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Demetrios of Bactria as Deva Gobujo and Other Indo-Greek Myths of Japan

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and Other Indo-Greek Myths of Japan

Lucas Christopoulos

Kyushu, Japan

Frontispiece. Three different perspectives of the sculpted bust of Demetrios-Wubujing-Juyanmoluo, or Gobujo, in Nara, Kofukuji Temple (興福寺), from 734.

ABSTRACT

A particular Buddhist divinity named *Gobujo* is represented in several Buddhist temples in Japan dating from the eighth century on. Originating in Nara, its distinctive representation remained constant through the centuries in other temples in Japan, characterized by his wearing plate armor like that of Tang dynasty Chinese and Tocharian portrayals, holding a Japanese *katana* broadsword in his right hand, and having an elephant head positioned on his head. Chapters 1–3 of this article trace the way in which the divinity was created from the image and cult of Demetrios of Bactria, following his conquest of India and because of his support for the Buddhists of India, together with the transmission of his fame through the ages in the Buddhist sutras. In chapter 4, we will also investigate other related myths, cults, and customs in Japan, especially Buddhist theatrical plays, which also originated with the Indo-Greeks and traveled all the way through the Tarim Basin and China before reaching the archipelago at the easternmost point of the Silk Road — that is, Kyushu and Nara.

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1. KING DEMETRIOS OF BACTRIA, CONQUEROR OF INDIA AND PROTECTOR OF THE BUDDHISTS

Figure 1. Coin (Tetradrachm) of Demetrios of Bactria, British Museum, around 180 BC.

> Heliodotos dedicated this fragrant altar for Hestia, venerable goddess, illustrious amongst all, in the grove of Zeus, with beautiful trees; he made libations and sacrifices, so that the greatest of all kings, Euthydemos, as well as his son, the glorious, victorious and remarkable Demetrios, be preserved from all pains, with the help of Tyche with divine thoughts.[1]

1 This inscription, which was found near Kulyab in Tajikistan, is written in verse and records a dedication made on behalf of two rulers of the Greek kingdom of Bactria. For some comments on the historical context, see S. Wallace, *Greek Culture in Afghanistan and India: Old Evidence and New Discoveries*, pp. 211–213. The translation is by A. Di Castro, in "Hestia, a Tabula Iliaca and Poseidon's Trident." Greek inscription: τόνδε σοι βωμὸν θυώδη, πρέσβα κυδίστη θεῶν Ἑστία, Διὸς κ(α)τ' ἄλσος καλλίδενδρον ἔκτισεν καὶ κλυταῖς ἤσκησε λοιβαῖς ἐμπύροις Ἡλιόδοτος ὄφρα τὸμ πάντων μέγιστον Εὐθύδημον βασιλέων τοῦ τε παῖδα καλλίνικον ἐκπρεπῆ Δημήτριον πρευμενὴς σώιζηις ἐκηδεῖ(ς) σὺν τύχαι θεόφρον[ι].

King Demetrios (Demetrios I), who later received the epithet of "Demetrios the Invincible" (Greek: Δημήτριος Α Ἀνίκητος, 222–167 BC), was the son of Euthydemos of Bactria (Greek: Εὐθύδημος BC), the king who took the Greco-Bactrian kingdom from King Diodotes II (Greek: Διόδοτος~238 to ~236 BC), establishing the new dynasty of the Euthydemids. The young Demetrios had been noticed from his youth, when he had battled alongside his father. According to Polybius in his *Histories* (Book 11, 34), Antiochos III "The Great" (Greek: Ἀντίοχος ὁ Μέγας 242–187 BC) had attacked Euthydemos on the Arius River (modern-day Hari River, Afghanistan) with a large troop of ten thousand soldiers. Euthydemos then retreated into the walled city of Bactra, where he resisted a three-year siege. Unable to take the city, Antiochos accepted the kingship rule of Euthydemos and met Demetrios when he was still a teenager of around sixteen years old, in 206 BC. Impressed by his strong and noble appearance, he offered Demetrios one of his daughters in marriage (Polybius, *Histories*, Book 10, 49). The young king then seems to have launched a drive for conquest throughout Taxila[2] in India starting around 200 BC, and he probably consolidated the territories of his father in the Tarim Basin as well, in what would later be known as the kingdom of Khotan, most likely by constructing fortresses along the road to China in the region leading up to Gansu Province.

Demetrios is, however, most famous for his conquest of the Indian subcontinent at around 186 BC, starting the *Yavana* (or Greek era. Sanskrit: यवन; Chinese: 葉筏那) era in India. The reason for this conquest is that he was an ally of the Mauryan dynasty, as his Greek predecessors were, and he supposedly gave a daughter named Berenice (English: Veronica, Greek: Βερενίκη) to the ninth and last Mauryan emperor, Brihadratha (187–185 BC), before his assassination by his own general, Pushyamitra Sunga (185–148 BC). Demetrios is famous for having conquered India as far as Pataliputra[3] and having built new cities in the Indian subcontinent, including Demetrias in the Sind. His association with Buddhism is attested by his Indian name Dha(r)mamita ("The one who will die in the cause of the

2 The Indian Raja Ambhi or "Taxiles" (Greek: Ταξίλης), from Taxila, was an ally of Alexander in the war against the Raja Poros (Arrianus, IV, 12 ; V, 3, 8. Diodorus, XVII, 86; Plutarch, 59, 65; Quintus-Curius, VIII, 14; IX, 3) and he became the Satrap of Punjab before being replaced by Chandragupta Maurya. See: Klaus Kartunnen, "India and the Hellenistic World," *Studia Orientalia*, vol. 83 (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 32–33.

3 According to the *Yuga-Purāṇa*, Demetrios I (Dhamamita) participated in a military expedition with artillery machines ("Tree-like engines," *Gargi-Samhita* 5, *Yuga Purana*), with which he conquered Pushpapura (Pataliputra).

Dharma"),[4] and for the general who followed him, Apollodotes "Savior" (Greek: Ἀπολλόδοτος Α΄ Σωτήρ, 174–165 BC) and later King Menandros "Savior" (Greek: Μένανδρος Σωτήρ Pali: धमधिन्दो, 180–130 BC), who are both remembered for their association with Buddhism. In "Discussions with King Menandros," the *Milindapanha* (10:1), Demetrios is perhaps mentioned as Devamantiya.[5]

I have already extensively described the expansion of the Greco-Bactrians and the Indo-Greeks and their association with Buddhism in three earlier articles,[6] and the way in which Demetrios, Apollodotos, and Menandros were perceived as protectors of the Buddhists in Gandhara, India, Sri-Lanka, Laos, Tibet, China, and Thailand.[7] A warlike Helleno-Buddhist aristocracy of Greek, Saka, Parthian, Indian, and later Khotanese origins, will participate in the construction of the Buddhist pantheon, philosophy, and model of representation mostly during the time of the Kushana kingdom. His coins show him with an elephant scalp on his head, as Alexander had worn the skin of the Nemean lion (Figure 1).

As soon as his ally Brihadratha Maurya (Sanskrit: बृहद्रथ) was killed by the general Pushyamitra Shunga (Sanskrit: पुष्यमित्र), Demetrios launched a successful punitive attack to regain control of the geopolitical situation of the region of Northern India in 186 BC. Traditionally associated with the Mauryas, the Indo-Greeks were based mostly in Taxila (Sanskrit: Takshashilâ तक्षशिला) until 90 BC, where the university was located (ISO: *Takṣaśilā Viśvavidyālaya*), and also in Sagala (Sanskrit: साकला,

4 D. C. Sircar, "The Account of the Yavanas in the *Yuga-Purana*," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 95, issue no. Univer. 1–2 (April 1963), p. 13.

5 "The Debate of King Milinda: An Abridgement of the *Milinda Panha*," in *Buddhist Traditions* (Delhi: Motilal Barnarsidass, 1991), vol. 18: 83–86, pp. 3–6, 19.

6 Lucas Christopoulos, "Hellenes and Romans in Ancient China (240 BC–1398 AD)," *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 230 (2012); "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 326 (2022); "Alexander the Great and Herakles as Guardians of the Buddha from Tapa Shotor," *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 350 (July 2024).

7 After his conquest of India, Demetrios would be known as Dhamamita or Dimita in the Indian texts. W. W. Tarn (*The Greeks of Bactria and India* [Cambridge University Press, 1938], p. 144) writes that he was named Dhamamita in the Sanskrit text of the Yuga-Purana, and that he had founded a city named "Demetrias." R. D. Banerji (1885–1930) and K. P. Jayaswal (1881–1937) found the name "Dimita" in the *Hathigumpha* inscription of the Kalinga king Kharavela. Demetrios opened the path of Greco-Buddhist sculptural arts and Indo-Greek civilization that Menandros "The Savior" (Μένανδρος Α' ὁ Σωτήρ, 165–130 BC) then expanded.

Greek: Σάγγαλα, also known as Euthydemia, re-named after King Euthydemos of Bactria by his son Demetrios). Sagala was the main center for Buddhism starting during the reign of Menandros *Soter*, until around 10 of our era with Straton III, and it had been independent from the Sakas who ruled in Taxila after 90 BC.[8] The cities of the Indo-Greeks were constructed the same way that they were in Greece and in the Seleucid kingdom during Hellenistic times, where temples established to worship tall statues of Greek and local gods during the Indo-Greek times gradually had been replaced by ones of the Buddha during the Kushana period (Figure 2). Similarly, the *Stupas* (Sanskrit: स्तूप), or Buddhist reliquary structures, attributed at first to funding from Ashoka (Sanskrit: अशोक 304–232 BC) in India,[9] started to get more and more elaborate between the Mauryas to the Kushanas, passing by the Indo-Greeks. In the case of the Butkara Stupa (Pashto: بت کړه ستوپا), an important Buddhist stupa near Mingora, in Swat, Pakistan, built during the time of the Indo-Greeks, we can witness a real transformation of the stupa together with the advent of Buddhist rituals and architecture of that period

8 I have mentioned in brief some similarities between the *atomist*'s philosophy of the Greeks and the Buddhist philosophy of the *Sarvāstivāda* in a previous paper ("Alexander the Great and Herakles as Guardians of the Buddha of Tapa Shotor," pp. 29–30). The Indian Buddhist philosopher Nargarjuna's (Sanskrit: नागार्जुन c.150–250) connection with Parmenides of Elea (Greek: Παρμενίδης ὁ Ἐλεάτης sixth-early fifth century BC) and their "Double Truth," is another example of that fusion of doctrines and that full admixture of Indian and Greek philosophies that flourished within advanced "Helleno-Buddhist philosophy." These discussions and writings were developed at the University of Taxila, and they should be much more investigated by scholars, in my opinion, because even though it was the result of a long-past historical fusion, it also can open the path to a future "Universal perspective," simply because it can combine ancient Hellenistic "Universal" spirituality and sciences together with modern discoveries and progress in science. That possible fusion point between science and spirituality-philosophy was to emerge in the work of the ancient Greek atomists (Parmenides, Anaximander, Demokritos Leucippus, Epicurus, etc.) and the Buddhists, who were already dwelling with "multiverses," and could, in my sense, reshape the future of mankind by developing a harmonious evolution and a balance between science and spirituality. It is however a personal point of view, and not directly related with the subject and the historical evidence developed in this present study, but it caught my eyes and thoughts because that parallel has already been pointed out by numerous "progressive" scientists of today, such as Philippe Guillemant: "Science without consciousness is only the ruin of the soul" (*Philippe Guillemant: Le pic de l'esprit*, ed. Guy Trédaniel, 2017).

9 David Scott, "Ashokan Missionary Expansion of Buddhism among the Greeks (in N.W. India, Bactria and the Levant)," *Religion* vol. 15 (1985), pp. 137–138.

and the Kushana.[10] The word *stupa* itself is a Sanskrit word for "a knot or tuft of hair, the upper part of the head, crest, top, or summit," and it is etymologically similar to the Greek word *stupos* (Greek: στύπος), meaning "stem, stump, or block."

Beast fables such as "The Crane and the Crab," "The Priest in Horse-Trappings," the "Brahmin and the Acrobat," "The Ass in the Lion's Skin," "The Stolen Ploughshares," or "The Crane and the Geese" of the *Jataka Tales* (Sanskrit: जातक), written between the third and second centuries BC,[11] show striking similarities with the fables of Aesop (Greek: Αἴσωπος 620–564 BC), and these fables are represented on several Buddhist stupas of the Kushana period, demonstrating as well the fusion of Indo-Greek artistic and thought.[12]

The brown or saffron color clothing of the Buddhist monks is called *kasaya* (Sanskrit: काषाय) (Chinese: *jiasha* 袈裟; Japanese: *kesa* 袈裟). The original *kasaya* were made of fabrics stitched together to form three rectangular pieces of cloth, which were then fitted over the body in a particular manner. The three main pieces of *kasaya* are divided into the *uttarāsaṅga*, the *antarvāsa* and the *saṃghāti*. The *samghati* dress of the Buddhist monks was a robe with two layers, of which the outer was used as a cloak. It went over the upper robe (*uttarāsaṅga*), and the undergarment (*antarvāsa*). In early representations of the Buddha, the *saṃghāti* is usually the most visible garment, with the undergarment or *uttarāsaṅga* protruding at the bottom. It was made after the Hellenic *himation* (Greek: ἱμάτιον), and its shape and

10 See Language Log: Indo-Greeks: the importance of archeology for historical linguistics, part 4: https://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=56678

11 See Henry Thomas Francis and Edward Joseph Thomas, *Jataka Tales*, selected and edited with introduction and notes, (Cambridge, 1916). Many other philosophical comparisons between the mind of man and that of animals can be seen as well in the *Milindapanha*, though the parallel with the fables of Aesop is not so obvious as it is in the *Jataka Tales*. See also *Aesop's Fables in Ancient China* (古代中國的 伊索寓言), by Pei-lin Wu (吳珮琳), in; *Central Asiatic Journal* Vol. 60, No. 1–2, Migration and Nation-Building in Central and Western Asia: Turkic Peoples and Their Neighbours (II) (2017), pp. 207–230 (24 pages) Published By: Harrassowitz Verlag. According to Plutarch (Sayings of kings and commanders: Pages 174), the Scythian King Skilurus ruling in Crimea during the second century BC, talks also about the fable of Aesop "The Old Man and his Sons."

12 See Albert Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India* (London, 1901), p. 176.

folds have been treated in that style by the Buddhist monks through history from the time of the Indo-Greeks in Gandhara.

