



Muchalinda Buddha:- An Interdisciplinary approach to Reinterpret the Depiction of the Buddha with Muchalinda Naga

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Abstract : *The Indian sub-continent has a vibrant history of human-snake interaction spanning from the prehistoric period up to modern times. Snakes are an integral part of the ecosystem, agriculture cycle, mythology, folklore, art, iconography, etc., and we see them in depiction, worshipped in rituals, and even venerated in live form across religions; this interaction also includes abuse of snakes, destruction of their habitat, etc., but falls beyond the scope of this paper. When we hear the word 'snake' the localised term of 'Naga' comes into our mind; the famous ones being Sheshnaga, Muchalinda Naga, etc. This paper will be focusing on Muchalinda Naga, a snake king that appears in Buddhist texts, whose appearance is dated to the 6th Cen. B.C. coinciding with the enlightenment of the Buddha. When a researcher is observing the original Pali Sources, it is noted that there is a clear dichotomy in what is spoken in the text regarding the interaction of Muchalinda and the Buddha and what is depicted specifically in the first few centuries onwards. In order to study iconographic evolution, the researchers will be examining the depictions of 'Muchalinda Buddha' from the earliest times and will expatiate on the various developing iconographic features as noted in these depictions over the ages. The paper will try to answer the following questions with an interdisciplinary approach vis-à-vis the type of snake Muchalinda Naga was, the change in his depiction over the centuries, faithfulness of the visual depiction to the textual depiction, the reason behind the evolution of the depiction and lastly Muchalinda's interaction with the Buddha from a herpetological perspective. For the herpetological perspective, the researcher will be using the scholarly works by Whitaker, R., & Captain, A. (2015), Smith, M., (1981), Günther, A. (1864) and others in order to illustrate their hypothesis.*

Keywords: Buddha, Constriction, Coils, Hood, India, King Cobra, Muchalinda, Naga, Snake

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Introduction: Snakes, Nagas in Indian scenario-literary and mythological records across religions in the subcontinent

The Indian sub-continent has a vibrant history of human snake interaction spanning from the prehistoric period up to the modern times. Snakes are an integral part of the ecosystem, agricultural cycle, mythology, folklore, art, iconography, etc., and we see them in depiction, worshipped in rituals and even venerated in live form across religion; this interaction also includes abuse of snakes, destruction of their habitat, etc. but falls beyond the scope of this paper. When we hear the word ‘snake’ the localised term of *naga* comes into our mind. Along with this, we have the terms like *Nagaraj* (King Cobra or Royal snake), *Bhujang* (Black snake, usually a cobra), *Sheshanaga* (the timeless serpent on which Vishnu rests), etc. The term *Naga* (*Nagini* - feminine) is usually used as a suffix or prefix to the proper name of the individual Naga, thus denoting that it is a common name for the entire gamut of snakes. Among the most famous of these cognate snake names are *Shesh-Naga*, *Ananta Shesh-Naga*, *Naga-Raja*, *Kaliya Naga*, *Muchalinda Naga*, etc. This paper will be focusing on *Muchalinda Naga*, a snake king that appears in Buddhist texts, whose appearance is dated to the 6th Cen. B.C. is coinciding with the enlightenment of the Buddha. The paper will try to answer the following questions with an interdisciplinary approach- What type of snake was *Muchalinda Naga*. How has his depiction changed over the centuries? Has the depiction been faithful to the textual depiction? Why has the depiction evolved? and What was Muchalinda’s interaction with the Buddha from a herpetological perspective?

Ancient Sources- Literature review of *Muchalinda sutta*, examining the depiction of Muchalinda depiction in art from 1st few centuries B.C. to Late Medieval Period

Literature review of the Muchalinda Naga

The first and the earliest source quoting *Muchalinda Naga* is the *Muchalinda Sutta*, *Mucalindavagga* (Udana, K.N., Sutta Pitaka).

