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**BUDDHA JAYANTI**

**SOUVENIR**

R-68

**THE LANKA BAUDDHA MANDALAYA**

*(The Buddhist Council of Ceylon)*



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*Published by*

**The Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya**

(The Buddhist Council of Ceylon)

THE MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS,  
COLOMBO

Presented by the Government  
of Ceylon.  
8.4.63.

9607

Printed in Ceylon by  
**SAMAN PRESS**  
(The New Asia Trading Co., Ltd.)  
MAHARAGAMA

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Photo by K. G. Amaradasa



## Message from the Honourable Prime Minister

2,500 years ago, on the Wesak Full-moon day, there passed away One, who had lit a beacon light, a sure and unfailing guide to a haven of peace and safety for those tossing on the dark and troubled waters of Life.

Today, particularly, in an uncertain World of flux and change, the teaching of the Buddha brings a message of hope and solace to mankind. Realising the sorrow, to which all living things are subject, He has shown us the middle-path through the Eight Fold Way to guide us to the final goal of freedom and of peace.

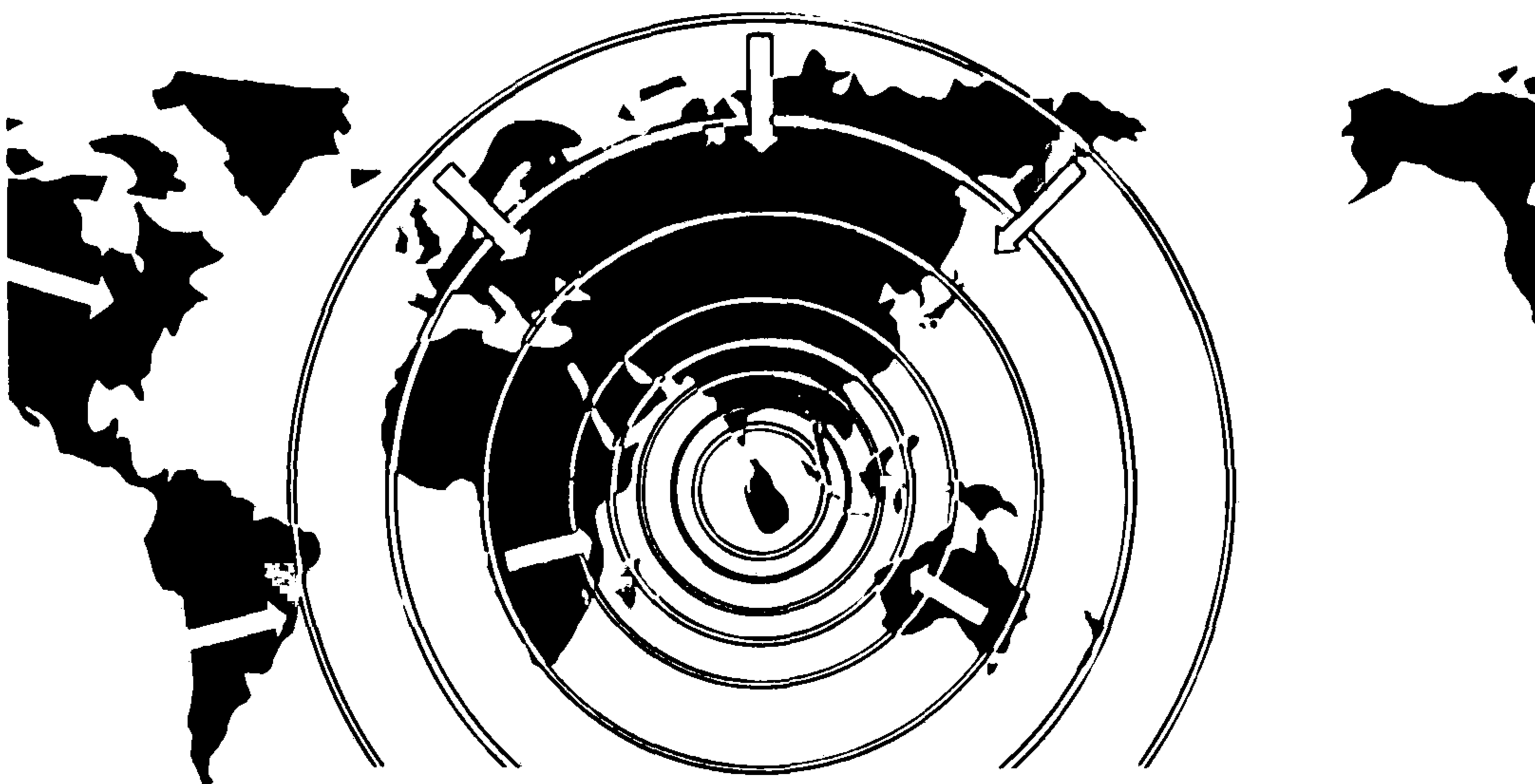
The 2,500 Sam-Buddha Jayanti celebrated by Buddhists throughout the World, has a special significance for the Sinhalese. It was 2,500 years ago, that the Sinhalese race was founded, when Prince Vijaya landed on our shores. There is also a tradition amongst us that this event marks the dawn of a new era of prosperity and happiness for the people of Sri Lanka.

Let us, therefore, amid the rejoicings determine to achieve that ideal, not only for ourselves but for all mankind, by following, each one according to the best of his ability, the teachings of the Master.

May all living things be happy.

(*Sgd.*) S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike





## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUDDHA JAYANTI

*By*

**The Right Hon'ble Sir John Kotelawala**

C.H., P.C., K.B.E. M.P.,



THE 2500th Anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha falls on the Full Moon Day of May, 1956. The celebration which the Buddhists of the world are organising to commemorate this occasion is known as the "Buddha Jayanti."

The tradition preserved in the Buddhist countries specifies that the teaching of the Buddha will last five thousand years and that the 2500th year will be a significant turning point in the history of Buddhism. The tradition further records that at this time the doctrines of the Buddha will be known throughout the world and that it will witness an unprecedented spiritual re-awakening.

The Buddha Jayanti is essentially a celebration in honour of the Buddha who is one of the greatest men in history, if not the greatest. The sacrifices he made for the sake of humanity, his career as a philosopher and religious teacher and his doctrines of universal love, non-violence and equanimity are all too well known to be recounted here. During his life-time and during the last 2500 years many millions of people have looked up to his teachings for inspiration and guidance. Numerous generations of Asians had come under the benign influence of his doctrines. The art and architecture and the literature of practically all the countries in Asia have, at some-time or other, been moulded by the principles of Buddhism. The monks, who are the followers of the Buddha, have been serving Asia throughout history as its cultural leaders. The contribution which Buddhism has made to the spiritual and cultural advancement of humanity is indeed notable. And the promise it holds for the future is still more significant. Therefore the Buddha Jayanti will be an occasion not only to evaluate the benefits rendered to humanity by the Buddha and his teachings, but also to speculate on how his lofty ideals can be utilised to bring peace and harmony to our troubled world.



The Buddha Jayanti is bound to bring about a change in the way of life of the Buddhists and the Hindus who pay homage to the Buddha either as the founder of their faith or as the incarnation of their great god Visnu. A strong movement to ensure the spiritual regeneration of the Buddhists and the Hindus, who together form nearly one half of the world's population, should be launched in connection with the Buddha Jayanti. At present, such a movement is being organised in Ceylon; and similar efforts, it is known, are being made in other Buddhist countries. A combined effort made by all Buddhist countries will no doubt give better and more lasting results. The spiritual unity of a formidable sector of the world's population will exert an enormous influence on the rest of mankind. The Buddha Jayanti will be an ideal occasion for the followers of the Buddha to announce to the world that the true object of life is to "do good, shun evil and cleanse the inmost thoughts"\* and to draw the attention of the warring world to the lofty teachings of the Master who has taught humanity the way out of misery and suffering. The message of the Buddha can truly be the solution to all ills in the modern world.

It is known that the Buddhist countries are making arrangements to celebrate the Buddha Jayanti in a fitting manner. Some of them have already spent large sums of money on various activities. In Ceylon, a Buddhist Council consisting of members of both the Sangha and the laity has been set up to make representations to the Government on all matters pertaining to the Buddha Jayanti and to undertake all activities in connection with the Buddha Jayanti. The Government of Ceylon has decided to cooperate with the Buddhist public, who form 65 per cent of the population, by granting a large sum of money to the Buddhist Council. Besides organising the movement to usher in a spiritual awakening in the Island, the Council has commenced the translation of the Buddhist Canon (the Tripitaka) into Sinhalese and the compilation of an Encyclopaedia on Buddhism in English and a general Encyclopaedia in Sinhalese. Arrangements are also being made to publish a number of souvenirs, brochures and books on the life and the teachings of the Buddha and the history of Buddhism. The historic Temple of the Tooth in Kandy is being reconstructed with a view to restore it to its pristine glory. Besides putting up a number of memorial buildings, the Council will assist in the restoration of the Mahiyangana Stupa which stands at a spot visited by the Buddha and the construction of a Hall of Residence for Buddhist monks at the University of Ceylon in Peradeniya. A special library called the Buddha Jayanti Library, which will be a repository of valuable books on world religions, will also be established at the University. Financial assistance will be given to the Vidyalankara Pirivena of Kelaniya (a seat of Oriental learning) to hold a Sangayana as a part of its activities in connection with the revision of the sacred scriptures. This Pirivena will also compile a Concordance of sacred texts. In February 1957 the Council will hold an International Buddhist Conference in Colombo and will organize an exhibition of Buddhist Art, wherein all Buddhist countries will be represented. The Council is also considering a proposal to establish a seat of Buddhist learning of University standard where Buddhism and allied subjects will be taught besides providing facilities to meditate. In Ceylon we are making further arrangements to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the landing of Vijaya and the founding of the kingdom of Lanka, which coincides with the Buddha Jayanti.

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\* Dhammapada 183.



In order to achieve the best results in these undertakings the cooperation of almost all the countries of the world is absolutely necessary. The compilation of the Buddhist Encyclopaedia, which will be a complete and authoritative reference book on Buddhism and Buddhist Civilization, requires the services of a large number of scholars and workers not only to write the articles but also to select and prepare the illustrations. The International Buddhist Conference should provide an opportunity for the leading Buddhist scholars of the world to meet together and discuss their common problems. The exhibition of Buddhist Art should represent the development of Buddhist art in all countries of Asia; models and replicas of the archaeological treasures of these countries should find a place in this exhibition. Besides, the Buddha Jayanti Library can be made complete only if books and manuscripts are available from the Buddhist countries. The Buddhist Council proposes to appeal to all nations for their assistance in executing these projects.

The Asian countries which are organising various activities in connection with the Buddha Jayanti must have felt the necessity for international cooperation. There is no doubt that if all of us pool our resources and make a unified effort to celebrate the Buddha Jayanti we would derive immense benefits. The Buddha Jayanti will be celebrated in a manner befitting the greatness of the personality in whose honour it is held. Besides, such an arrangement will contribute towards the strengthening of the bonds of friendship which exist among us. It will, moreover be unique in so far as it is motivated not by military or commercial considerations but by the keenness to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha whose message we offer the world today as the corrective it sorely requires to save mankind from self-inflicted annihilation.

Let the Buddha Jayanti be an integral part of our scheme to ensure world peace. We, who had been subject to foreign domination and have therefore remained poor and under-developed, have neither the means nor the strength to maintain peace by warfare. Even if we do have, the rich religious heritage to which we are heirs prevents us from adopting such a course of action, whose failure has been proved beyond any doubt. Our solution to war is the message of Universal Love which the Enlightened One has taught. "He should not commit any slight wrong," the Buddha stated, "such that other wise men might censure; may all beings be happy and secure; may their hearts be wholesome. Let none deceive another nor despise any person whatsoever in any place. In anger or ill-will let him not wish any harm to another. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so let him cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings. Let his thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world—above, below and across—without any obstruction, without any enmity,"<sup>1</sup> It is this doctrine of love which alone can save the world from the destruction wrought by nuclear weapons; this alone can bring harmony to the world which is torn asunder by greed, hatred and ignorance. To disseminate this doctrine in the world is our responsibility; and it is not an easy task. Has not the master expounded:

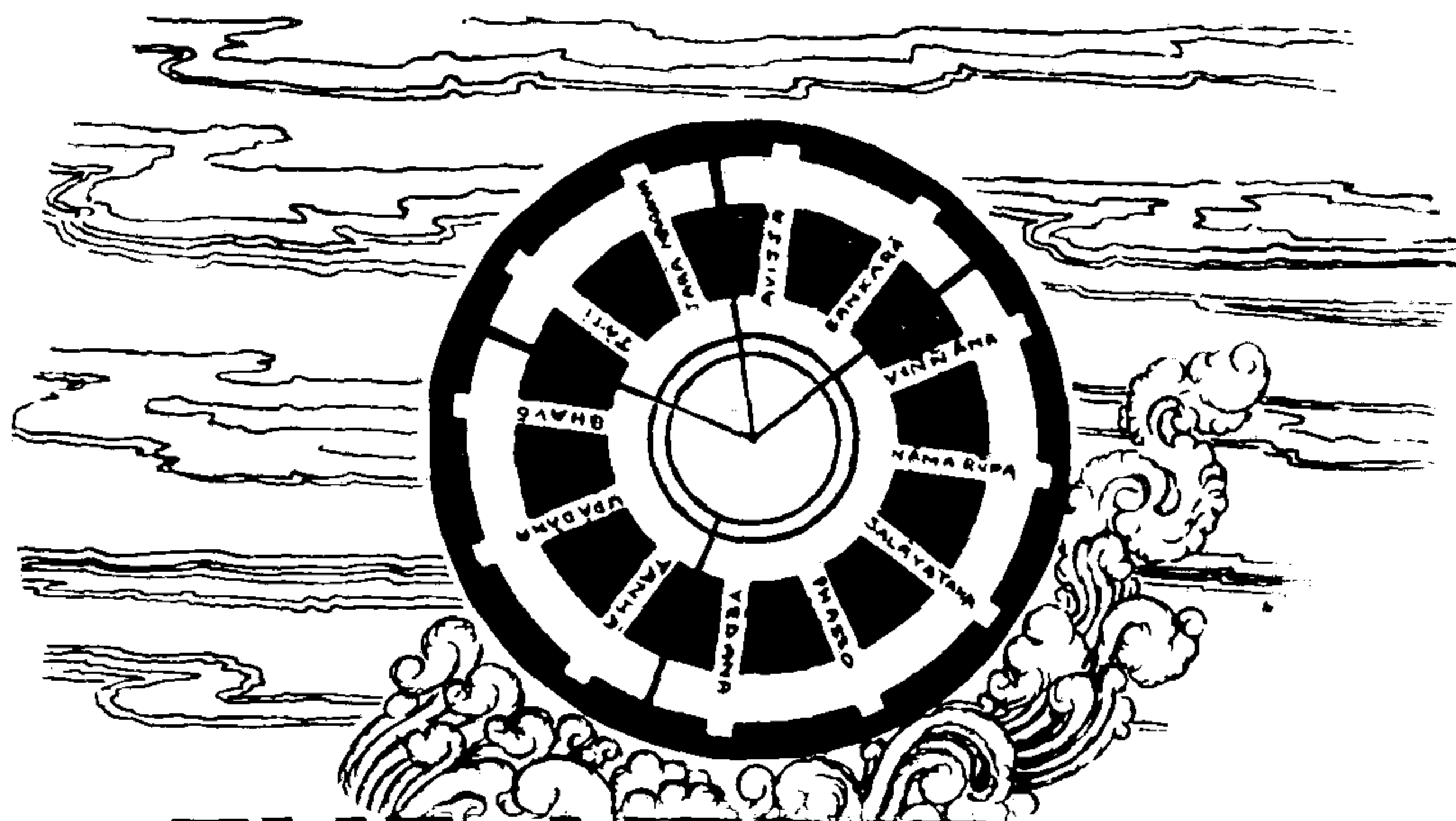
"Easy to do are things that are bad and not beneficial to self;

But very, very hard to do indeed is that which is beneficial and good."<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Metta Sutta.

2. Dhammapada 163.



# THE HERITAGE OF BUDDHISM

## THE BUDDHA & HIS MESSAGE

by Dr. G. P. MALALASEKERA

**B**

UDDHISM is not merely a religion, it is also a whole civilisation, with its historical background, its literature and art, and philosophy, its institutions, social, political and educational, and its code of ethical conduct.

It had its origin in the valley of the Ganges: from there it spread, first, throughout India. Then, carried by the royal missionary, great Asoka's son, Mahinda, it reached Ceylon, where it lives even today, in almost its pristine purity after the vicissitudes of twenty-five centuries.

From Ceylon it went, in due course, to Burma and Siam—the modern Thailand—into Cambodia and Indo-

China, into Champa and Annam. In Central Asia it built mighty temples and created huge libraries, long since desolated by overwhelming storms of sand.

It secured a home in Java, was established in Tibet, spread into Mongolia and gained a firm foothold in China. Thence, through Korea, it was transmitted across the seas to Japan, where in the sixth century of the Christian era, the Japanese Emperor himself lectured on the new religion to vast audiences. The manuscripts of those lectures are still preserved in the royal archives.

### Literature and Art

Its record in literature is unique. From the very outset Buddhism appealed most



strongly to the cultivated and the intellectual. It is usually described as "*veditabbo viññuhi*," best appreciable by the wise. Its canonical scripture, now accepted as authoritative throughout the Eastern hemisphere, far exceeds those of other religions. The Buddhist monastery was everywhere the centre of education. Wherever it went, the new religion enriched the language of the people among whom it spread. The linguistic difficulties involved must have been enormous, since Indian idioms of thought and speech had to be adopted to wholly different mediums of expression.

The labours of Jerome, for instance, translating the Hebrew of the Old Testament into Latin, must have been a child's play compared with Hiouen Thsang's task in writing in Chinese the *Prajna Paramita*, a work estimated at twenty-five times the length of the whole Bible. Equally voluminous were its productions in the Karosthi dialects of Turkestan and the region of the Pamirs.

Its achievements in the realm of art were no less significant. It was Buddhism that first called architecture to the service of religion. The stone terraces of the temple of Boro Budur in Java, crowded with statues and bas-reliefs which, if placed side by side, would extend to over three miles, rank among the architectural wonders of the world. So with the temple of Ankor Vat in Indo-China.

The paintings of the cave-temples of Ajanta and Ellora command our awe and our admiration. The image of the Buddha at Nara in Japan, fifty feet in height, and that at Kamakura, almost equally high, are unrivalled in their majesty by any sculpture in any country. And then there are the numerous statues in our own beautiful Island, for instance the well-known stone image in the park at Anuradhapura, which so truly symbolises the central theme of Buddhism, the spiritual peace that comes of perfected knowledge and the subjugation of all passions.

## Ideals of Peace and Kindliness

But greater than all these triumphs was the indelible sway it exercised in moulding the character of the millions who became its votaries, instilling into them its noble ideals of peace and gentleness, tolerance and kindliness and hospitality, the care of the sick and the weary, the pursuit of the good and the beautiful, and compassion towards all that lives and breathes. It is Buddhism's proud boast that not a single drop of blood has ever been shed in its name.

Throughout its history its missionaries never claimed exclusive privileges for themselves nor attempted to preserve power over the churches they founded; no endeavour was made by them to promote the trade of their nationals or to establish outposts for their empires.

## The Man

The Founder of this great movement was the Buddha or Sakyamuni (the Sage of the Sakya clan) or, to give him his family name, Gotama. We are told that his personal name was Siddhattha. The Buddha generally spoke of himself as the Tathagata, One who had found the Truth. The biographical details given of him in the books are too well-known to need recapitulation at length. His father was Suddhodana, chief of the Sakyan clan who lived at the foot of the Himalayas, and his mother was the lady Māyā. The pious delight to speak of the marvels that heralded his advent into the world of men and his birth in a *sala* grove. An immeasurable light filled the ten thousand world-systems; the blind saw, the deaf heard and the dumb spoke; the crooked became straight and the lame walked; the sick were healed, prisoners were set free. Fountains burst forth from the ground; flowers fell from the sky; music and perfume filled the air, while devas in heaven sang in joy.

He was brought up in the lap of luxury; his education consisted not only of knowledge of the wisdom which the great men of his time taught, but also of

proficiency in all the manly arts. At the age of 16 he married Bimbadevi or Yasodharā, having won her favour by a display of his skill and prowess.

Though he had every reason to be happy, the sorrows of the world around him filled his sensitive soul with restlessness, and the more he pondered on the cruel realities of life, the more determined he became to find a way of escape from them.

“There is a getting born and a growing old, a dying and a being re-born. And from this suffering, alas, an escape is not known, even from old age and death. When shall such escape be revealed?” And then he thought further, “Surely there must be a way out of this ill? Just as there is warmth as opposed to cold, and light as against darkness, there must likewise be happiness as opposed to sorrow?”

Thus pondered he, till one day when he was 29 years old, soon after the birth of his only child Rahula, he left home and family, resolved never to return without succeeding in his quest. For six long and weary years he sought, going through innumerable experiences that imposed severe strain on both his body and his mind. He was beset with numerous temptations but he overcame them all.

### A Life of Incessant Activity

Then on the full-moon night in the flowery month of May, seated under a *peepul* tree near Gayā, while the world stood still in expectation, he put forth a supreme struggle. The forces of Evil opposed him in vain: he rent asunder the veil of ignorance and he saw the Truth, thus becoming the Buddha, the Awakened One, the Seer of the Perfect Light.

He had found emancipation, *vimutti*. Thenceforth, for 45 years, till his death at Kusinārā at the age of eighty, his life was one of incessant activity, teaching and preaching, continually travelling except during the three months of the monsoon, sleeping but two hours a night, carrying the tidings of good cheer,

the message of hope and happiness to all that would care to hear. Thus was his destiny fulfilled; accomplished was the resolve he had made many aeons ago to find the way of salvation and declare it to ailing humanity.

### At Dipankaras's Feet

For, countless ages ago, he had been a very holy man, a hermit named Sumedha, wearing bark-robe and skin-mantle, and had met the Buddha Dīpankara—for Buddhas appear from time to time in the world and our books speak of twenty-eight such by name to show men the way to Nibbana, escape from suffering into happiness without end. In the dispensation of each Buddha many myriads of beings follow the Way thus taught and find their goal. Sumedha saw that under the guidance of the Buddha Dipankara he, too, could win emancipation for himself.

But nobler thoughts filled his mind. “What boots it,” he asked himself, “that I should reach the further shore alone? Rather let me be like Dipankara and attain Buddhahood in some future age that I might bring solace to countless others as well.” Thus began the first great act of renunciation, which the aim at supreme Enlightenment requires: it was but a presage of glorious fulfilment. It was, indeed, not undertaken without a full realisation of its meaning. The aspirant for Buddhahood is called the Bodhisatta—the seeker after Enlightenment—and his chief requisites are *karuṇā*, compassion and love of service, and *appamāda*, earnest resolution.

### Preparation for Buddhahood

Each life, in one world-aeon after another, involved him in its entanglement of change and suffering. The Buddha-aspirant must understand all forms of experience: he must pass through all phases of life, animal, human and super-human, and adapt himself in sympathy with them all. As man he must be tried again and again that he may meet ill-will



with forbearance, be patient under abuse or cruelty, and learn to overcome evil with good. Mocked and derided, pierced with the slings and darts of outrageous fortune, offering life itself again and again in the service of others, he firmly trod the path of pain, that by the steadfast practice of the ten perfections—generosity, goodness, renunciation, wisdom, firmness, patience, truth, resolution, kindness and equanimity—he might win the knowledge that would save the world. As an Old text has it: “He gave up kingdom, city, wife and son. He plucked out his eyes and gave them to another. He allowed the flesh to be severed from his bones to ransom the life of a dove. He cut off his head to be given as alms: he gave his body to feed a starving tigress, he grudged not his bones and his brains for the good of others.” Thus not in one single life only, but in many countless lives did he bear the cross of suffering and lay down his life in the service of humanity. And behind the tales that speak of these sacrifices is the subtle idea, significant for a proper understanding of the religion, that all forms of life, from the monkey or hare to the great Brahma himself, who rules in the highest heaven, all forms of life are interdependent and closely related to each other.

### Yet A Man

The wondrous being who thus became the Buddha was indeed yet a man, though, of course, endowed with what we might call a heavenly humanity. In fact it is this essential humanity of the Buddha that shines out most brilliantly through the canonical records of his life and activities. He moved amongst men and women—for his ministry was meant as much for women as for men—not as superman or an incarnation of a god who had come from heaven to earth for an all too brief visit, but as very man, and preaching to men and women that what *he* had become *they* could, everyone of them, become themselves, that we are all of us potential Buddhas. In fact,

according to the teachings of Buddhism, there is in each one of us the germ of the Buddha-ideal, in some, of course, more developed than in others. In the ten thousand world-systems there is no greater being than a Buddha and the Buddha is always a human being.

It is this humanity that is the most striking thing about the Buddha, his humanity and also his great earnestness. He was in deadly earnest to tell the truth, whether others liked it or not, though, of course, he chose his time and place. It is said about his speech that it was always truthful, spoken at the proper season, purposeful and profitable and in exact accord with his own actions.

Countless men and women sought his help and guidance in their personal problems and to all of them he was a friend and a brother. Even contemporary followers of other faiths admitted that his was an attractive personality. They said that he possessed the *āvattanimāyā*, the power of fascination, and warned their adherents not to go near him lest they should be enticed by his winning ways. He always greeted with a smile those that went to see him and thus put them at their ease. He set no limit to what they could ask of him, though he firmly refused to be involved in answering questions which he declared were useless from the end he had in view, namely the finding of a way out of suffering into happiness.

He was very quick to recognise the infinite variety of men's dispositions: he could feel after the real need in each man's heart. The needs of men called forth in him an instant wish to help. His teachings were homely, yet full of wisdom; he spared no pains to make men and women not just good but better, to help them become their best. His kindness to animals was intense as shown for instance when he interfered to get a pension for the king's elephant after she had been declared unfit for further service. He often looked after the sick inmates of his monastery, himself attending to the worst cases: he made it part of his daily routine to visit

the sick-room: he was fond of natural beauty and selected his residences with a view to their scenic attractiveness, preferring woodland and hill and flowering park.

He could appreciate good music, as when he praised Pancasikha's song pouring out his heart in praise of his beloved. The story of the little boy, Culla Panthaka, shows his deep affection for children. He found the little man in tears because he had been scolded by his elder brother for having failed to learn his lesson. The Buddha led him away by his hand, drew water from the well for him to wash his face and feet and gave the Buddha's own towel to wipe them. Having thus comforted him the Buddha took him under a tree and gave him a new lesson of but two words promising that if he learnt the two words he would intervene with the brother and regain his goodwill for the boy. And, needless to add, under such humane methods, the boy soon became most proficient in his studies.

### **The Historical Background**

No proper appreciation of the Buddha's teaching is possible without some knowledge of the conditions of the age in which he lived. The Buddha lived in the sixth century B. C. It was an age of great activity, both intellectual and social, in many parts of the world. In Rome the last of the kings had come and gone, while in Greece the tyrants had been replaced by a more democratic form of government. Pythagoras was then conducting his famous school, while the philosopher Heraklitos was giving to the world his doctrine of the fluid nature of all things. In China, Lao Tze had kindled men's minds by his teachings. In India itself there were very many flourishing cities and well-organised states, some democratic, others ruled by kings. The University of Taxila had many thousands of students and it was only one of many such. There was unlimited freedom of speech: kings and rich men actually provided halls for discussion where not only men but even

women could meet and air their views untrammelled by any restrictions, save the courtesies of debate. In the sphere of religion the Vedas still held great sway and the brahmans, who were the custodians of this learning, had become a hereditary priesthood. They encompassed the whole of the life with religious observance. The ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death were in their hands and it was they who arranged the formalities of worship and controlled the details for which they had to be handsomely rewarded. The belief was fostered that these rites and sacrifices helped one to gain not only the pleasure and enjoyments of this world and the next but also liberation from the sorrows of existence. It was also claimed that the performance of sacrifices was necessary to keep the world's order going and the brahmans were the gods on earth sent hither for that very purpose. It was even asserted by some that the path of ritual could make men greater than the gods. Often these Vedic rites included animal sacrifices of a very cruel and revolting character.

There were, however, others who conceived of a different way to happiness. Man, they said, was naturally attached to worldly enjoyment and wanted to delight the organs of sense. This was what kept him from being mighty and powerful. It did not need very deep investigation to prove that such enjoyment could not bring real happiness. The pleasures of sense were ephemeral. We should, therefore, try our best to control our senses, resorting to austerity or self-mortification in its different forms. In some cases this was carried to the severest possible extent. To wear a dress of coarse human hair or none at all, to eat but once in so many days, to hang head downwards like a bat, to stand on one leg for years on end—these and many other self-torturing inventions attracted certain types of men.

There was yet a third class who, inspired with a passion for truth, and a deep longing to solve the mysteries of existence, left home and family and sought in the seclusion of the forest or



as wandering mendicants, opportunity for meditation and mental development. A teacher would gather round him others prepared to follow his instruction: travelling along from place to place they would meet friends or rivals for quiet discussion or even angry debate. To live on food or clothing given as gifts by others was considered in no way disgraceful: a grove of trees or a village rest-house would provide shelter for the night. Here the problems which from the beginning of time have kindled men's imagination and occupied human thought, were formulated with fearlessness and discussed with candour. Did the world have a beginning in time or was it eternal? Was there a soul apart from the body? What was it like? What happened to it after death? If it lived again where did it live and how? Was there a condition in which one could live and yet not live?

### The Highest Happiness

It was into this sphere of religious and philosophical speculation that the Buddha was born. It was to men imbibing such ideas as these that he preached a new gospel which in its essence seems simplicity itself. "To live mastered by the body," said he, "or to live totally neglecting the body is equally wrong. There is a middle way, the way of the good life. The good life is to be one's best in thought and word, in will and deed." When he had discovered it he proclaimed his discovery in no uncertain terms. "Wide open are the portals of immortality," he announced, "let those that have faith and courage come and share therein."

"Happy is the solitude of him who is full of joy, who has learnt the truth, who sees the truth. Happy is freedom from malice in this world, self-restraint towards all beings that have life. Happy is freedom from lust in this world, getting beyond all desires, the putting away of that pride which comes from the thought 'I am.' This truly is the highest happiness." It was this message that the Buddha brought into the world, like a new theme.



II

## THE FIRST SERMON

It was seven weeks after the attainment of Enlightenment that the Buddha decided to preach his first sermon; he selected five ascetics as his first audience. They lived in Benares, about a hundred miles from where he then was, at Gaya. This distance he covered on foot and then in the Deer-park at Isipatana, still the scene of pilgrimage, he met them. They were old friends and colleagues of his; they had watched his earlier austerities with growing admiration and approval. They had marvelled at his stern resolve and his powers of emaciated frame, his courage and devotion, but when after a long trial of this method, he had given it up and begun to take ordinary food, they had been filled with angry disappointment and left him in disgust. To them, therefore, the Buddha returned, to proclaim that he had at last discovered what he and they had sought.

It was a very practical sermon and went straight to the heart of their problem. He declared that those who wish to lead a religious life should avoid the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-torture. Self-indulgence is low and self-mortification crazy: both are profitless. There is a Middle Way which leads to insight and wisdom: its fruit is serenity, knowledge, enlightenment Nibbāna.



## Four Noble Truths

It is summed up in four great truths, four irrefutable facts—the fact of suffering, the further fact that this suffering has its cause in the craving for personal satisfaction, the third fact that this suffering will cease when such craving is stilled, and fourthly, that that result can be achieved by treading the Middle Way, otherwise defined as the Noble Eightfold Path, consisting of right views, right aspirations, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right rapture.

Once deliverance is thus obtained from suffering, such emancipation cannot *ever* be lost from those that have won it. There will be for them no more faring on through continued existence, no more birth and no more death. The fundamental principle of all reality is that whatever has a beginning must, in due course, also have an end, and suffering is no exception. Herein lies the core of the truth—the impermanency of every thing in this world of time and space. The recognition of this fact provides the means for the eradication of all ill. Well might the devas of the ten thousand world-systems rejoice that the Rule of Truth and Righteousness had at last been established and the great fact of emancipation proclaimed!

This first sermon contains all the essentials of the Buddha's teaching and the elements of the Buddhist ideal. Its foundation is the apprehension of the ultimate facts of life, reached not so much by reasoning and logic as by immediate insight. When this apprehension is once gained the passions of sense are subdued, all ill-will disappears and conflict ceases. The winner of the goal no longer demands that the world shall minister to his gratification; he is delivered from the arrogance of claiming the recognition of his own individuality. The cravings on which his being had erstwhile been reared, have died away and in the resultant calm there is intense but tranquil joy.

## Emancipation

It is fundamentally a teaching of emancipation: "just as the great ocean," says the Buddha, "has only one taste, the taste of salt, so has this doctrine and discipline only one taste, the taste of emancipation." Emancipation must needs imply the existence of evil from which men must be freed; a happy world would require no such doctrine. Both facts are equally important—that is the reason for the statement which occurs again and again in the Buddha's discourses: "One thing do I teach and one only—suffering and the extinction of suffering." The two are inseparable, they are complementary.

The first sermon is also significant for what it does *not* contain. It does not, for instance, give any account of the creation of the world, nor the progress of events whereby sin and death came to spoil the perfect order of things. It does not promise exemption from pain and evil in return for prayer or ritual or sacrifice, nor any support or favourable intercession by the divine powers. The Buddha does not proclaim himself a saviour, willing and able to take upon himself the sins of mankind. On the contrary, he declares that each man and woman must bear the burden of their own sins.

So far from promising, by his own merits, to save his disciples from the effects of their misdeeds and folly, he asserts that no god, even, can do for any man that work of self-conquest and self-emancipation which in the teaching of the Buddha stands for "salvation." It will be seen, therefore, that many of the features which we are accustomed to find in what is usually called "religion" are absent from Buddhism. The Buddha claims only to be a guide, a teacher of the Way, who, having gained deliverance from suffering, declares that spiritual emancipation is no divine gift of grace but the conquest of man's intellect and will, rightly ruled and directed by man himself.



The goal and reward of the higher life is not in any external state but in the attainment of a perfect and tranquil mind. Nibbāna, which is the name given to that goal, is not a sort of Buddhist heaven, no new Jerusalem, no Holy City with "gates of pearl and streets of pure gold, as it were of transparent glass." There are heavens mentioned in the Buddhist books but they are just as transitory as the world of men; their pleasures just as fleeting and unsatisfactory.

### Suffering

"Come" says the Buddha to his disciples, "lead the good life"; and for what end? The extinction of suffering. It would be wrong to think that the suffering which the Buddha envisages is something apart from the ordinary sorrows and pains of life, the trivial material and moral suffering we all know; it is wrong to imagine that what the Buddha has in mind is a sort of metaphysical suffering, like the *weltschmerz* of German philosophy. Nothing is further from the truth. It is precisely of the suffering we are familiar with that he spoke: old age and illness, death, association with those we dislike and separation from those we love. Nothing can be simpler than this. The Buddha takes his stand upon common experience, on the bitter consciousness of the ills that flesh is heir to, on revolt against the pleasure as well as the cares and sorrows of the world.

The first requisite of his teaching is thus a frank recognition of the facts of life, a just estimate of their values. The first essential is a realisation that all conscious existence is enveloped in suffering. The world is on fire, burning with lust, ill-will and stupidity; how can there be laughter and joy? This body of ours is a dressed-up lump, sickly and frail; neglect it but for a few days and it becomes a mass of filth. In a few years it breaks into pieces and ends in death. Thereafter it becomes carrion for dogs and jackals, wolves and worms.

The maladies of the body are only too well-matched by the ills of the mind—striving and failure, frustrated ambition, mortified passion, baffled hope and disappointed endeavour, inexpressible bereavement, love wrecked by accident, disease or death. What anguish of mind there is in a single life-time, what grief and dejection, what lamentation and despair! Not all the waters of the four great oceans can equal the tears shed by a single being in his long pilgrimage through the innumerable ages of his past. The scene of our days and years is full of change; all our pleasures must end, alas! too brief is their satisfaction. Early and late Death goes his rounds, ever alert and irresistible, mowing down high and low, rich and poor, young and old, the mighty and the meek.

This unescapable doom hangs over all felicity, frustrates all hope, poisons all joy. No one can escape it, whether deity, man or demon. The gods in their celestial hostelries, however splendid they may be, and their life however glorious, some of them redoubtable tyrants, others compassionate protectors,—they, too, are dominated by the same laws of decrepitude and dissolution as ours. How can they, deluded by their folly, save the world from suffering when even they have not freed themselves therefrom?

### A Vale of Tears

Other religions, too, have described man as a pilgrim through a vale of tears, called the world a bubble, the life of a man but a span, full of sorrow from womb to tomb, cursed from the cradle to the grave. But these religions, while declaring that "the world passeth away and the lust thereof," also assure us that behind this transitory show lies God's eternity and that therein is security for those who do God's will. God, they say, has revealed in the commandments the conduct which enables men to share in his heaven. He has thus shown himself to be their Father and even though they must humble themselves before his holiness they may yet trust his mercy to

forgive. Buddhism has no such consolation of possible mercy to offer. The laws that govern life are merciless and the Buddha refuses to be mealy-mouthed in his exposition of them. All existence, all existence without exception, is sorrow, he declared.

That his was an unattractive doctrine the Buddha himself realised, and we are told that for a brief moment after his Enlightenment he wondered whether it would be worthwhile carrying such a message to men who were blinded by passion and wrapt in the darkness of ignorance. But then he recalled that it was for this that he had laboured throughout countless lives; he knew that among men there were many whose minds were dulled by hardly any dust at all, and they would understand. In the world were men of many dispositions and capabilities, like lotuses in a pool some blooming under the water, some on its surface, some emerging out of it. The Buddha considered himself a physician; the illness of the world was desperate and a desperate remedy was required, nothing less would suffice. If by the sacrifice of his own life he could assure happiness to the world's creatures, he would have gladly laid it down. Many times, in his previous existences, while preparing for Buddha-hood, he had given his life for others and one more life would have meant nothing to him. But in the destruction of suffering, as the Buddha saw it, the shepherd laying down his life for the flock had no meaning.

### **Unsatisfactory and Transitory**

Though he thus declared the world and all in it a mass of suffering the Buddha never showed any impatience with it; he was never angry with the world nor did he curse it. He thought of it as unsatisfactory and transitory rather than as wicked, as ignorant rather than rebellious. The temper which prompts the Buddha's utterances is not the melancholy of satiety, which, having enjoyed all things, finds that all is vanity, but rather the regretful verdict of one

who while sympathising with the nobler passions—love, ambition, the quest of knowledge—is forced to pronounce them transitory and hence unsatisfactory. In his life there is no idea of suicidal sacrifice, no element of the tragic, no nervous irritability. He is never described as a man of sorrows; the cares of the world did not weigh him down. He was not overpowered with a sense of alienation from a holy god, of shame at the violation of a father's will and love. He did not consider himself as belonging to a race whose first pair had drawn upon themselves a sentence of labour and pain and involved their descendants in corruption. There was no need to call for repentance to escape an impending doom.

The Buddha was, therefore, always happy; his images always depict him with a countenance of serene joy. "Happy, I seek my rest," he declared over and over again, "happy I rise; happy I pass the day, escaped from snare of evil." He described his teaching as "lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress and lovely in its consummation." One has only to read the outpourings of the heart of his disciples as contained in the records to realise that their lives were irradiated with joy, with bliss ineffable.

This was because the Buddha had not only the recognition of the existence of suffering but also the sure knowledge of the way out of it. There are four possible attitudes to suffering. The first is its denial in the face of all evidence to the contrary; the second, passive resignation, the acceptance of a state of things which is inevitable; the third is that of camouflage, by uttering pompous sophistries about suffering that it disciplines character, and attributing to it various other qualities so as to ennoble it or to diminish its bitterness. The fourth is to fight against it, accompanied by the faith that it can be overcome.

### **Victory by Self-conquest**

This last is the Buddhist attitude. "Warriors, warriors we call ourselves," says a well-known passage, "we fight for





SAMADHI BUDDHA, ANURADHAPURA

Photo:- Dr. H. C. P. Gunawardene



splendid virtue, for high endeavour, for sublime wisdom." It is necessary for purposes of conquest that we should discern in all his forms, beneath all his disguises, the enemy against whom we fight. It is a fight that each one must wage for himself, by himself. While it is true that we do not find in Buddhism the consolation of a saviour willing and able to fight on our behalf, we *do* find in it the encouraging and ennobling faith that man has within himself the strength and virtue that render him independent of all such consolation. It is the one religion that bids man unequivocally to trust himself, that calls upon him to raise himself by his own exertion, to govern and control and form himself. It is the one religion that tells him not only that there is no strength outside of himself to help him, but what is even more significant, there is no one that can prevail against him should he conquer and achieve sovereignty over himself. Not even a god, nor Mara, nor Brahma can change into defeat the victory of the man who has won self-conquest. "By canal and aqueduct," says an old text, "men lead the water where they want; fletchers bend the arrow; wise men fashion themselves." And again "self is the lord of the self; who else is the lord?" To depend on the mercy of a creator, says the Buddha, would be mere folly:-

*He who has eyes can see the sickening sight:  
Who does not Brahma set his creatures right?  
If his wise power no limits can restrain  
Why is his hand so rarely spread to bless?  
Why are his creatures all condemned to pain?  
Why does he not to all give happiness?  
Why do fraud, lies and ignorance prevail?  
Why triumphs falsehood truth and justice fail?  
I count your Brahma one the unjust among,  
Who made a world in which to shelter wrong.*

As against this belief in a creator he gives his own teaching:—

*By oneself alone is evil done, by oneself is one defiled.  
By oneself is evil avoided,  
by oneself alone is one purified.  
Purity and impurity depend on oneself;  
no one can purify another.*

Thus was the clarion-call sounded of human liberty: "Be ye refugees unto yourself; be ye your own salvation. With earnestness and high resolve work out your salvation with diligence.



### III

## THE COMMUNITY OF MONKS

It is a view common to all religions that family life and worldly business are incompatible with the quest for higher spiritual development. The religion of the Buddha is no exception; while the layman could practise many of the teachings and enjoy many of the blessings of the religious life, the Buddha held that the path to holiness could not be fully traversed among the occupation and interests of common life. The records do speak, it is true, of men who became arahants *i.e.* saints, while in the condition of householders but it is explained that such men had assiduously practised the monastic life in former births and were thus fully ripe for salvation.

As a poet has it, the blue-necked peacock can never attain the swiftness of the swan; neither can the householder however good he be, equal the monk. The life of complete holiness, in Buddhism, thus involves withdrawal from

the world; home and family must be abandoned; profession, trade and craft left behind. The detachment needed for the higher life can only be realised by the unflinching severance of all home ties. It was for this reason that immediately after the attainment of Enlightenment the Buddha founded a religious order which has continued to the present day with very little change in its essential character. It is known as the Sangha and its members are called Bhikkhus.

### **Originated With Five**

This Order originated with the five ascetics to whom the Buddha preached his first sermon at Benares and who became his earliest converts. The story of the origin and expansion of the Order is so simple and spontaneous that we are almost surprised to see how naturally it ultimately came to be one of the greatest forces for good in the world. It was very common in India at the time of the Buddha for earnest-minded men to renounce household life and become wandering ascetics. In gathering round him a band of disciples who were prepared to accept his doctrines and follow a common mode of life, the Buddha, therefore, did nothing new. He was merely doing, obviously of course with more conspicuous success, what every contemporary teacher set out to do. The Order which the Buddha founded differed from the others chiefly in being broader and more human, less prone to extravagance and better organised.

The emphasis laid by the Buddha on insight and knowledge, rather than on ritual and observance, was such that at first the response was mainly from the educated young men of what were called good families. The number of young nobles who sought admission to the Sangha became so large that it excited considerable disquiet and complaints were made that soon there would be no more fathers to beget sons, wives were being widowed and families would soon become extinct; when the monks went about for alms they were reviled as destroyers of the family-life. But soon

the people understood the true import of the Order and became its most ardent supporters. The Buddha's teaching was not that life was worthless but that all life was unsatisfactory.

Very early in the history of the Sangha, King Bimbisara of Magadha, who was one of the Buddha's greatest admirers and most faithful followers, issued a proclamation granting complete freedom from all laws to those joining the Buddhist fraternity of monks; he also presented for their use his own pleasure-park near the capital as a place of rest and quiet. It was the first of many similar gifts by those who followed the royal example.

### **Vinaya**

As a result, it was not only seekers after the Truth and the higher life that wished to be admitted to the Order, but even robbers, debtors, slaves running away from their masters, boys in search of pleasant food, soldiers anxious to escape service, sufferers from loathsome diseases and others seeking protection from the clutches of the law or those merely wishing to lead an idle and comfortable life began to avail themselves of these immunities. The Buddha at first laid down no barrier of race, caste, occupation or age but soon it became necessary to make definite regulations to prevent the intrusion of the unfit and to give guidance in such matters as ceremonial, discipline, clothes, food, furniture, dwellings and medicine. The regulations were not all made at once but were formulated from time to time as each incident and difficulty arose and was brought to the Buddha's notice. This resulted in the gradual elaboration of a code of discipline, known as the Vinaya, which was meant to secure that only those influenced by the proper motives would seek admission into the Order and only those who conducted themselves properly could remain within it.

At first the Buddha admitted members of the Order himself but increasing distances and other practical difficulties



rendered this more and more inconvenient and the disciples themselves were permitted to admit members.

### The Novitiate

Two simple ceremonies were prescribed for admission to the novitiate and to full privileges, respectively. Though sometimes described as "ordination," they are unlike the ordination of other religions but are rather applications from postulants which are granted by a Chapter of monks consisting of not less than ten members. The admission to the novitiate—Sāmaneraship is called *pabbajjā* or going forth, *i.e.* leaving the world. The would-be-novice has his hair shorn, and also his beard, if he has any—for novices can be enrolled at any age—and puts on yellow robes. He recites a formula, known as the Three Refuges whereby he professes his faith in the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Order of Monks. He also takes upon himself a promise to observe ten precepts which consist in abstinence from hurting life, stealing, impurity, lying, intoxicants, eating at forbidden times, dancing music and theatrical shows, garlands, perfumes and ornaments, high or large beds and accepting gold and silver. This is his formal abandonment of the world.

### Upasampadā

Full membership of the Order is obtained by a further ceremony, called *Upasampadā*. No candidate is so admitted under twenty years of age; he is examined to ascertain that he is a free man, that neither his parents nor the State have a claim on him, and that he does not suffer from certain diseases and physical disabilities. He is introduced to the Chapter by a learned and competent monk who asks those in favour of his admission to signify the same by their silence and those who are not, to speak. When this formula is repeated three times without objection being recorded, the ceremony is complete. The newly-admitted Bhikkhu is placed

under a qualified preceptor, the *upajjhāya*, of at least ten years' standing in the community. He has to wait upon the preceptor, seeing to the latter's clothes, bath, bed, etc., and, in return, the preceptor gives him spiritual instruction, supervises his conduct and tends him in sickness. No vows of obedience are taken and the monk is always at liberty to return to the world. No disgrace of any kind attaches to the man who so reverts, provided that he has not been guilty of evil conduct while being a monk.

It is a grave and strenuous discipline that the monk is expected to practise. The Buddha described it as the Middle Way, equally distant from luxury and from self-mortification; on the one side from the world, with its interests, its enjoyments and passions and on the other from the practices of the hair-clad ascetic and naked devotee. It is interesting to note that some contemporary opinion in India criticised the monks as easy going and lax. It is said that the Buddha's own cousin, Devadatta, tried to induce him to make the discipline more severe. The Buddhist monks could not claim, much less exact, anything from the layman, yet it was considered the layman's duty and his privilege to provide the monks with food, clothes, lodging and whatever else they might legitimately need. It was the most obvious and easy method for a layman to acquire merit. Strictly speaking, a monk does not beg for food, nor does he give thanks for what he receives. He gives the layman a chance of doing a good deed and it is the donor, not the recipient, who should be thankful. The monk, on his part, by leading the good life to the best of his ability, ensures that the gifts provided by the piety of laymen earn for them the greatest reward.

The monk's conduct must be grave and serious; the doors of the senses must be closely guarded. He must always be mindful and self-possessed, constantly on the alert in all actions, ardent and strenuous, not hankering after the

objects and pleasures of the world and feeling no dejection at their loss. Such ceaseless attentiveness requires a long training in concentration and for this purpose solitude and meditation are necessary. Beginning from such simple exercises as the contemplation of the impurities of the body, he rises to greater heights of contemplation, to raptures and ecstasies, both mental and moral. Four such Raptures are specially mentioned, in the first of which the monk pervades the whole of the universe with boundless love, above, below, around, with far-reaching and measureless love. His mind is filled with Sympathy with all things that have life, Pity for those involved in all forms of suffering and Equanimity which can bear the sight of the world of Ill without quailing, confident in the means to end it. By successive processes of abstraction and intense inward withdrawal he reaches a state of void in which all consciousness of ideas and feelings has wholly passed away and the light of Truth shines in his mind, translucent and unobstructed and he is filled with the senses of complete freedom.

But only rare souls can climb such heights; the ordinary member of the Sangha is not so ambitious and he takes upon himself a long period of less strenuous training. He would rise early, travel about or go round to beg his only meal and, having taken it, spend the heat of the day in retirement and meditation. In the evening there would be discussion and instruction. Sometimes he might be entertained to a substantial meal at the house of some rich devotee and a comfortable house provided for him. But he has no right to expect any of these things. It is the duty of monks to wait upon their sick colleagues and to help each other in all their needs.