Another indication of the adoption of Buddhism by the Indo-Greeks of northwest India, among the numerous other written and archeological evidence mentioned earlier, can be found in the *Harivamsa* (Sanskrit: हरिवंश I.14.16), written during the second–first centuries BC and corroborated in other *Puranas* (e.g., the *Vayu Purana*. Sanskrit: वायुपुराण, 88.140. ff). It is recorded there that both the Kambojas (Yuezhis) and the Yavanas (Greek) men of that period had the custom of shaving their heads, while the Sakas had only half of the head shaven, the Paradas (or later called the "Paratarajas," Indo-Parthians) had long hair, and the Pahlavas (Parthians) long beards. The Greek students of Diogenes the Cynic (Greek: Διογένης ὁ Κυνικός c.412/404–323 BC) also had their heads shaved,[13] and we can see a real historical parallel as a symbol of humility for the Indo-Greeks, who followed similar Buddhist ascetic practices and a frugality of lifestyle, perhaps adopting the same hair style as their distant relatives who had followed "Diogenes the Cynic" in Greece or the "dog-like" Cynics (Greek: Κυνικοί) in general. As shown on the sculptures of Tapa-Shotor and dating from the Kushana period, we can also suppose that the shaved head style was a common fashion among the Yuezhi and the Greeks, corroborated in such texts as the *Jataka Tales*.

Moreover, the gigantic Buddha statues such as the Maitreya Buddha of cave n. 96 at Dunhuang (45 m high), dating from the Tang dynasty, as also the one of Leshan (71 m high), and flourishing in many other Buddhist centers all over East Asia, as far as the Todaiji Temple with its gilt bronze statue of Vairocana (18 m. high) of Nara from the eighth century, are reminiscent of the transformations of the colossal Greek gods worshipped in India, Central, and Eastern Central Asia.[14]

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13 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Book VI.2 "Diogenes," pp. 30–31.

14 In Eastern Central Asia and China, colossal statues of the twelve Greek gods had reached as far as the Palace of Qinshi Huangdi; the golden Zeus of King Xiutu is another testimony to the reach of this influence. For Central Asia and India, Plutarch made it clear as well in his *Moralia, De Fortuna Alexandri* (1.5), while the reality must have been somewhere in between: "But if you examine the results of Alexander's instruction, you will see that he educated the Hyrcanians to respect the marriage bond, and taught the Arachosians to till the soil, and persuaded the Sogdians to support their parents, not to kill them, and the Persians to revere their mothers and not to take them in wedlock. O wondrous power of Philosophic Instruction, that brought the Indians to worship Greek gods, and the Scythians to bury their dead, not to devour them! We

To mention another Indo-Greek heritage still visible today, just as Demetrios of Bactria came to be represented later as Deva Gobujo, Alexander the Great (Greek: *Alexandros o Megas* Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Μέγας 356–323 BC), in his Hinduist Skanda (Sanskrit: स्कन्द, Chinese: 塞建陀,室建陀) form in India,[15] was also transformed into a Deva called Weituo Tian (Chinese 韋馱天), or sometimes "Boddhisatva Weituo" (Chinese: Weituo Pusa 韋馱菩薩), when he was carried through the Tarim during the development of Chinese Buddhism, and ultimately emerged as Idaten (Japanese: 韋馱天) in Japan. Alexander the Great, similarly to Demetrios, evolved from Indo-Greek origins into the form of a Deva in the Kushana, Chinese, and Japanese Buddhist world. Many sculptures of Weituo-Idaten can be seen in Buddhist temples in both China and Japan. Alexander-Skanda-Weituo-Idaten is considered also to be an earlier manifestation (evolution) of Vajrapani, and he is usually represented at the right side in the main Heavenly Kings Hall, holding a Vajra-mace (Chinese: *Jingan chu* 金剛杵) and facing Sakyamuni Buddha, standing just behind Maitreya Buddha, while the Han military General Guan Yu (Chinese: 關羽 ? –220), or "Sangharama Boddhisatva" (Sanskrit: संघाराम, Chinese: Qielan Pusa 伽藍菩薩), is standing on his left. *Sangharama* was originally the place where the Sangha lived. A famous *Sangharama* (Buddhist monks' residence, early monastery) was the Kukkutarama of Pataliputra. It had earlier been destroyed and its monks killed by Pushyamitra Sunga, who was against the Mauryas and the Buddhists.[16] Later, as we saw,[17] Demetrios killed Pushyamitra, conquered Pataliputra, and saved the Buddhists, and thereafter he and especially King Menandros constructed new stupas and temples. It is

admire Carneades' power, which made Cleitomachus, formerly called Hasdrubal, and a Carthaginian by birth, adopt Greek ways. We admire the character of Zeno, which persuaded Diogenes the Babylonian to be a philosopher. But when Alexander was civilizing Asia, Homer was commonly read, and the children of the Persians, of the Susianians, and of the Gedrosians learned to chant the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides. And although Socrates, when tried on the charge of introducing foreign deities, lost his cause to the informers who infested Athens, yet through Alexander Bactria and the Caucasus learned to revere the gods of the Greeks."

15 Christopoulos, "Alexander the Great and Herakles," p. 9.

16 According to the "Narrative of (King) Ashoka," the *Ashokavadana* (133) (Sanskrit: अशोकावदान), transmitted from the second century: "Then king Pushyamitra equipped a quadruple army, and with the intention of destroying the Buddhist religion, he went to the Kukkutarama. (...) Pushyamitra therefore destroyed the *sangharama*, killed the monks there and left."

17 Christopoulos, "Alexander the Great and Herakles."

then very natural, as Demetrios had protected the Buddhists, that Alexander and the other Indo-Greek kings became assimilated with local Indian divinities of war for protecting the Sangha, and were then gradually transformed to and mixed in as Heavenly Kings in Buddhism, while passing through the Tarim to China.[18] Alexander the Great, as the Buddhist Heavenly King "Skanda," appeared, perhaps for the first time, on the coins of the fifth king of the Kushanas kingdom, Huvishka (151–191), together with other Greek, Indian, and Iranian divinities. In China, he is mentioned as "Skanda" in the "Golden Light Sutra" or *Suvarṇaprabhasa Sutra* (Sanskrit: सुवर्णप्रभासोत्तमसूत्रेन्द्रराज), (Chinese: *Jinguang Mingjing* 金光明經) from around 414–421, or as "God Weituo" (Chinese: *Weituo Tianshen* 韋馱天神) in the thirteenth chapter of that sutra (*Guishen pin* 鬼神品).[19] Alexander-Skanda was mentioned for the first time in India in the *Chandogya Upanisad* (Sanskrit: छान्दोग्योपनिषद्), a Hindu text written during the first century BC, and on a Brahmi inscription of the second century BC as "Skandavarna." He appeared later as the "God of War" in Indian mythology, after having humbled the pride of Devaraja Indra, the lord of gods. His greatest feat in Buddhism is to have killed the powerful *Asuras* Mahisa and Taraka. In the *Mahabharata*, Skanda-Alexander (Iskandar; Persian:اسکند ر or Sikandar ; Persian: سکندر in classical Persian literature) became linked and merged with other deities such as Kartikeya, Kumara, and Mahasena. His vehicle was the peacock and his holding attributes a cock, a long spear (*sarissa*), a stick, or a shell.

His name appeared later in the Chinese Buddhist sutras from the fifth century, and he became settled as a protector of the *Dharma* mainly from the twelfth century on. He was added to the group of the Heavenly Generals protecting the *Dharma* mainly by the monk Ming Zhi (Chinese: 明智 ?–1115) together with the "Goddess of the Dawn," Marici. Skanda-Weituo and Marici became invocated and invited for protection during a Buddhist purification ritual by monks in procession, who were making retreats into nature with prayers, chanting the sutras, preaching sermons, and making food-bestowing rites for a good harvest, in a ceremony called "The Liberation Rite of Water and Land" (Chinese: *Shuihu*

18 What is possibly the first transitional image of Alexander Vajrapani evolving into the Heavenly General Skanda, holding a Vajra-mace, can be seen on the Kizil cave painting (cave 4), representing him with both a long sword and a Vajra (Christopoulos, "Alexander the Great and Herakles," p. 19).

19 See Li Xinjie, "Weituo: A Protective Deity in Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist Art." M.A. thesis, University of Macao, 2012.

Fahui 水陸法會). Weituo in China became popular and was widely represented during the Song dynasty (Chinese: 宋 960–1279). Worshipped by both the Sangha and the secular population, he became viewed as a major protector of the Buddhists and the Dharma, though, as said earlier, he had already been worshipped since the third century in China, after passing through the Tarim Basin. As his image and cult came mainly from the time of the Indo-Greeks and the Kushana Alexander-Vajrapani, Weituo also wears the head of the Nemean lion on a sculpture from the Shuangling Temple (Chinese: *Shuangling Si* 雙林寺), situated in the "Thousand Buddha Hall" (Chinese: *Qianfodian* 千佛殿), in Shanxi Province, dating from the Ming dynasty.[20]

20 Li Xinjie, "Weituo: A Protective Deity," pp. 40–41.

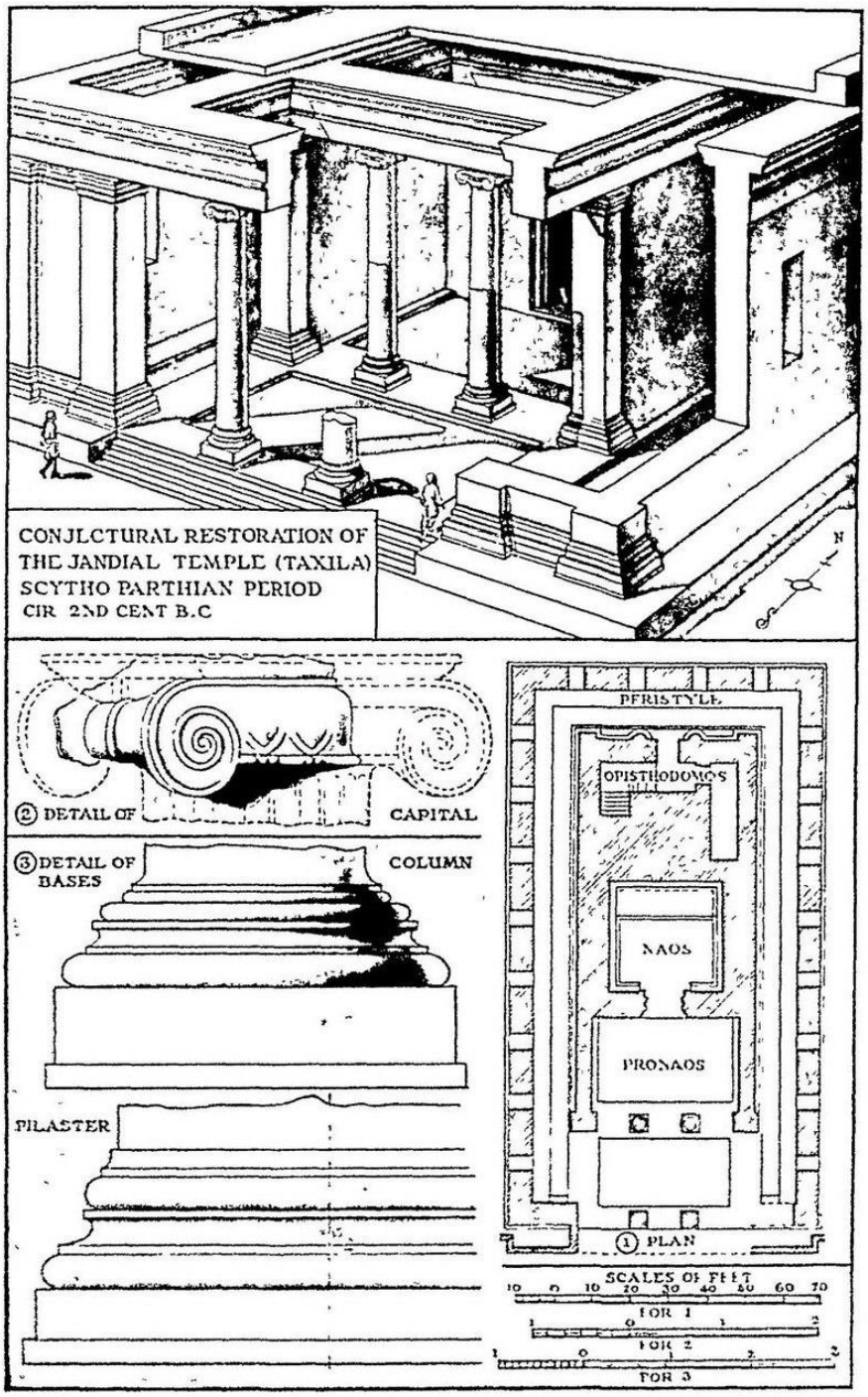

Figure 2. Reconstitution of a Greek Temple of Taxila, with a *naos*, *pronaos* and an *opisthodomos* at the back, 45 × 30 meters. Built during the time of the Indo-Greek King Demetrios or Menandros, around 180–150 BC. From: Percy Brown's (1872–1955) *Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu* (Bombay, India, 1956).

Buddhist philosophy, arts, and sciences developed there because of an Indo-Hellenistic admixture that was perpetuated during the Kushana period, by these same populations of Greek, Saka, Yuezhi, Parthian, Sogdian, and Indian origin who lived throughout Central Asia, Eastern Central Asia, and Gandhara. Herakles became the guardian of the Buddha (Vajrapani),[21] and many Greek artistic or philosophical elements came to be included in the core of Buddhism from the Indo-Greeks to the Kushana period. During the time Saka rule was replacing Greek rule, the military hierarchy still referred to the army commander as *Strategos* (Greek: στρατηγός), demonstrating the Indo-Greek military organization system that somehow continued among the Saka and the Yuezhi in Bactria and Gandhara. In the *Avadanas* or *Purvayogas*, the Helleno-Buddhist Saka general Aspavarma (Kharosthi: 𐨵𐨗𐨿𐨪), son of the Apracha king Indravarman (of Bajaur),[22] around 50 AD is referred to as a *Stratega*.[23]

Unlike in the Ptolemaic kingdom, where local Egyptians were not allowed to follow Greek education forms, Iranians from the cities of the Seleucid Empire were eager to send their children to the Hellenic gymnasium, just as in Bactria and India, where the contact seems to have been even closer, with complete access to a cultural admixture between various peoples coming from different cultural backgrounds.

King Demetrios, who had included numerous Saka mounted troops among his forces during his conquests, seems gradually to have come to be regarded as a major warlike figure in Buddhism in India

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21 See Christopoulos, "Alexander the Great and Herakles."

