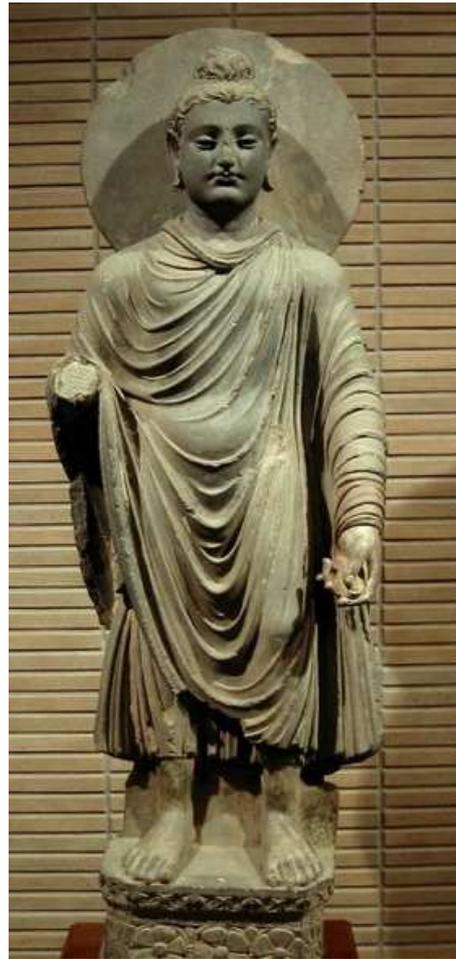


Vincent-Paul TOCCOLI

# THE BUDDHA REVISITED



*Bodhisattva Maitreya*

&

*Standing Bouddha*

*Afghanistan, 1er & 2ème siècles*

or

## *THE GENESIS OF A FICTION*

an essay on art and spirituality

*Translated from French by  
Philip Pierce*

???

"Stories do not belong to eternity  
"They belong to time  
"And out of time they grow...  
"It is in time  
"That stories, relived and redreamed  
"Become timeless...  
"Nations and people are largely the stories they feed themselves  
"If they tell themselves stories that are lies,  
"They will suffer the future consequences of those lies.  
"If they tell themselves stories that free their own truths  
"They will free their histories for future flowerings.

(Ben OKRI, *Birds of heaven*, 25, 15)

"Dans leur prétention à la sagesse,  
"Ils sont devenus fous,  
"Et ils ont changé la gloire du dieu incorruptible  
"Contre une représentation,  
"Simple image d'homme corruptible.

(St Paul, to the Romans, 1, 22-23)

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# INTRODUCTION

We need a great aesthetic history of Hellenism, which precisely would start at the very time, when the historians of Antiquity put an end to it: that would have happened, the day Augustus entered Alexandria of Egypt (30 BC). This history notwithstanding is very far to have been closed, on the contrary (WOODSTOCK 1996: 182 sq), especially for the traveler who raises his eyes upward to the vertical architectures of Pudong in Shanghai, of Wanchai in Hong Kong or Miniato-ku in Tokyo. And what to say in Beijing...The (uncompleted) periple of Alexander has disseminated as far as the Tigris river first, and beyond the vast Persian-Iranian desert, up to the Indus and the Amu-Darya (the famous Oxus of the Greeks) a "certain something" that surpassed him - however great he was -, of which he actually promoted himself as the ambassador - more or less consciously-, as the sewer and finally as the promoter and the propagandist. That something is a daimon, - the daimon of Hellenism, which certainly consists of "kaloskagatos" (The Beautiful and the Good together), the "enthousiamos" (The God in Oneself) and the "ananké" (The Fate).

The author does not identify himself with the "best critic" of WW.TARN, - whom his marvelous book " The Greeks in Bactria and India" is dedicated to, - but it may have been allowed a touch of scientific haughtiness to leak out, when, just by the last lines of his introduction (XXII-XXIII), he considers the "artistic material" of the Gandhara Art: those phenomena " are native arts which borrowed, and sometimes misapplied a certain modicum of Greek form and ornamentation. They furnish a subject of very great interest in it, but they have little to do with...the Greek spirit". And as if that peremptory prejudice of his was not enough, the Cambridge Professor feels the need of claiming assistance from Professor HERZFELD, who writes as an outmatch: " Only the most superficial features of Greek art are taken over; the essential ones are missed;... it neither really understands nor assimilates the spirit of Hellenism" (Archaeological History of Iran, 1934: 50 and 75, quoted by TARN 1951: XXIII). Beyond that condescension, and maybe thanks to it, the Professors both let appear with more strength those "great spirit" and «spirit of Hellenism " which are my quest indeed. TARN and HERZFELD will have more eulogistical commentaries for the productions of that Hellenistic art, which is the Gandhara Art, when it reached from the 1st century AD on the centers of Herat, Hadda and Fondukistan in Iran, or further above those of Ai Kanoum on the Amu Darya river, and of Tumcuk in the Tarim Basin.

That what is based upon historical facts is the following: at the very time of the fall of the last rulers of the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt, - whose Alexandria had been elevated to the symbolic flagship, - hardly thirty years after the fall of Athens and the defeat of the Lagids by Pompeius, it happened that , at the ultimate border of the ex-empire of Alexander, the last illegitimate graeco-bactrian descendants of the Seleucid dynasty were pushed off by the Barbarians, shifting down from the oases of the Taklamakan desert. No more Greek rule : the roman rule takes the place, and uninterested in spreading out beyond Mesopotamia, will conquer westward as far as the ocean border, from the fjords of Cambria down to the sands strands of Mauritania. Sure, the adventures of Alexander with his generals Lagos, Ptolemaeos and Seleucos comes to an end; but that what surpasses them, and will go on and in a very special manner ,both unexpected and mysterious, is the story the author wants tell you in the

following: an episode, heavy and rich of consequences, of the Hellenistic experience, which will survive its presumed fathers, because of its inextinguishable genius, brought to light one day on the Mediterranean rock of Crete and making any aesthetics feel itself as

la fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé (Racine)  
the daughter of Minos and Pasiphaé.

This essay was induced by three inspired meetings. The following is personal enough that the author may be permitted to speak in the first person... I was totally innocent in Gandhara matters, in Greek (-Iranian- Roman-) Buddhist art and in the FOUCHER and MARSHALL hypothesis, when I landed in Asia seven years ago. It was in Taipei (Taiwan ), some time later, that I saw a tiny little stucco head ( 5cm ) : at an art dealer ( a horrible word, but no deal, no art!), who smuggled now and then ( who never smuggled in that profession ?), gave me the hospitality as I was learning mandarin in town. He told me that it was a "Gandhara" of Afghanistan: "From Hadda!" he added. He saw me so much troubled and virgin that he exclaimed: «Just keep it! ». The tiny Hadda head is right now looking at me writing those lines in my study room at the Lumbini International Research Institute, where I took refuge in order to compose this essay.

Two years later, I spent All Saints in Beijing. I took the advantage of devoting some ten hours to the Buddhist grottoes of Yungang and traveled to Datong by the night train. Rain was waiting for me. With wet feet and quite alone, I was filing past the first caves, colored, charged, full with Indian reminiscences or too much sinisided: nothing attracted me particularly. Above all, I was trying to protect me from the cold rain and my "Guide Bleu" too, which was already in a bad state. I had been walking through the site for already two hours; I had "seen" the main things, and I was on the point of turning back. Just a last glimpse to the guide warned me not to miss, - at any price! - the big beheaded Buddha in cave number... I forgot! Well!...He was outlined against the deep grey sky: tall, standing, without head, his arm raised ( as if on the Agora or Forum squares) and the drapé of his himation or toga in a perfect fall. He looked as much Greek or roman as his face, thanks to its absence, imposed not any physiognomy. I was no more tired or annoyed: gone with the wind! From that moment on nothing counted any more: only me, the CAMUSian Mediterranean boy, contemplating a statue of Greek descendance, in the 6th century BC Buddhist caves of Yungang, at the Mongolian border! Which kind of emotion was mine, if not the fact that I belong to that cultural basin, which from the Pontus and Cyprus up to the Columns of Hercules, conceived and brought into the world and educated the "enfance de l'Art". And from there I could "see" Mycens, Athens and Delphi; Paestum, Segest and Agrigente; Ephesus, Palmyra and Dura-Europos... But I couldn't see yet all that what the following summers jealously kept for me, on all the Silk Roads, and their tributaries of the Chinese Turkistan and Central Asia...

The last meeting dates from last year. I was driving all over the Kinki peninsula, in South Japan, from the Zen Gardens of Kyoto, through the big temples of Nara, up to the Koya-san, where I spent three days and nights in one of the Shingun monasteries. This episode takes place some hours before the departure of my train Nara-Osaka-Koyasan. I was near to give up: my visits, - when I visit, - always are systematic: and I let me lead by my "esprit de système". Although exhausted by eight fulfilled days, I processed to that last discovering, the Shin Yakushi-ji, in the surrounding countryside of Nara. From the outside view, the main hall

is very conventional, although powerfully and firmly impressive. But inside, I immediately found out that the enormous tree trunks which bore the whole roof structure were arranged according to the pattern of the hypostylitic rows of the Greek temples! But something more was still to come... Considering my spontaneous interest and rapture, - what else! - the Abbot joined us, my guide and myself, and invited us to follow him. All excited I walked behind him, and we strolled across the closure up to a small pavilion, hidden among the tall trees of a park and hermetically closed. The keys had to be fetched up... The humid half-obscurely let guess the existence of two niches, covered with a sort of transparent gauze; behind the gauze curtain two statues were to be peered at : nature size! The Abbot drew the veil of the first niche, already enjoying the surprise we were to be granted with by him! It was a wooden Buddha, totally naked, with a quite convenient penis and a face à la Kukai (I remembered the Kokufu-ji). He was nearly drawing the second curtain, I intervened at my guide (and friend, Prof Dr Hideaki NAKAI, of the Universities of Kyoto and Nara, General Secretary of the Nara Nippon-French Association): " I am sure that the second statue is a wooden one too, that it has clothes on, is a little broader than the first one, but it is hollow because it serves as an envelop to the other one." Hideaki translated, and the face of the Abbot lit up in a smile of surprise, at the moment he drew the gauze away...Nara is situated at the nec plus ultra extremity of the Silk Road and of the Buddha Route, by the northern way, the Mahayana, through the Karakorum Highway, Central Asia, the Chinese Sinkiang and Gansu provinces, Xi'an (the ancient Chang'An, the capital of the Tang Dynasty), and the Korean kingdoms of Silla and Paekche (WOODSTOCK 1966: 184). At that moment, I am standing in front of a pharaonic rite, - a Ptolemaic, i.e. an Hellenistic one, - that a strolling artist, aware of that rite, applied at that place, on the rim of the Pacific, to the representation of the Buddha's Mahaparinirvana: he dared make the junction with the sarcophagus rites, which followed the embalming of Osiris'corpse by the care of his sister Isis.....some 15 000 kms away from Nara!

Western Marches of Iran, Mongolian Border, Heian culture: for the last six years I have been driving all over those roads, making stops in the various museums along the way. In all honesty, I traveled also the southern route, that of the Hinayana, through the sites of Anuradapura in Sri Lanka, of Pagan in Myanmar, of Angkor in Kampuchea, and of Borobudur in Java. Beyond the Gandhara Art and Buddhism itself, a question has been revealed that put me on the trail, without my knowing it, but that time succeeded in turning it perspectives: the question of an exchange, a transfer, and a trade. At one moment ( when ?), Buddhist people addressed a characteristic demand ( what and why ?) to an artist, a school of art, an atelier ( where and who were they ?) ; and those people negotiated a product, a merchandise, a piece of art ,- a suitable one,- the craftsman was able to make and we know with which success !

Which were the psycho-mental presuppositions that agitated the brains of the partners of the offer and the demand of that unique deal? The approach took place in a place which ever was a buffer zone, between that Indus tributary, the Sutlej river,- also called the Hyphosis or the Beas,- which Alexander refused to cross, and the superior course of that Mesopotamia, formed by the Ganges and the Jumna, up by the town of Saharanpur. On the Indus side: this is Taxila. On the Jumna-Ganges side: this is Mathura. For 300 years the lost children of Alexander have been multiplying cities, kingdoms and empires between the 28th and the 36th parallels : the last Greek king will fall just some years after Augustus took Alexandria of Egypt (c. 30 BC ). On their side, the Buddhists knew glorious hours under the Maurya King

Asoka (240 BC), then under the graeco-bactrian Menander (the Milinda of the Milindapanha (c.125-95 BC). Already two movements, two schools, two vehicles (Yana) were shaping themselves : the Maha (Big) and the (Hina), the first one nearer to the lay people, more prone to adaptations; the second one more "pure and hard", integrist, elitist, counting more upon the monks of the sangha and abandoning the lay people manage with their superstitious religiosity. The first ones will meet with the graeco-hellenistic artists: they are the Mahayanists, that will order statuettes, diptychs and triptychs, which they will bring with themselves on the roads of the Hindu Kush, Pamirs and Karakorum, for their mission work among the rich Tarim oasis, on both sides of the Taklamakan, up to Dunhuang and the capital of the Tang. The Abbots of the big Mahayanist monasteries of the Peschawar and Swat Valleys will order lots of standing statues and bas relieves to ornate stupas and convent buildings.

I have contemplated those statues, first in the Museums on their birth places: Saidu Sharif, Peschawar, Taxila; then in Lahore, Karachi, Dehli and Bombay; then in our great European museums which have collected the founds of Peillot at the Guimet in Paris, of Stein at the British Museum in London, and of von Lecoq at the Dahlem in Berlin. I have contemplated their photogenic reproductions too in the catalogues of the last world exhibitions of Paris, Vienna, Zurich, Tokyo or Fort Worth...The same questions ceaselessly recurred: what did the seekers exactly want? What did they explained to the local artists they were to engage? What did they want to see represented? ...As for the expatriate artists, what did they know of that Mahayanist Buddhism, they were to contribute to precise and reinforce? As Greeks of the borders of the oikouméné, from where did they get their skills: in the attic or Ionian provinces, in Alexandria of Egypt, in Palmyra or in Dura-Europos, at Seleucia on the Tigris, or at Balkh and at Ai Kanoum on the Oxus? And what about their graeco-hellenistic religion? Didn't their artistic symbolism assimilate all that what the Magna Graecia had drawn from the pharaonic Egypt, the mazdean Mesopotamia and the mithraic Iran? They may have even counted theoreticians among themselves...

Anyway the contract has been concluded and much more than respected: but what has been respected actually? I shall consider only the completed image. At that time ,- a few decades before the new era,- the historical Buddha, the Sakyamuni, the nomad of the gangetic open flat country, the pelerine of Vaisali, Rajaghra, Sarvasti and Samkasya, the Illuminated one of Bodh-Gaya, the preacher of Sarnat, the Siddhartha of Lumbini, the youngster of Kapilavastu, the Nivarna candidate of Kusinagara. That man ... what about him! For more than four centuries, councils, schools, texts, interpretations, legends and commentaries had already granted his figure with stylistic lines and significance: the command has been done of that unhistorical Buddha image. And with their own religious sense, their own capacity of transcendence, the graeco-hellenistic artists of that Pentapotamia (Punjab means the land of the five rivers: the Indus and its four tributaries) accepted and executed the command.

What did the meeting look like? Two religious mentalities chatted about religion...I wished I could have attended it, in the artist's atelier, when the three monks, sent by the monastery client, came for the order, then regularly for appreciation of the development state of the first statue, for possible interventions at such or such detail: and one morning they at last ere able to contemplate, standing in the sunshine, the original image of a cult granted such a long and vast posterity. Which was the artist's deposit into it? What did the monks find out at it? How far the graeco-hellenistic mark? Up to which grade the Buddhist tolerance?

If the image really is the word of the illiterates (John Damascene), it nevertheless is a fixed, complete, inalterable, sensible and material: present one! Of course, that Buddha image in the following will be multiplied and diversified in Gandhara, Tarim, China, Korea and Japan styles. Before hand however it must have been fashioned by hands - I mean one genius, - which was non Buddhist, non Indian, and who knows, on religious at all!

And what if the first Buddha image were after all nothing but a sublime misunderstanding, a providential incident, an aesthetic fiction... of the religious history of the ever triumphant Hellenism?!

And as WW.TARN says from the outset: «It may be well to begin with the statement of the plan of this book "(1951: XIX)

Yes, I really want to tell you a story, the story of the meeting between seekers of images (statues, icons, simulacres), reformist Buddhists, desiring to represent their already deified Master : the prince Siddhartha, Gautama from his mother, the Sage of the Sakya family (Sakyamuni), who is supposed to have reached Illumination ( the Bodhi), becoming the Buddha ( the Enlightened one), circa the end of the 6th century BC, near the village of Gaya, on the river Sona, a small tributary of the Ganges, south from Pataliputra ( to day Patna)... and a handful of expatriate Greeks or "sabra" ones, - the way the Israelis call those who were born on the land of Israel since the Great Return of 1947,- or other ones, strolling from the Aegean Sea and its numerous coasts up to the Land of the Five Rivers, sculptors, earning their living with their art.

The modern studies could localize and almost date that meeting with a certain probability. It would have happened somewhere in the North-Western part of India, West from the Indus, anyway, between Islamabad and the Peshawar and Swat Valleys, a region/ kingdom called Gandhara, where the rather illegitimate Graeco-bactrian royal dynasty is coming to an end, a territory at a time gained to Buddhist faith since the missionary campaigns of the emperor Asoka, from the Mauryan dynasty.

Et ceci se passait en des temps très anciens (Victor-Hugo)  
All this was happening in very ancient times

a few decades before the new era (c. 50 BC).

The reader is aware : this story actually is a kind of inquiry, an investigation about the genesis of such an adventure, that of an image, created by the mutual fecundation of symbolic and religious ideologies, at the limits of the influence fields of one culture/civilization- Hellenism,- on the one hand, and on the other hand, of another culture/civilization,- Indo-Buddhism, gangetic-brahmanism,- the latter on the point of giving birth to the new and powerful Kushan dynasty and to a religious schism with multiple consequences, among which the foundation of a new belief and accessories : first of all, the unique item of our research, the statue!

The problem is, dear reader, albeit the exchanges terms (partners and contract) may to a certain grade be identified, how to appreciate the exchange itself. From the offer and the demand, which came as first? We can imagine that it was not the matter of a not so significant statue, but a cult object, unseen under that form. Qualifying that statue as graeco-bouddhist is at a time too little and too much (FOUCHER).

How to lead my investigation? Noblesse oblige, I'll start establishing the making sense transgressions, operated by the ups and downs of original Buddhism into the pre-schismatic situation at the end of the ancient era: it will the Ganges side question.

Then we'll cross to the Indus side, in order to draw the parallel with the transformations, evolutions and adaptations, which the Greek presence was submitted to, from the Bactria down to India, where some kinglets and a few great monarchs reigned. It will constitute the historical background, in religious and cultural matters.

Thereafter we'll enter the psycho-mental analysis. The phylogenetic fonctionments must be questioned: which roles are the collective unconscious playing, when they choose their symbolic and sacred toys, when they dress up as this or that form, when they play hide-and-seek with what they decide to see and/or show, or to keep secret.

This is the moment of the meeting, the interview between a certain Hellenistic art (which type?) and certain stage of the religious Buddhist thought/mystic. How to outline the contact, the flagrant delict, the Tatort?

At the end we'll compose our report, as usual after inquiry, a protocol with all the data of the transfer and its diagnosis, establishing the congruence and/or the non congruence of the effects of such an event for the Buddhist Hellenistic forces and the Buddha posterity.

We'll start that reconnaissance mission, supplied with the experiences of our masters. We'll never forget those statements of Louis de LA VALLEE-POUSSIN (LVP 1 and 2) and Alfred FOUCHER, on one side: «There is no other land, so inclined to religious proliferation, as the Indian Aryan world of India...Nothing was borrowed by Indian, that was not immediately indianised"( LVP 1930: 242). " As a production of the Indian genius, Buddhism at a time is for us intelligible and unacceptable, near and far, same and disparate... How many and many things he has to learn and know, who desires to enter a religion in which he was not born" (FOUCHER 1987: 24, 156). On the other side, here is the statement of Isocrates (380 BC)." The name of Hellens is no more applied to the race, but to the mentality, the dianoa; and one calls no more Hellens the blood brothers, but rather those who share in our culture "(Panegyric 50, quoted by MEYER 1935: 20).

There we are: let's go!

# FIRST PART

## THE MAKING SENSE TRANSGRESSIONS

The Occident was born from a triple transgression. That of God first, who transgressed his quiet eternity, - a blue one, according to the French poet Paul Eluard, - in order to "create ex nihilo», outside of himself. The results were two more transgressions: the Angels', and the most beautiful of them all, Lucifer's (Light bearer), who transgressed his nature and didn't accept to serve anymore (non serviam); and man's at last, created after God's image, who transgressed the limits of his knowledge in order to become "like God" (sicut dei)... The achievements: the fall into time - arrogance - disobedience. Those three transgressions will fashion the human condition around three focuses: death (then sexuality); power (then violence); freedom (then art). That's the way the Occident tries to forge an ideology, able to make the unacceptable symbolically, i.e. mythologically, acceptable:

*Borné dans sa nature, infini dans ses vœux,  
L'homme est un dieu tombé qui se souvient des cieux!  
Imparfait ou déchu, l'homme est le grand mystère  
Dans la prison des sens enfermé sur la terre:  
Esclave, il sent un cœur né pour la liberté,  
Malheureux, il aspire à la félicité. (Lamartine )*  
By nature limited, by his vows unlimited,  
Man is a fallen god who remembers heaven  
He, however imperfect or fallen, is the great mystery,  
In the sensuous jail imprisoned on earth.  
A slave, he feels his heart, born for freedom;  
A needy, he longs to happiness.

Transgression plays like a lever with western culture: but only in its own linearity. Transgressing one's own culture, crossing to others' one, that means changing one's history, making no sense anymore inside the symbolic sphere of one's mythology.

Alexander refused transgressing, i.e. crossing the Sutlej river, the last one, and the most oriental of the five rivers of Penjab, the ultimate step beyond the Indus: India itself. He went back southwards, across the Makran desert, to his appointment with death, on his occidental way, as a Greek king and hero. Had he passed to the east, he would have been assimilated into an episode of the Ramayana or Mahabharata and entirely digested : Alexander would have been turned into an Indian or indianised hero, among the indianised foreign heroes. Unique in the west, he would be but one primus inter pares... for the best!

The same ambiguity likely played with Sakyamuni, when he had to choose his mission field. «If he actually died c. 477 BC at the start of Xerxes-Assuerus ' reign, he was contemporaneous with the Indian conquests of Cyrus the Great and Darius 1st (which spread over up to the 4th Punjab river - i.e. Hyphasis or Bias or Sutlej -, which the companions of

Alexander did not accept to cross...). Cheapened army and administration had completely colonized that White India. Had Sakyamuni gone northwestwards, he would have found himself hemmed in already rigidly outlined forms of civilizations: A prisoner of a social state and a mental environment, totally different ( Iranian dualism and mazdeism ) from those in which he will easily and successfully swim, he would have been for ever lost in history too! On the contrary, by crossing the Sadanira River (a Ganges tributary up to Patna) on his way to Vaicali, Sakyamuni definitely turned his back to the meat and wheat eaters and alcoholic liquor drinkers... Siddhartha's heart and spirit were oppositely inclined towards vegetarian and water drinkers of the vast rice field region, friends of abstinence, compassion and peace... and in metaphysics prone to nihilism by dint of having seen... the world all around vanishing like a fata morgana into the pale incandescence of a fire sun... Two very different worlds, two mind attitudes : to monism, substantialism, robust optimism of the first ones ( west from Indus ) were opposed point by point pluralism, phenomenism, resigned pessimism of the latter ( in the rice fields of the Ganges)...The Bodhisattva has already chose:... Eastwards... The confuse voice of the eastern non Aryan India". (FOUCHER 1987: 122, 124).

Alexander and Siddhartha made the decision not to transgress. Besides the Greeks will leave no trace in India, and Buddhism will not get over the northeastern marches of Iran; it will go along the three others: the northern one beyond the Himalayas, the eastern one through the kingdom of Myanmar, and the southern one via Sri Lanka.

Only the statue will remain, as a testimony of the double transgression, in that place of all the possible, between Indus and Ganges, in the Buddhist Hellenistic airlock, at the border of two worlds, moreover, of two eras which from then on divide the universal time.

## FIRST SECTION

### ON THE GANGES SIDE

Let us see among which environment Prince Siddhartha Gautama's thought was born, as he was becoming the Sakyamuni. We shall then be able to draw the main lines of that early Buddhism, on which he has been living during the 40 years he dedicated to its propagation. After a light glimpse into Mauryan King Asoka's Buddhism, - a Constantine long before he existed, - we'll land to our interest terrain, i.e. the preparation of the Buddhist schism, just before the Christian era. We try to outline the toppling moment, after circa five centuries of a traditional functionment.

A reality must be clearly perceived at the start: Hinduism is more a way of life than a creed. All Hindu has first of all to be a Hindu. This proceeds from the innermost feeling that India as a collectivity of multiple elements constitutes a world apart, inassimilable to any other... Situated at the borders of the Central, Western, Mongolian and Oceanic Asias, the Hindu world shares by means of multiple correlations in the so diverse a life of the Scythic, Chinese, Indonesian and Malaysian sectors. Therefore India marks at a time a link with the Asian Mediterranean world, and an essential break between that world and that of the Far East, and perhaps even that of the Pacific. The history of India, which for its greater part is the history of the covetousnesses aroused by its rich valleys, mainly consists of the struggle, undertaken by foreign invading elements against anterior ethnical strata (AUTRAN 1946: 381, 382). That way of life has its roots in the fear for calamity: first misfortune to live, to age and to die; all that intensified by the belief in the never ending rebirth cycle and consequently in misfortune. All the sects are one to declare life as a burden, a total evil. Therefore all of them tend to getting freed from terrestrial existence, rebirth cycle, Samsara. All of them are convinced that there is a means to escape, a hail way that consists in getting innate non science and reaching the highest truth. But which is the highest truth? That's the point of going asunder! The same way the Indians may accept the most tragic situations in their epics, under the condition that all ends well, so they accept all kinds of misfortune in life, but in the same time, they believe it is possible to get rid of those nuisances which are existence and reincarnation: just ask the master! And the offer is proportionate to the demand! (KERN 1989: 11).

It can be said that at any stage of their history, the people of the subcontinent have revealed as beings more by religion fashioned than by any kind of religious creed. Here speaks the strong individuality of the Hindu genius which marks with its own seal whatever he makes its own, und transforms into complete assimilation any foreign element in its reach. If India was never Hellenized, it does not mean that it has not received anything from the Hellenistic ferment, so strong in the anterior Asia : but that ferment rose nowhere else so strongly as in that northwestern region, a land for all nations,- like the Galilaea of the biblical prophets (cf. AUTRAN 1946 : 389 ; LVP 1930 : 249 ).

## CHAP.1: THE BUDDHISM OF THE BUDDHA.

Let us begin with the following statement: that is Siddhartha's atheism, at least agnosticism and indifference, as soon as he completed his "education" (cf FOUCHER 1987: 133): «Nothing is more conforming to the old Buddhist ideas than this keeping-the-gods-out-of-way... The early community, albeit it did not deny the existence of the traditional deities, was convinced in their perfect inutility. For the first Buddhists the salvation of humanity uniquely was man's business...It is to the influence of the popular ideas about legends that we owe that excessive mythological deployment that the hagiographical texts have taken pleasure in boring us with" (FOUCHER 1987: 119). We'll keep that statement: all is said, about the following drift which will lead to schism.