### **All Property is Communal**

The private possessions allowed to a member of the Order are only the three garments he wears on his person, a

belt, an alms-bowl, a razor, a needle and a water-strainer. Everything else that may be given to an individual has to be handed over to the confraternity to be held in common. All property belonging to the Order is communal. It sometimes happened even in the Buddha's life-time that conditions in monastic establishments, especially near the principal cities, attained a high level of comfort, according to the standards of the times. Here and there the liberality of the laity erected large residences with halls for exercise, store-rooms for robes and other requisites, warm baths and ample grounds. In such cases all sorts of restrictive precepts prevented any tendency towards luxury.

Generally, however, the Brethren live in little groups of huts and their lives are of the greatest simplicity. A monk is only sufficiently clad to protect him from cold and heat and his food just enough to maintain his health for the inward concentration needed. Rags gathered from different places would go to make his clothes if no pious layman provides them and food is obtained by the daily round from house to house, if there is no invitation to a meal. If he lives in the forest, as many do to this day, the trees and creepers there would provide him with berries and roots.

### **Vassa**

A monk's year is divided into two parts. During nine months he would wander about in the woods or reside in a monastery. During the remaining three months residence in a monastery is obligatory and the laity are expected to make the necessary provisions. This period is the *Vassa* or the rainy season when travelling is impossible. No special observances are prescribed for this period but as it is the time when people have most leisure and the monks are brought into continual and more intimate contact with them, it has come to be regarded as the appropriate season for instructing the laity in matters of religion. The end of the rains is marked

by a ceremony called *pavarana* or the End of the Retreat, at which the monks living in the same monastery ask one another to pardon any offences that might have been committed by them. Immediately after this comes the *Kathina* ceremony or distribution of robes. The word *kathina* signifies the store of raw cotton presented by the laity and held as common property until distributed to individuals. In modern times this has become a very elaborate ceremonial.

## 227 Rules

As the rules prescribed for monks implied a life of continuous tension, it was soon found necessary to make provision for the regulation of strict discipline and to impose remedies for its violation. It was, therefore, laid down—tradition says at the suggestion of King Bimbisara—that all the monks inhabiting a parish or district, within limits formally prescribed by the monks themselves, to hold periodical meetings attendance at which was compulsory. These meetings are held at the new and full moon and on the eighth days after the new and full moons. They have become occasions for mutual confession and the ceremony consists of the recital of a formula called the *Patimokkha* or “Disburdenment,” embodying a list of formal transgressions and acts of unseemly behaviour, some 227 in all.

These rules show that the Buddha was very particular about refinement in conduct and “gentlemanliness” in personal behaviour, including the strict observance of good manners. The monks would assemble in the evening and after a duly trained Elder has opened the proceedings, each rule is repeated three times. After each item the question is put to the assembly, “Are you pure in this matter?” Silence indicates a good conscience; only if a monk has something to confess does he speak. Failure to acknowledge a remembered transgression involves intentional falsehood which would prevent higher stages of spiritual development. If a monk con-

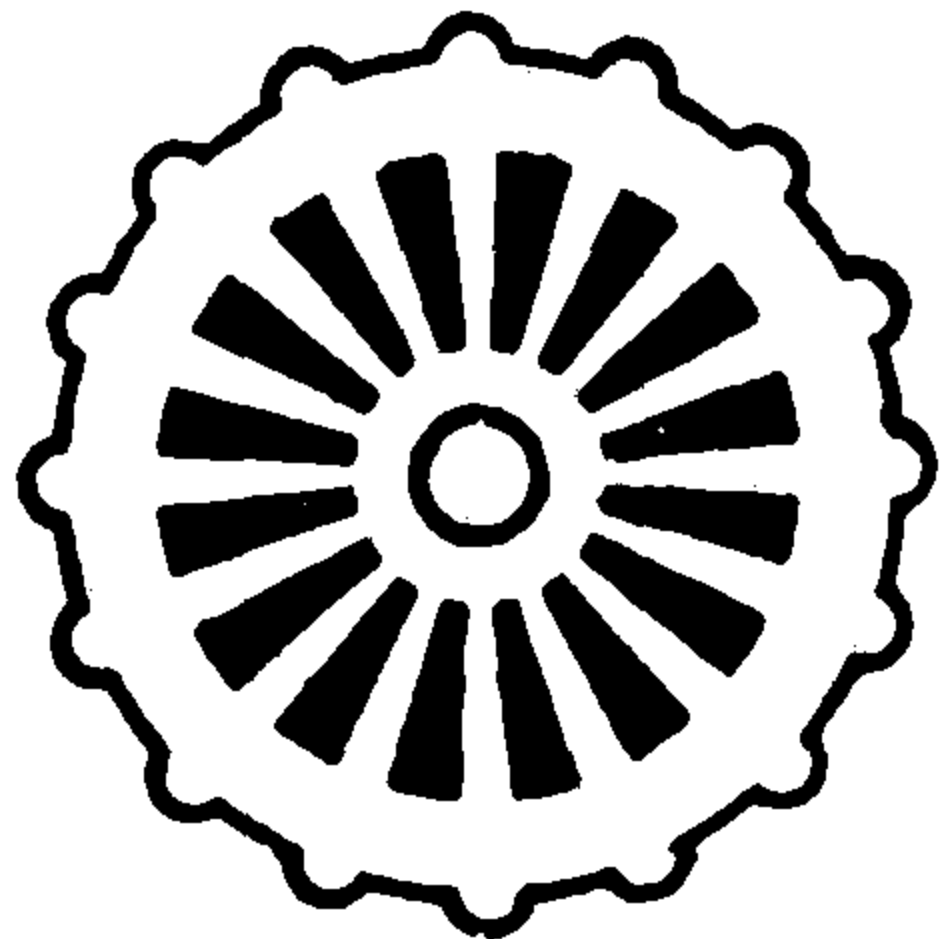
fesses to having destroyed human life, or committed unchastity or theft or to have falsely proclaimed the possession of advanced insight, he would be expelled from the community. For minor offences the offender may be rebuked, suspended, some form of expiation prescribed. But this can be done only if the monk admits his guilt; no allegations or evidence against him will suffice. The Buddha insisted that no adherence to rules was of any use apart from the emancipation and purity of heart and mind and the cultivation of love and knowledge.

## A Model Democratic Institution

From its inception the Buddhist Sangha has been a model democratic institution. There are no vows of obedience, and no recognition of rank other than simple seniority or the relation of teacher to pupil. As time went on various expedients were invented in different countries since the management of large bodies of men necessitates authority in some form but these have never assumed the right to direct the belief and conduct of others. In the Sangha no monk can give orders to another; there is no compulsion, no suppression of discussion, no delegated power to explain or supplement the truth. The Buddha considered himself only as an elder brother who set the perfect example and he refused to nominate a successor to be the head of the Order after his death. The Teaching and the Rules of the Order were to be their guide. At gatherings of the monks a chairman is elected by the unanimous consent of those present, and the procedure—the proposal of a resolution and the request for an expression of opinion—is that adopted in modern public meetings, except that assent is signified by silence. All decisions are taken by majority vote and sometimes, where strong differences of opinion seem to exist, a decision is postponed for a more suitable occasion and special committees are set up to deal with problems needing investigation.



At first the Sangha consisted exclusively of monks but about five years after its establishment, women too were admitted with a few restrictions, dictated not by any prejudice the Buddha had against women, but as a concession to current public opinion. The Buddhist Sangha never promoted wars nor claimed to be the source and guide of civil power. It has no Pope and no hierarchy; nor does it profess to cover the whole field of religion. It has always practised toleration and true unworldliness, directly encouraged art and literature and never opposed the progress of knowledge. The monk is merely one who is on a higher spiritual level than laymen; he may teach, though teaching is not obligatory to him. Yet always the monastery has been the centre of education and these monasteries sometimes developed into mighty universities like that at Nalanda with its 5,000 students all fed, clothed and taught free, or like the Maha-Vihara at Anuradhapura which attracted men in search of learning from all parts of the then known world.



IV

## THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

**C**OMPASSION for the world, the realisation of its universal suffering and of the ignorance which is at the root of that suffering were the causes that called the Buddha into the field as a Teacher. It was to relieve the world

of its suffering and to remove its ignorance that he had laboured during countless lives, making sacrifices beyond all imagination; he had renounced his own personal happiness, only that he might find a way out of life's ills. It was but natural, therefore, that almost immediately after the Buddha gained Enlightenment he should have proclaimed to the world the success of his search: "Wide open is the door of the Deathless, open to all that have ears to hear. Let them put forth faith and reach it." He had discovered the Middle Way, between the two extremes of pleasure and self-mortification, through insight and wisdom to serenity, enlightenment and emancipation. For those who had attained the goal that lay at its close, there would be no more birth and no more death.

### The First Buddhist Mission

The Buddha's disciples at first were only the five ascetics who had been his companions in the practice of austerities, but quite soon the little group grew till within a few weeks it numbered sixty arahants. The Buddha now felt that the time had come to spread his doctrine far and wide. He summoned them, therefore, and pointed out to them that the shadows of change and mortality enveloped not only men and women but even the gods, and that for all of these the knowledge of the Truth would be of inestimable gain. "Go ye," he said, "and wander forth for the gain of the many, the welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way. Preach the Truth which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in its progress, and glorious in its end, in the spirit and in the letter. Proclaim the life of holiness, consummate, perfect and pure." Thus began the great Buddhist missions which in the course of a few centuries brought nearly one-fifth of the world's population under the influence of the Buddha's teaching.

It is correct to say that Buddhism is the first universal and missionary religion; it was the Buddha who first taught that the way to salvation is open to one and all who are prepared and are able to follow it, irrespective of any other condition whatsoever. The monk's life is, of course, the ideal life but, said the Buddha, not all may have the necessary qualifications of intellect and character to become monks. All can, however, be good laymen, if they have but a little determination, and for a layman the religious life ordinarily consists in the observance of more or less elementary morality combined with such simple virtues as the study of the scriptures, the care of parents, respect for elders, and the reverent service of holy men. The Buddha did not deny the existence nor forbid the worship of popular gods; in fact he looked upon such worship with a genial and kindly tolerance. He recognised the very human craving for personal happiness through superhuman help, a craving which some other religions satisfy by supplementing their belief in an Almighty God with the worship of numerous saints. The Buddha made it quite clear, however, that such worship was *not* holiness and that the gods were, if anything at all, merely people who may be able or willing to help good men and women. They were useless as guides to salvation since they needed instruction themselves.

#### No Creed to be believed in

The Buddha also realised the necessity of variety in sympathetic response to the needs of men and women, in harmony with their different degrees of mental and spiritual growth. He did not lay down any creed that had to be believed in everywhere, always and by everybody. Indian religions have always shown more spirituality and a greater sense of liberality than Western creeds; they are not merely tolerant but hold that the different classes of mankind have their own rules of life and their own suitable

beliefs and that he who follows such partial truths does no violence to the greater and all inclusive truths of which circumstances have made him ignorant. There is an evolution in the realisation of Truth as there is in other kinds of growth. It is the duty of the good man, the *kalyanaputhujjana*, to hasten this evolution and that is why the gift of Truth is considered to be the highest of all gifts.

In Buddhism the spread of the doctrine was from the very outset regarded as the permanent and immediate duty of the disciples. The trained Elder should not only instruct the young novices within the community, but he must also carry the message of deliverance far and wide. He has nothing else to give in return for the layman's services. But in Buddhism there are no sanctuaries, no consecrated officers, no hallowed gifts, no mysteries, no priesthood and no sacrifice. The Buddhist missionary does not feel that he can "save" men only to the extent that some God is willing to help to rescue them from their own impotence. He does not labour under the belief that salvation depends on the acceptance of the benefits of an atonement which has been accomplished once for all, that for those who refuse such benefits or have never received an offer of them, no fresh opportunity would ever be vouchsafed. On the contrary, everything depends on the earnestness of his own efforts and he can play as much part in the great aim for universal deliverance as anyone else. He needs no blessings from a higher power, no permission from any authority.

#### An Example of the Greatest Stimulation

It is true that the Buddhist Order contains no records of martyrs but there is no doubt that the Buddhist missionaries had often to contend with strenuous opposition in their call to men to lead lives of holiness. The books mention the ridicule and the persecution to which the Buddha himself was



subjected in his lifetime. It is not easy to live happily in an atmosphere of scorn and hatred but the Buddha showed only love in the face of provocation and gentleness in the face of derision.

*Who doth not, when reviled, revile again,  
a twofold victory wins;  
Both of the other and of himself  
he seeks the good.*

The Buddha compared himself to an elephant who had entered the fray, enduring in silence the storm of arrows in battle.\* What sacrifices had he not made, what an accumulation of suffering and scorn had he not borne that he might open the road to Truth and the Good. He expected of his disciples, therefore, that they should do likewise; whatever had to be suffered by those whom he addressed he, too, had suffered; what ever labours of self-disciples he laid upon his followers, he had himself, again and again, fulfilled. His was thus an example of the greatest stimulation and it produced in his disciples boundless enthusiasm and zeal for the propagation of the Truth. When one of the early arahants, Punna, informed the Buddha of his desire to preach the doctrine among the Sunas, who were probably identical with the Huns of history, the Buddha warned him that he might have his hands and feet cut off and even his life taken away. Punna's reply was that in any event the body was a loathsome thing and what did it matter if it were destroyed in the pursuit of good? Such was the spirit of the disciples.

Communication in those days was not easy and travel was full of peril. But, nothing undaunted by these risks, the early missionaries went east and west and north and south, a long and unbroken succession of monks, and nuns also,—for the nuns were as active as the monks—consisting of converted

brahmans, princes and nobles, ladies of the court and wives of wealthy merchants, men and women of divers ranks and races. They travelled often over vast forests, with roots and berries as their only food; they crossed deep rivers, infested with crocodiles in but the flimsiest of crafts, climbed inaccessible mountain-passes and even went across the seas. They knew that wild beast and reptile, robber or cannibal, and many unknown dangers might make an end of them but they were confident that others would follow without fail and where the world's welfare was concerned, as one missionary asks, who could be slothful or indifferent?

### The Emperor Asoka

There is no satisfactory record of these missionary activities till we come to the time of the great Buddhist emperor Asoka, who ruled in the third century B.C. Asoka's empire exceeded in dimension the territory of present-day India. In the ninth year of his reign he attacked and conquered the kingdom of Kalinga in the eastern shores of India. In this campaign as many as 150,000 persons had been enslaved or deported, 100,000 killed and many times that number had perished through famine and disease. Soon afterwards Asoka came under the influence of Buddhism and he waged war no more. His previous career filled him with grief and horror and thenceforward he dedicated his services in the cause of peace. The taking of life, even that of an animal, became hateful to him, he disliked all strife, even the mutual hostilities of creeds and sects. He made Buddhism the state religion and directed all his energy to increase in the world qualities of compassion and liberality, truthfulness and purity, mildness and goodness, the constituents of piety, the practice, in a word, of the Dhamma which he defined in one place as "obedience to parents, respect for living creatures, the speaking of truth, reverence to teachers and elders

\*අහං නාගොව සඞ්ගාමෙ  
වාපාතො පතීතං සරං.  
අතිවාසං තිතික්ඛිසං.  
දුස්සිලො හි බහුජ්ජනො.

\*Ahañ nāgo va saṅgāme  
Capato patitam saram.  
Ativākyam titikkhissam  
Dussilo hi bahujjano.

and courtesy and consideration to everyone." Towards the end of his life we are told that he entrusted the administration of his kingdom to commissioners and became a member of the Buddhist Sangha.

In the history of the world Asoka gained immortality by his famous edicts which he caused to be engraven on rocks in different parts of his dominions. These have now been deciphered and we are able to have some idea of his opinions and aspirations. Both by precept and example Asoka appears to have been an ardent exponent of the strenuous life and in his edicts he continually harps upon the necessity of energy and exertion, thus giving the lie to the criticism that Buddhism is a gloomy and unpracticable creed, suited only to the stoical and scholarly recluse. The religion which he enjoins in his edicts is just ordinary and civic virtue, except that it makes respect and regard for all life whatsoever an integral part of morality. Asoka has been regarded as the model Buddhist king; the physical and moral welfare of his subjects was his constant care. He had wells dug by the roadside, supervised charities, built hospitals and provided medical aid not only for men but also for animals. He constantly proclaimed the necessity of goodwill among all classes and lectured to his subjects on their duties to all living creatures. He instituted circuits in which prominent officials travelled through the kingdom expounding to the people their social and religious duties and commending special portions of Buddhist text for their intense study. He emphatically enjoined religious toleration, and included Brahamans and ascetics, and followers of sects of various kinds in his unceasing benevolence.

### No Persecutions or Inquisitions

The wide tolerance thus shown by Asoka is characteristic of Buddhism throughout its history. For Buddhism has never claimed any exclusive power

to divide mankind into two groups, the saved and the lost. Its long history has no blots of persecutions or inquisitions. It has always been considerate to those outside its pale. Even within its own ranks, differences of opinion were settled by quiet adjustment and general sanction, with no heat of temper being allowed to mar the serenity of the proceedings. It can be said without fear of contradiction that of all religious orders mentioned in the history of religion, Buddhism has displayed the greatest variety and freedom of thought.

Asoka's greatest achievement, however, was the despatching of missions to propagate the religion which had won his allegiance. He was clearly dominated by a burning desire to see the Dhamma spread throughout the world. In the first instance he brought practically the whole of India under the sway of Buddhism, including not only the Dravidian peoples of the South but also the wild tribes of the forests and the hills. To Ceylon, which in time became the home of Buddhism, he sent his royal son, Mahinda, and his daughter Sanghamitta, both of whom had joined the Order and attained arahantship. He sent eminent teachers to Kashmir and Gandhara in Western India; to the Himalayas and the "Golden Land" in South East Asia. His records also speak of missions sent to the Hellenistic kingdoms of Asia, Africa and Europe—to Syria and Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia and Epirus, to Bactria and, through Central Asia, to China. Thus began the great expansion of Buddhism. A modern Christian divine, Bishop Copleston, described it as "the greatest missionary effort, in scale at any rate, made by man outside Christianity." There is no need to quarrel with this description except perhaps to ask the good bishop where did he find a greater *inside* Christianity?

Asoka has been compared to the Christian emperor Constantine and even to St. Paul, but in both cases the comparison is only superficial. Constantine merely recognised and regulated a



religion which had already won its way in his empire. St. Paul, for good or evil, greatly developed and complicated the teaching of Christ. Asoka's activities had a decisive effect in the history of Buddhism, especially in making it a world-religion. After his time the Dhamma spread further, into Burma and Siam, Annam, Korea and Japan, Tibet and Mongolia, Java, Cambodia and China. Nowhere was its progress sought by its missionaries by any means other than those of persuasion; they claimed no privileges either for themselves or for their countries, but merely promoted its ideals of kindness and peace paying little or no attention to problems of efficient organisation, the founding of places of worship or the establishment of ecclesiastical authority. When one looks back on the history of Buddhism one cannot help marvelling at the rapidity with which Buddhist missionaries won over millions of people in many countries to a way of life and

to the acceptance of doctrines so different to those that generally find favour with the majority amongst men, to a religion which acknowledges no god in the accepted sense, which denies a soul, which counts the belief in personal immortality a blunder, which refuses any efficacy to prayer and sacrifice, which bids men to look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation, which has no forgiveness of sins or communion with God, which knows nothing of vows of obedience and never sought the aid of secular power, which has no dogmas and no priesthood, which claims no special place even for its Founder but teaches that every man and woman can be equally great with the Teacher himself, which says that every one is his own Saviour and that the highest happiness is to be found not in some far-off heaven but in this very world, in this very life. It was truly a remarkable feat.



# The Expansion of

# BUDDHISM

By  
S. F. de Silva

*"Go ye forth my brethren, for the gain of many, for the welfare of many out of compassion for the World. Preach ye this doctrine.....and as ye preach so practise."*



his great message of the Blessed One was the watchword for all those who for the welfare of others worked unselfishly and without weariness. For 45 years the Buddha had wandered from village to village from town to town, teaching "those who wish to be taught" and he ended his long mission at the age of 80 under the shade of the sal trees in the Park of the Mallas at Kusinagara.

In His life time and for centuries afterwards, the Message of the Enlightened One was carried by His zealous followers drawn from all ranks of life. Among these were princes such as Mahinda, Kumarajiva of Kuchi, Gunawarman of Kashmir, Vimuksasena of the Sakyas and Vajirabodhi of Central India. These and others whose names are not recorded were true "Sons of the Sakyan Sage."

Where these noble ones worked, and the results of their work, have been almost blotted out by the ravages of man as well as those of time. But the memorials of the Dhamma are yet preserved not only in the lives of men but in the buildings wrought by the hand of

faith and devotion. Such memorials are of value to the Buddhist because they can yet inspire him. Towards the end of His days Ananda asked the Buddha who were worthy of a "Stupa" and why—The Buddha replied—that a Tathagatha, a Pacceka Buddha and a righteous king and righteous layman were worthy, for at the sight of such a stupa, a thought may arise in the beholder : "This is the stupa of a Tathagatha.....and at this thought peace and calm will come to him." Perhaps for this reason the ancient Buddhists set up stupas, viharas and other memorials because it was believed that such objects could raise and elevate the thoughts of men.

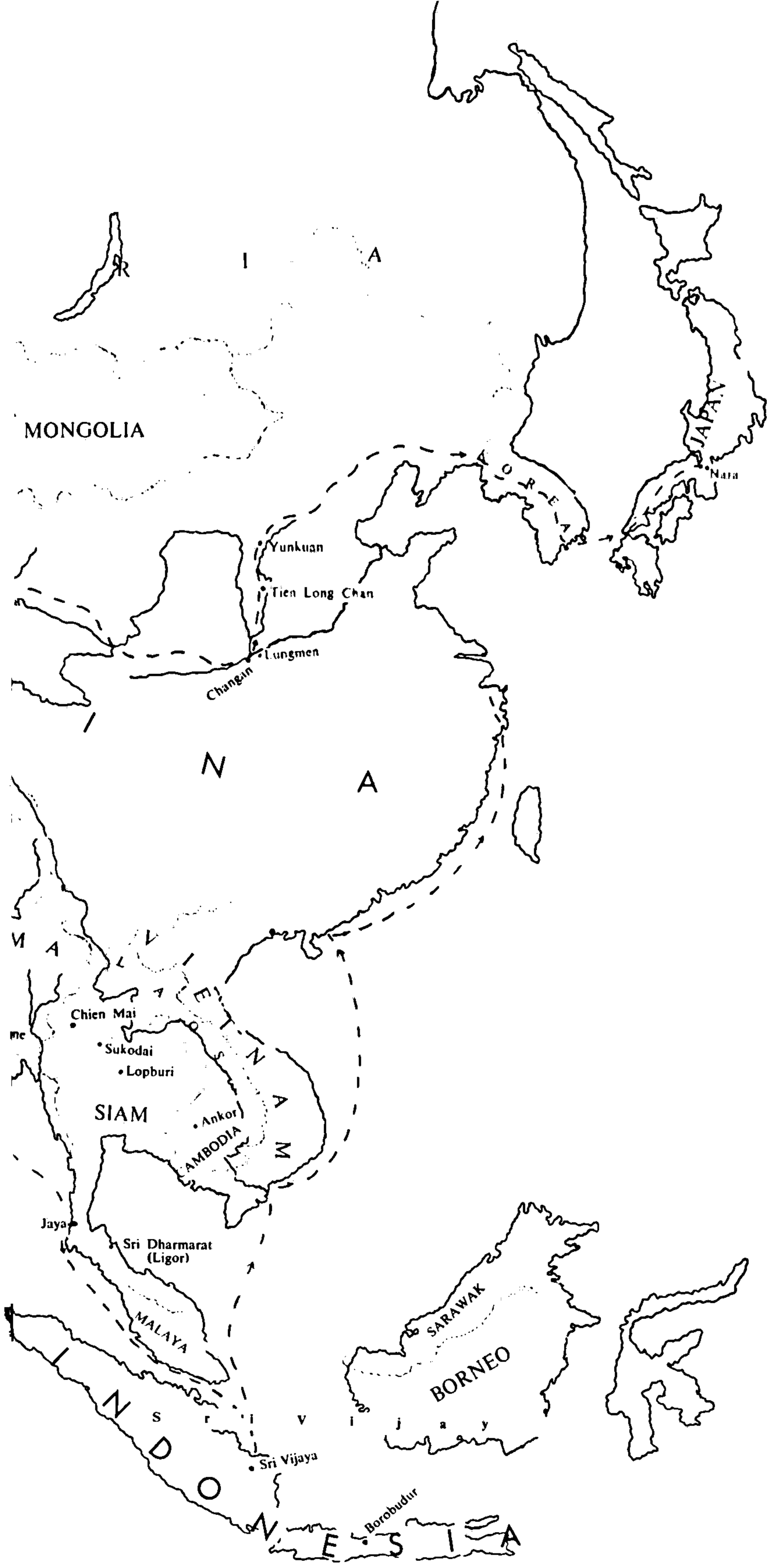
If we begin our search for places of interest to the Buddhist, it is best to begin at Buddha Gaya. Here is the spot where knowledge arose, insight arose, where Light arose and it was this "Light" which was to light the pathways of millions. From Gaya several routes mark the trails of the faith and enthusiasm of Buddhists. One such way leads South-West along the valley of the Son towards the West coast of India and the ports of Bharukaccha and Sopara. Yet another continued its way South-East, down the





## BUDDHIST SITES

Central, East and South East Asia



valleys of the Godaveri and Kistna to the Andradesa, and southwards to Kanchipuram and by sea to Lanka. A third route went eastwards, down the Ganges to the ancient port of Tamralipti. From this port, ships sailed to the West coast of modern Burma, the Malaya Peninsula and the islands of Sumatra and Java. From ports of the Andradesa and the Pallava country, ships sailed with the South-West Monsoon to the Malay Peninsula and the East Indian Islands. Some sailed through the Straits of Malacca to Java and then North to Cambodia and China. Others stopped at Malayan ports, crossed the narrow peninsula overland and once more took ship to modern Thailand, Cambodia and China.

Land routes were also in constant use. From Pataliputra a way led to modern Assam (Kamarupa) and one could enter Tibet or proceed North-East to the province of Yunnan. The more frequented land route went North-West from Pataliputra along the Ganges valley, passing through well known towns such as Benares, Sarnath, Mathura to distant Taxila. From this famous town, routes went North to Kashmir and through the high mountain passes to Central Asia. But the more popular and frequented, was the route up the Kabul valley through Purushapura (Peshawar) into the Gandharadesa. Here were famous monastic sites and past these, one had to cross the Hindukush and reach the great city, Balkh. One then proceeded North-East across the Pamir Plateau and reached the Tarim Basin (Chinese Turkistan) and its famous city of Kashgar. From this town there were two routes East to China. One followed the foothills of the Tien Shan mountains, the other the foothills of the Kuen Lun mountains. The central area was a vast sandy desert, but along these foothills the rivers, fed by melting snow, provided water for cultivation and townships. Along these routes from the 1st century A.D. many towns had sprung up and it was in these that Buddhist viharas also grew.

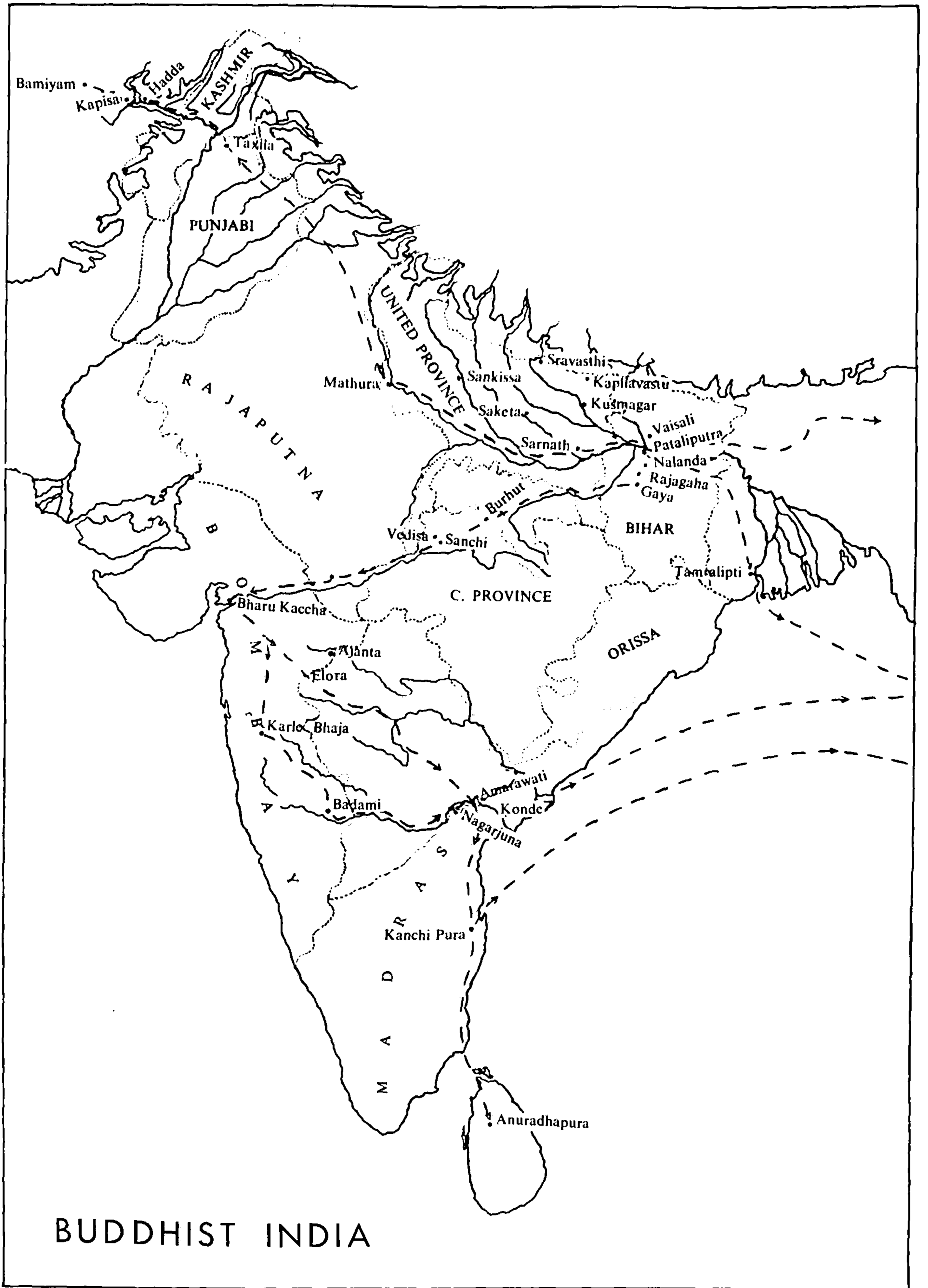
The two routes after crossing Turkistan converged on the oasis of the Tunhuang and then followed the road through Lanchow to Changan the great capital of the Tang Emperors. The journey did not end here because from Changan a north road went past modern Peiping and turned to Korea "Land of the Morning Calm." Ships took the traveller across the Tushima Straits into Japan.

It is along these routes that one can best study the historic sites connected with the spread of Buddhism. The beginning is best made in that area best called the "Cradle of Buddhism." The heart of it is the town of Kapilavastu. Not far is a modern village Ruminidei which is none other than Lumbini. A pillar set up by Asoka indicates that it is on the spot where the Buddha was born. Other places of great interest are Piprava where the relics of the Buddha were found and this stupa no doubt contained the share of the relics assigned to the Sakyas. The map also indicates places such as Kusinagara, Vaisali and Sravasti, Buddha Gaya, Rajagaha and Sarnath—places hallowed by the feet of the Blessed One. From this region we may set out on a pilgrimage.

Buddha Gaya has always been a place of the highest veneration, together with such spots as the Deer Park at Sarnath and the caves and hill tops of Rajagaha. The Bo-tree under which the Buddha attained the Great Truth was the centre of devotion. Here are the ruins of an 'Asana' which appear to date from Mauryan times and was perhaps constructed by Asoka. A century after Asoka, a sandstone railing was erected round the Bodhi tree. This follows the pattern of medallions and stone carvings based on the life story of the Buddha (who is not represented in person) and Jataka stories. An inscription on one railing refers to a donation in the reign of Indragimmitra 1st century B.C.

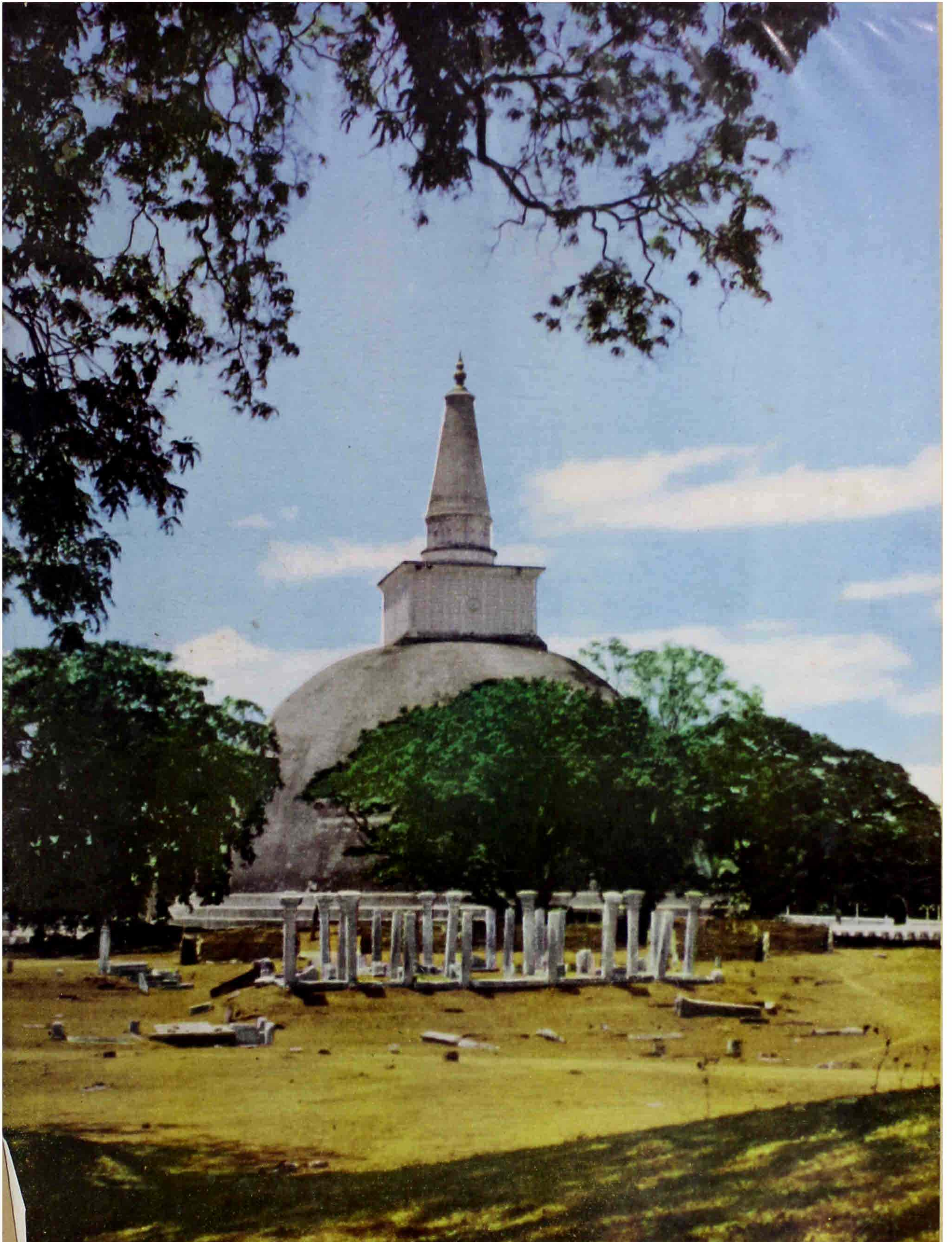
There also appears to have been a lofty temple here from early times. Fahien who visited India in the first half











RUWANVELI SEYA, ANURADHAPURA

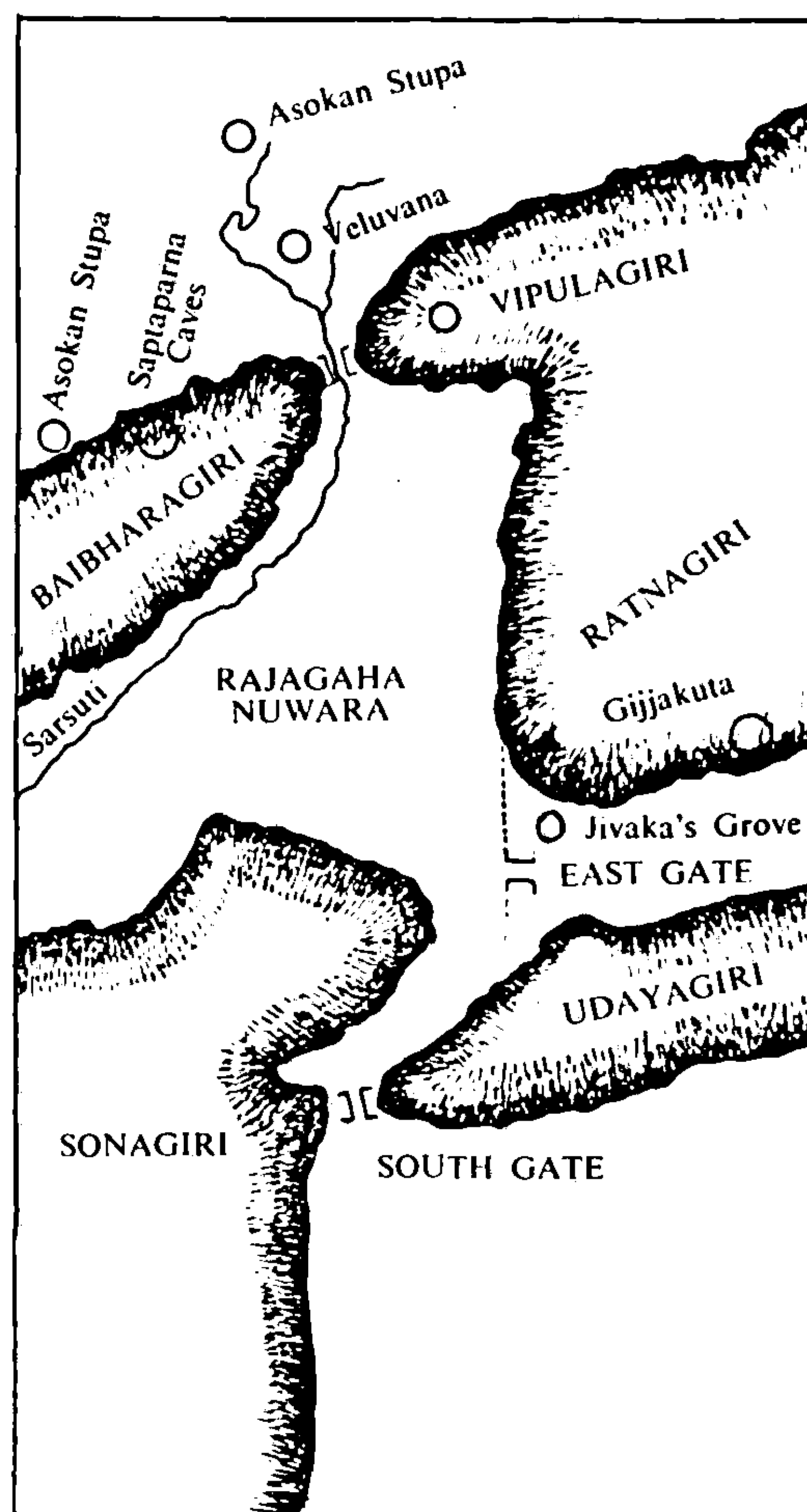
Photo:- Dr. H. C. P. Gunawardena



vings we have. Westwards is Vedisa so celebrated on the history of Asoka and close to it is Chetiyagiri, the hill on which Sanchi stands. The Sanchi stupas are world renowned for their marvellous toranas. The Chaityas have been built at various epochs, beginning with Asoka and renewed or rebuilt by the Andhras and later in the Gupta period. A record states that one of the toranas was the gift of the ivory carriers of Vedisa. Other records state other donors such as Ananda, the son of the Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of Rajan Siri Satakani. The fame of the stupas has been due to the wonderful carvings on the toranas. There are scenes from the life of the Buddha and the Jataka tales. But to the Buddhist one of the stupas of Sanchi is of special interest for here in 1851 General Cunningham discovered in the stupa numbered three, a stone box containing the relics of Sariputta and Maha Moggallana. These were taken to the Victoria and Albert Museum but to-day after receiving the homage of the whole Buddhist world they finally rest at Sanchi under a free and independent India.

From Sanchi the pilgrim will travel to Bagh, Ajanta, Ellora and Karli. In all these places the noticeable features are the great Chaitya Halls of Assembly. These are carved out of the living rock to serve as halls for the monks to assemble and these rock-cut sanctuaries are "unrivalled on account of their magnificence and plastic embellishment." The inspiration for this type of architecture came most likely from the royal tombs of the kings of Persia for these were excavated in the cliffs of Persepolis. The rock-cut caves in the Barabar group in Bihar started by Asoka in the 3rd century B.C. mark the beginning of this type of architecture in India, where it was later developed on a magnificent scale in Western India. The Theravada Buddhists became the bold pioneers and carved out of the living rock huge monastic settlements ranging from the 2nd century B. C. to the 2nd cen-

tury A. D. These settlements were in the mountainous retreats not far away from the old highways and cultural centres. Thus came into existence here groups of caves consisting of halls, Viharas and cells and these were the patient labour of local artists and sculptors working under the patronage of devout kings, merchants, princes and laymen. The early caves of the Theravada Buddhists depicted the stupa, the Bodhi tree, the Dhamma Cakka and the foot-prints of the Buddha. But by the 5th to 7th



PLAN OF RAJAGAHA

century A.D. these earlier caves were converted into places of worship by the Mahayanists who adorned them with graceful carvings and paintings. From the inscriptions one learns that Buddhism flourished in Western India as late as the 10th century A.D. The caves at Karli are of the highest interest. The Chaitya Hall was established "by the merchant Bhutapala of Vijayanthi" so reads an inscription. This rock-cut hall is the most perfect of the Chaitya Halls and is the finest achievement of the Hinayana artists. It is 125 feet long, 46 feet wide and has a vaulted roof 45 feet high. At one end of the hall is a great rock-cut chaitya and on either side of the hall are rows of pillars with marvellous capitals of rock-cut riders on elephants. The entrance to the hall is by means of a great central door above which is a great chaitya window throwing a flood of light into the hall. The front wall as well as the inner walls are adorned with most graceful sculpture, several of which are figures of the kings and queens who were the pious donors of the Hall.

The fame of the caves at Bagh and Ajanta are due to the celebrated wall paintings—the frescoes with which they are adorned. The themes of the painter are taken from the life of the Buddha and the Jataka Stories. The famous figures of the "Bodhisatva Padmapani Avalokitesvara," "the dying princess," "the mother and child group depicting Yasodhara and Rahula" are among the masterpieces of Buddhist art. In fact the art of Ajanta became the art of the whole Buddhist world, from India to Ceylon and even the Far East. In the Golden Hall of the great temple of Nara in Japan one finds the very spirit of the Bodhisatva of Ajanta, in the great Bodhisatva figure-painted by Japanese artists.

Leaving this area of rock-cut viharas one travels down the Kistna Valley and reaches two famous sites of Nagarjunikonda and Amaravati. These were celebrated places and in fact the

Andhradesa contains proof, that for 600 years from 3rd century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D. a phenomenal growth of Buddhist art and culture took place in this area.

The Andhradesa is watered by two rivers, the Kistna and the Godavari. Along the Andhra coast which extends to about 400 miles, there existed sea-ports. Navigation and commercial enterprise were much encouraged and sea-farers left the shores of Andhradesa even to settle in South-East Asian countries. Maritime trade was largely responsible for the flourishing state of Buddhism. Many of the merchant class were Buddhists and they devoted their wealth to enriching Buddhist Shrines and monasteries. The finds of Roman coins in this region shows that there was considerable trade with the Western World.

Of all the Buddhist monuments, the most famous were those at Amaravati and Nagarjunikonda. Each of these places had a great stupa and a number of subsidiary chaityas and viharas. Of Amaravati nothing remains on the site, but a large number of slabs of limestone that formed the panels, friezes, pillars, etc., speak in no unmistakable language, of the past grandeur of its monuments and of the high artistic skill of the sculptors. The remains of these monuments are now in several Indian and foreign museums.

The great stupa of Amaravati had a beautiful stone railing with four ornamental doorways leading to the chaitya precincts. Facing the four gateways were four ornamental marble panels known as the "Ayikas." Round the body of the chaitya were marble panels on which were carved scenes from the life of the Buddha and stories from the Jatakas. Like the fresco paintings at Bagh and Ajanta, the sculptures of Amaravati and Nagarjunikonda represent the finest achievements of ancient Buddhist art. Its influence can be



traced even in Ceylon where the limestone work, sculpture, pillars and guard-stones, all bear traces of Andhra influence. This is best seen at the Kantaka Chaitya, Mihintale.

The next great stage of our pilgrimage can be overland. We move from Pataliputra north-west to Taxila and enter the sphere of the influence of the Buddhist Kushan rulers.

In the 2nd century A.D. all Northern India, modern Afghanistan and Central Asia, came under the rule of the Kushan Dynasty. Greatest of them was the Emperor Kanishka who like Asoka, was a devout Buddhist, but of the Mahayana School. Under his patronage, viharas were built but only the barest of ruins remain today. Taxila which was a city celebrated from early times, was not the capital city of the Kushans, but it continued to be a great commercial centre. The capital was Purushapura (modern Peshawar). Sun Yun who visited India in the 6th century A.D. described the great building of Kanishka as being one of "135 storeys rising to a height of 700 feet." In the realm of the Kushans there developed what is often called the Gandhara School of Buddhist Art. In the sites of Kapisa, Hadda and Bamiyan vast caves were excavated to serve as monasteries and these contain traces of paintings such as characterised the caves at Bagh and Ajanta. The style, however, is different and reveal phases peculiar to the area. At Bamiyan, the cliffs for over a mile are honeycombed with a great series of excavated sanctuaries and halls. But what is typical are perhaps the colossal Buddha statues, one of which is 120 feet high while the other is 175 feet high. The influence of these gigantic statues has been very great, specially on Buddhist Art in China and the Far-East and one has only to think of the great Buddha images in the caves of Lungmen and Yun Kang or the great bronze image at Nara in Japan to appreciate this.

We proceed beyond the Hindu Kush and enter the land of Bactria called by

the Chinese Fo-Ho and by the Indians Balkika. Buddhism came here in the 1st century B.C. and this land remained faithful to the Buddha Dhamma till the 7th century A.D. Huientsang for example tells us, that in the 7th century there was in Balkh a great Buddhist Vihara--"the Navasangharama." Here were learned Buddhist monks. It is tragic to know that the Muslim invaders destroyed this monastery and its teachers taken to the Court of the Caliph of Baghdad.

The road next leads one to Kashgar and Yarkand. By the middle of the 7th century A.D. there were hundreds of monasteries here to welcome the pilgrim and scholar. From here one can take the South Road past Khotan and the sites of Dandan Ulik, Endere and Miran. Of these, Khotan figures very prominently in ancient records. It appears to have been colonised by Indians, but to the Buddhists it is of importance to note that in this city of Khotan was the celebrated "Gomati Vihara." It was one of the biggest institutions of Buddhist learning in Central Asia. It was quite a common fact for Chinese pilgrims instead of coming to India, to stop at Khotan for their special studies. This was possible because great Indian monks who were also teachers and scholars lived here.

On the North Road there were many places of importance but Kuchi was by far the most celebrated. Kuchi was not merely a seat of Buddhist learning, it was also a leading centre for missionary work. Monks from Kuchi such as the celebrated Kumarajiva were, the great teachers of Buddhism in China and they did pioneer work from the 2nd to the 5th century A.D. In the neighbourhood of Kuchi are memorable cave viharas where monks spent their time in quiet study and meditation.

The next stage of the North Road was Agnidesa (Karasahr). Kuchi and Agnidesa were the great mission centres for

China. Along the North and South Roads many towns have been discovered by the Grunwedel and Von Le Coq and the Waldsmihte expeditions. In their reports we learn much of the viharas at Kizil, Khotan, Karasahr, Turfan, Dandan Ulik, Endere and Miran. The Indian tradition of cave viharas and fresco painting have been carried out here but a difference exist in that the types of people are Central Asian.

The North and South Roads met in the "Jade Gate" at Yumen Kuan. Not far is Tunhuang which was one of the largest Buddhist Institutions. In the hills near Tunhuang are cave-cut cells and halls which were used in the 5th to 8th century A. D. by monks. These grottos were called the "Caves of the thousand Buddhas." Here met monks from the East and West and the place became almost a University. The diversity of manuscripts found here testify this, for here were discovered manuscripts in Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Khotanese and Syriac. The frescoes here at Tunhuang and the caves of Wang-Fo-Sia carry yet eastwards, the tradition of Ajanta, but the spirit is Chinese Buddhist.