Here they are as follows in English and Pali:

“Thus have I heard. At one time, the Lord was staying at Uruvela beside the river Nerañjara at the foot of the Mucalinda Tree, having just realised full enlightenment.

At that time, the Lord sat cross-legged for seven days, experiencing the bliss of liberation. Now it happened that there occurred, out of season, a great rainstorm, and for seven days there were rain clouds, cold winds, and unsettled weather. Then Mucalinda, the naga-king left his dwelling place and having encircled the Lord’s body seven times with his coils, he stood with his great hood spread over the Lord’s head (thinking) to protect the Lord from cold and heat, from gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and the touch of creeping things.

At the end of those seven days, the Lord emerged from that concentration. Then, Mucalinda, the naga-king, seeing that the sky had cleared and the rain clouds had gone, removed his coils from the Lord’s body. Changing his own appearance and assuming the appearance of a youth, he stood in front of the Lord with his hands folded together venerating him.” (Ireland, 2020)

“Atha kho bhagavā sattāhassa accayena tamhā samādhimhā vuṭṭhahitvā ajapālanigrodhamūlā yena mucalindo tenupasaṅkami, upasaṅkamtivā mucalindamūle sattāhaṃ ekapallaṅkena nisīdi vimuttisukhapaṭisaṃvedī. Tena kho pana samayena mahā akālamegho udapādi, sattāhavaddalikā sītavātaduddinī. Atha kho mucalindo nāgarājā sakabhavanā nikkhamitvā bhagavato kāyaṃ sattakkhattuṃ bhogehi parikkhipitvā uparimuddhani mahantaṃ phaṇaṃ karitvā aṭṭhāsi—“mā bhagavantaṃ sītaṃ, mā bhagavantaṃ uṇhaṃ, mā bhagavantaṃ

ḍaṃsamakasavātātapasarīsapasamphasso”ti. Atha kho mucalindo nāgarājā sattāhassa accayena viddhaṃ vigatavalāhakaṃ devaṃ viditvā bhagavato kāyā bhoge vinivethetvā sakavaṇṇaṃ paṭisaṃharitvā māṇavakavaṇṇaṃ abhinimmitvā bhagavato purato aṭṭhāsi pañjaliko bhagavantam namassamāno. ” (SuttaCentral, 2016)

Quoted above is the entire account of the Muccalinda Sutta in English and Pali both in Roman script. Upon analysing this, we come to know the following details- firstly, this encounter is happening in the sixth week after the enlightenment of the Buddha (Geary, Sayers, and Singh Amar, 2012) in the 6th Cen. B.C., the Buddha is seated at the roots or base (or under) a Nighrodha tree in Muchalida (place), the Nighrodha tree is also called the Muchalinda tree (possibly denoting the place) under which or near the roots of which (mucalindamūle) the Buddha sat to meditate; the word ‘mucalindamule’ is also interpreted in a way that Muchalinda was a tree spirit who took this form (Tiwari, 2002). The prerequisite to this encounter is the great storm (mahā akālamegho) raging for a week. The Naga-king Mucchalinda leaves his palace (sakabhavanā) encircles the buddha’s body in his coils seven times, and spreads his hood over him to protect him from the elements, the transformation of Muchalinda from zoomorphic to anthropomorphic form (māṇavakavaṇṇaṃ) after a week when the skies cleared so as to venerate the Buddha, the sutta ends with Buddha giving short teaching on non-violence, detachment and bliss.

