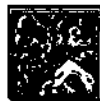


Elements of Buddhist Iconography

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FOREWORD

COOMARASWAMY'S *A New Approach to the Vedas*, Luzac and Company, 1933, *The Transformation of Nature in Art*, Harvard University Press, 1934, and the present volume, which is published under the auspices of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, are based on the following convictions, which have gradually been developing in his mind.

In the first place, Buddhist art in India — and that is practically equivalent to saying art in India — begins about the second century before Christ with a well-developed set of symbols in its iconography. It does not seem possible to completely separate Buddhism as religion and as art from the main current of Indian religion and art, or to think that these symbols suddenly developed as a new creation. Therefore Coomaraswamy proceeded to study from a new point of view the symbolism which pervades the whole early Vedic literature of India, trying to discover whether concepts expressed symbolically in the literature of the aniconic Vedic period may not have found their first iconographic expression in early Buddhist art.

In the second place, he noted many surprising similarities between passages in the mediaeval Christian theologians and mystics, such as St Thomas, Meister Eckhart, Ruysbroeck, and Böhme, and passages in the Vedic literature — similarities so striking that many sentences from the Christian writers might be taken as almost literal translations of Sanskrit sentences, or vice versa. The conviction developed in him that mystical theology the world over is the same, and that mediaeval Christian theology might be used as a tool to the better understanding of ancient Indian theology. This theory he proceeded to apply even to the Rig Veda, assuming, contrary to the general opinion, no complete break in thought between the Rig Veda and the Brahmanas and Upanishads. In many obscure and so-called "mystical" stanzas of the Rig Veda and Atharva Veda he finds the same concepts vaguely hinted at which are employed in a more developed form in Brahmanism and Buddhism.

The present study of the Tree of Life, the Earth-Lotus the Word-Wheel, the Lotus-Throne, and the Fiery Pillar tries to show that these symbols can be traced back beyond their first representation in Buddhist

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iconography through the aniconic period of the Brahmanical Vedas, even into the Rig Vedic period itself, and that they represent a universal Indian symbolism and set of theological concepts.

Objective linguistics is apparently near the end of its resources in dealing with the many remaining obscurities of Rig Vedic phraseology. This new metaphysical approach is welcome even though to the matter-of-fact linguist it may seem that ideas are not being built up on the basis of words but that words are being made to fit ideas.

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"Symbols cannot be studied apart from the references which they symbolise."

Ogden and Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, p. 20

"To determine the import of names is the same as to determine the fundamental character of concepts."

Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, I, p. 459

"I speak thus (in images) because of the frailty of the intelligence of the tender children of men." "But since thou takest thy stand upon the principles (*dharmesu*), how is it that thou dost not enunciate the First Principle (*tattvam*) explicitly?" "Because, although I refer to the First Principle, there is not any 'thing' in Intellect corresponding to the reference 'First Principle.'"

Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, II, 112 and 114

"The picture is not in the colors . . . the Principle (*tattvam*) transcends the letter."

Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, II, 118-119

Mirate la dottrina, che s'asconde, sotto il velame degli versi strani.

Dante, *Inferno*, IX, 61

PART I

TREE OF LIFE, EARTH-LOTUS, AND
WORD-WHEEL

“Die Menschheit . . . versucht sie, in die greifbare oder sonstwie wahrnehmbare Form zu bringen, wir könnten sage zu materialisen, was ungreifbar, nichtwahrnehmbar ist. Sie schafft Symbol, Schriftzeichen, Kultbild aus irdischen Stoff und schaut in ihnen und hinter ihnen das sonst unschaubare, unvorstellbare geistige und göttliche Geschehen.”

— Walter Andrae, *Die ionische Säule, Bauform oder Symbol?* 1933, p. 65.

THE iconography (*rūpa-bheda*) of Indian and Far Eastern art has been discussed hitherto almost exclusively with respect to the identification of the various hypostases as represented “anthropomorphically” in the later art. Here it is proposed to treat those fundamental elements of Buddhist symbolism which predominate in the earlier aniconic art, and are never dispensed with in the later imagery, though they are there subordinated to the “human” icon. In neither case is the symbol designed as though to function biologically: as symbol (*pratīka*) it expresses an idea, and is not the likeness of anything presented to the eye’s intrinsic faculty.¹ Nor is the aniconic image less or more the likeness of Him, First Principle, who is no thing, but whose image it is, than is the “human” form. To conceive of Him as a living Tree, or as a Lamb or Dove, is no less sound theology than to conceive of Him as Man, who is not merely *mānuṣya-laukika* but *sarva-laukika*, not merely *mānuṣa-raupya* but *viśva-raupya*, not human merely but of Universal Form.² Any purely anthropomorphic theology is to that extent specifically limited; but He takes on vegetative, theriomorphic, and geometrical forms and sounds just as much and just as little as he dons flesh.³ So the Bodhisattva vows that he will not be Utterly Extinguished until the last blade of grass shall have reached its goal.

What has been said above is to dispel the notion that in discussing symbolism we are leaving life behind us; on the contrary, it is precisely by means of symbols that *ars imitatur naturam in sua operatione*, all other “imitation” being idolatry. Before proceeding, it only remains to be said that if any particular stress seems to be laid on Buddhism, this is strictly speaking an accident. Buddhism in India represents a heterodox development, all that is metaphysically “correct” (*pramiti*) in its ontology and

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symbolism being derived from the primordial tradition; with the slight necessary transpositions, indeed, the greater part of what is said could be directly applied to the understanding of Christian art. In the following discussion, no ideas or opinions of my own are expressed, everything being taken directly, and often verbally, from Vedic or Buddhist sources.

It has often been remarked that in Pali texts there is no express tradition prohibiting the making of anthropomorphic images of the Tathāgata, originally "So-come" or "So-gone," later "Who has entered into the Suchness," which might account for the designation of the Buddha only by aniconic symbols in the early art.⁴ And this is essentially true; the representation by aniconic symbols is not in kind a Buddhist invention, but represents the survival of an older tradition,⁵ the anthropomorphic image becoming a psychological necessity only in *bhakti-vāda* offices. However, the *Kāliṅga-bodhi Jātaka* (J., IV, 228), in the Introduction, enunciates what amounts to such a prohibition, and may well have been the point of view current in Buddhist circles at a much earlier date than can be positively asserted for the Jātaka text. Here Ānanda desires to set up in the Jetavana a substitute for the Buddha, so that people may be able to make their offerings of wreaths and garlands at the door of the Gandhakuṭi, as *pūjanīyatthāna*, not only when the Buddha is in residence, but also when he is away preaching the Dharma elsewhere. The Buddha asks how many kinds of hallows (*cetiya*)⁶ there are. "Three," says Ānanda, with implied reference to contemporary non-Buddhist usage, "viz., those of the body (*sāṅgika*), those of association (*pāribhogaka*),⁷ and those prescribed (*uddesika*)." The Buddha rejects the use of bodily relics on the obvious ground that such relics can only be venerated after the Parinibbāṇa. He rejects the "prescribed" symbols also because such are "groundless and merely fanciful" (*avattukam manamattakam*), that is to say only artificially and by convention referable to the absent being for whom a substitute is desired; the terms as employed here in a derogatory sense can only mean "arbitrary." So "Only a Mahābodhi-rukkha, Great-Wisdom-tree, that has been associated with a Buddha is fit to be a *cetiya*, whether the Buddha be still living, or Absolutely Extinguished." This occurs also in the *Mahābodhivamsa*, PTS. ed. p. 59.

In the absence of specific definition, it may be assumed that the class of "associated" symbols included also such other aniconic representations as the wheel (*cakra*), feet (*pāduka*), *trīśūla* ("nandi-pada"), and/or other geo-

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metrical, vegetative, or even theriomorphic forms actually met with in early Buddhist art. It is true that, like the tree, these symbols had older than Buddhist application, and one could imagine objections made accordingly — had not Sujātā indeed mistaken the Bodhisattva for a *rukkhadevatā*? But where no objection had been made to the tree, none could have been logically raised in connection with the other symbols. These in fact came into use in connection with the setting up of local *cetiya*s as objects of reverence, as substitutes for pilgrimage to the original sites, the different symbols serving, as is well known, to differentiate between the several Events. The wheel, for example, had special reference to the first preaching in Benares. At the same time, the use of such symbols, with their inherent metaphysical implications, must have contributed to the early definition of the mythical Buddhology. It is perhaps because the Jātaka passages do not yet take account of Four Events, but only of the most important, the Great Awakening — a recent event from the Hīnayāna point of view — that the Buddha is made to say that a Buddha can *only* be represented rightly by a Great-Wisdom-tree.

By *uddesika*, “prescribed,” corresponding to *vyakta*, “manifest,” in the Brahmanical classifications of icons, we should expect that anthropomorphic images were indicated, and this is confirmed in the *Khuddakapāṭha-Atthakathā* (PTS. ed., 1915, p. 222), where *uddissaka-cetiyaṃ* is explained by *buddha-paṭimā*, “an image of the Buddha.” Notwithstanding that a use of anthropomorphic images of any kind must have been rare in the Buddha’s lifetime, it is clear that the Commentators understood that the Buddha’s own position was definitely iconoclastic. It is true that the Buddha image, with its non-human *lakṣhaṇas*, can no more than other Indian images be thought of as the likeness of a man, nevertheless the objection made must have depended on the generally human appearance of such images, this appearance being inappropriate to him who was “not a man.” We ought perhaps rather to say that it was in this way that the ancient custom of using predominantly aniconic imagery was thus explained and justified. The attitude of those who actually made use of anthropomorphic images is defined in the *Divyāvadāna*, Ch. XXVI, where it is explained that those who look at earthen images (*mṛnmayā-pratikṛti*) “do not honor the clay as such, but without regard thereof, honor the deathless principles referred to (*amara-samjñā*) in the earthen images.” The rendering of *uddesika* as “pre-

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scribed" is supported by the expressed *yathāsamdiṣṭam* in the *Divyāvadāna* passage cited below.

The Buddha is represented as dealing again with the same problem in later life, and now (*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, V, 8 and 12 = *Dīgha Nikāya* II, 140–143), in view of his approaching death, he declares that after the Total Extinction there are four places proper to be visited by the community, and these "places which should stir deep feeling" (*saṃvejanīyāni thānāni*, cf. *pūjanīyatthāna* cited above) are those at which the four crises of the Buddha's life had been passed. With respect to the edification resulting from such visits, we are told that at the sight of the *thūpa* of the Rāja Cakkavatti "the hearts of many shall be made calm and glad."

Later traditions represent the Buddha himself as having not merely sanctioned but actually instituted the use of anthropomorphic images. Thus, according to the *Divyāvadāna*, p. 547, Rudrāyaṇa (sc. Udāyana) desires a means of making offerings to the Buddha when he is absent; the Blessed One said "Have an image of the Tathāgata drawn on canvas, and make your offering thereto" (*tathāgata-pratimām paṭe likhāpayitvā*, etc.). Rudrāyaṇa calls his painters (*cittakarā*). They say that they cannot grasp the Blessed One's exemplum (*na śaknuvanti bhagavato nimittam udgrahītum*). The Blessed One says that is because they are affected by lassitude (*kheda*, equivalent to *śīthilasamādhī* in *Mālavikāgnimitra*, II, 2), but "bring me a piece of canvas" (*api tu paṭakam ānaya*). Then the Blessed One projected his similitude upon it (*tatra . . . chāyā utsrṣṭā*), and said "complete it with colors" (*raṅgaiḥ pūrayata*), adding that certain texts are to be written (*likhitavyāni*) below. And so "everything was by them depicted according to prescription" (*yathāsamdiṣṭam sarvaṃ abhikhitam*).

According to the version of this legend preserved by Hsüan-tsang (Beal, *Life*, p. 91) it was an image of sandal-wood rather than a painting that was made for Udāyana; a skilled imager was transported to the Trayastrimśas heaven by Maudgalyāyana, and after contemplating there the appearance and features of the Buddha, who was preaching the Law to his mother, the artist was brought back to earth and carved the figure in his likeness. This image, which Hsüan-tsang identified with one that he saw at Kauśambī, was nevertheless as he mentions elsewhere (*Si-yu-ki*, Beal, *Records . . .*, II, p. 322) borne through the air (we may interpret, "transferred as a mental image in the mind of a sculptor") to Khotān, and there became the arche-

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type of innumerable later copies, which are regarded as possessing a similitude of univocation, so that we find at Long Men a statue called "Udāyana's" (Chavannes, *Mission archéologique . . .*, pp. 391-2). There is also the tradition of still another image, made in gold after the Buddha's final departure, and it is with reference to an image in this "succession" that an inscription of about 665 at Long Men (Chavannes, *loc. cit.*, p. 362), remarks "Si l'influence et le modèle ne disparurent pas, c'est grâce à celà" where the thought expressed is tantamount to this, that the image is still his whose image it is. With respect to such traditional representations it is also said in an inscription of 641 (Chavannes, *loc. cit.*, p. 340-1) "Le K'i-chö est devant nos yeux; Na-kie peut être représentée," that is, "when we look at these statues, it is just as if we saw the Buddha himself on Vulture Peak, or his likeness in the cave at Nāgarahāra" (where he left his "shadow" (cf. *chāyā utsrṣṭā* in the *Divyāvadāna* passage cited above). As the Long Men inscription of 543 (Chavannes, *loc. cit.*) reminds us, "they cut the stone of price in imitation of his supernatural person." In the absence of the past manifestation in a human body (as Śākyamuni) and before the future manifestation (of Maitreya) the Wayfarer resorts to a means of access to the transcendental principles from which all manifestations proceed. The image merely as such is of no value; all depends on what he does who looks at it; what is expected of him is an act of contemplation such that when he sees before him the characteristic lineaments, it is for him as though the whole person of the Buddha were present; he journeys in the spirit to the transcendent gathering on Vulture Peak (*Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*, Ch. XV). Aesthetic and religious experience are here indivisible; rising to the level of reference intended, "his heart is broadened with a mighty understanding" (inscription of 641, Chavannes, p. 340). Cf. Mus, *Le Buddha paré . . .*, BEFEO., 1928, pp. 248-9. The experience of those who beheld the likeness of Buddha is further described at length in the *Divyāvadāna*, Ch. XXVI, in connection with Māra's exhibition of the Buddha's similitude.

