

Walking on the Path — of — THE BUDDHA



Department of Religious Affairs

Ministry of Culture

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History, Scripture, and Archeology:
A Brief Study Regarding Some Ancient Buddhist Sites

By
Phravidessatanaporn (Thanat Inthisan, Ph.D.)

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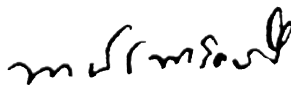


คำนำ

พระพุทธองค์ได้ทรงตรัสว่า สถานที่ควรไป ควรเห็น เพื่อยังให้เกิดความแช่มชื่น เบิกบานใจ เจริญใจ และควรให้เกิดความสังเวชแห่งกุลบุตรผู้มีศรัทธา คือ สังฆณียสถาน ๔ ตำบล คือ สถานที่ที่พระตถาคตประสูติ พระตถาคตตรัสรู้อนุตรสัมมาสัมโพธิญาณ พระตถาคตทรงประกาศธรรมจักรอันยอดเยี่ยม และพระตถาคตปรินิพพานด้วย อนุปาติเสสนิพพาน อนึ่ง เพื่อปฏิบัติตามพุทธดำรัสข้างต้น รัฐบาลได้มีมติเห็นชอบ ในการจัดตั้ง “กองทุนส่งเสริมการเผยแผ่พระพุทธศาสนาเฉลิมพระเกียรติ ๘๐ พรรษา” ในคราวการประชุมคณะรัฐมนตรี เมื่อ ๑๒ มิถุนายน ๒๕๕๑ โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์ ประการแรกเพื่อส่งเสริมให้พระสงฆ์และพุทธบริษัทไปประกอบศาสนกิจและแสวงบุญ ณ สังฆณียสถาน ทั้ง ๔ ตำบลโดยมอบหมายให้กรมการศาสนาดำเนินการบริหารจัดการ กองทุนและรับสนองพระราชปณิธาน ของพระบาทสมเด็จพระปรมินทรมหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดช บรมนาถบพิตร ที่ได้ทรงได้สถาปนากองทุนเผยแผ่พระพุทธศาสนา ไว้เป็นเบื้องต้นแล้ว

กรมการศาสนา กระทรวงวัฒนธรรม ได้ตระหนักว่าการแสวงบุญของชาวพุทธ เป็นสิ่งสำคัญที่ทำให้พุทธศาสนิกชนได้รำลึกถึงพระบรมศาสดา จึงได้จัดพิมพ์หนังสือ ภาษาอังกฤษ “Walking on the Path of the Buddha” งานนิพนธ์ของ พระวิเทศรัตนารักษ์ (ดร.พระมหาณัด อตถจारी) เพื่อให้พระสงฆ์ พุทธบริษัท และผู้สนใจ ทั่วไป ทั้งชาวไทย ชาวต่างประเทศ ได้ใช้เป็นคู่มือในการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับพทธ ุทธสถาน สำคัญที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการประกาศพระศาสนาของพระพุทธองค์ตลอดพระชนมายุ ๘๐ พรรษา

กรมการศาสนา ขอขอบพระคุณพระวิเทศรัตนารักษ์ (ดร.พระมหาณัด อตถจारी) ที่ได้อนุญาตให้จัดพิมพ์หนังสือเล่มนี้ออกเผยแผ่ หวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่า หนังสือเล่มนี้ จะเกิดประโยชน์ในการเผยแผ่พระพุทธศาสนา และเสริมสร้างศรัทธาต่อผู้เลื่อมใสให้ยั่งยืนสืบไป



(นายมานัส ทารัตนใจ)

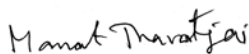
อธิบดีกรมการศาสนา

Preface

Lord Buddha had said, that the places where we should go and see for the sake of cheerful contentment heartily and bringing up the commiseration to all faithful Buddhists are Four Holy Places in four districts. The first place is where the Tathagata was born, the second place is where the Tathagata attained the unexcelled Supreme Enlightenment, the third place is where the Tathagata set rolling the Wheel of Dhamma, and the fourth place is where the Tathagata passed away into Parinibbana. For going by the Buddha Speech mentioned above, the government has approved the resolution to establish the “Buddhist Propagation Promotion Fund for the Celebrations on the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the late King’s 80th Birthday.” in the meeting of the Council of Ministers when 12 June 2008 with the objective of encouragement the monks and Buddhists pilgrimage at the Four Holy Places in four districts by entrusting to the Department of Religious Affairs to handle on fund management and meet the commitment to the royal wish of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej who established the Buddhist Propagation Fund as a preliminary.

Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Culture has realised that the pilgrimage of the Buddhists is significant to commemorate Lord Buddha and his teachings in remembrance, so the books “Walking on the Path of the Buddha” in English version which written by Phra Wites Rattanaporn, Ph.D. (Dr.Handy Inthisan) are published. This book is used as handbook for monks, Buddhists, and other people who are interested in Buddhism and Buddhist landscapes, which are relevant to the Buddhism announcement of Lord Buddha for his entire 80 years.

Department of Religious Affairs would like to express sincere appreciation to Phra Wites Rattanaporn, Ph.D. (Dr.Handy Inthisan) for allowance to publish this book. This book will be useful for Buddhist Propagation and encourage the faith to all faithful people sustainably everlastingly.



(Mr. Manat Thajattjai)

Director – General

Department of Religious Affairs

No. 0301/5642



Department of Religious Affairs
10 Huay Kwang District,
Bangkok 10310

November 23, 2017

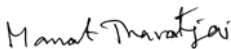
Subject: Request for permission to publish **“Pilgrimage to the Land of the Buddha”** and **“Walking on the Path of the Buddha”**

Dear Honorable Phra Videsratnaporn,

The Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Culture, supports the Government religion-related projects by promoting to the Thai people the Buddhist doctrines in order to improve their quality of life and morals. The books **“Pilgrimage to the Land of the Buddha”** and **“Walking on the Path of the Buddha”** are of great benefits because they contain valuable information about the Buddha, including his biography and works as well as important Buddhist historical sites. These two books also provide the basic knowledge of Buddhism and help promote the study of the Buddhist doctrines. We, therefore, would like to ask for your kind permission to publish the books and distribute them to educational institutions and other Buddhist organizations. Four thousand (4,000) copies of **“Pilgrimage to the Land of the Buddha”** three thousand (3,000) copies of **“Walking on the Path of the Buddha”** will be printed. We designate Mr. Sukpet Yanakaew, a senior religious academic, to be the coordinator. His phone number is 06 -1994- 7426 and his email is sukpet1979@gmail.com

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Respectfully,



(Manas Tharatjai)

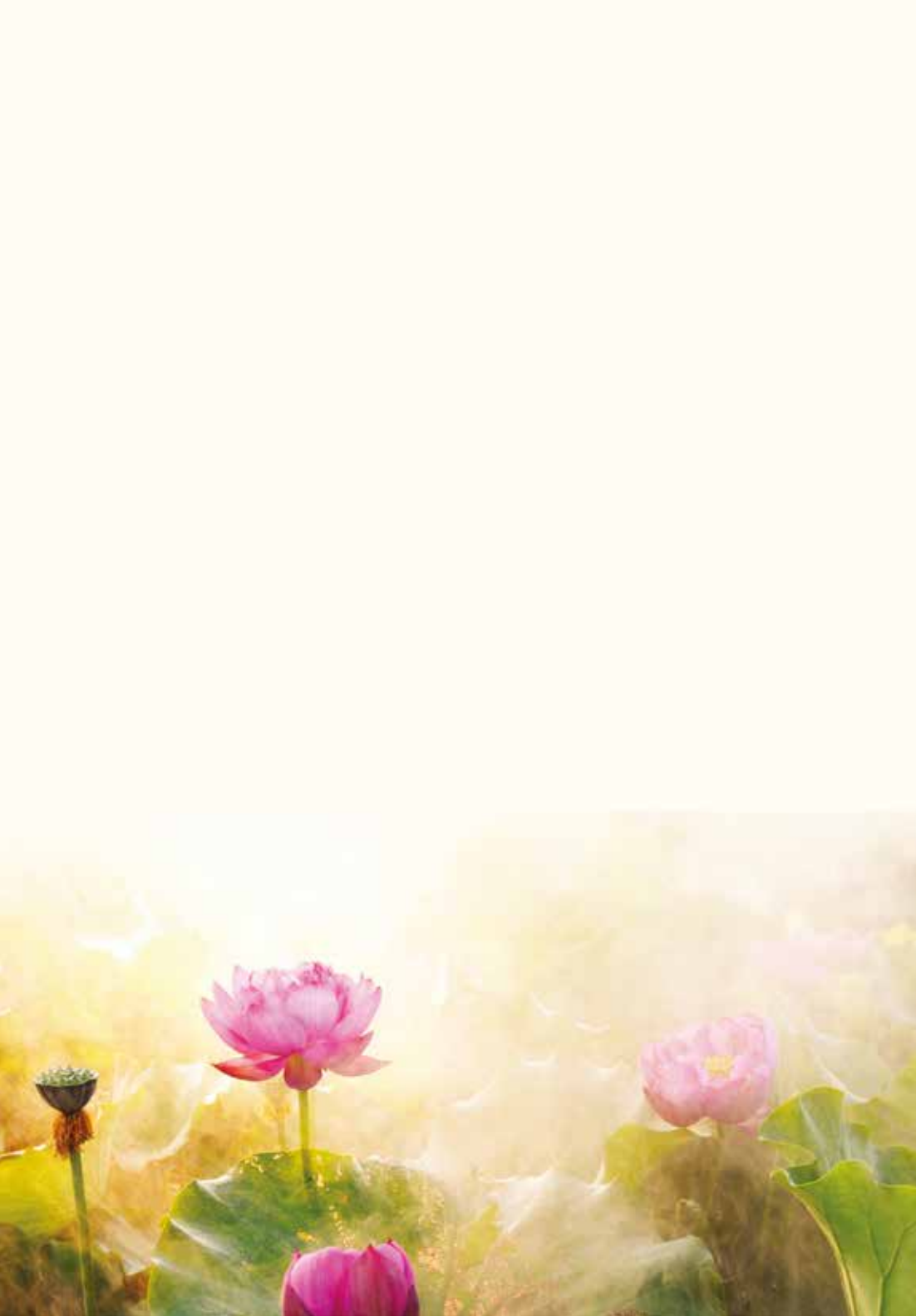
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Subject: Permission for Publication of “Pilgrimage to the Land of the Buddha” and “Walking on the Path of the Buddha”

To: Mr. Manus Taratjai, Director of Religious Affairs Department,
Ministry of Culture

Reference: Memorandum dated November 23, 2017 - Permission for Publication of **“Pilgrimage to the Land of the Buddha”** and **“Walking on the Path of the Buddha”**

The Religious Affairs Department of the Ministry of Culture had indicated its interest in the publication of the above referenced two books. Their publications are in line with the Department’s goal of promoting the teachings of the Lord Buddha among Thais and the general population. These two books will help people to learn to apply the Buddha principles to improve the quality of their lives.

It is with great pleasure to inform you of our approval for you to go ahead with the publications, and I have taken upon myself to forward the manuscripts to the publisher already.

Sincerely Yours,

(Phra Videsratanaporn)

Secretary-General of the Council of Thai Bhikkhus in the U.S.A.
President of Wat Thai Washington, D.C.





An Acknowledgement

Without historic studies we may not be able to know what have been there last 2600 years ago in the land of the Awakened Buddha, what was going on at those days especially for the Buddhist world today. Ven. Dr. Thanat Inthisan did his studies on the very significant and important sites. Those who have not been in India may use this book for history of Buddhism and its civilization and how Buddhist teachings, Buddhist arts and culture had been influenced the world today in many ways. As we know today our friends from all parts of the world keep going to India just for visiting the Buddha places, because these places give them the peace of mind and insight. Buddhism is the teaching of the awakened Buddha which is beautiful in the beginning, peaceful in the middle, and peaceful at the end of the Buddha's life. Buddhism is the teaching of non-violence, the teaching of loving kindness and compassion.

When readers finished reading of this book, I am sure that they will realize that the places referred in this book can be named as the Wonder of the World. The world can learn about Buddhist civilization. Ven. Dr. Inthisan has presented such a wonderful aspect of Buddhist Historic places, after your reading you may want to go and see by your own eyes. And I am sure you will be one of those who want to make known the Buddha teaching to the world for world peace we are seeking for.

Achahn Chuen Phangcham, Ph.D.
The Author of Buddhism for Young Students.
Board of CPWR
Full Moon Day of Magha Month
(3-4-07)



Preface to the First Edition

In 1995 I made a decision to come to India, the land of the Buddha. I learned many things about this country. When I arrived in Calcutta for the first time that year, I was shocked when faced with the strange people and the crowded places. This was something I had never known and never seen before in my life. My friend told me that this was the normal situation in India, something found everywhere in the country. So I practiced detachment and gradually adjusted to the Indian lifestyle.

I spent twelve days on the pilgrimage. I went to the Buddhist holy places: where the Buddha was born in Lumbini, Nepal; where he attained Enlightenment in Bodh Gaya; where he gave his first sermon in Sarnath (Benares); and where he entered into *Mahaparinibbāna* in Kusinara. Besides those special places, I visited Nalanda University (the oldest and largest Buddhist university in the world), and the Veruwanaram, the first Buddhist monastery in the world, donated to the Buddha by King Bimbisara of Magadh. I also saw the Gandhakuti, the residence of the Buddha on the top of the mountain Kishguta; and the Jetavana, the largest and the most important monastery in Sāvattṥi. These are the places that impressed me the most and brought me back to India again and again. After my first trip to India, I returned to the United States to perform my duties as a Buddhist missionary at the Wat Thai Washington, D.C. I showed the pictures and played the videotapes about my trip to the people and gave them information about the holy places. Though I could provide these things only in Thai, American friends interested in Buddhism also asked me about the holy places in India and Nepal.

In the year 2000, I came back to India with a group of scholars, professors, and administrators from Mahachulalongkornrajavidhayalaya “Buddhist University”

and four lay people from Washington, D.C., to join the seminar, "The revival of Buddhism in India." The seminar, which opened at the Wat Thai Buddhagaya, was presided over by Phrarajbodhivides. The programs for the seminar were divided into four groups, the first of which I attended.

In the year 2001, I decided to study in India, the land of the Buddha. I choose Magadh University in Bodhgaya, Bihar, and enrolled in the Department of Buddhist Studies there. Magadh was the land that produced many philosophical and religious thinkers. Buddhism, which also originated in this land, flourished here nearly two thousand years. Unfortunately, Buddhism lost ground in its birthplace due to the mainly indifferent attitude of its followers. However, it was able to spread successfully to many Asian countries before it died out in India.

Many Buddhist pilgrims such as Fa-Hien, Huien-Tsiang, I-Tsing, came to India to pay homage to the Buddha and to gain wisdom. When they returned home, they took the truths of Buddhism to their countries. They spread the Dhamma first imparted by the Blessed One in India.

Because of modern advanced systems of communication and transportation, the influx of students and pilgrims into India these days has greatly increased. Hundreds of thousands of Buddhists from various countries come to Bodh Gaya to pay homage at the site where the Buddha achieved Enlightenment. Some of these visitors seek to deepen their knowledge of Buddhism, Indian philosophy, and other related subjects, as did previous pilgrims to India. Fortunately, Magadh University, adjacent to the holy site, offers such subjects in its curriculum.

Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, President of India, laid the foundation stone of the Magadh University building at its present site close to the Vajrasana, the seat of the Enlightened Buddha, on August 20, 1964.





The university was established under the Magadh University Act of 1961. Its first session was held near the pilgrims' hospital in a private, rented building. The offices and library were located in a house near Durgabari. Subsequently, the offices were shifted to the Red House near Gandhi Maidan. The university then had only two colleges at Arrah under its jurisdiction, besides twenty-eight affiliated colleges. The teaching departments and offices were permanently shifted to the present building on December 15, 1969.

Magadh University in those days had three outstanding characteristics.

First, it was located at a place where Sakyamuni Buddha had attained supreme Enlightenment. Even today, people visiting the university take note of the quiet environs around this glorious historical spot. Secondly, it had the distinguished vice-chancellor, Dr. Kali Kinkar Dutta, the reputed historian. Thirdly, Mr. Satyendra Narain Sinha, Education Minister of Bihar, took a personal interest in the institution.

In his address on the day the foundation stone was laid, Dr. Dutta forecast a bright future for Magadh University and said that it would be a temple of learning specializing in the study of ancient Indian and Asian history. Eminent scholars, Dr. H.G. Singh in economics, Dr. Y. Masih in philosophy, Dr. S.B. Singh in history, and Dr. U. Thakur in ancient Indian and Asian studies, were invited to join the university. Hopes ran high for making the university a symbol of a successful revival of learning.

According to Dr. R.N. Prasad, retired head of the Department of History, Magadh University, Manpur, was originally founded by the Raja to save the people of Gaya from constant attacks from the rebel Afghans. The Raja constructed a fort in the new town known as Mangarhi.

This book took form from many books, articles, and other sources with the special intention of fulfilling the needs

of those of our friends enrolled in the Department of Buddhist Studies or even in the Department of Ancient India and Asian Studies. Furthermore, it is meant to serve the needs of pilgrims to India and Nepal who want to study about the ancient Buddhist sites before coming to visit, especially Westerners who are looking for something in English about the subject matter.

Special thanks go to my friend, Du Wayne Engelhart, who devoted his time to work with me to produce this book. I really appreciate all his efforts. I also would like to thank Achahn Chuen Phangcham, Ph.D. The Author of Buddhism for Young Students those professors at Magadh University who give me the opportunity to collect notes and materials from various works. I also thank those friends Phramaha Phan Thaekrathoke, Ph.D., Phramaha Sayan Lasanam M.A., Phramaha Srisuporn Khamnon M.A., Phramaha Piya Jundadal, M.A. and the Buddhist missionary monks at Wat Thai Washington D.C. Phra Supechallo (C. Thompson) who help me in proof reading and devotees, well-wishers who encouraged me to complete this book.

I will be very grateful if this little book is of some small help to our dedicated friends.

On the special occasion of the Wat Thai Buddhagaya 50 Year Anniversary Celebration in 2007 (2550 B.E.), I myself, in the name of the Magadh University alumni, would like to be a part of the festivities. This will be a special time for celebrating, an occasion which commemorates the longevity of Buddhism, 2550 years old; the Wat Thai Buddhagaya Temple 50th year anniversary; and the 80th year of His Majesty the King of Thailand. This book will be distributed to all the guests participating in this special event.

Phramaha Thanat Inthisan, Ph.D.

December 5, 2006





Preface to the Second Edition

This book, *Walking on the Path of the Buddha*, is being republished at the behest of the Religious Affairs Department of the Ministry of Culture of Thailand. Under the direction of the Ministry, not only is the English-language version of the book being republished, but I am also preparing a Thai translation (complete with a section on chanting). I am quite happy to comply with the wishes of the Religious Affairs Department regarding the book. Since *Walking on the Path of the Buddha* was first printed, it has continued to be valuable as a kind of textbook for university students about the teachings and history of Buddhism, as a guide for Westerners who are interested in information about the sites in India and Nepal associated with the life of the Buddha, and as a handbook for travelers who want to keep up the tradition of making a once in lifetime pilgrimage to these holy places. The educated reader in general, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, can also benefit from a reading of the book.

The book retains the “Outline of the History of Buddhism,” which has been updated for the second edition. This Outline, though necessarily short on details, gives some sense of the panorama of history encompassed in the more than 2,500 years since the Buddha walked on the face of the Earth.

Once again, I am grateful to those who helped me with the preparation of this book. I am glad that the book can be of some use in promoting an understanding and appreciation of the life and teachings of the Buddha.

With Loving-kindness and compassion

Phravidesratanaporn
(Thanat Intisan, Ph.D.)
President of Wat Thai Washington, D.C.
January 15, 2018

Introduction



The purpose of this book is to provide a brief overview of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India and Nepal. In this regard the book is concerned with the history of the sites; in many cases relevant sections of the Pali scriptures associated with the sites; and the archeology and monuments of the sites, i.e., excavations previously made, and monuments and artifacts that remain today. The book is intended to be useful to pilgrims, especially Westerners sympathetic to Buddhism, who intend to visit the holy sites associated with the life of the Buddha, or who have recently done so. It can also be used by anyone who is interested in a serious fashion in learning something about the life and teachings of the Buddha in terms of the actual places associated with his life. So this book is like a travelogue but it also is not. In other words, while being quite useful to the traveler to the holy sites, the book is also intended to be a serious introductory study of these sites in terms of the aforementioned concerns (history, scripture, and archeology and monuments).

The first four chapters of the book discuss the most important places associated with the life of the Buddha, places he himself described as most worthy of visiting: Lumbini Park, the place where the Buddha was born



(Chapter 1); Bodh Gaya, the site where he attained Enlightenment (Chapter 2); Sarnath, or Deer Park, where he gave his first discourse (Chapter 3); and Kusinara, the city where he passed away (Chapter 4). Each of these chapters has something to say about the location and historical significance of the site, relevant scriptural passages, archeology and monuments, and what is to be seen at the site by the travelers today.

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with two important cities associated with the life of the Buddha: Svatthi, where he spent twenty-five rainy seasons and delivered a wealth of discourses (Chapter 5); and Vesali, which the Buddha often visited and where he frequently preached, and a place connected with important relatives of the Buddha (Chapter 6). For the most part the same general format is followed in these two chapters as in the first four. The treatment of the scriptures in the Svatthi chapter entails a somewhat serious attempt to understand the meaning of Enlightenment, a notion at the very core of the Buddhist teachings. In this case two discourses the Buddha delivered at Svatthi are analyzed. In the chapter on Vesali, the important scriptural passage selected was not only delivered at the city but also concerned the welfare of the city in an important way.



Chapter 7 of the book is concerned with the city of Kosambi, where several important discourses were preached. Consideration is given to the history of the city and the archeology associated with it. The city is infamous for being the site of the first crisis within the community of the monks, a fierce argument between two factions over interpretations of doctrine. The relevant scriptural passages chosen for consideration in this chapter concern an important lesson in Buddhism, the lesson of loving-kindness.

Chapter 8 is somewhat different in tone and substance from the previous seven. It is about a village called Sankasya, where, legend has it, the Buddha, accompanied by the divine beings Brahma and Sakra, descended from heaven after having taught the Dhamma there to his mother. This chapter relies for its details upon the historical account of the famous Chinese pilgrim, Fa Hien.

The next chapter (Chapter 9) discusses another city frequented by the Buddha during his lifetime: the city of Rajagaha, the capital of Magadha ruled by the Buddha's patron, King Bimbisara. The Buddha spent a considerable amount of time here and delivered important discourses as well. The city is also of great significance insofar as it was the site of the First Buddhist Council, which occurred three months after the death of the Buddha.



Chapter 10 of the book concerns the town of Nalanda, through which the Buddha frequently passed and where he often stayed. This town is of the utmost historical significance because it was the site of the famous Nalanda University, which thrived as a center of Buddhist learning for hundreds of years. The scriptural passages considered in this chapter are two discourses preached at Nalanda which concern the Buddha as a teacher. Teaching (and learning) are said to be the real “miracles” of Buddhism. The chapter also gives due consideration to archeology and monuments associated with the town.

The last two chapters of the book, while not directly connected with the life of the Buddha, deal with very important Buddhist monuments, the Sanchi stupa, the great stone structure from the age of the Mauryan emperor King Asoka, the preeminent patron of Buddhism in the ancient world (Chapter 11); and the truly spectacular Ajanta and Ellora temple caves, structures cut into solid rock over hundreds of years, truly wonders of the world (Chapter 12).

For the student of history who wants to follow the development of Buddhism from the lifetime of Master to the present day, the book includes an Appendix devoted to an outline of the history of Buddhism.



The Map of India.





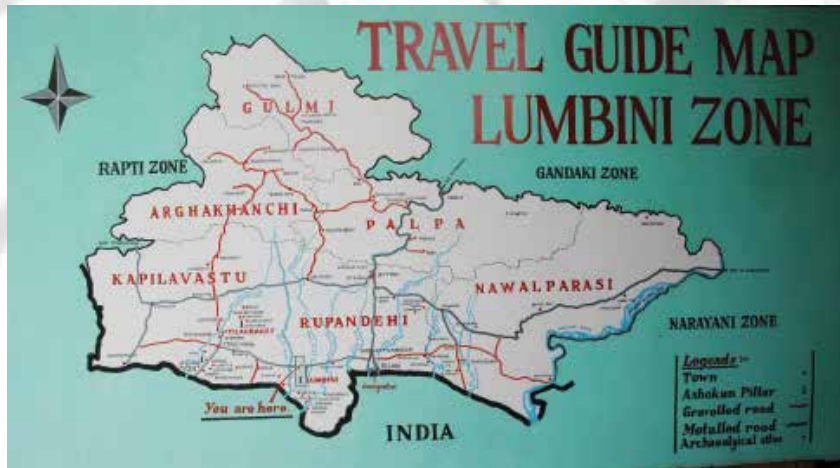
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The Queen Maya and her newborn child.

Lumbini Park, the Birthplace of the Buddha



I. Geography

The Buddha was born in the ancient village of Lumbini (Sanskrit for *the lovely*, named after Lumbini, married to Suprabuddha, the ancient king of Devadaha; also spelled as Rummindei, the queen of King Anjana of Devadaha). Lumbini lay in the district of Rupandehi near the ancient town of Kapilavastu (Bhairahawa, Piprahwa, Siddhartha Nagar) in the southwestern part of the Terai region of Nepal at the foothills of the Churia (Chure) mountain range (also Siwalik mountain range). The Himalayas, including Mount Everest, lie further to the northeast. Bhairahawa, about two and a half miles from Sunauli at

the Indian border, is one hundred eighty-six miles west southwest of the capital of Nepal, Kathmandu, and about sixty-eight miles north of the Indian city of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. The Terai region of Nepal is a narrow strip of fertile land about sixteen to twenty miles wide running across the southern part of the country from the far west to the far east. The ancient village of Lumbini no longer exists. At the time of the Buddha's birth, there was a grove of sala trees there. The site of the birthplace remained unknown until 1886, when a German archeologist, Alois Fuhrer, discovered the Asoka pillar located there.

II. The Story of the Buddha's Birth

In Buddhist tradition the Buddha was born at Lumbini in 563 B.C. The ruler of the kingdom at that time was King Suddhodana of the Shakya dynasty of the Kshatriya, warrior, caste. The capital city of his kingdom was Kapilavastu. His queen was Maya Devi.

According to the Buddhist text, one night at the palace during the Midsummer Festival, the queen had a dream that four Brahmins came to her bedside. They carried her to a place under a sala tree in the Himmapan forest. There were devas and other spiritual beings waiting there to attend to her. Then they took her to Anodard pond to be purified of her sins. Suddenly a white elephant (the future Buddha) brought her a white lotus flower in his trunk and made a triple circumambulation around the queen. Striking her on her right side, he seemed to enter her womb.¹

The next morning the queen told the king her dream. The king called sixty-four Brahmins together to interpret the dream. They told the king that the queen had become pregnant and would have a son. If his son continued to live in the household, he would become a great monarch. On the other hand, if he left the household and





*The Maya Devi
Vihar and the
sacred pool.*

abandoned the world, he would become a Buddha. When the time of birth came near, the queen asked the king for permission to return to her hometown of Devadaha to give birth to their child. According to the custom of the time, a woman ready to give birth had to go to her parents' house to have her child. King Suddhodana consented and ordered a large number of royal attendants to accompany the queen on the trip. (Some sources indicate the queen traveled to Lumbini specifically to worship the sacred tree there.) The entourage traveled about twelve and a half miles, arriving at Lumbini garden on the fifteenth day of the sixth lunar month. The beautiful garden and the peaceful neighboring areas belonged to both the Shakyas and the Koliyas clans. The day was a Friday, the day of a full moon. (This date is currently celebrated every year on the day of the full moon in May.) Since it was almost noon, the weather was getting hot. So the queen ordered the attendants to stop so she could rest for a while. However, it was not long before she felt labor pains. She reached up and supported herself by holding the branch of a sala tree. Thereafter the queen, standing under the sala tree, gave birth to her son as the birds were singing.²



When the future Buddha was born, he did not touch the earth: four gods received him. He emerged from the womb unbloodied, unsoiled. When he was born an immeasurable light appeared throughout the world. His body and that of his mother were washed with two streams of water, one cold and the other hot, falling from the sky. (The hot water symbolized the harshness of asceticism, the cold water the coolness of Enlightenment.) The streams from the sky formed the water within the sacred pool of Pokarani. The future Buddha, once born, looked in all four directions. (This scanning of the four quadrants, according to the commentator, meant unobstructed knowledge.) He saw no one who was his equal. He then took seven steps and stopped. (The seven steps symbolized he would acquire the seven Enlightenment factors.) He spoke the following words with a bull-like voice: "I will be the chief one, the supreme one, the eldest one in the world. This cycle of birth will be my last. There will not be another existence for me". (Even the "bull-like" speech is significant as setting in motion the irreversible *Dhamma* wheel. The statement that there would not be another existence signified the "lion's roar" of the coming Nibbana of the arahant.) The future Buddha was born with the thirty-two Brahmanical distinctive marks of a great man, for instance, a bright, golden complexion, and blue eyes³.

