



M.A. HISTORY
SEMESTER - III (CBCS)

HISTORY PAPER - I
HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

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MA History, SEM-III

Paper-I, History of Buddhism

Objectives: To study the sources of Buddhism in order to understand life and teachings of Gautam Buddha. To examine the contribution of King Ashoka and other dynasties in the spread of Buddhism and to understand the impact of Buddhism on society.

Module

1.Sources of Buddhism

- (a) Literary and Archaeological Sources
- (b) Life of Gautam Buddha
- (c) Teachings of Buddha- Four Noble Truths, Eight-Fold Path, Law of Dependent Origination(Paticcacc Sammuccapad(a), Sila, Samadhi and Panna

2.Buddhism and its Impact

- (a) Ashokan Inscriptions, Six Buddhist Councils
- (b) Art and Architecture- Stupa,Chaityagruha, Vihara
- (c) Sects in Buddhism, Spread of Buddhism –Srilanka, Myanmar, Thailand, and Japan

3. Political expansion of Buddhism in India

- (a) Role of King Ashoka in spread of Buddhism
- (b) Expansion of Buddhism under Satavahanas
- (c) Kanishka and Harshavardhana

4.Places associated with Buddhism

- (a) Lumbini, Kushinagar and Kapilvastu
- (b) Sarnath , Bodhgaya and Shravasti
- (c) Buddhist Universities in India

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LITERARY SOURCES

Unit Structure:

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Survey of Important Books in Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit
- 1.3 Canonical Pāli Literature – Tipitaka
- 1.4 Non-Canonical Pāli Literature
- 1.5 Buddhist Sanskrit Literature
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Unit End Questions
- 1.8 Additional Reading

1.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To study the literature as the source of Buddhism.
- To be able to correspond the literature to the other sources of history of Buddhism.
- To check the authenticity of the Literary sources vis-à-vis archaeological sources.
- To understand the relevance of the literary sources and the translation of the texts.

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

As far as our present knowledge goes, we find that the main stock of systematized Buddhist literature, in the original or in translation, is contained mainly in Pali, Sanskrit (pure or mixed), Tibetan and Chinese, although the Buddhist texts were also translated into the language of the countries to which Buddhism spread.

In the treasure-house of Buddhist literature, the Pali Tipitaka represents the earliest available and most complete collection of Buddhist sacred literature. It is preserved in three systematic collections: (1) the Vinaya-pitaka, or the Book of Discipline, (2) the Sutta-pitaka, the popular book of discourses, and (3) the Abhidhamma-pitaka, the collection of books on abstruse philosophy based on psychological ethics. The names of various books in these three Pitaka and their mutual relation can be understood from the table on the next page.

Besides this canonical literature in Pali, there is also the non-canonical literature, consisting of the *Milinda-panha*, the *Netti-pakarana*, Buddhagotta's Manuals on Vinaya and Abhidhamma, commentaries on the Pali Tipitaka texts, including the Jatakas, written by or ascribed to Buddhaghosa or Dhammapala, Chronicles of Ceylon like the *Dipavamsa*, the *Mahavamsa*, and the *Culavamsa* and later works in Pali modelled on classical Sanskrit poetry. Among the works of grammar, those of Kaccayana and Moggallana, the *Rupasiddhi* and the *Saddaniti* are also well known. Buddhaghosa's masterly original work, the *Visuddhimagga*, is veritably a small cyclopaedia on early Buddhism.

Unfortunately, we have at present no complete canon of Buddhist books preserved in Sanskrit, as in Pali. It appears, however, that the Sarvastivada school did possess the Agamas corresponding to the Pali Nikaya and seven books of Abhidharma corresponding to the seven books of the Pali Abhidhamma. The Mulasarvastivadins possessed a Vinayapitaka and large sections of this preserved in the Gilgit Manuscripts have now been published. These texts reveal in several places a remarkable divergence from the corresponding Pali texts, though they have some resemblance in general.

In Sanskrit, pure or mixed, therefore, we find several independent texts or fragments of texts which are of a varied nature and belong to different schools of both the Hinayana and the Mahayana type. The *Mahavastu* is claimed to be a book on Vinaya belonging to the Lokottaravadins of the Mahasaiighikas but its subject matter is so varied that we find in its sutras corresponding to some in the *Digha*, the *Majjhima*, and the *Suttanipata* as well as stories which correspond to some in the Pali Jatakas. The *Lalitavistara*, an incomplete biographical account of the Buddha in mixed Sanskrit, is considered to be a text of the unorthodox (Mahayana) school and forms part of the *Vaipulya-sutra*. Ashvaghosais known for his *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* and Aryasura for his *Jataka-mala*, a Sanskrit text, though far more polished, corresponding to the Pali *Cariya-pitaka*. There is also a vast Avadana literature, corresponding to the Pali *Apadanas*, containing stories intended to explain the good or bad effects of good or bad karma.

Among the Mahayanist sutras, nine texts or dharmas are regarded as the most important, of which special mention might be made of the *Astasahasrika-prajnaparamita*, the *Saddharma-pundarika*, the *Lalitavistara*, the *Lankavatara*, the *Suvarna-prabhasa*, the *Gandavyuha*, the *Tathagata-guhyaka*, the *Samadhiraja* and the *Dasabhumisvara*. These are called the *Vaipulya sutras*. Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu and Asanga are the authors of the philosophical works of this school, and we shall have occasion to refer to them elsewhere. In Tibet, too there is a large collection of translations of Indian Buddhist texts numbering more than 4,566. These are divided into two groups, namely, *Bkahlgyur*, popularly called the *Kanjur*, consisting of 1,108 texts, and *Bstan-hgyur*, popularly called the *Tanjur*, consisting of 3,458 texts.

The Kanjur is divided into the following seven parts:

Literary Sources

- (1) Vinaya
- (2) Prajna-paramita,
- (3) Buddhavatamsaka,
- (4) Ratnakuta,
- (5) Sutra,
- (6) Nirvana, and
- (7) Tantra, while the Tanjur is divided into
 - (1) Tantra, and
 - (2) Sutra.

There exists a large number of translations from Indian texts into the Chinese language. In his Catalogue, Bunyiu Nanjio records as many as 1,662, which are classified into four divisions: (I) Sutra-pitaka, (2) Vinaya-pitaka, (3) Abhidharma-pitaka. and (4) Miscellaneous.

Hobogirin, a still later catalogue, mentions as many as 2,184 texts printed in fifty-five volumes of the Taisho edition. In another 25 volumes, there are supplementary texts, written in China and Japan. In Japan there are three complete translations of the Chinese Tripitaka. including the supplementary 25 volumes in the Taisho edition of the Tripitaka. In the Manchurian language also there is a translation of the same, and in Mongolian, a translation of the Tibetan Tanjur. The intention here is to survey some important books in Pali and Buddhist Sanskrit only.

1.2 SURVEY OF IMPORTANT BOOKS IN PALI AND BUDDHIST SANSKRIT:

There was at one time a vast Buddhist literature in Pali, the Prakrit, mixed Sanskrit and pure Sanskrit. It is, indeed, ironical that not a single Buddhist work, with the exception of the Manjusrimulakalpa, has been found within the borders of India. The main reasons for such a complete disappearance of Buddhist literature from India are (i) that its study was confined to the ordained monks and novices resident in the monasteries, (ii) that the literature, which was mostly religious, was preserved in manuscript in the libraries or the cells of the monasteries and never kept in the houses of laymen, and (iii) that with the decay or destruction of the monasteries, whether by the passage of time or through desecration and vandalism, these manuscripts were destroyed. The Buddhist literature that we study today has come to us from monasteries outside India, in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Nepal, and in translations from Tibet, China and Mongolia. An idea of the vastness of the literature can be formed from the works mentioned in the Chinese and Tibetan Catalogues. A remarkable addition to our knowledge of Buddhist literature has been made by the discoveries

of manuscripts in Central Asia and Gilgit as well as by the manuscripts photographed in Tibet by Rahul Sankrityayan and collected by Prof. G. Tucci. The original Sanskrit manuscripts, found in Central Asia, Gilgit and Tibet, belonging mostly to the fifth or sixth century A.D. or to an earlier period, were preserved in Central Asia and Gilgit in stone chambers built under the stupas or monasteries, and in temples in Tibet where they were meant to be worshipped only and not studied. These discoveries have thrown a flood of light on the development of Buddhist literature and the languages in which it was written, particularly on some extinct Central Asian dialects into which some of the texts were translated.

Buddhist literature may be divided broadly into two sections: the Hinayana (in Pali and mixed Sanskrit) and the Mahayana (in mixed and pure Sanskrit). It can be further sub-divided into literatures of different sects of both the Hinayana and the Mahayana schools.

1.3 CANONICAL PĀLI LITERATURE – TIPITAKA

Survey of Tipitaka: Pāli Literary development can be divided into the following periods, Viz.,

1. The Canonical literature: Contemporary with the Buddha;
2. The Commentarial literature: 5th century CE;
3. The Sub-commentarial literature: 12th century CE.

The canonical literature consists of three Pitaka (Tipitaka) viz., Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka. A break up of these Pitaka is as follows:

1. VINAYA PITAKA

VINAYA PITAKA (CODE OF DISCIPLINE): Vinaya literally means guidance and contains the rules of monastic discipline. The five books of Vinaya Pitaka are arranged according to subject-matter into these three parts:

1. Vibhanga – Parajika and Pacittiya;
2. Khandaka – Mahavagga and Culavagga;
3. Parivara.

Vibhanga gives an elaborate explanation of all the rules laid down by the Buddha for Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis. These rules, 227 for Bhikkhus and 311 for Bhikkhunis, are contained in the Patimokkha ‘Code Book’.

Patimokkha: The bhikkhunis have more Patimokkha rules in keeping with feminine circumstances. Literally, it means that which ‘delivers’ (mokkha) one from blame or impurity. It is divided into eight sections, viz., Parajika, Sanghadisesa, Aniyata, Nissaggiya Pacittiya, Pacittiya, Patidesaniya, Sekhiya and Adhikaranadhamma, these are formulated according to the

gravity of the offenses, so as to shield a monk or nun from conduct not commensurate with holy life. These rules, therefore, reflect the nature of transgressions and their remedies.

Patimokkha is recited twice a month on full moon and new moon days, known as Uposatha observance, in which all the resident monks and nuns of a given area (separately) gather in a special Chapter House called *Sima*. Before reciting the Patimokkha, the fully ordained monastics mutually perform the act of confession of transgressions, if any. At the end of each section of the recital, the reciter asks the assembly whether it is blameless in respect thereof. If any member remembers an offence, he/She had committed and had forgotten to make a clean breast of it earlier, then the member has to confess and receive absolution, that is, a formal release from offence. The completion of the recitation, therefore, is an indication that all those participating are blameless and pure.

1. Historical analysis (Vibhanga): In the Vibhanga, consisting of Parajika Pāli and Pacittiya Pāli, the *bhikkhu* and *bhikkhuni* Patimokkha rules are treated analytically and in detail: At first an historical account is given, as to how a rule came to be framed. After laying down a rule, the Buddha gives an exhortation, which ends with “*Netamappasannanamvapasadaya, pasannanamvabhiyyobhavaya* –This (offence) does not lead to the rousing of conviction in those who are not convinced, nor to the further growth of conviction in those who are already convinced”. That is to say the *bhikkhu*’s or *bhikkhuni*’s conduct should not only bring about self-purification, but it should also inspire others to lead the pure life.

After a rule is laid down by the Buddha, it is followed by a word for word commentary. If a situation requires a rule to be modified the Buddha amends the – rule, which is again explained in detail.

2. The Khandhakas: The second part of the Vinaya, consist of the two books, Mahavagga and Culavagga. These deal with all such Sangha matters which have not been dealt with in the rules of the Patimokkha. From the view-point of history, Khandaka contain very valuable materials which throw a flood of light on various aspects of contemporary Indian life.

There is the inspiring account of how the Buddha attained Supreme Enlightenment, how he embarked upon his compassionate mission of spreading the Dhamma ‘For the welfare and happiness of the many-*bahujanahitaya, bahujanasukhaya*’, and how he established the Holy Order of *Bhikkhus* to serve as a ‘Living example’ of the truth he preached. The Sangha also ensures the continuity of the Buddha’s dispensation by passing on the Teaching from generation to generation of teachers (*Acariya Parampara*).

Khandhaka also provide the stimulating stories of the Buddha’s famous disciples, like the venerables Sariputta, Moggallana, MahaKassapa, Ananda, Upali, Angulimala etc., lay devotees, like the kings Bimbisara, Pasenandi, Ajatasattu etc., and philanthropists like Anathapindika,

Upasika Visakha, Jivaka the physician and many others. People drawn from all walks of life – royalties, nobles, leaders of the various sections of the society, and the humblest of common folks sought refuge in the Buddha. By embracing his Teachings, they brought about a change in the society that was unheard of before.

The Khandhaka also contain some of Buddha's most famous and important discourses, such as the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, Anattalakkhana Sutta, Aditta Pariyaya Sutta and so on. Again, the Khandhaka contain most important text, called the Kammavaca. These are 'Official Acts' which govern the procedures of all institutional functions, known as Sanghakamma. These acts relate to admission into the order, suspension of expulsion from or rehabilitation into the Order, ecclesiastical jurisprudence, Sangha properties, such as monasteries and things, needed in a monastery, spending of the Rain's Retreat (vassavasa), confessions, punishments to offenders and so on.

There are altogether 22 Khandhaka which deal with all matters connected with the members of the Holy Order, including the requisites of clothing, food, dwelling, medicaments, etc., The last two khandhaka give a lucid account of the first and second great councils.

3. The Parivara Pali: The third part of the Vinaya, the Parivara Pāli is a kind of manual. Compiled in the form of questions and answers (catechism), it enables one to make a thorough analytical study of the Vinaya Pitaka. All the rules, official acts, and other matters of the Vinaya, are subject to a searching analysis and placed under separate themes.

Besides, it contains various lists to assist one's memory. There are 21 chapters dealing with a particular list of the lineage of the teachers (acariyaparampara) -34 in number from the Buddha's time down to several centuries i.e. till the Fourth Sangayana which committed to writing the sacred Tipitaka. Parivara is called the key since it makes Vinaya explicit.

Briefly, the rules of the Order fall into two categories; rules governing the spiritual life of the *bhikkhu* or *bhikkhuni*, and rules governing the affairs of the Order. The *Bhikkhu*-rules are again twofold – those that have a spiritual basis, i.e., which lead to his spiritual edification, and those that have a conventional basis, i.e., good manners, behavior and customs which help maintain a good human relationship.

The rules of the Order are based on the highest of democratic principles. Nothing is done or owned individually; it is the Sangha which owns properties and promulgates a given code of conduct. In the matter of jurisprudence unless an offence is accepted by the accused or is proved beyond doubt, the accused has absolute protection of the Sangha.

As a historical document Vinaya is a mine of varied information on contemporary social, political and economic systems, on commerce, taxation, law, agriculture, medicine, educational institutions, religious sects and so forth.

Decentralised Sangha: The Buddhist monastic order, particularly the Theravada Sangha, is a completely decentralized body, and a self-sufficient community, so formed as to provide the right environment for spiritual development. Its rules are so framed as to free the *bhikkhu/bhikkhuni* of all encumbrances, both subjective and objective. The so-called sects among Theravada Buddhists are decidedly the product of this spirit of decentralization, holding aloft the charter of individual liberty.

After all, the very purpose of leading the *bhikkhu* life is to gain Liberation which can be achieved only in an atmosphere of personal responsibility and freedom. Hence the Vinaya rules, instead of tying the *bhikkhu* down to any rigid pattern, provide him with maximum inner freedom, since these are entirely self-imposed. Since there is no difference of view among the Theravada sects as far as the basic Teachings of the Buddha are concerned, these sects are, therefore, wholly organizational set-ups and never doctrinal.

2. SUTTA PITAKA

The Sutta Pitaka is the mainspring of Buddhist thought, being the repository of the original discourses of the Buddha. It is divided into five main divisions called Nikayas which are collated according to the particular size. Style and arrangement of the suttas.

1. DIGHA NIKAYA: The collection of lengthy discourses.
2. MAJJHIMA NIKAYA: The collection of medium –length discourses.
3. SAMYUTTA NIKAYA: The collection of (subject-wise) Connected discourses,
4. ANGUTTARA NIKAYA: The collection of numerically arranged discourses.
5. KHUDDAKA NIKAYA: The collection of Compact expositions in the form of separate treatises. Here the entire Buddhist view of life has been discussed in an objective and dignified way.

The famous orientalist Dr. Rhys Davids says: “The suttas are distinguished in the depth of philosophy, in the method of Socratic questioning, in the earnest and elevated tone of the whole, in the evidence they afford of the most out-turned thought of the day.” The Sutta Pitaka also contains the discourses of the Master’s principal disciple’s such as, the Venerable Sariputta, Maha Moggallana, Maha Kassapa, Maha Kaccana, and others.

A sutta literally means ‘thread’. It is so called since it leads one to a larger content of meaning not expressed in so many words. Thus every sutta has two contents—the vohara, conventional content and paramattha, the ultimate content, which makes the suttas accessible to people at all levels of development, i.e., from the ordinary folk to the most learned scholar.

Another characteristic feature of the suttas is that they are liberally sprinkled with simple, yet telling, illustrations and homely stories. To drive home a profound truth, the Master uses familiar similes, such as, the bullock cart, seed, agricultural operations, or the irrigation ditch and so on for the edification of the simple, rural folks.

Likewise, to tame an arrogant scholar, like the Brahmin Bharadvaja, he often used a telling analogy illustrated by personal example. Bharadvaja, a learned scholar of the Vedas, scoffed at the idea of Gotama, a *Khattiya*, becoming a religious teacher, which, according to him, was the prerogative of the Brahmin, however vile he may be. He was further roused by some of Buddha's unorthodox teachings. And his wrath broke all barriers when his wife became an ardent devotee of the master.

Once, when the Buddha was preaching, he tore through the large crowd and, facing the Master, started hurling filthy abuses at him until he was tired. In his unbounded compassion, the Buddha gently put to him this question: "Suppose, Brahmin, a friend of relative was to visit your house and you were to offer him a plateful of sweets, and he was to decline it. To whom would that plateful of sweets return?" "Ofcourse to me; it is mine, and it comes back to me," he replied rudely. "Likewise, good brahmin, I decline to accept all that you said."

The moral went right into his heart and illumined his whole being, like a flash of lightning piercing and illuminating the dark sky. As the insight dawned on him that his actions recoiled on him with greater force, and having failed to affect one who refused to be offended, he fell at the feet of the Lord and requested the Buddha to admit him into the Sangha. No learned philosophical disquisition could have wrought in Bharadvaja so profound a change as this simple illustration did.

Further, the Sutta Pitaka is also an excellent document on the contemporary cultural history of India. One finds graphic accounts of various conditions- social, cultural, religious, political etc., of the time. For instance, once the King Ajatasattu bluntly asked the Buddha as to what tangible benefits could one gain through the religious life, as one would from one's occupation then he enumerated a great many of the existing occupations when the Buddha convinced him of the benefits of true spiritual life, this blood thirsty despot became an ardent devotee of the Master.

As to the form, the sutta begins with a historical account of how, where and under what conditions a discourse was given. Then follows the main body of the sutta which ends with an expression of appreciation from the audience.

1. Digha Nikaya: This work contains 34 lengthy suttas, some of which could fill a book. This is particularly true of these three suttas: 1. The *Mahaparinibbana sutta* which presents a moving narration of the master's last days together with many of his important teachings. 2. *Mahasatipatthana sutta*, which constitutes the quintessence of his unique method of spiritual training by converting every experience into a

meditative, which is also known as Householders Book of ethics, (*Gihi Vinaya*).

Literary Sources

2. Majjhima Nikaya: This work contains one hundred fifty-two middle-length suttas of rare beauty, both in content and language. All the fundamental teachings, such as, Dependent origination, (*Paticca Samuppada*), the law of *kamma* and Rebirth, the four Noble Truths, (*Ariya Saccani*) and the Noble Eightfold Path, (*Ariya Atthangika Magga*), have been lucidly expounded in this work. Of the fifteen chapters, one entitled *Opammavagga* is devoted to exposition by way of illustration, and another to the householders, *Gahapativagga*.

3. Samyutta Nikaya: This work contains seven hundred sixty-two (7762) suttas of varied length, generally short, arranged in a special order according to subject-matter. Thus, there are fifty-six connected subjects (*samyutta*) arranged in five divisions, e.g., on Enlightenment factor (*Bojjhanga Samyutta*), mental defilements (*Kilesa Samyutta*), mental powers (*Bala Samyutta*), etc. Some *samyuttas* are named after principal enlightened disciples, (*Arahats*), such as, the Venerables Sariputta, Kassapa, and Anuruddha etc. *Devata Samyutta*, deals with gods like Brahma, Sakka or Indra, who are ardent followers of the Buddha.

4. Anguttara Nikaya: This work contains nine thousand five hundred fifty-seven (9557) short suttas which are numerically arranged into eleven sections known as *Nipatas*. For instance, the first *Nipata* deals with subjects having a single aspect or view-point; likewise, the subject-matter of the second *Nipata* has two view-points; the third has three view-points, and so on, till the eleventh *Nipata*, in which all such matters that can be viewed in eleven different ways. Thus, this work presents the Dhamma arranged numerically. In the whole of the Sutta Pitaka, Anguttara Nikaya is considered to be an important source-book on Buddhist psychology and ethics. The Anguttara contains a unique chapter entitled *Etadaggavagga* wherein the Buddha enumerated the names of those enlightened disciples (*bhikkhu-bhikkhuni-upasaka-upasika*) who had achieved pre-eminence in a certain field of spiritual attainment. For example, while the Venerable Sariputta was pre-eminent in Intuitive Wisdom (*Panna*); the Venerable Moggallana was pre-eminent in Supernormal powers (*Abhinna*); the Venerable Uppalavanna was pre-eminent among nuns in *Panna*, and the Venerable Khema in *Abhinna*; the upasaka Anathapindika and the upasika Visakha were pre-eminent in act of generosity (*Dana*), and so on.

5. Khuddaka Nikaya: Khuddaka Nikaya is a collected of 18 independent treatises of great merit. These are:-

1. Khuddaka Patha (Compact Handbook).
2. Dhammapada (Path of wisdom).
3. Udana (Solemn Utterances).
4. Itivuttaka (Inspired Sayings, lit. Thus, was said by the Buddha).
5. Sutta Nipata (Treatise of important discourses).
6. Vimanavatthu (Lit. Divine Mansions, Accounts of divinities).
7. Petavatthu (Stories of departed ones of spirits).

8. Theragatha (Inspired verses of the elder monks)
9. Therigatha (Inspired verses of the elder nuns).
10. Jataka (Stories of Buddha's past lives).
11. Niddesa (Exposition).
12. PatisambhidaMagga (Analytical way).
13. Apadana (Biographical Treatises).
14. Buddhavamsa (Chronicle of Buddhas).
15. Cariyapitaka (Buddha Gotama's past life)

1. Khuddaka Patha: It is an anthology used as a manual for under-training monks. It contains some very important texts, e.g. the catechetic section called Kumara Panha. The young novice, Kumara Kassapa, already an Arahant at the age of seven, was asked by the Buddha ten questions of fundamental spiritual importance. He answered all the questions with consummate skill and clarity which only an enlightened disciple can do. He received his higher ordination (upasampada) at that tender age as a special case. Normally nobody can be ordained a *bhikkhu* before the age of twenty. The Questions were put in a numerical order; e.g. what is the One? What are the two three etc., upto the tenth? The answers being 'Nutriment' that sustains life of beings, i.e., the one factor that sustains life is Nutriment, both material and mental. Similarly, the two factors to which all phenomena of existence could be reduced, are Mind and Matter (*Nama-rupa*, lit. Mentality and Materiality). Answer to the tenth being. 'The ten super-mundane attainments of an Arahant- a Perfected disciple of the Buddha, constitute the ultimate state of spiritual perfection. That means, there is nothing higher than the spiritual attainments of a Perfect One.

2. Dhammapada: It is a famous world classic which epitomizes the entire teaching of the Buddha in four hundred twenty-three gathas (verses). Culled from different works of Tipitaka each verse is a rare gem sparkling with practical wisdom. The Dhammapada has been translated and re-translated into virtually all the import languages of the world.

The first gatha of this inspiring anthology is about the Mind. It underlines the importance of mind because one's samsaric bondage or nibbanic freedom i.e., one's misery or happiness now and one's destiny in future, entirely depend on the working of one's mind. Buddhists do not depend on any external power for spiritual liberation. On the contrary, they rely entirely on the transforming power of their own minds. The Buddha said:

Manopubbangamadhamma, manosetthamanomaya;

manasacepadutthenabhasativakarotiva,

tatonamdukkhamanveticakkam'vavahatopadam.

Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with an impure mind a person speaks or acts, suffering follows him like the cart-wheel that follows the foot of the ox.

manasacepasannenabhasativakarotiva,

tatonamsukhamanvetichayavaanapayini.

Mind precedes all mental states. Mind is their chief; they are all mind-wrought. If with pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never departing shadow.

These first two gathas of the Dhammapada spell out what really matters in life- it is the good or bad mind, and the good or bad action arising there from. So, for a spiritual seeker, what matters is focusing oneself to the purification and development of the mind. In the fifth gatha, the Lord Buddha similarly teaches another eternal law, concerned with life, both at the individual and at the collective levels.

“By hatred one can never appease hatred”. it will only persist and prolong suffering.

Contrarily, non-hatred, meaning good-will and amity as well as the spirit of patience and forbearance, all combined, is the panacea for the deadly affliction created by hatred. This is a verifiable reality throughout the world and throughout the world and through millennia. Whenever human beings have engaged in mutual hatred, revenge and hostility, civilization itself, created by so much of noble human values and actions, got wiped out. Both parties destroyed each other. Thus the eternal law is –“Good will alone triumphs over ill-will.” Buddhists are therefore enjoined to practice good-will and universal love, under all circumstances, in keeping with this eternal law, viz:

Na hi verena verani, sammantidhakudacanam,

averena ca sammanti, esadhammosanantano.

Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world. By non-hatred alone is hatred appeased. This is a Law Eternal.

The Buddha succinctly summarized his teachings in the Dhammapada gatha No. 183. “Avoid all evil, cultivate the good, and cleanse the mind- This is the Teaching of the Buddhas.”

Spiritual life need not become loaded with all kinds of complicated theological dogmas and philosophical theories. Unfortunately, religions, as organized institutions, throughout the world, and at all times, tended to be loaded with emotional or intellectual assertions and doctrines, demanding from the adherents unquestioned acceptance or blind faith.

Spiritual progress is possible only when the mind is exposed to the sunshine of virtue, mental purity and wisdom. These three spiritual excellences ultimately stand for spiritual development and freedom. Virtue needs to be cultivated, deliberately, through rightly understanding the nature of moral principles.

Likewise inner purity needs to be developed, consciously, thorough the practice of meditative concentration, leading to purification and tranquility of mind.

Similarly, wisdom needs to be cultivated by assiduous practice of insight meditation aimed at development of intuitive wisdom. For wisdom alone is capable of penetrating into the realities of one's own life, of the world in which one lives, and of the Beyond, namely, spiritual freedom, Nibbana. Hence the Buddha's enunciation:

***Sabbapapassa akaranam, kusalassa upasampada,
sacittapariyodapanam, etam Buddhanaśasanam.***

To avoid all evil, to cultivate the good, and to cleanse one's mind- this is the teaching of the Buddhas.

3. Udana: This work contains the 'Ecstatic Utterances' of the Buddha. Udanas are outpourings or inspired sayings of sheer bliss. It is mostly in verse form inspired by a particularly intense emotion. It is collection of 80 joyful utterances made by the Buddha on unique occasions of sheer bliss.

4. Itivuttaka: It contains 112 suttas divided into four nipatas with verses and prose mixed. The peculiarity is each passage is preceded by the phrase: "Itivuttam Bhagavata – It was said thus by the Buddha," it is called Itivuttaka. The division into nipatas instead of vaggas denotes that the collection is classified in ascending numerical order.

5. Sutta Nipata: In an archaic style of mixed prose and verse, it is a work of great philosophical and literary merit, and one of the most inspiring in the whole of the Tipitaka. The language of this work resembles that of the Chandas. The language style and its contents all indicate it to be one of the oldest books of Pāli canon. For understanding primitive Buddhism, it is of great use. We get the picture not of monasteries but of the life of hermits in the first stage. On the Bhabru Edict of Ashoka out of seven discourses mentioned three belongs to suttanipata only.

6. Vimanavatthu: This book contains vivid accounts of the lives of the devas in various heavenly abodes (vimana), and of the deeds that enabled them to gain access into these wonderful domains.

According to Buddhism, gods (devas) are not immortal, nor are they creators, or saviors of other beings. But they are spiritually more evolved beings in various divine realms, which too are subject to the law of kamma and Rebirth and have to achieve the deathless state of Nibbana. And there are many gods who have already attained Nibbana.

7. Petavatthu: This book contains graphic accounts of the miserable states of the spirit world and of the evil deeds that lead to one of these states. A certain and immediate release from such miseries can be given to them if former relatives perform meritorious deeds and share their merits with them.

8. Theragatha: This book contains some of the finest pieces of poetry embodying the ecstatic sayings of the finest pieces of poetry embodying the ecstatic sayings of the Arahats, enlightened disciples of the Buddha.

9. Therigatha: Analogous to Theragatha, this work contains the inspired utterances of Arahats, enlightened nuns.

10. Jataka: this is a book of 550 stories of the Buddha's previous lives when he was the bodhisatta, engaged in training himself to become a Buddha. In these stories are embedded moral principles and practices which Bodhisatta had observed for self-development and perfection to attain Buddhahood. The ten virtues to be developed are dāna, sila, nekkhama, panna, viriya, khanti, sacca, aditthana, metta and upekkha.

11. Niddesa: Divided into two books, Mahaniddesa and Culaniddesa, this work is a commentary by Venerable Sariputta on some important suttas from Suttanipata.

12. PatisambhidaMagga: Entitled "The Path of Analysis," this is another work of Venerable Sariputta analytically dealing with the salient teachings of the Buddha in the style of the Abhidhamma.

13. Apadana: It is a biographical work containing the life-stories (past and present) of various Arahats and Theris. This gives a short historical account of Gotama Buddha and of the former twenty-four Buddhas who had prophesied his attainment of Buddhahood.

14. Budddhavamsa: This contains the biography, in verse, of Gotama Buddha and of the 23 previous Buddhas prior to him.

15. Cariyapitaka: This contains 35 Jatakas illustrating the Buddha's fulfillment of the ten Paramis (three times over), which determines the attainment of Sambodhi, Supreme Enlightenment.

3. ABHIDHAMMA PITAKA

AbhidhammaPitaka: While the Sutta Pitaka treats the Dhamma in conventional (*Vohara sacca*) terms, the AbhidhammaPitaka treats it entirely in terms of ultimate reality (*Paramattha sacca*). It resolves all phenomena into their ultimate contents (sarupa) analytically and then aims at synthesis by finding the relations (paccaya) between the various concomitant factors. The language of the Abhidhamma is purely objective and impersonal, hence truly scientific. It contains no such words as 'I', 'We', 'He', 'She', 'Man', 'Tree', 'Cow', 'Mountain', 'God', etc, which are just conventional names given to an object.

Here everything is expressed in terms of Khandha- five groups or aggregates of existence, *Ayatana* five sensory organs and mind and their respective objects, *Dhatu*-eighteen elements, *Indriya*- twenty-two faculties, *Sacca*- the four Noble truths. All relative concepts, such as, man, tree, etc., are reduced to their ultimate contents, such as, Khandha, *Ayatana* etc., and viewed as an impersonal psycho-physical process which

is Anicca (impermanent, changeful) Dukkha (unsatisfactory) and Anatta (without a permanent core, e.g. ego or atma, i.e., unsubstantial or non-self).

The purpose of this analytical approach is to get rid of egocentricity or selfhood which hinders spiritual progress and is the root- cause of bondage in samsara. Abhidhamma can be called the ‘Science of mind’ in a real sense, i.e. more than modern psychology.

The most Venerable Acariya Buddhaghosa describes Abhidhamma as Uccatara (higher) or Visesa (special) dhamma (teachings) of the Buddha. That is to say, a system of appraisal purely from the Buddhist psychological and philosophical stand-points.

This special higher teaching was first expounded by the Buddha at Tavatimsa (Sakka, the divine ruler’s, heavenly realm) to his mother who was reborn as a god. This exposition was in the 7th year of his ministry during the 3 months’ Rain’s–Retreat. After teaching the devas, the Master repeated the teaching verbatim to Venerable Sariputta, who in turn taught five hundred Arahats, who memorized the Abhidhamma and passed it on to others. It is therefore regarded as the most priceless heritage of Buddhism.

The following seven books of Abhidhamma are so many portals of analytical wisdom. They contain different methods of analysis and synthesis.

1. Dhammasangani: It provides a detailed enumeration of all phenomena, and is divided into three divisions:

- a. An analysis of consciousness (citta) and its concomitant mental factors (cetasika)
- b. An analysis of corporeality (rupa)
- c. Summary in which all phenomena of existence are brought under 122 categories (matika), in group of three (tika) and two (duka), e.g. Kusala (wholesome) dhamma, akusala (unwholesome) dhamma, abyakata (indeterminate) dhamma.

When analysed, these three comprehend everything, mundane and supermundane. It is invaluable as a source-book of psychology.

2. Vibhanga: It consists of 18 independent treatises (vibhangas), each of which is divided into three parts: (i) Sutta explanation (ii) Abhidhamma explanation (iii) Summary in question-answer form. It is distinct from that of Dhammasangani w.r.t. this analytic procedure.

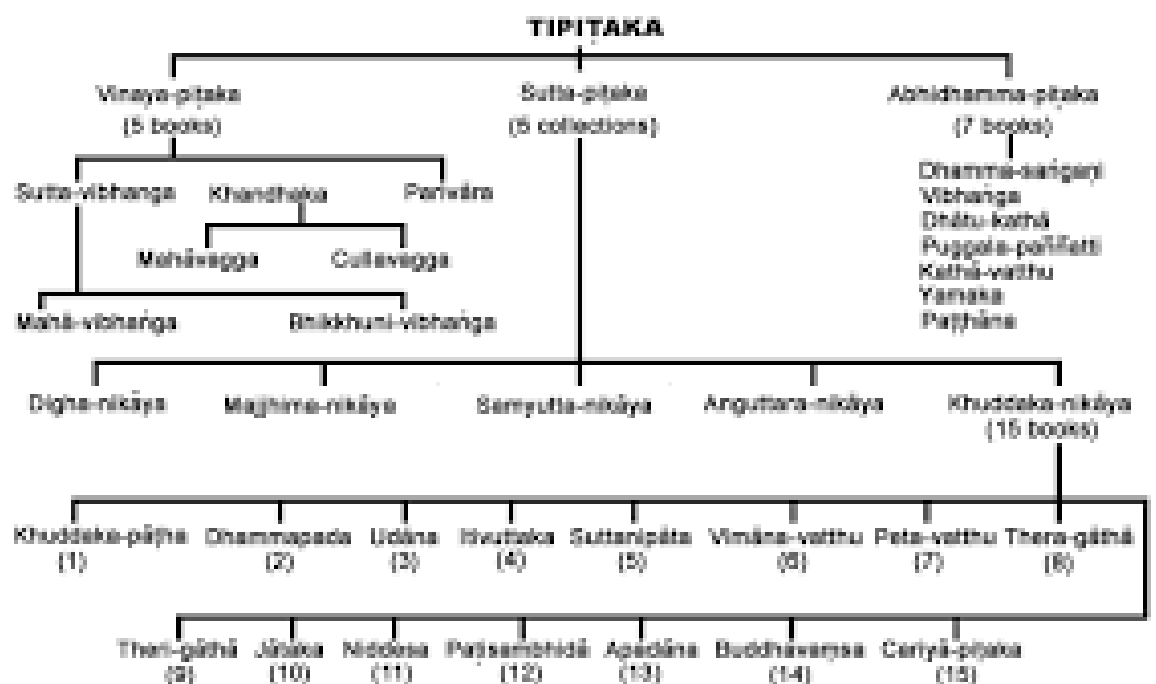
3. Dhatukatha: This and the next book, PuggalaPannatti, are small-sized books, written in the form of a catechism. Dhatukatha consists of 14 chapters in which all phenomena of existence are discussed with reference to the three categories of Khandha, Ayatana and Dhatu.

4. Puggalapannati: It resembles the style of the Anguttara Nikaya and consists of 10 chapters in which various types of individuals (puggala) are discussed, often with similes and comparisons.

5. Kathavatthu: As mentioned earlier, this work was compiled by the Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa, the presiding Arahant of the Third Great Council, in order to uproot all points of controversy regarding Buddhaddhamma. There are 23 dialogue-form chapters dealing with some 21 controversies in a purely logical style.

6. Yamaka: This is a work of applied logic which deals with the delimitation as to the range and content of all the doctrinal terms and content of all the doctrinal terms and concepts. Yamaka clears up all ambiguities and distortions which may creep into the manifold doctrines of Abhidhamma. For every discussion, throughout the work there are two sets of questions in contrast, e.g., (a) Are all wholesome phenomena (kusala dhamma), wholesome roots (kusalamula)? Or (b) Are all wholesome roots, wholesome phenomena?

7. Patthana: This is a gigantic work which, together with Dhammasangani, constitutes the quintessence of Buddhist Philosophy. The 4 divisions of Patthana adopt four different ways- Positive, Anuloma; Negative, Patiloma; Negative-positive, Patiloma-anuloma - to elucidate the profound philosophy of Relations (paccaya) otherwise known as the, Law of Conditionality. This Law is based on 24 paccaya, conditions or relations, which, in different combinations and permutations, keep the 'wheel of existences (samsara) moving. These paccaya explain the law of universal interdependence.



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Tipitaka—The Pali Canon with Commentaries & Sub-commentaries

(巴利三藏及其註解、再註解)

Sutta Pitaka—經藏	Vinaya Pitaka—律藏	Abhidhamma Pitaka—論藏
Digha Nikaya—長部 . Silakkhandhavagga 戒(集)品 . Mahaavagga 大品 . Paṭhikavagga 波梨品 . Sumangala vilasini 吉祥悅意 (長部註解) . Patama-Sarattamañjusa 第一真實義經 (長部再註解) Majjhima Nikaya—中部 . Muḍapā.n.naasa 經本五十經篇 . Majjhima.n.naasa 中分五十經篇 . Uparipa.n.naasa 後分五十經篇 . Papañcasudani 破除疑障 (中部註解) . Dudiya-Sarattamañjusa 第二真實義經 (中部再註解) Samyutta Nikaya—相應部 . Saggathavagga 有偈品 . Nidānavagga 因緣品 . Khandhavagga 蘊品 . Sa.laayatana.vagga 六處品 . Mahaavagga 大品 . Sarattappakasini 結義顯明 (相應部註解) . Tadiya-Sarattamañjusa 第三真實義經 (相應部再註解) Anguttara Nikaya—增支部 . Ekakanipāta 一集 . Dukanipāta 二集 . Tikanipāta 三集 . Catukkanipāta 四集 . Pa.ncakanipāta 五集 . Chakkaniipāta 六集 . Sattakanipāta 七集 . At.thakanipāta 八集 . Navakanipāta 九集 . Dasakanipāta 十集 . Bkaadasakanipāta 十一集 . Manorathapurani 希求滿足 (增支部註解) . Catuttha-Sarattamañjusa 第四真實義經 (相應部再註解) Khuddaka Nikaya—小部 . Khuddakapatha 小誦 . Param atthajotika (I) 勝義光明 (小誦註解) . Dhammapada 法句 . Dham m apada-atthakatha 法句註解 . Udana 自說 . Param atthadipani (I) 勝義經 (自說註解) . Itivuttaka 如是語 . Param atthadipani (II) 勝義經 (如是語註解) . Sutta Nipata 經集 . Param atthajotika (II) 勝義光明 (經集註解) . Vimanavatthu 天宮事 . Param atthadipani (III) 勝義經 (天宮事註解) . Petavatthu 惡鬼事 . Param atthadipani (IV) 勝義經 (惡鬼事註解) . Theragatha 長老偈 . Param atthadipani (V) 勝義經 (長老偈註解) . Therigatha 長老尼偈 . Param atthadipani (V) 勝義經 (長老尼偈註解) . Jataka 本生 . Jatakatthavannana 本生註解 . Niddesa 義釋 . Sadham m apajotika 正法光明 (義釋註解) . Patisambhidamagga 解脫道 . Sadham m appakasini 正法顯明 (解脫道註解) . Apadana 譬喻 . Visuddhajana vilasini 淨人悅美 (譬喻註解) . Buddhavamsa 佛種姓 . Mādhurattava vilasini 妙義悅美 (佛種姓註解) . Cariyapitaka (I) 所行藏 . Param atthadipani (VI) 勝義經 (所行藏註解)	Sutta Vibhanga 經分別 . Parajika 波羅夷 . Pacittiya 波逸提 Khanddhaka 健度 . Mahavagga 大品 . Cullavagga 小品 Parivara 附隨 Commentaries 律藏註解 Samantapasadika 一切善見 Kankhavitani 析疑 Vinaya sangahathakatha 律攝議論 Sub-commentaries 律藏再註解 Sarattadipani 心義燈 Vimativinodani 猶豫排除 Vajirabuddhi 金剛覺醒 Vinayathamñjusa 律美經 Sumangalapakasini 吉祥顯示 Vinayathasarasandipani 律義燈 Linatthapakasana 隱義顯明 Vinayavim atimaticchedani 律疑破除	Dhammasangani 法集論 . Atthasālini 殊勝義 (法集論註解) . Linatthajotana 隱義顯明 (法集論根本再註解) . Linatthapakasini 隱義顯示 (法集論小再註解) Vibhanga 分別論 . Sammohavinodani (連惑冰消) . Linatthajotana 隱義顯明 (分別論根本再註解) . Linatthapakasini 隱義顯示 (分別論小再註解) Kathavatthu 論事 . Pañcappakaraṇatthakatha 五論註 (論事註解) . Linatthajotana 隱義顯明 (論事根本再註解) . Linatthapakasini 隱義顯示 (論事小再註解) Dhatukatha 界說論 . Pañcappakaraṇatthakatha 五論註 (界說論註解) . Linatthajotana 隱義顯明 (界說論根本再註解) . Linatthapakasini 隱義顯示 (界說論小再註解) Puggalapannatti 人施設論 . Pañcappakaraṇatthakatha 五論註 (人施設論註解) . Linatthajotana 隱義顯明 (人施設論根本再註解) . Linatthapakasini 隱義顯示 (人施設論小再註解) Yamaka 雙論 . Pañcappakaraṇatthakatha 五論註 (雙論註解) . Linatthajotana 隱義顯明 (雙論根本再註解) . Linatthapakasini 隱義顯示 (雙論小再註解) Patthana 發趣論 . Pañcappakaraṇatthakatha 五論註 (發趣論註解) . Linatthajotana 隱義顯明 (發趣論根本再註解) . Linatthapakasini 隱義顯示 (發趣論小再註解) 其他再註解 Abhidhammavata-poranatika 入阿比達磨論古疏 Abhidhammatthavikasani 阿比達磨顯義 Abhidhammavibhavi 阿比達磨義分別 Abhidhammatthasangaha-anutika 阿比達磨義論小疏 Khemappakarana-Tika 安瑠論疏 Namarupapariccheda-Tika 名色差別論疏 Saocasankhepa-Tika 諸要略論疏 Mahavamsa-Tika 大史疏



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1.4 NON-CANONICAL PĀLI LITERATURE

Introduction: Pāli literature is broadly classified into Canonical Pāli literature and Non-canonical Pāli literature. The Buddhavacana or the Tipitaka is the Canonical Pāli literature and all the remaining literature written on the canonical is the Non-canonical Pāli literature.

Non-canonical Pāli literature comprises mainly of the Atthakathas, Tikas and Anutikas. Atthakathas are the commentaries of the canonical

literature, the commentaries of the Atthakathas are the Tikas and the commentaries of the Tikas are the Anutikas and so on.

Generally, the commentary of any literary work of the ancient language gives the meaning of the difficult verses or the words with the grammar. But the commentaries of the Pāli literature are unique and different from any other literature for they not only give the meanings of the difficult verses with grammar but talks more about the time period- as to when Buddha uttered the verses, the place- as to where Buddha uttered the verses and also the background of the situation as to why he uttered the verses. This information gives the whole picture of the social, political, geographical, historical background of India of 6th century BC as well as the life sketch of the Buddha and his chief disciples along with their daily routines.

Another characteristic of the atthakatha, which make them unique in the literary world, is the contents of the literature. Pāli literature is Buddhism, that too the early Theravada Buddhism. Even today whatever is written in the language Pāli is Buddha and his teachings, in the form of the atthakatha, tika and anutika of the Tipitaka. India, Sri Lanka Burma and Thailand are the only countries where the Pāli literature is mainly written and also found.

Origin of the Attakatha- it is believed that the attakatha came to Sri Lanka from India along with the canonical literature. When thera Mahinda brought with him the original Tipitaka [in the oral form] to Sri Lanka after the Third Buddhist Council, the attakatha were there with it. He translated them into Sinhalese. But we don't find the mention of them anywhere. Even when the Pāli Tipitaka were written down in the 1st century BC in Sri Lanka during the reign of King Vattagamini, no mention of the Pāli Attakatha to be written down is found.

The direct mention of the Pāli Atthakatha is found in the 4th-5th century A.D when Buddhaghosa went to Sri Lanka to translate the atthakatha from Sinhalese to Pāli language. Therefore, generally the age of atthakatha is believed to be from the 4th-5th century A.D onwards that is about 1000 years after the Buddha. But the authenticity of the words of Buddha is believed due to the existing atthakatha in the Sihalese language, which Thera Buddhaghosa often refers to in his atthakatha. [The Sihalese atthakatha existed until the 12th century A.D, but thereafter no references of them are found anywhere.]

The non-canonical Pāliliterature is broadly divided into three phases or three periods.

100 BC to 400 A.D Prior to Buddhaghosa

400 A.D to 1100 A.D Buddhaghosa era

1100 A.D until today Age of Tikas

100 BC to 400 A.D- there are three main literary works in this period. They are

- Netipakarana
- Petkopadesa and
- Milindpanha.

These three books are so important that the Burmese tradition includes them in the Tipitaka, but the Sinhalese and the Indian tradition consider them as non-canonical work. Of the three the Milindapanha is the most popular work. It is the dialogues between the king Milinda [Menandros-the Greco-Bactrian king who ruled northwest of India in the 2nd century BCE] and the therā Nagasena.

400 A.D to 1100 A.D- this period is also called the period of Atthakathas. Most of the commentaries on the Tipitakas are written in this period and the three commentators who stand out distinctly in this era are the therā Buddhadatta, therā Buddhaghosa and therā Dhammapala.

Therā Buddhadatta and therā Buddhaghosa were contemporary while therā Dhammapala is of a little later date. The main works of these three great commentators are-

Therā Buddhaghosa

- Vishudhimagga – a book written on the two verses from Samyutta Nikaya
- Samantapasadika- commentary on Vinayapitaka
- Kankhavitarani- commentary on Pattimokkha
- Sumangalvilasini- commentary on Digha Nikaya
- Papancasudani- commentary on Majjhima Nikaya
- Sarathapakasini- commentary on Samyutta Nikaya
- Manorathapurani-commentary on Anguttara Nikaya
- Paramatthajotika- commentary on commentary on Khuddhakapatha and SuttaNipata of the Khuddhaka Nikaya
- Atthasalini- commentary on Dhammasangani
- Sammohavinodini- commentary on Vibhanga
- Pancapakaranatthakatha- commentary on the remaining five books of Abhidhammapitaka except the Dhammasangani and Vibhanga.
- Jatakathavannana- commentary on the Jataka
- Dhammapadatthakatha- commentary on the Dhammapada

Therā Buddhadatta

- Abhidhammavatara- summary of the commentary on Abhidhamma by Buddhaghosa
- Rupavibhanga
- Madhurathavilasini-Commentary on Buddhavamsa
- Vinayavinicchaya- Commentaries on the Vinaya pitaka
- Uttaravinicchaya - Commentaries on the Vinaya pitaka

- Paramathadipani- is the commentary on the Udana, Ithivutthaka, Vimanavatthu, Petavatthu, Theragatha, Therigatha, Chariyapitaka [remaining all the books on which Buddhaghosa did not write the commentaries]
- He also wrote the atthakatha of Netipakarana
- Linatthavannana- the commentary on the atthakatha of the Netipakarana
- Paramatthamanjusa-commentary of the Visuddhimagga
- Linatthapakasini- commentary of the four atthakathas of the Nikayas of the Buddhaghosa
- Tika of the atthakathas of the Jataka written by Buddhaghosa
- Tika on Madhuravilasini- the commentary of Buddhaddatta on the Buddhavamsa.

There are other authors like Thera Anurudha who wrote the Abhidhammattasangaho, also in this period.

1100 AD upto today- this phase is also called the age of tikas. During this period many tikas were written down on the atthakathas. It starts with the reign of the king Parakramabahu-I of Sri Lanka. The monks of Sri Lanka and Burma contributed to the literature.

The Sarathadipani- the tika written by Thera Sariputta on the atthakatha of the Vinayapitaka called Samantapasadika by Buddhaghosa.

There are many tikas written and all the names cannot be given, but the latest of the tikas written in Devanagari script by Indian scholar Dhammananda Kosambi in 1933 is the Navnita tika –a tika on the book Abhidhammathasangaho written by Thera Anurudha. He also wrote the commentary on the Visuddhimagga of the Buddhaghosa called Visuddhimaggadipika.

The Vamsa Literature or the Chronicles of Ceylon: The chronicles of Ceylon are the combination of the history of the country along with the poetic legends, which connects them to the land of Buddha and Buddha himself. The Dipavamsa- the history of the Island, is the oldest of the vamsa literature and goes back to the pre-Buddhaghosa era. The author of the book is not known, but it was probably written between the beginnings of the 4th century CE.

The Mahavamsa is written by the Thera Mahanama. Though the chronicle gives the history of the Ceylon, we also get historically important information of India from them, especially the era after the mahaparinibbana of the Buddha and the reign of Emperor Asoka. Mahavamsa tells about how Buddhism reached the island through the Thera Mahinda and Theri Sanghamitta.

In early days the scholars were skeptical about the value of the Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, as source of authentic historical information. But now it

has been realized that these books contain the truth [history] buried under the legends, myths and fables.

Besides the Dipavamsa and Mahvamsa, there is Culavamsa, which is the continuation of the Mahavamsa written by many authors through centuries. The Dathavamsa, the Thupavamsa, the Gandhavamsa and the Sasanvamsa are some of the Vamsa literature.

The Gandhavamsa and the Sasanvamsa belongs to the 19th century CE and to the country of Burma/Myanmar.

Origin And Growth of the Commentaries: According to Indian tradition, a commentary means reading new meanings back into old texts according to one's own education and outlook. It explains the words and judgments of others as accurately and faithfully as possible; and this remark applies to all commentaries, Sanskrit as well as Pāli.

The need for an accurate interpretation of the Buddha's words which formed the guiding principle of life and action of the members of the Samgha, was felt from the very first, even during the life time of the Master. There was at that time the advantage of referring a disputed question for solution of the Master himself, and therein we can trace the first stage in the origin the Buddhist comments.

The Buddhist and Jaina texts tell us that the itinerant teachers of the time wandered about in the country, engaging themselves wherever they stopped in serious discussions on matters relating to religion, philosophy, ethics, morals, and polity. Discussions about the interpretation of the abstruse utterances of the great teachers were frequent and the *raison d'être* of the development of the Buddhist literature, particularly of the commentaries, is to be traced in these discussions.

There are numerous interesting passages in the Tipitaka, telling us how from time-to-time contemporary events suggested manifold topics of discussion among the bhikkhus, or how their peace was disturbed by grave doubts calling for explanations either from the Buddha himself or explanations either from the Buddha himself or from his disciples.

Whenever an interested sophist spoke vehemently in many ways in dispraise of the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order (Digha-I) whenever another such sophist misinterpreted the Buddha's opinion (Majjhima Vol, III), whenever a furious discussion broke out in any contemporary brotherhood (Majjhima, Vol.II, Sanagana Sutta) or whenever a bhikkhu behaved improperly, the bhikkhus generally assembled under the pavilion to discuss the subject, or were exhorted by the Buddha or by his disciples to safeguard their interests by presenting a strong defense of their case.

The Digha and Majjhima Nikaya contain many illuminating expositions of the Buddha, e.g., Mahakammavibhanga, the Salayatanavibhanga, (Majjhima, Vol.III) etc. Then we have from Thera Sariputta, the chief disciple of Buddha, a body of expositions of the four Aryan truths, the Saccavibhanga. We have also to consider other renowned and profoundly

learned disciples of the Buddha, among whom were some women, who in their own way helped forward the process of development of the commentaries. Mahakaccayana wrote some exegetical work like Kaccayanagandho, Mahaniruttigandho, etc. we have similar contributions from Mahakotthita, Ananda, Dhammadinna, and Khema, but it is needless to multiply instances.

The Three Great Commentators: The works of Thera Buddhaddatta, Thera Buddhaghosa, and Thera Dhammapala are most important in Pāli commentaries. They are rich in materials for reconstructing a secular and religious history of ancient India. They also throw a flood of light on the philosophical psychological and metaphysical aspects of the period with which they deal. A large variety of information is available from these commentaries and hence their importance is very great.

Thanks to the indefatigable labours of the Pāli Text Society, London, for printing and publishing a major portion of the Pāli commentaries and making them accessible to the reading public. Besides, there are some other Pāli commentaries, such as the Saddhammapajjotika or a commentary on the Niddesa written by Upasena; Saddhammapakasini, a commentary on the patisambhidamagga written by Mahanama Thera of Anuradhapura, and the Visuddhajanavilasini or a commentary on the Apadana written by an unknown author.

Buddhaghosa Thera: The greatest of Commentators on the Tipitaka. He was born in a village near Buddhagaya and became proficient in the Vedas and allied branches of knowledge. One day he met a monk, named Revata, and on being defeated by him in controversy, entered the Order to learn the Buddha's teachings. Because his speech was profound, like that of the Buddha, and because his words spread throughout the world (like those of the Buddha), he came to be called Buddhaghosa. While dwelling with Revata, he wrote the *Ñānodaya* and the *Atthasālinī*, and also began to write a *Parittatthakathā* (a concise commentary) on the Tipitaka.

In order to complete his task, he came over to Ceylon at the suggestion of Revata (Sās.p.29, says he was sent to Ceylon as punishment for thinking himself wiser than his teachers) and studied the Sinhalese Commentaries at the Mahāvihāra, under Sanghapala. When his studies were ended, he wrote the *VisuddhiMagga*, and having thereby won the approval of the Elders of the Mahāvihāra, he rendered the Sinhalese Commentaries into Pāli. During this period, he lived in the *Ganthākaravihāra*, and on the accomplishment of his task he returned to Jambudīpa.

Besides the above-mentioned works of Buddhaghosa, we have also the *Samantapāsādikā* and the *Kankhāvitaraṇī* on the Vinaya Pitaka; the *Sumangalavilāsinī*, the *Papañcasūdanī*, the *Sāratthappakāsinī* and the *Manorathapūraṇī* on the Sutta Pitaka. He is also said to have compiled Commentaries on the *Khuddakapāṭha* and the *Sutta Nipāta* (called the *Paramatthajotikā*) and on the *Dhammapada*. He also wrote a series of Commentaries on the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* (the *Atthasālinī*, the *Sammohavinodanī* and the *Pañcappakaraṇatthakathā*).

Thera Buddhadatta: In the early half of the 5th century A.D, Buddhadatta, who is famous and wise scholar in Buddhism, was born in Urugapura in south of India (modern time Kaveri River region near Truchirappalli). He was a member of Tamil family living in Chola country.

Like most theras Buddhaghosa, Thera Buddhadatta went to Sri Lanka to study Buddhism in Mahavihara temple which is the main seat of the ancestral branch for present day Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka, and which was founded by King Devanampiya Tissa in the capital of Anuradhapura on the site of the Tissarama, given to visiting missionary from King Asoka. Thera Buddhadatta wrote many books living in Chola country by supporting of king and delivered the Buddha's teaching to his fellowship.

Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosa: On the way by boat to India, Thera Buddhadatta met Thera Buddhaghosa, the great Buddhist scholar. When the Buddhadatta having accomplished the task was en route back to India by boat which was crossing to another boat by which Buddhaghosa was a trip to Lankadipa from Jambudipa. Some time, boats on the way faced the heavy winds so both of them had been stopped. By the time boats being stopped by side by side very closely, Buddhadatta and Buddhaghosa met each other on board their own vessels. And they introduced themselves with being exchanged courtesy greetings according to being Indian tradition. Firstly, venerable Buddhaghosa said to Buddhadattathera; "Bhante, the doctrine of the Buddha is available in the Sinhala language, I am proceeding to Lankadipa to render them to Magadhi* (early Pāli)". In the end of the Buddhaghosa's first talking, Buddhadatta replied, "Dear Bhante, I too had come to Sri Lanka for the same task, but as I shall not live very long now, I cannot finish the task". And Buddhadatta requested Buddhaghosa to send each copy of his commentaries to him in India. For boats departed in the conversation in position of subside winds, the limited time did not allow them to discuss more.

As Buddhadatta requested on the boat, Buddhaghosa sent him copies of each commentary written by himself. Later Buddhadatta summarized Buddhaghosa's commentaries on the abhidhammapitaka into abhidhammavatra and vinayapitaka into vinayavinicchaya. But Rohan L. Jayetilleke said; "Among Buddhadatta's works Abhidhammavatara stands supreme. Buddhadatta did not accept Buddhaghosa's commentary on Abhidhammapitaka blindly". Even though they lived in different places, they had friendly discourse with communicating each other by charring knowledge concerned with the Buddha's teachings from another to another.

In accordance with describing of some scholars, while Gupta king Kumara Gupta was a patron of venerable Buddhaghosa, the patron of Buddhadatta was the Kalabhra Accyutavikkhanta (Acyuta Narayana) of the Colanadu. Buddhadatta had written most of his works in Kaveripattinam at the instance of important books, by the supporting of Chola king. He was the most important adviser with regard to Buddhism for king. What he had

done to introduce about Buddhism with his firm confidences is seen as follow:

1. Abhidhamma-avatāra,
2. Vinaya-Vinicchaya,
3. Uttara-vinicchaya
4. Rûparûpavibhāga and other books

Abhidhammavātara, is the introduction to abhidhamma' which is mostly in verses, is introduction to study of abhidhamma and comparable to Visuddhimagga of Buddhaghosa. But some scholar translates abhidhammavātara as 'the coming of abhidhamma'. He had composed it by using verses to be easily memorized by those who want to study abhidhamma because around the last century B.C, only a number of atthakathas which is very large to be studied was found on particular texts for Buddha's abhidhamma. Although abhidhammavātara is easy to memorize, it is too hard to understand abhidhamma by this book in deeper. He continuously wrote another book named Rûparûpavibhāga. It has three parts of meaning, Rupa+Arupa+Vibhāga. It says "explaining about nama-rupa in detail or widely".

Rûparûpavibhāga, which is a supplement of abhidhammavātara is a large writing about Abhidhamma in detail.

Both Vinaya-Vinicchaya and Uttara-vinicchaya are judgments or condemnations for faults of Buddhist monks. It is also called vinaya. Uttara-vinicchaya is as a supplement to his own Vinaya-vinicchaya. I would like to mention the meaning of these books.

Vinaya-Vinicchaya: Because of being requested by his pupil, Buddhasiha from Sri Lanka both Uttara-vinicchaya and Rûparûpavibhāga were written by him for those who want to deeply and widely learn about the Vinaya and Abhidhamma. All of them are written in Pāli.

Thera Dhammapala: an inhabitant of south India therā Dhammapala dwelt at Padaratittha in the realms of Dāmilas. He was also the celebrity of the Mahavihāra. He seems to have based his commentaries on the Sinhalese atthakathas which were not preserved in the main land. The Gandhāvamsa enumerates the following works to therā Dhammapala

- Netti-pakarana-atthakatha
- Itivuttaka-atthakatha
- Udana-atthakatha
- Cariyapitaka-atthakatha
- Theragatha and Therigatha-atthakatha
- Vimalavilasini or the Vimanavathu-atthakatha
- Vimalavilasini or the Petavathu-atthakatha
- Paramathamajusa
- Linathapakasini on the four nikayas
- Linathapakasini on the Jataka atthakatha
- Nettittha- kathayatika

- Paramathadipani and
- Linatthavannana.

From his works it appears that Thera Dhammapala was well read and well informed. His explanation of terms is very clear. His commentaries throw considerable light on the social, religious, moral and philosophical ideas of the time like the commentaries of the Thera Buddhaghosa. In his commentaries Thera Dhammapala follows a regular scheme. First comes an introduction to the whole collection of the poems, giving the traditional account of how it came to be put together. Then each poem is taken separately. After explaining how, when and by whom it was composed each clause in the poem is quoted and explained philologically and exegetically.

Visuddhimagga: The Visuddhimagga was written by Buddhaghosa at the request of the Thera Sanghapala, it is generally believed, in Ceylon in the beginning of the 5th century A.D., when King Mahanama was on the throne at Anuradhapura. Thera Buddhaghosa, on reaching the Mahavihara (Anuradhapura) entered the Mahapadhana Hall, according to the account of the Mahavamsa, the great Ceylonese Chronicle, and listened to the Sinhalese Atthakatha and the Theravada, from the beginning to the end, and became thoroughly convinced that they conveyed the true meaning of the doctrines of the Lord of Dhamma. Thereupon paying reverential respect to the priesthood, he thus petitioned: “I am desirous of translating the Atthakatha; give me access to all your books” The Ceylonese priesthood for the purpose of testing his qualification, gave only two gathas saying, “Hence prove thy qualification; having satisfied ourselves on this point, we will then let thee have all our books”. From these (taking these gathas for his text), and consulting the Pitakattaya, together with the Atthakatha and condensing them into an abridged form he composed the commentary called the “Visuddhimaggam.”

The Mahavamsa account of the circumstances that led to the composition of the “Visuddhimagga” agrees substantially with what Thera Buddhaghosa has written about himself in the Nidanakatha or story of the origin of the work at their respective beginnings. Thus in the Nidanakatha to his Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa at the very beginning quotes the following gatha of Buddha’s own saying: -

**“Sile patitthaya narosapanno, cittampannam ca bhavayam,
Atapi nipako bhikkhu, so imam vijataye jatanti”**

(After having been established in precepts, a wise person should think of Samadhi and panna, an active and wise bhikkhu disentangles this lock.)

Next, he proceeds to record the circumstances under which he wrote his compendium of Buddhism (i.e. the Visuddhimagga). “The real meaning of sila, etc. is described by means of this



Photo Source: <https://srilankanrip.quora.com/Kelaniya-Temple-Srilanka-Place-that-all-Buddhists-have-to-know>

stanza uttered by the great sage. Having acquired ordination in the Order of the Jina the benefit of the Sila, etc., which is tranquil and which is the straight path to purity, the practitioner of vipassana who are desirous of obtaining purity, not knowing purity as it is, do not get purity though they exert. I shall speak of the Visuddhimagga according to the instruction of the dwellers of the Mahavihara, which is pleasing to them, and which is the correct interpretation: Let all the holy men who are desirous of obtaining purity listen to what I say, attentively” (Visuddhimagga, P.T.S. Vol.Ip.2)

At the end of the work again, therā Buddhaghosa returns to that very gāthā which he has adopted as his text for writing the Visuddhimagga, and after referring to his promise quoted above, thus delivers him: “The interpretation of the meanings of the Sila, etc, has been told in the atthakathas on the five Nikaya. All of them being taken into consideration, the interpretation gradually becomes manifest, being free from all faults due to confusion; and it is for this reason that the Visuddhimagga should be liked by the vipassana practitioners who are desirous of obtaining purity and who have pure wisdom.”

Thus, according to therā Buddhaghosa, the whole of his Visuddhimagga was written as a commentary on that one gāthā uttered by the Master. Evidently it was this gāthā which the writer of the Mahāvamsa account had in his mind when he wrote that the Visuddhimagga was written as a comment on and expansion of the two gāthas which were set by the Sinhalese Sangha residing at the Mahavihara to test Buddhaghosa’s learning and efficiency.

The Visuddhimagga is in fact an abridged edition of the three pitakas, the Vinaya, the Sutta, and the Abhidhamma, whose main arguments and conclusions are here condensed into a single treatise. In the gāthā itself, of which the Visuddhimagga is a commentary, there is however no mention either of the word “Visuddhi” or “Magga”; but there is mention of Sila, Samadhi, and Panna. Strict observance of the silas leads to the purification or visuddhi of the kaya or body, while the practice of Samadhi leads to the purity of soul and the thinking of Panna to perfect wisdom. A wise man alone is capable of disentangling the net of cravings and desires and is fit to attain Nirvana. The disentangling of the lock, as it is called, is the final goal, it is called “visuddhi and sila, Samadhi, and panna are the ways or “magga” to attain to it. As the ways or “magga” to attain to purity or “visuddhi” having been explained in the book, it is called “Visuddhimagga” or “Path of Purity”

MilindaPanha: The MilindaPanha or the questions of Milinda had originally been written in Northern India in Sanskrit or in some North Indian Prakrit by an author whose name has not, unfortunately enough, come down to us. But the original text is now lost in the land of its origin as elsewhere; what now remains is the Pāli translation of the original which was made at a very early date in Ceylon. From Ceylon, it travelled to other countries, namely Burma and Siam, which have derived their Buddhism from Ceylon, and where at a later date it was translated into

respective local dialects. In China too, there have been found two separate works entitled “The Book of the Bhikkhu Nagasena Sutra”, but whether they are translations of the older recensions of the work than the one preserved in Pāli or the Pāli recensions is difficult to ascertain. However, in the home of Southern Buddhism, the book is accepted as a standard authority, second only to the Pāli Pitakas.

The Milindapañha, states that it contains 262 questions, though in the editions available today only 236 can be found. Although not included as a canonical text in the traditions of all the Theravadin countries, this work is much revered throughout and is one of the most popular and authoritative works of Pāli Buddhism. Composed around the beginning of the Common Era, and of unknown authorship, the Milindapañha is set up as a compilation of questions posed by King Milinda to a revered senior monk named Nagasena. This Milinda has been identified with considerable confidence by scholars as the Greek king Menander of Bactria, in the dominion founded by Alexander the Great, which corresponds with much of present-day Afghanistan. Menander's realm thus would have included Gandhara, where Buddhism was flourishing at that time.

What is most interesting about the Milindapañha is that it is the product of the encounter of two great civilizations — Hellenistic Greece and Buddhist India — and is thus of continuing relevance as the wisdom of the East meets the modern Western world. King Milinda poses questions about dilemmas raised by Buddhist philosophy that we might ask today. And Nagasena's responses are full of wisdom, wit, and helpful analogies.

The contents of the Milindapañhāare: Background History

1. Questions on Distinguishing Characteristics: (Characteristics of Attention and Wisdom, Characteristic of Wisdom, Characteristic of Contact, Characteristic of Feeling, Characteristic of Perception, Characteristic of Volition, Characteristic of Consciousness, Characteristic of Applied Thought, Characteristic of Sustained Thought, etc.)
2. Questions for the Cutting Off of Perplexity: (Transmigration and Rebirth, The Soul, Non-Release from Evil Deeds, Simultaneous Arising in Different Places, Doing Evil Knowingly and Unknowingly, etc.)
3. Questions on Dilemmas: Speaks of several puzzles and these puzzles were distributed in eighty-two dilemmas.
4. A Question Solved by Inference
5. Discusses the Special Qualities of Asceticism
6. Questions on Talk of Similes

Dipavamsa: The Dipavamsa, the earliest extant chronicle of Sri Lanka, of unknown authorship, deals with the history of the island from earliest times up to the reign of Mahasena (325-352). Erudite opinion holds that it

is not the work of a single author but of several authors. Considering the nature of ancient chronicle of the island, we can believe that there is a certain element of truth in it, particularly calculated to be the vehicle of history in early times, when literary facilities were scanty. There is also the opinion that Dipavamsa was the work of two nuns Sivala and Maharuha from India.

As the title indicates, the Dipavamsa contains the history of the island. The preamble to the chronicle, (as translated into English by B. C. Law) reads: "Listen to me! I shall relate the chronicle of the Buddha's visits to the island, the arrival of the Tooth Relic and the Bodhi tree, the advent of the Buddha's doctrine, the rise of the teachers, the spread of Buddhism in the island and the coming of (Vijaya) the Chief of Men".

According to B. C. Law, "Dipavamsa contains many stages of development concluding at different important historical events. There is an apparent lack of uniformity, an unevenness of style, incorrectness of language and metre and numerous repetitions, apart from many other imperfections which indicate it to be the outcome of a series of traditions collected together as a first attempt to record a connected history of the island".

The chronicle embodies the oral tradition of the country handed down from the time of the advent of Buddhism to the island. With all its drawbacks, both literary and grammatical, it is a very useful source of information dealing with the ancient times, and written in Pāli.

Mahavamsa: The Mahavamsa, similar to the Dipavamsa, is written in Pāli. It deals with the history of the island, from legendary beginnings, also up to the reign of Mahasena. This great chronicle is said to have been written by Ven. Mahanama Maha Thera, an uncle of king Dhatusena (460-478), who lived in the DighasandaSenapathiPirivena, which belonged to the Maha-vihara Fraternity in Anuradhapura. His work ends with Ch. 37:50. The rest of the Mahavamsa is known as Culavamsa, especially after Prof. Wilhelm Geiger, who is said to have made the division.

The preamble to the Mahavamsa reads: "Having made obeisance to the Sam-buddha the Pure, sprung from a Pure Race, I will recite the Mahavamsa, of varied content and lacking nothing". (Rendered into English by Prof. Geiger). When Maha-vamsa appeared after the Dipavamsa, it assumed such popularity and importance that it not only superseded the earlier work, but also prompted authors to gradually produce supplementary work based on it.

The later chronicles of the island, written from time to time, are the Attanagalaviharavamsa, the Dhatuvamsa, the Elu-Attanagaluvamsa, the Bodhivamsa, the MahaBodhivamsa, the Thupavamsa, the Daladavamsa, the Viharavamsa, etc.

In the Culavamsa, it is stated that king Dhatusena, ordered the Dipavamsa to be publicly recited at the annual Mihindu festival held in Anuradhapura (Ch. 38:58). This indicates that at time it was available in some coherent

form. The authors of Culavamsa, who made additions to it from time to time.

1.5 BUDDHIST SANSKRIT LITERATURE

Development of Buddhist sectarianism among the Sāgha influenced origin of Buddhist Sanskrit literature. Several sects have developed their own literary productions, the language of which is partly Sanskrit and partly a dialect which we may call the mid-Indian and which is given the designation of mixed Sanskrit by Senart. Of this Sanskrit literature there have remained to us many voluminous books and fragments of several others while many are known to us only through Tibetan and Chinese translations. The major portion of this literature, in pure and mixed Sanskrit, which we for brevity's sake call Buddhist Sanskrit literature, belongs either to the school known as that of the Mahāyāna or has been more or less influenced by the latter.

“The Sanskrit Literature in Buddhism, however, is by no means exclusively Mahāyānist. Before all the widely spread sect of the Sarvāstivādins, which belonged to the Hīnayāna and which is indicated by its designation of positivists, possessed a canon of its own and a rich literature in Sanskrit”

Winternitz also has mentioned above matter as, “Buddhist Sanskrit literature by no means exclusively Mahāyānic. There are also a number of important Hīnayāna texts, which are exclusively written in pure and mixed Sanskrit.”

Therefore, under this title further we have to discuss in two ways

- How Buddhist Sanskrit literature developed with influence of Srāvakayāna and
- How Buddhist Sanskrit literature developed with influence of Mahāyāna.

DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST SANSKRIT LITERATURE WITH INFLUENCE OF SRĀVAKAYĀNA

During King Aśoka's reign, Buddhism had spread through India and it continued to develop. Some Buddhist school became stronger than other schools. Therefore, some schools gradually disappeared and some school developed and became more powerful with patronage of king. In general, however, the Mahāsāghika tradition was weaker than the Sthaviratradition. The names of many schools belonging to the Sthavira tradition, such as the Sarvāstivādin, Theravāda, and Sammatīya, are well known.

THE SARVĀSTIVĀDA SCHOOL

“In the history of the secession of school, it has been shown that the Sarvāstivādins belonged to the orthodox group, which is why there are

many points of agreement between the Theravāda and Sarvāstivāda doctrines.

During the reign of Asoka, the Sarvāstivādins had two centers; one at Mathurā and the other at Kāśmīr. With the patronage of king Kaniṣka (1st century A.D.) the Sarvāstivāda School developed in India remained as the most powerful and influential school in North-Western India from around the beginning of the Christian era to about the 7th century A.D., initially established in Mathura and expanding in the north where Kāśmīra became their center of orthodoxy.

