses. The showmen wander in definite areas, and in some places have inams given them on account of their proficiency in their art. They admit recruits, especially women from the higher castes, with the sanction of the Gaṇāchari, obtained after payment of a fine. They have no social disabilities in the matter of conveniences in the village. Barbers may shave them, but not pare their nails; but the fishing section have usually their own washerman....

One of the most significant items of information provided by Iyer is that the Killekyātas sometimes combine the use of puppets or marionettes and pictures. This is in conformity with the intimate connection between picture-storytelling and early theater in China and in Indonesia.

In chapter 3 (“Population”) of the Bijapur volume of the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, under the section on “Wanderers,” there is listed a group called the Killikets or Katbus who were said to number 374 around the time the volume was published in 1884. Although they claimed descent from high-caste Kṣatriyas, they lived outside the villages in little reed cabins where “a few cooking vessels, a grindstone, some clothes, and the show-box of pictures constitute the furniture....” This box of pictures, which they showed to earn a living, was definitely considered to have demon-dispelling qual-
ities. For, “when a Killiket is possessed by a ghost, he or she is made to sleep near the show-box for three or four days, and this scares the ghost away.”

As the Gazetteer describes it, “Their calling is peculiar. The men fish with nets, and in the evening show, before a light, transparent pictures painted in brilliant colours on skin, representing Lakshman, Rámchandra, Sitábái, Hanumant, Rávan, and many other heroes and gods, the character of the show closely resembling that of the Chitrakathis or picture-showers of the north Konkan and Deccan.” It is extremely important to note that, although the Killikets were considered to be picture showmen, they displayed their translucent figures before a light and evidently without any sort of screen. This is further indication that generically there is no absolutely clear distinction among puppet plays, shadow plays, and picture stories (using scrolls, hangings, or other types of painted scenes and figures). Again, the use of artificial illumination should be noticed. What this implies is that, in evolutionary terms, a shadow play figure is essentially a cutout from a narrative picturescroll. In the early stages of the development of the shadow play, the shadows did not have movable joints, even though they had become detached from the painted background.

There were also Killikiatars to be found in Dharwar. They are described in the volume of the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency that deals with that district under the section on “Craftsmen” in the third chapter. Around the time of the publication of the volume in 1884, they were said to number 445. From the description of their performance given in the Gazetteer, we learn that their “dolls” were shown from behind a curtain and that more than one performer was involved.

Their main calling is showing leather dolls of various shapes all naked and indecent. These dolls are placed behind a curtain with a lamp close by. A man sits near, explains the movements, and beats a drum. The motions and the explanations cause much laughter among the spectators, but are so indecent that Government have forbidden the performance in public places. Since their show has been stopped some have begun to work as field labourers.

It is curious that people of similar occupation with the same name and at the same time were proscribed by the government in Dharwar for their indecency but, in nearby Belgaum, as we shall see momentarily, were considered to be religious beggars.
Perhaps their repertoires were broad enough to include material for audiences whose taste varied with the occasion. The Killiketars or Katabus, listed under the section on “Beggars” of chapter 3 in the Belgaum volume of the Gazetteer, numbered 108 around the year 1884 and were said to to be “a class of cattle-keepers and picture-showmen.” ¹⁰ The Gazetteer goes on to say that

Their chief occupation is showing pictures of the Pândavs and Kauravs, and other heroes. The pictures are drawn on deer skins and cost 3d. to 6d. (2–4 as. [equal to about .17 troy ounce of pure silver]). They always show them at night. One of the men sits behind a curtain with a lighted torch and shows from one to two hundred pictures. Another man sits outside and explains. The women beat a drum. The show lasts five to seven hours beginning about nine or ten at night. The villagers club together and pay them about 4s. (Rs. 2 [equal to almost exactly one troy ounce silver]), half in cash and half in grain and oil. At harvest time they go from village to village collecting grain which the husbandmen give them in charity.¹¹

This description is a rich and self-explanatory source of information; the entire passage deserves to be highlighted for emphasis. We should note particularly that at least two men and two women were involved and that, although they showed pictures, a stage of some sort and artificial illumination were integral elements of the performance. Also noteworthy are the method of payment and mode of work. In contradistinction to their kin, the Killikiatars in nearby Dharwar, “they are a religious people, and daily worship their box of pictures.”¹²

Iyer’s and the Gazetteer’s accounts are supplemented by other observations:

The caste contains two main occupational subdivisions, viz., the Minahiḍiyu, or Burude Besta, river fisherman, and the Gombeyāḍisu, or Bombeyātadavaru, picture-showmen. *Gombe*, as well as *bombe*, means in Kanarese “image,” “figure,” or “puppet.” The shadow-play is known in Mysore as *cakkaladagombe*, from *cakkala*, “leather,” while the exhibitions of wooden marionettes are called *sūtradagombe*, from *sūtra*, “string.”...

Dr. Spies remarks that [the shadow puppet called Killekyāta from whom the caste gets its name] has a huge phallus. After an initial prayer to Ganapati and Sarasvatī, Killekyāta is made to
appear behind the lighted screen in the company of his equally hideous wife Bangarakka, to amuse the audience with obscene jokes.

The picture-exhibiting subdivision of the Killekyātas is again subdivided into two sections, viz., the major and the minor showmen, Doḍḍa and Cikka Bombeyāṭadavaru. It seems to be the minor section that chiefly excels in the ruder sort of show....

Some points mentioned in the accounts of the Killekyātas may be of some importance as to the comparison of the Indian with the Javanese play. Emphasis is laid upon the ancestor worship prevalent in this caste. The Killekyātas worship their leather figures on Ganesha’s festival in August-September; according to another account they worship their box of pictures daily. A belief in an exorcising power imminent in the leather figures appears in their practice of making a person possessed by an evil spirit to sleep near the show-box for three or four nights, which is believed to scare the spirit away. There is a notion that it is auspicious for rains and crops to have the shows performed about the harvest time, and in some places the Killekyātas are entitled to customary annual fees. The various agricultural implements are believed to be the limbs of the demon Karebhanta, or Killekyāta, rude charcoal drawings of whom are made on each corner of a field under crop. The brother of this demon, Jokumara, is believed to die annually and to go to the god of rain imploring him to save people from famine.

It may be worth while, in this connexion, to reconsider the meaning and position of Semar, the phallic buffoon of the Javanese Wayang. Semar has been regarded as an original vegetation demon, a relic of the genuine Javanese, or pre-Hindu, mythology. The etymology of his name, which has been connected with old Javanese sumār = Sanskrit sphuṭa, “burst,” “opened,” “expanded,” “blossomed,” has been said to point into the same direction. However, granting this etymology to be true, it would not necessarily stamp Semar as an autochthonous Javanese figure. It is quite conceivable that he is an import from India like the rest of the Wayang caste, being nothing else but the Javanese counterpart of the phallic Killekyāta or his prototype in the old Indian shadow-play.13

The Killekyātas originally hailed from Kolhapur, now in Maharashtra. Altogether there were among them fourteen recognized clans of nomadic descent, half of which took to showmanship, most as shadow performers. These seven clans spread far across the Indian subcontinent, and there are as many as

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four hundred families who pursue their art today. The Killekyātas, as did so many of the other picture showmen in ancient India, sometimes functioned as spies. They went from village to village putting on their shows while at the same time gathering intelligence. It is for these two reasons that they gradually became so widely scattered. But, no matter where they go, they converse among themselves only in their native Marathi tongue. Also consonant with such traditions elsewhere in the world, while the Killekyātas are folk performers, they have from time to time received elite, even royal, patronage. Finally, though the themes of their stories often have classical sources (the Purāṇas, Rāmāyaṇa, and Mahābhārata), their texts have never been reduced to writing. They are, instead, transmitted orally, usually within the family.  

Various volumes of the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency provide interesting information on another group of picture showmen who are called chitrakāthi [i.e., citrakath]. In the volume for Poona (now called Pune), we find them listed under chapter 3 in the section on “Beggars.” They are said to number 148 and are called simply “picture showmen.”

They take their name from chitra a picture and katha [i.e., kathā] a story, because they show pictures of heroes and gods and entertain their audience by telling them stories from the Puráns.

They live in houses of the poorer class with walls of clay and thatched roofs. Their house goods include blankets, quilts, cradles, boxes, and metal and earthen vessels.

Neither men nor women have any store of fine clothes for holiday wear. As a rule Chitrakathis are dirty, thrifty, and hospitable. Their chief calling is begging by showing pictures of gods and heroes and reciting stories and songs about them. They also show wooden dolls whom they make to dance and fight to represent the wars of the heroes and demons. These puppet shows have ceased to be popular, and they now seldom do anything but show pictures by which they make 8s. to 10s. (Rs. 4–5 [about 2 to 2½ troy ounces of silver]) a month. A boy begins to act as showman at twelve and in two years has mastered his work. A Chitrakathi’s stock generally includes forty pictures of Rám worth 10s. to 12s. (Rs. 5–6 [about 2½ to 3 troy ounces of silver]), thirty-five of Babhruváhan the son of Arjun one of the five Pándavs worth 8s. to 10s. (Rs. 4–5), thirty-five of Abhimanyu another son of Arjun worth 10s. to 12s. (Rs. 5–6), forty of Sita and Rávan worth 10s. to 12s. (Rs.
5–6), forty of Harishchandra king of Oudh, and forty of the Pándav brothers worth 10s. to 12s. (Rs. 5–6). They paint these pictures themselves and offer them for sale, and they have a caste rule that on pain of fine every house must have a complete set of pictures. The women mind the house and never help the men to show pictures. They fetch firewood, beg, and cook. As they get paid in grain their monthly food expenses are small.

As a class, the chitrakáthis are badly off and growing poorer.

The Thānā (or Thāne, a place just north of Bombay) volume of the Gazetteer gives the population of chitrakathi [i.e., citrakashī] in that district as thirty-two in number:

They are a Maráthi speaking people, who go about carrying a few coloured pictures of their gods rolled up and slung on their backs. Each showman has a companion with him, who carries a drum and beats it when they come near a dwelling, and offers to tell the exploits of Rám and other incarnations of Vishnu. If the people agree, the showman opens his book and shows them the pictures singing and describing. Their dress and customs do not differ from those of Maráthas.

Especially noteworthy in this description is the fact that these citrakashī carry their picture-scrolls (or books) around on their backs. This is reminiscent of the portraits of presumed Central Asian itinerant storytellers found at Tun-huang and of information regarding Indonesian dalang.

In the Gazetteer for Kolāba and Janjira, the citrakashī are recorded as only three in number and are classed as beggars: “Chitrakathish or picture-showers, come occasionally from the Deccan, begging from door to door, offering to show two or three dozen paintings of the ten incarnations of Vishnu.”

Chapter 3 of the volume for Sātāra, gives the population of the citrakashī as ninety-eight and refers to them as beggars. “They show pictures of heroes and gods and repeat stories from the Puráns while showing them, and also sing and beg.”

The Ahmadnagar Gazetteer, also listing them as beggars, gives the number of citrakashī as 387: “They beg by showing pictures of gods and heroes, and reciting stories and songs regarding them. Women mind the house and beg by singing songs.”

Additional information on these picture showmen that is useful for comparative study is provided in an article on “Chitrakathi, Hardas”: 86
A small caste of religious mendicants and picture showmen [may be found] in the Marātha Districts. In 1901 they numbered 200 persons in the Central Provinces and 1500 in Berār, being principally found in the Amraoti District. The name, Mr. Enthoven writes, is derived from chitra, a picture, and katha, a story, and the professional occupation of the caste is to travel about exhibiting pictures of heroes and gods, and telling stories about them.... Though not impure, the caste occupy a low social position, and are said to prostitute their married women and tolerate sexual licence on the part of unmarried girls. Mr. Kitts describes them as “Wandering mendicants, sometimes suspected of associating with Kaikāris for purposes of crime; but they seem nevertheless to be a comparatively harmless people. They travel about in little huts like those used by the Waddars; the men occasionally sell buffaloes and milk; the women beg, singing and accompanying themselves on the thāli. The old men also beg, carrying a flag in their hand, and shouting the name of their god, Hari Vithal (from which they derive their name of Hardās). They are fond of spirits, and, when drunk, become pot-valiant and troublesome.” The thāli or plate on which their women play is also known as sarthāda, and consists of a small brass dish coated with wax in the centre; this is held on the thigh and a pointed stick is moved in a circle so as to produce a droning sound. The men sometimes paint their own pictures, and in Bombay they have a caste rule that every Chitrakathi must have in his house a complete set of sacred pictures; this usually includes forty representations of Rāma’s life, thirty-five of that of the sons of Arjun, forty of the Pāndavas, forty of Sita and Rāwan, and forty of Harishchandra. The men also have sets of puppets representing the above and other deities, and enact scenes with them like a Punch and Judy show, sometimes aided by ventriloquism. This immediately calls to mind Edward Moor’s 1791 description of the camp followers at Dharwar. One wonders whether the Venerable Kumāra Kassapa who had, even during the Buddha’s lifetime, the reputation of being a citrakathī might not actually have been a forerunner of these late nineteenth-century picture showmen.

A closely related group, both in name and in occupation, are the citrakar (or citrakār) who were still present in Bengal as late as the fifties. Biswanath Banerji has studied them extensively and I quote here a portion of his “Notes on Chitrakars.”
Their main business is to exhibit their scrolls and sing the traditional explanatory verses as the scroll is unfolded gradually. The scroll is generally 24 ft. to 50 ft. long and rolled like a film strip. They do not sell the scrolls like art pictures, but earn their livelihood by exhibiting these pictures and singing in accompaniment. These scrolls are looked upon by the chitrakars as their chief wealth. They generally spend Rs. 6 for preparing a scroll. In the village they get rice and vegetable (½ a poa to 1½ poa of rice i.e., 4 to 12 ozs.) for one performance. On rare occasions, they get a Dhuti [i.e., dhoty, Hindi dhotī, “loosely hanging loin cloth that extends to the knees”] or Sari in the towns, or in mofussil [i.e., mofussil, Urdu mufaṣṣal, “provincial, outlying”] areas they get a few annas as remuneration.

The scrolls are made by men. Formerly, for making scrolls they used hand-made paper and for the pictures they had their indigenous colours such as charcoal for black, chalk for white, “Pat atta” or juice of ripe “telakucha” (certain local fruit) for red etc. But at present they use ordinary paper and foreign paints for preparing scrolls and painting pictures respectively (Ref. The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal—Census 1951, West Bengal).

The men also make images of Gods and Goddesses during different pujas [“rites, ceremonies, sacrifices”] which fetches them Rs. 3 to Rs. 35 according to the size and shape of the images. In making images of such Gods and Goddesses or scrolls the son or the daughter or the wife assists the chitrakar. The chitrakars help one another in making the images. Here, the helper is never paid in cash; at least he takes his meal there.

To exhibit such scrolls, the chitrakars usually go to the neighbouring villages within a radius of four miles. When cultivation and harvesting is over, generally from the last part of January to March, the men go with their scrolls from village to village. All of my informants used to tour in different villages and towns of Bankura, Birbhum and different villages of Midnapore. Some also used to go to Baleswar, Jamshedpur etc.

In the village, it is revealed that the chitrakars exhibit scrolls and beg from 7 A.M. to 2 P.M.

The theme or subject-matter of the scroll is taken from:

1. Ramayana as Sita Harana, Ravanbadha, Lakshman Saktishela.
2. From Bhagbata as Krishnalila, Jagannath.
3. From Mahabharata—as Naramedh Yagna, Sabitri Satyaban, Data Karna etc. and from
4. Manasa Mangala,
5. Chandi Mangala and such other Mangala poems. Each scroll opens with a large-sized portrait of the presiding deity which is followed by a series of pictures illustrating his or her awards or punishment upon mankind. The concluding scenes of the main story—is a comedy of rescue etc. Interesting scenes are carefully selected and painted from memory.

The women make toys from clay by freehand modelling or from clay sheets cast in terracotta moulds. These toys are generally sunbaked, sometimes also baked in fire. They make idols of different gods and goddesses, “alladi” dolls and figures of different birds and animals. These toys have many colours. In colouring these toys also now-a-days foreign colours and paints are used. These toys are not sold in the weekly markets but in the fairs held during Pous or Chaitra Sankranti etc. Price of such toys varies from 2 pice to annas 4. 27 Men sell these toys in the fairs.

The chitrakars have no other profession. But their earning is not sufficient to satisfy even their minimum requirements. They, actually, have to depend on the charity of the villagers. At present, this totally landless artisan group is leading a miserable economic life. 28

Stella Kramrisch emphasizes that these artisans work in several media. They also practice painting on the walls of their houses and rub off the exercises daily. 29

Like the citrakathi, the citrakar too may well stem from myth-shrouded antiquity. In a discussion of the theory and origin of castes, the Brahmavai varta purāṇa (“legends of the metamorphoses of Brahmā [who is identified with Kṛṣṇa], heavenly bodies, their influences on human behavior and other matters”) mentions them among a list of outcastes who apparently were expert draughtsmen:

Those who were begotten by the Vaiśyas upon S’ūdra women were styled Karaṇas; and those who were begotten by the Brāhmaṇas upon the Vaiśya women were Amvaṣṭhas. Afterwards, Viśvakarmā begat 9 sons on a S’ūdra woman. They are named as follows: Malākāra, Karmakāra, S’ankhakāra, Kuvindaka, Kumbhakāra, Kaṃsa-Kara, Sutradhara, Chitrakāra and Swarṇakara. All of them are illegitimate and expert in architecture; but out of these, the first six are particularly accomplished in architecture and the last three being cursed by a Brāhmaṇa became unholy and were deemed incompetent by the S’āstras to offer sacrifices.
Any one who engages them for the purpose of presiding in matters relating to sacrifice is also an outcaste; in other words, he is rendered unholy.  

A few pages later, the same text states the specific charges made against the ancestral citrakār:

Of the sons of Viśwakarmā, Swarnakāra became outcasted and unholy on account of the curse pronounced against him by a Brāhmiṇ whose gold he had stolen. Sutradhāra also neglected to carry out the orders of a Brāhmiṇ to collect fuels for sacrificial purposes and, being cursed by him, was likewise degraded. Chi-trakāra transgressed the orders of a Brāhmiṇ in respect of a picture the construction of which was defective and not according to orders and underwent the same fate.

In Varāhamihira’s (d. 587?) Brhat Saṃhitā (the Great Compendium on the astrological significance of heavenly bodies and their influence on human behavior) (5.74), artists (citrakāra) are classed with musicians and dancing girls.

Another surviving form of the picture-storytelling tradition in India is the paṭ or paṭa (also called paṭacitra), which is to be found in Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and elsewhere. Paṭ may be either small, squared-up illustrations for sale or jarāno-paṭ (literally, “rolled [paintings] on cloth”). The favorite themes are drawn from popular mythology and may focus on matters of social injustice. In the latter case, they often end with a depiction of hell and the evil-doer receiving his just dues there. They may tell stories of saints as well as of prostitutes and sing-song girls.

Except for the fact that Bengali paṭ scrolls are usually arranged in a vertical format, the scenes being divided into horizontal panels, they functioned virtually identically as did wayang bèb èr and pien scrolls. The scrolls range in length from about ten feet to as much as fifty feet and are about one or two feet wide. The “priest”-painters who unroll the painted scrolls for the spectators also narrate them. According to G. S. Dutt, these scroll paintings “represent an art tradition of pre-Buddhist times with but the slightest admixture of foreign elements.” The oldest extant specimens, however, probably do not date from before the seventeenth century. But, given the fact that these scrolls were ritually discarded when they became tattered, it is remarkable that any survive from such an early date. Although few extant paṭ date from before the late
eighteenth century, there are specific references to Bengali *pat* in a text dating from about 1600, the *Caṇḍī Maṅgala* (*Auspicious Song to the Goddess Caṇḍī*) by Mukundarāma and in the *Manasā-maṅgal* of Viṣṇupāla, an eighteenth-century poet. A painting in an illustrated Jain *Mahāpurāṇa*, dated 1540 at Palaam, shows a woman with a *pat* as tall as herself. The *pat* is attached to two long, vertical sticks and depicts two human figures, two trees, and four other unidentifiable objects. To the left of the woman holding the *pat* is another woman who is either meant to represent the audience or, perhaps, because she appears to be dancing, she may be a partner of the woman with the *pat*.

It is no wonder that so few old scrolls survive considering how quickly they wear out due to the constant turning. When a scroll begins to fall to pieces, the artist often simply copies a new one from it. Although the tradition does change slowly over long periods of time, there is little urge to create a new story or even to present the old stories in a new way. The intent of the artists is to preserve and perpetuate the old versions. Another reason why the scrolls do not last is because they are often painted on the cheapest available materials, such as waste paper from shops or government offices and discarded newspapers (Tun-huang popular literature was also often written on similar materials—the backs of old government documents, letters, religious texts, and so forth). The individual sheets are glued or sewn together at the edges, varying in length from two to fourteen panels. A piece of calico or the tail of a worn-out shirt might be sewn to each end of the scroll to protect the more fragile paper. The pieces of cloth are then attached to two sticks on which the scroll can be rolled.

The itinerant professionals who recite the *pat*, the *patuā* or *pa ṭidār*, are poor and of low caste. Their caste ranking is comparable to that of potters, barbers, blacksmiths, and sweetmeat makers. These storyteller-painters may be classed as *jādupatuā*, who specialize more in magic, and *duāripatuā*, who “wait at the door.” The area in which they wander is usually about seven or eight square miles, but famous performers may range somewhat farther abroad. They travel light, carrying only their bag of scrolls and a bamboo container of oil. They usually stay the night in the village where they perform.

The *pat* is often performed by a single *patuā* at a crossroads or in the center of a village. Or the *patuā* may travel from door to door exhibiting his *pat*. If a householder or someone in the street expresses an interest in hearing a story, he will grad-
ually unfold and explain one of the *paṭ* he carries with him. The *paṭuā* must erect a simple bamboo frame on which to hang his scroll (the need for such preparation is, of course, obviated when a small handscroll is used). He then praises the protective deity of the *paṭ* and begins his story. As he narrates the story, he points to various parts of the scroll. But a perfect correspondence between picture and story is not absolutely essential because the themes are so well-known both to the *paṭuā* and to his audience.

Important sources for *paṭa* performances include Bengali folk poems, the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic and numerous episodes from Kṛṣṇa’s life. The most often recited folk poems are about the goddess Manasā, who is the rival of Lord Śiva and the protectoress of snakes, and about the goddess Caṇḍī, the wife of Śiva and adversary of Manasā. The tradition also accommodates new themes which the *paṭuā* may introduce to attract larger audiences and income. Popular sources for these are stories of famous robberies and murders. Like the religious stories, these are stories with a moral: the good are rewarded and the evil are punished. These traditional songs, along with the recitation and painting techniques, are passed down from father to son. New material is also gained from friends and other *paṭuās* as well as from literature. Some *paṭuās*, in fact, create their own compositions.

The *paṭuā* do not consult promptbooks or any other literary materials in connection with their performances, which are strictly oral and visual. By contrast, “narrative paintings produced for court or elite patrons often are accompanied by a written text or refer to one.” Most *paṭuā* speak a vulgar form of Bengali and local dialects. Socially, they are looked down upon by the people for whom they perform but are respected for their illusion-creating powers. Some individual *paṭuā* started to call themselves *citrakār* (painters) in an apparent attempt to improve their social standing.

The status and *modus operandi* of the West Bengal *paṭuā* are well described in the following paragraphs:

There is a community, particularly in West Bengal bordering on Orissa on one side and Bihar on the other, known as *Paṭuā* or scroll painters. They come of a very low social origin and hence they are not admitted in the Hindu community. They form their own social group though they have more inclination towards
Muslim religion than Hindu. They earn their livelihood by painting the episodes of the Rāmāyana, the Bhāgavata and other local legends for entertainment of the people among whom they live. They exhibit the paintings in public in accompaniment of a class of narrative song sung by themselves. They paint on canvas, about 2 ft. in breadth and about 40 ft. in length, the events of an episode one below the other and roll it up while carrying it from place to place or when not used. While exhibiting the paintings they unfold the scrolls and explain them to the lay public by means of songs they sing. The scroll painters are unlettered but hereditarily they possess the talent of painting and the knowledge of the traditional themes which they generally paint. The songs they sing are also inherited from their forefathers; sometimes newly composed songs are also added if the situation demands and if the painters have some talent for composition. The tradition is entirely oral and it has nothing to do with the texts either of Vālmiki, the original author, or of Krittivāsa, the Bengali translator. These folk songs are known as the songs of the scroll-painters of Bengal.

Among the themes of the songs and paintings, the Rāmāyana plays a vital role. The scroll-painters have developed an oral tradition of the Rāmāyana of their own and they describe the incidents according to such tradition showing little regard either to Vālmiki or even to Krittivāsa. According to this tradition, the characters of the Rāmāyana have been more naturalised in the environment of Bengali social and domestic life.

The scroll-painters select one independent incident from the Rāmāyana, like the killing of Sindhu, the young son of the blind ascetic parents by the king Daśaratha, and illustrate the incident by means of folk-painting made on canvas as stated before. In the course of their public exhibition made from door to door in the villages, the scroll painters slowly unfold the scrolls and exhibit the paintings one by one as they explain them by singing a narrative song....

The case of the Bengali patuā also affords proof that a group of picture-storytellers do not always restrict themselves to a single format nor even to storytelling alone, for that matter. In their efforts to secure a living, the patuā community also paint wooden dolls and earthenware figures. Functioning as multi-talented artists and minstrels, they might also entertain the villagers with stories about them. And, like their counterparts in Japan and Germany, they often increase their income by selling off cheap copies of the artwork about which they sing.
The Kalighat paṭuā produced religious paintings for mass sale to pilgrims who thronged to the Kali temple, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Paṭ were also suitable mementos to bring back from the great pilgrimage center at Puri, the abode of Jagannāth, Lord of the Universe, whose present shrine was established there in the eleventh century. That the paintings were supplied by Mahārānās, hereditary citrakāra who lived (some still do) close to the temple precincts. 47

From the essays in the book edited by Sankar Sen Gupta, *The Patas and Patuas of Bengal*, I have been able to obtain the following additional information about Bengali paṭ and paṭuā. 48 In the first place, Indian scholars generally believe that they are traceable to pre-Aryan times and have proposed that there is some evidence for their existence at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. 49 There are, at any rate, literary references to their forerunners from at least the international era. 50 The extreme poverty of these performers, and their low position in the caste system, are stressed. 51 Paṭuā are largely landless. Their small income from paṭ performances may be supplemented by money earned through piercing ears and noses, snake charming, metal smithing, and so forth. 52 The craft of the paṭuā is passed on almost exclusively hereditarily. The son will attend his father’s performances to observe his techniques and he learns how to paint the paṭ by tracing over the latter’s work. The paṭ are considered to be a type of folk-art because they are produced by people from the villages who have no formal “academic” training. 53 Some of the functions they fulfill are those of education, mass communication, and entertainment for the common people. 54 In an interview with a paṭuā named Khandu Chitrakar (note the surname), in response to what kind of paṭ is most in demand, he said that people prefer scenes of murder, robbery, and hooliganism. 55 This reminds us very much of the sensationalist news-reporting Bänkels änger of Germany. Another comparative note is struck by the fact that, although paṭ are made in various formats, the themes and representation remain the same. 56 This is similar to the situation in Indonesia, Japan, and elsewhere.