*The newborn
Siddhartha image
and his footprint.*

III. Archeology and Monuments

As an archeological site Lumbini is significant today for the Asoka pillar; the sacred pool of Pokarani (the Sakya bathing tank); the temple of Maya Devi, built over other successively built temples which were built, in turn, over one of Great King Asoka's four stupas; the stone presumably placed by Asoka to mark the exact spot where the Buddha was born; the many stupas; the monasteries (*viharas*); and the basrelief of Maya Devi giving birth.⁴

1) Asoka Pillar. Great King Asoka was responsible for the construction of at least forty pillars throughout his country. The pillar at Lumbini dates from 249 B.C., the time of the king's visit to the site to commemorate the birth of the Buddha there. Like the other pillars, this one was built of sandstone with a monolithic shaft, a separate bracket sculpture placed on the top. The shaft, over twenty four feet high, is cracked and has two iron "belts" around it. The bracket figure (capital stone) still exists separately at the site, but it is broken. The sculpture at the top no longer exists. The inscription on the pillar reads: "King Piyadasi (Asoka) the beloved of Devas in the twentieth year of the coronation himself made a royal visit; Buddha Sakyamuni having been born here, a stone railing was built and a stone pillar erected ..." ⁵ There is some discussion as to whether the Brahmi word, *silavigadabhica*, in the inscription means that a stone railing (wall) was build or that a stone figure of a horse was built for the capital of the pillar. More often than not, the translations opt for the former rendition.



The Asoka Pillar.



2) Sacred Pool of Pokarani. This pool is located just to the southwest of the temple of Maya Devi. Though mentioned in Buddhist literature and in other sources, there is no indication there of shape or size. The current structure and configuration date from only the 1930s. From 1933 to 1939

*The Sacred
Pool in
Lumbini.*

General Keshar Shumsher conducted excavations at Lumbini in a rather ruthless manner. He destroyed a lot of structures. To his credit, however, it can be said he improved the site of the sacred pool by adding steps and a brick veneer. In 1993 when dirty water and mud were removed from the pool, two artesian wells were discovered at opposite corners. As it exists today, the bottom of the pool is approximately forty-eight and a half feet long by forty feet wide.



3) Temple of Maya Devi. This famous white temple was totally dismantled so that excavations could be conducted underneath it. The excavation of the temple site took place from 1992 to 1996.⁶ The archaeologist in charge of the project, K. P. Acharya, has outlined various periods of construction at

the site that account for the time from the third century B.C. (before the time of Asoka) to the twentieth century A.D. Acharya has outlined six different periods, with the sixth period being divided into six phases. (The Japanese archaeologist, S. Uesaka, has another take on this difficult matter: he concludes there were five periods, the fifth period being divided into five phases.) Acharya's Period II, coinciding with the construction of the Asoka pillar, saw a great deal of construction at the temple site. A structure about seventy feet by

eighty-five feet consisting of fifteen chambers of various sizes was unearthed. At the center of the second chamber was found in 1996 an apparently conglomerate stone seeming to mark the exact spot where the Buddha was born. What is worthy of note is that the placement of this marker stone, based on the evidence, would be rather late, the time of Asoka's reign. In 2003 the Maya Devi temple was restored over the excavated site reopened by the king of Nepal.

4) Stupas and Monasteries.

The stupas at Lumbini were constructed during the time from the third century B.C. to the eighth or ninth century A.D. All the stupas currently excavated at Lumbini, thirty-one in all, have been more or less leveled over the years.



Almost all of them were votive stupas (erected by pilgrims to the site to gain merit). Numbers six and thirtyone seem to have been *Dhamma* stupas (built over religious books of various materials). Stupa thirty-one has nineteen terra-cotta seals that would typically characterize a *Dhamma* stupa. Number six is the only *saririka* stupa (one built over relics), but it is unclear whose relics were contained in the casket. The largest stupas are the square stupa ten, roughly thirty feet across, situated to the southwest of the Asoka pillar; and the square stupa thirty-one, roughly forty-five feet across, southeast of the meeting hall to the east of the Maya Devi temple site. Lumbini contains four groups of monastery (*vihara*) remains to the southeast of the sacred pool of Pokarani, three groups being clearly delineated. The initial construction of the monasteries lasted from the third century B.C. to the fourth century A.D.⁷



The Bas Relief of Maya Devi.

5) Bas Relief of Maya Devi. The basrelief of Maya Devi giving birth to the Buddha is enshrined in Maya Devi temple. The basrelief of the nativity was initially installed at the time of the Malla Kings of the Naga dynasty from about the eleventh to the fifteenth century in the Karnali zone of Nepal. (Bidari offers three views on the date of the carving of the panel, one view ascribing the work to the time of Asoka; another to the Kusana period, spanning the time between

the second century B.C. and the fourth century A.D.; and a third to the Gupta period, which extended from the third to the eighth centuries A.D. (pp. 73-74).) The sculpture is a realistic depiction of the Buddha's birth. As well as featuring the Buddha and Maya Devi, there are images of the queen's sister, Prajapati, supporting the queen; the Hindu creator of the universe, Brahma, bent to receive the future Buddha; and the leader of the devas, Indra, who assisted him in the difficult task of teaching humanity the path to Enlightenment. The panel is over six and a half feet high and almost three and a half feet wide.



*The monk residence
Wat Thai Lumbini.*



Wat Thai Lumbini.

IV. Conclusion: Lumbini Today

Lumbini is currently located on 6,000 acres of land. Additional trees have been planted, and fences have been built to protect it. It is being developed under the master plan of the Lumbini Development Trust, a plan devised in 1978 by the famous Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. UNESCO lists Lumbini as a World Heritage Site. It is now under the supervision of the Nepalese government. The Government has invited Buddhists from around the world to participate in the building of Buddhist temples at the site. Many beautiful temples have been built in recent years to honor the Buddha among others, the Myanmar (Burmese) Temple with a monastery complex nearby, the International Gautami Nuns Temple, the China Temple with its huge Buddha statue, the Dae Sung Suk Ga Sa Korean Temple, the Nepal Buddha Temple and monastery, the Japan Peace Stupa with its four Buddha statues at the dome, as well as the Thai Temple. The Lumbini International Research Institute (LIRI), dedicated to the study of Buddhism and religion in general, is also located on the premises. The weekly Lumbini bazaar offers insights into the cultural life of southern Nepal. As a religious, historical, and cultural center, Lumbini Park, after centuries of neglect, is of the utmost significance today for Buddhists worldwide.



The Mahabodhi Temple Bodh Gaya



Bodh Gaya, the Site of the Buddha's Enlightenment

I. Location and Historical Importance

The shrine of Bodh Gaya is the place where the Buddha reached Enlightenment in 528 B.C. while meditating under a bodhi tree⁸. Bodh Gaya is near the present-day village of Urel, the ancient town of Uruvela, in the state of Bihar in India, the Gaya district. Bodh Gaya is almost seven and a half miles south of Gaya (also Brahma Gaya). It is about fifty-six miles south of Patna and about one hundred forty-two miles east southeast of Varanasi. Bodh Gaya adjoins the Neranjara River (called today Nilajan or Lilajan), which meets the Mohana downstream to form the Phalgu River flowing past Gaya. *Uruvela* refers to the sand (*vald*) in the area. The name of the town became disused, and the site was called Sambodhi by Great King Asoka, later Mahabodhi, Bodhimanda, and Vajrasana (the Diamond Throne), finally, in the seventeen hundreds, Bodh Gaya, as distinct from (Brahma) Gaya. After the Enlightenment the Buddha spent forty-nine days in the vicinity of Uruvela. Later the same year he returned to convert three famous ascetics, Gaya Kassapa, Nadi Kassapa, and Uruvela Kassapa, who lived nearby. Thereafter, the Buddha apparently never came back to the place of his Enlightenment.



The history of Bodh Gaya is of the utmost interest. Bodh Gaya originally consisted of probably no more than the bodhi tree, the stone slab marking the place where the Buddha was meditating, and a railing around both. It is assumed that King Asoka built a temple there, presumably the one depicted in the relief at the Bahrhut stupa. The history of Bodh Gaya can be traced by examining the inscriptions made at the site and the accounts given by pilgrims. For example, Huien

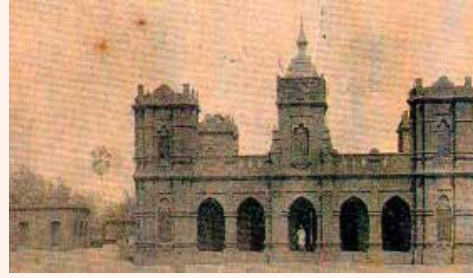
Tsiang, who visited the place in the early part of the seventh century, describes the monastery there as well as the Mahabodhi Temple, originally built probably in the early fourth century and appearing in the seventh much as it does today. Bodh Gaya and the Mahabodhi Temple flourished during the extended rule of the Bengalese Pala kings, who reigned from about 700 A.D. to 1161 A.D. During this time, too, in the early part of the eleventh century, important pilgrims came from such places as China and Tibet, e.g., the Tibetan translator Rinchen Sangpo. Bodh Gaya, it seems, had become not only an important shrine but also a center of learning. Between the early 300s, on the one hand, and the early 1200s, the time of Muslim attacks, on the other, the kings and monks of Sri Lanka maintained and expanded Bodh Gaya. After the attacks Bodh Gaya, abandoned and forgotten, fell into ruins. Buddhism had all but



disappeared in India. As the Sri Lankans had cared for the Mahabodhi Temple for the nine hundred years before the Muslims overran the area, so for about six hundred years after the attacks the kings of Burma, ironically enough, preserved the temple by sending at least six missions to repair it, the first in 1295 and



Anagarika Dharmapala.



The Mahabodhi Society Building.

the last in 1877. In 1880 J.D. Beglar, under the auspices of Alexander Cunningham, the father of Indian archeology, restored the temple. In the late 1800s Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder of the MahaBodhi Society began disputing the claims of the mahant (the Hindu headman) who resided at Bodh Gaya to the Maha Bodhi Temple. In 1949, at last, following public support by Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, the Bodh Gaya Temple Act established a committee of four Hindus and four Buddhists to tend to the affairs of the temple. This arrangement is less than desirable, especially since, according to the Act, the district magistrate of Gaya, presumadiy a Hindu, is the ex-officio chairman of the committee. Furthermore, should it happen that the magistrate is not a Hindu, the state government must still nominate a Hindu as chairman of the committee (cf. Barua, *Buddha Gaya Temple*, Appendix Four, "The Bodh Gaya Temple Act, 1949", sees. 4-6, p.289). In June of 2002 the Maha Bodhi Temple was added to UNESCO's World Heritage list as a cultural landmark having outstanding universal value.





The Bodhi tree.

II. The Story of the Buddha's Enlightenment and Its Significance: a Synopsis and Analysis of the Text

After the future Buddha, Siddhartha Gotama, left his home in search of Enlightenment, he went to Rajagaha, then to Giribbaja of the Magadhans to go on an alms walk.⁹ King Bimbisara saw him and sent messengers to find out where he was going. Siddhartha went to Mount Pandava to dwell in a cave. The king went to see him and asked whence he came. Siddhartha told the king he had come from an area near the Himalayas, being of the Adicca clan, the Sakiya dynasty. The king promised to make his life easy, but Siddhartha said he saw a danger in a life of sensuous pleasures and intended to strive for something better.

Siddhartha, seeking a life of peace, went to Alara Kalama and expressed a desire to learn his Sankhya philosophy. Siddhartha mastered this branch of learning. He eventually realized that Alara Kalama's teaching did not lead to Enlightenment and left, looking for something better. Next he went to Uddaka Ramaputta and told him

he wanted to learn his doctrine. Once again, though, he realized the teaching did not lead to Enlightenment, and he left.¹⁰

So Siddhartha wandered through the Magadhan country until reaching the vicinity of Uruvela. Here he spent six years in extreme asceticism accompanied by five bhikkhus (Kondanna, Vappa, Assaji, Mahanama, and Bhaddiya). He eventually realized that there was nothing wrong with eating a reasonable amount of food.¹¹ The five bhikkhus left, thinking Siddhartha was now living a life of luxury. Siddhartha went to meditate under a bodhi tree near Uruvela close to the banks of the Neranjara River. While he was meditating he was tempted by Mara (Namuci), death, the evil tempter, who tried to dissuade him from his efforts.¹² The armies of Mara (sensual pleasures; discontent; hunger and thirst; craving; sloth and torpor; fear; doubt; hypocrisy and obstinacy; and gain, renown, honor, false fame, extolling of self and disparagement of others) were no match for the mindfulness of the Blessed One.¹³ In his meditation he passed through the first and second *jhana* to the “third true knowledge” of Enlightenment.¹⁴ He became the Buddha.

The meaning of *Enlightenment*, i. e., *Nibbana*, is coolness.¹⁵ In other words *Nibbana* is being “cool and collected”, not “hot and bothered.” The Buddha’s achievement of Enlightenment is described in different ways in the suttas.

*The Vajrasana or
the Diamond
Throne under the
Bodhi tree.*



For example, in the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, 26:19, reaching Enlightenment is cast in terms an understanding of specific conditionality and dependent origination, as well as of such truths as the destruction of craving. In the *Mahasaccaka Sutta*, 36:42, the liberation of Enlightenment is understood in terms of an understanding of the Four Noble Truths. In the “*Mahapadana Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lineage*”, in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Digha Nikaya)*, 11:14.2.18-2.22, the “insight (*vipassana*) way to enlightenment” (2.21) (italics mine) is the realization of dependent origination, and sainthood (the state of the *arahāṇa*) is the contemplation of the rising and falling of the *five aggregates* in all their complexity (2.22). In the “*Nidanasamyutta; Connected Discourses on Causation*”, in *The Connected Discourses (Samyutta Nikaya)*, 11.12.65, the *path to Enlightenment* is associated with ceasing of name and form, hence, ceasing of consciousness.

After reaching Enlightenment, the Buddha, considering the difficulty of the teaching, the *Dhamma*, he had discovered, was not inclined to share it with others (cf. the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, 26:19-21; cf. the *Mahapadana Sutta*, 11:14, 3.1-3.7). However, the Brahma Sahampati, telling the Buddha there would be those who would understand and would benefit, convinced him of the importance of spreading the *Dhamma*.



The Jewel
Promenade Shrine.



III. Archeology and Monuments

Bodh Gaya is a place of important Buddhist monuments, including the gateway, the railing, the Buddhapada Temple, the Mahabodhi Temple, the Bodhi Tree, the outer Vajrasana, the Ratanacankama Chaitya, the Ratanaghara Chaitya, and the Asoka pillar. The most important of these is the Mahabodhi Temple.¹⁶



The original Mahabodhi Temple, the same structure that exists today, probably dates from 300 to 350 A.D. It is the temple of the “great Enlightenment” (cf. *maha*, great; *bodhi*, Enlightenment). There is no pilgrim’s report of it in the early 300s; there is a report of it in the early 600s. There is no existing inscription indicating who the donator was. The base of the temple is a large rectangle 50 feet square, atop of which in

the middle sits a large spire (*sikhara*), an obelisk with the top pyramid cut off. Four similar, smaller spires sit at each corner. The main spire, almost 171 feet high, is capped by a flat, round structure, the *amalaka*, above which is a tower called the *kalasha*, both comprising the *stupa*.

The temple was constructed almost entirely of bluish bricks with a plaster coating, the bricks in the oldest parts fitting together so well almost no cement was used. The two niches on either side of the main entrance in times past contained silver statues of Avalokitesvara and Maitreya; today they contain statues of the Buddha. The first chamber of the temple is noteworthy insofar as the floor contains crude carvings from the first third of the fourteenth century of figures with hands in the *anjali* mudra (hands folded at the heart). The next room, a large room with the ceiling vault shaped like a barrel, has the shrine

at the end. At this place

is the exact spot, the "Navel of the Earth", the Vajrasana, the Diamond Throne (from *vajrasa*, diamond, and *asana*, seat or sitting), where the Buddha attained Enlightenment.



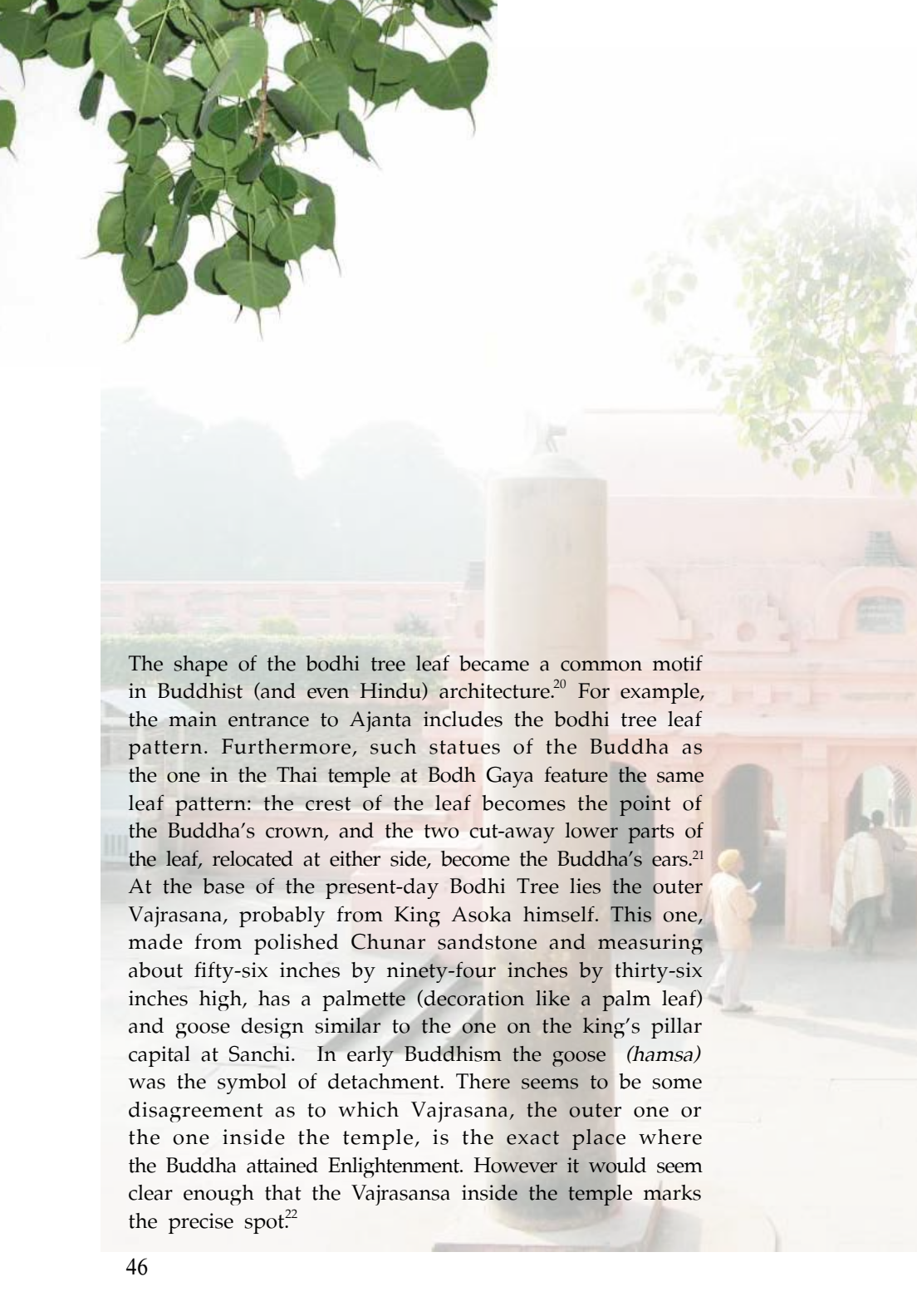
Cunningham discovered

a second shrine behind the stone slabs, one presumably dating from about 160 A.D. Moreover, a third shrine, the earliest, was also discovered. This latter shrine is thought to have contained the original Vajrasana, one similar to the one depicted in the relief from the Bahrhut stupa.¹⁷ It is thought this Vajrasana, with a smooth, broken sandstone slab; pedestal; and four pilasters at the front, was part of Asoka's original temple, although the sandstone slab might be even older. The Buddha statue at the shrine today dates from the late 900s.¹⁸ More than six and a half feet high and featuring the Buddha in the earthtouching posture, this statue was moved to the temple by Cunningham from the Mahant's palace. The previous statue, more impressive and moving than the current one, was likely destroyed during the Moslem invasion.

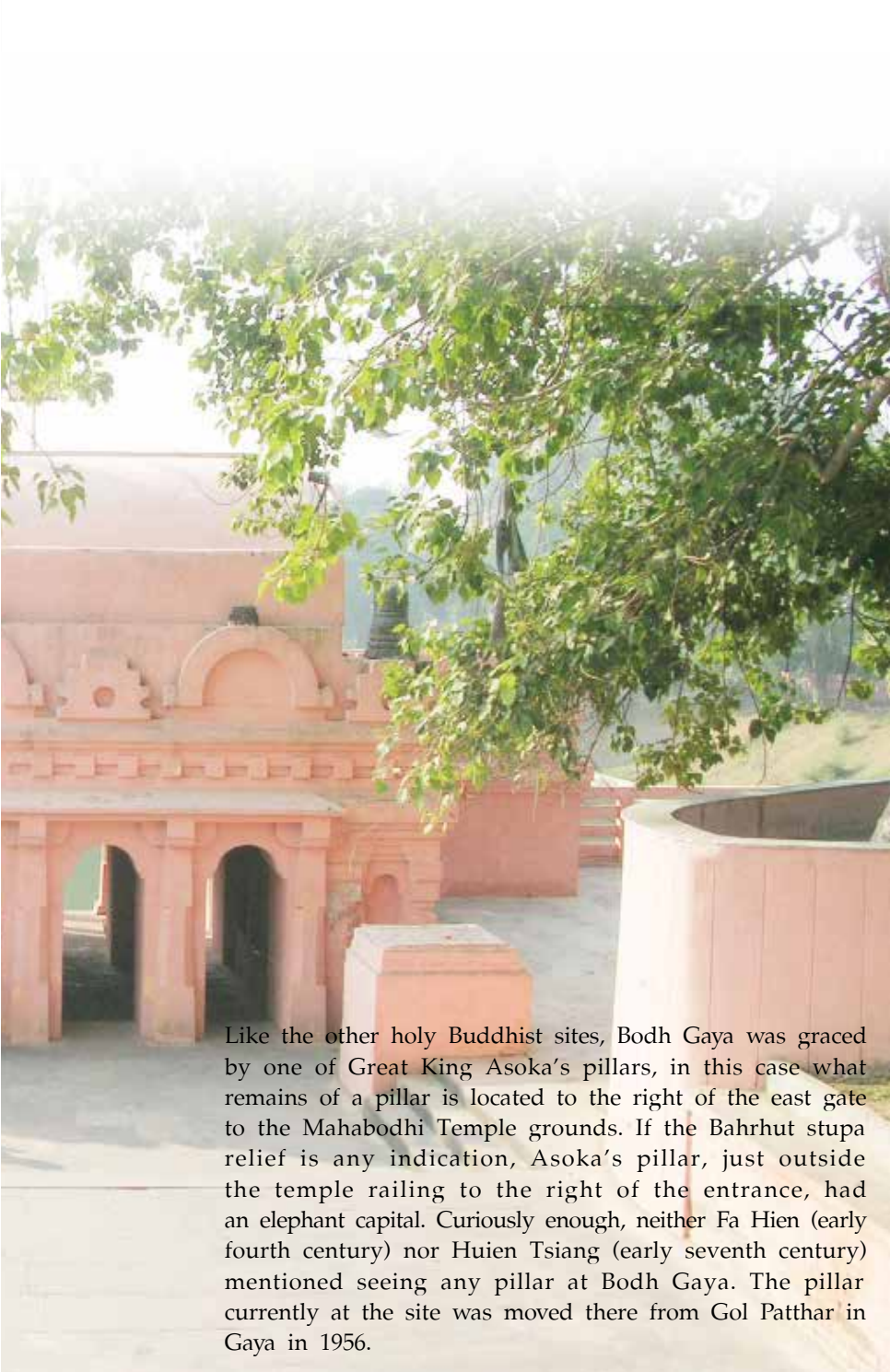


The Buddha inside the stupa.

At the rear of Mahabodhi Temple (the western end, the inner shrine side) is the Bodhi tree, like the one under which the Buddha achieved Enlightenment. The bodhi (botree) is a variety of fig tree (*bodhirukkha*, *ficus religiosa*; the Indian fig tree, peepul/pipal/peepal). King Sasanka of Bengal dug up the original tree about 600 A.D. and burned it. A supporter of the Hindu religion of Siva Mahesvara, he persecuted Buddhists and slandered the Buddhist religion out of envy.¹⁹ The original Bodhi Tree was moved a little westward when the Mahabodhi Temple was built. In 1876 the remaining part of the tree existing at that time fell down, and Cunningham planted a sapling from the tree. In 1880 Cunningham, digging near the new Bodhi Tree, discovered at a depth of about three feet what he thought were two pieces of the tree destroyed by King Sasanka.



The shape of the bodhi tree leaf became a common motif in Buddhist (and even Hindu) architecture.²⁰ For example, the main entrance to Ajanta includes the bodhi tree leaf pattern. Furthermore, such statues of the Buddha as the one in the Thai temple at Bodh Gaya feature the same leaf pattern: the crest of the leaf becomes the point of the Buddha's crown, and the two cut-away lower parts of the leaf, relocated at either side, become the Buddha's ears.²¹ At the base of the present-day Bodhi Tree lies the outer Vajrasana, probably from King Asoka himself. This one, made from polished Chunar sandstone and measuring about fifty-six inches by ninety-four inches by thirty-six inches high, has a palmette (decoration like a palm leaf) and goose design similar to the one on the king's pillar capital at Sanchi. In early Buddhism the goose (*hamsa*) was the symbol of detachment. There seems to be some disagreement as to which Vajrasana, the outer one or the one inside the temple, is the exact place where the Buddha attained Enlightenment. However it would seem clear enough that the Vajrasana inside the temple marks the precise spot.²²



Like the other holy Buddhist sites, Bodh Gaya was graced by one of Great King Asoka's pillars, in this case what remains of a pillar is located to the right of the east gate to the Mahabodhi Temple grounds. If the Bahrhut stupa relief is any indication, Asoka's pillar, just outside the temple railing to the right of the entrance, had an elephant capital. Curiously enough, neither Fa Hien (early fourth century) nor Huiien Tsiang (early seventh century) mentioned seeing any pillar at Bodh Gaya. The pillar currently at the site was moved there from Gol Patthar in Gaya in 1956.



*The Votive
Stupas.*

Other monuments of note at Bodhi Gaya include the gateway, the railing, the Buddhapada Temple, the Ratanacankama Chaitya, and the Ratanaghara Chaitya. The beautifully carved gateway to the Mahabodhi Temple dates from about the 700 A.D. Interestingly enough, at the base there are two figures of Burmese craftsmanship, probably from the 1811 mission. The railing surrounding the temple was originally a wooden structure. About 100 B.C. a stone railing replaced the wooden one. The present-day stone railing, constructed sometime around the 500s, contains pieces of the old stone, brown in color and smooth compared to the newer gray and rough. The Buddhapada Temple is significant because its portico has carved footprints symbolic of the Buddha. The Ratanacankama Chaitya, the so-called "Jewel Promenade Shrine", is the place where the Buddha walked in the third week after his Enlightenment. The Ratanaghara Chaitya, lastly, the "Jewel House Shrine", is the place where it is said the Buddha stayed the fourth week after the Enlightenment meditating on the Abhidhamma, the third "Basket". The oldest monuments at Bodhi Gaya, the earliest temple structures, are the remains of the Ratanacankama Chaitya, the Vajrasana, the Bodhi Tree, and the railing (the brown, smooth stones).

IV. Conclusion: Bodh Gaya Today

Despite the fact that Bodh Gaya barely survived the ravages of time and history and sectarianism, it has become an important tourist spot and pilgrimage stop (for the following, cf. Baudah, *Bodhgaya*, especially pp. 109-123). Sculpture and architecture are once again flourishing at the site in a way they have not for a century and a half. An indication of this was the construction from 1984 to 1989 by the Japanese Daijokyo sect of the eighty-foot-high Buddha statue, the second highest statue in India. The Dalai Lama himself unveiled this statue in November of 1989.