FOURTH BUDDHIST COUNCIL

The Kusāna emperor Kaniṣka I (78-102 A.D.) became a patron of Buddhism and of the Sarvāstivāda School in particular and the fourth Buddhist council held at Kāśmīr under patronage of this emperor. Vasumitra, the great Buddhist philosopher, was the president of the council. Asvaghosha, another great Buddhist philosopher acted as the Vice-president of the council and at this council, Buddhist texts of *Sūtra*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma* were ordered to be engraved on sheet of copper and deposited inside *stupa* which led to emergence of later Tantrayāna. Sarvāstivādins took active parts in this council and did a splendid job for the reconciliation of the conflicting opinions of the different sects and for the settlement of the texts of the canonical literature.

THE LANGUAGE OF SARVĀSTIVĀDINS: According to scholars the language of Sarvāstivādins is grammatical Sanskrit, not mixed Sanskrit. N Dutt says “The Tibetan traditions corroborated by the recent finds of manuscripts in Eastern Turkestan and Gilgit leave no room for doubt about the fact that the Sarvāstivādins adopted grammatical Sanskrit (and not mixed Sanskrit) as the medium of their literature and that they possessed a complete canon of their own in three divisions *Sūtra*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidharma*.” According to Dutt, Sarvāstivādins used grammatical Sanskrit as their literary language and they established *Tripiṭaka* in this language.

DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST SANSKRIT LITERATURE WITHIN SARVĀSTIVĀDINS

Buddhist Sanskrit literature developed with Sarvāstivādins. According to Winternitz Sarvāstivādin take first place among the Buddhist sects of Srāvākayāna with regard to the development of Buddhist Sanskrit literature. Sarvāstivādins especially in Kāśmīr and Gandhāra spread thence to Central Asia, Tibet and China, had a Sanskrit Canon of its own. “Though no complete copy of this canon has come down to us, we know it firstly, from many fragments, large and small, which have been discovered among the manuscripts and block-prints brought from Eastern Turkestan by M.A. (Sir Aurel) Stein, A. Grunwedel, A. von. Le Coq, P. Pelliot, and other; further from quotations in other Buddhist Sanskrit texts (like *Mahāvastu*, *Divyāvadāna* and *Lalitavistara*) and finally from Chinese and Tibetan Translations.” The Sarvāstivādins had own completed *Tripiṭaka* (*Sūtra*, *Vinaya*, *Abhidharma*) which written in Sanskrit Language, and

same to Sthaviravāda *Tripiṭaka*. The *Sūtra-piṭaka* of the Sarvāstivāda was divided into *Āgamas* corresponding to *Nikāyas* of the Pāli school. There were four *Āgamas* called *Dīrgha*, *Madhyama*, *Samyukta* and *Ekottara*. In the *Kośa* there is reference to the *Ksudraka*, which implies by the existence of a *Ksudrakāgama* too. But in the *Dīvyāvadāna* (pp. 17, 331, 333) and elsewhere the *Āgamas* are referred to as *Āgamacatustayam*. In the Nāgarjunakonda inscription also, four *Āgamas* are mentioned and not five.

In the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of Sarvāstivādins the principal text was the *Daśādhyāya-vinaya*. The other texts in *Vinaya Piṭaka* of Sarvāstivādins can be found in the catalogues of Chinese canonical literature. Dutt⁴⁸ quotes following titles of *Vinaya* texts from Nanjio's Catalogue,

- (i) *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-mātka*, (ii) *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṅga*,
 (iii) *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-sangraha*, (iv) *Daśādhyāya-vinaya-nidāna*,
 (v) *Daśādhyāya-vinaya-bhiku-prātimoka*, (vi) *Daśādhyāya-vinaya-bhikunī-prātimoka*,
 (vii) *Daśādhyāya-vinaya or Sarvāstivāda-vinaya*.

Sarvāstivādins are also called *Vaibhāṅgikas*. In their *Abhidharma* there are seven texts. For each text the author has been given, they are ascribed to the disciples of the Buddha. Although the number is similar to Theravada *Abhidhamma*, the contents of those seven texts differ from that of Theravāda teachings. The 7 texts are:

- (i) *Jñāna-prasthāna-śāstra* of Ārya Kātyāyanī-putra, (ii) *Prakaranapāda-śāstra* of Sthavira Vasumitra, (iii) *Vijñānakāya* of Sthavira Devaśarma,
 (iv) *Dharmaskandha-śāstra* of Ārya Sāriputra, (v) *Prajñapti-śāstra* of Ārya Maudgalyāyana, (vi) *Dhātukāya* of Pūra, and (vii) *Sangīti-paryāya* of Mahākausthila.

All literature of the Sarvāstivādins is fairly comprehensive. At the fourth Buddhist council Sarvāstivādins wrote *Vibhāṅga* commentaries for their primary books. "During the session of the council, they composed 1,00,000 stanzas of *Upadeśa-śāstra* explanatory of the canonical *sūtras*, 1,00,000 stanzas of *Vinaya-vibhāṅga-śāstra* explanatory of the *Vinaya* and 1,00,000 stanzas of *Abhidharma-vibhāṅga-śāstra* explanatory of the *Abhidharma*.

As a one Buddhist School, the Sarvāstivādins have done vast role for development of Buddhist Sanskrit literature and their role pertains in the major ground of particular literature which developed under Srāvakayāna. Not only Sarvāstivāda but also number of another Buddhist Schools which pertain to Srāvakayāna branch and further development of Nikāya Buddhism also caused to development of Buddhist Sanskrit literature. Mahīśāsakas, Kāśyapīyās, Mūlasarvāstivādins, and Sautrāntikās are categorized in particular matter. Among those Buddhist sects Mūlasarvāstivādins which later separated from Sarvāstivādins and who later caused to appear Tantrayāna, are very prominent.

Āsvaghoṣa is regarded as one of the most prominent poets in Sanskrit literature. Modern scholars have acquainted that Āsvaghoṣa was the most prominent predecessor of Kālidāsa, and he was the creator of epic, dramatic and lyrical compositions. The traditions embodied in the Chinese and Tibetan sources agree in asserting that Āsvaghoṣa was a contemporary of king Kanika (2nd century A.D.) Āsvaghoṣa was one of Brāhmin family, and had enjoyed a thorough Brāhmanical education before he went over to Buddhism. As a Buddhist he probably associated himself first with the Sarvāstivāda School, but laid great stress on the *Buddha-Bhakti* and thus prepared Mahāyāna.



Ashvaghosha

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashvaghosha>

Āsvaghoṣa's works, which have been found in the Buddhist Sanskrit literature, his best-known work is his epic poem *Buddhacarita* ("Life of the Buddha"). This is the first known complete biography of the Buddha, from his birth to the *parinirvāṇa*. His other works are *Saundarānanda* describes how the extremely worldly Nanda was induced to become a monk by the Buddha, and *Sūtrālankāra* which was translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva in about 405 A.D., was ascribed by Chinese authors to Āsvaghoṣa. *Śāriputra-prakaraṇa*– This drama treats the conversion of Śāriputra and his friend Maudgalyāyana. *Gandistotragāthā*– This poem is well known for its beauty of style and contents. The *Rāstrapāla-nāṭaka*, the *Gurusevādharmapañcāśadgāthā* or the *Gurupañcāśikā*, the *Vajrayānamūlāpattisamgraha*, the *Vajrasūci*, the *Stūlāpatti*, the *Daśakuśalakarmapatha*, the *Sadgatikārikā*, the *Nairātmya-pariprcchā*, the *Tridandamālā*, were also, maybe spuriously, ascribed to Āsvaghoṣa.

DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST SANSKRIT LITERATURE WITH INFLUENCE OF MAHĀYĀNA

First time major community divided into two groups as a result of schism and step by step they developed as many groups finally all these groups divided into two major groups as Srāvakayāna and Mahāyāna. After schism first time appeared Mahāsaṅghikas and regularly they sub divided to seven groups finally Lokottaravādins the sub-group of Mahāsaṅghikas returned to Mahāyāna. Same way Sthaviravādins also sub-divided to eleven groups among those eleven groups Sarvāstivādins later turned to Mahāyāna. This point is further discussed by Akira Hirakava in his book of *A History of Indian Buddhism* as following, "Many modern scholars have maintained the view that Mahāyāna Buddhism developed out of the Mahāsaṅghika School. But since the Mahāsaṅghika School continued to exist long after Mahāyāna Buddhism arose, the rise of Mahāyāna cannot be explained simply as the transformation of the Mahāsaṅghikas into Mahāyānists. While it is true that the many similarities between

Mahāsaṅghika and Mahāyāna doctrines prove that the Mahāsaṅghika School did influence Mahāyāna Buddhism, teachings from the Sarvāstivādin, Mahīśāsaka, Dharmaguptaka, and Theravāda schools were also incorporated into Mahāyāna Buddhism. The doctrines of the Sarvāstivāda School in particular were often mentioned in Mahāyāna texts, and Sammatīya teachings also were influential. The relation between Nikāya Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism clearly is not a simple one”.

INFLUENCE OF SRĀVAKAYĀNA TO DEVELOPMENT OF MAHĀYĀNA LITERATURE

When we attempt to find literary development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Sanskrit, we can see how influence of Srāvakayāna works in Sanskrit regarding their literature, with regard to particular object. Earlier is discussed the *Mahāvastu* which pertains to Srāvakayāna and the *Vinaya* text of Lokottaravādins, who sub-group of Mahāsaṅghikas, Winternitz further discusses with regard to particular matter as, “And although the *Mahāvastu* belongs to the Srāvakayāna and contains much that could likewise occur – or even actually occurs- in the Pāli texts of the Theravādins, still it also contains something that makes it come closer to the Mahāyāna. The reason for many such traits is probably that the conception of Buddha prevalent among the Mahāsaṅghikas and the Lokottaravādins does actually represent a transition to the Mahāyāna.”

Otherwise Sarvāstivādins and their literature also influenced to developed Buddhist Sanskrit literature of Mahāyāna. “The Mahāsaṅghikas may have been the forerunners of Mahāyāna but it is clear that the Sarvāstivādins contributed much to the growth of Mahāyāna in one way or the other.” According to scholars the Sarvāstivādins texts can be found in not only India but also Tibet and China. The main texts of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, who later translated to Mahāyāna, were translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by the Chinese pilgrim I-tsing in the years 700- 712 A.D. In this way Buddhist Sanskrit canon which belong to Srāvakayāna later belong to Mahāyāna. Some Mahāyāna ideas which included in Srāvakayāna texts later developed and this development caused to particular matter.

THE LALITAVISTARA

According to details which discussed above while the *Mahāvastu* belonging to Srāvakayāna although it has assimilated some of the Mahāyāna features, the *Lalitavistara* is considered as one of the holiest texts of the Mahāyāna. Although the work originally contained the description of Buddha’s life for the Sarvāstivādins belonging to the Srāvakayāna. But the *Lalitavistara* describes itself as a *Vaipulyasūtra* (“elaborate teaching text”) - a common term for Mahāyāna *Sūtras*- and exhibition all features of a Mahāyāna *Sūtra*. According to scholars the *Lalitavistara* is a redaction of an older Srāvakayāna text expanded and embellished in the sense of the Mahāyāna. The *Lalitavistara* according to nature of the text, it is not a single work of one author but is an anonymous compilation in which very old and very young fragment stand in juxtaposition. The book moreover consists, according to its form, of

unequal sections, a continuous narrative in Sanskrit prose and numerous, often extensive, metrical pieces in “Mixed Sanskrit”.

THE *AVADĀNA* LITERATURE

With regard to development of Sanskrit Buddhist literature the *Avadāna* literature takes very important place. According to scholars the *Avadāna* texts like both books of Buddhist story literature which *Avadāna* and *Jātaka*, the *Avadāna* texts also stand, so to say, with one foot in the *Srāvakayāna* and the other in the *Mahāyāna* literature. The earlier works belong entirely to the *Srāvakayāna* literature, and the others in the *Mahāyāna* are completely *Mahāyānistic*, although they expound Buddha worship. This point has discussed by J.K. Nariman,

“The *Jātakamālā* is also called *Bodhisattva-avadānamālā*, for *Bodhisattva Avadāna* is synonymous with *Jātaka*. The *Jātakās* are consequently nothing but *Avadānas* having the *Bodhisattva* for their hero. Consequently, works like the *Sūtrāṅkārā* and the *Jātakamālā* have much in common with the texts of the *Avadāna* literature. On the other hand, numerous *Jātakas* are to be found in the collection of *Avadānas*.”

In the *Avadāna* literature of *Mahāyāna* there can be found many text.

The *Avadāna-śāṅkaka* is a work of the first variety which is most probably the most ancient of its kind. It is a collection of a hundred *avadāna* legends.

The *Divyāvadāna* is a later collection than the *Avadāna-Śāṅkaka*, but it also includes some very old texts.

The *Kalpānumāvadānamālā*, the *Ratnāvadānamālā* and the *Aśokāvadānamālā* are poetical versions of *Avadānas*, partly selected systematically from the *Avadāna-Śataka*, partly taken from other sources.

The *Dvāviśatyavadāna*, the *Bhadrakalpāvadāna*, the *Vratāvadānamālā* and the *Vicitrakarnikāvadāna*, all these works belonged to *Avadāna* literature and so far accessible only in a few manuscript. Others are known only through the Tibetan and Chinese translation.

THE *MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS*

In the *Mahāyāna* literature the *Mahāyānasūtras* are in vast range and has been developed within long period of time. The basic material for the critical studies of the *sūtras* of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is their Sanskrit originals. Up to the present a fairly large number of these have been discovered. According to scholars many of these can be compared with Chinese translations. Among Chinese translation, Kumārajīva, Paramārtha and Hsuan-tsang were probably most important.

In the beginning, various Buddhist *sūtras* appeared in *Prākṛit* or in the language of Central Asia. Modern scholars have been discussed the background of translation of *Mahāyānasūtras* from *Prākṛit* to Sanskrit.

According to scholars with regarding this matter the Nālanda University is very important.

“About the time when Buddhism was studied at Nālanda University, in the sixth century, they had been rewritten in Sanskrit, though there remain in these Sanskrit versions traces of Prākṛit colloquialism.” According to Hajime Nakamura, this change to Sanskrit from Prākṛit was caused before or during the Gupta Dynasty in 320 A.D., which adopted Sanskrit as the official language.

MAIN MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS

The Buddhist Sanskrit literature which mentioned so far belongs to the borderland which forms the transition between Srāvakayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism. According to scholars the Mahāyāna Sūtras which going to mention here can be categorized as the works which belong entirely to the Mahāyāna. In the Mahāyāna Sūtra literature the basic, oldest, most famous and most representative text is the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, of which there are several versions, large (the biggest is said to be in one hundred thousand śloka), medium and small (the smallest being of one śloka only). In the Mahāyāna Sūtra literature there can be seen the main nine texts have been categorized under title of *Nava-Darmas*. The titles of these nine books are:

(i) *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñā-Pāramitā*, (ii) *Saddharma-Puṣṭakarika*, (iii) *Lalita-Vistara*, (iv) *Lankāvatāra or Saddharma-Lankāvatāra*, (v) *Suvarṇa-Prabhāsa*, (vi) *Gaṇḍavyūha*, (vii) *Tathāgataguhyaka or Tathāgataguṇajñāna*, (viii) *Samādhirāja* and (ix) *Daśabhūmiśvara*.

At the present day also all these books are held in great honor in Nepal, and all these works are also called “*Vaipulya-Sūtras*.” There is evidence of that fact that the *Prajñā-Pāramitā*s belong to the earliest Mahāyāna-Sūtras. In the *Prajñā-Pāramitā* literature the following have come down to us in Sanskrit:

- *Śatasāhasrikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā* (100,000 Śloka),
- *Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā* (25,000 Śloka),
- *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā* (8000 Śloka),
- *Sārdhadvai-sāhasrikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā* (2,500 Śloka),
- *Saptaśatikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā* (700 Śloka),
- the *Vajracchedikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā*,
- *Alpākāra-Prajñā-Pāramitā* and
- *Prajñā-Pāramitā-Hṛdaya-Sūtra*.

The *Prajñā-Pāramitā* was already translated into Chinese as early as 179 A.D. The *Prajñā-Pāramitā* appear to have originated in the South, and afterwards spread to the East and the North.

OTHER MAHĀYĀNA SŪTRAS Mahāyānasūtras began their steady growth in the first century B.C. and they reached their fullest splendor by the seventh or eighth century A.D. By influence of the Philosophical traditions of the Mahāyāna later developed the Mahāyānasūtras in vast range. The main Mahāyānasūtras have been categorized under the title of *Nava-Dharmas*, which mentioned above, and other Mahāyānasūtras have been categorized under few titles according to teachings which included in the sūtras of Mahāyāna.

(i) The Sūtras which introduce meditation-

Especially in the Yogācāra School has been discussed meditation, the Meditation sūtras of Mahāyāna seen to have originated from among them. Following sūtras can categorize under particular matter.

The *Yogācārabhūmi-sūtra*, the *Dharmatara-dhyāna-sūtra*, the *Pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra*, the *Pratyutpanna-samādhi-sūtra*, the *Samādhirāja*, the *Samādhirāja-candrapradīpa-sūtra*, the *Śūrangama-samādhi-sūtra*, the *Atyāya-jñāna-sūtra*, the *Vajrasamādhi-sūtra*,

(ii) The Sūtras which introduce transmigration-

In the Mahāyāna there are some sūtras describing the process of transmigration of living beings. Following sūtras can categorize under above matter.

The *Kuṇḍraka-sūtra*, the *Saddharma-smṛty-upasthāna-sūtra*, the *Dharma-śarīra-sūtra*, the *Śālistamba-sūtra*, the *Pratītyasamutpādādivibhanga nirdeśanāma-sūtra*,

(iii) The Sūtras which introduce Buddhas and Bodhisattvas –

In Mahāyāna, Buddhas came to be regarded as more superhuman and more divine than in Conservative Buddhism, although physical and spiritual features of Buddhas were retained. Following sūtras are introduced particular matter. the *Kusuma-saṅcaya-sūtra*, the *Ratnajāti-paripīcchā-sūtra*, the *Ratnacandra-paripīcchā-sūtra*, the *Badrakalpa-samādhi-sūtra*, the *Akṣobhya-vyuha-sūtra*, the *Karunā-pundarika-sūtra*, the *Sukhāvātīvyūha-sūtra*, the *Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra*, the *Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra*, the *Aparimitāyurjñāna-sūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, the *Buddhāvatamsaka-sūtra*, the *Daśabhūmika-sūtra*, the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, the *Mahāsannipātasūtra*.

(iv) The Sūtras which introduce discipline.

In some Mahāyānasūtras Buddhist ethical practices to be observed by monks and nuns, laymen and lay women were described. Following sūtras are prominent particular matter.

The *Dharmavinayasamādhi-sūtra*, the *Kuśala-mūlasaṅgraha-sūtra*, the *Tathāgata-guhyakośa-sūtra*, the *Bodhisattvapratimokṣa-sūtra*, the *Śrīmālādevī-sūtra*, the *Brahmajāla-sūtra*.

THE OTHER TEXTS WHICH HAVE WRITTEN BY GREAT PHILOSOPHERS OF MAHĀYĀNA

Another way the Mahāyāna works that immediately follow are those of Nāgarjuna, Āryadeva, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, etc. The Nāgarjuna, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu wrote bulky commentaries on the *Prajñā-Pāramitās*, which have, however, only come down to us in the Chinese *Tripiṭaka* and in the Tibetan Tanjur.

Nāgarjuna (c.150-250 A.D) is the elaborator of one of the most important schools of the Mahāyāna, namely the Mādhyamika School and he is the author of the *Mādhyamika-Kārikās* which present in a systematic manner the *Sūnyatāvāda* which is taught in the Mahāyāna *Sūtras*. The other works probably his are: the *Yuktiśataka*, the *Śūnyatā-Saptati*, the *Pratītya-Samutpādahrdaya*, the *Mahāyāna Vimśaka*, the *Vigraha-vyāvartanī*, the *Dharma-Saṅgraha*, the *Ratnāvalī* and the *Suhrllekha*. Among these the *Ratnāvalī* and the *Suhrllekha*, Letter to a Friend, are and epistle to the Sātavāhana emperor, expounding traditional Buddhist morality in no way different from that we have found in the *Tripiṭaka*.



Āryadeva (170-270 A.D.) who was the most famous disciple of Nāgarjuna and his works are as follows; the *Śata-śāstra*, the *Catuhśataka*, the *Akṣara-śataka*, the *Mahāpuruṣa-śataka*, the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa*, and the following four books, existing in Tibetan alone, are traditionally ascribed to Āryadeva, are the *Jñānāsārasamuccaya*, the *Skalitapramathanayuktihetusiddhi*, the *Madhyamakabhramaghāta*, the *Āryaprajñāpāramitāmahāparipīcchā*.

Maitreya or Maitreya-nātha (c.270-350 A.D.) who was the elaborator of Yogācāra School and he also later identified with Maitreya-Bodhisattva, the future Buddha. Asaṅga heartily venerated his teacher Maitreya who was respectfully called Maitreya-Bodhisattva. As for Maitreya's works, the Chinese tradition enumerates the *Yogācārabhūmi*, the *Yogavibhāga*, the *Mahāyāna-sūtrāṅkārā*, the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, and the *Vajracchedikāvyaṅkyā*, while the Tibetan tradition has the *Mahāyāna-sūtrāṅkārā*, the *Madhyāntavibhāga*, the *Abhisamayāṅkārā*, the *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga* and the *Uttaratantra*.

These five are well known among the Tibetan scholars. Asaṅga or Āryasaṅga expounded the *Vijñānavāda* systematically, and he was born about or after the year 290 A.D. in Purusapura and died about 360 A.D.

The following books are ascribed to him. The *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha*, the *Vajracchedikāvyākhyā* (a commentary on the *Vajracchedikāsūtra*), the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*.

Vasubandhu (320-400 A.D.) who was the younger brother of Asaṅga and he was one of the most prominent philosophers in the history of Buddhist literature. His chief work, the *Abhidharmakośa* has not come down in the Sanskrit and its auto commentary is available in Sanskrit now. The *Abhidharmakośa-kārika*, the *Gāthā-Saṃgraha*, the *Paramārtha-Saptati*, the *Pañcaskandha-Prakarana*, the *Vyākhyāyukti*, the *Karma-Siddhi-Prakarana*, and the *Pratītya-Samutpāda-Sūtra* these are the other works of Vasubandhu.



Furthermore, in the Buddhist Sanskrit literature it can see many authors belong to philosophical school such as Mādhyamika and Yogācāra have been written many books to explain their views. Buddhapālita and Bhāvaviveka (Bhavya) who belong to Mādhyamika School and wrote commentaries on their works lived and worked at the beginning of the 5th century A.D.

In the 5th century A.D. there lived Sthiramati was a disciple of **Dignāga** (Dīnāga) who belongs to Yogācāra School. Sthiramati wrote a commentary on the *Kāśyapa-Parivarta*, and on Vasubandhu's *Trimśikā* these are available in Sanskrit. Also he wrote a commentary on *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu available only Tibetan translation.

Another author **Dharmapāla** wrote a commentary on the *Vijñaptimātratā-Siddhi*. The greatest and most independent thinker among the successors of Vasubandhu is Dignāga, the founder of Buddhist logic, only a single one of Dignāga works, the *Nyāyapraveśa* has come down in Sanskrit. The principal works of his successor Dharmakīrti, the *Nyāyabindu*, has come down to us in Sanskrit. Dharmakīrti wrote seven books on Buddhist logic including *Nyāyabindu*. The other books are the *Pramāṇavartikā*, the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, the *Hetubindu*, the *Vādanyāya*, the *Sambandhāparikṣā*, the *Santāntarasiddhi*. Among these books the *Vādanyāya* and *Santāntarasiddhi* are available in Tibetan translation.

Candragomi who as a grammarian, philosopher and poet and belongs to Yogācāra School enjoyed high renown in the Buddhist Literary. Of his poetical works we have only a religious poem in the form of a letter to his pupil, the *Sīsyalekhā-Dharma-Kāvya*. The most prominent among the later teachers of Mahāyāna Buddhism, who also distinguished himself as a poet, is Śāntideva, who probably lived in the 7th century A.D. Tāranātha ascribes to him the works *Śikṣā-Samuccaya*, *Sūtra-Samuccaya* and *Bodhicaryāvatāra*.

Śāntarakṣita was one of the most important and pivotal thinkers in the history of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and the Professor of Nālandā University. He was born during the reign of Gopāla (660-705 A.D) the founder of the famous Pāla dynasty of Bengal and died at the time of Dharmapāla who ascended the throne in 765 A.D. Śāntarakṣita was the author of several philosophical and logical works.

In the Tibetan Tanjur a number of works are attributed to him among which the *Vādanyāyavṛttivipacitārtha* and *Tattvasaṃgraha* deserve special mention. The first work is a commentary on the *Vādanyāna* of Dharmakīrti the Sanskrit original of this work is lost Tibetan translation still exist. The most famous book of Śāntarakṣita's is *Tattvasaṃgraha* compendium Indian philosophy systems, non-Buddhists and 30 Buddhists. His disciple Kamalasīla (740-795 A.D) wrote commentaries on both books are available in Sanskrit, and Tibetan translation. Both went to Tibet, Kamalasīla wrote two books at Tibet, *Bhāvanākrama* and *Madhyamāloka*, all these are available in Sanskrit and Tibetan translation.

Check Your Progress:

1. Fourth Buddhist Council was held at which place ?
2. Who was the author of 'a history of Indian Buddhism'?

1.6 SUMMARY

The Buddhist Literature specially the early Pali literature has a very long oral tradition and it was preserved very meticulously by the teacher-disciple tradition and was written down in Sri Lanka in the 1st BCE. Today the Buddhist Literature is studied through the four languages- Pali, Buddhist Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan. Here we have taken only the brief survey of the Buddhist literature of the Pali- canonical and non-canonical literature and the Buddhist Sanskrit Literature. The Pali literature specially the Tipitaka is considered to be authentic source of the Life and teachings of the Buddha and is said to be the buddhavacana- the words of the Buddha. It corresponds to the archaeological sources and many Buddhist sites and places have been excavated with the help of the Pali literature.

Mixed or hybrid Sanskrit initially and then Buddhist Sanskrit is used by the Buddhist monks and scholars for writing the expositions on the teachings of the Buddha. These works were mainly translated into Chinese and Tibetan languages and is preserved in that languages, but unfortunately lost in the originals.

1.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- Write in brief about Pali Canonical Literature or the Tipitaka
- What are the atthakatha or the Pali commentarial literature-Discuss
- Discuss the development of the Hybrid-Sanskrit or Buddhist Sanskrit Literature

- Write the names of some Mahayana scholars with their literary works.

1.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS

- B C Law: History of Pali Literature
- Bharatsingh Upadhyaya- Pali Sahitya ka Itihas (Hindi)
- Bhikkhu Sujato- The Authenticity of Early Buddhist Texts.
- G. P Malalasekhara-Pali Literature- a 3 in-1 Publication
- Gombrich Richard- Buddhism and Pali
- J K Nariman-Literary history of Sanskrit Buddhism
- Jain Bhagchandra- Baudha Sanskrit Sahitya ka Itihas (Hindi)
- Norman K R -History of Indian Literature- Pali
- Ranjan Rajesh-Exegetical Literature in Pali
- Sayagji U Ko Lay- Guide to Tipitaka
- Shukla Karunesh-History of Buddhist Sanskrit Literature.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

Unit Structure:

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Buddhist Art- Sculptures and Paintings as Sources
- 2.3 Archaeological Sites as Sources
- 2.4 Important Buddhist Places in Northern India
- 2.5 Important Buddhist Places in Western India
- 2.6 Important Buddhist Places in Southern India
- 2.7 Summary
- 2.8 Unit End Questions
- 2.9 Additional Reading

2.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To understand sources other than Literature for the study of Buddhism, their utilization, their role and contribution in constructing and reconstructing ancient history of India and of Buddhism.
 - To know how to explore different excavated material for getting the correct and reliable information.
 - To re-write the history of Buddhism with the help of new findings.
 - To develop analytical skill and experiential knowledge for the understanding of history of Buddhism through archaeology, art and architecture.
-

2.1 INRODUCTION:

Archaeology is the scientific study of the remains of the past. They include buildings monuments and other material relics that the inhabitants of that period were associated with. Excavations at Taxila give an idea about the Kushanas. The rock cut temples of Ajanta and Ellora with its sculptures and paintings express the artistic finery of that period. Besides all these pots, pottery, seals, skeletal remains all are inseparable parts of the reconstructing history.



The study of Buddhism in India would have received a great setback had it not been for Sir Alexander Cunningham's archaeological expeditions which re-introduced the places of Buddhist interest like Vaishali, Sravasti and so on to the Indians. For gaining information about archaeological aspect of Ancient India with reference to history of Buddhism study should be carried out on various architectural forms which existed in the Buddhist India like the 'stupa' 'vihara' 'chaityagraha' and of the Buddhist art from the 'sculptures' and 'paintings of the excavated stupas and caves (leni).

STUPA: As per the wishes expressed by the Buddha in Mahaparinibbana sutta, stupas are to be built on the relics (dhatus-remains of the body after cremation) of the Buddha, Pacceka Buddhas, (one enlightened by himself for himself) Arahatta (fully liberated ones) and cakkavatin (soverign kings). As per Pali literary sources originally there were eight stupas in Rajagraha, Vaisali, Kapilvastu, Allakappa, Ramgram, Vethadipa, Pava and Kusinagar (erected on relics) besides those erected by Brahmina Drona and Mauriyas of Pippalivana on the pot and the embers respectively.

Thus, Stupas are monument erected on the relics of the Buddha, Pacceka Buddha, a Buddhist saint, (Arahatta) and cakkavatin King. Such stupas erected on the relics are called the Saririka stupas. Stupa at Kapilvattu is a Saririka stupa. Sometimes Stupas are erected for marking a sacred spot, or for commemorating an event connected with the life of the Buddha. Such stupas are called the Uddesika stupas. Dhamek stupa is a Uddesika stupa commemorating the dhammacakkapavattana at Sarnath. Stupas constructed over or on the objects used by the Buddha like bowls, garments, sticks etc are called the Paribhogika stupas. The stupa at Sopara near Mumbai is the Paribhogika stupa built on the piece of the Patta [begging bowl] of the Buddha.



Architecturally the origin of the stupa is from the earthen mound developed to form the huge stupa. Stupa consists of the circular base called Medhi, supporting the massive solid dome called Anda, crowned by the Harmika and the Umbrella or chattra symbolizing the Universal monarchy of the Buddha- the one who conquered the SELF. Though in its development the stupa often became elaborate and complex, in its purest form the plan consisted of a circle. Worship consists of walking clockwise around a stupa, therefore the structure is surrounded by a processional path, or the padakkhinapatha. This basic design is the inspiration for other types of Buddhist monuments, including pagodas, seen throughout Asia. Many important stupas have become places of pilgrimage.

The emperor Asoka was the first to encourage the building of stupas. He is said to have constructed 84,000 stupas all over his kingdom. Archaeological excavations have proved the existence of Asokan stupa under most of the stupas excavated in India.

The Chinese traveller Fa-hien speaks of the alms bowl of the Buddha which he saw at Peshawar. Huen Tsang speaks of head-dresses of prince Siddhartha associating them with the vihara at Konkanpura in South India. There are places where it is believed that Buddha has left his foot prints for faithful to worship. Sanctuaries of different kinds have arisen in all such places. For getting information about history of early Buddhism these stupas prove to be a very valuable source. As they are built on either relics or the objects used by the Buddha or to mark an important event connected with his life or sacred spot their location can throw new light on the history of early Buddhism. Apart from this it can throw light on history of origin and development of Art and Architecture of ancient India. The stupa architecture also reflects the technological development and the material of construction of the period.

With time the stupa not only became the symbolic form of the mahaparinibbana of the Buddha but also the symbolic form of the Buddha himself, his Dhamma [teachings] and his Abhidhamma [higher teachings]. Thus, the study of the evolution of the stupa reveals the changing phases of Buddhism through time.

VIHARA: The vihāra is the residential place of the monks and the nuns. This unit of the architecture is also influenced by the philosophy, by disciplinary rules and regulations of the monks [Vinaya] and the changing pattern of the Buddhism. The evolution and the development of the vihāra clearly shows the origin of the vihāra in the natural grottoes of the mountains in case of the rock-cut architecture and in the temporary huts of grass, self erected by the monks, in case of structural architecture. From there they developed with the need of the Sangha, with the changed philosophy, with the time and technology into the grand rock-cut architecture of the Sahyādri and to the lofty well-developed monasteries of the Nalanda and Taxila in later date.

Vihara or Buddhist monastery is an important form of institution associated with Buddhism and can also be defined as a residence for monks, a centre for religious work and meditation and a centre of

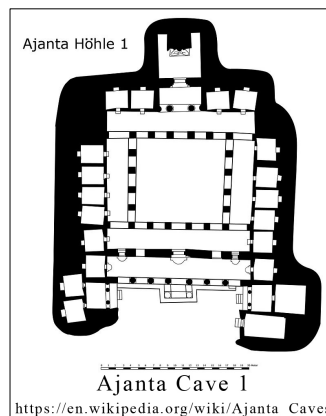


Buddhist learning. Reference to five kinds of dwellings (Panca-lenani) namely, Vihara, Addayoga, Pasada, Hammiya and Guha is found in the

Buddhist canonical texts as fit for monks. Of these only the Vihara (monastery) and Guha (Cave) have survived.

The monastic establishment excavated in the Nagarjunakonda valley shows the typical layout. It consists of residential quarters of the monks, a stupa and a chaityagraha. The living quarters of the monks called the cells were small rooms around the central open courtyard. The similar plan is seen for the vihara in the rock-cut architecture of Maharashtra, with the only difference that the central courtyard is not open to sky and the cells were fitted with rock-cut platforms for beds and pillows. The largest rock-cut vihara is seen at Junnar and has 20 cells around the courtyard.

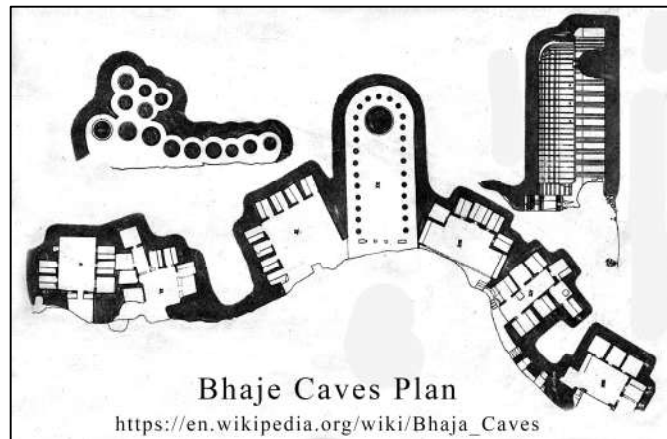
From the first century CE onwards viharas also developed into educational institutions, due to the increasing demands for teaching. In the later period the image of the Buddha is seen in the central shrine of the vihara. Some Viharas became extremely important institutions, some of them evolving into major Buddhist Universities with thousands of students, such as Nalanda.



Epigraphic, literary and archaeological evidence testify to the existence of many Buddhist Viharas in Bengal (West Bengal and Bangladesh) and Bihar from the 5th century AD to the end of the 12th century. These monasteries were generally designed in the old traditional Kushana pattern, a square block formed by four rows of cells along the four sides of an inner courtyard. They were usually built of stone or brick. As the monastic organization developed, they became elaborate brick structures with many adjuncts. Often, they consisted of several stories and along the inner courtyard there usually ran a veranda supported on pillars. In some of them a stupa or shrine with a dais appeared. Within the shrine stood the icon of Buddha, Bodhisattva or Buddhist female deities. More or less the same plan was followed in building monastic establishments in Bengal and Bihar during the Gupta and Pala period. In course of time monasteries became important centres of learning.

An idea of the plan and structure of some of the flourishing monasteries may be found from the account of Hsuan-Tsang, who referred to the grand monastery of po-si-po, situated about 6.5 km west of the capital city of Pundravardhana (Mahasthan). The monastery was famous for its spacious halls and tall chambers. General Cunningham identified this vihara with bhasu vihara. Huen-tsang also noticed the famous Lo-to-mo-chi vihara (Raktamrittika Mahavihara) near Karnasuvarna (Rangamati, Murshidabad, West Bengal). The site of the monastery has been identified at Rangamati (modern Chiruti, Murshidabad, West Bengal). A number of smaller monastic blocks arranged on a regular plan, with other adjuncts, like shrines, stupas, pavilions etc have been excavated from the site.

CHAITYAGRUHA / CHETIYAGHARA: There is no mention of ‘*chetiya*’ in the Pāli literature as such but the inscriptions and the sculptures mention the word in the later date. Today the word *stūpa* and *chetiya* is taken synonymously, but it was not so in the period of the Buddha. “a glance through the pages of the Mahāprīnibbāna sūta will also bring out the difference between the *stūpa* and the *chetiya*. As a matter of fact, the former type is used there to signify funerary monuments whereas *chetiya* or *chaitya* conveys a sense very much akin to that of a shrine. No less than seven *chetiya*s, are specifically mentioned in the Mahāprīnibbāna sūta and all these *chaitya*s were visited by the Buddha”. Chetiya is a home of a *chaitya* or *stūpa* as the name itself suggest and probably developed in later days when the need was felt for enclosed place to sit in front of the *stūpa* and meditate.



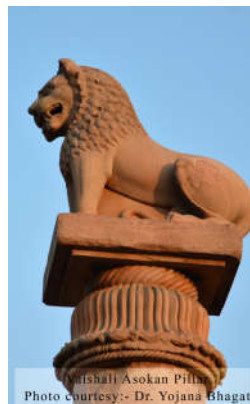
Chetiya plays a very important part in the Buddhist architecture, as it is a unique structure found in Buddhism which not only has different plan, elevation, section, but is the perfect reflection of the philosophical teachings and the changes happening through the years. It is also the best-executed structure that fulfils the requisites of vipassana meditation in a structural form; especially the apsidal planned vaulted roofed chetiya.

The development of chetiya can be traced from the archaeological evidences found in the structural as well as in the rock-cut ones. Structural evidences are very inadequate due to the material of construction not strong enough to sustain the time period of thousands of years. But the rock-cut chetiya are adequate in number and are in good condition to develop the chronology as well as the origin. The Chetiya of Karle, Bhaja, Bedse, Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Ellora etc are few of the examples.

The most important part of the evolution of the chaitya is the shape of the chetiya. The apsidal plan marks the beginning and end of the structures and that too only in Buddhist architecture. No architectural evidences are found in India of apsidal plans prior to the Buddhist period. The study of the development of the plans of the chetiya are adequate to reveal the changing phases of Buddhism in India with reference to the different school or sects of Buddhism.

2.2 BUDDHIST ART-SCULPTURES AND PAINTINGS AS SOURCES

SCULPTURES: Both types of sculptures, the sculptures in relief and the freestanding sculptures forms the authentic source of Buddhist history. The earliest sculptures belong to the Mauryan period and are the capitals and the crowning animal figures on the Asokan pillars. The Lion capital of Sarnath, the Sankasya Elephant capital, the Rampurva bull capital are some of the examples of the Maurayan sculptures which has reached its zenith of perfection. Beside the animal figures the sculptures of this era is also marked by the figures of Yaksha and Yakshinis. The Didarganja yakshini with the bright mauryan polish is said to be one of the most beautiful freestanding sculptures of the period.



Lion Capital of Ashoka, Sarnath
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat



Gajalakshmi - Bharhut Stupa
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gajalakshmi>

The sculpture of the Sunga period shows the evolution from the archaic phase to one of maturity and is marked with the sculptures on the stone vedikas and toranas of Bharhut, Sanchi and Bodhgaya. Jataka stories are very cleverly represented in a single carving but with the method of continuous narration at the Bharhut stupa. This shows the epitome of efficiency reached by the artist in that period.

It is a well-known fact that in the earlier phase of Buddhism, Buddha was not represented in the human form and was worshipped in the symbolic forms. The important events in the life of the Buddha are represented in the relief sculptures where the Bodhi tree, the footprints, the stupa are the symbols of the Buddha himself, which is very well depicted in the Sanchi stupa.

The Satavahana sculpture is seen in the Naneghat rock-cut excavation and its evolution can be traced through the different rock-cut excavations like the Bhaje, Karle, Pitalkhore, Bedse and so on. The figures on the capitals or the donor couples at the chaityagruhas show the development of the Buddhist sculptures reached at that period.

Kushana period is marked by the 'Gandhara art' phase and its most important contribution to the Buddhist art was the creation of the Buddha image. With the transition from Theravada to Mahayana the image of Buddha appeared in the Gandhara and the Mathura



Gandharan Buddha, 1st-2nd century AD
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Buddhist_art

school simultaneously. Buddha is represented in the human form for the first time in the history of Buddhism. The Buddha images with the different mudras came along with the bodhisattvas.

The Amaravati school of art flourished in the south India at Amaravati stupa and Nagarjunakonda valley. In subject matter, composition and arrangement of figures, the Nagarjunakonda sculptures show slight differences from those of the Amaravati, but both had great influence on the later Indian sculptures flourished in the south India.

The Gupta period marks the height of glory of the Indian art. The representation of the human body in fully Indian and the mastery over the refinement and technique is seen in the sculptures. Though the Gupta period is the revival of the Hindu period, the Buddhist and the Jaina art flourished nevertheless. The Vakatakas, the allies of the Gupta, in their reign is the art of the later Ajanta attributed.

After the Gupta dynasty the Buddhism art flourished under the Pala dynasty. The art of this period marks the final phase of the classical Indian tradition. Stone sculptures were replaced by the metal ones.

REMARKS: the changing phases of the Buddhism are reflected through the study of the sculptures through the ages. The earliest is marked with the symbolic art and the image of the Buddha is never shown. Though the bodhisattvas were shown they were depicted through the inspiring Jataka tales fulfilling the paramitas or perfections.



Nagarjunakonda Panel

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

The Mahayana phase of Buddhism is marked with the introduction of image of the Buddha in the sculptural art. This was supported by the innumerable bodhisattva figures featuring on both sides of the Buddha image.

Thus, in short, the study of sculptures is the source of the study of Buddhist history directly as well as indirectly.

PAINTINGS: There are innumerable references to painted decorations in the Jatakas and other Buddhist literature. The earliest surviving examples of Buddhist paintings, dating from 2nd cent B.C. are found in some of the rock-cut chetiyagharas and viharas at Ajanta in Maharashtra. A principal wall painting of the period is in chetiyaghara-10 which is devoted to the illustration of Chaddanta Jataka. However, Buddhist painting seems to have attained its maturity only during Gupta period (5th-6th cen A.D.) The finest specimens of this period are to be found in the caves at Bagh (central India) and Ajanta. The mural paintings in Ajanta contain representations of scenes from Buddha's lives, from Jataka tales etc. These stories are represented in continuous narrative.

The mediaeval period in Eastern and Western India was a period of intense activity in manuscript writing. As the authors of manuscript wanted to embellish their books with illustrations the use of miniature paintings came into vogue. The miniature paintings of Pala period prove to be consisting of Buddhist form of art.



The Bodhisattva of compassion
Padmapani with lotus
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajanta_Caves

These paintings throw a flood of light on the history of Ancient India. They provide information about the people, their way of living, costumes, jewellery, architecture and many other aspects. They give information of social, political, cultural, and religious conditions existing during those times.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AS SOURCES

Places mentioned in the Pali literature: Gautama-the Buddha has left his footprint on the soil of India and his mark on the soul of mankind. This human teacher eclipsed even the heavenly gods and the places consecrated by his presence were held in great veneration. Before his mahaparinirvana, the Buddha spoke of the four places which a pious believer should visit with faith and reverence. They are the Lumbini-vana where the Tathagata was born; Gaya (Bodh Gaya) where he attained bodhi (enlightenment); the Deer Park at Isipatana (Sarnath) where he proclaimed the Law for the first time; and Kusinagara where he reached the unconditioned state of nirvana.

In the Buddhist sacred lore there are four other places which with the above four make up the atthamahasthanani (astamahasthanani) or eight sanctified spots. They were the scenes of four of the principal miracles that the Blessed One was said to have performed. At Sravasti, the capital of Kosala, the Buddha gave a display of his miraculous powers to confound the leader of the Tirthika sect. Next, in accordance with the practice of the previous Buddhas, he ascended the heaven of the thirty-three gods, preached the Abhidhamma to his deceased mother and descended to earth at Sankasya. Rajagrhya, the capital of Magadha, was the

scene of another miracle in which he tamed the mad elephant, Nalagiri, that had been let loose by his jealous cousin, Devadatta. In a mango grove at Vaisali, a number of monkeys offered him a bowl of honey. The famous cities in India at that time were thus hallowed by their association with the Buddha's religion.

These holy places became centres of great attraction for the pious believers and pilgrimages were religiously undertaken to these places. Asoka calls such pilgrimages dhammayata (dharmayatra), or tours of piety. Many other places, too, rose into prominence as the influence of Buddhism spread. The places of Buddhist significance are many in the land of Buddha and in their flourishing days their sanctity, no less than their splendour and magnificence, attracted visitors from far and wide.

Finding and identification of the places: though the places were mentioned in the Literature the actual sites were not identified or found, due to the decline and loss of Buddhism in India and the interim ignorance of almost 1000 years. Sir Alexander Cunningham in the early 19th CE with the help of the diary of Huein Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim scholar, actually walked on the footsteps and identified the places associated with the Buddha, with the help of the remains of the Asokan Stupas and monolithic pillars and the seals and coins found at the excavations on the sites. Most of the sites associated with the Buddha were searched for and excavated by the western scholars and identified thus like the Lumbini- the birth place of the Siddharth Gautama with the help of Asokan pillar with the inscription, the capital of Kosala and the famous capital Sravasti and the Jetavana with the village of Saheth-Maheth and the capital city of Kosambi on the bank of Yamuna with the help of story of Bakulathera from the Pali literature and so on.

Thus, it is to be understood that though these places are well-known places of pilgrimages today, they were under the ground for nearly 800 years and gone into oblivion till the western scholars excavated and identified them making them the archaeological sources of the study of the ancient Buddhist India and history of Buddhism.

2.4 IMPORTANT BUDDHIST PLACES IN NORTHERN INDIA:

Lumbini: Among the sacred places of Buddhism, Lumbini where the Blessed One was born must inevitably come first. It has been identified with the site of Rummindei, in the Nepalese Terai. As the birth-place of the Buddha, the site grew in sanctity and importance. Many are the establishments that rose on the site. Very few, however, are now in existence. Of course, there still stands at the site a pillar engraved with an inscription commemorating the great Asoka's pilgrimage to this place in the twentieth year after his consecration. "Here the Buddha was born", says the emperor, and this statement proves the identity of the sanctified spot beyond any doubt. Apart from the pillar, there is an ancient shrine with an image representing the nativity of the Lord as described in the sacred texts.

The authenticity of the archaeological remains within the boundaries has been confirmed through a series of excavations since the discovery of the Asoka pillar in 1896. The remains of viharas, stupas and numerous layers of brick structures from the 3rd century BC to the present century at the site of the Maya Devi Temple are proof of Lumbini having been a centre of pilgrimage from early times. The archaeological remains require active conservation and monitoring to ensure that the impact of natural degradation, influence of humidity and the impact of the visitors are kept under control.



Lumbini pillar excavation 1896 - Nepal
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lumbini_pillar_inscription

Bodh Gaya: Bodh Gaya where the Buddha attained supreme wisdom (bodhi) lies six miles to the south of Gaya, a place of Hindu pilgrimage. To the devout Buddhist there is no place of greater interest or sanctity than the holy spot of the Buddha's enlightenment. Sacred shrines and stately Several interesting inscriptions have been discovered at this site, according to which Ceylonese, Burmese and Chinese people visited this place of pilgrimage. Two Ceylonese inscriptions in Sanskrit tell us about one monuments were raised all around and the account of the Chinese pilgrim, Huein Tsang, gives us a glimpse of the past splendour of this sanctified site.

Huein Tsang ascribes the erection of the original Bodhi shrine to Emperor Asoka. According to one of his rock edicts, Asoka visited this place, which is called Sambodhi in the inscription, when he had been consecrated ten years, and it is more than probable that the great emperor constructed a shrine on this holy spot. No vestiges of such a shrine can, however, be found at present. Scholars are of the opinion that the Bodhi shrine carved in a Bharhut relief (circa 2nd century B.C.) might represent the one erected by Asoka. It seems to have consisted of a balustraded gallery enclosing the Bodhi tree, preceded by a column of the type on which Asoka's edicts are carved. The original balustrades seem to have been of wooden construction, which was later translated into stone. The stately structure, which we see nowadays, is a later erection. This temple has been restored and renovated many times. From the description of Huein Tsang



Kumrahar Mahabodhi plaque
<https://siddham.network/material/clay-terracotta/>

it appears that the temple, essentially in its present shape and appearance, existed already in the seventh century A.D.

As it now stands, the Mahabodhi temple at Bodh Gaya is approximately 160 feet high and consists of a straight pyramidal tower surmounted by a stupa, complete with the harmika and the top with a fluted amalaka-like lower member. The tower has angle amalakas at the corners, demarcating its different stages. The entrance porch, evidently later than the original temple, is on the east. Each of the four sides of the tower presents several tiers of niches, while the front face has a tall lancet opening for the admission of light into the sanctum. At the base of the tower there rises a turret at each of the four corners, a miniature replica of the main spire.

The temple enshrines a great gilded figure of the Blessed One touching the earth which symbolizes the supreme event of enlightenment. Along the northern side of the temple, there is a narrow masonry platform raised about four feet above the ground. This is known as the "jewel shrine of the walk" or the Buddha's Promenade (*cankama*), where after attaining enlightenment, the Great Teacher is said to have spent a week walking to and fro in deep meditation. At the points where he set his feet, there are sculptured ornaments representing the miraculous blossoms which are said to have sprung up in his footsteps. Passing along this promenade and to the west of the temple stands the Bodhi tree and the holy spot of enlightenment, now marked by a red sandstone slab, representing the Vajrasana on which the Master is said to have reached Perfect Wisdom. The original Mahabodhi shrine, as represented in the early reliefs, is portrayed as enclosing this holy spot including the Bodhi tree. The idea of erecting a temple with a lofty conical tower necessitated its erection a little to the east of this holy spot so that the holy spot and the Bodhi tree now stand at the back of the temple.

Around the temple lie innumerable remains of which the most important are portions of the stone railing which represent two different periods of construction, the earlier going back to about the 2nd century B.C. and the latter to the early Gupta period. Interesting carvings are still to be seen on these rail posts, and of these the figure of Indra as Santi, and that of Surya, the Sun god, drawn by a four-horsed chariot, are noteworthy. Beautiful sculptures and richly decorated votive stupas, scattered all round, still continue to attract the admiring gaze of pilgrims and visitors. The residence of the Mahanta, who was for a long time in charge of the temple precincts, is close to the great temple and, like the sculpture shed nearby, is a store-house of fine sculptures and other relics which once embellished this holy spot. In the immediate vicinity are situated seven sacred sites, which, according to tradition, were identical with those where the Lord is said to have passed seven tranquil weeks in the enjoyment of his Buddhahood.

Sarnath: Sarnath marks the birth of the religion of Buddha. Hence it became a great centre of Buddhist activities and remained so for more than a millennium and a half. The inscriptions refer to the site as the "Monastery of the Turning of the Wheel of Righteousness" (Saddharma-cakra-pravartana vihara) by which name this sacred place was known to ancient Buddhist writers. Though very little is known of the history of the Deer Park during the early centuries of Buddhism, the place acquired celebrity, like the other holy places of Buddhism, from the time of Asoka. This saintly monarch erected a series of monuments, including a pillar inscribed with an edict warning the resident monks and nuns against creating schisms in the church. The Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hien and Yuan Chwang, visited the place in the 5th and 7th centuries A.D. respectively, and left us valuable information regarding this important site. In later periods also, the site grew in size and prosperity and inscriptions and other evidence relate to the building of new shrines and edifices, as well as to the renovation of old ones, one of the latest being the Temple of the Wheel of the Law founded by Kumaradevi, one of the queens of King Govindachandra of Kanauj, in the first half of the 12th century A.D.



Sarnath Buddha - Sarnath Museum
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Soon after, the place was destroyed, presumably by the armies of Muhammad Ghorī. There is evidence of earlier vandalism, once probably by the Hunas and later during the sacking of Banaras by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. Such damage, however, was immediately repaired by pious devotees, but this final catastrophe brought waste and desolation to the prosperous establishments.

The ruins of Sarnath cover an extensive area. The Archaeological Department has done a good deal of excavation at the site and a number of interesting monuments and sculptures of exquisite beauty and workmanship have come to light. As one approaches the site from Banaras, the first landmark that attracts the eye is a lofty mound of brick-work, locally known as the Chaukhandi, surmounted by an octagonal tower at the top. The mound represents the ruins of a stupa on a terraced basement erected to mark the spot where the Buddha, on his way from Gaya to Isipatana, first met his five former comrades who were soon to become converts to his Faith.

Half a mile to the north is the site of the Deer Park, which must have had imposing buildings in the days of its pristine greatness. All is now in ruins, save a battered structure, the Dhamekh stupa, which rears its head to a

height of nearly 150 feet above the surrounding country. The ruins have been laid bare by the spade of the archaeologists and the site, as exposed, shows that temples and stupas occupied the central position with monasteries in the area around them. They belong to different periods of construction, the earliest going back to the days of Asoka. Traces of successive restorations and renovations are also evident in some of the important buildings.

The Asoka stupa, seen by Yuan Chwang, has been identified with the ruins of a large brick stupa, commonly known as Jagat Singh's stupa after Jagat Singh, the Diwan of Raja Chait Singh of Banaras. He dismantled it in 1794 for bricks for the



construction of a market in Banaras. The site of this stupa probably marks the spot where the Buddha delivered his first discourse and thus literally turned the Wheel of the Law. A little farther to the north stands the broken stump of the Asoka pillar, the magnificent Lion Capital of which may now be seen in the Archaeological Museum nearby. On the east may be seen the ruins of a temple, designated the main shrine, which must date from the Gupta period, if not earlier.

Around the main shrine there is a paved court with a similar approach from the east. In this court are found innumerable remains of stupas of various shapes and sometimes also of shrines, the remnants of pious benefactions of votaries and pilgrims who flocked to this holy spot. On the north and south were ranged monastic establishments.

Among the ruins at Sarnath, the most imposing is no doubt the Dhamekh stupa situated at the south-east corner of the site. Battered though it is, it still stands 143 ft. high from its original foundations. Indeed, it is a solid structure, built of massive blocks of stone at the lower stage and of brick, probably faced with stone, at the upper. It is of cylindrical shape and is relieved in the lower section by eight projecting bays, each with a large niche originally containing an image. This lower section has a broad belt of carved ornamentation of intricate geometric pattern with floral arabesques above and below it. The modern name, Dhamekh, is probably derived from the Sanskrit dharmeksa, meaning "the pondering of the Law", and since it is in a line with the Dharmarajika stupa of Asoka which stands due west of it, it must have been an important, monument. The original structure on this spot also possibly dated from the days of Asoka.

Apart from the ruins and relics of the past, a place of modern interest is furnished by the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, erected by the Mahabodhi Society where are enshrined certain Buddhist relics discovered at Takasila (Taxila), Nagarjunakonda and Mirpur-khas in Sindh.

The antiquities so far discovered in the ruins are numerous and consist of sculptures, bas-reliefs, rail fragments, terra cotta figurines, seals and sealings, inscriptions, pottery vessels, and various other objects. With very few exceptions, they pertain to the Buddhist religion and cover a period of approximately 1,500 years, from the 3rd century B.C. to the 12th century A.D. They have been housed in a neat little Museum and a sculpture shed, situated near the ruins, which well repays a visit. The Lion Capital, originally surmounting the Asoka pillar, now occupies a place of honour in the Museum. It consists of four addorsed lions, supported on an abacus over a bell-shaped lower member. The capital was originally crowned by a wheel, the fragments of which have been recovered from the ruins. Symbolical of India's message of peace and goodwill to the world, the capital now forms the crest of resurgent India.



One of the foremost of the sculptures in the Museum is the famous sandstone image of the Master in the act of setting the wheel of the Law in motion (dharmacakra-pravartana-mudra), which is a masterpiece of Indian plastic art.

Kusinagara: Kusinagara or Kusinara is sacred to Buddhists as it was the place where under a grove of sal trees the Lord passed into nirvana in his eightieth year. The site has been identified with Kasia in the Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh.

Like the other sacred places connected with the eventful life of the



Master, Kusinara rose to be an important place of pilgrimage and in the course of time was covered with sacred shrines and monasteries. For reasons unknown, however, the place was deserted early in its history, and both Fa-hien and Yuan Chwang note the utter ruin and desolation of this

once important site. The remains that have been partially laid bare by excavations are extremely fragmentary, but the identity of the place with the site of the mahaparinirvana is settled beyond doubt by the discovery of inscriptions referring to the Parinirvana Caitya. The stupa of parinirvana which Asoka is said to have built has not yet been brought to light. The Parinirvana Caitya to which the inscriptions refer dates from the Gupta period and it is possible that the Asoka stupa lies buried under the later construction. Among the other sacred edifices that still remain may be mentioned the Matha Kunwar ka Kot which enshrines a large recumbent figure of the Buddha in the state of nirvana. The image was found in fragments and has been skilfully restored by Mr. Carlleyle. The great



Reclining Buddha

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parinirvana_Stupa

stupa which stood on the spot where the body of the Lord was cremated and where the relics of the Master were divided into eight equal portions is probably represented by a large mound locally known as Ramabhar. This mound has only been partially examined and a more systematic exploration is expected to bring to light important material relating to the history of this venerable spot.

Sravasti: Sravasti (modern Saheth-Maheth in U.P.), the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kosala, was sacred to the Buddhists, because it was here that the Master, in accordance with the practice of the previous Buddhas, performed the greatest of his miracles. It was here that the



Jetvana - Bharhut Stupa

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bharhut>

Buddha had to take part in a contest of miraculous feats with the Tirthikas before King Prasenajit of Kosala and the assembled audience. The Buddha took his seat on a thousand petalled lotus and created multiple representations of himself which went up to the highest heaven. The heretical teachers discomfited at this miraculous event dared not show their own feats and were finally confounded by a violent thunderstorm and obliged to run away. The supreme position of the Master was thus vindicated

and he preached the Law before a huge assemblage of people that had come to witness the miracle. The Sravasti episode has been a favourite theme in Buddhist art from very early times.

Even from the days of the Buddha, Sravasti was an active centre of Buddhism and it was here that the merchant Anathapindika built, in the garden of Prince Jeta purchased at a fabulous price in gold, a large monastery for the reception of the Master. The story of its purchase and its eventual presentation to the Lord was a favourite theme in early Buddhist art. In later times also shrines and monasteries arose on this sacred spot which continued to be a flourishing centre of the Buddhist faith for a long time.



Sravasti miracle

<https://artsandculture.google.com>

Saheth-Maheth consists of two distinct sites. The larger one, Maheth, spreads over about 400 acres and has been identified with the remains of the city proper. Saheth, covering about 32 acres and lying about a quarter of a mile to the south-west, is the site of the Jetavana monastery. The excavations on the former site have laid bare the remains of the massive gates of the city and the ruins of other structures, indicating the prosperous state of the city in days gone by. The latter, sanctified by the Master's association, rose to be an important place of pilgrimage and numerous shrines, stupas and monasteries were built in it. The remains so far brought to light date approximately from the Mauryan epoch down to the decadent days of Buddhism in the 12th century A.D. One of the earliest stupas, the original foundation of which may go back to the 3rd century B.C., if not earlier, contained some bone relics, probably those of the Master himself. A colossal statue of the Master was found at the site. One of the latest patrons of the establishment was Kumaradevi, the queen of Govindacandra, the Gadhavala king of Kanauj, who donated some land for the maintenance of the Jetavana monastery in the year 1128-29 A.D.



Sankisa Panel - Sanchi Stupa

Photo courtesy: Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Sankasya: Another holy spot connected with the life of the Master was Sankasya (Sankisa-Basantapur, Etah district, Uttar

Pradesh) where the Buddha is said to have descended to earth from the Trayastrimsa heaven (Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods) where he went to preach the Abhidharma to his mother and other gods. This event is said to have occurred after the Great Miracle was performed at Sravasti, as it was an immutable law that all Buddhas should resort to the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods after they had performed their greatest miracles. According to Buddhist legend, the Lord came down by a triple ladder, accompanied by the gods, Brahma and Sakra, and the incident forms a favourite motif in Buddhist art. Owing to this sacred association, Sankasya came to be an important place of pilgrimage, and important shrines, stupas and monasteries were raised on the site in the heyday of Buddhism. Both Fa-hien and Yuan Chwang visited the place and left interesting accounts of the important monuments. Through long neglect, however, all is now in crumbling ruins. The accounts of the Chinese pilgrims also are too meagre to admit of any proper identification of the remains extant. The present village is perched on a mound, locally known as the fort, 41 feet high and with an area, 1,500 feet by 1,000. A quarter of a mile to the south is another mound, composed of solid brickwork and surmounted by a temple dedicated to Bisari Devi.

Other mounds containing masses of brickwork may be seen scattered around and there are also the remains of an earthen rampart over 3 miles in circumference. The trial diggings, undertaken long ago by Cunningham, indicate the extremely fragmentary nature of the remains and of the urgent necessity of more systematic explorations. The Elephant Capital that once surmounted a column is an important relic of the days of Asoka and further explorations are expected to lay bare important material which has relevance to the history of this site.

Rajagrha: Rajagrha, (modern Rajgir in the Patna district of Bihar), the capital of the powerful state of Magadha, was sacred to the Buddhists for more than one reason. Not only did the Master go into a retreat several times in this famous city, but it was also the place where Devadatta, his wicked cousin, made several attempts on his life. Moreover, in this city, in the Sattapanni (Saptaparni) cave of the Vaibhara hill, was held the first Buddhist Council (Sangiti) just after the parinirvana.



The remains of the ancient city are few and far between. The site appears to have suffered much at the hands of time. The ruins indicate that the followers of different religious denominations live here. The Buddhist remains, except for stray and isolated images, are scanty, and it is not impossible that the visible monuments were denuded partly through

religious animosities. Even the identification of the Sattapanni cave, the site of the first Council, is not beyond doubt. According to the canonical texts, the cave was situated on the northern fringe of the Vaibhara hill and Stein may be right when he identifies the site with the large terrace with a group of cells at the back in a semi-circular bend of the rock on the northern scarp. A remarkable structure, known as Jarasandha ki Baithak, on the eastern slope of the Vaibhara hill, with irregular cells at the sides has been identified by some with the residence of Pippala. Some of the Pali texts describes the Pippala cave as the residence of Mahakasyapa, the organizer of the First Council. From the cyclopaean masonry, analogous to that of the city walls and its bastioned gateways, this erection appears, however, to be more military than secular or religious in character. A mound to the west of the citadel is usually connected with a stupa, which, according to Fa-hien, was built by Ajatasatru, and by Asoka according to Yuan Chwang. Trial diggings on this mound have exposed several strata, none of which, however, can be traced back to the pre-Christian epoch. The cave, called the Sonbhandar, on the southern scarp of the Vaibhara hill might have been a Buddhist excavation, though the possibility of its having been a Jaina establishment cannot altogether be ruled out. The Grdhrakuta mountain which was a favourite resort of the Buddha, is not far from the city.

Vaisali: The city of Vaisali (Basarh in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar), the capital of the powerful Licchavi clan, was a stronghold of Buddhism in the early days. Gautama Buddha is said to have visited it three times during his lifetime. In one of these visits several monkeys are said to have offered the Lord a bowl of honey, an incident mentioned among the eight great events in the life of the Master. It was here again that the Buddha announced his approaching nirvana, and after the nirvana the Licchavis are said to have erected a stupa over their share of the remains of the Master. A little over a hundred years after the nirvana, the Second Buddhist Council was held here. The most interesting finds consist of a large number of clay seals, official and private, the latter bearing the names of individuals or guilds of merchants, bankers and traders. The official seals indicate that Vaisali was an important administrative headquarters in the Gupta period, and an interesting seal, engraved in characters of the Maurya period, refers to the patrol outpost at Vaisali.



The Chinese pilgrims, Fa-hien and Yuan Chwang, visited Vaisali in the course of their travels. The latter described the city as covering an area of 10 to 12 square miles. He wrote that, within and without and all around the town of Vaisali, the sacred monuments were so numerous that it was

difficult to mention them all. Unfortunately, the area is now practically denuded of any visible remains of religious edifices.

At Kolhua, two miles to the north-west of Raja Bisal ka Gadh, there stands a monolithic pillar (locally known as Bhimsen's Lath) of highly polished sandstone surmounted by a bell-shaped capital that supports the sedent figure of a lion on a square abacus. It is about 22 feet above the present ground level, a considerable portion having sunk underground in the course of time. In style it resembles the edict pillars of Asoka, but diggings round the shaft have failed to reveal any Asokan inscription. Nevertheless, it can be identified with one of the Asoka pillars mentioned by Yuan Chwang at the site of ancient Vaisali. The line of pillars in the Champaran and Muzaffarpur districts—at Ramapurva, LauriyaAraraj, LauriyaNandangadh, and Kolhua—is believed to have marked the stages of a royal journey from Pataliputra to Lumbini which Asoka undertook in the 20th year of his consecration. Nearby to the south, there is a small tank, called Rama-kunda, identified by Cunningham with the ancient Markatahrada (monkey's tank), believed to have been dug by a colony of monkeys for the use of the Buddha. To the north-west there is a ruined mound, at present only 15 feet high and with a diameter of about 65 feet at the base, which has been identified with the remains of the Asoka stupa mentioned by Yuan Chwang. On the summit of this mound stands a modern brick temple enshrining a medieval image of the Buddha.

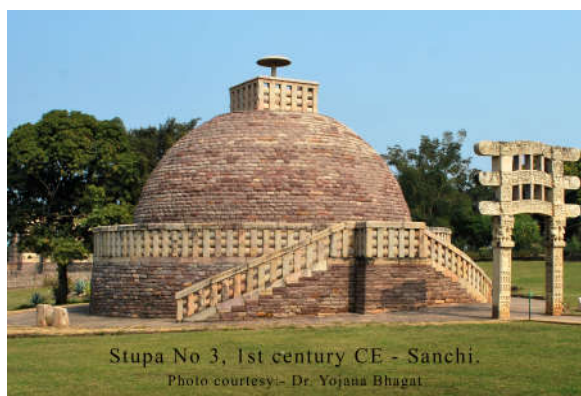
It will not be out of place to recount also a few other memorable sites of Buddhism, the sites of sacred shrines, stupas and monasteries. In the course of the spread of Buddhism in India, such sites, though not particularly associated with the life and legend of the Buddha, rose into prominence on account of the imposing monuments that were raised in and around them.

Of these, Sanchi in the former Bhopal State is important as the site of one of the earliest of the stupas, which later grew into an important centre of Buddhist monuments. Taksasila, (modern Taxila), now in West Pakistan, also rose to be a very prominent site in the early days. Kausambi, the capital city of the Vatsa kingdom, was an early centre of Buddhism, and it was here that the famous Ghositarama Vihara stood. The remains of this monastery have been laid bare in the recent excavation of Kosaba, the site of ancient Kausambi, while in the medieval period the Nalanda monasteries in Bihar were famous throughout the Buddhist world of

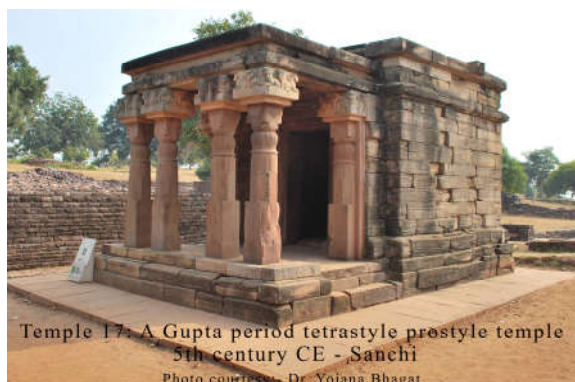


that time. In the days when Buddhism flourished, many other sites, too, became important sites of the good faith (Saddharma).

Sanchi: Sanchi (549 miles from Mumbai in MP) is the site of the most extensive Buddhist remains now known in India. The site had no apparent connection with the traditional history of Gautama Buddha; the place is scarcely mentioned in Buddhist literature. Even the itineraries of the Chinese pilgrims, which are a mine of information about the other ancient centres of Buddhism, do not refer to this site at all. It is surprising therefore that the monuments at Sanchi should now form the most magnificent and perfect examples of early Buddhist art in India. There seems to be considerable force in the view that Sanchi is the modern representative of Cetiya-giri of the Ceylonese Chronicles, which was situated in the neighbourhood of Vidisa. It is connected with the story of Asoka's marriage with a merchant's daughter and the erection of a monastery on the hill where Mahendra, Asoka's son by that marriage, is said to have halted on the way to his proselytizing mission in Ceylon. Whether the story is true or not, the fact remains that the earliest monuments at Sanchi date from the time of Asoka and it is not impossible that it was the patronage of this Constantine of Buddhism which made the place an active centre of the religion of Gautama Buddha and was responsible for the splendour of the site in days gone by.



Most of the monuments are situated on a plateau on the hill top which was enclosed by a wall of solid stone about 1100 A.D. Of the stupas, there are many dating from the 3rd century B.C. They vary in size ranging from the Great Stupa that measures 100 feet in diameter at the base and has a vast, imposing dome nearly 50 feet high to miniature ones no more than a foot high. Originally built of brick in the time of Asoka, the Great Stupa was enlarged to nearly twice its previous size, and faced with stone, perhaps a century later, when the massive balustrade and the four imposing gateways were added. These gateways (toranas) on the four cardinal faces constitute, with their richly carved decorations, a most striking contrast with the simplicity of the structure behind. All the four gateways are of similar design, and the technique employed in their construction shows that they were more the work of carpenters than of



stonemasons. The gateways, with columns and superstructures, are richly carved with bas-reliefs illustrating the Jataka tales, scenes in the life of the Master, and important events in the subsequent history of the Faith. Reference may be made to one singular relief panel in an architrave of one of the gateways which represents the visit of Asoka to the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. The greatest patron of Buddhism has not been portrayed in any other monument in India. This portrait of the Emperor may not be authentic, but this unique representation of one of the greatest figures of Indian history must be cherished by all his countrymen.

Of the many other stupas on this site, three are especially noteworthy. One of these, stupa No. 3, is to the north-east of the Great Stupa and although smaller is of almost identical design. In the relic chamber of this stupa. General Cunningham discovered the relics of Sariputta and Mahamoggallana, two of the famous disciples of the Lord, which were recently brought back from London for consecration in a new shrine at Sanchi. Another small stupa, near the foot of the hill on the western side, enshrined the relics of Kashyapa and Moggaliputta, well-known Buddhist apostles of the 3rd century B.C. In the surrounding region, groups of stupas lie scattered and of these a few have proved to be of particular sanctity on account of the relics enshrined in them. Of more historical value are the battered remains of the Asoka pillar, with its capital of four lions back to back. It is situated close to the south gate of the Great Stupa at Sanchi. On its broken stump one can still see the edict in which the Emperor forbids in strong terms any schism in the Church. Its lustrous polish, its design and style place it with similar edict pillars of Asoka. The chief fascination of Sanchi no doubt rests on these grand old stupas, not only on account of their sanctity but also because of their rich and elaborate carvings. This fascination is further enhanced by the shrines and monasteries that cluster around them and give a vivid picture of monastic life on this peaceful hill top. Among these, the most noteworthy is the Caitya Hall (Temple No. 18), situated directly opposite the south gateway of the Great Stupa. And is especially interesting as one of the few examples of this kind of structural edifice.

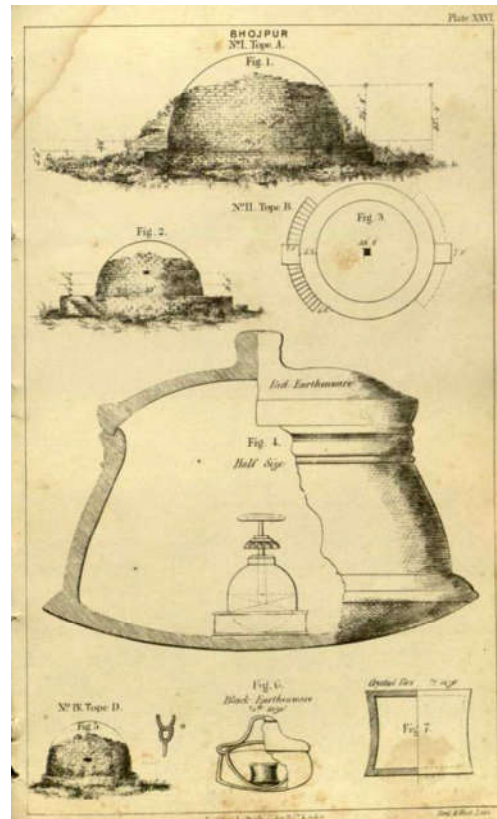


Image from the book:-Bhilsa topes by Cunningham, Alexander

Another structure recalling the classic temples of Greece may be seen in a tiny and unpretentious shrine (Temple No. 17), consisting of nothing more

than a simple flat-roofed square chamber with a pillared portico in front. Though modest in dimensions, its structural propriety, symmetry and proportions, appreciation for plane surfaces and restraint in ornament may very well compare with the best architectural creations of classical Greece.

