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Review Article

Claudine Bautze-Picron

Chefs-d'oeuvre du delta du Gange, Collections des musées du Bangladesh, Catalogue réalisé sous la direction de Vincent Lefèvre et Marie-Françoise Boussac, Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux/Établissement public du musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, 24 octobre 2007-3 mars 2008, 2007. English translation : *Art of the Ganges delta, Masterpieces from Bangladeshi museums*, book edited by Vincent Lefèvre and Marie-Françoise Boussac, Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux/Établissement public du musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, 2008.

The catalogue under survey is left as being the only testimony of what could have been a presentation to the French public of at times splendid images and objects preserved in various Bangladeshi museums. This exhibition unfortunately remained at the stage of being a project; numerous hindrances and misunderstandings arose in the course of its preparation, culminating in the tragic theft and destruction of two images (catalogues 19 & 20) in the aftermath of which the Bangladeshi authorities finally cancelled their participation to this exhibition (see the remarks introduced in the foreword and the introduction to the English translation which appeared nearly six months after the French edition).

This publication has been edited by Vincent Lefèvre, Curator of the textile department at the Musée Guimet and by Marie-Françoise Boussac, Professor of Greek History who excavated at Mahasthan. It includes two large parts: the first one (pp. 12-116) offers a welcome survey on the geography, history and culture of Bangladesh up to day; the second one deals with the description of the 120 entries (pp. 117-299) before concluding on a glossary (pp. 301-3) and a bibliography (pp. 304-310). The photographic work, of high quality, was done by Thierry Ollivier; sculptures and objects are here reproduced in a way they had never been and probably will not be before long.

In the first part, the initial section deals with the geography and the people of Bangladesh (Bruno Helly, Riccardo Caputo, Anie Montigny). The section "History" includes a historical presentation of the country and its relation to neighbouring countries (Jean-François Salles, Ernelle Berliet), a survey of the archaeology in the Indian State of West Bengal before the thirteenth century (Gautam Sengupta), and an introduction to the history of the country in the following period till today (A.B.M. Hussain, France Bhattacharya). This is followed by two chapters concerned with the coinage of the region in the pre-Islamic and in the Islamic periods, respectively by Joe Cribb and Rezaul Karim and by two further chapters on the epigraphy in the pre-Islamic period and on Bengali literature (Sylvain Brocquet, Philippe Benoît). The section "Religion" has three chapters dealing with the "ancient" religions of the country (Vincent Lefèvre), contemporary Buddhism (Jacques Leider), and Islam (Marc Gaboriau). The section "Archaeology" includes chapters on the testimonies left by Chinese, European or North African travellers and historians on the region (Jean-François Salles, Ernelle Berliet), temple and monastery architecture (Vincent Lefèvre), and the syncretistic images of Bengal (Adalbert J. Gail) which are followed by a presentation of the major archaeological sites and the result of their excavations: Wari-Bateshwar, Vasu Bihar, Bairāgī Bhiṭā, Mangalkot, Pāhāṛpur and Lalmai-Māināmatī by Jean-François Salles, Ernelle Berliet, Barbara Faticoni, Céline Gaslain, Monica Smith, and Md. Shafiqul Alam (pp. 83-97). The final section deals with the cultural heritage of the country, including chapters on the Asiatic Society and the Varendra Research Museum, two major cultural institutions (Saifuddin Chowdhury), on the

Islamic architecture and art (Perween Hasan), on the architectural history of Dhaka (Saif ul Haque), and on the European trading posts in the Delta by Jean-Marie Lafont. The distribution of the chapters in the different sections escapes at times the understanding: thus, why the Buddhist and Brahmanical architecture is presented in the section dealing with archaeology and why the Islamic art and architecture are included in the section concerned with the cultural heritage of the country is not explained.

If the chapter written by Saifuddin Chowdhury, which widely draws from the author's contribution on the topic in *Banglapedia*, offers a clear and detailed presentation of the history of the Varendra Research Society and the Varendra Research Museum, it only but mentions the Asiatic Society which was initially founded under the impulse of Ahmad Hasan Dani in 1952 as the "Asiatic Society of Pakistan", later, in 1972, to be relabelled "Asiatic Society of Bangladesh". The Asiatic Society is a fundamental institution in having produced numerous publications dedicated to the archaeology and other cultural aspects of the country; besides, it has published *Banglapedia*, an encyclopaedia in 10 volumes also available on-line and in presently publishing the 12 volumes of the Cultural Survey of Bangladesh in Bengali and in English. Moreover, the "International Centre for the Study of Bengal Art" based in Dhaka should not be neglected; being a private foundation created under the inspiration of Enamul Haque, former director of the Bangladesh National Museum (and responsible for the transformation of the "Dhaka Museum" into the "National Museum of Bangladesh" and its move from its old premises to the new location), it has organised international conferences on a regular base and is publishing since 1996 the "Journal of Bengal Art".

Within this context also, one wonders that no line has been devoted to the art-historical research on the art of Bengal in general – only one paper on the archaeology of West Bengal by Gautam Sengupta has been here introduced (pp. 31-33); as a matter of fact, it is impossible to ignore the artistic production of what are now the Indian States of West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand when dealing with the historical study of the art of the Delta before 1947 and to limit this study to the contemporary political borders of the country.

The historical, art-historical and archaeological research in this wide region emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century and has been elaborated upon the interaction of scholars from Bengal and Europe. In the early nineteenth century, Charles 'Hindoo' Stuart (1757/1758 -1828) collected a large number of images in North and Eastern India; now in the British Museum, this is the first major collection of sculptures having reached London and the Western world and sold after Stuart's death in an auction in 1830 (Casile 1999, pp. 15-29). At the same period, numerous drawings made under the supervision of Francis Buchanan (Hamilton)(1762-1829) while surveying Bihar and Bengal between 1807 and 1814 and partly published by Montgomery Martin in 1838, documented the art of the region (Bautze-Picron 1989b). The interest paid by Buchanan for the Bengali culture is visible at the reading of the survey which he conducted in the region and which was partly incorporated in Montgomery Martin's vol. 3 of "The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India" (1838). Buchanan was, however, not the first one to show curiosity for Bengal: François Balthazar Solvyns had already published his etchings in Calcutta as early as 1796-1799 before republishing them in Paris between 1808 and 1812 in a final, larger (it includes 288 plates against the 250 plates of the Calcutta edition) and better produced edition entitled "Les Hindoûs". And to conclude this short and necessarily incomplete survey, we should mention Charles d'Oyly (1781-1845) who, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, painted and drew the Mughal monuments around Dhaka – the drawings being published as engravings in the "Antiquities of Dacca" from 1823 (Bautze 2007 with further references in the bibliography).

Epigraphic and iconographic studies initiated in the nineteenth century involved Bengali and Western scholars, contributing to one of the most fruitful collaborations in the field of South-Asian art history which is still alive today through publications or conferences. If one can suggest that the attention of Western scholars was immediately drawn to the culture of the region where the British had decided to settle the capital of their Empire, it is also possible that this interest echoed the awareness of their own culture which the Bengalis always showed.

Thus, in the particular field of art history, we can see how both sides reacted to each other: J.C. French's "The Art of the Pal Empire" published in 1928 and Stella Kramrisch's seminal paper "Pala and Sena Sculpture" printed the following year in *Rupam* (vol. 10) were echoed, also in 1929, by "Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum" authored by Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, a publication which has remained up to day a fundamental contribution which goes beyond the limits suggested by its title. Four years later, R.D. Banerji published his "Eastern Indian School of mediaeval Sculpture", avoiding very carefully to name any dynasty in the title of his book. Nearly fifty years later, Susan L. Huntington's use of quotation marks around the dynastic names in the title of her book "The 'Pāla-Sena' Schools of Sculpture" (1984) also betrays that the use of dynastic names with the aim of referring to specific periods of art history is not always relevant. This is particularly true of the art of the Bengal where the Pāla rule was practically limited to the North and Western parts of the Delta and where other dynasties, the Khaḍgas (seventh-eighth c.), the Candras (ninth-early eleventh c.) and the Varmans (eleventh-twelfth c.) ruled in South and Southeast Bengal over the centuries; also, the presence of two images inscribed during the reign of Pāla rulers in Southeast Bengal cannot be considered to prove the incorporation of this region into their kingdom (see Huntington 1984, pp. 218 & 220-221). To this day, no copper plate inscribed in the name of a Pāla ruler and attesting of the donation of lands for the upkeep of a religious institution has been collected in the region; in the contrary, numerous official inscriptions of the Candras were discovered (here cat. 55 for instance). The Senas reigned hardly more than one century (end of eleventh-beginning of thirteenth c.), first from their capital located in North Bengal, then from Vikramapura, the ancient capital of the Candras and the Varmans, where they settled after having been defeated by the Muslim armies.