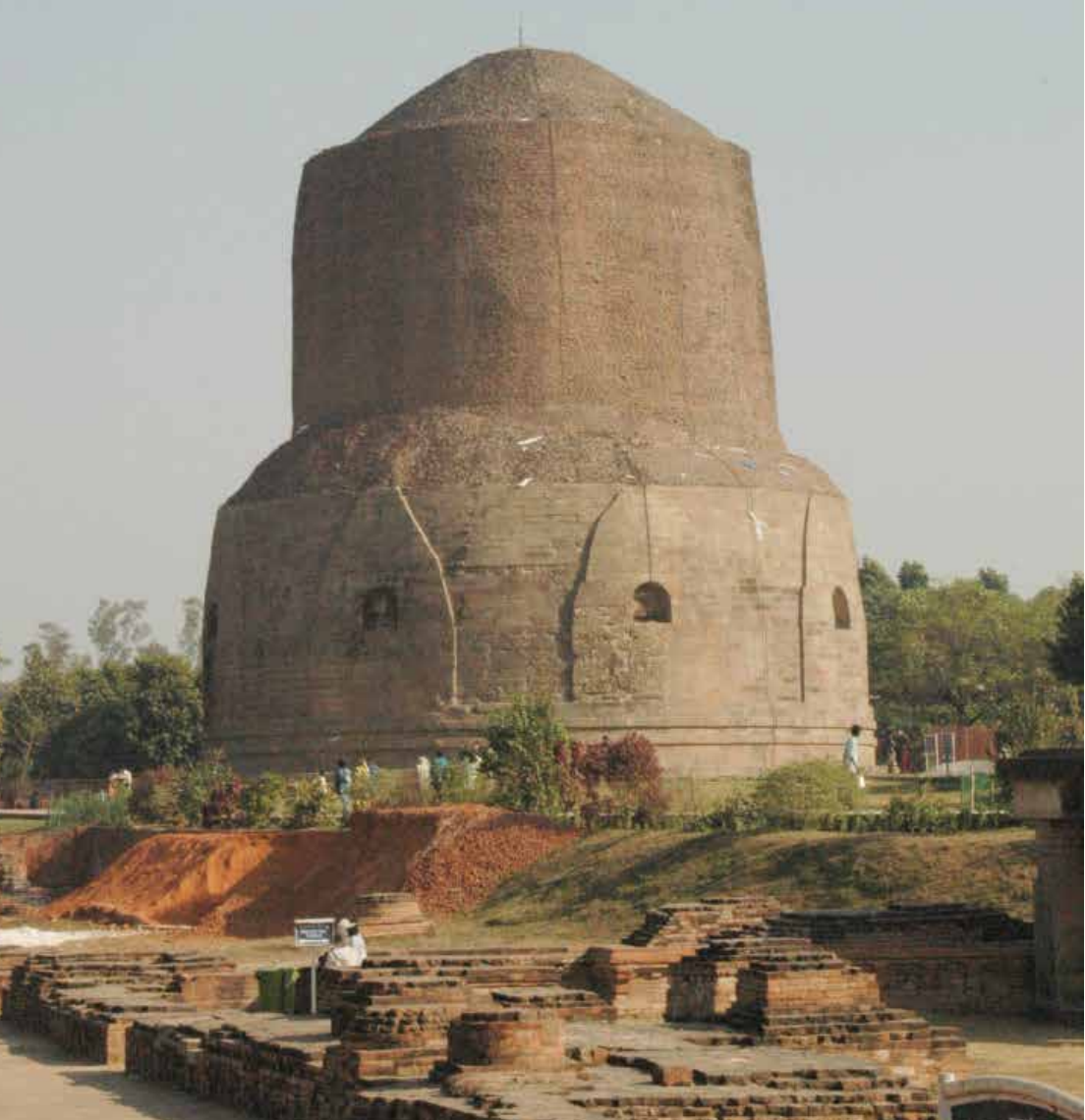
| *Wat Thai
Buddhagaya.*

Numerous temples have been constructed in recent times at Bodh Gaya. The most important of these, second only in splendor to the great Mahabodhi Temple itself, is the Wat Thai (Wat thai Buddhagaya). Completed in 1957 and renovated in 1970 to 1972, this temple is as beautiful as its counterpart in Thailand. Its most distinctive feature, not to mention its orange roof, is the beautiful Buddha statue inside, measuring almost twelve feet in height. The statue includes the bodhi tree leaf motif. Bodh Gaya today also includes the following temples: the Burmese Buddha Vihara, popular with foreigners with ample accommodations; the Indosana-Nipponji (Japanese); the Daijokyo ("great Vehicle", "Mahayana") Buddha Vihara; the Geluppa and the Karamapa Tibetan Buddha Viharas; the Bhutanese Buddha Vihara (Bhutan is a small kingdom in the Himalayan Mountains); the Chinese Buddha Vihara; and the Vietnamese, Korean, Bangladeshi and the Taiwanese Buddha Viharas.



| *Japanese
Temple.*

The magnificent Dhamek stupa in the Deer Park.



Sarnath (Isipatana), Deer Park, the Site of the Buddha's First Discourse

I. Location and Significance

Sarnath, also previously known as Mrigadava, Rishipattana, and Isipatana, located about six miles from Varanasi (Baranasi, Benares) in Uttar Pradesh, India, is the deer park where the Buddha delivered the first discourse, set in motion the wheel of the *Dhamma*, and founded the Sangha. *Sarnath* (cf. *Saranganath*) means *lord of the deer*; *Mrigadava* means *deer park*; and *Rishipattana* and *Isipatana* mean *the place where the holy men fell to earth* when devas announced to them the birth of the future Buddha (cf. Pali, *isi*, holy men; and Sanskrit, *rishi*). The Buddha subsequently converted Yasa, the son of a wealthy nobleman of Varanasi, as well as his family and friends. A short time afterwards Yasa and the others became monks at Sarnath. The following rainy season the Buddha stayed at the monastery at Sarnath. By this time the Sangha had grown to sixty monks. The Buddha sent them out to preach the *Dhamma*. The Buddha later preached other important discourses at Sarnath. By the seventh century when the Chinese traveler Hsuan Tsang visited Sarnath, there were thirty monasteries and three thousand monks there. The site became an important

center for one of the Theravada schools. It was plundered and burned by the end of the 1100s by Turkish Muslims. There followed the diaspora of the Sangha, and the site was then forgotten for about seven hundred years. Sarnath was rediscovered about 1800, and excavations began. The site is the location of several monuments important to the history of Buddhism, including the Dhammarajika stupa, built by King Asoka, as well as the Asokan pillar with its lion capital.



II. The Story of the Buddha's First Discourse

Sarnath was the location of The Buddha's first discourse. The Buddha had achieved Enlightenment at Uravela (presently Bodh Gaya) under the bodhi tree on the banks of the Neranjara after repulsing the attempts of Mara, the evil tempter, to prevent him from reaching Buddhahood. After reaching Enlightenment, the Buddha spent seven days at Uravela and seven days at six other nearby locations, a total of forty nine days, enjoying the bliss of sainthood. He thought about giving his first discourse to Alara Kalama, a wise man who would quickly acknowledge the truth of the *Dhamma*. However, a deity came to the Buddha to tell him that Alara Kalama had died a week earlier. Then he thought about giving his discourse to Uddaka, student of the wise man Rama. However, once again



The Asok Pillar
at Sarnath.

a deity came, this time to announce that Uddaka had died the night before.²³ At this point the Buddha recalled the five bhikkhus, Kondanna, Vappa, Assaji, Mahanama, and Bhaddiya, the *Pancavaggiya*, with whom he had practiced the ascetic life for six years before realizing that it was not conducive to liberation. He wanted to pay them back for the help they had given to him. So he set off on foot for Sarnath, the deer park at Varanasi, about one hundred forty-two miles away, where the five were staying.

The Buddha had traveled only a short distance when he met the naked ascetic Upaka, a follower of Nataputta of the naked sect. He attempted to convince the man of the truth of Buddhism but was unable to do so because of the ascetic's misconceptions. When the Buddha had arrived at Sarnath and had approached the five bhikkhus, they decided they would ignore him and not pay him honor. However, when the Buddha came near they lost their resolve because they were so impressed by the glory and serenity of his countenance. They greeted him and called him "friend", prepared a seat for him, and washed his feet. The Buddha told the five ascetics that he was the fully Enlightened One and that he would teach them the truth of the *Dhamma*. He said that if they practiced the *Dhamma*, as instructed by him, they would achieve *Nibbana*, Enlightenment. For a time the five remained incredulous, but after a while, realizing he had never made such claims in the past, they became receptive to his words.

*Mulgandhakuti
Sarnath.*



*The Sarnath
Museum.*

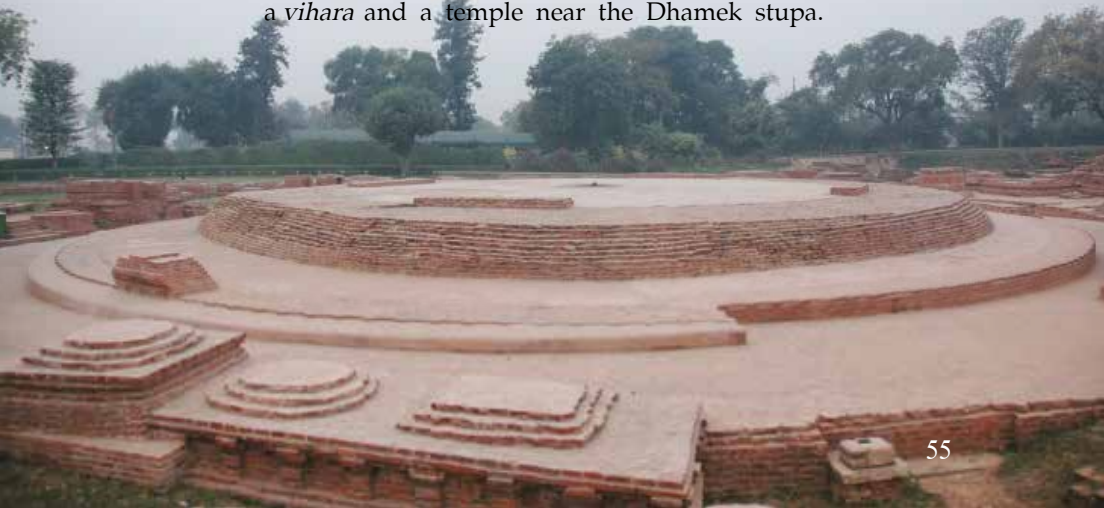
So at Sarnath, the deer park near Varanasi, the Buddha delivered to the *Pancavaggiya* his first discourse, the the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, *Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma*,²⁴ The first discourse was concerned with the Middle Way and the Four Noble Truths. The Buddha first spoke about the Middle Way-the way leading to Enlightenment which lies between the extremes of sensual gratification, on the one hand, and of the self mortification of the ascetic life, on the other. The Middle Way, as described in the discourse, is the Eightfold Path that includes right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. The Four Noble Truths are the truths of suffering (in brief, the five aggregates), of the origin of suffering (craving), of the cessation of suffering (freedom from craving), and of the way leading to the cessation of suffering (the Eightfold Path, the Middle Way). Hearing the Buddha's words, the five ascetics became convinced of the truth of what he said. The conversion of the five bhikkhus represented the beginning of the Sangha, the order of the Buddhist monks. The words of the Buddha also set in motion the wheel of the *Dhamma*, the wheel symbolizing the eternal cycle of the existence of the world (*samsara*), the endless life after life of craving.²⁵

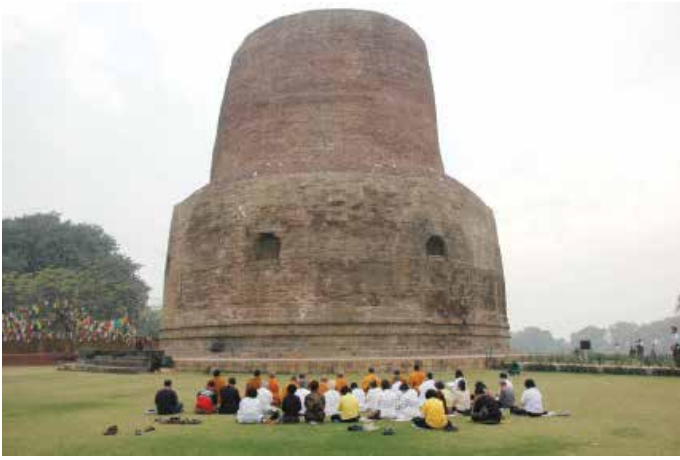
III. Archeology and Monuments

Sarnath is the site of many important Buddhist monuments, the most notable being the Dhammarajika stupa, the Dhamek (Dharmek, Dhammeka) stupa, the Mulagandhakuti (the main shrine), the Asokan pillar and lion capital, and the preaching Buddha statue.²⁶

1) The Dhammarajika stupa, built by Great King Asoka, who visited Sarnath in 249 B.C., originally contained relics presumed to be those of the Buddha. Before six subsequent enlargements were made to it, the stupa had been about forty-four feet in diameter. Today only the foundation remains. Tragically enough, in 1794 Jagat Singh, a Varanasi minister, dismantled the stupa so he could use the red bricks for building a housing project. The relics were found about twenty-seven feet from the top in a small green marble casket inside a stone box. In accordance with the Hindu custom of the time, the remains were thrown into the Ganges River. The Commissioner of Varanasi, Jonathan Duncan, published a report on the finding of the relics as well as of a Buddha statue in the stupa. Interest in Sarnath soon grew, in 1815 the archeologist Colonel C. Mackenzie started exploration of the ruins and surveyed the area. From late 1834 to 1836 Alexander Cunningham conducted systematic excavations at Sarnath and explored not only of the Dhammarajika stupa but also the Dhamek stupa, the Coukhandi stupa, and a *vihara* and a temple near the Dhamek stupa.

*Dhammarajika
Stupa*





2) The Dhamek stupa, the impressive cylindrical structure that exists at Sarnath today and dates from the early sixth century A.D., measures ninety-three and a half feet in diameter and one hundred thirty-eight feet high, including the foundation. Asoka built the original stupa at this location. The remains of this original are what Cunningham probably found when he bore a shaft in the center of the Dhamek stupa and found remnants of a Mauryan-brick structure. There were no relics inside. However, Cunningham did find a stone slab with an inscription in sixth-seventh century script suggesting a connection with the *Dhamma*. The inscription of King Mahipala (1026 A.D.) indicates that the original name of the stupa was the *Dhammacakka* (Sanskrit, *Dharma Chakrd*) stupa (“stupa of the turning the wheel of the law”). This evidence suggests that the Dhamek stupa was the exact location of the Buddha’s first discourse, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. Portions of the bottom of the stupa are covered with a wide band consisting of a pattern of swastikas (fylfots) with a lotus wreath at the top and bottom. At the bottom of the stupa eight large shelves, spaced at equal distances around the circumference, are built into the wall. These apparently once contained images of the Buddha.

3) The ruins of the Mulagandhakuti (main shrine, a *vihara*), or the First Perfumed Chamber, lie to the north of the Dhammarajika stupa (perfumed in the sense of *incensed*). (There is another shrine at Sarnath, the sunken shrine of Pancayatana, east of the Dhammarajika stupa under a sunken concrete platform.) The Buddha stayed at the Mulagandhakuti during the first rainy season following the first discourse. A rich man named Nandiya donated it to the Buddha. The shrine was a square building



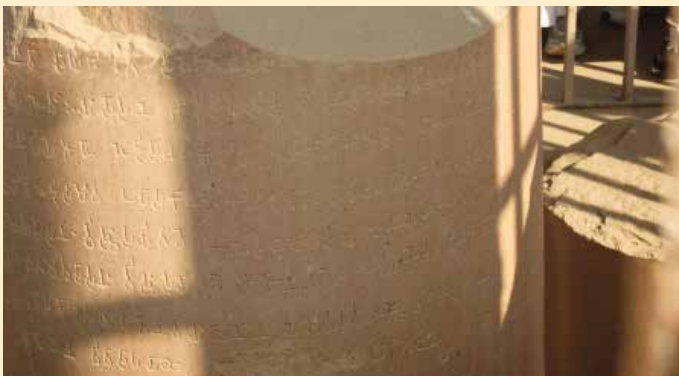
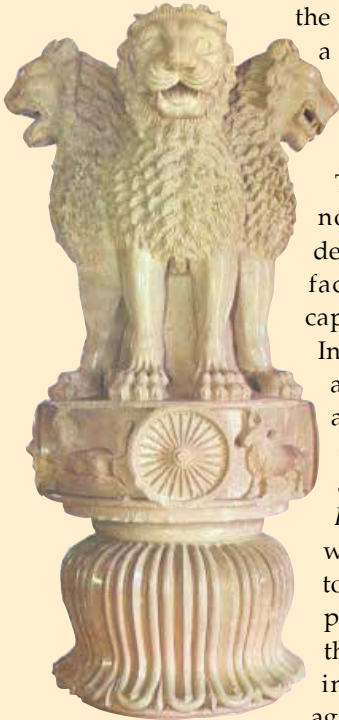
Mulagandhakuti

with the entrance to the east, each side about sixty feet long; according to Hsuan Tsang, it was about two hundred feet high. The area between the shrine and the Dhammarajika stupa is believed to have been the Camkama, the promenade where the Buddha performed his walking meditation.

4) To the west of the Mulagandhakuti are the remains of the Asoka pillar, discovered in 1904. Originally about forty-nine feet high surmounted by a capital, the remaining base today is about six and a half feet high. The monolithic shaft was slightly tapered, about twenty-eight inches in circumference at the bottom, about twenty-two inches at the top.

The pillar's brownish-sandstone capital, now located in the Sarnath museum, depicts the fronts of four lions, each head facing a different direction. (The lion capital is the official emblem of modern India.) The abacus contains four animals: an elephant (Buddha at conception), a bull (Buddha's birth sign), a horse (his renunciation of home life), and a lion (his first discourse). A large *Dhammacakka* ("wheel of the law") with thirty-two spokes presumably topped the capital of the original Asoka pillar. There were three inscriptions on the pillar, the oldest an edict from Asoka in Brahmi warning monks and nuns against schism in the Sangha. The site of

the Asoka pillar is believed to be the place where the Buddha assembled the first sixty bhikkhus and directed them to go out and spread the *Dhamma*.



The Asoka Pillar at Sarnath.

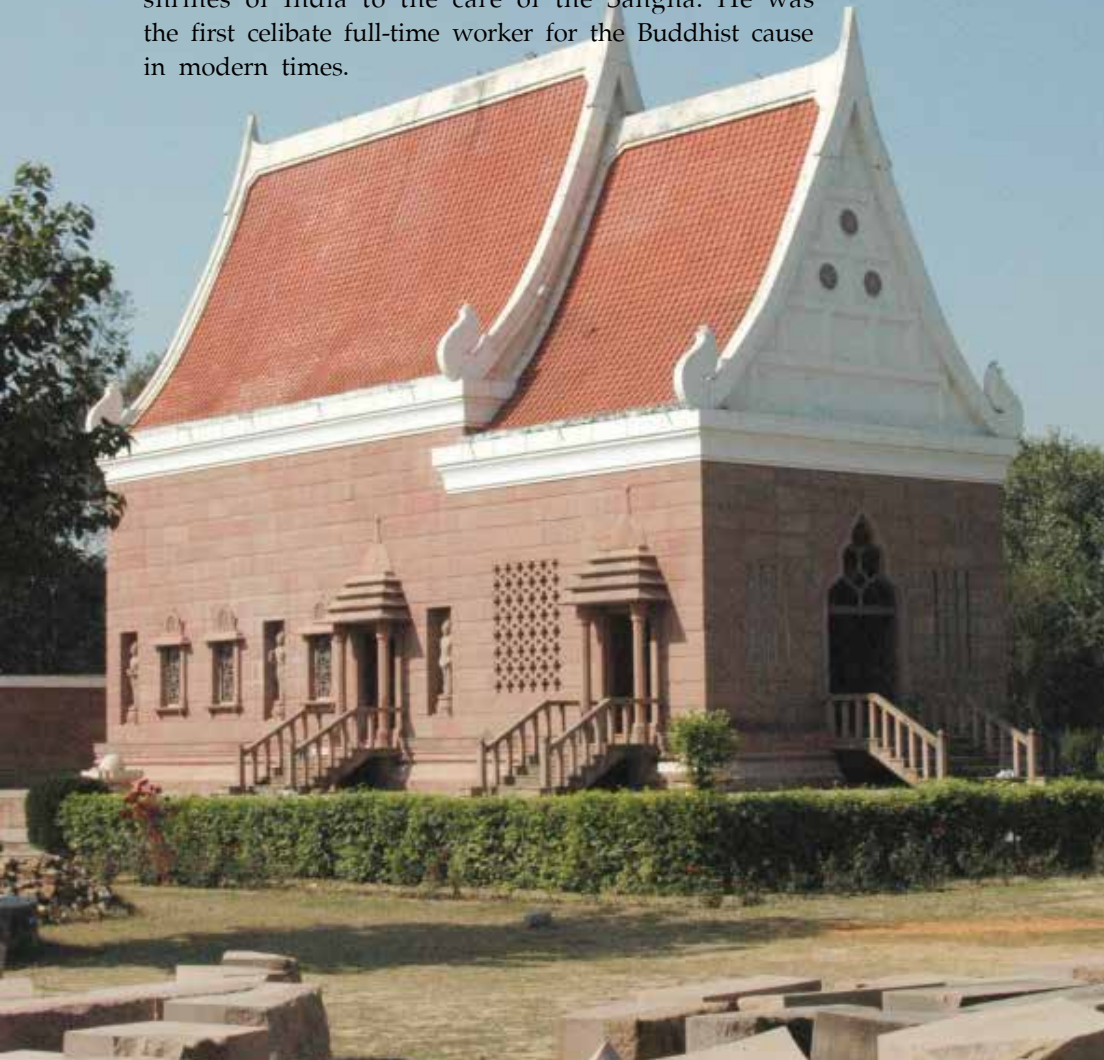


5) During the Gupta age, roughly from the fourth century to the sixth century A.D., the same age that saw the creation of the Ajanta caves, Sarnath became a center of Buddhist art. The beautiful carving of the preaching Buddha, the *Dhammacakkappavattana* statue, currently in the Sarnath museum, bears witness to this fact. It was a gift of King Kumaragupta (414-455 A.D.) F. C. Ortel discovered it. This is the world's finest statue of the sitting Buddha. The figure is in the preaching posture, the *Dhammacakka mudra*. The Buddha is very naturalistic. His seat is magnificently carved; the halo around the Buddha's head is intricately designed. An image of a deer appears on either side of the Buddha. The top of his seat contains a "wheel of the law", which relates the statue to the first discourse. The positioning of the hands has come to symbolize the *Dhammacakkappavattana*, the turning of the wheel of the law. The middle finger of the right hand touching the middle finger of the left suggests the Middle Way. Between the two front legs of the seat appear figures of the *Pancavaggiya*, as well as those of a woman and child, Yasa and his mother.

IV. Conclusion: Sarnath Today

Sarnath owes its status today as a major Buddhist shrine to Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933), founder of the Maha Bodhi Society in 1891. He established the Society at Sarnath on premises located to the left of the new Mulagandhakuti Vihara, an impressive structure built by the Society in 1931. As time went on, the Society added schools, a college, a library, a training school for monks and nuns, and a hospital for the poor of Sarnath. Dharmapala's intention was to restore all the Buddhist shrines of India to the care of the Sangha. He was the first celibate full-time worker for the Buddhist cause in modern times.

| *Wat Thai Sarnath.*



There are several modern temples at Sarnath, including the Burmese, Chinese, Korean, Thai, three Tibetan, and the Japanese. There is a Tibetan monastery; the Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies with its two hundred monks; and the Tibetan printing press, the Pleasure of Elegant Sayings. Accommodations at Sarnath are available at



the Maha Bodhi Society or at the Thai temple near the museum. The museum, established in 1910, contains artifacts found at the site starting in 1904, notably, the lion capital, a huge Bodhisatta statue, the preaching Buddha statue, and the Buddha's life panels. In the vicinity of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara lies the Mrigadava, deer park, with canal, roaming deer, and bird sanctuary. Varanasi, finally, six miles away, with its two rivers, the Varana and the Asi, is important today for Varanasi University, where many Thai monks come to study.

It is not entirely clear *exactly* where the Buddha gave his first discourse. Some argue it was at the site of the Dhamek stupa, with its stone slab discovered by Cunningham. Others say it was at the place where the Dhammarajika stupa currently stands. Still others maintain that it was actually at the location of the sunken shrine of Pancayatana. Whatever the case may be, for the pious Buddhist pilgrim Sarnath is of the utmost importance as the site visited by the fully Enlightened One at the time he gave his first discourse, even if the exact spot where it was given cannot be pinpointed. It is a religious, historical, and cultural Mecca.

The Parinibbana Stupa Kusinara



Kusinara, the Place of the Buddha's *Parinibbana*



I. Location and Historical Significance

Kusinara (Kusinagar, Kushinagar) is the place where the Buddha passed away at the age of eighty (reached *Mahaparinibbana*, “the great fullness of Enlightenment”). It is about thirty-four miles east of Gorakhpur in the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India. It is next to the town of Kasia (Kusia). Ancient Kasia, known as Kushavati, though not very large, was the center of the Malla tribe of eastern India. The Buddha himself provides some historical perspective on the old town. In the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, defending his choice of Kusinara as the place of his passing away in the face of Ananda’s opposition, the Buddha says that Kusinara, named Kusavati in previous times, was once a rich and populous capital that never slept, ruled by the righteous King Mahasudassana, who had conquered all the adjoining areas.²⁷



The ancient monasteries and stupas.

Over the centuries following the Buddha's death, Kusinara has up-and-down history.²⁸ When Huien Tsiang came to Kusinara in the early part of the seventh century, the place was already in ruins. However, a few decades later when I Tsing came, there were more than one hundred monks during the rainy season, there were five hundred during the pilgrimage season. When the Korean Hye Ch'o traveled there about 725 A.D., the place was once again in decline. The site was more or less abandoned. After 725 A.D., even before the Muslim invasions, historical records are silent about Kusinara.

After hundreds of years of neglect following the Muslim invasions, Kusinara was rediscovered in the middle of the nineteenth century. At the suggestion of H.H. Wilson in 1854 that the town of Kasia might be Kusinara, Alexander Cunningham visited the area in 1861-62 and agreed with Wilson's assessment, in 1876



Cunningham's assistant, A. C. L. Carlleyle, excavated the area around Kasia. He found the large reclining Buddha statue currently exhibited in the Nirvana Temple at Kusinara. However, only after further excavations between 1904 and 1912 which produced seals and an inscription was there conclusive proof that Kasia was ancient Kusinara. Just as the Burmese played a key role in the preservation of the shrine of Bodh Gaya through their missions to repair the premises, so, too, did they play a role in the rejuvenation of Kusinara. During in the 1900s Venerable U. Chandramani, a monk from Burma, made a pilgrimage to Kusinara and built a temple in the following years the took care of the visitors who began coming. In 1956 the Government of India built the presently existing Nirvana Temple at Kusinara in conjunction with the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations, the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's death, when Buddha Jayanti Park was built in Delhi.



The Buddha in the Pirinibbana posture.

II. The Story of the Buddha's Passing Away: a Synopsis of the Text

The *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* in the *Digha Nikaya* is the story of the Buddha's passing away. The first two-thirds of the *sutta* (II: 16.1.1 - 4.43) deal with a variety of topics leading up to the final journey to Kusinara: the discussions on morality, the Noble Truths, and the Mirror of Dhamma; the trip to the grove of Ambapali, the courtesan, and the meal with her; the Buddha's sickness at Beluva during the rainy season; the discussion of the Dhamma as an island and of the four roads to power; the evil Mara's visit with the Buddha at Capala Shrine three months before the *Parinibbana*; the discussion of the eight stages of mastery and eight stages of liberation; the discourse to the assembly of the monks in the Great Forest; the Buddha's final trip to Vesali for alms; the discourse to the monks at Bhandagama and several other locations; the meal prepared by Cunda, the smith, at Pava and the Buddha's ensuing sickness; and the visit of Pukkusa, a student of Alara Kalama, with the Buddha on his final journey from Pava to Kusinara, of the events

leading up to the trip to Kusinara, the incident involving Cunda is important and instructive (cf. 4.13-20, 4.42). The Buddha, Ananda, and a large group of monks traveled to Pava to the mango grove of Cunda, the gold smith, whom Buddha had taught the *Dhamma*. Cunda, in turn, offered to prepare a meal for him. After the Buddha had eaten the meal of “pig’s delight” (4.17), he became so sick that it was as if he were going to die. However, he endured his sickness with mindfulness and did not complain, then asked Ananda to immediately journey to Kusinara. While resting on the road, the Buddha exhibited his special powers by making the dirty water of a stream clean so that Ananda could bring it to him to drink. Later the Buddha instructed Ananda on what to say to Cunda so that the latter would not feel remorse about the sickness he had caused.



The last third of the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* (11:16.5.1-6.28) covers the passing away of the Buddha and the events immediately prior to this. The Buddha, Ananda, and a large group of monks crossed the Hirannavati River to the sala grove near Kusinara in preparation for the *Parinibbana*. At the Buddha’s behest, Ananda prepared a bed between two sala trees with the head to the north. Buddha was tired and wanted to lie down. He told Upavana, standing in front fanning him, to move to the side so the devas from ten world-spheres could see him. They knew he would pass in the last watch of the night, and they wanted to see him while they had chance. Ananda asked the Buddha what was to be done with his remains. The Buddha said his remains were to be treated like the remains of a “wheel-turning monarch” (5.11): they were to be wrapped 500 times in cotton and a new cloth, placed in an iron oil-vat, and cremated on



a perfumed funeral pyre; then a *stupa* was to be built at the the crossroads. Ananda wept at the thought of the Buddha's passing away, but later reminded by other that everything pleasant or unpleasant, is changeable, and that all things is borned and later decays.

