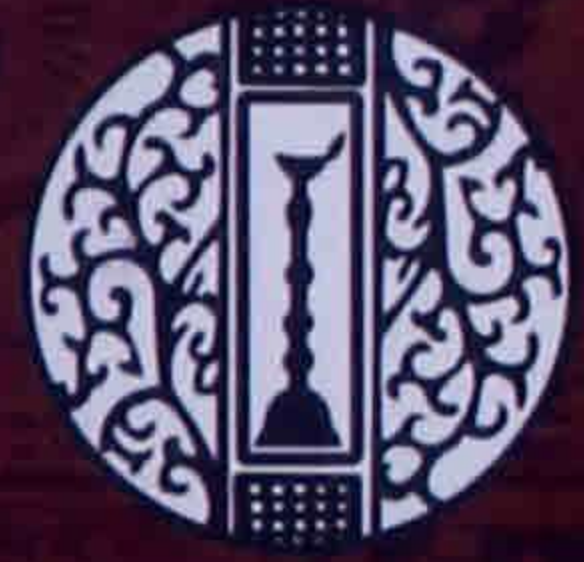




“Mathurā”



“Gandhāra”



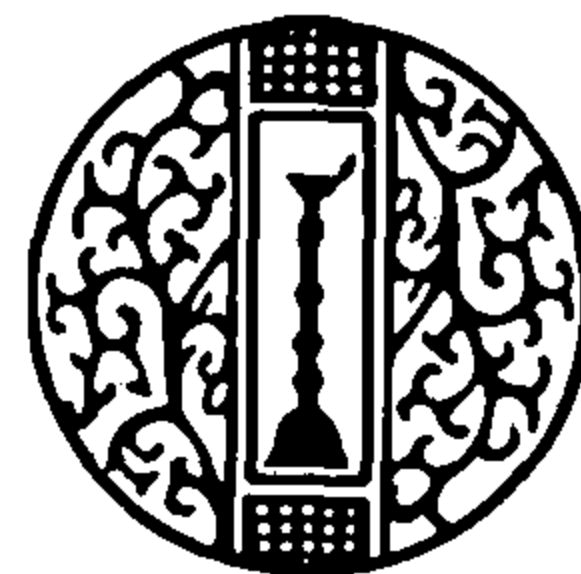
“Bagan”

COLLECTED PAPERS

Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Heritage

15,16,17 December, 2012

Sitagu International Buddhist Academy , Yangon , Myanmar



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Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Yangon, Myanmar

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2600 Years of Buddhajayanti World Buddhist Heritage
An international seminar jointly organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Sitagu International Buddhist Academy (SIBA)

List of Foreign & Local Participants

Myanmar

- (1) Ashin Nyanissara, The Most Ven. Dr. Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies, The founder of Sitagu Association, The principle of the Theravada Dhamm Society of America.
- (2) Ven Dr. Dhammapiya
- (3) Ven Dr. Ashin Ketu
- (4) Myo Myint, Dr. Former MD (Religious Affairs) and main coordinator of the conference
- (5) Dr Hla Tun, a reputed Sanskrit Scholar
- (6) U Aung Thein Nyunt, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Religious Affairs
- (7) U Aung Kyaing, Member of Parliament and former Director General (Archaeology and Culture)
- (8) U Win Maung, Renowned craftsman and artist Buddhist Art and culture.

Singapore

- (9) Venerable S. Dhammika (Australia), Buddha Mandala Society, Balestier Road, Singapore

United Kingdom

- (10) Venerable Dr. Dhammasami, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Oxford, Oxford.
- (11) Mr. Charles Shaw (administrator, University of Oxford, Oxford; Pali scholar & chairman, Samatha Trust, UK; accompanying his wife, Dr. Sarah Shaw)
- (12) Dr. Sarah Shaw, Dept of Continuing Education, University of Oxford, Oxford.
- (13) Dr. Elizabeth H. Moore, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London.
- (14) Dr. ShailendraBhandare (Assistant Keeper, South Asian Coin Collections and Paper Money, Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford)

Thailand

- (15) Venerable Dr. Anil SakyaSugandho, Deputy Dean, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Bangkok.
- (16) Dr. PiryaKrairiksh (!)



India

- (17) Prof. Lalji Shrivastava, former head of Dept. of Pali & Buddhist Studies, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.
- (18) Assoc. Prof. Dr. Subhra Barua Pavagadhi, Dept of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi.
- (19) Dr. Bandana Bhattacharya (Mukherjee)
- (20) Prof. Neelima Dahiya, M D University, Delhi.
- (21) Prof. Rajiva Kumar Sinha
- (22) Dr. Saswati Mutsuddy, Reader, Dept of Pali, University of Calcutta.
- (23) Dr. Ravindra Panth, Director of Nava Nalanda Mahavihara

Vietnam

- (24) Ven. Dr. Theich Giac Hiep, Vietnam Buddhist University.

Sri Lanka

- (25) Prof. Asanga Tilakaratne, Colombo University, Sri Lanka.

China

- (26) The Most Ven. Xue Cheng (Secretary General, Buddhist Association of China/ Vice-chairman, IABU)
- (27) Ven Xian Qing (Buddhist Association of China)
- (28) Ven. Prof. Dr. Yuanci (paper presenter/ Buddhist Academy of China)
- (29) Mr. Wang Li (chief of foreign affairs/ Buddhist Association of China)
- (30) Ms Luo Yuzhen (staff/ foreign affairs/ Buddhist association of China.

Korea

- (31) Ven. Prof. Dr. Jinwol Y. H. Lee, Dongguk University, Korea
- (32) Chojoonho, Seoul National University, Seoul

Lao

- (33) Mr. Bounthavy Phonethasine, Head Division of Buddhism\ Department of Religious Affairs, Department of Religious Affairs Front for National Construction Lao

Cambodia

- (34) Khan Daun Penh, Phnom-Penh, Cambodia



INTRODUCTION

This Conference will dwell on the Buddhist heritage shared by mankind, a heritage that transcends man-made borders of country, region and language. The timing of the Conference is apt as it commemorates the 2600th anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment and the Buddha Sasana.

Lord Gautama Buddha was born in Lumbini (now in Nepal), grew up in India, attained enlightenment in Buddha Gaya, preached his first sermon thereafter at Sarnath (India) and attained nirvana in Kushinagara (India). His teachings were carried across the world first into South East Asia and later spread even farther afield into Europe and the Americas over the years. Today, Buddhism is practiced by over 500 million people around the world. Buddhism adapted to local beliefs and practices and different streams were born as a result – Mahayana, Theravada and Tibetan. Buddhism being highly syncretic and accommodative faith, it was able to absorb ideas and influences from other religious practices to become an influential world religion. Buddhism, particularly the way it is practiced in South East Asia, became a way of life, encompassing religious tenets, social mores and ways of doing business and more.

The Buddhist heritage is both tangible and intangible. The tangible heritage is the wealth of Buddhist monuments – the pagodas, stupas and monasteries that have been erected in countries all over the world. Myanmar has some incredible examples of such architecture – the holy and revered Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon, the Mahamuni statue in Mandalay which is regarded as the most sacred image in the country, the scenic Kyaitiyo Golden Rock Pagoda and of course, the over 2000 temples in just 16 sq miles in the ancient city of Bagan. India, as the birthplace of Buddhism has its fair share – the temple at Buddha Gaya, the stupa at Sarnath/Varanasi and the image of Buddha in Mahaparinirvana pose at Kushinagara – where millions of pilgrims from all over the world come to pay respect. There are two sacred tooth relics of the Buddha, which are today enshrined in Kandy, Sri Lanka and Beijing, China. These are venerated by devoted Buddhists as being akin to paying respect to



the live Buddha himself. Apart from these central shrines, there are many Buddhist shrines in Central Asia, Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, China and others.

Historically, Buddhism was born in India in the 4th century BC. The Buddha lived and preached in what is now modern India and Nepal. His teachings were carried to South East Asia, largely through the movement of his disciples and traders, both to and from India. Around the 10th century, Buddhism suffered a decline in popularity in India but continued to remain vibrant in Sri Lanka, which nurtured the religion and contributed to its spread in South East Asia. As a result, Theravada Buddhism, which evolved in Sri Lanka, was widely adopted over much of South East Asia (Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar) by the 15th Century. Similarly, Buddhism spread from India to China around the 6th / 7th century and from there to Korea and Japan. Through the efforts of Chinese and Indian monks who tried to reform the religious traditions of Tibet, a new Tibetan school of Buddhism was also born.

The intangible heritage of Buddhism is the Buddhist philosophy, ideas and culture. This permeates every aspect of the day-to-day life of the Buddhist, whether layman or monk. The teachings of the Buddha can be practiced both at a practical and a spiritual level, depending on the capacity and stage of life of the disciple. The idea of merit as a part of salvation is a key to the understanding of Buddhism. The essence of the teachings of the Buddha is that the Noble Eightfold Path to Salvation and the Four Noble Truths could be practiced by all, regardless of occupation and position. Another intrinsic feature of Buddhism is the spirit of tolerance and compassion, which enabled Buddhism to co-exist peacefully both with pre-existing traditional belief systems and later world religions such as Christianity and Islam. This makes it even more relevant today, when the world is in dire need of tolerance and compassion between all human beings. These basic teachings of Buddhism had a deep influence on the literature, art, music and poetry created by Asian artists. This is evident in the pagodas and monasteries, the sculptures and mural paintings, the classic Pali literature and poetry, the performing arts etc.



Structure of Conference

The Conference is being organized jointly Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Sitagu Sitagu International Buddhist Academy (SIBA). The Conference will involve 25 scholars (7 from Myanmar, 7 from India and 11 from other nations) coming together in Myanmar to share views and perspectives on the chosen theme of Buddhist Cultural Heritage. The audience will include monks and laymen as well as students of Buddhism from Myanmar and abroad. The ICCR will bear the cost of international travel of the invited scholars while the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the SWBA will undertake the responsibility for local hospitality, including boarding and lodging and local transport. The cost of organizing the Conference will be shared equally by, ICCR, and SIBA. This will include the decoration of the conference venue, technical requirements such as audio system, lighting, stage etc, provision of refreshments, catering for the guests, honorarium and souvenirs to scholars, printing of publicity material etc.

Other Related Events

On the margins of the Conference, a Buddhist Exhibition, Buddhist Film Festival, Cultural Programme and visit to holy Buddhist sites in Myanmar will be arranged. The Buddhist Exhibition will be sourced from the Sitagu International Buddhist Archives, the Ministry of Religious Affairs archives and private collections in Myanmar. These will be reinforced with exhibits from India to be arranged by the Embassy of India. The Buddhist film festival will include documentary films on Buddhist themes produced by filmmakers from India and Myanmar as well as other countries. A joint India-Myanmar cultural programme with performing artists from both countries (dance-drama, musical performance and a play on the life of the Buddha) will be staged. This cultural performance will be supported by ICCR, SIBA and the Ministry of Culture of Myanmar. ICCR, SIBA and Dr. Dhammasami will bear the cost of international air travel while local hospitality for the artists will be provided by SIBA. The cost of staging the



performance (invitation cards, publicity and stage requirements) will be shared equally by ICCR and SIBA. A visit of the invited scholars to Buddhist holy shrines in Myanmar (Mandalay and Sagaing Division) will be arranged for which all costs will be borne by SIBA.



REPORT OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Dr Myo Myint

Main coordinator of the Conference

The idea of holding a Buddhist Seminar originated during the state visit of honourable President of Myanmar to India in October 2011. When the Prime Minister of India paid a visit to Myanmar it was announced in joint statement that “the two leaders welcomed the preparations that have been made towards organizing the international conference on Buddhist Heritage in Myanmar in December 2012 in cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Ministry of Religions Affairs of Myanmar and Sitagu World Buddhist Association.”

Preparations were under way with the forming of Central Organizing Committee with Sitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara and H.E. Dr. V. S. Sashodri, Ambassador of India as joint Chairmen and Dr. Myo Myint, Retired Director General, as Secretary. Professor Laji from India and Ven. Dr. Dhammasami of Oxford Vihara were the two academic coordinators of the seminar. The Central Organizing Committee decided to hold the International Seminar on Buddhist Cultural Heritage at Sitagu World Buddhist Academy, Yangon, from 15-17 December 2012. Samath Style Buddhist statues, gift from the people of India to people of Myanmar, will also be inaugurated at the western entrance of the Shwedagon Pagoda. This Buddha image will be an object of public veneration permanently. For public participation and awareness Photo and Exhibition with film shows are held in the Shwedagon Pagoda Platform during Seminar. Cultural performances by India and Myanmar Dance Troupes also will perform at the Natural Theatre for three days from 15 to 17 December.

The Seminar will highlight the Buddhist Cultural Heritage which goes beyond the borders of the country, religion and language. As a universal religion Buddhism brings peace of mind around the World and provides solutions for contradictions in society. Timeless Buddhist teachings which emphasize love, compassion and tolerance are more relevant today for the turbulent world facing violence, terrorism, poverty and environmental degradation.

Research papers were invited from scholars of Buddhism all around the world. The Organizing Committee got (24) research papers and were printed in book form to give the participants during the Seminar. The academic coordinators Professor Laji and Ven. Professor Dhammasami had done a good job in coordinating with the scholars



around the world. Scholars from different disciplines contributed research papers in the field of art, archaeology, history, philosophy, architecture, numismatics etc. These papers will be a significant contribution to Buddhist studies.

I take this opportunity to thank Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Ministry Religious Affairs, Embassy of India, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy and Shewdagon Pagoda Trustee Board for their generous input of money, time and labour for the successful convening of this Seminar. The Organizing Committee tries to make your stay here a rewarding and delightful one. We apologize for any shortcomings during the Seminar.



OPENING SPEECH

Dr. Ashin Nyanissara

Joint President of Organizing Committee

Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Yangon,

Your Venerables,
Excellencies
Distinguished Scholars
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour and privilege to address this august gathering held at the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy. This international seminar on Buddhist Cultural Heritage is the first of its kind to be held in Myanmar. We are not only celebrating 2600 years of Buddha Sasana but also making a landmark in Indo-Myanmar relations. We are also greatly satisfied that India, the birth place of Lord Buddha, and Myanmar, the leading Theravada Buddhist country, are jointly holding this conference to highlight the Buddhist Cultural Heritage which is part of World Cultural Heritage of mankind. Buddhism, one the world historical religions, has brought spiritual well-being and happiness to millions of people. We can observe that timeless teachings of the Buddha are reflected in both tangible and intangible cultures of Asia countries. I am sure that the research papers presented at the Seminar will show how Buddhism has exerted tremendous influence on Asian Art, Architecture and Sculpture, Mural paintings, Pali literature, Poetry and Performing arts.

In my address, I would like to draw your attention to two significant aspects of tangible Buddhist Cultural heritage, namely the structure of the stupa and features of Buddha statues which have a long tradition in history. First, I am of the opinion that the culture consists of traditions, religious belief, society, way of life, literature, music, philosophy, moral and political concepts. As culture creates dignified people it is necessary to protect and study the cultural heritage of one's country.

To give you an example of cultural heritage, I will give you a glimpse of evolution of Stupa in classical times. In third century B.C. Stupa bears resemblance to round shape of upturned monks bowl. The Pali word Stupa means heaped or rounded shape. During the lifetime of the Buddha people put relics of Arahats in bowl and offered it to the Buddha. As described in the scriptures, the Buddha told the people to enshrine the relics in Stupa for worship. Later people modified the design of the Stupa to their aesthetic taste. Square-shaped hamika was put on Stupa and tiered stone umbrella as were again put on the hamika. The lower part of the Stupa was extended to the sides to look like the bell. The tiered



umbrella later became a circular decorative band of Stupa. Both Myanmar and Sri Lanka embellished the Stupa with their own architectural style.

By analyzing the embellishment of Stupa in which relics of Arahats and Buddha were enshrined one could find out the culture, history, national character, philosophy and art of mankind. Therefore we can say that Sanchi Stupa, Mahabodhi Temple, Shwezigon Pagoda, Ananda Temple and Shwedagon Pagoda are repository or Encyclopedia of Buddhist culture.

Please allow me to say something about evolution of Buddha statues in classical period. It was agreed that there was no making of Buddha statue earlier than 1st Century B.C. Buddha statues in Mathura were considered as the most ancient ones. It is surprising to see that Mathura Buddhist statue's hairstyle and facial features were very much like Punjab hairstyle and the face of Punjab people.

Now, let us turn to influence of Greek on Buddha statues. Greek art influenced the Indian art as a result of the conquest of northern India by Alexander the Great in 3rd Century B.C. Some scholars are of the opinion that stone sculpture was learned from the Greeks. But there was no sign of Greek influence on Mathura Buddha Statues. On the other hand, Gandhara Buddha Statues were fully influenced by Greek stone sculpture.

I believe that Buddha Statues were made in Punjab, called Magada, during the life time of the Buddha, before the coming of the Greeks. King Candragupta of Maurya Empire drove out the Greeks from Indian soil. The art style and robe of Gandhara Buddhist statues were very much like the dresses of the philosophers and religious leaders of the Greek and Roman period. Like Stupa statues, they had hidden meaning of history, religion, philosophy, culture and politics.

Please look at this picture of earliest form of Buddhist worship. This piece of art was made at a time when people were unable to make Buddha statues. In the picture three wheels of Dhamma symbolizing triple gems were put on top of the trident with the monks in prayer mode. In Hinduism trident represents Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. At the time of Gandhara, the inclusion of trident with wheels of Dhamma shows the friendly and peaceful coexistence of Hinduism and Buddhism. Besides, if you look at the style of the robe wearing, it is also the same as Theravada monks of today. The colour of the robes may be different but the way the robes were made and the style of wearing of robes by monks were similar to Theravada monk at present.

Therefore, I would like to conclude my address by saying that although the theme of this International Seminar is Buddhist Cultural Heritage in fact the world is made up of multiple cultural heritage. Let's us maintain the grandeur of culture, history of the country and dignity of people by preserving our culture heritage forever.





Mathura



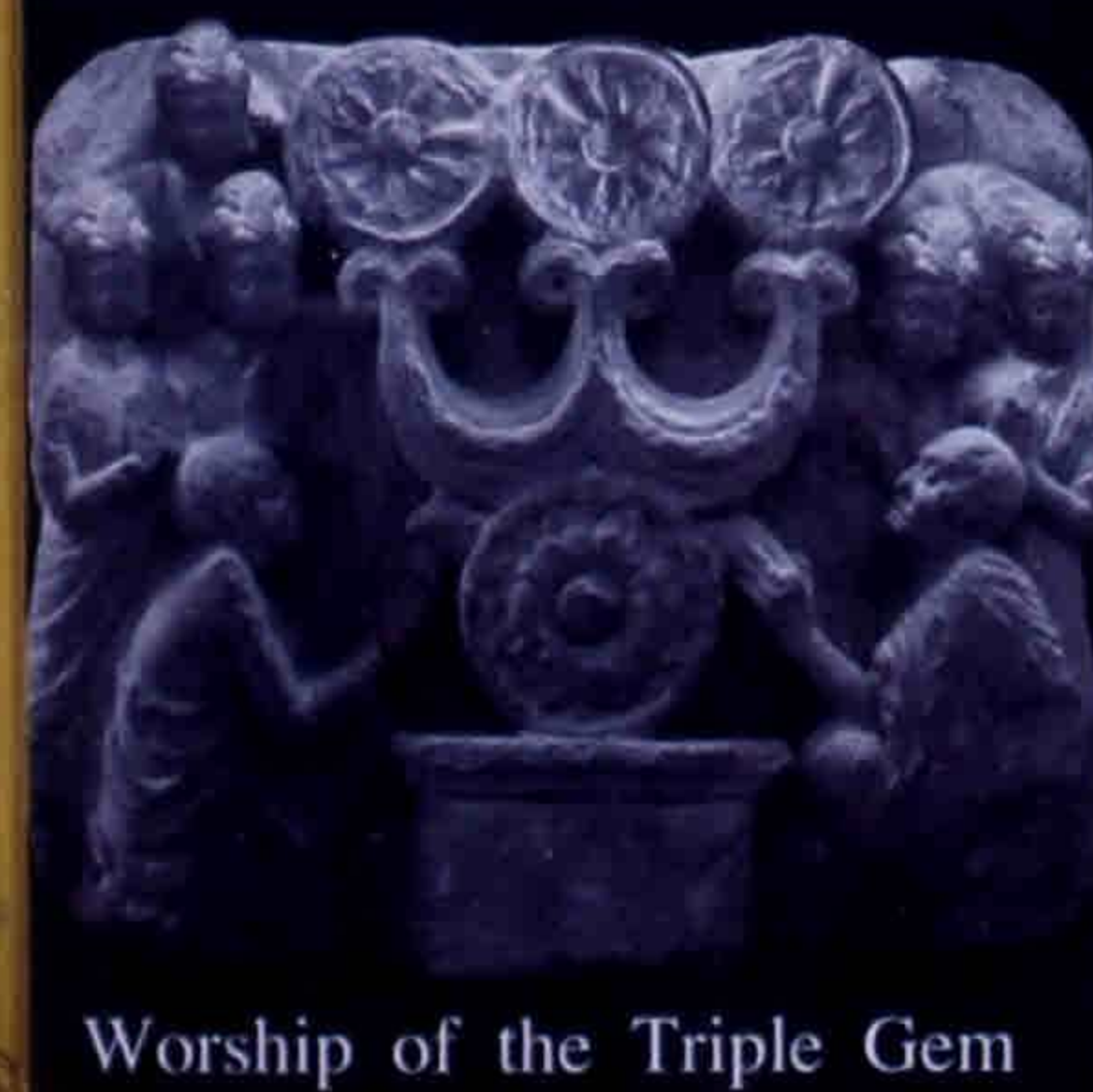
Multiple Miracle of the Buddha's Heads,
The antiquity of Gandhara



THE ART OF GANDARA, GRANDEURE OF PAKISTAN



Miracle of the Buddha in Sārvasthi



Worship of the Triple Gem



STUPA GANDHARA STYLE MINIATURE (TAXILA, PAKISTAN)



Shankar holding a book
Taxila
1st-2nd century AD

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

By Professor Dr. KhinMaungNyunt,
MahaSaddhamma Jotikadhaja, Sithu
Member of Myanmar Historical Commission

Most venerable Sayadaw monks, Buddhist delegates from the world, presenters of papers, scholars, Ladies and Gentlemen in Dhamma friendship and honorable chair, please accept my humble homage to all of you and heartily wish you “Kaya CittaSukha” (Sound body with sound mind). It is a great privilege and honor for me to have this opportunity of delivering a keynote address at this gathering of scholars who are going to interact on one of many important subjects of the new millennium “Buddhist Cultural Heritage”

Needless to say much that cultural Heritage is one and the only last frontier which can salvage and survive mankind in this age of Globalization which has reached the zenith of material progress and prosperity, but torn apart spiritually and bringing mankind to the verge of total fiasco, unless timely means of salvation is found and implemented by a united co-operation. That means of salvation is none other than cultural Heritage.

Internationally, regionally, Sub-regionally, multilaterally and bilaterally nations of the world are being engaged in the activities of surviving, preserving and promoting their respective cultural heritages in both tangible and intangible aspects, with the noble intention of meeting the challenges of the Age of Globalization which has encompassed the entire human habitat that is our earth under a wired network undermining the spiritual values and national identities of the peoples of the countries

Such international organizations and institutions as UNESCO, and regional organizations and institutions like ASEAN, BIMSTEC, SAARC, APEC, ASCAP and sub-regional organizations and institutions like ACMEC, GMS E.A.C' etc. are working in their own frame works for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and identity. In the past decades an inter- faith forum, initiated by and based in the Philippines has been making effort to forge a practical and meaningful co-operation between world's Faiths [religions] for the elimination of violence, armed conflicts and war and maintenance of permanent world peace. We all heartily welcome and wholeheartedly support such activities.

But we as Buddhists are gathered here to continue what we have been doing so far for world peace and to find what we could do more for that purpose. Our seminar has already given us a point to start World Buddhist cultural Heritage.

Buddhism, plainly speaking, is spiritual salvation of oneself, and all sentient beings from the whirl pool of samsara to reach Nibbana, the end of cravings and sufferings and attaining eternal peace and bliss. That is purely a spiritual line. But Buddhism is a culture



just like other faiths or religions. It is a way of life you live from the moment of your conception in the mother's womb, deliverance from it to the moment of your demise and internment in the tomb! Culture is a way of life. Therefore we Buddhists are imbedded in Buddhist culture in our way of life. In other words Buddhism is not only and merely spiritual, it covers our way of life. We need not go into details, as all suttas preached by Lord Buddha regarding our cultural way of life have been clearly expounded. The Mingala Sutta alone is suffice enough. The point to highlight is Buddhist Cultural Heritage for us is the only means of our salvation from the challenge of the Age of Globalization.

Most venerables, Ladies and Gentlemen, since culture and cultural heritage have tangible and intangible aspects may I dwell briefly upon tangible aspect, leaving intangible or spiritual aspect to the better-qualified religious service men, monks and nuns the tangible aspect of culture and cultural Heritage is a boundless field encompassing geography, geology, archaeology, anthropology, history and culture. Myanmar, being the second largest in size among the ASEAN ten may rightfully claim to be very rich in cultural heritage resources. In addition to pre-Buddhist cultural heritage evidences on the underground and under water across the country, our Buddhist cultural heritage evidences are bountiful. Governmental departments such as archaeology, geology, anthropology and history and other associated departments are working for the maintenance of cultural Heritage within their own frame works, many NGOS and INGOS and private well wishers are giving out their helping hands in these days. Also private individual monks, nuns, and laymen are taking interest and participating in cultural heritage preservation.

At some workshops and seminars at home and abroad sponsored by UNESCO on the enlisting of Myanmar cultural Heritage Zones in the world cultural Heritage List, I learnt that in Buddhist countries, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam religious service men, monks and nuns are deeply involved in the maintenance and promotion of Buddhist cultural Heritage. Here in our country, strict adherence to the rules of Vinaya has a sort of inhibiting influence upon our monks and nuns to participate in such secular activities. But all religious monuments which are cultural centers are mostly situated in or near monasteries, nunneries and sacred places, monks and nuns and all religious service personnel can more effectively take the custody of them than the government employees. Besides, monks and nuns can effectively preach the importance of Buddhist cultural heritage to the grass-root public. In other words, at this Seminar, in my keynote address, I would like to emphasize the important role of monks, nuns and all religious service personnel in the preservation and promotion of Buddhist cultural Heritage for public awareness, to meet the challenge of the 21st Century.



RELEVANCE OF BUDDHISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY CRISIS OF THE WORLD

DR. BANDANA BHATTACHARYA

Buddhism, that is the teachings of Gautama Buddha, is a religion based on the cardinal principles of universal love, compassion and friendship. It is world's oldest missionary religion. Since its beginning about 2600 years ago in Northern India it has spread to nearly every region of the world. The reason behind the popularity and universal acceptance of Buddhism is that it is reasonable, practical and free from strict dogmatism. The journey of Buddhism from its birth place to throughout the world proves that it has sustained itself without recourse to violence and has remained unstained by religious war and violence. Buddhism never forced its faith on others' faith, never enforced its doctrine with swords. The expansion of Buddhism throughout the world was achieved through humanly attempts conceived mainly by peace and peaceful means.

It is an undeniable fact that since the moment of its inception up to the present day Buddhism plays a significant role in the advancement of human values. In the context of the contemporary Indian scenario an urgent need is felt for such values for the individual as well as for the social elevation. The aims of the social philosophy of Buddhism are peace, amity and justice. With such aims in view Buddha's tenets encourage the cultivation of the social emotions for maintaining social harmony. Thus among the prescribed meditation *metta* (love) *karuna* (compassion), *Ahimsa* (non-violence) tolerance and equanimity are more important. Even today these human ethos are extremely necessary to preserve and restore social harmony and to regulate human attitudes. Indeed the universal peace of which United Nation Organisation advocates today is gradually veering round to the belief embodied in the utterances of Buddha. Buddha's message of peace and tolerance is more relevant today than before.

Since the Second World War (1938-1945) a rapid and remarkable changes are marked throughout the social life. The practical result of which is the emergence of a gulf of difference between the people of higher income level and the people living below the poverty level group. This socio-economic condition creates three categories of people in the present society. Those are: (a) capitalist or ruling group; which is also sub-divided as high and low. (b) Middle Class, in which belongs majority of the total population and (c) people belonging to below poverty level group. This socio-economic categorization is

Research Officer, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata; & Guest Lecturer in Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Calcutta, INDIA.



mainly responsible for disparity and unrest in the world. As a result the peace and harmony is not achieved and moral values become questionable to the greater section of the people now a day. In the Neo-modernism, the human societies have been sick and poor in their human outlook and individuals became frustrated within being a tool of earn and enjoy. Disproportion in personal life affects the disproportion in social life. The outcome of this situation is inevitable chaos, conflicts, distrust, frustration, anger and misbelief. Human Society turns into a society of exploiters and self seekers. Amidst this situation Buddha's message for the well being of the sentient world impressed upon a large number of the people of Asia who found peace and solace in his words. To them the teacher was not only an embodiment of universal love personified but was also a symbol of perfect wisdom. They sought in Him a shelter for their distressed mind and considered his teaching as the remedy for all the evils that could confront a worldly man. The *Lolitavistara*, one of the main texts of the *Vaipulya* sutra of the Sanskrit Buddhist literature, addresses the Buddha as the king among physicians to indicate the importance of His teachings in respect of the world of beings:

CiratureJivaloke Kleśavyādhiprapīḍite

Vaidyarāttvaṃsamutpannaḥsarvavyādhī pramocakaḥ¹

[In this world, long sick and beset with suffering from disease of passions, oh you, the supreme physician have appeared to cure all diseases].

So, the teachings of Lord Buddha contained in the Pali and Buddhist literature is possibly the only instrument for creating a peaceful atmosphere in present society. Here Buddha is compared with an efficient physician (Vaidyarat) and His teachings contained in the above mentioned Buddhist literatures are described as His medicament, that can cure and ease all of our tension, ailments, and afflictions' of present society.

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore, "Buddha is the most perfect man even born on the earth". His teachings are even today applicable, essential and relevant in the contemporary socio-economic environment. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, first Indian Prime Minister remarked: "We live in an age of conflict and war of hatred and violence, all over the world. Never before has the need been greater for all of us to remember that immortal messages, which Lord Buddha, the greatest and the noblest of the sons of India, gave to us, and to you, and to the entire World".

Here, we have to remember that prince Siddhartha, also known as Gautama, took the state of homelessness (*āgārassaanāgāra*) with the promise to find out the root of ills and evils causing *dukkha* to mankind, and as seeker of truth, it was His mission to indicate to the afflicted humanity the path that would lead to make an end of sufferings. At the same time, the Buddha as a human Himself taught His followers the way of self-cultivation and meditation. His teachings for ordinary men, women and children of all



classes and of socio-economic circumstances are based on universal love, compassion, tolerance and the practice of the sense of Universal brotherhood. These teachings were applicable to the humanity of those days as of the world today, tomorrow and millennia to come. What He taught was meant to ensure the good and benefit of the many here in this life and here after:

“bahujanahitāya, bahujanasukhāyalokānukampāya deva manussānam desatha bhikkhavedhammainādikalyāṇam, majjhima-kalyāṇaṁpariyosaṇa kalyāṇam”

The teaching of Buddha is very scientific progressive, reasonable, practical and all embracing. It is another important reason of relevance of Buddhism in the contemporary society. His teachings are no doubt religious in the strict connotation of the term but at the same time ethical, philosophical and universal in character. He has shown how impure mental states, ego and passion afflict our mind and creates a cause for us to move in the cycles of births and consequential sufferings in the *samsāra*. Therefore, the best and the only way for easing our tension and healing of all diseases is to cast off all egoism and purify our mind. But it is true that He has never favoured a negative avoidance of the evils rather He has asked for a positive performance of inward cleaning. *“Abhantaramtegahanambahiram parimajjasi”*² [you cleanse yourself outside while you are full of filth within] that requires *mma* (moment wise mindful awareness) referring to the observing of your own mental function by yourself. The essence of the teachings of Lord Buddha is

*Sabbapāpassaakaranamkusalassaupasampadā
SacittapariyodapanametamBuddhānusāsanam*¹

[Discarding of all evils, the perfecting of one's mind – this is the teaching of the Buddha] He repeatedly appealed to us not to believe only by listening down from him or to believe what was in the scripture. But one should examine everything critically by practicing himself.

*Attānamevapaṭhamampatirūpenivesaye
Athaṇṇamanusāseyya no kiliseyya pandita*⁴.

“Let one first examine himself what is proper, then let him teach others”. Buddha advised the validity of treating a person on the basis of his moral standing and not merely by his birth as the then caste system decreed:

*Na jaṭāhinagottenanajaccāhotibrāhmaṇo
Yamhisaccañcadhammoca so hisūcī so hi Brāhmaṇo*⁵.

In the Buddhist Samgha He had His disciples from all the castes and He compared their integration within his community with the four birds of different colours which came falling at Buddha's feet and became all white, or like the five great rivers which were to lose their identity into the ocean and thereby lost their individual names. More than 2600



years ago He declares, “As the great streams, disciples, however many may be, the Ganges, Yamunā, Achiravati, Sarabhu, when they reach the great ocean lose their old name and their old descent, and bear only one name”. This view of Buddha is very pertinent in respect of modern society whentthroughout the world differences of religion and of castes are the most important factors of social disturbance, and the burning problem of the society throughout the world.

Social Philosophy: The aims of the social philosophy of Buddhism are: peace, amity and justice. With such aim in view it encourages the cultivation of social emotions for maintaining harmony in the society. The Buddha was deeply aware of maintaining the importance of healthy interpersonal relations and worked out a matrix of rights and obligations between parent and children, teacher and student, husband and wife, friend and friend, employer and employee and religious teachers and disciples. In the *Singālavada Suttanta*⁶ of the *DīghaNikāya*, which is considered as the *Gihi-Vinaya*; [Vinaya of the Householders], Buddha states that every person should support his parents in old age, perform duties incumbent on them, keep the lineage and tradition of the family and make himself worthy of his heritage. Even in the remote ancient period Buddha practically considers that social harmony cannot be maintained without mutual love and respect which is very pertinent in modern society. Buddha, throughout his discourses to laities reminded parents to educate their children, ensure their timely establishment in marriage and passing on family inheritance while the children still needed their support. The children were likewise asked to nourish and maintain parents in old age. Nowadays due to the improvement of science and technology and advanced educational system people became more progressive in their culture and leading a good standard of life in comparison to the then society, but the elite people have become self-centered and busy within their own earn-n-enjoy. They pay very little attention towards their family and especially old parents and other family members, kept them in old-homes or asylums and parents also suffering in mental loneliness. The result of these attitudes caused frustration, and breaks the social-bondage and disrupts social harmony. To avoid this situation The Supreme Courthas promulgated various laws. So Lord Buddha’s discourses to laity are still relevant to recover from the crisis of modern society, which can keep people free from mental and psychological agony, tension, and pollution, which is undoubtedly the root cause of all problems.

Welfare Economics: Further, the practical sense of Buddha may be discerned in His discourses on the financial management, or, in other words, discourses on the modern concept of ‘welfare economics’. Buddha’s advice to the laities regarding their economic



activity to gain wealth is noteworthy. He showed how wealth gave a person *fourfold* happiness of possession, consumption, sharing and avoiding wrongful ways of living. His remarkable approach to moderation of living as reflected in the *Majjhima Patipada* (middle path) is noteworthy. He cautioned against excessive greed that causes corruption. With practical knowledge of financial management, He advised the laities that one should consume only one fourth of his earnings but invest half into his business and keep the remaining in savings for future or for rainy days. He stressed the matter that one should safe guard his property by adopting a balanced life style in which income exceeded the expenditure. Similarly he counseled the young to avoid addictions, and wasteful and dangerous activity which would lead them in danger. This is also another burning problem of present society all over the world. Some of the secular teachings of Buddha are concerned with the modern concept of welfare economics, contributions to which have earned the Nobel Prize for economics in 1998 for Professor Amartya Sen.

Buddhist economics is not a self contained science: "It is one of a number of interdependent disciplines working in concord for academic, environmental, individual and social progress" ⁷. The Buddhist view of economics discards the narrow and limited approach that satisfies only personal demands. Rather, it investigates the economic activities affecting various aspects of human life. In this sense Buddhist economics is very close to Welfare Economics that adds value judgment. In the *Pali Dvicakkhu Sutta*⁸, it is noted that a person is called one-eyed because he does not make balance between abundance of material objects and abundance of virtue. The *Vaḍḍhi Sutta*⁹ of the same text elaborated this idea by mentioning ten aspects in which a person prospers. These are land and field, wealth and possessions, wife and children, servitors and retinue, beasts of burden, faith, virtue, learning, generosity, and wisdom. Even in those early days, Buddha was conscious of the fact that, poverty is the Social evil and it has to be eliminated by the post conceived concept of welfare economics. In fact being aware of financial stringencies Buddha reminds us twice: for householders in this world, poverty is suffering "*Daliddiyambhikkhavedukkhinlokasmimghino Kāmabhogino*"¹⁰ and "woeful in the world are poverty and debt"¹¹

Basically Buddha's view of economics is devoid of egoism and greed. Hoarding of wealth in any form is looked down upon in Buddhism¹² and if a wealthy person enjoys his wealth all by himself only it would be a source of failure for him¹³. In fact pride of wealth or economic snobbery is regarded in Buddhism as a cause of one's downfall¹⁴. Our modern society has become a greedy society and most of us do not know when we would be fully satisfied and content. In such a mental state personal success is valued more highly than social responsibility. A society driven by greed loses the power of seeing things in wholesomeness. In this respect Professor E.F. Schumacher rightly remarked,



“The hope... that by single minded pursuit of wealth, without bothering our heads about spiritual and moral questions, we could establish peace on earth is an unrealistic, unscientific and irrational hope... the foundations of peace cannot be laid by universal prosperity, in the modern sense, because such prosperity, if attainable at all, is attainable only by cultivating such drives of human nature as greed and envy ... making inordinately large demands on limited world resources and [putting rich people] an unavoidable collision course ... not primarily with the poor (who are weak and insecured) but with the other rich people”¹⁵.

Therefore even the greatest production cannot keep peace ... due to unlimited desires of people in modern society. “Necessarily, those who are stronger, more and more favoured by other circumstances will try to establish a favoured position for themselves and try to take advantage of those who are less powerful, either by force and violence or by suggestion ... (conflict in the society) cannot disappear as long as greed dominates the human heart”¹⁶. Buddhism even though concentrates on spirituality and meditation aims at liberation of human beings from egoism and greed as they are the main cause of misery and harm as it has already been mentioned.

In fine, it can be said that during the age of globalization, due to improvement of information technology the world has turned into one global village. But practically there are two global villages – one of the rich and another of the poor. It is the application of the theory of economics which can only minimize the material difference between these two global villages and assure to form one genuine global village without poverty, misery and hunger. Indian Nobel Laureate professor Amartya Sen interprets human capital in terms of the development of knowledge, education and skill of the human beings¹⁷. Exactly, in the same sense, in 2500 years ago, Gautama Buddha also in the background of welfare economics thought about the all round development – both economic and spiritual-of humanity. When Prof. Sen is honoured for his contribution to welfare economics, it is an acknowledgement of Buddha’s excellent legacy of human resource development programme¹⁸.

Contribution of Buddhism for Ecological crisis: Unending desire and greedy mind is not only a threat to one’s own peace and happiness, but it is a great threat to others’ peace and a great hazard to ecology. In the *Aggañña Sutta* of the *Dīgha-Nikāya*., it is clearly shown how man’s greed and craving affect ecology. This Sutta also shows how men were happy when their minds were not polluted and how they began to feel unhappy and experienced different kinds of troubles and sufferings when their minds were polluted by craving, aversion and other negativities¹⁹.

It cannot be denied that man and ecology are interdependent. They can protect and destroy each other. If the relationship between them is friendly and humane, both of them



grow and flourish. But if their relationship is strained and enmity both are affected and destroyed. Buddha was aware of the psycho-somatic hindrances of 'desire' and 'craving' of the individual or those at social level. Due to this reason He enunciated some basic ethical principles²⁰ of which the practice of *panca-śīla* is one of the important codes of Buddhist ethics. If we follow the social ethics preached by Buddha and even if we observe the first precept of abstaining from killing animals, birds, snakes etc. we would reduce our craving and aversion which would enable us to save ecological balance. Men kill animals only either for their tasty meal or for their skins and other parts of body to sell and make a huge amount of money. These indiscriminate killings create a sort of imbalance in ecology. If there are no tigers, lions and other jungle animals, people will not be afraid to go to those jungles and cut trees for making money, as it happens now frequently. As a result deforestation takes place which leads to the shortage of rainfall. The result of which is famine, poverty, and many other negativities. Observance of Buddha's ecological ethics can enable us to avoid ecological crisis.

In ancient Indian tradition an emphasis was laid upon being satisfied with plain living and being engaged in high thinking. Any amount of possession of more than that of one's need was regarded as an instance of theft or to deprive others. Among the *patimokkha* rules for Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis promulgated by Buddha emphasis on leading a controlled life with minimum requirements is clearly revealed. It is surprising to think that more than 2600 years ago Gautama Buddha first laid the foundation of need-based socialisation of requirements in respect of the individual within his order (Sangha) and that for societies. Buddha's prescription for rendering good and welfare of the societies begins from the individual in the order of social multiplication. The *Vinaya Pitaka* mentions the instance of social multiplication in episodes of Sariputta's entrance in the Buddhist order and that of householder yasa. In the Buddhist ecology harmony (*samatā*) becomes the basic criterion with constant mental awareness of every momentary changes *pratikṣaṇapratijāgaratā* corresponding to fourfold mindfulness (*satipatthāna*)²¹.

Briefly speaking, Buddhist ecological perspective is based upon the ethical value which never disowns the biotic community. Biotic community is the basic unit of ecology in the bio-science and refers to the behavior patterns of the individual in relation to the community in which he belongs and also in respect of other animate beings belonging to different spheres, like bio-sphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere, symbiosis with flora and fauna, and abiotic environments of the humans. The Buddhist bio-social ecology determines the practice of amity (*Metta*) compassion (*Karuṇā*), and rejoices in the welfare of other (*Muditā*), in spite of negative attitude of the antagonist by tolerance (*Kṣanti*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*) to all beings. The practice of the four factors of *Brahmavihāra* in



individual life is the core of the Buddhist social thrust. This is very pertinent, relevant and meaningful in the present society when throughout the world unrest, conflict, egoism and unending desire of being rich and powerful by plundering nature and exploiting the weaker section of people is the burning problem and the main reason of the present socio-economic crisis in the twenty-first century.

With greater and greater achievements of external prosperities, humans have undergone to be victims of craving [*tanha*] more and more in competitions. Each nation is in a race of using the nuclear weapons to face threats from the neighboring society. Group Hunger holds no measurement in the competitive race of possessing more and more. That leads to group enmity. So the problem of the present society is, how to overcome the group enmity for which the UNO endeavours. Buddhism is being welcomed by wide circles among the peace-loving societies in various nations for the last few decades. Buddhist ethics of moral conduct, of discipline and that of compassionate altruism in an ethical devise of social Engagement with Universal Responsibility aims to build healthy peaceful societies in the human world. That prompts to good learning of the Buddhist literatures for awareness and practice of meditations for self-control and discernment as a Bodhisattva deserves with Patience, Vigour and Wisdom.

Moreover present industrialised modernity has also increased environmental pollution. In some cases, that becomes difficult for the existence of sentient beings on the surface of the earth. It has also threatened the world peace; in this circumstance, all religion, especially Buddhism lays greater emphasis on the internal ecology of Mankind. Because it has already been mentioned, cleansing of mind is the prime factor. It may be regarded as the basic criterion of Buddhist ethics. According to Buddha mind is the forerunner of all good and evil works. In the words of Dharmapada:²²

Monopubbaṅgamādharmāmonoseṭṭhāmanomayā

Manasacapaḍuṭṭhenabhāsativākaroṭivā

Tatonamdukkhamanveticakkam' vavahatopadam. [Dhp verse no. 1

Conclusion: Therefore, it may be concluded that the growing upsurge of scientific inventions and the modern craze for materialism have forced men to concentrate their attention on the problems of the day to day life, but still they are deprived of the inner peace and spiritual solace. Prof. J. Huxley remarks: "what man shall do with the new facts, the new ideas, the new opportunities of control which science is showering upon him does not depend upon science, but upon what man wants to do with them, and this in turn depends upon his scale of values. It is here that religion can become the dominant factor. For what religion can do is to set up a scale of values for conduct and to provide emotional or spiritual driving force to help in getting them realized in practice." In this perspective of value, the significance of Buddhism to the present day society cannot be questioned. The



Buddhist socio-spiritual teachings (Dharma), the welfare conducting organization (Sangha) and ethical principles laid more emphasis on the basic characteristics of the human beings and thereby welcomed changes in attitude, which is very important to meet up to the contemporary crisis in the world. It is a doctrine which satisfies both heart and mind and gives consolation and assistance in all our circumstances of daily life.

All these facts reveal that Buddhism which is actually a way of life is based on logic and reasoning. It is called *akālika* timeless, that is, relevant and pertinent in those ancient days, and is meaningful, important and relevant in present world and would be continued with same tune in the future world to meet up socio-economic and political crisis.

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THE FIVE MORAL PRECEPTS: MODE OF ESTABLISHING UNIVERSAL SOCIAL HARMONY

**Dr Subhra Barua Pavagadhi,
Associate Professor,
Deptt of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi,
Delhi, India**

According to Buddhist tradition, there are several world systems in the universe. We are inhabitants of one of these world systems consisting of different beings, seasons, vegetables, etc. Human being is one of the different kinds of beings. Human beings are divided into nations, societies, races, regions, etc. But from the Abhidhammic point of view, human beings are made up of mind and matter. Mind constitutes the mental aspect of a human being while matter constitutes their physical aspects. Mind is further constituted of consciousness and different types of mental states. It is the types of mental states which differentiate between two people. For instance, if a mental state, known as greed or lobha dominates a being, the nature of being would be that of a greedy person and so he would always covet to possess others property. Similarly, if a mental state, called hatred or dosa dominates a person, he or she would be violent. In the same way, functions of different types of mental states make people of different attitudes and orientations.

The nature of people generally functions under the influence of greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), delusion (moha), non-greed (alobha), non-hatred (adosa) and non-delusion (amoha). The first three are responsible for negative activities of a person while the latter three lead to positive functioning. The Five Moral Precepts or the PañcaSila expounded by the Buddha not only entail refraining from negative activities like killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc. but also motivate people to indulge in positive activities which are conducive to the happiness and welfare of human beings. The Five Precepts are the minimal ethical code binding on the Buddhist lay followers. These precepts are formulated in accordance with the ethical principle of using oneself as the criterion for determining how to act in relation with others. They boost self esteem for they make a person humane and worthy of respect. They are formulated in such a way that they provide a set of standards which are very simple – like no intentional killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech or taking of intoxicants. They are not formulated with ifs and buts. The negative activities are influenced by greed, hatred and delusion and when we succumb to them we strengthen these evil roots and then they become dominant traits. But by



observing the precepts we weaken the grip of evil roots by dispelling them with wholesome mental volitions. Thus a process of substitution takes place in which the defilements are replaced by moral states i.e. non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion.

The uniform and universal practice of these moral precepts has the potential of establishing just, equitable and harmonious societies all over the world and so this paper aims to present the general aspect of moral precepts with emphasis on its potential to act as mode of establishing universal harmony in different societies.



***BRAHMA-VIHĀRA* (SUBLIME STATES): WHOLESOME ATTITUDES OF MIND AND WORLD PEACE**

Lalji 'Shravak'

The Buddha realized the *dhamma*, which was very profound, difficult to see, difficult to understand, excellent, beyond speculation, subtle, to be known by the learned only and leading to Peace.¹ In course of time he taught his Dhamma for the welfare and the benefit of many. The *dhamma*, well-expounded by the Buddha, is visible, timeless (in the sense that there is no time lag in giving its fruits.), it is open to all to come and see here and now (*ehi-passiko*), it is mentioned as leading to liberation, it is to be known personally by the wise.² Buddha's teaching is beneficial not only for the individual, but also for all.

What the Buddha has taught is virtuous in the beginning, in the middle and in the end,³ because it illustrates the most perfect and very pure higher life. Since his teaching explains the precepts concerning morality, it is virtuous in the beginning. It is virtuous in the end, because it explains the precepts concerning wisdom. The teachings of the Buddha, is virtuous in the middle, because it explains the precepts concerning meditation to control the mind. It extends the scope of the teachings from a person to the community as well as to the universe. Mind is concerned not only with one's self, but also with others. Of course mind is impatient (trembling, impulsive) and unsteady. It is very difficult to control and restrain the mind and maintain its balance.⁴ Rise and fall, success⁵ and failure, loss and

Professor, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi – 221005
(INDIA)



gain, honour and blame, etc. are the contrasts of the life that disturb the mind. State of mind, whether peaceful or disturbed, pure or defiled, affects not only the self but also the society and the world. Conflict and disagreement of the individual expands towards a social problem. It gradually increases and becomes global problems.

It is a well known fact that the Buddha never liberated anybody by the power of his personal salvation or by showering the boons. He only taught the path leading towards the salvation and exhorted his disciples to find deliverance for them selves by following that path.⁶ The Buddha was an extra-ordinary teacher. He never told who is in us? He never accepted any outsider power or agent, who controls this world? He taught that what is good and what is bad? What is virtue and what is evil?⁷ Virtue and evil both are latent in the mind of the being and according to the occasion they become prominent. These virtuous and evil tendencies are the cause for the liberation from and bondage to the cycle of transmigration respectively. The one, who wants to be liberated from this entanglement, should remove the latent evil tendencies and should cultivate the virtues underlying within him.

To control the mind the Buddha has transmitted the meditation technique to his disciples. Meditation is a process to develop the mind from lower level to a higher degree. It controls the mind and cultivates wholesome tendencies towards all sentient beings. This depends only on the continuous practice of meditation skills.

Greed (*Lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) and ignorance (delusion *moha*), these are the three roots of evil, which are lying down in uncultivated mind. Whenever and wherever they find time and occasion, they become prominent. Because of these three roots, other unwholesome tendencies like anger, cruelty, jealousy, attachment, etc. arise in the mind. This further develops tendencies towards violence, terrorism, dangerous rivalries, unhealthy competitions, partiality, etc. *Alobha*, *adosa* and *amoha*, these are the three roots of the wholesome (virtues), which subside the unwholesome roots. To vacate the impure



thoughts from, and to generate and develop the wholesome thoughts in the mind, one has to follow the sincere and diligent practice. This practice of replacement or exchange of unwholesome thoughts with wholesome thoughts is called mental development, *bhāvanā*. For this mental development the Buddha has taught many objects of meditation and expounded its practice. Among them the cultivation of four *Brahma-vihāras* (Sublime states)— Love or loving-kindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), sympathetic Joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*), are very important.

These four states are referred to as *Brahma-vihāra*. The term *brahma-vihāra* is variously translated as ‘divine states’, ‘supreme conditions’, ‘sublime states’, ‘sublime livings’ etc.. This word may be divided into two components as “*Brahma*” and ‘*vihāra*’. Here ‘*Brahma*’ is rendered into English as ‘supreme’, ‘great’, ‘excellent’, ‘sublime’, ‘lofty’ or ‘divine’. It is in the sense of ‘faultless’, ‘clean’, ‘pure’ state.⁸ *Vihāra* denotes ‘state’, ‘abiding’, ‘attitude’, ‘living’, ‘dwelling’. Thus *Brahmavihāra* means ‘lofty or sublime states’, ‘Brahma abiding’ or ‘sublime attitudes’.⁹ They are considered divine or sublime because they are concerned with the cultivation of superior mental factors or spiritual qualities. Buddhaghosa says that the divineness of the abiding should be understood here in the sense of best and immutable.¹⁰ According to *Arthavinibhaya-sūtra-nibandhana*, *Brahma* means great (*bṛhat*). Cultivation of loving-kindness and the other sublime states bring a great fruit. Therefore, they are called *brahmavihāra*.¹¹ These four sublime states lead one to the proper and perfect conduct of beings towards each other in the society, which also leads to the companionship of the Brahmā.¹²

Brahma-vihāras (sublime states) are also known as *appamaññā*, which is usually translated as immeasurable, infinitudes, boundless, illimitable etc. Since immeasurable beings are the object of these sublime states of thoughts, these are called



immeasurable.¹³ Objects of these thoughts are the innumerable beings of the *Kāṃāvacara* sphere.¹⁴ These four sublime states are included in the forty objects of meditation.¹⁵

The Buddha has expounded the advantage of the sublime states. He says that the idea of loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity, if cultivated and expanded, one may look for one of two fruits even in this very life: realization, or if there be any substrate left, at any rate the state of non-return.¹⁶ In the *Tevijja Sutta* (The Threefold Knowledge) of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the Buddha has said that the monk must follow this up with an equal suffusion of the entire world with mental projections of loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity (regarding all beings with an eye towards equality). In *Metta Sutta* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* the Buddha states that those who practice radiating the four immeasurables in this life and die "without losing it" are destined for rebirth in a heavenly realm in their next life.¹⁷

Metta (Loving-Kindness):

The Loving-kindness is an emotion of mind with unlimited effects which is expressed towards others for their welfare. *Mettā* is a sincere wish for the welfare and happiness of all the beings. There is no discrepancy, compulsion or exception. It also refers to the qualities such as showing tolerance, receptivity, appreciation, and concern for other living beings without expecting anything in return.

Among the four immeasurables, loving kindness and equanimity are not included in the mental factors. They are represented by the good will (*adosa*) and balance of mind (*tatramajjhataṭṭa*) respectively, which are included in the group of Psychic Factors



essentially presented in all the types of good consciousness(*Sobhana Sādhāraṇa cetasika*).¹⁸

Mettā (Loving-kindness, goodwill,) is not carnal love. It denotes affection. That, which exists in beings as the act of loving-kindness, state of loving kindness is *mettā*. The attitude which provides mental freedom from ill-will (hatred) is called loving kindness.¹⁹ It fattens, it softens thus it is loving-kindness.²⁰ It softens the coarse malevolent attitude of beings towards the benevolence endowed with knowledge.²¹ It comes about with respect to a friend, it proceeds towards a friend thus it is loving kindness.²²

Loving-kindness is an earnest intention to work for the benefit and happiness of the beings. 'May all beings be happy!' Having this thought in mind one cultivates loving kindness.²³ When one attains well cultivated, extensive, lofty and immeasurable mind endowed with loving-kindness, he abides in the sublime state of loving-kindness. Loving kindness is the antidote of the unwholesome thought malice (*vyāpāda*).²⁴ It becomes free from enmity (*vaira*), jealousy (*sapatnam*) and harmfulness (*asambādham*), which respectively counters the three adherences (*upāśleṣas*). 'Free from enmity (*avaira*)' counters the enmity towards equal and higher harmful beings. 'Free from jealousy (*sapatnam*)' counters the jealousy towards equal and higher beings, who do not harm. There is hatred towards harmful and even harmless beings, because of which one oppresses these beings. 'Free from harmfulness (*asambādham*)' counters it.²⁵



Benevolent attitude, promoting the aspect of welfare, is chief characteristics of loving-kindness.²⁶ Hatred or ill-will (*vyāpāda*) is its far enemy and affection (*rāga*) is its near enemy.²⁷ The culmination of *mettā* is the identification of oneself with all beings. It is an unlimited extension of loving-kindness starting from oneself towards all. It is synonymous with goodwill or absence of hatred or aversion (*adosa*). *Mettā* is a moral volition of well being of all. Cultivation of loving kindness has been included in *samyak saṃkalpa* in the form of *abyāpāda saṃkappa*. It is a mental state of eliminating the evil thoughts of sense-desire (*kāma*), ill-will (*vyāpāda*) and cruelty (*hiṃsā*), by cultivating the good thoughts of renunciation (*nekkhamma*), loving kindness (*abyāpāda*) and harmlessness (*ahiṃsā*).²⁸

In the *Metta Sutta*, the Buddha has explained the importance of the cultivation of loving kindness and its eleven kinds of benefits. The one, who practices loving-kindness, sleeps and wakes happy; never see evil dreams; he will be dear to human beings as well as to non-human beings alike; *devas* protect him; fire, poison or sword do not affect him; he could concentrate his mind quickly; his complexion becomes bright (pleased); he makes an end without bewilderment (infatuated); and if he does not attain the arhatship, he reaches the Brahma world after death.²⁹ Practice of this immeasurable caused the practitioner to be reborn into a Brahma realm (*Brahmaloka*). Realizing the importance of loving kindness, the Buddha has advised to protect it at any cost and produce friendship towards all the beings of all the directions. As a mother protects her only son even at the cost of her life, so also let every one cultivate a boundless friendly mind towards all beings.³⁰



Deception, anger, harbouring hatred etc. are the factors of destroying the friendship. The Buddha says that no one should deceive another, one should not despise another in any place. One should not harm others out of anger or resentment.³¹ Thinking others like himself one should produce the thought of loving kindness. One should not repay the anger. If one becomes angry in the reply of other's anger, he could not win the battle. The person, who does not repay the anger, promotes the weal of both.³² One, who has removed the anger, will sleep happily.³³

Meditation on *mettā* is the best prescription for the disease of anger. If one develops meditation on loving-kindness and his ill-will would be removed.³⁴ Thus one should cultivate goodwill towards all the being of the world in all the directions and should extend boundless friendly mind without hatred without enmity.³⁵ With such an infinite friendly consciousness, one should overwhelm all the directions. The Buddha has said that hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. It is appeased only by loving-kindness.³⁶ If one harbours such kind of thoughts that one abused me, ill-treated me, stole my belongings, his enmity will never be appeased.³⁷ One should not do any thing mean for which wise persons might reprove. One should always think that all beings be happy and secure, all the beings be happy minded.³⁸

Buddhist non-violence is not only the abstaining from killing the beings or abstaining from making trouble for others, but it is a thought of peace, friendship and sympathy. Gaining pain from others but tolerating it without reaction, leads to the



development of the loving-kindness. ³⁹In order to practice the loving-kindness and overcoming selfishness, one begins from self. Self-centred love creates problem only. Selfless love is helpful in maintaining the peace as well as one's own salvation. Suicide kills physical body, while selfishness kills moral body as well as spiritual progress. To loves one's family and relatives it is not a loving kindness. Of course it is love among them. They are helpful to each other, they also represent good wishes and deeds towards each other. It is their attachment, their *lobha*, not *mettā*. When this love is reflected towards the society, towards all the beings without any discrepancy, it becomes loving kindness.

Mettā is a very effective method to maintain not only the purity of the individual mind but also mentally polluted atmosphere. Jealousy is usually a symptom of selfish love. Surrendering his whole welfare for the good of other is selfless love. One should develop his mind and extend it to selfless universal love by practicing loving kindness gradually. To extend one's selfish love into universal love is *mettā*. This love expects no reward, so it would never be disappointed or frustrated. Selfless love is without frontiers, without discrimination. The one, who cultivates universal love, will cultivate compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity also. It is the ground for the other three states of mind.

Buddhaghosa has explained in detail how one can control his bodily, verbal and mental behaviour by making efforts and purity.

***Karuṇā* (Compassion):**

Karuṇā is a natural attitude of pure mind. If the mind of a being is associated with virtue and pleasure, seeing the suffering of others, sympathetic thought arises in his mind. When a person thinks about the sufferings and problems of others, it produces the thought of compassion. It is manifested as the antidote of the cruelty (*vihiṃsā*).⁴⁰ Seeing the misery of their relative one's heart will be melted, but that is not the real *karuṇā*. It is only *soka*,



i.e. *domanassa vedanā*. The mental factor, which, seeing the sufferings of others, creates the vibration in the heart of the noble persons, is *karuṇā* (compassion).

It crushes and destroys the suffering of others, it is, therefore, compassion. It is compassion because it is scattered upon those who is afflicted; it is extended to them by diffusion.⁴¹ Beings are submerged in a flood of various distresses. May they be free from suffering! Such kind of feeling is *karuṇā*.⁴² This virtue of mind has been included in Immeasurable Psychic Factors present in good consciousness (*Sobhana appamāṇṇā cetasika*).⁴³

Wish for the removal of sufferings of others is its characteristic.⁴⁴ If a person has compassion, he could not bear the misery of others. Its nature reflects the absence of malice. Because of hatred, a person wants to kill, bind, reprimand, and inflict pain on the others; while compassion wants to save the beings from these. Its far enemy is wickedness (*hiṃsā*) and near enemy is grief based on the home life (*domanassa*).⁴⁵ In AKB (viii.29, p.452) it is explained that nature of both, loving-kindness and compassion is the absence of malice.⁴⁶

Beings are the object of compassion. If happy being is taken as object, then *muditā* arises; and if unhappy being is taken as object, then *karuṇā* arises. Because of the difference of object, *karuṇā* and *muditā*, both can not arise simultaneously. Since the beings of *kāmaloka* are the object of *karuṇā* and *muditā*, both are not found in *lokuttara citta*.⁴⁷



Karuṇā corresponds to *avihiṃsā saṃkappa* as a part of right intention (*sammā saṃkappa*). It is a great quality and attainment of the Buddha (*Mahākaruṇā samāpatti*). Out of his great Compassion (*Mahākaruṇā*) only, the Buddha decided to teach his attained knowledge to the people.

***Muditā* (Sympathetic joy):**

The third immeasurable or sublime state is *Muditā*. It has been translated as sympathy, Sympathetic joy, appreciative joy, gladness, etc.. It implies rejoicing at others' happiness, virtues and prosperity. Buddhaghosa explains that those endowed with it are happy. Since it is the mere act of being happy, it is Sympathetic joy.⁴⁸

It is the wholesome attitude of mind which counters jealousy and makes people less self-centred. This attitude of the mind is with the nature of faculty contentedness (*saumanasyendriya*).⁴⁹ It is the antidote to the dominance by discontent.⁵⁰ Joyful beings are the object of *Muditā*. 'Let all the beings be joyful!' With this thought in mind, one cultivates sympathetic joy.⁵¹

It is not mere sympathy, but appreciative joy. Happy consent (*anumodanā*) in others prosperity is its characteristics.⁵² Joy based on the home life is its near enemy and aversion, which is dissimilar to the similar joy, is its far enemy.⁵³ It discards dislike (*arati*). It is manifested by destruction of disliking.⁵⁴

Every one has one's own circle of relation in society. *Muditā* expands from nucleus to periphery. It extends its range starting from self to nuclear family, joint family, relatives and friends, neighbour, society and so on. The Feeling of loving kindness and compassion



is easier for a man but it is very difficult to share joy outside of one's own family and relatives.

Upekkhā (equanimity):

The fourth immeasurable is called *Upekkhā*. It is rendered in to English as equanimity. It is a state of mind, which is very balanced and is without partiality. It avoids both, the attachment and the aversion, but it is not a neutral feeling. It accepts all good and bad, pleasure and pain, conflict or peace, agreeable or non-agreeable feelings with indifference intention and reaction. It is a tendency of the mind which neither wishes for the happiness of the beings as *mettā* nor wishes to destroy the misery of the beings as *karuṇā*, nor seeing the happiness and prosperity of the beings feels happy as *muditā*. But it is not the negation of loving-kindness, compassion or sympathetic joy. The earlier three immeasurables are the different forms of the sympathy, but in this fourth immeasurable, one practices the philosophical neutrality or mediation. Thinking about the un-resisted activities (functions) governed by the law of causation produces the thought of equanimity. 'All the beings have their own kamma (activities) and accordingly experience its fruition' having such kind of thoughts is equanimity.⁵⁵ 'They are simply beings' with this thought in mind one cultivates equanimity without having any discrepancy or partiality between friend and enemy.

Passion (*rāga*) and hatred (*patigha*) are its far enemy, and equanimity of unknowing based on the home life is its near enemy.⁵⁶ In the group of Psychic Factors essentially present in all the types of good consciousness (*Sobhana Sādhāraṇa cetasika*) this equanimity is represented by the balance of mind (*tatramajjhataṭṭā*).⁵⁷ *Tatramajjhataṭṭā* and *upekkhā* are some times used as synonymous terms. In mental factors it is said *tatramajjhataṭṭā*, and in immeasurable it is called *upekkhā*. Impartial view of object is the chief characteristic of *tatramajjhataṭṭā*. Because of appeasing the hatred



and friendliness, *tatramajjhataṭṭa* proceeds in the beings, so it is *upekkhā*.⁵⁸ The tendency of mind, which has neither attachment nor jealousy towards the object, is called equanimity (*upekkhā*).⁵⁹ Equanimity is not only having balance of mind (*tatramajjhataṭṭa*) towards his personal loss and gain, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, praise and blame, success and failure, but also has detachment for own self and for others.

Manifestation of the aspect of neutrality towards beings is the characteristic mark of the equanimity.⁶⁰ According to MHÍ, giving up is the characteristic mark of equanimity.⁶¹ Equanimity is with the nature of the root of merit absence of greed.⁶² The equanimity is an antidote for attachment to sensual pleasure (*Kāmarāga*).⁶³ According to AKB, the equanimity is an antidote for both attachment to sensual pleasure (*Kāmarāga*) and malice (hatred *vyāpāda*).⁶⁴ The nature of equanimity is the absence of desire. It is said that equanimity is the antidote of ill-will. Ill-will is being provoked by desire. Thus the nature of the equanimity is the absence of both, desire and ill-will. Its object is beings.⁶⁵ Without making any distinction it considers beings as beings.⁶⁶

The contemplation of the repulsive (*asubhābhāvanā*) is also an antidote for attachment to sensual pleasure. But some difference is there. Attachment to colour is cured by the contemplation of the repulsive, while attachment to carnal enjoyment (*maithunārāga*) is cured by equanimity.⁶⁷ According to Vasubandhu, repulsiveness is an antidote for



sexual lust and equanimity is an antidote for attachment to mother, father, son and relatives.⁶⁸

“Why are there only four sublime states?” Dealing with this question, Buddhaghosa has explained that due to the paths of purity as well as the aspects of the welfare of the being, only these four have been said. Loving kindness is the way to purity for the one who has much hatred (malice); compassion is for the one who has much cruelty; sympathetic joy is for the one who has much aversion; and the equanimity is for the one who has much greed.⁶⁹

In AKB and AVSN also this question has been explained. According to their explanation, these four sublime states are the antidotes in sequence to four unwholesome thoughts – malice, cruelty, discontent (aversion) and attachment to sense desire and malice. By cultivating these wholesome attitudes one can gradually remove the hatred, cruelty, jealousy and attachment to sense desires. Loving kindness is the antidote for those who dominate by malice (*vyāpāda*), compassion is the antidote to those who dominate by cruelty (*vihiṃsā*), and sympathetic joy (*muditā*) is the antidote to the dominance by discontent. The equanimity is the antidote for those who dominate by attachment to sense desire and by malice.⁷⁰

Dealing with the order of the sublime states Buddhaghosa explains that there are four aspects to bring the aims of welfare for the beings. Having desire to practice these sublime states towards being, one should be engaged with the aspect of welfare. After seeing, hearing or judging the suffering of the being, one should be engaged with the aspect of the removal of suffering. After accomplishing the desired welfare and removal of suffering of those beings, one should practice to be happy seeing their success. After that



“there is nothing to be done” having this feeling one should practice the neutral aspect. On account of their respective aims the order of four sublime states should be understood.⁷¹

The attitudes, which are the most ideal way for a person to conduct themselves toward others are said to be sublime. These are manifested in two ways- as a psycho-ethical thought and as a noble attitude of social behaviour. As psycho-ethical thoughts, these are the laws of harmonization; and as a social behaviour these are practice of the application of four virtues. These four states remove tension and encourage peace in social conflict. These attitudes of mind can heal the wound of the struggles of life. They can remove social barriers, create harmony in communities, and promote brotherhood among people of the Earth. For the peace and happiness of the many, four sublime states (*Brahma-vihāra*)⁷² have been taught by the Buddha. Of course these are the principles of conduct and reflection, but it is not easy to achieve such limitless applications. For this purpose, one has to use these sublime states as important objects of meditation. When these attitudes develop to a higher degree in meditation, they become ‘immeasurable’.

One is able to generate a calm and pure mind by cultivating these qualities or virtues. These virtues are naturally latent in each and every person together with other psychic factors. By the practice of these sublime states one can make his emotions mature. Anger, hate, wrath, jealousy, pride, etc. are the negative tendencies. It is not easy to remove these negative tendencies through will power only, but one has to use these sublime states as guiding principles, also as objects of meditation in his life. The virtuous mental states of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity are powerful antidotes to these negative mental states or attitudes.

These four states of mind represent the four higher sentiments of beings. These are not only the mental training but also are the moral foundation of the individual life as well as social life. The first three sentiments are the different forms of sympathy. Those different forms of sympathy are developed and increased by the practice of meditation. In



the fourth sublime state the philosophical practice of indifference is being developed. Sublime states are the best remedy of the purification of mind as well as the presentation of the ideal social behaviour and spirit. These are the excellent states of mind. If one develops the four sublime states through training in morality, and they become dominant, they will influence the mind and the mind will experience extremely refined degrees of pleasure and happiness. These four sublime states even if practiced for self-development, will influence the whole society.

These four sublime states are co-ordinated with the *jhānas*. By achieving these four states, one can attain the high state of mental concentration (*jhāna*). While meditating on the first three sublime states one can achieve the attainment of first three *jhānas*. Meditation on equanimity, the fourth sublime state, leads to the fourth mental concentration. The one, who seeks to attain loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, proceeds to practice the meditation from the easier to the difficult. When a practitioner meditates on love, he begins it from personal well-being and extends it to family, relatives, society, then onward to indifferent people; and finally to enemies also. "I wish to be happy and free from suffering, and therefore I wish for all beings to be happy and free from suffering." 'Let beings be happy! With this thought in mind, one cultivates loving kindness. 'Beings are suffering!' With this thought in mind, one cultivates compassion. 'Let being be joyful!' With this thought in mind, one cultivates sympathetic joy. 'They are simply beings' with this thought in mind, one cultivates equanimity.⁷³ In other words, thinking others like himself produces the thought of loving kindness. Thinking about the suffering of others, produces the thought of compassion. Thinking about the happiness of others produces the thought of Sympathetic Joy. Thinking about the continuous activities governed by the law of causation produces the thought of equanimity.



These qualities make no distinction or discrimination between rich or poor, intelligent or ignorant, saint or sinner. The general purpose of these four states is the bliss of insight (*vipassanā sukha*) and an excellent existence (*bhava sampatti*).⁷⁴

Today's world has sufficient material wealth, advanced technology, scientific knowledge, advance medical facilities, many kind of luxurious things, but there is no peace and harmony. Neither the individual feels happy, secure and satisfied, nor the society. Every one has become selfish and self-centered. He does not think of others. Disagreement, conflict, violence, terrorism are disturbing the atmosphere of the earth. World is being threatened by the war. In this situation the teachings of the Buddha on sublime states and its training are not only befitting but also essential. It is a well known fact that mind is the origin of every good or bad action. Any action begins first in the mind, and then it takes the visible form. War first begins in the mind of the human and then it appears in its very cruel physical form. Peace also begins in the mind first. To make this world peaceful, one has to cultivate his mind in peaceful situation. Because of the three evil roots— *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*, mind becomes defiled. Selfish desires and changing conditions of the world cause the worries and suffering. The practice of these sublime states will generate the wholesome roots- *alobha*, *adosa*, *amoha* and pave a way to world peace.



ABHIDHAMMA STUDY AND BHĀVĀNĀ MEDITATION PRACTICE IN MYANMAR

U Aung Thein Nyunt,

Ministry of Religious Affairs

The Present World Situation

The present world situation is such that disharmony, terrorism and wars are breaking out in several regions. Because of deviant doctrines, the four sublime states of mind known as **Brāhmavihāra**, such as loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity are going into extinction. This then takes away stability and harmony existent in the world.

Negative emotions are beginning to be reflected even in the virtuous. Those inclined towards virtue begin to doubt the wisdom of doing the righteous thing, Dhamma, in place of armed conflict, i.e. Adhamma. Negative emotions such as greed, hatred, bewilderment, conceit, jealousy and stinginess are seriously violating the becalming forces like loving-kindness, unity and justice. Therefore, the majority of people are being denied a peaceful existence with the four noble states of mind. But Myanmar Buddhists make efforts to live with the four sublime states of mind as much as possible, while trying to lessen mental defilements.

Here, we would like to refer to the remark of well-known Mahā Thera, Venerable Ashin Janakābhivamsa, Taungmyo Sayadaw in the Author's Preface of his classic work, "Abhidhamma in Daily Life". "Taking into consideration of the situation of the present day, we find that the first three of four moral sublime virtues called **Brahmavihāra**, namely, Loving-kindness (**Mettā**), Compassion (**Karuṇā**), Sympathetic joy (**Muditā**), and Equanimity (**Upekkhā**) appear to have ceased to flourish, to have dried up in the human mind. The element of heat generated by beings through such cessation of virtues incinerates even the virtuous, who now find themselves on the verge of drying up."

Taungmyo Sayadaw continued: "The heat element" is nothing but greed (**Lobha**), hatred (**Dosa**), conceit (**Māna**), jealousy (**Issā**), selfishness (**Macchhariya**), that leave no room for sympathy or compassion for one another. That 'heat- element' causes drying up of virtuous element not only in the present but also in the coming existences in the rounds of rebirths (**Saṃsāra**). Therefore people should endeavour in this very life to the best of their ability to extinguish "the heat-element" and seek the cool elements of loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.



The Study of Abhidhamma

As commented by the Most Venerable Taungmyo Sayadaw, the world of today is truly burning with aforesaid heat-elements; but up till now it is very hard for people of the world to find the way out of these troubles. It is clearly shown that correct mental attitude is absolutely essential to make a judicious attention in everyday life. The study of Abhidhamma is bound to fulfill this need. Without it, a harmonious and prosperous human society cannot be established.

Abhidhamma says there is nothing in the whole world except for the four mental phenomena, namely: **Nama** (i.e mind and mental concomitants); its refuge **rūpa** (i.e physical phenomena); the continuous interaction between the two; and “**nibbāna dhātu**”, liberation from it all to attain the supreme bliss of peace. This worldly life has various views because of the various designations, i.e paññatti in Pāli, Conventional Truth, given to these four natural phenomena. **Paññatti** is confusing the whole world. It reigns supreme so sensual beings grasp doctrines dogmatically to remain in continuing discord.

All the designations like man, deva, Brāhma, dog and cat are, in essence, **rūpa** and **Nama** (i.e matter and mind) only. But they are conventionally called the same names. Of these two factors, matter, as external mind-object, is not of much significance. But mind and mental concomitants, as internal phenomena, fare well on meeting with the good and fare ill on meeting with the bad. Some Myanmar proverbs go: "Physical breakdown happens because of oppressive mental suffering" and "You remain as physically young as how youthful you feel". All this shows how Myanmar, endowed with abhidhamma knowledge, emphasize to what extent the importance of the mind.

Good mind and mental concomitants beget more of good mental and physical phenomena. The Buddha has revealed that just as wholesome **nāma** leads one to a good destination like human world, deva world or Brāhma world, so also unwholesome **nāma** leads to a bad destination like animal kingdom or hell. Thus judicious consideration or proper attention (**Yoniso manasikāra**) has a major role to raise a good Nama, i.e. wholesome mind and mental concomitants. While a proper attention (**Yoniso manasikāra**) creates meritorious thoughts together with a happy situation, an improper attention (**Ayoniso manasikāra**) begets demeritorious thoughts together with an unhappy situation, the Abhidhamma has taught. To repeatedly hold a proper attitude means reading good literature such as Abhidhamma books, listening to the virtuous and constant pondering and analysis of the knowledge gained. Mere pondering and analysis do not constitute a good habit yet. The knowledge gained through that process has to be strengthened by repeated



meditation or contemplation on the inner and outside objects, or bhāvana. While practising Bhāvanā, one should study Abhidhamma as much as one can.

Abhidhamma Study in Myanmar

In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar where the majority of Buddhist population lives, Buddha's original teachings, i.e., the three Divisions or the three Baskets of Buddhist Canon have carefully been sustained in their pristine purity from the successive olden ages upto the present date. Out of the three, the Basket of Abhidhamma which is higher, wider, deeper and more profound than the other two, Suttanta-Discourses, and Vinaya- Code of Discipline for the Saṅgha Order, has also been sustained from one generation to another. And, as it is difficult to be studied, only a small number of learned monks and lay-men can approach its deeper field. Nevertheless, it is indeed out of reach for a large majority of Buddhists and non-Buddhist foreigners.

Especially, as Myanmar student monks and sāmaṇeras have to study such Abhidhamma texts as Mātikā of Dhammasaṅgaṇī, Dhātukathā, Yamaka and Paṭṭhāna as the study-course of 'Night-Lecture' for their Pariyatti Pāḷi Examinations, the study of Abhidhamma in Myanmar has been successively prolonged. In the traditional method of studying Abhidhamma, 'the Night- Lecture' plays the vital role; the lecturer-sayadaw who lectures the aforesaid Abhidhamma texts explains basic Abhidhamma facts, numerical data and numerals together with their respective theories and meanings without using any books concerned in a dark room at early night; the students also have to memorize the lecturer's explanations without seeing any book in the dark and have to follow the recitation of the lecturer with intensive care and concentrative mind. Such a method of teaching and learning Abhidhamma texts is traditionally called "Nyawar--Night-Lecture" in Myanmar. It is learnt that ancient Myanmar learned Mahatheras compiled Analytical Commentaries of original Abhidhamma texts in Myanmar language- "Abhidhamma Ah-ya- kauk-kyan" and they are indeed a great support and assistance to this kind of study- "Night-Lecture" in the study of Abhidhamma in analytical approach. The Ven. Munindaghosa (Taungphilar Sayadaw) was the very first author in this field. Because we have such Analytical Commentaries on Abhidhamma in Myanmar, the teaching of Abhidhamma have not waned or declined. When the learning of the Buddhist Scriptures (Pariyatti Sāsanā) disappears, the first one to disappear will be Abhidhamma Sāsanā. For this reason, those conscientious people, interested in Abhidhamma should do their utmost to compile and propagate the Analytical Commentaries on Abhidhamma. This will go a long way in ensuring the flourishing of Abhidhamma Sāsanā for a long time. As long as Abhidhamma Sāsanā flourishes, the Buddha Sāsanā will flourish, too. We may,



therefore, say that monks and the laity, who are engaged in the propagation and promotion of Abhidhamma are the commendable warriors at the frontline, protecting against the danger of the decline and disappearance of Lord Buddha's teachings.

Abhidhamma Examinations in Myanmar

The analytical study of profound and subtle ultimate realities, i.e., consciousness, mental concomitants, material qualities and Nibbāna, mainly organized in Abhidhamma texts, is very difficult and needs to have painstaking zeal. Therefore, there are only few Abhidhamma lecturers and Abhidhamma students. Nevertheless, as it is down-to-earth, realistic, practical and applicable in the handling of daily life problems there are some Abhidhamma classes for intellectual persons in some parts of Myanmar. In order to disseminate the knowledge of Abhidhamma among lay-people, and to live a peaceful and prosperous life by way of practicing its teachings, the Most Venerable Ledi Sayadaw founded the Compendium Abhidhamma Associations (Abhidhamma Thankheik Ahthin) and held Basic Level Abhidhamma examinations in different parts of the country in Colonial Age. Nowadays, many Abhidhamma classes and meditation retreats are thriving throughout the country. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar held Abhidhamma Examinations every year and the number of candidates amount to over 50,000. The Abhidhamma Propagation Association of Myanmar founded in 1946, has now covered over sixty-five years. The Most Venerable Sītagū Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nānissara, one of the Ovādācariya Committee Members, gave a thoughtful guidance to the Association to start propagation of Abhidhamma overseas, as required by the changing trends in the contemporary world. It was appreciable and also a great applause that the Committee for Propagation of Abhidhamma Overseas was established in October 2006 and the Course in English in Applied Abhidhamma was successfully conducted by the Committee from January to April 2007.

Ven. Sītagū Sayadaw and IIA

Moreover, at the Conference of the International Theravāda Buddhist Universities held at Yangon and Popa in Myanmar from 9 to 11 March 2007, the delegates from other Theravāda Buddhist countries suggested that Myanmar should take the leading role in the teaching of Abhidhamma and to establish an International Institute of Abhidhamma in Myanmar, aiming at the emergence of International Abhidhamma University later on. As suggested by the delegates participating in the aforesaid Conference, the Most Venerable Sītagū Sayadaw advised and guided the Abhidhamma Propagation Association and the Committee for Propagation of Abhidhamma Overseas, to establish such an Institute



promptly to fulfill the need of the time. It was an unmentionable pleasure that the International Institute of Abhidhamma was founded on 30th June 2007.

It is learnt that in 2011-2012 academic year of IIA, altogether 249 graduates of Superior Diploma (Abhidhammadhara) and 790 trainees of All Levels and All Programmes have been conferred the respective certificates of Abhidhamma. As for those who have basically studied the Compendium of Abhidhamma, they can easily understand the meditational terms, and comfortably grasp the intrinsic meaning of the terms explained by their immediate meditation instructor. Through the thorough understanding, they may easily follow up the meditation technique manifested by the mentor, whether it may be Samatha Bhāvanā or Vipassanā Bhāvanā.

Bhāvanā Meditation

“**Bhāvanā**” means arduous attempts which should be made by means of repeated contemplation or development of mental culture. Concentration-**samādhi** which can make mental defilement calm and tranquil is called “**Samatha**”. The arduous effort which can lead to the arising of concentration and to develop it more and more is called “**Samatha Bhāvanā**”. By developing the concentrative mind, mental defilements such as greed, hatred etc. can be temporarily wiped away and calmed down.

