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BUDDHISM AND VAISALI

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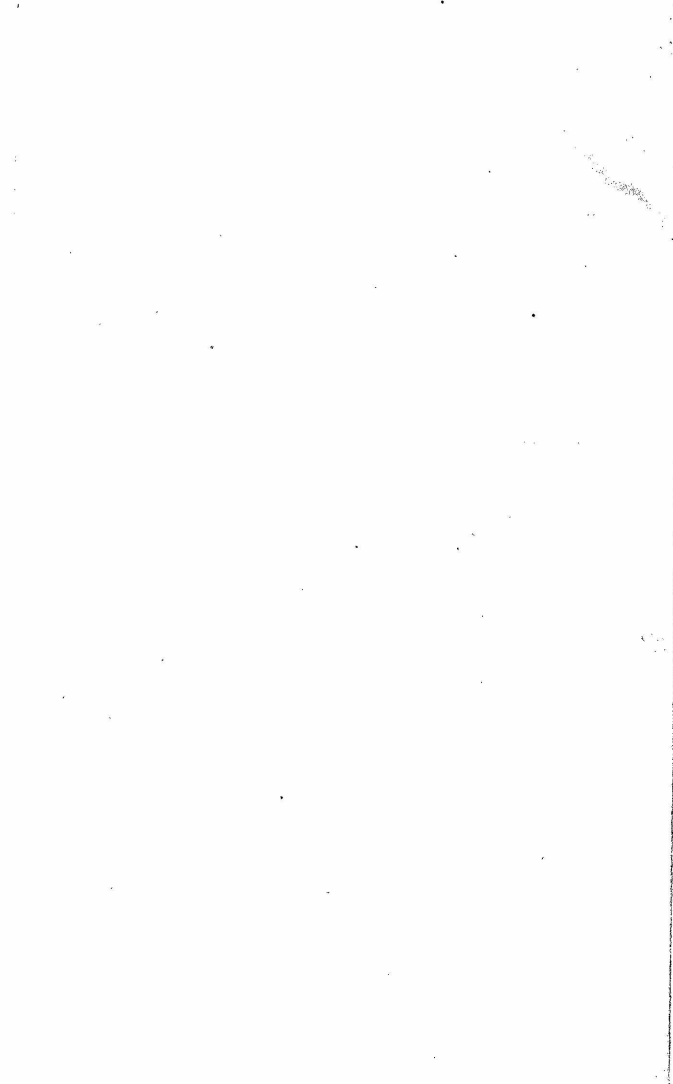
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FIRST EDITION]

[May, 1957

To

THE PILGRIMS OF YESTERDAY, TO-DAY AND TOMORROW AT VAISALI



FOREWORD

It flatters me to be invited to write a foreword to this small book on 'Buddhism and Vaisali'. It is but recently that Vaisali has become a great centre of attraction. Archaeology has definitely rehabilitated it as the metropolis of the Vriji Republican Confederacy as well as the capital of the brave and historic clan of the Lichhavis. It has also been established that Kundagram near about Vaisali is the birthplace of Mahavir, the last of the Jain prophets. Last year, our beloved President of the Indian Union laid the foundation there of a Research Institute for the study of Prakrit, Jainology, and Ahimsa.

Bhagawan Buddha loved the Lichhavis and compared them to the Timsa gods. For aught we know, he adopted many of the methods of organisation and discipline, current in the Vriji Republic of those days, for his Sangha. Though strictly historical material is rather scant, archaeological as well as literary material is being constantly discovered which throws light on the life and events of those days.

Vaisali has, indeed, a fascinating story to tell and the authors here have invited the attention of the readers especially to one important aspect of it, namely, its connection with the Buddha and Buddhism. They are scholars of note and have taken pains to write in as popular and simple a style as possible about one of the most important places, in both pre-Buddhistic and Buddhistic India.

While Vaisali is important for all India, it is much more so for Bihar. In fact, no history of republican form of government in India or elsewhere can be written without pointed reference to Vaisali, the Lichhavis and the Vrijis. The sevenfold Dharma of an ideal republic indicated in the famous dialogue between Ananda and the Buddha (p. 23) is a classic and may well serve as a maxim for any republic in the world.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that very keen interest is being evinced by the intelligentsia of Bihar in the rich treasure that they possess in the form of a great

and glorious past which overwhelms not only Indians but even foreigners, especially the Buddhists of the world. I am sure that this brilliant addition to literature on Vaisali will be very warmly welcomed by all lovers of Indian history and culture.

PATNA

April 9, 1957

R. R. DIWAKAR,

Governor of Bihar

INTRODUCTION

I am, indeed, very pleased to introduce to the readers this small book on "Buddhism and Vaisali" written by two eminent teachers of the Bihar University. Vaisali was an ancient seat of culture. Apart from the fact that it was the seat of the Vriji Republican clan, it was also the meeting place of the three mightiest religions of the world, viz., Brahminism, Jainism and Buddhism. This book particularly deals with Vaisali's association with the Buddha and Buddhism. Its authors have taken pains to discuss, in a lucid style, the role of Vaisali in shaping the destiny of Buddhism in India and it is gratifying to note that the rich mines of information, in connection with Vaisali, which are lying still unexplored, are now attracting the attention of scholars. Indeed, time has come for a proper evaluation of the importance of Vaisali in Indian history, for a critical study of the social and cultural life of the people, who inhabited the territory embracing this ancient republic. Nothing would give me greater satisfaction than the publication of such books as may unravel the mysteries of the past associated with Vaisali.

PATNA

L. P. SHAHI,

The 7th May, 1957

*Deputy Minister, Bihar,
and*

*Secretary, Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee,
Vaisali (District Muzaffarpur).*



PREFACE

The writing of this monograph was entrusted to us by the Vaisali Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee on the occasion of the twenty-five hundredth anniversary of Lord Buddha's *Mahaparinirvana*. It is meant not for the learned but for the average reader, who has an interest in Buddha and Buddhism and who may not be properly acquainted with Vaisali's importance in the history of Buddhism.

A work such as this is bound to suffer from certain limitations. In the first place, it could be made more exhaustive and yet by no means less interesting. It could be made more critical as well, which, however, would not be quite welcome to the general reader. That the work has been much less detailed than many would have wished it to be is partly due to the shortage of time given to us. No pains have been spared, however, to bring out the importance of Vaisali which unfortunately has not till now been given its right place in the history of Buddhism.

We take this opportunity to offer our grateful thanks to Sri S. V. Sohoni, M. A., I. C. S., lately Commissioner of Tirhut Division, and Sri L. P. Shahi, B. L., M. L. A., President and Secretary, respectively, of the Vaisali Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee for the keen interest they have taken in the publication of this monograph. We feel it our duty to acknowledge the encouragement we have received from Sri Mahesh Prasad Sinha, Minister for Information, Transport and Industries, Bihar, and Sri Dip Narain

Sinha, Minister of Co-operative and Animal Husbandry, Bihar, during the course of our writing.

We are greatly indebted to Dr. S. K. Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar, for his valuable suggestions. And we are under a deep debt of gratitude to Sri R. R. Diwakar, Rajyapal, Bihar, who has very kindly written out a foreword for the book.

We sincerely thank Sri R. B. Lal, Director of Public Relations, Bihar, and Sri Uma Nath, Deputy Director of Public Relations, who have taken keen interest in the publication of this book. Lastly to the Superintendent of the Secretariat Press, Gulzarbagh, Patna, and his staff also our thanks are due for seeing the book through the press carefully.

We cannot fail to thank Sri Kamta Prasad Varma and Sri Ramjulum Roy, the Office Secretary and member, respectively, of the Vaisali Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee for rendering necessary help in typing the manuscript.

MUZAFFARPUR

The 10th December, 1956.

H. R. G.

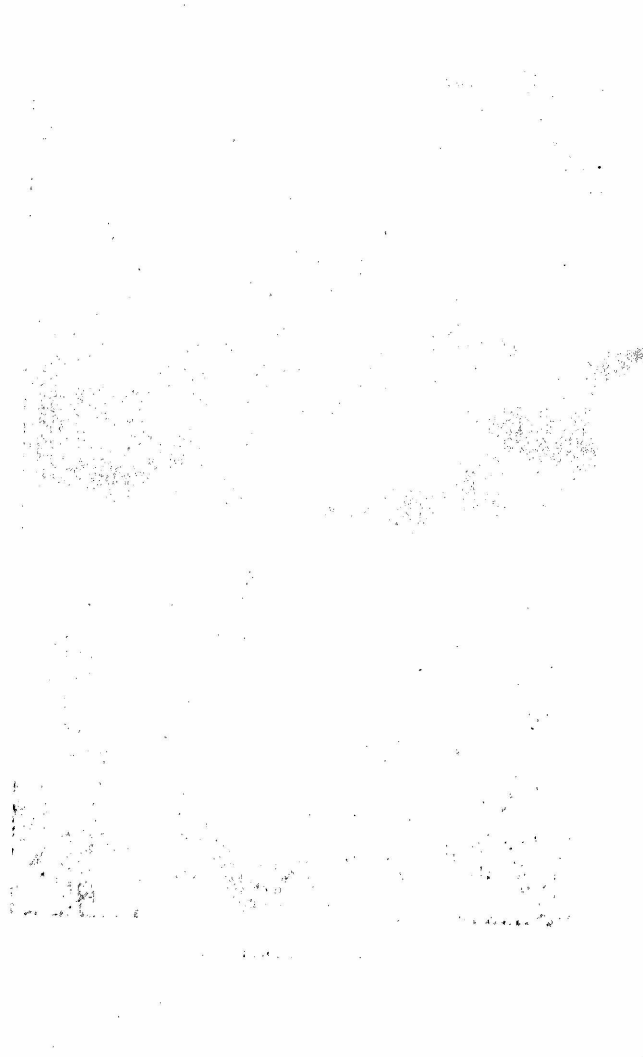
J. K.

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An image of the Buddha in meditation



CHAPTER I

Introductory

Long long ago, there lived in the land of Tirubhukti or Tirhut a king named Visala. He is represented in the Balakanda of the *Ramayana* as a son of Iksvaku.¹ It was probably after his name that the city and the kingdom of Vaisali came to be so called. The *Ramayana* tells us that when Rama and his brother Lakshmana, accompanied by the sage Visvamitra, crossed the Ganges and reached its northern bank, they had a glimpse of the city of Vaisali. They actually went to the city which was an excellent town, charming and beautiful, "in fact a veritable svarga"². Visvamitra narrated the mythological account to show the importance of the locality. According to him, the Iksvaku prince ruling over the country at the time was Sumati by name. And all the kings of Vaisali had been long-lived, high-souled, possessed of strength and power, and virtuous. In Buddha's time the city of Vaisali was surrounded by three walls, which had three gates with watch-towers and buildings. In ancient literature there is a mention of two other towns in the neighbourhood of Vaisali proper, viz., Kundapura and Vinayagrama. Beyond Kundapura lay the suburb of Kollaga³, which appears

¹ According to some Puranas, he was a son of Nabhaga, but the Vishnu Purana says that Visala was a son of Trinavindu.

² *Ramayana*, Chapter 45, Verses 11 and 12.

³ May be identified with the village Kolhua, where the Asoka pillar stands.

to have been principally inhabited by Kshatriyas of the Jyatri clan, to which Vardhamana Mahavira belonged¹. The prosperity of Vaisali is thus described in *Lalita Vistara* : "This great city is prosperous and proud, charming and delightful, crowded with many people, adorned with buildings of every description, storeyed mansions, buildings with towers and palaces and noble gateways, and charming with beds of flowers in her numerous gardens and groves".²

Extent and size of Vaisali.—The actual territory included in the kingdom of Vaisali is not known to us. There is no doubt, however, that it must have embraced nearly the whole of the present district of Muzaffarpur. Its southern limit was the Ganges, while to the east of it lay the kingdom of Videha. The river Gandak seems to have been the western boundary of the kingdom, which to the north must have extended as far as the borders of Nepal. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited Vaisali in the seventh century A. D., states that the old city was sixty or seventy "li" in circuit³ which would mean an area of about twenty miles in circumference. He says, however, that the palace city, that is, the walled part of the city was four or five "li" in circuit. The state of Vaisali has been described by the pilgrim as being above 5,000 "li" in circuit, a very fertile region abounding in mangoes, plantains and other fruits⁴.

¹ *Vide Homage to Vaisali*, p. 30.

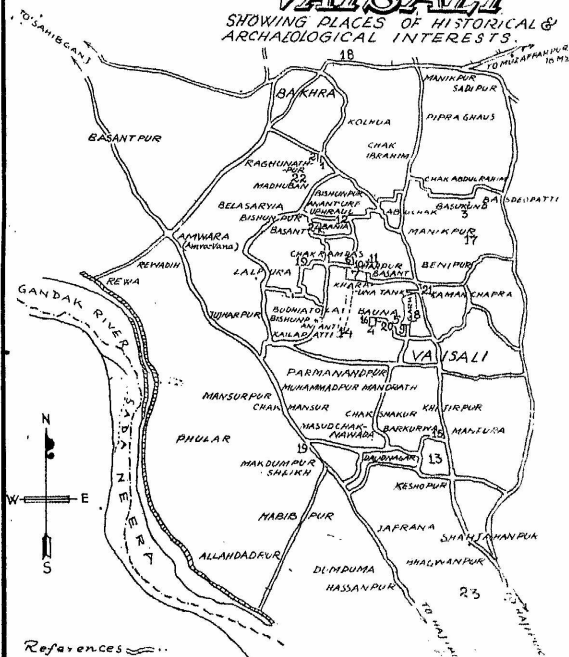
² *Ibid.*

³ *Vide* Chapter X.

⁴ *Ibid.*

Map of VAISALI

SHOWING PLACES OF HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERESTS.



References

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 ASHOK PILLAR | 9 REST SHED | 17 Proposed Site for Market |
| 2. ANANAD STUPA | 10 YOUTH HOSTEL | 18 DB REST SHED |
| 3 BIRTH PLACE OF MAHVIRA | 11 PROPOSED INSPECTION | 19 OLD CONCRETE ROAD |
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| 6 MUSEUM | (Chahupurak Chaitiya) | 22 MOUNDS |
| 7 KHARAUNA TANK | 13 GUPTA MAHDEO | 23 BALUKARAM |
| (Abishakh pushkarile) | 14 GHOGHA (Race course ground) | 24 BANIA TANK |
| 8 GARH | 15 KONSA TANK | |
| | 16 MAHAVIRA TEMPLE | |

The city of Vaisali has been identified by scholars with the present village Basarh. The ruins called "Raja Visal ka Garh" still preserve the name of the founder. About two and half miles from the *Garh* to the north-west stands the lion pillar of Asoka. The site where the pillar stands must have been originally a suburb of the city and later on, after the fall of Vaisali, became gradually covered over with jungles.

Republic of Vaisali.—It is rather unfortunate that no ancient account tells us when exactly the old kingdom fell and a republic was established in Vaisali. The Buddhist *Anguttara Nikaya* and the Jaina *Bhagavati Sutra* mention the Vriji Republican Confederacy, in the list of sixteen *mahajanapadas*. That was about the time of Buddha. From the statement of Buddha himself before his disciple Ananda¹, it appears that the Vriji Confederacy had existed for a long time past. The republic of Vaisali was one of the eight confederate states included in the Vriji federation. Its foundation must have taken place pretty long after Rama's visit to Vaisali, probably shortly after the Mahabharata War. Republican Vaisali evolved a constitution which was undoubtedly the best ever possessed by an Ancient Indian republic and which compares favourably with the constitutions of modern republican states.

The Lichchhavis.—The people who lived in Vaisali have been described in our ancient literature as the Lichchhavis. The origin of this republican clan has been a subject of great controversy amongst scholars. According

¹ Vide Chap. IV.

to Dr. Vincent A. Smith, the Lichchhavis might be of Tibetan origin. On the other hand, Dr. S. C. Vidyabhusan holds the view that they were of Persian extraction. Both the views may be dismissed as incredible. The prevalence amongst the Lichchhavis of the practice of disposing of their dead sometimes by exposure has led Dr. Smith to conclude that they had Tibetan affinities. But the existence of the practice is attested by a well-known funeral hymn of the *Atharva Veda*, where it is said: "They that are buried and they that are scattered away, they that are burned and they that are set up—all these Fathers, Oh Agni, bring thou to eat the oblation."¹ Dr. Vidyabhusan's argument for the Persian origin of the Lichchhavis is based mainly on the verbal coincidence between Nisibis in the Persian Empire and the fancied occurrence of the word *Nichhivi* in Manu. But his view that about 515 B.C., when Darius, King of Persia, sent an expedition to India, some of his Persian subjects from Nisibis immigrated into this country and finally settled down north of Magadha is untenable, because the Lichchhavis were already long established in this region.² Nor is there any ground to agree with Beal that the Lichchhavis belonged to the Yuechi race of Central Asia. In fact the Lichchhavis were Kshatriyas of the *Vasishtha gotra*. This is evident from the Jaina sacred literature, as well as from the account given by Buddhaghosa to explain their origin.³

¹ Quoted in B.C. Law, *Kshatriya Clans in Buddhist India*, p. 31.

² *Ibid*, p. 33.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 14 and 23. According to the *Vishnu Purana* and the *Markendeya Purana*, the kings of Vaisali became Vaisyas, while those of Mithila remained Kshatriyas.

Some dominant characteristics of the Lichchhavis.—

Apart from the practice prevalent amongst them of sometimes exposing their dead, the Lichchhavis had some other distinct characteristics of their own. They were, to begin with, fond of colours in their dress and equipages, generally handsome, and given to pomp and rejoicing. Buddha in his first meeting with the Lichchhavi nobles was led to compare them with gods. On another occasion, it is stated in the *Anguttara Nikaya*, when Buddha was staying at the *Kutagara-sala* in the *Mahavana*, or extensive forest adjoining Vaisali, five hundred Lichchhavis were seated round him, and they were dressed wholly in blue, red, white or yellow. There was, moreover, a profusion of gold and jewels in their equipages. On two occasions there were processions of 84,000 conveyances from Vaisali, all decked in pearl and gold.¹ This does not mean that the Lichchhavis were generally given to luxury and indolence. On the other hand, the Enlightened One said on one occasion: "Look ye Bhikshus here, how these Lichchhavis live sleeping with logs of wood as pillows, strenuous and diligent, zealous and active in archery".

Hunting and archery were favourite sports of Lichchhavi youths.² They were also in the habit of training elephants. Fond of manly exercises, the Lichchhavis were at the same time lovers of fine arts. Education was well attended to. A Lichchhavi youth named Mahali went to Taxila to study *silpa* or arts and on his return home trained as many as five hundred persons, who in their

¹ B.C. Law, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

² *Ibid*, p. 64.

turn did the same thing.¹ In this way education spread amongst the Lichchhavis. The Lichchhavis ate flesh on certain days in the month and on festive occasions sang songs accompanied with drums and trumpets.² Marriage laws amongst the Lichchhavis were somewhat peculiar.³ But chastity amongst women was highly prized. Punishment for a woman who violated her marriage vow was very severe; a husband could even take away the life of his faithless wife.⁴ An adulterous woman could, however, save herself by entering the congregation of nuns, by getting the *Prabhajja* ordination.⁵

On the whole the Lichchhavis seem to have been a highly enlightened people. They were well-versed in arts and crafts. And according to a passage in the *Vinaya Pilaka*, theft was unknown amongst them.

