An Early Image of Maitreya as a Brahman Ascetic?

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The history of Indian art from the second century B.C. to the third century A.D. is relatively well understood. Despite this, there are many objects about which very little is known. Whether displayed in museums throughout the world or kept in storerooms, they await further study, or at least a fruitful insight. One such category of objects consists of early Indian bronzes, especially those predating the fifth century A.D., which do not form a cohesive group and are frequently enigmatic, even when found in excavated contexts. Often, they are unique, or at least appear to be so.

In 1984 The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired one of these puzzling bronzes, a seated figure from ancient India (Figure 1). Cast by the direct lost-wax process, the figure is made of a copper-zinc alloy that is actually a brass, but by common convention we will refer to it as a bronze. The work is 36.4 centimeters high, considerably larger than most ancient Indian bronzes. While the bronze was included in the Museum's 1987 publication of highlights of its Asian art collection,[1] the piece has been subsequently either ignored or disparaged by scholars, despite its importance. Since its acquisition, it has been shown only in one small exhibition outside the Museum; aside from the catalogue of that exhibition, it has been reproduced in only one non-Museum publication, a corpus of early Indian bronzes that attempted to include every known fragment.[2] Both carbon 14 dating and stylistic analysis indicate that the bronze was produced in the second or third century A.D., when the invading Kushan dynasty ruled vast portions of northern India, although local rulers retained a certain amount of power. The same period saw the introduction of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain icons and portraiture, many of which were experimental in form, as the iconographic canons were less rigid than in later times.

Other than the date, every other aspect of the bronze remains a matter of conjecture, for it has no direct parallels. Nevertheless, we will suggest a possible origin and iconography. While admittedly speculative, our study endeavors to focus scholarly attention on this extraordinary work of art and to address many of the questions it has raised over the last few decades.

The Figure

The figure is seated regally on an openwork basketry stool. His legs hang down, the heels supported by the bottom ring of the stool, while the balls of his bare feet extend slightly beyond the rim of the basket. The slightly pigeon-toed appearance of the feet is probably due to subsequent damage. His proportions are rather squat: his chest seems far too short in relation to his broad shoulders (a configuration common to Kushan sculpture) and large head with forward-staring eyes. His right hand is in *abhaya mudra* (the gesture of "fear-not") and is turned inward and slightly cupped, with the tapering of his fingers perhaps only due to wear. His left hand holds a flask (*kamandalu*) between the index and middle fingers. On his head, matted coiled locks are drawn up into an asymmetrical topknot in the fashion of Brahmanical ascetics. As we shall see, the fact that the topknot flares out into two parts may be a key to identification of the figure. The face is apparently bearded, but the beard is covered by a cloth fringed with a pendant pearl border, part of which is lost. The figure wears an unusual necklace, which stands out prominently against the short upper body, and ropelike bracelets ending in snake heads are tied around his wrists. Across his chest is the traditional sacred thread of the Hindus, and his dhoti is tied at the waist with a flamboyant bow that acts as a visual counterbalance to his topknot. Wrapped around his legs and back is a strap quite similar to the *yogapatta* used by ascetics in meditation (see Figures 3, 10, 11).

The piece has an unusual wear pattern that gives it a misleading and even folkish aspect. Its surface is uneven in color, the face having a shiny brass appearance while the remainder is reddish brown. This certainly was not the original condition, for the entire surface would

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Figure 1. *Seated Ascetic (Maitreya?).* Indian, Gangetic Valley, possibly Kaushambi, 2nd–3rd century A.D. Brass, H. 36.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Frank Weinstein, 1984 (1984.499). See also Colorplate 2

have been bright metal. The considerable layer of cuprite—the dark reddish brown layer on the body, a product of many centuries of slow oxidation—suggests that the bronze was buried for a long time. At the time it was unearthed, a layer of green cupric corrosion product would have covered the cuprite. The figure must once again have become an object of veneration and been rubbed by worshipers over a period of several hundred years. The face was worn down to bare metal, while the remainder was worn only to the dense reddish cuprite layer. Thus, its odd, uneven appearance attests both to its great age and to its interrupted use.

The bronze has been subjected to modern scientific analysis. This was particularly necessary because from the time of its appearance on the art market, various respected scholars have suggested to me that it was anything from a second-century-B.C. object (a most implausible theory) to a modern forgery. One thermoluminescence test, using two samples from the ceramic core of the bronze, provided a date of the fourteenth century A.D.[3]—a time period for which we

Figure 2. *Seated Woman Holding a Mirror.* Indian, Andhra Pradesh(?), 3rd–4th century A.D. Bronze, H. 9.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Samuel Eilenberg Collection, Gift of Samuel Eilenberg, 1987 (1987.142.326a,b)

Figure 3. Side view of Figure 1

can find no satisfactory stylistic (or even technical) comparisons. Another indicated that the bronze was produced in the fifteenth century![4] The tentative suggestion was made that any early date would have to be excluded "unless the entire object was refired during the 14th century, which seems to be a very remote possibility."[5] In fact, the fourteenth or fifteenth century may have been when the bronze was excavated. It was perhaps then in a fire, although other explanations are possible. At any rate, these test results caused a certain amount of misunderstanding and contributed to rumors that the piece was a modern fake, a notion that disturbed several art historians and scientists.[6]

In 1993, in conjunction with the opening of the Florence and Herbert Irving Galleries for the Arts of South and Southeast Asia at the Metropolitan, there was renewed interest in reconfirming the stylistic date of the bronze. Richard E. Stone, senior Museum conservator at the Metropolitan, first examined the object at that time and continued to do so throughout this study. A sample was taken and sent out for a carbon 14 analysis. Buried in the original core of the bronze was a fragment of carbonized wood, which yielded a result of about the second century A.D., a date more plausible than those derived from the thermoluminescence tests.[7] Of course, carbon 14 dates the wood, not the bronze, and the bronze may well have been made about a hundred years later, based upon stylistic analysis, but certainly not seven hundred years later. While the second century is the earliest probable date for the bronze, it could be slightly later, as it is possible that the tree from which the wood came was as much as one hundred years old when the bronze was produced. Bronzes dating to before the Gupta period (4th–6th century A.D.),

except for those from Gandhara, are quite rare in India, and only very few are of a comparable size.[8]

Those conversant with Indian sculpture cannot imagine that this bronze could be anything but ancient, because it is stylistically related to a large corpus of objects from that period. In reliefs from the second century B.C. through the Gupta period, ascetics and nonascetics alike are seated on baskets. Both men and women sit on them, most in a relaxed, cross-legged pose. Our figure, however, has his legs down in what is referred to as Northern Pose. This posture is best known from the headless portrait statue of the Kushan king Wima Kadphises from the Mat sanctuary in Mathura, where the king is seated on a throne.[9] Rarely used before the Kushan period (late 1st–early 4th century A.D.), it was said to have been reserved for princes, bodhisattvas, and minor deities but never for Buddhas.[10] That the pose must have been more common is suggested by a female version on a small bronze mirror handle in the Metropolitan Museum, in which the figure is likewise seated on a basket (compare Figures 2 and 3.)[11]

The art that best compares stylistically to our piece comes from the site of Kaushambi in the Gangetic Valley, the epicenter of Indian religious thought. It was here that Brahmanical Hinduism developed and the Buddha and his Jain counterpart, Mahavira, were born. Comprising eastern Uttar Pradesh and parts of Bihar, Kaushambi stands at the border of both states and shares cultural features with each.[12] While now on the left bank of the Yamuna River, in ancient times it may have been closer to the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna.[13] It would thus have been connected with the trade routes to every major city and port in India, including Taxila in the northwest and the cities of the Deccan. The site has a long history extending back to the late second millennium B.C.[14] and appears to have been a place where Vedic rituals were performed.[15] Despite the fact that this region may later have been briefly part of the vast Kushan Empire, its local kings, known as the *Maghas*, continued to produce their own coinage and seals,[16] and its art retained its distinctive regional character. The dating of Kaushambi material remains problematic, however. Despite the importance of this ancient city, it has not been given archaeological priority, and the final reports of excavations at the site have never been systematically published. Kaushambi is well known in Buddhist literature and had very strong royal associations, since during the time of the Buddha it was ruled by King Udayana, who, according to one tradition, was brought up in the Himalayan region in the hermitage of a sage and is said to have converted to Buddhism.[17] Tales of his life have provided material for Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit literature and were even carried into Tibetan and Chinese texts.[18]

Figure 4. *Lion-Headed Seated Deity.* Indian, Kaushambi, 2nd century A.D. Bronze, 8 x 3 cm. Allahabad Museum (photo: courtesy John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art, Ohio State University)

The closest stylistic comparison to our figure is a small bronze of a lion-headed female deity, perhaps a mother goddess (Figure 4). A surface find from Kaushambi, it is currently in the Allahabad Museum.[19] As in the Metropolitan's bronze, the figure is seated frontally, with pleated folds hanging between her legs, which appear to be bare. Her right hand is similarly in *abhaya mudra,* turned inward, a gesture often seen in early Kushan images from Mathura; the cupped pointed fingers also resemble those of our bronze. In her left hand she holds a small feline. She sits on an openwork stool that might be made of wicker. Although we cannot definitively identify the material,

we may assume so since textual sources report that the Indo-Gangetic plain was known for its basket weaving.[20] A slight base gives the seat stability, and the deity's feet rest upon it with her toes extending slightly beyond the platform, just as in the Metropolitan Museum's figure. The small size of the Kaushambi bronze should not remove it from consideration as a stylistic model, for there may originally have been many larger examples. Ancient bronzes were often melted for reuse of the metal, and we are lucky that this one escaped the furnace.[21]

The Kaushambi bronze has been assigned various dates between the first and the second century A.D., but in any case, it probably belongs to the Kushan era. It has been compared to a small bronze plaque showing a male and a female figure, excavated at Sonkh in the Mathura district, that is stylistically unrelated but similar in subject matter.[22] Its female figure, in this instance standing, is likewise lion-headed and carries a babe in her arms. The Kaushambi figure has been thought to represent a sort of folk mother goddess who was worshiped under several names. As there was clear contact between Mathura and the Gangetic Valley, we will refer to the well-stratified Sonkh excavations to confirm our stylistic dating.