Early Buddhism is first of all: Dharma. And even uniquely Dharma: it is the truth, discovered by any Buddha at the time of his Illumination, and preached all around during his public ministry, by themselves and their disciples." Beyond the canonical texts, which were transmitted in Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese recensions, some authors postulate the existence of a "primitive» or precanonical Buddhism that they try to reconstruct "(LAMOTTE 1976: 25, note 1: with 7 references.) But which personal place does the Buddha hold himself, in relationship with that Law that he is supposed to have found? What is his teaching made of?

First the Buddha has withdrawn: he is a visionary. He neither (a) god, nor a celestial spirit (Gandharva), nor a demon, nor even a human being. He acquired science, he has no master: he is «nirvanised". He is victorious, but he only shows the way: he cannot more. Truth, i.e. the origin of all and their destruction, exists by itself, and it works independantly of Buddha's presence or absence. Sakyamuni himself sticks to it in order to honor, respect and serve it. «The Law be your island and your help: look for no other one" (DIGHA II 100).

In the Preaching at Benares (the Dharmacakrapravartanasutra: the sutra of the setting in motion of the wheel), we find the four Holy Truths (azyasatya). Between the two extremes, which are a life of pleasure and a life of mortification, the Buddha proposes a via media, which leads to Illumination and Nirvana: CONZE (1977: 17 sq) qualifies that way with three characteristics: pragmatic, dialectic and psychological. Pragmatic:

- all attachment (upadana skandha ) is suffering, and suffering is the essential fact of the human existence;
- the cause of it is the desire : of pleasure, existing, impermanence; the value of a thought must in consequence be appreciated at that what we can do thank to it, at the quality coming out of it.
- in order to cancel suffering, the desire must be extinguished, because whatever we may say is false from the very fact that we say it.
- the way to the target is eight folded: purifying faith, will, speech, action, existence means, application of memory and meditation; the sacred doctrine is a medicine, first of all.

Then dialectic, i.e. kind of logic:

- if man thinks of something in a correct and deep way, man comes to contradictions, i.e. views that however annihilate one another.
- by vanquishing thought man can free contradictions that then turn into paradoxes.

- at that moment the spread of the unlimited space of truth (the Absolute) opens by itself. At last psychological: meditation definitely is the main means of salvation; by meditating upon the mental processes, one can exercise one's control upon them. So there is an operative relation between metaphysics and psychology.

As for the famous «sequence of the causes», let's ask FOUCHER (1987: 163-170) to help us follow the very special logic of it, with the recommendation of LAMOTTE (1976: 36, note 35): "western interpretation, particularly remarkable! » Which is that demonstration?

- 1- Suffering can be summarized in two words: aging and death.
- 2- Aging and dying suppose being born.
- 3- Being born supposes conception and gestation (bhava).
- 4- No conception without coupling.
- 5- Coupling is provoked by carnal desire (trishna).
- 6- Desire is awoken through perception/sensation (vedana).
- 7- Perception/sensation supposes contact between senses and their objects.
- 8- Contact gets as opportunities the 6 senses (the external five and the internal "manas").
- 9- The 6 senses constitute the "person"(name and form).
- 10- Albeit impermanent the person gets some conscience of his ego.
- 11- That conscience comes from "samskara" (the coefficient of our heredity/predestination).
- 12- Those predispositions exist because there is no knowledge of them: it is the "unknowability" of our origins and ending.

And what about the noble eight folded path that leads to the suppression of suffering, - that puts an end to the «sequence of the causes», - it is composed with three elements:

- 1- Morality (sila): i.e. conscious and intentional abstention of any sin of the body and of the voice, sometimes of thought: to avoid anything that can shade others.
- 2- Concentration (samadhi): i.e. fixation of thought on to one point, absence of distraction and peace of mind.
- 3- Wisdom (prajna) or penetrating sight (vipasyana): it produces the four fruits of the way and accomplishes Nivarna. For Sakyamuni, this is not a superficial gnosis, but the capture of the three general characteristics ( samanalaksyana ) of all things which are : transitory ( anitya), painful (duhkha), unsubstantial (anatman).

So, the Law, according to Sakyamuni, is a matter for morals and ethics, rather than for philosophy and metaphysics: It tries in no way to solve the enigmas coming from the human mind but intends only to help man across the ocean of suffering. About the rest, the Buddha says no word: it is a matter apart (avyakrtavastu). He is pledged to no school, but he fights no system; his aim is healing more than teaching. It is called "intentional teaching» (samdhabhasya), addressed to the spirit and uninterested in striking imagination through magic. This is perhaps the reason why the holy and simple truths preached by Sakyamuni will resist time wearing and scholastic development of Maha- and Hinayana.

Third Jewel (ratna) of the Buddhist refuge, - the others two are the Buddha himself and the Dharma, the Good Law, - the monk community, the sangha, which also was founded by Sakyamuni, author of a doctrine of salvation. The sangha comprises four congregations ( parisad ) : the betel monks ( bikhsu ) and the nuns ( bikhsuni ), the lay men ( upasaka ), and the lay women ( upasika ). Sakyamuni,- this will have a heavy consequence upon the following Buddhism, and starting at his death,- left the sangha without neither a master nor a

hierarchy : everything ought to be based only upon the personal thought process, that what everybody has acknowledged, seen and understood by himself. The only admitted precedence was that of seniority, calculated at the ordination date. Yet less wanted Sakyamuni to give the whole community a spiritual leader." When I am dead, be your own island, your own refuge for yourself « (Digha II 100)." The Law I preached, the Discipline I gave you will be your master after my death" (Digha II 154). The lay congregation (upasaka and upasika) will play in the history as important a role as that of the monks (bikhsu and bikhsuni). The

upasaka tends to Paradise, a good reincarnation in the world of the gods or in that of men. He does not go the eight folded path that leads to Nivarna, but the practice of the five virtues : faith ( sradda), morality ( sila ), donation ( tyaga), learning ( sruta ) and wisdom ( prajna). Two more practices are especially incumbent to them and are considered as special forms of donation: the cult (puja) and adoration (bhakti), - the latter will play a big role in the formation of Mahayana and the cult of the statue. At the disposal of those, wanting to learn more completely, a progressive catechism eventually was constituted (anupurvika), and even, in case of need and as an illustration for their lessons, the monks painted in the vestibules of the monasteries, some images of the Circle of the Transmigrations (samsaramandala) (cf FOUCHER 1987: 354 fig.1).

A last concept must be elucidated. at a time subtle and potentially rich. I choose CONZE (1997: 147 sq) as a guide into that labyrinth, so much his pedagogic maestria turns clear what may be obscure to the novice that I am. The notion of vacuity, emptiness: it is what is situated right in the middle, between affirmation and negation, existence and non- existence, eternity and annihilation: it can't be the object of any defined creed. It is inaccessible, and if man might reach to it, man could not recognize it, because it has no distinctive marks. Therefore it is called: the- fact-of -being -so, because the reality is to be taken as it is, without overtaxing it with any concept. Therefore in the emptiness, there is no obtention neither no-obtention, because nobody knows whether he's got it or not. Vacuity is not instructed to support a theory (affirmation) against others (non-affirmation), but to get rid of all theories. It is the non-difference between yes and no, because truth escapes from us if we say " it is " or if we say " it is not ", but it holds together somewhere between both. The person who lives in vacuity has no attitude, neither positive nor negative as regards nothing and never sticks to whatever that is different from him nor to none else. That one is «omniscient ", in the same meaning that he is looking for the way to the extinction of the ego: not to fall into an everlasting dreamless sleep, but at a time» to wake up" and to "know" (that is the meaning of the root "budh" in Sanskrit). As for the "omniscience", its virtue precisely consists in that I (for example) have not the slight desire of it. It is pure contradiction: my aim must be attractive for me, if not I would never try to get to it; but it equally must be unattractive for me, because otherwise I would try to get to it. So the "omniscience" and I are unable to meet together: were I no more I, all may happen to me! To do all and to be aware of doing whatever. To think all and to be aware of nothing. To struggle for all, and to be satisfied with reaching to nothing: this is the miracle to perform to get rid of ourselves. (LVP 2 1935: 333). I must confess to the reader, actually my past unreal wish: to attend one day the meeting of Prince Siddhartha with the Caballero Inigo Lopez de Loyola, in the cave of Manrese or somewhere under the Bodhi tree: the holy indifference of the Spiritual Exercises resounded in me, six years ago, the same way as to day the Buddhist holy vacuity. The whole Spanish Golden Century ( El Siglo de Oro) speaks about it with san Juan de la Cruz and Santa Teresa de Avila: there are such coincidences, at a distance of 2000 years: from -500 to + 1500 .

After Buddha's death and mahaparivirvana, his disciples inherited an immense task. Granted no written testament, neither doctrinal nor disciplinarian, they must fix his teachings. How was the sangha going to manage in order to proceed legitimately to the composition of that revelation, without any kind of magisterial authority? Mahakasyapa was the man, who with his closest disciples, on behalf of their status of arhats, convoked the synod of Rajaghra and devoted themselves to recitation and quotation from memory, to perform the constitution of an oral canon, that although rigorous and uncompromising could not nevertheless establish itself for all their colleagues, especially among the monks still in the state of student ( saiksa) or profane ( prthagjana), or also some lay faithful ( upasaka) and, but later, a few scholars (bahusruta): the latter resolutely undertook the revision of the oral canon, expurgating and complementing it. All that provoked the break of the early sangha into two main branches: the «sthavirian" one (fideist) and the "mahasamghika" one (reformist, democratic and more open), which will promote the Mahayanist religiosity: those latter events happen under Asoka (NAKAMURA 1989: 100).

## CHAP. 2: STATE OF BUDDHISM UNDER THE LAST MAURYAS

Sakyamuni's teachings were almost few and his "word" enshrined inside the sutras actually is a late creation of the posterior scholastic. For about two centuries after the Nivarna, Buddhism knew no spectacular success, confined in the state of Magadha and some places. Thanks to the emperor Asoka of Avanti. The achievement of the monks was the compilation of their Master's words into the local dialects in usage: Maghadi, Pali and Sanskrit: their work helped to fix the main lines of the Dharma (the Doctrine) and the Vinaya (the Discipline). The initiative came from a group of arhats, trying to monopolize for themselves the religious teaching: but they awkwardly behaved when claiming for themselves alone the right to nirvana. They so estranged all the others' sympathy. The discontent was to last a long time before bursting.

Thanks to the Emperor Asoka, Buddhism could come to daylight and the missionaries went everywhere around with the top imperial servants, bearers of the Dharma edicts: pillars and carved rocks. Actually under Asoka Buddhism appears like a wholly moralistic doctrine, not particularly interested in special dogmas nor abstract theories, little embarrassed with scholastic or monastic elements, not inclined to insisting upon the differences that part it from the surrounding religions... It is a Dharma religion, a moralistic one, the way to heaven and nirvana, and not a Buddhism of Abhidharma, refinement of metaphysical dharma: it is too a Buddhism ignoring "views and opinions" (drshti) and condemning them all..., disliking philosophical speculations and truths. Of course Asoka reveres the Buddha too, the man who the Buddha was, that what remains of the Buddha, i.e. relics and holy places (LVP 1930: 125, 140). If the reader wants to know Asoka's use and reduction of the early doctrine, he can refer to LAMOTTE (1976: 249-255) and NAMAKURA (1989: 75). Opportunely at the same time, the propagandists must change their target and address the mass rather than the elite: there were more conversions than vocations. (This fact is more than a simple statement; it developed Buddhism into a religion.)

Nevertheless, the Good Law proceeded on and on from Himalaya down to Deccan and from Gandhara to Champa, provoking the birth of the Middle Indian School of sculpture ( Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Sanci and Amaravati) and the launching of the cave architecture.

But which are the causes that stage by stage,- according to a drift certainly unnoticed by the going on generations,- made doctrine and discipline slide up to that mental diving board where both hopped and skipped a while before actually jumping into the immemorial waters of religion? One can better and better understand that the iconolatry(i.e. image cult) of the Buddha,- beyond the artistic event that it means,- was to assume the character of a sociological evidence und to found because of that the symbolic locus of one transgression : the passage from an-iconism ( non-representation ) to iconism ( representation ) of the sacred figure ( having until that moment solo-representation withdrawn ) will turn into the reference point in space and time of the buddhist schism, already on its way for c. one century and a half. But let's cut out no stop and proceed in our (hi) story from Asoka (c.-250) to the Christian era. Then we'll dissect the big religious monk/lay quarrel, in embryo from the very time of the sangha foundation. What actually do the laypeople want exactly: the answer to that question is to determine the sequence of the next events? We'll have to allude a religious

stream, "visnuism", appeared c. 3rd century BC, in the region of Mathura, on the Jumna River: because the Mahayana will borrow it some important devotion forms. That will permit us at last to dare define that new-styled Buddhism that together with the era change will be granted a new blossoming.

The remarkable event was the great fear that the reign of Pusyamitra (187-151 BC), - at least at the beginning, - inspired: as from a Brahmanic origin and the general in chief of the last Maurya, he founded the Sunga dynasty. He re-established the ancient Vedic liturgy and governed with the support of the Brahmins. Did he use persecution against the Buddhists? That is confirmed by an old persistent Buddhist tradition, shared in by all the schools. Independently from the reality of the facts, the Buddhists were no more granted the royal favors ( remember Asoka) fulfilled by the Mauryas, but on the contrary scared by the Yavana (last graeco-bactrian kings ) and Saka ( the Scythes : we come soon to them ) weapon concert on their side of the Indus(i.e. west ) : they fell into panic and behaved consequently.

Effectively the Scythian invasion was considered by the Buddhists as one of the precursory signs of the Dharma suppression (-90):" When the Saka Kingdom is destroyed, the earth will be a desert"(Yugapurana V 124-730). That fear was vain. The Scythes were to be humanized by Hellenizing: administration, coinage, seleucidic calendar, artistic conceptions (important). Sirkap/Taxila (the capital of Gandhara) was rebuilt after the typically Greek chequered pattern, with acropolis and agora, temple, the latter more Iranian and Zoroastrian than Greek indeed (Jandial). Of course with time the imitation of the Greek models was condemned to be perverted down to decadence ( infra ) , because of the Parthian blocus ( northeastern Iran) preventing all renewal : the indigenization became a general process. All considered the Saka attitude regards Buddhism could be qualified tolerant and benevolent: re-establishing, restoring and founding (cf LAMOTTE 1976: 542-543).

With the arrival of the Palahva nothing changed. Saka and Palahva both were of Scythian origin. The Palahva had been the masters of Iran since -247 and they gave themselves as the heirs of the Achaemenidian and Seleucidic Mesopotamia. One strong influence touched the minds , - and the Reformist Buddhists in particular, - that of the prestige granted to the almost divine sovereign : the king bears the tiara ( the popes have been keeping it into the 20th century !), takes the title of Theos ( God ) or Theopater ( God the Father ), and after his death is turned into the object of a cult with temples and statues ( what else will the Mahayanists do ?). Greek keeps on as official language until -50 and the kings called themselves «Philhellenes" (infra); the ruling class reads and speaks Greek. So in those passage zones from one world to another world, the Palahvas-Parthians became the true rivals of the Romans. Their religion, however, still remains obscure: do they adore the natural phenomena, render a cult to the sun and the moon? The Iranian people kept faithful to the mazdean triad (Ahuramazda, Mithra, Anahita), the cult of Anahita spreading over and over.

The same as the Sakas, the Palahvas shew themselves perfectly tolerant ( Gondopharnes 19-45 AD even received the title of Savior - trāta- which is to be read on his coins ). Nevertheless in their immense majority the Saka-Palahvas attracted by Buddhism were not prepared to assume and to understand the message of Sakyamuni. The Buddhist propagandists then must adapt themselves. The time is flown away of the pure and hard message, the progressive catechesis, disputing and quibbling! For the adorers of fire, to the devotees of Anahita, they had to restrict themselves to inculcating a spirit, to initiating to the

essentials through most simple means: stances and catechism to learn by heart. The stances were to take on a magic power and to rise to the rank of a Buddhist creed, if permitted:

All Dharma come from one cause  
Of all the Predestinated says the cause

He also says the suppression of it  
Such is the doctrine of the great sramana. (Vinaya Pali 40)

Avoid sin, practice good  
Purify thought: so teach Buddhas. (Digha ii 49)

In the Northwest, the Sarvastidin- the sect that refused to take part to the synod of Ceylon and had already made secession under Asoka c.-250,- inaugurated for the foreigners a true apostolate means the stances, and the Mahayanists will take it over for themselves, above all the mnemotechnical developments of Aracapana ( the five first letters of a scian or khotanese alphabet of the Scythians and Parthians, being each of them the beginning of a word or a phrase and exposing a creed article of faith under a compact form), in order to inculcate their adepts the fundamental thesis of Vacuity/Emptiness of all Dharmas : Anutpanna, Rajas, Paramartha, Cyavana, Naman ( Pancavimsati, ed.N.Dutt 212 ).

What is to be well noted before going on is that with the Saka-Palahva dynasties, Buddhism, wide open to all sorts of influences, takes a quick way towards Mahayana. From outside will a messianic stream come (cf infra: Baghava), strong enough to imperceptibly transform Maitreya and Ajita, -two obscure disciples of Sakyamuni, - into one Buddha-to-be (and we can easily guess that Amitabha, the most notorious among the Buddhas of the Great Vehicle, God of Light, Splendor and Eternal Life, reigning on the Western Paradise, - sunset light of the mahaparinirvana - is but the Buddhist and Hindu replica of an Iranian solar god! Time is up...).

From the very beginning of the sangha affair, the lay people had felt themselves frustrated. And the question of their respective rights was asked very soon. Above all, that important one of their access to nirvana. Read which answer they received from the then theoreticians of Buddhism (Majjhina I 493; Samyutta V 134, 244). «The same way the Ganges leans, bends and flows to the ocean, so the sangha of Gautama, upasaka as well as bikhsu, leans, bends and flows to the nirvana." But the crucial point is to know whether the lay (upasaka) may accede to the sanctity arhat state, the fourth and ultimate fruit of religious life. Even the Buddha himself refused to take position, so much difficult this seems to be in it, and still more for those who live in the world. The triumph of the lay aspirations will be sanctioned by the substitution of the ideal of personal sanctity (of the arhat), up to a new altruistic one: the thought of Illumination (bodhisattva), associated with the desire of the supreme and perfect Illumination (anuttarasamyaksambodhi) and directed towards the good and the happiness of all creatures. The future Mahayanist therefore enters the path of the Bodhisattva (cf infra), willingly delaying his own access to nirvana to secure, through the more and more lucid and benevolent practice of perfections (paramita), the happiness of all creatures and doing on his salvation work: this carrier is open to everybody without exception.

Actually the lay people claimed for a god, where the monks looked for a master! The mass people are more pious than enlightened (admirable LAMOTTE 1976: 707 sq): they had nothing to do with a dead model, whose only rests (savita) can be revered. They needed a living god, and even a god- superior- to- the- gods ( devatideva ) who goes on saving them, predicting future, and whose cult (puja) might be something else than a simple commemoration (anusmrti). That state of mind will influence some late productions of the Tipitaka Pali, and then clearly appear in the hybrid and Sanskrit post-canonical literature.

Here we are: still one step...

The Buddha from now on is presented as an extraordinary being, «ornated with the thirty two marks of the Great Man (the Son of Man), with his body radiant with eighty undermarks, haloed with a fathom large brilliance (Transfiguration) .... seducing all ways (the most beautiful among man's children) « (Avadanasataka, among other texts). Here are all the indications for the future conceptors of Gandhara...The Buddha is a living miracle, no more the lover of solitude; on the contrary, he is the incarnated science, omnipotence and mercy: a prophet and a seer. All is ready for the legend to be created: the spectacular is on the way! Whom will the scenario be entrusted to, in those times when western and eastern hegemonic fortunes are arising and falling down? To prevent that great invention, - which means at a time a great hope and idea, - from vanishing away, for lack of support, monks and lay tacitly are one on a compromise. Arhat and prthagjana (religious and profane) were better off than the Hebrews in the Desert of the Golden Calf during the exodus at the foot of the Sinai (Exodus 32, 1.4b.6). They had not to search into the animal collection of the pharaonic pantheon, but found out the most beautiful figure, ever conceived, thought, and performed by the most aesthetically religious men of that time: actually may it be archaic, classical or Hellenistic, the Apollo figure is the most beautiful ever of man, propulsing himself into luminous and smiling immortality. The northwestern Indians decided to fetch the Greeks of the Indus rather than their compatriots of the Ganges-Jumna: Gandhara versus Mathura... (I am just anticipating a little, but it would be unwholesome not to still tell a little more). So: something must not have pleased in the latter, or something must have fascinated in the first ones. Or: if they anyhow must change, they should have chosen the biggest change. They intuitively steered to the radical alterity of such an exotic model, that they were allowed, - if they were naive! - to definitely cut off with the innumerable mythology of all the multisecular Indias and do an original work. But what's bred in the bone comes out in the flesh! Then came the entangled hotchpotch of the Bodhisattvas first, followed by the multiple deities of the triple world (that of Desire, that of Subtle Material and that of Immaterial)! Why? Were they not satisfied, - those Reformist Buddhists, - with their turning into god their godless master (betraying him in good faith!)? It appears that the religious mentality is very complex, and in India more than elsewhere. The deification of the Sakyamuni, become the Buddha, and his apotheosis up to the rank of God-superior-to-the-gods did not fulfill the inextinguishable thirst of their religious aspirations. In spite of the first one, they needed a second fiction, a total one, with mythology, hagiography, and cult : adhering to the doctrine of the Buddha ought not to divert the new believers from their ancestral cults, nor from unseen ones like the cults of Maitreya ( The benevolent Unvanquished ), the Buddha-to-be, the true replica of the Iranian god Mithra,- Sol Invictus,- who let himself drift in the heart of the great stream of messianic hope, called to spread all over the whole Orient, at the very end of the Christian era. (For information only: the Manichaeon and Uigur texts achieved the following performance, make the "Mithra Invictus, Jesus Son of God and Maitreya Unvanquished" melt

together!). From that cult precisely came the Buddhism of pure devotion (bakhti: come soon), a true "monotheism" (in the Indian way, never forget!), which reincarnation and nirvana vanished on and on from, but where the only means of salvation is from now on the divine grace, attentive and efficient.

With the Sakyamuni of before the Bodhi, Maitreya will be the most represented by the graeco-buddhist school of Gandhara: how full of noble beauty! TISSOT ( 1985 : fig. 103-183, 205-233: plates xviii-xix, xxiii-xxiv, xxvii-xxxiv, text 86-94 ) superbly took pleasure in the "defense and illustration " of that "jeune premier" of new-styled Buddhism : the famous Mahayana, where the dashing Bodhisattva ( Charming Prince à la Kushan ), with his devastating sex-appeal, will appear as Prince of Light, Comforter receiving the confession of the sins, Guide of the souls after death, Inspirer and Supporter of the Law masters in their doubts and crises of discouragement... Isn't it the most magnificent fiction, at which the Buddhists, passionately fond of humanity and the Indo-Greeks, genially touched by the daimon of plastic art mutually outmatched and fecunded! It is the Hellenistic-Mahayanist Art, more precise than graeco-buddhist! In my sense!

LAMOTTE, - whom I shamelessly draw my inspiration from, - ends his chapter on Maitreya (1976: 775-788), and his marvelous survey by the same way), with that nostalgic and bittersweet question:" What's still in common between that maitreyan mysticism and the cold realism of the Sage of Kapilavastu? The Muni who taught:

All accumulations end in ruin  
All elevations move near fall  
Unions resolve apart  
Life leads to death»

Let's plot our position: the growing performances of the propaganda brought with them the turning of Buddhism, from a philosophic-mystic message it early was, into a true religion, possessing a god (more precisely a deified Buddha), a pantheon, some saints, a mythology, and a cult. The scholars of the monasteries missed the necessary authority to resist the doctrinal and disciplinarian innovations. Nevertheless they seemed to have used enough cleverness to orientate the stream and maintain safe the essentials of Sakyamuni's gospel, while partially conforming to the new ideas, where the Buddhism of the Mahayana eventually sprang from.

In the Northwest the communities Sarvastivadin (the schismatics of the Ceylon synod -250) and of Mahasamghika (the schismatics of the Rajaghra synod, quick after Buddha's nirvana) both also ceaselessly must treat with the innovative streams. Pushed forward by the popular feeling, they were obliged to insist again and again on following:

- the attributes of the transcendent Buddha;
- the performances of his carrier as a Bodhisattva;
- the rank to give the lesser gods;
- the importance of the external practices;
- the legality of cult,

all questions of religious matter, - in the meaning of "religion", - more than of spiritual matter: far away from the philosophic elaboration of the doctrine, this is the matter of the Abhidharma.

The cultual manifestations and ceremonies too were growing, at the same speed as popular piety. But,- note please,- still no question of images neither of the Buddha nor of the Bodhisattvas, that the ancient Middle Indian school of sculpture went on avoiding to represent under their human features and as a solo statue. The cult was but a stupa and bhodhitree one.

While the sects continued their quarrels and the early Buddhism was turning into a popular religion, in the neighborhood of Mathura, on the Jumna, a danger was rising, the visnuit danger, that meant a real peril and was a long time underevaluated by the Buddhists, too busy with their domestic problems. Actually, in the country of Mathura, some populations, always on the quest for the beyond, had begun deifying their heroes and sages, by identifying them (nothing gets lost in religious matters!) with the ancient Vedic deity Vishnu. They were the Baghavata, the "Adorers of the Lord»: the 9th Sunga sovereign even took the name of Bhaga. The evidence is abundant and undisputable about them. Deeply rooted into the Mahabharata (XII 339, 73). The visnuism develops for its heroes one total devotion (bhakti) from the side of its sectators (cf infra). The "bhagavata" adept turns away from the external world in order to collect his thoughts and find in himself god's presence. That sublime catch is conceived like an equation of the soul with the god, which allows to see oneself into every being and to see all beings into oneself. Vishnu helps the devotee with his grace ( prasada ), takes care of the world and incarnates himself if necessary to save : those divine "raids" (avatara ) are unpredictable : one of them precisely was that of Krsna, from the tribe of the Yadava, and born in Mathura.

For the first time Buddhism was confronted with a living theist doctrine, putting in precise terms the problems of god and soul, and of their mutual relationships. All problems, according to Sakyamuni, qualified as "matter apart" (avyakravastu): his sons are suddenly forced and constrained to (re-)examine the situation. Man sees how that Hindu theism will use its influence on the Mahayanists: via Bhakti and Bodhisattva. Let's us have a look at them.

The Bakhti, first. And let's call CONZE (1997: 165-167) for help to show us into it. The laypeople incapable of wisdom (prajaparamita) needs faith: there is the path of the bakhti. But both lead to the same target. The hard path of rigorous wisdom, in which one exercises by oneself, was no more practicable for many, if not for the majority, even among the monks. In those conditions, the (easier) path of faith was the only one the people still could go. The bakhti had been taking more and more importance for over 400 years in India; during the 1st century BC, it will be much reinforced. What is the bakhti? It is a devotion, -personal, loving, - to deities, - adored and conceived under human forms. Just before spending some time with the six notations of that catalogue, two points must be precised. First: the Baghava. Rather than a sect, concerned with cultivating its own differences from other sects, must have been the expression of a bakhti, the importance of which is to be rightly found in the deep mark its adepts granted the whole late visnuism and consequently the Mahayana (RENOU 1947-53: 1306). Second: the bakhti cult is accessible to everybody, women included; it possesses a feature of universalism and everybody may experience one's "dominant emotion" and practice one's "form of devotion": above all, it is a devotion of the heart (RENOU 1947-53: 1354-1357). Back to CONZE's catalogue!