Of the monasteries at Sanchi, there are five examples and they date from the 4th to the 12th century A.D. The earlier ones, once occupying the site, were built of wood and have perished or been buried under the foundations of later structures. Those that have survived, or are now exposed to view, are built more or less on the usual plan of an open quadrangular court surrounded by ranges of two-storeyed apartments.

The incomparable monuments of Sanchi were rescued from centuries of oblivion as early as 1818 and a host of scholars and archaeologists have tried to resuscitate this memorable site of the past. The major part of the exploration and restoration work goes to the credit of Sir John Marshall, a former Director General of Archaeology in India, who has not only excavated the numerous remains, but also recreated the structures.

Nalanda: The far-famed monastic establishments at Nalanda (Bargaon near Rajgir) were of supreme importance in the history of latter-day Buddhism. According to tradition, the place was visited several times by the Buddha and the history of the monastic establishments can be traced back to the days of Asoka. But excavations have not yet revealed any proof that it was occupied prior to the time of the Guptas; and inscriptions, seals and other remains, coupled with references in literature provide a glimpse of the flourishing state of this famous monastic site from the 5th to the end



Nalanda University Seal

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nalanda>

of the 12th century A.D. It was at this monastery that the celebrated Chinese pilgrim, Yuan Chwang, stayed for some time. He gives a detailed and graphic account of the different establishments with as many as 10,000 inmates, their rules and practices. He also mentions Harsa and several of his predecessors as beneficent patrons of this institution. I-tsing, another Chinese traveller, has also left us a picture of the life led by the Nalanda monks, who were maintained by 200 villages donated by different kings. Nalanda was known throughout the Buddhist world of that time for its learned and versatile teachers, and the names of Acarya Silabhadra, Santaraksita, and Atisa or Dipankara, shining luminaries among a galaxy of many others, conjure up a vision of the supreme eminence of the Nalanda Mahavihara throughout its prosperous history.

The ruins of Nalanda extend over a large area. The structures exposed to view represent only a part of the extensive establishment and consist of monastic sites, stupa sites and temple sites. Lengthwise they extend from south to north, the monasteries on the eastern flank and the stupas and the temples on the west. The monasteries were all built on more or less the

same plan in each case, with rows of cells preceded by a corridor round a central courtyard and a shrine against the back wall, opposite the entrance. Different strata, accumulated one above the other, are clearly seen and indicate successive repairs and renovations. There is also evidence that these monasteries were storeyed structures; and they convey, even in their ruins, a memory of their imposing and glorious past.

Stupa site No. 3 represents a huge structure standing in the middle of a court on the south-western flank, surrounded by a number of votive stupas.

To the north of this stupa and in the same alignment, there have been exposed structures each of which consists of a temple erected directly over the remains of an earlier one.

In the Museum nearby are deposited numerous sculptures and other antiquities recovered during the excavations, and these, by their great variety and fine workmanship, are most impressive.

The wealth of epigraphic material is no less telling. It includes copper-plate and stone inscriptions and inscriptions on bricks and terra-cotta seals.

Among the latter, we have the official seal belonging to the community of venerable monks of the great monastery.

The Buddhism that was practised at Nalanda and other

contemporary

institutions in Bengal and Bihar was no longer the simple Hinayana; nor was it the Mahayana of the early days. It was strongly imbued with ideas of Tantrism not far removed from Tantric Brahmanism. The Muslim invasion dealt a death blow to these cloistered strongholds and the flickering remains of the religion of Gautama Buddha, which had been so transformed as to have been absorbed, almost unawares, into modern Hinduism.



Nalanda University Ruins

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

2.5 IMPORTANT BUDDHIST PLACES IN WESTERN INDIA:

It cannot be said with certainty when Buddhism spread to Saurashtra. However, there seems to be no reason to suppose that any form of

Buddhism existed in the province before Asoka sent his missionaries to propagate it. He had one of his edicts incised on a rock at the foot of Mount Girnar near Junagadh in the heart of the province. Buddhism soon spread in the province as a result of his activities and several Buddhist caves have been excavated in the southern and south-eastern parts of Saurashtra. From their extremely simple architecture and from the general absence of sculpture, it would seem that they belonged to a very early period, probably the second century B.C., if not earlier.

Junagadh: Junagadh, the capital of the province, which owing to the presence of the Asoka edict had already become famous among Buddhists, became a centre of attraction for them. In the vicinity of Girnar Hills, we

find now on a huge rock the full text of what are known as the Fourteen Rock Edicts. The text



inscribed in Brahmi characters on this rock is remarkably well preserved. Naturally, the most important of the caves excavated in Saurashtra are in and around Junagadh. They must have been very numerous and continued to be important at least up to the middle of the seventh century, for while visiting Junagadh, Yuan Chwang had noticed at least fifty convents with at least three thousand monks of the Sthavira sect.

These caves fall into three groups, namely, those in Junagadh proper, those in Uparkot and those called Khapra-khodia, close to the town. The caves at Junagadh have two to three storeys and have been excavated in three stages. Two of them measure 28'x16' and 26'x20'. Among the caves in Uparkot, which was the citadel of the old city, the caitya windows, the deep tanks, measuring seventeen feet square, and the two wells, popularly called Adcdivav and Navaghan-vav, are the most interesting. One of the three Khaprakhodia caves, locally known as Khanjar-mahal, measures 250' x 80'. The other is 38' square, and the third measures 61' x 60'. The second and the third caves have four and sixteen heavy pillars respectively. No inscription has been found in any of the caves.

One can imagine from the evidence on the spot that in early times large monasteries must have existed at Junagadh and mount Girnar. The remains of two brick-built stupas have recently been exposed at Intwa on a hill about three miles away from Asoka's edict. The only inscribed object found there is a baked clay seal belonging to a bhiksusangha which resided in the vihara of Maharaja Rudrasena. This king was most probably Rudrasena I of the Ksatrapa family who ruled from 199 to 222 A.D.

Besides Junagadh, many places have become important in Saurashtra owing to the Buddhist caves found there.

Talaja: Besides Junagadh, Talaja, thirty^ miles south of Bhavanagar near the mouth of the Satrunjaya river, also seems to have been a great Buddhist centre. There are 36 caves and a tank measuring 15' x 20' One of the largest of the caves is locally known as the Ebhal-mandap and is 75' x 67 ½' and 17 ½' high. It had four



Talaja Caves - Talaja, Gujrat
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

octagonal pillars but no cells. One of the caves had a dagoba. The simplicity of the arrangement and the complete absence of sculptures in the caves show that they belonged to an early date, probably only a little later than the reign of Asoka.

Sana: The caves at Sanah, which is to the south-west of Tajaja and sixteen miles north of Una, are important. Both sides of the hill are honeycombed with more than 62 caves. They are of a plain type and well supplied with tanks for water. The largest of them is locally known as Ebhal-mandap and measures 68 ½' x 61' x 16 ½'. It has six pillars in front but none inside. Although the caves in Saurashtra are among the most ancient, they do not possess the interest that attaches to many of the same period found elsewhere. Among the numerous caves there is not a single caitya cave which can be compared with the caves of this class in other parts of the country. The viharas, too, are very simple and do not show any important architectural features.

Devnimori, or **Dev-ni-Mori,** is a Buddhist archaeological site in northern Gujarat, about 2 kms (1.2 mi) from the city of Shamlaji, in the Aravalli

District of northern Gujarat, India. The site is variously dated to the 3rd or 4th century CE, or circa 400 CE. Its location was associated with trade routes and caravans in the area of Gujarat. Site excavations have yielded Buddhist artifacts dated prior to 8th-century in the lowest layer, three relics caskets were retrieved from the stupa. One of these caskets bears an inscription which mentions a date: the 127th year in the reign of Western Satrap ruler Rudrasena:



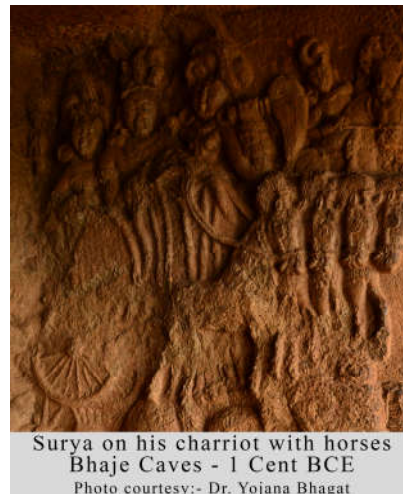
Stone Relic Casket recovered from Devni Mori in the name of the Western Satraps king Rudrasena
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devni_Mori

"In the year 127 of the Kathika kings, when king Rudrasena was ruling, the erection of this stupa, which was banner of this earth, was done. It was the 5th day of Bhadrapada."

Curiously enough, we do not come across any place of Buddhist interest in Gujarat proper. Only a solitary place named Kampilya, near Navasarl, seems to have been of some importance. A copper-plate inscription of the Rastra-kuta king, Dantivarman of Gujarat, dated S. 789 (867 A.D.), records that, after bathing in the river Puravi (modern Purna in the Surat district), the king donated lands at the request of the monk, Sthiramati, in favour of the Kampilya vihara, where there lived five hundred monks of the Sangha of Sindhu Desa. Another inscription of the Rastrakuta king, Dharavarsa, records a similar grant to the same monastery in S. 806 (884 A.D.). It seems that the Buddhist community migrated from Sindh, presumably for fear of the Muslims and founded a vihara at Kampilya which was already known as a sacred place.

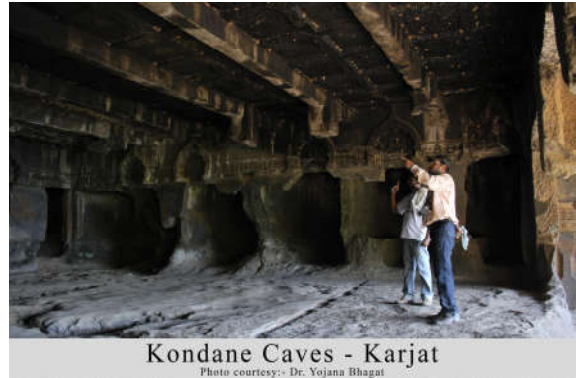
Rock-cut archaeological sites of Maharashtra: Buddhism was most popular in Maharashtra from the time of Asoka who sent Buddhist missionaries to preach there and had one of his edicts engraved on a rock at Sopara on the West Coast. From this time, right up to the decline and disappearance of Buddhism, Maharashtra continued to be favourably inclined towards Buddhism. Consequently, a number of Buddhist places of interest are to be found in the province. It is well known that, just as Buddhist structural monasteries were built above ground in flat regions, Buddhist rock-cut sanctuaries were always excavated underground in hilly tracts. The latter could not therefore be at places sanctified by the association of the Buddha or of Buddhist saints. The Sahyadri mountain in western Maharashtra with its hard trap was best suited for rock-cut architecture. It was accordingly honeycombed with cells at every possible spot, so that the majority of the Buddhist caves in India are found in western Maharashtra. It was also customary in ancient times to adorn these caves with mural paintings. The skill involved in rock-cut architecture and its decoration was held in such esteem that the masons who excavated the caves and the artists who decorated them were rewarded with gifts of land as is evident from some of the inscriptions.

The places in Maharashtra which assumed great importance in Buddhist times owing to their rock-cut architecture are Bhaje, Kondane, Pitalkhore, Ajanta, Bedse, Nasik, Karle, Kanheri and Ellora (Verul).



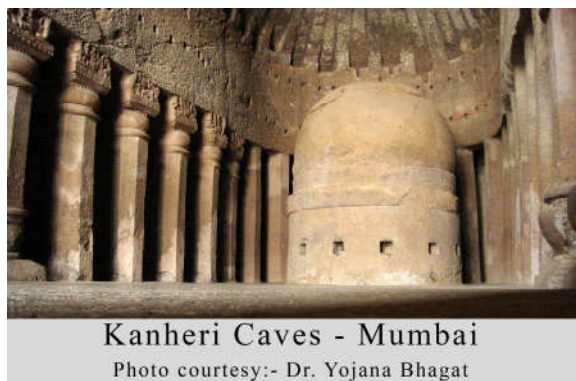
Bhaje: The earliest caitya hall, dating from the second century B.C., is found at Bhaje. The inward slope of the pillars, the wooden roof girders and the free use of timber show that this hall was an imitation of a wooden prototype. The actual use of wood in rock-cut architecture is a special feature of the earlier period. The octagonal pillars near the walls are plain. Traces of paintings on the pillars and figures of the Buddha attended by chauri-bearers are still discernible. Sculptures of Surya and royal personages riding on elephants can also be found.

Kondane: The Buddhist caves at Kondane, which is seven miles from Karjat, are of slightly later date than those at Bhaje. The facade pillars are in stone instead of wood. The caitya hall is one of the earliest and is an important landmark in the development of rock-cut architecture. The vihara is unique with decorated cell doors and the sculptor of yaksha is identified as Balaka-the student of Kanha, who was the sculptor at Pitalkhore.



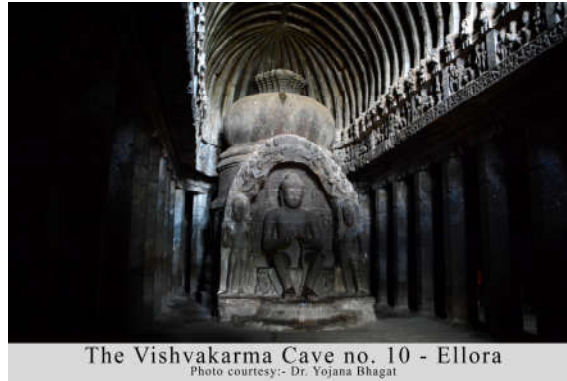
Kanheri: There are more than one hundred caves at Kanheri which was also a large monastic establishment. From a number of inscriptions found here, dating from the second century A.D. to modern times, a more or less connected history of the place can be reconstructed. The beginning of the caves can be attributed to the reign of Gautamiputra Satakarni about 180 A.D. Many excavations and sculptures were added from time to time. The introduction of the Buddha image in the establishment is shown by a fourth century inscription recording the dedication of a Buddha image by a

certain Buddhaghosa. The Shilahar rulers of Puri, who were feudatories of the Rastrakuta sovereigns, took a special interest in the Buddhist establishment at Kanheri and made liberal donations to it as recorded in their copper-plate grants dated S. 765, 775 and 799. Inscriptions of S. 913, 921



and 931 further show that the Buddhist monks still continued to occupy the caves. A modern Japanese inscription of a Buddhist pilgrim of the Nichiren sect engraved on the walls of Cave No. 66 testifies to the continued importance of the caves even in modern times. Some inscriptions found in Kanheri incidentally tell us of the Buddhist viharas situated at Kalyan and near Paithan, of which we know nothing from other sources.

Ellora (Verul) At Ellora can be found the most wonderful caves in the world, mountains cut into colossal sanctuaries. Of the thirty-four caves, the twelve to the south are Buddhist while the remaining are Brahmanical or Jaina. The Buddhist caves are the earliest, dating from 450 to 650 A.D. The entrance to the hall lies through a large open court. The caitya hall, which is called the Visvakarma Cave,



The Vishvakarma Cave no. 10 - Ellora
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

measures forty-eight square feet. A huge image of the Buddha flanked by attendants and flying figures is seated on a lion throne in a projecting arch of the stupa. There are a number of Buddha and Bodhisattva images. Two of the monasteries with wide courtyards in front are three-storeyed and rise to a height of 50'. These impressive structures and their execution show remarkable ingenuity.

Pitalkhore: The Pitalkhore Caves, in the Satmala range of the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, are an ancient Buddhist site consisting of 14 rock-cut cave monuments which date back to the 3rd century BCE, making them one of the earliest examples of rock-cut architecture in India. Located about 40 kms from



Pitalkhore Caves - Chalisgaon
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Ellora, the site is reached by a steep climb down a flight of concrete stairs today. Known for its paintings and sculptures, also houses a rock-cut stupa gallery. Seven painted inscriptions are found which record the names of Buddhist monks who bore the cost of the frescoes. The site shows statues of elephants, two soldiers of which one is intact, a damaged Gaja Lakshmi icon, and an ancient rainwater harvesting system.



Ajanta Caves - Chalisgaon
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Ajanta: There are no fewer than twenty-nine caves of various sizes at Ajanta. They are cut in the hard volcanic rock, some of them going as far as 100' into the rock, which is naturally considered a remarkable architectural achievement. Cave No. 1 is the finest vihara in India. The



Ajanta Caves - Chalisingaon
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

caitya hall in Cave No. 10 measures 100' x 40' x 33 and its stupa has a double tier at the base and a slightly elongated dome. Cave No. 26 contains a gigantic sculpture of the Buddha, considered to be one of the finest in the whole of India. However, Ajanta is more famous for its beautiful paintings than for its architecture or for the carved sculptures in the caves. The walls, the ceilings, and the pillars of nearly all the caves were once decorated with paintings, remains of which are found only in thirteen caves. They depict chiefly scenes from the life of the Buddha and the Jatakas,

but there are many paintings of a secular nature too. The Court life of the period and scenes of everyday life are graphically depicted in the frescoes. Indian painting reached its finest development in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. and the best can be seen at Ajanta. Everything is drawn with grace and mastery and delicately modelled. As an artist has said, the more one contemplates the Ajanta frescoes the more one appreciates the subtle relationship that exists between the groups of figures.

Bedse: The caitya hall at Bedse, which is four miles south-east of the railway station of Kamshet, measures 45 ½' x 21'. The base of the column is vase shaped and its capital is surmounted by pairs of men and animals seated on kneeling horses and elephants. Traces of paintings can also be seen on the pillars in the stupa. It has the only apsidal vaulted roof vihara of the rock-cut architecture.



Bedse Caves - Pune
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Nasik: There is a group of twenty-three caves, dating from the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. at

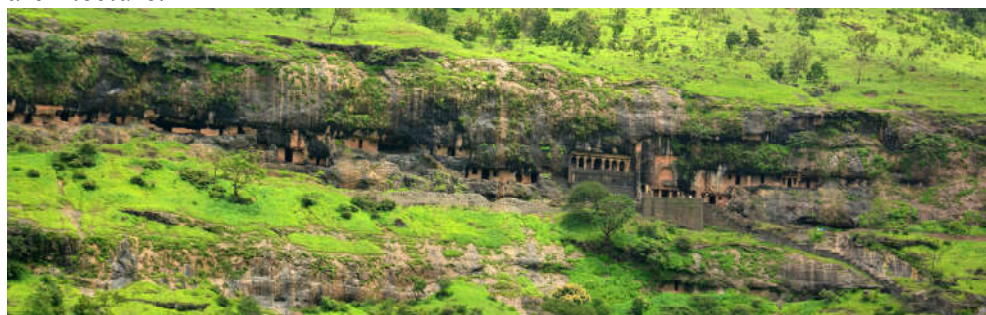


Pandavleni - Nasik
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Nasik. Some of these were altered and adapted by the Mahayana Buddhists between the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. Cave No. 3, called Gautamiputra Vihara, is large, having six pillars with carvings of elephants, bulls and horses on the capital. Cave No. 10 is called the Nahapana vihara. The caitya halls at Nasik and Junnar are

more or less of the same type. The Nasik caves are especially important for the interesting and beautiful inscriptions of Nahapana, Gautamiputra and Srivijaya Satakarni.

Junnar: Junnar Caves illustrate yet another rock cut cave temple complex devoted to Buddhism in the state of Maharashtra. Spread over four hills, this cave district hosts the largest number of 220 excavations dedicated to Theravada phase of Buddhism. Carved during mid-3rd century BCE to late 3rd century CE, the caves form the perfect base for observing rock cut architecture.

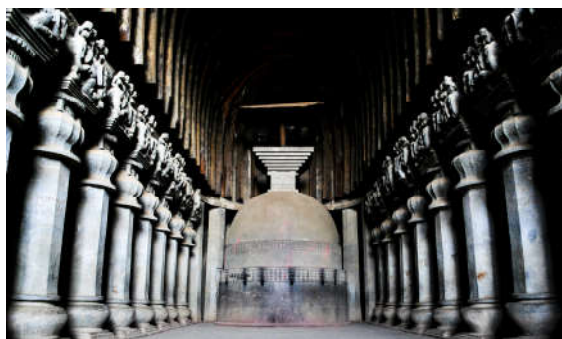


Lenyadri Caves - Junnar

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

There are 4 rock cut cave groups on four hillocks encircling the town of Junnar. They are Ganeshlena (Lenyadri), Tuljalena and Manmodi and Shivneri cave groups. The best-known facet of Junnar belongs to Lenyadri Caves, comprising 30 caves in its group belonging to 1st-3rd century period. Facing southwards, these caves are numbered serially from east to west. Two of the caves, namely, 6 and 14 are chaityas (prayer halls); whereas rest of them feature vihara cells (monasteries), including the largest vihara in the rock-cut architecture. Tuljalena in Junnar has the earliest circular chaityagraha and is dated the earliest of all groups.

Karle: The caitya hall at Karle is of the same general pattern as that at Bhaje. In size and splendour, however, it is one of the most magnificent monuments in India. In fact, it is described, in one of the ancient inscriptions found at the place, as the most



Karle Caves - Lonavala

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

excellent rock mansion in Jambudvīpa. It was excavated by Bhutapala, a merchant of Vaijyanti. Fortunately, it is also among the best preserved. It measures 124' x 46 ½' and the vaulted roof rises to a height of 45'. It has a row of fifteen monolithic pillars on each side with kalasa bases and bell-shaped capitals surmounted by kneeling elephants, and horses with men and women riders. Its two-storeyed façade has an enormous sun-window. The caitya hall dates from the close of the first century B.CE.

Other important sites: One of the sites of these caves is Kuda on the shore of the Rajapuri creek, forty-five miles south of Bombay. Another is Mahad on the Savitri River, 28 miles south-east of Kuda. At Karhad in the Satara district, there is an extensive series of sixty caves on the spur of the Agasiva hill. The cells here are small, the large halls are devoid of pillars, and there is complete absence of sculpture. There is another series at Shelarwadi. Two women disciples of Thera BhadantaŚīha are said to have had the caitya hall at this place excavated and one of the caves was donated by the wife of a ploughman. At Kondivte, three miles from Jogeshwari, there is a group of nineteen caves. In the Sholapur district at Ter (ancient Tagara) there is a structural caitya hall which was built in the eighth century A.D. and later transformed into a Brahmanical temple. In 1188 A.D. the Silahar king, Gandaraditya, built a Buddha temple at Kolhapur on the bank of a tank called Gangasagara.

Goa: That Buddhism flourished in and around Goa, farther south, in the sixth century A.D. is proved by the discovery of the Hire-Gutti (north Kanara district) plates which record an endowment to a Buddhist vihara by the Bhoja king, Asankita of Goa. Similarly, the discovery of Buddhist statues of a later date in the village of Mushir in the Goa district shows that Buddhism continued to flourish for a considerable period. Buddhist monks in Goa at the time of the Kadamba king, Jayakesin, are referred to in the Dvyasraya-kavya of the twelfth century.

Karnataka: Buddhism began to exercise its influence in Karnataka from the time of Asoka, whose edicts at Siddhapur and in the neighbourhood are found in the province. His missionaries carried the message all over the land, as a result of which many Buddhist monasteries were built at Vanavasi at the time of the Satavahanas. **Kanganahalli stupa**, situated about 3 km from Sannati, is an important Buddhist site where an ancient Mahastupa was built dating from 1st BCE to 3rd CE. It is on the left bank of the Bhima river in Chitapur taluk, Kalaburagi district in Karnataka. It is the veritable gallery of eminent rulers like King Ashoka and the Shatavahana rulers (Simuka, Pulumavi) are immortalized by depicting their portraits at Kanaganahalli.



Sannati Stupa - Karnataka
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

2.6 IMPORTANT BUDDHIST PLACES IN SOUTHERN INDIA:

If a number of places in Maharashtra attained great importance in Buddhist times on account of their wonderful rock-cut architecture, there were certain places in Andhra which were famous for their equally magnificent Buddhist stupas. Buddhism was well established in Andhra in the time of Asoka. if not earlier, owing to its situation midway between Magadha. the home of Buddhism, and Ceylon which had already become a stronghold of Buddhism and with which Andhra had seaborne trade through its big river ports. As the Buddhists were largely recruited from the commercial classes, their wealth was utilized to raise magnificent stupas.

Such stupas were built at several -places in the region between the lower valleys of the Krishna, and the Godavari. A number of Buddhist sites from Shalihundun in the north to Chinganjam in the south have been discovered, of which the following are the most important since they possess magnificent stupas.

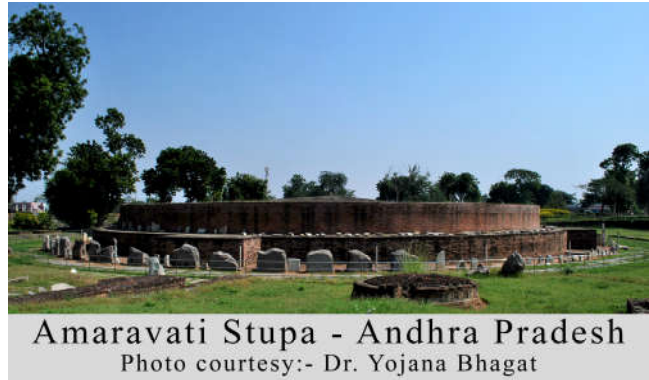
The stupas at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in the Guntur district and at Bhattiprolu. Jagayyapeta, Gudiwada and Ghantsala in the Krishna district were built between the 2nd century B.C. and the 3rd century A.D. These consisted of brick-built hemispherical domes and were characterized by rectangular projections from the base of the dome at the four cardinal points. They were finished with plastic grace, painted white, and embellished at the base with sculptured white marble panels richly carved in low relief. The technical skill and artistic excellence of the Andhra craftsmen are best seen in the construction of the stupas and especially in the manufacture of small caskets of crystal and other jewellery.

Bhattiprolu stupa: The earliest Buddhist monument in the region is the Bhattiprolu stupa built in the second century B.C., probably by a Buddhist missionary during the time of a local king named Kubiraka. The claim that it was a mahastupa enshrining the mortal remains of the Buddha is justified by the discovery of a bone relic inside a crystal casket together with flowers made of gold and pearls. One of the earliest evidence of Brahmi script in South India comes from Bhattiprolu.

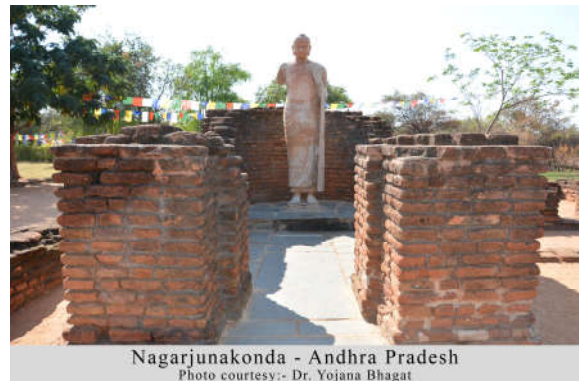


Amaravati: Amaravati, which is 16 miles west of Guntur, is the most important Buddhist site in Andhra. The stupa at this place is the largest and most famous. It was first begun as early as the second century B.C. and was enlarged between 150 and 200 A.D. by the efforts of Nagarjuna. Its dome measures 162' and has a height of 95'. The width of the

pradaksinapatha is 15', and the railing surrounding it 14' high. This stupa is larger than the Sanchi stupa which is 120' wide and 54' high. The beautiful railings depict scenes from the Buddha's life. The relief medallions, beautifully balanced in composition, are among the greatest works of art in India. The Amaravati stupa could well vie in artistic beauty and grandeur with the Sanchi and Bharhut stupas in the North. Like the Mathura and Gandhara schools of sculpture, the Amaravati school enjoyed great influence. Its products were carried to Ceylon and South-East Asia and had a marked effect on the local styles.



Nagarjunakonda: Nothing was known of this great stupa at Nagarjunakonda or the Hill of Nagarjuna before it was discovered in 1930's. It is situated on the south bank of the river Krishna in the Guntur district. It was also a mahastupa, enshrining the mortal remains of the Buddha, and was probably built in the time of Asoka. It was renovated with

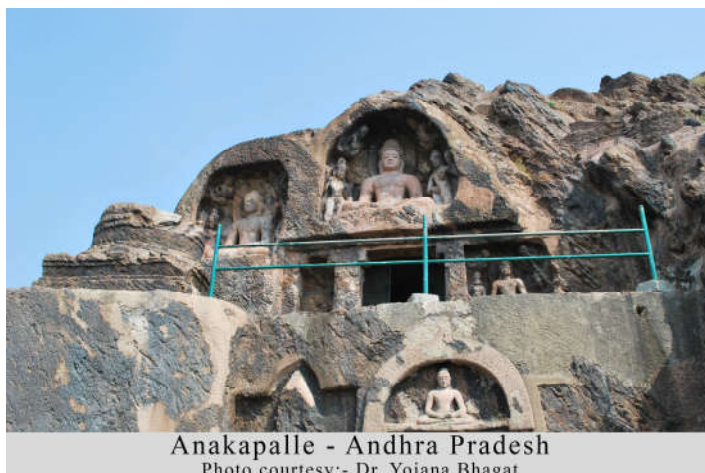


additions by Santisiri and other ladies of the local Ikshvaku royal family, to whom goes the credit of making Buddhism popular in Andhra in the third century CE. Now it is in ruins which are greater than those at Amaravati. Hundreds of remarkable sculptures executed in the Amaravati style have been found. From the inscriptions on the Ayaka pillars, it is evident that Nagarjunakonda, the ancient city of Vijayapuri, was of great importance as a centre of Buddhism and enjoyed international fame. Several monasteries were built at this place for the residence of Buddhist monks of different schools coming from different countries like Ceylon, Kashmir, Gandhara, and China.

The people of Andhra traded in and outside the country and had close contacts with the Roman world of the time. This is proved by the discovery of inscriptions, of sculptures depicting a bearded soldier wearing a tunic, and trousers, and of various other objects of Roman origin.

In Andhra, Guntapalli, 28 miles north of Ellore railway station, and Sankaran, a mile east of Anakapalle, are important for their rock-cut architecture.

Other places in the neighbourhood appear to have assumed significance in Buddhist times, as the presence of



Anakapalle - Andhra Pradesh
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

stupas and other antiquities testifies. The most notable among these are Goli, Chezarla, Gummadiduru, Bezwada, Garikapadu, Bavikonda, Totlakonda, Shalihundam.

Nagapattam: Nagapattam, near Madras on the East Coast, had a Buddhist settlement in the time of the Colas. An important copper-plate inscription of the 11th century A.D. states that the Cola King, Rajaraja, gave the village of Anaimangalaip for the maintenance of a shrine of the Buddha in the Culamanivarma Vihara which the Shailendra king, Mara- vijayottung Varman of Sri-vijaya and Kataha of Indonesia, had erected at Nagapattam. In the epilogue of his commentary on the Nettipakarana, Dhammapala mentions this place and the Dharmasoka Vihara in it, where he composed this commentary. Nagapattinam Buddha and Bodhisattva images in bronzes of 11th 12th CE are very well known.



The Buddha

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/1699>

Kanchi: Kanchi, with its Rajavihara and its hundred monasteries, was a famous stronghold of Buddhism in the South. Five Buddha images have been discovered near this town. The famous Pali commentator, Buddhaghosa, has mentioned in his commentary (the Manorathapurani) that he wrote it at the request of the Venerable Jotipala who was staying with him at Kancipura. Yuan Chwang also mentions a certain Dharmapala from Kanci as being a great master at Nalanda. In Korea, an inscription in verse has been discovered. In a preface to it, written by Li Se in 1378 A.D., there is an account of the life and travels of an Indian monk called Dhyana-bhadra. This account tells us that this monk was the son of a king of Magadha and a princess from Kanchi and that when he visited Kanchi he heard a sermon given by a Buddhist preacher on the Karanda-vyohasutra. Clearly, this place was a recognized centre of Buddhism as late as the 14th century CE.

Check your Progress:

1. What is the importance of Bodhgaya?
2. Which is one of the important Buddhist sites in Southern India?

2.7 SUMMARY

Sources other than literary should be explored for gaining information about history and culture of ancient India with special reference to the Buddhism. the chief sources mentioned are study architecture, art and archaeological study with reference to stupa, vihara, chetiyaghara, sculptures and paintings. Apart from defining the terms like archaeology, stupa, vihara chetiyaghara, sculptures and paintings it also describes in which manner it contributes the information which can construct the history of Ancient India and history of Buddhism itself.

2.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- Which are the different archaeological sources used to write the history of Buddhism- Discuss.
- Write a note on – ‘art and architecture-a source of Buddhist history’.
- Describe how the archaeological excavations in north India corresponds to the Pali literature. Write about Sarnath and Bodhgaya
- Take a survey of the Buddhist archaeological sites in South India.
- Write in short about the rock-cut architecture seen in Buddhism.

2.9 ADDITIONAL READING

Cunningham Alexander- Archaeological Survey of India-Four Reports made during the years 1862-63-64-65.

Cunningham Alexander- The Bhilsa Topes

Samuel Beal- Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World.

Thomas Watters- On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, 629-645 A.D.

Brown Percy-Indian Architecture Buddhist and Hindu

James Fergusson, James Burgess-The Cave Temples of India, 1886

George Michell- Buddhist Rock-Cut Monasteries of the Western Ghats

Dhavalikar M K- Late Hinayana caves of western India

Akira Shimada (Editor)- Amaravati: The Art of an Early Buddhist Monument in Context

Elizabeth Rosen Stone-The Buddhist Art of Nagarjunakonda.

Walter Spink- Ajanta: History and Development

[https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-](https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-10/Buddhist%20Tourism%20Circuit%20in%20India_ani_English_Low%20res.pdf)

[10/Buddhist%20Tourism%20Circuit%20in%20India_ani_English_Low%20res.pdf](https://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-10/Buddhist%20Tourism%20Circuit%20in%20India_ani_English_Low%20res.pdf)

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/travel_records.pdf



LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

Unit Structure:

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Life of Gautam Buddha
- 3.3 The Middle Path
- 3.4 Dawn of Truth
- 3.5 The Dhamma as the Teacher
- 3.6 The Invitation to Expound the Dhamma
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Unit End Questions
- 3.9 Additional Reading

3.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To study the life of the historical Buddha and how it is the source of Buddhism.
- To know who is the Buddha and what is His teachings?
- To understand the relevance of the teachings of the Buddha and its impact on the society
- To acknowledge the importance of the Teachings of the Buddha in the spread of Buddhism
- To learn the practical aspect of the teachings so as to apply in the daily life.

3.1 INTRODUCTION:

The Buddha-Dhamma is a moral and philosophical system which expounds a unique path of Enlightenment, and is not a subject to be studied from a mere academic standpoint. The Doctrine is certainly to be studied, more to be practiced and above all to be realized by oneself.

Mere learning is of no avail without actual practice. The learned man who does not practise the Dhamma, the Buddha says, is like a colourful flower without scent. He who does not study the Dhamma is like a blind man. But he who does not practise the Dhamma is comparable to a library.

There are some hasty critics who denounce Buddhism as a passive and inactive religion. This unwarranted criticism is far from the truth. The Buddha was the first most active missionary in the world. He wandered from place to place for forty-five years preaching His doctrine to the masses and the intelligentsia. Till His last moment, He served humanity both by example and by precept. His distinguished disciples followed suit, penniless, they even travelled to distant lands to propagate the Dhamma, expecting nothing in return.

“Strive on with diligence” were the last words of the Buddha.

No emancipation or purification can be gained without personal striving. As such petitional or intercessory prayers are denounced in Buddhism and in their stead is meditation which leads to self-control, purification, and enlightenment. Both meditation and service form salient characteristics of Buddhism. In fact, all Buddhist nations grew up in the cradle of Buddhism.

“Do no evil”, that is, be not a curse to oneself and others, was the Buddha’s first advice. This was followed by His second admonition— *Do good*, that is, be a blessing to oneself and others.

His final exhortation was – *Purify one’s mind*— which was the most important and the most essential.

Can such a religion be termed inactive and passive?

It may be mentioned that, amongst the thirty-seven factors that lead to enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya-Dhamma*), *virīya* or energy occurs nine times. Clarifying His relationship with His followers, the Buddha states:

“You yourselves should make the exertion. The Tathāgata-s are mere teachers.”

“A unique Being, an extraordinary Man arises in this world for the benefit of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, benefit, and happiness of gods and men. Who is this Unique Being? It is the Tathāgata, the Exalted, Fully Enlightened One.”

3.2 LIFE OF GAUTAM BUDDHA:

Birth: On the full moon day of May, in the year 623 B.C. there was born in the Lumbini Park at Kapilavatthu, on the Indian borders of present Nepal, a noble prince who was destined to be the greatest religious teacher of the world. His father was King Siddhodana of the aristocratic Sākya clan and his mother was Queen Mahāmāyā. As the beloved mother died seven



Image source:-

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/gandhara-gray-schist-panels--389772542731520615/>

days after his birth, Mahāpajāpati Gotami, her younger sister, who was also married to the King, adopted the child, entrusting her own son, Nanda, to the care of the nurses. Great were the rejoicings of the people over the birth of this illustrious prince. An ascetic of high spiritual attainments, named Asita, also known as Kāladevala, was particularly pleased to hear this happy news, and being a tutor of the King, visited the palace to see the Royal babe. The King, who felt honoured by his unexpected visit, carried the child up to him in order to make the child pay him due reverence, but, to the surprise of all, the child's legs turned and rested on the matted locks of the ascetic. Instantly, the ascetic rose from his seat and, foreseeing with his supernormal vision the child's future greatness, saluted him with clasped hands. The Royal father did likewise.

The great ascetic smiled at first and then was sad. Questioned regarding his mingled feelings, he answered that he smiled because the prince would eventually become a Buddha, an Enlightened One, and he was sad because he would not be able to benefit by the superior wisdom of the Enlightened One owing to his prior death and rebirth in a Formless Plane (Arupaloka).

Naming Ceremony: On the fifth day after the prince's birth he was named Siddhattha which means "wish fulfilled". His family name was Gotama. In accordance with the ancient Indian custom many learned brahmins were invited to the palace for the naming ceremony. Amongst them there were eight distinguished men. Examining the characteristic marks of the child, seven of them raised two fingers each, indicative of two alternative possibilities, and said that he would either become a Universal Monarch or a Buddha. But the youngest, Kondañña, who excelled others in wisdom, noticing the hair on the forehead turned to the right, raised only one finger and convincingly declared that the prince would definitely retire from the world and become a Buddha.

Ploughing Festival: A very remarkable incident took place in his childhood. It was an unprecedented spiritual experience which, later, during his search after truth, served as a key to his Enlightenment. To promote agriculture, the King arranged for a ploughing festival. It was indeed a festive occasion for all, as both nobles and commoners decked in their best attire, participated in the ceremony. On the appointed day, the King, accompanied by his courtiers, went to the field, taking with him the young prince together with the nurses. Placing the child on a screened and canopied couch under the cool shade of a solitary rose-apple tree to be watched by the nurses, the King participated in the ploughing festival. When the festival was at its height of gaiety the nurses too stole away from the prince's presence to catch a glimpse of the wonderful spectacle. In striking contrast to the mirth and merriment of the festival it was all calm and quiet under the rose-apple tree. All the conditions conducive to quiet meditation being there, the pensive child, young in years but old in wisdom, sat cross-legged and seized the opportunity to commence that all-important practice of intent concentration on the breath – on exhalations and inhalations – which gained for him then and there that one-pointedness of mind known as Samadhi and he thus developed the First Jhāna (Ecstasy). The child's nurses, who had abandoned their precious charge to

enjoy themselves at the festival, suddenly realizing their duty, hastened to the child and were amazed to see him sitting cross-legged plunged in deep meditation. The King hearing of it, hurried to the spot and, seeing the child in meditative posture, saluted him, saying – “This, dear child, is my second obeisance”.

Education: As a Royal child, Prince Siddhattha must have received an education that became a prince although no details are given about it. As a scion of the warrior race, he received special training in the art of warfare.

Married Life: At the early age of sixteen, he married his beautiful cousin Princess Yasodharā who was of equal age. For nearly thirteen years, after his happy marriage, he led a luxurious life, blissfully ignorant of the vicissitudes of life outside the palace gates. Of his luxurious life as prince, he states:

“I was delicate, excessively delicate. In my father’s dwelling three lotus-ponds were made purposely for me. Blue lotuses bloomed in one, red in another, and white in another. I used no sandal-wood that was not of Kāsi. My turban, tunic, dress and cloak, were all from Kāsi.

“Night and day a white parasol was held over me so that I might not be touched by heat or cold, dust, leaves or dew. “There were three palaces built for me – one for the cold season, one for the hot season, and one for the rainy season. During the four rainy months, I lived in the palace for the rainy season without ever coming down from it, entertained all the while by female musicians. Just as, in the houses of others, food from the husks of rice together with sour gruel is given to the slaves and workmen, even so, in my father’s dwelling, food with rice and meat was given to the slaves and workmen.”

With the march of time, truth gradually dawned upon him. His contemplative nature and boundless compassion did not permit him to spend his time in the mere enjoyment of the fleeting pleasures of the Royal palace. He knew no personal grief but he felt a deep pity for suffering humanity. Amidst comfort and prosperity, he realized the universality of sorrow.

Renunciation: Prince Siddhattha reflected thus: “Why do I, being subject to birth, decay, disease, death, sorrow and impurities, thus search after things of like nature. How, if I, who am subject to things of such nature, realize their disadvantages and seek after the unattained, unsurpassed, perfect security which is Nibbāna!”

“Cramped and confined is household life, a den of dust, but the life of the homeless one is as the open air of heaven! Hard is it for him who bides at home to live out as it should be lived the Holy Life in all its perfection, in all its purity.”

One glorious day as he went out of the palace to the pleasure park to see the world outside, he came in direct contact with the stark realities of life. Within the narrow confines of the palace he saw only the rosy side of life, but the dark side, the common lot of mankind, was purposely veiled from him. What was mentally conceived, he, for the first time, vividly saw in reality. On his way to the park his observant eyes met the strange sights of a decrepit old man, a diseased person, a corpse and a dignified hermit. The first

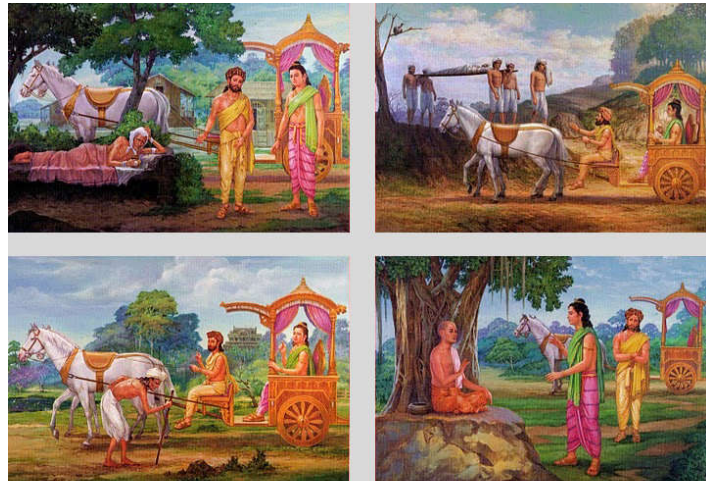


Image source:-
<https://www.sansarlochan.in/en/story-behind-siddhartha-gautama-becoming-buddha/>

three sights convincingly proved to him, the inexorable nature of life, and the universal ailment of humanity. The fourth signified the means to overcome the ills of life and to attain calm and peace. These four unexpected sights served to increase the urge in him to loathe and renounce the world.

Realizing the worthlessness of sensual pleasures, so highly prized by the worldling, and appreciating the value of renunciation in which the wise seek delight, he decided to leave the world in search of Truth and Eternal Peace. When this final decision was taken after much deliberation, the news of the birth of a son was conveyed to him while he was about to leave the park. Contrary to expectations, he was not overjoyed, but regarded his first and only offspring as an impediment. An ordinary father would have welcomed the joyful tidings, but Prince Siddhattha, the extraordinary father as he was, exclaimed – “An impediment (rāhu) has been born; a fetter has arisen”. The infant son was accordingly named Rāhula by his grandfather.

The palace was no longer a congenial place to the contemplative Prince Siddhattha. Neither his charming young wife nor his lovable infant son could deter him from altering the decision he had taken to renounce the world. He was destined to play an infinitely more important and beneficial role than a dutiful husband and father or even as a king of kings. The allurements of the palace were no more cherished objects of delight to him. Time was ripe to depart.



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<https://thetattooedbuddha.com/2017/06/02/deadbeat-buddha/>

He ordered his favourite charioteer Channa

to saddle the horse Kanthaka, and went to the suite of apartments occupied by the princess. Opening the door of the chamber, he stood on the threshold and cast his dispassionate glance on the wife and child who were fast asleep. Great was his compassion for the two dear ones at this parting moment. Greater was his compassion for suffering humanity. He was not worried about the future worldly happiness and comfort of the mother and child as they had every-thing in abundance and were well protected. It was not that he loved them the less, but he loved humanity more.

Leaving all behind, he stole away with a light heart from the palace at midnight, and rode into the dark, attended only by his loyal charioteer. Alone and penniless he set out in search of Truth and Peace. Thus did he renounce the world. It was not the renunciation of an old man who has had his fill of worldly life. It was not the renunciation of a poor man who had nothing to leave behind. It was the renunciation of a prince in the full bloom of youth and in the plenitude of wealth and prosperity – a renunciation unparalleled in history. It was in his twenty-ninth year that Prince Siddhattha made this historic journey.

He journeyed far and, crossing the river Anomā, rested on its banks. Here he shaved his hair and beard and handing over his garments and ornaments to Channa with instructions to return to the palace, assumed the simple yellow garb of an ascetic and led a life of voluntary poverty. The ascetic Siddhattha, who once lived in the lap of luxury, now became a penniless wanderer, living on what little the charitably-minded gave of their own accord.

He had no permanent abode. A shady tree or a lonely cave sheltered him by day or night. Bare-footed and bare-headed, he walked in the scorching sun and in the piercing cold. With no possessions to call his own, but a bowl to collect his food and robes just sufficient to cover the body, he concentrated all his energies on the quest of Truth.

Search: Thus as a wanderer, a seeker after what is good, searching for the unsurpassed Peace, he approached ĀlāraKālāma, a distinguished ascetic, and said: “I desire, friend Kālāma to lead the Holy Life in this Dispensation of yours.” Thereupon ĀlāraKālāma told him: “You may stay with me, O Venerable One. Of such sort is this teaching that an intelligent man before long may realize by his own intuitive wisdom his master’s doctrine, and abide in the attainment thereof.”

Before long, he learnt his doctrine, but it brought him no realization of the highest Truth. Then there came to him the thought: When ĀlāraKālāma declared: “Having myself realized by intuitive knowledge the doctrine, I – ‘abide in the attainment thereof’ – it could not have been a mere profession of faith; surely ĀlāraKālāma lives having understood and perceived this doctrine.”

So he went to him and said “How far, friend Kālāma, does this doctrine extend which you yourself have with intuitive wisdom realized and attained?”

Upon this ĀlāraKālāma made known to him the Realm of Nothingness (Ākiñcaññāyatana), an advanced stage of Concentration.

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Then it occurred to him: “Not only in ĀlāraKālāma are to be found faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. I too possess these virtues. How now if I strive to realize that doctrine whereof ĀlāraKālāma says that he himself has realized and abides in the attainment thereof!” So, before long, he realized by his own intuitive wisdom that doctrine and attained to that state, but it brought him no realization of the highest Truth.

Then he approached ĀlāraKālāma and said: “Is this the full extent, friend Kālāma, of this doctrine of which you say that you yourself have realized by your wisdom and abide in the attainment thereof? “But I also, friend, have realized thus far in this doctrine, and abide in the attainment thereof.” The unenvious teacher was delighted to hear of the success of his distinguished pupil. He honoured him by placing him on a perfect level with himself and admiringly said:

“Happy, friend, are we, extremely happy; in that we look upon such a venerable fellow-ascetic like you! That same doctrine which I myself have realized by my wisdom and proclaim, having attained thereunto, have you yourself realized by your wisdom and abide in the attainment thereof; and that doctrine you yourself have realized by your wisdom and abide in the attainment thereof, that have I myself realized by my wisdom and proclaim, having attained thereunto. Thus, the doctrine which I know, and also do you know; and, the doctrine which you know, that I know also. As I am, so are you; as you are, so am I. Come, friend, let both of us lead the company of ascetics.”

The ascetic Gotama was not satisfied with a discipline and a doctrine which only led to a high degree of mental concentration, but did not lead to “disgust, detachment, cessation (of suffering), tranquillity; intuition, enlightenment, and Nibbāna.” Nor was he anxious to lead a company of ascetics even with the co-operation of another generous teacher of equal spiritual attainment, without first perfecting himself. It was, he felt, a case of the blind leading the blind. Dissatisfied with his teaching, he politely took his leave from him.

In those happy days when there were no political disturbances the intellectuals of India were preoccupied with the study and exposition of some religious system or other. All facilities were provided for those more spiritually inclined to lead holy lives in solitude in accordance with their temperaments and most of these teachers had large followings of disciples. So it was not difficult for the ascetic Gotama to find another religious teacher who was more competent than the former.

On this occasion he approached one UddakaRāmaputta and expressed his desire to lead the Holy Life in his Dispensation. He was readily admitted as a pupil. Before long the intelligent ascetic Gotama mastered his doctrine and attained the final stage of mental concentration, the Realm of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception (“N’evasaññā N’asaññāyatana), revealed by his teacher. This was the highest stage in worldly

concentration when consciousness becomes so subtle and refined that it cannot be said that a consciousness either exists or not. Ancient Indian sages could not proceed further in spiritual development. The noble teacher was delighted to hear of the success of his illustrious royal pupil. Unlike his former teacher the present one honoured him by inviting him to take full charge of all the disciples as their teacher. He said: “Happy friend, are we; yea, extremely happy, in that we see such a venerable fellow-ascetic as you! The doctrine which Rāma knew, you know; the doctrine which you know, Rāma knew. As was Rāma so are you; as you are, so was Rāma. Come, friend, henceforth you shall lead this company of ascetics.”

Still, he felt that his quest of the highest Truth was not achieved. He had gained complete mastery of his mind, but his ultimate goal was far ahead. He was seeking for the Highest, the Nibbāna, the complete cessation of suffering, the total eradication of all forms of craving. “Dissatisfied with this doctrine too, he departed thence, content therewith no longer.”

He realized that his spiritual aspirations were far higher than those under whom he chose to learn. He realized that there was none capable enough to teach him what he yearned for – the highest Truth. He also realized that the highest Truth is to be found within oneself and ceased to seek external aid.

Struggle: Meeting with disappointment, but not discouraged, the ascetic Gotama seeking for the incomparable Peace, the highest Truth, wandered through the district of Magadha, and arrived in due course at Uruvelā, the market town of Senāni. There he spied a lovely spot of ground, a charming forest grove, a flowing river with pleasant sandy fords, and hard by was a village where he could obtain his food. Then he thought thus:

“Lovely, indeed, O Venerable One, is this spot of ground, charming is the forest grove, pleasant is the flowing river with sandy fords, and hard by is the village where I could obtain food. Suitable indeed is this place for spiritual exertion for those noble scions who desire to strive.”

The place was congenial for his meditation. The atmosphere was peaceful. The surroundings were pleasant. The scenery was charming. Alone, he resolved to settle down there to achieve his desired object.

Hearing of his renunciation, Kondañña, the youngest brahmin who predicted his future, and four sons of the other sages – Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji – also renounced the world and joined his company.

In the ancient days in India, great importance was attached to rites, ceremonies, penances and sacrifices. It was then a popular belief that no Deliverance could be gained unless one leads a life of strict asceticism. Accordingly, for six long years the ascetic Gotama made a superhuman struggle practising all forms of severest austerity. His delicate body was reduced to almost a skeleton. The more he tormented his body the farther his goal receded from him.

How strenuously he struggled, the various methods he employed, and how he eventually succeeded are graphically described in his own words in various Suttas. MahāSaccaka Sutta describes his preliminary efforts thus: “Then the following thought occurred to me: “How if I were to clench my teeth, press my tongue against the palate, and with (moral) thoughts hold down, subdue and destroy my (immoral) thoughts!

“So I clenched my teeth, pressed my tongue against the palate and strove to hold down, subdue, destroy my (immoral) thoughts with (moral) thoughts. As I struggled thus, perspiration streamed forth from my armpits.

“Like unto a strong man who might seize a weaker man by head or shoulders and hold him down, force him down, and bring into subjection, even so did I struggle.

“Strenuous and indomitable was my energy. My mindfulness was established and unperturbed. My body was, however, fatigued and was not calmed as a result of that painful endeavour – being overpowered by exertion. Even though such painful sensations arose in me, they did not at all affect my mind.

“Then I thought thus: How if I were to cultivate the non-breathing ecstasy! “Accordingly, I checked inhalation and exhalation from my mouth and nostrils. As I checked inhalation and exhalation from mouth and nostrils, the air issuing from my ears created an exceedingly great noise. Just as a blacksmith’s bellows being blown make an exceedingly great noise, even so was the noise created by the air issuing from my ears when I stopped breathing.

“Nevertheless, my energy was strenuous and indomitable. Established and unperturbed was my mindfulness. Yet my body was fatigued and was not calmed as a result of that painful endeavour – being over-powered by exertion. Even though such painful sensations arose in me, they did not at all affect my mind.

“Then I thought to myself: ‘How if I were to cultivate that non-breathing exercise!

“Accordingly, I checked inhalation and exhalation from mouth, nostrils, and ears. And as I stopped breathing from mouth, nostrils and ears, the (imprisoned) airs beat upon my skull with great violence. Just as if a strong man were to bore one’s skull with a sharp drill, even so did the airs beat my skull with great violence as I stopped breathing. Even though such painful sensations arose in me, they did not at all affect my mind.

“Then I thought to myself: How if I were to cultivate that non-breathing ecstasy again!

“Accordingly, I checked inhalation and exhalation from mouth, nostrils, and ears. And as I stopped breathing thus, terrible pains arose in my head. As would be the pains if a strong man were to bind one’s head

tightly with a hard leathern thong, even so were the terrible pains that arose in my head. “Nevertheless, my energy was strenuous. Such painful sensations did not affect my mind.

“Then I thought to myself: How if I were to cultivate that non-breathing ecstasy again! “Accordingly, I stopped breathing from mouth, nostrils, and ears. As I checked breathing thus, plentiful airs pierced my belly. Just as if a skilful butcher or a butcher’s apprentice were to rip up the belly with a sharp butcher’s knife, even so plentiful airs pierced my belly.

“Nevertheless, my energy was strenuous. Such painful sensations did not affect my mind. “Again I thought to myself: How if I were to cultivate that non-breathing ecstasy again!“Accordingly, I checked inhalation and exhalation from mouth, nostrils, and ears. As I suppressed my breathing thus, a tremendous burning pervaded my body. Just as if two strong men were each to seize a weaker man by his arms and scorch and thoroughly burn him in a pit of glowing charcoal, even so did a severe burning pervade my body.

“Nevertheless, my energy was strenuous. Such painful sensations did not affect my mind.

“Thereupon the deities who saw me thus said: ‘The ascetic Gotama is dead.’ Some remarked: ‘The ascetic Gotama is not dead yet, but is dying’. While some others said: ‘The ascetic Gotama is neither dead nor is dying but an Arahant is the ascetic Gotama. Such is the way in which an Arahant abides.’”

Change of Method: Abstinence from Food: “Then I thought to myself: How if I were to practise complete abstinence from food! “Then deities approached me and said: ‘Do not, good sir, practise total abstinence from food. If you do practise it, we will pour celestial essence through your body’s pores; with that you will be sustained.’”

“And I thought: ‘If I claim to be practising starvation, and if these deities pour celestial essence through my body’s pores and I am sustained thereby, it would be a fraud on my part.’ So I refused them, saying ‘There is no need’.

“Then the following thought occurred to me: How if I take food little by little, a small quantity of the juice of green gram, or vetch, or lentils, or peas!

“As I took such small quantity of solid and liquid food, my body became extremely emaciated. Just as are the joints of knot-grasses or bulrushes, even so were the major and minor parts of my body owing to lack of food. Just as is the camel’s hoof, even so were my hips for want of food. Just as is a string of beads, even so did my backbone stand out and bend in, for lack of food. Just as the rafters of a dilapidated hall fall this way and that, even so appeared my ribs through lack of sustenance. Just as in a deep well may be seen stars sunk deep in the water, even so did my eye-balls appear deep sunk in their sockets, being devoid of food. Just as a bitter

pumpkin, when cut while raw, will by wind and sun get shrivelled and withered, even so did the skin of my head get shrivelled and withered, due to lack of sustenance.

“And I, intending to touch my belly’s skin, would instead seize my backbone. When I intended to touch my backbone, I would seize my belly’s skin. So was I that, owing to lack of sufficient food, my belly’s skin clung to the backbone, and I, on going to pass excreta or urine, would in that very spot stumble and fall down, for want of food. And I stroked my limbs in order to revive my body. Lo, as I did so, the rotten roots of my body’s hairs fell from my body owing to lack of sustenance. The people who saw me said: ‘The ascetic Gotama is black.’ Some said, ‘The ascetic Gotama is not black but blue.’

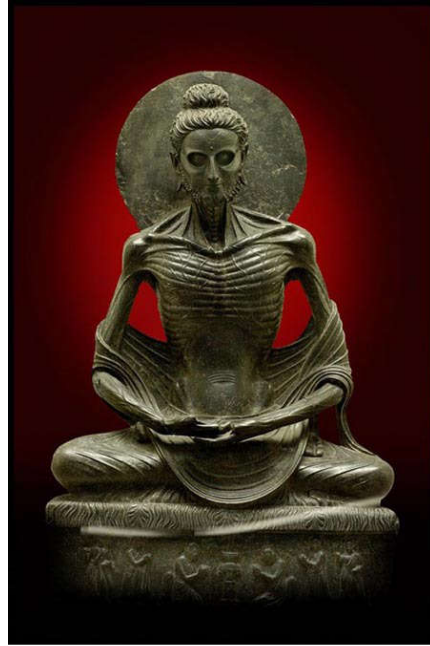


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Some others said: ‘The ascetic Gotama is neither black nor blue but tawny.’ To such an extent was the pure colour of my skin impaired owing to lack of food.

“Then the following thought occurred to me: Whatsoever ascetics or brahmins of the past have experienced acute, painful, sharp and piercing sensations, they must have experienced them to such a high degree as this and not beyond. Whatsoever ascetics and brahmins of the future will experience acute, painful, sharp and piercing sensations they too will experience them to such a high degree and not beyond. Yet by all these bitter and difficult austerities I shall not attain to excellence, worthy of supreme knowledge and insight, transcending those of human states. Might there be another path for Enlightenment!”

Temptation of Māra the Evil One: His prolonged painful austerities proved utterly futile. They only resulted in the exhaustion of his valuable energy. Though physically a superman his delicately nurtured body could not possibly stand the great strain. His graceful form completely faded almost beyond recognition. His golden coloured skin turned pale, his blood dried up, his sinews and muscles shrivelled up, his eyes were sunk and blurred. To all appearance he was a living skeleton. He was almost on the verge of death.

At this critical stage, while he was still intent on the Highest (Padhāna), abiding on the banks of the Nerañjarā River, striving and contemplating in order to attain to that state of Perfect Security, came Namuci, uttering kind words thus:

“‘You are lean and deformed. Near to you is death.

“A thousand parts (of you belong) to death; to life (there remains) but one. Live, O good sir! Life is better. Living, you could perform merit. “By leading a life of celibacy and making fire sacrifices, much merit could be acquired. What will you do with this striving? Hard is the path of striving, difficult and not easily accomplished.”

Māra reciting these words stood in the presence of the Exalted One.

To Māra who spoke thus, the Exalted One replied: “O Evil One, kinsman of the heedless! You have come here for your own sake. “Even an iota of merit is of no avail. To them who are in need of merit it behoves you, Māra, to speak thus. “Confidence (Saddhā), self-control (Tapo), perseverance (Viriya), and wisdom (Paññā) are mine. Me who am thus intent, why do you question about life? “Even the streams of rivers will this wind dry up. Why should not the blood of me who am thus striving dry up? “When blood dries up, the bile and phlegm also dry up. When my flesh wastes away, more and more does my mind get clarified? Still more do my mindfulness, wisdom, and concentration become firm? “While I live thus, experiencing the utmost pain, my mind does not long for lust! Behold the purity of a being! “Sense-desires (Kāmā), are your first army. The second is called Aversion for the Holy Life (Arati). The third is Hunger and Thirst (Khuppīpāsā). The fourth is called Craving (Tanhā). The fifth is Sloth and Torpor (Thina-Middha). The sixth is called Fear (Bhiru). The seventh is



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Doubt (Vicikicchā), and the eighth is Detraction and Obstinacy (Makkha-Thambha). The ninth is Gain (Lobha), Praise (Siloka) and Honour (Sakkāra), and that ill-gotten Fame (Yasa). The tenth is the extolling of oneself and contempt for others (Attukkamsanaparavambhana).

“This, Namuci, is your army, the opposing host of the Evil One. That army the coward does not overcome, but he who overcomes obtains happiness. “This Muja do I display! What boots life in this world! Better for me is death in the battle than that one should live on, vanquished! “Some ascetics and brahmins are not seen plunged in this battle. They know not nor do they tread the path of the virtuous.

“Seeing the army on all sides with Māra arrayed on elephant, I go forward to battle. Māra shall not drive me from my position. That army of yours,

which the world together with gods conquers not, by my wisdom I go to destroy as I would an unbaked bowl with a stone.

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“Controlling my thoughts, and with mindfulness well-established, I shall wander from country to country, training many a disciple. “Diligent, intent, and practising my teaching, they, disregarding you, will go where having gone they grieve not.”

3.3 THE MIDDLE PATH:

The ascetic Gotama was now fully convinced from personal experience of the utter futility of self-mortification which, though considered indispensable for Deliverance by the ascetic philosophers of the day, actually weakened one's intellect, and resulted in lassitude of spirit. He abandoned for ever this painful extreme as did he the other extreme of self-indulgence which tends to retard moral progress. He conceived the idea of adopting the Golden Mean which later became one of the salient features of his teaching.

He recalled how when his father was engaged in ploughing, he sat in the cool shade of the rose-apple tree, absorbed in the contemplation of his own breath, which resulted in the attainment of the First Jhāna (Ecstasy). Thereupon he thought: “Well, this is the path to Enlightenment.” He realized that Enlightenment could not be gained with such an utterly exhausted body: Physical fitness was essential for spiritual progress. So he decided to nourish the body sparingly and took some coarse food both hard and soft. The five favourite disciples who were attending on him with great hopes thinking that whatever truth the ascetic Gotama would comprehend, that would he impart to them, felt disappointed at this unexpected change of method and leaving him and the place too, went to Isipatana, saying that “the ascetic Gotama had become luxurious, had ceased from striving, and had returned to a life of comfort.”



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At a crucial time when help was most welcome his companions deserted him leaving him alone. He was not discouraged, but their voluntary separation was advantageous to him though their presence during his great struggle was helpful to him. Alone, in sylvan solitudes, great men often realize deep truths and solve intricate problems.

3.4 DAWN OF TRUTH:

Regaining his lost strength with some coarse food, he easily developed the First Jhāna which he gained in his youth. By degrees he developed the second, third and fourth Jhānas as well. By developing the Jhānas he gained perfect one-pointedness of the mind. His mind was now like a polished mirror where everything is reflected in its true perspective. Thus with thoughts tranquillized, purified, cleansed, free from lust and impurity, pliable, alert, steady, and unshakable, he directed his mind to the knowledge as regards “The Reminiscence of Past Births” (Pubbe-nivāsānussatimāna).

He recalled his varied lots in former existences as follows: first one life, then two lives, then three, four, five, ten, twenty, up to fifty lives; then a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand; then the dissolution of many world cycles, then the evolution of many world cycles, then both the dissolution and evolution of many world cycles. In that place he was of such a name, such a family, such a caste, such a dietary, such the pleasure and pain he experienced, such his life’s end. Departing from there, he came into existence elsewhere. Then such was his name, such his family, such his caste, such his dietary, such the pleasure and pain he did experience, such life’s end. Thence departing, he came into existence here. Thus he recalled the mode and details of his varied lots in his former births. This, indeed, as the First Knowledge that he realized in the first watch of the night.

Dispelling thus the ignorance with regard to the past, he directed his purified mind to “The Perception of the Disappearing and Reappearing of Beings” (Cutūpapātanāna). With clairvoyant vision, purified and supernormal, he perceived beings disappearing from one state of existence and reappearing in another; he beheld the base and the noble, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the miserable, all passing according to their deeds. He knew that these good individuals, by evil deeds, words, and thoughts, by reviling the Noble Ones, by being misbelievers, and by conforming themselves to the actions of the misbelievers, after the dissolution of their bodies and after death, had been born in sorrowful states. He knew that these good individuals, by good deeds, words, and thoughts, by not reviling the Noble Ones, by being right believers, and by conforming themselves to the actions of the right believers, after the dissolution of their bodies and after death, had been born in happy celestial worlds.

Thus with clairvoyant supernormal vision he beheld the disappearing and the reappearing of beings. This, indeed, was the Second Knowledge that he realized in the middle watch of the night. Dispelling thus the ignorance with regard to the future, he directed his purified mind to “The Comprehension of the Cessation of Corruptions” (Āsavakkhayanāna).

He realized in accordance with fact: “This is Sorrow”, “This, the Arising of Sorrow”, “This, the Cessation of Sorrow”, “This, the Path leading to the Cessation of Sorrow”. Likewise in accordance with fact he realized:

“These are the Corruptions”, “This, the Arising of Corruptions”, “This, the Cessation of Corruptions”, “This, the Path leading to the Cessation of Corruptions”. Thus cognizing, thus perceiving, his mind was delivered from the Corruption of Sensual Craving; from the Corruption of Craving for Existence; from the Corruption of Ignorance.

Being delivered, He knew, “Delivered am” and He realized, “Rebirth is ended; fulfilled the Holy Life; done what was to be done; there is no more of this state again.” This was the Third Knowledge that He Realized in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was dispelled, and wisdom arose; darkness vanished, and light arose.

3.5 THE DHAMMA AS THE TEACHER:

On one occasion soon after the Enlightenment, the Buddha was dwelling at the foot of the Ajapāla banyan tree by the bank of the Nerañjarā river. As he was engaged in solitary meditation the following thought arose in His mind: “Painful indeed is it to live without someone to pay reverence and show deference. How if I should live near an ascetic or brahmin respecting and reverencing him?” Then it occurred to Him:

“Should I live near another ascetic or brahmin, respecting and reverencing him, in order to bring morality (Sīlakkhandha) to perfection? But I do not see in this world including gods, Māras, and Brahmas, and amongst beings including ascetics, brahmins, gods and men, another ascetic or brahmin who is superior to me in morality and with whom I could associate,

respecting and reverencing him. “Should I live near another ascetic or brahmin, respecting and reverencing him, in order to bring concentration (samādhikkhandha) to perfection? But I do not see in this world any ascetic or brahmin who is superior to me in concentration and with whom I should associate, respecting and reverencing him.

“Should I live near another ascetic or brahmin, respecting and reverencing him, in order to bring wisdom (paññākkhandha) to perfection? But I do not see in this world any ascetic or brahmin who is superior to me in wisdom and with whom I should associate, respecting and reverencing him. “Should I live near another ascetic or brahmin, respecting and reverencing him, in order to bring emancipation (vimuttikkhandha) to perfection? But I do not see in this world any ascetic or brahmin who is superior to me in emancipation and with whom I should associate, respecting and reverencing him.”

Then it occurred to Him: “How if I should live respecting and reverencing this very Dhamma which I myself have realized?” Thereupon BrahmāSahampati, understanding with his own mind the Buddha’s thought, just as a strong man would stretch his bent arm or bend his stretched arm even so did he vanish from the Brahma realm and appeared before the Buddha. And, covering one shoulder with his upper robe and placing his right knee on the ground, he saluted the Buddha with clasped hands and said thus: “It is so, O Exalted One! It is so, O

Accomplished One! O Lord, the worthy, supremely Enlightened Ones, who were in the past, did live respecting and reverencing this very Dhamma.

“The worthy, supremely Enlightened Ones, who will be in the future, will also live respecting and reverencing this very Dhamma.

“O Lord, may the Exalted One, the worthy, supremely Enlightened One of the present age also live respecting and reverencing this very Dhamma!” This the Brahmā Sahampati said, and uttering which, furthermore he spoke as follows:

“Those Enlightened Ones of the past, those of the future, and those of the present age, who dispel the grief of many – all of them lived, will live, and are living respecting the noble Dhamma. This is the characteristic of the Buddhas. “Therefore he who desires his welfare and expects his greatness should certainly respect the noble Dhamma, remembering the message of the Buddhas.”

This the Brahmā Sahampati said, and after which, he respectfully saluted the Buddha and passing round Him to the right, disappeared immediately. As the Sangha is also endowed with greatness there is also His reverence towards the Sangha.

3.6 THE INVITATION TO EXPOUND THE DHAMMA:

From the foot of the Rājāyatana tree the Buddha proceeded to the Ajapāla banyan tree and as He was absorbed in solitary meditation the following thought occurred to Him.

“This Dhamma which I have realized is indeed profound, difficult to perceive, difficult to comprehend, tranquil, exalted, not within the sphere of logic, subtle, and is to be understood by the wise. These beings are attached to material pleasures. This causally connected ‘Dependent Arising’ is a subject which is difficult to comprehend. And this Nibbāna – the cessation of the conditioned, the abandoning of all passions, the destruction of craving, the non-attachment, and the cessation – is also a matter not easily comprehensible. If I too were to teach this Dhamma, the others would not understand me. That will be wearisome to me that will be tiresome to me.”

Then these wonderful verses unheard of before occurred to the Buddha:

“With difficulty have I comprehended the Dhamma. There is no need to proclaim it now. This Dhamma is not easily understood by those who are dominated by lust and hatred. The lust-ridden, shrouded in darkness, do not see this Dhamma, which goes against the stream, which is abstruse, profound, difficult to perceive and subtle.” As the Buddha reflected thus, he was not disposed to expound the Dhamma.

Thereupon Brahma Sahampati read the thoughts of the Buddha, and, fearing that the world might perish through not hearing the Dhamma, approached Him and invited Him to teach the Dhamma thus:

“O Lord, may the Exalted One expound the Dhamma! May the Accomplished One expound the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes, who, not hearing the Dhamma, will fall away. There will be those who understand the Dhamma.”

Furthermore he remarked: “In ancient times there arose in Magadha a Dhamma, impure, thought out by the corrupted. Open this door to the Deathless State. May they hear the Dhamma understood by the Stainless One! Just as one standing on the summit of a rocky mountain would behold the people around, even so may the All-Seeing, Wise One ascend this palace of Dhamma! May the Sorrowless One look upon the people who are plunged in grief and are overcome by birth and decay!

“Rise, O Hero, victor in battle, caravan leader, debt-free One, and wander in the World! May the Exalted One teach the Dhamma! There will be those who will understand the Dhamma.”

When he said so the Exalted One spoke to him thus: “The following thought, O Brahma, occurred to me – ‘This Dhamma which I have comprehended is not easily understood by those who are dominated by lust and hatred. The lust-ridden, shrouded in darkness, do not see this Dhamma, which goes against the stream, which is abstruse, profound, difficult to perceive, and subtle’. As I reflected thus, my mind turned into inaction and not to the teaching of the Dhamma.” Brahmā Sahampati appealed to the Buddha for the second time and He made the same reply. When he appealed to the Buddha for the third time, the Exalted One, out of pity for beings, surveyed the world with His Buddha-Vision.

As He surveyed thus He saw beings with little and much dust in their eyes, with keen and dull intellect, with good and bad characteristics, beings who are easy and beings who are difficult to be taught, and few others who, with fear, view evil and a life beyond.

“As in the case of a blue, red or white lotus pond, some lotuses are born in the water, grow in the water, remain immersed in the water, and thrive plunged in the water; some are born in the water, grow in the water and remain on the surface of the water; some others



Image source:-

<https://www.quora.com/Who-is-Brahma-Sahampati-in-Buddhism>

are born in the water, grow in the water and remain emerging out of the water, unstained by the water. Even so, as the Exalted One surveyed the world with His Buddha-Vision, He saw beings with little and much dust in their eyes, with keen and dull intellect, with good and bad characteristics, beings who are easy and difficult to be taught, and few others who, with fear, view evil and a life beyond. And He addressed the Brahmā Sahampati in a verse thus:

“Opened to them are the Doors to the Deathless State. Let those who have ears repose confidence. Being aware of the weariness, O Brahma, I did not teach amongst men this glorious and excellent Dhamma.”

The delighted Brahma, thinking that he made himself the occasion for the Exalted One to expound the Dhamma respectfully saluted Him and, passing round Him to the right, disappeared immediately.