Ananda expressed the wish that the Buddha not die in the miserable little town of Kusinara, but the latter recounted

the glorious history of ancient Kusavati and its ruler, King Mahasudassana. The Buddha sent Ananda to Kusinara to tell the Mallas of his imminent passing away. The Mallas and a large crowd of people, came to the sala grove all weeping with great sorrow to pay their homage.

It happened at that time that a wanderer by the name of Subhadda was in Kusinara. Hearing that the Buddha was about to pass away, he went to the sala grove to gain Enlightenment. Though Ananda insisted several times that Subhadda not disturb the Buddha. But with his great compassion Buddha urged Ananda to let the wanderer see him. Subhadda asked the Buddha if the famous ascetics and Brahmins had realized the truth, or not. The Buddha typically refused to be drawn into a debate about other doctrines. His tact was to shift the focus to the efficaciousness, therefore validity, of his own teaching: only the *Dhamma* with the Noble Eightfold Path had produced Stream-Winners, Once-Returners, Non-Returners, and Arahants (cf. 5.27).²⁹ Subhadda subsequently saw the truth of the *Dhamma* and was ordained as the Buddha's last personal disciple.

The Buddha spoke further, first to Ananda, then to the assembly of the monks. He told Ananda that he would have no successor: the only teacher after his death would be the *Dhamma* itself. To the assembly of the monks he spoke his last words: “all conditioned things are of a nature to decay-strive on untiringly” (6.7).

Having gone through the various jhanas and Spheres, the Buddha passed away (cf. 6.8-6.9: the four jhanas and the various Spheres, e.g., the Sphere of Neither-P
creep tionNor-Non-Perception, the Sphere of No-Thingness, etc.; cf., also, 3.33: the eight liberations). A terrible earthquake occurred, together with thunder. Some of the monks wept passionately; others bore their loss mindfully. The next morning the monk Anuruddha sent Ananda to Kusinara to tell the Mallas about



Rambhar Stupa.

the death of the Buddha. The Mallas, anguished and sorrowful, came to pay homage, paying respect with song and dance for six days. On the seventh day they carried the body through the city to the shrine of Makuta Bandhana and wrapped the body in linen and cotton wool. The Venerable Kassapa the Great, who had been traveling from Pava to Kusinara with an entourage of monks, went to the Mallas' shrine to pay homage. Once he had done so, the funeral pyre ignited by itself, and the Buddha's body was burned so that only the bones remained. The leaders of eight cities-Magadha, Vesali, Kapilavatthu, Allakappa, Ramagama, Vethadipa, Pava, and Kusinara-laid claim to the relics of the Buddha. The Brahmin Dona divided the relics among the cities. The leaders of the eight cities built *stupas* for the relics, Dona build a *stupa* for the urn, and the Moriyas of Pipphalavana built a *stupa* for the embers in their city.

III. What to See at Kusinara Today

Why go to Kusinara? It is one of the four sites the Buddha himself recommended the faithful visit: the place of his birth, Lumbini Park; the place of his Enlightenment, Bodh Gaya; the place of his first discourse, Sarnath, and the place of his passing away, Kusinara (cf. 5.8 of the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*).

Kusinara today is noteworthy both for the ancient monuments to be found there as well as for the temples that have recently been built.³⁰ The temple by which Kusinara is recognized today is the Nirvana Temple with its barrelvaulted roof and its large round glass windows. It is at the site of the ancient temple, which also had a barrelvaulted roof. The Nirvana Temple is noteworthy for the large reclining Buddha statue that it contains. This statue, twenty feet long and dating from the 400s A.D., was carved from one piece of red sandstone. Carlleyle found it in 1876 when he excavated at the site of the original temple. Behind the Nirvana Temple is the main *stupa*, seventy-five feet high, which was restored by Venerable U. Chandramani, the Burmese monk, in 1927.



Wat Thai Kusinara Chalermraj



There is some difference of opinions about whether the Buddha passed away at the spot where the temple exists or where the *stupa* exists. (According to Ahir, p. 47, the reclining statue in the temple is thought to be the place where the Buddha died. According to Dhammika, p. 168, however, the *stupa* marks the spot. Dhammika argues that the present *stupa* consists of *stupas* within *stupas*, in the first of which were found charcoal and black earth, presumably from a funeral pyre. It is not clear why material from the site of the creation *stupa* would be present in the main *stupa*.) Down the road and south of the Nirvana temple and the main *stupa* lies the Matha-Kuar temple. It should be noted that this is the temple that was built in 1927 by the Burmese to hold a large Buddha statue. This statue, ten feet high and about 1000 years old, represents the Buddha in the earth-touching position under the bodhi tree at the time of his Enlightenment. About one mile east of the Matha-Kuar temple is the remains of the cremation *stupa*, the Makutabandhana Chaitya (the site of the Mallas shrine) or Ramabhar *stupa* (from the name of the nearby pond), where the Buddha's body was burned. The cremation *stupa* was a drumshaped shstructure. It was large: 112 feet in diameter, its base 155 feet in diameter. Modern temples, lastly, have also been constructed at Kusinara by the people of China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Japan.

Jetawan Maha Vihar Svatthi



The City of Svatthi

I. Location and Historical Significance

Svatthi, in the province of Uttar Pradesh, is located about thirteen and a half miles from Balrampur.³¹ In the days of the Buddha it was a thriving city, the capital of the kingdom of Kosala. Starting with the twentieth year of his Enlightenment, the Buddha spent every rainy season there except for the last one, twenty-four in all. He usually stayed at a large monastery complex called Jetavana Anathapindikarama, i.e., Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's Park, in honor of the two men responsible for providing this retreat for the Blessed One. Anathapindika built the complex after purchasing the park for an exorbitant sum of money from Prince Jeta, who had been at first reluctant to sell. Other monasteries were subsequently built around Svatthi, for example, the Pubbarama, the eastern monastery; and the Rajakarama. The Buddha delivered numerous discourses at Svatthi, more than at any other location, most likely because he spent so much time there. After his lifetime, Svatthi went into decline. However, the Jetavana Monastery remained an important Buddhist center for some time. When Fa Hien came to the site in the early 400s, the city had become little more than a small town, although the monastery continued to prosper. Fa Hien wrote that a fire destroyed the original seven-story Jetavana Monastery, this famous sandalwood statue of the Buddha survived, but a two-story monastery was rebuilt. By the early 600s when Huiyen Tsiang visited, both the town and the monastery were nothing but empty ruins, only the foundation of the monastery remained. Nonetheless, archeological evidence indicates that right after the time of Huiyen Tsiang, Jetavana experienced a rebirth and that it continued to thrive until the 1100s, when it sank into oblivion.



The Dhamma Hall in Svatthi.

II. Archeology and Monuments

In 1863 Alexander Cunningham, using clues from the writings of Fa Hien and Huien Tsiang, was able to identify Jetavana and the city of Svatthi, which had become known as Saheth and Maheth.³² In 1876, he returned to do some additional work. Excavations have been conducted periodically since that time up to the late 1980s, when Japanese archeologists dug at the site. Between 1907-08 and 1910-11, J. Vogel, J. Marshall, and D.R. Sahni excavated within the compound at Saheth, exposing stupas, monasteries, and temples. The earliest dating is from Kushan times (second century B.C. to third century A.D.), the latest from Govindacandra, a Gihadavila ruler from the twelfth century. In 1959 K.K. Sinha conducted excavations at Maheth for the Archaeological Survey of India. He dug two trenches, one at the northern wall, and the other within the city boundaries. Three distinct historical periods could be determined: Period I, the 500s to 300 B.C.; Period II, early phase, 275 to 200 B.C., middle phase, 200 to 125 B.C., and late phase, 125 to 50 B.C.; and Period III, many centuries after the birth of Christ.



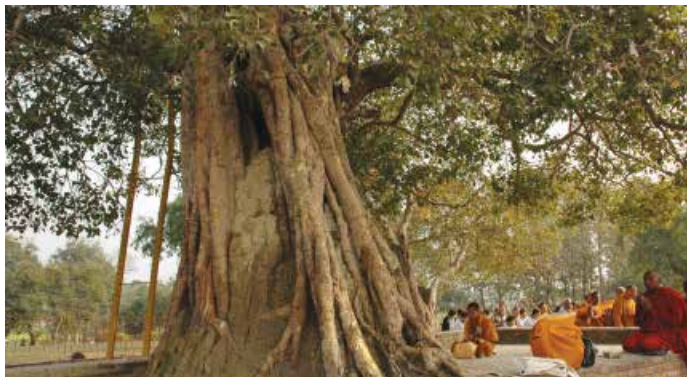
Most of the monuments to see at Svaththi today are at the Jetavana site (Saheth):

1) Just inside the main, southern gate at Jetavana and to the left lie the ruins of Temple 12. It is made up of a shrine in the middle and a smaller shrine at either side, the middle one probably for a statue of the Buddha, the smaller ones for a statue of Avalokitesvara and Maitreya.

2) Monastery 19, northwest of Temple 12, dates back to the sixth century, being rebuilt in the eleventh or twelfth century. Twenty-one cells surround the monastery's courtyard, which contains a well. Under the floor of one of the cells was found an inscription, dating from 1130 A.D., of King Govindachandra, husband of Queen Kumaradevi, builder of the Dharmachakrajina Monastery at Sarnath. This inscription is the reason for the latest digging of the Saheth site.

3) Northeast of Monastery 19, the so-called Ananda bodhi tree can be found. The Commentary on the Jatakas states that people coming to the monastery to pay their respects to the Buddha were accustomed to leave flowers and other offerings for him. Anathapindika asked the Buddha where these should be left when he was absent. He replied that these gifts should be left at a bodhi tree. Therefore, a seed was brought from the bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya and planted by Ananda at Jetavana. However, since the jungle overran the monastery for centuries, there is no way to determine exactly where this bodhi tree stood.

Ananda Bodhi tree,



4) North along the road from the present-day bodhi tree lies the Kosambakuti, one of two of the Buddha's favorite dwelling places at Jetavana. When the Buddha lived there, this was likely just a wood and thatch hut. (The relief from



the Bharhut Stupa gives some idea of what the Kosambakuti and the Gandhakuti were like.)

A brick building later replaced the original one. This structure's original one. This structure's foundation, measuring about nineteen feet by eighteen feet, can be seen today. Cunningham discovered a pink-sandstone

statue at the Kosambakuti. It was the statue Huien Tsiang saw there, when this was the only building at the Jetavana not destroyed. In front of the Kosambakuti is a long brick plinth (*chankama*), the place where the Buddha could walk back and forth for exercise in the evening.

5) Further north along the road is the second of the Buddha's favorite dwelling places at Jetavana, the famous Gandhakuti, the Fragrant Hut. Indications are this structure was similar to the Kosambakuti, but somewhat larger and in the shape of a cross. The ruins visible today, from the Gupta period (early fourth to middle of the eighth centuries A. D.), include a rectangular terrace with stairs, a pavilion, and a relatively small shrine a little over nine feet square. Vogel dug under the Gandhakuti during his excavations in 1907-08, but he found nothing



additional. The Commentary indicated that the Gandhakuti was constructed in the middle of the Jetavana. Cunningham, verifying this statement, discovered a wellconstructed road going east from the site to what was considered to be the main gate.

6) At the northern edge of the Jetavana is Monastery 1, the largest of the ruins currently visible. It seems this monastery was built in the 900s. The courtyard, with a temple in the middle, has thirty-five cells around it. Evidence indicates that this temple, as was the case with most at Jetavana, was destroyed by fire.



7) Outside Jetavan's back gate and midway along the road to the ruins of the city of Svatthi there is a pond. It is assumed this is the pond where the Buddha gently chastised a group of boys who were tormenting the fish. We may call this the "Golden Rule" pond.³³

Besides the monuments at Jetavana, there are also the ruins of Svatthi proper (Maheth). The walls of the ancient city are in the shape of a crescent moon, with the points extending away from Jetavana in the direction of the Rapti River. The walls extend in length just over three miles. At one time the banks of the Rapti ran right

inside the crescent. Today the river is almost a mile away to the northwest. The main gate of the city was at the western wall, north of where the road currently leads to the ruins inside. Well along the road into the site and close to the far wall facing the river, there are two big brick structures, now called the Pakki Kuti and the Kachchi Kuti. It seems both were originally stupas. There is some speculation that these were originally the Angulimala stupa and the Sudatta (Anathapindika) stupa. The original structures were subsequently remodeled for other purposes.

In addition to the ruins at Saheth and Maheth, there are other attractions today. Most notably, there is the modern temple, the Nava Jetavana Mahavihara, built by



Anathapindika's building.

the Sri Lankan monk Venerable Metivala Sangharatana. It stands across the road from the entrance to Jetavana. In the shrine of the temple, there is an incredible array of thirty-one panels of paintings showing events in the life of the Buddha, most occurring at Svatthi. Incidents depicted include Anathapindika's meeting with the Buddha; the planting of

the Ananda bodhi tree; the demise of the Buddha's evil cousin, Devadatta; the tragic life of the woman Patacara, whom the Buddha consoled and taught the Dhamma; the Buddha being chased by the murderer Angulimala; the Buddha's famous miracle at Svatthi of reproducing himself and having fire and water come out of his body; and Anagarika Dharmapala and the Mahabodhi Temple.

There are also other modern temples to be seen. For example, there is the Thai temple on the main road to Balrampur right at the entrance to Svatthi. Then, too, there is a Burmese temple east of Jetavana close to where the main gate used to be, a Chinese temple at the northeast corner of Jetavana, and a Japanese temple on the main road southeast of the Thai temple. (Cambodian Buddhist Association)

Angulimala
followed the
Buddha.



III. Two Conversations at Svatthi : the Meaning of Enlightenment

From the numerous discourses delivered by the Buddha at Svatthi, two conversations may be selected which are very important for an understanding of what Enlightenment (*Nibbana*) means. The first conversation is found in the “*Angulimāla Sutta* ; On Angulimāla”, in the *Majjhima Nikaya*, 86.³⁴ The second conversation occurs in the *Udna*, I, x.³⁵

The most famous incident to occur at Svatthi was the Buddha’s conversion of Angulimāla. In the *Angulimāla Sutta*, the Buddha, staying at Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s Park, returned from the city, where he had gone for an alms round. At the time there was a notorious murderer, Angulimāla, in the forest in the area. He was so wicked he had made a garland of the fingers of the people he had killed. The total slain was an incredible nine hundred ninety-nine. Though warned three times by the country people of the danger posed by Angulimāla, the Buddha journeyed along the road to where the killer was staying. Angulimāla saw the Buddha coming at a distance and marveled that a sole recluse would dare to venture into the area. Then he started after the Blessed One with the thought of killing him. However, despite the fact the murderer ran as fast as he could, he could not catch up with the Buddha, who was walking along at his regular pace. Angulimāla, amazed, called out to the Buddha to stop. The Buddha replied that he had stopped (thought he was still walking): “I have stopped, Angulimāla, you stop too” (86.5). The latter, understanding that



recluses speak the truth, asked for an explanation. The Buddha replied, “Angulimāla, I have stopped forever, / I abstain from violence towards living beings; / But you have no restraint towards things that live: / That is why I have stopped and you have not” (86.6). The murderer, realizing that the Buddha had come to the forest for the very purpose of saving him from his wicked ways, had a complete change of heart and immediately requested to be ordained a monk. The Buddha, the “Sage of Great Compassion” (86.6), made him a bhikkhu at once.

*The Gandhakuti
in Jetavana.*

What does this account of Angulimāla teach us about Buddhism? The sutta is rich in themes of significance to one on the path to Enlightenment. The most important lesson in the *Angulimāla Sutta*, though, is one that is not immediately evident. This lesson is about the meaning of Enlightenment itself. As Buddhadasa Bhikkhu suggests, the Buddha’s words, “I have stopped, Angulimāla, you stop too”, hold the key to an understanding of Enlightenment as emptiness, as putting a complete stop to the grasping and clinging of “I” and “mine.”³⁶ The obvious meaning of the text is that the Buddha has stopped forms

of violence, and Angulimāla should do the same. The text says as much (“Angulimāla, I have stopped forever, / I abstain from violence towards living beings; / But you have no restraint towards things that live: / That is why I have stopped and you have not”). However the hidden meaning here, which Buddhadasa Bhikkhu chooses to exploit, is much more interesting and important. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu goes so far as to say any other meaning is incorrect (“Don’t wrongly explain, as is often done, the Buddha’s reply to Angulimāla . . .”)³⁷ He interprets the line as follows: “So it is emptiness that is stopping and it is the only kind of stopping that could have made Angulimala an arahant. If it was stopping murdering why aren’t all people who don’t kill arahants? It is because cessation, the true stopping, is the emptiness where there is no self to dwell anywhere . . . That is true stopping. If there is still a self then you can’t stop.”³⁸

So what is the meaning of Enlightenment, and what does it have to do with emptiness? Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, I would say, has two main themes in his *Heart-Wood* book, both of which help us understand the meaning of Enlightenment: 1) “Nothing whatsoever should be clung to: Sabbe dhamma nalam abhinivesaya” (p. 12); and 2) absolutely nothing is worth having or being (cf. 62). The first theme is the ‘heart-wood’ of the Buddhist teaching. Not clinging to anything at all means totally eliminating all notions of an “I” or “mine.” Because we think in terms of “I” and “mine”, we cause all forms of suffering to arise. Furthermore, such thinking is the source of the defilements, greed, hatred, and delusion. Eliminating the “I” and “mine” is bringing emptiness into our lives. the self ceases to exist insofar as the mind is empty, and nature, in turn, is recognized for the emptiness that it is. The experience of the total emptiness of “I” and “mine” is the experience of Enlightenment: “The truth-discerning awareness must be so impeccably clear that one has not the slightest feeling of ‘self’ or ‘belonging to self’ for it to be called paramam sunnam, supreme emptiness. Supreme emptiness is Nibbana because it completely

extinguishes the things that are on fire, the stream or whirlpool of flowing and changing phenomena.”³⁹ The strategy for stopping the emergence of the “I” and “mine”, the stopping that enabled Angulimāla to achieve Enlightenment, is putting an end to the very birth of the suffering self in Dependent Origination. This is of the utmost importance: “The way of making use of [*paticcasamuppāda*] is not to allow the dependent arising to take place; cutting it off right at the moment of I sense-contact [*phassa*], not allowing the development of vedana, not allowing feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction to arise. If . . . [*phassa*] is stopped just there, there is no way for the ‘I’ and ‘mine’ to arise. There is no . . . *Dukkha* [suffering].”⁴⁰ If there is no “I” and “mine” and no suffering, then there is the emptiness of Enlightenment, whether realized only briefly or eventually to perfection.

The second main theme of the *Heart-Wood* book is that absolutely nothing is worth having or being. We people the world with “I” and “mine”, but having or being anything at all puts us in a suffering state. Everybody is suffering: mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, men and women, adults and children, human beings and gods in heaven, good people



and bad people, the fortunate and the unfortunate, the happy and the unhappy, and people being born and people dying.⁴¹ "To be anyone of a pair of opposites or to be nothing at all, which is better?"⁴² It is better to be nothing at all. The key is to become a nobody! Enlightenment is the emptiness beyond opposing choices available to us in our daily lives. It is beyond even good and evil.

A second conversation of the Buddha at Sāvattī, one found in the *Udāna*, deepens our understanding of the meaning of Enlightenment. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu points out the importance of this passage.⁴³ The Buddha was staying near Sāvattī at Jeta's Grove, Anāthapīṇḍika's Park. At the same time, Bāhiya of the Bark Garment was staying far away at Suppāraka on the ocean's shore. A thought came to his mind: he wondered whether he was an arahant or whether he was on the path to becoming one. One of the gods felt compassion for the mendicant and, visiting him, told him that he was not an arahant nor on the right path. Bāhiya asked where there were arahants or those on the way to becoming so. The god told him that the Buddha, who was staying at Sāvattī, was, indeed, an arahant and was teaching the Dhamma for achieving arahantship. Bāhiya immediately began his journey to where the Buddha was staying. Arriving at Jeta's Grove, Bāhiya saw a large number of monks walking about and asked where he might find the the Buddha. He was told the Buddha had gone into the city on an alms round. Wasting no time, Bāhiya went into Sāvattī in search of him. Seeing him on his alms round, he went up to the Buddha and prostrated himself before him. He begged the Buddha to teach him the Dhamma. The Buddha told him he had come at an inopportune time, since he was begging for alms. Bāhiya asked him again to teach him the Dhamma, since the span of a man's life is uncertain. Again the Buddha told him he was occupied. Still, the mendicant asked the Buddha for third time to teach him the Dhamma. The Buddha's reply holds a key for an understanding of the meaning of Enlightenment:



Devadatta story

Then, Bāhiya, thus must you train yourself: In the seen there must be just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in the imagined just the imagined, in the cognized just the cognized. Thus you will have no ‘thereby.’ That is how you must train yourself. Now, Bāhiya, when in the seen there will be to you just the seen, in the heard just the heard, in the imagined just the imagined, in the cognized just the cognized, then, Bāhiya, as you will have no ‘thereby,’ you will have no ‘therein.’ As you, Bāhiya, will have no ‘therein,’ it follows that you will have no ‘here’ or ‘beyond’ or ‘midway between.’ That is the end of Ill.⁴⁴

The passage in the *Udā* can be understood in the context of a more expansive exposition of the same theme in *Samyutta Nikāya*, 35:95, “*Mālunkyaṇḍita*.”⁴⁵ In this case the Venerable Mālunkyaṇḍita asks the Buddha to teach him the Dhamma in brief. After some initial questioning, the Buddha responds, “When . . . regarding things seen, heard, sensed, and cognized by you, in the seen there will be merely the seen, in the heard there will be merely the heard, in the sensed there will be merely the sensed, in the cognized there will be merely the cognized, then . . . you will not be ‘by that,’” etc. The translator uses the Sinhala-script edition of the *Samyutta* to help explain the meaning.⁴⁶ He says that what is seen is only the form, not some kind of permanent essence. The sense of *merely* (or *just*) in “merely the seen” (“just the seen”) is that there is only the seen as an attribute of the mind,

and the mind is nothing more than eye-consciousness. So for the types of consciousness (the *jāvanas*, impelling movements of the mind), consciousness is considered as nothing more than eye-consciousness. The application is similar for hearing, cognizing, etc. In each case the mind is nothing more than the awareness of some sort of object. "The 'cognized' [for example] is the object cognized by mind-door advertizing (*manodāvrāvajjana*) [i.e., *mano-dvārā-vajjana*, with *vajjana* equivalent to the Latin, *vergo*, *turn*]. In that cognized, 'merely the cognized' is the advertizing (consciousness) as the limit."⁴⁷ The door of the mind, in other words, is closed to everything except a cognized object. The mind directing its attention as it does, *it is not possible for the defilements (greed, hatred, and delusion) to arise*. A person will not be by any defilement, not disturbed by any, not "thereby" (*na tena*). Nor will he or she be *in* what is seen, heard, etc., be involved with them, be "therein" (*na tattha*). States of defilement will not be anywhere, not "here," not "beyond," not "midway between" (*ubhayamantarena*), i.e., both here and beyond.⁴⁸ The defilements will be absolutely nowhere, we might say. The result is the end of "Ill" suffering (*dukkha*), and the beginning of Enlightenment. *Nibbana* is realized if the types of consciousness are treated as nothing more than eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc.--as simply consciousness of some sort of object.



The Yamaka Stupa.



The Kach chi kuti or Sudatta's Stupa.



Another more literal and straightforward interpretation of the passage from the *Udna* is possible to aid us in an understanding of what Enlightenment means. Here, again, the “*Mālunkyaputta* ” provides clues. Following the Buddha’s teaching Mālunkyaputta the Dhamma in brief, the latter expresses his understanding in verses, which begin as follows:

Having seen a form [*rūpaṃ*] with mindfulness [*sati*]
muddled [*muttha*], /

Attending to the pleasing sign [*piya.m nimittam*], /
One experiences it with infatuated mind /
And remains tightly holding [*ajjhosaṃ tiṭṭhati*⁴⁹] to it. /

Many feelings [*vedan*] flourish within, /
Originating from the visible form [*rpasambhav*], /
Covetousness [*abhijjhā*] and annoyance [*vihesā*] as well /
By which one’s mind becomes disturbed. /
For one who accumulates suffering [*dukkham*] thus /
Nibbāna is said to be far away.

The words, *rūpaṃ*, *ajjhosa tiṭṭhati* (suggesting, *upādānaṃ clinging*), *vedanā*, and *dukkham* recall the process of Dependent Origination. It would seem that the Buddha’s teaching in the “*Mālunkyaputta*,” as well as his advice to Bahiya in the *Udna*, should be understood within the context of *paticcasamuppāda*.⁵⁰ If this is so, then, interpreting “In the seen there must be just the seen,” etc., literally, the meaning would be that when objects such as forms are considered as any more than such, in accordance with the law of Dependent Origination, the suffering self arises, and Enlightenment becomes impossible. However, if this form is considered merely as the seen and the causal process, e.g., is stopped at the point where feelings would originate from the visible form (cf. *rūpasambhavā*), then Enlightenment is possible. The *pleasing sign* [*piyaṃ nimittam*] mentioned here intimates that an “attractive attribute”⁵¹ is given to the form, etc., in other words a feeling of pleasure is attributed to it. *Abhijjhā* is a synonym for *lobha* (greed), a defilement that accompanies the suffering self. Actually, the conversation with Bāhiya in the *Uādna* appears within the context of a discussion of Dependent Origination.⁵² This is all the more reason for interpreting the Buddha’s words in this way.

The lion capital ; Asoka's pillar Vesali



The City of Vesali

I. Location and Historical Significance

Vesali (modern Besrah/Basarth/Basrah), about thirty miles north of Patna on the Gandak River in the northwestern state of Bihar, was one of the Buddha's favorite places to visit. He stayed there at least three times, probably more. It was the capital city of the Licchavi tribe, one of the tribes of the Vajjian confederacy, constituting one of the sixteen great states of ancient India. As a large and prosperous center of commerce, Vesali was one of the six major cities of the great states. Outside the city the Mahavana Forest stretched all the way to the Himalayan Mountains. The Buddha spent his fifth rainy season there as well as the last one before his *Parinibbana*. His custom was to stay at some of the city's shrines (*cetiyas*), e.g., the Udena Cetiya, Gotamaka Cetiya, Sattambaka Cetiya, Capala Cetiya, Kutagarasala Cetiya (where he generally stayed), etc. Vesali is associated in important ways with the Buddha's disciple, Ananda (cf. his recitation of the the *Ratanasutta Partita*, the assistance he gives to Mahapajapati Gotami in her quest to enter the order, his stay at the city with the Buddha on the last trip to Kusinara, and the supposed burial of half his relics there). It is also associated with two important women of early Buddhism: not only Gotami, the Buddha's stepmother and nurse, but also Ambapali, the courtesan. The Buddha not only taught the Vajjians at Vesali seven principles for prospering and not declining, but also outlined his thinking about the welfare of the Sangha in terms of these principles.⁵³



Vesali was one of the eight cities to receive relics of the Buddha after his death. Lastly, the city is important because, about one hundred years after the Buddha's death, it was the site of the Second Buddhist Council, called to settle issues regarding monastic discipline.

The Buddha delivered many suttas at Vesali.⁵⁴ With regard to these, the most intriguing story is perhaps the one surrounding the reciting of the *Ratanasutta*, the great sutta concerned with the blessings of happiness resulting from the truths of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. In this case Vesali was not merely the locus of the preaching of a sutta. The sutta was delivered there because a crisis had arisen in the city and the Buddha was asked to intercede.⁵⁵ On that occasion there was a famine because of droughts and poor harvests. People began to die, and corpses started to pile up. Demons gained entry into the city, and eventually a plague broke out among the citizens. At the time the Buddha was staying at Rajagaha with King Bimbisara of Magadha. The people sent two regents and a military force to the king of Vesali requesting that he ask Bimbisara to allow the Buddha to come to their city to assist them. The king told the regents to deal with Bimbisara themselves. When the regents went to the Buddha and asked him to make their city safe again, he agreed. Bimbisara prepared the road between Rajagaha and the Ganges River, leveling the ground and building resting places where the Buddha could stop during the journey. The Buddha, accompanied by five hundred monks, traveled to the Ganges, then rode on a boat lavishly adorned by Bimbisara. No sooner had the Buddha disembarked at the territory of the Vesalians than a heavy downpour washed away all the corpses in the city. The Buddha and his retinue traveled to Vesali along a road prepared at the behest of Bimbisara. When the Buddha arrived at the city, Sakka, ruler of the gods, accompanied by a community of the gods, also came. Then most of the demons fled the city. At the gate of Vesali, the Buddha told his disciple Ananda to learn the the "Jewel" sutta and then walk around the city between its walls sprinkling holy water. The Buddha recited the sutta,

and Ananda did as he had been instructed. The remaining demons fled, and the citizens were cured of their sickness. A throne having been prepared for the Buddha in the great assembly hall, the Buddha and his monks, and the regents and the people took their places in the hall. Sakka and the community of the gods also assembled. Once Ananda and the citizens with him had made their way into the hall, the Buddha once again recited the words of the sutta. Afterwards the *Ratanasutta* came to be recited by the faithful in times of sickness or other disturbances.

