

3. THE IMAGE OF THE BUDDHA pdf

1: Buddhism - The Buddha Image

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The 3 Bodies of the Buddha [trikaya] Trikaya is a Sanskrit word used in the Buddhist context to refer to levels of manifestation or activity. Tri means three and trikaya as a concept concerns three levels of buddhahood. Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha who is generally considered one of many buddhas to have come to the help of sentient beings, is understood to be accessible in various ways. These are called the dharmakaya, samboghakaya, and nirmanakaya. They have been translated into English as: A simplified explanation is that the dharmakaya is the Absolute. It is the source of everything including buddha activity, and is not different from the Void Skt. It is not usually experienced except by fully realized beings. It is not normally "prayed to," though it is saluted or praised. Its nature is the subject of discussion. The sound Aum Om evokes the dharmakaya. One explanation found in the Hindu Puranas is that it is the grunt of the Goddess as she gives birth to creation. In Buddhism, that which it represents is entirely unborn. The 3 components of this syllable, here in a Tibetan form, can also be understood as the kayas, and also as symbolic of the 3 Jewels. The samboghakaya enjoyment body is rarely experienced. Its manifestation is as described in the images used in visualization, and in stories told of deities. It is Manifestation that permits description, and has been referred to as "timeless communication. The nirmanakaya is the third "body. The sound Hum, which actually means us in Sanskrit in Tibetan it is rendered as Hung! It is the here-and-now, with all its future potential. It may be helpful to think of the three as: Continuum Press, Rita M. Gross gives concrete examples with regard to the ritual worship Skt. The late Kalu Rinpoche compared the dharmakaya to the sun the direct perception of which is impossible for us, the samboghakaya is the disc form that we see and of which we say, "It is rising " or "It is setting," and the nirmanakaya is the light and heat we experience. For a detailed explanation, see Ven. In the Buddhist tradition which focuses on Buddha Amitabha, his pavilion is bounded by three walls each of which symbolizes one of the kayas: The ancient Celts who some scholars believe originated near the Caspian Sea, had a similar belief in the Three Existences: Several of their myths, symbolism and practices resemble those of ancient India. Is there a 4th kaya? The 4th kaya is called, Svabhavikakaya of an essence, or essential. Tai Situpa, explaining Mahamudra, says, "They are just three different aspects of the state of a buddha, which is indivisible. A Further Example of Levels of Manifestation and Activity Yeshe Tsogyel was once a merchant who lived during the time of a former Buddha when she went before him and swore not to be reborn except for the benefit of beings. Then, according to Nyingma tradition, in 8th century Tibet, Guru Padmasambhava invoked Saraswati to manifest as a woman who would help disseminate the Mantrayana. Both are Samboghakaya Buddhas. In tangkas, he is depicted as dark blue in colour, and she as pure white. Due to their union, Yeshe Tsogyel was born into this world, first as an Indian princess. Aspects of Deity Tantric deities, which are the focus of individual practice either through assignment by the guru or through personal connection, are considered to operate in several ways, usually five: Sometimes, we speak of a sixth or "essence" aspect. As a "meditational deity" or yidam, Yeshe Tsogyel is regarded as the manifestation of the speech of Vajrayogini, herself a form of Vajravahni, who is the Sambhogakaya aspect of Samantabhadri. The Tibetan expression is yidam Skt. Chosen by the teacher or by the student with guidance from the teacher, this figure can act as a psychological complement or support. Deities are also viewed as mythic figures, but they are understood to arise and return to Emptiness. Although they have no inherent reality nevertheless they do exist, according to such excellent teachers as Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche. They are not worshipped in the sense of idolatry, though certainly it may seem to be so for example, when someone first encounters people doing full prostrations before images on a shrine. Think of how it was with many of us before we were so fortunate as to have real teachers, when we only had access to Tibetan Buddhism via vaguely translated books. Kings could have several kas; mere mortals had only one. During life the ka remained separate from the body. At death a person was said to have "gone to his [or her] ka. To survive, the ka needed a body for its eternal home. The Egyptians believed that the ka dwelt within either the mummy or the tomb statue sometimes called the ka-statue, a spare body needed if the corpse should be destroyed. The Egyptians called the second element of

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the soul the ba or "animation". It was the part of the spirit that was free to leave the tomb and travel about the earth during the day. The ba was obliged, however, to return to the tomb during the perilous hours of darkness. Artisans had several ways of showing the ba, sometimes as a bird, but most often as a human-headed bird. The ba came into being only when the ka and the dead body were united; without the ka and a mummy or ka-statue, the ba could not exist. Death, Burial, and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt. Ba, depicted in hieroglyphics as a bird or a human-headed hawk, is usually translated simply "soul" and meant sublime and noble. It could leave the body at death and revisit the tomb to reanimate the body; it was able to go to heaven and dwell with perfected souls there. Closely associated with the ba was the khu which meant shining or translucent and is usually translated "intelligence. More difficult to interpret is the ka, which could mean image, genius, double, character, disposition, or mental attributes. For a long time the term "ghost" might have been used; today we would probably say, "psyche.