Artistic Review of a few Muchalinda Buddha Depiction

The researchers examined a few images of Muchalinda Buddha from the earliest period i.e. 2nd Cen. B.C. going down to the 14th Cen. A.D. and have come up with the following hypotheses regarding the analyses and interpretations of these depictions. The earliest image of Muchalinda Buddha under this study is from Pauni, Maharashtra discovered in 1967 (Schopen, 1997) which is dated to the 2nd Cen B.C., roughly contemporaneous with the Stupas at Sanchi and Bharut and the dynasties of Sungas and Satavahanas (Quintanilla, 2007). In this depiction of the *sthambh* (railing pillar), the Buddha’s presence is denoted in a way by his absence as the school under which it was patronised was the Hinayana school (Plate 1). Muchalinda is present in this depiction as a five-hooded snake with seven coil-like features going around the empty seat, denoting the presence of the Buddha. The researchers hypothesize about how the depiction could be faithful to the text of the Muchalinda Sutta since there was no anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha in the Hinayana depiction and around what the coils could go if there was no representation of the lord. The coils are therefore depicted below the seat which then became a prototype for all depictions of Muchalinda Buddha henceforth with the exception of Gandharan depictions. The Pauni image is to be contrasted with one of the images of Muchalinda found at Sanchi Stupa, dated as contemporary to Pauni and Bharut. This depiction is located on the front face of the Right Pillar, Western Gateway of the Great Stupa and is unique because of its iconography (Javid and Javeed, 2008). The iconography of this relief is unique because the Naga Muchalinda is depicted in zoo-anthropomorphic form with five hoods and is seated below the throne of the Buddha in Lalitasana while his Naginis with singlehood attend to him and the empty throne (Plate 2). It is also a path breaking depiction as the narrative of the Mucchalinda sutta seems to be completely ignored while giving it a new interpretation altogether of the Naga retinue in worship or ease around the Buddha, who is present in the form of an empty throne.

The next set of images will be examined as a group, this is because all four depictions are of the Gandharan style, belonging to the same period of 2nd Cen. A.D. and are very faithful to the textual references of the Mucchalinda Sutta (Plates 3-6). If one observes each of these four depictions, each of these shows the Buddha encircled in the coils of the Naga Muchalinda, although the number coils can

be as less as 4 coils (Plate 4) or as many as six coils (Plates 5-6) but never exactly seven. It has to also be noted that though Muchalinda's hoods are uniformly kept to seven, in two of these images (Plates 3 & 5), the hoods are too damaged to make out the details, while in Plate 6, the hoods are almost indistinguishable from leaves of a palm tree or a floral motif sheltering the head of the Buddha. Scholars are of opposed views wherein depictions like these would be praised for their faithful representations to the texts and human anatomy like the Hellenistic source on the one hand, whereas they would be considered too loud, vivid and energetic in contrast to their graceful counterparts at Mathura on the other hand (Mahajan, 2019). Though scholars may debate on the same, it has to be noted that these four depictions as per our interpretation, are the only ones that make the original Pali text alive, while the rest are the artist-influenced or doctrine-influenced depictions.

Now that image-depictions under the Mahayana school from the 1st Cen. A.D. become the new normal across the subcontinent. We see many depictions of the Buddha coming up in various schools of art like Mathura, Amaravati, Gupta, Vakataka, etc. Along with these depictions of the Buddha the iconography of the Muchalinda Buddha also evolves. Taking into account the deception from Goli, Andhra Pradesh dated to 3rd-4th Cen. A.D. (Plate 7), the depiction here totally deviates from the text, especially at least for half of the context. In this depiction, the Buddha is shown seated on a seat of four large coils of Muchalinda while he is sheltered by his hood, visible although the image is badly damaged. Besides the Buddha to the viewer's right, there is a human figure with joined hands and what appears to be an indistinct hood, possibly connecting to the part where Muchalinda transformed into a human and worshipped the Buddha as per the sutta as shown in Plate 7 and Plate 9. There is a possibility that this was a combination of the Hinayana template with the Mahayana image template; this can be explained by the fact that the coils in the Hinayana template are present below the empty throne, which signifies the Buddha's presence, and what better to fill that empty throne in the Mahayana version than by adding the image of the Buddha on the seat while keeping the coils below his feet. Two depictions from Southern India dated to mid-3rd Cen. A.D. are carvings of the Muchalinda Buddha from the site of Nagarjunakonda (Plate 8 & 9). The researchers considered these depictions as important because this motif is most often confused with the motif of the Jain Tirthankara Parshwanath who is also depicted with a snake hood (Melton, 2011) (Plate 10). While juxtaposing both these images together though both are separated by around 200 years the concept of a reticulated serpent as the background for the seated divinity either the Buddha or Parshwanath, both of which are sheltered by the open hood is a common motif. Could this reticulated depiction of Muchalinda behind the Buddha as depicted in Nagarjunakonda be interpreted as an independent motif or an influence of Jain thought on Buddhist art? The answer is debated, but the researchers feel that the latter is more appropriate as a theory. An evolved depiction of this template of reticulated serpent behind the divinity reaches its birthplace Bodhgaya when we observe the 7th Cen. A.D. sculpture now in the Indian Museum, Kolkata (Plate 11), the template of the reticulated Muchalinda is clear with the wavy snake much visible behind the Buddha and the coiled seat as the previous depiction, but what is unique in this is that it almost appears that the coiled seat of Muchalinda and the reticulated body are two distinct entities and not just one snake. It has to be noted that upto this depiction, the coiled seat of Muchalinda is shrinking slowly and progressively so as to be almost the same size as the Buddha's folded legs.