Our present concern is, however, primarily with the aniconic representations, and first of all with the symbolic representation by means of the Tree. That the ancient symbol of the Tree of Life, *vrkṣa* (= *rukkha*), *vanaspati*, *akṣaya-vaṭa*, or *eka aśvatthu* of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, should thus have been chosen to represent the Buddha is highly significant; for as we

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have already indicated, every traditional symbol necessarily carries with it its original values, even when used or intended to be used in a more restricted sense. In order to appreciate the full content of Buddhist symbolism we must accordingly take into account the fundamental implications of the symbols employed; in fact only a knowledge of the symbols in their total significance will suffice for an understanding of their values as they are employed in connection with the developed Buddhology. To sum up, then, the pre-Buddhist and some possibly later references: ⁸ the Tree of Life, synonymous with all existence, all the worlds, all life, springs up, out, or down into space ⁹ from its root in the navel centre of the Supreme Being, Varuṇa, Mahāyakṣa, Asura, Brahman, as he lies extended on the back of the Waters, the possibilities of existence and the source of his abundance. That Tree is his procession (*utkrama*, *prasaraṇa*, *pravṛtti*) in a likeness (*mūrta*), the emanation of his fiery-energy (*tejas*) as light, the spiration of his breath (*prāṇa*); he is its wise, indestructible mover (*rerivā*).¹⁰

The "Lord of the Forest" (*vanaspati*) is already in the Vedas a familiar symbol of the supreme deity in his manifested aspect. There may be cited, for example, *Rg Veda*, I, 24, 7, "King Varuṇa as pure act lifted up in the Unground the summit (*stūpam*) of the Tree"; I, 164, 20-21, "Two Fairwings (*suparnāḥ*, birds, angels) in conjoint amity rest in the one same Tree; one eats the tasty fig (*pippalam*), the other looketh on and does not eat . . . there those Fairwings sing incessantly their part of lasting-life"; Varuṇa, Prajāpati, or Brahman manifesting as the moving spirit in the cosmic Tree is called a Yakṣa, cf. *Atharva Veda*, X, 7, 38, "A great Yakṣa proceeding in a seething on the back of the waters, in whom abide whatever Angels be, as branches of the Tree that are round about its trunk," and *Kena Up.*, 15-26, "What Yakṣa is this? . . . Brahman."

The description of the World-tree in the *Maitri Up.*, VI, 1-4, VII, 11, and VI, 35, may be quoted at length:

"There are verily two forms of Brahman, with and without likeness (*mūrta*, *amūrta*). Now the That which is in a likeness is contingent (*asatya*); the That which is imageless is essential (*satya*) Brahman, light. That Light is the light of the Supernal-Sun. He verily becomes with OM as Self. He assumed a Trinity, for the OM has three factors, and it is by these that 'the whole world is woven, warp and woof, on Him.' As it has been said, 'beholding that the Supernal-Sun is OM, unify therewith thyself.' . . .

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The threefold Brahman has his root above, His branches are space, air, fire, water, earth, and the rest. This is called the Single Fig-tree (*eka aśvattha*); and therein inheres the fiery-energy (*tejas*) that is the Supernal-Sun . . . the One Awakener (*eka sambodhayitr*). . . . This, verily, is the intrinsic form of space in the vacuity of the inward man (*antarbhūtasya khe*); that is the supreme fiery-energy (*tejas*), determined as the Trinity of Fire, Supernal-Sun, and Spirit . . . the Imperishable-Word, OM. And by that Imperishable-Word, the fiery-energy awakens (*udbudhyati*), springs up, and expands; that is verily an everlasting basis (*ālamba*) for the vision of Brahman. In the spiration it has its place in the dark-heat that emanates light, proceeding upwards as is the way of smoke when the wind blows, as a branching forth in the firmament, stem after stem . . . all-pervading as contemplative vision. . . . He who is yonder, yonder Person in the Supernal-Sun, I my-Self am He."

Here the World-tree becomes a "Burning Bush," in an imagery closely related to that by which in several Vedic texts Agni is spoken of as a cosmic pillar, supporting all existences. Almost all of this is valid Buddhology, if only we substitute "Buddha" for "Brahman," remember the large part played by the concept of the Fiery-Energy (*tejas*) even in canonical texts, and take account of the early iconography as well as of the literature. Especially noteworthy is the designation of the "Single Fig-tree" as the World-form of the "One Awakener" (*eka sambodhayitr*) and "enduring basis of the vision of Brahman" (*brahma-dhīyālamba*); for just so also is the Buddha's Fig-tree (*aśvattha*) constantly spoken of as the "Great Awakening" (*mahā-sambodhi*); being the chosen symbol of the Buddha's unseen essence, it is an enduring basis for the vision of Buddha; it might have been called in Pali *Tathāgata-jhānālamba*, cf. the terms *ārambaṇa*, *āvaraṇa*, *upadarśana*, used of the Tathāgata's various manifestations, *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*, text, p. 318, and *ālamba* = *viśaya-grahaṇa*, Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa*, I, 34, and II, 34, b-d. The *Mahā Sukhāvātī-Vyūha*, 32, in fact, merely paraphrases the words of the *Maitri Up.* cited above, when it is said that "All those beings that are constant in never turning away from the vision of that Bodhi-tree are by the same token constant in never losing sight of the supreme and perfect Awakening" (*tasya bodhi-vṛkṣasya . . . yad uta anuttarāyāḥ samyak-sambodheḥ*). In the *Maitri Up.* text the expression *udbudhyati*, "awakens," applied to the Tree, is significant, and

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like the designation *uṣarbudh*, "awakened at dawn," which in the *R̥g Veda* is commonly applied to Agni, recalls him who is typically *buddha*, the "Wake."¹¹ As for the Fiery-Energy (*tejas*), this is the element of fire present as an unseen energy in all existences, but preëminently manifested by Arhats or the Buddha, e. g. in the case of the "Double Miracle," the "Conversion of Kassapa," or when (*Samyutta Nikāya*, I, 144) the Buddha takes his seat in the firmament immediately above Brahmā. In *Theragāthā*, 1095, where *arahatta* is clearly synonymous with Buddhahood, the *ugge-tejo*, "sharp fiery-energy," is the flaming sword of Understanding (*paññā* = *prajñā*) whereby Māra is defeated. In *Dhammapada*, 387, the Buddha "glows with fiery-energy," *tapati tejasā*.¹²

Amongst the late Āndhra reliefs from Amarāvati may be seen numerous remarkable representations of the Buddha as a fiery pillar, with wheel-marked feet, supported by a lotus, and with a *trīsūla* "head" (Figs. 4-10);¹³ these have been almost completely ignored by students of Buddhist iconography.¹⁴ Remembering, however, (1) that Agni is born of the Waters, or more directly from the Earth as it rests upon the Waters, hence specifically from a lotus (*puṣkara*), *R̥g Veda*, VI, 16, 13, and (2) is frequently spoken of as the pillar that supports all existences, e. g. *R̥g Veda*, I, 59, 1-2, and IV, 13, 5, it is clear that the Buddhist fiery pillars represent the survival of a purely Vedic formula in which Agni is represented as the axis of the Universe, extending as a pillar between Earth and Heaven.¹⁵

No less remarkable than the fiery pillars of Amarāvati is the unique representation of a Buddha in the form of a *kalpa-vṛkṣa* or "wishing-tree" at Sāñcī (Fig. 1).¹⁶ This Tree of Life is like the fiery pillars at Amarāvati as to its head and wheel-marked feet, but its trunk is built up of superimposed lotus palmettes,¹⁷ and bears laterally by way of fruits pearl garlands and other jewels suspended from pegs such as are elsewhere spoken of as *nāga-danta*. It may be remarked that only perhaps a century later (*Mahā Sukhāvati-vyūha*, 16, and again, *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*, V, 29-33) the seekers after Buddhahood are compared to small and great herbs, and small and great trees, and that Sukhāvati is said to be crowded with jewelled trees made of precious metals and gems, presumably representing various degrees of enlightenment. The jewel-tree of Sāñcī corresponds directly to the Bodhi-tree of Amitâyus, Tathāgata, described in the *Mahā Sukhāvati-vyūha*, 31: "A thousand *yojanas* in height . . . it is always in leaf, always in flower,

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always in fruit, of a thousand hues and various foliage, flower, and fruit . . . it is hung with golden strings, adorned with hundreds of golden chains . . . strings of rose pearls and strings of black pearls . . . adorned with symbols of the *makara*, *svastika*, *nandyāvarta*, and moon . . . according to the desires of living beings, whatever their desire may be." Such a symbol as this, though assuredly of Buddhist import, is not of Buddhist origin; even the words "fulfilling the desires of living beings, whatever they may be" ring strangely in the ambient of early Buddhist monasticism. All this implies in relatively early Buddhism already existing Mahāyānist tendencies, which are really a prolongation of Vedic tradition. Amitāyus, "Immeasurable Life," corresponds to innumerable Vedic designations of Agni, often also invoked as Vanaspati, "Lord of the Forest," or "King of Trees," as Viśvāyus, "Life Universal," or Ekāyus, "The One Life"; Amitābha to Vedic notions of the all-seeing Sun, or Agni whose beams dispel all dark-nesses, cf. I, 65, 5 *dūrebhā*, "shining from afar," and VI, 10, 4, *paprau . . . urvī dūredrṣā bhāsā*, "filled heaven and earth with a far-seen light." It is certainly not impossible that the notions "Amitāyus" and "Amitābha" had received a Buddhist interpretation in or before the first century B.C.: this need not have prevented a connection of the jewelled tree with Śākya-muni, who is in fact the earthly counterpart of Amitābha.

The World-tree then, equally in and apart from its Buddhist applica-tion, is the procession of incessant life. Standing erect and midmost in the garden of life, extending from Earth to Heaven, branching throughout Space (we shall see later that "space" is "within you"), that is the one Wishing-tree (*kappa-rukkha*, *kalpa-ṛkṣa*) that yields the fruits of life, all that every creature calls "good." Buddhism interprets this, as it interprets the corresponding symbol of the Dharmacakra, from an edifying point of view: that Wisdom-tree (*jñāna-druma*) "whose roots strike deep into sta-bility . . . whose flowers are moral acts . . . which bears righteousness (*dharma*) as its fruit . . . ought not to be felled," *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 65. But amongst the accidents of being, the fruits of life, are also the wages of desire, that is our mortality, *jarā-maraṇa*, all that every existence, each embodied will to life, calls "evil." So the World-tree, as an exteriorization of the Will to Life, *kāma*, and corresponding Craving, *taṇha*, *trṣṇa*, from the point of view of all those who would be naughted is a tree to be felled at the root: in Buddhism, a "vine of coveting (*taṇhā-latā*), who shall cut (*chind*)

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it off?" (*Theragāthā*, 761 and 1094). For in a modeless mode there is a Principle "higher and other than the World-tree . . . the Bringer of Truth (*dharma*) and Remover of Evil (*pāpa*)," *Svetāśvatara Up.*, VI, 6; note the "Buddhist" ring of these Aupaniṣada expressions. He who Understands, or who is become a Comprehensor, *ya evaṃ vidvān* a Buddha, who beholds the tree with seeing and undesirous eyes, sees in it the One Awakener, *eka sambodhayitr*, the Great Awakening, *mahāsambodhi*. By that very Understanding, *paññā*, *prajñā*, he fells it at the root, *āsvattham* . . . *chittvā*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, XV, 3, he is quit of Brahmā, quit of Māra at one stroke;¹⁸ for him the Garden of Life, *prāṇārāma*, becomes the Circle of Wisdom, Bodhimaṇḍa (-la); for him the world is voided of any personal content, of any self or Self, and as *anātmya*, *anatta*, he is emancipated from mortality, Totally Extinguished, *parinirvāta*. But he who desires and eats the fruits or shoots (*viśaya-pravālāḥ*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, XV, 2), be he man or angel, and thereby comes into operation or existence, thereby also perishes at last, for, as is repeatedly enunciated in the Pāli Buddhist canon, "Whatsoever has an origin, in that is inherent the necessity of dissolution." He only whose desires are all liberated (*pramucyante*), who does not desire, becomes immortal (*amṛta*), being very Brahman goes to Brahman (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, IV, 4, 6, and 7): that is, in Buddhist terms is *parinibbuta*, *parinirvāta*, in Christian terms is dead and buried in the Godhead, having died to God and all his works.¹⁹ Inasmuch as works of any kind are necessarily purposeful, being undertaken with an end in view, it is a perfectly correct theology which represents Brahmā, Buddha, or God, *qua* Creator or *qua* Saviour, as a mortal being, uttering a Word which as it is in itself cannot be thought or spoken. *Dharmacakra-pravartana*, then, has an essential content wider than that of merely "Preaching the Gospel"; it implies the creation of the world, and in this capacity as Lokapitā, and equivalent to Brahmā, the Buddha can only be thought of as *prajā-kāmya*, philoprogenitive; even in early Buddhism, that the Buddha teaches (and at first he hesitates to do so) is because he is moved by compassion. "Philoprogenitive" and "compassionate" are to be understood, of course, in a metaphysical, not in a sentimental, sense.