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2: Buddha Stock Images - Download , Photos

The Buddha Image. Buddha Footprint The Buddha never suggested that he was above other men and did not want himself to become a deity to be worshiped. Early art included him by representation, often by his footprints, or a wheel to represent the teaching.

Following a transition under the Sui Dynasty , Buddhist sculpture of the Tang evolved towards a markedly lifelike expression. However, foreign influences came to be negatively perceived in China towards the end of the Tang dynasty. In the year , the Tang emperor Wuzong outlawed all "foreign" religions including Christian Nestorianism , Zoroastrianism and Buddhism in order to support the indigenous religion, Taoism. He confiscated Buddhist possessions, and forced the faith to go underground, therefore affecting the development of the religion and its arts in China. Connected as they were with the then-unpopular school of Chan Buddhism, their paintings were discarded and ignored. Some paintings survived after being transported to Japan by visiting Zen monks, but the school of Chan painting gradually diminished. The Shunzhi Emperor was a devotee of Chan Buddhism, while his successor, the Kangxi Emperor promoted Tibetan Buddhism , claiming to be the human embodiment of the bodhisattva Manjusri. He commissioned a vast number of religious works in the Tibetan style, many of which depicted him in various sacred guises. They combine a characteristically Tibetan attention to iconographic detail with Chinese-inspired decorative elements. Inscriptions are often written in Chinese, Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian and Sanskrit, while paintings are frequently rendered in vibrant colors. The Leshan Giant Buddha , carved out of a hillside in the 8th century during the Tang Dynasty and looking down on the confluence of three rivers, is still the largest stone Buddha statue in the world. Buddhism in Korea , Korean Buddhist sculpture , and Korean art Korean Buddhist art generally reflects an interaction between other Buddhist influences and a strongly original Korean culture. Additionally, the art of the steppes, particularly Siberian and Scythian influences, are evident in early Korean Buddhist art based on the excavation of artifacts and burial goods such as Silla royal crowns , belt buckles, daggers, and comma-shaped gogok. Three Kingdoms of Korea[edit] Bangasayusang , semi-seated contemplative Maitreya probably from Silla circa early 7th century. Particularly important in the transmission of sophisticated art styles to the Korean kingdoms was the art of the "barbarian" Tuoba, a clan of non-Han Chinese Xianbei people who established the Northern Wei Dynasty in China in The Northern Wei style was particularly influential in the art of the Goguryeo and Baekje. Baekje artisans later transmitted this style along with Southern Dynasty elements and distinct Korean elements to Japan. Korean artisans were highly selective of the styles they incorporated and combined different regional styles together to create a specific Korean Buddhist art style. While Goguryeo Buddhist art exhibited vitality and mobility akin with Northern Wei prototypes, the Baekje Kingdom was also in close contact with the Southern Dynasties of China and this close diplomatic contact is exemplified in the gentle and proportional sculpture of the Baekje, epitomized by Baekje sculpture exhibiting the fathomless smile known to art historians as the Baekje smile. Particularly, the semi-seated Maitreya form was adapted into a highly developed Korean style which was transmitted to Japan as evidenced by the Koryu-ji Miroku Bosatsu and the Chugu-ji Siddhartha statues. Although many historians portray Korea as a mere transmitter of Buddhism, the Three Kingdoms, and particularly Baekje, were instrumental as active agents in the introduction and formation of a Buddhist tradition in Japan in or During the Unified Silla period, East Asia was particularly stable with China and Korea both enjoying unified governments. Early Unified Silla art combined Silla styles and Baekje styles. Korean Buddhist art was also influenced by new Tang Dynasty styles as evidenced by a new popular Buddhist motif with full-faced Buddha sculptures. Tang China was the cross roads of East, Central, and South Asia and so the Buddhist art of this time period exhibit the so-called international style. State-sponsored Buddhist art flourished during this period, the epitome of which is the Seokguram Grotto. The Goryeo kings also lavishly sponsored Buddhism and Buddhist art flourished, especially Buddhist paintings and illuminated sutras written in gold and silver ink. The crowning achievement of this period is the carving of approximately 80, woodblocks of the Tripitaka Koreana which was done twice. Joseon Dynasty[edit] The Joseon Dynasty actively suppressed Buddhism

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beginning in and Buddhist temples and art production subsequently decline in quality in quantity although beginning in , Buddhist art does continue to be produced.

