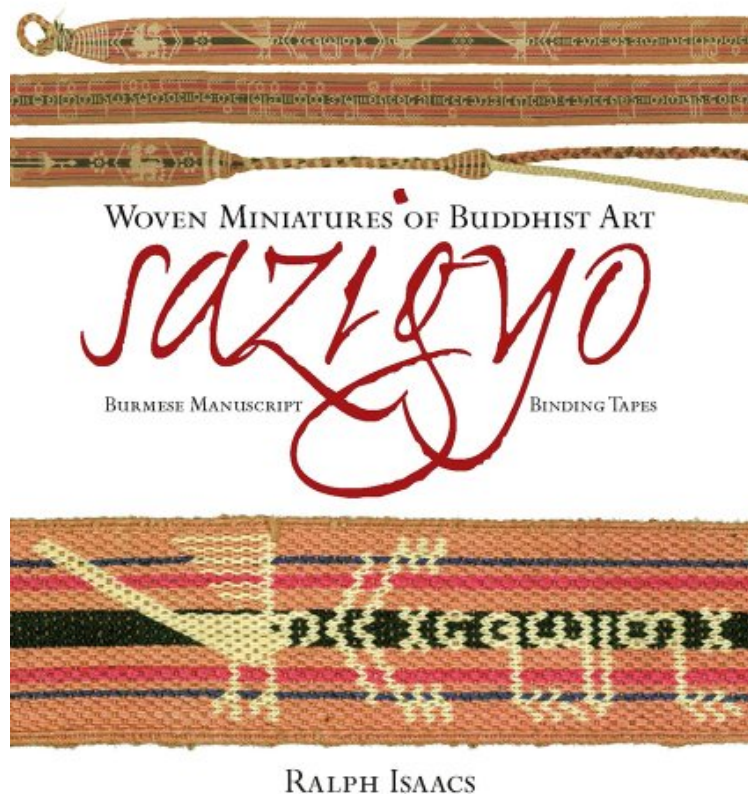


## Sazigyo, Burmese Manuscript Binding Tapes: Woven Miniatures of Buddhist Art

*Ralph Isaacs*

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**Ralph Isaacs : Sazigyo, Burmese Manuscript Binding Tapes: Woven Miniatures of Buddhist Art** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sazigyo, Burmese Manuscript Binding Tapes: Woven Miniatures of Buddhist Art:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Award Winning Book By Robb Shep This book was selected to receive the R.L. Shep Ethnic Textiles Book Award for 2014. The Award is presented annually by the Textile Society of America (TSA) to a publication judged the best book of the year in this field. The purpose of the Award is to encourage the study and understanding of textile traditions by recognizing and rewarding an exceptional study that fosters appreciation for the field of ethnic textiles. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Tablet-woven wonders By Marilyn Romatka Seldom does one come across a book that, for its sheer mass and beauty, can qualify as a coffee-table book, but at the same time be a book one wants to curl up with, together with a mug of hot tea, and read cover to cover. Ralph Isaacs has given us such a book. Sazigyo are long narrow tablet-woven bands, crafted in Burma for generations. They were used for wrapping bundles of palm-leaf slat-manuscripts of Buddhist texts. These bands

were commissioned to be woven as an offering to a monastery, thereby earning merit for the pious donor. The mastery of weaving shown in these bands left the great Peter Collingwood, in his own words, gasping with admiration! As Isaacs points out, they are both textile and text, since the entire length (sometimes 18 feet!) is a continuous stream of intricate, graceful Burmese script, interspersed with exquisite miniature images of birds, fish, and temple parasols; each a symbol of different aspects of the Buddha's teachings. Isaacs offers translations of many of the texts woven on the bands. Many sazigyo are inscribed with prayers for the benefit of the donor, sometimes mentioning the name of the donor. The book is heavy with excellent photographs, closeups that make the Sazigyo so present with me that I was tempted to reach out and touch the page to feel the band with my fingers. For cultural context, Isaacs offers the reader a thumbnail summary of the Buddha's life, description of a monk's life, and monastery details often referencing how objects in the monastery are found woven symbolically as embellishments on the sazigyo itself. This reviewer has long held an interest in these tiny woven masterpieces. Of course, to a weaver, any textile can be interesting; its structure, history, color-ways, the culture it represents. But a sazigyo takes the fascination one could put into a wide piece, and distills the delight down to a narrow gem of a cloth. Tragically, the practice of weaving sazigyo died out in the late 1970s, a victim to the convenience of a printed book over slats of palm-leaf. Any three-quarter inch textile that is over 6 feet long is interesting to a weaver, but these bands have the added delight of being tablet-woven. Tablet weavers will want to own a copy of *Sazigyo, Burmese Manuscript Binding Tapes*, as will collectors and weavers with an interest in ethnographic textiles. (Originally published in HGA's "Shuttle, Spindle, and Dyepot")

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Beautifully photographed, with chapters on the meaning. By Customer Beautifully photographed, with chapters on the meaning, history and weaving methods employed to make these amazing devotional scripts. If you collect textiles and South East Asian art or Buddhist art this book is a must have.

Sazigyo are fine, tablet-woven Burmese tapes used to bind the palm-leaf manuscripts of an earlier era. Tiny images and extended texts were deftly woven into the long, colorful bindings. These Buddhist textile texts were commissioned by donors to make merit in the hope of attaining a better rebirth and ultimately nirvana. This beautiful book elucidates the religious and social context of sazigyo and describes in detail the weaves, texts, designs, and images. It contains stunning, full-scale reproductions and enlargements of many hundreds of sazigyo segments found in collections throughout the world and presents translated excerpts from 150 sazigyo texts. The book is a celebration of a craft now vanishing and a tribute to the skill and flair of Burmese women weavers. It will appeal to weavers and textile designers and to all admirers of exquisite craftsmanship.

About the Author Ralph Isaacs is coauthor of *Visions from the Golden Land: Burma and the Art of Lacquer*.