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BUDDHIST SHRINES IN INDIA

BUDDHIST SHRINES IN INDIA

BY

DEVAPRIYA VALISINHA, B.A.

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THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

TO
THE UNDYING MEMORY OF
The Anagārika Dharmapāla
(Siri Debamitta Dhammapāla)

FOUNDER OF THE MAHĀ BODHI SOCIETY, PIONEER
OF BUDDHIST REVIVAL IN INDIA AND THE
GREATEST BUDDHIST LEADER OF MODERN
TIMES, WHO, BY HIS LIFE-LONG LABOURS IN
INDIA, THE MOTHER-LAND OF BUDDHISM, OPENED
THE WAY FOR PIOUS DEVOTEES OF THE DHAMMA
IN OTHER LANDS TO COME IN LARGE NUMBERS
ON ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE SACRED
SHRINES HEREIN DESCRIBED, THIS VOLUME IS

Respectfully Dedicated

AS A SMALL TOKEN OF PROFOUND AFFECTION AND
OF DEEP VENERATION OF A GRATEFUL AND
HAPPY FOSTER-SON BY HIS DEVOTED PUPIL AND
ADMIRER THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

Almost ten years ago, in Calcutta, I commenced writing a short Guide to the Buddhist Sacred Places in India, but, owing to heavy pressure of work connected with the multifarious activities of the Mahā Bodhi Society, I could hardly complete even one chapter, although the desire to complete the book was constantly before my mind. I am glad my desire in this respect is fulfilled today thanks to the Government of India's action in arresting me under the Defence of India Regulations and restricting my movements for the duration of the war.

I was in Police custody for 21 days during which period I fell ill and had to be removed twice to the Calcutta Medical College Hospital. Through the intervention of Mr. Rajah Hewavitarne, then a member of the State Council of Ceylon and later Minister for Labour, Commerce and Industries, I was permitted to return to Ceylon where I had some leisure to devote to this work. To Mr. Hewavitarne my grateful thanks are due for many acts of kindness shown me during this unhappy period. The suggestion that I should undertake this work was first made by the late lamented Mrs. Sumanā Jayasuriya and again by the Ven. Diyagama Sārānanda Nāyaka Thera of Pāntiya Temple, while I was staying there under Wijesingha Vedamahatmayā's treatment. The encouragement given by these friends fortified my intention and a beginning was made at Pāntiya. The work thus begun there was continued at Pānadure while staying with Goonetilleke Vedamahatmayā and finally completed at Bhikkhu Sisya Nivāsa, Demaṭagoḍa, where the Venerable Dr. Paravāhāra Vajirañāṇa Thera, Ph.D. (Cantab.), afforded me all facilities for quiet work. To all these friends and well-wishers I owe a deep debt of gratitude.

In addition to those mentioned above, my thanks are also due to the following for their valuable assistance in various ways to complete this work:—Mr. Francis Gunaratna, Administrative Secretary, Mahā Bodhi Society of Ceylon, Mr. H. P. Karunaratne, also of the same Society, Revds. Metivala Sangharatana and Neluve Jinaratana, Joint Secretaries of the Mahā Bodhi Society of India, and Mr. K. T. Wimalasekara of Horana. Last, but not least, I have to express my deep gratitude to Mudaliyar P. D. Ratnatunga Vāllavatta for his valuable co-operation and assistance in getting this book out. Not only did he make useful suggestions to improve the contents but also very kindly read through most of the proofs and suggested alterations wherever necessary.

As a very long period—almost six years—has elapsed since the preparation of this book began, I regret that with regard to some of the sacred places, the information I have given is neither complete nor up-to-date. I have also failed to mention the names of several co-workers. I hope to remedy these shortcomings in the next edition.

Need I add that the writing of this book has given me some relief and a great deal of joy during a period of utmost mental distress and physical discomfort? As the General Secretary of the Mahā Bodhi Society, I have always endeavoured to draw as many Buddhist pilgrims to India as possible, and have done all that was in my power to provide them with accommodation and comfort while in India. If this guide book helps the future pilgrims and visitors to a better understanding and a truer appreciation of the several monuments described herein, I shall consider my labours more than amply rewarded.

Colombo, 1st January, 1948.

D. VALISINHA

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa.

Four Sacred Places which every Buddhist
should visit with awe and reverence

*Cattār' imāni Ānanda saddhassa kula-puttassa
dassanīyāni saṃvejanīyāni thānāni. Katamāni
cattāri?*

- (1) “ Idha Tathāgato jāto ” ti Ānanda saddhassa kula-puttassa dassanīyaṃ saṃvejanīyaṃ thānaṃ.
- (2) “ Idha Tathāgato anuttaraṃ sammā-sambodhiṃ abhisambuddho ” ti Ānanda saddhassa kula-puttassa dassanīyaṃ saṃvejanīyaṃ thānaṃ.
- (3) “ Idha Tathāgatena anuttaraṃ dhamma-cakkaṃ pavattitaṃ ” ti Ānanda saddhassa kula-puttassa dassanīyaṃ saṃvejanīyaṃ thānaṃ.
- (4) “ Idha Tathāgato anupādisesāya nibbāna-dhātuyā parinibbuto ” ti Ānanda saddhassa kula-puttassa dassanīyaṃ saṃvejanīyaṃ thānaṃ.

—*Mahā-Parinibbāna Sutta*, v. 8.

TRANSLATION *

There are these four places, Ānanda, which the believing clansman should visit with feelings of reverence. Which are the four ?

- (1) The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say :—“ Here the Tathāgata was born ! ” is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

* By T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids.

- (2) The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say :—“ Here the Tathāgata attained to the ¹supreme and perfect insight !” is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.
- (3) The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say :—“ Here was the kingdom of righteousness set on foot by the Tathāgata !” is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.
- (4) The place, Ananda, at which the believing man can say :—“ Here the Tathāgata passed finally away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain behind !” is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

INTRODUCTION

Jambudvīpa or North-Eastern India is the holy land of the Buddhists from time immemorial. It was here that our Lord Buddha was born over 2,500 years ago. It was also here that all Buddhas of the past lived and worked for the benefit of gods and men, and it is also in this sacred soil that all future Buddhas will arise. No wonder, therefore, that Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma, Siam, China, Tibet, Japan and other countries love this holy land as much as, if not more than, their own. Some Buddhists of Ceylon go to the extreme length of their devotion to Mother India by solemnly aspiring to be reborn in the Himālayās so that they may hear the Dhamma from the lips of Maitriya Buddha who is to appear in the distant future.

“ Ito cutohaṃ varajambudīpe
Himālaye hema mayamhi kūṭe
Kappāyuko devapatīva hutvā
Metteyya nāthassa sunomi dhammaṃ.”

“ Having passed away from here and being reborn in the Himālayās as a god of an aeon's age, I shall hear the Dhamma from the Lord Buddha Maitriya.”

This is the fervent hope expressed by many a devotee at the end of his daily worship. This prayer of his is sufficient indication of the deep and sincere veneration Ceylon Buddhists harbour in their hearts for the land which gave them their Great Teacher. If further testimony is required, one has only to turn to the records of the arduous journeys of Fa Hien in the fifth Century and Hiuen Tsiang in the seventh Century and other Chinese pilgrims who visited these sacred places risking their lives in tractless deserts and snow-capped mountains. No wonder, therefore, that H. A. Giles, in his

Introduction to the translation of " Fa Hien's Travels," asks, " What indeed must have been the cogent influence of that Faith which could impel several of its ministers to undertake, and one to carry through for the Faith's sake, a supremely dangerous expedition, in the glow of which the journeys of St. Paul melt into insignificance ?"

There are four principal sacred shrines—all situated in the Madhyamaṇḍala—which are held in the highest veneration by the Buddhists of all countries. These have been actually specifically indicated by the Lord Buddha Himself, who told Ānanda, His constant companion, that devout followers of the Lord should not fail to visit them at least once in their life-time with thoughts of love and reverence. These are :—

1. LUMBINĪ, the birthplace of Lord Buddha ;
2. BUDDHAGAYĀ, where He attained Supreme Enlightenment ;
3. ISIPATANA, where He preached His first sermon to the five brahmins and
4. KUSINĀRĀ, where the Lord passed away into Mahāparinirvāṇadhātu.

In addition to these four principal sacred places, there are several other important sites which have been hallowed by the Lord Buddha's presence and which Buddhists should visit with equal reverence. They are :—

1. RĀJAGHHA, where Lord Buddha stayed many years, preaching some of the most important sermons ;
2. NĀLANDĀ, which Lord Buddha visited in the course of His last journey and where the famous Buddhist University came into existence ;

3. SĀVATTHI, where Lord Buddha spent twenty-four rainy seasons ;
4. KAPILAVATTHU, the city of His father, King Siddhodana ;
5. SAṆKASSA, where the Lord is said to have descended from Tusita Heaven after preaching to His mother ; and
6. KOSAMBI, where a quarrel arose among the Lord's disciples.

Then again, although they are not sanctified by the presence of the Lord Buddha Himself, there exist a number of world famous Buddhist monuments in different parts of India—which no discerning visitor should omit from his itinerary. They are well worth visiting not only on account of their religious significance but also because of their importance in the history of Indian art and architecture. They are :—

1. SĀÑCHI, where the Relics of Sāriputta and Mahāmoggallāna, the two chief disciples of Lord Buddha, were discovered ;
2. AJAṆṬĀ, the caves containing masterpieces of Buddhist art ;
3. ELLORĀ, the caves containing great Vihāras ;
4. TAXILĀ, the site of the famous University of Takkaśīla ;
5. KĀRLI, the Buddhist rock Cathedral ; and
6. ROCK CUT CAVES OF BARĀBAR, KANHERI, etc.

It is these places that we propose to describe in the following pages for the benefit of pilgrims and visitors.

CHAPTER I

LUMBINĪ (RUMMINDEI)

LUMBINĪ (modern name *Rummindei*) is the birthplace of Lord Buddha. It is situated in what is now known as the Nepalese Terai and thus falls within the territories of His Majesty, the King of Nepal, who is the only independent Hindu King living today. Actual power in his State is, however, wielded by his Prime Minister known as His Highness the Maharajah of Nepal.

Lumbini is about 7 miles from the large village known as Kankra Bazar in Balia District of the United Provinces which runs along the Nepal boundary. There are two routes to reach Lumbini. The first is through Nowgarh, a station on the Oudh and Tirlut (O.T.) Railway and at a distance of about 20 miles from the actual spot. Though unmetalled, the road from here is fairly serviceable and the journey can be made by car or by bus which must be ordered from Gorakhpur beforehand. The second route is *via* Nautanwa, the terminus of the Nautanwa branch of the O.T. Railway. From here the distance is 10 miles but there is no proper road. One has to make the journey over fields on foot or on ponies or in bullock carts which can be hired at very reasonable rates. There are three small rivers and several rivulets which are fordable during summer and winter but impassable during the rainy season (July-September). If the visit is planned by the latter route visitors can avail themselves of the assistance of the Buddhist monk in charge of the Lumbini Rest House at Nautanwa. This Rest House was built by the Maha

Bodhi Society under the supervision of the Venerable Kumbalwelle Siriniwāsa Nāyaka Thera. It is a few minutes' walk from the Nautanwa Railway station.

Present Condition of the Sacred Place.

The site of Rummindei was discovered in 1896 A.C. and identified as the Lumbinī Park by the famous Indian archaeologist Sir Alexander Cunningham, to whom the entire Buddhist world is deeply indebted for the accuracy of his identification of the principal sacred places and for the manifold efforts made by him to restore them.

Situated on a slightly elevated ground covered with dense vegetation and surrounded by rice fields which stretch right up to the horizon, Lumbinī looks very much like an island grove from a distance. Lately the site was excavated and the jungle cleared by the Nepal Government. A well-equipped Rest House has also been erected close to the site, where pilgrims are provided with free accommodation. The Government has also made arrangements to supply them with rice and other provisions if needed.

Objects of Interest.

The following are the main objects of interest at the site :—

1. THE STONE PILLAR OF ASOKA.
2. TWO MODERN STŪPAS, erected recently by the Nepal Government.
3. THE STONE SCULPTURE inside the modern temple at the site.
4. THE FOUNDATION OF AN OLD MONASTERY OR TEMPLE unearthed by the Nepal Government.
5. A SMALL POND, described as the site where the Prince was bathed.