The distinction between Nirvāṇa and Parinirvāṇa is no less fundamental and necessary than that of God from Godhead in Christianity.²⁰ Those who maintain the "rationalism" of early Buddhism may deny the value

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of its theological development, yet the fact remains that without this development and such distinctions Buddhist and Christian iconography would be devoid of intelligible meaning; the only Buddhist or Christian art which could have existed must have been an art of realistic portraiture, "in memory" of the Founders and their Saints. For example, the representation of the Parinirvāṇa by the *stūpa*, essentially a tomb, or alternatively by the actual scene of death, is altogether appropriate, whether we regard the Great Decease from a human or a transcendental point of view. In the same way the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, I, 2, speaks of That which is logically antecedent to the Self, and whereto the Self returns un-Selfed, as "Death" and "Privation." Again the double negative, privation being here privation of a limiting affirmation.²¹

To think of these as "pessimistic" expressions is to confuse Existence with Being and Non-being, destiny with liberty. Beside the Buddha's death-bed only Brahmā and those Arhats who were "the same" in singleness and wisdom shed no tears; Angels such as Indra wept and wailed, being still attached to their and to his existent Personality. At the same time, it was taken for granted that the possibilities of existence amply provided for those who clung to individual immortalities throughout immeasurable aeons; this would be in familiar Christian terms until the "Last Judgment"; the individual could not be liberated from limiting conditions, from himself, unless by his own effort, much less against his will. A majority of Buddhists, like the majority of Christians, looked forward to a resurrection in "Heaven," Sukhāvātī, beholding God or Buddha face to face. The Buddha by no means denied such possibilities; but he taught a Way leading to an End beyond Heaven, though he would not, because he could not, God himself could not, explain or define that End in any language, save only in terms of negation.

Although their history and significance can hardly yet be fully explained, some consideration of the symbolic forms representing the head and feet of the jewelled Tree of Life at Sāñcī and the Fiery Pillars at Amāravātī is necessary. The *trīśūla*, in Buddhism (Figs. 1, 4, 23, etc.), commonly understood to denote the jewel-trinity (*ratna-traya*) of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, is certainly not exclusively of Buddhist nor even wholly of Buddhist and Jaina (Fig. 17) significance; Buddhism, as usual, is adapting an older symbolism to its immediate purposes. Sénart (*La légende du*

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Bouddha, p. 484) already regarded the Buddhist *triśūla* as a Fire symbol; we could think of it as naturally representing either the three aspects of Agni Vaiśvānara, or the primordial Agni as the triunity of the Several Angels. This would not in any way conflict with the Śaiva association suggested by Marshall, *Mohenjodaro*, p. 55, cf. our Figs. 21, 22, and indicated also by the use of the symbol in connection with Śiva at a later time, e. g. on the Śaiva coins of Kadphises II and on the Śaiva seal from Sirkap, A.S.I., A.R., 1914-15, p. 51 and Pl. XXIV.²² That the form corresponds to that of Siva's trident in the later iconography is indeed evident enough. It has not been so much observed that if the symbol is doubled, so as to consist of two adorsed tridents connected by a common stem, there is obtained the usual form of the *vajra*, or if quadrupled that of the fourfold *vajra*. In our representations (Figs. 1, 4, 6, etc.), the *triśūla* forms the termination of a stem or trunk which we have been able to identify with the pillar (*skambha*) that supports-apart Heaven and Earth, and with the axle-tree (*akṣa*) of the Solar chariot, i. e. with the axis of the Universe.²³ Recalling now the kenning *akṣa-ja = vajra*, it is not implausible to assume that our *triśūla* may also be thought of as a "single *vajra*."

What we know of the form of the Vedic *vajra* suggests in fact that it was of the single type; *Ṛg Veda*, I, 52, 15, tells us that it was pronged (*bhr̥ṣṭimat*), I, 121, 4, that it was three-pointed (*trikakubh*).²⁴ In *Ṛg Veda*, IV, 22, 2, the *vajra* is said to be a four-angled rain-producer (*vr̥ṣāmdhim caturaśrim*), and in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, X, 1, to be eight-angled. In *Ṛg Veda*, VIII, 7, 22, the Maruts are said to have "put it together joint by joint" (*parvaśo saṁ dadhuḥ*); in I, 80, 6, and VI, 17, 10, it is spoken of as hundred-jointed (*śataparvan*), and in the latter text also as thousand-pointed (for joints or nodes cf. Figs. 2, 3, 41, 42). It may be noted that in *Ṛg Veda*, VI, 22, 6, Indra's weapon is called *parvata*; Sāyaṇa is probably right in saying that this refers not to the "mountain," but to the many-jointed *vajra* (*bahuparvanā vajreṇa*). In the *Ṛg Veda* generally the *vajra* is said to have been made by the Divine Craftsman, Tvaṣṭṛ, who is "most skilled in handiworks" (*apasām apastamaḥ*, X, 53, 9), and hence the *vajra* itself is called "most well-made" (*svapastamam*, I, 61, 6, where also it is said to be "of the nature of light," *svaryam*, as in V, 31, 4, where it is "glittering," *dyumantam*). The *vajra* is wielded typically by Indra, who represents the temporal power (*kṣatra*) in relation to Agni as spiritual power (*brah̥ma*);

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and after the weapon, Indra is styled *vajrin*, *vajra-bāhu*, etc. With the *vajra* he slays the dragon, *Vṛtra*, *Śuṣṇa*, or *Ahi*, and thus brings about the whole cosmic manifestation. In the Buddha legend, the Vedic defeat of *Ahi-Vṛtra* is represented (1) in the *Māra-dharsaṇa*, and (2) in the Buddha's defeat of the serpent on the occasion of the conversion of the *Jaṭilas*. It may be observed that in the *Māra-dharsaṇa*, *Māra* makes use of the characteristic weapons of *Vṛtra* (cf. *Rg Veda*, I, 32, 13), and that the affrighted Angels desert the *Bodhisattva*, as they do *Indra* in the battle with *Vṛtra* (*Rg Veda*, IV, 8, 11; VIII, 93, 14-15; VIII, 96, 7; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,



FIG. A. *Nandipaam*: from *Paḍana*.

IV, 5); while in the Conversion of the *Jaṭilas*, the serpent is referred to as *ahi-nāga* (*Mahāvagga*, I, 15, 7). In northern Buddhism *Māra* is sometimes identified with *Namuci*.

Further as to the shape of the *vajra*, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, II, 35, tells us that it was narrow at the beginning, and divided above like a club or axe, comparison being made with the bifurcation of human legs (cf. Foucher, *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, Pl. I, Fig. 6); this, indeed, implies a two-pronged rather than a three-pronged termination, and it may be remarked that in actual iconography (cf. Foucher, *ibid.*, Fig. 7) the two lateral tines are often much more conspicuous than the central tine, which is in fact a prolongation of the stem. Types with from one to eight tines are found in *Shingon* usage. In *Śaiva* usage, the three-pronged *triśūla* is borne by the Father (*Śiva*), the one-pronged *śūla* by the Son (*Kārttikeya*, *Kumāra*). In the *Kauṣṭhiki Brāhmaṇa*, VI, 9, "Vajra" is one of the eight names of *Śiva*.

The question of terminology offers still another problem. In European literature, the term *nandi-pada* (lit. "Nandi-foot" or "-trace") has been

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applied to the *trīśūla* symbol in Buddhist or presumed Buddhist usage, this name deriving from the form *nandi-paam* inscribed beside the symbol as found on the Padaṇa hill near Bombay,²⁵ where hoofmarks are clearly indicated (Fig. A). I have argued against the general applicability of this term,²⁶ and it is far from clear that the label applies to the symbol, and not exclusively to the hoofmarks. Yet in fact the designation "Nandi's track" and the actual representation of hoofprints at Padaṇa accord well enough with the Śaiva associations, the notion of hoofprints equally well also with an original connection with Agni; that Siva and Agni can be assimilated and in certain aspects identified needs no demonstration here. The designation "taurine," employed by some authors, is probably the best available for our symbol, being appropriate equally to Agni, Śiva, or Buddha. In *Rg Veda*, I, 65, 1 (*padaiḥ*), and IV, 5, 3 (where Agni is a "mighty bull," and the Sāman chant "naught other than the hidden track of an ox," *padam na gor apagūlham*), the metaphor is employed of tracing the lost Agni by his footprints; cf. X, 71, 3, where the tracks (*padavīya*) of Wisdom (*vāc*) are followed by means of the ritual sacrifice, and *ibid.*, III, 39, 6, where Indra finds "by foot and hoof" (*patvat . . . śaphavat*) the wine of life and makes himself master of all the possibilities of existence "hidden" or "hoarded" in the Waters; cf. again *Bṛhadāranyaka Up.*, IV, 4, 23, "He should be a knower of the tracks of Brahman" (*tasyaiva syāt padavittam*), and *ibid.*, I, 4, 7, "As though by a footprint (*pada*), indeed, one should find the Angel" — his trace or footprint "set down in the secret place" (*guhā, guhā nihitam, passim*) being found "by the Sacrifice in the Seers" (*Rg Veda*, X, 71, 3), "in the heart" (*ibid.*, X, 177, 1), "in the Sea, the Heart, in living things" (*antaḥ samudre hr̥dy antar āyusi, ibid.*, IV, 58, 11). "Footprint" or "track" is thus tantamount to "vestige" as understood in Scholastic phraseology: *Dhammapada* should perhaps be translated in this sense as "Vestige of the Law," *dhamma-padāni* as "traces of the Law," cf. *Rg Veda*, X, 71, 3 *vācaḥ padavīyam . . . r̥ṣiṣu praviṣṭām*, "footprint of the Word vested in the Seers," and *pada* as "statement," "dictum," in *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* II, 98 (see Suzuki's discussion in his translation, p. 31, note 2). One can hardly doubt that a reminiscence of these ideas underlies the Ch'an-Zen allegory of searching for the lost ox, cf. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, pp. 357 ff.

The "tracks" by which He is to be found are primarily the symbolic

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expressions of the ritual sacrifice and hymns, "seen" and "warded" by the poetic genius (*Rg Veda*, IX, 73, 9, X, 71, 3, etc.); and in just the same way any symbol such as our *triśūla*, or any other "motif" of a canonical iconography, constitutes a "track" by means of which He may be "followed after," the symbol (*pratīka*) being employed, not for its own sake, but as a call to action. It is evident enough that "tracks" of this kind neither are nor need be represented literally in the form of a spoor, the indication of actual hoofprints at *Paḍaṇa* being quite exceptional. If, on the other hand, the notion be interpreted more literally and in connection with a more an-

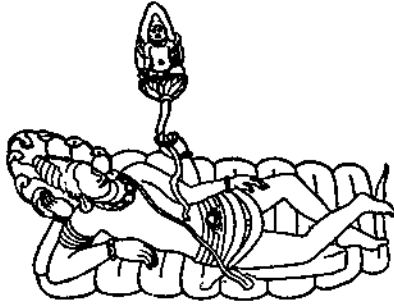


FIG. B. Birth of Brahmā; Elūrā.

thropomorphic concept, then all the passages cited above can be quoted in sanction and explanation of the cult of the "feet of the Lord" (*pādukā*, Buddha-pada, Viṣṇu-pada, etc.) in Buddhist, Jaina, and Vaiṣṇava practice alike. And if the Tree and Fiery Pillar are supported by such feet, it is because He is firmly established (*pratiṣṭha*) on solid ground (*prthivī*, represented by a lotus in the case of the Fiery Pillars), in the Waters, in the Depths, existent (*sthita*) in the world, that is in the last analysis "within you," in the lotus of the heart.