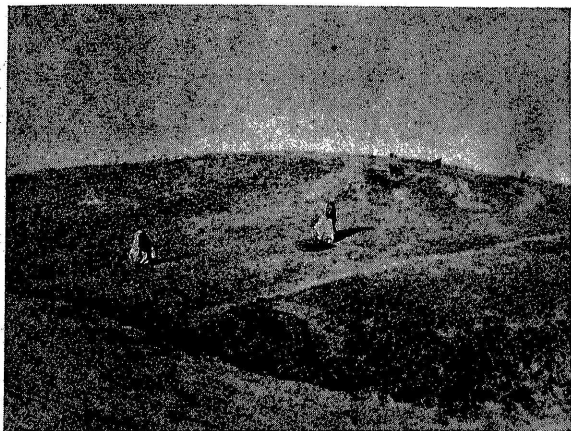
¹ B.C. Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 73 and 74.

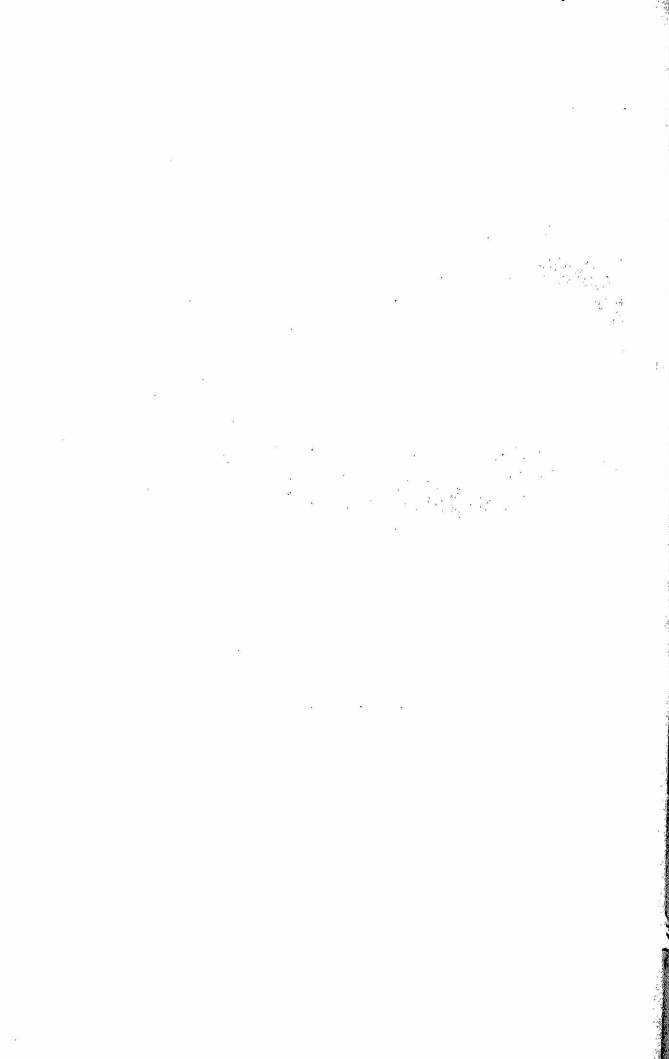
³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁵ *Ibid.*



Raja Vis al Ka Garh



CHAPTER II

Vaisali : An Ancient Seat of Culture

There is no mention of the Lichchhavis either in Vedic literature or in the epics. But Vaisali is referred to quite early in our sacred literature. The Satapatha Brahmana states that the river Sadanira was the boundary between Kosala and Videha, and that in olden times the Brahmins seldom went east of that river.¹ This means that during the early Vedic period the Vaisali region was inhabited mostly by non-Aryan people. It appears, however, that by the time Valmiki's Ramayana was written Vaisali had already assumed an importance as a seat of Brahmanical culture. According to the Ramayana, it was here that the *Devas* (gods) and the *Asuras* (demons) met and discussed the problem of *Samudramanthana*². Moreover, thirty-four kings are said to have already ruled in Vaisali before Sumati, according to the Vishnu Purana, although nine kings only have been mentioned by Valmiki. It may be taken for granted that the religious beliefs of the people of Vaisali, prior to the rise of Jainism and Buddhism, must have been the same as in Videha, where the sage King Janaka had flourished and Yajnavalkya preached the white Yajurveda.³

Jainism and Vaisali.—Vaisali had a close association with Jainism ; and Vardhamana Mahavira, the twenty-fourth tirthankara of the Jainas, was probably a citizen

¹ *Satapatha Brahmana*, Chap. IV, Verses 14—17.

² The mythological churning of the ocean.

³ B. C. Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

of this place. Professor Jacobi says :

“The Jainas, both Svetambaras and Digambaras, state that Mahavira was the son of king Siddhartha of Kundapura or Kundagrama. Kundagrama is called in the Acharanga Sutra a Samnivesa, a term which the commentator interprets as denoting a halting-place of caravans or processions. But combining occasional hints in the Buddha and Jaina scriptures we can, with sufficient accuracy, point out where the birth place of Mahavira was situated....”¹ In fact Mahavira has been called a Vaisalika, that is, a native of Vaisali in *Sutra-Kritanga* I. And Siddhartha’s wife Trisula was sister to Chetaka the head of one of the ruling families of Vaisali.

Though a prophet is seldom honoured in his own village, Vaisali during the life-time of Mahavira became a stronghold of Jainism. It should be noted, however, that the reformed faith of Parsvanath had already made considerable strides in Vaisali. In the *Ayaranga Sutra* it is stated : “The venerable ascetic Mahavira’s parents were worshippers of Parsva and followers of the Sramanas. During many years they were followers of the Sramanas, and for the sake of protecting the six classes of lives they observed, blamed, repented, confessed, and did penance according to their sins. On a bed of Kusa-grass they rejected all food, and their bodies dried up by the last mortification of the flesh, which is to end in death. Thus they died in the proper month, and leaving their bodies, were born as gods in Adbhuta Kalpa.”² Similar accounts may be found in other Jaina works showing the existence in this part of the country of

¹ Quoted in *Homage to Vaisali*, p. 86.

² Quoted in B. C. Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

a faith, which was afterwards developed by Mahavira. The Sramanas referred to above must have belonged to one of the numerous sects of wandering ascetics that had prevailed in India at least since the time of the Upanisads.

The preachings of Mahavira produced remarkable results in Vaisali, which soon developed into an important centre of Jainism and earned a reputation in the religious world of India for its teachers devoted to the practice of the highest penance and austerity. When Gautama renounced the world and went out in search of truth, he proceeded to Vaisali, which was then known for its "abundance of spiritual teachers". There he found his teacher Alara Kalama, a native of Vaisali, according to the *Mahavastu*. Alara was so much advanced spiritually that while in meditation sitting on the road, he did not hear or see even 500 carts rattling past him.¹ Mrs. Rhys Davids also records that Buddha found his first two teachers, Alara and Uddaka, at Vaisali and started his religious life as a Jaina. At any rate, Gautama gave himself up to a course of austerities under the influence of his Jaina teachers by which he "reduced himself to a mere skeleton, skin and bones, by ultimately limiting his food to the quantity that could be held in his hollowed palm".² Soon afterwards he parted company with Jainism and discovered for himself the middle path between the extremes of self-torture and self-indulgence.

In the *Mahavagga* of the Vinaya Pitaka we are told that Siha, a Lichchhavi general, was a disciple of Nigantha

¹ See R. K. Mookerji, Vaisali in Indian History and Culture—*Homage to Vaisali*, p. 4.

² *Ibid.*

Nataputta, who has been shown by Profs. Buhler and Jacobi to be identical with Mahavira. We are told that Siha became gradually attracted towards Gautama Buddha, and although very much dissuaded by the Jainas from accepting a faith which, according to them, was based on non-action, he eventually became a Buddhist.¹ It appears from this story that the number of Mahavira's followers at Vaisali was very considerable. And even after the numerous sermons preached by Buddha, it continued to be a strong centre of Jainism. This is evident from the story of Succaka, who had the courage to challenge Buddha to a philosophical discussion before an assemblage of five hundred Licchavis.²

The Jaina *Kalpa Sutra* tells us that when Mahavira died, there was a splendid illumination at Vaisali which signified the enlightenment of human souls under the influence of his teachings.³

¹ See B. C. Law, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

² *Ibid.*

³ The narrative in the *Kalpa Sutra* is as follows: "In that night in which the venerable ascetic Mahavira died, went off, quitted the world, cut asunder the ties of birth, old age and death, became a Siddha, a Buddha, a Mukta, a maker of the end (to all misery), finally liberated, freed from all pains, the eighteen confederate kings of Kasi and Kosala, the nine Mallakis and nine Licchavis, on the day of new moon, instituted an illumination on the poshudha, which was a fasting day; for they said—'Since the light of intelligence is gone, let us make an illumination of material matter.'".



An image of the Buddha near the Asoka Pillar at Vaisali

CHAPTER III

The Buddha's First Visit to Vaisali

In the preceding chapter a reference has been made to the first visit of Gautama to Vaisali and his association with the Jaina teachers. His visit to the city as Buddha took place years afterwards and has been described in the *Mahavastu* with a touch of romance.

Vaisali was in the grip of a devastating plague. Men perished in large numbers ; and holy men of great renown were sent for. They failed to afford any relief whatsoever. The municipal council then thought of a remedy. It must have the city purged of its impurities by the sacred touch of the feet of Buddha. Accordingly it appointed its President Tomara as its representative to receive Buddha. The Enlightened One was then staying in a garden in the vicinity of Rajagriha, capital of Magadha. Tomara fell at his feet and implored his help, and was asked to apply to king Bimbisara. The Magadhan monarch gave his assent on condition that the Lichchhavis must welcome Buddha at the border of their own dominions.

The road from Rajagriha to the Ganges was levelled and cleaned "like the palm of the hand" and decorated with flags, garlands and embroidered cloth. Flowers were strewn upon it and rich incense "perfumed its whole length". Bimbisara himself followed Buddha with his big retinue and saw him off, descending into the water up to his neck. The Lichchhavis, both *Abhyantara-Vaisalikas*¹

¹ Residing in the inner part of the city.

and *Bahira—Vaisalikas*¹, came “in all the glory of their dazzling garments, blue, purple, green, yellow, brown and crimson”. To Buddha himself they appeared like gods. “Look at the Lichchhavis”, he said, “with their elephants, with umbrellas of gold, their gold-covered litters, their chariots decorated with gold”. They all wore ornaments.

The preparations of the Lichchhavis for the reception of Buddha far excelled those of Bimbisara in magnificence. The Exalted One was taken in a procession of elephants and chariots, decked with gold, along the whole road from the Ganges to the city. As soon as he set foot on Lichchhavi soil there was a thunder, and rains fell in torrents². All evil influences disappeared; and “the sick and the suffering were restored to health”. Entering the city the Enlightened One taught Ananda the *Ratana Sutra* that very evening and ordered that it should be recited within the three walls of the city³. This was done. The Tathagata then himself recited it to the assembled people, and eighty-four thousand persons were converted².

The Lichchhavis asked Buddha where he would condescend to reside, whether among the people of inner Vaisali, or of outer Vaisali. He would not agree to either and accepted the invitation of Bhagavati Gosringi in the *Mahavana*. The Lichchhavis built the *Kutagarasala*, the peaked monastery, for Buddha in that forest, so that

¹ Residing in the outer parts.

² *Vide Homage to Vaisali*, p. 127.

³ *Vide B. C. Law, op. cit.*, p. 47.

they might easily pay their visits to him during his stay there. They offered it to the Buddhist Samgha and permitted the Bhikshus to reside there.

Buddha is said to have spent seven days in Vaisali on this occasion. Making due allowance for exaggeration and misrepresentations, it may be contended that he succeeded in making considerable converts even within this short time.

After seven days Buddha left Vaisali. The Lichchhavis accompanied him to the Ganges "with redoubled honours". On the other side Bimbisara awaited his arrival and conducted him to Rajagriha. According to one account, Suddhodana fell seriously ill during Buddha's stay at Vaisali. Buddha paid a flying visit to his dying father and preached to him, "thereby enabling him to attain arhatship before his death."¹

¹ *Vide Homage to Vaisali*, p. 127.

CHAPTER IV

The Buddha's subsequent visits to Vaisali

Buddha's first visit to the City of the Lichchhavis referred to in the last chapter took place, according to certain authorities, five years after the attainment of knowledge. Thereafter the Blessed One treaded the earth for many years. And it is not surprising that he paid frequent other visits to the city. It is not possible to say how many times he actually came to Vaisali. The closeness of his association with the Lichchhavis is, however, clear from several accounts. The Buddhist texts tell us that many of the important sutras were preached at Vaisali, such as *Mahali*, *Mahashanada*, *Culasaccaka*, *Mahasaccaka*, *Tevijja*, *Vacchagotta*, *Sunakkhata*, *Ratana*, etc.¹ These sutras contain interesting descriptions of his sojourns in the land of the Lichchhavis.

Once the Lichchhavis heard that Buddha had repaired to Chapala Chaitya for spending a day and so they made a present of it to him and the Samgha². Several other chaityas, e. g., Saptamra Chaitya, Bahuputta Chaitya, Gautamaka Chaitya, Kapinahya Chaitya, Markatahrada-tira Chaitya, were made over to Buddha and the Samgha³. Many important decisions regarding Dharma and Samgha appear to have been made at Vaisali.

On one occasion, we learn from the *Mahavagga*, Buddha saw some Bhikshus of Vaisali with superfluous robes on their heads, on their backs and on their waists.

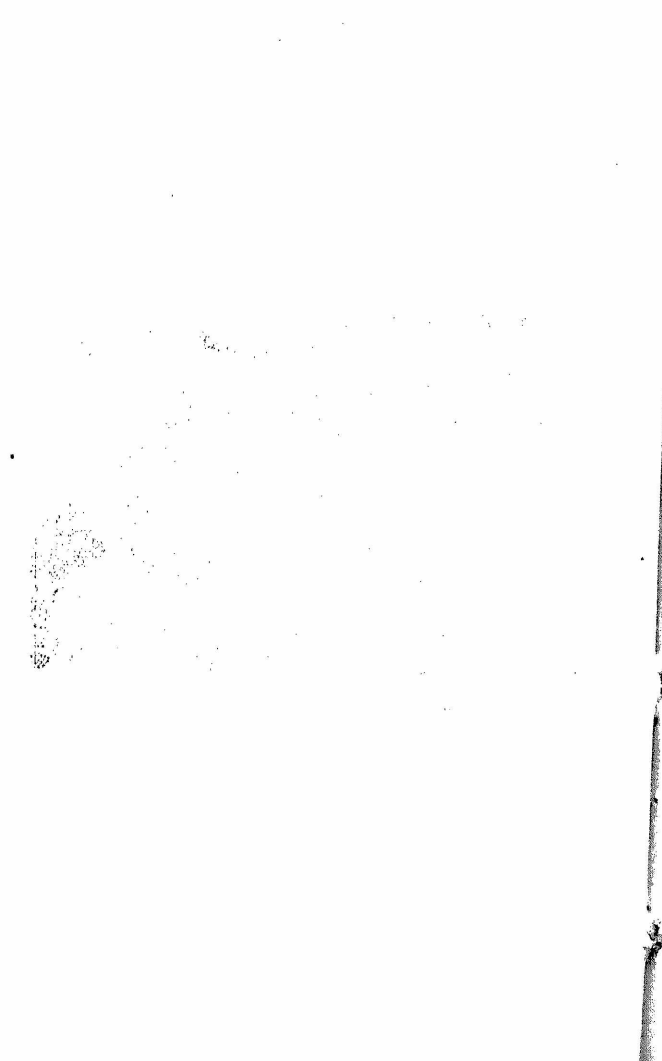
¹ *Vide Homage to Vaisali*, p. 128.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*



A view of the Hanuman Kund at Vaisali



The winter was severe. Several nights Buddha sat in the open with one piece of cloth on. In the beginning he did not feel cold; but after four hours he felt cold and covered his body with another piece of cloth. After midnight the cold appeared severer and he wore another piece. Towards dawn he felt the need for yet another piece of cloth. Then he decided to fix the number of robes for the Bhikshus which were limited to one doubled *sanghati*, one single *uttarasangha*¹ and one single *antarvasaka*². The Bhikshus using superfluous robes, he ordained, deserved to be punished. For ten days, however, Buddha permitted them to retain their surplus cloths which might be conveniently removed by that time or distributed to those who were short of cloths³.

The *Cullavagga* speaks of another occasion when Buddha was staying in the *Kutagarasala*. Finding the water there unfit for drinking purposes he permitted the use of filters for the Bhikshus⁴. The Blessed One is also said to have permitted the use amongst the Bhikshus of drinking vessels, mosquito curtains, and several other things⁵. In another account of the *Cullavagga* it is given that Jivaka Kaumara Bhrittya approached the Sugata for his advice, as he was frequently falling ill owing to over-feeding. Thereupon Buddha permitted the Bhikshus to make adequate use of open spaces for walking and also of bath-rooms⁶.

¹ Outer garment.

² Inner garment.

³ *Vinaya Pitaka* (Hindi Edn. of Rahula Sankrityayana), pp. 280-81.

⁴ B. C. Law, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁵ *Vinaya Pitaka* (Hindi Edn.), pp. 428-29.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Once the Tathagata came wandering from Rajagriha and reached Vaisali. In those days people used to build new houses after duly performing a religious rite. Those Bhikshus who conducted these rites and supervised the work of construction were rewarded with alms, clothes, medicine and rest-houses. A certain poor weaver wanted to build a house, but had no means to incur the expenses of performing the necessary rite. He therefore started building the house all by himself. But the foundations collapsed three times over. The weaver, deeply distressed, approached the Bhikshus. The matter was reported to Buddha, who said that before starting with house-building one should approach the Bhikshus, and they in their turn should bring it to the notice of the Samgha. If the Samgha so desired, the construction of particular houses was to be entrusted to the care of particular Bhikshus¹.

In the country of the Lichchhavis the Enlightened One addressed the Bhikshus on many occasions and gave them lucid and elaborate instructions in Dharma. In *Majjhima Nikaya* it is related that once the Tathagata was staying at Ulka Chela (near Hajipur), where he addressed the Bhikshus as follows² :—

“Oh Bhikshus ! In olden times an ignorant milkman of Magadha, at the end of the rainy season, tried to cross his cattle upstreams on the Ganges towards Videha taking a wrong route, without thinking of this bank and that one. The result was that the whole herd perished in the mid-stream. So Bhikshus, it is always dangerous

¹ *Vinaya Pitaka* (Hindi Edn.), pp. 428-29.

² Culla-Gopalaka-Sattanta (1/4/4)—*Majjhima Nikaya* (Hindi Edn. of Rahula Sankrityayana), pp. 136-37.

to listen to the advice of those Sramanas, Brahmins and Sannyasis who are ignorant of this world and of the next, of the aim of life in this world and the next. But Bhikshus, an intelligent milk-man of Magadha, having an eye on the other side of the Ganges, drove his cattle northwards to Videha. First of all, he launched the bulls into the water, then he tried the veteran cows, and then the calves. They all crossed over to the other side easily facing the currents in an angular way. The smaller and weaker calves crossed over with the aid of their mothers. Similarly Bhikshus, the wise who after observing *Brahmacharya* and practising good deeds attain true knowledge, become unfettered by worldly ties and easily cross over to the world of bliss traversing angularly the currents of death."