Next, we examine two unique depictions of the Buddha sitting encircled by a mesh of interwoven snake coils, most probably that of Muchalinda himself (Plates 12-13). These images from Nepal are similar to the previous tradition that the Buddha image is placed on the coils of Muchalinda, the innovation or evolution that this template has the motif of the interwoven coils of Muchalinda. The size of Muchalinda is varied in all of these templates and the hoods of Muchalinda are always serving

as a protective device over the head, acting as a halo but never going beyond the shoulders. But a sort of later variation is observed in images from South East Asia like the one from Thailand (Plate 14). This later variation affects the imagery of the Buddha as well, especially the incoming of Mongoloid facial features and the redesigned hair. Since this paper has a greater focus on the serpent Muchalinda and that work has been done on the imagery of Buddha in the singular by scholars (Ye and Angelo, n.d.), we will not elaborate this here. Upon focusing on the evolution of Muchalinda in these 13th Cen. depictions, it is clear that now the Muchalinda Naga has grown so large or the placement is as such that the hood extends from the elbows of the Buddha as its lowest point to the usual high point above the head or crobuloose (Rhys Davids Ph.D. LL.D. and Charles, 2014).

It would be a failure in research if we did not take an example from the island of Sri Lanka with special reference to Dambulla Caves. Here in the caves at Dambulla we find innumerable Buddha sculptures along with those of other deities, murals and stupas. One very unique depiction is that of Muchalinda Buddha present in the Cave of the Great Kings (Plate 15) commissioned during the reign of King Nissanka Malla of the 12th Cen A.D. (Ahir, 2000). The sculpture is an evolution of the template from India wherein the Buddha seated on the snake coils in Padmasana is depicted; the coils are almost a fit for the cross-legged posture, but instead of 5 to seven hoods the Naga Muchalinda is depicted with just three hoods and the halo of the hood is restricted to last bone of the cervical vertebrae.