From the Tree of Life we turn to consider the Earth-Lotus. In Vedic formulation, the Tree of Life rises into Space from the navel-centre of deity recumbent on the back of the Waters, its trunk representing the axis of the Universe, its branches all extension and differentiation on whatever plane of being. By the time that Nārāyaṇa takes the place of Varuṇa reclining on the Waters at the dawn of a creative cycle, it is not a forest tree (*vanaspati*, often also a designation of Agni) that rises thus from the navel-centre of immortality, but a lotus. This lotus bears on its expanded flower the Father of the World, Lokapitā, Brahmā-Prajāpati, whose epithets

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are "navel-born" (*nābhija*), "lotus-born" (*abjaja*, *abja-yoni*), and "lotus-seated" (*kamalāsana*, *padmāsana*), while the recumbent Nārāyaṇa is "lotus-navelled" (*padmanābha*, *puṣkaranābha*) (Fig. B). Corresponding descriptions of this "Birth of Brahmā" appear only in "late" books of the Epic, and corresponding representations in art not before the fifth or sixth century A.D.,²⁷ the archaeological data thus indicating a formulation not much before the Gupta period, though, as will presently appear, the motif is really Vedic. In some remarkable Burmese representations (Fig. 16), the one stem rising from the navel of the recumbent Nārāyaṇa bears on three flowers the Trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.²⁸ It would seem at first sight as though the tree of the earlier texts had later been interpreted or misinterpreted to be a lotus. The concept of the Lotus-birth of manifested creative deity is, however, coeval with that of the Tree of Life: and furthermore, a clear distinction of significance is made as between the Tree and the Lotus, the former being, as we have seen, "all existences," viz. "that which" is manifest, the latter "that wherein" or "that whereon" there is and can be manifestation. For "this lotus (of the heart, *hṛt-puṣkara*) is verily the same as Space (*ākāśa*); these four quarters and four interquarters are its surrounding petals,"²⁹ *Maitri Up.*, VI, 2, cf. *Chāndogya Up.*, VIII, 1-3; and it rises appropriately from the navel-centre since "the navel (*nābhi*) of Prājapati's world-form is the Firmament," *Maitri Up.*, VI, 6. Again the Lotus is explained to be the Earth, any one plane of being, that whereon and whereby existence is supported, *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, IV, 1, 3, and IV, 2, 8, and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 4, 1, 8. Or considered as a receptacle as implied in the expressions *padma-garbha*, *padma-kośa*, then "in this Space (*ākāśa*), coextensive (*yāvān . . . tāvān*) with Space-in-the-Heart (*antar-hṛdayākāśa*), are contained both Heaven and Earth . . . all is contained therein," *Chāndogya Up.*, VIII, 1, 3.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the subjectivity of Space, and therefore of Existence, implied in the expression "Lotus of the Heart," the primary connotation of the lotus symbolism must be further clarified. The earliest references to a lotus-birth, seat, or support occur in *śruti* in connection with Vasiṣṭha and Agni, in their capacity as the positive existence of all things.³⁰ In *Ṛg Veda*, VII, 33, 11, we have "O Vasiṣṭha, thou art the son of Mitra-Varuṇa, Brahman, born of (the Apsaras) Urvaśī and of Intellect (*manas*), thou the drop (*drapsa* = *retas*, "seed") that fell by angelic efflux

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(*daivyena brahmaṇā*); the Several Angels waited upon thee in the Lotus (*puṣkare*).” That is, Mitra-Varuṇa in Intellect (*manas*) beheld and were beguiled by the Fascination (Apsaras) of the possibilities-of-existence (Waters), their seed fell into the Waters, and thence arose the lotus-ground supporting Vasiṣṭha, surrounded by the Several Angels.³¹ In *Ṛg Veda*, VI, 16, 13, Agni is similarly born of or (re-)produced (*niramanthata*, lit. “rubbed” or “churned,” cf. “*samudra-manthana*”) from a lotus, *puṣkarāt*, cf. *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, IV, 1, 3g, and *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*, VIII, 1, “Thee, O Agni, from the Lotus”; and that he is thus mothered by the Lotus

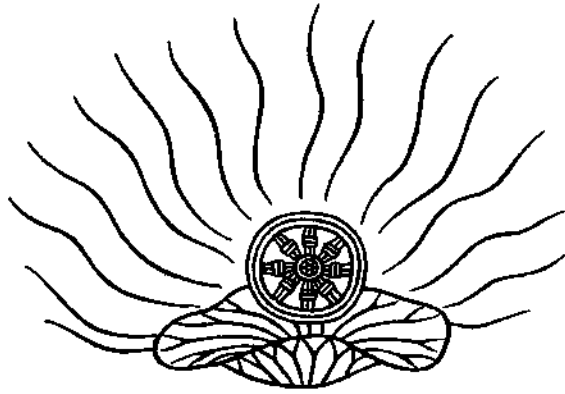


FIG. C. Rimbō (Dharmacakra) supported by a lotus leaf.
After Ōmura Seigai, *Sanbon Ryōbu Mandara*. Cf. Fig. F.

flower (or leaf, as in *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, V, 1, 3) merely enunciates in other terms the epithets constantly applied to him as “born from the lap or navel of the Earth” and “kinsman of the Waters.”³² All birth, all coming into existence, is in fact a “being established in the Waters,” and to be “established” is to stand on any ground (*pṛthivī*) or platform of existence; he who stands or sits upon the Lotus “lives.”³³ The Vedic passages cited above are thus valid prototypes of the “late” Epic legend of the Birth of Brahmā; the birth of Vasiṣṭha or of Agni is virtually the birth of Brahmā-Prajāpati or of Buddha.³⁴

Other ritual and exegetical texts can be cited in which the meaning of the Lotus is explained in the sense already deduced. *Nirukta*, V, 14, explains the Lotus (*puṣkara*) as Firmament or Middle Space (*antarikṣa*), which maintains (*poṣati*) existences (*bhūtāni*), cf. *Maitri Up.*, VI, 2, cited above. *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, IV, 1, 3 c, and IV, 2, 8 c, = *Vājasaneyi Saṃ-*

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hitā, XIII, 2, identifies the Lotus (*puṣkara*) with the Earth, extended on the back of the Waters, as the birthplace (*yonī*) of Agni. Sāyaṇa, commenting on *Rg Veda*, VI, 16, 13, *puṣkarāt*, substitutes for *puṣkara*, *puṣkara-parṇa*, "lotus-leaf," but explains in the traditional manner that "the property of the lotus-leaf is that of upholding all the worlds," *puṣkara-parṇasya sarvajagad-dhāraṅkatva*.³⁶ In *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 3, 2, 14 Prajāpati finds the lost Agni on a lotus-leaf. In the construction of the Fire Altar (*Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 4, 1, 7-13, VIII, 3, 1, 11, and X, 5, 2, 8 and 12) a lotus-leaf is laid down centrally (that is in the centre of the Universe, as represented by the whole altar) as the "birthplace of Agni" (*agni-yonitvam*), the "symbol of his womb" (*yonī-rūpatvam*), and as a chthonic basis (*pratiṣṭhā . . . pṛthivyām*): "the lotus means the Waters, and this earth is a leaf thereof . . . and this same earth is Agni's womb." On the lotus-leaf is laid a round gold disk representing the Sun; and thus the lotus-leaf becomes in effect the Sun-boat, though this is not specifically mentioned. Over the Sun-disk is laid the figure of a golden man (*puruṣa*), representing Agni-Prajāpati, the Person in the Sun; the golden Puruṣa and the Sun-disk, lying back to back, form a Janus-type, as explained *ibid.*, VII, 4, 1, 18.

Thus it is abundantly clear that the lotus, flower or leaf (see the alternative representations, Figs. C, F), but in actual iconography usually "flower,"³⁶ arising from or resting on the Waters, represents the ground (*pṛthivī*) or substance of existence, both that whereon and that wherein existence is established firmly amidst the sea of possibility. And just as it is said of the Cosmic Horse (Varuṇa) that he, whose birthplace is the Waters (*samudre yonīḥ*), stands firm in the Waters, and that he who understands himself stands firm wherever he may be, so we may say that he who realizes the meaning of the Lotus stands firm wherever he may be.³⁷

The world-lotus naturally blooms in response to the rising of the Sun "in the beginning"; in answer to and as a reflection of the Light of Heaven mirrored on the surface of the Waters. Earth as a reflection of Heaven is stretched out in like measure (*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, IV, 1, 3, and IV, 2, 8), this world is the counterpart (*anurūpam*) of yonder world (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII, 2); hence, no doubt, the two lotuses held by the Sun in iconography, corresponding to Upper and Nether Waters, *para* and *apara* Prakṛti.³⁸ However, the light of Heaven may be thought of not merely as

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the Sun, but collectively as the Lights of Heaven, and so we find in *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XVIII, 8, 6, and *Maitrayanī Saṃhitā*, IV, 4, 7, and 58, 16, a more general statement as follows: "Through the down-shining (*avakāśe*) of the Lights of Heaven (*nakṣatrāṇām*)³⁹ the Lotus (*puṇḍarīka*) is brought to birth (*jāyate*)," the text further making it clear that the Lotus implies Earth, the lights Heaven. It is further explained, *Pañcaviṃśa Br.*, XVIII, 8, 2, and 9, 6, that the wreath of lotuses put on by the Brahman officiating in the Rājasūya ceremony represents sensible operation, virility, and temporal power (*indriyam, vīryam, kṣatram*).

Some more familiar, but less essential, aspects of the lotus symbolism may be alluded to in passing. Amongst these is the lotus as a metaphor of purity: growing in the mud, it betrays no trace of its origin, nor is the flower or leaf wetted by the water it rests upon, and such also is the truly wise man, who lives in the world, but is not of it. For example, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, III, 140, "Just as, Brethren, a lotus, born in the water, full-grown in the water, rises to the surface and is not wetted by the water, even so, Brethren, the Tathāgata, born in the world, full-grown in the world, surpasses the world, and is unaffected by the world"; or the metaphor may be reversed, as in *Chāndogya Up.*, IV, 14, 3, and *Maitri Up.*, III, 2, where the Self, Ātman, is compared to the drop of water that rests on a lotus leaf, but does not cling to it. It may be inferred from what was previously explained, on the other hand, that when the image of a supreme deity is represented with a lotus in hand as *līlā-kamala*, "lotus of play," it stands for the Universe, his toy, just as an actual lotus, *līlā-kamala* or *līlābja*, held by a human being, is actually his, or more often her, toy. But when the lotus is offered by the worshipper to a deity, that would imply a rendering up of one's own existence to its source, a resignation of one's own nature and ground of separate existence; cf. *Nirukta*, V, 14, where a hermeneutic derivation of *puṣkara* from *puj + kar*, with the sense "to perform an office," is proposed.⁴⁰ Furthermore the lotus is a thing loved and admired by all, and is used as a means of adornment, or lends itself to laudatory similes, as when we speak of lotus-eyes or lotus-feet.

In actually surviving works of art we do not find representations of the Buddha supported by a lotus-throne before the second century A.D., viz. in the art of Gandhāra, and in late Āndhra works from Amarāvati, nor, as we have already seen, of Brahmā *kamalāsana* before the Gupta period. A

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second century Kuṣāna example from Mathurā is reproduced by Foucher, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra*, Fig. 552. Long before this, however, at the very beginning of artistic history so far as it is recorded in permanent materials, we meet with the lotus-flower employed as a support in various ways, nor is it at all likely that these examples had not been preceded by others in evanescent material, or painted. The lotus is most conspicuously connected in this way with Śrī-Lakṣmī, viz. in representations dating from the second century B.C. onwards; I have shown elsewhere that these compositions are comprehensible only with reference to Vedic notions, and that early Indian art is essentially the continuation of a mainly aniconic "Vedic" style.⁴¹

Śrī-Lakṣmī is essentially Aditi, Prakṛti, Māyā, Apsaras, Urvaśī, the Waters, all the possibilities of existence substantially and maternally personified. The Lotus is preëminently hers, because she is the Lotus and the Earth, at once the source and support of all existences, Vasudhā or Vasudharā; that is, with respect to their substance, as the Supernal-Sun is with respect to their form. So she is represented either aniconically by the Lotus, as Padmā, springing from the brimming vessel (*pūrṇa-ghaṭa*) of the Waters (Fig. 23), or in human form upon the Lotus, as Padma-vāsinī, and then typically as receiving a lustral bath of *soma*-bearing rains down-poured from the skies by the elephants of the Quarters (Fig. 23). These early representations occur for the most part in a Buddhist association, though this need not be assumed for all the coins and terracottas.⁴² It has been argued by some scholars, Foucher particularly,⁴³ that the representations in a Buddhist environment, as at Bhārhat, Bodhgayā, and Sāñcī, are actually of Buddha natiivities, a theme which would otherwise be lacking in the series of Four Great Events, so far as the early art is concerned. Others, myself included, have opposed this view, and not without justification inasmuch as the formula is certainly of pre-Buddhist origin, and because what is represented is certainly not the birth of Siddhārtha, but rather Śrī-Lakṣmī herself, at once Earth-Lotus and Mother-Earth personified, Universal Mother, Mother Nature, Aditi, Māyā,⁴⁴ the magical ground or substance of existence, fertilized by heavenly showers.⁴⁵ It must not be overlooked, too, that *Jātaka*, I, p. 53, affirms that when the Bodhisattva was born, "two streams of water came down from the sky (*ākāsato dve udakadhārā nikkhamitvā*) and refreshed the bodies of the Bodhisattva and his