22 Indravarman, whose coins show Athena standing and the Greek legend ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ/ΑΖΟΥ, is famous for being mentioned in Kharoshthi letters on the Bajaur Casquet: "In the sixty-third year of the late great king Aya (Azes), on the sixteenth day of the month of *Kartia* (*Kartika*), at this auspicious (?) time, Prince Indravarma (Indravarman), son of the king of Apraca, establishes these bodily relics of Lord Sakyamuni; …. He produces brahma-merit together with his mother, *Rukhunaka*, daughter of Aji…. And these bodily relics, having been brought in procession from the Muraka cave stupa, were established in a secure (?), safe, deep (?), depository…" —Text of the Bajaur Casket, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

23 Timothy Lenz (with a contribution by Andrew Glass and Bhikshu Dharmamitra), "A New Version of the Gandhari *Dharmapada* and a Collection of Previous-Birth Stories: British Library Kharoshti fragments 16 + 25," *Gandharan Buddhist Texts*, vol. 3. (Seattle/London: University of Washington Press/British Library, 2003).

and Central Asia, where he became deified as a *Deva* (Sanskrit and Pali: देव) in the Buddhist pantheon, a god of the highest of the six forms of existence.

2. DEVA DEMETRIOS–JUYANMOLUO–WUBUJING/GOBUJO IN PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURAL ART

Figure 3. Wujubing-Juyanmoluo can be seen in the famous *Sanjūsangen-dō* (三十三間堂), or the "Temple of Thirty-Three Bays," in Kyoto, dating from 1266.

"Wubujing-Juyanmoluo" is a Name in Heaven, or one of the Eight Gods and Demigods (generals), and he is known as Wubujing. He is an assistant of the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, and a good deity who always follows and supports (the Boddhisatva) on every step of the Way (to enlightenment). His

> appearance is purple and white,[24] and he is holding a *Juyan* scepter in its left hand and a female pole in its right hand.[25]

Demetrios Wujubing-Juyanmoluo (Chinese: 五部淨-居炎摩羅)[26] came to be traditionally known as a strong protective figure by the Buddhist monks, and he was invoked while they were reciting the *Dharani* Sutra, matching with the historical figure of the Greek conquering king Demetrios, who was perceived as a protector of the Buddhists in India.

Made about a thousand years after King Demetrios and the Indo-Greeks, there remains today a sculpture dated to 734, representing what seems to be the king wearing his elephant head in Nara, Kofukuji Temple (Japanese: 興福寺), Japan (Frontispiece). Only the bust remains, and it looks like an image of Demetrios. It formed part of the set of sculptures collectively known as the "Eight kinds of demigods and *Devas*," or the "Eight Generals" ("Eight Legions"), protectors of the *Dharma* (Chinese: *Tianlong babu* 天龍八部).[27]

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24 Purple was the color that the Greco-Macedonian, Indo-Greeks, and Greco-Bactrian kings wore, and it was also the color of the Roman Emperors. On the rainbow, it is the last color that can be seen by the human eye, making purple the transitional color for visually joining the visible to the invisible world, and therefore it is ranked the highest of the seven colors.

25 *Taishō Tripiṭaka*, Book 20, no. 1061, in *Taisho shinshu Daizokyo* (The Tripitaka in Chinese), *Revised, Collated, Added and Rearranged. Together with Original Treatises by Chinese, Korean and Japanese Authors*, edited by Pr. Dr. J. Takakusu and Pr. Dr. K. Watanabe. Published by the Taisho shinshu Daizokyo Kanko kai (Society for the Publication of the Taisho Tripitaka), Meijirodai, Bunkyo-ku 大正新脩大藏經 紙本來源：大正新修大藏經刊行會 編 / 東京：大藏出版株式會社.千手千眼觀自在菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼呪本 (唐) Tang dynasty, Jingang Zhi (金剛智譯) 共 1 卷，點選底下卷數可進入該卷 Great Compassion *Dharani* Sutra or Thousand-Handed and Thousand-Eyed *Avalokitesvara* Sutra (千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經) 57: 二十八部眾護衛受持者 作 者 / 觀 诸 法如 第六偈：「我遣梵摩三钵羅，五部净居炎摩羅，常當拥護受持者」。「梵摩三缽羅」即梵天王之名，《一切經音義》曰：「梵摩三缽天；此應天王名也，道行經云：梵天王也」。梵摩即梵天之意。其形相為色紅白，左手持寶瓶，右手三股杵。「五部净居炎摩羅」為天之名，二十八部眾之一，略曰五部净，為千手千眼觀世音菩薩之眷属，常隨遂行而擁護之善神。其形相為色紫白，左手持炎摩幢，右手女竿 Tokyo (1927–1960), 1988.

26 In middle Chinese it would have been pronounced (*Ngubudzjeng-Kihjemmala*).

27 Traditionally, the "Eight Generals, Protectors of the *Dharma*" are the Devas, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kimnaras, and Mahoragas. At the Kofukuji temple in Nara and in Japan, they still have precise names and are slightly

The sculpture in Nara portrays the god known in Japanese as Gobujo (Japanese: 五部浄), depicted as a young boy who gazes off into the distance with a proud expression while wearing a breastplate armor of the Buddhist Tocharian or Tang dynasty-warrior type, together with an elephant skin wrapped around his shoulders, the elephant's head covering his own like a helmet, as seen in the depictions of Demetrios of Bactria. These features suggest that the image now identified as Gobujo must originally have been meant to portray Demetrios as a *Deva*, of a class of deities incorporated into Buddhism from Indian (or Indo-Greek) mythology through the Tarim Basin during the Tang dynasty. These representations were a syncretism brought from the Greeks into Buddhism, mainly expanding during the Kushana period and later through the Tarim.

In Nara, like the other sculptures in the same set, the image of Gobujo was made using the hollow-core dry-lacquer technique.[28] It is the only one of the "Eight Generals protectors of the *Dharma*" to have suffered substantial damage. Aside from the remaining bust, the only parts to survive are the

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different in representation, following their descriptions as mentioned in the *Nilakantha Dharani*: Gobujō (五部浄), Śuddhāvāsa, a *Deva* and personification of the world of the fourth *Dhyana* (there are five other gods who reside there, all *anāgāmins*: Īśvara, Samantakusuma, Raśmimālin, Manojava, and Svaraviśruti), Sagara (沙羯羅) the Nāga King, Kubanda (鳩槃荼), the Gandhavra Kendatsuba (乾闥婆), Ashura (阿修羅), the Garuda Karura (迦楼羅), Kinnara (緊那羅), and Hibakara(畢婆迦羅), or Mahoraga.

28 The "dry lacquer technique" was known as *Kanshitsuzou* (Japanese: 乾漆像) or *Kanshitsu-zukuri* (Japanese: 乾漆造) and used to produce Buddhist images brought from China in the late seventh century and in Japan mainly throughout the Nara period (710–794). In writing documents from the Nara period *kanshitsu* was also known as *soku* (Japanese: 即), or using the Chinese term *kyoucho* (Chinese: *Jiazhu* 夾紵). There were two types of dry lacquer technique, one being the "hollow dry lacquer technique" (Japanese: *Dakkatsu kanshitsu* 脱活乾漆), and the other the "wood-core dry lacquer technique" (Japanese*: Mokushin kanshitsu* 木心乾漆). The hollow dry lacquer technique was the first to be used in Japan, known during the Nara period. Craftsmen first modeled a core in clay and then added layers of hemp cloth soaked in lacquer, applied over the surface. Each layer was left to dry before the next layer was added. After all was dry, the clay core was removed, leaving a lightweight hollow statue. A wooden framework was often fitted inside the statue to prevent it from warping. Surface details were modeled with a thick paste known as (*Kokuso-urushi* 木屎漆), or a mixture of lacquer, flour, and wood-powder. For the "wood-core dry lacquer statue" technique, the basic shape of the statue was first carved in wood and then lacquer was applied over it. Layers of hemp cloth were used as for the hollow dry lacquer statue, and surface details were added using the *Kokuso-urushi* paste. The lacquer layer was between 1 and 3 cm thick. This technique developed during the Nara period. The wooden core was carved to an increasing degree of precision, while the lacquer layer was made gradually thinner.

right hand and forearm, which were donated to the Tokyo National Museum during the Meiji Period (1868–1912).

A later sculpture of Demetrios-Gobujo can be seen in the famous Sanjūsangen-dō (Japanese: 三十三間堂), or the "Temple of Thirty-three Bays," of Kyoto, dating to 1266, wearing a similar type of armor, and holding a Japanese-style broadsword (Japanese: *katana* 刀), erected together with sculptures of the other Seven Generals (Figure 3). There is also another made of cypress, wearing the distinctive elephant head, in the Shionfune-Kannon ji Temple (Japanese: 塩船観音寺) on the mountain side of Tokyo, created by the Buddhist sculptor Jokai (Japanese: 定快) and his family between 1268 and 1288 (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Wubujing-Juyanmoluo from the Shionfune-Kannon ji Temple in Tokyo, by the Buddhist sculptor Jokai and his family, between 1268 and 1288, made of cypress wood, among all the Eight Generals.

Still another late Demetrios-Gobujo can be seen in Nara, also dating to the Kamakura period (1185–1333) and bearing the same elephant head, a similar armor design, and perhaps holding a sword. It is a masterpiece made by a sculptor of the Kei School (*Kei ha* 慶派), with such facial features as the mouth, the eyebrows, and the eyes causing a realistic impression of fear for the viewer (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Gobujo-Wubujing from the Kamakura period, Nara National Museum. Total height 62.8 cm; figure height 55.5 cm.

There are no surviving representations in China of Demetrios-Wubujing-Juyanmoluo wearing an elephant head, but similar painted figures of the "Eight Generals protectors of the *Dharma*" (*Tianlong babu* 天龍八部) can be seen the Mogao Cave (Chinese: 莫高窟, 第 158 窟), n. 158, dating from the

eighth-ninth century and wearing the heads of a dragon, a fish, a deer, a lion, an eagle, a peacock, etc. The painting, however, seems not to follow the same pattern of representations as the ones from Nara. On the Maijishan rock reliefs from the cave n. 4 (Chinese: 麥積山石窟, 第 4 窟 廊正壁 天龍八部一北周), similarly to Sichuan carvings, the "Eight Generals protectors of the *Dharma*" most commonly bear the attributes of Herakles-Vajrapani, that is, the Nemean lion skin, the lion head, and the wooden club (Figure 6), as represented in the Tarim Basin Kizil cave 77/14c, showing perhaps a cowherd listening to the sermon of the Buddha from the right wall of the main hall and dating from 406–425, holding a similarly designed wooden mace.

Figure 6. One of "Eight Generals-protector of the *Dharma*" from the Maijishan grottoes, n. 4. Gansu Province. Northern Zhou period, 557–581.

By contrast, the disguised figures of the Eight Generals-protector of the *Dharma* paintings of the Mogao cave n. 158 (Figure 7) seem to show some similarities with the religious masked celebrations of Hellenistic Bactria, the Tarim Basin, and India. In these, the power of the mask or the animal head in

connection with ancient mythical figures, emphasizes the importance of animal disguise during rites of passage and rebirth into Heaven, both in the cycle of nature and the life of humans.[29]

In an earlier work, I indicated the connection between Dionysian rituals and some Buddhist religious festivals and processions in India, Central Asia, and Eastern Central Asia, then China.[30]

As pointed out by W. W. Tarn, the representation of the Buddha as a *man* transforming into a *god* was initiated by the Greeks in India.[31] That transformation had a "realistic look," modeled on the previous figures of Apollo, Dionysos, or Herakles, together with their respective cults, and that is why their representation is reminiscent and constant in the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara from the Kushana period.

Wubujing-Juyanmoluo is however a specific figure, bearing a name that should be linked with King Demetrios, not with a random animal head used in ceremonies and cults. The fact that Demetrios himself wore an elephant head is also linked with these rebirth rituals, connecting him with the power of the ancient Indian symbol of kingship, as was Ganesh (Sanskrit: गणेश). Ganesh, however, began to be worshipped only after the sixth century in India, as a sculpture was found representing the elephant-head god in the Badami caves temple seems to confirm. His oldest known representation, however, comes perhaps not from India, but rather from the Mogao caves of China and is dated from 531,[32] that is, about seven hundred years after King Demetrios. In Buddhism, Ganesh also became associated with Avalokitesvara, and he was worshipped in Japan from the ninth century on under the name Kangiten (Japanese: 歓喜天).[33]

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29 Evy Johanne Haland, "From the Modern Greek Carnival to the Masks of Dionysos and Other Divinities in Ancient Greece," *Narodna umjetnost: Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research* (Nar. umjet.) 49/1 (2012), pp. 115–120. Lucas Christopoulos, "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 326 (2022).

30 Christopoulos, "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," "Alexander the Great and Herakles."

31 W. W. Tarn, *The Greeks of Bactria and India* (Cambridge University Press, 1938), pp. 407–408.

32 Paul Martin-Dubost, *Gaṇeśa, the Enchanter of the Three Worlds* (Franco-Indian Research. 1997), pp. 412–416. p. 311.

33 There is a drawing called the "Two-bodied Kangiten" (Japanese: *Soshin Kangiten* 雙身歡喜天), from the *Entsuji* manuscript of the *Zuzosho* at Mount Koya (Japanese: 高野山真別所円通寺本 図像抄, in "Selections of Iconographical Drawings," reproduced in the *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo Zuzo-bu* (大正新脩大藏經 圖像部), vol. 3.

Figure 7. Eight Generals-protector of the *Dharma*, with various animal headdresses, Mogao Cave n. 158, Gansu Province, China, 741 to 848.

Wubujing-Juyanmoluo is specifically represented, not in a random Dionysian procession of an animal-disguised *Deva*, but with the royal elephant headdress and skin. The fact that Demetrios himself wore an elephant headdress is, however. as noted earlier, also linked with these Hellenistic rebirth rituals, connecting him with the power of the ancient Indian imagery of power, authority, and strength.

To conclude, Wubjing-Juyanmoluo is a warrior-king wearing the headdress of an elephant, not "having" the head of an elephant himself, which shows him to be a human transcending death by rebirth through the metempsychosis of the Indian symbol of power and kingship. The earliest visual example of this type of association we have is Demetrios in India, the oldest, which matches exactly with the depiction of Wubujing-Juyanmoluo. As a symbol of divine royalty and his own conquest of India, the elephant is also constant on the various coins of King Demetrios, with one especially having on one side the caduceus, and the other the royal elephant with a bell around his neck.

