

## Royal Attributes of the Nirmāṇakāya Śākyamuni and the Dharmakāya Buddhas

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लोकेशचन्द्रमहाभागः बाजे पिक्रान् महाभागया प्रणीतं “अलङ्कृतबुद्धः” इतिशीर्षकं ग्रन्थं परिशीलयन् भगवतो बुद्धस्य क्षत्रियत्वम् इक्ष्वाकुवंशीयत्वञ्च प्रतिष्ठाप्य, अत एव विभिन्नस्थलेषु बुद्धप्रतिमासु छत्रचामरादिराजचिह्नोपलब्धिं व्याख्याय, बौद्धधर्मस्य अवान्तर-सम्प्रदायभेदेषु तत्तदुपासनाक्रमस्य आधारेण आसनमुद्रादिषु वैलक्षण्यं निरूप्य, सम्प्रदायभेदेन कालान्तरे बुद्धस्यैव वैरोचनादिसंज्ञाकरणं प्रतिपाद्य तेषां मूर्तिकलावैलक्ष्यानि विशदयति।

Prof. Claudine Bautze-Picron has done a detailed and perceptive study of the bejeweled Buddha in her latest book "The Jewelled Buddha." It has been published by Sanctum Books. New Delhi, in 2010 as their inaugural opus. The author has divided the assignment of royal insignia to the Buddha in four phases:

First phase from the first century BC to the third century AD at:

Bharhut: umbrella (chattrā and garlands), umbrella and flywhisks (cāmara, p. 10).

Sanchi: umbrella and flywhisk

AP: flywhisk and garlands

Mathura: flywhisk, lions on a royal throne, umbrella (p. 13).

Second phase from the fourth to the sixth century AD at:

Gandhara and Greater Gandhara: (i) laurel wreath held by two cherubs (they have their counterpart in the Mediterranean tradition)

(ii) Umbrella and wreath

Maharashtra: umbrella and/or wreath

Phophnar and Sarnath: umbrella and garland

Third phase from the sixth to the eighth century AD at:

Bejewelled Buddha in Bamiyan, Fondukistan

Crowned Buddha from Parihasapura (p. 47)

Two 'shoulder-effulgences' representing Sun and Moon (p. 47)

Fourth phase from the ninth to the twelfth century

Bodhgaya, Kurkihar, Antichak and other places in Eastern India

The assignment of royal emblems had its origin in the royal kṣatriya caste of the Buddha, his being a scion of the most venerated dynasty of Indian history the Ikṣvākus, the politico-economic imperative of the Yüeh-chih/Kushans to don the imperial mantle and philosophical sophistication of Buddhism to counteract the Chinese concept of being barbarians, the Buddhist expedient means (upāya-kauśalya) of interiorisation of Solar deities prevalent in ancient NW India and other factors.

### **Buddha as a scion of the Ikṣvāku family**

The royal connection of the Buddha is a frequent assertion in the Sutras and other Buddhist texts. The very first stanza of the Buddhacarita of Aśvaghoṣa says: "There was a king of unconquerable Śākyas. Śuddhodana by name, of the race of Ikṣvāku and the peer of Ikṣvāku in might." This has been translated from Tibetan and Chinese versions, as the Sanskrit is lost. Johnston (1936:2.1) has restored tentatively as:

*aikṣvāka Ikṣvākusamaprabhāvaḥ  
śākyeṣv aśākyeṣu viśuddhavr̥ttaḥ.*

*priyaḥ śaraccandra iva prajābhyāḥ  
śuddhodano nāma babhūva rājā.*

Thus the Buddha was a descendant of the Solar Dynasty of the Ikṣvākus, from which came Lord Rāma. The commentary on Jātaka 1.49 says that the Bodhisattva saw that the khattiyas were the highest caste, so he selected the khattiya caste to take birth. Among them the Licchavīs, Mallas, Videhas and Śākyas were noted for their well-organised system of government, with the