The First Two Converts: After His memorable fast for forty-nine days, as the Buddha sat under the Rājāyatana tree, two merchants, Tapassu and Bhallika, from Ukkala (Orissa) happened to pass that way. Then a certain deity,⁶ who was a blood relative of theirs in a past birth, spoke to them as follows:

“The Exalted One, good sirs, is dwelling at the foot of the Rājāyatana tree, soon after His Enlightenment. Go and serve the Exalted One with flour and honey-comb. It will conduce to your well-being and happiness for a long time.” Availing themselves of this golden opportunity, the two delighted merchants went to the Exalted One, and, respectfully saluting Him, implored Him to accept their humble alms so that it may resound to their happiness and well-being. Then it occurred to the Exalted One: “The Tathāgata do not accept food with their hands. How shall I accept this flour and honeycomb?”

Forthwith the four Great Kings understood the thoughts of the Exalted One with their minds and from the four directions offered Him four granite bowls, saying – “O Lord, may the Exalted One accept herewith



Image source:-
<http://viriananguyen.blogspot.com/2013/09/life-of-buddha-picture.html?m=0>

this flour and honey-comb!” The Buddha graciously accepted the timely gift with which He received the humble offering of the merchants, and ate His food after His long fast. After the meal was over the merchants prostrated themselves before the feet of the Buddha and said: “We, O Lord, seek refuge in the Exalted One and the Dhamma. May the Exalted One treat us as lay disciples who have sought refuge from today till death?”

These were the first lay disciples of the Buddha who embraced Buddhism by seeking refuge in the Buddha and the Dhamma, reciting the twofold formula.

Life and Teachings of the
Buddha

On the Way to Benares to Teach the Dhamma: On accepting the invitation to teach the Dhamma, the first thought that occurred to the Buddha before He embarked on His great mission was – “To whom shall I teach the Dhamma first? Who will understand the Dhamma quickly? Well, there is ĀlāraKālāma who is learned, clever, wise and has for long been with little dust in his eyes. How if I were to teach the Dhamma to him first? He will understand the Dhamma quickly.”

Then a deity appeared before the Buddha and said: “Lord! ĀlāraKālāma died a week ago.” With His supernormal vision He perceived that it was so. Then He thought of UddakaRāmaputta. Instantly a deity informed Him that he died the evening before. With His supernormal vision He perceived this to be so. Ultimately the Buddha thought of the five energetic ascetics who attended on Him during His struggle for Enlightenment. With His supernormal vision He perceived that they were residing in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares. So the Buddha stayed at Uruvela till such time as He was pleased to set out for Benares.

The Buddha was travelling on the highway, when between Gayā and the Bodhi tree, beneath whose shade He attained Enlightenment, a wandering ascetic named Upaka saw Him and addressed Him thus: “Extremely clear are your senses, friend! Pure and clean is your complexion. On account of whom has your renunciation been made, friend? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?” The Buddha replied:

“All have I overcome, all do I know.

From all am I detached, all have I renounced.

Wholly absorbed am I in the destruction of craving (Arahantship). Having comprehended all by myself whom shall I call my teacher?

No teacher have I. An equal to me there is not.

In the world including gods there is no rival to me.

Indeed an Arahant am I in this world.

An unsurpassed teacher am I;

Alone am I the All-Enlightened.

Cool and appeased am I.

To establish the wheel of Dhamma to the city of Kāśī I go.

In this blind world I shall beat the drum of Deathlessness.

“Then, friend, do you admit that you are an Arahant, a limitless Conqueror?” queried Upaka. “Like me are conquerors who have attained

to the destruction of defilements. All the evil conditions have I conquered. Hence, Upaka, I am called a conqueror,” replied the Buddha. “It may be so, friend!” Upaka curtly remarked, and, nodding his head, turned into a by-road and departed. Unperturbed by the first rebuff, the Buddha journeyed from place to place, and arrived in due course at the Deer Park in Benares

Meeting the Five Monks: The five ascetics who saw Him coming from afar decided not to pay Him due respect as they misconstrued His discontinuance of rigid ascetic practices which proved absolutely futile during His struggle for Enlightenment.

They remarked: “Friends, this ascetic Gotama is coming. He is luxurious. He has given up striving and has turned into a life of abundance. He should not be greeted and waited upon. His bowl and robe should not be taken. Nevertheless, a seat should be prepared. If he wishes, let him sit down.”

However, as the Buddha continued to draw near, His august personality was such that they were compelled to receive Him with due honour. One came forward and took His bowl and robe, another prepared a seat, and yet another kept water for His feet. Nevertheless, they addressed Him by name and called Him friend (āvuso), a form of address applied generally to juniors and equals.

At this the Buddha addressed them thus: “Do not, O Bhikkhus, address the Tathāgata by name or by the title ‘āvuso’. An Exalted One, O Bhikkhus, is the Tathāgata. A Fully Enlightened One is He. Give ear, O Bhikkhus! Deathlessness (Amata) has been attained. I shall instruct and teach the Dhamma. If you act according to my instructions, you will before long realize, by your own intuitive wisdom, and live, attaining in this life itself, that supreme consummation of the Holy Life, for the sake of which sons of noble families rightly leave the household for homelessness.”

Thereupon the five ascetics replied: “By that demeanour of yours, āvusoGotama, by that discipline, by those painful austerities, you did not attain to any superhuman specific knowledge and insight worthy of an Ariya. How will you, when you have become luxurious, have given up striving, and have turned into a life of abundance, gain any such superhuman specific knowledge and insight worthy of an Ariya?”

In explanation the Buddha said: “The Tathāgata, O Bhikkhus, is not luxurious, has not given up striving, and has not turned into a life of abundance. An Exalted One is the Tathāgata. A Fully Enlightened One is He. Give ear, O Bhikkhus! Deathlessness has been attained. I shall instruct and teach the Dhamma. If you act according to my instructions, you will before long realize, by your own intuitive wisdom, and live, attaining in this life itself, that supreme consummation of the Holy Life, for the sake of which sons of noble families rightly leave the household for homelessness.”

For the second time the prejudiced ascetics expressed their disappointment in the same manner.

For the second time the Buddha reassured them of His attainment to Enlightenment.

When the adamant ascetics refusing to believe Him, expressed their view for the third time, the Buddha questioned them thus: “Do you know, O Bhikkhus, of an occasion when I ever spoke to you thus before?”

“Nay, indeed, Lord!”

The Buddha repeated for the third time that He had gained Enlightenment and that they also could realize the Truth if they would act according to His instructions. It was indeed a frank utterance, issuing from the sacred lips of the Buddha. The cultured ascetics, though adamant in their views, were then fully convinced of the great achievement of the Buddha and of His competence to act as their moral guide and teacher. They believed His word and sat in silence to listen to His Noble Teaching. Two of the ascetics the Buddha instructed, while three went out for alms. With what the three ascetics brought from their alms-round the six maintained themselves. Three of the ascetics He instructed, while two ascetics went out for alms. With what the two brought six sustained themselves. And those five ascetics thus admonished and instructed by the Buddha, being themselves subject to birth, decay, death, sorrow, and passions, realized the real nature of life and, seeking out the birthless, decayless, diseaseless, deathless, sorrowless, passionless, incomparable Supreme Peace, Nibbāna, attained the incomparable Security, Nibbāna, which is free from birth, decay, disease, death, sorrow, and passions. The knowledge arose in them that their Deliverance was unshakable, that it was their last birth and that there would be no more of this state again.

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, which deals, with the four Noble Truths, was the first discourse delivered by the Buddha to them. Hearing it, Kondañña, the eldest, attained the first stage of Sainthood. After receiving further instructions, the other four attained Sotapatti later. On hearing the Anattalakkhana Sutta, which deals with soullessness, all the five attained Arahantship, the final stage of Sainthood.

The First Five Disciples The five learned monks who thus attained Arahantship and became the Buddha’s first disciples were Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji of the brahmin clan. Kondañña was the youngest and the cleverest of the eight brahmins who were summoned by King



First Sermon of The Buddha - Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh
<http://saraniya.com/buddhism/buddhist-stories/the-life-of-buddha-in-pictures/>

Suddhodana to name the infant prince. The other four were the sons of those older brahmins. All these five retired to the forest as ascetics in anticipation of the Bodhisattawhile he was endeavouring to attain Buddhahood. When he gave up his useless penances and severe austerities and began to nourish the body sparingly to regain his lost strength, these favourite followers, disappointed at his change of method, deserted him and went to Isipatana. Soon after their departure the Bodhisatta attained Buddhahood.

The venerable Kondañña became the first Arahant and the most senior member of the Sangha. It was Assaji, one of the five, who converted the great Sāriputta, the chief disciple of the Buddha.

3.7 SUMMARY

The life of the Buddha from birth to enlightenment is given for better understanding of the life led by the Siddhatta prior to enlightenment. 45 years after enlightenment Buddha kept on teachings the dhamma for the betterment of all the mankind, till he attained parinibbana at the age of 80 years.

The important events in the life of the Bodhisatta- (Buddha before enlightenment) is the four signs or nimitta-s seen by the Bodhisatta, which made him leave the household life in search of the truth- the great renunciation. The austerities practiced by the Bodhisatta gives us the religious traditions prevalent at the time- for the seekers of truth in India. The two teachers of the Bodhisatta and his struggle for enlightenment is relevant to know the importance of the teachings of the Buddha – the middle path- where Buddha specifically asks to avoid both the extremities- the pleasure and the pain to the body. The Dhammacakkapavattana sutta is thus the most important teaching given to the mankind- the dhamma.

3.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- Write in short -the Life of Bodhisatta Siddhatta before enlightenment.
- Describe in brief – the enlightenment of the Buddha under the Bodhi tree.
- Discuss the Dhammacakkapavattana or the turning of the wheel of dhamma in motion.
- Write in short- the learnings from the Life of the Buddha.

3.9 ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Ven. Narada Mahathera- Buddha and his Teachings

Ven. Walapola Rahula- What the Buddha Taught.

Ven. Thera Piyadassi- The Buddha, His life and Teachings

Ven. Nanamoli -Life of the Buddha According to the Pali Canon



TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA

Unit Structure:

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path
- 4.3 Eight Fold Path
- 4.4 Law of Dependent Origination
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Unit End Questions
- 4.7 Additional Reading

4.0 OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit the students will be able :

- To understand the teaching of Buddha.
- To know the actual meaning of Four Noble Truth and Eight-Fold Path
- To understand the *Paticca Samuppāda* theory

4.1 INTRODUCTION:

The teaching of Gautam Buddha was accepted universally and he became a great guru in the whole universe. Gautam Buddha left home at the age of 29 in search of Truth. After seven years wandering and meeting with several gurus of him but he could not get enlightenment. Finally, he change his path and sat under the (Pimpal) Bodhi tree at Gaya where he got enlightenment at the age of 35. Since then he became the Buddha or 'the Enlightened One'. After enlightenment or to achieve 'Keval Dnyan' he delivered his first sermon at Sarnath. Hence, till his Mahaparinirvana he spread his teaching and message for how overcome from the suffering to the common masses. Therefore, we need to understand his actual teaching to overcome from the suffering.

4.2 THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AND THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

"Light arose in me in things not heard before." – Dhammacakkasutta

The four truths are best known from their presentation in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* text, ("Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion) which contains the first teachings that the Buddha gave after attaining full awakening, and liberation from rebirth. Within this

discourse, the four noble truths are given as follows ("bhikkus" is normally translated as "Buddhist monks"):

Now this, bhikkhus, is the **noble truth of suffering**: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

Now this, bhikkhus, is the **noble truth of the origin of suffering**: it is this craving [*taṇhā*, "thirst"] which leads to re-becoming, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for becoming, craving for dis-becoming.

Now this, bhikkhus, is the **noble truth of the cessation of suffering**: it is the remainder less fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.

Now this, bhikkhus, is the **noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering**: it is this noble eightfold path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

According to this sutta, with the complete comprehension of these four truths release from *samsara*, the cycle of rebirth, was attained: Knowledge and vision arose in me: *'Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.* The comprehension of these four truths by his audience leads to the opening of the *Dhamma Eye*, that is, the attainment of right vision:

Whatever is subject to origination is subject to cessation.

The Pali terms *ariyasacca* (Sanskrit: *aryasatya*) are commonly translated as "noble truths". Truth (*Sacca*) is that which is. Its Sanskrit equivalent is *Satya* which means an incontrovertible fact. According to Buddhism there are four such Truths pertaining to this so-called being. In the Rohitassa Sutta the Buddha states:

"In this very one-fathom long body along with its perceptions and thoughts, do I proclaim

the world,

the origin of the world,

the cessation of the world, and

the path leading to the cessation of the world."

In this particular context the term "world" (*loka*) implies suffering. This interesting passage refers to the Four Noble Truths which the Buddha Himself discovered by His own intuitive knowledge. Whether the Buddhas arise or not these Truths exist, and it is a Buddha that reveals them to the deluded world. They do not and cannot change with time

because they are eternal Truths. The Buddha was not indebted to anyone for His realization of them. He Himself said: “They were unheard before.”

These Truths are in Pāli termed *ariyasaccāni*. They are so called because they were discovered by the Greatest Ariya, the Buddha, who was far removed from passion. The first Truth deals with *dukkha*, which for need of a better English equivalent, is rendered by suffering or sorrow. As a feeling *dukkha* means that which is difficult to be endured (*du* – difficult, *kha* – to endure). As an abstract truth *dukkha* is used in the sense of “contemptible” (*du*) and “emptiness” (*kha*). The world rests on suffering hence it is contemptible. The world is devoid of any reality – hence it is empty or void.

Dukkha, therefore, means contemptible void. Average men are only surface-seers. An Ariya sees things as they truly are. To an Ariya all life is suffering and he finds no real happiness in this world which deceives mankind with illusory pleasures. Material happiness is merely the gratification of some desire. “No sooner is the desired thing gained than it begins to be scorned.” Insatiate are all desires. All are subject to birth (*jāti*), and consequently to decay (*jarā*), disease (*vyādhi*), and finally to death (*marana*). No one is exempt from these four inevitable causes of suffering. Impeded wish is also suffering. We do not wish to be associated with things or persons we detest, nor do we wish to be separated from things or persons we love. Our cherished desires are not, however, always gratified. What we least expect or what we least desire is often thrust on us. At times such unexpected unpleasant circumstances become so intolerable and painful that weak ignorant folk are compelled to commit suicide as if such an act would solve the problem. Real happiness is found within, and is not to be defined in terms of wealth, power, honours or conquests. If such worldly possessions are forcibly or unjustly obtained, or are misdirected, or even viewed with attachment, they will be a source of pain and sorrow for the possessors. Ordinarily the enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the highest and only happiness to an average person. There is no doubt a momentary happiness in the anticipation, gratification, and recollection of such fleeting material pleasures, but they are illusory and temporary. According to the Buddha non-attachment (*virāgatā*) or the transcending of material pleasures is a greater bliss.

In brief, this composite body itself is a cause of suffering.

This First Truth of suffering which depends on this so called being and various aspects of life, is to be carefully analysed and examined. This examination leads to a proper understanding of oneself as one really is.

The cause of this suffering is craving or attachment (*tanhā*) which is the Second Noble Truth.

The Dhammapada states:

“From craving springs grief, from craving springs fear,

For him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear.”

(V. 216)

This craving is a powerful mental force latent in all, and is the chief cause of most of the ills of life. It is this craving, gross or subtle, that leads to repeated births in Samsāra and makes one cling to all forms of life. The grossest forms of craving are attenuated on attaining *Sakadāgāmi*, the second stage of Sainthood, and are eradicated on attaining *Anāgāmi*, the third stage of Sainthood. The subtle forms of craving are eradicated on attaining Arahantship. Both suffering and craving can only be eradicated by following the Middle Way, enunciated by the Buddha Himself, and attaining the supreme Bliss of Nibbāna.

The Third Noble Truth is the complete cessation of suffering which is *Nibbāna*, the ultimate Goal of Buddhists. It is achieved by the total eradication of all forms of craving. This Nibbāna is to be comprehended by the mental eye by renouncing all internal attachment to the external world. This Truth has to be realized by developing the Noble Eightfold Path which is the Fourth Noble Truth. This unique path is the only straight route that leads to Nibbāna. It avoids the extreme of self-mortification that weakens one's intellect and the extreme of self-indulgence that retards one's moral progress.

4.3 EIGHTFOLD PATH:

It consists of the following eight factors.:

- 1) Right Understanding (*SammāDitthi*),
- 2) Right Thoughts (*SammāSamkappa*),
- 3) Right Speech (*SammāVācā*),
- 4) Right Action (*SammāKammanta*),
- 5) Right Livelihood (*SammāĀjīva*),
- 6) Right Effort (*SammāVāyāma*),
- 7) Right Mindfulness (*Sammā Sati*), and
- 8) Right Concentration (*SammāSamādhi*),

1. Right Understanding ***Sammā Ditthi*** is explained as the knowledge of the four Noble Truths. In other words, it is the understanding of oneself as one really is, because, as the Rohitassa Sutta states, these truths are concerned with the “one-fathom long body of man.” The key-note of Buddhism is this right understanding. Clear vision or right understanding leads to clear thinking.

2. The second factor of the noble Eightfold Path is, therefore, ***SammāSamkappa***. The English renderings – “Right Resolutions”, “Right Aspirations” – do not convey the actual meaning of the Pāli term. Right Ideas or Right Mindfulness comes closer to the meaning. “Right Thoughts” may be suggested as the nearest English equivalent. By *Samkappas* is meant the “*Vitakka*” mental state, which, for want of a better

rendering, may be called “initial application.” This important mental state eliminates wrong ideas or notions and helps the other moral adjuncts to be diverted to Nibbāna. It is one’s thoughts that either defile or purify a person. One’s thoughts mould one’s nature and controls one’s destiny. Evil thoughts tend to debase one just as good thoughts tend to elevate one. Sometimes a single thought can either destroy or save a world. *SammāSamkappa* serves the double purpose of eliminating evil thoughts and developing pure thoughts.

Right Thoughts, in this particular connection, are threefold. They consist of:

- i. *Nekkhamma* – Renunciation of worldly pleasures or selflessness which is opposed to attachment, selfishness, and self-possessiveness.
- ii. *Avyāpāda*– Loving-kindness, goodwill, or benevolence, which is opposed to hatred, ill-will, or aversion, and
- iii. *Avihimsā*– Harmlessness or compassion, which is opposed to cruelty and callousness.

These evil and good forces are latent in all. As long as we are worldlings these evil forces rise to the surface at unexpected moments in disconcerting strength. When once they are totally eradicated on attaining Arahantship, one’s stream of consciousness gets perfectly purified. Attachment and hatred, coupled with ignorance, are the chief causes of all evil prevalent in this deluded world. “The enemy of the whole world is lust, through which all evils come to living beings. This lust when obstructed by some cause is transformed into wrath.”

One is either attached to desirable external objects or is repulsed with aversion in the case of undesirable objects.

Through attachment one clings to material pleasures and tries to gratify one’s desire by some means or other. Through aversion one recoils from undesirable objects and even goes to the extent of destroying them as their very presence is a source of irritation. With the giving up of egoism by one’s own intuitive insight, both attachment and hatred automatically disappear.

The Dhammapada states:

“There is no fire like lust, no grip like hate,

There is no net like delusion, no river like craving.” (v. 251)

- i. As one ascends the spiritual ladder one renounces by degrees both gross and subtle attachment to material pleasures like grown-up children giving up their petty toys. Being children, they cannot be expected to possess an adult’s understanding, and they cannot be convinced of the worthlessness of their temporary pleasures. With maturity they begin to understand things as they truly are and they voluntarily give up their toys. As the spiritual pilgrim proceeds on the upward path by his constant meditation

and reflection, he perceives the futility of pursuing base material pleasures and the resultant happiness in forsaking them. He cultivates non-attachment to the fullest degree. “Happy is non-attachment in this world, so is the transcending of all sensual pleasures,” is one of the early utterances of the Buddha.

ii. The other most rebellious passion is anger, aversion, illwill, or hatred, all of which are implied by the Pāli term *vyāpāda*. It consumes the person in whom it springs and consumes others as well. The Pāli term *avyāpāda*, literally, non-enmity, corresponds to that most beautiful virtue *Mettā* (Sanskrit *Maitri*) which means loving-kindness or goodwill towards all without any distinction. He whose mind is full of loving-kindness can harbour no hatred towards any. Like a mother who makes no difference between herself and her only child and protects it even at the risk of her own life, even so does the spiritual pilgrim who follows this middle path radiate his thoughts of loving-kindness identifying himself with all. Buddhist *Mettā* embraces all living beings, animals not excluded.

iii. *Avihimsā* or *Karunā*— Harmlessness or compassion is the third and the last member of *samkappa*. *Karunā* is that sweet virtue which makes the tender hearts of the noble quiver at the sufferings of others. Like Buddhist *Mettā*, Buddhist *Karunā* too is limitless. It is not restricted only to co-religionists or co-nationals or to human beings alone. Limited compassion is not true *karunā*. A compassionate one is as soft as a flower. He cannot bear the sufferings of others. He might at times even go to the extent of sacrificing his own life to alleviate the sufferings of others. In every Jātaka story it is evident that the Bodhisatta endeavoured his best to help the distressed and the forlorn and to promote their happiness in every possible way. *Karunā* has the characteristics of a loving mother whose thoughts, words, and deeds always tend to relieve the distress of her sick child. It has the property of not being able to tolerate the sufferings of others. Its manifestation is perfect non violence and harmlessness – that is, a compassionate person appears to be absolutely non-violent and harmless. The sight of the helpless states of the distressed is the proximate cause for the practice of *Karunā*. The consummation of *karuna* is the eradication of all forms of cruelty. The direct enemy of *karuna* is cruelty and the indirect enemy is homely grief. Buddhist *mettā* appeals to both the rich and the poor, for Buddhism teaches its followers to elevate the lowly, help the poor, the needy, and the forlorn, tend the sick, comfort the bereaved, pity the wicked, and enlighten the ignorant. Compassion forms a fundamental principle of both Buddhist laymen and Bhikkhus.

Speaking of Buddhist harmlessness, Aldous Huxley writes: “*Indian pacifism finds its complete expression in the teaching of the Buddha. Buddhism teaches ahimsā or harmlessness towards all beings. It forbids even laymen to have anything to do with the manufacture and sale of arms, with the making of poison and intoxicants, with soldiering or the slaughtering of animals.*” The Buddha advises His disciples thus: “*Wherefore, O Bhikkhus, however men may speak concerning you, whether in season or out of season, whether appropriately or inappropriately, whether courteously or rudely, whether wisely or*

foolishly, whether kindly or maliciously, thus, O Bhikkhus, must you train yourselves –Unsullied shall our minds remain, neither shall evil words escape our lips. Kind and compassionate ever shall we abide with hearts harbouring no ill-will. And we shall enfold those very persons with streams of loving thoughts unfailing, and forth from them proceeding we shall radiate the whole wide world with constant thoughts of loving kindness, ample, expanding, measureless, free from enmity, free from ill-will. Thus must you train yourselves.”

He whose mind is free from selfish desires, hatred and cruelty, and is saturated with the spirit of selflessness, loving-kindness and harmlessness, lives in perfect peace. He is indeed ablessing to himself and others.

3. Right Thoughts lead to Right Speech (***SammāVācā***), the third factor. It deals with refraining from falsehood, slandering, harsh words, and frivolous talk. He who tries to eradicate selfish desires cannot indulge in uttering falsehood or in slandering for any selfish end or purpose. He is truthful and trustworthy and ever seeks the good and beautiful in others instead of deceiving, defaming, denouncing or disuniting his own fellow beings. A harmless mind that generates loving-kindness cannot give vent to harsh speech which first debases the speaker and then hurts another. What he utters is not only true, sweet and pleasant but also useful, fruitful and beneficial.

4. Right Speech follows Right Action (***SammāKammanta***), which deals with abstinence from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. These three evil deeds are caused by craving and anger, coupled with ignorance. With the gradual elimination of these causes from the mind of the spiritual pilgrim, blameworthy tendencies arising therefrom will find no expression. Under no pretence would he kill or steal.

5. Being pure in mind, he would lead a pure life. Purifying thoughts, words and deeds at the outset, the spiritual pilgrim tries to purify his livelihood Right Livelihood (***SammāĀjīva***), by refraining from the five kinds of trade which are for bidden to a lay-disciple. They are trading in arms (*sattHAVanijjā*), human beings (*sattavanijjā*), flesh (*mamsavanijjā*), i.e. breeding animals for slaughter, intoxicating drinks (*majjavanijjā*), and poison (*visavanijjā*) Hypocritical conduct is cited as wrong livelihood for monks. Strictly speaking, from an Abhidhamma standpoint, by right speech, right action and right livelihood are meant three abstinences (*virati*) but not the three opposite virtues.

6. Right Effort (***Sammā Vāyāma***), is fourfold-namely:

- i. The endeavour to discard evil that has already arisen,
- ii. The endeavour to prevent the arising of unarisen evil,
- iii. The endeavour to develop unarisen good, and
- iv. The endeavour to promote the good which has already arisen.

Right Effort plays a very important part in the Noble Eightfold Path. It is by one's own effort that one's deliverance is obtained and not by merely seeking refuge in others or by offering prayers. In man are found a rubbish-heap of evil and a store-house of virtue. By effort one removes this rubbish-heap and cultivates these latent virtues.

7. Right Effort is closely associated with Right Mindfulness (***Sammā Sati***). It is the constant mindfulness with regard to body (*kāyānupassanā*), feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), thoughts (*cittānupassanā*), and mind objects (*dhammānupassanā*). Mindfulness on these four objects tend to eradicate the misconceptions with regard to desirability (*subha*), so-called happiness (*sukha*), permanence (*nicca*), and an immortal soul (*attā*) respectively.

8. Right Effort and Right Mindfulness lead to Right Concentration (***Sammā Samādhi***). It is the one-pointedness of the mind. A concentrated mind acts as a powerful aid to see things as they truly are by means of penetrative insight. Of these eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path the first two are grouped in wisdom (*paññā*), the second three in morality (*sīla*) and the last three in concentration (*samādhi*).

Sīla

Right Speech

Right Action

Right Livelihood

Samādhi

Right Effort

Right Mindfulness

Right Concentration

Paññā

Right Understanding

Right Thoughts

According to the order of development *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā* are the three stages of the Path. Strictly speaking, from an ultimate standpoint, these factors that comprise the Noble Eightfold Path signify eight mental properties (*cetasika*) collectively found in the four classes of supramundane consciousness (*lokuttaracitta*) whose object is Nibbāna.

They are: *paññīndriya* (faculty of wisdom), *vitakka* (initial application), *virati* (three abstinences), *virīya* (energy), *sati* (mindfulness) and *ekaggata* (one-pointedness) respectively.

All these factors denote the mental attitude of the aspirant who is striving to gain his Deliverance.

4.4 LAW OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION:

Teachings of the Buddha

“The Dependent Arising” (*PaticcaSamuppāda*) in direct order thus:
 “When this (cause) exists, this (effect) is; with the arising of this (cause), this effect arises.”

Dependent on Ignorance (*avijjā*) arise moral and immoral Conditioning Activities (*samkhārā*).

Dependent on Conditioning Activities arises (Relinking) Consciousness (*viññāna*).

Dependent on (Relinking) Consciousness arise Mind and Matter (*nāma-rūpa*).

Dependent on Mind and Matter arise the Six Spheres of Sense (*salāyatana*).

Dependent on the Six Spheres of Sense arises Contact (*phassa*).

Dependent on Contact arises Feeling (*vedanā*).

Dependent on Feeling arises Craving (*tanhā*).

Dependent on Craving arises Grasping (*upādāna*).

Dependent on Grasping arises Becoming (*bhava*).

Dependent on Becoming arises Birth (*jāti*).

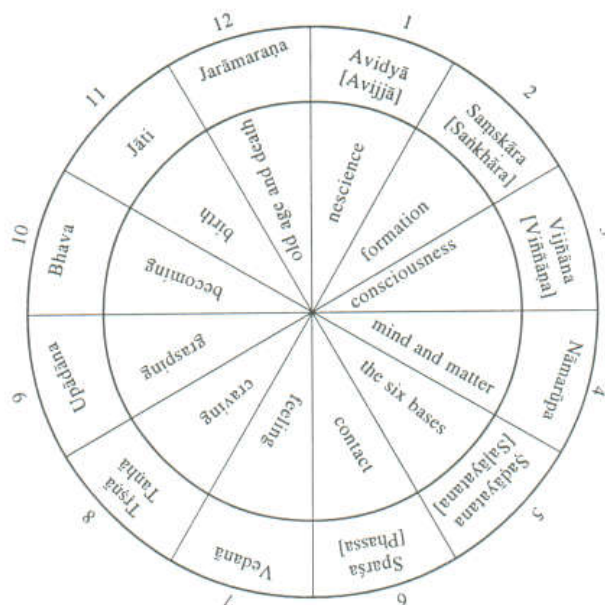
Dependent on Birth arise Decay (*jarā*), Death (*marana*), Sorrow (*soka*), Lamentation (*parideva*), Pain (*dukkha*), Grief (*domanassa*), and Despair (*upāyāsa*).

Thus does this whole mass of suffering originate.

“The Dependent Arising” in reverse order thus: “When this cause does not exist, this effect is not; with the cessation of this cause, this effect ceases.

With the cessation of Ignorance, Conditioning Activities cease.

With the cessation of Conditioning Activities (Relinking)



Consciousness ceases.

With the cessation of (Relinking) Consciousness, Mind and Matter cease.

With the cessation of Mind and Matter, the six Spheres of Sense cease.

With the cessation of the Six Spheres of Sense, Contact ceases.

With the cessation of Contact, Feeling ceases.

With the cessation of Feeling, Craving ceases.

With the cessation of Craving, Grasping ceases.

With the cessation of Grasping, Becoming ceases.

With the cessation of Becoming, Birth ceases.

With the cessation of Birth, Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation,

Pain, Grief, and Despair cease.

Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease.

Thereupon the Exalted One, knowing the meaning of this, uttered, at that time, this paean of joy: "When, indeed, the Truths become manifest unto the strenuous and meditative Brahmana, then all his doubts vanish away since he has understood the destruction of the causes." "When this cause exists, this effect is; with the arising of this cause, this effect arises. When this cause does not exist, this effect is not; with the cessation of this cause, this effect ceases."

The phenomena are happening and passing away and the main point of interest with the Buddha was to find out "What being what else is," "What happening what else happens" and "What not being what else is not." The phenomena are happening in a series and we see that there being certain phenomena there become some others; by the happening of some events others also are produced. This is called (paticca-samuppâda) dependent origination.

But it is difficult to understand what is the exact nature of this dependence. The question has it with which the Buddha started before attaining Buddhahood was this:

in what miserable condition are the people! they are born, they decay, they die, pass away and are born again; and they do not know the path of escape from this decay, death and misery. How to know the Way to escape from this misery of decay and death.

Then it occurred to him what being there, are **decay and death**, depending on what do they come? As he thought deeply into the root of the matter, it occurred to him that

decay and death can only occur when there is **birth** (jāti), so they depend on birth. What being there, is there birth, on what does birth depend?



Then it occurred to him that birth could only be if there were **previous existence** (bhava). But on what does this existence depend, or what being there is there bhava.

Then it occurred to him that there could not be existence unless there were **clinging** holding fast (upādāna). But on what did upādāna depend?

It occurred to him that it was **desire** (tanhā) on which upādāna depended. There can be upādāna if there is desire (tanhā).

But what being there, can there be desire? To this question it occurred to him that there must be **feeling** (vedanā) in order that there may be desire. But on what does vedanā depend, or rather what must be there, that there may be feeling (vedanā)?

To this it occurred to him that there must be a **sense-contact** (phassa) in order that there may be feeling. If there should be no sense-contact there would be no feeling. But on what does sense-contact depend? It occurred to him that as there are six sense-contacts, there are the six fields of contact (āyatana).

But on what do the six āyatanas depend? It occurred to him that there must be the **mind and body** (nāmarūpa) in order that there may be the six fields of contact; but on what does nāmarūpa depend?

It occurred to him that without **consciousness** (viññāna) there could be no nāmarūpa. But what being there would there be viññāna.

Here it occurred to him that in order that there might be viññāna there must be the **conformations** (sankhāra). But what being there are there the sankhāras?

Here it occurred to him that the sankhāras can only be if there is **ignorance** (avijjā). If avijjā could be stopped then the sankhāras will be

stopped, and if the sankhâras could be stopped viññâna could be stopped and so on.

It is indeed difficult to be definite as to what the Buddha actually wished to mean by this cycle of dependence of existence sometimes called Bhavacakra (wheel of existence).

Decay and death (**jarâmarana**) could not have happened if there was no birth. This seems to be clear. But at this point the difficulty begins.

Desire (**tanhâ**) is then said to depend on feeling or sense-contact. Sense-contact presupposes the six senses as fields of operation. These six senses or operating fields would again presuppose the whole psychosis of the man (the body and the mind together) called **nâmarûpa**. all the elements of being both those with form and those without, come into existence after having previously been non-existent and having come into existence pass away. "Nâmarûpa taken in this sense will not mean the whole of mind and body, but only the sense functions and the body which are found to operate in the six doors of sense (**salâyatana**). If we take nâmarûpa in this sense, we can see that it may be said to depend upon the viññâna (consciousness).

Consciousness has been compared in the MilindaPañha with a watchman at the middle of the cross-roads beholding all that come from any direction. Buddhaghosa in the Atthasâlinî also says that consciousness means that which thinks its object. If we are to define its characteristics, we must say that it knows (vijânana), goes in advance (pubbangama), connects (sandhâna), and stands on nâmarûpa (nâmarûpapadatthânam). When the consciousness gets a door, at a place the objects of sense are discerned (ârammana-vibhâvanatthâne) and it goes first as the precursor. When a visual object is seen by the eye it is known only by the consciousness, and when the dhammas are made the objects of (mind) mano, it is known only by the consciousness. Buddhaghosa also refers here to the passage in the MilindaPañha we have just referred to. He further goes on to say that when states of consciousness rise one after another, they leave no gap between the previous state and the later and consciousness therefore appears as connected. When there are the aggregates of the five khandhas it is lost; but there are the four aggregates as nâmarûpa, it stands on nâma and therefore it is said that it stands on nâmarûpa. So the citta or consciousness takes the phenomena of contact, etc., and cognizes them. So though it is the same as they are yet in a sense it is different from them.

To go back to the chain of twelve causes, we find that **jâti**(birth) is the cause of decay and death, jarâmarana, etc. Jâti is the appearance of the body or the totality of the five skandhas. Coming to **bhava** which determines jâti, I cannot think of any better rational explanation of bhava, than that I have already suggested, namely, the works (karma) which produce the birth. **Upâdâna** is an advanced trsnâ leading to positive clinging. It is produced by **trsnâ** (desire) which again is the result of **vedanâ** (pleasure and pain). But this vedanâ is of course vedanâ with ignorance (avidyâ), for an Arhat may have also vedanâ but as he has no

avidyâ, the vedanâ cannot produce trsnâ in turn. On its development it immediately passes into upâdâna. Vedanâ means pleasurable, painful or indifferent feeling. On the one side it leads to trsnâ (desire) and on the other it is produced by sense-contact (**spars'a**).

Vijñâna in this connection probably means the principle or germ of consciousness in the womb of the mother upholding the five elements of the new body there. It is the product of the past karmas (sankhâra) of the dying man and of his past consciousness too.

We sometimes find that the Buddhists believed that the last thoughts of the dying man determined the nature of his next birth. At the death of the man the vijñâna resulting from his previous karmas and vijñânas enters into the womb of that mother (animal, man or the gods) in which the next skandhas are to be matured. This vijñâna thus forms the principle of the new life.

It is in this vijñâna that name (**nâma**) and form (**rûpa**) become associated. The vijñâna is indeed a direct product of the samskâras and the sort of birth in which vijñâna should bring down (nâmayati) the new existence (upapatti) is determined by the samskâras. If the vijñâna had not entered the womb then no nâmarûpa could have appeared. This chain of twelve causes extends over three lives.

Thus avidyâ and samskâra of the past life produce the vijñâna, nâmarupasadâyatana, spars'a, vedanâ, trsnâ, upâdâna and the bhava (leading to another life) of the present actual life. This bhava produces the jâti and jarâmarana of the next life. It is interesting to note that these twelve links in the chain extending in three sections over three lives are all but the manifestations of sorrow to the bringing in of which they naturally determine one another.

Thus Abhidhammatthasangaha says "each of these twelve terms is a factor. For the composite term 'sorrow,' etc. is only meant to show incidental consequences of birth. Again when 'ignorance' and 'the actions of the mind' have been taken into account, craving (trsnâ), grasping (upâdâna) and (karma) becoming (bhava) are implicitly accounted for also. In the same manner when craving, grasping and (karma) becoming have been taken into account, ignorance and the actions of the mind are (implicitly) accounted for, also; and when birth, decay, and death are taken into account, even the fivefold fruit, to wit (rebirth), consciousness, and the rest are accounted for.

And thus: Five causes in the Past and Now a fivefold 'fruit.' Five causes Now and yet to come a fivefold 'fruit' make up the Twenty Modes, the Three Connections (1. sankhâra and viññâna, 2. vedanâ and tanhâ, 3. bhava and jâti) and the four groups (one causal group in the Past, one resultant group in the Present, one causal group in the Present and one resultant group in the Future, each group consisting of five modes).

These twelve interdependent links (dvâdas'ânga) represent the paticcasamuppâda (pratâtyasamutpâda) doctrines (dependent origination)

which are themselves but sorrow and lead to cycles of sorrow. The term *paticcasamuppâda* or *pratītyasamutpâda* has been differently interpreted in later Buddhist literature.

Check Your Progress:

1. Write the Four Noble Truth in the Teaching of Buddha?
2. State the importance of eight-fold path to overcome from the suffering in life?

4.5 SUMMARY

The teachings of the Buddha can be summarised as- “*avoid all bad deeds, increase your good deeds, and purify your mind.*” Thus, Mind is given lots of importance and is considered as the sixth sense alongwith the eyes=to see, nose=to smell, ears=tohear, tongue=to taste and skin= to taste, with Mind=to think.

It is within the Mind we have good or bad thoughts which manifest on the speech as words good or bad, or body as actions good or bad. Thus, purification of mind is necessary. The four Noble truths show us the reality of this existence which is *anicca*- impermanence, *dukkha*-suffering and *anatta*- no permanent self within.

With this understanding one can come out of the *dukkha* by eradicating the cause of *dukkha*- which is the desire-*tanha*, with the help of the eightfold path and reach *nibbana*.

The other aspect of the teachings of the Buddha is the negation of the creator or God. Buddha said- we are creator of our own self and thus are responsible for our own actions and their results. Because nothing happens without a cause. This cause-and-effect teaching is called the Law of dependent origination or the *Paticcasamuppada*.

Buddhas’ teachings is not just for the study but to be experienced in the daily life- thus is called the *dhamma*- the law of nature.

4.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- Write a short note on -Four Noble Truths.
- Explain the Eightfold Path in detail. Comment on Right Efforts or *Samma Vayama*
- What is *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*? Explain with the help of eightfold path
- Discuss the Law of Dependent origination and its importance to come out of the *dukkha*.

4.7 ADDITIONAL READING

Teachings of the Buddha

Ven. Narada Mahathera- Buddha and his Teachings

Ven. Walapola Rahula- What the Buddha Taught.

Ven. Thera Piyadassi- The Buddha, His life and Teachings

Ven. S. Dhammika -The Buddha and His Disciples

Ven. Nanamoli -Life of the Buddha According to the Pali Canon

Richard F. Gombrich -How Buddhism Began

<https://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/8foldpath.htm>

Dependent Origination and the Four Noble Truths: the Core Teaching of the Buddha1

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ASOKAN INSCRIPTIONS

Unit Structure:

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Description and Classification of the Inscriptions
- 5.3 Contents of the Inscriptions
- 5.4 The Propagation of Dhamma
- 5.5 The Nature of Ashoka's Dhamma
- 5.6 Summary
- 5.7 Unit End Questions
- 5.8 Additional Reading

5.0 OBJECTIVES:

The study is carried out with the following objectives

- To understand the most important source of writing history of ancient Indian
- To study the Asokan inscriptions in original for understanding the personality of Asoka himself.
- To know the dhamma and history reflected through the inscriptions
- To understand the role of western scholars in understanding the Asokan inscriptions.

5.1 INTRODUCTION:

Inscriptions of Ashoka: The inscriptions of Ashoka (reigned c. 268-232 BCE), the third king of the Maurya dynasty (c. 324-187 BCE), form the earliest large corpus of royal inscriptions in the Indian subcontinent. Ashoka inherited a large empire from his predecessors, Chandragupta and Bindusara, with its political centre located at Pataliputra (modern Patna) in eastern India. Ashoka's inscriptions mark an important innovation in political practice. They are an important and unique contemporary source of information on Ashoka and the Maurya empire.

The inscriptions of Ashoka were noticed during the early 1830s, but their scripts – early Brahmi and Kharoshthi - could not be read. While several scholars contributed to the decipherment of Ashokan Brahmi, the crucial breakthrough was made by James Prinsep in 1837. Prinsep, along with others such as Christian Lassen, played an important role in the

decipherment of Kharoshthi as well, but the first reliable reading of a Kharoshthi inscription was published by Edwin Norris in 1846. The decipherment of Ashokan Brahmi did not immediately lead to an understanding of the historical significance of the inscriptions. The king is usually referred to in his inscriptions by two epithets - *devananpiya*, which means “dear to the gods” and *piyadasī*, which can be translated as “he who looks upon at that which is beloved/dear/auspicious”, “he who looks affectionately or amiably”, or “one who is dear or auspicious to look at.” On the basis of references in the Sri Lankan chronicle, the *Dipavamsa*, George Turnour connected the epithet *piyadasī* with the Maurya emperor Ashoka. This correlation opened an invaluable source of information on what is considered ancient India’s first virtually subcontinental empire. Subsequently, the king’s name “Asoka” (of which “Ashoka” is the better-known Sanskritized form) was found in Minor Rock Edict 1 at Maski, Udegolam, Nittur and Gujjara. Over the years, several readings and translations of the inscriptions have been published.

5.2 DESCRIPTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE INSCRIPTIONS:

The inscriptions of Ashoka were inscribed on natural rock faces and pillars, and in caves. The conventional scholarly classification of the inscriptions, divides the inscriptions into Minor Rock Edicts, Major Rock Edicts (also known as Rock Edicts), Separate Rock Edicts, Major Pillar Edicts (also known as Pillar Edicts), Minor Pillar Edicts, and cave inscriptions. One of the unusual aspects of Ashoka’s inscriptions is that certain individual inscriptions and sets of inscriptions were inscribed, with some variations, in several places. The Major Rock Edicts usually occur in broadly similar sets of fourteen, except at Dhauli and Jaugada, where Rock Edicts 11, 12 and 13 are replaced by Separate Rock Edicts 1 and 2. The Separate Rock Edicts are also found at Sannati, where they replace Rock Edict 13. The Major Pillar Edicts usually occur in sets of six, except for the Delhi-Topra pillar, which has seven edicts.

Most of Ashoka’s inscriptions are in dialects of Prakrit/Pali (the various local languages spoken in North India, distinct from, but related to literary Sanskrit), which was the language of political power in the subcontinent for several centuries, and are written in an early form of the Brahmi script. Mansehra and Shahbazgarhi in Pakistan have sets of Major Rock Edicts in the Prakrit language and Kharoshthi script. The north-western part of the Empire (which included areas of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan) yielded one Greek, four Aramaic, one Greek-Aramaic, and one Aramaic-Prakrit inscription. The Prakrit of the Ashokan inscriptions can be divided into the eastern (this is the most predominant), western and north-western dialects. There are some variations in the form of Ashokan Brahmi characters, but these variations are not regional in nature. The orthography of the characters too displays some variations.

The inscriptions of Ashoka do not contain any genealogical information. The chronological markers mentioned in some of the inscriptions refer to the number of years that since his formal consecration (*abhisheka*) (this

seems to have taken place four years after he assumed power), and range from the eighth to the twenty-seventh year. References to certain Greek kings (see below) provide useful chronological correlates. Internal chronological references indicate that the Minor Rock Edicts were the earliest, followed by the Major Rock Edicts, and then the Major Pillar Edicts. The Minor Pillar Edicts and cave inscriptions were inscribed at various points in time.

Ashoka's inscriptions have a very wide distribution, stretching from Afghanistan in the north to the Indian states of Andhra and Karnataka in the south, Orissa in the east, and Gujarat in the west. The Major Rock Edicts are mostly distributed near the margins of the empire. The Major Pillar Edicts are concentrated in north India. They were often located near urban centers and along trade routes, and some of them seem to have been close to Buddhist monasteries. The Minor Rock Edicts have the widest distribution. They are generally found in more remote hilly areas, with a notable clustering in the Andhra-Karnataka area in South India, at sites that seem to have had an older cultic significance. The three cave inscriptions are found in the Barabar hills in eastern India. The location of the inscriptions is often considered to mark Ashoka's empire. However, while the places where the inscriptions have been found definitely indicate Maurya contact, intervention and influence, this does not necessarily indicate direct political control.

The pillar inscriptions are inscribed on imposing monolithic sandstone pillars with a highly polished surface. The stone seems to have been quarried at Chunar (Mirzapur district, Uttar Pradesh). It has been suggested that the pillars may have symbolized the centre of the universe. The text of the inscriptions needs to be considered along with the symbolism of the artistic motifs, especially the animals represented on certain pillar capitals - the lion (single or four seated back to back), bull and elephant (also carved and/or mentioned on the Kalsi and Girnar rocks), which were chosen to proclaim the king's power and his *dhamma*. Other motifs associated with the Ashokan pillars are the lotus, wheel, horse and geese. All these symbols had a deep resonance in Indian religious and cultural traditions over the centuries.

References in the accounts of the Chinese monks Faxian and Xuanzang to Ashokan pillars and stupas where none exist today suggest that the Ashokan inscriptions known to us are a fraction of their original number. New inscriptions continue to be discovered. For instance, a version of Minor Rock Edict 1 was recently found at Ratanpurwa in Bihar in eastern India.

Understanding the inscriptions of Ashoka requires interpreting their words and associated artistic motifs, as well as situating them within their larger archaeological and historical contexts. Scholars have made inferences about the epigraphic process, the audience, reception and transmission of Ashoka's ideas. They have discussed the impact of Ashokan policies on the history of the Maurya empire and the impact of Ashokan ideas and symbols across time.

5.3 CONTENTS OF THE INSCRIPTIONS:

The frequent use of the first person and the strong personal tone in Ashoka's Prakrit inscriptions indicate that they represent the emperor's ideas and commands. The inscriptions give us a unique insight into the emperor's mind, especially his thoughts on issues related to kingship and morality over his long, 36 years reign. The audience of the inscriptions consisted of the direct audience (high-ranking administrative officials); the indirect audience (the emperor's subjects), who were expected to receive their king's message through various intermediaries, largely in oral form; and posterity. The reception of the message, which would have varied according to the location of the inscriptions, the mode and agents of transmission, and the recipients, can only be speculated on.



Lumbini Asoka Pillar - Nepal
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Apart from the recurring epithets *devanampiya* and *piyadasi*, Ashoka describes himself as *laja-magadhe* (king of Magadha) (in the Calcutta-Bairat Minor Rock Edict 3, also known as the Bhabru edict), and mentions his capital city, Pataliputra (Rock Edict 5). The inscriptions reflect certain practical aspects of governing a vast and variegated empire. They occasionally touch on issues related to administration and taxation. They suggest the existence of provincial administrations, name certain cadres of officials, and express Ashoka's desire for administrative efficiency. They contain exhortations to officials to perform their job conscientiously and efficiently, and announce the backing of the exhortations by surveillance measures. They also allude to the problem of incomplete political consolidation and the problems posed to the empire by forest tribes.

Certain inscriptions refer to the king's concern for justice. For instance, Separate Rock Edict 1, addressed to officers known as the *nagala viyohalakas*, raises the problem of people suffering as a result of unfair imprisonment and harsh treatment, and exhorts officials to deal with all such cases with fairness and impartiality. Justice is discussed in greater detail in Pillar Edict 4, which instructs officers known as the *rajukas* to mete rewards and punishment fairly and fearlessly, and asserts that there should be impartiality (*samata*) in judicial proceedings and punishment.

Pillar Edict 4 also announces a three-day respite to prisoners condemned to death, in order to give their relatives time to appeal the sentence; and, if this failed, to give the prisoners time to distribute gifts or undertake fasts to attain happiness in the next world. This indicates that although Ashoka sought to temper the violence inherent in capital punishment, he did not abolish the death penalty, in spite of his strong commitment to nonviolence.



sought to temper the violence inherent in capital punishment, he did not abolish the death penalty, in spite of his strong commitment to nonviolence.

Some of Ashoka's inscriptions reflect his deep faith in Buddhism and his close relationship with the

Buddhist monastic Order, known as the *sangha*. In Minor Rock Edict 1, the king states that he had been a lay follower of the Buddha's teaching for over two and a half years, but confesses that he had initially not made much progress. He goes on to state that since a little over the past year, he had drawn closer to the Order and those gods and men had come to mingle due to his zealous efforts. In the Calcutta-Bairat Minor Rock Edict 3 (Bhabru edict), Ashoka addresses the Buddhist Order and announces his deep faith in the Buddha, the *dhamma* and the *sangha*. This edict goes on to state that what was said by the Buddha was well-said, and describes the Buddha's teachings as the true *dhamma*. It lists six Buddhist sermons on *dhamma* that Ashoka recommends that the laity and monks and nuns should listen to and reflect on. The king announces in Rock Edict 8 that his *dhamma* tours began after his pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya, the place of the Buddha's enlightenment. Ashoka's allegiance to Buddhism is also displayed by a pillar inscription at Lumbini, where he records his visit to this place 20 years after his consecration; he announces the erection of a pillar and a wall, and certain tax concessions to the village, as the Buddha was born here. His Buddhist faith is also evident from the NigaliSagar pillar inscription, which announces his enlargement of a stupa dedicated to Buddha Kanakamuni 14 years after his consecration; it also states that this stone pillar was erected after he visited and worshipped at this place, 20 years after his consecration. The imperious tone of the Minor Pillar Edict 1 (also known as the "Schism edict"), warns monks and nuns against creating dissension in the *sangha*, and suggests that Ashoka exercised considerable authority over the Buddhist monastic Order.

However, the single most important theme in the inscriptions of Ashoka is *dhamma* (the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit *dharma*), which can be understood as morality, virtue or goodness. The Aramaic inscriptions use the words *dāta* and *qš* in place of *dhamma*; the Greek inscriptions use *eusebeia*.

5.4 THE PROPAGATION OF DHAMMA:

Inscriptions were an important part of Ashoka's agenda for the propagation of *dhamma*. But literacy levels must have been low at the time, and the fact that the inscriptions were often inscribed high up on rocks and pillars, far beyond eye level, meant that they would often have been difficult to read, even for a literate person. The references in the inscriptions to speaking and hearing the *dhamma* message indicate oral dissemination. Officials were instructed to spread the king's *dhamma* among the people and a special cadre of officers known as the *dhamma-mahamatas* was established thirteen years after Ashoka's consecration, for this precise purpose. The king himself moved around the countryside, instructing his subjects in *dhamma*. Minor Rock Edict 1 tells us that he had spent 256 nights (and days) on tour, no doubt busy spreading *dhamma*. This indicates Ashoka's obsessive engagement with the propagation of *dhamma*, an obsession that seems to have continued throughout his long reign.



Lauriya Nandangarh Pillar - Bihar
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

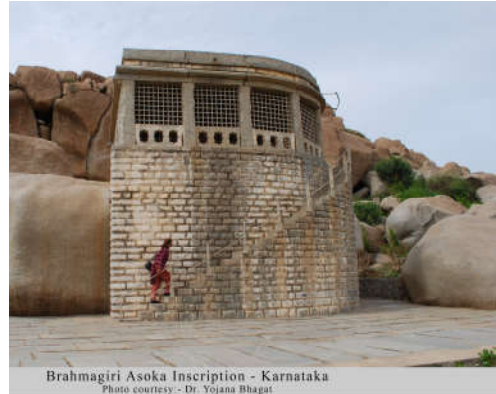
Ashoka had the idea of a political empire and moral empire, the latter encompassing the former. His understanding of his constituency extended beyond his political subjects to include all living beings, humans and animals, living within and beyond his political domain. His inscriptions express his paternalistic idea of kingship and describe his welfare measures, which included the provision of medical treatment, the planting of herbs, trees and roots for men and animals, and the digging of wells along roads (Major Rock Edict 2). The king's *dhamma* propagation activities were not restricted to his own political domain, but extended into the kingdoms of other rulers.

Ashoka recognized the close connections between the individual, society, king and state. His *dhamma* can be understood as morality, goodness or virtue, and the imperative to pursue it gave it the sense of duty. The inscriptions explain that *dhamma* included self-control, purity of thought, liberality, gratitude, firm devotion, truthfulness, guarding one's speech, and moderation in expenditure and possessions. *Dhamma* also had a social aspect - it included obedience to parents; respect for elders; courtesy and liberality toward Brahmanas and renunciants; courtesy to slaves and servants; and liberality toward friends, acquaintances and relatives.

Nonviolence, involving an abstention from injuring or killing any living being, was an important aspect of Ashoka's *dhamma*. The non-killing of living beings is described as part of the good (Rock Edict 11), along with gentleness towards them (Rock Edict 9). Rock Edict 4 refers to the increase in various vices in the past, including in the injury and killing of living beings; it asserts that the promotion of *dhamma* by the king had led to an unprecedented promotion of the non-injury and non-killing of living beings and other virtues. The emphasis on nonviolence was accompanied by the advocacy of a positive attitude of caring, gentleness and compassion.

According to the concept of *karma*, all actions have consequences across several lives. This concept is not mentioned explicitly in Ashoka's inscriptions, but it is implied. The ideas of merit and demerit are mentioned frequently. It is presumed that all individuals desire to achieve happiness in this

life and the next. Ashoka's argument is that following *dhamma* leads to the accumulation of merit, and this yields beneficial results in this life and the next, as well as the attainment of heaven. Not following *dhamma* leads to grave danger, sin, and demerit. In Ashoka's view, he as king had an obligation to ensure the happiness and welfare of all beings, in this life and the next. This is why making people good was central to his political agenda.



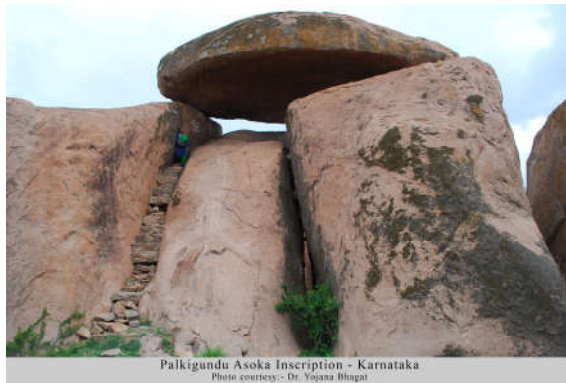
Brahmagiri Asoka Inscription - Karnataka
Photo courtesy: - Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Ashoka's Attitude Towards Animals: As mentioned above, Ashoka included all living beings in his moral constituency and, therefore, when he talks of nonviolence, he means nonviolence towards all living beings, including humans as well as wild and domesticated animals. His inscriptions mention a series of prohibitions against injuring or killing animals. Rock Edict 1 refers to the king's attempts to curb the killing of animals in sacrifices; in certain popular festive gatherings known as *samajas*; and in the royal kitchen. It reveals that although the consumption of meat in the palace was reduced, it was not completely eliminated. In Rock Edict 8, Ashoka announces that he had replaced the royal pleasure tours, which must have involved hunting, by *dhamma* tours. Ashoka was opposed not only to the royal hunt, but also to hunting as a subsistence activity. This is implied in his general exhortations not to kill any living beings, and in the claims made in one of the Laghman Aramaic inscriptions and the Shar-i-Kuna Greek-Aramaic edict, that due to the king's propagation of *dhamma*, hunters had stopped hunting and fishermen had stopped fishing.

Ashoka's exhortations against injuring animals and humans are accompanied by announcements of positive welfare measures undertaken for both. As mentioned above, Rock Edict 2 announces that the king had provided medical treatment for men and for animals; the planting of

medicinal herbs, roots and fruits; the digging of wells on roads; and the planting of trees. He states that he had done all this for the benefit of humans and animals, and not only in his own kingdom, but also in bordering principalities, such as those of the Cholas, Pandyas, Satiyaputras, Keralaputras, Tamraparni, the Yavana king Antiochus, and the latter's neighbours.

The most detailed statement about animal protection occurs in Pillar Edict 5, which lists a series of prohibitions that were issued 26 years after the king's consecration, in the later part of his reign. This includes a list of various types of birds, fish, insects and mammals (the identification of some of the terms is problematic) that were not to be killed. These were all wild, and Ashoka states that the ban on killing also applied to all four-footed animals that were useless from the point of view of human use and were not eaten. Pregnant or lactating she-goats, ewes and sows were not to be killed, nor were their young ones younger than six months. The killing of animals hunted in the elephant-forests (*nagavanas*) was banned, and so was the killing and selling of fish in the fishermen's preserves. Husk containing living animals was not to be burnt. Forests were not to be burnt needlessly or in order to kill living beings. Living beings were not to be fed with other living beings. Cocks were not to be castrated. Bulls, goats, rams and boar were not to be castrated on certain specific days. Horses and bulls were not to be branded on certain days. The inscription suggests the regulation, mitigation and ritualization of nonviolence towards animals to coincide with certain auspicious days in the lunar calendar. It has been suggested that these injunctions aimed at preventing excessive forest clearance and curbing shifting cultivation; or that they were a reaction against forest people who were impeding the state's appropriation of forest wealth. Whatever the practical motives may have been, these injunctions were rooted in Ashoka's strong moral commitment to nonviolence towards all forms of life. They would, no doubt, have been extremely difficult to effectively implement.



Palkigundu Asoka Inscription - Karnataka
Photo courtesy - Dr. Yojana Bhagat

The Arguments Against War: The politically most significant aspect of Ashoka's commitment to nonviolence was his renunciation of war. In the ancient world, a king's martial achievements were considered extremely important. But in Rock Edict 4, Ashoka states that due to his practice of *dhamma*, the call of *dhamma* had replaced the sound of the war drum. In Rock Edict 10, he states that he only valued fame that arose from his success in inducing people to follow *dhamma*.

The most detailed critique of war is found in Rock Edict 13. This mentions a war fought by Ashoka against the kingdom of Kalinga in eastern India, after eight years had elapsed since the king's consecration. The war was won by the Maurya army, but the event apparently led the emperor to reflect on the terrible and widespread consequence of warfare. The inscription describes the massiveness of the death, capture and deportation that were part of the Kalinga war, giving rhetorical figures; it also talks of the king's remorse in the aftermath of the victory. This is followed by certain general reflections on war. Ashoka observes that in war, people experience injury, capture and death. What he considered even more painful is the fact that Brahmanas and renunciants, members of various sects, and householders, who practice obedience to superiors, obedience to mother and father, obedience to elders, proper courtesy and firm devotion to friends, acquaintances, companion and kin, as also to slaves and servants, suffered indirectly through the injury, killing or deportation of their loved ones. The suffering caused by war extended far beyond those who suffered directly and included the emotional pain suffered by those who held them dear. In Ashoka's opinion, it was especially regrettable when such suffering was experienced by good people.



Sanchi Asoka Pillar - Sanchi
Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Rock Edict 13 also announces the replacement of military victory by a new kind of victory called *dhamma-vijaya* ("victory through *dhamma*"), which consisted of propagating *dhamma*. Ashoka asserts that he had won this victory in his own domain, among the Yavanas, Kambojas, Nabhakas, Nabhapanktis, Bhojas, Pitinikas, Andhras and Pulindas. He also claims to have won this victory in the dominion of the Yavana (Greek) king Antiyoka; beyond that, in the kingdoms of Turamaya, Antikini, Maka and Alikasudara; and towards the south, in the domain of the Cholas and Pandyas, stretching as far south as Tamaraparni. The identification of some of these terms is problematic. However, the Yavanas, Kambojas and Gandharas can be placed in the northwest; the Bhojas, Rishtikas, Andhras and Pulindas can be located in trans-Vindhyan India; Tamaraparni is Sri Lanka. Antiyoka can be identified with Antiochus II Theos of Syria; Turamaya with Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt; Antikini with Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia; Maka with Magas of Cyrene in north Africa; and Alikasudara with Alexander of Epirus or Alexander of Corinth.

Although Rock Edict 13 announces the abjuring of fresh military campaigns, it does not abjure the use of force to suppress recalcitrant forest people and forest chieftains (*aśavi*). The inscription closes with a statement that this inscription on *dhamma* had been inscribed so that the king's sons and grandsons should not think of a fresh military campaign;

but that if they did, they should be merciful and inflict little force or punishment. They should consider victory through *dhamma* as the only victory, because this was of value in this world and the next.

5.5 THE NATURE OF ASHOKA'S DHAMMA:

While the specific elements of the *dhamma* of Ashoka's inscriptions are clear enough, its general nature is the subject of scholarly debate. It has been variously understood as a Buddhist lay ethic, a set of politico-moral ideas that are found in various Brahmanical and Buddhist texts, a sort of universal religion, or an Ashokan innovation. The *dhamma* policy has also been seen as an ideology that sought to legitimize Ashoka's rule and consolidate the empire.

As mentioned above, Ashoka's faith in the Buddha's teaching and his position of authority vis-à-vis the Buddhist Order are clear from certain inscriptions. There is also a close resemblance between the code of conduct prescribed in Ashoka's inscriptions and that prescribed for the laity in Buddhist texts such as the Sigalovada Sutta. But although the *dhamma* Ashoka talks incessantly about in his inscriptions was no doubt rooted in his personal religious beliefs, it was not identical to Buddhism. The doctrinal vocabulary of Buddhism, including the supreme goal of *nibbana* (deliverance from the cycle of birth and death), is absent. In fact, the key metaphysical ideas underlying Ashoka's politico-moral discourse (rebirth, *karma*, merit, heaven) cut across and went beyond religious and sectarian divisions. The idea of nonviolence was an important part of the ethics of Buddhism, Jainism and the Ajivikas. The fact that the *dhamma* of the inscriptions was not exclusively connected with a particular sect is clear from the statement in Rock Edict 7 that all sects have in common an emphasis on self-control and purity of mind. At the same time, there is a recognition of the existence of sectarian conflict. In Rock Edict 12, Ashoka expresses his desire for a growth of the essentials of all sects and for courteous, open-minded dialogue and concord (*samavaya*) among them.

While Buddhist legends across Asia herald Ashoka as a paradigmatic Buddhist king, his inscriptions tell a more complex story. They indicate that he did not seek to create a Buddhist state, but a moral one. The *dhamma* of Ashoka's inscriptions was a new idiosyncratic synthesis, rooted in his deep personal faith in Buddhism, but broadened to include his own reflections on individual, social and political ideals and goals. Metaphysics, ethics and politics were combined in a unique way, and the king propagated this synthesis- which he called *dhamma* - through an elaborately organized propaganda campaign.

Although virtues such as self-control and nonviolence are emphasized in several early Indian traditions, what is unique is that Ashoka made morality the cornerstone of his political philosophy and policy. The inscriptions suggest that his ambitious aim was the moral transformation of all humankind. At the same time, he recognized that ethical principles could not be implemented in an absolute form and had to be tempered by

pragmatism. In spite of his commitment to nonviolence, he did not abolish the death penalty; and although he renounced war, he warned the forest people and those living on his borders that if required, he would not hesitate to use force against them.

Ashoka's Legacy: Ashoka's inscriptions are a valuable contemporary source of information on the political ideas and practice of this king, as well as for the history of the Maurya dynasty and empire. The contents of these inscriptions have formed the basis of several historical debates. For instance, Ashoka's emphasis on nonviolence, especially his pacifistic anti-war stance, has been cited by some scholars as a reason for the weakening of the military backbone of the Maurya empire. Ashoka's *dhamma* has been seen as an ideology that sought to weld together the vast and variegated Maurya empire, and which ultimately failed in doing so.

Ashoka seems to have considered his *dhamma* policy a great success. In Pillar Edicts 1 and 7, he announces that due to his exertions, adherence to the tenets of *dhamma* had increased dramatically. Although this suggests his own exaggerated assessment of his impact, Ashoka does seem to have had another sort of important impact. He may have played an important role in plucking the concept of *dhamma/dharma* out of religious discourse, redefining it by inserting social and ethical content, thereby making morality a central political, social and cultural issue in Indian thought.

The rocks and pillars on which Ashoka had his inscriptions inscribed had an interesting after-life. For instance, the Girnar rock, which bears the king's set of 14 Rock Edicts, also has a 2nd century inscription of the Shaka Kshatrapa king Rudradaman and a



5th century inscription of the Gupta king Skandagupta. The Delhi-Topra and Delhi-Meerut pillars (which also bear medieval inscriptions) were relocated from Topra and Meerut to Delhi by the Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq in the 14th century. The new locations they were assigned in Delhi - in the royal citadel, opposite the congregational mosque, and near the royal hunting lodge respectively - indicate that the pillars had special symbolic significance for the medieval Sultan, even though the writing of the old inscriptions could no longer be read. There are reports of Ashoka's pillars being associated in local traditions with the heroes of the *Mahabharata* epic, as well as of fragments of Ashokan pillars being worshipped as emblems of the god Shiva known as *lingas*.

The ideas and emblems associated with Ashoka have had, and continue to have, a great importance in independent India. This is most evident in the fact that the capital of Ashoka's Sarnath pillar, crowned by four lions sitting back-to-back, is the national emblem of India. Ashoka's ideas, expressed in his inscriptions, especially those related to morality, nonviolence and pacifism, continue to have relevance in the modern world.

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****Photos of Asokan Inscriptions and sites-** Dr. Yojana Bhagat

5.6 SUMMARY:

The inscriptions of emperor Ashoka (reigned c. 268-232 BCE) are an important source for the history of his reign and the Maurya empire (c. 324-187 BCE). The oldest large corpus of royal inscriptions in the Indian subcontinent, they are unique in their style and content, and form a rich source of information on Ashoka's political ideas and practice. They throw light on some aspects of Ashoka's administration and on his relationship with Buddhism, but are most eloquent in discussing *dhamma*, which can be understood as morality, virtue or goodness. This *dhamma* was rooted in Ashoka's faith in Buddhism, but was not identical to it. While the attempt to harness politics to ethics is not unique in the ancient world, what are unique are the primacy that Ashoka attached to the propagation of morality within and beyond his empire, and the importance of nonviolence in his political thought and practice, especially his measures for the protection of animals and his renunciation of war.

Check your progress:

1. Who deciphered the Brahmi script?
2. What is the importance Lumbini Pillar inscription of Asoka?

5.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- Write a note on- importance of Asokan inscriptions in writing of history of Buddhism.
- Explain the geographical locations of the Major, Minor rock inscriptions and Pillar inscriptions of Asoka.
- Write in short, the content of the 14 major rock inscriptions of Asoka and discuss Kalinga inscriptions.
- Discuss- role of Asoka in propagation of Buddhism as seen through inscriptions.

5.8 ADDITIONAL READINGS:

- Alexander Cunningham- Inscriptions of Asoka
- Radhakumud Mukherji- Asoka
- D C Sirkar-Inscriptions of Asoka
- Upinder Singh - Buddhism in Asia: Revival and Reinvention,
- Romila Thapar- Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas
- Ven. S Dhammika -The Edicts of King Asoka - Access to Insight
<https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/dhammika/wheel386.html>



SIX BUDDHIST COUNCILS

Unit Structure:

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Importance of Six Buddhist Councils
- 6.3 Summary
- 6.4 Unit End Questions
- 6.5 Additional Reading

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the authenticity of the buddhavacana and the tradition which preserved it.
- To understand the development of the Pali literature from the oral tradition to the most modern form of digital pali sources.
- To know how the teachings of buddha reached the different parts of the world and how it is preserved by the traditional sangha till date.
- To note the historical evidence of the teachings of the Buddha from the Literary tradition.

6.1 INTRODUCTION:

Since the passing away (*Parinibbana*) of Gautama Buddha, several Buddhist councils (*dhamma sangayana*) have been held in countries such as India, Myanmar (Burma) and Sri Lanka. In Buddhist literature, at least six such Buddhist councils have been recorded within the Theravada tradition of Buddhism practised mainly in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos. The purpose of these Buddhist councils, usually attended by an assembly of hundreds of learned and elderly Buddhist monks, has been to recite and discuss the Theravada Buddhist Pali Canon in order to clarify and maintain the purity of the Buddha's teaching and /or to address issues pertaining to monastic discipline and differing doctrinal approaches.

The six Buddhist councils that have been held and recorded within the Theravada Buddhist tradition are:

1. First Buddhist council held in India circa 483 BC
2. Second Buddhist council held in India circa 383 BC
3. Third Buddhist council held in India circa 250 BC

4. Fourth Buddhist council held in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in the 1st century BC
5. Fifth Buddhist council held in Burma (Myanmar) in 1871 AD
6. Sixth Buddhist council held in Burma (Myanmar) from 1954 to 1956 AD

6.2 IMPORTANCE OF SIX BUDDHIST COUNCILS:

The six Buddhist Councils according to the **Theravada tradition** are as follows-

6.2.1 The First Council: King Ajātasattu sponsored the First Council. It was convened in 544 B.C. in the Sattaparānī Cave situated outside Rājagaha three months after the Buddha had passed away. A detailed account of this historic meeting can be found in the Cūllavagga of the Vinaya Piṭaka. According to this record the incident which prompted the Elder Mahākassapa to call this meeting was his hearing a disparaging remark about the strict rule of life for monks. This is what happened. The monk Subhadda, a former barber, who had ordained late in life, upon hearing that the Buddha had expired, voiced his resentment at having to abide by all the rules for monks laid down by the Buddha. Many monks lamented the passing of the Buddha and were deeply grieved. However, the Elder Mahākassapa heard Subhadda say: "Enough your Reverences, do not grieve, do not lament. We are well rid of this great recluse (the Buddha). We were tormented when he said, 'this is allowable to you, this is not allowable to you' but now we will be able to do as we like and we will not have to do what we do not like". Mahākassapa was alarmed by his remark and feared that the Dhamma and the Vinaya might be corrupted and not survive intact if other monks were to behave like Subhadda and interpret the Dhamma and the Vinaya rules as they pleased. To avoid this he decided that the Dhamma must be preserved and protected. To this end after gaining the Saṅgha's approval he called to council five hundred Arahants. Ānanda was to be included in this provided he attained Arahant-hood by the time the council convened. With the Elder Mahākassapa presiding, the five-hundred Arahant monks met in council during the rainy season. The first thing Mahākassapa did was to question

the foremost expert on the Vinaya of the day, Venerable Upāli on particulars of the monastic rule. This monk was well qualified for the task as the Buddha had taught him the whole of the Vinaya himself. First of all the Elder



First Buddhist council
Image source:- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Buddhist_council

Mahākassapa asked him specifically about the ruling on the first offense [pārājika], with regard to the subject, the occasion, the individual

introduced, the proclamation, the repetition of the proclamation, the offense and the case of non-offense. Upāli gave knowledgeable and adequate answers and his remarks met with the unanimous approval of the presiding Saṅgha. Thus the Vinaya was formally approved.

First Buddhist Council (around the 5th century BC) at Rajagaha, the current Rajgir, Nava Jetavana Park, Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh. Photograph of murals in the Nava Jetavana temple.

The Elder Mahākassapa then turned his attention to Ānanda in virtue of his reputable expertise in all matters connected with the Dhamma. Happily, the night before the Council was to meet, Ānanda had attained Arahantship and joined the Council. The Elder Mahākassapa, therefore, was able to question him at length with complete confidence about the Dhamma with specific reference to the Buddha's sermons. This interrogation on the Dhamma sought to verify the place where all the discourses were first preached and the person to whom they had been addressed. Ānanda, aided by his word-perfect memory was able to answer accurately and so the Discourses met with the unanimous approval of the Saṅgha. The First Council also gave its official seal of approval for the closure of the chapter on the minor and lesser rules, and approval for their observance. It took the monks seven months to recite the whole of the Vinaya and the Dhamma and those monks sufficiently endowed with good memories retained all that had been recited. This historic first council came to be known as the *Pāṇāśatikā* because five-hundred fully enlightened Arahants had taken part in it.

6.2.2 The Second Council: The Second Council was called one hundred years after the Buddha's Parinibbāṇa in order to settle a serious dispute over the 'ten points'. This is a reference to some monks breaking of ten minor rules. they were given to:

1. Storing salt in a horn.
2. Eating after midday.
3. Eating once and then going again to a village for alms.
4. Holding the Uposatha Ceremony with monks dwelling in the same locality.
5. Carrying out official acts when the assembly was incomplete.
6. Following a certain practice because it was done by one's tutor or teacher.
7. Eating sour milk after one had his midday meal.
8. Consuming strong drink before it had been fermented.
9. Using a rug which was not the proper size.
10. Using gold and silver.