The task of concentration is a mental function and when concentration arises the faculties such as eye, ear, nose, tongue and physical movement can gradually be under control and change from impolite manner to polite manner. By doing meditational task-**Samatha** or development of concentration, one's mind fixedly takes only a single object, what one would like to take, and does not want to take the other objects apart from what one fixedly takes. At that time, by scrutinizing the controlling faculties of eye, ear, etc. one's state of concentration can be discerned more or less.

The Four Guardian Meditations

To establish the accomplished task of concentration, there are forty subjects of meditation. As it is a seat of development task, it is called **Kanīmatṭhāna**-meditation. The preliminary stage of mental culture is attainable in all these forty subjects of meditation. Out of the forty subjects of meditation, the four kinds, **Buddhlāussati**, **Mettā**, **Asubha** and **Maraṇāussati** are called the four Guardian Meditations because they guard and protect the meditator not to go astray from the path of righteous and noble life. These four are exactly suitable for the practice of every Buddhist.



‘Vipassanā’ literally means perceiving things in different ways; it can also be rendered by ‘insight’, ‘contemplation’, ‘intuition’, and ‘introspection’. The main object of vipassanā is to see things as they truly are in the light of transiency, sorrowfulness, and soullessness, in order to gain one's Emancipation. The main basic of Vipassanā is ‘insight’, ‘wisdom’ accompanied by moral consciousness and functional consciousness. People give names to living corporeal bodies combined with mental phenomena as ‘human beings’ ‘celestial beings’ ‘animal beings’ ‘men’ ‘women’ ‘cows’ ‘horses’ ‘elephants’, etc.; in the similar way, people call material objects, the combination of different material qualities, as ‘homes’ ‘houses’ ‘trees’ ‘schools’ ‘gardens’ ‘forests’ ‘mountains’ etc. Indeed they recognize them as permanence, pleasure, soul and loveliness. But in view of vipassanā-insight, they are not in the form of conventional terms. Extraordinarily, the above animate beings and inanimate things in view of vipassanā-insight are just material and mental qualities in the light of impermanence, sorrowfulness, no-soul and loathsomeness. Vipassanā-insight sees only the intrinsic and underlying qualities, not the outward appearance of them.

Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā

In reality, in the teachings of the Buddha there are the three working procedures-**dāna**-charity, **sīla**-moral ethics and **bhāvanā**-development of Samatha and Vipassana, as well as the three modes of training-**sīla**-moral ethics, **samādhi**-concentration and **paññā**-enlightenment or wisdom are obviously mentioned in principle. Only when these principles are practically exercised, will it be in consonance with the Theravāda Buddhist Teachings and those who follow these principles will definitely consume the benefits of their true practices: **Samādhi** and **Paññā** are not efficient without **sīla**; similarly **sīla** also is not efficient without **samādhi** and **paññā**. The three-fold training **sīla**, **samādhi** and **paññā** are interrelated and interdependent. If one wants to establish **sīla** to be efficient in purity, one has to inevitably establish the practice of **samādhi** and **paññā**. If one contemplates on the true nature and advantages of observing **sīla** or the tendency to breach moral precepts, **sīla** by way of satipaṭṭhāna-meditation technique one may become a person with completely efficient and pure **sīla**. A breach of moral precepts is arisen out of bodily and verbal violation without control so it is very important to control the mind in order to establish completely pure **sīla**. Here, Satipaṭṭhāna meditation technique plays the vital role.

Some meditators point out that some individuals in the life-time of the Buddha were able to attain Nibbāna at one sitting while listening to the dhamma preached by the Buddha so the arduous practice of meditation only plays the vital role to attain Nibbāna



without paying serious attention to the observance of morality-sīla and neglecting the serial process of the Sīlavisuddhi-purification of morality, Cittavisuddhi-purification of mind, etc. as mentioned in the Pitaka literature. They indeed do not know the four kinds of individual- (who may have chance to attain the Nibbānic bliss): (1) Ugghātitaññū (the one with sharp intellect knows what is taught in brief); (2) Vipāñcitaññū (the one with sharp intellect knows what is taught in detail); (3) Neyya (the one with moderate intellect who can memorize and understand the teaching and practice it for attainment of Nibbāna; and (4) Padaparama (the one who knows only the word without penetrating knowledge of it and cannot attain the Nibbāna in this very life). Out of these four the last two need to be engaged in the process of training such as Sīlavisuddhi, Cittavisuddhi, etc. for attainment of Nibbāna.

These last two can attain the Nibbāna only after they have trodden on the path of the purification-process above-mentioned. The Most Venerable Ledi Sayadaw obviously remarks that there are only two kinds of individual- Neyya and Padaparama after one thousand years of the Buddha's noble demise in the domain of the Buddha's teachings. Therefore, those who practice meditation of today should truly be replete with the moral virtues and head on the right path of purification-process. The practice of Samatha ends in the Psychic power-Abhiññāna. Vipassana's ultimate goal is Nibbāna. Only with the realization of Nibbāna, the circle of Samsāric suffering will cease. Therefore, every Buddhist should inevitably practise the Vipassanā insight- meditation. In practising Vipassanā insight-meditation, there are two different ways: first, Samatha is practised and then Vipassanā insight-meditation follows; second, Vipassanā insight-meditation is directly practised without touching Samatha initially. These two different ways of practice are called Samathayānika Way and Vipassanāyānika Way. You may choose whatever you wish but you have to inevitably deal with Vipassanāyānika.

Meditation Techniques in Myanmar

Most of meditation techniques followed in Myanmar of today, not taking much time to practise Samatha, directly touch with the Vipassanāyānika. All techniques are the origins of the Buddha's teachings as mentioned in Buddhist textual scriptures. However, depending on the slightly diverse techniques of Meditation Masters of Myanmar, they have to be termed, 'Ledi Technique' 'Sunlun Technique' 'Mahasei Technique' 'Moe-goke Technique', etc.

Ānāpāna practice, Satipaṭṭhāna, Foundation of Mindfulness is approached by Ledi technique with breath-in and breath-out at nostrils or at the tip of upper lip for beginners. It means mindfulness should be firmly and instantly kept on these areas in order to notice



the touch of air with them. **Sunlun technique** instructs to start with inhaling air at the nostril; when air touches at the nostril, mindfulness should be kept on it; touching and knowing should be maintained with mindfulness. All these manners should be done with closed mouth and eyes. **Mahasei technique** prescribes that a meditator should put his mindfulness on the moving abdomen, rising and falling, when breathed in and breathed out; when he breaths in, he has to notice the rising manner of abdomen and when breaths out, the falling manner of abdomen. **Moegoke technique** suggests that at the beginning, a meditator should breath-in and breath-out regularly; he should put his mindfulness at the nostrils or at the tip of upper lip or at the chest cavity; careful notice of touching air should be maintained with stable mindfulness.

The above techniques for the practice of beginners are differently mentioned according to different techniques. They are just giving brief accounts. What is the most important is to practise one technique with firm determination.

Whether the practice of meditation is correct or incorrect should be measured in canonical studies; without it, no one can determine what is wrong and what is right. On the other hand if someone would like to practise a certain technique of meditation, he needs to know about the technique in conformity with textual instructions and should practise accordingly. Only then he may arrive at the goal as he goes on the right way.

Here is one thing to be noticed. After careful reading of the textual explanations, one should not be disappointed and depressed. "I know nothing about the dhamma! I have many things to know about the dhamma! How can I get the dhamma using this technique of meditation practice?" These ideas may occur to the alien meditators or beginners. In olden days there were many successful yogīs who had attained the dhamma without knowing textual explanations; Ven. Sunlun Sayadaw U Kavi, Anargan Saya Thet Kyi were very well-known among them. When actually practicing the dhamma, it is very important to perform meditation task as instructed by a competent meditation master. Due to arduous and correct practice, the levels of knowledge can be gained step by step and dhamma-essence in conformity with the level can be acquired. At this time those yogis with poor knowledge of dhamma may cease their practice assuming that they have attained Magga, Phala and Nibbana though not actually gained.

For example, while a yogī-meditator is contemplating on the arising and passing away of conditioned things by way of Udayabbayañāṇa, the continuity of his mind becomes purer and purer and impediments to insight- meditation such as an aura, joy, tranquility etc. happen to appear. Some yogis may regard them as genuine dhamma. But they are just impediments to his insight-meditation. Longing for them makes insight-



wisdom impure. In order to overcome these obstacles, the yogis have to proceed their tasks with literary knowledge.

To sum up this point, literary knowledge should be referred in need but the actual ardent practice as instructed by the mentor plays the vital role in meditation task.

Exhortation

At present, the teachings of Buddha originally exist and it is an opportune time. The essence of dhamma taught by the Buddha should be put into noble service and actual practice. Such an opportune time will never exist for all time. Human life-span is also short. Still living, no one knows exactly when death comes. Still living, when old, or unwell, or facing with unexpected dangers and obstacles, meditation task cannot be exerted to the fullest extent.

Is it appropriate for a virtuous yogīs just to read Buddhist scriptures and just to hear Buddha's teaching? Will you spend your precious time only by paying attention to the never-ending worldly affairs? Is it an opportune time to be engaged in Vipassana-insight meditation? Should you be ready to face dying moment with the powerful dhamma-essence?

The full realization of Nibbānic Bliss by Buddhas and Arahats in ancient times is totally dependent on the path of the Vipassanāñāṇa. Without the practical exercise of vipassanāñāṇa, there will be no way to the path of Nibbānic Bliss. It is said in the Tipitaka scriptures that while hearing the Dhamma-teaching, some people attained Nibbānic Bliss. In fact, they had attained it by practising vipassanāñāṇa with deep attention to the teaching while listening to the dhamma. Therefore, Vipassanā insight-meditation is a true Noble Path which has been actually trodden by ancient Buddhas and previous Arahats. We would like to urge all to tread on the Noble path of Vipassanāñāṇa.

At present, there are meditation centres in Myanmar, offering meditation sessions in line with the methods shown in the Abhidhamma Texts, with the methods which were labelled after the founder, such as Mahāsī, Moe-goke, Ledi, Sunlun, Kathitwaing, Taungpulu, pa Auk Method etc. in almost all townships.

Every month 120-150 would-be yogīs come from abroad to practise Buddhist meditation in Myanmar. And the Government issues Meditation Visas to them, if they submit a recommendation letter from the local meditation centre concerned and respective Myanmar Embassies abroad.



Most probably you want to possess a meaningful life through a calm, concentrated response against life challenges, and stand as a useful person in society with an understanding of the deep goal of life, and then you are warmly welcome to take up training in Abhidhamma Courses and your chosen form of Buddhist meditation in Myanmar.

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ESSENTIAL FACTORS IN DISSEMINATING DHAMMA

Ven. Dr. THICH GIAC HIEP

Vietnam Buddhist University, VIETNAM

I. INTRODUCTION:

This article provides some essential factors that a propagator should know in order to disseminate Dhamma successfully and efficaciously.

After he attained perfect enlightenment, the Buddha hesitated to preach the doctrine that he just realized. He feared that the common people might neither understand nor accept, it may be a waste of time and energy. Out of compassion for beings, the Buddha preached his doctrine, setting the Wheel of the Law in motion. For us, propagators, it is difficult to convince beings, if we are not qualified. A propagator should know some factors as follow:

II. ESSENTIAL FACTORS:

1. Qualified propagator:

A propagator should be educated and then educate the masses to do in accordance with true Dhamma. Education is the most important and efficacious means which can change one's view and transform the society to the perfect level. Education purifies one's mind and develops the society. Buddhism plays an important role in education because it meets these two demands. The aim of disseminating Dhamma is to master people and develop society.

To disseminate Dhamma successfully, we need propagators who are educated and well equipped with canonical subjects and non-canonical subjects. We do not have enough qualified propagators. Maybe we have enthusiastic propagators but they have not been well equipped. Moreover, the Buddhist educational systems in many countries are backward. So they can not catch up with the scientific development. For this reason they could not produce a human resource to meet the needs of the vast multitude, guiding them to understand and practice the sublime Dhamma. However, in some developed countries, Buddhist educational system is well equipped. The propagators should know innovative methods of propagating Dhamma



to meet the contemporary needs. The propagators should have the following characters:⁷⁵

- Ethics
- Knowledge, understanding the tradition, customs, local dialects
- Acquiring complete knowledge and skill in language
- Understanding the audience

2. Financial support

Finance has done great work. During Buddha life time, some main factors that contributed to propagating Dhamma successfully were the support of businessman and government. Finance is needed to disseminate Dhamma and establish foundations. Sometimes, having good ideas and projects but facing financial problem, procedure cannot be carried out. If we lose the active support of the rulers, wealthy people, we face many difficulties in propagation. Some modern scholars think, "...decline in the royal patronage of Buddhism is the most important cause for the disappearance of Buddhism in India."⁷⁶

So we secure sympathy and support from government, wealthy people in order to expand Buddhism. At the same time, we also create our own financial resource in case the supporters are bankrupt. With finance and enthusiastic propagators, Buddhism will flourish everywhere.

3. Applying modern technology

To spread the Dhamma worldwide, the propagators should know how to take the advantage of the modern technology, to create the opportunity for others. Internet development brings people around the world together, only one touch we can communicate each with other. In the modern time, if we can not catch up with the others, we are backward.

Propagators use all skilfull means which they have, using advertisement, publishing, and internet. Especially, the internet became more dominant in the 1990s. The user was not only the receiver of information but could be a provider. It is better to construct a website,

⁷⁵ S.C. Ghosh, *The History of Education in Ancient India: c. 3000 BC to AD 1192*, (New Delhi: Munshinram Manoharlal Publishers, 2001), 50.

⁷⁶ K.L. Hazra, *The Rise and Decline of Buddhism in India*, (New Delhi: Munshinram Manoharlal Publishers, 1988), 393.



establishing a “cyber” community of Buddhists, using the internet as a primary tool for disseminating Dhamma. The web allowed greater diversity opinions to reach people around the world. Sometimes, the web serves both academic and lay readers. Internet radio is also a way to communicate the lectures and chanting.⁷⁷

4. Aiming at the remote countryside

The society develops so fast. There are many useless entertainments which attract the young. The young generation rushes to material life, forgets the spiritual life.⁷⁸ Materialism destroys good traditions, even people in remote countryside. How to instruct the young to know the danger of temporary pleasures, and how to lead them to the spiritual life is the important task of the propagators. Living for others, altruism, selflessness, sympathy, is the way of Buddhists. Buddhists are living and acting for the benefit of others. Buddha’s life is an example, leaving the palace, leaving the world for religious life, for the happiness of others. Following the Buddha’s footsteps, the propagators should revitalize the Dhamma to many people. Especially, people in remote countryside, they need the light of wisdom. Most of them live a very simple and backward life, in bad conditions, often contacting with heroin, smuggling, the cause of crime and bad habit. Life is not comfortable. They need both material and mental life. Propagators should provide them with opportunity to get in touch with the modern technology, the methods to earn living, the way to live peacefully.

In the field of charity, there are many things to do:

- Providing free medical care
- Building classrooms
- Developing water resources
- Setting up charitable foundations

Giving material and spiritual benefit is the Buddhist practice. Material and spiritual meet the needs of people in the remote countryside. After they

⁷⁷ R.L. Lewis. (2006) “Buddhist Education and Technology,” *lecture*. Huafan University

⁷⁸ Y. Hiroichi & Y. Haruka, ed. *Tradition and Modernity: India and Japan towards the Twenty-First Century*, (New Delhi: Munshinram Manoharlal Publishers, 1997), 111.



receive material they also receive training. For a stable development, we create a community which is ready to help each other in the difficult situation.

III. CONCLUSION:

The tasks of propagators are giving people confidence, happiness, hope and convenience, making Dhamma accessible and adaptable to people, helping the needy to overcome the difficult situations. Disseminating Dhamma is to stabilize the society to purify human's mind, the ideal of Buddhism. This ideal has been transmitted from generation to generation with the hope establishing a world with harmony, happiness. Propagating in modern time, monks should be well equipped with knowledge in many fields, so that they can catch up with the development of the world. If we spread the Dhamma widely, to the vast multitude, people have chance to follow and practice. Superstitious, wrong beliefs and practice will be washed away. People live in a peaceful life, the society stabilizes. It is also the hope of many religious leaders.

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RITUAL, MORAL AND COMMUNITY LEADER

**A glance at the practice of a funeral ritual text and the role of
its writer in preserving Buddhist moral teaching in some parts of
the Union of Myanmar**

**Venerable Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)
Trustee & Fellow, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, University of Oxford
Professor, International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Yangon
Executive Secretary, Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities &
International Association of Buddhist Universities**

Introduction

Anthropologists such as Nartsupha Chatthip (1999:10 *The Thai Village Economy in the Past*; 2001: *Life's entreaties and Tai Neua ceremonies: Shan in Yunnan*) and Andrew Turton (1972: "matrilineal descent groups and spirit cults of the Thai-yuan in northern Thailand" *Journal of Siam Society*; 2000: *Civility and savagery: Social identity in Tai states*) have observed that in the traditional Tai community, of which Shan are one, "authority is exercised by community leaders, kinship groups and ritual leaders" and "disputes are resolved internally". In this short paper, I describe how a local ritual tradition has been a vehicle in instilling Buddhist moral teaching for generations among the Shan Theravada Buddhists in Southern and Northern Shan State, the Union of Myanmar. A ritual leader, called in Shan *caray*, occupies a very important role in maintaining the moral standard based on the Theravada Buddhist teaching of karma as demonstrated in the Five Precepts. Indeed, the teaching also encompasses meditation on impermanence. This is significant if viewed in the wider context where moral guardianship is the role usually occupied by monks in other South and south-east Asian Theravada Buddhist communities. In so doing, I shall recount in brief about Shan funeral ritual texts, all of which are composed in highly complicated rhyming systems and intended to be read out to the audience as a religious poetic work. Then, I shall briefly discuss how the role of a ritual leader is connected to his being regarded as a moral guardian and community leader.

There is a custom for a Shan Buddhist family in the Southern and Northern Shan State in the Union of Myanmar to offer a kind of ritual text to the monastery when a member of the family dies. There is a perceived sanctity or magical power of the text



among the populace to the extent that some assume the text can undo the bad karma of the deceased. This is similar to a general belief in the libation ritual at funeral ceremony in other Theravada Buddhist communities around the world. On a closer examination, however, it is found that the text is skillfully employed as part of a ritual that is aimed at getting the moral message across to the audience.

There may be a number of such a funeral ritual text composed over the centuries. I have so far collected four among the Shan Buddhists in the Union of Myanmar. They are: (1) *Sutta-mon-tham*, “Dharmic Essence of the Sutta”, is generally considered to have been composed by a monk, Sao Dhammadina, and it is usually considered to be the earliest surviving work in Shan. [But when I examine the language used in this particular version, I do not think it is as early as early sixteenth century. Further investigation is required, however, to determine if *sutta-mon-tham* has several versions and by different authors.] (2) *Sutta-mahanibbana*, composed in the late 19th century, is not to be mistaken with the last discourse of the Buddha known as Mahaparinibbana-sutta; it is a text on moral teaching, focusing on the Five Precepts and the ten wholesome deeds (*dasakusalakammamapatha*). It was composed by Sao Kawli of Mong Pan, who studied at the Myin-won Monastery in Mandalay during the reign of King Mindon (1853-78). (3) *Tham-chao-loka-paywot*, composed only in 1961 by an unknown author, is how to undo one’s bad karma; it is very interesting ritually because it says if this sutta/ text does not work its magic, one needs to recite the Abhidhamma texts to free someone from a woeful ghostly life. (4) *Sutta woe-geng*, “The Sutta of the Bull”, dates only to 1943, is the longest among them, possibly an expanded version of a previous text of the same name. This one is better known and I have chosen this as my focus today because it contains more stories, four altogether. Each of the four texts runs between 20 to 34 A4 pages, not too long a text that can be read in the morning of the burial for the burial itself usually takes place in the early afternoon.

Stories

Let us first summarise two of the four stories with the same moral message. The first is about a very rich man during the time of the Buddha Vipassi; he had two beautiful daughters. Gopala and his wife broke not only the whole Five Precepts, but also made fun of anyone who observed them. The Five Precepts are, as we all know, to refrain from killing, stealing, adultery, telling a lie and intoxicants. The couple ridiculed people who observed the Five Precepts as stupid and those observing the Eight Precepts on the full-moon and new-moon days as starving themselves after midday for nothing. The couple killed animals for their meat and indulged in alcohol.



Instead of following the precepts, the couple used their wealth to make offering of many requisites to the monks as a means to pave their way to nirvana. While being generous to the monks, they often criticized those observing the eight precepts as stingy because in their eyes those people offered to the monks only simple food, and not as much or as many dishes they, the couple, did. After they died the couple were reborn as very repulsive looking hungry ghosts in the cemetery: with very tiny mouth but big stomach, naked and nothing much to eat. The hungry ghost couple let their daughters know of their misery and asked the girls to perform an offering on their behalves. The dutiful daughters obliged but the accumulated merits could not help their parents. On learning of this, the daughters went to Vipassi, the Buddha, to ask why. The Buddha then told them about their parents' misdeeds in their human existence. (This story is also in the *Sutta-mon-tham*)

The Buddha Vipassi is said to have recommended them to commission a *caray*, a learned man, a copy of a sacred text, have it read out, again, by the *caray*. I think the word *caray*, often pronounced as *calay* because the Shans do not have R sound, is not Shan in its origin. The term *caray* literally means "teacher", a word possibly deprived from *ācārya* in Sanskrit or *ācariya* in Pali.) A *caray*, mostly a man, holds enormous moral authority for his vast knowledge of Buddhist literature and expertise in rituals. He is considered to have religious authority by virtue of having been ordained as a monk and his being a learned man in both Buddhist moral issues and rituals. A *caray* combines many roles in one person: the honorific title *caray* itself would inform a Shan Theravada Buddhist that the title holder is both a learned man and a counsellor he can reply on for moral guidance and emotional counselling. A *caray* is also usually a writer in that he composes religious texts in Shan, at the very least he reproduces them; a respected poet in the western sense of the word; a priest for his role in Buddhist rituals; even an astrologer. The same position is called *Asan/ Ajahn* in the eastern part of Shan State, Union of Myanmar and in *Sibsongbanna* (Xishuangbanna: 西双版纳傣族自治州) in Yunnan, China. The *caray* are all ex-monks who were once the only learned men among the Southeast Asian Theravada Buddhists until the British and French brought a more secular education to the region in the 19th century.

Returning to the story in the funeral ritual text, it is described that the text itself, as far as the procedure goes, had be read out to an audience the whole night and then taken to the monastery to offer it to the Buddha in the morning. The Buddha then gave the text back to the donors who kept it at home and had it read every now and then to a gathering. Actually, even today this is what the Shan Buddhists in the Southern and Northern part of the present Shan State do as part of a funeral ceremony. There is an all night long reading ceremony, not by monks as they do not usually stay at home for the night, but by a *caray*



who reads of one of those funeral ritual texts and also one other text, composed in a genre, usually longer and more complicated. The focus of texts chosen on this kind of occasion is usually karma and impermanence.

Here in this text, *Sutta woe-geng*, “The Sutta of the Bull”, the *caray* were considered the moral authority in the community. In this story, the *caray* is presented as having received the authority or empowerment from the Buddha to help propagate his moral teaching. Indeed, even today in the Joti (Zawti) Shan, a Shan Buddhist puritanical tradition, the monastery mainly performs the task of educating young men who would then leave and become *caray*. A *Caray* acts as a clergy, wielding enormous moral authority over the people and are therefore revered as community leader.

The other story in the *Sutta woe-geng*, “The Sutta of the Bull”, is about a successful but cheating and cruel businessman who cheated his customers and was cruel to animals. One day, he sold a cow that had just had a calf to a butcher. During the night, before the butcher came to collect the cow-mother, the poor animal is said to engage in a heart wrenching conversation with her calf, asking it to suck enough milk during the night because she would not be there to feed it when the morning came; the mother-cow was also admonishing the calf not to stay too close to the bulls for fear of being hurt, to be careful when crossing the rivers and not to go stray from the herd when gazing in the forest for fear of tigers. The conversation was overheard by the wife of the businessman who then begged her husband to cancel the agreement to sell the cow. The husband, instead of listening to her advice, told her off, saying that a hen’s crow does not signal dawn and a woman’s advice brings no wisdom. When she insisted, he chased her out of the house; and she became a nun.

In the meantime, upon hearing the plight of the cow, even the leading bull lamented to its herd about the excessive greed of the businessman, complaining that the bulls have to pull his carts and then be treated inhumanely, and that in the end they were eaten by him. The next morning, the butcher came to take the cow from the businessman and left for his hometown. But on the way, he encountered a group of robbers who killed him and took all his belonging, except the animals who now roamed the Himalaya! The greedy businessman was reborn as a snake, a python, guarding the many pots of gold and silver he had buried. Then, a poor but ethically minded man came along and was requested by the suffering snake to go and ask the Buddha, this time by the name of Narada, why he, the snake, has to suffer. On learning the reasons, the snake showed the poor man of his wealth and asked him to use one third of it to do merits for him, the snake, and take the rest for himself. But the merits could not be obtained due to his deeply accumulated greed and



anger in his previous life. That was when the Buddha Narada recommended the poor man to commission and offer this sacred text on behalf of the snake and subsequently the snake was free from its woeful state. The rituals were exactly like the first one.

Conclusion

Here I wish to conclude with one or two interesting points from the stories. First is the emphasis on the teaching of moral values based on the belief of karma. The husband and wife in the first story and the greedy business man and the butcher in the second story accumulated a lot of bad karma. They did not observe the Five Precepts and did not care for the welfare of animals. The couple are said to have killed birds including chicks for foods. And, the greedy businessman and the butchers appear even more cruel. So, they were reborn as hungry ghosts and snakes respectively. The story teaches about one's actions and their consequences. It is a powerful story told in a simple and effective way.

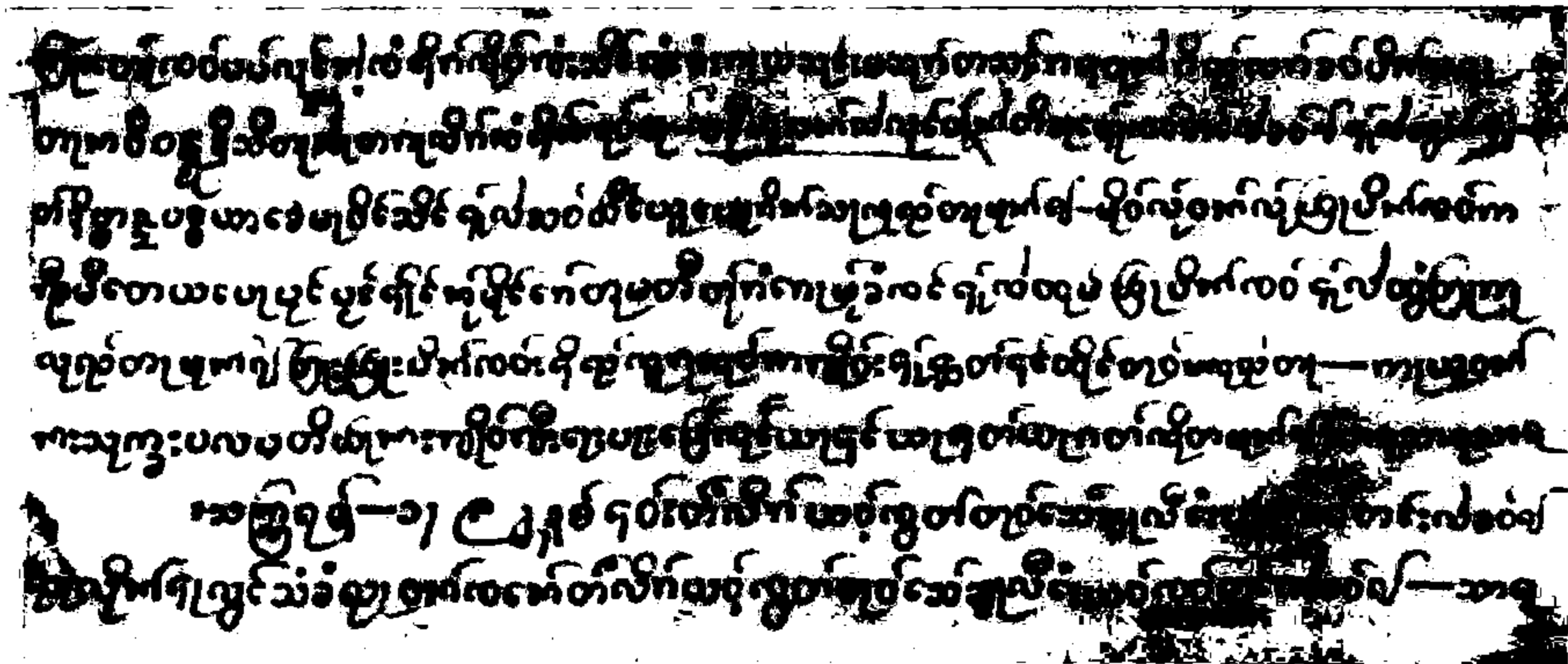
Secondly, the stories attribute magical power to a sacred text, all refer to some kind of sutta that is claimed to have traced back to the time of previous Buddhas prior Gotama the Buddha. I have not been able to locate the original sources of these stories in the Pali commentarial literature. I would be most grateful for any hint from anyone! Here, the more telling role in the texts, however, is perhaps reserved for *caray* in preserving this magical funeral ritual text and in using it to propagate the moral values that are so crucial for the existence of a peaceful village community for the Shan people, who call themselves Tai.

The magical text is not meant to be purely ritual as in the Vedic ritual traditions. Rather, it is meant to ensure a certain standard of moral harmony in the community. Indeed, some of these four texts say that these texts should be read every month, not just as a funeral ritual, to an audience in the community. The text basically talks about the importance of the Five Precepts, expressed in terms of honesty, generosity, kindness to both human beings and animals, respect for women and their advice, family value, humility and a life where one is mindful of the consequences of one's action and speech. The two daughters are portrayed as good, moral and wise who had real concerns for their parents.

A *caray* is sometime more influential than the abbot of a monastery in a village simply because he is more accessible for advice for ordinary people than the monk. One may notice one point that this sacred text is to be read, mostly, at night, and at home, which means it is not the responsibility of the monk who does not enter into the village at night. By reading the text to the audience, the *caray* is spreading not only the moral



teaching of the Buddha and but also holds the textual authority. Many of the Shan Buddhist scriptures, known as Great Texts, *lik loung*, have been composed by *caray*. So, while we may have plenty of misgiving about how the *caray* promote themselves in these texts, when Buddhas referred the two daughters of the couple in the first story and the honest but poor man in the second story to get help from a *caray*, the role of a *caray* in holding the community together and in upholding the moral standard as demonstrated in the Theravada teaching of the Five Precepts and karma is undeniable.



A Shan manuscript still common among the Shan Buddhists, despite the printing and digitization culture.





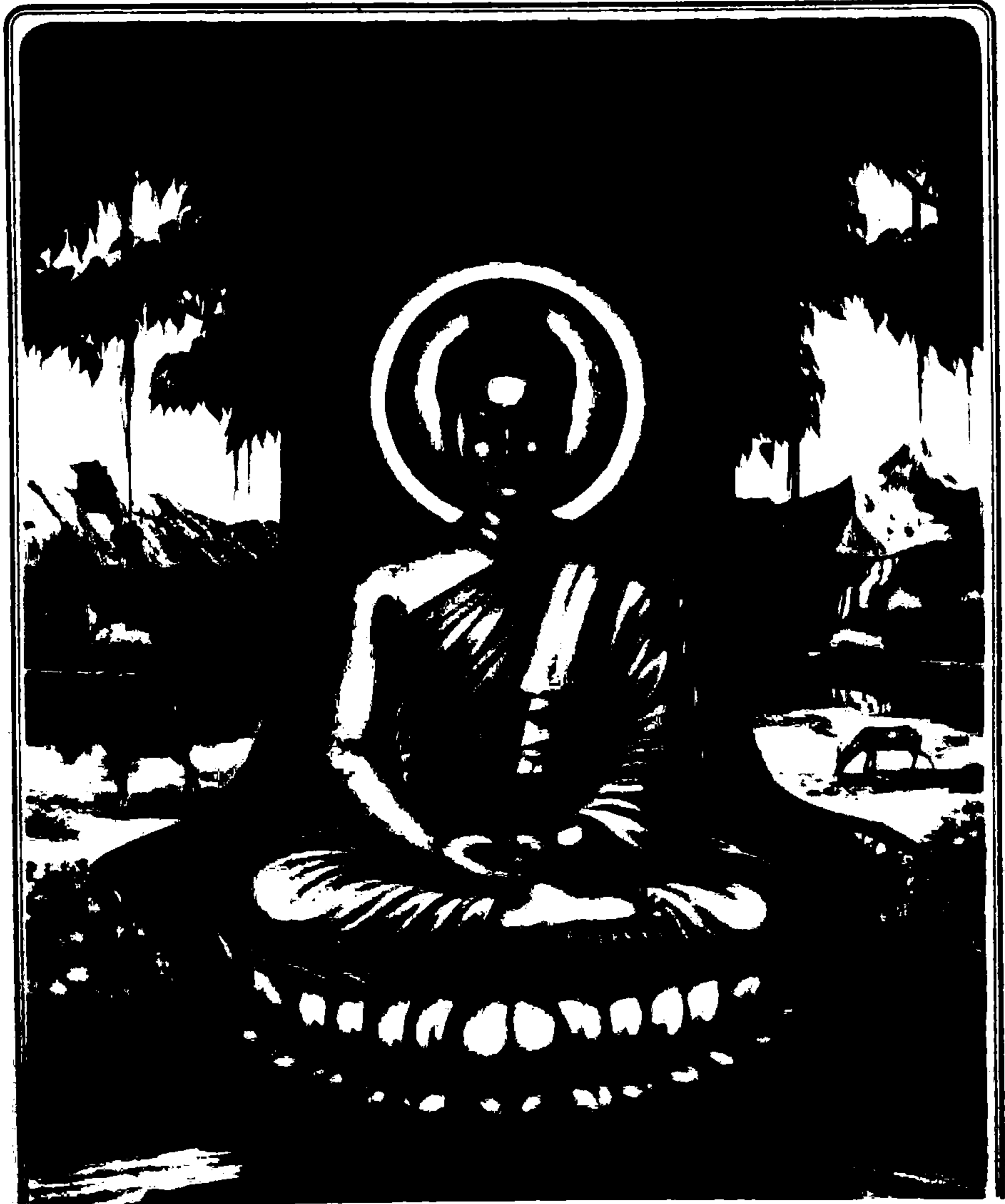
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QUANDARIES OF THE POST MODERN CIVIC SOCIETY AND THE BUDDHISTIC ANTICIPATIONS AND PRESCRIPTIONS

Dr Neelima Dahiya

The post modern civic society across the globe is in the grip of formidable multidimensional quandaries. The discomfort is being felt almost at all fronts - social, economic, cultural, environmental and ecological. The social order, based on human-centric and anthropocentric conduct is responsible for the continuous degeneration in moral values and ethical system on the one hand and irrational excessive use of resources-renewable and nonrenewable - on the other.

The civic society today is under great stress and strain. The fear of the crash of the civilization is the hot concern of the contemporary society. Owing to the moral degeneration, the society is infested with multi pronged crisis. Wars are justified in the name of justice and democracy. Terrorism is perpetuated to meet ulterior motives. Both the developed and the developing societies are facing erosion of humanistic, ethical and moral values. The continued presence of the global terrorism, violence, corruption, racism, communalism, religious fundamentalism, crime against women and children, nuclearization, militarization, food chain security crisis, social marginalization and deprivation, etc. are rendering the planet earth a miserable place to live in. We find that a big chunk of the budget of a nation is being allocated for militarization at the cost of social development. An alternative use of such an allocation may work as a magical wand to eliminate illiteracy, to improve health care and to provide basic social security. The present day society is submerged into gross inequality. Just the top 20% of the population is utilizing 85% of the resources. The crime is all pervasive-crime at public place, crime at work place, crime on road side, and crime at domestic front .A recent research shows that in a large number of families the environment at home is more stressed than at the workplace. The 'Honour killing', a soul searing crime, found in more than 40 countries, is being committed by the members of the family. In most of the rape cases, the relatives or close family friends are found involved.

Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture (Rtd), M.D.University, Rohtak (INDIA) . +91-9416516232



The modern economics is based on unbridled consumerism and ruthless exploitation of the non-renewable resources. Limitless growth and consumption are unsustainable and potentially self destructive .A large number of experiments conducted in the South- Asia have revealed that the soil fertility vis-à-vis nutrient supply capacity of most of the soils has either already depleted or is in the process due to an overuse of farm land. If such a situation is allowed to persist the world may soon face a serious food crisis⁷⁹. In developing economies food crisis has some other more challenging dimensions: overuse of insecticides, pesticides, chemical fertilizers and use of untreated sewerage water and/or river and canal water mixed with harmful industrial effluent and other kinds of pollutant material have laden the cereals, vegetables and fruits with harmful chemicals much above the safety level assessed for human consumption. Some recent researches on cow milk reveal that even the cow milk, produced under standardised hygienic conditions, has some contamination on account of the fodder used. The harmful chemicals in the fodder reach the body of the cow and ultimately go into the milk. Thus the modern economics is totally based on the profit- driven principle without caring for its effects upon people and the environment.

The irrational and excessive use or misuse of resources has serious impact on the physical environment and the ecology. These adverse effects might have been initially slow and even imperceptible but with the passage of time it has assumed serious dimensions. We all could see that its impact on ecology is already getting pandemic in nature and ruinous in effects. For instance at the end of the first world war, the pandemic influenza broke out on the western front and thence rolled out its fangs around the world.⁸⁰ A more recent instance is that of the pandemic swine flue which broke out in Mexico first and then rolled spread to various other parts of the world via USA. C. S. Elton, in order to highlight the gravity of the threats of the ecological devastation, terms it the 'Ecological Explosion'⁸¹ The insatiable lust, greed and craving for more and more material gains and the maniac industrialisation have resulted into holes in the ozone layer of the atmosphere causing global warming, melting of snow, receding glaciers, floods, frequent eruptions of volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and progressively increasing sound, air and water pollution. The global warming and the green house gas emissions have become the bane of humanity. The living beings are destined to consume poisonous substances and inhale

⁷⁹ SAARC Workshop on nutrients use held at CSSRI, Karnal, Tribune, dated 10-09-09

⁸⁰ Elton ,Charles, S, The Ecology of invasions by animals and plants, Methuen & Ltd,London,reprinted,1966, p 15

⁸¹ ibid



health hazardous gases like the carbon dioxide and the carbon monoxide. One quarter of Humanity has no access to the clean drinking water. Millions of people die every year by the water borne diseases. The world commission on water for 21st century ⁸²reports that 50% of the world's major rivers are going either dry or polluted. Australia's Murray-Darling river basin is stressed by draught; over allocation of water and the climatic change. In India the river saraswati has already disappeared. Yamuna has been reduced from perennial to seasonal stream and the Ganga has been contaminated beyond repair. Ever since the evolution of man on the earth the animals have been his great support system, earlier as his prey and later as a great source of economy and entertainment. The animals have contributed in a significant way in the development of practically every aspects of the human civilization, yet they met and still continue to meet the treatment they never deserved. Carol Adams⁸³, a renowned scholar, observes, 'we have institutionalized the oppression of animals at least on two levels: 1) in the formal structures such as the slaughter houses, the meat markets, zoos, laboratories and circuses. 2)

Through our languages.' As Colman McCarthy⁸⁴ has pointed out that the language shapes the attitude and the attitude shapes the behavior. We call each other by animal names in a derogatory sense such as dog, Pig, donkey, monkey, fox, so on and so forth and accuse each other by using animal similes such as: as mean as snake (aastiin ka saap), as Stubborn as mule (adial Ghoda). It reflects our callous behavior towards animals. The animals have just become the objects of human use, a medium of commodity production and surplus generation. The millions of animals every year are used in schools, colleges, universities and the research institutes for teaching and research purposes. All the medicines at testing stages are used on animals before declaring them safe or otherwise for human beings. Millions of animals suffer and die in the laboratories because of vivisection. The indiscriminate and unplanned deforestation and denuding of the upper crust of the earth, hilly or otherwise, urbanization and industrialization at an alarming rate have endangered the survival of wild life. The surveys conducted by the conservation biologists make it amply clear that 10-40% of all known species on the planet are on the verge of extinction, The exotic species such as parrots and coral reef fish are captured in

⁸² Eccles, B, Towards understanding of the primary ecological challenges of 21 century; The Activist, vol. 16, No 2

⁸³ Adams, Carol J, The Sexual Politics of Meat : A feminist- vegetarian critical theory, New York: cotinum, 1990, cf Singh, A.K, Buddhist attitude towards animals in early Buddhism, an unpublished thesis, Department of Buddhist studies, University of Delhi

⁸⁴ Ibid



millions for the pet trade. Most of them die before they reach the place where to be sold.⁸⁵ The African elephants and the various kinds of Rhinoceros are closer to extinction as they are being killed for their ivory and horns respectively.⁸⁶ Even the ocean fishing is so intensive that their population is fast dwindling. Eighty percent of the primary forests have been harvested compelling the wild animals to come out of their natural habitations and move towards the cultivated areas and the human habitants in search of food and water. The continuous squeezing of their habitats has exposed them to starvation, unlawful killing and challenges to procreation.

The man has become the ruthless predator. He has become a species which is no longer in co-evolved balance with its environment. The ecology is like an enormous jigsaw puzzle⁸⁷, each organism of the biotic community has requirements of life which interlock with those of many others in the area. They, therefore, develop interrelationship and interdependence. Let me cite two illustrations in support of the contention: a) the yucca plant supplies food for the moth but is dependent on the moth for fertilization and perpetuation.⁸⁸ b) The green plants capture sun energy and combine it with chemical raw materials from soil, water and air. The food these plants produce support all the animal lives including decay organisms which return it to the soil for plants to use once more⁸⁹. Likewise, the man is also a part of the biosphere and depends on its continued functioning for his very existence and survival. One should not forget that a break down in any of the biospheric systems would imperil the human survival. The conservation of the ecology is not only for the sake of other organisms but is the part of the global need to preserve the biosphere as a habitable system for us and our progeny too.

According to a report,⁹⁰ if the world continues to remain in the grip of these quandaries, soon, owing to combined climate- carbon crisis alone more than 100 million people will die by 2030 and the global economic growth will be cut by 3.2% of GDP. 05 million deaths occur each year from air pollution, hunger and disease as a result of the climate change and the carbon- intensive economies, if not monitored, that toll is likely to

⁸⁵ Champ man, J.L and Reiss, M.J, Ecology- Principles and application , Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, p257

⁸⁶ Ibid,p257

⁸⁷ Champ man , J L and Reiss,M J, Ibid, p3

⁸⁸ Trevedi ,R.P, etal, International Encyclopedia of ecology and environment,vol.I:p13

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ A report commissioned by 20 countries ,Hindustan Times reporting, New Delhi, September 27,2012,p. 12



rise to 06 million a year by 2030⁹¹. In that case as Meadows et al, in their report (1972) say, “dooms day is not far off.” A similar warning issued by a Union of environmental scientists in 1992 to humanity, ‘Human beings and natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices...may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know.’⁹² The message is very clear; the humanity cannot afford to sleep over these messages any longer.

Since such hazardous situation is a creation of our own shortsightedness, irrationality, and the anthropocentric conduct. Therefore, the onus lies on us alone - individually and collectively – to restore and sustain the planet earth as a safe, secure and clean place to live in and to ensure a congenial environment for the survival, procreation and the growth of all the organisms on the earth.

As we know that a minuscule section of scientists, philosophers, policy makers and social activists’ world over is already engaged in sensitizing the people by spreading awareness and suggesting possible ways and means to stem the rot and salvage the damages. Likewise, religion with its moral authority could also act as a catalyst in restoring and maintaining the environmental purity, ecological balance, peace and harmony on the globe. One can not ignore the fact that millions and billions of people worlds over draw their inspiration and guidance from their respective religions. Even the politicians, media persons and people at large cite instances from the province of their faith in support of their contention. What is required is a revisit to the principles and canons of different religions in the context of the requirements of the post Modern civic Society.

Some scholars are against such efforts and argue that “Delving into cultural heritage with the objective to find inspiration for the present may result into wealth of beautiful imagery but its merit can hardly be claimed to be congruent with historical facts and reality”⁹³. It may be true in case of those religions which are just meditative vehicles.

⁹¹ The report conducted by humanitarian organization DARA, Ibid.

⁹² Eccles,B, op. cit.

⁹³ Nugteren,Albertina, The Conflict use of religion symbolism in Indian environmental Movements, Paper presented in xix World Congress of the international Association for the history of religion, held in Tokyo,2005



However, a close scrutiny of the Buddhist teachings and practices would show that it is not true in the case of Buddhism. Buddhism, as hammalawa Saddhatissa⁹⁴ asserts,” does not recognise a conflict between the religion and science as it is a practical spiritual application of the principles of science. He further says that since practical realisation rather than abstruse disputation is expected of the bhikkhu that is why probably theology did not develop in Buddhism. VK Thakur also of the same view “...it needs to be asserted that it was its (Buddhism) articulation of the worldly problems that was possibly the crucial factor for its immediate success and impressive reception”⁹⁵ To quote Rhys Davids, “Had the Buddha merely taught philosophy, he might have had a small following as Comte.”⁹⁶ No doubt, the issues of the modern world are very different from that of Buddha’s time, yet the basic teachings, principles and tenets of Buddhism are still as relevant and applicable as were during Buddha’s time. Buddhism is widely respected for its benevolent and humane moral values. It has all the ingredients of handling the dilemmas of the modern world squarely. The in depth study of the Buddhist literature brings to light the Buddhist concerns for an array of issues pertaining to the society, environment, ecosystem and their mutual interdependency (Patticcasamuppada). It shows that Buddha as far back as 2600 years could anticipate the degeneration initiated by deluded human behaviour and could also perceive that such behaviour, if not corrected, would ultimately put mankind into a serious quandary: the Existential Dilemma.

In the Buddhist literature there are numerous references and stories that highlight the Buddha’s ecological ethics that make relations between the man and the flora and fauna congenial, smooth and loving so that human and non- human beings could coexist happily without any fear and foe. Out of the total 550 stories of Jatakas, at least half of them (around 225) are having animals as their main characters. Around 70 species of animals have found place in these stories. Through these animal characters the wisdom, compassion and moral behaviour expected of mankind towards all living beings have been exhibited.

According to Buddha all the sentient beings feel and like happiness and likewise, feel and dislike pain, though the level of intensity and sensitivity varies. The Karniya Mata

⁹⁴ Saddhatissa, Hammalawa, Buddhist Ethics, Wisdom Publication, Boston, Massachusetts, P.17

⁹⁵ Thakur, V.K, Deforestation, Ecological Degradation and Buddhist Response in Early India: a Preliminary Inquiry, Proceedings of Indian History Congress 60th session , 1999, P.80

⁹⁶ Ibid



Sutta⁹⁷ speaks of radiating loving kindness to all types of beings. Both the human beings and the animals respond better to those who they feel are friendly. This is shown in the following stories. The Nandi Visala Jataka⁹⁸ which concerns a Bull who, only when the master stopped using harsh words to get him going, would pull 100 loaded carts to win his owner's bet. Once when the Buddha was away from monks, a wild elephant and a monkey attended on him⁹⁹. Even the mad Nalagiri¹⁰⁰, an elephant, was tamed by Buddha by his kind words and compassion. On another occasion Buddha told that the reason a monk was bitten by a snake and had died was that he failed to radiate loving kindness to the snake¹⁰¹. Through such stories Buddha has tried to preach that man and animals can live together in harmony if the man shows compassion and loving kindness towards them.

The Angutra Nikaya and the Vinya Pitak are full of compassion and kindness to animals and add a new dimension to relationship between human beings and animals by highlighting the theory of mutual dependency for their mutual survival and growth. The numerous stories in the Jatakas help us to appreciate and analyze the mutual interdependency in a wider and broader context of the relationship. In Sasa Jataka, a rabbit offers his body to a Brahmana for food, jumping into fire piled up by the rabbit himself. The Avadana kalpalata tells of an elephant who throws himself off a rock in the desert to rescue starving travelers. A lion and an elephant rescue some people from a dragon, sacrificing their lives. Likewise, there are several other stories which tell of human sacrificing their flesh to keep animals alive. In the Jataka Mala, the suvarna prabhas, and the Avadana Kalplata, a story goes how a Buddhist throws himself before a hungry tigress so that she may feed her cubs.¹⁰² During draught Bodhisattva would ensure that no wild animals go without water¹⁰³. In another story: once the Bodhisattva threw his leftover to feed fish and for that act of compassion he was saved from a disaster¹⁰⁴.

In the Buddhist cosmology, the animal occupies an important place in the categories of human, Gods and other forms of life. According to the doctrine of kamma

⁹⁷ Samyayutta Nikaya, vol iv, p 302

⁹⁸ Nandi-Visala Jataka, II, 191

⁹⁹ Dhamma Padda, 158

¹⁰⁰ Vinay II, 194 -96

¹⁰¹ Angutra Nikaya, II, 72-73

¹⁰² Jataka, II, 423

¹⁰³ Jataka II, 449-51

¹⁰⁴ Jataka, II, 423



and rebirth, an animal may take the same form, form of different animals or advance to human or Godly status in the next birth. In the Buddhist tradition Humans may reborn as animals and vice-a-versa depending on ones kamma. In one of the Jatakas¹⁰⁵ there is a story of a Brahamana who was condemned to 500 rebirths as a goat: once a Brahamana sacrificed a Goat as an offering to his deity. For this act of violence and disregard to life he was condemned to 500 rebirths as a Goat. In another story: once the Bodhisattva threw his leftover to feed fish and for that act of compassion he was saved from a disaster.

The tremendous emphasis on Ahimsa (non violence) is yet another manifestation of the Buddhist attempt to have a humanistic attitude towards animals. Non violence or ahimsa is the central theme of the Buddhist philosophy which means not to cause any discomfort or injury to other living beings in thoughts, words and deeds. The various Jataka stories contain explicit preachings on the theme of Ahimsa. Not to injure or harm living beings is the first precept in the Buddhism (panatipata). In Vinya Pitak, the Buddha proclaims, "A monk who has received ordination ought not intentionally to destroy the life of any living being down to a worm or an ant¹⁰⁶." The Buddhist ethical conduct (Sila) is structured in vast conception of universal love and compassion for all living beings and the Buddha's concept of Ahimsa is the key component of the Sila (Sil). According to Buddhism the destruction of or injury to man, animal and plant involves sin. The Buddha puts the profession of butcher, hunter, fowler, and fisherman in the category of violent occupations liable to get heavy punishment. A Buddhist must not hate any being and should not kill a living creature even in thought¹⁰⁷

However, the Buddhist principle of Ahimsa is not without contradictions. Buddha himself died of meat eating as claimed by some scholars though refuted by others. It is a matter of debate and without going into the controversy it might certainly be deduced that the Buddhist text and actions of the Buddhist monks have sought to discourage the tendency of meat eating. . The Mahayana Sutras unmistakably condemn meat eating. The Surangama Sutta tells us that if we eat meat (flesh) of living creatures we are destroying the seeds of compassion. The Buddha was very critical of animal sacrifice too. The sacrifice of animals in order to earn merit had posed a serious threat to the existing balance

¹⁰⁵ Jataka Tale XVIII, trans. ,Francis, H.T and Thomas.E,J,Cambridge University Press, 1916

¹⁰⁶ Mahavagga, I.78 in Vinay Text ,trans,Rhys Davids,T.W,Oldenberg , Motilal Banarasi Das, 1974; Sacred Books of the East XVII, 30;XX 128

¹⁰⁷ Hardayal The Bodhisattva doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature, London: Kegan Paul 1931,197



between the human and the non human beings. The Buddhist response in the form of nonviolence emerged as a major savior of all kinds of life. The Jataka stories are full of instances where the sacrifice of living creatures are forbidden. In the Kutadanta Sutta there is a reference of a sacrifice that Buddha himself performed for a king in the past life. In this ceremony no animal was killed, no tree was felled to be used as sacrificial post, no forced labour was used as help and the offering items were products like butter and honey. The Buddha, it shows, did not just condemn the animal sacrifice but also presented an alternate model of performing the sacrifice.

The Buddha has shown his concern over disappearing species. A verse in the Khuddaka Patha runs as: 'come back o tiger to the wood, let it not be leveled with plain. For without you the axe will lay it low, you without it forever homeless go¹⁰⁸.' It suggests that the Buddha could anticipate the danger of gradual disappearance of various species. He, therefore, advises to protect the animals and their habitats and not to resort to deforestation.

The Buddha's concern not to destroy life was not limited to men and animals rather it goes up to the plant life. In the Vinaya Pitak¹⁰⁹ there is a reference that the monks stopped travelling in vass (rainy season) because it is felt that by doing so they crush the green herbs, they hurt vegetable life and destroy the life of many small living beings. Buddha's love for flora is evident from the fact that the nature has been a witness to every important event, right from birth to the maha parinibbana, concerning Buddha's life. He was born in the forest of Lumbini under Sal tree; left royal house and changed his robe on the bank of Rohini river saying goodbye to his horse, Kankak, and sarthi, Channa; meditated under banyan tree and ate milk rice (Kashira) offered by Sujata and took bath in Naranjara river; attained Buddhahood under bodhi tree; delivered first sermon at Sarnath in deer park; and attained Mahaparinibbana at Kushinara in sal grove. For Buddha the perfect man is one who, 'abstains from causing injury to seed life and plant life.'¹¹⁰

The Buddha has been well aware of the need of conserving ecology. That is the reason that the constructions of parks and pleasure groves for public use have been identified in the Buddhist traditions as an important source for gaining merit.¹¹¹ The

¹⁰⁸ Khuddakapatha, London pali text of Chatsumarn, Kabil Singh, Buddhist view on nature, Engaged Buddhism, ed., Arnold Kotler, Prallax Press, Barkley, p.65

¹⁰⁹ Mahavagga in Vinaya Text, III, I.I

¹¹⁰ The Book of Gradual Sayings, II, 222; Pacciyas 10 and 11

¹¹¹ The Jatakas, vol.I, ed by Fousboll, 7 vols, London, 1977-97



Buddha also laid down certain rules for conservation of water and told to his disciples to refrain themselves to contaminate the resources of water. Not only that he also laid down instructions for construction of toilets and water wells.

In short, in the Buddhist literature there are frequent references to various preventive measures to keep the environment clean by avoiding the contamination of water; denuding the earth's surface by indiscriminate felling of trees; and open disposal of leftovers; other wastes; etc. We also find suggestions for and illustrations of corrective actions to ensure safe and secure abode as well as to ensure enough food and water for all living beings including the micro-organisms. The Buddhism repeatedly emphasizes that ecological balance should be preserved and man should follow the principle of live and let live. The flora and fauna have as much right to live as human beings. If we put together the Buddhist tenets, principles, ethical system, practices and concerns, we could clearly perceive that the Buddhist philosophy has been earth-centric and eco-centric as against human-centric and anthropocentric nature of the post modern civic social order. In nutshell the planet earth and its bounties are to be shared by all living beings rather than monopolized by human beings alone.

As opposed to the modern economics, the Buddhist economics is based on the renewable resources. According to Buddhism, limitless growth and consumption are unsustainable and potentially disastrous. The Buddha's approach to economics was that growth is good only to the point of sufficiency. For a Buddhist material satisfaction merely provides a starting point for the pursuit of higher goals. In Buddhism spiritual growth and material wellbeing are not enemies but natural allies. A Buddhist concept of economic development avoids gigantism. The Buddhist economy, as sarao¹¹² says, is based on the happiness and welfare of the maximum number of people and the Buddhist approach to economics makes a meaningful distinguish between misery, sufficiency and glut.

The Buddhist doctrines aim at eliminating sorrow (dukha) from the life of the individuals as well as from the society as a whole. Like a seasoned physician the Buddha begins with the identification and diagnosis of the ailment – the Dukha. Once the factors causing Dukha are identified, Buddha proceeds to provide the prescription. He identifies greed (lobh), hatred (dwesh) and illusion (moha) as the root causes of all the ills and miseries of the society and its constituents. All immoral actions spring up from greed, hatred and craving. According to a verse of the Dhammapada, 'there is no fire like lust, no

¹¹² Sarao, K,T,S ,Buddhism and Consumer ethics,A paper presented in a SSARC writers conference, Buddha as a peace maker in post modern saarc ,held in New Delhi, 2009



grip like hate, there is no net like delusion, no river like craving¹¹³.' In the Digha Nikaya a detailed description is found about how happy the human being has been prior to his behaviour becoming greed, hatred and illusion oriented. If the greed, hatred and illusion are controlled and monitored, the life on the planet earth would be safe, secure, peaceful, harmonious and progressive. Universal love (Metta), Compassion (Karuna), M Sympathetic Joy (Mudita), and Equanimity (Upekkha), the four sentiments of Buddhism, are beyond the bounds of time, space or class. The application of these could break all the barriers of caste, colour and creed responsible for unnatural division of society. These cardinal tenets of Buddhism could serve as an antidote to human greed, hatred and illusion. The application of the Buddhist ethical system would enable us in the endeavour to building up healthy, compassionate and biosphere friendly society.

So it is fairly clear from the above discussion that the Buddhism carries all the insights and applicable solutions to the quandaries of the post modern civic society. The socially engaged Buddhist individuals and groups are doing commendable work in their respective areas of operation by addressing the area specific as well as some global issues related to world peace, global environment, and terrorism. However, the quantum of their efforts is not in proportion to the size and strength of the lurking demon confronting the humanity. The need of the day is that all the sensitized forces - scientists, artists, philosophers, Government Agencies, NGOs, religious preachers and individuals or group of individuals – should act quickly and unitedly in a coordinated manner to free the post modern civic society from the agonizing quandaries C.Kabil Singh¹¹⁴ rightly observes “If we cannot hand over a better world to future generation, it is only fair that they have at least as green a world to live in as we do.” And according to Thich Nhat Hanh, “These mindfulness based practices are the right medicine for our time” Thus, the Buddhist doctrines and practices could serve as a spring board for framing policies and action plans with the focus on inter and intra generational equity and earth centric development.

The Buddhist tenets, directions and practices not only provide the basic prescriptions to treat the agonizing quandaries of the post modern civic society but also serve as a guide for promoting a humane, just, healthy and harmonious globe culture and social order.

¹¹³ Dhammapada, Verse 251

¹¹⁴ Chatsumarn, Kabil Singh, op. cit , P144



In the end I would like to conclude my discussion with the Master's teaching; "Victory creates hatred, defeat creates suffering, the wise one never desires victory or defeat. Anger creates anger. He who kills would be killed...revenge can be overcome by abandoning revenge." Buddhism means: all pervasive universal Compassion, tolerance, nonviolence, humanism, and enlightenment. An honest commitment to these guiding principles would ensure the meaningful solution to the quandaries of post modern society.



STRESS AND STRAIN WITHIN MYANMAR SANGHA UNDER COLONIALISM

Dr Myo Myint

Former DG (Religious Affairs)

Since the introduction of Theravada Buddhism to Myanmar in the eleventh century, the king, the sangha and the people had harmonious and working relationship for perpetuation, promotion and propagation of Buddhist teachings. The kings as promotor and guardian of Buddhism provided necessities of life, built pagodas and monasteries and held Buddhist ceremonies. Through the administration of Thathanabaing (Sangharaja) the sangha was kept under royal control. When the sangha was secular and lax in discipline, the king initiated sasana reforms. Sangha as a field of merits for layman studied Buddhist scriptures, practised meditation and transmit Dhamma to the people to make them a good member of the society. Since the king and the people supported the Sangha by providing food, medicine, robes and monasteries the monks could pursue their spiritual works without worries. There was no sharp separation of religion and government. (Smith, 1965: 31).

Sangha organization was headed by a Thathanabaing or Primate who was the highest authority in Sangha affairs. With the help of senior Sayadaws Thathanabaing settled monk's disputes and maintained disciplines (Vinaya) and unity among the Sangha. However, concern for national survival is always linked with the state of sasana among the people. (Maung Maung, 1980: xp). For nine centuries continuity, stability and security in Myanmar were maintained by co-operation among the king, Sangha and laity. For Myanmar people Buddhism has been a great source of happiness, peace and culture. Armed with Buddhist values of extreme patience, take life as it comes' attitude, concept of karma and impermanence, Myanmar people pass through difficult times in their history.

This traditional and harmonious society was shattered by the impact of British colonialism. British annexed Myanmar in three stages by fighting First Anglo-Myanmar war (1826), Second Anglo-Myanmar War (1852), and Third Anglo-Myanmar War (1885). Colonial period in Southeast Asia history brought about profound changes in countries of Southeast Asia. Under the impact of colonial economy 'Plural Society' developed with its concomitant changes in economy, society and politics. British, Indian, and Myanmar lived side by side with each other without any attachment except pursuing one's economic interest. Religion was one aspect of the society which was greatly disturbed by colonial policy of the British who were non-Buddhist and were only interested in exploiting natural resources for their own benefit. In order to run the colonial economy they wanted to



preserve law and order by introducing colonial administration in Myanmar. As they found out later that it was not that easy to rule the country with different cultural perceptions and religion. It was more so for Myanmar who attained high cultural achievement and were proud of their religion and cherished their Buddhist way of life.

For Myanmar people introduction of colonial policy to their country was truly traumatic. It was a great blow to their pride and honour and went through new experience which they had never gone through before. With this strong sense of national identification Myanmar could not come to terms with colonial rule in their hearts. Both the people and Sangha were greatly concerned that without their king Buddhism would decline under alien rule and colonial rule constituted a danger to their religion. King Mindon (1852-1878) who ruled upper Myanmar clearly showed to the people of Myanmar that only under native Buddhist king, Buddhism could prosper. He convened the Fifth Buddhist Council, inscribed Tipitaka Texts on 729 stone tablets and donated large amount of money to the Sangha. In other words he sent the message to the people of Myanmar that Buddhism would be in danger under non-Buddhist ruler. (Win Maung, 1987:133-136). This fear was well justified when the British tried to handle the institution of Thathanabaing.

When the British annexed Myanmar kingdom in 1886, they were in dilemma. They found that Thathanabaing was in place as head of Sangha organization managing the affairs of the Sangha. Although they recognized Taungdaw Thathanabaing they refused to support his decisions with authority. Such support was contrary to their policy of religious neutrality which they learnt from experience in India. When Taungdaw Thathananaing passed away in 1895, it created a crisis for British policy makers. The colonial government had to appoint a new Thathanabaing as Myanmar king did in the past or left the position vacant. The British hesitation to appoint a new Thathanabaing caused suspicion and uncertainty among the people and the Sangha. It took nearly nine years for the British to recognize the new Thathanabaing. Within these nine years interval tensions and divisions exaoerbated within the Sangha.

Even before the recognition of new Thathanabaing by the British the situation within Myanmar sangha was in bad shape. As a result of second Anglo-Myanmar War of 1852 lower Myanmar fell under British rule. Consequently, the king and Thathanabaing lost influence over Myanmar Sangha in lower Myanmar. In 1852 Dwaya sect was founded by Oakpo Sayadaw. This sect was again divided into Kan and Dwaya Sect. In Upper Myanmar King Mindon founded Shwegyin sect which maintained independent Nikaya from Thudama Sect. Thus, territorial division caused great dissension among Myanmar



Sangha and deepened sectarian tendencies. Moreover, after British annexation of lower Myanmar in 1852, most of the abbots of monasteries migrated en masse to upper Myanmar where Buddhism was flourishing under king Mindon. The monasteries in lower Myanmar were deserted and left to decay.

British government urged the sangha in upper Myanmar to elect a new Thathanabaing among themselves and they would recognize the new Thathanabaing. This procedure for appointing a new Thathanabaing was irregular and unprecedented. Normination by the king rather than election by the sangha was the norm for appointment of new Thathanabaing. The British were not in a position to appoint Thathanabaing by virtue of being non-Buddhist. Thathanabaing must be well versed in Buddhist scriptures, capable of promoting Buddha sasana and must have a high standard of morality. The king usually appointed his former teacher who was highly respected for his erudition. His power was supreme in the affairs of the religion and also spilled over into the realm of politics in the kingdom (Myo Myint, 1987). Without playing the role of promoter and guardian of religion the British government had no legitimacy to appoint the Thathanabaing. The British colonial order was moral order without meaning for Myanmar sangha. The British government seemed to be worried that the institution of Thathanabaing with solid support of the sangha and people would likely to pose a threat to the British administration. (Thein Swe Oo, 1984:34)

The election for new Thathanabaing took place in Mandalay on 22 October 1901. The sayadaws from monasteries in Mandalay turned out to vote for the election of new Thathanabaing. Out of thirty three candidates for Thathanabaingship Moda Sayadaw got the majority vote and Taunggwin sayadaw got the second largest vote in the election. The British government was still undecisive and hesitant while sounding out the opinions of other sayadaws. Meanwhile rival candidates sayadaws requested the British government to appoint them as Thathanabaing. The elected Moda sayadaw was in advanced age that he passed away six months after the election. Instead of holding a new election the British government recognized the second successful candidate Taunggwin sayadaw as new Thathanabaing in 1903.

Although a new Thathanabaing was elected, there were flaws in the election. The voters were mostly from sangha in Mandalay and the result did not represent the consent of all sangha in upper Myanmar. Representatives from sangha in lower Myanmar were entirely left out in electing a new Thathanabaing. The opinion of sayadaw from upper Myanmar was consulted only after the election. Therefore, the authority of new Thathanabaing was seriously compromised with disastrous consequences.



Once the new Thathanabaing was elected, the British religious policy again showed its weakness and ambivalence by drastically reduced the power of Thathanabaing. Firstly, the authority of Thathanabaing did not cover the whole of Myanmar, and it only confined to upper Myanmar. Only by the demands of nationalist organizations and the sangha the Thathanabaing's authority was later extended over lower Myanmar. Secondly, the exercise of the Thathanabaing authority must not contradict the criminal law and British law of justice. If Thathanabaing broke the agreement in sanad he could be removed from his office. These drastic curtailments of the power of the Thathanabaing reduced his influence over the sangha with adverse consequences. At the same time British wanted to exercise their control over Myanmar sangha through the administration of Thathanabaing. They especially wanted cooperation of the sangha in implementing their education policy, but to no avail. When the nationalist tide was rising Thathanabaing had to issue order to sangha not to participate in political activities and refrain from any action against the law. The image of Thathanabaing was thus further tarnished in the eyes of sangha who thought that Thathanabaing was acting according to dictates of British authority. There appeared rival sangha organization called a General Council of Sangha Samaggi (GCSS) which defied the order of Thathanabaing and actively agitated for Home Rule.

Another area which led to confrontation between the British authorities and the sangha was in the field of monk's education. Studies of scriptures or Tipitaka (Pariyatti) and practice of meditation (Patipatti) were the two main duties of sangha according to Buddhist teachings. It was accepted by all sangha that studies of scriptures (Pariyatti) is the foundation of Buddha sasana. Studies of scriptures enable the sangha to practice meditation correctly. Only after practicing meditation the monk can realize the truth or final liberation (Pativeda). To use Buddhist metaphor Pariyatti (studies of scriptures) is like embankment of a pond which holds the water inside. The water is compared to Patipatti meditation and lotus in the water is taken as Pativeda (realization of truth).

Myanmar had a long tradition of Pali scholarship and had produced generation of monk scholars who compiled famous Pali grammar and works on Pali literature. As a promotor of Patiyatti sasana the king held Pali examination, usually oral recitation, with pomp ceremony. The successful candidates were lavishly rewarded and were offered jobs in the royal service as layman. But the introduction of British colonial rule had disrupted the holding of Pali examinations for nine years until 1894. Later the British realized that by holding Pali examinations they could to a certain extent console Buddhist sangha and laymen who were already upset with the British handling of Thathanabaing appointment. In addition the British wanted to give the impression that they were promoting the cause of



Buddhism like Myanmar King. The British might also think that once the monks were occupied with examinations and observe Vinaya rules they found little time to pay attention to secular affairs including politics.

Because of the persistent request by Sayadaws and laymen, the British finally resumed holding Pali examinations under their own aegis. From prescribing curriculum to issuing examination results, British Education Department handled the whole process of Pali examinations except the supervision of the examinations. The Education Department asked the Thathanabaing to nominate the monks who could supervise the examinations. By exercising tight control over Pali examinations British colonial government did not allow any native institution to develop freely including monk's education. (Nyunt Nyunt Wai, 96). The Education Department tried to introduce secular subjects like English, Geography and Mathematics in the curriculum of Pali examinations. In the opinion of sayadaw this would divert the attention of the monk students from studying canonical texts and monks would likely to leave the order. Owing to the strong protests of sayadaws the scheme was not implemented. The initial enthusiasm of the monks for government Pali examinations waned later because of lesser reward for the successful candidates and the alternative Pali examinations were held by private lay and monk religious organizations throughout the country. (Thein Swe Oo, 1994).

One significant feature of monk's education during colonial period was the holding of monk's examination by private religious organizations in parallel with government examinations. Each religious organization holds Pali and Vinaya examination at their locality and awarded certificates and donated money. Those monks who did not wish to sit for government Pali examination could sit for Pali examination held nationwide by General Council of Sangha Samaggi (United Sangha Organization) which boycotted British government examination.

In order to contribute to flourishing of Pariyatti sasana (Study of Scriptures) different sects and sayadaws hold private Pali and Vinaya examinations. Some of the most famous Pali examinations during the colonial period were Molemein (Mawlamyaing) Sangha Samaggi Vinaya Oral Examination, Pariyatti Pali Examination by Thudama Nyaungdone District Organization, Pali examinations held by Sangha Central Organization of Pyawbwe, Vinaya examination, Yamethin, Thayarwaddy U Neyya Pali examination, Vinaya examination held by Shwegyin Sect, Pali examination by Weluwun Sect and Pali examination by Dwaya Sect. Other famous associations which tried hard to provide Pariyatti sasana were Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), Mawlamyaningmyo Pariyatti Sadhamapala, Myaung District, Sagaing Division, Pariyatti Sasana Nuggha



Association, Bago Vinaya Tagon Pariyatti Puja Nuggha Association, and Suvanabumi Pariyatti Sasanahita Association. All these holding of non-governmental Pali and Vinaya examinations show that in the absence of royal patronage sayadaws from different sects and laity wanted to keep Pariyatti sasana alive.

Two famous Pali examinations which date back to colonial period and still survive today are examination of Cetiyingana Pariyatti Dhamanuggaha .Association, established in 1894, Yangon and Pali examination of Pariyatti Sasanahita Association, established in 1898, Mandalay. These two associations had already held centennial celebration. They are so difficult and of high academic standard that very few percentage of monk candidates passed the examinations. The monks who passed these two prestigious examinations are highly respected by other monks and they are offered lecturership at the famous Pariyatti monasteries. The two religious associations donated monthly rice and other foodstuff to lecturer sayadaws.

Despite lack of government support, outstanding scholarly works such as important treatises on Abhidama (Buddhist Philosophy) and meditation were compiled by famous sayadaws. Famous Ledi sayadaw compiled many scholarly works on Buddhism and he was offered D.Litt by University of Yangon. Another remarkable ex-monk hermit U Khanti carried out missionary works especially extensive renovation of Mandalay Hill and other religious buildings throughout the country. Both laymen and monks realized that they must make all-out effort to support Buddhism and to preserve their way of Buddhist life challenged by Christian missionaries and western education.

Monasteries were the backbone of traditional Myanmar education. From the king to the scribe Myanmar boys got their education at the monastery combined with basic knowledge of Buddhism. They were training and recruiting ground for royal administration. Because of monastic education Myanmar has high literacy rate in the world. Since the western education in colonial Myanmar was avenue to social mobility in British administration the important role of monastic schools declined. British government tried to revive the monastic schools with a view to integrate them with government education system. They believed that moral education of monastic school would contribute to decrease in crime rate. Smith estimated that the total number of unregistered monastic schools in Myanmar were over 16000. (Smith, 1965) The monks strongly opposed interference of British authority in their monastic schools. Moreover, Sangha Samaggi Organization had opened their own national schools. The monks were also against teaching of Christianity to Buddhist students in government and lay schools.



The rise of Myanmar nationalism drew its inspiration from Theravada Buddhism. Promotion of nationality, language and religion are closely intertwined and border lines among these concepts were not clearcut. Cry for defence of Buddhism could easily ignite the whole country. Mobility of the people and the influence of newspaper contributed to spreading of nationalist idea quickly. Therefore, it was no wonder that the first nationalist organization, Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) founded in 1906 started with Buddhist platform which was permissible only under the circumstances of the time. Only when the organization got strong popular support it agitated for political demands to the British government (YMBA centenary volume, 2006).

There are many basic factors strongly favourable to the rise of Myanmar nationalism. Theravada Buddhism was common religion which united Myanmar society since eleventh century of Bagan period. Myanmar history, culture, music, art, language and literature are rooted in Theravada Buddhism. This strong sense of national identification based on Buddhism had tremendous influence on nationalist struggle against the British. Nine centuries of independent kingdom conquering neighbouring countries was looked back with national pride by Myanmar. Various aspects of British colonial policy were considered assault on Myanmar cultural and national identity and they were believed to be eroding Myanmar Buddhist way of life. Anti British sentiment became an important component of Myanmar nationalism. Myanmar intellectuals who got western education first awakened to work for the good of the country within the legal framework of British colonial rule. Young Men's Buddhist Association founded in 1906 was the first fruit of their labour. Myanmar politics started with YMBA, so they believed. Myanmar monks who were influential over laity were not immune to nationalist fever either.

The first round of confrontation between the nationalist and the British government took place on the issue of controversial 'Shoe Question'. It was the Buddhist custom to take off shoe and slippers when one enters the precincts of pagoda as a token of respect. Myanmar felt insulted whenever foreigners wore shoes on pagoda platform. The problem started when Governor Craddock wore shoes on platform of Shwemawdaw Pagoda in Bago. A leading member of YMBA member U Thein Maung banned wearing of shoes by foreigners on the pagoda platform of Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pye. The whole country supported banning of footwear on the platform of the pagoda. The British government refused to budge on this issue. It caused an uproar in the country demanding the British government to conform to Buddhist custom and violation of which amounted to insult to Buddhism. This is the first time nationalist fury reached high pitch. Without yielding to nationalist demand the British government saved its face by way of saying that it was up to



the Pagoda Trustee to lay down rules for the Pagoda. Myanmar people regarded the 'Shoe Question' as a first victory for nationalist. The shoe question taught a lesson to the nationalist that a strong and united nationalist effort could overcome obstacles in nationalist struggle. It is paradoxical to note that one of the causes for Myanmar loss of independence was as a result of king's refusal to allow diplomats to wear shoes in the palace. This shoe question again became an important issue which led to nationalist struggle. (Khing Maung Nyunt, 2004).

British policies continued to provoke a storm of protest from the sangha and the public when the government considered to give administrative reforms to India. In Montagu Chams ford report and Craddock Scheme, Myanmar was being classed as backward and inferior to other people. At this stage because of British arrogance of power bolt the public and sangha were thoroughly awakened to take up an active nationalist struggle.

The entry of sangha into politics was signaled by U Ottama call for action against the British government. U Ottama was a monk of strong character with international experience. He was greatly impressed with Mahatama Gandhi's method of non-violence and passive resistance. The power of his oratory won over many supporters within the sangha and public. His match less dedication and sacrifice boosted the morale of nationalist monks and laymen alike. The first sangha organization Sangha Sammaggi Association was the brainchild of U Ottama. His speeches and writings were inspiring, educational, provocative and restored self-confidence and pride to Myanmar people. (Thakhin Lwin, 1967). He exposed the emptiness and corruption of British promises for administrative reforms. He bitterly attacked Dyarchy system of government and demanded Home Rule instead. He encouraged the women to participate in politics and initiated the formation of women's associations. He gave public lectures and speeches wherever he went around the country. He aimed at freeing the Myanmar people from subservience to the British dispelling fear of colonial power from public mind. He told his readers not to fear government officers who were no more than public servants before whom no one should quake. (Mendelson, 1965: 203) U Ottama said. "When the country fell under the domination of other people, the people were just slaves and the religion which they professed was therefore slave sasana. Only when the contry was free from slavery, sasana could be flourished. Therefore, the sangha must exert great effort to fight for independence by forming Sangha Samaggi Association (Kyaw Swe, 1988). Speeches of U Ottama were considered seditious and dangerous to public law and order by the British government. U Uttama was in prison many times between 1924 to 1938, imprisonment of the sangha by the British colonial government 1924 to 1938. Imprisonment of the sangha by the British



colonial government was considered by Myanmar Buddhist as an insult to their religion and the whole country again was in a state of political ferment.

More and more sangha involvement in politics such as boycott of election, anti-tax campaign and non-cooperation movement were matter of great concern to the British government. Therefore, they requested Thathanabaing to issue order to the sangha not to participate in politics as it was against Vinaya rules. Monks from Sangha Samaggi Organization disobeyed the order of Thathanabaing as he was being used by British government as instrument of British religious policy.

Sangha grievances against the British government accumulated since the British annexation of Myanmar in 1886. Introduction of western education deprived Myanmar sangha of important role in the society. Myanmar sangha thought that alien British government had been supporting the Christian missionaries who enjoyed the benefits derived from taxes of the people. Religious lands were confiscated by the British government and distributed to the individuals with land-lease grant. The sangha did not get whole-hearted material support from the British government as they used to get under royal government. When the British government put the monks in prison, the monks had no right to wear the robes and to observe Sabbath. This loss of monk's right was a sore point between Myanmar sangha and British. Above all, participation of Myanmar monks in politics was the result of the weakness of ecclesiastical organization led by Thathanabaing which led to laxity of discipline and lack of unity of sangha.

From the point of view of U Ottama and monks who participated in politics participation in politics was not against Vinaya. It could be done within Vinaya rules. They reasoned that even the Buddha himself intervened in affairs of the state and mediated the dispute between the two countries. So were Myanmar monks in history who went on diplomatic mission. Sasana affairs did not operate by itself alone. It depends on national affairs and economy. (Kyaw Swe, 1988). According to U Ottama, "Sangha should not ignore the suffering of the people while they concentrated single-mindedly on their spiritual benefit. The state of sasana-linked with the well-being of the faithful and the sangha-Bhodisetteva must lead the people in distress." (Thakin Lwin, 1967).

In 1919 Sangha Samaggi Association appeared in the midst of political storm created by the arrest of U Ottama and nation-wide political unrest. In 1921 Sangha Samaggi headquarters, upper Myanmar, came into existence in Mandalay. The two big associations were united in 1923 as one organization called General Council of Sangha Samaggi (GCSS) which had 700 branches throughout the country. General Council of Sangha Samaggi became the most powerful single organization in Myanmar from 1924



onwards, even to the extent of appointing and removing Presidents of General Council of Burmese Association, calling its conferences and controlling its activities. (Maung Maung, 1980). To awaken nationalism in villages, dhamakatika, political speakers or instructors of GCSS, went around the countryside and organized Wunthanu Athin (patriotic association). They also trained local leaders in political agitation. These grass-roots associations under the combined leadership of GCBA and GCSS became powerful political force which supported anti-cooperation and boycott of British administrative policy. Instead of resorting to armed struggle Sangha waged non-violent resistance against the British by organizing and mobilizing the people.

Sangha and Sangha Samaggi Association had participated in political crises either directly or indirectly. The crises in which Sangha were involved were as follows:

- The student leaders of 1920 University Strike enlisted the support of the Sangha. Shwegyinmonastery in Bahan, Yangon, became student headquarters for strike.
- In 1920 at the eighth annual conference of YMBA five Sayadaws were appointed as representatives in Executive Council.
- When the student decided to establish national schools after the strike, Sangha played a leading role in opening national schools.
- Under GCBA leadership diarchy form of government given by the British was boycotted by Sangha. Sangha decided that British scheme had no substance in administrative reform.
- When Sangha were in prison, the monks demanded the prison authorities to allow them to wear the robe and observe Sabbath.
- One famous Sayadaw named U Wisara who was a frontline leader of Sangha Samaggi Council was repeatedly arrested for making political speeches. He was disrobed and was sent to solitary confinement. U Wisara went on strike for 166 days and passed away in 1929. The death of U Wisara provoked a public outcry throughout the country and nationalist tide reached a high water mark. He became a martyre in Myanmar nationalist movement.
- All these political crises show Sangha complete domination of nationalist movement in the 1920s.
- Under the impact of world economic depression in 1930 the peasants were suffering from crushing burden. Being deprived of their subsistence, the peasants under Saya San leadership fought against the British for two years. In this upheaval the British were of opinion that the speeches of U Ottama and



support of Soe Thein radical wing of GCBA were causes of rebellion and Sangha Samaggi Association secretly supported the rebellion.

When the British government separated Myanmar from India, a storm of protest came from the Sangha and people with disappointment and anger. Because of pressure from Sangha Samaggi Council GCBA protested the separation.

The role of Sangha in nationalist struggle faded away as they tried to find candidates to contest the election to be held under new constitution of 1935. That meant Sangha were continuing the nationalist struggle by cooperation with the British. The Sangha seemed to outlive its usefulness since the people were not satisfied with any political concession short of independence.