Śākyas excelling them all (EBu. 6.204). Naturally his choice fell on the Śākyas as the appropriate clan to incarnate. Sêng-yu compiled a History of the Śākyā Family between the years 502-557 (T2040). He says: "In India the population is divided into four castes: the kṣatriya warriors, brāhmaṇa scholars and sages, vaiśya traders, and śūdra agriculturists. The first two classes are noble and the last two are low. The Buddha is never born in a class other than the first two. Having appeared in a troubled age when the warriors were most honored, the Buddha preferred to be born in this class." Here the kṣatriyas are mentioned first and the brāhmaṇas are second. Three passages in the Shih-chia ju-lai ying-hua shih-chi 'Life of Nirmāṇakāya Śākyamuni', compiled by pao-ch' eng in the Ming period from Chinese Sutras translated from Sanskrit from the third to the ninth century, state that the Buddha was born in the Śākyā clan of the Kāma tribe (Lokesh Chandra, Life of Lord Buddha from Chinese Sūtras Illustrated in Ming Woodcuts. New Delhi, 2010:33, 175, 177). It is repeated in the 'Sutra on the Cause and Effect of the Past and Present' translated by Guṇabhadra between AD 435-443 (p. 174). the Buddha is an ex-prince of the Kāma tribe and the Buddha of the Śākyā clan (p. 175). The same sutra affirms again: Siddhārtha, the son of Śuddhodana of the Kāma tribe, has become the Buddha of the Śākyas (p. 177). In the Mahāmāyūrī 93 a locality is called Kāmada. The Kāma tribe seems to have hailed from the area around the modern town of Kamdesh the tribal headquarters of the Kam Kafirs. about 2000 feet above the right bank of the Bashgal river, where Robertson spent an year in 1895 (George Scott Robertson, "The Kafirs of the Hindu-kush", London, Lawrence and Bullen Ltd., 1896, p. 19). "Katis and Kāma speak different dialects of the same language (Katī)" (Morgenstierne, some Kati myths and hymns, Acta Orientalia 1953:21.161). The migrations, history, kinship organisation, political leadership, social ranks among the Kam are discussed in the Cultures of the Hindu-kush, ed. Karl Jettmar and Lennart Edelberg (Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1974).

To revert to Sêng-yu who says that "having sprung up from the blood of Gautama the Younger, they took the name of Gautama and that of Kāma from the sugarcane field. Later the family adopted the clan name Śākyā." Kāma has been discussed

above. The sugarcane field refers to the Ikṣvāku dynasty, from ikṣu 'sugar-cane.' The name Ikṣvāku occurs as early as the Ṛigveda 10.60.7 and Atharvaveda 19.39.9. Their affluence, might and renown beyond the borders of India was due to the sugar that was in great demand and was a flourishing export from very ancient times.

The primacy of the kṣatriyas is well attested in the Pali Tripiṭaka. Whenever the four castes are referred to, the khattiyas always occur first, e.g. in Saṃyutta-nikāya 1.98, Dīgha-nikāya 3.82, Aṅguttara-nikāya 2.86, etc.

Dīgha-nikāya 3.97, Majjhima-nikāya 1.338, Saṃyutta-nikāya 1.153, 2.284 say : The khattiya is the best among folk Who put their trust in lineage.