The bakhti first consists in participating, then adoring: participating in the deity. The "baghavant" is the Lord who lets himself participate. The bakhti consequently is a proceeding of the deity towards its devotee. The grace (prasada) is function of the self donation that the devotee will do to the Baghavant. That personal feature of the relationship of the devotee to the Lord is well favored by an anthropomorphic god: the bakhti will more and more speed up towards religious emotion and demonstration, while very much reasoned in the beginnings. The Bhagavant is benevolent to everybody, without any exception, and particularly to those who look for him: the bakhta (the devotee) gets a sort of right to the benevolence of the Bhagavant: he is not a god who creates man but saves him. The bakhti is an essentially theistic attitude, with strong monotheistic tendencies, that will be never granted a total self affirmation and expression, because they are repugnant to the Indian spirit...although the god of the bakhti be not entirely transcendent (RENOU 1947-53: 1343, 1345, 1348, 1347). All philosophical, mono- or pantheistic belief is irrelevant to the bakhti : it is an exalted feeling of affection or slavery, an oft pathological fervor that succeeds in eventually forcing the doors of the apotheosis which the purification of the worship corresponds to. It quick turns into the only means of salvation: the liturgical act, the knowledge, the professional mysticism are powerless. It is likely to be the necessary complement of a religion arrived up to a certain grade of monotheism: it will be all the more lively since that monotheism is a product less directly coming out of the speculation and has as its object a god with a more concrete and human nature, immediately conceived or rather imagined, under the most precise form and with the most specific attributes. The bakhti has pushed towards idolatry: the more precise the god, the much more confounded it is with its own image. Sometimes it really is difficult to say whether the god or the idole is the object of the devotion (LVP 2: 239,326; cf also BISWAS 1987: 163 and BUSSAGLI 1996: 333).

The bakhti likely invaded Mahayanist Buddhism circa the time of the last Mauryas. Let's call it after CONZE: the Buddhism of faith: universal salvation, help to the less gifted, dharma turned accessible if not intelligible, to everybody equal opportunity of salvation.

Saviors are back (again)! Let's find them out! The new objects of the bakhti were some Buddhas:

- Akshobhya (The Unshakeable)
  - Amitabha (The Infinite Light)
  - Bhaishajyaguru (The Healer)
- and some bodhisattvas (RENOU 1947-53:2336-2339; KERN 1989: 65):
- Maitreya (The Unvanquished Buddha-to-be)
  - Avalokitesvara (The Benevolent, The Compassionate)
  - Manjusri (The Wisdom).

Let's stop a while to outline the symbolic meaning of the Bodhisattva whose carrier will develop itself in Mahayana. The Bodhisattva is a buddh-to-be, one being which desires to become a Buddha. The innovation by Mahayana consists in having elaborated that notion into an ideal worth for everyone, compared the Bodhisattva with the Arhat with disfavor for the latter and proclaimed that all ought imitate the Bodhisattva not the Arhat. The idealistic human being, -the Buddhist target, -was not in the eyes of the Mahayanists, the Arhat centered into himself, cold, narrow minded, but the universally compassionate Bodhisattva, who abandoned the world, but not the beings in it. The Bodhisattva is composed of both the contradictory forces of wisdom and compassion. In his wisdom he sees no person; in his

compassion he is resolute to save them. His capability to combine those contradictory behaviors is the font of his grandeur and capacity to save the others and himself. The Bodhisattva has well produced the thought of Illumination (bodhicitta), by vowing to one day reach the supreme and perfect Illumination (anuttarasamyaksambodhi), in sight of happiness for all creatures.

Until that time, the doctrine of "self confidence" stated that no one could be saved by another one. The Buddhism of Faith will support the transfer of merit, the presence in each of us of Buddha nature, and the intervention of a big number of saviors.

Let's never forget that it is the social pressure, at least as much as all the latent implications of the "self extinction" problematics, which provoked the development of new specific features, after more than 400 years of Buddhist practice. That took a concrete form exactly during that last century of the ancient era, when from one end to the other end of the influence sphere of Hellenism, big political, cultural and religious upheavals were to shake up history one more time. The choice of the Bodhisattva by Mahayana is not neutral, neither is the bakhti tendency, that replaces the self confidence, or better that replaces the faith in oneself by the faith in somebody else. For which reason ever, - humility, failure conscience, angst, help need, resignation, realism, weakness, human kindness or whatever..., - Buddhists at the end of the Mauryas «leave it to "one savior, another one, to a god. They want a religion: rites and cult: all what the Sakyamuni had relativized and put on side, if not rejected. And the climax of it all is the following: that Other One, that Savior, that God will precisely be He himself!

Fiction outmatches reality. Or is it the inverse? The Hellenistic logistics will be in charge for the job. At the very time when the Greek presence is vanishing from Alexandria of Egypt to Taxila,- from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus,-, here is, like with Aladdin: the genius springs out of the Wonder Lamp, at the service of a new religious adventure! Make way for the sculptors, please!

My pen gets carried away, dear reader! The cause is that the original Buddhism really no more is what it used to be! (that it should have kept on? i.e. an atheistic humanism, a philosophy of necessity, and a stoical phenomenology of extinction...?) The lay people won as usual. And so it happened : that genial idea of "living without existing and dying without never being born again" will quite simply let itself become perverted into a religion and rummage into all the Vedic, Brahmanic, Jainic, Visnuit Indias and all the Mycenaean, Pharaonic, Mithraic, Mazdean, Zoroastrian Europes...any food to quench,- one more time,- its inextinguishable craving for idols!

Then what about that triumphant Mahayanist? More ambitious and at a time easier, because much less demanding from human nature, and much more promising regards the devotees and the philosophers. To man indeed it is more natural to abandon himself to the elans of piety or thought, than conquer a cold self control of his conscious and unconscious psychism in order to dissolve its forces of impulsion: now the ways of feeling and speculation are wide open (RENOU 1947-53: 2324-2326; BISWAS 1987: 90).

The innovations of Mahayana were not directed to the discipline: that of the ancient schools currently was adopted. Only communitarian and begging life was not the unique and perfect model anymore, above all in the circles inclined to practicing devotion and rites, using symbolic and magical formulas and developing yoga experiences (RENOU 1947-53: 2229).

What about the doctrine? In buddhology and mythology Buddhas are benefactor gods, sitting enthroned in paradises and showing themselves here below via simulacres that are Buddha men. In eschatology, the nirvana doctrine is forgotten: the faithful tend to being born again in the paradise of one Buddha or becoming Buddhas themselves (LVP 2 1935: 341).

I would like to put an end to that (too long...) development with two plain charts, in order to fix some ideas, in a schematic indeed, but concise way:

- NAKAMURA ( 1989 : 152-154 ) on the base of the epigraphic research, applied to the Chinese recensions by his colleague M.SHIZUTANI ( Bukkyo Shigaku, Vol XIV, n 1, Sept 1968, pp32-49 ) proposes the following datation :

Proto - MAHAYANA	in its INCIPIENT stage	:	100 -1	BC
"	"	"	DEVELOPPED»:	1 -100 AD
Early	"	"	INCIPIENT	" : 50 -100 AD
"	"	"	DEVELOPPED»	: 150 - 250 AD

His commentary : " The first appearance of the Bodhisattva idea must be placed between the beginning of the 1st century BC and the middle of the 1st century AD, i.e. after Bharhut sculptures and before the early Mahayana scriptures."

- FOUCHER ( 1987 : 328-329 ), used to build great historical and geographical balances, develops the following categorization, via which both rivers turn into the symbolical axes of the cultural religious growth of Buddhism during the five centuries preceding Year O :

INDUS	GANGES
Love for the neighbor	The Good Law
Maitri (univers.Benevolence)	Apradama (strict observance)
Bakhta (affectuous devotion)	Arhat (self salvation)
Bodhisattvas and Buddhas	THE Buddha

No comment!

## SECOND SECTION

### ON THE INDUS SIDE

«Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas!" the Ecclesiast (or Qohelet) exclaims! » Which interest does man find in all the pain he takes under the sun?" (Qo 1, 2-3). I can't help, dear reader presenting you, «in prime time", with the first lines of the prolog:" An age comes, an age goes, and the earth still holds. The sun rises and the sun sets... The wind blows southwards, and turns northwards, it urns on and on, and the wind blows forwards. All rivers flow to the sea and the sea never fills up; and rivers flow on and on to their terms. All is boring! Nobody can say that his eyes have not seen enough or ears not heard their content. Was one day was, that will be; what was one day made, that will be made again. There is nothing new under the sun. Let something be that can be said about: Come, that's new! That already was in the past. Only no memory of old will remain; no more than afterwards, no memory will remain of the future (1, 4-12).

On the threshold of the second section, turning back to the three Alexandrian centuries between Nile and Ganges (more than 10 cities were founded, among which one "ultimate": Alexandria Eskaté, the nowadays Kokand or Khojend, in Ferghana, Uzbekistan, on the Syr Darya river), it gives me vertigo, and I must confess it, I feel somehow sad and anguished together (MEYER 1925: 43)." The history of India would have for the essentials remained as it has been, had the Greeks not existed! »: TARN's cold statement (TARN 1951: 376).

Indeed: vanity of vanities, all is but vanity! What's the use of that unheard military expedition: the conquered earth holds as it has ever, the sun has not gone else bound, the wind like Alexander blew southwards (Egypt), turned northwards (Ferghana), on and on (Hindu Kush, Punjab, Makran Desert), and resumed its way forwards (back to Babylon). With the slight difference that the wind does go on blowing...The generals inherited the empire and founded dynasties: the Lagids, the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. The latter, masters of the Marches of Orient, multiplied kingdoms and empires, from oriental Iran up to the superior course of Syr Darya and the southern Tarim Basin, and down to Gujarat and Deccan. As Greeks, then as Graeco-Bactrians, at last as Indo-Greeks : the children of Alexander have conquered, built, destroyed, reigned, lost , won again....territories and cities. Maybe up to nowadays only one thousandth has been excavated of that what unlimited surfaces still keep secret under the desert dunes they have been swallowed into: by changing their courses, rivers change that of history too! Where have they passed, beneath which sands did they sink down: Alexandria of Margiana (Merv/ Mari, Turkmenistan), Alexandria Prophtasia (Birjand, Kerman Desert, Iran), Alexandria of Arachosia (Kandahar, Afghanistan), Alexandria of Caucasus (Hocan Carikär, Hindu Kush, Afghanistan): Alexander had even baptized one city on the Hydaspes (the second tributary of Punjab, after the Indus main stream) by his horse's name: Bouképhala (bull's head)!

It is remarkable that neither town nor city has been founded eastwards of Punjab, beyond his "cavalry polis ". The non-transgression has been respected... Just as AUTRAN (1946: 381) reminded us that for the people beyond Indus, "life is more a way of life than a creed ", WOODSTOCK (1966: 186) warned never to forget that " the ancient Greeks were by nature

an undogmatic people: they carried with them culture but a creed. They set out to inquire, not to convert". «Way of life, culture»: strictly speaking indeed, India at the time of Alexander, only consisted of the old Persian satrapy of the Indus Valley; but soon the term used to be applied to all that what the Greeks discovered of the sub-continent: to the point that the term oft spread up to even including Southern Afghanistan, where Alexander found people of Indian race and Asoka should reign down to Kandahar. The then name of Arachosia was "White India"; the Khyber Pass was no border, and the activities of the Greek kings and graeco-buddhist artists will spread from the Northwestern part of Indus over the whole territory of Southern Afghanistan, among people who kept being of Indian race, up to the Iranian hegemony in the Middle Ages: the state of the thing must change with the Muslim invasion (WOODSTOCK 1966: 14-15). It has always been talking of Indies, plural: we still do that. For example : the Company of the East Indies ( in French "La Compagnie des Indes" ); we have inherited the West Indies ( in French "Les Antilles" ), since the Columbian mistake, that caused the name of Cartagena de Indias (Northern Columbia ) too.

If the Indies were plural, it means that there was no proper India. Even after the Timurid raid from Samarqand down to Aurangabad, the mogul empire has from the very start on functioned according to a perpetual diastolic and systolic scheme. Remember the 1947 Independence, which should actually unite all the inhabitants of the territories confined by Afghanistan, Nepal, Myanmar and the Ocean: it was but a fiction that immediately burst into Pakistan, Bangla Desh, and ...India, with multiple border conflicts. What remains still relevant is the "way of life" which actually is identical over all those areas where the borders are rather spatial religious (Hinduism/ Islam).

What was the Greek culture, the target of which was "to enquire not to convert"? It remained nothing that anyhow might be distinctly qualified as Greek, after the first half of the first century AD! The cities, when not yet destroyed, had become, circa the end of the first century AD, Indian from any point of view, what does not mean that some people might have still understood Greek. Anyway, in the time of Kanishka (78 AD), both Greek education and classical Greek had vanished from India. Hellenization, in the proper meaning of the word, - i.e. the adoption of Greek culture as one's own, - does not seem to have happened as oft as it might be believed. Both populations (Indian and Greek) simply lived side by side in good terms. Had the terms not been good, the Greeks couldn't have stayed as long and there would have been no Gandhara school of art... (cf TARN 1951: 352-355; 376). Although the Scottish professor uses a perpetually apodictic pen, the screeching of which resounds definitively, his statement at the turning point of the two eras is unanswerable and uncontestable, regarding "the Indies" or India, all the territory situated beyond Punjab and eastwards

But regarding Punjab itself, let it be said again, that already at the time of Alexander, it was the less Hindu Indian among the provinces of India. One could find there lots of foreigners, recent immigrants, but henceforth natives (LVP 1 1930: 11). And FOUCHER ( quoted by LVP 1 1930 : 238) rounds up with his usual humor : " All things considered, after the propagation of Buddhism and the Hellenic conquest, nothing was changed in Gandhara, but a little quantity of Greeks and a big quantity of monks on top of all !".

"... only no memory of old will remain; no more than afterwards no memory will remain for the future" (Qo 1, 12)

After that rather romantic emotion, I confess, back to more self control! That what precedes had no other aim than to properly line out the territory of the following historical considerations: they touch India but westwards from the Indus included, i.e. those Indians living in that Northwestern India; up to the North, in that Mesopotamia between Syr and Amu Darya; left, in the Marches of the Northwestern Afghanistan and down to the South, in Kandahar. I would like to call that ensemble: The Outer India!

Two points must concentrate our attention: the dynastic philhellenism and the properly Hellenistic influence. Not too long...

### CHAP.3: PERMANENCE OF THE DYNASTIC PHILHELLENISM (From the Graeco-Bactrians to the Scythian-Parthans)

With the reader's permission (!), I first situate myself at the very place where the baton must be handed on, the border of time, in the year 0 that not exists! Because one fact is to be stated: the chronology is a black hole. From 57 BC to 50 AD, - from the conquest of Taxila, capital of Gandhara, by the Sakas (the Scythians) to the reign of Gondopharnes (the great Kushan before Kanishka) - no record! Even the great Louis de La Vallée-Poussin (the famous LVP of my quotations) sees nothing, although he is THE man who has read all about all, regarding whatever published on the matter!

Communications with the Mediterranean and Greek worlds are cut off. Nothing to hope from over there. The towns, the "polis" that then prevailed, are turning (back) into oasis among a population with foreign speech and feelings. In vain the people look towards the West, begging for a help restoring the old order...The art degenerates too...and the few still performed pieces witness that limp style, totally deprived of any original virtue. (cf MEYER 1925 64).

How much distressed this time must have been, that only one "vox clamans in deserto"(a voice shouting in the desert) still comes to our own day!

Back to the event sequence: let's join Alexander again along the distance.

After the conquest of the Achaemenid Empire, he invades India (the Outer one) in 326 BC. He meets with some resistance around the Swat valley, near Charsadda and elsewhere. Conquering Taxila was easy. Five years later (321 BC): retreat! Exit Alexander...

From 326 BC on, the Northwest is absorbed by the first great outer-Indian empire: the Mauryas (326-187 BC). It is very interesting to state by the way that the Indian tradition is mute regarding the event: it shows out the mental distance in the self comprehension (the Selbstverständlichkeit of the Germans) that could separate the Indians between themselves. The Greek reports speak of a treaty between the Indian emperor and one of Alexander's generals, Seleucus, who inherits the oriental conquests but loses the territories of the Southern Hindu Kush.

We already met with Asoka (272-232 BC), the most illustrious of the Mauryas: his pillar-edicts, written in local Indian dialect and kharoshti (in Manserah and Shahbazgarhi), in Aramaic (in Axial), in Aramaic and Greek (in Kanawha), and in Aramaic (in Laghman) witness the spread of the empire where he himself strolled as a missionary of the Buddhist Dharma.

In 187 BC the Sungas replaced the Mauryas, invading from the North, but in the mean time (it is important), already from 250 BC, the Greek power had been spreading from Bactria on the Oxus (Greek name of the Amu Darya) southbound (i.e. towards Gandhara). It is the time when the Parthans start rising. The Parthans actually are the Greek settlers of Alexander (usually called Graeco-Bactrians by the historians). They had preserved their independence,

against any vague impulse of the Seleucids, the oriental successors of Alexander, to reconquer them.

In 130 BC the Graeco-Bactrians lose Bactria on their turn and are forced to settle more southwards from the Hindu Kush, in the Indian cultured regions of eastern Afghanistan and Punjab: they then were called Indo-Greeks!

The latter are the most important in that affair of statue which impelled this investigation. They are the Parthans, from Northeastern Iran, turned into Greek colonists by Alexander, managing to keep free from the Seleucids and founding the Bactrian kingdom on the Oxus (nowadays Southern Uzbekistan): they then deserved the name of Graeco-Bactrians. Pushed off by an invasion coming down from still more north, they must displace to settle in that Outer India (our inquiry field) to receive the last name of Indo-Greeks. Thus: Irano-Parthans turned into Graeco-Bactrians turned into Indo-Greeks! (I repeat myself: but it is as much for me as for you, dear reader).

Those very clever people created an indo-Greek double-legend coinage (after the Indian value), while the only Greek-legend graeco-bactrian one (after the attic-metropolitan value) went on circulating in the first territories under Greek rule.

The Greek rule knew dynastic conflicts and breaks, but its political history remains uncertain, by lack of literary or epigraphic documents: except Menander (c.150 BC), the famous Melinda of the Buddhist treatise (and his capital Sialkot, near Taxila) and Antialkidas (capital: Taxila, end of the 2nd century BC). One thing seems sure: the Greek rule kept holding in those regions, and in Gandhara in particular, up to 57 BC when, in Gandhara especially and through the whole western Punjab, the rule passed to the Sakas, then to the Parthans of Eastern Iran and at last to the Kushans (come down from Khotan, in the desert of Southern Taklamakan, in the Chinese Sinkiang). But the Greek influence definitively vanished out only at the turn of the Christian era.

To well line out the exact period of the inquiry, we have to turn back some years up to 90 BC. It is the Saka rule, the Scythians, pushed out of Central Asia by the tribes Yue Zhi : those Sakas appear not only in Taxila, west from Indus, but also in Mathura, on the Jumna, i.e. right in Northern India, as well as in Gujarat, i.e. down to the Indian Ocean. It is the first time that one territory under one jurisdiction and rule spreads both sides of Indus and Punjab: Outer and Inner Indias! That made so much sense that as the Sakas conquered Taxila, Azes 1st acceded to the throne and created an Indian era, that of Vikrama ( 57 BC).

It is at that exact moment that all turns confuse in the chronology. Azes 1st 's successors were Azilizes and Azes 2nd, and suddenly we "find" the "Eastern Parthans" ( apparently Irano-Parthans, remained in the Eastern Marches of Iran, below the Karakum and Kyzikum Deserts, preferring not to go with their likes up to the middle course of the Oxus/Amu Darya). They also seem to have been independent from the Arsacids, the national dynasty of the Parthian Iran.

One can understand why the situation keeps scheming: at a time when some Indo-Greeks of irano-parthian origin, mixed with Seleucidic Greeks, meet non only with Outer but also Inner Indians, Buddhism, which has been seething for contestation for more than 100 years and

whose schism is just waiting for opportunity to be consummated, will soon be enabled to give concrete expression into stone to one fiction, speculatively built with so much care...

We'll stop here with the chronology: further is out of our matter. Nevertheless, to omit no data at all, just some words about the Kushans who with Gondopharnes likely are ruling over Gandhara from 50 AD. Even the datation of Kanishka (78 AD) is problematic and divided the scholars, because it affects a lot those of the Gandharan pieces of art. The Kushans (the Guishuang of the Chinese sources) had been expelled from Western China and had occupied Bactria. The 1st Kushan conqueror of Gandhara was identified in the person of the king Kujula Kadphises, after the coinage (an imitation of the last Indo-Greek king Hermaeus). At that time, the Kushan Empire included Matura (on the Jumna), Kausambi (on a small tributary of the Ganges); westwards and northwards, through Gandhara and Afghanistan, it spread up to Ai-Kanum and Central Asia.

Were those dynasties philhellene beyond the coinage declarations? What I told demonstrates that their graecity or their Hellenism was claimed anyway! To put an end to that historical exposition, here are two witnesses: the one of an historian, the other one of an archaeologist. «One can only catch a brief glimpse, MEYER (1925: 43) says, of the men floods of Greek settlement, who rushed into the newly conquered territories. The only nowadays example would be the waves of the 19th century European emigration towards the Americas. The only difference is the then lack of any sort of preparation...". The Bactrian nobles, says STAVISKIJ (1986: 27), who in the past were serving the interests if not of the Achaemenids themselves, at least of their empire, got nearer to the Greek rulers during the last years of Alexander's lifetime and at the time of the Diadocan struggles for power (i.e. well after Alexander's death): carrying on the idea proclaimed by the Macedonian Conqueror of the unification of the Hellenes and Asians". Further on, MEYER (1925: 51) develops the settling of the veterans who decided to remain on the place, Macedonians above all, and other allied of the Greeks, enlisted as mercenaries into Alexander's armies. Those military colonies constituted multiple municipes but without urban rights near the Greek polis.

Maybe are you reading with a map besides : in that crescent, formed by the nowadays cities of Tashkent ( Uzbekistan), Kabul ( Afghanistan) and Lahore ( Pakistan ), via the Valleys and the Passes of the Hindu Kush, the Pamirs and the Karakorum, invaders and invaded, winning one day, vanquished another day,... have been moving along for 300 years, mixing blood and ideas and speaking the Greek koiné, embellished with Aramaic and karoshti, on the lips of two worlds whose ultimate word was a statue!

## CHAP.4: AN APPROACH TO THE GRAECO-HELLENISTIC INFLUENCE

What is an influence, if not the action exerted or the effect produced by one person or one reality in general, - be it material or spiritual, - upon another person or reality, - be it material or spiritual too. The matter is to pass from a sphere of exercise to another sphere of exercise: that is the proper definition of the transgression. Actually, to be complete the title of the chapter should induce to interaction and interactivity: from the graeco-hellenistic sphere upon the Indo-Buddhist sphere, and vice versa. Transgressions, - it can be stated from their consequences, - are never unilateral. Greeks and Indians have mingled with so many ethnic groups, forced to move along and along inside and outside the crescent I precedently delimited, by the multiple invaders! They must learn so many languages and dialects, hear so many stories, legends, epics! They must attend, - by obligation or friendship- so many cult forms, ceremonies, religious feasts! Their graecity and their indignity were no more exactly those of their respective metropolises!

«The domain of the Greeks, at the doors of India, - be it graeco-bactrian or Indo-Greek, - implicates a complex cultural presence: it is composed of an ensemble of culturally integrated phenomena, stemming from the Yavanas (Ionians), from their way to graft themselves onto diverse and heterogeneous cultural funds on the one hand, and on the other hand from the very broad contribution of western models and techniques. All those elements shape one geographic zone- strongly Hellenized and marked by adaptations and concessions, - which turns into a Hellenistic filter for the men coming down from the North towards the Indian sunshine. The function of that filter will be all the more extended and its effects will be sensible in all the spheres." (BUSSAGLI 1996: 103, 161). It is understandable that, in order to entangle the webs of so much rainbow-colored influences - even if the "Hellenistic filter" knows how to play with the prismatic nuances, - man must resemble "the troops of epigraphists and numismatists " of LVP 1(1930: 228) «fervent in reading, clever in interpreting, swift in theorizing ", without of course being too much "relentless in defending theories".

Whatever the case, the filter has been used from the very beginnings. " Under the Seleucids, for example, the peoples pretending to being emancipated looked for their life patterns in the Greek civilization, means of which they very quickly managed to go on an equality basis with the ruler power that founded its "raison d'être" upon Hellenism" ( G.RADET, quoted by LVP 1 1930 . 232 ). When Diodotes, as a satrap of Bactria, takes the king title (c.250 BC), he leans upon the numerous prosperous Greek colonies, all the diverse multiple Alexandrias, and the troops of natives which he enlists, are made of "civilized" who are learning Greek. At last when Eucratides (175-155 BC), as a regent of the Northern and Western Territories, breaks with his legitimate suzerain Apollodotes, the matter is a Greek civil war: a fratricidal war between two Greek states.

«In the last decades BC, Greeks and Scythes even mingled at such a point that in the Indian literature of the time they are qualified as constituting one people under the compound name of Saka-Yavanas, an ethnic denomination that kept scheming some native grammarians and even certain European orientalist... Little by little the denomination of Yavanas had stopped exclusively being applied to the Greeks or even to the Hellenized foreigners,... it ended

with being applied to all Western people, even to all foreigners in general...and still goes on that way from the side of the inhabitants of India to some Eastern populations of the (ex) Indochina, without any connection with Greeks."(GOBLET 1926: 9, 12). At last to conclude with those pointillist remarks, here are two considerations of archaeologists, excavating in Bactria, left and right banks of the Amu Darya /Oxus, which still conceal numerous not yet excavated sites for lack of means and many wars latent or open, according to the season, which are lead at their very common boundaries by the border states. SCHLUMBERGER (1960 : 306; cf also 315 ) notes too that going to whatever place, as colonists, traders, conquerors, the Greeks always brought with themselves their art, because they were proud of it and it was a sign of superiority. Is it thinkable, that except the coinage, they did not convey their art up to Bactria? Regarding the Hellenizing grade of this country, the opinions may go asunder. But in front of this coinage, true masterpieces, one is inclined to concluding with a very deep hellenization... One day the pieces of art of the conquerors of the Oxus lands will come to daylight." STAVISKIJ ( 1986 : 246 ) thinks that" it is quite clear that the missionaries coming up from Gandhara had managed to exercise their influence upon the artistic culture of the Kushan Bactria too ( i.e. after 78 ): The assimilation, in those regions, of the productions of that religious art ( our famous statues ) was probably facilitated by the following : certain of its Hellenistic elements dated back to the art of the graeco-bactrian empire and consequently constituted a common heritage, as well as in Gandhara that had been an integrated part of that then state, as in proper Bactria which had been the cradle of it."