I. THE STONE PILLAR OF ASOKA.

The most interesting monument at the site is the inscribed stone pillar. It was erected c. 244 B.C. at the actual site of Lord Buddha's birth by the great Emperor Asoka who visited the sacred place in the 20th year of his reign in course of the pilgrimage he undertook to all the holy places. The pillar is at present 13 ft. 6 in. high. Its circumference is 7 ft. 3 in. and about 10 ft. are embedded in the ground. There is a crack on the pillar caused either by lightning or while it was being damaged by enemies of Buddhism. As most of Asoka's pillars are about 70 feet high, this too must have been of the same height though none of the broken pieces have been traced. It must have also been surmounted by an animal figure. The inscription indicates that it was the figure of a horse. This too has yet to be recovered from the site.

Emperor Asoka's extraordinary foresight made him engrave a series of inscriptions of inestimable value to historians on rocks and stone pillars in different parts of India. The one at Lumbini is of exceptional interest to Buddhists as it definitely fixes the site of Lord Buddha's nativity and proves the genuineness of Asoka's pilgrimage.

There is a similar pillar at Sarnath but unfortunately the inscription thereon does not mention that Sarnath was the actual site of the First Sermon. No pillars or inscriptions of Asoka have yet been discovered at Buddhagayā and Kusinārā, the two other chief sacred places, although it is definite that similar pillars had existed up to the time of Hiuen Tsiang's visit.

The inscription engraved in five lines on the Lumbini pillar reads as follows :

*Devānapīyena Piyadasinā lājinā vīsativasābhisitena
atana āgāchu mahīyite. Hida Budhe jāte Sakyamunī*

*silāvigaḍabhiṇa kālāpita.—Silāthabheca usapāpīte.
Hida Bhagavaṃ jāteti Lummini gāme ubalike kaṭe
aṭṭhābhāgiyeca.*

" By His Majesty King Devānam Piyadassi, consecrated 20 years, coming in person, was worshipped (this spot), inasmuch as here was born the Buddha Sākyamuni. A stone bearing a figure was caused to be constructed and a pillar of stone was also set up, to show that the Blessed One was born here.

The village Lumbinī was made free of religious cesses and also liable to pay only one-eighth share (of produce)."

This inscription is sufficient to dispel the doubts deliberately bolstered up by certain writers regarding Asoka's personal religion. No stretch of imagination can conceive of a non-Buddhist Emperor undergoing the unnecessary fatigue of that long journey to Lumbinī and thereat erecting such a pillar. The inscription is in Brahmī script which Asoka uses in most of his edicts scattered all over Northern and Southern India. In the North West, he uses another script known as Kharoṣṭhi. It is written from right to left unlike Brahmī which is written from left to right as we do even today. The latter is the origin of all the main Indian scripts prevalent at present. The Sinhalese script is also derived from Brahmī as is evident from the identity between the scripts of the inscriptions of the 2nd Century B.C. found in India and Ceylon.

2. TWO MODERN STŪPAS.

These two stūpas were erected several years ago by the Nepāl Government with the bricks recovered from the site during excavation work. I cannot help remarking that they hardly do justice to the site in spite of the Government's well-meaning intentions and the vast expenditure incurred. The bricks recovered from the old monuments should have been built into the original structures as is done at other historic sites.

3. THE STONE SCULPTURE.

Quite close to the Asoka pillar, there is a small modern temple which contains an interesting piece of sculpture. It is a large slab of stone depicting the scene of Prince Siddhārtha's birth. Māyādevī is holding a branch of a *sāl* tree while the Prince is emerging from her side. The temple is known as Māyā Devī's temple and is in the charge of a Brahmin *pūjāri* who makes his living by the offerings made to the place. Owing to the darkness of the room, which is below ground level, the details of the sculpture cannot be properly ascertained. This may be a replica of the figure set up by Emperor Asoka as mentioned in the inscription. "Silāvigaḍabhīca" means, according to the *Sabda Kalpadruma*, among other things, a figure of Māyā Devī.

4. THE FOUNDATION OF AN OLD MONASTERY.

The recent excavations have unearthed a rectangular foundation of a large monastery or temple. It must have been an imposing building when in use. As the foundations do not show any divisions in the large rectangle, it was probably one big hall divided into temporary partitions.

The excavations carried out at this place have not brought to light statues of Buddha or Bodhisatvas of any artistic value as it has been the case at Sārnāth and other Buddhist sites.

5. A SMALL POND.

Not far away from the Asoka pillar is a small pond. It is pointed out as the one in which the ablution of Prince Siddhārtha was performed immediately after His birth. At present it is completely dry and hardly distinguishable from the land around it.

A curious fact about the site of Lumbinī is the absence of any *sāl* trees, though they are abundant in other places near about. Trees which grow at the site at present are *bel* (wood-apple), tamarind, *nim*, etc. Lack of *sāl* trees cannot be explained as it is not possible to find out when or how they became actually extinct. They were probably cut down and used for building houses by the villagers or uprooted by enemies of Buddhism to wipe out all traces of the great event.

History of Lumbinī.

The history of Lumbinī goes back to the time of Lord Buddha's father, King Suddhodana. According to the description given in Pāli books, it was situated midway between Kapilavastu, the capital of Suddhodana, and Devadaha, the capital of Anjana (Sākya), father of Māyādevī. This was a beautiful park resorted to by the citizens of both the cities.

Lumbinī park became famous in history on account of Prince Siddhārtha's birth over 2,500 years ago. Buddhist literature gives a vivid account of the circumstances under which the Great Being saw the light of day. Mahā Māyādevī, wife of King Suddhodana, had no issue for a considerable time. This was a great anxiety to the good king as well as his loyal subjects, who longed for a worthy successor. However, to the great joy and happiness of everyone in the Kingdom, she at last conceived a child who was destined, later on, to become Buddha and save humanity from the ills of continued existence and lead them to the path of Nibbāna. Before His conception in the womb of Māyādevī, Buddha was in the Tusita heaven (Tāvatiṃsa) awaiting the appearance of the five objects of reflection (*Pañca Mahā Vilōpana*) to be born among men. They are: Right Time, Continent, Country, Family or Clan and Mother. When He saw that Mahā Māyādevī was waiting like a pure lotus to receive

Him, He made up His mind to descend on earth. At the same time the Devas too came to Him and, in the following verse, requested Him to be born among men :—

“ *Kāloyaṃ te mahāvīra uppajja mātukucchiyaṃ
Sadevakaṃ tārayanto bujjhassu amataṃ padaṃ.* ”

“ *Great hero! it is now time for you to be born in a mother's womb, and ferry across both men and gods by realising the immortal way.* ”

Thereupon He passed away from Heaven and entered His mother's womb. This was to be His final birth.

After leading a life of absolute purity for ten months Māyā Devi decided to go to her parents' home for her confinement according to the custom in Indian families even now. The King made all suitable arrangements and the Queen left Kapilavastu in an imposing procession. When the procession approached the Lumbinī Garden, Māyā Devi conceived a longing to sojourn there as it was lovely at the time with flowers blossoming everywhere. *Sāl, Asoka, Champā* and other flowering trees were in their festive garb. Sporting about the park for a while and seeing a magnificent *sāl* tree at a certain spot, she raised her right hand to catch a branch. At that very moment pangs of childbirth arose, and on informing her retinue, they hurriedly prepared a suitable enclosure. Thus holding a branch of the *sāl* tree, she gave birth to the greatest human being ever born. At the moment of this memorable event the earth shook and many other miracles took place. The great Brahmā himself came down from Heaven to receive the child and there were rejoicings throughout the universe. It is said that immediately after His birth, the child stood erect when seven lotuses sprang up from the ground to receive Him. He walked on them and standing

on the last one, recited the following verse —

“ *Aggohamasmi lokassa*
Jetthohamasmi lokassa
Setthohamasmi lokassa
Ayamantimā jāti
Natthi'dāni punabbhavo.”

“ *I am the chief in the world,*
I am the highest in the world,
I am the noblest in the world,
This is my last birth,
There is no more rebirth for me.”

After this happy event the procession, instead of proceeding to Devadaha, returned joyously to Kapilavastu bearing their long expected Prince and the Queen mother. The Prince was named Siddhārtha as He was the *fulfilment* of the hopes and aspirations of the King as well as of his subjects. The mother died when the infant was only seven days old and He was brought up with much care and devotion by His aunt Mahāpajāpati Gotamī.

Pāli literature does not mention that Lord Buddha made use of Lumbinī Park for any of His sermons during His visits to Kapilavastu. Whenever He came to His father's capital, it was Nigrodhārāma (gifted to him by Sākya Prince Nigrodha) that He preferred as a place of residence. Although Lumbinī is not mentioned as a place utilised by the Buddha, there is no doubt that it must have been a resort for devout followers almost from the life-time of the Master. The earliest monument discovered at the site is the pillar set up by Emperor Asoka. History records that after the *Parinibbāna* of the Blessed One, His remains were divided amongst eight different Kings of India who took them to their respective kingdoms and erected suitable *stūpas* over them. Sākyas

were naturally one of the recipients of a portion of these precious relics which they must have deposited in a *stūpa* not far from the site of the Lord's birth. Asoka too probably erected a *stūpa* and a monastery here but unfortunately there is now not even a trace of any such buildings. The remains so far discovered belong to the post-Asokan period except, of course, the well-known pillar. It may be mentioned here that some undoubtedly genuine relics of Lord Buddha were discovered in 1898 A.C., in a *stūpa* at Piprāwa in the neighbourhood of Kapilavastu. The lid of the urn* had an inscription dating back to pre-Asokan period. It can hardly be disputed that these are a portion of the relics that fell to the lot of the Sākya.

As regards records of visitors or pilgrims to the sacred places, the earliest we know of is that of Fa-Hien who reached India in the 5th century of the Christian era, from distant China. He has left to posterity an extremely valuable account of his travels and the description of the sacred places given by him is of utmost value to us today. The following is the account of Lumbinī :—

"To the east of the town fifty *li*, is the royal garden; this garden bears the name of *Lun ming*.¹ The lady having entered the tank to bathe, came out therefrom by the northern gate; she proceeded twenty steps, took in her hand the branch of a tree and turning to the east gave birth to the Prince. Fallen to the ground, the Prince made seven steps. Two kings of the dragons washed his body. On the site of this ablution they have made a well; and it is at this well, as also at the tank where the washing took place, that the ecclesiastics are in the habit of drawing the water they drink. There are, for all the *Fos*,² four places determined from all eternity; the first is where they accomplish the doctrine; the second is that where they turn the Wheel of Law; the third where they preach the Law; where they hold discussions, and subdue the heretics; the fourth where they redescend from the heaven of

*This can be seen in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

1. Lumbinī. 2. Buddhas.

*Taoli*¹ whither they ascend to preach the Law in favour of their mother. The other places are those of sundry manifestations called forth by circumstances. The kingdom of *Kia wei lo*² is a great solitude; the people are scattered, and wild elephants and lions are to be apprehended on the roads, so that one may not travel there without precaution.

Travelling five *yeou yan*³ towards the east from the place where *Fo* was born, you come to the kingdom of *Lan mo*.''* (*Pilgrimage of Fa Hien, French edition, p. 207*).

This description of Lumbinī by Fa-Hien is not very helpful as it does not contain any details of the monasteries which he might have seen. It is also surprising that he totally omits to mention the Asoka pillar which must have been one of the most conspicuous objects at the time even as it is today. He gives the distance between Kapilavastu and Lumbinī as fifty *li*.

Hsuen Tsiang who visited the place two centuries later gives a more descriptive account. He mentions the existence of the Asoka pillar and a number of *stūpas* as well as a pond containing clear water. He also mentions that the pillar was broken in two and the top portion which had the figure of a horse, was lying below.

1. Tusita. 2. Kapilavastu. 3. Yojana. 4. Rāmagāma.



STONE GATEWAY IN FRONT OF BUDDHAGAYA VIHARA



BUDDHAGAYA VIHARA

CHAPTER II

BUDDHAGAYA (MAHABODHI MANDAPA)

BUDDHAGAYĀ (seven miles from Gayā Railway Station) is the holiest of holy places to the Buddhists. It is the place where the Lord Buddha attained the Supreme State of Enlightenment called "Sammāsambodhi." The exact spot was known as *Bodhi Maṇḍapa* in ancient days. Buddhagayā is the first sacred place to which pilgrims arrive in the course of their pilgrimage. From Calcutta one takes the East Indian Railway train which brings the visitor to Gayā within eight hours—the distance being 292 miles. From Gayā station conveyances can be arranged to go to the actual spot at a reasonable fare. There is a good metalled road right up to the temple.