II. Vesali and the Life of the Buddha

Aside from being the site of the delivery of many suttas, Vesali is closely connected with the life of the Buddha. For one thing, it is associated with the founding of the order of nuns. In this case Mahapajapati Gotami and Ananda played key roles. On one occasion when the Buddha had concluded a sojourn at Kapilavastu, he made his way to Vesali, staying at the Hall with the Pointed Roof in the Great Wood.⁵⁶ Mahapajapati Gotami, the Buddha's stepmother and nurse, also went to Vesali with a group of Sakyan woman. Previously she had asked the Buddha three times about the possibility of women obtaining the going forth from the house life into homelessness in the Dhamma, i.e., about his establishing a community of nuns, a Bhikkhuni Sangha. Three times he had turned her down. Now she stood forlorn outside the hall at Vesali until Ananda, the Buddha's cousin and great disciple, noticed her there. After learning the reason for her plight, he suggested he intercede on her behalf. Ananda went to the Buddha, posed the question to him three times, and was abruptly turned down each time. Ananda decided to try a different tactic, presenting two arguments to the Buddha: first, women were capable of attaining the various levels of Enlightenment, including Arahantship;



*Bhikkhuni
ordination.*



secondly, Mahapajapati Gotami had been a great help to the Buddha as his stepmother and nurse. The Buddha then agreed that Gotami could be admitted to the going forth from the house to homelessness, provided that eight conditions were followed. However, it was not that Ananda's sound arguments changed the Buddha's mind.⁵⁷ The Buddha's initial rejections of the idea, as well as his setting conditions, were meant to stress the point that allowing women to go

forth from the house to homelessness was potentially damaging.⁵⁸

The Buddha's long, last journey to his *Parinibbana* at Kusinara also involved the city of Vesali. After visiting Sariputta, one of his chief disciples, at Nalanda, the Buddha eventually arrived at Vesali, staying at the mango grove of Ambapali, the courtesan.⁵⁹ She was the "lady of pleasure at court" for the Licchavi princes, a kind of rich and cultivated "uncrowned queen" who had not married insofar as they had all quarreled over her.⁶⁰ She had even had a son by King Bimbisara of Magadha. When Ambapali heard that the Buddha was staying in Vesali at her mango grove, she went to see him. He instructed her on the Dhamma, and she was very pleased at what she heard. She invited the Buddha and the monks accompanying him to have a meal with her the next day at her house, and he agreed. The Licchavis of Vesali also went to the mango grove to see the Buddha. On the way they met Ambapali, who said the Buddha had accepted her

invitation to have a meal at her house. The Licchavis could not persuade her to let the Buddha dine with them instead, despite the fact they offered her a sizable sum. They went to where the Buddha was staying in the mango grove, and he delivered a Dhamma talk to them. They were pleased at what they heard and invited him to have a meal with them the next day. He declined, saying he had already accepted Ambapali's invitation. The Licchavis expressed their chagrin, saying they had been beaten by the "mango-woman." The next morning the Buddha and his monks dined on the meal that Ambapali had prepared. She donated her grove to the order of the monks headed by the Buddha. Then once again he instructed her on the Dhamma, and she was very pleased.

Ambapali, courtesan, nun, and poet, was an important figure in early Buddhism.⁶¹ Ambapali's son by King Bimbisara eventually became a monk. She herself became a nun after listening to her son preach. Her meditation as a nun centered on her own body and the changes that had occurred in it as old age had progressed. She wrote a poem about the impermanence of her body, one of the first Indian poems composed by a woman.⁶² The lesson to be learned from Ambapali's life is that despite the depths of moral depravity to which a human being can sink, he or she is also capable of acts of kindness. Furthermore, despite the ignorance and turpitude that have existed in one's life, Enlightenment is nonetheless always possible.



The ancient monastery in Vesali.



The Ananda Stupa in Vesali.

The Buddha went on to spend his last rainy season at Vesali (actually, at Beluva, a small village just outside Vesali's gates; the company of the monks stayed in Vesali proper).⁶³ During this time Ananda was his closest companion. Several important lessons can be gleaned from the conversations that occurred then between the Buddha and Ananda. 1) After the Buddha's first bout with serious illness, Ananda, who had noticed his condition, told him he took comfort in the fact the Buddha would not pass away until giving final instructions to the order of the monks. The Buddha, however, chastised Ananda, saying there were no final instructions to be given: the Dhamma had been revealed to the Sangha without distinction between the esoteric and the exoteric (2.24-25). 2). The Buddha comforted Ananda: he and the other monks should live as refuges unto themselves on the island of the Dhamma--mindful and dissociated from all worldly cravings, etc. (2.26). 3) After the Buddha had gone to Vesali for alms and eaten from his bowl upon his return, he told Ananda he wanted to go the Capala Shrine in the city. Once there he spoke about the various delightful shrines of the city, the Capala included (3.2; cf

3.45-46, where Vesali shrines are again mentioned). This passage gives some indication of the fondness the Buddha had for Vesali. 4) After Ananda left, Mara visited the Buddha and reminded him about his promise to seek final Enlightenment after training the monks (3.7-3.9). The Buddha assured Mara he would attain final Enlightenment in three months. The Buddha gave up the life principle, and an earthquake ensued. Following a discussion with Ananda about Mara's visit and the disciple's failure to take the hint and ask the Buddha to extend his stay on earth (3.36-47), the Buddha told Ananda that all things dear or pleasant must change, that what is born must decay (3.48). After going with Ananda to the Gabled Hall in the Great Forest and having all the monks in the vicinity of Vesali gather there, the Buddha reminded the monks about what he had taught them, e.g., the foundations of mindfulness, the Noble Eightfold Path, etc. (3.50). He concluded: "all conditioned things are of a nature to decay-strive on untiringly" (3.51). 5) After going to Vesali for alms and returning and eating, he turned around and told Ananda this was the last time he would look at Vesali (4.1). (He gave Vesali an "elephant-look": he turned his body completely around to look back as an elephant would.) Then the Buddha, Ananda, and the accompanying monks proceeded to Bhandagama, the next leg of the final journey to Kusinara.



The ancient Buddha's relic stupa

III. What to See at Vesali Today

The two most important monuments at Vesali are the Licchavis' stupa and the lion pillar.⁶⁴ As described in the *"Mahaparinibbana Sutta, 11:16.6.24-27*, the leaders of eight



cities laid claim to the bones of the Buddha after his cremation. Since the Buddha was a Khattiya, the Khattiyas of Vesali were among those receiving part of the relics. The Brahmin Dona gave one-eighth of the bones to the Licchavis, who built a stupa to contain them. The remains of this important stupa can be seen at Vesali today. The stupa was discovered and excavated in 1958 by Dr. A. S. Altekar. The original stupa was constructed of rammed earth. Inside was a small stone casket containing burnt bone, a copper coin, a small shell, two glass beads, and a small gold plate. The original stupa was enlarged about two hundred fifty years after its construction, in this case bricks were used in the construction. Evidence shows that at that time King Asoka opened the original stupa to remove the relics and further divide them among

the many stupas he was then building in his empire. The stupa was enlarged two more times in later centuries. The second stupa also seems to have been opened. The writings of Huien Tsiang, who would have seen the stupa in the first part of the seventh century A. D., mention that Asoka and another later king opened the stupa. All indications are that this stupa at Vesali was the one built by the Licchavis, and that the relics are genuine. What is surprising is that this exciting discovery did not cause much of a stir. Today the Buddha's relics from Versali are stored rather unceremoniously in a room down the road in the museum at Patna.

The other important monument at Vesali is the lion pillar, which is a little more than half a mile up the road from the Licchavis' stupa. This pillar, even after having sunk several yards over the course of time, is about forty-eight feet high. Huien Tsiang mentions seeing the pillar with the lion capital on top when he visited the city in the early 600s. Though evidence indicates King Asoka did open the original stupa to divide the relics, there is some debate about whether or not this pillar can be attributed to the king, in fact, the pillar differs from Asoka's, e.g., the pillar at Sarnath, in many ways. The shaft of the pillar is thicker than the rather slender shafts of Asoka's known pillars. Furthermore, the pillar here at Vesali is not as fine a piece of artwork as most of the sculptures of the Mauryan period: the lion on the capital is not as impressive. Also, the pedestal for the lion is square, whereas the Asokan pedestals are round with a frieze. What is more, the pillar bears no inscription.⁶⁵ It is suggested that the pillar predates the time of Asoka and served as a model for his. All in all, however, the lion pillar at Vesali is well worth the trip: this pillar, replete with capital, is the only Asoka-like one still standing intact.





The sacred pond in Vesali.

Since the area where Vesali existed lies in a flood plane and has been frequently flooded over the centuries, much of the old city has been destroyed. However, besides the Licchavis' stupa and the lion pillar, there are other monuments of interest still existing.

1) A little to the southwest of the present village on the left side of the road there is a grassy mound about ten feet high in the shape of a large rectangle one thousand five hundred seventy-eight feet long and seven hundred forty-eight feet wide. The moat around it is about twenty feet deep. This is the Raja Visala Ka Garh (the House of Visali's King), thought to be the remains of the great assembly hall, which was later a palace and then a fort. Is this perhaps the assembly hall where the Buddha recited the *Ratanasutta* after Ananda had purged the city following the famine and plague? At the time of Alexander Cunningham (the latter part of the nineteenth century), there were towers at each corner of the mound. Today these towers are gone. At the southwest corner of the mound there sits a stupa about one hundred forty-two



feet by twenty-three feet with, of all things, the tomb of a Sufi saint from the fifteen century, Shekh Miran Quazim Suttari, at the top.

2) West of the presentday village and southwest of the Licchavis' stupa, lies the Kharauna Pokhar, circled by a road, a hungrectangular "tank" somewhat larger in size than the Raja Visala Ka Garh. This tank is possibly the Abhiseka Puskarini, used in the coronation of Vajjian rulers. Dr. Altekar excavated it in 1957-58. There is a brick wall three feet three inches thick around the tank. A modern-day Japanese stupa and temple lie directly south of the Kharauna Pokhar. The stupa, the tallest peace pagoda in the world, was built between 1983 and 1996 by the Nipponjan Myhoji religious institution. A beautiful archeological museum lies at the northwestern edge of the tank.

3) In close proximity to the lion pillar between the pillar and the road running up to Muzaffarpur there is another stupa approximately sixty-five and a half feet in diameter and fifteen feet high constructed of bricks. Excavations done between 1976 and 1978 indicate that King Asoka constructed this stupa (Huien Tsiang says as much): it was built during the Mauryan period and enlarged twice after that. A stone relic casket was found inside. When Cunningham visited Vesali in 1862, there was a temple over the stupa. Speculation is that half the relics of Ananda were enshrined at the *chaitya* here.⁶⁶

4) South of the Asokan pillar there is another brick tank about two hundred feet long, the Ramakund, thought to be the Markata-hrada, dug by a band of monkeys for the use of the Buddha. (In fact, Vesali can be considered the miracle city not merely because of the miraculous rains that fell to wash away the corpses following the famine and pestilence, but also because of the miracle of the monkeys that gathered honey for the Buddha and offered it to him.)

5) The site of Ambapali's mango grove lies to the west of the Raja Visala Ka Garh and the Kharauna Pokhar on the banks of the Gandak River.⁶⁷

The Asoka's Pillar in Kosambi.



Kosambi, the Lesson of Loving-Kindness

I. History and Archeology

Close to the southern border of Uttar Pradesh at the banks of the Yamuna River about twenty-four miles west of Allahbad lied the ruins of ancient Kosambi.⁶⁸ A prosperous city on a trade route, it was the capital of Vamsa, ruled by King Udena, who stood out as not being a monarch of the time who supported the Buddha. The Buddha first visited Kosambi at the invitation of three merchants, Ghosita, Kukkuta, and Pavarika, who had heard him preach at Savatthi. Each of the three donated a park for his use: the Ghositarama, the Kukkutarama, and the Pavarikambavana. The Buddha preached several suttas of note at Kosambi the "*Upakkilesa Sutta*" "*Kosambiya Sutta*," "*Jliya Sutta*," and "*Kosambi Sutta*"⁶⁹ It is even suggested that all the discourses in the *Itivuttaka* were preached in this city and preserved by a lay disciple⁷⁰ Kosambi is infamous for being the site of the first big crisis occurring within the Sangha. Two groups of monks got into a fierce argument, one group made up of experts in the Vinaya rules, the other of experts in the Dhamma. Despite the Buddha's best efforts, he was unable to put an end to the quarreling and sought solitude in the forest near Parileyya. By the time Huien Tsiang travelled through Vamsa at the beginning of the seventh century, Buddhist monasteries were in ruins, and Hinduism predominated. The Chinese monk saw a large

temple about fifty-nine feet high with a sandalwood statue inside, supposedly the prototype of all subsequent statues of the Buddha. He also saw the ruins of the house of Ghosita and of the places where Asanga and Vasabandhu, the founders of the Yogacara school of philosophy and psychology, had lived. By this time Kosambi was long past its prime, and after Huiyen Tsiang's pilgrimage, it quickly sank into obscurity.

As regards the archeological ruins of Kosambi, when Alexander Cunningham visited the village of Kosambi in 1862-63, he identified it as ancient city. He saw the ramparts of the city rising almost fifty feet high and forming a rectangle over three and a half miles along the banks of the Yamuna. Excavations were carried out at the site in 1937, as well as between 1949 and 1955. It was determined that this city had been inhabited as early as 1,000 B.C. Today the most important monuments to see at Kosambi are the Asokan pillar and the remains of the Ghositarama monastery. The pillar, which contains some circular designs but no inscription, is located in what was once a residential area but is now a field. About a third of mile southeast of the pillar are the remains of the Ghositarama, the most famous of the Buddha's residences at Kosambi. This structure was unearthed during excavations beginning in 1951. This thousand-year monastery consists of a stupa ascribed to King Asoka, the base of a somewhat smaller stupa to the northeast, and a main monastery where about twenty-three monks' cells are visible. The remains of the two stupas are in the courtyard of the monastery. The Asokan stupa, going back to the Mauryan period and eighty-two feet square with enlargements, was, according to Huiyen Tsiang, two hundred feet high. The southeast wall of the monastery is thirteen feet thick: it is actually formed by the ramparts of the city. The Ghositarama is one of a kind, for it was the only monastery of the Buddha's time that lay within a city's walls.⁷¹

II. The Lesson of Kosambi

The lesson of Kosambi is of the need for loving-kindness (*metta*) toward associates, so much so that a noble person prefers a life of solitude to one of companionship with contentious people.

There are three key passages in the Tipitaka which recount in different ways the episode of the monk's quarrel at Kosambi and the Buddha's reaction to it.



The ancient city of Kosambi.

1) According to the "*Upakkilesa Sutta; Imperfections*," the Buddha was residing at Ghosita's Park when the argument erupted among the monks.⁷² Three times he tried to persuade the monks to give up their quarreling. Three times they told him in no uncertain terms to tend to his own affairs. The next morning the Buddha went on an alms walk in Kosambi and returned to his residence. He then uttered nine stanzas which underscore the disruption that arguments cause, the ineffectiveness of hatred in alleviating hatred that can be allayed only by love, and the preference that should be given to a life of solitude without evil when a worthy friend cannot be found (128.6). The Buddha, having set his residence in order, left the troubles of Kosambi behind and went to the village of Blakalonakra. Finding the recluse Bhagu, the friend he did not have at Kosambi, he taught him the Dhamma.

2) In the "*Kosambiya Sutta ; The Kosambians*," at the outbreak of the monks' quarreling, the Buddha, gathering together the monks involved, admonished them regarding the repercussions of their actions.⁷³ Such conduct could lead to nothing but harm and suffering. He taught them six principles that bring delight, that create love and promote unity: maintaining bodily acts of loving-kindness publicly and privately; maintaining verbal acts of loving-kindness publicly and privately; maintaining mental acts of loving-kindness publicly and privately; sharing all things in common with virtuous companions; sharing virtuous living itself with companions; and possessing together publicly and privately the right view of the noble path that eventually leads to the destruction of suffering (48.6). The most important of these principles is the last: sharing the right view that leads to the destruction of suffering. What does having the right view mean? On the negative side, as the Buddha explained, it means being free from the seven hindrances: sensual lust, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, and doubt (48.8).⁷⁴ It is quite noteworthy that, in the present content, the Buddha added an "eighth hindrance": "If a bhikkhu takes to quarreling and brawling and is deep in disputes, stabbing others with verbal daggers, then his mind is obsessed [hindered]."⁷⁵ Contentiousness, in short, prevents a person from staying on the right path that leads to Enlightenment.



3) The third key passage relating to the argument among the monks at Kosambi is found in the *Udā*. This passage considers the problem of contentious speech in a somewhat broader context.⁷⁶ The Buddha's plight is presented in more general terms: "Now on that occasion the Exalted One was worried by monks and nuns, lay followers, both men and women, by rajahs and royal ministers, by sectarians and their followers, and lived in discomfort, not at ease." The next morning the Buddha went on an alms walk in Kosambi returned to his residence, and ate his meal. After setting his lodging in order, he left Kosambi without telling anyone and went to the village of Prileyya. There in the Guarded Forest Glade he resided in solitude at the foot of a *sāla* tree. The Buddha's situation was similar to that of a bull elephant, worried and uncomfortable because of the she-elephants and calves that also went off into the solitude of the forest at Prileyya. The elephant kept the grass clear at the spot where the Buddha was staying and brought him water with his trunk. The Buddha reflected on his present circumstances: ". . . now here I am dwelling unworried by monks and nuns . . . by sectarians and their followers. Unworried, I dwell in comfort and at ease." The Buddha and the elephant were of one mind in their love of the ease of the solitary life.⁷⁷





The image of the Buddha descended from heaven.

Sankasya, Stairway to Heaven

Sankasya (also Sankisa), known today as the village of Basantpur, is about twenty-nine miles from Farrukhabad city in the state of Uttar Pradesh in northern India. The nearest large city is Agra, the location of the famous Taj Mahal, about one hundred twenty-six miles southeast of Delhi. Legend has it that Sankasya is the place where the Buddha descended from the Trayastrimsas heaven along with Brahma and Sakra. The Buddha had been in heaven for three months to preach the Dhamma to his mother out of gratitude for her bringing him into the world. According to Buddhist tradition, all Buddhas come to earth at Sankasya. The future Buddha, Maitreya Buddha (Arya Maitreya) is said to have been born here during the life of Gautama Buddha. King Asoka erected a pillar with a lion capital at Sankasya. At the supposed place of the Buddha's descent there is currently a temple with a Buddha statue. Nearby are also a temple dedicated to Bisari Devi and a large Shiva Linga. Fa Hien, who visited Sankasya on his pilgrimage in the early 400s, and Huien Tsiang, who did so in the early 600s, both wrote about the site.

Fa Hien's account of Sankasya describes the descent of the Buddha from heaven as well as what the monk saw when he visited the location.⁷⁸ By his supernatural power the Buddha had gone to the Trayastrimsas heaven to teach the Dhamma to his mother, Maya, who had died shortly after his birth. He spent three months there, not letting his disciples know where he was. Seven days before his departure, once the Buddha had given up his invisibility, Anuruddha with his divine eye saw him in heaven and told Mahamoggallana. As the Buddha was descending from his place in heaven, three flights of stairs

made of precious substances appeared. The Buddha, followed by innumerable devas, came down on the middle flight; Brahma, the first person of the Trimurti, on the right one; and Sakra, ruler of devas, on the left one. Once the three reached the bottom, the stairways, with the exception of seven steps, disappeared into the ground. When Asoka came to Sankasya, he had men dig into the earth to try to get to the bottom of the steps, but they were unable to reach it. The king had a vihara built, with a statue over the middle flight. Behind the vihara he also erected a pillar with a lion capital and an image of the Buddha carved into the stone on each side. Fa Hien on his visit saw a bathing house built where



The Asoka's Pillar in Sankasya.



the Buddha had bathed after descending from heaven. He also saw a stupa where the nun Utpala had shown reverence to the Buddha. Fa Hien describes the monasteries existing at Sankasya when he visited. There was a monastery with about a thousand monks and nuns, supported by a white eared dragon. To the northwest lay a second one, the "Great Heap," named for a wicked demon converted by the Buddha. Another monastery with six or seven hundred monks was the place where a Pratyeka Buddha used to receive food. The grass never grew at the spots where he was cremated and where he washed his clothes.



The Hill Fort of Rajagaha.



Rajagaha, the City of the Dhamma

I. History and Archeology

Rajagaha (Rajgir; also Giribhaja, the Hill Fort), the ancient capital of the kingdom of Magadha, is sixty-two miles southeast of Patna and about forty miles from Gaya.⁷⁹ At the time of the Buddha, it was the largest city in the Middle Land and one of the oldest human habitations in India. King Bimbisara, friend and patron of the Buddha, was a capable ruler of Magadha for fifty-two years.⁸⁰ The old part of Rajagaha was surrounded by five mountains, the Vebhara, Vepulla, Pandava, Gijjhakuta, and Isigili, now called the Vaibhara, Vipula, Ratna, Sona, and Udaya. This is why the city was named *Hill Fort*. The Buddha preached many suttas at Rajagaha, more than any other place except Svathth. Perhaps the most important are the “*Smaaphala Suttas*” and the “*Siglaka Suttas*.”⁸¹ He spent the second through the fourth rainy seasons following his Enlightenment there; He visited thirteen and fifteen years later and once more in the year before he died.

When Prince Siddhattha, the future Buddha, came to the city following his renunciation of a life of luxury, King Bimbisara saw him and went to visit him on the slope of Mount Pandava.⁸² The king tried to persuade him to join his court, but he refused, saying he saw danger in a life of sensual pleasure. He said he would visit the king if he attained Enlightenment. He did visit him later with a thousand monks, including the three elderly Kassapas, and instructed him in the Dhamma.⁸³ King Bimbisara



eventually handed his kingdom over to his wicked son, Prince Ajtasattu. The prince plotted to kill the king at the instigation of the monk Devadatta, the Buddha's evil cousin. Ajtasattu eventually imprisoned and tortured to death his father. Devadatta, who wanted to become head of the Sangha, tried to kill the Buddha. He even had mahouts release the fierce elephant Nalagiri to attack the Buddha as he was walking in Rajagaha on his alms round.⁸⁴

After the Buddha passed away, the capital of Magadha moved to Patna, and Rajagaha declined in importance. Sir Alexander Cunningham came to the site in 1861-62 and 1871-72. Several excavations have been conducted over the years, for example, in 1905-06. When Fa Hien visited in the early 400s A.D., there were two monasteries within the city. Rajagaha, although, no longer a center of Buddhist influence, was much less a political power. When Huiyen Tsiang came two hundred years later, he saw in abandoned Rajagaha places associated with the life of the Buddha, but the city was abandoned.⁸⁵

The remains of Rajagaha today consist of the old city, nestled in the mountains, and the new city on the plain to the northwest.⁸⁶ The walls of the new city are roughly rectangular-shaped and over three miles long. The outer



walls of the old city, which are difficult to see in some places, run for almost twenty-five miles. It is not entirely clear who was responsible for building the new city, Bimbisara, or Ajtasattu, or both. The consensus seems to be that the son completed what the father had started.

Monuments of interest, which are scattered over a large area at Rajagaha, include the following: 1) The Asokan stupa. This very large stupa built by King Asoka, actually stupas upon stupas dating back to the Mauryan period, lies west of the western wall of the new city. 2) Ajtasattu's stupa. East of the road running north and south between the new and the old cities lie the remains of the stupa built to contain the one-eighth of the Buddha's relics Ajtasattu received. It is impossible to determine today the characteristics of the original stupa. 3) The Veluvana, the Bamboo Grove. South of Ajtasattu's stupa but on the other side of the road is the Veluvana, a park Bimbisara donated to the Buddha on his visit after the Enlightenment. The Veluvana contained several famous sites: the Squirrel's Feeding Place, the Peacock's Feeding Place, and a beautiful lotus pond (the Sumagadha). Many important discourses were delivered in the Bamboo Grove.

Huien Tsiang saw monks inhabiting an old vihara Bimbisara had built in the grove, called by the Chinese pilgrim the Karanda Bamboo Garden.⁸⁷ 4) Jivakambavana. Outside the walls of the old city close to the southwestern corner are the ruins of Jivakambavana, Jivaka's mango grove. Jivaka was King Bimbisara's personal physician

and also became a physician for the Buddha. He was the son of Bimbisara by Ambapali, the courtesan. He built a dwelling in the grove for the Buddha, the foundations of which can still be seen. The site was excavated in 1954. The Jivakambavana is famous as the place where the Buddha delivered the very important



Veluvana
Grove



"*Smaaphala Sutta* " to King Ajtasattu after the latter murdered his father.

5) Gijjhakuta. West of old Rajhagaha and south of Ratna down the southern slope of Chhatha Hill is a small peak with ruins at the top, the Vulture Peak, Gijjhakuta.

This was the Buddha's favorite

Gandhakuti

retreat at Rajagaha, a place where he delivered many suttas. Huien Tsiang has a deeply moving account of his overnight stay in the Boar's Grotto on the slope of Vulture's Peak.⁸⁸

II. The City of the Dhamma

At Rajagaha down the northern side of Vaibhara Mountain is the Sattapanni Cave, a place of the great significance in the history of Buddhism.

Here in 483 B.C., three months after the passing away of the Buddha, five hundred monks gathered for the First Buddhist Council. The council was called at the behest of the elder monk Mahakassapa,. He was concerned same monks might interpret the Dhamma and the Vinaya (the monastic discipline)



any way they pleased hence he wanted to ensure that the dhamna and vindva would be preserved intact.⁸⁹ With the approval of the Sangha, he selected five hundred arahants for a council. Nanda, though still a learner at the time, was an expert in the Dhamma. With his incredible memory, he could recall all the discourses given by the Buddha. So he was includ in the five hundred, provided he attained arahantship before the council began. With great effort, he was able to do this.

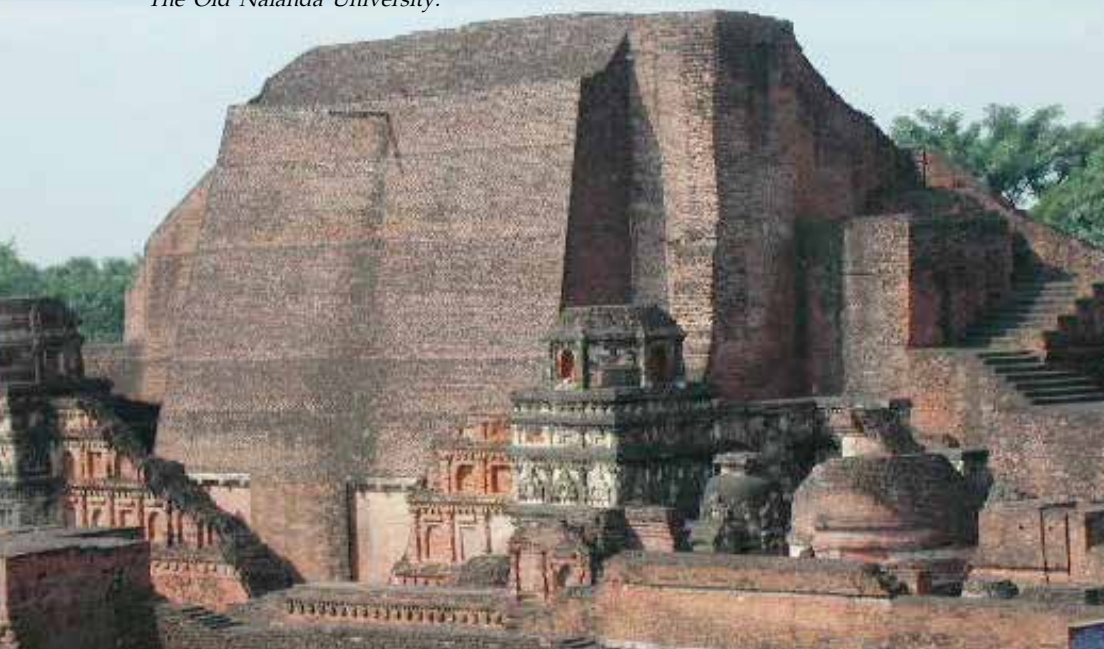
King Ajtasattu assisted in the preparations by having a magnificent hall built at the entrance to the Sattapanni Cave. At the council Mahakassapa questioned the monk Upli about the particulars of the Vinaya. He then questioned Nanda about the discourses preached by the Buddha. Afterwards the whole assembly of the monks chanted together the discipline and the Dhamma.