The clearest representation of Demetrios of Bactria is perhaps the statuette of a horse or elephant rider, most likely the "invincible" conqueror king, from the third century BC, and supposedly

from ancient Athribis, Egypt.[34] There are also many sculptures of the Buddha or *Devas* transitional from the Hellenistic to the Kushana period that seem to reflect the faces of these past Indo-Greek kings and other Hellenic gods, while at the same time taking new features from the Buddhist world, as illustrated by one from the Emory University's Michael C. Carlos Museum, dated from the Kushana period (Figure 8, left).

According to Dorothy C. Wong, from the University of Virginia, the representation of the eight demigod protectors of the *Dharma* in Buddhist art "have become the retinue of the future Buddha Maitreya (Figure 8, right) from the eighth century onward, and are shown in many depictions of Maitreya Pure Land murals, as in the Yulin cave (Chinese: 榆林窟) n. 25 in Gansu (Figure 9)." For Zhang Yuanlin (張元林), chief librarian and director of the Comparative Research Center on the Silk Road and Dunhuang, the Bodhisattva statue sitting in the Mogao cave n. 205, known as the "Venus (Aphrodite) of Dunhuang," shows a high level of realism borrowed from Indo-Greek art, as does the Buddhist "goodly sounding bird," or *Kalavinka* (Sanskrit: कलविंक, Chinese: 迦陵頻伽), which resembles the Sirens (Greek: Σειρήν) of Greek and Hellenistic artistic representation. He also mentions a solar deity resembling Helios on a chariot with horses on the west wall of Mogao cave n. 285. For architecture, Zhang Yuanlin points out the Dunhuang Mogao caves murals, with Ionic and Doric elements that can be seen as naturally following the art representation techniques and architectural structures of the Indo-Greeks of the past.[35] The columns of Horyu ji (法隆寺) temple in Nara and dating from the seventh century, having swelling center pillars, or the Doric column "entasis" (from the word *enteinein*/εντείνειν, to stretch tightly), are also a transmission from the architecture of the Greeks.

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34 Statuette of a horse or elephant rider, most likely Demetrios of Bactria, third century BC. Hellenistic. Supposedly from ancient Athribis, Egypt. Bronze. Height 9 3/4 in. (24.8 cm). Edith Perry Chapman Fund, 1955 (55.11.11). The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

35 Zhang Yuanlin, "An Echo from the Ancient Past: Depictions of the Lotus Sutra in Dunhuang Murals and Their Message for the Contemporary World," translated by Ho Chiew Hui, *The Journal of Oriental Studies*, vol. 28 (English) (Institute of Oriental Philosophy, 2018).

Figure 8. (Left) Long-haired *Deva* (or maybe Maitreya Buddha) from the Kushana period, third century (14 × 12.7 × 10.2 cm), no. 1985.019.003, Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University, Atlanta, is similar in inspiration to the sculptural representation of Wubujing-Juyanmoluo. (Right) Maitreya Buddha, Kushana period, third century, Matsuoka Museum, Tokyo (松岡美術館). Photograph by the author.

3. THE "MANTRA OF THE GREAT COMPASSION," AT THE ORIGIN OF THE WORSHIP OF DEMETRIOS-GOBUJO-WUBUJING-JUYANMOLUO

Demetrios-Wubujing-Juyanmoluo is a *Deva* who resides in the "Five Pure Abodes" (Pali: *Suddhāvāsa*).[36] The worlds of the Five Pure Abodes are in the Universe above the Earth, where reside the *Anagamins* (Sanskrit: अनागामिन्), or "non-returners," who are already on the path to becoming an Arhat (Chinese: *Luohan* 羅漢), and who will attain enlightenment directly from one of the Five *Śuddhāvāsa* worlds (Sanskrit: शुद्धावास), without the need of being reborn in a lower plane. Demetrios-Wubujing/Juyanmoluo/Gobujo and the other Seven *Devas* and demigods can stay in the universe of the *Śuddhāvāsa*, as it is not subject to natural calamities, and wait for a new Buddha. Meanwhile, their role is to protect, announce, predict, and prepare for the coming of the new Buddha and ensure that a Bodhisattva in his last life will see the four signs that will lead to his renunciation.

The reference to the figure of Wubujing-Juyanmoluo (Chinese:五部净-居炎摩羅) comes from the *Nilakantha Dharani* (*Maha Karuna Dharani*), or the "Mantra of the Great Compassion," (Chinese: *Dabei zhou* 大悲咒). Beginning in the seventh century, it became one of the most popular hymns of Mahayana Buddhism. At its origin, it consisted in the recitation of the epitephs of Shiva (*Nīlakaṇṭha Lokeśvara*, or the "Master of the World with Blue Throat") and Harihara. The mantra was pronounced by "Avalokitesvara of One Thousand Hands" and became a *Sutra* known in Tang dynasty China as "The

36 Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., eds., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton University Press, 2013), p. 232. The number of these worlds changes according to the various traditions: Sixteen (*Sarvāstivāda* school), Seventeen (*Sautrantika* school), or Eighteen (*Theravada/Sthavirankāya* school), where the *Devas* and Demigods reside in the Universe above the Earth, with the last being the Five *Śuddhāvāsa*. The five *Śuddhāvāsa* worlds are: *Akaniṣṭha* or *Akaniṭṭha* or the "World of the *Devas*." The highest of all is the *Rūpadhātu* world, understood to be at the highest extreme of the Universe. The current King of Heaven (*Śakra*) was born there. The ruler of *Akaniṣṭha* is *Maheśvara*. *Sudarśana* or *Sudassī* or "The clear-seeing" world is the second farthest and is similar to and friendly with the *Akaniṣṭha* world. Then comes the *Sudṛśa* or *Sudassa* or "The world of the beautiful" is a place of rebirth for five kinds of *anāgāmins*. Then comes *Atapa* or *Atappa*, or "The world of the untroubled," whose company those of lower realms wish for. Then comes the *Avṛha* or *Aviha*, or "The world of the not falling," or the common world for the reborn, *Anāgāmins*. It is a place where many beings become Arhat, but some pass away and are reborn in sequentially higher worlds of the Pure Abodes until they are at last reborn in the *Akaniṣṭha* world.

Great Compassion *Dharani Sutra* or Thousand-Handed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokitesvara Sutra" (Chinese: 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼).

Between the sixth and eighteenth centuries, nine Indian and three Tibetan monks made thirteen translations of the *Dharani Sutra*, from Sanskrit into Chinese or Tibetan. Nine of these are called "short," and four are called "long."

The Indian monk Bhagavaddharma had, by the middle of the seventh century, translated the stanzas of the *Sutra*, but not the *Dharani*, which he transliterated. Indeed, it was supposed to possess magical power when recited in Sanskrit. For this reason, the number of syllables and pronunciation in the targeted languages should reflect and reproduce those of the source language as much as possible. Other late translators all did the same. The four "long" versions are those of the Southern Indian Tantric (*Vajrayana*) Buddhist Monk Vajrabodhi (Sanskrit: वज्रबोधि, Chinese: Jin Gangzhi 金剛智, 671–741), and the three others from Tibetan, to which must be added the one found by Sir Aurel Stein among the Dunhuang Manuscripts, which Louis de La Vallée-Poussin and Robert Gauthiot published in 1912.[37] Earlier, Kyou Hiroyasu had published the *Dharani Sutra* in Japanese in 1908.[38] The ones from Toshihiko Kimura and Tomoyasu Takenaka were made in 1982 and 1988.[39]

As said, it was indeed not until the twentieth century that transliterations of the short versions of the *Dharani* into Chinese and Japanese were translated into English, by the Japanese scholar Daisetzu Teitaro Suzuki (1935),[40] by the Indian historian Lokesh Chandra (1988), and a recent one by the Japanese Zen practitioner and calligrapher Kazuaki Tanahashi, jointly with the American Joan Halifax in 2016.[41]

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37 Robert Edmond Gauthiot and Louis Étienne Joseph Marie de La Vallée-Poussin, "Fragment Final de la *Nilakanthadharani* En Brahmi et en Transcription Sogdienne," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge University Press, 1912), pp. 629–645.

38 Kyou Hiroyasu (広安恭寿), *Dharani Sutra*, published by Fuji Bunseido『三陀羅尼經和解』藤井文政堂、1908.

39 Toshihiko Kimura (木村俊彦) and Tomoyasu Takenaka (竹中智泰), *Darani of the Rinzai Sect* (Touhou Publishing, 1982; 臨済宗の陀羅尼)東方出版 1982). Toshihiko Kimura and Tomoyasu Takenaka, *Darani of Zen Buddhism* (Daito Publishing 木村俊彦・竹中智泰 (禅宗の陀羅尼) 大東出版社、1998).

40 Daisetzu Teitaro Suzuki (鈴木大拙), 禅仏教便覧 (1935 年) 未邦訳 入門 (1934), training 生活 (1934), manual 便覧 (1935).

41 Kazuaki Tanahashi and Joan Halifax; *The Heart Sutra: A Comprehensive Guide to the Classic of Mahayana Buddhism*

The English translations by D. T. Suzuki, Lokesh Chandra, Kazuaki Tanahashi and Joan Halifax, include elements of the "short" version of Bhagavaddhama and the "long" version of Vajrabodhi. However, none of these qualifiers can be attributed to them, because, not being transliterations, the numbers of verses and especially of syllables are highly variable.

Zhi Tong (Chinese: 智通 seventh-eighth century) has translated the text between 627 and 649, and entitled it: "The *Dharani* Sutra of Avalokiteśvara with a Thousand Eyes and a Thousand arms," (Chinese: 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經).[42] The Indian monk Bhagavaddharma went as well to China around the middle of the seventh century, between 650 and 660 from Khotan and the Tarim Basin.

Bodhiruci (Chinese: 菩提流支 ? –537), from southern India, arrived in Luoyang in 508. He translated the *Dharani*, which he titled: "The *Dharani* Sutra of the Boddhisattva-mother Avalokitesvara of the Thousand Hands."[43] As stated earlier, Vajrabodhi arrived in 719 in China via the Southern China Sea from Sri Lanka before continuing on to Guangzhou, and he is considered one of the Eight Great patriarchs (the fifth) of the Tantric Esoteric School (Chinese: *Zhenyan* 真言), or "Mantra" School (Devanagari: मन्त्रम्).

Amoghavajra (Sanskrit: अमोघवज्र, Chinese: Bukong Jingang 不空金剛, 705–774) was born in the Central Asian city of Samarkand from an Indian merchant or Brahmin father and a mother of Sogdian origin. He went to China at the age of ten following his father's death, and he became a disciple of Vajrabodhi. As was his master, he became one of the masters of the Chinese Esoteric Tantric movement, and the Japanese Shingon school (Japanese: 真言宗) considers him the Sixth of the "Great Patriarchs." Three translations of the *Dharani Sutra* are attributed to him, all dated to 726.

Later, Dyanabhadra (Chinese: Zhi Kong 指空, 1236–1363) exerted great influence on the esoteric movement during his lifetime, but his translation is difficult to date with precision. Chronologically, it is the last of the Chinese versions listed, and it is one of those called "long," and it is titled "Dharani of the Vast, Perfect, Great Compassionate Heart of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara" (Chinese: 觀自在菩薩廣

(Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala editions, 2016).

42 Lokesh Chandra, *The Thousand-armed Avalokitesvara* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1988), p. 238.

43 Chandra, *The Thousand-armed Avalokitesvara*, p. 44.

大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼). The *Sutra* was also been translated into Tibetan by an unknown monk before the ninth century, made from the Chinese version that the monk Go Chödrup (Tibetan: འགོ་ཆོས་གྲུབ་ Chinese: Fa Cheng 法成, 755–864) would use half a century later. He is known for having translated numerous *Sutras* from Chinese to Tibetan and vice versa, at the request of King Tri Ralpachen (Tibetan: ཁྲི་གཙུག་ལྡེ་བཙན་, 806–838), the fortieth king of the Yarlung dynasty of Tibet, who reigned from 817 to 836.

About a thousand years later, Changkya Rolpe Dorje (Tibetan: ཞང་སྐྱ་རོལ་པའི་རྡོ་རྗེ།, 1717–1786), a teaching monk, became very close to the Chinese Emperor Qianlong (Chinese: 乾隆, 1711–1799) of the Qing dynasty. He is known for having supervised the quadrilingual compilation of the Chinese into Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan translations of the entire *Shurangama Sutra* from 1752 to 1763.

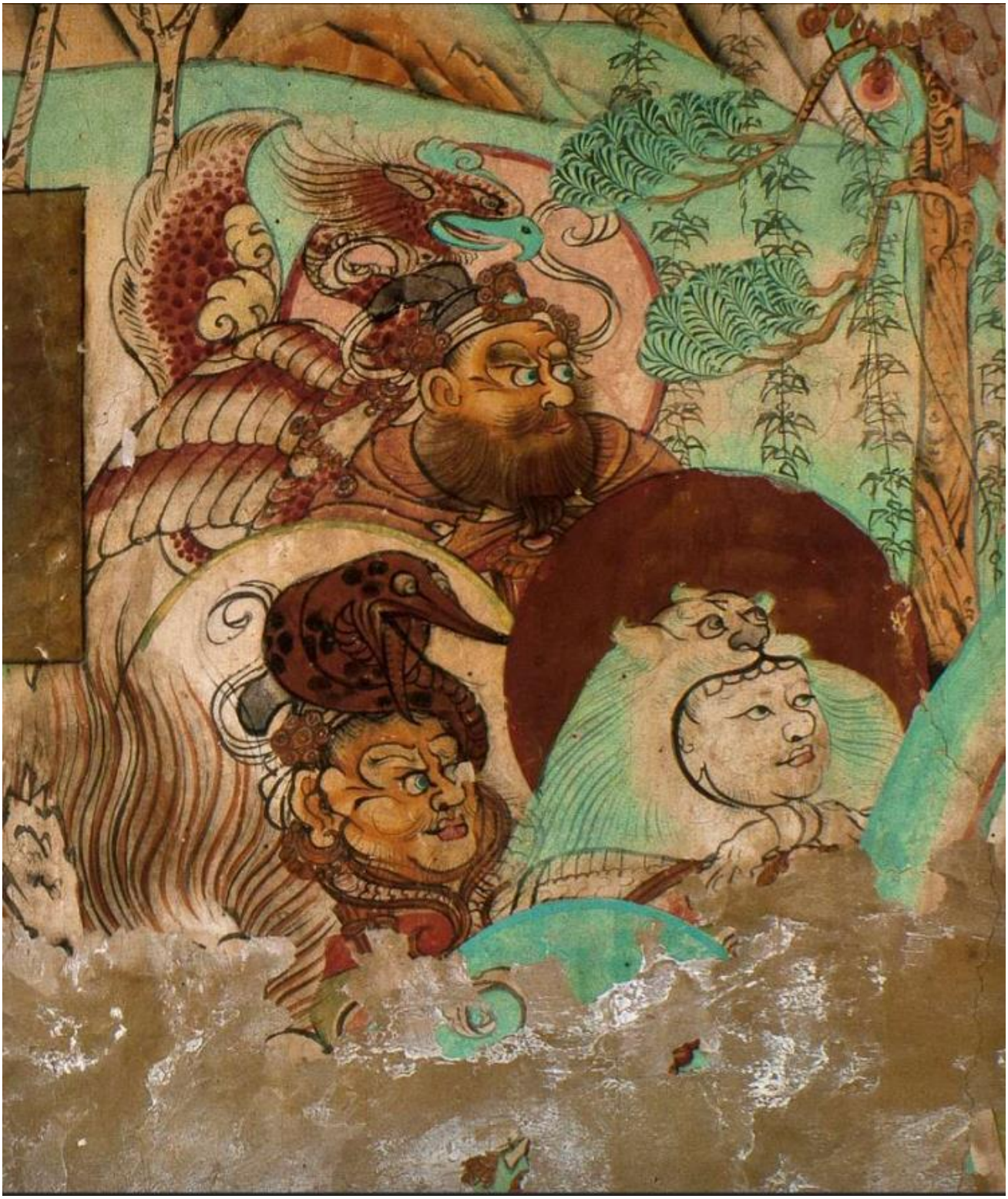

Figure 9. Yulin cave painting n. 25 in Gansu, "Maitreya Sutra," from the Tang dynasty. The Eight generals (demigods) are represented next to the future Buddha.