Present Condition.

Buddhagayā is not only a great centre of Buddhist pilgrimage but also a place of absorbing interest to Archaeologists, historians and visitors from all over the world. Not a single day passes without some pilgrims or tourists being present at this unique spot as it is a privilege for everyone to come and see with his own eyes its many interesting old monuments.

Objects of Interest.

The objects of interest are :

1. **MAHĀBODHI TEMPLE** built first by Emperor Asoka and later enlarged by other devout Buddhists.

The present temple is the one seen by Hiuen Tsiang who visited India in the 7th century A.C.

2. **BODHI TREE** (to the west of the temple). This is the world-famous sacred pipal tree which has replaced the original one under which Lord **Buddha** sat and obtained Enlightenment.
3. **VAJRĀSANA** (between the temple and the **Bodhi** tree). This seat made of stone marks the actual site where Gotama sat to become the **Buddha**, and thus the holiest of holy places to the Buddhist world.
4. **SEVEN SITES WHERE** He passed seven successive weeks in meditation after the Enlightenment,
viz. :-
 - (a) *Bodhi Tree*.
 - (b) *Animisalocana Stūpā* erected at the site where Lord **Buddha** stood gazing at the **Bodhi Tree** out of gratitude.
 - (c) *Caṅkamana* or the walk marked by a raised platform to the north of the *Vihāra*.
 - (d) *Ratanāghara*, the room in which Lord **Buddha** sat and meditated. It is situated in the compound to the north of the *Caṅkamana*.
 - (e) *Rājāvatana* tree. The actual site is not known.
 - (f) *Ajapāla Nigrodha tree*. The site of this tree is also not known though a place within the premises of a Hindu temple on the eastern bank of the *Nerañjarā* river is pointed out as the site where the tree stood.
 - (g) *Mucalinda Lake*. A dry filled-up pond at a distance of about a mile to the south of the **Mahā Bodhi Temple** is shown as the site of the lake.

5. STONE RAILING ROUND THE VIHĀRA. This is a fine stone railing set up during the time of the Sunga Dynasty. Only a part of it, in the South and West, now remains.
6. VOTIVE STŪPAS ROUND THE TEMPLE. A large number of beautifully carved stone *stūpas* are scattered all round the temple.
7. PAÑCA PĀṆḌAVA TEMPLE. A white building to the left side of the entrance to the great temple with five images of the Bodhisatvas.
8. SAMĀDHI OF A MAHANT. To the left of the Vihāra entrance there is another ugly white structure which is supposed to contain the grave of a Mahant.
9. FOUNDATION OF A MONASTERY to the south of the Vihāra.
10. IMAGE SHED near the Northern entrance to the compound of the temple on the main road.
11. LARGE TANK FOR BATHING to the south of the Vihāra.
12. BURMESE REST HOUSE. This is situated on the elevated ground to the west of the Vihāra.
13. MAHĀ BODHI REST HOUSE. To the north-west of the Burmese Rest House on the other side of the District Board Road is the modern fine two-storeyed Rest House built by the Mahā Bodhi Society.
14. SAMĀDHIS OF THE MAHANTS. These are to the east of the great temple and surrounded by a wall.

15. MAHANT'S MONASTERY. On the main road about two hundred yards from the temple, there is the large monastic establishment of the Mahant of Buddhagayā.
16. NEW BURMESE REST HOUSE. This is on the main road to the great temple near the Police Station.
17. NERAÑJARĀ RIVER. This river situated to the east of the temple was crossed by Prince Siddhārtha on His way to the shade of the Bodhi tree.
18. SUJĀTĀKUṬI. The site of Sujātā's house is now marked by a brick mound on the opposite side of the Nerañjarā river.
19. BIRLA REST HOUSE AND STŪPA. These are situated to the West, beyond the Maha Bodhi Rest House.
20. CHINESE TEMPLE AND REST HOUSE.

1. MAHĀ BODHI TEMPLE.

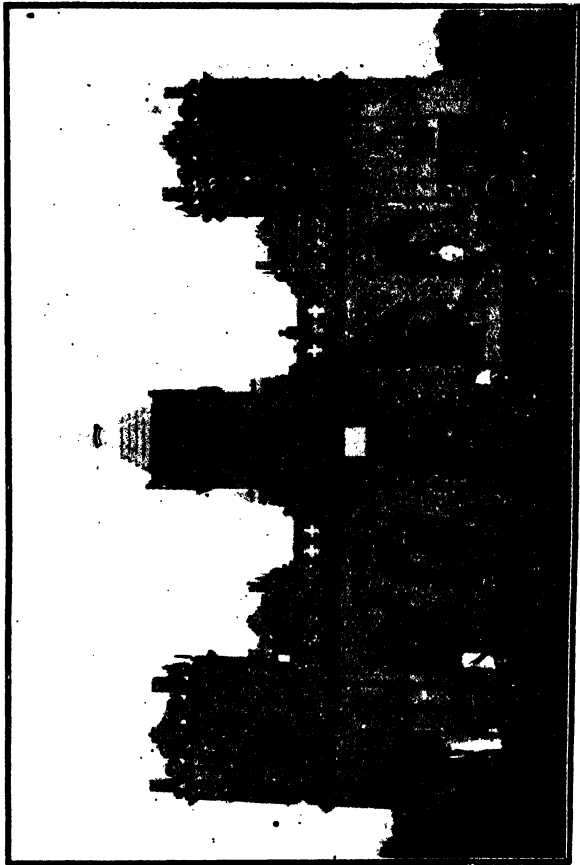
The Mahā Bodhi Vihāra, more commonly known as the Buddhagayā (Bodhgayā) Temple, is one of the most interesting and impressive religious buildings in India. Its architecture is unique and the design has been adopted in many temples erected later in India as well as outside. At Pagan in Burma there is a miniature of the same erected in the 13th century A.C. The Vihāra is a square building at the base and, as it rises up, it becomes narrower and narrower till it reaches its neck which is cylindrical in shape. The neck is surmounted by a spiral tee made of copper. From the four corners four towers similar to the main tower rise up above the first floor to some height giving the building perfect balance.

The main entrance to the Vihāra is from the east. Before the visitor reaches the door, he will pass through an imposing stone gateway decorated with delicate carvings. In front of this gateway is an elegant stone votive *stūpa* of small proportions. The niches on both sides of the main entrance to the Temple contain images of the Buddha which are painted in gold by Tibetan pilgrims. The central shrine of the Vihāra which is situated in the ground floor is reached after passing through a vaulted passage. The pillars and the main door are made of stone. Above the inner door is an inscription which gives the date when the repair work was completed. The shrine room is very dark as it has no windows; sun light can enter it only through the main door. On the high pedestal in front of the visitor as he enters the room, he will see a fine colossal image of the Buddha in sitting posture. It has been gilded by Tibetan pilgrims. The image is set up facing the east in the exact position the Lord sat for His final effort for Buddhahood with His back to the Bodhi tree. You will see at once that the image is a fine work of art. The saffron-coloured cloth over the body and the *tilak* mark on the forehead are "respectful decorations" added on by the Mahant's *pūjāri*. They greatly mar the beauty of the image. Buddhists have to remove these additions before they worship. It is regrettable to find that the floor and the walls are badly neglected and dirt is allowed to accumulate. The atmosphere inside is not at all pleasing to one who wishes to sit down and meditate quietly. If the shrine is in Buddhist hands such filthy conditions would never be tolerated. In the centre of the floor there is a square traced on the stone slabs into which Hindus sometimes drop offerings of flowers; the lamp post just in front is used for lighting ghee lamps. Both these ought to be removed so that the visitors may have sufficient space to squat on the floor in their traditional manner.

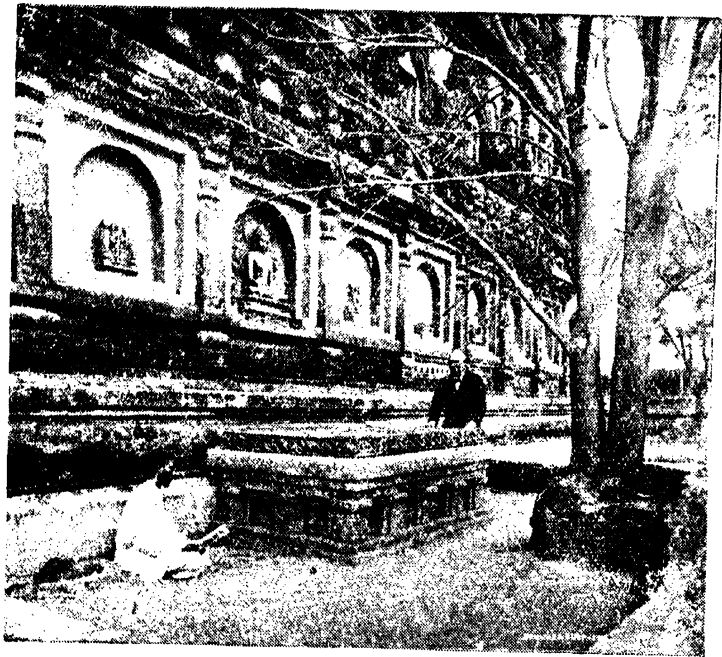
The temple has an upper storey. It is reached by means of two steep stone staircases on either side of the outer hall near the entrance. On reaching the first floor, one can walk right round the main tower as there is a fine open and wide passage. At the four corners of the temple on this floor, there are the four smaller towers already mentioned. These add greatly to the symmetry and grandeur of the whole structure. The two towers on the west side contain small shrines with images of the Bodhisatvas. The other two in the east contain the landings of the staircases. On these two landings also, there are two large images of the Lord. These as well as the images inside the western towers are covered with saffron-coloured cloth by the Mahant's servants who give them all kinds of absurd names through ignorance. The parapet round the passage contains numerous votive *stūpas*, some of which are exquisitely carved. Those in the east especially are simply superb.

Under the main tower on the first floor there is a fairly large shrine with a Bodhisatva figure installed on the altar. Except for this the room is absolutely bare. It was in this shrine room that the late Ven. Anagarika Dharmapāla enshrined the sandal wood image he had brought from Japan.

The true height and the imposing nature of the Vihāra are somewhat obscured by the fact that the surrounding land is at least fifteen feet higher than the ground level. It is said that these mounds were set up purposely to prevent the temple getting inundated during the rainy season. The height of the Vihāra is about 170 feet while the base is 48 feet square. The facing is plastered with *chūnam* with innumerable niches, carvings, creepers, etc. Some of the niches contain images. The main niche on the west wall contains an unusually fine image of the Buddha which has been gilded by Tibetan pilgrims. The best view of the temple is obtained



MAHA BODHI REST HOUSE, BUDDHAGAYA



SACRED BODHI TREE AND VAJRASANA, BUDDHAGAYA
THE LATE VEN. ANAGARIKA DHAMMAPALA IS SITTING WHILE MR. HARRISON,
A BURGHIER BUDDHIST FROM CEYLON, IS STANDING CLOSE TO THE VAJRASANA

from the north. It is a sight which no Buddhist can ever forget not only on account of the impressiveness of the Vihāra but also on account of the serene atmosphere which pervades the holy place.

2. BODHI TREE.

Sitting under the Bodhi Tree, Prince Siddhārtha attained Enlightenment and became the Buddha on the full moon day of the month of *Vaisākha*, and for seven weeks He kept on meditating on the bliss He had attained, spending one week at each of seven places. The first week was spent under the Bodhi tree itself. This Bodhi tree was the central object of worship to the Buddhists, at Buddhagayā. The present tree is situated to the west of the temple and is about 100 feet high. It is said that the original tree under which the Lord attained Buddhahood sprang up simultaneously with His birth and stood there for centuries for the devotees to worship. Fa-Hien says, in his travels, that Emperor Asoka used to visit the Bodhi tree "habitually to repent himself of his sins, to chastise himself and subject himself to the eight purifications. The king's wife asked whether the king daily repaired to the promenade (?). The grandees replied, that he always went to the tree *Peito*. The queen awaited the time when the king was not there, and sent people to cut and throw down the tree. When the king returned and beheld this, he was so troubled and afflicted that he fell to the earth. The nobles bathed his face with water, and after a long time he returned to his senses. He caused a brick wall to be built round the roots of the tree, and then to be watered with a hundred pitches of cow's milk. He cast himself upon the ground, and made oath never to rise again unless the tree were reproduced. Scarcely had he made this oath, than the tree began to sprout again from its roots, and from that time to the present it has become at least ten *chang* high."