The Buddha was a kṣatriya and his right to teach a new path was canonised by the presence of Brahmā who is the 'Lord of the Earth' (Brahmā Sahāmpatiḥ, sahā 'earth'). Brahmā addressed him as Tathāgata and requested him to deliver his message to humanity and other sentient beings. The way of meditation was evolved by the kṣatriyas as early as the Upaniṣads. The kṣatriyas assert their right to teach in general and in cases even brāhmāṇas. An interesting episode is that of the kṣatriya King Pravahana giving instructions to the brāhmāṇa Āruṇi in the Chāndogya-upaniṣad 5.3.7. Āruṇi says: "Because, as you have told me, O Gautama, this doctrine has never been in circulation among the brāhmāṇas upto the present time..." He refers to King Pravahana as Gautama. Lord Buddha was also Gautama. As a kṣatriya Buddha must have been steeped in the Upaniṣads. While the brāhmāṇas were involved in complex rituals of sacrifice to the Devas, the kṣatriyas were seeking enlightenment in the contemplation of Brahman, or in the expansion of consciousness (Brahman in from the root bṛnh 'to expand'), in the incandescence of being that is beyond matter and beyond mind. The Laṅkāvatāra distinguishes five vehicles of transcendence: devayāna: the way of ritual to the Devas or Vedic saṃskāra (brāhmāṇas), brahmayāna: the way of contemplation of Brahman (kṣatriyas), śrāvakayāna, tathāgatayāna: Buddhism, and pratyekayāna:

*devayānaṃ brahmayānaṃ śrāvakīyaṃ tathāiva ca.*

*tāthāgataṃ ca pratyekaṃ yānān etān vadāmy aham.*

(D.T. Suzuki, Studies in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, 1930:360, 408). The continuity of brahmayāna of the Upaniṣads in Buddhism was a kṣatriya phenomenon.

### Earth Goddess as a symbol of sovereignty

The Earth Goddess plays an important role as witness in support of the Budhisattva on the greatest of all occasions, namely, the attainment of Enlightenment or Buddhahood. When Māra challenges the Buddha-to-be to provide witness to his Enlightenment, he touches the Earth as witness to his Bodhi. She emerges to attest the magnitude of his spiritual enlightenment (Lokesh Chandra, Dictionary of Buddhist Iconography 15:4295). Why did the Buddha invoke the Earth Goddess? She is the goddess who grants dominion to kings, and can be seen emerging between the feet of Caturānana Viṣṇu to bless the King and queen in Sculptures from e.g. Kashmir ca. 800 AD, Kashmir 9<sup>th</sup> century, Chamba 9<sup>th</sup> century (Pratapaditya Pal, Bronzes of Kashmir 1975: 9, 10, 84). The Earth was the Goddess of Regnum. Royal symbolism was a constant underlying milieu in the life of the Buddha and in the ongoing evolution of Buddhism.

The Tathāgata is surrounded by five great goddesses in the opening paragraph of the Suvarṇa-bhāsottama-sūtra representing learning (Sarasvatī), prosperity (Śrī), security (Hārītī), dynastic deity residing on the banks of Nairāñjana (mahākuladevatā), and Dṛḍhā or Mahāpṛthivī-devatā. The five have clear nuances of the concerns of the state. They indicate the princely modes of the mind of the Buddha. The Sūtra (ed. Joh. Nobel p. 3) says that they will protect the devotees of the Sūtra with hoards of yakṣas (teṣāṃ rakṣāṃ kariṣyanti anekair yakṣa-koṭibhiḥ). The five goddesses occur twice:

nidāna p. 1 (in the assembly) p. 3 st. 13 (as protective goddesses)

Bodhisattva-samuccayā	mahākuladevatā	Nairāñjana-vāsinī
Sarasvatī	Mahādevatā	Sarasvatī mahādevī
Śrī	Mahādevatā	-----

Dr̥ḍhā	mahāpṛthivī- devatā	Dr̥ḍhā	pṛthivī- devatā
Hārītī	Mahādevatā	Hārītī bhūta-mātā	

Bautze-Picron has rightly remarked on p. 39 n. 94 that "the presence of the Earth-Goddess in the iconography of the Buddha constitutes a further link to his royal nature"

### From Śākyamuni to Śākyasiṃha

There are two names of Buddha: Śākyamuni to denote his hieratic aspect as a sage, and Śākyasiṃha to stress his royal birth. He was not only a muni but also a siṃha 'lion'. The Bodhicaryāvatāra 7.55 says: "I have to conquer all. I am not to be conquered by anyone. I have to keep up this dignity, for I am a disciple (sutra) of the Jinasiṃha (=Śākyasiṃha)":