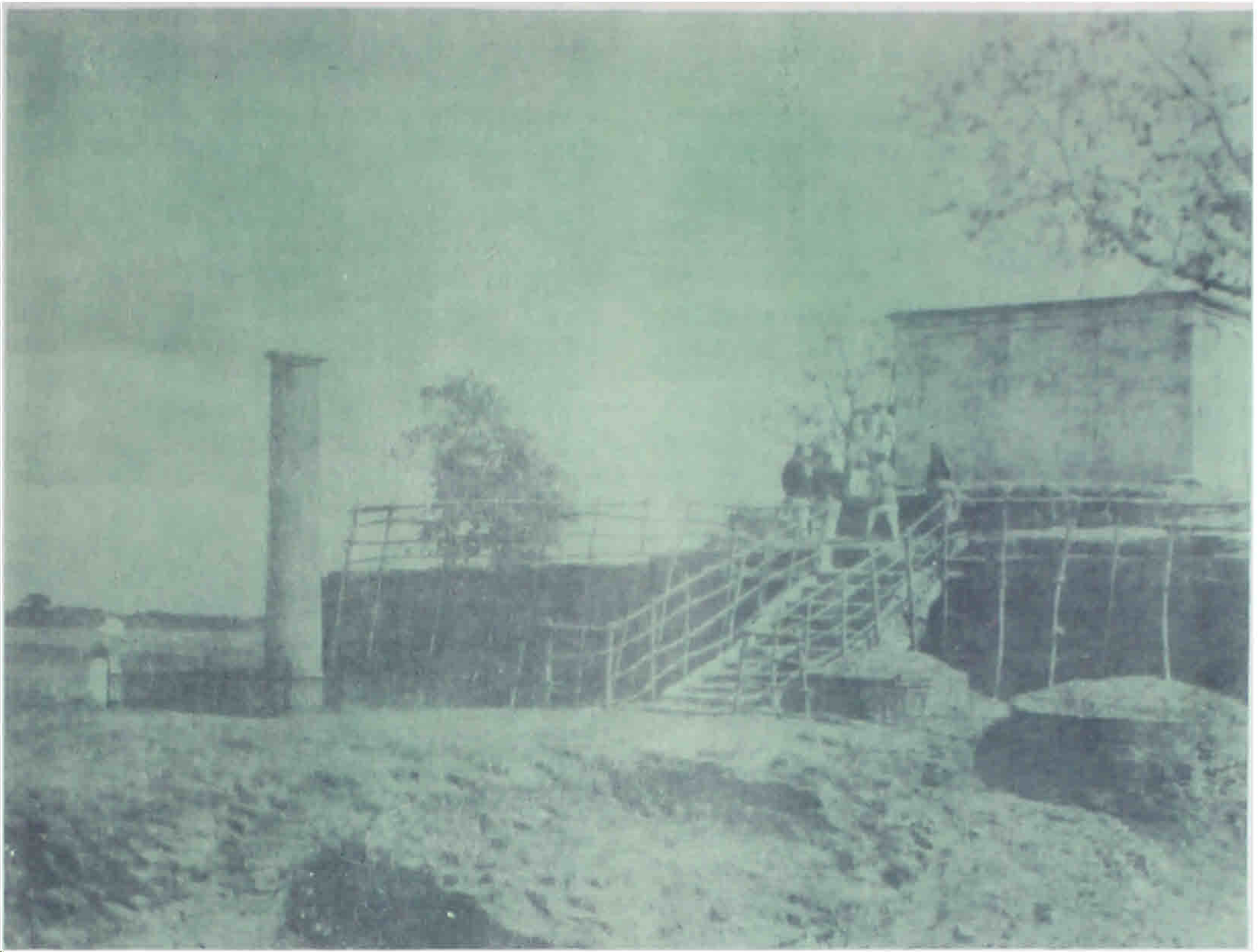
In the 7th century A.D. Buddhism reached Japan and by the 8th century it had become a mighty force. The great viharas became centres of learning and art, and today the temples at Nara are world renowned for their wonderful frescoes. "Superhuman in beauty these heroes of saintliness preserve the inexpressible grace with which the land of India adorned them. Above all, in these splendid bodies at once aristocratic and tender, the pride of eternal youth is so impregnated with intellectual gravity, so penetrated by the sentiment of universal vanity, so mature in religious feeling, that now and then there emanates a

kind of weariness of this transient world. And again as at Ajanta what mystery is hidden behind those closed eyelids, what sweetness and compassion! The gestures of Horiuji and Ajanta, gestures of faith in which lies the whole soul of the Mahayanist Ages."

The last stage of the great pilgrimage of Buddhism is in the South-East Asian lands and seas. Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia and Laos are still Buddhist lands. Not so are the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Java and the Celebes. But yet in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. Buddhism flourished in these lands, under the empire of Sri Vijaya and the dynasty of the Sailendras. Malaya was then Tambralinga with its capital at Dhamma Sri Ligor. Sumatra, Java and the Celebes still bear traces of Buddhism. The Sumatran city of Palembang was once Sri Vijaya, a great centre of Buddhist learning where Chinese spent many years learning Sanskrit before they came to India. Java has the wonder shrine of Borobodhur the greatest and noblest Buddhist building in the world. Here is a mighty stupa and as one perambulates on his way to the highest, one sees *three miles* of lovely stone relief sculpture telling in a spirit of tranquil harmony, and serenity, the story of the Buddha and the tales of the Jataka. Nowhere in the world has the Buddha Pratima or the hand of the stone sculptor revealed that quality of spiritual beauty so characteristic of the Dhamma.

So ends the pilgrimage—and one is deeply moved by what has been—the glory that has departed. These ruins fill us with the sense of "tears in mortal things," but they yet hold out the hope that the light which once illumined these lands, can yet be relit, never to be put out again.





*A view of the ruins of Lunbuni, — The birth place of Buddha Gautama showing the Asokan pillar inscription in the background where Nepal is making arrangements to celebrate the Buddha Jayanti.*



## THE HOME OF MANY BUDDHAS

*Secretary to the Government of Nepal, Department of Education, Kathmandu.*

epal—the home of many Buddhas—does not believe that the Buddhistic thoughts owed their origin to one single human personality of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha of Kapilavastu. Nepalese scriptural texts relate that six Buddhas namely Vipassi, Sikhin, Visvabhu, Krakutsanda, Konakamuni and Kasyapa

in different cycles of time had preceded Sakya Muni who was the last to arrive on the scene towards the conclusion of the Bhadra-kalpa. However Sakya Muni is credited with having given a definite form and a systematic force to the Buddhistic thoughts obtaining in the Himalayas, if he did not wholly originate them. In this important respect, Sakya Muni is to Buddhism what Dvaipayana is to Brahmanism. It is



interesting to note that the seven Buddhas are worshipped in Nepal not as the sons of God but as the embodiment of the principle of enlightenment, with their ashes in the stupas dedicated to the Adi-Buddha.

### Art and Literature

The earliest Buddhistic Viharas seem to be better organised than the Brahmanic institutions of Rajakulas and Devakulas. Towards the sixth century B.C. when Hindu expansion had claimed more than half of the Gangetic basin of north-India, the Himalayan Piedmont had challenged the orthodox Brahmins. On a small territory as conveniently restricted as a laboratory, the historians can easily link the chain of facts, where the northern and the southern religious notions have amalgamated to evolve an entirely new religion and culture.

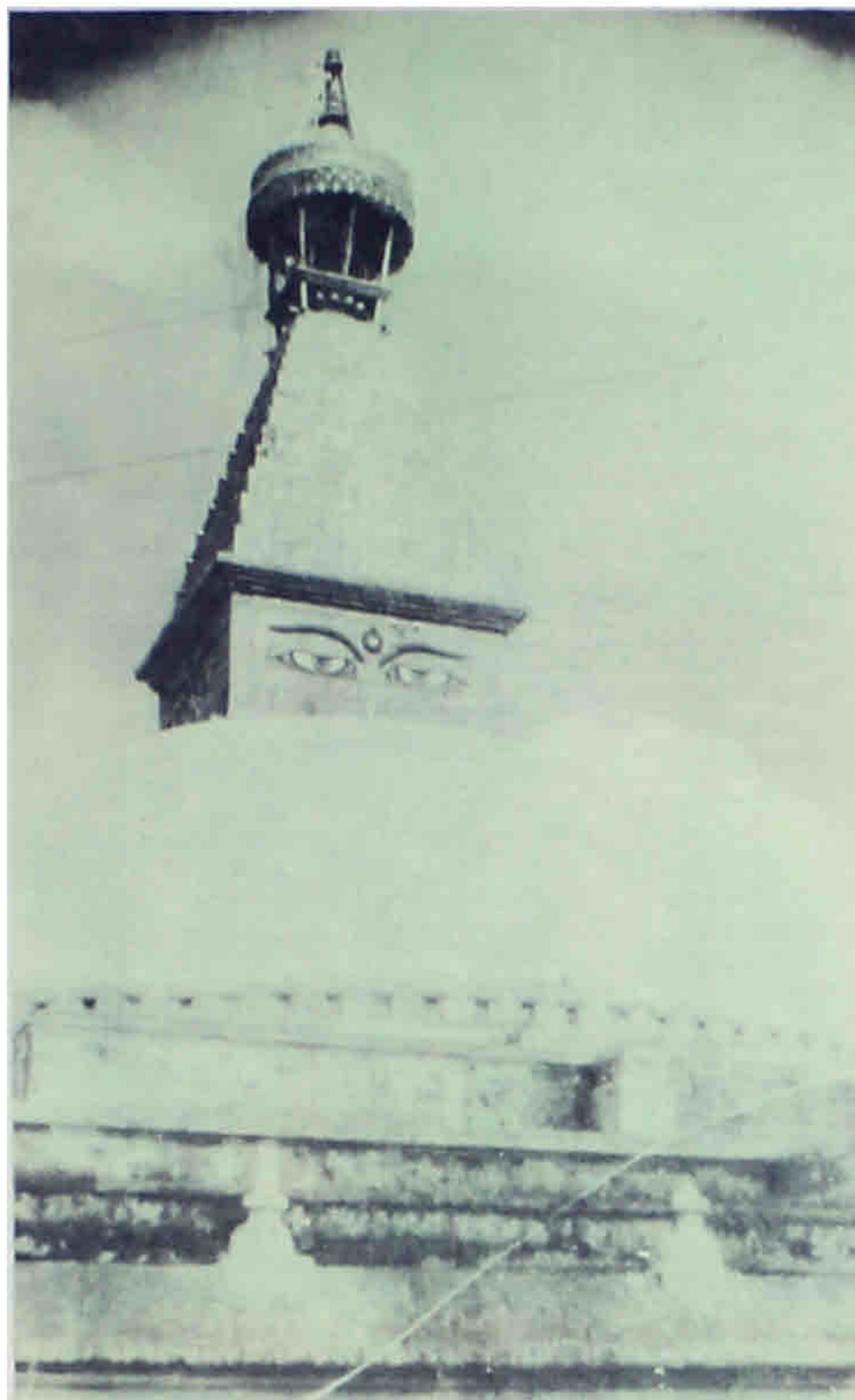
What Buddhism achieved was to fix its duration to a definite period and avoid the stunning eternity of the Brahmins in consideration of the course of milleniums already travelled over and the chasm of future before mankind in the abyss of time. Organised in their Viharas, the Buddhist free thinkers did not deceive themselves with the mirage of universal nothingness amid the jejune realities of this work-a-day world. As members of a healthy human community and responsible for its interests, the Buddhist monks carefully preserved the registers of donations and privileges granted by their kings. Propagated by a succession of wisemen, regulated by Buddhist councils and patronised by illustrious kings, the monastic institutions and systems of education founded by the many Buddhas and their disciples laid before Nepal the gradual stages of her growing greatness.

As a result, Nepal grew proud of a continuous chronology lavished prodigally by miniature paintings done by competent artists, which at least, carry the tradition of a by-gone age with its epi-centre in the stupa of the Adi-Buddha and the successive Aryan Gods.

The People of Nepal are familiar with the stupas in the sense of a tomb, temple or 'Dagoba' (covers for relics) from which the present word Pagoda has derived itself. When the Indian king Asoka in 238 B.C., undertook to restore the dilapidating stupa dedicated by the people of Nepal to the memory of Buddha Konaka Muni and went on a pilgrimage in 250 B.C., his route still recognizable by the pillar inscriptions he put up, lay across the buffer zone where he imbibed the first idea of this type of architecture. Practically the architecture of India commences with the age of Asoka, who is said to have laid the foundation of 84,000 religious edifices. In its development, the stupa has assumed an architectural importance. It consists of a solid hemisphere, commonly surmounted in its present superstructure by a tetragonal pyramid, the grades of which are thirteen and are typical of the Bodhisatva heavens of the Buddhist cosmography. The cone terminates in a bell-turret, bell, churamani and umbrellas. This part of the structure represents Akanishtha Bhuvana or the Highest Heaven of the Adi-Buddha. Between the hemisphere and the cone is a short square neck, upon each of the four sides of which a pair of eyes and noses are engraved, which typify cosmic omniscience.

The frontal representation of the static statues of the Buddhas with wavy hair and top-knot in the Kirata style characterise the earliest sculpture of Nepal. With the advent of the Licchavis, we find the frontal representation of the Aryan Gods such as Hari sitting upon the Garuda with his consort by his side. The Buddhistic bas-relief of the same period shows a man and a woman in profile worshipping the Dharma-chakra, which shows that the Buddhistic sculpture had made strides. Other bas-reliefs of the same time represent Mahamaya Devi clutching the sal-tree with the newly born Siddharta in the act of taking seven steps. With the fifth century A. D., we find some of the Aryan divinities in profile and the Buddhistic and the Brahmanic





*Khasa-Chaitya situated in the vicinity of Kathmandu, which is dedicated to the memory of Buddha Kasyapa.*

divinities trembling for contact. There was a widening of the horizon in the 6th century. It was with the dawn of the Seventh century A.D., that Buddhism and Brahmanism, long-separated and rivals in India, inter-penetrated and mingled in Nepal with the result that there was an *anschluss* of the Buddhistic and Brahmanic pantheons in the form of Vishnu Visvarupa, or Buddha Visvarupa. The local gods of the lesser priests, bronzes and the Brahmins have been welded into one harmonious whole.

The Piprahwa Buddhist vase inscription discovered in Nepal records in the earliest Brahmi script the first Aryan hymn enshrining the mortal remains of Sakya Muni and his next of kin—a funeral tradition which the most ancient kings of Nepal have recorded in most of their inscriptions even subsequent to

the appearance of the Aryan rule with the Licchavis in about 48 A.D. It is interesting that the Nepalese people follow the same funeral tradition faithfully even to this day.

Long before the Nalanda Vihara came into existence, the Nepalese inscriptions prove conclusively that there were such educational institutions as Sovitarama, Bhiringi-vihara, Kharjurika-vihara and Gum vihara where students were housed and given free education on a voluntary basis. All the most ancient Kiranti Kings were Buddhists and so was the first Licchavi King Vrisa Deva. Poets like Yama, Ushana and Anuparama flourished. Judging from the inscription of the pillar of Hari-gaon erected in the temple of Satya Narayana sometime in the third century A. D., we find direct evidences of a struggle between the principles of Sugata and the historic basis of the theories of Dvaipayana.

As already stated above, the earliest Buddhist sutras were caught up in Aryan hymns and pithy Chari songs which could be memorised easily and handed down from generation to generation. It is admitted that Buddhism was long taught in Ceylon without the aid of books; and that the first book reached that island three hundred years after the introduction of the creed. With the introduction of writing to this undocumented world, the words of the Buddhas were bound down to 84,000 volumes much of which is lost. The most authoritative of the books are known as the "Sutra and Dharma."

#### **Buddhist ritual peculiar to Nepal**

We have a stanza in the Aparinita Dharani to the effect that "The Buddhas who have been, are and will be, are more numerous than the grains of sand on the banks of the river." They may be classified as the "Pratyeka Buddhas, the Sravaka Buddhas and the Mahayanika Buddhas." Of all the Buddhas, Sakya Muni and his six predecessors are regarded with distinct veneration. An accurate and complete view of the Buddhistic



system of rituals and beliefs peculiar to our country would involve the severest study of a vast number of voluminous works written down in several scripts and languages and would demand more time and space than warranted by the present survey.

Religious schism, common to all religions, multiplied infinitely in India despite the great Convocations in B. C. 465, B.C. 365 and B.C. 235. But judging from the most ancient inscriptions of Nepal, the path of the Sugatas characterised great freedom of thinking and practices as opposed to the rigidity of Brahmanic faiths and castes. As the genius of Buddhism was free, there were many sects even before the Gautama's death. Unlike the Brahmins of India, Nepal has never reviled the Buddhists. There has been no catastrophe for Buddhism in our country for the last three milleniums of history. At one period, Buddhism waned and was absorbed only when she lost her right to exist for the nation. Uniform and severe, the discipline of the Viharas suited the Buddhist monk alone; too subtle and diverse, the lay society escaped them.

### Buddhism Today

Since the time Asoka adopted Buddhism, the new faith helped to civilise and soften the hordes of barbarians, who repeatedly conquered and held India till the onset of Islam. Buddhism outlived its usefulness for India, when it confronted the Crusaders of Allah who brooked no rival. With the burning of the Buddhistic convents Buddhism disappeared from India. For the second time in her long history, Nepal took up the thread and kept the torch burning by affording



*The all-embracing image of Vishnu-Viswarupa of the Seventh Century A. D., within the Quadrangle of the Famous temple of Changu-Narayana situated over the hill of Doladri to the east of Kathmandu—combines the Buddhistic and the Brahmannic pantheons.*

refuge to the Buddhist fugitives from India and sending them over to Tibet for religious reformation. In Nepal many Buddhas were absorbed in the Brahmanic pantheon and worshipped together with the Aryan gods. Fanaticism is a conception unknown to the people of Nepal and the adherents of the two faiths worship Shankara and Vishnu with the same zeal and fervour as they worship the stupas dedicated to the many Buddhas.





# Buddhism

*in*

by The Venerable JAGADISH KASYAP THERO

n India, the common belief is that when evil, wickedness and violence predominate, there arises a great Master, who changes the course of the time and leads the world to Righteousness. The Buddha himself had said, "I am one of a long series of Buddhas. Many were born before and many will be born in future. When wickedness and violence rule over the earth, a Buddha takes his birth to establish a realm of righteousness on earth." In the Bhagavadgita, Krishna reiterates this conception (Chap. 4 St. 7).

This seems to be true in the religious history of India, all the more, in the case of Gotama, the Buddha. In the sixth

century B. C., the country was in a state of religio-philosophical upheaval. The age-long faith in the efficacy of the Sacrifices was shaken, and, thinkers had arisen, who strived to build up their own systems of philosophy and religion independent of the authority of the Vedas. A list of them and their views, at least of the prominent ones, occurs in several sections of the early Buddhist and Jain scriptures. These teachers roamed in the country, accompanied by large followings, preaching their doctrine, winning converts, and often, holding public discussions and debates among them. These theories varied from the utter materialistic standpoint of "eat, drink and be merry" to the rigorous austerities of the Jains. It is, perhaps, in view of these diverse sects, that the

Mahavagga states, "In Magadha, there appeared wrong religions, conceived by teachers of impure mind. In the face of all these, people were bewildered, and, it seems, there prevailed a confusion."

As far as the "independence from scriptural authority" was concerned, Siddhartha Gotama showed the same attitude as the other non-orthodox teachers of his time. Rather, he himself approached many of them and examined their teachings with the spirit of a seeker. In practising the most rigorous austerities, Siddhartha surpassed the most ardent adherents. In the realisation of the Yogic heights and power, he beat teachers like Uddaka and Kalama in no time. As a prince, he had had the most luxurious life, that the royalty could bestow. He had seen the emptiness of all these and went forth in the search of the Sublime, the Supramundane, till he reached Gaya, on the bank of the Neranjara. He took a handful of straw from a passer-by, spread it under the Pipal Tree and took his resolute seat, firm as thunder bolt (Vajra) with the determination. "Let my blood and flesh be dried up, let there remain only skin, veins and bones, I will not leave this seat till I have attained what I am striving for."

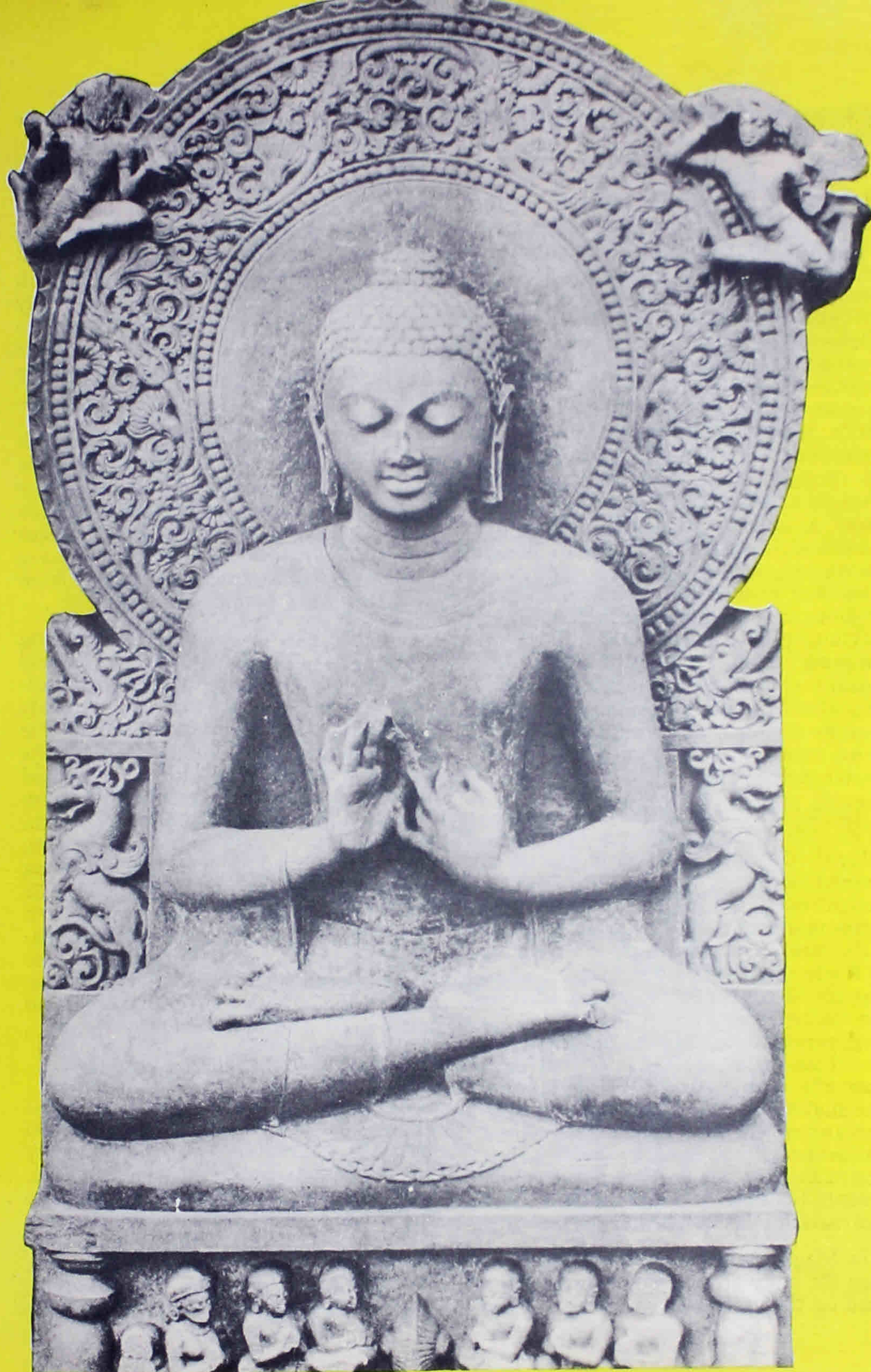
Light dawned upon him, and he became the Sammasambuddha, the fully Enlightened One. He declared that he had found out the way to Deliverance. It is due to our own ignorance and attachment that we are subjected to birth and death. The ignorance said he, can be dispelled by realising the transitory, substanceless and miserable nature of all existence in Samadhi, attained after the due training of the mind. The Buddha claimed that he preached only two things: Misery and Liberation. He compared the other teachers to dogs, who bite the stick with which they are beaten. His own position, he said, is like that of a lion, who attacks the person who strikes. Meaning thereby that while the other sects endeavour to attain liberation by worldly attainments, the Buddha teaches to conquer our own

attachments (Tanha), which are at the root of all evils.

The towering personality of the Buddha attracted converts from all castes and classes of the society. When the Buddha had sixty followers with him, he admonished, "Go Ye Bhikkhus! for the good of many. And, let not two go in the same direction." This missionary spirit lived pulsating for centuries after the Buddha, and survives even upto the present age. The Buddha, kept on moving from place to place for forty-five years, propagating his Doctrine and leading innumerable beings to Nibbana. He had centres all over the regions of North India. In the Parayana Vagga, Suttanipata, we see how enthusiastic seekers came to the Buddha from distant corners of the country. It is clear, beyond doubt, that even in the life time of the Buddha, the entire country had come under the influence of his teachings.

The Buddhist tradition is that there had been many Buddhas in the past. The Nidana Katha of the Jataka gives details of the Life of the previous Buddhas. The Jain scriptures also give description of 24 previous Tirthankaras. There are important points of Buddhism being distinct from Jainism; but, at least in being advocates of non-violence and renunciation, they are all against the Vedic cult of the Brahmanas. The Vedic hymns aspire for riches, cows, horses and all mundane attainments, even for the destruction of the enemies, whom the Aryas hated. In view of this, scholars have been led to assert that the Buddhist and the Jain traditions of Ahimsa had been the fundamental doctrine of pre-Vedic indigenous religions of India. As the Aryans settled down in India they came in contact with the ideals of these religions, and were naturally influenced greatly in due course of time. This is why, at a later stage, the Upanisads and Aranyakas diverted from the sacrificial practices and advocated non-violence, renunciation, meditation, self-purity and self-realisation.





Sarnath Buddha



## **Influence of Buddhism on the thoughts of the people.**

Sāṅkhya, the oldest system of Indian Philosophy, is highly influenced by the Buddhist ways of thought. It has denounced the Vedic practices as a way to Deliverance. Like Buddhism, Sāṅkhya has emphasised on the mystic realisation of Samādhi in Yoga, and on attaining absolute detachment from the mundane. Following the basic principles of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, Sāṅkhya repeats the same under the names of **Heya, Heya-Hetu, Hāna, and Hānopāya**. Patanjali, a Teacher of Sankhya system of thoughts, has defined 'Ignorance' (Avijjā) exactly from the Buddhist standpoint, as "mistaking the transitory, substanceless, miserable and impure to be permanent, substantial, bliss, and pure." The other systems followed the same line of thought in recognising **Dukkha** as the starting point and Liberation as the **summum bonum** of philosophy. The Vedānta philosophy was so much influenced by the Mādhyamika and Vijnānavāda Buddhism that Sankara himself began to be regarded as 'a hidden Buddhist'-**Pracchanna Bauddha**.

The influence of Buddhism in the day to day life of the people has been most salient. Gayā, the place of the Great Enlightenment of the Buddha became sacred even to the Hindus. Offering Piṇḍapāta to the Bhikkhus at Gaya has taken the form of a religious ceremony of Piṇḍa Dāna even upto this day. The Pippālā Tree began to be regarded as most sacred tree even by the Hindus. In the Bhagvad Gita, Krishna has identified the Tree with the Divine. "**Bhagva Vastra**" (literally, the colour of the Buddha) became the symbol of renunciation and spirituality, Hindu Maṭha and Akhārās were set up after the organisation of the Buddhist Sangha. The Buddha himself began to be regarded as the last incarnation of God Vishnu.

In Magadha, the present custom is to keep the body of the dying man, with the head on the north and lying on the right

side. This is perhaps, in memory of the posture in which the Buddha, under the two Sal Trees, at Kusināra, attained Mahāparinibbana. The **Dhammacakka-pavattana** day, the full moon day of the month of Āsālha, is celebrated all over the country as **Guru Pūrnimā** day, when the pupils approach their teachers with reverential offerings and regard it highly religious in paying homage to him. This is certainly a remnant of the memory of the great teacher, the Buddha, delivering the first sermon to the five disciples. Buddhist religious days, like the four Uposatha days of the month, the full moon day of the month of Kārtika (the Pavāranā day), the Vesak full moon day are regarded as sacred days by the Hindus as well. There are many castes and tribes all over the country who have definitely Buddhist ancestry, evident from their believes, customs and manners.

Side by side with these penetrating influences, the present day Hindu Society exhibits marks of bitterness and opposition against Buddhism. The priestly class, that was antagonistic to the liberality of the Buddha, had always given a vehement opposition. They had tried to misrepresent, defame and decry the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Magadha, the strong hold of Buddhism, became a banned land, and one visiting it was required to atone for the sin. The epithet '**Devānāmpiya**,' that was bestowed upon the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka, began to mean 'a fool' in Sanskrit. The word '**Vaisākhanandana**' (literally rejoices in the month of Vesak) began to mean in Sanskrit a 'donkey.'

## **The Revival of Buddhism in India**

From the last census report, prepared in the year 1951, there are 200,000 Buddhists in India. In a vast country like this, this number is most insignificant. There are Buddhist colonies on the hills in the north, in Assam and also here and there in the middle land. Being surrounded all round by other religionists and being cut off from the Buddhist world, they have greatly lost their





The Representation of the Buddha  
by a Bodhi—Tree. Sanchi.





Buddha in the Parileyya  
Forest. From Nagarjunikonda.



Buddhist consciousness. There is no organisation in India that could unify the scattered Buddhist population. In Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Bharat, - known as the Majjha - Mandal Desh in the Pali literature - that had been the original home of Buddhism, that had sent missionaries to distant countries, have unfortunately today no Buddhist population.

It was only after the establishment of the Maha Bodhi Society by Ven. Dhammapala of Ceylon that Buddhism once more began to be known by the people. Hindi translation of Pali texts by Maha - Pandit Rahul Sankrityayan Bhadant Anand Kaushalyan and others, were read with great interest by the intelligentsia of the country. The Buddhist centre at Kushinagar, originally founded by the great heroes of Jagdishpur, later on a Buddhist Monk, known as Mahavir Baba, has been doing very laudable work for the benefit of the Nepal and the northern regions of the country. Maha-Thera Chandra Mani, a direct disciple of Mahavir Baba, has ordained the greatest number of Indian young men as Bhikkhus and it would not be far from truth if he is regarded as the father of modern Indian Buddhist Sangha. The other great personage who has contributed most towards the revival of Buddhism in India was the Late Ven. L. Dhammananda, the high priest of Vidyalankara Pirivena, Kelaniya, Ceylon. Our respected teacher, he was kind enough to give shelter, and education to kindle enthusiasm in a number of Indian young men going to Ceylon for studies in Buddhism.

### **Buddhism Today**

The establishment of the Nalanda Pali Institute, for higher studies and research in all aspects of Buddhology, has been a source of inspiration to the people of Magadha, the land of the Buddha's Enlightenment, the birth-place of Sariputta and Moggallana and the capital of Emperor Asoka. With the liberal support of the Government of India, and the

State Government of Bihar, the Institute is preparing a critical edition of the complete Tripitaka in Devanagari script.

Recently, 20,000 men and woman, at Ajmer in the north, have taken refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. They belong to the Koliya Kshatriya caste, who identify themselves with the ancient Koliyas, the caste to which Maha Maya Devi, the mother of the Buddha belonged. This conversion has brought a stir in the country; and, the signs of a revival of Buddhism in India are becoming keenly felt. Then, there is a major move amongst the vast population of the Harijans, led by Dr. Ambedkar, to quit their present social position of disrespect and humiliation and embrace Buddhism. If it comes to pass, it would be certainly a very significant event in the religious history of the country. Though this acceptance of Buddhism by a significant class would be more due to social and political considerations than to a religious call, it would greatly enhance the Buddhist strength in India, and pave the way for further growth.

With the approach of the 2500th Buddha Jayanti, India is becoming more and more Buddha-minded. The Indians are realising that it is only through Buddhism that a cultural unity of Asia is possible. The conferences of the World Fellowship of Buddhists and the Sixth Buddhist Council has greatly influenced the thinking people of the country, and they are anxiously anticipating a significant cultural and religious unification of Asia. The dream of Dhamma-Vijaya (conquest of the Truth) of Asoka is being realised.

The greatest difficulty in the way of Buddhist Mission in India is the want of monks. Buddhist monks in India, leaving those who have come from the neighbouring foreign countries, are so few that they can be counted on one's fingers. It is so, not because of lack of devotion in the Indian youths, but because of a lack of organisation, encouragement and support.





*Ruins of the Buddhist monastery at Takht-i-Bhai  
in the Mardan District (North-West Frontier  
Province) -- 1st Century A. D.*



# THE BUDDHIST HERITAGE OF

by AMITAVE CHOWDHURY

When Pakistan was ushered into the comity of nations eight years ago, she arrived with all the splendour of a glorious heritage dating from the distant past. Scintillating among the priceless treasures that have been her fortunate legacy, the philosophy of Buddhism, its living form, and its artistic expressions that bedeck her realm, stand out pre-eminently as creation's "par-excellence" of human thought and activity. Prostrating in deep obeisance to the Enlightened One, Buddhists of Pakistan greet the Dawn of a New Buddhist Era, and look to the future with renewed hope and vigour.

## Introduction of Buddhism to Pakistan

Buddhism in Pakistan is nearly as old as Buddhism itself. Although it is no more a living force in West Pakistan, it was there, among the warrior inhabitants, that the message of the Great Master took firm root when it first began to spread afar. Magnificent remains of Buddhist civilisation abound in the territories of West Pakistan, and even today there are countless ruins awaiting exploration and excavation.

It is in East Pakistan, however, that living communities of Buddhists are still to be found. Historians have not been able to ascertain at which century Buddhism appeared on the Bengal scene, but it is surmised that it had arrived even before Asoka's reign. A 3rd Century

stone inscription records that Bengal was an important centre of Buddhism. The 5th Century found Buddhism firmly established, and a stone inscription states that there were many Buddhist viharas around Comilla, and one was known as Raj-Vihar. Huen Tsang, in the 7th Century, is recorded as having found Buddhism in a flourishing condition in Samatata (modern East Bengal,) with 2000 Bhikkhus in 30 viharas in the capital itself. Bhikkhus of both the Mahayana and Hinayana schools existed side by side. There were temples of other faiths, such as Jaina, Vaishnava and Saiva also. Two centuries later, Chinese traveller I-Tsing found the way of life led by Buddhist Bhikkhus in Bengal were in accordance with the ideals of the Dhamma and strictly according to the Code. His contemporary Tseng-Chi found more than 4000 Bhikkhus and nuns in the capital of Samatata. It would therefore appear that in the 7th Century, Bengali Buddhists were held in high esteem for their learning, piety and deportment throughout the Buddhist World.

The high tide of Buddhism began to recede from the rest of India soon after, and after a couple of centuries, circa 1000 A.D., it was practically obliterated in the north, west and south. But it was left to Bengal to serve as the stronghold of the Dhamma for another 300 years. Beginning with the Khadga Dynasty in the 7th Century, and ending with the fall of the Pala Dynasty towards the close of the 12th Century, a span of 400 years was the Golden Age of



Buddhism in Bengal. With the end of the Pala reign, Buddhism faded out from India, the land of its birth.

### **Buddhist Exodus**

The holocaust that followed in the wake of militant Brahmanism, subsequently pressed on by waves of Muslim invasion, compelled many Buddhist families from Bengal (then inclusive of modern Bihar), to seek refuge in the outlying fastnesses on the Burma Border. Others sailed across the seas to Burma, Siam, Malaya, Java, Sumatra and the Far East. Still others trekked over to Nepal and Tibet. All these countries were already under the sway of Buddhism, and represented, in a way, Greater Bengal.

### **East Bengal-10th Century to 18th Century**

From the 10th Century till the middle of the 18th Century, the territories that comprise modern East Bengal were in ceaseless turmoil under constant warfare, both internal and external. The panorama kept on changing with bewildering rapidity, as territories changed hands as often as the victor and the vanquished changed their roles every now and then. What began as a small, tribal war between ancient Tripura and the Chakmas, soon involved the Arakanese, to be followed later by Muslim invaders. Still later, the Burmese were in the fray. The Portuguese forced their way into the picture in the 16th Century, and finally it all ended with the British taking over in the 18th Century.

When order was restored, the Chakmas were found holding out in the hilly, central and inaccessible regions of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Flanked on their left were the Mongs, and on the right were the Bohmongs, both being Buddhist tribals of Arakanese origin. By their very location, all these inhabitants of the Chittagong Hill Tracts are shut off from the rest of the world, and having been thus for some centuries, they have

remained backward in terms of modern civilisation. Today, the Chittagong Hill Tracts is the only territory in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent which is a Buddhist majority area. The Chakmas, who are also Buddhists, claim descent from the Sakya clan, and profess to be of Aryan stock. Presently their number is 1,08,000.

### **Arakanese Buddhists in East Bengal**

Having repeatedly overrun the plains of East Bengal, considerable numbers of Arakanese settlers at one time became part and parcel of the local population. When the tide had turned against the Arakanese, most of the settlers retreated to their homeland, but a pocket stayed rooted along the Arakan borders in the Cox's Bazar subdivision of Chittagong. An abandoned Arakanese garrison in Barisal formed the nucleus of an Arakanese colony there, and their descendants now form an appreciable proportion of the local population. Their numbers were swelled by Burmese families fleeing from Lower Burma, seeking escape from the oppressive levies and conscription from their own rulers. The total number of Arakanese Buddhists in East Bengal, including those in the Hill Tracts, total about 1,36,000, and their manners, customs, dialect and dress are still predominantly Arakanese, with environmental variations.

### **Bengali Buddhists**

The remarkable element in the Buddhist population of East Bengal, is however, the Bengali Buddhists. Numerically, they are the smallest Buddhist community, about 72,000, and they are all that is left of the mighty Buddhist population that once teemed the ancient kingdom of Bengal, whose vast territory included Samatata and extended far beyond Magadha in the west. To trace the origin of these Bengali Buddhists is indeed a difficult task, but savants have established the fact that their dialect has certain words peculiar to them which are not intelligible to the rest of the popula-



tion. Etymological research has traced these words to a limited area in modern Central Bihar. Even fifty years ago, their womenfolk adorned themselves with heavy silver jewellery, most of which were family heirlooms patterned in the style prevalent in rural Bihar.

Additional light is thrown on the subject by the names of certain canals, rivers, and streams in and around Chittagong. An old artificial canal in Aburkhal a Buddhist village 15 miles north-east to Chittagong, is known as Vajjikhali, and legend has it that it was dug by Vajji settlers from Vesali. Another river in those parts is Mogdyr, which was so named because of Magh settlers on both sides of it. Towards the south, the names of Baruanikhal in Patiya and Baruakhali in Cox's Bazar are equally significant. Coupled with these names are the facts that Bengali Buddhists are generally known as Barua Buddhists, the term "Barua" signifying a "Great Aryan" or a Military Commander of the highest rank. The other fact is that from time immemorial, Bengali Buddhists have been popularly dubbed as Maghs, which quite possibly may be an easy appellation for people originating from ancient Magadha. At some stage later, the term became confounded with Arakanese bandits and pirates that infested both land and sea of East Bengal, and the term came to indiscriminate use for denoting Buddhists-lumping Arakanese and Bengalees together on grounds of religious kinship.

Be that as it may. It was with the restoration of peace and order brought about by British rule—and greatly assisted by the traditional British sympathy for the underdog—that the Bengali Buddhist community took rapid strides towards emancipation. Among its greatest achievements has been the introduction of Pali in schools and colleges affiliated to the Calcutta University. Subsequently a Bengali Buddhist scholar of international fame established a course of post-graduate studies in the same University and thereby rendered an inestimable service to humanity by reopening the

closed chapters in the history of Buddhism. Today, the Bengali Buddhists are recognised as being the advanced community among the mixed Buddhist population of East Bengal. It is also remarkable that their distribution lies within the borders of ancient Samatata, being concentrated in the plains of Chittagong, with a sprinkling in Noakhali and Tipperah. In the latter areas, many Buddhists still bear the title of Sinha. The total Buddhist population is about 3,16,000, the highest in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

Owing to its diminutive size, the Bengali Buddhist community has always tended to be regarded as a back number in the Buddhist World. Today, the same community presents the world with a phenomenon unparalleled in the history of human endurance. Defying persecution, death and disaster for generations after generations, centuries after centuries, these doughty standard-bearers of the Enlightened One have stoutly held fast to the Dhamma for a whole Buddhist Era, and accomplished the feat in the very land that Buddhism rose and fell.

#### **Buddhist Influence on the life and thought of the people**

Buddhism's stress on the individual being responsible for his own salvation by proceeding along the Noble Eightfold Path spontaneously enforces a moral self-discipline amongst its followers. Leading to introspection, logical thinking and rational behaviour in the individual, it simultaneously elevates his intellectual plane and widens his mental horizon. Such a mind attains the ability to analyse any new line of thought without prejudice and of dispassionately tolerating opposing beliefs until won over by logic alone. In the historic days when Chinese observers visited ancient Buddhist Bengal, they noted numerous temples dedicated to Brahmanical gods were in peaceful co-existence. The Buddhist Pala Kings did not permit their personal religion to intrude into the administrative affairs of the State,





General view of excavation of  
the Dharmarajika Stupa, Taxila.



and had no prejudices against employing non-Buddhists to high and responsible positions in the government. They saw to it that every person, whatever his faith, was free to follow it without let or hindrance. They made grants of rent-free lands for non-Buddhist temples, and even constructed quite a number of such temples in their domain out of public funds for the benefit of their non-Buddhist subjects.

For a country which has imbibed the spirit of Buddhism for centuries, it is inevitable that the people of East Bengal should acquire a certain amount of Buddhist culture. Almost all Hindu names and titles are derived by disjoining the prefixes and suffixes of Buddhist names. A large number of Buddhist sayings have become common aphorism among the general mass. A Maghi Era founded by an Arakanese Ruler to commemorate his conquest of East Bengal is still in use in land records. The common garment of the menfolk is the loongi of the neighbouring Buddhist countries, in contrast to the pyjamas customary in the Muslim West.

Reminiscent of the Mahayana Cult that was prevalent in Bengal is the worship of Magadheshwari-the presiding goddess of Magadha-by all sections of the people in the Chittagong and neighbouring districts. According to tradition this goddess was introduced by Mahayani Buddhists from Magadha, and although sacrificial killing is not altogether unknown, the chief characteristic in the rituals is the ceremonial release of captive and domestic animals to liberty. This sacrifice in reverse is quite in keeping with the compassionate principles of Buddhism. Even today at Kshetrapal, near Patiya in Chittagong, a big fair takes place spontaneously every year in her honour, and the rituals are observed freely by every community without distinction.

Despite the cataclysmic upheavals through which East Bengal underwent after the fall of the Pala Dynasty, ultimately converting Buddhist Bengal into a Muslim majority country, the effect of Buddhism on the people as a whole is

still discernible. Communal harmony in East Bengal has been proverbial in the prepartition days, and nowhere has it been sweeter than in the districts of Chittagong and Tripperah, where Buddhism still prevails. Even when communal passions were aflame before and after partition, the situation in these districts was disturbed to a far lesser extent, and any untowards happenings were due to outside influences.

Among the Buddhists, there inherent thirst for knowledge led to the early establishment of schools in almost all predominantly Buddhist localities. These schools were open to all communities and presently stimulated the spread of education in ever widening circles to other areas.

#### **Buddhist influence on art, literature, sculpture & architecture.**

Buddhism's emphasis on Right Thinking, Right effort and Right Knowledge in the Noble Eightfold path has been a powerful stimulus to learning and its practical application. Buddhist Bengal has produced scholars, missionaries, architects and craftsmen whose names, where known, have become historical legends. The great Bengali Buddhist scholar, Bhikkhu Shilabhadra, was the principal of the famous Buddhist University of Nalanda. With 10,000 students on its rolls and a huge variety of subjects on its syllabus, Huen Tsang was fortunate in having been able to study at the feet of such a teacher, whose fame had spread far beyond the borders of India. Another famous Bengali was Bhikkhu Dipankara Srijnana, who crossed the snow-bound Himalayas into Tibet to establish Buddhism there on a lasting basis. Unknown Bengali missionaries and craftsmen crossed the seas to Burma, Siam, Malaya, Java, Sumatra, China and Japan. Names of lesser Bengali Buddhist scholars abound in Tibetan manuscripts.

East Bengal was dotted with viharas. The Paharpur ruins in Rajshahi reveal that it was the largest vihara in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Its architecture



is unique in the sense that it has not been duplicated elsewhere in India, but replicas have been discovered in Java and Burma. Other internationally famous viharas have been at Mahastangarh in Bogra, Sompur, several others in Barendra (North Bengal), and Pandit Vihar in Chittagong, all of which are now in ruins. A huge stupa 70 ft. high and 900 ft. in circumference is still intact at Bharatbahena in Khulna. Practically every ancient town and village worthy of a tourist's visit has features to remind one of its Buddhist past. Stupas (chaityas) were so numerous in Chittagong that some authorities believe that the present name was derived from Chaityagram.

The latest archaeological excavations at Mainamati, near Comilla, which are still continuing, have brought to light the ruins of a vast vihara, with a stupa in its midst. A large collection of various antiques of historical value have been unearthed, together with an inscribed copper plate under Royal Seal. It would appear that the vihara was constructed by the Chandra Dynasty between the 9th and 11th Century. At Jheori, about 12 miles south to the city of Chittagong, the ruins of a large vihara was discovered about 25 years ago. It awaits further excavation, but a large bronze Buddha and several smaller ones have already been recovered from the spot. In 1954, a golden Buddha was found by a peasant in Bogra (North Bengal) while ploughing his fields. Countless Buddhist shrines all over East Bengal, some with the image of Buddha still installed, are in adverse possession by other communities, and presently are regarded as places of worship by their respective possessors.

Suitable rocks not being easily available, sculpture is less in evidence in this part of Pakistan. This lack, however, is more than compensated by a lavish abundance of terra cotta plastic art. Scholars have opined that Buddhism being a religion for the masses, the mass took to terra cotta as the readily available medium to express themselves.

In the Barendra Museum at Rajshahi, and to a lesser extent in the Chintamani

Museum at Chittagong, there are representative selections of Buddhist antiques on view. Specimens range from bronze images of Buddha in various attitudes, Boddhisattvas, Goddess Tara, stone images, stone friezes, coins, wood carvings and terra cotta work. A four feet high stone Buddha discovered while excavating for the foundations of the General Hospital in Chittagong in 1903 was handed over to the Buddhist Association by the then British Government. It is presumed to belong to the late Pala period.

### West Pakistan

In West Pakistan, Buddhism exists today in a petrified form. Of all the archaeological treasures that lie within its territories, whether yet discovered or not, none surpass the Buddhist specimens in technical excellence, profusion and historical value, apart from the older and primitive relics in Harappa and Mohenjodaro. As befits the rock terrain, the stress has been more towards rock sculpture. The superb blending of Graeco art with Buddhist philosophy developed into the classical Gandhara School of Art whose Buddha figures became the prototype of Buddha images in the rest of the Buddhist World. In Buddhist architectural wealth West Pakistan stands supreme in the Indo-Pakistan peninsula; fresh discoveries of ancient ruins are still reported from time to time, which is not surprising because Buddhism had seeped very deeply, and had also extended far beyond into Afghanistan, Iran and up to modern Syria. The famous city of learning, Taxila, and the historic cities of Purushapura (Peshawar), Sagala, (Sialkot) etc., are names which conjure Buddhist minds with the greatness of the Past. Buddhist relics from West Pakistan have found their way to all the museums of the world, and the Lahore Museum is full with little else except specimens of Buddhist civilisation. Stupas in various stages of disintegration still abound in West Pakistan. Hun



invasion in the 5th Century wiped out Buddhism in that wing of Pakistan.

### Literature

It is inevitable that, with the passage of time, a great philosophy should acquire a variety of interpretations from its large band of followers. This trait is developed into a strong feature in Buddhism, as its followers are positively exhorted to take nothing for granted, and to do their own thinking to arrive at the truth. Absence of rigidity in this respect gradually led to the rise of innumerable expositions, each with its own band of protagonists. In Buddhist Bengal, the constant pressure of Brahmanical revival wrought such changes that a number of sects came into existence whose creeds were a curious mixture, in varying degrees, of Mahayana, Vaishnava, Saiva and Tantric beliefs and practices. These in turn stimulated the birth of a new literature based on colloquial dialects. To make better contact with the masses, Pali, the spoken language of the times, became the official medium of Buddhism; likewise, the metamorphosed forms of Buddhism in Bengal took to colloquial dialects prevalent towards the end of the Pala Kings, and the foundations of the modern Bengali literature and script were laid from then on.