According to history, Sasanka, a Hindu King of Bengal had the Bodhi tree cut down and destroyed but luckily another tree arose out of the same roots. When Cunningham started the repair work of the temple in 1870, the old tree fell down, so he had a sapling from it planted at the very spot for the exclusive worship of the Buddhists. Another tree, at a distance of about 250 feet to the north of the temple, is reserved for the Hindus who come here to offer *pinda*¹ in memory of their ancestors. Asoka is said to have enclosed the Bodhi tree with a stone railing of excellent workmanship. He also made a pilgrimage to the tree with a great retinue the scene of which is illustrated on one of the Sānci gateways. Emperor Asoka's daughter Sanghamittā conveyed a branch of the original tree to Ceylon and it was planted in the sacred city of Anurādhapura where it is in excellent preservation even today after 2,000 years of continued existence, nourished by the pious Buddhists of the Island. It is thus the oldest historical tree in the world.

3. VAJRĀSANA

Vajrāsana or Diamond Throne is the seat which sprang up at the foot of the Bodhi tree and on which the Bodhisatta sat down in order to attain Supreme Enlightenment. In its place there is now a highly carved stone seat which is 7 feet 6 inches long and 4 feet 10 inches broad and 3 feet high. It is placed between the Bodhi tree and the temple on a raised platform. There is a circular stone slab in a small shrine within the compound of the Mahant's burial ground which is also described as forming part of the Vajrāsana. If this is a fact it must have been removed there by the Mahant sometime before the repair work of the temple commenced. It should now be brought back from its present seclusion and suitably placed near the Bodhi tree.

1. Offerings made to the dead ancestors.

After spending six years in practising austerities in the sacred locality known as Uruvelā, our Lord broke fast by partaking the milk-rice offered to Him by Sujātā under the Ajapāla nigrodha tree. The same night He came to the Bodhi tree and, spreading a handful of grass given by Sotthiya, a grass cutter, on the Vajrāsana which sprang up there miraculously, He seated Himself on it making the following firm resolution :—

*“ Kāmaṃ taca ca nahōru atthi ca avasissatu, upasussatu sarīre
mansalohitaṃ natveva sammāsambodhiṃ appatvā imaṃ
pallaṅkaṃ bhindissāmi.”*

*“ Indeed, let only skin, veins and bones remain; let the flesh
and blood of this body dry up; never will I abandon this
seat without obtaining the state of Sammāsambodhi
(Supreme Enlightenment).”*

Next day just as the first rays of the sun bathed the eastern horizon in a blaze of light, the Bodhisatta realized the Truth and became Fully Enlightened. It is also here that Māra, the evil one, is said to have disputed the seat with the Buddha. The story is worth noting as many a Buddha image depicts this scene. Always bent on frustrating the efforts of our Lord, this personification of evil ordered Him to quit the seat but Buddha refused to do so remarking that it was His by the right of His many acts of charity in past *kalpas* when He sacrificed, on innumerable occasions, His limbs and even body for the sake of attaining Buddhahood. Thereupon Māra asked Buddha to produce His witnesses but the Lord had none there at the time; so He pointed to the earth saying, “ This is my witness.” At that moment there was a mighty earthquake and Māra fled away in utter consternation and his forces scattered and disappeared. After he

had thus fled away and the Lord had acquired the *Sabbāññuta-nāna*,¹ He uttered the following verse in ecstatic joy :—

*"Aneka jāti saṃsāraṃ sandhāvissaṃ anibbisaṃ
Gahakārakaṃ gavesanto. dukkhājāti punappunaṃ.
Gahakāraka, diṭṭhosi punagehaṃ na kāhasi
Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā gahakūḷaṃ visaṅkhitāṃ
Visaṅkhāra gataṃ cittaṃ tanhānaṃ khaya majjangā."*

*"Through many a birth in existence wandered I,
Seeking but not finding the builder of this house.
Sorrowful is repeated birth.*

*O house-builder ! you are seen. You shall build no house
again,*

*All your rafters are broken, your ridge-pole is shattered,
To emancipation (Nibbāna) goes my mind,
The end of craving have I attained."*

4. THE SEVEN SITES.

(a) *Bodhi tree* (see page 17).

(b) *Animisalocana Stūpa*. This is a small *stūpa* erected at the site where Lord Buddha out of gratitude stood gazing at the Bodhi tree for giving Him shelter while making His supreme effort to gain Buddhahood. Built in bricks, some of which are tastefully carved, it stands on the mound to the left of the foot path leading towards the main temple from the long flight of steps. This *chaitya* was also repaired by the Government but not so thoroughly as the main Temple. It is square at the base and tapering towards the top, the height being 55 feet. The entrance is from the east which leads to a

¹ All knowing wisdom (omniscience).

small room 16 feet square. At present there is a small image of a Bodhisatva inside the shrine.

- (c) *Cankamana or the walk.* The site is marked by a raised platform along the northern wall of the main temple. At this place Lord Buddha spent seven days walking up and down in meditation. The platform is 3 feet high and 60 feet long. Formerly it was flanked with stone pillars which probably supported a roof over the walk. At present there is only one pillar standing with a figure carved on it. On the platform there are lotuses to indicate the places where the Lord's feet rested while walking.

- (d) *Ratanāghara.* At this place also Lord Buddha spent seven days in meditation and reciting to Himself "*Samanta patthāna.*" While He sat here the following seven rays emanated from His sacred body viz., blue, yellow, red, white, orange and lastly all these colours combined together. The Buddhist flag is designed with these colours and is in use all over Ceylon and among the Buddhists of India.

The Ratanāghara is now indicated by a small shrine room 14 ft. by 11 ft. in the northern compound of the temple. It is made of bricks but only the four outer walls are in existence today. Round about are numerous votive *stūpas* some of which are of fine workmanship.

- (e) *Rājāyatana.* This is the tree under which Lord Buddha spent the 7th week after His Supreme Enlightenment. The actual site is not known yet. Lord Buddha is said to have sat on a stone seat which sprang up there from the ground.

- (f) *Ajapāla Nigrodha tree.* It was under this tree that Sujātā offered milk-rice to the Lord before He left for the Bodhi tree for His final effort to attain Enlightenment. Here He is said to have spent the fifth week after His Buddhahood. A *stūpa* marked the place in ancient days. The exact site has yet to be discovered and identified.
- (g) *Mucalinda Lake.* According to local guides, Mucalinda Lake is about a mile to the south of the Vihāra. A small filled up pond which is now called " Mucharin " is pointed out as the spot where Lord Buddha spent the sixth week. If continuity of the same name is sufficient evidence for the identification of a historic place we have no reason to reject this local tradition. While the Buddha was meditating near the lake, there broke out a severe thunderstorm. Seeing that the Lord was getting wet, the snake king of the lake called " Mucalinda," came out of his abode and, encircling the body of the Lord several times, held his hood over Him as a protection against the furious wind and rain. By the side of the lake there is a small heap of bricks suggesting the existence of ancient monuments underground.

Hiuen Tsiang gives the following description of the lake:—
 " The water of the Mucalinda lake is extremely green (or blue) in colour. Drinking water in this lake gives delight to one. On the mound to the west of the lake there is a small Vihāra with a Buddha image."

5. STONE RAILING ROUND THE VIHĀRA.

Round the Vihāra there is now extant a portion of the stone railing made during the Sunga period. This is generally

described as an Asokan railing but the inscriptions found on some of the pillars definitely prove that it is of a much later date. The entire railing is made of sandstone and is very well designed. Some of the pillars have beautiful carvings of figures, medallions and flowers—especially the indispensable lotus. There are also several inscriptions in Brahmi characters which give the names of the donors. This railing must have replaced the one set up by Asoka, when the temple was enlarged. The railing is fairly well preserved on the south and the west whereas it is badly damaged in the north and the east. It is about eight feet high with four bars including the top piece. The difference between this railing and those of Asoka consists in the fact that the stone used is unpolished and contains sculptures whereas those of Asoka are highly polished and absolutely plain.

6. VOTIVE STŪPAS ROUND THE TEMPLE.

Round the temple as well as in the large court-yard are to be found hundreds of small *chaityas* which are known as votive *stūpas*. Most of these are made of *chunār* or black stone and are extremely elegant. These *stūpas* are supposed to be gifts of pilgrims who offer them in fulfilment of certain vows made by them. For instance, when a beloved member of the family falls ill, the head of the family makes a vow that he would, on the patient's recovery, offer a *stūpa* at Buddhagayā or some other holy place. Accordingly, on the recovery of the patient, the promised gift is made. There are two fairly large *stūpas* on the south-east quadrangle. These as well as the other, large ones were probably erected to enshrine relics of saints and not merely as votive offerings. A large damaged Buddha image in stone is found in a corner of the court-yard to the south.

7.

The white unattractive structure to the right of the main entrance to the great Vihāra is generally known as the Pañca Pāṇḍava Temple. There are two small rooms in a row with five images enshrined therein. These images are not connected with the story of the Pañca Pāṇḍavas of the Mahābhārata; they are familiar Bodhisatva figures and therefore the description of the place as "Pañca Pāṇḍava Temple" is absurd. This is an attempt on the part of ignorant Hindu *pūjārīs* to make a living by misleading the Hindu pilgrims who would not make any offerings to these Bodhisatva images if they are aware that they have nothing to do with their own religion. To say the least the building is quite out of place in the holy precincts. No one with an æsthetic sense would have allowed its erection in front of the great Vihāra. The removal of this eyesore from the compound will be much appreciated by visitors and pilgrims.

8. SAMĀDHI OF A MAHANT.

Again, to the right of the main entrance, there is another white structure without any proportions whatsoever. It is supposed to be the grave of Chaitanya Gir, the second Mahant in succession, who is reputed to have killed a tiger at the spot. While one can admire his bravery, one cannot certainly appreciate the artistic taste of his followers who thought it proper to commemorate the event by putting up this ugly and shapeless building in front of the fine Vihāra. The most appropriate site for this structure would have been the enclosure containing the *samādhis*, a few yards away. This too is a building that should be dismantled.

9. FOUNDATION OF A MONASTERY.

To the south-west of the Mahābodhi temple, there is a rectangle which is said to be the foundation of the monastery

erected by King Meghavarna of Ceylon for the use of Sinhalese monks visiting the sacred place. It is entirely in ruins and only the foundations exist ; we are therefore unable to say what the superstructure was like. Nevertheless the size of the foundations suggest that the building was a very imposing structure worthy of both the builder and the sacred place. The existence of these foundations proves that Ceylon Buddhists had in the past too taken an abiding interest in the well-being of Buddhagayā.

10. THE IMAGE SHED.

On the raised ground in front of the flight of steps going down to the compound of the temple, there is a small shed enclosed with an iron railing. It contains a collection of images and other sculptures recovered from the compound of the temple in course of the excavation work. Compared to the finds at Sarnāth and other centres, this collection is, of course, very negligible. Probably as the place was in the charge of the Mahant, most of the antiquities disappeared into the walls of the various buildings he had erected near the temple or went into the art collections of visitors to the site. A careful examination of the boundary walls of the Mahant's monastery and those of other buildings near about shows the regrettable fact that valuable specimens of sculpture are even today jutting out from them at different places. Of those which were left over after thus disposing off the majority, some were sold by the villagers to traders while others were carried away by visitors as souvenirs. While nothing can be done now to recover the sculpture removed from the place, it is yet possible for the Archaeological Department to salvage at least those which are near about the sacred temple before they vanish altogether.

II. LARGE TANK FOR BATHING.

To the south of the temple beyond the compound, there is a large artificial lake reached by a long flight of steps from the pillared pavilion. Here lotuses grow in profusion but the water looks unclean with a greenish coloured water-plant floating on the surface. On the north side there are a large number of cubicles which were used by monks to keep their robes when they came to bathe in the pond. At present the villagers use the tank for bathing and for washing their clothes though this is prohibited by the Government.