Their misdeeds became an issue and caused a major controversy as breaking these rules was thought to contradict the Buddha's original teachings. King Kāśāśoka was the Second Council's patron and the meeting took place at Vesālī due to the following circumstances. One day, whilst visiting the Mahāvana Grove at Veāśli, the Elder Yasa came to know that a large group of monks known as the Vajjians were infringing the rule which prohibited monk's accepting gold and silver by openly asking for it from their lay devotees. He immediately criticized their behavior and their response was to offer him a share of their illegal gains in the hope that he would be won over. The Elder Yasa, however declined and scorned their behavior. The monks immediately sued him with a formal action of reconciliation, accusing him of having blamed their lay devotees. The Elder Yasa accordingly reconciled himself with the lay devotees, but at the same time, convinced them that the Vajjian monks had done wrong by quoting the Buddha's pronouncement on the prohibition against accepting or soliciting for gold and silver. The laymen immediately expressed their support for the Elder Yasa and declared the Vajjian monks to the wrong-doers and heretics, saying "the Elder Yasa alone is the real monk and Sākyan son. All the others are not monks, not Sākyan sons".

The Stubborn and unrepentant Vajjian monks then moved to suspend the Venerable Yasa Thera without the approval of the rest of the Saṅgha when they came to know of the outcome of his meeting with their lay devotees. The Elder Yasa, however escaped their censure and went in search of support from monks elsewhere, who upheld his orthodox views on the Vinaya. Sixty forest dwelling monks from Pāvā and eighty monks from the southern regions of Avanti who were of the same view, offered to help him to check the corruption of the Vinaya. Together they decided to go to Soreyya to consult the Venerable Revata as he was a highly revered monk and an expert in the Dhamma and the Vinaya. As soon as the Vajjian monks came to know this they also sought the Venerable Revata's support by offering him the four requisites which he promptly refused. These monks then sought to use the same means to win over the Venerable Revata's attendant, the Venerable Uttara. At first he too, rightly declined their offer but they craftily persuaded him to accept their offer, saying that when the requisites meant for the Buddha were not accepted by him, Ānanda would be asked to accept them and would often agree to do so. Uttara changed his mind and accepted the requisites. Urged on by them he then agreed to go and persuade the Venerable Revata to declare that the Vajjian monks were indeed speakers of the Truth and upholders of the Dhamma. The Venerable Revata saw through their ruse and refused to support them. He then dismissed Uttara. In order to settle the matter once and for all, the Venerable Revata advised that a council should be called at Vāṭikārāma with himself asking questions on the ten offenses of the most senior of the Elders of the day, the Thera Sabbjakāmi. Once his opinion was given it was to be heard by a committee of eight monks, and its validity decided by their vote. The eight monks called to judge the matter were the Venerables Sabbakāmi, saha, Khujjasobhita and Vāsabhagāmika, from the East and four monks from the West, the Venerables Revata,

Sambhuta-Sāavāsī, Yasa and Sumana. They thoroughly debated the matter with Revata as the questioner and sabbakāmī answering his questions. After the debate was heard the eight monks decided against the Vajjian monks and their verdict was announced to the assembly. Afterwards seven-hundred monks recited the Dhamma and Vinaya and this recital came to be known as the Sattasatī because seven-hundred monks had taken part in it. This historic council is also called, the Yasatthera Sangīti because of the major role the Elder Yasa played in it and his zeal for safeguarding the Vinaya. The Vajjian monks categorically refused to accept the Council's decision and in defiance called a council of their own which was called the Mahāsaṅgīti.

6.2.3 The Third Council: The Third Council was held primarily to rid the Saṅgha of corruption and bogus monks who held heretical views. The Council was convened in 326 B.C. At Asokārāma in Paṭaliputta under the patronage of Emperor Asoka. It was presided over by the Elder Moggaliputta Tissa and one thousand monks participated in this Council. Tradition has it that Asoka had won his throne through shedding the blood of all his father's sons save his own brother, Tissa Kumāra who eventually got ordained and achieved Arahantship.

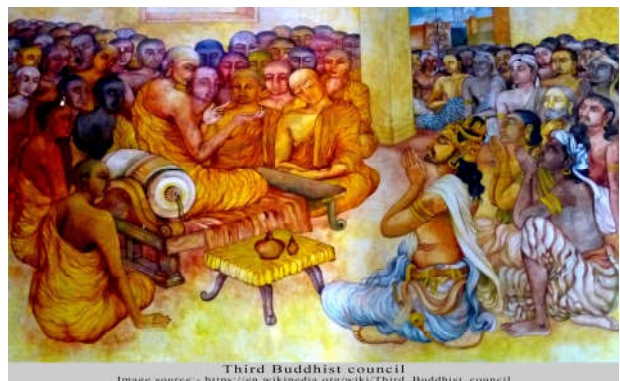
Asoka was crowned in the two hundred and eighteenth year after the Buddha's Mahāparinibbāna. At first he paid only token homage to the Dhamma and the Saṅgha and also supported members of other religious sects as his father had done before him. However, all this changed when he met the pious novice-monk Nigrodha who preached him the Appamāda-vagga. Thereafter he ceased supporting other religious groups and his interest in and devotion to the Dhamma deepened. He used his enormous wealth to build, it is said, eighty-four thousand pagodas and vihāras and to lavishly support the Bhikkhus with the four requisites. His son Mahinda and his daughter Saṅghamittā were ordained and admitted to the Saṅgha. Eventually, his generosity was to cause serious problems within the Saṅgha. In time the order was infiltrated by many unworthy men, holding heretical views and who were attracted to the order because of the Emperor's generous support and costly offerings of food, clothing, shelter and medicine. Large numbers of faithless, greedy men espousing wrong views tried to join the order but were deemed unfit for ordination. Despite this they seized the chance to exploit the Emperor's generosity for their own ends and donned robes and joined the order without having been ordained properly. Consequently, respect for the Saṅgha diminished. When this came to light some of the genuine monks refused to hold the prescribed purification or Uposatha ceremony in the company of the corrupt, heretical monks.

When the Emperor heard about this he sought to rectify the situation and dispatched one of his ministers to the monks with the command that they perform the ceremony. However, the Emperor had given the minister no specific orders as to what means were to be used to carry out his command. The monks refused to obey and hold the ceremony in the company of their false and 'thieving' companions [theyyasinivāsaka]. In desperation the angry minister advanced down the line of seated monks

and drawing his sword, beheaded all of them one after the other until he came to the King's brother, Tissa who had been ordained. The horrified minister stopped the slaughter and fled the hall and reported back to the Emperor Asoka who was deeply grieved and upset by what had happened and blamed himself for the killings. He sought Thera Moggaliputta Tissa's counsel. He proposed that the heretical monks be expelled from the order and a third Council be convened immediately. So it was that in the seventeenth year of the Emperor's reign the Third Council was called. Thera Moggaliputta Tissa headed the proceedings and chose one thousand monks from the sixty thousand participants for the traditional recitation of the Dhamma and the Vinaya, which went on for nine months. The Emperor, himself questioned monks from a number of monasteries about the teachings of the Buddha. Those who held wrong views were exposed and expelled from the Saṅgha immediately. In this way the Bhikkhu Saṅgha was purged of heretics and bogus bhikkhus.

This council achieved a number of other important things as well. The Elder Moggaliputta Tissa, in order to refute a number of heresies and ensure the Dhamma was kept pure, compiled a book during the council called the Kathāvatthu. This book consists of twenty-three chapters, and is a collection of discussion (kathā) and refutations of the heretical views held by various sects on matters philosophical. It is the fifth of the seven books of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. The members of the Council also gave a royal seal of approval to the doctrine of the Buddha, naming it the Vibhajjavāda, the Doctrine of Analysis. It is identical with the approved Theravāda doctrine. One of the most significant achievements of this Dhamma assembly and one which was to bear fruit for centuries to come, was the Emperor's sending forth of monks, well versed in the Buddha's Dhamma and Vinaya who could recite all of it by heart, to teach it in nine different countries. These Dhammadūta monks included the Venerable Majjhantika Thera who went to Kashmir and Gandhāra. He was asked to preach the Dhamma and establish an order of monks there. The Venerable Mahādeva was sent to Mahinsakamaṇḍapa (modern Mysore) and the Venerable Rakkhita Thera was dispatched to Vanavāsī (northern Kanara in the south of India.) The Venerable Yonaka Dhammarakkhita Thera was sent to Upper Aparantaka (northern Gujarat, Kathiawar, Kutch and Sindh).

The Venerable Mahārakkhita Thera went to Yonaka-loka (the land of the Ionians, Bactrians and the Greeks.) The Venerable Majjhima Thera went to Himavanta (the place adjoining the Himalayas.) The Venerable Soṇa and the Venerable Uttara were sent to Suvaṇṇabhūmi [now Myanmar]. The Venerable Mahinda Thera, The Venerable Ittiya Thera, the Venerable Uttiya Thera, the



Third Buddhist council

Image source:- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Buddhist_council

Venerable Sambala Thera and the Venerable Bhaddasāla Thera were sent to Tambapaṇṇī (now Sri Lanka). The Dhamma missions of these monks succeeded and bore great fruits in the course of time and went a long way in ennobling the peoples of these lands with the gift of the Dhamma and influencing their civilizations and cultures. With the spread of Dhamma through the words of the Buddha, in due course India came to be known as Visvaguru, the teacher of the world.

6.2.4 The Fourth Council: The Fourth Council was held in Tambapaṇṇī [Sri Lanka] in 29 B.C. under the patronage of King Vaṇṇagāmaṇi. The main reason for its convening was the realization that it was now not possible for the majority of monks to retain the entire Tipiṭaka in their memories as had been the case formerly for the Venerable Mahinda and those who followed him soon after. Therefore, as the art of writing had, by this time developed substantially, it was thought expedient and necessary to have the entire body of the Buddha's teaching written down. King Vaṇṇagāmaṇi supported the monk's idea and a council was held specifically to reduce the Tipiṭaka in its entirety to writing. Therefore, so that the genuine Dhamma might be lastingly preserved, the Venerable Mahārakhita and five hundred monks recited the words of the Buddha and then wrote them down on palm leaves.

This remarkable project took place in a cave called, the Āloka lēna, situated in the cleft of an ancient landslip near what is now Matale. Thus the aim of the Council was achieved and the preservation in writing of the authentic Dhamma was ensured. Later, in the Eighteenth Century, King Vijayarājasīha had images of the Buddha created in this cave.



Fourth Buddhist council - Alu Viharaya - Sri Lanka
Image source - <https://www.amayaresorts.com/blog/2018/10/26/aluvihare-rock-cave-temple.html>

6.2.5 The Fifth Council: The Fifth Council took place in Māṇḍalay, Burma now known as Myanmar in 1871 A.D. in the reign of King Mindon. The chief objective of this meeting was to recite all the teachings of the Buddha and examine them in minute detail to see if any of them had been altered, distorted or dropped. It was presided over by three Elders, the Venerable Mahāthera Jāgarābhivaṇṇasa, the Venerable Narindābhīdhaja, and the Venerable Mahāthera Sumaṅgalasāmi in the company of some two thousand four hundred monks (2,400). Their joint Dhamma recitation lasted for five months. It was also the work of this council to cause the entire Tipiṭaka to be inscribed for posterity on seven hundred and twenty-nine marble slabs in the Myanmar script after its recitation had been completed and unanimously approved.

This monumental task was done by some two thousand four hundred erudite monks and many skilled craftsmen who upon completion of each slab had them housed in beautiful miniature 'piṭṭaka' pagodas on a special site in the grounds of King Mindon's Kuthodaw Pagoda at the foot of Māṇḍalay Hill where this so called 'largest book in the world', stands to this day.



Fifth Buddhist council- Kuthodaw Pagoda, Mynmar
Image source:- <https://in.pinterest.com/pin/789818853382435014/>

6.2.6 The Sixth Council: The Sixth Council was called at Kaba Aye in Yangon, formerly Rangoon in 1954, eighty-three years after the fifth one was held in Mandalay. It was sponsored by the Burmese Government led by the Prime Minister, the Honorable U Nu. He authorized the construction of the Mahā Pāsāna Gūhā, the great cave that was built from the ground up, to serve as the gathering place much like India's Sattapānni Cave--the site of the first Dhamma Council. Upon its completion, the Council met on the 17th of May, 1954. As in the case of the preceding councils, its first objective was to affirm and preserve the genuine Dhamma and Vinaya. However it was unique in so far as the monks who took part in it came from eight countries. These two thousand five hundred learned Theravāda monks came from Myanmar, Cambodia, India, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. The late Venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw was appointed the noble task of asking the required questions about the Dhamma of the Venerable Bhadanta Vicittasārābhivaṣa Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṭṭāgārika who answered all of them learnedly and satisfactorily. By the time this council met, all the participating countries had the Pāli Tipiṭaka rendered into their native scripts, with the exception of India. The traditional recitation of the Dhamma Scriptures took two years during which the Tipiṭaka and its allied literature in all the scripts were painstakingly examined. Any differences found were noted down, the necessary corrections were made and all the versions were then collated. Happily, it was found that there was not much difference in the content of any of the texts. Finally, after the Council had officially approved them, all the volumes of the Tipiṭaka and their Commentaries were prepared for printing on modern presses and published in the Myanmar (Burmese) script. This notable achievement was made possible through the dedicated efforts of the two thousand five hundred monks and numerous lay people. Their work came to an end in

May, 1956, two and a half millennia after the Lord attained Parinibbāna. This council's work was the unique achievement of representatives from the entire Buddhist world. The version of the Tipiṭaka which it undertook to produce has been recognized as being true to the pristine teachings of Gotama the Buddha and the most authoritative rendering of them to date.

The volumes printed after the Sixth Saṅgāyana were printed in Myanmar script. In order to make the volumes to the people of India, Vipassana Research Institute started the project to print the Tipiaka with its Aṅgahakathās and Ṭīkas in Devanagari in the year 1990.



Sixth Buddhist council- Myanmar

Image source:- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_councils

This Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM which is a reproduction of the text authenticated in the Sixth Saṅgāyana is now being presented to the world so that the words of the Buddha are easily made available to the devotees and the scholars. The Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM can presently be viewed in the following scripts Devanagari, Myanmar and Roman., Sri Lankan, Thai and Mongol scripts.

Source: Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion www.iiste.org ISSN 2422-8443 An International Peer-reviewed Journal Vol.39, 2018 41 Buddhist Councils: Means and Ends for Clarity and Revitalization by Tanka Prasad Pokharel.

Check your progress:

1. Where was the first Buddhist Council held?
2. What is the importance of Third Buddhist Council?

6.3 SUMMARY

The six Buddhist councils are studied for the authenticity of the Theravada Buddhism and its literature the Tipitaka. The Tipitaka is the buddhavacana and was preserved through the oral tradition in the beginning of the Buddhist India and then written down in Sri Lanka in the first BCE.

The schism in the Sangha led to different schools of Buddhism and the change in the language started taking place. The Pali was replaced by Hybrid Sanskrit and eventually to Buddhist Sanskrit literature was studied

in India. The Pali language was almost lost from India as we know that Thera Buddhaghosa had to go to Sri Lanka to bring back the atthakatha in the 5th CE.

Thus, Buddhism is seen to be declining in India therefore the need to preserve the original teachings in Pali was very crucial and all the other three Buddhist councils were held in countries like Sri Lanka and Myanmar as the teachings of Buddha were lost in India.

The six Buddhist councils of the Theravada tradition give the authenticity to the teachings of the Buddha and preserved the texts, so that we received dhamma in the form of Pali literature from Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

6.4 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- What is the relevance of the Buddhist councils in the preservation of the teachings of the Buddha? Explain with the help of the first three Buddhist councils?
- Write in short -the importance of the third Buddhist council in the propagation of the dhamma.
- Is the sanghayana necessary for the preservation of the teachings of the Buddha? - Comment
- Who is the Tipitakadhara? What is the role of the chairman of the Buddhist council? -Discuss.

6.5 ADDITIONAL READING

Wilhelm Geiger English translation Mahavamsa-The great Chronicle of Srilanka

Ven. Sujato: The Authenticity of the Early Buddhist Texts

Tanka Prasad Pokharel- Buddhist Councils: Means and Ends for Clarity and Revitalization

Andre Bareau, 'The Buddhist Sects of the Small Vehicle'

Nalinaksha Dutt, 'Buddhist Sects in India,

Charles Prebish, A Review of Scholarship on the Buddhist Council
Journal of Asian Studies Vol. XXXIII No.2,

Bibhuti Baruah, 'Buddhist Sects and Sectarianism', 2000,



BUDDHIST ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Unit Structure:

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Buddhist Art
- 7.3 Buddhist Paintings
- 7.4 Buddhist Architecture
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Unit End Questions
- 7.7 Additional Reading

7.0 OBJECTIVES:

The Buddhist art and architecture is studied with the following objectives,

- To understand the relevance of Buddhist art and architecture in the history of Buddhism.
- To study the role played by the art and architecture in the evolution and development of Buddhism.
- To recognise the impact of the art and architecture on the Buddhist history and its study
- To know the importance of the study of Buddhist art and architecture in the development of Buddhist architecture all over the world.

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

The art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. Buddhist art is primarily the sculptures and paintings influenced by the life and teachings of the Buddha.



7.2 BUDDHIST ART:

The art work at the time of the buddha, though mentioned in the Pali literature has not survived the time due to the perishable material like the wood, clay in which it was made. Thus, the earliest Buddhist art in the

form of sculptures is of the Mauryan period- the free standing monolithic polished pillars with animal capitals dating back to the 3rd BCE. The earliest surviving paintings are seen at Ajanta caves of Maharashtra of the 2nd BCE.



Bharhut Stupa - 2nd century BC

Image source:- www.common.wikimedia.org

Sculpture: Both types of sculptures, the sculptures in relief and the freestanding sculptures forms the authentic source of Buddhist history. The earliest sculptures belong to the Mauryan period and are the capitals and the crowning animal figures on the Asokan pillars. The Lion capital of Sarnath, the Sankasya Elephant capital, the Rampurva bull capital are some of the examples of the Mauryan sculptures which has reached its zenith of perfection. Beside the animal figures the sculptures of this era is also marked by the figures of Yaksha and Yakshinis. The Didarganj yakshini with the bright mauryan polish is said to be one of the most beautiful freestanding sculptures of the period.



Bharhut Stupa - 2nd century BC

Image source:- www.common.wikimedia.org

It is a well-known fact that in the earlier phase of Buddhism, Buddha was not represented in the human form and was worshipped in the symbolic forms. The important events in the life of the Buddha are represented in the relief sculptures where the Bodhi tree, the footprints, the stupa are the symbols of the Buddha himself, which is very well depicted in the Sanchi stupa.

The sculpture of the Sunga period shows the evolution from the archaic phase to one of maturity and is marked with the sculptures on the stone vedikas and toranas of Bharhut, Sanchi and Bodhgaya.



Kushana Art

Image source:- https://www.indianetzone.com/53/kushana_art.htm

Jataka stories are very cleverly represented in a single carving but with the method of continuous narration at the Bharhut stupa. This shows the epitome of efficiency reached by the artist in that period.

The Satavahana sculpture is seen in the Naneghat rock-cut excavation and its evolution can be traced through the different rock-cut excavations like the Bhaje, Karle, Pitalkhore, Bedse and so on. The figures on the capitals or the donor couples at the chaityagruhas show the development of the Buddhist sculptures reached at that period.

Kushana period is marked by the 'Gandhara art' phase and its most important contribution to the Buddhist art was the creation of the Buddha image. With the transition from Theravada to Mahayana the image of Buddha appeared in the Gandhara and the Mathura school simultaneously. Buddha is represented in the human form for the first time in the history of Buddhism. The Buddha images with the different mudras came along with the bodhisattvas.



The Amaravati school of art flourished in the south India at Amaravati stupa and Nagarjunakonda valley. In subject matter, composition and arrangement of figures, the Nagarjunakonda sculptures show slight differences from those of the Amaravati, but both had great influence on the later Indian sculptures flourished in the south India.

It is believed that the Gupta period marks the height of glory of the Indian art. The representation of the human body in fully Indian and the mastery over the refinement and technique is seen in the sculptures. Though the Gupta period is the revival of the Hindu period, the Buddhist and the Jaina art flourished nevertheless. The Vakatakas, the allies of the Gupta, in their reign is the art of the later Ajanta attributed.

After the Gupta dynasty the Buddhism art flourished under the Pala dynasty. The art of this period marks the final phase of the classical Indian tradition. Stone sculptures were replaced by the metal ones.

Remarks: the changing phases of the Buddhism are reflected through the study of the sculptures through the ages. The earliest is marked with the symbolic art and the image of the Buddha is never shown. Though the bodhisattvas were shown they were depicted through the inspiring Jataka tales fulfilling the paramitas or perfections.

The Mahayana phase of Buddhism is marked with the introduction of image of the Buddha in the sculptural art. This was supported by the innumerable bodhisattva figures featuring on both sides of the Buddha image.

Thus in short the study of sculptures is the source of the study of Buddhist history directly as well as indirectly.

7.3 BUDDHIST PAINTINGS:

There are innumerable references to painted decorations in the Jatakas and other Buddhist literature. The earliest surviving examples of Buddhist paintings, dating from 2nd cent B.C. are found in some of the rock-cut Chetiyagharas and viharas at Ajanta in Maharashtra. A principle wall



Bodhisattva padmāpani - Ajanta - Maharashtra
Photo courtesy: - <https://twitter.com/truetanology/status/1298599392346140674?lang=fr>

painting of the period is in Chetiyaghara-10 which is devoted to the illustration of Chaddanta Jataka. However, Buddhist painting seems to have attained its maturity only during Gupta period (5th-6th cen A.D.) The finest specimens of this period are to be found in the caves at Bagh (central India) and Ajanta. The mural paintings in Ajanta contain representations of scenes from Buddha's lives, from Jataka tales etc. These stories are represented in continuous narrative.

The mediaeval period in Eastern and Western India was a period of intense activity in manuscript writing. As the authors of manuscript wanted to embellish their books with illustrations the use of miniature paintings came into vogue. The miniature paintings of Pala period prove to be consisting of Buddhist form of art.

These paintings throw a flood of light on the history of Ancient India. They provide information about the people, their way of living, costumes, jewellery, architecture and many other aspects. They give information of social, political, cultural, and religious conditions existing during those times.

7.4 BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE:

Definition of architecture: Architecture is the combination of art and technology in designing functional spaces in aesthetic manner.

Qualities of Architecture: Ruskin in the 19th century called architecture "Mother of all arts" and defined the three qualities of architecture as UTILITY: STABILITY: BEAUTY. Thus architecture is seen, felt, perceived, conceived and experienced.

Why the architecture is Buddhist? The architecture which is the manifestation of the Buddhas' Teachings in the concrete form is Buddhist architecture. Many features, forms, spaces designed are distinct and specific in structures developed with philosophy of Buddha making the architecture Buddhist.

- **Buddhist architecture is totally religious:** - The great architecture Buddhism has produced shows that it was never a religion confined to dogmas or rituals bounded by static forms, but shows growth and continuous progress, through its different architectural elements.
- **Buddhist architecture is symbolical:** - Buddhist architecture has to be understood from the context of the teachings, the philosophy, the practical application of the philosophical teachings, which manifests on your 'own' experience. The forms and the shapes used in the architecture are the symbolic representation of the teachings, like a stūpa in Buddhism is not just a monument but it is Buddha and enlightenment itself.
- **Buddhist architecture is transcendental:** it goes beyond the mere practical purpose and touches the unconsciousness of the mind. The chetiyaghara is so designed, so as to be useful for meditation.
- **Continuity is seen in the development of Buddhist architecture throughout the centuries:** the spread of Buddhism throughout the country and the new architecture coming out for the fulfilment, was carried out for centuries together, from generation to generation.
- **Buddhist architecture is foremost of the people, by the people and for the people:** -Buddhist architecture clearly gives a message, it shows how it has sublimated through the bindings of structures and developed into a culture, reaching the lowest strata of the society, where even the commonest folk, following and experiencing the truth of the teachings, can understand the significance and influence of the structure constructed.

Buddhist architecture is thus religious in character and **Stupa, Vihara** and **Chetiyaghara** are the main structures which represent it.

According to the geography and the material of construction the Buddhist architecture of India can be broadly classified into two

1. Structural architecture and
2. Rock-cut architecture.

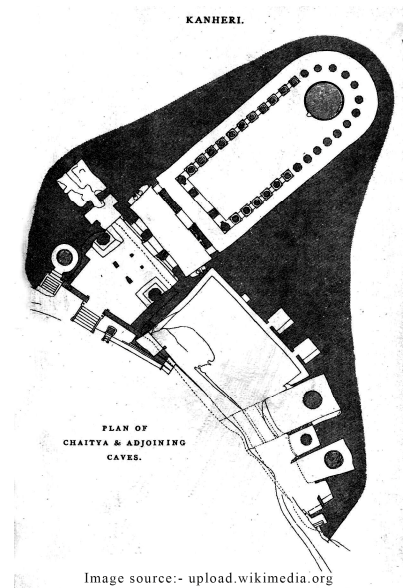
STRUCTURAL ARCHITECTURE is the one which is constructed or built from the material like mud, stone and bricks. Such architecture is regularly seen in the north and south India. Mostly the remains of the stupas, chetiyagharas and viharas [only the foundations] are found as the material is easily destructible with time.

ROCK-CUT ARCHITECTURE is the architecture which is cut or excavated in the rock or mountain. There are about 1500 rock-cut excavations in India and out of them 1200 are in Maharashtra of which 1000 are Buddhist. These large numbers of Buddhist rock-cut excavations in Maharashtra are due to the Sahyadri mountain range running north-

south dividing Maharashtra into Konkan and Deccan Pathar. They are dated from 2nd BCE to about 11th CE scattered in large and small 40 groups¹, broadly classified into Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

Not ‘Caves’ but ‘Leni’: the rock-cut architecture is called ‘Leni’ or ‘Lenya’ in the local language of Maharashtra- Marathi. ‘Lena’ word is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Lavanya’ which means beauty. Thus the rock-cut architecture in the bosom of the Sahyadri is like ornaments and garlands that enhance the beauty (lavanya) of it. The names so aptly given reveals the artistic bend of the minds of our forefathers.² On the other hand Caves are natural grottoes in the mountain and residences of wild animals. Calling these architectural beauties as ‘caves’ is like insulting our ancestors, so they should address properly.

These rock-cut excavations are very strategically placed on the trade routes climbing up from the konkan to the pathar, as the traders and the merchants were the chief donors and patrons of these excavations. Care was also taken that the leni-s are neither too close to nor too far from the villages, as the monks staying had to climb down every day for their alms.



The development of the Buddhist rock-cut architecture can be very easily traced from the excavations of Barabar hills in the 3rd cent B. C. to the excavations at Kanheri that dates to the 11th cent A.D. In the interim period of 1400 or so years rock-cut architecture has been through different phases of development, which can be classified into the spheres of art, architecture, technology and many more.

The rock-cut architecture has evolved from the humble beginning of a single excavation to the group of monasteries. The art of painting,

¹The largest being the group at Junnar with nearly 190 excavations subdivided into four groups on four hills. The next in size is the group at Kanheri-Mumbai with nearly 120 excavations. Karad with its 64 excavations is the third largest group of excavation. The groups with excavations ranging from 20 to 30 and more are Ajanta, Ellora, Bhaje, Thanale, Panhalekaji, Mahakali, Kuda, Pandavlena, Gandharpale. The groups with excavations ranging between 8 to 20 are Karle, Bedse, Aurangabad, Pitalkhora, Kondane, Shirwal, Lohare-Wai, Shelarwadi, Jivdhani, Pandavdhara. There are many groups with one or two excavations. Some are in very ruinous stage; they are Bhandara, Bhorgiri, Yerphale, Pohale, Vasale, Hal, Kol, Chaul, Lonad, Chiplun, Khed and so on. There are rock-cut excavations in other states of India like Khambalida, Sana, Talaja in Gujarat, Dhamner, Kolvi in Rajasthan, Bagh in Madhya Pradesh, Guntupalle, Sankaram in Andhrapradesh and so on.

²Dr. (Mrs) Meena Talim-Buddhist Rock-cut Architecture- Its Technique

sculpture has also seen the apex of creativity and declined through the centuries. All these changes are the part of development, which had taken place in Buddhism evolving from Theravada- Hinayāna to Mahāyāna to Vajrayāna, and then completely disappearing from India.

The rock-cut architecture is endowed with sculptures, paintings, inscriptions in Brahmi script and Pali language and thus are unique in themselves. The rain water harvesting seen in the rock-cut architecture is seen as the developed technological feat of the time. The climatological study was done while designing these rock-cut monuments as can be seen through the proper natural lighting through the chaitya arch into the chaityagruha. The torrential rainfall of the Sahyadri is taken care of with the help of the large verandahs in front of the excavations.

Excavated with just chisel and hammer these marvels in stone stood three floor high, with the technology developing through ages. The knowledge of the selection of the stone fit for chiselling is seen reflected through the sites like Karle, Bhaje, Bedse, giving the depth of the understanding of geology of the time.

Small features of the rock-cut architecture like the chaitya arch, evolved from an opening to a grand arch and after becoming the symbolic feature of Buddhism disappeared in a circle of a brick decoration. Similarly evolution of columns, verandah, roof and every other feature of architecture can be traced.

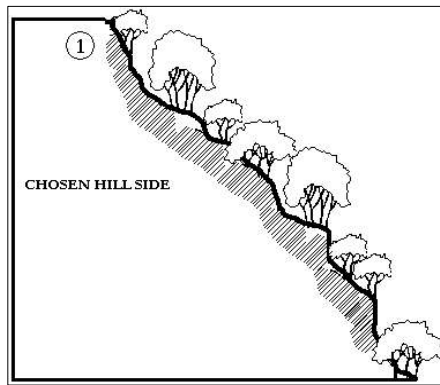
These excavations gives the history of the Buddhism through 2nd BCE to 12th CE and influenced the art and architecture of the south-east Asian countries, as specially such rock-cut architecture is seen on the silk-route.

With the loss of Buddhism, the rock-cut architecture was almost most.



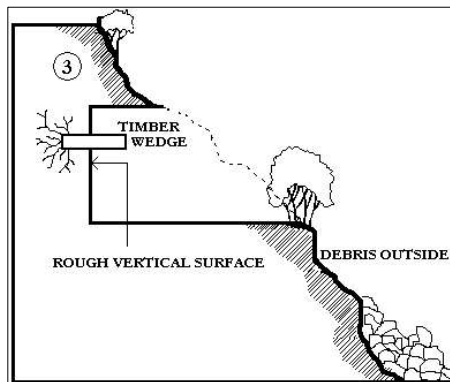
Bhaje Caves - Lonavala

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

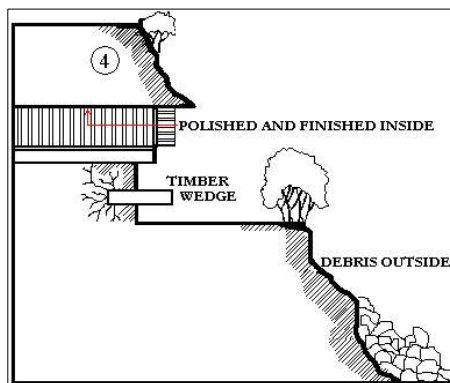


Once the location was decided, the selection of the specific rock for the excavation had to be searched for.

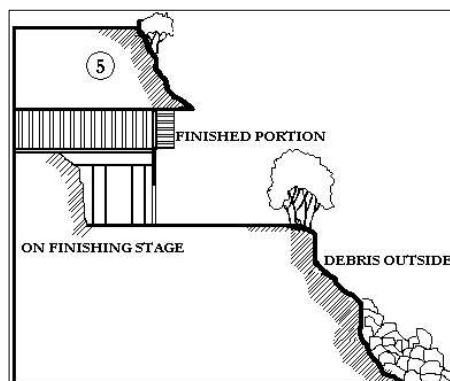
Having made it roughly vertical, the gable end elevation of the structural Chaitya hall was sketched on the rock wall.



Parallel tunnels were then run to the desired depth and timber wedges driven vertically.

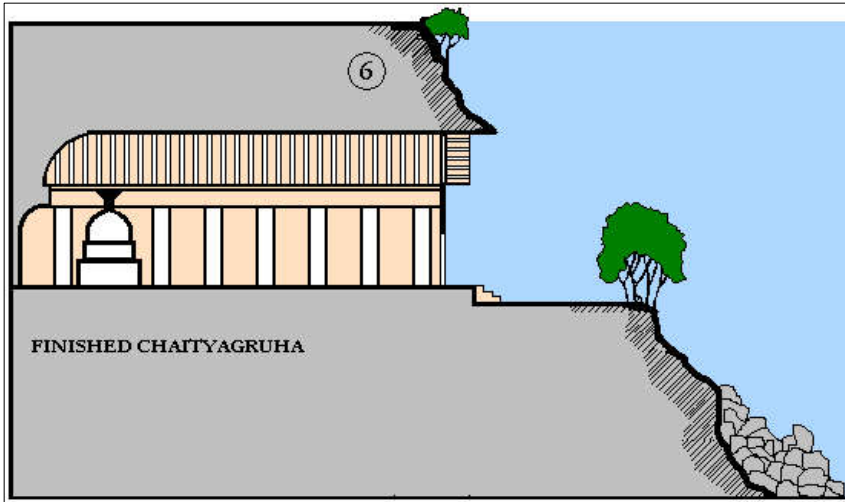


When moistened, these timber wedges expanded and dislodged large chunks of stone that were removed.



With mere 6 mm chisels and hammer as the only tool the excavation was carried on ceiling downward.

After completing the ceiling the down portion was excavated, thus no scaffolding was required.



Finished Chetiyaghara ready for meditation.

Stupa is the monumental structure adopted in Buddhist architecture, which has a pre-historic origin in burial mounds. Stupas were built over the remains of the dead even in pre-buddhist times, but they were built outside the villages. When Buddha asked to build stupa on the remains of the enlightened ones, he was specific about that they should be built at the crossroads of the village and has to be worshipped with flowers. Thus stupa no longer remained a structure associated with death outside the village but became the place of worship and also the symbol of Buddha and enlightenment.

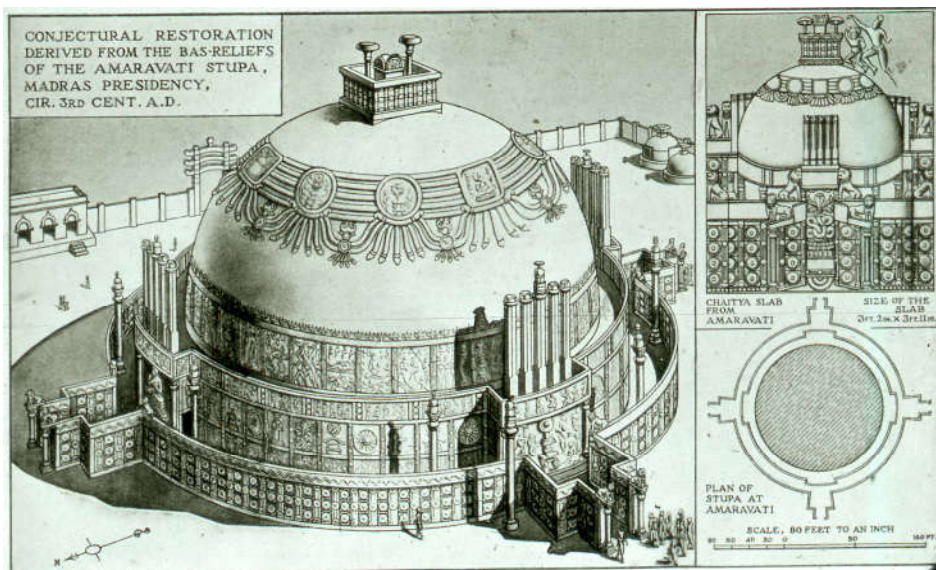
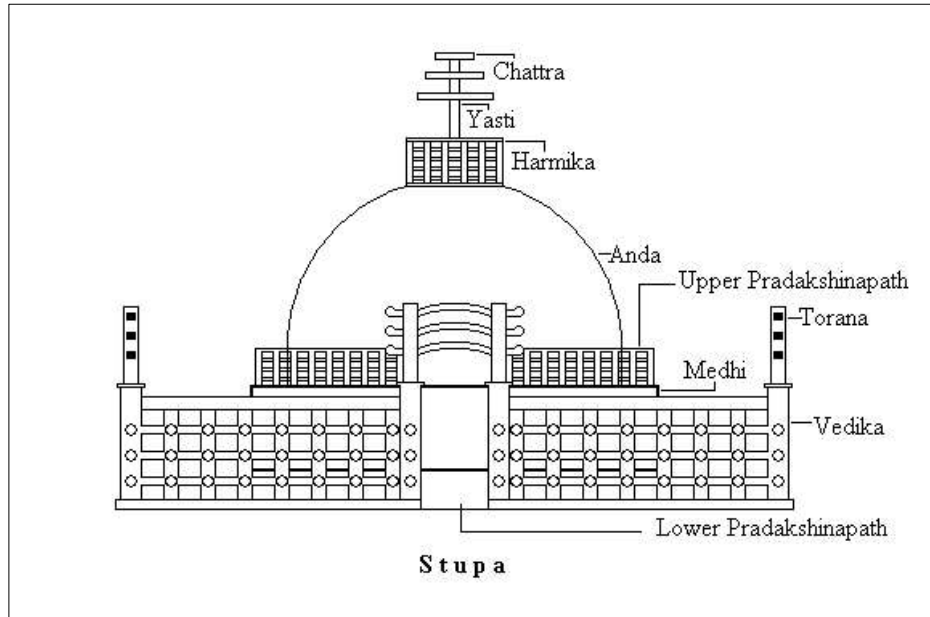


Image source:- <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/163477>

With the development in material and technology of construction, the stupa underwent considerable changes. The development in the philosophy of Buddhism as per the different schools is also reflected the changed stupa architecture.

Emperor Asoka was a great patron of Buddhism and it is said that he built 84000 stupas. Archaeological evidences prove that most of the earlier stupas have Mauryan origin or are renovated by Emperor Asoka.

Parts of Stūpa: Architecturally the basic stūpa consists of the medhi or the base, the anda or the semicircular dome on the base, the rectangular or square box on the anda called harmikā, and the chattra or umbrella on top of the harmikā, placed with the help of the post called the yasti. The circumambulatory path around the base, the vedikā railings around the path, adorned by the gateways are the additional features seen in the structural stūpas.



Types of Stūpa: Stūpas are broadly classified into

Sāririka stupa- As reliquary stūpas containing the chief corporeal relics of Gotama the Buddha, or in short the stupa built on the relics of the Buddha. Stupa of Piprahwa-Kapilavattu, Dharmarajika stupa at Sarnath, Mahastupa at Nagarjunakonda had relics of Buddha inside them.

Uddhesika stupa- As commemorative stūpas erected at places associated with important event in the life of the Buddha- like the turning of the Wheel of Law-

Dhammacakkapavattana, or the passing away- Mahaparinibbana. Eg.

Dhamekh Stupa at Sarnath or Mukutabandhana stupa at Kusinara.

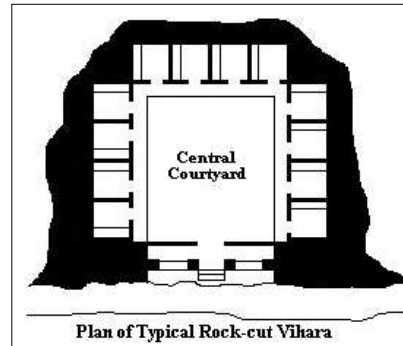


Nagarjunakonda - Andhra Pradesh

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

Paribhogika stupa- Stupa built on the objects used by the Buddha in his lifetime, like stupa built on the pieces of the begging bowl at Sopara is the paribhogika stupa.

Vihara – the vihara is a residential place for the monks and nuns. The origin of vihara can be traced back to the temporary structures erected by the monks themselves for the rain retreat of three months in a particular boundary and then dismantled by them. These structures are unique to Buddhist architecture as they show the discipline, code of conduct as per the Vinaya rule of the Buddhism, clearly reflected in the architecture. The systematic planning and layout of the sites, even depicting the development of Buddhism through the ages, as per the changes in Buddhist philosophy and characteristics, also marks these.



The donations of lay followers of the aramas or gardens with the structures for residence is the next stage of development of the viharas. The residential complexes or Viharas of the Sangha in later Buddhism became the universities of Buddhist studies like Nalanda. The typical plan of the vihara developed with time is, the rooms around the central courtyard. In case of structural vihara the central courtyard would be open to sky while in case of rock-cut vihara it is an enclosed space.

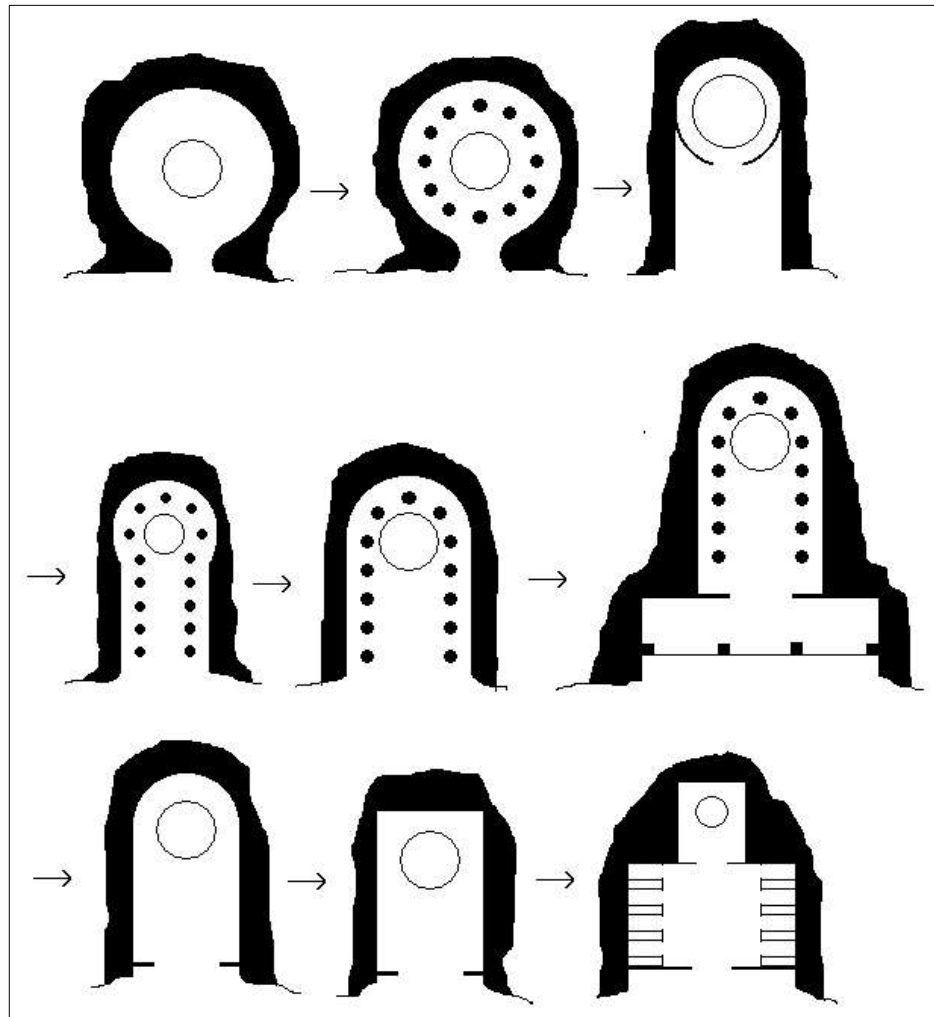


Chetiyaghara: “the house of the chetiya” is chetiyaghara. It is an enclosed place for meditation and worship of the stupa. To study the relationship between architecture and vipassana, study of chaityagruha is very important.

The earlier chetiyagharas were circular in shape and the archaeological finds of rock-cut as well as structural chetiyagharas in circular shapes with stupa inside proves this. Buddhism adopted circular shape for the chetiyaghara as it proved to be practically suitable as well as philosophically and psychologically fulfilling the demands. The apsidal planned vaulted roofed chetiyagharas developed from the circular ones and can be clearly seen from the different phases it went through years.

The existence of the apsidal planned chetiyaghara proved the existence of vipassana meditation in the Sangha and the loss of the vipassana meditation is seen with the change in the shape of the chetiyaghara which became rectangular in plan. In the later date the chetiyaghara and vihara was combined together to develop a new element of chetiyaghara+vihara which changed again with the introduction of image of the Buddha into the vihara.

The Development Of Circular Chetivaghara To Rectangular Chetivaghara+Vihara Through Centuries. (Drawings- Dr. Yojana Bhagat)



This is a very basic introduction and information of the Buddhist architecture.

7.5 SUMMARY:

A brief introduction to the Buddhist art and architecture is given to give the glimpse of the vast treasure the ancient India has. The scientific study of Buddhist art and architecture began in the late 18th CE with the coming of the western scholars and is still continuously going on.

The rich Buddhist heritage and culture is reflected through the remains of the Buddhist art and the advance technological development is seen in the construction of the huge structural stupas and the excavation of gigantic monuments in the rock.

Most of the credit to the construction of the stupa and vihara all over the country goes to the emperor Asoka, as all the excavations of the stupa definitely shows the presence of Asokan stupa inside. The Asokan stupa is identified with the stone as the material of construction used by the visionary emperor for the first time. The credit of excavating rock for the

first time as a place of dwelling also goes to the emperor who excavated the Barabar leni in Bihar for the ajivikas in the 3rd BCE and the tradition continued in Maharashtra for the next 1400 years, developing into the most developed Buddhist rock-cut architecture ever seen. Ajanta and Ellora are the world heritage sites famous for its sculptures paintings architecture and splendour.

7.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- Define the terms- art and architecture and discuss how they are Buddhist.
- Write in brief -the evolution and development of Buddhist sculptures and their contribution to the field of art.
- Give the characteristics of Buddhist architecture and write a note on stupa architecture.
- What is a vihara and chetiyaghara? How they are different in rock-cut and structural architecture?
- Discuss the technique of rock-cutting and write a note on any rock-cut site you have visited.

7.7 ADDITIONAL READING

- Brown Percy-Indian Architecture Buddhist and Hindu
- James Fergusson, James Burgess-The Cave Temples of India, 1886
- George Michell- Buddhist Rock-Cut Monasteries of the Western Ghats
- Dhavalikar M K- Late Hinayana caves of western India
- Akira Shimada (Editor)- Amaravati: The Art of an Early Buddhist Monument in Context
- Elizabeth Rosen Stone-The Buddhist Art of Nagarjunakonda.
- Walter Spink- Ajanta: History and Development



SECTS OF BUDDHISM

Unit Structure:

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Sects of Buddhism and the Buddhist Councils
- 8.3 Eighteen Schools of Early Buddhism
- 8.4 Summary
- 8.5 Unit End Questions
- 8.6 Additional Reading

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the evolution, development and expansion of Buddhism from 6th cent. B.C. till 1000 CE
- To understand the schism in the Sangha and evolution of different schools of Buddhism.
- Analyse and differentiate the different schools of Buddhism on the basis of the dating and the philosophy they are based on.
- Analyse and bring out the similarities from the schools of Buddhism on the basis of the dating and the philosophy they are based on.
- Understand what is Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism

8.1 INTRODUCTION:

Evolution of early sects of Buddhism: no exact date could be given when the differences in the sangha led to the formation of the sects. Differences of opinions were present among the followers of the Buddha even during his lifetime is evident through Pāli literature and the necessity of holding the First Buddhist Council, immediately after the mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha is also very well known. Still the sangha was united and one.

The schism in the sangha took place not until after almost 100 years of the Mahāparinibbanna of Buddha, after the Second Buddhist Council, which was held at Vaishali. The Mahāsanghikas separated themselves from the Orthodox school of Theravadas, though no inscriptional evidences are found.

The Third Buddhist Council was held at the time of Emperor Asoka and missionaries were sent to all parts of India and abroad for the propagation of Buddhism. No mention of different sects of Buddhism is seen anywhere, either on the rock edicts of Asoka or on the architecture, which he promoted. It is also surprising that no epigraphical evidences of the

sects during 2nd century BC are found. Infact the first record of the existence of the sect in Buddhism is in the Mathura Lion Capital inscription of the 1st century CE. Many inscriptions of the 1st century AD and onwards mentions different sects. The places from where these inscriptions are found also indicate the distribution and the hold of that particular sect on that area.

Archaeology plays a vital role in the whole operation of the study of the Sects of Buddhism in India. Scholars have different opinions regarding the distribution and ideologies of different sects. The archaeological evidences and the inscriptions help to place the proper place and date to the Sect existent in Buddhism in India.

Some believe that Mahāsaṅghikas are the forerunners of Mahāyāna Buddhism and some believe that Sarvastivādins is the Sect, which is the root from which the Mahāyāna Buddhism grew. To get the clear picture one has to study the early period of Buddhist history, mostly after the mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha.

The history of Buddhism for the first six centuries after the mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha may be divided into [according to scholar Bibhuti Barua]

- 1- Early or pure Theravāda Buddhism (circa 450-350 BC)- by early or pure Theravāda Buddhism we mean only that form of Buddhism which has been described in a considerable portion of the Vinaya Pitaka and the four Nikāyas
- 2- Mixed Theravāda Buddhism (circa 350-100 BC-this period is witnessed by the breaking up of the Buddhist sangha into many sections and the dispersal of these over the various parts of India, each growing in its own way. Though the dissensions in the sangha may be undesirable from the orthodox point of view, they were indicative of the deep interest taken by the disciples in ascertaining the real teachings of Buddha as also of the attempts to interpret the old teachings in new way and to adapt them to the changed circumstances brought about by the advancement of knowledge for over a century.
- 3- Appearance of Mahāyāna (circa 100-300 CE)-This phase is semi-Mahāyāna phase or Mahāyāna in the making. The first two centuries of the Christian era witnessed the conflict between the Theravāda and Mahāyāna as well as the systemization of the Mahāyāna doctrines. The Mahāyanist found faults with the Theravādins, not because they failed to comprehend the real teachings of Buddha but because they looked upon as truth that which appeared to the Mahāyāna as only partial truth. (Pg. 466)

Three months after the passing of the Buddha according to the scriptures, the First Council was held at Rajagaha by some of his disciples who had attained Arahantship (Enlightenment). At this point, Theravada tradition maintains that no conflict about what the Buddha taught is to have

occurred, and the teachings were divided into various parts and each was assigned to an elder and his pupils to commit to memory.

The Second Council was strictly about the misbehavior of a group of monks, who changed their behaviors after the first council. Most scholars believe that the first split occurred at the time of holding of the second council. It is believed that the first split resulted into coming into existence of the Sthaviravada and the Mahasanghika.

By the 3rd century BCE, there were 18 schools of Buddhism as a result of further split. Theravadin sources state that a Third Council was convened under the patronage of Emperor Ashoka. It is generally accepted, that one or several disputes did occur during Asoka's reign, involving both doctrinal and vinaya matters, The *Sthavira* School had, by the time of King Ashoka divided into three sub-schools, doctrinally speaking, but these did not become separate monastic orders until later.

According to the Theravadin account, this Council was convened primarily for the purpose of establishing an official orthodoxy. At the council, small groups raised questions about the specifics of the vinaya and the interpretation of doctrine. The chairman of the council, Moggaliputta Tissa, compiled a book called the *Kathavatthu*, which was meant to refute these arguments. The council sided with Moggaliputta and his version of Buddhism as orthodox; it was then adopted by Emperor Ashoka as his empire's official religion. This school of thought was termed *Vibhajjavada* (Pali), literally "those who analyse"

The version of the scriptures that had been established at the Third Council, including the vinaya, sutta and the abhidhamma (collectively known as Tipitaka), was taken to Sri Lanka by Emperor Ashoka's son, the Venerable Mahinda. There it was eventually committed to writing in the Pali language. The Pali Canon remains the most complete set of Nikaya scriptures to survive, although the greater part of the Sarvāstivādin canon survives in Chinese translation, some parts exist in Tibetan translations, and some fragments exist in Sanskrit manuscripts, while parts of various canons (sometimes unidentified), exist in Chinese and fragments in other Indian dialects.

Schools of Buddhism: even though attempts were made by emperor Asoka for the unification of the sangha as can be seen from the inscriptional data (schism edict of Asoka at Sarnath, Sanchi and Kosambi) and the Pali text *Kathavatthu*, the Pali chronicle *Mahavamsa* records 18 schools of Buddhism, as well as the inscription records the names of the different schools, not mentioned in the texts. Therefore it is to be understood that further divisions began to occur within the Buddhist movement and a number of additional schools emerged, including the Sarvāstivāda and the Sammitīya. All of these early schools of Nikayan Buddhism eventually came to be known collectively as the Eighteen Schools in later sources. Unfortunately, with the exception of the Theravāda, none of early these schools survived beyond the late medieval period by which time several were already long extinct, although a considerable amount of the

canonical literature of some of these schools has survived, mainly in Chinese translation. Moreover, the origins of specifically Mahāyāna doctrines may be discerned in the teachings of some of these early schools, in particular in the Mahāsāṅghika and the Sarvāstivāda.

During and after the Third Council, elements of the Sthavira group called themselves *Vibhajjavādins*. The Pudgalavādins were also known as Vatsīputrīyas after their putative founder, though this group later became known as the Sammitīya school, after one of its subdivisions, though it died out around the 9th or 10th century CE. Nevertheless, during most of the early medieval period, the Sammitīya school was numerically the largest Buddhist group in India, with more followers than all the other schools combined. The *Sarvāstivādin* school was most prominent in the north-west of India and provided some of the doctrines that would later be adopted by the Mahāyana. Another group linked to Sarvāstivāda was the Sautrāntika school, which only recognized the authority of the sutras and rejected the Abhidharma transmitted and taught by the *Vaibhāsika* wing of Sarvāstivāda. Based on textual considerations, it has been suggested that the Sautrāntikas were actually adherents of Mūla-Sarvāstivāda. The relation between Sarvāstivāda and Mūla-Sarvāstivāda is unclear. Between the 1st century BCE and the 1st century CE, the terms Mahayana and Hinayana were first used in writing, in, for example, the Lotus Sutra.

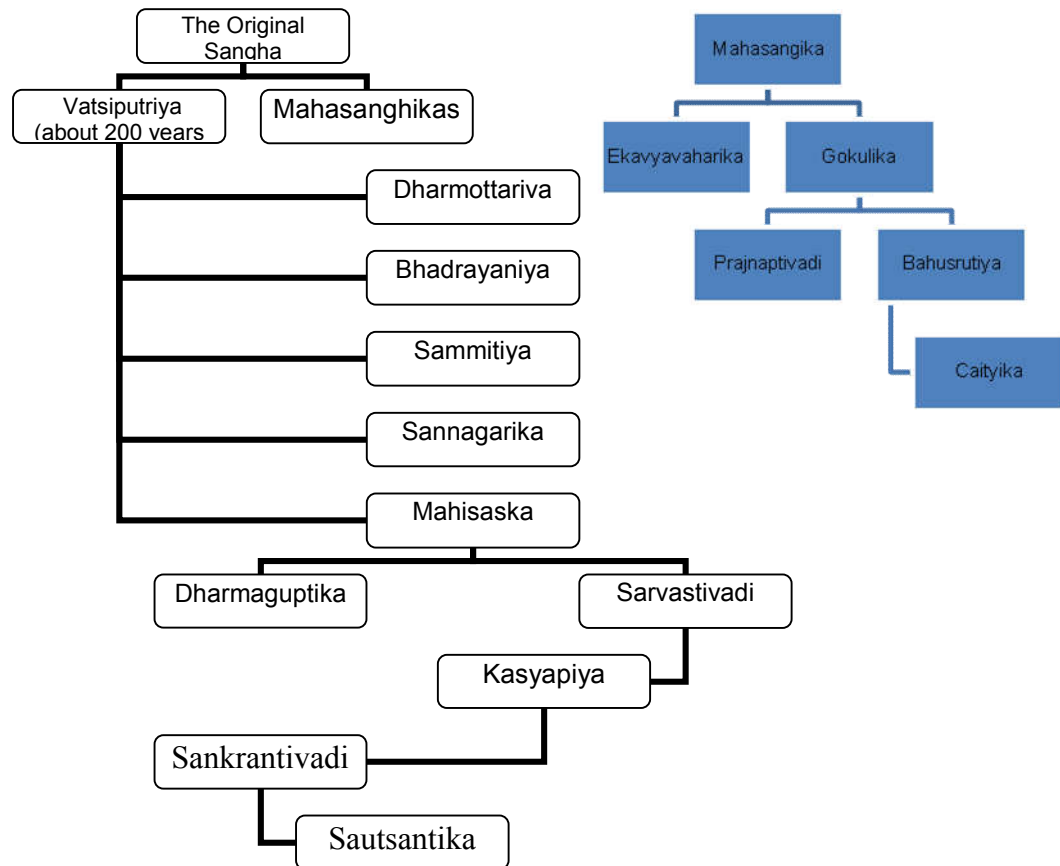
At present three phases of Buddhism are in practice.

(1) Theravada (2) Mahayana (3) Vajrayana

Theravada School: The word Theravada is a compound of two members: **Thera** and **Vada**; **thera** means "elder", especially "an elderly Buddhist monk"; second member **vada** coming from the root **vad**, "to speak" signifies "speech", "talk", "word", "doctrine". The word Theravada is frequently translated into English "the Doctrine of the Elders"; sporadic translations are "the Way of the Elders" and "the School of the Elders"; even "old Wisdom School" is met with. Most probably the word first appears as the name of a Buddhist school in the Dipavamsa, the earlier Chronicle of Sri Lanka, dating the 4th century AD. that the name is defined.

8.3 EIGHTEEN SCHOOLS OF EARLY BUDDHISM

It can be presented through chart in this manner.



The earliest available teachings of the Buddha are to be found in Pali literature and belongs to the school of the Theravadins, who may be called the most primitive school of Buddhism. This school admits the human characteristics of the Buddha, and is characterized by a psychological understanding of human nature; and emphasizes a meditative approach to the transformation of consciousness. The teaching of the Buddha according to this school is very plain. He asks us to 'abstain from all kinds of evil, to accumulate all that is good and to purify our mind'. These can be accomplished by The Three Trainings: the development of ethical conduct, concentration and insight-wisdom.

Theravada emphasizes on each individual working for his or her enlightenment. For the monks and nuns the ideal is to become an *Arahatta* (sometimes *arahant*), which means "fully liberated one ". For upasakas (lay-followers) the ideal put forward by the Buddha is to become at least stream-enterer: the first step on the path of becoming Arahatta. An arhatta is a person who has realized enlightenment and freed himself from the cycle of birth and death. Beneath the arahatta ideal is an understanding of the doctrine of anatta -- the egolessness -- that differs from that of the Mahayana. Very basically, Theravada considers anatta to mean that an

individual's ego or personality is a fetter and delusion. Once freed of this delusion, the individual may enjoy the bliss of Nirvana.

Above all, Theravada emphasizes on insight gained through meditative practice. Through meditation each individual should personally experience three characteristics that of impermanence, (anicca) suffering (dukkha) and ego-lessness (anatta) pertaining to mind matter phenomenon. This will enable one to purify the mind from greed, hatred and delusion. Its doctrines are taken from the Pali Tipitaka, and its basic teachings begin with the Four Noble Truths. Theravada teaches that enlightenment comes entirely through one's own efforts, without help from gods or other outside forces.

Theravada school flourished in India till 1st BCE. Then it got replaced with Mahayana school. Nowadays Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand are the three stalwart Theravada states with close religious ties. Though Laos and Cambodia have lost much of their religious lustre both still deserve to be recognized as Theravada countries. In Vietnam, formerly a land of pure Mahayana, Theravada is somewhat developing. In the hill tracts of Bangladesh many of the Baruas, the Chakmas and the Maghs and their fellow countrymen in the Chittagong area still prove to be staunch Theravadins. So do the Shans in the frontier regions of South China.

As for India, the land of the birth of Buddhism as well as of its death, signs of the revival of the Theravada school can be seen recently. With the revival of Vipassana technique in India in the recent period we can see revival of Theravada teachings and revival of Pali as well.

Mahayana School: Mahayana, which means "Great Vehicle" in Sanskrit, is one of the two major schools of Buddhism. It emerged as a separate school from Theravada, the other major school, during the 1st century BCE. About the 2nd Century CE Mahayana became clearly defined. Nagarjuna developed the Mahayana philosophy of Sunyata and proved that everything is Void in a small text called Madhyamika-karika. About the 4th CE, there were Asanga and Vasubandhu who wrote enormous amount of works on Mahayana. After the 1st Century CE, the Mahayanists took a definite stand and only then the terms of *Mahayana* and *Hinayana* were introduced.

We must not confuse *Hinayana* with *Theravada* because the terms are not synonymous. *Theravada* Buddhism went to Sri Lanka during the 3rd Century B.C. when there was no *Mahayana* at all. *Hinayana* sects developed in India and had an existence independent from the form of Buddhism existing in Sri Lanka. Today there is no *Hinayana* sect in existence anywhere in the world. Therefore, in 1950 the World Fellowship of Buddhists inaugurated in Colombo unanimously decided that the term *Hinayana* should be dropped when referring to Buddhism existing today in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, etc. This is the brief history of *Theravada*, *Mahayana* and *Hinayana*.

The major doctrinal point that distinguishes Mahayana from Theravada is that of shunyata, or "emptiness." Shunyata is a deepening of the doctrine

of anatman, or anatta, which is one of the foundational teachings of all Buddhism. According to this doctrine, there is no "self" in the sense of a permanent, integral, autonomous being within an individual existence. Mahayana teaches that beings and phenomena have no intrinsic existence of their own and take identity only in relation to other beings and phenomena. Shunyata also is an absolute reality that is all things and beings, unmanifested. The ideal of Mahayana practice is the bodhisattva, "enlightenment being," who works for the enlightenment of all beings. Over the years, Mahayana subdivided into more schools with divergent practices and doctrines. These spread from India to China and Tibet, then to Korea and Japan. Today Mahayana is the dominant form of Buddhism in those countries. Mahayana is further divided into many sub-schools, such as Pure Land and Zen.

According to it, the Buddhas are *lokottara* (supramundane) and are connected only externally with the worldly life. This conception of the Buddha contributed much to the growth of the Mahayana philosophy. The ideal of the Mahayana school is that of the Bodhisattva, a person who delays his or her own enlightenment in order to compassionately assist all other beings and ultimately attains to the highest Bodhi. The literature of Mahayana Buddhism is in Sanskrit.

Comparison of Theravada with Mahayana: Ven. Dr. W. Rahula writes in "Gems of Buddhist Wisdom" while comparing Theravada with Mahayana writes

‘Both accept Sakyamuni Buddha as the Teacher.

- The Four Noble Truths are exactly the same in both schools.
- The Eightfold Path is exactly the same in both schools.
- The *Paticca-samuppada* or the Dependent Origination is the same in both schools.
- Both rejected the idea of a supreme being who created and governed this world.
- Both accept *Anicca*, *Dukkha*, *Anatta* and *Sila*, *Samadhi*, *Panna* without any difference.

These are the most important teachings of the Buddha and they are all accepted by both schools without question.

There are also some points where they differ. An obvious one is the *Bodhisattva* ideal. Many people say that *Mahayana* is for the *Bodhisattvahood* which leads to Buddhahood while *Theravada* is for Arahantship. It should be noted that the Buddha was also an Arahant. Pacceka Buddha is also an Arahant. A disciple can also be an Arahant. The Mahayana texts never use the term Arahant-yana, Arahant Vehicle. They used three terms: *Bodhisattvayana*, *Prateka-Buddhayana*, and *Sravakayana*. In the Theravada tradition these three are called *Bodhis*.

Some people imagine that Theravada is selfish because it teaches that people should seek their own salvation. But how can a selfish person gain Enlightenment? Both schools accept the three Yanas or *Bodhis* but consider the *Bodhisattva* ideal as the highest. The *Mahayana* has created many mystical *Bodhisattvas* while the *Theravada* considers a *Bodhisattva* as a man amongst us who devotes his entire life for the attainment of perfection, ultimately becoming a fully Enlightened Buddha for the welfare of the world, for the happiness of the world.

THERAVADA COMPARED WITH MAHAYANA

Location	Southern (Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, parts of Southeast Asia)	Northern (Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, parts of Southeast Asia)
Schools and Sects	One surviving school (as many as 18 existed at one time) 8 major schools: four practice-based (Zen, Pure Land, Vajrayana, Vinaya); four philosophy-based (Tendai, Avamtsaka, Yogacara and Madhyamika)	
Buddhist Scriptures	Pali Canon/Tripitaka only	Books of the Theravada Tripitaka plus many other sutras (e.g. Lotus Sutra)
Buddhas	Historical Buddha (Gautama) and past Buddhas only	Gautama Buddha plus Amitabha, Medicine Buddhas, and others
Bodhisattvas	Maitreya only	Maitreya plus Avalokitesvara, Mansjuri, Ksitigarbha and Samanthabadra
Goal of Training	Arhat	Buddhahood via bodhisattva-path

3 Buddha Bodies (Trikaya)	Very limited emphasis; mainly on nirmana-kaya and dharma-kaya	Emphasized, including the samboga-kaya or reward/enjoyment body
Original Language	Pali	Sanskrit
Language of Transmission	Tripitaka is only in Pali. Teaching in Pali supplemented by local language.	Scriptures translated into local language.
Buddha's Disciples	Historical disciples described in Scriptures	Many bodhisattvas that are not historical figures
Mantras and Mudras	Some equivalent in the use of Parittas	Emphasized in Vajrayana; sometimes incorporated in other schools
Bardo (Limbo)	Rejected	Taught by all schools
Non-Buddhist Influences	Mainly pre-Buddhist Indian influences like concepts of karma, sangha, etc.	Heavily influenced by local religious ideas as transmitted to new cultures (China, Japan, Tibet).
Buddha Nature	Not taught	Emphasized, especially in practice-based schools
Rituals	Very few; not emphasized	Many, owing to local cultural influences

Courtesy, (http://www.religionfacts.com/buddhism/fastfacts/differences_thervavada_mahayana.htm)

Differences Between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism

Snapshots of Buddhism: Summaries of Teachings and Topics

#	TOPIC	THERAVADA BUDDHISM	MAHAYANA BUDDHISM
1	The Buddha	Only the historical Gautama (Sakyamuni) Buddha and past buddhas are accepted.	Besides Sakyamuni Buddha, other contemporary buddhas like Amitabha and Medicine Buddha are also very popular.
2	Bodhisattvas	Only Maitreya bodhisattva is accepted.	Avalokitesvara, Manshuri, Ksitigarbha and Samanthabhadra are four very well known bodhisattvas besides Maitreya.
3	Objective of training	Arahant or pacceka-buddha.	Buddhahood (via bodhisattva path).
4	Organisation of Buddhist scriptures	The Pali Canon is divided into 3 baskets (Tipitaka): Vinaya Pitaka of 5 books, Sutta Pitaka of 5 collections (many suttas) and Abhidhamma Pitaka of 7 books.	The Mahayana Buddhist Canon also consists of Tripitaka of disciplines, discourses (sutras) and dharma analysis. It is usually organised in 12 divisions of topics like Cause and Conditions and Verses. It contains virtually all the Theravada Tipitaka and many sutras that the latter does not have.
5	Concept of Bodhicitta	Main emphasis is self liberation. There is total reliance on one-self to eradicate all defilements.	Besides self liberation, it is important for Mahayana followers to help other sentient beings.
6	Trikaya concept	Very limited emphasis on the 3 bodies of a buddha. References are mainly on nirmana-kaya and dharma-kaya.	Very well mentioned in Mahayana buddhism. Samboga-kaya or reward/enjoyment body completes the Trikaya concept.

7	Transmission route	Southern transmission: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Laos and Cambodia and parts of Southeast Asia.	Northern transmission: Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and parts of Southeast Asia.
8	Language of dharma teaching	Tipitaka is strictly in Pali. Dharma teaching in Pali supplemented by local language.	Buddhist canon is translated into the local language (except for the 5 untranslatables), e.g. Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese. Original language of transmission is Sanskrit.
9	Nirvana (Nibbana in Pali)	No distinction is made between nirvana attained by a buddha and that of an arahat or pacceka buddha.	Also known as 'liberation from Samsara,' there are subtle distinctions in the level of attainment for the three situations.
10	Sakyamuni Buddha's disciples	Basically historical disciples, whether arahats or commoners.	A lot of bodhisattvas are introduced by Sakyamuni Buddha. Most of these are not historical figures.
11	Rituals and liturgy	There are some rituals but not heavily emphasized as in Mahayana schools.	Owing to local cultural influences, there is much more emphasis on the use of rituals; e.g. Rituals for the deceased, feeding of Petas, tantric formalities (in Vajrayana).
12	Use of Mantras and Mudras	Some equivalent in the use of Parittas.	Heavily practised in the Vajrayana school of Mahayana Buddhism. Other schools also have included some mantras in their daily liturgy.
13	Dying and death aspects	Very little research and knowledge on the process of dying and death. Usually, the dying persons are advised to meditate on impermanence, suffering and emptiness.	The Vajrayana school is particularly meticulous in these areas. There are many inner and external signs manifested by people before they die. There is heavy stress in doing transference of merit practices in the immediate few weeks following death to assist in the deceased's next rebirth.

14	Bardo	This in-between stage after death and before rebirth is ignored in Theravada school.	All Mahayana schools teach this after death aspect.
15	One meal a day practice	This the norm among Theravada sanghas.	This is a highly respected practice but it is left to the disposition of each individual in the various sanghas.
16	Focus of worship in the temple	Simple layout with the image of Sakyamuni Buddha the focus of worship.	Can be quite elaborate; with a chamber/hall for Sakyamuni Buddha and two disciples, one hall for the 3 Buddhas (including Amitabha and Medicine Buddha) and one hall for the 3 key bodhisattvas; besides the protectors, etc.
17	Schools/Sects of the tradition	One surviving major school following years of attrition reducing the number from as high as 18.	8 major (Chinese) schools based on the partial doctrines (sutras, sastras or vinaya) of the teachings. The four schools inclined towards practices like Pure Land/Amitabha, Ch'an, Vajrayana and Vinaya (not for lay people) are more popular than the philosophy based schools like Tien Tai, Avamtsaka, Yogacara and Madhyamika.
18	Non Buddhist influences	Mainly pre-Buddhism Indian/Brahmin influences. Many terms like karma, sangha, etc were prevailing terms during Sakyamuni Buddha's life time. References were made from the Vedas and Upanishads.	In the course of integration and adoption by the people in other civilizations, there were heavy mutual influences. In China, both Confucianism and Taoism exerted some influence on Buddhism which in turn had an impact on the indigenous beliefs. This scenario was repeated in Japan and Tibet.

19	Buddha nature	Absent from the teachings of Theravada tradition.	Heavily stressed, particularly by schools inclined practices.
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[Compiled by Tan Swee Eng]

(<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/snapshot02.htm>)

Vajrayana School: The term "vajra" denoted the thunderbolt, a legendary weapon and divine attribute that was made from an adamantine, or indestructible, substance and which could therefore pierce and penetrate any obstacle or obfuscation. As a secondary meaning, "vajra" refers to this indestructible substance, and so is sometimes translated as "adamantine" or "diamond". So the Vajrayana is sometimes rendered in English as "The Adamantine Vehicle" or "The Diamond Vehicle".

A vajra is also a scepter-like ritual object, which has a sphere (and sometimes a gankyil) at its centre, and a variable number of spokes (depending on the sadhana), enfolding either end of the rod. The vajra is often traditionally employed in tantric rituals in combination with the bell or ghanta; symbolically, the vajra may represent method as well as great bliss and the bell stands for wisdom, specifically the wisdom realizing emptiness or lack of inherent existence.

Vajrayana claims that its teachings were first expounded by the Buddha 16 years after his enlightenment, but Kitagawa has called this claim 'patently absurd'. Scholars have said that an early stage of Mantrayana began in the 4th century CE. Only from 7th or the beginning of the 8th century CE, tantric techniques and approaches increasingly dominated Buddhist practice in India. The first tantric (Vajrayana Buddhist) texts appeared in the 3rd century CE, and continued to appear until the 12th century CE.

8.4 SUMMARY:

the basic information regarding the different sects of Buddhism is relevant for the better understanding of development of Buddhism through ages. The evolution of the teachings of the Buddha into the prevalent broad classification of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism seen in the different part of the world, is easy to comprehend if it is known that all schools believes in the fundamental teachings of the Buddha and considers Buddha to be the founder of the path leading to liberation.

The charts helps in understanding the different sects of Buddhism prevalent at the time, though today we broadly classify all the forms into main three Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana- where the latter is practiced in very few places. Revival of Buddhism in India is of the Theravada tradition borrowed from countries like Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

8.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

Sects of Buddhism

- Write in short -the importance of Buddhist councils for the understanding the Sects of Buddhism.
- Comment on -the Theravada Buddhism and the different sects emerged from it.
- Differentiate between the Theravada and the Mahayana Buddhism.
- What is the Vajrayana Buddhism and how it is different from the Theravada and Mahayana ?
- Write a short note on- the sources and its relevance to study the different sects of Buddhism in India.

8. 6 ADDITIONAL READING

Dutt Nalinaksha- Buddhist Sects in India

Ven. Sujato -Sects and Sectarianism: The Origins of Buddhist Schools

H W Schumann- Buddhism: an outline of its teachings and Schools.