While the historical circumstances forced the Sangha to lead the early stage of nationalist struggle, they were not the right leaders to bring the revolution to a successful conclusion. Limited by traditional world view the sangha could not map out successful strategy to carry out the revolution. They were divided among themselves and sometimes they were manipulated by politicians. Despite the nationalist struggle under Sangha leadership for more than a decade the foundation of British rule in Myanmar was not shaken enough forcing them to quit the country. Moreover, they could not unite all the social classes into revolutionary force to undermine the colonial regime. This historic mission was fallen upon the shoulders of young Thakin intellectuals with international outlook and political ideology who fought the national struggle until independence was achieved in 1948.

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BODH GAYA – SPIRITUAL HUB OF ASIA

Bhante S. Dhammika (Australia)

India, together with Egypt, China, Mesopotamia and Greece was one of the great centres of human civilization. Indo-China and Indonesia are both named because their cultures were profoundly influenced by India but other regions such as Central Asia, China, Korea and Japan felt India's influence too. Indian culture was spread mainly by merchants and diplomats. But perhaps the single most important factor in this spread was Buddhism. And of all the locations Indian cultural and religious ideas emanated from was, the most important was remarkably, a small village in the north-east Ganges-Yamuna Valley named Uruvela, now popularly known as Buddha Gaya. The Buddha's experience at Uruvela not only resulted in the location changing its name to Buddha Gaya; it has also meant that this otherwise obscure village has been the focus of attention for millions of pilgrims for over two millennia. It became very early, and remains even today, the most important place of Buddhist pilgrimage. For well over millennia and a half years a two-way communication existed between this village and most of the regions of Asia. Pilgrims from all these regions came to Buddha Gaya and took home with them ideas, relics, works of art, books and even architectural all of which had an influence on the cultures to which they came. These pilgrims brought with them news of Buddhism in far off lands which stimulated Indian monks to travel abroad.

In ancient times, there were several approaches to Buddha Gaya. Pilgrims coming from the west could go overland from Benares, taking the same road that the Buddha took in the first year after his enlightenment. The other way was to sail further down the Ganges to Pataliputra and then take the road south to Gaya, or alternatively, the slightly longer road that passed through Nalanda, Rajagaha and Kurkihar. Pilgrims from Bengal or Orissa would sail up the Ganges or take the road that linked Magadha to Tamralipti. These approaches were an integral part of the great road system that connected the towns and cities of the Ganges valley. There were three main routes in this system - the northern which paralleled the Himalayan foothills and connected Ahicchatra, Sravasti and Saketa to Benares; the central which followed the Ganges and passed through Hastinapura, Sankasya and Kanyakubja to Prayaga; and the southern which followed the Yamuna, passed Kausambi and joined the central route at Prayaga. A branch of the northern route went from Sravasti, through Kapilavatthu, Kusinara and Vesali to Pataliputra. Pilgrims from Kashmir, Bactria and beyond followed the great trunk road that started at Taksila and ran



to Hastinapura where it joined the northern route. Few records of pilgrims from these regions have survived.

We have records of a monk named Viradeva from Bactria who visited Bodh Gaya twice, once as a young man, and again many years later when he was appointed head of the great monastery at Nalanda (1) The Chinese pilgrim I Tsing mentions a monk from Samarkand who came to Bodh Gaya, where he burned lamps for seven days and set up statues of the Buddha and Avalokitesvara at the foot of the Bodhi Tree (2). Sindh was a predominantly Buddhist region until the Arab invasion in the 8th century. The earliest record of pilgrims from this region coming to Bodh Gaya is an inscription thought to date from the reign of King Gopala II (950-970) (3). From Sindh there were three ways to the Ganges valley, one starting at Roruka and another at Sibipura, which both converged at Sairisaka from where it ran to Indraprastha and Mathura. Another possibility was to go from Patala to Gujarat, and then take the main road to the north through Ujjayini and Vidisa. The southern end of this road passed Nasikya and Ajanta, and was the main route for pilgrims coming from Deccan and the cities on the northwestern seaboard. Pilgrims from the Tamil country and Andhra could go either by foot or ship up the east coast to Tamralipti. No evidence of visits by South Indian Buddhists have yet been found at Bodh Gaya, but pilgrims from Kerala and particularly from Kanchipuram are known to have visited Kurkihar in large numbers during the 10th and 11th centuries. It is inconceivable that they did not go the extra 16 miles to Bodh Gaya.(4)

Pilgrims from beyond India travelled on the international trade routes. Sri Lankans embarked from either Mahatittha or Jambukola and sailed up the coast to Tamralipti, sometimes stopping at Kanchipuram or Amaravati on the way. Going directly with a favorable breeze, the pilgrim could be in Tamralipti in as little as 14 days. The *Rasavahin's* mention of a four months journey from "the further shore" (i.e. the Indian coast opposite Sri Lanka) to Bodh Gaya must have applied to those who made the whole journey on foot (5). Hsuan Tsang was going to sail down the east coast of India to Sri Lanka until a South Indian monk advised him that it would be safer to go by foot to the Tamil country and then take a ship across the Palk Straits (6). Pilgrims from Sumatra and Java usually arrived at Tamralipti via South Indian ports, taking advantage of the large number of ships that sailed between the two regions. Others may have landed in south Indian ports. The king of Sumatra had built a great monastery at Nagapatanam in the 10th century and although this establishment was mainly for Indonesian monks studying in India, it was probably also used as a staging point for Indonesian pilgrims heading north.(7) During the 11th century, Acarya Dharmakirti of Sumatra, probably the greatest



Buddhist scholar South-east Asia ever produced, made a pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya, Lumbini and Kapilavatthu, although it is not known what route he took to India (8). Ships from Burma avoided the open sea because of the sudden storms in the Bay of Bengal, but as a consequence were often a prey to the notorious pirates that infested the Araccan coast. Pilgrims from Burma sailing up the Ganges to Bodh Gaya via Pataliputra must have broken their journey there to visit Uren's shrines. It was also possible for Burmese to go overland through Assam, but few seemed to use this particularly dangerous route.

According to the famous Kalyani inscription, a 13th century Burmese monk took advantage of the psychic powers he had developed in meditation to fly to Bodh Gaya each day and sweep the temple courtyard (9). While this story may not be true, it does reflect the intense desire that many Burmese had to visit the site of the Buddha's enlightenment. Chinese and Korean pilgrims had two choices, to go by ship through South-east Asia or overland through the mountains and deserts of Central Asia. This second route in particular posed numerous difficulties, some of which the monk Sung Yun described. "Along the road, the cold was very severe while the winds, driving snow and the pelting sand and grit were so bad that it was impossible to raise one's eyes without getting them filled." (10). A few Chinese pilgrims went by a third route, through Tibet and Nepal, a journey that was still a formidable undertaking well into the 20th century. The Korean monk Yuan Tai went this way to Bodh Gaya. On his return journey through Central Asia, he met another monk going to Bodh Gaya and decided to accompany him. After this second visit, he managed to return safely to his homeland.(11) The only Japanese known to have attempted a pilgrimage to India in ancient times was Prince Takaoka, who had been an heir to the throne before becoming a monk. In 866 AD, at the age of 70, he set sail from Guangzhou but was never heard of again. He is thought to have died somewhere in the Malay Peninsula before having reached his goal.(12) Vietnamese began going to India on pilgrimage soon after the introduction of Buddhism into their country in the 6th century. One of the earliest such records concerns two monks, Khuy-Sung Phap Su and Minh Vien, who took a ship to Sri Lanka, sailed up the west coast of India and then went from there by foot to the holy land. The two companions reached Bodh Gaya and then continued on to Rajagaha where poor Khuy-Sung died. He was only 25 years old.(13) According to *Shes-hya-kun-khyab*, the first Tibetan to go to Bodh Gaya was Akaramatisila who was sent to India by Srong-btsan-sgam-po, the then king of Tibet, to get a statue of Avalokitesvara. On the way back he stopped in Bodh Gaya to get leaves from the Bodhi tree and sand from the Naranjara River. The earliest evidence of pilgrims from Nepal coming to Bodh Gaya is a number of coins dating from the reign of the Nepalese King Pasupati (approximately 400 AD).(14) Most pilgrims travelled on foot or by bullock cart, except where it was possible



to ply the Ganges or the Yamuna. Monks slung their bowl and water pot over their shoulder and carried either an umbrella or staff. (15)

Senior monks from more wealthy monasteries travelled by palanquin, accompanied by an attendant with their belongings. (16) The travelling kit of Sri Lankan monks on pilgrimage within their own country would consist of a water strainer, needle and thread, a small jar of oil for massaging the feet, nail clipper, tinder and flint, and a pair of sandals with a case to put them in. (17) Those who went to India must have been similarly outfitted. Local guilds, philanthropists and kings sometimes built simple rest-houses along main roads which offered shelter, although little more, for pilgrims and traders. In his *Ratanavali* Nagarjuna encouraged King Gautamiputra to “establish rest houses in temples, towns and cities and set up water pots along lonely roads?” (18) If such rest houses were not available a pilgrim might have to go from door to door looking for someone who might take them in.

It was a little easier for monks. Wayside temples would take in travelling monks for three, or in some places five, days, after which they would have to move on. (19) But temples were not always hospitable, particularly if the monk seeking accommodation was from a rival sect or a foreign country. When the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang visited a monastery east of Benares named Aviddhakarna Vihara (Monastery of the Unpierced Ears) and was told an interesting story of why it was built and how it got its name. A group of monks from beyond India’s North-Western frontier were on pilgrimage but could find no monastery that would take them in. One day, the king happened to see them in the street and, recognizing that they were not Indians by the fact that their ears were unpierced, asked them why they were so ragged and thin. When they told him, he decided to build a monastery for the exclusive use of foreign monks. Indians, that is those with pierced ears, were not allowed to stay there and hence the monastery’s name.(20) There are known to have been several other monasteries for foreign monks travelling or studying in India, one at Bodh Gaya for Sri Lankans, one at Nalanda for Javanese and Sumatrans, and another east of Nalanda for Chinese.(21) This ‘Cheena Vihara’ had been built by King Sri Gupta and allotted 24 villages for its upkeep.(22) But even when monasteries were unavailable, lay people were usually happy to help travelling monks. In the *Sihalavatthupakarana* there is a story of seven Sri Lankan monks who arrived at Pataliputra on their way to Bodh Gaya. The daughter of a rich merchant saw them in the street and invited them into her home for a meal. On being told they were on their way to Bodh Gaya, she gave them golden flowers, incense and lamps to offer at the Bodhi Tree on her behalf. She also provided them with servants and a bullock cart for the final stage of their journey. (23)



In 1202 the Japanese monk Myoe Shonin (1173-1232) decided to undertake a pilgrimage to India. As part of his preparations for this seemingly impossibly difficult undertaking he actually tried to calculate the distance involved and the time it would take if he set out from Ch'ang-an, the Chinese capital. His calculations are to be found in *Dainihon shiryō* apparently in his own handwriting. He wrote: "I am unable to contain my affection and longing for India, the land where the Buddha was born, and so I have drawn up plans for the journey thither. Oh, how I wish I were there! If I walked 7 long *ri* a day, I could reach India in 1,130 days, arriving on the 20th day of the second month of the fourth year of my travels. And if I walked 5 *ri* a day, I could at long last arrive on the 10th day of the sixth month of the fifth year, a total of 1,600 days." (24)

Myoe was not making a complete stab in the dark; he had carefully studied Faxian and Xuanzang accounts of their pilgrimages to India and had at least some idea of what was involved. Nevertheless, his calculations were highly unrealistic and as it happened he never even set out on this would-be journey. But what determination he had and what ingenuity!

For safety's sake, pilgrims usually travelled in groups or teamed up with caravans that plied the main trade routes. The *Milindapanha* tells us that Nagasena travelled from northwest India to Pataliputra with a caravan of 500 wagons. The caravan leader supplied all his food and, when they finally parted, gave him a beautiful woolen blanket.(25) In about the middle of the 11th century, the envoy sent to invite Atisa to Tibet travelled to Bodh Gaya with the king of Nepal and his entourage before completing his mission.(26) Another Tibetan, Dharmasvamin, and 16 other pilgrims on their way to Bodh Gaya in 1234, travelled through northern Bihar with a party of 300 Nepalese Hindus taking their deceased parents' ashes to immerse in the Ganges.(27) When Xuanzang was in Kanchipuram in the 7th century some 300 Sri Lankan monks arrived in the city. It seems they had found it judicious to come to India on pilgrimage at that particular time due to political upheavals in the island following the death of the king. Later Xuanzang travelled through the Tamil country with 70 of these monks; apparently they were going to north India.(28) To help pay their way, many pilgrims would buy goods in one destination to sell them in another. Visaka of Pataliputra sewed coins into the hem of his garment before setting out on his journey. He used the month he was kept waiting for a ship to do some business and managed to make a handsome profit.(29) A Tibetan monk earned 12 gold *zos*, enough money to finance his pilgrimage to India, by copying out two sets of the *Satasahasrikaprajnaparamita Sutra*.(30) Some incurred expenses even before they set out. Hindus from Kashmir going to Gaya had to pay a special pilgrim's tax, and we can assume it must have been the same for Kashmiri Buddhists going to Bodh Gaya.(31) For



Chinese pilgrims it was not taxes but the formidable imperial bureaucracy that posed the greatest obstacle. Before leaving the country they had to apply for and obtain a passport.(32)

The popularity of pilgrimage gave rise to a whole body of literature, mainly *sutras* praising the holy places and exhorting the faithful to visit them.(33) Sri Lankan monks had small handbooks (*muttipotthaka*) listing the Buddha's virtues which they could read while they travelled.(34) There were also guide books (*mahatyaya*) to help pilgrims to find their way, and inform them of the times of particular festivals that were held at each sacred place. The only guidebook that has survived to the present is The Extended Guide to the Diamond Throne (*Rdorje gdan rgyas bshad*) by Bcom Idan rig pa'i rel gri (1250-1311).(35)

Ancient Buddhist maps always showed either Mount Meru or Bodh Gaya in their centre. The most famous of these is the Map of the Five Indias (*Gotenjiku Zu*), drawn by the Japanese monk Juaki in 1364. This map is based carefully on Xuanzang's account of his pilgrimage to India and even marks his route with a red line. Mount Meru and Lake Anotatta with the traditional four rivers flowing out of it is shown in the centre while Bodh Gaya is located towards the southeast. The purpose of maps like the *Gotenjiku Zu* was didactic and scholarly rather than practical. This is clear from Juaki's own words. He says; "With prayers in my heart that Buddhism might prosper, I engaged myself in the task of making this copy, wiping my eyes which are dim with age and feeling that I myself were actually travelling through India." (36)

However, route maps meant to be used by those going to India did exist too. These were probably not available for ordinary pilgrims but were made by and for royal embassies visiting India. One of the few such maps that survive, from northern Thailand, was drawn in the 19th century although based on a much earlier prototype, probably by someone who had actually been to India. The map shows important pilgrimage sites like Rajagaha, Kusinara, Campa and Dona's stupa, and gives their direction and the number of days needed to reach them from the Mahabodhi Temple, which is depicted in the centre of the map. The Route to India (*Xitian lijing*) dating from the 10th and found in Dunhuang gives the direction and distance of towns and cities from the Chinese capital to Nalanda in India. (37)

In order to facilitate both trade and pilgrimage, King Asoka had main roads lined with trees, and wells dug at regular intervals along them.(38) He also had the road from Bodh Gaya to his capital at Pataliputra straightened and repaired.(39) However, throughout



most of India's history, roads were appallingly bad and travel for any reason was difficult and dangerous. Bridges were rare and rivers usually had to be forded or crossed by ferry. According to the *Lalitavistara*, a ferryman refused to take the Buddha across a river because he had no money to pay the fee, a story that must have mirrored the experience of many a wayfaring monk and poor pilgrim. A 13th century Tibetan pilgrim mentions crossing the Ganges on a craft that consisted of two square rafts lashed together. The river was full of crocodiles that would sometimes try to upset craft or snatch passengers off their decks.(40) In some areas the distances between one town and the next were considerable, and pilgrims were in danger of getting lost or running out of provisions. In the *Anguttara Nikaya* we read of the traveller's relief on coming upon a pond where he could drink and perhaps swim, eat some lotus roots and rest in the shade before moving on refreshed. Others might have to get down on all fours and drink from a wayside puddle because no other water was available. Less lucky pilgrims perished from hunger and thirst. (41)

Sickness was always a threat, especially for those not used to India's dust, heat, and poor food and water. The Korean pilgrim Hsuan-Ko made it all the way to Bodh Gaya only to die of sickness a few days after his arrival. (42) Wild animals were another problem. The road from Kausambi to Prayaga was notorious for elephants and tigers, as was the area around Kusinara. (56) One record mentions that in the forest around the latter place pilgrims were sometimes attacked by rhinoceros.(43) To ward off beasts at the Gijjhakuta at Rajagaha pilgrims had to beat drums, blow conches and carry bamboo tubes that emitted sparks. (44) But the perennial problem of travel in India was banditry. Nearly every traveller in the subcontinent up to the last century mentions this danger. The boat that Xuanzang took down river to Prayaga was attacked by river pirates who dragged it to the shore, robbed the passengers, and then decided that the Chinese pilgrim with his fair skin would be a suitable sacrifice for their goddess Kali. It was only by a stroke of luck that he escaped with his life.(45) After returning from Tibet in 1426, the Indian Tantric adept Vanaratna planned to go to Bodh Gaya to pay his respects and erect a statue of his teacher. But upon learning that bandits were laying in wait to steal the Tibetan king's gifts that he was carrying, he had to cancel his trip. Some poor pilgrims had to endure all these difficulties and more. In the account of his third journey to India, during which he went to Bodh Gaya, a peeved Marpa complained that he encountered bandits, wild animals and suffered greatly from fever and the searing heat of the Indian plains.(46)

It was around the beginning of the 12th century that what was to be a long and close connection between Bodh Gaya and the Buddhists of Burma began. By this time the Mahabodhi Temple was at least 700 years old and once again in need of repairs, which



King Kyanzittha of Pagan (1084-1113) undertook to carry out. An inscription found at Shwesandaw Pagoda in Prome and dating from approximately 1100 reads, in part: "King Kyanzittha got together jewels of diverse kind and sent them in a ship with intent to build up the holy temple of the glorious Vajrasana... The great temple built by King Dhammasoka, which had fallen into utter ruin, His Majesty proceeded to build anew, making it finer than even before." (47) This is the first evidence of repairs being done to the temple by parties from outside India and reflects the gradual decline of Buddhism in the subcontinent and its ascendancy in other parts of Asia.

An inscription in Burmese found in Bodh Gaya records more repairs to the Mahabodhi Temple towards the end of the 13th century done by another Burmese king titled 'Dhammaraja, Lord of the White Elephant.' (48) The repairs were carried out on behalf of the king by a monk named Siri Dhammarajaguru between 1295 and 1296. Exactly which king dispatched this mission can not be determined. It was probably King Klawcwa (1289-1297) although he is not known to have used the title 'Dhammaraja, Lord of the White Elephant.' Alternatively, it could have been his son, crown prince Klawcwa, who is called Dhammaraja in one of his inscriptions. But whoever it was, the size of the mission and the time it spent at Bodh Gaya indicates that major repairs were done to the temple at that time. In 1472, King Dhammacetiya of Pegu sent a large contingent of craftsmen under the leadership of a Sri Lankan merchant to Bodh Gaya to worship at the temple and also to make plans of it: "In order that those who live in Hamsavati might have great happiness, he had monks who were endowed with the burdens of study and meditation embark at Bassein, together with skilled masons, painters and builders, much treasure, royal letters written on gold under the authority of his seal, and ambassadors of greater and lesser rank to whom he entrusted many presents, and hence sail with expedition to Bengal to visit the Bodhi Tree at the centre of the world where the Buddha overcame Mara. When all the monks had reached the site of the Bodhi Tree and the presents had been offered, the painters made models of all the sites according to their distances and dimensions and brought them back to the place where the King dwelt." (49) The outcome of all this was a magnificent temple in Pegu called Shewgugyi. It is difficult today to determine how faithful this temple was to the original as it is now in a ruined state. In 1874, Burma's greatest modern king, Mindon Min (1853-1878), dispatched an emissary to Calcutta requesting the Government of India to help a delegation to offer gifts on his behalf to the Bodhi Tree. The report later written by the mission and presented to the Burmese king is full of information about Bodh Gaya not available from other sources. (50)



Despite all the difficulties involved in getting to Bodh Gaya pilgrimage remained an important and popular religious practice for centuries. During Buddhism's heyday in India, millions of people from both within the subcontinent and beyond its borders travelled to Bodh Gaya and other sacred places. Foreign pilgrims occasionally kept in contact with Indians they had met during their travels, sometimes for many years. The most remarkable example of such long-distance relationships is the letters that passed between the Chinese monk Xuanzang and two monks from Bodh Gaya, Prajnadeva and Jnanaprabha. Seven years after his return to China in 641, Xuanzang received letters and several rolls of cotton cloth from these monks. In their letters, they wished Xuanzang well, passed on the regards of a mutual friend and offered to send him any books he might need for his studies. Two years later, when a Chinese monk was setting out for India, Xuanzang gave him two letters to be delivered at Bodh Gaya. In his reply to Prajnadeva, Xuanzang expressed his delight in hearing from his friend after so long, talked about the weather and his work, and also gave a list of books he wanted sent. While in India he had been Prajnadeva's opponent in a debate at Kanauj, and now he expressed his satisfaction that the doctrinal differences between the two men did not prevent them from remaining friends. "During my sojourn in your country, I had the honour of meeting Your Reverence. In the convocation at Kanauj we were engaged in debate and argued out our respective view-points in the presence of princes and thousands of devotees. As one of us expounded the tenets of the Mahayana School, the other advocated the aims of the Hinayana. In order to defend the truth there was scant regard for personal feelings. In the course of the debate our arguments unavoidably got heated. Then there were clashes. But as soon as the debate was over we did not take each other amiss." (51) The fact that letters, gifts and books could be passed from one individual to another over such vast distances indicates that pilgrim traffic to and from Bodh Gaya must have been very considerable.

It is popularly believed that Bodh Gaya was destroyed during the Muslim invasion of Bihar in 1202 and that it ceased to function as a centre of Buddhism from then on. The evidence shows otherwise. Tibetan, Chinese and Nepalese sources show that there were still monks at Bodh Gaya at the end of the 13th and even in the early 14th century. A Tibetan work, the *Mkhas-pa'i dga-ston*, mentions a *yogi* named Ugyen Sangge who, during one of his frequent trips to India, made contact with the king of Sri Lanka and repaired the temple with his help. This is said to have happened around the year 1286. Because this date is only an approximation it is not possible to know which king might have undertaken these repairs. It could have been Bhuvanaikabahu I who died in 1284 or his successor Parakramabahu III who came to the throne about two years later. Although both monarchs had to face considerable political difficulties at home this did not prevent them having



overseas contacts. Bhuvanaikabahu had sent an ambassador to the Sultan of Egypt and Parakramabahu went in person to the Pandyan court in India to plea for the return of the Tooth Relic which had been taken there as war booty some years earlier. Either king could have thought that the merit earned by repairing the Mahabodhi Temple might make their thrones more secure. The *Mkhas-pa'i dga-ston* adds that while the work was being done Ugyen Sangge stayed to the north of the temple with 500 other *yogis*. This must be a reference to the Mahabodhi Monastery and its inmates and there can be no doubt that it was they who put Ugyen Sangge into contact with the Sri Lankan king in the first place and that they had a major role in the repairs. (52)

But it is the Tibetan historian Taranatha who provides us with evidence of at least some Buddhist activity at Bodh Gaya as late as the beginning of the 15th century. This concerns a monk named Sariputra (c.1335-1426) the last monk associated with Bodhgaya until the 19th century. We have four biographies of this eminent monk, three in Tibetan and one in Chinese. He is also briefly mentioned in inscriptions from Nepal, Tibet and China. He was born 'three months walk east of Vajrasana', perhaps somewhere near what are now the borderlands of Bangladesh and Burma, and was ordained by Gunaratana and Mahasvamin. He studies the *sutras*, their commentaries and grammar. When he decided to go on pilgrimage to the Buddhist sacred places his teacher agreed but only with the greatest reluctance, probably because of the possibility of Muslim hostility. When he arrived at Bodh Gaya he found the place in a state of disrepair and proceeded to rebuilt one shrine, set up a statue within it, adorned it with paintings and consecrate it on Vesakha. When a king named Cinghalaraja came to the throne he met and was impressed by Sariputra and became his patron. He appointed him to supervise repairs to the Mahabodhi Temple and after the passing of the royal preceptor Buddhasvamin, appointed him in his place. The next we hear of Sariputra is in Kathmandu in about 1412 where he was doing repairs to the Svyambhu Stupa in Kathmandu, Nepal. A few years later he was in Tibet where, amongst other things, he made a Copt of the Mahabodhi Image in Bodh Gaya so it could be enshrined in the great stupa in Gyantze. While in Tibet, Sariputta met a delegation from the emperor who invited him to the imperial court in Beijing. According to Chinese records he had an audience with the emperor who commissioned him to build a temple modeled on the Mahabodhi Temple. This temple can still be seen in the hills outside Beijing. We are also told that Sariputta later went to Wu Tai Shan in central China where he subsequently died. The stupa containing his ashes can still be seen there even today. (53)



After Shriputra we know of no meaningful Buddhist presence at Bodh Gaya until the late 19th century. But while the place may have died as a centre of Buddhism pilgrims kept coming, albeit in very small numbers. From the second half of the 15th century, comes the last mention until modern times of a Sri Lankan monk visiting Bodh Gaya. A monk named Dharmadivakara, apparently a Mahayanist, came to Bodh Gaya and then decided to go on from there to Wu Tai Shan in China. While at the sacred mountain he met some Tibetans who invited him to their country where he travelled and taught widely. However, the strain of several long years of travel, the strange food and the cold climate all proved too much for poor Dharmadivakara for we read that on his way back to Sri Lanka he disrobed in Nepal and later died in India. (54) In the early 1770s the Panchen Lama had sent nine monks and three laymen led by Tung Rampa to Sarnath and Bodh Gaya. The Maharaja of Varanasi, Chete Singh Bahadur, welcomed the Tibetans, gave them letters of introduction for their onward journey, palanquins and attendants and they were able to reach Bodh Gaya in a fortnight. When the party, minus three monks who had succumbed to the Indian heat, returned to Tibet, the Maharaja sent an envoy with them to present gifts to the Panchen Lama. Among these presents were a watch, elephant tusks and a model of the Mahabodhi Temple. (55)

The dangers and expense involved in going to India on pilgrimage meant that only a very small number of devotees were able to do it. Most had to be content with visiting the centers of pilgrimage that grew up in their own lands, and this trend was extenuated after the Muslim conquest of India. This diversion of people away from Bodh Gaya was a factor in its gradual decline, and also in its inability to recover from the blows inflicted on it in the 13th century. However, although the stream of Buddhists to Bodh Gaya declined dramatically, it never stopped completely. A trickle of pilgrims, mainly from Tibet, Nepal and Burma, continued right up to the 19th century. But it was not until the Mahabodhi Society started organizing pilgrimages in the 1890s that significant numbers of people began coming again. Going to Bodh Gaya is once more a significant part of Buddhist practice and Bodh Gaya has become not just a spiritual hub of Asia but of the world.



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THE BUDDHIST HERITAGE OF SRI LANKA: TWO LASTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO WORLD BUDDHISM

Asanga Tilakaratne

Professor of Pali and Buddhist Studies

University of Colombo

Sri Lanka

Introduction

The Buddhists in the Theravada tradition celebrated the 2600th anniversary of the Awakening of the Buddha in 2011. Traditionally the full moon day of the Month of May (Vesak) is considered as having triple significance for the followers of the Buddha, the birth, awakening and the Maha Parinirvana of the Buddha. Sri Lanka celebrated the period between the two Vesak full moon days of 2011 and 2012 as 'sambuddhatva year' with year long activities, one among which was to publish a volume [*2600 Years of Sambuddhatva: Global Journey of Awakening: The Government of Sri Lanka, 2012*] of articles written by a panel of international Buddhist scholars covering the state of Buddhism in the world, past, present and observations on the future. With twenty-six centuries behind it, Buddhism obviously is one of the oldest religious traditions in the world. It goes without saying that such old institutions deserve to be re-evaluated and re-examined from time to time for them to be more effective in their multi-dimensional task. This anthology of articles dealing with countries where one or two or all three of the existing Buddhist traditions are alive is an effort in this direction.

In the chapter on Buddhism in Sri Lanka, with two other co-authors, I outlined the history of Buddhism in the small island nation from its introduction in the 3rd century BCE up to the present and highlighted key events that shaped the Buddhist culture and tradition not only in the country itself but also in other Theravada Buddhist countries and the Buddhist world at large. In this paper I am not going to repeat the same discussion. But rather I will discuss two important events in the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka that have multiple implications both locally and beyond. The events I will discuss are committing of the word of the Buddha into writing which took place towards the conclusion of the 1st century BCE, and compilation of Pali commentaries by Buddhaghosa,



the greatest Theravada commentator. In the concluding discussion I will point out the broader significance of these two events in the context of Theravada in particular and all three schools in general.

1 Committing the word of the Buddha to writing: its significance and impact

In his pioneering and penetrative work, *Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, E.W. Adikaram describes the event of committing to writing the word of the Buddha as 'the most momentous event in the history of Theravada Buddhism' (p.73: 2009). This remarkable event took place during (the 2nd term of) the reign of Vattagamini Abhaya (29-17 BCE). The Mahavamsa spares two stanzas to record this historical act (33: 100, 101)¹¹⁵. There is however much more information relevant to this event, particularly the information on social and political conditions that necessitated this measure, found in the commentaries and other works. These commentarial accounts support Adikaram's judgment on the importance of this act on the history of Buddhism.

By deciding to write down the word of the Buddha, it is clear that the Theravada Sangha made a very crucial decision at a fairly early stage of the development of their organization. To quote Adikaram again, 'the event decided the future not only of the Theravada school of Buddhism but also of the whole field of Pali literature' (p.79). As we will see in the present discussion the significance of the event is not confined to Theravada or Pali literature alone. It has a much wider implications for Buddhism world-wide.

Historical Background

The writing down of the Pali Canon is counted as the fourth Sangayana in the Theravada history (although the Council of King Kanishka is counted as the fourth in the Indian history of Buddhism). The word of the Buddha was carried orally or by 'the tradition of the word of mouth' (mukha-parampara) until that point. There are debates among the scholars about the date of the Parinirvana of the Buddha. Modern European scholars believe that the traditional chronology followed in the Theravada tradition is at least longer by one hundred years. Consequently, the Chronology they adopted is called

¹¹⁵ Pitakattaya paalinca – tassaa atthakathampi ca

Mukhapathena aanesum – pubbe bhikkhu mahaamati

Haanim disvaana sattaanam -- tadaa bhikkhu samaagataa

Ciratthitattam dhammassa – potthakesu likhaapayum (*Mahavamsa* 33: 100,101)



‘short’ and the one adhered to by Theravada is called ‘long’. I do not wish to go into this long-drawn debate at this point. But according to the so-called long chronology, the word of the Buddha has come down in the oral tradition nearly for five centuries.

After the first Sangayana it is recorded that the word of the Buddha or ‘dhamma-vinaya’, as it was called at this assembly, was assigned to several eminent arahants and their pupils. The Vinaya was assigned to Upali Thera and his pupils. Digha, Samyutta and Anguttara Nikayas were assigned respectively to Ananda, Maha Kassapa, and Anuruddha Theras. Majjhima-nikaya was assigned to the pupils of Sariputta Thera who had already passed away. The Samantapasadika records the names of the monastic tradition that kept the Vinaya texts alive, namely, the pupillary succession of Upali Thera. The first Sangayana account of the Vinaya Cullavagga does not mention Abhidhamma-pitaka. Nor does it mention the Khuddaka-nikaya which is a collection of texts, some old, some new, according to the critical scholarship. Although the texts belonging to Abhidhamma and Khuddaka were not assigned to any particular Thera, for either they did not exist in the present form or some of them did not exist at all but were compiled later. Gradually the groups who undertook to master these texts became experts in those texts. This can be considered as the beginning of the bhanaka tradition whose expertise became the basis for the written down version adopted at the ‘book council’ (potthaka-sangayana) of Aloka vihara.

Conditions that necessitated writing down

The events that necessitated writing down the Buddha-vacana seem complex. The immediate reason may have been the famine that lasted more than a decade as a consequence of which many people including the monks who kept the Dhamma in their memory died, and some others went to neighboring India to save their life. The monks who opted to stay were determined to protect their memory even at the cost of their life. Commentarial accounts contain hardships they had to undergo in this effort. Finally, when the famine was over, and when the monks who had left the island had returned, one of the first things they did was to check each others memory of the Dhamma which they found was intact. Nevertheless, this whole calamity gave a serious warning to the Sangha on the perilous situation of keeping this vast and sacred literature in memory. An incident that precipitated this understanding is recorded in the commentaries. There was only one monk who remembered the Niddesa, a text belonging to the Khuddaka-nikaya. Unfortunately, since the moral integrity (sila) of this monk was questionable, the other monks with greater sense of morality were not willing to go to him, pay respect and learn from him.



Nevertheless, this had to be done and this was done. But situations of this nature may have triggered the need to adopting measures to safeguard the Buddha-vacana.

Additionally, the unfavourable political situation of the country seems too have served another reason. With Vattagamini Abhaya's open support of a monk who was brought under disciplinary measures by the Mahavihara was a direct challenge to the mainstream Sangha. The king was obviously not a supporter of the Mahavihara Sangha. This was unprecedented in the history of the sasana of the country so far (although it happened again later). Although there is no evidence to say that Abhayagiri fraternity adopted Mahayana, it is clear that they were open to the other Buddhist traditions of India. These traditions are described by the general term 'vetulla-vada' (vaitulya-vada) or heterogeneous views. However, this naming alone does not allow us to determine what these views exactly were. That those ideas were different from those of Mahavihara is certain. The Mahavihara tradition, which was determined to preserve the teaching exactly in the same form as it was received from the Arahant Mahinda, may have perceived this new development as threatening to the purity of the Buddha-vacana. Thus it is understandable why and how they decided to commit to writing what they brought forward from memory.

Consequences

There is no doubt about the momentousness of this decision by the Mahavihara sangha. The Abhayagiriya factor may have been a decisive cause in writing down the Buddha-vacana. The fact that there was, for the first time, a group rival to the Mahavihara was taken as a threat to the integrity of the Sasana. It was crucial that the dhamma and the Vinaya, revered as the teacher-substitute ever since the Buddha attained parinirvana, were kept intact, without any mixture. Some scholars wish to connect the very idea of a canon in the Theravada tradition to this specific development in the history of Sri Lanka. I do not think that the idea of a canon as an organized body of literature accepted by everyone was an outcome of the Abhayagiriya factor. On the one hand, the textual tradition, marked by unanimous acceptance, was there already by the time of Asoka. A good example is the method adopted in the Kathavatthu, the last book to be added to the Abhidhamma-pitaka and was compiled by Moggaliputtatissa thera. In this work, both Sakavadi (Theravadin) and Paravadi (opponent) quote the suttas in support of their arguments. This is clear evidence that there was a corpus of literature accepted by all different Buddhist groups as the word of the Buddha. On the other hand, this did not mean that there was any fixed canon for these sections of the Sangha at any given time. Even within the Theravada tradition itself we know that Digha-bhanakas and Majjhima-bhanakas did not accept the



authenticity of the Abhidhamma-pitaka. But this did not prevent them from being one group for all practical purposes including sharing the same monastic premises. This shows that the concept of canon as representing an exclusive and rigid body of literature is not quite at home with the Buddhist tradition. But on the other hand, it is clear that the basic division of the word of the Buddha as dhamma and vinaya and their main sub-categories date back to a period before the division of the Sangha into various schools, for all share this basic structure though with minor differences. Therefore, what the Mahavihara Sangha may have done when they committed the buddha-vacana to writing was to write down what had been already accepted as the Buddha-vacana in a broad sense.

One thing that happened for sure with this step was to give the Pali Tipitaka the shape it has continued to have until today. In other words, this event marked the culmination of the process of development of the canonical Buddhist literature, although the very idea of 'development' is unacceptable to some scholars. I do not plan to go to debate over this matter at this juncture, but simply assume the gradual shaping of the Pali canon as a fact. What may safely be said is that nothing was substantially added or subtracted from the Tipitaka since the Vattagamini Abahya's time. (I say 'substantially' for scholars such as Oliver Abenayaka have argued that Khuddaka-patha has been put together as a separate text by Buddhaghosa. The Netti and Petakopadesa are not counted as canonical by the Mahavihara tradition although these texts are included in the Khuddaka-nikaya by the Burmese Buddhist tradition)

Up to this point the Buddha-vacana was in the memory of individual members of the Sangha. Excepting the relatively rare cases of those who knew the entire Buddha-vacana, others had to depend on the experts of each text or section for the knowledge of that specific section or the text. Although the knowledge in the Dhamma was still public, it was public only within a limited group even among the Sangha. As far as ordinary householders were concerned, we can see that they virtually did not have any independent access to the Dhamma except receiving it from the sole source of the Sangha. Writing down on Ola-leaves and making public documents of the word of the Buddha is a tremendous step forward from its existence in relatively private memories.

It is interesting to note that the disciples of the Buddha did not have any reservation about committing the word of the Buddha to writing and making it a public property, so to say. In order to understand the value of this attitude we could contrast it with the attitude of Brahmins toward their Vedas. It is a fact that the Vedas were studied and kept in memory and passed to subsequent generations exclusively by Brahmins. This knowledge was not shared with others, i.e. those who belonged to other castes. Consequently the



Vedas themselves and knowledge in general remained a monopoly of this elite group of people. This practice seems quite in accordance with their overall attitude to religion and soteriology in which purity (suddhi) was allowed only for Brahmins (and other higher castes). It is due to this restrictive attitude that they criticized the Buddha for advocating purity for all four castes (*samano gotamo catuvannim suddhim pannapeti*). This exclusivism in soteriology justifies their exclusivist attitude to their religious texts, namely, the Vedas.

In the teaching of the Buddha, however, we know that this is not the case. The Buddha's Sasana was open to all from the beginning. It has been compared to the great ocean in which the waters of all great rivers come together and intermingle. The sangha has been described as 'Catuddisa-Sangha', the Sangha of the four quarters for this reason. The Buddha was always anxious to answer questions from his disciples, and he encouraged asking questions. Lying on his death-bed asked the disciples to ask any last questions, and he further said that one could get a friend to ask on their behalf if they do not feel asking directly. In the Vimamsaka-sutta of the Majjhima-nikaya (47) the Buddha says that anyone who does not have ability to read others' mind should question the Tathagata whether or not he is fully enlightened (*vimamsakena bhikkhave bhikkhuna parassa cetopariyam ajanantena tatthagte samannesana katabba sammambuddho va no vati vinnanayati*). Finally, in the Mahaparinibbana-sutta the Buddha says that there is no 'teacher's fist' (acariya mutthi) in his teaching, and that he did not ever make the distinction between inner and outer, which is characteristic of many religious traditions. It is this open attitude resulting from the universal friendliness, or metta to all beings sans boundaries (*dittha va yeva addittha ye ca dure vasanti avidure....sabbe satta bhavantu sukhitatta... manasam bhavaye aparimanam*) that makes the kind of open-mindedness and non-exclusivism exemplified in the act of writing down the word of the Buddha and making it available to the public.

The causes and conditions that necessitated writing down of the word of the Buddha seem to have been instrumental in bringing about a change of attitude among the Sri Lanka Sangha. This change of attitude is demonstrated in the establishment of the relative primacy of learned-ness (pariyatti) over the practice (patipatti). The attitude in the early phase of Buddhism was to view pariyatti merely as a means to patipatti in which two together have realization (pativedha) as the goal. With the harsh conditions faced by the monks in preserving the word of the Buddha, there arose among them a question whether it is pariyatti or patipatti at the root of the Sasana (*pariyatti nu kho sasanassa mulam udahu patipattiti*: Anguttaranikaya-atthakatha). After a debate the matter was decided in favour of pariyatti. The understanding was that in the absence of those who knew the word



of the Buddha the Sasana will not last, even if there were hundreds of meditating monks. Walpola Rahula thera who discusses this matter (in his *History of Buddhism in Ceylon*, 1956) takes this change as necessitated by the changing social and historical conditions. Adikaram, however, thinks differently. He says:

This change of attitude, though no attention has been paid to it in the commentaries, is of the utmost importance in the history of Theravada Buddhism. This school of Buddhism claims its descent from Upali, the greatest Vinayadhara among the disciples of the Buddha. Mahinda, too, the founder of this school in Ceylon, insisted on the reciting of the Vinaya, by a Ceylonese bhikkhu as it was only then, he maintained, that the sasana would take root in Ceylon. Mahinda's Buddhism was a religion predominantly of practice, and the victory mentioned above, of Suttana over Vinaya, would not have been one after the heart of that great missionary. (p.78)

The word of the Buddha organized into three baskets (*sabham tepitakam Buddha vacanam*) and written down at the alokavihara sangayana became the 'canon' for the entire Theravada tradition which gradually spreads to Southeast Asia from this country in the 12th century. One of the most important phenomena behind the Pali canon is that it has an unbroken tradition of practice running into two millennia by now. We know that many other early Indian schools had their own versions of the word of the Buddha in their vernaculars or in some forms of Sanskrit. But with the disappearance of these schools from India, and with their disappearance in the East Asia (China, Korea and Japan) where some of these schools were later established, their texts were preserved not as a part of a continuing tradition but as relics of the past. The situation with Theravada is quite different. These texts became a part of living Buddhist tradition in the Theravada countries. There were times when the practice of Buddhism became weak in these societies. But when it happened in one country the practice remained strong in other places. It never totally disappeared from any of the Theravada countries at any point of time. Therefore the Theravada canon has been the basis for an unbroken tradition of practice ever since it was committed to writing.

The word of the Buddha written down at the Aloka-vihara is the oldest version of the word of the Buddha available to us today. According to the Theravada history, the first construction of the Pali canon was started at the first Sangayana held three months after the Parinibbana of the Buddha. But as the Purana Thera's episode reveals, even by this time, there were divergent opinions among the earliest Sangha on what constitutes the word of the Buddha. But at the same time, we have to accept that the earliest attempt at organizing the word of the Buddha was the first Sangayana, and there are reasons to



believe that it is this 'canon' that finally came to Sri Lanka with Arahant Mahinda Thera. Since it is this same version, perhaps with some modifications, that was recorded at Aloka-vihara, our claim that the Pali canon is the oldest of available all Buddhist canons is reasonable. This also gives a clue to the language spoken by the Buddha. Our traditional belief is that it is Magadhi, also called 'Pali' today, that was spoken by the Buddha. But many modern scholars have questioned this assumption, and it is another debate which we cannot enter into in this forum. But what we can maintain safely is that if Pali as found in the three baskets recorded at the Aloka-vihara Sangayana is not the exact language spoken by the Buddha, it is surely the closest we have to the actual words of the Buddha.

The Pali canon provided the textual basis for the modern westward journey of Buddhism. It is well known that Rhys Davids, who pioneered the Theravada Buddhist studies in the west, studied that language while he was serving as an administrative officer in British Ceylon. He was taught Pali by the Venerable Yatramulle Dhammarama Thera. Also well known is the support Rhys Davids received from the Sangha in Sri Lanka and other Theravada countries such as Burma and Thailand, not only in securing the Buddhist texts but also by way of funds to print his first publications. The modern beginning of Buddhist studies in the West thus owes much to Rhys Davids, and it is the Pali canon and the earliest form of Buddhism contained in it that the West knew as Buddhism. This is true for both academic as well as religious studies of Buddhism in the West. The Chinese and Tibetan studies of Buddhism are relatively recent phenomena in the West compared to Pali Buddhist studies.

Beyond academic studies of Buddhism, today there has developed, based on the Pali discourses, a world-wide movement of Vipassana meditation popularized by such eminent monks as Mahasi Sayadaw and Ajahn Chah and such lay teachers as U Ba Khim, and Goekna-ji. Today this practice, which is known as 'mindfulness meditation', has become the most exciting discovery of psychiatry world-wide.

It was a result of a penetrative decision of the Sri Lanka Sangha that the word of the Buddha was committed to writing at a very early stage of the history of Theravada tradition. It was basically a precaution they took for the preservation of the Dhamma. They not only wrote it down but also they studied and practiced it diligently. The purity of the Sri Lanka Sangha was universally accepted in the Theravada Buddhist world almost up to the time of first arrival of Europeans. Subsequently Buddhism in this country showed some signs of deterioration. But by that time the South Asian Buddhist countries, in particular Burma and Thailand, had reached the highest point of their learning and practice. The story of Theravada Buddhism during the past one thousand years is one of



mutual support and enrichment by the Theravada countries. It is the word of the Buddha that was written down at the Aloka-vihara that provided and continues to provide the basis for the Buddhist study and practice going well beyond the boundaries of traditional South and Southeast Asia.

Buddhaghosa and Pali Commentaries

The most important event next to the writing down of the texts is the arrival of Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka and compiling commentaries in Pali language which seems to have a direct causal relation to the Aluvihara event. Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka in the 5th century CE during the reign of Mahanama (409-431). Where he arrived from has been a hotly debated issue among Theravadins Myanmar tradition in particular (according to the Buddhaghosuppatti of Mahamangala Thera of Burmese origin) claiming that he was a Brahmin from Bodhgaya, the north of India. The debate, though interesting, is not of direct relevance for the present discussion and hence we will bypass it.

Buddhaghosa wrote commentaries for the four main nikayas of the basket of discourses (Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta and Anguttara), the entire Vinaya Pitaka and the entire Abhidhamma Pitaka, and several of books in the Khuddaka-nikaya. By any standard, Buddhaghosa's work is of gigantic proportions. Its sheer size is mind-boggling not to mention the coherence and consistency of the interpretation developed and methodicity with which the enormous amount of material has been dealt with. Buddhaghosa stands out as the greatest system-builder in the entire Buddhist tradition including Mahayana and Vajrayana

The following are some reasons that explain the vast significance of Buddhaghosa's work. We may summarize some of them in the following manner:

1 Buddhaghosa's commentaries established what theravada or the view of the elders is. Although the term 'theravada' is found in the discourses, it started to be used to refer to the monastic tradition only since the first council. In the story of the first council (reported in such sources as the Samantapasadika, the commentary to the Vinaya Pitaka and the Mahavamsa) it is said that only 'theras' took part in this event. The Vinaya definition of 'thera' is one who has completed ten years after his higher admission (upasampada). Consequently it was called 'theriya' or belonging to theras. Although traditionally there is no difference between what the Buddha said and how we understand it through



Buddhaghosa, we have to admit that these are two different things: canonical texts and their interpretations (commentaries). One may argue that the so-called Tipitaka arranged and agreed upon by the executors of the first council itself is a Theravada production. Regarding this matter, we would make a distinction between systems, classifications and arrangements introduced by the executors of the first sangayana and the material or the content organized in such a manner. The assumption is that the Theravadins did not compose any new 'sutras' as it was the case with later Mahayanists. If we accept these assumptions and claims it amounts making a clear distinction between what is in the Tripitaka and what is in the commentaries. In this sense, the commentaries are the records of how the Theravadas interpreted and understood the word of the Buddha contained in the Tripitaka. Notwithstanding controversies the Theravadins themselves had on the origin of the Abhidhamma, it is safe to conclude that Buddhaghosa represents the ideological/doctrinal basis for the Theravada tradition. The Theravada tradition is clearly not Buddhaghosa or the other canonical commentators alone. The sub-commentaries (tika), sub-sub-commentaries (anutika) and other related literature, produced not only in Sri Lanka but also in the larger Theravada world, also represent the continuation of the Theravada tradition over the centuries.

- (1) Buddhaghosa's interpretations provided the definitive way to read, interpret and understand the Pali texts. This does not necessarily mean that there were no divergent interpretations to certain matters within the Theravada itself. A classic example is the debate over the authenticity of the Abhidhamma which was openly questioned by Dighabhanakas. The important thing, however, is that we know of these divergent interpretive traditions only through Buddhaghosa. We do not have any sources for any interpretive tradition other than those of Buddhaghosa. I do not suspect a foul play here. It may have been the simple fact that there were no any other divergent interpretive traditions substantial enough to gain identity and to enjoy continued existence as independent traditions.
- (2) Buddhaghosa's interpretive tradition served as the universal basis for Theravada tradition in South Asia as well as in South East Asia. While the Tripitaka finalised at Aluvihara provided the universal Theravada doctrinal basis, the interpretive tradition of Buddhaghosa became the sole authoritative way to understand the canon. Buddhaghosa is accepted, owned and continued by the entire Theravada world without question. The critical studies of religion, particularly, that of one's own religion, is relatively a new phenomenon. In the Theravada tradition of South and Southeast Asia, Buddhaghosa has been revered as the 'sound of the Buddha' both its literal and figurative senses.



(3) Buddhaghosa created the system which encompassed the entire teaching of the Buddha which, before Buddhaghosa, was found scattered in the discourses. It is imaginable that the Buddha taught individual or specific groups to meet the particular inner requirements of those who listened to him. The Buddha was not a teacher who gave systematic 'courses' on particular themes to his listeners. It was left to Buddhaghosa to create and develop a consistent and coherent 'system' out of the numerous discourses scattered all over the basket of discourses. Scholars debate over the exact nature of Buddhaghosa's work, as to whether he was a mere translator of the commentaries that were in Sinhala language, or did he write the commentaries anew or was he an editor cum translator. Discussing Buddhaghosa's role, Professor Kalupahana described him as a "great harmonizer who blended old and new ideas without arousing suspicion in the minds of those who were scrutinizing his work" (*A History of Buddhist Philosophy: Continuities and Discontinuities*, (1992) Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 207-8)

The Visuddhimagga is a great example of Buddhaghosa's systemizing genius. Without the aid of any modern technological sophistication Buddhaghosa compiled a gigantic treatise on the teaching of the Buddha which, in Buddhaghosa's own words, is to serve as a commentary to the all three baskets of the Pali canon. As is well known, he takes the main themes for the work, sila, samadhi and panna, from the Samyutta-nikaya stanza, *sile patitthaya naro sapanno – cittam pannanaca bhavayam*. The teaching of the seven purifications (satta visuddhi) provides the structure within which the path comprising the three disciplines (tisso sikkha) is elaborated. Accordingly, the first chapter of Visuddhimagga deals with sila which is the purification of virtue (sila visuddhi). The chapters 2 through 13 deal with citta (mind) or concentration (samadhi) of the mind, and cover purification of mind (citta visuddhi). The remainder of the vast volume is devoted to discuss panna (understanding) under the rest of the five purifications. Each of the key items, virtue, concentration and understanding, is described methodically under a set of sub-themes. Virtue is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- (1) What is virtue? (2) In what sense is it virtue? (3) What are its characteristic, function, manifestation and proximate cause? (4) What are the benefits of virtue? (5) How many kinds of virtue are there? (6) What is the defiling of it? (7) What is the cleansing of it?
- The other two themes too are discussed under similar sub-headings¹¹⁶. This very organization of the subject matter shows how methodical Buddhaghosa was.

¹¹⁶ The description of samadhi has an additional section on how it should be developed, and the account of panna has only six sections without cleansing and defilement of it.



An example of the systematization introduced by Buddhaghosa into the Buddhist doctrine is his exposition meditation as comprising a clear-cut procedure. Again, it is a truism that the Buddha taught individual or groups as their specific requirements demanded. In the *Visuddhamagga* Buddhaghosa formulated a general version of meditation which was an abstraction of the key discourses of the Buddha. Accordingly, Buddhaghosa said that understanding necessarily comes after concentration of mind which is marked by the attainment of fine material or immaterial states of jhana. It is Buddhaghosa who established the view that jhanas (or absorptions) must precede understanding (panna) and they are a necessary condition of understanding.

Notwithstanding Buddhaghosa's characterization of the path as necessarily involving jhanas, there are many discourses that allow one to think that one may attain nirvana without necessarily having jhanas. A relevant case is Susima who questions a certain group of monks who claims that they have won the defilement-less state in spite of the fact that they do not have jhanas (*nijjhanaka*)¹¹⁷. There have been discussions always among the practitioners regarding this issue. In recent times, there have been many heated debates over this issue. Elsewhere, I have studied the debate between two veteran Theravada elders of Sri Lanka and Myanmar, Bhikkhu Kheminda and Nyanuttara Sayadaw respectively¹¹⁸).

(4) It is an interesting question as to why Buddhaghosa 'translated' commentaries into Pali language. His own explanation is that he did so 'for the benefit of those who are of other islands' (*dipantaravasinam atthaya*). What is meant by 'dipantara' (other islands) is not very clear. But it could refer to 'jambu-dvipa' (India), or even to countries beyond India towards China including China itself. The Buddhist world, by this time (6th Century CE), comprised countries and areas well beyond the present day India, and it may be assumed that the Buddhists of those areas belonging to various schools other than Theravada and those who belonged to classical Indian Mahayana and newly emerging Chinese Mahayana wished to have access to Theravada commentaries. It is reasonable to assume that Pali was more accessible to the Buddhist world at large than Sinhala. While Buddhaghosa's own reasoning behind his (and his contemporaries') exercise has strong ground for acceptability, it may not be the only reason behind this

¹¹⁷ *Samyutta-nikaya II* (PTS) pp.119-128.

¹¹⁸ Maung, U Nyo (1979) *Satipatthana Vipassana Meditation: Criticisms and Replies* (Rangoon Thathana, Yeiktha: Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization).



momentous literary exercise¹¹⁹. There is sufficient internal evidence in Buddhaghosa's commentaries themselves to believe that his effort was motivated not purely by his concern for the larger Buddhist world but it may have been equally motivated by the changing attitudes of the Theravada Buddhists toward the language that they believed to have been spoken by the Buddha himself. In other words, it appears that Theravadins by this time had developed or were already in the process of developing an idea of sacred language in their tradition. A concept of sacred language may mean that particular language is (i) divinely originated; (ii) eternal; (iii) has mystical powers; (iv) does not undergo change; and (v) associated with a person who is considered to be sacred. Shortly we will see that Buddhaghosa attributes some of these characteristics to Pali language. His work may be taken as marking a new attitude to Pali language which Buddhaghosa called 'magadha'.

On this matter, I would like to invite the attention of the reader to a paper I wrote in 1989 and read at Premier Colloque Etienne Lamotte at Universite Catholique De Louvain, which was later published¹²⁰. Although I do not wish to reproduce my paper here, I will give a summary of my argument for, by now, the original paper is not much accessible to the public. From what we can gather from early discourses, there is hardly any evidence to believe that the Buddha had preference for any particular language. In the Vinaya there is the well known episode of two brahmin bhikkhus, Yamelu and Tekula who felt that the word of the Buddha was defiled by those who studied it in their own language (saka nirutti), and hence they should 'keep' the word of the Buddha in the Vedic language (tanti). When the idea was presented to the Buddha, he rejected it saying that his followers should study the Dhamma in their own dialects (sakaya niruttiya...)¹²¹. Although in Buddhaghosa's interpretation of 'saka nirutti' is the Magadha language which the Buddha spoke, the context strongly supports us to believe that the Buddha may have meant at the language of his followers. Although any specific reason for the Buddha's view is not given it is imaginable that the Buddha did not wish to endorse the view held by the two monks, namely, that the word of the Buddha was being polluted by the use of local languages. It is

¹¹⁹ Growing presence of Abhayagiri monastery with its emphasis on Sanskrit language as their canonical language and various international links facilitated by the adoption of more wide spread Sanskrit language may also have been a reason for Mahaviharins to give a new life to Pali as a counter-balancing measure.

¹²⁰ "The development of "sacred language" in the Buddhist tradition" in *Premier Colloque Etienne Lamotte*, under the series, Publications De L'institut Orientaliste De Louvain (42) (1993), pp.115-121.

¹²¹ *Samantapasadika Vinayattakatha*, vol. vi. Ed. J. Takakusus, Makoto Nagai and Kogen Mizuno (1966: London: Pali Text Society).



quite understandable that the Buddha rejected the view of linguistic purity which was strongly held by Brahmins. For him, language was a tool to be used without clinging into it. It is very unlikely that the Buddha made any extra emphasis on his own dialect over and above other dialects.

The attitude to Pali language developed later by Theravadins is articulated in this stanza which occurs in the Saddhammasangaha of Dhammakitti Thera belonging to the 12th century (*The Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1890).

sa magadhi mulabhasa – nara yayadikappika

brahmano cassutalapa – sambuddhacapi bhasare

(This Magadhi is the root language with which the people of very early times, Brahmas, those who have not heard any utterance and the Buddhas would speak).

It is interesting to note that the Buddhists claim that their language is one used by Brahmas who are higher than gods (deva) in the Buddhist cosmology. This can well be a response to Brahmins who claimed that their language is the language of gods (daivi vag). Buddhaghosa's following account seems to provide the basis for the attitude expressed in this stanza:

When a child has Tamil as the mother and Andhaka as the father and if it were to hear mother first, it would speak Tamil; if it were to hear the father first, it would speak Andhaka; if it were to hear neither, then it would speak the language of Magadha. If one were to be born in a deserted vast forest, if there were nobody capable of speaking, then, he, producing words by his own nature, would speak Pali. Everywhere, namely, hell, in the sphere of animals, petas, and human and in heaven, Pali alone is great. The languages such as Ottakirata, Andhaka, Yonaka and Tamil do change. It is this language of Magadha alone which is natural and the language of Brahmas and Aryans, and that it will not ever change¹²².

This account implies that the Pali is the original or the first language in the world, and says clearly that unlike other languages, it will not change. It is clear that this last assertion is totally in disagreement with the fundamental insight of Buddhism that all constructed phenomena are impermanent. Nevertheless this has to be understood more as an expression of sacredness of the language in which the Buddha taught the Dhamma than as contradicting the Dhamma of the Buddha itself.

¹²²*Sammohavinodani Vibhangatthakatha*, ed. P. Budhadatta Thero (London, PTS, 1951).



Perhaps the most striking example of the elevation of Pali as the sacred language comes from Buddhaghosa in his commentary to the Vinaya account of initial and higher admissions (pabbajja, upasampada). The practice during the time of the Buddha was to make the prospective candidates accept the Triple Gem as their refuge. This was done by uttering the formula: buddham saranam gacchami, dhammam saranam gacchami, sangham saranam gacchami. Commenting on this practice, Buddhaghosa says that, unless the formula is recited exactly without adding or omitting any one single syllable, the purpose is not achieved. "Therefore", he concludes, "it is necessary that one must utter it as exactly as it is in the text". Continuing his exegesis Buddhaghosa says:

pabbajja hi saranagamaneneva siddha. Sikkhapadani pana kevalam sikkhapri puranattham janitabbani. Tasma tani paliyam agatanayena uggahitum asakkontassa yaya kayaci bhasaya atthavasenapi acikkhitum vattati: initial admission takes place only with taking refuge; precepts, however, are to be understood for the sake of practice; therefore for someone who is unable to understand as they have been articulated in the canon (or in Pali) (paaliyam) it is proper to explain the precepts in a language understandable to him¹²³.

This stamen makes it clear that bestowing initial admission is impossible without using Pali language, and that it is not even necessary to understand it by one who receives it. What it indicates is that Pali language has a mystical power to make a drastic transformation in one's personality. Although, judging by the strongly psychological emphasis in the teaching of the Buddha, what Buddhaghosa says seems quite strange; it betrays the sacredness attributed to Pali language by Theravada Buddhists.

While Buddhaghosa provides unmistakable evidence to the newly developed idea of sacred language in the Theravada, his (and others) very act of translation into Pali of commentaries that were in Sinhala for many generations marks the culmination of this new trend. When Arahant Mahinda brought Buddhism to the island, he took it as part of his mission that he handed over it to the local community, an act which necessitated teaching and learning the Dhamma in the island language (dipa bhasa). In the subsequent history of Sri Lanka one can see how two trends, namely, elevating of Pali as the sacred language and relative downgrading of Sinhala as not fitting to communicate the Dhamma, went in hand-in-hand, finally leading Vidagama Maithreya Thera, a 15th century author of a Dhamma book in Sinhala to make a special plea to his listeners (readers) not to treat his work lightly for he was writing in Sinhala!

Conclusion

¹²³Samantapasadika Vinayatthakatha, vol.v, PTS pp. 969-971.



The two events discussed in this paper bear substantial significance not only to the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka or to that of other Theravada countries in Southeast Asia but also to the Buddhist world at large. The Pali Tripitaka as the earliest available and complete Buddhist canon has today gone beyond its traditional geographical boundaries and serves as the basis for religious practice of people all over the world. This is not to mention its value as one of the earliest sources of Buddhist academic studies. Notwithstanding the fact that Buddhaghosa may not be the only way to understand the word of the Buddha, he still serves as the most comprehensive and systematic exegesis of the entire Pali canon. The entire traditional Theravada world assumes uniformity owing to the Pali canon as well as its commentaries compiled by Buddhaghosa. Although both these phenomena have been the exclusive Theravada preserve, it is no longer so in this globalized world where a new form of Buddhism inspired by the texts and traditions of all Buddhist traditions is in the making.



BUDDHIST WORLD HERITAGES IN KOREA

Ven. Prof. Dr. Jinwol Y. H. Lee

(Dongguk University, Gyeongju, Korea)

I. Introduction

To follow the theme of a statement that “This Conference will dwell on the Buddhist heritage shared by mankind, a heritage that transcends man-made borders of country, region and language,” I would like to share with participants of other regions some information about Buddhist ‘World Heritages’ in Korea and to discuss on the matter for common interests. It is known that under the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (an international convention adopted by the UNESCO in 1972), properties of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity that need to be protected and preserved are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, which is divided into Cultural properties, Natural properties, and Mixed properties.¹²⁴ Among the well-known ten Korean heritages, inscribed on the World Heritage List, three are Buddhist heritage as the Cultural: Bulguksa Temple and Seokguram Grotto, Haeinsa Temple Janggeongpanjeon (the Depositories of *Tripitaka Koreana* Woodblocks), and Gyeongju Historic Areas.¹²⁵

In addition to World Heritage, UNESCO has programs to select Memory of the World and Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The Memory of the World Program launched in 1992 to guard against collective amnesia by calling for the preservation of the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world and ensuring the wide dissemination of the information held by them. Among the nine Korean items of the Memory of the World inscribed on World Register, two are Buddhist: Printing woodblocks for *Tripitaka Koreana* and the venerable Seon Master Baekun’s *Jikjisimcheyojeol* which is known as the oldest book printed with movable metal type

¹²⁴ So far the World Heritage List includes 962 properties forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value. These include 745 cultural, 188 natural and 29 mixed properties in 157 States Parties. As of September 2012, 190 States Parties have ratified the World Heritage Convention. See <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>

¹²⁵ Visit and see above cited web site of World Heritage Center; Cultural Heritage Administration, *1995-2011 World Heritage in Korea* (Seoul: Nulwa, 2011), hereafter cited as *WHK*, pp.6-7.



throughout the world.¹²⁶ The Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity was launched in 1998 to preserve the cultural diversity and traditions of the world. Intangible cultural heritage refers to the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. Also called living cultural heritage, it is usually expressed in one of the following forms: oral traditions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship. Among the eleven Korean items on the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity List, one is Buddhist: Yeongsanjae (Spiritual Mountain Offerings), a Buddhist ritual ceremony in which Dharma service with singing and various dances are included.¹²⁷

In fact, philosophy, ideas and metaphysical culture should be counted in terms of the intangible heritage, which permeates and influences every aspect of daily life of human beings. In such aspects, Buddhist ones have been remarkable. The teachings of the Buddha can be practiced both at a practical and a spiritual level, depending on the capacity and stage of life of Buddhists both the monastic and lay people. The essence of the teachings of the Buddha is that the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path which could be practiced by all, regardless of social status and lifestyles. Moreover, it is noticeable that Buddhist spirit of compassion and non-violence or tolerance which enable people to co-exist peacefully with other people of different religious traditions, has been more needed in modern societies around world. Those heritages of the Cultural, Memory of the World, and the Intangible are relevant today, when the world is in need of peaceful spirituality and culture for all sentient beings. I will introduce the Buddhist World Heritages of Korea and talk about their universal value and meaning for people including Buddhists and non-Buddhists.

1. Buddhist World Cultural Heritages in Korea

1. World Cultural Heritages

1) Bulguksa Temple and Seokgulam Grotto¹²⁸

It is well known that Bulguksa (Temple of Buddha Land) Monastery and the Seokguram (Hermitage of Stone Cave) Grotto on the slopes of Mount Toham are masterpieces of Korean Buddhist art. Korean history shows that the construction of both

¹²⁶WHK, p.9.

¹²⁷Ibid, p.8.

¹²⁸Bulguksa is a National Historic Site (No. 502) and Seokgulam is a National Treasure (No. 24) in Korea. Both were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1995.



Bulguksa and Seokgulam were initiated and supervised by a state councilor, Dae-seong Kim, began in 751 CE (the 10th year of the reign of King Gyeongdeok of Silla), and completed in 774 (the 10th year of the reign of King Hyegong of Silla)¹²⁹. Bulguksa is a Buddhist architectural complex that comprises a series of wooden buildings on raised stone terraces. The grounds of Bulguksa are divided into three areas: Daeungjeon (the Main Hall of Great Hero, the Buddha Sakyamuni), Birojeon (the Hall of Vairocana Buddha) and Geungnakjeon (the Hall of Supreme Bliss or Amitabha Buddha). These halls include not only the historical Buddha but also the cosmic or universal and the eternal Buddhas in ideal worlds.¹³⁰ These areas and the stone terraces were designed to represent the land of Buddha. They represent the terrestrial and the two celestial abodes: the World of Endurance of Sakyamuni and the two Pure Lands of Vairocana Buddha and of Amitabha Buddha. The stone terraces, bridges and the two pagodas - Seokgatap (Pagoda of Sakyamuni) and Dabotap (Pagoda of Many Treasures) attest to the fine masonry work of the Silla (57 BCE-935 CE). The Sakyamuni Pagoda, standing 10.63 meters high, is remarkable for its princely dignity and simplicity¹³¹; the Pagoda of Many Treasures, standing 10.34 meters high, is unmatched for its ornate decorative style. The realization of Buddha Land in the impure or mundane world was a communal aspiration in Silla, and the people of Silla believed that their kingdom was this very land. Even the name, Bulguksa, literally meaning Temple of Buddha Land, indicates the great significance to the people of Silla as a terrestrial paradise or blissful land of Buddha.¹³²

Seokguram is an artificial grotto constructed of granite that comprises an antechamber, a corridor and a main rotunda.¹³³ It is built from granite and features 39

¹²⁹ With deep filial piety, Dae-seong built Bulguksa Temple in memory of his parents in the present life, and Seokguram for his parents of the previous life. Ilyeon, *Samguk Yusa*, Tae-Hung Ha and Grafton K. Mintz trans. (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), pp.380-382.

¹³⁰ Sung-woo Kim, *Buddhist Architecture of Korea* (Seoul: Hollym, 2008), pp.48-52.

¹³¹ During the dismantling of this pagoda for repairing in 1966, archeologists discovered, in the body of the pagoda's second story, the *Mugujeonggwang-dae-darani-gyeong* (Great Dharani Sutra of Immaculate and Pure Light) inside a gold-copper reliquary. It is obvious that the scripture was made no later than 751 CE before the pagoda was built. Therefore, it is the oldest extant woodblock printed scripture in the world. The Center for Information on Korean Culture, *Exploring Korean history through World Heritage* (Seoul: Hollym, 2006), p.22.

¹³² WHK, pp.25-27; <http://www.bulguksa.or.kr>

¹³³ Seokguram Grotto is located 565 meters above sea level on the south-eastern slope of Mount Toham, facing the East Sea. It is recorded that it was originally known as Seokbulsu (Temple of Stone Buddha) or a hermitage affiliated with Seokhulsu. Unlike most other ancient cave temples in Asia, which were formed by nature or dug into hillsides and carved on rocks, Seokgulam is a man-made grotto built of some 360 granite pieces and covered with earth. It is known that cave shrines originated in India and became popular in the Dunhuang and Yungang regions of China before reaching Korea, where they attained a new level of development. It is said that Seokgulam is the only artificial grotto in the world and masterpiece of Asian Buddhist art. WHK,



Buddhist engravings on the main wall and the principal sculpture of the Buddha in the centre. The Eight Guardian Deities are carved in relief on the walls of the rectangular antechamber, four on either side. Two figures of Vajradhara stand on either side of the entrance to the corridor leading from the antechamber to the main rotunda. The Four Guardian Kings are carved in pairs on either side of the narrowed part of the corridor. There are two octagonal stone pillars, one on either side of the entrance to the main rotunda, where the main Buddha stands slightly off-centre. The walls to the left and right of the entrance are covered with relief images of two Devas, two Bodhisattvas and the Ten Disciples. In the middle of the wall behind the main Buddha there is an exquisite wall carving of an eleven-faced Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. It enshrines a monumental statue of the Sakyamuni Buddha looking out to sea with his left hand in dhyana mudra, symbolizing meditative concentration, and his right hand in bhumisparsa mudra, referring to the so-called earth-touching as concerning people on earth.¹³⁴ Together with the portrayals of Bodhisattvas, disciples and gods, delicately sculpted in high and low relief on the surrounding walls, the statues are considered to be a masterpiece of East Asian Buddhist art. The domed ceiling of the rotunda and the entrance corridor employed an innovative construction technique that involved the use of more than 360 stone slabs.¹³⁵

2) Haeinsa Temple Janggyeongpanjeon¹³⁶

Haeinsa (Temple of Ocean Seal [Samadhi]) is located on Mount Gaya National Park, one of Korea's most beautiful mountains which, because of its rugged terrain, has been immune from the ravages of war that have plagued Korea throughout its history. The temple was first built by the Venerable Suneung and Ijeong in 802 during the United Silla Dynasty and has been restored and enlarged on a number of occasions. The Janggyeongpanjeon (Depository of Tripitaka Wood Blocks) in Haeinsa is home to the *Tripitaka Koreana*, the most complete collection of Buddhist texts, laws and treaties extant, engraved on 81,258 woodblocks, which would require a reader well-versed in Chinese literature some 30 years to read. In fact, the *Daejanggyeong* (Tripitaka) was compiled twice during Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392). The compilation of the first edition

pp.17-18; *Exploring Korean history through World Heritage*, ibid, pp.17-18; Kang Hyejeong and Pyo Seonghoon, *Korean Cultural Heritage* vol.1 (Seoul: Sigong Tech & Sigong Media, 2010), pp.20-26; Yoo Myeong-jong, *Temples of Korea* (Seoul: Discovery media, 2009), pp.14-19.

¹³⁴It is compared with the Buddha image in the Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya, India, as similar dimensions. Lena Kim, *Buddhist Sculpture of Korea* (Seoul: Hollym, 2009), p.86.

¹³⁵<http://www.sukgulam.org>

¹³⁶It is a National Treasure (No. 52) in Korea and was inscribed on the World Cultural Heritage List in 1995.



began in 1011 (the 2nd year of King Hyeonjong) and was completed in 1087 (the 4th year of King Seonjong) and stored at Buinsa near Daegu. However, the Mongol invaders burned the printing blocks in 1232. The second edition began in 1236 (the 23rd year of King Gojong) and was completed in 1251 (the 38th year of King Gojong). This second edition is the *Tripitaka Koreana*, which is called in Korean as *Palman-daejanggyeong* (The Great Collection of Buddhist Scriptures in Eighty Thousand Blocks) or *Goryeo-daejanggyeong* (The Great Collection of Buddhist Scriptures of Goryeo). They were carved in an appeal to the authority of the Buddha in the defense of Korea against the Mongol invasions. They are recognized by Buddhist scholars around the world for their outstanding accuracy and superior quality. Initially, *Tripitaka Koreana* was kept in Ganghwa Island, the capital of Goryeo's wartime government. Later the woodblocks were temporarily moved to Seoul but permanently to Haeinsa in 1398 (the 7th year of King Taejo of Joseon Dynasty).¹³⁷

The Janggyeong-panjeon depositories comprise two long and two smaller buildings, which are arranged in a rectangle around a courtyard. Resting on the highest area in the temple grounds, at 655 meters above sea level on the middle of the slope of Mount Gaya (1430 m) the elongated wooden pavilions face the southwest for adjusting natural conditions considering climate situations. As the most important buildings in the Haeinsa Temple complex, they are located at a higher level than the Buddha Hall. Constructed in the 15th century in the traditional style of the early Joseon (1392-1910), their design is characterized by its simplicity of detailing and harmony of layout, size, balance and rhythm. The four buildings are considered to be unique both in terms of their antiquity with respect to this specialized type of structure, and for the remarkably effective conservation solutions that were employed in their design to protect the woodblocks from deterioration, while providing for easy access and storage. They were specially designed to provide natural ventilation and to modulate temperature and humidity, adapted to climatic conditions, thus preserving the woodblocks for some 500 years from rodent and insect infestation. The Haeinsa monastery complex is a famous destination for pilgrimages, not only among Korean Buddhists, but Buddhists and scholars from all over the world.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ *WHK*, pp.29-30.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, pp.30-36; <http://www.haeinsa.or.kr>



3) Gyeongju Historic Areas¹³⁹

The Gyeongju Historic Areas contain a remarkable concentration of outstanding examples of Korean Buddhist art, in the form of sculptures, reliefs, pagodas, and the remains of temples and palaces from the flowering, in particular between the 7th and 10th centuries, of this unique form of artistic expression. The Korean peninsula was ruled for almost 1,000 years by the Silla Kingdom (57 BCE-935 CE), and the sites and monuments in and around Gyeongju bear outstanding testimony to its cultural achievements of the golden age of ancient Korean civilization. These monuments are of exceptional significance in the development of Buddhist and secular architecture in Korea. Archeology and history show that there has been human settlement at and around the site of the present-day city of Gyeongju from the prehistoric period. The Silla clan became the rulers of the south-eastern part of the peninsula in 57 BCE. They chose Gyeongju as their capital. The Silla rulers embellished their city with many public buildings, palaces, temples, and fortresses. Their tombs are to be found in the surroundings of the ancient city. Mount Namsan (South Mountain), which had been venerated by the existing cults of Korea, became a Buddhist sacred mountain and attracted its adherents, who employed the most outstanding architects and craftsmen of the day to create temples, shrines, and monasteries. However, it is known that Gyeongju had grown into an international city during the Unified Silla period, as prosperous as Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) of Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, Baghdad of the Islam Empire, and Jagan (Xian) of the Tang Dynasty in China. There was a lot of foreign cultural exchange through the silk-roads by land and sea of Eurasia.¹⁴⁰

There are three major components ('belts') that make up the Gyeongju Historic Areas; in addition, the World Heritage site covers Hwangnyongsa (Temple of Yellow Dragon) and the Sanseong (Mountain Fortress). Mount Namsan Belt lies to the north of Gyeongju City: there are a large number of prehistoric and historic remains within the designated area and there have been hundreds of Buddhist treasures, including temple sites with Buddha images, stone pagodas, lanterns, and lotus pedestals, hence it is called an "outdoor museum." Wolseong (Moon Castle) Belt, in which the main monuments are the ruined palace site of Wolseong, the Gyerim (Cock Grove) woodland which legend identifies as the birthplace of the founder of the Gyeongju Kim clan, Anapji (Pond of

¹³⁹It was inscribed on the World Cultural Heritage List in 2000.

¹⁴⁰WHK, p.79; Korean National Commission for UNESCO, *Gyeongju: City of Millenial History* (Seoul: Hollym, 1998), pp.33-46; Choi Joon-Sik, *Gyeongju: The Heart of Korean Culture*, (Paju: Hanul books, 2011), pp.10-14.



Geese and Ducks), on the site of the ruined Imhaejeon (Pavilion on the Sea) Palace, and the Cheomseongdae (Observatory of Stars). Tumuli Park Belt, which consists of three groups of royal tombs. Most of the mounds are domed, but some take the form of a half-moon or a gourd. They contain double wooden coffins covered with gravel. Excavations have produced rich grave-goods of gold, glass and fine ceramics. One of the earlier tombs yielded a mural painting on birch bark of a winged horse. It is remarkable facts that there are about 30 National Treasures and more than 60 Treasures of cultural Assets, recognized by the government and registered in the national list, in Gyeongju area.¹⁴¹

2. Memory of the World

Memory of the World Program is an international initiative launched to safeguard the documentary heritage of humanity against collective amnesia, neglect, the ravages of time and climatic conditions, and willful and deliberate destruction. It calls for the preservation of valuable archival holdings, library collections and private individual compendia all over the world for posterity, the reconstitution of dispersed or displaced documentary heritage, and the increased accessibility to and dissemination of these items. The program began in 1992 as a way to preserve and promote documentary heritage, which can be a single document, a collection, a holding or an archival founts that is deemed to be of such significance as to transcend the boundaries of time and culture. This recorded memory reflects the diversity of languages, people, and cultures. UNESCO, the global agency responsible for the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage, realized the need to protect such fragile yet important component of cultural heritage. To this end, the Memory of the World Program was established with the aim of preserving and digitizing humanity's documentary heritage.

1) *The Goryeo Daejanggyeong* (Goryeo Buddhist Scriptures)¹⁴²

Being known as the "*Tripitaka Koreana*" to the modern scholarly world, it is a Korean collection of the Buddhist canonical scriptures. Carved onto 81,258 wooden printing blocks in the 13th century, it is currently stored at Haeinsa Monastery. It is often called the *Goryeo Daejanggyeong* for identifying the commission and period of production of it as well as the *Palman Daejanggyeong* ("Eighty-thousand Tripitaka") due to the number of the printing plates that comprise it. The *Tripitaka* (in Sanskrit, meaning "Three Baskets"), or *Daejanggyeong* in Korean, refers to the collection of Buddhist

¹⁴¹See the index of Cultural Assets in Gyeongju City and Vicinity. Kyongnyol Yun, *Namsan* (Seoul: Buddha land, 1994), pp.433-440; <http://www.culture.gyeongju.go.kr>

¹⁴²It is a National Treasure (No. 32) in Korea and was inscribed on the Memory of the World List in 2007.



scriptures that relate to teachings of the Buddha (*Sutra-pitaka*), regulations of monastic life (*Vinaya-pitaka*), and commentaries on the Sutras by renowned monks and scholars (*Abhidharma-pitaka*). When Buddhism was transmitted to East Asia through China, and the Buddhist scriptures translated from various Indian and Central Asian languages to classical Chinese (the lingua franca of educated discourse throughout East Asia, including Korea), there were several attempts by several countries to inscribe them in wooden printing blocks for distribution. However, the *Tripitaka Koreana* is the only complete canon still extant on the mainland of Asia.

Though the *Tripitaka Koreana* was a task commissioned by the Goryeo dynasty to produce an edition of the *Tripitaka* in wooden printing blocks, there were also individual woodblocks of miscellaneous Buddhist scriptures commissioned directly by Haeinsa Monastery. With the year of scribing dating from 1098 to 1958, there are 5,987 miscellaneous woodblocks that have been created and stored at Haeinsa Monastery. These miscellaneous scripture woodblocks, some of which are the only extant copy in the world, were created to supplement the *Tripitaka*. The woodblocks of the *Tripitaka Koreana* and miscellaneous scriptures possess high cultural value as an example of the best printing and publishing techniques of the period. Each block was systematically and meticulously prepared, and individually and beautifully inscribed with a great degree of regularity. Their excellent durability has been well proven, as the printing blocks can even now print crisp, and complete copies of the *Tripitaka*, 760 years after its creation.

Due to the sophistication of its editing and process of compilation and collation, the *Tripitaka Koreana* is known as the most accurate of the *Tripitakas* written in classical Chinese; as a standard critical edition for East Asian Buddhist scholarship, it has been widely distributed and used over the ages. It is known that the *Tripitaka Koreana* became a model for the *Japanese Revised Tripitaka*, and was re-exported to China and introduced to Western countries including United Kingdom, United States, France, and Germany.¹⁴³ These wooden printing blocks became a medium through which knowledge could be produced and distributed continuously. Using these woodblocks, Haeinsa Monastery printed copies every time need arose, as resources for research and material for the education of the ordained. Accordingly, Haeinsa Monastery was able to become a central locus for the traditional practice of knowledge transmission, where Buddhist education, the preservation of knowledge, and scholastic research could be conducted. Even in the present, Haeinsa Monastery reflects this tradition as a centre of Buddhist scholastic study as the designated Dharma-jewel Monastery of Korea, responsible for the teaching and

¹⁴³ *Exploring Korean history through World Heritage*, op.cit., P.34.



transmission of the Dharma, amongst the Three Precious Jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, i.e. Buddha, the Law, and the Ecclesia or Order.¹⁴⁴

2) *Baekun-hwasang Chorok Buljo Jikji-simche-yojeol* (The Venerable Baekun's Brief Draft of an Anthology of the Buddha and Patriarchs' Direct Pointing the Essence of Mind) Vol. II¹⁴⁵

Simply known as *Jikji*, this book contains the essentials of Seon (Chan/Zen) Buddhism compiled by the Venerable Seon Master Baegun (1298-1374) in the late Goryeo period and was printed at Heungdeoksa monastery in Cheongju, Korea, using movable metal types in July 1377. While some earlier metal type printings were mentioned in the old Korean books, this book is the world's oldest extant movable metal type printing evidence available and signifies an important technical change in the print history of humanity. Therefore, UNESCO confirmed *Jikji* as the world's oldest metalloid type in September 2001 and includes it in the Memory of the World List.¹⁴⁶ The *Jikji* was written by the Venerable Seon Master Baekun Gyeonghan (1298-1374), who served as the abbot of Anguk and Shingwang temples in Haeju, and was published in two volumes in Seongbulsan in 1372. The *Jikji* comprises a collection of excerpts from the analects of the most revered Buddhist Meditation Masters throughout successive generations from the Buddha. It was created as a guide for Seon students and meditation practitioners of Buddhism, then the national religion under the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392), Korea.