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3: The 32 Physical characteristics or Lakshanas of the Buddha - Buddha heads

The scholars asserting the priority of Gandhara claim that the Buddha image originated in Gandhara and the Mathura image of Buddha was the result of its inspiration, although as against the dated Mathura images, none of the reported Gandhara images of Buddha has a date inscribed on it.

The Buddha Image Buddha Footprint The Buddha never suggested that he was above other men and did not want himself to become a deity to be worshiped. Early art included him by representation, often by his footprints, or a wheel to represent the teaching. The powerful Ashoka had many impressive columns erected often with lions at the top symbolising the regal background of the Buddha. So it was several hundred years after his death, in the first century AD, before statues of him began to appear. Clearly, this was not the era of mass merchandising. With the new Mahayanist revival, the Buddha principle was elevated to a higher level than ordinary man, and statues were used to encourage worship of these principles. It became an act of faith to produce, or pay others to produce, Buddha images, and these would be given to the local monks for spiritual merit. Early Buddha images were a composite of Indian Art and the Graeco-Roman fashion which influenced northern parts of the Indian sub-continent at that time. The earliest Buddha images, in this style called Gandharan, usually showed the Buddha with flowing hair tied in a bun, full robes across both shoulders, and sometimes a moustache. Some features became standard, including the long ear lobes, and the bun on top of his head. Gandharan Buddha Certain hand positions have come to represent the pose of the Buddha. Hands in the lap indicate meditation, and the hands in front of the chest, left under the right, show the Buddha teaching. One favourite position is that soon after the enlightenment, the right hand of the Buddha touches the ground, and he is seated cross-legged, which refers to Buddha calling the earth to witness his new state. Also a common pose, usually standing, is the left hand raised as if in greeting. This represents compassion and giving, and is also considered to offer blessing. The walking Buddha, usually with one hand at his side originated in Thailand about seven hundred years ago. The Buddha is often seated on a lotus throne. The lotus may be shown with eight petals, symbolic of the Noble Eightfold path. Lotus flowers were associated with purity and spiritual perfection, and are frequently used in Buddhist art. The deer is sometimes found around in the art form to represent the first sermon about the Four Noble Truths in the Deer Park. Some positions relate to legends about the Buddha, such as the seated position with the seven headed serpent who is said to have protected the Buddha during a great storm by forming a living shelter around his body. Interestingly, he is usually shown seated in the Western position, with legs down and hands in a thoughtful position. The death of the Buddha, his Parinirvana, is always shown with him lying on his right side, hand supporting his head. Although he was over eighty, he is still shown as a young man and clearly, meant to represent the passing, rather than to accurately depict it. While it is difficult to generalise, Chinese Buddhist art was influenced by Confucian thinking and showed a high degree of order. In Japan, the respect for nature and for fine, clear detail produced some very simple, yet profound works. Indian art often reflects the sensual and the supernatural and this shows also in the art of Tibet. In Buddhist countries such as Thailand, it is important to respect the Buddha image. The images should be set up off the floor, and the feet of those around the Buddha should never point towards the statue. Scarves may be offered to the Buddha image, food and fruit may be brought as offering. Special permission must be sought to take a Buddha out of Thailand. This is to stop the image becoming a forgotten tourist item, and not treated with the required respect. While particular Buddha statues in various countries are much loved and visited, most Buddhist groups will revere the Buddha mind, the teaching, rather than the image. Matriya Buddha in "witness the earth" position.

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4: Peaceful Buddha Images, Stock Photos & Vectors | Shutterstock

One of the most characteristic creations of Tibetan Buddhist art are the mandalas, diagrams of a "divine temple" made of a circle enclosing a square, the purpose of which is to help Buddhist devotees focus their attention through meditation and follow the path to the central image of the Buddha.