Williams, Paul - Buddhism: The early Buddhist schools and doctrinal history; Theravāda doctrine, vol. 2



SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

Unit Structure:

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Spread of Buddhism
- 9.3 Buddhism in Asian Countries
- 9.4 Summary
- 9.5 Unit End Questions
- 9.6 Additional Reading

9.0 OBJECTIVES:

The study is done with the following objectives

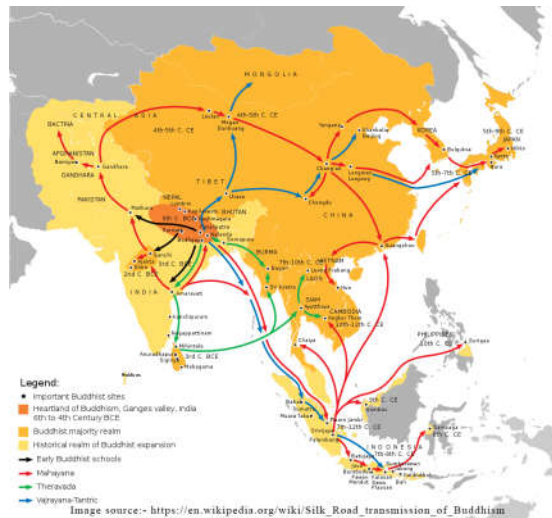
- To understand the appeal of Buddhism to the common people to follow the dhamma.
- To understand the role of monks and nuns, traders and merchants in the spread of Buddhism.
- To understand the patronage of kings in the spread of Buddhism.
- To study the art and architecture and its impact on the spread of Buddhism
- The role of literature and texts specially Tipitaka in the spread of Buddhism.

9.1 INTRODUCTION:

Caratha bhikkhave carikam bahujanahitaya bahujanasukhaya.. are the inspiring words of the Tathagata that had been the motivating force behind the spread of the teachings (dhamma) into the far distant lands of the world. one cannot ignore the missionary passion of the earlier monks who spread the dhamma to the far- off lands, Infact these are the monks who with the fire of their zeal had crossed the known unknown dangers and endured the hardships of the travels to reach the afar lands to propagate the dhamma, for the betterment of others.

These journeys are one or the other way the reasons for the pilgrims to visit the sacred places in India in the later dates. Somebody said these journeys may be said to be centrifugal, in that it leads away from these pilgrim centers, by un-traveled paths into the unknown like India to the south-east Asian countries.

Merchants and rulers: these developing missionary movement made Buddha's teachings spread afar over the centuries: first to Southeast Asia, then through Central Asia to China and the rest of East Asia, and finally to Tibet and the further reaches of Central Asia. Often it developed in these regions organically, because of local interest in foreign merchant's Buddhist beliefs. Sometimes rulers adopted Buddhism to help bring ethics to their people, but no one was forced to convert. By making Buddha's message available to the public, people were free to choose what was helpful.



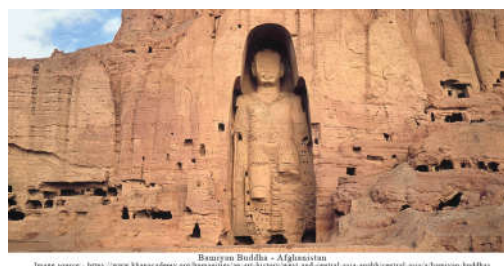
The Buddha's teachings spread peacefully across the Indian subcontinent, and from there far and wide throughout Asia. Whenever it reached a new culture, the Buddhist methods and styles were freely modified to fit the local mentality, without compromising the essential points of wisdom and compassion. Buddhism never developed an overall hierarchy of religious authority with a supreme head. Instead, each country to which it spread developed its own forms, its own religious structure, and its own spiritual head.



There are two major divisions of Buddhism: Hinayana (the Modest Vehicle), which emphasizes personal liberation, and Mahayana (the Vast Vehicle), which stresses working to become a fully enlightened Buddha to be able to benefit others. Both the Modest and Vast vehicles have many subdivisions. At present, only three major forms survive: one Hinayana subdivision in Southeast Asia, known as Theravada, and two Mahayana divisions, namely the Chinese and Tibetan traditions.

- The Theravada tradition spread from India to Sri Lanka and Burma (Myanmar) in the 3rd century BCE. From there, it reached the rest of Southeast Asia (Thailand, Cambodia and Laos).

- Other Hinayana schools spread to modern-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, eastern and coastal Iran, and Central Asia. From Central Asia, they spread into China in the 2nd century CE. These forms of Hinayana were



later combined with Mahayana aspects that came through this same route from India, with the Mahayana eventually becoming the dominant form of Buddhism in China and most of Central Asia. The Chinese form of Mahayana later spread to Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

- The Tibetan Mahayana tradition started in the 7th century CE, inheriting the full historical development of Indian Buddhism. From Tibet, it spread throughout the Himalayan regions and to Mongolia, Central Asia, and several regions of Russia (Buryatia, Kalmykia and Tuva).

In addition, from the 2nd century CE, Indian forms of Mahayana Buddhism spread to Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Sumatra and Java along the sea trade route from India to South China. None of them are extant today.



9.2 SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

The expansion of Buddhism throughout most of Asia was peaceful, and occurred in several ways. Buddha, as a travelling teacher sharing his insights with those who were receptive and interested from the nearby kingdoms, set the precedent. He instructed his monks to go forth in the world and expound his teachings. He did not ask others to denounce and give up their own religion and convert to a new one, for he was not seeking to establish his own religion. Buddha's aim was merely to help others overcome the unhappiness and suffering that they were creating for themselves, due to their lack of understanding of reality. Later generations of followers were inspired by his example, and shared with others his methods that they found useful in their lives. This is how what is now called "Buddhism" spread far and wide.

Sometimes, the process evolved organically. For example, when Buddhist merchants visited and settled in different lands, some members of the local populations naturally developed an interest in these foreigners' beliefs, as happened with the introduction of Islam to Indonesia and Malaysia later on. This process also occurred with Buddhism in the oasis states along the Silk Route in Central Asia, during the two centuries before and after the common era. As local rulers and their people learned more about this Indian religion, they invited monks from the merchants' native regions as advisors or teachers, and eventually, many adopted the Buddhist faith. Another organic method was through the slow cultural assimilation of a conquering people, such as the Greeks into the Buddhist society of Gandhara in present-day central Pakistan, during the centuries following the 2nd century BCE.

Often, the dissemination was due primarily to the influence of a powerful monarch who had adopted and supported Buddhism himself. In the mid-3rd century BCE, for example, Buddhism spread throughout northern India as a result of the personal endorsement of King Ashoka. This great empire-builder did not force his subjects to adopt the Buddhist faith, but by posting edicts engraved on iron pillars throughout his realm exhorting his people to lead an ethical life, and by following the principles himself, he inspired others to adopt Buddha's teachings.

King Ashoka also actively proselytized outside his kingdom by sending missions to distant lands, sometimes acting upon the invitation of foreign rulers, such as King Devanampiya Tissa of Sri Lanka. Other times he would send monks as envoys at his own initiative. The visiting monks would not pressure others to convert, but would just simply make the Buddha's teachings available, allowing people to choose for themselves. This is evidenced by the fact that in such places as South India and southern Burma, Buddhism soon took root, while in places such as the Greek colonies in Central Asia, there is no record of any immediate impact.



Painting of Xuanzang, Japan, Kamakura Period (14th century).
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xuanzang>

Other religious kings, such as the 16th century Mongol potentate Altan Khan, invited Buddhist teachers to their realm and proclaimed Buddhism the official creed of the land, in order to help unify their people and consolidate their rule. In the process, they may have prohibited certain practices of non-Buddhist, indigenous religions, and even persecuted those who follow them, but these rare heavy-handed moves were largely politically motivated. Such ambitious rulers still never forced subjects to adopt Buddhist forms of belief or worship. This is absolutely not part of the religious creed.

9.3 BUDDHISM IN ASIAN COUNTRIES

BUDDHISM IN SRI LANKA: Sri Lanka is the oldest continually Buddhist country, Theravada Buddhism being the major religion in the island since its official introduction in the 2nd century BC by Venerable Mahinda, the son of the Emperor Ashoka of India during the reign of King Devanampiya- Tissa. Later, the nun Sanghamitta, the daughter of Asoka, was said to have brought the southern branch of the original Bodhi tree, where it was planted at Anuradhapura. From that day up to the present, the Buddhists in Sri Lanka have paid



Sanghamitta there
 Image source:- <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/543035667564725767/>

and are paying the utmost reverence to this branch of the Bodhi Tree under the shade of which the Master achieved Enlightenment.

Monks from Sri Lanka have had an important role in spreading both Theravada and Mahayana throughout South-east Asia. It was in Sri Lanka, in the 1st century AD during the reign of King Vatta Gamini that the Buddhist monks assembled in Aloka-Vihara and wrote down the Tripitaka, the three basket of the Teachings, known as the Pali scriptures for the first time. It was Sri Lankan nuns who introduced the Sangha of nuns into China in 433AD. In the 16th century the Portuguese conquered Sri Lanka and savagely persecuted Buddhism as did the Dutch who followed them.

When the British won control at the beginning of the 19th century Buddhism was well into decline, a situation that encouraged the English missionaries that then began to flood the island. But against all expectations the monastic and lay community brought about a major revival from about 1860 onwards, a movement that went hand in hand with growing nationalism. Since then Buddhism has flourished and Sri Lankan monks and expatriate lay people have been prominent in spreading Theravada Buddhism in Asia, the West and even in Africa. Some of the most marvellous monuments in the Buddhist world belong to Sri Lanka, and her sculpture is closely associated with the early art of the Krishna valley and the later Pallava and Chola kings, owing to the close relationship that existed between south India and Sri Lanka. (above: Seven-metre-tall standing image of the Buddha in a rare cross-armed pose at Gal Vihara).



Gal Vihara
Image source: - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/543035667564725767/>

BUDDHISM IN BURMA: Buddhism is believed to have been introduced to Burma by missionaries sent by the Indian emperor Ashoka in the third century B.C. Tradition, basing itself upon the Sinhalese chronicle, the Mahavamsa, attributes the origins of Buddhism in Myanmar to the mission of Sona and Uttara who, in the 3rd century B.C., came to Suvannabhumi, usually identified with That on, on the Gulf of Mottama.

There are four dominant ethnic groups in the recorded history of Myanmar: the Mon, the Pyu, the Myanmar, and the Shan.

Buddhism was already flourishing in Myanmar in the 1st century A.D., as attested by the archaeological evidence at Peikthanomyo (Vishnu City), 90 miles southeast of Bagan. Buddhism was also an invigorating influence at Thayekhittaya, near modern Pyaymyo 160 miles south of Bagan, where a developed civilization flourished from the 5th to the 9th century.

From the A.D. 4th century onward, the Pyu built many Buddhist stupas and other religious buildings. The styles, ground plans, even the brick size and construction techniques of these buildings point to the Andhra region, particularly Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda in present-day southeastern India. Some evidence of Ceylonese contact is seen by the presence of Anuradhapura style "moonstones" discovered at Beikthano and Halin. By perhaps the 7th century, tall cylindrical stupas such as the Bawbawgyi, Payagyi and Payama had emerged at Sri Ksetra.



Pyu Ancient Cities - Myanmar
Image source:- <https://www.asiatravelgate.com/pyu-ancient-cities-myanmar/>

King Anawrahta and Theravada Buddhism: Arguably King Anawrahta's greatest and most lasting achievement was the introduction of Theravada Buddhism to Upper Burma after Pagan's conquest of the Thaton Kingdom in 1057. Supported by royal patronage, the Buddhist school gradually spread to the village level in the next three centuries although Tantric, Mahayana, Brahmanic, and animist practices remained heavily entrenched at all social strata.

A war broke out between King Anawrahta of Pagan and the Mon King Manuhar, when King Manuhar refused to hand over sacred Buddhist texts to Pagan. After the war, King Manuhar was captured and was kept under restrictions for a long time in Pagan until his death. He built Manuhar Temple while he was there.



Bawbawgyi pagoda - Pyu, Myanmar
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/18999877@N02/1475566855/>

According to Pagan myanmar.com: "Anawrahta was a king of strong religious zeal as well as one of great power. His clay votive tablets, made to acquire merit, are found widely in Myanmar from Katha in the north to Twante in the south. These votive tablets usually have, on the obverse, a seated image of the Buddha in the earth-touching attitude, with two lines underneath which express the essence of the Buddhist creed: 'The Buddha hath the causes told/ Of all things springing from causes; And also how things cease to be, 'Tis this the Mighty Monk proclaims.' On the reverse would be the prayer: 'Desiring that he may be freed from samsarica the Great Prosperous King Aniruddha himself made this image of the Lord.'"

“The chronicles relate that a monk from Thaton, Shin Arahan, came to Anawrahta in Pagan and preached to him the Law, on which Anawrahta was seized with an ecstasy of faith and said, "Master, we have no other refuge than thee! From this day forth, my master, we dedicate our body and our life to thee! And, master, from thee I take my doctrine!" Shin Arahan further taught Anawrahta that without the Scriptures, the Tipitaka, there could be no study, and that it was only with the Tipitaka that the Religion would last long. Anawrahta, informed that there were thirty sets of the Tipitaka at Thaton, sent an envoy with presents to its king, Manuha, and asked for the Tipitaka. Manuha refused, on which Anawrahta sent a mighty army, conquered Thaton, and brought back the thirty sets of Tipitaka on Manuha's thirty-two white elephants, as well as Manuha and his court and all manners of artisans and craftsmen.



Dvaravati - Sri Thep Historical Park, Thailand
Image source:- <https://www.thailanddiscovery.info/thailand-buddhism-dvaravati-art/>

BUDDHISM IN THAILAND: Judging from archaeological finds and other historical evidence, however, it is safe to say that Buddhism first reached Thailand when the country was inhabited by a racial stock of people known as the Mon-Khmer who then had their capital, Dvaravati, at a city now known as Nakhon Pathom (Sanskrit: Nagara Prathama), about 50 kms to the west of Bangkok. The great pagoda at Nakhon Pathom, Phra Pathom Chedi (Prathama cetiya), and other historical findings in other parts of the country testify to this fact as well as to the fact that Buddhism, in its varied forms, reached Thailand at four different periods, namely:

1. Theravada or Southern Buddhism
2. Mahayana or Northern Buddhism
3. Burma (Pagan) Buddhism
4. Ceylon (Lankavamsa) Buddhism

I. Theravada or Southern Buddhism: the first form of Buddhism introduced to Thailand was that of Theravada School is proved by various archaeological remains unearthed in the excavations at Nakhon Pathom, such as the Dharma Chakra (Wheel of Law), the Buddha footprints and seats, and the inscriptions in the Pali language, all of which are in rocks. That is the reason why scholars of Thailand express the view that the capital of Suvarnabhumi was at Nakhon Pathom. Moreover, the name Pathom Chedi (Pali: Pathama Cetiya) means "First Pagoda" which, in all probability, signifies that it was the first pagoda built in Suvarnabhumi. This would easily fit in with the record of the Mahavamsa-that Thera Sona and Uttara went and established Buddhism in the territory of Suvarnabhumi at the injunction of Emperor Asoka.

II. Mahayana or Northern Buddhism-Starting from the beginning of the fifth century A.D. Mahayana Buddhist missionaries from Kashmir in Northern India began to go to Sumatra in succession. From Sumatra the faith spread to Java and Cambodia. By about 757 A.D. (Buddhist Era: 1300) the Srivijaya king with his capital in Sumatra rose in power and his empire spread throughout the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago. Part of South Thailand (from Surasthani downwards) came under the rule of the Srivijaya king. Being Mahayanists, the rulers of Srivijaya gave much encouragement and support to the propagation of Mahayana Buddhism. In South Thailand today we have much evidence to substantiate that Mahayana Buddhism was once prevalent there. This evidence is in the



Khao Khlang Nok stupa - Sri Thep Historical Park, Thailand
<https://www.newmandala.org/will-oil-hunters-destroy-thailands-biggest-ancient-city/>

form of stupas or chetiyas and images, including votive tablets of the Buddhas and Bodhisattas (Phra Phim), which were found in large number, all of the same type as those discovered in Java and Sumatra. The chetiyas in Chaiya (Jaya) and Nakon Sri Thammarath (Nagara Sri Dharmaraja), both in South Thailand, clearly indicate Mahayana influence.

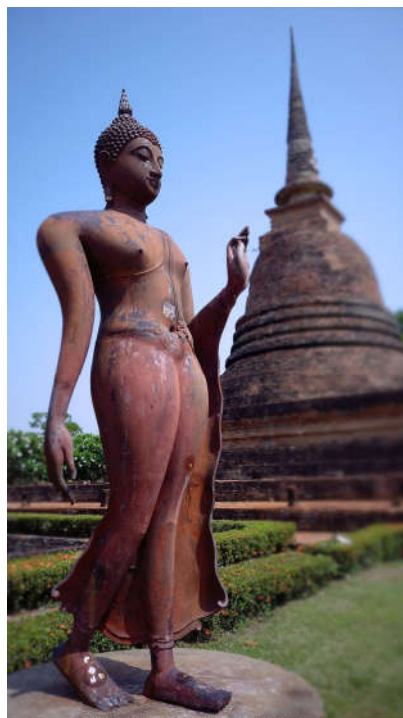
III. Burma (Pagan) Buddhism-In 1057 A.D. King Anuruddha (Anawratha) became powerful in the whole of Burma, having his capital at Pagan (Central Burma). Anuruddha extended his kingdom right up to Thailand, especially the Northern and Central parts, covering areas now known as Chiangmai, Lopburi, and Nakon Pathom. Being a Theravada Buddhist, Anuruddha ardently supported the cause of Theravada which Burma, like Thailand, at first received directly from India through missionaries sent by Emperor Asoka. However, at the time under consideration, Buddhism in India was already in a state of decline, and as contact between Burma and India was then faint, Theravada Buddhism, as prevalent in Burma at that time, underwent some changes and assumed a form somewhat different from the original doctrine. This, at a later stage, became what is known in Thailand as Burma (Pagan) Buddhism. During the period of King Anuruddha's suzerainty over Thailand, Burmese Buddhism exercised great influence over the country, especially in the North where, owing to proximity, the impact from Burma was more felt. It is significant that Buddhist relics found in North Thailand bear a striking Theravada influence, whereas those found in the South clearly show their Mahayana connections dating back from Srivijaya days. To a great extent this is due to the fact that, in their heyday of suzerainty over Thailand, the Burmese under Anuruddha were content with Upper Thailand only, while

leaving the South practically to be ruled by their Khmer (Cambodian) vassals whose capital was at Lopburi.

IV. Ceylon (Lankavamsa) Buddhism-This is the most important period in the history of the spread of Buddhism to Thailand, for it witnessed the introduction to that country of that form of Buddhism which remains dominant there until today. About 1153 A.D. (B.E. 1696) Parakramabahu the Great (1153-1186 A.D.) became king of Ceylon, known in ancient days as Lanka. A powerful monarch and a great supporter of Theravada Buddhism, Parakramabahu did much to spread and consolidate the Dhamma of the Lord in his island kingdom. Thailand also sent her Bhikkhus to Ceylon and thereby obtained the *upasampada vidhi* (ordination rite) from Ceylon, which later became known in Thailand as Lankavamsa. This was about 1257 A.D. (B.E. 1800). Apparently, the early batches of Bhikkhus, who returned from Ceylon after studies, often accompanied by Ceylonese monks, established themselves first in Nakon Sri Thammarath (South Thailand), for many of the Buddhist relics bearing definitely Ceylonese influence, such as stupas and Buddha images, were found there. Some of these relics are still in existence today. News of the



Source: Temple - Angkor Wat - Cambodia
Image source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/3758494831/1904781/>



Wat Sa Sri in Sukhothai Historical Park, Thailand
Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leela_attitude

meritorious activities of these monks soon spread to Sukhothai, then the capital of Thailand, and King Ram Kamhaeng who was ruling at the time, invited those monks to his capital and gave them his royal support in propagating the Doctrine. This fact is recorded in one of the King's rock inscriptions, dated about 1277 A.D. Since then Ceylon (Sinhala) Buddhism became very popular and was widely practiced in Thailand. Many monasteries, stupas, Buddha images and even Buddha footprints, such as the well-known one at Sraburi in central Thailand, were built in accordance with the usage popular in Ceylon. The study of Pali, the language of Theravada or Southern Buddhism, also made great progress, and in all matters dealing with the Dhamma the impact of Ceylon was perceptibly felt.

9.4 SUMMARY:

Buddha told people not to follow his teachings out of blind faith, but to only do so after examining them carefully. It then goes without saying that people should not accept Buddha's teachings out of coercion from zealous missionaries or royal decree. In various ways, Buddhism managed to peacefully spread throughout much of Asia, carrying its message of love, compassion and wisdom, while fitting in to the needs and dispositions of different people. Emperor Asoka's zeal of propagation of dhamma is responsible for the spread of Buddhism in the south-east Asian countries of Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar. The Buddhism had its up and downs in all countries but was never completely lost and disappeared as in India.

9.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- What is the role of Kings and patrons in the spread of Buddhism in different countries?
- How the teachings of buddha is responsible for the spread of Buddhism
- Spread of Buddhism is always peaceful- comment
- Write in brief the spread of Buddhism in SriLanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

9.6 ADDITIONAL READINGS

H.R. Perera- Buddhism in Sri Lanka: A Short History

<https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/perera/wheel100.html>

Roger Bischoff- Buddhism in Myanmar: A Short History

<https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/bischoff/wheel399.html>

Karuna Kusalasaya -Buddhism in Thailand: Its Past and Its Present

<https://www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/kusalasaya/wheel085.html>

Buddhist art and trade routes

https://www.asiasocietymuseum.org/buddhist_trade/intro.html

Andrea Acri- Maritime Buddhism

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.638>

Jason Neelis- Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade networks

<https://brill.com/view/title/18172>



ROLE OF KING ASOKA IN THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

Unit Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 The Edicts of King Asoka
- 10.3 The Fourteen Rock Edicts
- 10.4 The Kalinga Rock Edicts
- 10.5 The Seven Pillar Edicts
- 10.6 The Minor Pillar Edicts
- 10.7 Summary
- 10.8 Unit End Questions
- 10.9 Additional Reading

10.0 OBJECTIVES:

The study is carried out with the following objectives-

- To study emperor Asoka through inscriptions and literary sources.
- To understand the relevance of the Pali literary sources for the authentication of history of Asoka.
- To analyse and see how the literary sources match the archaeological sources giving us the role of Asoka in the spread of Buddhism.

10.1 INTRODUCTION:

King Aśoka, the third monarch of the Mauryan dynasty in the third century B.C., was the first ruler of a unified India and one of the greatest political figures of all time. After he embraced the teachings of the Buddha, he transformed his polity from one of military conquest to one of Dharmavijaya—victory by righteousness and truth. By providing royal patronage for the propagation of Buddhism both within and beyond his empire, he helped promote the metamorphosis of Buddhism into a world religion that spread peacefully across the face of Asia.

Though there is a discrepancy in the literary sources from northern India and southern India regarding the contribution of Asoka, the authenticity of the southern literature is accepted by many scholars due to its corroboration with the inscriptions. Thus, we taking the Sri Lankan

sources of Dipavamsa, Mahavamsa, Samantapasadika as the literary source and the inscriptions as the archaeological source, discuss the role of Emperor Asoka in the spread of Buddhism inside and outside his vast kingdom, through

- Third Buddhist council and purification of the Sangha
- Writing of Kathavatthu by Thera Moggaliputtatissa
- Sending missionaries to all different parts of the country their authenticity
- Schism edicts at Sarnath, Sanchi and Kosambi
- Mahinda thera, and Sanghamitta theri
- Dhammayatra and erection of pillars and stupas
- Excavations of caves for the ajivikas
- Construction of 84000 stupas and viharas all over his kingdom.

It is important that the Sri Lankan testimony on Aśoka is reviewed with much greater care. The Saṅgha of the island has, right through its existence to this date, taken a continuing interest in both recording and studying its ecclesiastic history. In the process they have focused considerable attention on political, social and economic aspects. In this respect Sri Lanka's twenty-five centuries of written history remains a unique example in the whole of the Indian subcontinent.

The historical sense of the Saṅgha has been exceptionally well developed and the information recorded only by them has dramatically proved to be invaluable especially for the following.

Purposes:

(1) The identification of "Piyadasi" of the Rock Edicts and Pillar Inscriptions with Aśoka, whose full name was preserved in Sri Lankan records only. Without this confirmation the historical interpretation of Aśokan inscriptions would have been long delayed by nearly a century, if not rendered impossible.

(2) The assessment of the role and achievements of MoggaliputtaTissa who had merited such special veneration in Asokan times as to have had his relics enshrined with the utmost honour in Stūpa No. 2 of Sānchi in a relic casket bearing the inscription "*Sapurisasa Mogalīputasa.*" (Incidentally, similar finds havenot yet established the historicity of any names like Upagupta or Yasa occurring in the Northern Buddhist records.)

(3) The establishment without doubt of the significance of the epithet "*Hemavataṅgariya*" occurring on the relic-caskets of Sānchi and Sonari Stūpas containing some remains of Majjhima, Kassapagotta and Dundubhissara, who, in a comprehensive list of missionaries sent out after the Third Council according to Sri Lankan Pali sources, were assigned the conversion of the Himalaya region. (This and the above information not only confirm the historicity of the Third Council and the missions but also provides the only literary support to the missionary role claimed by Aśoka in R.E. XIII.)

(4) The identification and interpretation of the sculptured scene depicting the transplanting of a Bo-sapling, found on the eastern gateway of the Great Sānchi Stūpa as further confirmed by the symbolism of peacocks and lions in the decorative motifs which seem to reflect Maurya-Sinhala solidarity. (The very existence of the Bodhi Tree at Anuradhapura further confirms the tradition.) With such an array of confirmation from archaeological and epigraphical evidence, the Sri Lankan Pali sources deserve to be given a much higher degree of credibility especially when their information differs from that of Northern Buddhist records.

The place which the Sri Lankan Pali sources — faithfully copied and preserved in many versions in all other Theravāda Buddhist countries, namely, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos — have given Aśoka in history is as a pious and generous patron of Buddhism. The main aspects highlighted are as follows:

(1) Aśoka was attracted to Buddhism because of the serene demeanour of a Buddhist monk as contrasted with the usual conduct of the brahmin priests whom the court had traditionally supported. He began to seek the association of monks which proved intellectually and spiritually more satisfying.

(2) His munificence to the Buddhist Order was immense. He was a great builder and the number of shrines constructed all over his empire on his command is held out as 84,000, possibly a traditional symbolism for “innumerable.” (N.B. Sanskrit Buddhist sources mention the same figure whereas Chinese sources have it as 80,000.)

(3) He was convinced that his patronage of Buddhism was not complete until and unless a child of his entered the Saṅgha. Accordingly, his son Mahinda and daughter Sāghamittā were ordained. They became the missionaries to establish Buddhism in Sri Lanka and, as such, the heroes of the Sri Lankan tradition.

(4) Aśoka’s generosity had a negative effect on the Saṅgha in that many joined it to enjoy its privileges. The need arose for purge and reform. Aśoka himself gave his patronage to the cleansing process. At first, he even attempted to enforce his imperial authority. But in due course he had to seek the assistance of the senior monk, Moggaliputta Tissa.

(5) The reformed Saṅgha undertook a programme of missions to propagate Buddhism in and around the empire of Aśoka and, by implication, these missions were supported by the Emperor. At least as far as Sri Lanka was concerned, Aśoka continued to support the mission by sending sacred objects of veneration (i.e. relics, Bo-sapling, etc.), additional missionaries, and skilled craftsmen to erect shrines.

In short, Aśoka was the instrument for the establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. There was no special sanctity attached to him and he was not an object of veneration. He was for all purposes only a historical person — the greatest patron of Sri Lankan Buddhism and that was all. The entire Theravāda Buddhist world saw him in that role.

This review of a number of prevalent opinions on the place of Aśoka in history has enabled us to answer the two main questions to which we focused attention. These answers in brief would be as follows:

(1) On the criterion of being corroborated by independent literary, archaeological or epigraphical evidence, the Sri Lankan Pali records and the Theravāda tradition founded on them can be relied upon as providing a credible account of the role and achievements of Aśoka as far as his services to the Buddhist cause are concerned.

The Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan sources of the Northern Buddhist tradition do reflect the memory of Aśoka's munificence, pilgrimages and religious buildings. But their historical reliability has been considerably reduced, firstly, because Aśoka figured in Avadānas where his spiritual adviser Upagupta was more prominent, and, secondly, because the chronology had been confused due to Upagupta's contemporaneity with Kāśāśoka.

Many of the problems in determining accurately Aśoka's place in history are to be traced to the proper evaluation of the historicity of these sources.

(2) The impact of Aśoka's policy of Dharmavijaya on contemporary India cannot be in any way evaluated as the sources at our disposal say nothing on it. If Aśoka had not elaborated his concept of Dhamma and the efforts he made to propagate it by means of his own edicts and inscriptions, both his Dhamma and the policy of Dharmavijaya would have gone into oblivion.

The mainstream Indian literature and tradition had either ignored or forgotten him. An obvious assumption would be that neither his Dhamma or his policy of Dharmavijaya made any lasting impression in the Indian mind. On the contrary, he was not only remembered gratefully but even glorified sanctimoniously for his unique contribution to Buddhism by both the Theravāda Buddhists of Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia and the Mahāyāna Buddhists of Northern and Eastern Asia. This paradox becomes more confusing on account of the determined effort of several Indian scholars to prove that the Dhamma of Aśoka should not be equated with Buddhism.

In short, the study of the inscriptions and the southern Pali sources would give the historical role played by emperor Asoka in the spread of Buddhism. Let us also study Asokan inscriptions for better understanding through translations.

10.2 THE EDICTS OF KING ASOKA:

With the rediscovery and translation of Indian literature by European scholars in the 19th century, it was not just the religion and philosophy of Buddhism that came to light, but also its many legendary histories and biographies. Amongst this class of literature, one name that came to be noticed was that of Asoka, a good king who was supposed to have ruled India in the distant past. Stories about this king, similar in outline but

differing greatly in details, were found in the Divyavadana, the Asokavadana, the Mahavamsa and several other works. They told of an exceptionally cruel and ruthless prince who had many of his brothers killed in order to seize the throne, who was dramatically converted to Buddhism and who ruled wisely and justly for the rest of his life. None of these stories were taken seriously — after all many pre-modern cultures had legends about "too good to be true" kings who had ruled righteously in the past and who, people hoped, would rule again soon. Most of these legends had their origins more in popular longing to be rid of the despotic and uncaring kings than in any historical fact. And the numerous stories about Asoka were assumed to be the same.

But in 1837, James Prinsep succeeded in deciphering an ancient inscription on a large stone pillar in Delhi. Several other pillars and rocks with similar inscriptions had been known for some time and had attracted the curiosity of scholars. Prinsep's inscription proved to be a series of edicts issued by a king calling himself "Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi." In the following decades, more and more edicts by this same king were discovered and with increasingly accurate decipherment of their language, a more complete picture of this man and his deeds began to emerge. Gradually, it dawned on scholars that the King Piyadasi of the edicts might be the King Asoka so often praised in Buddhist legends. However, it was not until 1915, when another edict actually mentioning the name Asoka was discovered, that the identification was confirmed. Having been forgotten for nearly 700 years, one of the greatest men in history became known to the world once again.

Asoka's edicts are mainly concerned with the reforms he instituted and the moral principles he recommended in his attempt to create a just and humane society. As such, they give us little information about his life, the details of which have to be culled from other sources. Although the exact dates of Asoka's life are a matter of dispute among scholars, he was born in about 304 B.C. and became the third king of the Mauryan dynasty after the death of his father, Bindusara. His given name was Asoka but he assumed the title Devanampiyapiyadasi which means "Beloved-of-the-Gods, He Who Looks On With Affection." There seems to have been a two-year war of succession during which at least one of Asoka's brothers was killed. In 262 B.C., eight years after his coronation, Asoka's armies attacked and conquered Kalinga, a country that roughly corresponds to the modern state of Orissa. The loss of life caused by battle, reprisals, deportations and the turmoil that always exists in the aftermath of war so horrified Asoka that it brought about a complete change in his personality. It seems that Asoka had been calling himself a Buddhist for at least two years prior to the Kalinga war, but his commitment to Buddhism was only lukewarm and perhaps had a political motive behind it. But after the war Asoka dedicated the rest of his life trying to apply Buddhist principles to the administration of his vast empire. He had a crucial part to play in helping Buddhism to spread both throughout India and abroad, and probably built the first major Buddhist monuments. Asoka died in 232 B.C. in the thirty-eighth year of his reign.

Asoka's edicts are to be found scattered in more than thirty places throughout India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of them are written in Brahmi script from which all Indian scripts and many of those used in Southeast Asia later developed. The language used in the edicts found in the eastern part of the sub-continent is a type of Magadhi, probably the official language of Asoka's court. The language used in the edicts found in the western part of India is closer to Sanskrit although one bilingual edict in Afghanistan is written in Aramaic and Greek. Asoka's edicts, which comprise the earliest decipherable corpus of written documents from India, have survived throughout the centuries because they are written on rocks and stone pillars. These pillars in particular are testimony to the technological and artistic genius of ancient Indian civilization. Originally, there must have been many of them, although only ten with inscriptions still survive. Averaging between forty and fifty feet in height, and weighing up to fifty tons each, all the pillars were quarried at Chunar, just south of Varanasi and dragged, sometimes hundreds of miles, to where they were erected. Each pillar was originally capped by a capital, sometimes a roaring lion, a noble bull or a spirited horse, and the few capitals that survive are widely recognized as masterpieces of Indian art. Both the pillars and the capitals exhibit a remarkable mirror-like polish that has survived despite centuries of exposure to the elements. The location of the rock edicts is governed by the availability of suitable rocks, but the edicts on pillars are all to be found in very specific places. Some, like the Lumbini pillar, mark the Buddha's birthplace, while its inscriptions commemorate Asoka's pilgrimage to that place. Others are to be found in or near important population centers so that their edicts could be read by as many people as possible.

There is little doubt that Asoka's edicts were written in his own words rather than in the stylistic language in which royal edicts or proclamations in the ancient world were usually written in. Their distinctly personal tone gives us a unique glimpse into the personality of this complex and remarkable man. Asoka's style tends to be somewhat repetitious and plodding as if explaining something to one who has difficulty in understanding. Asoka frequently refers to the good works he has done, although not in a boastful way, but more, it seems, to convince the reader of his sincerity. In fact, an anxiousness to be thought of as a sincere person and a good administrator is present in nearly every edict. Asoka tells his subjects that he looked upon them as his children, that their welfare is his main concern; he apologizes for the Kalinga war and reassures the people beyond the borders of his empire that he has no expansionist intentions towards them. Mixed with this sincerity, there is a definite puritanical streak in Asoka's character suggested by his disapproval of festivals and of religious rituals many of which while being of little value were nonetheless harmless.

It is also very clear that Buddhism was the most influential force in Asoka's life and that he hoped his subjects likewise would adopt his religion. He went on pilgrimages to Lumbini and Bodhi Gaya, sent teaching monks to various regions in India and beyond its borders, and he was familiar enough with the sacred texts to recommend some of them to

the monastic community. It is also very clear that Asoka saw the reforms he instituted as being a part of his duties as a Buddhist. But, while he was an enthusiastic Buddhist, he was not partisan towards his own religion or intolerant of other religions. He seems to have genuinely hoped to be able to encourage everyone to practice his or her own religion with the same conviction that he practiced his.

Scholars have suggested that because the edicts say nothing about the philosophical aspects of Buddhism, Asoka had a simplistic and naive understanding of the Dhamma. This view does not take into account the fact that the purpose of the edicts was not to expound the truths of Buddhism, but to inform the people of Asoka's reforms and to encourage them to be more generous, kind and moral. This being the case, there was no reason for Asoka to discuss Buddhist philosophy. Asoka emerges from his edicts as an able administrator, an intelligent human being and as a devoted Buddhist, and we could expect him to take as keen an interest in Buddhist philosophy as he did in Buddhist practice.

The contents of Asoka's edicts make it clear that all the legends about his wise and humane rule are more than justified and qualify him to be ranked as one of the greatest rulers. In his edicts, he spoke of what might be called state morality, and private or individual morality. The first was what he based his administration upon and what he hoped would lead to a more just, more spiritually inclined society, while the second was what he recommended and encouraged individuals to practice. Both these types of morality were imbued with the Buddhist values of compassion, moderation, tolerance and respect for all life. The Asokan state gave up the predatory foreign policy that had characterized the Mauryan empire up till then and replaced it with a policy of peaceful co-existence. The judicial system was reformed in order to make it more fair, less harsh and less open to abuse, while those sentenced to death were given a stay of execution to prepare appeals and regular amnesties were given to prisoners. State resources were used for useful public works like the importation and cultivation of medical herbs, the building of rest houses, the digging of wells at regular intervals along main roads and the planting of fruit and shade trees. To ensure that these reforms and projects were carried out, Asoka made himself more accessible to his subjects by going on frequent inspection tours and he expected his district officers to follow his example. To the same end, he gave orders that important state business or petitions were never to be kept from him no matter what he was doing at the time. The state had a responsibility not just to protect and promote the welfare of its people but also its wildlife. Hunting certain species of wild animals was banned, forest and wildlife reserves were established and cruelty to domestic and wild animals was prohibited. The protection of all religions, their promotion and the fostering of harmony between them, was also seen as one of the duties of the state. It even seems that something like a Department of Religious Affairs was established with officers called Dhamma Mahamatras whose job it was to look after the affairs of various religious bodies and to encourage the practice of religion.

The individual morality that Asoka hoped to foster included respect (*susrusa*) towards parents, elders, teachers, friends, servants, ascetics and brahmans — behavior that accords with the advice given to Sigala by the Buddha (DighaNikaya, Discourse No. 31). He encouraged generosity (*dana*) to the poor (*kapanavalaka*), to ascetics and brahmans, and to friends and relatives. Not surprisingly, Asoka encouraged harmlessness towards all life (*avihisabhutanam*). In conformity with the Buddha's advice in the AnguttaraNikaya, II:282, he also considered moderation in spending and moderation in saving to be good (*apavyayataapabhadata*). Treating people properly (*samyapratipati*), he suggested, was much more important than performing ceremonies that were supposed to bring good luck. Because it helped promote tolerance and mutual respect, Asoka desired that people should be well-learned (*bahu sruta*) in the good doctrines (*kalanagama*) of other people's religions. The qualities of heart that are recommended by Asoka in the edicts indicate his deep spirituality. They include kindness (*daya*), self-examination (*palikhaya*), truthfulness (*sace*), gratitude (*katamnata*), purity of heart (*bhava sudhi*), enthusiasm (*usahena*), strong loyalty (*dadhabhatita*), self-control (*sayame*) and love of the Dhamma (*Dhamma kamata*).

We have no way of knowing how effective Asoka's reforms were or how long they lasted but we do know that monarchs throughout the ancient Buddhist world were encouraged to look to his style of government as an ideal to be followed. King Asoka has to be credited with the first attempt to develop a Buddhist polity. Today, with widespread disillusionment in prevailing ideologies and the search for a political philosophy that goes beyond greed (capitalism), hatred (communism) and delusion (dictatorships led by "infallible" leaders), Asoka's edicts may make a meaningful contribution to the development of a more spiritually based political system.

INSCRIPTIONS of ASOKA

ROCK AT GIENÂR
in Kathiâwâr

PLATE V.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.

EDICT 1

[illegible]

IDIOT II

[illegible]**IDIOT III**[illegible]

EDICT IV

[illegible]

EDICT V

One-twelfth of the Original

Photoduplicated at the Surveyor General's Office Calcutta

A. Cunningham, del.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ashoka_Edivct_Girnaar1.png

10.3 THE FOURTEEN ROCK EDICTS:

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1. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, has caused this Dhamma edict to be written.[1] Here (in my domain) no living beings are to be slaughtered or offered in sacrifice. Nor should festivals be held, for Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, sees much to object to in such festivals, although there are some festivals that Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does approve of.

Formerly, in the kitchen of Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, hundreds of thousands of animals were killed every day to make curry. But now with the writing of this Dhamma edict only three creatures, two peacocks and a deer are killed, and the deer not always. And in time, not even these three creatures will be killed.

2. Every where[2] within Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi's domain, and among the people beyond the borders, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Satiyaputras, the Keralaputras, as far as Tamraparni and where the Greek king Antiochos rules, and among the kings who are neighbors of Antiochos,[3] everywhere has Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, made provision for two types of medical treatment: medical treatment for humans and medical treatment for animals. Wherever medical herbs suitable for humans or animals are not available, I have had them imported and grown. Wherever medical roots or fruits are not available I have had them imported and grown. Along roads I have had wells dug and trees planted for the benefit of humans and animals.[4]

3. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus:[5] Twelve years after my coronation this has been ordered — Everywhere in my domain the Yuktas, the Rajjukas and the Pradesikas shall go on inspection tours every five years for the purpose of Dhamma instruction and also to conduct other business.[6]

Respect for mother and father is good, generosity to friends, acquaintances, relatives, Brahmans and ascetics is good, not killing living beings is good, moderation in spending and moderation in saving is good. The Council shall notify the Yuktas about the observance of these instructions in these very words.

4. In the past, for many hundreds of years, killing or harming living beings and improper behavior towards relatives, and improper behavior towards Brahmans and ascetics has increased.[7] But now due to Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi's Dhamma practice, the sound of the drum has been replaced by the sound of the Dhamma.[8] The sighting of heavenly cars, auspicious elephants, bodies of fire and other divine sightings has not happened for many hundreds of years. But now because Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi promotes restraint in the killing and harming of living beings, proper behavior towards relatives, Brahmans and ascetics, and respect for mother, father and elders, such sightings have increased.[9]

These and many other kinds of Dhamma practice have been encouraged by Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, and he will continue to promote

Dhamma practice. And the sons, grandsons and great-grandsons of Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, too will continue to promote Dhamma practice until the end of time; living by Dhamma and virtue, they will instruct in Dhamma. Truly, this is the highest work, to instruct in Dhamma. But practicing the Dhamma cannot be done by one who is devoid of virtue and therefore its promotion and growth is commendable.

This edict has been written so that it may please my successors to devote themselves to promoting these things and not allow them to decline. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, has had this written twelve years after his coronation.

5. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus:[10] To do good is difficult. One who does good first does something hard to do. I have done many good deeds, and, if my sons, grandsons and their descendants up to the end of the world act in like manner, they too will do much good. But whoever amongst them neglects this, they will do evil. Truly, it is easy to do evil.[11]

In the past there were no Dhamma Mahamatras but such officers were appointed by me thirteen years after my coronation. Now they work among all religions for the establishment of Dhamma, for the promotion of Dhamma, and for the welfare and happiness of all who are devoted to Dhamma. They work among the Greeks, the Kambojas, the Gandharas, the Rastrikas, the Pitinikas and other peoples on the western borders.[12] They work among soldiers, chiefs, Brahmans, householders, the poor, the aged and those devoted to Dhamma — for their welfare and happiness — so that they may be free from harassment. They (Dhamma Mahamatras) work for the proper treatment of prisoners, towards their unfettering, and if the Mahamatras think, "This one has a family to support," "That one has been bewitched," "This one is old," then they work for the release of such prisoners. They work here, in outlying towns, in the women's quarters belonging to my brothers and sisters, and among my other relatives. They are occupied everywhere. These Dhamma Mahamatras are occupied in my domain among people devoted to Dhamma to determine who is devoted to Dhamma, who is established in Dhamma, and who is generous.

This Dhamma edict has been written on stone so that it might endure long and that my descendants might act in conformity with it.

6. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus:[13] In the past, state business was not transacted nor were reports delivered to the king at all hours. But now I have given this order, that at any time, whether I am eating, in the women's quarters, the bed chamber, the chariot, the palanquin, in the park or wherever, reporters are to be posted with instructions to report to me the affairs of the people so that I might attend to these affairs wherever I am. And whatever I orally order in connection with donations or proclamations, or when urgent business presses itself on the Mahamatras, if disagreement or debate arises in the Council, then it must be reported to me immediately. This is what I have ordered. I am

never content with exerting myself or with despatching business. Truly, I consider the welfare of all to be my duty, and the root of this is exertion and the prompt despatch of business. There is no better work than promoting the welfare of all the people and whatever efforts I am making is to repay the debt I owe to all beings to assure their happiness in this life, and attain heaven in the next.

Therefore this Dhamma edict has been written to last long and that my sons, grandsons and great-grandsons might act in conformity with it for the welfare of the world. However, this is difficult to do without great exertion.

7. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desires that all religions should reside everywhere, for all of them desire self-control and purity of heart.[14] But people have various desires and various passions, and they may practice all of what they should or only a part of it. But one who receives great gifts yet is lacking in self-control, purity of heart, gratitude and firm devotion, such a person is mean.

8. In the past kings used to go out on pleasure tours during which there was hunting and other entertainment.[15] But ten years after Beloved-of-the-Gods had been coronated, he went on a tour to Sambodhi and thus instituted Dhamma tours.[16] During these tours, the following things took place: visits and gifts to Brahmins and ascetics, visits and gifts of gold to the aged, visits to people in the countryside, instructing them in Dhamma, and discussing Dhamma with them as is suitable. It is this that delights Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, and is, as it were, another type of revenue.

9. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus:[17] In times of sickness, for the marriage of sons and daughters, at the birth of children, before embarking on a journey, on these and other occasions, people perform various ceremonies. Women in particular perform many vulgar and worthless ceremonies. These types of ceremonies can be performed by all means, but they bear little fruit. What does bear great fruit, however, is the ceremony of the Dhamma. This involves proper behavior towards servants and employees, respect for teachers, restraint towards living beings, and generosity towards ascetics and Brahmins. These and other things constitute the ceremony of the Dhamma. Therefore a father, a son, a brother, a master, a friend, a companion, and even a neighbor should say: "This is good, this is the ceremony that should be performed until its purpose is fulfilled, this I shall do." [18] Other ceremonies are of doubtful fruit, for they may achieve their purpose, or they may not, and even if they do, it is only in this world. But the ceremony of the Dhamma is timeless. Even if it does not achieve its purpose in this world, it produces great merit in the next, whereas if it does achieve its purpose in this world, one gets great merit both here and there through the ceremony of the Dhamma.

10. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not consider glory and fame to be of great account unless they are achieved through having my subjects respect Dhamma and practice Dhamma, both now and in the

future.[19] For this alone does Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desire glory and fame. And whatever efforts Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, is making, all of that is only for the welfare of the people in the next world, and that they will have little evil. And being without merit is evil. This is difficult for either a humble person or a great person to do except with great effort, and by giving up other interests. In fact, it may be even more difficult for a great person to do.

11. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus:[20] There is no gift like the gift of the Dhamma,[21] (no acquaintance like) acquaintance with Dhamma, (no distribution like) distribution of Dhamma, and (no kinship like) kinship through Dhamma. And it consists of this: proper behavior towards servants and employees, respect for mother and father, generosity to friends, companions, relations, Brahmans and ascetics, and not killing living beings. Therefore a father, a son, a brother, a master, a friend, a companion or a neighbor should say: "This is good, this should be done." One benefits in this world and gains great merit in the next by giving the gift of the Dhamma.

12. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, honors both ascetics and the householders of all religions, and he honors them with gifts and honors of various kinds.[22] But Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values this — that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions.[23] Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one's own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way. But it is better to honor other religions for this reason. By so doing, one's own religion benefits, and so do other religions, while doing otherwise harms one's own religion and the religions of others. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "Let me glorify my own religion," only harms his own religion. Therefore contact (between religions) is good.[24] One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desires that all should be well-learned in the good doctrines of other religions.

Those who are content with their own religion should be told this: Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions. And to this end many are working — Dhamma Mahamatras, Mahamatras in charge of the women's quarters, officers in charge of outlying areas, and other such officers. And the fruit of this is that one's own religion grows and the Dhamma is illuminated also.

13. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, conquered the Kalingas eight years after his coronation.[25] One hundred and fifty thousand were deported, one hundred thousand were killed and many more died (from other causes). After the Kalingas had been conquered, Beloved-of-the-Gods came to feel a strong inclination towards the Dhamma, a love for the

Dhamma and for instruction in Dhamma. Now Beloved-of-the-Gods feels deep remorse for having conquered the Kalingas.

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Indeed, Beloved-of-the-Gods is deeply pained by the killing, dying and deportation that take place when an unconquered country is conquered. But Beloved-of-the-Gods is pained even more by this — those Brahmins, ascetics, and householder of different religions who live in those countries, and who are respectful to superiors, to mother and father, to elders, and who behave properly and have strong loyalty towards friends, acquaintances, companions, relatives, servants and employees — that they are injured, killed or separated from their loved ones. Even those who are not affected (by all this) suffer when they see friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives affected. These misfortunes befall all (as a result of war), and this pains Beloved-of-the-Gods.

There is no country, except among the Greeks, where these two groups, Brahmins and ascetics, are not found, and there is no country where people are not devoted to one or another religion.[26] Therefore the killing, death or deportation of a hundredth, or even a thousandth part of those who died during the conquest of Kalinga now pains Beloved-of-the-Gods. Now Beloved-of-the-Gods thinks that even those who do wrong should be forgiven where forgiveness is possible.

Even the forest people, who live in Beloved-of-the-Gods' domain, are entreated and reasoned with to act properly. They are told that despite his remorse Beloved-of-the-Gods has the power to punish them if necessary, so that they should be ashamed of their wrong and not be killed. Truly, Beloved-of-the-Gods desires non-injury, restraint and impartiality to all beings, even where wrong has been done.

Now it is conquest by Dhamma that Beloved-of-the-Gods considers to be the best conquest.[27] And it (conquest by Dhamma) has been won here, on the borders, even six hundred yojanas away, where the Greek king Antiochos rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni.[28] Here in the king's domain among the Greeks, the Kambojas, the Nabhakas, the Nabhapamkits, the Bhojas, the Pitinikas, the Andhras and the Palidas, everywhere people are following Beloved-of-the-Gods' instructions in Dhamma. Even where Beloved-of-the-Gods' envoys have not been, these people too, having heard of the practice of Dhamma and the ordinances and instructions in Dhamma given by Beloved-of-the-Gods, are following it and will continue to do so. This conquest has been won everywhere, and it gives great joy — the joy which only conquest by Dhamma can give. But even this joy is of little consequence. Beloved-of-the-Gods considers the great fruit to be experienced in the next world to be more important.

I have had this Dhamma edict written so that my sons and great-grandsons may not consider making new conquests, or that if military conquests are made, that they be done with forbearance and light punishment, or better still, that they consider making conquest by Dhamma only, for that bears

fruit in this world and the next. May all their intense devotion be given to this which has a result in this world and the next.

14. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, has had these Dhamma edicts written in brief, in medium length, and in extended form.[29] Not all of them occur everywhere, for my domain is vast, but much has been written, and I will have still more written. And also there are some subjects here that have been spoken of again and again because of their sweetness, and so that the people may act in accordance with them. If some things written are incomplete, this is because of the locality, or in consideration of the object, or due to the fault of the scribe.

10.4 THE KALINGA ROCK EDICTS:

1. Beloved-of-the-Gods says that the Mahamatras of Tosali who are judicial officers in the city are to be told this:[30] I wish to see that everything I consider to be proper is carried out in the right way. And I consider instructing you to be the best way of accomplishing this. I have placed you over many thousands of people that you may win the people's affection.

All men are my children. What I desire for my own children, and I desire their welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, that I desire for all men. You do not understand to what extent I desire this, and if some of you do understand, you do not understand the full extent of my desire.

You must attend to this matter. While being completely law-abiding, some people are imprisoned, treated harshly and even killed without cause so that many people suffer. Therefore your aim should be to act with impartiality. It is because of these things — envy, anger, cruelty, hate, indifference, laziness or tiredness — that such a thing does not happen. Therefore your aim should be: "May these things not be in me." And the root of this is non-anger and patience. Those who are bored with the administration of justice will not be promoted; (those who are not) will move upwards and be promoted. Whoever among you understands this should say to his colleagues: "See that you do your duty properly. Such and such are Beloved-of-the-Gods' instructions." Great fruit will result from doing your duty, while failing in it will result in gaining neither heaven nor the king's pleasure. Failure in duty on your part will not please me. But done properly, it will win you heaven and you will be discharging your debts to me.

This edict is to be listened to on Tisa day, between Tisa days, and on other suitable occasions, it should be listened to even by a single person. Acting thus, you will be doing your duty.

This edict has been written for the following purpose: that the judicial officers of the city may strive to do their duty and that the people under them might not suffer unjust imprisonment or harsh treatment. To achieve this, I will send out Mahamatras every five years who are not harsh or cruel, but who are merciful and who can ascertain if the judicial officers

have understood my purpose and are acting according to my instructions. Similarly, from Ujjayini, the prince will send similar persons with the same purpose without allowing three years to elapse. Likewise from Takhasila also. When these Mahamatras go on tours of inspection each year, then without neglecting their normal duties, they will ascertain if judicial officers are acting according to the king's instructions.

2. Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus:[31] This royal order is to be addressed to the Mahamatras at Samapa. I wish to see that everything I consider to be proper is carried out in the right way. And I consider instructing you to be the best way of accomplishing this. All men are my children. What I desire for my own children, and I desire their welfare and happiness both in this world and the next, that I desire for all men.[32]

The people of the unconquered territories beyond the borders might think: "What is the king's intentions towards us?" My only intention is that they live without fear of me, that they may trust me and that I may give them happiness, not sorrow. Furthermore, they should understand that the king will forgive those who can be forgiven, and that he wishes to encourage them to practice Dhamma so that they may attain happiness in this world and the next. I am telling you this so that I may discharge the debts I owe, and that in instructing you, that you may know that my vow and my promise will not be broken. Therefore acting in this way, you should perform your duties and assure them (the people beyond the borders) that: "The king is like a father. He feels towards us as he feels towards himself. We are to him like his own children."

By instructing you and informing you of my vow and my promise I shall be applying myself in complete fullness to achieving this object. You are able indeed to inspire them with confidence and to secure their welfare and happiness in this world and the next, and by acting thus, you will attain heaven as well as discharge the debts you owe to me. And so that the Mahamatras can devote themselves at all times to inspiring the border areas with confidence and encouraging them to practice Dhamma, this edict has been written here.

This edict is to be listened to every four months on Tisa day, between Tisa days, and on other suitable occasions, it should be listened to even by a single person. Acting thus, you will be doing your duty.

Minor Rock Edicts

1. Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus:[33] It is now more than two and a half years since I became a lay-disciple, but until now I have not been very zealous.[34] But now that I have visited the Sangha for more than a year, I have become very zealous. Now the people in India who have not associated with the gods do so. This is the result of zeal and it is not just the great who can do this. Even the humble, if they are zealous, can attain heaven. And this proclamation has been made with this aim. Let both humble and great be zealous, let even those on the borders know and let zeal last long. Then this zeal will increase, it will greatly increase, it will

increase up to one-and-a-half times. This message has been proclaimed two hundred and fifty-six times by the king while on tour.

2. Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus:[35] Father and mother should be respected and so should elders, kindness to living beings should be made strong and the truth should be spoken. In these ways, the Dhamma should be promoted. Likewise, a teacher should be honored by his pupil and proper manners should be shown towards relations. This is an ancient rule that conduces to long life. Thus should one act. Written by the scribe Chapala.

3. Piyadasi, King of Magadha, saluting the Sangha and wishing them good health and happiness, speaks thus:[36] You know, reverend sirs, how great my faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and Sangha is. Whatever, reverend sirs, has been spoken by Lord Buddha, all that is well-spoken.[37] I consider it proper, reverend sirs, to advise on how the good Dhamma should last long.

These Dhamma texts — Extracts from the Discipline, the Noble Way of Life, the Fears to Come, the Poem on the Silent Sage, the Discourse on the Pure Life, Upatissa's Questions, and the Advice to Rahula which was spoken by the Buddha concerning false speech — these Dhamma texts, reverend sirs, I desire that all the monks and nuns may constantly listen to and remember.[38] Likewise the laymen and laywomen. I have had this written that you may know my intentions.

10.5 THE SEVEN PILLAR EDICTS:

1. Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus:[39] This Dhamma edict was written twenty-six years after my coronation. Happiness in this world and the next is difficult to obtain without much love for the Dhamma, much self-examination, much respect, much fear (of evil), and much enthusiasm. But through my instruction this regard for Dhamma and love of Dhamma has grown day by day, and will continue to grow. And my officers of high, low and middle rank are practicing and conforming to Dhamma, and are capable of inspiring others to do the same. Mahamatras in border areas are doing the same. And these are my instructions: to protect with Dhamma, to make happiness through Dhamma and to guard with Dhamma.

2. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: Dhamma is good, but what constitutes Dhamma? (It includes) little evil, much good, kindness, generosity, truthfulness and purity. I have given the gift of sight in various ways.[40] To two-footed and four-footed beings, to birds and aquatic animals, I have given various things including the gift of life. And many other good deeds have been done by me.

This Dhamma edict has been written that people might follow it and it might endure for a long time. And the one who follows it properly will do something good.

3. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: People see only their good deeds saying, "I have done this good deed." But they do not see their

evil deeds saying, "I have done this evil deed" or "This is called evil." But this (tendency) is difficult to see.[41] One should think like this: "It is these things that lead to evil, to violence, to cruelty, anger, pride and jealousy. Let me not ruin myself with these things." And further, one should think: "This leads to happiness in this world and the next."

4. Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus: This Dhamma edict was written twenty-six years after my coronation. My Rajjukas are working among the people, among many hundreds of thousands of people. The hearing of petitions and the administration of justice has been left to them so that they can do their duties confidently and fearlessly and so that they can work for the welfare, happiness and benefit of the people in the country. But they should remember what causes happiness and sorrow, and being themselves devoted to Dhamma, they should encourage the people in the country (to do the same), that they may attain happiness in this world and the next. These Rajjukas are eager to serve me. They also obey other officers who know my desires, who instruct the Rajjukas so that they can please me. Just as a person feels confident having entrusted his child to an expert nurse thinking: "The nurse will keep my child well," even so, the Rajjukas have been appointed by me for the welfare and happiness of the people in the country.

The hearing of petitions and the administration of justice have been left to the Rajjukas so that they can do their duties unperturbed, fearlessly and confidently. It is my desire that there should be uniformity in law and uniformity in sentencing. I even go this far, to grant a three-day stay for those in prison who have been tried and sentenced to death. During this time their relatives can make appeals to have the prisoners' lives spared. If there is none to appeal on their behalf, the prisoners can give gifts in order to make merit for the next world, or observe fasts. Indeed, it is my wish that in this way, even if a prisoner's time is limited, he can prepare for the next world, and that people's Dhamma practice, self-control and generosity may grow.

5. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: Twenty-six years after my coronation various animals were declared to be protected — parrots, mainas, *aruna*, ruddy geese, wild ducks, *nandimukhas*, *gelatas*, bats, queen ants, terrapins, boneless fish, *vedareyaka*, *gangapuputaka*, *sankiya* fish, tortoises, porcupines, squirrels, deer, bulls, *okapinda*, wild asses, wild pigeons, domestic pigeons and all four-footed creatures that are neither useful nor edible.[42] Those nanny goats, ewes and sows which are with young or giving milk to their young are protected, and so are young ones less than six months old. Cocks are not to be caponized, husks hiding living beings are not to be burnt and forests are not to be burnt either without reason or to kill creatures. One animal is not to be fed to another. On the three Caturmasis, the three days of Tisa and during the fourteenth and fifteenth of the Uposatha, fish are protected and not to be sold. During these days animals are not to be killed in the elephant reserves or the fish reserves either. On the eighth of every fortnight, on the fourteenth and fifteenth, on Tisa, Punarvasu, the three Caturmasis and other auspicious days, bulls are not to be castrated, billy goats, rams, boars

and other animals that are usually castrated are not to be. On Tisa, Punarvasu, Caturmasis and the fortnight of Caturmasis, horses and bullocks are not to be branded.

In the twenty-six years since my coronation prisoners have been given amnesty on twenty-five occasions.

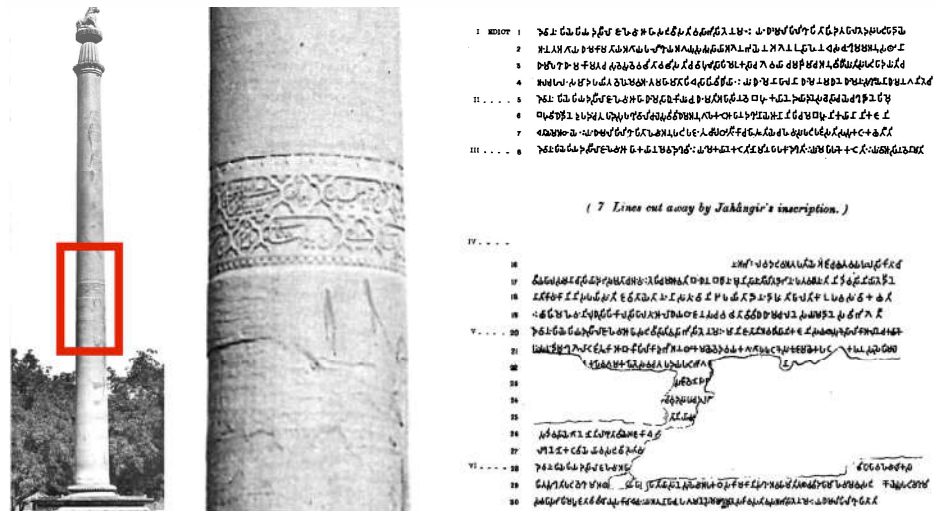


Image source:- https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Allahabad_Pillar

6. Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus: Twelve years after my coronation I started to have Dhamma edicts written for the welfare and happiness of the people, and so that not transgressing them they might grow in the Dhamma. Thinking: "How can the welfare and happiness of the people be secured?" I give attention to my relatives, to those dwelling near and those dwelling far, so I can lead them to happiness and then I act accordingly. I do the same for all groups. I have honored all religions with various honors. But I consider it best to meet with people personally.

This Dhamma edict was written twenty-six years after my coronation.

7. Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus: In the past kings desired that the people might grow through the promotion of the Dhamma. But despite this, people did not grow through the promotion of the Dhamma. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, said concerning this: "It occurs to me that in the past kings desired that the people might grow through the promotion of the Dhamma. But despite this, people did not grow through the promotion of the Dhamma. Now how can the people be encouraged to follow it? How can the people be encouraged to grow through the promotion of the Dhamma? How can I elevate them by promoting the Dhamma?" Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, further said concerning this: "It occurs to me that I shall have proclamations on Dhamma announced and instruction on Dhamma given. When people hear these, they will follow them, elevate themselves and grow considerably through the promotion of the Dhamma." It is for this purpose that proclamations on Dhamma have been announced and various instructions on Dhamma have been given and that officers who work among many promote and explain them in detail. The Rajjukas who work among hundreds of thousands of people have likewise been ordered: "In this way and that encourage those who are devoted to

Dhamma." Beloved-of-the-Gods speaks thus: "Having this object in view, I have set up Dhamma pillars, appointed Dhamma Mahamatras, and announced Dhamma proclamations."

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, says: Along roads I have had banyan trees planted so that they can give shade to animals and men, and I have had mango groves planted. At intervals of eight *krosas*, I have had wells dug, rest-houses built, and in various places, I have had watering-places made for the use of animals and men. But these are but minor achievements. Such things to make the people happy have been done by former kings. I have done these things for this purpose, that the people might practice the Dhamma.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: My Dhamma Mahamatras too are occupied with various good works among the ascetics and householders of all religions. I have ordered that they should be occupied with the affairs of the Sangha. I have also ordered that they should be occupied with the affairs of the Brahmans and the Ajivikas. I have ordered that they be occupied with the Niganthas.^[43] In fact, I have ordered that different Mahamatras be occupied with the particular affairs of all different religions. And my Dhamma Mahamatras likewise are occupied with these and other religions.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: These and other principal officers are occupied with the distribution of gifts, mine as well as those of the queens. In my women's quarters, they organize various charitable activities here and in the provinces. I have also ordered my sons and the sons of other queens to distribute gifts so that noble deeds of Dhamma and the practice of Dhamma may be promoted. And noble deeds of Dhamma and the practice of Dhamma consist of having kindness, generosity, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and goodness increase among the people.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: Whatever good deeds have been done by me, those the people accept and those they follow. Therefore they have progressed and will continue to progress by being respectful to mother and father, respectful to elders, by courtesy to the aged and proper behavior towards Brahmans and ascetics, towards the poor and distressed, and even towards servants and employees.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, speaks thus: This progress among the people through Dhamma has been done by two means, by Dhamma regulations and by persuasion. Of these, Dhamma regulation is of little effect, while persuasion has much more effect. The Dhamma regulations I have given are that various animals must be protected. And I have given many other Dhamma regulations also. But it is by persuasion that progress among the people through Dhamma has had a greater effect in respect of harmlessness to living beings and non-killing of living beings.

Concerning this, Beloved-of-the-Gods says: Wherever there are stone pillars or stone slabs, there this Dhamma edict is to be engraved so that it may long endure. It has been engraved so that it may endure as long as my

sons and great-grandsons live and as long as the sun and the moon shine, and so that people may practice it as instructed. For by practicing it happiness will be attained in this world and the next.

This Dhamma edict has been written by me twenty-seven years after my coronation.

10.6 THE MINOR PILLAR EDICTS:

1. Lumbini Pillar

Twenty years after his coronation, Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, visited this place and worshipped because here the Buddha, the sage of the Sakyans, was born.^[44] He had a stone figure and a pillar set up and because the Lord was born here, the village of Lumbini was exempted from tax and required to pay only one eighth of the produce.



2. Kosambi Pillar

Beloved-of-the-Gods commands:^[45] The Mahamatras at Kosambi (are to be told: Whoever splits the Sangha) which is now united, is not to be admitted into the Sangha. Whoever, whether monk or nun, splits the Sangha is to be made to wear white clothes and to reside somewhere other than in a monastery.^[46]

#Author- Ven. S. Dhammika -The Edicts of King Asoka

10.7 SUMMARY:

The First Evidence of the Religion Spreading outside India Coincides with Ashoka's rule as he sent emissaries to Sri Lanka and an area called Suvarnabhumi, which could be in modern Myanmar. Ashoka's son, monk Mahinda, converted king Devanampiya Tissa and other nobility in modern day Sri Lanka to Buddhism. King Tissa built the Mahavihara monastery, which became the main centre of Buddhism in the island nation. After Sri Lanka, it took more a thousand years for Buddhism to become a leading religion in Myanmar. Slowly and gradually Buddhism spread rapidly in south east Asia. Therefore, the spread of Buddhism in Asia, East and West.

10.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

Role of King Asoka in the
Spread of Buddhism

When did Buddhism start spreading outside India?

Why Buddhism became dominant religion in Srilanka and Myanmar?

Why emperor Asoka is known as the pioneer of spreading buddhism in outside India?

10.9 ADDITIONAL READING

- Cunningham Alexander- Corpus inscriptionum indicarum- Vol. I Inscriptions of Asoka, 1877
- D. R. Bhandarkar, *Asoka*. Calcutta, 1955
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EXPANSION OF BUDDHISM UNDER THE SATAVAHANAS

Unit Structure:

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Satavahana Dynasty
- 11.3 Art and Architecture
- 11.4 Satavahana Sculptures
- 11.5 Satavahana Paintings:
- 11.6 Summary
- 11.7 Unit End Questions
- 11.8 Additional Reading

11.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the spread and development of Buddhism in the Satavahana period.
- To understand the role of trader's merchants, monks and nuns in the spread of Buddhism.
- To explore the archaeological data to find more about the Buddhist rock-cut architecture of Maharashtra.
- To analyse the numismatic data for the study of Buddhist history.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Buddhism has reached today's Maharashtra at the time of the Buddha himself, as can be seen from the literary references from Pali literature of 5th BCE. The Thera Punna of the Punnavadasutta 145 of the Majjhima Nikaya was a resident of Sunaparanta (Konkan) and returned to his motherland to preach the dhamma with permission of the Buddha. The Purnavadana of the avadana literature of 1st CE describes the story of Thera Punna and the Sopara stupa in detail. Another reference of the teachings of the Buddha reaching Maharashtra is seen in the Parayanavagga of the Suttanipata Pali of the Khuddaka Nikaya, when the 16 disciples of the Bavari Brahman from the bank of Godavari near Nanded meet the Buddha and become arahants. One of them returns to preach dhamma to his uncle the Brahmin Bavari, thus making him come out of his fear of death.

Mahavamsa- the Pali chronicle of Sri Lanka mentions Maharattha and Aparanta where the missionaries were sent by Thera Mogaliputtatissa and Emperor Asoka to propagate the dhamma after the third Buddhist council in the 3rd BCE. Thera Mahadhammarakkhita came to Maharattha and taught the Mahanarada jataka while thera Yona Dhammarakkhita came to Aparanta and preached theaggikhandopama sutta to the people. Interestingly more females than males renounced the household life and became nuns in the Aparanta region after listening to the dhamma.

Expansion of Buddhism under the Satavahanas

A fragment of the 14 rock inscriptions (part of 8th inscription, now in the museum, Mumbai) of the Emperor Asoka near the Sopara stupa gives the archaeological evidence of the existence of the Buddhism in the Mauryan period.

The major development of the Buddhism in Maharashtra is seen through the existence of 1000 or so rock-cut architecture popularly called as caves or leni of which the Ajanta and Ellora are the world heritage sites. Out of the 1200 Buddhist rock cut excavations in India, almost 1000 are in Maharashtra [dating from 2nd BCE onwards] because of the north-south running Sahyadri mountain range with more than 90 ghats (passages). Most of the rock-cut caves/lenilike the Karle, Bhaje, Bedse, Nasik, Karad, Junnar, Kuda, Gandharpale-Mahad, Kanheri are on the trade routes connecting the Konkan to the Deccan Pathar. The structural stupas at Amaravati, Guntupalle, Nagarjunakonda, Bhattiprolu in the Andhra and Sopara and the Pauni stupa in Maharashtra are some of the major architectural activities seen at the time, which is the period of the Satavahana dynasty. The archaeological records in the form of inscriptions, coins, sculptures, paintings, architecture and archaeological excavations are the testimony of the expansion of the Buddhism at the time of Satavahana dynasty.

11.2 SATAVAHANA DYNASTY:

The Satavahana also referred to as the Andhra in the Puranas, were an ancient Indian dynasty based in the Deccan region. Most modern scholars believe that the Satavahana rule began in the late second century BCE and lasted until the early third century CE. The Satavahana kingdom mainly comprised the present-day Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra. At different times, their rule extended to parts of modern Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka. The dynasty had different capital cities at different times, including Pratishthana (Paithan) and Amaravati (Dharanikota).



Image source - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satavahana_dynasty

The origin of the dynasty is uncertain, but according to the Puranas, their first king overthrew the Kanva dynasty. In the post-Maurya era, the Satavahanas established peace in the Deccan region and resisted the onslaught of foreign invaders. In particular their struggles with the Saka Western Satraps went on for a long time. The dynasty reached its zenith under the rule of Gautamiputra Satakarni and his successor Vasisthiputra Pulamavi. The kingdom fragmented into smaller states by the early 3rd century CE.

The Satavahanas were early issuers of Indian state coinage struck with images of their rulers. They formed a cultural bridge and played a vital role in trade and the transfer of ideas and culture to and from the Indo-Gangetic Plain to the southern tip of India. They supported Hinduism as well as Buddhism and patronised Prakrit literature.

History: Information about the Satavahanas comes from the Puranas, some Buddhist and Jain texts, the dynasty's inscriptions and coins, and foreign (Greek and Roman) accounts that focus on trade. The information provided by these sources is not sufficient to reconstruct the dynasty's history with absolute certainty. As a result, there are multiple theories about the Satavahana chronology.

Foundation: Simuka is mentioned as the first king in a list of royals in a Satavahana inscription at Naneghat. The various Puranas state that the first king of the dynasty ruled for 23 years, and mention his name variously as Sishuka, Sindhuka, Chhismaka, Shipraka, etc. These are believed to be corrupted spellings of Simuka, resulting from copying and re-copying of manuscripts. Simuka cannot be dated with certainty based on available evidence. Based on the following theories, the beginning of the Satavahana rule is dated variously from 271 BCE to 30 BCE. According to the Puranas, the first Andhra king overthrew the Kanva rule. He is named as Balipuccha in some texts. D. C. Sircar dated this event to c. 30 BCE, a theory supported by many other scholars.

The *Matsya Purana* mentions that the Andhra dynasty ruled for around 450 years. As the Satavahana rule ended in the early 3rd century, the beginning of their rule can be dated to the 3rd century BCE. The *Indica* of Megasthenes (350 – 290 BCE) mentions a powerful tribe named "Andarae", whose king maintained an army of 100,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants. If Andarae is identified with the Andhras, this can be considered additional evidence of Satavahana rule starting in the 3rd century BCE. The *Brahmanda Purana* states that "the four Kanvas will rule the earth for 45 years; then (it) will again go to the Andhras". Based on this statement, the proponents of this theory argue that the Satavahana rule began immediately after the Maurya rule, followed by a Kanva interregnum, and then, a revival of the Satavahana rule. According to one version of the theory Simuka succeeded the Mauryans. A variation of the theory is that Simuka was the person who restored the Satavahana rule by overthrowing the Kanvas; the compiler of the Puranas confused him with the founder of the dynasty.