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mother;"⁴⁶ in this sense it may be legitimate to say that these are *virtually* Buddha nativities, inasmuch as they represent Her who is the Mother of all Existence, and so preëminently of the Buddha, when he is considered not as the man Siddhârtha, but as Universal Man, in whom all things are lively imaged, Ādityabandhu and Sūryavarmśin, "Kinsman of the Supernal-Sun" and "Of the Solar Race," and as Māyā-maya, "magically-natured."⁴⁷ It can scarcely have been an accident that Siddhârtha's mortal mother's name was Māyā-devī, "Lady Māyā."⁴⁸ Siddhârtha's birth from his mother's side is anticipated in *Rg Veda*, IV, 18, 1-2, where in connection with Indra's birth from Aditi we find . . . *tiraścatā pārśvān nir gamāni*, "I will go forth transversely, from the side"; a lateral procession is mentioned in several other passages, e. g. VI, 10, 4, X, 129, 5, and *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmāṇa*, I, 29, where the life-ray (*raśmi anumaya*) is *tiryān pratiṣṭhitah*.⁴⁹ Siddhârtha's visibility while yet unborn (*Jātaka*, I, 52, *antokucchigatam* . . . *passati*) may be compared to *Rg Veda*, VI, 16, 35, with reference to Agni, *garbhe mātuḥ* . . . *akṣare vididyutānaḥ*, "shining in the Mother's eternal womb." If we suppose that Śuddhōdana means "cloud" (as stated in the *Nighanṭu*, rather than "pure rice" as generally assumed), we have a striking parallel in the *Dīpaṅkara Jātaka*, where the Bodhisattva's name is Megha,⁵⁰ "Cloud," and his wife's either Bhadrā, "Abundance," or Prakṛti, "Nature"; but as designating the Father, it more likely corresponds to *pakvam odanam* and *kṣīrapākam odanam* in *Rg Veda*, VIII, 77, 6 and 10, *odanam pacyamānam* in VIII, 69, 14, *pacatam* in I, 61, 7, the cooking of rice with milk being thought of as an essential element of the Interior Operation; in *Jātaka*, I, 66, the Bodhisattva is represented as remembering the good food that was served in his father's house, where food and drink abounded ("fleshpots of Egypt"). The Bodhisattva's three palaces⁵¹ may be regarded as the three seasons of the Year, Prajāpati; it is noteworthy that until the Bodhisattva leaves his palaces he knows nothing of old age, decline, or death. The Buddha himself is Āditya-bandhu, and Sūryavarmśin, Mahāpurisa and *amanussa*, recalling Agni as the *amānava puruṣa* who leads the Comprehensor through the gateway of the worlds, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, V, 10, 2; that the Buddha is an Āṅgīrasa, "a descendant of the Glead," is equally significant, Agni in the *Rg Veda* being a son of Āṅgīras and himself *angīrastama*, "the best of Gleads." The Buddha's given name Siddhârtha, denoting the "attainment of the goal,"

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corresponds to *artha*, the "end" or "goal" envisaged by Agni, *Rg Veda*, X, 51, 4.

It is clear then that the genealogy of the Buddha, as we have it, is mythical, and it may be that he had been thought of very early in, or before, the rise of "Buddhism," as "a descent of the Sun" or aspect of Agni. If the representations of Māyā-Lakṣmī with the elephants were really regarded as Buddha-Conceptions, that too implies a Buddhology far advanced in centuries B.C. The later Nativity type, in which the Buddha comes to birth from the side of Māyā-devī as she stands like a Yakṣī beneath a tree, has equally mythical implications, though more anthropomorphic in expression, and corresponds in this respect to the coming in of the "anthropomorphic" image. It would seem indeed as if the Buddha had not so much been "deified" in later times, as humanized; assuming that there had been a veridically historical figure, it would seem that this figure had been clothed with a mantle of Fire almost from the beginning, and that, just as in the case of Jesus, the Great Events of the life must be thought of as "stages crowded together as though to present, in a single lifetime, the whole Epic of the Transcending of Mortal Destiny."⁵² In the development of a crowned and regal Buddha image and in the doctrinal development represented by the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka* we seem to sense a renewed stressing of the Buddha's divinity, in conscious opposition to the rationalistic interpretations.⁵³

That a very advanced Buddhology already existed in the Pali texts, if not from the beginning of "Buddhism," is also very apparent from the terminology and epithets made use of. When the Buddha is represented as saying, "I am neither Deva, Gandhabba, Yakkha, nor Man," *Anguttara Nikāya*, II, 38, it is evidently to be understood that what he is is a principle, the Principle, Dharma, Logos, Word, cf. *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 84, and *Samyutta Nikāya*, III, 120, cited below, p. 33. Amongst his epithets, mostly of Vedic or Aupaniṣada origin, or taken from these sources with only very slight modification, are Mahāpurisa, "Great Person," Appati-puggala, "Ineffable Man" (*apraṭi-pudgala* in SP., III, 33), Ādicca-bandhu, "Kinsman of the Supernal-Sun," Rājā cakkavattī, "Sovereign Mover of the Wheel," Devātideva, "Angel of the Angels" (cf. Agni, *devo devānām*, *Rg Veda*, I, 94, 13). As Mahāpurisa he is endowed with all the lineaments (*lakṣhaṇa*) proper to the Superman. The conception of the Buddhas as

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"the Eye in the World" (*cakkhum loke*, *Dīgha Nīlāya*, II, 158, and *Sutta Nīpāta*, III, 9, 6) corresponds to Vedic notions of Mitra ("Agni when enkindled," *R̥g Veda*, V, 3, 1), who "seeth with unclosing eyes," *animiṣā abhicaṣṭe*, *ibid.*, III, 59, 1, or of the Sun, who "sees all things," *viśvam abhicaṣṭe*, *ibid.*, I, 164, 44, and is the "Eye of Varuṇa," *passim*. With "Lion of the Śākyaas" cf. Agni as "lion," *R̥g Veda*, I, 90, 5 and III, 2, 11, cf. I, 115, 5. The so-called deification of the Buddha, the recognition of the universality of his essence and operation, cannot be denied to the Hinayāna.

We must now consider the representation of the Buddhas as Dharmacakra, Word-wheel (and World-wheel), or Wheel of the Law or Norm, of which early Buddhist art affords so many examples, amongst which the most famous is that wheel which was set up by Aśoka in the Deer Park at Benares on the site of the *prathamadeśanā*, "First Preaching," which was also the *dharmacakra pravartana*, "First turning of the Wheel of the Word."⁵⁴ The pre- and non-Buddhist meanings of the symbol must be studied. What the Wheel stands for in Indian symbolism is primarily the Revolution of the Year, as Father Time (Prajāpati, Kāla), the flowing tide of all begotten things (*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, II, 17), dependent on the Sun (*Maitri Up.*, VI, 14-16). In *R̥g Veda*, I, 164, 2, 11, 13, 14, and 48, the one wheel of the Sun's chariot has twelve or five spokes (months or seasons), or 360 spokes (days), axle (*akṣa*), and triple nave (*nābhi*); it is a revolving wheel of life (*amṛta*) undecaying (*ajara*), therein insist (*tasthuḥ*) the several worlds (*viśvā bhuvanāni*): *ibid.*, I, 155, 6, "He (Viṣṇu) by the names of the four (seasons) has set in motion the rounded wheel that is furnished with ninety steeds" (the ninety days in each quarter of the solar Year); similarly, *Atharva Veda*, X, 8, 4-7, and *Svetāśvatara Up.*, I, 4 (*brahma-cakra* in I, 6, and VI, 1); in the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*, XX, 1, "the Year (elsewhere identified with Prajāpati) is a revolving Wheel of the Angels, that is undying; therein is the sixfold proper food (i. e. means of existence) . . . thereon the Angels move round all the worlds."⁵⁵ In the sense that Time is the Sun, a circle is its centre, the Wheel represents the Sun, but more exactly the movement of the Sun, in his heavenly car, with one or two correlated wheels. The Sun or Solar Wheel is constantly spoken of as "revolving" or as being revolved, with use of root *vrt* as in the Buddhist *pavattana*, *pravartana*: e. g. I, 35, 2, where Savitr̥ is *vartamānaḥ*; I, 155, 6, *cakram* . . . *avīvi-*

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pat; II, 11, 20, *avartayat sūryo na cakram*; V, 30, 8, *aśmānaṃ cit svaryāṃ vartamānam*; VII, 63, 2, *samānaṃ cakram pary āvīrtsan*.

Actually to represent all possible states of being, the Wheel would have to be conceived in the manner of a gyroscope, revolving simultaneously in an indefinite number of planes, though still with a motionless centre: just as the Cross must be thought of from this point of view as constituted of three arms, mutually at right angles, intersecting at the one common point which is also the centre of the sphere in which the Cross stands. Actually, however, this would be to introduce a needless complication, and in fact the symbol as employed is essentially an ordinary chariot-wheel,⁵⁶ just as also in common usage the two-armed cross stands for a cross extended in three directions. Although, then, the Wheel, as the "round of the world" and "earth plain," strictly speaking corresponds only to a given ensemble of conditions, it represents analogically the indefinite totality of all possible conditions, the entire *saṃsāra*. As thus representing the Universe in its entirety, the Wheel symbol remains in use unchanged from *R̥g Veda*, I, 164, through *Svetāśvatara Up.*, I, 4, and *Anugītā*, XXX, to Kabīr and the present day.⁵⁷

The content of the wheel symbolism is extraordinarily rich, and can only be outlined here. Its dimensions are indefinite, its radius the variable distance between an undimensioned (*amātra*) point and an immeasurable (*asaṅkhyā*) circumference; there in the "middle space" (*antarikṣa*, *ākāśa*), between the "I" and the "not-I," essence and nature, lie procession and recession (*pravṛtti*, *nivṛtti*), there are good and evil (*dharmādharmau*), joy and sorrow (*sukha*, *duḥkha*), light and shade (*chāyātapa*), birth and death, all local movement and affection; and that motion and passibility are greater the greater the distance from the centre. Beyond the felly lies only the inexistence of the irrational, an impossibility of existence, as of square circles or the horns of a hare; within the nave, the non-existence of the supra-rational.⁵⁸

The cycle of ego-consciousness implies an outward movement from the nave to the ever-receding felly, and a return from the however distant felly to the unchanging centre. A progressive enlightenment (*krama-mukti*) can then be expressed as a gradual contraction of the radius, bringing the circumference ever closer to the centre, until that which seemed to enclose the point is seen to be contained within it, knowledge being thus concentrated

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into a single form, which is the form of very different things.⁵⁹ That is *Nirvāna*, unitary being, "with residual existential elements," and by a vanishment of the point becomes also Parinirvāna, without residuum of existence.

He whose seat is on the lotiform nave or navel of the wheel,⁶⁰ and himself unmoving sets and keeps it spinning, is the ruler of the world, of all that is natured and extended in the middle region, between the essential nave and the natural felly; "On whom the parts stand fast, as it were spokes on the nave of the wheel, Him I deem the Person to be known," *Praśna Up.*, VI, 6. In Pali Buddhist and later Sanskrit texts this Royal Person is designated Cakkavattī, Cakravartin, "He who turns the Wheel," and the same designation is applied analogically to any terrestrial "Universal Ruler" or Emperor (Figs. 19, 20). As we have seen, the term Cakravartin, as an essential name of the Buddha, and the corresponding expression Dharmacakra-pravartana denoting the setting in motion of the Word or Law, are constantly met with in early and later Buddhism. These terms do not occur as such in Vedic texts, where *cakri*, "doer," and other forms of the verb *kr*, to "do," "make," "cause," "instigate," etc.,⁶¹ must be distinguished etymologically from *cakra*, "wheel"; it may be surmised, however, that the "popular" etymology of Indian hermeneutists might have seen a significance in the assonance of *cakri* and *cakra*. And if the word *cakravartin* is absent in the Vedas, the meaning is nevertheless to be found there; the notion of a supreme Power, Lord of *ṛta* = *dharma*, whose sovereignty (*kṣatra*) is over all the worlds (*viśvā bhuvanāni*) and is also the axial mover of the twin world wheel of the car of Time and Life is so constantly presented that we can hardly speak of the notion of the King of the World as something new in Buddhist times. Varuṇa alone or with Mitra is often called *samrāj*, mention is often made of the Premier Angel's autonomy (*svarājya*), and in III, 55.4, Agni is universal King, *samāno rājā*.⁶² In X, 5, 3 and 4, the notions *viśvasya nābhīm carato dhruvasya*, "navel of all that is proceeding or concrete," and *ṛtasya vartanayah*, "propulsions of the Law"; in X, 168, 2, and 174, 1, and 5, the notions *viśvasya bhuvanasya rājā*, "King of the Universe," *abhāvartah*, "victorious," and *asapatnah*, "without a rival," imply a sovereign power. In X, 51, 6, *rathī'va adhvānam anvāvarīvuh*, "as one who drives a car upon its way," tantamount to "Cosmic Charioteer,"⁶³ X, 92, 1, *yajñasya vo rathyam viśpatim*, "your charioteer

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of the sacrifice and lord of the folk," and I, 143, 7, *dhūrṣadam agnim mītram na*, "Agni as Mitra seated on the pole," i. e. as driver,⁶³ necessarily imply the setting in motion of the principal Wheel or Wheels. No distinction of meaning can be drawn as between the driver of the solar chariot and him who makes the solar wheel revolve. "Seven treasures" (*sapta ratna*), apparently the same as those of a Cakravartin, are mentioned in *Rg Veda*, V, 1, 5, and VI, 74, 1.