Both hands are held at chest level, with thumb and index fingers forming a circle. The right hand is turned palm in, while the left hand is turned palm out. As do most images of the Buddha, the Teaching Buddha depicts a particular moment in the life of the Buddha, namely, the first sermon the Buddha gave after reaching Enlightenment. This sermon was to a small group of disciples who had previously scorned the Buddha. This is a statue that is particularly appropriate for those who are either studying or are interested in learning more about spirituality. The phrase DharmaChakra is hard to translate. The word Dharma means "the way of righteousness," while the word Chakra is usually translated as the "Universe" or as the "cosmos. Right hand raised, facing outward, left hand dangles along left side of body. Standing with right foot behind, starting to raise off the ground. This statue is particular to the Sukhothai period in Thailand. It represents a time when the Buddha was returning to earth after delivering a sermon on the Dharma in Heaven, and was being accompanied by Lord Indra and Lord Brahma. Contemplation Buddha Contemplation Buddha Click To View Larger Image In this pose, Both arms of the Buddha lie flat against the chest, the palms of both hands facing in, with right arm on outside of left arm. The Contemplation Buddha signifies quiet determination and patient understanding. This statue signifies compassion and caring for all beings. Contrary to what many think, monks and the Buddha did NOT beg for food. Instead, they collected alms. Devout Buddhists in Asia will prepare and give food to monks in the morning on their alms rounds. A hermit unleashed a wall of water hoping to cause a flood, but the Buddha used the power generated from meditating to stop the water from flooding the area. The Buddha raised his right hand to draw attention to their own bickering and asked them what was ore important; water, or their family relations? This makes a "triangle" shape to the image; the knees making the two bottom points of the triangle shape, while the tip of the head makes the top point of the triangle. The significance is that a triangle shape is more "grounded" or has a more solid foundation. There are two positions for crossed legs, namely with the right leg resting above the left leg in the Single Lotus Position, or with both knees pointing downward and the ankles tucked on top of one another in the Double Lotus Position. But there are a few postures that are not seated with crossed legs, namely the Maitreya Buddha, where the "Buddha of the Future" sits in a chair Western style. Also, there is a story of how a monkey and an elephant visited to make offerings to the Buddha, and in those images he is depicted sitting in a chair as well. In Thailand each day of the week is associated with a particular Buddha pose, and "your" pose is determined by which day of the week you were born. The Thai zodiac puts as much importance on the day of the week - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. So everyone born on a Monday would have one special posture, while everyone born on a Thursday would have a different posture, etc. Thus, everyone in Thailand knows which day of the week they were born. If you have ever been to a Thai temple, then you might see an area where there are 8 not seven small Buddha statues set aside, often with small bowls next tot them where you can make merit by putting money into those bowls. The money is then used to help maintain the temple. You make merit by donating in the bowl of the statue that represents the day on which you were born. Why 8 instead of 7 when there are only 7 days in a week? The Buddha stands with arms crossed over the stomach, right hand over the left, with the back of the hands facing outward. The eyes are open and this is a pose of mental insight. The Protection Buddha Tuesday: The Buddha sitting with a Monkey and an Elephant, which are giving offerings to the Buddha. This is a rather unusual pose that many westerners may not have ever seen before. Both of these Boddhisattvas are important to the Buddhist cosmology, as they have forsaken the final step to Nirvana in order to help mankind reach enlightenment. But neither is, indeed, the historical Buddha. You are more likely to come across the female form of Kuan Yin in Chinese temples, while the male from of Avalokiteshvara is more commonly encountered in the Mahayana schools of Buddhism found in Nepal, Tibet, and India. Nick, since Ho Tai was famous for his Buddhist sermons and for his bag full of gifts, which he

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brought to children in order to reward them for coming to learn about the Dharma. Part of the reason Ho Tai is confused with the Buddha is because they both wear robes, and that in certain languages Thai, for instance the vernacular word for the Buddha and for Monks is the same, namely, the word "Phra. Ho Tai is often depicted in various forms as well, either with his arms above his head, reaching skyward, or sometimes holding a bag or knapsack over one shoulder. But no matter how he is depicted, he always has a happy face. The Happy Buddha is often but not always depicted with one or more of the following characteristics:

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5: Buddhist art - Wikipedia

Broadly speaking, the image of the Buddha emerges during the first few centuries CE in two major centers of Indian art during the Kushana period. One center of artistic production was the ancient region of Gandhara, an area that includes northwestern India as well as parts of present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Apart from appreciating the image, have you read the description on any nearby signboard, or listened to the religious person managing the site or to a guide? I am sure you might have observed the statue closely and found out other details to interpret the symbolism central to each statute. Buddha statues generally show a particular Mudra a Sanskrit word or hand gesture. Gestures are a form of non-verbal communication, of course, but Mudras also have an important spiritual significance. This Hub presents statues of Buddha in different Mudras exhibited in different parts of the world and explains the gestures and their significance. Buddhism is centuries old and rich in symbolism. There may be regional variations in the way sculptures in different parts of the world depict Mudras. Shown in the sitting meditation position only. In this Mudra the right hand points towards the Earth, hanging over the knee, palm inward. The left hand in this Mudra rests in the lap, palm upright. This gesture is also peculiar to the sitting position only. In this Mudra both the hands in the lap, with the back of the right hand resting on the palm of the left hand with fingers extended. In many statues the thumbs of both hands are shown touching at the tips, thus forming a mystic triangle. This gesture has been used by yogis for meditation and concentration. It also signifies attainment of spiritual perfection. In this Mudra, the right hand is generally raised to shoulder height with arm bent. The palm of the right hand faces outwards and the fingers are upright and joined. The left hand hangs downwards by the side of the body. This gesture was shown by Buddha immediately after attaining enlightenment. It symbolises strength and inner security. It is a gesture which instills a sense of fearlessness to others as well. In Japan this Mudra is shown with the middle finger slightly projected forward. In Thailand and Laos this Mudra is more common in the walking Buddha.

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6: Images of enlightenment: aniconic vs. iconic depictions of the Buddha in India – Smarthistory

The Trikaya doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism tells us that a Buddha manifests in three different ways. This allows a Buddha to simultaneously be one with the absolute while appearing in the relative world for the benefit of suffering beings. Understanding the Trikaya can clear up a lot of confusion.

Scholars generally deem Gautama a historical figure who passed along to his followers the foundations of Buddhist philosophy and practice. Prepared throughout his previous lives for this his final reincarnation, Gautama could walk and talk immediately following his birth. Troubled by what he saw, Gautama then took on the life of an ascetic for the next several years and searched for an answer to the suffering he had encountered. In his search for enlightenment, Gautama excelled in meditation and ascetism at one point it was said that he lived off a daily ration of one pea. Gautama eventually rejected the positions of his mentors, though, and concluded that strict self-denial did not free an individual from suffering. One night he sat under a bodhi tree determined not to leave until he found an answer to the perennial problems of suffering and death. Gautama resisted these assaults, however, and meditated throughout the night. Though some traditions differ as to the exact nature of his enlightenment that night, the biographers agree that Gautama achieved the status of a buddha; he eliminated the ignorance that trapped individuals in the suffering dukkha associated with the endless cycle of reincarnation. The theme of his teaching revolved around the Four Noble Truths. The first Noble Truth stipulated the reality of suffering. Put simply, suffering persists throughout all the various stages of life. As such, they inevitably experience suffering as they try to maintain a permanent hold on things that are constantly changing and impermanent. Finally, the fourth Noble Truth pointed to the path that brings about the cessation of suffering, often referred to as the Eightfold Path. The path includes 1 right view, 2 right intention, 3 right speech, 4 right conduct, 5 right livelihood, 6 right effort, 7 right mindfulness, and 8 right concentration. Often, the different parts of the Eightfold Path are grouped under three main headings: Generally, however, Buddhist meditation requires careful control of the process of breathing and discipline of the mind. The Buddha would continue to teach throughout northeastern India for the next forty-five years of his life, and he soon attracted a cadre of followers. Tradition indicates that the Buddha formed a magical double of himself, that he ascended to heaven to teach his mother who had died, and that he tamed a wild elephant. The Buddha also formed a monastic order of monks and nuns, though the Buddhist community sangha included laymen and laywomen as well. At age eighty, the Buddha died. Just prior to his death, the Buddha delivered one final message and lay down between two trees. Following this event, his followers cremated his body and distributed his relics to be enshrined in what are known as stupas. Centuries later, canonical collections of his teachings were created, such as the Tripitaka. These scriptures contain material directly attributed to the Buddha buddhavacana as well as authoritative commentaries. Devotees lavished gifts on relics associated with the Buddha and annually celebrated his birth, enlightenment, and entrance into nirvana.

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7: Who Was the Buddha? | The Buddhist Centre

Early images of the Buddha at Bharhut. Some of the earliest depictions of the Buddha reaching enlightenment appear as sculptural friezes on the exterior of sacred Buddhist monuments known as stupas, which Buddhist monks and nuns built as part of their monastic complexes (more on stupas here).

Spreading from India to Central and Southeast Asia, China, Korea, and Japan, Buddhism has played a central role in the spiritual, cultural, and general considerations. The clan name of the historical figure referred to as the Buddha whose life is known largely through legend was Gautama in Sanskrit or Gotama in Pali, and his given name was Siddhartha Sanskrit. The events of his life set forth in these texts cannot be regarded with confidence as historical, although his historical existence is accepted by scholars. He is said to have lived for 80 years, but there is considerable uncertainty concerning the date of his death. Scholarship in the 20th century limited this range considerably, with opinion generally divided between those who placed his death about bce and those who placed it as much as a century later.