Once while Buddha was sitting under a shady tree in the *Mahavana*, Sachchaka, an arrogant pandit, drew near him along with five hundred Liehchhavis. He searchingly criticised the teachings of the Tathagata and said that everything worldly has a soul. Thereupon Buddha made it clear to him that the body is no soul; and so also misery and all worldly things are soulless¹. This truth is realised by them alone who after practising *Brahmacharya* and good deeds become a *mukta purusha*².

In the *Anguttara Nikaya* it is narrated that a Liehchhavi named Bhaddiya was explained *kusala* and *akusala* Dharma by Sugata and forthwith declared himself a Buddhist³. In another text it is mentioned that

¹ Culla-Sachchaka Suttanta (1/4/5)—*Majjhima Nikaya* (Hindi Edn.), pp. 138-39.

² Man who has attained salvation.

³ Vide *Homage to Vaisali*, p. 41.

Nanda, a Lichchhavi minister, was likewise explained the four Dharmas¹. The Buddhist texts record many other instances of Lichchhavis winning arhatship at the feet of the Blessed One. For example, Vasisthi, a woman belonging to a clansman's family "was taught by the Master about the outlines of the Norm", and she soon acquired insight and won arhatship².

Once while in the *Kutagarasala*, Buddha was approached by a certain Lichchhavi named Sunakkhatta. He wanted to know if the Bhikshus who went about saying that they had attained true knowledge and become free from bondage were sincere in their utterance or not. The Tathagata replied that not all who said so were sincere. And then the Enlightened One delighted Sunakkhatta by his edifying discourse on Dharma thus³ :

"Just as, Sunakkhatta, a man, long absent from his village, would like to hear about the welfare and other things, of the village from another man recently come from there, likewise a worldly person would like to have the company of another worldly person and to talk to him about worldly things. He would never relish listening to spiritual discourses."

"But, Sunakkhatta, a man who has really become free from worldly ties would not like to have the company of one who is tied to the world, just as a piece of stone cut out from another would no longer become attached to it."

¹ *Vide Homage to Vaisali*, p. 41.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Vide Majjhima Nikaya* (Hindi Edn.).

“ One may feel that one has shaken off desire and *avidya*¹ and yet be attached through his five senses and mind to forbidden things. Such a person suffers death-like sorrow.”

“A Bhikshu who can control his six senses, who knows that attachment to *visaya*² is the root cause of sorrow, and who has become free from bondage through non-attachment, would not go in for *visaya* again, just as a man who values his life would not stretch his hand to the mouth of a venomous snake”.

“ To be more clear, Sunakkhatta, just as a man would never like to take the things he has vomited, so also a man who has attained knowledge would not like to indulge in self-gratification again.”

¹ *Maya* or illusion ; that which is opposed to knowledge.

² Worldly or material things, such as *Kamini* (woman) and *Kanchana* (gold).

CHAPTER V

The Lichchhavi Gana and the Buddha

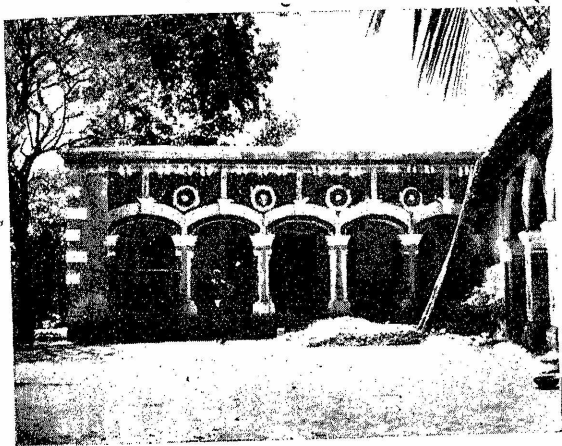
The establishment of a republic in Vaisali after the fall of the ancient monarchy must have been an event of great significance. In the time of Buddha the Lichchhavi *gana* was by far the most important amongst the Indian republics. Of the eight confederate member states, that of the Lichchhavis was the most prominent. In fact Vaisali was the headquarters not only of the Vaisali *gana* but of the Vriji confederation itself.

The ruling power in the Lichchhavi *gana* is said to have been vested in 7,707 *rajans*¹. The number does not denote that throughout the period of its history the *gana* had 7,707 members. It may signify that originally, or in the time of Buddha, there were 7,707 persons, in whom the ruling power was vested. The constitution, however, refers also to 7,707 *uparajans*, 7,707 *senapatis* and 7,707 treasurers². Without taking this number to be literally true it may be supposed that the actual ruling authority was wielded by a large body of citizens which represented the entire population of the Lichchhavi State.

Though every one of the 7,707 *rajans* had theoretically the same powers and rights, in actual practice the voice of the elders seems to have prevailed. The 7,707 *rajans* in all probability denote the total strength of the General Assembly of the *gana*. The executive power must have been vested in the hands of 8 or 10 members. They

¹ The term "Rajan" literally stands for "king". But here it is used in the sense of "ruler".

² See in this connection K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, chaps. on Hindu Republics.



The Harikatora Temple at Vaisali

were elected by the assembly. Besides the executive heads, the chief military officers of the *gana* must also have been elected, as was the practice with the Kshudrakas and Malavas of North-Western India¹. The eight or ten members who had the executive power in their hands must have been in charge of the several departments of the State each, such as the Military, the Finance, the Foreign Affairs, the Revenue, etc. In the *Jaina Kalpa Sutra* there is a reference to *Navagana-rayana* which probably testifies to the existence in the Lichchhavi Executive Committee of nine members².

In *Bhaddasala Jataka* there is a mention of that tank of Vaisali whose water was used during the *abhiseka*³ of the *rajans*. This tank was considered very sacred by the Lichchhavis, and its water was scrupulously guarded against being polluted. The story goes that once a Commander-in-Chief of Kosala bathed his wife in this tank, whereupon he was hotly pursued by five hundred furious Lichchhavis⁴.

A word about the judicial organization of the Lichchhavi *gana* may not be out of place in this context. Dr. K. P. Jayaswal has pointed out that there were in Vaisali various courts, and that these were presided over by members of the ruling families. An accused person could be punished only if he was uniformly held guilty in seven consecutive courts. This is an instance of the

¹ See A. S. Altekar, *The Constitutional History of Vaisali—Homage to Vaisali*, p. 70.

² See S. Narain and H. R. Ghosal, *Prajatantri, Vaisali—Homage to Vaisali*, p. 102.

³ Ceremonial consecration.

⁴ R. C. Mazumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 227.

utmost individual liberty ever enjoyed by the citizens of a state in any part of the world. The judicial officers were known as *Vinischaya Mahamatras*, *Vyavaharikas*, and *Sutradharas*. The first ascertained the facts of the cases, the second expounded the law, and the third served as experts. Appeals could lie from the lower to the higher courts.

These and many other details about the Lichchhavi constitution and its working may be had in Jaina and Buddhist texts. It is interesting to note that there was a system of voting not quite unlike the present day system at work¹.

The Lichchhavi *gana* possessed undoubted merits. In the first place, it was closely united with the other confederate states of the Vrijj Federation, and union constituted its main strength. Secondly, its financial position was very sound. Thirdly, due importance was attached to the military strength of the State and its defence. Fourthly, equality prevailed in the *gana* which in itself sustained it amidst many trials and political convulsions of the age².

Buddha himself had a very high estimation of the Lichchhavi *gana*. Once Prasenajit, King of Kosala, was found very much perplexed whereupon the Sugata asked, "O king ! Have you incurred the displeasure of Srenika Bimbisara of Magadha or of the Lichchhavis of Vaisali ?"³ This shows that the Lichchhavi *gana* was very powerful

¹ *Vide* K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, chaps. on Hindu Republics.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Homage to Vaisali*, p. 22.

indeed, and its displeasure might unnerve the lord of the largest kingdom of Northern India.

When Ajatasatru, son of Bimbisara, sent his minister Bhaskara to Buddha to sound his opinion on the possibility of his success against the Vrijis, the Exalted One enquired of Ananda if the Vrijis observed the seven points of excellence taught by him at the Sarandada Caitya, viz.—

- (1) Whether they held frequent public meetings of their tribe ;
- (2) Whether they met together to make their decisions and carried out their undertakings in concord ;
- (3) Whether they upheld tradition and honoured their pledges ;
- (4) Whether they respected and supported their class ;
- (5) Whether no women or girls were abducted or allowed to be taken by force ;
- (6) Whether they maintained and paid due respect to their places of worship ;
- (7) Whether they rightfully protected and supported the Arhants amongst them.

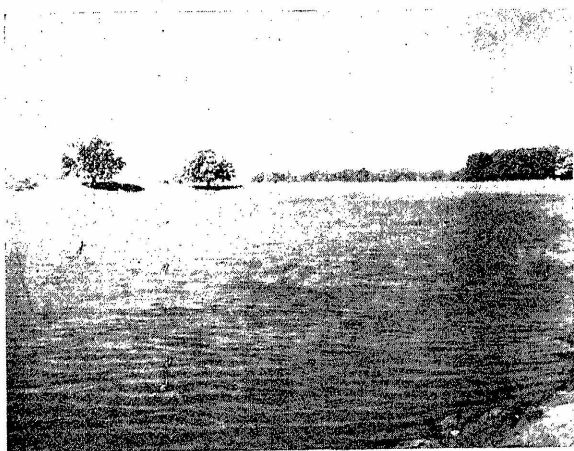
When the Tathagata was informed by Ananda in the affirmative, he told the Minister of Magadha that so long as these seven *dharma*s were followed by the Vrijis, it was next to impossible to achieve success against them.

Ajatasatru's attack on the Lichchhavis.—Ajatasatru was resolved on the conquest of the Lichchhavis “ I will root out these Vrijis”, he declared, “ I will destroy

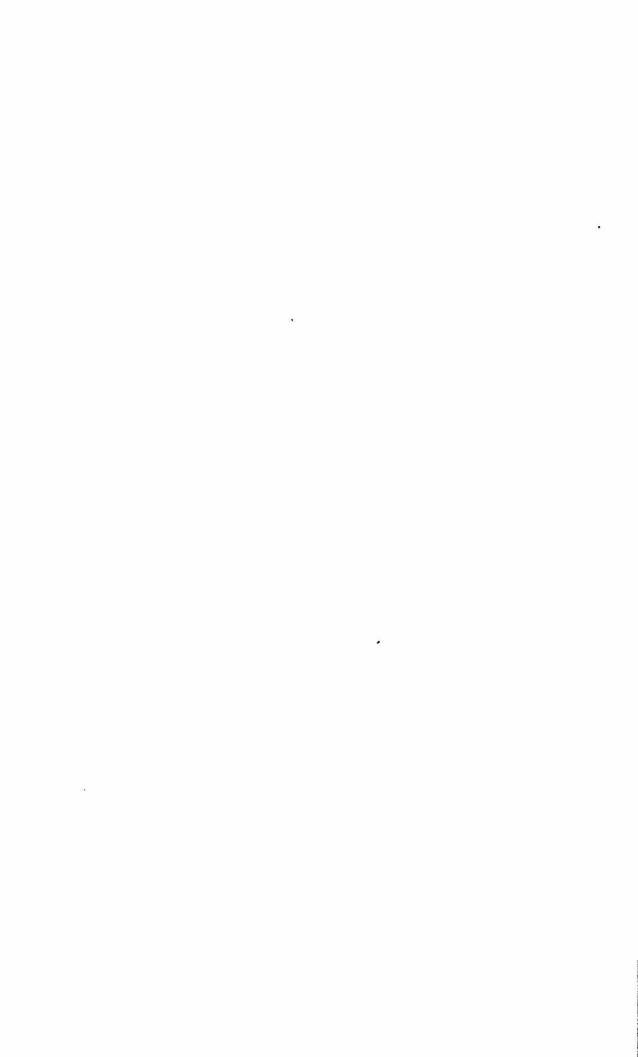
these Vrijis, strong and mighty though they be." The cause of his war on the Vaisalians is thus given in some texts. There was a port on the Ganges, extending over one *yojana*, half of which belonged to Ajatasatru and the other half to the Lichchhavis. Near about the port there was a hill, from which much fragrant material flowed into the river. While the King of Magadha was making preparations to claim his share of the material, the Lichchhavis would remove it all. This happened several times, and Ajatasatru vowed vengeance¹.

The above account does not appear to have any historical value. Ajatasatru was an ambitious king like his father and wanted to expand his dominion northwards. And the immediate cause of his wrath against the Lichchhavis might have been that the Vaisalians had probably secretly assisted Prasenajit, King of Kosala, during the Magadha-Kosala war. We are told that Ajatasatru made grand preparations for the war against the Vrijis. He built a city-fort on the bank of the Ganges near Pataligrama and used large engines of destruction in the war known as *maha-sila-kantakas*. He is credited with the conquest of the Vrijis and the annexation of their republic to the Magadhan Empire.

¹See A. K. Narain, *Vaisali and Gautama Buddha—Homage to Vaisali*, p. 127.



A view of the Abhisheka-Pushkarani (Consecration Tank) at Vaisali



CHAPTER VI

The Blessed One favours Gautami and Ambapali

The *prabhajja* (ordination) given to his aunt and foster-mother Gautami, and the deliverance of the courtesan Ambapali, were two of Buddha's most graceful acts done at Vaisali.

Gautami's admission to the Samgha.—We have it on the authority of the *Cullavagga* that while at *Nyagrodharma* in the Sakya country, Buddha was thrice approached by his old foster-mother with the request to admit her into the Buddhist order. But thrice the Enlightened One rejected her prayer saying that it was not for woman to leave her hearth and home and be a wandering ascetic. Mahaprajapati Gautami went away deeply mortified¹.

A little later, while the Master was staying at the *Kutagarsala* of Vaisali, the old Gautami, cutting off her locks of hair and clad in crimson, came to meet him². Many other Sakya women accompanied her. Gautami stood outside the gate of *Kutagarsala*, her eyes full of tears and her feet dust-laden and swollen by the fatigue of the journey. Her very appearance moved Ananda, who implored the Master in her behalf. This time too Buddha was obdurate. But Ananda pleaded strongly for Gautami. "If women are capable of attaining arhat", he asked, "why should they not be permitted to enter the Samgha, especially one who has been the guardian and foster-mother of the Tathagata?"

¹ *Vinaya Pitaka* (Hindi Edn.), pp. 519-20.

² *Ibid.*

Thereupon Sambuddha agreed to comply with the request of Ananda, provided Gautami was ready to submit to eight rigid conditions¹. Some of the conditions were as follows :—

- (1) It was incumbent on a Bhikshuni, who had been in the Buddhist order even for a hundred years, to salute, to stand with folded palms before, and otherwise to respect, a Bhikshu of even one day's standing.
- (2) A Bhikshuni should listen to the religious teachings of a Bhikshu.
- (3) Every fifteen days a month a Bhikshuni should offer prayers to the Bhikshu Samgha.
- (4) After spending the rainy season a Bhikshuni should live for some time a life of the utmost rigidity.
- (5) A Bhikshuni should on no account criticise or abuse a Bhikshu ; but a Bhikshu was entitled to criticise a Bhikshuni.

Mahaprajapati Gautami assured the Tathagata that she would hold to the eight conditions as steadfastly as a young man or woman of taste holds a garland of lotuses or pearls after bathing his or her body in fragrant water.

Thus on the intercession of Ananda, and somewhat moved by the sincerity and intensity of Gautami's desire, the Exalted One consented to admit the latter to the Samgha. The decision as such was one of the most momentous in the history of Buddhism in India. The

¹ *Vinaya Pitaka* (Hindi Edn.), pp. 520-21.

Buddhist texts make no mention of the admission into the Samgha of the other women who accompanied Gautami. The door was, however, opened for the fairer sex to become members of the Buddhist order¹.

In the Mango-grove of Ambapali.—On the outskirts of the City of Vaisali there was an extensive mango-grove. It was the pleasure-ground of Ambapali, the enchanting courtesan of Vaisali. The fire of her beauty attracted many a Lichchhavi fly. Indeed Ambapali's reputation had spread far and wide. And even the King Bimbisara of Magadha is said to have at one time been caught in the net of her beauty².

Ambapali had advanced in her years. She had heard of the Tathagata and had probably had a *darshan*³ of his. Could she not make amends for her past life by consecrating herself to the service of the Blessed One ? One day it was reported to her that the Sugata was roving in her mango-grove. Ambapali forthwith drove her beautiful chariot into the garden and was in no time beside him. Making an obeisance to Buddha she fumbled, "May it please your Holiness, humble and

¹ It is not necessary here to discuss at length what the effects of the admission of women into the Samgha were on Buddhism. Buddha is said to have forewarned that now that women were admitted as Bhikshunis, the life of the Samgha, which otherwise would have lasted for one thousand years, was cut short by five hundred years. Buddha was probably not incorrect. About five hundred years after him there was that schism which divided the Buddhists into two rival schools, viz., Hinayana and Mahayana. This cleavage may be regarded as the beginning of the downfall of Buddhism in India. The Mahayana school deviated from the original form of Buddhism, raised Buddha to the position of God and adopted image worship. This was the first tangible evidence of the fact that the assimilative force of Brahmanism was powerfully at work on Buddhism which was eventually to lead to its being wiped out of existence in this country.

² Y. Mishra, *Vaisali Ki Jhanki* (Hindi), p.79.

³ View.

lowly as I am, to permit me to offer my invitation to you and the Bhikshu Samgha to dine at my residence." To the utter astonishment of Ambapali the Exalted One nodded his assent¹.

Ambapali drove her chariot back. From the other side a number of Lichchhavis, attired in blue, red, white and yellow, were coming to meet the Bodhisattva. Ambapali enveloped the chariots of the Lichchhavis with the cloud of dust raised by the wheels of her chariot², so glad was she at heart. The Lichchhavis stopped her on the way to enquire what the matter was. "Very simple", replied the courtesan, "The Tathagata will dine at mine with the Bhikshu Samgha tomorrow". It was a bolt from the blue. To prevent Buddha dining in the house of the courtesan, the Lichchhavis offered her one lakh gold coins, if she transferred this privilege to them. "Not even for the whole Vaisali Janapada!", retorted she³.

At the feet of the Gracious One Ambapali drank deep of the nectar of bliss, perhaps for days together, which purged her of all impurities and drowned the memory of her past life. She made a gift of the mango-grove to Buddha and the Samgha which has been regarded as one of the greatest gifts ever made by an individual⁴.

¹ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edn. of Bhikshu Kittima), p. 43.

² *Ibid*, p. 44.

³ *Ibid*, p. 45.

⁴ In all probability Ambapali built a *Vihara* in honour of Buddha of which she made a gift along with the garden; for Fahien records that "inside the city the woman Ambapali built a *Vihara* in honour of Buddha which is now standing, as it was at first".

