CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIELD OF THE BUDDHA'S PRESENCE

Jacob N. Kinnard

THE PERSISTENCE OF PRESENCE

> Only the portrait, or image, has the presence necessary for veneration, whereas the narrative exists only in the past.
>
> —Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence*

It has become virtually impossible to discuss stupas, relics, and images of the Buddha without recourse to the language of presence. Although *presence* may be a convenient, and even an accurate, rubric for what these objects effect, such language is also inherently vague and carries with it significant and sometimes troubling philosophical and theological overtones. Added to this is the familiar problem, not in any way unique to Buddhist studies, that the texts upon which we base our studies are frequently either entirely silent or extremely cryptic regarding such matters. This is not to say that talk of presence should therefore be abandoned—no doubt to be replaced by some equally vague, equally loaded terminology. On the contrary, relics and images obviously involve and produce some sort of presence; what sort, however, is by no means self-evident.

A sampling of such "presence talk" is illustrative: "The stūpa is an important symbol in early and later Buddhism because of its ability to render the Buddha and other departed saints spiritually present."[1] "The *stūpa* is the Buddha, the Buddha is the *stūpa*."[2] "The stūpa symbolised His presence."[3] Relics and the cults that surround the 'traces,' or physical remainders, "seem to evoke a continuing presence of the Master."[4] "[T]he Buddha's eternal presence is contained in the Stūpa, and although enshrining relics, the worshipper sees it as the eternal Buddha."[5] "[T]hese are thought to contain something of the spiritual force and purity of the person they once formed part of."[6] "[T]he relic in early Buddhist India was thought of as an actual living presence" and was "characterized by—full of—exactly the same spiritual forces and faculties that characterize, in fact constitute and animate, the living Buddha."[7] "The stupa is at one and the same time the body of the whole world and the Body of the Buddha, which is the body of perfected Man, of the Buddha as the universal type or norm of the human. . . . [T]he stupa and the Buddha image are interchangeable."[8] "[I]n being the Buddha, the image is the Buddha's story."[9]

Such a list could go on for several more pages, but what should be abundantly clear is that although there is some scholarly agreement on the fact that presence is involved with images and relics and stupas, there is little consensus as to what exactly this presence *is*. In the above quotations, for instance, there is posited a kind of ontological presence—to which one might add a kind of ontological *absence;*[10] a kind of symbolic presence; and a kind of commemorative presence. Although such a state of ambiguity may be appropriate to the context, given the many histori cal and intellectual layers such statements encompass, it is compounded and further confused by a tendency to treat all relics—and here I mean the term in the broadest sense—as the same, if not in terms of their *classification,* at least in terms of their *function.*[11] Such an amalgamation i problematic. A stupa, for instance, ideally contains *physical,* or bodily remains of the Buddha—although the relics contained within a stupa ca also be relics of *use,* such as a bowl, and even *images* or pieces of images that is, *uddeṣika* relics, therefore further muddying an already murky discourse—and thus a stupa does have a kind of ontological link to the once living teacher. A stupa also evokes a symbolic presence, since, by convention, it signifies the relics it contains (and by extension the Buddha a the source of these relics); thus even a stupa *without* relics can symboliz the Buddha, or nirvana, or even another, more significant stupa *wi* relics. A stupa also effects a commemorative sort of presence, in that it a place to remember, to call to mind, the Buddha's life, his teaching, h nirvana, and so on.

What about a Buddha image,[12] though? What sort of presence doe it, or do they, evoke? It has been rather common to see images as func tional extensions, and therefore equivalents, of stupas: "Other trend such as the cult of the image, can equally be seen as developments of the stūpa cult. . . . [I]t functions like a stūpa in making the saint present."[13] Can we, or should we, so easily blend images into the relic/stupa discourse? Or does a Buddha image involve other sorts of presence that ought to be discussed *as such?*

One way images involve a different sort of presence is in their narrative function. In short, images tell a story. This is most obvious with the early examples of Buddhist art from such places as Bhārhut and Sāñcī, as well as the countless illustrations of the *Jātakas* found in temples throughout the Buddhist world.[14] Steven Collins has articulated a significantly more complex notion of this kind of narrative presence; he says that when an "image is encountered and recognized . . . or when an enshrined relic is venerated, the whole story is implicitly present."[15] What Collins means by this is that the larger narrative is already familiar, and thus the specific object acts as a kind of mental seed, a kind of Buddhist version of Proust's madeleines. An image of the seated Buddha displaying the *bhumiśparṣamūdrā,* for instance, not only visually narrates the specific episode of Māra's calling into question the Buddha's powers but also implicitly tells the story of all of Buddhism, from the young Siddhartha's first journey outside of the palace to the parinirvana.

An example of the sort of narrative presence that images evoke is the comparatively late stelae—most of these images date to the Pāla period (750–1200 CE)[16]—depicting the eight great events in the Buddha's life, the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya,* and the places at which those events took place, the *Aṣṭamahāsthānacaitya.*[17] John Huntington, for instance, says of these stelae: "The sequence is a kind of epitome of the life of Śākyamuni. . . . [T]he *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya* epitomizes the whole life of the Buddha, his attainments, his teachings and the benefits of faith in his life to his followers. In short, the set of eight scenes epitomizes the *whole* of Buddhism."[18] Although Huntington provides a detailed discussion of the literal, narrative function of these images—that is, textual accounts of the events the images depict—his analysis does not perhaps go quite far enough. What might have enabled the tenth-century pilgrim to recognize and value such images? What is it that was valued? Furthermore, why is there a continued emphasis on the life of the historical Buddha (i.e., Śākyamuni) in artistic images during the Pāla period, particularly when in contemporary textual practices Śākyamuni is increasingly nudged aside by the plethora of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and deities that come to inhabit the greater Buddhist pantheon? In short, what was the *field of presence* in Pāla India?

THE CONCEPT OF THE 'FIELD'

> One of the major difficulties of the social history of philosophy, art or literature is that it has to reconstruct these spaces of original possibles which, because they were part of the self-evident givens of the situation, remained unremarked and are therefore unlikely to be mentioned in contemporary accounts, chronicles or memoirs.
>
> —Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production"

In his articulation of the notion of the *'field,'* Pierre Bourdieu characteristically emphasizes the relational nature of artistic production and reception. In so doing, he rejects Foucault's concept of the *'épistemè'* because, Bourdieu argues, Foucault "refuses to look outside the 'field of discourse' for the principle which would cast light on each of the discourses within it . . . he thus refuses to relate works in any way to their social conditions of production, i.e., to positions occupied within the field of cultural production."[19] Bourdieu also argues explicitly against Kant's "pure gaze" aesthetic, insisting that the "work of art is an object which exists as such *only by virtue of the (collective) belief which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art.*"[20] In order to understand the work of art in its original context, it is necessary to reconstruct the field in which that work was situated, a field that was made up of a whole range of strategies of production and reception.

We know that the field of Buddhist practice during this period was far from unified. Given the broad expanses of time and space (including large parts of the modern Indian states of Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, plus parts of modern Bangladesh), plus the substantial international traffic through the region—it seems clear that what we have here is at the very least a diverse field.[21] What constitutes this field, though? What strategies were available to Pāla-period Buddhists for making the Buddha present?