We considered above mainly the case in which the cosmic wheel is thought of as single. Perhaps more often the chariot of the Sun is thought of as running on twin wheels connected by a common axle-tree (*akṣa*), and this involves a consideration of the world from two distinct but inseparable points of view (cf. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII, 2, cited above, p. 20). As the Sun shines equally for angels and for men (*Rg Veda*, I, 50, 5, etc.), so of the twin wheels of his chariot one touches Heaven, the other Earth (*Rg Veda*, I, 30, 19, and X, 85, 18); and their common axle-tree is identified with the axis of the universe that holds apart (*vitaram, viṣvak*) Heaven and Earth (*Rg Veda*, V, 29, 4, and X, 89, 4). Or again, when the chariot of the Sun is thought of as three-wheeled (*trīcakra*), *Rg Veda*, X, 85, two of the wheels are identified as aforesaid with Heaven and Earth ("one looks down upon the several worlds, the other ordains the seasons and is born again," cf. I, 164, 44 and 32), and these "proceed by magic," *māyayā caranti*; but the third is hidden (*guhā = guhāyām nihitam*, sc. "in the heart"), and only the adepts (*addhātayah*) are Comprehensors (*viduḥ*) thereof. This third wheel evidently corresponds to the "secret name," *nāma guhyam*, of X, 55, 1, and the "third light" of X, 56, 1. These doctrines of three wheels, three lights, etc., are tantamount to the *trīkāya* doctrine in Buddhism.⁶⁴

The axle-tree of the twin wheels (which axle must be thought of analogically also as penetrating the third wheel) is the primary source of moving power (as noted incidentally in *Rg Veda*, I, 166, 9): not itself revolving, it is the unmoved mover in relation to the wheels. But to complete our understanding of the *pratīka* it must be realized that the revolution of the wheel requires the operation of an opposing force operative at the felly, where in actual experience contact with the ground supplies a fulcrum. In other words, revolution depends on the interaction of conjoint principles, which may be called Heaven and Earth, Puruṣa and Prakṛti, *sattva* and *tamas*, I and not-I, subject and object, etc. This is recognized in several passages in

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which the infixation of the axle, or the movement of the wheels, is effected by the deity by means of his abilities (*śacībhiḥ*, *Rg Veda*, I, 30, 15, and X, 89, 4), powers (*śaktibhiḥ*, X, 88, 10), or magic (*māyayā*, X, 85, 18), *śaci*, *śakti*, and *māyā* being synonymous feminine designations of his "means whereby," the "ground" of manifestation, coöperating with his "essence," who is Śacīpati, Māyin, etc.

The axle-tree is also the axis of the universe, as most clearly stated in *Rg Veda*, X, 89, 4, *yo akṣeṇēva cakriyā śacībhiḥ viśvak tastambha pṛthivīm uta dyām*, "by the axle of his wheeled-car indeed, by his abilities, he pillars-apart Heaven and Earth," cf. V, 29, 4, *rodasī vitaram viśkabhāyat*, and other passages cited above, p. 10, notes 15 and 139.

In *Rg Veda*, X, 85, 12, "the chariot is in the mode of Intellect (*ano manasmayam*), the Breath of Life (*vyāna*) was the axle (*akṣa*) fastened there." It will be understood that the axle-point (*āni*) that penetrates the hollow (*kha*) in the nave (*nābhi*) is central in each wheel; ⁶⁵ so in *Rg Veda*, I, 35, 6, the Undying Angels (sc. the Several Angels, *viśve devāḥ*, Ādityas) are said to depend upon Savitr (the Supernal-Sun as prime mover) "as on the chariot's axle-point (*āni*)," and in *Aitareya Aranyaka*, II, 7, the Self (*ātman*) is compared to the "twin axle-points (*ānī*)" of the Veda. We have thus dwelt at some length on the Vedic implications of the wheel or wheels, because it is important to realize the wider content and consequent power of this symbol which was so extensively employed in Buddhism, though with a more restricted application.

The continuity of the ideology is often very striking; compare for example *Rg Veda*, I, 164, 13, "its axle is never heated (*na tapyate*), its heavy-laden nave (*nābhi*) is never worn away," with the edifying application of the same notion in *Samyutta Nikāya*, I, 33 (I, 5, 7), where the chariot which with its twin Word-wheels (*dhamma-cakkehi samyutto*) conducts the rider to *nibbāna* is by name "Frictionless" (Akujana).

In actual Buddhism, the Wheel, like the Tree, is regarded from two points of view, that is to say as a pair of wheels, principal (Dharmacakra) and phenomenal (Saṃsāracakra, Bhavacakra); hence from the standpoint of the Wayfarer, broken on the wheel, as either to be turned or stayed,⁶⁶ but from that of the Omniscient Comprehensor as one and the same uninterrupted Form, his own intrinsic form. For from any point of view within it, the movement of a wheel can be regarded as having two directions, as it

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were right and left; or again, the movement being continuous, any point on the circumference may be regarded either as beginning or as end. It can be understood from either point of view that when Buddha "hesitates" to set going the Principial Wheel, which is also the Existential Wheel, the Angels are in despair, that Brahmā exclaims, "Alas, the world is altogether lost," *vinassati vata bho loko*, and prays that the Word may be spoken, *desetu bhante bhagavā dhammam*, J., I, 81. Taking *dharmacakra-pravartana* and *prathama-deśanā* in their universal sense, that is with respect to the creation of the world, the Angels are naturally dismayed at the "hesitation," for their very existence depends on the operation of the Wheel, the revolution of the Year; as in *R̥g Veda*, X, 51, where Agni has "fled in fear from the high priestly office (*hotrāt*) lest the Angels should thus engage (*yunajan*) me . . . which as my goal (*artha*) I foresaw," the Angels answering "Come forth, for man is fain to serve us, he waits prepared . . . make easy paths, create the Angelic Way (*devayāna*, cf. *hīnayāna*, *mahāyāna*, *brahmayāna*, *dhammayāna*, etc.) . . . let the Four Quarters bow (*namantām*) before thee." ⁶⁷ Or taking the words in their specifically Buddhist application, with respect not to the procession of life, but its recession, and as the preaching of a Gospel to that end, the Angels must be thought of as equally despaired at the "hesitation," for all things moving seek their rest. ⁶⁸

In monastic Buddhism and from an edifying point of view, stress is naturally laid upon the Dharmacakra only as a Word-wheel to be set in motion to the end that men may find their Way (*magga*, *mārga*), and here the cosmic significance of the Dharmacakra as an embodiment of the Year, "Eniautos Daimon," is thus obscured; it is only gradually brought out again that the revolution of the Principial and Existential Wheels is interdependent and indivisible, in the last analysis one and the same revolution. ⁶⁹ That is developed in the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*, III, 33, where he who preached the Word at Sārnāth and on Mt Gṛdhra-kūṭa is addressed as having "set in motion the Principial Wheel which is the origin and passing away of the factors of existence," *dharmacakram pravartesi . . . skandhānām udayam vyayam*. ⁷⁰ That identity of Word-wheel and World-wheel — Vajra-dhātu and Garbha-kośa-dhātu in Shingon formulation — is equally implied in the well-known formula, *Yaḥ kleśaḥ so bodhi, yaḥ saṃsāras tan nirvāṇam*, "Error and Awakening, World-flux and Extinction, are the Same," cf. Maitreya-Asaṅga, *Sūtrālamkāra*, XIII, 12 (Commentary),

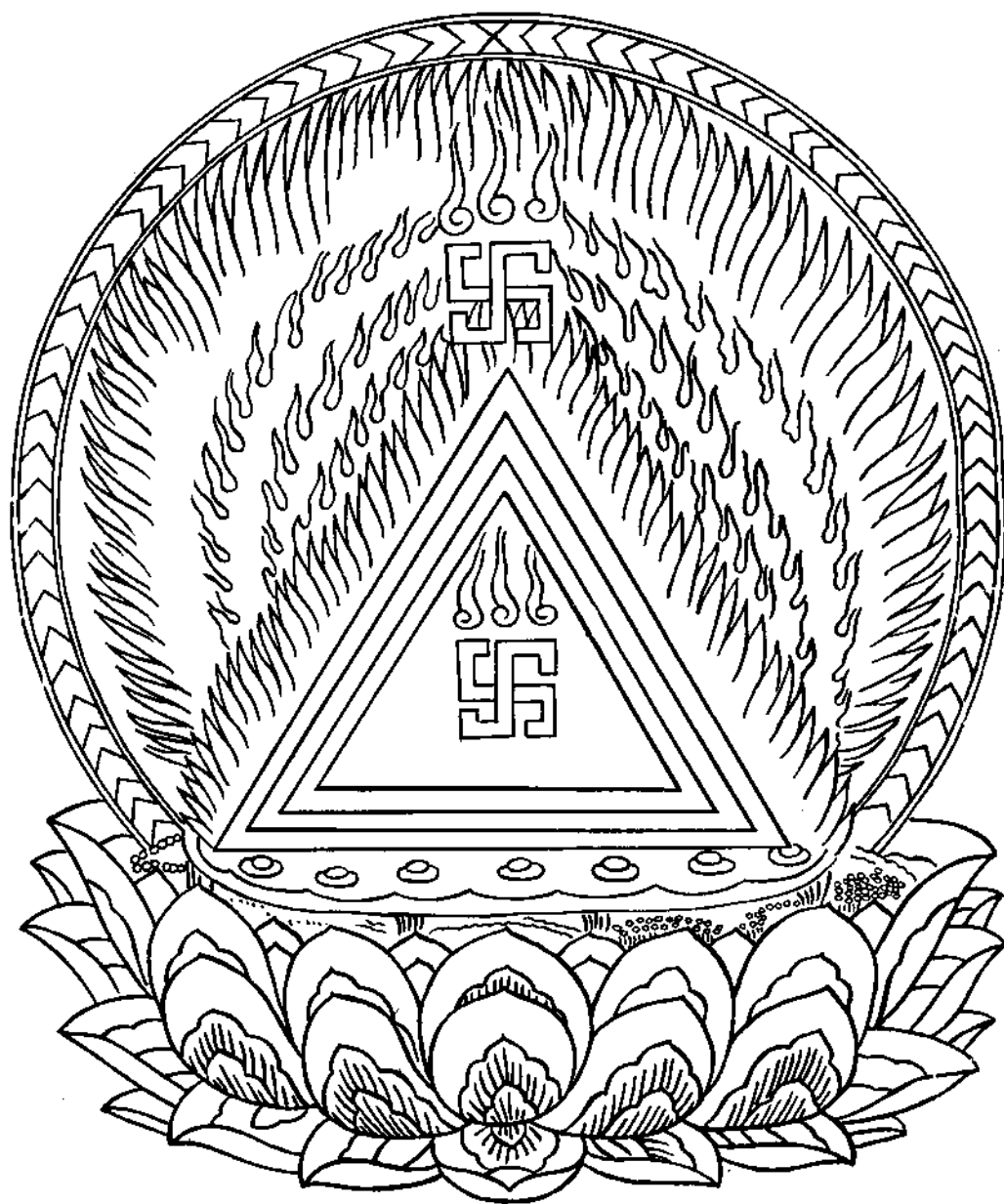


FIG. D. Issai Nyoraichi-in, "Signature of the Possible Intellect of all the Buddhas." Detail from a Shingon Garbhakośa-dhātu maṇḍala, see description of Fig. 31. After Ōmura Seigai, *Sanbon Ryōbu Mandara*.

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avidyā ca bodhiś caikam, "Experience and gnosis are one,"⁷¹ and in the doctrine that Omniscience, *sine qua non* of Nirvāṇa, is the realization of the sameness of all principles, SPT., p. 133 — the same, *sama*, but differently seen by the eye of flesh (*māṃsa-cakṣus*, viz. the eye's intrinsic faculty in the sensible world), the angelic eye (*divya-cakṣus*, viz. the mind's eye in the intelligible world), and the eye of wisdom (*prajñā-*, *dhamma-*, *ananta*, or *buddha-cakṣus*, viz. the Comprehensor's eye in the world of gnosis).

In another way the correspondence of manifested and transcendental being, here viewed as a correspondence of the twin Wheels and their depend-

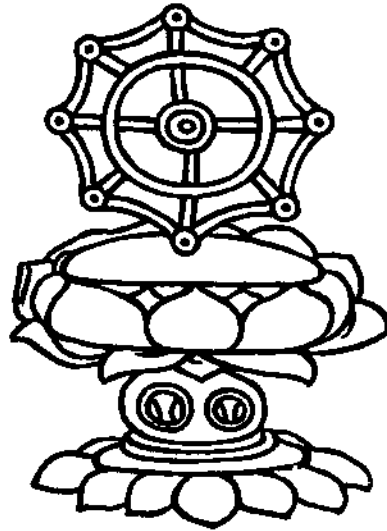


FIG. E. Dharmacakra, detail from a banner, from Tun Huang.
After Stein, *Serindia*, Pl. LXXV.

ence on a common axis, is developed in Shingon Buddhism as the identity of (1) the "Germ-calyx-plane" or "Germ-womb-plane" (*taizō-kai* = *garbha-kośa-dhātu* or *garbha-kukṣi-dhātu*) and (2) the "Adamantine plane" (*kongo-kai* = *vajra-dhātu*).⁷² Here the premier powers or principles of the two rationally but not really distinguished planes are represented respectively by the "seed-words" A and VAM (OM), according to the significance attached to these sounds in the Upaniṣads. In the Shingon *mandaras* these sounds are represented by diagrams or letters supported by lotus thrones (Figs. D, 32, 33, 40).