CHAPTER VII

The Sugata Bids Farewell to Vaisali

From the garden of Ambapali Buddha went to Velugrama, where he spent the last rainy season before his *parinirvana*¹. There he was in the grip of a serious illness, which he bore with that quiet fortitude which had been his constant companion since the attainment of light. But he felt all the same that he should be in this world for a little while more so that he could set the Bhikshus completely on the right track². The Tathagata shortly recovered from his illness and repaired to Capala Caitya. He called Ananda to his side and referring to himself said, "Oh Ananda ! The frail barge of life is at its journey's end. So as long as you are, let the lamp of the soul and the lamp of Dharma burn in you³."

From Capala Caitya the Blessed One went to *Kutagarasala* with Ananda and asked him to assemble all the Bhikshus round about Vaisali in the *Upasthansala*. There before the congregation of Bhikshus the Sugata made his famous announcement⁴ : "Oh Bhikshus ! Act up to the instructions I have given you in Dharma, think of them in their right perspective, and spread them far and wide that it may become permanent, and conducive to the good and happiness of many, and effect an association of gods and men. Be free from illusion and follow the ideal of righteousness. Three months hence the

¹ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edn.), p. 48.

² *Ibid*, p. 49.

³ *Ibid*, pages 50-51.

⁴ *Ibid*, page 78.

Tathagata will attain *parinirvana*¹." The Enlightened One further said, "Be active, cautious and elegant. Save your soul by the upright discharge of your duty. He that will exert himself in this Dharma free from *pramada*² will conquer sorrow and the cycle of births and deaths³."

Slowly the Sugata went his way towards Kusinara. Ananda alone was with him. A little way off from Vaisali the hoary-headed octogenerian turned his body elephant-like to have the last glimpse of the city⁴. The Vaisalians followed him, though repeatedly asked not to do so. The Blessed One presented his alms-bowl to the Lichchhavis⁵. And according to the Chinese pilgrims, he drew upon his miraculous powers, making an unfordable river appear between himself and the Lichchhavis⁶, who were thus compelled to go back. Later on the Vaisalians erected a stupa on the spot which Fahien saw.

At Bhandugrama Buddha gave four instructions to the Bhikshus and came to Pawa, where he instructed the blacksmith's son in Dharma⁷. There he again fell ill, but not the least perturbed, he moved on. At last he reached the *sal* woods in the vicinity of Kusinara in the Malla country. Famished and way-worn, the Exalted One sat under a shady tree and drank the last bowl

¹ *Nirvana* or *parinirvana* literally means liberation of the soul. Here it is used in the sense of death.

² Illusion and indolence.

³ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edn.), page 79.

⁴ *Ibid*, pages 79-80.

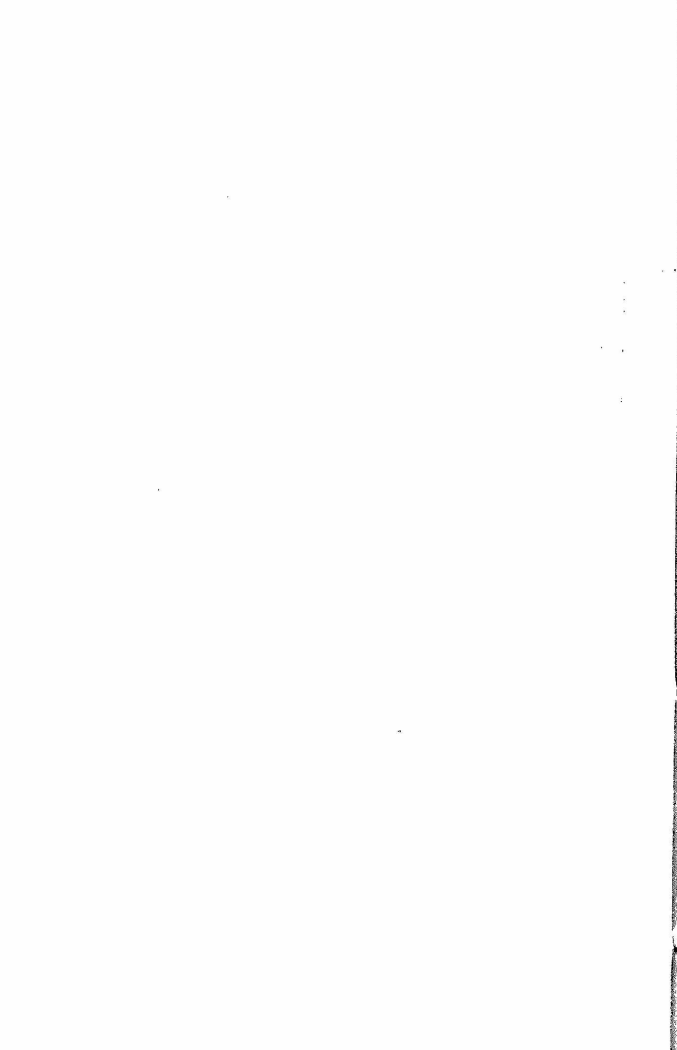
⁵ *Vide* Chap. IX. Cunningham has identified the spot, where Buddha left his alms-bowl, with Kesariya (30 miles to the north-west of Vaisali).

⁶ *See* S. N. Singh, *History of Tirhut*, page 44.

⁷ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edn.), pages 86-87.



A view of the Vaisali Temple



of water given by Ananda¹. The whole forest was fragrant with the sweet smell of *sal* flowers. "What should be our attitude towards the other sex?" Ananda begged to know of the Master. "Cast not your eyes on them" answered Buddha. "But what if by chance or mistake we see?" "Then speak not to them Ananda." "And how should one who speaks behave?" "He should take care not to lose his sense²."

Then the Exalted One related before the Bhikshus the virtues of Ananda and bade them go away. Meanwhile Ananda informed the Mallas of Kusinara that that night in the last *prahara*³ the Enlightened One would attain *parinirvana*. Thereupon the Mallas came deeply mortified and weeping⁴. Then the Tathagata instructed Parivrajaka Subhadra in Dharma, said his last words to Ananda, and calling the Bhikshus once again to his side asked if anyone had any doubt in Buddha, Dharma and Samgha⁵. Seeing the Bhikshus silent he said, "Exert yourself for the fulfilment of your goal. Be not indolent. This is my last advice to you⁶."

At dead of night the Master sat in his meditation four times over⁷. From the last meditation he rose no more. "Has the Master attained *nirvana*?" Ananda whispered to Aniruddha⁸.

¹ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edn.), page 89.

² *Ibid*, pages 109-10.

³ Quarter part of the day or night.

⁴ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edu.), page 120.

⁵ *Ibid*, page 130.

⁶ *Ibid*, page 131.

⁷ *Ibid*, page 132.

⁸ *Ibid*, page 134.

CHAPTER VIII

Vaisali's Share of the Relics of the Buddha

For six days the Mallas of Kusinara paid their homage to the departed one by singing, dancing and keeping the incense burning day and night¹. On the seventh day they carried the body to Mukutabandhana Caitya on the eastern outskirts of the city for cremation. The relics of the Sugata's body were kept for seven days in their *Sangsthagara* by the Mallas and honoured with songs, dances, incense and garlands².

The news of the Tathagata's *parinirvana* reached Ajatasatru, who forthwith sent messengers to the Mallas for a share of the relics³. Messengers were sent also by the Lichchhavis of Vaisali, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the Koliyas of Ramagrama, the Buliyas of Alkappa, the Brahmins of Vedhadwipa and the Mallas of Pawa⁴. The Mallas of Kusinara refused to part with the relics. But at last through the intercession of a certain Brahmin eight equal shares were made of the relics, and these were distributed amongst the claimants⁵. To the Moriyas of Pippalivana, who came late, ashes only were given.

At Rajagriha Ajatasatru erected a stupa over the sacred relics of Buddha and worshipped it in the due royal fashion⁶. The Lichchhavis of Vaisali also constructed a

¹ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edn.), page 138.

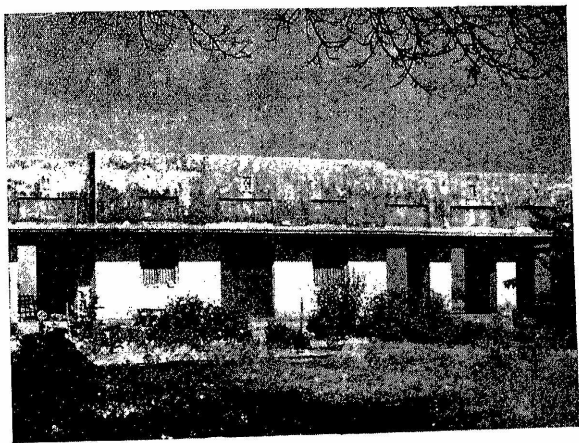
² *Ibid*, page 141.

³ *Ibid*, page 147.

⁴ *Ibid*, pages 148-49.

⁵ *Ibid*, page 149.

⁶ *Ibid*, pages 150-51.



The Vaisali Museum.



stupa over the sacred relics¹ and all others who had had shares of the relics did the same thing. Thuseight stupas were erected at eight different places, and another by the Moriyas of Pippalivana which long enshrined the memory of Sambuddha. More than eleven hundred years afterwards Hiuen Tsang saw the stupa built by the Lichchhavis over the sacred relics of the Master.

¹ *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* (Hindi Edn.), page 151.

CHAPTER IX

The Second Buddhist Council of Vaisali

Information about the Second Buddhist Council of Vaisali may be had from the Vinaya texts, the Ceylonese Chronicles and a few Tibetan works. Unfortunately all the accounts are more or less mixed up with an element of supernaturalism. On a careful sifting of history from the husk of legend, however, we may present the narrative as follows.

In the tenth year of the reign of Kakavarni Kalasoka of Magadha, that is to say, one hundred years after Buddha's attainment of *nirvana*, the second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali at the instance of the therā¹ Yasa, one of the oldest Buddhist monks of Vaisali. The main reason why the council was convened was that the Bhikshus of Vaisali, in utter disregard of the injunctions of Sambuddha, had for some time past been indulging in certain disreputable practices, such as, carrying salt in a hornvessel in order to season unsalted food when received, taking food after the mid-day, going to a neighbouring village and taking a second meal there the same day, taking unchurned milk even after the meal time, drinking fermented palm-wine, using big mats to sit on, accepting gold and silver from the laity, etc². On the therā Yasa protesting against these shameless acts, the Bhikshus became furious on him and surrounded his abode. The therā, however, somehow managed to effect his escape and reached Kosambi. There he related the whole thing to the Bhikshu Samgha and sent messengers

¹ *Thera-Sthavira* meaning Elder. A *Sthavira* was higher in spiritual rank than an ordinary Bhikshu.

² *Mahavamsa* (Edn. of W. Geiger), pages 19-20.

to Pawa and Avanti. From Kosambi he went to Ahoganga mountains¹ and related all to the thera Sambhuta Sanavasi. All the Bhikshus of Pawa and Avanti followed him to Ahoganga. Altogether ninety thousand Bhikshus assembled there from different corners. There they conferred together and decided to seek the opinion of the thera Revata of Soreyya who was chief amongst them at that time. When the thera heard this resolution he at once set out for Vaisali.

The thera Yasa met the thera Revata at Sahajati (near Allahabad) and asked his opinion about the ten points at issue. The thera Revata wholly disapproved of the ways of the Bhikshus of Vaisali. A very large number of Bhikshus assembled at Sahajati and requested the thera Revata to settle the dispute. Meanwhile the Bhikshus of Vaisali, having failed to win the thera Revata to their side, hurried back to Pataliputra and implored the protection of King Kalasoka : "Guarding our Master's performed Chamber we dwell in the Mahavana Vihara in the Vajji territory ; but Bhikshus dwelling in the country (outside) are coming, great king, with the thought : We will take the Vihara for ourselves. Forbid them !²". So saying they went back to Vaisali.

The misguided king seems at first to have decided to act on behalf of the heretical Bhikshus. But very soon he saw through the situation and changed his opinion. He set out for Vaisali and assembled the congregation of Bhikshus at the *Mahavana*, and heard both sides. He declared himself in favour of the thera Revata's view-point and said, "Do what ye think well

¹ Near Hardwar.

² *Mahavamsa*, page 22.

to further the doctrine¹.” Thus assuring himself to be their protector he returned to his capital.

Thereafter the brotherhood met to discuss the ten points ; but aimless words were spent. So the thera Revata resolved to settle the matter by means of an *upavahika*². Four Bhikshus of the east and four of the west were chosen to the *upavahika* and met in the solitude of Valikarama. The *upavahika* gave its judgment wholly against the heretical Bhikshus which was then discussed in the general congregation and finally accepted.

The venerable Revata, in order that the true faith might long endure, decided to hold a council of seven hundred elders, chosen from amongst the whole troop of Bhikshus, for the compilation of the teachings of the Great Master. This was done under the guidance of the thera Revata and the royal patronage of Kalasoka³. The *Tripitaka* thus compiled in eight months' time was the most fruitful outcome of the Second Buddhist Council.

The Ceylonese Chronicles record the tradition that, after the Second Buddhist Council had ended, the vanquished Bhikshus, who were called Excommunicated *Bhajjputtakas*, held a council of their own known as *Mahasamghati*⁴. The rival council established the *Maha-samghika* school or *Acharyavada* as opposed to the orthodox *Theravada* of the other council⁵. A new collection of scriptures appears to have been made by the *Maha-samghikas*.

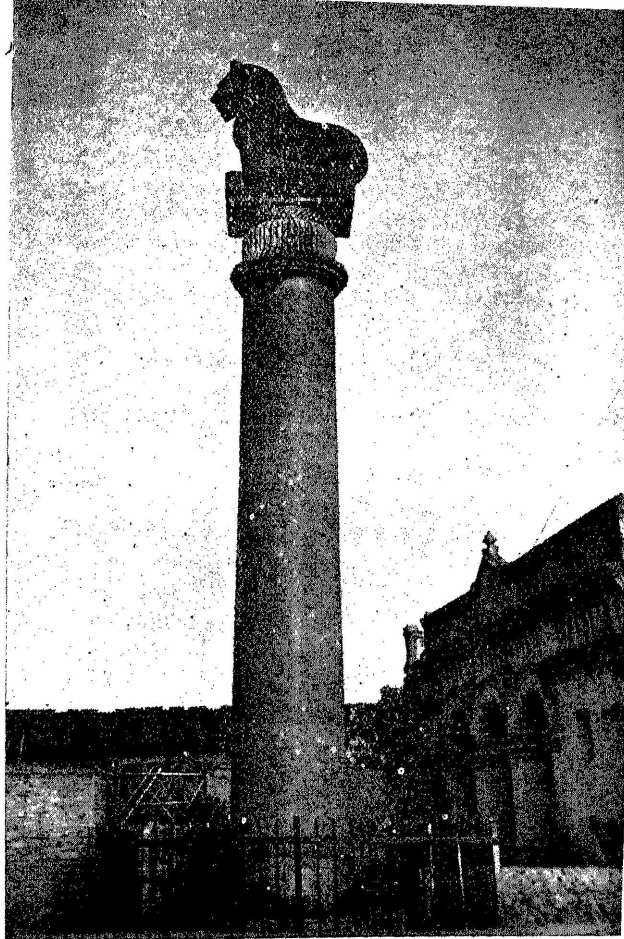
¹ *Mahavamsa*, page 23.

² Select Committee.

³ *Ibid*, pages 24-25.

⁴ *Homage to Vaisali*, pages 6-7.

⁵ *Ibid*, page 7:



The Asoka Pillar at Vaisali



CHAPTER X

Vaisali during Mauryan and post-Mauryan periods

Vaisali continued to be a part of the Magadhan Empire even after the death of Kalasoka, who is represented as the last king of the dynasty founded by Sisunaga¹. Its importance as a centre of Buddhist tradition and culture did not certainly decline, at least for some centuries, though the details of its history under the Nandas and the Mauryas are not available. Fortunately for us Asoka's visit to the city is recorded both in inscriptions and Buddhist literature.

In the twenty-fourth year of his reign (250 B. C.) the Great Maurya went on a pilgrimage to Lumbinigrāma, the birth place of Buddha. Evidently he had a mind to halt at Vaisali, which was so intimately associated with the memory of the Master and his great disciple Ananda. Besides the *chaityas* and *viharas* of the time of Buddha, and the stupa which the Lichchhavis had erected on the relics of the Tathagata, there was at Vaisali the stupa which the Vaisalians had built on the relics of Ananda.

Fahien records the tradition that Ananda on the eve of his *parinirvana* left Magadha for Vaisali and was readily pursued by Ajatasatru and his army to the southern bank of the Ganges. From the other side the Lichchhavis came to receive the "Shadow of Buddha²."

¹ The dynasty of Sisunaga supplanted the Haranyaka dynasty to which Bimbisara and Ajatasatru belonged. V. A. Smith's contention that Sisunaga had ruled before Bimbisara is untenable; for according to the Puranas, Sisunaga humbled the pride of the Pradyotas of Avanti, which event must have taken place pretty long after Ajatasatru's death.

² Ananda is sometimes referred to in Buddhist literature as the "Shadow of Buddha".

Ajatasatru had the intention to take him back ; but the Vaisalians were equally determined to have him in their midst. Ananda was in a fix. And so he welcomed his *parinirvana* on the mid-Ganges. It is said that his relics were shared equally by the king of Magadha and the Lichchhavis, both of whom erected *Ardhanga*¹ stupas on the sacred relics².

Vaisali lay on the road from Pataliputra to Nepal ; and the Emperor Asoka's line of march probably followed the route taken by Buddha on his way to Kusinara. At Vaisali Asoka worshipped the *Ardhanga* stupa of Ananda which was followed by the erection of the lion pillar. It is worthwhile to note that the face of the lion is turned northwards, or rather north-westwards, that is, towards Kusinara. Much time must have been taken in executing and transporting the pillar to Vaisali. Asoka's visit to the place was thus not merely a flying visit. At Kesariya, where Buddha had left his alms-bowl and parted company with the Lichchhavis, the Emperor built a stupa³. He is said to have removed also nine-tenths of the sacred relics of Buddha from Vaisali⁴.

After Asoka the history of Vaisali becomes obscure, until about the end of the first century, or the beginning of the second century A. D., when it again attracts our notice. While in Ceylon, Fahien heard a Buddhist pilgrim from India say : "The alms-bowl of Buddha originally was preserved in the city of Vaisali, but now

¹ Literally, half the body.

² *Vide* Chap. X.

³ See S. N. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁴ Hiuen Tsang's Travels—*Homage to Vaisali*, p. 139.

it is in the borders of Gandhara. In somewhat like a hundred years it will again be transported to the country of the Western Yu-chi."¹

Fahien says nothing about how the bowl happened to be taken to the Gandhara country. But the Tibetan historian Taranath observes that "the king of the Little Yu-chi invaded Magadha and carried off the bowl of Buddha and Asvaghosa²." Major-General Cunningham is of the opinion that it was either Kanishka, or his successor Huvishka³, who carried off the bowl. Since there is no evidence whatsoever that Huvishka ever invaded Magadha, it was in all probability removed by Kanishka to Peshawar. The philosopher-poet Asvaghosa probably accompanied the Yu-chi king to Peshawar and thereafter adorned his court for a considerable time.