According to existent references, *Jikji* consists of two volumes: The first book includes seven doxologies of the Buddha and stories of Dharma transmission of twenty-seven patriarchal masters in India, then forty-seven masters in China; the second book includes stories of practice and enlightenment about ninety masters in China.¹⁴⁷ All the contents are to teach and lead Buddhist practitioners for their awakening and realizing

¹⁴⁴ *WHK*, pp.188-189; <http://www.haeinsa.or.kr>; <http://www.sutra.re.kr>

¹⁴⁵ It is at National Library of France in Paris but was inscribed on the Memory of the World List in 2001.

¹⁴⁶ On the last page of *Jikji* is recorded details of its publication, indicating that it was published in the 3rd Year of King U (July 1377) by metal type at Heungdeok temple in Cheongju. The *Jikji* originally consisted of two volumes totaling 307 chapters, but the first volume of the metal printed version is no longer extant. There is a record indicating that in 1377 Baegun's students, two monks, Seoksan and Daldam, helped in the publication of *Jikji* by using moveable metal type and a nun, Myodeok, contributed her efforts as well. It was 78 years prior to Johannes Gutenberg's acclaimed "42-Line Bible" printed during the years 1452-1455. The greater part of the *Jikji* is now lost, and today only the last volume survives, and is kept at the Manuscripts Orientaux division of the National Library of France. *Exploring Korean history through World Heritage*, op.cit., p.178. Korean Culture and Information Service, *Guide to Korean Culture* (Seoul: Hollym, 2010), p.51-56.

¹⁴⁷ Donggukdaehakgyo-Hangukbulgyojeonseo-pyeonchanuiwonhoe, *Hangukbulgyojeonseo* Vol. 6 (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1984), pp.604-636; Baekun Gyeonghan, *Buljojikjismcheyojeol* Wonjo Gakseon trans. and comment (Seoul: Hyeonumsa, 1999), pp.6-16.



each one's nature and essence of mind. As the title literally means, *Jikji* is an anthology of the Buddha and Patriarchs' Direct Pointing the Essence of Mind, which was selected and edited in brief by the venerable Seon Master Baekun who was a representative Seon practitioner of the age. The writing style of *Jikji* is very simple and concise as a text of meditative practice.¹⁴⁸ It is noticeable well known Seon words that when Seon master points moon by a finger, then, one must not only see the finger but moon. However, one needs a finger of director who points the truth or reality. *Jikji* has been a good finger through which one could get a direction to practice and to attain enlightenment.

3. The Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity¹⁴⁹

Yeongsanjae is one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in Korea. It is a central element of Korean Buddhist culture. It is a re-enactment of the Buddha's delivery of the *Lotus Sutra* on the Vulture Peak in India.¹⁵⁰ Yeongsanjae begins with a ritual reception for all the dignitaries of universe and concludes with a farewell ritual representing manners of the otherworldly realm of Buddha, with singing, ceremonial adornment and varied ritual dances such as the cymbal dance, drum dance and ceremonial robe dance. The other components include a ritual cleansing, a tea ceremony, the dedication of a rice meal to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, a sermon inviting the audience to the door of truth and a ritual meal for the dead to congratulate them on their entry into heaven. Preserved mainly by the Sangha, the Yeongsanjae is held in temples throughout Korea to help all beings enter the world of enlightenment by worshipping the Buddha and practicing his teachings. The ceremony serves as an important space for transmission of merit and art forms and for meditation, training and enlightenment. The complete Yeongsanjae Ritual consists of the following parts:

- 1) Siryeon (Offering the Palanquin): It is a procession of the Buddha who sits on a palanquin under the special parasols. The palanquin may be carried from outside the temple gate to the venue of the events.

¹⁴⁸WHK, pp.188-189; <http://www.jikjiworld.net>

¹⁴⁹It is a National Important Intangible Cultural Property (No. 50) in Korea and was inscribed on the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List in 2009.

¹⁵⁰The *Lotus Sutra*, one of Mahayana Buddhism's most sacred texts, records that the historical Buddha Sakyamuni delivered a lecture on the Dharma to 1,250 pupils and numerous lay people at the Vulture Peak in India. According to the sutra, the Buddha's lecture enlightened audiences throughout the world, and was accompanied by flowers showering down from heaven, and the performance of sacred music and dance. Images of this sacred and solemn lecture came to be known as the "Yeongsanhoesang (Vulture Peak Assembly)" and Yeongsanjae (Vulture Peak Buddhist Ritual) itself is a recreation of the Buddhist community.



- 2) Daeryeong (Reception of Spirits): it is a preparation for the spirits to process to the Buddha with some offerings of food and an introduction about Dharma. In this section a letter (petition) is verbally presented to the Three Jewels (the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), stating that the Yeongsanjae ritual is prepared, and providing reasons for inviting the Buddha and Bodhisattvas.
- 3) Gwanyok (Spiritual Bath): It is a cleansing the Spirit's bad Karma by bath of Buddhist Rituals including Dharma and Mantra.
- 4) Jojeonjeoman (Consecration on the Artificial Money): It is a Mantric consecration to the artificial money which to be used in the realm of shades.
- 5) Sinjung-jakbeop (Inviting Rituals for gods): It is a ceremony of inviting a group of one hundred four gods who escort the Buddha and Bodhisattvas as well as protect the temple.
- 6) Guebul-iun (Moving out the Painting of Buddha): It is a ceremony to install the Buddha by carrying out the painting Buddha from the Buddha Hall to the outside venue of events.¹⁵¹
- 7) Sangdan-gwongong (Offering to the Buddha on the High Altar): It is a central ritual for offering to the Buddha in gratitude and pray for blessing people for their saving. This offering is the core of the ritual; here the Buddha and Bodhisattvas are offered a meal with the highest degree of respect which contains supplications for the eternal salvation of the dead and the wisdom for the living.
- 8) Sikdang-jakbeop (Ritual of Offering Food): It is a ritual to offer the special food to the Monastic Sangha who reflect causes of the food and share them with sentient beings of suffering.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹Guebul means a Buddhist painting, and iun literally refers to the moving of a temple ceremony outdoors. Performing music dedicated for this ritual, Buddha and Bodhisattva are invited to the ceremony, which will be the venue for a sacred sermon. A Guebul symbolizing the Buddha is hung outdoors introducing the Buddha into the ritual. Traditionally in this part of the ritual, the Guebul inside the building is taken outside (unlike usual Buddhist services), so that the Buddha encounters the people. Nowadays,

¹⁵² Before this ritual, Buddhist Musical Quartet with the Dharma instruments of Bell, Fish Gong, Cloud Gong, and Drum are performed. The four percussion instruments symbolizing the beings of four parts of the world: hell, water, land, and air spaces. The Beomjong (Grand Bell of Buddhist Temple) relieves sentient beings in the dark inferno of hell of their sufferings, the Moger (Wooden Fish Gong) relieves those in the water of their sufferings, the Unpan (Cloud Gong) relives birds and those in the sky of their sufferings, and the Beopgo (Dharma Drum) relives animals and those on earth of their sufferings and mundane mankind with the wisdom of Dharma, and its sound beckons people to the assembly. Jinbo An, *Seokmunneumbeom* (Seoul: Beomnyunsa, 1974), pp.128-129.



9) Unsu-sangdan (Offering to the High Platform): It is a ritual to offer food to the beings on high platform where Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the universe are attended.

10) Jungdan-gwongong (Offering to the Middle Platform): It is a ritual to offer food to the beings on the middle platform where the Eminent Venerable Masters and Ten Kings of the Ten Hells are attended

11) Sinjung-toegong (Offering to the Group of Gods): It is a ritual to offer to the group of god food which moves from the higher platform.

12) Gwaneum-sisik (Avalokitesvara Offering Food): It is a memorial service for spirits of the deceased and offering to beings in hell through the ritual of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva who is compassionate to save beings of suffering.

13) Bongsong (Farewell Ceremony): It is a ritual to send the invited beings including Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, gods, and spirits of the deceased at the fire place where various things of the deceased and decorations would be burnt up.

However, during the events, various music and dances are performed to offer to the invited Buddha, Bodhisattvas, gods, the deceased, as well as for participants. Beompae: this is a Buddhist Vocal Music. Seungmu: this is a Monk Dance, the most representative of traditional folk dances. Bara Dance: using one of the Buddhist musical instruments, Bara, or cymbals, which has huge resonance and to symbolize the roaring a lion, a metaphor of the preaching Buddha. Butterfly Dance: Here dancers wear white-sleeved robes and a surplice, with an outer garb of five colors like a rainbow and a stupa (reliquary)-shaped conical peaked hat, and hold a lotus in both hands, all of which represent Buddhist awakening. This dance announces that the Buddhist Dharma is deployed at the present site; at the same time it is an expression of religious ecstasy.¹⁵³

4. Spiritual Heritage

In addition to the items of the UNESCO World Heritage List, it is meaningful to reflect spiritual heritage which seems not measurable by objective ways. However, we ought to pay attention to spiritual heritage which has universal value and meaning for humanity. The Buddhist spiritual heritage in Korea is great and essential of Korean life. It refers to nature or character of metaphysical or mental aspect of humanity. It concerns about an ultimate immaterial reality; an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of one's being; or the supreme values and meanings one seeks. Meditation and

¹⁵³WHK, pp.159-161; <http://bongwonsa.or.kr>



contemplation seem major spiritual practices of Buddhism to develop an individual's inner life. Through the spiritual practice one could experience enlightenment or connectedness with the ultimate reality or Dharma. In the world, spiritual heritage has been much related with humanistic character, such as contentment, harmony, compassion, and benevolent care for others. Buddhist meditation and mindfulness help people for fulfillment of humanity and peace without any verbal explanation. Spiritual heritage has been needed whenever one seeks the meaning and value of life. Spirituality leads inner practice and outward service. In Buddhism, compassion is often understood as the manifestation of spiritual attainment. Recently, "Temple-stay," in which Seon practice is a core part, has been popular not only among Buddhists but also non-Buddhists, including other religious people, such as Christians and Confucians. Moreover, Temple-stay program has been interested by foreign visitors as well as Koreans.¹⁵⁴ If spirituality is understood as the search for truth or the development of inner peace or the foundations of happiness, then meditation practice is essential for personal well being no matter what one's faith tradition. Therefore, it can be said that Buddhist heritage of meditation practice is very universal and adjustable to anyone beyond one's religious formality.

'Chamseon' means in Korean, 'Seon Practice' or participating in Buddhist meditation, which maybe one of most important spiritual heritages in Korea.¹⁵⁵ Seon practice has been recognized in Korea as the best among all Buddhist practices to attain Enlightenment. Seon training emphasizes daily life practice. However, focusing on the Awakening or Enlightenment has always been the ultimate goal no matter where or when one is situated, but should always be aware of being in the here and now. In fact, Seon originated in India as a transcendental non-verbal Dharma which was communicated and transmitted directly by the Buddha to his disciples. It was later taken to China by Bodhidharma in the 6th century, where it was subsequently transmitted to Korea. It is noticeable that in the tradition Seon master and practitioner should share their wisdom and experience with people in the society to reward the supporters and realize their compassion. It is remarkable that Non-duality and non-violence of Buddhist spirit has been essential for the Seon practitioner who seeks peace and harmony not only for oneself but for all sentient beings in the world. The so-called Minjung-bulgyo (Buddhism for

¹⁵⁴This program was originally implemented during the 2002 FIFA World Cup events but continued with big extension following good reaction from participants. Seung Jae Lee, *Korean Cultural Heritage* (Seoul: Hankookmunhwasa, 2011), pp.155-158; <http://www.templestay.com>

¹⁵⁵'Seon' is the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese word 'Chán (禪),' which in turn is derived from the Sanskrit word Dhyāna, which can be translated as meditation or concentration. In fact, Japanese pronunciation of Chinese Chan is Zen, which has been popular in English speakers since some Japanese introduced it first to the West. Seon (Chan/Zen) is a school of Mahayana Buddhism which developed in China during the 6th century CE as a meditation practice-oriented tradition. Traditionally, Seon emphasizes practice to attain Enlightenment which generates Wisdom and Compassion for all sentient beings.



People [of the world]) can be interpreted as an expression of Buddhist concerns and caring people in the society.¹⁵⁶

II. Conclusion

I have introduced and reviewed the Buddhist World Heritage in Korea, which has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. At first, regarding the World Heritage, Bulguksa Temple and Seokguram Grotto, Haeinsa Temple Janggeongpanjeon (the Depositories of *Tripitaka Koreana* Woodblocks), and Gyeongju Historic Areas were reviewed. These are National Treasures of Korea and masterpiece of arts in Asia and the world. They signified Buddhist ideals which to be realized on this earth for the peaceful and blissful world. Second, for the Memory of the World, woodblocks for *Tripitaka Koreana* and the venerable Seon Master Baekun's *Jikjisimcheyojeol*, which is known the oldest book printed with movable metal type throughout the world, were described. They provide spiritual meal and medicine, as well as intellectual and academic sources. The wooden and metal printing methods of them have been pioneers of its history and pride of Buddhists for contribution to the world. Third, for the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, Yeongsanjae, a Buddhist ritual ceremony in which Dharma service with singing and various dances are included, was introduced. It shows and offers people to remember and revive the events on the Vulture Peak where the Buddha Sakyamuni taught his congregation the supreme Dharma. It contains spiritual music and dance for people to offer spiritual meal and to attain enlightenment for all participants including gods and departed souls. In addition, Seon Buddhist practice and peace-loving spirit of Buddhism in Korea were mentioned as to be appreciated and recognized as universal value for humanity.

I have intended to point out that those cultural heritage of Korea described above are not only for Korea but also for all human beings throughout the world as a world heritage and a common property for all peoples, who should take responsibilities of preservation and appreciation together in the global context. Finally, in short, I would like to suggest that all Buddhists of various traditions, including Theravada and Mahayana, learn and share their cultural heritage with each other to promote Buddhism and spread Buddhist culture around the globe for humanity and a peaceful world. To commemorate and celebrate the 2600 years anniversary of Attainment of Enlightenment of the Buddha we should refresh our resolution for preservation of the traditional heritage and development of Buddhist culture relevance to situations worldwide.

¹⁵⁶John H. Koo and Andrew C. Nahm, *An Introduction to Korean Culture* (Seoul: Hollym, 1997), pp.164-165.



THE DHAMMA AS THE BUDDHIST HERITAGES IN CHINA

Prof. Dr. Yuanci

The Buddhist Academy of China,

Beijing, China

The fact is that the teachings of the Lord Buddha in the earliest texts such as the *Sutra of Forty-two Chapters* (also called the *Sutra of Forty-two Sections*, Chinese: 四十二章經)¹⁵⁷ have illuminated China since the beginning of the first Century A.D., and removes the Chinese ignorance of various possibilities of life after death, of the concepts as *khamma*, *kusala dhamma*, *akusala dhamma*, good and bad results, of the Four Noble Truths, and *paramitas*. Therefore, the teachings of the Lord Buddha and Buddhist heritage like the texts and scriptures, relics, temples, caves, mountains, traditions, cultures, functions, practices and so on, are respected, valued, inherited, giving benefits and blessing to China.

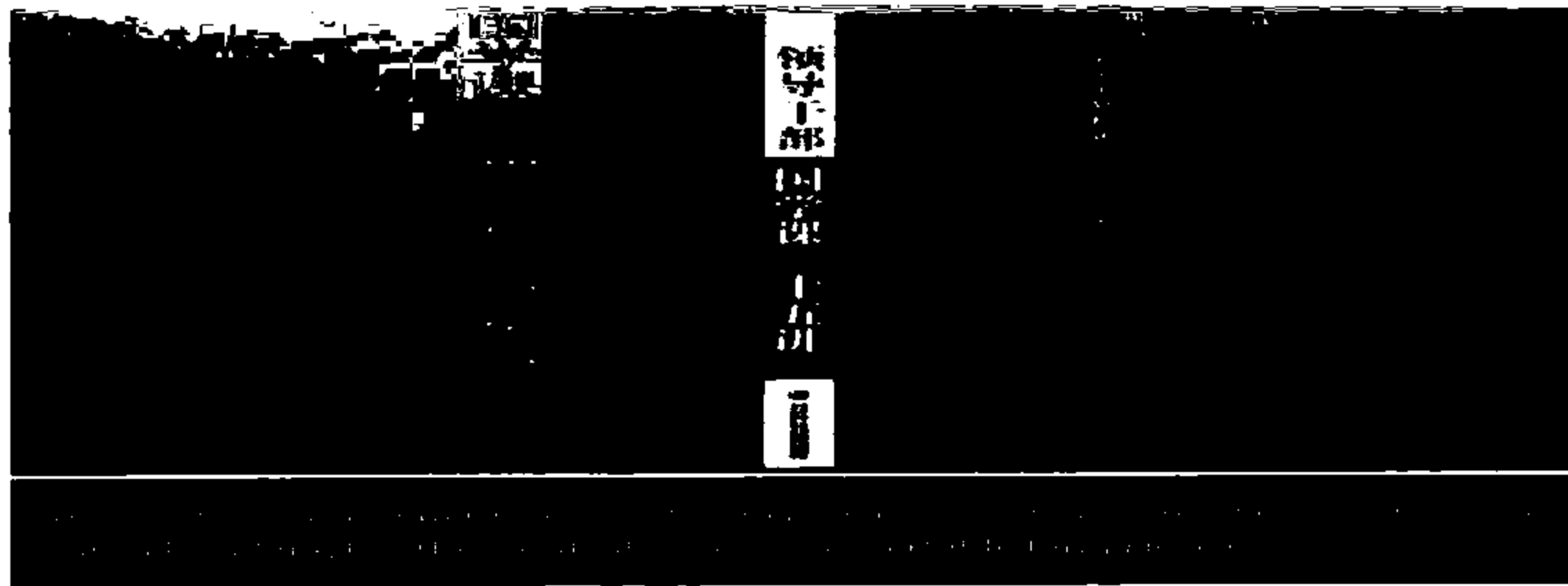
As the Buddha taught that “having the Dhamma as one’s island, the Dhamma as one’s refuge, seeking no other refuge,”¹⁵⁸ to respect this advice, to spread and protect the Buddha’s teachings, Buddhist texts, scriptures and Tipitaka in Chinese become extremely important. Ways have been taken for the purposes of stopping fire, water, insects, war, and other disasters to the existing Dharma – the teachings of the Buddha. More than four methods have been taken in China for the protection, inheritance and spread of the Buddha’s Dharma. In the earlier time, the Chinese Buddhist texts were manuscripts. Later on, the method of printing books has been used. Buddhist scriptures were inscribed and carved on wood slabs, and printed on papers. This method of printing Buddhist books has been used from the time of at least Tang Dynasty.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ This first Buddhist text was translated into Chinese by xxxx in the East Han dynasty during the time of Emperor Ming of Han, Liu Zhuang (28 AD-75 AD).

¹⁵⁸ The Mahaparinibbana Sutra was translated into Chinese in the Jin Dynasty (晋朝).

¹⁵⁹ One of the Buddhist books printed in the Tang Dynasty can be seen in the British Museum.



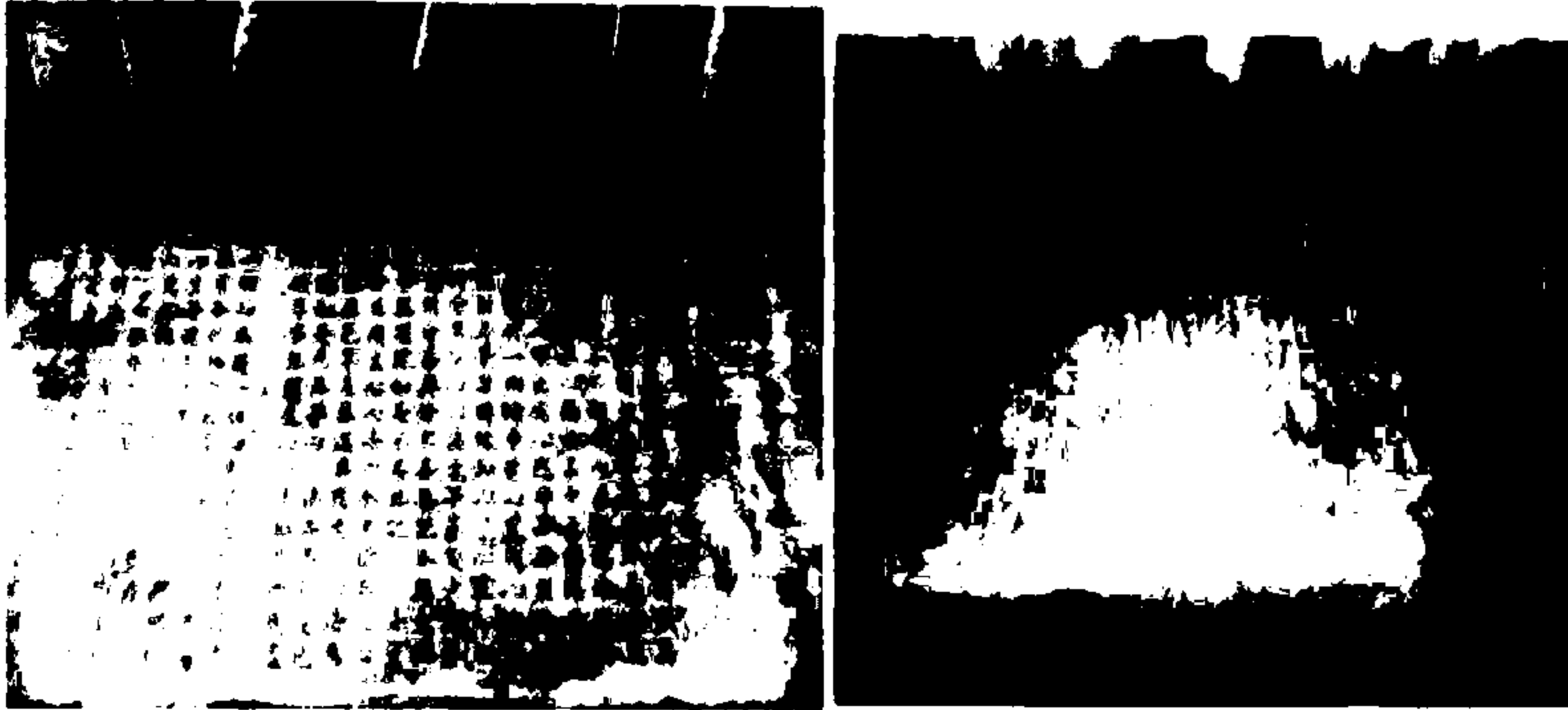


A book entitled *The Chinese National Culture in Twenty-Five Lessons For the Leaders In China*¹⁶⁰ (see above picture) has shown that since the Buddhist wisdom was officially introduced into China, most Chinese emperors were supporting Buddhism and they used the Buddhist wisdom well developed and governed their country. This is true because after the time of the Eastern Han, almost every dynasty in China has shown their capacities of protecting inheritance and attentions of sponsoring for organizing, translating the Buddhist texts into Chinese, editing and producing the books of their own Buddhist Tripitaka.

According to the later Buddhist studies, over 20 kinds of Buddhist Canon in Chinese were produced in the history of China. But some of them are not existent. In this article, some existent Buddhist Canons in Chinese are briefly introduced as the following:

To value and prevent the loss of them, from Sui Dynasty(A.D.581 - 618) to Ming Dynasty(A.D.1368 - 1644), Chinese monks for many generation inscribed more than 1000 Buddhist scriptures on 14,620 stone slabs, plus 82 stone inscriptions, housed and buried them in nine caves and a crypt on the Fangshan hill near Beijing. Those scriptures inscribed on the stone slabs and tablets are now well known as *Fangshan Stone Scriptures* (房山石□) in the world.

¹⁶⁰It was edited and published by the Central Party School Publishing House.



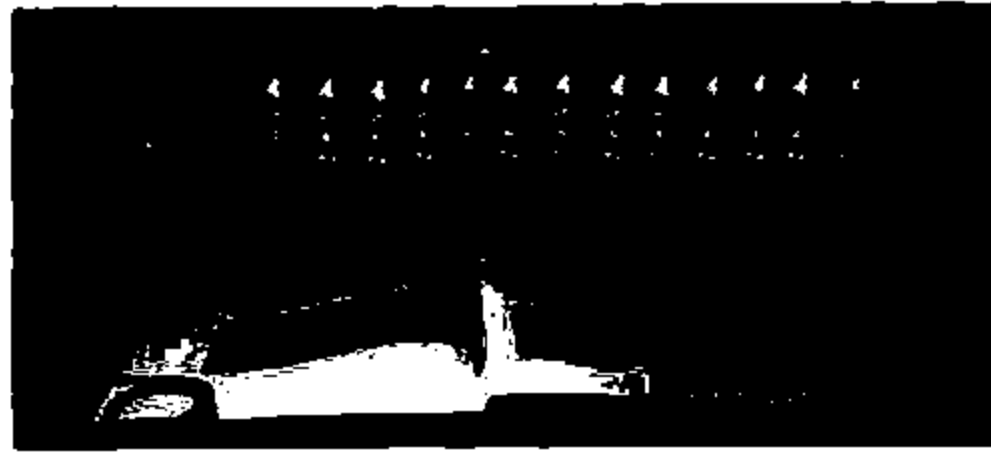
Stone slabs with the Buddhist scriptures in the caves on Fangshan hill

In the years 1956 and 2000, stone rubbings of *Fangshan Stone Scriptures*, which were inscribed in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, and also in the times of Liao, Jin, and the Ming Dynasty, were made by the Buddhist Association of China. Later on, they were photostatted and reduplicated. The photostatted stone rubbings of *Fangshan Stone Scriptures* have been published in 30 volumes. Since then, *Fangshan Stone Scriptures* in a new form of photostatted stone rubbings are inherited and available for the public and scholars to study.



Making stone rubbings of *Fangshan Stone Scriptures*





It is worthy to note that out of over 1000 Fangshan stone scriptures more than 60 texts are not seen in the rest of Chinese Buddhist Canons (*tipitaka*). Most important is that their original texts, according to scholars' studies, were sourced from the manuscripts belonging to the court of Tang Dynasty. It is clear that stone slabs and steles used to inscribe the texts in the times of Sui and Tang Dynasty are bigger than the others and housed together in eight caves on the Fangshan hill. The names of the inscribed texts are same to those in the *Kaiyuan Catalogue of Buddhist Texts*¹⁶¹. The texts translated by the great monks such as Kumarajiva and Xuan Zang (玄奘) are among them.

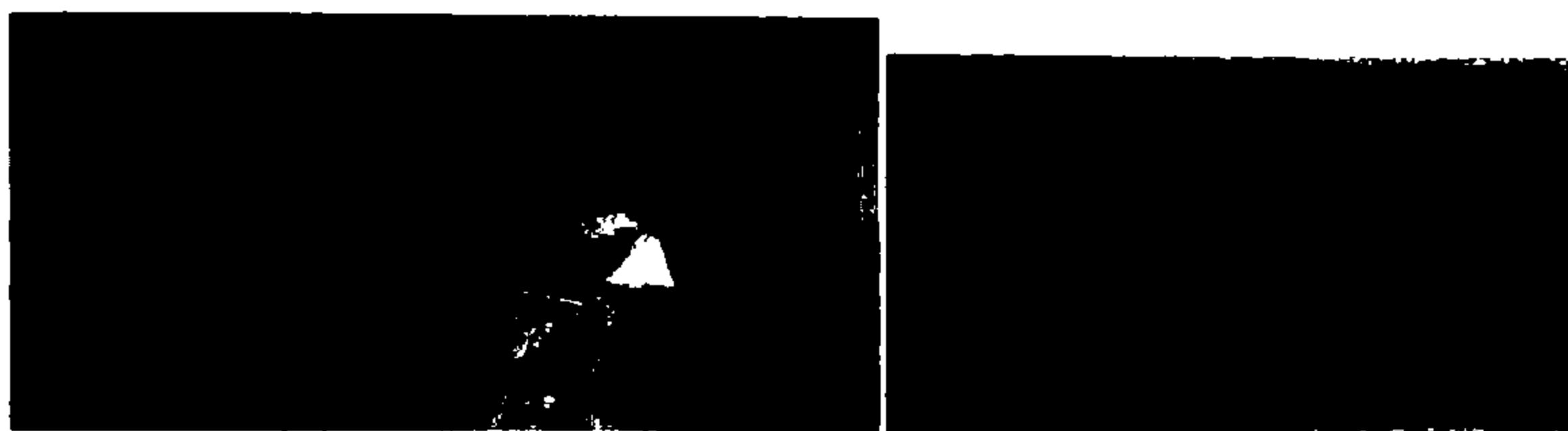


It is also interesting to know that a part of the *Fangshan Stone Scriptures* inscribed in the time of Liao and Jin, has been identified as the texts of the *Qidan Tripitaka*(契丹藏)¹⁶². However, it was safely stored in a crypt in the Yunju temple at the foot of Fangshan hill, and stone slabs used for inscriptions are smaller than those in the

¹⁶¹This *Kaiyuan Catalogue of Buddhist Texts* (开元释教录 *Kaiyuan Shijiaolu*) was edited in the time of Kaiyuan (A.D.713-755) in the Tang Dynasty.

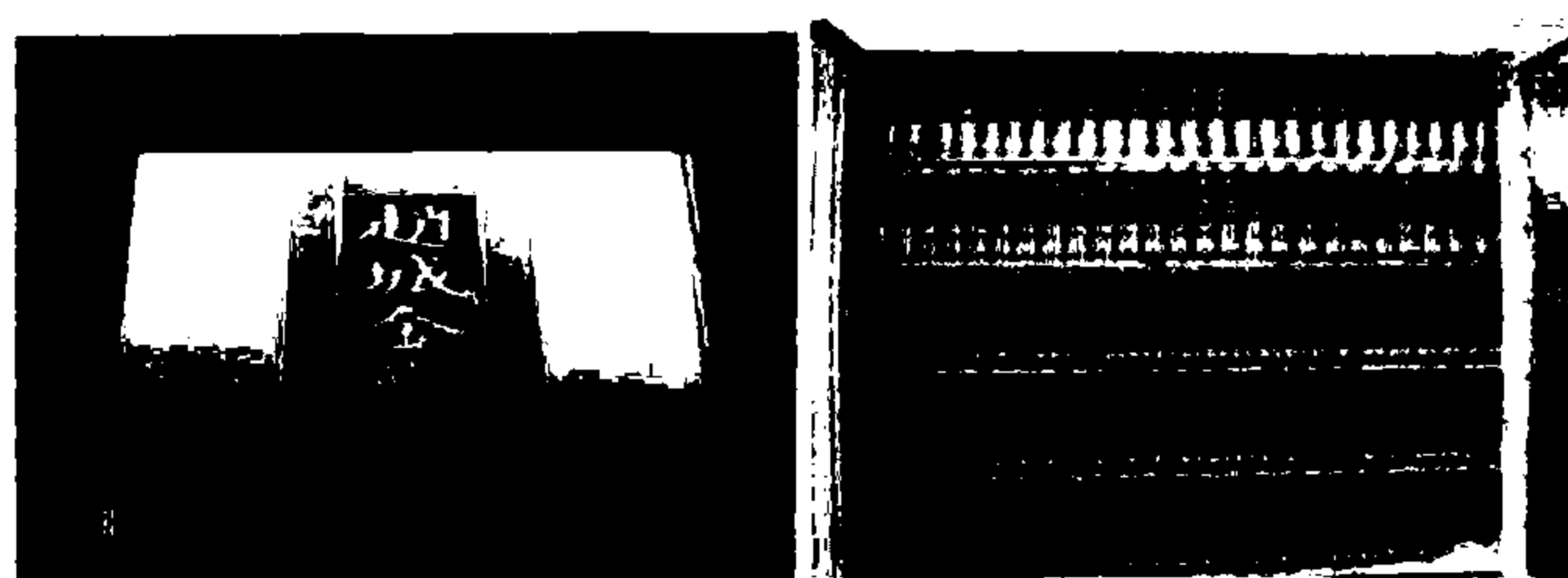
¹⁶² Also named *Liao Tripitaka* as it was edited in the time of Liao (A.D.1031 ~ 1054) , which was edited after the *Kaibao Catalogue of Buddhist Texts*.

times of Sui and Tang Dynasty. Scholars discovered that the existent texts¹⁶³ inscribed in the time of Liao are more than those in the time of Sui and Tang Dynasty.¹⁶⁴



On the stone slabs the *Fangshan Stone Scriptures* inscribed in the time of Liao and Jin

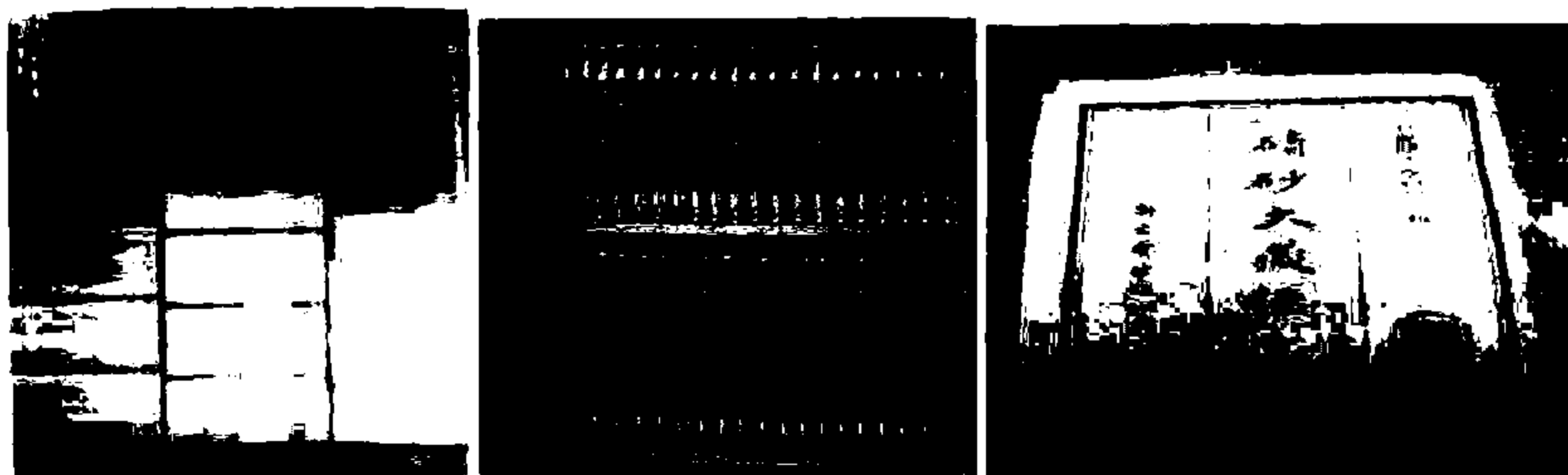
One of the earlier paper printing Buddhist Canon in Chinese is the *Zhaocheng-Jinzang* (□城金藏), which was originally produced in the time of Jin and Yuan (A.D.1139—1173) and it totally has 68,113 inscribed wood slabs. It was reproduced in A.D.1931-1936 in Beijing, with a totality of 6900 fasciculi in 122 volumes in its new form as the following picture. It has included the translations of Buddhist texts and written works done from the Han Dynasty to year 1172. According to scholars' studies, 46 texts in it are not seen in any other Buddhist Canons in China. It is a real treasury store of the Dhamma for Buddhists and scholars to study early Buddhism in China. And it was photostatted and reprinted in 122 volumes in a new form.



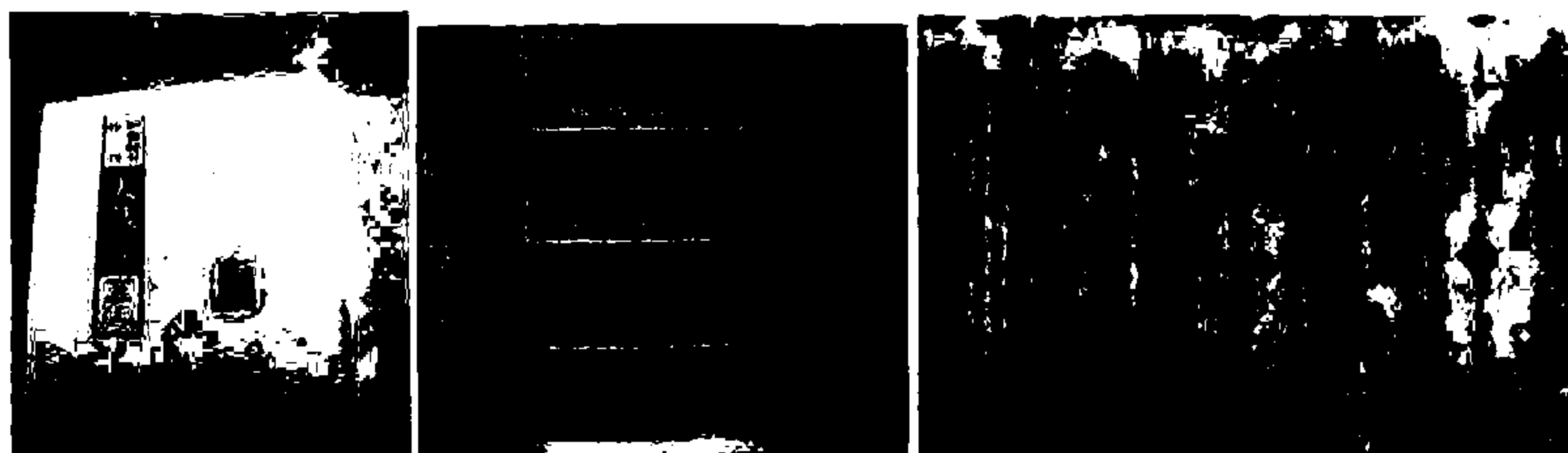
Zhaocheng-Jinzang (□城金藏)

¹⁶³ 《契丹藏》约在辽兴宗（1031—1054）时开雕，又名辽藏。它在《开宝藏》大藏修订本的基础上增收了《华严经随品赞》、《一切佛菩萨名集》、《随愿往生集》、《释摩诃衍论》、《大日经义释》、《大日经义释演秘钞》、《释教最上乘秘密藏陀罗尼集》等当时流传于北方的特有经论译本，先后历时30余年刻成。据辽咸雍四年（1068）燕京天王寺志延所撰《阳台山清水院创造藏经记》载称，这部藏经共579帙，千字文编次天字到灭字。以前并未发现有流传的印本，直到1978年修理山西应县木塔时，才在塔中发现50轴残卷；图卷轴本版式为每版24行，每行15—18字不等（也有每行字数较为一致的经卷，如《无法则陀罗尼经》卷13，“麻”字号，每行均为17字）。

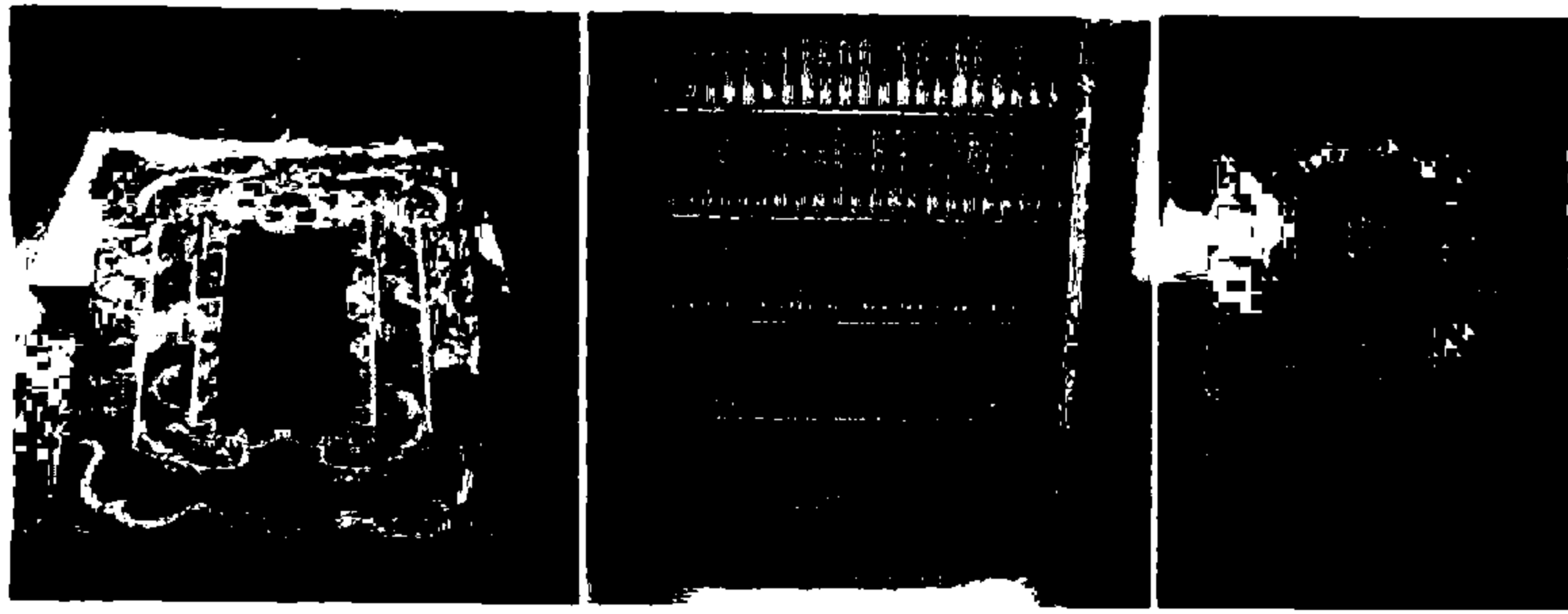
Further, during the Song Dynasty (宋朝), a Buddhist Canon named the Ji-sha-zang was originally produced in A.D. 1216-1322, reproduced in A.D. 1931~193, with a totality of 1532 fasciculi and 1532 individual texts in 593 volumes in the following new form. It contains the texts translated from A.D.1080 to 1321, and more Vajirayana texts and the records of Chan Masters included. It was photostatted and reprinted in 40 volumes as the following picture shown.



Further more, in year 1336 in the Yuan Dynasty (元朝), a Buddhist Canon named *Dazangjing* (大藏經) with a totality of 6500 fascicui was edited and published by the state. Part of its existent texts can be seen as the following form.

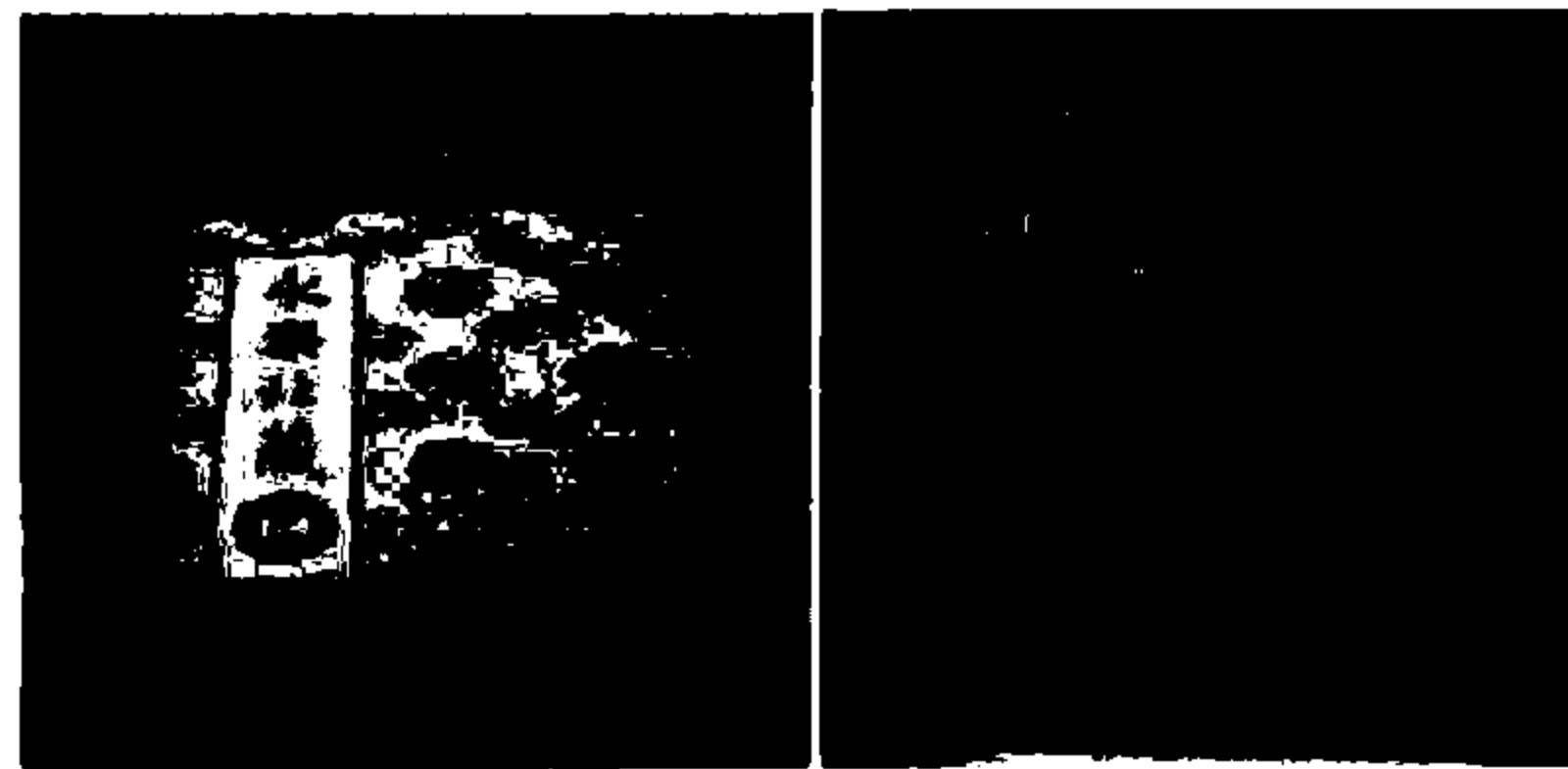


During the Ming Dynasty, a Buddhist Canon named *Hongwu-Nan-Zang* (洪武南藏) was originally inscribed and printed by the Stated in A.D 1372 - 1398, with a totality of 7000 fasciculi, 1600 individual texts, which were photostatted and reduplicated with a total number of 141 volumes in recent years.



Hongwu-Nan-Zang (洪武南藏)

Another Buddhist Canon named *Yongle-Bei-Zang* (永樂北藏) was inscribed by the Royal in A.D.1419 - 1440, originally produced with a totality of 6930 fasciculi, 1662 individual texts, which were photostatted in year 2000-2001 and reprinted in 200 volumes shown as the following picture .



Yongle-Bei-Zang (永樂北藏)

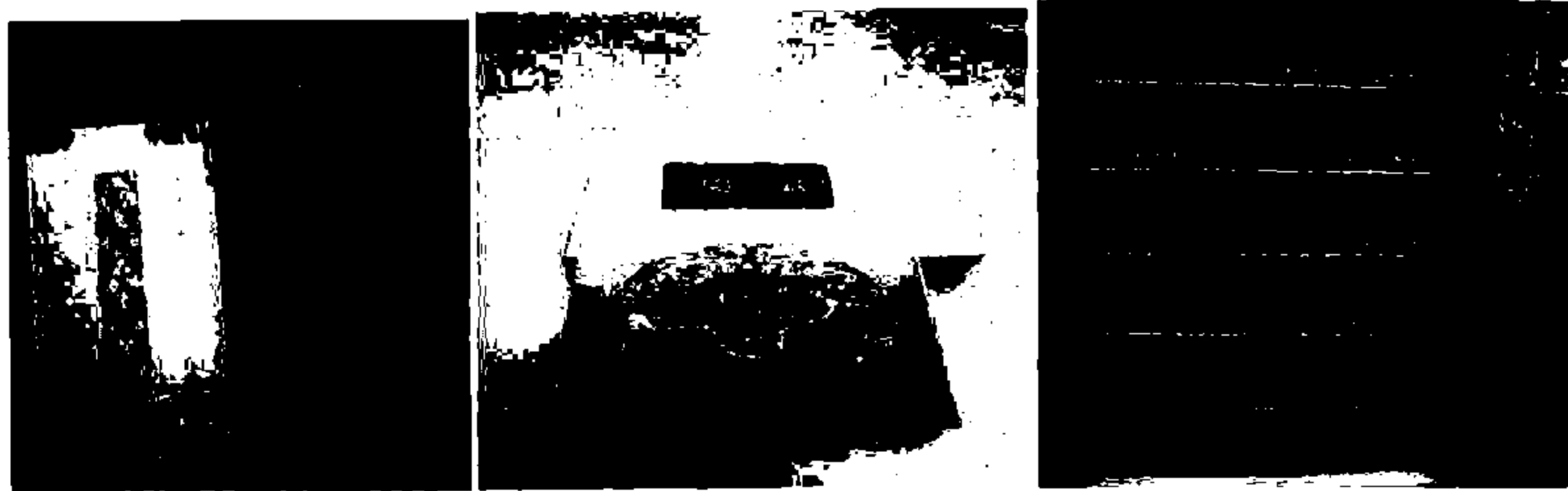
A Buddhist Canon named *Jiaxing-Zang* (嘉靖藏) was originally produced in A.D. 1589 - 1711, with a totality of 10,332 fasciculi, 2195 texts including 532 works written in China. It has three parts: the Genuine part containing the translations of the Mahayana Tripitaka and the Non-Mahayana Tripitaka, additional part containing the most translations of the works made by the ancient Indian and other Masters, a further additional part containing the works made by Chinese ancient masters including the texts of Buddhist sects in China, such as the treatises and books of Tiantai School, Chan School, Vinaya School, Madhyamika School, Vijnaptimātratā School and so on. *Jiaxing-Zang* is a really valuable source for studying Buddhism in China. It was photostatted and reprinted in 40 volumes in its new form as the following.





Jiaxing-Zang (嘉□藏)

During the Qing Dynasty, a Buddhist Canon named *Qianlong Dazong-Jing* (乾隆大藏□) was originally made the Royal and printed in A.D. 1734 - 1738, with a totality of 73024 existent inscribed wood slabs, 1127 fasciculi. It was reprinted in A.D. 1991-1993 in Beijing, and photostatted and reprinted in new forms, with a totality of 168 volumes as the following pictures shown. It contains the most texts of *Jiaxing-Zang* (嘉□藏) and the Buddhist works made from A.D. 1710 - 1738.



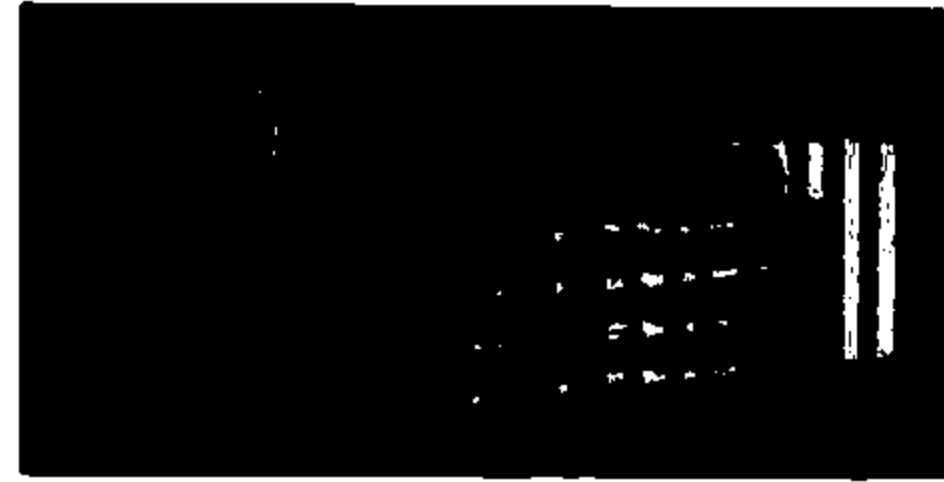
Qianlong Dazong-Jing (乾隆大藏□)

In A.D.1909-1913, a Buddhist Canon named *Pinqie-Zang* (□伽藏) was printed, with a totality of 8418 fasciculi, 1916 individual texts edited in 414 volumes. In A.D.1998, it was re-edited and printed in modern form with a totality of 100 volumes, which included the Buddhist works done from A.D 1737 - 1909.



Pinqie-Zang(□伽藏)

In A.D. 1943-1945, a Buddhist Canon named *Puhui- Dazang-jing* was edited and printed in Shanghai city, and reprinted in A.D.1997, with a totality of 100 volumes, which contains the texts of *Pinqie-Zang* (□伽藏) and the Theravada texts partly translated into Chinese.



Puhui- Dazang-jing (普慧藏)

In A.D.1982-1994, a Buddhist Canon named *Zhonghua- Da-zang-jing* (中□藏) was officially edited in China, with a totality of 106 volumes, 23,000 fasciculi and over 4200 texts, and printed since A.D.2002. At the time of editing it, the Buddhist Canons mentioned above were refereed.



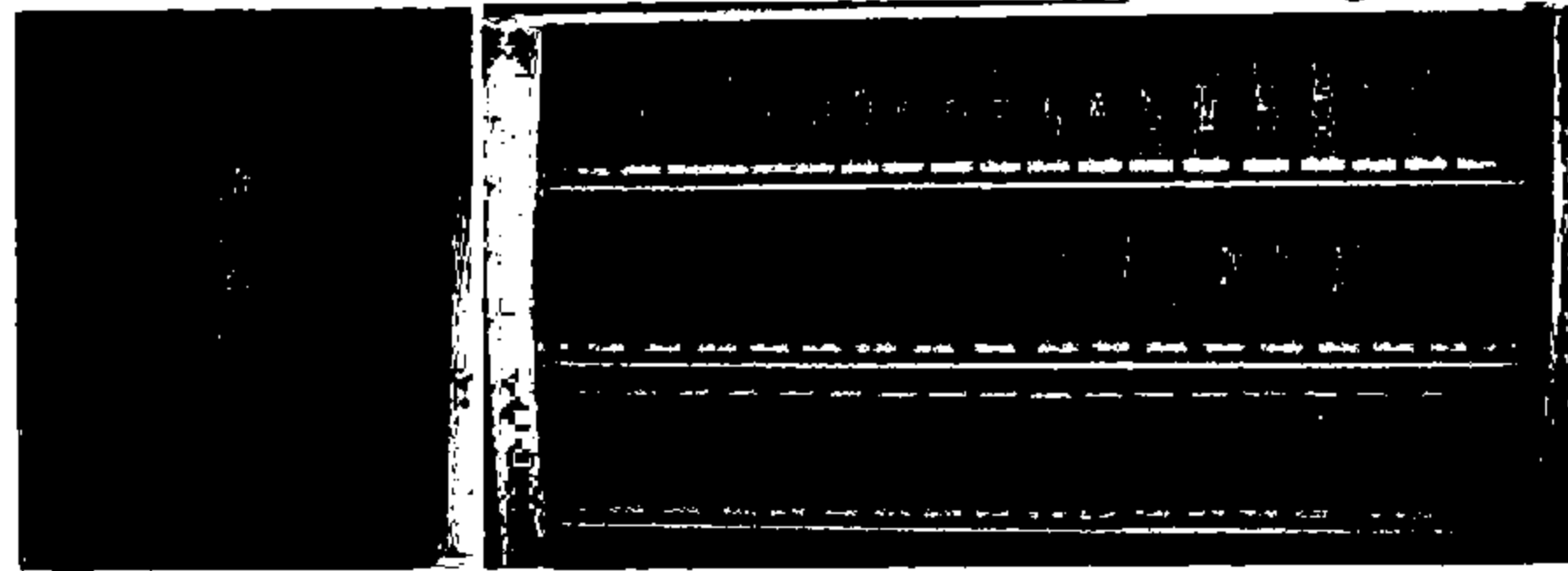
Zhonghua- Da-zang-jing (中□藏)

In addition, the Chinese in recent years used the materials and sourced originated from Dunhuang Caves and made the *Dunhuang Dazangjing* including *Dunhuang-Baozang* (*Treasury Stores*敦煌宝藏) in 140 volume, the *Dunhuang-Yishu* (*Heritage and Relic Books* 敦煌□□) in 139 volumes, and *Fabao-Dunhuang Xiyu-wenxian* (*Non Chinese Literatures* 法宝敦煌西域文献) in 34 volumes, printed in the following ways.

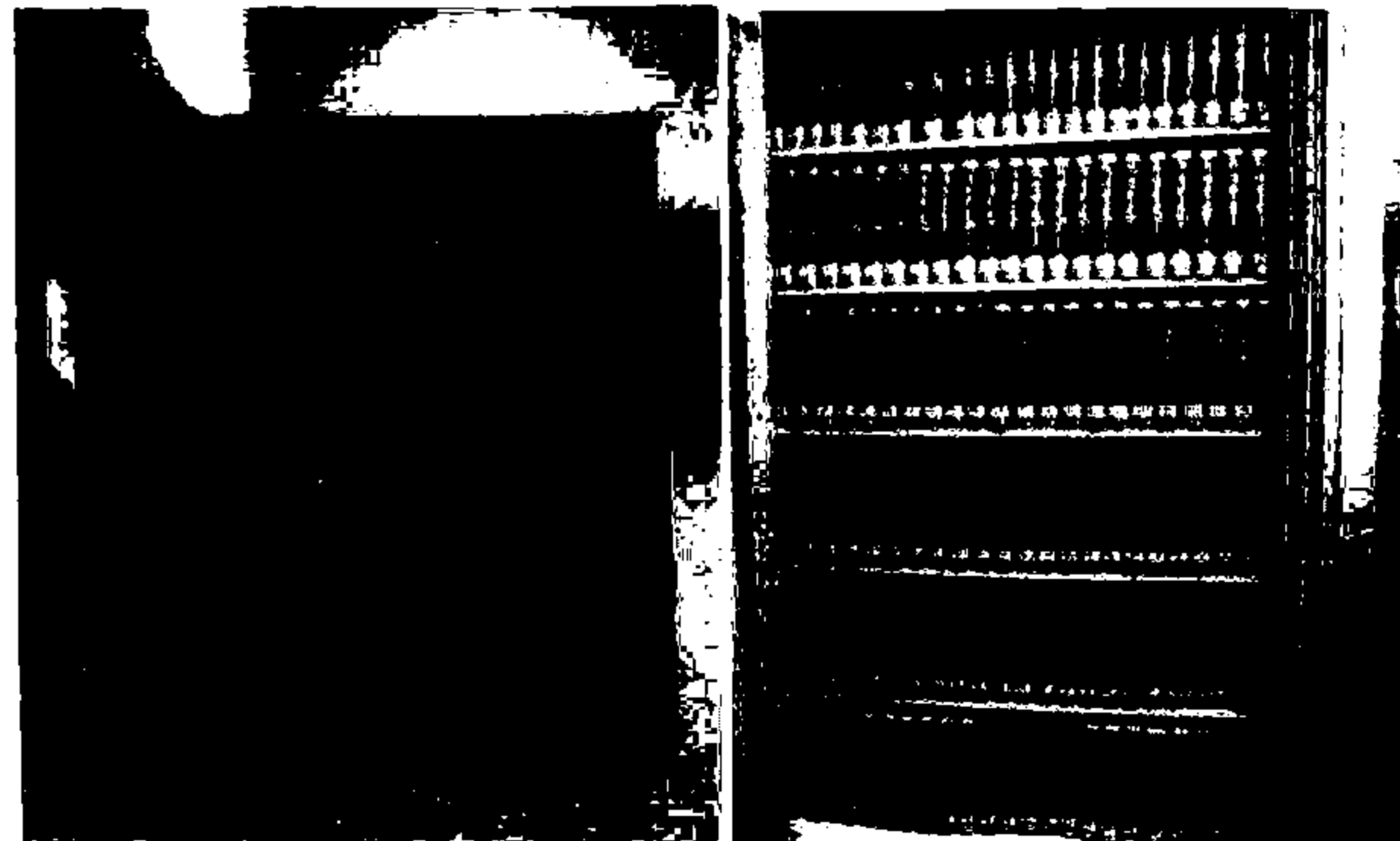




Fabao-Dunhuang Xiyu-wenxian (法宝敦煌西域文献)



Dunhuang -Yishu (Heritage and Relic Books 敦煌□□)

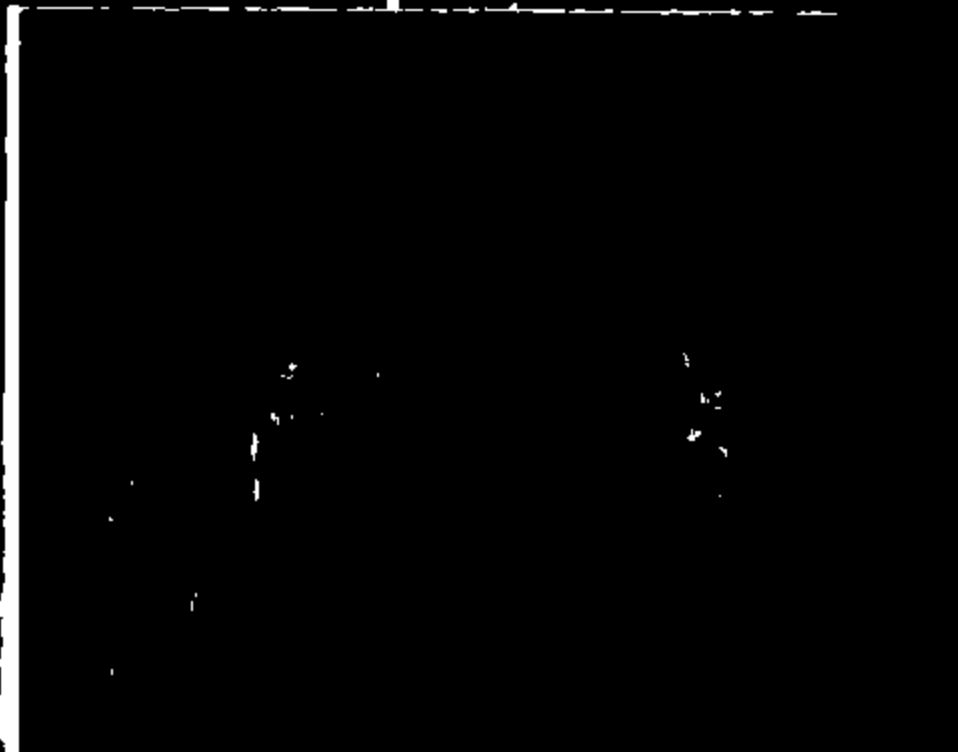
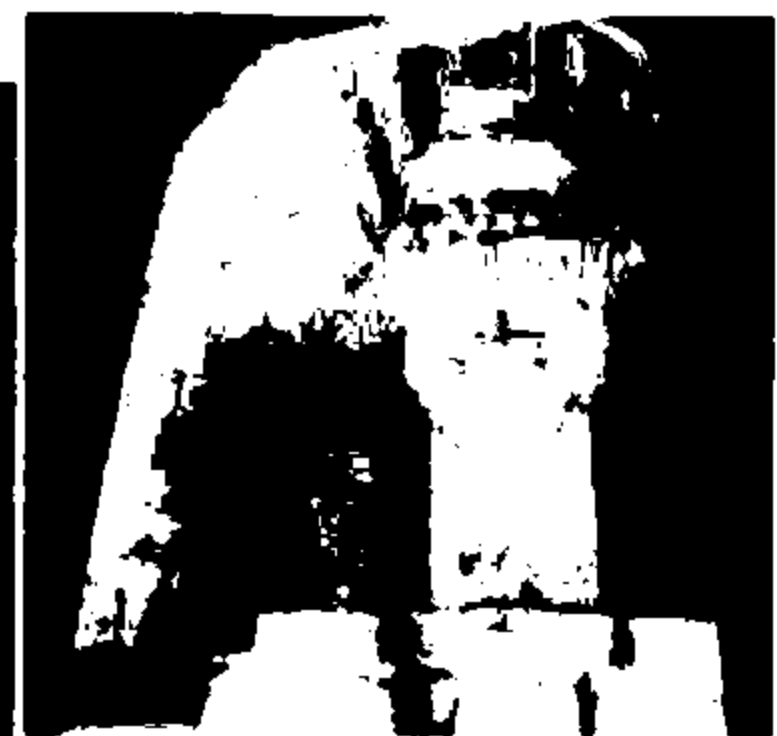


Dunhuang-Baozang (敦煌宝藏)

The above pictures¹⁶⁵ and narrations demonstrate that the Dhamma as the teachings of the Buddha have been inherited in forms of stone inscriptions and printed books by the Buddhists and Royals in China since the time of Han Dynasty down to now. They have been really valued, protected, saved and herniated in China.

The Buddha's teachings have been also carried out by various arts demonstrated in the Dunhuang and Longmen Grottoes. Those can be seen through the following photographs.

¹⁶⁵ All pictures of books taken in the Library of the Buddhist Academy of China in November, 2012.



龙门石窟 (Longmen Grottoes) 主要开凿于北魏时期 (Northern Wei, 386-557) 和隋唐时期 (Northern Song, 960-1127)。龙门石窟艺术在中国历史上有很高的地位，被奉为世界最伟大、最古老、最丰富的艺术宝库之一。龙门石窟艺术体现了佛教的智慧和宇宙观与世俗观，展示了佛教的智慧和通过修行，人人皆可成佛的九叫之道。

In addition to the above selectively mentioned heritages in China, the well-known Buddha's tooth and finger relics have been respected, glorified and protected in the Lingguang Temple in Beijing and Xi-an.





One of the characters regarding the Buddhist heritage in China is that the Buddhas are enshrined in cities and villages while the Bodhisattvas are on the well-known mountains such as Wutai, Emei, Jiuhua and Putuo.

The Buddhist texts in Chinese, Tibetan and Pali are studied in China by their followers and scholars. Buddhist meditation, chanting and ritual performances are practised in time. Traditionally Buddhist Ordinations including bhikhsuni ordination, and school practices have been normally conducted.

In short, Buddha's Dharma and Relics as Buddhist heritages have been protected and respected in China.



PICTURING THE MAHĀJANAKAJĀTAKA (539)

Dr. Sarah Shaw (Manchester)

Oxford University (UK)

Throughout Buddhist history, the *Jātakas* have been the means of distilling Buddhist principle in a form that is understood by the laity as well as monks. So their depiction and episodes that are chosen to communicate any tale in a particular context, offer great insight into the history and reception of Buddhism. This paper argues that the *Jātakas* offer a particularly rich way of enacting doctrine, through their historical portrayal with highly varied emphasis and weight to suit different demands of context, patronage and setting. It briefly explores the reception, depiction and presentation of the *MahājanakaJātaka* story in varied historical, geographical and situational contexts, in an attempt to argue that artistic depiction, accompanied by the story telling, enables an emphasis to be placed on different aspects of the narrative, according to the needs and preoccupations of the people who would be listening to them and seeing them portrayed. So, depictions of the *MahājanakaJātaka*(MJ) are explored in such sites as the cave paintings in Cave 1 of Ajanṭā (5th Century CE), *sīmā* depictions at Thaton, depictions at Pagan, and Siamese temple and manuscript art and finally terracotta tiles at the Shwedegon pagoda. The paper focuses on this story as a means of investigating ways that the *Jātakas*, in particular the last ten, through various re-imaginings, visualizations and representations, have been historically particularly adaptive as a means of communicating Buddhist principle and sustaining the Buddhist heritage, often in new environments and settings.

The Mahājanaka and the Ten Perfections

The *Mahājanaka-Jātaka*(MJ), one of the 547 stories describing the Bodhisatta's many lives spent preparing for Buddhahood, has historically been singled out from the earliest days of the Buddhist tradition. Despite the attribution in the commentarial story from the present to renunciation (*nekkhamma*), the third perfection, it is mentioned in the *Jātaka-nidāna* as representing vigour (*virīya*), the fifth, an association that it has nearly always retained. The verse associated with this may be canonical, if late:

All the men died in the ocean, with no shore in sight;

But there was nothing at variance in my mind and this is the perfection of vigour

Atīradassī jalamajjhe hatā sabbe va mānūsā.



So from this early stage this perfection is associated with the events connected with sea wreck, the Bodhisatta swimming after his ship is wrecked, and the goddess rescuing him after seven days, an occurrence that delivers the true king to the auspicious slab at Mithilā. Commentarial material makes no assignation of the ten perfections to each one of the Great Ten (*Mahānipāta*), the last ten stories in the collection, known now as *thosochat* or *sip chat*. These ten start to assume great importance in the tradition, however, at least since their depiction as a series in *sīmā* stones and tiles at Thaton, in what is now Southern Burma, in the eleventh century; at some time after this period, although it is not clear when, each of the perfections also becomes associated with a particular one of the last ten stories. Assignations often contrast to the attribution given in the commentarial introduction, 'The Story from the Present' in each tale, or indeed with the *Jātaka-Nidāna* attribution. Lists vary in different regions, a phenomenon explored by Naomi Appleton (Appleton 2010: 71ff). Despite its own, late, attribution to renunciation, and a great emphasis in the textual story on the king giving up the throne, MJ is always associated in subsequent traditions with vigour (*virīya*).

Indeed as one of the Great Ten (*Mahānipāta*), the tale has been constantly represented throughout Southeast Asia, in particular in Burma and Thailand where this small collection have been pre-eminent. Unlike others, such as the *Sāma Jātaka* or the *Vessantara Jātaka*, it seems to have few counterparts in other Indic literatures. It does not appear in the *Mahāvastu* or any *Jātakamāla* series.¹⁶⁶

This paper explores the interpretation and representation of MJ, by examining in a few historical and geographical contexts the scenes and episodes that are depicted and the varied weight accorded to these in different times. Motifs, characters and tropes associated with the tale are, as we shall see, also prominent in para-canonical *Jātakas*, and so are often depicted in temple art where these perennially popular stories are portrayed. It will be argued that depiction of this tale, along with motifs associated with it, provides not only a useful 'litmus' test of the varied preoccupations of the cultures that depict it, but also that it demonstrates a phenomenon whereby the portrayal of key events in each of the Great

¹⁶⁶ There are wrecks in the *Mahāvastu*, but the story line is different, and there is also a story of a renunciant king at Mithilā, who renounces after an encounter with an ascetic despite the protestations of his court ladies, but no maritime incident occurs in this tale (*Mahāvastu* III 449; see also Grey 2000: 228–231). For Vessantara variants see Gombrich introduction to Cone/Gombrich 1977 and for the development of Sāma storylines in art and literature see Brockington 2010.



Ten start to become emblematic for its respective perfection. Peter Skilling notes representations of the Great Ten 'are not illustrations: they exist in their own right, as amplifications and perfections of the Buddha (Skilling 2008: 72)'. The paper will not argue that there is a self-conscious tradition in this regard, but rather that the use of a largely intact shared textual base in these contexts, alongside a growing emphasis on the last ten stories, has produced not only great variety, but also a striking consistency of interpretation for this particular story.

Little work on following the history of the representation of a single *Jātaka* in Southeast and Southern Asia has, to my knowledge, been undertaken. Indeed I am not aware of much chronological and geographically varied study of story depiction of this kind, which is inevitably speculative, but as an exercise it was suggested to me by Richard Gombrich's introduction to the *Vessantara-Jātaka*, where he draws conclusions about the understanding of the story from scenes that are particularly emphasized in Sri Lankan Buddhist temple art, in the frequency of the elephant giving episode as a means of symbolizing the tale and its associated perfection, generosity. Mary Brockington has demonstrated the continued appeal of story lines associated with the *Sāma-Jātaka* in Indian literature and temple depictions (Brockington 2010). Lilian Handlin's recent study of the depiction of the *Vidhurapaṇḍita-Jātaka* (Handlin 2010), also one of the Great Ten, researches episodes emphasized in art at various stages in Burmese history. Such exercises are useful, because they indicate the extent to which portrayal reflects text, how people understood and used the text, and hints of any shared interpretation amongst differing regions. This paper does not offer a comprehensive historical study, rather an attempt to explore some visual means by which the story has been depicted: it does not attempt to include or reference all.

As an aid to descriptions of each depiction, this paper employs a method outlined and applied by Vidya Dehejia (Dehejia 1990; 1991 and 1998, 81-104). This divides early Indic art representations into various types according to their mode of narration: monoscenic active, monoscenic static, continuous, sequential, synoptic, conflated and network. Monoscenic active depiction takes one scene of action, where the protagonist is involved in activity. The static monoscenic mode takes one scene denoting being, or state, rather than action, such as that used for Buddha figures or representations of the *parinibbāna*, for instance. Continuous narrative depicts multiple scenes, but they flow into one another without differentiating markers. In a sequential narrative the artist presents a number of episodes, clearly differentiated from one another by architectural features such as pilasters, or by boundaries within the depiction, such as decorative lines. A synoptic narrative represents a multiple series of events within a single visual field, without any



temporal arrangement and with the repeated image of a central figure in all. A conflated narrative includes the hero, depicted once, in a series of varied events. The network pattern places episodes at various points across the entire visual field, without an obvious order or sequence (Dehejia 1991). Dehejia argues that these methods would be used by differing guilds or workshops of artists, perhaps even according to a known indigenous classificatory system, and she finds varied use of these modes at sites such as Ajanṭā, often mixed within the same cave or extent of mural.

For the purposes of this study, this method is employed as a descriptive tool, although it does not itself reveal a feature we shall see is primary in MJ depictions and many others of the last 'Great Ten' *Jātakas*. This is that one cluster of a series of incidents, perhaps as an active or static monoscenic depiction of one scene from that series, or a conflated or synoptic picture of these incidents, is frequently chosen to depict the story as a whole. So while this terminology, which has changed the vocabulary for understanding and appreciating religious art, is used where possible, it does not itself reveal this primary feature of depictions if they are taken as a historical continuity. This suggests that the communication of a story in Thailand and Burma is characterized by an underlying common approach that also seems to apply to depictions of others of the Great Ten, but that this feature cannot yet be analysed solely in terms of this otherwise invaluable classificatory system.

The story

Before we move on to discussion of the portrayal of the tale, here are the basic episodes that contribute to one of the longest of the *Jātaka* stories in the collection. The king of Videha has two sons, Polajanaka and Aritṭhajanaka. After his death the latter assumes the throne, and the former becomes vice-roy. The king, hearing erroneously that his brother is plotting to kill him, has him imprisoned, but he escapes, raises an army and kills his brother, thus taking the throne. Aritṭhajanaka's pregnant widow, with the help of King Sakka, escapes to another country, and raises her child in the home of a kindly Brahmin. At the age of sixteen her son, Janaka, the Bodhisatta, hears of his past, and determines to retake the kingdom. In order to gain funds he sets to sea, but the ship is wrecked. Resourceful where other passengers resort to vain prayers and vows, he covers himself with oil, eats a large amount of sugar, and clings to the mast as long as possible. As all the others perish he leaps into the sea and swims for seven days. The goddess Maṇimekhalā, appointed by the Four Kings as guardian of those who have been shipwrecked but keep precepts and are generous, after seven days visits him and offers him a number of challenges, questioning his vain struggle. He defends himself, saying he



is 'doing what is to be done by men', so she agrees to take him to his 'heart's delight': the city of Mithilā, where his father had been king. Polajanaka has meanwhile become ill on the day Janaka goes to sea, and dies when the ship is wrecked.

The goddess lays Janaka on an auspicious slab outside the city, where he is found by the magical horse and chariot of the kingdom. His body shows the auspicious marks of the ruler. After a series of tests of his suitability to rule, he wins the hand of the princess and the kingdom, and asks questions relating to the *paccekabuddhas* who used to stay nearby. After being installed as king and bringing his mother home, his wife has a son. One day the king sees two mango trees, one without fruit and one with. The one with fruit is stripped bare by hungry passers by: the one without remains intact. He decides to become an ascetic, and shaving his head and adopting the style and dress of a *paccekabuddha*, leaves the palace, unrecognized by his wife, Yasodharā in an earlier incarnation, who thus symbolically frees him from his position. She, however, rouses his many other beautiful wives to dissuade him, and incites the citizens of the kingdom to follow him and try and get him back. Despite eloquent and urgent pleas for his return, he leaves the city and draws out a line with his ascetic staff (*kattaradaṇḍena*: Ja VI 56), forbidding others to follow him. His wife follows him, up to the time they meet a fletcher making arrows, who stresses the importance of using only one eye, not two, to do the job well. Sometime after this riddle, she eventually gives up and returns to Mithilā. The tale is filled with tropes connected with *paccekabuddhas*, such as the encounter with the fletcher, and the meeting of the renunciate with a girl with one bangle on one arm on two on another: one, she says is better as it makes no noise.¹⁶⁷ The Bodhisatta goes to the Himalayas, alone, to practise meditation: his wife hands the kingdom over to their son, and also ends her days in meditative attainment.

The story is rich in incident; an artist has to make choices. As we shall see, it is in practice a quite limited range of events that are usually chosen to portray the Bodhisatta's adventures in this particular tale.

Bharhut; Cave 1 Ajaṇṭā; *Sīmā* stones; Pagan; Thai mural; Thai manuscript and Burmese 20th century tiles.

Bharhut and Ajaṇṭā: Jātaka as expression of public devotion

The importance of the tale in early Buddhism is suggested by two of its first known representations, at Bharhut and in the spectacular magnificence of Cave 1 at Ajaṇṭā, in

¹⁶⁷ For discussion of the *pacceka* path, see Norman 1991 and Kloppenborg 1974.



Aurangabad in Maharashtra. The Bharhut depiction is on stone coping, and dates from the second century, in a setting funded apparently by a number of donors. It shows Janaka with Sīvalī visiting the fletcher, or arrow maker, who recommends using only one eye to cut the arrow, an oblique *pacceka* like reference to the solitary life. The scene carries an inscription naming the two protagonists, who are shown of equal stature, and, unusually in the light of later depictions, in clear partnership, despite the solitary message imparted by the fletcher. This monoscenic active scene clearly associates the tale with the perfection of renunciation (*nekkhamma*), and suggests a version very like the present Pāli one, which describes this incident (see J.D. Beglar, 1874, Southeast Quadrant, 10031499, British Library online catalogue).

Renunciation also dominates the Janaka depiction in the spectacular magnificence of Cave 1 at Ajañṭā, in Aurangabad in Maharashtra. Walter Spink has precisely and convincingly ascertained on the basis of comparison with other historical sites, epigraphy and historical background, that work on this cave was executed in a period from the years 460–480 CE, when numerous patrons and donors were contributing to the revival of Ajañṭā's fortunes.¹⁶⁸ Spink, arguing that 'Ajañṭā's development can be analysed more precisely than that of any other monument in the world' (Spink 2006 5: 15), regards Cave 1, as one of the latest caves to have begun on site and brought to near completion, probably under the auspices of the Śivite Hariṣena, the Vakataka emperor, and possibly around 460–480 CE, although there is no epigraphic evidence within the site itself for this.¹⁶⁹

The depictions appear in a cave where the shrine is in the turning of the wheel of the *dhammamudrā*. It is a prestigious and magnificent site, the first encountered, with pillared complexes on either side creating an unprecedented wing format. The walls are twelve metres long and around six metres high. According to Spink, however, while a mini recession in 472 CE meant that the local feudatory ruler Upendragupta stopped work on other caves, work did continue with Cave 1 for longer, supporting his contention that the work had royal sponsorship. The reason for the cave's less prominent siting was because other caves had already been apportioned when Hariṣena started work on this. Spink notes that Ajañṭā art does not represent a slow evolution and gradually developed artistry: during this small time period artists were deliberately introduced from all regions, so the most famous murals were all executed within a narrow time frame of ten years,

¹⁶⁸ See Spink 2006 5: 8.

¹⁶⁹ See Spink 2006 5: 5.



drawing together the expertise and skills of artists from throughout the empire. These would not necessarily be Buddhist, just as the patron does not seem to be, but they too would have perhaps felt themselves to be participating in the auspiciousness of the dedication of the cave. All five patrons, who commissioned the paintings lived to see their completion; only Hariṣeṇa died shortly before the completion of Cave 1: this provides a good reason, Spink suggests, for the fact that it seems despite its magnificence unused.

What is so memorable about Cave 1's sumptuous evocation of an aristocratic and palatial world, is its preoccupation with kingship, a theme that the motifs on the façade and even on the ceiling reinforce (Spink 2006 5: 31). '...not surprisingly, it is the most splendid vihara on the site. Significantly its iconographic programme focuses significantly upon the theme of kingship' (Spink 2006 5: 7). Indeed Spink notes an 'insistent royal focus' with its *padma* and *saṅkha* decorative features, beautifully designed pillars, and lively façade friezes 'with their skillfully composed scenes of war, the hunt and amorous dalliance' (Spink 2006 5: 18–19) and a 'creative intensity' (Spink 2006 5: 26) manifest in pillar figures and the restrained depictions of goblins.

MJ occupies the central portion of the left wall. The painted murals primarily concern the king at court, and the ladies of the court, perhaps attempting to dissuade him from taking the renunciate life. There is a shipwreck depicted in the same cave, which was associated with MJ by early scholars, until Dieter Schlingloff noticed details in a late nineteenth-century drawing by Griffiths, that could only link it to a *Mahāvastu* story (Schlingloff 1987: 81, 181). Dieter Schlingloff links the shipwreck to this story, and not to MJ.

