

prophecy of his own greatness in the future. The episode was a favourite one with the sculptors of Gandhāra, who, however, staged it in a far more elaborate fashion.⁴⁶ Next we meet with three representations of the Bodhisattva's Miraculous Descent or Conception as revealed to Māyā in her dream.⁴⁷ The scene is familiar to early Indian as well as to Graeco-Buddhist sculpture. In the latter Māyā is always shown as reclining on her left side, a pose suited to the sacred tradition which made the future Buddha enter her right hip just as he was also to see the light from it.⁴⁸ In two of our banners, on the contrary, Māyā is seen resting on her right side.^{48a} This departure is of particular interest because the earliest representations of the scene at Barhut and Sānchi, as well as that at Boro-budur, support it.⁴⁹ May we recognize here a point of contact with Indian Buddhist sculpture preceding Gandhāra art, and can this apparently unorthodox pose be due merely to inadvertence, as has been assumed? It is noteworthy also that in our representations of the scene the white elephant carrying the Infant Bodhisattva appears on a cloud and is thus clearly marked as a vision. This is in complete harmony with the original tradition of the texts, which present the descent of the white elephant not as a real event but as a mere dream of Māyā.⁵⁰

Immediately below this scene in Ch. lv. 009 we find painted another, which seems rightly described by Miss Lorimer as Queen Māyā's return to her father's palace. It has no *pendant* in Gandhāra sculpture as far as we know it, and I am at present unable to trace any references to this episode in the texts.^{50a} The same remark applies also to the top scene in the companion banner Ch. lv. 0010 (Plate LXXIV), which shows us Māyā asleep in the same pavilion and pose as seen in the 'Descent' scene, but with three figures kneeling outside to the left on a cloud and in the attitude of adoration. They are dressed in the usual Chinese costume of these scenes and are without haloes. The interpretation is uncertain; but some connexion might suggest itself with the Interpretation of the Dream which would suitably find its place here. This incident is familiar to the Gandhāra reliefs,⁵¹ but has no representation otherwise in the banners. The scene succeeding the above in Ch. lv. 0010 is again one that is absent in Gandhāra but quite clear in its character. It presents to us Māyā on her way to the Lumbinī garden. She is being carried in a palanquin by four bearers whose rapid movement is excellently expressed.⁵²

Immediately below in Ch. lv. 0010 we see the miraculous Birth of Gautama Bodhisattva, represented also in Ch. 0039, and a familiar subject in Buddhist art of all times and regions.⁵³ The child's issue from the mother's right flank and her pose grasping a bough are in close conformity with tradition. But instead of gods receiving the sacred babe, as Indian tradition demanded, we find Māyā assisted only by her ladies. In this, as also in the ingeniously delicate way in which her wide-hanging sleeve is used to screen the act of birth, we may well recognize features due to Chinese sense of propriety. The same banner Ch. lv. 0010 (Plate LXXIV) completes its 'Nativity' series by showing in its lowest panel the Seven Steps of the Infant Bodhisattva, with the lotuses springing up beneath, a very spirited and well-drawn composition. We find the same scene twice again, in Ch. 00114 (Plate LXXIV); xxii. 0035, but in each case preceded by the Bath of the Infant. The placing of the Seven Steps immediately after the Birth is in agreement with the regular practice of the Gandhāra sculptors.⁵⁴ But the literary tradition oscillates between this and the interposition

Scenes preceding Gautama's Birth.

Gautama's Birth, Seven Steps, and Bath.

⁴⁶ Cf. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. pp. 273 sqq., Figs. 139, 140.

⁴⁷ See Ch. 0019, 0039 (a fragmentary banner of inferior execution); lv. 009 (Pl. LXXIV).

⁴⁸ See Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. p. 293; Figs. 149, 160 a.

^{48a} In Ch. 0019 the pose is doubtful, as the obverse cannot be determined.

⁴⁹ Cf. Foucher, *loc. cit.*, p. 293, note 1.

⁵⁰ Cf. Foucher, *loc. cit.*, p. 292.

^{50a} [For a textual reference, see *Add. & Corr.*]

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, i. pp. 296 sqq.

⁵² The subject is found treated by Javanese artists at Boro-budur; cf. Foucher, *loc. cit.*, i. p. 312, note 1.

⁵³ Cf. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. pp. 300 sqq.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*, i. pp. 305 sqq., Fig. 154.