Vaisali is referred to after this in the context of the celebrated philosopher Nagarjuna, who is said to have been a disciple of Asvaghosa. Nagarjuna's disciple Bhikshudeva was once invited to the religious conssembly of the Vaisalian Bhikshus. Nagarjuna, however, himself undertook to go, because, as he said to Bhikshudeva, the Bhikshus of the new school at Vaisali were very expert in the art of debating⁴.

That Vaisali retained its political and cultural importance for several centuries after Nagarjuna's time

¹ Hiuen Tsang's Travels—*Homage to Vaisali*, p. 148.

² *Ibid.*

³ It should be noted that Huvishka was not the immediate successor of Kanishka. The immediate successor was Vasishka, who was succeeded by Huvishka. Huvishka like Kanishka was an ardent Buddhist and is credited with the building of the city of Hushka-pura.

⁴ *Homage to Vaisali*, p. 16.

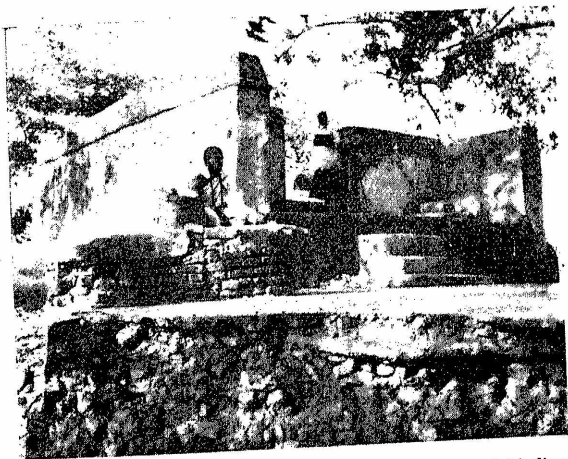
appears clear from subsequent references to the Lichchhavis in Indian history. The Lichchhavis are supposed to have conquered Nepal and established a dynasty there, and to have used an era, which is believed to have run from 111 A.D.¹ Later on, at the beginning of the fourth century, Chandra Gupta, grandson of Sri Gupta and son of Ghatotkach, married a Lichchhavi princess, named Kumaradevi. This important marriage may have helped him establish his sway over Magadha. A gold coin, introduced under the name of Chandra Gupta I, bears on one side the figures of the Gupta king and Kumaradevi, together with the words : "Chandra Gupta and Sri Kumaradevi²." The words are in Brahmi script of the fourth century A. D. ; and Chandra Gupta is shown on the coin as presenting a ring to his consort. On the other side of the coin are engraved the figure of a goddess seated on a lion, and the word "Lichchhavayah³." According to Allen, the coin was issued by the son of the royal couple, Samudra Gupta, with a view to perpetuating the memory of his parents. Indeed Samudra Gupta took pride in calling himself "Lichchhavidauhitra", that is, the son of the daughter of a Lichchhavi⁴.

¹ See S. N. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

² See B. C. Law, Vaisali in Ancient Literature—*Homage to Vaisali*, p. 37.

³ *Ibid.* Rapson holds that the inscription "Lichchhavayah" may signify that Kumaradevi belonged to a royal family previously reigning at Pataliputra. But the view does not seem to have any sound basis.

⁴ B. C. Law points out that the epithet "Lichchhavi-dauhitra" is not only asserted by Samudra Gupta himself but it continues to be a permanent appellation of this sovereign in the inscriptions of his successors—*Homage to Vaisali*, p. 37.



An ancient place of worship at Vaisali, where the Hindus and Muslims
worship together.

CHAPTER XI

The Chinese Pilgrims at Vaisali

Fahien.—The Chinese pilgrim Fahien came to India early in the fifth century A.D. and visited Vaisali on his way from Kapilavastu to Pataliputra. His account of Vaisali is mixed up with incredible legend and much too brief compared with that of Hiuen-Tsang. Yet it is valuable in its own way. And V. A. Smith is inclined to place more reliance on Fahien in certain matters than on Hiuen-Tsang, who came 230 years later, and by whose time the legends must have become somewhat fictitious¹.

The Chinese pilgrim arrived first of all at the spot, where the Lichchhavis, "desiring to follow Buddha to the scene of his *nirvana*" had been "forbidden to do so²." The pilgrim refers to the fact of Buddha's leaving the alms-bowl on the spot and to the erection by the Lichchhavis of a stupa at the place³.

Fahien then refers to the *Kutagarasala*, the *Mahavana*, the garden of Ambapali, of which she made a gift to the Tathagata, and the *Ardhanga* stupa of Ananda. "When Buddha was about to enter *nirvana*", says the pilgrim, "he left Vaisali by the western gate, and turning his body to the right, he beheld the city and thus addressed his followers: 'In this place I have performed the last religious act of my earthly career'. Men afterwards raised a tower on this spot³."

¹ *Vide Homage to Vaisali*, p. 156.

² *Ibid*, p. 136.

³ *Ibid*.

At a distance of about 3 or 4 *li* from there Fahien saw the spot, where the second Buddhist Council met. "Afterwards men erected a tower on this spot which still exists¹." Referring to the *Ardhanga* stupa of Ananda, the Chinese pilgrim relates the story of his attaining *parinirvana* thus: "Being perplexed, he (Ananda) forthwith entered the *Samadhi* called the "brilliancy of flame", consuming his body, and entered *nirvana* in the midst of the river. His body was divided into two parts; one part was found on either side of the river; so the two kings, taking the relics of half his body returned and erected towers over them²."

Hiuen-Tsang.—The exact date of Hiuen-Tsang's visit to Vaisali is not known to us. V. A. Smith believes 635 to be approximately the [correct date. Hiuen-Tsang's description of Vaisali is "unusually detailed and precise" and enables us to form a correct idea of the state of the ruins.

The Chinese pilgrim's observation that the kingdom (of Vaisali) was 5,000 *li* in circuit, with abundance of fruits and flowers, especially mango and banana, may be accepted more or less as accurate. His statement that the climate was agreeable and temperate seems to agree with the present day climate of this portion of Bihar which is somewhat more soothing and moderate than that of South Bihar.

Hiuen-Tsang found the capital city of Vaisali "to a great extent in ruins", and the *samgharama* to the north-west of it "with a few disciples" belonging to the Hinayana school³. The pilgrim refers to many a

¹ *Hommage to Vaisali*.

² *Ibid*, p. 137

³ *Ibid*, p. 138.

tupa, including that built by Asoka, to a number of *samgharamas*, to the *Markatahrada*¹, to several *viharas*, and to the garden of Ambapali. Not far to the south of the *Markatahrada* the pilgrim saw a stupa, where, he says, "the monkeys, taking the alms-bowl of Tathagata, climbed a tree and gathered him some honey²." Hiuen-Tsang refers also to the Asoka pillar which he describes as 50 or 60 feet high. "Both within and without the city of Vaisali", observes the Chinese pilgrim, "and all round it, the sacred vestiges are so numerous that it would be difficult to recount them all. At every step commanding sites and old foundations are seen, which the succession of seasons and lapse of years have entirely destroyed. The forests are uprooted, the shallow lakes are dried up and stinking; nought but offensive remnants of decay can be recorded³."

The whole of Vaisali thus presented a sad and desolate scene which the Chinese pilgrim has rightly ascribed to the ravages of time. It is unlikely that the dilapidated and deserted condition of the *samgharamas* and *viharas* was in any way due to the devastating effects of the Huna invasions during the early sixth century⁴.

Another observation of Hiuen-Tsang is important to note in this connection. The Chinese pilgrim says

¹ Monkey-tank.

² *Homage to Vaisali*, p. 139.

³ *Ibid*, p. 141.

⁴ There is no definite evidence to show that the Hunas came so far east as North Bihar. It may, however, be supposed that Sasanka, the Saiva king of Gauda (Bengal), who is represented as a severe persecutor of the Buddhists, destroyed the monasteries of Vaisali some time at the beginning of the seventh century. Since, however, Hiuen-Tsang makes no mention of the fact, there is no reason to accept it as a correct surmise.

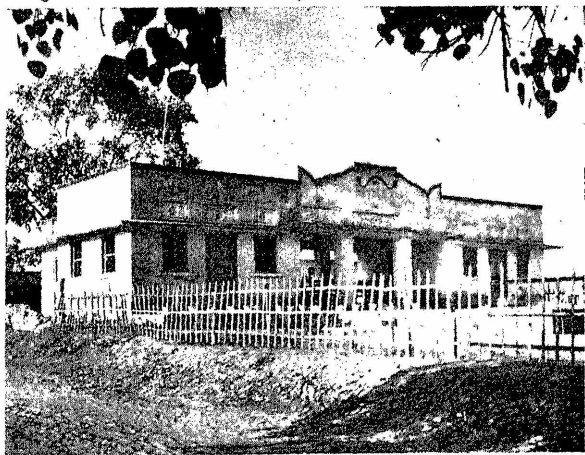
that both heretics and believers were living together, that there were "several tens of Deva temples", and that the followers of the Nirgranthas were very numerous. From this it is clear that Buddhism, in this part of the country, at any rate, was on the decline, and that Jainism was still flourishing, while Brahmanism was regaining an ascendancy. Elsewhere the Chinese pilgrim remarks that almost everywhere Brahmanism was ascendant which was but natural in view of the Brahmanical revival of the preceding few centuries.

Wang-Hiuen-Tse and Sung-Yun.—A Chinese traveller named Wang-Hiuen-Tse is said to have visited Vaisali twice in the seventh century A.D., and in his second visit he is believed to have offered robes to Buddhist monks¹. Sung-Yun, a Chinese traveller, who came to India in the sixth century, mentions about forty countries extending from the frontier of Persia on the west to Khotan on the borders of China in the east. According to certain authorities, the last one, Tihlo, mentioned by him, was but the present Tirhut². But it is a mere surmise, and there is no definite proof that he came to Vaisali.

It-Sing—Twenty-six years after Hiuen-Tsang's departure from India the Chinese pilgrim It-Sing came here and stayed in this country for a very long time. He visited various places sacred in the history of Buddhism, including Vaisali. He has left a fairly detailed account of what he saw. But although he has described Nalanda in some details, he has said very little about Vaisali, which apparently was in a more decaying condition than in the time of Hiuen-Tsang.

¹ S. N. Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

² *Ibid.*



The P. W. D. Rest-house at Vaisali

EPILOGUE

The foregoing sketch of the history of Vaisali in relation to Buddha and Buddhism ought sufficiently to impress the reader with the great importance of the place as a centre of Buddhist culture in the past. It is no doubt gratifying to note that the attention of Indian scholars has for some time been directed to exploring the mysteries of the locality, which also happened to be the seat of one of the most famous republics of ancient times, and was the birth-place of Mahavira and a stronghold of Jainism. In the opinion of the authors, however, Vaisali has not been given its due as a field of Buddha's activity by the historians of the present day.

Bodh Gaya and Rajagriha, Lumbini and Kusinara, Sarnath and Sravasti are all sacred with the memory of the Blessed One. But it may be questioned if Vaisali was not more dear to, and more intimately connected with the life and work, of, the founder of Buddhism. Here the young seeker of knowledge spent some of the early days of his wandering life, subjecting himself, at the instance of the Jaina teachers, to severe self-torture, which taught him, even at that early stage, that the middle path is the right path in life. At Vaisali, again, the Enlightened One announced to Ananda his forthcoming *parinirvana* and taking his last walk said, "In this place I have performed the last religious act of my earthly career".

The Tathagata came frequently to Vaisali, instructed many people in Dharma, and effected a complete reformation in the career of many, including the arrogant

Lichehhavi youth (Kumara) mentioned in Ekapanna Jataka¹. Here were taken some of the momentous decisions affecting the Buddhist Order, such as the admission into the order of women. Here also the Sakyaputra declared before the Bhikshus in emphatic terms that being a Brahmin or a Kshatriya did not confer any right to preference in the religious order, that such preference depended ultimately on merit and the performance of good deeds².

Buddha had a high opinion of the Lichehhavis, of their constitution, and of their traditions and customs. Indeed he was so much impressed by the democratic organisation of the Vrijis that he is said to have adopted it outright in the working of the Buddhist Sangha.

It is sometimes said that not very long after Buddha's *parinirvana* Vaisali became the first centre of schism and heresy within the Buddhist Church as indicated by the activities of the Mahasanghika school, which grew up at this place as a rival of the orthodox school³. But that does not detract from its importance as an abode of Buddhist faith and culture. That Vaisali had already become a memory by the time of Hiuen-Tsang is not to be wondered at. Its decay was only part of a greater decline affecting Buddhism (in India) as a whole and proves the soundness of Buddha's prophecy⁴. Moreover, Vaisali retained something of its old sanctity even long afterwards; for we are told that in the twelfth century one Utsaha, son of Manikya,

¹ Jataka (Hindi edition of Anand Kaushalyayan), part II, p. 128.

² *Tiffira Jataka*—Jataka (Hindi edition), part I, p. 283.

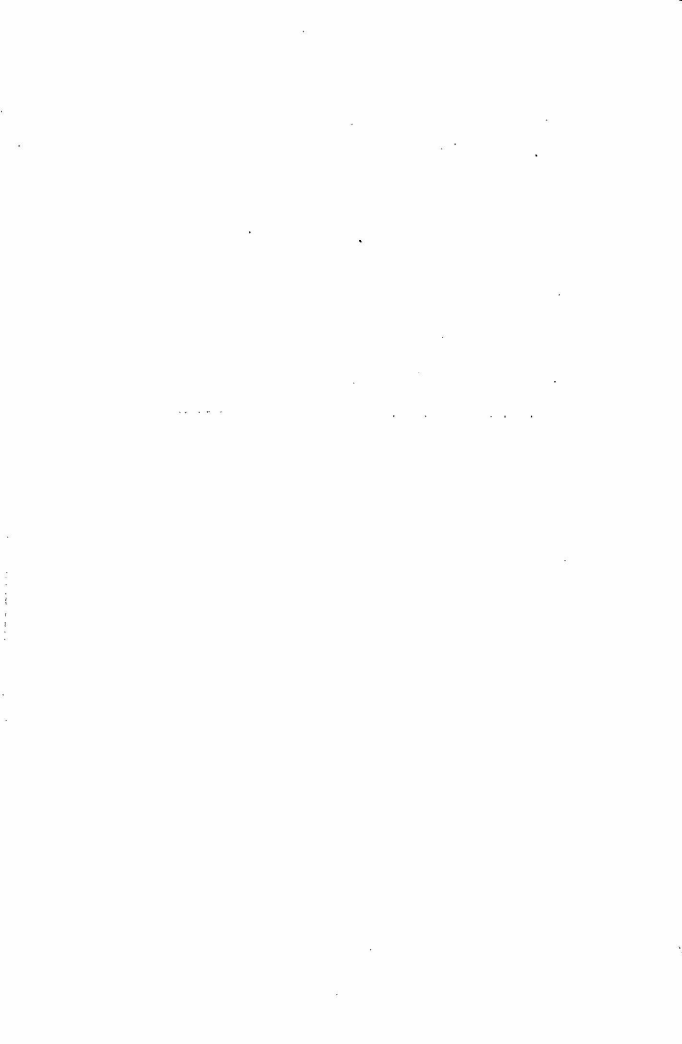
³ *Homage to Vaisali*, p. 7.

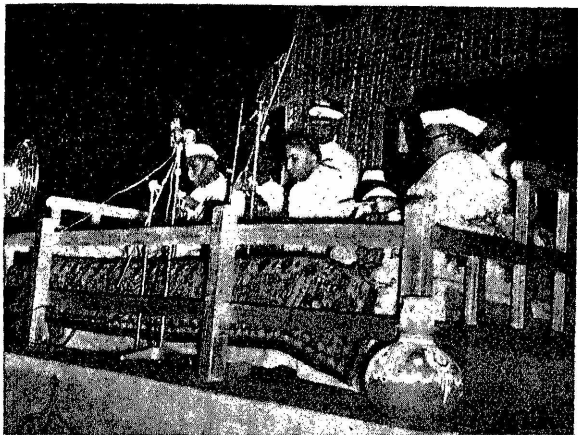
⁴ *Vide* Chapter V.

an ardent follower of the Mahayana school, made a gift to Vaisali of a beautiful image of Buddha¹.

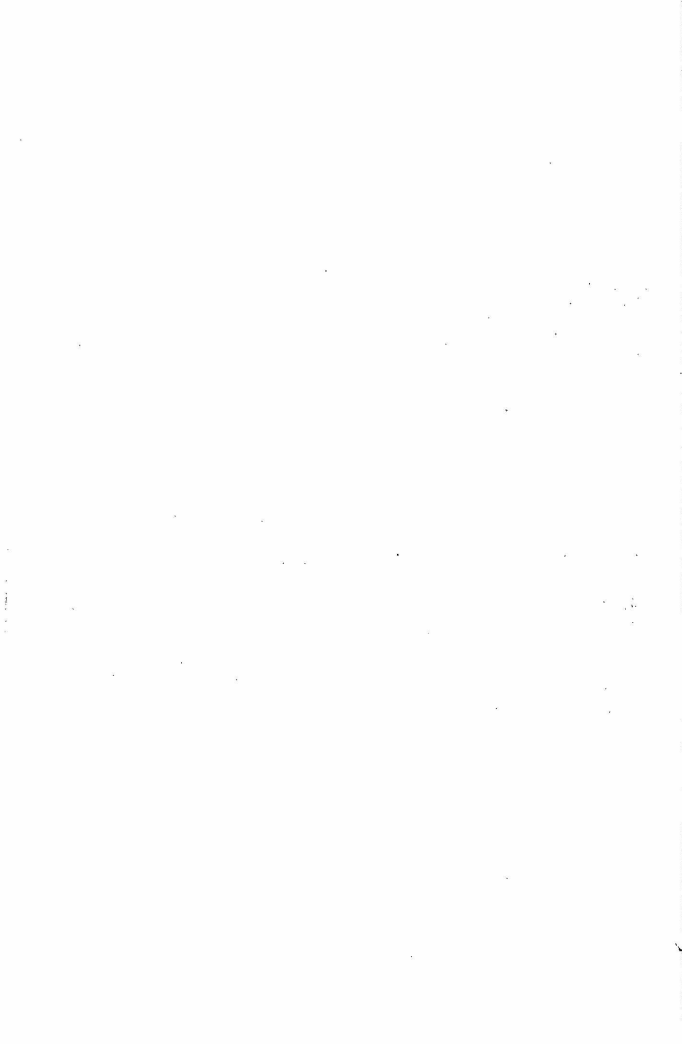
Time has come for a proper evaluation of the importance of Vaisali in Indian history, for a critical study of the social and cultural life of the people who inhabited the territory embracing the ancient republic. Materials for a fresh study are not lacking. And there may be also material hidden beneath the surface which, if unearthed, will probably unravel many more mysteries of the past.

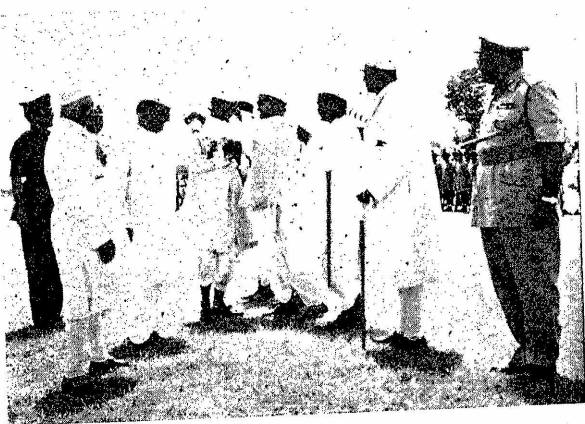
¹ *Homage to Vaisali*, p. 16.