In Tibetan literature,[44] the historian Taranatha, or Kunga Nyingpo (1575–1634), mentions in his "History of Buddhism in India" the conversion of the Greeks to Buddhism at the time of Menandros, changing from their past Dionysian religious rituals:

> Once upon a time there lived in the country called Thogar [Tokharistan-Bactria] a king named Mi-nar [Menander]. In this country everyone worshipped the Sky-god [Zeus?]. Besides this, they knew no distinction between virtue and vice [possible reference to Dionysiac cults]. During their festivals, they worshipped the Sky-god with great smoke by burning grains, clothes, jewels and fragrant woods. . . . Along with his five hundred arhat followers Aiya Dhitika once flew through the sky, appeared at the place of their worship and took his seat at the altar there. They took him as the Sky-god, bowed down at his feet and worshipped him elaborately. When, however, he preached the Doctrine, about a thousand people — including their king [Menander] — were led to the realization of the Truth.[45]

Note the similarity with the king Xiutu-*Soter* (Chinese: 休屠王) worshipping the three-meter-high golden statue of Zeus in Gansu during the Western Han dynasty, mentioned as well in the Chinese sources as "worshipping the Sky (Heaven) with a golden Statue" (Chinese: 祭天金人). The statue still

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44 For the introduction of Hellenic medicine into Tibet during the seventh and eighth centuries, see: Christopher I. Beckwith, "The Introduction of Greek Medicine into Tibet in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 99, no. 2. (American Oriental Society, 1979), pp. 297–313. On Greek medicine in Tibet and China, see also: Dror Weil and Ronit Yoeli-Tialim, "Galen in Premodern Tibet and China: Impressions and Footprints," in P. N. Singer and Ralph M. Rosen, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Galen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), pp. 658–674. Greek medicine in China was also written of as "Islamic medicine" (*Huihui yiguan* 回回醫官). For Tibetan-Hellenic contact and of interest is also the Bactrian Silver Bowl, representing Alexander the Great with the "Tree of life," found in Lhasa and dating from the fifth-sixth century, exhibited at the Ancient Orient Museum (古代オリエント博物館) of Tokyo.

45 Georgios T. Halkias, "When the Greeks Converted the Buddha: Asymmetrical Transfers of Knowledge in Indo-Greek Cultures," in *Religions and Trade, Religious Formation, Transformation and Cross-Cultural Exchange between East and West*, edited by Peter Wick and Volker Rabens (Leiden, Boston: Brill Publ., 2014), pp. 65–117, esp p. 96, from Taranatha, *History of Buddhism in India*, p. 46.

stood from its erection during the Greco-Bactrian colonization of Gansu, before the transition of Buddhism after Menandros *Soter* ("These gods are the same type as the Buddhist ones, but they date from the time of Han Wudi." Chinese: 此神全類於佛, 豈當漢武之時).[46]

The Tibetan story of Taranatha mentioning the flying Arhat Aiya Dhitika visiting Menandros on the site of their cult seems to resonate similarly with the first contacts between the Han and Buddhism, as one is mentioned in the "Three Kingdoms Records" (Chinese: *Sanguo zhi*: 三國志) and later, especially with the dream of the Emperor Han Mingdi (Chinese: 漢明帝, 28–75).

In 2 BC, Emperor Ai of the Han dynasty (Chinese: Han Aidi 漢哀帝 28–1 BC), had sent the scholar Jing Lu (Chinese: 景盧, or Qin Jingxian 秦景憲) to the country of the Yuezhi (Bactria) to take Buddhist *Sutras* (Chinese: *Futu jing* 浮屠經), back to China.[47] Several years later, Han Mingdi supposedly dreamed that a flying golden man, emitting light, was hovering above his palace; then he sent envoys to the Greater Yuezhis to take Buddhist texts as well, while extending the Han control in the Buddhist cities of the Tarim Basin.[48] These first Buddhist *Sutras* in China are said to have been translated in the "White Horse Monastery" (Chinese: Baima Si 白馬寺) of Luoyang by two Indian Buddhist monks, Kasyapa Matanga (Sanskrit काश्यपमातण्ग, Chinese: Jiayemoteng 迦葉摩騰) and Dharmaratna (Sanskrit: धर्मरत्न, Chinese: Zhufalan 竺法蘭), in 67.

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46 "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," p. 72

47 *Sanguozhi, Weishu Dongyi zhuan* 三國志·魏書東夷傳》注引《魏略》載"天竺有神人，名沙律。昔漢哀帝元寿元年，博士弟子景盧受大月氏王使者伊存口授《浮屠經》曰复立者其人也。" 漢哀帝元壽元年西域大月氏使臣伊存来朝，在帝都長安向中國博士弟子景盧口授《浮屠經》

48 *Taishō Tripiṭaka*, Book 17, n. 0784, *Shinshu Daizokyo* (The Tripitaka in Chinese): Revised, Collated, Added and Rearranged. Together with Original Treatises by Chinese, Korean and Japanese Authors. Edited by Pr. Dr. J. Takakusu and Pr. Dr. K Watanabe. Published by the *Taisho shinshu Daizokyo Kanko kai* (Meijirodai, Bunkyo-ku: Society for the Publication of the Taisho Tripitaka),大正新脩大藏經 紙本來源：大正新修大藏經刊行會 編 / 東京：大藏出版株式會社 Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna (Eastern Han dynasty). Sutra of Forty-two chapters. 大正新修大藏經第 17 冊 No.0784 四十二章經 No.784, 佛教典籍《四十二章經》:"昔漢孝明皇帝，夜夢見金人，身体有金色，項有日光，飛在殿前。意中欣然，甚悦之。明日问群臣，此為何神也?有通人傅毅曰:"臣聞天竺有得道者，号曰佛，輕舉能飛，殆將其神也。于是上悟，即遣使者張騫、羽林中郎將秦景、博士弟子王遵等十二人，至大月支(氏)國，寫取佛經四十二章，在十四石函中，登起立塔寺。于是道法流布，処処建立佛寺，遠人伏化，愿為臣妾者不可勝數"

The transitional Dionysian religious traditions included into the Buddhist ones during the time of the Indo-Greeks and the Kushana can still be seen among the Monguors of Gansu Province (who supposedly have Greek DNA),[49] today, who are from the same area where King Xiutu and his three-meter-high golden statue lived: their people participate in "cleansing-exorcism" Buddhist-Dionysian mixed processions while carrying bread and carrying pieces of meat and bread in their mouths. The Greeks called these performers *obeliaphoroi* (Greek: ὀβελιαφόροι), the "Look-alikes" or the "Spit-bread Bearers." During the "White-Tiger purification ritual" (*Wutu wu* 於菟舞) in Gansu, the Monguor of Gansu Province still perform a very similar ritual (Figure 10).

The French Sinologist, ethnographer, poet, adventurer, and archeologist Victor Seagalen, while on his expedition in China in 1909–1910, found as well the sculpture of Pegasus (Chinese: Tianma 天馬), from Greek mythology, at the tomb of Huo Qubing (Chinese: 霍去病: 140–117 BC), the Han general who had taken the golden statue of Zeus from King Xiutu/*Soter* after being sent there on a military expedition by Emperor Han Wudi (Chinese: 漢武帝, 157–87 BC) in 121 BC. They had carved this stone figure of Pegasus (Figure 11) from pegmatite, which was as hard as marble, using perhaps the same procedure as the Greeks had done earlier in making marble statues. Iron and steel tools were used to carve these stone figures found at the tomb of Huo Qubing, indicating an advanced smelting technology for the Western Han dynasty, which probably was a continuation of techniques that already existed in Gansu and and had been transmitted to the Han.

The rocks used in one block were not found in the local area of Xi'an but rather were transported from the Qinling Mountains in Gansu (Chinese: 秦嶺山脈). Pegmatite, among other types of stones, was also used for the Greco-Buddhist sculptures of Gandhara,[50] most likely linking the two traditions. The lines on the muzzle of the Xi'an Pegasus are similar with the ones on the snout of the Vaishali lion of King Ashoka in India. As a general observation, if we would also compare the fine charioteer and horses' sculptures of the Qin dynasty, together with the ones of the Han, we can realize that the Qin ones were the finest, and the most realistic, being the result of a direct technical transmission by artists

49 Garrett Hellental et al., "A Genetic Atlas of Human Admixture History," *Science*, vol. 343, issue 6172 (2014).

50 Pierre Cambon and Alain Leclaire, "Étude pétrographique des collections gréco-bouddhiques du musée Guimet," *Arts Asiatiques Année 1999*, vol. 54 (pp. 135–147), p. 144.

coming from the Greco-Bactrian (Greco-Saka) world in Gansu and then at the court of Qinshi Huangdi (Chinese: 秦始皇, 259–210 BC).[51] King Xiutu and his heir, the prince Midi (金日磾, 134–86 BC) are perhaps related to the royal family of King Demetrios of Bactria described in this article.[52]

Figure 10. Left: Attic red-figured bell krater, Telos group (Schauenburg). Telos painter, 390–380 BC, Naples, private collection. Right: Monguor during the White-Tiger cleansing ritual, Gansu Province, China, 2008.

51 See: Lukas Nickel, "The First Emperor and Sculpture in China," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 76, issue 3 (October 2013), pp. 413–447 (Cambridge, 2013), and "Tonkrieger auf der Seidenstrasse? Die Plastiken des ersten Kaisers Von China und die Hellenistiche Skulptur Zentralasiens," *Zurich Studies in the History of Arts*, vol. 13/14 (2009). As for the Eastern Han dynasty bronze "Gansu Galloping Horse," found in 1978 and dating from the late second century, excavated in Leitai, it is clearly influenced by sculptures from the Greco-Bactrians: it is quite similar to images on the coins of King Eucratides (Greek: Εὐκρατίδης 172/171–145 BC). These horses are still the symbol of the Bank of Afghanistan today (Pashto: د افغانستان بان), with even the text ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ ΕΥΚΡΑΤΙΔΟΥ remaining there.

52 Christopoulos, "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," pp. 68–102; "Alexander the Great and Herakles," p. 56.

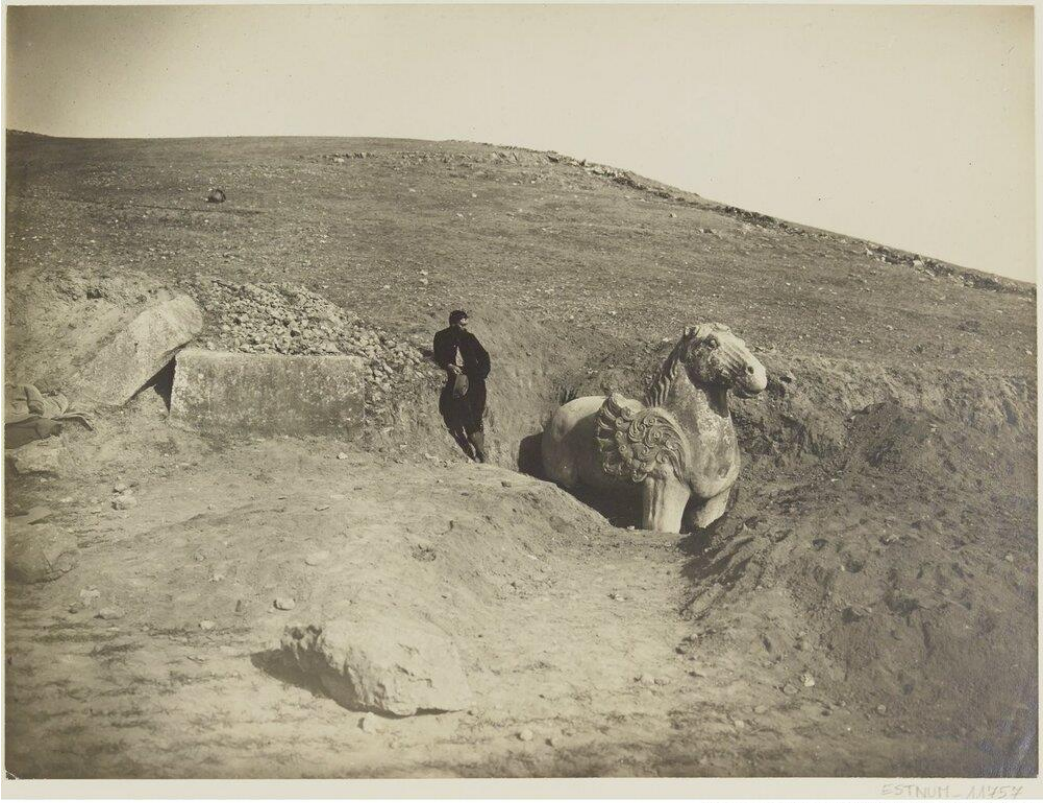

Figure 11. Victor Seagalen in China (1909–1910) finding Pegasus. Pegmatite stone-made "Heavenly-Horse" from the tomb of general Huo Qubing, near Xi'an. Photograph from the Bibliothèque National de France.