What allows us to apply the name of a dynasty to the production of the period during which it ruled (particularly when the images under consideration were discovered in regions not ruled by this dynasty)? Were the rulers responsible for the artistic production? What is the impact of the political power on the stylistic and iconographic forms? In fact, it is practically inexistent: the image is fundamentally located at the threshold between the religious institutions – be it the Buddhist monastery or the Brahmanical temple – and the economic power of the donators. Besides, the image echoes, at a larger level, the perception by the individual of his/her place in his/her own mythic universe. The artistic development reflects a continuation starting in the seventh c. and concluding in the early thirteenth c. which illustrates the political history of the Delta and the adjoining regions only in some rare cases (thus, some images discovered at Vikramapura and reflecting the stylistic idiom of North Bengal could be considered to have been produced after the Senas were chased out of North Bengal: this defeat possibly provoked the exile of artists towards the South). Hence, one wonders about the regular use, in particular in the catalogue part of this book, of outdated expressions such as "Pāla art", since one of the ambitions of this publication is to produce "a synthesis of the present state of knowledge on the topic" (by which the author probably means the cultural heritage of the country) (p.9).

The art of Bengal, especially of the pre-Muslim period, has been the object of numerous publications – books or articles – since nearly hundred years as one can surmise from the short summary made above. Exhibitions were also already devoted to it, based on Western collections: "Pala Art, Buddhist and Hindu Sculptures from Eastern India, ca. 800-1200 A.D." by Wayne Begley (University of Iowa Museum of Art, 1979); "Arts of Bengal, The Heritage of Bangladesh and Eastern India" (London, 1979); "Leaves of the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th-12th centuries) and Its International Legacy" by John C. & Susan L. Huntington (Dayton, 1990); "Pāla Stone Sculpture" (San Francisco, 1984). The first "Exhibition of Bengal Art" took place, however, in the Government House of Calcutta (Kolkata) in Spring 1945, mainly based on the collection of the Asutosh Museum, but showing also images from the Varendra Research Museum and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad and from different Indian private collections. Images from collections on Bangladeshi soil were presented in the exhibition "5000 Jahre Kunst in Pakistan" shown in Germany in 1962-1963, but this exhibition and its catalogue have likewise escaped the attention of

the authors of the catalogue under review which describes some major images discovered in the last decades.

Just like there is no historiographic chapter, there is also no chapter devoted to the art history of the region whereas this has been the main concern of most publications since nearly one century. A major question related to art history is dealt with in the chapter entitled “Bengal sculpture: syncretic images” by Adalbert J. Gail (pp. 77-82; it is probably due to an editorial mistake that the text of footnote 25, p. 82, has not been printed – but is present in the English version) but in the absence of a general presentation of the art-historical development, one might doubt that the issues presented here might be properly comprehended by the reader who is not acquainted with the topic. It would be indeed completely wrong to surmise that most images from the region betray syncretistic trends, quite in the contrary.

The definition of a “syncretistic image” is given nowhere (nor is given the meaning of “masterwork” as the authors of the catalogue understand it). In Eastern India, broad religious movements, “Buddhism”, “Hinduism”, e.g. could interact with each other through the medium of images where this discourse was formulated at different levels of intensity and reflected various ways of comprehending the “other” sectarian trends. Clear evidences to a connection willingly established between different major deities are observed in harmonious compositions from Bihar in the late eighth and early ninth c. (S. Sivaramamurti 1954), eventually showing topics such as Pañcopāsanā images (G. Bhattacharya 2000, pp. 335-40) or Pañcāyatana *liṅgas*. Such images, which do not seem to be as present in Bengal as they are in Bihar, put side by side various iconographic types without interfering into their representation. Although this hypothesis still begs for further detailed analysis, they might reflect a period where the Brahmanical institution became aware of its own power in front of the Buddhist monastery and somehow gathered its forces; images with known find-spot originate indeed from the region of Bodhgaya, a Buddhist stronghold.

A second type of what could be named syncretism, but is not, is testified by the presence within certain Buddhist iconographic types of Brahmanical deities, often seen in an aggressive mood or being submitted with violence. Again, such images, datable to the eleventh and twelfth c. are more particularly encountered in Bihar and Orissa. They can be related to a specific phase in the development of Buddhist religious thought as shown by Robert Linrothe (1999) but they illustrate also the perception of the Brahmanical temple institution as being a menace for the Buddhist monastery. The Brahmanical deities are also represented in such a way that they are easily recognized.

Another kind of Buddhist images integrates elements which refer to an altogether different iconographic “family” or pantheon, not in order to compromise in creating a resulting image but in order to assimilate the power hidden within the “imported” image or elements of the image. Such examples are particularly noticed in the personality of Avalokiteśvara (pp. 78-79) whose certain images betray a deep closeness to those of Śiva as has been shown in earlier publications by Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann (who remains strangely unmentioned here) (Mallmann 1952 & 1961 as quoted by Bautze-Picron 1998, p. 42 & notes 159-160); the iconography either integrates attributes drawn from Śiva’s iconography or is built on a schema which had evolved within the Śaiva iconography.

The author calls forth syncretism here, first by reference to attributes included in the image of the Bodhisattva seated on the lion whose presence would underline the “Buddhist nature” (?) of the Bodhisattva, second by mentioning Hālāhala-Lokeśvara, an aspect studied by A.J. Gail in an earlier publication and which is not often depicted – however, not as rarely as suggested by the author who only traces one example in Orissa (Gail 2003, p. 142), sustaining that this image is otherwise only met with in Nepal. Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann had already recognized in the Bhubaneswar image an aspect of the Bodhisattva (1961, pp. 203-6) and had also re-identified a bronze found at Keoar, P.S. Munshinganj, Dhaka district earlier published by N.K. Bhattasali (1929,

p. 130 & pl. LIb) and after him by Enamul Haque (1992, p. 158; see also Biswas 1995, fig. 13) as being Āliṅgana-mūrti (Mallmann 1961, pp. 204-6). A third example was inserted in the niche of a *stūpa* earlier located at Bodhgaya: it has indeed apparently disappeared since it was published by R.D. Banerji (1933, pl. LXXXVIIb – also reproduced by Bénisti 1981, fig. 32). And a fourth example was recovered at Purnaha (Bihar) and is preserved in the Indian Museum (inv.Kr.2); it has already been mentioned and properly identified by Alfred Foucher as early as 1900, p.110 footnote 3. Besides, the image is known in illuminated manuscripts.

However, the assimilation of specific attributes reflects or widens particular aspects of the deity's personality and cannot be necessarily considered as said above to contribute to the elaboration of a syncretistic image; moreover, it is likely that such images reflect marginal developments, they do not necessarily mean that the Bodhisattva integrates aspects of Śiva but that he displays his own potential of forms which can be made visible through the borrowing of visual elements already existing in other iconographic vocabularies – the relationship between both characters has moreover a long history and is vouchsafed through many aspects of the Bodhisattva (Mallmann 1952, 1961). Still in relation to the lion as vehicle of Avalokiteśvara, the author mentions the animal as *vāhana* of Durgā without any further explanation; in fact, one should here remember that the first Bodhisattva to be seated on this animal is Mañjuśrī in an image which was most probably conceived at Bodhgaya in the eighth c. Again, it would be interesting then to ask how and why the model “Mañjuśrī on the lion” was integrated within the Avalokiteśvara iconography. What generated in Avalokiteśvara's personality the emergence of features which echo Śiva's aspects? What brings the presence of the snake, the trident, or the skull, etc. to an image which has always been synonymous with boundless compassion? How can we explain the radical change of a personality who had always evolved within the exclusively male world of the Bodhisattvas, a change which is implied by the presence of a female character seated on his left lap – and thus perceived as being his wife? To refer to *sādhanas* is not enough here; the texts help to identify but they cannot help to understand how such an image was received by the “public” be it Buddhist or not and thus what was indeed the message spoken by such an image.

On the whole also, the question remains as to why the Buddhist iconography followed this way. Why were “Hindu” motifs integrated? Did Buddhist iconography become then “more Indian” in integrating patterns developed in Brahmanical iconographies – but then, this is a model which is noted since the very beginning? The Buddhist community had indeed opened new dimensions in introducing the visual language in Indian culture: in the very early period, before our era, it was the only place where “Brahmanical” deities found an organized way into the visual language. Art holds a major position in the game between different political, religious or economic powers and one can wonder whether it was, in the mediaeval period, a necessary compromise (beside the development implicit in the iconography and relevant to the personality of the Bodhisattvas) to integrate elements of “Hindu” gods and goddesses in order to draw the attention, i.e. to get the financial support of worshippers, or did this movement reflect a political language (Buddhists vs. “Hindus”)?

Still concerning Avalokiteśvara, the author repeats the outdated identification of a type of Viṣṇu images with an hypothetical “Viṣṇu-Lokeśvara” without any argument or discussion and without any reference to recent literature (Bautze-Picron 1994) – he avoids for instance mentioning the presence of the Sudarśaṇacakra in the pedestal or does not take into consideration the portly figures on either side of the attendants.