*mayā hi sarvaṃ jetavyam, ahaṃ jeyo na kenacit.  
mayaiṣa māno voḍhavyo, jinasimha-suto hy aham.*

The term Śākyasiṃha occurs in the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra, Lalita-vistara and Mahāvastu. The ever-victorious march of Buddhism over vast geographic regions was due to the royalty of various ethnicities, and they were keen to accentuate the royal constituents in the iconography of the Buddha.

### The Yüeh-chih strategy of Buddhism

The Yüeh-chih viewed the Buddha as a royal personage. Bautze-Picron says: "as a consequence of the Kuṣāṇa views of the royalty that the Buddha acts as if he were a king, and hence sits in pralambapādāsana on a throne in the way introduced by the Kuṣāṇa rulers" (p. 21). The Kushans were a clan of the Yüeh-chih. Benjamin (2002.v) points out that the probable ancestors of the Yüeh-chih established a powerful federation in present day Xinjiang and Ganur, based on trade in jade and horses. The Yüeh-chih enjoyed military superiority over their neighbours and established a strong kingdom. In 162 BC the Hsiung-nu inflicted a devastating defeat on them and converted the skull of the Yüeh-chih king into a drinking cup (p. 71). The Hsiung-nu expelled them and they migrated through the Ili Valley, Ferghana and Sogdia to northern Bactria. They conquered the Greek state of Bactria. In spite of the fact that the Yüeh-chih were the backbone

of the defence of China in supplying them Ferghana horses for the cavalry as well as bringing jade which was crucial for all imperial ceremonies, they were regarded as "barbarians" by the Chinese. This hurt their pride and diminished their status. They showed their cultural hegemony to the Chinese in the sophistication of Buddhist thought and its regal origins in the epic dynasty of the Ikṣvākus and thereby came to be respected as civilised. Monks headed by śramaṇa Shih-li-fang brought over two hundred Buddhist sutras to the capital of Ch'in Shih-huang-ti who ruled from 221-208 BC. He was the 'First Emperor' who united China by making the Great Wall, abolished all dialects of the Sinic family, created one spoken and literary language that has come down to this day, and had all the Confucian Classics destroyed. He did not accept the Sutras and all the monks were imprisoned. Later on, a Yüeh-chih crown prince instructed a Chinese envoy to the Yüeh-chih court and Ching Lu of the Imperial Academy in Buddhist Sutras in the year 2 BC (Zürcher 1972:24). Han Emperor Ming (ruled AD 58-75) sent Ts'ai yin and Academician Qin-Jing to invite Buddhist masters to China. They met Indian monks Kāśyapa Mātaṅga and Dharmaratna in the Yüeh-chih kingdom and escorted them to China in AD 67. The Emperor built the White Horse Monastery for them on the outskirts of the capital Loyang to preach, as stated in the Later Han Annals and in the Wei Annals (Tan Chung & Geng Yinzeng, *India and China: Twenty Centuries of Civilizational Interaction and Vibrations*, New Delhi, 2005: 287). The name of the monastery itself indicates that horses and Buddhism were a biunity in the Yüeh-chih mind.

### **Buddha depicted in bhadraśana of the Kushan Kings**

The Yüeh-chih divided the kingdom of Bactria into five chiefdoms. Around 139 BC the imperial envoy of the Former Han dynasty Chang Ch'ien visited the Great Yüeh-chih of Bactria. The Kushans, who were one of the five chieftains, defeated the other four and established the Kushan dynasty in the mid-first century. Yüeh-chih monks Laugākṣin, Chih-ch'ien, Dharmarakṣa were the early translators of Sutras into Chinese.