### Rituals Peculiar to Pakistan and doctrinal differences

Considering the phases of violence which Buddhism had to encounter in East Bengal, varying from Brahmanical revivalism to Muslim conquest, aided by major and minor doctrinal differences with itself, it would be irrational to think that the teachings of the Great Master survived the ordeal without a scratch. With the return of stability under British rule, it was discovered that the Bengali Buddhists were a benighted community, having little in common with the rituals customary in neighbouring Arakan, Burma and Ceylon. On the other hand,

practices foreign to Buddhist principles and against the canon were very much in vogue. It was at this critical juncture that the ancient cultural links with the neighbouring countries proved their worth. At the invitation of the Ven. Radha Charan Mahathera, the first reformist Bhikkhu of the community, the leader of the Theravada sangha in Arakan, the Ven. Sangharaja Saramitta, undertook the mission to come over to Chittagong with his chapter to carry out the reformation. In this arduous task the mission received the tireless support of the Ven. Achariya Punnachara Dhammadhara Chandramohan Mahathera, a widely travelled, multilingual and profound Bengali Buddhist scholar and zealous reformer. The message of Buddha was preached a new, and a fresh ordination of the Bhikkhu order was carried out in strict accordance with the Vinaya Rules. In the course of 30 years of unremitting toil, from 1868 to 1898 about 80 per cent of the Order returned to the Fold, but the remainder, representing some 2 or 3 groups, were loth to lose their seniority and "originality" by submitting to fresh ordination. So, instead of uniformity, a schism arose within the Order, dividing it between the Reformed and Non-reformed orders. The former is known as the Sangharaja order, while the latter, which is subdivided into two lesser units, are collectively known as the Mahathera orders, after the names of their respective leading Bhikkhus of that period.

The truant Mahathera Order who disdained to undergo valid ordination at the instance of the Ven. Sangharaja Saramitta, decided to carry out the reforms by themselves. By dint of strong determination they have succeeded in eradicating the evils that debased them, and presently there is nothing to distinguish their religious practices as being different from those observed by the regular Theravada Sangha anywhere. Nevertheless, it is not possible for the Theravada Sangha to recognise this form of self-purification as valid, as it was not in accordance with the rules of Vinaya.





*Sculptures from Taxila (Punjab) belonging to the Gandhara Valley.*



The schism remains a source of embarrassment to all concerned.

The Ven. Achariya Punnachara Dhammadhara Chandramohan Mahathera, leader of the Sangharaja order, was held in high esteem in Arakan, Burma and Ceylon, in one of his visits to the latter country, he was asked to reform a decadent order by administering a fresh ordination. The powerful Ramanna Order thus came into existence, and it was so named after Ramyabhumi the ancient and picturesque name for Chittagong and its surrounding tracts, which even then was renowned for its scenic charm. The capital of ancient Ramyabhumi was Ramu. By these processes, the ancient cultural links between the mother country and her spiritual children were brought up-to-date, and the doctrine of Theravada in its pristine purity again dominates the Bengali Buddhists of Pakistan. There is no difference in the rituals observed by the Sangharaja Order and their spiritual brethren in Burma and Ceylon. It is interesting to record that, by way of reciprocity, the Ramanna Order has granted a stipend of five years duration for any Sangharaja Bhikkhu scholar from Wangarata (Banga Rashtra-Bengal) for higher studies in Buddhism in any of their numerous parivenas in Ceylon. This stipend has been regularly utilised since its inception.

Despite the schism in the clerical Order, the mixed laity, on the other hand, is in perfect harmony and bears no social prejudices amongst itself. Furthermore, although the laities are affiliated to their separate viharas, they freely visit other viharas whenever minded and even join religious services conducted by Bhikkhus not of their affiliated order. At the moment, there are about 310 viharas and temples in the plains of East Bengal, out of which 245 alone are in the district of Chittagong, the remainder being in Noakhali, Tipperah and Barisal. Of these about 260 belong to the Sangharaja Order. Bengali Buddhist Bhikkhus number about 200, out of which about 150 are of the Sangharaja Order. There are 29 Pali tols among the more prominent

monasteries, where free instruction in Pali scriptures is given to young scholars, and regular examinations are carried out by the Education Department of the Government of East Bengal.

In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, there are about 320 monasteries between the Chakmas, Mongs and Bohmongs. As in the case of Bengali Buddhists, centuries of isolation and various adverse factors have tarnished the Theravada doctrine which the Chakmas claim to be originally imbued with. But no records have yet been found that they were guided by the Tripitaka, while their philosophy and codes are contained in a series of manuscripts (about 22) collectively known as the "Agar Tara." These manuscripts are mostly written in corrupt Pali and are difficult of comprehension. In the early part of the century their monks were known as Raulees, and but for the saffron garb, they had nothing in common with the Theravada Bhikkhu. It can therefore be surmised that the Chakmas were professing Buddhism in a blend of Mahayana, Hinayana and Mystical forms.

The first serious attempt at Chakma reformation was made by the Ven. Sangharaja Achariya Punnachara Dhammadhara Chandramohan Mahathera of revered memory. Since then a steady progress has been visible, impetus being provided by the publication of Buddhist literature in Bengali by Bengali Buddhists and other research scholars. The cultural advancement of the Bengali Buddhists, their next door neighbours, spurred the Chakmas to discover their real self after centuries of obscurity. Currently, Raulees have practically disappeared; their place has been taken up by Arakanese and Bengali Bhikkhus, while the number of Chakma Bhikkhus is steadily on the increase.

The Arakanese Mongs and Bohmongs, tribal neighbours to the Chakmas, and the Arakanese in the plains, are essentially Theravada Buddhists with some minor local variations. The Arakanese shrines in Cox's Bazaar, and the Mong shrine at Chitmarang in the Hill Tracts,



*A Buddhist Pagoda in Pakistan.*



*A view of the Buddhist Pagoda  
at Taltoli Bandar in Barisal.*



are held in high veneration by all sections of Buddhists, and Bengali Buddhists, bent on pilgrimage, go there in large numbers. Many Bengali Bhikkhus have Arakanese laymen, while some are actually in charge of Arakanese shrines, and the reverse is true.

### **Place of Buddhism in Pakistan Today**

In the vast perspective of undivided India, the Buddhist community was a microscopic minority and was therefore literally lost in the wilderness. Agitation for its recognition bore no fruit. With the establishment of Pakistan the community gained both in magnitude and importance, in consequence of which its separate political identity came to be recognised. For the first time in the 20th Century, two elected Buddhist representatives have thereby found their way into the East Bengal Legislature. Buddhists, along with their sister minorities, enjoy equal rights of citizenship with the majority community, and are at complete liberty to observe their culture and religious faith.

There is ample evidence that the Government of Pakistan are aware of the special needs of the community. Plans are under contemplation for expanding the course of studies in Pali up to the post-graduate stage. The pre-partition Buddhist Educational Grant continues in a modified form. An overseas scholarship for higher studies in Pali was inaugurated two years ago. Realising that a nation achieves greatness by preserving its cultural wealth increasing attention is being paid to archaeology, and it is hoped that, with the passage of time, many other Buddhist ruins will again see the light of day. Fortnightly discourses on the Tripitaka is a regular feature with Radio Pakistan.

Since the economic position of the Pakistani Buddhists is not very satisfactory, the support of the Bhikkhu Order and the regular maintenance and repair of monasteries out of community resources are becoming increasingly problematical. Government of Pakistan's donation

towards the renovation of the principal monastery in the city of Chittagong and the generous offer to bear all the expenses connected with the bringing of the Sacred Relics of Sariputta and Moggallana were therefore deeply appreciated by Pakistani Buddhists. The Chief Minister of East Bengal, the Hon'ble Mr. Abu Hussain Sarkar, has earned the gratitude of the community by agreeing to donate a piece of land in the capital of Dacca for a Buddhist monastery.

Strategically situated within the Buddhist sphere of influence, Pakistani Buddhists are in an admirable position to serve as a connecting link between the neighbouring Buddhist countries and their beloved homeland. Being aware of this fact, Government of Pakistan have always been vigilant to international Buddhist events abroad, and have never failed to send an official Buddhist delegation to participate in every Buddhist gathering that have taken place in the recent past. Once practically unknown, Pakistani Buddhists have been able to make their existence increasingly felt in the Buddhist world. Only beneficial results can flow out of such contacts, understanding and mutual goodwill.

Since their reformation, the small band of Pakistani Bhikkhus has been manifesting a dynamism worthy of the disciples of the Great Master. Quite a number have travelled far to learn at the feet of the most renowned of Achariyas, whether it be to the remote interior of Burma, or to some unknown corner in Siam, or to distant Ceylon. Out of necessity, they had to master the language of the countries they visited in order to understand and be understood. At home, they published Pali Texts and other Buddhist literature in Bengali script which soon began to grow in volume as other research scholars took up the work. Missionary ardour was soon kindled, and today one finds many a Bengali Bhikkhu dispersed widely over the plains of India, devoted to the revival of Buddhism.

It was a Bengali Bhikkhu who created history in the Delhi Durbar of His Majesty King George V, to which he was



invited to affirm the loyalty of the Buddhist community to the Imperial Crown. Calmly maintaining the dignity of his robes in that glittering pageantry of pomp and power, where every notable of the Indian Empire had assembled, the Bhikkhu approached the throne in the normal, upright attitude, and when in the immediate presence of their Majesties, raised his arm to pronounce the scriptural benediction. At this unforeseen turn of events, the aides-de-camp were apprehensive of hostile intentions, but nothing the saintly and compassionate demeanour of the Bhikkhu, they permitted the ritual to be completed without interruption. In that vast congregation, the lone Bengali Bhikkhu upheld the best traditions of Buddhist India and of his illustrious predecessors. For a fleeting moment, the scene took one back to the days when puissant kings in India felt honoured to be blessed by a disciple of the Great Master.

The scholastic attainments of Bengali Bhikkhus soon came to be appreciated among the learned circles. The Government of Bengal had only one occasion to bestow the rare title of "Aggamahapandita," and this they did when they conferred it on the late Ven. Dhammawansa Mahathera in 1927. History was repeated on the occasion of the Sixth Buddhist Synod now in session in Burma, when the Government of Burma conferred the same title to the Ven. Prajnaloka

Mahathera and four other Bhikkhus, from among 5000 Bhikkhu scholars. The Ven. Bhikkhu has been appointed to a highly responsible position on the Editorial Board of the Synod for the purpose of revising the Tripitakas.

### **The 2500th Buddha Jayanti**

Heralding the long-awaited Renaissance of Buddhism, the 2500th Anniversary of Buddha's first appearance in this world is of singular importance to every Buddhist living today. The Era of the Compassionate Buddha makes an auspicious beginning, and already there is a lessening of tension among the nations of the world. All Buddhist nations, and even non-Buddhist India, are preparing to celebrate the occasion as a state function on a right, royal scale. Pakistani Buddhists, within the limits of their capacity, will also observe the momentous occasion with due ceremonial, the details of which are still under discussion. Tentatively, a seven day programme is envisaged under the overall guidance of a committee representing all sections of the community, under the active patronage of the Government. In collaboration with the Department of Archaeology, it is proposed to hold an exhibition of ancient Buddhist art and modern literature, to enable citizens in general to appreciate their links with the past.



*Buddhists are lighting Candles before the 16-feet reclining image of Lord Buddha at a temple in Rauzan, Chittagong, East Pakistan on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the passing away of the Buddha held there on February 26, 1956.*





# AN ASPECT OF THE BURMESE BUDDHIST ART

by **THIRI PYANCHI U LU PE WIN, M.A.**

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**A**s in India and Ceylon, so in Burma, in the early days of Burmese history, Buddhist bhikkhus, who were responsible repositories of the Buddha's dhamma, in the absence of writing materials, committed to memory the teachings of the Tathagata, and imparted the same to their successors and pupils by word of mouth. Hence, even nowadays, a learned person in Burma is one who has heard much, a man who is **bahussuta**.

It was also because of the lack of written records in the Pre-Anoratha days at Pagan, that the Aris, the expo-

nents of Tantric Mahayana Buddhism, could propound any doctrine they like to the priest-ridden public, in the old city of Pagan. With the arrival at Pagan, however, of Dhammadassi, a learned thera of Mon nationality, the existence of written Theravada Buddhist texts in the Mon capital of Thaton, came to the knowledge of Aniruddhadeva, king Anoratha.

When his goodwill mission failed to get a single copy, out of more than thirty of the Theravada Tipitaka, Anoratha had but to invade Thaton and conquer it. In the wake of his conquest of the Mon country there was immense literary activity in his rajathani, the capital city of Pagan.



Dhammadassi, now known as, Shin Araham, became the primate of the king, Anoratha, and his successors-Sawloo and Kyanzittha. Previously a solitary missionary, Dhammadassi could now gather round him more learned monks whom he recruited from his native country. Many centres of Pali learning did he establish at Arimaddana, in the kingdom of Anoratha. The mission of this Mon missionary was so successful that the Pali bhasa the Language of Theravada Buddhism became very probably, the lingua franca of the country, throughout the Pagan dynasty.

Already documents began to be drafted in the Pali diction, and then translated into the Burmese and other languages. Rajakumar, the son of king Kyanzittha, prepared his dedicatory document, first of all, in the Pali language not in ordinary prose but in pleasing poetry and that too, in rhyme and stanza. He later translated his Pali poem into the official language of his country namely Burmese and also into the language of the minorities, namely, the Mon and Pyu languages. Thus it was his quadrilingual epigraph in two copies, one standing in situ and another at the Pagan museum, that has served today, as the Rosetta stone in Burma to students of epigraphy and philology, language and culture.

In his dissemination of the Buddha's dharma to his devotees, who took up the study of Buddhism as contained in the Theravada pitakas seriously, it seems that the Thera Dhammadassi used at least three languages, the Pali, Burmese and Mon. Not contented with his teaching by word of mouth which could only be heard but not seen by his pupils, Dhammadassi planned to provide visual education in Buddhism.

It must therefore be due to the discerning direction and far-seeing advice of the primate Dhammadassi, that king Anoratha adorned his Shwezigon pagoda and Petleik temples with dados and panels of terra cotta plaques, with jataka episodes and scenes on them. These Jataka plaques, apart from serving as

architectural ornament, vividly illustrate in terra cotta and stone the anterior lives of the Buddha as contained in the Jataka Commentary of the Theravada pitakas.

The laudable lead given by Aniruddha-deva, king Anoratha, in illustrating the Theravada texts, was enthusiastically followed by his successors throughout the entire Pagan dynasty. No wonder therefore all the temples in Pagan, big or small, solid or hollow contain in colour or in terra cotta or stone, illustrations of at least the important episodes of the Buddha's life as contained in the five nikayas of Theravada Buddhism.

Buddha's birth, Buddha's attainment of Buddhahood, Buddha's first dhammakatha or dhammacakkapavattanam, Buddha's encounter with Nalagiri elephant, Buddha's Yamakapatihariya or twin-miracle, Buddha's descent from Tavatimsa heaven, Buddha's retreat to Parileyya forest, and Buddha's Parinirvana are even today, to be seen illustrated in mineral colours and stones in not less than a dozen temples of Pagan. Even the Mahavamsa, one of the sacred chronicles of Ceylon can be seen illustrated in multi-coloured frescoes in the Sakyamuni temple, of 11th-12th century C.E., a mile or two east of Nyaungoo.

Even the last king of Pagan, Narathihapate, the king who fled from the Chinese or the Tartars, left behind in his religious edifice, the Mingalazedi or Ningsals stupa, a complete set of five hundred and fifty Jataka plaques set in the niches of the three terraces at regular intervals.

In the Ananta guha, now known as the Ananda temple built by king Kyanzittha early in his reign (1084-1112 C. E.) is a sculpture gallery which veritably constitutes a complete Buddha's biography. Except for one or two episodes this Buddha's life closely follows the nidanakatha of the Jataka commentary.

Of the two corridors surrounding the sanctum in the Ananda temple, it is in the first processional passage, the one formed by the outer and inner walls, that you will find the stone sculptures



illustrating the principal events in the Buddha's career until his attainment of complete enlightenment or Buddhahood. They are in two rows of niches, forty in each row and eighty in number altogether; the stones have an average height of three feet ten inches. The succession of scenes are so arranged that as you follow the Buddha's biography and study it in detail you are at the same time paying homage to the standing Buddhas in the sanctum by circumambulating them or doing the padakkhina. The standing Buddhas are masterpieces of Burmese plastic art and they represent the four Tathagatas who had appeared in this Bhaddakappa.

Over and above the eighty scenic sculptures in the central shrine as stated above, there are, in each of the four porticoes sixteen other sculptures, among which the Parileyya episode and the Buddha's descent from Tavatimsa heaven as well as the taming of the Nalagiri elephant are interesting.

With limited space available, I would describe very briefly a few interesting scenes with the help of photographic plates.

Figure 1 represents the nativity scene. Mahamaya stands gracefully on the right with one hand holding the sal branch and the other embracing her sister Mahapajapati on her left. The Bodhisatta is seen issuing from the right side of his mother in an attitude not conforming to the Nidanakatha which states that the child was born with hands and feet stretched out. There are four other sculptures of the same scene in the porticoes constituting the best works of art in the temple.

Figure 2 illustrates the visit of the hermit Kaladevala to the palace of Suddhodana.

Figure 3 illustrates the Bodhisatta residing in the five storeyed palace, one of the three built by his father to spend a season in each one in great splendour and enjoyment. The female figures here represent some of the fair attendants.

In figure 4 one of the Cattari Pubbanimittani Series, the Bodhisatta witnesses



1

the first of the four omens on his way to the pleasure garden.

In figure 5 the Bodhisatta wishes to his child lying asleep with Yasodhara. Here the Bodhisatta is about to leave his palace to proceed on mahabhinik-khamana.

The scene in figure 6 depicts the Bodhisatta giving over his jewels to Channa after having alighted from his horse in the forest.

In figure 7 the Bodhisatta is seen cutting off his hair to become a Bhikkhu.

Figure 8 illustrates the dukkaracariya of the Bodhisatta. Devas who came to nourish him are also represented here.

Figure 9 illustrates the contest with Mara. Here this biography of the Buddha seems to follow the Padhana Sutta of the Sutta Nipata, one of the fifteen books of the Khuddhaka Nikaya, rather than the Nidanakatha which is generally adhered to for the other scenes.

Figure 10 shows the Buddha having attained the perfect enlightenment after his victory against Mara and his daughters.





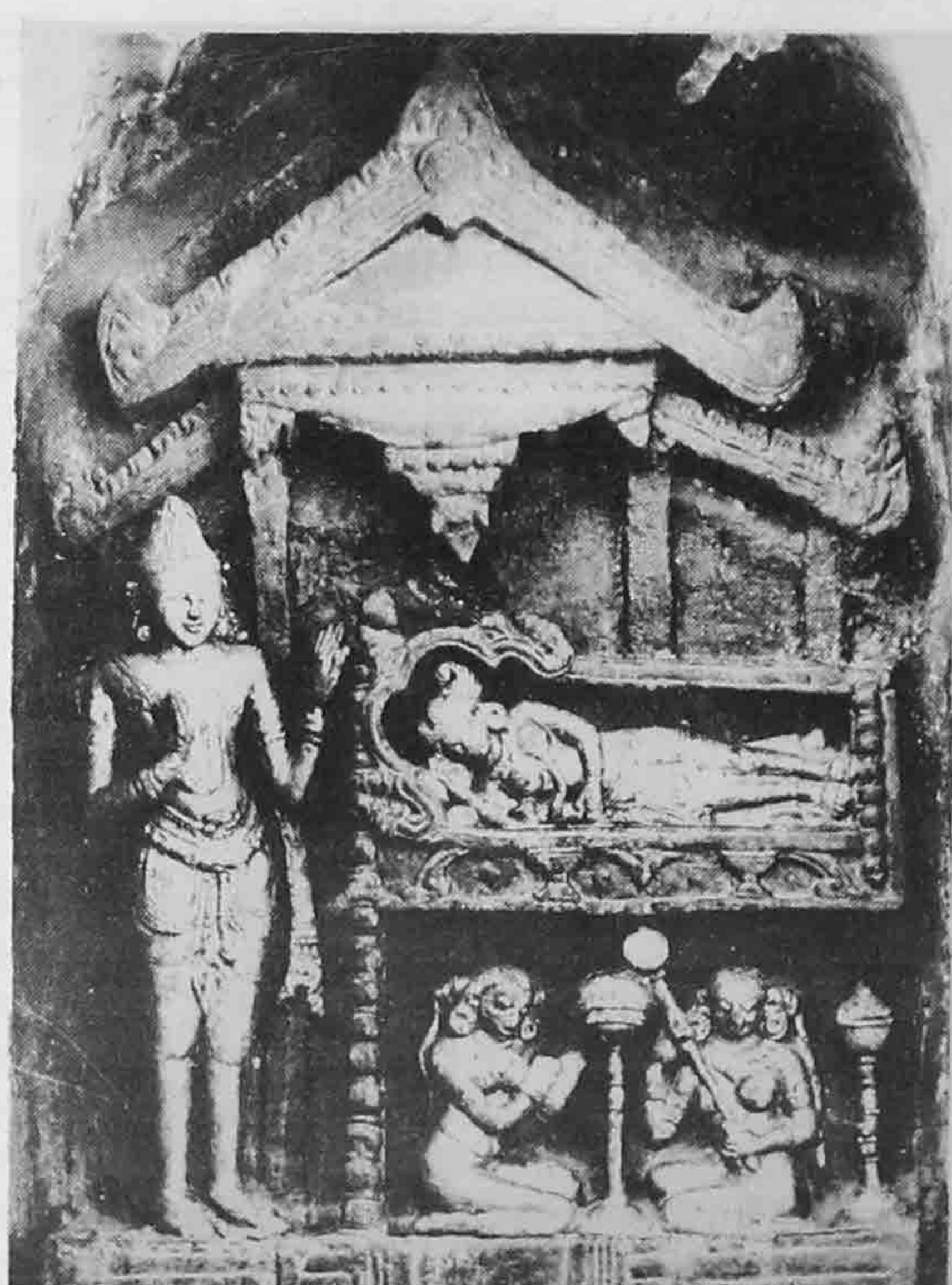
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BODHISATVA, A FRESCO FROM NARA, JAPAN





6



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8



9







# BUDDHISM

IN

## THAILAND

by DR. LUANG SURIYABONGSE, M.D.

### HISTORY

THE primitive religious belief of the Thai since ancient history more than 3,000 years ago when the Thai lived in Yunnan, and still later on when they moved into the present Siam, was Animism and Ancestor-worship. Later on came Buddhism and the Thai adopted it as their national religion. Unlike Burma, Siam inherited through the influence of the Cambodians, a fair proportion of Hinduism. Today our population is predominantly Buddhist, but many Brahmin rites and remnants of animistic beliefs have come to stay in the popular customs of our people. Especially Hinduism is still quite a force among the rich minority, because of its pompous ritual value.

Buddhism was first introduced into Siam as Hinayana Buddhism to Nakorn Phatom in B. E. 300 (B. C. 329).

For the second time, Buddhism came as Mahayana Buddhism through King Sri Vichai from Palambang (Sumatra) in A. C. 700 (or B. E. 1300).

For the 3rd time in A. D. 1,000 (B. E. 1600) Buddhism came from the north and was reintroduced as Hinayana Buddhism under King Anurut (A. D. 1057.) His capital was the town of Pagan, Burma. It was brought to Nakorn Phatom and

to Nakorn Sridhammaraj, which were great Hinayana Centres in the Malay Peninsula at that time.

For the 4th time in A. D. 1253 (B. E. 1800) Siamese Buddhist monks went to Ceylon and brought back with them the Pali-Scripts. They also invited Ceylonese Monks to Nakorn Sridhammaraj.

King Ram Kamhaeng, the third King of Siam, invited some of these Ceylonese monks to come and stay at his capital of Sukhothai. Ever since then all Kings of Siam must embrace Buddhism. From this springs the close connection between the Royal House and the Holy Sangha.

### SECTS

WE have in Siam two sects of Hinayana Buddhism.

1. The Dhammayuktika Nikaya to which at present only 4000 monks and novices belong and,
2. The Maha-Nikaya to which more than 200,000 monks and novices belong.

The Dhammayuktika Sect was established by King Monkut (1851-1856); in order to re-establish stricter discipline in the Holy Brotherhood. Both Sects adhere equally strictly to the 227 Vinaya rules as laid down by the Buddha, and there are only very slight differences in their daily practice. For instance, the Dhammayuktika monks give their robes



a twist to the left, the Mahanikaya monks twist their yellow robes to the right. The Dhammayuktika make a confession only when they feel themselves guilty of an offence against the 227 Vinaya rules; the Mahanikaya monks confess twice a day, before sunrise and before retiring to sleep. The Patimokkha, the Sacred 227 Vinaya rules are recited twice a month by both Sects. But the Dhammayuktika recite the Patimokkha publicly whereas the Mahanikaya monks recite them behind closed doors, and no layman is allowed anywhere near the inner circle or the temple (Vihara).

### 3. The present Administration of the Buddhist Church in Siam:—

Since 2487 B. E. (A. D. 1944), the Church has a similar administration to the State. The Patriarch or Sangha Raja is the highest Buddhist Dignitary of the Kingdom. He appoints a Council of Ecclesiastical Ministers headed by the Sangha Nayaka (equivalent to the Premier of the State). Under him we have four boards, namely the Board of Ecclesiastical Administration, the Board of Education, the Board of Propaganda and the Board of Public Works. The number of Ecclesiastical Ministerial Council consists of 10 members, (corresponding to the Cabinet).

A Consultative Assembly (corresponding to Parliament) consists of 45 members and acts as an Advisory Body.

ACCORDING to recent statistics (1948) there exist 19,150 Monasteries throughout the Kingdom, with more than 162,000 monks and 68,000 novices as inmates.

In 1949 there were 4,074 Pali-Students (monks only) at the Ecclesiastical University and 141,120 lay-students of Buddhist religion, participating at the examinations in various grades, held by the Government throughout the country.

The total amount of Stipends for monks of all ranks allocated in the Annual

Budget amounted in 1949 to 7,600,000 ticals. 1,000,000 ticals were set aside for the maintenance and repair of temples, and this sum was increased in 1950 to three million ticals.

The Buddhist Association of Siam receives a State subsidy of 25,000 ticals per year.

The Average Siamese spends 3 to 4 % of his total income upon merit-making, to the benefit of the Holy Brotherhood.

The family ties are very strong, and it is the moral obligation of the children to support their parents and elder relations. The Buddhist monastery is the Social gathering place of the village people. In sickness, in distress, and in any joyful family events, people will come to the temple to offer food and flowers to the monks and consult them. The respect for the Holy Brotherhood is such that people will disdain any monk who does not live the Holy Life or indulges in politics. A monk may give practical advice in sickness and as regards personal conduct to the people for the common good of them. A monk may promote and organise social welfare and any community service. As regards Communism he can only point out the advantages of a pure Buddhist life and may help distribute propaganda leaflets, such as given out by the Government; but never should he criticise any social order nor take sides in politics. He can give his blessings for the personal welfare of those going to War; but he cannot preach war nor take part in any warlike displays.

If you ask any Siamese peasant for what he cares, he will answer:

All he cares for is his Religion, his King and the Land he tills, and his family.

Buddhism has a firm grip upon our people; it is vital in their daily life and will always be so in spite of the influence of Western civilisation and as may be hoped, in spite of the influence of Communism; because the people have an indelible love of personal freedom, they respect the sanctity of all life, are extremely tolerant, and hospitable; and have a cheerful outlook upon life—all this because of their Religion.





*Groupe d'Ankor:  
Le Grand Bouddha du "Bayon"*

# CAMBODIA

by

**The Venerable  
BRAH GRU SANGHASATTHA**

*(PON-SOMPHEACH) DHAMMARAMA, Professor at the  
Preah Suramarit Buddhist College, Phnompenh, Corresponding  
Member of the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient,  
Member of the Cultural Commission.*

**C**ambodia is but a small country, and not very highly populated. Unlike most other countries today, it enjoys perfect religious unanimity, or rather, it has perfect religious unity: Cambodia is devoutly Buddhist, and it would not be exaggerated to say that 99% of the Cambodians are Buddhists.

Islam was introduced by the Malaysians and the Cham people, who are the descendants of those who, 400 years ago, migrated from Champa (now territory of Central Vietnam). Christianity was introduced by a few thousand Europeans who entered Cambodia. Mosques and Churches have been built near Buddhist Temples but have not in the least impressed the Khmers.

We learn from history that Brahmanism was brought over from India and practised by Kings and Nobles at the beginning of the Christian Era and that afterwards Buddhism was introduced into Cambodia in the middle of the 5th Century: it was the Theravada-Buddhism of the Southern School.

Buddhism in Cambodia reached its peak during the XII-XIII Century under the rule of the Great Khmer-King Jayavarman VII. This brilliant Buddhist built some magnificent stone edifices which are universally admired and which are all dedicated to the glory of the Buddha. The most typical and magnificent amongst them all, is the gigantic and most impressive one of the Bayon.

The following is a short survey of the Khmer architecture in Cambodia.

At first the Khmer Temples appear merely like piled up blocks of stones but a closer view, reveals galleries, chapels, cloisters and towers, scattered here and there. The Khmer Temples are glorious tokens of a period of wealth, greatness and splendour, when the Kings, great conquerors and brilliant administrators, ruled over Khmer Empire.

The kingdom of Cambodia, besides its present boundaries, included the whole of Cochin China and a part of South-East Asia. For a long time it was considered that the Khmer art was very ancient and very little was known about its history. Too hasty conclusions were drawn from the fact that the religious buildings of Cambodia are all dedicated to Hindu deities and that the inscriptions were written in Sanskrit. It was too quickly admitted that the Khmer architecture was a replica of the Indian. This opinion is not correct as it is now officially



acknowledged that the spirit, the composition and the architectural are different in India. After this period of Hindu influence, Buddhist architecture was introduced in Cambodia.

In 450 A.D., one notices a definite transformation in the architecture. Statues of the Buddha replaced those of Siva, Brahma and Vishnu. The attention of the visitor is drawn to the Temple of

the simple and powerful lines, can be found not only in Bakong and Koh-Ker but also in the many monuments with terraced platforms surmounted by a central sanctuary.

Greek art was introduced by Alexander-the-Great and influenced certain forms in Northern India. The first figure of the Buddha was carved, if not by the



*Phnom-Penh, Cambodge : La pagode du Phnom.*

Takeo at Angkor, with its five towers, of an extremely sober style being the only building with no ornamentation and the little sanctuary of the Baksey Cham Krong, which stands before the Southern Gate of the town, with its high red base-ment which is brightened by the sun. It seems that the Khmer architecture rises partly from the spirit which animates in these two edifices. The pyramid, with

Greeks, by Indian artisans of the Hellenic School. This is why the representations of the Buddha look surprisingly like Apollo's statues. Besides, a few details of the lintels or the bas-reliefs of the Khmer art of the 9th and 10th Century have a certain flavour and even a certain preciousness, not unlike those of some constructions of the 17th and 18th Century in the West.



During this period, Cambodia maintained close relations with Ceylon, the seat and cradle of the Southern Buddhist School, and diplomatic relationship with the Empire of China. The relations had declined, but they nevertheless maintained themselves despite a few breaks. To a great extent, these sporadic relations are responsible for the improvement of Buddhism in Cambodia.

monosyllabic roots, and has a tendency to transform the polysyllables by vocal contraction and agglutinative grouping. This tendency towards the monosyllabic contraction appears even in the composition of the derivatives by affixation.

The most ancient Khmer manuscripts were written on palm leaves; they included 30% of Sanskrit and Pali signs. To be more precise, it must be said that



*Phnom-Penh, Cambodge La quete de la nourriture dans un village.*

The study of documents enables us to see that the Khmer language has gone through no basic alterations since the 8th Century and has only developed within the lines of its initial character. The foreign influence was limited to the introduction of a few words borrowed from those people who subdued and colonised the Khmers.

The Khmer language is recto-tonic, with

these texts, ancient or contemporary, deal with Buddhist history up to our day.

The Khmer alphabet comes from South India. In script, every sign, whether simple or complex, is equivalent to a syllable. Each consonant includes a vowel without which it cannot be sounded and which can only be removed in certain clearly defined cases. The language which has been the subject of this



brief study is spoken by the Khmers who are called Cambodians by the people of the West.

Nowadays there are 4,500,000 Khmers in the Khmer district. Cambodia includes also a foreign group, namely 350,000 Vietnamese, 200,000 Chinese, 100,000 Chams or Malayans, 20,000 Laotians, 200, Burmese and a few thousand Europeans, mostly French.

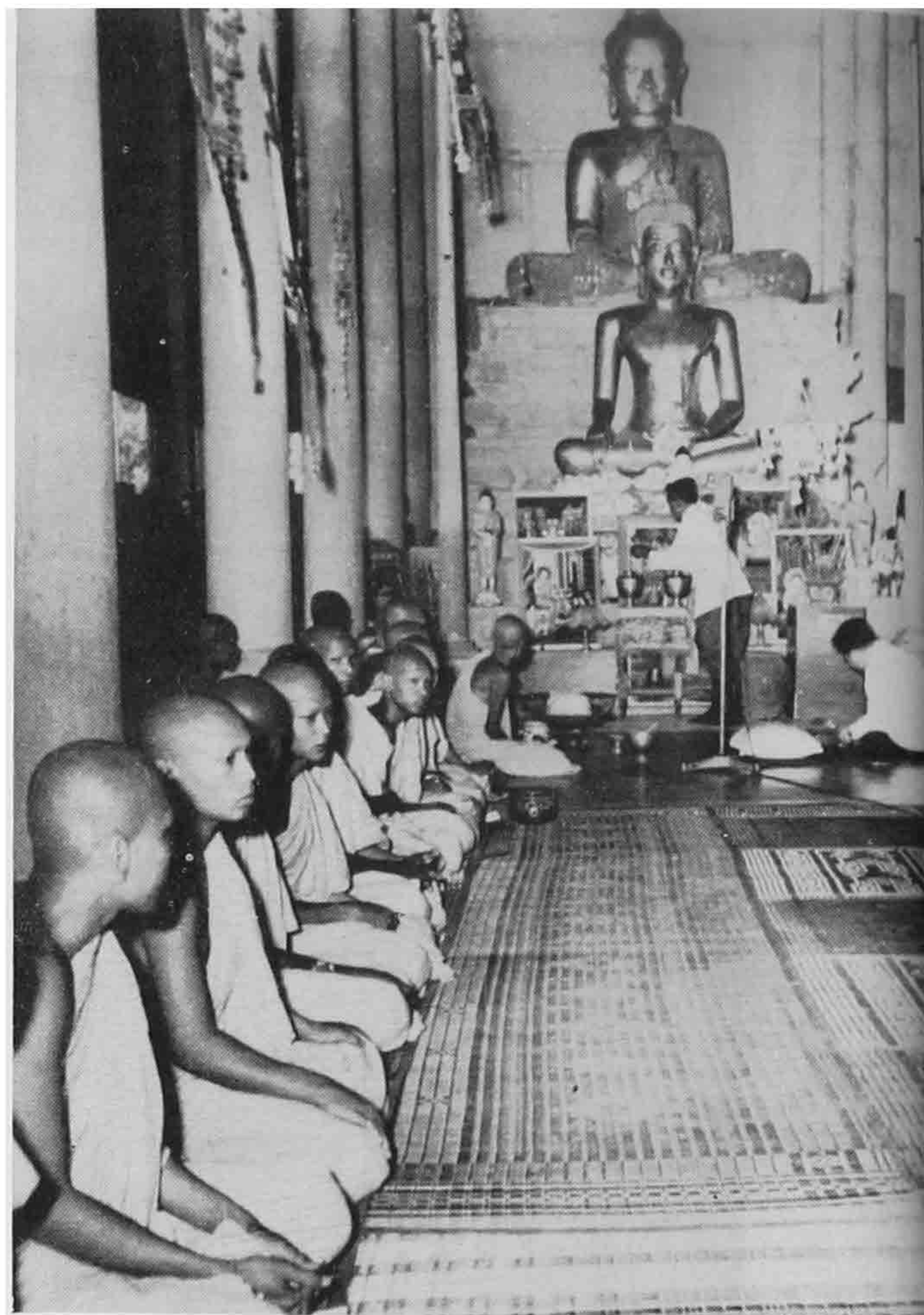
In Cambodia there are two sects of the Theravada Order :

- 1) the Mahanaikaya Sect,
- 2) the Dhammayuttikanikaya Sect.

The difference between the two Orders lies in the pronunciation of the Pali and a few secondary rules. The Kingdom includes 2800 monasteries in which live 82,000 monks and novices who come to seek refuge in the path of the Great Master. These monks are a strictly organised body, the hierarchy of which is established by royal decree.

If Buddhism has been able to develop and flourish in Cambodia it is due to the Kings and the Government rulers, being deeply attached to the religion of the Buddha. In 1914 a Higher School of Pali, was established in Pnom-penh. Besides religious teaching, it also gives instruction in temporal matters. After four years of studies a few thousand monks graduate from this school. Presently it has an attendance of 500 pupils and this year, by royal decree it has become a secondary school which bears the name of "Preah Suramarit Buddhist College."

In the same spirit, a royal library was created in 1925, and in 1930 the Buddhist Institute founded by Mademoiselle S. Karpeles, former Member of the School of far-eastern researches. Some years later, a "Tripitaka Commission" was formed, which included the most distinguished members of the Khmer Buddhist Sangha. This Commission was given the task to prepare and publish in Cambodian, at the light of Burmese, Thai and Ceylonese publications, a bilingual publication in Pali and Khmer of



*Cambodge, province de Takeo La visite du Prince Norodom Sihanouk a la pagode de Tonle Bati.*

the Tripitaka or Buddhist Canon; the first of its kind ever done in any Buddhist country.

Elementary schools of Pali were set up in 1933. Their teaching is conducted in the monasteries of the capital and the suburbs. There are about 400 in the whole kingdom. More than 2000 pupils leave these schools every year with the "Pali Elementary Certificate," after having attended the courses for three years. These schools will become "Pali Primary Schools," which will be devoted to the teaching of Dhamma-Vinaya as Buddhist Rules, in all the monasteries of the kingdom; compulsory for all the monks, without any exception but their age. In





*Phnom-Penh: Cambodge Stupa ( en cours de construction) eleve en souvenir de la Reception des Reliques sacrees a Phnom-Penh en 1952 et ou seront placees des nouvelles reliques en provenance de l'Inde.*

1955, one of the buildings of the Buddhist University will be completed. This new establishment which will be in charge of the higher teaching of Buddhism, will be open to all the scholars having the certificates of the Secondary Buddhist Schools or their equivalents.

The king is the first and strongest supporter of Cambodian Buddhism. His Majesty Norodom-Sihanouk-Varman abdicated in favour of Their Majesties, His parents, and became Vice-roy. As such he fulfilled his desire to leave temporarily the Court and live the simple and solitary life of a recluse ("Vassa") like the other Buddhist monks. His Majesty helped

through his own active financial participation, to build Buddhist establishments and schools of administration all over the kingdom. The "Preah Sihanu-Raj Buddhist University," to which the Buddhist sangha gave its own venerable name, is the result of His own active help.

Thus all these institutions help to the cause of Buddhism in Cambodia. Indeed, they enable the members of the Cambodian Buddhist Community to acquire the same level of culture. Consequently there is no doctrinal disagreement in the Community, which is a sign of a greater happiness, peace and prosperity for the years to come.

Beside the associations above mentioned, which deal only with the Religious teaching, there are two others of broader character, as they include laymen they are the "Association of the Friend of the Pali Schools" and the "World Fellowship of Buddhists," Regional Centre for Cambodia. The "Association" has besides others the task to foster the study of Pali and other languages. The latter is the link between Buddhists of various nations' activities.

The Cambodians have religious activities the year round. The main ones are:-

1. The festivities of the New Year, usually on the 13th, 14th and 15th of April. The most important rite is the one of the "Sand-Mountain," which represents the Culamunicetiya or celestial Stupa where the hair of the Buddha was enshrined when He left the household life.

2. In May, Visakhapuja is celebrated in the Royal Palace and in all the Pagodas on the occasion of the triple anniversary of Birth, Enlightenment and Death of the Buddha as in all other Buddhist countries.

3. The fourth day of the waning moon of the month of Visakha (May) there is in Pnom-penh the capital of the kingdom the celebration of the "Royal Ploughing" which reminds us of the story of King



Suddhodana, father of the Buddha, when he took his Son, the young Prince Siddhatta, to the festival of the "Royal Ploughing" of the fields. A messenger of the King holds the arms of a symbolic plough and turns three times round an imaginary field. Behind the royal cart, a woman in ceremonial dress (sampot), followed by her attendants, sows the seeds into the newly opened furrows. This celebration is the signal for the ploughing all over the kingdom.

**4. Ordination rites**—In Cambodia the ordination of the monks can take place at any time of the year, but not during the three months of Vassa, or Buddhist retreat. Very often and especially for the members of the royal family, these rites take place the last day before Vassa. The candidates of the royal and noble families, who are to be admitted under the patronage of His Majesty the King, are usually about twelve. The monks are requested to come and recite gathas on the eve of the ordination of the candidates.

The next day the monks to be, called "Nagas," go to the Pagoda in procession, and as the Buddha left his princely life to save mankind, the procession has as far as possible to consist of persons of princely state. First a band, some drummers, some men and women carrying silver trays on which are laid the religious garments, the bowls, the decorated candles—they are followed by the "Nagas" dressed in the traditional costume of princes, riding horses and protected by parasols. Then the future monks enter the temple; after lighting their candles and their incense sticks, they prostrate themselves at the feet of the statues of the Buddha and then joining the group of about 20 monks, ask the chief for their ordination.

**5. The Vassa**—As in all the other Buddhist countries the monks start their retreat during the first three months of the rainy season. During this period a "Vassa Candle" must be burning. It is a wooden cylinder, more or less richly

decorated and painted, filled of wax with a wick.

In the royal palace, the King, or in his absence, a member of the royal family, lights up four candles. One must be kept in the little sanctuary where the statues of the Buddha are kept. Another candle must be burnt in the room adjoining the state room, where are kept the ashes of the royal family. The third one is placed in the Pagoda of the "Sacred Sword" and the fourth one, remains in the "Silver Pagoda."

Besides, the King sends some candles to the different monasteries of the capital and of the rest of the country. The total number of the Royal Vassa Candles is 19.

On the eve of the Vassa, that is to say, on the full moon day, there is a certain animation in all the monasteries. Early morning, the next day, the Vassa Candle is carried in procession as well as the Satakas, pieces of cloth which the monks will wear for their bath and the remittance of the ritual offerings.

**6. The Fortnight of the Dead**—This festival is in honour of the dead. It is celebrated in all the monasteries by the Cambodians, in the fortnight of the waning moon in the month of September.

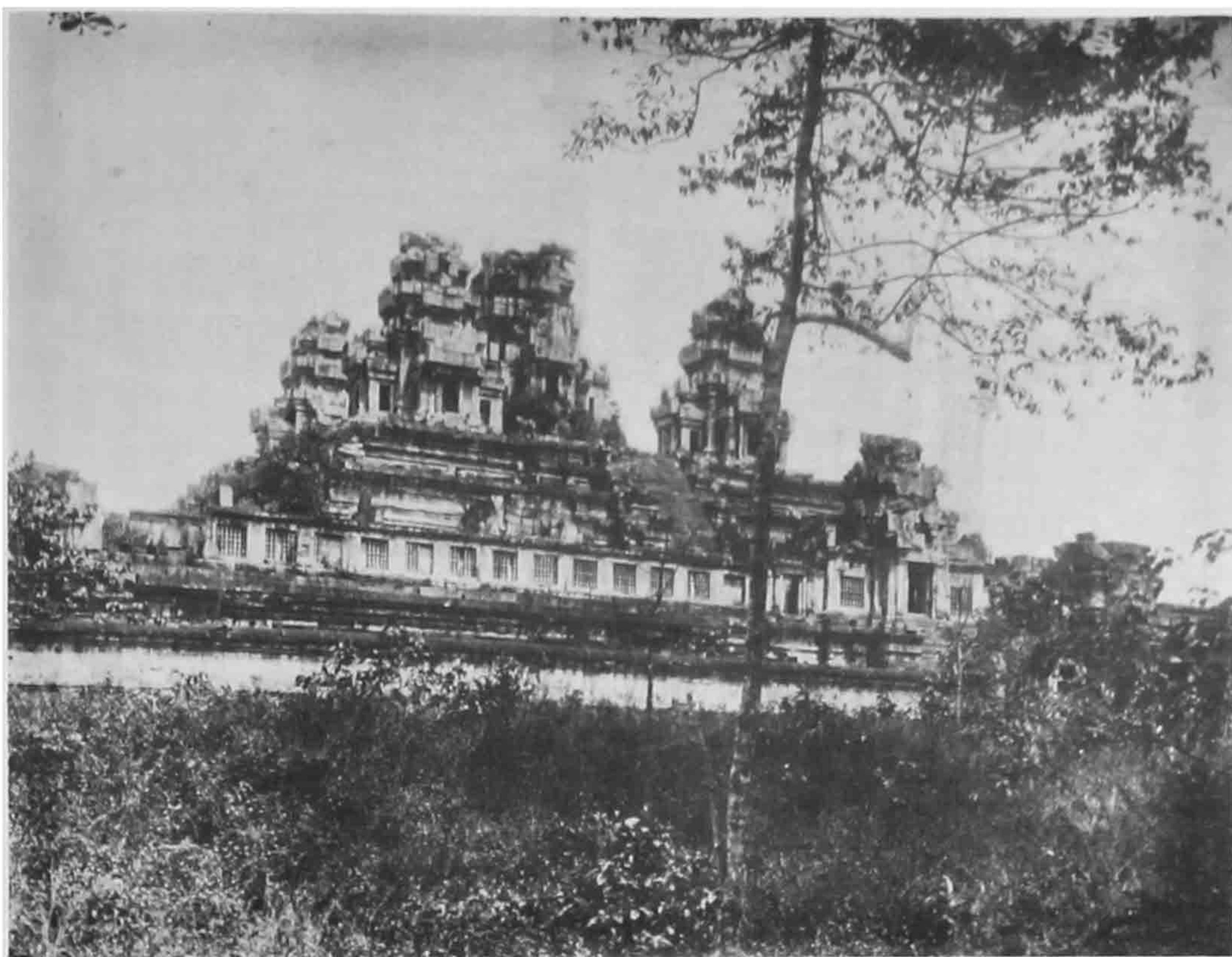
Inscriptions of King Yacovarman, who ruled between 889 and 910 A.D., state that in many convents founded by him offerings were given monthly to the monks in memory of those who died in war and for the forsaken.

There are other festivals which are the ceremony of the Ending of Vassa, the Kathina, the conclusion of the Rainy Season. A slight difference exists between them. In certain rites, some Brahmanical practices have survived. But they are not contrary to the Buddhist rules.

Nowadays there is a great wave of revival of Buddhism in Cambodia: Construction of new monasteries and schools of Pali in the different provinces of the Kingdom.

From early times, the Buddha-Jayanti was celebrated in the monasteries, but recently a new monument was erected in the commemoration of the Reception of





*Ankor (Takeo) Cambodge Vue generale prise du Sud-Est.*

the Relics of Buddha and of His two great disciples, Sariputta and Moggallana, which took place in Phom-penh in October 1952, under the high patronage of His Majesty the King of Cambodia. The Samdach Chiefs of the two Buddhist orders were present as well as some other Buddhist personalities.

Referring to these matters, we would like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that, there is a difference in time in the celebration of the 2500th Anniversary of the death of the Buddha. This is due to the fact that, in certain countries such as India and Burma, the celebration of the anniversary takes place at the beginning of the New Year, while in Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam the celebration takes place a year later. This is the reason for the difference of an year.

India and Ceylon will celebrate the anniversary of the Buddha Jayanti on May 24th, 1956, while in South East Asia the celebration will take place on May 13th, 1957.

We would like to mention, that on May 13th, 1957, according to our interpretation of the first part of the Buddhist Era, the anniversary will be celebrated in the capital, where a stupa has been erected in the centre where the Sacred Relics of the Buddha will be enshrined.

To conclude, we hope that the anniversary of the 2500th year of the Parinibbana will lay the foundation for the spread of Buddhism bringing peace to men of all creeds, races, and ideologies.



# BUDDHISM

by C. SIVARAMAMURTI

*Keeper, National Museum of India, New Delhi.*

**T**he story of the spread of Buddhism in India is as romantic as it is amazing and the indefatigable efforts of Asoka in this direction have contributed in no small measure to the spread of this faith. This great emperor always thought in terms of Dhamma. In his great empire he arranged for sermons in stones through his **Dhamma-lipis** that are found in every corner of his huge territory and mark as it were, the extent of his empire. One of his monuments on the border of Nepal marks the birth-place of Buddha in the Lumbini Garden, the present Rummindei. The pious emperor visited this place personally and set it up. The great monk Moggaliputta Tissa presided over the Third Council of Buddhists at Pataliputra called during the time of Asoka where the Theravadins triumphed over the Mahasanghikas who were more liberal in their interpretation of Vinaya and Dhamma than the conservative Theras, who ultimately with the increase in power of the Mahasanghikas had to seek refuge in Ceylon.

The great missionary activity of Asoka is recounted in the Ceylon chronicles that mention Kassapagotta, Majjhima and Dundhubhissara as teachers sent by him to the Himalaya

region. Archaeological excavations by Cunningham have confirmed the statement of the chronicles as this doyen of archaeology has found at Sanchi urns with inscriptions in letters of the Mauryan period "of the good man Kassapagotta, the teacher of all the Himalaya region," "of the good man Majjhima"; and at Sonari, Cunningham found urns with the inscriptions "of the good man Kassapagotta son of Koti, teacher of all the Himalaya region," "of the good man Majjhima son of Kodini," and "of the good man Gotiputta, of the Himalaya, successor of Dundhubhissara." The efforts of Asoka were crowned with success in distant parts of his empire and the seeds were laid by his missionaries in the Himalayan regions which were to bear fruit in course of time.