Syncretism as reflected by images which include elements drawn from various iconographic types and thus contribute to the emergence of a resulting “new” iconographic type (or rather sub-type) could be only traced in the image of Mārtaṇḍa Bhairava analysed p. 82 (fig. 8); elements are here drawn from one iconographic type and merged into another one in order to reflect an assimilation of power but without involving the need of submitting the other which is clearly aimed at in a whole category of Buddhist images such as those evoked above. As such, syncretism could be considered to be a compromise between two divine personalities: both gods, here Śiva and Sūrya, merge into each another and it is possible to read the image as being the image of the first deity incorporating basic features of the second one, or vice-versa: as mentioned also by the author p. 82,

one can here clearly differentiate the Śaiva and the Saura components of the image. Being considered the historical context within which this sculpture finds its place, such an extraordinary composition can be put in perspective since other “extraordinary” iconographic types/sub-types were produced probably in the second half of the twelfth c. in the region (Maldah and Dinajpur districts) showing Bhairava, Sūrya seated or standing and six-armed, for instance.

I fail to see what is syncretistic in the images of Akṣobhya, Vajrasattva, Sūrya or Brahmā, and I doubt that the elephant can be considered to be the *vāhana* of the Tathāgata (p. 78), or that it would show a function similar to the one of the elephant as vehicle of Indra (or Bṛhaspati), his visual function being more akin to the one of the Jain *cihnas*. Now, the presence of the animal forepart in the central part of the pedestal is not enough to identify the images illustrated p. 78, in particular fig. 3, as being images of Akṣobhya: the motif appears in the pedestal below the standing Buddha described pp. 198-9 (entry 67) and is further part of the ornamentation below images of Sadāśiva or Viṣṇu (Rahman 1998, pls 99, 150-153 and see fig. 9 in Gail’s paper). Moreover, the animal reflects certain aspects of the Buddha’s personality since at least Aśoka’s reign; its introduction in the artistic vocabulary of the Buddhists can in no case be considered to be the result of a borrowing from another iconographic context as suggested here.

On page 77, we read that the Paharpur monastery is the largest one in South Asia “after the Ananda vihāra” at Mainamati whereas it is in fact the latter which is second in size. (And correct, in another chapter authored by Sylvain Brocquet, p. 53 note 7: the monuments of Nalanda are not built in stone but in bricks and most inscriptions from the site are to be found incised on images, not on the monuments.)

A useful summary of the religious history in the pre-Muslim period is made by V. Lefèvre pp. 60-63; however, no chapter is particularly concerned with a presentation of this history of the region as reflected by the iconography or the style. The catalogue is not particularly representative of the historical development; although it includes a representative choice of images illustrating major deities of the Brahmanical and Buddhist pantheons, it only draws a tendentious picture of the religious landscape of the fairly long period covered by the exhibition.

Sūrya and Viṣṇu were the major deities in the region of Mahasthan from the sixth century and onwards as testified by numerous terra-cotta images such as those illustrated here (cats 17, 19-20) – although the discovery of a very large number of snake-deities should force us to some caution in this assertion (entries 10-13): whereas the first two gods might reflect a more “official” language bound to the temple institution, the snake-deities would relate to a more basic and mundane reality and to local concerns. Afterwards, in the stone production and starting from the eighth c., the most often represented god is Viṣṇu who was, however, mainly named Vāsudeva or, at a later period, Nārāyaṇa in the inscriptions (Bautze-Picron 1986), and whose most traditional form, i.e. standing and four-armed, is not present in the exhibition: he is illustrated here seated on his vehicle (entry 82) or as Varāha (entry 84). A Viṣṇupaṭṭa and two images of Garuḍa (entries 85-87) complete the survey of the Vaiṣṇava iconography whereas six images of the sun-god Sūrya (entries 17, 88-92) are illustrated. The presence of a Sūrya image most probably produced in the region of Gaya-Kurkihar in the second half of the ninth c. (entry 92), when and where the worship of this deity was of major importance, provides an interesting insight concerning the relation between North Bengal (but the observation also applies to the region located South and Southeast of Dhaka, see Asher 1981/83) and Bihar, more particularly Magadha. From the ninth to the early eleventh c. images were, as a matter of fact, imported from Bihar, contributing to settle and reinforce the visual expression of a new and stronger Brahmanical community in the region.

Another dimension which has not been recognized is that regional variations emerge: to return shortly to the images of Viṣṇu, for instance, the image of the god in South Bengal is usually set in the centre of a display of his *avatāras*, whereas in the North, he stands leaning on the “royal throne” (the meaning of which is nowhere to be found in the catalogue, see Auboyer 1949). Such

regionalisms do not only concern the iconography but also the style and the composition of the images. Similarly, Sūrya's most typical images in the South show him amidst the Ādityas. Or certain iconographic types are more present in a region than in another one, for instance the Devī standing between her "children" Skanda and Gaṇeśa or Camuṇḍā are major goddesses in the North but not in the South; in the contrary, the dancing Śiva is mostly encountered in the South.

From the eighth century and onwards, the political and cultural centres shift towards the West or the South-East of the Delta, and although numerous other divine images find then their way into the visual vocabulary, Viṣṇu and Sūrya preserve their central position. This shift is paralleled by a total change in the material that is used for producing images: terra-cotta gives way to stone and one will have to wait for a long period till the Bengali artists re-introduce the use of terra-cotta in the ornamentation of their temples. The terra-cotta images produced in the sixth and seventh c. testify to a high level of quality, to an extreme skilfulness in the use of this material: whereas only few gods or goddesses are illustrated, the period yielded also series of plaques illustrating for instance the *Rāmāyaṇa* (cats 21-25) which betray a deep sense for movement leading to elegant and intricate composition. When integrated in the ornamentation of Buddhist monuments in the eighth and ninth c., these plaques will be used to depict various iconographic motifs or characters, including the army of Māra and its monsters. This perception for a very harmonious dynamics also found its way in iconic representation such as the three-dimensional composition from Rajakpur showing Viṣṇu flanked by the personification of his two major attributes (cat. 19), a image now unfortunately destroyed where the god breathes energy and where the artist paid much attention to the treatment of the god's body.

A major centre arises around Vikrampur, South of Dhaka from the eleventh to the early thirteenth c.: capital of the Candras and the Varmans, it is selected by Lakṣmanasena when he is forced to abandon his capital in North Bengal at the beginning of the thirteenth c. Whereas earlier testimonies were mainly collected in the region of Comilla, and were mainly Buddhist, a major school of sculpture is based in the capital which betray the existence of a Brahmanical stronghold centred on images of Viṣṇu, Sūrya and the dancing Śiva. It is within this context that the late twelfth c. rather peculiar images described in entries 97 and 98 find their place. At the same period, the Buddhist monasteries located in the region of Mainamati produced a whole series of large images which reflect the last stage of the history of esoteric Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent (see entries 75-77). Further south and up to Chittagong, the Buddhist monasteries were apparently more open to the Buddhism of Pagan in Burma.

Abandoned by the Sena, the capital Gaur would soon become a major place for Islamic architecture where it is evident that the first artists working for Muslim patrons were the very same who had worked for those, Hindus, who had preceded them (see Banerji 1999 and Mitra 2002). The neighbouring sites of Gaur and Pandua have their monuments distributed on either side of the border between India and Bangladesh, their monuments were among the first ones to draw the attention of the European travellers and scholars or of Indian artists, such as Sita Ram who was active in the first quarter of the nineteenth c. and whose work has been intensively studied by Jeremiah P. Losty (1996). Concerning the pioneering work of scholars such as H. Creighton in the early part of the nineteenth c. or J.H. Ravenshaw who worked in the second half of the century, one will consult the excellent work by Abu Sayeed Mostaque Ahmed 1997 (see also Sinha 2002); Ahmed's study is more than the study of a mosque in Gaur, it includes a survey of the early mosque architecture in Bengal, hence in Bangladesh and has an extensive bibliography on the topic and one can be only surprised not to see his work mentioned in the bibliography accompanying this survey of the art of Bangladesh.

Moreover, the dates provided for the images in the catalogue part usually refer to general statements which are not sustained by a detailed study of the images, e.g. "stylistically, the work belongs to the maturity of the Pāla period" (p. 224) or "through the style of its ornamentation ... this work is very representative of the Pāla production in the eleventh c." (p. 240) or again "this sculpture is a very beautiful production of the art of the Sena period" (p. 254). However, art-historians concerned with this region would only make use today of such expressions in a most

general context but definitely not in the study of specific images. In such a context, the different stylistic regional idioms are simply ignored and no space is let to their respective developments. The systematic use of the term “Pāla” or “Sena” conceals the fact that other political powers were present in the Delta, in particularly in the South, i.e. the Candras and the Varmans. Moreover, these names refer to dynasties who were involved in the donation of lands for the upkeep of religious institutions, but they were only but loosely related, and this in an indirect way, to the artistic production: strictly speaking, we only know of one image actually donated by a member of a royal family, i.e. the now lost “Sarvāṇī” offered by Prabhāvatī, wife of Devakhaḍga, in the latter half of the seventh c.¹ even if one can assume, from inscriptions, that such donations must have been existing. Thus the use of dynastic names might give the impression that the rulers had an impact on the stylistic and iconographic developments, which they clearly did not have, other components were here acting, i.e. the religious thought through its institutions (be it Jain, Brahmanical or Buddhist), and the economic system sustained by the merchants and the donors. It is within such a context that reference is made more than once to a hypothetical Southern influence, brought by the Senas, in order to explain certain stylistic and iconographic forms.

