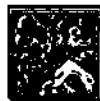


# Elements of Buddhist Iconography

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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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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,<sup>5</sup> 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*)<sup>6</sup> there are. "Three," says Ānanda, with implied reference to contemporary non-Buddhist usage, "viz., those of the body (*sāṅgika*), those of association (*pāribhogaka*),<sup>7</sup> 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 *lakkhaṇas*, 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" (*saṃvejanīyānī 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 *śīthīlasamādhī* 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 utsṛṣṭā*), 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 abhīlikhitam*).

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 utsṛṣṭā* 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: <sup>8</sup> the Tree of Life, synonymous with all existence, all the worlds, all life, springs up, out, or down into space <sup>9</sup> 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*).<sup>10</sup>

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."<sup>11</sup> 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*.<sup>12</sup>

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);<sup>13</sup> these have been almost completely ignored by students of Buddhist iconography.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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).<sup>16</sup> 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,<sup>17</sup> 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 Amitāyus, 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 darknesses, 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 application, 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 stability . . . 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*, *tṛṣṇa*, 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;<sup>18</sup> 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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 *Amarāvātī* 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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*).<sup>24</sup> In *Ṛg Veda*, IV, 22, 2, the *vajra* is said to be a four-angled rain-producer (*vṛṣamdhim 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 sam 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 (*brahma*);

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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,<sup>25</sup> where hoofmarks are clearly indicated (Fig. A). I have argued against the general applicability of this term,<sup>26</sup> 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-

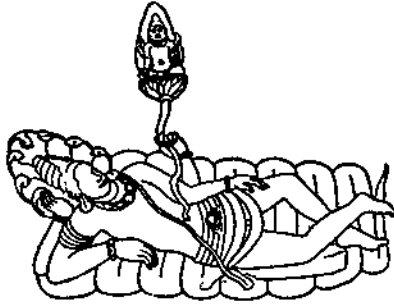


FIG. B. Birth of Brahmā; Elūrā.

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.,<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> 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,"<sup>29</sup> *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.<sup>30</sup> 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.<sup>31</sup> 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

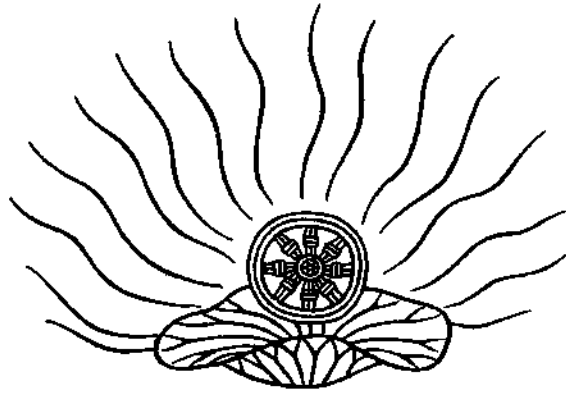


FIG. C. Rimbō (Dharmacakra) supported by a lotus leaf.  
After Ōmura Seigai, *Sanbon Ryōbu Mandara*. Cf. Fig. F.

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.”<sup>32</sup> 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.”<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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*.<sup>36</sup> 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,"<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup>

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.<sup>38</sup> 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 (*nakṣatrānām*)<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup> 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