One place to begin is with the Pāli Canon. It may seem odd to direct our gaze back to the Pāli materials here, but it is precisely the earlier conceptions of the presence of the historical Buddha in artistic images that inform and underlie the later production and use of sculptures and paintings, such as the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya* images. Indeed, all of the accounts of the significant events depicted on these stelae are contained within the Pāli Canon. Certainly these stories are retold and reworked throughout Indian Buddhist history, but there is a strong sense in which such images implicitly tell the original story, in much the same way, say, that the cross, in the Western Christian context, tells the original story of Jesus.[22] Thus what I shall attempt here is a kind of archaeological explication—not in

Foucault's sense, but in the sense of Bourdieu's methodological conviction that the field of art at any given time is constructed on, or through, a complex system of beliefs and practices made up of many layers of prior, inherited beliefs and practices. It is this layered system, this field, that allows for the recognition, in the deepest sense, of the object; it is the field that creates the "belief which knows and acknowledges" the kinds of presence evoked by physical images of the Buddha. Here I am concerned, in particular, with the relatively few references to making and worshiping visual images of the Buddha in the Pāli material and also with those passages that emphasize the importance of being in the physical presence of the historical Buddha in this literature and with the strategies employed when this physical presence is unavailable. Another important element in the field of presence is the concept of *'buddhānusmṛti'* (Pāli *anussati*), or "recollecting the Buddha." Although this technique is explicitly meditational, and therefore involves a cognitive act of "making present" the Buddha, it too is an essential part of the Pāla-period habitus—what Bourdieu calls the "principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations"[23]—of Buddha images.

IMAGINING THE BUDDHA: IMAGE TALK

> Honor these: an elder of the sangha, a Bodhi tree, an image, a reliquary.
> —Buddhaghosa, *Samantapāsādikā*

> Beings are contented, even just by seeing the Buddha; having heard the uttering of the discourse [of the Buddha], they obtain deathlessness.
> —*Buddhavaṃsa*, in Jayawickrama, *Buddhavaṃsa and Cariyāpiṭaka*

SEEING THE BUDDHA

A great deal of ink has been spilled on the topic of Buddha images. Beginning with the debate between Ananda Coomaraswamy and Alfred Foucher over the indigenous or exogenous origins of the Buddha image,[24] and progressing through the very recent debates about the "aniconic" period in early Buddhism,[25] scholars have been wrangling over two very basic questions: (1) When did Buddhists begin representing the Buddha in sculptures, drawings, and paintings? and (2) Why did they do this? The first question, one would think, would be relatively straightforward—given the precision of modern dating techniques—and for the most part it is, except that some art historians have recently begun to introduce "new" data that would push the date back in time.[26] Although this temporal debate is of considerable empirical interest, I will leave this to be argued by archaeologists and art historians.

Turning then to the second question—Why did Buddhists begin making images of the Buddha?—as we have seen, they did so in order to make the Buddha present, with all of the vagaries and polyvalent resonances of this phrase. What, though, is it about being in the presence of the Buddha? On the most basic level, the Buddha's disciples wish to be in the Master's presence in order to hear the dharma directly from him, in order to receive his direct guidance. We see variations of this throughout the Pāli Canon; a would-be disciple learns that the Buddha is preaching the *dhamma* somewhere and resolves to go hear for him- or herself. This is also emphasized by the familiar opening of so many of the *suttas: Evaṃ me sutaṃ,* "Thus have I heard." The text that follows this stock beginning is, at least on a very superficial level, legitimized by the fact that it was heard directly from the mouth of the Buddha—it is *buddhavacana,* the Buddha's own speech.[27]

One of the most well-known and oft-cited expressions of this general theme is Ānanda's tearful lament in the *Mahāparinibbāna-Sutta* when he knows that the master's death is imminent: "Alas! I am still but a learner, one who has [more] work to do. And the Teacher is about to pass away from me—he who is so compassionate to me!"[28] Ānanda here is expressing several layers of distress, not the least of which is the emotion of losing a dear companion. What is perhaps most emphasized in the passage, though, is Ānanda's fear that without the present Buddha there to teach and to guide him, he will remain a mere learner.[29]

Hearing the Buddha's words directly from the Buddha's mouth is not the only rationale for being in the physical presence of the Buddha. We see this explicitly addressed in the commentary on the *Dīgha-Nikāya,* the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī:* the text states that the *"evaṃ me sutaṃ"* with which Ānanda begins each narrative is intended to "make present" (*paccakkhaṃ,* more literally "make visible") the Buddha's *dhamma-kāya.*[34] The emphasis on visibility here is noteworthy. Indeed, in the episode preceding Ānanda's lament, the gods—who have heard that the Buddha is about to pass from the world—come to see him *(tathāgataṃ dassāyana)* one last time.

This visual emphasis is seen, of course, throughout later Buddhism;[31] seeing the Buddha is itself a tremendously significant event—seeing not just as an analytical act but also as David Eckel has claimed with respect to Bhāvaviveka's vision longing, seeing as "an emotional vision of a beloved object that fills the eyes with tears of joy, sadness, frustrations, or satisfaction."[32] We find this emphasized in the stock phrase that occurs in later texts such as the *Lalitavistara* and *Pañcaviṃśatiprajñāpāramitā,* as well as the *Divyāvadāna* and *Mahāvyutpatti:* Upon seeing the Buddha, "the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the mad recover their reason, nakedness is covered, hunger and thirst are appeased, the sick cured, the infirm regain their wholeness."[33]

Étienne Lamotte links this desire to see the Buddha and behold his miraculous qualities to an essentially lay-devotional impulse that took place after the Buddha had died:

> If monks, devoted to a life of study and meditation, are able to resign themselves to regarding their founder only as a sage who had entered Nirvāṇa, lay followers, who are exposed to the difficulties of their times, require something other than a 'dead god' of whom only the 'remains' *(śarīra)* could be revered. They want a living god, a 'god superior to the gods' *(devātideva)* who will continue his beneficial activity among them, who can predict the future, perform wonders, and whose worship *(pūja)* will be something more than more [sic] recollection *(anusmṛti)*.[34]

Leaving aside the problems of seeing the devotional aspect of early Buddhism as a lay affair,[35] Lamotte is probably correct in emphasizing the relative lateness of this tradition, although there are certainly earlier strata that emphasize the importance of seeing the physical Buddha.

In *Jātaka* 2, the *Vaṇṇu-patha-jātaka,* for instance, a young member of a Sāvatthi family, after being admitted to the first stage of the sangha, and after having been given a topic of meditation by the Buddha, goes off to the forest to meditate. After living there for three months, however, he makes no progress. Dwelling there, he was not able to obtain even a hint of insight. He thinks to himself: "I will go back to the Teacher, and having gone to the presence of the Teacher, I will live looking at his most excellent body and listening to his honey-sweet teaching." The Buddha, however, admonishes him for giving up so easily and then delivers a story about the need for perserverence in which the now-remiss Bhikkhu is shown in his former life as an energetic young man. "Having delivered this dhamma-discourse, he made known the Four Truths; at the end of this the remiss Brother was established in the highest fruit, Arahatship."[36]

Although the intent of this *jātaka* is quite clearly the need for perseverence, it is noteworthy for its dual emphasis on seeing and hearing and for the especially efficacious effects of this sight and sound. The young Sāvatthin does not want merely to receive the Buddha's words; he also wants to look at the Buddha, to be in his physical presence. There is, indeed, a rather striking emphasis on the physical body of the Buddha here; not only do we get the stock phrase, *Satthu-santikam gantvā* (Having gone to the presence of the Teacher), but also the phrase, *Buddha-sarīram olokento* (looking at the body of the Buddha). Although I wish to avoid the temptation to make too much of this use of *sarīram,* it is significant that the emphasis in this episode is placed equally on hearing the dharma and on seeing the physically present Buddha.