The catalogue part has been written by different authors (Ernelle Berliet, Marie-Françoise Boussac, Barbara Faticoni, Vincent Lefèvre, Stéphanie Lhopitalier) who are identified through the initials of their names. Each entry is accompanied by a very useful list of the publications where the images have been either reproduced or mentioned. As seen below, the references are often incomplete. Moreover, comparative material can be mentioned without any further reference, e.g. p. 214, the second image of Parṇasabarī preserved in the Bangladesh National Museum or p. 63 note 19, where two images of Viṣṇu’s *avatāras* are mentioned without any reference although they have been often published. New translations can also be suggested for explaining gestures without being sustained by any explanation. I assume that this absence of specific references is the result of an editorial choice, which one could understand. After all, catalogues are, first of all, aimed at the public visiting the exhibition – a fact which is too often overlooked by scholars invited to contribute to similar projects, and one can in such a context drop any end- or footnote. It is, however, likely that a number of publications have been consulted since they appear in the bibliography (pp. 304-310) but they are not always mentioned where one would expect them to be and thus, doubt remains as to whether they were really consulted or do not merely constitute decoration.

Concerning the list of bibliographical references quoted in each entry, whether the image was reproduced or not, one misses an explanation regarding the criteria of selecting these references since in many cases they are incomplete. One can surmise this to be accidental (or maybe also not): for instance, reference is made to the illustration of J.N. Banerjea’s contribution to the “History of Bengal, volume I”, edited by R.C. Majumdar in a number of cases (entries 6, 26, etc) but not always (captions 62, 94 or 100, see below). Moreover, it is also evident that the text accompanying the published reference to a photo (or to a mention in a list) has not always been carefully read, in particular it would have been necessary in many cases to read the iconographic descriptions provided by Enamul Haque in his work published in 1992 (solely mentioned for the illustrations) or refer to the work of Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann on the Agni-Purāṇa.

The descriptions are often drawn-out, dwelling upon details of the ornamentation when only very few remarks are introduced related to the iconography and the historical and cultural context within which such iconography evolved (and hence, no understanding of the iconography can be provided) and when no in-depth observation is paid to the stylistic composition of the images. The errors noticed in a number of identifications related to the iconography, could have been avoided, had the authors not only consulted the quoted publications because these include illustration of images, but also because they present a description and analysis of the images.

A number of entries deserve remarks. I am extremely obliged to Gerd J.R. Mevissen who read the manuscript of this review and very kindly provided further references to those which I had introduced. They are here indicated through his initials 'GM'. I owe him also the remarks introduced here concerning the English edition of the catalogue. References in brackets introduce publications too recent to have been consulted by the authors of the Paris catalogue.

1 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 37 pl. 15, & 75.]

2 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 37 pl. 12, & 75.]

3 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 37 pl. 14, & 75.]

6 – Further references (GM): Dani 1959, ill. 2; 5000 Jahre 1962, no. 342; University n.d., pl. [14]; A.K. Bhattacharya 1989, 10, fig. 3; Sunithananda 1999, pp. 161-2, citra 51; [Haque 2007, p. 41 pl. 25, & 77; SciBa 2008, cat. *67].

7 – With reference to the depiction of the “worshipper” at the right of the Buddha image on the reverse (ill.p. 131), one reads that he “bears on the head the stalk of the lotus” which spreads at the proper right of the Buddha (here figs 1-1a). This “worshipper” (“orant”), beside the fact that he does not bear any flower on his head, is not any worshipper: a nimbus is engraved around his head; he wears a *jaṭā*, a *dhotī*, a shawl across the chest and has elongated ears. He kneels and venerates the Buddha in presenting him a flower in his joined hands. As to the Buddha, he shows the *varadamudrā* while holding the extremity of his dress with the left hand. This very particular iconography is fairly well spread in north-east India, from Bihar to Bengal from the seventh to the late eighth (here figs 3-4, both from Kurkihar) or perhaps still early ninth c. and relates directly to fifth c. images from Sarnath (here fig. 2).² The small figure is most probably Maitreya, kneeling at the feet of the Buddha whom he worships but also depicted in the position of receiving the Dharma from the latter. Thus, these images might well be interpreted as illustration of the transmission of the buddhahood from Śākyamuni to Maitreya; they share, moreover, their structural pattern with the representations of the transmission of the Buddha's robe from Mahākāśyapa to the Buddha of the future as these are observed in Central Asia or Japan, for instance.³

Further references (GM): Sunithananda 1999, pp. 149-150, citra 44-45; [SciBa 2008, cat. *349].

8 – It is at the left, and not the right, ear that the ornament is still visible (although traces of it are also visible at the right ear which is much damaged) – information which is has been corrected in the English version.

11 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 58 pl. 28, &78.]

14 – Further reference: Khan 1969, p. 181,

15 – The head of cat. 15 was still located in the Mahasthan Museum by Khan 1969, p. 162 at the time of publishing his book. It was at that time better preserved since the left ear was still unbroken. Although the author suggests that the image illustrated as cat. 16 would be the replica of an original preserved in Karachi, I wonder whether this is not merely the simplified copy of the head now exhibited in Dhaka and which might have been exhibited (?) at some point in (West) Pakistan before returning to Bangladesh. Further reference for cat.15: Hossain 2006, fig.16b.

17 – Why the god would have held in his partly preserved hand “two” lotus stems remains unexplained – but most probably, the author meant that the god would have presented those two stems, one in each hand ? See also the next entry concerning the headgear. Further reference:

Hossain 2006, fig. 10 p. 41; [Haque 2007, pp. 57 pl. 27, & 78][and by GM: Mevissen 2008a, fig. 1.*]

18 – Whether this head belonged once to an image of Sūrya or Viṣṇu remains debatable. However, it clearly does not wear a “flattened cap” but the very traditional tiara (such as the one seen in entries 15-17 or 20). Thus, the upper edge of the plain tiara slightly hangs over the vertical part (and this is probably what has been misunderstood as being a “bonnet aplati”). A diadem encircles so closely the tiara as to become an integrated part of its structure: it supports the high triangular frontal bejewelled ornament where scrolls run along the two vertical sides along a rectangular horizontal precious stone which used to support an oval one (compare to 18 where it is perfectly preserved). Two round medallions protrude on either side and the side elements “shaped as fans” are indeed the extremity of the ribbons knotted behind the head and holding the diadem in position. Observed in other images included in this catalogue, it can show variations, for instance in 20, the bejewelled motifs are very sober and directly put on the surface of the central plain tiara, but it will become the most traditional headgear in the iconographies of Sūrya and Viṣṇu in later periods (see entries 88-92).

But beside this elaborated headgear, the Sūrya of catalogue 17 wears below the tiara a Phrygian cap: it is seen as a plain band above the forehead which slightly curves above the ears. As such, the cap is usually worn by Daṇḍin and Piṅgala, the attendants of the god (see here figs 5-6).⁴

19 – Why are the attendants labelled as being probably (“vraisemblablement”) the personification of his major weapons, i.e. the club and the disk when they are clearly those characters?

20 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 62 pl. 36, & 78.]

22 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 60 pl. 33, & 78.]

26 – Following Frederick M. Asher (1980), I would suggest to recognize here Avalokiteśvara. Early images of Mañjuśrī present the Bodhisattva with a very specific type of necklace and a particular head-dress; see Bautze-Picron 1989 (with references to further studies by Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann). Why is *varadamudrā* translated as being the “gesture of inviting the gift” and not simply the “gesture of gift” is not explained (see also entry 106) (the English version translates however ‘the gesture of benevolence’).

Further references: Majumdar 1943, pl. XLVI/figs 111 & 113; Khandalavala & alii 1986, fig. 27; and showing the image with its two arms: Bautze-Picron 2003a, fig. 5; [Haque 2007, pp. 41 pl. 24, & 77].

27 – Why is this image of Avalokiteśvara named Lokanātha? As written by the author, this image should be considered in relation to the images produced at and around Mainamati. Concerning the name, see also the remarks under 29-41.

Add: Majumdar 1943, pl. XX/fig. 52; [Haque 2007, pp. 107 pl. 78, & 97].

28 – See the remarks introduced above (entry 7) concerning the kneeling character at the feet of the Buddha.

Further references (GM): Haque 1963, pp. 10, 14, fig. on p. 8; Zakaria 1984, p. 182, pl. 11; Sunithananda 1999, pp. 146-8, citra 42; Gill 2002, pp. 44-45, 51, fig. 3; [Haque 2007, pp. 64 pl. 38, & 79; SciBa 2008, cat. *360; Bautze-Picron in press, fig. 3].