This form of picture-storytelling also spread from Bengal to neighboring Orissa. Kunjabehari Daś’ comments on the nature of the narration in picture-storytelling in Orissa bespeak a striking similarity to what we know of the quality of the wayang bèbèr recitations:
Oriya Patuās now sing songs, composed by village poets who pick up the subject matter from the R̄amayan [sic], Mahabharat, Puranas and now from the novels. The songs are simple in thought and language and can easily be understood by the illiterate mass. This type of song is called “Padā-bandiā”—the meaning of which is not required to be explained to the audience. The other type is called “Artha-bandi”—which has a deeper meaning and is shrouded in a jugglery of words. This requires an explanation from the Gāyak-singer, who has a power of oratory and is learned. The first type of song is accompanied by a drum and the second type by a Murdanga which is adopted from Palawallas.

There are six or seven members including Gāyak and Bāyak in a Patua-Jatra. There is one Rāutāni—a male member who puts on the dress and ornaments of a female borrowed from women of rich family. He breaks the monotony of Jatra by occasional dances.

Patua-Jatra [Paṭua-jātra] starts seven days before the Baisak-Samkranti [Sanskrit Vaiśākha-saṃkrānti, “vernal equinox”] and continues into the 15th Baisak.  

Note that, like the Maudgalyāyana variety play in the Sung period, this performance falls around harvest time, lasts for an extended period (twenty-one days for Paṭua-jātra, nine days for the variety play), and ends on the fifteenth. The forerunners of these plays during the T’ang were pien performances on the same subject.

The correspondences between Bengali pat and Indonesian wayang bèbèr are obvious in Philip Rawson’s discussion of the former:

In Bengal there still exist peasant families of professional story tellers, who travel from village to village earning their livelihood by giving public recitations of traditional legends of gods and heroes. They carry with them long painted scrolls which they unroll to illustrate the different episodes of their stories. These scrolls are family property, and are made by members of the family. The profession is an ancient and honourable one. The Sanskrit grammarian Patañjali in the second century B.C. refers to itinerant showmen who preached moral and religious sermons illustrating their talks with illuminated scrolls.

Sudhansu Kumar Ray has pointed to the similarity between paṭuā scrolls and film: “The pictorial arrangement in the painted scrolls made by the priest-painters is in the form of a
sequence almost recalling the early days of the cinema."

One is reminded of the long record of development in the Indonesian narrative tradition from wayang bèbèr to wayang gambar hidup.

Another branch of the Indian tradition of picture recitation comes from the Telangana region of northwestern Andhra Pradesh, in the heart of the Deccan. Investigation of this branch shows that the same scroll—if made of fine, durable handwoven cotton—might be used for performances during a period that lasted more than three hundred years. In the Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, there is a magnificent painted scroll (accession number 76.469) showing episodes from the life of the sage Bhavana, the legendary progenitor of the Padmasalis, a subcaste of the Salis, who were a caste of weavers. The scroll carries an inscription at the bottom which reveals that it changed hands on November 13, 1644, in the Mahbubnagar district of Telangana. Another inscription, which most likely would have provided the name of the artist and the date he completed the scroll, has been erased.

The scroll was owned by a family of itinerant minstrels of the Kunepullalu caste. Their prosimetric performances, which lasted for seven evenings, were staged for various Padmasali communities, and were the means of livelihood for the Kunepullalu minstrels.

Performances by the storytellers always opened with prayers to Ganesha, the elephant-headed Hindu deity who is invoked before any undertaking. Ganesha’s large image appears on the first panel of the scroll. Speaking in the vernacular Telegu, the narrator then began to tell the story. Three or four other members of the family played instruments or occasionally joined in the singing. As the drama unfolded, the scroll, suspended from poles or affixed to a wall, was slowly unrolled, event by event.

It is curious that the paintings on the Telangana scrolls are too sophisticated to be termed “folk.” Judging from their style and the high quality of their artistry, they seem to have been painted by the same class of artists who worked on commission for powerful Hindu landlords.

The Indian picture-storytelling tradition that has been studied best is known as par or para. Firsthand, verifiable knowledge of this living performance tradition is extremely
valuable in trying to understand the context of less well observed genres in other areas, including those that are extinct and for which only fragmentary data are available.

The par tradition flourishes in the semi-desert state of Rajasthan in the northwest part of India. It is also found in Gujarat, Haryana, and Madhya Pradesh. The word par and all other technical terms in this chapter concerning it are transcribed from the Marwārī (i.e., Māvārī) language. A paṛ is a long cloth (cf. Sanskrit pata and Bengali pat, note that the owner of the par is called a pāṭavi bhopo) on which is depicted an epic relating to a certain deity. A par performance is referred to as par vā ḍ cano (“recitation of the par painting”) or bhagata and involves exposition and explanation of the painting through a number of different devices, chiefly song and chant. There are par for the twenty-four Bagarāvat brothers and Lord Devnārāyaṇ, Pābūjī Raṭhaur, and Rāmdev (deified regional heroes), who are all “Little Tradition” gods not normally patronized by the upper castes. The performers are itinerant and pursue their occupation by journeying from village to village in search of a group willing to sponsor a performance. The singers who perform the par are called bhopo, a word that means roughly “priest for a folk-god” or “shaman.” This is in perfect consonance with the designation of the bhopo’s Indonesian counterpart, the dalang. The bhopo also generally functions as a part-time folk-priest who does some healing and divination during trance. He may be in charge of a small shrine (not a temple) that is dedicated to his deity. In fact, the par itself may be considered a sort of portable shrine. Though the performance is basically a religious observance, the performers are drawn from the lower and occasionally middle classes. Par painting and recitation are not high-caste, Brahmanical activities.

It appears that no bhopo earns his living entirely from the par performances he presents in rural villages or at fairs. Compare Amin Sweeney’s remarks about Malay storytellers:

It may be said of traditional Malay entertainments in general that the exponents only very rarely attempt to subsist entirely on their incomes from performing, and even the most popular dalangs ... will nearly always have a secondary occupation. This is usually small-scale agricultural work, for almost all performers of traditional drama and story-telling are rural people, and the majority are illiterate or semi-literate. Indeed the rate of illiteracy among story-tellers is higher than in other genres....
A bhoho can earn the equivalent of between five and ten dollars for a night’s entertainment. 67 This income is supplemented by wages earned from agricultural day-labor or tending of small plots and herds. A general observation needs to be made here that none of the religious leaders of the Little Tradition whom I have met personally in Taiwan, Nepal, and India were engaged full-time in their sacred duties. They also held jobs as porters, peasants, craftsmen, and so on. Their religious activity might thus be described as a secondary occupation, but one which clearly expressed deep psychological drives of the individuals who pursued it.

Because of the extensive ethnological work that has been done on them, we know with a high degree of accuracy the social background of the bhoho. They include members of the following castes: Gujārs (cattle-keepers and peasants), Kumbhārs (potters), Balais (weavers), and Nāyaks or Thories (tribal peoples). The first three groups focus their storytelling almost exclusively on Lord Devnārāyaṇ while the latter group will tell stories about him as well as about Pābūjī and Rāmdev. These are all from the middle and lower classes of society. They are decidely not rulers, warriors, priests, intellectuals, or merchants. Yet, though they may be illiterate, they are always thoroughly conversant with the folklore of their traditions. 68 A full Devn ār āyaṇ kī paṛ, for instance, may utilize more than 335 songs and the bhoho remembers them all. 69

Unlike the Bengali paṭuā, who is painter, musician, and poet, the Rajasthani bhoho rarely paints his own pictures. Paṛ are normally painted by professional painters. The bhoho who orders a paṛ may or may not consult with the painter during the course of his work.

The paṛ bhoho generally travel in groups of two—the pāṭavi, who is the chief singer, and the diy ālu/divālā or dīptyo (“light-holder”) bhoho, who is his assistant. They may be accompanied by optional vocalists called gāyak[ā], who may also play percussion instruments. The pā ṭavi bhoho dresses like a Rājpūt prince. 70 The divālā bhoho (bhopī if a woman) holds an oil lamp suspended from a stick to illuminate the paṛ.

In the Pābūjī tradition the pair are normally a man and wife, called bhoho and bhopī; in the Devnārāyān tradition there are two or more men. Both of these traditions utilize song (gāv) alternating with declamatory speech (arthāv; cf. art ha [“meaning”], hence “explanation [of the song]”). The latter is not prose but instead a more or less modified version of the metrical lines of the song. Some of the gāv lines are quoted
almost verbatim in the arthāv section. The last word or last few words in sentences of the arthāv are frequently spoken by the assistant. In doing so, the assistant may simply repeat what the bhopo has said, may vary it slightly, or may himself complete the sentence. Fuller versions of the par performances employ more extensive narration through the sung parts. The shorter versions tend to allow the narration to be carried mainly by the declamatory parts. In the Devnārāyaṇ epic, the g āv lines are simply sung to a number of repetitive stichic tunes, but in the Pābūjī epic they are enormously expanded with padding words to produce a text that can be made to match the strophic tunes used. 71 This is, incidentally, the identical technique employed in Chinese performing arts to inflate a pentasyllabic, heptasyllabic, or decasyllabic line to fit a canto or lyric meter. It also has affinities to the practice of Central Asian saga-tellers who deliver both the poetic and rhythmical prose parts of their narratives in recitative, not in spoken voice. 72

The bhopo refer to the cloth painting during the “spoken” (actually chanted) arthāv sections. Some of them make a great deal of use of the painting, illustrating every little detail of the narrative. Others seem hardly to notice that it is there hanging behind them. When they do use the painting, it is the lead singer who points to the pertinent parts while the assistant singer illuminates them with a lamp. It is significant that these are night performances. They are, in fact, considered to be a type of jāgaraṇ (“all-night wake”). Consequently, artificial lighting is important, even though it is from the front. The dancing flame of the lamp contributes immeasurably to the illusion that the hero himself has appeared before the very eyes of the beholders.

Another important aspect of the par performances that might be taken into consideration in trying to imagine what the oral pien presentations may have been like is that no rigidly set formulas are employed in pointing at a particular part of the cloth. Bhopo do, however, often use formulas both at the beginning and at the end of the “spoken” arthāv sections, but these vary from singer to singer. The initial formulas for the arthāv portions of the text are quite mechanical and perfunctory. The assistant almost invariably begins by saying rāj [a] bhalā (“Very good, sir”). This is an unmistakable signal that the gāv is concluded and the explanatory arthāv will now begin. The bhopo then usually says “The name of Lord Devnārāyaṇ is good” or the equivalent for the other heroes. He may add a few more words leading into the upcoming arthāv. The end of the pre-arthāv formula is marked by suṇai lāl ā ko asavāra, the last word
being uttered by the assistant. The meaning of līlā ko asavāra is not readily apprehensible but a common understanding is that it refers to the rider of Līlā[gar], Lord Devnārāyaṇ’s horse, hence, perhaps the bhopo as his representative. There is no doubt about sunai, however, which simply tells the audience to “listen.” These pre-arthāv formulas serve chiefly to signal the shift back into declamatory chant at the conclusion of a song. The nearest approximation of this function in the pien-wen are the tendencies for one or more of the following to occur at the beginning of the prose portions within the first full sentence after the verse:

1. perfective particles and verbs (chi 既, yi 已, ch‘i 訥, liao 了, pi 畢);
2. a verb denoting speaking, hearing, or proclamation (yueh 曰, yen 言, wen 聞, piao 表, pao 報);
3. a word or phrase indicating the passage of a period of time (hsü-yü 須臾, tso-yeh 昨夜, i-chen 一陣, liang-chiu 良久);
4. a word or phrase indicating movement through space (hsing 行, chih 至, hsiang-ch‘ien 向前, hui 迴, ju 入).

The end of a gāv is also marked by shifts in the musical and prosodic pattern. It is impossible to correlate these shifts with any comparable phenomenon at the end of the pien-wen verse sections because the music has long been lost and the lines have been standardized at heptasyllabic length. There is, however, a remarkable correspondence between the verse introductory formula of pien-wen and the concluding expressions of arthāv sections, which also serve to introduce the gāv or sung portions of a par performance. We now turn to a detailed examination of the similarity in form and function between these formulas.

The complete pien-wen pre-verse formula is “Let us see ...” or “Please look at the place where XXX happens. How does it go?” (Ch‘ieh k’an XXX ch‘u, jo-wei ch‘en-shuo, 且看XXX處若為陳說) There are a number of variants of this formula, most of them abbreviated versions. The arthāv-concluding, verse introductory formulaic language of par performances includes all three basic elements of the complete pien-wen formula: the reference to seeing, an overt or implicit indication of narrative locus, and a rhetorical question that serves as a preview of the succeeding episode that will be sung about in the verse section. Here I quote some examples from “The Epic of the Twenty-Four Bagaṛāvat Brothers and Lord Devnārāyaṇ[a]".
1.21–22 And let us see, does that Mother Cow go to the sacred fireplace of Baba Rupnath? And how does the story continue? Let us see. What things happen? Let us see.

2.14 And what does this Mother Cow hear? Let us see, in the place of meditation.

3.15 As these very words are being (said), what does Mother Cow, the one entrusted with speech by the Lord, discuss? And what does Baba Rupnath hear? Let us see, at the place of meditation.

4.14 What matters does Mother Cow explain? And what does Baba Rupnath hear? Let us see, at the place of meditation.

5.32 What did Baba Rupnath say? And what did Bhoj Maraj hear? Let us see. Let us see Parvati heating the milk. Let us see.

8.12–13 And at this time does he tie up the bundle of ash and grain husks? Let us see. And how does the story go? Let us see, among (Bhoj’s) men.

9.26–27 Let us see how Bhoj Maraj goes into the cows’ pens. And how does the story go? And does he let the calves of the cows go (to nurse)? And circulating (among them) does he match (each calf with its) cow?

10.14 Then what does (his) mother say? And what does Bhoj Maraj hear? Let us see. How does the story go among (Bhoj’s) men? Let us see.

11.10–11 While explaining these matters, what does Bhoj Maraj say? And how does the story go? Let us see, among (Bhoj’s) men. What does your Mother Kathera hear? Let us see.

21.39 And then what does Baba Rupnath say? And what does Bhoj Maraj hear at the abode of meditation, at the sacred fireplace? Let us see.
24.12–13 Yes, so then (what) does Bhoj Maraj say? And what is the talk about taking the robe? Let us see, at the abode of meditation. What does Baba Rupnath hear? Let us see. 73

The transcription of the operative words in these formulas (significant portions of which are spoken by the assistant) are as follows: \( \text{dek } \tilde{a} \), exactly equivalent to Chinese \( \text{ch’ieh } k’an \) (ancient \( \text{ts’ia-k’an} \), \(^{74}\) “let us see”); \( \text{k } \tilde{a} \text{ i vārtā calū ho jāvai} \) (“how does the story continue?”), functionally identical to Chinese \( \text{jo-wei ch’en-shuo} \) ("how does it go?"); \( \text{k } \tilde{a} \text{ i bāt } \tilde{a} \text{ baña jāvai} \) (“what things happen?”), which occurs less often than the preceding two components; and \( \text{par} \ [a] \) (post-position for “at”), \( \text{mē} \) (post-position for “in”), or some other indicator of location comparable to Chinese \( \text{ch’u} \) (“place”).

The similarity of these verse introductory sentences with the pien-wen pre-verse formula is striking. Both are highly visual in their orientation; the bhopo, or more often his assistant, consistently says “Let us see” (\( \text{dek } \tilde{a} \)) even when he is asking what someone in the story hears. The resemblances between the pien-wen pre-verse formula and the pre-verse formulaic language of the \( \text{par} \) performance are so great that they can scarcely be ascribed to sheer coincidence. Surely these likenesses affirm an analogous function. And, considering the compelling evidence for a historical relationship between Indian and Chinese picture recitation, in all probability, they also attest some sort of evolutionary linkage. It is highly unlikely that these two traditions could mirror each other so closely unless they were descended from some common ancestor whose traits they both reflect.

At the same time, we must not ignore the differences between these two formulas. The pien-wen pre-verse formula is far more obligatory and unvarying than is the pre-\( \text{gāv} \) language of the \( \text{par} \) tradition. In my estimation, this is due to the fact that pien-wen is a type of written literature that is already at a remove from the oral events whence it derived. Conversely, the passages from the epic of Lord Devnārāyaṇ translated above were taken from an oral \( \text{par} \) performance. No written texts are used by the performers of this tradition. Hence the formulaic language, while displaying obvious affinities with the pien-wen pre-verse formula, is more fluid and adaptive. Sometimes the bhopo and his assistant omit parts of it altogether or they may
repeat parts of it several times, especially *dekā*. It is probable that fixed formulaic regularity creeps into folk literature only when it is written down and becomes popular literature. Before that happens, there seems to be considerable variation among individual performers and even by a single performer from performance to performance and during a given performance, although each *bhopo* follows his own patterns, which he may, indeed, have learned from his teacher. All *par vā caṇo bhopo*, however, being part of a coherent tradition, retain a common framework within which they manipulate the pre-śāv formulaic language and the other essential elements of their craft.

Unlike performers in some other Asian picture-storytelling traditions, the calling of *bhopo* is not strictly hereditary. This is explained as being due to the fact that singing and dancing talent are essential for a *bhopo* and not all sons may be so gifted. A *bhopo* also needs a good sense of humor and a developed ability in mimicry to animate his performance. So, instead of automatically choosing his own son as successor, the *bhopo* has an understudy (*celā*) known as *sīkhādār* (“a learner”). Only someone who demonstrates genuine aptitude will be chosen by the *bhopo* as his apprentice. Often the individual chosen is possessed or “called” to the profession. The *bhopo* needs an assistant to perform and it is not always easy to find a good *celā*. The training of the *sīkhādār* is surprisingly short. He learns the songs gradually and later, during his travels with the *bhopo*, joins in some of the singing in performance. The *bhopo* also instructs his apprentice in the legend of the epic through use of prose narrations, for it is not only important to learn the songs but their proper sequence as well. The instructional prose narrative helps to fix it in his mind. But much of what is imparted to the apprentice requires no formal training on the part of the *bhopo*. Rather it is picked up merely by being present at *par* performances. Throughout the period of their training, the apprentice *bhopo* must be mindful of at least the following elements of performance: *nāc* (dance), *vāṇo* (pointing out pictures), *gāv* (verse), *arthā* (explanation), and *muskarī* (jokes). The *bhopī* learn what they are to do from their male partners, and members of the audience find out how to behave and react during a performance by observing their elders and peers. Audience participation is essential to keep the performance moving. There is even a designated member of the audience called the *hūkāro* (“responder”) who may interact with the *bhopo* at the end of the semimetreical chants (*arthāv*) and help
to determine the progress of the narrative. The average viewer participates in a par performance less than once a year, unless he happens to live close by bhopo who own a par. 76

It is fitting to refer to the par performances as dramatic events, for the various “transmission media” employed include large-size painted cloths or scrolls, artificial lighting, instrumental music, dances, songs, narration, conversation, riddles, jokes, gestures, costumes, and other props and accessories. 77 Among the most important accessories of the bhopo in performance are a conch, a lamp, a type of fiddle called a vīna or jantar or a stick zither called a rāvanahātto, hand-held metal slats (cimpaṭā), wooden and metal hand clackers (kartāla), and a pointer made out of peacock feathers (called a caṭṭī) that is used to direct attention to various parts of the par. No two par performances—particularly in the Pābūjī tradition—are ever the same, for the bhopo extemporizes and improvises anew each time. The audience, too, to a certain extent helps decide which episodes will be included in a given performance and in what order they will occur. On the other hand, there are definite limits to the modifications that can be worked on the narrative skeleton because it is basically determined by the contents of the painting. Yet the par is not a necessary mnemonic device because the bhopo can sit in a radio studio for hours without one, singing and reciting his story all the while. Such a performance is termed vārātā bolano (“to say, speak the story”) or v ārat ā sun āṇo (“to tell the story”). Since this type of performance is much simpler, it is also more common and more frequently presented. Even in performances with a par, the bhopo does not feel obliged to run methodically through each scene painted thereon. He skips around in the narrative as the occasion seems to warrant. It is not unusual for him to omit some scenes altogether during a given performance. On the other hand, he might well point to the same scene on the par two or more times during the course of his narration. This tremendous degree of flexibility on the part of the bhopo is tempered and constrained by the expectations of the audience and the shared heritage that comes from belonging to a given performance tradition. The full par epics (i.e., those that include all possible episodes) are very long but there is a variety of narrational devices available to the bhopo which rescue him from having to exhibit superhuman feats of memorization. For example, the epics are composed of discrete story segments or episodes called parvāro that are like building blocks for the nar-
rative structure. There are also memorized lines called *kaṛī* that may be inserted when needed. Embellishment is frequent and the *bhopo* is adept at filling out a passage extemporaneously.

The *bhopo* alone is not responsible for the actualization of the *par* performance. The event is made possible only as a result of a rather complicated social enterprise that may bring into association *par* artists, the *bhopo* who present the show, patrons who donate money to sponsor it because they wish to fulfill vows to the deity, the village elder who helps with some of the organization, and the audience (some of whom are devotees) who attend it and who often punctuate the performance with questions to which the *bhopo* must be prepared to respond swiftly. New and inexperienced singers may receive critical attention. The people also provide oil for the lamp and give meals to the *bhopo* while they are in the village. They may be in residence for several days, since the full telling of a *par* epic requires two or three nights. During the rainy season, when it is believed that their protective deities are asleep, the *bhopo* do not go out into the villages seeking opportunities to put on their shows. A practical consideration is the liability that would result from getting rained out. This does not, however, preclude other types of narrative performances less subject to the elements. The Pābūji bards, for example, often find work at odd times performing non-*par* entertainments for Rābāri camel-keepers.

When the *bhopo* arrive in a village with their paraphernalia, the people begin to gather and stir with excitement. After the *bhopo* are convinced that they will be adequately rewarded for their efforts, they purify the ground and then begin to erect their *par* in the street. As the sun goes down, the *par* is put up on its stand. The *par* may be set up outside or in front of a patron’s doorway, near the communal sitting stone, or in the vicinity of a shrine or temple to which it may have some connection. Individuals or communities may sponsor a *par* performance either as a separate event or as one activity in the context of a festival. Because a *par* performance is elaborate in comparison with some other forms of recitation, particularly those without a large and cumbersome painting, sponsorship is relatively expensive and requires a fair amount of preparation. The size of the *par* is truly enormous, ranging from about 5 feet by 15 feet for those on Pābūji to 5 feet by 35 feet for those on Devnārāyaṇ. 

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Once the par has been set up and all other necessary arrangements have been made, the show can begin. The performance itself starts in the evening after dinner; the singing and dancing before the par go on all night long. The first part of the performance is the bhopo’s evocation of the deity, Devnārāyaṇ or Pābūjī, to bless the people with prosperity and joy throughout the year. The bhopo narrates the story, event by event, and the exotic colors of the par come to illusory life as his assistant shines a flickering lamp upon the various appropriate parts of the par. The effect of conjuration is heightened by the burning of incense and the jingling of the small bells (ghungru or ghūgharā) worn around the ankles of the performer. The par bhopo sings and plays; sometimes he and his assistant will join in a sort of singing duel. The excitement of the performance depends upon many other techniques as well.

The bard jaunts back and forth in front of the par, often spinning, sometimes chasing his assistant, which excites the children, who sit right up front so that they can see and hear everything. Between the songs are poetic recitations called arthāv. Then the bard may bend over and point out a particular scene which illustrates the episode he is reciting. At other times songs and recitations stop altogether. Then a spectator will offer a rupee to the deity. For this the bard or his assistant blows the conch shell in the name of the donor for the pleasure of Devnārāyaṇ or Pābūjī. They continue all night. The next morning before the sun rises, they close the performance.

The sequence of elements in a typical Devnārāyaṇ par performance is as follows: initial purificatory rites; opening of the par; donning of the costume by the bhopo; sevā (this service may include hymns, burning of incense, lighting of lamps, etc.) consecration for the par; a series of invocations; prosimetric relation of the story; collection of offerings during the numerous breaks; celebrative āratī (“ceremony of the lamps”) songs to the relevant characters and deities; and closing sevā service for the par. This is not very different from the order of picture recitation elsewhere (e.g., Indonesia, Japan, and so forth).

The Rajasthani par tradition can be traced back approximately three hundred years (legend pushes it back another three hundred years), and the painting of the first par is thought to have been commissioned by Chochū Bhāṭ, who was a devotee of Devnārāyaṇ. But there is great difficulty in establishing the early history of the paintings because once the colors fade...
or the canvas cracks they are ritualistically destroyed in an elaborate ceremony by being thrown into a sacred lake called Pushkar or some other body of water. The par are sacred and, as long as they are usable, must be preserved with all due respect and in accordance with prescribed ritual. The professed religious nature of these performances is evident from the fact that they are intended primarily to evoke the protective deity for the welfare of the audience. (Before secularization, the pien had a similar purpose, viz., to cause or [re]capture the appearance [cf. pien = transformational manifestation] of a divine being.) The par performance also serves to transmit religious ideals while at the same time providing entertainment. From a sociological viewpoint, it may be said that the par performance promotes the solidarity of the community focused around a certain deity or deities. The purpose of a typical performance may be said to be threefold: it provides the community with devotional fulfillment, instruction, and entertainment.

It is interesting to note that Devnārāyaṇ bhopo occasionally get together for their own fairs (conferences!) to discuss their craft and pay respect to their patron deities. There is little competition among them because each seems to stick to his own mutually agreed-upon circuit.

A process of commercialization and secularization in the par and related genres has been observed. When this happens to an oral tradition there is often a loss of grounding in the essential folklore that sustains it. As a result, the tradition gradually becomes vitiated and its survival problematic. The same processes are observable in other Asian picture-telling genres. The death knell of a vital folk art is frequently sounded when urban entrepreneurs and the scholarly elite take possession of it for their own ends. With par performances, however, this process is partially belied by the Devnārāyaṇ tradition, which continues to thrive.

There are other forms of storytelling with pictures in Rajasthan. One is the Rāmdalā, which involves a much smaller cloth than the par. The bhopo holds an end in one hand and tucks the other under his armpit. Using a pointer held in his free hand, he calls attention to various scenes on the painted cloth. The kāvar provides another format for storytelling with pictures in both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. This is a box in the shape of a small wooden temple with numerous doors, inside which are panels depicting Hindu deities and illustrating popular stories. The bard, called a kāvariya bhāṭ, opens them
one at a time and narrates the exposed scene with song and recitation. This would seem to be very much like some of the earliest precursors of German picture-storytelling.