In any case, the Dharmacakra as Buddha symbol implies a conception of the Buddha as Dharmakāya, "Embodiment of the Word"; he is at once

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the Sovereign Mover of the Wheel, *rājā cakkavattī*, and the Wheel itself, the Word as set in motion, *pravartita*. From the fact that the words Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya do not occur in canonical Pali texts it may be inferred that the Trikāya doctrine was not originally developed; nevertheless, the Pali texts already reveal a very conscious Buddhology, as already observed above, p. 24. Here we need only indicate that the Dharmakāya concept of the Buddha is certainly presented, e. g. *Dīgha Nikāya*, III, 84, "The Tathāgata may be spoken of as Dhammakāya, or Brahmakāya,"⁷³ and *Samyutta Nikāya*, III, 120, "Who sees the Dhamma sees Me, who sees

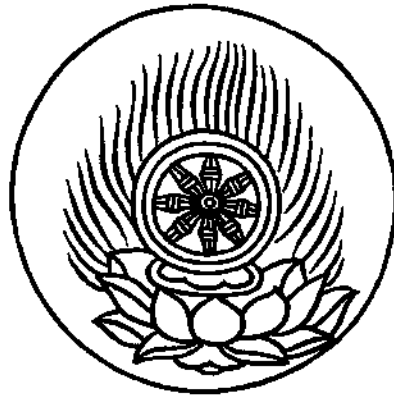


FIG. F. *Rimbō* (Dharmacakra) supported by the lotus.
After Ōmura Seigai, *Sambon Ryōbu Mandara*. Cf. Fig. C.

Me sees the Dhamma." So then, in the abundant early Dharmacakra representations, the Buddha is already ideally iconified as a Principal Wheel supported by a universal ground; the Word is embodied (*-kāya*).

This prepares us to understand that the Dharmacakra, like any other Buddha symbol, can properly be represented as supported by a lotus, of which very clear examples can be cited from Shingon *mandaras* (Figs. C, E, F).⁷⁴ That the Wheel of Life was actually so thought of in a certainly pre-Buddhist time is clearly shown by *Atharva Veda*, X, 8, 34, a prayer for fullness of life, "I ask thee concerning that Flower of the Waters (*apām puṣpa*) wherein insist (*śrita*) Angels and Men, as it were spokes in the nave (*nābhi*) (of a wheel), the which was there infixed (*hita*) by Magic (*māyā*)," where the "flower of the waters" is of course the lotus.

In early Buddhist art the Dharmacakra is represented as supported by a pillar with a bulbous capital, upon which are four lions, on which in turn the Dharmacakra directly rests.⁷⁵ The capital and lions I take to be the

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lotus and lion thrones which are so often combined in the later anthropomorphic iconography. I have discussed elsewhere ⁷⁶ the morphology of the lotus capital, and now take it for granted that the pillar itself corresponds to the stem, cable moulding to stamens, and abacus to pericarp. The capital, then, represents the heavenly ground on which the Word is manifested, while the actual earth in which the pillar stands is that terrestrial ground on which the Word is actually preached; the pillar extends from Earth to Heaven, it is the Axis of the Universe; the whole represents the Universe.

Allusion may also be made to one other way in which the Word may be shown as explicitly supported by a lotus; that is when the Word is embodied in a given text, any given *sūtra* or "alternative formulation," *dharma-paryāya*. Inasmuch as "he who makes a manuscript of the *dharma-paryāya* and cherishes it, thereby cherishes the Tathāgata" (SPt., p. 338), it is a perfectly correct iconography which represents Prajñāpāramitā or Mañjuśrī supporting the "Lotus of Transcendent Wisdom" upon a lotus, the holding of the stem of this lotus being a formulation equivalent in significance to the support of the pillar of the Dharmacakra by its ground.

We have seen that the lotus represents that wherein existence comes to be and passes away, the seat of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti*, of Him who starts and stays the revolution of the Wheels of Time, but have alluded only in passing to what is ultimately the most significant aspect of the lotus symbolism, i. e. the identification of the lotus with the "heart" or "mind" of man. Again and again in the Upaniṣads that elemental Space (*ākāśa*, *kha*, *nabha*, *antarikṣa*, etc.⁷⁷) in which the Principial Being is manifested as all the forms of natured being is located in the cave or secret chamber (*guhā*), dwelling (*veśma*), hollow (*kha*),⁷⁸ temple (*āyatana*), abode (*ālaya*), coffer or calyx (*kośa*), or nesting-place (*nīḍa*)⁷⁹ in the Lotus of the Heart (*hṛt-puṣkara*) or inward man (*antar-bhūta*), i. e. "in the innermost." There in a universal mode abides the Self (*ātman*), the Lord (*īśa*), Person (*puruṣa*), indefinitely dimensioned, "smaller than an atom and surpassing magnitude," *anor aṇīyān mahato mahīyān*, *Svetāśvatara Up.*, III, 20, etc. "This space-within-the-heart (*antarhṛdaya ākāśa*), therein is the Person (*puruṣa*) in the mode of Intellect (*mano-maya*) . . . there he becomes as Brahman in a spatial embodiment, as very Self, as the playground of the Spirit (*prāṇārāma*), as Intellect and Bliss, Peace uttermost and everlasting," *Taittirīya Up.*, I, 6, 1, "who is the Logos (*dharma*)," *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.*, II, 5, 11. Are we not

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reminded that "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you"? Or again, "That golden Person in the Supernal-Sun who from that golden station looks down upon this earth, it is even He that dwells in the Lotus of the Heart and functions there. He who dwells in the Lotus of the Heart is that same numinous solar Fire that is spoken of as Time, unseen and all-devouring," *Maitri Up.*, VI, 1-2, cf. *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, I, 27. So "what is within that should be searched out, that assuredly is what one should desire to understand . . . (for) everything is contained therein, both what is ours (now) and what is not (yet) ours," *Chāndogya Up.*, VIII, 1-3, i. e. not merely those possibilities that can be realized within the circle of a particular ensemble of conditions such as "ours," but all that can be realized in the indefinite totality of all states of being, all that God can "be." Thus Time and Space, manifested Deity in other words, are not external facts, but all contained at the core of our own being; there lies that "nothing" out of which the world was made; there can be realized the Kingdom of Heaven, in a degree proportionate to the measure of our Understanding.⁸⁰

These considerations carry us far beyond the iconography of Brahmanical or Buddhist art to its ultimate content. This content is no less essential in the visual than in the literary art; to use only the eye in looking at a sculpture is no better than to use the ear alone in listening to the recitation of a text or the chanting of a hymn, however "artistic" these performances may be. The visual and literary formulations have precisely the same "uses," their references are the same; for some purposes the one, for others the other, may be more efficacious; cf. Kōbō Daishi, speaking with reference to the propagation of the doctrine, "The reverend Divine informed me that the secrets of the Shingon sect could not be conveyed without the aid of pictorial representations" (cf. Figs. C, D, E, 32, 33, 40).⁸¹ In any case, it is the content that gives rise to the iconography, whether this be visual or verbal, just as the soul is said to be the form of the body ("form" is the principle that determines a thing in its species). To regard only the symbols, and not their form, is nothing but sensationalism, if not fetishism:⁸² *Docti rationem artis intelligent, indocti voluptatem*, where *ratio* is *raison d'être*. The humane point of view, that the symbols are merely indications or stimuli, not to be judged as ends in themselves, but as means or supports of realization, has been strongly emphasized in the East, nowhere more explicitly than in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, ed. Nanjio, p. 48: "As a master

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painter seated before some picture applies his colors for the purpose of making a picture, so do I preach (*deśayāmi*); the (real) picture is not in the color nor in the surface nor in the environment (*bhājana*), (but in the mind of the painter). The picture is devised in colors as a means of attracting living beings; and (just as the picture may be defective, so) the preaching may err, but the principle (*tattvam*, cf. *tattvārtha* in *Bṛhad Devatā*, VII, 110; Dante's "*vera sentenza*") transcends the letter" (*akṣara-varjītam*). As Dante expresses it, "Behold the teaching, that escapes beneath the veil of its strange verses." ⁸³ The vocabulary of art, sensible in itself, is necessarily built up from the elements of sensible experience, the source of all rational knowledge; but what is thus constructed is not intended to resemble any natural species, and cannot be judged by verisimilitude or by the ear's or eye's sensation alone; it is intended to convey an intelligible meaning, and beyond that to point the way to the realization in consciousness of a condition of being transcending even the images of thought, and only a self-identification with the content of the work, achieved by the spectator's own effort, can be regarded as perfect experience, without distinction of "religious" and "aesthetic," logic and feeling.

PART II

THE PLACE OF THE LOTUS-THRONE

“Where is the navel of the world?” — *R̥g Veda*, I, 164, 34.

“Quivi è la Rosa, in che il Verbo divino carne se fece; quivi son li Gigli,
al cui odor si prese il buon Cammino.” — Dante, *Paradiso*, XXIII.⁸⁴

IN EARLY Buddhist art, as is well known, the Buddha is constantly represented by a simple seat or throne (*pallaṅka*) situated at the foot of a Mahābodhi-tree, the Prince of Trees, *duminda*. After the second century A.D., in the case of *māra-dharsana* images (recognizable by the *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*), the manifested form of the Buddha himself, seated on a lotus-throne, or combined lotus- and lion-throne, has become the most prominent feature of the whole, the Wisdom-tree being now reduced from its original supremacy to a function merely indicative of place and event; or if some other of the *aṣṭasthāna* is in question, or indeed any scene from the Life, the Buddha is seated on a lotus-throne, or stands on a lotus-pedestal, the representation including at the same time the necessary indications of place and event. In just the same way the anthropomorphic figure displaces the Wheel, which is relegated to the pedestal as an indication of the event of the First Preaching; though it appears also as *lakṣaṇa* on the soles of the feet and palms of the hands, for the Buddha even in human form *is* essentially the Wheel, his Existence *is* its revolution.

In other words, anthropomorphic elements have now been combined with the earlier and more abstract symbolism; that was an inevitable result of the emergence of Buddhism as a popular religion, its extension as an emotional (*bhakti-vāda*) persuasion. That may have been just what the Buddha is said to have prophesied with regret on the occasion of the admission of women to the monastic order; and as we have seen a use of anthropomorphic images had been condemned as “groundless and fanciful.” Even if this is not original, as it may well be, at least it represents an iconoclastic tendency, subsequent to the development of the anthropomorphic imagery. Not that monastic orthodoxy could really have feared “idolatry” in the fetishistic sense, but that he who had denied that he was either Gandhabba, Yakkha, or Man, asserting thereby his Principial essence,

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might have sensed, or been thought of as sensing, a psychological danger in the use of a cult image in the form of a man, danger in fact in any sort of cult susceptible of an "animistic" interpretation. Nothing, however, is really changed in principle; the "anthropomorphic" image in India remains "abstract,"⁸⁶ and rightly understood is merely a means to the realization of a given station of consciousness. Actually, in the theological development, the Principial Essence of the Tathāgata is more and more strongly emphasized, the content of the iconography, anthropomorphic or otherwise, becomes more and more ontological, less and less historical. It is just this emancipation from the historical point of view which determines the character and permits the expansion of Mahāyāna art, preoccupied as it is with the concept of the Buddha's transcendental Perfection: when it is realized that the Buddha's Comprehension (Sambodhi) dates from the beginning of time, and was merely "displayed" at Bodhgayā, and that he "has never left his seat on Mt Gṛdhra-kūṭa," a mistaken attachment to his human personality is precluded. The mediaeval development of Christianity and of Christian art after the decline of Iconoclasm presents an exact analogy; here likewise it was realized that "Christ's birth is eternal," and so there came into being an art that emphasizes the Perfection of his being in Glory, far more than the course of his earthly ministry.⁸⁶

Beneath the Bodhi-tree, within the Bodhimaṇḍa, Gautama is said to have accomplished the Great Awakening, Mahāsambodhi, becoming Buddha, "Comprehensor"; that was an attainment of Nirvāṇa, though other terms for this condition attainable by a still existent being, particularly the term Arahatta, "Perfection," are more frequently employed in the canonical Pali texts. What was then this "Full Attainment" (*samāpatti*)? Nirvāṇa is literally "despiration," but in Buddhist usage more specifically "Extinction," viz. extinction of the flame of Will. Most significant for us is the distinction of Nibbāṇa as *sa-upādi-sesa*, "having a residual existential ground," from Parinibbāṇa as *an-* or *nir-upādi-sesa*, "without any residual ground of existence";⁸⁷ for these interpretations coincide with the doctrine of the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka* that the Buddha, though omniscient, though "extinguished," is not yet "absolutely extinguished" (*aparinirvāyamāṇa*, see p. 47). The Mahāsambodhi, Great Awakening, displayed at Bodhgayā was not then a "Drowning" in the utterly Unknowing and Unknown,⁸⁸ but the realization of a paradisiac,

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super-individual state of pure Being, realization of sovereign personality as Cakravartin and Dharmarājā. A transformation (Pali *vikubbana*, Skr. *parāvṛtti*, *abhisambhava*) is necessarily involved, which can only be described in terms of Paradise and Vision, Buddha-saukhya-vihāra (*Mahāyāna Sūtrālamkāra*, IX, 46). So according to the *Nidānakathā*, J., I, 75-76, ". . . throughout the universe flowering trees put forth their blossoms, and fruit-bearing trees were loaded with clusters of fruit . . . hells, whose gloom the rays of the seven suns had never dispelled, were filled with light⁸⁹ . . . the blind from birth received their sight. . . ." But this experience was not an effected miracle (*pāṭihāriya*, *inda-jāla*) made visible to any spectator: "the Great Person (*mahāpurisa*) sat there alone," J., I, 72, and if he beheld the ten thousand world-systems, the "World-picture" (*jagac-citra*, *Svātmanirūpaṇa*, 96),⁹⁰ none therein beheld *him*, unless it were in a likeness, *pratibimbavat*. Paradise is ever present to the transcendental Buddha, but naturally it was not supposed that the vision remained or could have remained present to the empirical Buddha in subsequent daily life, and indeed he is made to say that were he to repeat elsewhere the Full Attainment reached in the Bodhimaṇḍa, "Wisdom-circle," earth could not sustain him (J., IV, 229).⁹¹

Now to consider the position of the Bodhimaṇḍa, and continuing with the *Kāliṅga-bodhi Jātaka*: with the Buddha's approval, as already explained above, p. 4, Mogallāna fares through the sky⁹² to the Bodhimaṇḍa, and there procures a seed of the Wisdom-tree, and brings it back. Anāthapiṇḍika plants it in the place prepared for it at the gateway of the Jetavana, and there it springs up immediately, a full-grown "Forest-Lord," Vanaspati.⁹³ A Wisdom-festival (*bodhi-maha*) is held, and a railing (*vedikā*) and enclosing walls (*pākāra*) are built, clearly in imitation of those on the original site. Ānanda then prays the Buddha to repeat "at the foot of this Bodhi (-tree) that Full Attainment (*samāpatti*) to which you attained at the root of the Mahābodhi (-tree)." The Buddha replies that this is impossible, "for should I accomplish here what I accomplished in the Mahābodhimaṇḍa, the earth will not be able to sustain it"; he consents, however, to achieve during one night such a measure of Attainment as the site can support.