In a century after Buddha's death, the Second Council of Buddhists to condemn the heretical Bhikshus from Vaisali was called by Thera Yasa and at Pataliputra the Third Council was held under the presidency of Moggaliputta Tissa. The Fourth Council of the Buddhists was at Kundalavana in Kashmir under the presidency of Vasumitra in the reign of Kanishka. The commentary of the Mahasanghikas on the Tripitaka was now copied on sheets of copper after revision by Asvaghosha and enclosed in



a stupa. It was during the time of Nagarjuna and Aryadeva that philosophical speculations of the Mahayanists gained prominence. Nagarjuna's Sunyavada was followed by Maitreyanatha's Vijnanavada or the Yogachara system. With the element of bliss added to the earlier Sunya and Vijnana concepts of Nirvana, came Mahasukhavada which is the parent of Vajrayana that accounts for the rich Buddhist pantheon of gods and goddesses.

The Chinese traveller Fa-Hien writing in 400 A. D., tells us that the Mahayanists were specially devoted to Prajnaparamita, the mystical treatise produced by Nagarjuna and personified, Manjusri and Avalokitesvara. It is a strange course of events, but nevertheless the truth is this that at a time when there was a Brahmanical revival under the Guptas, Nalanda became a great centre of Mahayanist Buddhism and continued so in the 7th century, when Hiuen Tsiang visited it. It is rather surprising that even when the standard of morality was very high, Dharmapala, the Guru of Silabhadra had spoken with misgivings about the spreading cloud of irreligion as an impediment to the progress of Buddhism, as gradually the black arts of magic and sorcery were slowly creeping in. The highly ritualistic form of Buddhism or Tantricism was gaining strength.

It is about this time in the 8th century A. D., that Padmasambhava, the great master of the Yogachara school of Buddhism, came from Nalanda to Tibet at the invitation of king Khri-sronlde-btsan. Known in Tibet as Guru Rimpoche, he originated the Buddhism of this area as it obtains in the eastern Himalayas, well-known as Lamaism. He accepted some of the Bon deities by introducing them in the Buddhist pantheon and tactfully conciliated the Shamans or the priests of the earlier faith.

Though later this Lamaism developed into several sects, the main ones are the orthodox Ning-ma-pa "the red-capped sect," the Kar-gyu-pa "the white-capped sect," and the Ge-lug-pa "the yellow-

capped sect." The last, which is the sect of the Virtuous ones founded by Tsong-kha-pa in the 15th century, is strict in its monastic rules and principles and is today the dominant sect in Tibet.

The Lamaist church in Sikkim has its Lha-khang or house of prayer in almost the same form all over. The dim light, the faintly perfumed atmosphere, the gilded images and the maze of the frescoes adorning the walls of the monasteries, the crimson robes of the seated Lamas and the call of attention to the deities by the sound of cymbals, horns, drums and conches with the chant of prayers produces a strange effect which leaves a vivid impression on anyone who has seen it. Here, as in some of the Brahmanical temples, where the Sadagopa or the Pada of the deity are taken out to be placed on the head of the devotee in token of the blessing of the deity, a white scarf held up by the chief Lama before the great image of the Buddha for asking his blessing is brought and placed on the shoulders of the devotee in token of the mercy assured by the Lord. The mysterious invocation *om manipadme hum* "Hail to the jewel in the lotus, hail" is repeated as assiduously as any mantra is repeated by the most devoted Hindu in his Gayatrijapa. The prayer-wheel is turned over and over again reiterating mechanically this mystic formula in the hope that rebirth in the highest of the six worlds is possible and better still hell avoided. Monster prayer-wheels weighing 4,000 pounds, with this mystic formula engraved in bold letters all around and with several small rolls of this formula packed in it are found in the monasteries of Sikkim and some as on the steep mountain slope as in Dentam in Sikkim are similar cylinders fitted with water wheels continuously revolving through the power of the mountain stream as sources of happiness to the devotees of the faith.

The very sight of the Chortens or stupas over the remains of a mythical Buddha who preceded Gautama Buddha are believed to save men as they cleanse them of all their sins. These like the



Gopuras in South India have a strange appeal in the fond hope of their purificatory potency. Another sacred object is a casket with the seal of the Maharaja of Sikkim said to contain a stone bowl filled with holy water distributed among the devotees on a specified day in the month.

Apart from the gilded cylinders containing the "mani," a copy of the book *Bodhipathapradipa*, i. e., the way of attaining the Bodhi by Atisa is kept in these Buddhist temples. The Vajra, gong vessel of holy water and rosary are prominent in the Lamaist temple. A prominent altar with a covering of rich material contains the Ashtamangalas or the eight auspicious objects—the white parasol, pair of fish, conch, lotus, bowl, Srivatsa symbol, the Dhvaja standard and the wheel, respectively to ward off the heat of evil, to assure happiness, to suggest the blessedness of turning to the right, to suggest salvation or Nirvana, to symbolise all that is to be desired, to lead on to happiness and to lead to perfection. A tableau of seven jewels also here arranged would at once remind us of the Ratnas of Mandhata in the Jataka story—the wheel, elephant, horse, etc. Another group would show the seven offerings—the first three comprising of water, the fourth of flowers, the fifth of perfumed sticks, the sixth a lamp and the seventh food. This is the customary offering in receiving any guest or the worship of the deity in any household and is an ancient Indian custom which insists on Arghya, Padya, Achamaniya, Dhupa, Dipa and Naivedya being offered to the guest and the deity in proper worship.

The Buddhist monasteries of the Lamas are situated exactly like the ancient Sangharamas in India in remote places somewhat difficult of access on mountains and in the vicinity of lakes. The Talung monastery is one of the most sacred in Sikkim and is full of beautiful objects of artistic workmanship. Many objects from other monasteries were brought here for safety early in the 19th century and have remained undisturbed

and thanks to the careful scrutiny of the Maharaja are carefully preserved. The Ashtamangalas on the altar and the other paraphernalia are of excellent workmanship.

The most wealthy of all the monasteries in Sikkim today is that at Pomiongchi, which is within a day's journey from one of the first monasteries built in Sikkim at Sanga Chelling. Both these monasteries are picturesquely situated on mountain slopes and add to the interest of the natural beauty of the Himalayan range in this part of the country. In the Sikkim temple three large gilded images greet the eyes of the visitor above the altar—the central one of Gautama Buddha, with Guru Rimpoche and Cheresi on either side, the former the Indian monk Padmasambhava who founded Lamaism and the other Avalokitesvara, the Lord of Mercy and the patron deity of Lamaism. In his great mercy Avalokitesvara is believed to have refused to enter into Nirvana till all the beings on earth have been liberated and he is sometimes represented with innumerable heads and hands. The sacred formula **om manipadme hum** is a prayer attributed to him and is repeated by thousands all over. The monasteries have large libraries attached, which contain valuable books that are attracting the attention of scholars. The adi-Buddha carrying the thunderbolt and the bell can be compared to the Brahman or the Supreme One of the Hindu concept and ranks high in the bewildering maze of the later Buddhist pantheon. In recent years the presiding Lama of the Lachen gompa had earned such a great reputation spiritually that he was known as Gompchen or the great hermit and is believed to have reached the stage of Arahatship. To him the large-scale turning of the Wheel of Law through the largest monster Mani wheel, the largest in Sikkim, in the vicinity of his own temple, has no meaning at all, as virtue for him lies within the individual.

The art and culture of Sikkim that has always been a handmaid of the Faith draws its main inspiration from the



contiguous territory of Nepal and Tibet. Some of the finest specimens of calligraphy show the petrified form of 7th century Indian script introduced in Tibet by Sambhota from Magadha. The Thangkas or the large banner paintings and scrolls with diverse themes like the assemblage of gods, the wheel of life and transmigration, the Mandalas and astrological diagrams with the rich patterns and colours are only matched by the several images in metal prepared according to the method of *cire-perdu* or the lost-wax process and illustrate the amazing pantheon of Buddhist iconography. The amulet cases with representations of deities, the finely carved hand-prayer wheels, the metal-capped conch shells, bells, and thunderbolts of ritual, magic daggers and ornamented beaked vessels of exquisite workmanship are as beautiful as the rich and diverse robes and masks in gorgeous colours used by Lama dancers during the festivals to depict themes from the life of Buddha or the saints or some idea of religious import.

## LADAKH

In the 1st—2nd centuries of the Christian era, Ladakh was comprised in the great Kushana empire and an inscription in Kharoshthi letters at Khalatsi bears the name of the great king Vima Kadphises II. Hiuen Tsiang knows Ladakh only by hearsay as he had not visited the place. He mentions it as *mo-lo-so* region, which Cunningham identifies with Ladakh. Though in the 8th century Ladakh became a dependency of Tibet, the population here had not yet become Tibetan as it took sometime even for Guge that separates Ladakh from Tibet to be Tibetanised. But by the 10th century A. D., the process of Tibetanisation of Ladakh was far advanced and the inscriptions of Alchi dating back to the 11th—12th centuries A. D., mention the existence of Tibetans here. Buddhism which was the religion in this area was introduced from the Kashmir area with strong Indian cultural influen-

ces from the earliest times and Tibetan religious influence cannot be dated earlier than the 10th—11th centuries.

Before the introduction of Buddhism, the local animistic and totemistic beliefs of a religious system known as Bon prevailed. This earlier totemistic cult with the ibex as its sacred animal was supplanted by Buddhism in the Mauryan or Kushana period as is illustrated by the graffitoes representing the ibex in Ladakh overlaid with Buddhist figures of stupas and chaityas. In fact, even popular mythology has traces of this earlier belief as transformed in stories of local legends, one of which alludes to Buddha's birth as an ibex.

In the 7th century King Srong Tsan Gampo sent Thon mi Sambhota to study and bring Buddhist scriptures from Magadha which he did and it is this great scholar from Tibet who introduced a modified form of old Indian Nagari letters as the Tibetan alphabet which has remained almost petrified during the many centuries.

It was in the 8th century that Padma-sambhava, the great teacher from Nalanda came to Tibet at the request of the then king and introduced in Tibet the Yogachara school of Tantricism. His *Samayapanchasikha* was translated into Tibetan.

In the 10th century A. D., Acharya Atisa, a great scholar and missionary who had renounced his royal birth and riches for the wisdom of the Buddha and had become by his learning and equipment the head of the community of Buddhists of Magadha and Gauda, and head of the Vikramasila university at the instance of king Nayapala, was chosen to be invited to Tibet by king Chan-Chub to reform Tibetan Buddhism. Though Atisa was pre-occupied with the charge of many monasteries in India, under divine inspiration from the Goddess Tara, he made up his mind to visit Tibet and purged Tibetan Buddhism of its many corruptions. He was a prolific writer on Tibetan Buddhism, mostly on Vajrayana and translated several Sanskrit works into Tibetan. It may here



he incidentally remarked that the first Indian to taste tea was Atisa on the Tibetan soil as he was entertained with this beverage by his Tibetan hosts.

It is to about this time, i. e., the 10th century A. D., that the Alchi Monastery, the oldest in Ladakh, has to be assigned, though the most famous one today at Hemis is one of the many founded by king Sen-ge-rnam-ryal who did so much for Buddhism in Ladakh in the 17th century A. D. Though later Lamaism developed to in several sects, the three main ones today are the orthodox Ning-ma-pa "the red-capped sect," the Kar-gyu-pa "the white-capped sect," and the Ge-lug-pa "the yellow-capped sect." The first one was founded by Padmasambhava in the 8th century. The yellow-capped sect (Ge-lug-pa) which is the sect of the virtuous ones founded by Tsong-kha-pa in the 15th century enforces monastic rules and discipline and is today the dominant sect in Tibet, of which the "Priest King" Dalai Lama is the head and the Tashi Lama, the spiritual leader. The heads of important monasteries are considered continuous incarnations of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. As Avalokitesvara, who was ripe for release, was agonised by the misery of the people on earth at the moment of such a merciful being leaving them, he vowed to remain a Bodhisattva and help suffering humanity and refused to enter Nirvana till every being on earth was saved. Dalai Lama is believed to be the continuous incarnation of this Avalokitesvara.

The Buddhist pantheon of Tibet which is also that of Ladakh comprises of many gods and goddesses—the Dhyani Buddhas, the Manushi Buddhas, the Bhaishajya Buddhas or medicinal Buddhas, Maitreya the future Buddha, the Bodhisattvas or potential Buddhas Taras, Marichi, the Lokapalas, Jambhallas and several other gods and goddesses. The monasteries in Ladakh, as in other parts of Tibet, contain stucco figures, wood carvings and Tanka paintings illustrating the beliefs of transmigration, state between death and rebirth, magic circles and astrological diagrams, as also

gods and goddesses of the pantheon. The great formula "**om manipadme hum**" is believed to be the most potent saving factor. The utterance of this and the movement of the prayer-wheel are believed to assure everything.

La-drags-rgyal-rabs the Ladakhi version of the ancient traditions pertaining to the Tibetan royal house gives the entire story of Buddha as we find it in the Lalitavistara. The genealogy of the Sakyas is given in detail. The story goes that Buddha-Siri, the third son of Prasenajit of Kosala who belonged to the family of Buddha was mysteriously chosen by the Tibetans as their king and brought prosperity to their realm and the whole succession of kings is enumerated. These are all reminiscent of the close connection between the land of the origin of Buddha and the land that adopted his faith.

## BHUTAN

Bhutan like Sikkim is the neighbour of both Tibet and Nepal from both of which it draws its cultural inspiration and it is Lamaism as is found in Tibet that prevails here as also in Bhutan. This Buddhism of Tibet, which is transformed into something very different from the earliest form of the religion, is as full of deities as of ritual that form an interesting phase in the study of later Buddhism.

It was in the 8th century that this Lamaism was introduced in Tibet by Padmasambhava, the monk who came to Tibet at the invitation of king Khri-sron-lde-btsan. He is known as Guru Rimpoche and being very highly honoured is represented by images usually placed along with that of Avalokitesvara or the God of Mercy on either side of Buddha himself in all the monasteries.

It was however in the 10th century A. D., that Atisa, who came from the Vikramasila University that reformed Tibetan Buddhism and spent several years of his life devoting himself to his writings on Tibetan Buddhism pertai-



ning to Vajrayana and translating several Sanskrit works into Tibetan.

The monastery at Poonakha, well-lit, and decorated with fresco paintings and silken ceiling cloth and banners, with splendid examples of Bhutanese art-ware, and containing a thousand images of Buddha, is an excellent example of the type. Similarly the Ta-lo and Norbugang monasteries also contain fine specimens of art in addition to miniature silver caskets of fine workmanship, highly chased and jewelled, for containing the ashes of saints.

Here as in Sikkim the giant Mani prayer wheel rotates ever and anon to assure the great spiritual efficacy of the mystic utterance *om manipadme hum*, of which several rolls are packed in it. The smaller hand prayer wheels in motion are also a familiar sight all over.

The craftsman of Bhutan unlike the one from Sikkim who shows Nepalese influence is influenced to some extent by Chinese tradition and every work of art is distinguished by this peculiar trait. There is here less of Indian and more of Burmese and Siamese traces in the art of Bhutan. The amulets, hand-bells, the temple bells, the prayer wheels, carved wooden frames, lamps, tea-pots, bowls, daggers, horns are all excellent specimens of this type of work. The banners and scrolls with their picturesque themes of the wheel of life, the assemblage of gods, the magic circle and so forth are all similar to the Tibetan banners from elsewhere and the inscriptions are always in that picturesque script which is no other than the petrified letters of the 7th century introduced from Magadha into Tibet by Sambhota at the instance of king Srong-Tsan-Gampo.





# BUDDHISM in JAPAN

BY KUNIKIDA DOKU, D. Litt.

## I. The Introduction of Buddhism to Japan

**B**uddhism was introduced to Japan in 552, when king Seimei of Kudara, the country which occupied the southern part of the Korean Peninsula, presented the Emperor Kimmei of Japan with a golden image of Sakyamuni, some Mahayana sutras, and some Abhidharma sastras.

The religion of Japan prior to the introduction of Buddhism was Shintoism the main object of whose worship was Amaterasu Omikami or the Sun Goddess, the ancestor of the Imperial Family. In Shintoism are also worshipped many other gods, who are deifications of natural objects or of persons of historical importance. There arose a great controversy between conservatives and progressionists as to whether Buddhism should be adopted in Japan. The conflict between the two parties caused one of the three greatest difficulties in the history of Japan.

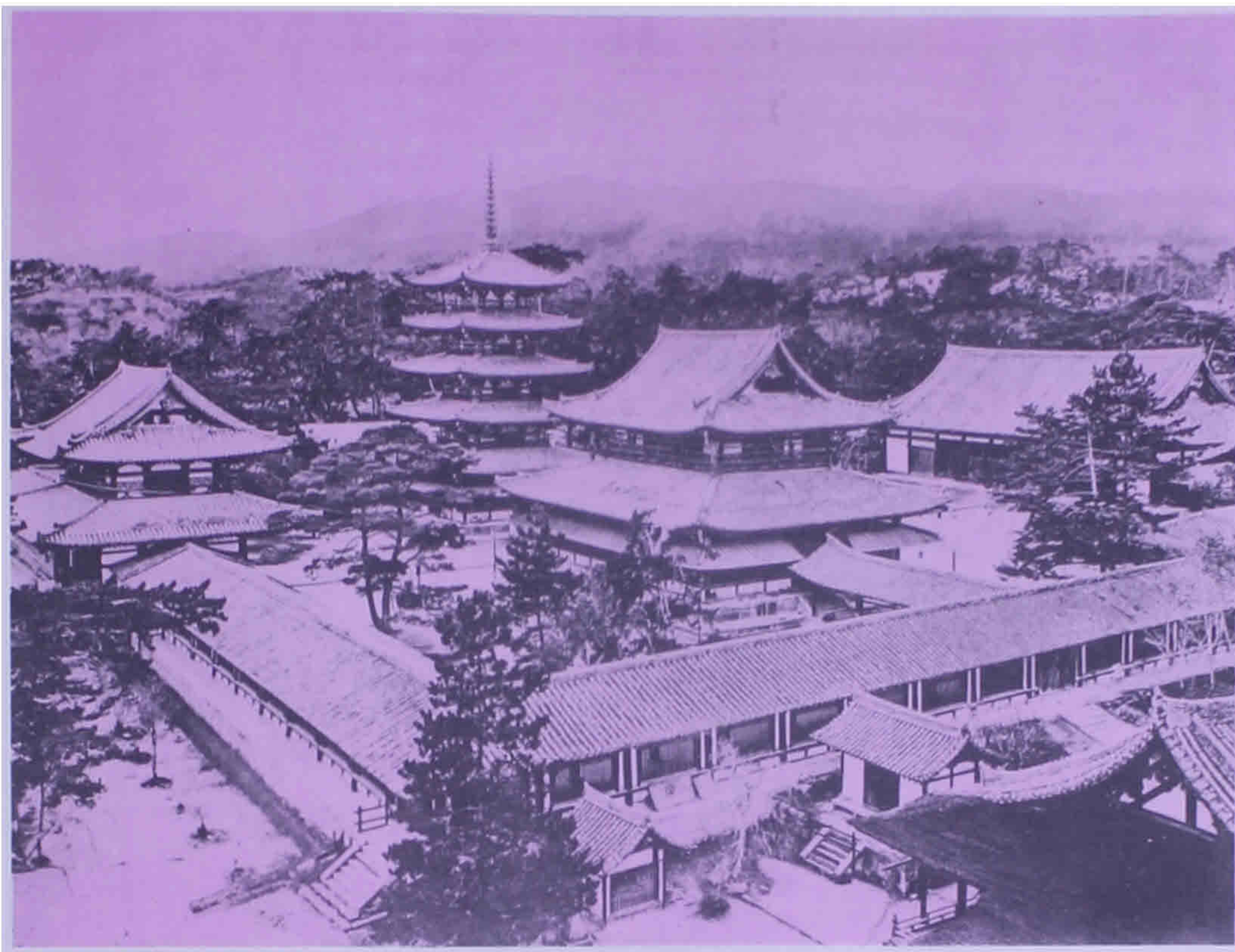
The conflict was settled in favour of Buddhism when Prince Shotoku (ruled 593-622) became regent to the Empress Suiko. Shotoku Taishi or Crown Prince Shotoku has been worshipped by Japanese Buddhists as the Buddha Sakyamuni of Japan. He taught that the

Japanese nation should take refuge in the Three Treasures (*Ti-ratana*). The sutras known to him were Chinese translations of Sanskrit texts. He studied especially the **Saddharmapundarika** and two others, on three of which he made commentaries. He devoted himself to realizing the ideal of Buddhism in everyday life of individuals as well as society in general. By his order many temples were built, furnished with dispensaries, clinics, hospitals, orphanages, and old people's homes; many wells were dug, and roads opened. Architecture and other fields of art were encouraged under his patronage. He is not only the father of Japanese Buddhism, but also that of Japanese culture.

## II. The Spread of Buddhism in Japan

Under the patronage of Prince Shotoku, Horyuji Temple at Nara, Shitennoji Temple at Osaka, and many other temples were built. Horyuji Temple is the oldest wooden building now extant in the world. By the end of the Nara Period (710-794) the famous Seven Great Nara Temples were completed. Todaiji Temple, one of the seven, which was founded by the Emperor Shomu, enshrines the Great Buddha of Nara. The grandeur of the bronze image, which was completed in 749, tells us how far the Emperor devoted himself to enhancing





*Horyuji Temple at Nara*

the teaching of the Buddha. His Edict announcing the making of this image remarks, "It is easy to make an image of the Buddha, but it is not easy to make all the nation follow the teaching of the Buddha. In order to propagate the Sublime Teaching, I hope that everyone of the nation should contribute something, be it a stem of grass or a particle of sand." After the completion of Todaiji Temple, the Emperor made it the headquarters of Buddhism in Japan (Sokokubunji) and established a regional center for monks (Kokubunji), another for nuns (Kokubunniji) in every province throughout the country.

Temples in the Nara Period were places for the study of Buddhism a kind of Buddhist college. They were built on level land for the convenience of students.

In the Heian Period (794-1192), temples were built in the depths of mountains for training monks. Women were prohibited from entering these temples. But the temples in the Heian Period are common with those in the Nara Period in that they were built for the clergy, not for the laity. They were open to public only for a specified period. In the Kamakura Period (1192-1333), however, most temples were built for laymen. Honen (the founder of the Jodo-shu Sect, 1133-1212), Shinran (the founder of the Shin-shu Sect, 1173-1262), Nichiren (the founder of the Nichiren Sect, 1222-1282) and others propagated their faiths among common people in order to share the compassion of the Buddha with them. Shinran taught at any place, at any time, anyone and everyone, man or





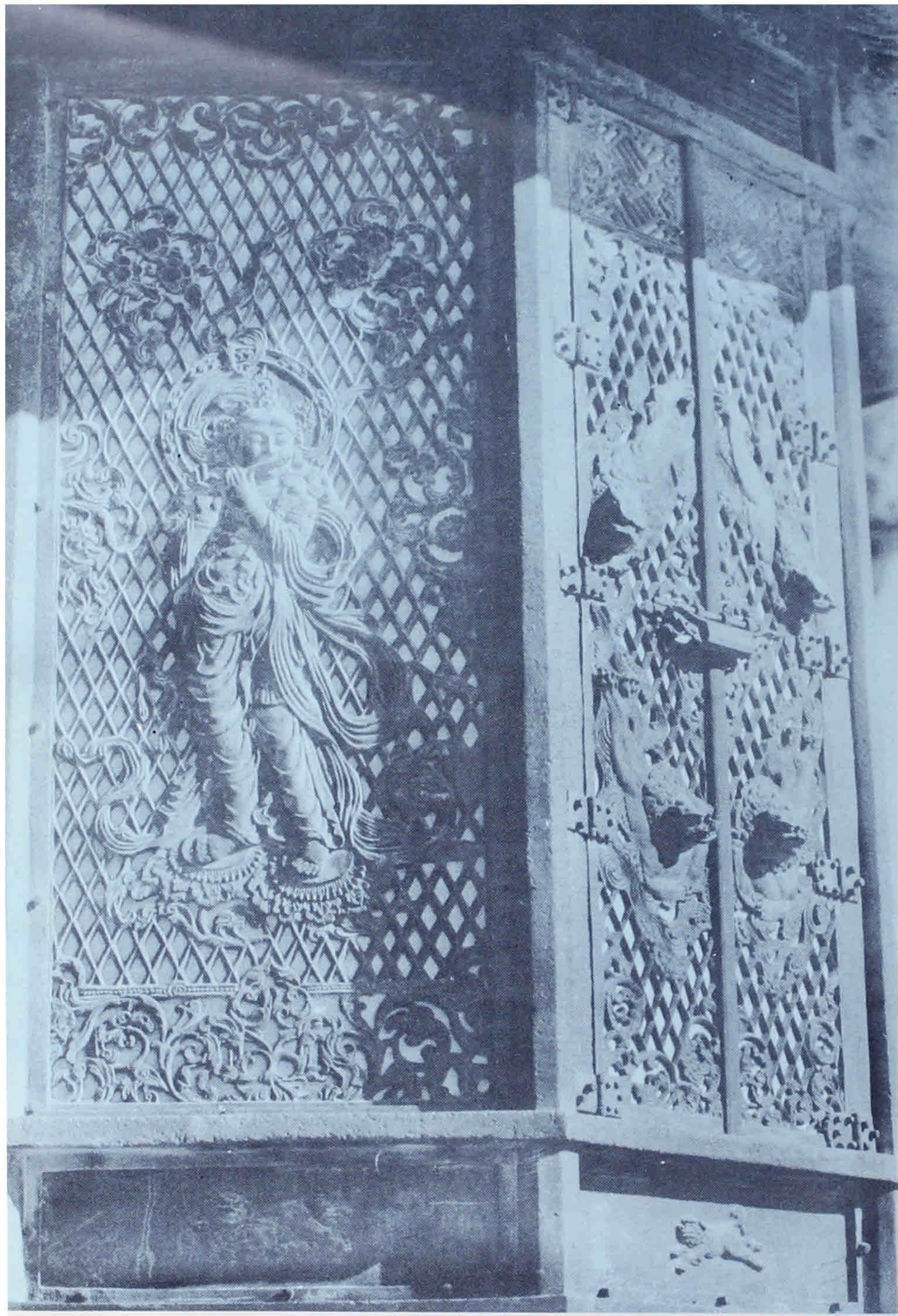
*The Bronze Image at Todaiji Temple, Nara.*





*Daibutsu-den of the Todaiji Monastery Hall of Grand Buddha.*





*Onjo-bosatsu Musician Bodhisata of To-dai-ji monastery.*

woman, noble or humble, virtuous or vicious. Nichiren preached at street-corners. Thus Japanese Buddhism became the Buddhism for laymen, putting stress more on faith, than on study or

training. As the result, many viharas and stupas were built throughout the country so that the smallest village has one or more sangharamas and Buddhist priests are seen preaching not in temples but also in the homes of lay followers.

### **III. Its Influence on the Life and Thought of the People**

Forty-three of ninety-three Emperors tonsured from the introduction of Buddhism to the dawn of the Meiji Period. The members of the Imperial family who took the Buddhist vow are countless. The Emperor Go-mizuno-in (1596-1680) wrote a novel, the *Kocho*, in which was revealed the ideal of Buddhism that all beings, including birds, beasts, grass, trees and even land itself, will attain to Buddhahood through the great benevolence (*maha metta*) and compassion (*maha karuna*) of the Buddha. To a helmet used by a Japanese warrior was attached a small image of Buddha, reminding him that an enemy is also a son of the Buddha. Many tales

are told of Japanese **Samurai** that some warriors treated warmly the bodies of enemies and their bereaved families, or that some entered into monastic life on seeing death in the field.



Love of purity and cleanliness has been one of the characteristics of the Japanese nation from ancient times. Buddhism appealed to them in that it stresses purification of mind (*sacitta-pariyodapanam*). One cannot purify oneself by bathing alone (*na udakena suci hoti*). To purify mind is more important to Buddhists. Japanese mountaineers repeat when climbing the phrase 'Rokkon Shojo,' which means, "May the six senses (*cha-ajjhakkani ayatanani*) be purified" Japanese Buddhists do not like hunting (*panatipata*). They decline fish for fun. It is not rare that they chant a sutra for the repose of dead silk-moths. In olden times Imperial Edicts were promulgated to prohibit hunting or to furnish safety-zones for birds and beasts. Stealing, adultery, deception, and other vices have been regarded as against the teaching of the Buddha. Parents tell their children, "If you tell a lie, your tongue will be pulled out by the devil in hell."

Japanese Buddhists have been more or less lenient to drinking (*suramerayapana*). From ancient times Japanese people have been accustomed to offer the Japanese liquor sake to the Japanese Shinto gods. The sake corresponds to *sura*, because it is made from rice. It seems that since the

earlier part of the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868) sake has been used, though reservedly in some Buddhist temples. Vegetarianism is occasionally observed in temples as well as in devout families.

*Amita-nyorai (Amitabha) of Hoodo hall, Byode-in monastery.*





1. *Dainidri-nyorai (Vairocana)*  
*of Enjo-ji monastery.*

2. *Shaka-nyorai (Sakyamuni)*  
*of Muro-ji monastery.*

3. *Kannon-bosatsu (Avalotitesuara)*  
*of Yumedo, Horyuji monastery.*

4. *A Buddha Puja ceremony at a Japanese*  
*Buddhist Temple.*

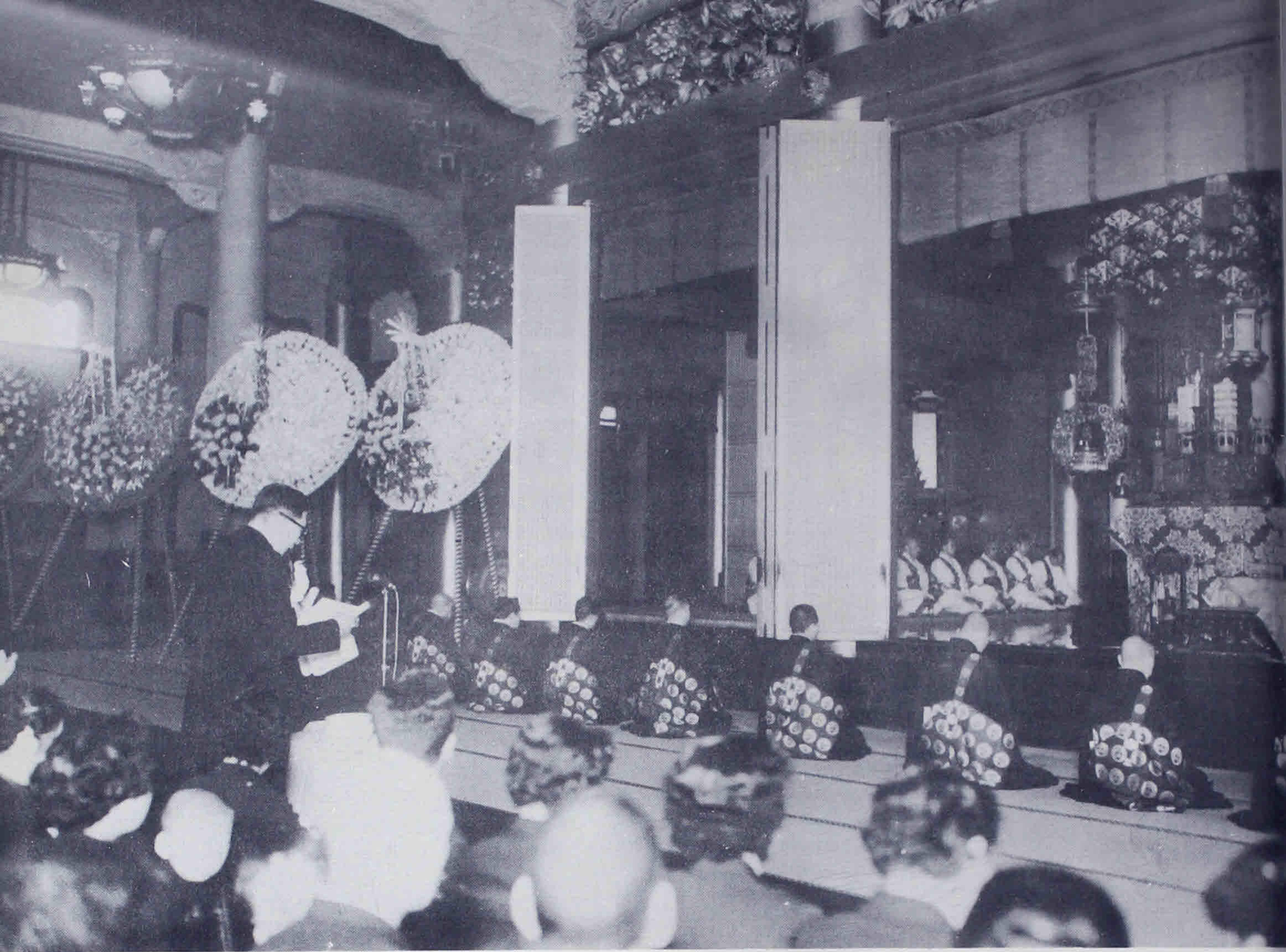
5. *Japanese Buddhist monks meditating*  
*at a Buddha Puja ceremony*



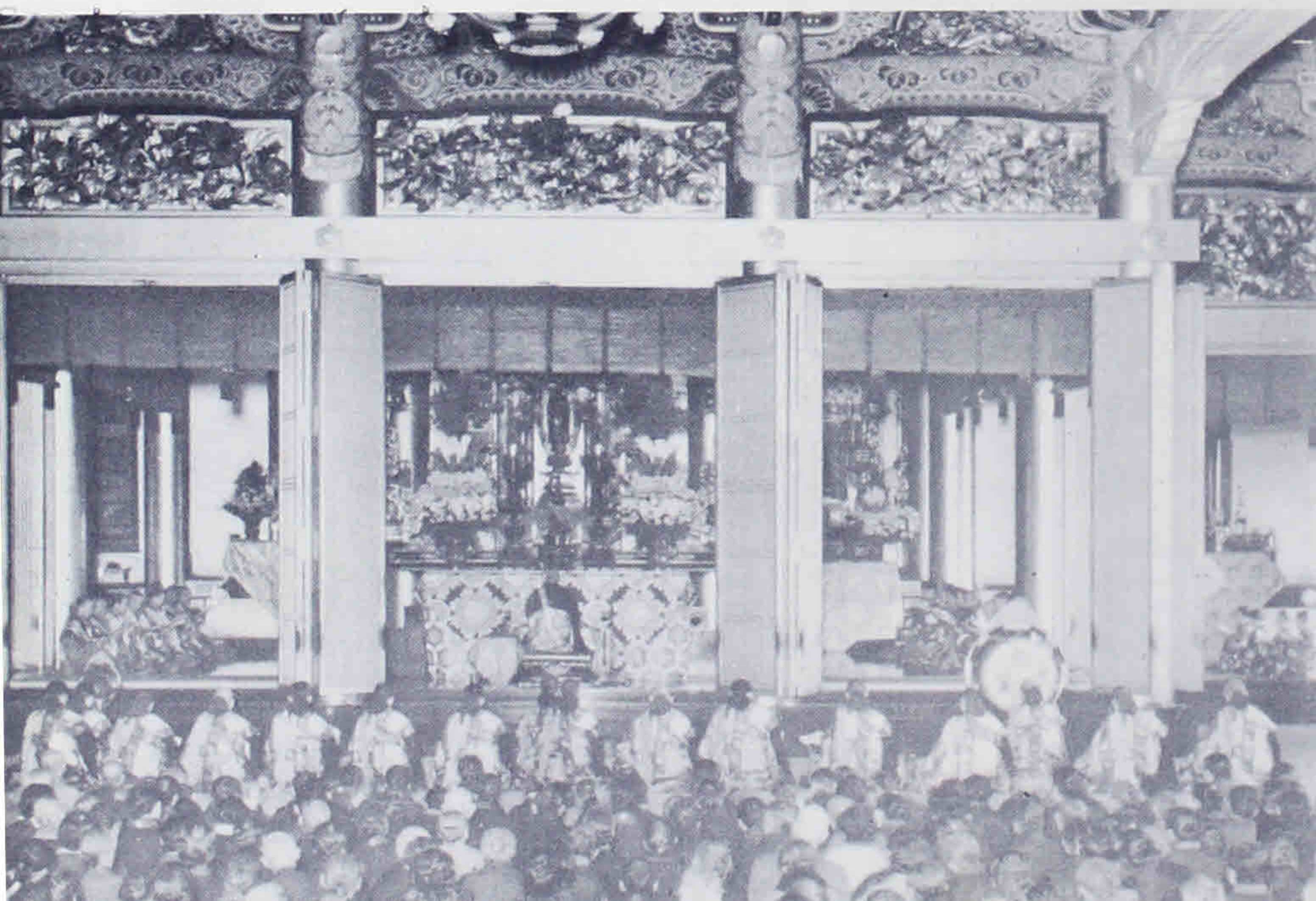








*A Lay Devotee Expresses His Gratitude to the Buddha  
in a Service held at Tsukiji Honganji Temple, Tokyo.*



*A Service in Honour of the Buddha, being  
held at Tsukiji Honganji Temple, Tokyo.*



Almost all the national festivities of Japan are derived from Buddhist ideas or associated with Buddhist faith. Of them the most popular ones are the **Bon** or the Ullambana Festival and the **Higan** or the two Equinoctial Observances.

The far-reaching variety of change of seasons in Japan enriches the country with beauty of nature. Japanese people who live in such a beautiful country are in nature happy and optimistic. They enjoy the beauty of springtime flowers, verdure in summer, tinted leaves in autumn, and snow in winter. But, after they were taught the pathos of nature by Buddhism they learned to appreciate the meaningfulness of the falling of flowers or leaves, and other declines. This realization of the pathos of nature as well as the appreciation of the beauty of nature has become the main theme of Japanese literature.

Japanese people clap their hands in front of Shinto shrines. The way of anjali or joining hands was introduced by Buddhism, and now practised more widely than clapping. Japanese people have a feeling of reverence not only to the Buddha, but also to parents, teachers, even to natural objects. This is also an influence of Buddhism.

#### IV. Its Contribution to Art, Architecture, Sculpture, and Literature of the People

It would be difficult to find Japanese art, architecture, sculpture, and literature which have no trace of influence of Buddhism. Buildings, sculptures, and paintings designated as national treasures are 99% Buddhist. Horyuji Temple is famous not only for its being the oldest wooden building in the world but also for its architectural beauty which also vies with the highest standard of modern science. Many Buddhist images designated as national treasures represent the exquisite art of Japanese iconography. Most of the authors of the Japanese classic were Buddhist priests. The **Taiheiki**, which was written by a Buddhist priest in the Heian Period, is sometimes called

the Bible of Japan. The **Yokyoku**, or **Utai**, a kind of poetry popular among refined people, which was originated in the Muromachi Period (1392-1573), is said to have been composed primarily for the purpose of teaching the Buddhist truth of causality and samsara to common people. The Japanese alphabet beginning with "I Ro Ha," which was invented by Kobo Daishi (the founder of the Shingon Sect, 773-835), is a translation of the famous verses "*anicca vata samkhara, uppavayadhammino, uppajjitva nirujjhanti, tesam vupassamo sukho.*" Thus, the first lesson to Japanese Children is made so as to teach them the Buddhist truth. Many songs composed during the Tokugawa Period were sung for the purpose of stopping evil deeds and encouraging to do good (*sabbapapassa akaranam kusalassa upasampada*). During the Meiji Period (1868-1912), Western civilization was imported only to affect some part of intelligent people, the bulk of common people remaining as Buddhists as ever.

#### V. Salient Features in the Rituals Peculiar to Japan

It seems that before the Kamakura Period the Buddhist rituals were performed according to the Chinese style, which is a modification of the Indian style. Buddhist sects created in the Kamakura Period, which stressed deliverance of common people rather than training of monks, performed rituals simpler than those of the older sects, affecting the mode of temple building. For instance, temples of the Shin-shu Sect have spacious room for laymen, while the halls of the temples of the older sects are mostly occupied with seats and instruments to be used for complicated rituals, leaving only a small portion of room for laymen.

Cremation was not known to the Japanese prior to the introduction of Buddhism. Japanese people call cremation **Dabi**, which is supposed to derive from the Pali *jhapeti*, to burn. The robes used by Japanese Buddhist priests are



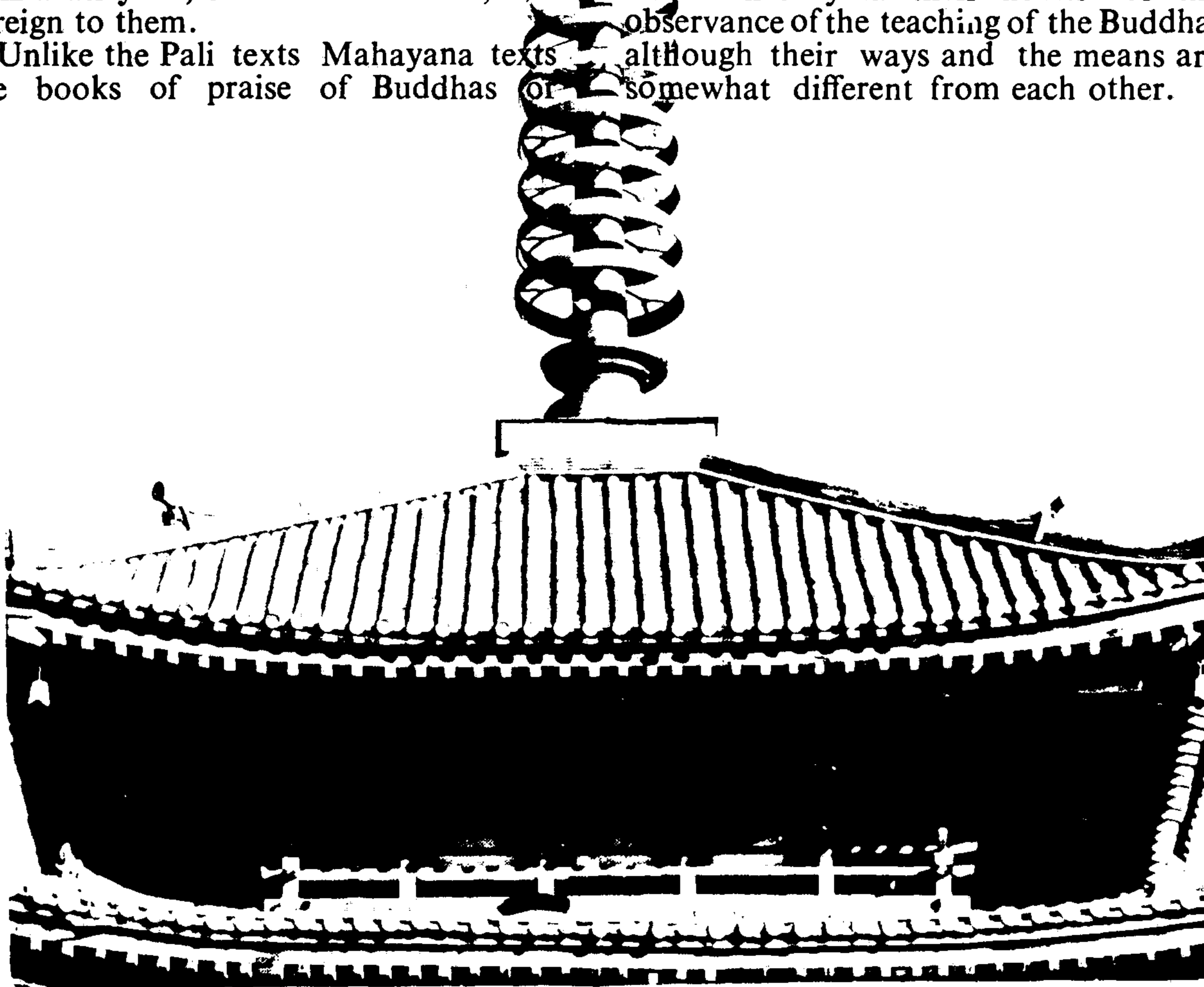
varied in color and shape according to sects and ranks, and also to occasions on which they are used. This is very Theravada Buddhism.

## VI. Special Doctrinal Differences

Japanese Buddhist sects are based on Mahayana Buddhist texts translated into Chinese from the Sanskrit originals. Most of the Pali texts were also translated into Chinese through their Sanskrit versions, but are devalued by Japanese sects because of the overvaluation of the Mahayana texts. Accordingly the texts which carry faithfully the words and deeds of the Buddha, such as the Agama-sutras, are almost ignored in Japan. On the other hand, Mahayana texts are not known to Southern Buddhists, so the most popular sutra in Japan, such as the *Saddharmapundarika*, the *Sukhavativyuha*, or the *Avatamsaka*, are foreign to them.

Unlike the Pali texts Mahayana texts are books of praise of Buddhas or

philosophy. They are the products of adoration of Buddhists, not the records of actual events. It seems proper to divide Buddhism into two: one relating to the one who is worshipped, the other to those who worship. Japanese Buddhism belongs to the latter. In Southern Buddhism monks are worshipped as the Buddha; in Japan priests worship the deputy of the Buddha, sitting together with laymen. Japanese Buddhists resort to the great benevolence and compassion of the Buddha, rather than to the power of training oneself. Shinran realized that he had no power to attain to Buddhahood by himself and that it is only through the wonderful power of the Buddha that he will be saved. There is no Bhikkhu in Japan as is meant by Theravada Buddhism. But I believe that Japanese Buddhists are not second to their friends in the South in that they have sincerity in their hearts for the observance of the teaching of the Buddha, although their ways and the means are somewhat different from each other.





# BUDDHISM

IN

# CHINA

By CHOU SHU-CHIA

Deputy Secretary-General of the Buddhist Association of China



Buddhism was introduced into China during the first century A. D. At that time the Madhyamika School was flourishing in India, and so China accepted the Mahayana thought of the Madhyamika School at the very beginning. From the opening years of the Later Han Dynasty to the end of the Wei Dynasty during the Three Kingdom Period (i. e., 25-264 A. D.), it was the period of inception of Buddhism in China. Since the wide circulation and learning of the Maha-prajna-paramita-sutra at the end of the Wei Dynasty, the Chinese Buddhists began to propagate this sutra by copying, annotating, preaching and debating on it. At the beginning of the fifth century (during the Later Chin Period 384-417 A. D.), Kumarajiva came to China, and his profound learning of the Madhyamika School and his fluent style of translations of the Buddhist scriptures surpassed those of all his predecessors. At the same time the Four Agamas of the Sravakayana and the Vinayas of the different schools were translated into Chinese one after the other. Thus Buddhism in China possessed a complete set

of the holy scriptures and afforded its followers a way of practice. Since then many experts of Buddhism emerged, some being teachers of Dharma who engaged themselves in theoretical researches, teachers of Dhyana who solely practised meditation, and still others, teachers of Vinaya who made analytical studies of the Vinaya. And there were also many different kinds of views regarding the teachings of Buddhism, arising from different scriptures, upon which these views were based. The arguments and disputes arising from these different views furthered the study of Buddhism to a deeper degree. During the sixth century (during the Liang Dynasty and the middle of the Northern Wei Period), the Yoga School of Buddhism was gradually developed in India. Since then most of the Indian teachers who came to China belonged to the Yoga School, such as Bodhiruci and Ratnamati who came during the Northern Wei Period and Paramartha who was in China at the end of the Liang and in the beginning of the Chen Dynasties. They propagated many of the works of the Yoga School. The various schools of Chinese Buddhism, each having its own particular points,



were founded successively. The first one was the Tien Tai School, founded by the venerable Chih Yi at the beginning of the seventh century with a newly created system of thought to mediate between the theories of the Madhyamika and the Yoga Schools. The "Three Treatises" School (basing on the **Madhyamika-sastra**, the **Satasastra** and the **Dvadasanikaya-sastra**) was also founded to propagate the teachings of the Madhyamika School. Being discontent with the different views and not knowing which was right, the venerable Hsuan-chuang went to India with a resolution to acquire a complete and thorough solution of the question at the beginning of the Tang Dynasty. After going through many hardships he arrived in India where he studied Buddhism, and returned to China, spending altogether seventeen years abroad. When he had returned home he translated a great number of sutras and sastras into Chinese (of the 5,000 volumes of translated works as collected in the existing Chinese Tripitaka, one-fifth was done by him alone). His disciple, the venerable Kuei-chi, succeeded him in his system of thought and founded the Tzu En School. Bodhidharma who came to China in the middle of the fifth century, advocated the knowledges of Dhyana, and this system of thought later developed into the Dhyana School in the middle of the Tang Dynasty. The schools that proposed to harmonize the theories of the Tien Tai, Tzu En and Dhyana School with another system of thought, was the Hsien Shou School, founded by the venerable Fa-tsang. During the eighth century when the Esoteric School flourished in India, two Indian teachers, Vajramati and Amogha, introduced the theories of this school into China. The Pure Land School which taught its followers to repeat the name of the Amita Buddha so as to be reborn in the Western Paradise, and the Vinaya School which chiefly devoted in the study and practice of the Vinaya rules, were also founded one after the other during the seventh and the eighth centuries. The

seventh and the eighth centuries were the golden time of Buddhism in China, and the various schools and sects which became prevalent among the Chinese Buddhists afterwards, were all founded during this period. It was also in this period that Buddhism was introduced into Tibet from the interior of China on the one hand, and directly from India on the other hand. And this was the Former Period of Buddhism in Tibet. During the tenth century (Sung Dynasty) the Esoteric School was again introduced into the land of Han from India, and at the same time it was also brought into Tibet and formed the Later period of Buddhism in Tibet, laying the foundation of the Tibetan Buddhism which is prevalent to-day. At the end of the twelfth century (the beginning of the Yuan Dynasty) Buddhism of the Pali system gradually spread among the Tai tribe in Yunnan province, and Tibetan Buddhism was also introduced into Mongolia. Thus the southern Buddhism of the Pali system and the northern Buddhism of the Chinese and Tibetan systems were all disseminated in China.