While the Kaushambi figure is small and in metal, it seems to have had monumental counterparts both in clay and in stone. The clay images, especially those from Kaushambi, bear particular relevance, for several reasons. The coroplast can work with a greater freedom of expression than the stone sculptor, who has a more intractible medium. In addition, the modeling of clay is an additive process and therefore the images produced were closer in style to bronzes, which were made from wax models in a similar additive process. (Stone sculpture, on the other hand, is produced by the method of subtraction.) The most significant of these related clay images have been excavated at Kaushambi and are in the collection of the Allahabad University Museum.[23] Particularly interesting among them are those found in the Ghoshitarama, a monastery originally constructed by Ghoshita, a treasurer of King Udayana, for the Buddha and his followers to use when they visited Kaushambi. The monastery was built and rebuilt over a long period of time, but the material that concerns us dates to the Kushan period.[24] Although the exact dates are in question owing to problems with the excavation, they clearly fall within the chronological range of the Metropolitan's bronze. A lifesize seated female, 82 centimeters high, was excavated in the so-called Hariti Shrine of the Ghoshitarama (Figure 5). The sculpture is of hollow terracotta and was fired with a mass of grain as its core.[25] Referred to as an image of Hariti, this rigidly frontal figure is seated on a stool in the Northern

Figure 5. *Seated Figure of Hariti.* Indian, Kaushambi, Ghoshitarama Monastery, ca. 1st–3rd century A.D. Terracotta, 82 x 33 x 40 cm. Allahabad University Museum (photo: courtesy John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art, Ohio State University)

Pose.[26] The stool is of a type similar to that on the sculpture of the lion-headed goddess, only much higher. In this case, however, its material looks less like wicker, but openwork clay would certainly be less able to support an image this large. Hariti lacks the usual girdle worn by female figures and has an unusually broad waist that gives her an almost masculine appearance; her breasts look as if they were added as an afterthought. Her hair is drawn up in a flaring topknot. She wears extremely elaborate jewelry, and close around her neck is a series of what appear to be neck folds incised with rows of pearls.

There is only one group of bronzes comparable in size to our male figure, the Jain bronzes from the village of Chausa in Shahabad, Bihar, which vary in size

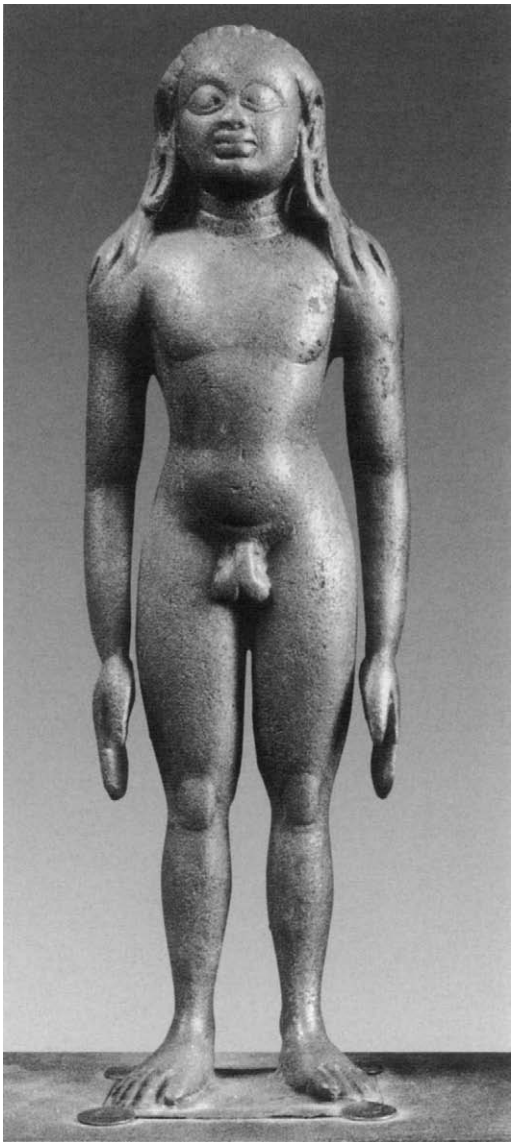

Figure 6. *Rishabhanath.* From the Chausa Hoard. Indian, Shahabad, Bihar, late 3rd century A.D.(?). Bronze, H. 21 cm. Patna Museum (photo: Nihar Ranjan Ray, Karl Khandalavala, and Sadashiv Gorakshkar, *Eastern Indian Bronzes* [New Delhi, 1986], pl. 12a)

from 8.25 centimeters to 48.89 centimeters.[27] It has been suggested that the Metropolitan's figure compares well with one of the bronzes from the Chausa Hoard (Figure 6) as well as with the Kaushambi lion-headed deity.[28] As a result, a provenance of either Bihar or Uttar Pradesh has been advanced for the piece. The Chausa bronzes were dug up on a farm as a hoard and not in the context of an ancient temple,[29] and there are no extant works from the region that are comparable. We would prefer to attribute them to a regional style of the Gangetic Valley, one distinct from that of Mathura. The most striking similarity between the Chausa bronzes and the one in the Metropolitan lies in the frequency of ascetic hairdos, indicated by matted locks.[30] But beyond stylistic considerations, the important point regarding the Chausa bronzes is that they confirm that bronzes were manufactured in the region and show that the Metropolitan Museum image is not an isolated one.[31] Equally important is that the Jain images of the Chausa Hoard reflect an iconography in formation and not as yet canonical, for this was an era of great innovation and experimentation.

The Beard

When the Metropolitan Museum bronze was first cast from its wax model, it had several flaws that were repaired using metal of the same composition as the original. While a crude repair appears at the back of the head, far more significant is that to the chin and neck. According to Richard E. Stone, there are remains of a beard from the original casting of the image, but not enough to reveal anything about its shape. These may be seen in the seam at the upper

Figure 7. *Head of Kubera.* Indian, Kaushambi, Ghoshitarama Monastery, 1st–3rd century A.D. Terracotta. Allahabad University Museum (photo: courtesy John Listopad for ACSAA)

edge of the beard (see Figure 13). The cloth on the chin is part of the same repair and definitely not a later addition. The chin treatment is one for which we have no comparisons, but again we return to Kaushambi and Sonkh for a fuller understanding of the imagery.

A male head, referred to as Kubera (Figure 7), was also excavated at the Hariti Shrine.[32] His mustache is incised and beneath his lower lip are two incised circles. A line running across his cheek may indicate a beard.[33] Another example from Kaushambi supports the identification as a beard line and suggests that the remaining details of Kubera's beard may have been filled in with paint.[34] Kubera wears an elaborate turban secured by some type of chin strap.[35] There are other related heads with incisions on the chin and chin straps that extend down from the turban. A later example, probably of the Gupta period, is a head of Shiva from Kaushambi in the Patna Museum,[36] which has a beard under the chin fashioned in the same manner as Kubera's chin strap.[37] Perhaps the use of a chin strap to hold on a turban was a local fashion, and the bronzecaster of our image was somehow trying to produce his own variation. Interestingly, Kushan terracotta heads from Sonkh also display beards that appear to be added but were certainly part of the original conception (Figure 8).[38] Similarly, the chin strap, best known from Kaushambi examples, also appears on a stucco head from Sonkh excavated at Kushan levels.[39] Frankly, we are unclear about the exact function of this detail of dress, but we will consider it again when we discuss the iconography of the image.

The Yoga Band

Another feature of the bronze, the elaborate and very clearly represented yoga band, is also quite distinct from those found on contemporary and later examples. Typically, figures wearing yoga bands sit in a cross-legged posture with their legs encircled by one strap tied to support the legs comfortably (Figure 9).[40] Our figure has his legs down in a relaxed seated position with what is apparently one piece of cloth wrapped around his back and another fringed piece of cloth

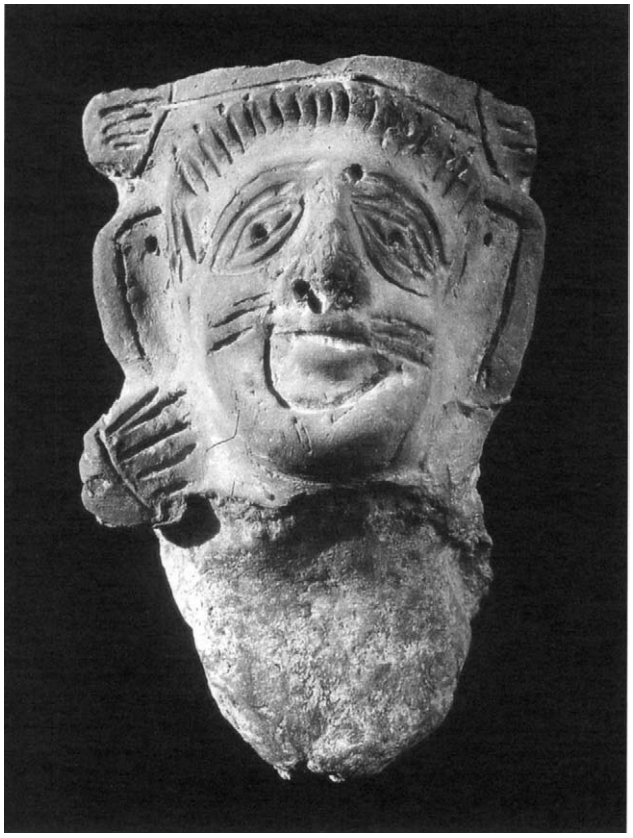

Figure 8. *Head.* Indian, Sonkh, Mathura district, Kushan period, 2nd century A.D. Terracotta, H. 11.2 cm. Government Museum, Mathura (photo: courtesy Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Asiatische Kunst)

Figure 9. *Seated Figure of Kubera.* Indian, Maholi, Mathura district, ca. 2nd century A.D. Red sandstone, H. 100 cm. Government Museum, Mathura (photo: American Institute of Indian Studies)

Figure 10. Three-quarter view of Figure 1

Figure 11. Rear view of Figure 1

stretched across the front of his knees (Figures 10, 11). The fringes are pulled together into a small ball. We do not understand exactly how the front band was attached to that on the back, but perhaps the two pieces were stitched together. While this whole configuration is atypical, there is one example to which it may be compared, the figure of a Brahman hermit instructing King Janaka in a magnificent wall painting in Cave 1 at Ajanta (Figure 12),[41] dating to the 5th century A.D. The entire painting, in keeping with the Ajanta tradition, displays the richness of the royal court, and the hermit, rather than resembling an inhabitant of the forest, takes on a royal pose.[42] Despite the simple clothing and long matted locks of the hermit, the yoga band is painted as a richly decorated cloth divided into segments of geometric patterns separated by pearl borders.[43] It is apparent from these two extant instances that this type of band was not unique; in addition, variants of it may be seen throughout Ajanta painting. It must have been more common than we now know.