29-41 – A series of rather small but at times very elegant bronzes which were discovered at the monastery of Vasu Bihar in Mahasthan are here described. One can, however, doubt the identification given for a number of them. Entries 29 to 36 show the Buddha standing and displaying the *abhaya*- or the *varadamudrā* (29 & 30), or seated in *vajraparyāṅkāśana* and

displaying the *bhūmisparśa*- or the *dharmacakrapravartanamudrā* (32-36 & 31). The standing figures would represent the historical Buddha Śākyamuni – which is to surmise since the author does not give any further name to them whereas the seated ones would represent some of the Tathāgatas, i.e. Akṣobhya (32-36) and Vairocana (31), an interpretation which remains unexplained. An element sustaining the first identification (with Akṣobhya) could eventually be the presence of the *vajra* on the pedestal between the legs of the Buddha, but it is absent on all images (and even if present, it refers more likely to the seat as being the *vajrāsana*). The identification of the bronze in entry 40 is certainly Mañjuśrī and not only “hypothetical” as written (p. 161): the Bodhisattva wears the necklace typical of young gods such as Kṛṣṇa (entry 60), he also presents the *utpala* with the manuscript whereas the arguments used by the author to doubt this identification, i.e. the absence of Akṣobhya in the head-dress and of the lion carrying the Bodhisattva cannot be held as valid in this early period (most images of Mañjuśrī illustrated by Bautze-Picron 1989 belong to the eighth to ninth c. and do not present these iconographic features). The Bodhisattva illustrated in entry 37 is not Avalokiteśvara: the flower is definitely not the *padma*. Concerning the use or misuse of the name Padmapāṇi, see Bautze-Picron 2004, note 2 – to be, however, corrected: the term Padmapāṇi appears in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-tantra*, as echo to the name Vajrapāṇi, both leading the *kulas* of the lotus and of the *vajra* on either side of the Buddhakula (Hodge 2003, p. 228; see also Tajima 1959, pp. 89-90) although the text mostly quotes the Bodhisattva under the name of Avalokiteśvara (ibid., pp. 160, 241 for example). The author does not give any conclusive explanation as to why he names also the Bodhisattva Lokanātha (entry 27) when the image is similar to the one which he here names “Padmapāṇi”. Further references (for 29): [Haque 2007, pp. 71 pl. 42, & 79]. (For 30): Ahmed 1975, fig. 10; [Haque 2007, pp. 64 pl. 41, & 79] (with the nimbus still complete); Khandalavala et alii 1986, fig. 34. (For 36): Ahmed 1975, fig. 15. (For 38): [Haque 2007, pp. 71 pl. 43, & 79] (still unbroken).

43 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 130 pl. 121, & 158].

53 – Further references: Huntington/Bangdel 2001, figs 4-4b; Huntington/Bangdel 2003, figs 1-2 p. 216. And by GM: Sunithananda 1999, pp. 99-100, citra 16 & cover illustration; Bhattacharya 2000, pp. 131-7, 547-50, pls. 11.1-7; Ahmed 2004-05, p. 363 (not ill.); [Haque 2007, pp. 95-98, col. pls 67-68; SciBa 2008, cat. *457].

54 – Further references by GM: Ahmed 2004-05, pp. 363-4 (not ill.); [Haque 2007, pp. 90 col. pl. 61, & 98; SciBa 2008, cat. *460].

56 – Let us add that the motif of the eight-rayed wheel which might also symbolically refer to the eight-fold Buddhist way is also observed at Nagarjunakonda.

59 – Further references by GM: Dikshit 1930, p. 144; Lohuizen de Leeuw 1957, p. 31 figs 3 & 37; Das Gupta 1961, pp. 26-27, pl. 9(b); Qadir 1980, p. 40; [Haque 2007, pp. 80 & 82 pl. 46; SciBa 2008, cat. *330].

60 – Further references: Khan 1969, p. 180. And from GM: Vogel 1930, p. 23, pl. IX.b; Saraswati 1936-37, p. 195; Qadir 1980, p. 40; Gail 1999, pp. 137-8, pl. 9.10; [Haque 2007, pp. 80 & 84 pl. 53; SciBa 2008, cat. *329; Bautze-Picron in press, fig. 32].

61 – Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann was the first to identify properly this image as being Vāyu, see Mallmann 1963, p. 133 note 5.

Further reference: Khan 1969, p. 182. And from GM: Dikshit 1930, p. 146; Banerjea 1956, p. 525; Das Gupta 1961, p. 27; Majumdar 1971, pl. XXI.41; Michell 1973, p. 86, n. 5; Qadir 1980, p. 38; Sanday et alii 1983, p. 70; Bhattacharya 1987, p. 64, fig. 2 (= 2000, pp. 206 & 564, pl. 18.2); Tanabe 1990, pp. 61 & 79, fig. 20; Bhattacharya 1997, p. 781, fig. 2 (= 2000: pp. 324 & 564, pl.

18.2); Gail 1999, pp. 138-9; Wessels-Mevissen 2001, p. 72, fig. 236; Hossain/Alam 2004, p. 21; Gill 2007, pp. 179 fig. VII.9 (left) & 186; [Haque 2007, pp. 80, 87, pl. 59; SciBa 2008, cat. *333; Mevissen 2008, pl. 40.2A-B; Bautze-Picron in press, fig. 1].

62 – Further add: van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1957, fig. 5 (although quoted in the final bibliography); Majumdar 1943, pl. LVI/fig. 140. And from GM: Das Gupta 1961, p. 26, pls. 4(b), 8(b); [Haque 2007, pp. 80 & 87 pl. 58; SciBa 2008, cat. *334].

63 – Although she has remained unmentioned here, Johanna van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1985, p. 744) was the first scholar to introduce this image to the scholarly public at the 1983 conference of the European Association of South-Asian Archaeology in Brussels. See also: Ahmed 1984, pp. 44 & 64-65. This tall bronze, which measures 130 cm in height, letting surmise an original size of around 3 m., was discovered in monastic cell 37 and nothing, in the present state of knowledge, allows supposing that it was ever standing in one of the four central sanctuaries.

Further reference: Sanday & alii 1983, pp. 20-21 & 23 (probably by Johanna van Lohuizen-de Leeuw); [Haque 2007, pp. 133 pl. 127, & 146].

67 – Further reference: *5000 Jahre Kunst* 1962, cat. 343; Khan 1969, p. 172.

68 – Further references: Bhattacharya 2003, fig. 33. And from GM: Sunithananda 1999, pp. 188-90, citra 63; Bhattacharya 2003a, pp. 381-2; [SciBa2008, cat. *76].

69 – The Bodhisattva's hands were not simply “drawn across the chest and perhaps [clasping] the two lotuses that feature on each side” of Mañjuśrī, they displayed the *dharmacakrapravartanamudrā*, as seen on a number of similar images from the region, which is further corroborated by the presence of the manuscript lying above the lotus at the proper left (and see the description by Saraswati 1977, p. XXIV). Further, the Bodhisattva is not depicted bare-chest but wears a shawl thrown over the left shoulder and crossing the breast. The term “yali” does not refer to the lion as such – as surmised in the description – but to a hybrid animal with lion face and elephant's trunk and tusks; being, moreover, a Tamil term (*yāli*), one wonders why the authors did not use the word *vyāla* which designates the horned lion and is mentioned in other descriptions (for instance: cats 67 or 91).

Further references: Bautze-Picron 1993, p. 151 note 15; Huntington/Bangdel 2003, fig. 1 p. 102. And from GM: Sunithananda 1999, pp. 237-8, citra 83; Huntington 2003, pp. 32 & 36, fig. 4; [SciBa 2008, cat. *72].

70 – The author is right to doubt the identification of the two small male figures carved in the scrolls of the pedestal with two Bodhisattvas. However, the figure at the left (for the viewer) sits like the tall Vajrasattva from Mainamati (catalogue 53) besides the fact that he wears a pointed cap: with this attitude and element of his dress, one can most probably recognize here the priest holding *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā* often encountered in the pedestal of Buddhist images from South Bengal in the eleventh and twelfth c. (Bautze-Picron 1995; Huntington/Bangdel 2001). It is difficult, if not impossible in the present state of knowledge, to identify the second male figure, perhaps another *ācārya* or *siddha*.

71 – It is not the *Ficus religiosa* (pipal tree) but the *Ficus benghalensis*. i.e. the banyan tree, which is here depicted: the aerial roots are depicted in low relief hanging down. Why this image depicts a “Yoginī Tārā” and why it is dated at such an early period, remains also without any explanation.

Further reference by GM: Sunithananda 1999, p. 166, citra 54.

72-73 – These two images illustrate the same iconography but, quite in contrary to what is suggested in their short description, p. 207, they clearly do not originate from the “same hand, or at least from the same atelier”. What allows characterizing the production of an atelier or of an artist is not in particular the iconography of the image, but rather the stylistic composition, the rendering of motifs, the proportions of the various elements within the overall structure. That both images were recovered at the same place rather suggests the existence there of a Buddhist monastery or/and shrine.

Further add to the references to entry 72: Mandel Sugana 1967, p. 40 (ill. upper left); 5000 Jahre Kunst 1962/1963, cat. 349; Khan 1969, p. 187; Huntington/Bangdel 2003, fig. 3 p. 103. And from GM: Lahiri 1998, p. 233, pl. 14.7; Sunithananda 1999, pp. 290-291, citra 119; Huntington 2003, pp. 36-37, fig. 6; [SciBa 2008, cat. *64]. Add to the references to entry 73 (by GM): Allinger 1998, pp. 108 & 116, fig. 3; Sunithananda 1999, pp. 292-3, citra 120; [SciBa2008, cat. *62].