The First Council at Rahagaha was very important because it was responsible for collecting and arranging the first two “baskets” of the Pali Tipitaka.⁹⁰ (The third “basket,” the Abhidhamma Ptaka, was recited by the monks at the Third Council called by King Asoka in 250 A.D. at Pataliputra, India.⁹¹) Otherwise, the words of the Buddha would not have been preserved intact. The discourses we read and study today are essentially the ones that were chanted by five hundred arahants in a cave at Rhagaha almost twenty-five hundred years ago. For hundreds of years the monks passed down the discourses orally from generation to generation. It was not until the Fourth Council, convened by King Vattagamani in 100 B.C., that the complete Tipitaka was written down for the first time on palm leaves.⁹²



The Old Nalanda University.



The Miracle of Nalanda

I. Location and Historical Significance

The town of Nalanda, close to present-day Baragaon, is almost seven miles north of Rajagaha and fifty-six miles southeast of Patna in the state of Bihar.⁹³ The Buddha frequently passed through this town or stayed there, usually at Pavrika's Mango Grove or at Ambalattika, the royal rest house. He delivered several suttas there: the Upali Sutta, for example, the Kevaddha Sutta, the Brahmajla Sutta, and the Ambalattika Rahulovada Sutta. Sariputta, the chief of the Buddha's disciples, is said by some to have been born in the vicinity of Nalanda. He also passed away there. It was on the road from Rajagaha to Nalanda that the Buddha first met the great monk Maha Kassapa, who would be the guiding influence upon the Sangha after the Blessed One's death and would be the president of the First Council.⁹⁴ King Asoka is reported to have come to Nalanda to pay his respects to the relics of Sariputta and to build a temple.

Sometime between the visit of Fa Hien to the site in the early 400s and the trip of Huiyen Tsiang to India

in the early 600s, a huge university complex developed at Nalanda. Nalanda University was actually one of the first universities in the world.



It became an important center of studies not only for Buddhism but also for such subjects as philosophy, logic, grammar, astronomy, medicine, and metallurgy. Famous students at the university included Huien Tsiang and I Tsing. Famous teachers included Dinnaga, the logician; Dharmakirti, the philosopher, the so-called Immanuel Kant of India; Chandragomi, the poet and playwright; and Dharmapala, the philosopher. In its heyday upwards of eight thousand five hundred students from India and abroad, possibly more than ten thousand, attended the university, and about fifteen hundred teachers taught there, possibly as many as two thousand. The Theravada



school of Buddhism, it seems, as well as Tibetan Buddhism and the Mahayana form, developed within the university. The University of Nalanda thrived for about six hundred years. Eventually the university helped bring about to its own decline: 1) as the university became wealthy, monks became more interested in lucrative

positions at the court than in understanding and putting into practice the Dhamma; 2) monks, sequestered in the monastery and dependent upon the court's riches, lost touch with the people they were to serve; and 3) liberal curriculums at the university changed the face of Buddhism to something the same as Hinduism.⁹⁵

Then in 1193 A. D. the Islamic onslaught reached the Middle Land with the invasion of Muhammad Bakhtyar (Bakhtiyar Khalji), who is supposed to have plundered the Nalanda University and killed the inhabitants. In 1235 when the Tibetan translator Chag Lotsawa visited Nalanda, he encountered a few monks still there in a damaged complex. Eventually all the inhabitants left, seeking refuge in Burma, Nepal, and Tibet. Such was one big step in the decline of Buddhism in India. Such, too, was one big step in the decline of Indian science, i.e., mathematics, astronomy, and anatomy.

II. Two Suttas Preached at Nalanda: the Buddha as a Teacher

Two important suttas were delivered at Nalanda, both concerned with the Buddha as a teacher of the Dhamma. The first, "*Kevaddha Sutta: About Kevadda; What Brahma Didn't Know*," in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Digha Nikaya)*, 11, begins with a consideration of miracles. While the Buddha is staying at Nalanda in Pavarika's mango grove, Kevaddha, the householder, urges him to have some monk perform miracles so that the people of Nalanda will have greater faith in the Buddha (11.1). The Buddha, addressing Kevaddha, discusses three different kinds of miraculous powers. The first is the miracle of psychic power, e.g., appearing and vanishing, going through walls, walking on water, or flying through the air. The Buddha, however, does not put any stock in such displays of power. The second miracle is that of telepathy: reading the minds of other individuals. Again, he does not put any stock in such a display. The third miraculous power, however, is the miracle of instruction. A monk, for instance, gives instruction: "Consider in this way, don't consider in that, direct your mind this way, not that way, give up that, gain this and persevere in it" (11.8). The real miracle, in short, is the miracle of the Buddha's teaching, which leads to the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (cf. 11.9-66). So while the use of psychic powers and telepathy may amount to nothing more than a magical performance to impress people, the miracle of instruction can lead them to a life free from suffering. The sutta concludes with a rather humorous story about the Great Brahm, all-seeing and all-powerful, taking a monk aside and admitting he really does not know the answer to the question about when the four elements cease without remainder (11.81ff.). He tells the monk to go back to the Buddha for the answer: what the Brahm does not know the Buddha can teach.



The second important sutta delivered at Nalanda is the "*Brahmajala Sutta: The Supreme Net* ; What the Teaching Is Not, *Digha Nikaya*, 1, the first discourse of the Tipitaka.



This sutta is concerned with the Buddha, first, as a speaker and then, more particularly, as a teacher. The setting is the royal park of Ambalatthik on the main road between Rajagaha and Nalanda. Suppiya, the wanderer, has been critical of the Buddha, his teaching, and the Sangha. The Buddha, in conversation with his monks, considers the matter of praise and disparagement. If someone is disparaging of the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the monks should not be angry or upset. Anger or displeasure will inhibit them from determining whether or not what is said is true. What is required is a simple "explanation" of the incorrectness of the criticism (1.5). Similarly, if someone praises the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Sangha, the monks should not be pleased or happy. Happiness or pleasure will likewise inhibit them from determining the truth of the matter (cf. 1.5-6). A simple "acknowledgement" of correctness is what is required (1.6).

What follows in the sutta (cf. 1.8-28) are three sections devoted to morality, much of which deals with the Buddha as a speaker. The Buddha describes himself as refraining from negative speech in all its forms: "refraining from false speech" "[a]bandoning malicious speech," "abandoning harsh speech," and "[a]bandoning idle chatter" (1.9). Furthermore, he does not speak about what is not profitable (cf. *attha*, in the sense of *welfare* rather than of *wealth*). He does not take part in "unedifying" conversation, that which is not uplifting, e.g., talking about wars, food, relatives, women, street-gossip, those who have departed, or speculative matters such as being and non-being (1.17). He refrains from participating in disputations about points of doctrine (1.18). He simply does not get involved in such useless debate.

Buddha's speech is never deceitful: he is not “. . . addicted to deception, patter, hinting, belittling, and . . . always on the make for further gains . . .” (1.20). All such negative speech is simply an “addiction,” a word used frequently in the second section devoted to morality. This type of speech really amounts to a kind of clinging. Lastly, unlike ascetics and Brahmins of his age, the Buddha does not engage in making predictions, e.g., about natural phenomena such as an eclipse, or the amount of rainfall (cf. 1.23-25). Making predictions represents a base activity and a wrongful means of livelihood.



The rest of the *Brahmajā Sutta* (1.29ff.), the bulk of it, considers the Buddha as, more particularly, a teacher. The Buddha mentions sixty-two topics with which he is *not* concerned. He distances himself from views which, as a teacher, he does not hold. Such views fall into five general categories: 1) whether the self and the world are eternal (1.29-2.15); 2) whether the world is finite or infinite (2.16-21); 3) whether a thing is good or bad (2.23-28); 4) whether the self and the world originated by chance (2.30-33); 4) whether the self exists after death and, if so, how (2.37-3.17); and 5) how Nibbana Here and Now is to be defined (3.19-25). So what does the Buddha stand for if he holds none of the views he has enumerated? What he stands for is precisely liberation from all these speculations. “These viewpoints thus grasped and adhered to will lead to such and such destination in another world. This the Tathgata knows and more, but he is not attached to that knowledge” (3.30). Unattachment brings with it peace. An understanding of how feelings arise and pass away, of how dangerous they can be when there is attraction to them, and of how deliverance from them is achieved leads to liberation (cf. 3.30). Liberation from speculative views is freedom from suffering, from “. . . the feeling of those who do not know and see, the worry and vacillation [i.e., suffering] of those immersed in craving” (3.32, etc.).

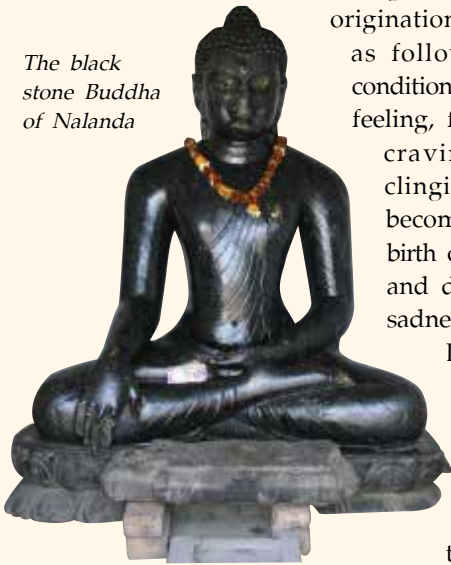
The *Brahmajāla Sutta*, the first discourse of the Tipitaka, concludes, appropriately enough, with a partial exposition of the most important teaching of the Buddha, dependent origination (*paṭicca samuppāda*) (cf. 3.71). Proclaiming speculative views is conditioned by contact (*phassa*) between the sense bases (eye, ear, nose, tongue, the body as tactile, and the mind) and their objects. This contact is that upon which

feeling (*vedanā*) is based. Dependent origination is outlined in the sutta as follows: the six sense bases condition contact, contact conditions feeling, feeling conditions craving, craving conditions clinging, clinging conditions becoming, becoming conditions birth, and birth conditions suffering (“ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, sadness and distress”) (cf. 3.71).

Dependent origination is really the description of how the suffering self emerges. Understanding dependent origination is the key to the extinguishing of

suffering. At the end of the sutta the Buddha says, “Monks, the body of the Tathagata stands with the link that bound it to becoming cut” (3.72). Such passages are usually interpreted in terms of a link to the cycle of rebirth. However, this sentence can be interpreted as meaning that the Buddha has cut the link to the suffering self. This has been achieved through his teaching of dependent origination, the primary, great Noble Truth.⁹⁸

The black
stone Buddha
of Nalanda





*The main gate
of Nalanda.*

III. Archeology and Monuments

Perhaps ninety percent of the ruins at Nalanda remains unexcavated: only about 150,000 square meters have been unearthed.⁹⁷ F. Buchanan first discovered the site in the early 1800s, and Cunningham identified it. From about 1915-16 to 1935-36, the Archaeological Survey of India, under the directions of H. Sastri, L.A. Page, and others, excavated extensively. Excavations have not shown anything earlier than the Gupta period of Indian history (320-520 A.D.); most of the activity was during the Pala dynasty (750-1090 A.D.). (Actually, the Pala rulers not only gave strong support to the University of Nalanda, but they, too, were responsible for the establishment of the second important center of Buddhist learning in ancient India, Vikramashila University, also in the state of Bihar at the village of Antichak in the Bhagalpur district. This university was started by King Dharampal of Bengal (783-82).)

The excavated ruins at Nalanda in general belong to the Pala period, though at lower levels they may belong to earlier periods. Small artifacts found at the site also generally belong to the same period. Seals and coins from the Gupta period, though, have been discovered, and the stucco figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the smaller towers of Temple 3 are also from that period. The excavated temples and monasteries sit in parallel rows running north and south, temples to the west, monasteries to the east. Temples and monasteries face a wide area in the middle. Running south to north, the monasteries are numbered 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11. (I use Dhammika's numeration. Gunasekara's is slightly different, and I am unable to correlate it to the map of the site Dhammika includes on page 117 of his book.) Temple 2, built at an angle, sits to the east of Monastery 8. Temple 3 is at the southwestern corner of the excavated area. Temple 12 lies north of 3 and opposite Monasteries 6 and 7. The complex is entered via a path running westward between Monasteries 1 and 4.



Brief consideration may be given to particular monuments at Nalanda:

1) The preeminent monument presently existing at Nalanda is Temple 3. This temple was modified at least seven times over the centuries. The first three stages have disappeared under

later construction. Currently the temple is eighty feet wide by one hundred thirty feet long, and it is the tallest structure there. The fact that it is surrounded by numerous votive stupas indicates that it was quite a sacred shrine. There seems to be some disagreement as to whether the temple was originally a stupa for the relics of Sariputta: Dhammika argues that it was (cf. p. 115), while Gunasekara disagrees, saying the fact that stages five through seven were topped with a Buddha statue indicates

that the structure was a temple plain and simple. The fifth alteration of the temple included a huge central tower and four smaller towers at each of the corners, a design similar to the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya. Three of these smaller towers, each of which contains a shrine, exist today. A large staircase goes all the way to the top of the temple, where there is a shrine. The stupas build around successive additions to the temple are quite interesting. Some of the stupas on the east side of the building, for example, include small rooms, where it is possible to meditate. One stupa dating from the time of the fifth addition contained, interestingly enough, a clay tablet, dated 516-17 A.D., with the text of the *paticca-samuppda* on it.



2) Monastery 1 has been modified about nine times, and the building today is an amalgam of three or four structures. It was at least two stories high. It has a large portico supported by pillars where teachers apparently delivered their lectures to students in the courtyard. The stairs are in the southwest corner. The eastern end of the monastery included a shrine that contained a Buddha statue. The shrine, with a portico at the front, projected out from the building like the apse of a church. The monastery consists of a courtyard with a veranda on each side; the cells for the monks are beyond the veranda. The bed in the cell is a brick platform. An inscription in the veranda suggests this monastery was a college for students from Java and Sumatra. The students would have lived and studied here.

3) Regarding the other temples, Temple 12, about one hundred seventy-one feet by one hundred sixty-four feet, is the largest building at Nalanda. This temple included a central tower and four smaller towers at the corners, as did Temple 3. Temples 13 (apparently west of Monasteries

9 and 10) and 14 (apparently northwest of Monastery 11) are similar to Temple 12. Temple 2 contains a dado from the 600s of two hundred twelve sculptured panels all around the outer walls. Figures include figures with musical instruments, Hindu gods, geese and peacocks, geometrical patters, etc. Also of interest is the fact that the stones of this temple are held in place with iron clamps. (Recall from Section I above that metallurgy was taught at Nalanda (cf. Dhammika, *Middle Way*, p. 112, as well as the related consideration Gunasekara gives to bronzecasting toward the end of his section on Nalanda).)

4) Monasteries 4 through 11 are similar to Monastery 1. All these monasteries were impressive buildings. All were probably four stories high. All were once beautifully painted and richly decorated. Monastery 9 is a curiosity for the six ovens in the courtyard. Just to the west of Monastery 11 there is a small shrine with a Buddha statue of black stone that goes back to the Pala dynasty.



IV. The Lesson of Nalanda

The lesson of Nalanda is the miracle of teaching and the miracle of learning. The miracle of teaching the Dhamma, the mission of the Buddha while he walked the face of the earth and the mission of monks and laity today following in his tradition, brings a life of peace and freedom. Spreading the teachings of the Buddha can lead to nothing less than the betterment of the peoples of the world. The process of free inquiry, under the guidance of a qualified teacher, about the nature and purpose of existence is the miracle of learning. While the University of Nalanda was true to its mission, it thrived. When it lost sight of its mission, however, and became concerned about riches, lost contact with the people it was to serve,

and strayed from the truths of the Dhamma, it fell into decline. An appreciation of the consequences of losing sight of the Buddhist mission is also the lesson of Nalanda.



The miracle of Nalanda continues today. In 1951 the Magadh Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Pali and Allied Languages and Buddhist Learning, the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, was established at Nalanda on the southern bank of Lake Indrapuskarani, close to the ruins of the ancient university, which lie near the northern bank. The idea was to create an institute modeled on the university of old where teachers and students live together in the pursuit of higher learning. Aims of the institute include studying and doing research in Pali and Buddhism; maintaining a well-stocked library to facilitate research; accommodating monks, nuns, and lay persons and introducing them to new research and study methods; collaborating with other institutions of learning in India and abroad; hosting scholars from all parts of the world; editing, translating, and publishing Buddhist works from diverse languages; publishing original works on Buddhism; and providing courses in *vipassana* meditation.⁹⁸

The Great Sanchi Stupa.



The Great Sanchi Stupa

The great Sanchi stupa looks like a huge bowl placed upside down. It has been well known since ancient times. Built between the years 200 B.C. to 200 A.D., it is the oldest stone structure from the era of Great King Asoka. The ancient hill of Sanchi was called Shikiri City of *Jetiyakiri, jetiyakiri* meaning *the mountain with the pagoda on top*. The Sanchi stupa is located in the Madhya Pradesh (state) in central India, about twenty-seven miles from the capital city of Bhopal. It is about 558 miles from New Delhi, about 124 miles from Bombay. It is situated atop a small mountain about 300 feet high. When viewed from a distance, it looks like a saddle on the back of a horse.



The ancient hill of Sanchi is near Ujayni, the capital city of Awanti. Awanti was the birthplace of Queen Devi, the first wife of Great King Asoka. When the king was traveling to Ujani to become a viceroy, he met the future queen on the way there at Vidisa and asked her to be his wife. The king was very fond of the hill near Vidisa and returned there to build a most beautiful stupa as an expression of gratitude to the Buddha. This Sanchi stupa was constructed to contain the Buddha's relics.

The stupa is well preserved to this day. It is constructed of rectangular-shaped stones lined up in rows. It is about 120 feet in diameter and about 52.5 feet in height. The stupa is topped by a ceremonial umbrella (*chattd*). The area around the stupa is quite





large and enclosed by stone balustrades. These balustrades are curved, designed to conform to the shape of the stupa. They are known as King Asoka Fence. All four entrances to the stupa have stone carvings of the Buddha depicting different periods of his life. There are carvings of the birth of the Buddha, Lumpini Grove where he was born, his reaching Enlightenment, his preaching the *Dhamma*, his leaving the palace to become a monk, and his passing into Nirvana. There are carvings of the Buddha converting the three ascetics. Another scene shows his relics being divided among the eight cities. There are even carvings which illustrate the lifestyles of the people of the time.

Two small stupas were subsequently constructed on either side of the larger one. The one on the right was built to enshrine the venerable Sariputta's relics. The other small stupa on the left contains the venerable Maha Moggallana's relics. The venerable Sariputta and the venerable Maha Moggallana were the Buddha's chief disciples. There was also a *sangharam* (temple, *wat*) at the rear. Another stupa at the temple holds the relics of Mokkalibutisa Thera, Great King Asoka's teacher and the abbot of the temple, as well as the relics of *arahants* respected by the king.



Near the great stupa at the *wat* there is a *Dhamma* hall used for religious ceremonies. Only remnants of this building remain, including the bases of the stone columns. At the front of the great stupa is a monolithic pillar, now broken. A long section of the pillar is now on the ground where the monk's residence hall (*vihara*) used to be at the temple. The inscription on the piece of pillar states the following: "If anyone moves or destroys this stone pillar, that person will be punished." The inscription warned that anyone tampering with the pillar was committing a sin.





The carved Buddhas in Ajanta caves.

The Amazing Ajanta and Ellora Temple Caves

I. Ajanta

The Ajanta temple caves were carved from solid rock. These caves, an inspiring expression of Indian art from the middle ages, are considered one of the wonders of India and are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The caves are located in the Intthriyathari Mountains about sixty-two miles from the city of Aurangabad in the state of Maharashtra. The caves were carved from volcanic lava at a site where a volcano once erupted. Great patience and skill were needed for the monks to carve these caves from the rock. It took almost 800 years to do so. The caves were excavated in two phases, the first from the second century B.C. to the second century A.D., the second phase from the fifth to the seventh centuries A.D. There are thirty caves arranged in the shape of a horse shoe extending for a length of over four miles. There is a walkway to the top peak.

The Chinese pilgrim Huien-Tsang wrote about the Ajanta temple caves and made illustrations. According to Huien Tsang the caves originally came into being as follows: the architect of the caves was Ajahn Jorijalo, an *arahant* of southern India. When his mother died he learned that she had already been reborned. He hoped to find her in order to preach the *Dhamma* to her.



One day during alms round, Ajahn Jorijalo saw a woman whose milk flowed from her breasts as a symbol of breath-feeding. Her family was upset and thought she was an evil person. The *arahant*, however, knew the woman had been his mother in her previous life. So he preached a sermon to her to enable her to reach Enlightenment. He wanted to show his gratitude to his mother, so he built her a temple (*sangkaram*) at the mountain.



The temple (cave # 10), about 100 feet high, was carved on the surface of the mountain. The walls were covered with paintings of the history of the Lord Buddha and the bodhisattvas from birth to Nirvana. The paintings were framed with sculptures. According to Huiyen Tsang

there were two stone elephants at the entrance to the *sangkaram*. There still are to this day.

So many caves were built by human hands, by the hands of monks who told stories through their carvings on the walls of the caves. The stone carvers achieved perfection (*parami*) through their work. Their craftsmanship was very difficult to achieve. Even the pillars are varied and unique. The carvings and sculptures in the Ajanta caves are thought to represent the beginning of classical art in India.

The paintings in the Ajanta temple caves were done on dry mud-plaster using a tempera technique. (Fresco painting, on the other hand, is usually understood to be the application



The painting in the cave.

of water colors to wet plaster.) In this technique the pigments of color are tempered (cf. the Latin, *temperare*, mix, regulate) with an emulsion and thinned with water. In a true tempera application egg yoke is used as the emulsion (hence, “egg tempera”). In the Ajanta caves tempera was applied over a layer of natural materials spread over the stone. The natural materials, consisting of a mixture of clay, cow dung, and rice husks, were a centimeter thick (about four tenths of an inch). A thin smooth coat of lime was spread over the natural materials, and the tempera applied to this. Natural products were used to make the pigments. For example, green earth pigment (*terreverte*), an organic pigment composed of celadonite and glauconite, was used by the Ajanta monks for their murals, whereas the ancient Egyptians, for example, used copper frits on their papyrus rolls (a frit being a partly fused mixture using fluxes, which promote fusing of the metal). A wide variety of tones were used so that the images were given depth. The monks first outlined the figures with red or black freehand brush strokes. These guiding strokes can sometimes be seen under the layer of color, so that a double outline is visible. This feature is characteristic of the Ajanta caves as well as of early Tibetan temples. The tempera technique, in short, has been used from very ancient times right up to the Italian painters of the early Renaissance—from the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Mycenaean Greeks, and the Chinese, to the Christians in the catacombs, to the medieval Italian painters in the thirteenth-and-fourteenth-century Byzantine tradition like Giotto, right up to the early Renaissance depth painters like Botticelli (*circa*1500). Nonetheless, it appears that the tempera technique of mural painting, which became so widespread later in Asia, originated with the monks of the Ajanta temple caves.



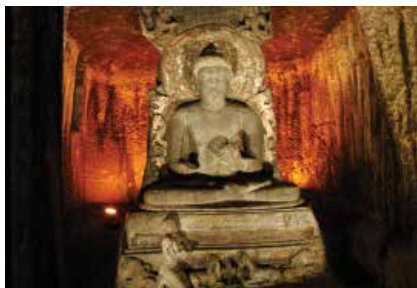


The chaitya
cave of
Ajanta

The Ajanta caves, moreover, represent both the Theravada (Hinayana) and the Mahayana Buddhist traditions. The thirty caves are divided into two types: five of the caves are *chaitya-grihas* (stupa halls, prayer halls) (numbers 9, 10, 19, 26, and 29); the rest are *viharas* (residence halls,

monasteries), (In Indian architecture, the *chaitya-griha*, or *chaitya*, was a circular chamber, a stupa, combined with an outer rectangular hall to accommodate the congregation. As time went on the wall between the stupa and the hall was removed to create a hall with an apse at one end.) The oldest caves are *chaityas* 9 and 10 and *viharas* 8,12,13, and 15A. These caves, the first phase, represent the Theravada tradition. The remainder of the caves, the second phase, represents the Mahayana tradition: 3 *chaityas* (cave numbers 19, 26, and 29 not complete) and 11 *viharas* (cave numbers 1,24,6,7,11,15, and 20 through 24). Whereas the Theravada excavations are all but lacking in carvings, the Mahayana religious sculptures represent a rather formalized imagery.

Cave 10 is not only the oldest but also the largest excavation at Ajanta, and the second largest in India. The cave is about 97 feet long and 41 feet wide with 39 pillars. It is apsidal in design. The inscription at the front of the cave points to an early decade of the second century B.C. The paintings in this cave are of special interest as examples of Indian art. Like the other caves, the paintings in cave 10 depicted stories from the Jatakas, the large body of Buddhist literature in the Pali language from the Theravada tradition. In the case of cave 10, the paintings show illustrations from only two of the Jatakas, the Sama Jataka and the Cchhaddanta Jataka.



One of the most beautiful caves at Ajanta is cave 16, a *vihara* excavated during the second phase of construction. The caves of the second phase dated from the supremacy of the Vakatakas and Guptas. (The Vakataka empire arose in the central Deccan Plateau in India about 250 A.D. The Vakatakas promoted literature and the arts. They were allied to the Guptas by marriage.) The inscription on cave 10 indicates that Varahadeva, the minister of the Vakataka king, Harishena (about 475-500 A.D.), dedicated the cave to the Buddhist sangha, a gift for the “best of ascetics.” There are significant paintings in cave 16: a painting of the Buddha’s nativity story, started in cave 2, continues on the right wall of cave 16; the painting on the left wall is the famous “The Dying Princess.” The Jatakas depicted in cave 16 are the Hasti Jataka, the Maha Umniaga Jataka Number 546, and the Sutosoma Jataka Number 537.

Cave 1, an excellent example of a *vihara*, with exquisite interior paintings, was excavated in the late fifth century A.D. This cave is noteworthy for several reasons. Two gracious bodhisattvas, Padmapani and Vajrapani, stand at either side of the richly decorated doorway. On the wall of the rear corridor are painted images of Padmapani and Vajrapani, the former, lotus flower in his hand, exhibiting a calm demeanor stemming from compassion for all



beings. In cave 1 the face of the huge Buddha image changes expressions depending on the direction of the light. If light hits the right side of the face, the Buddha smiles. If light hits the front of the face, the expression is unaffected. And if light hits the left side, the Buddha shows displeasure.

The large Buddha images in the caves have different features depending upon the tradition from which they stem. Any cave containing a large Buddha sitting in the meditation position, a bodhisattva sitting on either side, was built by Theravada monks. On the other hand, any cave containing a large Buddha sitting with feet down (the chair position) was built by Mahayana monks, in their case the hands are in the same position, i.e., the gesture of teaching, *Dhammacakra Mudra*, both hands being in front of the breast, the tips of the index fingers and the thumbs touching.

The ceilings of some of the caves are quite spectacular. Some ceilings have paintings that give the appearance of the wind blowing through fabric to create waves, in cave 19 the beautifully ribbed ceiling features various murals showing the Buddha at different periods of his life. (This is to say nothing about the other lavish features of this cave: the lovely carved facade with its Buddha figures, the large arched window, the many Buddha images inside the prayer hall, and the painted panels on the walls.)

So the Ajanta temple caves not only afford the opportunity to see amazing carvings, sculpture, and paintings, but also provide the occasion for learning a good deal about the Buddha's life and his teachings.

II. Ellora

The Ellora temple caves are used for worship by different religions, namely Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. These caves are a mile and a quarter long. They are located about eighteen and a half miles from the city of Aurangabad. There are twelve caves devoted to Buddhism, eighteen to Hinduism, an four to Jainism, thirty-four in all.



The Ellora caves, which dated from the period 9 to 12 A.D., were constructed later than the Ajanta caves. Sometimes when people worshipped the Lord Buddha, they built caves to honor him. These caves also served as places for monks to perform Buddhist ceremonies and to study the *Dhamma*. Such was the case with the Ellora caves. Many carvings were produced in these caves. Because of changes in the religious leadership, there was a lack of support for the continued construction of some of the Ellora caves. Changes in leadership meant that some caves remained unfinished.

The chaitya cave of Ellora.



The most beautiful of the Ellora caves is the tenth. It is two stories high with a pagoda inside. The top floor has a large arched balcony extending outwards. There are stone carvings of hovering devas on the exterior face of the cave. The ceiling is a Sanchi-style dome, with a large Buddha statue inside the stupa.

The eleventh and twelfth caves, which are considered to be more important than the other caves, are three stories high. Each story consists of a large residence hall (*vihara*) that the monks used. The monk's cells extend off from the halls. The *viharas* are decorated with large columns

and balconies contains Buddha images lined up in a row, with a large Buddha sculpture in the hall. The fourth cave is currently used for *Dhamma* study, and the twelfth for merit ceremonies and as well as for monks' residence.

The seventeenth cave was the Hindu cave. The Hindu people wanted their caves to be a treasure of Hindu religion. They constructed caves thirteen through twenty-nine.