The Necklace

One of the most striking features of our seated figure is the necklace conspicuously displayed across the upper part of the chest. That there are no similar necklaces known in Indian art is one of the factors contributing to the confusion regarding the date of the piece. The remnant of a small chokerlike torque from the original jewelry ensemble, clearly visible from the back (see Figure 11), remains under the cloth introduced during the repair. However, we are concerned here with the major necklace, which rests on the broad shoulders of our figure and closes in the center of the back (Figures 11, 13). Although the details are heavily worn, we can still reconstruct its

Figure 12. *Ascetic Instructing King Janaka.* Wall painting from the Mahajanaka Jataka. Indian, Ajanta Cave 1, 5th century A.D. (photo: © copyright Benoy K. Behl)

elements.[44] In the center is a large pierced-work ornamental disk. On either side are three parallel chains, of which the individual links are obscured by wear.[45] The chains are attached to a terminal that has three coiled elements forming a trefoil design (Figure 14). The broader ends of the terminal face toward the center of the body, forming the base of the triangle, while the apex faces toward the shoulders of the figure. A second terminal is formed by two facing S-shaped coils arranged in a trapezoidal square. A small loop probably joined the terminals. At each end of the ensemble there are two single chains, adjusted at the back by a square glide, or perhaps a square knot, that functions as a clasp. Not only is such a necklace unknown in India, but most of the individual elements, as well as the way they are combined, are not Indian but belong to the Western world.

The necklace is certainly based upon an original model in gold, which we will suggest was either imported from the Roman Empire, perhaps even from Roman Egypt, or made by Roman craftsmen working in India. While this type does not normally figure in discussions of works from the Gangetic Valley, we will see that it is a regular component of art in the Deccan and, farther south, in Tamil Nadu. The necklace confronts us with the age-old problem of discussing foreign motifs or imports, or copies and

Figure 13. Detail of head and torso of Figure 1 (photo: the author)

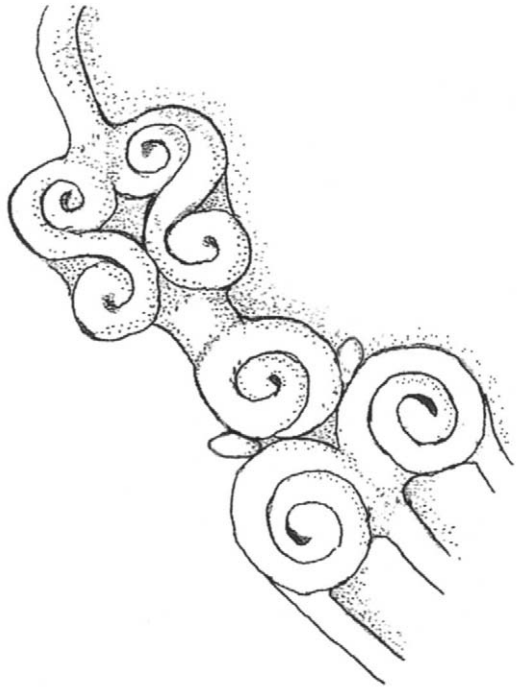

Figure 14. Transitional elements in necklace of Figure 1 (drawing by Richard E. Stone)

adaptations of them, in Indian contexts. We are not always fortunate enough to find the perfect prototype, although there have been some excellent studies of such questions in recent years.[46]

The first step in our study is to discuss why we believe the original necklace to be an import. Most fundamental is the fact that the entire method of manufacture is unknown in the Indian tradition. There are four basic elements in the necklace that we will investigate in this regard: the clasp, the transitional elements, the triple chain, and the central medallion.

The Clasp

As noted above, two strings or chains appear to pass through either an unusually neat square knot or a glide (Figure 11). We have not seen it in ancient Indian examples, nor have we seen it in Western examples, making this the most enigmatic element. Indian necklaces are often tied at the back ending in two tassels as, for instance, on a *yaksha* (male nature spirit) in the Metropolitan Museum dating to the first century B.C. (Figure 15). Classical necklaces, on the other hand, simply have a hook and eye for their closure.

The Transitional Elements

The transitional terminal elements in our necklace serve to separate and display the individual strands of the necklace.[47] Conversely, Indian jewelers often used transitional elements to bunch together multiple strands of a necklace and typically selected a bulbous toroidal element for this purpose, as seen in a superb Kushan piece from Mathura in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Figure 16).[48] In fact, the ultimate source of the transitional elements in the Metropolitan figure's necklace is Greek jewelry made up of trefoils and squares that are formed by a series of simple wire coils or, more commonly, filigree. Among the numerous examples and variants is a group of necklace parts from the fourth century B.C. in the Brooklyn Museum (Figure 17).[49] Their basic pattern consists of four spirals in a square, while our Indian example is trian-

Figure 15. Rear view of a *yaksha*. Indian, Madhya Pradesh, ca. 50 B.C. Sandstone, 88.9 x 45.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Jeffrey B. Soref, in honor of Martin Lerner, 1988 (1988.354)

Figure 16. Rear view of *Attendant Bearing a Fly Wisk (Chauri)*. Indian, Mathura, Kushan period, late 1st–early second century A.D. Red sandstone, H. 55.8 cm. © Cleveland Museum of Art, Andrew R. and Martha Holden Jennings Fund, 1965.472

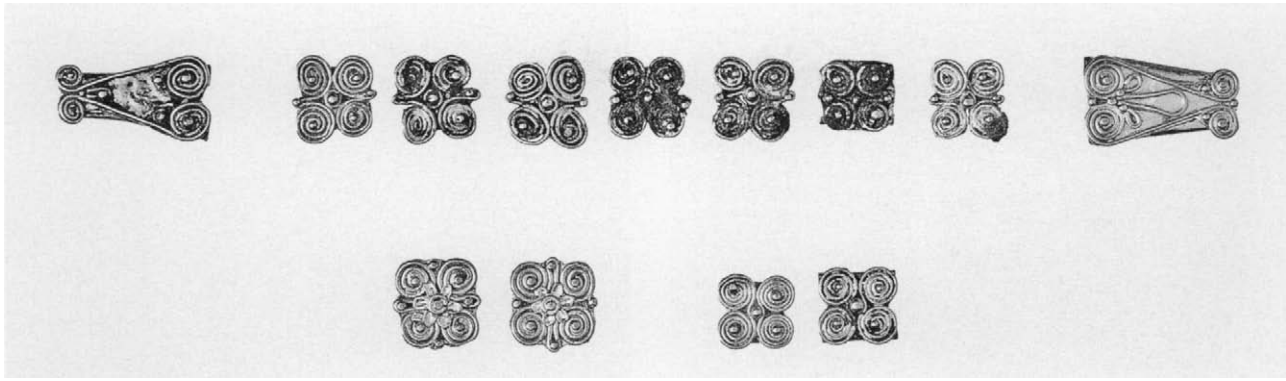

Figure 17. Thirteen parts of a necklace. Asia Minor, East Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold, quatrefoil pieces: .7 x .6 cm; end pieces: L. 1.2 cm. Brooklyn Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas S. Brush, 71.79.27–37, 71.79.38, .39

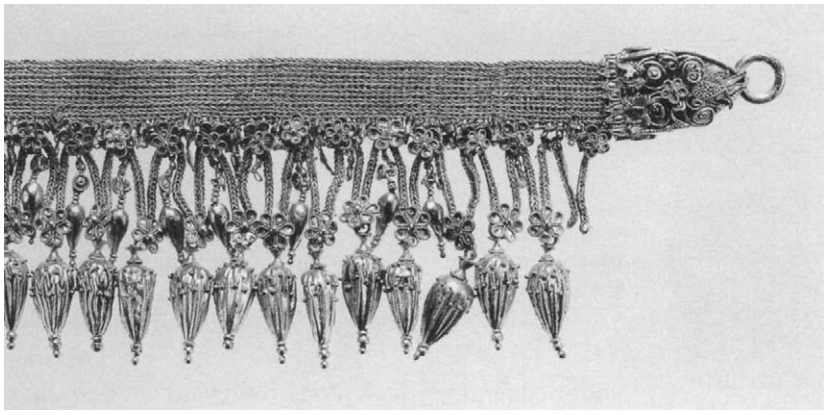

Figure 18. Detail of braided-strap necklace. Greek, Madytos, 330–300 B.C. Gold, H. 3.2 cm, total L. 32.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1906 (06.1217.13)

gular. The terminals on the Brooklyn necklace form trapezoidal sheets, with the wire arranged in curving forms on the upper surface—a shape and pattern especially close to those of our necklace. Variants of such terminals are found on braided strap necklaces, including several Hellenistic examples.[50] One of the finest and most pertinent examples, now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, is said to be from Madytos and to date from 330 to 300 B.C. (Figure 18).[51] Its transitional element features spirals consisting of four plain-wire coils arranged within a triangular shape, albeit with further details; the broader side holds the wires of the strap in place. Another Hellenistic transitional element, also in the Museum, uses wire coils to outline the entire element and is bisected by a standing figure of Eros.[52]

Variants and simplifications of the Hellenistic versions are commonly found in later Roman jewelry.[53] In fact, the individual elements on Roman necklaces are closer in type to those on our Indian figure. On a well-known necklace in the British Museum (Figure 19), two terminal elements are connected by a loop. Compared with the clasp on our figure's necklace, the elements are reversed: the smaller terminal is closer to the front, the larger closer to the clasp (which in classical works is the usual hook and eye). The necklace

Figure 19. Necklace with coin of Domitian. Egyptian, 2nd century A.D. Gold, L. 50.8 cm. British Museum, London (photo: © Trustees of the British Museum)

in London is dated to the second century A.D. and comes from Egypt.[54] The similar way in which the individual elements of both necklaces are composed and juxtaposed enables us to suggest that the design of our necklace may have also come from Egypt.

Figure 20. *The Bodhisattva Maitreya* (detail). Indian, Gandhara, Kushan period, ca. 3rd century A.D. Stone, H. 163.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Lita Annenberg Hazen Charitable Trust Gift, 1991 (1991.75). See also Figure 32

Figure 21. Necklace. From the Aesica Hoard. Romano-British, mid-2nd century A.D. Silver, L. 35 cm. Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle, 1956.150.20.2A (photo: courtesy Museum of Antiquities of the University and the Society of Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne)

The Triple Chain

The multiple chains securing the central medallion, a common feature in Roman jewelry, are an extremely important part of our necklace. While distinct strands with a medallion in the center occur often in the West, in South India they are known only on pearl necklaces, rarely on those of chain unless they are imported. Necklaces with multiple chains are familiar on bodhisattva images from Gandhara. They are most often worn along with a torquelike necklace close to the neck. The terminals of the chain necklace are in front and are attached to the chains by a round element in the same fashion that Indian pearl necklaces are fastened to terminals in the back.[55] See, for example, the necklace on a Gandharan image of the bodhisattva Maitreya in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 20). This configuration is in contrast to the classical Western type, in which a small jump ring attaches each chain to the central medallion so that the individual strands are displayed concentrically across a broad area of the chest. There are numerous examples of concentric multichain necklaces in the Roman world: without medallions, such as a triple chain in the British Museum;[56] with medallions in the center, as can be seen on fine examples of Egyptian mummy portraits;[57] with medallions spaced along the chain, among them a notable example from Palmyra;[58] and with medallions as clasps.[59] The only one of which we are aware with three chains and a central medallion, albeit with different transitional elements, is a silver necklace in the classical tradition, referred to as Romano-British, from the Aesica Hoard in the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle (Figure 21).[60]