Any association of the story with effort or vigour is less apparent, unless it is demonstrated in the king's ability to withstand the beautiful temptations of his many wives. Certainly it is these women, depicted in a sumptuous and gorgeous splendour reminiscent of Sigiriya in Sri Lanka, that have made the Cave 1 portrayal of this scene so renowned. Their glorious beauty, and that of the female flute players, are majestic and memorable: but also interestingly serve the *Jātaka-attavaṇṇanā* interpretation of the tale in the story of the present, that aligns the tale with the perfection of renunciation. Indeed the scene in the tale itself is associated with a considerable amount of canonical verse in the Pāli *Jātaka*: 20-115 (mixed with some prose in Ja VI 45-51) describe his wishes to leave a palace that is richly described, while verses 116-22 describe his beautiful wives, and 123-124 the request that he return (Ja VI 54). As Dehejia points out, in Cave XVII, commissioned at the same time by Upendragupta, a feudatory of King Hariṣeṇa, the *Vessantara* depictions place prime emphasis on acts of generosity, as it is that perfection



with which the story is associated (Dehejia 1991). The depiction of the palace wives at the time of the renunciation suggest that MJ was being circulated in a version that is like the extant Pāli form, without reference to the *Jātaka-nidāna*, and that the events leading to the great renunciation have been picked out, for the tale's own association with renunciation and the considerable emphasis placed on this within both commentarial prose, but also, notably, canonical verse.

At any rate, although, as Spink notes, kingship is indeed predominant in all depictions, both this and another Cave I portrayal, of the *Mahāsudassana-Jātaka* (J 95; Ja I 391–393), present a profound and contradictory counter-narrative: for kingship, with all its glories and splendours, is strikingly presented in both tales with an emphasis on its unsatisfactoriness and transience, not its enjoyment. It is both extensively and magnificently celebrated yet also, ironically, deeply challenged, within the painting, and in the context of others. The young Gotama's encounter with the three deva messengers of the sick man, the old man and the corpse are also shown on the broken frieze over the left court cell in Cave 1. The story of Nanda, who renounces a happy lay life to become a monk, is also shown in the same cave. The Pāli *Mahāsudassana-Jātaka*, in contrast to the *sutta* of the same name (D II 169–199), concentrates solely on the final relinquishment of worldly pleasure of the Universal Monarch at the instigation of his wife, just before he dies, not extensive description of the great palace and riches that are both celebrated and renounced in the *sutta*. The *Jātaka* is marked by what some consider the most important verses of the Pāli canon, on the impermanent nature of all conditioned phenomena:

Impermanent indeed are conditioned things! For they partake in birth and old age.

What arises ceases; Happy is the calming of these things (Ja I 393/Shaw 2006: 78)¹⁷⁰

Hariṣeṇa, or his artists, in demonstrating regal power, employ texts that stress its unsatisfactoriness too, a paradox behind the work of both commissioner and artists in colluding to make the MJ court scenes such a nuanced showcase of Indian craftsmanship, splendour and riches. The verses attributed to the king, the Buddha in the present, and the bereft wife, that dwell upon the departure and list all the possessions the king has at his disposal appear intent on emphasizing that it is a Great Renunciation (*Mahā*)*nekkhamma*, of kingship, performed by a Bodhisatta. The verses are memorable for their vivid evocations of the many jewels, beautiful objects, wives, courtesans and treasures such an abandonment would leave behind (Ja VI 45–54). But there is a sense of wistfulness in the eyes and bearing of the figures too. Robert Brown has argued that Ajanṭā depictions

¹⁷⁰ See Shaw 2006: 78, n.1.



are primary for their iconic role, placing the visitor in the Buddha's presence and 'biography', and so less concerned with what he terms the 'didactic' (Brown 1997). This argument importantly reminds us of one aspect of simply being in the presence and the seeing (*darśana*) that is so central to all Indian religious observance, but perhaps suggests an 'either/or' axis that cannot be applied to such magnificent art: the nuances of the narrative and textual base behind this depiction transcend our somewhat rigid associations of the word 'didactic', or a role as provider of an auspicious presence. These deeply human evocations of a kingship that is finally rejected, enacted in a commonly known story, employ narrative to instil rather a sense of the profound contradiction involved both in the auspicious lay existence on the Buddhist path, and its renunciation. Whatever later associations the tale acquires, in its expression of the paradoxical drama involved in the acquisition of the third perfection, this early depiction of MJ seems to fuse a sense of presence with a 'teaching' that is illuminatory, not didactic. It is worth noting that in line with the story's own attribution, Bharhut and Ajanṭā both stress renunciation as the key to the tale.

Jātaka as protection Boundary stones: Thailand and Burma

Ordination boundary (*sīmā*) stones mark out a sacred space, whether of a vihāra, a monastery or a forest dwelling, following procedures laid out in the *Vinaya* (Murphy 2010: 86ff). For the monastic orders, as Jason Carbine points out in a recent article, 'an essential component of their identity as a lineage', involving extensive preliminary rites (*sīmāsammuti*) and preparatory clearing of land. The space thus delineated is, in fifteenth-century *sīmā* inscriptions in Lower Burma, constantly described as requiring continued vigilance as part of sustaining the purity of the current *sāsana* (*sāsanasammuti*) (Carbine 2012). In this regard the *pāṭimokkha* and the *uposatha*, with their key element of purification, as well as the ordination, are prime ceremonies in ensuring its continued freedom from defilement and efficacy as a purified space (Murphy 2010: 88–9).

So the choice of *Jātaka* subject matter, occasional in ordination stones in regions of what are now called Burma and Thailand in the eleventh century, along with scenes from the life of the Buddha that, as a new study by Stephen Murphy notes, usually accord with the *Jātaka-nidāna* version, is intriguing. These stones provide some of our earliest evidence for their various depictions and customs associated with ordination and the delineation of boundaries (Murphy 2010: 263ff). Murphy argues that while the stories may be significant simply for their presence, as argued by Brown, they would also be clearly viewed and appreciated for narrative content (Murphy 2010: 34). Their use also suggests that the *Jātaka* stories and the last life story as described in the *Jātaka-nidāna*, were



accorded a special status, as providing a protective intermediary between the world of secular authority, and the space specially designated as the home and abiding – as suggested by the word *vihāra* – of the Triple Gem as it is represented in the physical world, outside the state polity. The ten great birth stories occupy a particularly important role in this, suggesting that even from this period, the final chapter of the *Jātakatthavaṇṇanā* has gradually become a separate textual unit in its own right. Other *Jātakas* are also represented, but as Murphy's discussion of *Jātaka* themes represented in Laotian, Burmese and Thai stones from this period demonstrates, there is a preponderance of the Great Ten (Murphy 2010: 210–343).

Thaton

One of the earliest depictions of MJ is at the Thaton, in the Mon region of Burma, in *sīmā* stones at the Kalyāṇī Sīmā dating from around the 11th century.¹⁷¹ The narrative depictions are accompanied by ornate decorative motifs. For this depiction, MJ appears as it does so often in subsequent temple and manuscript art, as representing the second of the series of the Great Ten. It is not clear yet whether an attribution to each one of the ten perfections for these tales had been made. The *Jātaka-nidāna* certainly cites some tales as exemplifying the ten perfections, and indeed these are often portrayed in *sīmā* stones of this time, but the origins of the list in association with the Great Ten has not been dated. As Murphy notes, evidence of *sīmā* stones for this period is scant in Burma.

The Mon sequence is the one that came to be the Burmese that differs from the Sri Lankan (Stadtner 2008: 203). In accordance with other Thaton depictions, for the Great Ten two scenes are shown, one above the other, so they are vertically sequential rather than in the usual *sīmā* monoscenic style (Murphy 2010: 210). For MJ they adhere to the same cluster of events. On the top is the moment before the shipwreck, with Janaka standing by an upright mast. Below the ship, the episode of the goddess lifting him away seven days later after his long swim is shown. It appears that the upper area, where the Bodhisatta is about to jump into the sea, represents the active part of the incident, and the lower the fruits or the benefits. In another stone, the Vessantara life, the gift of the elephant is in the upper area and an unidentified crowd scene in the lower, which could be seen as following a pattern of 'fruit' (*vipāka*) if the scene were to be assigned to the restoration of the prince. Close study of other *sīmā* stones would be needed to investigate whether such a deduction can be made for all depictions. Here, however, the choice of the shipwreck incidents is

¹⁷¹ See Luce 1969 [m]: 252–3. For pictures of *sīmā* in cages at Thaton, see photo courtesy Douglas Stadtner, Figure 4.32; Murphy 2010: 200. For the MJ *sīmā* see Murphy 2010: 226–7 and 306ff; Figure 5.130. See also Guillon 1999: Plate 39.



significant, and one apparently made elsewhere in the region. While there are important stylistic differences from a Khorat Plateau depiction at Bahn Nohn Chat, pointed out by Murphy (Murphy 2010: 306–8), in that the Bahn Nohn Chat *sīmā* stone focuses on figures rather than backdrop during the wreck, and the Thaton version emphasizes the narrative by offering two scenes, the episodes chosen to portray this tale, in two very distinct regions, are comparable. Murphy forms a convincing argument that the two regions, not otherwise related ethnically, shared a basic text and teaching. While we can read too much into readings where evidence is so partial, in this case, it would appear, the *Jātaka-nidāna* association of the story with vigour and the events at sea appear to be assuming the role that persists throughout the history of subsequent MJ depictions. Around the eleventh century the *Buddhavaṃsa* was starting to be used in Pagan temple art. The portrayal of the sea incident suggests that the import of texts from Sri Lanka included the *Jātaka-nidāna* (Ja I 60) too, which chooses this incident as the demonstration the perfection of the Bodhisatta's *virīya*.

The Thaton stones represent a landmark in terms of our understanding of the last ten as a distinct entity. A strong narrative content and interest is indicated by the local two-scene format, also used for Thaton terracotta tiles of the Great Ten (Stadtner 2008: 172), supporting Murphys' argument that they are designed for viewing and seen and known as stories. It seems significant the Great Ten here perform a ceremonial, ritual function, offering the *Jātaka* stories as a means of protecting the ordination space, mediating between that and the outside world, and offering a public face for the Buddhist tradition and the shrine hall for those approaching and entering the space marked by the *sīmā* stones. There is no stated specific association with the ten perfections.

Murphy's study demonstrates that *Jātakas* are integrated into the artistic and religious life of the region in boundary stone depictions from the 8th century. He observes that particular episodes and scenes are chosen to represent the Great Ten, which even at this stage are far more frequently represented than the others. They are also commonly shown by specific scenes, such as the grave-digger, occurring several times for Temiya (*Mūgapakkha*) (Murphy 2010: 262). This could simply mean the artists have copied other depictions. It also, however, anticipates a tendency throughout Southeast Asian depictions of the Great Ten to pick out an emblematic incident for the tale, that is in some way memorable, or in a later context, particularly evokes the perfection with which that tale comes to be associated.



Bahn Nong Hang, Northeast Thailand

One MJ assignation should be mentioned at this point for its unusual emphasis. This has been proposed by Krairiksh, at a *sīmā* stone in Bahn Nong Hang, in Thailand (Sema S7), dating possibly from the 8th to the 9th centuries.¹⁷² It appears to show a different scene from the story, with the figure of a woman leaning on the shoulder of a shaved ascetic, holding a long stick. This, Krairiksh argues, could then be a rare depiction of Sīvalī, the Bodhisatta's wife, attempting to persuade him to remain as king. Murphy contests this attribution, on the grounds that the Bodhisatta is not wearing the conical head-dress with which he is usually depicted at this time and that the stick he carries could be carried by any ascetic at that time, not a Buddhist one (Murphy 2010: 225ff). While this author does not have the technical knowledge of the artistic conventions of the period to challenge either argument, on textual grounds alone it does seem possible that the *sīmā* depicts the *Mahājanaka*, as a shaved head and the carrying of a stick are crucial in the Pāli version of the tale, that focuses so greatly on the unfolding of the Bodhisatta's renunciation. Considerable emphasis is placed in the commentarial prose story on the Bodhisatta secretly shaving his head and obtaining monastic robes within the palace so that he looks like a *paccekabuddha*:

The king then ordered the barber to cut his hair then dismissed him....He put the earthenware bowl in his bag and strung that over his shoulder too. Then, taking a walking stick, he walked on the roof of the palace several times backwards and forwards with the carriage of a *paccekabuddha* (Ja VI 52; Shaw 2006: 252).

Because of this Queen Sīvalī does not recognize her husband and pays respects to him as he leaves, thus symbolically releasing him from her marriage.

But although she did meet him as he was coming downstairs, she did not recognize him: instead she paid respects and stood to one side as what she thought was a *paccekabuddha*, who had come to give instruction to the king, passed by (Ja VI 52; Shaw 2006: 253).

In *Jātakas* of course no mention is made of the kind of ascetic that the Bodhisatta becomes: he never becomes a Buddhist monk, and that he is carrying a stick is also crucial

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¹⁷² See Krairiksh 1974 [m] 59-63. Murphy also suggests MJ associations in Thailand with Sema 317 from Bahn Nohn Chat, in what he terms Cluster 3, which involves a wreck and a figure with the Bodhisatta's conical head-dress and L. 3 at Bahn Nong Hang, and L. 20 Bahn Nohn Chat (Murphy 2010: 227).



in the tale, as it is with this that in the story he marks the line in the ground after which he will become an ascetic, and where his people cannot follow him:

So with his ascetic's staff he drew out a line across the road and because of the king's power no one could cross the line he had made (Ja VI 56; Shaw 2006: 255).

Indeed these features align the scene with MJ in a way that would be tricky to see for any other tale. As Murphy points out, the absence of the *uṣṇis* precludes an attribution to the Buddha and his last life (Murphy 2010: 227).

From the point of view of this paper, the assignation is important, if it stands, as it indicates the status accorded to the original Pāli text, and commentarial story. The choice of this scene would mean the stone echoes the emphasis on the renunciation found in the Pāli tale from the present, in the Bharhut and Ajaṇṭā depictions, and the theme of the whole second half of the story. The episode would then be an apt choice in the context of the boundaries of an ordination ground, which defines a space in which female relatives might be regretting the departure of a beloved son, brother, husband or father, whatever the auspicious implications of having a close family member within the saṅgha. In this regard it is also worth remembering that Sīvalī, at the end of the story, becomes an ascetic herself and practises meditation, and that she eventually becomes the Buddha's spouse in his last life. If this is an MJ depiction, the choice of incident shows new light on its protective function and the theme of renunciation, and suggests a textual counterpart that is very like the Pāli one we have today.

To sum up this section, the use of *Jātakas* as content for ordination stones gives some, if small, evidence of a common and shared text in these regions, probably like the one that is used now. Many ordination stones have no pictures: so why the use of *Jātaka* stories at all? In the tales as a group the Bodhisatta is of course a lay man, or, when ascetic, never a Buddhist monk: most of the stories are set in the time when there is no teaching, and where the Bodhisatta is cultivating and following the *dhamma* during periods when he would have around him no teacher capable of teaching a full path to awakening, though his occasional contact with *paccekabuddhas* as well as ascetics, sometimes ensures he receives some. Arahats do not feature in the stories from the past; in only a very few is there a mention of a Buddha around, as by implication in the *Lomahaṃsa-Jātaka* (J 94: Ja I 389-91), set in the time of the Buddha Vipassī, where the Bodhisatta is described as an ascetic who does *not* until his death moment see the futility of extreme asceticism. Perhaps the stories acquire this role partly because their auspiciousness rests on the Bodhisatta path, and the need to live 'in the world', usually in a lay capacity, to fulfil it. The injunction of the *Jātakas*, repeated throughout the tales, is



‘practise *sīla*, give *dāna*, and observe the *uposatha*’, formulae encapsulating possibilities of lay actions in the *Jātaka* world view (Shaw 2006: xxxii–xxxvii). Presumably such protective injunctions ensure the purity of the laity that enter into the sacred space they denote, where the *uposatha* would be observed. So the frequently lay figure of the Bodhisatta, perhaps considered purified by his vow, in the Great Ten, as well as the Buddha, acts as a mediation between the world outside the temple and that within. In this role, as protectors of space as well as source of narrative, the Great Ten find the prominence they are accorded in later art, and we see already a tendency for the emblematic encapsulation of a cluster of events to denote each of the Great Ten.

Burmese Temple mural and stūpas Jātaka as narrative and distillation of the Bodhisatta’s power

We now move to evidence of depictions found in and around temples and stūpas in Burma. In Burma, as there is such a rich interpretative scene for *Jātaka* depictions around Pagan and Mandalay, only two examples will be chosen, the unglazed terracotta tile at the Ānanda temple, Pagan, and the mural depiction at the Loka-hteik-pan temple.

Terracotta tile, Pagan

The unglazed terracotta tile is one of a tiered arrangement decorating an eleventh-century *stūpa*, the west Hpetleik Stūpa, the banks of the Irrawaddy River at Thiripyitsaya, south of Pagan, where apparently all of the Burmese 550 *Jātakas* were depicted (Skilling 2012: 585). The Great Ten are not singled out here, though the tile appears on a tier with the stories of Sāma, Nemi and Mahosadha (Skilling et al 2012: 165, Plate IVa). They were described by Luce as the ‘finest in Burma’.¹⁷³ Each story is depicted on a single plaque, with the name and number engraved in Mon script of Aniruddha’s reign (r. 1044–1077). Unfortunately, because of damage the tiles have experienced over the last century, we need to consult the photograph now held in the Myanmar Archaeology Department. This shows a well-defined image of the Bodhisatta, again clinging to an upright mast, presumably before the ship has wrecked: this occurrence, as at Thaton, suggests that the moment before the wreck was a common portrayal at this time, though it features rarely in subsequent art. The Bodhisatta’s hands appear as if they are both held upwards in *abhaya mudrā*, with neither holding the mast, from which he appears suspended, though this is not clear, or perhaps it depicts the very moment in which he plunges into the sea from it. This

¹⁷³ For discussion of early comment on these plaques, see Skilling 2012: 585, n.14. The photograph (shown as Plate IVa in Skilling et al 2012) was reproduced there courtesy of Lilian Handlin. It was taken during early excavations of the West Hpetliek Stūpa.



posture is associated in the Dvāravatī period with revealing the Worlds or Descending from the Tavatimsa Heaven (Matics 1998: 104–5).¹⁷⁴ In this tile, the sea itself forms a larger proportion of the picture than in the *sīmā* stones, and is denoted by stylized wavy lines, while human and other figures appear quite small in comparison. The goddess is floating in the upper left of the picture, fluidly rounded in form, like the sea creatures and humans intermingling in the sea around and below the boat. The Bodhisatta presents a static monoscenic image of grand, but solitary loneliness and quite literal uprightness, with the straight line of the standing figure following the centrally placed line of the mast of a boat that itself looks remarkably stable: it is not clear how the other passengers could have been thrown out of it. This focus on the scene before the wreck gives a powerful interpretation of *virīya*, that demonstrates the lone magnificence of the Bodhisatta, against a large expanse of sea that is distinct from other ‘wreck’ depictions: the centrality of the boat seems to act almost as a strong support to this imposingly controlled standing presence. The *Jātaka* has described the Bodhisatta vow in terms of embarking on the ‘ship’ of the teaching (*dhammanāvā*), in the commentary described as one that will take people across the ‘ocean of existence’ (*saṃsārasāgara*; Ja I 14/Shaw 2006: 1). Indeed the tile seems to show the boat as such an embodiment, and the monoscenic portrayal exploited as a chance to anticipate the Bodhisatta’s role in his final life, with a clear headed and straight-backed teacher, suspended out of time, whose central position in the sea seems to command the swirling lines of the ocean, sea creatures, others struggling in vain around and even the figure of the goddess herself, poised for her rescue in the upper left hand part of the tile. The tile is one of a series, unified in presenting *Jātakas* episode by episode.

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Jātaka as narrative frieze The Loka-hkteik-pan Temple, Pagan

One other interior, painted depiction of the Janaka story shows a quite different perception of the momentum of the tale, through one of its earliest full episodic depictions. At the Loka-hkteik-pan Temple, the story is illustrated on two tiers of mural depiction, on the West Walls of the shrine hall, Rows V and VI (Luce 1969: I 387 and III Plate 356a). This temple is described aptly as a ‘gem’ by Strachan for its unity of paintings and architecture, that employ the *Jātaka* for decorative and did active effect (Strachan 1989: 83). Strachan notes that during this period full versions of the *Jātaka-nidāna* and the

¹⁷⁴ This posture is also seen in subsequent Siamese depictions as describing the Buddha causing the waters to subside to curb a flood that threatens to engulf Kassapa and his followers. This posture is later interpreted as symbolizing his mastery over the passions (Matics 1998: 90–91).



Buddhavaṃsa were known, introduced from Mon regions, presumably from Sri Lanka: inscriptions of *Jātaka* depictions usually use Mon script (Strachan 1989: 9). The comprehensive and fairly systematic portrayal of this *Jātaka* indicates that the full version as we have it now was employed. Scenes are shown in sequential, and occasionally continuous form, reading from left to right, with episodic depictions rather than the simple 'reduced iconography' described by Claudine Bautze-Picron as characterizing other local *Jātaka* presentations. The last ten are accorded particular space and prominence, with several episodes rather than a single being shown. They follow the Burmese rather than the Sri Lankan arrangement that sometimes supplanted it in this period (Bautze-Picron 2003: 75).¹⁷⁵ There is in accordance with chronology within the tale, as Bautze-Picron notes, with, for instance, the same narrative shift to Mithilā with the Princess Sīvalī insulting the suitors after the wreck, and then the finding on the auspicious slab, in the precise sequence they are given in the tale. The two tiers also show the war, the incidents at sea, the king's assumption of the throne, the incident with the mango trees and the renunciation. The influence of what one may infer are the usually depicted scenes for the story may be seen in the stereotypic portrayal of the scenes of the wreck. In contrast to other incidents on this frieze, these three scenes, placed to the left hand side of the second tier of the story, are shown in three clearly delineated squares: the wreck, the swim and the rescue, all in discrete monoscenic boxes, look as if they emulate pre-existing patterns of tile portrayals.

The life of this portrayal, however, lies in quite a different area of the story, as Bautze-Picron notes, in the depiction of the war that precipitates the events of the tale, even though it takes only a small part of the tale in the Pāli original (Bautze-Picron 2003: 70ff. See Ja VI 30–31/Shaw 2006 227–8). This scene features occasionally in subsequent Thai and Burmese mural depictions: the *Mahājanakawar* and some battles in the Mahosadha, or *Ummagga-Jātaka* (J 546), are the only incidents in the Great Ten that show an outright martial conflict. It has exercised a small but continued appeal to the secular interests of artists and commissioners throughout the history of this story's portrayal. All the Loka-hkteik-pan depictions are striking for the strong visual emphasis on human character, interactions between humans, and the animal, in animated scenes constantly punctuated by square surrounds of the pavilion and other simple edifices. Human faces are unusually large and strongly expressive, set in full bodies that occupy the central spaces to the exclusion of any background or landscape detail. Strachan notes that their size may be described as "monumental" in effect, with a focus 'uncluttered by extraneous

¹⁷⁵ Strachan notes that during this period the great advances in scholarship included a growing tendency towards the Sri Lankan *Jātaka* numbering system (Strachan 1989: 10).



paraphernalia' (Strachan 1989: 84). But it is the war scenes that portray magnificent fighting elephants that arrest the attention by their prominent position in the first tier of the story, in the centre, a little to the right, above the door of the hall. These creatures, that occupy what would be three 'boxes' according to the pattern of the mural make this part of the story a centre-piece, whose liveliness seems to defy the stratified format of tiers, punctuated by recurrent pavilions (*pyattat*) and other structures. Indeed throughout the wall, elephants, regally auspicious throughout Southeast Asia and symbolically important in many tales, such as the *Vessantara*, frequently attract by a roundedness that complements the geometric confines of their location. From afar, the wavy curves of ears and trunks, in this and other stories on the wall, reinforce a sense of regality, for the white elephant is the second treasure of the Universal Monarch (*cakkavattin*) and became throughout Southeast Asia a symbol of authority and strength (Ginsberg 1989: 33-43). The temple was constructed soon after King Kyanzittha's death in 1114 (Handlin 2012: 197) by Sithu I, at a time when Mon and Burmese vernaculars are employed fluidly to describe such depictions, suggesting that *Jātakas* are in this period acting as 'transregional and transcultural' systems of communicating Buddhist teaching, as Skilling notes (Skilling 2008: 68ff). This cross-cultural appeal works across class too, to include monks, visitors and royal, aristocratic, merchant and labouring laity. Handlin points out a strong sense of the societal, the injunctive and the responsibilities of *gahapatis* in Buddhist emphasis during this period, with the king acting as a radiating focus for Buddhist principle (Handlin 2012: 199ff). We can sense the heritage of this *bhagavā* and the presence of a highly social and perhaps even grandiose patron, fulfilling his *cakkavattin* duties and gaining merit in funding temples, but unable to resist guiding the hands of his artists in an exuberant display of regal and martial power. Strachan rightly notes that it would be cynical to say that 'a city of such outward visual glory and inner spiritual power was the product of political preoccupations' (Strachan 1989: 10). In this role, *Jātaka* depiction is certainly didactic, and certainly decorative, but it seems also here celebratory and geared to societal concerns, providing a shared pool of narratives, whose morals and codes are applicable to everyone. This collection accommodates the human, the royal and the martial, in incorporating highly worldly and monarchic preoccupations into a larger Buddhist narrative of rebirth and the great happiness of lay participation as an aspect of this.

This latter emphasis is crucial in the prominence accorded to *Jātakas* in this and other Buddhist locations. Steven Collins, opening out the axis of salvific versus kammic activity, argues that narratives involving lay kingship and action within the political and social sphere are not expressions of a diluted Buddhism, avoiding issues of salvific and monastic commitment: rather they offer a paradigmatic and diverse route to awakening.



through a number of spheres.¹⁷⁶ So the ‘felicities’ Collins describes of the Buddhist path, are certainly available through auspicious kingship, but also attainable in all areas and walks of life. The institution of monarchy is subject to harsh criticism in some tales, such as the *Temiya-Jātaka* (J 538), where the Bodhisatta avoids taking the throne (see Gombrich 1988: 70). The ideal of the Universal Monarch, who rules by *dhamma*, not force, and cares for the needs of his subjects, however, has historically been a paradigm of an auspicious kingship and a happy lay life (D II 169–199). It is noteworthy that such a king is, in the *sutta* and *Jātaka* stories involving such monarchs, a Bodhisatta; he could not become a Buddha and teach a complete path to liberation without some lifetimes spent in this prime position of lay power, able to act munificently towards his subjects and willing feudatories. This was a fertile period of stūpa building and temple construction, with donative tiles, paintings and a love of textual inscription, in vernacular and Pāli. Commissioning patrons were the king or aristocratic Buddhists, but lesser simple acts of kindness and generosity are also represented, in line with the idea that such a monarch imbues his own subjects with enthusiasm for the *dhamma*. Handlin says generally:

While elites were encouraged to spend on the behalf of the common good, lesser mortals were provided role models in the form of occupants of splendid *vimānas* whose attainments, though mostly in the hereafter, stemmed from tiny acts of goodness everyone could do (Handlin 2012: 210).

The depiction of *Jātakas*, where the Bodhisatta himself is born in so many conditions and castes, and where lay activity, as king or low-caste human, or even as animal, is seen as worthy and valid in the acquisition of the perfections, seems central to this world view. A painted hall would then make a welcoming, contextual environment, both for any Buddha images empowered within the temple space, perhaps then regarded, as it was later in Siam, as the ‘abode or dwelling place of the Buddha’ (Swearer 2004: 232). The variety and comprehensive content of murals would also appear sympathetic to those who visited such spaces, whether well-born or not: they would be able to relate to and recognize episodes from a shared imaginative world, that included and validated all kinds of human activity as providing fields of merit, and, occasionally, the happy results of good kammic action too.

¹⁷⁶ On some aspects of his discussion of kingship, see Collins 1998: 224; 443ff; see also Shaw 2006: 26–28 on the *Makhādeva-Jātaka* (J 9) as a paradigm of auspicious kingship. Richard Gombrich writes of the *Vessantara-Jātaka*’s finale, where the prince is restored, to enjoy monarchic life with his family: ‘his reward is both on earth and in heaven; and the supreme reward of Buddhahood is still to come’ (Gombrich and Cone 1977: xxv).



The MJ depiction is central in providing material to encourage this collective *bhāvanā*, making this beautiful and idiosyncratic wall one of the most memorable in this region. Overall, the temples, stūpas and systematic tiled depictions of the *Jātakas*, often showing the whole sequence, whether the 550 or the 547 employed in Sri Lanka, in a region where portrayals of the entire collection appear frequent, stress the fact that for Pagan and Mandalay, the *Jātakas* occupied a pivotal role: as a limb of the teaching, a multivalent world of differentiated aspects of the Bodhisatta's long search, a source of highly diverse narrative applicable to all social classes, of models for legal and state behaviour, of an auspicious embodiment of the teaching, as offerings on tiles used for the base and support for stūpas, and as a means of protecting and defining both the exterior and interior space of temple. Such a centrality seems unparalleled in any other Buddhist historical or geographical context.

Burmese rural temples

Some prominence continues throughout the following centuries, and in this area of Burma there are many depictions of the Great Ten in temple mural art. In a forthcoming book, Alexandra Green describes the gradual changes affecting *Jātaka* depictions over the next few centuries throughout Upper Burma. As she demonstrates, depictions of the Great Ten flourish, in painted strip mural friezes that exhibit a burgeoning interest in background, landscape, natural environment, details of birds and animals, jewels, textiles and clothes. Her study focuses on rural temples from the seventeenth century onwards, financed by traders whose loyalty to the king is paramount. Of thirty temples she surveys for study of last ten depictions, the most frequent are events around the wreck, swim and rescue (that feature eighteen times), those around the waiting, being found by the chariot and recognition on the auspicious slab (fifteen times) and the battle (thirteen times). Various incidents connected with the mother, that occupy the first part of the tale, feature ten times.¹⁷⁷ There is a general tendency, noted by Green, for depictions of the first part of any story in the Great Ten to emphasise opening scenes, perhaps in part explaining the prevalence of the scenes concerning the mother and the battle. Other episodes from all parts of the tale also feature, though with less frequency. In their murals, MJ depictions are often inclusive of the whole story, picking different episodes, but there is no incident actively rejected, suggesting a strong textual association throughout. Compared to Siamese depictions, one can trace, perhaps, a characteristically Burmese approach of elucidation through a largely even-handed representation of incidents from most of the story involved,

¹⁷⁷ I am grateful to Alexandra Green for providing this information to me (2nd November, 2011), for allowing me to read the excellent material in her book, and for generously providing photographs.



though choices vary from place to place and the second half of the tale, involving renunciation, is less well represented.

What is also notable is that the Great Ten have now largely supplanted other *Jātaka* representations, though many others are recommended too in the Royal Orders of 1795 (Tun 1983; see also Skilling 2008: 108). From the perspective of the *Jātaka* text, it might be concluded that they are perhaps seen as a distillation of the others. The overriding royal emphasis of the Great Ten, which explore kingship in a variety of ways, means that the Bodhisatta is often himself regal, as Temiya (*Mūgapakkha*), Janaka, Nimi and Vessantara, or involved in some way with the court. It is possible that the popularity of the Great Ten amongst the merchant classes supported and promoted the strong advocacy of royal enjoyment and power their depictions suggest. As Green notes of these Great Ten depictions, textile designs and patterns of the fabrics traded by the commissioning merchants, which would have financed their temple projects too, inform the aesthetic of frieze surrounds, background and boundary lines between pictures, suggesting that the paintings themselves were regarded as material objects, and offerings to the Buddha (see Green: forthcoming). Filled with contemporary references and a palpable enjoyment of the detailed, the patterned and the repetitive design, these murals seem apt offerings from a class represented so markedly within the *Jātaka* stories as a whole.¹⁷⁸ As Green notes elsewhere, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, a sense of process and continuity accompanies sequential and continuous narrative depictions, of the Bodhisatta's quest. The awakening, as Gotama become Buddha, and moments associated with that, appear to lie outside of time, and are communicated in monoscenic mode (Green 2002: 67ff).

One eighteenth-century temple, the Laung U Hmaw in Ywathitgyi village, should be mentioned, as it shows the wreck with much the same sort of iconography seen in Siamese depictions that date from this time, in the portrayal of *farangs* on the doomed boat, and a scout with telescope in hand. Their inclusion suggests that Christian Dutch, British and Portuguese sailors might be seen as misguided in this lifetime, but who are not denied future access to the Buddhist path. This has a close parallel in the portrayals in late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Siam, at Wat Yai Intharam for instance, that also absorb potentially hostile foreign elements by placing them in the wreck (Leksukhum 2000: 140). This comparable interpretation suggests not only a shared textual base, but also considerable trade, movement, and monastic interchange between the regions. In this

¹⁷⁸ It is significant that the first *Jātaka*, the *Apaṇṇaka-Jātaka* (Ja I 95–106), involves the Bodhisatta as a canny but responsible caravan merchant, who protects his fellow traders from disaster and ruin; indeed the first four all involve traders, with the *Cullaka-seṭṭhi-Jātaka* (J 4: Ja I 114–123) constituting a celebration of mercantile values.



regard, the *Jātakas* appear to be imagined in an ongoing present, with the temple in which they are depicted acting as a space for artistic observation that accommodates and absorbs the new and strange.

Siam Wat Si Chum slab depictions: hidden merit bringers?

Another perspective on the employment of the *Jātakas* is provided by the Siamese temple mural. Wat Si Chum, with depictions dating from the third quarter of the fourteenth century, shows single depictions of each of the first 150 *Jātakas* each, of single verse. The engravings are finely and ornately executed on slabs of phyllite, a rock between schist and slate, with one, two or three stories per slab. The slabs are about 80 cm wide and 15 cm thick. The Great Ten are not depicted at Wat Si Chum, but the presence of a shorter version of the story, the *Cūḷajanaka-Jātaka* (J 52), within the sequence is suggestive of the way the story was being perceived in other lost portrayals of the time. The *Cūḷajanaka-Jātaka* (J 52) involves the king, sitting on his throne, reciting the verse:

A man should take hope, and should not become discouraged

I see my own self, who was brought out of the water to the dry land (Ja I 267).

This verse is the same as in the *Mahājanaka* (Ja VI 43/Shaw 2006: 241). The story simply recounts this, and says 'and the rest is as described in the *Mahājanaka*', so we can assume a transferable iconography between the tales. The Wat Si Chum depiction, now badly defaced, shows a scene that, as in Burma, comes to be highly popular in MJ depictions: the future king lying on the auspicious slab outside Mithilā after the wreck after being 'brought out of the water'. This static monoscene is also shown at Wat Phuthaisawan, c. 1700 (Wray 1996: Plate 7). It is depicted with the shipwreck at Wat Kongkaram, at some time during the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries (Leksukhum 2001: 141), and in Ayutthayan style, at Wat No Phuttangkul, Suphanaburi, from around 1750 (Wray 1996: Plate 8).

One feature of Wat Si Chum is important when considering the role of *Jātakas* within temple portrayals. The temple is significant for the fact that these engravings are enclosed in a tunnel that was sealed off at some early stage. Under the editorship of Peter Skilling, a recent work, *Wat Si Chum: Past Lives of the Buddha*, explores the nature of this hidden aspect in considerable depth, with various authors positing a number of different viewpoints as to whether the *Jātakas* were intended at the outset to be closed off (see Skilling 2008: 95ff; Chirapravati 2008). If the series was intended to be sequestered, it suggests that the depiction of *Jātakas* was itself considered auspicious, irrespective of whether the content would be viewed or not. Possibly they were felt to encapsulate the



meritorious nature of the Bodhisatta's many lives as a protective series. That the auspiciousness would simply arise from the presence of the stories' depictions, whether or not they can be seen, need not deter an artist of course: the transferable merit from such an activity, and presumably a professional joy in its' execution, would have ensured their happy compliance, as for the accruing of merit (*puñña*) it is not necessary for one's work to be seen (see Skilling 2008: 80ff). Folding books (*samut khoi*) are sometimes not opened, as their presence is meritorious in itself (Appleton et al.2012: 4). It is still customary in Thailand today to regard putting gold leaf 'on the back of a Buddha figure' as a particularly auspicious task, precisely because no one will see it. Such merit-making, however, does not mean the stories are not known, told, narrated or visualized by those involved: it is just that their potency in pictorial form is here hidden, if indeed this was the case here.

The Great Ten: Jātakas as the completion of the Bodhisatta path

From the seventeenth century onwards, the Great Ten assume a particular importance in Siam, as they do in Burma. The reason for this is not clear, but at some point the perfections themselves start to be associated with each tale, in ways not explicitly suggested by canonical text. The *Jātaka-nidāna* begins this process by taking some of the Great Ten as specifically representing perfections, though not necessarily those assigned within the tales or by subsequent traditions, though Vessantara, as always, is associated with generosity. Vidhura and Mahosadha are linked to wisdom, Temiya (*Mūgapakkha*) to resolve, and Janaka to vigour, though the last two are, within the tales, heroes both associated with perfecting renunciation (Ja I 44–47). The move to Perfection/Great Ten alignment was also presaged by the visual use of the last ten as apparently representing the culmination of a process embodied within the whole Pāli *Jātaka* corpus. They were given particular prominence in Thaton, and in Pagan, at Lokahteipkan, through depiction in multiple episodes rather than the single episode chosen for other stories, for instance, though they are not yet usually isolated as a group.

By the fourteenth century the Great Ten are certainly described as particularly important: an inscription dated to 1380 at Sukothai indicates that recitation of the ten lives was considered very meritorious (Skilling 2008:70). By the seventeenth century, in both Burma and Siam, the Great Ten appear to have become encapsulations of the Bodhisatta path and the search for the perfections. This development is still recognized in chants throughout southeast Asia: one, the 'Ten *pāramīs*', is particularly popular, which culminates in homage to the Buddha for his completion of the worldly *pāramī*, the higher (*upapāramī*), and the highest (*paramattapāramī*), the making of three levels of perfection,



an elaboration suggested in Ācariya Dhammapāla's 'Treatise on the Pāramīs' (Bodhi 1978). Another, that pays homage to the Great Ten heroes, with the addition of the early life of the Buddha before the enlightenment, takes the heroes of each of these eleven narratives as worthy of homage and offerings.¹⁷⁹ A Thai tradition retains a mnemonic made up from the first syllables of each of the titles (or the first syllables of the names of the Bodhisatta in each of the stories): Te-Ja-Su-Ne-Ma-Bhu-C'a-Na-Vi-Ve. The date of all these is unclear. It is in this role, as one of the Great Ten, that most subsequent extant depictions of the *Mahājanaka* have endured.

Here there is quite a distinct aesthetic between Thai and Burmese art, though it appears that the textual basis and role of the stories within the temple space is comparable between the two regions. Whereas in Burma, and indeed in Sri Lanka, a region not discussed in this paper, the continuous frieze continues to be popular, a quite different development emerges in Siam. Ayutthaya depictions take a simple though often highly decorated scene, against a space behind, decorated with geometric and abstract motifs and simple, natural ochres and reds. From the eighteenth century, however, temple murals become more highly coloured, with imported dyes and paints, and show stories in a flowing, continuous mode, arranged in what becomes the classical Siamese manner, around a serpentine, organic arrangement occupying an entire mural (Leksukhum 2000: 124–163). These can be continuous, sequential with boundaries placed between incidents, or network, arranged perhaps in aesthetic rather than chronological manner around the area. Such murals often occupy most of the side walls, beneath a tier of devas. Sometimes the Great Ten are placed with a highly sophisticated care in bays, or separate murals within the hall. In some Thai depictions stories from the Great Ten run in to one another, further enforcing a sense of their enactment in their own imaginative landscape, a kind of Tolkienesque world where the stories appear as ongoing narratives, that flow from one set of incidents to the next. These involve precisely delineated and expressive scenes set against a landscape of dark forests, mountains and oceans, with boundaries between incidents created by zig-zag lines, screens, palace pillars, or simply by the same environmental space as between other distinct episodes or group of events. In such cases one story moves as if separated geographically, across a forest or landscape background to the next. This fluidity between stories can be seen, for instance, in the mid nineteenth-century murals at Wat No Putthangkun (Wat Makham No), Suphanburi Province, Thailand, where incidents follow an S shaped curve downwards, in a continuous sequencelike a lowering pendulum, whereby Temiya's adventures move without break

¹⁷⁹ See Oxford Buddha Vihāra Chanting Book (undated).



into Janaka's and then to Sāma's (see Appleton et al 2013: 16).

Episodes chosen in such depictions vary, and sometimes the war features in some (Wat Bang Yi Khan, Thonburi; Wray et al. 1996: 34–5) and the palace ladies and the renunciation in others (Wat Yai Intharam, Wat Suvannaram). Overwhelmingly represented are, however, the maritime scenes and the finding of the king on the auspicious slab. The popularity of the cluster of events concerned with the wreck is not surprising. It is singled out in the *Jātaka-nidāna*, has often been portrayed before, and in the largely maritime regions of Southern Buddhism would seem an encapsulation of both the exercising of vigour, and its reward. It is often depicted with some artistic licence, as for instance at Wat No Phuttangkul, where on the left of the wreck the goddess appears almost to be catching the Bodhisatta falling, while on the right she is shown on the other side of the wrecked ship carrying him away (Wray 1996: Plate 6). Neither of these incidents, portrayed within the mural, correspond exactly to the story, but the aesthetic balance and drama of this synoptic presentation is striking. The narrative thread then moves around from the top of the picture, near the zig-zag line that marks the top of the mural, beneath the devas, down more towards the centre, with the placing on the auspicious slab, the other cluster of events most commonly selected in Siam to denote this story, already seen at Wat Si Chum.

The finding of the king on the auspicious slab, in a static monoscene within the mural, seems the culmination of an increased emphasis on the rewards of effort and vigour, and perhaps an indication that the perfection of *virīya* is seen fully established in the events of this scene, where the true king is recognised by the magical horse and chariot. The Siamese have historically viewed kingship with an almost sacred importance, with the king regarded as ensuring the prosperity of the state and polity. After the ransacking of Ayutthaya in 1767, the move of the capital to Thonburi, and then to Bangkok in 1782, under new kings, the Siamese had endured considerable state upheaval, internal and external threats, and concern over the role of the monarchy (Baker & Pongpaichit 2005: 26–46). The Siamese felt they were recovering from a period of lawlessness (*adhamma*) and even a dark age (*kaliyuga*) (Reynolds 2006: 169ff). It is noteworthy that depictions around the late Ayutthaya period and early Rattanakosin era, when a new monarchic line was established, place so much emphasis on the Siamese dress of the goddess and the Bodhisatta (Wat Yai Intharam, Wat No, Suphanburi)¹⁸⁰ in the rescue scene, and the Western dress of potentially hostile foreigners, with telescopes, as the doomed sailors. While not excluding foreigners from the overall narrative of potential liberation in lifetimes to come, such depictions show the goddess and Bodhisatta as

¹⁸⁰ See Leksukhum 2000: 140 and Wray et al. 1996: 34–5. See also Shaw 2013b forthcoming.



personifications of traditional Siam, both givers and recipients of auspicious kamma. So, with no disturbance to a growing emblematic use of the goddess scenes as representative of vigour, contemporary doubts and fears about potentially hostile or colonialist foreigners can also be integrated and allayed within a *Jātaka* narrative structure. While subsequent events do feature in Siamese murals from this period, the foreground of the story is clearly perceived as concerning the restoration of a monarch, not his renunciation, and the fifth perfection as in some sense culminating, in the *Jātaka* world-view, with such an event.

A memorable third phase Rattanakosin representation amongst painted wall murals occurs at Wat Suvannaram, where the first nine feature on the right-hand wall and scenes from the Vessantara story all along the left. MJ occupies the second bay after the entrance. In accordance with many contemporary renderings, incidents and scenes are set against a richly detailed and evocative landscape, including expressively delineated trees, waterfall, mountains, forest and ocean as well as buildings. This stylized natural environment, filled with birds and animals, occupies the major part of the space, with the tiny, highly coloured figures vivid in comparison to their backdrop. Western perspective is skillfully mixed with the organic, flowing mode of scene depiction, and the style incorporates both Western and Chinese elements in its depiction. Rare documentary background for *Jātaka* depiction is provided by letters concerning the commissioning of the pictures, and one artist of this group was Chinese (Sinuan 1982). The organization of the story is balanced and pleasing. The upper right hand part of the mural features the wreck, with the goddess rescuing the Bodhisatta straight from the wreck, in a scene that is not in the story but, as is so common by now, condenses the sequence of events into one memorable image. The entire base of the picture shows the populace of Mithilā. These many figures seem separate from the king, mirroring the weight of the textual rejection of the kingdom by Janaka in his renunciation. The upper left hand part of the picture balances the upper right in its pre-eminent emphasis on a feminine companion to the hero, with the portrayal of Sīvalī following the Bodhisatta, balancing the goddess rescuing him on the right hand upper part of the mural. Rarely for these depictions, Sīvalī is shown pursuing Janaka, in the mountainous forest region favoured as background to ascetic practices in Siamese art. This part of the story is less frequently shown, but the artist is clearly conscious that Janaka's decision in this lifetime to leave wife and kingdom behind might seem harsh. In the top left part of the mural, a male and female kinnara are shown in the mountains above the figures. This evocation of the fabulous beings thought to inhabit such regions reminds the viewer of the *Candakinnara-Jātaka* (J 485), famously told to Yasodharā on the Buddha's return to visit her and his family after the enlightenment. In this tale, the Bodhisatta as kinnara has been mortally wounded, and his loving spouse cures him and brings him back



to life. The story is recounted by the Buddha, he says, in gratitude for the many lifetimes the two have spent together, with Yasodharā supporting his search to fulfil the perfections in preparation for his final life, when she will be his final consort too (Vin I 82; Ja IV 179). An intertextual reference of this kind would remind the viewer of the pair's shared lives together. Another possibility is that these creatures in some way suggest the next story, about Sāma, who lives in an enchanted forest, so anticipating the next bay.

Each area of the mural has its own drama and closely delineated tableau: each of the last ten is regarded here as distinct; within each mural each incident also appears distinct, despite the compositional flow. The focus of the entire story as it is represented here, however, is Janaka waiting, alone, on the auspicious slab. With the slab painted in white with yellow detail against the vast landscape, all other characters in the story seem far away: here at the centre is the king, experiencing the result of his great effort, waiting to take the throne. With the events at sea, Siamese art throughout this Rattanakosin period, in which the monarchy was establishing itself in a new capital and a new mercantile culture, seems to take the king's waiting for recognition, in his safe haven, often as a static monoscene, as the other primary key to the tale.

Manuscript art: Jātaka as emblem

The manuscript, a little like the tile, requires a dramatic communication in a monoscenic or conflated style, simply because of its size and limited scope for large-scale episodic or sequential presentation. In Siamese folding books (*samut khoi*) from the late eighteenth century the last ten are frequently shown in this way, as pictures flanking texts which would be used by the monks. The *samut khoi*, primarily an *aide de memoire*, also starts to become a repository of graphic illustrations of the last ten. Manuscripts and folding books that contain textual material from the *Jātakas* never have *Jātaka* depictions within them. The increasingly popular *Jātaka* last ten series however are constantly found in those chanting books and folding books where other frequently used chants, such as the funerary *Abhidhamma-mātikā* and the *Iti pi* sorecollections and elaborations are found.

*Jātakade*pications in manuscripts here seem then to occupy a slightly different role from that of their portrayal in temples. These manuals are treasured objects, bringing merit to all those involved in commissioning and creating them, and the temple/monastery that keeps them. They were, however, and indeed still are, working books, to be placed on a table in front of the monks as they face the gathering in a temple. While the Great Ten certainly fulfil decorative and devotional functions, being regarded as auspicious simply by their presence flanking the text, they are used for explication too, in a form through which a monk teaching the story can open the book out and show it to the assembled



attendees in order to illustrate the tale he is recounting (Appleton et al. 2013: 1–9).¹⁸¹ Here, the association with the ten perfections is paramount, as the pictures themselves appear as texts in their own right, evoking these ten *Jātakas* as an inter-related field of merit and auspiciousness, suggested by visual encapsulations of significant scenes. So the manuscript emphasises a feature found sometimes in temple art, where one or a group of scenes from one story become symbolic of the associated perfection, rather in the manner of Western Mediaeval emblematic representation (see Shaw 2013). Iconography in both manuscript and temple art is interchangeable; tiny, finely painted manuscript pictures, with their monoscenic bias, evoke the whole tale and its associated perfection through a cameo representation of what is seen as the most memorable or distinctive element within the story as a whole. Usually in such books figures do not crowd the picture, but rather the flowers, birds, trees and suggested landscapes that first decorated such books in the Ayutthaya period (Ginsberg 1989:42–71). So, the Janaka depiction in British Library OR 14068, dating from the mid eighteenth-century, has passengers and fish struggling in a stylised ocean, while the goddess waits above amidst flower motifs, wheels and petals on a bright red sky (Ginsberg 1989: Plate 13, p.49). MS Pali a.27 (R), now in the Bodleian Library, shows for MJ the wreck on the right side with the goddess rescuing the Bodhisatta above, as so often drawing together incidents separated by seven days, and, on the left, the recognition of the king on the auspicious slab as the greatly fortunate recipient of the good *kamma* associated with his superhuman effort. His auspiciousness lies, in these depictions, in receiving the fruits of this perfection, not in exercising effort itself. This feature could be compared to Temiya depictions, where throughout central Siam the scenes most popularly represented are certainly the withstanding of various temptations, but also the incident where Temiya is finally released from his self-imposed imprisonment. For this perfecting of renunciation (*nekkhamma*), he is shown outside the city gates, exercising his strength by twirling the chariot above his head while a bemused charioteer is supposedly digging his grave, an action frequently depicted as far back as the early ordination stones. MS Pali a.27(R) was, it appears, sent to Kandy as part of a late eighteenth-century exercise in restoring the saṅgha and Buddhist narrative and doctrine, to Sri Lanka. This attempt to sustain the *sāsana* in another region gives manuscript art a potentially different function, in that it is being used to communicate the story and its associated iconography to another region. Thus its portability here involves depiction as a succinct means of distilling the *dhamma* for dissemination elsewhere.

Janaka influences: the para-canonical story

¹⁸¹ I am grateful to Ajahn Phra Mahā Laow, Buddha Vihāra, Staffordshire, UK, for describing the way the manuals are used in modern contexts, as illustrations shown to the laity to accompany the telling of each story.



Mention should also be made to depictions of the *Paññāsa-Jātakas*, assuming great popularity in Southeast Asia in general. These ever popular para-canonical stories include many that exploit an unusually large amount of tropes from the *Mahājanaka*.¹⁸² Incidents such as the sea or river wreck, consequent separations and the timely intervention of Maṇimekhalā to rescue those that keep *sīla*, practise generosity and observe the *uposatha* day, occur in a number of tales and their depictions, demonstrating that the Janaka is perhaps the most influential *Jātaka* on these stories, with more affinities found within them to this story than for any other in the Great Ten (for pictorial representation, see, for instance Roveda and Yem 2009: 120–2). The largely coastal and riverine cultures of Southeast Asia presumably felt some affinity for events connected with sea-wrecks and rescues by Maṇimekhalā, who herself assumes a significant role in story, dance and popular mythology throughout these regions (Levi 1930). This popularity perhaps led to reinforcement in art of the ancient emphasis found in the *Jātaka-nidāna* on Janaka's struggle in the sea as his exemplification of the perfection of effort. Her appeal also extends to Tamil Nadu regions in India: while Levi suggests an origin for her story there, Peter Skilling has rightly warned against the use of the word 'influence' in South and Southeast Asian literary and artistic culture (Skilling 2009): whatever her origins, we can perhaps see her widespread depiction as commonly shared, throughout maritime and riverine cultures, acquiring particular pre-eminence in the twelfth to the thirteenth century, perhaps supporting a tendency from this period for MJ depictions to place such attention on the struggle at sea, in accordance with the ancient *Jātaka-nidāna* emphasis.

Repicturing Jātakas Shwedagon Pagoda tiles, Yangon

In the twentieth century MJ has continued to be portrayed, though to a lesser extent than in previous centuries. Early twentieth-century depictions of MJ are shown on votive tiles that encircle the base of the Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon. The date of these is uncertain, but seems to have occurred at the same time as the construction of 64 cells surrounding the great stūpa (Moore and Mayer 1999), a short time before 1906, when photographs were taken with them there. The commissioning and placing of tiles by private donor, a practice seen in twelfth-century Pagan, here, at the outset of the twentieth century becomes in part a showcase in exhibiting modern tile-making techniques and absorbing Western production methods into a traditional setting. It is sometimes thought

¹⁸² See Jaini 1981–3. Variations on MJ themes may be seen in *Sumbhamittā-Jātaka* (no.5), *Samuddaghosa-Jātaka* (no. 6), *Sanhāpattarājā-Jātaka* (no 10), *Sattadhamu-Jātaka* (no. 20), *Candakumāra-Jātaka* (no. 21), *Ratanapajjota-Jātaka* (no. 23) and *Vaḍḍhana-Jātaka* (no.44). For discussion of the genre, see Skilling 2006.



that all the *Jātakas* are depicted here, but they seem to be individually commissioned, the last ten as a series and the others as single tiles. In this regard the Great Ten feature frequently, demonstrating a pre-eminence in Burma and Siam over the others, dating from the seventeenth century. There are only occasional interspersed examples of other *Jātakas*. Their overall design, of four tiles representing each story, with a preliminary descriptive tile before each series, is standardized according to a presumably predesigned commercial template. Within Great Ten depictions only the Temiya, or *Mūgapakkha-Jātaka*, exhibits variation, in differing forms of the temptations the young Bodhisatta is forced to confront. Some tiles record donors: the whole decoration of the base must have been undertaken on the basis of a number of individual private sponsorships. Interestingly the choice of scene and arrangement on the tile often corresponds to the later depictions of the twentieth-century Mahābodhi pagoda next to the Shwedagon, perhaps based on these models. The systematic monoscenic depiction of episodes within a story, in a sequential manner, is peculiarly Burmese, as seen in the temples of Pagan and Mandalay, as indeed is a liking for the box-shaped surround the tile form implies. The four scenes chosen for MJ are the swim, the rescue, the finding on the auspicious slab and the renunciation. These depictions are frequent - there are at least ten on the base of the stūpa - and they sometimes feature outside the usual Great Ten sequence, suggesting the popularity of this story in a coastal region, where wrecks must have been commonplace. In the light of earlier discussion of *sīmā* stones in Bahn Nong Hang, Northeast Thailand, it is worth noting the presence of the renunciate Bodhisatta, carrying the stick described in the story, though recognizable here by his unshaved head and head-dress.

The story continues to be depicted as one of the Great Ten in the twentieth century. Some lessened impact of the first nine stories of the Great Ten must be seen as the result of the impact of modernity, of an often rationalist based understanding of Buddhism and a lessened status accorded to the stories in the general sense of *Jātakas* as being in some way not completely 'Buddhist'. But other factors have come into play too: in Thailand the last ten still retain some, though greatly lessened importance, with the *Vessantara* continuing to be more popular even than the Buddha's life story (see Cone and Gombrich 1977). Narrative, which formed the basis of most rural teaching in Thailand at the outset of the twentieth century, still continues to appeal.¹⁸³ Dramatic representations, vernacular versions of MJ and other manifestations of the story in poetry, art, dance and folk tale,

¹⁸³ A commission sent by the king in 1900 to rural Northeast Thailand reported that all the teaching was *Jātaka* based, a phenomenon of which they did not approve, but which informed the understanding of forest teachers such as Ajahn Mun Bhuridatta, who apparently had many *Jātaka* like encounters with other beings in his walks and travels. For the reports of 1900, see Tiyanich 1997: 30.



have not been considered here, and would be the subject for further study, as would Sri Lankan, Cambodian and Laotian retellings.

One major development in the reception of this tale occurred in the twentieth century, in a revision that itself shows, as has historically been the case, the hand of the king as a Buddhist monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej. Hearing MJ at a ceremonial event, and feeling that a greater emphasis on the duties of the king would represent a significant contribution to this ongoing narrative, he composed and published his own version of the story, published in 1996 as *The Story of Mahājanaka*. The narrative was presented in Thai and English, with Pāli verses in Nāgari script and contributions by leading Thai artists and cartoonists. A black-and-white and a colour version followed in 2000, which has been translated into many languages, and a mural of this version is being painted in a temple in the north of Thailand (Skilling 2008: 76). ‘Cartoon’ is a natural *Jātaka* form: episodic sequentially arranged pictures allow for the same kind of flow that one finds in friezes, and the artist/s exploit this medium with considerable skill.¹⁸⁴ This new version includes a great deal of emphasis on the role of the king in implementing reforms for the benefit of his people. The mango tree incident, for instance, is treated quite differently. Rather than being a prompt for royal renunciation, nine different ways of reviving mango tree sites are delineated, that can be applied by anyone, so that the problem does not recur in the future and there will be enough fruit for everyone. This applied socially enlightened Buddhist royal ethos thereby integrates twentieth-century preoccupations, with the environment, social justice and democracy, into a traditional story motif and a *cakkavattin* model of ideal monarchy. So there is a new interpretation and revision, continuing the flexible tradition of *Jātaka* representation we have seen demonstrated at various times in the story’s history.

It should be noted that there is a growing popular interest in *Jātakas* in the West. According to the librarian at the Buddhist Society in London requests for *Jātaka* translations are amongst the most common requests made by people interested in Buddhism whose ethnic origin is not Buddhist, and amongst those of Thai/Burmese/Sri Lankan diaspora or Thai/Burmese/Sri Lankan mixed Western marriages, who request them for their children. The Thai Temple in Calonne Road, Wimbledon, includes a depiction of MJ in its twentieth-century Great Ten sequence, in the East Wing of the *ubosot*. In these depictions artists absorb modernity through global artistic references and the inclusion of twentieth-century artefacts and figures, while still retaining the structure of traditional temple art and many visual links to episodes that have become ‘iconic’ to Thais (Cate

¹⁸⁴ For such depictions in modern Sri Lanka, see Appleton 2010: ref.



2003: 71–78). Story books in the ever popular Amar Chitra Katha Series, showing the stories as episodic cartoons, make the tales accessible to children, as well as reshaping traditional visualizations.

As we have seen one story assumes differing importance in different contexts, and is susceptible to many kinds of interpretation. MJ is unusually consistent. Its attribution to *virīya* persists. It is one of only two stories in the Great Ten that involves outright war, in an opening incident that anticipates the association with vigour the story comes to enact. It is hardly surprising that this feature is sometimes emphasized by artists and commissioners for whom such secular concerns will have jostled with their wish for kammic merit. This could, however, simply be the result of a trend noted by Green in Burma from the seventeenth century, to portray beginnings of the last ten. If this is a visual cueing, it works on comparable lines to the verbal mnemonic, whereby the first line of the first verse is used as a tag preceding all *Jātakas* in the Pāli versions. In a number of contexts discussed here the visual cue is, however, not the opening scenes, but a central and memorable incident or series of incidents within the story that encapsulate or remind the teller of the story concerned. These possibilities both stress the oral nature of *Jātaka* transmission, and that temples that follow such visual patterns may do so because the stories were so frequently recounted and chanted there.

At Ajanṭā and Bharhut the renunciation dominates, suggesting the use of a version like that found in the Pāli, which emphasizes these features. Such scenes feature occasionally, in subsequent depictions such as at Wat Yai Intharam. But in the eleventh and twelfth century in Burmese and Mon regions, as well as probably in the Khorat plateau, scenes associated with the wreck, and rescue, suggest that the tale was being particularly associated with the *Jātaka-nidāna* link to *virīya*, also suggested by the *Cūḷajanaka* choice of this recollected incident by the king. Alexandra Green notes in the context of Burma that the depictions ‘reach to the dramatic heart of the narratives’ (Green: forthcoming). In this regard the wreck and the finding of the king on the auspicious slab seem paramount. Indeed these two scenes command MJ depictions and become emblematic of the perfection of *virīya*, an intriguing association, given their receptivity, as if the perfection has finally come to fruition. Portrayals in late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century Siam also start to absorb, portray and satirise threats from outside the state. In these settings the *Jātaka* story can, through flexibility in its treatment and execution, offer a means of absorbing foreign or alien elements within a thoroughly Buddhist narrative framework.



The system developed by Vidya Dehejia has been employed throughout this discussion. This method is deeply illuminating as a way of reading pictures: Green has shown, for instance, that from the fifteenth century in Burma the monoscenic is used for events in the Buddha's life that are outside of time, communicating the unconditioned, while a sense of process animates narrative and *Jātaka* stories (Green 2002, 67ff). So, stories leading up to Buddhahood tend to be sequentially or continuously presented, but moments suggesting awakening are seen as single tableaux. When we look at the development of depictions of one story, however, in a Southeast Asian context, the Great Ten start to become represented by emblematic scenes, that bring together a series of incidents, or events closely related to one another, or a particularly memorable episode involving various characters as well as the Bodhisatta, involved in different activities. These configurations of events, from one quite small section of the story, whose particular composition varies, are often used as subject matter in quite different locations and contexts, and are chosen both in murals where there is great compositional, continuous flow, or a network arrangement, as in much Thai mural art, and in manuscripts and tiles, where there can only be one tableau or monoscenic depiction. So the typology of modes, useful as it is, does not reveal centrally important features: that it is memorable incidents around the wreck and the finding of the king that are most depicted, whatever mode is used. It is as if their memorability lies in the evocation of a cluster of important events, or a loosely connected series. Sometimes, as in manuscripts, an event perhaps suggesting the perfection itself is denoted by one such incident, from this cluster, in monoscenic or sometimes conflated form. Depictions of other stories would need to be examined closely to see if this is a general tendency.

Throughout these varied interpretative depictions, and uses of *Jātaka* portrayals on *sīmā* stones, tiles, commissioned art for temple interiors, stūpa adornment, and manuscripts, the form of this story, one of a textual grouping that has acquired an its own life and symbolism throughout Southeast Asia, where other *Jātaka* stories are lesser known, has remained perennially popular. Like the other Great Ten stories, this tale has been constantly and flexibly re-pictured and re-imagined: as protective, as emblematic, as a demonstration of auspicious results, as teaching, as a manuscript depiction intended to be shown to others, and as offering. These functions need not exclude each other, though emphases may vary. The history of this tale is in many ways that of the last ten, but its very consistency offers a suggestion as to the way that the link between the stories and the ten perfections may have emerged in part simply through visual depictions, that continually portray the scenes that are most memorable and representative of the qualities of each story as a whole. Amidst these varied incidents, the Bodhisatta, in the Great Ten, is



often a kingly or courtly hero, finding the culmination of a path that because it is so often a lay one offers inspiration and a model for everyone.

Jātakas as bhāvanā

One last point should be made about the original function of listening to *Jātakas* as an aspect of *bhāvanā*. This is made explicit by their inclusion as one of the nine *aṅgas* of the teaching, but also by internal evidence provided by the commentary to the stories themselves. At the end of most stories, in the assigned connections (*samodhāna*), the assembled companies are given teachings on the four noble truths, and many reach four stages of path on the basis of that. The implications of this are interesting, for listening to *Jātakas* itself then being implied as itself a salvific activity, aligned with *samādhi* and the last three factors of the eightfold path. Clearly these tales are not solely moral teachings for a laity participating in a compromised or partial form of Buddhist practice. Throughout *Jātaka* stories the injunction is given to practise generosity, morality and to observe the *uposatha*. It seems likely that historically, as is the case now, *Jātakas* were told at times when the assembled company of laity are observing extra precepts, wearing white and observing the *uposatha* in a way that all activities would be part of a purificatory, collective *bhāvanā*, shared by all present. All of these activities would be felt to contribute to the triad in the eightfold path concerned with *sīla*. Being in temples where *Jātakas* are depicted would enhance a sense of auspiciousness, by placing practitioners in the presence of the Buddha's 'history', which as Swearer and Brown point out, is so central to Buddhist practice (Swearer 2004: 232; Brown 1997). But in largely non-literate societies, listening to stories would not be just a diversion, albeit an auspicious one, or even simply a means of providing a 'didactic' service, in the communication of principles by which to live, though these would certainly be central to their efficacy. If we take the model of the earliest texts, and one suspects, the role they performed in many traditional rural societies, the extended narratives of the Great Ten are also themselves a way of arousing *samādhi*, or concentration, by encouraging attentiveness and interest, under conditions of mindfulness. The *Saṅgīti Sutta* lists five spheres of freedom (*vimuttāyatana*): hearing the teaching from one who knows, hearing it from one who has heard it, chanting the texts (*sajjhayaṃ*), investigating them carefully (*dhammaṃ cetasāmuvitakketi anuvicāreti manasā'nupekkhati*), and grasping the sign of calm meditation, leading to wisdom. In each case this process leads to gladdening of the mind, and then to joy. This joy makes the body tranquil, and the tranquil body becomes happy, and the happy mind goes



to concentration, *samādhi* (D III 241–2).¹⁸⁵ The stories are not mentioned here. But the role of *Jātakas* in arousing sustained attention, as such a *bhāvanā*, places them in the perspective of their role as limbs of the teaching: the mind is being made ready for the salvific teaching of the four noble truths, and the wisdom of the first two path factors. We consider the varied political, economic and highly contextualized contexts in which *Jātaka* depictions have featured in the construction of temples, stūpas and in the composition of manuscripts and books: but *Jātakas* are particularly associated with *uposatha* activities. Such days involve taking extra precepts and making offerings – the *sīla* and generosity they so often recommend. When these very long stories are recounted or chanted, sometimes in vernaculars or vernaculars mixed with Pāli, all these secular interests are accommodated, explained, and perhaps transformed, by a Buddhist understanding, so that they contribute to a form of collective *bhāvanā* too.

In this role, the *Mahājanaka*, with its war, brave swim, rescue by the goddess, restoration of a true king and final renunciation, represents a magnificently nuanced communication of the perfection of vigour, and one that, one imagines, must have been used to promote this factor as a faculty, power and, by implication, an element in the eightfold path, as well as a perfection.

¹⁸⁵ The series, frequent in Pāli texts, goes: *Tassa atthapaṭisaṃvedino dhammapaṭisaṃvedino pāmojjam jāyati, paṃuditassa pīti jāyati, pītimanassa kāyo passambhati, passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vedeti, sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.*



SRI KSETRA AND THE BIRTH OF BUDDHIST ARCHAEOLOGY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Elizabeth Howard Moore
University of London, London

“The Buddha’s teaching is a prescription for putting us into harmony with our surroundings, and for establishing a proper ecology of mind ¹⁸⁶ so that we are in accord with others and with nature around us.” Sitagu Sayadaw ¹⁸⁷



Pyu period image of the Buddha, Shwesandaw Pagoda, Pwaj (Photograph by author; Courtesy Shwesandaw Trustee Committee)

The ecology of ancient Buddhist cities

I would like to thank the Sitagu World Buddhist Association (SWBA), the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Myanmar and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) for the opportunity to be part of this celebration of the 2600th anniversary of the Buddha’s enlightenment and the Buddha Sasana. I would also like to thank the conference organizers for including Myanmar’s Buddhist archaeology within our celebration.

In selecting the Buddhist city of Sri Ksetra, I draw upon the celebration which brings us together, to bring to you the extraordinarily rich tangible and intangible heritage of Myanmar’s Buddhist archaeology. In particular, I call to your attention the quotation

¹⁸⁶ vspfvL&SK

¹⁸⁷ *The Noble Path of the Noble Ones*, Lecture by Ashin Nyanissara (Sitagu Sayadaw), 2000.



from an address given by Sitagu Sayadaw which I have cited above. His phrase 'proper ecology of mind' underlines how what we think and do comes from and is part of a world where we have the chance to create harmony.¹⁸⁸ Ecology in this sense which I am using here includes man and his communities and so opens the door to social, environmental and conceptual change.¹⁸⁹ The birth of Buddhist archaeology in Myanmar, focused here on the example of one ancient city, Sri Ksetra, did just this with simultaneous and inter-related transformations of the landscape, social hierarchy and spiritual worldview.

Man and nature: pre-Buddhist Myanmar cultures

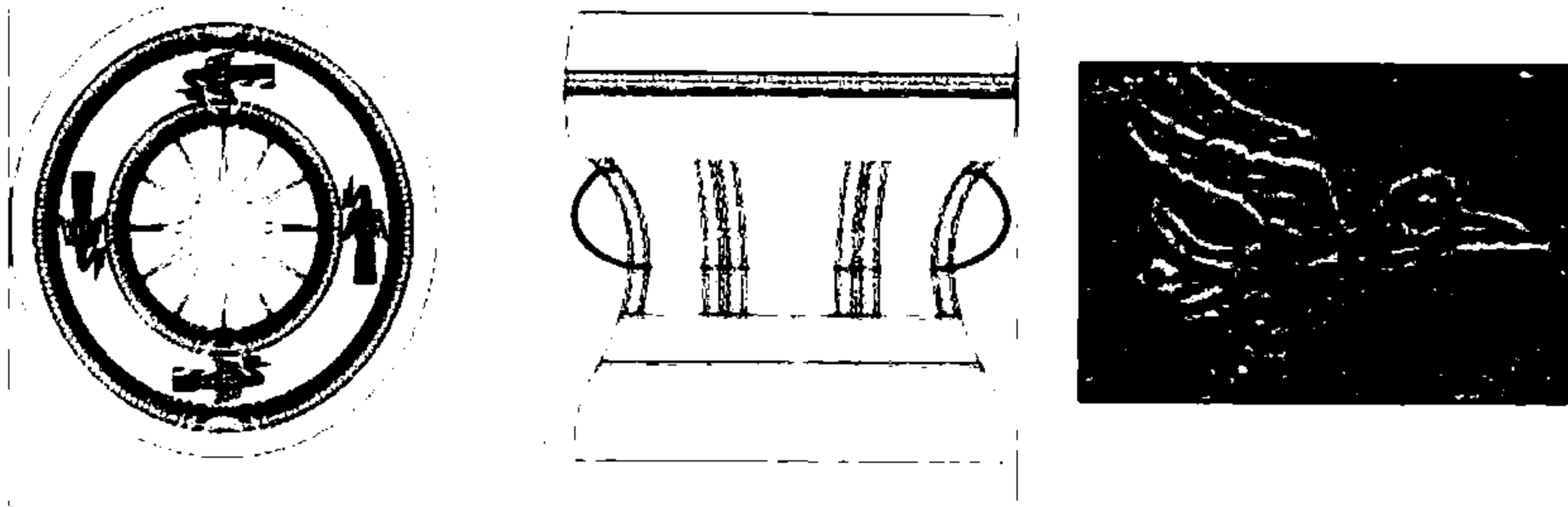
Was this sensitivity part of man's conception of the world before the time of the Buddha Gautama? The archaeological data from the pre-Buddhist civilizations of Myanmar suggests not, with a focus on propitiation of nature and survival more than understanding and balance. Archaeologists have now documented prehistoric cultures in Upper and Lower Myanmar, with ritual artifacts including ceremonial stone rings and fertility figures. There is a clear attention to the vitality of the landscape with rituals aimed at establishing at least temporary harmony with spirits of nature and tutelary guardians of place. Many of these prehistoric cultures worked the landscape, particularly with the establishment of settled cultivation and animal husbandry. The beginnings of wet rice agriculture and husbandry as well as bronze and iron production in Myanmar took place in the Chindwin and Samon Valley cultures of Upper Myanmar dated from circa 1500 BC to 300CE. The Chindwin and Samon areas saw the rise and flowering of local bronze and some iron production. There is evidence of trade with bronze musical instruments including celebratory Heger I drums of circa 400 BC to 100 CE from Yunnan.¹⁹⁰ The tympanum and mantle of these drums are incised with rice barns and figures of birds in flight who convey a keen appreciation on the part of the artist of their beauty and animation

¹⁸⁸ Collins 1982. *Selfless persons: imagery and thought in Theravada Buddhism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.166.

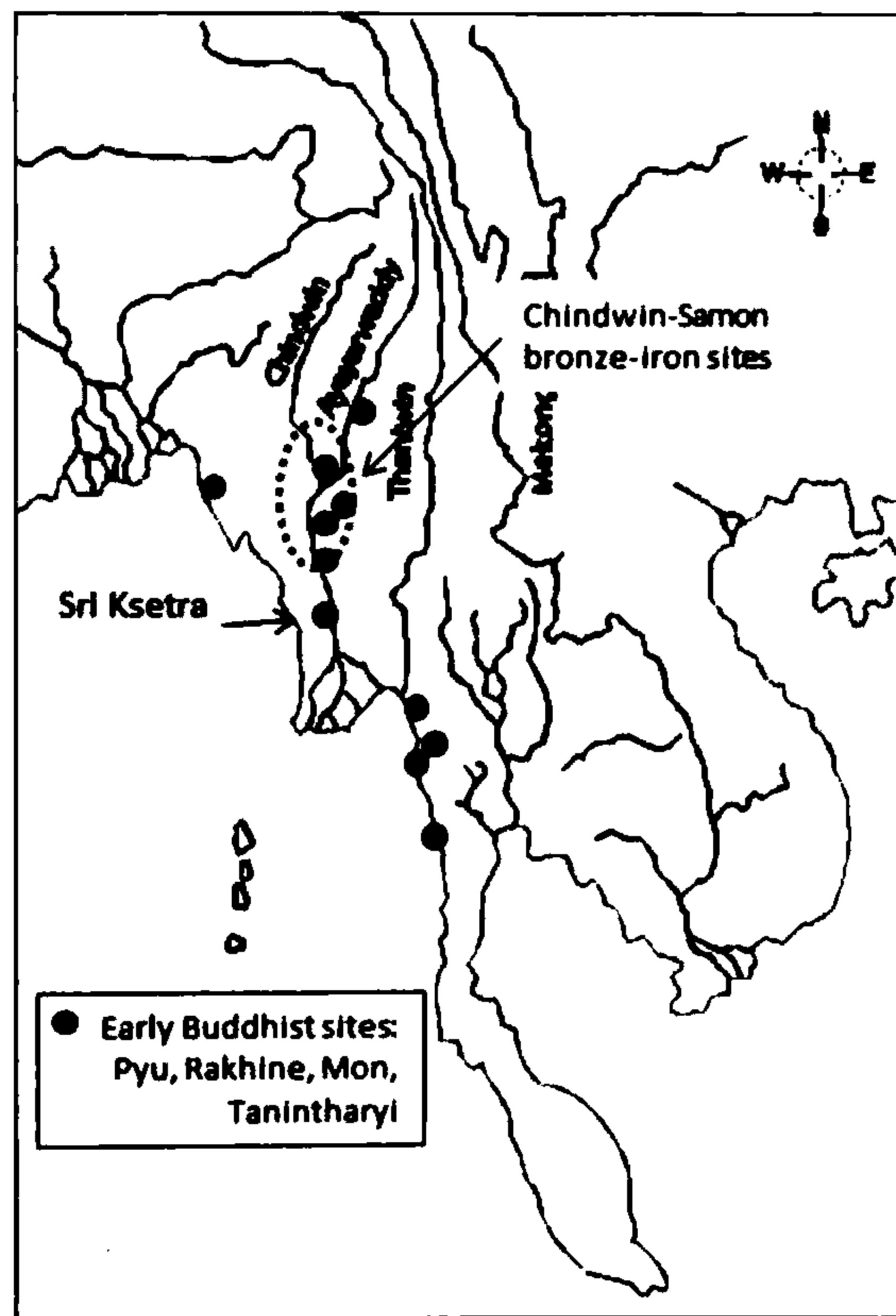
¹⁸⁹ ob10av1u ESith ywf0ef;usif

¹⁹⁰ Calo', Ambra. 2007. Heger I Bronze Drums and the Dian-Dong Son Question. In *Uncovering Southeast Asia's Past - selected papers from the Tenth Biennial Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists*. The British Museum, London, September 2004 (edited by Ian Glover). Singapore: National University Press..





Detail of birds on bronze drum found in Upper Myanmar (courtesy U Win Maung (Tampawaddy))



Principal rivers of Myanmar (courtesy Prof. U San Shwe, Yangon University) showing location of Sri Ksetra and other early Buddhist sites



Interchange with South Asia

Despite the technical mastery, highly developed aesthetics and evidence of inter-regional exchange networks demonstrated by the bronze-iron artefacts found in Upper Myanmar, we have yet to find any clear patterning by which to understand the perception and use of the landscape by these pre-Buddhist cultures of the Samon and Chindwin Valleys. Mortuary goods of the Samon Valley include small bronze packets or *kye doke* that resemble bundles of paddy for cattle feed and in turn indicate an increase in wet rice production, but excavations have solely unearthed cemeteries, leaving the location and character of possible farming villages ambiguous. The Samon and Chindwin artifacts indicate belief systems focused on fertility, animism, tutelary and ancestral veneration structured within human lifespans and local kinship groupings. Evidence for this is clearest in the Samon valley where 'mother-goddess' figures of high-copper bronze were fastened to the top of coffins made from trees.

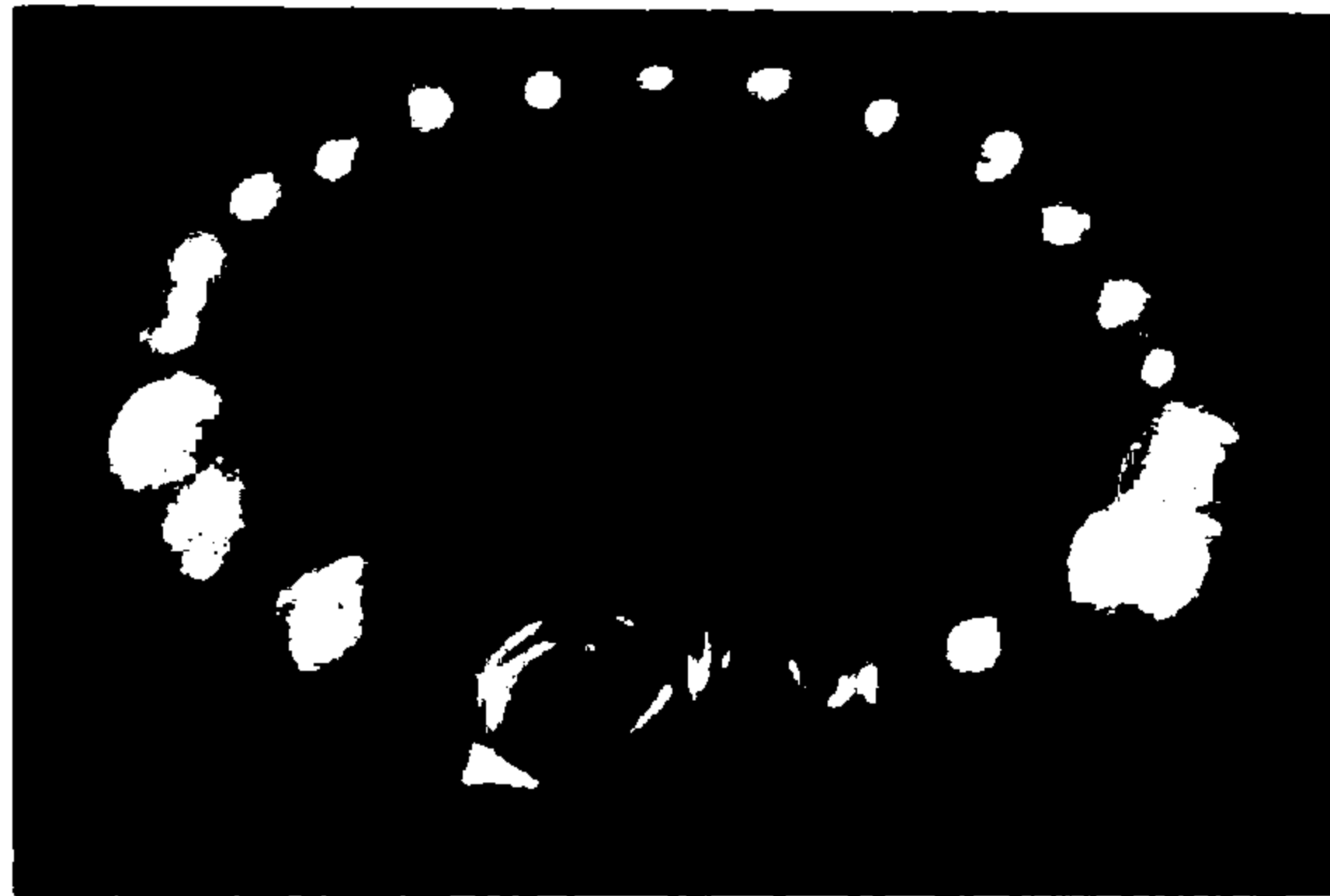


Bronze Kye doke from Samon valley and 'mother-goddess' figures (drawing courtesy U Win Maung (Tampawaddy))

In the early centuries CE, however, increasing interchange with South Asia not only sparked agricultural re-organization and new inter-regional trade networks but transformed the systems of belief and law. Brahmanic and Buddhist teachings may at a village level have been 'adopted for their effectiveness' and pragmatic concepts, and with Buddhism in particular flexible enough to adapt to local conditions.¹⁹¹ There is also good evidence that the developing societies of South and Southeast Asia had much in common, facilitating the

¹⁹¹ Maxwell, Thomas S. (2007:71-121) 'Religion at the time of Jayavarman VII' in *Bayon, New Perspectives* Ed. Joyce Clark, Bangkok, River Books, p. 121

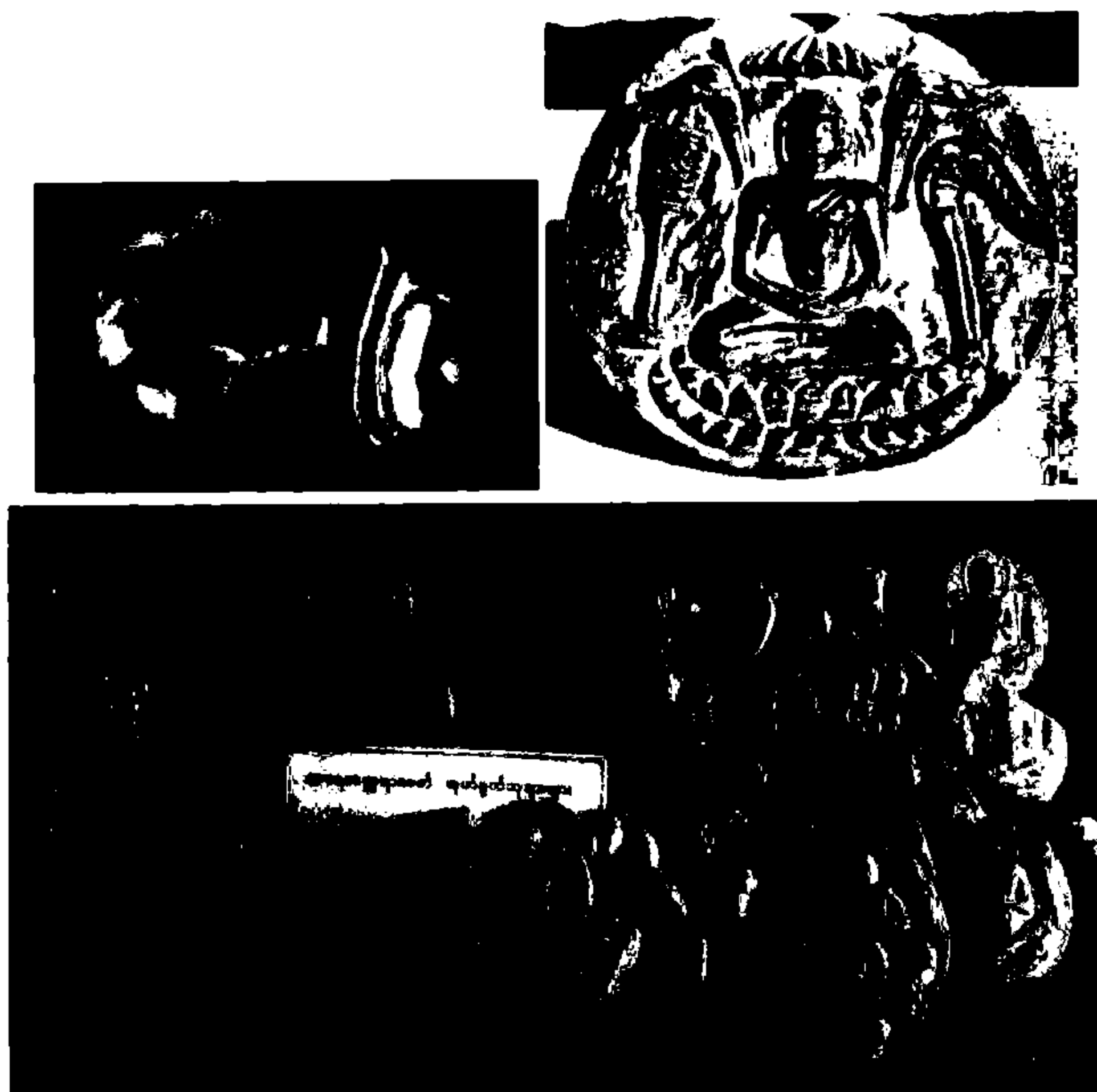
adoption of the text-based religions of Hinduism and Buddhism with their ideological and apparatus and concepts of urbanization.¹⁹²



*Semi-precious polished beads from Sri Ksetra, National Museum, Yangon
(Photograph by author; Courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum
and Library (DANML))*

Apart from a continued use of local semi-precious stones such as carnelian to produce polished beads, the cultural profile of Myanmar's archaeology shifts from affinities to Yunnan to those of South Asia with the rise of Buddhist kingdoms. For the first time, settlement patterns are distinct, with villages sited near but not on the massive north to south Ayeyarwaddy River. Brick was used for building and site fortification, sometimes in conjunction with wood, with radiocarbon dates of as early as 200 BCE from ritual structures and settlement ramparts. In addition, there is abundant evidence for specialized and abundant production of new types of goods in terracotta, stone, glass, bronze, silver and gold. Goods were used and trading locally and exchanged within inter-regional networks.