12. BURMESE REST HOUSE.

The Rest House which was erected in 1874 by the late King Mindoon Myin of Burma for the use of Burmese pilgrims, is situated to the west of the Vihāra and contains three large rooms. This was erected actually for the residence of His Majesty's representatives when the late king sent an embassy to the sacred place to have it excavated and the temple repaired. For a long period it was occupied by the late Venerable Angārika Dharmapāla and the Japanese image found in it a safe home for a considerable time but the Mahant had it removed from the place by instituting a law suit. At present the building is lying idle.

13. MAHĀ BODHI REST HOUSE.

The fine two storeyed building which stands at a short distance to the west of the Vihāra, was erected at a cost of Rs. 15,000 by the Mahā Bodhi Society for the use of Buddhist pilgrims. Constructed in 1901 A.C., it was the first major work accomplished by the Mahā Bodhi Society in India. It is a two-storeyed building with several rooms and a large hall in the middle of the ground floor. About one hundred pilgrims can be comfortably accommodated in it at a time.

Funds for its construction were provided by the Burmese and the Sinhalese Buddhists. Pilgrims to Buddhagayā from all parts of the world take shelter here and it is pleasant to see so many races mingling together at this place. Five of the rooms are reserved for the exclusive use of monks appointed by the Mahā Bodhi Society. With the Society's permission the Tibetan Buddhists have put up another Rest House for their use. Some of the Tibetan pilgrims, however, make use of the Mahā Bodhi Rest House also. The management of the Mahā Bodhi Rest House is left in the hands of the District Board of Gayā.

14. THE SAMĀDHIS OF THE MAHANTS.

To the east of the Vihāra, the visitor will see within an enclosure a large number of white conical towers. These are the *samādhis* or the burial places of the Mahants and their chief disciples. The dead bodies of *sanyāsīs* are either buried or thrown into the river Ganges, contrary to the customary disposal by cremation of deceased lay Hindus. There are several of these *samādhis* to the north of the Vihāra as well.

15. THE MAHANT'S MONASTERY.

On the way to the Mahābodhi Vihāra, before taking the upward turn of the road, the visitor will see on his left, a high boundary wall and a massive gateway. Within this wall is the monastery of the Mahant of Bodhigayā who is now in possession of the Mahābodhi Temple. He is the present representative of a line of ascetics, the first of whom came to Buddhagayā about 300 years ago and took up his residence here by mere chance. "Attracted by the sylvan solitude of the place," he squatted down near the Vihāra and, in due course, gathered round him a number of supporters. His successors obtained grants from various Kings and today the monastery of Bodhi-

gayā is one of the richest in North India. In fact the Mahant is the second biggest landlord of the Province of Behar.

16. NEW BURMESE REST HOUSE.

Not far from the Buddhagayā Police Station, on the main road to Buddhagayā, there is now a new Rest House built by the Burmese Buddhists. Though small at present, there is every likelihood of the place growing in importance as a centre for pilgrims.

17. NERAÑJARĀ RIVER.

Nerañjarā river is now called "Lilājan" and flows about 200 yards in front of the Mahābodhi Vihāra. It is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile wide but there is very little water during the greater part of the year. It is one vast stretch of sand during summer and winter months but becomes full to the brim during the rainy season. It was in this river that the Lord bathed and, after finishing His meal, sent His begging bowl upstream, making a solemn declaration that, were He to become Buddha, the bowl should go upstream and join those of the previous Buddhas. This happened exactly as He wished, and He thus knew that He would attain His object soon. On the left bank of this river, seven miles below Buddhagayā, is the modern city of Gayā. The famous Vishnupāda Temple where the Hindus assemble to offer *pinda* is in the old city which in former times was known as Brahmagayā. These pilgrims visit Buddhagayā as well where some of them repeat the ritual under the Bodhi tree specially set apart for them. There is a belief that the foot-print in the Vishnupāda Temple is none other than that of Lord Buddha now appropriated by the Hindus.

18. SUJĀTĀKUTI.

At a distance of a mile and half across the Nerañjarā river, there is a high mound overgrown with trees and shrubs.

It is pointed out by some as the site of Sjuātā's house ; others consider it to be the site of the Ajapāla tree. Nothing definite can be said in favour of either theory until the place is excavated and the remains properly examined. From its outward appearance, the mound looks like the ruins of an ancient *stūpa* and not of a dwelling house.

19 AND 20. BIRLA DHARMASALA AND THE CENTRE FOR THE CHINESE.

19 and 20. Two new additions to the institutions at the place are the Rest House erected by Seth Jngol Kishore Birlaji and the Centre for Chinese Buddhists.

Buddhagayā Dak Bungalow.

Visitors to Buddhagayā can stay in the Government Dak Bungalow which is to the north of the Vihāra. It has two well-furnished rooms which can be reserved at Re. 1.00 per head. Buddhist pilgrims are accommodated in the Mahābodhi Rest House but those who wish for European comforts can come over here. In the compound of the Dak Bungalow there is a stone pillar which is carved from top to bottom with fine minute figures of the Buddha.

History of Buddhagayā.

The history of Buddhagayā as a place of sacred importance to the Buddhists commences from the time the Bodhisatta started austerities in the forests around the place, then known as Uruvelā.

Ever since the Buddha acquired supreme Enlightenment under the Bodhi, Buddhagayā has remained the most sacred spot on earth to the entire Buddhist world. It is said that all Buddhas attain Enlightenment at this spot. One can then easily imagine the extraordinary veneration the Buddhists entertain for this sacred place.

After realising the ideal for which the Bodhisatta had worked so strenuously life after life, He as the Buddha started on His mission of enlightening the world about the new discovery He had made, while His faithful followers began to look upon the actual spot where this historic event took place as the holiest of holy places. Though no mention is made in the Pāli books, Lord Buddha must have visited Buddhagayā again in the course of His preaching tours while His followers regarded it as a meritorious act to visit it as often as possible. Emperor Asoka journeyed here more than once and one of his visits is charmingly inscribed in a Sānci Torana. He must have also been the founder of the Buddhagayā Temple proper, though, unfortunately for us, we see no remains of his works at present. Lack of Asokan monuments at this place can only be explained by the fact that every succeeding King thought it a privilege to add new buildings with the result that those of previous kings became obliterated. It is also quite possible that Asokan remains were destroyed during the reigns of hostile Kings like Sasanka.

For an accurate history of the temple as it is now found, we must go back to the records of the Chinese pilgrims Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsiang, both of whom visited it in the course of their pilgrimage. Basing our conclusions on their accounts, we can safely affirm that the present temple was built about the 2nd century A.C.

Fa Hien who visited the place in 409 A.C., writes :—

“ At the place where Buddha attained to perfect wisdom, there are three monasteries, in all of which, there are monks residing. The families of their (the ?) people around supply the necessities of these monks with an abundant sufficiency of what they require so that there is no lack or stint. The disciplinary rules are strictly observed by them . . . The place of the four great topes have been fixed and handed down without break since Buddha attained to Nirvāna. Those four great topes are those at the places where Buddha was born ; where he attained to wis-

dom, where he began to move the wheel of the law, and where he attained to Parinirvāṇa." (*Vide Trans: of Fa Hien's Travels by James Legge, pp. 89, 90*).

A fuller account is given by Hiuen Tsiang who visited the place in 637 A.C. He says :

"To the east of the Bodhi tree there is a Vihāra about 160 or 170 feet high. Its lower foundation wall is 20 or more paces in its base. The building is of blue tiles (bricks) covered with *chunam* ; all the niches in the different stories hold golden figures. The four sides of the building are covered with wonderful ornamental works ; in one place the figures of stringed pearls, in another figures of heavenly *rishis*. The whole is surrounded (surmounted ?) by a gilded Copper *amlak* fruit. The eastern face adjoins a storeyed pavilion, the projecting eaves of which rise one over the other to the height of three distinct chambers ; its projecting eaves, its pillars, beams, doors and windows are decorated with gold and silver ornamental works with pearls and gems let into fill up interstices. Its sombre chambers and mysterious halls have doors in each of the three storeys. To the right and left of the outside gate are niches like chambers; in the left is a figure of Avalokitesvara Bodhisatva and in the right a figure of Maitriya Bodhisatva. They are made of white silver and are about ten feet high. On the site of the present Vihāra Asokarājā at first built a small Vihāra. Afterwards there was a Brahmin who reconstructed it on a larger scale. At first this Brahmin was not a believer in the Law of Buddha and sacrificed to Mahesvara. Having heard that this heavenly spirit (god) dwelt in the snowy mountains, he forthwith went there with his younger brother to seek by prayer (his wishes). The Deva said, 'Those who pray should aim to acquire some extensive religious merit. If you who pray have not this ground (of merit) then neither can I grant what you pray for.'

"The Brahmin said, 'What meritorious work can I set about, to enable me to obtain my desire ?'

"The God said, 'If you wish to plant a superior root (growth) of merit, then seek a superior field (in which to acquire it). The Bodhi tree is the place for attaining the fruit of a Buddha. You should straightway return there, and by the Bodhi tree erect a large Vihāra, and excavate a large tank and devote all kinds of religious offerings (to the service). You will then surely obtain your wishes.'

"The Brahmins having received the divine communication conceived a believing heart, and they both returned to the place. The elder brother built the Vihāra, the younger excavated the tank, and then they prepared large religious offerings, and sought with diligence their heart's desire (vow). The result followed at once. The Brahman became the great Minister of the King. He devoted all his emoluments to the work of charity." (*Beal's Hiuen Tsiang*, Vol. II, pp. 118-9).

According to Sir Alexander Cunningham, the above description tallies "so closely with the great temple as it now stands that there can be no reasonable doubt that it is, inspite of repairs and alterations, the same building which was seen and described by Hiuen Tsiang." (*Vide Cunningham's Mahā Bodhi*, p. 18).

There is another tradition, much later, which says that the temple was erected by Amaradeva, the author of *Amara-kosha*, in 948 A.C. This tradition is made much of by the Mahant on the strength of a certain inscription. But close examination of this inscription has definitely proved that it is a spurious one set up by a Vaishnava monk, probably at the instigation of one of the Mahants to strengthen his claim to the Vihāra. Scholars are agreed on this point; we can therefore without much ado, dismiss this inscription as absolutely worthless as a historical document. It can be asserted with conviction that nothing which the Mahants may do or say, can destroy the true facts of history, which prove beyond a shadow of doubt that the temple as well as all other ancient monuments found at the site are the remains of the activities of pious Buddhists in the course of many centuries.

It is also a remarkable fact that whenever the temple needed repairs, these were always carried out by Buddhists alone. The orthodox Hindus never looked upon Buddhagayā as a place of any religious importance to them.

While a connected history of the place is not available from ancient times, whenever any information is discovered, it invariably goes to prove that the temple was in Buddhist possession up to the advent of the Mohammadan invasion in the twelfth century A.C., and all repairs and alterations were undertaken not only by Indian Buddhists but also by Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma and other foreign countries. Hence it appears that Buddhagayā was not a sectarian place but a centre of international Buddhist activity.

According to recorded history, Ceylon's intimate connection with the sacred place began about 250 B.C. when Asoka sent Sanghamittā to Ceylon with a branch of the Bodhi tree. The monastery at Buddhagayā built in 330 A.C. by Meghavarna, (see p. 24, *supra*) had its origin in the complaints made by pilgrims from the Island visiting the famous shrine. As they had no residence of their own, they were put to "untold hardships." On representing matters to the King, he sent an embassy to Samudragupta, the then reigning King of Magadha, requesting his permission to erect a suitable monastery for the use of Sinhalese monks. The necessary permission being given, King Meghavarna erected a magnificent monastery which was fully occupied throughout the year by devout pilgrims from Ceylon. The *three* monasteries mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang were probably the ones erected by Meghavarna. The copper plate inscription which he set up there has not been discovered. It is said to have contained the following inscription:—"To help all without distinction is the highest teaching of all the Buddhas; to exercise mercy as occasion offers is the illustrious doctrine of former saints. And now I, unworthy descendant in the royal line, have undertaken to found this Saṅghārāma to enclose the sacred trees, and to hand down their renown to future ages and to spread their benefits among the people. The monks of my country will thus obtain independence and

be treated as members of the fraternity of this country. Let this privilege be handed down, from generation to generation without interruption." (*The Buddhist*, Vol. VIII). The fact of the building of this monastery alone is sufficient to show the continued interest taken by Ceylon Buddhists in this famous centre of Buddhism in India.