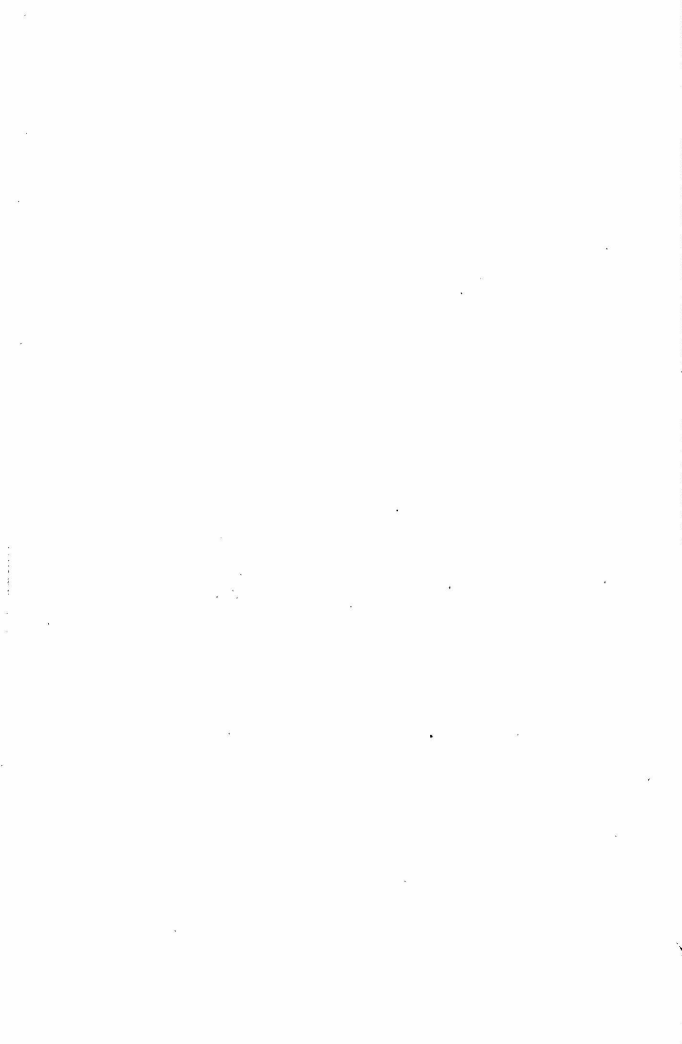


A view of the Vaisali Festival held at Vaisali under the presidentship of Desharatna Dr. Rajendra Prasad (1956).





A view of the reception of Desharatna Dr. Rajendra Prasad at Vaisali,
on the occasion of his visit in 1956.



APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A

A Short History of Buddhism in India

The birth of Gautama Buddha took place at a time when the intellectual mind in India was struggling restlessly to break through the bondage of superstition and blindness to find out a rational solution of the riddle of misery in the world. Buddha did not seek to establish a system of religion completely detached from, and having nothing in common with, Vedic Brahmanism¹. His object was to purge, to purify, to reform. Since the time of the composition of the Atharva Veda, at any rate, religion had become more a matter of form than of the spirit. Over-elaborate ritualism and bloody sacrifices had become the commonly accepted modes of worship. And social inequalities due to the division of society into *Varnas*² had, for a considerable time led to the growth of a certain spirit of rivalry amongst the several classes of the Aryans throughout India, and more especially perhaps in Aryavarta.

It was against the abuses of this priest-laden, over-elaborate, ritualistic system of religion that Buddhism, and also Jainism to a large extent, protested. In so doing neither Buddha nor Mahavira was treading an altogether new path. Truly speaking, Jainism and Buddhism represented the climax of a movement which had begun at least two centuries and a half before

¹ *Vide* Appendix B.

² The society was at first divided into four *Varnas* or classes, viz., Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. Out of this many different castes arose in later times.

the birth of Buddha. Most of the earliest metaphysical philosophy of the Hindus known as the Upanishads is believed to have been written between 1000 and 600 B.C.¹ In the Upanishads we find for the first time a genuine urge to rise above the commonly accepted dogma of the Vedic *Samhitas*², an attempt to provide an adequate explanation of the cosmic mystery. Though the Upanishads do not openly criticise the gross formalities of the Vedic religion, there can be no doubt that their writers, the *rishis*, are struggling to work out a philosophy, to find out the way that man must follow to attain salvation.

Indeed to attain salvation (*moksha*) is the ultimate aim of human existence, according to the Upanishadic conception of religion. And salvation means being one with *Brahman*, the Supreme Reality, who having created the universe pervades it. *Brahman* resides in the human soul itself, is *Atman* or the Self. When man realises this truth his soul becomes one with *Brahman*, and he is freed from transmigration. Normally he has to move from birth to death, and from death to birth times without number in accordance with the law of *Karma*.

Besides the Upanishadic school, several lesser schools of religious thought had appeared in India before the rise of Buddhism. Two of these especially deserve mention—the Sankhya school and the Jaina school. Both were pessimistic in their own ways. According to the one, the aim of religion is to find out

¹ S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, pp.141-142.

² Collections of hymns.

a radical remedy for misery. According to the other, salvation lies through extreme self-mortification and self-torture. The Jaina school, however, laid the greatest stress on the sanctity of living creatures and strongly condemned the rituals and sacrifices of Vedic Brahmanism.

Buddhism, while emanating as an offshoot from the mighty current of Brahmanism, must necessarily have been influenced by the parent stream, as also by some of its several other offshoots. This will be clear when we shall discuss about the fundamental ideas of the Buddhist school of thought. Before that it will be necessary to turn to the life of the founder of that school.

Gautama Buddha, whose real name was Siddhartha, was born at Lumbini-grama in the vicinity of Kapilavastu in the Nepal Tarai. The actual date of his birth is a matter of dispute. But there is no doubt that he was born some time between 624 and 556 B.C. His father, Suddhodana, a Kshatriya, was the head of the Sakya oligarchical clan of Kapilavastu. His mother's name was Maya. Siddhartha lost his mother immediately after his birth, and was nursed and suckled by his aunt Gautami. Gautama seems to have been his family name.

No very reliable account of Buddha's life is available to us. In the Buddhist scriptures, which were written five or six centuries after his death, he appears more or less as a legendary hero. Certain facts of his early life, however, may be taken as fairly authentic. The story that one day, while driving round the park with his faithful chariotteer Channa, he saw three grim

realities in succession, viz., an old man, a sick man, and a dead man, and then a fourth man, an ascetic, is in all probability a later concoction. But the fact of his having been moved to tears at the sight of the helpless pigeon, wounded by his cousin and companion, Devadatta, may be accepted as reliable. That Suddhodana, being forewarned by a soothsayer, scrupulously guarded his son against knowing the sorrows of the world seems to be an exaggeration. The real fact may be that the motherless Siddhartha was much too sensitive, and that Suddhodana spared no pains to keep him humoured. But the first seeds of *vairagya*¹ might have been sown in his mind quite early, and no amount of Gautami's fond caresses, and Suddhodana's affectionate watchfulness, could uproot it. The *vairagya* seems to have increased with the years.

At sixteen Siddhartha was married to a beautiful girl named Yasodhara². Thereafter for twelve years he appears to have lived an outwardly pompous life, surrounded by the luxuries of the court. But neither wealth nor luxuries, nor the gay company of court maidens could make him really happy. All the time he must have been reflecting on misery, on infirmity, sickness and mortality. By twenty-nine he was almost determined to renounce the world, and the birth of his son Rahula only made him decide about the course he was to adopt. One day he left his wife, his son and all and went out in the garb of an ascetic in search of truth. He went to Rajagriha and stayed

¹ Indifference to the world.

² Gopa according to some texts.

there for some time, and thence to several other places. He came in close contact with reputed teachers, ascetics, and probably also *yogins* who could perform miracles. He saw their ways, practised them, and was disappointed. He came to Vaisali and, subjecting himself, for some time to severe self-torture at the instance of the Jaina teachers, finally bade good bye to them and their ways¹. In the woods of Uruvela near Gaya, by the side of the river Niranjana, Gautama plunged himself desperately into a course of penance which proved equally fruitless. Here, however, he is said to have heard a dancing girl talking to her companions: "Make not the strings of your lyre too loose; make them not too tight either." The words were profoundly significant for him.

Six or seven years were spent thus in wandering, penancing and searching for the unsearchable. These were years of the utmost trials and privations in the life of Sakyaputra which only made the intensity of his spiritual conflict all the more intense. At last one evening he sat down under a Pipal tree a few miles to the south of Gaya town, taking a solemn vow that though his bones wasted away, he would not leave his seat until the problem of suffering was solved. For forty-nine days he sat in deep meditation and, despite manifold temptations and other disturbances, persisted on until at the end of the period he saw the flash of light. He was now fully enlightened, but for another seven weeks he remained under the Bodhi Tree meditating on the great truths which had been revealed to him.

¹ Vide Chapter I.

Buddha might well have kept what he had known all to himself. That would have been meaningless. The suffering was not his alone. Humanity needed his lesson. So he left for Banaras and preached his first sermon at the Deer Park (Sarnath) to the five ascetics, who had at one time been his spiritual companions, and were still groping in the dark. Then the Enlightened One addressed thus :

"These two extremes, monks, are not to be practised by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two ? That conjoined with the passions and luxury, low, vulgar, common, ignoble, and useless ; and that conjoined with self-torture, painful, ignoble, and useless. Avoiding these two extremes the Tathagata has gained the enlightenment of the Middle Path, which produces insight and knowledge, and tends to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana."

"And what, monks, is the Middle Path, of which the Tathagata has gained enlightenment....? This is the noble Eightfold Way : namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration¹."

The five ascetics were further told that "birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful." The cause of pain, the Sugata said, lies in the craving, "which tends to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust." And the cessation of pain arises from the

¹ The quotations are from E. A. Burtt, *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*, pp. 29-30.

cessation of craving, "the abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment¹."

Thus did the Tathagata set in motion the Wheel of the Law (Dharma); and the five were so much impressed with the new doctrine that they at once became his disciples. A little later sixty young ascetics became his followers and were sent in different directions to preach the reformed doctrine. Buddha's fame spread quickly over the neighbouring territories, and the number of his followers increased rapidly. Even kings and princes became attracted by his personality and his teachings. The contemporary king Bimbisara soon offered him an invitation, which Buddha gladly accepted. It is said of the Magadhan king that he became actually a follower of Buddha's doctrine. He must have been delighted at any rate to listen to the Tathagata's discourses and paid him the utmost civility and respects, according to the Buddhist texts. Arrangements were made for his stay at Rajagriha, in a garden outside the city; and very probably donations were made by the king which enabled Buddha to establish the *Bhikshu* Samgha soon afterwards.

The date of the establishment of the Samgha cannot be known. The Samgha, however, played a very important part in the propagation of Dharma. It is related in some texts that for eight months in the year Buddha and his disciples moved about in different localities, both towns, and villages, enlightening people by their discourses and making converts. Sarnath, Sravasti ², Kosambi ³,

¹ The quotations are from E. A. Burtt, *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*, p. 30.

² Capital of Kosala (Oudh).

³ Capital of Vatsa.

Pawa, Rajagriha and Vaisali were frequently visited by Buddha and soon became the radiating centres of the Buddhist Dharma. Returning to Kapilavastu the Enlightened One converted his father, wife, son and many others of the court circle and outside. A fairly detailed account has been given in the chapters of this book of Buddha's connection with Vaisali. The Sugata seems to have had a special liking for the place, because it was the seat of a republic, and equality prevailed amongst its citizens which agreed well with his own conception of equality. Probably he took from the Lichchhavi *gana* the model for the Buddhist Samgha.

For about forty-five years Buddha preached his Dharma amongst all classes of people. The story is too long to be narrated here, and the various parables and anecdotes are almost impossible to arrange chronologically. The earliest traditions record few miracles performed by him, but in the later traditions the story of his life suffers a great deal. Once, it is said, his jealous cousin Devadatta plotted to get Buddha killed by a mad elephant, but the beast, impressed by the Tathagata's gentleness, calmly bowed at his feet. This is quite possible to believe. But Buddha himself does not seem to have had any faith in miracles, and he sternly forbade his followers to perform magical feats. The well-known parable of the mustard-seed¹ may be taken as an instance to illustrate the fact that he did

¹ Kisa Gotami, a woman, having lost her son, went to the Tathagata and asked him for medicine. The Tathagata thereupon advised her to go from door to door in the town and fetch mustard-seeds from the house where no one had died. Gotami went from door to door and failed to find a single house, where no one had died. So her eyes were opened and she learnt that all things are impermanent.

not heal the sick by supernatural means. Disputes broke out amongst his disciples from time to time, even while he was alive. There is an interesting account in the *Mahavagga* of his once meeting a schism amongst his followers. At first Buddha left them in the midst of their wrangling. But the quarrel led to abuses and even blows. Then the Wise One related to them the story of king Dirghayu of Kosala who wanted to take revenge upon king Brahmadata of Banaras for having killed his father and mother and snatched his dominion. But while he had unsheathed his sword, Dirghayu thought of the last words of his father : "Do not look long, do not look short. For not by hatred is hatred appeased. Hatred is appeased by not-hatred alone." And thinking thus, he put his sword back into the sheath. Such was the effect of this wise course that king Brahmadata was moved, and he gave Dirghayu back his father's kingdom and gave him his daughter in marriage. Having finished the story, the Tathagata said : "Now, O bhikshus, if such can be the forbearance and mildness of kings who wield the sceptre and bear the sword, so much more, O bhikshus, must you let your light shine before the world that you, having embraced the religious life according to so well-taught a doctrine and a discipline, are seen to be forbearing and mild....¹"

Buddha's connections with Sravasti, the capital of Kosala, were very intimate indeed. There lived at this place a rich merchant named Anathapindika, who was once travelling with five hundred carts full of merchandise. Coming to Rajagriha he heard of Buddha, and he

¹ E. A. Burtt, *op. cit.*, pp. 40—43.

had a pious wish to make a gift to him of a beautiful garden. There was no garden so beautiful as that of Prince Jeta near Sravasti. So he made a proposal to the prince to buy his garden. At first the prince refused to sell, but Anathapindika persuaded him that he should sell as much of the garden as could be covered by the merchant with pieces of money. Cart-loads of coins were brought and spread over the garden. Anathapindika then built dwelling houses for Buddha and eighty monks, and invited him to come and accept the gift. Elaborate arrangements were made to receive the Blessed One, and a pompous ceremony was held in the garden in his honour. Buddha accepted the gift, and is said to have spent many rainy seasons in the exquisite Jeta Garden.

Many people wrongly imagine that Buddha's life was mostly spent in quiet meditation under shady trees in the groves and woods. As a matter of fact he had a strenuous activity all through. In the midst of his busy life, however, he reformed many a way-worn youngman and corrected many undignified *bhikshus*. He is said to have prevented an open rupture between the Sakyas and the neighbouring Koliyas. The establishment of the Bhikshuni Samgha appears to have been one of the last important acts of his religious career. The story of his *parinirvana* has been narrated in chapter VI of this book and need not be repeated here. Nor need we recount the many virtues which he possessed. He was a rare combination of ancient wisdom and modern rationalism. And the world had a need of him.

Soon after Buddha's *parinirvana* there was a Buddhist Council at Rajagriha. Upali, one of his chief disciples

recited the *Vinaya Pitaka*, or rules of the Order, in this gathering; and Ananda recited the *Sutta Pitaka* or the collection of Buddha's sermons. About the Second Buddhist Council, which met at Vaisali one hundred years after Buddha's death, a tolerably detailed description has been given in a chapter of this book¹. The first open split occurred in the Buddhist order at this time when the Order became divided into two sections, namely, *Theravadins* (*Sthaviravadins*) and the *Mahā-saṃghikas*². By the time the third Buddhist Council met at Pataliputra under the patronage of Asoka, differences amongst the Buddhists had become acute and complex. Numerous points of difference were raised at this meeting, and many heretics were expelled from the Order. An important contribution of this Council was the adding of the last section to the *Kathavatthu* of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*³.

Originally Buddhism had little conflict with Brahmanism, though evidences of a keen rivalry between the Jainas and the Buddhists, even during the life-time of Buddha, are not wanting. By the time of Asoka sharp antagonism had developed amongst the several religious sects in India. According to the edicts of Asoka, there were, besides the followers of Brahmanism, the *Sramanas*⁴, the *Nirgranthas*⁵, the *Ajivikas*⁶, and "other sects" at the time. The Maurya king repeatedly

¹ Chapter VIII.

² *Ibid.*

³ A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 261.

⁴ Members of the Buddhist Saṃgha were so called.

⁵ Jainas.

⁶ A particular sect of ascetics founded by Gosala Maskariputra.

complains of the unfortunate communal bickerings amongst the several sects ; and he tried his utmost to promote friendliness amongst them, calling upon his subjects to show due respects to Brahmins, *Sramanas*, *Nirgranthas* and *Ajivikas* alike. Several exaggerated accounts of a cut-throat rivalry between the Jainas and the Buddhists in his time are available which at least seem to bear out that unhappy relations had subsisted between the two sects for a long time past.

The conversion of Asoka is said to have taken place sometime after the Kalinga war at the instance of the Buddhist teacher Upagupta of Mathura. The event may be regarded as of the greatest importance in the history of Buddhism. For no one did more for its propagation than the Great Maurya. For two and a half years he remained a lay disciple. Then he formally joined the *Samgha* and exerted himself strenuously for about a quarter of a century, until by the time of his death Buddhism was fairly well established all over India, and in Ceylon, Survarnabhumi (Burma) and probably several other neighbouring countries. The Emperor sent Buddhist missionaries also to the several Hellenic kingdoms in the West. But Buddhism never struck deep roots in those regions, because after Asoka there was no one to continue the work of evangelization there ; whereas in the countries of the East the work was carried on by generations of sincere *bhikshus* under the patronage of princes and rich men.

Conversion to Buddhism or Jainism did not necessarily mean complete estrangement from Brahmanism. Nor did adherence to the Brahmanical religion stand in

the way of attending the religious discourses of the Buddhists, Jainas or Ajivikas, or even offering donations to any of these sects. In India religious divisions were never absolutely water-tight, until at a late stage in the history of Buddhism. As for Asoka, he showed the same reverence to the Brahmins, and to the gods and goddesses, after his conversion, as he had been doing in the past. Daily many thousand Brahmins were distributed alms from the royal establishment, and to the last the king took pride in calling himself "the favourite of the gods".

Although Buddha said nothing about the existence or non-existence of God, the tendency grew up very soon to raise him almost to divinity. On his death there was, as we have seen, a scramble over the division of his relics which were ultimately shared equally amongst seven tribes and Ajatasatru, and stupas were erected thereon¹. After his death Buddha was worshipped through symbols—the stupa and the tree, recalling respectively his *parinirvana* and his enlightenment. The places associated with the life and work of Buddha became holy in the eyes of the Buddhists. Indeed Asoka went on his pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Vaisali, Lumbini and Kusinara which were later on visited by many other pilgrims.