"An interactive influence," have I written at the beginning of the chapter. The then fully growing Mahayana will be on charge of it. From a certain point of view, the doctrine ready to consummate the big schism with the Hinayana, - that Buddhism of faith, according to CONZE, - is a kind of " salvation means of the works ", very near to the then heterogeneous Greek philosophy: thus it happened a great number of conversions and of Greek monks entering the monastic orders, because Buddhism was turning into a redemption religion in which compassion (the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara) was becoming the mainspring. It was too the time when the first Greek kings were coming down from Bactria to Gandhara. The contact between both populations will be all the more narrow with those mobile and egalitarian societies, those " invaders of the Northwest" who rejected the cast system and the xenophobic character of the brahmanic cults and somehow found their bearings under the protection of that Lord of Compassion, making no distinction of people (a then revolutionary idea) and helping everybody out of the slavery of that illusive world and of his karma chains. (WOODSTOCK 1966: 158-162). All that however remains questionable! How that Greek society, light and refined, proud of its past, quite impregnated by a culture that implicates one serene and optimistic conception of life, came so far that it jumped into the arms of a religion of renouncement and despair, whose ideals incarnate in the figure of the ascete and no more of the hero, whose aim will become the annihilation of one's personality into a dreamless sleep and no more its lightning up in the radiant brightness of the Elysian Fields?... The Greeks of India found themselves the preys , - three centuries before their cousins of Europe,- to the moral crisis engendered in high cultured souls by the predominance of material pleasures and the incapacity of ancient beliefs in satisfying the needs of mind and heart. Buddhism, under its still vigorous hinayanic and its irresistibly growing mahayanic forms came on time to provide with refuge those disenchanteds who, like Menander found India empty!" Not much less disenchanteds reflexions of GOBLET (1926: 28)! FOUCHER, whom quotes LVP 1 ( 1930 : 240 ) exclaims with humor : " Either they have been theosophically

infatuated with it , - a frequent result of too long a stage in India!,- or they have from the doctrine of the Buddha , above all retained the philosophical aspect... anyway : the distance was no so far from the wisdom of the Blessed One to that other wisdom which had just turned Epicurus into his sectators'god! « (cf too FOUCHER 1987: 3259).

An inextricable ambiguousness is to be lined out of the multiple webs of the cultural religious interactions; the nets overthrust one another like on the hertzian waves. Bad reception, crackle, useless antenna orientation: and at last a permanently fading language, surrounded by all kinds of others, from which one can catch a word if already known! That most confuse acoustic image slides through my mind, while I stay considering those three centuries BC and above all the last one! Of course, the graeco-hellenistic mark was deep and widely spread. Of course, in matter of habits and customs, - morals and modes included, - exotic charm always gets a chance! And necessity makes law: in order to move in the masters circles, it is required to resemble them just enough not to alienate them. Besides, masters are not necessarily bad "guys": they will even make all efforts to show their subjects that they do understand them! They will learn their language; for example, take interest in their folklore, arts, religion. They will exhibit in their own reception room many items, - statuettes, pottery, hats, weapons, carpets and other objects. Their children will be dressed like the natives' ones. On certain occasions "they even won't pass some dressing' up"! As singles, they with the time may even marry a native: the inverse is not so well seen! And by dint of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling the native way, they happen to acclimate themselves. They will start appreciating things, places and people; sympathizing with their ways of thinking, feeling, believing and hoping; sharing visions, values, even beliefs. This happens everywhere and always. That happened in Punjab some 2000 years ago. All who transgressed came forward into their self-consciousness, that of the others and of the world...

The investigation now will turn into a kind of archaeology: but one of the mental.

# SECOND PART

## THE ARTIFICIAL FECUNDATIONS

Is mystery a must for all religion that states it is one? Was early Buddhism free from any religious or philosophical element? Was Sakyamuni but a moralist? Was not Asoka the founder of a mass religion, opening the way to the Lord Buddha, - the Baghavan, - then to the God of Mahayana?

Besides doesn't mystery itself comprehend a whole series of attitudes and behaviors, which not only do not exclude one another, but well rather share in a same spring and keep mutually fecunding? The mystery of initiation: and there is a Buddhist initiation, were it only the admission rites into the samgha. The mystery of mythology: and there is a Buddhist mythology, were it only the myriads of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. At last the mystery of mysticism: and there is Buddhist mysticism, that of the bakhti and anusrmti (BEYER 1977: 333). Let us remember : bakhti and anusrmti have lead to idolatry; the more precise the features of the god, the more they confound it with its image , to such a grade that it is in certain cases difficult to guess which between god and image the object of devotion is (BARTH, Deux chapitres du Saurapurana, Mélanges Harlez 12 ,I, 193-197, quoted by LVP 2 1935 : 328 ). The vocabulary used in the last phrases is remarkable: visualization, iconography, idolatry, and image: i.e. vision, icon, idol, and image. Actually the next question will be that of representing the Buddha, making him a figurative immanent vision: but the representation must keep symbolic, his figurative fixation in no way hem the spontaneousness and the particularity the faithful, vision and imagination go on mutually feeding, at last the immanence of his presence in the object be but the reflection of his transcendental sacred character.

This undertaking of ours need a concourse of theoretical and practical knowledges, regarding all the fields of religious both mysticism and iconography. Those artificial fecundations are pretty rare in history and in the history of religious art in particular. TARN who knows Hellenistic matters qualifies that event as «without parallel in Hellenistic history (1951: 393) «Greeks of themselves placed their artistic skill at the service of a foreign religion and created for it a new form of expression in art...If Greeks elsewhere made statues of foreign deities it was because they wanted them themselves...Buddhists or not, the Greeks worked for the Buddhist world; and the school of Gandhara in that sense is unique". Confronted with this massive reality, a series of scholars (WALDSCHMIDT, BACHHOFER, COHN, COOMARAWAMY, VOGEL, CODRINGTON, KONOW, HERZFELD: cf complementary literature) qualified as impossible that yet historical factum. Precisely because, goes on TARN: 1951: 33) " they are confusing two different things: history and psychology. What history desires to know is who made the 1sr statue of Buddha and when. But this school is so impressed with the belief that Indians ought, as a matter of psychology, to have made the 1st statue of that revered figure, and that they alone would have possessed the necessary religious vision... that they argue that what ought to have happened, must have happened, a very dangerous procedure". The necessary religious vision! If it is true that a Mahayanist Indian,

an adept of bakhti and anusmrti was the claimant who fetched a Greek artist (of whatever origin he might have been: Greece, Middle Asia or Punjab), which kind of a person did he actually meet? A religious one, of the early Greek religion or the ambient Buddhism ambient? Or was it a benevolent atheistic one, sociologically religious of a graeco-buddhist syncretism?

Isn't the most essential of all, that that Indian found an artist -only that, - and a good one?

Those forms (actually a matter of seeing!) eventually are the result of a precise choice, bound to elaborating a system of expression particularly well adapted with the Buddhist spirit and thought. What is surprising is that those forms were transferred from their original lands to different ones; they had to graft themselves to an ensemble of cultural religious traditions very faraway from those which they were supposed to go with. They thus must prove, when expressing the sacred, a plastic potential and a psychological efficiency, similar to those which the impressive stylizations of the Greek figurative model tried to produce. (cf BUSSALI 1996: 183).

The Buddhist will ask the Greek to help him pass from imagination to vision, from symbolisms to representation, from non-figurative to figurative, from transcendence to immanence : he wants to be helped to cross the distance from non- mediation ( direct adoration and prayer = mysticism) to mediation ( statue = cult ) : but without dualism!

De facto, indeed, duality is the indirect/direct consequence of the double state of the Founder's personality: the Bodhisattva, the Being predestinated to perfect sightedness and the Buddha, perfectly accomplished. "Not forgetting those two aspects of the Master, FOUCHER (1987: 327) says, one understands better what became of his church". The Northwest open to the western influences all the more preferred to call on the spirit and example of the Prince of charity, since the ambient air (bakhti and anusmrti) pushed in that direction»: This is the basic structure: opposition of two moralistic attitudes, still more than the unequal development of their mythological creations or metaphysical speculations".

And is it not that duality itself that feeds the so- called mysticism of early Buddhism, which " puts an end to all becoming, to all life as we know it, in order that the mystic man enter a world of pure spirit which is deathless, unborn, unbecome, uncompounded, utterly beyond space and time" (PARRINDER 1977: 400, quoting ZAEHNER RC: Concordant discord, Oxford 1970, p.290). Maybe that is nirvana: a mystic sate (Buddha-state), and the Illumination, a virtual nirvana (Bodhisattva-state)?

By concentrating on the "person" of the Buddha, the mystic devotion (bakhti/anusmrti) makes him the same object that we meet in the theistic religions, at least at the level of the mass religion (which is the powerful motor of Mahayana). Isn't the "triple refuge" pronounced by the lay people: Buddha, as the first, and then Dharma and Samgha? And isn't this parallel in time and space, and in the sate of the ideology, with the Bhagavad-Gita, - which is not necessarily anti-Buddhist albeit theistic:

Abandoning all the Dharma

Come TO ME ALONE for refuge! (18, 66)?

And what about the Buddhist faithful, for whom the cult object is supposed to be manufactured, elaborated, constructed? "It may be easy to perceive the coexistence of

precised spectators, characterized by specific cultural back-grounds ( especially in mission field ),- without quoting niveaus, but only components ,- it is absolutely impossible to know which grade of amalgam ( i.e. mutual fecundation ) characterized the average faithful, for whom the image had to "speak" and the Gandharan language was to be created in all its multiple inflexions and varieties " ( BUSSAGLI 1996 : 25 ).

The dogmas of the Great Vehicle are likely to have very early been fixed, in the quite first decades of the new era: but its hagiology/mythology did not exert its influence itself on the Northwest, and consequently on the Gandhara art (FOUCHER, *Art du Gandhara*, II 371, quoted by LVP 2 1935: 344, note 3). On the other hand, c. the 2nd century AD, a man from the South (Amravati), Nagarjuna, a dialectician and a metaphysician, will found the so-called Middle School (Madhyamaka), which belongs to Mahayana. Nagarjuna, besides the true meditation by means of the negation and the vacuity/emptiness of any Ego, goes further: he shows the absurdity of all intellectual notions and the logical impossibility of all sensible and mental experience. True meditation, - and thus true truth and salvation, - may be reached by means of the total and absolute emptying, - the meditation of the vacuity that destroys itself. Nagarjuna is too the commentator of the Prajnaparamita, which is markedly ontologicistic, - they are both of them (text and man) influenced by a few schools around Amravati, that had input into Buddhism the brahmanical notion of the Absolute (Dharmadhatu), the eternal nature of things. The Prajna, - a multiple recensioned ancient sutra, - already was in complete agreement with it: but it «Buddha-ized" the Absolute by emptying it; it puts a transcendental Absolute: better, non-related with all things that not exist. (cf LVP 2 1935: 344-346).

At that precise moment, - if you're reading on, dear reader: I 'm trying to be as simple as possible!)- the moment of the transcendental Absolute, outlined in terms of vacuity of apparent things, - something may be understood: the relationship between the notions of vision, imagination, dream and the notion of cult, all engaged into that process of multiple and artificial fecundations, that will eventually lead to the birth of the new unseen statue (without any parallel, according to Prof WW TARN): actually, follow me...

What is a " transcendental Absolute" (thus something infinitely equal to itself and radically different from all materiality), outlined in terms of «vacuity of all apparent things « (thus inexistence of all sensible things)? That still is a reality (ontological) but outmatching nature (physics): actually that is a meta-physics. But a mystical one, i.e. which is animated by a uniting proceed between two poles: the one that " reveals» (raises the veil), the other that "sees beyond" the veil... All that happening, - of course! - inside the totallest vacuity, where nothing exists and has any substance, but where all may happen and befall... The metaphysics of the Prajnaparamita actually is the metaphysics of vision (in the meaning of visionary) and dream (imaginary): a universe of sparkling and quick-silver changes precisely is a universe which can only be qualified as "empty». Vision and dream turn into instruments to dismantling the heavy categories we charge the reality with, in order to reveal the capacities of the eternal flow the Bodhisattva lives in. To speak about the "Lord as vision" makes him equal a "spiritual reality", present and personal, placed in front of the "meditator»: the only answer, appropriate to that overwhelming is worshipping. Here vision and cult go hand in hand with each other: seeing is worshipping, and worshipping is hoping for the vision. In the worship is made real the ultimate meeting between will and grace: the meditator sees, but the god reveals. (cf BEYER: 1977:340, 334 and the whole article...)

The original Buddhist tradition, lying on the bed of Brahmanism and already cultured by some internal rebellions, will feed its monstrous pregnancy with some more steadfast ferments from the Bhagavad-Gita and Prajaparamita, up to the ultimate fecundation, performed with an unseen élan into the arms of the graeco-hellenistic daimon, first astonished, then inventive, at its historical twilight, on that border of all the possible! Monstrous pregnancy, because man might have waited for the Dr Frankenstein's creature: it was APOLLO REDIVIVUS for a BUDDHA REVISITED!

## THIRD SECTION

### THE SYMBOLICAL IMAGINARY AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE SACRED

This episode is to properly put in presence the partners, - imaginary and mentality together, - of that historical happening. Now is the moment to show oneself a shrewd archaeologist of the mental as well an acute observer. If Buddhism is internally parted between the figurative and non-figurative chapels of its adolescent tradition (what is half a millenary?), the Greek statuary tradition, - transplanted as far as 10 000 kms from home, - goes on in spite of the distance working on the base of its multiseular requirements.

We'll deal with collective unconscious, archetypical meaning, symbolical religious tradition and approach of the sacred in its mystical and figurative components. What is at stake is important, if we remember that the matter is the choosing of the human form instead of the symbol, - and one certain human form to the exclusion of the others. The mental universes, already very complex in themselves, are called to mutual identification, evaluation and agreement by adopting the lowest common denominator and multiple, respectively coefficients of convergence and divergence. The human form, body, face: at a time the most familiar and taboo realities. Difficult to imagine (!) so sensible an element in all the cultural traditions: from the place and role attributed to the cadaver, up to those regulated regarding clothing. Mortuary (not funerary) rites and dress fashion (even dressing up) could constitute, if told, an important chapter of the Mystery of Incarnation. Because that matter falls into the sexual reality of our human condition, unavoidable locus of our being-in-the-world, of our becoming and future, - if the latter belong to the bunch of our convictions. Bakhti as well as anusrmti invite to visualizing the god in each and every possible detail of his: up to the apparent and the secret ones! The Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola demand from the exercitant that he visualizes in details (?) all the pericopes of the Gospel which he "exercises" about and he must find for him, not any place for, but his "real" place in : during the escape to Egypt, - I belonged to the trip !- I caught myself packing and checking. What is astonishing is that we manage! You still have to (dare) try!

At Bharhut, Amaravati, Sanci, Sakyamuni is represented: but lost in the middle of the other monks, and if he is in the middle of the jataka, no special sign distinguishes him. The sculpted cartoon itself is the theme of that stone catechism which the freezes and the relieves of the stupas are: like the pillar capitels and the stained glass windows in our western churches and cathedrals. But we already had, at the very beginning in the roman catacombs, our Good Shepherd, Our Crucified, Our Resurrected; then we got our Pantocrator, our Rex Gloriam. We even managed in representing that Faceless One who is God the Father, the Invisible God whose Christ was supposed to be the only visible image.

In the hinterland of any aesthetics, of any figurative art, as well as in the hinterland of any refuse of representation (cf the bible of the Hebrews), an ideology hides itself in which the "tremendum and fascinosum", fear and fascination, mingle. Let us enter this wonderland of our phylogenetical atavism.

## CHAP.5: FIGURATIVE VISION OF BUDDHISM

The regulation, permission and control of the image (and of the whole iconic system) - here in religious matters, - is the must rule for any religion or religious group. Moses and Judaism tolerate no image at all; the graeco-roman world, as soon as the fall of Jerusalem (70 AD), made early then constantinian Christianity topple into a frenzied iconism. Pharaonic Egyptians and Median Persian Mesopotamians affectionated zoomorphic figures of all sorts. ( Interesting : the "Star War "series , too, makes all sorts of humanoids,- as strange as ugly,- living together with our favorite cine stars on the white screens of the movie theaters; and what about E.T ? ). Remember the iconoclastic battle in Constantinople in the IX and X centuries, just before the schism of the Orthodox Patriarchate with the Roman Holy See. And the return to the "naked walled churches" by the Reformers in the XVI century! (I limit myself to what made Europe: as much interesting are the pre-Columbian representations of the Incas, Mayas and other Aztecs; or those pre indo Buddhist of South Asia and the Pacific; or those of the impenetrable black Africa! I'll come back to the Greeks in next chapter).

Let's take place under the patronage of an authority in the matter, Sir John ( MARSHALL 1960 : 8 ) who speaks of " the strange anomalous rule of the Buddhist church which permitted the person of he Buddha to be portrayed in he scenes of his former lives, but not of his last one!" Actually, in all the most ancient monuments of the Middle Indian School of art, the stories of his first births, or Jatakas, become the absolute predominance. Later the interest slid to the events of his last terrestrial life. And still later on, to his image itself, which was to eclipse all the rest in Buddhist art.

Iconism/Aniconism: AUTRAN (1946: 365-375) searched very far back into deep India, whose Buddha remains a legitimate son. What did he find? Well! Still nowadays, among all the classes and regions of India, the aniconic stone currently is to be seen in the center of a cult. Thus in the cult of the dead, the "bid-diri"(= raised stone,) refers to the material trace of the individuality of the late one; and the "sacan-diri"(= the lying stone,) is the grave stone. The stone holds in the rites the place of the dead (we'll remind of it infra). The remains of that kind : dolmens, cromlechs, heroic sanctuaries of essentially exterior tumular type seemed even perhaps have provided the architectural germ around which later on the art of the early Buddhist monuments has developed ( cf RENOUE 1947-53 : 1178). The basis is not the concept of representation of the god, (spirit or demon,) but essentially the inherent potential of the stone itself, its "virtue". Therefore undoubtedly the choice of a rock to serve as a support to the mystic connection with the late hero, and further, provide a stable residence and a magically charged medium, which is the foundation of the religious iconography. Thus, the icon, a utilitarian item, essentially is not so different from any other cultural medium, be it a tree, a piece of wood or stone, or whatever at the end. A statue of a god or a hero "only" constitutes a power in the ritual. The statue is granted this power definitely by the "election» which, - be it a rough stone, a post, a tree, a lingam or a more or less unrefined image, - promoted this object to the office of a sacred residence for the "demon" (god or dead) that is to honor. In fact the statue proceeds from a magic religious substratum, in principle depending on the strict requirements and the college of the "sorcerers" with their dogmatic formulas. The sculptor will sometimes become his own work ordered by the object itself (avayam bhū), up to the minimal details.

Well examined in the context of its "indirect" substructured thought, the symbol can be turned into the tangible sign of the epiphanic presence and possibility of well outlined transcendence. Thus the symbolic expression of the Buddha would have invested the sacred with its highest value. But his image, consequently, would have expressed/ will have to express and enlighten/ed the whole ensemble of the values inherent to the Buddha himself! It is quite understandable that, measured at the human standard, no statue at all could'nt/ will be able to manage it: and the Buddha himself demonstrated the vanity of life and the necessity of renouncing desire and passion. The only path he ever declared apt for that has nothing to do with an image, but with the Dharma. And Himself!

Besides, the Buddha himself is very "beautiful" and «object of desire" sublimated (even though the hagiographic topos of the 32 body marks...!). Moreover: his beauty is transfigured by his spirituality and turns it into an object of devotion and an instrument of conversion. The body of the Buddha is "a" power, - "the" power,-, the mysterious efficacy. The same way it can be spoken of a concupiscence for the Buddha's relics (remember the reliquary demence of Asoka!), there too exists a concupiscence for the carnal body of the Buddha alive (remember Ananda unveiling the sexual organs of Sakyamuni, after his Mahaparinirvana, under the eyes of the women come to lament, in order to put an end to the doubts regarding his entirely manly conformation!). The faithful has to engender that body into himself, with all his marks: it is a semiotic body (we'll come again to the theme), a kind of mandala: a religious program, illustration and mnemotechnical summary of the doctrine. That physical "body of law" is the counterpart of the metaphysical body of law, a sort of "Table of Law" or "Locus of Memory" which the buddhist imaginary fits in. ( All the preceding owes much to FAURE ( 1994 : 24, 36-37) whose entire book deserves total attention). FOUCHER (1949: 59) speaks of "a divination manual (of the Buddha's body) that changed into a sort of iconographic memento". Moses, Hammurabi and Asoka wrote the Law into the stone: here the Law is the anthropomorphic Buddha!

But still no question of a statue! All those processes, - when and if they happened, - were a matter of teaching, memorizing and practicing of meditation in front of the "reminders" of Buddha: among them stupas, lotus flowers, umbrellas, wheels, trees, foot prints... I think, more that a dogmatic interdiction, a taboo, a "mana", the Buddhist aniconism, regarding the very figure of the Buddha Sakyamuni himself, is the simple statement, - not even the proof, we don't need any, - that there still were no demand of representation, - of iconism, - such as the populations will feel and express it in the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. It must happen all the events and causes exposed in the 1sr Part, so that, with the pression, the demand were formulated on and on, justified and at last fand the opportunity of its completion. Then Buddhism itself was passing to another stage, too

Philosophically,- I was nearly writing "occidentally"!,- that position of the early Buddhism could be understood too from the point of view of the EGO, and even the EGO FICTION, which is not so far from its vision sometimes nihilistic, nor from Sakyamini's. Let's ask FOUCHER (1987: 206), never lacking an idea and VALLIN (1987: 19-21), the unrecognized philosopher of Nancy (and whom my friend Bertrand VIRIOT introduced me to):" What we called our EGO, - Alfred reminds us, - is just a flow of consciousness states filing along through a psychophilosophical organism all the more unstable since it has no real existence outside of them. Brief, the worlds where our perception of the things flows, are no more illusorish than themselves : formative elements, formations and forms at last vanish

away into the same fata morgana ... Man at last confesses to be but the irreal and transitorish seat of a running away series of mental phenomena...Being an entity no more, he may just be " history"- " The truth of the EGO,- Georges teaches us,- is the affirmation and the reality of Nothingness, it is the negation in its pure state which splits and limits the Being, and opposes the manifestation of the fundamental aspects of it... It is the metaphysical and contemplative oriental man who is the man of the originary affirmation, integral and integrative, because he is not Ego nor Individuality centered... When the occidental man affirms God, he does it always from and according to his invincible idolatry of the Ego: beyond the Supreme Individual, there can be only Nothingness. But it is according to that journey towards the plenitude of that so-called Nothingness that is organized the fundamental project of the oriental metaphysics, leant upon the techniques of concentration and ontological transmutation of the Ego ".

No individual, no statue!

## CHAP. 6: THE AESTHETICAL TRADITION OF THE GREEK SCULPTURE

Entering the territory of the Greek statuary is entering a sanctuary. There was born Europe who projects herself, questing a face for herself and contemplating herself. The European was born out of a white Attic marble, the same way Michelangelo's David out of a Carrarean one. When the Athenian Acropolis was completed, at that time when around the Parthenon, the Erechtheion and the Propylaeas, all what was still standing and lined out against the Homeric sky, - and will never be seen again!, - the citizens decided to command a statue of Athena and to put it at the entrance of the upper city, into a small temple, - rather an altar, like those on the "hagios odos", the sacred path at Delphi. But before, they broke the usual wings of the statue and baptized it «Athena Apteris Niké», the Victory without wings, so that their Goddess Victory may never fly away from her/their city and must stay home. More than a beautiful story, it is the illustration of the whole "Greek religion", the paradigm of which Athens and her treatment represent.

But what a long way to get to the Punjab and Gandhara! We'll run the distance in 3 stages, which will let us follow the meanders of a continue evolution which the fall of neither Alexandria of Egypt nor of Taxila could stop, only forced to make its way elsewhere. It will be first the "stone" of the archaic period, then the gods of the classical one, at last that Hellenistic soaring which goes with a true aesthetic philosophy. Our companions on the way will be nothingness than Jean-Pierre VERNANT, the world specialist of Greek Myth and Thought and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich HEGEL, a magister in Philosophy at the age of 20 and successively a professor at Iena, Heidelberg and Berlin: I 'all use his course of esthetics and especially of course his considerations on the sculpture of the Greek classical age.

By entering VERNANT (1974: 65) asks the fundamental question: «How could the Greeks turn into a visible form some powers of the beyond which belong to the Invisible? Etymologically, the vocabulary of the statue turns around the root: "kol" (colossos) which means: erected, standing, set up, and too: fix, still. Put into earth inside the empty grave, near items belonging to the late, the "colossos" plays the role of a substitute for the absent corpse... He holds the place of the late. The colossos must not reproduce the late's features, nor give the illusion of his physical appearance,...it incarnates and fixes into the stone his life in the beyond...It is not an image: it is a "double"...The same stone can permit too, when it is erected on the surface of the earth, establish a contact with him...Unusual ambiguous presence which also is the sign of the absence." And going further into its etymological inquiry, VERNANT ( 1974 : 69 ) lists for us a psychological catalog of the phenomena "eidola", idols ( remember that the root of the word "idol" comes from the aorist form of the verb "orao", to see : "eidon" )There are :

- the "colossos", a rough figure of substitution;
- the "psych", which belongs to both visible and invisible worlds;
- the "oneiros", the dream itself ( the "onaroiphantoi" are dream figures);
- the "skia", a shade;
- the "phasma" at last, a supra natural apparition.

Let's retain from all that the category of "double": it requires a mental organisation, of course different from ours, occidental people of the XXth century AD! But can't we see like a pre-comprehension (a Vor-verständnis) of the atavistic greek mentality, that the Gandharan artist may have inherited? A "double" is qsomething quite different from an image; it is:

- neither a natural object,
- nor a mental product,
- nor the imitation of an object,
- nor an illusion of the mind,
- nor a creation of the thought.

In the very moment when the "double" shows itself as present, it reveals itself "not belonging to here", but to an unaccessible elsewhere. (Doesn't the practicant of anasmrti experience something analog with his Lord: but without statue, let's not forget!).

Of course, as any sign, the colossos refers to a general symbolical system, a mental ensemble organisation which affiliated it with death and the dead, where the stone ( which a colossos is) plays the multiple role of its physical qualities ( from the myth of the Gorgon who turns into stone the one who looks at her, on to the poet Pindarus who speaks of the death of stone, voiceless, cold, sightless and invisible ( Hades is the place of the dead : "aides" comes from "a-eidon" in-visible). Thus the operative value of the colossos, is to be used for attracting and fixing a "double" which is located somewhere else. The plastic sign is not separable from the rite: it is granted its meanings only by the ritual proceedings it is the object of. The sign is "acted" by man while hides an active force: it has an efficient virtue

At last, by its character of a "double", the colossos offers, as a sign, some aspects of tension and like oscillation between the visible and the invisible. But soon the Greeks have retained only its visible form: they have seen no more than a simple "mnéma", a reminder sign for the memory. Thus the colossos refers to one of the most essential characters of the religious sign, the aim of which is always establishing with the sacred power a true communication, really inserting its presence into the human universe, while underlining all the inaccessible, mysterious and fundamentally different characters of the beyond for the living man ( cf VERNANT 1974 : 65-78 ).

At the end of that first stage, retain that an-iconical stone, and its double religious function which is to oscillate between the visible and the invisible, the presence and the absence, and from which the Greeks will keep, at their conscious level, only the mnemonic (al) function, even if it remains religious and rite attached. A sign of alterity. Let's proceed...