As early as 1079 A.C. we find the Burmese Buddhists carrying out a complete repair of the temple and the walls round it. A bhikkhu by the name of Dhammarakkhita carried out certain repairs at this place between 1100 and 1200 A.C. The cost was borne by Asokamalla, Rājā of Sapadalaksha. The Burmese once again renovated the place in the year 1298.

Lately an inscription dated 1202 A.C. was discovered at Jānibīghā in Behar. It was translated into English by the late Mr. K. P. Jayaswal and published in the Behar and Orissa Research Society's Journal, Vol. IV, p. 279. This valuable inscription records the gift of a village to the Diamond throne (Vajrāsana) at Buddhagayā. "It was given in trust into the hands of Maṅgalaswāmi who must have been the guardian of the Diamond throne. The purpose of the donation was the maintenance of the *Adhivasati*, residence or monastery, attached to the Diamond throne, or the residence of the monk Maṅgalaswāmi himself (*tadadhivasrtaye*)." This Maṅgalaswāmi must have, therefore, been the bhikkhu in charge of the Buddhagayā Temple at the time. It is a pity we have no record of his successors, if any. Probably during his time Buddhagayā was over-run by invaders and therefore the place was left without a guardian. It is a very interesting fact that this Maṅgalaswāmi was a *Sinhalese* by birth and had become the head of the Buddhagayā Vihāra on account of his learning and piety. The Buddhists of Ceylon can, therefore, rightly claim the Mahābodhi temple as their own by virtue of its last known incumbent having been a countryman of theirs.

Thus probably up to at least the twelfth century A.C., Buddhagayā was in the hands of either Sinhalese or Indian *Buddhists*. Their control over it was lost only after its destruction by the Moslem invaders. From the time of their invasion to the time of the arrival of the first Mahant at the site, we have no information whatsoever. This is of course natural as it was a period of internal insecurity as a result of Moslem invasion and no pilgrimages were possible. As a result of these turmoils, most of the monks fled to Tibet, Nepāl and other friendly countries leaving the sacred places to be over-run with jungle.

About 1590 A.C. a wandering *saṃyāsī* by the name of Gosain Ghamanḍi Gir arrived at the village of Buddhagayā. He was struck by the "sylvan solitude" of the vicinity and consequently decided to make the place his permanent abode. Close to the ruins of the temple, he got a small monastery erected and gathered round him a number of followers. In course of time this monastery grew in importance until, in a few generations, it developed into the present enormous Maṭh of the Mahants. The present Mahant is the 13th in succession to Ghamanḍi Gir. It was during the time of Mahant Lal Gir that the Maṭh acquired a substantial portion of its vast property. The villages of Mastipur and Tarāḍih were given to him as a grant by the Muslim Emperor of Delhi. It must be mentioned here that we have no evidence whatsoever to show that the Mahants had acquired any right over the Temple which was entirely in ruins then.

It is curious that the Buddhagayā Temple which ought to be in the village known as "Bodhgayā" deriving its name from the Temple, is, as a matter of fact, now shown in Survey maps as falling within the orbit of the village called "Tarāḍih" deriving its name in turn from a Temple still existing in that village. What can be the explanation of this mix up? As the

Survey maps of the District were completely destroyed during the Mutiny of 1857, we are now unable to verify whether this anomaly had existed even before that year. What we can conjecture is that the Mahant who by then had realised the value of the ruins, induced the officials preparing the new maps to show the Temple within his own property of Tarādih and not within Buddhagayā which, to a very recent date, was the property of the Rājā of Tikāri. This alteration is extremely simple as the Temple is marked on the boundary between these two villages.

In 1811 the King of Burma visited the sacred place and later the King of Āvā sent two messengers who identified Buddhagayā and other sacred places round about with the help of Buddhist books.

A Mahāyāna Nepālī monk visited the site and spent a considerable time in close company with the inmates of the Mahant's monastery. He also had the good fortune of converting one of the *sanyāsīs* to Buddhism.

Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, the wellknown archaeologist, visited Buddhagayā in 1812. He found the Vihāra in utter ruins and it was apparent that the Mahants had not shown the slightest interest in the Mahābodhi temple until then.

Again in 1833 the ruins were visited by a Burmese ambassador named Mengy Maha Chesu and his *suile*. They discovered a Pāli inscription in Burmese character at the site. The following is a translation of the same :—

" This is one of the 84,000 shrines erected by Sri Dharmasoka, ruler of the world (Jambudvīpa), at the end of the year 218, of Buddha's Parinirvana (B.C. 326) upon the holy spot in which Bhagawan (Buddha) having tasted milk and honey (madhupāyāsa). In lapse of time having fallen into a state of disrepair, it was rebuilt by a priest named Naikamahanta. Again been ruined, it was restored by Raja Sadomang. After a long interval it was once more demolished, when Raja Sempyu-sakhentara-

mangyi appointed his guru Sri Dhammrajaguna to superintend the building. He proceeded to the spot with his disciple Sri Kas-yapa, but they were unable to complete it although aided in every way by the Raja. Afterwards Varadasi-naik-thera petitioned the Raja to undertake it, to which he readily assented, commissioning Prince Pyatasing to the work, who again deputed the younger Pyusa-Kheng, and his Minister Ratha, to cross over and repair the sacred building. It was thus constructed a fourth time, and finished on Friday, the 10th day of Pyadola, in the Sakharaja year 667 (A.C. 1306?). It was consecrated with splendid ceremonies and offerings of food, perfumes, banners, lamps and puja, of the famous ornamented tree called *Kalpa Vriksha*; and the poor (too) were treated with charity as the Raja's own children. Thus was completed this meritorious act, which will produce eternal reward and virtuous fruits. May the founders endure in fame, enjoy the tranquillity of Nibbana and become Arahants on the advent of Maitri (the future Buddha)."

In 1874, the then ruling King of Burma, sent an embassy to the Government of India with costly gifts to the sacred Bodhi Tree, requesting the Government to render every possible assistance to these ambassadors to offer worship to the holy place on his behalf. As this is the first attempt in modern times to revive the place as a centre of Buddhist worship, we may quote from the correspondence which passed between the King of Burma and the Government of India as well as between the Government and the Mahant. After expressing the King's wishes in regard to worship etc., his letter says :—

"The King further desires that the compound of the tree which may have been burnt(?) on account of age be repaired. It is also his wish that two persons be deputed near the Bodhi tree. He also wishes that once or twice a year his people may take offerings to the tree as he may desire."

The wishes of the King being conveyed to the Mahant by the District Magistrate of Gayā, the former replied as follows :—

"1. As to the compound of the tree which the King of Burma wishes to repair, His Majesty is at liberty to do so if he so desires.

"2. Secondly the King of Burma may at his pleasure depute persons to officiate at the worship of the said Bodhi tree."

Accordingly the ambassadors sent by the King made the offerings at the shrine and left for Burma to report. The value of the gold and silver articles alone offered by the King came to about Rs. 20,000. Although the King's instructions to the Mahant were to have these kept in a *paribhoga* house specially erected for the purpose at the expense of the King, they were all appropriated by the latter for his own use. On the return of the delegation to Burma, the Burmese Foreign Minister wrote to the Agent of the Governor-General on 18th August, 1875, as follows :

"The locality where stands the Mahabodhi tree of India being the original spot where the Omniscient and Most Excellent Lord, our great Truths, extraordinary reverence, and honour should be paid to it. His Majesty the King accordingly desires to do that homage."

"1. By repairing the *Madhya* or sacred enclosure, now in a state of decay, of the Maha Bodhi tree.

"2. By the repair of the sacred *chhatra* built by the King Phramasaka over the site of Aparajit Throne (this is nothing but the great *Vihara-Lukha*).

"3. By firmly propping up with masonry the right branch of the Mahabodhi tree.

"4. By repairing all ruined structures connected with the treasures situated within the enclosure of the Mahabodhi tree.

"5. By building near the Mahabodhi tree a monastery capable of containing about 20 Royal Rahans who will live there continually to perform the Bodhi-ranjan duties namely those connected with lighting of lamps and those connected with preservation of flowers and cold water.

"6. By enclosing the above Royal Monastery with a solid wall of masonry."

Report of the Bodhiyaya Temple by the Committee appointed by the All India Congress Committee and the Behar Provincial Hindu Maha Sabha.

" 7. By hiring men to live on the spot to watch and to attend to the wants of the monastery.

" 8. By erecting a *paribhoga* for the deposit of the Royal offerings to the Mahābodhi tree.

" Orders have consequently been given to the Royal scribe at Calcutta to submit plans and estimates for the completion of the above mentioned items."¹

The Mahant agreed to all these proposals - his only condition being that the idols of the Hindus living in the compound, etc., were not to be destroyed or interfered with. Accordingly the repair work was commenced and the King of Burma spent a good deal of money on this undertaking. He also got a small monastery put up for the use of monks about 80 yards to the west of the Vihāra. This is at present known as the Burmese Rest House. The *paribhoga* house was not even begun. On account of one reason or other the repair work started by the King was carried out in a haphazard manner. The Government of India had therefore to depute two experts *viz.*, Sir Alexander Cunningham and Dr. Rajendra-lal Mitra to supervise the operations. In the meantime the Anglo-Burmese war broke out and the King's representatives had naturally to leave the country. Thus by a strange irony of fate, the great temple which would have been in charge of the representatives of the King of Burma, fell into the dual control of the Saivite Mahant and the Government of India.

The repair work taken over by the Government of India was completed at a cost of over a lakh of rupees and the building was placed under the supervision of a custodian. An order dated the 25th July, 1889, passed by Mr. (later Sir) G. A. Grierson, Magistrate of Gaya, states :

" Mr. Maddox is placed in charge of Bodhgayā temple and Bungalow. He should visit once a month and see that the drains

1. Report of the Bodhgaya Temple by the Committee appointed by the All India Congress Committee and the Behar Provincial Hindu Maha Sabha.

are kept clear and that the other things insisted upon by me are carried out.

" He should also see that the Bungalow is kept in watertight repair, and that the chaityas and other stone relics are not carried away."¹

The last para was necessitated by the fact that these relics were being carried away by villagers for preparing mortars and other objects of domestic use and as souvenirs by visitors to the sacred place. This again shows that the Mahant had not the slightest interest in the preservation of these historic objects. The Public Works Department later on took over the building and it is in their charge even to this day. Strange to say, the Archaeological Department which is the proper custodian of ancient monuments in India, has no concern whatever with this Temple !

The question of restoring the temple into Buddhist hands was first mooted by Sir Edwin Arnold, the reputed author of " Light of Asia." He visited the spot while the repairs were being carried out and made an earnest appeal to the Government of India as well as to the British Government to have the temple placed in the hands of the Buddhists who would naturally take good care of it. He also wrote to Buddhist countries asking them to interest themselves in the matter. His appeal, however, fell on deaf ears, neither the Governments concerned nor the Buddhists taking any initiative in the matter until the late Venerable Anagārika Dharmapāla took up the cause in 1891. It was left to this lion-hearted Sinhalese leader to take the first steps in a substantial movement to regain the temple from the Mahant. It was indeed a historic day when he first arrived at Buddhagayā and worshipped at the sacred *Bodhi maṇḍapa*. This event took place on the 21st

1. Report of the Bodhgaya Temple by the Committee appointed by the All India Congress Committee and the Behar Provincial Hindu Maha Sabha.

January, 1891. I cannot do better than quote the very words of the late Venerable Dharmapāla with regard to this visit, a record of which he made in his diary immediately afterwards. One can better imagine rather than describe the feelings of a person like the Ven. Dharmapāla to whom the service of the Master was dearer than life itself. Here are his actual words :—

“ We went in the company of Durga Bābu and Dr. Chatterjee to Buddhagayā, the most sacred place to the Buddhists. After driving six miles we arrived at the holy spot. Within a mile you could see lying scattered here and there broken statues, etc., of our Blessed Lord. At the entrance to the Mahant's temple on both sides of the portico, there are statues of our Lord in the attitude of meditation and expounding the Law. How elevating ! The sacred Vihāra, the Lord sitting on His throne and the great solemnity which pervades all round makes the heart of the pious devotee weep. How delightful ! As soon as I touched with my forehead the Vajrāsana, a sudden impulse came into my mind. It prompted me to stop here and take care of the sacred spot, so sacred that nothing in the world is equal to this place where Prince Sākya Sinha gained Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. The tree is a noble representative of the old tree. I gathered some leaves of the tree and one was very peculiar in its formation. When the sudden impulse came to me, I asked Kozen priest whether he would join me and he joyously assented, and more than this he had been thinking the same thing. We both solemnly promised that we would stop here until some Buddhist priests come and take charge of the place.” 22nd January, 1891.