Other traditions are the kalāmkārī (paintings on cloth) from Andhra Pradesh and Madras, and the Kṛṣṇal īlā (“Kṛṣṇa’s sports or diversions”) and Ahmedabad temple prints. Written above each frame of the kalāmkār ī are inscriptions in Tamil or Telugu describing the action of the scene. The narration is in prosimetric form and the storyteller points to the scene as he tells about it. Some of these cloth-paintings are enormous. One colorful kalāmkārī from Andhra Pradesh illustrating the full story of the Rāmāyaṇa with sixty scenes arranged in eight rows measures 30 feet by 10 feet. The Vividha-tīrtha-vastra- pāta of Ahmedabad (1641) is approximately 10 feet by 4 feet. A fragment of an old kalāmkārī from South India in the Madras Museum bears several points of similarity with the Sāriputra illustrated scroll (P4524) and Indonesian wayang bèbèr that deserve mention. All three employ a horizontal format with trees functioning as boundaries between scenes to break up the otherwise continuous narratives into episodes. Here, too, the forces of good are arrayed on the right, the forces of evil on the left. The so-called “Avatār” scroll painted by hereditary faujdār (Urdu for “soldier” or “military man”) artists of Vishnupur (i.e., Biṣnūpūr) in West Bengal is believed to have a history of more than 1,200 years. The Gujarat mātā nī pachedī (“temple-cloth of the Mother Goddess”) is painted by guildlike groups of artists and used for narration (reddi) of stories about the mother goddess, Kulagotar, by shepherds (bharwar).

Paintings from Paiṭhān, a town in Aurangabad district, Maharashtra, are also used in storytelling. They come in series and illustrate stories from the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa, myths from the Purāṇas and stories telling of regional heroes. The storytellers of this tradition are called citrakathī, which means, as we have seen, “[someone who paints] pictures and recites stories [about them].” As is true of virtually all picture-storytellers, the Paiṭhān citrakathī are itinerants of low social status: “These story tellers travel from village to village in Maharashtra, reciting their stories in song and verse for patrons in the regional language, Marāthī. Their low social status and poverty is reflected by the way they live in make-shift camps outside their patrons’ villages.”

Paiṭhān paintings were originally made in sets (loose-leaf folios called pothi). Each set belonged to an individual citrakathī and served to illustrate a particular narrative. The number of
scenes per set varied from thirty to approximately seventy. The obvious advantage of this format over a small, hand-held picture-scroll is that scenes could be rearranged or omitted easily during the performance. The paintings measured approximately 12 inches in height by 15 to 17 inches in width. These dimensions would have been suitable for groups no larger than ten to thirty individuals. Since the scenes on the Śāriputra transformation scroll have about the same dimensions, we can get an idea of the average size of audience at transformation performances. In spite of their relatively small dimensions, the Paiṭhān paintings have been described as muralistic in nature. Some of them were divided into two sections by a vertical element, such as a pillar or tree. Usually two consecutive Paiṭhān paintings would be pasted back to back and occasionally were mounted on an extra piece of paper placed between them for added strength. In order to supply the demands of collectors, they are often split apart and the sets broken up. Most of the paintings have been badly frayed through frequent handling. Many of them have been patched at the top in the center where they were worn through by being held up to the audience during performance. The Paiṭhān paintings are closely related stylistically to the leather shadow puppets of Karnataka (Mysore), Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala. 100

Although their art is rapidly dying out in competition with the cinema, there are still numerous picture showmen operating in the Indian countryside, but information concerning most of them is exceedingly difficult to obtain. One such group that has recently been brought to light are the Thakar inhabitants of Gudi Wadi village of Pinguli town in South Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra. 101 Their history as entertainers can be traced back approximately five hundred years. During their early history as a recognizable group, they received some support and patronage (in the form of small grants of land) from the chiefs of the old Sawantwadi state. In return, they had to fulfill certain duties, such as performing during the Navarātri (“nine days and nights”) sacrifices before Daśahrā (or Dussehra, Durgā Pūjā, Durgotsava, etc.), a ten-day Hindu festival that starts on the first night of the month of Asvin, which falls between September and October. Out of seventy-seven villages in Sawantwadi state, the Thakars still perform in twenty-nine of them. For this, they receive an annual income from some of the local temples. Among the performances they offer are pangul (showing a trained bull), citrakathī (picture-storytelling of myths), chamadyachya bahulya (myths and ghost stories told
with leather shadow puppets), and *kalasatī bahulya* (myths and popular stories enacted with string puppets). Individuals, however, may specialize in one or another of these performances. Across the Thakar community of entertainers as a whole, we see that there is not a hard and fast line between drama and narrative. This corroborates the hypothesis that Indian-influenced narrative and drama in China are part of a continuum and not two wholly separable realms of literature.

Occasionally, the Thakars have been classified as untouchable leather craftsmen because they had, at times, to repair their own puppets when no other skilled craftsmen were available. But socially they are actually even lower than the untouchables because their occupation as wandering players places them outside of the caste system altogether. They are not priests, monks, or ascetics, yet many of their performances deal with religious subjects. The community has its own governing council (*jāt panch āyat*) that acts as mediator to resolve conflicts among members. They even have their own special dialect (a sort of thieves’ Latin), which they use when strangers are around. Many of the younger members of the community are abandoning the traditional occupation as entertainers and are taking more lucrative jobs in Bombay. The seventy families who live in Gudi Wadi are mostly farmers or fishermen but all of them also engage in one or another type of folk entertainment.

In Pinguli, the most interesting type of performer, for the purposes of our research, are those who display *pothi*, sets of approximately thirty pictures painted on sheets of brown paper measuring about 1 by 1½ feet that illustrate the classics. The pictures seem always to be tattered from repeated use. As with the illustrated Śāriputra scroll and *wayang bèbèr*, there is a clear division between the forces of good and evil on the right and left, respectively. The Pinguli *pothi* reciters believe that their pictures were painted long ago by their ancestors and they treasure them accordingly. There are communities in the northern part of Ratnagiri district who call themselves *citrakathī* but the Pinguli people maintain that they are imposters who do not have the *pothi* to authenticate their claim.

In performance, two Gudi Wadi *citrakathī* sit cross-legged on the ground, one playing a small two-headed drum, the other—who sings and gesticulates—a three-stringed instrument called *tambūr* and small finger cymbals. The man who plucks the *tambūr* props against his knee a wooden board slightly larger than the size of the pictures to give support to them. A black cloth is laid on the ground and bunched up at the base
of the board to prevent the pictures from slipping. When one episode is finished, the picture portraying it is removed and replaced by a new one chosen from the pile that is lying on the ground next to the singer. Some of the Gudi Wadi citrakathī are reported to hold up the scene being narrated so that the audience can see it better. Others exhibit leather puppets and wooden dolls while they narrate stories about them. Like earlier picture showmen we have encountered, some of the accompanists produce a drone by turning a stick on the center of a brass plate.

Another obscure tradition that has recently been studied for the first time is that of the Garoda picture showmen of Gujarat and Rajasthan. It is known to have been widespread in the past but is now on the verge of extinction. The Garoda are a caste of folk-priests, sometimes described as fallen Brahmans. They minister to other low castes, particularly various types of craftsmen. Aside from their recitation of picture-scrolls, they lead devotional songfests and also practice palmistry and astrology. Their scrolls are called tipanu or tippan (“recording,” “remark”) and the recitation may be referred to as bhambhal (“noisy narrative”). The scrolls used to be on cloth but now are almost exclusively on paper. They measure a little under 14 inches in width and are about 13¾ feet long. There are usually five to seven seams per scroll. They always seem to be badly worn, and the torn parts are mended by pasting on old newspapers or pages from an almanac as backing. Some of the scrolls are poorly painted by amateurs; others are the work of experienced, professional artists. They are done in different, individual styles but all show the same scenes and in the same order. Each scroll has nineteen panels arranged vertically. These depict different stories and sometimes several scenes from a single story are represented on a given panel to allow for narrative development. Puranic myths, regional epics, the Rāmāyāna, and the Mahābhārata provide the themes but local elements predominate. ¹⁰²

The Garoda are itinerants but do maintain a small cluster of homes that they come back to from time to time. Some of them are at least partially literate because they keep books of folklore written in a corrupt script. The following passage describes the performance of a Garoda picture showman:

... a Garoda, carrying several bags on his shoulders, went from door to door, singing in a low voice a couple of Gujarati stanzas which said: “One should obtain merit by listening to sacred
stories…. Such opportunities don’t come often…. One should be charitable to the wandering Garoda priest who shows the path of virtue.” He had a scroll in his hand and, as he offered to narrate the stories, he half-opened the scroll and then closed it when he received a negative response. Often people gave him a coin or put some grain in his shoulder bags, without asking him to narrate the stories. While he was still moving about in the village, some women had second thoughts and called him back. He washed his hands and face, drank some water and sat down on a string-meshed cot in the open courtyard. In the meanwhile the villagers gathered around him. He opened his recital with the first panel and related in verse and prose the import of the panels and their ethical implications. As the interest and response from the audience heightened, he rose and approached the crowd, holding the open scroll in his hands and collecting coins or currency notes on the scroll itself. After the show was over, he was given wheat-flour and grain which he collected in different bags kept for the purpose. 103

The parallels with other Indian picture-storytelling traditions and with Chinese transformation performances are obvious.

There is one more widely practiced type of Indian storytelling with pictures that should be mentioned— *narak citra* (“hell paintings”).

An integral part of the funeral rites of many Jain and Vaiśṇava communities living in Western India is to have a priest read or recite the *Garuḍa Purāṇa*. Besides describing numerous rites and paths of liberation, the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* expounds upon the sins and punishments delivered in Hell (Yamaloka). The recitations continue for three or four consecutive evenings during the period of mourning. On one evening, an account of the torments of Yama, the king of Hell, is given. Along with this account, the priest displays small paper paintings which graphically show the grisly tortures of Hell. 104

These *narak citra* remind us not only of ancient Indian *yamapaṭa* but of numerous scrolls found at Tun-huang that depict the various halls and horrors of hell. 105 Such paintings were immensely popular throughout China until the middle of this century.

Finally, there exists a type of indigenous Tamil folk theater called *terukkūttu* (“street drama”) that was very popular in the nineteenth century. 106 While gradually being forced out of ex-
istence by the cinema, it still survives. Although terukkūttu is not a kind of picture-storytelling, certain of its features offer interesting parallels to other types of performing arts in Asia and are worth discussing briefly. Before any character enters the stage, he first introduces himself behind the curtain. The plays are mostly in song, the prose passages serving primarily to bridge the gaps between songs rather than to construct story lines. Furthermore, the audiences know the stories by heart and so it is the repetition and variation of the songs as well as the quality of the singing that are appreciated, not the novelty of the plot. The latter is usually episodic in nature and the individual scenes might well be described as tableaux. At moments of great excitement, not only do some of the actors become possessed, members of the audience may also fall into trancelike states. The terukkūttu plays were so well liked and well known by the broad masses of the people that the literati became familiar with them and soon began to experiment writing imitations of them. With the introduction of the printing press, these written versions became cheap enough for many people to buy. But as happens again and again in the process of the adaptation of folk performing arts into written traditions, the plot structures became noticeably more rigid than the plays without scripts. The gradual displacement of teruk kūttu by the cinema is a natural evolutionary phenomenon whereby technologically more sophisticated forms tend to achieve a position of prominence over simpler ones.

Although our attention in this and the other chapters of this book has necessarily focused on picture recitation per se, we have repeatedly seen how difficult it is to separate this particular genre of folk performance from a host of associated oral and performing arts. This is not surprising in light of the fact that a given group of performers often specialized in telling the same story or stories in several organically linked media. The most recent monograph on Indian shadow puppets, for example, richly details the close interrelatedness with picture-storytelling:

Leather puppets are one of India’s most ancient folkloric treasures. As old as civilisation itself, we have evidence of their existence from the ancient scriptures like the Puranas and the Jatakas. The shadow theatre existed long before human theatre and originated from the first pictorial performances, like the Chitra Kathi of Pinguli, Maharashtra, the Pads from Rajasthan, the other Chitra Kathas from the South, and the Yamapatta of
Bihar. Judging by the literature and historical documents, shadow theatre had already acquired a degree of excellence by the 11th century.

Shadow theatre gradually developed from picture dramatisation to cut-out figures. These were stuck on a length of cloth with thorns, in a sequence of the scenes, and a lantern was passed behind it, moved by the narrator as the story unfolded. Soon these cut-outs were given mobility and the figures came to life on the white curtain with lamp-lights, music, song and narration, and even sometimes a dance rhythm.

The themes played were mostly from the epics of the *Rāmāyana* and the *Maha-bharata*. They were the only audiovisual educational aids of decades ago, for these themes involved not only religious thought, but also social norms, philosophical thought and of course the initial conviction of the good overpowering the evil.

In India, six different styles of leather shadow puppets have developed in six different regions—some opaque, some small and coloured, some medium sized and some the largest coloured shadows in the world. All the puppets are stylised figures in the flat, symbolic of the characters portrayed and in no way an attempt at adhering to human proportions.

The puppets representing gods and celestial beings are revered and considered sacred. They are stored together and never mixed with those representing demons and lesser humans. The latter are often grotesque and exaggerated to show the evil in them. Even the stage entries are reserved according to tradition, with the godly characters entering from the right side of the performing screen and the left side reserved for the evil ones.

These rules are adhered to by all shadow theatres in India from whatsoever region they come and have even been adopted by the Indonesians, Javanese and Malay shadow shows which have a Hindu origin. 107

I shall close this chapter with a detailed and revealing eye-witness description of a late eighteenth-century troupe of Indian picture-storytellers and dancers. This is taken from Edward Moor’s narrative of the siege of Dharwar in 1791:

The number of women with this army, could they be at all accurately computed, would not be believed; our estimate so far exceeds the bounds of probability, at least strangers would deem it so, that we are afraid to give it. There are a great many sets or parties of dancing and singing girls, five, six, or seven in a
set; others who dance the tight rope, jump, tumble, and play all manner of tricks; of these parties, ten or fifteen perhaps are constant in their visits to our line. The singing girls are generally attended by an old man who carries a drum and a parcel of pictures, chiefly descriptive of the battles and conquests of their deified heroes. These he exhibits in rotation, and chants an account of them, in which he is now and then relieved by a stave from the damsels by way of chorus. The girls in their singing are accompanied by a curious piece of music: it is a round shallow pan of brass, about a foot in diameter and two inches deep, on the bottom of which a thin piece of slit bamboe, inserted in a piece of wax to keep it from slipping, is placed; and one of the party slides her thumb and finger of both hands alternately heavily down it, bringing out a sound uniformly deep and sonorous, that serves as a bass to their vocal strains. The pan is actually a culinary utensil; it is used to wash and clean rice in preparatory to cooking, and to serve it up in at meals: when used as a musical instrument, one side rests on the ground, supported by the feet of the performer, who, as well as the whole party, squats on the ground, or on carpets, if the auditors choose to furnish them. The subjects of their songs are not at all limited; they comprehend a great variety of incident from which the obscene cannot be excluded; the actions of their armies and heroes are for the most part the theme, and we could not but remark that our detachment did not go unsung. The persons, however, who through their favour had become heroes, were not very characteristically introduced, from which it may be supposed the poems were not new but old ones adapted to the occasion. It would be impossible for so many of these itinerants to get a livelihood merely by singing; they depend, indeed, more upon their personal appearance than their vocal abilities, which we apprehend they find more profitable as in general the handsomest girls are selected for this vocation. Being professedly votaries of pleasure, subject to the same regulations as the dancing girls, of whom they are an inferior class, chastity is not at all necessary either to their credit or character.

Moor has left little to the imagination concerning the social status and dramatic abilities of these entertainers. Judging from what we know of picture-storytellers elsewhere, his account is credible.
5
Picture Recitation around the World

Thus far in our investigations, we have discovered that picture-storytelling was found in India, Central Asia, Indonesia, and China. This genre of oral folk literature was, however, by no means restricted to these areas alone. There is plentiful evidence that shows it thrived in numerous other countries, both in and outside of Asia. The purpose of this concluding chapter is to survey the available data for picture recitation as it existed (and, in some cases, still exists) in Japan, Tibet, Iran, the Near East, and Europe. As always, I shall endeavor to extract information that may be useful for understanding the performance aspects of the isolated, perplexing transformation scroll from Tun-huang, P4524, which depicts the contest of magic between the Buddhist disciple, Śāriputra, and his heretical opponents.

The counterpart of pien storytelling in Japan, etoki 繪解き (“explanation of/by a picture”), is a tradition that goes back to at least the Heian period (794–1185) and is still alive today, though in a limited way. On the question of how picture recitation reached Japan, it is possible that Koreans were involved. There is documentary evidence that Korean monks not only visited Tun-huang but lived there in substantial numbers and may even have established a temple, called on one manuscript (P3935) the “Han ssu 韓寺.” 1 It is conceivable that they may have been involved in the transmission of pien to Japan. The famous pilgrim Ennin (793/4–864) and other Japanese travellers to China, we know, had extensive contact with Koreans who had established temples and monasteries in various parts of China. Korean traders and merchants were also active in China.

The earliest unmistakable reference to etoki may be found in the Miscellaneous Notes Concerning the Temple of Clarified Truth (Daigoji zakki, 醍醐寺雜記), dated 931. 2 Etoki were defi-
nately being performed in Japanese temples during the twelfth century. In the diary of Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120–1156), under the twenty-second day of the tenth month of the year 1143, a description is given of the explanations of pictures by a “monk” (說繪僧) relating to the life of Prince Shôtoku (聖徳, 574–622) at the Shitennōji (四天王寺) in Osaka. ³ “Holding a stick, he pointed at the painting as he explained it” (持楚指畳説之). This could very well be a description of similar traditions in India, Tibet, and Germany.

Barbara Ruch has written an extremely important article entitled “Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature” that explains in detail who the “picture explainers” were and how they operated. She also reproduces several old paintings showing these etoki in performance, among which one dates from the year 1299. These paintings are invaluable for understanding some of the various techniques for displaying and commenting on pictures that were current, particularly during the Muromachi period (1392–1573). Ruch’s Figure 1, dating from between 1469 and 1487, shows a man dressed as a low-ranking samurai. ⁴ He has spread a wrapper (fukusa 袱紗) in front of him and has unfolded (cf. Indonesian bèbèr) upon it a painting (tatami e 畳絵) that he has taken from his travelling case. Since the pictures have straps, it is also clear that he could hang them up if necessary. He accompanies himself on the balloon-guitar (biwa 琵琶) and stops from time to time to point at different scenes with a pheasant feather attached to a stick. The use of this particular kind of pointer is to protect the pigment of the painting.

Figure 5 (mid-seventeenth century) of Ruch’s article shows a female etoki performer who is a nun or priestess but in name only. ⁵ Her stylish hairdo and her small box of texts or scrolls modestly carried beneath one arm reveal her as a completely secular performer. Some such female etoki, called “singing nuns” (uta bikuni 歌比丘尼), were known in Japan for combining a far older profession with that of picture explanation, which they occasionally used as a pretext for travelling about freely. ⁶

But there were more religiously oriented etoki as well, especially among the Amidist sects. They would take to the road from time to time in order to proselytize or raise funds for the temples where they were based. Ruch’s Figure 3 (seventeenth or eighteenth century) shows a woman in nun’s robes, her shaven head covered by a cloth, sitting by the side of the road, where many travellers are sure to pass, telling about
her pictures. These she displays on a stand in the form of hanging scrolls (kakejiku 掛軸). The one she is pointing at with a staff has the basic circular arrangement of a mandala depicting heavens and hells. This puts it squarely in the tradition of Indian yamapaṭa and Tibetan ma-ṇi-pa (see below). She seems at this moment to be discussing the character kokoro 心 (“heart-mind”). Behind her is a large box that must have been difficult to carry and which was used to hold her scroll pictures. Her young assistant holds out a cup to solicit donations. There is no musical instrument evident. A wholly different setting is portrayed in Ruch’s Figure 4 (dated 1804). This illustration shows a “nun” performing etoki for two ladies at court or, perhaps, in their house. She is gesticulating while the ladies look at the scroll, which is unrolled on the floor. A little girl covers her face with a handkerchief as though she were crying. The box for storing and transporting her scrolls, similar to that carried by the “singing nun” in Ruch’s Figure 5, is placed near the performer. No musical instrument is noticeable. According to one report, beggars in Japan during the early part of this century were still showing similar pictures of hell (called yemma yezu [enma 閻魔絵圖]) and singing stories about them.

One striking aspect of Japanese etoki that helps us to understand other traditions of storytelling with pictures is the wide variety of formats employed. There are hanging scrolls with subdivisions into sections, horizontal scrolls that are unrolled on a stand or on the floor as the narration progresses, paintings that are unfolded and hung up and, in some cases, sets of illustrations in booklet form that were used when the performer went from house to house. There were even sets of dolls or figurines that the etoki performer would display by the side of the road. As he arranged the dolls in different ways and against varying backgrounds, he would tell stories about them. What this amounts to is a type of movable etoki tableau, as it were. Or one might look upon narratives told with dolls as incipient puppet plays.

In the Collection of Antiquities by Edo Seisei (d. 1816), there is an old line drawing, said to date from the Kan’ei reign period (1624–1643). It is entitled “Picture Explanations by Nuns Who Promote Virtue” (kanjin bikuni no etoki, 勸進比丘尼絵解). The drawing depicts two “nuns” facing each other and holding picture-scrolls in their hands. They are gesturing, apparently in rhythm. Spectators are looking on. In front of the nuns is a “cow king box” (goōbako 牛王箱), which probably con-
tained their paraphernalia. It is significant that these nuns are said to be from Kumano (熊野), an area sacred to Buddhism and Shinto. Indeed, women who specialized in showing pictures were often referred to simply as Kumano bikuni (比丘尼), “Kumano priestesses or nuns.” Men were called etoki hōshi (繪解法師), “picture-explaining priests.”

Ruch’s remarks on the social and religious status of these “priests” and “priestesses” are illuminating. These people were actually from a very low level of society and performed religious and semireligious ceremonies for shrines and temples. Etoki performances of engi (緣起), “legends concerning the founding of a temple and the deities worshipped there,” and eden (繪傳), “illustrated biographies of important religious figures,” were not considered to be menial tasks. On the other hand, they were not undertaken by the ordained nuns and monks either. “In general ..., such highly specialized performing arts seemed to be the province of people from the bottom level of society who were associated with temples but not fully involved with religious pursuits.” This corresponds closely to what we know of similar folk performers in India, Central Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, Indonesia, and China. That the Kumano bikuni were not really ordained Buddhist nuns at all is brought out in this account of Ichiro Hori:

In medieval times, especially during the Ashikaga period (1338–1573), the mountain ascetics (yamabushi or shugen-ja) of Mount Kumano sometimes married shamanesses and wandered with them from village to village throughout Japan. Because the Kumano-shugen-ja had been controlled by Mantrayâna Buddhist Tendai and Shing-on sects, the wives of shugen-ja were colloquially called nuns (bikuni). They traveled from village to village to preach the way to salvation in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha and the moralistic theory of causality, designating as etoki boards on which pictures of paradise (Jōdo) and hell were painted. They lived on offerings from the villagers.

In Japan there was also a distinction made between those etoki hōshi who operated in and around shrines or temples and those who stationed themselves at the roadside or in the marketplace. Like their counterparts elsewhere, etoki performers were not always what they seemed to be in other respects as well. Reminiscent of the accounts in Indian literature of spies who disguised themselves as yamapaṭṭaka (painters and explainers
of pictures about hell) is a scene from a play by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1725) called Shume Hōgan Morihisa (主馬判官盛久), probably written in 1686.  

Some women try to impersonate Kumano bikuni in order to get permission to pass through a road barrier. What is most interesting is that they do not even have in their possession the picture-scrolls habitually carried by Kumano bikuni. Instead they attempt to improvise a performance using the small scroll with pictures of heaven and hell that is inside the portable Buddhist altar the travellers carry, as is customary, for protection. That a group of women could hope to deceive the barrier guards by such a ploy or that a spy could gain entrance to an important official’s house in the guise of a yamapaṭṭaka is surely indicative of the enormous popularity of picture-storytelling in seventeenth-century Japan and in eighth-century India. Rather than drawing attention to oneself, a person who had adopted the guise of picture-storyteller was effectively concealed from suspicion. Like the later kamishibai (“picture-card show” 紙芝居, literally “paper theater”) entertainers for children and the Bengali paṭuā, they must have been such common figures on the roads that—except for those interested in hearing and watching a story illustrated with pictures—other people scarcely paid them any attention.

As to whether written texts were used or not during performance, according to Ruch, “all the evidence points to etoki who memorized or extemporized on their narrations but who read the snatches of conversation written on the pictures of the scrolls as they reached out to point to scenes.” This is in basic agreement with many types of Indian and Indonesian picture-storytelling but is especially important for understanding why verses were written on the back of the Śāriputra scroll (P4524). Even a low level of literacy might be sufficient for reading a very limited number of brief inscriptions with which the performer was intimately familiar through long training and practice. The written inscriptions probably were not meant to serve as a text to rely on since, through repeated performance, the storyteller would quickly memorize them. They must have been intended, rather, as a reminder that these were the parts of the oral narration (most likely the verse) that were not to be tampered with. They were what gave structure to the narrative and, as such, should remain unchanged. In some cases, however, no texts were used at all.
In Japan today there are still approximately fifty different temples in which individuals regularly perform etoki. Most contemporary etoki use hanging scrolls, in sets ranging from two to eight in number. They do occasionally use a horizontal handscroll very much in the format of P4524. One particularly interesting religious hanging scroll with many scenes is a pictorial biography of the priest Rennyo 蓮如上人御遺徳繪傳 published by the temple called Gankei-ji 願慶寺 on the mountain named Yoshizaki-san 吉崎山 in the province of Echizen 越前, which lies northwest of Kyoto on the Japan Sea. As we have discovered so often in Asian picture-telling traditions, trees are utilized in this etoki to divide scenes with registers.

Kamishibai—the “picture-card show”—is a kind of storytelling that, as late as 1950, was still enormously popular in the Japanese countryside. It has been estimated that at that date there were yet active some 25,000 players. In spite of the poor documentation (as is the case, incidentally, with nearly all other types of folk arts in Japan and elsewhere until recently), the magnitude of their impact on society was tremendous. Satoshi Kako calls kamishibai a type of early-day television. With the advent of that modern electronic device, however, its primitive forerunner faded from the streets with amazing rapidity. Kamishibai now is to be found, for the most part, only in primary school classrooms as a teaching device and devoid of its traditional associations. Very few Japanese under age forty whom I approached had ever heard of kamishibai as a form of street entertainment.

“Uncle kamishibai” usually carried with him three sets of pictures for telling separate stories. Each set consisted of approximately ten thick paper sheets or light boards of illustrations. The sheets would be inserted one after another into a box with a large, fixed-frame aperture. The most important words that went along with a given scene would be written on the back of the sheet. The box, during this century, was most often attached to the back of a bicycle. The kamishibai player would ride about from neighborhood to neighborhood, striking his wooden clapper or beating on a small drum to attract the attention of children. When a crowd had gathered, he would sell them sweets or, more rarely, books, medals, and trinkets that even poor children could afford. Those who bought from him would be permitted to stand up front where they could see and hear clearly. This is how the kamishibai player earned his living. One is reminded of the old folk doctor of the American
frontier. It is difficult to say which of his wares were more important—the remedies, potions, and appliances or the bombastic rhetoric and showmanship. In both cases, what was important is that a minor entertainment “event” took place that relieved the participants of the tedium of everyday life.