74 – Mārīcī would be according to the author (p. 210) mainly worshiped at dusk whereas in the next entry (p. 212), she is – correctly – said to be the goddess of dawn. And if a source refers to the goddess as being venerated as the sun sets, one would have like the author to have it quoted. She is surrounded by her four – and not three as written – attendants, the fourth one being much damaged but with her legs still visible above the goddess, below the lotuses on which sat the five Buddhas. Mārīcī might appear to stand “in front of the entry to a sanctuary”, but in fact she is to be visualised as being within this *caitya*, which is more clearly evident in the following image where the architectural frame is carved in high relief. The *caitya*, in this particular case, has for function to remind of Vairocana, whose body is coalescent with the monument and can even be substituted by it in the head-dress of the goddess in rare examples (Bautze-Picron 2001, p. 278).

Further references: Sengupta 1993, pl. 69; Bautze-Picron 2001, image n° 36 p. 288. And from GM: Sunithananda 1999, pp. 264-5, citra 100; Mevissen 2007, p. 161 no. 20, 187 diagram H-II-5, pl. 20.9; [SciBa 2008, cat. *58].

75- More surprise concerning Mārīcī follows in the next entry, for, if it is correctly assumed that she is the goddess of dawn, she is also said to be the “Buddhist goddess of earth” or “la déesse bouddhiste du sol”. Again, some more reference would have been here welcome to enlighten our knowledge. But I suspect here a mistake while writing which escaped the attention of the authors: it is (I hope so) not “sol” which should be read here but well “soleil” or “sun” –which would make sense (unfortunately, the mistake remained in the English edition of the catalogue).

Further references: Dani 1959, ill. 35; Bautze-Picron 2001, n° 41 p. 288. Further references bay GM: Behrsing 1943, p. 14, no. 36 (not ill.); Ray 1999, pl. I; Sunithananda 1999, pp. 262-3, citra 98; Bandyopadhyay 2002, p. 148, fig. 22; Bhattacharya 2003, pp. 227-8, fig. 39; Mevissen 2007, p. 162, no. 25 (not ill.); [SciBa 2008, cat. *44].

76 – Correct the reference to S.K. Saraswati 1977, “fig. 188”; it is in fact the Parṇaśabarī of fig. 189 which is here catalogued.

Add: [Haque 2007, pp. 142 pl. 144, & 147.]

77 – Neither does Akṣobhya present the *dhyānamudrā* but the *bhūmisparśamudrā*, nor is this gesture here depicted.

Further references: Biswas 1995, fig. 38; Huntington/Bangdel 2003, figs 1-2. p. 458. And from GM: Bhattacharyya 1924, p. 62, pl. XXV.c; Bhattacharyya 1958, pp. 156, 265, fig. 125; Dani 1959, ill. 34; Murthy 1988, pp. 41-42, pl. 1; Sunithananda 1999, pp. 252-3, citra 93; [Haque 2007, pp. 141 pl. 140, & 146; SciBa 2008, cat. *7].

78 – Add to the references: Bhattacharya 2003, fig. 35; and from GM: Sunithananda 1999, pp. 245-6, citra 88; [SciBa 2008, cat. *364]. Jambhala is here surrounded by seven jars pouring jewels. The particular distribution of having two in the upper part of the image and five in the pedestal

composes a pattern often observed in the late Buddhist art of India, where the five lower jars can often form the stool under the god's right foot (e.g. Bautze-Picron 1998, cat. 73 & pp. 42-43; for further examples, unfortunately damaged, see Saraswati 1977, ills 148-9, and other examples with a different number of jars: *ibid.*, ills 145, 147; Leoshko 1996, figs 1-2). The two elements falling down from the upper jars are part of the seven treasures of the *cakravartin*, an important topic in the same period. Thus, the two items depicted here are the *cakra*- and the *mañiratna*, with the second jewel being oval and surmounted by an ornament.

However, two interesting features mark the iconography of Jambhala in the late period. On the one hand, he becomes himself part of the seven jewels owned by the *cakravartin*, being substituted to the precious householder (Bautze-Picron 1995 and see Bautze-Picron 1998, cat. 75 for such a clear substitution). On the other hand, he becomes the owner of seven jars pouring jewels and although in being related to the Yakṣas, Jambhala could possess the eight treasures owned by these creatures (Mallmann 1986, p. 196 note 6), it is not unlikely that the "seven" jars constitute a reference to these seven jewels of the *cakravartin*.

Moreover, the god owns also the treasures of the conch and the lotus which are, in this late period, evoked through the pearled sacred cord and the garland of *utpalas*. The two tall Yakṣas of the façade of cave 19 at Ajanta wear respectively the garland of flowers (at our left) and of pearls (at our right), a feature referring to the two *niddhis*, the pearls are like the conch related to the water whereas the flowers remind of the *padma*: see Bautze-Picron 2002b, p. 228; at the time of writing this article, I had overlooked the article by L. Prematilleke 1966, where the same dichotomy is noticed in the jewel ornamentation (see his figs 1-2, 4-5 showing two pairs of *niddhis*). The garland of *utpalas* is mentioned in some *sādhana*s, as well as the presence of the personification of the two *niddhis*, i.e. Śaṅkhamuṇḍa and Padmamūṇḍa at his feet (Mallmann 1986, p. 196).

79 – The author's main source of information for this manuscript and the following one (entry 80) is the detailed description given by S.N. Siddhanta in his "Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Varendra Research Museum Library". He thus closely follows Siddhanta's suggested identifications of the deities (who was careful enough to have his identifications preceded with a "possibly") and does not recognize that the "possibly" Mañjuvara is in fact Avalokiteśvara. In one major point, V. Lefèvre moves away from Siddhanta who wrote that the "appearance" of the manuscript is "complete." (Siddhanta 1979, p. 383); here we read, in the contrary, that the manuscript is "incomplete", and would be even less complete than the second manuscript. No further information is, however, given as to which folios would be missing. A detailed study of this manuscript including the illustration of the six illuminations, and of a second one dated in the same reign has been published by Bautze-Picron 1999.

Further references: Bautze-Picron 1999, figs 32-35, 40-41 & pp. 186-7 concerning the iconography; Bautze-Picron 2001, n° 81 p. 290; Bautze-Picron 2003b, fig. 1; [Haque 2007, pp. 321-2 pls 405-10, & 324].

80 – Further references: Bautze-Picron 2003b, fig. 3; Huntington/Bangdel 2003, fig. 3 p. 212.

81 – Most interesting is this image of Rṣabhanātha. I fail to see the "two winged genii" (the motif of the wings occurs in Gandhara and in the earliest period of Indian art, observed for instance at Bharhut or Chandraketugarh; it disappears apparently afterwards beside a rare late example of the eight c. at the Lakshanadevi temple of Brahmaur, Himachal Pradesh) who are supposedly flanking the umbrella according to the author (p. 222): two couples of flying figures (without wings) converge towards the head of the Jina and four pairs of hands playing musical instruments (cymbals, drum) or holding perhaps flowers are carved on either side of the umbrella. This motif is commonly met with in the iconography of Jinās and in the representation of the Parinirvāṇa of the Buddha.

Further references: Saraswati 1932, pp. 192-3 & pl. 8, fig.4; *5000 Jahre Kunst*, cat. 352; Bhattacharya 2003, fig. 43. And from GM: Ramachandran 1944, pl. XXVI; Ganguli 1984, p. 133 (not ill.); Shah 1987, pp. 120 & 330, pl. XXXII, fig. 57; Jash 1989, p. 81 (not ill.); Bruhn 1995, pp.

266 & 283, fig. 17; Nagar 1999, pp. 86-87, pl. 40; De 2001, p. 54, pl. II; Dutta 2004, p. 105, pl. 37; Mevissen 2005, p. 93, no. 9 (not ill.); [Haque 2007, pp.144 pl. 146, & 147; SciBa 2008, cat. *66; Mevissen in press: fig. 2]. Further the reference to “Bhattacharya D.C., 1974 XXXX” is wrong and should be deleted (GM).

82 – A study of this iconographic topic is given by Bautze-Picron 2002a where this sculpture is also published as fig. 3. Moreover, the god does not wear ear-rings shaped as snakes (and such ornaments can also not be labelled “makara-kunḍala”), a type of ornament which one might expect adorning Garuḍa but certainly not Viṣṇu.

Further references (GM): Farooq 1969, p. 226, no. 1 (not ill.); Haque 1992, pp. 87 & 342, no. 230, pl. 58; [Haque 2007, pp. 100 & 115 pl. 94; SciBa 2008, cat. *371].

83 – Add the further references (GM): Haque 1975, p. 37, pl. XXI, fig. 3; [Haque 2007, pp. 100 & 113 pl. 90; SciBa 2008, cat. *26].