Determined he was. Ever since that memorable occasion when he resolved to spend the rest of his life for the recovery of the sacred temple and the spread of the Dhamma in India, every hour of his life was devoted to that tremendous task. No less a being than a Bodhisatva who dedicates his whole life to the welfare of the world, could have continued that thankless job year after year in the face of untold sufferings and most disheartening of disappointments. And yet, to the last day of his life, he never lost courage nor abandoned confidence in his ability to achieve his object. It is true he did

not succeed in regaining Buddhagayā but it is also an undeniable fact that he has been able to rouse the Buddhists to a sense of their duty in this matter and, therefore, the movement that he had inaugurated for this purpose will never cease till final victory is attained.

Of his second object, *viz.*, the revival of Buddhism in India, he was able to witness before his death very tangible results. The historic opening of the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra at Sarnāth which took place two years before his death, proved to him that his efforts in this respect were bearing good fruit and he therefore died a very happy man.

To come back to the history of the eventful period of Buddhagayā's modern history. On his return to Ceylon from his pilgrimage, Venerable Dharmapāla held a public meeting with the late Most Venerable Hikkaḍuve Śrī Sumaṅgala, Nāyaka Thero, Principal of the Vidyodaya Pirivena, a saint and scholar of international reputation, in the chair, on the 31st May, 1891. At that meeting the Mahā Bodhi Society was formally inaugurated with the main object of regaining the Buddhagayā temple and spreading the Buddha Dhamma in the land of its birth. The Venerable Nāyaka Thero was elected President and the Ven. Dharmapāla, the General Secretary. With characteristic energy, the Ven. Dharmapāla (then Mr. H. Dharmapāla) commenced the activities of the Society which, in due course, was destined to become the leading Buddhist organisation in the world.

In July, 1891, he returned to Buddhagayā with four Buddhist monks whom he stationed there. Hem Narayan Gir, the Mahant at the time, was very sympathetic and wished the Ven. Dharmapāla every success in his efforts. Later on with some reluctance, the Mahant also gave him on lease a small plot of land for erecting a temporary rest house. This Mahant unfortunately died soon after and Krishna Daval Gir

ascended the *gaḍī* on the 4th February, 1892. His coming to power at the sacred place was the signal for trouble. He did not possess that breadth of vision and sense of justice necessary to view the work of Ven. Dharmapāla with any sympathy and therefore took up a definitely hostile attitude.

On his return from the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, Ven. Dharmapāla brought a beautiful image of Lord Buddha from Japan which the Buddhists of that country desired him to install in the upper storey of the temple. Accordingly, on the 25th February, 1895, he took it to the top floor and after installing it, along with other members of his party, he engaged himself in worship and meditation. At this moment Mahant's men arrived there and forcibly removed the image. Several members of the party engaged in worship were roughly handled and one or two were very severely beaten. This resulted in the famous Buddhagayā temple case which went on for a number of years. In the lower courts Ven. Dharmapāla won the case but on preferring an appeal to the Calcutta High Court, the decision of the lower Court was reversed. It must, however, be mentioned that the learned judges held that the temple was entirely a Buddhist one but as the case was a criminal one, they did not think it expedient to go into the question of the civil rights of the parties. The question regarding the ownership of the temple was left to be decided by a Civil Court but the Buddhists have not attempted to establish their rights through this channel. The following extracts from the judgments of the two Courts will be read with interest :—

The District Judge of Gaya, in the course of his judgment, said,

“(a) The temple has continually and regularly been used as a Buddhist place of worship by Buddhist pilgrims. (b) No form of Hindu worship has been carried on inside the Mahā Bodhi temple and there is nothing to show that any such has been carried.

on in it for many centuries, if ever, since Sankara's attempt. But since July of last year there has undoubtedly been an attempt at the instance of the Mahant and his disciples to carry on a semblance of Hindu worship of the great image of the Buddha which is on the altar of the Sanctum on the ground floor of the temple. Since then as deposed by the Custodian, a Brahmin priest named Bishnu Misra, has been employed who passes a light in front of the image, sounds bells, laves the image and altar and a *tilak* or Hindu caste mark has been painted on the forehead and the image clothed with a regular vestment and the head decked with flowers. The Custodian who is a Kulm Brahmin of the highest caste deposes that nevertheless what is done does not constitute complete Hindu worship, and it must be remembered that in spite of this neither the Mahant nor any of his disciples nor any Hindu has ever been seen by him worshipping inside the temple . . . All the Hindu worship started last year, it will be observed, shortly after Dharmapāla endeavoured to place the Japanese image in the temple, and on a review of the evidence there is no room for reasonable doubt that it is of a specious kind started as a mere stratagem for giving the Mahant a pretext for interfering with the dealings of the Buddhists with the temple and strengthening whatever prescriptive rights he may possess to the usufruct of the offerings made at it."

Justice Mepherston, one of the two judges of the Calcutta High Court, who heard the appeal, said,

"It may be conceded that the Mahā Bodhi temple which is very ancient and very sacred to the Buddhists, was a Buddhist temple, that although it has been in the possession of Hindu Mahants, it has never been converted into a Hindu temple in the sense that Hindu idols have been enshrined or orthodox Hindu worship carried on there, and that Buddhist pilgrims have had free access and full liberty to worship in it."

Though the law suit was thus finally lost, it indirectly helped Ven. Dharmapāla to acquaint the Buddhist public with regard to the alarming state of affairs at their holiest of holy shrines. The proceedings of the case were published in all newspapers and the Buddhagayā question became a live topic throughout India, Burma and other countries. Thus a strong public opinion was created in favour of the Buddhist claim.

The Venerable Dharmapāla had no funds to go before the Privy Council.

In 1902 Mr. Okakura, a Japanese Buddhist monk, arrived at Buddhagayā and started negotiations with the Mahant for the establishment of an independent Mahāyāna monastery at the place. The suspicions of the Government were naturally roused and his efforts proved to be abortive. The consequences of his intrigues were, however, disastrous to the movement started by the Ven. Dharmapāla whose object was purely religious. The Government of India which was always sympathetic towards the Buddhist claims, now feared Japanese complications and turned definitely hostile to the Buddhists. This was a most unfortunate and unexpected turn of events.

Emboldened by the changed attitude of the Government, the Mahant instituted in 1906 another case to have Ven. Dharmapāla ejected from the Burmese Rest House which he was occupying peacefully up to that time. The former again won the case and the Buddhists were thus finally driven away from their most holy site.

One cannot read the account of these cases and other events of those stirring days without a feeling of wonder and admiration at the heroic figure of the Ven. Anagārika Dharmapāla. He had to fight single-handed against the powerful Mahant who had behind him not only the limitless resources of his *Maṭh* but also the active support of the orthodox section of the Hindus. Often the Buddhist leader had to carry on his work without sufficient food or rest in a strange land but he never lost heart nor budged an inch from the course he had chalked out. It was an epic struggle which a less powerful personality would have given up as impossible. But not so the Ven. Dharmapāla. The harder became the fight, the more determined he was. Failing to get redress from the Courts, he turned his attention to the general public and carried on an

intensive campaign through the medium of the press and by means of numerous pamphlets. These had their effect. The more enlightened section of the Hindu community was converted to his views and they gave their unstinted support to the claims of the Buddhists which they felt were based on historic facts and undeniable rights.

The Buddhagayā question was brought before the Indian National Congress at its sessions held in Gayā, Belgaon, Coconada, and other places. It was also brought before the Hindu Mahā Sabhā sessions held in Mussaffarpur which Ven. Dharmapāla himself attended and at Cawnpore attended by a large number of Buddhist delegates including the author. The National Congress appointed a Committee with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as its Chairman to report on the matter. After careful consideration of the question, an exhaustive report was duly published with the recommendation that a joint committee of Hindus and Buddhists should be formed for the management of the Vihāra. The Hindu Mahā Sabhā session held at Cawnpore appointed another Committee with Bhāi Paramānanda as its Chairman. This Committee went into the question again extensively and made almost identical recommendations. None of the recommendations, however, could be put into effect owing to the opposition of the Mahant and his advisers. The failure of all these efforts by some of India's leading statesmen point to the fact that this matter can only be settled by legislation. The Mahā Bodhi Society, therefore, approached the different parties in the Behar Legislative Assembly with a view to getting the necessary legislation passed. It is a matter for rejoicing that the Congress Government of Behar took up the question seriously and were engaged in collecting necessary data in order to introduce a Bill when it had unfortunately to resign. Now that the Congress Party has again come into power, it is the wish of Buddhists as well as all fair-minded Hindus that the Govern-

ment should take the earliest opportunity to have the required legislation passed, so that half a century's efforts of the late Ven. Dharmapāla may at last be crowned with success.

It must also be added here that several attempts were made by the Burmese members of the Indian Legislative Assembly at Delhi to get a similar Bill passed. Though they succeeded in getting it introduced, it did not go beyond the first reading.

The following extracts from the Rājendra Prasād report and the candid opinion of Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, India's greatest poet of modern times, are typical of enlightened Hindu opinion on the question :—

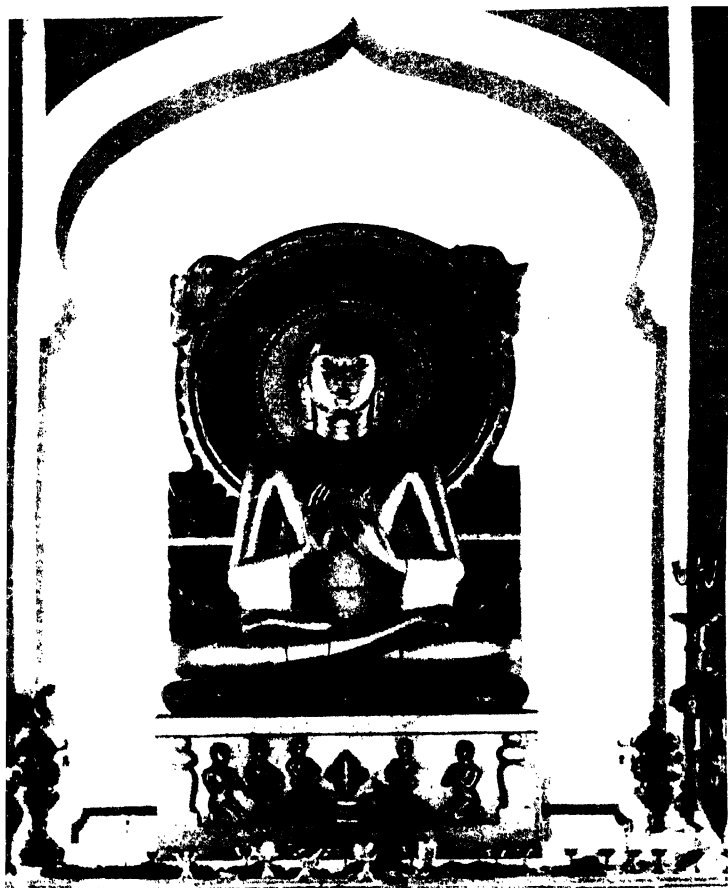
The Report says :

" The whole history of the temple as detailed above and the judgments of Courts cited above leave no doubt that the temple was *ab initio* a Buddhist shrine and has remained so throughout. Our own observation of the present condition confirms the view that the Shrine is in fact Buddhistic. All the images that we could see are Buddhistic and even those which have been given Hindu names are by their very appearance Buddhistic, *e.g.*, what are shown as the images of Pañca Pāñjāvas, Tārādevī are nothing else but images of Bodhisatvas and Buddhas and, as found by the Court, the temple has never been converted into a Hindu temple. On the other hand there is absolutely no evidence that the temple was built by the Hindus or that it has ever been repaired by the Hindus."

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore writes :

" I am sure it will be admitted by Hindus who are true to their own ideals, that it is an intolerable wrong to allow the temple raised on the spot where Lord Buddha attained His Enlightenment, to remain under the control of a rival sect which can neither have an intimate knowledge of nor sympathy for the Buddhist religion and its rites of worship. I consider it to be a sacred duty for all individuals believing in freedom and justice to help to restore this historical site to the community of people who still reverently carry on that particular current of history in their own living faith."