The Central Medallion

The central medallion of our necklace is decorated with pierced work arranged in three concentric circles and with small granulations around the edges that give it a slightly stellate form (see Figure 13). Circular medallions with pierced work commonly appeared as part of the clasp on chain necklaces, as in an example from Roman Egypt in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 22), or as a suspended medallion. In the West, pierced work, also known as *opus interrasile* or *diatrita,*[61] is a well-established tradition that reached its height during early Byzantine times. Some of the finest examples are found on a pair of bracelets from the J. P. Morgan collection, now in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 23);[62] examples at Dumbarton Oaks show pierced work in concentric circles radiating from the center and flanked by coins of Constantine.[63] Although the tradition is best known from medieval works, *opus interrasile* appeared abruptly in the Roman Empire toward the end of the second century A.D. and by the first decades of the third century it was incorporated into various

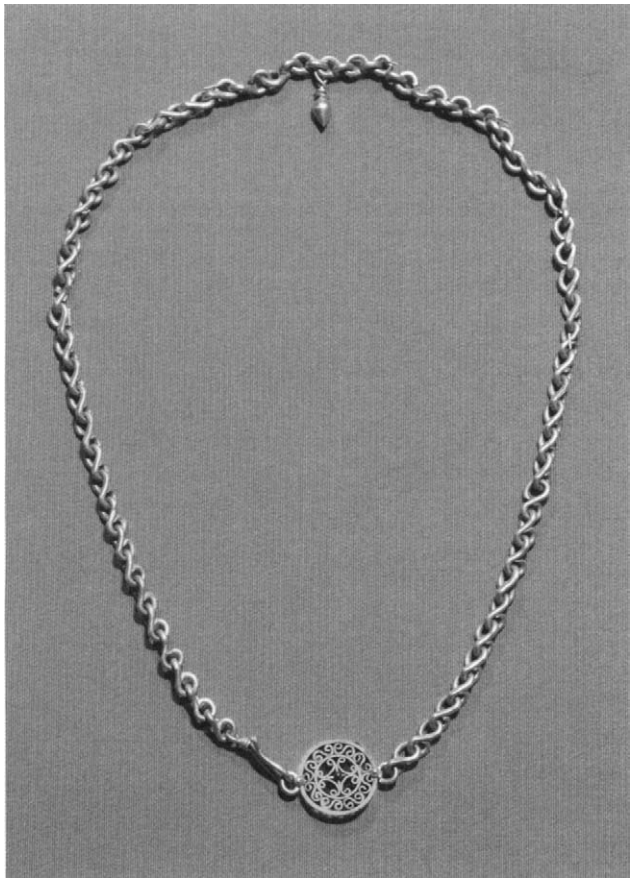

Figure 22. Necklace with small drop pendant and ornate clasp. Romano-Egyptian, 2nd century A.D. Gold, L. 37.9 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Helen Miller Gould, 1910 (10.130.1523)

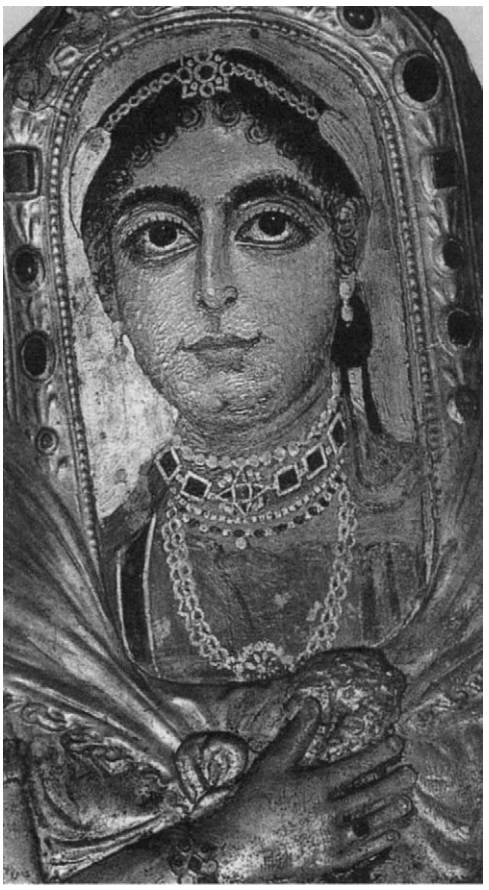

Figure 24. *"The Golden Girl"* (mummy portrait). Egyptian, Hawara, 2nd century A.D. Encaustic on wood. Egyptian Museum, Cairo (photo: Euphrosyne Doxiadis, *The Mysterious Fayum Portraits: Faces from Ancient Egypt* [New York, 1995], p. 71)

Figure 23. Pair of bracelets. Late Roman, ca. A.D. 400. Gold, Diam. 7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.1668, .1669)

types of jewelry throughout the Roman Empire. It was also used on Roman military equipment.[64]

The necklace that perhaps reminds us most of our figure's appears on a mummy portrait known as *"The Golden Girl"* (Figure 24). While the terminal elements are not visible, the two chains clearly merge into a single strand, and the necklace must have closed in the back with a single strand as in the necklace on our Indian figure. Note also that the pendant on the necklace is of pierced work.[65]

A number of years ago, our Indian bronze was seen by Barbara Deppert-Lippitz, who observed that "a triple chain with openwork decorated element dividing [it] into segments would fit well into the picture of Roman jewelry." She considered all the elements of the necklace consistent with those of Roman jewelry and suggested some comparative material from the third century A.D.[66] Again, none of Deppert-Lippitz's comparisons provided a one-to-one correspondence, but they were highly suggestive of the sort of works that may have been imported to India. While there have been references to foreign occupations of the Gangetic Valley region, little is known about imports to the area. If, in fact, necklaces were imported into the region, as we have suggested, there must have been other things as well. A domed object, called a skin rubber, was found at Jhusi, not far from Kaushambi,

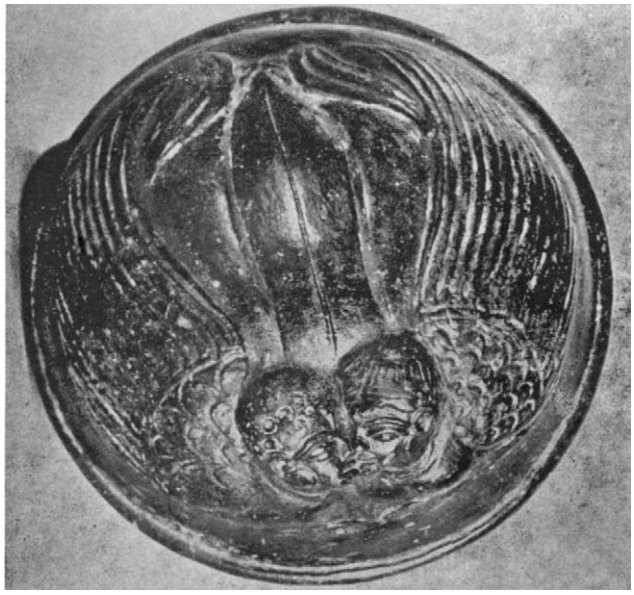

Figure 25. *Eros and Psyche* (skin rubber). Indian, Jhusi, 2nd–3rd century A.D. Hollow terracotta, H. 4.5 cm, Diam. 9 cm. Allahabad Museum, A.M. 4972 (photo: Rishi Raj Tripathi, *Masterpieces in the Allahabad Museum* [Allahabad, 1984], fig. 62)

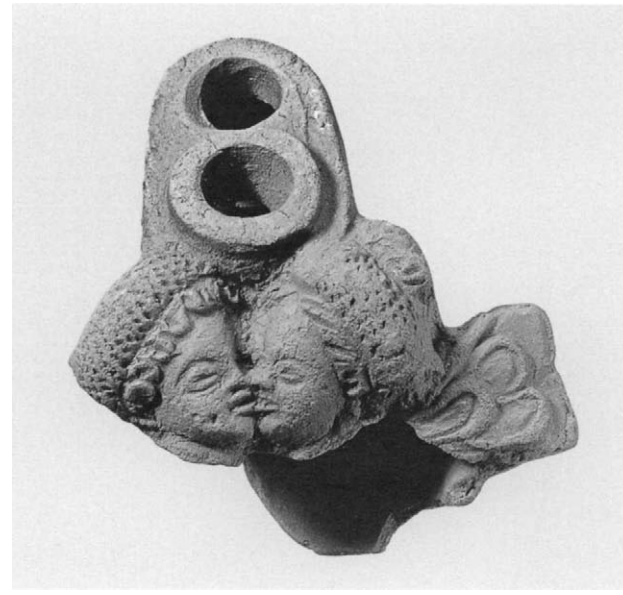

Figure 26. *Eros and Psyche* (lamp). Romano-Egyptian, ca. 2nd century A.D. Terracotta, H. 4.8 cm, L. 6.2 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux)

and is currently in the Allahabad Museum (Figure 25). It shows winged and kissing male and female heads sculpted in relief in three-quarter profile; on its bottom are tiny knobs used to massage the flesh. Although previously unidentified, its subject is the same as that shown on a terracotta lamp from Roman Egypt in the Louvre that bears the faces of Eros and Psyche (Figure 26). Obviously, foreign works were known in the Gangetic Valley.

While there is no identical parallel for the necklace, a strong case for its being Roman can be made on the basis of the many parallels to its individual parts, and it can even be suggested that it may have been imported from Roman Egypt. Not only is the design unknown in Indian jewelry, but the whole manner in which the necklace is made is antithetical to Indian jewelry techniques, while parallels for the method are found in the West. Certain elements of the necklace have a long history going back to the Hellenistic world, while others are known in the Roman Empire. Necklaces of this type were most probably produced in the imperial workshop at Alexandria, where artistic influences from Greece and Rome coexisted. The unusual clasp, however, opens the possibility of its having been produced by foreign craftsmen working in India (see discussion below). While the question of foreign imports into India is a major subject in its own right, it is especially important in a study of this bronze, for scholars striving to understand this piece must come to terms with the necklace.

Stylistic Parallels in the Deccan and Farther South

In ancient India, regular artistic and cultural interchange was facilitated by trade throughout the subcontinent. Despite the existence of clear regional styles, the same forms or motifs often occurred simultaneously in several regions.[67] Thus, as we date our bronze to the second or the third century A.D., we are aware of parallel forms seen in the Deccan, a region that has been the subject of important studies regarding the use and interpretation of imported objects. While the necklace on our Gangetic Valley bronze appears to be a rare example based upon a Roman original, the influence of foreign objects was pervasive in the Deccan and farther south. Many of these were imported; others may have been produced on Indian soil by artisans from other lands. This suggestion was originally made by Sir Mortimer Wheeler based upon his examination of Roman-style gems at the trading port of Arikamedu in Tamil Nadu. One of the many gems found there was left untrimmed and was more than likely made on the spot rather than imported.[68] The practice of importing and copying foreign jewelry was known in Taxila during the first century A.D.[69]

and in Tamil Nadu during the early centuries of the Christian era.[70] In the Deccan during the second and third centuries A.D., Roman coins were used in jewelry (see discussion below). Small bits and fragments of such jewelry have been published, but many others await further study. In any case it is clear that in the early centuries of the Christian era objects reflecting foreign styles were known throughout large areas of the subcontinent.