¹⁹² Manguin, Pierre-Yves. 2010. 'Pan-regional Responses to South Asian Inputs in Early Southeast Asia', in *50 years of Archaeology: Essays in Honour of Ian Glover* (Bellina, Becérniece, E. Bacus, T.O. Pryce and J. W. Christie, Eds.) 181, Bangkok, River Books, P. 177



Objects of donation: turtle-shaped crystal bead, gold plaque with image of the Buddha and Pyu votive tablets, Poñña Ceti, Shwesandaw pagoda, Pyay (Photographs by author; courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library (DANML); Shwesandaw Pagoda Trustees)

Profits and objects were also significant in a sophisticated patronage network linked to the king but primarily aimed at the essential support needed to building and sustain the growing monastic communities. Populist support to support the *sangha* reached across kinship lines to draw together various communities sheltered within the massive brick walls of the new Buddhist cities. New Buddhist teachings likewise instigated new cyclic celebrations meshing with the agricultural cycle and familial respect traditions, with the lunar calendar marking significant points in the full-moon festivals throughout the year. Consecration of a new temple was marked by celebration with enshrinement of goods from those made of precious metals to simple votive tablets bearing images of the Buddha. While these modifications may have been implemented by an increase in the existing population, the conceptual and material transformation in social hierarchy and negotiation with the local ecology of the early centuries CE suggest a steady influx of at least in part a

new population group responsible for the transmission of the teachings of the Buddha, the establishment of the first monastic communities and the birth of Myanmar Buddhism.¹⁹³



Seasonal small scale management, Sri Ksetra (note stupa in distance) (Courtesy U Win Kyaing, DANML)

Much research remains to be undertaken on the transition to Buddhist kingdoms during *circa* 100 BCE – 500 CE, but there is good archaeological evidence of new repertoire of specialized products and landscape engineering to facilitate expanded rice cultivation and widening trade networks. A text elucidating this process still eludes us, but we can ‘read’ in the landscape a new type of relationship between man and nature. There is good reason to suggest that this new relationship may have been initiated and promoted through the establishment of new monastic communities and Buddhist teachings spread through a populist support that embraced both elite and farming sectors of the population of Upper Myanmar. Material and epistemological change thus appear to have worked in tandem in the birth of Buddhist monasteries, the construction of stupas and temples, a wealth of specialized products and city walls, gates and palaces demarcating vast cities in arguably the most significant turning point in the Buddhist archaeology of Myanmar.

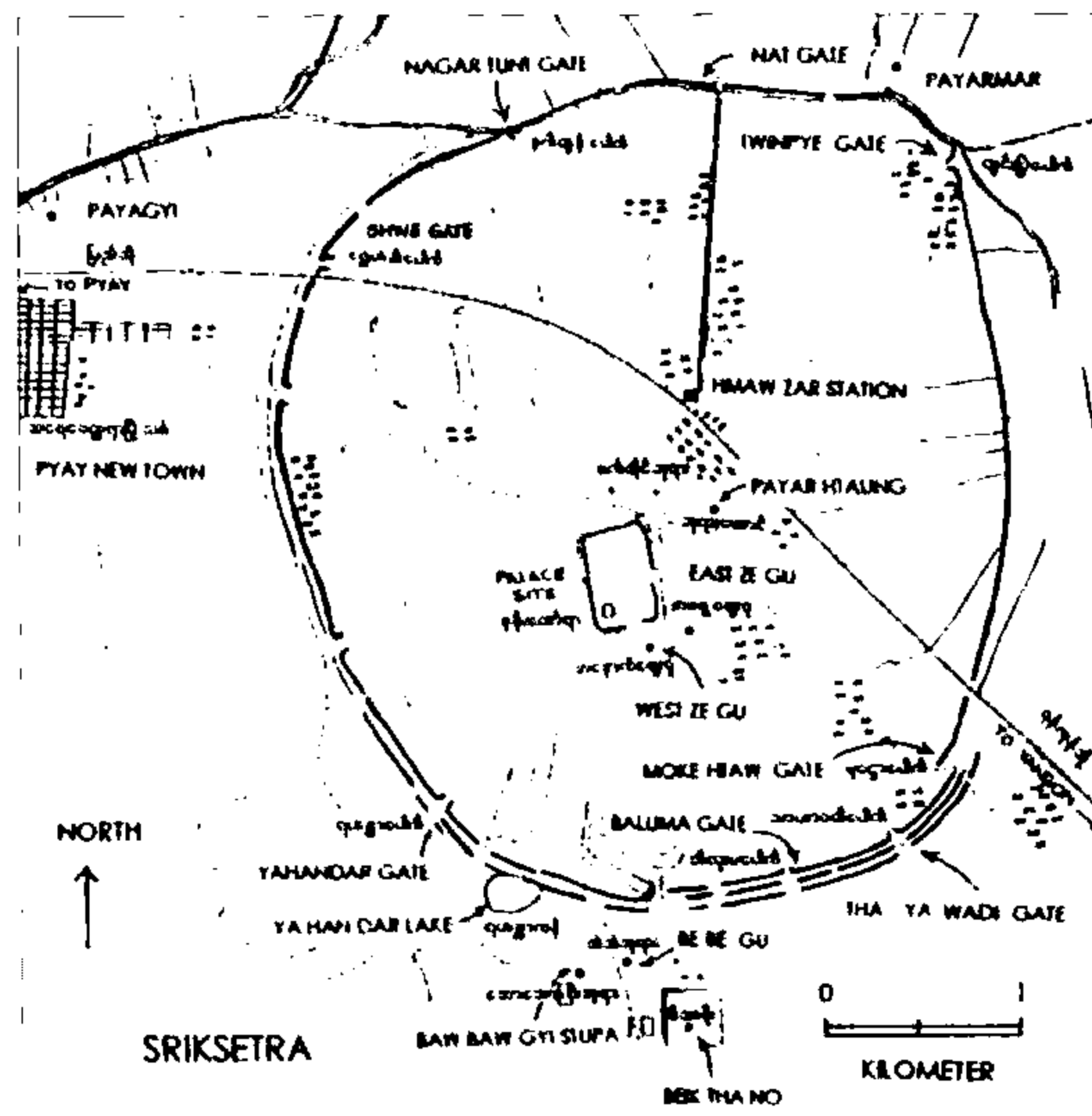
¹⁹³ Myanmar chronicles describe the first millennium CE population of Upper Myanmar in relation to the Pyu (P’iao or Tircul), Kanyan and Thet-Kadu (Sak) with G.H. Luce speculating that the northernmost Buddhist city of Tagaung was a Kadu capital and the Pyu were never very numerous. (Luce, G.H. 1974, ‘The Advent of Buddhism to Myanmar’, in *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner* (I. Cousins, A. Kunst, and K.R. Norman, Eds.) D. Reidel: Dordrecht, Boston, Pp. 119-138), p. 124. Despite these indications of a varied population base, the only written script from this period is attributed to the Pyu, with ‘Pyu’ having become an umbrella term for the cultures of Upper Myanmar in the first millennium CE. (Moore, E. 2009, Place and space in early Burma: a new look at ‘Pyu Culture’, *Journal of the Siam Society*, 92, pp. 1-27. Re-printed in Moore, E. H. 2012, *The Pyu Landscape: collected articles*, Naypyitaw Ministry of Culture. The meaning given to the word ‘P’iao’ varied over time, from ‘rebel’ in early Tsin Dynasty texts to ‘cavalry’ in later T’ang ones. Aung Thwin, Michael 2005 *The mists of Ramanna: the legend that was lower Burma*, Honolulu, University of Hawai’i, p.14





Large-scale landscape intervention, double and triple brick walls, Tharawaddy gate, Sri Ksetra (Courtesy U Thein Lwin, DANML)

To illustrate the depth of change and to convey to you the extraordinary flowering of these new Buddhist cities, I go on to focus on the city of Sri Ksetra, the largest of the Pyu sites of Upper Myanmar. As I will explain, in the placement of stupas and the construction of walls, the past population of Sri Ksetra lived in relation to and in harmony with the landscape and the challenges of the arid local ecology.



Plan of Sri Ksetra showing walls, palace and Payagyi, Payama and Bawbawgyi stupas outside city wall (Courtesy U Aung Myint, Forestry)

However, to momentarily look ahead to my conclusion on the future, I would like to note that Buddhism is active today at monasteries and meditation centres of Sri Kseta, with resident monks, short-term meditation courses and periodic celebrations marking the Full Moon and other occasions of the Buddhist calendar. These monasteries and mediation centres are growing and through their popularity giving living expression to a very different perception of ancient times than that of archaeology, 'not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past.'¹⁹⁴ It is in the relationship between the archaeology of the Pyu city of Sri Ksetra and the living religious landscape that we can look towards celebrating the continued flourishing of Myanmar's unbroken Buddhist heritage.



Waipolarama Monastery, just south of Shwesandaw Pagoda in Pyay (Photograph courtesy U Win Kyaing, DANML)

¹⁹⁴Ingold, T.1993. The Temporality of the Landscape, *World Archaeology* 25 (2 Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society): 152-174, p. 152-153., Johnson, M. 2007. *Ideas of Landscape* Malden: Blackwell Publishing, p. xviii



The ancient Buddhist city of Sri Ksetra

Sri Ksetra is the largest of a distribution of Pyu Buddhist sites within Upper Myanmar, distinctive with its vast walled city, brick stupas, monasteries, temples and ritual objects marking the first transmission of Buddhism to Southeast Asia. With a corpus of radiocarbon dates and inscriptions dating from to *circa* the 2nd century BCE to the 9th century CE,¹⁹⁵ Sri Ksetra – and other cities such as Halin, Beikthano, Waddi and Pinle (Maingmaw) - are each unique and yet interconnected through a shared expansion of Buddhist culture that initiated customs of today.

Sri Ksetra is called Thayekhittaya, Yathet-myo or ‘city of the hermit’ and sometime Hmawza, the name of the ancient village and inside the walls. It is often paired with the city of Pyay (Prome) located some 6.4 km to the west on the bank of the Ayeyarwaddy with a 1093 CE inscription of King Kyanzittha at the Shwesandaw pagoda of Pyay recounting the Buddha’s prophecy of the founding of the Sri Ksetra.¹⁹⁶ In this account, recorded in the *Glass Palace Chronicle*, the Buddha came to Hpo-Oo Taung or mountain on the opposite side of the Ayeyarwaddy from Prome and predicted that in the 101st year after His demise that the earth would quake, a great lake would appear, the Samon and Samyeit Rivers would appear, the cone of Mt. Popa would arise, and the sea courses would dry up around Sri Ksetra.¹⁹⁷ In the 7th century CE, the pilgrim I Ching (Ijing) wrote that it was ‘...more than a month’s march to reach these mountains. To the south, the country borders on the sea: it is the kingdom of Sri Ksetra.’¹⁹⁸ The name Sri Ksetra, ‘field of glory’ or ‘auspicious land’ could be an honorific rather than a contemporary place name, for I Ching never actually visited the city.

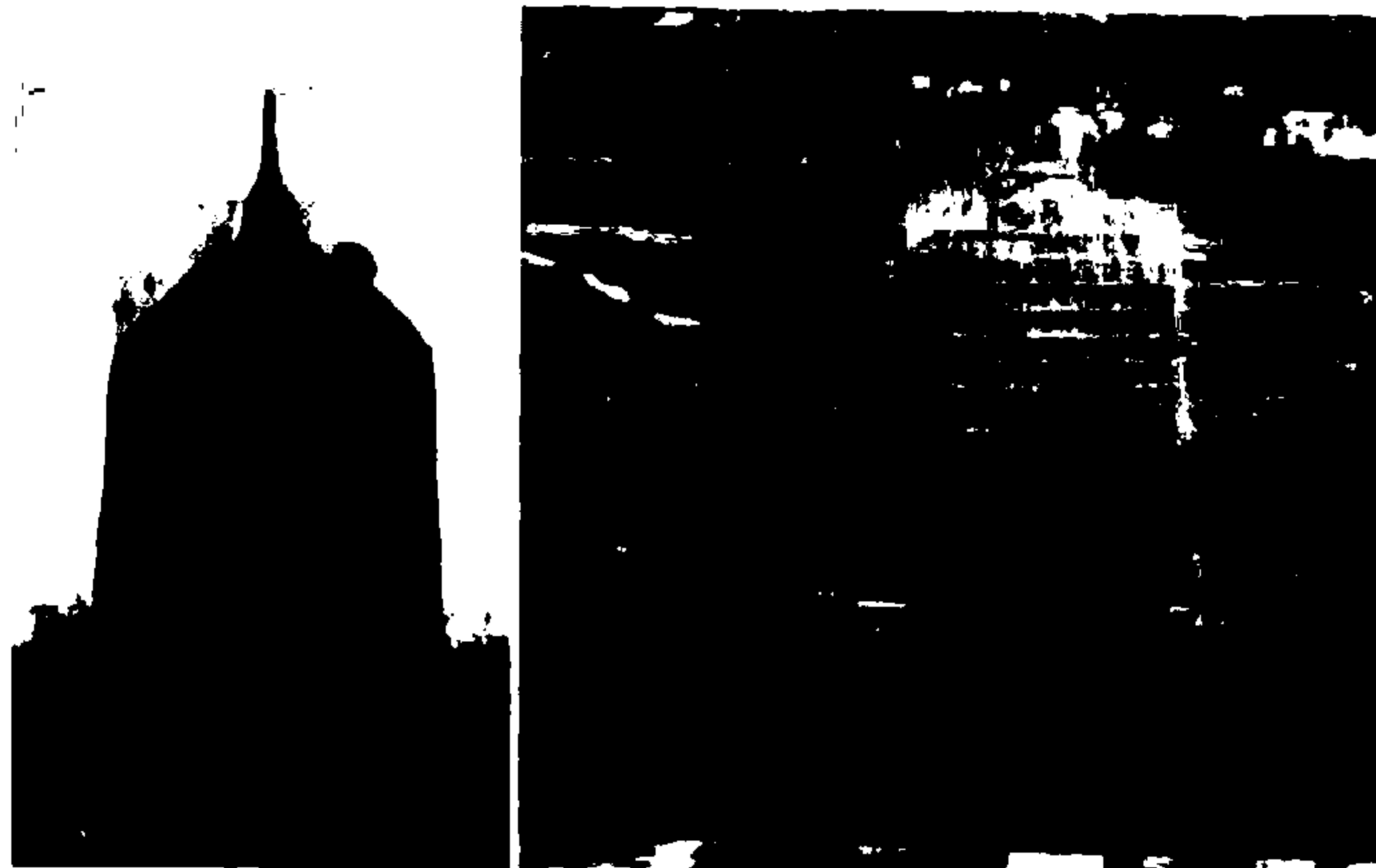
¹⁹⁵ Hudson, B. 2012. ‘A Thousand years before Bagan: carbon dates and the ancient Pyu cities’, presented at *Early Myanmar and its Global Connections Conference*, Department of Historical Research, Ministry of Culture and Nalanda-Srivijaya Centre, Singapore, held at Bagan, Myanmar

¹⁹⁶ Aung Thaw. 1972. *Historical Sites in Burma*. Rangoon, Government of the Union of Burma, p. 16;
Luce, G. H. 1985. *Phases of Pre-Pagan Burma*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.49

¹⁹⁷ Pe Maung Tin and Luce, G.H (1960 (1923 reprint)). *The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma*. Rangoon, Burma Research Society, p. 7

¹⁹⁸ Luce 1985:48





Early 20th century photograph of Bawbawgyi stupa and stupa today with traditional bamboo scaffolding in preparation for conservation (Courtesy U Win Kyaing, DANML)

Sriksetra was first investigated archaeologically in the early 20th century. As with all the Pyu cities of Upper Myanmar, the setting of Sri Ksetra along the broad Ayeyawaddy basin is of high importance in understanding its shape and dimensions as it was formed largely in relationship to the river, the ecology and the local topography. The Ayeyarwaddy (1130 km) runs the north to south length of the major landmass of Myanmar, an area of 677,000 sq km about twice as long north to south as it is east to west.

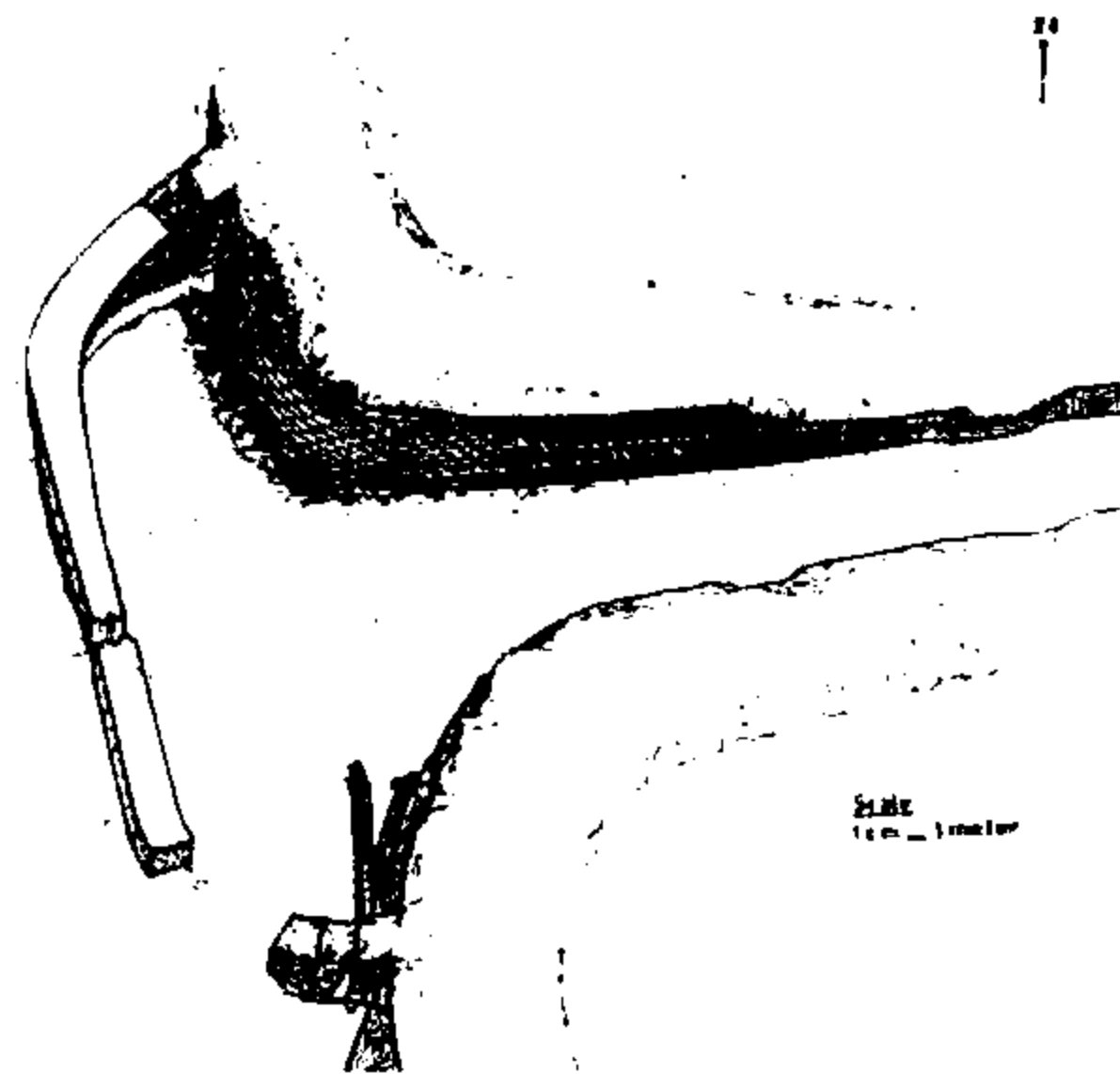
The rainfall at Sri Ksetra, some 1250 mm per annum, mostly falls between May and September, with 60 mm average in June and 0 mm in December bringing rice crop failures in two out of every three years.¹⁹⁹ The water flows from southwest to northeast across Sri Ksetra, from a peak on the Myinbahu hill crest just west of the city wall of 114 meters to 32-34 meters on the north and northeast. On the north of the ancient city is the Nawin River which flows west only *circa* 5 km before emptying into the Ayeyarwaddy.

¹⁹⁹ Stargardt, J., B. Amable and B. Devereux. 2012 'Irrigation is Forever: A Study of the Post-destruction Movement of Water Across the Ancient Site of Sri Ksetra, Central Burma. Chapter 11, pages 247-167 in In Lasaponara R and Masini, N (eds) *Satellite Remote Sensing: A new tool for Archaeology* Springer Remote Sensing and Digital Image Processing Series, Vol 16, p. 250



Walls and gates

The massive brick walls of Sri Ksetra embraced over 14 square kilometers, with up to three tiers on the southwest and southeast along high ground of 45-65 meters signalling the areas of greatest water flow during the rainy season. It has often been suggested that the walls carried a cosmological symbolism. However, an ecological explanation is embedded in the landscape as the walls follow local contour lines resting between the large *in-gyi* or tank on the east, the Myinbahu hills on the southwest and the Nawin River to the north. Located nearly at the centre of the curved walls in a transition zone between the higher land of the hills and the flat rice fields of the northeast sector of the site is the palace-citadel.



Plan Shwedaga gate (HMA-5) (Courtesy U Myint Aung, Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, DANML)





*Mosaic of aerial photographs of Sri Ksetra*²⁰⁰

The construction of the brick walls and structures at the Buddhist cities in Upper Myanmar during the first millennium CE brought far more manmade ecological adaptation than seen during earlier cultures. The natural cycles, particularly those of water, were not interrupted, however, but rather managed with the repeated construction and repair of walls allowing water to be channeled more effectively. It has been shown elsewhere in Southeast Asia that the most prosperous settlements tend to occur in areas of marginal ecological advantage. Glover, for instance, has noted the importance of the monsoon cycle, for the ever-wet equatorial climates are not well suited to rice and millet. The evolution of these staple crops occurred in temperate monsoon regions with long dry seasons fitting well with the ecology of Upper Myanmar sites such as Sri Ksetra.²⁰¹

The huge and unique inward-curving brick gates of Sri Ksetra were not built at one time, but added to as needed. While varying from gate to gate all have rounded corners

²⁰⁰ Stargardt, J. 2002-3. 'City of the Wheel, City of the Ancestors: Spatial Symbolism in a Pyu Royal City,' *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 6/7: 144-167, p. 152

²⁰¹ Glover, Ian and Peter Bellwood. 2004. Southeast Asia: foundations for an archaeological history. In *Southeast Asia, from prehistory to history*, edited by Ian and Peter Bellwood Glover. London: Routledge Curzon, p. 9

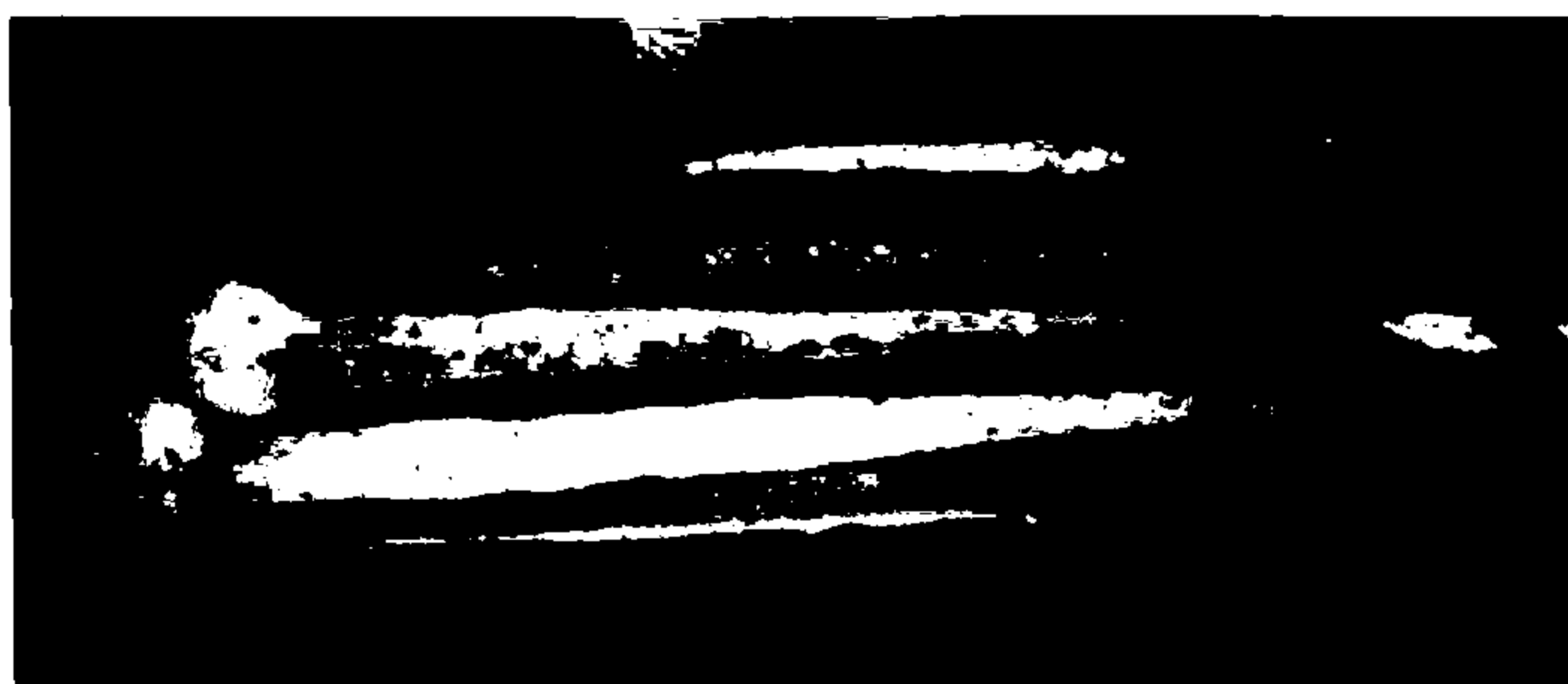


where the city wall turns inwards to form long barricades on their either side of the entrance passage. Nine gates have been identified to date at Sri Ksetra, their size illustrated by the northwest Shwedaga gate (HMA-5) where the arms were *circa* 68 metres long, each being 4.5 metres wide with a 5.18 metre-wide passageway. Chinese annals recorded a city of Pyu (P'iao) with 12 gates and it is also possible, given the finds of massive protective iron spikes embedded in the ground outside the gates, that they served astrological purposes. Each of the excavated Sri Ksetra gates has a distinctive name: Nagatount (wiggly dragon), Shwedaga (golden gate), Moatshe (long gate), Lulinkyaw (young man pass), Yahanda (*arahat* or enlightened one), Tharawaddy, Mataw, Twinbye and Natbauk.



Lulinkyaw gate on the southwest side of Sri Ksetra (courtesy U Win Kyaing, DANML)

Walls marked out the royal and religious domain, with water management being a key element in economic prosperity and also spiritually guarded the palace, with stupas and burial urns of venerated peoples found both inside and outside the walls. At several of the gates of Sri Ksetra very large protective iron nails have been found pounded into the earth, in one case (Shwedaga gate, HMA-5) in conjunction with a stele inscribed with *Paritta* or protective Buddhist verses.



*Massive iron spikes from Sri Ksetra (Courtesy Department of Archaeology,
National Museum and Library, Hmawza Museum, Sri Ksetra)*

Palace-citadel

At Sri Ksetra the palace-citadel measures (575 x 375 meters) with a clearly marked enclosing moat demonstrating its sacred role marking the centre of the cosmological universe common to Brahmanic and Buddhist belief. Some twenty locations within the palace site have been excavated since 1908-09, yielding tangible evidence of the palace walls and gates. Recent excavations at HMA-44 and HMA-45 demonstrated the numerous levels of structures within the palace-citadel as well as a corner watch tower. It may be with further excavation of the large palace-citadel compound that much earlier habitation will be unearthed, particularly given its location along a natural contour marking the transition from the upland area of Myinbahu Range on the southwest and the flatter rice fields of the lowest part of the site on the northeast.



*Excavations of HMA-45 within the large rectangular palace-citadel of Sri Ksetra
(Courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, DANML)*

Stupas and temples inside and outside the city walls

Donation of land for monasteries and stupas was a significant part of the social and material transformation of Sri Ksetra. Important monasteries were built near royal citadels with both involving not only environmental change but land ownership as they moved into



the property of the *Sangha*. Palaces, monasteries and rice fields were protected by walls from predators of all sorts. Perhaps the most unpredictable danger came from the natural world - the stress of the wet and dry season extremes in rainfall, river and stream flooding and desiccation. The massive brick walls of Sri Ksetra, multiple in a number of sections, have been described in relation to controlling the flow of water from the Myinbahu hills on the southwest, although given the long-term residual effect of the construction of ramparts, moats and canals, attributing a chronology to what was repeated construction of features is problematic.²⁰² In addition, the massive curved brick gates with their iron fittings and what were once massive wooden doors indicate defense.

What is the relationship of walls and gates to stupas? Simply that Sri Ksetra, as with all the Upper Myanmar early Buddhist Pyu cities, has numerous stupas, temples, monasteries and tanks both inside and outside the wall. As with the massive iron spikes implanted in the earth outside the Shwedaga gate noted above, the demarcation of the wall may have in large part been a show of authority and apotropaic protection, with the numerous structures and extended habitation underlining an expanding urban dominance rarely tested by rival polities. One element of this extended urban area, unique to Sri Ksetra, are the so-called *Pyu taik*, elite ritual, residential and community fortresses or enclosures of the Pyu.



Rectangular enclosure of Payama Pyu taik and HMA-8 bronze bell and musical troupe, Sri Ksetra (Courtesy U Thein Lwin, DANML)

Pyu taik are seen to the northeast and to the southeast of the Sri Ksetra city wall. They are bounded by walls and moats, several with corner and central structures forming a quincunx likened, as with the palace-citadel, to Mt. Meru. From both the northeast and southern *Pyu taik*, impressive artifacts have been excavated. For example, a gold-plated bronze urn (36 centimeters high) has come from the southern *Pyu taik* and from HMA-8,

²⁰² Hudson 2012, Stargardt 2012

a structure in the northeast *Pyu taik* lying immediately north of the Payama stupa, a finely cast bronze bell (28 centimetres) decorated with the auspicious *Srivatsa* motif, a bronze image of the Buddha and one of Bodhisattva and bronze figures of a musical troupe (a flute player, a drummer, a cymbal clapper, a dancer and a smaller figure of a clown) likened to a mission sent by a Pyu ruler to the Chinese court in 802 CE.

The majority of above ground ancient ritual structures are in the south part of the city, both inside and outside the walls.²⁰³ Four of these are found within 100 meters south of the wall, from east to west, the Lemyethna, the Bèbè, the Bawbawgyi, and the Yahandaku. The tallest, the Bawbawgyi is about 250m south of the wall, standing 46m high. The structure rests on five terraces, their circular form supporting an early dating for their construction. The cylindrical brick structure was once plastered, as seen by the notched bricks of its surface. The lower two-thirds of the Bawbawgyi is hollow, up to a height of some 24m.²⁰⁴ The Payama is equally impressive although as with the Payagyi, domical rather than cylindrical in shape.



*The tall domical stupa of Payama stands on the northeast of the city wall
(Photograph by author; courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum
and Library, DANML.)*

Absolute dating and corpus of religious inscriptions

The wealth of religious and royal and urban remains and artifacts at Sri Ksetra is

²⁰³ Aung Thaw 1972:19

²⁰⁴ Taw Sein Ko 1908:13



extraordinary, with the mixed epigraphic evidence best left dated broadly between the 5th to the 8th century CE. Radiocarbon dates from HMA-47 at Sri Ksetra have been calibrated to 420-570 CE and other dates as much as 200 years earlier from other Buddhist cities of Upper Myanmar.²⁰⁵ The radiocarbon sequence is supported by the architectural style of the clustered remains of stupas, stupa-like structures, memorial halls and other ritual buildings and the corpus of religious inscriptions which provide a record in both indigenous (Pyu) and foreign (Sanskrit, Pali) scripts and languages from 2nd century BCE to the 9th century CE. The Pyu script is also seen in the Myazeidi inscription of the 9th to 13th century CE city of Bagan.



Inscribed intaglio 'Dhayadarnan' (a donor) from Sri Ksetra and Myazeidi inscription Bagan (1113 CE) with faces in Mon, Pali, Pyu and Myanmar (Private collection; and courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, DANML)

The earliest religious writing is on small objects such as a stone seal from Halin and a terracotta sealing from Beikthano dated to the 2nd to 3rd century CE while Pyu religious inscriptions are found at Sri Ksetra on a set of twenty gold plates inscribed with compressed excerpts of the Pali canon is dated to *circa* the 5th century CE. As a whole, these inscriptions testify to the complex use of the innovative Pyu script and a rapid adaptation of Brahmanic and Buddhist texts and practices to suit local ritual preferences.

²⁰⁵ Absolute dates for the religious structures of the Pyu cities of Beikthano (190 BCE- 260 CE), Halin (540- 780 CE) and Sri Ksetra (420- 570 CE) from Hudson 2012

Terracotta urns and votive tablets: patronage goods

Royal and village donors sponsored towering brick stupas such as the Payagyi, Payama and Bawbawgyi. But there are many more types of ritual structures, each of which testifies to the past patronage of donors, recording what was undoubtedly a complex and shifting network of relations between the *Sangha*, the court and elite sectors, and the rest of the populace from farmers to artisans. Religious edifices include numerous stupa-like structures, rectangular with a central hemispherical structure and often *ayaka* or pedestals. There were also long rectangular memorial halls with a brick platform and wooden superstructure, thought to link to pre-Buddhist custom at Sri Ksetra.

In a distinctive trait of the Pyu sites many of these structures have yielded urns and at times skeletons embedded in the foundation layer. At memorial halls, urns are found both on the exterior and the interior of the structure, where they may be grouped around posts holes that would have contained wooden pillars. At the stupa-like structures, one or two skeletons or a pile of bones at times often marked the cluster of urns. Urns were also placed in the city gate areas. At Sri Ksetra, two urns were unearthed during 1997-1998 excavations at Lulin Kyaw gate (HMA34) on the southwest where both were placed against the outside curve of the gate.²⁰⁶

The urns were plain, although pottery from Halin was sometimes decorated with panels containing human figures, *Srivatsa* and *Bhaddapitha*, or impressed with hatching, punch-marks or rouletting. Urns have been classified by Hla Tun Pru (2004) into bowls, globular, betel box (drum-shaped) and a high narrow multi-ridged neck types. Bowls generally had lids and ranged in diameter from 15-25 centimeters. Other forms have been found, including an inscribed cylindrical pot containing bones, silver ornaments and white pebbles found near one of the royal stone urns.

The Sri Ksetra terracotta urns are also located on elevated areas, and have been found together with iron artifacts. One such cemetery is located near Yahandagan village south of Sri Ksetra where in the 1920s, archaeologist Charles Duroiselle recorded unearthing over 1000 terracotta urns with another 1000 left undisturbed. The urns measured some 15-22.5cm in height, and were arranged in rows and layers on small brick terraces. In the middle of the mound was a stone slab, and on the summit, a possible wooden structure. The associated iron objects included iron nails, pins and a spiked plate

²⁰⁶ Hla Tun Pru 2004



with forty-three nails ranging from 17.5-29cm.²⁰⁷ Iron production at Sri Ksetra was aided by iron resources on the Myinbahu hills, and as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, its production increased in tandem with expanding rice cultivation and increased social hierarchy. Iron is also traditionally used in Myanmar alchemy, perhaps a factor linked to a citation at the start of this paper on the smooth meshing of Buddhist and local custom reiterated in the embedding of large iron nails outside city gates.



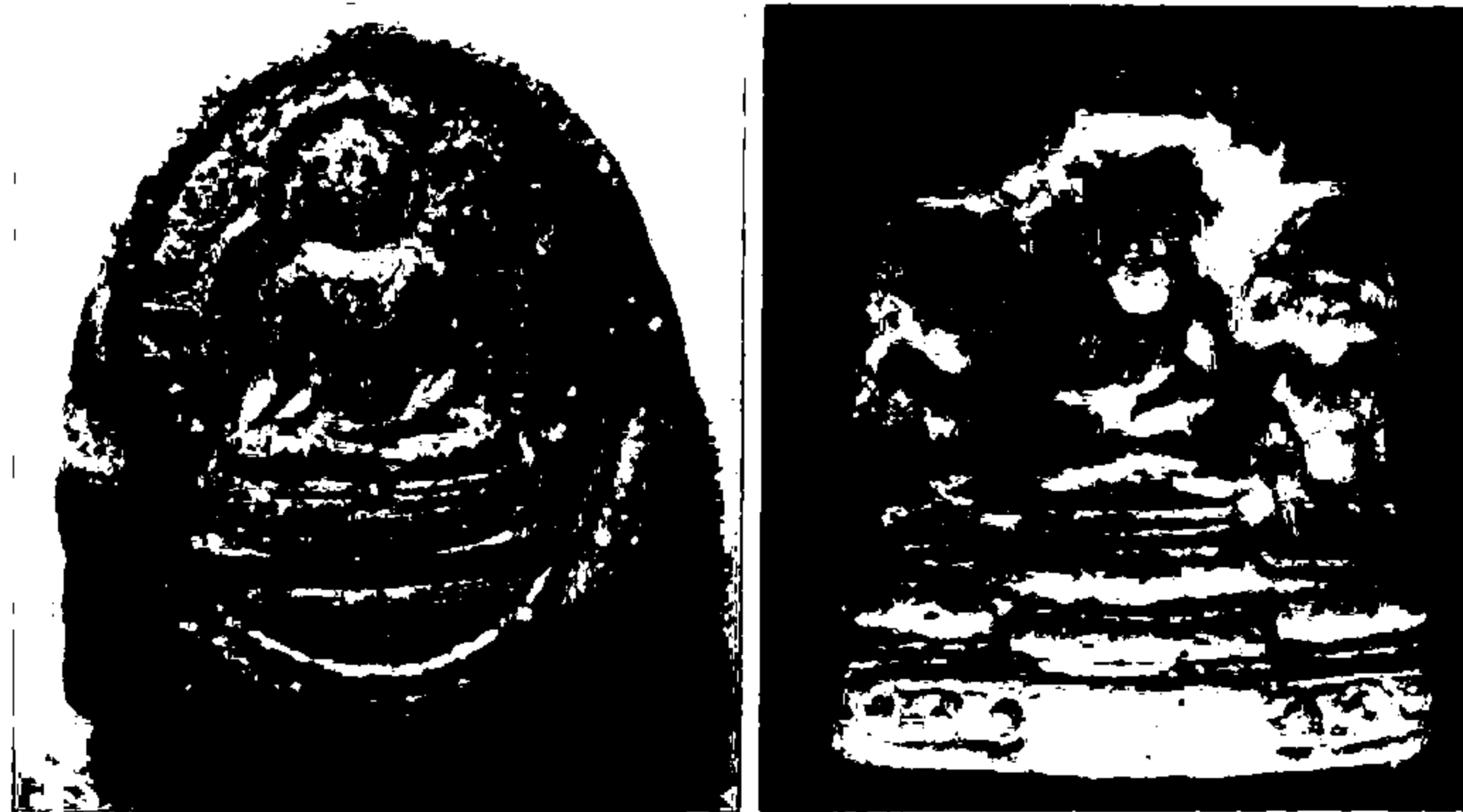
Excavations at HMA-53, Sri Ksetra, yielded numerous urns, votive tablets and other finds in a memorial hall constructed over several phases (Photograph by author; courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, DANML)

The extent of urn burials and the continued use of the custom over what appears to be an extended period was underlined in a 2011, excavation of a 22 x 12 meter memorial hall (HMA-53) at Sri Ksetra. This yielded remains of an inner and outer row of pillar bases surrounding a rectangular raised ritual platform. Artefacts included 290 terracotta urns, iron nails, knives and blades, 13 small bronze bells, 22 copper rings and a terracotta spindle-whorl.

²⁰⁷ Duroiselle, C. 1926. 'Exploration, Burma Circle' in *Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report 1923-24*. Calcutta: Government of India Central Publication Branch: 82-4:83



Pyu terracotta urns from Sri Ksetra (Courtesy Daw Nanda Hmun, Historical Research Department); Votive tablet with Pyu writing on reverse (after U Mya,²⁰⁸)



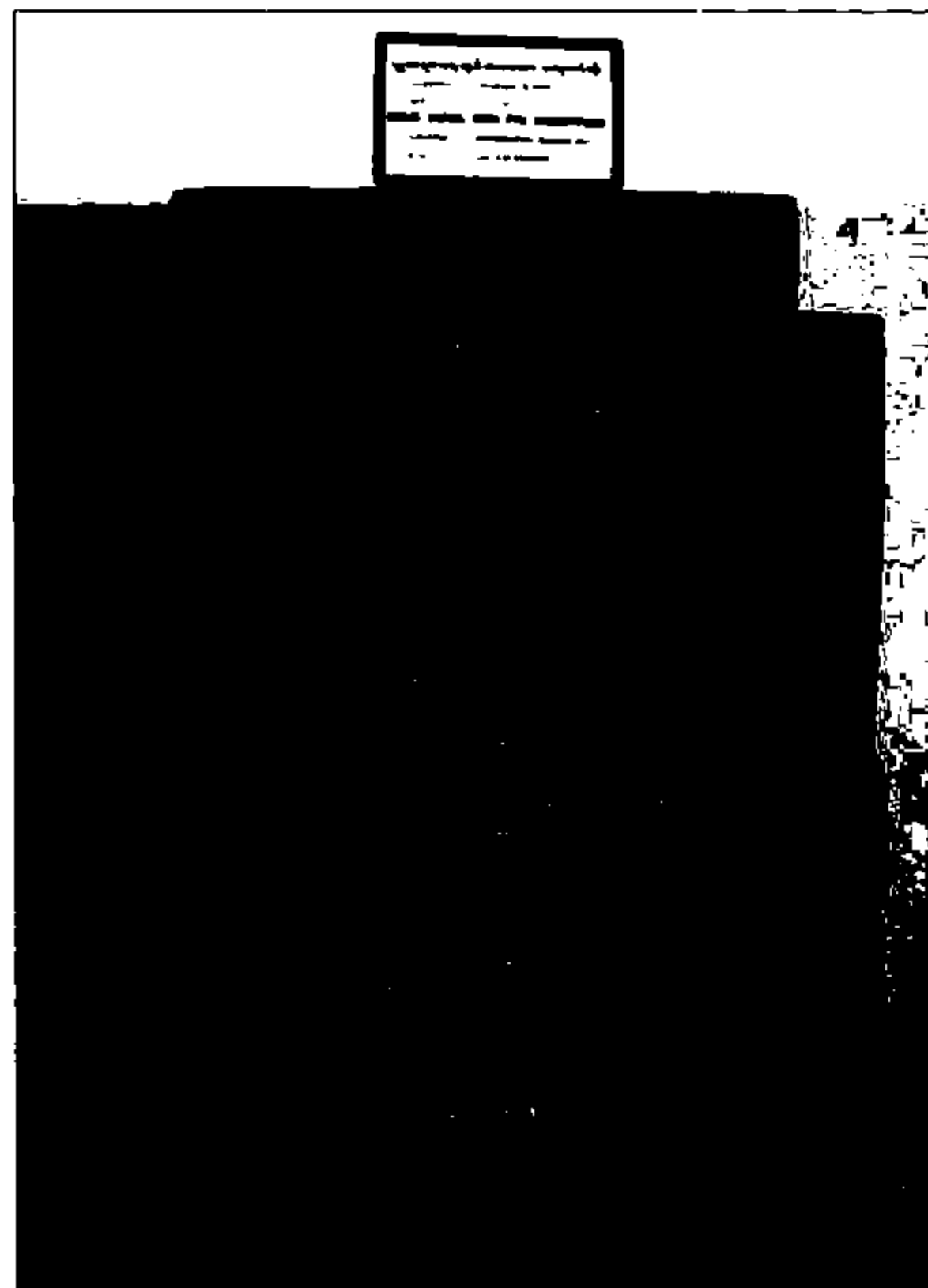
Pyu period votive tablets, Sri Ksetra (courtesy Dr. Daw Htwe Htwe Win)

The HMA-53 memorial hall excavation also unearthed six votive tablets, a reminder of the point made at the start of this paper on the production and donation of goods from gold to terracotta for the celebratory consecration of the completion of a ritual structure. The votive tablets, in some instances inscribed on the reverse in Pyu script were simply made, often at a site. Their popularity as a means of devotion and merit-making was an on-going part of ceremonial occasions and as a pilgrimage memento.

²⁰⁸ U Mya Mya (Thiripyanchi). 1961. *Votive Tablets of Burma, Part 2*. Rangoon, Department of Archaeology



While the custom was derived from South Asian examples of the 4th to 6th century CE Gupta Era, votive tablets were made in extraordinary numbers at the ancient Buddhist cities of Myanmar. They are often Bodhi-leaf shaped recalling the Enlightenment of the Buddha under a Bodhi tree, were also made in oval, square, circular, rounded and pointed arch shapes ranging from 3.75 to 19 centimeters in height. It is not yet known what they were called at Sri Ksetra, but an 11th century CE inscriptions of a Bagan queen refers them as 'patiman', the Pali word for an image or statue of the Buddha. Like the many stupas and images of the Buddha, their abundance at this and other ancient Buddhist cities in Myanmar, highlights the community character of patronage, from king to farmer, in support of the monastic population. The act of donation was at times public, others private, and while on occasion part of a massive royal festival, others were solitary and undertaken during an extended period of meditation.



Stone urn from Hpayataung stupa at Sri Ksetra site HMA-31 (National Museum, Yangon; courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, DANML)

Royal stone urns of Sri Ksetra

Some of the most valuable evidence for royal lines of the Buddhist kingdom of Sri Ksetra comes from Pyu inscriptions on five stone urns. Written in Pyu with interlinear Brahmi, the script has been dated to the 7th to 8th century CE, and while the writing includes years no era was specified leading to continued debate about their dating. Four of the stone urns were unearthed in 1911-12 from a grave some 63m south of the Payagyi



stupa outside the city wall on the northwest. When found, one had been looted but the other contained white pebbles, bone ash, and red earth.²⁰⁹ Each bore the name of a single person, deciphered by the British scholar C.O. Blagden using the 'Burmese era that begins in 638 AD.²¹⁰

A fifth urn fifth was found in 1976 at the Hpaya Htaung (HMA-31), a square (11.4m) stupa-like structure northeast of the citadel-palace area.²¹¹ It is the largest urn, measuring 105cm high and 260cm in circumference and is inscribed with five lines of writing giving all the names in serial order. Using this information, and **basing the era on the Gupta (adding 319 years), San Win obtained a different sequence of names:**²¹²

- On the 9th day of the 7th month in the (Pyu) year 41 (CE 360) King Hri Vikrama died. His age was 57 years, two months and 24 days.
- On the 20th day of the 9th month in the (Pyu) year 44 (CE 363) King Singha Vikrama died. He was 80 years old.
- The beloved wife of King Suuriya Vikrama (the queen) died. She was 35.
- In the (Pyu) year 64 (CE 383) King Suuriya Vikrama died, at age of 50 years and 5 months.



Relief of Visnu and Lakshmi from Sri Ksetra, Hmawza Museum (Courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, DANML)

²⁰⁹ Duroiselle 1915:147

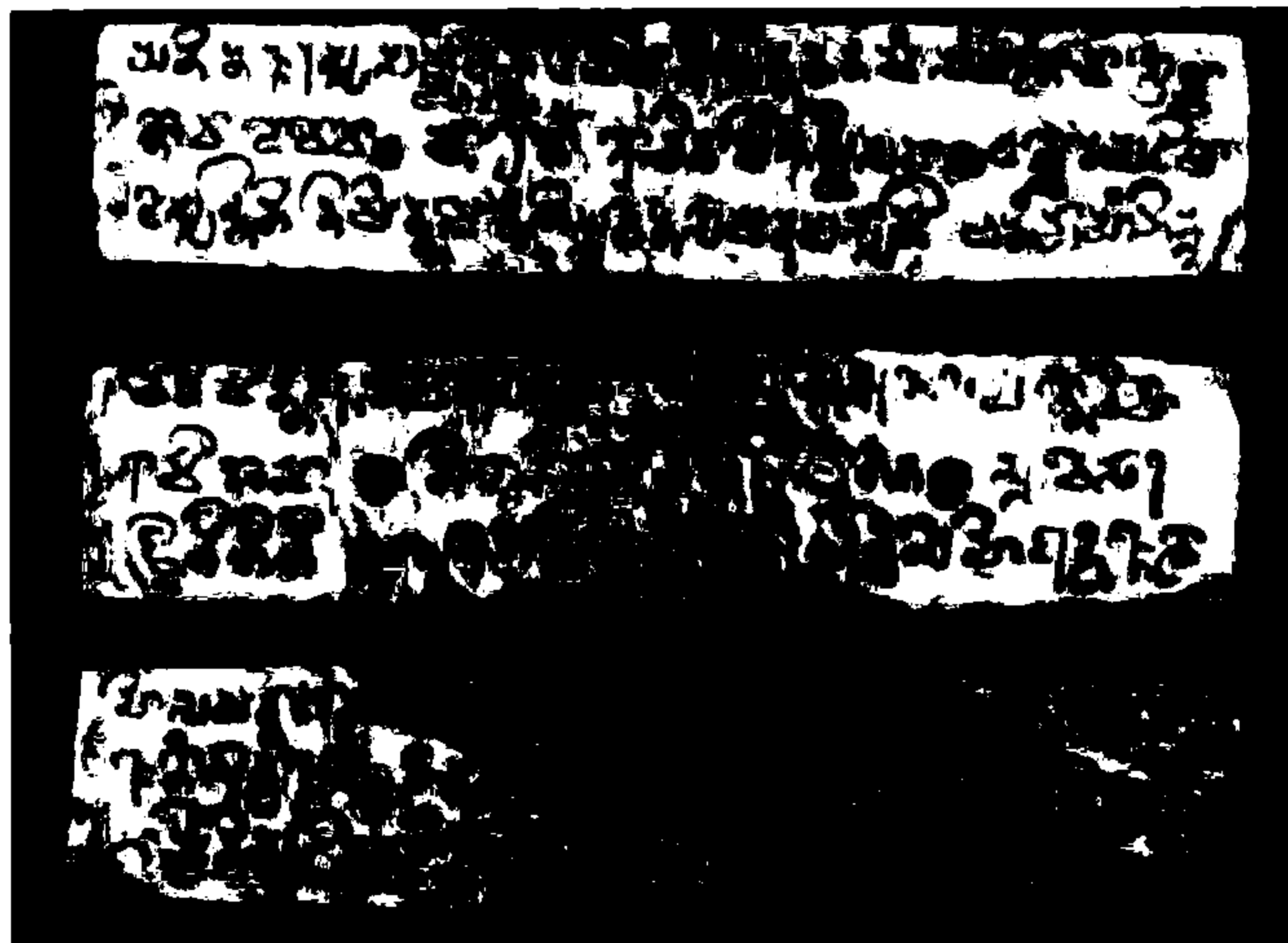
²¹⁰ Blagden, C.O. 1917. 'The 'Pyu' Inscriptions', *Journal of the Burma Research Society* 7(1): 37-44

²¹¹ Hla Tun Pru. 2003. 'Ceramics of the Pyu Culture', *Ceramic Traditions in Myanmar*, SEAMEO, Yangon, SEAMEO Regional Centre for History and Tradition: 79-89; San Win. 2001. 'The Date of the 'Hpaya Htaung' Pyu Inscription', *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 45, 2000-1: 120-125

²¹² San Win 2001



Some scholars suggest that vikrama suffix may indicate adherence to Vishnu, a practice used most extensively by Gupta kings of the 5th to 7th century CE.²¹³ Sculptures of Vishnu have been found in Upper and Lower Myanmar and in Rakhine as well as Thailand and Cambodia.²¹⁴ Many of the Vishnu statues are large, suggesting elite patronage and perhaps alluding to the deity's association with temporal rule.²¹⁵ *Luce noted a broken one metre high stele depicting a four-armed image of Vishnu standing on an upright Garuda with Lakshmi on his left standing on a lotus.*²¹⁶



Inscribed gold palm-leaf shaped manuscript plates (Courtesy Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, DANML)

Gold palm-leaf shaped manuscript plates

In 1926 at the mound of a villager named Khin Ba (Khin Ba Gon) in the village of Kalagangon just outside the east wall of Sri Ksetra a relic chamber measuring one cubic

²¹³ Hla Tun Pru 2003

²¹⁴ Gutman, Pamela (2002). A Burma Origin for the Sukhothai walking Buddha. *Burma: Art and Archaeology* (A. Green and R. Blurton, eds.) London, British Museum Press: 35-44, p.41

²¹⁵ Gutman, Pamela. 1999. 'Vishnu in Burma' in *The Art of Burma*, (D. Stadtner, ed.) Mumbai, Marg: 29-37, p. 36; Guy, John. 1999. 'The Art of the Pyu and Mon', in *The Art of Burma*, (D. Stadtner, ed.) Mumbai, Marg: 13-28, p. 18

²¹⁶ Luce 1985:148

metre was unearthed from a ruined stupa-mound. A stone slab (190 x 137.5 x 15cm) covering the chamber depicts a cylindrical stupa with a rectangular *harmika*, five-tiered *chattravali*, and streamers. The sun and moon were on the top corners, and niches with images of the five Buddhas of this era or *bhadrakalpa* are along the base of the stupa. The style of the stupa has been dated to the late 5th century with a second, similar slab found nearby.²¹⁷



Stone slab covering relic chamber, Khin Ba Gon mound, Sri Ksetra (Courtesy Daw Nanda Hmun, Historical Research Department)

In the centre of the chamber was a gilded silver reliquary casket (66cm high) with a flat cover supporting the trunk of a *Bodhi* tree. On the sides of the casket are images in high relief of the four Buddhas of this era in an unusual order: Konagamana, Kakusandha, Kassapa, Gotama.²¹⁸ Each image of the Buddha is flanked by smaller figures of disciples of Gotama: Kassapa, Moggallana, Sariputta, Ananda. A spiky nimbus surrounds the heads of the images of the Buddha. The names of the different Buddhas are inscribed in Pyu and Pali on the upper rim of the casket, along with what may be a compressed excerpt related to the inscribed gold palm-leaf shaped manuscript plates described below. At the bottom

²¹⁷ Guy, J. 1999. 'The Art of the Pyu and Mon' in *The Art of Burma*, (D. Stadtner, ed.) Mumbai, Marg: 13-28, p.16; Duroiselle, C. 1930. *Excavations at Hmawza*, Calcutta, Government of India Central Publication Branch.; Luce 1985:136, Plate 27

²¹⁸ Luce 1985:137

of the casket are the names of the disciples and a later dedicatory inscription in Pyu with the Sanskrit names of the donors, *Sri Prabhu Varman* and *Sri Prabhu Devi*.²¹⁹



Gilded silver relic casket from Khin Ba mound (Yangon National Museum, Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, photograph after Stadtner 1999)

A number of gold plate manuscripts have been found in the region of Sri Ksetra, all inscribed with extracts from the Pali canon. Two gold plates were found at Maunggan, 11.5km south of walls. Each was inscribed with three lines of Pali, the writing edited by U Tun Nyein (1898) and later by Finot (1912, 1913).²²⁰ The text, dated to the 6th century CE, was identified as the Ye Dhamma stanza and other verses. A single gold plate was found at the village of Kyundawzu, within the walls of Sri Ksetra, in 1929. This was inscribed with two lines of Pali, the text from one of the dialogues of the Buddha, the same as one of the eight excerpts found on the remarkable twenty gold plates found with the Khin Ba Gon treasure in 1926-7. Both the Maunggan and Kyundawzu plates have been used to re-assess the Khin Ba Gon plates along with two inscribed stones found on a terrace of the

²¹⁹ Guy, John 1999. 'The Art of the Pyu and Mon' in *The Art of Burma*, (D. Stadtner, ed.) Mumbai, Marg: 13-28; Stargardt, J. 2000. *Tracing Thought through Things*. Amsterdam, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, p.23

²²⁰ Tun Nyein, 1989. 'The Maunggan Gold Plates', *Epigraphica Indica* 5: 101-102.

Bawbawgyi stupa identified by Finot (1912) as Pali texts from the Abhidhamma Vibhanga, dated to the 6th century.²²¹

Twenty numbered gold leaves were recovered from Khin Ba Gon trove, most inscribed with three lines of text in of Pali. The inscribed texts are eight excerpts from all three main canonical texts, including the chain of causation, praises of the Buddha, and qualities of Enlightenment. U Lu Pe Win, then Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of Burma, first published the texts in the Report of the Superintendent of Archaeology for the year 1938-39. The script is similar to those of 5th century CE Pallava Copper Plate Grants, leading to a provisional mid-to-late 5th century date. As mentioned above, the texts inscribed on the gold plates may link to the inscription on the upper rim of the silver reliquary casket from the same relic chamber.²²² The leaves (16.5x3.1cm each) were contained within two gold covers. The covers and leaves each had two holes, through which a thick gold wire passed to bind up the manuscript. When found, the wire was fastened to the covers with sealing wax and small glass beads.²²³

Texts and community-based dissemination

With the introduction of Buddhist teachings, came an international text-based worldview seen in the royal and religious inscriptions described above which facilitated and expanded oral traditions of knowledge dissemination and propagation. This contrasts greatly with the localised Brahmanic sects typical in India at the time of the Buddha Gotama, *circa* the 6th century BCE. In these, the underlying animistic and ancestral practices were a vital part, a sub-stratum of indigenous beliefs seen also across mainland Southeast Asia.

The writing and recitation of the Pali Canon and the commentaries made international distribution of the teachings as understood in each locale possible. In relation to art and archaeology, this internationalism also has provided us with a comparative base,

²²¹ Finot, L. 1912. 'Un nouveau document sur le bouddhisme birman', *Journal Asiatique* XX (July-August): 121-136; Stargardt, J. 1995. 'Urbanization before Indianization at Beikthano, Central Burma, c. 1st cent. BC-3rd cent. AD?' in *Angkor et l'eau*, Siem Reap, UNESCO/EFEO, p. 201

²²² Stargardt, J. 1995a. 'The Oldest Known Pali Texts, 5th-6th century: Results of the Cambridge Symposium on the Pyu Golden Pali Text from Sriksatra', *Journal of the Pali Text Society* XXI (April): 199-213. Cited pp. 204, 210

²²³ Luce 1985:139



as we are able to roughly date many South Asian sculptures and thus map the spread of Buddhism to Southeast and East Asia.

Did the ancient rulers have a proper ecology of mind? In my view, the answer is 'yes', the evidence being in their creation of Buddhist polities in living harmony with the often challenging world around them. The evidence lies before our eyes in the landscape; rivers and streams have changed, and sedimentation and erosion have taken place, but the 'bones' of the land – the primary mountains and valleys – and the basic ecological monsoonal cycles remain consistent. By looking at the relationship of different cultures to the environment, we can begin to chart the ecologies of the past.

In the relationship of the communities of the Sri Ksetra to other living beings is an appreciation of the rare chance to be born as a human being.²²⁴ Since the time of the foundation and construction with its many brick stupas and other structures there has been an unbroken tradition of care of the ancient features testifying to the unique place of Buddhism in the cultural, spiritual, and social life of Myanmar.

This Myanmar tradition of community care has woven a new fabric into the ancient city, one of spiritual and social pride. Monasteries have retained their central role in the life of the community both at the villages of Sri Ksetra as they have across the country. The ancient moats and small water control structures which enabled the surplus rice production of the ancient Buddhist cities has likewise continued seen in the many canals within and around the walled area of Sri Ksetra.

Sri Ksetra is one of many large Pyu walled cities in Upper Myanmar with other significant and equally early Buddhist cities found in Rakhine (Arakan), in the area of the present day Mon State around the Gulf of Muttama (Martaban) and far to the south at Thagara in Dawei, Tanintharyi, the long southern peninsula of Myanmar. Long-established trading links between all these regions of Myanmar and India and Sri Lanka stimulated exchange of goods and ideas, giving birth to the earliest introduction of localized Buddhist teaching and monastic practice into mainland Southeast Asia. It is our job to continue in the future.

The future: religion, community, education and heritage

One very tangible way to begin such a mission would be through the establishment of an autonomous Cultural Foundation, or perhaps a Sitagu Pyu Foundation if one day such was possible.²²⁵ Such an undertaking could bring the large monastic communities of

²²⁴ One of five *Dullabha* or rare occurrences

²²⁵ The idea of an autonomous foundation is part of the conceptual and practical planning included in the in-progress undertaking of the Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, Ministry of Culture, to nominate the ancient Buddhist sites of Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra for inscription in UNESCO's World Heritage List.



Sri Ksetra and other Pyu Buddhist cities in Myanmar into the combined safeguarding of the ancient culture and the sustenance of the living *Sangha* and traditional village culture at these ancient sites.²²⁶ Support, when going directly to the villages and people of the country's unique Buddhist sites, would appeal to Myanmar Buddhists in the country and in the widespread Buddhist diaspora throughout the world. Provision might also come in relation to education where local schools might be brought into programmes exploring the ancient culture or interviewing the elders of the villages of Sri Ksetra to understand their perception of the living Buddhist heritage of the ancient city.



Traditional art of woodcarving, (Courtesy U Win Muang (Tampwaddy))

Myanmar has a remarkably vibrant Buddhist tradition with many religious, social and artistic traditions. The cyclic cycles of celebration and consecration which gave rise to the monasteries, stupas and cultures of Sri Ksetra are seen in communities across the country. The traditional arts such as wood-carving, ephemeral offerings from fruits to candles and coconuts support national and village pagodas. At Sri Ksetra, new monasteries are being founded, and as noted earlier drawing in large numbers for seasonal celebrations and mediation courses.

²²⁶UNESCO. 2008. *Cultural Survival and Revival in the Buddhist Sangha, Documentation, Education and Training to Revitalize Traditional Decorative Arts and Building Craftsmen in the Buddhist Temples of Asia*. Final Report, March 2008. 504RAS4001-CulturalSurvivalPhaseII-FinalReportMar08



Gyatawya Monastery (new extension of Pyay monastery), southwest sector Sri Ksetra walled city near Yahanda (Rahanda) gate (Courtesy U Win Kyaing, DANML)

While vibrant and colourful, monasteries such as Gyatawya Monastery enliven and sustain the religious inspiration which gave rise to the ancient city of Sri Ksetra, the monks and novices or *koyin* as well as the local communities of the villages such as Hmawza and others inside the walled area are part of the past, present and future of Buddhism in Myanmar. Within Myanmar, the *Pan-she-myo* or 'Ten Arts' are still transmitted through systems of apprenticeship and can be integrated into the sustenance of the ancient culture.²²⁷ The religious arts take and give vitality and meaning through patronage and intention of donors large and small.

Buddhist and traditional ceremonies need not be separate from the archaeology for these ceremonies created the stupas and temples of the past. Traditional methods of conservation and construction from brick-making to the making of stucco and concrete from natural

²²⁷ (1) Lacquerware *pan yun*, (2) Painting *pan gyi*, (3) Stone sculpture *pan ta mawt*, (4) Stucco decorative work *pan htawt*, (5) Bronze, copper or brass wrought or cast items *pan tin*, (6) Gold, silver smithing *pan htein*, (7) Wood or ivory carving *pan pu*, (8) Blacksmithing *pan peh*, (9) Turning, turnery *pan pwet*, (10) Masonry *pan yan*, Lapidary *pan ywe*, Canework *pan kyain*, Gold leaf making *shwe-hsaing-lok, hgan*, Gold embroidery and tapestry *Shwe-kyi-hto-lok-ngan* Weaving and sometimes Singaing

substances in village settings can work together with the training now provided by the Field School of Archaeology of the Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library.

Current monasteries are the lifeblood of Pyu cities for in the absence of Buddhism there is no living dimension infusing the unique ancient heritage of the country. The future of the ancient birth of Buddhism in Myanmar lies in sustaining this link between past and present expressed in the inseparability of the tangible and intangible heritage. By bringing the early legacy together with the living religious and cultural communities of Sri Ksetra, the ecology with which I opened this paper, the opportunity before us can take on new meaning in sustaining the Buddhist archaeology and culture of Myanmar.



Appendix

Table 1 River Valley cultures of Myanmar by U Win Maung (Tampawaddy)

Valley region	Degrees (n) x (e)
Upper Ayeyarwaddy	22-28 x 96-98
Middle Ayeyarwaddy	20-22 x 94-97
Lower Ayeyarwaddy	16-20 x 94-97
Upper Chindwin	23-26 x 94-95
Lower Chindwin	21-23 x 94-95
Mu	22-24 x 95-96
Samon	19-22 x 95-97
Myit Nge (Dotawaddy)	22-23 x 96-98
Sittaung	17-20 x 96-97
Lower Thanlwin	17-19 x 97-98
Inle (Inlay) Lake	21 x 97
Kissapanadi (Kaladan)	20-21 x 92-93
Dawei	15-15 x 98
Delta rivers and canals	16 x 96-97
Extreme North (Me Hka and Mali Hka)	25-28 x 96-97



CURRENCIES OF FAITH, IMAGES IN CIRCULATION

MONEY AND BUDDHISM - A STUDY IN REPRESENTATION AND HISTORY

ShailendraBhandare

University of Oxford

1. Religion and Money are strange bedfellows! Although many religions of the World eschew material pursuits and warn against greed, avarice and accumulation, the worlds of religion and money are always intertwined. Religion requires wealth to grow upon and wealth is often afforded by moneyed patrons. Thus there has historically been an interesting dynamic between men of religion and men of money. Buddhism is not an exception to this dynamic. It is a well-known fact that Buddhist heterodoxy was upheld largely by the mercantile class and a few of the Buddha's earliest disciples were merchants.

Coins and banknotes are the most familiar forms of money. Religion has played an important part in the evolution of numismatic typology from the very inception of coins and banknotes. As media of exchange, they change hands frequently and as such are historically regarded as a form of disseminating information. From its advent in the 6th-7th centuries BCE, coinage the most familiar form of money has been utilised as a medium to bear visual representations. By their very nature, coins circulate and as they do, they offer an excellent instrument for transmission and circulation of ideologies and concepts that could be articulated through the imagery that coins bear. Ancient faiths and belief-systems are no exception – from earliest times, divine representations, religious ceremonies, ideas and beliefs have been subjects of imagery on coins.

This paper will outline and illustrate Buddhist imagery on coins, particularly from the Indian subcontinent and more widely from SE Asia. It will track the evolution of such imagery on coins (and later banknotes), in the particular context of development of the Buddhist iconography, including the development of the Buddha's 'human image'. It also proposes to discuss how coins have played a crucial role in understanding the chronology this important development, and how they help us to understand Buddhist Art in general by providing some crucial markers.



The paper will also illustrate and discuss how Buddhist imagery on money has acted as a marker of identity in case of modern nation states in the region and how, certain aspects of modern politics in the region and their consequential appropriation of Buddhism towards achieving certain goals has been reflected on money.

2. The Buddha and the history of Indian coinage have been inextricably linked. Some of the earliest confirmed references to money use in the Indian subcontinent (the circulation of coins - economic and monetary activities like buying and selling using coins; banking, lending and saving in form of coins, etc.) are found in Buddhist literature such as the Jatakas. Mentions in Buddhist literature have also been discursively employed to propose a chronology and attribution for the earliest Indian coins. Thus, the date of the historical Buddha and his Nirvana in 486BCE has been a bench-mark in dating India's most ancient coinage, the 'punch-marked' coins. Description of political entities contemporaneous to the Buddha found in Buddhist literature has been used to attribute some series of the 'punch-marked' coins. The method adopted here is to map the provenance of these series on the political 'landscape' described in the literature. The outcome of this method is that we have various coins attributed to the sixteen Mahajanapadas that Buddhists texts speak of. The veracity of this approach is a much debated aspect of numismatic studies. However, the approach works as a quick attributive tool, making identification of a coinage that otherwise has very few attributive features possible.

3. It is interesting to note in this respect that the earliest 'extra-numismatic' depictions of coins in Indian Art are also seen in context with stories from the Buddha's life. The story depicted here is that of the purchase of Jetavana grove by the merchant Anathapindaka. The Buddha was invited to Shravasti to preach by Anathapindaka, he chose the grove belonging to one Jeta as a venue and offered to buy it. But Jeta refused Anathapindaka's demand by saying, "Not even if you cover the entire grove with money!" When Anathapindaka showed an intention to comply with this seemingly impossible demand, Jeta said he had no intention of bargaining. The dispute was then resolved by the city magistrate who held Jeta responsible for his utterance and ruled that if the price was paid, the grove would be Anathapindaka's. The latter then proceeded to bring money by the cartload and covered the entire grove with coins laid touching each other. A small piece of land was left uncovered and Anathapindaka sent for more money, but Jeta in admiration of Anathapindaka's earnestness agreed to leave it and build a gateway in the uncovered portion. The total number of coins spread over Jetavana by Anathapindaka was said to have been 1.8 million! He spent a further 5.4 million in erecting dwelling rooms.



retiring rooms, storage facilities, bathrooms, cloisters, wells etc. in the grove. The result was an 'Arama' (refuge) for the Master, known as 'Jetavana-arama'.

A depiction of this story is known from two bas-reliefs (Fig. 1 and 2), both on display in the Indian Museum, Kolkata. The first one is very famous – it is a medallion depiction on one of the pillars from the Bharhut railing. It is inscribed with the names of Jetavana and Anathpindaka. The second one is less well-known and it comes from the Bodhgaya railing, having a similar architectural disposition as the Bharhut medallion. In both depictions we see coins being brought and spread over the ground by men. Their shape is characteristically rectangular resembling most punch-marked coins. Although the depictions are dated centuries later than the Buddha's life, the historical memory of coins and their visual articulation is evidently maintained in the depictions.

4. However, it was the Buddha's own wish that he should not be depicted in his human form and should not be worshipped as such. The early Indian coins do not show any expressly 'Buddhist' elements although some symbols on the punch-marked coins have been interpreted as having a Buddhist connotation – for example, a hill-like symbol composed of arches was explained by D.B.F. Spooner, an early numismatist, to represent a 'Chaitya'.

But symbolic depictions with a strong Buddhist connection become commonplace on Indian coins during c. 2nd century BC. Thus, we see a 'tree-in-railing' symbol, ostensibly referring to tree-worship, wherein the tree is shown surmounted by a canopy or umbrella (Fig. 3 – a coin of a king named Bhumidatta from East Malwa, c. 2nd century BC), whereby its holy status is clearly marked as such. The shape of the leaves in this case strongly suggests this is a representation of the Bodhi tree. In some other instances, the railing surrounding the tree is also decorated with canopies planted at its cardinal points. Very similar depictions of sacred trees, particularly the 'Bodhi' trees associated with different mythical Buddhas, are found in early Buddhist art from sites like Bharhut. The fact that Bhumidatta's kingdom was located in the same region as the Buddhist site of Sanchi adds a further context to the employment of this symbol on his coin.

One symbol which is ostensibly Buddhist is the 'Triratna', symbolising the 'three jewels' of Buddhist philosophy. It is encountered on many ancient Indian coins but its deployment is purely functional. Thus, on the coins of the early Apracaraja kings of Bajaur (NW Pakistan), dated to c. 1st cent. BC, we see the Triratna on the reverse, employed most likely as a mint-mark (Fig. 4) while on an early inscribed series of coins from the Deccan (Fig. 5 – coin of a king named 'Kutapada', c. late 1st cent. BC) it appears in a bold form on reverse, suggesting a use as a 'dynastic emblem' within the context of the coin design. Here again it is worthwhile to note that in regions dominated by these rulers, Buddhist



centres flourished contemporaneously with the coins. Bajaur has several 'Gandharan' sites, whereas the Buddhist site of Pauni has been excavated from the part of Deccan where Kutapada's coins are found.

A curious depiction of the 'hill' symbol, identified by Spooner as a 'Buddhist' symbol, is found on 2nd cent. BC inscribed coins from the Taxila region (Fig. 6). Here we see the symbol dominating the visual program, while a human figure (female?) is shown in a gesture of salutation to its right. This does indicate veneration of the symbol and although nothing can be said about the exact nature of the symbol, the fact that it was deemed fit for veneration can be evident from this depiction.

5. In the symbolic context, there is an exciting new discovery to be considered. Shown here (Fig. 7) is a hitherto unpublished silver punch-marked coin with a range of symbols – a tree-in-railing, a seated lion in profile, a 'chakra' or wheel and a 'Triratna'. The fifth symbol is of a standing human figure. Apart from this figure, all the other symbols show a strong affinity to Buddhism. The tree is a Bodhi tree, as evident from its leaves and the fact that the railing has canopies shown emerging from its sides (this is a stylistic way to show that they were planted at the cardinal points along the railing); the lion is a famous Buddhist symbol and has been adopted to indicate the 'sounding call' or 'roar' of the 'Dhamma' – exactly a similar seated lion is seen atop the Asokan pillar at Vaisali. The Chakra obviously denotes the 'wheel of law' that the Buddha so famously set in motion. Judging by the context of these symbols, it would be not unreasonable to assume that the human figure shown in the fifth punch also must have strong Buddhist connection – in fact it could well be the depiction of the Buddha! If so, this becomes the earliest anthropomorphic depiction of the Lord as the coin is to be dated to c. early 3rd cent. BC. It is a simplistic depiction, where the man does not make any gestures, but doubtlessly wears robes of a monk and has a hairstyle resembling a top bun or 'ushneesha'.

6. In the context of the 'Turning of the Wheel of Law', a very significant depiction is seen on a unique gold coin, unearthed in the excavations at the site of TillyaTeppe in North Afghanistan (Fig. 8). There is no doubt that the motifs on both sides of this coin have a strong Buddhist connotation, which is articulated not only through the imagery but also by the inscriptions each side of this coin bears. On one side, we see a roaring lion with a 'Triratna' symbol in its front. The inscription above, in Kharoshthi script reads *Siho-wigata-bhayo*. This can be taken to mean 'the Lion who has dispelled fears' or 'the Lion whose fears have been dispelled'. The Buddha was regarded as the 'lion of the Shakya clan'. If we take the beast to stand for the Buddha, in first interpretation of the inscription



he can be understood as the lion that dispels fears in others (by his teachings). The second interpretation can be taken to mean the lion whose fears have been dispelled (by enlightenment). Thus in any sense of the adjective, the reference to the Buddha is implicit in the statement.

The depiction on the reverse is far more interesting - it shows a naked and bearded man causing an eight-spoke wheel to turn by using his hands. The man also appears to have a 'tail', but it might well be the dangling end of a skin that he wears across his shoulders. The Kharoshthi inscription on this side reads *Dharma-C'hakra-pravatako*. The grammatical construction of this ('pravatako' =skt. 'pravartaka' with a nominative '-ka' ending) clearly identifies the man shown as the one who turns the Wheel of Law, except it presents a conundrum! The adjective surely belongs to the Buddha, but the man itself is far from any icon recognizable as the Buddha, lacking all the familiar iconic features. It has also been suggested that this is a representation of Zoroaster - who commanded a similar 'law-giving' disposition in the Indo-Iranian borderlands - however, the context of the legends and the lion motif on the other side of the coin suggest beyond doubt that the connotation the motifs and the legends have is undoubtedly Buddhist. It has also been suggested that the figure shown is of the Greek god Heracles, to whose iconic features (nakedness, beard, association with a lion skin) it matches very well. It is to be remembered that in the context of Gandharan Art, the personification of Buddha's heavenly protector Vajrapani, is often depicted in the guise of Heracles. Seen in context with Vajrapani/Heracles, it can be safely surmised that while the legend does refer to the Buddha, according to his own injunction, he is not shown in a personified form. His presence is thus unseen, but indicated indirectly by association with his protector Vajrapani/Heracles.

7. By far the earliest securely dated anthropomorphic depictions of the Buddha are seen on gold and copper coins of the Kushan ruler Kanishka I (127-c.150AD). Early instances were reported from the Stupa of Manikyala (copper coin) when it was opened by Gen. Ventura in the 1830's and the famous gold Dinara (Fig. 9) in the British Museum was also a Stupa deposit find, known from the Ahin Posh stupa and subsequently added to the coin collection of Maj. Gen. Alexander Cunningham. Subsequently many more copper coins and a select few gold coins have been reported. The gold coins are struck in two denominations - a full stater or Dinara of c.8 Gm. and a ¼ stater of c.2 Gm (Fig. 10) The coppers come in three denominations - the full copper 'Tetradrachm' of c. 15-17 Gm. (Fig. 11), its half unit (or 'Didrachm') of c. 7.5-8.5 Gm. (Fig. 12) and quarter units or Drachms weighing c. 3.5-4.5 Gm. (Fig. 13)



The iconic depictions of the Buddha we see on these coins are two –the historical Buddha shown as a monk, and the mythical ‘Maitreya Buddha’, or the ‘Buddha of the Future’ shown in a royal form. It is interesting to note that the depiction of Maitreya is only known on copper coins and of only one denomination, the Tetradrachm (Fig. 14). The historical Buddha, on the other hand, is found represented on both the gold denominations and the entire range of copper denominations.

Each representation comes with an attributive inscription, inscribed in a hybrid ‘Bactrian Greek’ script. On gold coins, the Buddha is referred to simply as ‘BODDO’, while on copper coins we see labels as ‘SAKAMANO BODDO/BOUDO’ (‘Shakyamuni Buddha’, a reference to the historical Buddha) and ‘METRAGO BOUDO’ (‘Maitreya Buddha’, seen on coins with the Maitreya depiction). The language of these inscriptions is Bactrian.