The Kushans were proud of being of royal descent, and to them the worship of Buddha the great kṣatriya, was a matter of

dignity and of self-identity. They introduced the image of the Buddha sitting in bhadrāsana on a throne in the way they sat (Bautze-Picron 2010:21). The term pralambapāda is a modern coinage of A.K. Coomaraswamy and it does not occur in any Buddhist text. The correct term is bhadrāsana, which is common in Tibetan iconographic texts in a literal translation: bzañs.poḥi. ḥdug.stañs, and also as hor.ḥdug which means 'the āsana of the Hor or Central Asians' (N.G. Ronge & Loden Sherap Dargyab, *Ikongraphie und Symbolik des tibetischen Buddhismus, Teil AII. 222, Wiesbaden*). Bhadra is a Sanskritisation of Bactria.

The annotations of Hsüan-tsang and I-tsing clarify that Bhadra is the name of a village in their time (see details in my *Trapuṣa and Bhallika, Cultural Horizons of India 1993:3.140-147*). The correct term bhadrāsana should be used in place of the newly coined pralambapādāsana. Moreover, bhadrāsana indicates the origin of the sitting posture. The Kushans consciously expressed their imperial style in many ways: they put a headline on the Brāhmī script to crown it as the imperial script. The Yüeh-chih and the Kushans worshipped the Buddha as a kṣatriya of royal blood in conformity with their imperial glory (as distinguished from clan Chieftains) and the regalisation of Buddha's iconography was an expression of their pride and power.

### **From the historic Buddha to the transcendental Buddhas**

Bautze-Picron discusses the constant evolution of the images of various transcendental Buddhas, with the iconic attributes and mudrās becoming more specifically defined. Theogony was a fundamental process in the upāya-kauśalya strategy of Buddhism to link the outside with the inside. The alterities were not taken as opposing metasytems, but they were interiorised within the system. The outside was subjectified and it became the inside of the inside. The royal cults of the NW of India were heliotropic, dominated by solar worship. The heliotropic evolution can be tabulated as follows:

Maitreya



Amitābha



Rocana (of the Avataṃsaka tradition)



Vairocana

Mitra or Mithra became Maitraka (which gave the SinoJapanese Miroku) or Maitreya, who sat in the bhadrāsana posture of Bactria. He is also known as Ajita who is Mithra Invictus. In his Chinese translation of the Lotus Sutra, Kumārajīva translates Ajita as Maitreya. His paradise Tuṣ-āra (Tukhari-stan). The idea of a divine saviour in the future is prominent in the Iranian pantheon. Maitreya's mount is a peacock, which reminds us of the Peacock Throne of Iran down to the present. The stūpa represents the state: stūpa is Crown in the Ṛigveda, while his other attribute of the close-necked flask (kuṇḍikā) is the earlier wine-flask, as wine was used in Mithraic rituals. Later it became the bread and wine of the Christian sacrament. Mus (1935: 418f) takes up Śākyamuni and Maitreya in 'royal' ritual and the assimilation of the quality of the Buddha to royal dignity (p. 429).

Amitābha replaced Śākyamuni, and the historic Enlightenment was transcended into Supreme Illumination. The distant corridors of etymology provide links that are missing in the texts. Amita is 'infinite, transcendent' and -ābha is 'light, illumination.' The component -ābha can be seen in af of af-tab 'sun' (af 'sun', tab 'shine' Skt. tāpa, compare meh-tab 'moon' : meh 'moon' Skt. māś + tab 'shine') : an indication that the name Amitābha originated in the NW of ancient India. The Pure Land of Amitābha is transcribed as Hsü-ho-mo-t'i (=Sudhāmatī) in Chinese and translated as An-lo, in which the Chinese character for An is the same as the ethnic on for Parthia.