4. INDO-GREEK MYTHS OF JAPAN

As recorded in the *Kojiki* (古事記 c. 712) and the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀 720), Okuninushi (Japanese: 大国主), the god of the Earth and agrculture, and one of the three major gods of the Japanese Shinto Pantheon, was killed by a boar released by his eighty brothers, jealous of his love affair with the princess Yakami, just as Adonis (Greek: Ἄδωνις) was killed by a boar sent by Ares to punish him for his love affair with Aphrodite. Both were characterized by physical beauty, and while Adonis was reborn in the form of an anemone plant, Okuninushi was reborn because of the supplications of his mother to the god Kamimusubi (Japanese: 神産巣日) and the use of a special medicine ointment made by the shell goddesses.[53]

Orpheus (Greek: Ὀρφεύς), the mythological musician, poet, and prophet, is comparable to Izanagi (Japanese: 伊邪那岐/伊弉諾), the heavenly god of the seventh generation of the Shinto Pantheon and the legendary creator of life. Both Orpheus and Izanagi went to the underworld, Izanagi to the country of the Yomi (Japanese: 黄泉). Izanagi, together with his wife and sister Izanami, is the creator of the Japanese Islands, being the father of local creatures and divinities. As in the Greek and the Hellenistic world, the dead souls go to the underworld, while the High Plains of Heaven (*Takama-ga-Hara*) is a place reserved only for the divinities. Between them, in the middle world, is the Earth, where living beings reside. After Buddhism came into Japan, the Buddhist Hell, or *Jigoku* (Japanese: 地獄), became known as the Hades of Japan, and, just as does Charon (Greek: Χάρων) in the Greek and Helleno-Buddhist world, the couple Datsue ba (Japanese:奪衣婆), assist the dead to reach it. Keneo (Japanese: 懸衣翁) will get six coins from the dead to allow them to cross over the Styx, i.e., the Sanzu River (Japanese: 三途の川), to the other side, where Kṣitigarbha-Jizo (Japanese: 地蔵) will help to conduct these souls on their way, as Hermes (Greek: Ἑρμῆς) *Psychopompos* "Herdsman of the souls," did

53 See Maxime Danesin, "Explorer les transferts littéraires et culturels européens au Japon. Des temps archaïques au néo-médiévalisme de l'ère Heisei (1989–2019)," Chapitre IV, "Du monde gréco-romain à l'archipel japonais," pp. 288–334. Doctoral thesis, University of Tours, 2019.

earlier.[54] Lyu Pin[55] has already demonstrated the connection between Hellenic traditions and beliefs about the afterlife and Charon in China, and Monika Zin has done so for the Tarim Basin with the Tocharians, originating from the same Greco-Bactrians and Indo-Greek cults and beliefs.[56] The "Three ways" river (Sanzu River) of the Japanese Buddhist Underworld is shown to be related to the three-headed dog Cerberus (Greek: Κέρβερος), watchdog at the gates of Hades.

During the Han dynasty (Chinese: 漢 202 BC–220 AD) in China, the "Queen Mother of the West" (Chinese: Xi Wangmu 西王母) became a primordial and constant mythological figure in art representation, with the dual role of legitimizer of Imperial political authority and guide of the sovereign in the beyond on its quest for immortality. She is often assisted by the little Erotes-Yuren (Yuren 羽人) and, as coming from the Western Regions, she is in continuity with the Mystery cults of Dionysos of rebirth and the quest for immortality from Greek religion undertaken by the kings of Indo-Greek and Greco-Bactrian origins.[57] The "Bamboo Annals" (Chinese: *Zhushu Jinian* 竹書紀年), supposedly saved from the "burning of books" by Qinshi Huangdi and discovered during the Jin dynasty

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54 See the Tarim Basin Loulan tapestry with Hermes Psychopompos in Christopoulos, "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," p. 30. Menandros II "The Just" (Greek: Μένανδρος Β΄ Δίκαιος, 90–85 BC), the grandson of Menandros Soter, had coins representing Hermes wearing his petasos hat (Greek: πέτασος) and a chalmys, pushing the Dharma Wheel (Dharmachakra; Sanskrit: धर्मचक्र). On another coin, a sitting Zeus is holding a scepter and Nike is holding a wreath on the top of the Eight-Spoked Buddhist Wheel. The Wheel on the coins of Menandros II shows the syncretism of Buddhist philosophy and the "Wheel of Fate" of Nemesis. See: Elisabeth Riefstahl, "Nemesis and the Wheel of Fate," *Brooklyn Museum Bulletin*, Spring 1956.

55 Lyu Pin, "Placing Western Coins Near the Deceased in Ancient China: The Origin of a Custom," *Sino-Platonic Papers* no. 351 (2024). See the *Kojiki*, Sect. IX, "The Land of Hades," or the description of the Yomi (黄泉), perhaps a phonetical translation of Yama (Sanskrit: यम राज Chinese: 閻魔/閻摩), the Buddhist king of Hell.

56 Monika Zin, "Crossing the Ocean of *Saṃsāra*," *Berlin Museum für Asiatische Kunst*, no. III 9023, pl. 2 and fig. 21. The painting from the Kizil cave shown in this article seems to corroborate the Japanese (Buddhist Legend), as Datsue ba is a demon wandering around the Styx-Sanzu river of the underworld. The name of Keneo (懸衣翁), punisher of the souls in the underworld, contains the Chinese character *zhong* (翁), as in "Tomb Guardian" (*Wengzhong* 翁仲).

57 See: Lucas Christopoulos, "Yuren, from Bird Man to Eros. Sulla Via del Catai (On the Road to Cathay)," *CINA e GRECIA. Ecumenismi antichi allo specchio : il riflesso dell' Altro* (China and Greece. Ancient Ecumenism in the Mirror: The Reflection of the Other) (Trento, Italy: Centro Studi Martino Martini, 2024).

(Chinese: 晉 266–420), recounts the story of King Mu (Chinese: Zhou Mu Wang 周穆王, 957–922 or 958–918 BC), who would had undertaken an expedition into the Tarim Basin (Kunlun Mountains range), where he found Xi Wangmu among the Tocharians. She could have been the earlier form of Demeter, that is, Cybele (Phrygian: *Matar Kubileya/Kubeleya*) , "Mountain Mother-goddess," or the similar Hurro-Hittite goddess Kubaba among the Tocharians, before she got her own real cult of mysteries, in the Hellenistic sense, institutionalized with the new figure of Demeter at the time of the Greco-Bactrians, traveling eastwards to the Qin-Han dynasties, becoming especially popular in Han aristocratic circles.

The exhibition of the "Great shiny Goddess of Happiness" Ame-no-Uzume-nomikoto (Japanese: 天鈿女命 or 天宇受売命), or "Uzume," seems close to the Eleusinian Mysteries (Greek: Ἐλευσίνια Μυστήρια), as shown by Baubo's (Greek: Βαυβώ) engaging in a "Cosmic dance" with similar gestures to console Demeter (Greek: Δημήτηρ, meaning "Mother Earth"), desperately wandering in search of her daughter Persephone, who had been kidnapped, in Hades, dressing in black, and not permitting the Sun to shine on her, so that the Earth and life stay in darkness and die. The ritual dance, narrated in the *Kojiki*, served to "attract the major divinity of the Sun, or Amaterasu-ōmi-kami," (Japanese: 天照) out of the cave of Iwayado (Japanese: 天の岩戸), where she had locked herself away to protest against the sacrilegious behavior of her brother, Susanoo-no-mikoto" (Japanese: 素戔嗚命/須佐之男命), thus condemning the world to darkness, famine, and countless catastrophes, exactly as in the myth of Demeter.[58] In this cult we find two of the future trifunctional imperial treasures, that is, the "Mirror *Yata*

58 The "Heavenly Cave" (Japanese: Ama No Yasukawara Cave 天安河原), where Amaterasu was supposedly hiding, is situated in Takachiho, Miyazaki Prefecture, Kyushu. This traditional myth and dance was called *kamukura*/*kamikura* (Japanese: 神座) and was performed by actors going into a trance, dancing and invoking the gods to come. The ritual is known today as *Kagura* (Japanese: 神楽). For the myth in the *Kojiki* as translated by Basil Hall Chamberlain (1919), Sect. XVI. *The Door of the Heavenly Rock-Dwelling*, p. 65, when Uzume (Japanese: 天鈿女命), worshipped at Mt. Inamu (Japanese: 稲叢山), in Shikoku, makes Amaterasu laugh by showing her private parts: "...and the Heavenly Hand-Strength-Male-Deity standing hidden beside the door, and Her Augustness Heavenly-Alarming Female hanging [round her] the heavenly clubmoss of the Heavenly Mount Kagu as a sash, and making the heavenly spindle-tree her head-dress, and binding the leaves of the bamboo-grass of the Heavenly Mount Kagu in a posy for her hands, and laying a sounding board before the door of the Heavenly Rock-Dwelling, and stamping till she made it resound and doing as if possessed by a Deity, and pulling out the nipples of her breasts, pushing down her skirt-string *usque ad privates partes*. Then the Plain of High Heaven shook, and the eight hundred myriad Deities laughed together." For the corresponding Greek myth (Uzume-Amaterasu; Baubo/Iambe-Demeter), see the *Homeric Hymns to Demeter*, translated by Gregory Nagy (lines 197–204), when Baubo/Iambe

no Kagami" (Japanese: 八咫鏡) and the curved jewel "*Yasakani no Magatama*" (Japanese: 八尺瓊勾玉).[59] Uzume then exposes her private parts, leading to the hilarity of the gods present and the resolution of the crisis.[60] This story corresponds to a precise ritual of the Eleusinian Mysteries, named the *Gephurismoi* (Greek: Γεφυρισμοί), meaning "rude taunts." When the Eleusinian Mysteries initiates went at nightfall in procession to the bridge at the border between Athens and Eleusis, masked figures greeted them with jokes, obscene gestures, and indecent exposure, or *anasurma* (Greek: ἀνάσυρμα), with men and women showing their genitals, just as in other Dionysian festivals (Figure 12.). It has been suggested that the ritual of indecent exposure (*anasurma*) originally dates to the *Thesmophoria* festivities in honor of Demeter.

(Greek: Βαυβώ/Ἰάμβη), daughter of the god Pan (Greek: Πάν), similarly made Demeter laugh by showing the goddess her private parts: "On this she [Demeter] sat down, holding with her hands a veil before her face. For a long time, she sat on the stool, without uttering a sound, in her sadness. And she made no approach, either by word or by gesture, to anyone. Unsmiling, not partaking of food or drink, she sat there, wasting away with yearning for her daughter with the low-slung girdle, until Iambe, the one who knows what is dear and what is not, started making fun. Making many jokes, she turned the Holy Lady's disposition in another direction, making her smile and laugh and have a merry *thûmos*." Nagy explains that: "Iambe, as we shall now see, is a personification of the iambic tradition, which reflects a ritual discourse that provokes laughter and thereby promotes fertility. This discourse, which makes fun of its targets, is often obscene in nature. The obscenity, it goes without saying, is ritual obscenity." For an acoustic reconstitution of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbFOYNlZMB4.

59 The third "imperial treasure of Japan" is the sword *Kusanagi-no-tsurugi* (Japanese: 草薙の剣). These "three treasures" are sacred, as they were supposedly given by Amaterasu in person to his own grandson, Ninigi-no-Mikoto (Japanese: 瓊瓊杵尊), father of the first mythical emperor of Japan, Jimmu Tenno (Japanese: 神武天皇).

60 Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 53–54.

Figure 12. Terracotta figure of Baubo from the Ionian city of Priene (Greek: Πριήνη), situated near what is now the Turkish village of Güllübahçe. Priene was built during the eleventh century BC, with a temple dedicated to Poseidon *Helikonios*, another to Athena, and a third to Demeter.

The link between Xi Wangmu and Amaterasu in Japan began during the earlier representation system of the mounded tomb culture of the Initial Kofun period (Japanese: 古墳時代, 300–538), considered to be a symbol of the imposition of the political power of the Yamato (Japanese: 大和) court, in the western part of the Japanese archipelago.

Gina L. Barnes examines a whole range of elements, including bronze mirrors with triangular rims decorated with deities and animals (Japanese: *shinjukyo* 神獣鏡), discovered in great numbers during archaeological excavations of the various tumuli of the Japanese archipelago. These bronze mirrors are the dominant funerary material of the Initial Kofun period and bear the effigies of Xi Wangmu and his divine creatures, that is, tigers and dragons together with her mythical husband, the King of the East (Chinese: Dongwang gong 東王公).[61]

61 Gina L. Barnes, "A Hypothesis for Early Kofun Rulership," *Japan Review*, vol. 27 (2014): "[We] can conclude that the cult

Elfriede R. Knauer correctly states that the transformation of Xi Wangmu into a Taoist divinity came later in time, initially from a Hellenistic origin:

> Taoism in its most recent version — which had transformed the cosmic nature of Xiwangmu into a beneficent power ready to be called upon by humans — could make use of the most recent formulae in which the Western mother goddess was cast by Hellenistic artists. Earlier versions of her iconography had already provided the high headdress, the animal throne, the cup, and the staff. After some tentative variants, the high-backed throne with its upper projections, albeit misunderstood, was turned into the *sheng* by Chinese artists.[62]

The myth of Odysseus (Greek: Ὀδυσσεύς), the hero of *the Iliad*, seems also to find its parallel in Japan with the legend of "Yuriwaka the minister," or Yuriwaka *Dajin* (Japanese: 百合若大臣). Yuriwaka (Figure 13) is a legendary hero in Japan, famous for possessing an enormous strongbow that he only could bend, and victorious over the Mongolian army that planned to invade Japan in 1274 and 1281. He was abandoned on the island of Genkai (Japanese: 玄界島) by one of his subordinates, named Beppu

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of the Queen Mother during the Kofun period initially focused on a female shaman who was able to either communicate with the Queen Mother, whether as she was named or to serve as her representative on earth. Neither the name of Himiko nor that of the Queen Mother appears in Japanese chronicles. However, Japanese chroniclers included many important female shamans. The historical context of the second century was favorable to the introduction of the mythology of the Queen Mother to Japan, and many of the personal attributes of shamans in the *Nihon shoki* correspond to this myth. Many objects from the ritual burial system of the Initial Kofun period correspond to the attributes of the Queen Mother, and we know that the most valuable mirrors actually bore the image of the Queen Mother, and that they were used both for political purposes and cosmological. Finally, we know that the Queen Mother was an important legitimizer of political power. So, even though the Queen Mother is not named in the chronicles, just like Himiko, is it unreasonable to consider the Queen Mother and Amaterasu as successive female deities, the second inspired by the first, or as even being a transformation strictly speaking of the latter?" (p. 22).