After the fall of the Maurya dynasty, which occurred in or about 187 B.C., Buddhism is said to have suffered for a time a severe persecution in the hands of Pushyamitra Sunga. The allegation that he destroyed numerous monasteries, and massacred thousands of Buddhists

¹ *Vide* Chap. VII.

from Pataliputra right up to Jalandhar in the Punjab may be a gross exaggeration. A much more important event was the division of the Buddhists which occurred about the first century A.D. into the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) and Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) schools. A new sect amongst them, known as the *Sarvastivadins*¹, had already arisen in the north-western part of India. According to a Chinese tradition, the fourth Buddhist council was held in Kashmir under the patronage of Kanishka, and the *Sarvastivadin* doctrines were codified in a summary called the *Mahanihhasa*. The divisions which had been developing amongst the Buddhists since the convocation of the second Buddhist council were accentuated by the rise of the *Sarvastivadin* sect and eventually led to the great schism in Buddhism, the split between the Hinayanists and the Mahayanists. It has been suggested that such a division was but a natural sequel to the coming in of new peoples, and of new ideas, from the west, and that the Mahayana form of Buddhism developed because it "fitted the mood of the times and the needs of many simple people"² better than the original form of Buddhism. The real fact is that the off-shoot of Buddhism, having been diverted a great length from the main religious current of Brahmanism, was being drawn closer to it again. And the rise of the Mahayana school demonstrated the first great victory of the assimilative force of Brahmanism over Buddhism in India which had been strongly at work since the second century B.C.

¹ Literally those who say "All is".

² A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

Apart from many minor differences which developed between the Hinayanists and the Mahayanists, where the two fundamentally differed was in their attitude towards Buddha. The Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle is godless, and even soulless¹. In that of the Greater Vehicle Buddha gradually assumes a divine role. At first the change was no more than the development of the Bodhisattva doctrine, according to which Buddha in a long series of transmigrations had done many deeds of compassion before he was born as Sakyaputra. Of the numerous Bodhisattvas of the Mahayanists, *Avalokiteshwara*² or *Padmapani*³ was the principal one. In the next stage the idea gained ground in the Mahayana school that Gautama Buddha had not been a mere man but "the earthly expression of a mighty spiritual being" having three bodies, a Body of Essence, a Body of Bliss, and a Created Body⁴. The first is eternal and all-pervading, the second exists in the heavens, and the third descends on earth as an emanation from the second. From the first [century A.D. numerous images of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas began to be made; and a little later Buddha was set up as a deity in the temple and worshipped like a Brahmanical god.

It was the Buddhism of the Mahayana school which was carried to China and thence to Japan by a long succession of *bhikshus*, under the patronage of kings like Kanishka and Huvishka. In popularizing the Buddhism of the Mahayana school within and outside India Kanishka

¹ *Ibid* p. 270.

² The Lord who looks down.

³ Literally one having lotus in hand.

⁴ A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

must have played quite an important part. As time advanced, the Hinayana school began more and more to lose ground in India, until by the time of Hiuen Tsang in the seventh century it was a negligible sect with a minor following. In Ceylon, Burma, Siam and certain other parts of South-East Asia, on the other hand, it gained in popularity and became the religion of the people.

Gradually within the Mahayana school itself several sub-schools appeared. Two of these, the *Madhyamika* and the *Yogācāra* are interesting from the point of view of their philosophical differences. The basic text of the first is the *Madhyamika Karika* of Nagarjuna, according to whom, *Samsāra* and Nirvana, are equally unreal, and the One Thing which alone is real is Void or Emptiness (*Sunyātā*)¹. The *Yogācāra* school carried the doctrine of unreality a step further. According to it, the world has no more reality than a dream. The latter school, however, did not become so influential as the *Madhyamika* school.

Mahayana Buddhism received a strong encouragement from Harshavardhana in the first half of the seventh century. To popularize the Mahayana doctrine Harsha held the grand assembly at Kanauj to which the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, was invited. The deification of Buddha was carried almost to an absurd length in this, as well as in the religious assembly which used to be held at Prayag every five years. According to Hiuen Tsang, a golden image of Buddha was placed in the centre of the assembly at Kanauj, and the image of

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Buddha was carried in a long and spectacular procession and then worshipped in the most befitting royal manner. The Chinese pilgrim gave a discourse on Mahayana Buddhism on the occasion which must have been attended by many thousand people.

But the seventh century witnessed a moral degeneration amongst the Buddhists which is evidenced by the rise of the Vajrayana sub-school within the Mahayana school. The Vajrayana, the Vehicle of the Thunderbolt, carried the process of deification to its zenith. Feminine divinities found their way into the Buddhist pantheon, and Buddha and the Bodhisattvas were endowed with female partners, who represented the force or energy (*shakti*) of their consorts. The Vajrayanists came closely under the Hindu *tātrikas* and adopted *vamamārgiya sādhana*¹ as their popular mode of worship. Alongside of that they began to practise acquiring magical power. The new sub-school gradually gained a solid footing in North-Eastern India and was patronized by the Pala kings of Bengal and Bihar. Nalanda in Magadha became its principal centre. The followers of the Vajrayana school, under the patronage of the Palas, no doubt took an active interest in spreading the Buddhist Dharma and Buddhist culture beyond the bounds of India. But many obnoxious practices entered into their mode of worship which discredited the Buddhists in the eyes of the people soon afterwards.

The chief deities of the Vajrayana school besides Buddha the Bodhisattvas and Prajñāparamitā, were the Tārās (Saviouresses), and the demonesses, the *Mātangi*,

¹. *Vamamargiya Sadhana* means worship with the aid of woman a sexual partner.

Pisāci, *Dākini* and *Yogini*¹. Gradually many other deities entered into the pantheon, and the abstract Dharma itself began to be worshipped as a god. The worship of these deities went on along with the *vāmamārgiya sādhana* and under the influence of the *Tāntrikas* the followers of the new school indulged in all sorts of forbidden things, such as wine-drinking, meat-eating, killing of animals, etc. These things were, however, the underground activities of the sect. Outwardly its followers lived the life of a normal human being.

The followers of the Vajrayana school had from the beginning adopted the trident *vajra* as the symbol of Buddha, Dharma and Samgha². In *Tāntras*, however, *Vajra* is another name for Siva. During the later half of the Pala period in Bengal a sub-sect of the Vajrayana school, the Nathas, became very powerful. In Natha cult *Vajra* took the place of void and began to be worshipped, and Dharma became associated with *Vajra* and *Siva*.³ Eventually Dharma worship became the popular form of worship amongst the later Buddhists and has survived to this day amongst the lower classes of people in Bengal.

Meanwhile there had been a very strong reaction against Buddhism and the Buddhists in India due to the growing influence of a Brahmanical revival. Late in the seventh century Kumarila Bhatta appeared as a redoubtable champion of Vedic Brahmanism and assailed Buddhism outright. Early in the ninth century Sankaracharya

¹ A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

² N. N. Chaudhury, *Banga Bhasa O Bangi Sahityer Krāma-Vikāsa* (Bengali), Vol. I, p. 79.

³ *Ibid*, p. 81.

carried his work to a completion. Sankara and his disciples entered into vigorous disputations with the Buddhist teachers all over India and flouted their arguments so strongly and convincingly that Buddhism practically lost its solid ground in this country for ever. Sankara was the exponent of what is called *Māyāvāda*. According to him, the universe is a *Māya*, an illusion, a figment of the imagination, and *Brahman* alone is real. Sankara's *Brahman*, it has been said, is not very different from the Void of Mahayana Buddhism, and this has sometime led him to be regarded as a "Buddhist in disguise". The truth is that he vanquished the Buddhists with the weapon of the Buddhists themselves.

The decline of Buddhism in India, and its eventual disappearance from this country, often wrongly ascribed to the factor of religious persecution and to corruption which crept into the Buddhist Church at a late stage¹, were really due to other causes. That Pushyamitra Sunga, and later on king Sasanka of Gauda, destroyed Buddhist monasteries and massacred a large number of *bhikshus* has been regarded by many as substantially baseless. But even admitting the truth of the allegation, the mischief possibly wrought by them could not have been such as to lead to the permanent decline of Buddhism. Nor were the devastating Huna invasions during the late fifth century responsible for this decline. It is true that the Turkish conquerors at the beginning of the thirteenth century destroyed outright the Buddhist monasteries in Bihar and Bengal, and put many a shaven-headed Buddhist to the sword. But that was

¹ See *Malaviya Commemoration Volume*,

merely the last blow dealt against a faith already far advanced in its downward march. The moral degeneration of the Buddhists from the seventh century onwards no doubt did much to bring discredit on their religion and thereby helped its decay. Yet Buddhism could have survived, had it not been for certain powerful factors which had been operating to its prejudice and which it was almost impossible to resist. As for the uncritical assertion, sometimes made, that Buddhism suffered for lack of royal patronage afterwards, it may be dismissed as wholly untenable. As a matter of fact it did enjoy the patronage of princes and richmen down to the end of the eleventh century.

The virtual wiping out of Buddhism from the land of its birth was due chiefly to three causes. In the first place, its very success proved ultimately fatal to its existence. Having emanated as an off-shoot from Brahmanism, it became in course of time a deadly rival of the latter on account of the astounding successes it received. Hence its extinction was a necessity in the [interests of Brahmanism. That was why Kumarila and Sankaracharya appeared as champions of the Vedic religion to grind Buddhism with the edged axe of their logical rhetoric. Secondly, the growing popularity of Vaisnavism was responsible for the waning popularity of Buddhism in India. Vaisnavism borrowed certain virtues from Buddhism and soon captured popular imagination, because while it laid great stress on non-violence, it did not challenge the authority of the Vedic religion, and emphasized the importance of the existence of a Supernatural Force. Finally, Buddhism was

eventually washed away in the mighty current of Brahmanism and lost its separate identity. Brahmanism had been strongly influencing it at least since the first century A.D., and the influence became more and more pronounced as time went on. In the end Buddha was admitted as one of the incarnations of Vishnu, to be worshipped as the other incarnations.

No account of Buddhism will be complete without a reference to the rich heritage left by the Buddhists in India and abroad. The most impressive contribution of Buddhism from the point of view of the common man was in the field of art—architecture, sculpture and painting. Between the third century B.C. and the eleventh century A.D. numerous Buddhist monuments, stupas, temples, chaityas and viharas were built. The stupas at Bharhut in Madhya Bharat, Sanchi in the Bhopal State, and Amravati in the far south are especially worthy of note, not only for their massiveness and architectural skill, but also for the rich variety of sculpture on them. The Sanchi gateways, for example, are one of the finest specimens of art for their carved ornamentation. These stupas were built between 300 B.C. and 200 A.D. The stupas of Sarnath and Nalanda, though inferior to those of the abovenamed places, are also worth mentioning.

More spectacular than the stupas are the cave-temples of Ajanta, Ellora, Karli and Bagh in South India, though the caves of the Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills in North India are, with one exception, mostly bald and flat. These South Indian rock-cut monuments, of which there are more than a hundred, were built between the second century B.C. and the eighth century A.D. With rows of

numberless pillars going deep into the interior these cave-temples present a magnificent sight and are a thing of wonder to the modern tourists. Quite a good number of these temples are Brahmanical and Jaina. But a very considerable number, especially those at Ajanta, are Buddhist chaityas and viharas. Mention should be made also of the Buddhist temple at Bodh Gaya which is impressive not for its massiveness but for its beauty and the minuteness of its carvings.

Though the crowning achievement of early North Indian sculpture is the Sanchi stupa, excellent sculptural designs were carved on the cave-temples of Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh. They reflect life as it was in its various forms and aspects, and are full of vitality. Another striking example of Buddhist sculpture is afforded by the images of Buddha, a very considerable number of which belong to Gandhara art, and many others to the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. And perhaps the most life-like art productions are the fresco paintings on the walls of the Ajanta temples, of which there is a rich variety.

While ancient Indian art owed a great deal to the vigorous spirit of Brahmanical revival, there can be no question that its early inspiration came from Buddhism. In the early Brahmanical temples, the Buddhist style predominates. But later on a distinct Brahmanical style developed which in its turn influenced Buddhist art to some extent.

The second great contribution of Buddhism was in the domain of history and literature. The Buddhist nikayas, jatakas, sutras and pitakas, apart from their

importance as philosophical studies, supply us with valuable information on the political, social, religious and economic conditions of a considerably long period of Indian history. Indeed our knowledge of ancient Indian history would have remained much more incomplete than it is, if we had not had an access to these works. Then again, many of these writings possess undoubted literary merit. Asvaghosa, Nagarjuna and Buddhagosa wrote much fine poetry. And the prose work *Milindapanha*, containing the Greek king Menander's discussions with Nagasena, has considerable literary and dialectical skill to its credit. Apart from that Buddhist literature influenced Brahmanical literature somewhat unconsciously. For example, the inclusion of Prakrit prose passages in Sanskrit dramas might be due to the indirect influence of Buddhist writings. A much later influence of Buddhist literature is traceable on some of the Vernacular literatures of India. The earliest specimens of Bengali poetry, for instance, are the *dohās* and *charyāpadas* composed by Buddhist writers of the Vajrayana school.

Buddhist contributions in the realm of philosophy and religion have been so wide and remarkable that it is possible to make only a passing reference to the subject here. The Buddhist Dharma has long been a world religion. In fact it has the second highest number of followers in the world today. Likewise Buddhist philosophy has a very important place in world philosophy. But quite apart from that, Buddhism influenced the religious and philosophical thought currents of India a great deal. One example may be given in support of our contention. The indebtedness of Vaisnavism to

Pawa, Rajagriha and Vaisali were frequently visited by Buddha and soon became the radiating centres of the Buddhist Dharma. Returning to Kapilavastu the Enlightened One converted his father, wife, son and many others of the court circle and outside. A fairly detailed account has been given in the chapters of this book of Buddha's connection with Vaisali. The Sugata seems to have had a special liking for the place, because it was the seat of a republic, and equality prevailed amongst its citizens which agreed well with his own conception of equality. Probably he took from the Lichchhavi *gana* the model for the Buddhist Samgha. ✓

For about forty-five years Buddha preached his Dharma amongst all classes of people. The story is too long to be narrated here, and the various parables and anecdotes are almost impossible to arrange chronologically. The earliest traditions record few miracles performed by him, but in the later traditions the story of his life suffers a great deal. Once, it is said, his jealous cousin Devadatta plotted to get Buddha killed by a mad elephant, but the beast, impressed by the Tathagata's gentleness, calmly bowed at his feet. This is quite possible to believe. But Buddha himself does not seem to have had any faith in miracles, and he sternly forbade his followers to perform magical feats. The well-known parable of the mustard-seed¹ may be taken as an instance to illustrate the fact that he did

¹ Kisa Gotami, a woman, having lost her son, went to the Tathagata and asked him for medicine. The Tathagata thereupon advised her to go from door to door in the town and fetch mustard-seeds from the house where no one had died. Gotami went from door to door and failed to find a single house, where no one had died. So her eyes were opened and she learnt that all things are impermanent.

not heal the sick by supernatural means. Disputes broke out amongst his disciples from time to time, even while he was alive. There is an interesting account in the *Mahavagga* of his once meeting a schism amongst his followers. At first Buddha left them in the midst of their wrangling. But the quarrel led to abuses and even blows. Then the Wise One related to them the story of king Dirghayu of Kosala who wanted to take revenge upon king Brahmadata of Banaras for having killed his father and mother and snatched his dominion. But while he had unsheathed his sword, Dirghayu thought of the last words of his father : "Do not look long, do not look short. For not by hatred is hatred appeased. Hatred is appeased by not-hatred alone." And thinking thus, he put his sword back into the sheath. Such was the effect of this wise course that king Brahmadata was moved, and he gave Dirghayu back his father's kingdom and gave him his daughter in marriage. Having finished the story, the Tathagata said : "Now, O bhikshus, if such can be the forbearance and mildness of kings who wield the sceptre and bear the sword, so much more, O bhikshus, must you let your light shine before the world that you, having embraced the religious life according to so well-taught a doctrine and a discipline, are seen to be forbearing and mild....¹"

Buddha's connections with Sravasti, the capital of Kosala, were very intimate indeed. There lived at this place a rich merchant named Anathapindika, who was once travelling with five hundred carts full of merchandise. Coming to Rajagriha he heard of Buddha, and he

¹ E. A. Burtt, *op. cit.*, pp. 40—43.

had a pious wish to make a gift to him of a beautiful garden. There was no garden so beautiful as that of Prince Jeta near Sravasti. So he made a proposal to the prince to buy his garden. At first the prince refused to sell, but Anathapindika persuaded him that he should sell as much of the garden as could be covered by the merchant with pieces of money. Cart-loads of coins were brought and spread over the garden. Anathapindika then built dwelling houses for Buddha and eighty monks, and invited him to come and accept the gift. Elaborate arrangements were made to receive the Blessed One, and a pompous ceremony was held in the garden in his honour. Buddha accepted the gift, and is said to have spent many rainy seasons in the exquisite Jeta Garden.

Many people wrongly imagine that Buddha's life was mostly spent in quiet meditation under shady trees in the groves and woods. As a matter of fact he had a strenuous activity all through. In the midst of his busy life, however, he reformed many a way-worn youngman and corrected many undignified *bhikshus*. He is said to have prevented an open rupture between the Sakyas and the neighbouring Koliyas. The establishment of the Bhikshuni Samgha appears to have been one of the last important acts of his religious career. The story of his *parinirvana* has been narrated in chapter VI of this book and need not be repeated here. No need we recount the many virtues which he possessed. He was a rare combination of ancient wisdom and modern rationalism. And the world had a need of him.

Soon after Buddha's *parinirvana* there was a Buddhist Council at Rajagriha. Upali, one of his chief disciples

recited the *Vinaya Pitaka*, or rules of the Order, in this gathering ; and Ananda recited the *Sutta Pitaka* or the collection of Buddha's sermons. About the Second Buddhist Council, which met at Vaisali one hundred years after Buddha's death, a tolerably detailed description has been given in a chapter of this book¹. The first open split occurred in the Buddhist order at this time when the Order became divided into two sections, namely, *Theravadins* (*Sthaviravadins*) and the *Mahasanghikas*². By the time the third Buddhist Council met at Pataliputra under the patronage of Asoka, differences amongst the Buddhists had become acute and complex. Numerous points of difference were raised at this meeting, and many heretics were expelled from the Order. An important contribution of this Council was the adding of the last section to the *Kathavatthu* of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*³.

Originally Buddhism had little conflict with Brahmanism, though evidences of a keen rivalry between the Jainas and the Buddhists, even during the life-time of Buddha, are not wanting. By the time of Asoka sharp antagonism had developed amongst the several religious sects in India. According to the edicts of Asoka, there were, besides the followers of Brahmanism, the *Sramanas*⁴, the *Nirgranthas*⁵, the *Ajivikas*⁶, and "other sects" at the time. The Maurya king repeatedly

¹ Chapter VIII.

² *Ibid.*

³ A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 261.

⁴ Members of the Buddhist Samgha were so called.

⁵ Jainas.

