Divine Procreation

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As is pointed out by Ernst Windisch in 1907, it is due to the requirement of the religiöse Logik that the pious biographers of the particular religions tried to embellish the lives of their founders as much as possible. As a result, their life becomes mythified and adorned with various sorts of legendary story and miracle in the course of time. The process of mythification, however, varies from one religion to the other in accordance with the different cultural background of the countries where the historical lives of these founders actually took place. The Buddha's life is not an exception and is entangled with a number of legendary stories which are strongly imbued with the tinge peculiar to the cultural history of India.

However, we notice here a general tendency to eliminate the paternal element out of their birth story. As virgin Mary prevails in Jesus Christ's birth story and his father Joseph retreats out of scene, so also in Buddha's case such stories as his descent from the Tusita-heaven and entering Māyā's right side in the shape of a white elephant are spoken, but we hear scarcely of his father Śuddhodana.

However, in the case of historical Buddha, another important elements are further added; that is his marriage with Yaśodharā as a royal prince and the birth of his son Rāhula. Then, how Buddhist biographers interpreted these events of their founder? We meet in his biography transmitted in Chinese Tripiṭakas that his wife becomes pregnant as a result of his touching of her navel instead of the ordinary *maithina dharma*.

Yet, this motif naturally reminds us of the Epic hero Karṇa's birth story in the Mahābhārata and that of Sāma in Jātaka literature. Here we notice the Hindu trial to embellish the birth of gods and sages.

Yet, the touching of women's navel is not the single instance of divine procreation, but remains as one of them. Here in this paper, we shall examine other forms of divine procreation and investigate its relevant problems.