Amitābha evolved into Rocana, the thousandth of the thousand Buddhas of the Gaṇḍavyūha. No specific characteristics were attributed to him, except that he was an abhyucca-deva or colossus, a concept that must have come from Hellenised regions through the Tokharians who spoke a European language. "The gigantic images of Bamiyan inspired the Northern Wei colossi in Lung-men which were Lu-she-na (=Rocana) of Buddhahadra's translation of the Avataṃsaka done in 420-421 from a manuscript secured in Khotan.

### Vairocana or 'Great Sun' as the Cakravartin

A further evolution was the several types of Vairocana with well-defined attributes. The family descent of Śākyamuni was a crucial factor in the development of heliocentric Buddhas, besides the imperial role of the Sun in the NW. As Lord Buddha was a scion of the Solar Dynasty of the Ikṣvākus, the transition from Śākyamuni to Vairocana was inherent in the lineage of the Enlightened One. Vairocana means 'The Sun', and the Sino-Japanese translation of Vairocana is Dai-nichi 'Great Sun'. By this time definitive iconic attributes, related to specific texts, had become the norm. Thus some types of Vairocana discussed by Bautze-Picron can be correlated to different textual traditions: Abhisambodhi-Vairocana, crowned, hands in samādhi-mudrā (different from the dhyāna mudrā), from the Vairocanābhisambodhi-sūtra main deity of the Mahākaruṇā-garbhadhātu-maṇḍala.

Bautze-Picron (p. 54 n. 41) says that this maṇḍala integrates two aspects of nirmāṇa-kāya in the Śākyamuni quarter and sambhoga-kāya in the central quarter of Abhisambodhi-Vairocana.

Śākyamuni represents the originating Buddha and the trikāya is not applicable here.

Vajradhātu-Vairocana, crowned, hands in bodhyagrī-mudrā AKA jñāna-muṣṭi-mudrā, from the Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha (STTS), main deity of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala.

The bodhyagrī-mudrā is specified in the Niṣpanna-yogāvalī 19. It is illustrated in Śubhākarasimha's Gobu-shingon pantheon.

Durgati-pariśodhana Vairocana, hands in dharmacakra-mudrā, from the Sarva-durgati-pariśodhanatantra Sarvavid Vairocana with four faces, crowned, hands in samādhi-mudrā hold a cakra.

There are 37 types of Vairocana in my Dictionary of Buddhist Iconography 13:3770-3829. The author Bautze-Picron has taken into consideration the icons per se, without correlating them to the steady evolution of texts which contributed to ever-renewing (i) philosophical formulations, (ii) ritual to accompany the new thought system with new rites, mantras, mudrās, (iii)

new iconography of the main deity and its entourage. As pointed out above, every Vairocana belongs to a specific root-tantra. The Tibetan tradition of the Nyingma sect divides the evolution into two grand divisions of (i) inner tantras which include yab-yum deities in conjugal embrace, and (ii) outer tantras which pertain to Amitābha, and various manifestations of Vairocana. While the first are erototropic or derive from orgiastic practices, the second are phototropic or centred around solar worship.

### State and sacred palladia

Vairocana in his designation as Ekākṣara Cakravartin (Jap. Ichiji Kinrin) sits on seven lions with the hands in bodhyagrī mudrā and is surrounded by seven constituents of the state. His symbol is a cakra in dhyāna-mudrā his hands are in bodhyagrī. He is illustrated in several Buddhist pantheons and his images are found in Japan. His representation from the Shoson-zuzō by Shinkaku (AD 1117-80, TZ.88:7) is illustrated below:

	chattra (imperial umbrella)	
horse (cavalry)		elephant (one of the four constituents of the army)
queen (stability of the dynasty)	VAIROCANA	prime minister
cintāmaṇi (prosperity)	cakra (imperium)	general (defence)