It is thus apparent that a particular significance attached to the (Mahā-) Bodhimaṇḍa with respect to its position in the Universe. We have

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already understood that the Wisdom-circle is an extent ideally equivalent to that of the whole Universe, and in gnosis realized as such. Now the meaning of a circle is with respect to its centre, which is a mathematical, and undimensioned, point, not with respect to its actual extension in physical space. It is in fact precisely at the centre of the Bodhimaṇḍa that the Bodhisattva took his seat. As related in the *Nidānakathā*, he first essays to find a seat on the north, south, and west of the Tree, but in each case the Great Earth (*mahā-paṭhavī*) fails to maintain its level, it seems to move up and down, like a great cartwheel lying on its hub (*nābhi*, "navel," "nave") when the circumference is trodden on; only when he takes his stand to the east of the Tree, that is evidently on the hub of the "wheel," is the level maintained.⁹⁴ Here there rises up a seat (*pallaṅka*) called "Unconquerable" (*aparājita*), and "of impartite, or adamantine, form" (*abhejja-rūpa*), and the Bodhisattva takes his seat with his back to the Tree. Māra, embodying the Will to Life, *libido*, *libet*, claims the throne;⁹⁵ he assaults the Bodhisattva with every weapon known to him, but every weapon is transformed and reaches the Great Person in the form of a flower. Māra's daughters present seduction in all its most attractive forms; the Bodhisattva is equally unmoved, he does not "look," for he has passed beyond "affection" to "perfection."⁹⁶

The location of the Buddha-seat at the navel of the World-wheel is emphasized again in the *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 68: "This is the navel of the earth-plain (*nābhīr vasudhā-tala*); it is possessed of transcendent entirety (*parama-kṛtsna*⁹⁷); no other place on earth but this is the realm of At-onement or Consummation (*samādhi*), the situation of the Goal (*hita*)." By the same token, this "unmoving site" (*acalaṭṭhāna*) has been occupied by all previous Buddhas (J., I, 71), by every Bodhisattva "on the day of his Great Awakening" (*abhisambujjhana*, J., I, 74, cf. *Buddhacarita*, XIII, 67).

The seat itself (*pallaṅka*, *patta-pallaṅka*) is spoken of as unconquerable (*aparājita*), impartite or adamantine (*abhejja*), and as a Waking-seat (*bodhi-*) and Victory-seat (*jaya-*), J., I, 73-77. It is fourteen cubits in length, and makes its appearance, "is" (*ahosi*), spontaneously; but its form is not emphasized, *pallaṅka* and *patta-pallaṅka* simply denoting a slab of stone, and as such, supported by a plain rectangular base, the seat is represented in the early art. In *Theragāthā*, 1095, however, we find it spoken of as a "lion-throne," *sīhāsana* (glossed *thirāsane aparājita-pal-*

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lanke, "unconquerable seat of firm séance"); this lion-throne is the form actually favored in the case of the oldest representations of the Buddha in human form at Mathurā, and it long survives in literature and art, often in combination with the lotus. Other royal types of seat or throne are met with at Amarāvati. It is here also, as well as in the art of Gandhāra, mostly of the second century A.D., that the characteristic lotus seat (*padmāsana*) or lotus pedestal (*padma-pīṭha*) first appears.

We also find the term *vajrāsana*, "adamantine throne," applied to the Buddha's seat. This term does not occur in the Pali texts, but is common in



FIG. G. Vajra-dhātu form of the Dhyāni-Buddha.
After Omura Seigai, *Sanbon Ryōbu Mandara*.

the Mahāyāna sūtras. The word and notion led no doubt to the occasional representation of actual *vajras* on the pedestal of the Buddha throne, as at the Gal-vihāre, Połonnāruva, in the twelfth century; such representations are rare. In certain Shingon Buddhist representations (Fig. G) the *vajra* is combined rather with the body of the Buddha than with the throne, and this is probably to be connected with the late Tantrik form of Buddhism known as Vajrayāna, the designation of the Principial plane as Vajra-dhātu, Dharmakāya as Vajrakāya, and the personification of Vajrasattva = Vairocana, Ādi-Buddha. It will be remembered also that long before this (*Dīgha Nikāya*, I, 95, *Majjhima Nikāya*, I, 231, and in the *Lalita Vistara*) a Yakṣa Vajrapāṇi, a guardian angel and not to be confused with Indra, is closely associated with the Buddha during his ministry; and that this Vajrapāṇi, "who bears a *vajra* in his hand," soon becomes the Bodhi-

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sattva of the same name.⁹⁸ From the standpoint of Vedic angelology such a figure must be regarded simply as an externalization of the Buddha's own adamantine power, personified as an angel attendant upon him.⁹⁹

Although the term *vajrāsana* is not directly represented in Pali texts, the idea is clearly present by implication. The throne is in fact spoken of as *abhejja-rūpa*, i. e. as of impartite or adamantine form, *abhejja* being equivalent to Skr. *abhedya*, "indivisible," and also a kenning for *vajra*, "diamond," "adamant." We have also already seen that the Buddha's seat is at the centre, on the navel of the World-wheel, i. e. also centred on the axle-tree (*akṣa*), which is also the World-axis; and it may be noted that *akṣa-ja*, "axle-born" or "axis-born," is again a kenning for "*vajra*," while Kṛṣṇa's *cakra* is said to be *vajra-nābha*.¹⁰⁰

The *vajra* (Jap. *kongō*) plays a large part in Shingon symbolism and ritual (Figs. G, H). A detailed study of the symbolism of Shingon ritual and implements is much to be desired.¹⁰¹ However, it is evident from the representations and objects themselves, in the light of what has been shown above with respect to *akṣa*, *vajra*, and *cakra*, that the point or end of the *vajra* corresponds to *āṇi*, the "point" of the axle-tree that penetrates the nave of the Wheel, Dante's *punto dello stelo a cui la prima rota va d'intorno*. In the ordinary double *vajra*, *kongō-sho* (Figs. 26, 27), then, the stem or handle corresponds to the vertical axis of the Universe, extending between Heaven and Earth, which are represented by the two ends, one- or three-pointed as the case may be, each in the image of (*anurūpam*) the other. That is as pure Being, *Ding an sich, in principio*, and motionless, *pūrṇa apravartin, acala, abhedya*. On the other hand the fourfold (crossed) *karma-vajra*, *katsuma-kongō* (Fig. 28), corresponding to Dharmacakra, *rimbō*, represents the movement or operation of this exemplary Principle either universally or on any given plane of being, as already explained in connection with the symbolism of the Wheel. Hence we find the spokes of the World-wheel not infrequently and quite naturally represented as *vajras*, extending from centre to felly; in the *rimbō* (Fig. 25), for example, the "earth-points" of the eight *vajra*-spokes are seen in contact with the felly, but it must be understood that the unseen "heaven-points" meet at the common centre, within the lotus-nave. From the point of view of anyone "on earth" the corresponding *vajra*-spoke extends as before from Earth (the felly) to Heaven (centre). From this point of view it will also be apparent why in

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Shingon symbolism the *vajra, kongō*, is always represented as “supported” by a lotus, that is, by a universal “ground,” the relation of *vajra* to lotus being that of “impartible essence” to “universal substance”; and it is in the “middle region,” i. e. “round about” the axis of the *vajra*, between the centre and the felly of any Wheel, that all existence is extended. It should not be overlooked that *kongō-sho* and *katsuma-kongō*, the former vertical, the latter in a horizontal plane, considered together represent the poles of the Universe in the form of a three-armed cross: and as we have seen, the Buddha’s throne is situated in the centre, at the intersection of the arms.



FIG. H. Vajra-Dhātu symbol of the Five Dhyāni Buddhas.
After Ōmura Seigai, *Sanbon Ryōbu Mandara*.

Furthermore, the origin of the term *vajrāsana* can also be explained psychologically, with reference to the mentality of him who sits thereon: ¹⁰² in the *Anguttara Nikāya*, I, 124, the highest type of consciousness is termed *vajirūpama citta*, “heart like adamant,” ¹⁰³ he having such a heart or mind “who by the destruction of the foul-issues ¹⁰⁴ and the vision of Dhamma (Principle) has verified the gnosis of issue-free heart-and-mind-release (*vimutti = nibbāna*), and having won it abides therein. Just as, Brethren, there is nothing, whether gem or rock, which a diamond cannot cut (*vajirassa . . . abhejjam*) . . . such is one of the three types of man (*puggala*) to be found in the world.” In Hinduism such a one is styled *Jīvan-mukta*, Freed in Life, or *Vidvān*, Gnostic, in Buddhism *Jina*, Conqueror, or *Nirvāta*, Extinguished, in Christianity Comprehensor. Such undoubtedly was the *Mahāpurisa*, *Tathāgata*, *Buddha*, *Devātideva*; appropriate to him

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whose heart is like a diamond, adamantine, or as we should now perhaps express it, "of steel," is an adamantine throne, immovable as himself.

In the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka*,¹⁰⁵ not later than A.D. 250, the Buddha doctrine is completely emancipated from its historical setting, which is preserved only with respect to the "traces" (*dhātu*) of Gautama on earth, and in the iconography in so far as the monastic type is still adhered to. The Buddha himself becomes a transcendental principle, Dharma, Logos, awakened (*abhisambuddha*) from the beginning of time (SP., XV, 1). Not merely is his throne (*āsana*), upon which he is never weary of sitting (SP., V, 23),¹⁰⁶ the same as that which all former Munis have occupied (SP., XIII, 67), as was also taught in the Pali texts, but he is from the beginning one and the same who has occupied throne after throne in time and time again: "again and again I take my stand on the ground of the living world" (SP., XV, 7), "showing myself as such and such forasmuch as men have fallen into sin and sorrow" (SP., XV, 22, 23, cf. *Bhagavad Gītā*, IV, 7 and 8); being thus not merely the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past, but those yet to come (SP., XIV, 38, XVI, 59-62, etc.).¹⁰⁷ As Dharmarājā, "King of the Word" (SP., V, 1), Puruṣōttama, "Most High Person" (SP., II, 41), *Svayambhū*, "Self-subsistent" (SP., II, 48, XV, 21), Lokapitā, "Father of the World" (SP., XV, 21), and Sarvaprajāna Nātha, "Lord of begotten existences" (SP., XV, 21, cf. "Prajāpati"), "I display return (*nirvṛta*) who am not myself returned (*anirvṛtaḥ*)" (SP., XV, 21).¹⁰⁸ "I reveal the Ground of Extinction (*nirvāṇa-bhūmi*), speaking by accommodation for the edification of living beings, though I was not Extinguished (*na . . . nirvāmy ahu*) at that time, but am ever revealing the Dharma here. . . . Believing that my Self-nature (*ātma-bhāva*) was Wholly Returned (*parinirvṛta*), they worship variously the traces (*dhātu*), but see not Me. . . . I have not left this Grdhrakūṭa . . . the duration of my life is an interminable aeon" (SP., XV, 3, 5, 10, and 17). Again, "The Threefold World is seen by the Tathāgata,¹⁰⁹ not as childish worldlings see it, but immediately as Principles (*dharmā*); verily the Principles are not remote from the Tathāgata in the station where he is. . . . The Tathāgata who was Awakened (*abhisambuddha*) so long ago, and the measure of whose life is incalculable, is continuously (*sadā*) existent (*sthita*). . . . My ancient Bodhisattva course is not yet run, the measure of my life is not fulfilled. . . . I announce an Absolute-Extinction (*parinirvāṇa*) who-am-not-by-way-of-being-Totally-Extin-