Christoph Cueppers, Max Deeg and Hubert Durt (eds)


This volume, which contains twelve articles of mixed quality, is introduced by one of the editors, M. Deeg, who outlines the purpose of the conference and surveys the content of the individual contributions, which cover topics from archaeology to art and text history in an area ranging from India and Tibet to Southeast and East Asia covering China, Japan and Korea (pp. 1–18).

The first article by Giovanni Verardi assesses the archaeological evidence on sites up to the supposed date of the Buddha, not only, but heavily relying on his own excavation at Gotihawa (Terai) in continuation of Herbert Härtel’s survey provided at the occasion of the symposium “The Dating of the Historical Buddha” held at Hedemünden in 1988 (pp. 19–39). In spite of some criticism on Härtel’s views the result remains the same: The uncertainty in dating archaeological evidence does not allow any helpful contribution to determine the date of the Nirvāṇa, although the “short chronology” is favoured (p. 35). A central point is the lack of evidence for the strong cultural change accompanying the emergence of Buddhism (p. 32), which can be seen clearly in the texts. In the very oldest layers of Buddhist canonical texts, Buddhism is presented in a village environment, while only the fully developed Buddhist suttanta literature

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1 In the introduction, the Pāli word °-suttanta is regularly misprinted as °-suttānta, as is the name of one of the contributors, M. Stoye, who appears as Stoyen almost regularly. The name of Ch. Luczanits narrowly escapes the same fate being misspelled only occasionally as Lucanits.


places events in cities. Early introductions to *suttantas* even refer to Brahmin villages without monasteries before the well-known sites, first of all the Jeta-vana at Śrāvasti, rule the field.\(^4\) A bracket between 450 to Aśoka might be a plausible period for this development, but this is by no means a safe assumption.

Next, Christian Luczanits provides a comprehensive study of the episodes showing the Bodhisattva in the Tuṣita heaven, which is based on the author’s updated MA thesis submitted at the University of Vienna in 1993 (pp. 41–91). Covering the written and the visual sources, this is a most useful and welcomed survey. While Ch. Luczanits touches upon the descent of the Bodhisattva from the Tuṣita heaven, Max Deeg proposes to solve the problem why the Buddha enters the womb of his mother in her famous dream not as an elephant as in India but in China sometimes also riding on it (pp. 93–127). After presenting the extant sources in Indian languages and the Chinese translations of the episode, the solution is sought in a misunderstanding of a Gândhārī sentence by some Chinese translators. The crucial sentence is reconstructed — no Indian text or any Chinese translation preserve this wording — *bhayavadu ṣodado śpetagajo tusida madukukṣim/-kuṣsim ogrami* (p. 116) corresponding to Sanskrit *bhagavān ṣaḍdantah śvetagajo tuṣitād mātr̥kuṣim/-kuṣāv avākramūt.* This is not even likely in the light of Mahāvastu *gajarūpi ṣaḍdanto* or Lalitavistara *gajavaramahāpramāṇah saddanto,* LV 39,17\(^*\) = Hokazono (1994) 348,1\(^*\) (quoted in notes 37 and 38 respectively), which would rather support a reconstruction as *śvetagajarūpī* or the like. This, however, would destroy the ambiguity together with the idea underlying the solution of the problem, which, obviously, should rather be sought elsewhere.

It is not new that the text of Aśvaghoṣa’s Buddhacarita was expanded during the 19th century by the Nepalese scholar Amṛṭānanda. It is, however, a real progress to demonstrate where the sources of these expansions are to be discovered as done by Michael Hahn (pp. 129–156). In addition to sources already traced earlier by M. Hahn, he now convincingly argues that part of Amṛṭānanda’s text is based on and thus even preserves verses from Sarvārākṣita’s Mahāsaṃvartanīkathā, which are added as an appendix to his article as is the beginning of Kṣemendra’s Buddhāvatāra, chapter 9 of his Daśāvatāraracarita.

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