The residence of Vairocana is quoted with the metropolis of a cakravartin which has seven ramparts made of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, coral and one of all jewels. Kuśavatī is surrounded by such seven enclosures in the Dīghanikāya. Kuśavatī can stand for the capital (vatī) of the Kushans (kuśa). The central lotus enceinte of Vairocana in the Mahākaruṇāgarbha-maṇḍala has seven lines of different colours representing the seven precious metals and stones. The statues of the bejewelled Buddha have to be reconsidered in the light of comparative iconography. It is not "Buddha as Vairocana" (Bautze-Picron p. 141), but a new Transcendental Tathāgata/Jina/Buddha, representing a new order based on the Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha or other texts. The maṇḍala is an architectural structure, and hence the central parts of the "maṇḍalas are square" (Tucci 1949: 1.249), while the outer parts are round and represent the psychic elements: circle of flames (jvālāvali) to burn the sins, vajrāvalī to represent that the practitioner has become a vajrasattva, and the circle of lotuses (padmāvalī) that the devotee has attained the full purity of heart to approach the sanctum.

Bautze-Picron (p. 24) interprets devaputratvat in the inscription of one of the Sarnath images as: "the one who possesses devaputras, those born of the gods" I would like to translate the term as "like a devaputra." Devaputra is a translation of the Chinese 'Son of Heaven' for the Emperor. The portrait of Kaniška is inscribed mahārāja rājātirāja devaputro Kānishko, where he is the Indian mahārāja, Iranian rājātirāja, and Chinese devaputra. Thus the Sarnath image was like that of a devaputra or emperor. Statues were donated at Sarnath and Kauśāmbī early in the reign of Kaniška (John M. Rosenfield, The Dynastic Art of the Kushans, 1967:144).

The close connection of the state and Buddhist statuary is pointed out by Bautze-Picron (p. 56 n. 48). The crowns of various figures of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala in the Gobushingan of Śubhākarasimha (AD 637-735) recall the crown of Sūrya from Khair Khaneh (Afghanistan) dated to the late fourth or early fifth century.

### Internetting texts and iconics

Bautze-Picron uses the term vajraparyaṅkāśana. The Niṣpanna-yogāvali has vajraparyaṅkā and sattvaparyaṅka, where paryaṅka means a mode of sitting. The suffix āśana is tautology and should better be avoided. Correct technical terms have become known from a number of Sanskrit Buddhist texts. We need to study and correlate them to graphic representations. For this the vast Tibetan and Japanese oeuvre on theography will have to be compared.

The historic Śākyamuni and the multiple Transcendental Buddhas who evolved over the centuries like Maitreya, Amitābha, Rocana, and Vairocana have to be contradistinguished on the basis of attributes. As there are very few inscriptions in India that define their nomenclature, the texts in Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan as well as images in these regions can help us to name the specific Buddhas individually, rather than as developments of the historic Śākyamuni.

The book of Bautze-Picron is a model of a comprehensive approach, as well as of precision. She has covered India and SE Asia, and at times compared them with the extensive Sino-Japanese evidence. It is a crowning magnum opus on the culmination of the Buddha pare, from being surrounded by elements of royal paraphernalia to being fully jewelled and crowned. A work that provokes, raises questions, and inspires further study of the enigmas of mantrayāna, Uttarāpatha (NW of ancient India), the Kushans and the silence of Buddhist statuary over the centuries and climes, that once were the light that gave life to everything, and were the apotheosis of power and purity, of statecraft and spirituality.

**Abbreviations**

Benjamin 2007

Craig G.R. Benjamin, the Yuezhi: Origin, Migration and the Conquest of Northern Bactria, Brepols Publishers n.v., Turkhut, Belgium.

E Bu = Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, ed. G.P. Malalasekera and others, Colombo, 1961

Johnston 1936

E.H. Johnston, the Buddhacarita, Calcutta.

Mus 1935

Paul Mus, Barabudur: esquisse d'une histoire du Bouddhisme fondée sur la critique archéologique des textes, Hanoi

T = Taishō edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, ed. Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, Tokyo, 1924-1929.

Tucci 1949

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