Briefly touching on the evolution of the figure of the Buddha himself in the images discussed above, we note the transition from Hinayana to Mahayana phases, the bifurcation from Indian to foreign influenced depiction and lastly, Indian and non-Indian origin imagery based on locations. Plate 1, which depicts the Naga Muchalinda over an empty throne, is but obviously, the Hinayana depiction wherein the Buddha is symbolically represented by the empty seat and the Bodhi tree, in this case the Muchalinda tree. The phenomenon is repeated in Plate 2 only with the addition of the Chhatra to symbolise the presence of the Buddha. From plates 3 onwards the rest of the depictions are Mahayana in nature or atleast adhering to image worshipping or veneration as a cult in Buddhism. Plates 3 to 6 are Gandharan type images and hence have a Graecian look with emphasis on the wavy hair. Though much detailing is vague in some of these, Plate No. 5 is unique with the addition of a moustache for the Buddha. Most probably all of these Muchalinda Buddhas would have been seated in Padmasana holding a Dhyana mudra depicting the Buddha in meditation as shown in the texts, but since the coils cover the body of the Buddha in the places 3-6 the mudra is obscured. Plates 7 to 9 from Southern India are rather unique, showing the Buddha as a teacher. This becomes more evident in plate 8 where it is a very rare depiction of the Muchalinda Buddha holding his right arm in Abhaya Mudra. Also all of these depictions and the depiction of plate 11, the Buddhas are wearing the Sanghati on the left shoulder while keeping the right one bare- this is in exception to plate 9, where the Buddha is wearing the Sanghati on his full body like in the Gandharan style. The phenomenon of wearing the Sanghati on one shoulder i.e. the left, is repeated on plates 12, 13 and 15- the former two are from Nepal while the latter is from Sri Lanka. It is in Plates 13 and 15 that the Sanghati is rather visible, but in plate 12, its presence is noted by the extension of cloth on the left shoulder. The depiction of Buddha from Sri Lanka is unique. All the depictions are shown with a sort of orb of fire (flame tipped ushnisha/protuberance) on the head, possibly symbolizing enlightenment (Pal, 1998). It is to be noted that the depiction of Buddha from Thailand in plate 14 is unique as rather nude, though there is a line indicating the garment. Also to be noted in plate No 14 and other Buddhas depicted in South East Asia, the hair forms a crown like feature and is pointed on the top as an evolved depiction. The hood of Muchalinda may have enlarged so as to balance out the evolved iconography especially of the head and hair region of the Buddha.

Comparison of the Text with Depictions and Herpetology

Smith (1981) introduces snakes as elongated limbless squamates belonging to the suborder Serpentes (Linnaeus 1758) while Albert Gunther (1864), in his historical work on reptile taxonomy *The Reptiles of British India*, termed the Indian Spectacled Cobra (then *Naja tripudians*) as the ‘Cobra’ or ‘Naga’. One of the many characteristics he mentions it having a ‘dilatable neck’, which is better known as a ‘hood’ among the common folk (Dewar, 1912). The *Muchalinda Naga* sculpture also shows the serpent having seven hooded heads and a long body (Plate 6). Rafu Ullas and Ghani-ur-Rahman (2009), in their article ‘The Power of Bodhi: Buddha’s Victory Over the Malevolent Naga-s’ have stated that the term ‘naga’ applies particularly to the King Cobra. According to *Serpentes*, Fauna of British India (Smith, 1981), the King Cobra was earlier under the genus ‘Naja’ and later renamed under the genus ‘Ophiophagus’ and the specific name ‘hannah’.

The area of reference of the *Muchalinda Naga* as per literature is at Gaya, Bihar, India. The geographical distribution in India of the King Cobra scientifically named *Ophiophagus hannah* (Cantor, 1836) ranges throughout Northern India, Eastern India, North-Eastern India, Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats and the Andamans (Aengals et al. 2018). As per the India Biodiversity Portal, the above said serpent’s local distribution also includes Bihar (Whitaker and Captain, 2004; *Ophiophagus hannah* (Cantor, 1836) | Species | India Biodiversity Portal n.d.).

With reference to the image, it is seen in the sculpture that the serpent has coiled around the human seven times (Plate 6). Length is also a characteristic of the King Cobra as it is described as the longest venomous snake in the world (Longest venomous snake (species) | Guinness World Records n.d.).

According to *The Reptiles of British India*, it grows up to more than 12ft (Günther 1864). The longest King Cobra specimen was recorded from London Zoo in 1939, which was captured from Malaysia in 1937 and grew up to 5.71 metres (18ft 8 in) (Longest venomous snake (species) | Guinness World Records n.d.). One of the other long specimens was recorded by Aagard(1924) from the Nakon Sritamarat Mts., Peninsular Siam, which was 18ft. 4in. long (Smith 1981; Burton 1950). Although there do exist other snakes which grow longer than the King Cobra, they are constrictors unable to display a hood unlike the one in the sculpture. The longest snake ever recorded was a Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*, Schneider, 1801) measuring 7.67 metres (25 ft 2 in) (Longest snake ever in captivity slithers into Guinness World Records 2013 | Guinness World Records n.d.). These aforementioned pieces of information lead us to conclude that the Muchalinda Naga was a King Cobra or *Ophiophagus hannah* (Cantor, 1836).