An even more striking example of this desire to see the living Buddha is found in the story of Vakkali, as it occurs in the *Samyutta Nikāya*.[37] In this version, Vakkali is a rather frail monk who has fallen ill and is visited by the Buddha, who is concerned about Vakkali's health. When the Buddha asks him how he is faring, however, Vakkali replies that he has long desired to see the Blessed One *(Bhagavantaṃ dassanāya),* but due to his illness he has been unable to satisify this desire. The Buddha sharply rebukes him: "Enough, Vakkali! What is the sight of this putrid body to you? He who sees the dhamma, Vakkali, he sees me; he who sees me, he sees the dhamma."[38] As in the *jātaka* story above, the point of this passage is quite clear: attachment to the physical body of the Buddha is pointless—if not actually a hindrance—since the vision of the Buddha and the "vision" of the dhamma are equal.

In the *Dhammapada* commentary, however, the message of the Vakkali story is somewhat more ambiguous. In this version, Vakkali is a young Brahmin who one day sees the Buddha and is so struck with his appearance that he joins the sangha in order to see the Blessed One constantly. As a monk, he is so attached to the physical form *(sarīrasampatti)* of the Buddha that he follows him everywhere, to the point that he neglects his dhamma study and meditational exercises. The Buddha upbrades him with the *Samyutta* verse (equating seeing the Buddha with seeing the *dhamma*), but the visually obsessed Vakkali is unable to leave the Buddha's side. The Buddha finally attempts to cure Vakkali by forbidding the young monk to accompany him on the rains retreat; Vakkali responds by vowing to hurl himself off a cliff. In order to save him, the Blessed One creates an image[39] of himself for Vakkali. Vakkali is overjoyed at the sight of this image. Once the Buddha sees that Vakkali is out of danger, he delivers a short sermon, and Vakkali is cured of his visual obsession and obtains arhatship.

Again, although the immediate message of this episode is the danger of becoming too attached to the physical form of the Buddha, there is also a kind of celebration of the joy one receives from a vision of the Buddha. It is, after all, the sight of the Buddha that immediately prevents Vakkali from committing suicide in the Dhammapada commentary version of the story and enables him to absorb the Buddha's wisdom. Much more could certainly be said about the dynamics of vision in the Buddhist context;[40] what is most relevant at this point, however, is that seeing the Buddha is linked to progress on the Path and that this is one of the basic tenets underlying the construction of Buddha images from the earliest periods of Buddhist history. As Reginald Ray has put it recently, with specific reference to Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita,* but with implications for all of Buddhism: The sight of the Buddha, *buddhadarśana,* "is a vehicle of transformation, wherein one is able to participate in the holy charisma of the Buddha. . . . [D]arśan is a vehicle to knowing who the Buddha really is. . . . It enables one to know the Buddha, commune with him, and actively participate in his charisma—experiences that rouse those who see him to faith, to spontaneous acts of devotion, to insight."[41]

Seeing Images

Despite the scholarly debates over the earliest Buddha images and the origins of these images, there are suprisingly few textual references to images and image making. In all of the Pāli canonical literature, there is not, to my knowledge, a single reference to images of the Buddha. This is striking, but understandable. The Canon is, after all, largely concerned with events contemporaneous with the living Buddha. Certainly shortly before and immediately after his death there is discussion of his corporeal remains, but there is simply no mention of images.[42] There are, however, references to images in the commentaries, and although a detailed analysis of the Pāli commentarial literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, there are a few specific references to why images were made, references that demonstrate that images were in part made to fill the void left by the absent Buddha. They were intended, in contrast to Lamotte's "out of sight" remark, to bring him back into sight.

In the *Samantapāsādikā,* the commentary on the *Vinaya,*[43] there are several references to both *viggaha* and *paṭimaṃ.*[44] Most of these references are not of particular value in the present context in that they fail to explain why Buddhists made images. There are two, however, worthy of note. The first is embedded in a list of objects deserving of veneration: *"cetiyaṃ paṭimaṃ bodhiṃ saṅghattheraṃ vandathā ti"* (*Samantapāsādikā* 627). What is striking about this is the inclusion of the *paṭimaṃ,* particularly without the modifier *sadhātuka*—with relics—in the list.[45] Both *cetiya* and *bodhi* resonate with the presence of the Buddha—the one in which are deposited his physical remains, the other under which he achieved enlightenment—and the eldest member of the sangha is almost by definition worthy of respect and veneration; an image, however, is usually worthy of veneration only if it contains relics, only if it is *sadhātuka.*[46]

This is not to say, however, that images are simply a different sort of reliquary, significant only because a relic is contained within. This is certainly important, but the degree to which the image truly is a *paṭimaṃ,* truly is an "accurate measure" of the Buddha, is also significant. At *Samantapāsādikā* 1142–43 (8:32), we encounter this passage:

> Formerly, they gave gifts to both sides of the sangha [i.e., male and female], headed by the Buddha; the Blessed One sat in the middle, the Bhikkhus sat on the right, the Bhikkunis sat on the left, [and] the Blessed One was the Sanghathera of both; then the Blessed One himself received the gifts and also enjoyed them himself; then he had them given to the Bhikkhus. Now, however, learned people, having [first] set up either a reliquary *[cetiya]* or an image enclosing relics, give gifts to both sanghas, headed by the Buddha. Having set a bowl on a stand in front of the image or reliquary, and having given water as an offering, they say, "We will give to the Buddhas *[buddhānaṃ]*."[47]

There are many points of interest here, the most relevant of which is the temporal dimension, the emphasis on before *(pubbe)* and now *(etarahi)*. While the Buddha was alive, he was the leader of the sangha, the one who sat at the head of the assembly, the one who first received gifts from the laity. When the Buddha is gone to nirvana, however, a kind of *ersatz* Buddha replaces him, mediates his presence: offerings are made to the Buddha (to the Buddhas, that is) via the medium of the statue (or *cetiya*).

Although Collins is certainly correct in his reservations about the use of the language of "presence" with regard to Buddhism,[48] the language in this passage comes very close, indeed, to just the sort of *presence* we see in early Christianity, even if we encounter no *emic* terms in the Buddhist materials. Peter Brown describes the milieu in which the cult of the saints, and particularly the cults surrounding their bodily relics, arose as being one in which Mediterranean men and women, beginning in the fourth century, "turned with increasing explicitness for friendship, inspiration and protection in this life and beyond the grave, to invisible beings who were fellow humans and whom they could invest with the precise and palpable features of beloved and powerful figures in their own society."[49] As in the early Christian context, relics were perhaps the primary means by which Buddhists brought the absent "invisible being"—the Buddha—into the visible present. As the passage from Buddhaghosa demonstrates, though, visual images such as sculptures could also serve this function. And also as in the Christian context, this presence was always in dialectical tension with absence: "The carefully maintained tension [in early Christianity] between distance and proximity ensured one thing: *praesentia* . . . the *praesentia* on which such heady enthusiasm focused was the presence of the invisible person."[50]

One of the clearest, and perhaps one of the earliest,[51] expressions of a reason for making images of the Buddha occurs in the many versions of the Prasenajit story.[52] The story, as recorded by Faxian, goes as follows:

> When the Buddha went up to heaven for ninety days to preach the Faith to his mother, king Prasenajit, longing to see him, caused to be carved in sandal-wood from the Bull's head mountain an image of Buddha and placed it where Buddha usually sat. Later on, when Buddha returned to the shrine, the image straightaway quitted the seat and came forth to receive him. Buddha cried out, "Return to your seat: after my disappearance you shall be the model for the four classes in search of spiritual truth." At this, the image went back to the seat. It was the very first of all such images, and is that which later ages have copied.[53]

The degree to which the image mediates the absence of the Buddha here is obvious. Whether this is in fact a very early story that was still popular in Faxian's time, or whether it is in fact a much later "explanation" for the existence of Buddha images, the image is intended to "fill in" for the Buddha in his absence. Xuanzang records an almost identical story, although King Udāyana replaces Prasenajit. In that version of the story, the Buddha himself explicitly expresses the function of the image. Upon his return from the Trāyatriṃśati heaven, where he has been preaching the dharma to his mother for three months, he tells the sandalwood image that King Udāyana has had carved: "The work expected from you is to toil in the conversion of heretics, and to lead the way of religion in future ages."[54]

IMAGINING THE BUDDHA. PART TWO: IMAGE THOUGHT

> Therefore in the presence of an image
> Or reliquary or something else
> Say these twenty stanzas
> Three times a day
>
> —Nāgārjuna, in Hopkins and Lati Rimpoche, trans.,
> *The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*

Buddhists did not begin making images of the Buddha as a result of some "wave of visual theism"[55] that swept across Buddhist culture with the rise of Mahayana. Rather, it was the result of a gradually developed and multi-layered habitus, a habitus constituted by a range of strategies intended to respond to the absence of the Buddha. An important strategy to negotiate this absence of the Buddha as a teacher and guide is the practice of *buddhānusmṛti,* "recollection of the Buddha." Although this is typically portrayed as a meditational practice, *buddhānusmṛti* is also a mediating practice, in that it can make present the absent Buddha. Recollection of the

Buddha also often explicitly involves the use of physical images in addition to the creation of a mental image of the Buddha—what might be called "iconographic thought" about the Buddha.

In the Pāli materials, *anussati* tends to be rather low on the scale of things, a preliminary step in the more complex systems of meditation. Winston King, for instance, calls the different forms of *anussati* "preliminary low-level" techniques "in which one's mood is set favorably toward the meditative process but that produce no recognized level of higher awareness. . . . [T]his type of meditation never reaches that deep inner isolation of consciousness, completely cut off from outer stimuli, that takes place in the jhānas."[56] In this light, *buddhānussati* is a kind of meditational warm-up, a rather simple exercise intended to "clear the slate" for the higher levels of *jhānic* attainment. Edward Conze notes that the descriptions of the recollections are "rather sober and restrained, without great emotional fervour. This is the way of the Theravadins."[57] *Anussati,* according to Paul Harrison, is "a kind of exercise in the power of positive thinking, but of the most abstract kind."[58]

Buddhānussati is the first item in a larger list of either six or ten things to which one should devote one's thoughts;[59] it is "a name for mindfulness with the Buddha's virtues as object."[60] Buddhaghosa, in his long exposition of the different forms of *anussati,* opens his description of *buddhānussati* in this way:

> Now a meditator with absolute confidence who wants to develop firstly the recollection of the Enlightened One among these then should go into solitary retreat in a favourable abode and recollect the special qualities of the Enlightened One, the Blessed One, as follows: "That Blessed One is such since he is accomplished, fully enlightened, endowed with (clear) vision and (virtuous) conduct, sublime, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed."[61]

The effect of this practice is the greater concentration of the mind that then enables one to move on to the cultivation of the higher *jhānas*. "As he continues to exercise applied thought and sustained thought upon the Enlightened One's special qualities," says Buddhaghosa, "happiness arises in him" (*Visuddhimagga* 229). This leads to tranquility and bliss: "When he is blissful, his mind, with the Enlightened One's special qualities for its object, becomes concentrated, and so the jhana factors eventually arise in a single moment" (*Visuddhimagga* 229–30). There is thus a sort of mimetic rationale for the development of *buddhānussati* in the Pāli texts;

one is to concentrate on the qualities of the Buddha in order to emulate him and, in the process, to develop those virtues he exemplifies.

Mimesis is not, however, the only rationale for recollecting the Buddha.[62] At the end of the section in the *Visuddhimagga* enumerating the various qualities of the Buddha, Buddhaghosa states: "When a bhikkhu is devoted to this recollection of the Buddha, he is respectful and deferential toward the Master. He attains fullness of faith, mindfulness, understanding and merit. He has much happiness and gladness. He conquers fear and dread. He is able to endure pain. *He comes to feel as if he were living in the Master's presence*."[63] Thus by recollecting and concentrating on the Buddha's many virtues, the meditator creates a mental picture so vivid and lifelike that the absent Buddha is made present.[64]

It is not, perhaps, immediately clear what these recollections—these mental images—have to do with visual images made of stone and wood. Buddhaghosa does not introduce any specifically visual language here, although his long elaboration of the special qualities of the Buddha does, in a way, create a visual image of the Buddha, such that: "When he encounters an opportunity for transgression, he has awareness of conscience and shame as vivid as though he were face to face with the Master" (*Visuddhimagga* 230). In the *Vimuttimagga*,[65] however, this *visual* aspect is made explicit: "If a man wishes to meditate on the Buddha, he should worship Buddha images and such other objects."[66] The text does not mention meditation on the Buddha's physical form anywhere, but as Harrison has noted, this reference in the *Vimuttimagga* is "a tantalizing clue."[67] Harrison sees a gradual movement in terms of the conception of the Buddha. At first, the Buddha was a teacher and exemplary religious figure, and the emphasis was, as we have seen, on hearing the dharma directly from him and, later, conforming to the model he had established while alive. This paradigmatic quality, however, is according to Harrison gradually replaced; the Buddha becomes not so much a figure to be emulated as one to be worshipped. "As much as the corpus of his teachings (the Dharma) was preserved, transmitted, and inexorably enlarged, his followers must still have felt keenly how unfortunate it was to be deprived of his actual presence.... It is not too difficult to conceive how *buddhānusmṛti* was pressed into service in such circumstances, until practices were evolved that entailed not merely a reminiscence of the Buddha, but an imaginitive evocation of his presence by means of structured meditative procedures."[68]

Harrison has written extensively on an early Mahayana text that represents a developed form of *buddhānusmṛti*, a text that includes both a more standard discussion of meditation on the physical body of the Buddha,[69] and a detailed treatment of the importance of images in devotional practice. The text is appropriately entitled the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* (henceforth *PraS*),[70] the "*Sūtra* on the direct encounter with the Buddhas of the present." The main point of this sutra is to "provide practitioners with the means to translate themselves into the presence of this or that particular manifestation of the Buddha-principle for the purpose of hearing the Dharma, which they subsequently remember and propagate to others."[71] The Buddhas discussed in this text are not the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, but such figures as Amitābha; Harrison notes, however, that these Buddhas are "simply idealized clones of Śākyamuni transposed to different world systems."[72]

Although the *PraS* is largely concerned with meditational techniques (hence the *samādhi* in the title), there are several very relevant discussions of the use of images in the cultivation of this *samādhi*. For instance, the *samādhi* itself is attained through an extremely detailed visualization of the Buddha, in much the same way as we have seen in the Pāli texts, but with even greater attention to the iconographic qualities of the Buddha's physical body. As Harrison puts it, "To aid this detailed iconographical visualization, practitioners are encouraged to imagine the Buddha's body as resembling an image."[73] In the *PraS,* images act as a kind of visual cue:

> If you desire this most excellent of *samādhis*
> Paint pictures well, and construct images of the Incomparable
> One,
> Which have the marks complete, resemble the colour of gold,
> Are large, and flawless."[74]

By gazing at the artistically created physical image, the practitioner is thus able to conjure up a detailed mental image of the Buddha; in turn, it is via this "mental visualization" that one is fully able to recollect the Buddha, a process that, if perfected, effectively brings the Buddha into the present. Significantly, even this "direct encounter" with the Buddha is described in the *PraS* in specifically iconographic terms: "In that way those bodhisattvas will see the Tathāgata (like) a beautifully set up beryl image."[75]

This idea that the Buddha's physical body resembles an image is seen elsewhere in early Mahayana texts. In what may be the earliest Mahayana sutra in India, the *Dao-xing jing* of Lokakṣema (compiled in 179 CE), we encounter this passage:

> The Buddha's body is like the images which men make after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha. When they see these images, there is not one of them who

> does not bow down and make offering. These images are upright and handsome; they perfectly resemble the Buddha and when men see them they all rejoice and take flowers and incense to revere them.[76]

The context of this passage is a conversation between the Bodhisattvas Sadāprarudita, who is in search of the *Prajñāpāramitā* teachings, and Dharmodgata, who guides and instructs Sadāprarudita.[77] The close interplay between the present (inanimate) image and the absent (animate) Buddha is striking here. As we have already seen in the Pāli texts, with the creation of the sandalwood image in the Prasenajit story, and the substitution of the image for the departed Buddha in the midst of the assembled sangha as described in the *Samantapāsadikā,* the rationale for making and venerating Buddha images passes fluidly between a commemorative sort of representation of the absent Teacher, and a more ambiguous sort of recollection, one that explicitly makes present, *really present,* the Buddha. The interplay between these conceptions of the significance of visual images is particularly evident in Dharmodgata's discussion of images in the *Daoxing jing*. On the one hand, the image is there as a reminder: "If there is a man who has seen the Buddha in person, then after [the Buddha's] Nirvāṇa he will remember the Buddha and for this reason make an image." On the other hand, the image is more than a reminder, since it is capable of activity: "If men constantly see the Buddha [in the form of a visual image] performing meritorious deeds, then they too will constitute a perfect Buddha body, and be endowed with wisdom" (see figure 5.1).[78]

CONCLUSION: THE PERSISTENCE OF PASTNESS

In closing, I wish to return briefly to the passage from the *Samantapāsādikā* and the reference to the gifts given to the sangha, "headed by the Buddha." The passage tells us that in the past *(pubbe)* the Buddha himself was at the head of the sangha, but now it is not the Buddha himself, but an image or a reliquary *(paṭimāya vā cetiyassa vā).* Gregory Schopen has analyzed the use of the word *pamukkha/pramukha* in medieval inscriptional data, and he concludes that "the designation—*pramukha* was never applied 'symbolically,' but always referred to actual individuals holding certain responsible positions."[79] *Pramukha,* Schopen argues, indicates "that the Buddha himself was thought to actually reside in the specifically named monastery."[80] The evidence I have presented here concerning images is consistent with Schopen's assertion, and, I would argue, it is this conception of presence that is passed on through the Pāla period and beyond.

FIGURE 5.1. *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya* image (tenth century, Bihar, currently in the collection of the National Museum in New Delhi). The central figure depicts the Buddha at the time of his enlightenment and his "victory over Māra." The other seven scenes are, from the top and moving clockwise: the Buddha's death (parinirvana), first sermon, descent from the Trāyastriṃśa heaven where he had gone to teach his mother, gift of honey to the monkey at Vaiśālī (the Buddha's compassion and the importance of giving), birth, taming of the wild elephant Nīlīgiri (the power of the teachings), and the miracle at Śrāvastī (representing the triumph of the Buddha's teaching over all others). *Photograph by Jacob N. Kinnard*

What the evidence I have examined also illustrates, though, is that this way of characterizing presence—real, even *ontological* presence—is perhaps too narrow and too neat. With images the field of presence is constituted by several layers of overlapping discourse, several different conceptions of presence that are not always consistent with one another. We should be more cautious, then, in how we characterize the way Buddhists themselves have conceived of and perceived the presence of the Buddha in relics and stupas and images. The language of the texts and inscriptions may seem to indicate, unambiguously, that "the Buddha was thought to actually reside" in the object in question; does it necessarily follow, however, that those who composed these texts and inscriptions—as well, say, as those who actually gave gifts to the sangha with the Buddha at the head in the form of a statue—did indeed believe that the living Buddha was there in the stone image?

Jonathan Smith has examined a similar problem in a very different context in his article, "The Bare Facts of Ritual."[81] In this article, Smith specifically examines a group of bear hunting rituals in which the participants are said to go through an elaborate, formalized ritual every time they kill a bear; among other things, they ask the bear for permission to kill it, and they kill it without shedding any blood. Smith reproduces, in summary form, the "text" of these rituals, a text that, if taken literally, indicates that the participants in the rituals are, simply put, daft: "[I]f we accept all that we have been told by good authority, we will have accepted a 'cuckoo-land' where our ordinary, commonplace, commonsense understandings of reality no longer apply."[82]

Smith argues, however, that to take such texts literally is to miss the point. This is a kind of idealized language; the language of the ritual, and the ritual itself, is intended as a way of making up for an incongruity, of creating an idealized version of the world. As Smith puts it, there is a gap "between their ideological statements of how they *ought* to hunt and their actual behavior while hunting."[83] What the bear hunting ritual represents—indeed, for Smith, what *all* rituals represent—is a conscious strategy intended to bridge the gap; *"Ritual is a means of performing the way things ought to be in conscious tension to the way things are in such a way that this ritual perfection is recollected in the ordinary, uncontrolled, course of things. . . . [T]he ritual is unlike the hunt.* It is, once more, a *perfect hunt with all the variables controlled."*[84]

If we apply Smith's view of ritual to the Pāla period—to, say, images such as the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya* stelae—we can see how such images represent, or are, a strategy of choice, a way of creating an ideal world in contrast to the actual one. The real world, of course, is marked by the absence of the historical Buddha. What, then, is the idealized world? Precisely that contained in the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya* images. Here the Buddha is not so much made present, but the believing viewer is made past. The image transports one into the past—into the *pubbe* of the *Samantapāsādikā*—the ideal time when the Buddha was alive, preaching the dharma, defeating Māra, and so on; the image transports the viewer into a time when these places were not merely shrines and the Buddha was not merely a presence but a living being.

In the end, I would agree with John Huntington's emphasis on the narrative, almost instructive function of images such as the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya*, and I would also say that he is correct in positing the "total" representation of Buddhism in the image, such that, in Collins' words, "the whole story is implicitly present."[85] What I have attempted to demonstrate here, however, is that there is more to the picture than meets the eye. There is a field of practice underlying not only the *production* of such images—that is, what sorts of conventions are handed down (*paramparа*)—but also the *reception* of such images. Let us recall Bourdieu's point: A work of art, be it intended for decorative purposes, fo commodity exchange, for religious worship, must be recognized as such and the ability to recognize it depends on the field of practice, the large habitus in which the work is situated. What I have attempted to uncove here are merely some of the highlights of that field. Thus a piece of ston or clay, such as the small terra cotta versions of *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya* tha were common in medieval northeast India, is at once a pilgrim's memento a reminder of a significant journey (or a token in lieau of such a journey and also a representation of the Buddha's entire life and entire teachings such an image creates an opportunity to remember the Buddha in th *anusmṛti* sense and thus to conjur him up mentally; such an image als creates the Buddha's very presence (see figure 5.1).