One among the characters of "the greek religion",- which had to blossom into what everybody knows, at the classical age exactly,- is giving the invisible powers of the beyond, well outlined individual figures and fully human aspects. But it may be asked how much those individualisation and humanisation of the supra natural powers are belonging to the personal categories, i.e.: is it possible to have with them a personal relationship, the same way as with singular unique subjects, wholly defined by their spiritual lives, as with responsible agents? It is of course one typically occidental question, whereby the onto-psychological categories of the individuation, of the personalisation, of the spiritual life and of the responsibility,- among others,- can make sense only for mentalities equipped to conceive and capt them. The Greeks have developed several attitudes according to the roles to play they granted those powers of the beyond :

- if they were supposed to protect a given human group ( "géné", the nation, or the "polis", the city), then they received the "eusebeia", the piety, a kind of civic duty;

- if one was on the quest for a religious experience, at the inverse of an official cult, something that could free from it and leads to a radically different aim, one referred to "dionysism", a kind of liberation from the sacred, with bacchanalian and orgiastic feasts ;  
-at last, there was the "cult of the mysteries", that could satisfy the personal human relationship with the god: the religious life might turn individual and could form a community, no more a sociological ( nation, city or bacchanals and orgies ) but a spiritual one: communicating with the god : a religion of the soul!

We have already heard that kind of echoes and that demand, about the Bhagavadgita and the Prajnaparamita with the religious streams of the Bhakti and Anusmrti. Some archetypes seem to structure from the distance different religious sensibilities which have not the same philosophical basis. What does not necessarily emerge up to the consciousness, that seems to have been experienced in an asymptotic synchronic, but monadic and unexpressable way . Up to the day when...The preceding rather obscure sentence only means that given human groups experience at the same time but in different places and with different minds, some analogous aspirations, they may have had no consciousness of and nor expression for.

Let's call back VERNANT (1974 (86-88)). The Hellenistic gods are powers not persons, and the religious thought answers above all the problems of their organization and classification; it does not ask about their personal or not personal character. It goes even further. A given divine power has no actual existence for itself: it may be an "indefinite plurality" or a «enumerated multiplicity"! The Greek religious conscience has no problem at all of any radical incompatibility! The figuration of the god into a fully human form (cf HEGEL infra: important) constitutes a factum of religious symbolism which must be exactly situated and interpreted. The idol is not a portrait (very important) of the god: gods have got no bodies. The great cultural anthropomorphic statue only lines out and presents the form of the human body in general... I insist: that last assertion of VERNANT is very heavy with consequences for our work: it illustrates in a magnificent way my approach to this chapter. It is man who projects himself, is questing for a face for himself and contemplates himself. The creation of the statue, is the auto creation of man, the affirmation of his essence and existence, i.e. of his Being-in-the-world, even if "he is but a sad consciousness under the sun": it is the proof that he gives the universe, of the perfect adequation between the idea (= "eidon"=vision) he has of himself, and the capacity he possesses to complete it (cf our last chapter). Still one word. The only example I know of that auto affirmation in the Being and History, is the self portrait of Albrecht DÜRER, into a figure of a Pantocrator Christ (almighty man and god), signed 1500, at Nürnberg : it is the end of the Mediterranean era, the Atlantic ocean is crossed, the New World is discovered : the Modern Times !

And what about that Hellenistic soaring of the philosophical thought, that only an aesthete like HEGEL could at a time feel and express. He too starts with a massive statement that we may but accept : " The human form is the only capable to manifest the spirit in a sensible way : and the task of the art is to make disappear the opposition between matter and spirit , enhance the body and to turn that form more perfect, in order to animate and spiritualize it"( HEGEL 1970 : 40-41 )." so that the spiritual aspect, when it appears, can do it only by taking the human form: the spirit of the art has at last found its form " ( HEGEL 1964a : 152-153). Charm here plays as much at least as dialectics : which is to retain is that the Greek miracle consists of the perfect meeting of the spirit with the human form, the only possibility it has to manifest itself ; and the art,- the Greek one,- secures the aesthetic perfection of it.

The content of the art is itself constituted by the "idea" (that's another key!), represented under a concrete sensible form: it must have nothing abstract. That form (figure) must also be individual and essentially concrete (HEGEL 1964a: 139-141 passim). Here is striking the insistence on the sensible concrete aspect: something quasi "materialistic", as if the anthropomorphic statue were a true materialization, operated by the art, of the "idea/spirit"! And more precise: the "natural" form of the human body is something sensible concrete, "capable" to represent the spirit and to make itself conform to the latter. It is not per chance that such a form is chosen to represent such an exterior reality. The concrete content itself provides the art with the way of its own completion, exterior and sensible... Thus, what the human body is per nature, that makes it able, - it alone, - not only to represent the spirit, but to make itself conform to it...I.e.: per nature, -morphologically,- the human form can turn itself (TAKE THE FORM OF) the spirit. The sculptor is in charge of it: that is his duty as a Greek, since from that time on, that's what Greek art is!

The reader understands that the matter at stake here is more than quibbling, even if my efforts in making more explicit HEGEL's thought may be submitted to criticism. It is with his chisel and hammer that the artist must turn into concrete marble the "idea that identifies itself with human form". If the idea keeps abstract, - because it is intransposable, not "turnable» into stone, differently said: if the human form is not/no more able to conform itself to the "idea", because it has become nothing more than ectoplasm or an oneirophantos (dreams figure), unsubstantial...then what about the sculptor and the statue? HEGEL (1970: 147) concludes: "The truly concrete idea engenders the true form and the correspondence between both of them constitutes the "ideal". (We'll come again to this with the "demand and the offer").

A spiritualistic religion could have satisfied itself with interiorly contemplating and meditating. A religion which speaks to the senses, as the "Greek religion" does, must ceaselessly produce new images, because both artistic invention and creation are its precisely true worship: a means the Greek religious feeling must be satisfied with. Thus the classical artist works for the interests of the religion, using the free artistic play to turn the religious beliefs and mythological representations more clear, serene and refined (cf HEGEL 1970: 58; 1964b: 28).

The misfortune and the non sense of St Paul landing at Athens and running up to the Acropolis, is more understandable. Before entering the Propylaeas, there was on the left the site of the Areopagites, before the members of which the Apostle of the Gentiles must have held his first, unique and last sermon. He had noticed in town an aniconic stele, dedicated to the "Unknown God", and he hustled up to those honorable men to make them know (Ah! Good News!) That he, Paul of Tarsus, came in order to tell them who that god is, since they still ignored it! I wonder whether, - albeit he was hellenophone, - the missionary understood the exact reasons why he was sadly dismissed! That "Unknown God" was but the "waiting stone" for any new image: it was not essential that the deity to be figured neither exists nor be real; it must be only the theoretical possibility to figure whichever: this or that one! That stele ought to keep "image-less", an-iconic, and by this very absence, witness the potential making of it. The colossos was not dead: ousted by the statue, it reminded of the reign of it by its very aniconism. St Paul perhaps guessed at last that, as lovers of civic piety, Dionysian frenzy or sophisticated mysteries, the Greek were "religious" indeed: which had never prevented them from being atheists! (Acts of the Apostles, 17,21b-32b).

## FOURTH SECTION

### THE PRECIPITATE IN SPACE AND TIME

The Northwestern India,- Outer India!,- the West of Indus, the Punjab, the Gandhara...In the last 6 years I acceded to it/them,- by plane of course,- but also per surface, by all the authorized routes! By the North first, through the Kundjerab Pass, after the Northern Route of the Taklamakan Desert ( Dunhuang and the Mogao Caves, Turfan and the Bezeklik Caves, Kuqa and the Kyzyl Caves, then Kashgar and Tashkurgan) : driving down the Valley of Hunza ( a kind of Shangri-la with micro climate, apricots and the Wall of the Rakaposhi Peak at 7000 m ). After 3 weeks of a difficult cohabitation with the Hans in the Sin kiang, in spite of the quasi Mediterranean presence of the Uigurs, what a cordial to meet the Pathans, tall and slender, with the noble faces of the Parthan and Kushan princes, immortalized by the Bodhisattvas Maitreyas (cf the whole book of TISSOT 1985): and what a smiling hospitality!... The second time, it was from the Indian Haryana, then Lahore: crowds, flat land, Hinduism and Islam, i.e.: bustle, noise and nothing else (Much ado about nothing!)... The third time, from the South: I drove up the Indus Valley, on the quest of the ancient civilizations of Mohenjo-Daro, Mehrgarh and Harrapa and d on the traces of Alexander through the deserts of Makran, Beluchistan and Kush... The fourth and last time, it was last summer, after crossing Uzbekistan, from Ferghana and Khokand/Khodjent ( Alexandria Eskaté, the ultimate!), down to Merv/Mari ( Alexandria of Margiana) in Turkmenistan : but the Hindu Kush was "closed",- I just might reach up to Termez ( the ancient Tarmita )-because of the war Taliban versus Uzbek minority in Afghanistan! I wished I might have taken the second part of the Khyber Pass; I used the half of at my first "invasion", from Peshawar westwards.... Those expeditionary memoirs, -besides they may legitimately engender jealousy, - are not just a report. They helped me to recognize, with all my senses, that the place really is a melting pot, a today "hub", brief a meeting point (the same way as those provinces of Southern Italy: Apulia, Basilicata, Capitanata, Calabria and of course Sicily, - the western ex-extension of the Magna Graecia,-between the Muslim Conquest and the fall of that German Emperor (the Holy German Roman Empire), Friedrich II von Hohenstaufen.

Somewhere,- was it in one book of his, or by a course or a conference, an interview perhaps,- Fernand BRAUDEL, "the" historian of the Mediterranean Worlds ,-has spoken a word ( it was more than a joke : a kind of "aha-Erlebnis" would S.FREUD say, an "Einsicht", a sudden awareness ) . «Europe goes to/stops at the Indus River!" It is true: he is right! I know it now! Perhaps it was valid, at a time when the geographical and historical concepts were constituted, to call Middle Orient/Asia that vast territory from the Eastern Mediterranean Sea to Afghanistan. One lacked certainly the necessary background as well as the results of the history of compared religions ( M.ELIADE, VAN DER LEUWEEN ) to realize that the crescent zone : Rom-Alexandria-Jerusalem and its center Athens, has ceaselessly functioned like the axle of a wheel, the spokes of which have permanently been extended in a centrifugal way : in the North, towards Borea ( Ice-land), in the West ( towards Finistere = finis terrae), in the South ( towards the Deserts : Nothing beyond the 5th cataract of the Blue Nile) and in the East precisely.... here we are! The Gandhara Art, - with all the possible syncretisms he contributes to illustrate, - has "colonized" the whole Central Asia, the magnificent Oases of

the Tarim Basin, the Valleys of Afghanistan, from Kandahar to Panshir, with multitudes of statues, urban and monumental architecture, religious philosophies, and diverse cultural forms. By the North the extension has gone on even, through the China of the Tang dynasty, up to the kingdoms of Silla and Paekshe in Korea, then over the straits, to Heian, the to day Nara, in the Kinki Province of Japan... But... towards the South and the East from Indus, nothing has passed (cf supra) : India itself has indianized the worlds of Southeast Asia only up to Bali, because the jungles of Irian Jaya ( New Guinea ) and Kalimantan ( Borneo) are still impenetrable, the Philippines, unseizable, with their too many islands.

The Indus functions like an invisible cultural border: a " civilization" one! Asia really begins from there on. This is a neither orological, nor desertic nor oceanic impenetrability (There has always been "Yellow Cruises" à la Citroen! The matter is an other one. It has to do with mental patterns, "Denkschemata", archaic convolutions of the brain! I crossed: better than crossed! For 56 days exactly, to the 4 points of the horizon, I walked and drove everywhere: historical and monumental sites, diverse temples, palaces, coastal and hinterland provinces, hotels, lodges, at the country side, day and night... I must confess, I felt myself a stranger, a foreigner, an alien, an "other"... in whole India. Except.... No, no exception! But with the Pathans and the Punjabis, with the people of the Northwest.

In chimics, the precipitate is one symptom: its matter and color indicate the qualitative grade of the experience. The substances put in contact into the crystallizing dish have mingled, mixed, amalgamed. The final unique substance will be all the more difficultly analyzable since the synthesis, - it is the result of, - has been more perfect. I.e.: the capacity of assimilation of each element has conditioned the congruent compacity of the final product... That multibordered March of Punjab was a laboratoy; I tried to analyze the multiple substances which were to amalgam into the crystallizing dish of Gandhara: the final product is the statue. The precipitate is that School of Art, so much disputed : the circumstances of its birth still keep obscure, its putative parents are themselves near illegitimate grandsons of the great common Hellenistic ancestor : like those captains at sea who have a woman in every harbour and whose descendency will be identifiable and countable only at the Doomsday !

I long hesitated and I finally chose to introduce first the contract partners of the statue. It seems to me that "something Gandhara" must first have existed before the "idea" of making that kind of statue only ran through the mind.

Idea, statue, and spirit, human form: here is HEGEL and his Aesthetics, again!

## CHAP.7: THE PRIMITIVE SCHOOL OF GANDHARA

Two preliminary remarks: I'll treat, - according to the title, - only the primitive period, i.e. the very beginnings, of that artistic stream, which was granted its name just in the last century. I'll start with some historical marks. Then I'll enquire by some specialists and collect some statements.

By entering I follow TARN's statement ( 1951 : 396-397 ) : " The real question ( in the matter of the origin of the Buddha statue) at issue is not one of style or stones, but of the genesis of an idea ( the reader discovers the inspiration to the undertitle of this essay!). No one has ever put the Mathura Buddhas before Christian era, and usually, they are assigned to the late Kushan period, 2nd century AD, the association of the Kushan Huvishka with artistic activity at Mathura being indisputable... The 1st Gandhara Buddha is to be dated to about the Christian era, and the 1st Indian Buddha of Mathura, influenced by Gandhara, about a century later". And to put an end to all contest ( on can feel by the CAMBRIDGE professor, a slight move of irritation, where his Highlander temperament pierces ):" The evidence exists in the representation of a Buddha statue on a coin of Maues ( c. 80 to c. 58 BC )... this was pointed out in 1914 by Mr LONGWORTH DAMES ( Whitehead' Lahore Catalogue, JRAS, Vol I,1914, p.793) ...One reference to it : CODRINGTON, Ancient India,1926,p.38, note 2 ( If this attribution is correct, it is probably the earliest appearance of Buddha in coinage). Maues'conquest of Gandhara was not much earlier or much later than 70 BC and the Buddha statue must have been well established before he issued the coin: that dates the Gandhara Buddha to early in the 1st century BC at latest: this means that FOUCHER's chronology for the beginning of Gandhara statues was substantially right « (TARN 1951: 400-403): We'll never come to it again!

Sir John (MARSHALL 1960) is definitive: his preface needs no comment. It must be taken the way it was written. He starts with 5 affirmations:

- there were 2 distinct schools of Gandhara: the 1st at the 1st and 2nd centuries AD (FOUCHER and TARN have an other opinion); the 2nd, in the 1st part of the 4th and the 5th centuries AD. The material used seems to characterize them: first, stone, then, stucco;
- under the Sakas, to which are to be dated the oldest pieces, the old Hellenistic art was decadent in Gandhara (I underline «in", not "of");
- Taxila witnesses a clear resumption of the Hellenistic art under the philhellene Parthans (cf Chap.3), who succeeded the Sakas in the Northwest at the 1st century AD. That Parthan - Hellenistic art was to play a great role in the evolution of the school (remember "the near illegitimate grandsons"!);
- It is abundantly clear that the school knew its adolescence and maturity under the Kushans who ousted the Parthans c. 64 AD;
- it is also clear that the datation is facilitated by the examination of the different stones used.

Just a little remark, to elucidate the way our scholars work. TARN uses history and numismatic (while rectifying the latter very oft) and Marshall, art history and used material. They both come to a period of a little less than 100 years (from 70 BC to something AD) during which the Graeco- Buddhist moment with all its implications has had enough time to happen.

Then Sir John softheartedly speaks about that land of Gandhara, located on the west bank of the Indus, a country where a Greek could have believed to be at home: valleys of Peshawar, Swat, and Bajaur, at the border between India and that Western Asia that I would like to grant the name of Southeastern Europe instead of the usual one!. The inhabitants are cosmopolite as well as by their culture as their look: the old sculptures present them tall, noble, very near to the today Pathans (always MARSHALL), and to their dress fashion (baggy trousers and sleeved vests), the ones rather Greek, the others rather Indian faced. They spoke an Indian Prakrit, but wrote kharoshti, one Aramaic adopted by the Persian Empire in the Achaemenid times, as official language. Thus in Gandhara, they spoke "Easter"(Indian) and wrote "Western"(Aramaic). Buddhism seems to have penetrated c. the middle of the III<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Asoka). From that period on dates the stupa cult (with and without Buddha relics), become a special Buddhist symbol: it is precisely for the ornamentation of those stupas that the Buddhists spent their richness (cf TISSOT 1985: 126). Except for the dialogs, - besides apocrypha, - of Milinda (King Menander) with the arhat Nagasena, regarding the Buddhist faith, the documentation is rare on the relations that the Princes entertained with Buddhism. What is sure, is their open-mindedness in religious matters: and Sakyamuni's doctrine, with its then essentially ethical character, its logical reasoning, not yet ousted by the devotions bakhti and anusmrti, and by the underlining of the free will and the observance of the right middle, all that must exert a strong attraction to the Greeks. Anyway, supported, Buddhism was prosperous. And the Sakas, who followed, wherever it was possible, the politics of their Greek predecessors, did not lack adopting Buddhism as the official religion.

It is possible to measure the stability and continuity of the Greek art in Gandhara, and over the whole Northwest, from the striking series of coinage of those regions. They are not as perfect as their Bactrian ancestors, but they indicated local engravers, not only clever, but able to hand over their skills from generation to generation. That is true for the other arts.

When the Sakas came to power, most of the Greeks remained on the place: how to go back to Bactria, to the homeland of their fathers? Their consolation was great to state that their new masters had already been submitted to the influence of the Greek culture and was very familiar the "Greek way of life". One could legitimately presume that they would go on applying the rule dispositions established by the Greeks and encouraging the Greek art, imitating the coinage and following in all their predecessors'example.

The Sakas were all but not artists! The Greek art lowered and degenerated little by little. The Parthian Empire surrounded them and let no more exchange with the Western world! When the latter came to power in their turn, then all resumed: the Parthians declared themselves philhellene (ch chap 3) and proud of their Hellenistic culture. Not only their territories sheltered immense Greek colonies, but they were capable to entertain narrow trade links with the Mediterranean coasts. The example of Taxila illustrated perfectly that general resumption after it was taken by Gondopharnes.

Effectively Taxila is important, because it is the proof that around the end of the 1st century BC, there existed already in Gandhara local artists, capable to produce pieces in a decadent Hellenistic style, which served as a start base to the Buddhist art in that region (our concern), but that after the Parthian conquest (c. 25 AD, there was a striking amelioration in the character of Buddhist art.

To help visualize the situation, regarding the birth of the primitive Gandhara art, and considering all the trends appeared until now, this table is a résumé:

	MAUES (Last Greek King)	- 70		
				Trend FOUCHER/TARN
	SAKA (Dynasty)	- 30		
J-C	-----	0	-----	
	PARTHANS (Dynasty)	25		
				Trend MARSHALL
	KANISHKA (Great Kushan)	78		

It could be perhaps sustained with BUSSAGLI ( 1996 : 21 ), that the "art of Gandhara is first of all a sacred art... that delivers a message", if one considers only the period that I called "primitive" and that runs some 50 years on both sides of the year 0. But regarding the main features that he grants it (frontal, rigid, proportional symbolic) and above all its position «in front of a dialectic between two ways of understanding, feeling and expressing the sacred", because it is the product of permanent cultural interferences, that's why we are at work here.

Among the brilliant introductions to his (admirable) general survey on Gandhara art collections of the British Museum, ZWALF (1996: 67) forges the formula:" The more Greek in style, the earlier the work! » That is the exact FOUCHER's thesis, who despairing that a Bactrian source might be found for Greek art in those regions (whereupon SCHLUMBERGER laments too) proposed instead an eastward cultural movement, taking Hellenistic art across Iran in Graeco-Iranian form, so that Taxila and Puskalavati in a sense paralleled Palmyra and Dura-Europos in the West:

- as artists from Gandhara formed Central Asian Buddhist art,
  - Central Asian artists the art of Buddhist China,
  - Chinese artists that of Korea and
  - Korean artists that of Japan,
- so might.
- Graeco Syrian artists have created a Graeco Iranian art and
  - Graeco Iranian artists GRAECO-BUDDHIST ART.

This to indicate the early eastward transformation of Hellenistic art ad stress that, besides Alexandria of Egypt, the Syrian and Mesopotamian monuments offer the best agreements of details with Gandhara." (cf SCHLUMBERGER 1960:322-323).

Inside that highly probable referential frame, the Parthan art was actually an avatar of the Hellenistic art that reigned over Western Asia / Southeastern Europe. The Buddhists of Taxila were as prompt as those of Gandhara in using that new blossoming of the Hellenistic art. The Parthan conquest of the Northwest and the reopening of the communications with the Mediterranean coasts facilitated not only importations of "objets d'art" from Middle Orient and Egypt, but also flows of skilled artists and craftsmen, seeking their fortunes under he patronage of the philhellene Parthans. That period must have been fascinating which knew the efforts and the work of the artists to overcome their initial difficulties in order to harmonize the Greek art and the local ideas and to create from them a new synthesis of religious art adapted to the needs of the Buddhist church (No parallel, TARN exclaimed! cf MARSHALL 1960: 26-40).

After recension of 431 works plus 13 complementary ones, DEYDIER (1950: 17) allows himself 2 (two!) presumptions (!)- that's humility- :

- "a Hellenistic influence with Graeco-Iranian elements was exerted in Gandhara, via artists and traders from Middle Orient ( Syria, Mesopotamia, Iran ) come per surface and sea ;
- a Hellenistic influence, with elements belonging to the imperial roman art came from Alexandria of Egypt and perhaps from Rom too in Gandhara, also per surface , but above all per sea" ( both forms of influence having besides been able to penetrate simultaneously via the roman trade).

SCHLUMBERGER (1960: 316) brings some more precisions:

- the Gandhara art had no local ancestor as such;
- it was quasi exclusively interested in Buddhist monuments;
- it inherited at a time from the old Achaemenid Iran,
  - Greek Bactria
  - Nomads of the new Iran
  - Indian contribution of Buddhism and
  - Graeco Roman influence.

Therefore the question of its denomination is a little problematic. While concluding his recensions, DEYDIER lets FOUCHER speak (whom else, by Buddha!): " The attribute "Graeco-Buddhist", so strong that both words clash together, is eventually the most convenient to designate, by calling it, that original adaptation of the Hellenistic forms and ornamentations to purely Indian subjects: just don't forget to precise that the Greek style the Gandhara School borrowed its techniques of, is that, - still so badly known, - of the Hellenized Orient. It ought to be added that the dominant character turned cosmopolite is its decadent uniformity!" Indeed, and if the words clash together, it is not only because they speak different languages, it is also because each of them speaks of a different reality. The word "Greek" refers to the ethnic group, to the language, to the art, and the word "Buddhist" refers to religion, Indian of course, but history reports about many conversions, for whichever reason. Those Buddhists might legitimately be called "Graeco-Buddhists", without referring to Gandhara art: as to day there are Orthodox-Greeks. I don't know whether Indians, - Buddhists or Hinduisms, - have converted to the Greek religion; but be it the fall, by which name to call them? "Indians of Greek religion" seems to be the most correct way, whereby no reference to art. But what a horrible denomination! If the word does not exist, that means that one does not convert to the Greek religion, perhaps because there is none! Consisting of sculptures, architecture and literature, it is only one feature of the way the Greeks are: a culture, a civilization. Therefore our /their vocabulary: nation Greek (Attic, Ionian /Yavana, Corinthian, Macedonian,), ancestors Aegean (Mycenaean, Minoan ...), culture Hellenism (Hellene, Hellenistic...). The Greek religion is all that, plus still more...

We have to consider a last aspect: the concomitance between the soaring, better of the strong pushing of the Mahayana and the existence, even primitive, of the Primitive School of Art. NAKAMURA (1989: 156) thinks that «it is likely that the prototype of Buddhist statues existed prior to Gandhara's and Mathura's... The character of Buddhism which prevailed (in India) at the time of the Buddhist Art of Gandhara, was Hinayana. But the Sarvast Sect (one grandmother of Mahayana) was predominant in this area (Gandhara), when the 1st Buddha image was made « (NAKAMURA leans upon Osamu TAKADA, Bijutsu Kenkyu, n 243, Nov 1965: 1-20, who dates the Gandhara sculpture c. the end of the 1st century BC, too). For

curiosity, a finding of the eminent Italian archaeologist G.TUCCI (E.W.Vol 9, 1958: 227-230):" A Buddha statue, from whose shoulders come out was found in Gandhara. This coincides with the description in Mahayana sutra", goes in the direction of NAKAMURA (1989: 156-157).

The new religion which does not dare declare itself as a religion, satisfies much more the popular psychological demands, but also much better answer the fundamental questions asked by people who did not integrally belong to the Indian culture anymore, or,- if preferred, -to indianity. High standardised religious aspirations, welcomed and transformed by Buddhist thought, thanks to its adaptative potential and souple orthodoxy, seem to have contributed to the formation of that very complex "new religion", the evolution of which the Art of Gandhara follows , which it goes with and contributes,- be it "only" by the statue,- to determine. (cf BUSSAGLI 1996: 383 sq.).

I must conclude this chapter. It will be the task of that "Great Book of Hellenism", to deeply study that question ... Let's plot our position...

The Indus River actually is a border zone Europe and Asia come to butt together to. The Art of Gandhara is one of the historical locus, where it happened the "donation of a (Hellenistic) form" (the statue) to that "exportable part" of the (Buddhist) fund (the Bodhisattvas and the "new" Buddha of Mahayana). Be it under the mode Avalokitesvara ( Compassion) or Maitreya ( Buddha-to-be ), the representation of the Buddha itself ( between sambodhi = illumination and mahaparanirvana = ultimate achievement ) was to be more and more competed with those of the Bodhisattvas, i.e. the ones who remain or come back to serve the human beings, by maitri ( charity ), bhakti ( devotion) or anusmrti ( mystical union). We know, - he said it, - that the Buddha can do nothing more for anybody; he is no savior, but only the excellent witness of Dharma... The Graeco- Buddhist sculptor has a pretty good work to do.

## CHAP.8: THE OFFER AND THE DEMAND

..... That summer, they remained at the monastery, the three most Ancient. They still called themselves Arhat, at least they tolerated that the others called them so. They personally led the quite simple life of bhiksus, just their old age having let them be granted those posts of responsibility... All the other monks, the 270 others,- it was a middle sized monastery,- were gone as usual at every nice season to preach the Dharma along the paths of the Swat Valley they well know, the three of them. Their splendid monastery, quasi new, - they had just celebrated its 200 years of existence : the foundation dated to the time of Asoka, the great Maurya King,- was located between Barikot and Bazira, hardly some kilometers from the meeting of the Swat river with a small tributary, the Sanijara. The founders had chosen a half up hill site, near a thick woods of oaks and a flat place that must be used as wood reserve and veg garden. But actually the monastery had been built all around the majestic well under which an important spring flew and principally imposed the last choice. The monastery was exactly on the great trunk road from Balkh to Taxila.