Since the introduction of Buddhism into China during the Han Dynasty, it was always studied and propagated, although not without hindrances, throughout the succeeding Tsin, the Six Dynasties, Tang, Sung, Yuan and Ming Dynasties. The salient points of Chinese Buddhism are that it advocates all the three "yanas," but lays stress on Mahayana teachings, and that under the guiding thought of "benefitting all sentient beings and purifying the world," the Chinese Buddhists positively promote the good traditions of Buddhism and obtain their own liberation by working for the liberation of others.

At the end of the Ching Dynasty when imperialism invaded China, Buddhism suffered the same fate as the original culture of China (and the Buddhists also shared the common fate of the Chinese people). Buddhism was rejected and the Buddhists were despised, Buddhist temples and monasteries being



demolished and destroyed. During the forty years before the liberation, there were however many enthusiastic Buddhists who tried with utmost effort to renovate and bring about a renaissance of Buddhism, but they all wasted their time and energy without any achievement.

In 1949 China was liberated, and under the protection of the policy of religious freedom (which was first fixed in the Common Programme and is now prescribed in the Constitution) as adopted by the Communist Party and the People's Government, the religious faith of Buddhists is protected and respected, and the political and social status of Buddhists is unprecedentedly elevated. Many of the important Buddhist temples and monasteries which were damaged before the liberation, have been repaired or reconstructed by the people's Government. In June, 1953, the Buddhist Association of China, which is constituted by the leading Buddhists of the various regions, nationalities and schools of all the China, was founded in Peking. In August, 1955, the second (expanded) session of the Board of Directors, the Buddhist Association of China, was convened in Peking and it was resolved to found Buddhist Academy of China for the purpose of educating competent persons to disseminate the Dharma. The meeting also passed a resolution that the Buddhists should positively promote the good traditions of Buddhism, maintain the purity of the Tathagata's holy

teachings, support the socialistic reconstruction of our mother country and protect world peace.

A number of regional Buddhist associations have now been established one after the other, and the Buddhist followers of the different areas in the whole country have already made a certain amount of achievements in the study and practice of Buddhism, as well as in the promotion of the good traditions of Buddhism. Owing to the full realization of the positive Buddhist spirit of "benefiting all sentient beings and purifying the world," Buddhists are now supported and esteemed in society. Now, the Buddhists of China, under the leadership of the Buddhist Association of China, are working hard with a full confidence together with the people of the whole country for our socialistic reconstruction, for protecting world peace and for the further promotion of the good traditions of Buddhism.

1956 is the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's Nirvana. The Chinese Buddhists do not have, however, quite the same calculation as regards the year in which the Buddha entered Nirvana, with the Buddhists of the various southern Buddhist countries, but we also have a great esteem for the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's Nirvana, which is to be held in 1956, and therefore the Chinese Buddhists are making due preparations for the celebration and will undertake a series of memorial works for the occasion.

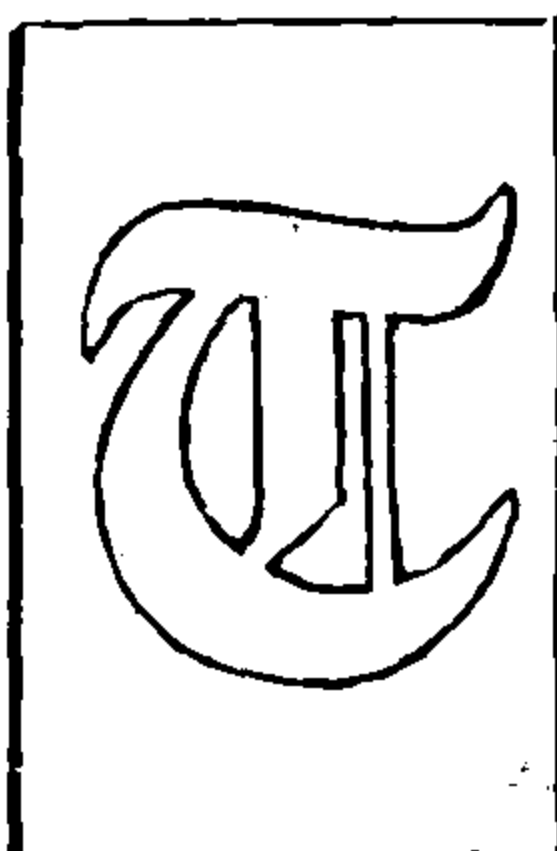


## AJĀTASATRU SŪTRA<sup>1</sup>

# 佛說末生冤家經。

*Translated from the Original Chinese*

by Ven. Pandit Maditiyawela Sumangala Thera



Thus have I heard: Once upon a time the Blessed One was staying in the kingdom of Rājagruha ( राजगृह wēng-shi-kuo), on the mountain called the Vultures Peak ( गिरिकूट chi-shan-chung.) Now at that time, all the gods (tien), dragons (lung), ghosts (kui), deities (shen), emperors (ti), kings (wang), ministers (chên) and people came to the Buddha and made obeisance unto him.

They then made many offerings to the Buddha in conformity with the prevailing custom. When Dévadatta saw these offerings he was overwhelmed with jealousy.

He returned from Gijjhakūta and spoke thus:—to Ajātasatru, the prince (太子末生冤 tai-tzū-wēi-shian-shên). “Your father, the king, spends all the country’s wealth in offerings to the Buddha and his disciples: If this continues the nation’s wealth will be depleted and exhausted before-long.

You had better put into effect your plan to ascend the throne (and become king), and I will raise an army to conquer the Buddha. You can thus become the king and I the Buddha. Is this not a feasible plan to obtain our proper positions? I am quite sure you will succeed if you attempt it.”

When Dévadatta and the prince Ajātasatru had thus conspired, the latter<sup>2</sup> instructed the minister of war (minister in charge of armed forces) to keep the armies in readiness, and further ordered him:—“When the king returns, take his royal seal and imprison him.” Later when king Bimbisāra returned, the minister of war immediately, arrested him. At that moment the king’s mind was calm and quiet. He reflected on it as the result of his previous misdeeds; therefore he had no fear whatsoever, but renewed his confidence in the teaching of the Buddha. However the king said:—“Oh, have I committed any crime that I should receive such a punishment?”

1. The Ajātasatru Sūtra ( अजातशत्रु सूत्र Fo-shuo-wēi-shên-yüan-ching) which is attributed to the Buddha (Buddha Bhāsita Ajātasatru Sūtra) taken for my Visva-Bhārati University research Diploma Course on Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism, belongs to the Mahāyāna School of Buddhism, which is not found in Thēravāda canon or Tripitaka. I have found only a few references to this theme in the Pāli Tripitaka and its commentaries. (1) Ajātasattu Kumāra Vatthu, Cullavagga Pāli, Sinhalese Edition part 1. pp. 177, 178. (2) Sāmaññaphala Sutta in Digha-Nikāya, 35-66. pp. (3) Sāmaññaphala Sutta Vannanā, Sumangala Vilāsini, S. E. pp. 95, 97. (4) Dhammapadattha Kathā, Dévadatta Vatthu. S. E. pp. 70, 71. 佛說末生冤家經. (Fo-shuo-wēi-shên-yüan-ching) the Buddha Bhāsita Ajātasatru Sūtra belongs to the Chinese Miscellaneous works. ( 雜記 ) chi-chiang is the name of the translator, who was a lay scholar and a devotee ( 居士 ) shih-chih, ( 優婆塞 ) upāsaka. He lived about 223 to 253 A. D. in the city of Nanking, during the reign of ( 晉武帝 ) sun-chiën, the first sovereign of ( 吳 ) the Wu dynasty, which flourished during the period 222 to 280 A. D. Later the translator was appointed professor by sun-chiën, His Majesty the King of China.
2. Towards the north gate way of the palace there stands a sthūpa. It was here that Dévadatta ( 提婆達多 tiao-to) and Ajātasatru conspired against the Buddha and king Bimbisara. See-Buddhist Records of the Western World, by Samuel Beal. Vol. ii, p. 150.





MONKS AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE LANKA BAUDDHA MANDALAYA

Photo:- Dr. H. U. P. Gunawardene



When the queen, the nobles and the people of the country were deeply grieved at his misfortune the king looked at those who were crying and weeping and said:—“It is not declared by the Buddha, that the sky, earth, sun, moon, the mountain Sumeru and sea, though they are in existence now, yet all are subject to decay and destruction?”

Growth leads to decay, meeting to absence, birth to death. Death causes the wheel of sorrow to turn eternally, and still greater sorrow is the result thereof.

“When the Lord Buddha first visited my country, I had no child. Once he asked me whether I knew who would succeed me? I replied in the negative. The renowned One said again:—“Everything is impermanent (in this world), ponder upon it! I think he had this day in view when he gave me this instruction. You all should try your best to attain your goal and keep the instructions of the Blessed One in your heart.”

The king said to the prince, “Whenever you fell ill, I felt so anxious that I never hesitated to undergo any suffering on your behalf. Nothing but Heaven is comparable to the kindness and compassion of parents. What have you in your mind that you dare to commit such a crime? Who so ever that kills his parents will enter hell, the Tai Mountain,<sup>1</sup> immediately after his death and thereafter suffer continuously.

Now, I handover this kingdom to your charge and I wish to go to the Buddha to become a Samana or monk (沙門 -shā-mén). I view lust, like a fire, which burns the body. I think the beauty of womanhood to be unreal, but ordinary persons who have not gained insight are often misled. It is only by reading the Sūtrās of the Buddha that one can realise the evils of women and the physical harm caused by the pursuits

of fame and wealth.” Ajātasatru, the prince said:—“Shut your mouth, I have realised desires cherished so long, therefore, how can I pardon you.”

Then the prince said unto the jailor, “Give him no food, let him starve to death.”

When the officers took king Bimbisāra (平沙王 -Ping-shā-wang), to jail<sup>2</sup> he turned his face in the direction where the Buddha stayed and paid homage with head bowed. Then he said over and over again. “Alas! the sin of my son would fill the whole heaven and earth, yet I cherish not the slightest anger. I am only bearing in my mind the teaching of the Buddha, that the worldly happiness is impermanent.”

When locked up in jail the king looked up to the sky with dishevelled hair and cried: “Oh, how miserable! Could heaven be so unkind to me?” When the queen the nobles and the people of the country heard this news they were deeply grieved at his misery.

Now, the chief queen said to the prince: “Oh, prince: Our great king is bound with fetters and kept in jail, he can neither get up nor lie down without another’s help. His sufferings are indeed inexpressible! Do you know that ever since you were born, our noble king had you always in mind even while partaking of his food or resting? When you fell ill it was with a grieving heart and a drooping body that he came to your bedside and tears would often trickle down his face. Moreover he was even ready to sacrifice his life for your sake. Therefore, bearing in mind the good instructions of gods and men, do not be a criminal or a sinner.

Buddha has preached in the Sūtrās that there is no virtue greater than serving parents and also no sin greater than killing one’s parents. You followed evil

1. There is no equivalent either in Pāli or Sanskrit for (泰山 tai-shan) Tai Mountain which indicates hell. There is also a mountain by this name which is considered as one of the five mountains, held sacred in China. The most famous and most frequented of them all is the Tai Mountain or Tai-shan in the province of shan-tung, which in the second month of the Chinese year is crowded with pilgrims from different parts of the country. Parties and provisions therefore should be organised and arranged before hand. In my opinion it may be the particular name for hell, but (any way) it does not refer to the Taishan-in shan-tung.
2. Ajātasatru, the prince, put his father into a smoke-room, but not in jail as referred to in the Chinese Text. See, Sāmaññaphala Sutta Vannana, the commentary of Dīgha Nikāya, p. 96. S. E.



doers, and has committed atrocious crime. You will go to hell, Tai-shan (Tai Mountain). Lacs of years in this world are equal to one day and night in the hell of Tai-shan as you know. With the termination of suffering in one place, you go to another place for suffering again, the end of which will not come for many long years. Would this not be an embarrassing position to you? I think an intelligent person will not leave room to repent for deeds such as these."

The prince said:—"When I was quite young I had an idea in my mind, that I should kill my father and become king. I have to-day realised my dreams; and what is there in advising me any more?"

The queen replied: "If a king heeds not advice, it would cause the ruin of the country. I wish to see the great king. Will you allow me"? The prince then said: "Yes, you may see him."

Before her visit, the queen having cleansed her body applied fried-flour mixed with honey.<sup>1</sup> She saw the imprisoned king emaciated and unable even to speak. People on hearing this tale shed tears for the king.

Now, the queen said unto the king: "The Lord Buddha used to teach that glory and happiness are impermanent!" The king said: "The jailor has stopped my meals and I am in hunger and thirst for so many days. There are eight thousand fissures in the body, each of which is infested with hundred of insects. They wriggle in my stomach sucking the blood and exhausting the flesh. It seems as if my life is about to end." Having thus spoken he sobbed and fell into a swoon, shortly afterwards he regained his breath.

The queen said: "I am aware of all your difficulties, therefore I have applied fried-flour mixed with honey on my body. Do come and partake of it. You should always keep the instructions of the Buddha in mind, and never deviate from it."

After his meal, the king turned his face towards the direction in which the Buddha lived and prostrating upon the ground in veneration said: "Indeed true is the teaching of the Blessed One. Glory and fortune are like evanescent dreams which cannot be maintained for long." Then he spoke to the queen: "When I was the ruling sovereign my kingdom spread far and wide and I had the choicest of foods and worn the best of robes. But living as I am now in jail, I shall be starved to death; unto death I have no fear. I pity that my son should have followed the advice of ill disposed teachers extremely opposed to the all embracing love of the Buddha. I am deeply grieved that I have been denied the pleasure of seeing the Buddha and hear him preach or discuss His noble doctrine with the elders Sāriputra, Maudgalyāna and Mahākāśyapa."

After a little pause the king addressing the queen again said: "Once the Blessed One told us that pleasant one's are like birds who roost upon a tree for the night only to fly away in the morning in quest of luck or misfortune. You know that even the great Maudgalyāna who freed himself from all evil associations and defilements and who obtained the six supernatural powers and the four kinds of insight knowledge was assaulted by an envious Brahmin. What wonder is then that I should now suffer in this manner.

The evil that men do follows as the shadow the body, as the echo the sound. Rare is the appearance of a Buddha in this world, and rare still is the opportunity of listening unto His teaching. The peerless conduct and decorum of the sages are high indeed, the attainment of which is very difficult for laymen.

You should not forget to obey his instructions, remember His scriptures, offer Him gifts which will bring you merits. And also you should kindly persuade your subjects to be good. These opportunities come rarely to us. I am

1. On the first occasion the queen carried food for the king hidden in her waist. This being detected the prince immediately stopped it. There upon food was taken in the golden slipper worn by the queen, which too when the prince came to know was stopped. See-Ajātasattu Kumāra Vatthu, Cullavagga Pāli, S. E. Sāmaññaphala Sutta Vannanā, Sumangala Vilāsinī. S. E.



now dying and my soul will soon reach an unknown destination. If you want to achieve your aims do so, through the means of the noble teaching of the Buddha. However you should be careful and guard yourself against misfortune."

Having heard the king's instruction the queen felt very much grieved. One day the prince said unto the jailor: "Many days have gone by since the king's food was stopped, why is he not yet dead." The jailor replied: "When the queen comes to jail, she gives fried-flour mixed with honey unto the king, which makes him live long." The prince then ordered thus: "Henceforth, allow not the queen to see the king." The helpless king now had nothing to eat. Whenever he felt hungry he paid homage unto the direction where the Blessed One lived. His hunger then vanished and in the night there shone forth a light before him.

When the prince heard of this he ordered the officers so shut the windows and strip the skin of his soles to prevent him from seeing the Buddha's light. The officers complied with the orders given. Although the king suffered great inconvenience he had the Buddha in his mind. Then the Lord Buddha thus preached unto him the Sūtrās from a distance. "Merit or demerit depend upon the good or evil that one may do. Therefore, one should be careful."

King Bimbisara replied: "Even though my body be cut into pieces, I will never think of any sinful action." The Blessed One said again: "Now, I am the Tathā-

gata, I am freed from all attachments. I have entered the real path (mārga) and attained Sammasambodhimagga ( 正覺道 )<sup>1</sup> I am a self controller, a master of Three Thousand lesser worlds and the great Three Thousand systems of greater worlds,<sup>2</sup> you know as the Buddha I am worshipped by gods, men, sun, moon deities, spirits, ghosts and dragons with their heads touching the ground. Yet hitherto even I am not free from the result of my previous 'Karma.' What of the ordinary persons (Puthujjanās).<sup>3</sup>

The king was favoured by the Lord of gods. He knew very well the misdeeds of his previous life. Hence he had no anger towards anyone nor did he fear the punishment of burning in the hell of Tai-shan. His mind was always fixed on the Buddha and his disciples. Never did he forget them even for a single moment.

For the last time the king prostrated upon the ground and with folded hands cried: "Today my life comes to an end and my soul will vanish for ever." He uttered these words and sobbed.

A moment later he felt into a swoon and passed away. The ministers and all his subjects were thus sunk in deep sorrow and grief.

It is said that Bimbisāra attained enlightenment ( 道 德 -tao chi) and immediately after his death, he was born in the heaven ( 天 tien)<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, there is no place for him in the Three Lower states of suffering, because he has destroyed all grief and pain.

1. Sammāsambodhimagga ( 正覺道 Chên-Chiao-tao-fā.), The way of knowledge which leads to omniscience.

2. In the Theravāda school of Buddhism or Southern Buddhism, there are ten thousand world systems ( 十千世界 ).

3. Puthujjana—( 凡夫 )—Kuang-fan-shu) denotes an average man ( 凡人 ). An ordinary person of unsubdued passions.

4. He was born in the Cātummahārājika Heaven ( 四天王天 ), as Janavasabha ( 閼風王 ) Lord of men) Yakkha ( 夜叉 ) in the retinue of Vessavana ( 韋舍摩 ) See-Sāmaññaphala Sutta vāṇanā, Sumangala Vilāsini, p. 97. S. E. What does the term "Yakkha" signify? "Yajanti tattha balim upaharantoti yakkhā, pūjaniya bhāvato yakkhoti vucchatī." A being to whom sacrifices are given or by the sense, to be honoured is called the yakkhā. Yakkha literally means non-human beings as spirits, orgres dryads, ghosts and spooks. And 'Amanussa' is the appropriate word for Yaksha, i. e., not a human being, but a being half deified and of great power as regards influencing people with helping and hurting. These Yakshas are under the authority of Vessavana (Kuvera) one of the four guardians of the world (Lokapālās).

Yakshini fetch water for Vessavana from the great Tank of Anotatta, which is somewhere in Himālaya Mountain. (See-Kāliyakkhīni Vatthu, Dhammapadatthakathā). Or a certain class of semi-gods who are described as attendants of Kuvera, the god of Riches, and employed in guarding his gardens and treasures. See-Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary.





Bronze Buddha Statue from South Celebes

# Indonesia

## WHERE BUDDHISM ONCE FLOURISHED

By  
**R. SOEKMONO**

*Head of the Archaeologic Divison of the Ministry of  
Education.*

It is not certain exactly when Buddhism was introduced into Indonesia, but, judging from Chinese sources, it may be assumed that it had already obtained a foothold in the fifth century A. D. For, sailing home from Ceylon to Canton and driven out of his course, the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hsien landed in Ye-p'o-t'i in 414. In this country (later identified as Yāvadvīpa), it was written, heresy and Brahmanism flourished, whereas the Law of the Buddha was hardly worth mentioning. It proves, however, that, however small their number, there were Buddhists living in Indonesia.

Shortly after Fa Hsien's departure, a monk of royal blood from Kaçmir, called Gunavarman, came to Chōpo (very probably Java) to preach the Law. During his stay until 424 he translated a text of the Dharmagupta-sect, an offshoot of the Mūlasarvāstivādanikāya, which shows us that it was Hīnayāna Buddhism that was taught in Java.

Since then Buddhism must have spread rapidly and thoroughly over vast regions in Indonesia. This is apparent from archaeological finds in South

**T**he modern-Javanese expression "djaman budo" means "the ancient, pre-Islamic period." The name itself points to the fact that not only did Buddhism occupy an important place in ancient Java's religious life, but its influence was also very deep-rooted. Indeed, our history clearly shows that the Buddhist doctrine found a very fertile soil in Indonesia, especially in Java, Sumatra and Bali.



Celebes, East Borneo and South Sumatra, where large bronze and stone statues of standing Buddhas were found, which in style and treatment are quite different from the later Hindu-Indonesian sculpture, but which closely resemble the Buddha figures from the Amarāvati and Gupta periods. If not of Indian origin, they must either be directly influenced by or be closely related to those centres of Buddhist art dating from the period before the 7th century.

The same Chinese sources record that in the middle of the 7th century in Ho-ling (localised in Java) there lived an eminent Javanese Buddhist scholar, named Jñānabhadra. With the special purpose to profit by this scholar's learning a Chinese master, called Hui-ning, came to Ho-ling to translate āgama-texts. Special attention was paid to texts, dealing with Buddha's nirvāna and the cremation of his body. It is remarkable that in I-tsing's (another Chinese pilgrim) records it is positively stated that these texts were different from the Mahāpari-nirvānasūtra of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Hīnayānistic character of Buddhism in those days is the more stressed by I-tsing, when he writes that on the islands of the Southern Ocean, i. e. Ho-ling too, Hīnayāna, and especially the sect of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-nikāya, prevailed. Only Malayu (in Sumatra) was Mahāyānistic.

I-tsing left Canton for India in 671. He first visited Ḑrīvijaya (in Sumatra) to study Sanskrit grammar for 6 months and stayed another 2 months in neighbouring Malayu. After a ten years' stay in the famous monasteries of Nālanda, he came back in Ḑrīvijaya in 685, where he remained for several years while co-operating with many other Buddhistic scholars, such as the well-known Cākya-kīrti.

I-tsing's stay in Ḑrīvijaya for the special purpose of studying Buddhism was not an exceptional case. Ḑrīvijaya, then the centre of a maritime empire, was, due to its favourable position as an intermediate station in the pilgrim's sea-route between India and the Far East, a very important place, not only politically

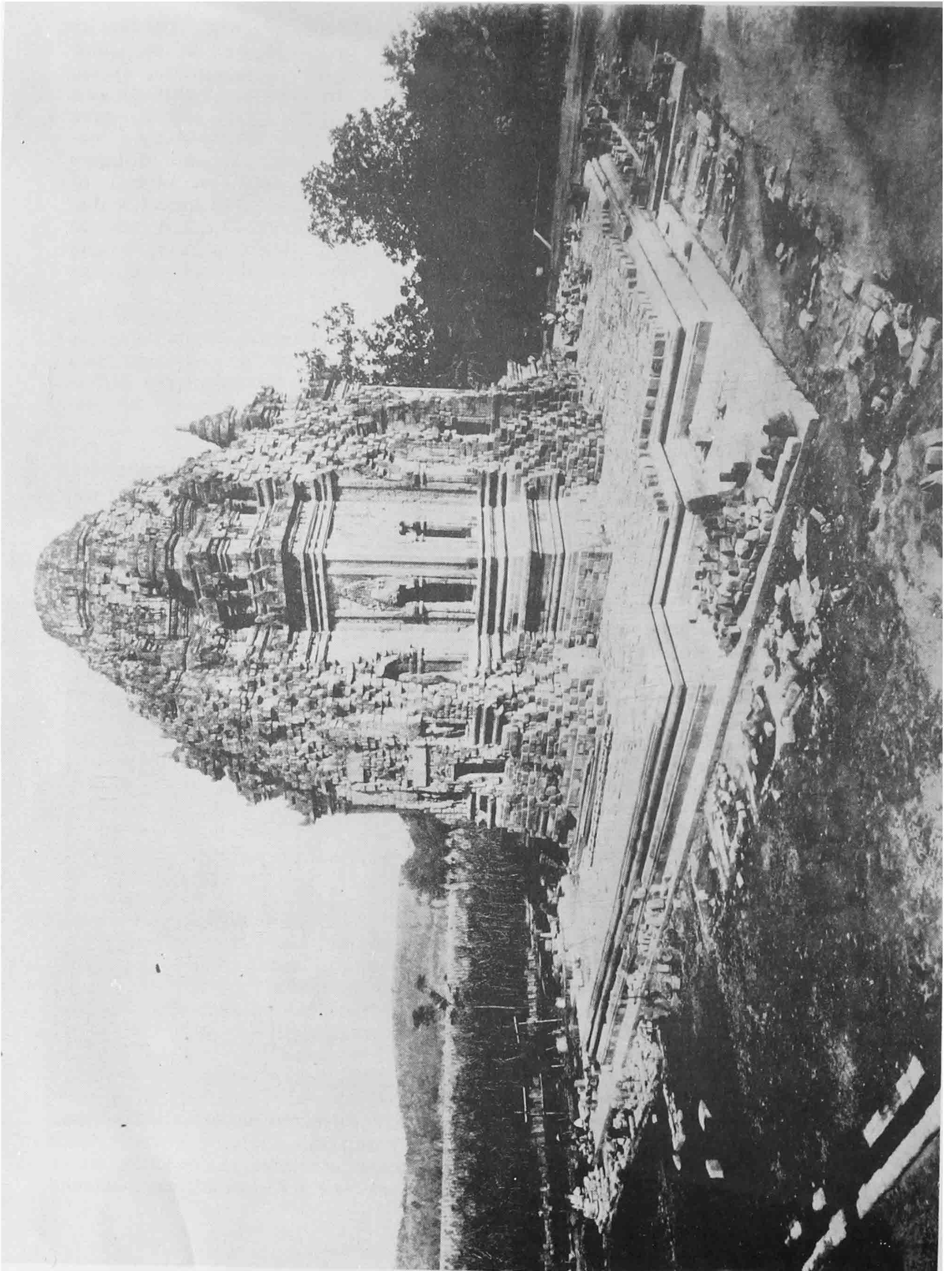
but scientifically as well. During its flourishing period, it was in particular the centre of Buddhistic studies, in the first place for interpretations of and research into the texts. It is quite plausible, therefore, that not only Hīnayāna doctrines but also authoritative Mahāyāna texts were the objects of study. Dharmapala, the eminent Mahāyānistic scholar from Kāncī, is said to have taught in Sumatra after having given lectures for 30 years at the Nālanda University.

Adding the fact that Malayu was Mahāyānistic from the beginning it is not surprising to see that Hīnayāna was more and more superseded by Mahāyāna during the last decades of the 7th



*Bhairawa Statue Representing King Adityavarman*





*Chundi Kalasan*



century. From the earliest dated inscriptions found near Palembang it is evident that this change was an accomplished fact by then. Special mention should be made of inscription of Talangtuwo of 684 A. D., concerning a grant of king Jayanāṣa which consisted of a park the benefit of which was to be given to all beings. The wording and formulas positively refer to Mahayanism. The term Vajracārī even points to Tantric Buddhism!

In the next period Hīnayāna can be said to have vanished from Indonesian soil. Between 750-850 the ruling power, the Śailendravarman, governing the "double-empire" of Śrīvijaya and Central-Java, was wholly given to Mahāyāna. For a century, art and architecture, inspired by Mahayana, took an exceptional, high flight (which, remarkably enough, was concentrated in the southern part of Central Java).

The most important monuments, dating back to the Śailendra-period, are the chandis Borobudur, Mendut, Kalasan, Sari, Sewu, Palosan, Lumbung and Sodjiwan. They all contained statues of Buddhist deities, most of which, unfortunately, got lost. Chandi Mendut though still contains its objects of worship, consisting of a huge stone image of the Buddha, about 10 feet high, seated on a throne and flanked by the dhyāni-bodhisattvas Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi, thus forming the well-known Mahāyāna trio.

Special mention deserves the Borobudur, a monumental stronghold of Mahāyāna, which is also considered a manifestation in stone of whole system of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It comprises a quadrangular base, consisting of four terraces, storied like a stepped pyramid, on which arise three circular terraces, the whole being crowned by a large stūpa. The original foot of the building, which is also quadrangular, is entirely covered with stones which are placed to form a broad processional path. The exterior of this covered foot is sculptured with scenes of the Karmavibhaṅga-text. The walls of the four quadrangular terraces are

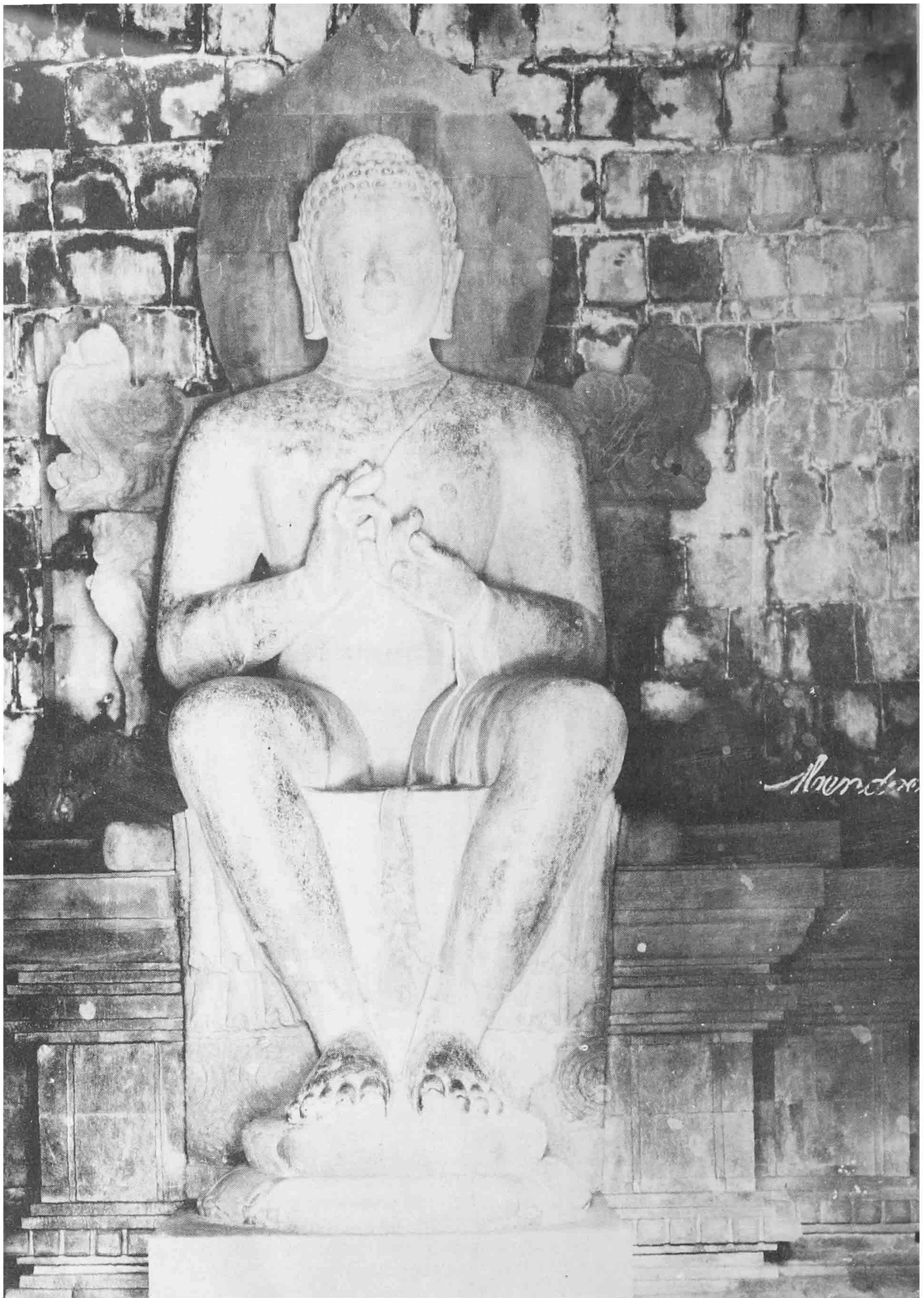
also entirely decorated with sculpture, plastic ornamentation, Buddha images in niches, ornamental designs and reliefs representing Jātakas, Avadanas and scenes of the Lalitavistara and Caṇḍavyūha texts. The circular terraces, on the other hand, are plain. Rows of stupas with Buddha images inside are the only decoration. Owing to this unusual treatment Borobudur is considered to represent the Buddhist cosmos with its three spheres: Kāmadhātu, Rūpadhātu and Arūpadhātu.

Because of lack of epigraphical material the Borobudur can only be approximately dated. Short inscriptions on several places of the covered foot point to the 9th century. Of the Śailendra inscriptions only one positively relates to a monument. It is the inscription of Kālasan, dated 778 A. D., which deals with the erection of the Kalasan-temple, dedicated to the exalted Tārā. A huge bronze statue of the goddess must have adorned the throne in the interior of the building.

Judging by the style, sculpture and decoration, however, it is to be doubted whether the present Chandi Kalasan is the temple referred to in the mentioned chapter. The discovery of two different basements within the walls of the present building strengthens the opinion that the original Kālasa-temple of 778 must have been rebuilt and enlarged twice, before it got its present shape. Rebuilding monuments *par emboitement* appears to have been a very common feature in Indonesia, for it can be observed in other Buddhistic as well as Hinduistic monuments. The fact that sanctuaries were so treated is comprehensible, when it is assumed that not the building but especially the site is sacred.

The king who has erected Chandi Kalasan, was a Śailendra prince who worked in co-operation with a certain Panāṅkaran, a name which is also mentioned in the list of kings of the Śivaitic Śaṅjayavarman summed up in King Balitung's charter of 907. The presence of two different dynasties and religions suggests to us the existence of





*Buddha Image Of Chandi Mendut*





One of the Temples of the Chandi Sewu complex





*Prince Siddhartha displays his skill in Archery. From Borobudur, Indonesia.*



two kingdoms in Central Java. This presumption is, indeed, supported by archaeological data, but it is too early yet to establish the relation between these two dynasties. There is evidence, however, that in the middle of the 9th century the Sañjayavamça came to the throne, probably through the marriage of a Gailendra princess with a Sañjaya king. Meanwhile, the Gailendras were apparently still on the throne in Sumatra, for the Nālanda-charter of Devapāladeva of Bengal mentions a vihāra at Nālanda which was erected by the Sumatran king Bālaputradeva of the Gailendra-vamça.

This apparently peaceful co-existence of two dynasties with different religions in Central Java naturally furnished a favourable basis for the development of a strong syncretism between Buddhism and Ġivaism, tinged with Tantrism. Borobudur already shows this tantric trend. Its system of dhyāni-buddhas fits into that of the Vajradhāra-sect, dealt with in a literary work from about the 10th century, the Sañ Hyañ Kamahāyānikañ.

Full Tantric Buddhism with the Bhairava cult as its prominent representative developed towards the end of the 13th century. The last king of Singhasari, Kṛtanagara, who ruled from 1268, to 1292, was known as an ardent Tantrist. He was called Ġiva-buddha. In 1289 he was consecrated as Jina. This identification of the king with one of the Jinas, in this case the Dhyāni-Buddha Akṣobhya, is expressed by a stone statue of a monk with the king's features, as is evident from the inscription on the statue's seat. Another stone image in the shape of the terrible Bhairava, now in the Leyden Museum, is also related to Kṛtanagara. Monuments ascribed to this king, probably containing deposits with his ashes, are Chandi Jawi and Chandi Singosari, both sanctuaries with many exceptional deviations. The East-Javanese chandis, either Buddhistic or

Ġivaitic, have in general the same shape and the same decorations. But chandi Jawi's ordinary cubical top is surmounted by a stūpa, while Chandi Singosari is a storied building with five tops and its statues are placed in the basement which is treated as a sousterrain.

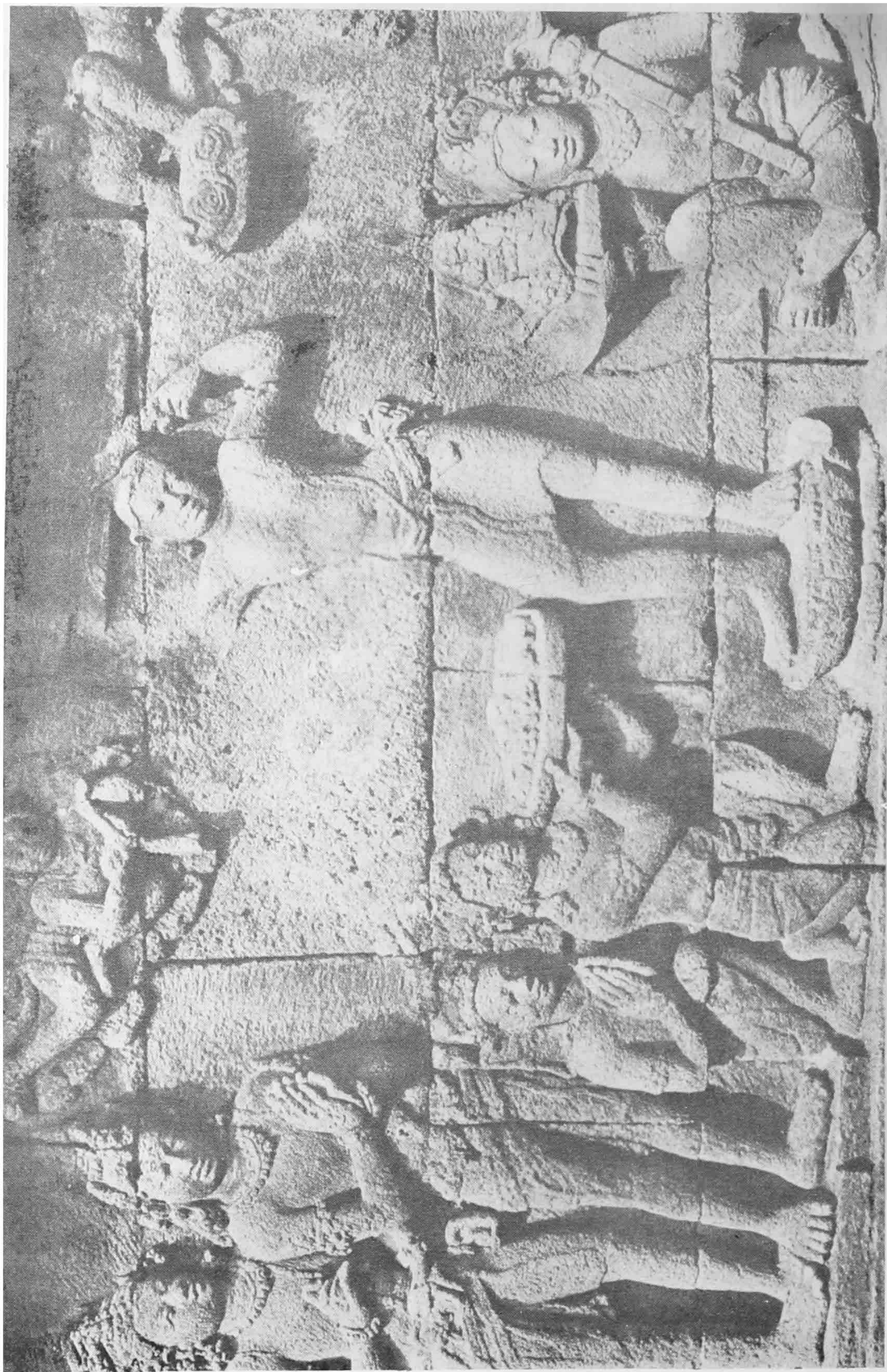
Another Tantric king was Adityavarman who, raised at the Majapahit court of East Java, came to rule part of Sumatra in the middle of the fourteenth century. According to the inscription of Suroaso, dated 1375, the Sumatran king received the highest consecration of the Bhairava-sect. A huge stone image of nearly 15 ft. high, now in the Djakarta Museum, is considered a representation of the Bhairava-king in his terrible shape.

Other such images, found in Tapanuli, Sumatra and also in Bali, bear witness to the fact that Tantric Buddhism flourished in several parts of Indonesia.

It is highly probable that this kind of Buddhism, if we may still call it that, was the issue of an ever active influence of old indigenous elements.

From this brief historical survey it is clear that Buddhism has played a very important role in shaping the Indonesian view of life. Though completely superseded by Islam since the 15th century, its mark left upon the Indonesian way of living is not entirely wiped out. Especially in Java Islam could not prevent the survival of many mystical groups dealing with subjects that are far from being pure Islamic. During these last years groups have been formed whose members call themselves Buddhists, though naturally they profess a special sort of Javanese Buddhism. The Vaiçak-ceremonies, since some years ago annually held at Borobudur, might be considered a strong stimulation towards the revival of Buddhistic activities in Indonesia which are mainly centred in the Chinese society called "Gabungan Sam Kauw Indonesia."





*Prince Siddhartha cutting his hair. From Borobudur, Indonesia.*



# BUDDHISM IN VIET-NAM

By MAI-THO-TRUYEN



Vietnam has a population of about 25 million inhabitants, a fifth of which is composed of mountain tribes. It is believed that of the rest at least three fourths, that is to say 15 millions are "cool or warm Buddhists," according to a very accurate term of a French author—the reason is that the "Light of Asia" spread over the country in the very early days, from the beginning of the second century of the Christian era.

By what method did the wisdom of Buddha penetrate this country? How was it propagated? What influence has it exerted, in the course of time, upon the thinking and the life of the people, literature and art? What is the Vietnamese concept of Buddhism and how do they practise it? In what state do they find themselves now? Such are the questions which we are trying to answer now.

But first of all, it must not be forgotten that in many instances the history of Buddhism in Vietnam evolves side by side with the history of its adopted land, so that it is impossible to speak of one without touching the other. We hope to be forgiven in case they are found confounded.

## I. INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM

The date of the introduction of Buddhism to Vietnam has been much argued and as yet there is no generally

accepted opinion. However according to the most believable opinion, the date would be about the year 189 (A. D.)

The task was probably carried out by Master Meou-Po, from You-Tchéou (China), an ex-Taoist converted to Buddhism. Before him, other missionaries such as Marijivaka, Kalya-Naruci and Kang-seng-Houei, by the way of China or from sea, had come to Giao-Châu, the cradle of the present Vietnam. It is more than probable that they had preached the good word, thus preparing the way to Méou-po's ulterior apostolate.

Vietnam was then under the direct administration of the Great Chinese Empire which was only interested in the propagation of Confucianism. Hardly tolerated, Buddhism was known only by its ritual form. Few efforts were made to disseminate the Doctrine whose wonderfully rich literature was represented altogether by a few "sûtras" translated into Chinese.

## II. GROWTH

### 1. Its beginning

From 544 to 602, Vietnam enjoyed a short period of national independence which, nevertheless, promoted an expansion of Buddhism. But the progress was superficial, for it was just before and during the third Chinese domination (603-939) that began a period of real progress with the coming of two missions in 580 and 820. The first was conducted by the Superior Vinitaruci, Indian by



birth, recognised later on as the first patriarch of the "Zen" Sect in Vietnam, the second by the Venerable Vo-ngôn-Thông who formed another Zen apart. The country had 20 "stupas" to house the precious relics offered as a diplomatic present by the Chinese Emperor, many temples and 500 monks, many of them made themselves celebrated by their vast knowledge and their rigorous discipline.

## **2. Marking time (939-968).**

In 939, Ngô-quyên, after having chased out the last Chinese governor and defeated the imperial army, proclaimed himself king, putting an end for ever to a domination which lasted for a total of more than 1,000 years.

But the Ngô dynasty, undermined by internal conflicts was short-lived. It ended in the fire and blood of the "rebellion of the twelve Lords." One of them, Dinh Bô Linh, came out of the struggle as a victor and gave himself the title of Emperor.

During this time, Buddhism was forced to remain motionless, while in China it underwent the most dreadful persecution.

## **3. Rebounding (968-1009).**

With the accession to power of Dinh Bô Linh who gave his protection to Buddhism, started an era of prosperity for the "Doctrine" which became then a popular belief. This period of prosperity lasted until 1009.

A monk named Ngô Chân Luu, lived in the monastery of Phât-Da. His reputation as a distinguished scholar, a talented poet, and very well-versed in the practice of contemplation (Zen) was soon called to the attention of the Emperor who invited him to come to the Court to explain the Dharma. Very satisfied with Ngô-Chân-Luu's teaching, Dinh Bô Linh appointed him Head of the Buddhist Clergy he had just created. It was in 946. A year later, to thank him for his intelligent advice on the conduct of public affairs, the Emperor elevated him to the dignity of Imperial Councillor with the

laudatory surname of Khuong-Viet (Servant of Vietnam).

The Dinh dynasty was succeeded by the first Lê's (980-1009). During the latter's reign the Buddhist Clergy continued to profit by royal favours because of the monks' advice on political and religious matters (Ngô Chân Luu was one of them). It was then that a diplomatic mission was sent to China for the first time to bring back a complete series of sacred books on the Dharma.

The advantageous position of Buddhism under the Dinh and the Lê dynasties can be—to some extent—explained this way. It is known that from 187, under the Chinese domination, Chinese characters were taught in Vietnam. But few people learned them except Buddhist monks who desired to draw from the Chinese translations the essence of a Doctrine of which a verbal transmission did not satisfy them. Thus, cultured people could not be recruited anywhere else but from the restricted circle of monks who were well-considered, even respected by the people, for their high spirituality and outstanding knowledge. Indeed, to a Chinese as well as a Vietnamese man of that time, a scholar was everything: man of letters, poet, moralist, lawyer, astrologer, chiromancer, physician.....What could remain unknown to him who, in the eyes of the people, was the trustee of all the spiritual treasures of the Great Chinese Masters?

The brief insight into the common thinking of that period is, however, enough to explain why so much honour was done to Buddhism under the Dinh and the first Lê dynasties.

## **4. Blooming under the Ly (1010-1225)**

The last representative of the Lê dynasty was so cruel and despotic that, at his death, a court revolution broke out and a high mandarin named Ly-công-Uân was brought to power. Godson of the Superior Cồ-Pháp and former disciple of the Venerable Van-Hạnh, one of the greatest spiritual symbol of Vietnamese Buddh-



ism Ly-công-Uân, known later on under the name of Ly-thai-To ascended the throne in 1010.

The fortune of Buddhism was made since then. Many Zen Masters, Van-Hân, Da-Bao, Sung-Pham with their incontestable prestige, contributed to make the teaching and practice of Dharma particularly brilliant and successful.

Lê Thai Tô died 1028, leaving to his successors the most beautiful traditions of piety and devotion. The first of them was Ly-Thai-Tôn (1028-1054), a practising layman of exceptional fervour who has probably obtained the "satori" under the tutoring of his "guru," the Venerable Thuyen-lao of the Vo-ngôn-Thông sect. In the respect of Buddhist expansion, the noticeable events, during his reign, were the erection—by order of the King—of 95 pagodas whose completion was pompously celebrated and marked by a general exemption of taxes in favour of the people; the restoration of all Buddha statues in the existing temples followed by another fiscal amnesty (1036); and finally, in 1049, the construction of the Dien-Huu pagoda decided in consequence of a dream. The king saw himself led to the Lotus Palace by Bodhisattva Avalokitecvara; and therefore he gave to the temple its original shape: a lotus flower sustained by a single column planted in the middle of an artificial lake. Built up in Hanoi and called by the public "Chùa Một cột" (one columned Pagoda), this historical monument was sabotaged by anonymous hands at the end of 1954, just before the withdrawal of French troops from the capital of Northern Viet-Nam. It is rumoured now that the pagoda has been restored.

The third king of the Ly dynasty was Ly-Thân-Tôn (1054 - 1072), a living image of Buddhist compassion. Very often did he happen to recall—specially in Winter time—the miserable life of his poor people and the prisoners' sufferings. That is why distributions of food and clothes to unfortunate people and reduction of prison terms in favour of prisoners were so frequent during his reign.

Three years before the death of this good monarch, in 1069, a sensational event occurred. The country was at war with Champa, a small neighbouring kingdom. On the return from a raid against the enemy who used to make frequent and sudden attacks against Vietnam, Ly-Thanh-Tôn brought with him a group of prisoners of war which he gave as slaves to his mandarins. One of these happened to be a member of the Buddhist clergy. One day, coming back from town, he discovered—to his surprise—that some parts of his selection of Buddhist thoughts bore written corrections. The author was soon found out. It was one of his slaves. The mandarin reported it to the Emperor who had him brought to the Court and there "questioned" him on the Dharma. The prisoner evinced an outstanding knowledge. Nothing was astonishing about it anyway: the man was a Chinese Zen Master called Thao-Duong. He was captured while he was preaching in a foreign land.