⁶ A particular sect of ascetics founded by Gosala Maskariputra.

complains of the unfortunate communal bickerings amongst the several sects ; and he tried his utmost to promote friendliness amongst them, calling upon his subjects to show due respects to Brahmins, *Sramanas*, *Nirgranthas* and *Ajivikas* alike. Several exaggerated accounts of a cut-throat rivalry between the Jainas and the Buddhists in his time are available which at least seem to bear out that unhappy relations had subsisted between the two sects for a long time past.

The conversion of Asoka is said to have taken place sometime after the Kalinga war at the instance of the Buddhist teacher Upagupta of Mathura. The event may be regarded as of the greatest importance in the history of Buddhism. For no one did more for its propagation than the Great Maurya. For two and a half years he remained a lay disciple. Then he formally joined the Samgha and exerted himself strenuously for about a quarter of a century, until by the time of his death Buddhism was fairly well established all over India, and in Ceylon, Survarnabhumi (Burma) and probably several other neighbouring countries. The Emperor sent Buddhist missionaries also to the several Hellenic kingdoms in the West. But Buddhism never struck deep roots in those regions, because after Asoka there was no one to continue the work of evangelization there ; whereas in the countries of the East the work was carried on by generations of sincere *bhikshus* under the patronage of princes and rich men.

Conversion to Buddhism or Jainism did not necessarily mean complete estrangement from Brahmanism. Nor did adherence to the Brahmanical religion stand in

the way of attending the religious discourses of the Buddhists, Jainas or Ajivikas, or even offering donations to any of these sects. In India religious divisions were never absolutely water-tight, until at a late stage in the history of Buddhism. As for Asoka, he showed the same reverence to the Brahmins, and to the gods and goddesses, after his conversion, as he had been doing in the past. Daily many thousand Brahmins were distributed alms from the royal establishment, and to the last the king took pride in calling himself "the favourite of the gods",

Although Buddha said nothing about the existence or non-existence of God, the tendency grew up very soon to raise him almost to divinity. On his death there was, as we have seen, a scramble over the division of his relics which were ultimately shared equally amongst seven tribes and Ajatasatru, and stupas were erected thereon¹. After his death Buddha was worshipped through symbols—the stupa and the tree, recalling respectively his *parinirvana* and his enlightenment. The places associated with the life and work of Buddha became holy in the eyes of the Buddhists. Indeed Asoka went on his pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Vaisali, Lumbini and Kusinara which were later on visited by many other pilgrims.

After the fall of the Maurya dynasty, which occurred in or about 187 B.C., Buddhism is said to have suffered for a time a severe persecution in the hands of Pushyamitra Sunga. The allegation that he destroyed numerous monasteries, and massacred thousands of Buddhists

¹ *Vide* Chap. VII.

from Pataliputra right up to Jalandhar in the Punjab may be a gross exaggeration. A much more important event was the division of the Buddhists which occurred about the first century A.D. into the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) and Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) schools. A new sect amongst them, known as the *Sarvastivadins*¹, had already arisen in the north-western part of India. According to a Chinese tradition, the fourth Buddhist council was held in Kashmir under the patronage of Kanishka, and the *Sarvastivadin* doctrines were codified in a summary called the *Mahanihhasa*. The divisions which had been developing amongst the Buddhists since the convocation of the second Buddhist council were accentuated by the rise of the *Sarvastivadin* sect and eventually led to the great schism in Buddhism, the split between the Hinayanists and the Mahayanists. It has been suggested that such a division was but a natural sequel to the coming in of new peoples, and of new ideas, from the west, and that the Mahayana form of Buddhism developed because it "fitted the mood of the times and the needs of many simple people"² better than the original form of Buddhism. The real fact is that the off-shoot of Buddhism, having been diverted a great length from the main religious current of Brahmanism, was being drawn closer to it again. And the rise of the Mahayana school demonstrated the first great victory of the assimilative force of Brahmanism over Buddhism in India which had been strongly at work since the second century B.C.

¹ Literally those who say "All is".

² A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

Apart from many minor differences which developed between the Hinayanists and the Mahayanists, where the two fundamentally differed was in their attitude towards Buddha. The Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle is godless, and even soulless¹. In that of the Greater Vehicle Buddha gradually assumes a divine role. At first the change was no more than the development of the Bodhisattva doctrine, according to which Buddha in a long series of transmigrations had done many deeds of compassion before he was born as Sakyaputra. Of the numerous Bodhisattvas of the Mahayanists, *Avalokiteshwara*² or *Padmapani*³ was the principal one. In the next stage the idea gained ground in the Mahayana school that Gautama Buddha had not been a mere man but "the earthly expression of a mighty spiritual being" having three bodies, a Body of Essence, a Body of Bliss, and a Created Body⁴. The first is eternal and all-pervading, the second exists in the heavens, and the third descends on earth as an emanation from the second. From the first century A.D. numerous images of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas began to be made; and a little later Buddha was set up as a deity in the temple and worshipped like a Brahmanical god.

It was the Buddhism of the Mahayana school which was carried to China and thence to Japan by a long succession of *bhikshus*, under the patronage of kings like Kanishka and Huvishka. In popularizing the Buddhism of the Mahayana school within and outside India Kanishka

¹ *Ibid* p. 270.

² The Lord who looks down.

³ Literally one having lotus in hand.

⁴ A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

must have played quite an important part. As time advanced, the Hinayana school began more and more to lose ground in India, until by the time of Hiuen Tsang in the seventh century it was a negligible sect with a minor following. In Ceylon, Burma, Siam and certain other parts of South-East Asia, on the other hand, it gained in popularity and became the religion of the people.

Gradually within the Mahayana school itself several sub-schools appeared. Two of these, the *Madhyamika* and the *Yogācāra* are interesting from the point of view of their philosophical differences. The basic text of the first is the *Madhyamika Karika* of Nagarjuna, according to whom, *Samsāra* and Nirvana, are equally unreal, and the One Thing which alone is real is Void or Emptiness (*Sunyātā*)¹. The *Yogācāra* school carried the doctrine of unreality a step further. According to it, the world has no more reality than a dream. The latter school, however, did not become so influential as the *Madhyamika* school.

Mahayana Buddhism received a strong encouragement from Harshavardhana in the first half of the seventh century. To popularize the Mahayana doctrine Harsha held the grand assembly at Kanauj to which the Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang, was invited. The deification of Buddha was carried almost to an absurd length in this, as well as in the religious assembly which used to be held at Prayag every five years. According to Hiuen Tsang, a golden image of Buddha was placed in the centre of the assembly at Kanauj, and the image of

Ibid p. 279.

Buddha was carried in a long and spectacular procession and then worshipped in the most befitting royal manner. The Chinese pilgrim gave a discourse on Mahayana Buddhism on the occasion which must have been attended by many thousand people.

But the seventh century witnessed a moral degeneration amongst the Buddhists which is evidenced by the rise of the Vajrayana sub-school within the Mahayana school. The Vajrayana, the Vehicle of the Thunderbolt, carried the process of deification to its zenith. Feminine divinities found their way into the Buddhist pantheon, and Buddha and the Bodhisattvas were endowed with female partners, who represented the force or energy (*shakti*) of their consorts. The Vajrayanists came closely under the Hindu *tātrikas* and adopted *vamamārgiya sādhana*¹ as their popular mode of worship. Alongside of that they began to practise acquiring magical power. The new sub-school gradually gained a solid footing in North-Eastern India and was patronized by the Pala kings of Bengal and Bihar. Nalanda in Magadha became its principal centre. The followers of the Vajrayana school, under the patronage of the Palas, no doubt took an active interest in spreading the Buddhist Dharma and Buddhist culture beyond the bounds of India. But many obnoxious practices entered into their mode of worship which discredited the Buddhists in the eyes of the people soon afterwards.

The chief deities of the Vajrayana school besides Buddha the Bodhisattvas and Prajñāparamitā, were the Tārās (Saviouresses), and the demonesses, the *Mātangi*,

¹. *Vamamārgiya Sādhana* means worship with the aid of woman a
sexual partner.

Pisāci, *Dākini* and *Yogini*¹. Gradually many other deities entered into the pantheon, and the abstract Dharma itself began to be worshipped as a god. The worship of these deities went on along with the *vāmamārgiya sādhana* and under the influence of the *Tāntrikas* the followers of the new school indulged in all sorts of forbidden things, such as wine-drinking, meat-eating, killing of animals, etc. These things were, however, the underground activities of the sect. Outwardly its followers lived the life of a normal human being.

The followers of the Vajrayana school had from the beginning adopted the trident *vajra* as the symbol of Buddha, Dharma and Samgha². In *Tantras*, however, *Vajra* is another name for Siva. During the later half of the Pala period in Bengal a sub-sect of the Vajrayana school, the Nathas, became very powerful. In Natha cult *Vajra* took the place of void and began to be worshipped, and Dharma became associated with *Vajra* and *Siva*.³ Eventually Dharma worship became the popular form of worship amongst the later Buddhists and has survived to this day amongst the lower classes of people in Bengal.

Meanwhile there had been a very strong reaction against Buddhism and the Buddhists in India due to the growing influence of a Brahmanical revival. Late in the seventh century Kumarila Bhatta appeared as a redoubtable champion of Vedic Brahmanism and assailed Buddhism outright. Early in the ninth century Sankaracharya

¹ A. L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

² N. N. Chaudhury, *Banga Bhasa O Bangi Sahityer Krāma-Vikāsa* (Bengali), Vol. I, p. 79.

³ *Ibid*, p. 81.

carried his work to a completion. Sankara and his disciples entered into vigorous disputations with the Buddhist teachers all over India and flouted their arguments so strongly and convincingly that Buddhism practically lost its solid ground in this country for ever. Sankara was the exponent of what is called *Māyāvāda*. According to him, the universe is a *Māya*, an illusion, a figment of the imagination, and *Brahman* alone is real. Sankara's *Brahman*, it has been said, is not very different from the Void of Mahayana Buddhism, and this has sometime led him to be regarded as a "Buddhist in disguise". The truth is that he vanquished the Buddhists with the weapon of the Buddhists themselves.

The decline of Buddhism in India, and its eventual disappearance from this country, often wrongly ascribed to the factor of religious persecution and to corruption which crept into the Buddhist Church at a late stage¹, were really due to other causes. That Pushyamitra Sunga, and later on king Sasanka of Gauda, destroyed Buddhist monasteries and massacred a large number of *bhikshus* has been regarded by many as substantially baseless. But even admitting the truth of the allegation, the mischief possibly wrought by them could not have been such as to lead to the permanent decline of Buddhism. Nor were the devastating Huna invasions during the late fifth century responsible for this decline. It is true that the Turkish conquerors at the beginning of the thirteenth century destroyed outright the Buddhist monasteries in Bihar and Bengal, and put many a shaven-headed Buddhist to the sword. But that was

¹ See *Malaviya Commemoration Volume*,

merely the last blow dealt against a faith already far advanced in its downward march. The moral degeneration of the Buddhists from the seventh century onwards no doubt did much to bring discredit on their religion and thereby helped its decay. Yet Buddhism could have survived, had it not been for certain powerful factors which had been operating to its prejudice and which it was almost impossible to resist. As for the uncritical assertion, sometimes made, that Buddhism suffered for lack of royal patronage afterwards, it may be dismissed as wholly untenable. As a matter of fact it did enjoy the patronage of princes and richmen down to the end of the eleventh century.

The virtual wiping out of Buddhism from the land of its birth was due chiefly to three causes. In the first place, its very success proved ultimately fatal to its existence. Having emanated as an off-shoot from Brahmanism, it became in course of time a deadly rival of the latter on account of the astounding successes it received. Hence its extinction was a necessity in the interests of Brahmanism. That was why Kumarila and Sankaracharya appeared as champions of the Vedic religion to grind Buddhism with the edged axe of their logical rhetoric. Secondly, the growing popularity of Vaisnavism was responsible for the waning popularity of Buddhism in India. Vaisnavism borrowed certain virtues from Buddhism and soon captured popular imagination, because while it laid great stress on non-violence, it did not challenge the authority of the Vedic religion, and emphasized the importance of the existence of a Supernatural Force. Finally, Buddhism was

eventually washed away in the mighty current of Brahmanism and lost its separate identity. Brahmanism had been strongly influencing it at least since the first century A.D., and the influence became more and more pronounced as time went on. In the end Buddha was admitted as one of the incarnations of Vishnu, to be worshipped as the other incarnations.

No account of Buddhism will be complete without a reference to the rich heritage left by the Buddhists in India and abroad. The most impressive contribution of Buddhism from the point of view of the common man was in the field of art—architecture, sculpture and painting. Between the third century B.C. and the eleventh century A.D. numerous Buddhist monuments, stupas, temples, chaityas and viharas were built. The stupas at Bharhut in Madhya Bharat, Sanchi in the Bhopal State, and Amravati in the far south are especially worthy of note, not only for their massiveness and architectural skill, but also for the rich variety of sculpture on them. The Sanchi gateways, for example, are one of the finest specimens of art for their carved ornamentation. These stupas were built between 300 B.C. and 200 A.D. The stupas of Sarnath and Nalanda, though inferior to those of the abovenamed places, are also worth mentioning.

More spectacular than the stupas are the cave-temples of Ajanta, Ellora, Karli and Bagh in South India, though the caves of the Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills in North India are, with one exception, mostly bald and flat. These South Indian rock-cut monuments, of which there are more than a hundred, were built between the second century B.C. and the eighth century A.D. With rows of

numberless pillars going deep into the interior these cave-temples present a magnificent sight and are a thing of wonder to the modern tourists. Quite a good number of these temples are Brahmanical and Jaina. But a very considerable number, especially those at Ajanta, are Buddhist chaityas and viharas. Mention should be made also of the Buddhist temple at Bodhi Gaya which is impressive not for its massiveness but for its beauty and the minuteness of its carvings.

Though the crowning achievement of early North Indian sculpture is the Sanchi stupa, excellent sculptural designs were carved on the cave-temples of Ajanta, Ellora and Bagh. They reflect life as it was in its various forms and aspects, and are full of vitality. Another striking example of Buddhist sculpture is afforded by the images of Buddha, a very considerable number of which belong to Gandhara art, and many others to the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. And perhaps the most life-like art productions are the fresco paintings on the walls of the Ajanta temples, of which there is a rich variety.

While ancient Indian art owed a great deal to the vigorous spirit of Brahmanical revival, there can be no question that its early inspiration came from Buddhism. In the early Brahmanical temples, the Buddhist style predominates. But later on a distinct Brahmanical style developed which in its turn influenced Buddhist art to some extent.

The second great contribution of Buddhism was in the domain of history and literature. The Buddhist nikayas, jatakas, sutras and pitakas, apart from their

importance as philosophical studies, supply us with valuable information on the political, social, religious and economic conditions of a considerably long period of Indian history. Indeed our knowledge of ancient Indian history would have remained much more incomplete than it is, if we had not had an access to these works. Then again, many of these writings possess undoubted literary merit. Asvaghosa, Nagarjuna and Buddhagosa wrote much fine poetry. And the prose work *Milindapanha*, containing the Greek king Menander's discussions with Nagasena, has considerable literary and dialectical skill to its credit. Apart from that Buddhist literature influenced Brahmanical literature somewhat unconsciously. For example, the inclusion of Prakrit prose passages in Sanskrit dramas might be due to the indirect influence of Buddhist writings. A much later influence of Buddhist literature is traceable on some of the Vernacular literatures of India. The earliest specimens of Bengali poetry, for instance, are the *dohās* and *charyāpadas* composed by Buddhist writers of the Vajrayana school.

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did not necessarily mean complete vegetarianism. It appears clear from the scriptures that a monk might eat meat under certain restrictions. True to the spirit of the Buddhist Dharma, Asoka did not entirely prohibit, but greatly restricted, the killing of animals for the royal kitchen. On the other hand, the vow against doing harm to living beings must be understood to have shut the door for a Buddhist against following the profession of a hunter or butcher. It must be regarded also as having meant to discourage militarism in general.

Although Buddha sanctioned the middle path between self-torture and self-gratification, the path of Buddhism, at least for some centuries in the beginning, was by no means very liberal and simple. But here we must distinguish between *Upasakas* or lay worshippers and *Bhikshus* or members of the Order. So far as the *Upasakas* were concerned, the rules of the Buddhist Dharma were no doubt simple and by no means rigid. But for the members of the Samgha the Buddhist doctrine and discipline were in some respects more severe than those of Brahmanism in general. Thus under the rules of the Order the monk was expected to beg his food from door to door in the morning, that is to say, to observe the vow of poverty. Begging, however, was later on reduced to a mere formality, according as the Samgha became wealthy, and eventually it was dropped.

We need not repeat what has been already mentioned in the preceding appendix regarding the subsequent modification of the Buddhist Dharma at the hands of the Mahayana school and its several off-shoots. Suffice it to say that the Buddhism of the earlier centuries laid

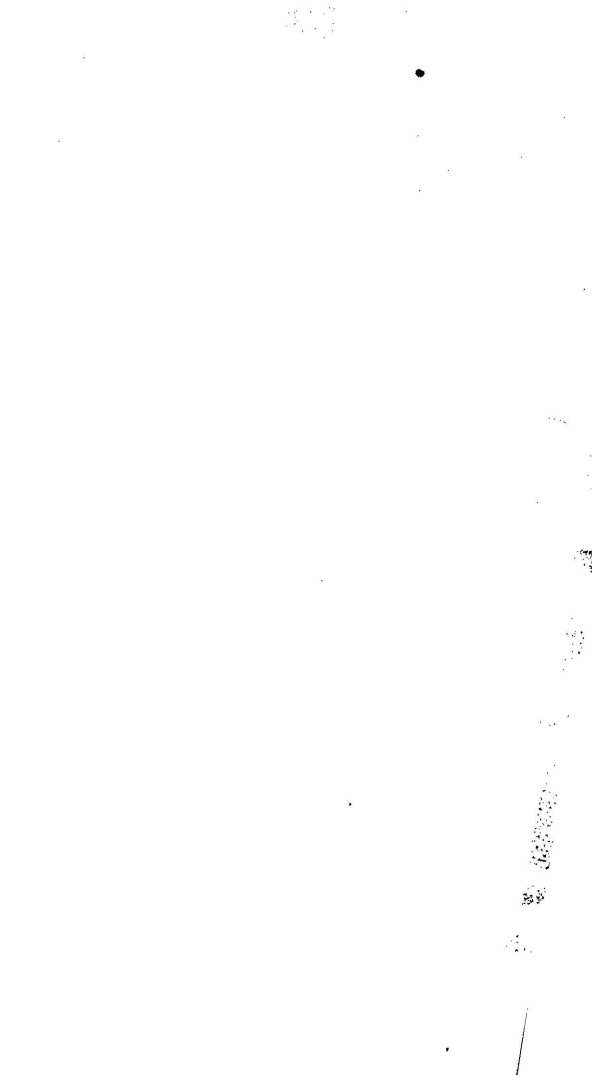
the greatest stress on individual right conduct, by which alone, and not by propitiating the gods through reciting hymns and offering sacrifices, can society be purged of its evils and suffering be lessened. And individual right conduct includes, according to Buddha, not merely following the life of poverty, purity and simplicity but also fellow feeling, kindness and love of all creatures.

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