Certainly I am not suggesting that a Buddhist layperson living i say, Bihar in the middle of the tenth century would have necessarily— even possibly—been consciously aware of all of the layers underlyin the image to which he or she was performing a *buddhapūja* *buddhānusmṛti* exercise. On the contrary, these are the "self-evide givens" that, according to Bourdieu, constitute any field of practice. Pe haps, then, the language of presence, with all of its baggage, is ultimate fitting for discussing the field of Buddha images; for *presence* is ju vague enough, just broad enough, and just elusive enough to encompa such a field.

NOTES

1. Reginald A. Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India: A Study in Buddhist Values and Orientations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 344.

2. Paul Mus, quoted in Benisti, "Etude sur le stūpa l'inde ancienne," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise* 50 (1960): 51.

3. Sushila Pant, "The Origin and Development of the Ṣtupa Architecture in India," *Journal of Indian History* 51, no. 3 (1973): 472.

4. Nancy Falk, "To Gaze on the Sacred Traces," *History of Religions* 16, no. 4 (1977): 283.

5. Akira Hirakawa, "The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Its Relationship to the Worship of Stūpas," *Memoires of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunkyo* 22 (1963): 88.

6. Peter Harvey, "The Symbolism of the Early Stūpa," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 7, no. 2 (1984): 69.

7. Gregory Schopen, "Burial 'Ad Sanctos' and the Physical Presence of the Buddha in Early Indian Buddhism," *Religion* 17 (1987): 203; and "On the Buddha and His Bones," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 108, no. 4 (1990): 181–217.

8. Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Ithaca: Studies in Southeast Asia, 1985), 360, 363.

9. Donald Swearer, *History of Religions* 34, no. 3 (1995): 15.

10. See Malcolm David Eckel, *To See the Buddha* (San Francisco: Harper/Collins, 1992).

11. See Kevin Trainor, *Relics, Ritual, and Representation in Buddhism: Rematerializing the Sri Lankan Theravāda Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

12. See below for a discussion of the indigenous terms for images; see also Schopen, "The Buddha as an Owner of Property and Permanent Resident in Medieval Indian Monasteries," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 18 (1990): 181–217, particularly the lengthy note (20) on page 208.

13. Reginald Ray, *Buddhist Saints,* 416.

14. See Vidya Dehejia, "On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *Art Journal* 49 (1990): 374–92.

15. Steven Collins, "*Nirvāṇa,* Time, and Narrative," *History of Religions* 31 (1992): 241.

16. For some tentative suggestions on dates, see John Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image: The Cult of the *Aṣṭamahāprātihārya,*" part 1, *Orientations* 18, no. 4 (1987): 55–63; and part 2, *Orientations* 18, no. 8 (1987): 56–68.

17. There is a short text—extant in Chinese and Tibetan only—that describes these eight places; see Hajime Nakamura, "The Aṣṭamahāsthānacaityastotra and

the Chinese and Tibetan Versions of a Text Similar to It," in *Indianisme et bouddhisme: Mélanges offerts à Mgr. Étienne Lamotte* (Louvain-La-Neuve: Universiteã Catholique de Louvain, Institute Orientaliste, 1980).

18. John Huntington, "Pilgrimage as Image," pt. 1:55 and pt. 2:67–68.

19. "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," trans. Richard Nice; originally published in *Poetics* (Amsterdam) 12, nos. 4–5 (1983): 311–56; reprinted in Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* ed. and intro. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 33.

20. Ibid., 35; emphasis added. See also, in the same volume, "Outline of a Sociological Theory of Art Perception," 215–37.

21. See Lal Mani Joshi's "Preliminary Observations" to his "Religious Changes in Late Indian Buddhist History," *Buddhist Studies Review* 8, nos. 1–2 (1991): 45–64, and vol. 9, no. 2 (1992): 153–68.

22. As Julien Ries has put it: In the cross, the "entire ancient symbol system is assumed, but it is now placed within the context of a new vision of history framed by the theology of creation and redemption. In the eyes of the Christian, the cross is considered inseparable from the mystery of the divine Logos. Hence it takes on a cosmic dimension, a biblical dimension, and a soteriological dimension" (*Encyclopedia of Religion,* ed. Mircea Eliade [New York: MacMillan, 1987], 4:165).

23. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72. See also Bourdieu's discussion of *habitus* in *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Standford University Press, 1990), especially chapter 3.

24. See Alfred Foucher, "L'Origine grecque de l'image du Bouddha," *Annales du Musee Guimet, Bibliotheque de vulgarisation,* tome 38 (Chalon-sur-Saone, 1913), 231–72. In this highly influential article, Foucher first articulates the view that the origins of the earliest Buddha images were Greek; see also Foucher, "The Beginnings of Buddhist Art," in Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and Other Essays in Indian and Central Asian Archaeology* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1917), 1–29; originally published in *Journal Asiatique,* Jan.–Feb. 1911. Perhaps the most vocal opponent of this theory was Ananda Coomaraswamy. See his "Origin of the Buddha Image," *The Art Bulletin* 11, no. 4 (1927): 1–43; and also his "Indian Origin of the Buddha Image," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 46 (1926): 165–70.

25. See Susan Huntington, "Early Buddhist Art and the Theory of Aniconism," *Art Journal* 49 (1990): 401–07, for a useful survey of the relevant points here. Also see A. K. Narain, "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas: Ideology and Chronology," in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia,* ed. A. K. Narain (New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1985), 1–21, as well as John Huntington's article, in the same volume, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and

the Concept of Buddhadarśanapunyā," pp. 24–58. See also Paul Mus, "The Iconography of an Aniconic Art," *RES* 14 (1987): 5–28.

26. See for instance J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image," in *South Asian Archaeology* 1979, ed. Herbert Hartel (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 1981).

27. There are many places in both the Canon and the Commentaries in which this point is emphasized. For a useful discussion of *buddhavacana* in the Pāli Theravada context, see George Bond, *The Word of the Buddha* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1982), 1–33; see also Paul Griffiths, *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), particularly pp. 46–41; and also José Ignazio Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), especially chapters 2 and 3. The phrase *evaṃ me sutaṃ* has generated a fair amount of controversy in Buddhist studies; see John Brough, "'Thus have I heard . . .'," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13, no. 1 (1949): 416–26; and, more recently, Jonathan A. Silk, "A Note on the Opening Formula of Buddhist *Sūtras*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 12, no. 1 (1987): 158–63.

28. *Dīgha Nikāya (DN)*, T. W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter, eds. (London: Pali Text Society, 1949–60).

29. The Buddha's advice to him in this matter is twofold: first, he must be diligent and earnest in his own efforts (*DN* 2:144); and second, he and the other disciples must realize that after the Buddha's *parinibbāna* the *dhamma* will continue: "Oh Ananda, that Dhamma and Vinaya has been made known and taught to you by me; after me (after I'm gone) that is your Teacher" (*DN* 2:154).