Then, he was admitted into the national clergy by order of the king who allowed him at the same time to start as a preacher in the Khai-Quốc Pagoda. Many students soon clustered round the new Master, Thao-Duong founded a third Zen Sect that took his name. The king joined in and, like his forefather, probably attained Enlightenment.

Under Ly-nhân-Tôn (1072-1127), the successor of Ly-thanh-Tôn, the Confucian culture, having appeared in the previous reign, made its entry in the intellectual life of the country, on the occasion of the first competitive examination instituted by imperial edict for mandarin recruitment. But it was far from endangering Buddhism which continued to flourish under the King's protection. Many manuscripts still existing in the present days, attest the profundity of thought in the Buddhism of that epoch, represented by a group of scholars namely the Venerable Vien-Chiêu, Ngô-An and Kho-dau; the latter had assumed the high functions of Imperial Councillor for a certain time, just like Khuông-viet under the Dinh and the first Lê.



From 1128 to 1225, at the end of the Ly dynasty, there were still three kings who went in for the Zen practice. The last of them, weary with social life, became a monk, after having abdicated in favour of his daughter who, in turn, handed the power to her husband Trần-Cân, the founder of the Trần dynasty.

As you see, Buddhism has never been so prosperous and strong as it was under the Ly. Through 8 reigns of 215 years, the religion of Cakyamuni remained the only one that was honoured and worshipped. However, it must not be thought that the royal favours given to Buddhism concealed an ulterior motive of some sort. It was only a sincere "acte de foi" inspired by the marvellous beauty of the Doctrine and the dignity and spirituality of its observants as well.

### **III. INFLUENCES OF BUDDHISM UPON LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE**

There were therefore fundamentally three main religions in Viet-Nam: Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. But in fact, there was only one which is the product of their mutual interpretation and each one of which may be considered as one of the different aspects. That continuing situation which renders difficult even impossible, to divide the Vietnamese into three separate and independent communities. If a minority—monks or laics—devotes itself exclusively either to Buddhism or Taoism, the bulk of the people is open-minded and has no discrimination. It may belong to Buddhism whilst approaching taoist temples on performing the rites required by the cult of ancestors.

It is doubtless that such a confusion often brings about superstitious practices and hence it furthers and maintains Ignorance. However, it is not without any beneficial effect on morality, way of thinking, in short on life of the people.

Many scholars, without denying so far the principles of Confucianism, are in effect Buddhism-products, and if there has been no direct borrowing of ideas,

the main Buddhist theories such as: Impermanence, Karma, causality, reincarnation, earthly sufferings etc.....are much reflected in many literary works to enable one to find out the source. But it is especially in the field of morale that such an influence will play its effective role. The most illiterates, the very non-Buddhist are afraid of the Karma reactions which they conceive through the symble of "Ten Hells." Often this knowledge prevents them from doing any harm to others and prompts them towards acts of kindness. Strengthened by the "five commandments," it provides the faithful with a softness of morals which the liberating Zen first of all and the Admidism full of promise for an incomparable felicity afterwards contribute to make more vivacious and lively. The Vegetarian regime in particular, observed on specific date by laics and in a continuing manner by monks, has at least the merit smoothing the sanguinary instinct common to the whole humanity.

In the field of Fine Arts, the same influence is noticed. The architecture, sculpture and painting are inspired mostly by these two main ideas of Buddhism: Purity and Compassion. The flower of lotus is a very valuable figure and Avalokitecwara under its manifold representations is another design which is highly appreciated by women.

### **IV. HOW DO THE VIETNAMESE CONCEIVE BUDDHISM AND PRACTISE IT ?**

We have pointed out the effort undertaken by the reformist movement since 1920. It has indeed made a long way but does not yet reach its aim. The results obtained are not less encouraging.

The promoters have succeeded to some extent in making clear the essence of Buddhism, by depriving it from foreign contributions, but they are willing to remain faithful to the mahayanist traditions, the prevailing matter of which, it is known, is the compassion represented by the theory of Bodhisattva



which is based on this exhortation of Buddha: "Delivered, deliver, advised, advise." The reason why the followers of the movement are complied, whether they are monks or laics, to improve gradually their spiritual formation and to behave accordingly through actions the truths they have learned from the sūtras. They realize now the real meaning of rites and shila which are mediums to attain internal peace, wisdom.....and not for personal purposes. They will be no longer deluded by the symbolism often in use in the mahayana and they know how to extract from it the substantial nectar. If they subscribe without restriction to the orthodoxy extolled by the Theravadins, they abandon neither the theories established later on that base by Nagarjuna, Asvaghosa, Vasubandhu and others nor the school of "Pure Land" or the Admidism which is known as a practical form of the difficult Dhyana since it is accessible to the majority.

## V. PRESENT POSITION OF BUDDHISM

In Viet-Nam, Buddhism remains the religion which gathers the most of adepts, the approximate figure has

been given at the beginning of this brief study. It is especially prosperous in Central Viet-Nam as it was also in North-Vietnam by the end of 1954. Because of lack of contact with this latter region, it is not possible for us to supply with accurate information on its present situation. In South-Vietnam, its numerical size is far less, because of the co-existence of other creeds from western or local origin. However, the faith in the Dharma is maintained ardent within the strictly buddhist circles as well as within the faithful of other religious systems more or less connected with the Cakya-muni teaching.

If we should make now the division between traditional and deformed Buddhism on the one hand and modern or reformist Buddhism on the other hand the same proportions remain available as for the repartition of faithful in the three parts of Viet-Nam. In effect Central Viet-Nam has about two million reformists, while South Viet-Nam has not exceeded twenty thousand. But the idea took shape in this latter area and we may hope with the return of peace, modern Buddhism will make prompt and tremendous progress.



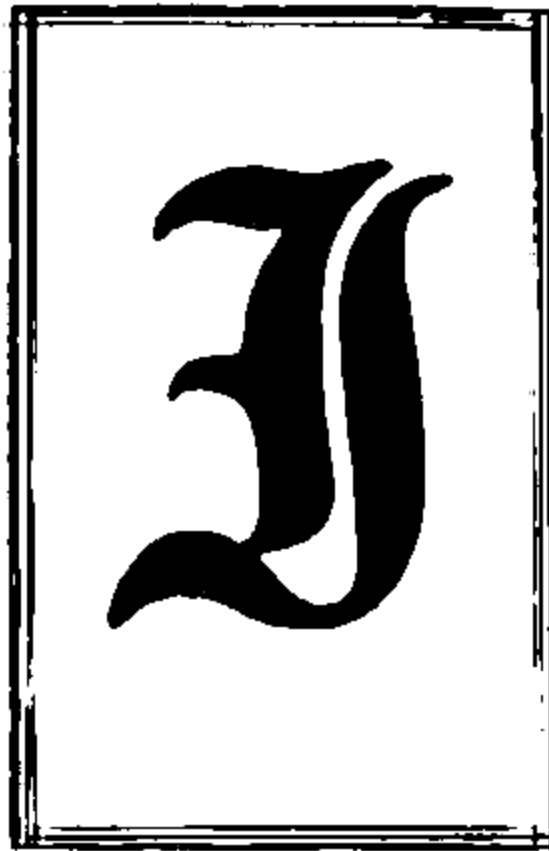


# ZEN BUDDHISM

## AND BODHIDHARMA

By **W. PACHOW**, Ph. D.,

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In the Far East, there is no Buddhist influence so profound and penetrating as that of the Ch'an (Dhyāna) School, popularly known as Zen Buddhism. It has effected a change in the cultural life as well as the general outlook towards the method of attaining Enlightenment. Not merely that; from the beginning of the 10th century A. D., this School has gained supremacy over all other Schools in China, so much so that the monks in the monasteries throughout the country claimed in one way or the other the patriarchal lineage of celebrated Dhyāna masters. This phenomenon may be ascribed to the fact that the Dhyāna School has been the life and soul of Buddhism for over a thousand years in China. As a result of its important position, voluminous works have been produced by various writers. Some of them are compositions containing the sayings of Dhyāna masters, mystical and paradoxical in nature, and others are historical records concerning the patriarchal genealogy, especially that of the various branches of the disciples of Hui Neng, the 6th Patriarch. However, all of them unanimously claim that Bodhidharma, the sage from India, was the 28th Patriarch of the Indian tradition and the First Patriarch of the Chinese Dhyāna School. To substantiate this claim, various fabulous tales or legends have been popularized and linked with his life. We give below a few of them as an illustration:—

1. When the Emperor Wu Ti of the Liang Dynasty (502-549 A. D.) could not understand and appreciate the unusual answers given by him, he went across the Yangtse River by means of a piece of reed. He then entered the Shao Lin Monastery in Ho Nan province and practised deep meditation facing the wall for nine long years. As a sequel, it is said, he imprinted his image on the wall.

2. He is said to have attained the hoary age of 150 years, and passed away after that. However, a Chinese envoy, while returning from India, saw Bodhidharma with one shoe dangling from his monk's staff in the Pamirs (Ts'ung Ling). When he reported this to the Emperor, his tomb was unearthed and, to their surprise, they could not find anything else in the coffin, except a broken shoe!

The stories mentioned above appear to indicate that he was a person possessing supernatural powers, or, in the derogatory sense, that he was some sort of a magician. This, indeed, is unfortunate. We shall endeavour, in the following pages, to bring out the truth about this great sage. Special attention will be paid to the conditions of this School prior to his arrival in China and after his demise.

### **I. Was he the founder of the Chinese Zen Buddhism?**

The answer to this question may be divided into two different categories. In one case, we may say 'No,' and in the other, 'Yes, but partially.'



It is a well-known fact that when Buddhism was introduced into China, it embraced all the three aspects of that religion viz., disciplinary observance, meditation and philosophy (Sīla, Samādhi and Prajñā). As such, we find a large number of works on Dhyāna or meditation in the Chinese Tripitaka. The earliest ones are probably those translated by An Shih-Kao in 148-170 A. D. Take for instance:—

1. The Sūtra spoken by the Buddha on keeping thought in the manner of great Ānāpāna. Nanjio No. 682.

2. The Sūtra on perception in the law of practice of meditation. Nanjio No. 683 and the works on the same topic translated by Gih Yao in 185 A. D. (Nanjio Nos. 724, 1338), by Buddhābhadda in A. D. 398-421 (Nanjio No. 1341), and many other important texts translated by Kumārajīva in 402-412 A. D. This would show clearly that the theory and practice of Dhyāna had been known to the Chinese Buddhists quite early. Further, we find that there are 11 Dhyāna masters in the Buddhist Biographies<sup>1</sup> (completed in 519 A. D.) by Hui Chiao, in which the name of Bodhidharma is not included, while in the second series of the Buddhist Biographies<sup>2</sup> (completed in 645 A. D.) by Tao Hsuen, the names of 135 Dhyāna experts are found including a few of the immediate disciples of Bodhidharma. These facts clearly show how popular and well-known was Dhyāna Buddhism among the Buddhists at that time. They also show that that Bodhidharma, who came to China round about 480 A. D., was the founder of the Dhyāna practices would not accord with truth.

This however concerns only the early phase of the Dhyāna School in China which had already a firm footing before the arrival of Bodhidharma, and, therefore, he is not entitled to the honour of

being its founder as, is usually supposed. We must make it clear, nevertheless that the later developed Zen School has much to do with him, though the honour seemed to have been forced on him.

When we say the later developed Zen School, we mean the particular form of Zen Buddhism which flourished during the T'ang and the Sung Dynasties (618-905 and 960-1278 A. D. respectively), and was greatly popularized by Hui Neng, the 6th Patriarch who succeeded the Bodhidharma lineage. It was during the early portion of this period that the Japanese Buddhists came to China for higher studies and later took back with them the various Buddhist Schools including the Zen (Zen is the Japanese term for 'Ch'an' which in turn is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Dhyāna'). It is this form of Zen Buddhism that has been widely known to the West. It may be said of Bodhidharma that he was in some way associated with this School, though indirectly.

## II. The truth of his being the 28th Patriarch.

Several Chinese records<sup>3</sup> of the Biographies of the Patriarchs of the Zen School claim that Bodhidharma was the 28th Patriarch of the Indian tradition starting from Mahākāśyapa. Ch'i Sung, author of two of these records, asserted that he was really the 28th Patriarch in India and refuted the authority of Fu-fa-tsang-yin-yuan-ching or 'Sūtra on the Nidāna of transmitting the Dharmapitaka' (Nanjio No. 1340), a Sanskrit text translated into Chinese in 427 A. D. by Chi-Chia-Yeh. This work gives us a list of the 'Parampara' tradition of 23 Indian patriarchs, beginning with Mahākāśyapa and ending with Simha Bhikṣu. In between we have Aśvaghosa as the 11th

1. Kao-sheng-chun or Biographies of eminent Buddhist masters. Nanjio No. 1490.
2. Shu-kao-sheng-chuan or the Second series of the Biographies of eminent Buddhist masters by Tao Hsuan. Nanjio No. 1493.
3.
  - i. Ch'i Sung: A treatise on the right School of transmitting the Law. Nanjio No. 1528.
  - ii. Ch'i Sung: Records of the right School of transmitting the Law. Nanjio No. 1529.
  - iii. Tao Yuan: Records of the transmission of the lamp upto the Ching Teh Period-1004-1007 A.D. Nanjio No. 1524.



Nāgārjuna the 13th, Vasubandhu the 20th and so forth. In the biographical sketch of the last Patriarch, Simha Bhikṣu, we are told that he was killed by Mirakutsu (Mihirakula?), a king belonging to the heretic faith, known for his destruction caused to Buddhist establishments and the massacre of the Buddhist monks in Kashmir. As a sequel, the line of 'Parampara' was discontinued after his death, because he could not find a suitable person to succeed him while he was alive. On the evidence of this document, it is very difficult for us to believe the claim that Bodhidharma was the 28th Patriarch of the Indian tradition. Moreover, as this claim was first made only in the 11th century A.D., by a staunch supporter of the Zen School in China, viz., Ch'i Sung, it can hardly convince us. We know that the motive behind this claim was to enhance the prestige of the said School.

### III. The date of Bodhidharma's arrival in China.

The popular tradition<sup>1</sup> recorded in the literature of the Zen School tells us that Bodhidharma reached Canton in 527 A. D., (or 520 A. D. in another version) in the reign of Emperor Wu Ti of the Liang Dynasty (502-549 A. D.). It is stated in the same source that he met the Emperor. As this Emperor chiefly devoted his attention towards the building of monasteries, giving alms to the monks and so forth, he could not understand the mystical teachings of Bodhidharma and, therefore, the latter left him without being appreciated. However, other earlier and more reliable sources present us with quite a different picture. The following cases may be cited:—

1. Tao Hsuan (595-667 A. D.), author of the second series of Buddhist Biographies gives us a life-sketch of Bodhidharma where he says: 'He first reached the territory of the Sung Dynasty (420-

479 A. D.) and then proceeded towards the South.' This Sung Dynasty came to an end in 479 A. D. Moreover, he does not mention anything about his interview with the Emperor of the Liang Dynasty. If we accept this version, we may safely place the date of his arrival somewhere between 420-479 A. D.

2. One of the chief disciples of Bodhidharma was Sheng Fu 2 who met the Master sometime about 480 A. D., when he was about 17 years of age. Sheng Fu passed away in 524 A. D., at the age of 61 years.

3. Hui Sheng,<sup>2</sup> another pupil of Bodhidharma learnt all the meditational methods from him and observed strictly the ascetic practices. He enjoyed the mature age of 70 years and died sometime between 502-519 A. D.

All the foregoing evidence leads us to the same conclusion, that is, that Bodhidharma reached China sometime round 480 A. D. If that is so, then the popular tradition about his arrival in 527 A. D., and about his meeting in the same year the Emperor of the Liang Dynasty, falls to the ground.

### IV. His teaching and relation with the later Zen Buddhism.

According to the general belief, it is said that the way of teaching adopted by Bodhidharma differed substantially from that of all the Buddhist missionaries who found their way into China. He seemed to have been a bad linguist because he never translated any Sanskrit text into Chinese, nor did he compose any literary piece. What was worse, judging by conventional standards, was that he preached an ultra—modern doctrine which seemed to harbour a profound hatred towards the traditional Buddhism as contained in the books. We quote below an outline of the

1. See Nanjio Nos. 1528, 1529 and 1524.

2. See Nanjio No. 1493. Ch.6.



fundamental principles of Zen Buddhism:—

“A special tradition outside the Scriptures:

Not to depend upon on books of letters:

To point direct to the heart of man:

To see (one's own) nature and become Buddha.”

These lines tell us of the Dhyāna School of the developed form. We believe they have been strictly observed by most of the Zen followers in the Far East. However, to have a glimpse of its early simple teachings and practices, we have to go back to the sayings and the mode of life of Bodhidharma and his immediate disciples.

In his short life-sketch we find that he used to instruct Hui K'e, later on known as the Second Patriarch, the following twofold doctrine: One is 'reasoning' or the basic principle, and the other 'practice.' As regards 'reasoning' he says:—

“I firmly believe that all living beings possess the same Real Nature (Svabhāva). But in most cases it has been covered by the external dust of obstruction. I now ask them to give up falsehood and return to reality by gazing at the wall and meditating. They should not try to make any distinction between the self and others, between the saintly and the profane, but to stand firmly on these foundations and not to follow any other teachings. This, indeed, will be in concordance with the 'Tao' which is silent and devoid of activities.”

Among the 'practices' there are four in number:—

1. The attitude towards one's enemy—

“During the course of religious training, calamity may fall on the practitioner. Under such circumstances, he should think that in the previous Kalpas he had been led astray and had many ties of attachment and hatred. In the present life he might have been freed from them, but the suffering should be regarded as the effect of the deeds performed in one's former births. Therefore, one should willingly face all the sorrows and

should not harbour any enmity towards the wrong-doer.....When this occurs in one's mind, it is in accordance with the 'Tao,' because trying to understand what is the nature of enmity is to enter into the path of 'Tao.' ”

2. To be content with one's lot—

“There is no Atma (soul) in living beings. Happiness and misery should be received calmly as they came. Even if one is treated with honour, it is due to his previous deeds; when their effect is over, it would not come again. Therefore, there is no occasion for rejoicing. In the case of gain or loss, there should not be any difference in the tranquillity of the mind. If the Mind is calm and gentle with regard to success or failure, then, it is said to be in fitting accordance with the Dharma.”

3. The avoidance of hankering—

“The ordinary folk have for a long time lost themselves in greed—that means hankering. A seeker after the Truth should be different from them. He ought to rest his mind on inactivities and let him face squarely whatever is his lot. Indeed, all the Three Worlds are full of sufferings and nobody is secure. The Sūtra says:

‘Whatever you hanker after,

The sequel is suffering.

There will be happiness

When one is devoid of greed.’ ”

4. To be in accordance with the Dharma—

This is meant that the Svabhāva or Real Nature is inherently pure.

As Bodhidharma never composed anything himself, this sums up the total output of his teachings. In addition to this, we are told that he recommended to his disciples the study of the *Laṅkāvatāra-Sūtra*. This is the only Mahāyāna text which had some connection with the Dhyāna School in its early stages.

Judging by the rather curt outlines of his teaching and the ascetic way of life of his immediate disciples, it appears to us that theoretically he had more or less based his philosophy on the interpretation of Buddha-nature in sentient beings as found in the *Nirvāna Sūtra*.



Therefore, he regarded the saintly and the profane as on the same level, because intrinsically there would not be any difference between them. However, there is not the slightest hint of the theory of 'Sudden Enlightenment' here, though it is very prominent in the teachings of the later patriarchs and their disciples. Moreover, the apparently eccentric ways of teaching, such as giving a blow, a kick or a twist of the nose, drawing a circle in the air, saying paradoxical things, answering questions with incoherence and all kinds of absurdities—adopted by the patriarchs after Hui Neng, the 6th Patriarch (639-713 A. D.) cannot be said to have originated with Bodhidharma, because he had nothing to do with them. On the contrary, the emphasis laid on austerity, self-contentment, self-mortification, the curb of desire, the belief in the effect of Karma, the insistence on concentration of mind by gazing at the blank wall, and other ascetic trends appear more akin to the early 'Arhat' ideal than the Mahāyāna Dhyāna practices seen after the 7th century A. D. To substantiate our statement, we cite a few examples in order to show what kind of austere life Bodhidharma's disciples used to lead:—

i. Hui K'e, his chief disciple and in later generations known as the Second Patriarch, used to practise the teachings of Bodhidharma very strictly. During the period of Persecution of Buddhism started by Emperor Wu Ti of the Northern Chow Dynasty (561-578 A. D.) one of his arms was cut off by an assassin. As he took it calmly by adhering to his master's instructions, he did not feel any pain. To stop bleeding, he cauterized the wound with fire and bandaged it with a piece of cloth. He went on begging his alms as if nothing had happened.

ii. Na Ch'an-Shih, or Na, the Dhyāna master, was a disciple of Hui K'e. Before his renunciation he was a renowned Confucian scholar. From the time of his becoming a monk, he gave up reading non-Buddhist literature and never touched a pen. Regarding his personal

possessions, he had only a robe, and a begging bowl. He ate only one meal a day and observed the practice of 'Dhūta' very strictly.

iii. Hui Man, a disciple of Na Ch'an-Shih and a great-grand disciple of Bodhidharma, devoted himself to the practice of non-attachment. He had only a robe and ate once a day. There was no other property belonging to him except two needles. He needed them for mending his rug in the winter, but would discard them during the summer. Once he was meditating in an open ground which was covered by snow over five feet deep. Someone saw him and offered him free board and temporary lodging. He refused that kind offer and said:

"I would accept your invitation only when no one else in the whole world is alive!"

Besides, the lives led by his other immediate disciples like Sheng Fu (who died in 524 A. D.) and Hui Sheng (who died during 502-519 A. D.) are more or less like the ones described above. If we compare their spirit of self-mortification and quiet contemplation with the boisterous daring of burning a wooden image of the Buddha (by Tan Hsia) and the killing of a cat (by Nan Chuan) and other strange acts performed by later Dhyāna masters—supposedly to contain the mystery of Dhyāna ideals—we would come to the conclusion that there is hardly any common ground between them. Thus, it would appear to be an irony of Fate that Bodhidharma was placed as the First Patriarch of the Zen School.

From the foregoing evidence we are led to believe firstly, that historically speaking Bodhidharma was very sober, simple living and comparatively less known than most of his contemporaries. The story of his meeting with the Emperor of the Liang Dynasty and other fabulous tales associated with his life cannot stand critical enquiry. Secondly, Bodhidharma's theories and practices concerning Dhyāna differed a good deal from those of the later patriarchs and



their numerous disciples. If that is so, why was he regarded as the First Patriarch of the Zen School? Thirdly, the list of the six Patriarchs

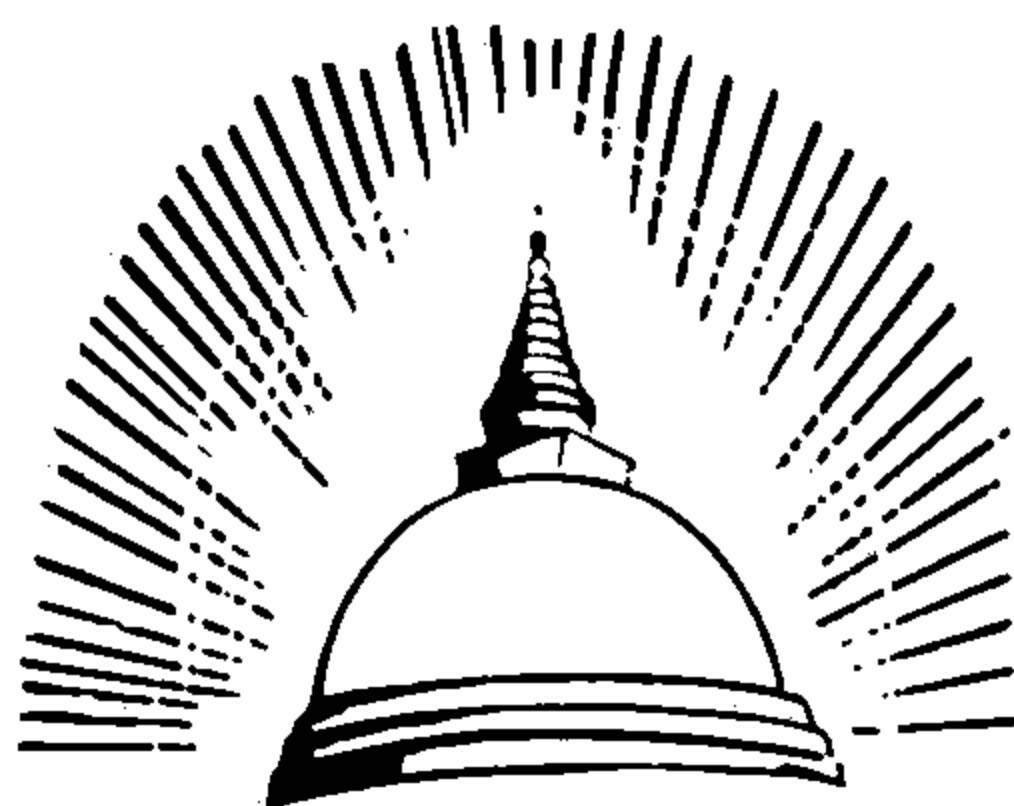
1. Bodhidharma
2. Hui K'e
3. Sheng Tsan
4. Tao Hsin
5. Hung Jen
6. Hui Neng (or Shen Hsiu)<sup>1</sup>

popularly known from the beginning of the 8th century A. D., and later on recorded in the Dhyāna literature written by Ch'i Sung in the 11th century A. D., was not found in early Buddhist historical records. Sheng Tsan, the Third

Patriarch in our list, was not known to any author of the Buddhist Biographies (The second series completed in 645 A. D. and the third series in 988 A. D.). Tao Hsuan mentioned very briefly in his 'Biographies' the names of Tao Hsin and Hung Jen as teacher and pupil, but he did not say anything about their being the 4th and the 5th Patriarchs in the Bodhidharma line. Naturally, he could not, because he had already recorded the life-sketch of Hui man, the great-grand-disciple of Bodhidharma.

On the face of all this, we would suggest that it is high time to correct the wrong but popular traditions and beliefs concerning Bodhidharma and the patriarchs.

1. Shen Hsiu died in 706 A.D. The inscription on his tomb contain the above mentioned list. It is claimed that he was the 6th Patriarch.





# PRINCE SHOTOKU

## FOUNDER OF JAPANESE BUDDHISM AND TRUE PACIFIST

By Rev. RIRI NAKAYAMA

*Director of International Affairs Bureau, Buddhist Federation of Japan*

I deem it a miracle of Japan that Prince Shotoku was born in this country. My admiration of the Prince extends to his eldest son, Yamashiro Oye-O, as the first great disciple of the way of "Peace" advocated by the Prince.

Yamashiro Oye-O willingly became a victim of the violence at the hand of the Soga-no-Iruka group for the sake of peace along with all his family members, 23 in number ("Taishi Den-Ryaku" says 25), including three younger brothers of Prince Shotoku. This historical fact may be regarded as a model of the way of universal peace worthy of tribute even from the followers of Mahatma Gandhi.

The first thing Prince Shotoku wrote in his famous Constitution consisting of 17 articles was: "Peace is of paramount importance. Make every effort to avoid strife."

We find ourselves now in the latter part of the twentieth century. In no other age was the cry for peace so strong as at the present one. This is because apprehension for the outbreak of the Third World War pervades the earth. The age in which Prince Shotoku was born, the latter half of the sixth century, was similarly restless. Bloody strife around the Imperial throne was the order of the day. The nobility of that day was divided into the two major camps of Soga and Mononobe. A number of lesser cliques such as Otomo and Nakatomi acted as their satellites.

When the messenger of a Korean King brought a statue of the Buddha and a number of sutras as formal gifts in the seventh year of the era of Emperor Kimmei (546 A. D.), the internationally minded group of Soga advised the court to accept them, while the conservative camp of Mononobe and Nakatomi opposed it. This heralded a fierce struggle between the clans. Buddhism was used in this case only as a clock, and did not constitute the real core of the struggle.

Strife among the Imperial family members having complicated relationships arising out of the clannish conflicts and the matrimonial ramifications, was also bloody. After the early death of Emperor Bidatsu who succeeded Emperor Kimmei, Prince Anahobe, one of the younger brothers of Bidatsu but born of a different mother than the rest, attempted to usurp the throne by violating the Empress who was mourning the death of her spouse at a pavilion where the late Emperor's body lay in state. Getting angry with Sakashi Miwa, a follower of the deceased Emperor who thwarted this attempt, Prince Anahobe joined hands with Moriya Mononobe, stormed the palace of the then reigning Emperor Yomei with armed soldiers, and killed Miwa. Yomei died after having been on the throne for one year and seven months. The ambitious Prince Anahobe tried to achieve a coup d'etat, again with the military support of Moriya, but met with a strong counter attack from Umako Soga, and was killed



along with his younger brother, Prince Yakabe. Moriya met the same fate. On the other hand, however, Umako also committed a detestable crime by killing Emperor Sushun whom he himself installed. The young Prince Shotoku became Regent for Empress Shuiko amidst such scenes of carnage.

The Soga clan was weak as long as Prince Shotoku lived, but began to show its claws after the latter's death. Immediately upon the demise of Empress Suiko, Emishi Soga disqualified Yamashiro Oye-O, Prince Shotoku's eldest son whom he disliked, by deliberately obscuring the late Emperor's will, and installed on the throne Jomei, a grandchild of Emperor Bidatsu. This was done in spite of the circumstance that the Empress Suiko had called Yamashiro Oye-O to the death-bed, expressed her will to transmit the Emperorship to him, and said; "Although you are young, try your best with appropriate caution." Even Prince Tamura, who mounted the throne and came to be called Emperor Jomei, had been present on this occasion. This treachery of Emishi aroused indignation of his uncle Marise, the younger brother of Umako. Marise strongly advised Yamashiro Oye-O to raise an army. But what did the Prince say to this? *Nihon Shoki*, one of the two oldest classics on history of Japan, has this to tell: "It is nice of you to have come to me, undoubtedly moved by a feeling of gratitude toward my father, Prince Shotoku. But Japan would be thrown into a great confusion if your advice followed. At his death-bed our father admonished us children by saying: 'Abstain from all evils, and practice all virtues.' These words constitute an eternal precept for me. Therefore, although there are private feelings in me, I transcend them and thus harbour no hatred."

Within a little over ten days Prince Yamashiro's younger brother Hatsuse-O who gave shelter to Marise, suddenly died, and the latter, who was mourning the former's demise, was, along with his son Aya, strangled to death by Emishi.

Emperor Jomei, who had been a pup-

pet of Soga-no-Emishi and his son Iruka, died after a reign of 13 years. It was now undoubtedly Prince Yamashiro's turn to mount the throne. But Emishi made the deceased Emperor Jomei's Empress ascend the throne under the name of Emperor Kakyoku in the expectation that she would be followed by Furuhitono-Oye-O, a bereaved child of Emperor Jomei born of Emishi's own sister Hotenoiratsume. This was a measure taken at the instigation of Iruka, who "disliked the spread, all over the country, of the fame and prestige" (*Nihon Shoki*) of the family of Prince Yamashiro as the eldest son of Shotoku-taishi. The book "*Hoketsu Ki*" says that, at last, "6 persons comprising Emishi, Iruka, Karuno-Oji, Kose, Otomo, and Nakatomi schemed a treacherous plan, and the innocent Prince Yamashiro and all of his family members, 23 in total, were murdered." Of the six people, Karuno-Oji was a child of Jomei and later became Emperor Kotoku.

On this occasion Prince Yamashiro was suddenly attacked by Iruka's soldiers, who besieged his residence. The Prince calmly fled to the Takoma mountain with his family, but food ran out within 4 or 5 days. Miwa-no-Fumiya, a follower of the Prince, advised the latter to flee further to an eastern province and raise an army by arguing that Iruka could be subjugated and victory would become theirs if the people of the village, which used to supply wet nurses to the family of Prince Shotoku, were mobilized. The Prince's answer, which has become famous, is conveyed by "*Nihon Shoki*" as follows:

"It is quite possible that we shall win if I act as you advise. But it has been my earnest wish not to trouble the farmers for at least 10 years. Why should I cause trouble to the people for my personal predicament? I do not like to have the future people say: 'we lost our parents because of Prince Yamashiro.' The idea of hero does not need to be confined to the case of a man who has won a fight. Is he not a hero, too,



who consolidates the country by sacrificing himself?"

So saying, the Prince and his family left the mountain and entered into the Ikaruga temple. Ikaruga's troops, armed to the teeth, surrounded this defenceless, innocent group. The Prince sent Miwa-no-Fumiya as his messenger to the attacking officers, and declared: "If I fight with Iruka after raising an army, I shall be able to win easily. But I do not wish to hurt the farmers for my personal cause, and, therefore, I shall give my body to Iruka." (Shoki). The posterity of Prince Shotoku was totally exterminated in this day's massacre. It took place only 21 years after his death.

Abiding by the precept left by Prince Shotoku, Prince Yamashiro Oye-O and his family members bequeathed to the later generations an example of living up to the truth of non-violence through their voluntary death, their undying effort to attain Nirvana by cutting off the iron chains of karmic delusion. It was a tragedy impossible to think of without shedding tears. We console ourselves with the thought that this historical fact will come to resound in the cultural history of mankind as an eternal message of the victory of truth over violence.

Article I of the constitution consisting of seventeen articles, which was drawn up by Prince Shotoku in 604 A. D., reads:—

"Peace is of paramount importance. Make every effort to avoid strife. Everyone has his bias and few are far-sighted. Hence there are those who disobey their lords and fathers, and who dissent from their neighbours. But when peace and union are maintained between those above and below, and harmony rules in the discussion of affairs, the right reason of things will prevail by itself. Then what could not be accomplished?"

In Article II the fundamental principle of peace is defined as follows:—

"Sincerely revere the Three Gems. Three Gems are Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, which constitute the final resort of all kinds of living beings and the

ultimate foundation of all realms. Should any age or any people fail to honor this truth? There are few men who are utterly vicious. Everyone will realize it if adequately instructed. Could any crookedness be made straight without taking refuge in the Three Gems?"

Article III prescribes what should be the nationalistic way of life of the people of Japan as follows:—

"Attend with respect to the orders of the Sovereign. The Lord is like Heaven, and the vassal like Earth. Heaven overspreads and earth upbears; the four seasons pursue their due course (between the two) and all forces obtain therein their efficacy. Should the earth attempt to spread over the heaven, all would fall in ruin. Therefore, when the lord speaks, the vassals listen; when the superiors act, the inferiors comply. Thus be assuredly attentive on having received orders from the Sovereign. When one fails in this, ruin would be the natural consequence."

It is not wrong to say that the authentic history of Japan began with Crown Prince Shotoku. At least it is certain that the cultural history of the Japanese people started when Crown Prince wrote this constitution. Indeed in the long history of Japan there is no maxim so well known among the Japanese as "Peace is of paramount importance" which is in the opening passage of Article I. In Article II people are enjoined to revere Buddha, Dharma and Sangha with utmost cordiality. For the reason that Crown Prince Shotoku wrote commentaries and lectured on The Saddharma-Pundarika sutra (the sutra of the Lotus of the Perfect Truth), The Srimala Sutra and The Vimalakirti Sutra, erected Horyuji Temple and many other great temples and politically introduced Buddhism into the daily life of the people, we Japanese regard him as Father of Japanese Buddhism. Generation after generation, we Japanese have remembered him with deep respect and love through his teaching: "Revere Buddha, Dharma and Sangha." In fact the influence this catch-word exerted over the mentality of



the Japanese and helped Buddhism spread in our country is unfathomable and incalculable.

With the spirit as made clear in Articles I and II, for over one thousand and three hundred years Japan had continued to lead a national life of her own, centered in the Imperial Family. But a century ago when Japan came in contact with the monotheistic civilization of Western nations, fascinated by its brilliant but egoistic features her people began to go a wrong way. They are generally docile and gentle, kind-hearted and industrious. They are also friendly disposed towards foreigners, are intelligent enough to understand and appreciate foreign cultures and have capabilities to adapt what are good in them to their own use.

After they began to learn about Western civilization, misled by a section of political leaders, they gradually fell into the error of considering material wealth and physical strength as prerequisite to national greatness and happiness and adopted the degenerated modern imperialism as guiding principle of national policy. It is a thousand pities that in consequence this nation of ours, which formerly was one of peace and amity existing, as it were, as one great united family as described in Article III of Crown Prince Shotoku's Constitution finally changed into a military power.

Following suit of imperialistic Western powers, Japan, after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, began to regard her former teachers, China and Korea, with scant respect and by strengthening her armament with scientific knowledge she acquired from the West, often dared to invade her great neighbours. She also forgot and forsook her precious qualification for being a member of the community of Asian nations connected by the tie of Buddhistic culture. Though one of the few independent Asian countries, she was left alone by the rest of the Asian peoples with the result she undertook a stupid warfare single-handed only to find herself thoroughly beaten and crushed and her land occupied by

foreign armies for the first time in her history. During the past ten years religions, arts, ways of thinking, industrial organizations, social systems and ways of living of Europe and America have been flooding into Japan without any check to be meekly received by the people with their characteristic docility.

Nevertheless, looking back at the history of this country we find that during many years the Japanese had meekly received cultures from India, China and Korea, digested and assimilated all of them with consummate skill and made them characteristically Japanese to suit their purposes. First of all Buddhism was well digested and assimilated by Crown Prince Shotoku and in the course of the following periods of Nara, Heian and Kamakura was perfectly Japanized and further developed. It is our belief that the Western cultures we have received in recent years will be likewise assimilated and Japanized by our people, stripping them of their foreign colours. What should be the basic principle of this process of assimilation of Western cultures? The answer is: There can be none but the spirit of "Peace is of paramount importance. Make every effort to avoid strife." Since time immemorial Japan has been known by another name "Yamato." Written name in Chinese character, it means "Great Peace." Probably this name originated in Crown Prince Shotoku's Constitution, in the spirit expressed in the precept that teaches to revere Buddha, Dharma and Sangha with utmost cordiality. The unchangeable course for Japanese culture to take is in the teaching found in Crown Prince Shotoku's Constitution. When we think of this, our hearts warm up and our eyes glow. Herein we feel confidence in our power for contributing our share to efforts for bringing about lasting world peace.

'Be it that amidst pains  
And poisons I find me,  
I will bear all adown:  
There no remorse shall be'  
—"The Maha-Sukhavati-Vynha Sutra."



# Buddhism in PENANG

By LIM TEONG AIK

*Hony. Secretary, Penang Buddhist Association.  
Penang Centre, World Federation of Buddhists.*



Penang, a small island lying to the west of the Malay Peninsula, has a cosmopolitan population of more than 300,000 inhabitants, comprising Chinese (over 60%), Malays, Indians, Siamese, Europeans, Burmese, Sinhalese, Eurasians, etc. Before 1786 it was part of Kedah. It was in that year that the Union Jack was hoisted in Penang, and it has since been a British settlement. To-day it forms part of the Federation of Malaya.

The first mention of Buddhism in this part of the world was in connection with a mission under Sona and Uttara, sent to Suvannabhumi (Golden Land. The Malay Peninsula was meant. Teste Lassen, ii. 249. More probably the whole coast from Rangoon to Singapore) in about 252 B. C., immediately after the great Buddhist Council held in Pataliputra (modern Patna) on the summons of Emperor Asoka.

The immigration of Indians in large numbers and the formation of permanent settlements began in the first centuries of the Christian era, with commerce as the driving force. In the fourth century. A. D. the Indians built temples and chiselled Buddhist inscriptions in Sanskrit in Kedah. This early Buddhist influence has been proved by the discovery in Kedah and Province Wellesley (Part of Penang) of Theravada and Mahayana inscriptions in Sanskrit, dating from the fourth century A. D.

A Sanskrit inscription setting forth doctrines of the Mahayana Buddhism in Pallavan script dated to be Sixth Century has been unearthed on the River Bujang (probably the River Muda) in Kedah. In the seventh century a great Mahayana Buddhist empire, Sri Vijaya, taking swift advantage of the growing commerce from India, spread over this part of the world. During the Hindu period a pillar called Buddhagupta Pillar was set up at the mouth of the River Muda near Penang.

In the late thirteenth century nearly the whole of the Malay Peninsula was under Thai rule and Theravada Buddhism flourished.

The Chinese started to migrate from China to Malaya towards the end of the fourteenth century, but they never came in large numbers until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Chinese brought with them a mixture of Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. The influence of these three religions is still felt among the Chinese in Penang, though after the first Great War and especially after the Second World War most of the Chinese in this island practise Mahayana Buddhism with quite a good number following Theravada Buddhism. In fact, many Buddhists practise both. The Mahayanists in Penang belong to the "Pure Land School" with Kwan Yin (Avalokitesvara Bodhisatva) of the Sukhavati as the most popular deity being worshipped. In nearly every Mahayana temple the main image is the Gotama or Sakyamuni Buddha. In every



Chinese home there is an image of Kwan Yin.

In Penang to-day more than 75% of the population are Buddhists. There are over 60 Chinese Buddhist temples (all Mahayana), and 6 Theravada temples (1 Sinhalese, 4 Siamese and 1 Burmese.) The largest is the world-famed Kek Lok Si Monastery, which is six miles from the pier. It stands on the slope of the Ayer Itam Hill, a worthy monument to the patience and diligence of the planners and builders who conceived the idea of "transplanting" in Penang the famous Kusan Monastery in the Fukien Province of China. Standing tier on tier the monastery spreads over an area of 30 acres of luxuriant and colourful hillside. Its two lofty pagodas (one being of the old Burmese type, and the other a seven-tiered gigantic tower) rise high above the surrounding trees looking like silent sentinels guarding the sprawling monastery. As this is a purely Mahayana concern, the monks who number about two dozen are vegetarians. Tourists who come to Penang never fail to visit this world-famed Buddhist Monastery.

In the centre of the town stands Penang's oldest temple, the historic Kong Hock Keong which is dedicated to Kwan Yin (Avalokitesvara Bodhisatva). This temple, the most popular one in Penang, was erected in 1800 A. D., fourteen years after Penang had formally become a British Settlement.

A couple of miles from the pier stands the temple of the Penang Buddhist Association. This is the largest and richest Buddhist organisation in Malaya. It contains a very big library with several hundreds of Buddhist books. Preachings are held on Saturdays and Sundays.

One of the most picturesque of Buddhist temples in Penang is the Mahindarama Temple. It is of Sinhalese design, being a low spreading single-storied building. The Head Bhikkhu of the temple is the most Ven. K. Gunaratane of Ceylon. He was promoted to be the Chief High Priest of Malaya and Singapore. On 7th April, 1955 he was given

the Honorary Title of Dharmakirti Sri at an august ceremony conducted at the ancient and historic Chapter House, at Malwatta, Kandy, Ceylon. Every Sunday he preaches the Dhamma at the Penang Buddhist Association.

It is not possible to trace the date when the oldest Siamese temple in Penang was built. This temple is situated in Burmah Lane, and opposite is the Burmese temple. It was built about 125 years ago.

Penang can boast of the only Buddhist school in the Federation of Malaya. It is called the Phor Thay Buddhist School. In the centre are Maha Kassappa Thera and Ananda Thera standing on either side. The right wing houses the school. In the left wing is a Mahayanist nunnery.

Preachings are held regularly in the Mahindarama, Siamese and some Chinese temples. Parties of preachers are sent regularly by the World Fellowship of Buddhists (Penang Centre) to preach and so spread the Dhamma in the new villages in Province Wellesley, the prison, the T. B. camps, the leper camp, homes for the aged, Po Leung Keok (a home for destitute girls), the Camp School, etc. Monthly there are hundreds of Buddhists observing the Atthanga Sila (the Eight Precepts) in the Penang Buddhist Association, the Penang Buddhist Institute, the Siamese temples and a few Chinese temples.

Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, O. B. E., M. A., D. Litt. (London), President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists visited Penang in May, 1951 and delivered several lectures on Buddhism in many temples. Mr. A. V. Aston, the then Resident Commissioner of Penang, who presided at a public function held in honour of Dr. Malalasekera said inter alia in his speech, "Penang is the centre of Buddhist culture in Malaya." Every now and then famous Buddhists call at Penang enroute, and are invited to give lectures on Buddhism.

On Tuesday, March 1st 1949 a mammoth meeting with representatives from all Buddhist organisations and temples in Penang was held at the Penang



Buddhist Association to request the Government to declare Wesak Full Moon Day a public holiday annually from 1949. Consular representatives of Buddhist countries and prominent Buddhists from various parts of Malaya were also present. A Committee of 15 persons, known as Wesak Holiday Committee, with the writer of this article as Honorary Secretary was formed to prepare a Memorial to be signed by representatives of all Buddhist organisations and temples and prominent Buddhist individuals throughout the Federation of Malaya for presentation to H. E. the High Commissioner, Federation of Malaya. On Monday, 4th April 1949 the Memorial was presented. As a result of this, two Settlements (Penang and Malacca) and one state (Kedah) have been given a public holiday on Wesak Day since 1949. The Wesak Holiday Committee will keep on appealing to the Federal and various state governments until Wesak Full Moon Day is declared a public holiday throughout the Federation, thus gaining for Buddhism the same recognition as has been accorded to other major religions.

Since 1949 on the occasion of Wesak Day "red packets" (i. e. monetary gifts) have been distributed to the inmates of the leper and T. B. camps, the Camp School, Poh Leung Keok (Home for destitute girls), the Malay Orphanage, homes for the old and aged, St. Nicolas' Home for the blind, the Federation School for the Deaf, the Ramakrishna Ashrama, etc. Preaching of the Dhamma, the observation of the Atthanga Sila (the Eight Precepts) are held on all Buddhist temples. On that auspicious day a flower-and-flag procession has been held annually since 1949 with more than 10,000 people taking part. The prominent feature has always been a decorated chariot carrying a six-foot image of the Buddha which wended its way through all the principal streets of the town. Butchers stop slaughtering pigs on that most important day of the year. Offerings are made to all members of the Sangha, and the six-coloured Buddhist flags are flown for three days in all institutions, temples and homes. In short, it is observed as the greatest festival of all Buddhists in Penang, which thus falls in line with rest of the Buddhist world.





# BUDDHISM

## AND BUDDHIST MONUMENTS IN

# AFGHANISTAN

By J. A. WILL PERERA

**T**he first news of Buddhism and Buddhist monuments in Afghanistan trickled through to Civilization in the year 1831, when the celebrated Orientalist H. H. Wilson published the story of the travels, discoveries, and death of two British intrepid, pioneer explorers in the first quarter of the 19th century. George Trebeek, son of a British lawyer practising in Calcutta, and William Moorcroft, Veterinary Surgeon, and Superintendent of the British East India Company's military stud-farm, undertook that ill-fated journey over 130 years ago from India to Turkistan, Moorcroft was keen on importing the "Turkoman breed of horses" with a view to improving the remounts of the East India Company. He also had the idea of opening up trade relations between India and Turkistan. These brave explorers endured many hardships, encountered hostility from tribes and races, faced several disappointments, overcame difficulties, and finally arrived in Bokhara via Le' and Kabul. Men possessed of less resolute hearts may have quailed, faltered, and failed, but the British Spirit prevailed, as it has done throughout history; when the depths of the ocean have been investigated and fathomed, when unconquerable heights were scaled, and when the air itself has been conquered. Like Capt. Robert

Falcon Scott and his men perishing in the snowy wastes of Antarctica 40 odd years ago, young Trebeek and Moorcroft were stricken with ague (fever) and succumbed to that malignant malady on their homeward trail in the year 1825. Their remote and lonely graves at, or in the vicinity of Balkh, told the sorrowful tale of their ill-timed, ill-advised, and ill-fated expedition.

Trebeek and Moorcroft, we glean from Mr. Wilson's publication, were the first Europeans ever to explore the *Chetiyas* (Stupas) of Afghanistan. They were also the first Westerners to visit, gaze, and marvel at the *Colossi* at Bamiyan. Seven years after the tragic deaths of these Britons, a young English Officer, Lieut. Alexander Burnes journeyed across the Punjab, thence through Peshawar on to Bokhara. He was bent on seeing the areas conquered by Alexander the Great, and also of exploring the Oxus. His companions in that adventure were Mohum Lal a Kashmiri Brahmin, and Dr. James Gerard the Medical Officer. Success attended their mission in 1832. Mohum Lal acted as the Persian Munshi (interpreter). In his narrative Lieut. Burnes mentions "Caves in rocks," "towers," and "topis" in Kabul and Jelalabad districts. He describes the "Buts of Bamiyan" which he thought "existed before the time of Mohammed, and when the country was possessed by





*Remains of a Colossal Statue of the Buddha at Bamiyan in Afghanistan.*



Kafirs under the dominion of Zohak whose reign was antecedent to Christianity.”

The discoveries of Trebeek, Moorcroft, and Burnes, were soon eclipsed by the thorough exploration of Afghan antiquities by the American Traveller Charles Masson. He was impelled to venture into Afghanistan, by his thirst to uncover the site of Alexandria under the Caucasus, one of the Colonies established by the powerful Macedonian. This American archaeologist displayed a remarkable keenness in ascertaining facts, an aptitude in garnering valuable information, and unlimited powers physically. These qualities have won the unqualified approbation of M. Foucher, the greatest authority on the Gandhara art. Masson stayed in Afghanistan for 3 years (1834—37), during which period he excavated several *Cheti yas* (Stupas) in the Kabul and Jelalabad areas, within which dagabas he discovered exquisite relic-caskets, coins, etc.