The origins of *kamishibai* are lost in obscurity but may, perhaps, be traced back to so-called “shadow-pictures” (*kage-e* 影絵). It has also been suggested that they may have been imported from Germany during the nineteenth century. Peep shows or raree shows were indeed introduced to Japan from abroad and were known during the Meiji period (1866–1912) as *nozoki karakuri* 顕からくり (“peep gimmick”) or *karakuri-megane* からくり眼鏡 (“gimmicky glasses”) (note that puppets and marionettes may be referred to as *karakuri-ningyō* からくり人形, “gimmicky dolls”). It would seem, however, that the technique of *kamishibai* was derived from a combination of influences (*etoki, kage-e*. Middle Eastern and European picture boxes, etc.). Be that as it may, *kamishibai* clearly falls within the general development of Asian picture-storytelling.

In Tibet, the functional equivalent of *wayang bèb èr dalang* and *pien* performer until recent times has been *ma-ṇi-pa*. These are itinerant storytellers who recite edifying tales while showing the episodes on a painting that they carry with them. They also engage in a certain amount of mime during the explanation of the pictures. Guiseppe Tucci has described the practice in detail:

The custom survives in Tibet; in the fairs, places of pilgrimage and bazaars of the chief cities one frequently meets itinerant lamas or laymen, who sing to a devoutly spellbound audience wonderful stories about Padmasambhava and the glories of Amitabha’s heaven, showing as they sing, on large tankas they unroll, the pictorial representation of the events or miracles they are relating. Often they repeat tales in verse, reciting them in a sort of sing-song, and drawing them from a special section of sacred literature, called *gsol adebs*, hymns or invocations; the saint is invoked in each verse, with a brief allusion to one of the most remarkable episodes of his life, a vision he had or a miracle he performed; some tankas ... are precisely illustrated *gsol adebs*.
In his *Recherches sur l’épopée et le barde au Tibet*, Rolf Stein shows a *ma-ṇi-pa* at a temple in Ghoom (near Darjeeling) during a festival. He has hung up his tanka (Tibetan *thaṅka*, a religious painting that is usually mounted on fabric) on the wall and is sitting down to the left of it. He has set a plate in front of the tanka, most likely for expected donations.

Sven Hedin gives a firsthand account of a *ma-ṇi-pa* performance: “Pious visitors also frequent my courtyard: two nuns, for instance, with a large tanka representing a series of complicated episodes from the holy scriptures. While one chants the explanation, the other points with a stick to the corresponding picture. She sings so sweetly and with so much feeling that it is a pleasure to listen to her.” For a photograph of these so-called “nuns,” see Plate X.

Frederick Spencer-Chapman, who travelled in western Tibet during the years 1936–1937, photographed two adult male *ma-ṇi-pa* reciters and their two young male assistants. One of the reciters has a prayer wheel and both are wearing packs to carry their picture-scrolls. These itinerant entertainers would hang their tankas by the side of the road and chant the stories depicted on them.

Like their counterparts in many other lands, the *ma-ṇi-pa* possessed clear shamanistic traits. Their very name reveals them to be adepts equipped through Avalokiteśvara’s initiation with the “power” (*dbang*) to recite the “lotus” formula—*Om maṇi padme huṃ* (“Oh, Jewel [maṇi] in the Lotus!”). Apart from their picture-storytelling, they also performed various rituals that demonstrated their unusual powers.

A final, key observation about the *ma-ṇi-pa* is that their subjects were largely the same as those enacted in Tibetan plays. This is a clear analogy to the *wayang* tradition and stands as further confirmation of the unified nature of narrative in Asian storytelling and drama.

The epic of Gesar (or Kesar [< Caesar]) of Ling was enormously popular in Tibet and Mongolia. The men who wandered about telling it resembled picture-storytellers elsewhere in Asia in many respects. Since this was still a living tradition in the first half of the twentieth century, it might be well to quote *in extenso* the observations of a student of Tibetan culture, George Roerich, regarding it:

> Among the rhapsodists of the Kesar Epic one finds both professional itinerant rhapsodists, distinguished by a special costume, and ordinary laymen, both men and women. The recital
of the epic may take anything from three to ten days. The epic is sung or often read drawlingly. A professional rhapsodist may often improvise whole passages while reciting it. I still vividly remember my experience with a rhapsodist of the Kesar Epic whom I had invited to write it down. This rhapsodist continually improvised passages and whenever I asked him to repeat the passage sung by him, he would always sing it in a slightly different version. Professional rhapsodists seldom use manuscripts of the epic during recitals. They know it by heart and often sing it in a sort of trance. Laymen on the contrary read it from a manuscript, and seldom know it by heart, except for a few passages. Itinerant rhapsodists are distinguished by a special costume. These rhapsodists (sgruṅ-pa, pronounced ḏruṅ-pa, or sgruṅ-bšad) wear on the head a special high hat, called the “rhapsodist’s hat” or sgruṅ-žwa. The hat is white and is adorned with the images of the Sun and Moon. It is a pointed hat with three triangular shaped sides, edged with red. On his body a rhapsodist wears a white Tibetan coat or chu-pa. It is noteworthy that the colour of the hat and coat is white, white being the colour of the ceremonial garments worn by Bon-po priests and exorcists. An itinerant rhapsodist of the Kesar Epic always carries with him a painted image or than-ka representing the life story of king Kesar, and an arrow adorned with multicoloured (blue, green, yellow, and red) ceremonial scarfs or kha-btags. With the help of this arrow or dā-tar (mda’-dar) the rhapsodist points out the various episodes of the Kesar Epic depicted on the painting. Some of the more famous rhapsodists are accompanied on their journeys by a troop of disciples who learn the art of singing and reciting the epic. In the Amdo Province of North-East Tibet the rhapsodists of the Kesar Epic often belong to the ancient Bon faith. Very often a rhapsodist of the Kesar Epic is also well known as an exorcist. Among the Goloks and the Hor-pas of North-East Tibet the epic is recited during funeral ceremonies. Before such a recital a flat platform is prepared and the floor is strewn with rtsam-pa or barley flour. The listeners sit around the platform and the rhapsodist sits facing the platform. The recital continues for several days. It is commonly said that frequently hoof-prints appear on the platform, and these are believed to represent the hoof-prints of the mighty steed of king Kesar, invoked by the rhapsodist. Some of the rhapsodists lead a sedentary life and marry. In such cases the sons often follow their fathers and become rhapsodists in their turn. In Western Tibet, in Ladak, the Kesar Epic is sung by village musicians or bedas. One of the versions of the epic recorded by Dr. A. H. Francke (his “first manuscript”) was recited
by a girl of about sixteen years of age (Indian Antiquary, vol. XXX, 1901, p. 330). In some districts of Tibet the Kesar Epic and its singers were persecuted by the Lamaist clergy and this somewhat reflected on the popularity of the epic (king Kesar is popularly believed to be the mortal enemy of the yi-dam ICam-srin).  

It is evident from this description that Roerich’s “rhapsodist of the Kesar Epic” possessed pronounced shamanistic traits; that he was normally an itinerant; that he utilized a picture to illustrate his tale or, perhaps more accurately, that his tale was an explanation of a pictorial representation of the story of Gesar; that he used a pointer to mark various scenes on the picture; that he often had apprentices; and that he was sometimes at odds with the religious establishment. All of this is in agreement with what we know of other picture-storytelling traditions in Asia. Furthermore, Roerich’s report that the professional teller of the Gesar epic did not resort to a text while “laymen” (i.e., nonprofessionals as entertainers—both were laymen in the sense of not being ordained monks) who dabbled in it did keep written versions from which they read is highly significant. This confirms our understanding not only of the situation in South and Southeast Asia but in Tun-huang as well. The written transformation texts (pien-wen) discovered at Tun-huang were neither for nor by the professional teller of transformations; they were the preserve of the very individuals who copied them down and passed them about among friends. There is no clear indication that such copies of popular literary texts were sold commercially until during the Sung period when, with the “sprouts of capitalism” and the development of printing, enterprise in the book trade became a reality.

An Iranian analogue of Indian śaubhika, yamapaṭṭaka, and other picture showmen is şūrat khwān. In his Persian-English Dictionary, F. Steinglass defines the term as specifying “one who pictures the state of angels and men as to reward and punishment on the day of resurrection, and receives a remuneration for it from the bystanders.” 34 Steinglass was undoubtedly relying on the Persian dictionary Bahār-i ‘ajam [Persian Spring], compiled in 1760, which defines ściēt-ch(w)ān as “someone who, sitting in marketplaces, displays and lectures for people on figures of gods and men and their treatment on the day of resurrection, both rewards and punishments, and receives some (money) from them.” 35 Ananda Coomaraswamy offers the following invaluable discussion of the origins of şūrat khwān:
This is clearly a parallel to the Indian Yamapaṭika. šūrat also means puppet and in the Persian popular theatre the reader or singer for the puppets is called khwān or khon; he usually prefaced his performance by the recitation of a religious poem called rāk-i-hindi. Martinovitch, to whom I owe this information, renders this “the Indian way,” but it seems much more likely that rāk = rāg, and thus the meaning should be “Indian song or tune.” In any case there is here some positive evidence for an Indian origin of the puppet show in Persia, or at least for Indian influence in the manner of its presentation, and this supports the idea of an Indian origin for the šūrat khwān. 36

Coomaraswamy’s remarks are important also because they point to the evolutionary unity of picture-storytelling and puppet plays, which is one of the main theses of this study.

There is, in Iran, another type of picture showman called parda-zan. That the form of entertainment he provides is probably foreign to Iran can be deduced from one of its other names, shahr-i farang (“foreign city,” i.e., “city of the Franks”). It is also referred to as Hazrat-i ‘Abbās after the martyred Shiite saint who is the chief subject of the story told. The Soviet ethnographer, R. A. Galunov, who studied the parda-zan in Teheran during the year 1927, referred to their performances as “itinerant picture theatre.” 37 In a way that plainly recalls the pien formula (“Please look at the place..., 且看...處”), the parda-zan invites the viewers to “Look at the place of the murder! Look at the martyr!” 38 Galunov’s Figure 20 shows a crowd of people around an elaborate box that houses the pictures. However, Persian parda (I have been unable to determine conclusively whether this is cognate with Sanskrit pat, though I suspect that it is) means basically sheet or curtain. 39 The original form of Iranian storytelling with pictures was called parda-dāri (“owning or possessing the parda”) and the person who performed it was the parda-dār. This was clearly more like the hanging picture sheets used in par, etoki, German picture-storytelling, and so on. 40 It cannot, for example, be sheer happenstance that the lead singer in a Rajasthani par performance is called the paradāri bhopo.

Judging from the photographs of parda-dār that I have seen (Color Plates 7 and 8), the paintings measure approximately 4½ feet by 13 feet. They are painted in bright, bold colors and are densely packed with large and small figures. The outlines and features of all the figures are clearly delineated. The central
personage is nearly always the hero-martyr, Hosein, on his magnificent horse and with sword in hand. There is much blood and gore, all graphically depicted. The colors, density, heroic postures, and general themes of the parda all contribute to making them strikingly attractive and powerful. The parda is hung on the external wall of a building along some busy street (as in a bazaar) where the performer is likely to attract a crowd without too much difficulty. The performer (or performers—sometimes they work as a pair) stands in front of the parda and, singing and declaiming, explains its contents. The performer himself is imposing, what with his full beard, fez, and long, often deep purple, robes. He refers to no printed material during the performance nor, to the best of my knowledge, do there exist any written texts of these essentially oral narratives. I am not aware that any musical instrument is used as accompaniment for this type of storytelling. At appropriate moments, he points with a cane to various scenes on the parda to illustrate his narrative. The onlookers who gather to listen and watch usually give him a few coins. Should a constable come to harass him, he will immediately begin to sing the praises of the sheriff who is painted on the upper right corner for just this purpose. This meager attempt at self-protection would appear to be a necessity because the parda-dār performers have long been persecuted by the authorities. The latter scorn them because they are manifestations of rude, folk culture and fear them because their performances are sometimes capable of stirring the people to protest. An essential component of all parda sessions is copious weeping.

Though we might consider the parda-dār to be a sort of folk priest, he receives no recognition from the religious establishment; no imam, mullah, or ayatollah he. Persians make a clear distinction between the mollā-ākhond- ayatollāh group who have formal religious training (no matter how little) and the entertainer. Parda-dār perform no legal religious functions, nor do they officiate in mosques. They are not recognized by the ecclesiastical authorities because they do not represent the Islam of the books and the law, but rather popular folk belief, which is always in tension with what the religious establishment tries to promote. After centuries of government interference with their performances, the parda-dār are now very hard to locate and carry out their tradition only in remote, provincial towns and villages. This situation parallels quite closely the fate of pien performers in Sung China and pao-chüan reciters in the People’s Republic.
Another Iranian picture recitation tradition is that of the *shamāyel-gardān* (literally, “picture/portrait circulator”). The performers usually travel in pairs with their religious pictures. One carries the pictures and explains the stories depicted on them; the other sings at appropriate moments, sometimes slapping his chest for rhythm. Shamāyel-gardān is essentially the same thing as *parda dār*, and the two terms are used interchangeably today.

The connection between Iranian religious storytelling with pictures and the primary stages of development of folk drama has been recognized by Jiří Cejpek with regard to the performance of the *parda-zan*: “It is but a small step from alluding to simple pictures as accompaniment to a narrative about a saint, to having his story actually dramatised by live persons.” This observation of a real historical process perfectly coincides with the argument I have been making about the evolution of folk and popular literature in parts of Asia farther east.

In Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, there is a type of entertainment similar to that of the *parda-zan* which is called *ṣandūk al-‘ajāyib* (“wonder [cf. pien in the sense of *shen-pien* 神變] box”). The storyteller carries it around on his back, announcing his presence with a klaxon. When he finds an audience, he sets up the box on its stand and collects a few pennies from each of the children and occasional grownups who will watch. The box has six holes with magnifying glasses inserted. Illumination is provided by a candle inside the box. The stories may be about contemporary figures and events, or they may tell of ancient legends and epics. As in Indian and Japanese picture-telling, descriptions of heaven and hell are favorite subjects. The audience is directed to each new scene as it is rolled before their eyes with the invitation “Shūf iṭ-ṭalla’ ya-‘yūnī” (“Look/observe, my dear [literally, eyes]”). The stories are memorized and told in a combination of prose and verse. The verse utilizes a common musical meter that has a long tradition in a variety of popular literary forms. At the conclusion of the session, the storyteller causes a set of blinds to drop before the eyes of the audience and recites the final verse:

Your turn is over, my dear,
You who have paid the Syrian frank [five Syrian piastres].

*Khalāṣ dawrak ya-‘yūnī.*
Yā abūl frank es-sūrī. 44

Georg Jacob has identified the *tamāthīl* of eleventh-century Shiite Egypt as a form of storytelling with pictures. 45 The basic meaning of *tamāthīl* is “quotation of examples” → “exemplification” → “portrayal” → “picturing” or “illustration” and hence “[dramatic] representation.” 46 In the modern Arab world, *tamāthīl* still exists, and its most popular stories are hero tales. The pictures illustrating the story are painted in bright colors on a long canvas roll, which is wound from one side of a wooden frame to the other as the story unfolds. 47

Throughout the Arabic-speaking world and dating back to at least the fourteenth century, the *Saga of the Sons of Hilāl* (Sīrat Banī Hilāl) has been well known as a kind of profane counter to Islamic religious literature. It is a popular epic that deals with the wandering of the Hilali tribe from the Arabian peninsula across North Africa and down into the Sudan. The events narrated in the epic are said to have occurred during the eighth and ninth centuries. It was told in colloquial language by professional outcaste bards who were illiterate. Unlike the classical Koranic tradition, the epic was always recited in dialect. Chapbooks of the epic do exist, however, and they were taken down from performance by local nonelite literates. The secular, unsanctioned nature of the epic made it liable to charges of subversion. What is particularly interesting for our present purposes is that the epic was sometimes recited in the presence of paintings under glass that graphically depicted various memorable scenes. After the recitation, the bard might sell off some of the paintings. There are records of this convergence of painting and recitation for eighteenth-century Tunisia, though I suspect that its antecedents are still earlier. Some of the artistic motifs clearly come from Iran. Virtually every aspect of the epic performance that is outlined here—except the specific narrative content—is consonant with picture recitation in the other pan-Asian traditions we have examined in this study. 48

Moving northward into Europe, we find that picture recitation was also widespread there. During the Middle Ages in South Italy, there grew up the practice of reading the *praecanonium paschale* from illuminated scroll pictures called “exultet rolls.” These rolls are so denominated because the Easter vigil service in which they are used begins with the exhortation *exultet* (rejoice!). Most of the rolls date from the tenth to twelfth centuries. 49 They are in a vertical format, like the Bengali *paṭa*. The deacon would stand in the pulpit and, pointing with his
index finger to the appropriate pictures, unroll the scroll over the front of the ambo so that it would hang down before the congregation.  

The text was usually inserted alternately between the various scenes and upside-down so that the deacon could read from it directly. The earliest known scrolls, however, did not have the text written in upside-down. Occasionally the texts were destroyed, cut away, erased, rewritten, or rearranged in the opposite direction. Hence it would appear that the illustrations were primary and the written texts secondary. Nonetheless, since there is no true Roman liturgica extant older than that of the ninth century, it is possible that the use of exultet rolls in religious services has some connection to its formation. Two other interesting features of the exultet rolls are that the texts include neums instructing the deacon in the correct manner of singing them and that, on at least one, the Vatican MS. Latin 9820, Christ is pictured inside what could well be described as a maṇḍala.

At the Museo del Duomo in Salerno, there are illustrations of Bible stories in blue, red, and gold that were used like films. These paintings date to the twelfth or thirteenth century and consist of eleven sheets approximately 24 inches by 18 inches.”

The earliest attested predecessors of modern Italian picture reciters can be traced back to the first half of the sixteenth century and were known as cantambanco (var. cantimpanca, cantainbanca, cantambanca, cantambanchessa, cantambanchina = “bench-singer”). Some of the variant forms are feminine, which indicates that women must have been involved in early Italian picture recitation. From seventeenth-and eighteenth-century paintings (see Figures 10–12), we know that the cantambanco sometimes worked alone and sometimes in pairs. When they performed in pairs, the singer would accompany himself on a guitar and his partner would indicate the appropriate scene with a pointer. Various media (carved wooden triptyches, hanging banners, and so forth) would be used as the illustrative material. A portion of their earnings derived from the sale of printed versions of their songs and stories and cheap pictures. Their social status in the seventeenth century is determinable by their customary association with magic, swindlery, skulduggery, quackery, charlatanism, puppetry, and even acrobatics. Some of the earliest cantambanco were blind or affected blindness. Their performances were a combination of comedy, horror, and profanity in varying degrees. In the seventeenth century, they were also called ciur-
madore and cerretano, while in the twentieth century they have been styled cantastorie. The pictorial layouts they used normally had multiple scenes represented (from seven to thirty-five in the ones I have seen and read about). A 1790 engraving (Figure 13) by Giuseppe Testi of the picture reciter Luigi Pergola shows that it was even possible to recite before a large crowd with the aid of a medium-sized picture-book. Like most other picture reciters around the world, Italian reciters were usually itinerants and, together with their audiences, came from the poorest levels of society (see Figure 15; cf. Figure 74). In Sicily today, the cantastorie still sing stories of legendary heroes and contemporary criminals. They usually accompany themselves on a guitar and display large, garishly painted canvas banners. The banners are divided into sections illustrating various episodes of the stories they tell. The cantastorie travels about (some now by car) with several of these banners and mounts them on a pole for all the audience to see.

Italian puppet theater showbills reveal a direct link to the narrative illustrations of cantastorie. The puppets too are made to appear like the figures in the storyteller’s pictures and the plots used in the two genres are identical. This is reminiscent of the Indian, Indonesian, and Chinese dramatic narrative traditions.

In Germany, the analogue of Asian picture reciters was called Bänkelsänger (“bench-singer”); Marktsänger (“market-singer”); Strassensänger (“street singer”); Zeitungssänger (“news-singer”); Ständlisänger (“stand-up singer”); and Schildersänger (“picture-singer”). They are also sometimes referred to as Moritat, the precise meaning of which is uncertain. One of the earliest textual references to a German picture reciter, in the 1536 account book of the town of Ochsenfurt, simply called him a Spilman (Spielmann, “street-player” or “minstrel”). The first pictorial evidence for picture recitation in Germany dates from around 1485 and is found in a drawing from the Hausbuch der Fürsten Waldburg-Wolfegg (see Figure 28). J. Scheible’s Die Fliegenden Blätter reprints many Bänkelsang texts from the first quarter of the seventeenth century and a few from the sixteenth century, including one dated 1520. There are other grounds for placing the origins of Bänkelsang in Germany at least back to the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

Most of the Bänkelsänger were itinerants. Their performance was usually quite straightforward. First came an announcement or advertisement and that was followed by a pro-
logue. Then there was a series of song verses, alternating with prose explanations. At the beginning of some verse sections came a line that is remarkably similar to the *pien-wen* pre-verse formula: "Look at this picture ..." ("Betrachtet dies Bild hier ..."). 64

The best account of the early history of these itinerant picture-storytellers may be found in Rolf Brednich’s article entitled “Zur Vorgeschichte des Bänkelsangs.” 65 He traces them back as far as the beginning of the seventeenth century and gives one reference to the year 1536. 66 It may be speculated that the forerunners of the *Bänkelsang* were introduced from Italy with the exultet scrolls and wandering *ju glares* (jongleurs). Since, however, many of the oldest known pictorial records of *Bänkelsänger* show them performing with folding caselike triptyches or diptyches, it is impossible to say precisely in what form they entered Germany and from where. I would mention only that I have seen Indian boxes (e.g., the Rajasthani *kāvar*) hinged in such a way that they can be opened to reveal a series of pictures that are used by storytellers to illustrate their tales. Japanese *etoki* also sometimes employed similar devices as did seventeenth-century Italian *cantambanco*.

To give some idea of the nature of early *Bänkelsang* performances, I shall describe three of the plates in Brednich’s article. In the first plate (Figure 34 here), a reproduction of an anonymous copperplate engraving that dates from 1721, 67 we see a man and a woman standing on a bench (a primitive sort of stage, whence the name “bench-singer”) that has been set up outside the door of someone’s house. Underneath the bench is a boxlike object with two projecting poles and what appears to be a supporting strip joining them. Judging from its size and shape, this could well be a pack-frame for carrying pictures and other equipment used by the ballad singers. Behind them two large picture-sheets (approximately 5 feet by 3 feet each) are hanging; the thick vertical support of one is clearly lashed with rope to the bench and it is likely that the second sheet is hanging from a horizontal support that extends from the first, although this is not visible in the engraving. Both of the picture-sheets are weighted at the bottom by thick, wooden rods. The perspective is such that it is impossible that either of the sheets could be hanging on the wall of the house. All that can be seen of the picture on the first sheet, behind the male singer, is the raised leg of a man and a hand holding a sword. I surmise that it may be a portrait of the bandit leader Louis Dominique Car-
tacular trial that captured the attention of all Europe. At the bottom of the first sheet is a large acorn, which may have served as the artist’s signature. The second picture-sheet is manifestly about Cartouche. It depicts grisly scenes of mutilated bodies hanging from a gallows, being turned on a wheel, and impaled (?) on a stake. From its perch on the gallows, a skull presides over all. At the top of the sheet, there are four words, “La Bande de Cartouche,” which serve as a label. The male performer is pointing with morbid gusto to a particular spot on the second picture-sheet with a long, thin stick that tapers to an end. In his right hand is a promptbook, which he is not referring to at the moment, or it may be a copy of the news-sheets about the execution that are for sale and extras of which the man has tucked in his waist. To his right, at the other end of the bench, stands the female singer, who is obviously portrayed in the midst of her performance. Her left hand rests on her hip and her right hand holds a promptbook that is in position for convenient reference.

Both the man and the woman appear to be seasoned professionals. Their seeming reliance on printed texts is most likely due to the fact that they served as news-singers (see below) and hence had to change their ballads and recitations frequently. Captions in French and German beneath the engraving refer to the pair as “John Blowbag, Licensed Market and News Singer, with his Musically Talented Wife.” John must have done most of the talking and his wife most of the singing. The audience consists of a woman and a child. Although we see them from the back, the quizzical posture and the pointed left index finger of the woman as well as the raised, outspread right hand of the boy indicate that they are properly spellbound and fittingly aghast. At the bottom of the engraving is a short poem, probably as it would have been spoken by the man, written both in French and German. I offer the following crude translation:

Listen to what happened to Cartouche and his band,
How they were executed, as usual, on wheel and with rope,
Which you would know if you look not blindly
upon this sheet (Taffel, tableau),
And which my song will tell you more about.
Oh! thus must every thief die too,
And the hangman will make a fortune from it.
This may well have been the sort of ballad singer who was satirized by Daniel Chodowiecki in his *Reformation of Morals* (1787, see Figure 41) and in an almanac compiled by Friedrich Nicolai and illustrated by Chodowiecki:

_Eyn feyner, kleyner Almanach Vol schönnerr liblicherr Volckslieder, lustigerr Reyen unndt kleglicher Mordgeschichte, gesungen von Gabriel Wunderlich, weyl. Benkelsengerrn zu Dessaw....

A fine little almanac full of beautiful, charming folksongs, merry and lamentable tales of murder sung by Gabriel Wunderlich [Wonderful], formerly ballad-singer in Dessau....

Brednich’s second plate (Figure 32) depicts a singer, mouth wide open, with a hinged triptych that has been elevated for easy viewing, on a small table. The nine scenes within the opened triptych are carved in relief. In front stand six pious children in rapt attention.

Brednich’s third plate (Figure 78) shows an enormous diptych standing high above a crowd of observers. A singer, again with mouth wide open, also stands above the crowd, probably on the same bench with the diptych. The singer has casually hung his tricorne over the front edge of the diptych. His left hand holds a long, thin stick that points to the middle of the top row of scenes, which apparently depicts Christ on the cross. In his right hand are some sheets of paper (probably texts for sale). In this market setting, the women passersby who have chores to do (note the heavy water pails) and the children tugging at their skirts evince far less interest than the men, who seem to demonstrate genuine curiosity.

It is important to observe that the _Bänkelsänger_ sometimes earned a part of their living by selling copies of the ballads they sang and the commercial broad-sheets called *Neue Zeitung*, which were written versions of the stories they told. The _Bänkelsang_ performance was, in a sense, an advertisement for the published wares. The _Bänkelsänger_ sold other sorts of goods, including quack medicines, at parish fairs, entertainment centers, and elsewhere. This is reminiscent of the Japanese _kamishibai_ performers, who survived by selling candy to the children in their audience, or those Bengali _paṭuā_ who peddled their paintings to pilgrims. There is also good evidence that _Bänkelsangs_ were performed in close association with
other types of entertainment such as puppets (see Figures 48 and 51). Bänkelsänger might be hired to perform at private parties (Figure 49) and they were often found in various processions (Figure 71).

By chance, I discovered a copy of a 1588 copper engraving of an itinerant merchant selling Neue Zeitung (Figure 29). Based on a drawing by Jost Amman, it is entitled “Der Kramer mit der Neue Zeitung” and was printed by Jacob Kempner. On his cap, the merchant has affixed a tiny card that reads (in German): “New Daily of France. Frightful assassination of the Duke of Guise.” This refers to the event of the same year (1588) that took place at Blois. In his right hand, the merchant holds a view of the city of Orléans. His left hand holds a folded picture of the battle of the Armada (also 1588). The verse patter imputed to the merchant (not shown in the figure as reproduced in this book) says that he brings news of France and England and that he “scorns” his competitors “who deceive and mock you” (meaning his customers). The caption goes on to say that he gives a good bargain because he needs the money.