62 Elfriede R. Knauer, "The Queen Mother of the West: A Study of the Influence of Western Prototypes on the Iconography of the Taoist Deity," in *Contact and Exchange in the Ancient World*, ed. Victor H. Mair (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), p. 63.

Taro, who left him for dead and tried to take his wife and palace. Yuriwaka then sent a message with his private falcon, named "Midori-Maru" (Japanese: 緑丸), which reached his wife while she was praying in a Shinto sanctuary. He kept his identity secret as he returned to his palace, killing the traitor with his strongbow.

This story can be found in the *Kotetsugukyoki* (Japanese: 言継卿記) from 1551 on, and it is said to be a record of the Yuriwaka story as traditionally recited in Kyoto. The story is found earlier in the *Ungyoku Wakasho* (Japanese: 雲玉和歌抄) of 1514 and also mentioned in the "Kumagai Family Biography" of 1522 (Japanese: 熊谷家伝記).

Figure 13. Odysseus-Yuriwaka. Woodblock print by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (Japanese: 歌川 国芳, 1797–1861), 1852.

Japanese theater of the time, called *Gigaku* (Japanese: 伎楽, or *kure-gaku* 呉楽), arrived during the Asuka period (Japanese: 飛鳥時代 538–710), in the year 612, with a migrant from Paekche (or Baekje; Hangeul: 백제; Hanja: 百濟) named Mimaji (Japanese: 味摩之), who introduced theater into the Nara area after studying it in Southern China (Wu kingdom area; Chinese: 呉). It was then that theater with various masks and plays appeared in Japan.

René Sieffert had already written in 1997 that these masks and plays may have originated in Hellenistic Central Asia, but as with most of his contemporaries, he could not admit that the Greeks themselves were the main cause for the spread of these Dionysian cults and customs from Greek cities that became established in Central Asia, Eastern Central Asia, and India. The people who participated in these festivals, from India, Central Asia, China, to Japan, were indeed also Indians, Sakas, Sogdians, Parthians, Tocharians, Chinese, but these religious Dionysian festivities were at first institutionalized by the Greeks and their theatre, and initiated by them from the time of the cultural admixture of Central Asia during the Greco-Bactrian, Indo-Greek and Kushana periods that I have already described in previous articles noted below (and in n. 6).

> It is certain that, for the Japanese of that time, these festivities evoked strange, therefore foreign, characters. There are eleven types of masks, and the names given to them confirm their Indian, Chinese, or even more distant origins, towards Central Asia. Some specialists go so far as to see in some of them a final metamorphosis of Greek masks, and in one of the dances itself a final avatar of the *Dionysia*, whose agents of transmission would have been the Scythians.[63]

These Hellenistic Dionysian theatrical plays were carried all the way to Japan[64] along the Eastern "Silk Road" to Nara from the Han to the Tang dynasties (Chinese: 唐 617–908). The Iliad of Homer was

63 René Sieffert, *Théâtre classique, avec la collaboration de Michel Wasserman* (Paris: Publications Orientalistes de France, Coll. Arts du Japon, 1997), p. 29.

64 For the similarities between Greek and Japanese theater, see: Mae J. Smethurst, "Dramatic Action in Greek Tragedy and Noh: Reading with and beyond Aristotle," in *Greek Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Lanham, MD; Plymouth, UK:

still sung in India at the time of Dion Chrysostom (40–120),[65] and the heroes of the Trojan War were played in Japan using the same structure and adapted to local figures mixed with Buddhist legends. The plays of the *Gigaku* being brought to Japan seems to be in continuity with the way that an earlier Dionysian procession style became mixed with Buddhist and earlier Khotanese and Chinese elements. In Japan, the performance took place in the temple courtyard, where masked actors and their accompanying musicians arrived in a solemn procession. The orchestra following the procession included two flautists, two cymbalists, and twenty drummers. The actors' procession walked a couple of times around the temple and was then led by a lion and its attendants, together with two dancers wearing children's masks, just as had happened earlier in Sri-Lanka, India,[66] Khotan,[67] and China, following the customs of the Greco-Bactrians and the Indo-Greeks. The lion was a symbol of kingship in India, and it came to be associated with the kings who followed the *Dharma*, starting with Alexander the Great (356–323 BC), then Ashoka the Great and continuing with the Indo-Greeks and the Kushana Buddhist rulers all through the Tarim Basin, China, and then Japan. There were Assyrian (mostly stone carvings) and Hittite lions (as in Hattusa) earlier in Asia, but the similarity in the style of sculptural representation — the lion sitting on a pedestal with his two front legs straight — seems to have started after Alexander and the Mauryas, before getting its primordial symbolic role associated with kingship in Buddhist art following that continuity. The connection is clear if observing the representation of the Lion of Chaeronea in Greece (338 BC), the Vaishali lion of Ashoka in India (third century BC), the Mogao cave n. 275 (fourth-fifth centuries) lions, and the Todaiji Temple lion in Nara, Japan (eighth century).

Lexington Books, 2013). Jean-Jacques Tschudin, "Histoire du théâtre classique japonais," *Toulouse, Anacharsis, Coll. Essais*, 2011, pp. 37–38. "We had to wait until the middle of the sixth century, and especially the beginning of the seventh, marked by the reign of Prince Shotoku (574–622), to find reliable documentation" (Ibid., pp. 17–18). Such a 'delay,' however, only with regard to the data that has reached us — favors the emergence of hypotheses dedicated to possible exogenous contributions."

65 Christopoulos, "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," p. 56, n. 141.

66 Ibid., p. 30.

67 Ibid., p. 19.

For *Gigaku* theatrical ceremonies (Figure 14), after the procession, the actual play, called *Konron* (Japanese: 崑崙, Chinese: *Kunlun*),[68] began with the entrance of the King of Wu, after which a mythical bird performed its dance. The beautiful Princess of Wu (Japanese: Gojo 呉女) was then approached by the "black" (*chthonic*) demon Konron-Kunlun to perform his wild dance with a phallic staff in his hand, exactly as during earlier Dionysian processions. Konron then kidnapped the princess as Dionysos kidnapped Ariadne during the festivities before ritually making love to her as a symbol of fertility.[69] Later, Kongo Rikishi or "Kongo the wrestler," (Japanese: 金剛力士, Chinese: Jingang lishi), or Herakles-Vajrapani, transformed from Buddhist times as a guardian of the Buddhist doctrine, arrived and was able to bin the phallic staff with ropes as to restore the virtue of the *Dharma*. Three mime scenes followed the main play. The first one showed a poor, fallen monk, who was washing his baby son's clothes and the second play described a poor grandfather, who with his orphaned grandchildren is making offerings in a temple. The third scene played the character of the "Drunken Barbarian King," or *Suiko-o* (Japanese: 酔胡王), as initiated earlier by the Dionysian wine festivals of Hellenistic Central Asia, and still alive today in modern carnival forms of Greece, with the king been "cleansed" (Dionysos resurrected) in pure water before all the procession finishes in a banquet together with drunken events.[70]

68 Kunlun is the name of a mountain range in the Tarim Basin (Chinese: 崑崙山脈), where the play was imported into China.

69 Christopoulos, "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," p. 10, n. 10.

70 Ibid., p. 14.

Figure 14. *Gigaku*-style play at the first Buddhist Temple of Japan, *Shi Tennoji* (Japanese: 四天王寺), dating from the time of Prince Shotoku (聖徳太子 574–622), when the play was first being performed in Japan. Photo by the author, 2009.

Tsubouchi Shoyo (Japanese: 坪内逍遥 1859–1935), established seven parallels between the Homeric myth and the story of Yuriwaka, while James T. Araki establishes twenty-one.[71] The legend, as explained by the anthropologist Nomura Junichi (野村純一 1935–2007) records the myth of Yuriwaka in the texts mentioned earlier: the "Kumagai Family Biography" of 1522 (Japanese: 熊谷家伝記), and the *Ungyoku Wakasho* (Japanese: 雲玉和歌抄) of 1514, definitely *before* the arrival of the Portuguese in Tanegashima Island and their selling guns in 1543, and Francis Xavier's (1506–1552) landing on July 27, 1549, in Kagoshima, Kyushu. He concludes, evidently, that the missionaries could not have translated

71 Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Yuriwaka Densetsu no Hongen*, Waseda Bungaku, Ser. III, no. 1, January 1906, pp. 134–143; James T. Araki, "Yuriwaka and Ulysses: The Homeric Epics at the Court of Ōuchi Yoshitaka," *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 33, no. 1 (1978), pp. 1–36.

the myth of Yuriwaka-Odysseus in Japan, as it existed earlier there, and as they were also occupied in spreading Christianity. I also do not see the likelihood of their having carried the books of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to Japan and translating these.

As I did in this present study for Demetrios-Gobujo, so also have other scholars looked to find a connection with China, discovering parallel elements in two Buddhist Sutras, respectively called the "Sutra of the great good means (*mahopaya*) used by the Buddha to repay kindness" (Chinese: *Dafangbian Fo Baoenjing* 大方便佛報恩經) of the third-sixth centuries, and the "Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish," the *Balapandita-Sutta* (Chinese: *Xianyu Jing* 賢愚經).[72] The "*Sutra* of the great good means (*mahopaya*) used by the Buddha to repay kindness," in seven scrolls, is an apocryphal scripture highly regarded as an artistic theme for the paintings of the Dunhuang caves, and appearing in numerous copies in the Dunhuang manuscripts.

The *Xianyu Jing* in thirteen scrolls is interesting as well, as it was brought during the Northern Wei dynasty (Chinese: 北魏, 386–535) by eight monks travelling in 445 from Gansu to Khotan to obtain the sacred scriptures. This happened at the time of Emperor Wen of (Liu) Song (Chinese: (劉) 宋文帝 407–453), from the Song Southern dynasty, when the *Sramanas* from Liangzhou (Chinese: 凉州, around the Wuwei area in Gansu). Sakya Tanxue, Weide, and six others translated the *Sutra* that they got from the Tocharians in Khotan. The name of Herakles-Vajrapani is also mentioned in that Sutra, when the first disciple of the Buddha, Sariputra (Sanskrit: शारिपुत्र, Chinese: 舍利弗), had the athletic god appear wearing its Nemean lion skin and holding his wooden mace:

> Then Sariputra right away created an adamantine strongman [Vajrapani-Herakles] with an adamantine mace. He used it to point at the mountain from a distance and the mountain was immediately demolished without any trace.[73]

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72 Dragomir Costineanu, *Origines et mythes du Kabuki* (Cergy: Publications Orientalistes de France, 1996), pp. 25–26. Saida Khalmirzaeva, "Yuriwaka: On the Possible Route of the Story's Transmission: Annals of "Dimitrie Cantemir," *Christian Annals of Dimitrie Cantemir Christian*, vol. XV, no. 1 (2016), pp. 232–234, 237; Araki, "Yuriwaka and Ulysses," pp. 21–23.

73 Victor H. Mair, "The Linguistic and Textual Antecedents of 'The Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish,'" *Sino-Platonic Papers*

It is also under that same dynasty of the Song from the Southern dynasties (Chinese: 南朝宋) that, a few years later, Emperor Ming of (Liu) Song (Chinese: (劉)宋明帝, 439–472 AD) will participate in the first Dionysian drunken festival recorded in China, with naked players coming from the Tarim Basin and Gansu, in 470.[74]

Drogomir Costineanu reaches the conclusion that the transmission to Japan of the myth of Odysseus is: "situated after the Hellenistic period and, perhaps, before the arrival of the Jesuits in 1549."[75]

Aside from the earlier theatrical plays and the stories found in Buddhist Sutras, two later traditions in transmitting the myth of the Homeric poems were the indigenous theatrical dance forms called *Kowaka-mai* (Japanese: 幸若舞) around the fifteenth century. *Kowaka-mai* was institutionalized in Japan mainly during the Muromachi period (Japanese: 室町時代 1336–1573) and consisted in two actors' singing a long narrative story while dancing (Japanese: *futari mai* 二人舞). The other tradition was the *ningyo-joruri* (Japanese: 人形浄瑠璃), or "puppet theatre," popular around the seventeenth century, consisting in manipulating puppet dolls while a monologue was declaimed and sung with musical accompaniment from the popular genre called *joruri* (Japanese: 瑠璃).

Saida Khalmirzaeva produced a publication[76] that proposed the Indo-Greek tradition was coming instead from the Turks of Central Asia to Japan, with the story of the hero Alpamych (Uzbek: Алпомиш, Kazakh: Алпамыс), written between the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries. It claims the bow (p. 242) and the falconry (p.2 41) of that figure as initiated the myth of Yuriwaka, but in fact falconry in Japan had started earlier. In the *Nihon Shoki* (book 11.28), there is an exchange between the lord Chyu, grandson of the king of Paekche, and the sixteenth Japanese emperor, Nintoku (Japanese: 仁徳天皇 313–399). The talk between the two figures mentions the tradition that falconry arrived in Japan in the year 355.

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no. 38 (1993), p. 46, nn. 112, 113. The name "Vajrapani-Herakles" is added here by the author of this paper, corresponding to the designation he uses in discussions everywhere from India to China in Buddhist art.

74 Christopoulos, "Dionysian Rituals and the Golden Zeus of China," p. 34.

75 Costineanu, *Origines et mythes du Kabuki*, pp. 29–30.

76 Khalmirzaeva, "Yuriwaka: On the Possible Route of the Story's Transmission," pp. 230–250.

There is also a story with geese and an eagle in the *Odyssey*, wherein Penelope dreamed that: "There were twenty geese that she loves and who eat at her home. A curl-billed eagle slaughters them and flies away, leaving the bodies piled up in the big room. In her dream the queen laments this event, whereupon the eagle returns and, perching on a beam, explains that he is Odysseus and that the geese are the suitors. The foreigner approves of this interpretation." Subsequently, "Penelope rejects the lesson of her dream, believing that it comes from 'the ivory door,' the source of dreams' illusions, and she continues to doubt even after Ulysses's reassuring words."[77]

However, Saida Khalmirzavea concedes that the tale of Alpamych, written in two parts, corresponds to the same sequences of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* that are included in the *Xianyu jing*, and is probably inspired by it.[78]

In the "Sutra of the great good means (*mahopaya*) used by the Buddha to repay kindness," there is a similar story. The prince, son of the great king of Varanasi (Chinese: 波羅奈大王), was cast away and left for dead on some remote shore by a traitor brother. He had then sent his favorite domesticated white goose (Chinese: 白鴈) to fly over the Seas to inform his wife and parents that he was alive, by

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77 Nick J. Allen, "L'Odyssée comme amalgame: Ulysse en Ithaque et comparaisons sanskrites," *Gaia, revue interdisciplinaire sur la Grèce Archaïque*, vol. 12 (2009), pp. 90–91. The dream of Penelope is from the *Odyssey* (19.535–550): "But come, respond to a dream for me and listen to it. I have twenty geese at home, they eat wheat out of the water, and I delight in looking at them. But a great eagle with a curved beak came from the mountain and broke each one's neck and killed all of them. And they lay in a heap in the house, while the eagle rose up high into the shining ether. But I cried and wailed, though in a dream, and Achaean women with beautiful hair gathered around me as I was bitterly lamenting that the eagle killed my geese. But the eagle came back and settled on a projecting roof-beam, and in a human voice consoled me and spoke to me: "Take heart, daughter of far-famed Ikarios. This is not a dream, but a true waking vision, and it will come to fulfillment. The geese are the suitors, and I was an eagle before, but now I have come back and I am your husband, and I will bring an ugly death upon all of the suitors."