But the last autumn, as the monks were back from mission, a lot of rumors had run through the house, especially when they went to work into the woods and the garden. Besides, those rumors have been heard by the Ancient for years already: they even spoke now of a new synod, so much tense the relation was between the old and the new spirit. There were those who wanted to only know the pure and hard doctrine of the 3 Jewels, the 4 Holy Truths and the 8-folded Path and the Discipline: all that decided one good time for all at the 1st synod of Rajaghra, the year after the Master's Mahaparinirvana. But here was that new sect of the Sarvastivadin, and the other one of the growing Mahayana, well appreciated by many monks,... here are those sects more attracting than ever, above all since one had seen in the Mathura region, like a resurgence, the marvelous poem of the Bhagavad-Gita spread all around the practice of Bakhti and Anusmrti! Besides, the monks had managed to get some sutras of the Prajanaparamita, that, -they said, - the people of the big cities were fighting over. Not only monks were taking part to those streams, but also upasakas and indianized foreigners, who all claimed for less rigor and more humanity, who were fed up with those inaccessible ways towards Sambodhi and felt themselves put by side from Mahaparinirvana. Of course, everyone knew that the Buddha had clearly said he is neither god nor man, only the Buddha; he had said too he could do nothing for anybody anymore and one must help oneself out of it, by seeking refuge uniquely to "one's own island". That was also too theoretical or too hard! At last, the upasakas had no place to meet together, no human faced statue which to address! Just stupas, lotus flowers, umbrellas, wheels or foot prints! While looking at the foreigners' polis and cantonments, with their temples and innumerable statues... they felt envious and wishful... They began having ideas...

The three Ancient knew that very well, and they were talking about the matter while eating their unique meal of the day, made of all sorts of herbs, some rice and water from the well. Besides, they understand quite well their monks and the others. They sometimes confessed themselves, under secret seal, that all was not false, in those claims, especially one of them, a "Late Called", who had strolled a lot between Indus and Ganges for his business, before he met a wandering monk and converted. He was that one who two years before had convinced

*the procurator of the community not to oppose the building of the big stupa in the inner yard. He had even managed to let it decorate with an ensemble of relieves, representing the different jatakas of the Master's legend. For example, there were that «Interpretation of Maya's dream" and also «The 7 first steps of the Child Buddha ". The monks had appreciated very much. Of course, as the community counted no sculptors, it had to address an atelier of sculpture of Charsadda, near Puskaravati, a good hundred kilometers more south. It was a little far, but that Greek had an excellent fame and had contributed the decoration of the Great Stupa at Hauti, - which can be seen from the road, along the Swat, just before Puskaravati. Sure, by a nearer look, one could state that he had had the " Greek blink", followed his natural and was inspired by Greek ideals, had used Greek techniques, Well, the expression was Greek! But he had known how to create an atmosphere, what the monks had called "the atmosphere of the Buddha". It was clear that he had made the effort to plunge into the sacred traditions and that he had tried hard to put all his skills at the service of narrating those legends. Briefly all were touched:" Well, he is a Greek, the monks said; he is a Greek artist, but he would deserve to be a Buddhist! "And they burst laughing! as at the pauses they strolled around the stupa by the left side and stooped suddenly still in front of "The 7 first steps of the Child Buddha"! They got used, since nobody knew the artist's name, to say «The Graeco-Buddhist" when they spoke of him!*

*The three Ancients wanted to speak frankly to each other of all that ran through their minds. They trusted mutually... But when things are said, they keep floating around in the air a while, and they quickly turn imperative... They were very conscious of their responsibility, - personal, collegial and communitarian. The most ancient of the Ancients began telling that, as a fresh monk, he had traveled down to Sanci: at that time the great stupa was being built, but he could remember all those Indian sculptors, - were they Buddhists themselves? - working at the relieves and toranas. «You know, he said, I think... But we must agree the three of us! Then we can speak to the monks! » Both the others smiled: they knew their elder: he had somehow guessed their thought, and indirectly asked them to speak it out, under the pretext it was his own! The "Latter" spoke, both the others already staring at him: actually he always had an original idea, most of the time an orthodox one, even if sometimes at the margin! «Well! I'll speak, he said. I don't ask you to answer me by yes or no. When I have let you hear my thought, I'll stand up and go strolling around the stupa. If you come and join me, I'll get your agreement. If not, we'll get back to our duties, and never talk about it again... OK? Well, I confess: I'm a Mahayanist, I'm practicing bhakti and anuśmṛti, I revere the Bodhisattvas, I've got, - while he showed them from under his cloth,- sutras of the Prajñāpāramitā, that I never quit, and I revere too the great Amitābha... I've still something to say,-(both the others, listening, still and with closed eyes up to then, stared at him, wondering which other heterodoxy he was about to confess!- He stared back at them, and with great softness at a time and resolute unshakable firmness, went on ) :And I adore the Buddha Śākyamuni!" All eyes shut a while, the time to take a deep breath. But immediately the voice resumed:" My idea is the following: let's ask the Graeco-Buddhist to sculpt for us a statue of The Buddha, standing, by himself, in the mudra of the peace. The stupa in the inner yard is vast, high and to all accessible, but at a time discreet and retired. We'll have a human sized statue made and we'll put it inside. It will scandalize nobody: no one wants to adore, will go there publicly, and respectfully. I spoke!" He was serene; the others had made no move. He stood up in a slight rustle of his robe, bowed to his confreres, walked out into the yard and started his periphrase around the stupa while lightly claudicating because of an old rheumatism. He had to wait no second. Almost at once and as agile as novices, without any*

word, both the others ran to him and strolled on with him around the "symbolic Buddha". They peeped at each other, - and which they still never dared to do, - they widely opened their arms for a long, very long hug.

Overfilled with emotion, they came back to sit down again, excited and shivering for joy. The most Ancient broke the silence: "At Bharhut, I know a rather good famed sculptor. Actually we come both of us from Vanarasi. My family came to settle here in the Northwest, and I lost him from sight. But I..." The "Late Called" intervened: "Why to fetch at Bharhut, Sanci or Bodh Gaya? Let's us help ourselves home "- "Are you serious? All those artists of the Ganges are Indians: even if they are not all Buddhists, they feel and see like us. Here we are almost abroad...! The matter is too important to ..."- "entrust it to the Graeco-Buddhist! Isn't t?" the "Late Called" intervened again speaking to the end! The Ancient pulled a face like the one turned the target of an insolence. The other stood at once, then stooped down before the Ancient and kissed his foot as a sign of penence and submission. The matter was closed: they had been fiends for too long a time to keep nemical more than a few seconds: «Why don't you want that we entrust that Indian task to Indian Sculptors? The "Late Called" took a while to think about. He must not fail: the stake was really too important, and he held to his plan." First of all, it is not a task exclusively Indian. The Buddha and the Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana are universal: they want to save all the human beings... even the Greeks, and a fortiori the Graeco-Buddhists", he added mezzo voce, which provoked all faces smile and turned him more secure for his second point " Then, I must confess that the style of the Ganges Schools seems to me heavy and out of date. They lack that grace and that divine elegance, - that atmosphere, the monks would say, - we all felt in front of the stupas relieves. If our faith is really new, if our religion is really new too, if Mahayana is the vehicle of the Maitreya, of the future, then let's choose an art that comes from over the other side of the mountains and the deserts and that will be able to go still beyond other mountains, other deserts-.... and other seas!..." His voice had turned soft, melodious and quasi magic; he could see the future: he was prophesying...Silence...Silence full of the decision to take...The most Ancient, suddenly, addressed the "Third One", who has said no word since the very beginning, and with the last phrases of the "Late Called» had lowered his head, so low that his chin was digging into his chest! » What do you say? » The "Third One» raised his head: he was weeping, for joy, of course: it was evident. And he could but nod. All smiled. The conference was closed. «To morrow, we'll go to Charsadda to meet that... how is it? The Ancient of the Ancient asked cunningly! And altogether shouted while laughing»: «The Graeco Buddhist!"

On their way to their duties, they passed by the low wall let unbuilt to serve as a look out post and saw their closest neighbor riding up the hill with his horse driven cart, along the path which from the valley leads to the monastery. They ran down to meet him." I come to let you know that to morrow I must go on the road to Taxila, up to the stupa of Hauti. If you have any need..." Our three friends looked joyfully to each other, with the neighbor wondering why. The Ancient spoke:" Could you lift us three to Charsadda? I know the round rip will take 4or5 days! But you'll find an accommodation at the hermitage of Hauti. I 'm sure that our Graeco-Buddhist will take us in "- "Who?"-" A friend of ours, we have a work to ..." "- entrust him!" the three monks spoke to the end roguish and happy! «Well, see you to morrow at the crossing. I'll wait by the bridge. You'll see me from your belvedere!"

The whole journey long, the three companions asked their neighbor and the people on the route, how they apply the Dharma, what they hold of the Sangha and what they think of the

*Buddha. All the answers comforted them in their decision and demonstrated that something must be undertaken. They did know yet that "vox populi vox dei". But they drew that conclusion from all the grieves against a Buddhism dry, hard and impracticable for the majority as well of the masses as of the monks.*

*At Hauti the monks were to get down, but the neighbor changed his mind and decided to drive them up to Charsadda «I want to see your Graeco-Buddhist too!" he said, with a gentle laughing!*

*The sculptor saw them coming from the distance... His atelier and his house were located upon a little hill too, a 100 m from the road. Noting that he cart lead to his place, he at once recognized them and ran to meet them... Of course he could take them in, this night and the others... And while walking by the cart, he called: " Maya!" A still young woman appeared under the canopy of the vast low house. All spoke Prakrit. The artist bad her to count 4 guests more for supper, although the monks exclaimed. They ate behind the house, under the grapes arches and the rising moon. A boy, around 10 helped the house mistress. Another one, 18, was as an apprentice by a parent's in Taxila. The mother came from Taxila too. The artist had emigrated from Bactria, at the now age of his elder son. He had found again here a life he had known in the past on the banks of the Oxus, an the landscapes of the Swat country, were like, they say, those of his very far home land, Greece, after the sayings of a parent, recently come to settle in Gandhara since the communications had reopened with the Mediterranean coasts " We work together. He teaches me the new techniques, and that gives me new ideas! He has worked at Alexandria of Egypt, on his way he stopped at Palmyra and at Dura Europos. I'm learning every day with him. You'll see him to-morrow. He is a pure Greek: he adores statues. Just to say! «The monks were very much moved. All was tired. The mother and the boy had prepared sleeping for 4 in the reserve above the atelier. All withdrew for the night.*

*Very early the monks woke up for meditation. The neighbor left for Hauti: he would fetch them the day after. As soon as the sun rose, a man rode in: "The Greek!" the monks said. "You've got it!" the man answered, who had heard it.*

*«So you want me to make a statue of Buddha!" They all were sitting under the big tree; the foliage of it could give shade to the whole place all around. «You know, that is a big decision of yours... I ain't a Buddhist, my wife is one. Our children don't know what to think about it. They ask us questions. I confess: I don't believe in much, only in my art. But I respect my wife's choice... Besides she thinks the same way as yours... But, this morning she had a curious saying: The Sakyamuni was just a man at the origin, since only a human being may turn into a Buddha; now he is the Buddha, he overpasses all the gods of India, who, to get salvation must turn themselves his proper disciples...If your friends the monks, she said, want to turn the Buddha into a god, they'll at a time diminish, lesser, belittle him... Well, she concluded, they must make him a god above the gods, a super god!" The monks kept silent. But the Ancient of the Ancient spoke:" Do you know which name our monks have granted you... The Graeco-Buddhist!" The artist smiled! «We trust you. You'll show us sketches. We'll tell you all the distinctive marks of the Buddha's body... You know: times are hard! The Greek kings have been ousted. The Sakas seem to tolerate us. But we hear some war rumors come from the Hindu Kush... Between us, Buddhists, is great dissension. We, we well feel that we are drifting towards a schism... And we feel too all the old superstitions emerging again and all the false prophets get abundant up to our good Valley of Swat : magic and mysteries are*

invading us. I'm old. I've seen all kinds of things: I'd like to bring our valleys a certain quietness and rest of mind! The faithful claim for a god, they wish to be helped in their difficulties; they wait for a reward in the paradises of the Buddhas if they apply and respect the Dharma... Brief they have only the religion left to give them a last hope! »-" And you you come to a Euro Asian Greek and to his Mediterranean companion for a help? Don't you fear to get a hybrid statue? I don't believe in god, in any god! For me the Buddha is a man: I understand nothing of sambodhi and nirvana! I only know how to sculpt statues: solo, groups, relieves, freeze, stone, marble, stucco! It's my job I earn my living with sculpting... They say I am a good sculptor: I know I can get a better one!" he smiled at his parent who smiled back to him. «Your religion is too different from my countrymen's, my race, my culture... How can I understand your sacred world of Illumination and reincarnation...My wife let me read some sutra of the...how do you call that...? I can never remember how to spell it correctly ..."-"" Prajnaparamita! «a voice from inside the house articulated: all laughed again..." I'll see no problem at all to show you some prototype, a smart manly statue, I'll try to turn the most sacred I can. I don't yet know how... But the risk is it is a pure invention, which will not meet what you wait for or believe in... It will be perhaps a simulacrum, a fiction... All the more since yourselves are, if I good got it, elaborating your own god... It will be a double fiction! «The monks still kept silent, because word- and voiceless. The parent was still. The boy was now sitting on his father's lap. The woman too stood still on the threshold... Time went away... Much time... Anyway it seemed long! «Ok, I'll try... but I want to be left alone the whole day!" .Joy burst out, the boy clapped in his hands, the monks jubilated. The parent shook his head. The woman crossed over the distance to her man who stood up, she kissed him while he took her in his arms. It was a deal!

The whole day, they left the artist and his companion alone. The three monks withdrew into the surrounding woods. At midday the boy brought them some food. The sun turned. On the soil, around a rudimentary table, sketches and designs were piling up and up. Silently both the companions were drawing on and on, correcting mutually, smiling at a just draw, an elegant drapé, a tender ear, a peaceful hand. When daylight began lowering, they collected their productions and imperatively, silently rejected all what did not "please"! A dozen boards were left. The boy had already rubbed the rejected ones clean for use. The monks re appeared. Still silently bowls were handed over and everybody took some food, peaceful and joyful with that common task to achieve. As if planned, the boy and the woman arrived holding 4 torches: every monk received one, the woman kept one for herself. And while the boy exhibited the boards on by one, the monks swept them with their torches, with a ritual attention. The "Late Called asked for a coal.» May I?" The Graeco-Buddhist" nodded his yes! Before the 6 pairs of astonished eyes the monk made retouches here, there, up there, down here, on the left, on the right... Always with delicacy and lightness. The "Graeco-Buddhist" suddenly ran to the atelier and back handing a board and a coal. Resuming all the monk's suggestions he drew the all again, handed it over to the monk who corrected again and handed it back to the artist. And again and again...It was very late when artist and monk let boards and coals on to the ground, exhausted! Exhausted, but happy with that magnificent emulation! The soil was scattered with hands, legs, heads, necks, arms, himations in drapés, heavy togas, ears, noses and eyes, eyes and eyes. Impossible to get satisfaction with all those eyes...The woman collected the all, entrusted the boy with it into the atelier. The night was clear, as clear as her voice when she said to her husband:" Why don't you go to the monastery. Go back with the monks! Stay in the valley as much time as you need. Meditate. Listen to the monks. Look at them. Draw... And when you feel ready, come back home. Your

*son and I shall wait for you. Then you'll put yourself at the stone!" And she added, because her husband hesitated: "Your parent will stay with us at home and look after us! Then the artist smiled. The monks, you can imagine! The child wished he might go with his father: but he felt the shouldn't! Instead he kept silent and snuggled to his father.*

*...The artist spent about one month at the monastery. Actually, he did not draw too much. He spent his time observing the monks, listening to the Ancient of the Ancient telling him the life story and the works of the Prince Siddhartha Gautama, from the Sakyas, the Buddha. He listened also to the Prajanaparamitasutra. While lying on his couch, he thought, dreamt and imagined. The last days he kept hours sitting on the stairs of the stupa: they did as if they did not see him: he did not anything anymore. And one morning, the neighbor came etc... Etc...Etc... And the artist left for the flat land, asking the Ancient to come again to the atelier within one month. His last word was: «I believe that I see...!"*

*... The excitement was bigger when one month later, our three monks, still with the neighbor, had journeyed again to Charsadda. They scolded their poor phaeton who did his best. He was excited too, and he had harnessed two horses, instead of one.*

*The artist was waiting for them: it was full afternoon. A frank sunlight enlightened the whole place before the house, where they noticed a sort of scaffolding, wrapped up into a grey cloth, torn at places. The monks had brought eggs, strawberries and aromatic medicinal herbs. They presented the woman with some sutras, and the boy with a fine bowl carved out of a light and solid wood... Now they stood, waiting to be introduced to.... They began walking towards the atelier, but the artist with a move of his chin shew them the scaffolding. They turned over to it, moved and unquiet. "Come on!" the artist invited them. The monks were giving the precedence to each other. Eventually the Ancient of the Ancient spoke «You're on!" addressing the "Late Called", who hoped that honor but did not believe it. Then he went forward slowly like in a ceremony, held the cloth firmly and gently let it fall down. The statue, intentionally placed at the sunlight, shone into it great splendor and pleased at once ( the eyes above all : at a time heavy enough, but not flabby; half opened into the nirvana; in Indian almond shape ,but just a touch of it ). The himation was absolutely Greek and the drapé had a grace of silk. One hand falling along the body seemed to grip one fold, while the other one in the gesture of abhaya gave quietness and rest. The usnisa, the urna, the earlobes: the artist had even granted him a halo of sanctity ... After a while of quasi infatuated astonishment the «Late Called " fell on to his knees: he was weeping...*

*They must come back to reality... They approached the artist to congratulate him. The three monks had so many questions... The artist just called loud: «Siddhartha!" Then the Buddha appears on the threshold and comes over to them: the elder son of the artist, with the euro Asian face inherited from his father and mother, dressed with a himation taken among the accessories of the atelier...He smiles... He places himself in the sunlight, near the statue and takes the same pose. Then he stands still... They can hear him breathe and give his breath over to the Buddha in stone...*

The reader needs some explanations! This chapter might have been written like the preceding ones in a documentary and distant way. The idea ran through my mind to narratively tell you a possible meeting between the Graeco-Buddhist artist and the Mahayanist monk, nearest sticking to the collected information. It can be found again in all details in BUSSAGLI

(1996: 23, 334-336, 364 ), DEYDIER ( 1950: 46-48), FOUCHER (1987 : 120), MEYER 1925 : 67-69) and TARN (1951 ( 404-405, 407); at last MARSHALL (1960 : (43), to whom I borrowed the evocation of the two relieves: " The interpretation of Maya's dream" and " The first 7 steps of the Child Buddha", which have been found in the Guide's Mess of Mardan, at 30 kms northeast from Charsadda and are now in the Peshawar Museum ( commentaries and illustrations : MARSHALL 1960 : 42-43 , fig. 54 and 55 , plate 34) ; and the description of the standing Buddha, found in the same place, but I could not guess in which museum it is now. I chose that Buddha especially, because it is very beautiful (FOUCHER, quoted by MARSHALL, says that "it is the most beautiful, and probably also the most ancient of the Buddhas which it has ever been granted to me to encounter "): there is a divergence between the two archeologists who date that Buddha at the extreme of each other: 100 BC for FOUCHER, 150 AD for MARSHALL! A third reason is that another statue of the Peshawar Museum, - that seems to come from the same atelier, has been found at Charsadda, the place where I intentionally make "my" Graeco-Buddhist artist live with his family. (cf MARSHALL 1950: commentaries p: 100-101; fig.132 and 131, in that order, plates 95 and 94, idem). Brief, I found it more suitable to recreate and make feel again an atmosphere, than to stun the reader,- as I just did in the immediately preceding lines,- with all kinds of data and references...But I must come back to it now regarding the proper work of the artist , with the accurate help of HEGEL.

HEGEL will formulate the question himself: «From where is the artist granted that gift and that capability to conceive and to complete? How does he produce his work of art? Raphael said he was just following a certain idea!" (HEGEL 1964c: 316). Remember Tarn's formula who wrote he was interested in "the genesis of an idea". An idea! For the Greeks, at least since Plato, the idea is a vision, in the English meaning of the word: a material intuition of the things, of the future, of a program, here, of an "enterprise". The artistic liberty of mind is reached only as much as the artist knows how to fully dilute the general meaning ( or sense )into the individual form that he must achieve and, at a time, regarding the sculpture, how to raise the physical forms up to the true expression of the spiritual meaning ( or sense )." The classical artist ( ) finds his matter in the popular beliefs, in the events that he can see and in those registered in the legends and transmitted by the tradition. The artist keeps his liberty in the sense that he ignores the engendering process of meanings apt to be represented artistically, but he finds an already existing content that he can seize and produce in all liberty. The Greek artists have drawn their subjects from the popular religion in which the Greeks had already started adapting what they had received from the Orient. On the other hand, the classical artist supposes a already enough high level of technical perfection, making possible the subordination of the sensible matter to the bids of the artist's will...,a very much advanced development of the manual processes that are attached to art (cf BUSSAGLI 1996 : 334). That development is only conceivable inside an official religion. « (HEGEL 1964b: 26). That quotation will have perhaps seemed a little too long, but I hope not tedious. It is the perfect theoretical commentary to my fiction : every element is listed, analyzed, signified and ordered to show the mental, sociological, technical and religious processes of the enterprise ( If you want, read Hegel again and remember all the hints at the fiction : I did it! Nothing is missing!)

The imagination of the artist is the subjective creative activity (To follow a certain idea), capable to turn the work of art into an object of intuition (vision) for the others: it appeals to their sensibility (cuff HEGEL 1964c: 315, passim). Let us call that creative imagination,

HEGEL asks ( 1964c : 317), " fantasy..., a name and a meaning that let seize the reality and its forms, and engrave into the mind ...the various images of the existing reality,... of life..." The artist must have much traveled, seen, heard and much retained; he must never have ceased spreading the circle of his intuitions and possess an intimate familiarity with the internal human world, with the passions of the soul and all the ends that animate it." The artist must be conscious of what he wants, of the aims he sets forward, of the work he wants to achieve". (HEGEL 1964c: 319).

When leaving the monastery,- after one month of retreat, somehow, a retreat of "election», of choice and decision, Ignatius would say,- with these words : " I believe that I see !", the artist summarized all the mental processes, or rather the result they had lead him to : the decision to represent his own son Siddhartha, who,- besides the name intentionally directed to the final impact,- totalized the eternal youth of the deified Buddha, the Eurasian ( graeco-indian) beauty, the Apollo of his statuary specialty, the satisfaction of the client's demand, the respect of the popular feeling, the acknowledgement of his capacities and the excellence of his payment, I presume!. Our Graeco-Buddhist artist was perfectly conscious of what he did not want, of the aims he had a priori rejected and of the results he had refused to be forced to. That was all the work of "purgation" of his «spiritual exercises". When going down to the flat land, he had passed a limes, he had " sub-limed."

He must have found a very strong interest in that work, so that he could let the subject live in himself, be obsessed by that what should be present in it, not have any rest as long as that mysterious "something" had not been granted an artistic form and completed. Then he must learn to forget his proper subjective particularity, in order to totally plunge into the subject: he must reduce himself to only be the form fashioning the content that had seized him! (HEGEL 1964c: 328 sq: admirable!).

It was out of his own soul and internal life that our Graeco-Buddhist had to draw the elements of his own incarnation into that statue. His originality regarding that precise statue, - according to history, - was the power of his subjective inspiration that let him, instead of conforming himself to a certain usual way, seize a subject rational as such (cuff infra) in order to fashion it, while obeying only to the voice of his artistic subjectivity, so that his own originality appeared as being that of the statue itself: the evidence of the piece of art and of its creator. (cf HEGEL 1964c: 332,338).

By calling "Siddhartha!" the artist recognized his work, (his son!) and the future that he predicted to his work. By putting himself as the model, near the prototype (the statue), Siddhartha gave it over the breath necessary, at a time to animate it with his own life, and to free himself from it. At last, standing in the light of the West Paradises ( it is sunset, the sun sets at the West ), the Buddha, born to a god's life, contemplated the eternity which he was , against his express will, condemned to! Very hard!

# THIRD PART

## THE CATALYZED PARTHENOGENESIS

Parthenogenesis! Why that zoobiological term? And first of all what does it mean exactly? The dictionary says: «reproduction from a gamete, especially as a normal process in invertebrates and lower plants...Formerly also asexual reproduction as by fission or budding." In both cases no sexual coupling of whichever kind; be it in the animal or vegetal reign, no complex structure of the organism; at last, be the start from a gamete or from a cell fission or from two budding cells into one : it does not make the slightest difference! The parthogenesis actually is the most solitary mode of reproduction.

Does it mean,- in order to decipher the metaphor.- that both the graeco-hellenistic and Indian Buddhist contributions to that reproduction act which constitutes the construction of the graeco-buddhist statue of the Buddha, were just a kind of "budding", without mutual transmission and assimilation of the respective hereditary characteristics of both partners, like in the most elementary animal reign? As if the cultural-religious heritages of both Hellenism and Buddhism would have, during the spasm of the Gandharan embrace, transmitted to each other only the objective terms of the exchange included in the contract : i.e. one "cult object", corresponding to the prior conditions and consequent retribution! Since no Buddhist dared make that Buddha solo statue, - although they felt that by making it they crossed the last obstacle, reached the no return point, achieved the ultimate transgression,- well, in those uncertain times when empires were swaying and sects hardening, a natural "opportunity" appeared. «Let's entrust the job to the foreigners, to the expatriates, to those who will never be Indians, even if they believed to have converted to Buddhism; let's entrust that job to the Greeks, heirs of a statuary techniques, well tried and tested, from here up to Bactria, Margiana and Arachosia; if we offer them enough money, - they are greedy traders, - we can then demand what we will! So, we'll keep our hands clean! To us the statue we need, to them the responsibility of the making...And when we possess our statue, we'll do out of it, what we want! That's the statue we want, not their religion, their ideas, their world vision. Therefore we must be watchful, precise and provident; we have to personally answer that question: what are we to do with that statue?

Yes, it is likely that the embrace actually was only a commercial shake hand. They didn't make love! No transmission of psycho- mental gametes! It was processed the way of an artificial budding, a construction game, a Lego budding: like a 50/50 joint venture. There was an act, but with condom. Hermetically, more or less. It is true that nobody escapes totally safe from any meeting. The sight must have been getting used to western accessories: after all, it is an image, something to see; it has to somehow obey the western mode. In those times of international exchanges, which resumed between the Mediterranean Sea and the Bengal Gulf, man could see so many exotic products pass by and by! A touch of exotism at the statue would turn it into up to date. The people will state that religion changes too, that it is "modern", that it does not keep always being in tow... like that Hinayana and those Arhats who have only the Master's name in their mouths, but do nothing to help the good folk who

do not "eat" those indigest treaties they understand nothing of, but want a worship place, worship and somebody to worship! Worship: the Mahayana, - with statues, bhakti and paradise, - is going to provide them with one! The Beaujolais nouveau has arrived!

That mental attitude, - if I may dare bring the events nearer to each other, - has been that of the Roman Catholic Church, very early, but above all in the Middle Ages, regarding money and speculation. From the theological point of view, financial speculating was inadmissible, because it exercised with a value that is not a market one in itself: the only permitted profit regarded the merchandise itself, not their market value. Nevertheless, financial speculating was very profitable and was practiced on the sly by lay as well as by church people. Thus the Church, - as an expert in compromises when they suit to its interests, - chose again the Chosen People, to entrust them that criminal activity, which came under Church Courts... if it was perpetrated by a Catholic! But since Jews are not Catholics, - at least in general,-and that, as a deicidal race, they anyway were already "damned", a little more "sin" could turn their (unlucky) situation only slightly worse. To them the punishment for the sin, - i.e.: to the Jewish bankers, - to us the profit,-i.e. to the Catholics! Arbeitsverteilung, Marx would say! So far for the responsibility.