What could the Coiling of Muchalinda around the Buddha mean According to Herpetology and Buddhism?

Defined as ‘the dorso-lateral flattening of the body,’ hooding behaviour is a defensive strategy, aposematic in nature. The display is used to appear larger and more threatening to potential predators when the serpent itself feels threatened in any way. This display reduces the chances of attack (Jones 2017). H B Lillywhite describes ‘coiling’ in snakes as an aid to their feeding wherein, to immobilise prey, snakes employ either constriction or envenomation, of which snakes’ body coils help in the former (Lillywhite 2014). The King Cobra is prominently ophiophagous as explained by its name (‘Ophio – phagus’ quite literally translates to ‘snake-eater’), and their main diet includes snakes, sometimes of its own species, and rarely monitor lizards (Whitaker and Captain 2015; Gowri Shankar and Whitaker 2013). The diet and the foraging activity (“apparent purposeful searching, characterised by constant tongue- flicking and active probing of crevices, burrows, tree buttresses and vegetative debris”) of the

King Cobra does not change with heavy rain (Bhaisare et al. 2010).

The only snake to be recorded to have ever eaten a human being is a Reticulated Python (*Malayopython reticulatus*). This incident occurred in Indonesia where an adult male was found dead inside the body of a 7m long Reticulated Python (Missing man found dead in the belly of 7m-long python in Indonesia: Report, SE Asia News & Top Stories - The Straits Times 2017). Although there is folklore in and around Borneo about the existence of man-eating serpents, nothing of that sort has been recorded on paper, even if such incidents must have happened. Real incidents faded and evolved in time to give rise to folklore (Drake 2014).

The possibility of the existence of extremely long King Cobras capable of consuming a human like that of the Buddha, at some point of time in the past, cannot be supported. It is believed that snakes used to grow bigger in the past than they do now, quite possible due to the warming of the Earth that is occurring with the passage of time, but no scientific proof can be provided for this claim as studies in this aspect are not very clear. Although the hood indicates defensive behaviour and the seven coils seem to have been employed to aid constriction of the prey, i.e., the Buddha, the chances of the King Cobra having tried to eat the Buddha, are very slim, especially in comparison with the findings of today.

However, an alternate scenario can also be speculated. The King Cobra might have encountered the Buddha under the Nigrodha tree (*Ficus religiosa*), where he sat as he meditated while foraging. Any sudden movement by the Buddha or a surrounding object might have alarmed the serpent and caused the hooding. Perception of this scene (the snake hooded and the Buddha seated calmly) might have led to several artistic and textual depictions of the same but interpreted with more reverence towards the Buddha and exaggeration. The serpent, upon sensing the lack of threat thereafter, owing to the calmness of the Buddha, might have slithered away. King Cobras are considered to be docile and non-aggressive and escape would be preferred over the attack. This suggests that the retraction of the snake from the Buddha was owing to his calm demeanour and not his divinity, unlike depicted by many.

What, therefore, can we learn from the Buddha and his interaction with Nagas or snakes? For this, we can juxtapose two suttas - The Muchalinda Sutta and the Ahi Sutta; in the former, the Buddha is constricted, sheltered and venerated by the snake, while in the latter, the Buddha comments on a monk's death due to snake bite. Any person, whether a monk or lay person, in today's world or in the times of the Buddha, would have been rather terrified seeing a human being constricted by a snake and its hood open near the head of the person. In response to this, the Buddha appears to be calm, unperturbed and fixed in meditation, maybe because he was the Buddha he was venerated, but a normal person (if not calm and still enough) would not have walked out alive from that situation as the snake would have perceived the person as an immediate threat and most likely would have bitten the person and injected lethal doses of venom. Also, in the Ahi Sutta, the Buddha, on hearing that a monk had died due to a snake bite, does not call for violence against the 'footless beings' but rather calls for Metta and compassion for blessings or overall fortune beings. This, in a way, is the crowning jewel of Buddha's thought- Compassion and Metta to all beings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the depiction of the Muchalinda Buddha motif has evolved from over 2000 years and is still evolving in the present day, even in the digital media. The depiction of Muchalinda Buddha used in this study is limited and is very selective to serve the purpose of the researchers trying to highlight the evolution of the depiction through the centuries, its faithfulness to the textual references,

