

tradition of the texts the King institutes, as soon as his departure is discovered, with a view to persuading him to return and forgo renunciation of the world. In the top scene of Ch. xx. 008 (*Thousand B.*, Plate XIII); xxvi. a. 003 we assist at the dispatch of the mounted messengers by the King. In Ch. xlvi. 004 the inscription attached to the third panel explains that the scene represents the King being told of the dispatch of the five 'Ministers', as the royal emissaries are styled there. The same appear to be meant by 'the five Ministers' to whom the panel immediately above shows 'the Prince preaching the Law'. The scene of the royal messengers' actual search seems to have been a particularly favourite theme; for we meet with it in not less than five banners.⁷⁵ Finally, the banners Ch. xx. 008 (*Thousand B.*, Plate XIII) and xlvi. 007 (Plate LXXV) make us assist at the scene of the messengers reporting to the King the futility of their quest.

I have already had occasion to point out how few are the scenes which show us Gautama Buddha after his Enlightenment. Those illustrating events directly leading up to the attainment of Bodhi are equally scarce. The six years of Austerities are symbolized by Ch. xxvii. 001 (Plate LXXVII) and lv. 0012 (Plate LXXV), which show us the emaciated figure of the Bodhisattva in the traditional pose of Indian ascetics, as exhibited also by the corresponding relievo representations of Gandhāra.⁷⁶ Next we see in the bottom panel of the former banner the Bodhisattva taking his bath in the river Nairāñjanā before proceeding to the place of his approaching final Illumination—a traditionally well-known scene but not hitherto met with in Gandhāra. The great scene of the Illumination itself, so dear to Indian Buddhist thought throughout all phases, and soon symbolized in the *bhūmisparśa-mudrā* of the Enlightened One, is absent from our banners. But, as if to compensate us for the blank left by the chief spiritual event, the top scene of Ch. xxvii. 001 (Plate LXXVII) reflects it as it were by a vivid and effective presentation of the miraculous Announcement of the Illumination. There, too, the Master's Five Disciples are cleverly introduced. The absence of chronological arrangement in this banner, already noted above,⁷⁷ removes any doubt that the pair of deer or antelopes which are shown below the ascetic figure of the Bodhisattva are intended to symbolize the First Sermon in the Deer Park of Benares.⁷⁸ On the other hand, we find no trace in the banners of the symbols of the Wheel (*dharmacakra*), the trident, or Trisūla, and their combination (*vardhamāna*) serving as symbols of the First Sermon, as they did in the ancient sculpture of India including that of Gandhāra.⁷⁹

Scenes after
Gautama's
'Bodhi'.

In conclusion it seems convenient to make brief reference here to two silk banners which, if they have no connexion whatever with the legendary life of the Buddha, yet represent a scene of a religious character and could not be more suitably treated elsewhere. They depict what M. Foucher first rightly recognized as the Rebirth of souls in a Buddhist paradise. The banner xl. 001 is too badly preserved for the determination of all details. But the composition undoubtedly agrees with that of Ch. lv. 0015 (Plate LXXXIII). This shows a lotus plant rising from an expanse of water meant for Lake Sukhāvātī and bearing at alternate curves five lotus

Rebirth
of souls.

ii. Pl. VI). For a doubt about the king's (?) figure on horse-back, see Descriptive List, Ch. xlvi. 007.

⁷⁵ See Ch. 0071 (*Thousand B.*, Pl. XII); xxvi. a. 003; xlvi. 007 (Pl. LXXV); xlvi. 004 (here the ministers search on foot); lxi. 002 (Pl. LXXVI). A comparison of the last with the first of the above scenes points to a common prototype and one of considerable artistic merit.

⁷⁶ Cf. Foucher, *L'art du Gandhāra*, i. pp. 379 sqq., Figs. 192, 193.

⁷⁷ See above, p. 853, note 39.

⁷⁸ Cf. Foucher, *loc. cit.*, i. pp. 432 sqq., Figs. 217, 220. Whether the bottom scene in Ch. 0071 (*Thousand B.*, Pl. XII)

is also meant for the First Sermon remains, in the absence of any distinguishing mark or *lakṣaṇa*, quite uncertain.

⁷⁹ For a conjecturally suggested representation of the *triratna* or 'Three Jewels', see the remarks on the as yet unidentified scene of Ch. lv. 0021 in Descriptive List.

Here may be conveniently mentioned also three unidentified scenes, Ch. xlvi. 005; lv. 0022, in which appears the figure of a Buddha on a lotus seat and within a vesica. That Gautama Buddha is meant in the first banner is clear from the Chinese inscription which describes him as being worshipped by the King and Queen. But the incident remains obscure.