84 – Read in place of “Banerjea J.N., 1943, pl. LVII...”: “...pl. LXVII...” Add to the references (GM): ASIAR 1930-34, pp. 303-4, pl. CL.b; Rahman 1981, p. 14, pl. V; M. Bhattacharya 2002, pp. 40-41, pl. XV.3; [SciBa 2008: cat. *125].

85 – The description of Viṣṇu’s *avatāras* given in this entry is theoretical but does not match the illustrated item: as noted by Gerd Mevissen, “instead of Paraśurāma – who would be expected to be represented in the compartment between Vāmana and Rāmacandra (and is thus erroneously described in the accompanying text) – this Viṣṇupaṭṭa shows Trivikrama.” Further the “Buddha” is here replaced by a depiction of Avalokiteśvara holding his *padma*.

Further references (GM): Farooq 1969, pp. 227-8, no. 8, pl. XXXI; [SciBa 2008, cat. *401].

86 – (GM) The reference “Banerji R.D., 1933, pl. XLI.4” is wrong. Further reference: [SciBa 2008, cat. *178].

87 – (GM) The reference “Banerji R.D., 1933, pl. XLI (a)” should read “... pl. XCI (b)”. Further references: Kramrisch 1983, pl.11.47; Haque 1992, pp.124 & 344, no. 294; [SciBa 2008, cat. *160].

88 – The position of the attributes held by Daṇḍin should be inverted in the description (this has been corrected in the English version). Further (GM): The reference to J.N. Banerjea should read “1956/2002” instead of “1952/2002”, and the reference to G. Bhattacharya's article should read “1989/2000” instead of “1987/2000”. Further references: Sanyal 1930, pp. 9-10, pl. 2; Banerjea 1943, pp. 456-7, 523; Banerjea 1948, p. 80; Srivastava 1972, pp. 303-4, pl. 19.b; Pandey 1989, pp. 113-4, pl. XIX; Haque 1992, pp. 186, 366 no. 956, & 501 pl. 153; M. Bhattacharya 2002, p. 23, pl. VIII.1; [Haque 2007, pp. 41 pl. 26, & 77; SciBa 2008, cat. *177].

89 – (GM) Further reference: [SciBa 2008, cat *137].

90 – (GM) Further references: Haque 1992, p. 363, no. 855 (not ill.); [SciBa 2008, cat. *40].

91 – (GM) The reference to Coomaraswamy's plate number should be corrected to “pl. LXXI”. Further references: Gangoly 1920, p. 184 (left); Chatterji 1930, pp. 88-89, fig. 4; Rahman 1981, pp. 13-14, pl. III; Kramrisch 1983, p. 232, pl. 11.36; Pandey 1989, p. 140, pl. XXXIII; Haque 1992, pp. 185, 365, no. 924; [SciBa 2008, cat. *116].

92 – Most interesting is this image of Sūrya, which includes an elaborated ornamental decoration and reflects a harmonious composition which are both typical of the artistic production between

Gaya and Kurkihar in the second half of the ninth century. Some more remarks: the chest is not bare as written but is covered by a thin dress, the lower edge of it being indicated by parallel thin lines in low relief below the navel. The description of the headgear is wrong: the god does not wear a *jaṭāmukūṭa* but the most traditional possible *kirīṭāmukūṭa* and the “braid hair” (“haut chignon de tresses”) are in fact tiny flowers carefully delineated in small superimposed squares adorning the surface of the tiara; as to the “pyramid” standing in front, it is the high triangular ornament which is an integrated part of the headgear. A diadem wearing two side triangular finials, as noticed by the authors of this entry, flank a central lotus bud from which a row of pearls hangs.

The find spot is strangely mentioned as being the “cimetière de Mazar” or “Mazar cemetery”. Had the authors of this entry simply check the entry “Mahasthan” in Banglapedia, they would have read that “mazar” means tomb (in this case of Shah Sultan Mahisawar) and that to speak of a “cemetery of the tomb” is inappropriate; this part of Mahasthan is simply known as “Mazar area”. Further reference (GM): [SciBa 2008, cat. *411].

93 – Further reference: Biswas 1995, fig. 14. And (GM): Gupta 1909, pl. opp. p. 256; [Haque 2007, pp. 101 & 117, pl. 101; SciBa 2008, cat.*50].

94 – Whereas the “female dancer” (“danseuse”) carved between the two large lotus flowers in the centre of the composition of the pedestal is in fact the scrawny (male) Bhr̥ṅgin, the second portly dancing figure in the proper left part (“petit personnage dansant”) is Kuṣmāṇḍa: both form practically a pair occurring regularly in the iconography of Śiva (see Bautze-Picron 1998, p. 84, entry 235 and notes 57-58, with reference to Mallmann 1963, pp. 69-70). Concerning the questionable denomination “Nandin” applied to the vehicle of Śiva, consult Bhattacharya 2000, pp. 149-72 (earlier published in 1977). The *upavīta* is made of a snake the head of which stands above the proper right shoulder of the god.

Add: Majumdar 1943, pl. VII/fig. 21. Further (GM): The reference to G. Bhattacharya's article should read “1984/2000, pl. 14.3” instead of “... no.14.3”. Further references: Sanyal 1939, p. 23, fig. 1; Saraswati 1957, fig. 144; Maitra 1976-77, pl. VIII.1; Bhattacharya 2001, pp. 11, 13, fig. 6; M. Bhattacharya 2002, p.9, pl. X.3; Gail 2002, p. 38, col. fig. 9; [SciBa 2008, cat. *110].

95 – The god is not naked, as surmised from the description mentioning that Śiva would only be dressed with his jewellery: he wears the short skirt, the edge of which being carved in low relief above the knees. The god dances on Mount Kailāsa, accompanied by two musicians (at the proper left in the pedestal) and by Kuṣmāṇḍa and Bhr̥ṅgin (see remarks to the previous entry). An interesting feature of this image, shared with another one published by N.K. Bhattasali (1929, pl. XLII and pp. 112-3) is the depiction of the human head and breast of the *nāga* used as sacred cord above the left shoulder.

Further reference: Biswas 1995, fig. 36. And (GM): The reference to “Bhattacharya G., 2003, p. 12, pl. 19” is correct, but the respective entry (*Gaṅgā -Viṣṇupadī – Nāginī*, 1st Kumar Sarat Kumar Roy Memorial Lecture, Kolkata: Centre for Archaeological Studies & Training, Eastern India, 2003) is missing in the bibliography (also quoted under cat. 104). Further references: Sivaramamurti 1977, p. 80, col.fig. 70; Rahman 1980-81, pl. V, no. 2; [Haque 2007, pp. 101 & 119, pl. 102; SciBa 2008, cat. *33].

96 – Further reference: Biswas 195, fig. 37. And (GM): The appellation “Kalyāṇasundara” for images of Śiva's marriage is a misnomer, often incorrectly applied to north Indian images; it refers to the marriage of Śiva Sundareśvara and Mīnākṣī in Madurai, Tamil Nadu (cf. Bhattacharya 2004-05, pp. 247-9). The term “Vaivāhikamūri” should be used instead. The reference to Bhattasali's plate should read “pl. XLVII(b)” instead of “pl. XLVIIIa”. Further references: Wessels-Mevissen 2001, p. 84, note 441; Donaldson 2007, p. 146, fig. 67; [Haque 2007, pp. 101, 122 pl. 106; Mevissen 2008b, fig. 6 (detail); SciBa 2008, cat. *30].

97 – Add: Bazaz Wangu 2003, fig. 27; Bhattacharya 2003, fig. 13. Further references (GM): Gupta 1909, frontispiece; Bhattasali 1920, pp. 409-411, fig. [1]; Gangoly 1920, p.188 (right); Chowdhury 1347 B.S., pp. 464-5 & plate; Sivaramamurti 1950, p. 57, pl. XX.C; Sharma 1970, p. 662; Journal of the Varendra Research Museum 3 (1974), cover photo; University n.d., pl. [16]; Donaldson 2007, 236, fig. 171; [Haque 2007, pp. 101 & 121 pl. 105; SciBa 2008, cat. *171].

98 – Add: Biswas 1995, fig. 43; Bhattacharya 2003, fig. 22. And (GM): The name “Bhattacharya D.C., 1974” should correctly be spelt with double -yy- as “Bhattacharyya”, and “fig. 1” should be added to this reference. Further references: Gupta 1909, pl. opp. p. 280; Bhattasali 1920, pp. 409-10, fig. [2]; Banerjea 1956, pp. 508-9, pl. XLV.2; Banerjea 1966, pp. 151-3, pl. XXVI; Sivaramamurti 1977, col. fig. 71; Bhattacharyya 1980, pp. 28-29, fig. 23; Bhattacharyya 1983, p. 362, fig. 49; Michell 2000, pp. 108-9, fig. 91; [Haque 2007, pp. 104 & 131, pl. 124; SciBa 2008, cat. *37].

99 – The flower bud is held in the right, not the left, hand (which has been corrected in the English version). Whereas the list of the space guardians is correctly given in the French edition, two mistakes crept into the English edition (GM): the name of Varuṇa is missing between "Nirṛti" (sic, correctly Nirṛti) and Vāyu. Further reference (GM): [SciBa 2008, cat. *381].