It was well known that the sixteenth cave, the Kailash cave, was the most beautiful of all the Ellora caves. This cave was carved from top to bottom out of a mountain. Altogether the stone that was removed weighed about 200,000 tons. The stone was carved into a very large and very beautiful Hindu-style temple. Around the temple walls and doors there are various forms of the Hindu god (*tavathas*) with his consort. Inside what was the monks'

Ellora cave (Buddhism)



Jainism



Kalash (Hinduism)



residence is a large Shivalincum (phallus). On the ceiling of the temple is a carving of a lotus. Many Hindu people come here to worship. When they enter they feel that they are connected with their ancestors. Because the temple cave is so enormous, in every direction there are stone carvings of Hindu *tavathas* miles long.



When the Jains were in power, they built caves that modeled the caves the Buddhists and Hindus had built. This is especially true of the thirtysecond Jain cave. This temple cave contains a stone carving of Mahavira sitting in the meditation position under a banyan tree. Another carving depicts a naked male standing with a vine wrapped around his arms and legs. However, all thirty-four caves have carving of devas at the ceiling angles, as well as carvings covering the columns with large lotus pedals at the capitals of the columns.





Appendix

An Outline of the History of Buddhism

The major events within Buddhism's historical development, which covers about twenty-five centuries, can be outlined as follows:⁹⁹

1. **624-544 B.C.**¹⁰⁰ These are the years of the Buddha's life. Siddhattha Gotama, the Bodhisatta, i.e., Buddha-to-be, was born in 624 (563) B.C. in Lumbini Park near the ancient town of Kapilavastu in Nepal. He was a prince of the Sakya tribe. In 595 (531) at the age of twenty-nine, he renounced his life of luxury and spent six years in extreme asceticism at Uruvela in Magadha in India in the company of five ascetics. In 589 (528) at Bodh Gaya under a bodhi tree the Bodhisatta achieved Enlightenment and became the Buddha, the "Enlightened One." He preached his first discourse to the five ascetics the same year at Sarnath, and so founded the Sangha, the order of the bhikkhus. He spent the next forty-five years teaching the Dhamma. In 544 (483) at the age of eighty, the Buddha died at Kusinara, northern India, having achieved Parinibbana.

2. **Circa 500 B.C.** Great thinkers contemporaneous with the Buddha included Lao Tzu (about 570-490 B. C.), the founder of Taoism; Confucius (551-479 BCE), the Chinese philosopher; and Heraclitus (about 500 B. C.), the Greek pre-Socratic philosopher.

3. **544 (483) B.C.** Shortly after the Buddha's death, the First Council was held under the direction of the senior monk, Mahakassapa, at Rājagaha, India, during the rains retreat. Five hundred monks gathered to recite the Dhamma and the Vinaya, the monastic discipline, and so the Sutta Pitaka and the Vinaya Pitaka, the first two of the "three baskets" (Tipitaka), were established.

4. **444 (383) B.C.** One hundred years after the death of the Buddha, the Second Council convened at Vesali, modern Besrah near Patna, India, to settle disputes regarding monastic discipline. The first schism occurred within the Sangha when the Mahāsaṅghika

school split with the traditional Sthaviravadin school. The former did not accept the Sutta Pitaka and the Vinaya Pitaka as the final teaching authority. This split foreshadowed the later division between the Theravada sect and the Mahayana, and the emergence of Mahayana Buddhism, prevalent today in China, Tibet, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Within the two hundred years or so following the council, according to tradition eighteen different sects emerged, eleven Sthaviravadin and seven Mahāsanghika.¹⁰¹

5. **327-325 B.C.** Alexander the Great, after defeating the armies of the Persian leader, Darius III, invaded northwest India and conquered large areas. He soon gave up his campaign, though, and departed, appointing governors to rule.

6. **322-185 B.C.** Alexander's quick departure from northern India created a power vacuum. Consequently, Chandragupta Maurya (322-297) conquered all of northern India. The Mauryan dynasty lasted from 322 to 185 B.C. The peace and unity the dynasty brought allowed Buddhism to spread throughout northern India.

7. **269-232 B.C.** King Asoka, the third of the Mauryan emperors and a great patron of Buddhism, ruled during this time. He had stupas and pillars constructed throughout his kingdom, e. g., the famous Sanchi stupa. His edicts were carved in stone at these sites. Though a devout Buddhist, he was also tolerant of other religions.

8. **250 B.C.** The Third Council, called by King Asoka, convened at Pataliputra, modern-day Patna, to deal with new schisms resulting in the Sarvastivadin and the Vibhajjavadin sects. The monks at the council recited the "third basket," the Abhidhamma Pitaka, together with additional sections of the Khuddaka Nikaya. The Tipitaka in its oral tradition was now essentially complete.¹⁰²

9. **247 B.C.** As directed by the council, nine groups of missionaries were sent to various parts of Asia. Of the nine, one group, headed by Asoka's own son, Venerable Mahinda, was dispatched to Sri Lanka (Ceylon). King Tissa of Sri Lanka was converted to Buddhism. Another group, headed by Ven. Sona and Ven. Uttara, was sent to Suvarnabhūmi (the "land of gold"), present-day Thailand, possibly Nakhon Pathom Province.¹⁰³

10. **240 B.C.** Ven. Mahinda founded the Mahavihara of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, whose Vibhajjavadin community became known as the Theravadins. Thus Theravada Buddhism, the “Way of the Elders,” was established. Mahinda wrote the first of the commentaries on the Tipitaka (in Sinhala, the Indic language of Sri Lanka). Mahinda’s sister and Asoka’s daughter, Ven. Sanghamitta, arriving at Sri Lanka with a cutting from the Bodh Gaya bodhi tree, established the order of the nuns (bhikkhuni).¹⁰⁴

11. **202 B.C. to 220 A.D.** The Han dynasty ruled in China.

12. **200 B.C.-200 A.D.** These years were roughly the time frame for the rise of Mahayana Buddhism, the “Great Vehicle,” and its spread throughout South India and into Central Asia and China. New suttas appeared representing a supposedly “higher” teaching, e.g., *The Sutra of the Lotus of the True Dharma* and the *Vision of the True Land*. Mahayana Buddhism was characterized by an emphasis on the bodhisattva and his concern for the welfare of others, the Buddha as a kind of divine being, a variety of interpretations and sects, and the converting of the original scriptures into Sanskrit. Theravada Buddhism, on the other hand, was characterized by an emphasis on the arahant and his achievement of Enlightenment, the Buddha as a man (though very holy and wise) who lived and died, adherence to a single unified tradition, and the preservation of the original Pali Canon.

13. **200 B.C.-900 A.D.** More than 1,000 Buddhist cave monasteries were carved, mainly in western India, e.g., the Ellora and the Ajanta caves near Aurangabad.

14. **140-115 B.C.** The Indo-Greek king Menander (Milinda), ruled in the northwestern part of the old Mauryan dynasty. He appears with the monk Nagasena in an important Theravada text, the *Milinda-panha* (*Questions of Melinda*), a dialogue considering basic Buddhist teachings.¹⁰⁵

15. **100 B.C.**¹⁰⁶ King Vattagāmanī called the Fourth Council in Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁷ The significance of this council is that five hundred reciters and writers from the Mahavihara were able to write down the Pali Tipitaka on palm leaves for the first time after it had been preserved in an oral tradition almost four hundred fifty years.

16. **78-101 A.D.** King Kaniska, one of the rulers of the Kushana dynasty, reigned as a patron of Buddhism. During the Kushana dynasty, which lasted from about 50 B.C. to 200 A.D., Buddhism flourished. The Kushanas rule extended from northcentral India to central Asia, including Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Chinese Turkestan.

17. **1-100.** Through the Greek influence images of the Buddha first appeared, fabricated by Kushana artisans at Mathura and in the region of Gandhāra. Within the Gandhāra School of art the fabrication of Buddha images became common in northwestern India in a century or so. Thereafter the practice of making such images became widely accepted.

18. **100.** Theravada Buddhism first appeared in Burma (Myanmar) and Central Thailand.

19. **Circa 200.** Clement of Alexandria gave a small indication of the spread of Buddhism in the West when he wrote about people from India obeying the precepts of the Buddha.

20. **300-500.** Buddhism was introduced to various parts of Southeast Asia. Buddhism became prominent in China after about 500: Ch'an ("Meditation" sect) and "Pure Land" (Amidism, with its Amitabha Buddha) arose there.

21. **320-540.** The Gupta dynasty, supportive of both Brahmanism/Hinduism and Buddhism, unified and ruled India. This was the classical age of Indian culture. Additionally, during this time the worship of Buddhist relics became very prominent.

22. **399.** Buddhism spread from China to Korea.

23. **400-600.** During these two hundred years, thanks to the patronage of the Gupta dynasty, a huge university complex developed at Nalanda, India. It remained an important world center for the study not only of Buddhism but also of other sciences until about 1200 A.D.

24. **Circa 400 A.D.** Yogacara school of Buddhism was founded by two brothers, Asanga and Vasubandhu.

25. **402-411.** Fa-Hien, the Chinese monk, made a pilgrimage to India and visited the various Buddhist sites in search of manuscripts. He kept a detailed record of his journey that is an important source of information for scholars today.

26. **412.** In Sri Lanka Ven. Buddhaghosa wrote the *Visuddhimagga* (*The Path of Purification*), an important, controversial book on meditation. This great commentator collated Sinhalese commentaries on the Canon, notably, the Maha Atthakatha, and translated them into Pali. Significantly, the Theravada scholarship of Sri Lanka thus became available to the world. Moreover, Buddhaghosa's efforts were the beginning of what would develop into a huge body of post-canonical Pali writings.

27. **500.** Toramana, chief of the Black Huns (Hunas), whose capital was in modern Afghanistan, conquered western India up to Airikina (north of Sanchi). The Huns pillaged and burned many of the great monasteries.

28. **500.** Dhammapala¹⁰⁸ wrote commentaries on seven parts of the Canon not considered by Buddhaghosa, those consisting largely of verses. These parts included the *Udana*, *Itivuttaka*, *Theragatha*, and *Therigatha*. He also wrote many subcommentaries on the writings of Buddhaghosa, thus giving the commentaries the form they have today.

29. **538.** Buddhism spread from Korea to Japan.

30. **629-644.** Huien Tsiang, a Chinese Buddhist monk, visited India. He studied at Nalanda University and at other monasteries. Like Fa-Hien he kept records of his travels that are important to scholars today.

31. **638-713.** Hui Neng, the Chinese Ch'an master, lived during these years.

32. **740-798.** King Khri-srong made Mahayana Buddhism official in Tibet.

33. **750.** Gopala founded the Pala dynasty in Bengal. This dynasty, which lasted to 1199, was a strong supporter of Buddhism. The Palas restored Nalanda University as well as built two more, Odantapura and Vikramasila.

34. **700s.** During the early years of the Pala dynasty, a third “vehicle” of Buddhism, the Tantrayana (Mantrayana, Vajrayana), something of an offshoot of the Mahayana, emerged at Nalanda. This strain of Buddhism was characterized by magic, esotericism, ritual, and complex meditation techniques. It eventually died out in India and southeastern Asia. Spreading to Tibet in the eighth century, it was essentially wiped out there in 1950-1951 with the invasion of the Chinese army. Tantric Buddhism eventually developed in Japan as Zen, a major sect in that country today as well as a major force in the West.

35. **750.** The Borobudur stupa was built on Java (Indonesia).

36. **Circa 850.** Huang-Po, the Chinese Ch’an master, lived at this time.

37. **1044-1077.** King Anawrahta officially established Theravada Buddhism in Burma.

38. **1050.** The communities of the monks and nuns at Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, were wiped out because of internal wars and invasions from India.

39. **1070.** Monks from Pagan (Burma) came to Polonnaruwa, the new capital of Sri Lanka, to reestablish the Theravada line of ordination there.

40. **1150.** The Angkor monastery and temple were constructed in Cambodia.

41. **1153.** The Fifth Buddhist Council was held in Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁹

42. **1164.** Invaders destroyed Polonnaruwa. With the help of Ven. Mahakassapa and Ven. Sariputta, two monks from a forest branch of the Mahavihara (Theravada) sect, King Parakramabahu reunited all the Sri Lankan monks into the Mahavihara sect and reestablished the scriptures.

43. **1176.** The Seventh Buddhist Council¹¹⁰ was held in Sri Lanka with Kassapa Thera as president.

44. **Circa 1200.** Northern India succumbed to the Muslim invaders. (The fall of Bengal in 1199 brought an end to the Pala dynasty;

the fall of the kingdom of Bundelkhand in 1203 meant the conquest of the entire northern subcontinent.) Buddhist monastic centers were obliterated. By about 1500 the last vestiges of Buddhism in

45. **Circa 1200.** “Pure Land” (Jodo) and Zen Buddhism (Ch’an in China) arose in Japan.

46. **1200-1253.** Dogen, the great Japanese Zen teacher and founder of Soto Zen, lived during these years.

47. **1236.** Monks from Ka’cipuran, India, came to Sri Lanka to reestablish the Theravada line of ordination.

48. **1200s.** Monks from the Sri Lanka forest brought the ordination line to Myanmar and Thailand. Theravada Buddhism spread to Laos. After the establishment of the Thai nation in 1257 (emergence of Lanna and Sukhothai) following the decline of the Khmer empire, Thai Theravada monasteries started to appear in Kampuchea (Cambodia).

49. **1277-1317.** The Thai king Rama Khamheng (third king of Sukhothai, northcentral Thailand) introduced to Thailand Theravada Buddhism in its present form.¹¹¹

50. **1295 to 1877.** During the course of six hundred years after the Muslim invasions, the kings of Burma preserved the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya by sending at least six missions to repair it.

51. **1327.** King Jayavarman Parameshvara established Theravada Buddhism in Cambodia.

52. **1360.** Fa Ngum of Laos established Theravada Buddhism in his country.

53. **Circa 1450.** The three kingdoms of Thailand (Lanna, Sukhothai, and Srayudhy) were united under the rule of Ayutthaya, the new capital.

54. **1400s.** Another forest ordination line was brought from Sri Lanka to Ayutthaya, as well as to Burma.

55. **1477.** King Tilokaraj called the Tenth Buddhist Council, the first in Thailand.

56. **1580s.** Luang Poo Tuad (Somdet Phako), one of the most famous and beloved of the Thai monks, was born (Ayutthaya period).

57. **1656.** Tibet came under the rule of a Dalai Lama.¹¹²

58. **1753.** At the behest of King Kirti Sri Rajasinha of Sri Lanka, monks were sent from the Thai court of King Boromkos to reestablish the line of ordination. The *Siyam Nikāya* sect, still prominent today, emerged in Sri Lanka.

59. **1768.** The Burmese army destroyed Ayutthaya.

60. **1782-1809.** King Rama I reigned as founder of the current Thai dynasty.¹¹³ Having obtained copies of the Pali Canon from Sri Lanka, he was the patron for the Second Buddhist Council of Thailand, which revised and established the Canon and the commentaries. The king was responsible for the return to Bangkok of such national treasures as the Emerald Buddha and the Buddha Sihing.

61. **1803.** Sri Lankan monks ordained at Amarapura, Burma, founded the *Amarapura Nikāya* sect in Sri Lanka.

62. **1828.** The Thai Prince Mongkut, later King Rama IV, was a monk for twenty-five years. In 1828 he founded the *Dhammayuttika* sect, distinct from the original *Mahānikāya* sect. Today there are no substantial differences between the two.

63. **Middle 1800s.** The works of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1869). Though presenting a somewhat distorted view of Buddhism, engendered wide interest in the subject among intellectuals and artists.

64. **1861-1885.** Alexander Cunningham, founder of the Indian Archaeological Survey, traveled extensively throughout India and explored and excavated many important Buddhist sites, including Sanchi, Sarnath, and the Maha Bodhi Temple.

65. **1862.** Sri Lankan forest monks led by Ven. Paññananda, who had been reordained in Burma, returned to the island to begin the *Ramañña Nikāya* sect.

66. **1868.** The Fifth Buddhist Council (Burmese numeration) was held at Mandalay, Burma.

67. **1879.** The Englishman, Sir Edwin Arnold, published his epic poem, *The Light of Asia*, which greatly increased Western interest in Buddhism.

68. **1880.** Helena Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott, who started the Theosophical Society, came to Sri Lanka, became Buddhists, and promoted the restoration of Buddhism there. They revived the Buddhist educational system, opening three colleges and two hundred schools.

69. **1881.** T. W. Rhys Davids founded the Pali Text Society to edit and translate the Theravada scriptures. In the next one hundred years, most of the Canon was published in Roman script and translated into English.

70. **1891.** A Sri Lankan layman who eventually became a monk, Anāgārika Darmapāla, founded the Maha Bodhi Society, whose purpose was to bring Buddhism back to India. Darmapāla traveled extensively to promote his cause and set up branches of the society in India.

71. **1891. Col.** Olcott formulated the fourteen “Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs,” an important document attempting to find the common ground existing among the various sects. In 1945 Christmas Humphreys did something similar with his “Twelve Principles of Buddhism.”

72. **1893.** The first Parliament of the World’s Religions met in Chicago. Speeches by a Theravada monk and a Zen caused interest in Buddhism. Darmapāla also attended and gave a talk.

73. **Circa 1900.** Ven. Ajahn Mun and Ajahn Sao reinstituted the tradition of forest meditation in Thailand. Ajahn Mun trained many monks in meditation, the most influential of whom was Ajahn Chah.

74. **1903.** Thailand’s King Rama V, who brought great social progress to his country, enacted the Sangha Administration Act of R.E. 121.¹¹⁴

This act took the government of the Sangha from a lay official and turned it over to the monks themselves. The act was also the official beginning of the *Dhammayuttika* and *Mahanikaya* sects.

75. **1905-1906.** The Japanese Zen teacher, Soyen Shaku, visited the United States, resided in San Francisco, and delivered lectures on Buddhism. In the first part of 1906, he traveled to the eastern part of the country, including Washington, D.C. and gave talks there. His student, D.T. Suzuki, became a world authority on Zen Buddhism.

76. **1908.** Ven, Ananda Metteya (originally the Englishman, Allan Bennett), a monk from Burma, came to England as the head of the first Buddhist mission to the West.

77. **1924.** Christmas Humphreys founded the Buddhist Lodge in London (a part of the Theosophical Society), that later in 1943 it became the Buddhist Society.

78. **1929.** The American woman, Grace Constant Lounsbury (1876-1964), founded the society Les amis du Bouddhisme in Paris.

79. **1931.** The Buddhist Society of America, a Zen Buddhist institution, was founded in New York City.

80. **1943.** Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, a reformist monk and the greatest Buddhist scholar and teacher of his time, established his forest monastery, Suan Mokkh (Garden of Liberation) near Chaiya, Thailand. Avoiding superstition, mindless ritual, and materialism, and attempting to return to the original meaning of the Buddha's discourses, he wrote numerous books and gave innumerable talks. He exerted great influence not only in Thailand but also internationally. He died on July 8, 1993. Important students of his included Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein, and Varasak Varadhammo.

81. **1944.** The Buddhist Churches of America was organized. The group united temples of Pure Land Buddhism in America.

82. **1954.** Burma acted as sponsor for a Buddhist Council in Rangoon (the sixth council in the Burmese and Sri Lankan numeration).

83. **1956.** Buddha-Jayanti Year, the 2500th anniversary of the *Parinibbana* of the Buddha, was celebrated. In honor of Buddha Jayanti Year, the Thai government supported the construction of a Thai monastery, Wat Thai Buddha-Gaya. Furthermore, the same year Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, chairman of the committee drafting the new Indian Constitution and leader of the “untouchables,” the lowest stratum of Indian society, led about half a million followers in a profession of Buddhism. Buddhism started gaining a substantial following in India: by 1965 there were four million Buddhists in the country.¹¹⁵

84. **1958.** The Buddhist Publication Society was started in Sri Lanka by Ven. Nyanaponika Thera, a German Buddhist monk learned in the Abidhamma.¹¹⁶

85. **1959.** Refugees from Tibet fled to India and Nepal, and even to Europe and America, where they established communities and built monasteries. The occasion for this mass exodus was the attempt of the Chinese invaders to arrest the Dalai Lama, who went into exile in Dharamasala, India. The Dalai Lama became one of the most important religious figures of his day, teaching his “religion of kindness” around the globe. The influx of Tibetan Buddhists into the West had a tremendous effect.¹¹⁷

86. **1965.** The Washington D.C. Buddhist Vihara, the first Theravada monastic community in the United States, was founded and incorporated the following year under the auspices of Ven. Madihe Pannasiha Mahanayaka Thera of Sri Lanka.¹¹⁸

87. **1966.** Thailand established the Wat Buddhapadīpa in London, England.¹¹⁹

88. **1969.** Satya Narayan Goenka, the great *vipassanā* meditation teacher, conducted his first course in Bombay, India. His efforts contributed to the rebirth of Buddhism in India. He established meditation centers throughout India and in Nepal. In 1982 he inaugurated a center in the United States at Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts. His courses were eventually given worldwide.

89. **1970s.** Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees of war settled in the United States and Europe, bringing their Buddhist religion with them.

90. **1973.** Australia's first Theravada monastery was set up in New South Wales by Sri Lankans.

91. **1974.** The Wat Thai of Washington, D.C., was established when two monks from Thailand moved into a house in Silver Spring, Maryland.¹²⁰ The Buddhist Association in Washington, D.C., had been functioning since 1971. In the winter of 1975 Phra Maha Surasak Jivanando (Luang Ta Chi) of Wat Vajiradhammasadhit, Prakanong, Bangkok, became abbot of the Wat Thai, D.C. An influential teacher and writer, he has held this position ever since.¹²¹ In 1986 the Wat Thai moved to its present location in Silver Spring. In 1995 an *ubhosata* (ordination hall) was constructed at the site. The Wat Thai Washington, D.C., remains an important center for the study and dissemination of Buddhism in America.

92. **1975.** The Thai Wat Buddharangsee was opened in Sydney, Australia.

93. **1975.** Ajahn Chah, the greatest and most influential of modern Thai forest monks, established the Wat Pah Nanachat forest monastery in Thailand for the purpose of training Western monks. Ajahn Chah's most famous student had been the American, Ajahn Sumedho. Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein also studied with Ajahn Chah.

94. **1976.** Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein, and Sharon Salzberg founded the Insight Meditation Society, rooted in the Theravada tradition of *vipassanā* meditation. Today it is located in rural Barre, Massachusetts.

95. **1979.** Ajahn Sumedo founded the Wat Pah Cittaviveka (Chithurst Forest Monastery) in Sussex, England, and became its first abbot.

96. **1981.** Ven. Taungpulu Sayadaw and Dr. Rina Sircar from Burma set up the Taungpulu Kaba-Aye Monastery in California.

97. **1982.** Ven. H. Gunaratana founded the Bavana Society in West Virginia. This was the first Theravada forest monastery in the United States.

98. **1984.** Ajahn Sumedho established the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery in England. Vens. Jagaro and Brahmavamso, students of Ajahn Chah, established the Bodhinyana Monastery in western Australia.

99. **1990s.** Buddhism entered cyberspace with a proliferation of websites: Buddhist scriptures, books, articles, and information net works became available online.

100. **1993.** An American monk, Ajahn Thanissaro, an important writer and translator, founded the Metta Forest Monastery in southern California.

101. **1993.** The second Parliament of the World's Religions was held in Chicago. Phra Maha Surasak (Luang Ta Chi) attended on behalf of the Wat Thai, Washington, D.C.

102. **1996.** The English monk, Ajahn Amaro, began the Abhayagiri Forest Monastery in California.

103. **1996.** The Theravada order of nuns was reestablished in Sarnath after a gap of nine hundred eighty years: Eleven women were ordained.

104. **1998.** The order of nuns was revived in Dambulla, Sri Lanka: Twenty-three women were ordained.

105. **1999.** The third Parliament of the World's Religions was held in Cape Town, South Africa. Phra Maha Thanat Inthisan from the Wat Thai, Washington, D.C., attended, 1-8 Dec. 1999.

106. **In 1999.** The United Nations, an organization performing various activities on behalf of the worldwide population, unanimously resolved to declare Visakha Puja Day (Vesak Day) an International Day on December 15, 1999.

107. **summer of 2000.** Buddhist pavilions and pagodas at the World EXPO in Hanover, Germany, were telltale signs of the preeminence today of Buddhism on virtually every continent, even South America and Africa, and the widespread interest in its practices and teachings.

108. **2004.** The fourth Parliament of the World's Religions occurred in Barcelona, Spain. On this occasion Phra Maha Surasak and Phra Maha Thanat Inthisan from the Wat Thai Washington, D.C., attended.



Endnotes

¹ See the Introduction (*Nidana Katha*) to the Jataka Commentary (i.47), paragraphs 27-28.

² See the Introduction to the Jataka (i.47), paragraphs 29-30, 32-3. Contrast the "Acchariya-abbhuta Sutta; Wonderful and Marvelous," in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (*Majjhima Nikaya*), 111:123, 7-15; and the "Mahapadana Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lineage," in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (*Digha Nikaya*), 11:14, 1.17-1.24. Neither of these latter texts mentions the Lumbini trip; both say the queen gave birth to her son standing up. One passage in the old Buddhist poetry text, the *Suttanipata*, alludes to Lumbini (cf. *Lumbini; A Haven of Sacred Refuge*, by Basanta Bidari, p. 36.) The "Mahapadana Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lineage," 11:14, 1.31, places the king's consultation with the Brahmins after the birth of the future Buddha.

³ Cf. the "Acchariya-abbhuta Sutta; Wonderful and Marvelous," 111:123, 16-21.; the "Mahapadana Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lineage," 11:14, 1.25-1.32; and the extensive discussion of the distinctive marks in the "Lakkhana Sutta; The Marks of a Great Man," *Middle Length Discourses*, 111:30. Cf. the continuation of the story line in the Introduction to the Jataka (i.47²¹), paragraphs 40-43, 54, and 31. The Introduction also describes in paragraph number 31 how, when the future Buddha was born, thirty-two prognostics appeared, for instance, all the worlds filled with an immeasurable light, and the blind saw and the deaf heard and the lame walked.

⁴ *Lumbini*, by Bidari, is the principle text utilized in the following discussion. *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India*, by Ven. S. Dhammika, also has a brief discussion of Lumbini.

⁵ Department of Archeology, H.M.G. Nepal, translation, quoted in *Lumbini*, by Bidari, p.60.

⁶ See Bidari, *Lumbini*, pp. 91-97, for a detailed discussion.

⁷ T. N. Mishra has detailed descriptions of the monasteries in Bidari's *Lumbini*, pages 108-110.

⁸ A good account of the history of Bodh Gaya is contained within *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India* by Ven. S. Dhammika, pp. 43-57. This source was used in the preparation of the material here. Cf., also, *Buddha Gaya Temple; Its History*, by Dipak K.Barua, pp. 10-157.

⁹ See *The Group of Discourses* (*Sutta-Nipata*), trans. by K. R. Norman, III.1, "Going forth," p.50.

¹⁰ See the "Ariyapariyesana Sutta: The Noble Search," Number 26, in *The Middle Length Discourses* (*Majjhima Nikaya*), 14-17. Cf. sections 13-30 of the same sutta, where the Buddha recounts the story of his search for Enlightenment from his early experiences with the ascetics to his conversion of the five bhikkhus at Deer Park. Cf. Number 36, the "Mahasaccaka Sutta; The Great Discourse to Saccaka," *Middle Length Discourses*. Sections 13 through 16 of this sutta repeat sections 14-17 of Number 26 in a new setting.

¹¹ See the *Mahasaccaka Sutta*, *Middle Length Discourses*, No. 36:32.

¹² See *The Group of Discourses* (*Sutta-Nipata*), trans. by K. R. Norman, III.2, "Striving" (also called *Padhana Sutta*), pp. 51-53.

¹³ See the *Padhana Sutta*, pp. 52-53; cf. the "Marasamyutta; Connected Discourses with Mara," in *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha* (*Samyutta Nikaya*), 1.4.24, "Seven Year of Pursuit" (Mara pursues the Buddha for six years prior to the time of his Enlightenment and for one year thereafter); and 1.4.25, "Mara's Daughters" (Mara's daughters, Tanha, Aranti, and Raga, try different tactics to tempt the Buddha).

¹⁴ See the *Mahasaccaka Sutta*, 36:34-44; cf. the *Ariyapariyesana Sutta*, 26:18.

¹⁵ Cf. the discussion in "Nibbana for Everyone," by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, p. 4ff.

¹⁶ See the discussion in Dhammika's *Middle Land, Middle Way*, pp. 47ff, 58-62, the primary source for the following; and cf. the extensive discussion in Barua's *Buddha Gaya*, notably, pp. 158-182, the discussion of art and architecture.

¹⁷ This stupa, about ninety-four miles from Jabalpur, which is east southeast of Bodhi Gaya, dates from 250-150 B.C. It contained many historic scenes, and pieces of sculpture having inscriptions with lettering similar to that on the Sanchi stupa. Cf. D. C. Ahir, *Buddhism in Modern India*, pp. 56-57.

¹⁸ Cf. Shanti Swaroop Baudh, *Bodhi Gaya; The Great Sacred Place of Buddhists*, p. 82, who claims, mistakenly, that the Buddha statue in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Mahabodhi Temple was placed there in 380 A.D.