Most modern scholars believe that the Satavahana ruler began in the first century BCE and lasted until the second century CE. This theory is based on Puranic records as well as archaeological and numismatic evidence. The theory that dates their rule to an earlier period is now largely discredited because the various Puranas contradict each other, and are not fully supported by epigraphic or numismatic evidence.

The oldest Satavahana inscription is the one found on a slab of the upper drum (medhi) of the Kanaganahalli Great Stupa mentioning year 16 of Vasisthiputra Sri ChimukaSatavahana's reign, which can be dated from ca. 110 BCE.

Ranosirichimu(ka) sātavāhanasaso 10 6 mātiseka

"In the year sixteen 16 of King Siri ChimukaSlilaviihana"

—□*Kanaganahalli inscription of the 16th year of Simuka.*

On another stone slab at Kanaganahalli, the king is possibly shown together with a Nagaraja, and the inscription reads:

Rājā Siri ChimukoSādavāhanonāgarāyaSakhadhābho

"Lord King Simuka the Satavahana, Nagaraja Sakhadhābho"

—□*Kanaganahalli inscription of Simuka.*

Simuka was succeeded by his brother Kanha (also known as Krishna), who extended the kingdom up to Nashik in the west. His successor Satakarni I conquered western Malwa, Anupa (Narmada valley) and Vidarbha, taking advantage of the turmoil caused by Greek invasions of northern India. He performed Vedic sacrifices including Ashvamedha and Rajasuya. Instead of the Buddhists, he patronised Brahmins and donated a substantial amount of wealth to them. The Hathigumpha inscription of the Kalinga king Kharavela mentions a king named "Satakani" or "Satakamini", who some identify with Satakarni I. The inscription describes dispatching of an army and Kharavela's threat to a city. Since the inscription is only partially legible, different scholars interpret the events described in the inscription differently. According to R. D. Banerji and Sailendra Nath Sen, Kharavela sent out an army against Satakarni. According to Bhagwal Lal, Satakarni wanted to avoid an invasion of his kingdom by Kharavela. So, he sent horses, elephants, chariots and men to Kharavela as a tribute. According to Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya, Kharavela's army diverted its course after failing to advance against Satakarni. According to Alain Daniélou, Kharavela was friendly with Satakarni, and only crossed his kingdom without any clashes.

Satakarni's successor Satakarni II ruled for 56 years, during which he captured eastern Malwa from the Shungas. This allowed him access to the Buddhist site of Sanchi, in which he is credited with the building of the decorated gateways around the original Mauryan Empire and Sunga

stupas. Satakarni II is known from a dedicatory inscription at Sanchi. He was succeeded by Lambodara. The coins of Lambodara's son and successor Apilaka have been found in eastern Madhya Pradesh. However, Andrew Ollett argues that there is only one Satakarni, as the alleged first Satakarni is assigned ten years, and the second, fifty years by other scholars, but the only dated inscription of this king is Candankheda seal from his reign's year 30, around 60 BCE, and he ruled ca. 88-42 BCE.

Art of Sanchi: *The Satavahanas contributed greatly to the embellishment of the Buddhist stupa of Sanchi. It was heavily repaired under King Satakarni II. The gateways and the balustrade were built after 70 BCE, and appear to have been commissioned by the Satavahanas. An inscription on the Southern Gateway records that it was the work of Satakarni II's royal architect Ananda. An inscription records the gift of one of the top architraves of the Southern Gateway by the artisans of the Satavahana Emperor Satakarni:*

Gift of Ananda, the son of Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of rajan Siri Satakarni.

First Western Satraps invasion under Nahapana: Little is known about Apilaka's successors, except cryptic references to one KuntalaSatakarni. The next well-known ruler of the dynasty was Hāla, who composed *GahaSattasai* in Maharashtri Prakrit. Like Hala, his four successors also ruled for very short periods (a total of 12 years), indicating troubled times for the Satavahanas.

Epigraphic and numismatic evidence suggests that the Satavahanas earlier controlled the northern Deccan Plateau, the northern Konkan coastal plains, and the mountain passes connecting these two regions. During 15-40 CE, their northern neighbours - the Western Kshatrapas - extended their influence into these regions. The Western Kshatrapa ruler Nahapana is known to have ruled the former Satavahana territory, as attested by the inscriptions of his governor and son-in-law, Rishabhadatta.

The Satavahana power was revived by GautamiputraSatakarni, who is considered the greatest of the Satavahana rulers. Charles Higham dates his reign c. 103 – c. 127 CE. S. Nagaraju dates it 106–130 CE, the new consensus is shared by Shailendra Bhandare, Akira Shimada, and Oskar von Hinuber, who regard GautamiputraSatakarni's reign was ca. 60-85 CE, Andrew Ollett considers it as 60-84 CE. The king defeated by him appears to have been the Western Kshatrapa ruler Nahapana, as suggested by Nahapana's coins over struck with names and titles of Gautamiputra. The Nashik *prashasti* inscription of Gautamiputra's mother Gautami Balashri, dated to the 20th year after his death, records his achievements. The most liberal interpretation of the inscription suggests that his kingdom extended from the present-day Rajasthan in the north to Krishna river in the south, and from Saurashtra in the west to Kalinga in the east. He assumed the titles *Raja-Raja* (King of Kings) and *Maharaja* (Great King), and was described as the Lord of Vindhya.

During the last years of his reign, his administration was apparently handled by his mother, which could have been a result of an illness or military preoccupation. According to the Nasik inscription made by his mother Gautami Balashri, he was the one who crushed down the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas; who destroyed the Sakas (Western Satraps), Yavanas (Indo-Greeks) and Pahlavas (Indo-Parthians),... who rooted out the Khakharata family (the Kshaharata family of Nahapana); who restored the glory of the Satavahana race.

—□ *Inscription of Queen Mother Gautami Balashri at Cave No.3 of the Pandavleni Caves in Nashik.*

Gautamiputra was succeeded by his son Vasisthiputra Sri Pulumavi (or Pulumayi). According to Sailendra Nath Sen, Pulumavi ruled from 96–119 CE. According to Charles Higham, he ascended the throne around 110 CE, according to Shailendra Bhandare, Akira Shimada, and Oskar von Hinuber Vasisthiputra Sri Pulumavi ruled ca. 85-125 CE, and Andrew Ollett considers it to be ca. 84-119 CE. Pulumavi features in a large number of Satavahana inscriptions and his coins have been found distributed over a wide area. This indicates that he maintained Gautamiputra's territory, and ruled a prosperous kingdom. He is believed to have added the Bellary region to Satakarni's kingdom. His coins featuring ships with double mast have been found on the Coromandel Coast, indicating involvement in maritime trade and naval power. The old stupa at Amaravati was renovated during his reign.

Second Western Satraps invasion under Rudradaman I: Pulumavi's successor was his brother Vashishtiputra Satakarni. According to S. N. Sen he ruled during 120–149 CE according to Charles Higham, his regnal years spanned 138–145 CE. He entered into a marriage alliance with the Western Satraps, marrying the daughter of Rudradaman I.

The Junagadh inscription of Rudradaman I states that he defeated Satakarni, the lord of Dakshinapatha (Deccan), twice. It also states that he spared the life of the defeated ruler because of close relations:

"Rudradaman (...) who obtained good report because he, in spite of having twice in fair fight completely defeated Satakarni, the lord of Dakshinapatha, on account of the nearness of their connection did not destroy him."—□ *Junagadh rock inscription*

According to D. R. Bhandarkar and Dineshchandra Sircar, the ruler defeated by Rudradaman was Gautamiputra Satakarni. However, E. J. Rapson believed that the defeated ruler was his son Vasisthiputra Pulumavi. Shailendra Nath Sen and Charles Higham believe that the defeated ruler was Vashishtiputra's successor Shivaskanda or Shiva Sri Pulumayi (or Pulumavi).

As a result of his victories, Rudradaman regained all the former territories previously held by Nahapana, except for the extreme south territories of Pune and Nasik. Satavahana dominions were limited to their original base in the Deccan and eastern central India around Amaravati.

Sri Yajna Sātakarni, the last person belonging to the main Satavahana dynastic line, briefly revived the Satavahana rule. According to S. N. Sen, he ruled during 170–199 CE. Charles Higham dates the end of his reign to 181 CE. His coins feature images of ships, which suggest naval and marine trade success. Wide distribution of his coins, and inscriptions at Nashik, Kanheri and Guntur indicate that his rule extended over both eastern and western parts of Deccan. He recovered much of the territory lost the Western Kshatrapas, and issued silver coinage, imitating them. During the last years of his reign, the Abhiras captured the northern parts of the kingdom, around Nashik region.

Decline: After Yajna Satakarni, the dynasty was soon extinguished following the rise of its feudatories, perhaps on account of a decline in central power. On the other hand, the Western Satraps would continue to prosper for the next two centuries, until their extinction by the Gupta Empire. Yajna Sri was succeeded by Madhariputra Swami Isvarasena. The next king Vijaya ruled for 6 years. His son Vasishthiputra Sri Chadha Satakarni ruled for 10 years. Pulumavi IV, the last king of the main line, ruled until c. 225 CE. During his reign, several Buddhist monuments were constructed at Nagarjunakonda and Amaravati. Madhya Pradesh was also part of his kingdom.

After the death of Pulumavi IV, the Satavahana empire fragmented into five smaller kingdoms:

1. Northern part, ruled by a collateral branch of the Satavahanas (which ended in early 4th century)
2. Western part around Nashik, ruled by the Abhira dynasty
3. Eastern part (Krishna-Guntur region), ruled by the Andhra Ikshvakus
4. South-western parts (northern Karanataka), ruled by the Chutus of Banavasi
5. South-eastern part, ruled by the Pallavas

The Satavahana capital kept shifting with time. The Nashik inscription describes Gautamiputra as the lord of Benakataka, suggesting that this was the name of his capital. Ptolemy (2nd century CE) mentioned Pratishthana (modern Paithan) as the capital of Pulumavi. At other times, the Satavahana capitals included Amaravati (Dharanikota) and Junnar. M. K. Dhavalikar theorised that the original Satavahana capital was located at Junnar, but had to be moved to Pratishthana because of Saka-Kushana incursions from the north-west.

Several Satavahana-era inscriptions record grants to religious monasteries. The settlements most frequently mentioned as the residences of donors in these inscriptions include the sea ports of Sopara, Kalyan, Bharucha, Kuda (unidentified), and Chaul. The most frequently mentioned inland settlements include Dhenukakata (unidentified), Junnar, Nashik, Paithan, and Karadh.

Other important Satavahana sites in western Deccan include Govardhana, Nevasa, Ter, and Vadgaon-Madhavpur. The ones in eastern Deccan include Amaravati, Dhulikatta, Kotalingala and Peddabankur.

Expansion of Buddhism under the Satavahanas

The inscriptions of Gautamiputra Satakarni suggest the existence of a bureaucratic structure, although it is not certain how stable and effective this structure was. For example, two inscriptions from Nashik Cave 11 record donations of agricultural land to ascetic communities. They state that the ascetics would enjoy tax exemption and non-interference from the royal officials. The first inscription states that the grant was approved by Gautamiputra's minister Sivagupta on the king's verbal orders, and preserved by the "great lords". The second inscription records a grant by Gautamiputra and his mother, and mentions Syamaka as the minister of the Govardhana *ahara*. It states that the charter was approved by a woman named Lota, who according to archaeologist James Burgess' interpretation, was the chief lady-in-waiting of Gautamiputra's mother.

The Satavahana-era inscriptions mention three types of settlements: *nagara* (city), *nigama* (market town) and *gama* (village).

According to Sastri, "the Satavahanas were described as 'lords of the three oceans' and promoted overseas colonization and trade. Under them, Buddhist art attained the superb forms of beauty and elegance preserved to this day in the cave-temples of western India and the survivals from the stupa of Amaravati, Goli, Nagarjunikonda. This tradition was followed by successors of Satavahana in the eastern and western Deccan.

The Satavahanas participated in (and benefited from) economic expansion through intensification of agriculture, increased production of other commodities, and trade within and beyond the Indian subcontinent.

During the Satavahana period, several large settlements emerged in the fertile areas, especially along the major rivers. The amount of land under agricultural use also expanded significantly, as a result of forest clearance and construction of irrigation reservoirs.

The exploitation of sites with mineral resources may have increased during the Satavahana period, leading to the emergence of new settlements in these areas. Such sites facilitated commerce and crafts (such as ceramic ware). The increased craft production during the Satavahana period is evident from archaeological discoveries at sites such as Kotalingala, as well as epigraphic references to artisans and guilds.

The Satavahanas controlled the Indian sea coast, and as a result, they dominated the growing Indian trade with the Roman Empire. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* mentions two important Satavahana trade centres: Pratishthana and Tagara. Other important urban centres included Kondapur, Banavasi and Madhavpur. Nanaghat was the site of an important pass that linked the Satavahana capital Pratishthana to the sea.

The Satavahanas were Hindus and claimed Brahmanical status, although they also made generous donations to Buddhist monasteries. The lay

people in the Satavahana period generally did not exclusively support a particular religious group.

The Naneghat inscription of Nayanika, recorded on the walls of a Buddhist monastic cave, mentions that her husband Satakarni I performed several Vedic sacrifices, including *ashvamedha* (horse sacrifice), *rajasuya* (royal consecration), and *agnyadheya* (fire ceremony). The inscription also records substantial fees paid to Brahmin priests and attendees for these sacrifices. For example, 10,001 cows were granted for the *Bhagala-Dasaratra* sacrifice; and 24,400 coins were granted for another sacrifice, whose name is not clear.



Naneghat Inscription

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

In the Nashik inscription of Gautami Balashri, her son Gautamiputra Satakarni is called "ekabamhana", which is interpreted by some as "unrivaled Brahmana", thus indicating a Brahmin origin. However, R. G. Bhandarkar interprets this word as "the only protector of the Brahmins".

A number of Buddhist monastic sites emerged in the Deccan region during the Satavahana period. However, the exact relations between these monasteries and the Satavahana government is not clear. The Pandavleni Caves inscription issued during the reign of Kanha states that the cave was excavated by *maha-matra* (officer-in-charge) of the shramanas (non-Vedic ascetics). Based on this, Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya concludes that Kanha favoured Buddhism, and had an administrative department dedicated to the welfare of Buddhist monks.

However, Carla M. Sinopoli notes that although there are some records of donations to the Buddhist monasteries by the Satavahana royals, the vast majority of the donations were made by the non-royals. The most common among these donors were merchants, and many of the monasteries were located along the important trade routes. The merchants probably donated to the monasteries, because these sites facilitated trade by serving as rest houses, and possibly by directly participating in the trade. The monasteries appear to have been an important venue for displaying charitable donations, including the donations made to non-Buddhists (especially Brahmins).

Dating of the Kings: The reconstructions of the Satavahana kings by historians fall into two categories. According to the first one, 30

Satavahana kings ruled for around 450 years, starting from Simuka's rule immediately after the fall of the Mauryan empire. This view relies heavily on the Puranas, and is now largely discredited. According to the second (and more widely accepted) category of reconstructions, the Satavahana rule started in around first century BCE. The chronologies in this category contain a smaller number of kings, and combine Puranic records with archaeological, numismatic and textual evidence.

Because of uncertainty regarding the establishment date of the Satavahana kingdom, it is difficult to give absolute dates for the reigns of the Satavahana kings. Therefore, many modern scholars do not assign absolute dates to the reigns of the historically attested Satavahana kings, and those who do vary greatly with each other.

Himanshu Prabha Ray provides the following chronology, based on archaeological and numismatic evidence:

- Simuka (before 100 BCE)
- Kanha (100–70 BCE)
- Satakarni I (70–60 BCE)
- Satakarni II (50–25 BCE)
- *Kshatrapa interregnum* with vassal Satavahana kings like Hāla
- Nahapana (54-100 CE)
- Gautamiputra Satakarni (86–110 CE)
- Pulumavi (110–138 CE)
- Vashishtiputra Satakarni (138–145 CE)
- Shiva Shri Pulumavi (145–152 CE)
- Shiva Skanda Satakarni (145–152 CE)
- Yajna Shri Satakarni (152–181 CE)
- Vijaya Satakarni
- Regional rulers of south-eastern Deccan:
 - Chandra Shri
 - Pulumavi II
 - Abhira Isvarasena
 - Madhariputra Sakasena
 - Haritiputra Satakarni

S. Bhandare also suggests the following sequence of reigns, based on his analysis of Satavahana coinage:

- Gautamiputra Satakarni (ca. 60-85 CE)
- Vasithiputra Siri Pulumayi (ca. 85-125 CE)
- Vasithiputra Siri Satakarni (ca. 125-152 CE)
- Vasithiputra Siva Siri Pulumayi (ca. 152-160 CE)
- Vasithiputra Siri Khada Satakarni (ca. 160-165 CE)
- Vasithiputra Vijaya Satakarni (ca. 165-170 CE)
- Siri Yashwantra Satakarni (ca. 170-200 CE)
- Gotamiputra Siri Cada (ca. 200-215 CE)
- Gotamiputra Siri Vijaya Satakarni (ca. 215-225 CE)

Language: *Most of the Satavahana inscriptions and coin legends are in a Middle Indo-Aryan language. This language has been termed "Prakrit" by some modern scholars, but this terminology can be considered correct only if the term "Prakrit" is defined broadly to include every Middle Indo-Aryan language that is "not exactly Sanskrit". The language of the inscriptions is actually closer to Sanskrit than to the literary Prakrit used in the GahaSattasai anthology attributed to the Satavahana king Hala.*

The Satavahanas also used Sanskrit in political inscriptions, but rarely. A fragmentary inscription found close to the Nashik prashasti of Gautamiputra Satakarni uses Sanskrit verses in *vasanta-tilaka* metre to describe a deceased king (probably Gautamiputra). A Sanskrit inscription found at Sannati probably refers to Gautamiputra Shri Satakarni, one of whose coins also features a Sanskrit legend.

The Satavahanas also issued bilingual coins featuring Middle Indo-Aryan language on one side, and Tamil language on the other side.

Several Brahmi script inscriptions are available from the Satavahana period, but most of these record donations to Buddhist institutions by individuals, and do not provide much information about the dynasty. The inscriptions issued by the Satavahana royals themselves also primarily concern religious donations, although some of them provide some information about the rulers and the imperial structure.

The earliest extant Satavahana inscription is from Nashik Cave 19, which states that the cave was commissioned by Mahamatra Saman of Nashik during the reign of king Kanha.

At Naneghat, an inscription issued by Nayanika, the widow of Satakarni I, has been found. It records Nayanika's lineage and mentions the Vedic sacrifices performed by the royal family. Another inscription at Naneghat comprises names of Satavahana royals, appearing as labels over their bas-

relief portraits. The portraits are now completely eroded, but the inscription is believed to be contemporary to Nayanika's inscription on a paleographic basis.

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The next oldest Satavahana-era inscription appears on a sculpted gateway element of Stupa 1 at Sanchi. It states that the element was donated by Ananda, who was the son of Siri Satakarni's foreman of artisans. This inscription is probably from the reign of Satakarni II.

The Satavahanas were the earliest Indian rulers to issue their own coins with portraits of their rulers, starting with king Gautamiputra Satakarni, a practice derived from that of the Western Kshatrapas he defeated. The Western Satraps themselves had been following the features of the coins of the Indo-Greek kings to the northwest.

Thousands of lead, copper and potin Satavahana coins have been discovered in the Deccan region; a few gold and silver coins are also available. These coins do not feature uniform design or size, and suggest that multiple minting locations existed within the Satavahana territory, leading to regional differences in coinage.

The coin legends of the Satavahanas, in all areas and all periods, used a Prakrit dialect without exception. In addition, some reverse coin legends are in Dravidian^[3] (similar to the Tamil and Telugu languages), in the Dravidian script (similar to the Brahmi script apart from a few variations).

Several coins carry titles or matronyms that were common to multiple rulers (e.g. Satavahana, Satakarni, and Pulumavi), so the number of rulers attested by coinage cannot be determined with certainty. The names of 16 to 20 rulers appear on the various coins. Some of these rulers appear to be local elites rather than the Satavahana monarchs.



Image source: < a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satavahana_dynasty">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satavahana_dynasty

The Satavahana coins give unique indications as to their chronology, language, and even facial features (curly hair, long ears and strong lips). They issued mainly lead and copper coins; their portrait-style silver coins were usually struck over coins of the Western Kshatrapa kings. The Satavahana coins also display various traditional symbols, such as elephants, lions, horses and chaityas (stupas), as well as the "Ujjain symbol", a cross with four circles at the end.

The Satavahanas patronised the Prakrit language instead of Sanskrit. The Satavahana king Hāla is famous for compiling the collection of Maharashtri poems known as the *Gaha Sattasai* (Sanskrit: *Gāthā Saptashatī*), although from linguistic evidence it seems that the work now extant must have been re-edited in the succeeding century or two. Through this book, it was evident that agriculture was the main means of livelihood. Also many sorts of superstitions had prevailed. Additionally, Gunadhya, the minister of Hala, was the author of *Brihatkatha*.

11.3 ART AND ARCHITECTURE:

The Satavahana rulers are also remarkable for their contributions to Buddhist art and architecture. They built great stupas in the Krishna River Valley, including the stupa at Amaravati (95 feet high) in Andhra Pradesh. The stupa was decorated in marble slabs and sculpted with scenes from the life of the Buddha, portrayed in a characteristic slim and elegant style.

The Amaravati style of sculpture also influenced the sculpture of Southeast Asia and represent the architectural development of the Satavahana periods. They also built large number of stupas at Goli, Jaggiahpetta, Gantasala,

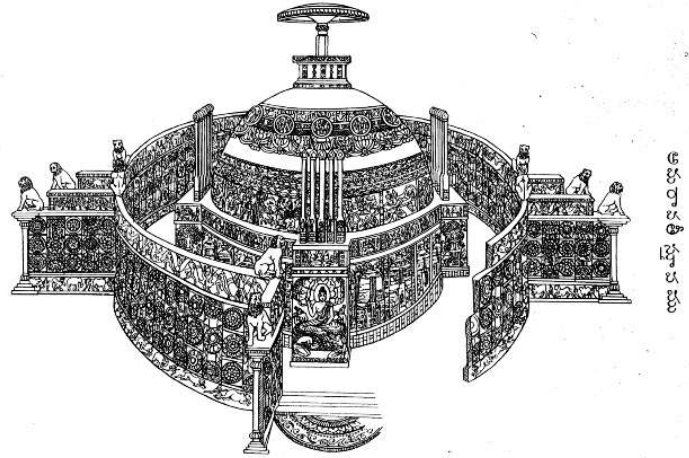
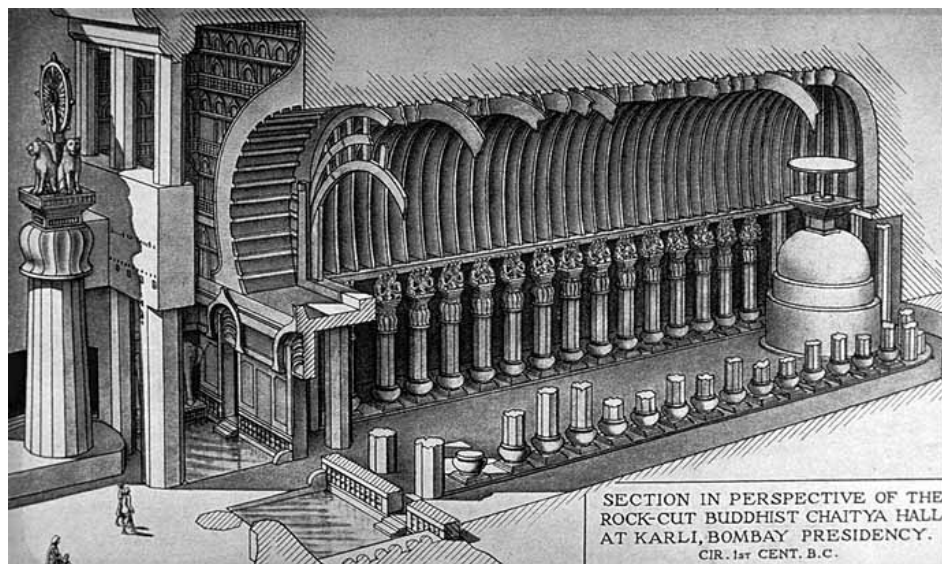


Image Source:- https://te.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amaravati_Stupam

Bhattiprolu and Nagarjunakonda. Ashokan Stupas were enlarged, the earlier bricks and wood works being replaced with stone works. The most famous of these monuments are the stupas, the most famous among them being the Amravati Stupa and the Nagarjunakonda Stupa.

The Buddhist architecture would have been incomplete without the rock-cut architecture of the Satavahana period. The huge rock-cut monasteries - viharas and chaityagruhas are the outcome of the support of the royal dynasty as can be seen from the inscriptions on the different Buddhist sites of Karle, Bhaje, Junnar and so on. The rock-cut architectural activity declined with the decline of the Satavahana dynasty in the late 3rd CE.



SECTION IN PERSPECTIVE OF THE
ROCK-CUT BUDDHIST CHAITYA HALL
AT KARLE, BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.
CIR. 1st CENT. B.C.

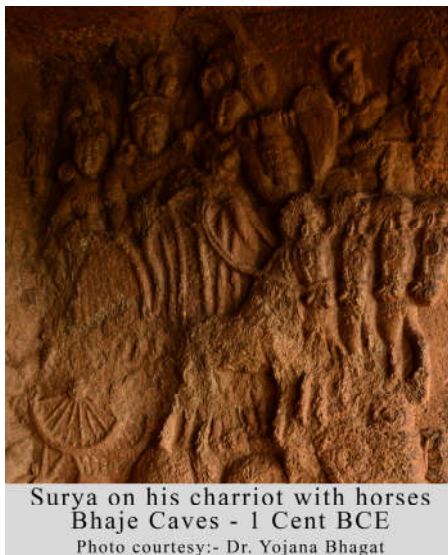
Image source:- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A_reconstruction_of_the_chaitya_hall_at_Karle.jpg

11.4 SATAVAHANA SCULPTURES:

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Prof. Dhavalikar writes that "The Satavahana sculptures unfortunately has never been recognized as an independent school in spite of the fact it has its own distinctive characteristic features. The earliest in point of time is that in the Bhaje Vihara cave which marks the beginning of sculptural art in the Satavahana dominion around 200BCE. It is profusely decorated with carvings, and even pillars have a lotus capital crowned with sphinx-like mythic animals."

Dhavalikar also writes that in Chankama "the panel occurring on the west pillar of Northern Gateway portrays a very important event in Buddha's life. It depicts votaries, two each on either side of what looks like a ladder which actually is the promenade which Buddha is supposed to have walked. It is said that Buddha, after attaining Enlightenment, spent four weeks near the Bodhi tree. Of these, the third week he spent walking along the promenade (*chankama*) to and fro." Along with some of the above major Satavahana sculptures some more sculptures existed—namely, *Dvarapala*, *Gajalakshmi*, *Shalabhanjikas*, Royal Procession, Decorative pillar, etc.



Several metal figurines are found that could be attributed to the Satavahanas. A hoard of unique bronze objects was also found from Bramhapuri. Numerous articles obtained from there were Indian but also reflected Roman and Italian influence. A small statue of Poseidon, wine jugs, and a plaque depicting Perseus and Andromeda were also obtained from the house from where the objects were found. The fine elephant in the Ashmolean Museum, the Yaksi image in the British Museum, and the cornucopia found in Posheri, kept at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj VastuSangrahalaya can also be attributed to the Satavahana period.

11.5 SATAVAHANA PAINTINGS:

The Satavahana paintings are the earliest surviving specimens—excluding prehistoric rock art—in India, and they are to be found only at the Ajanta Caves. There were two phases of artistic activity of Ajanta: the first occurring in the 2nd to 1st centuries BC, when Hinayana caves were excavated during Satavahana rule; the later in the second half of the 5th century under the Vakatakas. Vagaries of nature and some vandalism have taken a heavy toll on the Ajanta Caves. Only a few fragments related to the Satavahanas have survived in Caves No. 9 and 10, both of which are chaitya-grihas with stupas. The most important surviving painting of the Satavahana period at Ajanta is the *Chhadanta Jataka* in Cave No. 10,

but that, too, is only fragmentary. It is a painting of an elephant named Bodhisattva with six tusks, related to a mythological story. The human figures, both male and female, are typically Satavahanas, almost identical with their counterparts on the Sanchi Gateways so far as their physiognomy, costumes, and jewellery are concerned. The only difference is that the Sanchi figures have shed some of their weight.

11.6 SUMMARY

The expansion of Buddhism under the Satavahana rulers can be summarised with the help of the large number of Buddhist archaeological sites excavated by the western scholars in the early 18th and 19th century, in the Andhra region. The most beautiful Mahastupa of Amaravati is considered to be the epitome of Buddhist architecture as well as sculptural beauty in marble technically introducing the Amaravati school of art in the south India.

The biggest contribution of the Satavahana dynasty to the Buddhist art and architecture is the support to the excavation to the rock-cut architecture beginning from the circular chaityagruha at Junnar of the 1st BCE to the largest apsidal planned vaulted roofed Chaityagruha in Jambudvipa at Karle. The largest vihara- the residences of the monks, the rock-cut water cisterns, the monolithic stupas inside the chaityagruhas, the huge verandahs and decorative chaitya windows is seen in the Satavahana period.

The beautiful sculptures of Bhaje, Karle, Pitalkhore, Bedse are well known to the art world. The inscriptional data and the symbols on the coins donot leave any doubt about the flourishing Buddhism in the Satavahana dynasty.

11.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- Write in brief the historical background of the Satavahana dynasty and their support to Buddhism.
- Explain how the archaeological sources, especially inscriptions is the source of writing history of the Satavahana dynasty.
- Buddhist art and architecture helps to understand the expansion of Buddhism in the Satavahana dynasty- Comment giving examples
- Elaborate the importance of coinage in understanding the contribution of Satavahana dynasty to the Buddhist art.

11.8 ADDITIONAL READING

Expansion of Buddhism under
the Satavahanas

Ajay Mitra Shastri- The Satavahanas and the Western Kshatrapas: A historical framework

Sharma R K-The Ages of the Satavahanas: Great Ages of Indian History

Mirashi V V- The History and Inscriptions of the Satavahanas and Western Ksatrapas

Bhandare Shailendra-'Historical Analysis of the Satavahana Era: A Study of Coins' (PhD Thesis) - Chapters 1 and 2

Features Of Satavahana Sculptures,
https://www.indianetzone.com/35/features_satavahana_sculptures_indian_sculpture.htm



KANISHKA AND HARSHAVARDHANA

Unit Structure:

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 King Kanishka and his Rule
- 12.3 Kanishka's Buddhist Coins
- 12.4 Buddhist Statuary Under Kanishka
- 12.5 The Reign of King Harshavardhana
- 12.6 Summary
- 12.7 Unit End Questions
- 12.8 Additional Reading

12.0 OBJECTIVES

- To study the contribution of the king Kanishka and king Harshavardhan to the spread and development of Buddhism.
- To understand the role of art, architecture and archaeology as the authentic source to be collaborated with literature.
- To study how the royal patronage of the kings helps in the spread of Buddhism

12.1 INTRODUCTION:

Kanishka I, or Kanishka the Great, an emperor of the Kushan dynasty in the second century (c. 127–150 CE), is famous for his military, political, and spiritual achievements. A descendant of Kujula Kadphises, founder of the Kushan empire, Kanishka came to rule an empire in Gandhara extending to Pataliputra on the Gangetic plain. The main capital of his empire was located at *Puruṣapura* (Peshawar) in Gandhara, with another major capital at Kapisa. Coins of Kanishka were found in Tripuri (present-day Jabalpur).

His conquests and patronage of Buddhism played an important role in the development of the Silk Road, and in the transmission of Mahayana Buddhism from Gandhara across the Karakoram range to China. Around 127 CE, he replaced Greek by Bactrian as the official language of administration in the empire.

Earlier scholars believed that Kanishka ascended the Kushan throne in 78 CE, and that this date was used as the beginning of the Saka calendar era.

However, historians no longer regard this date as that of Kanishka's accession. Falk estimates that Kanishka came to the throne in 127 CE.

Kanishka and Harshavardhan

12.2 KING KANISHKA AND HIS RULE:

Kanishka was a Kushan of probable Yuezhi ethnicity. His native language is unknown. The Rabatak inscription uses a Greek script, to write a language described as *Arya* (Ἀρια) – most likely a form of Bactrian native to Ariana, which was an Eastern Iranian language of the Middle Iranian period. However, this was likely adopted by the Kushans to facilitate communication with local subjects. It is not certain, what language the Kushan elite spoke among themselves.

Kanishka was the successor of Vima Kadphises, as demonstrated by an impressive genealogy of the Kushan kings, known as the Rabatak inscription. The connection of Kanishka with other Kushan rulers is described in the Rabatak inscription as Kanishka makes the list of the kings who ruled up to his time: KujulaKadphises as his great-grandfather, VimaTaktu as his grandfather, VimaKadphises as his father, and himself Kanishka: "for King KujulaKadphises (his) great grandfather, and for King VimaTaktu (his) grandfather, and for King Vima Kadphises (his) father, and *also for himself, King Kanishka". A map of India in the



Conquests in South and Central Asia: Kanishka's empire was certainly vast. It extended from southern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, north of the Amu Darya (Oxus) in the north west to Northern India, as far as Mathura in the south east (the Rabatak inscription even claims he held Pataliputra and Sri Champa), and his territory also included Kashmir, where there was a town Kanishkapur (modern day Kanispora), named after him not far from the Baramula Pass and which still contains the base of a large stupa.

2nd century AD showing the extent of the Kushan Empire (in yellow) during the reign of Kanishka.

Knowledge of his hold over Central Asia is less well established. The Book of the Later Han, *Hou Hanshu*, states that general Ban Chao fought battles near Khotan with a Kushan army of 70,000 men led by an otherwise unknown Kushan viceroy named Xie (Chinese: 謝) in 90

AD. Ban Chao claimed to be victorious, forcing the Kushans to retreat by use of a scorched-earth policy. The territories of Kashgar, Khotan and Yarkand were Chinese dependencies in the Tarim Basin, modern Xinjiang. Several coins of Kanishka have been found in the Tarim Basin.

Controlling both the land (the Silk Road) and sea trade routes between South Asia and Rome seems to have been one of Kanishka's chief imperial goals.

Kanishka's coins portray images of Indian, Greek, Iranian and even Sumero-Elamite divinities, demonstrating the religious syncretism in his beliefs. Kanishka's coins from the beginning of his reign bear legends in Greek language and script and depict Greek divinities. Later coins bear legends in Bactrian, the Iranian language that the Kushans evidently spoke, and Greek divinities were replaced by corresponding Iranian ones. All of Kanishka's coins – even ones with a legend in the Bactrian language – were written in a modified Greek script that had one additional glyph (□) to represent /š/ (*sh*), as in the word 'Kushan' and 'Kanishka'.

On his coins, the king is typically depicted as a bearded man in long coat and trousers gathered at the ankle, with flames emanating from his shoulders. He wears large rounded boots, and is armed with a long sword as well as a lance. He is frequently seen to be making a sacrifice on a small altar. The lower half of a life-size limestone relief of Kanishka similarly attired, with a stiff embroidered surplice beneath his coat and spurs attached to his boots under the light gathered folds of his trousers, survived in the Kabul Museum until it was destroyed by the Taliban.

Kanishka's reputation in Buddhist tradition regarded with utmost importance as he not only believed in Buddhism but also encouraged its teachings as well. As a proof of it, he administered the 4th Buddhist Council in Kashmir as the head of the council. It was presided by Vasumitra and Ashwaghosha. Images of the Buddha based on 32 physical signs were made during his time.

He encouraged both Gandhara school of Greco-Buddhist Art and the Mathura school of Hindu art (an inescapable religious syncretism pervades Kushana rule). Kanishka personally seems to have embraced both Buddhism and the Persian attributes but he favored Buddhism more as it can be proven by his devotion to the Buddhist teachings and prayer styles depicted in various books related to Kushan empire.

His greatest contribution to Buddhist architecture was the Kanishka stupa at Purushapura, modern day Peshawar. Archaeologists who rediscovered the base of it in 1908–1909 estimated that this stupa had a diameter of 286 feet (87 metres). Reports of Chinese pilgrims such as Xuanzang indicate that its height was 600 to 700 (Chinese) "feet" (= roughly 180–210 metres or 591–689 ft.) and was covered with jewels. Certainly this immense multi-storied building ranks among the wonders of the ancient world.

Kanishka is said to have been particularly close to the Buddhist scholar Ashvaghosha, who became his religious advisor in his later years.

The Buddhist coins of Kanishka are comparatively rare (well under one percent of all known coins of Kanishka). Several show Kanishka on the obverse and the Buddha standing on the reverse. A few also show the Shakyamuni Buddha and Maitreya. Like all coins of Kanishka, the design is rather rough and proportions tend to be imprecise; the image of the Buddha is often slightly overdone, with oversize ears and feet spread apart in the same fashion as the Kushan king.

12.3 KANISHKA'S BUDDHIST COINS:

Only six Kushan coins of the Buddha are known in gold (the sixth one is the centerpiece of an ancient piece of jewellery, consisting of a Kanishka Buddha coin decorated with a ring of heart-shaped ruby stones). All these coins were minted in gold under Kanishka I, and are in two different denominations: a dinar of about 8 gm, roughly similar to a Roman aureus, and a quarter dinar of about 2 gm. (about the size of an obol).

The Buddha is represented wearing the monastic robe, the *antaravasaka*, the *uttarasanga*, and the overcoat *sanghati*.

The ears are extremely large and long, a symbolic exaggeration possibly rendered necessary by the small size of the coins, but otherwise visible in some later Gandharan statues of the Buddha typically dated to the 3rd–4th century CE (*illustration, left*). He has an abundant topknot covering the usnisha, often highly stylised in a curly or often globular manner, also visible on later Buddha statues of Gandhara.

In general, the representation of the Buddha on these coins is already highly symbolic, and quite distinct from the more naturalistic and Hellenistic images seen in early Gandhara sculptures. On several designs a mustache is apparent. The palm of his right hand bears the Chakra mark, and his brow bear the urna. An aureola, formed by one, two or three lines, surrounds him.

The full gown worn by the Buddha on the coins, covering both shoulders, suggests a Gandharan model rather than a Mathuran one.

The Shakyamuni Buddha (with the legend "SakamanoBoudo", i.e. Shakamuni Buddha, another name for the historic Buddha Siddharta



Gautama), standing to front, with left hand on hip and forming the abhaya mudra with the right hand. All these coins are in copper only, and usually rather worn.

Image source:- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanishka>

The gown of the Shakyamuni Buddha is quite light compared to that on the coins in the name of Buddha, clearly showing the outline of the body, in a nearly transparent way. These are probably the first two layers of monastic clothing the *antaravasaka* and the *uttarasanga*. Also, his gown is folded over the left arm (rather than being held in the left hand as above), a feature only otherwise known in the Bimaran casket and suggestive of a scarf-like *uttariya*. He has an abundant topknot covering the ushnisha, and a simple or double halo, sometimes radiating, surrounds his head.

The Bodhisattva Maitreya (with the legend "MetragoBoudo") cross-legged on a throne, holding a water pot, and also forming the Abhaya mudra. These coins are only known in copper and are quite worn out. On the clearest coins, Maitreya seems to be wearing the armbands of an Indian prince, a feature often seen on the statuary of Maitreya. The throne is decorated with small columns, suggesting that the coin representation of Maitreya was directly copied from pre-existing statuary with such well-known features.

The qualification of "Buddha" for Maitreya is inaccurate, as he is instead a Bodhisattva (he is the Buddha of the future).

The iconography of these three types is very different from that of the other deities depicted in Kanishka's coinage. Whether Kanishka's deities are all shown from the side, the Buddhas only are shown frontally, indicating that they were copied from contemporary frontal representations of the standing and seated Buddhas in statuary.^[20] Both representations of the Buddha and Shakyamuni have both shoulders covered by their monastic gown, indicating that the statues used as models were from the Gandhara school of art, rather than Mathura.



The "Kanishka casket", dated to 127 CE, with the Buddha
Image source - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kanishka_casket.jpg

12.4 BUDDHIST STATUARY UNDER KANISHKA:

Several Buddhist statues are directly connected to the reign of Kanishka, such as several Bodhisattva statues from the Art of Mathura, while a few other from Gandhara are inscribed with a date in an era which is now thought to be the Yavana era, starting in 186 to 175 BCE.

The "Kanishka casket" or "Kanishka reliquary", dated to the first year of Kanishka's reign in 127 CE, was discovered in a deposit chamber under Kanishka stupa, during the archaeological excavations in 1908–1909 in Shah-Ji-Ki-Dheri, just outside the present-day Ganj Gate of the old city of Peshawar. It is today at the Peshawar Museum, and a copy is in the British Museum. It is said to have contained three bone fragments of the Buddha, which are now housed in Mandalay, Burma.

The casket is dedicated in Kharoshthi. The inscription reads:

Kanishka and Harshavardhan

"(*mahara) jasakanishkasakanishka-pure nagareayagadha-karaedeya-dharmesarva-satvanahita-suharthabhavatumahasenasasagharakidasaagisalanava-karmi ana*kanishkasaviharemahasenasasangharama"

The text is signed by the maker, a Greek artist named *Agesilas*, who oversaw work at Kanishka's stupas (caitya), confirming the direct involvement of Greeks with Buddhist realisations at such a late date: "The servant Agisalaos, the superintendent of works at the vihara of Kanishka in the monastery of Mahasena" ("*dasaagisalanava-karmi ana*kaniskasa vihara mahasenasasangharama*").

The lid of the casket shows the Buddha on a lotus pedestal, and worshipped by Brahma and Indra. The edge of the lid is decorated by a frieze of flying geese. The body of the casket represents a Kushan monarch, probably Kanishka in person, with the Iranian sun and moon gods on his side. On the sides are two images of a seated Buddha, worshiped by royal figures, can be assumed as Kanishka. A garland, supported by cherubs goes around the scene in typical Hellenistic style.

The attribution of the casket to Kanishka has been recently disputed, essentially on stylistic ground (for example the ruler shown on the casket is not bearded, to the contrary of Kanishka). Instead, the casket is often attributed to Kanishka's successor Huvishka.

In Buddhist tradition, Kanishka is often described as an aggressive, hot tempered, rigid, strict, and a bit harsh kind of King before he got converted to Buddhism of which he was very fond, and after his conversion to Buddhism, he became an openhearted, benevolent, and faithful ruler. As in the Sri-dharma-pitaka-nidana sutra:

"At this time the King of Ngan-si (Pahlava) was very aggressive and of a violent nature....There was a bhikshu (monk) arhat who seeing the harsh deeds done by the king wished to make him repent. So by his supernatural force he caused the king to see the torments of hell. The king was terrified and repented and cried terribly and hence dissolved all his negatives within him and got self realised for the first time in life ." *Śrī-dharma-piṭaka-nidānasūtra*

Additionally, the arrival of Kanishka was reportedly foretold or was predicted by the Buddha, as well as the construction of his stupa:

". . . the Buddha, pointing to a small boy making a mud tope....[said] that on that spot *Kaṇiṣka* would erect a tope by his name." *Vinaya sutra*.

The same story is repeated in a Khotanese scroll found at Dunhuang, which first described how Kanishka would arrive 400 years after the death of the Buddha. The account also describes how Kanishka came to raise his stupa:

"A desire thus arose in [Kanishka to build a vast stupa]....at that time the four world-regents learnt the mind of the king. So for his sake they took the form of young boys....[and] began a stūpa of mud....the boys said to [Kanishka] 'We are making the *Ka□i□ka-stūpa*.'....At that time the boys changed their form....[and] said to him, 'Great king, by you according to the Buddha's prophecy is a *Sa□ghārāma* to be built wholly (?) with a large stūpa and hither relics must be invited which the meritorious good beings...will bring."

Chinese pilgrims to India, such as Xuanzang, who travelled there around 630 CE also relays the story:

"*Ka□i□ka* became sovereign of all Jambudvīpa (Indian subcontinent) but he did not believe in Karma, but he treated Buddhism with honor and respect as he himself converted to Buddhism intrigued by the teachings and scriptures of it. When he was hunting in the wild country a white hare appeared; the king gave a chase and the hare suddenly disappeared at [the site of the future stupa]....[when the construction of the stūpa was not going as planned] the king lost his patience and took the matter in his own hands and started resurrecting the plans precisely, thus completing the stupas with utmost perfection and perseverance. These two stupas are still in existence and were resorted to for cures by people afflicted with diseases."

King Kanishka because of his deeds was highly respected, regarded, honored by all the people he ruled and governed and was regarded the greatest king who ever lived because of his kindness, humbleness and sense of equality and self-righteousness among all aspects. Thus such great deeds and character of the king Kanishka made his name immortal and thus he was regarded "THE KING OF KINGS"

Buddhist monks from the region of Gandhara played a key role in the development and the transmission of Buddhist ideas in the direction of northern Asia from the middle of the 2nd century CE. The Kushan monk, Lokaksema (c. 178 CE), became the first translator of Mahayana Buddhist scriptures into Chinese and established a translation bureau at the Chinese capital Loyang. Central Asian and East Asian Buddhist monks appear to have maintained strong exchanges for the following centuries.

Kanishka was probably succeeded by Huvishka. How and when this came about is still uncertain. It is a fact that there was only one king named Kanishka in the whole Kushan legacy. The inscription on the Sacred Rock of Hunza also shows the signs of Kanishka.

12.5 THE REIGN OF KING HARSHAVARDHANA (606 TO 648 AD)

The deficiency of material which embarrasses the historian when dealing with the latter half of the sixth century is no longer experienced when one enters upon the seventh. For this period is fortunate enough to possess, in addition to the ordinary epigraphic and numismatic sources, two

contemporary literary works, which shed much light upon the political condition of India generally, and supply, in particular, abundant and trustworthy information concerning the reign of Harshavardhana, who ruled the North as paramount sovereign for more than forty years.

The first of these works is the invaluable book of travels compiled by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited almost every part of India between 630 and 645 A.D. and recorded observations more or less minute about each state and province. The narrative in the *Travels* is supplemented by the pilgrim's biography, written by his friend, Hwui-li, which supplies many additional details. The second work alluded to is the historical romance entitled the "Deeds of Harsha" (*Harsha-charita*), composed by Bana, a Brahman author who lived at the court and enjoyed the patronage of the hero of his tale. Further information of much interest and importance is given by the official Chinese histories, and when all sources are utilized, our knowledge of the events of the reign of Harsha far surpasses in precision that which we possess respecting any other early Indian king, except Chandragupta Maurya and Asoka.



From remote ages the country surrounding the city of Thanesar (Sthanvisvara) has been holy ground, known as the "Land of Kuru," and famous as the battle-field of legendary heroes. In the latter part of the sixth century, the Raja of Thanesar, Prabhakaravardhana by name, had raised himself to considerable eminence by successful wars against his neighbours, including the Hun settlements in the North-western Panjab, and the clans of Gurjara, or the country of Gujarat, between the Chinab and Jihlam Rivers⁴. The fact that his mother was a princess of Gupta lineage no doubt both stimulated his ambition and aided its realization.

In the year 604, this energetic raja had despatched his elder son, Rajyavardhana, a youth just entering upon manhood, with a large army to attack the Huns on the north-western frontier, while his younger and favourite son, Harsha, four years junior to the crown prince, followed his brother with a cavalry force at a considerable interval. The elder prince advanced into the hills to seek the enemy, while the younger lingered in the forests at the foot of the mountains to enjoy the sport of all kinds which they offered in abundance.

While thus pleasantly employed, Harsha, who was then a lad fifteen years of age, received news that his father lay dangerously ill with a violent fever. He returned to the capital with all speed, where he found the king in a hopeless condition. The disease quickly ran its course, and all was over long before the elder son, who had been victorious in his campaign, could return to claim his birth right. There are indications that a party at court inclined to favour the succession of the younger prince, but all intrigues were frustrated by the return of Rajya-vardhana, who ascended the throne in due course. He had hardly seated himself when news arrived which compelled him again to take the field.

A courier brought the distressing intelligence that Grahavarman, King of Kanauj, and husband of Rajyasri, sister of the princes, had been slain by the King of Malwa, who cruelly misused the princess, "confining her like a brigand's wife, with a pair of iron fetters kissing her feet." The young king, resolute to avenge his sister's wrongs, started at once with a mobile force of ten thousand cavalry, leaving the elephants and heavy troops behind in his brother's charge. The King of Malwa was defeated with little effort, but the joy of victory was turned into sorrow when the victor was treacherously slain by an ally of the Malwaking, Sasanka, King of Central Bengal, who had inveigled Rajya-vardhana to a conference by fair promises, and had assassinated him when off his guard. Harsha was further informed that his widowed sister had escaped from confinement and fled to the Vindhya forests for refuge, but no certain news of her hiding-place could be obtained.

The murdered king was too young to leave a son capable of assuming the cares of government, and the nobles seem to have hesitated before offering the crown to his youthful brother. Acting on the advice of Bhandi, a slightly senior cousin, who had been educated with the young princes, they ultimately resolved to invite Harsha to undertake the responsibilities of the royal office. For some reason which is not apparent on the face of the story, he hesitated to express his consent, and it is said that he consulted a Buddhist oracle before accepting the invitation. Even when his reluctance, whether sincere or pretended, had been overcome by the favourable response of the oracle, he still sought to propitiate Nemesis by abstaining at first from the assumption of the kingly style, modestly designating himself as Prince Siladitya. There is reason to suppose that Harsha did not boldly stand forth as avowed king until the spring of 612 A.D., when he had been five and a half years on the throne, and that his formal coronation, or consecration, took place in that year. The era called after his name, of which the year 1 was 606–7 A.D., dated from the time of his accession in October, 606.

The immediate duties incumbent upon him obviously were the pursuit of his brother's murderer and the recovery of his widowed sister. The latter task, being the more urgent, was undertaken in all haste, even at the cost of permitting the assassin's escape. The haste shown was none too great, for the princess, despairing of rescue, was on the point of burning herself alive with her attendants, when her brother, guided by aboriginal chiefs, succeeded in tracing her in the depths of the Vindhya jungles. The details

of the campaign against Sasanka have not been recorded, and it seems clear that he escaped with little loss. He is known to have been still in power as late as the year 619, but his kingdom probably became subject to Harsha at a later date.

Harsha, having recovered his sister – a young lady of exceptional attainments, learned in the doctrines of the Sammitiyaschool of Buddhism – devoted his signal ability and energy to the prosecution of a methodical scheme of conquest, with the deliberate purpose of bringing all India “under one umbrella.” He possessed at this stage of his career a force of five thousand elephants, twenty thousand cavalry, and fifty thousand infantry. Apparently he discarded as useless the chariots, which constituted, according to ancient tradition, the fourth arm of a regularly organized Indian host.

With this mobile and formidable force Harsha overran Northern India, and, in the picturesque language of his contemporary, the Chinese pilgrim, “he went from east to west subduing all who were not obedient; the elephants were not unharnessed, nor the soldiers unhelmeted.” By the end of five and a half years the conquest of the north-western regions, and probably also of a large portion of Bengal, was completed, and his military resources were so increased that he was able to put in the field sixty thousand war elephants and one hundred thousand cavalry. But he continued fighting for thirty years longer, and, as late as 643 A.D., was engaged in his last campaign, an attack upon the sturdy inhabitants of Ganjam on the coast of the Bay of Bengal.

His long career of victory was broken by one failure. Pulakesin II, the greatest of the Chalukya dynasty, vied with Harsha in the extent of his conquests, and had raised himself to the rank of lord paramount of the south, as Harsha was of the north. The northern king could not willingly endure the existence of so powerful a rival, and essayed to overthrow him, advancing in person to the attack, with “troops from the five Indies and the best generals from all countries.” But the effort failed. The King of the Deccan guarded the passes on the Narmada so effectually that Harsha was constrained to retire discomfited, and to accept that river as his frontier. This campaign may be dated about the year 620 A.D.

In the latter years of his reign the sway of Harsha over the whole of the basin of the Ganges (including Nepal), from the Himalaya to the Narmada, was undisputed. Detailed administration of course remained in the hands of the local rajas, but even the king of distant Assam (Kamarupa) in the east obeyed the orders of the suzerain, and the King of Valabhi in the extreme west attended in his train.

For the control of his extensive empire, Harsha relied upon his personal supervision exercised with untiring energy rather than upon the services of a trained bureaucracy. Except during the rainy season, when travelling with a huge camp was impracticable, he was incessantly on the move, punishing evil-doers and rewarding the meritorious. Luxurious tents, such as were used by the Mogul emperors, and still form the movable

habitations of high Anglo-Indian officials, had not then been invented, and Harsha was obliged to be content with a “travelling palace” made of boughs and reeds, which was erected at each halting-place and burned at his departure.

Hiuen Tsang, like his predecessor, Fa-hien, more than two centuries earlier, was favourably impressed by the character of the civil administration, which he considered to be founded on benign principles. The principal source of revenue was the rent of the Crown lands, amounting, in theory at all events, to one-sixth of the produce. The officials were remunerated by grants of land; compulsory labour upon public works was paid for; taxes were light; the personal services exacted from the subject were moderate in amount; and liberal provision was made for charity to various religious communities.

Violent crime was rare, but the roads and river routes were evidently less safe than in Fa-hien’s time, as linen Tsang was stopped and robbed by brigands more than once. Imprisonment was now the ordinary penalty, and it was of the cruel Tibetan type; the prisoners, we are told, “are simply left to live or die, and are not counted among men.” The other punishments were more sanguinary than in the Gupta period: mutilation of the nose, ears, hands, or feet being inflicted as the penalty of serious offences, and even for failure in filial piety; but this penalty was sometimes commuted for banishment. Minor offences were visited with fines. Ordeals by water, fire, weight, or poison were much esteemed as efficient instruments for the ascertainment of truth and are described with approval by the Chinese pilgrim.

Official records of public events were kept in every province by special officers, whose duty it was to register “good and evil events, with calamities and fortunate occurrences.” Such records were, no doubt, consulted by the writers of the great historical inscriptions, but no specimen of them has survived.

Education evidently was diffused widely, especially among the Brahmans and numerous Buddhist monks, and learning was honoured by the government. King Harsha was not only a liberal patron of literary merit, but was himself an accomplished calligraphist and an author of reputation. Besides a grammatical work, three extant Sanskrit plays are ascribed to his pen, and there is no reason for hesitating to believe that he had at least a large share in their composition, for royal authors were not uncommon in ancient India. One of these plays, the *Nagananda*, which has an edifying Buddhist legend for its subject, is considered to rank among the best works of the Indian theatre, and the other dramas, the *Ratnavali*, or “Necklace,” and the *Priyadarsika*, or “Gracious Lady,” although lacking in originality, are praised highly for their simplicity both of thought and expression.

The greatest ornament of the literary circle at Harsha’s court was the Brahman Bana, author of the historical romance devoted to a panegyric account of the deeds of his patron, which is an amazingly clever, but

irritating, performance, executed in the worst possible taste, and yet containing passages of admirable and vivid description. The man who attributes to the commander-in-chief, Skandagupta, “a nose as long as his sovereign’s pedigree,” may fairly be accused of having perpetrated the most grotesque simile in all literature. But the same man could do better, and shows no lack of power when depicting the death-agony of the king. “Helplessness had taken him in hand; pain had made him its province, wasting its domain, lassitude its lair. . . . He was on the confines of doom, on the verge of the last gasp, at the outset of the Great Undertaking, at the portal of the Long Sleep, on the tip of death’s tongue; broken in utterance, unhinged in mind, tortured in body, waning in life, babbling in speech, ceaseless in sighs; vanquished by yawning, swayed by suffering, in the bondage of racking pains.” Such writing, although not in perfect good taste, unmistakably bears the stamp of power.

One campaign sated Asoka’s thirst for blood; thirty-seven years of warfare were needed by Harsha before he could be content to sheathe the sword.

King Harsha’s Autograph on the Banskhera Inscription.

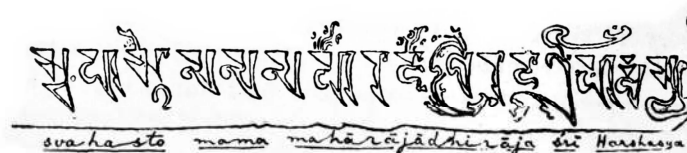
“My own hand. Sri Harsha, Lord Paramount.” (Svahasto mama maharajadhirajasriHarshasya,) From Epigraphia Indica.

His last campaign was fought against the people of Ganjam (Kongoda) in 643 A.D., and then at last this king of many wars



Image source:- <https://eyeburfi2.tumblr.com/post/48505083819/banskhera-copperplate-inscription-of>

doffed his
armour and
devoted himself
to the arts of
peace and the
practice of
piety, as



AUTOGRAPH OF KING HARSHA.

Image source:- <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/10843/autograph-of-emperor-harsha/>

understood by an Indian despot. He obviously set himself to imitate Asoka, and the narrative of the doings in the latter years of Harsha’s reign reads like a copy of the history of the great Maurya.

At this period the king began to show marked favour to the quietist teachings of Buddhism, first in its Hinayana, and afterward in its Mahayana form. He led the life of a devotee, and enforced the Buddhist prohibitions against the destruction of animal life with the utmost strictness and scant regard for the sanctity of human life. “He sought,” we are told, “to plant the tree of religious merit to such an extent that he forgot to sleep and eat,” and forbade the slaughter of any living thing, or the use of flesh as food throughout the “Five Indies,” under pain of death without hope of pardon.

Benevolent institutions on the Asokan model, for the benefit of travellers, the poor, and the sick, were established throughout the empire. Rest-houses (*dharmasala*) were built in both the towns and rural parts, and provided with food and drink. Physicians were stationed at them to supply medicines without stint to those who needed them. The king also imitated his prototype in the foundation of numerous religious establishments devoted to the service both of the Hindu gods and the Buddhist ritual.

In his closing years the latter received the chief share of the royal favour, and numerous monasteries were erected, as well as several thousand stupas, each about a hundred feet high, built along the banks of the sacred Ganges. These latter structures doubtless were of a flimsy character, built chiefly of timber and bamboo, and so have left no trace; but the mere multiplication of *stupas*, however perishable the materials might be, was always a work of merit. Although Buddhism was visibly waning in the days of Harsha and Hiuen Tsang, the monks of the order were still numerous, and the occupants of the monasteries enumerated by the pilgrims numbered nearly two hundred thousand. A monastic population of such magnitude offered abundant opportunities for the exercise of princely liberality.

The picture of the state of religious belief and practice in India during the seventh century, as drawn by the contemporary authors, is filled with curious and interesting details.



Coin of Harshavardhana, circa 606–647 CE
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harsha>

The members of the royal family to which Harsha belonged freely acted on their individual preferences in the matter of religion. His remote ancestor,

Pushyabhuti, is recorded to have entertained from boyhood an ardent devotion toward Siva, and to have turned away from all other gods. Harsha's father was equally devoted to the worship of the Sun, and daily offered to that luminary "a bunch of red lotuses set in a pure vessel of ruby, and tinged, like his own heart, with the same hue." The elder brother and sister of Harsha were faithful Buddhists, while Harsha himself distributed his devotions among the three deities of the family, Siva, the Sun, and Buddha, and erected costly temples for the service of all three. But, in his later years, the Buddhist doctrines held the chief place in his affections, and the eloquence of the Chinese Master of the Law induced him to prefer the advanced teaching of the Mahayana sect to the more primitive Hinayana doctrine of the Sammitiya school with which he had previously been familiar.

The religious eclecticism of the royal family was the reflection and result of the state of popular religion at the time. Buddhism, although it had

certainly lost the dominant position in the Ganges plain which it had once held, was still a powerful force, and largely influenced the public mind. The Jain system, which had never been very widely spread or aggressive in the north, retained its hold on certain localities, especially at Vaisali and in Eastern Bengal, but could not pretend to rival the general popularity of either Buddhism or Puranic Hinduism.

The last-named modification of the Hindu system was now firmly established, and the earlier Puranas were already revered as ancient and sacred writings.

The bulk of the population in most provinces was then, as now, devoted to the service of the Puranic gods, each man and woman being, of course, free to select a particular deity, Siva, the Sun, Vishnu,



Ruins Of Nalanda University

Photo courtesy:- Dr. Yojana Bhagat

or another, for special adoration according to personal predilection. As a rule, the followers of the various religions lived peaceably together, and no doubt many people besides the king sought to make certain of some divine support by doing honour to all the principal objects of popular worship in turn.

But, while toleration and concord were the rule, exceptions occurred. The King of Central Bengal, Sasanka, who has been mentioned as the treacherous murderer of Harsha's brother, and who was probably a scion of the Gupta dynasty, was a worshipper of Siva, and hated Buddhism, which he did his best to destroy. He dug up and burned the holy Bodhi tree at Bodhi Gaya, on which, according to legend, Asoka had lavished inordinate devotion; he broke the stone marked with the footprints of Buddha at Pataliputra; and he destroyed the convents, and scattered the monks, carrying his persecutions to the foot of the Nepalese hills. These events must have happened about 600 A.D. The Bodhi tree was replanted after a short time by Purnavarman, King of Magadha, who is described as being the last descendant of Asoka, and as such was specially bound to honour the object venerated by his great ancestor.

Harsha himself sometimes offended against the principle of perfect religious toleration and equality. Like Akbar, he was fond of listening to the expositions of rival doctors, and he heard with great pleasure the arguments adduced by the learned Chinese traveller in favour of the Mahayana form of Buddhism, with the doctrines of which he does not

seem to have been familiar. An interesting illustration of the freedom of ancient Hindu society from the trammels of the system of female seclusion introduced by the Mohammedans is afforded by the fact that his widowed sister sat by the king's side to hear the lecture by the Master of the Law, and frankly expressed the pleasure which she received from the discourse.

The king, however, was determined that his favourite should not be defeated in controversy, and when opponents were invited to dispute the propositions of the Chinese scholar, the terms of the contest were not quite fair. Harsha, having heard a report that Hiuen Tsang's life was in danger at the hands of his theological rivals, issued a proclamation concluding with the announcement that "if any one should touch or hurt the Master of the Law, he shall be forthwith beheaded; and whoever speaks against him, his tongue shall be cut out; but all those who desire to profit by his instructions, relying on my good-will, need not fear this manifesto."

The pilgrim's biographer naively adds that "from this time the followers of error withdrew and disappeared, so that, when eighteen days had passed, there had been no one to enter on the discussion."

A curious legend, narrated by Taranath, the Tibetan historian of Buddhism, if founded on fact, as it may be, indicates that Harsha's toleration did not extend to foreign religions. The story runs that the king built near Multan a great monastery constructed of timber after the foreign fashion, in which he entertained the strange teachers hospitably for several months, and that at the close of the entertainment he set fire to the building, and consumed along with it twelve thousand followers of the outlandish system, with all their books. This drastic measure is said to have reduced the religion of the Persians and Sakas to very narrow limits for a century, and it is alleged that their doctrine, presumably Zoroastrianism, was kept alive only by a single weaver in Khorasan.

King Harsha was so delighted with the discourse of Hiuen Tsang, whom he had met while in camp in Bengal, that he resolved to hold a special assembly at Kanauj, which was then his capital, for the purpose of giving the utmost publicity to the Master's teaching. The king marched along the southern bank of the Ganges, attended by an enormous multitude, while his vassal Kumara, King of Kamarupa, with a large but less numerous following, kept pace with him on the opposite bank. Advancing slowly in this way, Harsha, Kumara, and the attendant host reached Kanauj in the course of ninety days, and there encamped, in February or March, 644 A.D. The sovereign was received by Kumara, the Raja of Kamarupa, who had accompanied him on the march, the Raja of Valabhi in Western India, who was connected with him by marriage, and eighteen other tributary rajas, as well as by four thousand learned Buddhist monks, including a thousand from the Nalanda monastery in Bihar, and some three thousand Jains and orthodox Brahmans.

The centre of attraction was a great monastery and shrine specially erected upon the bank of the Ganges, where a golden image of Buddha, equal to the king in stature, was kept in a tower a hundred feet high. A similar but

smaller image, three feet in height, was carried daily in solemn procession, escorted by the twenty rajas and a train of three hundred elephants. The canopy was borne by Harsha in person, attired as the god Sakra, while his vassal, Raja Kumara, the most important of the princes in attendance, was clad as the god Brahma, and had the honour of waving a white fly-whisk. The sovereign, as he moved along, scattered on every side pearls, golden flowers, and other precious substances, in honour of the “Three Jewels,” – Buddha, the Religion, and the Order, – and having with his own hands washed the image at the altar prepared for the purpose, bore it on his shoulder to the western tower, and there offered to it thousands of silken robes embroidered with gems. Dinner was succeeded by a public disputation of the one-sided kind already described, and in the evening the monarch returned to his “travelling palace,” a mile distant.

These ceremonies, which lasted for many days, were terminated by startling incidents. The temporary monastery, which had been erected at vast cost, suddenly took fire, and was in great part destroyed; but when the king intervened in person, the flames were stayed, and pious hearts recognized a miracle.

Harsha, attended by his princely train, had ascended the great stupa to survey the scene, and was coming down the steps, when a fanatic, armed with a dagger, rushed upon him and attempted to stab him. The assassin, having been captured instantly, was closely interrogated by the king in person, and confessed that he had been instigated to commit the crime by certain “heretics,” who resented the excessive royal favour shown to the Buddhists. Five hundred Brahmans of note were then arrested, and, being “straitly questioned,” were induced to confess that, in order to gratify their jealousy, they had fired the tower by means of burning arrows, and had hoped to slay the king during the resulting confusion. This confession, which was no doubt extorted by torture, was probably wholly false; but, whether true or not, it was accepted, and on the strength of it the alleged principals in the plot were executed, and some five hundred Brahmans were sent into exile.



Master Xuanzang - Nalanda Xuanzang Memorial
Photo courtesy - Dr. Yojana Bhagat

After the close of the proceedings at Kanauj, Harsha invited his Chinese guest to accompany him to Prayaga (Allahabad), at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna, to witness another imposing ceremonial. The Master of the Law, although anxious to start on his toilsome homeward journey, could not refuse the invitation, and accompanied his royal host to the scene of the intended display. Harsha explained that it had

been his practice for thirty years past, in accordance with the custom of his ancestors, to hold a great quinquennial assembly on the sands where the rivers meet, and there to distribute his accumulated treasures to the poor and needy, as well as to the religious of all denominations. The present occasion was the sixth of the series (644 A.D.), which evidently had not been begun until Harsha had consolidated his power in the north.

The assembly was attended by all the vassal kings and a vast concourse of humbler folk estimated to number half a million, including poor, orphans, and destitute persons, besides specially invited Brahmans and ascetics of every sect from all parts of Northern India. The proceedings lasted for seventy-five days, terminating apparently about the end of April, and were opened by an imposing procession of all the rajas with their retinues. The religious services were of the curiously eclectic kind characteristic of the times.

On the first day an image of Buddha was set up in one of the temporary thatched buildings upon the sands, and vast quantities of costly clothing and other articles of value were distributed. On the second and third days, respectively, the images of the Sun and Siva were similarly honoured, but the accompanying distribution in each case was only half the amount of that consecrated to Buddha. The fourth day was devoted to the bestowal of gifts on ten thousand selected religious persons of the Buddhist order, who each received one hundred gold coins, a pearl, and a cotton garment,

besides choice food, drink, flowers, and perfumes. During the next following twenty days, the great multitude of Brahmans were the recipients of the royal bounty. They were succeeded by the people whom the Chinese author calls "heretics," that is to say, Joins and members of sundry sects, who received gifts for the space of ten days. A like period was allotted for the bestowal of alms upon mendicants from distant regions, and a month was occupied in the distribution of charitable aid to poor, orphaned, and destitute persons.

"By this time the accumulation of five years was exhausted. Except the 'horses, elephants, and military accoutrements, which were necessary for maintaining order and protecting the royal estate, nothing remained. Besides these the king freely gave away his gems and goods, his clothing and necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets, chaplets, neck-jewel, and bright head-jewel; all these he freely gave without stint. All being given away, he begged from his sister [Rajyasri] an ordinary second-hand garment, and, having put it on, he paid worship to the Buddhas of the ten regions,' and rejoiced that his treasure had been bestowed in the field of religious merit."

The strange assembly, which in general appearance must have much resembled the crowded fair still held annually on the same ground, then broke up, and, after a further detention of ten days, Hiuen Tsang was permitted to depart. The king and Kumara Raja offered him abundance of gold pieces and other precious things, none of which he would accept, save a fur-lined cape,

the gift of Kumara. But although the Master of the Law uniformly declined gifts intended to serve his personal use, he did not disdain to accept money for the necessary expenses of his arduous journey overland to China. These were provided on a liberal scale by the grant of three thousand gold and ten thousand silver pieces carried on an elephant.

A raja named Udhita was placed in command of a mounted escort, and charged to conduct the pilgrim in safety to the frontier. In the course of about six months of leisurely progress, interrupted by frequent halts, the raja completed his task, and brought his sovereign's guest in safety to Jalandhar in the north of the Panjab, where Hiuen Tsang stayed for a month. He then started with a fresh escort, and, penetrating with difficulty the defiles of the Salt Range, crossed the Indus, and ultimately reached his home in distant China by the route over the Pamirs and through Kilo-tan, in the spring of 646 A.D.

The pages of Hiuen Tsang and his biographer give the latest information about King Harsha, who died at the end of 647, or the beginning of 648, not long after his distinguished guest's departure. During his lifetime he maintained diplomatic intercourse with the Chinese empire. A Brahman envoy, whom he had sent to the Emperor of China, returned in 643 A.D., accompanied by a Chinese mission bearing a reply to Harsha's despatch. The mission remained for a considerable time in India, and did not go back to China until 645 A.D. The next year, Wang-hiuen-tse, who had been the second in command of the earlier embassy, was sent by his sovereign as head of a new _Indian mission, with an escort of thirty horsemen. Before the envoys reached Magadha in 648 A.D., King Harsha had died, and the withdrawal of his strong arm had plunged the country into disorder, which was aggravated by famine.

Arjuna, a minister of the late king, usurped the throne, and gave a hostile reception to the Chinese mission. The members of the escort were massacred, and the property of the mission plundered, but the envoys, Wang-hiuen-tse and his colleague, were fortunate enough to escape into Nepal by night.

The reigning King of Tibet, the famous Srong-tsanGampo, who was married to a Chinese princess, succoured the fugitives, and supplied them with a force of a thousand horsemen, which co-operated with a Nepalese contingent of seven thousand men. With this small army Wang-hiuen-tse descended into the plains, and, after a three days' siege, succeeded in storming the chief city of Tirhut. Three thousand of the garrison were beheaded, and ten thousand persons were drowned in the neighbouring river. Arjuna fled, and, having collected a fresh force, offered battle. He was again disastrously defeated and taken prisoner. The victor promptly beheaded a thousand prisoners, and in a later action captured the entire royal family, took twelve thousand prisoners, and obtained thirty thousand head of cattle. Five hundred and eighty walled towns made their submission, and K-umara, the King of Eastern India, who had attended Harsha's assemblies a few years earlier, sent in abundant supplies of cattle, horses, and accoutrements for the victorious army. Wang-hiuen-tse

brought the usurper Arjuna as a prisoner to China, and was promoted for his services. Thus ended this strange episode, which, although known to antiquaries for many years, has hitherto escaped the notice of the historians of India.

The observations of Hiuen Tsang throw considerable light upon the political arrangements of India in the regions beyond the limits of Harsha's empire during the seventh century A.D. In the north, Kashmir was the predominant power, and had reduced the kingdoms of Taxila and the Salt Range (Simhapura), as well as the minor principalities of the lower hills, to the rank of dependencies.

The greater part of the Panjab between the Indus and the Bias Rivers was comprised in the kingdom called Tseh-kia by the pilgrim, the capital of which was an unnamed city situated close to Sakala, where the tyrant Mihiragula had held his court. The province of Multan, where the Sun-god was held in special honour, and a country called Po-fa-to, to the northeast of Multan, were dependencies of this kingdom.

Sind was remarkable for being under the government of a king belonging to the Sudra caste, and for the large number of Buddhist monks which the country supported, estimated at ten thousand. But the quality was not in proportion to the quantity, as most of the ten thousand were denounced as idle fellows given over to self-indulgence and debauchery. The Indus delta, to which the pilgrim gives the name of O-tien-pochi-lo, was a province of the kingdom of Sind.

The Kings of Ujjain in Central India and of Pundravardhana in Bengal, both of which kingdoms were more or less subject to Harsha's control, belonged to the Brahman caste. The Ujjain



country supported a dense population, which included few Buddhists. Most of the monasteries were in ruins, and only three or four, occupied by some three hundred monks, were in use. The early decay of Buddhism in this region, which was sanctified by the traditions of Asoka, and included the magnificent buildings at Sanchi, is a very curious fact.

Bhaskara-varman, or Kumara Raja, the King of Kamarupa, or Assam, who played such a prominent part in Harsha's ceremonies, was also by caste a Brahman, and without faith in Buddha, although well disposed toward learned men of all religions. He was so far subject to the sovereign of Northern India that he could not afford to disobey Harsha's commands.