30. See Collins, *"Nirvāṇa,"* 236.

31. Andrew Rawlinson has gone so far as to argue that seeing the Buddha and hearing the sound of his voice were the defining motifs in the emergence of the Mahayana. He sees the Mahayana appearing "suddenly and with great power." At the heart of this sudden appearance is a "transformative experience": "This experience was nothing less than direct contact with the Buddha. By 'direct contact' I mean three things: (a) a vision of the Buddha *(buddha-darśana)* (b) hearing the Buddha's voice *(buddha-śabda)* (c) immersement in the Buddha's knowledge *(buddha-jñana)*." See his "Visions and Symbols in the Mahāyāna," in *Perspectives on Indian Religion: Papers in Honour of Karel Werner*, Bibliotheca Indo-Buddhica, no. 30, ed. Peter Connolly (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1986), 191.

32. Eckel, 1.

33. Étienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Śaka Era*, Sara Webb-Boin, trans. (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain, Institut orientaliste, 1988).

34. Ibid., 645.

35. Gregory Schopen has argued that this is a fundamental misconception about Indian Buddhism. See his "On Monks, Nuns and 'Vulgar' Practices: The Introduction of the Image Cult into Indian Buddhism" *Artibus Asiae* 49, nos. 1–2 (1988): 153–68. According to the evidence Schopen presents, it was the monastics who "initiated and disproportionately supported the cult of images at Sārnāth [among other places] in the early periods. . . . A picture of the actual Indian Buddhist monk and nun is gradually emerging, and these monks and nuns differ markedly from the ideal monk and nun which have been presented on the basis of textual material alone. The actual monk, unlike the textual monk, appears to have been deeply involved in religious giving and cult practice of every kind from the very beginning" (155, 167).

36. I have translated the Pāli *"ossaṭṭhaviriyo bhikkhu"* as "remiss bhikkhu," although the commpound *"ossaṭṭhaviriyo"* means literally "one whose energy *(viriyo)* is let loose *(ossaṭṭha)*." It would make equal semantic sense to translate this phrase as "diligent bhikkhu," since the *ossaha* can also have the sense of "put forth." The redactors of this *Jātaka* are obviously playing on this compound, although it is difficult to say, exactly, how they intend it to be taken. Either the young monk achieves arhat status as a result of his former diligence, or achieves it—rather paradoxically, in my opinion—as a result of seeing and hearing the Buddha.

37. There are several versions of this story, in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya (AN),* as well as the commentary on the *Dhammapada.*

38. *Saṃyutta Nikāya (SN)* 3:120. The episode concludes with Vakkali committing suicide, although the Buddha then declares that, in fact, Vakkali had already been *parinibutto* at the time of his death. For more on such suicides, see Martin G. Wiltshire, "The 'Suicide' Problem in the Pāli Canon," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 6, no. 2 (1983): 124–40.

39. The Pāli is *obhāsam,* the most immediate sense of which is "appearance."

40. See, for instance, Ananda Coomaraswamy's interesting article, "*Saṃvega,* 'Aesthetic Shock,'" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7 (1942–43): 174–79; Alex Wayman, "The Buddhist Theory of Vision," in *Buddhist Insight: Essays by Alex Wayman,* ed. George Elder (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984), 153–61; Stephan Beyer, "Notes on the Vision Quest in Early Mahāyāna," in *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honour of Edward Conze,* ed. Lewis Lancaster (Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977), 329–40.

41. Reginald Ray, *Buddhist Saints in India,* 52.

42. The earliest textual references to images seem to be from the Mathur[a] inscriptions. See H. Luders and K. L. Janert, *Mathura Inscriptions* (Gottinge[n] 1961), nos. 4, 9, 29, 74, 135, 167, and 180, among others.

43. It is perhaps significant that these references occur in the *Vinaya* commentary, since much of the fuel behind the *aniconic* thesis about early Buddhist art ha[s] been a purported ban on images in the *Vinaya.* In fact, only one such passag[e]

occurs, in the *Mulasarvāstavādin-Vinaya,* where the Buddha is said to have explicitly prohibited the use of images. See the appendix to Arthur Waley's article, "Did the Buddha Die of Eating Pork?" *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 1 (1932): 352–54. See also G. Roth, "The Physical Presence of the Buddha," in *Investigating Indian Art* (Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst, 1987), 304–05. One of the most commonly cited passages to support the purported ban on images is the *Kalingabodhi Jātaka* (*J* 4:228). Stanley Tambiah has seen in this passage "an early Buddhist view against the representation of the Buddha in human form"; see his *Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of the Amulets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 201. In this *jātaka,* Anāthapiṇḍika learns that while the Buddha is away from Jetavana on pilgrimage, the people of Sāvatthi, in the absence of the Buddha, leave garlands and wreaths at the gateway of the Buddha's chambers. Anāthapiṇḍika goes to Ānanda and tells him that the monastery is "unsupported" (*nipaccaye*—i.e., without the four requisites, since there is no place for the laypeople to deliver them, or no Buddha to receive them) while the Buddha is on pilgrimage. He asks Ānanda to speak to the Buddha in order to find out whether there is a place for such offerings. The Buddha informs Ānanda that of the three kinds of memorials *(cetiyāni),* a bodily memorial *(sarīraka)* is not proper because the Buddha is not dead; an *uddesika* memorial is not proper because it depends on imagination *(uddesikaṃ avatthukaṃ manamattakena hoti);* a *bodhi* tree (here, presumably, a *pāribhogika* shrine), however, is fit for worship. The Buddha thus allows Ānanda to have a *bodhi* tree planted. Tambiah has suggested that the Buddha rejects "personalized" (i.e., *uddesika*) symbols "because such are 'groundless and merely fanciful,' that is, they are only artificially, arbitrarily, and by convention referable to the absent being" (201–02). Tambiah is placing a great deal of emphasis on the word *avatthuka* here. Literally, this means "without ground." This, however, is not some general indictment of image worship (or an iconoclastic "precedent," as Tambiah suggests on p. 202). No images are, in fact, mentioned in this passage. Rather, the specific discussion is about what sort of structure would be most appropriate to allow laypeople to bring alms and flowers to the monastery in the Buddha's absence.

44. These are perhaps the most common terms for physical (i.e., artistic) images. The precise distinction between the two is not at all clear, however. *Viggaha* (Sk. *vigrāha*) derives from the Vedic root *√grah,* "grasp, grab, seize," with the prefix *"vi"* here serving as an intensifier. Hence the *viggaha* "seizes" that which it depicts—or it enables the viewer to seize on to it. *Paṭimā* (Sk. *pratimā*) comes from the verbal root *√mā,* "measure," with the suffix *paṭi* functioning here as a comparison, as in that which is "measured against" the original, or copied. Other terms from images are *rūpam* ("form," often as *buddharūpam*—see *Visuddhimagga (VM)* 228, or the particularly interesting episode in the *Samantapāsādikā (SP)* in which Aśoka convinces a *nāgarāja* to create an image of the Buddha for him to see, at which point the text reads: "Buddha-rūpaṃ passanto satt-divasāni akkhi-pūjaṃ nāma akāsi," *SP* 43–44), *bimba* and *paṭibimba* (see *VM 190, Vimānavatthu* 50), and occasionally *sarīra* (*J* 5:98). Other terms can also refer to images, although in a more general sense, such as *vesa* (i.e., dress, disguise, appearance), and *obhāsa.*

45. Walpola Rahula is thus incorrect when he states that "the Buddha image, though in existence at the time, was not given a place in the scheme of worship by the Pāli Commentaries. . . . [T]he image is completely ignored." See his *History of Buddhism in Ceylon* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena, 1956), 126.

46. Ibid. Rahula notes, "An image was considered important only if relics were enshrined in it. Without them it was a thing of little or no religious value."

47. Collins writes about a remarkably similar passage that occurs in "*Nirvāṇa,*" 237.

48. See note 30 in this chapter.

49. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 50.