100 – The eight smaller images surrounding the central Durgā Ugracaṇḍā do not exactly reproduce this goddess since they have “only” sixteen arms against the eighteen arms of the main image (see J.N. Banerjea in Majumdar 1943, pp. 453-4 and Mallmann 1963, p. 149).

Add: Majumdar 1943, pl. XIII/fig. 35; Mallmann 1963, p. 149; Bhattacharya 2003, fig. 19; [Haque 2007, pp. 103 & 126 pl. 115]. And since the reference to the Annual Report of the Varendra Research Society was copied after Rahman, the wrong number of figure given by the later was also reproduced here (the sculpture is reproduced on fig. 2, not on “fig. 21” as written here).

101 – Add (GM): Rahman 1981, p.14, pl. VI; Haque 1992, pp. 248 & 375 no. 1214; [SciBa 2008, cat. *91].

102 – The particular carving of the head-dress of the central figure, with the knotted hair turned upwards would reflect a link to South India, hence the identification “Kanyā Kumārī” already proposed by A.K.M. Shamsul Alam. The authoress of this caption writes that “most scholars” recognize here the “young virgin”, aspect of Durgā in the South: unfortunately no information is provided as to who these “scholars” are. The only one to have suggested this identification is A.K.M. Shamsul Alam in his survey of the sculpture from Bangladesh (1985): this has been challenged with sound ground by G. Bhattacharya (2000) who recognized here a female “devotee or donor”.

Such an image belongs to a trend which is noticed in the late eleventh and in the twelfth c. all through North Bengal, i.e. wise men and women are depicted, flanked by various attendants and in a composition which settles them at the level of a deity; they usually, when standing, depict the *añjalimudrā* (see Bhattacharya 2000, pls 20.9-10) – and I would, in view of the comparative images of male figures, even identify her with a female teacher.

Concerning the head-dress and its so-called South Indian flavour, we may look at entry 72 where the bun lies on the right shoulder, or at entries 94 (female attendant at the proper left) and 104 where it is depicted as here, i.e. carved upwards below the head. It is also commonly met with in the depiction of the female donors (entries 68 where she also wear the shawl above the head, 69 ...) and of goddesses or attendants in the twelfth c. (e.g. Bautze-Picron 1998, cats 235, 242, 244-245, 256 or, from Orissa: cat. 271), and in fact the awkward position of the bun results from a visual compromise: the bun lies in the back of the head and can, hence, not be seen in a strict frontal depiction.

Correct also the district name which is Sirajganj (not Siraganj)(GM).
Further reference (GM): [SciBa 2008, cat *386].

103 – “The naked young man” (“jeune homme nu”) on whose shoulder the goddess dances is the Mahāpreta mentioned in the literary sources (Haque 1992, pp. 273-4, Mallmann 1963, p. 153) (but the visual rendering of this creature here clearly draws its inspiration from the image of Kuṣmāṇḍa); further he does not show the gesture of “requesting” the protection but rather of offering it (see also entry 26)(the English version properly translates with “gesture of protection”). The goddess does not wear a “high crown” but has her hair standing on end. Further, she holds in a right hand the *kartrī* forming a pair with the *kapāla* in the corresponding left hand (second hands from bottom), two hands holding the elephant skin with which she drapes herself, the arrows and the bow (right and left hands), makes the *varadamudrā* and perhaps the *tarjanīmudrā* which seems to be combined to the gesture of whistling. Twenty women surround her (two further figures are carved at the extremities of the pedestal, perhaps dancing, one of them perhaps a woman, and probably belonging to the main group; they flank the two large groups of devotees, strangely labelled “orans” [sic!] in the English edition); they dance with a human head lying at their proper left. Concerning the difficult iconography of this goddess evoked in order to win in the battle field, see Enamul Haque (1992, pp. 267-74) and Mallmann 1963, pp. 153-7. Further reference [Haque 2007, pp. 103 & 128 pl. 118]; (GM): Bhattacharya 2003, p. 222, fig. 21; [SciBa 2008, cat. *29].

104 – Correct “Banerjea J.N., 1933 ... pl. LXXXVI...” to “Banerjea J.N., 1943 ... pl. LXXVI ...”; and “Huntington S.L., 1984, fig. 354” in “Huntington S.L., 1984, 185-186, fig. 249” (GM). Add: Bhattacharya 2003, fig. 23. Further references (GM): Kramrisch 1923, p. 62, fig. [7]; Majumdar 1929, pp. 44, 49, & 54-55 & plate; Maitra 1976-77, pl. IX.2; University n.d., pl. [15]; Haque 2003, p. 306, pl. 26.8; [Haque 2007, pp. 104 & 131, pl. 125; SciBa 2008, cat. *104].

105 – (GM) Further reference: [SciBa 2008: cat. *397, which gives the size as 28 x 19 cm].

106 – (GM) Further references: Basak and Bhattacharyya 1919, p. 26; Banerji 1933, p. 119, pl. LX.c; Haque 1992, pp. 324 & 382, no. 1432; [SciBa 2008, cat. *107].

107 – Add: Haque 1992, n° 1488 & p. 332-3. And (GM): [Haque 2007, pp. 104 & 142, pl. 141; SciBa 2008, cat. *106].

108 – (GM) Further references: Rahman 1989, pp. 55-56, citra 15; De 2003, p. 113, pl. 43; [Haque 2007, pp. 104 & 142, pl. 141; SciBa 2008, cat. *394].

109 – (GM) Further references: Sivaramamurti 1977, p. 427, fig. 316; Markel 1989, p. 265, fig. 78; Martin-Dubost 1997, p. 297, col.pl. 13; [Haque 2007, pp. 102, 124-125, pl. 110; Mevissen 2008b, fig. 9 (detail); SciBa 2008, cat. *55].

110 – (GM) Further references: Nagaswamy 2002, pl. I.4; [SciBa 2008, cat. *359].

111 – It is of course not Viṣṇu and his wives who have to be recognized here, but well the Buddha, probably showing the gesture of protection, and accompanied by Avalokiteśvara whose padma is visible at the level of the left shoulder and most probably Maitreya holding the nāgapuṣpa in his left hand (flower still visible at the level of the left shoulder): a similar composition is here illustrated under entry 67.

120 – Further reference: [Haque 2007, pp. 350 & 356 pl. 468].

Bibliography (GM)

Throughout the volume, the names of B[enoytosh] Bhattacharyya (1925-28 and 1949), D[inesh] C[handra] Bhattacharyya (in "Basak R.G. & Bhattacharya D.C., 1919") and D[ipak] C[handra] Bhattacharyya (in "Bhattacharya D.C., 1974") have been spelt wrongly with only one -y-. Also "Akman A., 1996", correctly "Akman A., 1996". In the case of "Akman A., 2006" (which is correct), in the text we sometimes read "Akman A., 2006" (e.g. p. 146, cat. 20). Further, "Jahan S.N., 1999" should read "Jahan S.H., 1999".

Published in French in 2007, this catalogue was unfortunately of limited access to most potential readers. An English translation was announced at the time of writing this review – which was a judicious and welcome decision: one could have hoped that it would have been more than a translation and that the editors would have corrected some if not all the mistakes of the French edition – unfortunately this has not been the case.⁵

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Figs 1-1a



Figs 2-2a



Figs 3-3a



Figs 4-4a



Figs 5-6

¹ Biswas 1995, pp. 16-17. The Sarvāṇī is illustrated by: Huntington 1984, fig. 26 (& p. 205); Khandalavala & alii 1986, fig. 29; Biswas 1995, pl. 2; Mitra 1979, fig. 61; [Haque 2007, pp. 64 pl. 39, & 79].

² For instance, see two images from Sultangañj (Zwalf 1985, p. 105, cat. 139 and Huntington/Huntington 1990, pp. 123-25, cat. 1), one from Dharawat, Bihar (Bautze-Picron 2005, fig. 1), from Bodhgaya (Haque 1994, fig.5, and Kossak/Lerner 1994, fig.30 p.38; Bautze-Picron 2003c, fig.5 & pp.84 and 87 – from the Mahant's compound from where it was stolen at the end of the eighties; it was still photographed in situ by John & Susan Huntington in 1970: Huntington Archives n° 4067) or from unknown origin (1. Rowland 1963, cat. 18; Christie's New York 21.3.2007, lot 245; and 2. Asher 1980, pl. 146), The Buddha illustrated in our fig. 2 (photo Joachim K. Bautze) is preserved in the Indian Museum, Kolkata, the image in fig. 3 (photo British Museum) in the British Museum, London and the image in fig. 4 (photo Brigit Breidkopf) in the Baroda Museum. Fig. 1: photo by Joachim K. Bautze.

³ Brock 1988, passim & figs 3, 5, 6, and 10.

⁴ See Nies 2006, pp. 12-13 (Daṇḍin, 42 cm) and Grusenmeyer 2007, cat. 28 (Piṅgala).

⁵ The observations which I made in this paper concerning the description of the objects have been restricted due to space and the amount of material involved: a proper reading would practically imply a rewriting of most captions.