Historical context The Buddha was born in Lumbini Rumin-dei, near Kapilavastu Kapilbastu on the northern edge of the Ganges River basin, an area on the periphery of the civilization of North India, in what is today southern Nepal. Scholars speculate that during the late Vedic period the peoples of the region were organized into tribal republics, ruled by a council of elders or an elected leader; the grand palaces described in the traditional accounts of the life of the Buddha are not evident among the archaeological remains. The central Ganges basin was organized into some 16 city-states, ruled by kings, often at war with each other. The rise of these cities of central India, with their courts and their commerce, brought social, political, and economic changes that are often identified as key factors in the rise of Buddhism and other religious movements of the 6th and 5th centuries bce. Buddhist texts identify a variety of itinerant teachers who attracted groups of disciples. Some of these taught forms of meditation, Yoga, and asceticism and set forth philosophical views, focusing often on the nature of the person and the question of whether human actions karma have future effects. Although the Buddha would become one of these teachers, Buddhists view him as quite different from the others. His place within the tradition, therefore, cannot be understood by focusing exclusively on the events of his life and times even to the extent that they are available. Instead, he must be viewed within the context of Buddhist theories of time and history. According to Buddhist doctrine, the universe is the product of karma, the law of the cause and effect of actions, according to which virtuous actions create pleasure in the future and nonvirtuous actions create pain. The beings of the universe are reborn without beginning in six realms: The actions of these beings create not only their individual experiences but the domains in which they dwell. The means of escape remains unknown until, over the course of millions of lifetimes, a person perfects himself, ultimately gaining the power to discover the path out of samsara and then compassionately revealing that path to the world. A person who has set out on the long journey to discover the path to freedom from suffering, and then to teach it to others, is called a bodhisattva. A person who has discovered that path, followed it to its end, and taught it to the world is called a buddha. Because buddhas appear so rarely over the course of time and because only they reveal the path to liberation moksha from suffering dukkha, the appearance of a buddha in the world is considered a momentous event in the history of the universe. The story of a particular buddha begins before his birth and extends beyond his death. It encompasses the millions of lives spent on the bodhisattva path before the achievement of buddhahood and the persistence of the buddha, in the form of both his teachings and his relics, after he has passed into nirvana. The historical Buddha is regarded as neither the first nor the last buddha to appear in the world. According to some traditions he is the 7th buddha; according to another he is the 25th; according to yet another he is the 4th. The traditional accounts of the events in the life of the Buddha must be considered from this perspective.

Sources of the life of the Buddha Accounts of the life of the Buddha appear in many forms. Perhaps the earliest are those found in the collections of sutras Pali: In the sutras, the Buddha recounts individual events in his life that occurred from the time that he renounced his life as a prince until he achieved enlightenment six years later. Several accounts of his enlightenment also appear in the sutras. While the sutras focus on the person of the Buddha his previous lives, his practice of austerities, his enlightenment, and his