¹⁹ See *Buddha Gaya*, Barua, p. 229.

²⁰ See Baudh, *Bodhi Gaya*, pp. 90-92, the figures.

²¹ Cf. the picture in Baudh, *Bodhi Gaya*, p. 111.

²² Cf. Ahir, *Buddhism in Modern India*, p. 44, who says, "The Vajrasana . . . seen between the Bodhi Tree and the Temple marks the actual spot..." Yet discussions about the inner Vajrasana in Dhammika's *Middle Land, Middle Way*, pp. 59-60, and in Barua, *Buddha Gaya Temple*, pp. 29-31, would seem to indicate otherwise.

²³ Cf. the "Mahapadana Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lineage," in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Digha Nikaya)*, 11:40, 3.8ff, the story of Khanda and Tissa, an alternate version.

²⁴ See *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Samyutta Nikaya)*, 56:11; cf. the analysis in the "Saccavibhanga Sutta; The Exposition of the Truths," Number 141 in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (Majjhima Nikaya)*, also delivered at Sarnath; and in the *Vibhanga*, 99-105, in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*.

²⁵ Cf. the "Ariyapariyesana Sutta; The Noble Search," Number 26 in *The Middle Length Discourses (Majjhima Nikaya)*, 13-30, where the Buddha recounts to the bhikkhus the story of his search for Enlightenment from his early experiences with the ascetics to his conversion of the five at Deer Park. Cf. Number 36, the "Mahasaccaka Sutta; The Great Discourse to Saccaka," *Middle Length Discourses*. Sections 13 through 16 of this sutta repeat sections 14-17 of Number 26 in a new setting. Cf. *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta; The Great Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma*, by Ven. Mahasi Sayadaw, pp. 44-63, an account of the Buddha's story from the Enlightenment to the first discourse at Deer Park which, relying on the Commentaries, never mentions, curiously enough, the more pertinent suttas in the *Majjhima Nikaya*.

²⁶ Cf. *Sarnath: The Great Holy Place of Buddhists*, by Shanti Swaroop Baudh, translated by Moses Michael, the principle text used in the following discussion; and *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India*, by Ven. S. Dhammika, pp. 73-87.

²⁷ See the "Mahaparinibbana Sutta: The Great Passing; The Buddha's Last Days," in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Digha Nikaya)*, 11:16.5.18.

²⁸ See *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India*, by Ven. S. Dhammika, p. 167, for what follows in the rest of this section.

²⁹ This little passage is quite significant for providing some insight into the way the Buddha "defends" his teaching in the face of contending doctrines without engaging in debate. It can be studied in the context of two other masterful pieces: the "Dighanakha Sutta; To Dighanakha," in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (Majjhima Nikaya)*, Number 74 ("debate" by accepting a view at face value and showing it is untenable (Dighanakha's "Nothing is acceptable to me") (74.6-8); and the ensuing brief analysis of material form, and of kinds of feelings, here representative of all mental factors—an analysis which leads to liberation (9-13));

and the “*Satipatthana Sutta*,” *The Foundations of Mindfulness*,” in *The Middle Length Discourses*, No. 10 (a full-blown analysis of material forms, mental factors, etc.: mindfulness/insight meditation leading to liberation).

³⁰ For the following, see D. C. Ahir, *Buddhism in Modern India*, pp. 46-48; cf, also, Dhammika, *Middle Land, Middle Way*, pp. 168-169.

³¹ The following consideration of the history of *Sāvatthī* summarizes S. Dhammika, *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India* (2nd ed.; Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society 1999), pp. 151-54.

³² The following is almost exclusively a summary of Dhammika, *Middle Land, Middle Way*, pp. 154-64. Also consulted was Victor Gunasekara, “The Buddhist Archaeology of India,” at http://www.uq.net.au/slsoc/bsq/bud_arc.htm.

³³ The story, found in the *Udāna*, V, iv, reminds us of the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” It is interesting to compare and contrast this passage with no. 21 of *Aesop's Fables*, “The Boys and the Frogs.”

³⁴ Cf. *The Middle Discourses of the Buddha; A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* original trans. from the Pali by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli; translation ed. and revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2nd ed.; Boston: Wisdom Books, 2001), pp. 710-17.

³⁵ Cf. *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon* Part II, *Udāna: Verses of Uplift*, and *Itivuttaka: As It Was Said*, trans. by F. L. Woodward, with an Introd. by Mrs. Rhys Davids (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), pp. 8-12.

³⁶ Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, *Heart-Wood from the Bo Tree* (Boston: Wisdom Books, 1999), available online at http://what-buddha-taught.net/Books/BhikkhuBuddhadasa_Heart_Wood_from_the_Bo_Tree.htm, p. 51 (online ed., here and throughout).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 51

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* The italics are mine.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-67.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 23.

⁴⁴ *Udāna*, I, x, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Cf. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha; A Translation of the Samyutta Nikāya*, trans. from the Pali by Bhikkhu Bodhi (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), pp. 1175-78.

⁴⁶ Cf. his footnote 75, p. 1410.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, translator's footnote 75, p. 1410.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1406, footnote 53. The Abhidhamma does not allow an intermediate state here.

⁴⁹ The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary, noting that *ajjhosa* is a verse form of *ajjhosāya*, states that the phrase *ajjhosā ti.t.thati* means to *cleave or cling to*.

⁵⁰ This is the way Buddhadasa Bhikkhu interprets the passage in *Heart-Wood*, pp. 19, 23. The strategy for stopping the emergency of the “I” and “mine” in Dependent Origination becomes effective if we follow the advice the Buddha gave to Bāhiya (p. 23).

⁵¹ *Connected Discourses*, p. 1411, the translator's footnote 75.

⁵² Cf. *Udāna*, I, i, ii and iii, pp. 1-3. The whole of the first chapter is entitled, “Enlightenment,” and the tone for what follows is set from the beginning with initial considerations of Dependent Origination.

⁵³ See the “*Mahāparinibbana Sutta: The Great Passing; The Buddha's Last Days*,” in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha (Dīgha Nikāya)*, 11:16.1.1-1.6.

⁵⁴ Among these are the *Mahālī* (“To Mahālī,” *Samyutta Nikāya*, III.60.8, concerned with the cause and condition for the defilement and purification of beings), *Mahasihanada* (“The Great Discourse on the Lion's Roar,” *Majjhima Nikāya*, 12, the powers of the Tathagata, the five destinations and Nibbana, etc.), *Culasaccaka*

("The Shorter Discourse to Saccaka," *Majjhima Nikaya*, 35, the Buddha questioning Saccaka on the nature of the self), *Mahasaccaka* ("The Greater Discourse to Saccaka," *Majjhima Nikaya*, 36, the story of the Buddha's search for Enlightenment), *Tevijja* ("The Threefold Knowledge; The Way to Brahma," *Digha Nikaya*, 13, the four Brahma *viharas*—*metta*, *karuna*, *mudita*, *upekkha*—and the stage of the non-returner), *Vacchagotta* ("With Vacchagotta," *Samyutta Nikaya*, IV.44.8, the questions of the eternity of the cosmos and the nature of the self), *Sunakkhatta* ("To Sunakkhatta," *Majjhima Nikaya*, 105, the stages of perfection achieved by the monks, the simile of the poisoned arrow (craving) and the surgeon (the Tathagata)), and *Ratana* ("The Jewel," *Sutta-Nipata*, verses 222-238, also *Khuddakapatha*, VI, the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha). The *Telovada Jataka* (No. 246) as well as the *Sigala Jataka* (No. 152) were also preached at Vesali.

⁵⁵ The following summary is from the *Khuddakapatha*, VI, 10-16.

⁵⁶ For the following, see the *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, *Anguttara Nikaya*, 8:53, excerpted in *The Life of the Buddha*, by Bhikkhu Nanamoli, "Formation of the Order of Nuns," pp. 104-108; for an analysis, cf. *Great Disciples of the Buddha; Their Lives, Their Works, Their Legacy*, by Nyanaponika Thera and Hellmuth Hecker, ed. by Bhikkhu Bodhi, pp. 154-156.

⁵⁷ See *Great Disciples*, p. 155.

⁵⁸ See *Anguttara Nikaya*, 8:51, in *The Life of the Buddha*, pp. 106-07.

⁵⁹ See *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, 11:16.2.14-2.19. Cf. the biographical sketch, "Ambapali the Generous Courtesan," in *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, pp. 300-303.

⁶⁰ See *Great Disciples*, p. 300.

⁶¹ See *Great Disciples*, pp. 301-303.

⁶² See *The Elders' Verses II; Therigatha*, 252-70, quoted in *Great Disciples*, pp. 301-303.

⁶³ See *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, 11:16.2.22-4.1, the end of the first recitation section to the beginning of the third; cf. the analysis in *Great Disciples*, pp. 168-72.

⁶⁴ The following discussion of the monuments depends largely upon *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India*, by Ven. S. Dhammika, pp. 126-130. Cf., also, *The Vaishali*, by Sanjay Kumar, pp. 93-99. Kumar's book, packed with information, is quite useful, but the English is sometimes barely readable.

⁶⁵ This is contrary to what Kumar says in *The Vaishali* about a "script that has not yet been deciphered," p. 98.

⁶⁶ See *The Vaishali*, by Kumar, pp. 63-64, 98; cf. *Great Disciples*, p. 182: the miraculous death of Ananda in the air and the division of his relics between the cities of Vesali and Rajagaha.

⁶⁷ See "The Buddhist Archaeology of India," by Victor Gunasekara, at http://www.uq.net.au/sloc/bsq/bud_arc.htm.

⁶⁸ The following discussion concerning history and archeology for the most part summarizes S. Dhammika, *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India* (2nd ed.; Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1999), pp. 131-36.

⁶⁹ The first two suttas are in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, 128 and 48, respectively. The third is in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, 7. The fourth is in the *Sa.myutta Nikāya*, 12.68.

⁷⁰ However, it is not so clear that this was the case. Cf. *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, Part II, *Udāna: Verses of Uplift*, and *Itivuttaka: As It Was Said*, trans. by F. L. Woodward, with an Introd. by Mrs. Rhys Davids, Sacred Books of the Buddhists (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), "Translator's Preface," p. viii.

⁷¹ Victor Gunasekara, "The Buddhist Archaeology of India," at http://www.uq.net.au/sloc/bsq/bud_arc.htm, also has a very detailed description of the archeological ruins at Kosambi.

⁷² See *The Middle Discourses of the Buddha; A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya* original trans. from the Pali by Bhikkhu Nā.namoli; translation ed. and revised by

Bhikkhu Bodhi (2nd ed.; Boston: Wisdom Books, 2001), 128.1ff, pp. 1008-10.

⁷³ See *Middle Discourses*, 48.1 ff., pp. 419-23.

⁷⁴ On the positive side, having the right view means possessing seven supramundane knowledges. Cf. *Middle Discourses*, 48.8-15, pp. 421-23.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.8, p. 421.

⁷⁶ See *Udāna: Verses of Uplift*, IV, v, pp. 49-50. There is a similar passage in *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pi.taka)*, Volume IV (*Mahāvagga*), trans. by I. B. Horner, Sacred Books of the Buddhists (London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1971), X.4.6-7, pp. 503-04. This latter passage is tied more specifically to the quarrel that broke out among the monks at Kosambī. The following discussion of the monuments depends largely upon *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India*, by Ven. S. Dhammika, pp. 126-130. Cf., also, *The Vaishali*, by Sanjay Kumar, pp. 93-99. Kumar's book, packed with information, is quite useful, but the English is sometimes barely readable.

⁷⁷ Cf. the "*Samaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Homeless Life*," in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha; A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, trans. from the Pali by Maurice Walshe (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 2, pp. 91-109. In this important discourse, the second of the Tipitaka, the Buddha proclaims in almost lyrical terms the benefits of the life of a recluse which follow upon right view and culminate in the destruction of suffering and the achievement of Enlightenment. One of the stages of this journey to Enlightenment is the possession of moral discipline. (There are three sections in the sutta on moral discipline, 43-5, 46-55, and 56-62.) Much of the discussion about moral discipline, furthermore, is about the avoidance of negative speech in all its forms, including not only quarreling but also slandering and idle chattering. Negative speech keeps a person from traveling along the path to Enlightenment.

⁷⁸ See *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms; Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fa-Hien of his Travels in India and Ceylon (A.D. 399-414) in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline*, trans. and annotated with a Korean [sic] recension of the Chinese text by James Legge, Chap. XVII, "Sankasya, Buddha's Ascent to and Descent from the Trayastrisas Heaven, and Other Legends," at <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/f/fa-hien/f151/index.html>. The highlights of Fa Hien's chapter are presented in what follows.

⁷⁹ The following discussion concerning history and archeology for the most part presents some of the high points of S. Dhammika, *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India* (2nd ed.; Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 1999), pp. 91-104.

⁸⁰ See B. G. Gokhale, *Ancient India; History and Culture* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1952), p. 29.

⁸¹ See the "*Samaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Homeless Life*," in *The Long Discourses of the Buddha; A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya*, trans. from the Pali by Maurice Walshe (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), 2, pp. 91-109; and the "*Sigālaka Sutta: To Sigālaka; Advice to Lay People*," *ibid.*, 31, pp. 461-69.

⁸² See *The Group of Discourses (Sutta-Nipāta)*, trans. with an Introd. and Notes by K. R. Norman, Pali Text Society Translation Series No. 45 (2nd ed.; Oxford: The Pali Text Society, 2001), 408 ff., pp. 50-51.

⁸³ See *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pi.taka)*, Volume IV (*Mahāvagga*), trans. by I. B. Horner, Sacred Books of the Buddhists (London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1971), I.22.1-11, pp. 46-49.

⁸⁴ The Buddha subdued the elephant with loving-kindness, and Devadatta was disgraced. See *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pi.taka)*, Volume V (*Cullavagga*)

trans. by I. B. Horner, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, The Pali Text Society (London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1975), VII.3.11-13, pp. 272-75.

⁸⁵ See *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms; Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fa-Hien of his Travels in India and Ceylon (A.D. 399-414) in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline*, trans. and annotated with a Korean [sic] recension of the Chinese text by James Legge, Chap. XVIII, "Rajagriha, New and Old, Legends and Incidents Connected with It," at <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/f/fa-hien/fl51/index..html>.

⁸⁶ In addition to Dhammika's discussion of the archeological remains at Rājagaha in *Middle Land, Middle Way*, pp. 93-104, cf. Victor Gunasekara, "The Buddhist Archaeology of India," at http://www.uq.net.au/slsoc/bsq/bud_arc.htm,

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Chapter XXX.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, Chapter XXIX.

⁸⁹ The monk Subhadda had expressed satisfaction in the fact that the Buddha would no longer be telling the monks what they could and could not do, so they would be able to do what they liked. The story of the First Council is detailed in *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pi.taka)*, Volume V (*Cullavagga*), IX.1.1-16, pp. 393-406. Cf. *Great Disciples of the Buddha; Their Lives, Their Works, Their Legacy*, by Nyanaponika Thera and Hellmuth Hecker, ed. by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Buddhist Publication Society (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003), pp. 131-32, 179-81.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Sutta Pitaka; The Basket of the Suttas*, at <http://www.accesstoinight.org./tipitaka/sutta.html>. The discourses, the suttas, in the first basket are gathered into five collections, *nikāyas*: the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *The Long Discourses (dīgha, "long")*; the *Majjhima Nikāya*, *The Middle Length Discourses (majjhima, "middle")*; the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *The Connected Discourses (saṃyutta, "group," "collection")*; the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, *Numerical Discourses* (literally, "further-factored," from *aṅga*, "factor," and *uttara*, "beyond," "further"); and the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, "Division of Short Books" (*khudda*, "smaller," "lesser"). The *Khuddaka Nikāya* is made up of fifteen books (eighteen in the Burmese edition): *Khuddakapāṭha*, *Dhammapāda*, *Udāna*, *Itivuttaka*, *Sutta Nipāta*, *Vimānavatthu*, *Petavatthu*, *Theragāthā*, *Therīgāthā*, *Jātaka*, *Niddesa*, *Paṭisambhidaṃga*, *Apādāna*, *Buddhavaṃsa*, and *Cariyāp. itaka*.

⁹¹ See John Bullitt's "Theravada Buddhism; A Chronology," at <http://www.accesstoinight.org./history.html>.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Much of the following discussion of the history of Nalanda is an outline of the presentation in S. Dhammika, *Middle Land, Middle Way; A Pilgrim's Guide to the Buddha's India*, pp. 110-118.

⁹⁴ See *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Saṃyutta Nikāya)*, 16:11, for a description of the meeting.

⁹⁵ See Dhammika, *Middle Land*, p. 113.

⁹⁶ See Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, *Paṭiccasamuppāda; Practical Dependent Origination* especially pages 22-24, 32-41, and 58-62.

⁹⁷ The following exposition represents a summary of the material in Dhammika, *Middle Land, Middle Way*, pp. 114-17; as well as Victor Gunasekara, "Other Buddhist Archeological Sites," in "The Buddhist Archeology of India," http://www.uq.net.au/slsoc/bsq/bud_arc.htm.

⁹⁸ See "Nava Nalanda Mahavihara," <http://www.navnalanda.com/nava%20nalanda%20mahavihara.html>.

⁹⁹ This outline focuses on the development of Theravada Buddhism. Given the complexity of the subject matter and the span of time involved, it is necessarily an oversimplification. The dates given are sometimes approximations because exact times cannot be determined. Most of the outline is based on Robert C. Lester's

Buddhism; The Path of Nirvana, Volumes in the Religious Traditions of the World Series, ed. by H. Byron Earhart (San Francisco: Harper, 1987), pp. 5-8 ("Chronology of Buddhist History"), 18-55, and 137-46; and John Bullitt's "Theravada Buddhism; A Chronology," at <http://www.accesstoinight.org/history.html>. Other valuable sources also consulted are John Snelling, *The Buddhist Handbook; A Complete Guide to Buddhist Schools, Teaching, Practice, and History* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1991), pp. 16-33, 75-256, and 261-74; and P. A. Payutto, *Thai Buddhism in the Buddhist World*, publ. by the Council of Thai Bhikkhus in the U.S.A. (6th printing; Bangkok: Saha Dhammika Ltd., 2000). Another useful book is Dilip Hiro, *The Timeline History of India* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005), which is basically one huge chronology including a lot of other information.

¹⁰⁰ These dates are respected by Theravada Buddhists. The dates are more frequently given in scholarly works as 563-483 B.C. In terms of the Buddhist Era (B.E.), the years are 80-1. The Buddhist Era after the death of the Buddha is calculated two different ways: in Sri Lanka and Myanmar (Burma), it is figured from the date of his passing away; in Thailand it is figured from the date of the first anniversary of his passing away. So the year 2006 A.D. is 2550 B.E. in Sri Lanka and Myanmar but 2549 in Thailand.

¹⁰¹ See Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, pp. 42-43. The lists of the original Buddhists sects vary depending upon the source (chronicle or scripture). For example, in one passage in his treatise, the Sarvastivadin monk Vasumitra (possibly 42 B.C.) names nine Mahāsāṅghika sects: 1) Mahāsāṅghika, 2) Ekavyavaharika, 3) Lokottaravadin, 4) Gokulika, 5) Bahusrutiya, 6) Shi-chi, 7) Yan-ka, 8) Ho-lo, and 9) Uttarasaila. He then names twelve Mahasthaviras sects: 1) Mahasthaviras, 2) Haimavatas, 3) Sarvastivadins, 4) Vatsiputriyas, 5) Dharmottariyas, 6) Bhadraniyas, 7) Sammatiyas, 8) the school of six cities, 9) Mahisāsikas, 10) Dharmaguptas, 11) Kasyapiyas, and 12) Sautrantikas. See the translation of Vasumitra's treatise from three Chinese authors in "The Eighteen Schools of Buddhism," by Rev. S. Beal, in *The Indian Antiquary; A Journal of Oriental Research*, ed. by Jas. Burgess, Vol. IX, 1880, at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/journals/ia/18ab.htm>.

¹⁰² As Bullitt points out in his "Chronology," some scholars think at least two parts of the Tipitaka, the *Parivāra* (Vinaya Pitaka) and the *Apadāna* (Sutta Pitaka), date from a later time.

¹⁰³ In fact, the history of the great Phra Pathom Chedi at Nakhon Pathom seems to date back to within a few decades of the reign of King Asoka.

¹⁰⁴ It should be noted that Asoka's edicts say nothing about the Third Council or the involvement of his son and daughter in the spread of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. It is the chronicles that give the details regarding these matters.

¹⁰⁵ Note that this is one of three texts that are included only in the Burmese edition of the Tipitaka. The other two are the *Nettipakaraṇa* and the *Petākopadesa*.

¹⁰⁶ Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, p. 38, says 112 B.C.E.

¹⁰⁷ In the Sinhalese tradition this council was the fifth: the Fourth Council was held in Sri Lanka shortly after the arrival of Ven. Mahinda. See Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁸ Dhammapala lived in a monastery near the eastern coast of India, but it is not clear exactly when. Dates given by the scholars vary from the sixth century or the ninth century (Bullitt), the latter part of the fifth century, and sometime in the fifth century (Payutto).

¹⁰⁹ This was the fifth council according to Sri Lankan numeration, the seventh council according to Thai.

¹¹⁰ This was the seventh according to Sri Lankan calculation.

¹¹¹ Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, pp. 24-32, has a detailed account of the development of

Theravada Buddhism in Thailand.

¹¹² This is the date given by Lester, *Buddhism*, p. 54. Snelling, *Buddhist Handbook*, p. 277, says 1578 (or 1391, if the posthumous conferring of the title on two predecessors is taken into consideration). The XIV Dalai Lama, the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people, has been living in exile in India since the Chinese invasion of his country in 1950-1951.

¹¹³ It is not clear why Bullitt's "Chronology" gives the date 1777 for the king.

¹¹⁴ R.E. means *Rattanakosin Era*, also *Bangkok Era*. This dating system numbers the years from the establishment of Bangkok as the new capital of Thailand in 1782. See Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, p. 28, footnote 1. Bullitt's "Chronology" mistakenly gives the year as 1902.

¹¹⁵ Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, p. 84.

¹¹⁶ Other notable Buddhist scholars of the time included the following: Ven. Nārada Thera, Ven. W. Rahula, Ven. Nyanatiloka, and Ven. Ñanamoli. See the discussion in Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, p. 89.

¹¹⁷ For example, in England several Buddhist centers of study were established (e.g., the Tibetan Centre at Samya Ling, the Kham Tibetan House, the Mañjushrī Institute, and the College of Tibetan Buddhist Studies). Centers were also established in the United States (the Tail of the Tiger in Vermont, the Karma Dzong Meditation Center in Colorado, and the Tibetan Nyingmapa Meditation Center in California). See Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, p. 184.

¹¹⁸ For recounting the history of Buddhism from the 1960s to the present, the following chronology was also used: "The Theravada Bhikkhu Sangha in the Buddhist Borderlands" at <http://www.parami.org/duta/duta.htm>

¹¹⁹ Thais have established Buddhist institutions in other parts of Europe as well, for instance the Dhammasucharitanucharee Temple (Wat Buddharam) in Waalwijk, the Netherlands, and the Vipassanā Centre at Surrey, England. See Payutto, *Thai Buddhism*, p. 182.

¹²⁰ See *Wat Thai, D.C. 30th Year's Anniversary (1974-2004)*, pp 57-62, for a brief history of the Wat Thai.

¹²¹ The details of Phra Surasak's life are contained in *The Life Story of Luang Ta Chi*, a translation by Dr. Kamala Tiyanich of interviews with Luang Ta Chi (Bangkok: Sahadhammika Co., Ltd., 2005).





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About the Author



Phravidessratanaporn (Phramaha Thanat Inthisan, Ph.D.) was born in the village of Pangkhwangtai, Sakolnakorn in the Isan region of Thailand in 1963. At the age of fourteen he became a novice at Wat Srisumongala, and for the next six years he was a forest novice. In 1983 he was ordained as a monk.

From 1978 to 1996 Phramaha Thanat practiced meditation under teachers in the forest tradition, attained a Class V in the study of the Pāli language, and received a B.A. degree from Mahachulalongkorn Buddhist University and an M.A. degree in Education from Century University, New Mexico, in the United States. In 2000 he received an M.A. degree in Ancient Indian and Asian Studies from Magadh University of the Bihar State in India and in 2003 a Ph.D. degree in Buddhist Studies from the same university.

From 1992 to the present, Phramaha Thanat has served for the most part as an overseas Buddhist missionary monk at Wat Thai Washington, D.C., in Silver Spring, Maryland. Today he is President of Wat Thai Washington, D.C. He has traveled extensively across the United States and across the world, pursuing his studies, promoting the Buddhist religion, participating in seminars and giving talks at conferences, leading pilgrimage tours to the Buddhist holy sites in India-Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Lao PDR. Cambodia and some other countries in Asia and teaching meditation and the Buddhist religion. He has also written several books in English and in Thai related to Buddhism.

In recent years Phramaha Thanat headed the project to establish Wat Padhammaratana (the Buddhist Meditation Center of Pittsburgh) in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, in 2011. He is President of the board of directors of Wat Padhammaratana. In 2016 he cofounded and inaugurated the International Buddhist Association of America (IBAA) at Wat Thai Washington, D.C. (he is Chairman of the board of directors). He has gone, furthermore, to many schools and government groups in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area to promote the Buddhist religion, has received students

and teachers at the Wat Thai, D.C. to teach them about Buddhism, and has conducted meditation retreats at the temple.

For many years Phramaha Thanat has worked hard as an administrator in The Council of Thai Bhikkhus in the U.S.A. to support the efforts of Thai Buddhist missionary monks to spread the Dhamma in the United States. Today he is the organization's Secretary General.

For all his efforts on behalf of the spread of the Buddhist religion in the United States and beyond, in 2013 Phramaha Thanat Inthisan received a higher monastic rank with a new name, Phrakrusiriattavidhes. His promotion was celebrated on January 8 at Wat Amphawan Dusit in Bangkok and on January 17 at Wat Srisongdhamma in Udon Thani.

In December of 2016 Phramaha Thanat was again honored with a higher rank and a new name. Every year in Thailand on the King's birthday, December 5, King Bhumibol had given a higher rank to certain monks for their efforts on behalf of the Buddhist religion. In 2016, with the passing away of the King, the new King of Thailand, Rama X, who officially ascended the throne in October, 2017, honored deserving monks in the same way as his father had done in previous years. Phramaha Thanat was recognized, too, and given a new rank called "Chao Koon," higher than that of Phrakru. With his higher rank came a new name: Phravidesratanaporn. On December 5, 2016, together with other monks, Phramaha Thanat went to the Grand Palace in Bangkok to receive his new ceremonial monk's fan from King Rama X.

Phravidesratanaporn, then, is a missionary monk of many accomplishments for the sake of the Buddhist religion. He travels tirelessly in the United States and abroad to promote the message of Buddhism. For instance, in the last two months of 2017 he led a pilgrimage to Buddhist temples in Myanmar, visited Buddhist temples in the Isan area of Thailand and participated in a seminar at Mahachulalongkorn University at Wat Phra That Phanom on the influence of the Buddhist religion on the Mekong River area, led a pilgrimage to the holy sites in India and Nepal and took part in the yearly chanting of the International Tipitaka at Bodh Gaya, and visited temples and other religious sites in Japan.

Date

Walking on the Bath of the Buddha

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ที่ปรึกษา

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นักวิชาการศาสนา



Department of Religious Affairs



History, Scripture, and Archelogy: A Brief Study Regarding Some Ancient Buddhist Sites

Phravidesratanaporn (Thanat Inthisan, Ph.D.)

This book stems from a decades-long interest on the part of the author in ancient sites in Nepal and India associated with the life of the Buddha. The book is being republished at the request of the Religious Affairs Department of the Ministry of Culture of Thailand. The goal of this brief study is to provide an overview of the most important pilgrimage sites associated with the life of the Buddha. To this end the book discusses the history of the sites, in many cases relevant sections of the Pali scriptures connected with these places, and the archeology and monuments of the sites (excavations made, and monuments and artifacts to be seen today). The book is intended to be useful to pilgrims, especially Westerners, who intend to visit the holy places. It can be used in universities as a handbook for students. It is also helpful to anyone who is seriously interested in learning something about the life and teachings of the Buddha in terms of the actual places associated with his life. The Appendix of the book includes a useful

outline of the history of Buddhism from its beginnings to the present day.

Phravidesratanaporn (Thanat Inthisan, Ph.D.) is a well-traveled Buddhist missionary monk born in Thailand and now serving at the Wat Thai Washington, D.C., in Silver Spring, Maryland, in the United States. He received his Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Magadh University, India, in 2003. His dissertation concerned the "problem of self" in Buddhism. He is the author of several works, including *The Buddhist Missionary in the USA* (in Thai). He is also an expert in meditation practices and in yoga. His wide range of experiences includes trips to Russia to teach vipassana meditation, and participation in the World Parliament of Religion conferences. He has been the tour guide for numerous pilgrimages to Buddhist holy sites in Nepal and India.

Du Wayne Engelhart,
Editor



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