What regards the incompatibility of mental procedures and the a priori absence of any will to communicate, share and adapt in the matters of world vision, (Weltanschauung), I personally know nothing more hermetic than the Chinese blunt refusal. That doctrine is usually applied to whichever "international exchange" in techno economical matters for example, but it is valid as a structural way of doing in any matter." Wai xi nei zhong»: what is western (xi), must be kept outside (wai), what must be inside (nei) must be Chinese (zhong). Zhong guo = the Land of the Middle = China! All Chinese move ever is and may only be centripetal, - middle centered-, the back to the exterior. The rest, all the rest is only "wai", -exterior-, then uninteresting. The "xi" (European, western, occidental) presence is just tolerated as an unavoidable evil. Of course that state of the things is changing: but before the evolution reaches to the qualitative threshold, where the conversion is operated, there will still be much despair among the western/xi joint ventures in China!

Now it may be asked with reason whether the graeco-buddhist art has ever been (has ever wanted or asserted to be) a sacred art. That the Hellenistic art in Gandhara, - that non-Mediterranean grandson of Hellenism- in its religious department have received commands from the Buddhist Church, it has just fulfilled the contracts, - besides very profitable, since so many monasteries were then been founded in those regions because of the Mahayanist success. But all that was only business. The godsend (!) was that business was getting good and the ateliers opened branches from the Amu Darya (at Ai Kanum) to Kandahar (Afghanistan) and from Merv (Turkmenistan) to Buképhala (Punjab). It must have emerged specialists in sacred art, even as much learned as the theologians of the Buddhist monasteries, but as artist, sensible to beauty, wherever it might come from!

I very much appreciate the remark of LVP 2 (1935: 314) regarding the Gupta art, the beautiful sitting Buddha of Sarnat falls into: "We well know how much the Hindu soul does love excessiveness and manierism, Mahabharata outrageousness and the polishing up of the classical literature... The masterpieces of the Gupta period mark in the art history one moment which is the lest Hindu of that long history: as being unique! Artists might meet, who with a sure technique have created figures located at the limits of naturalism and

imagination, which is classicism. It is Indian since those bodies, attitudes, clothes, are of India and one may recognize psychological marks of India. But also, it just simply is artistic. Which is admired here, is not exotism, besides certain, of those masterpieces, but which makes them masterpieces; and he goes on (quoting A.B.KEITH): "unusual beauty of figure, dignity of pose and restraint and refinement in detail". And if HAWELL (always in LVP 2 1935: 313) insists on "the high spiritual quality of the Indian conception of "what is divine", such as it is expressed into the Gupta sculpture", "it simply is (MARSHALL answers) because this precise spirituality might not express itself into the Art of Gandhara, - buddhist or not, - because the latter is an art based on western traditions, incompatible with its development."

Perhaps VALLIN ( 1987 : 140) is right : " Which seems to constitute the permanent ideology ( since the Greeks) of the Occidental is the belief in the reality of the Individual ( the identification between Reality and Individuality ), in opposition to the fundamental ideology of the traditional Asia ( Mahayana, for example) ...The Eastern ...tends to identify Real and Universal : "tat tvam asi " ( tat = the supra personal Absolute ; tvam = you , as Individual ; asi = are , i.e.: you are the Absolute )"... How will there ever happen a mutual fecundation between "the hope of the Occidental, - which is not to die anymore, - and the hope of the Eastern, - which is not to be born anymore?" (FOUCHER 1987: 27)

The parthogenesis was catalyzed by Hellenism, which for the first, unique and last time, - TARN reminds, - put its powerful competence at the service of a religion which was to him a totally strange one. The Graeco-Hellenistic art played the role of a chemical catalyser, as it intervened into the operation Buddha-solo, only as much as this operation was the practical historical conjunction, - in that place in the world, - of the conditions of possibility of such an initiative. Did the demand come from the Buddhists themselves, - as non-sculptors and opportunists, - (cf my fiction, chapter 8), or did it come from the Greeks craftsmen, - as sculptors and opportunists too (the fiction can as well turn my artists into traders in religious art): that does not make the slightest difference. In both cases, "opportunity makes the thief", - i.e.: the existence in Gandhara of ateliers of sculpture, run by Greeks whose fame was enough established. The motivations of both the contract partners were and remained secret personal: means to perform their religious politics (statues of Buddha solo to establish Mahayana) on one hand; on the other hand, commercial politics (marketing) of those means (the Graeco-Hellenistic specialty in matter of statuary).

Moreover my story of «The Sculptor of Charsadda" could be continued. Let's imagine it while considering all the historical, economic and religious data of the time. We'll call our friend Alexander, and his (recently arrived) parent Eulogos (" He who can speak well"). All are back home, after the delivery of the first statue of a Buddha solo ever at the monastery of Barikot: here are Alexander and Maya his wife, Eulogos his parent, and both sons, the younger, Ananda (not yet introduced) and the beautiful Siddhartha who was the model!

..... *It was a good deal, and the monks gave to understand that Alexander was being turned into the sole supplier of the monastery in matter of religious art. "However, Alexander was commenting, I've got the feeling that it is still too early for us to distribute largely the Buddha solo. The monks over there have taken their decision: I wonder whether we don't need an intermediary step, a less revolutionary one, more practicable by the majority, which would prepare the clients to a large scale commercial*

*offensive we could launch, for example... "- ...for the 500 the anniversary of Siddhartha's birth (everybody burst laughing, looking at the elder son who fully blushed at once), I mean the Prince Siddhartha!" Maya concluded, while stroking her first born's head, who had a cute move of satisfied irritation.*

(This would date the event in 60 BC. Were it the 500th anniversary of his Nirvana, the datation would be then 20 AD: we respect the extreme dates of the scientific historical apparition of the first ever Graeco-Buddhist statue of the Master!)

*«But we should found an artist union, I don't know exactly what... a guild, a corporation. We could begin with our colleagues in Charsadda, Mardan, - where I know excellent ones, - and in Taxila, of course, dear Eulogos, where you already got famous."- Well, but what to tell them?" Eulogos lisped with his slight tongue defect." What? You, the good-speaker, you ask that question? » All laughed, with Eulogos as the first one!*

*Suddenly Eulogos got serious. All turned silent and he began in a sad voice." Yes, I'll tell them what is become out of our homeland...*

*(1st case: we are in 60 BC)... Since Pompeius entered Athens, some 8 years ago....*

*(2nd case: we are in 20 AD)... Since Augustus entered Alexandria of Egypt, some 50 years ago....*

*life is no more so nice at home! The Romans are granted all the jobs, and their artists all the commands. They try to imitate us, they can't manage. Their togas fall like lead mantles, compared with our immaterial himations: their philosophers, generals and emperors have the rigid blink and features of the dead. It is a fascist art, at the service of mad and ambitious masters .( His voice sounded painfully, and the slight lisping added to it a naive note, the effect of which was a huge contrast to his beard á la Vajrapani, and his long hair á la Manjusri added to nostalgia a childish touch)... Yea, you' right, Alexander, I'll tell them that I left the Aegean sea and my atelier at the Cape Sounion, near the big temple of Poseidon, to join them on that foreign earth, but so much welcoming, prosperous and eventually so likely to my native Attica!... There is work for us here. Before the Romans come,- and they are already coming, the trade is at its utmost, the roads of the caravans are crowded,- we must get established, organized, united and prepared : the "Buddha Solo" could turn our exclusivity!"- "Bravo!" all exclaimed together, clapping in their hands, while Maya, helped by Ananda was pouring some lassi into the new bowlset, presented by the monks at the delivery of the first ever Buddha Solo ... of the series! " Then I'll speak" Alexander said, looking over at Maya first : " Correct me if I 'm wrong...Before he became a Buddha, Gautama was a Bodhisattva on his way towards the Bodhi ( the Buddhcity ), isn't ?( Maya nodded her yes ). It is well that Buddha-before -the Buddha, if I dare say, that you,- the adepts of Mahayana and the practicants of the Bakhti and Anusrmti- honor particularly, rather than the Buddha himself, whom you find too far away and inoperative, according to his own sayings ( Maya went on nodding yes), well..."- " Let's, euh... Papa, you make Bodhisattvas! I accept to serve as model! So, everybody can see it's the same Siddhartha, before and after the Bodhi of Gaya!" All had turned over to the elder son, who standing went on, superbly untying the strip that retained its abundant hair:" Look, I've got long curly hair!"... Eulogos remembered the Diadoumenos, attributed to Phidias (BOARDMAN 1993: fig.230), and the Dionysos of Delphi and Thassos, the small northern island where he had stayed a time (BOARDMAN 1993: fig: 77, 79,80). «Yes! he shouted, passing from his old dream to the next vision, let's make Bodhisattvas."- " The Bodhisattva we love the most "Maya*

*said, coming near Siddhartha and passing her arm around his waist," is Maitreya: he is as beautiful as light and endless charitable! »-" OK, Maitreya!" Alexander said." And what about me?" Ananda sniveled." You already are on the stupa of the monastery: you served as the child Buddha and his first seven steps!-" Yes, but I'm a big boy now!""- " Well, you'll serve as Avalokitesvara, as soon as your mother finds you're ready for that!""- " Yes, love! Then your father can serve for Eulogos to make a glorious Manjusri! » While all laughed again, Alexander who wanted to speak the last word, solemnly declared:" Eulogos, you'll be my first...." and looked around for complicity at the whole family: immediately all together loudly burst laughing and articulating:" Vaj-ra-pa-ni !"*

*The end!*

The further I plunge into that inquiry, the deeper my conviction turns that the statues of the Bodhisattvas preceded the Buddha-Solo, and filing this way: Maitreya, Avalokitesvara and Manjusri, for simple reasons of opportunity and carefulness, but also of waiting and success. And preparing the 3rd type to come, the ascete Gautama ( TISSOT 1985 for the Bodhisattvas : marvellous; for the ascete MARG 1985 : 6 ; KHAN 1994, cover and fig.23 and TISSOT 1985 : fig.127, and last cover; and ZWALF 1996 : fig.182). Thus are constituted between c. 50 BC and 50 AD the paradigmatic figurative figures:

- the Bodhisattva Siddhartha, and the Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana: Maitreya, Avalokitesvara and Manjusri (later);
- the ascete Gautama;
- at last, when the minds are ready to accept it, the Buddha Sakyamuni Solo ( cf FOUCHER 1987 : 116-117 and LVP 2 1935 : 352-353 ), which brings the development forward, by launching the form of the Sino Japanese Buddha, issued from Mahayana too, but not from Gandhara art : Amitabha).

In that story with the Bodhisattvas, perhaps is it to see that far away figure of the hero, that of the Mahabharata and Ramayana, of course, but of that one too who crosses all the religions questing for salvation, because the hero can bring a help. Remember that only one man has been deified in the Greek mythology: Heracles, the half brother of Apollo. Let's listen to VERNANT (1974: 89-91 passim) our expert for the matter: his definition of the hero, - at least some of it - can be applied to the Bodhisattvas by many aspects: "The hero keeps in the beyond his proper name, his personal figure...He appears as a man, alive in the past and who...was promoted to a quasi divine status ... (but) nevertheless has to assume the human condition (hardships, limitations, suffering, death). What defines him, which is his achievements: what he dared undertake and was successful in? He figures Action in a paradigmatic way: Action which creates, inaugurates, initiates...and ensures Victory...at last, while abolishing his own limits...he transcends the human condition... and joins to the divine power. What characterizes the heroic achievement, that is disinterestedness...He does not have success in impossible matters because he is a hero; he is a hero because he was successful in impossible matters."

The Greek genius has revealed itself only in the fact that they were those who had "that idea" and turned it into the stone: it really was, (cuff HEGEL) a Human Form (but that's was the only thing they knew how to do!). Like Raphael, they just followed "their unique idea"... up to that end, indeed!

«Genesis of an idea" turned into a statue.

## FIFTH SECTION

### THE IDIOSYNCRATIC MOMENT

*When the French v.g. want to speak or write with concision, they must use " Graeco-Latin" originated words. My titles are the demonstration of it: to name the different parts, eg. «transgressions, artificial fecundations " are Latin. But with "parthenogenesis, catalysator" and now "idiosyncratic", later" iconogrammic", that's Greek! We are in the tone of the theme, you'll say, while excusing me!*

Actually, the substantive "idiosyncrasy", adjective «idiosyncratic" says all with one word. But two in Greek: "idios" (original) and "sunkrasis" (mingle). A mixture without parallel! The "moment" in physics, is the point in time ( the D Day ) and space ( the place X )of the resolution of two forces form different origins : at sea, to get to a destination located at 12 by your watch, if the wind blows from the right ( port side ), the cape is to be put somewhere at 2 or 3 by your watch, and maintained, during the whole drift to port, in order to correct permanently the route and get to the aim at 12 by your watch. The meeting point of the port wind and the cape resistance is the moment; the resolution is the aim imperatively imposed by the helmsman.

The Greek Art, - the first force, - is not a simple ornament, but a need living and imperative of the Greek religious feeling. From it, we may explain, in spite of the difficulties of the statuary, that incredible quantity of sculptures, those forests of statues of all kinds, which stood up to 1 and 2000 in one only polis, at Elis, Athens or Corinth eg. and even in every small village (cf HEGEL 1964c: 59).

The Buddhist Art, - the 2nd force,- up to the moment of the meeting, was on one hand an abstract symbolism, aniconic and "sacramentary" ( lotus flower, wheel of the law, umbrella, empty throne, stupa, foot print : sometimes up to two deers, figuring the Deer Garden of Sarnat, where the Buddha, quite brand new from his Illumination, went to, in order to let the five ascetes who have left him, the deceived, know the success of his enterprise : it was his 1st sermon). On the other hand, it was a narrative art : the relieves of Sanci, Bharhut, Amaravati and Bodh Gaya, all schools together, dispatched the jatakas, all the episodes of his anterior existences, the four big events of his last life ( Birth at Lumbini/Kapilavastu, Illumination at Bodh Gaya, 1st Sermon at Sarnat and Mahaparinirvana at Kucinagara), with the 4 miracles, attributed to him ( at Sravasti, Vaisali, Rajaghra and Samkasya); and his whole legend starting with Maya's dream , his mother and the white elephant).

The "lack" was the Buddha himself, by himself, with nobody around him, beyond his legend and even his historical existence! The Greeks had too symbolic representations: the helm, shield and owl of Athena; the wings of Hermaeus; the trident of Poseidon; the bow of Artemis and of course the lightning of Zeus .They practiced also the narrative sculpture: just think of the metopes and the freezes of the Parthenon and Pergamon.

But, over and above, they had THE STATUE!

## CHAP. 9: THE ARCHETYPE APOLLO

His identification sheet in the mythology indicates that he is the son of ZEUS and LETE (the Goddess of Forgetting), and the grandson of Chronos (Time), by his father. He has at least one sister Artemis (Huntress and Caretaker of animals) and a half-sister Athena (at a time Warrior, Artist and Wisdom); at least five brothers: the beautiful Hermes (the News Bearer), the son of Maia, Hephaestus (the Blacksmith), the son of Hera, Dionysus (The god of the Wine), the son of Semene... and the hero of the heroes, Heracles, the son of Alcmene, the only man to have been deified. I wrote that Apollo had at least 1 sister..., because first, the stallion carrier of Zeus was quasi infinite... (of all the gods, he seems to be always at it!); then, if Athena is but a half sister of Apollo, she is the daughter of Zeus alone: since she was born by parthenogenesis, come out of the thigh of her father. Well, Eva came out of a rib of Adam in the Garden of Eden, and Siddhartha out of his mother's side in the Gardens of Lumbini! (For Zeus's - complete? - descendance, cf BELLINGHAM 1989: 16-18). The sheet indicates also that Apollo was born on an island, and even under the only tree of that island, a palm tree. His beloved residence was Delphi where his prophetess, the Pithy gave her oracles. He apparently had some annoy with his half brother Heracles regarding one tripod. Apollo dedicated himself to the fine arts, poetry, eloquence and even medicine. At last, he joined to Orpheus, to build eternal life!

To get a diversified idea of his representation, I consulted with great satisfaction some art books. I selected thirteen images: here they are, with their usual denominations and their approximate datations, all BC:

1-Piraeos	530-520	BELLINGHAM 1989	page26	Athens
2-Belvedere	4th c.		28	Rom
3-Omphalos	460	BOARDMAN 1992	fig 66	Athens
4-Mantua	460		65	Pompei/Naples
5-Kassel	450		68	Kassel
6-Tiber	450		69	Rom
7-Civitavecchia	5-4th	SMITH 1991	74	Civitavecchia
8-Cyrene	3rd-2nd		75	British Museums
9-Tralles	3rd-2nd		76	Istanbul
10-Sauroctomos	4th	BELLINGHAM 1989	page 35	(?)
11-Acropolis	450	BUITRON 1992	58	Kassel
12-Chatsworth	460-450		100	British Museum
13-Piazza Azmerina	(?)	CLAYTON 1990	33	Palermo

But I think I must add some images of "Kouri", those young men, at the border of the archaic and classical periods. They were "Offering Statues» to Apollo, precisely and filed by their presences the proper (and unlucky) absence of the donators by the god. We remember (chap.6) the "colossos», root "col". well, we find again in the word "kouros", the same root, but with the lingual/dental variation " l/d" , that we met to day in Greek and Spanish, for example cataRina/cataLina. The diphthongization of «o " into «ou» is purely dialectal: c-ou-r equals c-o-l : C O/OU R/L .

The "kouros" is the first and permanent great anthropomorphic form of the Greek statuary: all the others will ensue from it. Here are 5 of them:

1-Melos	55o	BOARDMAN 1993	fig 101	Athens
2-Ptoon	55O		119	Thebes
3-Keos	53O		144	Athens
4-Kouros	53O-52O	BUITRON 1992	page 78-79	Athens
5-The Charioteer	5-4th	BOARDMAN 1992	fig 34-35	Delphi

At last my intuition, informed with so many hours of contemplation, demands that I refer too to 7 portraits of Alexander; the first 3 are, after SMITH (1991) the three types from which the following production will ensue:

1-Azara	33O	SMITH 1191	fig 6	Louvre
2-Dresden	33O		7	Dresden
3-Erbach	33O		8	Athens
and				
4-Egypt	3rd		9	British Museum
5-Macedonia	3rd		288	Pella
6-Syria	2nd		264	Jerusalem
7-Alexandria	2nd		249	Cleveland

Here is my collection on the quest of an Apollonian archetype: 13 Apollo, 5 Kouros and 7 Alexander. Precisely, because it is from the first "kouros" of Ptoon (Beotia) or of the small islands of Melos and Keos (at the very time of Siddhartha's birth), via "The Charioteer" of Delphi (circa 400 BC), that the great classical anthropomorphic form will, in an extraordinary way, be incarnated in the figure of Apollo, with all the variations which my catalogue is an illustration of. With Alexander, it seemed that the god (Apollo) was incarnated no more into a piece of marble, but in the Human Form itself of Flesh and Bone of that Man, during his flashing passage on earth. The same way as the Hero Heracles, half brother of Apollo, had been before, as a reward for his "works and days", thus the faces of Le Louvre, Dresden and Athens (which get younger in the file) and the faces of Thebes and Delphi are those which have engendered or preceded the Apollo - whose Eulogos, our sculptor of Taxila, could admire the images all over the falling Hellenistic empire, during his pre-Gandharan peregrinations.: he must have drawn sketches, which he jealously kept secret and shows with comments to his parent Alexander, in the atelier of Charsadda, Swat Valley, Gandhara, year 0 something more or less.

If Apollo was actually chosen or managed to impose himself, it is a good proof that Hellenism still lived on and on and that only a Greek could have that genial idea. We know now, that the "Hellen" (Yavana/Ionian, Danaean or Attic) is at a time psychologically "pious", but metaphysically "atheistic: polytheist. He reveres all possible gods it seems necessary to revere. He does not have any problem with any of them if it exists. He is always on the spot to create a new statue, for a still unknown god! It is his way to worship: making god statues.

In its preliminary phases, the Gandharan Buddha has inherited the face of a transfigured man, an image that the Greek mentality of the artist animated with personality, while his techniques imparted to it a formal plasticity unseen up to then: an essentially apollonian face in the physiognomy and the treatment. A deliberate choice, it seems, since its attributes make it a remarkable instrument, convertible into a Mahayanist half deity. Physically, it represents the achieved idealization of the Human Form, a model appropriate to the glorified body of the Buddha. In the mythology, Apollo is the doctor who is in charge of the purification, (sanation), of the sinners, of the protection against the wolves (Lycophylactos): he is the shepherd. But overall, this god championed the *media via*, (the middle way), recommends moderation, and crowns the all with the "gnoti seauton" (« know yourself"). We'll see in the last chapter that the whole Buddhist Mahayanist «grammar" will be applied to it. The emphasis will be set upon the very person of the Buddha, when telling the story of its life: it will take the form of a series of episodes in a logical sequence. The Greek mind, with its precise conception of time and space, will inject an efficient dramatization.

Let HEGEL (1964a: 1942) speak the last word: «The Greek god in no abstraction. It is individual and receives a form which is near the natural ones."

## CHAP.10: THE ARCHETYPE BUDDHA

We must not forget that at the time the Buddha had never yet been represented, i.e. the archetype is purely abstract and has to be understood the following way: were the Buddha to be represented as a solo, it should possess such and such characteristics. The catalogue existed (RENOU 1947-53: annexes), not in order to represent the Master, but to draw out of it all sorts of informations and teachings.

Those characteristics are called "laksanas" and "mudras". The laksanas are the attributes of a transcendental being (mahapurusa)" who may also be a Universal Monarch, are a set of 32 principal signs or body-marks of which only some appear on sculpture. The most striking is the usisa, later defined as a bump of spiritual intelligence on the top of the head and connected with yogic conceptions. In Gandhara... it is represented as a bun-chignon... The urna, textually a tuft or whirl of hair between the eyebrows at the root of the nose. The sculptural device of protected fingers from breakage by a stone membrane may correspond to what described as webbed fingers in the texts; another attribute, the wheels on the palms and soles is not invariable, but the long earlobes, although not listed among the laksanas generally appear and are explained by the weight of ear pendants worn during the secular life... Rarely without a halo... The mudra is used to designate certain significant gestures performed by the hand....fewer in Gandhara...The abhaya seems the only gesture made by standing Buddha images ( "without fear, bur also instruction and assent")... Seated figures have the mudra of meditation or dhyana...The preaching gesture is called dharma cakramudra... And the earth touching gesture bhumispara (context of assault of Mara).

The robes are recalling a Greek mode with himation"

Those are a posteriori the descriptions given by ZWALF (1996: 39-41) of the representable elements, which, except the himation were supplied by the demand. The face was to be that of an Indian that ought to look not too much Indian...

And the eyes, the blink, the interior vision: those of the kouros that "sees" the absent one whom it represents by the god, of Apollo that contemplates a world of light and beauty and of Alexander, because

Pour avoir trop aimé les beautés périssables  
Il sait quelle tristesse est au fond du fini !

For having loved perishable beauty too much  
He knows which sadness lies in deep down finite!

## SIXTH SECTION

### THE ICONOGRAMMIC MOMENT

«The piece of art... is a question, an appeal to soul and mind .The quality of art and the extent in which the reality that it represents is conform to its concept, are submitted to the grade of fusion and union existing between the idea and the form. A piece of art is all the more perfect since its content and its idea correspond to a deeper truth". So does the master of philosophy George Wilhelm Friedrich HEGEL (1964a: 142).

The Mahayanist troops needed a banner: visible, legible, identifiable and exportable. The conquest, inside and outside, was depending on it. All church, all sects, all religious order differentiates from the others and chooses its marks. The statue solo was to concentrate upstream the whole hope and waiting that had suscitated it; downstream it must beforehand subsume dialectically (the Marxian *Aufhebung*) its four folded character of visibility, legibility, identifiability and universality. The statue ought to be constituted as a reference and it had to do it «hic and nunc" (here and now)," some when" between BC and AD, on the superior course of the Indus, by means of Buddhist hearts and strange hands. The enterprise was much more than a risk. The statue-message (that's what icono-gram means) must find one master in complex systems.

They must "construct", - the same as in a construction play - a complex anthropomorphic image, able to let components of different natures, origins, mental categories, cultures, reference frames, symbolical systems intervene together...to make out of the stone emerge a Buddha that be at a time: Human Master, Essence of the Universe, Savior of the whole mankind by the Law and at last God (this time with a capital and without an article) and above all the other gods. So complex an image that it could have turned monstrous and meaningless. It had to be considered as a typical iconogram with multiple entries, a diagram of values and powers, able to be analyzed and deciphered by whomever having got the adequate cultural key. Albeit as infractions of the orthodoxy, all the elements (like he "prhabha", the halo; the hair treatment, besides the usnisa; the moustache saka; the ornamental circle at the basis of the usnisa) are as many demonstrations of the effort invested to adapt the image to the sensibility of the faithful, to augment the edifying power of it and not to fail in the aesthetic demanding, that ought to keep on supporting it. One can legitimately shiver, when thinking that the diffusion of their image, by its configuration, assumed a moral importance, - a deontological one,-that in symbolical and iconogrammic terms was going to exert its influence on the evolution of the Buddhist thought. (cf BUSSAGLI 1996: 176, 178, 367, 62).

## CHAP. 11: THE STATUE

The history of that extraordinary adventure of the Graeco-Hellenistic Art, put at the service of the Buddhist Word, is story of adaptation, modification and transformation. Let's dare say the word: a story of metamorphosis! It is the story of a soaring, liberating and emancipatory, which grants the one who receives it, the means necessary to free himself from it. This adventure began in Bactria, when the Macedonians of Alexander, - the veterans of a military campaign of several uninterrupted years,- settled down on the banks of the Amu Darya River, in order to re-create, as much as possible, Greece, their Greek province,- swamping again, while their generals and their princes were quarreling on and on, all those territories on both sides of the Hindu Kush Range, with a multitude of statues which reflected, with Greece, all that what they met with, on the very long way from Alexandria of Egypt up to Alexandria Eskaté of Ferghana... Kouroi, Apollos, Hermes and Dionysus had betaken but mingled themselves with Syriac, Iranian, soon Scythian and Parthan, later Chinese, Korean and Japanese features. In those days around the new era, those features were Indian, more exactly, Buddhist- Indian!

This statue resembles nothing else than itself : the Buddha Solos " downcast their eyes full of compassion,- diverting them from a world where the elite of the gods displayed their supreme (and insulting ) beauty ,-in order to focus them, while smiling ( like La Gioconda), to the immense crowds of their faithful who humbly wait for receiving in themselves a light spark of their supreme wisdom "( BUSSAGLI 1996 : 445 ).

The image is conceived like an independent value and conventionally equals to the description of the texts. Besides it is supposed to be laden, - like a battery, - with spiritual force, with virtue. It is a "narrated portrait" (BUSSAGLI 1996: 381), which narrates back that one, the absence of which it indicates. As a means to meditating, the image facilitates the concentration of the spiritual power of the meditator, and,- the same way as the different stages of the rocket propulse it after one another up to the speed required to go further on by itself, - so that power, accumulated by contemplating, propulses the meditator towards the Absolute. In that sense the image reveals and completes the desire of turning Buddhism into an unseen religion, in contrast with Hinayana for example.