Kalinga, the conquest of which had cost Asoka such bitter remorse nine hundred years earlier, was depopulated, and mostly covered with jungle. The pilgrim observes in picturesque language that “in old days the kingdom of Kalinga had a very dense population. Their shoulders rubbed one with the other, and the axles of their chariot-wheels grided together, and when they raised their arm-sleeves a perfect tent was formed.” Legend sought to explain the change by the curse of an angry saint.

Kanishka and Harshavardhan

Harsha was the last native monarch prior to the Mohammedan conquest who held the position of paramount power in the North. His death loosened the bonds which restrained the disruptive forces always ready to operate in India, and allowed them to produce their normal result, a medley of petty states, with ever varying boundaries, and engaged in unceasing internecine war. Such was India when first disclosed to European observation in the fourth century B.C., and such it always has been, except during the **Excavations at Thaneshwar Kurukshetra-Harsha ka tila**

comparatively brief periods in which a vigorous central government has compelled the mutually repellent molecules of the body politic to check their gyrations, and submit to the grasp of a superior controlling force.

Excepting the purely local incursions of the Arabs in Sind and Gujarat during the eighth century, India was exempt from foreign aggression for nearly five hundred years, from the defeat of Mihiragula in 528 A.D. until the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni at the beginning of the eleventh century, and was left free to work out her destiny in her own fashion. She cannot claim to have achieved success. The three following chapters, which attempt to give an outline of the salient features in the bewildering annals of Indian petty states when left to their own devices for several centuries, may perhaps serve to give the reader a notion of what India always has been when released from the control of a supreme authority.

12.6 SUMMARY:

Beside Emperor Asoka, Buddhist history knows of only two Buddhist kings. They are the Kushan king Kaniska I of the 1st CE and the king of Kanauj Harshvardhana of the 7th CE. Kanishka is known through his contribution to art and architecture and archaeological evidences, while Harsha is known through the authentic literary evidence, like the diary of Chinese scholar Huiyen Tsang and the Bana Bhatt's Harshacharita, supported by the archaeological evidences like coins and inscriptions.

Many kings- known unknown patrons of Buddhism are lost in the midst of the ignorance and should be studied with the help of archaeological and numismatics evidences.

12.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- Write in Brief the role of Emperor Asoka in the spread of Buddhism
- Are the inscriptions of Asoka enough to know the spread of his kingdom? Justify giving examples.
- Discuss King Kanishka and the Buddhist art and architecture.
- Write in short the life of Harsha and his relation with the Chinese Buddhist scholar HuienTsang..

12.8 ADDITIONAL READING:

John Rosenfield- The Dynastic arts of the Kushans

B N Puri- Kushans in India and Central Asia

Arvind K Singh-Coins of the great Kushans

K. Walton Dobbins - The stupa and vihara of Kanishka I

Hans Loeschner- Kanishka in Context with the Historical Buddha and Kushan Chronology

The Harsha-charita of Banabhatta trans. by E. B. Cowell and F. W Thomas, 1897

Radhakumud Mookerji -Harsha : (Calcutta University readership lectures, 1925)

D Devahuti- Harsha: A Political Study

Cultural India : History of India : Ancient India History: Harshavardhan
<https://www.culturalindia.net/indian-history/ancient-india/harshavardhan.html>



LUMBINI, KUSHINAGAR AND KAPILAVASTU

Unit Structure:

- 13.0 Objectives
- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Lumbinī
- 13.3 Kushinagar: (Ancient Kusinara)
- 13.4 Kapilavastu- (Today's Piprahwa)
- 13.5 Sarnath
- 13.6 Bodhgaya
- 13.7 Shravasti
- 13.8 Summary
- 13.9 Unit End Questions
- 13.10 Additional Readings

13.0 OBJECTIVES:

The study is done with the following objectives

- To dig out more information about the places associated with the life of the Buddha and the development in the next 1500 years.
- To know more about the history of Buddhism through the archaeological excavations and findings.
- To study the development of the Buddhist art and architecture through the centuries.
- To understand the reasons for the decline of Buddhism in the later period.
- To be able to read and collaborate the diary of the Chinese scholar Huiyen Tsang and the actual excavated sites today.

13.1 INTRODUCTION:

Through the tremendous efforts of the archaeologists like Sir Alexander Cunningham, that today we are able to study the sites associated with the Buddha. It should not be forgotten that just 175 years ago these sites which dates 5th century BCE were not known to any Indians, let alone studied.

Sir Alexander Cunningham with the help of the diary of the Chinese scholar Huen Tsang of the 7th CE, actually walked on the path and identified the places associated with the Buddha.

The identification is very tricky aspect as can be seen from the two sites of Kapilavastu seen today, one in India and one in Nepal. Not only the knowledge of the Pali literature is necessary but the explorer has to be an expert geographer and historian.

One cannot but be grateful to the dhammayatra of the emperor Asoka who not only visited the sites associated with the Buddha but left his own footsteps on the form of pillars and stupas on the sites.

The places like Lumbini, Kosambi, Sarnath, with the pillar inscriptions are very easy to identify. The Kapilvastu in India is at Piprahwa and in Nepal is at Tilaurkot. The railing and the vajrasana of the Asokan period is helpful for the identification of the Bodhgaya, but the villages of Saheth, Maheth to be identified with Kosala capital Sravasti is really difficult.

13.2 LUMBINI

Lumbini,
Kushinagar and
Kapilavastu



Lumbini ("the lovely") is in the foothills of the Himalaya, and is the place where Queen Mayadevi is said to have given birth to Siddhartha Gautama, it is in Nepal today, 20.0 kms from Kakarahwa border, and 70.0 kms from Gorakhpur.



IN BUDDHA'S TIME

In the Buddha's time, Lumbini was a park situated between Kapilavastu and Devadaha. In the Sutta Nipāta it is stated that the Buddha was born in a village of the Sākya, in the Lumbineyya Janapada. The Buddha stayed in Lumbinivāna during his visit to Devadaha and there preached the Devadaha Sutta.

महामायापि देवी पत्तेन तेलं विय दस मासे कुच्छिना बोधिसत्तं परिहरित्वा परिपुष्णगद्मा जातिधरं गन्तुकामा सुद्धोदनमहाराजस्स आरोचेसि- "इच्छामहं, देव, कुलसन्तकं देवदहनगरं गन्तुं"ति। राजा "साधु"ति सम्पटिच्छित्वा कपिलवस्तुतो याव देवदहनगरा मगं समं कारेत्वा कदलिपुष्पणघटधजपटाकादीहि अलङ्कारापेत्वा देवि सुवण्णसि विकाय निसीदापेत्वा अमच्चसहस्सेन उक्खिपापेत्वा महत्तेन परिवारेन पेसेसि। द्विघ्नं पन नगरानं अन्तरे उभयनगरवासीनमपि लुम्बिनीवनं नाम मङ्गलसालवनं अत्थि, तस्मिं समये मूलतो पट्टाय याव अगसाखा सव्वं एकपालिफुल्लं अहोसि, साखन्तरेहि चेव पुष्फन्तरेहि च पञ्चवण्णा भमरगणा नानपकारा च सकुणसङ्घा मधुरस्सरेन विकृजन्ता विचरन्ति। सकलं लुम्बिनीवनं चित्तलतावनसदिसं, महानुभावस्स रज्ज्वा सुसज्जितं आपानमण्डलं विय अहोसि। देविया तं दिस्वा सालवनकीलं कीलितुकामताचित्तं उदपादि। अमच्चा देवि गहेत्वा सालवनं पविस्सि। सा मङ्गलसालमूलं गन्त्वा सालसाखं गण्हितुकामा अहोसि, सालसाखा सुसेदितवेत्तमं विय ओनमित्वा देविया हत्थपथं उपगज्जि। सा हत्थं पसारित्वा साखं अगहेसि। तावदेव चस्सा कम्मजवाता चलिंसु। अथस्सा साणिं परिक्खपित्वा महाजनो पटिक्कमि। सालसाखं गहेत्वा तिष्ठमानाय एवस्सा गब्भबुद्धानं अहोसि। तद्धणंयेव चत्तारो विसुद्धचित्ता महाब्रह्मानो सुवण्णजालं आदाय सम्पत्ता तेन सुवण्णजालेन बोधिसत्तं सम्पटिच्छित्वा मातु पुरतो ठपेत्वा "अत्तमना, देवि, होहि,महेसक्खो ते पुत्तो उप्पन्नो"ति आहंसु।

ASOKA'S VISIT TO LUMBINI

Emperor Asoka personally visited Lumbini and venerated the place and marked his coming by erecting the pillar which served as the identification mark to identify the place after nearly 2200 years.

"20 years after the coronation Devanampiya piyadassi raja visited this place and worshipped because this is the place where the Buddha- the sakya sage is born. He had the stone wall and the stone pillar set up for the lord is born here in the village of Lumbini and the villagers are exempted from taxes and are required to pay only 1/8th of the products."

Chinese Pilgrim

Huien Tsang visited Lumbini in the 7th century AD and talks about the Asokan pillar with the figure of horse on top which is broken into two by the thunderbolt lightning by a dragon.

Re-discovery of Lumbini.

In 1896, Nepalese archaeologists discovered a great stone pillar at the site, attributed to Emperor Ashoka. Records made by the Chinese pilgrim Fa Xian and Huien Tsang were used in the process of identifying this religiously acclaimed site.

Present-day.

The holy site of Lumbini has ruins of ancient monasteries, a sacred Bodhi tree, an ancient bathing pond, the Asokan pillar and the Mayadevi temple, where the precise place of birth of Buddha is located.



Lumbinī or Rummindei is a small village now located in Rupandehi district Nepal, near Indian border, around 20-25 km away from Kakarahwa border and around 70.0 kms from Gorakhpur India.

The place is identified as the Lumbinī grove -the birth place of *bodhisatta* Siddhārtha with the help of the Asokan pillar still standing at the site with the brahmi inscription saying- *ide buddhejate*- here is the Buddhaborn. The inscription on the pillar also informs that Emperor Aśoka visited this sacred place in the 20th regnal year and erected this pillar.

A sacred tank, a shrine in memory of queen Mahāmāyā–Māyādevī shrine and the Aśokan pillar are the important monuments at the archaeological site which also has the tank-which is believed to be the one in which the bodhisatta was given the first bath..

The excavations first began in 1896 CE and are still being carried out as new findings add many interesting details to the facts. The first recorded visit to this place is of Emperor Aśoka. He not only erected a pillar at Lumbini but probably tried to make this place significant pilgrimage place according to the wishes of the Buddha, so that it would become easily accessible site as the other three-. Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kusinara.

Foreign travellers like Fa Hsien (5th century CE) and Huan Tsang (7th century CE) have also left behind the records of their visit to this place.

Lumbini is declared UNESCO world heritage site in 1997 and is visited as a sacred Buddhist pilgrimage place by the Buddhist all over the world.

13.3 KUSHINAGAR: (ANCIENT KUSINARA)

Lumbini,
Kushinagar and
Kapilavastu



KUSINARA Kushinagar, Kusinagar or Kusinara is a town and a nagarpanchayat in Kushinagar district in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is located 51.0 kms. east from Gorakhpur.

HISTORY

In ancient times, it was known as Kushavati (Jatakas). Kushinagar was a celebrated center of the Malla kingdom of ancient India. At this location, near the Hiranyavati River, Gautama Buddha attained Mahaparinibbana (or 'Final Nirvana') Many of the ruined stupas and viharas here date back to 3rd century BCE - 5th century CE when prosperity was at its peak.

The Mauryan emperor Asoka is known to have contributed to significant construction at this site. Visits by the Buddha to Kushinagar.



AT THE TIME OF THE BUDDHA, Kushinagar was the capital of the Mallas, and the scene of the Buddha's Mahaparinibbana. It was 25 yojanas from Rajagaha and 24 yojanas from Kapilavasthu) At that time it was a small city, "a branch-township with wattle-and-daub houses in the midst of the jungle," and Ananda was, at first, disappointed that the Buddha should have chosen it for his mahaparinibbana. But the Buddha, by preaching the Maha-Sudassana Sutta, pointed out to him that in ancient times it had been Kusavati, the royal city of Maha-Sudassana.

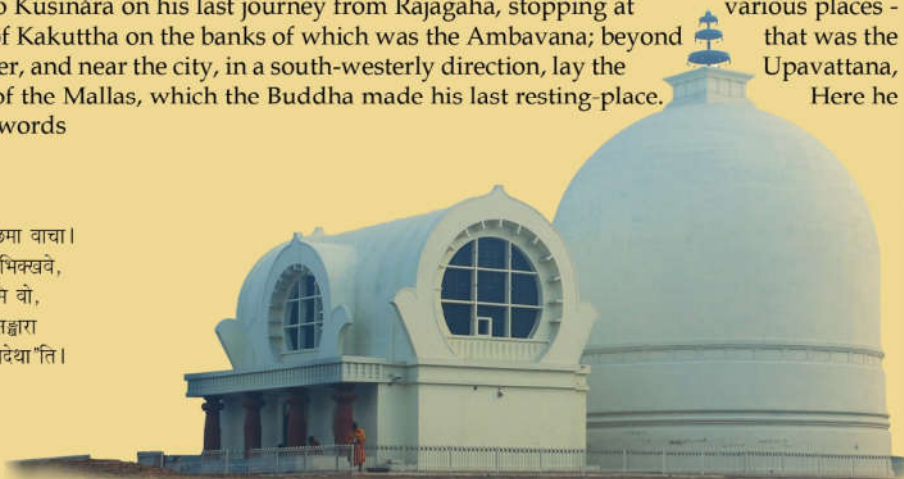


Image of the Buddha at the Mahaparinibbana Temple

It is said that the Buddha had three reasons for coming to Kusināra to enter Mahaparinibbana

1. Because it was the proper venue for the preaching of the Mahā-Sudassana Sutta;
2. Because Subhadda would visit him there and, after listening to his sermon, would develop meditation and become an arahant while the Buddha was still alive; and
3. Because the brahman Drona would be there, after the Buddha's death, to solve the problem of the distribution of his relics Between Kusinara and Pava, three gavutas away - from where the Buddha came to Kusināra on his last journey from Rajagaha, stopping at various places - lay the stream of Kakuttha on the banks of which was the Ambavana; beyond that was the Hiraññavati river, and near the city, in a south-westerly direction, lay the Upavattana, the Sala-grove of the Mallas, which the Buddha made his last resting-place. Here he uttered his last words

तथागतस्स पच्छिमा वाचा ।
“हन्द दानि, भिक्खवे,
आमन्तयामि वो,
वयधम्मा सङ्घारा
अप्पमादेन सम्पादेथा”ति ।



After the Buddha's Mahaparinibbana his body was carried into the city by the northern gate and out of the city by the eastern gate; to the east of the city was Makutabandhana Cetiya, the shrine of the Mallas, and there the body was cremated. For seven days those assembled at the ceremony held a festival in honour of the relics. Mention is made of other visits paid to Kusinára by the



Image of Buddha from Mathakunwar

Buddha, prior to that of his mahaparinibbana. During some of Buddha stayed in a wood called Baliharana, and there he preached two of the Kusinára Suttas and the "Kinti" Sutta a third Kusinára Sutta he preached while staying at Upavattana. Hiuen Tsang's day there still existed towers and Sanghárámas erected to mark the spots connected with the Buddha's last days, though they were in a desolate state. He talks about the Asoka stupa which was built on the spot where the Buddha entered Mahaparinibbana and it was above 200 feet though it was now in ruins. in front of it was the Asokan pillar recording the circumstances. He mentions the image of the Buddha in the mahaparinibbana with the head to the north, in the temple near the stupa.

He also states that there was a Asoka stupa built at the place where the relics of the Buddha were divided into 8 kings and there was a stone pillar in front of it recording the circumstances.

Rediscover

The remains of the Parinirvana Stupa and Parinirvana Temple, when rediscovered, were covered in a 40 foot high mound of bricks surrounded by a dense thorny forest. E. Buchanan, H. H. Wilson, in 1854, made the suggestion that ancient Kushinagar and Kasia were the same. Work resumed around 1861–1862 when General Alexander Cunningham, prove the site to be that of Gautama Buddha's passing. A British officer named Mr. A.C.L. Carlleyle also agreed and excavations began in the late 1880s and many important remnants of the main site such as the Mathakunwar and Ramabhar stupa were unveiled.

Today

Mahaparinibbana Stupa: is an uddesika stupa built on the place of Buddha's Mahaparinibbana between the two Sala trees. It is recently renovated by the Indian government, inside it is the old stupa. Stupa is surrounded by ruins of ancient monasteries though no Asokan pillar is found.

Mahaparinibbana temple: houses the 1500 year old image of the Buddha as he attained the mahaparinibbana. It is made of black stone but today shines like gold because of the application of gold leaves through the years.

Mukutabandhana or Ramabhar stupa: is the place where the cremation of the body of the Buddha was done after the Mahaparinibbana and the relics were distributed into 8 parts.

Mathakunwar Temple: ancient ruins of a vihara along with a small temple recently built, is seen on the site. Inside the small temple is a huge image of sitting Buddha, some 16' tall, finished in gilded polish, of 7th or 8th century AD.

PAVA

10kms from Kushinara is a place called Fazilnagar where a mound is to be excavated it looks like a stupa.

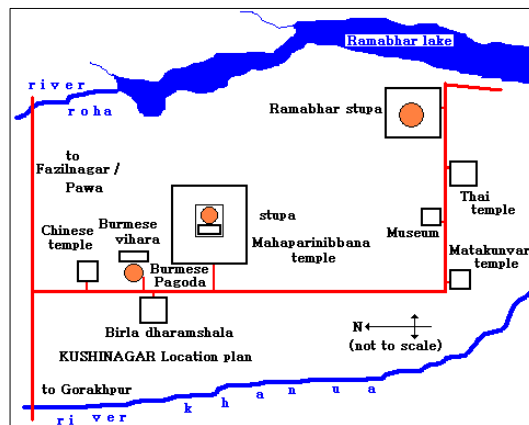
It is believed that it is a place where Chunda gave the last meal to Buddha, and Asoka has commemorated that event by constructing stupa there. The stupa is not yet excavated. From Pává the Buddha journeyed on to Kusinara, crossing the Kakkuttha on the way.



Unexcavated Stupa at Pava



Location: Kusinara today known as Kasia, a village located 51.0 kms from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, India. This is the place where Buddha attained *mahāparinirvāṇa* and hence became one of the most important sites of pilgrimage for the Buddhists. At the time of Buddha's Mahaparinibbana the Kusinara was a small underdeveloped village surrounded by sal forest under the rule of Malla's.



From the Mahaparinibbana sutta of the DighaNikaya it can be understood that Ven. Ananda was not very happy with the place and said to Buddha that there are other great cities like Champa, Rajir etc. why choose this dusty little town?

The Buddha explains to Ānanda the reason for selecting this place for his parinibbana and delivers the *Mahāsudassana Sutta* at this place as it was the most suitable place for giving the last sermon. Subhadda listens to the sermon and become the last disciple of the living Buddha. Here Buddha uttered his pachimavaca – the last words- ‘*vayadhammasankhara-appamadenasampadetha*’

While expressing his wish on what need to be done of the body of the Tathagata after Mahaparinibbana, the Buddha preached the importance of the stupa- as to where to build, and how it is to be worshipped with *malagandhavilepana etc*

Here at this place after the *mahāparinibbāṇa* the relics of the Buddha were distributed by Drona brahmin and 10 stupas were built in different directions. While telling the importance of the place- Kusinara to Ananda, Buddha also predicted that this place would become important for the monks as well as to the lay devotees in future. Both Fa Hsien (5th century

CE) and Huan Tsang (7th century CE) mention this place in their records, which helped in rediscovering the place.

Importance of the stupas: The importance of the both stupas at Kusinara is undoubtedly greater than any other stupas except the one at Lumbini, Sarnath and Bodhgaya. Kusinara was important in ancient days with two stupas – one Saririka – the Mahaparinibbana stupa and one Uddesika – the Ramabhar stupa being there. The Mahaparinibbana stupa is on the place where the Buddha left his body and the Mukutbandhana or Ramabhar stupa – where the Buddha's body is cremated after ven Mahākassapa lit the funeral pyre.

Kusinara developed after the Mahaparinibbana of Buddha and became a Buddhist centre where lay followers as well as monks paid visit as a pilgrimage to one of the important places connected with the life of Buddha. Emperor Asoka visited the place and renovated the Mahaparinibbana stupa and constructed Asoka pillar there. The Chinese traveler Huiyen Tsang also visited the place and mentions the Asoka pillar and the height of the Mahaparinibbana stupa to be 200 feet high.

Today Kusinara is developing into a town with beautiful temples and viharas of different countries coming up. Mathakuar is another small shrine erected on a stone statue of the golden Buddha in *bhumisparśamudrā* on the excavated ruins of the vihara of 5th CE. A small museum named as Kushinagar Museum is located at the site where all the artifacts gathered from the excavations are preserved and displayed.

Archaeological Report:

Mukutbandhan stupa or the Ramabhar stupa (near the Ramabhar Lake)- In 1861 General A. Cunningham indicated that there is a possibility of the Ramabhar stupa of being the Mukutbandhan stupa. In 1876 under the presidentship of Mr. Caralyll, excavation started as indicated by General Cunningham. It was carried on afterwards by Dr. Wogel and Hiranand Shashtri. While digging in the centre of the stupa Hiranand Sashtri came across a platform like structure of burnt bricks at a depth of 5 feet below water level. He said “after having found the centre I sank a shaft of with radius of 2’ to about 5’0” below the water level which was reached at 48’0” from the top of the eastern portion of the stupa. At water level and towards the west of the centre I noticed a brick flooring and cornices of walling, but these proved to be nothing but foundation walls” [Hiranand Sashtri – excavation at Kasia, Archaeological survey of India report 1910-11, Calcutta 1914, p 70]

Mahaparinibbana stupa- The main Mahaparinibbana stupa must have been restored many times. In 1910 the stupa was excavated. Then its ht. was 24’0” Inside one copper plate was found. It stated that this copper plate is inside the Mahaparinibbana stupa. Archaeology department covered the original stupa with bricks in 1926-27. Then again, the stupa is reconstructed into a huge dome like structure in 1950. But the stupa was damaged in 1962 due to heavy rainfall and the Archaeological Department in 1990 reconstructed it. The Mahaparinibbana image of Buddha

rediscovered during excavation in 1876. It is probably of 5th century A.D. the present temple constructed over it is done in 1956 on the occasion of 2500 years of Buddha. Though there exists an old temple covering the image built in 1877.

Lumbini,
Kushinagar and
Kapilavastu

The original stupa was probably built by the Mallas on the share of relics they had received on the same place where Buddha attained the Mahaparinibbana. Hiuen Tsang talked about the stupa being 200' tall and an Asokan pillar in front of it. The Asokan pillar is not discovered there as yet but there must have been one, for Asoka definitely would have visited Kusinara as a pilgrimage and must have renovated the stupa.

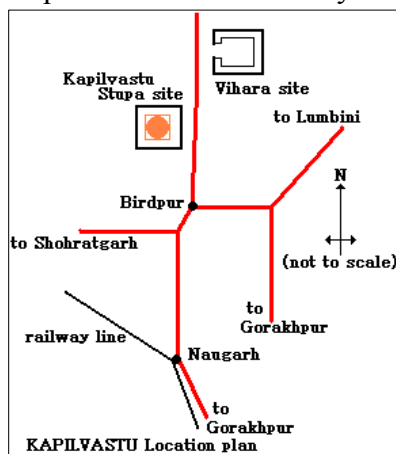
So today what stands is a new stupa with the interior old stupa on the older foundation.



Location- Piprahwa is located about 22.0 kms north of Naugarh in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh. It is 9.0 kms from Birdpur which is on the way to Lumbini through Kakrahwa border.

Archaeological Report- in the book “Buddha’s relics from Kapilavastu” the author Mr. K M Srivastava, himself being the archaeologist who excavated the ancient stupa of Piprahwa in 1974, gave detail of the excavation. He also has put to an end the confusion existing regarding the real site of Kapilavastu.

K M Srivastava established beyond doubt that Piprahwa is the ancient site of Kapilavastu, following the discovery of the lid of the pot carrying inscriptional evidence.



In 1897 W C Peppe an English landlord of Birdpur bored a shaft in the stupa at Piprahwa in search of valuables and reliquaries. At the depth of 8 feet he came across a completely shattered small soapstone vase (similar to those found down by the author in 1974). There was the inscription on the lid in Brahmi script.

The inscription was first read and interpreted in 1898 by G Buhler. As it is necessary Buhler did a little restoration in order to interpret it in a proper manner. After restoration he made the inscription to read as

*(I)yasal (i)lanidhanebuddhasa bhagavata(sa)
sakiyanasukitabhatinamsabhaginikanasaputadalana*

He translated the inscription thus –“This relic shrine of divine Buddha (is the donation) of the sakyasukiti (i.e. either of Sukiti’s brother or of Sukiti and his brother), associated with their sisters, sons and wives”.

A Barth read the inscription and interpreted it almost at the same time and in the same manner at Buhler, according to the Bart.

*“iyamsalilandhanebuddasabhagavatesakiyanamsukitibhatinamsabhaginik
anamsaputadalanam”*

the translation is-“this receptacle of relics of the blessed Buddha (is the pious gift) of the sakyas, the brothers of Sukirti and his brothers), jointly with their sisters, their sons and their wives”.

The excavation of the Piprahwa was resumed in 1972 by K M Srivastava the author and reports about the stupa that: The stupa at Piprahwa was subjected to detailed examination as it happened to be one of the earliest so far discovered in India. In addition to that the stupa yielded the relics of Buddha. [The relic caskets of the Buddha are made in two parts, the body of the container with a broad base and a lid to fit closely on top. The shape is very similar to that of a stupa.] Further excavation in the area established that the fresh relic casket could be dated back to 5th – 4th cent. B.CE, i.e.

earlier in date than the inscribed relic casket discovered by Peppe at a higher level in 1898. The finding of earlier casket proved that the stupa, in which they were found was built by the sakyas over their share of the relics in the first instance. They were further on an adequate and tangible evidence to establish that Piprahwa was ancient Kapilavastu.

Kapilavatthu in Buddhist Literature-Kapilavastu being the capital city of the Śākya gets described in the Buddhist texts as the prosperous city. King Śuddhodana, the head of the Śākyans and the father of prince Siddhartha, raised the would be king in luxury and comfort. The texts describe building of different palaces for different seasons along with many beautiful pleasure gardens. Even though the king took utmost care in raising his son in luxuries, at the age of 29 the prince finally renounced after seeing the four sights of old age, sickness, death and tranquillity respectively.

After attaining enlightenment, *bodhisattva* Siddhārtha became the Buddha and is said to have visited the city of Kapilavastu. He stayed in the Nigrodhārāma near Kapilavastu and preached a sermon to the king and other royal members including the women. After listening to this sermon MahāpajāpatiGautamī, the foster mother of the Buddha became the stream enterer (*sotāpanna*). The texts like Vinaya Piṭaka, describe that Rāhulamātā or Yaśodharā, the wife of Prince Siddhārtha and the mother of Rāhula did not attend this sermon and the Buddha later on preached her separately. In different visits of the Buddha to Kapilavastu, ordinations of Nanda, Rāhula, Ānanda, Devadatta and others took place.

The earliest travelers to the city, the Chinese travellers Fa Hsien (5th century CE) and Huan Tsang (7th century CE) have described the city and *stūpas* there to have been deserted.

A cutting through the Piprahwa stupa revealed three stages of construction.

Phase I: maximum diameter of the tumulus raised by piling up natural dug earth from the surrounding area is (38.30 mts) 125'3" and height (0.25mts.) 0'9". Probably the top portion was flattened during the second phase of construction. The pradakshinapath or circumambulatory paths is (5.20mts.) 17'0" from the main stupa and is (2.0mts.) 6'6" wide of burnt bricks. Burnt bricks are pre Mauryans – since the relics found inside the two burnt brick chambers belonged to Phase 1 of the stupa when the Sakyas enshrined them over their share.

Phase II: there are 2 pradakshinapaths or circumambulatory paths and the stupa had two tiers. There was projection from main dome of (1.52mts.) 5'0" with the total ht. of (4.55mts.) 15'0" the dome being (19mts.) 62'0" in circumference. Mr. Peppe found lid with inscription from 2nd phase.

Phase III: new features were introduced in the stupa. The base of the stupa was converted in to square from circular one. One side of square measures (23.50mts.) 77'0" the space between the drum of the stupa of the second phase and the square base was filled up. The height of the stupa and also the diameter of dome are increased. The diameter of dome was increased

from (19mts) 62'3" to (23mts.) 75'3" and height up to (6.35mts.) 20'9". The square base had niches for images of Buddha in Kusana period.

Today the stupa is square based with (26.28mts) 88'0" on one side. Height of the base is (1.25mts) 4'10". The height of the dome = (10.0mts) 30' 0" with the diameter of dome (22.72mts) 75'0".

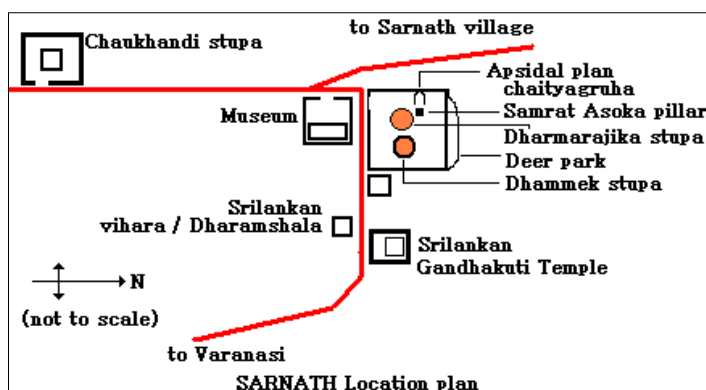
Many more sites are to be explored and studied with the help of archaeological evidences.

SARNATH, BODHGAYA AND SRAVASTI

13.5 SARNATH

Sarnath is located 10.0 kms from Varanasi. The deer park of Isipattana or Sarnath is important because it is the place where Buddha, set into motion the wheel of Dhamma by delivering his first sermon, the dhammacakkapavattana Sutta to the five monks-namely Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma and Asajji.

This place is marked today by the presence of stupas like the Dhamekh stupa, the Dharmarajika stupa, the Chaukhandi stupa along with many broken monasteries,



gandhakuti, one apsidal plan chaityagruha, numerous votive stupas and the huge but broken Asokan pillar with the famous Lion Capital (in the Museum). All these structures are under the dept. of Archaeology and are preserved by them.



SARNATH (Migadāya, Isipatana) is the deer park where Gautama Buddha first taught the Dhamma, and where the Sangha came into existence. Sarnath is located 13 kilometres north-east of Varanasi, in Uttar Pradesh, India.



Migadāya means "deer-park". Isipatana is the name used in the Pali Canon, and means the place where holy men *isi*, (rishi) fell (*isayo ettha nipatanti uppatanti cāti-Isipatanam*). Hiuen Tsang quotes the Nigrodhamiga Jātaka to account for the origin of the Migadāya. Sarnath, from Saranganath, means "Lord of the Deer" and also relates to another Jātaka.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA AT ISIPATANA

When Gautama Buddha found his five former companions, He gave to them his first sermon, called the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. It was given on the full-moon day of Asalha. Buddha subsequently also spent his first vassavasa at Sarnath at the Mulagandhakuti. The Sangha had grown to 60 in number (after Yasa and his friends had become monks), and Buddha sent them [all Arahants] out in all directions to travel alone and teach the Dhamma saying:

"चरथ, भिक्षवे, चारिकं बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय लोकानुकम्पाय अथाय हिताय सुखाय देवमनुसान्।"

Besides the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, several other suttas were preached by the Buddha while staying at Isipatana, among them:

- the *Anattalakkhana Sutta*,
- the *Pañca Sutta*
- the two *Pāsa Suttas*
- the *Katuviya Sutta*
- the *Dhammadinna Sutta*,
- the *Saccavibhanga Sutta*,
- the *Rathakāra* or *Pacetana Sutta*
- the *Samaya Sutta* and
- a discourse on the *Metteyyapañha* of the *Parāyana*



ISIPATANA AFTER THE BUDDHA

The Asokan pillar and the stupa indicates the presence of Asoka at Sarnath the 3rd BC but we are not sure whether he personally visited the place. According to the Mahāvamsa, there was a large community of monks at Isipatana in the 2nd century B.C. For, we are told that at the foundation ceremony of the Mahā Thūpa in Anurādhapura, 12,000 monks were present from Isipatana led by the Elder Dhammasena.

By the 3rd century AD Sarnath had become an important center for the arts, which reached its zenith during the Gupta period (4th to 6th century AD). In the 7th century AD when Hiuen Tsang visited, he found 30 monasteries and 3000 monks living at Isipatana, 1500 monks studying the Theravāda.

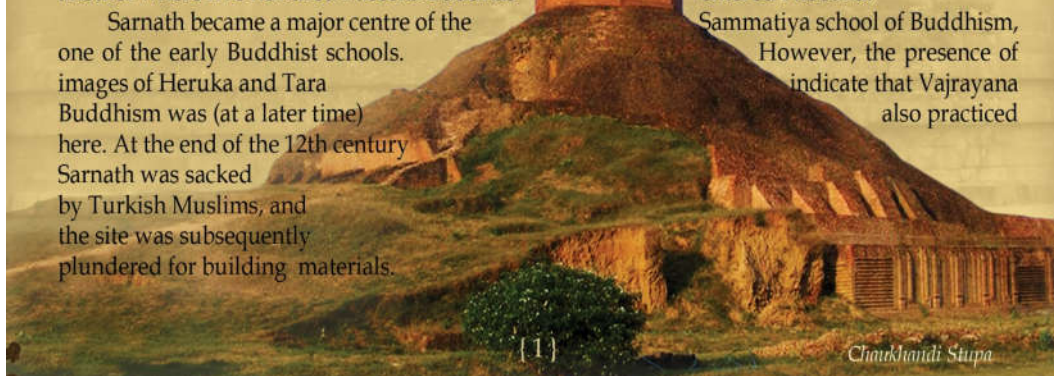
In the enclosure of the Sanghārāma was a strongly built vihāra about two hundred feet high and in the centre of the vihāra was a life-size macakkapavattana mudrā. To the south-west built by King Asoka. In front of it was a stone Buddha preached his first sermon. Near by was the Pañcavaggiyas spent their time in meditation another where five hundred Pacceka Buddhas

Sarnath became a major centre of the one of the early Buddhist schools. images of Heruka and Tara Buddhism was (at a later time) here. At the end of the 12th century Sarnath was sacked by Turkish Muslims, and the site was subsequently plundered for building materials.



image of the Buddha in the Dham- were the remains of a stone stupa pillar to mark the spot where the another stupa on the site where before the Buddha's arrival, and entered Nibbāna.

Sammatiya school of Buddhism, However, the presence of indicate that Vajrayana also practiced



DISCOVERY OF ISIPATANA

Isipatana is identified with the modern Sarnath, six miles from Benares by General Sir Alexander Cunningham. He found the Migadāya represented by a fine wood, covering an area of about half a mile, extending from the great stupa of Dhameka on the north to the Chaukundi stupa on the south. Along with Major Markham Kittoe, Cunningham undertook many excavations and brought to light many antiquities, monuments and lots of images in 1835.



Modern Mulagandhakuti Vihara

Isipatana archaeological site today

Most of the ancient buildings and structures at Sarnath were damaged or destroyed by the Turks. However, amongst the ruins can be distinguished:



Dharmarajika Stupa

- **The Dhamek Stupa;** is 128 feet high and 93 feet in diameter. It is the Uddesika stupa, said to be built on the spot where the Dhammacakka pavattanasutta is given to the Pancavaggiya bhikkhus.

- **The Dharmarajika Stupa** was one of the pre-Ashokan Saririka stupas, although today only the foundations remain. The stupa is recently [1794] destroyed by a local jamindar Dewan

Jagatsingh and the stones and bricks are used to construct a house and a bridge. The relics found is said to have deposited in the river Ganges.

- **The Chaukhandi Stupa** is a Uddesika stupa which commemorates the spot where the Buddha met his first disciples. It is dated back to the 5th century or earlier and later enhanced by the addition of an octagonal tower of Islamic origin. Archaeological reports says that it was a terraced temple at Gupta period.

- **Apsidal Plan Chaityagruha:** near the Asokan pillar is one apsidal plan of earlier date, probably of Mauryan. But no definite date could be given as many constructions of later dates are seen on it. It does not have any signs of stupa inside neither any of images. Other things besides these important structures are the Mulagandhakuti vihara, which marks the place where the Buddha spent his first rainy season, viharas and votive stupas. The remains of railings with Asokan polish, gives a faint hope of chances of railing for the Dharmarajika stupa, making it an important place.
- **The Asoka Pillar** erected here, originally surmounted by the "Lion Capital of Asoka" (Sarnath Museum), was broken during Turk invasions but the base still stands at the original location. This treasure was brought to light in 1904 by Mr. Oertell. Hiuen Tsang talks about this Pillar and says that it was about 70 feet high standing in front of the main temple Mulagandhakuti. The Brahmi inscription on the Pillar is in Pali Language and is a proclamation of the Emperor Asoka saying that any Bhikkhu or bhikkhuni whoever tries to split the sangha should be made to wear the white clothes and stay at the inappropriate place. Other than this original inscription, Pillar has two other inscriptions, one of Kushana period and the other of the Gupta period which mentions the two schools of Buddhism- the Sammatiyas and the Vasatiputtiyas.



- The Sarnath Archeological Museum houses the famous Asokan lion capital, the National Emblem of India and national symbol on the Indian flag. The museum also houses a famous and refined image of the Buddha in Dharmachakka mudra.

- The modern Mulagandhakuti Vihara is a monastery built in the 1930s by the Sri Lankan Mahabodhi Society, with beautiful wall paintings. Behind it is the Deer Park.

- There is also a Bodhi tree planted by Anagarika Dharmapala which was grown from a cutting of the Bodhi Tree at Bodhi Gaya.



Panchavaggiya Bhikkhu



Archaeological Reports: the ancient site of Sarnath at a glance look all scattered with remains of the bygone era. Among them significant for the studies are 1) the Dhamek stupa, 2) Dharmarajika stupa and 3) Apsidal chaityagraha. 4) Asokan pillar and Mulagandhakuti are important, they are not relevant to the studies.

The site of Sarnath was brought into light in 1794 when Jagat Singh, the Dewan of Raja Chet Singh of Banaras pulled down the Dharmarajika stupa for building material. The worker had found a relic casket inside which is thrown into Ganga. Mr. Duncan, the resident of Banaras at that time published of this discovery in 1798. Accordingly, Col. C. Mackenzie carried out some explorations. In 1835-36 Sir Alexander Cunningham carried fuller excavations at Sarnath, he opened the Dhamek stupa and found inside a stone slab inscribed with Buddhist creed. Even after that about 40 sculptures and 50-60 cartloads of stones were employed for building bridges on river Barna. In 1851-52 Major Kittoe, Government Archaeological Enquirer exposed numerous monuments around the Dhamek stupa. In 1865 Mr. E Thomas and Prof. Fitz Edward Hall and Mr. C. Home continued the work. In 1904-05 Executive Engineer Mr. F. O. Oertel undertook excavations and published an account in the annual report of the Archaeological Survey. He found Main shrine (Mulghandhakuti), Asokan pillar and the famous image of Buddha preaching the first sermon. In 1907 Sir John Marshall, the director general of archaeology excavated large area, exposing monasteries of late Kushan period. In 1914-15 Mr. H Hargreaves excavated and discovered sculptures from Mauryan to Kumaragupta II period. Finally, in 1921-22 Daya Ram Sahni excavated the Dhamek stupa and the area around it.

DHAMEKH STUPA: is the uddesika stupa probably built to commemorate the place where the dhammacakkapavattana sutta is given by the buddha to the pancavaggiyas. Said to have been constructed by Emperor Asoka initially was made large in the 7th CE.

DHARMARAJIKA STUPA: now stands only upto the height of 3'0 above the ground level. This circular planned stupa, and is said to have been constructed by Emperor Asoka and had relics of Buddha inside. The stupa is recently destroyed by a local jamindar and the stone used to construct a house and a bridge. The relics found is said to have deposited in the river

Ganges. This is older stupa as relics were found here, the remains of the Asokan pillar is nearby along with the apsidal chaitya-gruha, suggests its earlier dating.

Lumbini,
Kushinagar and
Kapilavastu

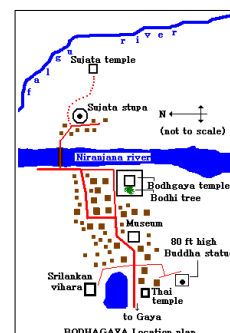
CHAUKHANDI STUPA: this is a square based probably a terraced stupa with an octagonal tower on top of it, which is a later date construction. The original stupa could be Asokan period, probably made large in 7th - 8th CE. This is also a *uddesika* stupa constructed to commemorate the place from where the five erstwhile companions first saw Buddha coming and met him. The modern Sarnath consists of the Archaeological Museum housing the grand Lion capital of the Asoka pillar with the broken Dhamma chakka. The stone chattra of probably the Dharmarajika stupa is huge. Beside it the museum houses the famous image of the Sarnath Buddha.

13.6 BODHGAYA

It is the place where Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree and spent 7 weeks in the premises. It is located about 20.0 kms from Gaya in Bihar. Bodhgaya is very auspicious place of pilgrimage for the Buddhist and devotees from all over the world come to this place.



The temple of Bodhgaya commemorates the place of enlightenment and the sapling of the tree still stands today where all devotees venerated it. Many votive stupas are seen around it and the ancient stone railing similar to Sanchi is also seen around the temple and the Bodhi tree. (The Bodhgaya Museum houses the original stone railing) Beside the Mahabodhi temple and the Bodhi tree, the monolithic pillar believed to be Asokan is seen near the Mucalinda tank. The *Vajrāsana* throne is a big red sandstone construction of a seat below the Bodhi tree built by king Aśoka in the 3rd century BCE. This seat represents the cross-legged posture - *vajrāsana* or *bodhi māyā* of the Buddha at the time of enlightenment.





Bodh Gaya or **Bodhgaya** is a city in Gaya district located about 96 kilometers from Patna, in the state of Bihar. It is famous for being the place of Gautama Buddha's attainment of nirvana (Enlightenment). Historically, it was known as the Bodhimanda (ground around the Bodhi-tree), Uruvela, Sambodhi, Vajrasana and Mahabodhi. The name Bodh Gaya did not come into use until the 18th century.

HISTORY:

A small temple beneath the Bodhi tree, Bodh Gaya, built in 7th century, after the original built by Mauryan Emperor Asoka in 3rd century BC. Offerings found in Bodh Gaya under the "Enlightenment Throne of the Buddha", with a decorated coin of the Kushan emperor Huvishka, 3rd century BC.

Kittisirimegha of Sri Lanka, contemporary of Samudragupta, erected with the permission of Samudragupta, a Sanghārāma near the Mahābodhi-vihāra, chiefly for the use of the Singhalese monks who went to worship the Bodhi tree. The circumstances in connection with the Sanghārāma are given by Hiuen Tsang who gives a description of it as seen by himself.

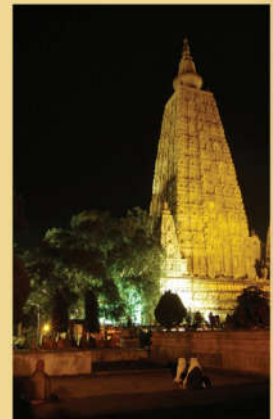


AT THE TIME OF BUDDHA

According to Buddhist traditions, circa 500 BC Prince Gautama Siddhartha, wandering as an ascetic, reached the sylvan banks of Falgu River, near the city of Gaya. There he sat in meditation under a bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa*). After three days and three nights of meditation, Siddhartha attained enlightenment and insight, and the answers that he had sought. He then spent seven weeks at seven different spots in the vicinity meditating and considering his experience. The history of Bodh Gaya is documented by many inscriptions and pilgrimage accounts. Foremost among these are the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims Faxian in the 5th century and Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century.

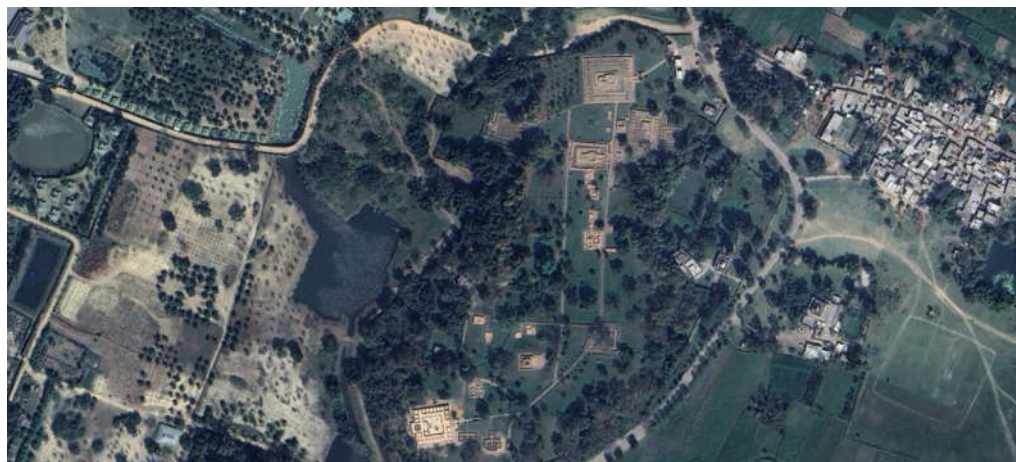
- **Mahabodhi Temple:** It is believed that 250 years after the Enlightenment of the Buddha, Emperor Asoka visited Bodh Gaya. He is considered to be the founder of the original Mahabodhi temple. Some historians believe that the temple was constructed or renovated in the 1st century during the Kushan period. The temple was later restored by Sir Alexander Cunningham and along with J. D. Beglar and Dr Rajendralal Mitra, He painstakingly excavated the site.

- **Sujata Stupa:** Near Bodhgaya a stupa is under excavation. It is near the place where Sujata is supposed to have given the Siddhartha the Kheer, after which he was enlightened. The stupa is circular at the base and looks ancient though no details are available.

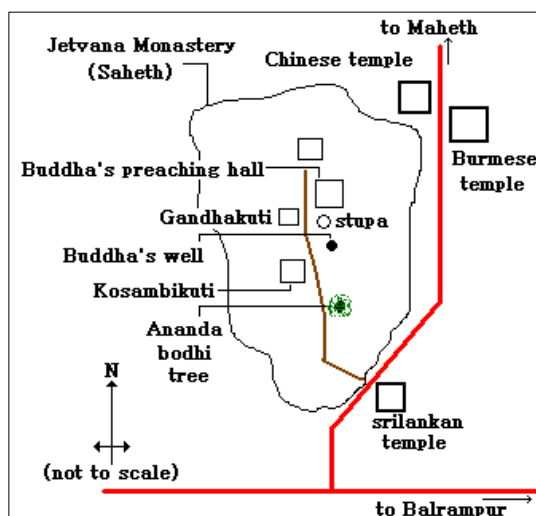


13.7 SRAVASTI

Lumbini,
Kushinagar and
Kapilavastu



It is located 18kms west of Balrampur, in Gonda and Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh. Today it is identified with the names of Saheth- Jethvana and Maheth is Sravasti city, but now is called Sravasti. In ancient date it was the capital of Kosala and king Prasenjit ruled it at the time of Buddha. The famous Jetavana monastery donated by Anathpindaka is at Sravasti. Buddha spent more than 20 vassavasa (rain retreat) here at jetavana and delivered many of the important suttas here. It is here that the famous miracle was performed by him, which in sculptures is known as Sravasti miracle.



Huien Tsang states that Emperor Asoka visited Sravasti and erected two pillars 70 feet high on the left and right side of the eastern gate of Jetavanamahavihara. One was crowned with wheel the other with a Bull capital. He also mentions the relic stupa at Sravasti, but unfortunately none of the mentioned monuments or remains of them were excavated during the excavations. Maheth is identified by A. Cunningham as the capital and fortified city of Sravasti. The kacchikuti and the Pakkikuti are the Angulimala stupa and the (Anathapindika) Sudatta's stupa excavated with the help of the diary of Huen Tsang. Pubbarama monastery of Vishakha Migarmata is also excavated nearby in Sravasti.



Śrāvastī or Sāvattī a city of ancient India, was one of the six largest cities [Mahajanapada] in India during Gautama Buddha's lifetime. Today it is located

18 kms west of Balrampur, in Gonda and Bahraich district in Uttar Pradesh. It is identified with the names of Sahet-Jetavana [famous Jetavana monastery donated by Anathapindaka] and Mahet is Sravasti city on the river Achiravati [now Rapti].



ORIGIN OF SRĀVASTI

Tradition says there was a caravanserai there, and people meeting there asked each other what they had ("Kim bhandam atthi?"), then replied "Sabbam atthi" (meaning "we have all things", as in everything). And the name of the city was based on the reply.



SRĀVASTI IN BUDDHA'S TIME

Savattī was the capital city of the kingdom of Kosala, and its king was called Pasenadi, who was a disciple of Buddha. Buddhaghosa says that, in the Buddha's day, there were 57,000 families in Savattī, and that it was the chief city in the country of Kasi Kosala, which was three hundred leagues in extent and had 80,000 villages. The Buddha passed the greater part of his monastic life in Savattī. His first visit to Savattī was at the invitation of Anathapindaka, whom he met in Rajagaha.

Anathapindaka, the Merchant built a splendid monastery in the park of Prince Jeta after paying the latter as many gold coins as would cover the ground, and donated the "Jetavana Vihara" to the Buddha.

The main monasteries in Sravasti were the Jetavana and the Pubbarama. Savattī also contained the monastery of Rajakarama, built by Pasenadi, opposite Jetavana. Not far from the city was a dark forest called the Andhavana, where some monks and nun went to live..

The chief patrons of the Buddha in Savattī were Anathapindaka, Visakha Migaramata and King Pasenadi

We have more than 500 suttas which starts with

"एवं मे सुतं- एकं समयं भगवा सावत्थियं विहरति जेतवने अनाथपिण्डिकस आरामे।"

Woodward states that, of the four Nikayas, 871 suttas are said to have been preached in Savattī; 844 of which are in Jetavana, 23 in the Pubbarama, and 4 in the suburbs of Savattī. These suttas are made up of 6 in the Digha Nikaya, 75 in the Majjhima Nikaya, 736 in the Samyutta Nikaya, and 54 in the Anguttara Nikaya. The Commentaries state that the Buddha spent twenty five rainy seasons in Sāvattī, this leaving only twenty to be spent elsewhere. Of the 25 rainy seasons Buddha lived in Sravasti, he spent 19 in the monastery named Jetavana, and 6 in the monastery called Pubbarama. Thus, Sravasti is the place where Buddha lived the longest amount of time, and it is the place where he gave the largest amount of discourses and instructions.



Savatthi is the place where the Twin Miracle (Pali:Yamaka Patihariya) took place, in which Buddha made a demonstration of his supernatural powers for the purpose of silencing certain believers of other faiths who proclaimed that the Buddha was incapable of performing supernatural miracles. Here Buddha performed the miracle of levitating on a thousand petalled lotus, causing fire and water to leap out of his body and multiplied his person in the air.



Twin Miracle

• The Angulimala-the dreaded dacoit who wore a necklace of fingers that were chopped from its victims, was about to kill his mother, Buddha met him that moment and Angulimala was converted to the faith and became an arhat here at Savatthi.



Angulimala

“गच्छं वदेसि समण टितोमि,
ममञ्च द्रुसि टितमडितोति ।
पुच्छामि तं समण एतमत्थं,
कथं टितो त्वं अहमडितोमी”ति ॥
“टितो अहं अङ्गुलिमाल सब्बदा,
सब्बेसु भूतेसु निधाय दण्डं।

• Here at the gate of the Savatthi, thera Sariputta responded to the challenge of Bhadda kuntal-kesa and answered all her questions. But she was unable to answer the only one question asked by him and accepted defeat. She became an Arhant when Sariputta thera sent her to Buddha where she joined the order.

• Visaka migarmata of Savatthi, the agga upasika in dana had the courage to ask for eight boons from the Buddha. She asked for life long donation of

- Civara for the rainy season to the bhikkhus.
- Food for in-coming bhikkhus [in Savatthi].
- Food for out-going bhikkhus [from Savatthi].
- Food for the sick bhikkhus.
- Food for those who wait upon the sick bhikkhus.
- Medicine for the sick.
- A constant supply of Yagu.
- Bathing robes for the bhikkhunis.

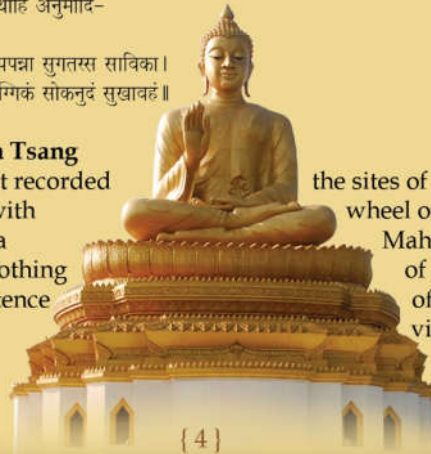
When she gave the reasons for asking these boons from the Buddha, He asks her what are the advantages you have in it for yourself in asking these boons from the Tathagata? She narrates her advantages

तस्सा मे तदनुस्सरन्तिया पामुज्जं जायिस्सति, पमुदिताय पीति जायिस्सति, पीतिमनाय कायो पसम्मिस्सति, पससद्धकाया सुखं वेदियिस्सामि, सुखिनिया चित्तं समाधियिस्सति । सा मे भविसिस्सति इन्द्रियभावना बलभावना बोज्झभावना । इमाहं, भन्ते, आनिरसं सम्पस्समाना तथागतं अट्ट वरानि याचामी”ति ।
“साधु साधु, विसाखे; साधु खो त्वं, विसाखे, इमं आनिरसं सम्पस्समाना तथागतं अट्ट वरानि याचसि । अनुजानामि ते, विसाखे, अट्ट वरानी”ति ।
अथ खो भगवा विसाखं मिगारमातरं इमाहि गाथाहि अनुमोदि-

“या अन्नपानं ददतिप्पमोदिता । सीलूपपन्ना सुगतस्सा साविका ।
ददाति दानं अभिमुख्य मच्छरं । सोवगिकं सोकनुदं सुखावहं ॥

• The Chinese Pilgrim Hiuen Tsang

found the old city in ruins, but recorded of two pillars of Asoka, one with wheel on top. There is a mention of a relics of Buddha inside. But nothing There is a possibility of existence as it is mentioned that he had he had pilgrimaged he had pillar.



the sites of various buildings. He talks wheel on top and the other with ox Mahastupa built by Asoka with of such sort is yet discovered. of stupa and pillar of Asoka, visited Savatti, and wherever constructed the stupa and

13.8 SUMMARY

To visit the holy places of Buddhism is a regular practice in Buddhism to understand the importance of those places and to pay their respects to Buddha. Like Lumbini the birth place of Siddhartha, Kapilvastu the capital city of Shakyas where the prince Siddhartha spent 29 years of his life, Bodhi Gaya is an important place where Buddha attained Kevala Dnyan, and Sarnath where Buddha had given his first sermon. Shravasti was the capital city of the kingdom of Kosala and its king was a disciple of Buddha and Kushinagar (Kushinara) was another important place for Buddhists where Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana (Mahaparinibbana). Therefore, people of different corners of India and abroad also regularly visit these holy places. Worshipping is not the intention of Buddhists to visit holy places or in temples because Buddhism is a way of life; it doesn't believe in artificial gods and their worship. Buddhists do visit holy places, shrines and temples to pay their respects to Buddha and to meditate with other Buddhists.

13.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

What is the importance of Lumbini in Buddhism?

Write a detailed note on 'Kapilvastu'.

Why is Sarnath a Buddhist Pilgrimage even today?

Discuss the historical importance of Shravasti.

Why is Bodhi Gaya known as the important holy place for the Buddhist?

13.10 ADDITIONAL READINGS

Cunningham Alexander- Archaeological survey of India: The four Reports made during the years 1862-63-64-65

Chan Khon San -Buddhist Pilgrimage

Adarsh Batra-Indian Tourist Sites – In the Footsteps of the Buddha

Frederick M Asher-Sarnath: A Critical History of the Place Where Buddhism Began

K.M. Srivastava - Buddha's Relics from Kapilavastu

Buddhist Tourism Circuit in India_ani_English_Low res.pdf

David Geary-The Rebirth of Bodhi Gaya: Buddhism and the Making of a World Heritage Site



ANCIENT BUDDHIST UNIVERSITIES

Unit structure:

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Ancient Buddhist Universities

14.3 Summary

14.4 Unit End Questions

14.5 Additional Reading

14.0 OBJECTIVES:

The study is undertaken with following objectives

- To study the ancient education system with the help of universities.
- To understand the role of archaeological excavations and the literary sources
- To analyse the role of Buddhist universities in the spread of knowledge and culture.

14.1 INTRODUCTION:

Buddhist Universities in India – Many great centres of learning were existing in ancient India which imparted not only of religious knowledge but also industry orientated knowledge like in the fields of mathematics, medicine, art and architecture, chemistry etc. These centres of education were not universities in the modern sense imparting formal education but more of the nature of nurturing and cultivating the love for knowledge. Even for the followers of the religious schools these centres served as the hubs of sharing knowledge and improving skills by participating in the learned debates. Takaśilā, Nālandā, Vikramaśilā, Valabhī, Odantapurī were some of the well-known centres of education in ancient India.

14.2 ANCIENT BUDDHIST UNIVERSITIES

It is well-known that with the rise of Buddhism in India there dawned the golden age of India's culture and civilisation. There was progress in all aspects of Indian civilisation under the impact of Buddhism. With the rise of Buddhism in India, there arose many centres of learning which did not exist before. Buddhist monks could opt for a life of meditation in the forests, or a life of teaching, preaching, propagating the Dharma as a result of the activities of the teaching monks, seats of learning arose. These seats of monastic learning gradually developed and some of them became full-

fledged universities. As a result, Buddhist India came to have five major universities which achieved wide fame. These five were 1. Nalanda, 2. Vikramasila, 3. Odantapuri, 4. Jagadalala and 5. Somapura. But the study of universities begins with the name Takshashila which was well known even at the time of Buddha.

TAKAŚILĀ:

By some accounts, the university of ancient Takāśilā/Taxila is considered to be one of the earliest universities in the world. It was the most important and ancient educational centre in India situated near Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan), the ancient Gandharan region, which was on its peaks at the time of the Buddha. Taxila was considered as a seat of higher education of colleges or a university as distinguished from schools and was particularly renowned for science, especially medicine, and the arts, but both religious and secular subjects were taught, and even subjects such as archery or astrology. Many Jataka of early Buddhist literature mention students attending the university and mention this centre as the centre of great learning.



An aerial, reconstructed view of Taxila (Takshashila) University
Image source:- https://www.reddit.com/r/papertowns/comments/kg33ww/reconstruction_of_taxila_university_near_what_is/

any references of the students of the university is seen in the Pali literature, of them mention can be made of the closest followers and contemporaries of the Buddha to have studied in Taxila, namely King Pasenadi of Kosala, Āṅgulimāla, follower of the Buddha and Jivaka, court doctor at Rajagriha and personal doctor of the Buddha.

The university must have lost its grandeur afterwards as both Fa Hsien (5th century CE) and Huan Tsang (7th century CE) describe in their records that the centre had lost its glory by the time they visited.

NALANDA: Nalanda is the best known of ancient India's universities. Its site has been discovered and its ruins have been preserved by India's Department of Archaeology. It is situated in Bihar State, the ancient Magadha country. Magadha is well known as the cradle of Buddhism. Bihar is so called because it had a large number of Viharas or Buddhist monasteries.

Nalanda was a small village at the days of the Buddha. He visited it during his preaching itineraries. When in Nalanda, the Buddha sojourned at Ambavana the mango-park with his disciples. Nalanda was also the home town of Ven. Sariputta, the chief disciple of the Buddha who also attained *parinirvāṇa* there. King Asoka had erected a Stupa at the spot where he was cremated. We get a comprehensive account of Nalanda university from Hieun Tsang the brilliant Chinese scholar who came there for his studies during the reign of King Harsha-Siladitya. Lama Taranata the Tibetan historian also gives an account of Nalanda in his works.



Aerial View of Ancient Nalanda University, Photo by: Yves Guichard
https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/aerial-view-of-ancient-nalanda-university/QwFW_XKhGSSIrA

It appears that King Kumara Gupta (AC 415-455) built the first monastery at Nalanda. It was a seminary for training Buddhist monks. Its site was not too far nor too close to the city. Hence it was selected as an ideal centre for the pursuit of Buddhist studies by monks. Nalanda University was an expansion and extension of this seminary. King Buddha Gupta (AC 455-467) Jatagatha Gupta (AC 467-500) Baladitya (500-525) and Vijra (525) made additions and expansions to the buildings. King Baladitya made a shrine-room a house of worship which was 300 feet high. His son Vijra built the fifth monastery. King Harsha Siladitya built the sixth monastery and surrounded the university buildings with 9' high wall. In the 7th century when Hieun Tsang entered the university, there were 10,000 resident students. They came from all parts of India and foreign lands. It was India's leading University. Its chancellorship was reserved for India's foremost Buddhist scholar when Hieun-Tsang visited Nalanda Silabhadra Maha Thera held the post. At that time there were 10,000 students, 1510 teachers, and about 1,500 workers at Nalanda. Students from foreign lands such as Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Sumatra, Java and Sri Lanka were found there. Admission to Nalanda was by oral examination. This was done by a professor at the entrance hall. He was called Dvara Pandita. Proficiency in Sanskrit was necessary, as it was the medium of instruction. All Chinese monks going to India for higher studies in Buddhism had to go to Java and brush up their Sanskrit. Hieun Tsang reports that of the foreign students only 20% managed to pass the stiff examinations. Of the Indian students only 30% managed to pass and gain admission. Therefore, the standard required were high. Castes, creed and nationality were no barriers in keeping with the Buddhist spirit. There were no external students at the university. Nalanda was maintained by the revenue from seven villages which were granted by the king.

The study of Mahayana was compulsory for Buddhists. One could also study the doctrines of 18 other Buddhist sects. One could also study secular subjects like science, medicine, astrology, fine-arts, literature etc. The six systems of Hindu philosophy were also taught. One could study Hinayana forms of Buddhism. This included the Theravada commerce, administration and astronomy were also taught. The observatory of the university was situated in a very tall building. Lectures, debates and discussions were part of the educational curriculum. Hieun Tsang states that 100 lectures were delivered there every day. The discipline was exemplary.

Nalanda university occupied an area of 30 acres. There were three large libraries bearing the names Ratna-Sagara, Ratna-Nidi and Ratna-Ranjana. One of these was nine storeys high. Nalanda was graced by the presence of India's most brilliant Buddhist luminaries. Some of them were Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Dharmapala, Silabhadra, Santarakshita, Kamalasila, Bhaviveka, Dignaga, Dharmakirti etc. The works they left behind are mostly available 14 Tibetan and Chinese translations. The originals perished when Muslim invaders under Bhaktiar Khilji set fire to Nalanda and beheaded the monks. (AD 1037), Prior to that Nalanda flourished for a thousand years, a lighthouse of wisdom and learning, the first of its kind in the world. Bhaktiar Khilji the invader of Magadha set fire to Nalanda. When the monks were about to have their meals. This is revealed in the archaeological remains which show food abandoned in a great hurry. Charred rice from the granaries also tells this sorry tale. Nalanda's ruins and excavations are preserved in a Museum by the Indian government.

VIKRAMASILA: Vikramasila is said to have been situated on the banks of the Ganges near the northern part of Magadha. This educational centre was founded in 8th century CE by king Dharmapāla of the Pāla dynasty. The place was identified near Baragaon, Bhagalpur district by Cunningham, but was not excavated. The literary sources gave information that Dharmapāla also built shrines at this centre enshrining the Mahābodhi images. The university received good royal support and flourished up to the 13th century CE. There were constant interactions of this centre with Tibet. The renowned Buddhist scholars, composers and translators like Jñānapāda, Vairocana, Ratnākaraśānti, Jñānaśrī-mitra, Dipaṅkaraśrījñāna or Atiśa are said to have belong to the tradition of Vikramaśīlā.

Although its site was undiscovered, the Indian newspaper 'Searchlight' of 25.4.80 carried an account of the discovery of the ruins of Vikramsila by Dr. B. S. Varma, Superintending Archaeologist in charge of the discovery of the ruins of the Vikramsila Excavation Project. According to this Vikramasila was situated at Antichak Village, Kahalagon, Bagalpur District.

Vikramasila was said to be a sister institution of Nalanda and was said to have been founded by a monk called Kamapala, under the patronage of King Dharmapala. (AC 770-810). The King granted land-endowments for it's upkeep later King Yasapala also patronised the institutions by liberal land endowments. Under the Pala Kings Vikramasila rose to positions

when it rivalled Nalanda and bade well to outshine it. In the centre of the university was the main lecture-hall. It was called 'Vidyagriha'. There were six entrances to this building and near each entrance was a monastery for resident monks about 150 teachers were accommodated in each monastery. Like Nalanda, Vikramasila was also surrounded by a high-wall. There were six 'Dvara Panditas' i.e Professors who examined candidates seeking admission. Here too high standards were maintained. 108 Professors were engaged in teaching and administrative duties. The curriculum of studies was similar to that of Nalanda. Here preference was given to the Tantric form of Buddhism.



Vikramshila University Ruins - Bihar

Image source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vikramashila>

Dipankara Sri Gnana who is also known as Atisha (AC 960-1055) was the more-famous of the scholars of Vikramasila. His fame spread far and wide as the propagator of Buddhism in Tibet. Tibetans hold his name in the highest veneration. When he was at Vikramasila he was invited to teach and propagate Buddhism in Tibet. He postponed it for some time till he completed his work at Vikramasila and then undertook the task. Vikramasila achieved its high water mark of prosperity and fame under him. Sri Gnana's period was the golden era of Vikramasila. In 1038 Sri Gnana left Vikramasila for Tibet to organise Buddhist studies in that country. Vikramasila was managed by a staff of Professors. They constituted the Board of Education, Board of Administration, Board of Discipline and the Board in charge of entrance examinations. Inaugurated in about 800 A.C. it graced the land until it was demolished by the Muslim invaders and suffered destruction after the attacks of Bakhtyar Khalji.

ODANTAPURI: Odantapuri was considered the second oldest of India's universities. This was situated in Magadha, about 6 miles away from Nalanda. Acharya Sri Ganga of Vikramasila had been a student here. Later he joined Odantapuri. King Gopala (660-705) was the patron who helped to found this university. According to the Tibetan records there were about 12,000 students at Odantapuri. Our knowledge of this seat of learning is obscure, and we are not in a position to give more details. This too

perished at the hands of the Muslim invaders. It is said they mistook the universities with their high walls for fortresses. They thought the Buddhist monks were "Shaven headed Brahmins" who were idolaters.

SOMAPURA: Somapura was situated in Bangladesh. King Devapala (AC 810-850) is said to have erected the Dharmapala-Vihara at Somapura.

The ruins of these buildings cover an area of about 1 square mile. There was a large gate and the buildings were surrounded by a high-wall. There were about 177 cells for monks in additions to the shrines and image houses. A common refectory and a kitchen are among



Somapura Mahavihara - Bangladesh
Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somapura_Mahavihara

the ruins, Remains of three -strayed buildings are to be seen. This university flourished for about 750 years before it was abandoned after the Muslim invasion.

JAGADDALA: King Ramapala (1077-1129) is said to be the founder of this University.

Jagaddala University was the largest construction works undertaken by the Pala Kings. This was a centre for the study and dissemination of Tantric Buddhism. It followed the methods, practices, and



Jagaddala University
Photo source: https://matineews.com/travel_destinations/Jagaddal-Bihar-11th-Century-Moh/

traditions of Nalanda. According to Tibetan works many books were translated to the Tibetan language at Jagaddala. The Buddhist teacher Sakya Sri Bhadra, seeing that Nalanda, Vikramsila, and Odantapuri were in ruins after the Muslim invasion, entered Jagaddala for his studies. It is said that his pupil Danaseela translated ten books to Tibetan. Sakya Sri Bhadra was responsible for the propagation of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet. He lived for seven years at Jagaddala. In 1027 the Muslim invaders sack and destroyed Jagaddala.

VALLABHI : This was another important educational centre situated near modern Kathiawar-Gujarat. The Maitraka kings who ruled Western India constructed a monastery at Vallabhi their capital. While Nalanda was the centre for Mahayana Buddhism, Vallabhi achieved fame as the centre for Theravada Buddhism. The Maitraka kings spent lavishly to maintain their university and gave every encouragement and assistance to Buddhist studies at this institution. This centre received important royal

support from princess Duṣṣā of Maitraka dynasty in 6th century CE. The university had received equal admiration to that of Nālandā.

Ancient buddhist
universities

In the 7th century Vallabhi was as prosperous and famous as Nalanda. Hieun Tsang visited Vallabhi, and reported in his "Ta-Tang-Si-Yu-Ki" as follows:

- "The population of Vallabhi is very large. The country is rich and prosperous.

There are over a hundred millionaire families there. Imported luxury goods are seen in this city. There are about 100 monasteries with about 6,000 Buddhist monks. Most of them



Photo source: <https://www.agastyagurukulam.org/valabhi-international-indian-university-of-the-6th-century/>

belong to the Sammitiya Sect. There are also many Hindu temples and a large Hindu population in this part of the country. The Buddha had visited this land during his ministry. There are stupas erected by King Asoka to mark the spots hallowed by the Buddha's visit. "There are about 100 shrines and about 6,000 resident monks studying at Vallabhi. They do not believe that Abhidharma was the teaching of the Buddha. They believed in the Antarabhava doctrine and were exponents of Puggalavada a tradition that disregards Abhidharma teachings that are inconsistent with the Sutra-Teachings.

Along with the references from the records of Yijing and Huan Tsang, the narrative text *Kathāsaritsāgara* (c.11th century) describes a Brahmin who wanted to send his son to Valabhī for the higher education. Students from different countries used to stay at Valabhī for 3 to 4 years for completing their education and clearing their doubts. Sthiramati and Guṇamati, the well-known scholars from Buddhist tradition were considered to have belonged to this university. Valabhī received royal support up to the 8th or 9th century CE but later succumbed to destruction. There were plenty of Buddhist monasteries at this place and thousands belonging to Buddhist tradition had studied here.

I -TSING'S RECORD-I-Tsing records that foreign students were found at Vallabhi. They come from many lands far and near from these facts we know that like Nalanda-Vallabhi was internationally recognised. There was a large library. This was maintained by a fund established by the King. An inscription put up by King Guhasena confirms this. Precedence was given to Sammitiya doctrines at this University. The course of studies included Comparative Religion. The Six systems of Hindu Philosophy and various other schools of Buddhism, Politics, Law, Agriculture, Economics also formed a part of the curriculum.

I-Tsing records that the graduates of Vallabhi, displayed their skill in the presence of the royalty, nobles, and other eminent people. The Elders Gunamati and Sthiramati were Nalanda's alumni and were teaching there for a time. They are said to be the founders of Vallabhi. As the founders came from Nalanda, Vallabhi followed the Nalanda pattern in most of its activities. It flourished from 475 to 1200 CE. It met the same fate as other Universities at the hands of the Muslim invaders.

Thus it would be seen that as long as Buddhism was a power to reckon with in India, it rendered yeomen service in the field of learning and culture. This is how it should be in a religion that teaches that ignorance is the worst enemy of man and the cause of his sufferings while knowledge (panna/pragnya) is his highest asset. Panna/Pragnya wins all that is good in this world, and finally brings him the highest happiness, mundane as well as supra-mundane.

14.3 SUMMARY:

Education played a very important role in the Buddhist history. Teachings of the Buddha was not only studied but expounded by every generation thus adding onto the knowledge. Texts early in oral tradition and then in written format were studied from generation to generation initially in Pali then in Hybrid-Sanskrit and then translated in Chinese and Tibetan language.

The monasteries became the centres of education and eventually centres of higher education and then Universities like Nalanda and Vikramsila, where scholars from different parts of the world came to gain knowledge. Destruction of these universities is partly responsible for the loss of Buddhism in India and eventually the ignorance in the Indian society thereafter.

14.4 UNIT END QUESTIONS:

- What is the role of education in Buddhism? Write about the University of Nalanda and Taxila.
- Discuss- Higher education was lost with the loss of Buddhism in India.
- Write a brief note on any three ancient Universities you know.
- Comment on -Chinese pilgrim scholars and ancient Buddhist universities.

14.5 ADDITIONAL READING

Ancient buddhist
universities

Samuel Beal- Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World.

Thomas Watters- On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, 629-645 A.D.

D. Amarasiri Weeraratne -The Six Buddhist Universities of Ancient India

J. B. Barua- Ancient Buddhist Universities in Indian Sub-Continent

<https://www.thestatesman.com/education/list-ancient-indian-universities-1503075194.html>