There exist other examples of drawings of Neue Zeitung sellers and analogous vendors in France (see Figures 31 and 76), so we may assume that they were fairly commonplace in sixteenth-and seventeenth-century Germany and elsewhere in Europe. But we may not assume that literacy was so widespread that all auditors would be prompted to buy the printed texts. An illustration for a 1619 picture recitation shows an encounter between a Neue Zeitung seller and a peasant (see Figure 30b). The accompanying text says that the peasant does not want to buy the merchant’s broadsheets because he would not be able to understand them.

Anne Pellowski has brought together in convenient compass a great deal of valuable information regarding the mode of operation of the Bänkelsänger, The Bänkelsänger were active from the late sixteenth century, as we have seen, to the beginning of the twentieth century in German-speaking areas of Europe. There were similar performers in other language areas of Europe but they have scarcely been studied at all. It should be noted that these street-singers were despised as being among the lowest classes of society. In Basel, Swiss Morithaten were considered by individuals of refined taste to be so abominable that they would sometimes call in the police to disrupt the performances. In spite of this, the masses delighted in listening to them. The audiences consisted mostly of the petty bourgeois, workers, and domestic servants.
Bänkelsänger would wander about from place to place in search of people who were interested in watching him perform. He would set up a stand, often in a town square and especially during market season, and upon it he would hang a large picture. In front of the picture he would place a bench so that he could stand above the crowd during his performance. Pelowski’s Plates 12 and 13 reproduce two marvelous scenes of Bänkelsänger in action. The first dates from 1740 and shows a village setting. The second is from the mid-nineteenth century and vividly portrays a crowded market setting in a town or city. The Bänkelsänger has a hand organ that he cranks with one hand and in the other he holds a pointer.

The performance consisted of singing and chanting about the picture as the Bänkelsänger pointed to the appropriate parts of it. The subjects of his narration were often topical events of a sensational nature such as fires, robberies, murders, and so on. The Bänkels änger would ask for donations during their performances but they also earned their living by sale to the audience of printed versions of the sung narratives. The printed narratives were called Fliegenden Blätter or Flugblätter (both of these names mean approximately “flying sheets”), and Flugschriften, (“flying papers”). The former were sheets printed on one side, usually just one picture with a simple text. Other types of vendors also might sell these but usually they were to be obtained from the Bänkels änger themselves. The latter were more elaborate, sometimes reaching as many as fifty pages in length and with fewer pictures in proportion to the amount of text. The printing was generally of the poorest quality and the paper used was crude and rough. One publisher who issued a tremendous number of Bänkelsänger texts during the second half of the nineteenth century was Ernst Reiche of Schwiebus. He had an in-house writer named Zerndt, an elementary school instructor, who composed them for him. The Bänkels änger themselves were also known to commission poetasters, jesters, and teachers to write songs for them. Occasionally, as for example was the case with the family Damm, the Bänkels änger would compose their own texts, especially the picture explanations in prose.

The Bänkels änger, who were common fixtures at fairs and in markets, frequently punctuated their performances by such invitations and commands as “Listen! See this! Here! Hear!” The 1933 film Hitlerjunge Quex, directed by Hans Steinhoff,
includes a local carnival scene with an anti-Nazi Moritat performer. This device was apparently modelled after a film of the Dreigroschenoper (Three Penny Opera).  

Bertolt Brecht’s Three Penny Opera is, in essence, a dramatized B änke sang performance. Although he borrowed the plot from John Gay’s (1685–1732) The Beggar’s Opera, the mode of presentation is strictly Brecht’s own invention. The intended effect is that of a street singer singing an extended ballad in which he narrates the whole play. It is, in a sense, an operatic elaboration and parody of the “Moritat von Mackie Messer (Ballad of Mack the Knife).” The characters, of course, soon step out from the illustrative stage tableaux and begin to sing and speak for themselves. At various important points (compare shih 時 and ch’u 處 of the pien tradition) in the play, a board or sign will descend from the flies or light up on a screen to give fitting tags for a section of the play (compare pien-hsiang cartouches). For example, at the beginning of Act 1 in Mr. Peachum’s shop for beggars, the sign says, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” In the final scene, these words appear: “Third Finale: The Arrival of the Mounted Messenger.” Brecht has, in effect, created on the stage an animated series of transformation tableaux or B änke änger’s Schilder (“bench-singer’s pictures”).

There are much earlier ties between picture recitation and mainstream European literature. For example, an intriguing parallel to such storytelling recitation formulas as Chinese pien-wen “Ch’ieh k’an [Please look!]” and Indian par “Dek ā [Let us see!]” exists in the recurring locution “As/ais vos/vus or As les vus [See now! or Behold!]” of the medieval French Song of Roland. Gerard J. Brault remarks that this narrative technique “imparts a sense of immediacy to the narration, but it also implies pointing by the jongleur to draw the audience’s attention to the approach of an imaginary walking or riding figure.” There may, however, be more to the locution than Brault himself suspects. After more than a century of scholarship on the chanson de geste, its origins are still clouded in obscurity. It is possible that the jongleur’s frequent “See now!” or “Behold!” suggests a connection with picture-storytelling. The events in the Song of Roland took place on August 15, 778, and were written down in the Oxford manuscript version sometime around 1095 to 1100. This time period coincides with that of the worldwide diffusion of picture-storytelling. Other
aspects of the *chanson de geste* that suggest an affinity with picture-storytelling are the dramatic nature of its narrative and the illiteracy of its jongleurs.92

In France, the picture reciter was known as *le chanteur de cantiques, le chanteur en foire, marchand de crimes/complaintes, crieur de journeaux*, and the like. It would seem that the *images d’Épinal* (from the middle of the seventeenth century on) and other popular prints were used for storytelling.93 The *marchands de complaintes* as well sometimes sold pictures of the “complaints” they sang.94 Picture-storytellers were still active in Paris in 1900.95

In Spain, beginning from at least the seventeenth century, wandering merchants would sell folded pictures known as *auques* or “[pliego de] aleluyas.” There was a tradition of jongleurs orally explaining the stories depicted thereon.96 Furthermore, one of the major themes of this book—the lack of firm boundaries between various types of oral and performing arts—is also borne out by the history of Spanish jongleurs. The first literary reference to puppets in Spain dates to 1211 and is found in a poem by Girant de Calansó. The *juglar* (jongleur), says de Calansó, should know how to present puppets (*bavastels*) and do conjuring tricks (*e fey los castells assalhir*).97 The counterpart of the *Bänkelsänger* in Spain was commonly known as *cantor de feria*.

It is remarkable that another Spanish name for picture recitation might almost be considered a translation of Chinese *pien-hsiang*—“*retablo de las maravillas*” (“tableau of marvels”). Cervantes (1547–1616) even wrote a short play by that name which is entirely organized around a picture-storytelling session.98 The underlying message of the play is that illusion can sometimes be more real than reality itself. The *retablo de las maravillas* is an appropriate vehicle for such a view and Cervantes is justified in speaking of conjuration and chicanery in connection with this species of performance. In their notes to this play, two of the editors of Cervantes’ interludes mention the close relationship of *retablo de las maravillas* to puppetry.99 One of them states that *retablo de las maravillas* was brought to Spain from Italy.100 This is in accord with the expected pattern of diffusion.

To show that Spanish picture recitation remained a lively tradition for four centuries, I need only mention a play by Frederico García Lorca (1899–1936) entitled “La Zapatera Prodigosa [The Shoemaker’s Prodigious Wife]” (1930).101 Like Cervantes, Lorca uses the device of picture-storytelling to trick the au-
dience within the play and to convey to his real audience the close link between fantasy and reality, pointing out the essential reality of fantasy. This is a commonplace of picture-storytellers around the world. Since Lorca describes the performance in some detail, it is worth our while to record here its characteristics.

The people in Lorca’s play who watch the show refer to it as one of titeres and to the showman as “señor tituitiero.” These terms are usually rendered into English as “puppets” and “Mr. Puppeteer,” respectively, but this is not accurate in many instances. The showman in Lorca’s play is actually a picture reciter, not a puppeteer. He carries a trumpet and has a picture-scroll (rollo, telón, or cartélon) that is rolled up and slung across his back. He is prepared to give his performance on the street but may also be invited into someone’s house. Before he begins his performance, he displays the scroll on which the narrative of his story is painted. It is “divided into tiny squares, drawn in red ochre and violent colors.” The audience becomes so involved with the narrative and its embellishment that they tremble and shiver. Like virtually all the other picture-storytellers we have encountered, señor tituitero is an itinerant jongleur (= juggler; magician). Lorca writes of “those ballads and little songs you sing and tell through the villages (todos esos romances y chupaletrinas que canta y cuenta por los pueblos).” The verses he sings are also called aleluyas (“couplets”); this implies a connection with the seventeenth-century wandering merchants of folded pictures mentioned above. The showman points with a staff (varilla) to incidents depicted on the painting. As he does so, he uses the same types of picture-storyteller’s phrases as do his counterparts in many other lands:

“Look now at that beastly woman ...
(Miren ustedes la fiera ...).”

“And now look how she was courted ...
(Ved cómo la cortejaban ...).”

“Mark her how with one she’s flirting ...
(Miradla hablando con uno ...).”

The storyteller shifts back and forth from third-person narration to dramatic dialogue with him taking all the parts. There is, as we find in picture recitation elsewhere, a great deal of audience interaction with the storyteller.
Storytelling with pictures in Russia is known from the second half of the eighteenth century and dealt with a wide variety of subjects: myths, saints’ lives (often inspired by apocryphal scriptures), heroic epics, and so forth. The stories told by the picture showman may have been the Russian popular epics known as b’ilinn’ii. Like the German Bänkelsänger, the itinerant Russian storyteller would also sell his stock of cheap pictures (called lubochnye kartinki). 105

In old Moldavia, entire churches used to be covered with colorful frescoes inside and out. As on the fifteenth-century monastery church at Voronet, these paintings illustrated Romanian folklore and stories from the Bible. 106 Their purpose was to serve as teaching aids for the illiterate who would come to hear recitations of the tales portrayed thereon.

I have also come across reports of picture-storytelling in Holland and England (see Figures 80–83) but have not been able to document these entirely to my own satisfaction. 107 It is clear, however, that from at least the sixteenth century, there existed in Europe a continentwide phenomenon of storytelling with pictures. The Swedes called picture reciters marknadsängere; the Swiss styled them Ständlisänger, Stüelisänger, or Schildersänger, and, in French-speaking areas, simply le chanteur; the Czechs referred to them as krámarský zpevák; in Flanders they were known as liedjeszanger; and so on. Because of its low social status, unfortunately, picture recitation has not been regularly recorded in the history books. Consequently, it is very difficult to obtain reliable information on this subject for many countries.

In all areas where I have traced storytelling with pictures, religious imagery is frequent but not exclusive. Another common trait of picture-storytellers around the world is that they are virtually all itinerant lay persons who have to supplement their income from storytelling with other types of work. Though they are, as a rule, illiterate, they are capable of reciting lengthy tales. Their social status, as we have seen repeatedly, is generally quite low but occasionally, because a wealthy or powerful person enjoys their performances, a few individuals among them may attain a certain degree of fame and influence, if not wealth.

In tracing the origin and extension of picture recitation, we have now come full circle. I have not pursued the spread of this genre to America because it is essentially a modern phenomenon in the New World and my purpose has been to study traditional manifestations of storytelling with pictures.
Furthermore, we are all familiar with flannel board lectures at Sunday school, grade school projects involving picture-scrolls on wooden dowels viewed through the front of an old shoe box, and the like. Visitors to Gettysburg (Pennsylvania) will remember the spectacular postbellum cyclorama painted by Paul Philippoteaux. Even more intriguing were the moving panoramas that were six to ten feet tall and hundreds of feet long. Like gigantic wayang bèbèr, etoki, or transformation scrolls, these paintings were wound on two upright spindles and were transferred by means of cranks from one to the other. Displayed on the proscenium of a theater stage, these moving pictures were accompanied by music and a lecture. The owner of the scroll, like so many of the other picture reciters we have encountered in this study, was an itinerant performer. We have, then, literally followed the development of the phenomenon of picture recitation around the entire world.

To bring this chapter, and indeed this book, to a close, I refer the reader to the map appearing on the endsheets. What with all the arrows of influence emanating from India, it would seem to be a diffusionist’s delight. Certainly, we have seen in various chapters indisputable evidence of links between South Asian picture recitation and parallel traditions elsewhere. At the same time, many question marks could be added to the map. For a genre of folk literature that has been so vital for such a long period of time and in so many different places cannot conceivably be reduced to a few lines on a simple schematic map. Hence the map ought to be viewed only as suggestive of some possible connections in the spread of this phenomenon across the globe.

My intent in gathering the information offered in this book has not been to demonstrate that picture recitation has a single Indian source. My sole original purpose was to clarify the meaning and function of the enigmatic narrative picture-scroll from Tun-huang (P4524), which shows the contest of transformations between Śāriputra and the Six Heretics. After many more years of investigation and far more miles of travel than I had anticipated, I am as surprised as anyone that India has emerged as the apparent fountainhead of picture recitation. The subtitle of this book should thus be taken as a hypothesis to be tested. In conclusion, the strongest impression I have gained over more than a decade of research is that of the broad diversity and wide distribution of picture recitation throughout the world.
Figures and Plates

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Figure 52. Illustration for Die entsetzliche Mordgeschichte von dem jungen Werther by Friedrich Nicolai. From “Musenklänge aus Deutschlands Leierkasten,” Leipzig, 1869, 11. Auflage. From Neunzig, Das illustirte Moritaten-Lesebuch, p. 221.
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SWITZERLAND

Figure 70a. Street singer with troupe telling of disasters in the year 1830 in Basel (earthquake) and Höllstein (flood). The wife carries a baby and holds ballad sheets for sale over her arm. Painted in 1832 by Hieronymus Hess (1799–1850). From Zimmermann, Lechzend nach Tyrannenblut, p. 43.
Figure 70b. Identical subject. Terra cotta figures by the same artist. Schweizerisches Museum für Volkskunde, Basel. From Zimmermann, Lechzend nach Tyranntenblut, p. 47.
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Figure 72. A picture reciter and his wife performing next to many different types of entertainers. Zurich festival, 1902 From Petzoldt, Bänkelsang, preceding p. 10.
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Figure 75. “La lanterne magique,” ca. 1765–1770. Copper engraving by Jean Ouvrier (1725–1784) of a painting by Johann Eleazar Schenau (1737–1806). Veste Coburg collection. The man who is projecting a picture on the cloth sings an explanatory song to the accompaniment of a barrel organ. This shows an affinity with other types of European storytellers. Compare also “La curiosité,” 1660, by Richard Brakenburg and the etching thereof by Noel Le Mire (1724–1801) preserved in the Graphische Sammlung der Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. From Eichler Bänkelsang und Moritat, p. 85.
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Figure 77. Jean Michel Moreau le Jeune (1741–1814), drawing of a picture reciter at a French fair, 1772. Veste Coburg collection. This performer accompanies himself on a violin, uses his bow for a pointer, and sells printed versions of his tales to the predominantly feminine audience. From Eichler, B änkelsang und Moritat, p. 95.
Figure 78. “Le chanteur de cantiques,” 1778, by Charles-Nicolas Cochin le fils (1715–1790) engraved in copper by Madeleine Cochin (1686–1767). Statliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett. The singer on his bench tells his devotional tale before a crowd at a street corner. The illustrative device he uses is a portable shrine in the form of a diptych with a statue of a suffering man inside and scenes from Christ’s passion on the door. From Eichler, B änkelsang und Moritat, p. 89. Also in Brednich, “Zur Vorgeschichte des Bänkelsangs,” pl. 3.
Figure 79. “Passe-Tems [Amusement]” by Victor Vincent Adam (1801-1866). Chalk lithograph. These itinerant performers sang devotional tales centering on the Virgin Mary, who is depicted as a doll inside the portable shrine with folding doors. From Eichler, Bänkelsang und Moritat, p. 88.
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Figure 81. Christian Wilhelm Dietrich, born Dietricy (1712–1774), “Der Bänkelsänger,” 1740. Drawing of an eccentric Dutch picture reciter and his young assistant in the countryside. Note the text at the bottom of his large narrative hanging scroll. From Eichler, Bänkelsang und Moritat, p. 93.
Figure 82. Johann Conrad Seekatz (1719–1768), oil painting of a Dutch female picture reciter in the countryside. Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Stadt Dortmund, Schloss Cappenberg. From Eichler, Bänkelsang und Moritat, p. 90.
ENGLAND

Figure 83. “Long-song Seller,” offering his tale “The Policeman.” Note the picture at the top of the sheet. Deutschen Volksliederarchiv in Freiburg im Bresgau. From Neunzig, Das illustrierte Moritaten-Lesebuch, p. 271.

Plate III. Detail from “Picture of Spring Festival by the River.” Courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See p. 7–8.
Plate IV. Detail of a wall-painting from Māyā-Höhle II, Kyzil (Chinese part of Central Asia). See. p. 46.
Plate VI. Uiohur narrative Picture-scroll See PP. 47ff.

Plate VIII. Wayang bèbèr scroll. Archives Internationales d'Ethnographie 16 (1903), Taf. 18.1.
Plate IX. Wayang bèbèr scroll. Archives Internationales d’Ethnographie 16 (1903), Taf. 18.1.
Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. In a number of books and articles, I have shown that pien-wen derived from a type of oral storytelling with pictures. See Victor H. Mair, Tun-huang Popular Narratives; T’ang Transformation Texts; “Lay Students and the Making of Written Vernacular Narrative: An Inventory of Tun-huang manuscripts”; and others. For additional references, see the bibliographies to these works as well as the Bibliography of this book.

2. For a general discussion of the ideas behind popular Buddhist fiction, see Victor H. Mair, “The Narrative Revolution in Chinese Literature: Ontological Presuppositions.”


4. Kawaguchi Hisao, Etoki no sekai (Pl. III and accompanying explanation), believes that an illustrated copy of part of the Lotus Sūtra in the Bibliothèque Nationale is a pien-hsiang scroll used in connection with popular lectures on that scripture. He specifically mentions that the illustrated scroll in question was used as an illustration for the “Sūtra Lecture on the Sūtra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law” 妙法蓮華經講經文 (P2133, cf. P2305—another sūtra lecture on the same text—which is not cited by Kawaguchi). But the text of the sūtra lecture and that on the illustrated
scroll bear no resemblance. The latter simply copies verbatim the chapter of the *Lotus* known as *Samantamukha* (普門品) while the former is an elaborate exegesis of a small portion of another part of the sūtra. Furthermore, the format of the illustrated *Samantamukha* scroll is entirely different from P4524. The *Samantamukha* scroll consists of a panel of serial narrative pictures on the top third of the sheet and corresponding text on the bottom two-thirds. It is obvious that this scroll was designed for private reading (the classical language also confirms this assessment). P4524, in contrast, has illustrations that occupy the entirety of the recto and corresponding vernacular verse passages on the verso. For additional evidence that P4524 was used as a transformation (*pien*) performance scroll, see chap. 4 of Mair, *T’ang Transformation Texts*.

5. P4524 has been reproduced in magnificent facsimile with an introduction by Nicole Vandier-Nicolas and studied intensively from the art historian’s viewpoint by Akiyama Terukazu.

6. For evidence, see Mair, *T’ang Transformation Texts*, chap. 6.

7. There is evidence of government repression due to the association of *pien-wen* with unauthorized religious movements. See ibid.


9. The word *ambèbèr* could also, evidently, mean “unfold” or “spread out.” See Gustave Schlegel, *Sprechsaal*, p. 34.

10. “There is another type of person who variously draws human figures, fish, beasts, insects, and reptiles in the form of what in China would be a handscroll with two pieces of
wood three feet in height and level at the top as uprights for the painting. The man [i.e., the performer] sits cross-legged on the ground with the pictures set up on the ground. He unrolls a section and, facing forward, using his foreign language, explains the background of the section in a loud voice. The audience sits round about and listens, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying, just as though someone were telling expository tales (p’ing-hua) in China.” Kung Chen, Hsi-yang fan-kuo chih, p. 10.


15. Yü Yüeh, Chiu-chiu hsiao-hsia lu, 12.10ab.

16. For the biography of Wu-chu, see the first entry in the official History of the Chin Dynasty (Chin Shih 金史) 77. A similar stratagem is employed in a Yüan drama with a T’ang setting, the anonymous Hsiao Yü-ch’ih chiang-tou chiang jen fu kuei ch’ao, 7b–8b.


18. See T’ao Chün-ch’i, Ching-chü chü-mu ch’u-t’an, p. 283. This play is still popular in the Ch’ao-chou (潮州) operatic tradition. Wang Tso’s profession as a storyteller is brought out very clearly in Act II. The crucial point at which he
begins his illustrated tale is as follows: “Here I have a picture which I will hang up. I will relate my story in accordance with the picture” (這裡有圖畫一張，掛起來，照圖來講). From the recording by Kuo Chih-lüeh (郭智略), et al., “Wang Tso Cuts off His Arm.”

21. Ibid., Plates 136 and 137.
22. Reference is to the plates section of Liu Yüan-lin, *Ch‘ing-ming shang-ho t’u chih tsung-ho yen-chiu*. The White Cloud Hall copy is owned by Huang Chün-pi (ibid., p. B2). Liu’s dating of this copy is given on p. A9. It is difficult to tell from the reproduction in Liu exactly what is being displayed.
23. The Yüan Secret Treasure copy is also reproduced among Liu’s plates. Here, however, there appears neither to be a cloth nor a narrator holding a pointer. The same is true of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (A) copy, section nine, except that it does show a curtain of sorts.
24. These are the copies by the Ming artist, Ch’iu Ying (Shih-chou) 明仇英 (仇十洲); see plates in Liu, *Ch‘ing-ming shang-ho t’u*.
25. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (A) copy shows in this position a horizontal scroll depicting four figures.
27. Roderick Whitfield, “Chang Tse-tuan’s *Ch‘ing-Ming shang-ho t’u*,” appendix 3, pp. 196–206. See also Chiang Fu-tsung, “‘A City of Cathay.’”
28. The ethnomusicologist, Iris Pian, told me that, somewhere in her travels around the world, she did see a copy of the “Picture of Spring Festival by the River” that included a picture-storyteller. I have not been able to determine for certain which one this might be.
29. The missing character is most likely either 用 or 着.

31. *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.

32. I am grateful to Kuan Te-tung of the Chinese department at Shantung University for providing me with the text of this poem in a letter dated March 14, 1985. Professor Kuan gives as his source *Ch’en Ta-sheng yüeh-fu ch’üan-chi* [The complete ballads of Ch’en To] 陳大聲樂府全集. Here is the poem in the Chinese original:

[滿庭芳] <道人>
稱呼爛面，倚稱佛教，
那有師傅，沿門打聽還經願，
整夜無眠，　長布衫當袈裟拖展，
舊家堂作聖像高懸，宣罷了 <金剛卷>，
齋食兒未免，單顧嘴，不圖錢。

I was unable to locate this poem in the two volumes of Ch’en To’s *san-ch’ü* that were republished in this century: *Ch’iu-pi yüeh-fu* 秋碧樂府 and *Li-yün chi ao* 梨雲寄傲, in Lu Ch’ien (Chi-yeh) 盧前 (冀野), ed., *Yin-hung i so k’e ch’ü 欣虹精所刻曲* (Taipei: Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1967 rpt.), vol. 1.

33. In Ming-Ch’ing popular religious usage, *hsüan chüan* 宣卷 (“recite scrolls”) usually means *hšuan pao-ch üan* 宣寶卷 (“recite precious scrolls”).


38. Li Fang et al., comp., T’ai-p’ing kuang-chi, chap. 422, no. 6 (Lu Yüan-yü).
39. Li Tou, Yang-chou hua-fang lu, chap. 11, p. 258.
40. Hsü K’o, Ch’ing pai lei-ch’ao, 77.43. Hsü K’o’s notes, especially in fascicles 77–80, are a veritable treasure trove of information about Chinese performing arts.
41. Based on a survey of titles and variant titles given in T’an Cheng-pi and T’an Hsün, eds., T’an-tz’u hsü lu. This phenomenon was called to my attention by Piet van der Loon.
42. Compare, for example, the following Ch’ing dramas: Picture of Drinking Wine and Reciting Vexations (飲酒讀騷圖), Picture of Auspicious Celebration (吉慶圖), Picture of Numerous Progeny (百子圖), and many others.
43. T’an Cheng-pi and T’an Hsün, eds., T’an-tz’u hsü lu, pp. 33–36.
44. Ibid., pp. 160–162.
45. Maudgalyāyana is called Molon Toyin and Labay or Labuy (i.e., “Turnip”).
46. See Alice Sárközi, “A Mongolian Picture-Book of Molon Toyin’s Descent into Hell.”
47. Hard documentation became available in 1983 with the publication in facsimile of the Pei-ching min-chien feng-su pai t’u [One hundred drawings of popular customs in Peking]. See picture number 36 therein (reproduced as Figure 8 in this book).
49. George Henry Mason, The Costume of China, Illustrated by Sixty Engravings, plate 10, “A Man with a Raree-Show.” The hand-tinted engraving was by Pu Quă’s studio in Canton. It was published May 4, 1799, by W. Miller (London). Cf. Mason, Costume of China, plate 38, “A Puppet-Show” (same attribution for the engraving). This type of entertainer stands on a stool and completely conceals himself as far as the ankles with a cloth. A tiny covered stage for puppets, which he works from below, rests on the top of his head. I
suspect that this type of puppet show may have been introduced to China from Russia where it was one type of skomorokh ("mountebank") entertainment. The "puppeteer in a bag" is documented as early as 1630 in a famous drawing by Adam Olearius from *Vermehrte neue Beschreibung der Muscowitischen und Persischen Reyse* [New and enlarged descriptions of Muscovite and Persian journeys]. See Russell Zguta, *Russian Minstrels*, p. 79. Another variant of the small puppet show has the stage placed on a table in front of the showman. See William Alexander, *Picturesque Representations of the Dress and Manners of the Chinese*, plate 25, "A Raree Show," engraving of January 1814 by J. Murray (London).

51. The painting, by an unknown Chinese artist, is gouache on pith. Jean Gordon Lee, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1784–1844*, no. 188.
52. For a picture of a Hsi-hu ching showman in action, see *Pei-ching min-chien feng-su pai t’u*, no. 6.
53. The Yen-shih chi pi [Accumulated vices of the city of Peking] 燕市積幣, cited by Li Chia-jui (comp.) in *Pei-p’ing feng-su*, p. 363, states that there were many different varieties of peepshows in Peking and that some of them were corruptive of public morals.
54. Li Feng-hsing, *Chung-kuo min-chien i-shu*, pp. 54–56.
57. All of the information in this paragraph was supplied to me in Philadelphia on March 21 and 22, 1988, by the noted Soochow p’ing-hua storyteller Chin Sheng-po 金聲伯. He has promised to send me additional materials on the subject upon his return to China.
Notes

58. Gary Seaman, *The Chinese Cult of the Dead* (a series of films); a fine set of hell screens (date unknown to me, probably from mainland China) may be seen in the Breckinridge Public Affairs Center of Bowdoin College at York, Maine. On the popularity and didactic use of pictures of hell during the T’ang and Sung periods, see Wolfram Eberhard, *Guilt and Sin in Traditional China*, p. 46.