the efflorescence in the motifs, the herpetological identification of Muchalinda as a real snake with mythological significance, the herpetological interpretation of the features of Muchalinda with the analysis of the same, etc. There are many more depictions of the Muchalinda and Muchalinda Buddha present at sites like Ajanta, Nagarjunakonda, Bihar, etc. along with the various depictions of the Muchalinda Buddha in South-East Asia; the latter has been dealt by Ye, L. and Angelo, B in their research document (Ye, L. and Angelo, B, 2017). More research can be done on other aspects of the motif of the Muchalinda Buddha by analysing research done by previous scholars, this comparative short work and other material along with the original Pali text, but for another topic in the future.



**Plate 1: Pillar with Naga Muchalinda over the throne of the Buddha. Pauni (Bhandara District).
Railing pillar from Jagannath Tekri. 2nd-1st century BCE**

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pillar_with_Naga_Muchalinda_over_the_throne_of_the_Buddha._Pauni_\(Bhandara_District\)._Railing_pillar_from_Jagannath_Tekri._2nd-1st_century_BCE.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pillar_with_Naga_Muchalinda_over_the_throne_of_the_Buddha._Pauni_(Bhandara_District)._Railing_pillar_from_Jagannath_Tekri._2nd-1st_century_BCE.jpg)



Plate 2: Muchalinda Naga with Naginis and the symbolic representation of the Buddha on Western Gateway of Sanchi

Source: http://www.kamit.jp/02_unesco/01_sanchi/xsan_9eng.htm



Plate 3: The Buddha Protected by Muchalinda, Kurita Collection copyright : Jimmy Bastian Pinto collection

Source: <http://gandharan-archives.blogspot.com/2011/06/buddha-protected-by-muchilinda.html>



Plate-VI Relief Panel of Naga Muchalinda in the Reserve Collection of DOAM

Plate 4: Relief Panel of Naga Muchalinda

Source: Sehrai, N.,Jawad, A., (2015). Relief Panel Depicting Buddha Protected by Naga Muchalinda.*Ancient Pakistan*, Volume XXVI,



Plate 5: A green schist relief panel of Siddhartha protected by Muchalinda, Ancient Region of Gandhara, 1st-2nd century.

Source: <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20903/lot/15/?category=list&length=170&page=1>



**Plate 6: Grey schist Buddha protected by Mucilinda © Victoria and Albert Museum, London,
Buddha protected by Mucilinda**

Source: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O65733/buddha-protected-by-mucilinda-relief-panel-unknown/#>



**Plate 7: Buddha Shakyamuni Sheltered by the Serpent King Muchalinda, India, Andhra Pradesh,
Goli Village, Limestone, Gift of the Michael J. Connell Foundation (M.71.54)**

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Buddha_Shakyamuni_Sheltered_by_the_Serpent_King_Muchalinda_LACMA_M.71.54_\(1_of_8\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Buddha_Shakyamuni_Sheltered_by_the_Serpent_King_Muchalinda_LACMA_M.71.54_(1_of_8).jpg)



Plate 8: Muchalinda on a lintel in Cave No. Ajanta, Maharashtra

Source: Dr. Shreekant S. Jadhav



**Plate 9: Muchalinda Buddha, mid 3rd century, Limestone, Andhra Pradesh.
(probably made in Nagarjunakonda)**

Source: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O72373/buddha-sheltered-by-muchalinda-figure-unknown/>



Plate 10: Muchalinda Buddha from Nagarjunakonda

Source: Jadhav Shreekant S., (2014), Nāga: With Special Reference to the Recently Discovered Nāgarāja Image at Ghatotkacha, Maharashtra, *Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology* 2 (2014): 331–346.