8. The Buddha depictions on Kanishka’s coins come with all the iconographic features that we currently associated with the Buddha. Figs. 15 and Fig. 16 will help illustrate this. In Fig. 15, we see the gold Dinara or stater of Kanishka. The depictions on copper coins bearing the legend ‘SAKAMANO BODDO/BOUDO’ is pretty much comparable. The Buddha is depicted standing in a full frontal fashion, with his head surrounded by a nimbus and his entire body shown with an outline of a halo. He wears his hair in the familiar bun (*ushneesa*) and on his forehead is the jewelled mark, or the ‘Mani’. He wears a monk’s robes (*sanghati*) – the lower garment extends just beyond his knees and the upper garment is draped neatly over both his shoulders, falling into loose ends over the left. His left hand holds the loose ends aloft in a fist. With his right hand, the Master makes a gesture of reassurance, or ‘*Abhayamudra*’. One can even see the ‘wheel’ mark in the centre of his palm which was a symptom (*lakshana*) of his greatness. He also has long ears, seen as the sign of his wisdom and also another symptom of greatness.

Fig. 16 shows a copper coin of the ‘Maitreya’ type. Here we see the ‘Future Buddha’ seated on a pedestal-like throne, which is covered with a cloth. The loose ends of the cloth hang in front of the throne. Maitreya sits cross-legged in a ‘lotus position’, with his clothes completely covering his body. He has a nimbus around his head and his hair is tied in bun but unlike the ‘monk’ Buddha, he has plenty of them and they are held together in a coiffure. He wears ornaments to signify his ‘royalty’; after all the mythological Maitreya will descend in his kingly form from his abode in the ‘Tushita Heaven’. He has large ear-ornaments (*kundalas*) and also armlets and neck adornments. He holds a water pot in his left hand, drawn close to the middle of his crossed legs; his right hand is rested in a gesture of reassurance. Here again, the ‘wheel’ is clearly identifiable in the middle of his palm.



9. The images of the Buddha on Kushan coins can be studied, in a significant way, utilising their comparative contexts – there is a numismatic context to them as well as a wider art-historical comparison. In a numismatic sense, the images of Buddha figure in a wide range of pantheonic representations one comes across in Kushan coins. The Kushan rulers regarded themselves as semi-divine ‘sons of the Gods’ (Devaputra) and sought the legitimization of their kingship through divine intercession. The rulers themselves have divine features like ‘flaming shoulders’ and their own images is balanced in a ‘legitimation alignment’ with a divine representation on the reverse. A wide array of divinities is shown on their coins. They are drawn from the Greek (Hellenic), ancient Iranian, Indic and Bactrian pantheons. Many of the deities, including important ones like the Sun and Moon, make a gesture of blessing directed towards the figure of the king on the other side of the coin (Fig. 17A, 17B, 17C).

Seen in this context, there seems a little doubt that the Buddha appears on these coins as a divinity, not as an ordinary mortal even though he is shown in his human and heavenly forms. This choice of the Buddha within a wide pantheonic representation is interesting inasmuch as it gives us an indication of the evolution of belief in his status, wherein he is elevated from a historical human being and a spiritual master, to a divine and heavenly ‘higher being’ about to return to the earth at a future time to oversee an earthly paradise.

The emergence and worship of the image of Buddha in his human and divine form has been a matter of controversy. Many scholars have tackled the subject from various angles – art-historians like Tanabe, Carter and Kim have addressed the problem using art-historical comparisons and contextualisation; the archaeologist Faccenna has used evidence from the excavations at Butkara (Swat valley, Pakistan) to suggest a date, and the French scholar Gerard Fussman has argued for the date on the basis of a palaeographic study of Kharoshthi character ‘Sa’ in an inscribed sculptural panel from Hashtnagar in Gandhara. But by far the most convincing analysis is done by numismatist Joe Cribb, who – employing numismatic techniques like die analysis – has proposed that the ‘Buddha’ coinage was issued by Kanishka towards the end of his reign, in. c. 145-150AD. This is most plausibly the closest we can get to in dating the emergence of the ‘Buddha’ as an icon. However - what comes first, the coins or the sculptural representations? – is treated as an open question.

10. The stylistic comparison between Buddhist objects / sculptures from Gandhara depicting the Buddha in an iconic human form and the representations seen on coins indicate without a doubt that the two are closely connected. As an example, we can compare the figure of Buddha on the famous Bimaran reliquary casket with that seen on the



copper coins of Kanishka (Fig. 18A and 18B). Here the similarity is evident – both the depictions show such a close correspondence that it will be hard to imagine that they have been created without the image being very familiar in the tradition that both the artists – a goldsmith and a die-engraver – would have followed. The Buddha in both instances, stands in exactly the same manner, has his left hand flexed at the elbow while he grasps the ends of the robes in exactly the same fashion and even the perspective shown in depicting the Buddha's frontality is very much the same. In spite of this overwhelming congruence the Bimaran reliquary casket is dated to c. 50AD based on the associative find of some coins (which are difficult to date anyways). But if Cribb's postulation in dating the coins is to be followed, it would indicate that the reliquary is made about a hundred years later than the accepted date. The numismatic depictions thus add a considerable 'spice' to the debate about dating the anthropomorphic Buddha.

To compare the similarity of the Maitreya images from a sculptural source to his numismatic depiction, I have chosen the schist Maitreya image from Lahore Museum (Fig. 19). It was discovered at Karki in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan and is dated to c. 2nd-3rd Century AD. When we compare it to the seated Maitreya figure on Kanishka's coins we immediately see many similarities. The throne on which Maitreya sits, along with the cloth it covers is the same in both depictions. Maitreya's iconic features – the right hand in a gesture of reassurance, the left hand holding a water pot – are pretty much the same. The hairstyle, the face and the nimbus are very comparable, and so are all the jewels he wears including the ear ornaments and the armlets. The draping of the robes and the lotus position in which he sits is both articulated in the same way – but of course the numismatic depiction has a much smaller scale for the artists to articulate all the finer details so has been stylised to a good, yet recognizable, extent.

11. It is a well-known historical fact that Buddhism faced a serious challenge from Brahmanism from the age of the Guptas. The Guptas were devout Vaishnavites and the richness in Buddhist imagery that we witness in the Kushan and the immediate post-Kushan epoch is lost. There are a few examples of continuity in the employment of Buddhist devices, particularly the term 'Dharma' in some coin inscriptions from the North-West. But there are some interesting isolated instances in which Buddhist imagery makes a comeback in a major way. They are found on coins from the Mainamati region of Bengal (now Bangladesh). The region, known in historical times as 'Samatata' was famous for the flourish of major Buddhist monasteries like Paharpur and Mahasthan. On a coin from this region (Fig. 20), we see the representation of a seated Buddhist deity, flanked by a flaming trident and a flaming sword. It is a man, seated cross-legged holding aloft a straight-edged sword in his left hand while keeping his right hand on his right knee.



This is identified as Bodhisattva Manjushri. The Buddhist context of the imagery is further accentuated by the inscription we see above Manjushri - it reads '*Ratna-traya*' and is obviously a reference to the 'Three Jewels' - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - of Buddhist philosophy. The depiction of the flaming 'sword' (skt.Khadga) is taken to refer to the ruling dynasty of the region, namely the Khadgas of Devaparvata (Mainamati) who were devout Buddhists. This coin is dated to c. 700AD and matches closely with the flourish of Buddhism in the region. The reverse of the coin shows a cow seated couchant with a calf, under a 'sun and moon'. Although this is not apparently a Buddhist symbol, it might have been borrowed from other coinages from neighbouring regions having bovine depictions, such as the Akara and Chandra dynasty coins from Arakan.

12. Buddhism flourished in the region of Arakan bordering on Bangladesh during the post-Gupta years. For the early rulers of Arakan, there was a close relationship between sovereignty and the issue of coins in their names. The coins they struck had a seated bull on obverse with the ruler's name inscribed over it. On the other side they had a curious composite symbol, prominently composed of the 'Srivatsa' emblem. Although this symbol had association with Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of fertility and plenitude it was modified to suggest certain Buddhist themes and subsequently copied on the later Pyu and Mon coins of Myanmar. A 7th century Buddhist ruler named 'Dharmavijaya' reintroduced silver coinage in Arakan after a brief hiatus (Fig. 21). A text named 'Ananda-Chandra-Prashasti' dated 729AD mentions Dharmavijaya as a king successful both as a warrior and a follower of the Buddha.

In late medieval times, Arakan coinage shows an interesting syncretism between Islam and Buddhism.

In 15th century rulers of the kingdom of Mrauk U regained the control of Arakan with the help of the Sultans of Bengal. They were Buddhists, but they also adopted Islamic names and struck coins in three languages and scripts. The coins shown here (Fig. 22) is of Min TyaGyi, alias 'Sikandar Shah' (1571-1593AD). It is struck in relation in its weight to the Spanish silver Dollar, a popular trade coinage of 16th century. It has Arakanese inscription on one side and Arabic and Bengali inscriptions on the other. All give the name and the titles of the ruler. Noteworthy in this repertoire are 'Lord of many White Elephants' and 'King of Righteousness' ('Dharma Raja'), both alluding to the Buddhist ideals and symbols of kingship. The first title is translated into Arabic as '*Al-Sahib al-Fil al-Kathir al-Abyad*'.

13. The coinage of ancient kingdoms in Myanmar is uninscribed, but replete with Buddhist symbolism (Fig. 23 and 24). The Pyu and Mon kingdoms struck an extensive



silver coinage, which came to an end with its sack in 832AD. The types used by these kingdoms became the standard coin types for much of the South-East Asian region and their finds are dotted from Vietnam in the East to Bengal (Bangladesh) in the West. As these regions were dominated by Buddhism one would expect the depictions on the coinage to bear some context with the religion. The symbols are no doubt derived from the Indian symbolic tradition – familiar motifs like the bull, the Srivatsa, the Conch shell are all to be found on these coins, in addition to specific symbols such as the ‘rising sun’ and a ‘Bhadrapeetha’ or ‘throne’ motif.

The ‘Bhadrapeetha’ is perhaps the most distinctly Buddhist symbol found on these coins. It is depicted in its classic ‘hourglass’ form with ribbons tied to its constricted part. The finds of coins bearing this symbol are confined very much to the Sri Kshetra (Beikthano) area. The symbolism of the Bhadrpeetha is interpreted with a cosmic meaning, with the ‘Axis Mundi’ separating the heavenly and earthly worlds. It has been also interpreted in a Tantric sense to mean a ‘Symbol of Harmony’, composed of two stylized triangles touching at their corner, one on top of the other. The joining of two triangles on their points is the direct representation of the “unity of the opposites” theory. The place where these triangles meet is called ‘Bindu’, or a tiniest spot, which is the most basic or simplest form of existence.

Many of the symbols on the reverse of these coins tend to get interpreted in their familiar Indian sense – thus, a ‘Srivatsa’ is associated with the goddess ‘Sri’, the hill-like pile of dots within the arches of the Srivatsa as the depiction of mythical Hindu mountains like Meru and the Conch shell as an emblem for Vishnu. But it is very likely that these were seen by population that used them with a Buddhist sensibility as the fact remains that the ‘consumers’ of this currency were predominantly Buddhist. The Srivatsa, the Conch, the Ankush or elephant goad, and the Bhadrpeetha all come from the Buddhist repertoire of ‘eight auspicious symbols’ or ‘*Ashtamangalas*’. The Vajra, or thunderbolt, seen in association with the predominant Srivatsa is a well-known Buddhist symbol as well.

14. The coins of modern Myanmar continue the tradition of bearing symbolic motifs with a Buddhist connotation. Coins of the third Burmese empire employ symbols such as a ‘pair of fish’ (*Meena-mithuna*) which also comes from the repertoire of the Buddhist ‘*Ashtamangalas*’ or ‘eight auspicious symbols’. We see it on copper coins struck by Bodawpaya (Fig. 25), the king of Amarapura (1782-1819). The 19th century ruler Mindon Min (1853-1878) issued coins with the motifs of a lion (Fig. 26) and that of a hare (Fig. 27). The ‘lion’ coins were of copper while the hare coins were of lead. Both were struck in denominations of ‘Pe’ and its fractions, the lead coins representing very small fractions of the ‘Pe’ like 1/16th or 1/32nd. The symbolism of the lion is well-attested in



Buddhism; the hare represents the 'full moon' and thereby alludes to the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and the Nirvana, all of which happened on a full moon.

15. One of the uses of coins and money is in its 'powers' - money multiplies and brings us happiness, so its forms have been associated with plenitude in many cultures. Coins are popularly used as talismans or charms because they can easily be carried, stored, worn and even worshipped. Such cultural association also gives rise to charms which are like coins - their design is based on coins and they are often made using the same manufacturing processes as coins. There is a great tradition of coin-like charms in the entire world, and often these objects bear religious depictions, making the worlds of money and faith come together in a remarkable way.

Buddhism is not an exception and there exist a very large number of Buddhist charms which are in effect modelled on coins. Their use was and is popular in many Buddhist countries of the Far East. I have chosen to illustrate a few, which derive their designs largely from the Chinese coinage tradition. Chinese coins were modelled on the Confucian ideal of kingship wherein the king's position is legitimised through the Earth and the Sky. The coin design reflects this philosophy - Chinese coins for almost two historical millennia have been made in only one shape: round with a square hole in the centre. The round shape denotes the Sky while the square hole in the centre stands for the Earth - apart from the practical utility of providing a way to string many coins together to form a bunch which can then be used in circulation as a collective denomination.

The first two objects are entirely figural (Fig. 28 and Fig. 29) even though they are shaped like a coin. The first depicts the four 'heavenly kings' or the four guardian attendants of the Buddha on one side, while the other side bears the depictions of five Bodhisattvas. The second has eight representations of the thunderbolt or 'Vajra' on both sides.

There are a number of coin-like charms bearing inscriptions. The first is a modern charm (Fig. 30) with Chinese inscriptions denoting faith in Buddha's powers ("The powers of the Buddha are unlimited) and particularly of protection ("May the Buddha protect us"). The second (Fig. 31) bears an outwardly non-Buddhist inscription ("Let your longevity be infinite"), but it has a charming inscriptional pun where the first character 'wan' is inscribed in its 'Swastika' form, which is a well-known Indic-Buddhist symbol of auspiciousness. The third (Fig. 32) comes from the Japanese tradition but still bears considerable Chinese influence. It has the Mantra "NamuAmidaButsu" inscribed upon it in a form of Japanese script.

Coin-like tokens were also manufactured en masse as mementos for pilgrims. In numismatic jargon, they are called 'temple tokens'. These were sold at prominent pilgrimage sites so visitors could buy them to keep for themselves or give away as pious gifts. There is evidence that such pieces were worshipped in household shrines. A regular



pilgrimage audience to Bodhgaya, the town associated with the Buddha's life and enlightenment came from Myanmar. Pilgrimages within Myanmar must also have been undertaken. To cater for the needs of a pilgrim market, brass tokens were made in Kolkata in 19th-20th centuries (Fig. 33). These have the depiction of the Buddha seated in 'Bhoomisparsha-Mudra' (right hand touching the ground), flanked by heads of elephant and a lion – both associated with the Buddha in a symbolic way. On the other side there is a crude inscription in Burmese script invoking the Buddha and what appears to be a stylised landscape with buildings resembling the 'pagodas'.

16. In the context of modern money, the Buddha and imagery associated with him has been appropriated in a number of historically interesting ways. Coinages of Buddhist nations like Tibet employ designs inspired from Buddhist concepts such as the 'Mandala' (Fig. 34), have dates corresponding to eras associated with events in the Buddha's life, and bear symbolic representations of Buddhist philosophy, such as the 'three jewels' or the 'eight auspicious signs'. This makes currency intimately associated with faith and establishes a cultural 'dialogue' between these two expressions of humanity. But the imagery also serves interesting political agendas.

Colonial administrators in 20th century saw Buddhism in a 'romantic' fashion, often exoticizing its image in the Western mind through representations of 'Gods and Monsters' of the Oriental religions. The Buddha is not an exception and finds himself shown as an exotic and curious piece of antiquity, as evident on banknotes of French Indochina (Fig. 35). But the imagery was also used in a deliberate way in colonial politics. It is a well-known fact that during the Second World War, much of colonial SE Asia was occupied by another aspiring colonial power – Japan. In most instances, Japan deliberately fostered nationalist sentiments in countries under her rule in order to create a 'neo-colonial' political picture favourable to her own dominance. The image of the Buddha played a part in this politics, as is evident from the 10-Rupee note issued for circulation by the Japanese occupation government in the former Dutch East Indies. Here we see the imagery from the famous archaeological monument of Borobudur on the reverse (Fig. 36) – with seated Buddhas shown against the backdrop of architectural Chaityas from the last two galleries. Interestingly, one of them is in the 'touching the ground' gesture. Anyone familiar with the story of 'Mara's defeat' by the Buddha would immediately understand why a deliberate choice was made by the Japanese to depict the Buddha at this interesting juncture in his life, on the note! The depictions also serve as appropriate images to remind the Japanese of their glorious ancient past.

As the Asian countries became free of colonial yoke in the second half of the 20th century, their money became a vehicle to display their identity through the motifs and



vignettes it depicted and as such archaeological imagery was deployed to a good extent on coins and banknotes. The monumental faces of the Buddha that adorn the temple at Bayonne in Angkor Thom were widely used in Cambodian money – a 5 Riels note with the vignette issued in 1972 is shown here as a representative example (Fig. 37).

The Buddha also plays a part in regional and cultural politics and leaves an imprint on money in that effect. The identity of the site of the Buddha's paternal abode before his enlightenment, 'Kapilawastu', has had a long history of contestation between Nepal and India. The Indians regard it to be the region around Piprahwa, on the Indian side of the Terai region, while the Nepalese identify it with Tilaura Kot, lying inside the Nepalese border. The potential the exact identification of the site holds in terms of economic and developmental aid from wealthy nations sympathetic towards Buddhism such as Japan has had this issue being contested vehemently by concerned authorities. Reflecting this debate is an interesting set of commemorative coins issued by Nepal – which not only show the Buddha, but also saliently allude to key historical facts in his life such as his birth (Fig. 38) and the episode wherein he saw the old man, the monk, the sick and the dead man (Fig. 39). The site of the birth of the Buddha, Lumbini is shown by a small vignette showing the pillar of Asoka erected there. The pillar carries an inscription which presents incontrovertible evidence that it was erected at the site where the Buddha was born. Lumbini lies well within the Nepalese lands, but the same cannot be said with certainty about the site where the second episode took place! However, in context of the coinage this legacy has been successfully appropriated by Nepal.

17. Events connected to the life of the Buddha as well as important events concerning the modern activities of his followers have both caused an occasion for special coins to be issued. In 1957, Sri Lanka issued a special set of 1 Rupee and 5 Rupees coins to mark the 2500th year of the Buddha's birth. The design of the 5-Rupee coin (Fig. 40) seeks inspiration from ancient Indian / Buddhist art, particularly the depictions of flora and fauna as evident in the art of the Mauryan period (c. 320-185BC). The reverse shows a 'medallion'; much similar to the ones we started this paper with – showing two sets of bull, lion, elephant and the horse going in circle around a lotus bloom, and a flock of celestial geese or '*Hamsas*' perambulating this assembly in a circular manner. The animals in the centre stand on their own artistic merit, but the geese are copied from the borders of the '*Vajrasana*', the stone seat of the Buddha worshipped as the marker of the site where he attained enlightenment in Bodhgaya.

Occasions, such as anniversary of the 'World Fellowship of Buddhist' have occasioned a special issue of 10-Baht coin in Thailand (Fig. 41).



But the popularity of the Buddha as a spiritual and philosophical Master has also meant that he is used as a market commodity! This antithesis might seem curious, but it has caused many countries in the world to issue what numismatists regard as 'Non-Circulating Legal Tender' or 'NCLT' issues – commemorative coins, which notionally are legal tender but are struck with high specifications to be sold to the collectors. Over the past few decades, the Buddha has emerged as a favourite historical person to be featured in such thematic issues. Some of the countries engaged in this enterprise have a Buddhist past and present that they can be identified with (for example, Nepal – Fig. 42; Laos – Fig. 43 and Korea, Fig. 44), but there are 'Buddha' issues of countries like Gibraltar and Liberia who obviously have culturally and historically nothing to do with Buddhism! Nevertheless, the aura and popularity of the Master continues to benefit them, as it does to so many Buddhists all around the World.



CULTURE, IDEOLOGY AND CONSERVATION: BUDDHISM AND ECOLOGICAL PRUDENCE

Rajiva Kumar Sinha*

Professor

Univ. Deptt. of A.I.H., C. & Archaeology,

T.M. Bhagalpur University,

Bhagalpur, Bihar-812007

The close relationship between cultural formations, belief systems and natural resources is well known. Exploitation of natural resources does affect the pattern of civilisational growth. The whole range of resources, so varying in demand and utilised in many ways, is always under great stress and often leads to social conflicts. Belief systems such as religious ideology, tradition or science legitimize and validate human interactions with nature. Throughout human history we therefore find a patchwork of prudence and profligacy of sustainable and exhaustive resource use.¹ It is within this framework that in the present paper an attempt has been made to study Buddhism and ecological prudence.

In more than two thousand five hundred years of its existence Buddhism has exerted tremendous influence on mankind. Buddhist responses to the waves of social and cultural changes have been distinctive and in some ways have conformed to patterns well enhanced in its past.² The realisation of symbiotic relationship between human being and their natural surroundings and its translation into an ethical code of normatives made Buddhism extremely relevant to the process of cultural formations.³ By the time of Gautama Buddha settled agriculture and pastoralism had covered wide tracts of the country. The highest concentration of agricultural / pastoral populations were of course along the Gangetic plain.⁴

This radical transformation profoundly affected man-nature interactions mainly due to breakdown of local traditions of resources conservation and gradual over-harvesting and erosion of the resource base. As the frontiers closed, and as the resource crunch mounted there arose the need for prudent use of resources.⁵

Buddhist response to the situation was distinctive. It began to play a role in designing social conventions which promoted prudent use of resources by bolstering traditions which gave protection to plants, animals and elements of landscape such as



groves and ponds. Forests, trees and wild animals apart from his Jataka stories, are in one way or other associated with the life of Gautama Buddha.⁶

In Buddhism ecology therefore is nonviolent and gentle attitude to nature. Here the word nature means everything which is not organized and constructed by man.⁷

According to Buddhism, changeability is one of the perennial principles of nature. Everything formed is in a constant process of change (*sabbesankharaanicca*). Though change is inherent in nature Buddhism believes that natural processes are affected by the morals of man.⁸ If immorality grips society, man and nature deteriorates, if morality reign the quality of human life and nature improves. The Buddhist concept of human morality, besides delineating an ethical code of conduct, has a direct bearing on the natural environment.⁹ The *AgganaSutta* makes two suggestions on this point : (i) though admitting the nature's capacity to change it draws a direct linkage between the degeneration of nature and the deterioration of human morality, and (ii) the moral deterioration is invariably linked with a tendency to resort to excessive exploitation of natural resources.¹⁰ This Buddhist perception becomes more pronounced in *ChakkavattisimhanddaSutta* which takes unimaginable miseries as the ultimate outcome of this practice.¹¹ The Buddha in a discourse in the *AnguttaraNikāya*, even hints at the ecological devastation that is caused by wilful exploitation of the resource base when lust, greed and wrong-values grip the heart of humanity and immorality becomes widespread in society.¹²

This is one reason that Buddha pronounced that the world is led by mind (*cittananiyatiloko*)¹³. The mind has a vital role in penetrating into the nature of reality. Environmental crisis is thus a man made crises. To make environment free from pollution, the mind of the people should be free from mental pollution.¹⁴ Excessive delusion, greed and hatred pollute not only the mind of people but also the environment. The disequilibrium in the eco-system is thus the outcome of this delusion. Greed and hatred had spilled beyond the confines of human mind to poison the sea, air and earth.¹⁵ The Buddhistic emphasis on morality, therefore, needs to be viewed also as a form of praxis aimed at both conserving the natural resources and putting it to proper use.¹⁶

Buddhism in fact prescribes a dual possible approach to Nature. One is ethical and the other is contemplative — Environmental ethics is mastering and harnessing of the natural resources for man use; contemplative attitude is the way by which a man discern in nature its own image of peace and tranquility.¹⁷

This dual possible approach is routed through the Four Noble Truths and can be observed by practical applications of Buddha's tenets such as the Eightfold Path and the Fivefold principles etc. The Second Noble Truth when thus identifies delusion as the cause



of suffering it cautions us against a behaviour pattern that visualises the individual as separate from the surroundings including the environment.¹⁸ Thus the SigalovadaSutta asks the householder to accumulate wealth in a way similar to the one adopted by a bee in collecting nectar from a flower.¹⁹ Like a bee gathering nectar to turn into sweet honey without harming either the fragrance or the beauty of the flower, a human being is required to make appropriate use of nature so that the continuity of a beneficial pattern of man-nature relationship is not threatened.

The Buddhist emphasis on non-violence is yet another instrument to preserve ecological balance. For the Buddha perfect man is one who abstains from injury to seed life and plant life.²⁰ Among the Fivefold principles also one is non- injury to life. The Buddha in fact taught his disciples to have "compassion on all creatures"²¹ and "never to destroy the life of any living creature, however tiny it might be."²² The KaraniyamettāSutta enjoins the practice of loving kindness (mettā) towards all creatures, timid and bold, short and long, small and big, minute and great, invisible and visible, near and far, awaiting birth and born.²³ While a cattle-butcher is punished for 'many hundred thousands of year in purgatory'²⁴ and layperson is expected to abstain from trading in meat.²⁵ The Buddhist monks and nuns are to follow even stricter code so that living creatures are not harmed even unintentionally.²⁶ The Buddha once questioned for the sake of sustaining life would we intentionally deprive any being of life.²⁷

In the Buddhist scheme of things the culmination of ethical process is contemplation. Accordingly, environmental ethics particularly morality receives its consummation in the serene concentration of mind.²⁸ Satipatthana, an aspect of Buddhist meditation practice Samatha, thus becomes important in the conservation of natural resources and its prudent use. The SatipatthanaSutta, 'The Discourse on the Application of Mindfulness' is, according to the testimony of contemporary Buddhist scholars, the most popular and frequently studied of all the Buddha's instruction. Thus it begins:

"There is this one way, bhikkus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrows and griefs, for the going down of sufferings and miseries, for winning the right path, for realising nibbana, that is to say, the four applications of mindfulness."²⁹

The four objects of mindfulness are body (kaya), feelings (vedana), states of mind (citta) and objects (dhamma).³⁰ In the social behaviourism this mindfulness is not only physiological in respect to human being but also physically conductible for other living and non-living, sentient and insentient ones.³¹ This stance becomes more pronounced if one recounts that for Buddhists there is no fallacy in attributing human qualities to non-human beings.³² Buddhism in fact draws no hard and fast line between different forms of



life. The Buddhist belief in reincarnation provides a new perspective on the relationship between man and the rest of creation, one very much in tune with contemporary ecology.³³

The initial response of Buddhism to the changing resource use pattern in the sixth century B.C.E. became more pronounced as exploitation of nature intensified during the succeeding centuries.³⁴ Organised outflows of agricultural produce as well as commodities such as elephants, musk and sandal further affected man-nature relationship.³⁵ As the pressure increased, the society became aware of the necessity for 'readjustment through the more efficient and conservative use of resources. This is well reflected in the State-sponsored conservation campaign undertaken by the Mauryan emperor Asoka, following his conversion to Buddhism.³⁶ The Asokan edicts advocate both restraint in the killing of animals and planting and protection of trees. Some of such edict goes in translation as follows:

"The king ... in his conquered territories and in the neighbouring countries, thus enjoins that: medical attendance should be made available to both man and animal; the medicinal herbs, the fruit trees, the roots and tubers, are to be transplanted in those places where they are not presently available, after being collected from those places where they usually grow, wells should be dug and shadowy trees should be planted by the roadside for enjoyment both by man and animal" (P.E. VII).

"Forests must not be burned either uselessly or in order to destroy living things" (P.E. V).

Asoka asserts that "I have done these things in order that my people might conform to Dhamma."³⁷ Such policy statement apparently aimed at extending an ethico-moral legitimation to the scheme of conservation.³⁸ In the heyday of Buddhism, therefore, there appears to have been a widespread perception of the need to moderate the harvesting of plant and animal resources.³⁹ With active involvement and effort of Asoka Buddhism now began to penetrate the peripheral countries of Magadha and gradually spreaded into the regions of South and Southeast Asia i.e. Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

The ecological implications of Buddha injunctions notwithstanding, the upper and the middle valleys of Ganga experienced a serious resource crunch by the third century C.E. Deforestation and over-grazing constituted a vicious cycle leading to serious ecological imbalances. The earliest impact of the loss of adequate forest cover was felt in the area of Punjab, Haryana, Western U.P. and neighbouring parts of Rajasthan. It soon afflicted the mid-Ganga valley.⁴⁰ The contemporary Buddhist Sangha did realise the intensity of the crisis, a point illustrated by the perception of its nature in the commentary



on the ChakkavattisimhanddaSutta. Explaining the pattern of mutual interaction between moral degeneration and environmental degradation, it says, "When humanity is demoralised through greed, famine is the natural outcome; when moral degeneration is due to ignorance, epidemic is the inevitable result; when hatred is the demoralising force, widespread violence is the ultimate outcome."⁴¹ It was under such situation of ecological imbalance in the fourth century C.E. that the Buddhist scholar Vasubandhu (c. 320-400 C.E.) asserted "The world is created from intention."⁴² In other words, the environment we find ourselves in and the way we experience it are the consequences of how we have chosen and agreed to live.

Buddhist response to the destructive exploitation of resource base was thus well perceived by the contemporary Buddhist tradition. As the crisis deepened it laid greater emphasis on compassion. For the Mahayanist the ultimate ideal was now Buddhahood, embodied compassion, in place of personal fulfillment in enlightenment (arhatta).⁴³ This is well reflected in Santideva (c.690-1743 CE), one of the most widely appealing Mahayana authors who evoked this sense of universal sympathy with his image of life as a single organism, like a cosmic body. For just as the hand reaches out to a foot that is in pain, so does the enlightened person reaches out in sympathy to those who are suffering. Insight into the interpenetration of all things transforms our immediate relationship with those around us, making it simply impossible to stand by with indifference and watch the world go up in flames. At this point, compassion stops being the deliberate doing of good, it becomes an instinctive urge.⁴⁴ A portion of the Bodhisattva vow as mentioned in SantidevasBodhicaryavatara reads like this —

"As the earth and other elements are in many ways useful to the innumerable creatures which fill the endless space, thus may I be of manifold use to all the creatures which space holds as long as they have not reached nirvana."⁴⁵

In an attempt obviously to impress upon the people their oneness with nature and the mutual interdependence of the two Santideva does articulate his unequivocal preferences for natural surroundings:

"When shall I come to dwell in forests
Amongst the deer, the birds and the trees,
That say nothing unpleasant
And are delightful to associate with."⁴⁶

"With its philosophic insight into the interconnectedness and thoroughgoing interdependence of all conditioned things, with its thesis that happiness is to be found in



the restraint of desire, with its goal of enlightenment through renunciation and contemplation and its ethic of non-injury and boundless loving-kindness for all beings, Buddhism provides all the essential for a relationship to the natural world characterized by respect, care and compassion."⁴⁷

In the present context the followers of Buddha's doctrine consider 'Nonobservance of Ecological Ethics' or 'Moral Collapse'⁴⁸ as the cause of the growing ecological disequilibrium in the world. Some of them, however, view the ecological crisis from the perspective of "the pollution through westernisation of mind and culture as well as the environment."⁴⁹ Such a concept of 'ecological disequilibrium' has been illustrated in the Table below⁵⁰—

BUDDHIST WORLD VIEW

Ecocentrism (human part of nature) ·

Non-violence

Mental control

Need and being

Spiritual development

Ego extinction

(Extinction line)

Biopoverty

Life line

Species extinction

Economic development ('growth mania')

Greed and possessing (consumerism)

Technological control

Violence

Anthropocentrism (humans apart from nature)

This perception of relationship between man and nature in Buddhism, as contextualised in the early Indian historical realities, therefore, becomes very important. Here it may be, however, noted that it is difficult to arrive at precise prescription for prudent use of resources in only local situation, and even more difficult to arrive at prescriptions that work under a variety of conditions⁵¹ viz. material, socio-religious and technological knowledge base relating to resource use. Buddhism therefore did not attempt to prescribe practices applicable to each given local situation. It provided an ideological base to principles such as compassion towards all living creatures, a ban on killing animals



and planting as well as protecting trees.⁵² All these broad principles are adaptable to the time, place and culture.

In a century where man is bent on the destruction of innumerable forms of life it is necessary to insist, as do the myths, that a properly appointed humanism cannot begin of its own accord but must place the world before life, life before man, and the respect of others before self-interest.⁵³ History is a process in continuum. Past, present and future are relative terms. Destruction is as integral to its construction. There is no end, there is no beginning. Factors of flux and dependent origination are the realities of objective history.⁵⁴ Looking back many questions arise which do require responses. Looking ahead we may look for an Universal Buddhism. The historical Buddha was at once a spiritual humanist and social leader concerned with suffering of the people and one who stood for human rights.⁵⁵ Transnational interactions has made Buddhism a cross-cultural and global phenomenon in which it is an ideology, a moral and spiritual system. It is like a think tank based on dialectic to draw guidance from. We do need now an 'integrated' and 'total' history of Buddhism and the Buddhists in a cross-cultural and global perspective. Never before there was a better time to do this.⁵⁶

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE, MAKING THE BRIDGE OF INDO-MYANMAR CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BUDDHISM: REVISIT

Dr.Saswati Mutsuddhy

The travelogue of Noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore of South East Asia is the pillar of cultural document for Indo-Myanmar relationship. Tagore expanded Buddha's message of peace and harmony around the world and became the part of world cultural heritage particularly for Buddhism. His acceptance of invitation from the pond Lyceum to undertake a lecture –tour of the United States of America, He sailed by Japanese cargo boat S.S.Tosha Maru from Kolkata (then Calcutta) on 3rd May, 1916 accompanied by C.F.Andrews, Pearson and Mukul Dey.²²⁸ As it is known that Tagore was first influenced by Buddhism in Buddhagaya, where He saw the compassionate statue of Lord Buddha at Buddhagaya and gave his speech on 18th May 1935 at the function organized by the Mahabodhi society at Sri Dharmarajika Caityavihara in Kolkata to observe the birthday of the Lord Buddha, where he talked on Buddha's teachings of universal loving kindness (*mettā*), great compassion (*karunā*), altruistic joy (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*). The paper would like to focus the journey of the poet at Rangoon, which period was very short but should take a very special look from the points of historical and socio-religious view of Indo-Myanmar. He spends three days from 7th -9th May, 1916 at Rangoon where the Indian and Burmese communities gave him an exciting reception. At that time He visited the religious place of Shwedagon pagoda, the World heritage site and felt not to travel anywhere if possible but only to stay at Buddhist places and second time he visited Rangoon on 1924 at the age of 63. That was his sixth foreign tour. At the invitation of Liang-chi-chao, president of the universities lecture association of china, sails for China on 21st March accompanied by Kshitimohan Sen ,Nandalal Bose ,Leonard K.Elmhirst and Kalidas Nag.Seth G.D. Birla undertakes to bear the expenses of the tour. The poet again received a great ovation en route at Rangoon. There he spent four days from 24th-27th March.²²⁹

His emotional attachment with these tours overcomes all geographical boundaries, so his tiny footsteps became very strong to avoid. His Rangoon travel is also such identical document for both (Buddhism and Tagore). So, the paper also tries to glow the description of social scenario of His first foot-step at Yangon (then Rangoon) as described in the

Reader, Department of Pali, University of Calcutta.

²²⁸ Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, A centenary volume, Rabindranath Tagore, Sahitya akademi, p.472

²²⁹ Ibid., p.481.

letters of the poet which has its own historical and amalgamated influential culture of India on Myanmar.

The paper provides three principle characters---i. Tagore's emotional feeling for first seeing the city of Rangoon, which flashes the nature and culture of Rangoon ii. His visit to Shwedagon pagoda, emotion for Buddhism iii. Cultural amalgamation between these two countries

As it is said that Tagore accepted the invitation from the pond Lyceum to undertake a lecture –tour of the United States of America, He sailed by Japanese cargo boat S. S. Tosha Maru from Kolkata (then Calcutta) on 3rd May, 1916 accompanied by C .F. Andrews, Pearson and Mukul Dey. ²³⁰From 7-9May, He spends at Rangoon .It is His fourth foreign tour and the first tour through the Bay of Bengal. The Rangoon tour of Tagore is described in scattered way in His letters and writings of Kalidas Nag where He expressed his emotional views regarding Rangoon and its people. He always liked to write his tour experience to his close friends and relatives which ultimately became valuable documents in his life time. As usual he wrote from his Rangoon tour ---“it is not a serialized letter nor an essay. I am writing whatever in my mind without trying any revision.”So, it is quite natural that poet revealed his genuine nature through his travel diary which is un-corrected, un-edited and exempted from re-writing as expressed by himself. His writings of series were keep continue till he reached at Japan and thereafter quite irregular. Later these letters were published in “Sabuj patra”, which had been published in a form of book viz. ‘Japan- Yatri’ and dedicated to Sriyukta Ramananda Chattopadhyay.

He expressed his emotion after he reached at Rangoon on 24th Vesak noon. His innermost feeling observed at that very moment---“there is no stomach for the observation at the back side of the eye, where those observations are being digested otherwise it is not possible to show them as my observation. Who care if not so? It is not fault to describe the exact place of travel as it is but alike.”²³¹His observation is that he couldn't do any copy. Though sometime there are various compulsions to give note or report but those entire parts of his talk slip through the outlet of his mind .He admitted that haphazard travel is tiring and fruitless to him. So, he aware to all not to expect detail travel description from him (poet). In a court poet can swear through the touch of Gita that he went Rangoon but in other court where there would do the greater swear than previous to poet should admit that he didn't reach at Rangoon.

²³⁰ Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyay, A centenary volume, Rabindranath Tagore, Sahitya akademi, p.472

²³¹ Jatri aami, part iii, p.17



The new city Rangoon described by him, there roads are wide, straight; houses are neat and clean. Madrasi, Punjabi and Gujarati people were roaming on the road. When there is few country people with colourful dresses have seen they seem to be foreigners. Actually, it seems that the bridge of Ganga is not for Ganga but fastens with strap; so the Rangoon is not for Brahmadesa but the protest for the entire country.

At first, when poet came to the city Rangoon, through the river Irawati, he first be familiar with about the place. He saw the giant factories with their long chimney on the bank of river Irawati just like they are smoking pipe to the sky. Thereafter, at the time of coming forward to the city, poet saw the rushes of ship from various countries. At the time of reaching at ghat it looks like that there are no banks of the river, jetis of row are scratching like an insect. After that they have reached their friends home through the roads of offices and markets. There have not seen any structure of Brahmadesa has exposed through even any tiny hole. It seems like Rangoon is in map of Brahmadesa but not in the country. The city is not grown from the soil of the country like a tree, but it floating like a moment in time; so the place is the same like other places for them.

The fact is that the city of universe which are truth are the production of affections; pleasure of human being make cities like Delhi, Agra, Kashi. But the goddess of trade²³² is very cruel. She never looks upon men but always hankering for matter and machine is her carrier. He also described that when his ship was entering into the city through the Ganga river, he saw the shameless cruelty of the goddesses of trade on both bank of the river. She has no affection so she can spoil such a beautiful bank of Ganga.

Poet thought that it is his luck that he was born on before this kind of machinery age which was not grasping the city from Metiabruz (place of Kolkata) to Hoogly. At that time the calm and pretty beauty of bank of the river kept Ganga as a relative; boat were taking people from the bank of the river returned to their home. On one side there are the continuation of the heart of the country and other side the flowing of the river of country. There were no any hard and fasten separation between river and the country.

At that time, there were no obstacles to see and breathe the whole perfect beauty of Bengal. Though Kolkata is old enough but didn't come to an end like cuckoos kid. But when the civilization of trades and commerce gradually grown up, the beauty of nature has partially covered up. Now Kolkata has exiled Bengal from its boundary. Time has won with its modern teeth and nail in between war of country and time whereas greenery of country has lost.

²³²Goddess Laxmi



In past, People thought that trade goddesses' live in commerce. Then they usually knew the nature of goddesses not only for property but also its beauty. Trades and humanity were not different from each other. Each part of social workers has their mental involvement in their own work. So, through their work their mind decorated themselves in a beautiful manner. From when tap became the carrier of commerce then trade becomes ugly. Just like the comparison between old Venis and modern Manchester. People of Venis gave their own introduction through beauty and wealth. But in Manchester people deprived themselves in all the way and introduced themselves through the ages. Therefore, where the modern business flourish greediness of people grows up. Anyway Tagore believes that trade and commerce never divulge people but shaded them.

Then the general observation for Burmese ladies and gentlemen, poet explained that Burmese ladies are much more hard worker and dominating than their gents people; he memorized Bengali boys and girls who are completely difference in nature from these people .

The portrayal of the above Rangoon city as described by Tagore vivid as the twentieth century India which is gradually grown up its technology but not its innovation. According to poet, as Rangoon observed by Him was only the view of eye not by mind. From there he bears memory from the felicitation of his Rangoon friends but not any gift from Brahmadesa. There was only one open window from the modernity of the country. The day was Monday just before poet's birthday .He wrote one poem for his friend Pierson. Then He went the famous Buddhist temple Shwedagon Pagoda.

The second phase of the article is the description of this pagoda and his feeling about Buddhism of Rangoon with the amalgamation of India. He instant said that he just saw something new. At first where he was that was an abstract, inseparable substance. That was one city but not only one city. When he described the temple his eloquent expression about Bengali lady was so appetizing that couldn't make me un-describable--- "Now what I am watching that has its own identity. So, my mind became very cheerful. There are seen very fashionable Bengali lady in modern home; who are desperate and converse in English. I feel there are very much lack, it seems that fashion is the main theme of them not that lady. Apart from this type of Bengali lady, when I saw any cool and clam one that seems to me genuinely Bengali not an illusion, it's just like crystal clear water of pond glorifying with its lotus bank which is thirst- less to comprehensiveness. When I entered into the temple my mind was gazing at pleasure. It seems that it is not an empty, it is huge other than what is practically observing .the entire city is smaller than this temple; the ancient Brahmadesa divulged itself within the temple."



First look to the temple gazed poet feels to enter the ancient experienced shadow of time from deep light .The rows of stairs have gradually upgraded with wrapper. There are flowers-fruits and lamps are selling on both sides of the road. The Burmese girls were selling those materials. Colours of their linen cloths and flowers are the same as the shadow of the temple seems to be a mixture of sunrise in the sky. There is no obstruction for selling and purchasing matter. The Muslim shop keepers opened the shop of foreign jewelries. Also, there are no obstacles for eating fish and meat; there are scattered homes build in the surroundings. As there are no differences between home and temple, they are mingled with each other. Only the noises of markets are absent there. The surroundings are not bare but veiled; not silent but calm. There are one Burmese Barrister with poet's team, so when they asked him the cause of marketing into the temple surroundings barrister replied---"Buddha preached us about the welfare and bonding of human being; He never pressurized for any welfare of human being; he do believe not to welfare through any outside rules; aspiration of inner mind help to deliverance; so there are no pressure for any customs and rituals in our society or temple."²³³

When Tagore ascended through the staircase he saw there an open space; various temples are there in different places. There is no gravity in this temple; only architectures have altogether jumbled in one to other, just like toys. It is quite strange which is not to see anywhere just childish play; its rhythm is continuous, but everything is jumbled with each other and there is no requirement for the interaction with each other.

Though there is no such detail architecture or historical description came from His travelogue but cultural emotion for both countries have expressed through his writings. So he uttered, "Here at last I really saw something. Until then I had been surrounded by an abstraction - it was a city, not any particular city, but this place had a unique appearance. The whole of the mind was gladdened and responsive."²³⁴ The background of the astonishment of the poet is the original Pagoda is recorded to have been 66 feet in height. The pagoda not only withstands the elemental ravages through the passage of time, but certainly grew in beauty, splendor and height, owing to the devoted works and generous endowments of succeeding generations as well as Myanmar kings. Presently with the height at 326 feet on the hill, it dominates the city and is serendipitously seen from almost from anywhere in the capital Yangon. It serves as a benchmark or a sentinel to those who sail from the Yangon River. The devotee or visitor has four optional paths to reach the main platform of the Pagoda, each stairway southern, western, northern and eastern, has its

²³³ Jatri aami,part iii,p.19

²³⁴ Rohan L. Jayetilleke , Shwedagon Pagoda The Icon of Theravada Buddhism,2007



own accentuation of character of Myanmar architecture. The southern stairway, with its 104 steps, is the principal approach from the heart of the city. The eastern stairway, with its 118 steps, is the longest representation an extension of the residential and commercial sectors of Bahan. The entire complex is flooded with Buddha images, in standing, sitting, meditating and reclining postures. These images are manifestations of the message of compassion, loving, kindness, blissful joy and equanimity of the Buddha. Rudyard Kipling also feels Shwedagon Pagoda's golden mystery.... a beautiful winking wonder. 'British author Somerset Maugham, very logically wrote, a sudden hope in the dark night of the soul of which mystics write, glistening against the fog and smoke of the thriving city'..²³⁵

In conclusion, it would say that Tagore was the first great Indian in recent times who travelled on a cultural mission for re-establish contacts and establish friendships with peoples of other countries without any instant or specific educational, economic, political or religious aim. It is also notable that his cultural journeys were not only confined to the western world. He visited Europe and North America, as well as Japan, China, Iran, Latin America and Indo-China, Myanmar. As the paper is the travelogue from the noble laureate, he travelled to other lands out of curiosity, simply to see and speak with persons of a cultural background different from his own. His diaries on those journeys became very useful document for the historian as well as academicians. The paper would fulfill its aim with one of the quotation of poet---"a background where two opposing forces are constantly in action, one beckoning me to peace and cessation of all strife, the other egging me on to battle. It is as though the restless energy and the will to action of the West were perpetually assaulting the citadel of my Indian placidity. Hence this swing of the pendulum between passionate pain and calm detachment, between lyrical abandon and philosophizing between love of my country and mockery of patriotism, between an itch to enter the lists and a longing to remain wrapping in thought."These emotional voyages which bridged the cultural relationship with these countries are still in extension.

²³⁵ Ibid,p.2



THE INFLUENCE OF SANSKRIT ON MYANMAR LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Dr. Hla Tun

Culture is the spirit of a country. The word “Culture” is so widespread that it contains both incline and decline of politics, economics, literature, philosophy and social traditions within its boundary. The culture is formed by combining these traditions. Therefore, the word “culture” defines very deep meanings. It is inevitable to study the history of literature to know the characteristics of culture. It is very important to study Sanskrit and Pali languages to know about Myanmar literature and culture.

Sanskrit Rigveda was composed in between 3000 to 1500 B.C. in India. It was composed in Aryan’s language “Sanskrit”. The Sanskrit is still used today from that time in religion and literature by scholars. Their spoken language was differed considerably from the written language. Both languages were also changing gradually.

Pali In 600 B.C the changing form of Sanskrit was for used for propagating the Buddhism. This language is known as “Pali”. Pali is a mixture of local language and Sanskrit from northern India. The first form of “Pali” can be found in Buddhist scriptures: “Tripitaka”. The commentaries on Tripitakas were also written in Pali. Although “Pali” is still used today for writing from the time of Lord Buddha, Tripitakas and Anupaitakas are only important in the view language development.

Myanmar In Myanmar, a petrography from A.D. 108 describes Myanmar as Brahmadesh or Burma Desh. A petrography of Hastinapur (Tagaung) from A.D. 416 and another petrography of Arimardanapura (Bagan) from A.D. 610 were written in Sanskrit. In a petrography from A.D. 610, the following sentences were written in Sanskrit. “During the reign of King Aditya Sen, two Shakyan descendent Bhikkhus who were honoured as Bodhi Verman and Dharmadas from Hastinapura city which was located on the bank of Irrawadi, donated a statue of Shakya Muni (Lord Buddha the Gautama) to the Ashokarama monastery”

It is clear that when these petrographs were written, the Buddhism was spread throughout the North Myanmar. The Sanskrit stories from the time of Gupta period were quoted in terracotta. The bricks written in Sanskrit, on which the Buddha images were curved, are



found. They are 1700 years old. Coins written in Sanskrit were also found. Many people from the Valley of Ganges River from north India came to the Irrawaddy bank region and settled down. They brought their culture, religion and literature with them. These things are mentioned well in Myanmar history. Philosophy, Brahmi scripts, language, culture etc. came from India to Myanmar. A mixture of Brahmana culture and Buddha culture also spread in middle and northern Myanmar. All Royal related activities and rituals were performed by Hindu Brahmanas. Sanskrit and Pali were used in monastery, petroglyphs, monuments and Royal orders.

Pyu Era Pyu people adopted the architecture, religion, culture etc. from Andhra Pradesh. The people from Andhra Pradesh were the masters of architecture. They were good Engineers in building Pagodas, Monasteries and public houses. All these things were adopted by Pyu people. Shri Kshetra found during the digging by the archeologists supported the fact that Mahayana and Theravada were honored as the same. Many statues of God Vishnu were also found. It is a proof that the worship of God Vishnu was prevalent during that time and the social systems were also from Hindus or Brahmanism.

Swarnabhumi (Thuwanna Bhumi) There were special prevalent of Arya of Brahmanism. They worshipped God Vishnu. They also worshipped Lord Buddha. Later, the followers of Buddhism increased. Emperor Ashoka sent Bhikkhus Ashin Sona and Uttara for the propagation and promotion of Buddhism. They gave purified sermon of Buddha. The true Buddhism was founded in Swarna-Bhumi. There were also small cities inhabited by Indian merchants. Therefore, in ancient Myanmar Sanskrit, Pali, Pyu and Mon languages were used in which Sanskrit and Pali were main.

The petroglyph of Rajakumara, son of king Kyansitthat, was written in four languages: Pyu, Mon, Pali and Myanmar. These four languages are fully influenced by Sanskrit. In Myanmar history, this Rajakumara's petroglyph was quoted with exact date. The specialty of this petroglyph is that it is the first petroglyph quoted in Myanmar language. In A.D. 1312, during the era of Pinya, scholars and Bhikkhus composed many books based on Sanskrit and Pali scriptures. For example: Dhammathat, Thaddha, Alankaras, Ayurved etc.

Even in the present time, there are many Sanskrit words in conversation and literature. For example : Thukha-Dukkha, Thubha-Athubha, Samaya, Dotha, Lobha, Moha, Thura, Thiha, Deva, Raja, Mingala, Thuwanna, Hanthawady, Ketumati, Mithila, Okkala etc. words and Tekkathoe (University) related subjects and vocabulary. For



example: Dhatu Veda, Rukkha Veda, Bhoga Veda, Thinchha, Pinnya, Teitkha, Vaijja, Adipati, Pamaukkha, Guru, Aasariya, Vipashyana, Thaddha, etc.

In conclusion, the Myanmar language has its own existence now. Burmese literature is perfect and abundant from every aspect such as poems, novels, stories, plays, dramas, autobiography, Gita etc. Any Myanmar citizen can be proud of their own literature and language.

References of Books

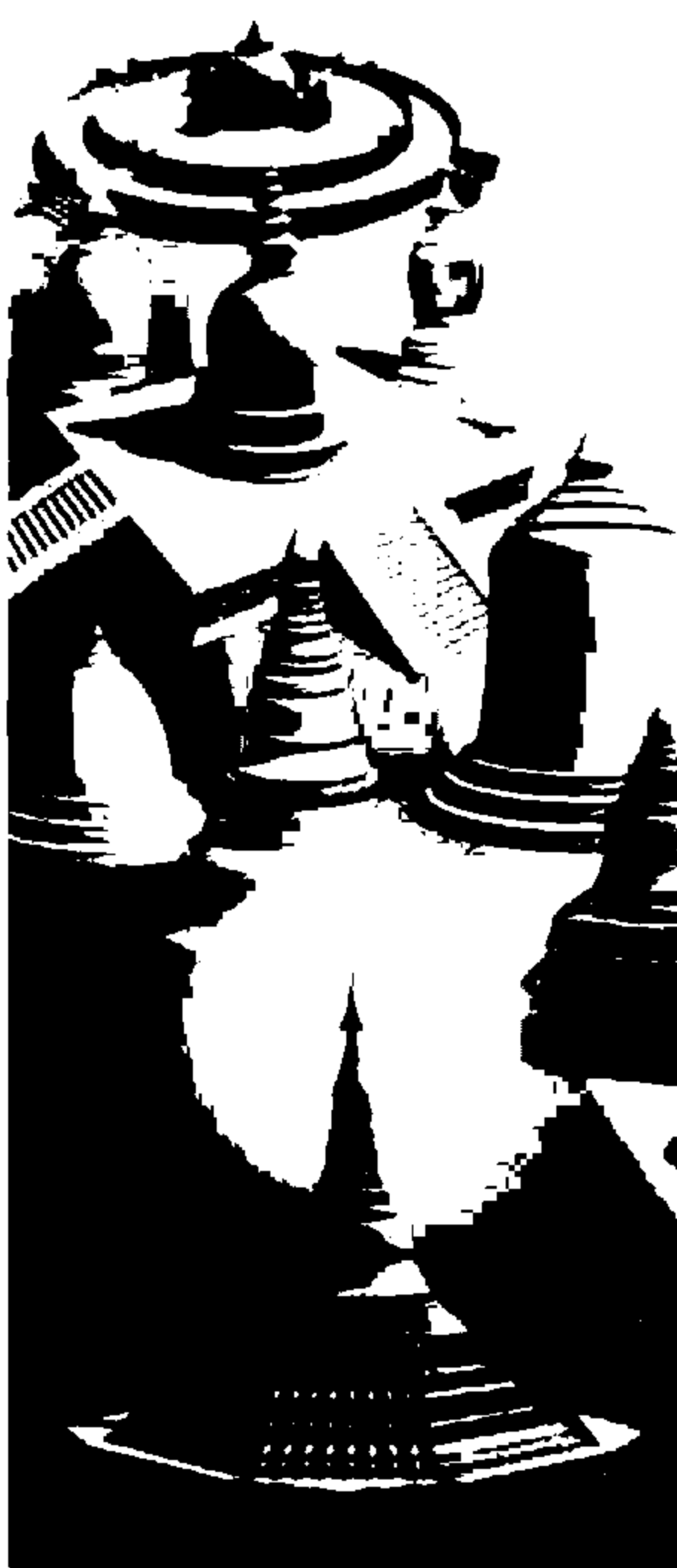
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The Evolution of Stupas in Myanmar

(1st Century A.D. to 19th Century A.D.)



**U Win Maung (Tampawaddy)
Classical Architect
Myanmar**



**International Seminar of Buddhist Cultural Heritage
December 2012
Yangon, Myanmar.**



THE EVOLUTION OF STUPAS IN MYANMAR

U WIN MAUNG (TAMPAWADDY)¹

(1) The Earlier Topes

The earlier Buddhist stupas looked almost similar to the *Jainnish* stupas, which appeared earlier than the Buddhist. The cremated relic of a holy person or the *Arahat* was put inside the burial urn and placed at the foot of the pit, which was usually chosen on top of a hillock, and covered by a capstone at the ground level. To be a monument, stones were overlapped on top of the cap stone as to create a hemispherical stone-heap where an umbrella stood on top of it and served to glorify² the monument, as illustrated in the early Indian silver coins.



Around the heap of stones, there was a circular walk-way for chanting along in a clockwise direction. The walk-way or the procession path was encircled by a stone rail or stone fencing, which led to a single entrance gate.

These burial topes were the prototypes of the later Buddhist hemispherical shape stupa built with bricks or stones, like the most famous Stupa of *Sanchi*.

(2) Hemispherical Dome Type Stupas

According to the Buddhist canons, there were few stupas existed since the Buddha life time³. Most of the early stupas or topes were usually constructed during the *Maurya* dynasty⁴, probably at the time of the great emperor, King *Asoka*, enthroned in the central *India*.

¹Traditional architect and individual archaeologist, Mandalay, Myanmar.

²In 550 jataka tiles, every Bodhisatta were illustrated as figure with the umbrella on top of his head

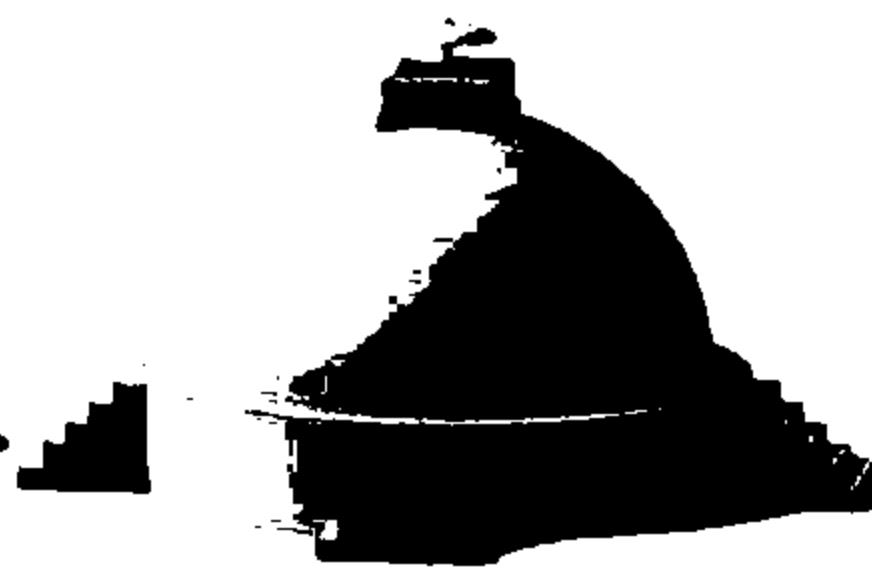
³At Vasali

⁴320 - 130 B.C.





MAURYAN Style
(3rd Century B.C.)

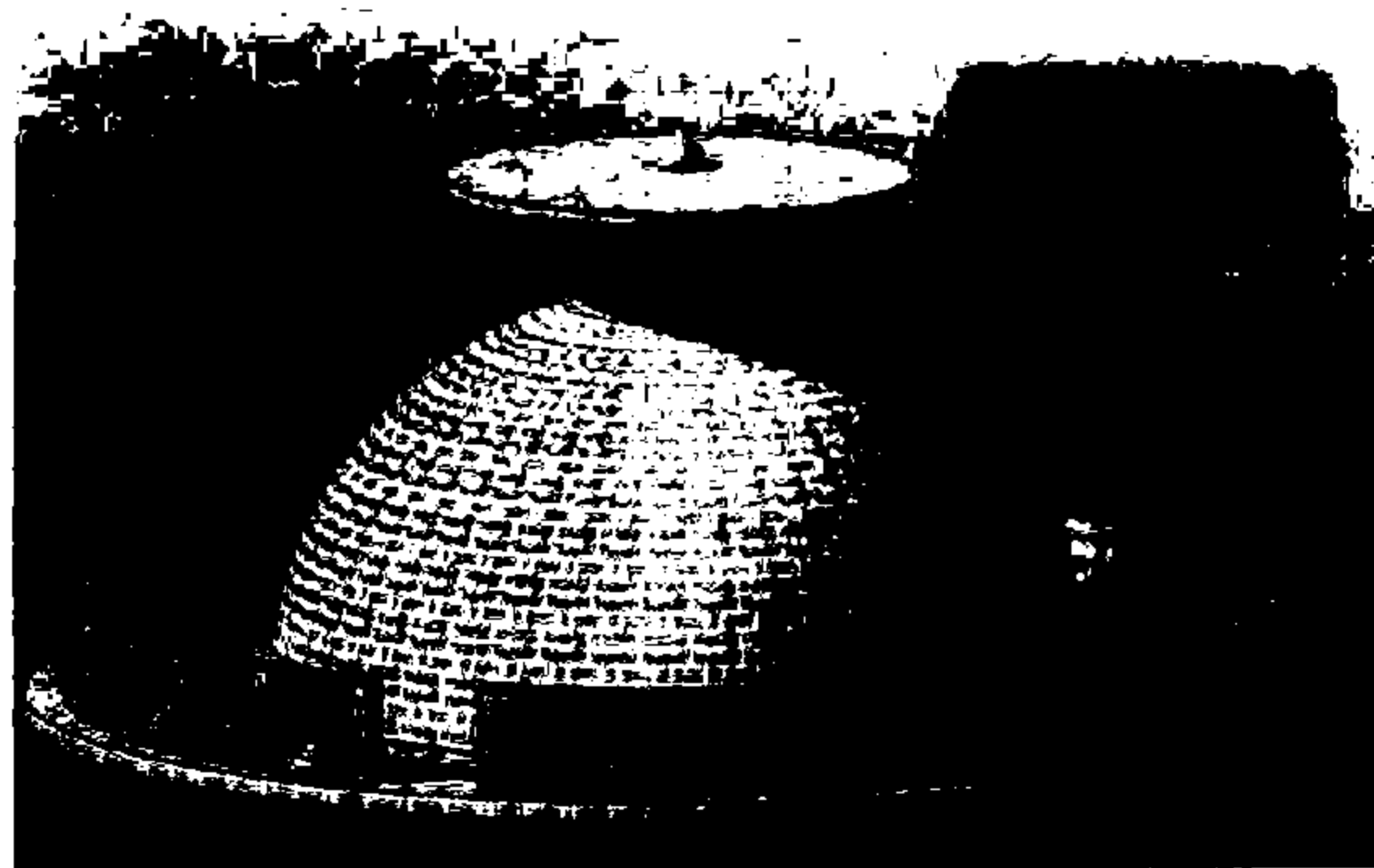


SUNGA Style
(2nd Century B.C.)



KUSHAN Style
(2nd Century A.D.)

Mauryan style hemispherical dome type stupa had neither *harmika* nor the stair cases while Sunga style hemispherical dome type stupa started to add *harmika* and stair cases with single umbrella on top of the *harmika*. And then at Kushan style stupa, it added the Greek style drum base with the columns and also multiple tiers of umbrella⁵.



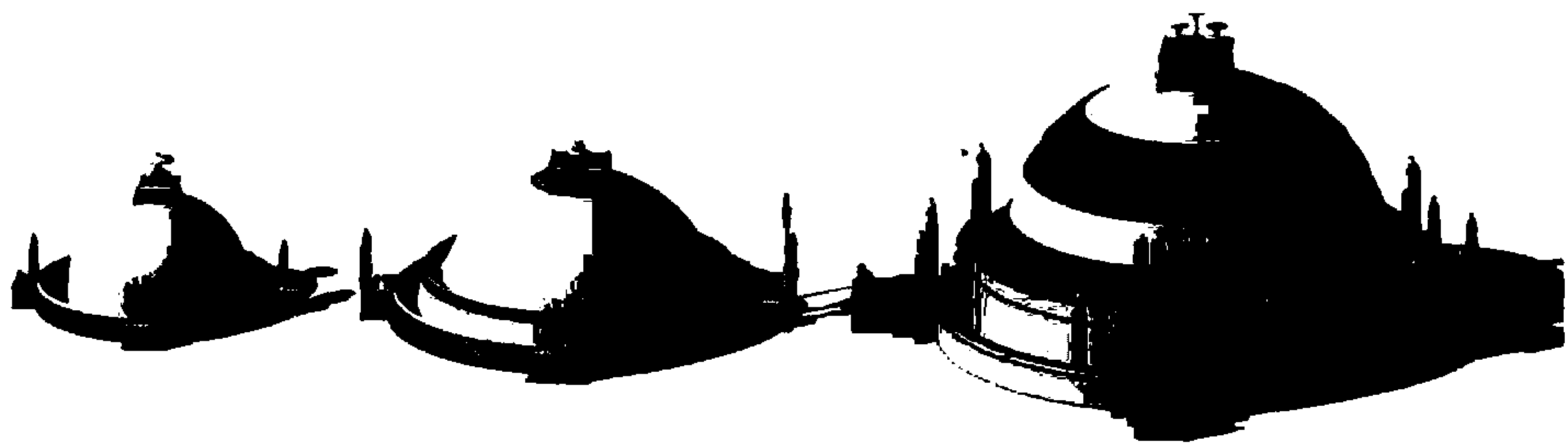
King Asoka's Buddhist missionary monks, who went to the North West frontier of *India*, also tried to make medium-sized stupas in that area. The existing document was the Stupa of *Chakpat* from *Swat* valley⁶.

The site was excavated in 1896 by *Mr. A. Caddy* who discovered a small stupa in the form of a simple hemispherical dome, about 20 feet in diameter. This unique stupa probably was one of the earliest types of stupa found in *India*. The dome was gorgeously completed and was encircled by the base of a wall about 30 feet in diameter, assembled with the debris of a circular stone disc of 11 feet in diameter. It was the *chattra* or umbrella, which crowned the stupa. The umbrella, the dome and the wall or the rail were all created with a very simple masonry and without any decorations. This was only surviving sample of the earliest Mauryan style stupa in India (Pakistan).

⁵ *Chatavali*

⁶ North West frontier of *Pakistan*





Bharhut

Sanchi

Amaravati

There were three famous hemispherical dome shaped stupas in India, Bharhu, Sanchi and Amaravati. If we compare and study these three stupas, we can know the evolution of the architectural style of the dome shaped stupas in India.

Bharhut stupa was of an earlier architectural style which had single procession path at the ground-level, while **Sanchi** stupa had two procession paths, one at the ground level and another higher path at the base of the dome. The carving style of the figures which depicted 550 *Jataka* tales of Buddha from Bharhutstupa, seemed to be earlier than the style of the figures from **Sanchi** stupa, which were the later contributions at the **Kushan** period⁷. At the center of *harmika*, there was a rail inclosure and wooden rail style, and an umbrella which was set as a single stone disc, while **Sanchi** stupa had three tiers of umbrella or *chatavali*.

The great **Sanchi** stupa had the double procession paths, the first at the ground level between the stupa and the rail, the second on top of the base of the dome together with a small size railing like the one at the ground level, which imitated the style of a wooden rail⁸. Although there were four entrance gate-ways at the ground floor, there was only a single stair case at the southern part of the dome at the upper floor, which could be stepped up through a single staircase⁹ single umbrella was changed to triple-tier type or *chatavali*.

The old brick and cement masonry was done during the Maurya dynasty by the great king **Asoka**, while the outer renovated stone dome and the beautifully carved stone gateways¹⁰ were added at the time of the **Kushan** kings.

At the time between the decline of the **Maurya** dynasty and the rise of the **Gupta**¹¹ dynasty, there were two or more Buddhist sites reigned in Andhra¹², while at **Nagajunakonda** and **Amaravati** historical sites, where a thousand of large size, medium size and small size dome shape stupas were situated. One of the famous stupas was the great stupa of **Amaravati**. Many architectural influences were taken from the **Mauryan** architecture which was added with some of their local architectural styles. The most prominent creations were the *Ar-yaka* columns and the multiple umbrellas on top of the *harmika*¹³. At the base of the dome, unlike the **Sanchi** stupa entrance, *torana* or the gate-ways were moved to the outer most squared fencing wall, instead of at the entrance gate of the outer

⁷ 1st century A.D

⁸ the column, three cross bars and the coping rail on top of it

⁹ which had the double stairways, that were parallel to the circumference of the dome. And the style of the umbrella was on top of the dome

¹⁰ **Torana**

¹¹ 3rd to 7th Century A.D.

¹² which was known as **Karlinga**

¹³ At the four direction of the base of the hemispherical dome, outside the drum, there were four extended oblong pedestals, on top of those, each stand five vertical columns, capped by the miniature stupas. And that pedestal at the bottom of the columns was used as the stair case to climb up to the upper processional path.



circular wall. The belt band, the base part of the dome, lower part of the upper processional path and all rails were richly decorated with the beautiful bas-relief figure including the present and previous lives of Buddha.

Inside the *harmika* rail on top of the dome, many scholars' conjectures reconstructed the central *chatavali* and another four single umbrellas at the corners of the *harmika*. So totally there were seven umbrellas.

If we compare the stupas from both *Mauria* and *Andara* dynasties, the evolution of the hemispherical dome shape stupas was as follows;

- (a) Increasing in diameter of the dome,
- (b) Decorative bas-relief on the rail and gateway became richer and richer,
- (c) The umbrella on top of the *harmika* became smaller in size and increased in the numbers of umbrella,
- (d) The processional path also increased in number from single path at the ground level to triple path at the later times. Dome type, ever built in *India*¹⁴.

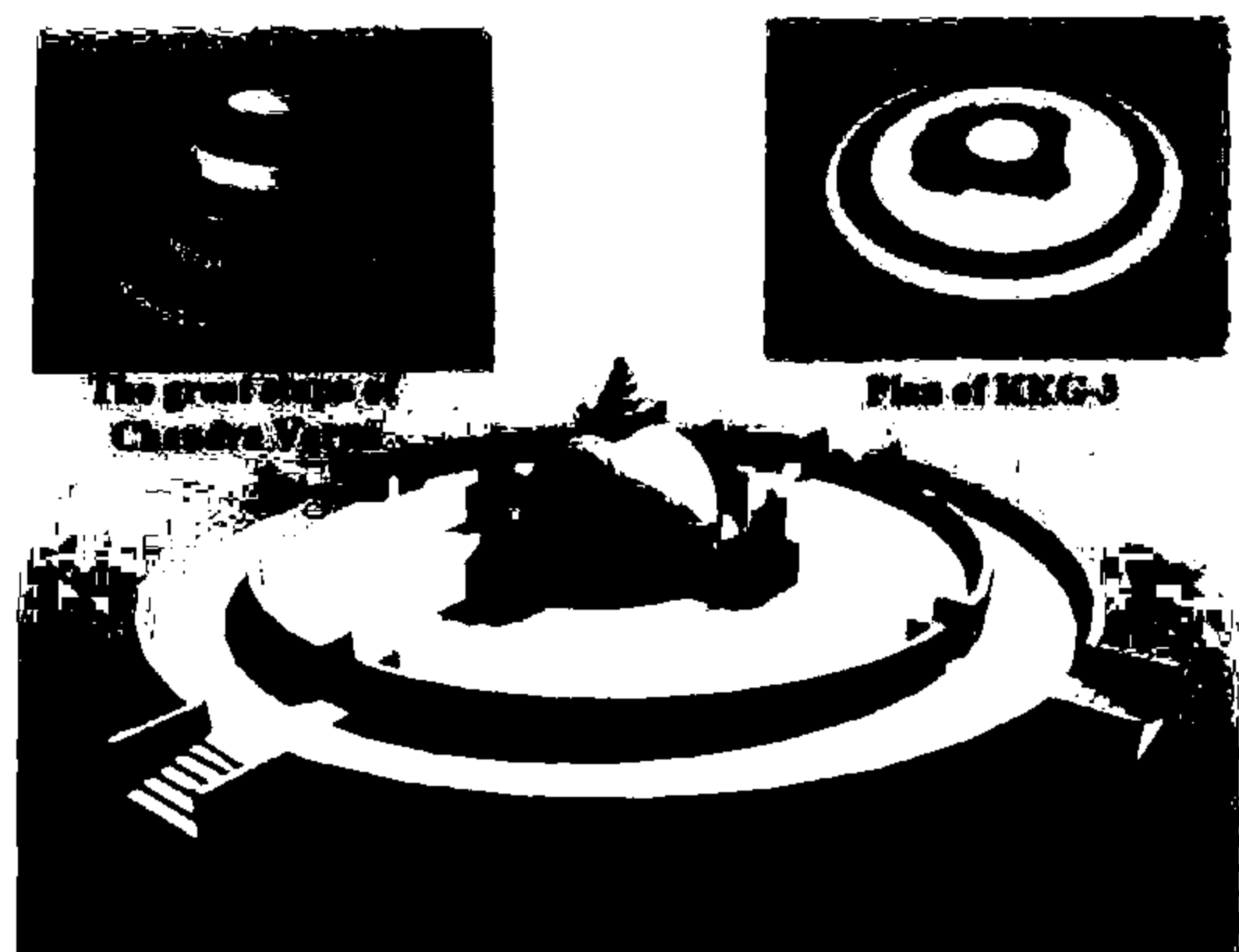


*Chandra varum*¹⁵, a rarely known

Buddhist site was excavated not very long ago, consisted of a stupa very similar to the great stupa of *Amaravati*. Not like the *Amaravati* stupa, which had two processional paths¹⁶, the stupa of *Chandra varum* stupa had three processional paths, the third one on top of the second path.

(3) The Earliest Stupa in Myanmar

The earliest evidence for the Buddhist stupas in Myanmar was the foundation of KKG-3, one of the excavated mounds in *Beikthano* city¹⁷, central Myanmar, where we also found the silver image of Buddha, which was strongly influenced by *Amaravati* style. The terra cotta Sealed impression bearing *SanghaSiri*, in Brahmi alphabets, may be contemporary to *Sunga* period of India, earlier than the stupa, where that seal was found nearby. The style of the stupa is more close to the *Chandra varum* style rather than the *Sunga* style¹⁸.



¹⁴ But now, the whole stupa was totally destroyed and badly damaged. So the stupa of *Sanchi* became the biggest of all stupas ever existed in good complete condition.

¹⁵ by the river of *Gundlakomma*, near the small town *Alampuri*, to the south of *Hyderabad*.

¹⁶ one at the ground floor and the other at the base of the dome, on top of the circular base or drum.

¹⁷ Pyu capital near Magwe founded by the queen *Pan Htwa*. The carbon dating of Beikthano is 1st Century A.D.

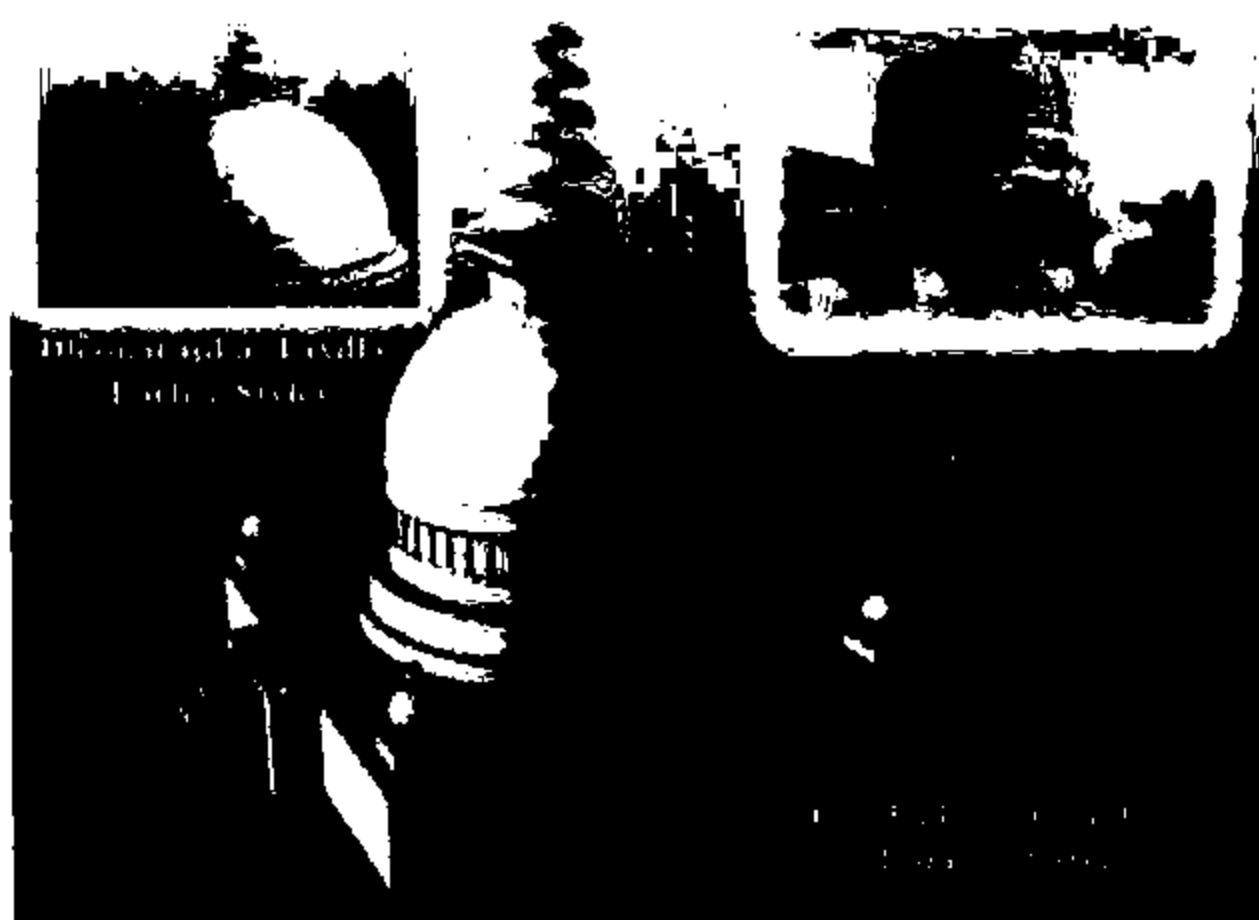
¹⁸ The stupa at *Amaravati* had five *Ayaka* columns on each square pedestals at every cardinal directions at the base of the dome. *Sunga* period stupas, *Sanchi* and *Barhut*, had neither square pedestal nor the columns.



The foundation of the stupa of KKG-3 has three concentric rings. The innermost ring and the outermost ring have the extensions of square brick foundations at the four cardinal directions. The outer extensions may be the stair cases and the extensions from the inner ring must be the pedestal for the *Ayaka* columns, like the great stupa at *Amaravati*. To compare to the *Amaravati*, the great stupa of KKG-3 (*Beikthano*) was smaller in stupa size and wider in walkways. Out of two circular walk ways around the central stupa, the inner is higher than the outer.

(4) Improving the Base in Kushan period

In the *Kushan* period¹⁹, the shape of the early dome stupa from *Mauria* architectural style had been improved. The dome was put on the circular base, decorated with a row of vertical columns, and it was put again on two or three other circular bases, to increase the height of the whole dome up to the height, equal to the length of the diameter of the dome or more than that, , like the relic casket got from the chamber of the stupa of *Manikyala*, found by *Cunningham*, while in the older style, the height of the dome was only half of the diameter of the dome. Again the improved dome shape new stupa was put on the wider square platform, which was also decorated by the double rows of vertical columns. Sometimes it bore the images of Buddha in stucco between two columns. There were four small corner stupas on top of the corners of the raised square platform, and also a single²⁰ stair case together with the landing.



This new style of *Kushan* period dome shape stupa was very popular in *Gandhara* area of *Kushan* dynasty, like the *Gombaduna* stupa from Swat valley. There were other similar type of stupas in *Gandhara* region²¹. Few examples were *Shingardar* stupa, Stupa of *Sirkap*, *MohraMaradu* stupa, stupa of *Rhamala* and central stupa of *Takh-i-bahi* monastery complex and etc;.

The exposed stupa at *Gwe Bin TetKon*²² has the similar form like the great stupa of *Nalanda* or the late Gandhara stupa. The central stupa which would be like the stone relief stupa, excavated from *Khin Ba Konmount*²³. The relic casket shaped central stupa was placed on top of the raised square platform.



¹⁹ 25 – 80 Centuries A.D.

²⁰ sometimes four stair cases from four directions

²¹ Of *Taxila* valley, *Peshwar* valley, *Swat* valley and also at *Panjab*

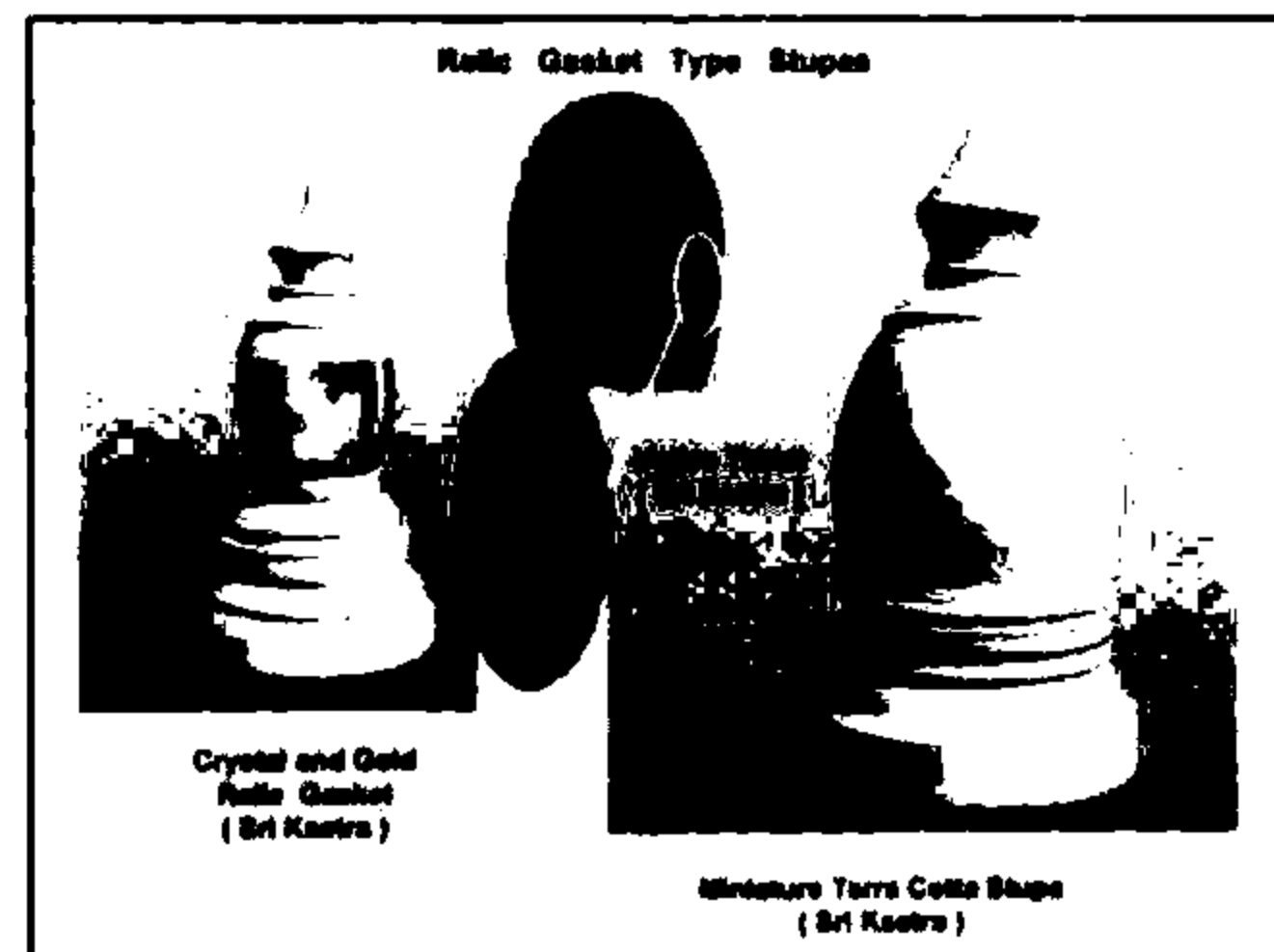
²² A mount at the South East part of *Sri Khettara*, so called *Ma ThiKyaKon*, outside the city wall excavated by the Archaeology Department in the year 1927.



which was beautifully decorated by the terra cotta relief figures²⁴ of the man riding on the horse and holding the sword in his hand. To climb up to the top platform, it has four stair cases from four directions. The other similar excavated mounds at *Halin*, *Beikthano* and *Maing Maw (Pinle)* have only single stair cases, similar to the stupa of *Nalanda*. Stupa foundations of square base with circular ring at the center together with the trace of stair case on one side were found not only at *Nalanda* of *Gupta* period but also at *Amaravati* and *Nagarazuna Konda* sites at the *Andhra* region, East coast of India. So, it can be said that the stupas of Pyu period had influence by *Andhara* style in early time and later by the *Gupta* style.