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passage into nirvana , the vinaya literature tends to emphasize his career as a teacher and the conversion of his early disciples. Near the beginning of the Common Era, independent accounts of the life of the Buddha were composed. They do not recount his life from birth to death, often ending with his triumphant return to his native city of Kapilavastu Pali: Kapilavatthu , which is said to have taken place either one year or six years after his enlightenment. These accounts typically make frequent reference to events from the previous lives of the Buddha. Here, an event reminds the Buddha of an event in a past life. He relates that story in order to illustrate a moral maxim, and, returning to the present, he identifies various members of his audience as the present incarnations of characters in his past-life tale, with himself as the main character. The Jataka stories one Pali collection contains of them have remained among the most popular forms of Buddhist literature. They are the source of some 32 stone carvings at the 2nd-century bce stupa at Bharhut in northeastern Madhya Pradesh state; 15 stupa carvings depict the last life of the Buddha. Indeed, stone carvings in India provide an important source for identifying which events in the lives of the Buddha were considered most important by the community. Lives of the Buddha that trace events from his birth to his death appeared in the 2nd century ce. Texts such as the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya probably dating from the 4th or 5th century ce attempt to gather the many stories of the Buddha into a single chronological account. According to some, all past buddhas had left the life of the householder after observing the four sights, all had practiced austerities, all had achieved enlightenment at Bodh Gaya , all had preached in the deer park at Sarnath , and so on. The life of the Buddha was written and rewritten in India and across the Buddhist world, elements added and subtracted as necessary. Regions that Buddhism entered long after his death—such as Sri Lanka , Kashmir, and Burma now Myanmar —added narratives of his magical visitations to accounts of his life. No single version of the life of the Buddha would be accepted by all Buddhist traditions. For more than a century, scholars have focused on the life of the Buddha, with the earliest investigations attempting to isolate and identify historical elements amid the many legends. Because of the centuries that had passed between the actual life and the composition of what might be termed a full biography, most scholars abandoned this line of inquiry as unfruitful. Instead they began to study the processes—social, political, institutional, and doctrinal—responsible for the regional differences among the narratives of the Buddha. The various uses made of the life of the Buddha are another topic of interest. In short, the efforts of scholars have shifted from an attempt to derive authentic information about the life of the Buddha to an effort to trace stages in and the motivations for the development of his biography. It is important to reiterate that the motivation to create a single life of the Buddha, beginning with his previous births and ending with his passage into nirvana, occurred rather late in the history of Buddhism. Instead, the biographical tradition of the Buddha developed through the synthesis of a number of earlier and independent fragments. And biographies of the Buddha have continued to be composed over the centuries and around the world. During the modern period, for example, biographies have been written that seek to demythologize the Buddha and to emphasize his role in presaging modern ethical systems, social movements, or scientific discoveries. What follows is an account of the life of the Buddha that is well-known, yet synthetic , bringing together some of the more famous events from various accounts of his life, which often describe and interpret these events differently. Previous lives Many biographies of the Buddha begin not with his birth in his last lifetime but in a lifetime millions of years before, when he first made the vow to become a buddha. According to a well-known version, many aeons ago there lived a Brahman named in some accounts Sumedha, who realized that life is characterized by suffering and then set out to find a state beyond death. He retired to the mountains, where he became a hermit, practiced meditation, and gained yogic powers. While flying through the air one day, he noticed a great crowd around a teacher, whom Sumedha learned was the buddha Dipamkara. When he heard the word buddha he was overcome with joy. Sumedha reflected that were he to practice the teachings of Dipamkara he could free himself from future rebirth in that very lifetime. But he concluded that it would be better to delay his liberation in order to traverse the longer path to buddhahood; as a buddha he could lead others across the ocean of suffering to the farther shore. Dipamkara paused before Sumedha and predicted that many aeons hence this yogin with matted locks would become a buddha. Over the subsequent aeons, the bodhisattva would renew his vow in the presence of each of the buddhas who came after Dipamkara, before becoming the buddha

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Shakyamuni himself. Over the course of his lifetimes as a bodhisattva, he accumulated merit punya through the practice of 6 or 10 virtues. After his death as Prince Vessantara, he was born in the Tusita Heaven, whence he surveyed the world to locate the proper site of his final birth. Birth and early life He determined that he should be born the son of the king Shuddhodana of the Shakya clan, whose capital was Kapilavastu. Shortly thereafter, his mother, the queen Maha Maya, dreamed that a white elephant had entered her womb. Ten lunar months later, as she strolled in the garden of Lumbini, the child emerged from under her right arm. He was able to walk and talk immediately. A lotus flower blossomed under his foot at each step, and he announced that this would be his last lifetime. Seven agreed that he would become either a universal monarch chakravartin or a buddha; one astrologer said that there was no doubt, the child would become a buddha. As a young child, the prince was once left unattended during a festival. Later in the day he was discovered seated in meditation under a tree, whose shadow had remained motionless throughout the day to protect him from the sun. Chandra The prince enjoyed an opulent life; his father shielded him from exposure to the ills of the world, including old age, sickness, and death, and provided him with palaces for summer, winter, and the rainy season, as well as all manner of enjoyments including in some accounts 40, female attendants. At age 16 he married the beautiful princess Yashodhara. When the prince was 29, however, his life underwent a profound change. He asked to be taken on a ride through the city in his chariot. The king gave his permission but first had all the sick and old people removed from the route. One old man escaped notice. Not knowing what stood before him, the prince was told that this was an old man. He was informed, also, that this was not the only old man in the world; everyone—“the prince, his father, his wife, and his kinsmen”—would all one day grow old. The first trip was followed by three more excursions beyond the palace walls. On these trips he saw first a sick person, then a corpse being carried to the cremation ground, and finally a mendicant seated in meditation beneath a tree. Having been exposed to the various ills of human life, and the existence of those who seek a state beyond them, he asked the king for permission to leave the city and retire to the forest. The father offered his son anything if he would stay. The prince asked that his father ensure that he would never die, become ill, grow old, or lose his fortune. His father replied that he could not. The prince retired to his chambers, where he was entertained by beautiful women. Unmoved by the women, the prince resolved to go forth that night in search of a state beyond birth and death. In another version of the story, Rahula had not yet been born on the night of the departure from the palace. According to these sources, Rahula was born on the night that his father achieved buddhahood. The prince left Kapilavastu and the royal life behind and entered the forest, where he cut off his hair and exchanged his royal robes for the simple dress of a hunter. From that point on he ate whatever was placed in his begging bowl. Early in his wanderings he encountered Bimbisara, the king of Magadha and eventual patron of the Buddha, who, upon learning that the ascetic was a prince, asked him to share his kingdom. The prince declined but agreed to return when he had achieved enlightenment. Over the next six years, the prince studied meditation and learned to achieve deep states of blissful concentration. But he quickly matched the attainments of his teachers and concluded that despite their achievements, they would be reborn after their death. He next joined a group of five ascetics who had devoted themselves to the practice of extreme forms of self-mortification.