The results of Masson's expedition, he divulged to the world in three consecutive Memoranda published in the Journals of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, in the years 1835 and 1836. Later, in the year 1841, the great Orientalist H. H. Wilson, published them in the “*Ariana Antiqua*,” London, together with a Memoir from Masson. Then followed a lull or a “calm before the storm,” when the First Afghan War waged by the British, broke out in all its fury. When the war was in a most critical stage, a British prisoner-of-war in Afghan hands (Lieut. Vincent Eyre), contrived to explore the Bamiyan Caves. His short and incomplete notes were embodied in his book: “*The Military Operations at Kabul, with a Journal of imprisonment in Afghanistan.*” Shortly after Eyre's contribution to knowledge J. P. Ferrier, a French Officer travelled *incognito* from Baghdad overland to Lahore in India. In the course of his risky journey Ferrier inspected the Buddhist rock-cut caves at Sing-lak in Afghanistan. During the Second Afghan War (1878—80) William Simpson, the British War-Correspondent explored the cave-

shrines and stupas at Jelalabad. He published his discoveries, (with several sketches), in the journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1882, and in other periodicals.

When Lord Dufferin appointed the Russo-Afghan Boundary Delimitation Commission in 1885, Capt. the Hon'ble M. G. Talbot together with Capt. Maitland, made complete as well as reliable descriptions of the Bamiyan Caves, subsequently published with sketches in the Royal Asiatic Journal of 1886. As there was a cessation of research work since then, Foucher in the first volume (pub. 1905,) of his monumental work “*L'ART GRECO-BOUDDHIQUE DU GANDHARA*” (page 7) remarks, that mankind must await further exploration to augment the present knowledge. However, in 1922 M. Foucher signed a Pact with the Royal Afghan Government, by which Convention, the exclusive right was granted to France till 1952 (30 years), to carry on Archaeological excavation throughout Afghanistan. Within a short time, the wise action taken by the King of the Afghans has been amply justified. Besides M. Foucher, other French savants like M. Hackin, M. Jouveaux Dubrenil and M. and Mme. Godard visited the country, and their combined enthusiastic work has yielded much valuable material pertaining to Buddhism. In the twenties of this century, the second volume of Foucher's great work on the Graeco-Buddhist Gandhara Art was published, replete with illustrations and a bewitching tale of the Buddhist Sculptures, etc, of Bamiyan. Further volumes are contemplated, and it is fervently hoped that like the sea giving up its dead, this ancient Buddhist Kingdom, will surrender what yet lies buried beneath its soil, thereby enriching Buddhism in the next 2,500 years of this World Religion, commencing from June 1957. The present turmoil, and ferment in the Islamic World, and the antipathy towards the West, are passing phases—the birth-pangs of new nations—and should not be permitted to foul or clog the springs, of knowledge regarding Asian religions,





*A Buddhist Wall Painting at Bamiyan.*



cultures, etc. I now approach my main theme "Buddhism & Buddhist Monuments in Afghanistan."

Prof: Sylvain Levi, the great French orientalist, in one of his works said:—

"In the great movement of exchange which constitutes from time immemorial the organic life of the whole of mankind, India has largely given as she has largely received."

Dr. Upendra Nath Ghosal, M. A., Ph. D. in his book "Ancient Indian Culture in Afghanistan" written in 1928 at the request of Dr. Kalidas Nag, and in which undertaking he received the valuable assistance of Dr. Prabodh Chandra Bagchi and Dr. Bijan Raj Chatterjee, refers to the Buddhist monuments that exist in Afghanistan today.

*Before the Christian era Buddhism flourished in the valley of the Oxus. In B. C. 2 a Chinese Ambassador sent to China certain Buddhist texts "from the country of the Yueh-chi," which correspond to Afghanistan of our times.*

*Before the Indian Buddhist missionaries Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna arrived in N. W. China in A. C. 68, they worked in Yueh-chi (Afghanistan).*

*The great Afghan monarch Kanishka of the Yueh-chi or Kushan dynasty, says Dr. Ghosal, "fell under the spell of Buddhism, and he distinguished himself as much by his patronage of Vasumitra and Asvaghosa, as by his construction of stupas and viharas."*

*Among the many pious donors of Buddhist institutions in ancient Afghanistan, as revealed in the inscriptions on urns, earthen jars, and reliquaries discovered in Afghan stupas, are the names of the Greek district officer Theodoras, the satrap of Vespasi named Horemurta, "an unnamed son of the Satrap Kapisi, who was the son of the Satrap Granafaka," the monk Rahula who hailed from Vanayu, also Kamaguli's son Vagra Marega.*

*It is apparent, therefore, that among the donors figured high officials, as well as monks and laymen of non-Indian races, viz. Greeks, Persians, etc.*

The Persians were in the forefront of those spreading the cultures of India,

Central and Eastern Asia.

Adds Dr. Ghosal:—"Neither the climate nor the historical development of Afghanistan has been so favourable to the preservation of the ancient records.

"But it may be observed that birch-bark manuscripts were found along with other relics inside the Stupas of the Upper Kabul valley by their first Western explorer."

## PRAKRIT

*The early Christian era inscriptions are in Indian Prakrit, identical with those Kharosthi Mss. found in Khotan areas.*

*Prof. Sten Konow in 1926 proved that Buddhist canonical literature, presumably of the Sarvastivadin school was written in Prakrit in Kharosthi inscriptions.*

In ancient Afghanistan too there is evidence of the Graeco-Buddhist school of art "which expressed the ideas of Buddhism in forms of Hellenistic art."

The Buddhist monuments are strewn "along the tract of the great highway that connected N. W. India along the Kabul Valley and across the Hindu Kush with Western and Central Asia."

These are majestic in proportion and execution. In the plain of Jelalabad (Nagaratara of the ancients) stupas and monasteries exist in profusion.

*At Hadda, 5 miles south of Jelalabad is the site of the famous Stupa of Lord Buddha's skull bone. In the ruins there, fine, examples of Gandhara sculptures can be seen.*

In Kohistan of Kabul the remains of a Buddhist city have been unearthed. Those remains are situated "on the site of three vast amphi-theatres now called Seh Topan the Kamari, and Shevaki.

*In Kapisa valley have been located the famous monastery erected by the Chinese hostages of Emperor Kanishka.*

Besides, Stupas and other monastic buildings mentioned by Hnue Tsang have been unerringly identified. Grottos and caves are found at Bamiyan near the snow-capped Hindu Kush. *The colossal images of Buddha there are far-famed.*



Abul Fazi a Muslim writer of the 17th century estimated these caves to be 12,000 in number. In some monks lived, others contain images of the Buddha and Bodhisatvas.

The colossal images are five in number, three sedant images and two erect ones of the Lord.

The two erect ones "are coated with stucco, which was originally gilt, so much so, that Hiuen Tsang held the lesser of them to be made of bronze."

The frescoes have vanished in the course of ages, but the French Archaeological delegation at Kabul, has commendably preserved for posterity "precious fragments from the riches of the colossal Buddhas."

Buddhas, Bodhisatvas, Kings, nobles, their wives *servants carrying trays of offerings* (of *Sigiriya frescoes*), pious donors, and the Persian Moon Goddess "mounted upon a chariot drawn by horses" can be seen in those fresco fragments.

Says Dr. Ghoshal:—"The Bamiyan paintings are of high importance, as forming the connecting link between the art of Ajanta and the Buddhist pictorial art of Central Asia."

There is also a famous Parinirvana image of the Buddha at Bamiyan. In Afghan-Turkistan the ruins of Stupas and others were discovered about 35 years ago by Mon. Foucher.

This is on the ancient site of Balkh. The Stupas range from the primitive or earliest types, to the more elaborate and complicated varieties.

In most Stupas extant "the drum is adorned with a belt or ornamental moulding consisting of a succession of arches

resting upon pilasters or else of a series of pilasters alone".

In many Stupas were found "relic-caskets which were made either of gold, or of silver, and often encrusted with gems."

Pillars similar to those at Sanchi and Saranath are, also found in almost all Buddhist sites in Afghanistan.

S. E. of Kabul are two pillars, one called Minar Chakri or the Wheel Pillar which may have had on its summit the Dharma Chakra.

A few years ago, Mr. Abdusattar Shalizi, General Director of Labour in Afghanistan, when attending the International Labour Conference at Nuwara-Eliya; referred to the Colossal Buddha statues in the Bamiyan Valley as "the World's biggest statues, each Buddha being over 200 feet in height." Mr. Shalizi saw a remarkable affinity in the Buddha images at Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Awukana, and those in Afghanistan. He added that the Afghan Government would be only too glad to welcome Buddhists from Lanka, who might care to visit his Country, either as pilgrims, or as research students in archaeology. The best season to visit Afghanistan, he said, would be from the end of April to the end of September, as at other times it is very cold there.

In the Kabul Museum there are said to be many rare "pieces" of the Buddhist era in Afghanistan, among them being a Bodhisattva from Fondukistan, a stucco in the Indo-Sassanian style, Circa 7th Century A. C., and 27 inches high. An exquisite photograph of it by G. Butcher appeared in "Oriental Art," vol. I, No 4, Winter 1955.



# BUDDHISM IN CEYLON

By Dr. G. P. MALALASEKARA



Tradition has it that the Buddha, during his lifetime, visited the Island of Ceylon three times to bless it with his presence and to make it a fit treasure-house wherein his sublime teachings would be cherished and protected for the welfare of humanity. Our Chronicles, which are among the earliest and the most reliable in the world, record that the first immigrants from India reached our shores on the very day of the Buddha's Final Release, his Parinibbana. As the Master was breathing his last, in the Sāla-grove of the Mallas in Kusinārā, he saw with his divine eye their arrival and enjoined upon the devas who were around him to give them their special protection.

But, historically speaking, it was not till two centuries later that Buddhism was firmly established in Ceylon, when the Arhant Mahinda, son of the Great Emperor Asoka, came over from India and converted to the new Faith the reigning monarch, Devanampiyatissa—Tissa, Beloved of the Gods. The hill at Mihintale—later so-called after Mahinda himself—eight miles from Ceylon's ancient capital, Anuradhapura (now famed throughout the Buddhist world as a Sacred City), was the site of this historic meeting between Saint and King. And here, on every full-moon day of the month of Poson (June), millions of pilgrims wend their way to relive in their imagination the drama of the introduction of Buddhism into this lovely land. Mahinda's mission was the most successful of the many missions sent by Asoka for the propagation of Buddhism. The conversion of the king was soon followed by that of the people, who welcomed the Teaching with the utmost enthusiasm. The circumstances that prevailed were most favourable for its immediate

acceptance and rapid spread. Buddhism thus became the State Religion of Ceylon and the way of life of its people, bringing with it untold blessings of peace and happiness.

Asoka himself took great personal interest in the propagation of the religion in Ceylon and, soon after Mahinda's arrival, followed the latter's visit by despatching his daughter, Sanghamittā, who had become a Nun, together with a branch of the Sacred Tree under which the Buddha had reached Supreme Enlightenment. The arrival of this Bodhi-tree in the Island kindled the people's imagination as no single event has done before or since. Just as securely as the roots of that Tree wended their pliant way into the soil of Lanka, so did the Teaching of the Buddha enter into the innermost lives of the people influencing them into the pursuit of noble virtues.

The branch of the Bodhi-tree was one of the many objects of worship associated with Buddhism in the Island. Soon after the acceptance of the Religion by the King, Mahinda obtained for him from India Relics of the Buddha. These were enshrined in massive structures, the Dagabas as they were called, and successive rulers vied with one another in their construction, whenever they were able to secure more Relics from the mainland of India. The first Dagoba to be built in Ceylon was the Thupārāma, small in size and with a roof, on stone-pillars, to protect it. It was the work of Devānampiyatissa himself. But the most famous of Ceylon Dagabas is the Ruvanvali, called in Pali Suvannamālī, constructed by Dutthagāmini, hero of the Pali Chronicle, the Mahāvamsa, who, more than any other monarch in Ceylon's hoary history, has kindled popular imagination. For, it was he who saved Buddhism from the marauders of South India when they invaded Ceylon and the national faith was thereby



threatened with extinction. Numerous legends are current about this warriorking. After his death, he was born in Tusita-heaven from where he acts as the guardian of Buddhism in Ceylon. Many are the Dagabas to be found in this fair land; in fact, no village inhabited by the Sinhala Buddhists would consider itself self-sufficient, if it does not possess a gleaming-white Dagaba, crowned with gilt or copper-pinnacle, either resting among the palm-groves, or on some hill-top, looking down upon the green and smiling paddy fields. Mightest of them all, in actual size, is the Jetavana Dagaba, the work of Mahāsenā who defied even the gods when they suggested to him that he should not use for his handiwork the name of the famous monastery of Sāvātthi, hallowed as the Buddha's residence for twenty continuous years.

But it was not merely by the construction of religious edifices, Dagabas and Viharas (as the residences of the monks were called) that Buddhism was stabilised in Sri Lankā. It is true that the Viharas in particular played a very important role in that stabilization. They were not only the centres of Buddhist propagation but also served as schools where the whole population, prince and peasant alike, received their education. They were the pivot round which revolved all the activities of the community and their influence on the people was most profound. It was this impact of Buddhism upon the innermost fibre of their being that was responsible for inculcating into them the virtues of gentleness and tolerance, their love of hospitality and peace and harmony, their generosity and mutual service which have characterised the Buddhists of Ceylon throughout the centuries.

The Sinhala Buddhist were not only builders; they were sculptors as well and lovers of all the Fine Arts, including drama and dancing, literature, painting and music. There is reason to believe that it was in Ceylon that the first images of the Buddha were made, while India was still reluctant to represent the Master

by anything other than symbols. So great was the skill developed by Sinhala sculptors that their work won the highest approval even in foreign lands such as those of Burma and Thailand, Cambodia and distant China. There is a tradition that the "Emerald Buddha," which is considered Thailand's greatest treasure, was the work of Ceylon sculptors. Earlier in the fifth century, when a goodwill mission from Ceylon visited China, carrying with them many gifts, including a stone-image made by a Sinhala monk, Nanda by name, so greatly was it admired in the Court of China that, it is said, the Emperor gave orders that thenceforward all Buddha images in the Middle Kingdom should be modelled on the Ceylon image.

The art of mural-painting, too, reached a very high level of excellence and, what is of even greater significance, is that it is possible here, in Ceylon, to follow the development of mural-painting for a period of not less than twenty centuries, from the earliest times to the present day, the examples ranging from world-famous paintings, such as those of the rock-fortress of Sigiriya to folk-art which depicts with vigour and imagination the daily life of the people by whom they were drawn. No other country in the world can boast of such a long continuity of mural-painting, with living examples from every age. The subjects selected by the artists were such that they provided a high quality of "visual education" that was valuable in the moulding of character and the development of their mental outlook.

In the time of Valagambā, in the first century B. C., the sacred texts of Buddhism were reduced to writing, for the first time in recorded history. This memorable event took place in the cave of Aluvihāra, which has since become an important international centre of pilgrimage. Five hundred Arhant monks took part in this mighty task and thus fixed the authentic word of the Buddha, the Tipitaka. This was followed by an active and intense study of the Tipitaka and many scholars wrote learned commen-



taries to interpret and explain the doctrines of Buddhism. The Maha Vihāra or Great Minister at Anuradhapura was the chief centre of these intellectual activities. There the languages used were Pali and Sinhalese. In Anuradhapura itself, as time went on, a sister institution came into being, the Abhayagiri Vihara, where the books of the unorthodox Buddhist Sects of India were studied with care and attention. These were chiefly in Sanskrit.

Attracted by the fame of these centres of learning, scholars from foreign lands to Anuradhapura and stayed there travelled sometimes for many years, imbibing deep from the very sources of the sacred lore. Some of them came from distant China; the names of about a score of them are actually recorded in Chinese annals, the most notable among them being the indefatigable savant and pilgrim, Fa Hsien. He belonged to the Mahāyāna School of Buddhism and studied at Abhayagiri. Even more famous in Theravāda lands was Buddhaghosa who had been born near the sacred Bodhi-Tree in Buddhagaya. He was sent by his teacher to study at the Maha Vihāra in Anuradhapura, where he spent many years writing in Pali voluminous commentaries on books of the Tipitaka. He also wrote a compendium of Buddhist doctrine called the Visuddhi Magga (Path of Purity) which became one of the classics of Buddhism. According to Burmese tradition, after his labours in Ceylon were over, Buddhaghosa went across to Burma and helped greatly in the firm establishment of Buddhism in that land.

The period from the fifth century A. C., to the ninth century was one of great Buddhist missionary activity, and Ceylon furnished the focal-point in those activities. Missionaries travelled from there across the seas to the countries of South East Asia and even beyond, into China. They were greatly welcomed and succeeded in establishing cordial relations between Ceylon and her neighbours. Among these missionaries were also Bhikkhunis or Nuns who cheerfully

braved the dangers of travel in their zeal for the propagation of their Faith. The Chinese annals record a visit to Nankin of eight Nuns from Ceylon and it was as a result of their visit that for the first time in Chinese history order of Nuns was established in 434 A. C. The Buddhist Nuns of China of the present day claim direct descent from this Order, though in the course of time many changes inevitably took place, especially in external observances. A few centuries later, the Order of Bhikkhunis disappeared altogether from Ceylon, because of a variety of reasons. Recently, there are stirrings of a new desire to re-establish the Order and the possibility of obtaining the assistance of Chinese Bhikkhunis for the purpose has been discussed.

The relation between Ceylon and foreign lands was not a one-way traffic. As a result, many influences left their impress on the life of the people, not least in the domain of religion. The great Mahāyāna movements of India, in particular, found their way into Ceylon, much to the discomfiture of the orthodox Theravādins. But sometimes even the Kings of Ceylon, like Mahāsenā and Sena I, were attracted by these "Vaitulya doctrines" (as they were called by local Theravadins), though this interest was generally short-lived, because of the great power of orthodox monks and nuns. The exotic practices of the Tantric Sects, especially those of the Blue Robed monks, were particularly unpopular and put down with a firm hand. But there exists unmistakable evidence of the profound influence of Mahāyāna upon Buddhism in Ceylon, both in doctrine and in ritual.

Buddhist ritual in Lanka was greatly enriched by the arrival here of the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha in 312 A. C. It was brought here on the instructions of her father by the Kalinga Princess Hemamāli. The Relic eventually became the greatest national treasure of Ceylon and its possession was regarded as the essential qualification for Kingship. In every capital of the kingdom, a



special shrine was built for it, as part of the king's palace, and king after king lavished upon it every token of deep regard. Its present resting-place is in Kandy, the capital of the last Sinhala King, and the Daladā Māligāwa or Temple of the Tooth Relic is annually visited by millions of pilgrims, from every part of the world. A very colourful ritual is witnessed, especially on the special occasions when the Relic is shown to devotees. In the 10th century the even tenour of Buddhist development was greatly disturbed by the incursion into Ceylon of the mighty empire of the Chola in South India. For fifty years, Lanka was ruled by the Cholas who did all in their power to destroy Buddhism from this country. The Chronicles record the damage they caused in no uncertain terms. "In the three Fraternities (of the monk) and in all Lanka, breaking open the Relic-chambers they carried away many valuable images of gold etc., and while they destroyed here and there all the monasteries, like blood-sucking demons, they took all the treasures of Lanka for themselves." The Order of monks was almost completely wiped out. But happily for Buddhism and for Ceylon, the need produced the man and Vijayabāhu I was able in 1055 A. C., to drive away the conqueror and unify the scattered force of Ceylon. He was a man of great energy, foresight and wisdom and one of his first acts was to send tribute to Burma (then called Rāmañña) and invite a chapter of twenty Elders to restore the Sasana in Ceylon. They came willingly to repay in generous measure the assistance which in times gone by Ceylon had rendered to Burma in a similar predicament. From then on to this day, religious intercourse between the two lands has gone on with unabated vigour to the enduring benefit of both peoples.

Two of Vijayabāhu's successors, Parākrama Bāhu I and Sri Nissanka Malla, continued the work of consolidation begun by Vijayabāhu, restored the shrines and monuments, built new

ones, unified the Sangha by getting rid of undesirable and dissident elements, and enhanced the prestige of Ceylon among her neighbours. By this time, Buddhism had almost completely disappeared from India, and Ceylon took her place of leadership in the Buddhist world, a position which she continues to occupy to the present day. The Theriya Nikāya of Lankā, the orthodox Sect established by Mahinda himself, came to be regarded as the custodians of Buddhism in its purest form.

The arrival of the portuguese in Ceylon in 1505 A. C., proved a turning-point in the Island's history. "There is no page in the story of European colonisation," writes Sir Emerson Tennant, one-time Lt. Governor in Ceylon, "more gloomy and repulsive than that which recounts the proceedings of the Portuguese in Ceylon.....They appeared in the Indian Seas in the threefold character of merchants, missionaries and pirates. Their ostensible motto was, 'amity, commerce, and religion;' but their expeditions consisted of soldiers as well as adventurers, and included friars and a chaplain-major; and their instructions were, 'to begin by preaching but, that failing, to proceed to the decision of the sword.'"

The Portuguese occupied the maritime provinces of Ceylon and remained there for 150 years, oppressing and harrassing the people, with unbelievable cruelty. The Portuguese historian, Manuel de Faria y Souza writes:

"When he (Jeronymo de Azavedo) was acting in Ceylon as lord of war, he used to oblige women to throw their own children into stone-troughs and pound them in them, as they would spices in brass mortars, without any mitigation of the cries uttered by those innocent ones under the blows that fell and without any pity for the hearts of mothers who saw themselves made the cruel executioners of their own sons. As soon as they had reduced (the children) to paste, he had the women beheaded as if they had not obeyed him."

The Portuguese were eventually driven



away by the Dutch. Their main concern was trade, especially in cinnaman which they found was 'the very best in the world and abundant.' Unlike the Portuguese, they did not persecute the Buddhists; all their renown was directed against the Roman Catholics. Ironically enough, the Roman Catholic Portuguese had to seek the protection of the Sinhala Buddhist kings who yet held away in the central parts of the Island and this protection was given in ample measure. Lands were given for the establishment of Roman Catholic seminaries and Roman Catholic priests were allowed freedom to preach their religion even in the heart of the Buddhist King's capital. Such was the tolerance that characterised the Buddhists of Ceylon.

During this period, because of various circumstances prevailing in the land, Buddhism suffered greatly and assistance had to be sought again, this time from Siam (or Thailand) to bring about a revival of the Religion. The spear-head of this movement was a monk of great energy, far-sighted wisdom and saintly character, known by the name of Velivita Saranankara. His efforts were wholeheartedly supported by King Kīrti Sri Rājasinha of Kandy, who later appointed him Sangharāja or Chief Prelate of Ceylon. At the instigation of Saranankara, the King sent an embassy to Thailand, to the king and monks of that land. At their invitation a chapter of twenty monks arrived in Ceylon from Thailand, with the Maha Thera Upāli at their head, and these monks restored the upasampadā or Higher Ordination of Monks, with the Malwatte Vihāra in Kandy as their headquarters. To this time too belongs the establishment of the sister-institution at Asgiri Vihāra, also in Kandy. These two great institutions continue to this day at the head of the largest Sect of Buddhist Monks in Ceylon, membering over 10,000.

Some years after the monks from Siam had established the Higher Ordination in Ceylon, there was dissatisfaction among certain sections of the people about restrictions regarding

admission into the Order and a feeling that there was among the monks some laxity in the observance of certain minor rules dealing with monastic discipline. This resulted in the despatch of several missions to Burma and the establishment in Ceylon of two other Sects or Nikāyas, besides the earlier "Siam Nikāya" or "Upālivamsa." The two later Nikāyas are called Āmarapura and Rāmañña. All three Sects own allegiance to the orthodox Theravāda and there are no doctrinal differences among them whatsoever, the only points of variance being confined to the interpretation of a few minor rules of monastic conduct and discipline.

In 1796, the British took over the Dutch possession in Ceylon. So far, Sinhala Buddhist kings had continued to rule in the centre of the Island, while three European races successively occupied the maritime regions. In 1815, however, because of a variety of causes, the whole of Ceylon passed into the hands of the British, the Kandyan provinces (so-called because their capital was in Kandy) being ceded to them by a treaty (called the Kandyan Convention), according to one clause of which the British undertook "to protect and maintain the religion of the Buddha" and to preserve inviolate the rites and ceremonies connected with it.

The British proved themselves to be better rulers than either the Portuguese or the Dutch, probably because they came from a Europe which was more enlightened than that of their predecessors. Generally speaking, British administrators in Ceylon tried to observe the terms of the Kandyan Convention, at least in the letter. But, the pressure of Christian missionary bodies in England often proved too strong to resist and the consequent damage to Buddhism was almost irreparable. No education was allowed except in schools where the most important part of the curriculum was the compulsory study of the Bible. The disabilities suffered by the Buddhists were such that many of the more ambitious among them became Christi-



ans for worldly gain. There were others who were ashamed to own themselves Buddhists in public. In the course of time, there came into being a strongly favoured minority of Ceylonese, educated in English, bearing foreign names and proud of the fact, practically all of them Christians, who controlled the administration of the country. The prestige of Buddhism greatly suffered thereby. In addition, many hundreds of thousands of acres of land, belonging to Buddhist institutions, which had been gifted by kings and rich men of old, were systematically expropriated and the religious establishments thus completely impoverished. Some of this land was given to the missionaries for their churches and schools, often set up cheek by jowl with the institutions to which the land had earlier belonged. Public funds were freely given for the construction of churches and Christian padres paid government salaries from public revenue.

Every support and encouragement was given for the propagation of Christianity. The policy followed by the colonial rulers was that laid down by Lord Acton, Regius Professor of History in Cambridge University. "The religion and manners of the orientals naturally support one another; neither can be changed without the other. Hence, the pioneer of civilization has to get rid of the religion to enable him to introduce a better culture and the pioneer of Christianity has to get rid of (native) culture before he can establish his religion." Hence, it was not merely the religion of the Buddhist that was sought to be supplanted; every vestige of the culture, which was so inextricably bound up with their religion, had also to be uprooted.

This policy would have succeeded but for certain historical happenings. The growth of Rationalism in England gave courage to some Buddhist scholars in Ceylon to challenge the superiority claimed for Christianity over other faiths. There were fierce controversies between the Buddhists and Christians on the rival merits of their religions.

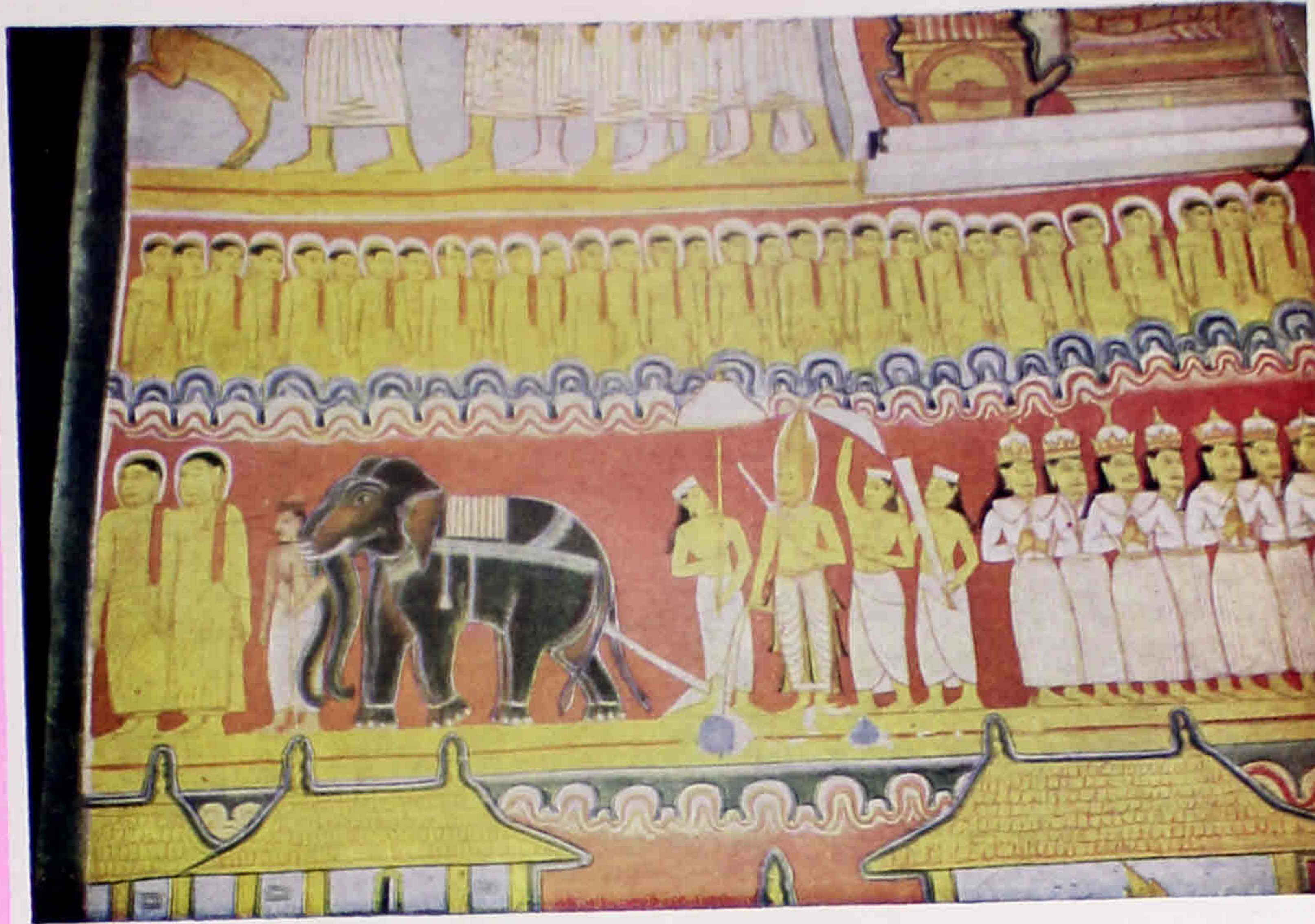
These were often marked by bitterness of language but some of them were of high academic level. Most notable of these was one in August 1873, held in the form of a public debate, in the town of Panadura, not far from Colombo. The leader of the Buddhist group was a monk of great eloquence and powerful personality, Migettuwatte Gunānanda. The Buddhist scored a triumphant victory and the results of the debate proved to be of momentous significance. The debate was held in Sinhalese, but, through the labours of an enterprising local journalist, reports of it were also published in English and a copy of these fell into the hands of Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, co-founder and President of the Theosophical Society.

Col. Olcott was greatly attracted by the presentation of Buddhism as given in the report and he visited Ceylon to learn more of a religion which, although centred in a little Island, so directly challenged the teachings and power of Christianity. Olcott was fascinated by Buddhism and publicly declared himself a follower of the Faith. He was a man of intense sympathy and courage and was shocked by the plight of the Buddhists. He saw with unerring eye that the first step to be taken was the removal of the stranglehold imposed on education by the missionaries. As the time of his arrival there were only two schools under Buddhist management. In consultation with Buddhist leaders and with their active cooperation, he founded the Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society for the establishment of Buddhist schools everywhere. His association with the Buddhist cause greatly enhanced Buddhist prestige and he was able to secure the removal of several Buddhist disabilities. In this connection, he visited England to interview high officials there. One result of his visit was the declaration of the full-moon day of May a public holiday in Ceylon. The Buddhists gradually regained the self-respect that had been lost in the period of their travail and realised the need to check the growth of Christian



# FRESCOES AT THE DAMBULLA VIHARA

Marking the boundaries of  
Anuradhapura with a golden  
plough.



The arrival of the Bodhi  
Tree in Anuradhapura

Photographs by  
K. T. Wimalasekera



influence which had grown beyond all proportion to their numerical position. As a symbol of unity they adopted the six-coloured flag which was destined, not-long afterwards to be the symbol of international Buddhism.

Various Buddhist organisations soon sprang up everywhere in the Island and thus began a great awakening of the people for the resuscitation of their national culture. This movement produced many leaders, among the most energetic and uncompromising of whom was the Anagārika Dharmapāla. He was a fiery speaker who won laurels not only in Ceylon but even in America where he represented Buddhism at the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago. He was inspired to revive Buddhism in India and for this purpose founded the Maha Bodhi Society, whose chief object was to obtain for the Buddhists the sacred site at Buddha Gaya where the Buddha had attained Enlightenment. He did not live to see the success of his efforts but his campaign served to draw Buddhist lands closer together for the common good. In all his activities he was most generously supported by a woman of great vision, Mrs. Mary Foster Robinson of Honolulu who had met him in America and learnt from him the doctrines of Buddhism.

Meanwhile, the monks of Ceylon saw the need for a revival of their ancient learning and for training themselves to meet new demands. For this purpose were established two Pirivenas or ecclesiastical centres of learning, the Vidyodaya Pirivena at Maligakanda, by the eminent and saintly scholar Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, and the Vidyāṅkāra Pirivena at Peliyagoda, by Ratmalane Dharmāloka, his no less distinguished colleague. These Pirivenas provided cultural homes not only for scholars in Ceylon but also for men who came from many lands for the study of Theravāda Buddhism, and who, on their return, wrote a book which spread a correct knowledge of Buddhist doctrine in various parts of the world. The work of these Pirivenas was greatly reinforced

by other men of reputed erudition like Waskaduwe Sri Subhūti and Weligama Sri Sumangala. Pupils of these Pirivenas and of these individual scholars were soon able to establish smaller institutions in many parts of Ceylon till today they number nearly a hundred and fifty, serving a very important purpose in the cultural renaissance of the country.

The national awakening thus set afoot made the people aware of their past greatness as revealed in their Chronicles which were made available by the labours of scholars both from East and West. The printing and publication of these Chronicles and of the sacred texts of the Buddhists, originally written in Pali and hitherto confined to palm-leaf manuscripts in temple-libraries, proved to be a great eye-opener and inspired the people with a determination to make their future as great as, if not even greater than, their past had been. It was this determination which, having gone through many vicissitudes of fortune, culminated in 1948 with the regaining of their independence from foreign domination.

With the regaining of freedom, the Buddhists of Ceylon realised their opportunity for giving a lead to Buddhist activities in the world and in June 1950 was summoned the inaugural meeting of the World Fellowship of Buddhists which was held in the sacred precincts of the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy. Twenty nine Buddhist nations sent representatives and, for the first time in the history of Buddhism, was inaugurated a movement to bring about unity and solidarity among the five hundred and fifty million Buddhists of the world. The resolution, inaugurating the Fellowship, stated, in its preamble, the determination of Buddhists "to make our utmost endeavour to observe and practise the Teachings of the Buddha that we may be radiant examples of the living Faith and to strive with all our might and main to make known the sublime Doctrine of the Buddha, so that its benign spirit of service and sacrifice may pervade the entire world, inspiring and influencing the peoples of the earth



and their governments to lead the Buddhist Way of Life, which is for all ages and times, so that there be Peace and Harmony amongst men and Happiness for all beings."

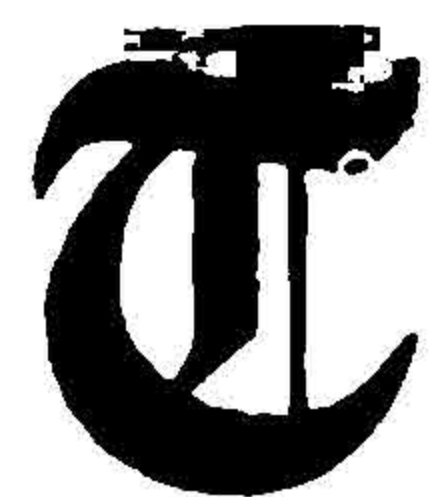
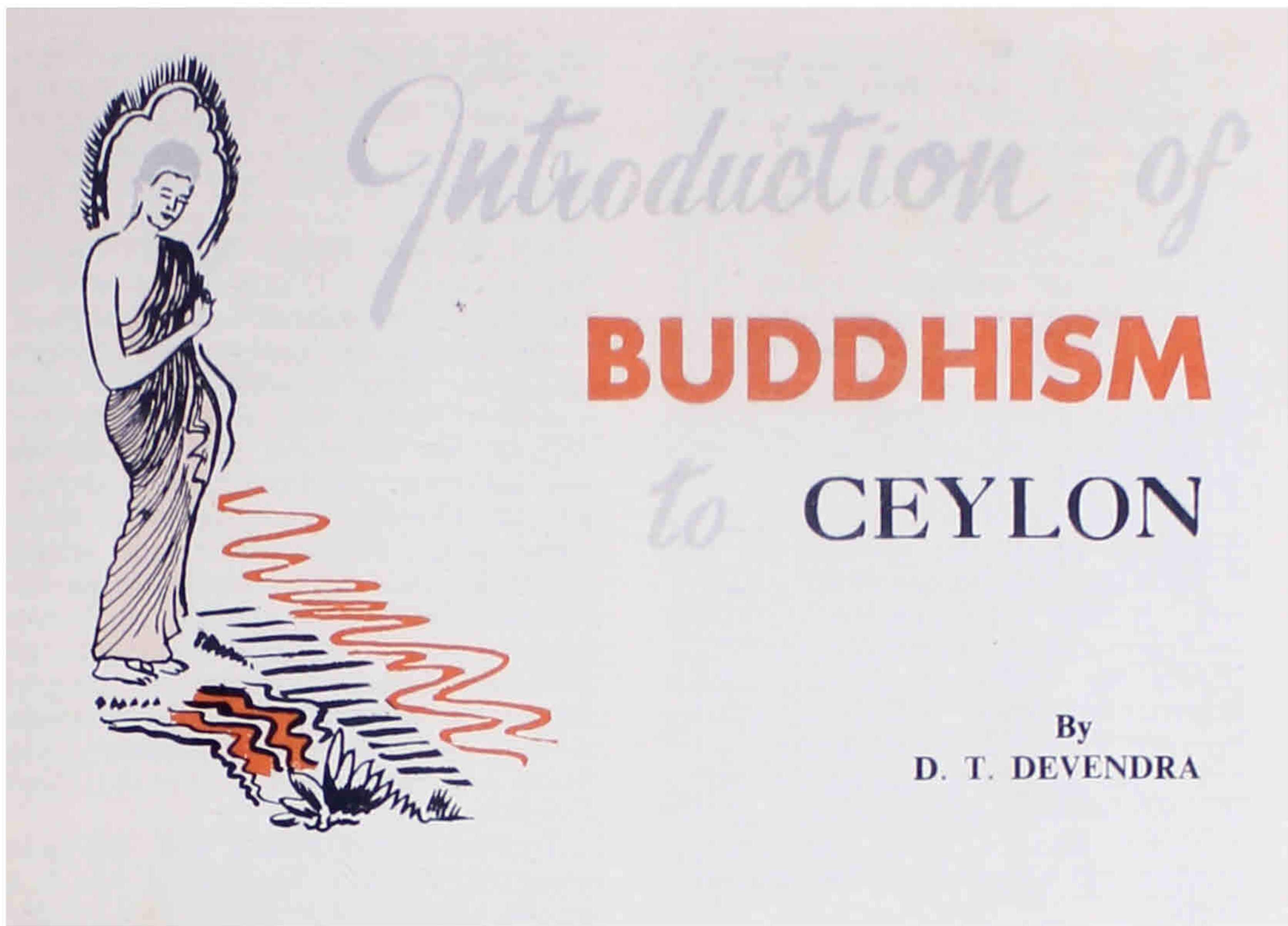
There still remain many problems to be solved before the Buddhists of Ceylon can secure the circumstances which will enable them to live the Buddhist Way of Life in their own country. The damage done to their religion and their culture, during nearly five centuries of almost continuous oppression and suppression, has to be repaired and the rehabilitation of Buddhism has to be effected. In order to investigate fully the nature of these problems and to suggest remedial awareness, the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress appointed in 1954 a Committee of Inquiry, consisting of leading monks and laymen. This committee held numerous sittings in many parts of the Island where they were received with unparalleled enthusiasm. The results of their investigations were published in a Report and presented at a public meeting on Independence Day (February 4th) 1956, attended by 6,000 monks and nearly 10,000 lay people, estimated as having

constituted the largest religious meeting to be held in Ceylon for many centuries. The dissolution of the Parliament of Ceylon and the holding of the General Elections soon followed and in the election campaign, in full swing at the time these words are being written, the findings of the Buddhist Committee of Inquiry are being given great prominence.

Meanwhile, elaborate preparations are afoot to celebrate in fitting manner the 2500th Anniversary of the Buddhist Era and of the Founding of the Sinhala Race. These preparations are under the auspices of the Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya, established by the Government of Ceylon. Very significant among the activities of the Mandalaya has been the part played by it in associating Ceylon with the Chattha Sangāyanā (Sixth Recital of Buddhist Sacred Texts) now being held in Rangoon, and thus bring together the two countries even closer than ever before. The story of the Mandalaya and its purposes and activities are given elsewhere in this publication and need no repetition here.







he acceptance of Buddhism was the most significant event in the life of the Sinhala. It was Buddhism that fashioned the race and placed it worthily in a civilized world. Not one of the many important events in the life of the people could measure up to the influence of Buddhism through this long course of 2500 years of history.

We do not know much of the religious life of our people before the Arahat Mahinda formally brought to us the message of the Buddha. Hiouen Tsang the Chinese bhikkhu a thousand years later, said that the kingdom of Sinhala had been previously given to immoral worship. He himself was prevented from visiting our country because of civil strife and famine. He was then only three sailing days away from Lanka. But he had the companionship of seventy Sinhala monks in his exploration of the

shrines of India and some of the things he had heard are confirmed by the Mahavamsa. However, his was a very far cry from the time of Mahinda.

An article in 1929 by Dr. S. Paranavitana in the Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society described some of the pre-Buddhist beliefs among the Sinhala. The immoral practices referred to by Hiouen Tsang are hinted in it. We learn, too, that there were Brahmanas, possibly Vaishnavas, and other ascetics, and certainly Nighantas (Jainas), Ajivikas, Paribbajakas and some called samanas. Geiger interprets





*samana* as applied to Buddhist ascetics to differentiate them from Brahmanas. Among these sects some followed Mahavira and Makkhali Gosala who lived at the same time as the Buddha. There was absolutely no reason, therefore, why Buddhists could not have been found amongst these different religious sects. The acceptance of the religion from the Arhat by the king was an event likely to obliterate earlier traces and it would not be surprising if the memories of pockets of Buddhists were lost in the memory of the grand event itself.

The tradition of the three visits of the Buddha is an old one in which too, may be reflected the existence of early Buddhists. If there is colonization of the land by Vijaya and the founding of the Sinhala race, for which equally demonstrate evidence is lacking. We should not, for instance, deny the art of writing to the earlier people merely because the earliest script is Brahmi and is precisely datable no easier than to Uttiya, the younger brother and successor of Devanampiya Tissa.

Furthermore, there is a little more in favour of acceptance and that is that the tradition of Buddha's visits is an ancient one. Besides as Geiger has pointed out, the inscription of Asoka to Devanampiya Tissa (when the requisites for the latter's coronation were being sent) to accept the teachings of the Buddha was sent before the despatch of Mahinda.

When all things are considered one is constrained to say that the existence of Buddhists in Ceylon before the arrival of Mahinda was highly probable and no incontrovertible argument can be adduced against it. Any such argument is merely on the same level as the other, and has no greater force.

We may now ask why Buddhism was not brought here officially before the time of Devanampiya Tissa. Prior to Asoka in India the religion was individual and its propagation was not regarded as needing organization. This idea of organization originated with Asoka. His intense piety and desire to spread the Good Law necessarily made his reign

the starting point of the spread on a grand scale. In fact, the official coming of Buddhism had been mooted earlier in the time of Mutasiva, the father of Devamanpiya Tissa. But the time was not propitious.

But one may suspect another reason. The old king was reluctant to give in his old age, whatever creed he had accepted.

The energy of Asoka made India a rare land. India, which regained her full stature of nationhood a few years ago, revived the memories of two of her greatest sons, the Blessed One and Asoka, in grateful appreciation of their names, even though India does not belong to the Buddhist faith. Asoka's urge was undoubtedly that for which we in Lanka have to remain grateful as long as the Sinhalas remain a distinctive people. Asoka was inspired in his Dhammaduta work by the Great Moggaliputta Tissa Thera who had presided over the Third Council.

To what sort of people did Mahinda bring the Buddha Vacana? It was to a people who led disciplined lives, under kings who had organized them in ways which remind us of very modern times. They appreciated that cities should be planned, for example, that sanitation was an important feature to a community. They were a people engaged in the placid pursuit of agriculture, taking their own fill of relaxations.

But for the pursuits of the intellect they were not ordered or organized, as we have seen, early. Nevertheless they were quick and receptive to ideas. Otherwise they would never have readily accepted Buddhism. They had nothing to gain from receiving the new religion, for no mighty nation, no persuasion of material gain induced it. They were an intellectually advanced people, even if we have no remains of any written word, and were as filled with the spirit of the ascetic ideal as India itself.

This is a thing which cannot be always said of people. In our Buddhist history we do not read always that people who received Buddhism acted as the Sinhalas did. In Chinese Turkestan



up to the 4th century the lofty Sramana ideal was not so easily absorbed, and the life of those who in that land called themselves *bhikkhus* was utterly surprising to us who are familiar with the Indian way. The study of a Kharosthi documents shows these differences very clearly.

Therefore, one should not think it natural for every Buddhist people to appreciate Buddhist virtues, merely because the people responded readily to Buddhism. As the Sinhala did it, it must be put to their credit.

The religion of the Buddha poses problems for the intellect. Whether there is a creator—god or a soul, are not thoughts that could be expressed in other than a developed language. They need a degree much more than average intelligence to grasp. This was the mental equipment of the Sinhala who took to Buddhism.

It was not for a mere whim that Lanka was regarded by its ancient chroniclers as a Dhamma—dipa. The compiler of the Mahavamsa described the dying Buddha's words to Sakra: "Vijaya, son of king Sihabahu, is come to Lanka from the country of Lata, together with seven hundred followers. In Lanka, O Lord of gods, will my religion be established, therefore carefully protect him with his followers and Lanka." (Page 55 Geiger's translation of Mahavamsa.)

It is obvious that the position of the island gives extraordinary security. This is illustrated from the fact that Buddhism and the Sinhala held their own against powerful influences from India through the centuries. Islam, whose power was irresistible in India, was unable to reach Lanka at the time. These are not accidents, but directly due to the security of the country. And so we can understand that Sakra sought out Mahinda to tell him, "Set forth to convert Lanka; by the Sambuddha also hast thou been foretold (for this) and we will be those who aid thee there. (Page 89 Geiger's translation of Mahavamsa). He meant that the time was ripe.

He the Arhat met the King, the conversation between the two and other details are known enough to everybody, and there is no need to repeat them. It is important to remember here that along with the king a large mass of people embraced Buddhism. The first sermon that was preached was the "Chulla Hatthi Padopama Sutta." At the end we are told that 40,000 people became Buddhists with their king. The next day the great Mahinda with his followers came to the city from the east by way of the spot which is today by a ruined mound surrounded by paddy fields beyond Nakha Vehera. To mark this spot of entry to the city the first cetiya after Mahinda's arrival, was built, that is Pathama Chetiya. In the city they were received with great ceremonial. Anula, the wife of the king's younger brother Maha Naga who was sub-king, came with 500 women to pay their respects. The Arhat preached to them "Petavatthu, Vimana Vatthu and Sacca Sanyutta" and they became Sovan and next the city folk clamoured to see the revered monks. The king prepared a larger hall for them and Mahinda preached Devadatta Sutta to them. A thousand of those who listened entered the stage of Sovan. From here the Arhat went by the southern gate to Nandana Vana, and there members of women of noble families listened to his preaching the 'Bala Pandita Sutta'; a thousand became Sovan. And so the description goes on, each day saw more and more Buddhists in the land. And when the Theri Sanghamitta came to Lanka bringing the south branch of the Sacred Bo Tree, the Order of Bhikkhunis was established with the Princess Anula herself as the first Sinhala Theri mentioned by name in our history.

The progress of Buddhism was due to the help it received from the kings and the government. The religion was not one which would clash with any existing system of beliefs and in its teachings there was nothing to which a sensible person could object. Princes, nobles, and ordinary men were devoted



to the cause of Buddhism as the kings themselves and especially, therefore, did the great religious buildings came up in the land which now, from day to day, saw the number of Buddhists increasing. In a way the putting up of religious buildings fitted very well into the life of an agricultural people who have leisure during the off-season.

In the tenets of Buddhism there was nothing distasteful to the adherents of the contemporary religions. The Buddha Himself visited the hermitages of other religious folk as a friend and has enjoined upon His own followers the broadest tolerance. This was also the keynote of Asoka when he spread the doctrine of the Blessed one in his Empire.

Buddhism thus appears almost like the religion most suited to the Sinhallas, as other religions are to other people. It took such a strong hold on the people that its position does not appear to be able to be shaken. Indeed, if an example were needed, it is the South-Western coast where other foreign influences were most powerful for five centuries, that other religions have remained ever weak, as Sir Arthur Ranasinghe has commented in the first Census Report of recent times.

Even as it is our paramount duty to preserve and encourage the distinctive features of our culture, so it would be a crime if the Message of the Buddha were not cherished for the posterity of this Land of Pure Buddhism.





