

Prajñāpāramitā dans le bouddhisme du Cambodge ancien

Up to now, researchers have paid little attention to Prajñāpāramitā, the only female representation of Buddhism in Angkorian Cambodia. She remains discreet, and often in the shadow of Avalokiteśvara, insofar as the worship of the goddess has never known the same devotion that in India. However, while in India the name is primarily linked to the sacred eponymous texts revered by adherents of Mahāyāna, in Cambodia, it mostly refers to the deity. In the 10th century, she appears, both in sculpture and in inscriptions, but it is only during the reign of Jayavarman VII, in the late 12th century, that she reached the status of a main deity. According to the evolution related to Mahāyāna's expansion during Angkorian time, images of Prajñāpāramitā are varying, from the 12th century, giving rise to new iconographic types unknown in India. This study, that affords an unpublished presentation of Prajñāpāramitā, in its artistic and religious aspects, also sheds light on the fundamental primacy given to means to attain enlightenment of which she embodies transcendental and supreme path within doctrinal trends of Mahāyāna Buddhism in ancient Cambodia.