59. One of the poems I discussed in chapter 6 of *T’ang Transformation Texts* does indicate that the preformer wore a special costume. Uighur Buddhist nāṭaka (dance drama), as described by Annemarie von Gabain in *Das Leben im uigurischen Königreich von Qočo* and Şinasi Tekin in personal communications, also bears certain similarities.

60. See Victor H. Mair, “The Origins of an Iconographical Form of the Pilgrim, Hsüan-tsang.”


1: PICTURE-STORYTELLING IN ANCIENT INDIA

1. F. W. Thomas, “Political and Social Organization of the Maurya Empire,” pp. 480–481 (italics added). Niharranjan Ray (*Maurya and Śuṅga Art*, p. 57) has recently voiced the opinion that the narrative reliefs at Barhut, Bodhgayā and Sāñcī are, in essence, lithic picture-scrolls. See also Stella Kramrisch, *Unknown India*, p. 70. The lintel of the Eastern gate at Sāñcī does indeed display a continuous narrative. For example, when the Buddha is shown leaving his father’s palace, his horse appears several times in a left to right progression. On the columns, the progression is from top to bottom.
2. See Jarl Charpentier, “Ājīvika,” pp. 671–672, and commentaries noted there.


4. F. Kielhorn, ed., *The Vyākaraṇa-Mah ābh āshya by Patañjali*, vol. 2, p. 36. For well over a century, there has been extensive scholarly discussion of this passage from Patañjali. The most recent and exhaustive treatment of the issues involved is that by Norvin Hein, *The Miracle Plays of Mathurā*, pp. 240–258. Unfortunately, I did not discover Hein’s work until after I had already spent several months of work on the passage myself. While exhaustive in its treatment of the scholarly debate on this celebrated passage, Hein’s coverage has its own agenda. Hein attempts through his elaborate analysis of the text to show that Kṛṣṇa dramas by human actors already were in existence by the second century B.C. Earlier scholars have spoken on both sides of this extremely complicated issue and I believe that the evidence for such dramas remains inconclusive. None of Hein’s presumed strictures (pp. 251 and 253) against śaubhika as picture reciters is disabling.

5. My crude rendering of this passage is based upon Sten Konow, *The Indian Drama*, pp. 70–71; Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Picture Showmen,” p. 182; and Albrecht Weber, *Indische Studien*, vol. 13, pp. 488–489. Indologist Peter Gaeffke’s help is also appreciated, although he is not to be blamed for any shortcomings in the final results.

6. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*, p. 32n. 1. Keith’s transcription of this passage is somewhat deficient. The Sanskrit quotation also includes material at the beginning that I have paraphrased in the three sentences following note 4 just before my direct translation above.

8. Keith, The Sanskrit Drama, pp. 32–35, 53–56, and 272n. l. Keith’s language is so intemperate (“[wholly/clearly] ludicrous/absurd,” “in error,” “unfortunate,” “contradicts entirely the facts,” “misunderstood,” “wholly illegitimate,” “impossible theory,” “renders ... nonsense,” “wholly impossible,” “disastrous results,” etc.) that it smacks of an argument ad hominem and should accordingly be discounted. See also Keith’s “The Caubhikas and the Indian Drama,” where he dismisses outright the idea that the Mahābhāṣya passage has anything to do with the explanation of pictures.


13. Cf. also Armenian surb and Sanskrit śob hate, ś ubhra, which function similarly to Tocharian kāwälte. See Pavel Poucha, Institutiones Linguae Tocharicae, pt. 1, p. 61, and A. J. van Windekens, Lexique étymologique des dialectes tokhariens, p. 32.

14. For helpful annotations on all of these terms, see the commentary in J. J. Jones, trans., The Mahāvastu, pp. 110–111nn. 5–10 and 1–10. The original text may be found in E. Sénart, ed., Le Mahāvastu, p. 113. The material in square brackets has been added by me.

15. Slightly modified from Radhagovinda Basak, A Study of the Mahāvastu- Avadāna, pp. 37–38; also in his “Indian Life as Revealed in the Buddhist Work, the Mahāvastu-avadāna.” The material in brackets has been added by me, except in number 17, which, incidentally, is left unclosed in Basak’s original commentary. Although they are not listed by name, it is likely that the śaubhika also existed in South India at a very early date. We read in the Tamil novel Silappadikāram, composed around 171 I.E. with the possibility of additions as late as the fifth century, of “a hundred magicians skilled in the ninety-six forms of illusionism.” Alain Daniélou, trans., Shilappadikaram, p. 166, and Ka. Naa. Subramanyam, trans., The Anklet Story, p. 156.

16. V. Fausbøll, ed., The Jātaka, book 22, 1199–1201, p. 277; trans. by H. J. Francis in vol. 6 of Edward Cowell, ed., The Jātaka (1907), p. 135. The material in brackets has been added by me. It is interesting to note that in this Jātaka the formula “Passa: ... maṇimhi passa nimittam” [“Behold created in this jewel”] frequently recurs. Cf. “Please look at the place...” (且看...處...) in the transformation texts.

Notes

18. Slightly modified from T. W. Rhys Davids and C. A. F. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, vol. 1, pp. 6–9. The correction in square brackets has been added by me. The translators provide helpful notes on all of the terms given and these should be consulted by those who are interested in the subject of entertainers in early India.

19. R. Otto Franke, ed. and trans., *Dīghanikāya*, pp. 8–9n. 13. It would have been better for Franke to give the variants in their nominative form (without final-ṃ).


22. Cf. the inscription in cave 335 at Tun-huang: “Paint an image of the Buddha, one layout” 畫佛像一鋪; and in cave 380: “make an image of the Buddha, one layout” 造佛像一鋪. In shih yai, *Tun-huang shih-shih hua-hsiang t’i-shih*, pp. 80b and 85b.


26. Tibetan scrolls for picture recitation are also called *thanka* (“something rolled up”). See Guiseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, p. 267, who says that the word for *paṭ* (a) in Nepal is *prabhā*. The latter is probably a variant of the Newari word *paubhā*.

27. Mizutani Shinjō, “‘Ippo’ no igi ni tsuite.”
Notes


29. Taishō Tripitaka (1636) 32.138a.

30. For the Sanskrit, see Bendall, ed., Čikṣāsamuccaya, pp. 330 [1486], l.16. The Tibetan translation comes from the Sde-dge (Derge), edition of the canon, bstan·hgyur section, no. 3940 (Śikṣāsamuccaya), fol. 177b, l.6. I am indebted to Masatoshi Nagatomi for help in locating and in explicating the Tibetan passage.


32. The Tibetan translation is indicative of the etymological root of śobhika (i.e. saubhika) but is not an accurate rendering of the word in this context.

33. Cf. the expression 旋踵 (“turn on the heels”) for which 旋轉 may be an error. It is possible, however, that the Chinese translator simply omitted utkuṭa and that 旋轉 refers only to the movements of the dance, which is mentioned later in the passage.

34. These definitions are from William E. Soothill and Lewis Hodous, A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms with Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index, p. 484a.


39. Konow, The Indian Drama, pp. 5, 6, and 72.
40. Pischel, “Das altindische Schattenspiel,” pp. 483–484. Also see Hein’s good study of this word in Miracle Plays, pp. 252ff, which clearly establishes loṇaśobhikā as an individual gaṇikā (“courtesan-performer”).


42. This passage is discussed by both Coomaraswamy, “Picture Showmen,” pp. 184–185, and B. M. Barua “Maskari-Gośāla’s Early Life,” pp. 369–370. I have relied heavily on both of them for the account I give of it. In a careful review of the problem of dating Viśākhadatta, G. V. Devasthali, Introduction to the Study of Mudrā-rākṣasa, pp. 10–14, conservatively places him among the older group of dramatists who followed Kālidāsa and certainly flourished long before the ninth century. There is even evidence that indicates he might well have been active under Candragupta II of the Gupta dynasty, the same reign (375–413) under which Kālidāsa himself flourished. See Keith, The Sanskrit Drama, pp. 146–147.

43. Picture showmen also functioned as spies in Japan (see Chapter 5) and elsewhere.

44. The entire relevant passage has been translated by J. A. B. van Buitenen in Two Plays of Ancient India, p. 191, as follows:

Enter a spy; he is carrying a canvas which pictures the exploits of Yama, God of Death.

SPY: Bow, world, to Yama! Why pray to other Gods at all?

He gets the toiling souls of each denomination!
Each man lives by the trouble of his God’s dictation,
But Yama gets us all, no other Gods at all!

I am going into this house here, and show Yama’s picture and sing his praises. (He walks around.)
PUPIL (looking up): Don’t come in here, fellow.
SPY: Oh? Who lives here?
PUPIL: My master, the worshipful Cāṇakya.
SPY: Oh, we belong to the same school! Let me come in and show Yama’s picture to your master and instruct him in the Law.

For the Sanskrit text, see Alfred Hillebrandt, ed., *Mudrārākṣasa of Viçākha-datta*, p. 17.


46. R. Shamasasya, trans., *Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra*, pp. 343–344. The question mark in the quoted translation after the word “saubhikas” is Shamasasya’s own.


48. The Pāli name for him is Makkha [putta]. In Sanskrit he is called Maskarī Gośāliputra. We might understand the latter name as referring to a wandering ascetic who carried in his hand a bamboo staff (*maskara*). It is not my purpose here, however, to dispute the accuracy of the Jain legend.

49. See Coomaraswamy, “Picture Showmen,” p. 183n. 2 for references.


52. Otto Böhtlingk and Charles Rieu, eds., *Hemak’andra’s Abhidānak’intâmani*, verse 795, pp. 145 and 365. The Sanskrit equivalent of Prakrit *māgaha* is *māgadha*.

Cited and translated by Barua in “Maskari-Gośāla’s Early Life,” pp. 356–357. Also see Benimadhab Barua, *A History of Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, p. 298, and the same author’s “Books of Stories of Heaven and Hell,” p. ix, an appendix in Bimala Charan Law’s *Heaven and Hell in Buddhist Perspective*. The information in this section is drawn chiefly from these sources. A. L. Basham, *History and Doctrine of the Ājīvikas*, pp. 35–37, also treats of these matters.

Cited by Barua in “Maskari-Gośāla’s Early Life,” pp. 359 and 361: *Saeṇaṃ se Gosāle dārae ummukā-valabhāve viṇṇāya-pariṇayamatte jubbanagamanuppatte ... maṃkhataṇeṇam appāṇaṃ bhāvemāṇe viharai.*

Cited in ibid., p. 364: *Maṃkhah citraphalaka-vyagrakaro bhikṣukaviśeṣah.* Cf. the Bhāṣa commentary to the same text, also cited by Barua: *Maṃkha kāṣṭha-citrāma dekhādato phirai ehavo bhikṣuka-viśeṣa (bhikṣācāra) (both from 15.1, leaf 1204), which indicates that the maṅkha carried pictures that were drawn on wooden boards.*


Hoernle, *Uvasagadasāo*, p. 121n. 273. Ratnachandraji, *An Illustrated Ardha- Magadhi Dictionary*, vol. 4, p. 65ab, provides other references from Jain texts and defines maṅkha as a class of beggars who make a living by showing pictures framed in a box by means of a glass.

This rendition is by A. N. Upadhye from his Introduction to the critical edition, *Uddyotana-Sūri’s Kuvalayamālā*, vol. 2, pp. 49–50. The Prakrit may be found on pp. 185.7–194.33 and the Sanskrit digest (kathā) on pp. 67.35–69.4.
Notes

61. See Mair, T’ang Transformation Texts, chap. 6.
64. Buddhaghoṣa, Sārattha-ppakāsinī (Siamese ed.), vol. 2, p. 398. In the Thai syllabary, “n” (โ) and “m” (ม) resemble each other so closely that there may be a mistaken exchange of the two here (hence nakha instead of maṅkha). Quoted and translated by Barua in “Maskari-Gośāla’s Early Life,” pp. 366–367 (punctuation modified). The edition published by F. L. Woodward, Sārattha-Ppakāsinī, Buddhaghoṣa’s Commentary on the Saṇyutta-nikāya, reads (p. 327, 22 [11,] v. 8) as follows: Caraṇaṅ nāma cittan ti, vicaraṇa-cittaṅ. Sankhyā nāma brāhmaṇa-pāsaṇḍikā honti. Te paṭa- koṭṭhakaṅ katvā tattha n āna-ppak ār ā sugati-duggati-vasena sampatti-vipattiyo lekh ā- petvā, ‘idaṅ kammaṅ katvā, idaṅ paṭil-abhati. Idaṅ khatvā idaṅti dassentā taṅ cittaṅ gahetvā vic-aranti. Woodward was working primarily from Burmese and Singhalese manuscripts. For sankhyā. Woodward noted only two of his manuscripts that differed in giving samanā-. None of his manuscripts gave nakha or maṅkha. It is possible that s (स) has been subsituted for m (म). Compare Coomaraswamy’s translation of the same passage in “Picture Showmen,” p. 186, from which I have drawn the final sentence.
65. Mrs. Rhys Davids, trans., Psalms of the Early Buddhists, p. 378. See also her notes on p. 419, where she connects cāraṇikaṅ with Sanskrit cāraṇa (“strolling player”).

67. P. V. Kane, ed., *The Harshacharita of Bāṇabhātta*, p. 11 of chap. 4; E. B. Cowell and Frederick Thomas, trans., *The Harṣa-carita of Bāṇa*, p. 119. The translator’s note 7 on this page states that *ambara* means “ether, the vehicle of sound” and “canvas.”


70. Sudarshan Sharma, ed. and trans., *Dutavakyam*, pp. 11–16 (Sanskrit), 4–5 (English).


72. For an English translation of the relevant passage, see Shripad Khrishna Belvankar, *Rama’s Later History or Uttara-Rama-Charita*, pp. 18ff.


75. Helen Johnson, trans., *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra*, vol. 1, pp. 60–63. This same story was found earlier in *Ādi-purāṇa* of Jinasena (fl. 778–838).
Notes


2: THE TRANSMISSION OF PICTURE RECITATION THROUGH CENTRAL ASIA

3. Paul Pelliot, “Notes à propos d’un catalogue du Kanjur,” p. 139, supposes this to be the Gomatīmahāvihāra.
5. Thus Pelliot and Takakusu (see note 6 below for references). It is conceivable, however, that this should be rendered “teaching in accord with karma,” that is, exercising the doctrine of upāya (“skill-in-means”).
9. The Maitrisimit colophons are listed in F. W. K. Müller and E. Sieg, “Maitrisimit und ‘Tocharisch,’” pp. 405 and 414. The colophon in question states that the text was originally written in the Änātkāk (Indian) language, was translated
into the To ḫrî (“Tocharian”) language by the Master ṛcārya (“teacher”), the vaibhāṣika (“member of a realistic school of Buddhism”) Ārycandra, and was then translated from the To ḫrî language into the “Turkish” (i.e., Uighur) language by the Master Prajñārakṣita. It would appear that both of these men were Indian scholars. See Pavel Poucha, “Indian Literature in Central Asia,” pp. 27–28 and 31. For additional discussion of the various Central Asian versions of the Maitreyasamiti and their colophons, see Baruch, “Maitreya d’après les sources,” pp. 79–91.


15. Translated from the German of Annemarie von Gabain, Das uigurische Königreich von Chotscho, pp. 73–74.

17. Demiéville, review of von Gabain, *Faksimile*, p. 436. The modern Uighur word for *pien-hsiang*, as used, for example, to refer to a wall-painting of the Maitreya legend in cave 17 at Kyzil, is özgirişi ("transformation").


24. Julius Theodor Zenker, *Türkisch-Arabisch-Persisches Handwörterbuch*, p. 771a. Wilma Heston has mentioned to me (letter of July 26, 1984) a similar k→g-shift in a curious root that shows up as √gor-, √fær-, √gor-, meaning "to see" in Pashto, Sogdian, and Yaqnobi, respectively, which lacks a good Iranian background.

25. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 736b. One might speculate whether the Turkish word for shadow play, *kara-göz* (literally, "black-eye"), has any connection with this whole complex of Uighur words for making things visible.

27. Şinasi Tekin, in a letter dated May 27, 1978. For the “following event,” or happening, affair, matter, story, cf. Chinese shih 事. For the Uighur word (saw/sav/sab), see Bang and von Gabain, Analytischer Index, p. 40 (498). The formula reads: Āmtī bo savīy magat uluš-ta āndayakri atly suzaq-ta bilmiš uqmīš krgāk. After Annemarie von Gabain and Tadeusz Kowalski, eds., “Turkische Turfan Texte X,” pp. 10-12, ll.31–33. In another letter, dated September 25, 1981, Şinasi Tekin states that the important expression of narrative moment and locus, “the time/place when/where X did such and such,” can be found in almost all the Old Turkish Jātakas, especially those translated from Central Asian languages into Uighur, i.e., from Tocharian, Khotanese, etc. For example, Tekin refers us to Maitrisimit nom bitiq, edited by him, and to F. W. K. Müller, ed., “Uigurica III.” This corresponds closely with the pien-wen pre-verse formula that derives from picture-storytelling (see Chapter 4) and to the inscriptions in the cartouches of pien-hsiang inscriptions.

28. Edited and translated into German by Şinasi Tekin, Die Kapitel über die Bewusstseinslehre. The Sanskrit predecessors of this text have a bewildering number of variant titles, several of which we shall encounter.


30. Tekin, Die Kapitel über die Bewusstseinslehre, p. 62, ll. 12–13 (Uighur text), and p. 90 (German translation, rendered here in English).


32. While the extant manuscript of the Uighur translation dates from the eighteenth century, the composition is much earlier. According to Clauson, Etymological Dictionary, pp. xv-xvi, it dates from the eighth century or later. I believe that
it probably is from the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century, exactly the time when many of the pien-wen manuscripts were being copied.


34. Taishō Tripitaka (665) 16.408b.

35. Roger Finch, “The Śrī-parivarta (chapters xvi and xviii) from Sīṅgqu Sāli’s Uighur Translation of I-tsing’s Version of the Suvarṇaprabhāsottama-sūtra,” pp. 68, 81, and 189; the Chinese portions that I have inserted in Finch’s translation (italics mine to indicate körk) are from I-ching’s version (the original upon which the Uighur seems to have been based), Taishō Tripitaka (665) 16.439b10 and 16. Finch’s romanization seems unusual. For 519.8, he gives k.wmyn [kwyrkwmyn] and, for 520.10, k.wm-k’ [kwyrkwm-k’]. Clauson, Etymological Dictionary, p. 741a, defines körk(g) as “something visible; shape; form.” It may also refer more specifically to an image or statue. See also Caferoğlu, Eski Uygur Türkçesi Sözülgü, p. 116. The word is derived from √kör-. In a conversation of July 27, 1980, Şinasi Tekin informed me that, in more developed usage, körk is equivalent to Sanskrit nātaka (“dance, drama, representation”).


37. Cf. Taishō Tripitaka (2053)50. The relevant portions of the Chinese text are given by von Gabain. For the Uighur text, see V. V. Radlov’ and S. E. Malov’, eds., Suvarṇaprabhāsa, pp. 343, l.10 and 674, ll.4ff.


39. Ibid., p. 158, l.58.
40. A similar usage occurs in the Uighur translation from the Chinese biography of Hui-yuan 慧遠 (334–416), founder of the Pure Land Sect: “abit(a) burxanïg körkdäsi üskintä (before the form/representation/image of Amitābha Buddha).” Körkdä is an adjective here being used as a noun. See Kahar Barat’s unpublished paper “Hui-he-wen liang-chien,” p. 8, ll.8–9 of text.


43. Translated from the German of von Gabain. Clauson, *Etymological Dictionary*, p. 746a, follows her: “When I, the monk Prajñādeva, had composed a poem about the divine Buddha’s rtived körünç kilu yarlikamişin deigning to bring about the appearance (or revelation?) of the Ṛgveda....”

44. “Miracle,” see Edgerton, BHS, s. v. prātihārya, p. 481b.


46. See also, in the same biography (*Taishō Tripitaka* [2053] 50.272b), the presentation of “implements of the faith” 道具 to the son of the emperor, which included “one set of transformations of the *Sūtra of Recompense for Kindness* (報恩經變一部). Cf. Julien, trans., *Histoire de la vie de Hiouen-thsang*, p. 328.

47. See Victor H. Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux,” for numerous examples of such eulogies. They usually consist of a celebration of the completion of the pien-hsiang, praise of the artist and patron, and some discussion of its contents.


49. Ibid., p. 149.

50. Ibid., p. 103.
Notes


52. Taishō Tripitaka (187)3.588bc. The portion that corresponds roughly to the Mongolian text’s “made visible a picture of the land of all the Buddhas” and the italicized portion of the translation from the Sanskrit reads thus: 爾時菩薩以神通力，令十方無邊剎土功德莊嚴之臺，皆現於此菩提道場.


56. See Ernst Waldschmidt, Gandhara, Kutscha, Turfan, pp. 73–75 and plate 42; Albert Grünwedel, Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan. figures 92, 321, 383, 384; Herbert Härtel and Marianne Yaldiz, Along the Ancient Silk Routes, p. 87.

57. Cf. Albert von le Coq, Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan, p. 137, with a line drawing (after Grünwedel) of the wall-painting at Kyzil. See also Albert Grünwedel, Alt-Kutscha, II, pp. 103–104.

58. Matsumoto Yeichi, “Kosha hekiga ni okeru Ajasei-Ō koji,” traces the theme from Central India to Chinese Turkestan. In the same issue of Kokka, 566.1 (January 1938), there is a stunning colored woodblock reproduction of a part of the painting from Māyā-höhle at Ming-oi near Kyzil that is preserved in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin. See also Grünwedel, Alt-Kutscha, figures 86, 87, 92, 321, plate 23, and double plate III-IV (pp. 42–43, a magnificent color reproduction); Albert Grünwedel, Amtliche Berichte, figures
106 and 107; Albert von le Coq, *Die Buddhistische Spätzantike in Mittelasien*, vol. 3, plate Aa; Dietrich Seckel, *Kunst des Buddhism*, figure 264; and Yūki Somei, *Saiiki ga shūsei*, vol. 10, nos. 1 and 2. Pelliot manuscript 3352 is a list of incidents in the story of Ajātaśatru. They are of cartouche length and many end in *shih* 時 (“the time when ...”). This format suggests a close connection with Tun-huang Buddhist popular narratives. See Mair, *T’ang Transformation Texts*, chapter 4.

59. Simone Gaulier, Robert Jera-Begard, and Monique Maillard, *Buddhism in Afghanistan and Central Asia*, pt. 1, p. 18, have recognized that “apart from its iconographical interest this image is proof of the existence of a mobile form of painting serving to instruct the faithful and to transmit the sacred images.” See their figure 10 for another reproduction.

60. See William E. Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms with Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index*, p. 293.


62. [Anu]krama, meaning “in methodical/due order.”

63. *Taishō Tripitaka* (1451)24.399b, l.25.

64. *Taishō Tripitaka* 24.399c, l.12.

65. Vol. *da* of Ḥdul-ba, no. 6, in Tōhoku catalogue (Hakuju Ui et al., *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons*), 290b, l.7. For a summary of the Tibetan version (Snarthang ed., 635a.7–639a.4) of this story, I offer that given by Anukul Chandra Banerjee, *Sarvāstivāda Literature*, p. 97:

The venerable Mahākāśyapa (Ḥoḍ-sruṇ-chen-po), who was then residing at Rājagṛha (Rgyal-poḥi-khab), came to know from the signs that Buddha had passed away. He knew that so deep was the devotion of Ajātaśatru (Ma-skyesdgra) to Buddha that if the news of his death was broken to him suddenly, he was sure to die. To save the life of the king he asked the brahmin Varṣakāra (Dbyarbyed) to draw pictures
illustrating the different stages in the life and career of Buddha—the last of which would represent him in his final rest at Kuśanagara (Groṅ-khyer-rtsba-can). The representation should be shown to the king successively and finally the last scene should be shown and explained to him. The king would then fall into a swoon and his body should successively be placed in seven jars filled with fresh butter. Finally, the body should be placed in the eighth jar filled with sandal wood, and the king would revive. Varṣākira (Dbyarbyed) followed the instructions and the life of the king was saved.

66. Introduced by Umezu Jirō, “Tonkō shutsudo Kaikotsu Bukkyō danpen.” The date of this painting, which is kept in the library of Tenri University (Nara, Japan), is by no means certain. Umezu suggests the twelfth or thirteenth century. Von Gabain, “Kṣitigarbha-Kult in Zentralasien,” has introduced numerous other fragments of Uighur picture-scrolls that deal mostly with the underworld. Since many of the fragments have snatches of writing, they merit further study. Von Gabain’s figure 64 is particularly interesting in that it shows a man holding a scroll unrolled in front of him as though he were displaying it to some onlookers.

67. I am deeply grateful to Şinasi Tekin, who both transcribed and translated these highly fragmentary inscriptions.

68. I follow Kudara Kōgi, whose work only became available to me just as this book was going to press, for the translation of körk. Tekin had suggested “form” (Sanskrit rūpa). Kudara tentatively dates the painting to the Mongol period (thirteenth-fourteenth centuries). He identifies the content of the painting as being based on an apocryphal Uighur text about the ten kings of the Buddhist underworld. Kudara also published in the same article another fragmentary painting associated with the same apocryphal text that bears the fol-
lowing Uighur inscription: onunč bāg uu ta(o ...) luin wang bāg(-ning) [k]örki ol (“this is the picture of the tenth king, the King of the Five Destinies”).


70. This wall-painting is now in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin. See Härtel and Yaldiz, Along the Ancient Silk Routes, pp. 105–106.


72. René Grousset, Chinese Art and Culture, p. 221.

73. Translated from the German of Liu Mau-tsai, Kutscha und seine Beziehungen zu China, vol. 1, p. 34.


75. D. N. Mackenzie, “Buddhist Terminology in Sogdian: A Glossary.” The Middle Iranian specialist David Utz (personal communication, July 1984) holds that much of the Sogdian Buddhist terminology was derived from Chinese sources. The polyglot atmosphere of Central Asian Buddhist culture may also be seen in the texts recovered from the Turfan, where Chinese characters are intermixed with scripts of other languages, especially Uighur. Cf. Gerhard Schmitt and Thomas Thilo, comps., Katalog chinesischer buddhistischer Textfragmente.

76. Guitty Azarpay, Sogdian Painting, p. 102.

77. A. M. Belenitskii and B. I. Marshak in ibid., p. 28. David Utz (personal communication, July 1984) denies any close connection between India and Sogdiana. Recent archeological findings, however, tend to confirm the view of Belenitskii and Marshak, particularly for lower levels (i.e., those not textually oriented) of society. The research of Ahmad Hasan Dani, Chilas: The City of Nanga Parvat, and Helmut Humbach, “Die sogdischen Inschriftenfunde,” shows that Sogdians and other Central Asian people did not wait pas-
sively for the Indians to bring Buddhism to them but that they regularly travelled at least as far south as the Karakorum area. Émile Benveniste, “L’Inscription sogdienn de Ladakh,” Études sogdiennes, pp. 170-173, plus plates, also documents this phenomenon. Nicholas Sims-Williams, “Indian Elements in Parthian and Sogdian,” has identified a number of Sanskrit, Gandhari, and other Prakrit words that occur in Sogdian texts. See also the detailed articles by B. A. Litvinsky, “Outline History of Buddhism in Central Asia,” and by Lore Sander on “Buddhist Literature in Central Asia.”