Literary evidence goes hand in hand with archaeological evidence to support the notion of both foreign craftsmen and foreign imports in India. A Tamil literary source speaks of foreign craftsmen working alongside Indians.[71] A passage in the Jaina *Kalpa-sutra* refers to *urattha-dinara malaya,* or a string of *denarii* (Roman coins) worn around the neck.[72] Coin necklaces of this type can be seen on the sculpture of Amaravati, and pierced Roman coins as well as clay bullae based on them were excavated in Nagarjunakonda.[73] As we have demonstrated elsewhere,[74] Italy and Roman Egypt were often the source of objects imported by sea that were then copied on Indian soil. Western works of art entering India via known ports on the west coast were subsequently transported across internal trade routes to Mathura and Kaushambi in the Gangetic Valley as well as to the Deccan and Tamil Nadu.

While jewelry was imported into India largely for its bullion value, other objects of lesser commercial value from the Roman world were frequently copied or transformed into Indianized versions of the originals. Adaptations of Western works of art in Gandhara and in the Deccan are usually quite dissimilar. In Gandhara, we more often see a literal copy of an original, while in the Deccan the original is more easily Indianized, partially obscuring the source.[75] In the Deccan, at the Roman trading post of Ter, both Roman-type terracottas and local adaptations of them were found; the process of transformation and adaptation of the Roman style at Ter has been masterfully studied by M. N. Deshpande.[76] Double-molded terracottas similar to those from Roman Egypt have been found at Satavahana and Ikshvaku sites throughout the Deccan, including Kondapur, Sannathi, and Nagarjunakonda.[77]

The Deccani trading post of Paithan (ancient Pratisthana) in western India has a particularly significant group of terracottas. A squat male wearing a necklace of amulets, with arms raised, hair tied in a topknot, and legs spread apart, has been identified as a child because of his cherubic face[78] and perhaps also because his genitals are exposed (Figure 27). (In India male adult figures are usually covered unless they are ascetics.) While the Paithan figure is clearly

Figure 27. *Figure of a Child.* Indian, Paithan, ca. 2nd century A.D. Terracotta (photo: M. K. Dhavalikar, *Satavahana Art* [Delhi, 2004], pl. 38)

Figure 28. *Male Orans.* Romano-Egyptian, 2nd–3rd century A.D. Terracotta, H. 8.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, 84.266.A (photo: László Mátyus)

Figure 29. *Squatting Figure.* Indian, Paithan, ca. 2nd century A.D. Terracotta (photo: Dhavalikar, *Satavahana Art*, pl. 40)

Figure 30. Collar with medallions containing the coins of Emperors Lucius Verus, Alexander Severus, and Julia Domna, wife of Emperor Septimius Severus, Romano-Egyptian. Said to be from Memphis, A.D. 225. Gold, L. 91 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1936 (36.9.1)

Indian in style and manufacture, its sources are from Roman Egypt, as can be seen in a group of figures with their arms raised in the "orans" gesture of prayer (Figure 28). Although associated with Christianity, this prayer gesture predates its appearance in Christian art. These figures date to the second and third centuries A.D. and clearly form a direct prototype. Like their Indian successors, they are hollow molded terracottas produced from a bivalve mold.[79]

Interestingly, both the Paithan terracotta and the Egyptian orans figure wear necklaces with amulets. While orans figures seem to have had a religious function in the Egyptian world, it is doubtful that they had such a meaning in India, where the gesture of prayer (*anjali mudra*) consists of joined hands and is the same as the gesture of greeting. Although the Deccani terracottas may at first appear physically distant from our little figure with the yoga band, there is a certain parallelism in that the craftsmen of both were familiar with Western minor arts: the bronze wears an imported object; the terracottas are transformations of an imported object. The *Eros and Psyche* found in the Gangetic Valley was a literal copy (Figure 25); the "orans" figure was an adaptation into an Indian type. Both these processes were

Figure 31. *Seated Figure.* Indian, Ter, ca. 2nd century A.D. Terracotta (photo: courtesy Archaeological Survey of India)

common during the early centuries of the Christian era and beyond.

While Deccani terracottas merit more attention than we can give them in this context, two more are relevant here. A squatting terracotta figure from Paithan (Figure 29)[80] wears a necklace with what appears to be a double chain. Hanging from this is a row of medallions kidneylike in shape. These seem to us to be an Indian adaptation both of the crescent-

shaped pendants that became popular in the Roman world in the second century A.D.[81] and of elaborate medallion necklaces such as the magnificent example from Roman Egypt of the third century A.D. in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 30). Another terracotta, from Ter, portrays a squat figure on a basket, with a yoga band around his broad body (Figure 31). While not close in style, it certainly demonstrates that our seated figure from the Gangetic Valley was not an isolated example.

A Noncanonical Image of Maitreya, the Future Buddha

The iconography of the seated figure is challenging, for there is little on the piece to tell us anything except that it is an elaborately dressed Brahman ascetic. The iconographic repertory at the time of its production was relatively limited in comparison with the innumerable deities represented in later Indian art, and consequently we will suggest that it is an early or noncanonical form of an otherwise familiar deity.[82]

Certainly the most important innovation of the Kushan era was that a very large number of images of both Buddhas and bodhisattvas (Buddhas-to-be) were created in human form. While most types of these images are familiar, there were those which did not conform to the norm both in the formative phases and later. The major centers of production, Gandhara and Mathura, produced images carved in gray schist and red sandstone, respectively. Our image, however, is not from either of those two centers, but from the Gangetic Valley, the historical heartland of Buddhism. Despite the fact that Kaushambi imported and perhaps copied Buddha images from Mathura, the Gangetic Valley had an idiom of its own, as can be seen from the vibrant terracottas of the Ghoshitarama (Figures 5, 7).

According to the basic tenets of Indian thought, all beings are continuously reborn in a higher or lower form depending upon their acts. Their goal is to obtain release (*moksha*) from this endless cycle. This notion was incorporated into Buddhism, so that, according to the Hinayana Buddhist tradition, in order to become a Buddha (one who is perfectly enlightened) one had to perform innumerable meritorious deeds in previous lives and undergo subsequent rebirths. Only then can one attain final release from the cycle of birth and death. Many Buddhas existed in past eras, and some are even known by name. The current Buddha, the historical Shakyamuni (Sage of the Shakya clan), was an Indian prince named Siddhartha Gautama (ca. 563–483 B.C.). Tales of his prior human and animal incarnations are well known, having been told through a series of *jataka* (life stories) and throughout Buddhist narrative art.

Very early in the Buddhist tradition there arose the notion of a Buddha of the Future, the archetypal bodhisattva who came into being to give hope for future salvation—essentially, the Buddhist Messiah. This successor to Shakyamuni, named Maitreya, was extremely popular in the Mahayana faith throughout Asia. The Mahayana faith is a system in which there are numerous bodhisattvas, or Buddhas-to-be, who postpone their own enlightenment in order to help others attain salvation. Thus, Maitreya is considered a deity who forms a transitional step between these two vehicles of Buddhism: he is both the Hinayana follower of Shakyamuni and the Mahayana deity waiting in Tushita Heaven to be reborn on earth.[83] It is his Hinayana aspects that concern us here.

There are many views as to how Maitreya entered Buddhist literature, but there are two basic theories: one that sees him as having Vedic origins, in which he is associated with the Indian god Mitra, and the other that considers him to have come from Iran and to have been associated with Mithra, the future Savior of Zoroastrianism, and with other messianic cults from the West.[84] In an important article, Padmanabh Jaini has argued for the foreign origins of Maitreya.[85] He suggested that the immediate chosen successor of the Buddha would logically be either someone uniquely associated with him in his various biographies or a contemporary king who followed his noble example. In the early literature, however, Maitreya is only one disciple among many, quite a minor figure, in fact. Jaini therefore suggests that the legendary figure of Maitreya was added to the earlier genealogy of the Buddhas under the influence of a foreign messianic cult such as the Zoroastrian Saoshyant or the Persian-Greek Mithras Invictus. Without attempting to solve the problem of the ultimate origin of Maitreya, one must keep in mind that India in ancient times was quite cosmopolitan and periodically adapted foreign forms and ideas to suit its needs.

The connection of the Metropolitan Museum's bronze to Maitreya was suggested to me by Doris Srinivasan, who noted that Maitreya was born into a Brahman ascetic family and that the attributes of the figure are consistent with a Brahman ascetic as well as with a "Prince of the Church."[86] Once placed in this context, the various attributes of our figure may become more comprehensible.

Most Hinayana sources speak of Maitreya as one disciple of the Buddha among many, but the *Mahavastu* elevates him to first on the list of Future Buddhas. Before reaching this exalted position, Maitreya underwent various stages in order to ultimately be anointed

Figure 32. *The Bodhisattva Maitreya.* Indian, Gandhara, Kushan period, ca. 3rd century A.D. Stone, H. 163.2 cm. See also Figure 20

Figure 33. *Standing Maitreya.* Indian, Ahicchattra, 2nd century A.D. Buff sandstone, H. 71.1 cm. National Museum, New Delhi (photo: courtesy John C. and Susan L. Huntington Archive of Buddhist and Related Art, Ohio State University)

by the Buddha as his immediate successor and to be reborn into Tushita Heaven.[87] Shakyamuni predicted that Maitreya would be born into a Brahmanical family and that his father would be a Brahman chaplain learned in the Four Vedas and sacred formulas.[88] The notion of his being born into a Brahman, or priestly, family is important to early Buddhism because Shakyamuni was a Kshatriya and belonged to a royal clan. Since Buddhism is a proselytizing religion, the introduction of this tale relating to Maitreya marked an attempt to expand its appeal and to bring the Brahmans into the faith. The Brahmanical element in Buddhist literature has been stressed by John Rosenfield, who quotes the following passage from a eulogistic poem in honor of Shakyamuni Buddha: "You are Brahman, in you is the Brahmanical path, you are chief among

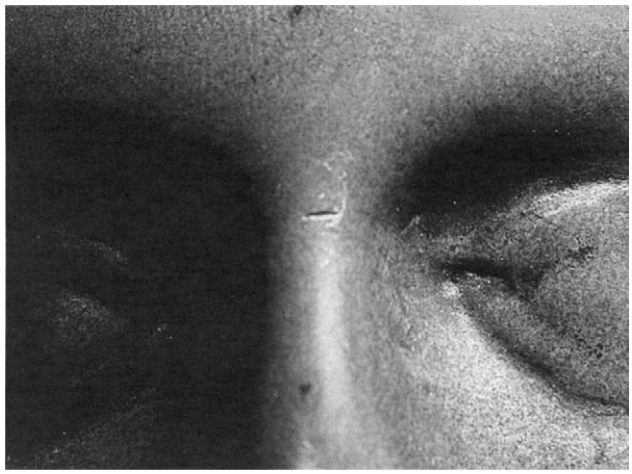

Figure 34. Detail of *urna* in Figure 1 (photo: courtesy Ronald Street)

Figure 35. *Seated Bodhisattva.* Indian, from Katra, Mathura, 2nd century A.D. Red sandstone, 71 x 50 cm. Government Museum, Mathura (photo: American Institute of Indian Studies)

Brahmans, you are the guide and the preceptor, the priest and the chaplain."[89]

Maitreya is represented differently at Mathura and Gandhara. Stylistically our image is more closely related to those from Mathura. If we hypothesize, however, that it is an image of Maitreya, it is more closely related iconographically to those from Gandhara.[90] The earliest representations appear on Gandharan Kushan coins.[91] The most significant aspect of Maitreya images is their combination of features that indicate he is both a Brahman ascetic and a royal figure. (The princely adornments, such as his elaborate jewelry, appear on all bodhisattvas, as they remind us that Shakyamuni gave up his royal status in order to become a Buddha.) Sometimes, especially in Mathura, he has the characteristics of a Buddha.