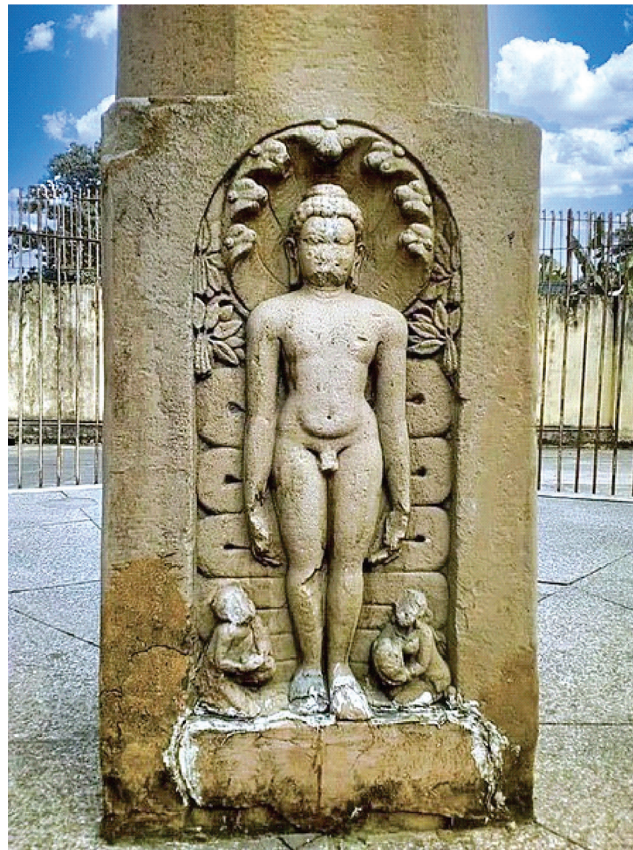


Plate 11:- Relief of Jain tirthankara Parshvanatha on the Kahaum pillar erected by Skandagupta

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kakandi.jpg>



Plate 12: Buddha protected by the serpent Muchalinda,6th or 7th century C.E.,Sandstone, Bodh Gaya, Bihar- Indian Museum-Kolkata

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:53._Buddha_protected_by_the_serpent_Muchalinda-6th_or_7th_century_CE-Sandstone-_Bodh_Gaya-Bihar-_Sculpture_Gallery-_Indian_Museum-Kolkata-6290.jpg

Plate 13: Buddha Sheltered by the Serpent King Muchalinda,11th/12th century, Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

Source: <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/148392/buddha-sheltered-by-the-serpent-king-muchalinda>





Plate 14: A Stone Figure of Buddha Muchalinda, 12th Century, Nepal, Christies Collection

Source: <https://globalnepalimuseum.com/objects/a-stone-figure-of-buddha-muchalinda/>



Plate 15 : Mucalinda sheltering Gautama Buddha , 12th century Khmer Sandstone with traces of pigment and gold, Honolulu Academy of Arts

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mucalinda#/media/File:Muchilinda_Buddha_from_Cambodia,_Angkor_kingdom,_Bayon_style,_12th_century,_sandstone,_HAA.JPG



Plate 16: Muchalinda Buddha at Dambulla Caves

Source: Jason Johns



Plate 17: King Cobra at the Cincinnati Zoo

Source: Photo by Greg Hume
Greg Hume / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)



Plate 18: King Cobra displaying the hood Photo by Dr. Anand Titus and Geeta N Perreira

Source: Titus, A. and Perreira, G., 2012. *The Mystical King Cobra And Coffee Forests*. [image] Available at: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:12_-_The_Mystical_King_Cobra_and_Coffee_Forests.jpg> [Accessed 22 October 2020]

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