78. Remarks by al-Bīrūnī (973–1048) and other Arab and Chinese historians lend support to this interpretation. There is, however, an opposing interpretation that points to a complicated shift of power and culture (a Persianization, as it were). See The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. III, pt. 2, p. 1217.

79. See Mair, T’ang Transformation Texts, p. 317 at note 52.

80. The information in this paragraph has been gathered chiefly from Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, Manichaeow Art and Calligraphy, together with articles in the Macropaedia of the Encyclopaedia Britannica by E. G. Pulleyblank on An Lu-shan and by Henri-Charles Puech on Manichaeism. I have also consulted Colin Mackerras, ed. and trans., The Uighur Empire According to the T’ang Dynastic Histories, and Luc Kwanten, Imperial Nomads.


82. Men-ho-i, as suggested by Benveniste and reported by Puech (Le Manichéisme, p. 149n. 262—see G. Haloun and W. B. Henning, “The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light,” p. 210n. 6) probably derives from Parthian bungāh (“fundament”), *mbon- ya-yīeg (reconstructed form of men-ho-i) being the unattested adjective form *bungāhīg. In an unpublished
paper, “Two Parthian Words in the Chinese Manichaean Tradition,” p. 11, David Utz gives the Parthian adjective as *bunyāhag (“fundamental”).


85. Taishō Tripitaka (2140) 54. 1277c.

86. Lu Yu, Wei-nan wen chi, 5.4b.

87. Hard data in support of this proposal are presented in chap. 6 of Mair, T’ang Transformation Texts.

88. Ibid.

89. See Forte, “Deux études,” pp. 238-241 and 244-245, for this and the examples that follow in the discussion. Similar Buddhicisms are frequent in earlier Chinese translations of Manichaean texts.

90. Cf. the entries under fubo (p. 1174d) and bumo (p. 1183a) [māta-pitṛ] in Nakamura, Bukkyōgo daijiten.

91. A. van Tongerloo, “Buddhist Indian Terminology in the Manichaean Uyghur and Middle Iranian Texts.”


93. For a good example of a Manichaean document that is permeated with Buddhist terminology and Buddhist concepts, see W. Bang and A. von Gabain, “Türkische Turfan-Texte III.” For other instances of Buddhist-Manichaean exchanges, see Kung Tien-min, T’ang-ch’ao chi-tu-chiao chih yen-chiu, especially chaps. 4, 5, and 6. Cf. also the works by Hans-Joachim Klimkeit listed in the Bibliography.
### 3: INDONESIAN ANALOGUES

5. This connection between fantastic manifestations and illusional phenomena would not have been at all strange to the ancient Greeks. Both the English “fantasy” and “phenomenon” are derived from the verb *phaínein*, “to bring to light, make known, display” and its mediopassive counterpart *phaínesthai*, “to appear, be brought to light,” both ultimately from the noun *phōs* (originally *pháos*), “light.” Actually, fantastic as well as fantasy, phantasm, phantom (or fantom), and phantasmagoria (originally, a magic-lantern display in which optical illusions were produced for entertainment), come from the verb *phantázein*, “to make visible,” itself a reasonably transparent derivative of *phaneîn* through the addition of the -z- infix signifying process (which appears in English as -ize and ise).

Other English spinoffs from the verb *phaneîn* having to do with appearances, apparitions, and illuminations are: *diaphanous* (“transparent, see-through”), used at least 97 percent of the time as an epithet for women’s wear; *epiphany* (“showing forth, revelation”), specifically (and capitalized), the revelation of the infant Jesus to the Magi; *phenocryst* (“an easily visible crystal in an igneous rock”); *phenotype* (“an individual that looks like another but may be genetically different underneath it all”).
phosphene ("an appearance of light" and, specifically, "the appearance of rings of light when somebody pokes you in the eye");

phase (as in "phase of the moon," that is, "the way something appears at a given time");

emphasis ("special significance or prominence given to something");

hierophant (originally, "an explainer of the Eleusinian mysteries," that is, of the sacred rites of spring celebrated at Eleusis in honor of the goddess Demeter).

From Alexander and Nicholas Humez, Alpha to Omega: The Life and Times of the Greek Alphabet, pp. 157–158.

7. N. J. Krom, Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis, p. 47.
8. See the appendix to chap. 3 called “The Origin of Wayang” in Ramesa-Chandra Majumdar, Ancient Indian Colonisation in South-East Asia, vol. 2, pt. 2, pp. 57–60.
9. See H. Meinhard, “The Javanese Wayang and its Indian Prototype,” pp. 109 and 111; Antoine Cabaton, “Communication”; and Theodore Bernard van Lelyveld, La danse dans le théâtre javanais, cited in Marjorie Batchelder, Rod-Puppets and the Human Theatre, p. 333; and Jiwan Pani, Ravana Chhaya, pp. 7–16, for a concise and persuasive summary of critical factors, including a list of basic technical terms in wayang that resemble Sanskrit and Oriya words with the same or similar meaning. Jacques Brunet, in his "Attempt at a Historical Outline of the Shadow Theatres," p. 129, states that shadows spread to Southeast Asia with the expansion of Indian culture. See also Friedrich Seltmann, "Vergleichende Komponenten der Schattenspielformen von Süd-Indien, Malaysia, Thailand, Kambodscha, Bali und Java," who emphasizes the technical and ritual similarity between Indian and Southeast Asian shadow-play performances.
Notes

15. See Mair, T’ang Transformation Texts, end of chap. 2.
16. Betty Erda, Shadow Images of Asia, p. 35.
17. Also transliterated as keroetjil or keliṭik.
18. Bodrogi, Art of Indonesia, figs. 113–114, 116, 117, pl. 11.
21. There are also numerous other minor types of wayang, such as wayang madya, wayang woesana, wayang dobel, wayang lilingong, etc., all of which are derived from “shadows.” For another descriptive list of wayang, see C. Poensen, “De Wajang,” pp. 234–242.
23. For the European progression, beginning in the seventeenth century, from magic lanterns to projections onto smoke, illumination on gauze, and finally to moving pictures, see Erik Barnouw, The Magician and the Cinema.


29. Cited in Ensink, “Rekhacarmma,” p. 416, and in Batchelder, *Rod-Puppets*, p. 9. Cf. the translation by P. J. Zoetmulder in *Kalangwan: A Survey of Old Javanese Literature*, pp. 209–210: “For it is as with the spectators of a puppet-performance (*ringgit*). They (are carried away,) cry, and are sad (because of what befalls their beloved hero or heroine) in the ignorance of their understanding. And this even though they know that it is merely carved leather that moves and speaks. That is the image of one whose desires are bound to the objects of the senses, and who refuses to understand that all appearances are only an illusion and a display of sorcery without any reality”.


32. *Wayang* presented during the day is known as *wayang lēmah*; during the night it is known as *wayang pêtēng*. See Seltmann, “Vergleichende Komponenten,” p. 36.


34. Meinhard, “The Javanese Wayang,” p. 111. For an example of the composite figures that are sometimes used in *wayang kulit*, see the barīsan (“army”) in Museum Folkwang,
Wayang Kulit, fig. 83, and also Jeune Scott-Kemball, Javanese Shadow Puppets, fig. 24. For a single wayang perd-juangan (a type of wayang kulit) stick that depicts an audience of twenty people, see Alit Djajasoebrata, Java Wajang Purwå Schaduwtoneel en Wereldbeeld, pl. 17a.


38. This word is used for anything that is “screened,” including the cinema. Most of the information on the Thai shadow play here is derived from Dhaniniwat, Shadow Play, the Naŋ, and “The Shadow-Play as a Possible Origin of the Masked Play.” See also James Low, “On Siamese Literature,” p. 389.


40. In India, Andhra Pradesh shadow puppets (tōlubommalāṭa) are large like Thai nang but also share many features with wayang kulit. There are the usual clown characters, called Killegithirigadu and Bangarakka, and the puppets are stored in a box similar to the chest in which wayang kulit figures are kept. Joseph C. Miller, Notes for an exhibition entitled Oral Literature in India: An Exhibition of Pictorial Media Used in Narrative Recitations, p. 51. For an illustration of splendid flat leather cut-outs for shadow plays from Andhra Pradesh and Mysore, see Verrier Elwin, Folk-Paintings of India, p. 49.


Notes

43. The quotation in Thai, together with its translation and much of the information that follows, are drawn from E. H. S. Simmonds, “New Evidence on Thai Shadow-Play Invocations,” pp. 553–555.

44. Cf. Robert Shafer, *Introduction to Sino-Tibetan*, pp. 69 and 499–500:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siamese</td>
<td><em>plîyen’</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laotian</td>
<td><em>pin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahom</td>
<td><em>piŋ</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan</td>
<td><em>pin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Tai</td>
<td><em>pien</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Tai</td>
<td><em>pin</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tho</td>
<td><em>pien</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nung</td>
<td><em>pien</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dioi</td>
<td><em>pien</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jai</td>
<td><em>pîn</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td><em>pin</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also Bernhard Karlgren, *Analytic Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese*, p. 190, 變, Cantonese *pîn*, and p. 227, 平 (評), Cantonese *p’îng* or *p’êng*, Ancient Chinese *[b’îm’êng]*. I have included the pronunciations of 平 in these various languages because the evidence seems to indicate that a confusion between it and the sound of 變 might be possible. I offer this only as a speculative suggestion for how *pien-[wen]* may have become *p’îng-[hua]*. The case is made somewhat more probable by considering the pronunciation of these words in the time when *p’îng-hua* was actually current. See Hugh M. Stimson, *The Jongyuan In Yunn*, 平 (no. 4993) and 評 (no. 4995), both Middle Chinese *phîen* ² and Old Mandarin *phiin* ², and 變 (no. 4743), Middle Chinese *pjen* ⁵ and Old Mandarin *pian* ⁵. Li Fang-kuei, *A Handbook of Comparative Tai*, pp. 85 and 281, lists Siamese
plian together with Lungchow and Po-ai piin. R. A. D. Forrest, *The Chinese Language*, p. 99, gives the following words for “change” in Miao and other related minority languages of China: Khasi pli, Bahnar pliːh, Stieng and Biat pleh, Ch’uan Miao plei. Cf. Indo-European $\sqrt{\text{bha}}$ (“to shine”) and see Chapter 3, note 5 above.

45. Paul Benedict, *Sino-Tibetan*, p. 176 and note 469 on the same page. Benedict’s tentative conclusion that “this appears to be an old loan-word in Chinese” is still open to discussion because the word is so very much a part of the whole Sino-Tibetan language family. But the fact that it has not been found on the oracle bones does give some credence to Benedict’s suggestion. Bernhard Karlgren, “Word Families in Chinese,” p. 59, following Henri Maspero, “Le dialecte de Tch’ang-ngan sous les T’ang,” p. 25, also accepts the identification of Chinese pien and Siamese plien (i.e., Shafer’s plīyen’).


47. Nguyễn-Văn-Khôn, *Việt · Anh Anh · Việt tự Diễm*, p. 87b. I have also consulted numerous other Vietnamese dictionaries, for which see Victor H. Mair, *A Partial Bibliography for the Study of Indian Influence on Chinese Popular Literature*, pp. 78, 82, 102, and 110.

48. I am grateful to Charles Benoit for having checked this for me in Vietnamese etymological dictionaries.


53. Batchelder, *Rod Puppets*, p. 11, describes how the *dalang* employs the puppet box during performance: “A wooden chest to his left holds the puppets when traveling and serves as part of the ‘noise effects’ during the play. He holds a wooden knob between the toes of his right foot, and with this strikes the box or a pair of wooden or metal plates hanging from it. This device is used to signal the orchestra, to underline the speeches of the characters, or to provide general noise, as for war.”

54. Ensink, “Rekhacarmma,” p. 423. Ensink’s note on “Tumpěk Vayañ” is as follows: “An auspicious day falling on Saturday of Vayañ, the 27th week in the 210-day cycle of the Balinese calendar. The day is celebrated as the ‘birthday’ (*odalan*) of the wayangs” (p. 423n. 1). Cf. Seltmann, “Vergleichende Komponenten,” p. 28.


58. On Bali, the *gunungan* is also called *kakayon* or *babat*; cf. Ensink, “Rekhacarmma,” pp. 415n. and 423. For magnificent color photographs of a *kayon* or *gunun gan* (“Symbol of Cosmic Order”), see the frontispiece to Scott-Kemball, *Javanese Shadow Puppets*, and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, vol. 3, pl. 14, facing title page.

59. See the edition of M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony*, p. 112, on whom I rely for my understanding of the proverb, and his extensive discussion (including references to Ugaritic and Latin texts), pp. 167–169. My thanks to Sylvia Brown

60. E. T. Kirby, *Ur-Drama: The Origins of the Theatre*, p. 45. For a general documentation of the sacred tree symbol throughout the world, see Roger Cook, *The Tree of Life: Image of the Cosmos*. And for the cosmic symbolism of the tree in India and in Greater India, see F. D. K. Bosch, *The Golden Germ: An Introduction to Indian Symbolism*. In his *The Daemon in the Wood*, David Bynum offers an extensive discussion of the motif of the tree in storytelling throughout the world.


68. For a full description of an Indian picture recitation tradition (performed by the *baḍvo* [“master of rituals”] of the “scheduled” tribe from central Gujarat province known as the Rathva) that is so mystically incantatory that it has nearly lost whatever narrative qualities it may once have had, see Jyotindra Jain’s *Painted Myths of Creation*.


70. On the priestly, shamanistic function of the *dalang*, see Seltmann, “Vergleichende Komponenten,” pp. 31ff.

Notes

84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., pp. 3 and 8.
89. Ibid., pp. 35 and 9–10.
90. Selwyn Dewdney, *The Sacred Scrolls of the Southern Ojibway*.

92. Charles, “Drama in Shaman Exorcism,” p. 95, referring (note 2) to the important study of B. Laufer, “Origin of the Word Shaman,” *American Anthropologist* (n.s.) 19, 3 (1914). In strictest terms, the word “shaman” (from German *Schamane* which comes from Russian *shaman*) refers to certain religious practitioners of northern Asia who were thought to travel to the abodes of the spirits during trance. It ultimately may be traced back to Tungusic *šaman* (“priest, medicine man”). Further derivation from Tocharian *šamāne*, Prakrit *samaṇa*, and Sanskrit *śramaṇa* (“ascetic”) is suspect. The word “shaman” has long since come to be used commonly by anthropologists and students of religion to refer to a broad variety of medicine men and mediums.

93. Piet van der Loon, “Les origines rituelles du théâtre chinois,” English summary, p. 168. In the same article, pp. 158–162, van der Loon discusses the purification aspects of Mu-lien performances. Mu-lien (i.e., Maudgalyāyana) was a favorite subject of *pien* performances and texts.

94. Though a very few *dalang* might achieve prestigious position and considerable wealth, it was customary for them to be drawn from the ranks of the lowest castes.


97. De Kleen, *Wayang*, p. 10. My discussion of *wayang bèbèr* was written seven years before I became aware of Benedict Anderson’s study of the same subject entitled “The Last Picture Show: Wayang Beber.” His interpretation of the history and social standing of *wayang bèbèr* differs greatly from mine. He strongly emphasizes the courtly, elite aspects of the genre to the extent that he comes close to denying it ever was a form of popular entertainment. After reading Anderson’s study, I reread my own account and did not feel
that the evidence he presented was sufficient to cause me to change the basic understanding of the genre presented here and in other chapters of this book.


100. Holt, *Art in Indonesia*, p. 127. In a note on this same page, Holt mentions that Benedict Anderson of Cornell University, on his return in 1964 after two years of field research in Indonesia, reported that the very scrolls Holt had seen were still in existence but that performances were seldom, if ever, meant to entertain, being used only in connection with purification rites. The owners of the scrolls claimed that they had been in their family for twelve generations. In “The Last Picture Show,” Anderson also names marriages and rites carried out in fulfillment of a promise or vow as appropriate occasions for the performance of *wayang bèb èr*. Cf. Joan Raducha, “The Narrative Tradition in Mathurā Art,” who notes the hieratic and devotional qualities that seep into and, in some cases, dominate the narrative realm.


102. Bapak Sarnèn was interviewed in his village for me by Diane Borden and Bill Crawford during the summer of 1977.

103. For photographs of *wayang bèbèr*, see N. J. Krom, “L’Art javanais dans les musées de Hollande et de Java,” pl. 59 (same as in Rassers below); J. Kunst, “Een en Ander over de Javaansche Wajang,” figs. 9 and 10; Holt, *Art in Indonesia*,
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pl. 105 (p. 127), an old and battered wayang bèb èr scroll of Pacitan, South Java; W. H. Rassers, Pañji, the Culture Hero, p. 171, from Leiden National Museum of Ethnology (series 360, nos. 5254–5259).

104. The information on wayang bèb èr dalang is taken largely from Rassers, Pañji, the Culture Hero, pp. 164-165; from Hazeu, “Eine ‘Wajang Beber’ Vorstellung”; and from Kern, “De Wajang Beber van Patjitan.”


106. Kern, “De Wajang Beber van Patjitan,” p. 342. The basis for Kern’s article may be found in the manuscript material listed by Pigeaud, Literature of Java, vol. 2, p. 840 (KITLV, Or 354, B–31.141), which contains two different descriptions in Javanese of wayang bèb èr of Pacitan district dealing with the Pañji romance together with two sheaves of notes in Dutch by Kern.


110. Shyam Parmar, Traditional Folk Media in India, pp. 40–41.

111. Integral translations of both these texts may be found in Victor H. Mair, Tun-huang Popular Narratives, pp. 31–84 and 87–121.


113. See the latter part of chap. 4 in Mair, T’ang Transformation Texts.


115. The only extant text I know of that might specifically have been intended for use in conjunction with wayang bèb èr is mentioned in Pigeaud, Literature of Java, vol. 2, p. 55 (Leiden University Library, Oriental Department 1979–B–31.081). This is a manuscript of treebark paper and consists of a collection of 166 concise prose outlines of
wayang purwa plays, the 111th of which is sêmar barang wayang bèb èr. Cf. also in Pigeaud, vol. 2, p. 671 (LOr 10.832–B–31.082), four wayang purwa lakon by the Surakarta dalang Lagutama, the third of which is on dalang wangkěng (i.e., Sêmar appearing as dalang, performer of wayang bèber). This sort of lore seems to indicate that wayang bèber èr is more ancient than wayang purwa, since it is embedded within it. There is also listed in Pigeaud, vol. 2, p. 700 (LOr 10.973–S–43.120, item six in the portfolio) a wayang bèber èr of Wědi, Wanasari, from Jogjakarta. This is a Javanese text dated 1832–1902 entitled Lakon Pañjalin kiněñcang, written in Jogjakarta script. Item seven in the same portfolio, incidentally, has photographs of the wayang bèber èr of Pacitan by Mr. J. L. Moens. There are also two more recent complete texts written for interested persons. The first (Pigeaud, vol. 2, p. 965 [LOr 10.934–B–31.141]) is of the wayang bèber èr on Pañji Jaka Kèmbang Kuning, noted down by order of Mangu Nagara VII in 1918, and the second (Pigeaud, vol. 2, p. 671 [LOr 10.834–B–31.142]) is a romanized text made for Dr. Pigeaud in 1931 of the wayang bèber èr scrolls of Gěḍompol, south Central Java, on the same story, and including suluk songs and conversations. The private collector Harrison Parker mentioned to me the existence of lontar (synopses of the plays written on palm leaves or paper) to be used to refresh the memory before shadow-play performances, but I have not seen any such for wayang bèber.

117. TCWSC, pp. 97–98 and 311.
119. Cf. Clifford Geertz, The Religion of Java, p. 264: “The lakon as the dalang learns it is hardly more than an outline, consisting of a bare description of what happens in each of a half-dozen to a dozen major scenes.... In the wajang the same pattern recurs over and over. First the people face
each other, then they talk, then they leave, then they talk again, and then they fight.” Not only does formulaic language assist the singer to elaborate the bare outlines of his story, there are also formulaic structural elements that he relies on for the very shape of the narrative. For an example of a complete, written lakon, see Tjan Tjoie Siem, “Hoe Koeeroepati zich zijn Vrouw Verwerft.”

121. Similarly, in Manichaean scriptures and paintings, evil doers are invariably located on the left side. L. Koenen, lecture, “Manichaean Apocalypticism at the Crossroads of Iranian, Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian Thought.”
122. See Hanfmann’s article on Greek illustrated narrative in the symposium on “Narration in Ancient Art,” p. 74.
123. The earliest-known illustrated sūtra from Japan is the _Kako genzai inga kyō_ [Atīta-pratyutpanna hetuphala sūtra (?)] 过去現在因果經. This sūtra narrates biographical events concerning Śākyamuni and Jātaka stories of his past lives. There are several illustrated versions, which began to appear in Japan in the Nara period, just after the middle of the eighth century. The scrolls are believed to have a Chinese prototype, but it has not yet been discovered. The top half of the scroll consists of a continuous series of narrative pictures, broken only by mountains and trees. This method of scene division bears a striking resemblance both to the illustrated Śāriputra scroll and to _wayang bèbèr_. The bottom half of the scroll contains the text, each segment of which begins “At that time ...” (時) and which corresponds to the illustration above. See the 1918 facsimile reproduction of the Tokyo Academy of Art copy published by Nihon bijutsu gakuin and Kadokawa shoten henshubu, ed., _É Ingo-kyō_.

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124. See, for example, the palm-leaf manuscript of Jayadhavalā, painted between 1113 and 1120, in the collection of Siddhānta Vasahī (Mudibri, South Kanara, Mysore State). In Moti Chandra, Studies in Early Indian Painting, figs. 27 and 28.

125. See Mair, T’ang Transformation Texts, chap. 4, for a full explanation of these terms.

126. Because this type of storytelling already existed in India many centuries before the beginning of the International Era, I hesitate to seek an earlier source elsewhere. The possibilities of satisfactory documentation today would be very slim. At the same time, I do not wish to rule out hypothetical Egyptian or Mesopotamian influence even as far back as Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.

4: PICTURE-STORYTELLING IN RECENT AND MODERN INDIA

1. I have regularized the spelling of this name throughout the chapter as killekyāta.

2. From Arabic in’ām, “a gift (from a superior)” or “a favor.” In India, this word often refers to a gift of rent-free land.

3. Indo-Portuguese term for “headman of a village.”


6. Ibid., p. 199.

7. Ibid., pp. 198–199.


10. Ibid., vol. 21, pp. 185–187. Ibid., p. 185.

11. Ibid., p. 186.

12. Ibid., p. 186.


15. There are at least half a dozen different transcriptions of this name. Throughout this chapter I have regularized it as citrakathī.


18. For the Tun-huang portraits, see Victor H. Mair, “The Origins of an Iconographical Form of the Pilgrim Hsüan-tsang.” Descriptions of the Indonesian dalang may be found in Chapter 3 of this book.


20. Ibid., p. 117.

21. Ibid., p. 178.


25. See the passage from Edward Moor, A Narrative of the Operations of Captain Little’s Detachment, quoted at the end of this chapter.


27. Under the old system of Indian currency there were four pice in one anna and sixteen annas in one rupee.

30. Rajendra Nath Sen, trans., *The Brahma-vaivarta Puranam*, chapter entitled *Brahma-khaṇḍa*, p. 30 (p. 27 of Sanskrit text), 5.74. The present recension probably dates to the fifth century i.e. or later but the events related in the text supposedly refer to the Vedic period more than two thousand years before. Note that the *citrakār* occurs in close company with his brother, the *sūtradhāra* ("thread-holder," i.e., "[puppet-] play director").
31. Ibid., p. 34 (p. 31 of Sanskrit text).
34. See Sudhansu Kumar Ray’s remarks in Asok Mitra, ed., *Tribes and Castes of West Bengal*, pp. 311–312. Sankar Sen Gupta, however, in *The Patas and the Patuas*, p. 50, makes a distinction between the *paṭuā* who are supposed to paint the *pa ṭ* and the *pa ṭ ṭikār* who sing about them. Most other authorities indicate that *pa ṭuā* do their own singing.
36. Ibid., p. 21. Most of the old *pa ṭ* in the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta Museum, and in the collection of G. S. Dutt are not more than 115 years old. The earliest extant *jarāno-pa ṭ* are probably not more than 180 years old. See D. P. Ghosh, “An Illustrated Rāmāyaṇa Manuscript of Tulsidās and Paṭs from Bengal,” p. 133.
38. See Saryu Doshi, “Iconic and Narrative in Jain Painting,” p. 32. This illustrated manuscript is in the collection of Shri Digambara Jain Atishaya Kshetra (Shri Mahavirji) of Jaipur. My colleague, Peter Gaeffke, has kindly identified the lit-
erary source for this illustration as canto 22.21, lines 10ff. of the *Mahāpurāṇa* by Puṣpadanta. His translation of the relevant lines is as follows:

And she painted on it the deep danger of knavery and the secret play of lovemaking;  
Where she lived, and where she made love—“This is me and that is you.”  
Having said this, she did not hide anything,  
Sundasi said all that she knew.  
“Oh, learned one, bring me my beloved and quench the burning pain of my love;  
There is no other woman like me who shines as the stars in the sky.” final couplet

This sort of private picture explanation for the purposes of heartfelt communication goes all the way back to the first century in India. In the collection of Prākrit poems associated with Hāla Sātavāhana entitled *Gāthā saptaśati*, when a chaste wife becomes the object of her younger brother-in-law’s unwanted attentions, she points to the drawings from the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the walls of their house and tells how loyal Lakṣmaṇa was to his older brother Rāma:

1.35 The young lady of the family is lecturing the whole day to her brother-in-law (her husband’s younger brother), whose mind is corrupt, on the deeds of Sumitrā’s son (Lakṣmaṇa), who was so devoted to Rāma, that were recorded in paintings on the walls of (their) house.

[Radhagovinda Basak, ed. and trans., *The Prākrit Gāthāsaptaśati*, p. 6, with minor changes.]

41. Miller, Notes for *Oral Literature of India*, p. 3.
42. Tiger, “Narrative Folk Pat’s,” pp. 7 and 66n. 20.
44. W. G. Archer, Bazaar Paintings of Calcutta, p. 10.
45. Elwin, Folk Paintings of India, p. 11.
47. Cf. pp. 87ff. above. See Elwin, Folk Paintings of India, p. 14; for illustrations, see pp. 15-17.
48. For a partial bibliography, see pp. 37-38. For brief references in Western scholarly works, see p. 10.
50. Ibid., pp. 39-40, 47, 54, 89, and 94nn. 7-8. On the etymology of the word paṭa, see pp. 30-31.
51. Ibid., pp. 108 and 87.
52. During the forties, they earned about two annas (coins formerly equaling one-sixteenth of a rupee in value) or a paita (measure) of rice per performance. See Mildred Archer, Indian Popular Painting in the Indian Office Library, pp. 15ff. and 41, for this and other valuable information that I have relied on about the paṭuā.
54. Ibid., p. 41.
55. Ibid., p. 115.
56. Ibid., pp. 48-49 and 124.
58. See Victor H. Mair, “Notes on the Maudgalyāyana Legend in East Asia,” n.21: “The musicians from the entertainment quarters, starting from the seventh day [of the seventh month], would enact the variety play.... It lasted straight through to the fifteenth....”
61. This quotation, like all the other information concerning the Kunepullalu scroll given here, is taken from Jagdish Mittal’s description in Stuart Welch, *India: Art and Culture*, pp. 51–52 (quotation is on p. 51).