In Gandharan images, the most striking feature of Maitreya is the ascetic's hairdo with a bifurcated topknot, which is sometimes symmetrical, at other times not (Figure 32). This feature has a long history[92] that can be traced back to the rarely represented image of Brahma in which he is shown as subservient to the Buddha. Eventually it is adopted by Maitreya, who is fully accepted as an equal to Shakyamuni as well as the Buddhist's hope for the future. While the matted locks of the Brahman are entirely within the Indian tradition, the Gandharan version of the bifurcated topknot ultimately derives from Apollo's *krobylos* and thus from the classical world.

Maitreya can have a number of other attributes, including his right hand in *abhaya mudra* and his left hand holding a water pot or *kamandalu*. While both features can be associated with a number of deities, their combination with other attributes such as the ascetic's hairdo and princely ornaments clearly identifies representations of Maitreya. The water pot, interpreted as a sign of Maitreya's Brahmanic nature,[93] is also believed to have developed into a symbol signifying the auspicious nectar of Future Life, the essence of the Buddhist Law.[94] Another attribute is the *urna*, usually represented as a small dot placed slightly above the eyebrows and between the eyes. This feature can be seen both in the Metropolitan Museum Maitreya from Gandhara (Figures 20, 32) and in a Maitreya in the Mathura style from Ahicchattra, currently in the National Museum, New Delhi (Figure 33), which is the earliest image of Maitreya identified by inscription.[95]

The Metropolitan Museum's bronze ascetic is certainly not a standard image of Maitreya. It is from neither of the major centers of production, but it does have many of the iconographic characteristics. The bifurcated topknot of the ascetic's hairdo, the key to our hypothesis, has hitherto been overlooked. It must have been of special significance to the sculptor, because it is otherwise unknown in this specific form and is emphasized by the enormous double bow at the figure's waist. Taken in the context of numerous Maitreya images from Gandhara, the hairdo is simply

the matted locks of Maitreya as a Brahman ascetic.[96] A small, perfectly round *urna,* which is discernible only in raking light, appears between the eyebrows (Figure 34). It is heavily rubbed and nicked above the bridge of the nose, but its outlines are clear.

While the right hand of our image is in *abhaya mudra,* it is slightly turned inward, as is common on the early Buddha/bodhisattva images from Mathura. Among such examples are the Katra Bodhisattva in the Government Museum, Mathura (Figure 35), as well as the small bronze from Kaushambi (Figure 4). Whether the angle of the hand is characteristic of a very early date or of iconographic significance is unclear,[97] but it is definitely a feature of Kushan art from Mathura. Similarly, the left hand, holding the water pot, is not of the traditional type. In an unusual variant, the palm faces upward, in a manner not frequently seen in Maitreya images or, in fact, in any images carrying a water pot. One comparable image, however, is a seated Maitreya from Shotorak in which the water pot is similarly placed between the fingers of the upturned hand.[98]

Although Maitreya usually wears an elaborate necklace, there is no other exactly like ours. If we assume that our bronze is an early or noncanonical image of Maitreya, there was no precedent to guide our artisan in the details. Yet, he knew that his Buddha of the Future should have special jewelry. As we have seen in the Deccan, imported necklaces were worn but not necessarily associated with any particular deity. We would suggest here that Maitreya is wearing an imported necklace simply because it was of special distinction and not because he was an adapted or imported deity. Apparently, the use of imported goods in India was a privilege of the wealthy, but such goods did not otherwise have iconographic significance.

We cannot particularly link the yoga band with Maitreya, for we know of no other images of him on which it appears. Yoga bands are associated with asceticism, but no other example is so elaborate. A passage from the *Sutra on the Original Vow Asked by the Bodhisattva Maitreya* may possibly give a clue to the use of the yoga band in this context: "The Bodhisattva Maitreya three times daily and three times every night put his clothes in order, restrained his body, folded his hands, bowed his knees upon the ground, and, turning towards the ten quarters, pronounced the following stanza (*gatha*): 'I repent all my sins, / I encourage and assist all the virtues of the Road, / I take refuge in and pay reverence to the Buddhas, / That they may cause me to attain the unsurpassable Wisdom.'"[99] The fact that the only similar yoga band we have been able to find is in the fifth-century Buddhist caves of Ajanta may possibly indicate that this type was particular to Buddhist images.

To us, the seated posture and the bare feet (known on Mathura Maitreya standing images [Figure 32]) are of little significance, as is the form of the lower garment, which is a stylistic feature of Kaushambi dress. So too with the basket: while it can be associated with ascetics, it can also be associated with kings.[100]

The beard of our figure is not part of the standard Maitreya iconography but does pertain to Brahmanical ascetics. Images from Gandhara portray the Buddha and Maitreya as generally clean-shaven or at most with a mustache, while at Mathura both are entirely clean-shaven. The most prominent bearded image is the Fasting Siddhartha, as in the example from Lahore,[101] in which his flesh is wasted away, his eye sockets are deeply set, and his rib cage and blood vessels bulge through his skin. The image represents the severe austerities that were practiced by the Buddha but then rejected for a more moderate path to Enlightenment.

An examination of the characteristics of Maitreya as described in texts and a comparison of our figure's attributes to those seen in Mathura and Gandhara lead to the conclusion that our figure can well be an early representation of Maitreya as a Brahman ascetic. Certainly he is unique and experimental—no matter what his identification. Conceptually, if he is Maitreya, he is one step away from the canonical image, just as sculptures of the Fasting Siddhartha do not look like the Buddha as we usually know him.

A final aspect of our image that we have not explained, and probably cannot, is the strange cloth or chin strap. Two tales regarding Maitreya must be mentioned in this regard. According to textual sources, Maitreya performed various acts of heroism similar to those of Shakyamuni Buddha,[102] but the feats that interest us most concern decapitation. The *Divyavadana* tells of a bodhisattva of the past who tried to follow Maitreya's example by cutting off his head but failed to do so.[103] This gruesome episode may be more suited to a narrative than to an image, but if it has relevance to our sculpture, the scarf may be seen as both calling attention to and covering the slit in the neck, which was in fact a casting fault.

In a Pali tale, Maitreya was born in a former life as a *chakravartin* (world ruler). He actually cuts off his head with his bare nails and presents it to the Buddha with the words, "May this gift of mine result in omniscience." By these words, Maitreya had fulfilled the perfection of giving and was born in Tushita Heaven.[104] While this tale does not explain our sculpture, it does represent Maitreya as a self-sacrificing ruler. The literary parallels do not prove that our image depicts Maitreya but are, nevertheless, highly suggestive.

Although not conclusive, the proposal that the Metropolitan Museum's bronze represents Maitreya as a Brahman ascetic seems to fit the available visual evidence better than any previously put forth. While the visual comparisons are scant, the literary evidence is less so, for Maitreya has many faces throughout the Buddhist world. To many, Maitreya is seen as the deity who was not only venerated as the lord of the Tushita Heaven, where many Buddhists aspired to be reborn after death, and as the future Buddha, whose coming was eagerly awaited by the faithful, but also regarded as the paradigm of the ideal follower of the Buddha's path.[105]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to James C. Y. Watt and Steven Kossak for encouraging me to work on the bronze and to Martin Lerner for his wisdom in acquiring this "enigmatic masterpiece" as well as for his initial studies of the piece. Doris Srinivasan's suggestions regarding the iconography of the bronze have been of incalculable help. I have discussed this paper, throughout its evolution, with Joan Mertens and Michael W. Meister, whose willingness to listen and make carefully considered suggestions has helped bring it to fruition. Sincere thanks are due to S. Suresh, Chandra Reedy, Marsha Hill, Barbara Deppert-Lippitz, Christian Luczanits, and Patrick Olivelle for their help and insights in their own specialties. As ever, Richard E. Stone patiently examined and reexamined the bronze with me and discussed in detail each and every technical question that arose. But perhaps the most important acknowledgment should be to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in its entirety, for the encyclopedic nature of its collections serves as a constant reminder that few artistic traditions were created in isolation.

ABBREVIATIONS

Agrawala 1977
Prithri K. Agrawala. *Early Indian Bronzes.* Varanasi, 1977.

Jaini 2001
Padmanabh Jaini. "Stages in the Bodhisattva Career of the Tathagata Maitreya." In Padmanabh S. Jaini, *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies*, pp. 451–500. Delhi, 2001.

Kim 1997
Inchang Kim. *The Future Buddha Maitreya: An Iconological Study.* Emerging Perceptions in Buddhist Studies 7. New Delhi, 1997.

Lerner 1988
Martin Lerner. "Enigmas and Masterpieces." In *The Real, the Fake, and the Masterpiece*, pp. 37–40. Exh. cat., Asia Society Galleries. New York, 1988.

Rosenfield 1967
John Rosenfield. *The Dynastic Art of the Kushans.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967.

Sharma and Sharma 2000
Deo P. Sharma and Madhuri Sharma. *Early Buddhist Metal Images of South Asia: With Special Reference to Gupta-Vakatakas Period.* Delhi, 2000.

Stefanelli 1992
Lucia Pirzio Biroli Stefanelli. *L'oro dei romani: Gioielli di età imperiale.* Rome, 1992.

Stone 1994
Elizabeth Rosen Stone. *The Buddhist Art of Nagarjunakonda.* Delhi, 1994.