Paradoxically the vague notion of transcendence and the absence of rigid orthodoxy were to suscitate and accelerate the religious invest, that the aesthetical emotion, - activated by bhakti and anusmrti, - will let feel like a response already given to questions unformulated because unformulable. The image started very early behaving like the photographic fixer that reveals, in the darkroom, an image already present in the negative, but invisible. The statue is sacramentalized, as the fixer of the Buddha image, which it reveals in the darkroom of meditation. Whereby it can be stated whether the image is or not correctly completed. If not, it cannot be used as a basis for a meditation able to evoke the represented subject. The same way as the Verb (Logos) was incarnated, the Word of the Buddha was turned into a (deity, thus) image: it is an article of faith, transposed into stone by a Greek. By means of its very ambiguousness,- i.e. the discreet aesthetical disharmony, illustrated by that body of a Greek statue ( in spite of the abhaya mudra ), topped by a head indisputably marked by Buddhism ( usnisa, urna, earlobes, rather Eurasian face features,)- the statue provokes the trouble, the unrest necessary to weaken somehow the "looker on", the "contemplator", the meditator :

only then the two opposite poles of all mystical experience may put each other in perspective, with a move of systole and diastole, of contraction and extension, but also,- more psychologically,- in a move of regression ( back to our primitive zones) a move of progression ( forwards to our sublimated ones).

If the Mahayanist thought had had the time or idea to codify (on whichever behalf) the directions of use of the statue by the faithful, behaviors and attitudes would have been induced that would have harmed significantly spontaneous developing the cult of that image. Therefore, it must be said again and again that the graeco-buddhist image has first evolved independently from the Mahayanist thought which went on its own way, elaborating and producing texts. The statue was the originary "big bang" of another type of religiosity because it was new and unique: it was the origin of the start of the beginnings. By inaugurating a figurative world, it was to transform the mental universe individual and general. "Origin»: because it was fundamental; "start»: because it was historical; "beginnings»: because it was operative. This statue founds in History a new operative Buddhist mode. If a symbolical witness were needed of the breach from primitive Buddhism, well it is this graeco-buddhist Gandhara statue of a Buddha Solo!

Buddhism was a move, a path of evoking the Bodhi in itself: a manifestation of its possession via the elementary practice of the 3 Jewels, the 4 Truths and the 8folded Path. The matter was "badgering oneself": difficult, very difficult, and almost impracticable! One..., most of the people might never come up to the sambodhi, but stayed "on the way" their all life on: many called, a few elected! Not so many Buddhas, but a great deal of Bodhisattvas... From then on, at least in Mahayana, it would be a religion of adoration, worship and meditation.

The Greek has committed a master piece of lese Buddha! He forced, by his perfect art, the Man of the Ganges, the rice fields and the water drinkers to cross over the Indus to the corn fields and the drinkers of fermented drinks. Unintentionally, of course, and without knowing it anyway, inside that donation of the statue, there lies something like the Trojan Horse:

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes

I fear the Greeks, even when their make a donation!

## CHAP.12: THE FICTION

The client is a king: he is always right. The supreme command in trade is to satisfy him: «One Buddha Solo...? We haven't that in stock... but we'll sort the things out... Can I have your details please ..."One never lets a deal fall down. Luck favors boldness... The graeco-buddhist market of the Buddha Solo was the success of a genial coup.

They were no forgers. And Buddha knows how clever they are! The counterfeits of the watches Piaget, the scarves Hermes, the perfumes Dior, the sketches of Dali: one gets the illusion! As long as the consumer is not aware of it ... We don't speak of fool's bargain : nevertheless one must acknowledge that the pure malt extra old scotch whiskies distilled in the caves of Ventimiglia (at the French Italian border), and the Californian and Australian French wines deceived lots of established wine tasters...and are excellent! Regarding the know-how, the tailors of Hong Kong Kowloon side are able in 24 hours to make any fashioned cloth, be it very sophisticated, under the only condition that you know exactly what you want! They don't create: they just imitate. The Chinese word is the same for both. As for the films of Yang Zhimou and other Chen Kaige, which are rewarded internationally ( i.e.: accidentally !) at the festivals of Cannes, Venice, Berlin or Toronto, if you good look at them, one can wonder whether the juries are not actually rewarding western images that genial Chinese directors knew how to reproduce with a Chinese touch of exotism! To international trade, international dealings : in Gandhara, we find ourselves inside one of the most frequented hubs on the most important world trunk road of the time : the Silk Road and its tributary webs ( the Incense road to Oman, the Spices road to Sri Lanka and the Buddha road to everywhere out of there): making business , signing a deal, establishing connections, opening a representation office then launching the first euro Asian atelier of Buddha kits in Gandhara : that was simply great! There already existed Niarchos's and Onasis's in Athens and (Thes)Saloniki, Tata's in Persia and Jardine & Matheson's coming from the roman Hadrian Wall... eager to plunge into he graeco-roman completion which was now inheriting the empire from Alexander!

Perhaps is it required to live or to have lived enough time in those Geographic Locus of History where the ensemble of the living and progressive forces on the planet are used to give regular appointments to one another : because the unpredictable international conjuncture displaces its centre, via successive drifts, at that moment of time and space! We'll never forget that it is Europe, and inside Europe, the Mediterranean people (from the islands and the peninsulas: Greeks, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese) who breath in a centrifugal extension... Alexander, Marco Polo, Cristoforo Colombo, Vasco de Gama and Magellan were born neither at Mathura, nor Xi'an, nor Manhattan, nor Cuzco! Discovering was their motto... of course colonizing, trading and conquering at a time too! But who ever heard of an Indian, a Chinese, a Red-Skin or an Inca/Maya/Azteca gone over the waters or through the deserts: to discover! «To inquire" WOODSTOCK would say?

That passion , an atavistic heritage of that one who lives facing horizons always withdrawing at the pace he goes forward to meet them, for whom water, sea, ocean do not divide, neither part but on the contrary are but liquid bridges : "pontoon bridges" ( Pontus means the sea in Greek!), upon which communication is possible! That passion develops human qualities (psychological, moral and spiritual) all specific. The first one is to fear nothing and be ready

for all. The second one is to count only with oneself and hope nothing from the others. The third one is to never stop going on because where there's a will, there's a way! I.e. open-mindedness (at the limit of gapingness), independence (at the limit of solitude) and optimism (at the limit of foolhardiness)... When an artist gets used to practicing his art, based upon that triple structure, nothing seems to him impossible to make. Besides when he turns pushed by necessity to earn his living far from home and family, he can but get ideas. In the case regarding us, our artist had moreover genius!

*That genius proceeded to the elaboration of a fiction.* A fiction that must appear truer than nature, to the point that nature must appear to be a fiction! Alexander,- the sculptor of Charsadda-, has certainly remembered that story which ran through every atelier in Attica and had too made his way up to Gandhara ... Was it Phidias, was it Praxiteles ? The one or the other, they say, took part to a sculpting competition for getting any important command from the polis. Our sculptor made his work delivered by night and located it in the bottom of the exhibition hall. The day after, at the opening of the competition the jury, composed of the most eminent artists of Athens, let know the command amount: all the metopes of one temple in progress, a great work, but very profitable! The jury proceeded to the examination of the works: time flew away... At the bottom of the hall, one big curtain, badly tied, was awfully hanging against the wall. A little tired, - they have been strolling for more than an hour yet, - and outraged with that intolerable *laisser-aller*, the jury members looked for the man in charge: a young man came near to them and said: «Well, it's my work! Sir!" The marble curtain in *trompe-l'oeil* had well and truly irritated the honorable citizens, by means of its fictive perfection... Some years ago, at the time of the US Vietnam war, a US-TV team shot a life doc that had moved all the nephews of Uncle Sam. Some years later a French director Pierre Schoendorfer shot a fiction film about the French Vietnam war. The US doc's title was «Platoon Henderson", the French fiction's was "The 317th Section "(Platoon 317). In the following time, from an investigation program of a research center, a survey was conducted on the subject: Truth and Fiction .The two works were selected as test stuff. Results: the "true" US doc was tested as a fiction, and the French film as the reality! What is truth? What is fiction? What does that mean that the *graeco-buddhist Buddha Solo* is a fiction?

First of all, what is a Buddha? What kind of a Being is the Buddha? To this question asked by the Brahman Dona, the tradition, - we read it many times, - made Sakyamuni himself answer: " Neither god, nor demiurge, nor spirit, nor man: I am the Buddha!" Alexander of Charsadda has worked at his statue with that phrase in the mind: he must manage to understand that he had to give a Human Form to some One (?) who is not/No more a Human Being. His task, well understood, consisted of turning into stone that what the semeioticians with Umberto ECO call »*semen*"(i.e. one figure: fix in most of its characteristics, allowing numerous variations, able to be "read" via multiple approaches and circuits). The "looker on", - the meditator,-must, according to his inclination (*bhakti* and *anusrmti*) and his cultural preference (*arhat*, *upasaka*, *muni*, *sarvastidin*, *yogi*, *Mahayana*...), be able to choose such or such "circuit"! *Ad libitum*! But who was disposing enough cultural information and education to follow all the circuits and discern all the combinations and implications of them? (cf BUSSAGI 1996: 351 sq.). Thus, this image was the condensation, - explicitly, it "gave to see",- a whole system of ideas, including not only the Human aspect of the terrestrial apparition of Sakyamuni, but also a part of the most referential metaphysical values . Which justified the organization of that complex explicitation, was Not the Man Sakyamuni, but a

cultural content inherent to something Non-Human: The concept of Buddhism and through it, of Buddhicity, ie. of the Illumination, of the Bodhi!

Actually, as we can see, all is mythical: all the jatakas, - the complete narrations of his life-, have been institutionalized and play the role of mental images in order to be somehow integrated into the convolutions of the pre-reptilian brain cortex, never over fed up with our fear and joy images, - as much unjustified the ones as the others, but unavoidably necessary to entertain "the primitive being" in ourselves. And the circle is outrounded: since the Buddha is the knowledge that the faithful is looking for, whichever the obvious contents of the pseudo-historical images of the Master's life may be, to see the Buddha is to contemplate the pure knowledge. Actually, it means to see nothing imaginable, since all is impermanent, except this nothing, this "vacuity" (emptiness, cf (CONZE), which is located in permanent oscillation between illusion and reality.

St Juan de la Cruz desired "ver a Dios "(to see God), and when he managed sometimes to get up to the end of one mystical path, he equaled God to the "Nada" that he had "seen"!

By claiming in the Nikaya ( II,38) : "I am neither deva, nor gandharva, nor yaksa, nor a human being, I am the Buddha", he meant well,- at least the text lets him so speak,- that he had nothing more to do with any kind of neither human nor supra human existence. He is one "crucijohannist Nada "... of the East, for the best!

Is it necessary to evoke the topos of the "logos" of Philon of Alexandria of Egypt (early 1st century BC), and to establish the equation "logos = anthropos»:i.e. the human figure = the universal principle? Since the "logos" consists of two parts:" épéa" and «erga" (Word and Reality/Action), it is their union that the "logos" comes from, a formula according which «all happens". A Word and a Reality which be One and the eminent Incarnation of which be the Human Figure (and it only would HEGEL add).We can feel by that Alexandrian Jew, the influence of his biblical work on the "dabar", the Word/Act of Yahweh of Israel :

Omnia quaecumque voluit fecit ( Vulgata text)  
His will is his acting

All is possible in the ideological requirements which have intervened into the "mounting" of that image. Did you attend the photomontage of a film? Orson WELLES is an unoutmatched master in the matter ( with Alfred HITCHCOCK and some others, perhaps) of artificial material :one day, meters and meters of film, shot in heterogeneous times and places are collected on the table : every image is to be dismantled and re- mantled, according to the now fixed intention of the director/editor: order, sequences, voices, music, time, plans, retouches, color variation... all is manipulated ( the best example is WELLES' Falstaff)... Federico FELLINI can so far that he re-constructs in the studio Venice canals and Piombi jails roofs for the needs of his Casanova... And when at the end of his "E la navé va...", the camera gets back and that one sees on the screen appear the whole machinery of boards, pulleys, silk cloth , ship deck set, and dozen of effects men bustling around to "animate" sea and ship,...we must clap with both ends for the Master of Illusion, the Magician of our Dreams and Desires, Fears and Joys, who has "deceived" and amused us for our greatest pleasure... and his not less great professional and artistic satisfaction.

*Art is delusion.* That statue is an effect of art. The effect is a magic one. The Buddha statue was planned to exert a sort of magic mute spell. In the ateliers, "rupataka" and "silpin" were free to let their own fantasies (cf HEGEL) wander in matter of effects; they had no specific references and were "condemned» to borrow and to invent! The only imperative was to set the fundamentals of a dialog, that must may engaged, between the "lookers on" (whom the image was destined to) and the image (which could use no words to express itself). That project of an abstract and mute dialog was unavoidably to lead to the formulation of an expression code, able to grant the system of that communication chain a united language. When they worked at carving Jatakas into the relieves and the drums of the stupas, the task was relatively easy, because their art made itself narrative: the codification was molded after the continuity of the narration, were it in the stone. But now the only matter is the image of Buddha, as the only key by himself of his own system, essential for any expression and dialog! The only bank of accessories was limited to some 3 or 4 laksanas ( among the 32 principal and 86 secondary ones ), only 1 asana ( among the 4ones ) and only 1 mudra too ( among the 4 ones ) ! The gestual and kinetic codes seem to have been taken from the dance art and the yoga techniques. Mudra and asana, applied to the image of the Buddha, outlined the state grade, or better, the state category of the Buddha himself. They actually express either his psychic state and personality, or the way he perceives and analyzes the apparent reality surrounding him. If the one who contemplates the image is able to re-construct into his own psyche the state category of the Buddha, then he is undoubtedly capable too to re-experience in himself the whole path to the Illumination, while leaning upon the other images that describe it ".( BUSSAGLI 1996 : 358 ).

Blink and eye must be submitted to a totally different treatment from the classical one. The artist who tried to express the Illumination, wanted to represent introspection, very intense interior life, voluntarily and definitively detached from all surrounding reality. Would such a quest have had any meaning for the classical world?

Our Gandhara Graeco-Buddhist artists sure are the cousins of the artists who, circa the same time, put the Phrygian hat of Ganymede on the head of the Persian Mithra (CLAYTON 1990: 86-87, 132) and granted the Jesus of the Catacombs in Rom the features of Orpheus or of the Good Shepherd (CLAYTON 1990: 149; and BOARDMAN 1993: 112 and cover). Which gives :

c. 80 BC-50 AD	Apollo-----Buddha-----Gandhara
c. 0- 50 AD	Ganymedes -----Mithra-----Perse
c. 80 - 100 AD	Orpheus-----Jesus-----Rom

A hybrid fiction and complete originality: that's the wonder! Perhaps... And it is almost interesting! Greek and Apollonian in an uneasily outlineable proportion, the Buddha Solo remains at a time wonderfully Indian and Buddhist. (cf FOUCHER, among others, in LVP 1 1930: 147).

# CONCLUSION

I will ask no question about the mystery of History: why in Gandhara? why at that time? why is the first statue of the Buddha Solo a donation of the Greeks to the Buddhists of Northwestern India? That kind of questions is a topos "since there are men and who can think"! History is first facts which may explain one another inside the conjuncture that made them happen. Thus the social economic situation of Macedonia at the time of King Philip, the education of Alexander with Aristotle as his preceptor, Alexander's complex personality and personal ambition allied to his military genius and fascinating authority ( and smartness too, they say...) have certainly helped the young man he was ( around 29 , the age of the big decisions, FOUCHER says referring to Siddhartha and Jesus some 3 centuries before and after him!) seize the opportunity to "carving" in the matter of the "ananké", the "mnémé" that his "daimon" inspired him!

And if the road to the East passed through there, making no progress for 300 years, the simple reason is that both Macedonians and mercenaries were fed up with those endless campaigns: they mutinied and Alexander did not find opportune to resist the revolt at this dead end of the Pamirs, Hindu Kush and Karakorum. He sounded the retreat, an honorable one. Many Greeks and assimilated settled on the spot, letting at the doors of History the epic poets take the care of writing, singing and spreading the legend through stone ( from 300 on Alexander's portraits multiplied) and writing ( uncounted Alexander' lifes ).

And they organized themselves and worked hard to earn their living, in spite of the succession, invasion and expansion wars. One road through the passes will be opened up from Balkh (Bactres, by the southernst course of the Amu Darya, the then Oxus) down to Taxila (in Northern Punjab, just before the Karakorum Valley, near the to-day Islamabad-Rawalpindi). That road will ceaselessly be used up- and downstream by soldiers, emigrates, traders, missionaries, monks and artists, first strolling ones, then sedentary looking for work.

The only conjuncture made them meet there, those who were looking for "the thing", and those who "knew how" to do it. The statue of the Buddha Solo is the simple "co-idence" of a demand and an offer, and that Graeco-Buddhist deal was a genial commercial and ideological coup, circa the year O!

... But not all is said so far! The genial «object of the market ",- whereof the partners could not be conscious then,- was to be invested with such a charge of aesthetic emotion that it at once played the following four folded role of a catalysator :

- the role of a purification agent, regarding the exterior Hellenistic religiosity and the interior Buddhist one;
- the role of a magisterial agent, regarding the consummation of the schism Maha/Hinayana (Iconism/aniconism);
- the role of a theological agent, regarding the nature of the Buddha neither god, nor demiurge, nor spirit, nor man ....so what? (Devatideva = God-above-all-others-gods = God-of-the-Gods);

- the role of an aesthetics agent, regarding the subsequent Buddhist art.

It will never be repeated enough that this transaction is unique in the history of religious art ( TARN 1951 : 333 ,339 ) and if it needed the "necessary religious VISION", the Greek artist must have already possessed SUCH a mental pre-comprehension ( denkschematisches Vorverständnis), a spiritual reference frame ( geistiger Bezugsrahmen ) and a creative fantasy ( schöpferische Einbildungskraft ) THAT he knew how to SEE ( IDEA = EIDON =VISION) during one wonder second ( Blitzeinsicht) : an application of the Greek miracle!

Actually he was confronted with the problem of the "double», which he solved with the procedure of the "metamorphosis".

The problem of the “double” was present at different levels. First, inside the very person (hypostasis) of the Sakyamuni, at a time Bodhisattva and Buddha, and crossing both the thresholds of the Illumination (sambodhi) and the Nirvana (total extinction). Those crossings bring after them two spiritual attitudes: that of the decision of awakening (bodhicitta) and that of the devotion/commemoration (bhakti/anusmrti). The Greek artist besides asked the question of the representation under the point of view of its philosophical congruence: because for him, as a Greek, there may be only statues of Individuals!

Another level of the "double" question: the dialectics Presence /Absence. The material presence of the statue must not obliterate the immaterial presence of That One who is absent but is represented by the statue. This oscillation, that he knows well, as a Greek,-from the concept of the "psyche" at a time visible and invisible,- he found it again in the practice of the "mysteries", where the "magic" of a selected object ( here, the statue) is granted a present power ( hic et nunc) according to an appropriate ritual. The "double" was to be played inside a permanent exchange between two realities, not exclusive from each other, but the planes of which must be neither mixed up (the worship of the statue) nor separated (dualism unacceptable for the Hindu Buddhist symbolism) The choice of the human form against the symbol opened a long series of "passages" at all the levels of the aesthetic-religious processes:

- |   |                         |             |                   |             |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| - | from                    | imagination | to                | materiality |
| - | vision (invisible)      |             | sight (visible)   |             |
| - | direct contact          |             | indirect contact  |             |
| - | straight line (anaphor) |             | detour (metaphor) |             |
| - | dream                   |             | awakening         |             |
| - | Wünsch                  |             | Realität          |             |
| - | transcendence           |             | Immanence         |             |
| - | a-sexuality             |             | sexuality         |             |

The last item was new for the Greek, because even if the Greek gods do not have any existence for themselves; even if they are only indefinite pluralities; even if the idol is not a portrait of the god, the gods having no bodies; ... the problem had been, in Greece, solved per absurdum, by granting those gods the most marvelous human bodies, with a triumphant and public sexuality ... which actually honored and celebrated the human figure, immortalized in the Olymp of all the projections! That's still an unacceptable solution for the Buddhists clients! THE solution was the himation, hiding all unrepresentable!

It remained the face!

Of course, the features and the blink (the eyes!) must in the meditative silence of the statue turned into:

La seule voix qui puisse  
Avec les flots dormants et les forêts bénies  
Murmurer ici-bas  
Quelques commencements de ce qu'est l'Infini!

The only voice able  
With the sea asleep and the blessed woods  
To whisper on earth  
A few beginnings of what is the Infinite!

Our artist will use all the resources of the "metamorphosis": to find the means of turning "sensible" to the "orant" (the one who is "praying") the extraterrestrial aspect of a presence which is neither divine, nor demiurgic, nor spiritual, nor human ...How! By facilitating for the faithful the access to both "upstream and downstream "of the statue, and then a confrontation with it. The statue will be over connotated by the whole dogmatic code, - as much as it is visible, - by the expectations, feelings and faith of the faithful ("orant/meditator/adorer"), and by the genius of the artist!

Meta - morphosis = to let pass from one form (morphé) to another one beyond (méta). And Apo - theosis = to let access to the highest (apo) position, that of the gods (théos). So all non-Greek statue will make "no sense", because the achievement is "impossible" and it will be «monstrous», because it will reveal (mostrare) only a "caricature"! The statue, thus, must play, not on the plane of the mineral materiality of its presence, but on the plane of its independent value, as a "selected object", as an apriority "charged image", as a "religious fancy" referring the faithful to the complex world of his own psyché, i.e. to his primitive brain, the magic factory of the unconscious. The meditation - as the application locus of the religious event,- will fully play its role of anamnestic oscillation between illusion and reality, regression and progression of the consciousness, to lead the faithful up to the mystical emptiness (vacuity), where he must necessarily reach in order to reconstruct the Buddha in oneself and get freed from the statue. It is by means of the fiction mediated by the object that the worshipper of the Buddha comes to his own Illumination.

The delusion permitted the event to happen: it is not the cause of it. If the delusion is not evacuated, - like a crutch after use, - it turns into a fetish (In Baghava it was the risk of the Bhakti). That's not what the Mahayanist-Buddhist wants: he wants his Buddha Solo. The Greek has understood him. He'll deliver one statue, - that's the wonder: look at it! - which in the very simplicity of its sculptural conformation, will allow the Buddhist users turn it into a semeiotic body, a memory body, a mandala body.

The "program" of that "computer statue" is an all the more complex system since the contemplation of it seems to be "simple". By being used only, it reveals its potential. Meditating on Buddha "informs" the statue, and the screen of the statue displays the grade and the state of the growing Buddha in us. Without "knowing" it, - but with Greeks, you never know !,- our Graeco-Buddhist played the interactive game , by integrating a double

reality into the functioning of a two-way metaphor, free to display itself all over the vacuity preceding all making-sense experience.

In that market of the statue, the pragmatism of the businessman never darkened the deontology of the artist. The Buddha Solo is a wonder of the Greek Art, as a response "simple" to a "contradictory "Buddhist desire: the answer could be only paradox!

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## GLOSSARY

- abhaya: without fear; mudra
  - abhidharma: high doctrine; philosophy and psychology; one of the three canons
  - ajita: the winner : Maitreya Ajita
  - akshobhya: one of the Buddhas
  - amithaba: one of the Buddhas; the infinite light
  - anatman: without soul; without ego
  - anitya: impermanence
  - anupurvikatha: gradual, progressive teaching
  - anusmrti: commemoration, devotion
  - anuttarasamyaksambodhi: the supreme and perfect Illumination
  - apradama: strict observance
  - arapacana: mnemotechnical alphabet for a creed item
  - arhat: reached Illumination and entered Nirvana; a figure of Hinayana; doesn't care in helping the others on their own way
  - asana: settingsattitudes of the body in the buddhist gestual code
  - avalokitesvara: bodhisattva; the compassionate one
  - avatara: different incarnations of the gods
  - avyakrtavastu: reserved matter, apart
  - azyasatya: the four holy truths
- 
- baghava: devotion or devotee to a baghavan, to a Lord god
  - bahusruta: sect of great scholars
  - bhaishajyaguru: one buddha, the healer
  - bhakti: intense devotion to a deity
  - bhava: continuity of the existence
  - bhumisparsa: mudra: evocation of the earth as a witness of the Illumination of the Buddha and the defeat of Mara
  - bikhsu: bettelmonk (bikhsuni = fem.)
  - bodhi: Illumination
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- bodhisattva: figure of Mahayana; compassion; reached Illumination, but renounced Nirvana in order to help the other men on their own way
  - bodhicitta: the thought of Illumination
  - buddha: recieved Illumination
- 
- deva: deity
  - devatideva: god over the gods
  - dharma: the buddhist law
  - dharmacakra: the preaching of the law
  - dharmadhatu: elements of the dharma; brahmanical notion of the Absolute
  - dhyana: state of meditation
  - digha: holy texts
  - drshti: opinions
  - dukkha: suffering; conflict; unsatisfaction; unsubstantiality; emptiness

- gandharva: half god: musician, singer, lord of heaven and air
- hinayana: little vehicle; school of the monastic buddhism; its ideal: the arhat; spread at the death of the Buddha up to the new era
- jataka: stories of the lives of the Buddha
- laksana: sign; one of the 32 marks of perfection distinguishing the body of the Buddha
- mahayana: big vehicle; importance given to the roles played by buddhas and bodhisattvas
- mahaparinirvana: the great and ultimate extinction
- mahasamghika: reformist, democratic and rather open sect which influenced Mahayana; began after the council in Rajagaha
- maitreya: bodhisattva; the buddha of the future
- maitri: universal benevolence
- mandala: esoteric design
- manjusri: bodhisattva : wisdom
- mudra: position of the hands; belongs to the buddhist gestural code
- muni: silent sage, monk, different from a brahman
- nirvana: extinction; state of deliverance; the absolute truth; the ultimate reality
- paramita: jewel
- parisad: assembly, congregation
- prajna: wisdom
- prajnaparamita: the jewel of wisdom, a famous text
- prasada: grace
- prabhava: splendour, aura, halo
- prthagjana: a profane person
- puja: prayer, cult, ceremony
- ratna: jewel
- rupakaraka: creative craftsman
- saiksa: devoted to studies
- sakyamuni: the sage of the Sakya family
- samadhi: mental discipline; concentration reached through long meditation
- samanyalaksana: the three general characteristics of the dharma
- samdha bhasya: intentional teaching
- samsara: the cycle without end of birth, death and reincarnation
- samskara: coefficient of our personal heredity; predestination
- sangha: the community of the buddhist monks
- savartivadin: those who say that "all exists"; a buddhist sect, well spread in Gandhara, after the council of Ceylon
- savita: rests, relics
- sila: virtue; morality
- silpin: master craftsman; nearly a technical artist

- skandha: the five aggregates
- sradda: faith
- sruta: science, instruction
- sthavira: a sect, fideist to the 1st tradition
- stupa: monument, normally without space inside; containing relics of the Buddha, sometimes, sacrament of the presence of the Buddha
- sutra: pieces of sacred texts, dating from or coming from the Buddha
- svayambhu: illumination by oneself
  
- tat tvam asi: that (the Absolute), you (as an individual) are it
- tipitaka: the triple canon (the three baskets): Vinaya, Sutta, Abhidharma
- trata: saviour
- trishna: desire
- tyaga: generosity, the virtue of the lay people
  
- upadana: attachment
- upasaka: a buddhist lay man (upasaka = fem)
- urna: whorl of hair; sign of esoteric wisdom, placed between the eyebrows of the Buddha
- usnisa: protuberance on the head of the Buddha; a sign of wisdom
  
- vajrapani: lightning bearing spirit; bodyguard of the Buddha
- vedana: sensation
- vinaya: one of the three canons of Tipitaka: the discipline
- vipasyana; an inner vision
  
- yaksa: supernatural male creature, in connexion with trees