50. Ibid., 88.

51. See John Huntington, "The Origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and Concept of Buddhadarśanapunyā," in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia,* ed. A. K. Narain (New Delhi: Kanak, 1985), 32–33.

52. A. Waley notes that there is a version in the *Ekottarāgama,* as well as various Mahayana and Hīnayāna texts translated into Tibetan and Chinese; see "Did the Buddha Die of Eating Pork?" 353–54. See also Richard Gombrich's interesting discussion of the *Kosala-Bimba-Vaṇṇanā,* a medieval Sri Lankan text in Pāli (the text as well as Gombrich's translation are printed in the article), in *Buddhism in Ceylon and Studies on Religious Syncretism in Buddhist Countries,* ed. Heinz Bechert, Symposien zur Buddhismusforschung, 1, Akademie der Wissenschaften, Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Dritte Folge, no. 108 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1978), 281–303. See also Padmandabh S. Jaini, "On the Buddha Image," in *Studies in Pali and Buddhism: A Homage Volume to the Memory of Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap,* ed. A. K. Narain (Delhi: B. R. Publishing,1979), 183–88; here Jaini discusses a Thai story in a Burmese manuscript of the Prasenajit story, contained within the Burmese Jātaka collection as the *Vaṭṭaṅgulirāja-Jātaka* (no. 37). For a particularly thorough account of the literature on this topic, including Chinese materials, see also G. Roth's excellent article, "The Physical Presence of the Buddha and Its Representation in Buddhist Literature," in *Investigating Indian Art* (Berlin: Museum für Indische Kunst, 1987), 291–312. A story similar to the Prasenajit story occurs at the beginning of the *Pratimālakṣaṇam,* a *śilpasāstra* (the date of which is far from clear) that describes in great detail the proper proportions of a Buddha image. In this version it is Śāriputra who asks the Buddha how he is to be honored when he is away (in the Tuṣita Heaven), to which the Buddha responds: "Oh Śāriputra! When I am gone or when I attain *parinirvāṇa,* [my] body is to be made [as a] well-proportioned body [or image]." See Jitendra Nath Banerjea's extensive notes in "Pratimālakṣaṇam" *Journal of the Department of Letters* 23 (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1933).

53. *The Travels of Fa hsien,* trans. H. A. Giles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 30–31.

54. Samuel Beal, trans., *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World* (London: Routledge, 1884), 1:236. In a footnote, Beal gives the somewhat less hyperbolic: "To teach and convert with diligence the unbelieving, to open the way for guiding future generations, this is your work."

55. I borrow this phrase, out of context, from Stephan Beyer; see his "Notes on the Vision Quest in Early Mahāyāna," in *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honour of Edward Conze*, ed. Lewis Lancaster (Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977), 329–40.

56. Winston King, *Theravāda Meditation: The Buddhist Transformation of Yoga* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980), 33, 38.

57. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Meditation* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956), 28. Conze here is following in a long line of "rationalizers" of Buddhism—those who wish to portray as "pure Buddhism" that which has no taint of what Conze, later in the same volume, calls practices "which offered salvation at a cheap price" (p. 61). See Philip Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), for a particularly good discussion of this "rationalizing" construction of Buddhism.

58. Paul Harrison, "Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhānusmti*," in *In the Mirror of Memory*, ed. Janel Gyatso (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 216–17.

59. See *AN* 5:328–32 for the six-fold list and *AN* 1:30 for the ten-fold.

60. This is Pe Maung Tin's translation of the *Visuddhimagga*, Pali Text Society Translation Series, nos. 11, 17, and 21 (London: Luzac, 1971), 226.

61. This is Ñāṇamoli's translation, p. 206. Buddhaghosa's commentary is on the standard formula for *buddhānussati:* "Iti pi bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇa-sampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā ti" (*D* 1:49; *AN* 3:285).

62. Harrison has noted that there is an apotropaic function to *anussati;* at *S* 1:218, for instance, the Buddha is said to have prescribed the first three *anussati* as a method to ward off fear while meditating in solitary places. See Harrison, "Commemoration," 218.

63. *VM* 230, emphasis mine.

64. Paul Williams has drawn attention to a scene from the *Sutta Nipāta* that illustrates precisely this sort of presence created via the practice of *buddhānussati*. Significantly, the episode is almost the mirror opposite of the Vakkali story. In the *SN*, a monk, Piṅgiya, is asked why he does not spend all of his time with the Buddha. Piṅgiya responds that he is old and frail, that his body is decaying. However, he says that "there is no moment for me, however small, that is spent away from the Gotama, from this universe of wisdom, this world of understanding. . . . [W]ith constant and careful vigilance it is possible for me to see him with my mind as clearly as with my eyes, in night as well as day. And since I spend my nights revering him, there is not, to my mind, a single moment spent away from him" [*vv.*

1140, 1142]. See Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 217–18.

65. The relationship between these two texts is, to say the least, ambiguous, and is not really relevant here. See P. V. Bapat, *Vimuttimagga and Visuddhimagga: A Comparative Study* (Calcutta: J. C. Sarkhel, 1937).

66. In Ehara's translation, p. 141.

67. Harrison has pointed out that in the Chinese translations of the Sanskrit Āgamas, in particular the *Ekottarāgama* III, *buddhānusmti* is propounded "as the one practice for realizing all spiritual goals and [it] recommends that practioners contemplate the image of the Buddha without taking their eyes off it, that they call to mind the body and the countenance of the Buddha and then his moral and mental qualities, arranged under the traditional rubrics of morality, mediation, wisdom, liberation, and the cognition and vision of liberation" (see Harrison, "Commemoration," 220).

68. Paul Harrison, "Buddhānusmṛti in the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Saṃmukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 6 (1978): 37. Harrison produces a translation here of a particularly relevant passage in the *Ekottarāgama* (extant only in the Chinese translations of the Sanskrit) in which *buddhānusmṛti* is discussed: "Without entertaining any other thought he earnestly calls to mind *(anusmṛ-)* the Buddha. He contemplates the image of the Tathāgata without taking his eyes off it" (see ibid., 38). "Image" here is denoted by the Chinese *hsing*, and Harrison notes that it is unclear whether it refers to a *mental* image or a *physical* one, or both.

69. I say "more standard" here because this attention to the magnificant qualities of the Buddha's body are common in the Pāli materials as well as the early Mahayana texts.

70. See Paul Harrison's edited version, along with a translation, *The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1990).

71. Ibid., xx.

72. Harrison, "Commemoration," 220.

73. Ibid., 222.

74. Harrison, *Direct Encounter*, 47.

75. Ibid., 40.

76. Lewis R. Lancaser, "An Early Mahayana Sermon about the Body of the Buddha and the Making of Images," *Artibus Asiae* 36, no. 4 (1974): 289.

77. This part of the story is not contained in the Sanskrit recension of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*, the text upon which Lokakṣema's *Dao-xing-jing* is based.

78. Lancaster, "An Early Mahayana Sermon," 289.

79. Schopen, "The Buddha as an Owner of Property," 191.

80. Ibid., 192.

81. Jonathan Smith, "The Bare Facts of Ritual," *History of Religions* 20, no. 2 (1980): 112–27. See also Smith, "I Am a Parrot (Red)," *History of Religions* 11, no. 4 (1971): 391–413.

82. Jonathan Smith, "The Bare Facts of Ritual," 122.

83. Ibid., 123.

84. Ibid., 125, 127.

85. See note 15 in this chapter.