

Royal Attributes of the Nirmānakāya Śākyamuni and the Dharmakāya Buddhas

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ABSTRACT

The royal attributes in the iconography of the Buddha are a reflection of his being a kshatriya, who are the best of the four *varṇas* in Pali texts, and precede the Brāhmaṇas in enumerations. Moreover, the *Buddhacharita* says that he was of the Ikshvāku dynasty (of Lord Rāma). With the Earth Goddess as witness to his enlightenment, he is shown sitting in *bhadrāsana* of the Kushan kings with pendant legs, the two effulgences on his shoulders indicative of the Sun and Moon, the regal symbolism of Uttarāpatha, the interiorization of Mithraism as Maitreya, the solar dynasty (*Sūryavarṇīśa*) of the Buddha evolving as Mahāvairochana 'The Great Sun', and other factors contributed to the jewelled and crowned iconography of the Buddha in the apotheosis of spirituality and statecraft.

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