62. See Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis et al., “Pābūji’s Paṛ: Essays on an Indian Cloth-Painting and Its Function in an Oral Tradition.” This section of my study relies heavily on information provided in private communications by John D. Smith and Joseph C. Miller, Jr. Also see Shyam Parmar, *Traditional Folk Media in India*, pp. 78–79, and Om Prakash Joshi, *Painted Folklore and Folklore Painters of India*, for extensive information. For a photograph of a par, see Anne Pellowski, *The World of Storytelling*, pl. 27, and the magnificent cover illustration of Aditi (also p. 232). Authorities differ on the proper vocalization of paṛ and other important terms in this tradition (hence we also find paṇa, paṛbāncanā, and so forth).

63. Joshi, *Painted Folklore*, p. 3; Miller, Notes for *Oral Literature of India*, p. 8.

64. Ibid., p. 29.


69. Ibid., p. 29.

70. Ibid., p. 31. Compare the Tibetan Gesar storyteller who wears attributes of the hero as part of his dress.

71. Smith, “Metre and Text,” p. 350

73. Unpublished transcription and translation by Joseph C. Miller, with the assistance of Bhoju Ram Gujar, Nathu Nath, and John D. Smith. For all the extant variants of the pien- wen pre-verse formula, see Mair, Tun-huang Popular Narratives, appendix. Additional information provided by Joseph C. Miller, Jr., in the spring of 1981 and in early 1985.

74. T’ang pronunciation provided for informational purposes only; no claim of phonetic equivalence.

75. Joshi, Painted Folklore, pp. 31–32 and 101.


78. Ibid., pp. 9 and 22.

79. Miller, Notes for Oral Literature of India, p. 12.

80. Joshi, Painted Folklore, p. ix.

81. Ibid., p. 23.

82. Ibid., pp. ix and 34.

83. Ibid., p. 8. The picture of the bhopo presented here is reminiscent of the enigmatic whirling figure on Peking National Library Tun-huang manuscript 6110 verso (discussed in my article on “The Origins of an Iconographical Form of the Pilgrim Hsüan-tsang”).

84. Miller, “The Three Principal Ways,” p. 3.

85. Joshi, Painted Folklore, pp. x, 7, and 9.

86. Ibid., p. 35.

87. Ibid., p. 36.


89. Ibid., p. 102.

90. Joshi, Painted Folklore, pp. 11–12 and 18–19.


93. Ibid., p. 27; also Valentina Stache-Rosen, “Survival of Some Ancient Forms of Audio-Visual Education in Present-Day India,” pl. 10, and Heinz Mode and Subodh Chandra, Indian Folk Art, pp. 263ff. and plates 388–396, for this and other types of modern narrative paintings.

94. See Pellowski, The World of Storytelling, pl. 26. Līlā means “play, amusement, sport, pastime,” but it may also mean “mere appearance, sham, semblance.” The etymology is uncertain. See Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary, p. 903bc. For an example of a twentieth-century Kṛṣṇa-līlā scroll from Midnapur, West Bengal, see Elwin, Folk Paintings of India, illustration 13. Also see Ajit Mookerjee, Art of India, pl. 94, for a nineteenth-century Kṛṣṇa-līlā scroll-painting on paper from Midnapur kept in the Asutosh Museum of Calcutta.


96. Elwin, Folk Paintings of India, p. 12.


98. For bibliographical information on Paiṭhān paintings, see Eva Ray, “Documentation for Paiṭhān Paintings,” p. 240n. 4.

99. Miller, Notes for Oral Literature of India, p. 49.

100. Most of the information in this paragraph has been gleaned from Ray, “Documentation for Paiṭhān Paintings,” pp. 240–244.

101. Valentina Stache-Rosen, “On the Shadow Theatre in India,” p. 283 and fig. 11, and “Schattenspiele und Bildervorführungen,” especially fig. 6. Ray, “Documentation for Paiṭhān Paintings,” p. 240, has provided additional helpful information. There is an excellent film on this group by
Pramod Kale entitled “Folk Arts of Pinguli.” Mr. Kale has also kindly written me a long and detailed letter (April 6, 1981).

102. All of the information in this paragraph has been drawn from Jyotindra Jain, “The Painted Scrolls of the Garoda Picture-Showmen of Gujarat.”

103. Ibid., pp. 5–6.

104. Miller, Notes for Oral Literature of India, p. 28.

105. Stephen Teiser, a specialist in medieval Chinese religion, is presently engaged in an extensive investigation of medieval Chinese narrative paintings that deal with hell and its torments.

106. My information on this subject is drawn largely from an unpublished paper by Bill Crawford entitled “The Tamil Cinema and the Plays of Tamil Nāṭu Nāṭaka Naṭikar Cānkam” and from a lecture by Richard A. Frasca entitled “Ritual Theater of Tamil India.” Much of what I have to say here of terukkūttu could also be said of other folk dramas in India such as khyāl, svāṅg, nautāṅki, turrākalaṅgī, and so forth. Khyāl, according to Miller, “The Three Principal Ways,” p. 10, “offers an interesting fusion of verbal expository and written (often prompted) song texts.” The prompter, who stands on the stage in close proximity to the actors, ensures that they do not stray too far from the main drift of the story by constantly referring to a chapbook version of the story that he holds in his hand.

107. Meher Contractor, The Shadow Puppets of India, “Introduction” (unpaginated text). Contractor gives the following names and identifying information for the six regional shadow puppet theaters of India: the tōlubommalāṭa (“the play of leather dolls”) from the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, which has existed since 200 B.I.E.; the chamdyacha bahulya (literal meaning uncertain) from the western state of Maharashtra; the Rāvana chāyā (“shadow of Rāvana”) from the eastern state of Orissa; the tōlubom malāṭa of the
southern state of Tamil Nadu; the tōgalugombe aṭṭa ("the play of leather dolls [?]") from the southwestern state of Karnataka; and the thōlupāva kootu ("the play of leather dolls") from the southern state of Kerala. Contractor has interesting observations to make about all of these forms, but his remarks on the last-named type of shadow puppetry are particularly revealing for our purposes.

[T]he characters ... are set in a rectangular, oval, round or square shape having some implications in design of their environment [usually a tree]. The puppets are very static, and may have only one arm and hand which is mobile and of an exaggerated proportion to the character. They are held with one main stick running down the centre as the supporting stick with another stick which is detachable to the hand and arm. They are, however, very richly perforated. While performing they are at times moved away from the screen to create an illusion.

The manipulation of these puppets lies only in an up and down or side to side movement with gesticulations of the mobile arm if any. But battle and hunting scenes take place with great vigour to the beat of the chanda [Malayalam cheṇḍa] drum, ankle bells, a gong and a large pair of cymbals. Spare arrows and bows are made separately so they can be let off by the manipulators to make them appear as if the puppet is doing so.

The gist of Contractor’s remarks here is that the kootu pava are essentially a cross between pictures and manipulable shadow puppets. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that, in essence, they represent the tentative emergence of mobile shadow puppets from the flat, stationary surface of narrative illustrations. For additional information on the early history of the Andhra Pradesh shadow theater tradition, see M. Nagabhushana Sarma, Tolu Bommalata. pp.
14–17. The two most scholarly monographs on the Indian shadow theater are both by Friedrich Seltmann and have appeared within the past two years: *Schatten- und Marionetten-spiel in Sâvantvâdi (Süd- Mahârâştra)* and *Schattenspiel in Kerala*.


5: PICTURE RECITATION AROUND THE WORLD

3. Fujiwara no Yorinaga, *Taiki*, 3.102b. Reference to such explanations are frequent elsewhere in this and similar diaries. Barbara Ruch, “Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature,” p. 296, suggests that paintings depicting events in the life of Prince Shōtoku on the inner walls of Hōryūji in Nara, founded in 607, were also for *etoki*.
4. Ruch, “Medieval Jongleurs.” From the illustrated scroll *Sanjūniban shokunin uta awase* 三十二番職人盡歡合 in the collection of Mr. U. Sakai, Tokyo.
5. Ibid. Hanging scroll reproduced by courtesy of the World Messianity, Atami Art Museum, Atami.
8. The nun’s painting is specifically of a genre called *Kanjin jikkai zu* 觀心十界圖 or *Kanjin jikkai mandara* 曼茶羅 (“Picture or Mandala of Mental Contemplation of the Ten Realms of Existence”). The ten realms of existence or dharma-worlds (法界) are hells, hungry ghosts, animals,
titans, men, deities, saints, self-oriented Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas. On pilgrimage *maṇḍala* that were used by *etoki*, see Victor and Takako Hauge, *Folk Traditions in Japanese Art*, p. 17; for a photograph of a folding Nachi pilgrimage *maṇḍala* with loops to hang it, see p. 38, no. 3, and p. 226.


15. Ichiro Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan*, pp. 214–215. On the various types of medieval Japanese *etoki* and the parallels they offer to T’ang *pien* performances, see also Naba Toshisada, “Zokkō to henbun,” pp. 432–433. For brief remarks on fourteenth-century *etoki*, see Akiyama Terukazu, “New Buddhist Sects and *Emakimono* (handscroll painting) in the Kamakura Period,” p. 66. A good general account in Japanese of *etoki* and related art forms is Okami Masao, “Etoki to emaki, ezōshi.” There has been a recent surge of interest in *etoki* that has resulted in a number of valuable scholarly contributions. See Hayashi Masahiko, *Nihon no etoki*; Kawaguchi Hisao, *Etoki no sekai*; and *Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to Kanshō*, 47.11 (October 1982), special issue on *etoki*.


18. Ibid., p. 301.
19. The information in this paragraph is drawn primarily from a talk given by Barbara Ruch at Harvard University on November 20, 1978.


21. Horio Seisi and Inaniwa Keiko, Kamishibai; see the photograph following the title page.


23. Satoshi Kako, “KAMISHIBAI.”

24. For the sort of picture that could be used by the ma-ṇi-pa, see L. A. Waddell, The Buddhism of Tibet, p. 542 and facing figure. This particular painting has forty-nine different episodes in a former life of the Buddha as the Charitable Prince Viśvantara. The story has a canonical basis and is also acted out as a play.


27. Stein, Recherches sur l’épop ée, pl. 1.


31. Ibid., p. 278.

32. George N. Roerich, “The Epic of King Kesar of Ling,” pp. 285-286. I have omitted the Tibetan letters from Roerich’s text and italicized his romanizations of them.

33. As to the nature and origins of these representations, Roerich (ibid., pp. 307-308), has this to say:

Images of king Kesar, both pictorial and in bronze, found throughout Tibet and Mongolia, can be conveniently classed into two groups:
(a) representations of king Kesar’s miraculous life, closely following the extant written version of the epic;

(b) representations of king Kesar as Kuan-ti, the Manchu War God and protector of the Manchu dynasty.

The second group is by far the largest, and most of the images belonging to this group date back to the XVIII-th and XIX-th centuries.

To the first group belong the so-called Ke-sar thaṅ-ka or painted banners of king Kesar depicting the miraculous life of the king. Such thaṅ-kas are mostly found in the possession of itinerant rhapsodists of the epic, and are only rarely seen in the homes of Tibetan laymen. Some of these banners, representing king Kesar’s life, belong to the rNiṅ-ma-pas or ‘Old-believers’ sect of Tibetan Buddhism, who were the first to accept the epic and adapt it to their needs. In such cases on the top of the painting will be seen an image of Kun-tu bzaṅ-po or Samantabhadra, or the central figure will represent a Buddhist deity, for example the goddess mThiṅ-gi Žal-bzaṅ-ma, an attendant of the goddess Lha-mo, riding a mule and holding an arrow (ṅdā) and a mirror (me-loṅ). (See the Ke-sar thaṅ-ka in the Tibetan collection of the Musée Guimement in Paris.) Some of the representations of the Kesar Epic belong to the Bon-po faith, and are distinguished by Bon-po symbology. Sometimes the central figure of a painted banner represents king Kesar himself depicted attired in a white garment with a tiara-like hat surmounted by feathers, a costume still worn by professional rhapsodists of the epic in North-Eastern Tibet. Usually round the central figure are grouped episodes of the miraculous life of king Kesar: his fights with demons and werewolves, which appear in the shape of a black yak, a black horse, and a black she-goat, the destruction of three ravens, birds of evil omen, Kesar’s marriage to ’Brug-mo, his combat with the powerful demon king of the North (rDud-rgyal), Kesar’s war against the three kings of the Hor, etc. The composition of such banners reveals
clear traces of Buddhist influence and is very similar in composition to the Buddhist thaṅ-kas depicting the lives of famous Buddhist teachers and sages. Such Kesar thaṅ-kas are hung during the recitals of the epic by itinerant rhapsodists, and this again seems to be an adaptation of a well-known Buddhist custom of presenting edifying Buddhist dramas, as for example the story of prince Vessantara or the Dri-med Kun-ladan rnam-thar. Sometimes famous episodes of the Kesar Epic form the themes of wall-frescoes in private residences of wealthy Tibetans.

38.  As reported by Galunov, ibid., p. 68.
40.  My colleague, William Hanaway, discussed this form of picture-storytelling on April 2, 1982, at the Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting in Chicago. His talk is the source of most of the information given on *parda-dār*, though I am responsible for any errors of interpretation. In private conversation (February 9, 1982), he told me that the *zan* of *parda-zan* means “he who beats on.”
41.  The preceding three sentences are from a letter written to me by William Hanaway on July 5, 1984.
42.  Rezvani, *Le théâtre et la danse en Iran*, p. 121.
44. I am deeply indebted to Adnan Haydar who provided all of the information in this paragraph about ṣandūk al-ʿajāyib during a conversation on January 29, 1982. I suspect that both Arabic ṣandūk al-ʿajāyib and Iranian shahr-i farang have been technologically influenced (use of lenses, blinds, lamps or candles, and so forth) by European peepshows. These were a popular form of entertainment from the seventeenth century on. The itinerant showman carried his equipment on his back as have so many other picture-story-tellers. See Encyclopedia Americana (1981), vol. 21, p. 468b and Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed. (Micropaedia), vol. 7, pp. 832c–833a.


46. See Hans Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, p. 892b. Tamāthīl is also commonly taken to mean “statues.”

47. I am indebted to Peter Molan for this information (letter of August 16, 1984).

48. All information in this paragraph comes from Susan Slyomovics, author of The Merchant of Art.

49. The earliest known roll is Rome Vatican MS. Latin 9820, which was produced at Benevento between 981 and 984. See Myrtilla Avery, “The Exultet Rolls of South Italy,” pp. 191 and 203.

50. This scene is actually depicted on many of the exultet rolls themselves. See Avery’s Exultet Rolls of South Italy, vol. 2, pls. 183 (Troia, no. 33, Cereus... consecratus—note the man catching the scroll at the bottom as it comes off and the two acolytes holding paschel candles), 36 (Gaeta 2), 38, 41, 42 (Gaeta 3), 72 (Fondi), 121 and 124 (Casanatense), 133 (Vat. Lat. 3784), and 151 (Barberini).


According to a travel diary entry by W. Scott Morton of May 1, 1980, communicated to me on February 20, 1981.


Willi Hirdt, *Italienischer Bänkelsang*, “Vorwort [Foreword].”


Cocchiara, “Il cartellone.”

The intimate relationship between *cantastorie* and puppets, as well as the acting ability of the *cantastorie* themselves, is discussed in Li Gotti, *Il teatro dei pupi*, pp. 45ff and 87ff. See also Figure 24.

The name is clearly resonant with Italian *montambanco* or *montimbanco* (“mountebank”). Note that the Bänkelsänger did not always display pictures during their singing and storytelling.

*Moritat* would appear to have something to do with songs about murder and death (cf. *mordtat*).

Walter Salmen, *Der fahrende Musiker in europäischer Mittelelter*, p. 138n. 503.


The French caption reads, “Chantre des Vaudevilles.”

Cf. Indian *pātā* and *par*, Chinese *p’u*, Indonesian *bèb èr*, Iranian *parda*, and so on.
71. Brednich has transcribed the German on p. 83 of his article "Zur Vorgeschichte des Bänkelsangs."


73. This is a mezzotint by the Dutchman Jacob Gole (ca. 1660–1737); Deutsches Volksliederarchiv Friburg i. Br., Inv.—Nr. 362.

74. A copperplate engraving based on a sketch of C. N. Cochin of Paris dated to 1778.


76. Leander Petzoldt, B än kelsang, p. 30. Walter Röhler, Grosse Liebe zu kleinen Theatern, demonstrates a close connection between theater, paper theater, and prints about the theater that were sold on the streets of German cities.

77. The original engraving is in the Cabinet des Estampes and has been reproduced in Jean Mistler, François Blaudez, and André Jacquemin, Épinal et l'imagerie populaire, p. 45.

78. J. Scheible, comp., Der fliegenden Bl ätter des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts, p. 222.


80. On the social position of B än kelsänger, see Petzoldt, B än kelsang, pp. 4ff. Gunnar Müller-Waldeck, Unter Reu' und bitterm Schmerz, p. 269, says that B än kels änger often were also magicians, quack doctors, and the like. A German dictionary from the early part of this century gives as English equivalents "street-singer," "negro-minstrel," and "wretched rhymester" (Muret-Sanders: Enzyklop ädisches
This is not to say, however, that learned authors were uninfluenced by them. See Riedel, *Der B änkelzang*, pp. 20ff.


82. Hans Adolf Neunzig, *Das illustirte Moritaten-Lesebuch*, p. 273, attributes much of the *B änkelzänger*’s popularity to the illiteracy of his audiences. Listening to a picture reciter was an inexpensive way for an illiterate person to experience literature.

83. Called *Schilder*, these pictures are now extremely rare.

84. Some European picture reciters simply sold prints of the illustrations to their tales. An etching labled “Kauffen Sie mir doch von meinen Bildern ab (Buy some of my pictures, won’t you?)” attests to such a practice. This etching was originally published in *Les cris de Berlin: Zwölf merkwürdige Aufrufer von Berlin mit ihrem Geschrey* (Berlin: Johann Morino, Königl. Acad. Kunsthänd., ca. 1890). The picture reciter stands in the street selling his wares to a poor man while surrounded by two children and a woman. Reproduced in Karen P. Beall, *Kaufrufe und Strassenhändler*, p. 55. For numerous other examples of such picture sellers throughout Europe and the New World, cf. ibid., pp. 96–97, 99, 168, 170, 351, 405, 447, 459, and passim.


86. David Stewart Hull, *Film in the Third Reich*, p. 34.


89. Ibid., p. 192.
Notes


91. Ibid., p. 113.


93. See Mistler, Blaudez, and Jacquemin, Épinal et l’imagerie populaire. The museum in this town in the Vosges that straddles the upper Moselle possesses an excellent collection of these prints.

94. See the lithographs by E. F., “Le marchand de crimes ou crieurs de journeaux” (1845) and by Anon., “Le marchand de complaintes” (ca. 1850), reproduced in Ulrike Eichler, Bänkelsang und Mori tat, p. 84.

95. As observed by G. Herrmann and reported in Görner, “Der Bänkelsang,” p. 157. For a picture of a late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century French picture reciter, see Figure 74.


97. Cited in N. D. Shergold, A History of the Spanish Stage from Medieval Times until the End of the Seventeenth Century, p. 176n. 2, and J. E. Varey, Historia de los titeres en España, p. 9. The precise meaning of Fey los castells (“make castles”) is
not clear but must refer to some sort of illusionary display. Cf. the well-known Spanish expression “castillos en el aire.” Varey’s substantial dissertation, “Minor Dramatic Forms in Spain with Special Reference to Puppets,” lends support to many of the theses in this book. He shows (p. 9) that “juglares” were wandering players of various kinds who became prominent in Spain during the tenth to twelfth centuries, having come from Italy (pp. 81ff.). Among the entertainments they performed was the retablo (n.b.), which consisted of scenes in a box, sometimes with automata. Spanish puppets showed a close connection with legerdemain, dancing, and acrobatics (pp. 87ff.). All of this sounds reminiscent of Indian śaubhika, Indonesian wayang, and Chinese pien.


100. Asensio, Entremeses.

101. See Frederico Garcia Lorca, Obras Completas, ed. and annot. Arturo del Hoyo, pp. 861–870, and James Graham-Lujan and Richard O’Connell, trans., Five Plays, pp. 88–95, for the picture-storytelling scene. I would like to thank Alex Hadary for the references to Cervantes and Lorca.

102. Lorca, Obras Completas, p. 865; Graham-Lujan and O’Connell, Five Plays, p. 91.


104. Lorca, Obras Completas, p. 864; Graham-Lujan and O’Connell, Five Plays, p. 91.


Evidence for picture recitation in Holland and England may be found in William Hogarth’s (1697–1764) paintings of fairs at Southwark; Robert Thomas Stothard’s (1775–1834) “The Ballad Seller” (1795); Francis Wheatley’s (1747–1801) “A New Love Song Only Ha’penny a Piece” (1796); and in Jan van Meurs’ (ca. 1760–1824) “De Schilderij Vertooner” (1791) in the Deutsches Volksliederarchiv, Freiburg/Brs. Cited in Eichler, Bänkelsang und Moritat, p. 94. An engraving from the late eighteenth century by the French Artist, Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg (1740–1812, lived in England from 1771), shows a mountebank with medicines, monkey, texts, and hanging illustrated banner. See Sandro Piantanida, “Ciarlatani,” p. 249.

Llewellyn Hedgbeth, “Extant American Panoramas.”
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Due to the wide-ranging nature of this work, it has been impossible to provide exhaustive bibliographical coverage for any of the geographical areas touched upon. By consulting the bibliographies and references given in the works listed below, however, the interested reader ought to be able to locate most of the important scholarly studies concerning painting recitation throughout the world. For those who wish to pursue the topic of transformation texts in greater depth, the bibliographical references in my various publications on the subject, particularly *T’ang Transformation Texts*, should enable one to find the whereabouts of virtually all significant scholarship dealing with this subject. The reader is also invited to consult my *A Partial Bibliography for the Study of the Influence of India on Chinese Popular Literature* (215 pages) which has been published in *Sino-Platonic Papers*.

Chinese, Japanese, and Korean titles have been given in English translation as well as in romanized transcription and in characters. The translations enclosed by square brackets are my own. Those within parentheses are either established equivalents or have been provided by the authors and editors of the works concerned. On occasion, I have made minor changes in these latter renderings to bring them into agreement with standard English grammar and usage. It should be noted that translations of texts from a given language are included in that section of the bibliography rather than in the section of the language into which they have been translated. For example, J. V. G. Mills’ English version of the *Ying-yai sheng-lan* may be found in the Chinese section rather than in the European.

Works from the Chinese (see *Taishō Tripiṭaka* under Abbreviations) and Tibetan Buddhist canons are not listed individually in the bibliography: specific references to such works occur only in the notes. The same is true of the standard dynastic histories
of China and Tun-huang manuscripts. For the latter, where in the notes I do not refer specifically to the published source of a manuscript, the reference is either to the original in London, Paris, Leningrad, and Peking or to microfilms, photographs, and photocopies in my private collection, the Harvard-Yenching Library, the Van Pelt Library of the University of Pennsylvania, and in Olin Library of Cornell University. Information about the Tibetan Buddhist Canon is from Kenneth K. S. Ch’en “A Study of the Svāgata Story in the Divyāvadāna in Its Sanskrit, Pāli, Tibetan, and Chinese Versions,” HJAS 9, 3–4 (February 1947): 207–314, originally the author’s 1946 Harvard University Ph.D. dissertation, as follows:

a. Peking blockprint edition (completed 1700), Harvard-Yenching Library;
b. Lhasa blockprint edition (perhaps completed under the thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933 [?]), Harvard-Yenching Library;
c. Derge blockprint edition (completed 1733), Harvard-Yenching Library.

The Snarthang blockprint edition kept in the Harvard-Yenching Library was cut in 1730–1732.

The bibliography is divided into the following sections:

1. Abbreviations
2. Works in European Languages (Other than Translations from Asian and Near and Middle Eastern Texts)
3. Chinese Studies, Texts, Translations, and Dictionaries
4. Japanese and Korean Studies, Texts, Translations, and Dictionaries
5. South and Southeast Asian and Buddhicized Central Asian Texts, Translations, and Dictionaries (Includes Indic, Tibetan, Uighur, Indonesian, and Other Texts)
6. Near and Middle Eastern Texts, Translations, and Dictionaries
7. Films, Performances, Lectures, Unpublished Manuscripts, and Personal Communications
8. Articles and Books Not Seen

ABBREVIATIONS

ADAWB Abhandlungen der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin.
Bibliography

AKPAW Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissen schaften.
AM Asia Major.
APAW Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
ArchOr Archiv Orientální.
BEFEO Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient.
BSOS Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies.
CYYY Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k’an (Bul letin of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica) 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊
HJAS Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.
IAE Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie.
IHQ Indian Historical Quarterly.
JA Journal Asiatique.
JRAS Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.
JSS Journal of the Siam Society.
KITLV Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde.
MBV Mitteldeutsche Blätter für Volkskunde.
SPAW Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
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**SPPY**  

**Taishō**  
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**Tripitaka** , eds. *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō (The Tripitaka in Chinese)* 大正新修大藏經, 100 vols. Tokyo: The Taishō Issai-kyō Kanko Kwai, 1922–1934. Individual works from this collection are not listed separately in the bibliography. The form of citation used in the notes is *Taishō Tripitaka* (number of work) volume of *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* , page and section of page from same; e.g. *Taishō Tripitaka* (9)4.433c.

**TCWSC**  

**TP**  
*T’oung Pao.*

**TsSCC**  

**ZDMG**  
*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.*

**WORKS IN EUROPEAN LANGUAGES**

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Color Plate 6: Courtesy of Kazuo Tokuda.

Color Plates 7 and 8: Courtesy of William L. Hanaway, Jr.

Color Plate 9: One of a set of ten hanging “Land and Water” scrolls used in conjunction with *pao-chüan* (“precious scroll“) recitations in Ts‘ang County, Hopei province. Courtesy of Li Shih-yü and Paul Cohen.

Color Plates

Color Plate 2. Energetic performance by a picture reciter with hand organ and two assistants. The male assistant is offering texts for sale. Anonymous fragment taken from an early primer. Collection of Günter Böhmer, Munich. From Eichler, Bänkelsang und Moritat, p. 53.
Color Plate 4. Hieronymus Hess. Bänkelsänger with his troupe at Nadelberg in Basel, 1832. From Eichler, Bänkelsang und Moritat, frontispiece. See Figures 70a and 70b for more information.
Color Plate 5. The bhopo dances while he plays his stick zither. His assistant, the lamp-holder, looks on.

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