Stone 2004
Elizabeth Rosen Stone. "A Buddhist Incense Burner from Gandhara." *MMJ* 39 (2004), pp. 69–99.

NOTES

1. Martin Lerner (unsigned) in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Asia,* intro. R. Barnhardt (New York, 1987), p. 120; see also Martin Lerner, in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Notable Acquisitions 1984–1985* (New York, 1985), p. 85, and Steven Kossak, "The Arts of South and Southeast Asia" [Ancient India; Medieval India; Late India; The Himalayan Kingdoms; Southeast Asia], *MMAB*, n.s., 51, no. 4 (spring 1994), p. 24, fig. 12.
2. The bronze has been studied by Martin Lerner in his essay "Enigmas and Masterpieces," which was written for the catalogue of the outside exhibition, held at the Asia Society, New York, and called "The Real, the Fake, and the Masterpiece." The very title of the essay and that of the show itself are provocative, for indeed many aspects of this piece still remain enigmatic. See Lerner 1988, pp. 37–38, no. 20. The other work in which the bronze was published is Sharma and Sharma 2000, p. 12, and p. 13, fig. 7.
3. Dr. S. J. Fleming, then at the Research Laboratory for Archaeology, Oxford University, to Dr. Pieter Meyers, then Research Chemist, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, June 3, 1974.
4. Dr. Chandra Reedy, then Associate Research Scientist, Los Angeles Museum of Art, to Martin Lerner, December 9, 1988.

Though it is plausible that they were made in the same workshop, their function and iconography are quite dissimilar.

32. Tripathi, *Buddhist Art of Kaushambi*, pp. 120–21.
33. It is difficult to tell what else it might be. For another example of this feature, see James C. Harle, *Gupta Sculpture: Indian Sculpture of the Fourth to the Sixth Centuries* A.D. (Oxford, 1974), figs. 113, 114.
34. Rishi Raj Tripathi, *Masterpieces in the Allahabad Museum* (Allahabad, 1984), pp. 39–40, fig. 69. Traces of paint have been found on this head.
35. These chin straps should not be confused with the so-called wrapped heads that have appeared at Persepolis in representations of foreigners and are common in the art of Andhra Pradesh. See James Harle, "The Significance of Wrapped Heads in Indian Sculpture," in *South Asian Archaeology 1979: Papers from the Fifth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe Held in the Museum für Indische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin*, ed. Herbert Härtel (Berlin, 1981), pp. 401–10. As Harle notes, similar head wrappings were seen in Achaemenid reliefs at Persepolis (E. F. Schmidt, *Persepolis*, vol. 1, *Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions* [Chicago, 1953], pls. 30, 33).
36. See Madhukar K. Dhavalikar, *Masterpieces of Indian Terracottas* (Bombay, 1977), p. 61, pl. 79.
37. In the early Gupta image of Shiva and Parvati from Kaushambi, Shiva has a narrow row of curls under his chin. For a discussion of this feature see Joanna Gottfried Williams, *The Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 36–37.
38. Härtel, *Excavations at Sonkh*, p. 130, nos. 106, 109.
39. Ibid., p. 457, no. 6.
40. See also Isabelle Gobert, *Le Mobilier*, fasc. 2 of Jeanine Auboyer, *La vie publique et privée dans l'Inde ancienne (IIe siècle av. J. C.–VIIIe siècle environ)*, Publications du Musèe Guimet, Recherches et documents d'art et d'archéologie, vol. 6 (Paris, 1976), p. 32, fig. 1.
41. Dieter Schlingloff, *A Guide to the Ajanta Paintings*, vol. 1, *Narrative Wall Paintings* (New Delhi, 1999), pp. 4–5, no. 45.
42. Ibid. pp. 5–6. Compare Benoy Behl, *The Ajanta Caves: Artistic Wonder of Ancient Buddhist India* (New York, 1998), p. 86, right fig., and p. 87, right fig., which show a similar posture and attitude of a hermit and king.
43. This is clearly seen in a detail published by Behl, *Ajanta Caves*, p. 86.
44. The notion of wearing many necklaces has a long tradition in ancient India. The individual necklaces rarely overlap (except in Gandhara), so that the details of each can be clearly seen.
45. Martin Lerner (*Metropolitan Museum of Art: Asia*, p. 120; and Lerner 1988, p. 37) refers to this as a torque, but bends in the wire and comparisons with other examples indicate that it is a chain necklace.
46. The most recent dealing with the art of Gandhara are Doris Srinivasan, "From Clipeata Imago to Gandharan Image Medallion in the Embellishment of the Parinirvana Legend," in *Architetti, capomastri, artigiani: l'organizzazione dei cantieri e della produzione artistica nell'Asia ellenistica; studi offerti a Domenica Faccenna nel suo ottantesimo compleanno*, ed. Pierfrancesco Callieri (Rome, 2006), pp. 247–69; Martina Stoye, "Der Dreifuss in Gandharischen Szenen vom Ertstn Bad des Siddhartha Gautama—Überlegungen zu Herkunft und Bedeutung Eines Visuellen Zitats" [The Tripod in Gandharan Scenes of the First Bath of Siddhartha Gautama: Reflections on the Provenance and Meaning of a Visual Quote], *Artibus Asiae* 64, no. 2 (2004), pp. 141–76 (article in German with an English summary); and Stone 2004. For the Deccan, see Richard Daniel De Puma, "The Roman Bronzes from Kolhapur," in *Rome and India: The Ancient Sea Trade*, ed. Vimala Begley and Richard Daniel De Puma (Madison, Wis., 1991; reprint Delhi, 1992), pp. 82–124, and M. N. Deshpande, "Classical Influence on Indian Terracotta Art," in *Huitième congrès international d'archéologie classique: Rapports et communications* (Paris, 1965), pp. 603–10.
47. The same format can be clearly seen in Greek folk jewelry in the Benaki Museum (for example, Benaki Museum, *Greek Jewellery from the Benaki Museum Collections* [Athens, 1999], p. 420, fig. 304, pp. 486–87, fig. 347).
48. Czuma, *Kushan Sculpture*, p. 76, no. 18.
49. Patricia F. Davidson and Andrew Oliver Jr., *Ancient Greek and Roman Gold Jewelry in the Brooklyn Museum* (Brooklyn, 1984), pp. 19–20, no. 15. A very fine example of this type is published in Ilknur Özgen and Jean Öztürk, *The Lydian Treasure: Heritage Recovered* (Istanbul, 1996), p. 181, no. 132. An earlier but similar type of element appears in the form of papyrus-lily beads (see Benaki Museum, *Greek Jewellery*, pp. 36–37, no. 1, for Late Helladic examples).
50. For example, Aikaterini Despini, *Ancient Gold Jewellery*, trans. Alexandra Doumas (Athens, 1996), pp. 162–63, nos. 150–52, pp. 166–67, nos. 153–56.
51. Dyfri Williams and Jack Ogden, *Greek Gold: Jewelry of the Classical World*, exh. cat., British Museum, London; MMA; Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (New York, 1994), pp. 112–13, fig. 64; Dietrich von Bothmer and Joan R. Mertens, *The Search for Alexander: Supplement to the Catalogue* (New York, 1982), p. 6 and p. 7 no. S23.
52. Bothmer and Mertens, *Search for Alexander*, p. 17, no. S 58 (MMA, Rogers Fund, 1913 [13.234.10]).
53. Ljudmila Ruseva-Slokoska, *Roman Jewellery: A Collection of the National Archaeological Museum–Sofia* (Sofia, 1991), p. 50, no. 103, p. 51, no. 97; p. 52, nos. 107–8.
54. Hanging from the chain is a coin pendant of Emperor Domitian dated A.D. 90–91. Stefanelli 1992, pp. 164–65, 175; F. H. Marshall, *Catalogue of the Jewellery: Greek, Etruscan, and Roman in the Departments of Antiquities, British Museum* (London, 1911), pp. 317–18, pl. LIX, no. 2735.
55. Chain necklaces are well known in Gandhara but are of a different style. Also, the way in which they are configured on the body is quite different: they are usually suspended from the neck in very much the same way necklaces are worn in modern times. For an interesting study, see Carolyn Woodford Schmidt, "Replicas of Chain Necklaces with Figural Terminals in Buddhist Art of the Kushan Period," in *South Asian Archaeology 1995: Proceedings of the 13th Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, Cambridge, 5–9 July, 1995*, ed. Raymond Allchin and Bridget Allchin (New Delhi, 1997), vol. 2, pp. 523–42.
56. Marshall, *Catalogue of Jewellery*, pl. LIX, no. 2716. See also Stefanelli 1992, p. 110, no. 76, for an example from Pompeii, as well as one from the third century with a medallion as a pendant, now in the National Archaeological Museum, Sofia (Ruseva-Slokoska, *Roman Jewellery*, pp. 138–39, no. 98).
57. Euphrosyne Doxiadis, *The Mysterious Fayum Portraits: Faces from Ancient Egypt* (New York, 1995), p. 71, figs. 59, 60, and p. 79, no. 72.
58. See, for example, Astrid Böhme, "Frauenschmuck der römischen Kaiserzeit," *Antike Welt* 9, no. 3 (1978), fig. 1. D. Mackay

has suggested that the manner in which necklaces were worn in India influenced jewelry fashions in Palmyra, a major Syrian trading emporium in the early centuries of the Christian era. See D. Mackay, "The Jewellery of Palmyra and Its Significance," *Iraq* 11, no. 2, p. 176. For further connections between Palmyra and northwestern India, see also Harald Ingholt, *Palmyrene and Gandharan Sculpture: An Exhibition Illustrating the Cultural Interrelations between the Parthian Empire and Its Neighbors West and East, Palmyra and Gandhara,* exh. cat., Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (New Haven, 1954).