78 Khalmirzaeva, "Yuriwaka: On the Possible Route of the Story's Transmission," pp. 235–236: "As we can see from the table, common motifs, such as "birth," "sleep," "shepherd," "instrument," "messenger bird," and "foreign princess," can be found in the "Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish" (the *Xianyu jing*), and *Alpomish*. These motifs appear in both stories in the same sequence. It is clear also that at some point *Alpomish* evolves into the *Odyssey*.... All these motifs can be seen in *Alpomish* as well. Moreover, in *Alpomish*, they appear in the same sequence as in the *Odyssey*. It is clear that *Alpomish* combines features of both the *Odyssey* and the "Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish." The part of *Alpomish* preceding the return of the hero to his country shares motifs with the "Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish."

attaching a message around its neck (Chinese: 手自作書系其鴈頸).[79] At some point, the king of Varanasi organized a contest with wrestlers and elephant- and horse-mounted fighters, and one of the wrestlers was so strong that he made the nearby lotus pond shake when he jumped on the ground.[80] However, there are here and there mentions of bow contests in the same Sutra — shooting at geese and showing mercy to them, then stopping the hunt — but the bow is mostly used in the Buddhist philosophical sense:

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79 "Sutra of the great good means (*mahopaya*) used by the Buddha to repay kindness" (Chinese: *Dafangbian Fo Baoenjing* 大方便佛報恩經, Scroll 4. 失譯人名在後漢錄惡友品第六. [0146b14]6. 爾時善友太子未入大海在宮殿時，養一白鴈，衣被飲食，行住坐臥，而常共俱。爾時夫人往到其所，報其鴈言：『太子在時，常共汝俱。今入大海未還，生死未分，而我不能得知定實。汝今云何不感念太子？』鴈聞是語，悲鳴宛轉，啼淚滿目，報言：『大王夫人！欲使求覓太子者，不敢違命。』爾時夫人手自作書，繫其鴈頸。其鴈音響問太子大海所在，身昇虛空，飛翔宛轉而去。夫人見已，心生恃賴：『今者此鴈，其必定得我子死活定實消息。』飛至大海，經過周遍，求覓不見。次第往到利師跋國，遙見善友太子在宮殿前。其鴈斂身，擁翅往趣，到已悲鳴歡喜。太子即取母書，頭頂禮敬，發封披讀，即知父母晝夜悲哭，追念太子，兩目失明.

80 "Sutra of the great good means (*mahopaya*) used by the Buddha to repay kindness" (Chinese: *Dafangbian Fo Baoenjing* 大方便佛報恩經, Scroll 3. [0139c05] 失譯人名在後漢錄論議品第五: 波羅奈王將諸群臣。後園中游戲觀看. 作倡伎樂. 鬥其象馬諸力士. 中有第一大力士踉 [跳-兆 旁]. 顛蹶足蹴地. 地皆震動蓮華池. These "jumping wrestler" stories can be traced back in the *Jataka Tales*, as in the "Ten Slave-Brethren." That tale is also compared to the story of Danae (Greek: Δανάη) by William Henry Denham Rouse (1863–1950). See Henry Thomas Francis and Edward Joseph Thomas, eds., *Jataka Tales, Selected and Edited with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge, 1916), p. 325. In previous articles I have demonstrated the influence of Greek wrestling in China after passing through the Tarim and the Scythian Steppes. It seems that some of Central Asian Greek wrestling customs were transmitted as far as Mongolia; according to Deborah Rhode: "Wrestlers remove their hats before a bout and it is held by his *zashuul*. In Mongolia a man's hat is symbolic of his 'personhood' and must always be treated with respect; it should never be placed on the ground or treated carelessly. Red 'streamers' are attached to the back of hats (*malgai*), on which gold chevron marks are added after each successful win; the stripe gets wider as the wrestler has more wins. Sansone (1988) records that the Greek heroes were adorned with 'fillets'–strips of (red) cloth to signify their victories and the esteem in which they were held; they 'signify the consecration of the victor to the gods' (David Sansone, *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988], 81)." Rhode, *Mongolia's Naadam Festival Past and Present in the Construction of National Identity* (Christchurch, N.Z.: University of Canterbury, 2009), p. 101.

> With the secret bow of the Buddhist *Sramana*, I will cover myself with my monk dress (*Kasaya*) and go slowly under that tree. To get closer, as if he sees me, coming to me with affection. I am bending my bow again, using my healing arrow, while there is nothing in the world to be captured.[81]

As for the bow, it was a very strong component of the Central Asian and steppe nomadic warriors, and accordingly it cannot be taken as a very reliable reference for linking it with the story of Yuriwaka. A comparable example is the description of the Western Mongolic Xianbei (Chinese: 鮮卑) warlord, Qifuguoren (Chinese: 乞伏國仁), as being "strong as a Divine Tortoise, and as big as a tumulus made to sacrifice horses." It was also claimed that the power needed to bend Qifuguoren's bow was equivalent to 250 kilos (*wangong wubaijin* 彎弓五百斤).[82]

The myth of Odysseus, as with other Indo-Greek myths carried eastward, as mentioned previously, originated in the world of Helleno-Buddhist Central Asia, where it evidently mixed with their "Buddhist" elements during the Indo-Greek and Kushana period, before making its way to Japan from China over the course of about a thousand years. James T. Araki correctly concluded (aside from his notion that the "Romans" had nothing to do with it) that:

> Yuriwaka Daijin is essentially the story of *Ulysses* in a Japanese setting, but embellished with several motifs from an Indian story in the Buddhist Scriptures. The fact that there should be a common denominator in an Indian story points to the possibility [...] of a

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81 "Sutra of the great good means (*mahopaya*) used by the Buddha to repay kindness," (Chinese: *Dafangbian Fo Baoenjing*, Scroll 7. 失譯人名在後漢錄親近品第九 [0162c17] 大方便佛報恩經: 我今當作沙門之像密弓射之, 袈裟覆上細視徐行往詣樹下. 彼若見我，必來親附。以親近已，便復挽弓，藥箭射之，萬無不獲.

82 Tang Qiu (湯球), *Sixteen Countries Spring and Autumns* (*Shiliuguo Chunqiu* 十六國春秋). Shangwu yinshuguan (商務印書館); *Western Qin Records* no. 1. chap. 85. Qifuguoren. (西秦錄一, 乞伏國仁). "乞伏國仁 狀若神龜大若陵阜乃殺馬而祭之" (Taiwan, 1975), p. 591.

fusion in early times of Greco-Roman and *Mahāyāna*-Buddhist traditions that might have taken place in Gandhara.[83]

As for the evident similarities between ancient Greek and Japanese music, the "Homeric Hymns" (Greek: Ὁμηρικοὶ ὕμνοι), attributed to Homer by Pindar and Thucydides and sounding almost exactly like Japanese ancient ritual rhythms, must have arrived in Japan together with the related dancing and Indo-Greek Buddhist rituals described earlier. Isawa Shuji (Japanese: 伊澤 修二, 1851–1917), the famous Japanese educator who established the "Tokyo University of the Arts" (Japanese: Tokyogeidai 東京芸大) and other universities, was the first scholar to make that parallel, especially with the "Homeric Hymn to (Delian) Apollo,"[84] and he proposed that: "Though the scale of Classical music may be allowed to have been imported from Hindoostan (LC: India-Gandhara-Tarim) through China, and therefore may agree with Hindoo and Chinese scales in consequence of their common origin, yet it is very curious that the scale of Japanese popular music also agrees in its construction." Shuji also understood that: "Although the Greek music was so rudimentary, yet it is the foundation of all modern music, and it is, therefore, worthy to be studied at any time. There is no scale in the Japanese Classical or popular music (LC: popular music in the nineteenth century) which is not found in the scales of Greek music."

While following his deductions of close similarities, Isawa was still unable to provide a solid explanation for an historical transmission through the Tarim Basin and China and states unconvincingly that: "The correspondence which exists between the Greek scale and the present scale of Japanese popular music, can be explained only on the ground that music is founded on human nature." [85] Concerning the same "Homeric Hymn to (Delian) Apollo," Isawa however was astonished with the result of his "Helleno-Nipponica" musical experience:

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83 Araki, "Yuriwaka and Ulysses: The Homeric Epics at the Court of Ouchi Yoshitaka," p. 23.

84 See: Kyle Bonnell, *Homeric Hymn to Apollo: Introduction and Commentary on Lines 1–178* (Wadham College, Trinity, 2019). For a direct audio example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6QfeG5KH1M

85 Extracts from the report of Shuji Isawa, Director of the Institute of Music, "On the result of investigations concerning Music undertaken by order of the Department of Education," translated by the Institute of Music, seventeenth year of the Meiji Era, 1884. "Similarity between the Ancient Greek and the Present Japanese Music," p. 176. https://archives.geidai.ac.jp/files/y100/100yh_mus01_043.pdf

> In Japan, Shuji Isawa, the director of the Institute, found this Hymn in the *History of Music* (Vol. I, *From the Earliest Records to the Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1874) by Mr. Chappell (William Chappell, 1809–1888), and by close study of its melody recognized the similarity of the tonality and theory between the melodies of Greek and Japanese music, and at last discovered that this piece just conforms with the *Banshiki cho* (Japanese: 盤渉調)[86] in Japanese Classical music. Therefore, he charged Shiba Fujitsune (Japanese: 芝葛鎮 1849–1918), a (Meiji and Taisho era) Court Musician and a member of the Institute, to harmonize it purely according to the principles of Japanese Classical music, and to set it for three wind and two stringed instruments. When the piece was played on those instruments, nobody could find any difference between the ancient Greek and present Japanese music. This circumstance clearly proves that the present Japanese music agrees with the theory of ancient Greek music, and also renders it very probable that a similar agreement existed even in the mode of performance.[87]

The tradition of the poems of Homer, together with Hellenic plays and arts, employed structures and elements that followed the same initial patterns as had been transmitted to India and Bactria, during the Hellenistic and Kushana periods, travelling along the eastern Silk Road to Japan mainly through the Buddhist arts, while other elements were added along its way; this was before such heroes of the Japanese archipelago as Yuriwaka came to be adopted and included in a similar pattern of theatrical story-telling or other performing arts. This conclusion is also to my understanding very natural, because — from the conquest of Bactria by Alexander in 329–327 BC, followed by the conquest of India by Demetrios in 186 BC, through the last Indo-Greek king, Strato III, in 10 AD, finishing with the

86 Also called *Banshiki no Shirabe* (Japanese: 盤渉の調), *Banshiki cho* appears as a prelude to the piece *Shin Kyorei* (Japanese: 真虚霊), and it is played as music for the late fall or beginning of winter. *Banshiki* is the sixth piece of the ancient *Gagaku* (Japanese: 雅楽). The pitch or scale corresponding to the seasons was transmitted through the music of the *Hitoyogiri* flute (Japanese: 一節切), popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Among the *Kinko Ryu Honkyoku* (Japanese: 琴古流本曲), the original musical pieces transmitted from the Buddhist itinerant warrior priests of the beginning of the Edo period (sixteenth century), *Banshiki cho* is the only surviving example.

87 Isawa, "On the result of investigations concerning Music," "Hymn to Apollo," p. 177.

Hellenized Kushanas until Vasuveda (192–232) — these Helleno-Buddhist arts and cults had plenty of time to be transported to Japan in various forms.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrates that the impact of the Indo-Greeks on Buddhism is very deep and has been mingled with it from the time of Ashoka, that is, at the very beginning, when the conception of the "Four Noble Truths" of the *Tathagata* and the philosophy following from them, had been elevated to the status of a State religion in India. The Hellenic elements in Buddhism as described in this article are not "foreign-borrowed" and superficial, just to *represent* a strictly Indian Buddhist thought. This article, as in earlier ones from the same series, has shown that Hellenism entered the core of Buddhism at its origins, not only in artistic representation, but also in cults, beliefs, mythology, thought, and philosophy.

We can also say with certainty that, if the Greeks had not allied with the Mauryas, if Demetrios of Bactria had not invaded India, and of the Indo-Greeks had not converted to Buddhism, then Mahayana Buddhism would never have spread in the East, and the face of the world would have been very different today. Perhaps Buddhism itself would even have been extinct long ago or practiced by merely a few. Greco-Buddhist art, or "Helleno-Buddhist Universalism," including theatrical festivities, and its continuation with various styles through subsequent ages made a profound difference in people's perception and collective consciousness in Eastern Asia. Moreover, existing references of Indo-Greek thought, Greek mythology, and cults from the Hellenistic period as far as the Japanese archipelago encourage us to believe that the world is united at its origins, and that ethnonationalism is not an answer to the concept of history in the future.

The genius of Greece has always resided in the notion of a free individual, independent from any high priestly command, hierarchical caste system, or politico-religious authorities. In Hellenistic India and Bactria, the primordial quest for "excellence," or *arete* (ἀρετή), taught from childhood, together with the Indian spiritual practices and philosophy of the *gymnosophists* (naked wisemen) that came gradually within, as the Greeks were eager to learn it from the time of Alexander, will allow individuals to pursue the quest of an understanding and an elevation of the mind giving birth to *Mahayana* Buddhism. That very promising and mind-expanding prospect, available and promoted in the universities of the Kushana kingdom, permitted Buddhist thought and arts to flourish extensively and to thrive, with the hope of an individual "salvation" from sufferance and death at a very large scale in the East Asian psyche, for more than two millennia.

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