(5) The Relic Casket Type Stupas

The third stupa style in *Sri Khetara* was the small crystal relic casket²⁵ decorated by the real gold plates in form of a stupa and miniature stupa²⁶ made of terra cotta, in the technique of pottery making²⁷. The egg shape body was put on the circular base and surmounted by *Harmika* and umbrella²⁸. These styles can be founded on the few terra cotta votive tablets from *Sri Khetara*. Although this style of stupa was exactly like the *NgaKyaweNadaung* Stupa in early *Bagan*, we can't find any stupas in *Sri Khetara* and other *Pyu* capital sites, because it needs hundreds of mount in *Pyu* sites to be excavated.



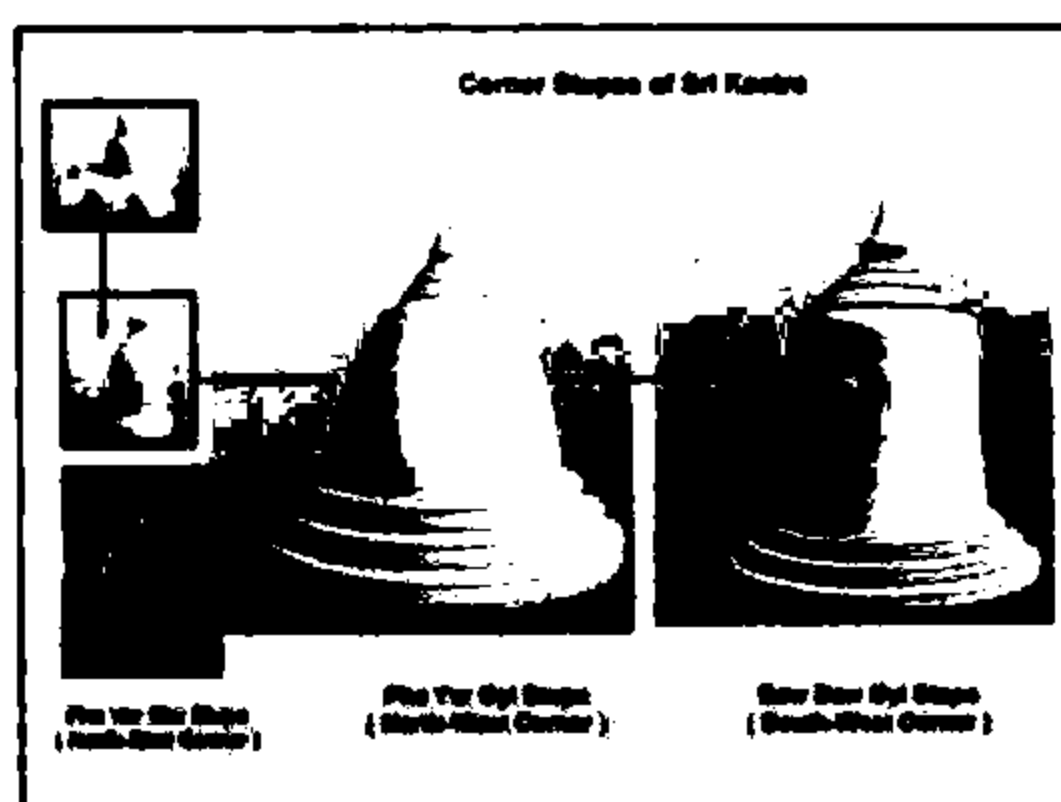
(6) Pointed Egg Shaped Stupas

It was said that there were four great corner stupas at *Sri Khetara*, but now only three stupas have survived,

Payargyi stupa at the North West corner,

Payarmar stupa at the North East corner,

Baw BawGyi stupa at the South West corner.



Some said that *Moat Htaw* stupa may be the South East corner, but it was badly damaged. The foundation was too small to compare to the other three stupas. The dome or the body of *Payarmar* and *Payargyi* stupas were in up pointed egg shape²⁹ while the body of *Baw BawGyi* was in shape of tall upstanding cylinder. It may be the later evolved style based on the former two stupas.

²³ A mount near Gwe Bin TetKon, inside the wall, excavated by the Archaeology Department in the year 1926, where they found 20 sheet of gold plate and a stone steal bearing the figure of stupa in relief, which was the upper lid of the relic chamber.

²⁴ Now in the Archaeology Museum, *HmawZar*, *Sri Khetara*.

²⁵ Private Collection at Berlin, Germany.

²⁶ Collected by the author and donated to the Museum of *HmawZar*.

²⁷ Inside of the stupa is hollow.

²⁸ not multiple tier umbrellas, but single and half open

²⁹ Traditional call the shape of the heap of paddy.

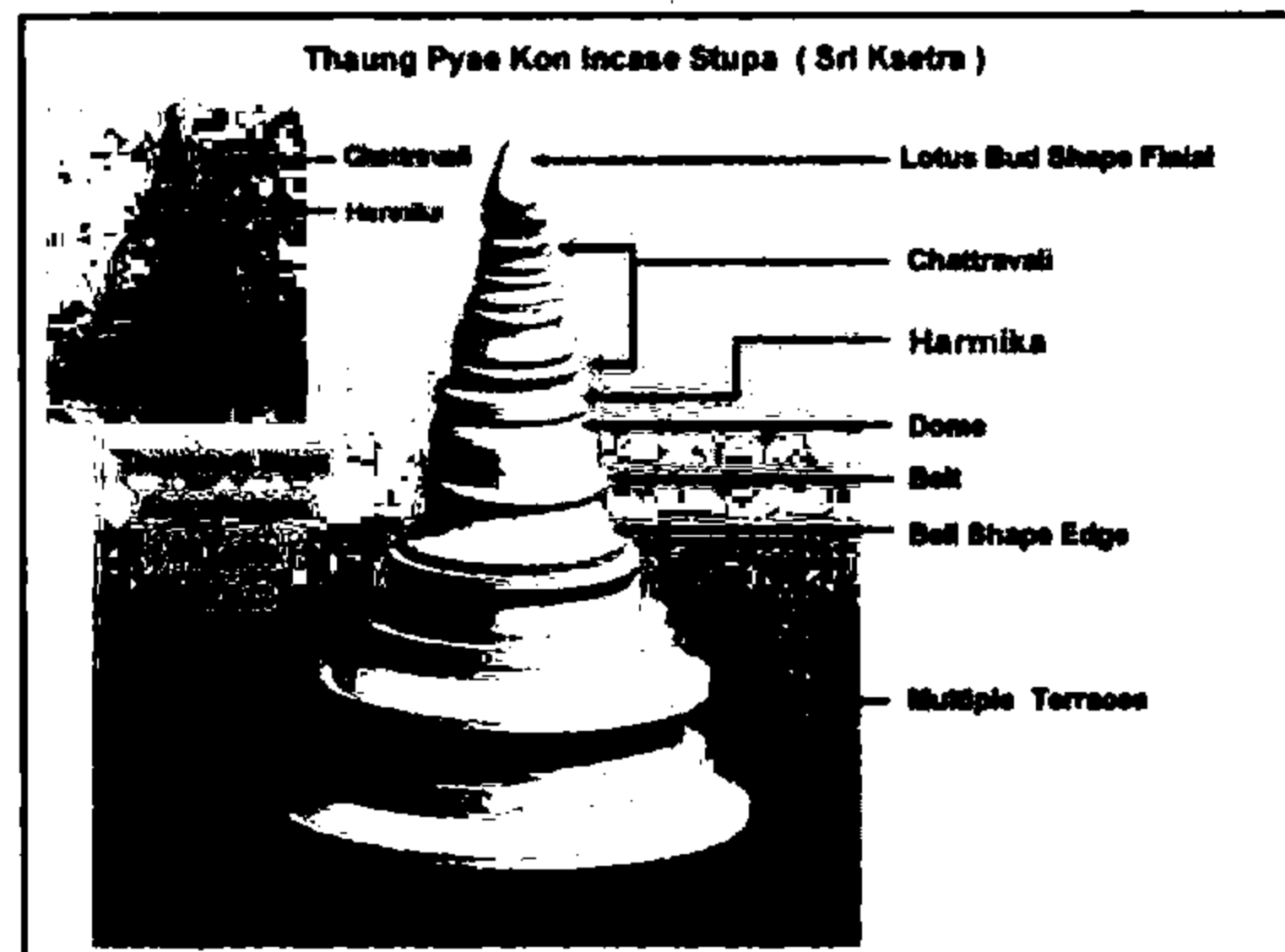


Upper portions of these stupas were repaired³⁰ by the later peoples. But we can trace back the original style of the *Harmika* and umbrella (half open) of those from the miniature stupas³¹ unearthed from *Sri Khettara* are.

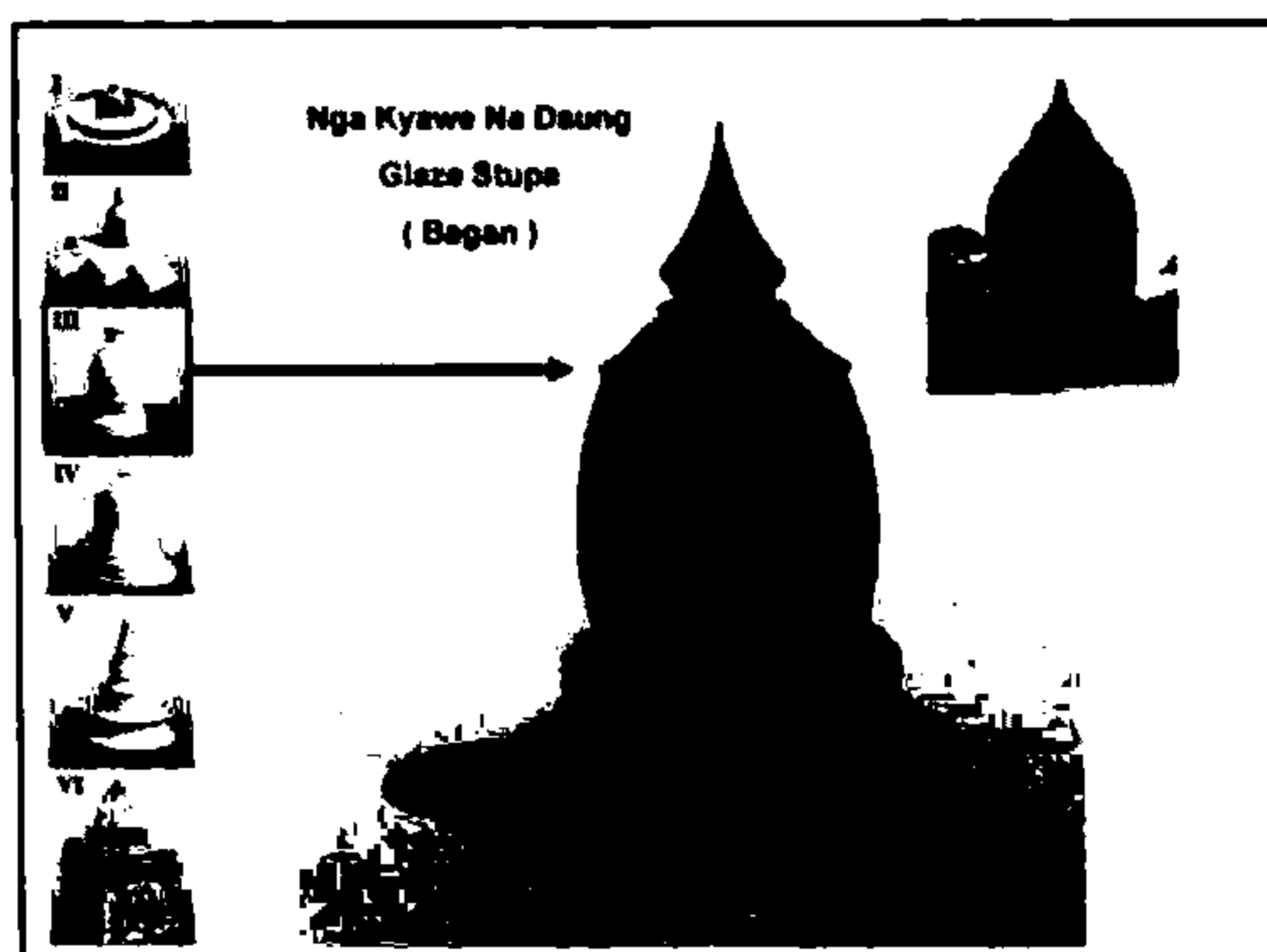
(7) Earliest Bell Shaped Stupa

Formally scholars thought that the bell shape end dome with the belt at the center was invented only at the time of King *Anawratha*, round about 10th century A.D. At the year 1926, the archaeological excavation on two mounts near *ThaungPyaeKon*³² exposed two bell shape stupas which were the inner one of encased stupa. Outer stupas were badly damaged and removed during the excavation.

The earliest bell shape stupa style in Asia might be the great *Borobudur*³³. The bell shape dome and the circular terraces must have same influence by *Thuparama* but the upper portion, lotus shape finial *Chattravali* and *Harmika* were different from that. The *Harmika* was changed both the size and the form and camouflage between the dome and the *Chattravali*. This inversion may be created by the local people of pyu and myanmar, where all the *Chattravali* from stupa and temple of *Bagan* and later period continuously used this shape. Later people named the combination of *Harmika* and *Chattravalias* *PhaungYit*³⁴.



(8) Early Bagan Stupas



After studying the different styles of Stupas from *Sri Khettara*, we would like to move our study to *Bagan*³⁵. As the first king of *Bagan*³⁶ came from the old Pyu capital, *Sri Khettara*, he may have brought together with him the Buddhism, Buddhist arts and craft men to *Bagan*. *Nga-Kyaw-Nadaung* (glazed stupa) may be the earliest type of stupa in Bagan area.

³⁰ Not only repaired in the non-original shape but add the metal umbrella on top of it.

³¹ Crystal relic casket and the terra cotta miniature stupa mentioned above.

³² A village at the South East part of *Sri Khettara* inside the wall. *ThaungPyaeKon* means the mount full of ten thousand pagodas.

³³ The great stupa in Indonesia, Java, was built in 8th Century A.D.

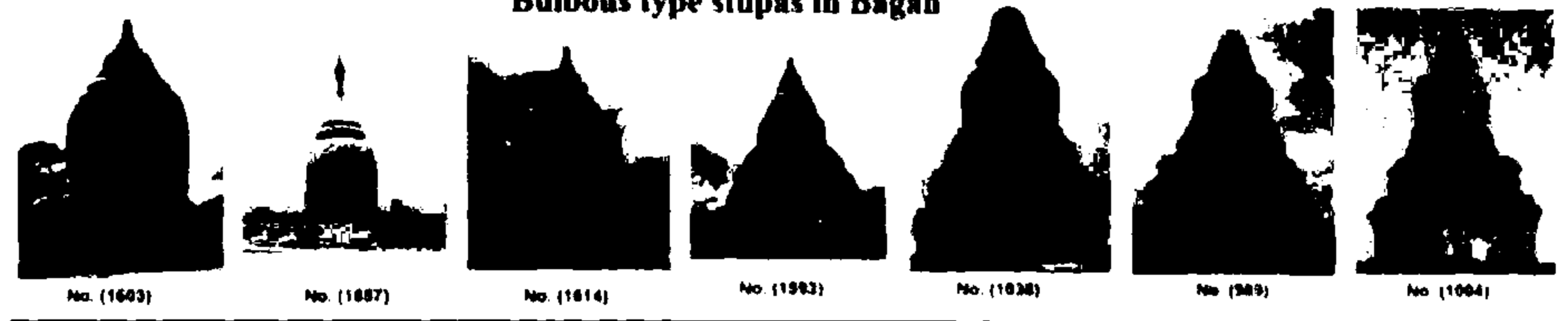
³⁴ The cemented ringed spire gradually pointed upwards in the conical shape.

³⁵ *Bagan* was founded by King *Thamudarit*, the nephew of the last king of *Sri Khettara*, at 27 years Buddhist era.

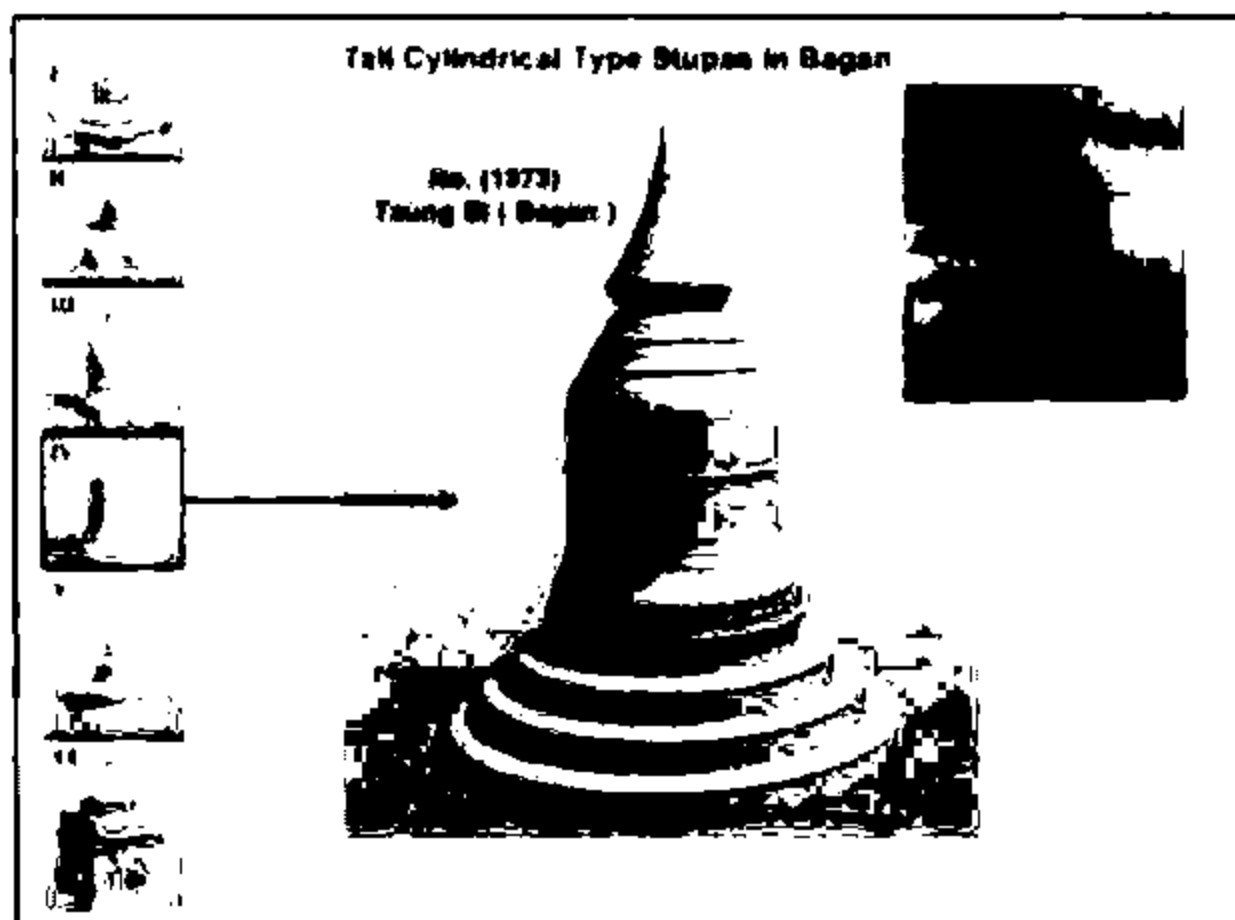
³⁶ King *Thamudarit*



Bulbous type stupas in Bagan

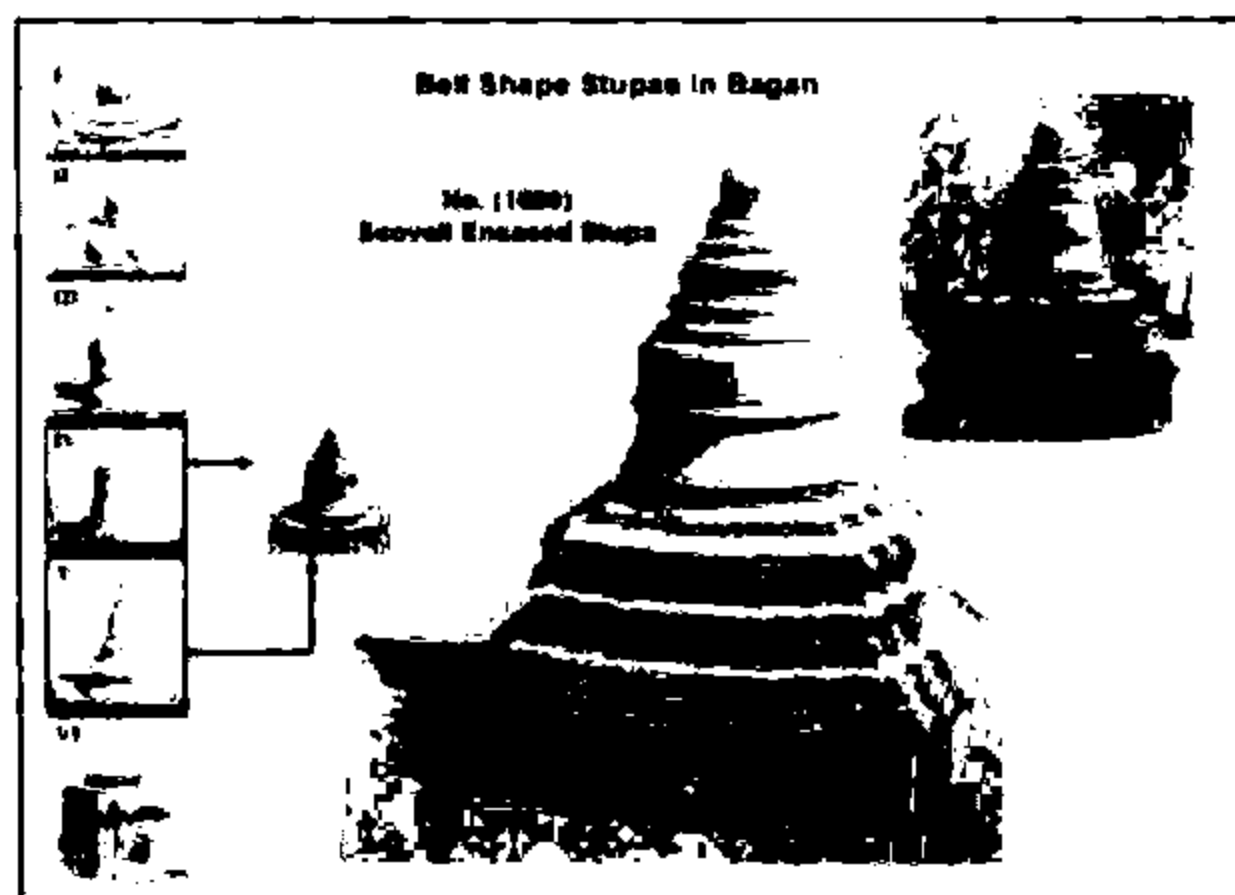


The earliest stupas in Bagan may be nearly or exactly the same shape as *Pyu* miniature stupas. The proof is that the glazed stupa, *NgaKyaweNadung*³⁷, was same as the form of relic casket and miniature terra cotta stupa from *Sri Khettara*. There were seven egg shaped body (Bulbus type³⁸) stupas. The earlier stupas stand on the low circular terrace while the later stand on the square and higher terraces.

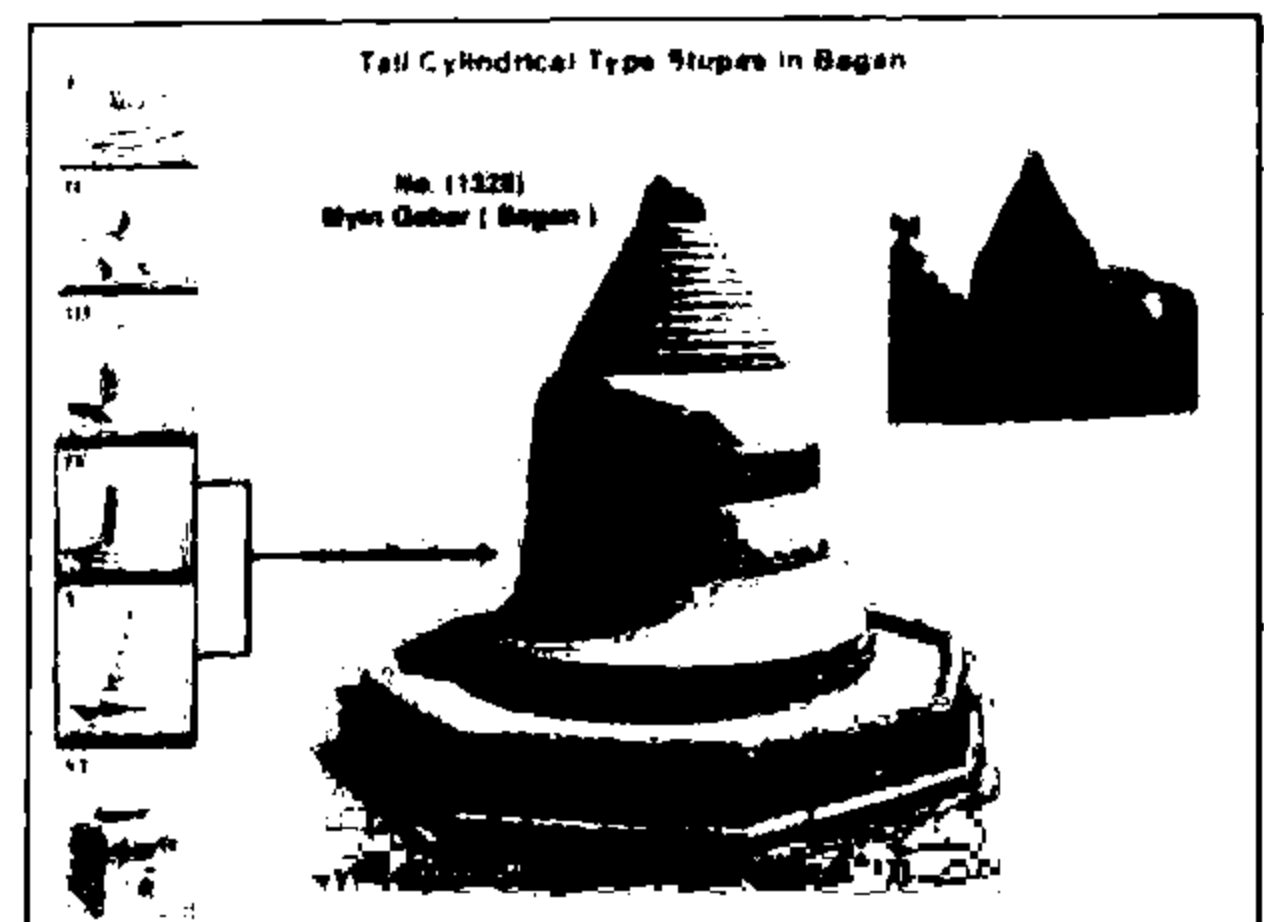


(9) Tall Cylindrical Type Stupas

Another early type stupa which is exactly like the *Baw BawGyi*³⁹ stupa, from *Sri Khettara*, was stupa no.1973 near Taung Bi village in Bagan. These two types of stupas, *NgaKyaweNadung* and stupa no. 1973 were the true *Pyu* type stupas of *Bagan* area for the earliest times.



The second bell shape stupa of Bagan from the earlier period was the encased stupa (No.1690), called *scovell*⁴⁰ encased stupa. The bell shape stupa on the square terrace with two extensions. Stupa and terrace were put again on the square base. These type of stupas from the pre *Anawratha* period can be found in many place around *Bagan* area.



The stupa, slightly change in style from *Baw BawGyi*, was the *MyinKabar Stupa*⁴¹ (No.1328). Three circular terraces had changed to octagonal shape single terrace. The bell shape end at the bottom of the belt is more prominent and the *Chattavali* is

³⁷ *NgaKyaweNadung* means the ear plug of the giant hero, named *NgaKyawe*, in early *Bagan* Mythology.

³⁸ Myanmar name for this type is *Bu ThiPon*, in the shape of a gourd

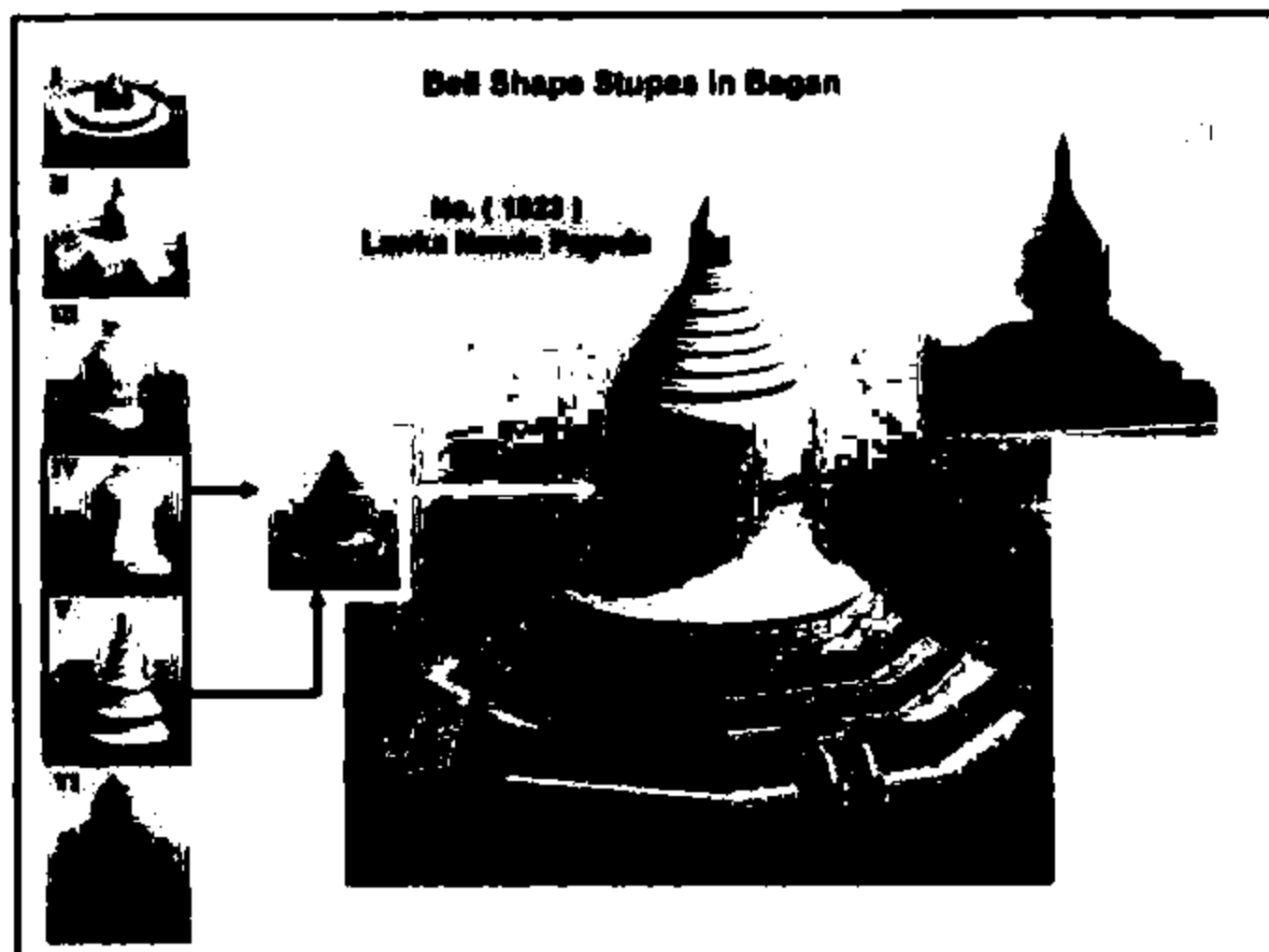
³⁹ The original form of *Baw BawGyi* pagoda was with the high conical body on top of the three low circular terraces surmounted by the *Harmika* and half open umbrella in conical shape

⁴⁰ Name of civil engineer in *Bagan* area, in the British colonial time.

⁴¹ *MyinKabar Stupa* was built by King *Anawratha* in his early part in the memorial of the fighting place with his elder brother, the former King.



more taller than the former one. It took some of the style from *Thaung Bye Kon* encased stupa and also the *Chattavali* style from *Gupta* period miniature stupas.

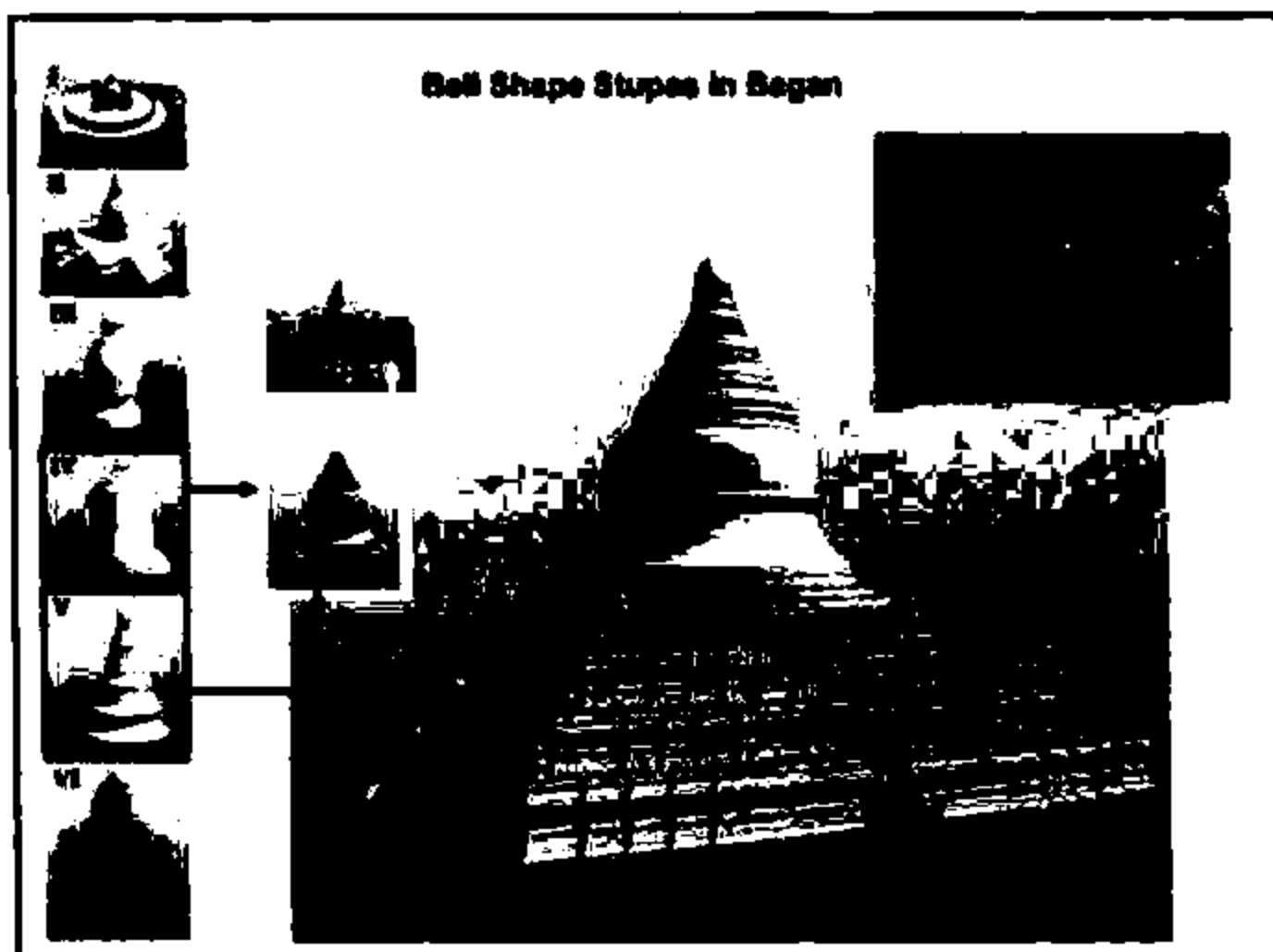
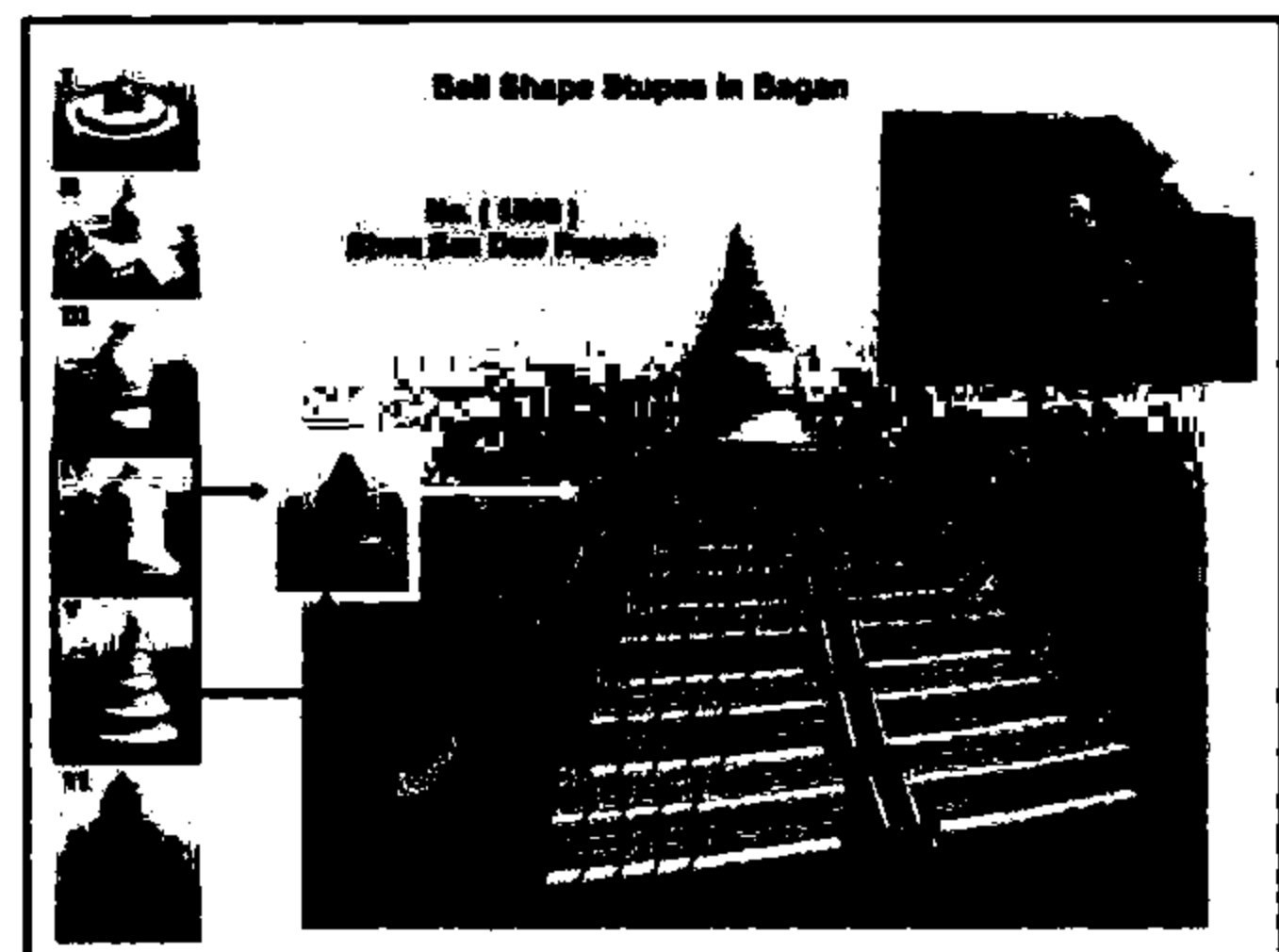


Lawka Nanda pagoda has four stairways⁴². The three terraces are still in octagonal form, which is the earlier style of *Pyu* and Myanmar. The belt of the high cylindrical bell shape body was beautifully decorated with eight long diamond shape floral designs within a row of flower.

(10) Square Terraced Stupas

After conquering the Mon state of lower Myanmar by the King *Anawratha*, the stupa styles were changed by combining with Mon Architectural styles of using multiple square terraces and stair case to climb up to the top terrace from four directions. *Shwe San Daw* pagoda was the sample of the mixture of *Pyu*, Mon and Myanmar architectural styles.

All the terraces are in square form. To get the square pyramid style, the bell shaped stupa that was placed on top of the high five terraces had to be reduced. The proportion



of the bell compare to the total height of the stupa is so small⁴³, it seems that the king did not like this new style.

*Shwe Zigon*⁴⁴ at *Nyaung Oo* is bell shape stupa on top of the five terraces⁴⁵ and decorated with four corner stupas and twelve flower pots (*Kalasa*) on three set of square terraces at four corners. It has three steps of stairways for three square terraces at four directions. This new style of stupa was so popular for the Myanmar people, so all the royal merit great stupas from later period continue to use the style and proportion of

Shwe Zigon pagoda up to the end of *Bagan* dynasty and later periods.

⁴² Now only three stairway were left, North, South and East sides of *Lawka Nanda* pagoda.

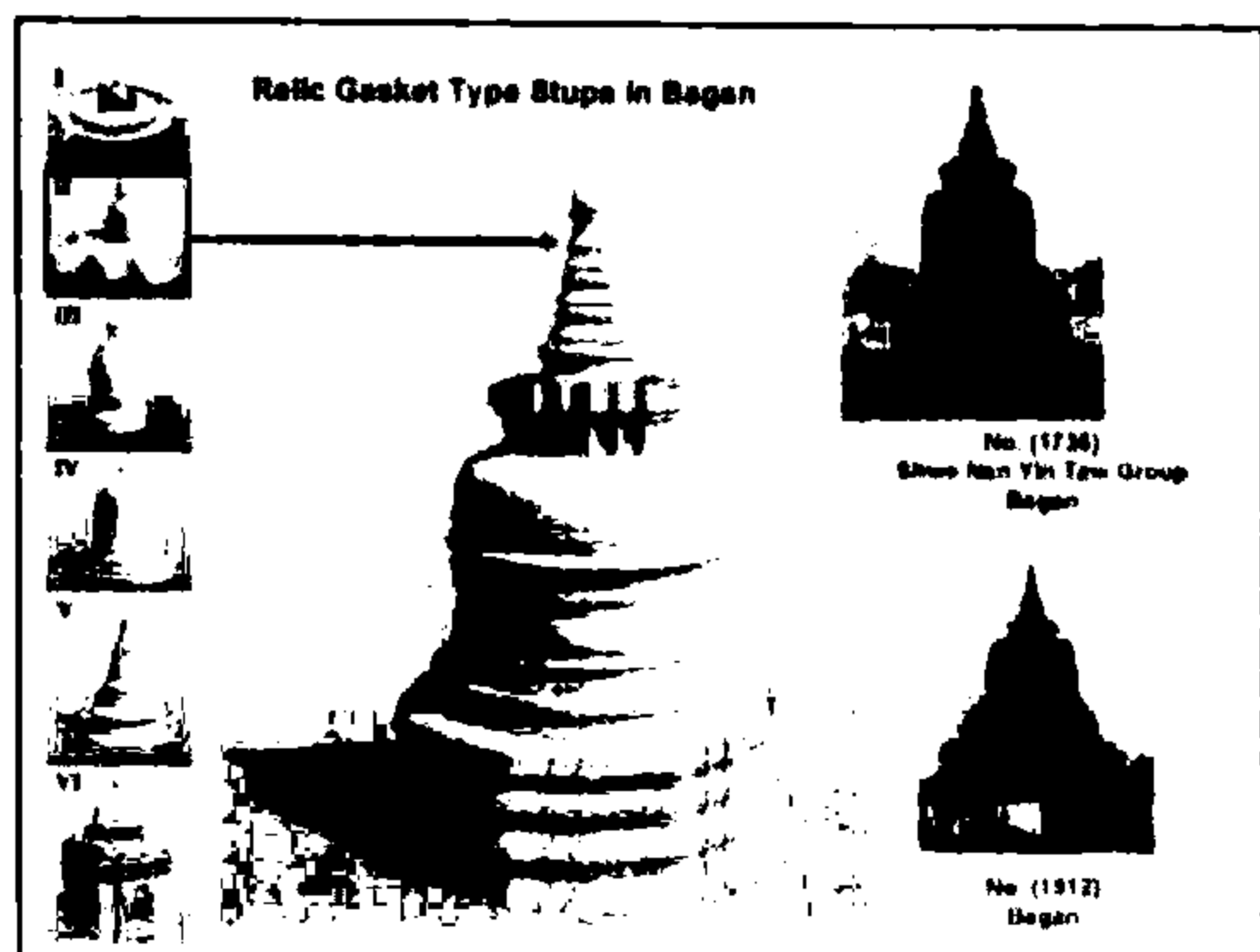
⁴³ Height of the bell is only one-sixth of the whole height of the stupa

⁴⁴ It was first started by King *Anawratha* (late 11th Century) and finished at the time of King *Kyan Sitha* (12th Century).

⁴⁵ The lower three square terraces, one in octagonal and another one in circular terrace at the top.

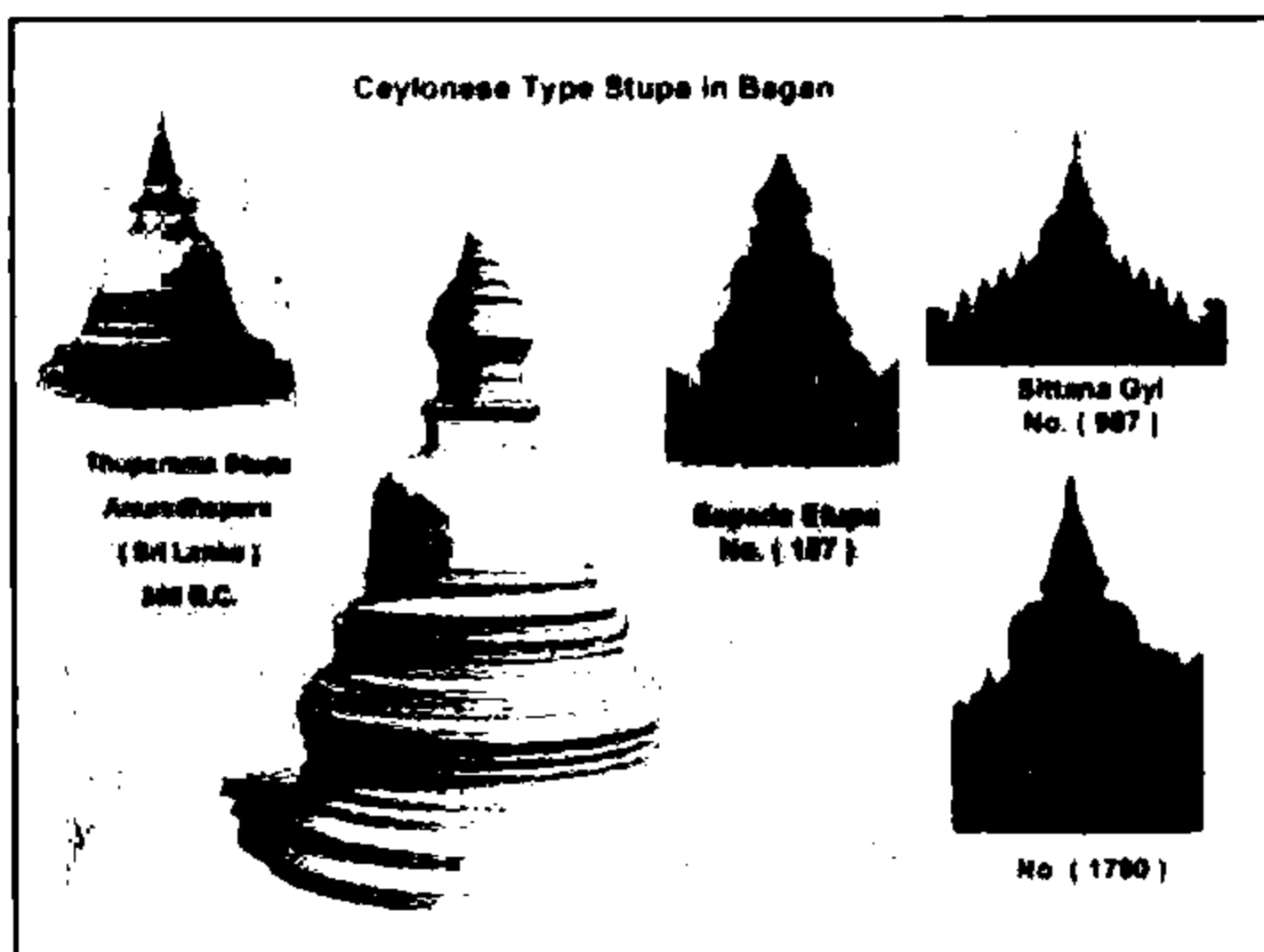


MingalarSadi, built by the last king of Bagan at the end of 13th century, was exactly like ShweZigon, nothing had changed.



(11) Gupta Influence and Sri Lanka Influence

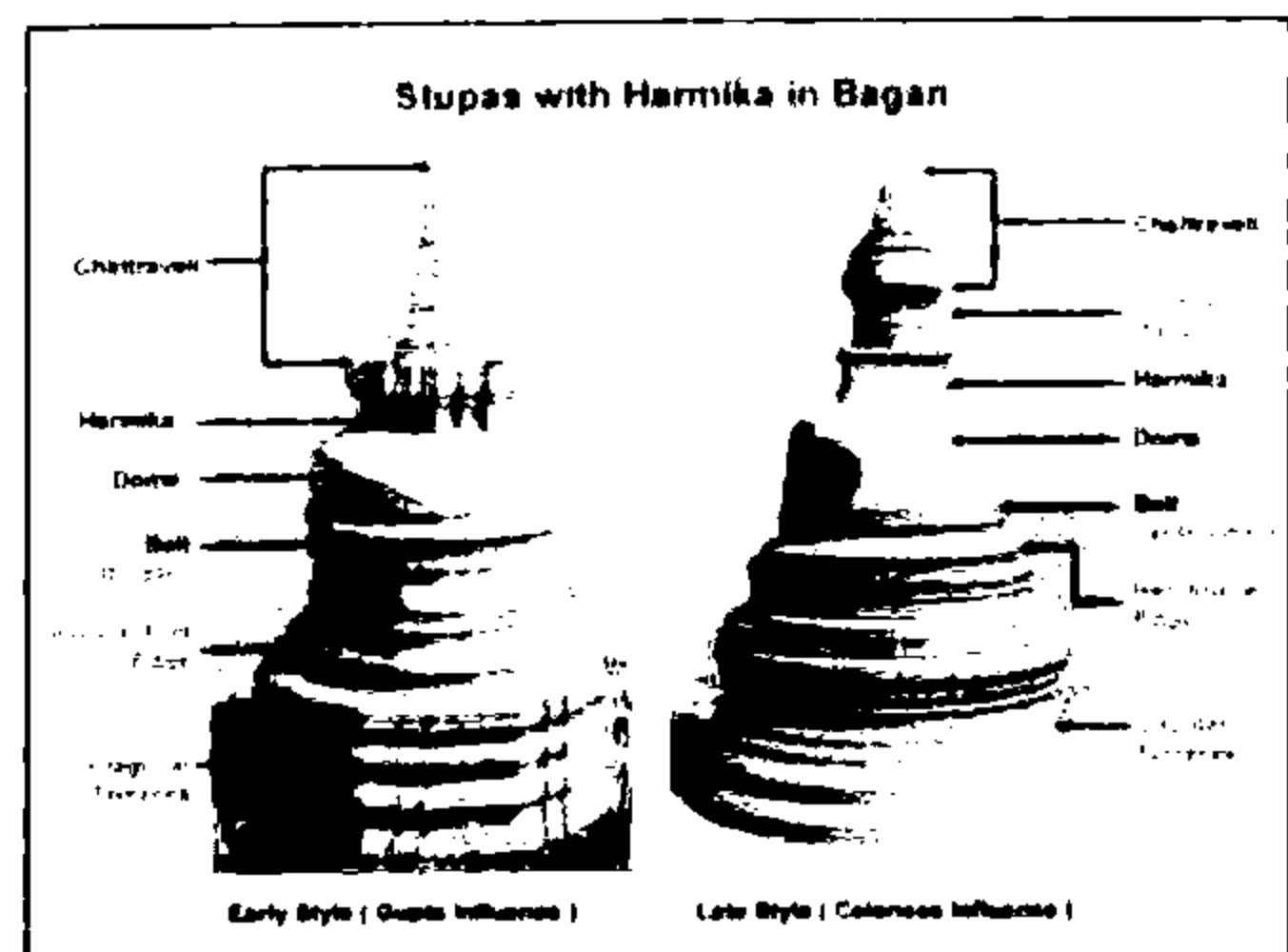
Another popular style in early Bagan was the relic casket type stupas, which has strong Gupta influence. The hemispherical dome, belt, *Harmika* and *Chatravali* are not too much different from the *Gwe Bin TetKon* stupa. Some of these type stupas had deep niche for Buddha image at the belt or at the lowest terrace. The sample can be seen at stupa no.(1733) in *Shwe Nan Yin Taw* complex, Bagan.



There were two types of stupas surmounted by the *Harmika* in *Bagan*. The earlier type, which had strong *Gupta* influence and the later type which had Sri Lanka influence. The *Gupta* type stupas are earlier than the 11th century and the later type is later than the 12th century.

The difference and similarities between the early style and the late style were as follow-

Although we had already got Sri Lanka influence in the early *Pyu* and *Bagan* period, at 12th century we have the second time Sri Lanka influence again brought back by *Ashin Sapada*⁴⁶. All the stupas built in this typical period are called Ceylonese type stupa. The most famous stupa of the ceylonese type was Sapada stupa (No. 187) at NyaungOo

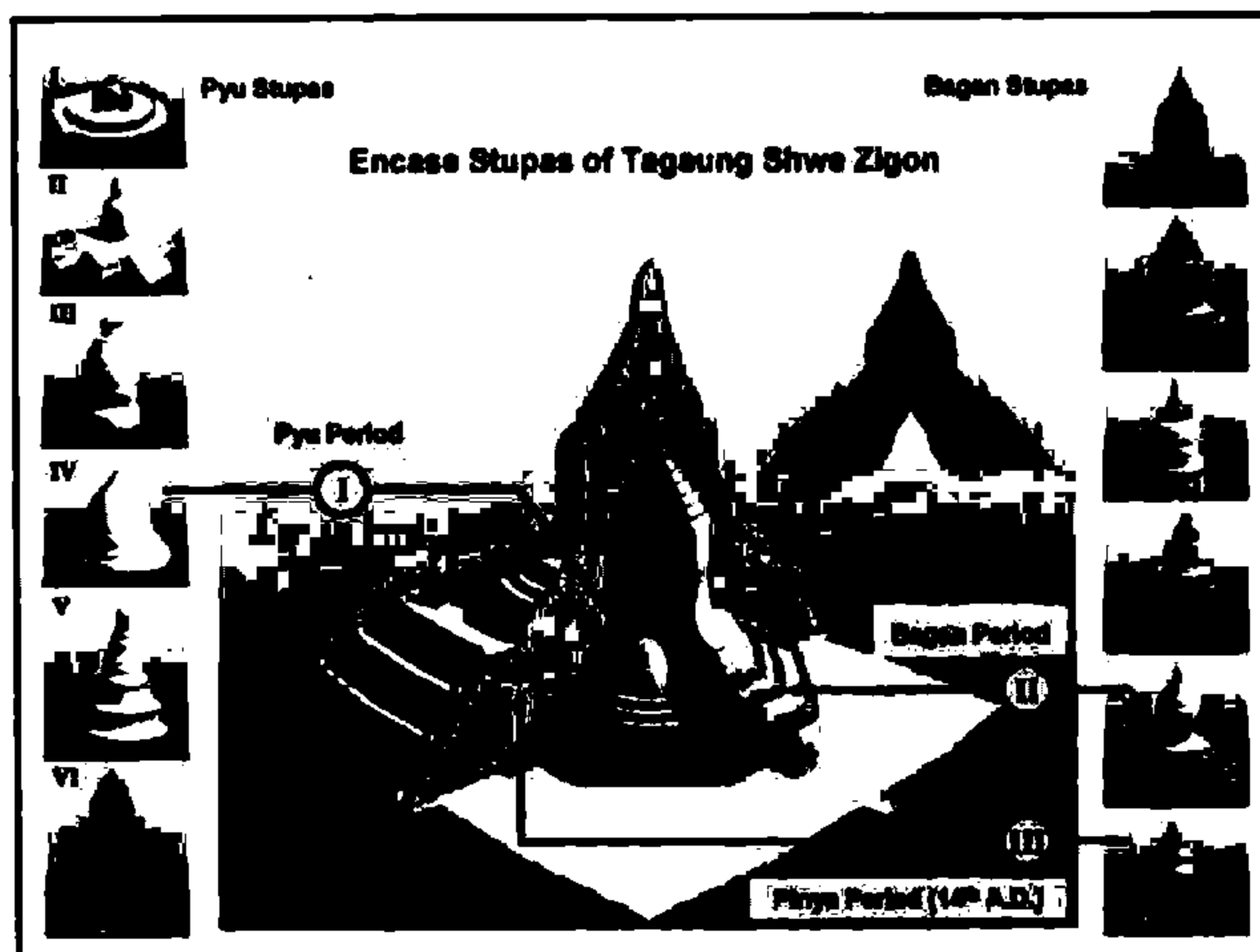


⁴⁶ A monk who had studied the Buddhist literature at Sri Lanka for several years and back to *Bagan* together with four other monks and established a new monastic sect called Sri Lanka Sect.



- (a) Base of the early style is octagonal and base of the late style is circular.
- (b) Dome with vertical ended edge and belt at the middle for early style and dome in the bell shaped edge and belt at the bottom of it for late style.
- (c) Octagonal or multiple cornered shaped Harmika for the early style. Square Harmika and extra cylindrical support on top of it for the later style.
- (d) The height of the dome (Bell) is one-third of the whole height for the early style. The height of the bell is only one-fourth of the whole height for the late style.

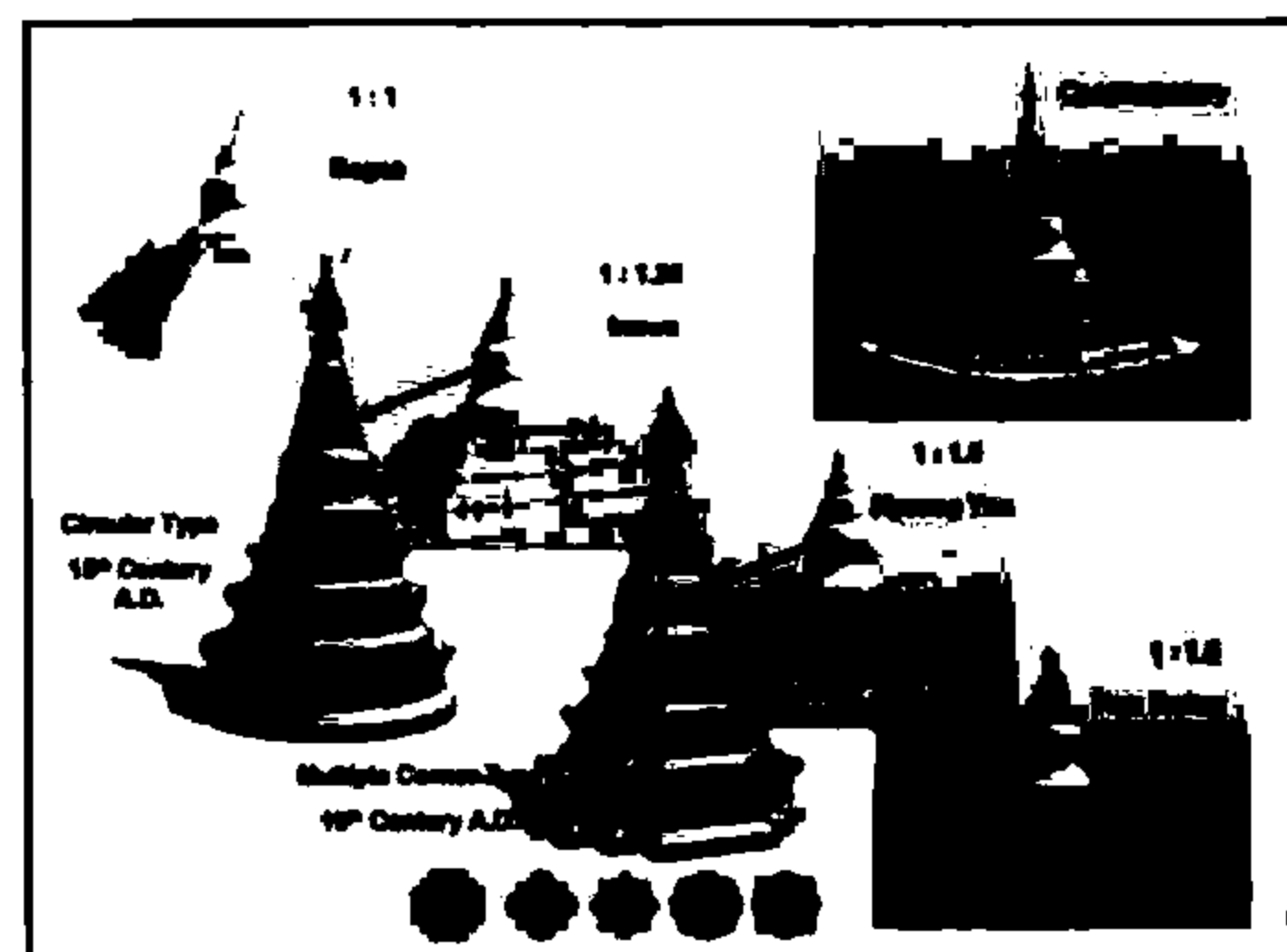
(12) Encased Stupa at Tagaung



The evolution of the stupas in Myanmar from *Pyu* period to *Innwa* period could be clearly seen if we know about the encased stupas from *Tagaung*⁴⁷, called *TagaungZigonGyi*. The most inner stupa was like *Payargyi* stupa from *Sri Khettara*. The most outer stupa was like *ShweZigon* pagoda, but built only at *Pinya* period⁴⁸ (14th century). The middle stupa was exactly like the *Loka Nanda* stupa, build by King *Anawratha*.

(13) Post Bagan Style

The form, proportion and style of *ShweZigon* pagoda was very popular among the Myanmar people and they used the same stupa style up to the end of 19th century and even up to present period. Although the styles of the later stupas are same form and same type of *ShweZigon*, the ratio of the Base and the height was slightly changed. In the early *Bagan*, it was (1:1), then at *Innwa* period, it change to (1:1.25) and after that it completely change to (1:1.5).

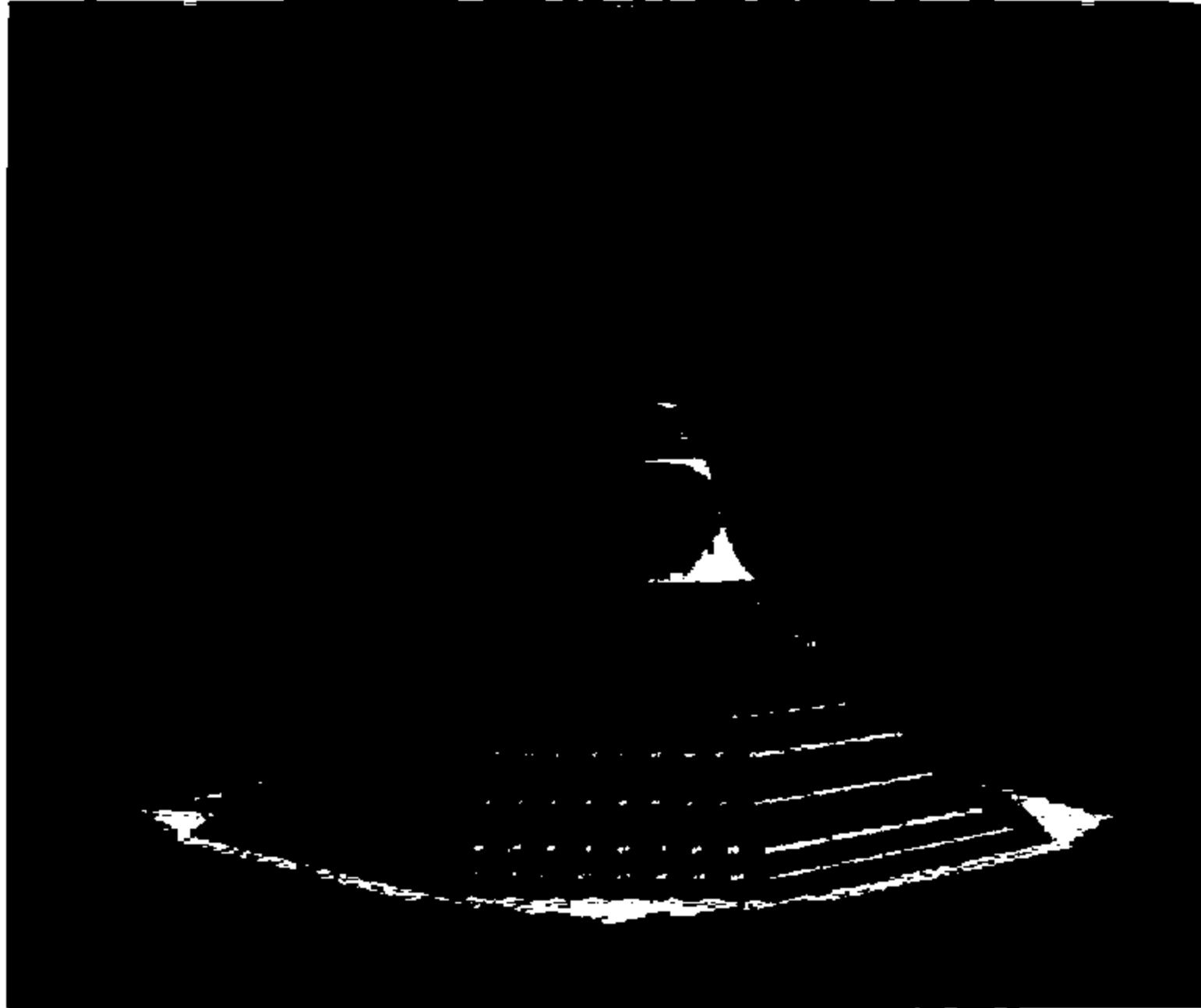


⁴⁷Tagaung was the earliest capital in Myanmar founded by King *AbhiRajar* who came back from *KapilaVastu*, the native place of Lord Buddha, 700 years before the birth of Buddha. Up to 2000 A.D. no evidence earlier than 11th century was found. Now, many burial urns and hand marked bricks, the characters of Pyu culture were found.

⁴⁸*Pinya*period was from 1312 to 1364 A.D., founded by King *Thihathu*.

There were two prominent invented styles of stupas in *Innwa* period. Circular plan from the base to *Chattravali* type in first *Innwa* period⁴⁹ and multiple corner shape⁵⁰ plan from the base to *Chattravali* style in second *Innwaperiod*⁵¹.

(14) The Architectural Style of Shwedagon



Although there were many changes, during the evolution of the architectural components and forms of the stupa, from the early *Myanmar*, after the creating of *ShweSigon* stupa in early *Bagan* period⁵², it was so perfect and so grand, as the new *Bagan* stupa style was still popular with only small changes during the later periods, like *Shwedagon*.

The differences and similarities between *Shwe-Sigon* of *Bagan* and *Shwedagon* of *Yangon* were as follows:

- (a) The first or lowest terrace, in square shape with some shallow extensions outside, had not too much changes.
- (b) The second and third terraces, which were in square shape like the first terrace in *ShweSigon*, were changed to octagonal terraces at *Shwedagon*.
- (c) The fourth and fifth terraces⁵³ were nearly the same as *ShweSigon*, instead of single circular terrace at *ShweSigon*, *Shwedagon* was changed to five circular terraces.
- (d) The bell together with the belt in the middle and garland flower above it was also the same as *ShweSigon*.⁵⁴
- (e) *Chatavali* or the *PhaungYit* in *Myanmar*⁵⁵ were also the same with their two stupas.
- (f) Up turn and down turn lotus and a row of beads from *Shwe Dagon* was with the same shape but increased in height compared to *ShweSigon*.
- (g) The greatest change was at the finial of the stupa under the metal umbrella. At the upper *Myanmar*, the lotus bud at the top was *Kah Ye Thee*⁵⁶ which was in a very

⁴⁹ 1364 to 1526 A.D. called first *Innwaperiod*.

⁵⁰ Normal square has only four rectangular corners while multiple corners shape can be 8, 12, 20 or more rectangular corners.

⁵¹ 1597 to 1751 A.D. called second *Innwaperiod* or *Nyaung Yan* period.

⁵² 11th century A.D

⁵³ the octagonal terrace and circular terrace

⁵⁴ the garland flower of *ShweSigon* was added only at the renovating time of *ShweSigon* by king *BayinNaung* at 16th century A.D.

⁵⁵ tiers of rings

⁵⁶ The fruit of star-flower (Indian medlar, *Mimusopsefengi*)



short form. But at the lower *Myanmar*, especially in *Mon* areas, instead of lotus bud, they set the *Hnetpywhpu*⁵⁷, in a longer form.

- (h) The metal umbrella of *ShweSigon* donated by the king *ThayaWady* was in *Chi Win*⁵⁸ form.⁵⁹ The umbrella of *Shwedagon* donated by the king *MinDon* was in *Ma Gaik*⁶⁰ form.⁶¹
- (i) The height of the bell is roughly one third of the whole height at ShweSigon while the height of the bell is only one-sixth of the whole height at Shwe Dagon.
- (j) The ratio of base and height of the stupas is 1:1 at ShweSigon and 2:3 at Shwe Dagon.



octagonal terraces, the octagonal form of the fourth terrace was simply built by eight straight line, while the octagonal form of the second and third terraces were delicately built of zigzag lines at four corners⁶² it was a very popular form in 16th and 17th centuries of *Nyaungyan* Period.

Four corner stupas of ShweSigon were also changed to the satellite stupas on top of the first square terrace at Shwedagon, while stair cases of ShweSigon had disappeared.



(15) Conclusion

⁵⁷ Banana(plantain) bud

⁵⁸ A ball of yarn taking from a spindle

⁵⁹ The middle parts of the umbrella tiers extend outward

⁶⁰ royal crown

⁶¹ The middle parts of the umbrella tiers extend inward.

⁶² In Myanmar . *KhoNannChoo*

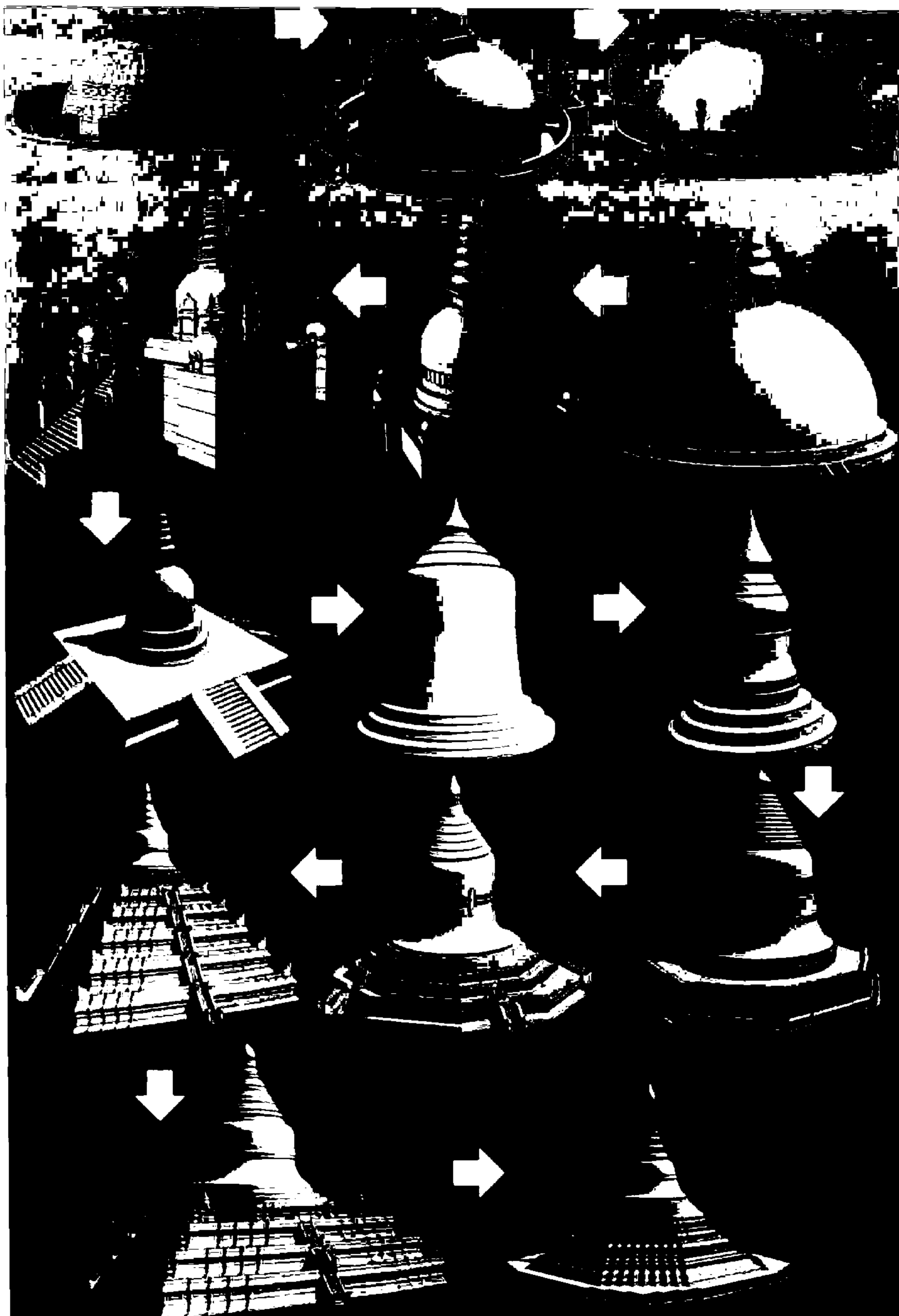


In conclusion, after studying about the ancestral stupas of *Shwedagon*, the evolution can be explained, as follows;

- (a) The hemispherical dome shape stupa like *Sanchi* was the earliest form in *India* during *Mauria* dynasty.
- (b) Although there was a small change at the *Andhra* region like *Amaravati* stupa,, the biggest change happened during the *Kushan* dynasty in *Gandhara*, by setting the dome on top of the drum or circular terraces.
- (c) The dome was changed to a tall cylindrical form and was put on top of the square base during the *Kushan* and *Gupta* periods. It was influenced by the early *Pyu* architecture, in *Sri Ksetra, Myanmar*.
- (d) During *Bagan* period, especially at the time of king *Anaw rata*, a complete bell shape stupa had been created and placed, first on top of the octagonal terrace and again on top of the three square terraces.
- (e) Finally, the *Bagan* style bell shape Stupa's terrace was improved by mixing with some *Mon* influences, which completed the final architectural style of the great golden Stupa of *Shwedagon*.

For upper Myanmar areas, ShweSigon style is common and for lower Myanmar area, Shwe Dagon style is popular and still using these styles up to contemporary period in both areas.





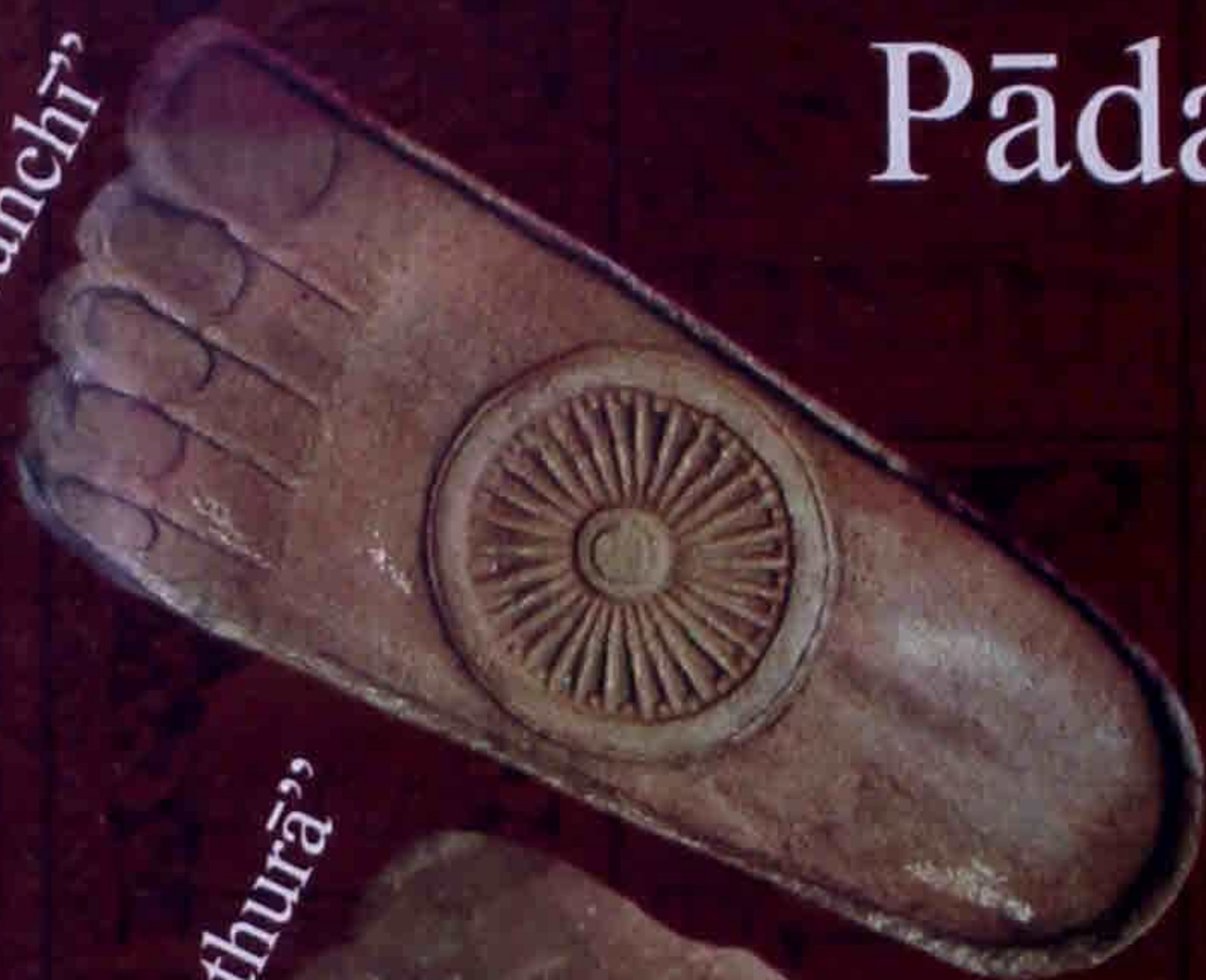
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Pāda Stupas

“Sanchī”



“Mathurā”



“Gandhārā”



“Amaravati”