59. See, for example, Stefanelli 1992, p. 110, no. 75, p. 141, no. 131, p. 201, no. 245.
60. Catherine Johns, *The Jewellery of Roman Britain: Celtic and Classical Traditions* (Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 91–92, fig. 5.4.
61. The Latin term *opus interrasile,* traditionally applied to this type of jewelry, was originally used by Pliny in the first century A.D. in various contexts, including gardening, votive crowns, decorative marble work, and precious metalwork. However, Jack Ogden and Simon Schmidt ("Late Antique Jewellery: Pierced Work and Hollow Beaded Wire," *Jewellery Studies* 4 [1990], pp. 10–11) have questioned the use of this terminology in connection with the type of pierced work we shall be discussing, namely, that which appears largely between the third and seventh centuries A.D.; they suggest that we simply use the term "pierced work." On the basis of this discussion, the term *diatrita* was adopted by Amilia Yeroulanu for her extraordinary publication on this type of work (*Diatrita: Gold Pierced-Work Jewellery from the 3rd to the 7th Century* [Athens, 1999], p. 15). While the terminology is not of specific importance to our study of the Indian prototype and was not universally adopted, it may help the reader to understand why the various references to pierced-work examples have different descriptive titles.
62. See Yeroulanou, *Diatrita,* p. 155, no. 288, no. 225.
63. Ibid., no. 116 (one of four similar medallions). The spiral work is perhaps even closer in a bracelet in the J. Paul Getty Museum; see ibid., no. 212, and Barbara Deppert-Lippitz, "L'opus interrasile d'orfèvres romains," in *Outils et ateliers d'orfèvres des temps anciens: Ouvrage publié avec le concours de l'enveloppe Recherche du Ministère de la Culture,* ed. Christiane Eluère, Antiquités Nationales, mémoire 2 (1993), figs. 5, 6.
64. Deppert-Lippitz, "L'opus interrasile d'orfèvres romains," pp. 69–72.
65. Doxiadis, *Mysterious Fayum Portraits,* p. 71, no. 60. Another good example, only with a gemstone in the center, is in the National Museums of Scotland, Royal Museums, Edinburgh, ibid., p. 79; Susan Walker and Morris Bierbrier, with Paul Roberts and John Taylor, *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt* (London, 1997), p. 57, no. 33.
66. Barbara Deppert-Lippitz to Richard E. Stone on behalf of the author, February 3, 1994.
67. After having written several articles regarding trade and trade routes, I was pleased to see my work neatly summed up in a paragraph by Robert L. Brown ("Vakataka-Period Hindu Sculpture," in *The Vakataka Heritage, Indian Culture at the Crossroads,* ed. Hans T. Bakker [Groningen, 2004], p. 64).
68. R. E. M. Wheeler, with contributions by A. Ghosh and Krishna Deva, "An Indo-Roman Trading Station on the East Coast of India," *Ancient India: Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India* 2 (1946), pp. 17, 19–21, 101 (F), pl. XXXIII, nos. 11, 12). It has been suggested by S. Suresh that Greco-Roman craftsmen worked in India and that it is often very difficult to distinguish between the workmanship of a Roman original work of art and its Indian copy. While this is the subject of an ongoing study, he suggests that foreign craftsmen also worked at Karur; S. Suresh, *Symbols of Trade: Roman and Pseudo-Roman Objects Found in India* (Delhi, 2004), pp. 124, 142–46. See also Stone 1994, pp. 10–11.
69. John Marshall, *Taxila: An Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavations Carried Out at Taxila under the Orders of the Government of India between the Years 1913 and 1934,* 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1951), vol. 2, chap. 30, vol. 3, pl. 193.
70. Suresh, *Symbols of Trade,* pp. 141–50.
71. A Tamil epic poem, the *Manimekhalai* (3rd century A.D.[?]) mentions that Indian artists worked with *yavana* (foreign) carpenters to build the city of Kaveripattinam. See Rosa Maria Cimino and Fabio Scialpi, *India and Italy,* exh. cat., Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Italian Embassy Cultural Centre, New Delhi (Rome, 1974), p. 22.
72. Stone 1994, p. 109, n. 139; K. Krishna Murthy, *Nagarjunakonda: A Cultural Study* (Delhi, 1977), p. 80, fig. 6, no. 19.
73. Stone 1994, pp. 29–30.
74. Stone 2004.
75. Compare for example the Levy-White incense burner from Gandhara and its sources (ibid., figs. 1, 23) with reliefs from Amaravati, which are no less classical in their sources but which adapt spatial conventions rather than motifs. Elizabeth Rosen Stone, "The Amaravati Master: Spatial Conventions in the Art of Amaravati," in *Hari Smriti: Studies on Art, Archaeology, and Indology: Papers Presented in Memory of Dr. Haribishnu Sarkar,* ed. Arundhati Banerji (New Delhi, 2006), vol. 1, pp. 51–60, 67–72.
76. See Deshpande, "Classical Influence on Indian Terracotta Art."
77. M. K. Dhavalikar, *Satavahana Art* (Delhi, 2004), pp. 87–90.
78. Ibid., p. 88, no. 1 (pl. XXXVIII).
79. László Török, *Hellenistic and Roman Terracottas from Egypt* (Rome, 1995), p. 127; see pls. XCIII, XCIV, and XCIII for other orans figures. Pl. XCIV, no. 170, is of particular interest because it is a female figure with its hair pulled up in a type of style common on Indian figures. See also Françoise Dunand, *Religion populaire en Égypte romaine: Les terres cuites isiaques du Musée du Caire* (Leiden, 1979), pl. LXI, no 112.
80. There are unpublished parallels to this piece at Ter, but since they are very worn, we have chosen to show the Paithan example.
81. Reynold Higgins, *Greek and Roman Jewellery,* (London, 1961), p. 186, no. 3c, pl. 55b; Andrew Oliver, Jr. "Greek, Roman, and Etruscan Jewelry," *MMAB,* n.s., 24, no. 9 (May 1966), fig. 30 (Rogers Fund 21.88.90); Stefanelli 1992, p. 202, no. 246.
82. We have examined the possibility of its being one of the various Hindu deities; none of these can be justified. It has previously been suggested that our figure represents Agni, the fire god, and while this is remotely possible, one would hesitate to think so without any indication of a halo of fire. (Lerner 1988, p. 3, attributes this idea to Doris Srinivasan, but it is clear from the references that it is only a remote possibility.) A *yaksha* has also been suggested, an identity that is possible, but the lack of a pot belly makes it unlikely (Kossak, "Arts of South and Southeast Asia," p. 24).
83. Rosenfield 1967, p. 230.
84. Ibid., p. 288. Inchang Kim, the author of the most recent monograph on Maitreya, believes that his origins go back to the time of the Buddha. Kim 1997, pp. 11–16.

85. Jaini 2001, p. 451. This essay was originally published in *Maitreya, the Future Buddha,* eds. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge, 1988), which did not contain the quotations from Sanskrit and Pali texts that were later included as an appendix in the 2001 paper.
86. Doris M. Srinivasan to the author, undated (May 2007).
87. For the four stages of the bodhisattva, see Jaini 2001, p. 453.
88. For an excellent overview of the basic characteristics of Maitreya, see Rosenfield 1967, pp. 229–34. For the origins and spread of the cult of Maitreya in Southeast Asia, see Denise Patry Leidy, "The Bodhisattva Maitreya, Prakhon Chai, and the Practice of Buddhism in Southeast Asia," in Nandana Chutiwongs and Denise Patry Leidy, *Buddha of the Future: An Early Maitreya from Thailand* (New York, 1994), pp. 65–91.
89. Rosenfield 1967, pp. 232–33, and p. 312, n. 76. This passage is quoted from a section of a eulogistic poem in honor of Shakyamuni by the author of "The Letter to King Kani[sh]ka," translated by D. R. Schackelton Bailey, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950), pp. 671–701, 947–1003. The chapter is entitled "Praise [of the Buddha] in Brahmanical Terms."
90. Most of the images commonly accepted as Maitreya have been published in Kim 1997.
91. Ibid., p. 73; Joe Cribb, "Kanishka's Buddha Coins—The Official Iconography of Shakyamuni and Maitreya," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 2 (1980), pp. 79–88; "Kanishka's Buddha Image Coins Revisited," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 6, Papers in Honour of Francine Tissot (1999–2000), pp. 151–89.
92. Alexander Coburn Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China, Artibus Asiae,* supp. 19 (Ascona, 1959), pp. 216–17.
93. Rosenfield 1967, p. 232.
94. Kim 1997, p. 51.
95. For a discussion of the image, see Rosenfield 1967, pp. 231–32.
96. We can only reiterate here that regional interpretations of standard iconographic features are the norm in India, the most conspicuous illustration being that the *ushnisha* (cranial protrusion) of the Buddha is interpreted as a naturalistic hairdo in Gandhara, while it is portrayed as a snail's shell in Mathura.
97. Härtel suggests that this hand gesture may be *vyavritta,* which is associated with the Kapardin-type Buddha and also found on Hindu deities. He believes that it represents "addressing the audience rather than removing fear." Herbert Härtel, "The Kapardin Buddha Type of Mathura," in *South Asian Archaeology 1983: Papers from the Seventh International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe, Held in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels,* ed. Janine Schotsmans and Maurizio Taddei, 2 vols. (Naples, 1985), pp. 666–67.
98. Rosenfield 1967, fig. 101. I thank Michael Meister for this reference. See also Kim 1997, figs. 58, 78.
99. Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The Many Faces of Maitreya," in Sponberg and Hardacre, *Maitreya,* p. 13.
100. In an illustration of the *Mahakapi Jataka* at Bharhut, the bodhisattva, portrayed in a former life as a monkey, is talking to the king of Benares. Both are seated on baskets. See Susan L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York and Tokyo, 1985), pp. 70–71; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *La sculpture de Bharhut,* trans. Jean Buhot (Paris, 1956), pp. 69–70, pl. XXVII, fig. 68. In fact, varieties of the wicker seat were in common use as furniture by deities and nondeities alike. See Gobert, *Mobilier,* p. 32, fig. 1, p. 76, pl. VI, and p. 78, pl. VII. Bodhisattvas seated on baskets appear on several Late Gandharan reliefs. See, for example, the figure of Avalokiteshvara from Loriyan Tangai (Isao Kurita, *Gandara bijutsu / Gandharan Art,* vol. 2, *Budda no sekai / The World of the Buddha,* rev. and enlarged ed. [Tokyo, 2003], p. 63, fig. 156).
101. Islay Lyons and Harald Ingholt, *Gandharan Art in Pakistan* (New York, 1957), fig. 52.
102. Interestingly, though Maitreya must have, at one point, been previously born in animal form, there is no known tale of this except in Southeast Asia in which he was reborn as a lion. Jaini (2001, p. 455) cites this example from a story called the *Panchabuddhabhyakarana,* which originated in Chieng Mai/Laos in about the fifteenth century. While Maitreya was born as a lion in this tale, he was accompanied by four other bodhisattvas, namely, Kakusandha, Konagamana, Kassapa, and Gotama, who were born, respectively, as a rooster, snake, tortoise, and bull. Jaini (2001, p. 483 n. 11) notes that the five Buddhas with their animal emblems are depicted in a Cambodian temple. See *Panchabuddhabhyakarana,* ed. and trans. G. Martini, *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient* 55 (1969), pp. 125–44, pl. 14.
103. See Lewis Lancaster, "Maitreya," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* ed. Mircea Eliade (New York, 1987), vol. 9, pp. 136–37; Jaini 2001, pp. 456, 483 n. 12, and appendix, p. 492 (VII), for the original text from the *Divyavadana.*
104. Jaini 2001, pp. 456–57, 483 n. 13, and appendix, p. 492 (VIII), for the original text from the *Dasabodhisattuppattikatha.*
105. Kitagawa, "The Many Faces of Maitreya," p. 13.