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8: Evolution of the Buddha Image

Nirmal C. Sinha, Buddharupa observation of the evolution of the Buddha image, Bulletin of Tibetology, Vol. , pp. External links [edit] Wikimedia Commons has media related to Statues of the Buddha.

Broadly speaking, the image of the Buddha emerges during the first few centuries CE in two major centers of Indian art during the Kushana period. One center of artistic production was the ancient region of Gandhara, an area that includes northwestern India as well as parts of present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. Gandharan images have a style that is reminiscent of Hellenistic sculpture, and artists in the region were certainly influenced by the presence of Hellenistic colonies, and the large-scale trade and exchange that occurred in this cultural crossroads. A second area of artistic production is associated with Mathura, a city that still stands to the south of Delhi. Here, artists developed a style that can be characterized as more indigenous, less concerned with naturalistic realism in the human form, and more with the symbolic qualities of the spiritual figure. Mathura artists created other kinds of religious imagery as well. It is probable that Buddhist imagery was influenced by the development of Hindu and Jain figures, and that various communities were developing images of devotional figures simultaneously. A very significant gap of several centuries exists between the lifetime of the historical Buddha, and the creation of the first surviving images of the Buddha in stone or any other medium. The first surviving Buddhist art in stone was actually created prior to images of the Buddha himself. During the Maurya period, in the reign of emperor Ashoka – BCE , significant monuments and other artworks in stone were commissioned, apparently for the first time. Although stone sculpture, such as large columns surmounted by images of lions and wheels, expressed Buddhist symbolism and motifs, there are no Buddha images from this period. Many scholars have speculated that an aniconic without idols period existed in Buddhist art, where there was a prohibition against depicting the actual Buddha, and various symbols substituted for an explicit anthropomorphic representation. Some scholars have interpreted narrative reliefs at early Buddhist monuments to illustrate early Buddhist processions or festivals, where aniconic symbols, rather than anthropomorphic symbols, represented the Buddha. Not all scholars accept these theories, however. It seems likely that various kinds of religious imagery, in the Buddhist, Hindu, and other contexts, were created in ephemeral materials before being created in stone. Indeed the great sophistication and high level of sculptural expertise expressed in Maurya stone sculpture implies that the sculptural tradition was already highly developed by this time. The imperial might and Buddhist inclinations of the emperor Ashoka may have been the first great instigators of a transition to large-scale stone sculpture in India. More than three hundred years later, in the Kushana era, a strong imperial ruler bringing various outside artistic and stylistic influences to the realm, seems to have contributed to further artistic developments and a hitherto unseen profusion of sculpture created in stone. We are not entirely sure how all Buddhist figures were used in ritual and worship. Buddhist images and sculptures originally adorned the complexes of stupas sacred mounds containing relics as well as monastic structures. Early Buddhist sites also incorporated indigenous imagery such as loving couples and fertility figures. Caves were hewn from rock in parts of India, creating spaces for worship rituals and community meetings, as well as monastic dwelling quarters. These rock-cut cave complexes became increasingly elaborate in terms of imagery and iconography, which was created in painting as well as carved from stone in situ. Laypersons contributed to small- and large-scale constructions as a means of acquiring merit. Votive images also developed for private use, and as souvenirs for pilgrims to sacred sites. The figure of the Buddha and attendant bodhisattvas, and other divine and semi-divine beings, became the objects of devotion themselves. Over time, the proliferation of great numbers of Buddhist images, in some cases explicitly created through mass production techniques, reflected beliefs in the meritorious repetition of various names and phrases. This distinguishes the image of the historical Buddha, the Buddha who lived on earth during this present period, from past, future, or cosmic buddhas, bodhisattvas, or other divine beings.

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