Indeed it would be a red letter day in the history of India when Buddhists are once again allowed to occupy this sacred place, for it will mean the ushering in of another golden period in Indian history. Those who have visited Shwe Dagon Pagoda and other important Buddhist shrines in Buddhist countries can visualise under Buddhist control, what a wonderful transformation there will be at this holiest of holy place to them.



BUDDHA IMAGE
MULAGANDHAKUTI VIHARA, SARNATH

CHAPTER III

SARNĀTH (MIGADĀYA)

SARNĀTH is the modern name for Migadāya or Rishipatana of Pāli and Sanskrit literature. It is situated six miles to the north of the "Eternal City" of India, viz., Benares, in the United Provinces. As the place where Lord Buddha delivered His first sermon, Sarnāth is second in importance as a centre of Buddhism to Buddhagayā only. Sarnāth and Buddhagayā are known as *Acala-cetiya*s as all Buddhas of all ages utilise these places in an identical manner. The distance from Gayā to Benares is 129 miles. From Gayā visitors can take the East Indian Railway to Benares Cantonment Station. The six miles from here to the site has to be traversed by car, *tongā*¹ or *ekkā*¹—all of which can be hired at the place. There is an excellent tarred road right up to the excavated area beautifully shaded with mango, tamarind and *bodhi* trees. Visitors can also take the Oudh and Tirhut Railway from the Cantonment Station to Sarnāth where there is a small Railway station. From here the sacred site is only one mile. Only *ekkās* are available here.

Objects of Interest.

Places of interest at Sarnāth are the following :—

1. CHOUKHANḌI on the way to the sacred site. It is a dilapidated *stūpa* over which a brick tower has been built later by Emperor Akbar. It is only half a mile from the sacred site.

1. These are carriages drawn by horses.

2. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM is to the right of the road just on reaching the excavated area. It is an attractive building with a spacious lawn in front.
3. THE EXCAVATED AREA. This is to the north of the Bhikkhu Dharmapāla Road. It contains the ruins of the ancient monasteries and temples.
4. DHAMEK STŪPA. This is the most conspicuous object in the excavated area.
5. MŪLAGANDHAKUṬI VIHĀRA. About six hundred yards to the east of Dhamek *Stūpa* is the great modern Buddhist temple erected by the Mahā Bodhi Society. Its high tower can be seen for miles around.
6. THE CHINESE TEMPLE. This is the latest addition to Sarnāth Buddhist establishments. It is situated to the east of the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra.
7. MAHĀ BODHI VIDYĀLAYA BUILDING. The red brick building opposite the Chinese Temple is the home of the English School conducted by the Mahā Bodhi Society.
8. MAHĀ BODHI FREE DISPENSARY. Further down the road on the right is the free dispensary.
9. MAHĀDEVA TEMPLE. Proceeding further down towards the east one reaches this old temple dedicated to Siva on the banks of an artificial lake.
10. ĀRYA DHARMA SAṄGHA DHARMASĀLĀ. This is a gift to the Mahā Bodhi Society from the Birla family for the use of Buddhist visitors. This imposing building is in front of the Vihāra, across the Dharmapāla Road.

11. MŪLAGANDHAKUṬI VIHĀRA LIBRARY. The yellow low building further down the road towards the Museum is the Library of the Society.
12. MONASTERY OF THE BHIKKHŪS. The residence for the monks of the Society is in front of the Library on the other side of the road.
13. JAIN TEMPLE. This is a temple belonging to the Jain community. Its yellow tower can be seen from a distance in the midst of the ancient ruins.
14. BURMESE TEMPLE AND REST HOUSE. This lies to the north west of the excavated area and belongs to the Burmese Bhikkhūs.
15. ARTIFICIAL LAKE. Surrounding almost the entire sacred area there is a large lake which can be seen from the Burmese Temple.

1. CHOUKHANḌI.

Let us now examine each and every one of these places of interest beginning with Choukhaṇḍi. It is the first monument met by the visitor as he proceeds towards Sarnāth. Situated on the left side of the road at a distance of half a mile from Sarnāth Station, this mass of bricks with an octagonal tower standing on top, is what remains of an ancient *stūpa*. From the size of the heap and the circumference of the base, it can be concluded that it was a huge *stūpa* comparable to the one known as "Dhamek Stūpa" in the main site. The present height of this mass of bricks including the tower is 84 feet. Sir Alexander Cunningham, Archaeological Commissioner, who drove a vertical shaft through the centre of the *stūpa* to the foundation in 1836, did not discover any relics or other treasures. Had there been any, they must have been robbed at an earlier date. The tower on the

summit can be reached by climbing the monument from the west. This tower was constructed by Emperor Akbar in 1588, A.C., to commemorate the visit of his father Humayun when he was fleeing from the wrath of his enemies. This fact is mentioned in the Persian inscription on the stone slab fixed at the front of the entrance. But it is not mentioned why he visited this remote spot. Probably it afforded him the safest hiding place from which to send his pursuers on the wrong tract. The visitor may ascend to the flat roof of the tower from where he can obtain a magnificent view of the countryside. We have no knowledge as to the age or the builder of the *stūpa*. From the remains of the plinth it can be surmised that the structure had an octagonal base decorated with pilasters. The bricks and the architectural features indicate that it was built about the 2nd or the 3rd Century, A.C.

The site of the *stūpa* is said to mark the actual spot where the Lord Buddha met His five disciples who had deserted Him at Uruvela when He abandoned the practice of self-mortifications. As the spot where the First Sermon was delivered is definitely known by the Asokan pillar at a distance of half a mile away, they must have walked up to that place from here as it was probably a more suitable place for their conversation. Lord Buddha's first meeting with His five earliest disciples is graphically described in Buddhist books. When they saw Him coming at a distance, they decided not to welcome Him or offer Him the courtesies due to a teacher. However, as He approached nearer and nearer, they could not keep to their resolve. Buddha's personality was so great, inspiring and irresistible that none of them could keep quiet. One prepared a seat for Him, another took His begging bowl, while yet another fetched water to wash His feet. After these customary courtesies were duly shown, Buddha preached to them His First Sermon at the spot marked by the Asokan pillar.

2. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

After examining the Choukhaṇḍi *stūpa*, the visitor should proceed towards the excavated area. Before he reaches it, he will see on his right the simple but imposing stone building of the Archaeological Museum. This spacious museum building was completed in 1910. It was designed after an ancient monastery by Sir John Marshall himself who was the Director General of Archaeology in India for many years. The well-kept lawns in front of the museum are a pleasing sight to the eyes.

The museum houses all the valuable antiquities found at Sarnāth. A full account of these is given in Rai Bahādur Dayā Rām Sāhni's guide and catalogue. The following are some of the chief objects preserved in the museum :-

A. *Middle Block.* (1) *Capital of Asoka's pillar.* As the visitor enters the middle block of the building from the main door, the first thing that will arrest his attention is the lion capital of Asoka placed in the centre of the hall with an old railing on two sides. This magnificent production of the ancient stone mason alone is well worth a visit to the museum. It is not an exaggeration to say that no other antiquity discovered in India so far can be compared to this in the mastery of its design and execution. Its perfect proportions, the liveliness of the animal figures and the inimitable polish render it one of the finest specimens of sculpture of the kind in the world. Dealing on the technique of the figures carved on the capital, Sir John Marshall says that they "are wonderfully vigorous and true to nature and are treated with the simplicity and reserve which is the keynote of all great masterpieces of plastic art. India certainly has produced no other sculpture equal to them."

This capital originally surmounted the pillar which Emperor Asoka set up at the site where the First Sermon

was delivered by the Buddha. The capital is about 7 feet high. It consists of four lions sitting back to back on a circular abacus about one foot high. This abacus has a Dharmacakra wheel of 24 spokes below the front legs of each lion. Between these Dharmacakras are figures of the following animals exquisitely carved: elephant, bull, horse and lion. The abacus is placed on an inverted lotus flower which was fixed on to the actual pillar. The pillar itself is said to have been 70 feet high originally. Fa Hien, the Chinese pilgrim, saw a Dharmacakra surmounting the pillar but this was not discovered intact during the excavation work. When the pillar was hurled down by the invaders, the Dharmacakra must have been broken to small bits and lost. A few pieces were recently recovered from the site and are kept in the museum.

Archaeologists have taken a good deal of pains to explain the meaning of the symbols and the figures of animals carved on the capital. Rai Bahādur Dayā Rām Sāhni, ex-Director General of Archaeology, who was personally responsible for most of the conservation work, thinks that the four lions and the figures of the bull, elephant, etc., indicate the Anotatta lake, these animals being the four guardians of the same. This explanation appears to be far-fetched. Rai Bahādur Pandit Sheo Narain, an esteemed member of the Mahā Bodhi Society, who wrote an excellent guide to Sārnāth, published by the Society, was of the opinion that the figures show symbolically the supremacy of Buddha over other beings just as the lion is the king of all animals. There is some sense in this explanation but the correct interpretation, as far as I could conjecture, is entirely different. I venture to think that the capital gives in figures and symbols the chief events of Buddha's life. The bull indicates the birth, as He was born under the sign of the bull (Vṛṣabha), elephant indicates conception as Mahā Māyādevī dreamt that a white elephant entered her womb. The horse indicates Prince Siddhārtha's

renunciation (abhinīṣkramaṇa) as he left home on his favourite horse Kaṇṭhaka. The lion indicates His First Sermon and His subsequent ministry. The four lions which surmount the capital together with the four Dharmacakras below indicate His rolling the Wheel of Law in four directions or, in other words, the proclamation of the Dhamma throughout the world. In Pāli books Buddha is mentioned as "making a lion's roar" (sihanādaṃ nadati)- so the symbol of lion is quite appropriate. The absence of the deer from the symbolism is rather remarkable.

(2) *The red stone statue of a Bodhisatva.* This huge piece of sculpture with a pillar standing at the back placed to the right of the Asokan capital is made of red sandstone unlike other remains which are almost all in white stone imported from Chūnār and Mirzāpur, about 30 miles from Sarnāth. The stone of this statue reminds one of the Agrā and Delhi Forts which are constructed out of this same granite. There are two inscriptions engraved on the back of the image from which we learn that it was made at Muttā and brought here in the third regnal year of Kanīṣka by a monk named Bala and set up at the place where Lord Buddha walked. The huge stone umbrella placed against the northern wall originally stood over this image as its sun shade. It is made of one single piece of red sandstone.

(3) *Buddha image in preaching attitude.* This image placed against the south wall of the main hall is perhaps the most perfect image of Buddha found in India and belongs to the 4th or the 5th Century, A.C. It is made of Chūnār stone and is in the attitude of preaching the *Dhammacakkappa-vattana Sutta*. The sculptor has succeeded to a remarkable degree in depicting the perfect serenity of Buddha's face. The nose and one of the fingers are unfortunately broken. In this piece of sculpture Buddha is shown as covering both

the shoulders. On the pedestal below, the figures of His five disciples are also engraved. In the middle of the seat is the Dharmacakra guarded by two deer. The woman and the child on the left hand corner perhaps represent the donor and her child in whose name the image was dedicated. The deer is the invariable symbol used at Śārnāth and indicates Migadāya or the "Deer Park." It always accompanies the Dharmacakra or the "Wheel of Law." The image of the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra is made after this statue. A replica of the same is installed in the newly-built Vihāra in New Delhi.

(4) *Other Objects.*—There are many other objects of interest in this block. Several fine standing figures of Buddha occupy the eastern corner. In the almirah kept near the north wall, the visitor will see a few small specimens of polished stone objects. The two earthen begging bowls of Buddhist monks as well as fragments of inscriptions may be noted.

The visitor should now pass on to the right wing through the open door leading from the main hall. Immediately on his left he will see an interesting piece of sculpture. In one piece of stone and in one and the same scene the whole of Buddha's life is sculptured. It is rather confusing to one who is unaccustomed to the old technique but a careful examination of the piece will show the following scenes well illustrated :—Māyādevi's dream, birth of the Prince, bathing, leaving home on horse back, cutting the hair, meditation at Buddhagayā, attainment of Buddhahood and the preaching of the First Sermon. The only important incident missing is the passing away. This is really not an omission but that part of the stone where the scene was carved has been knocked out of the piece. It is a very old custom in Indian sculpture and painting to depict several scenes in one and the same picture.

After this the visitor may see the exhibits inside the glass cases, particularly the fine heads of the Buddha kept inside the almirah on the left. Going further down this wing, he will also see figures of Bodhisatvas and other persons kept against the same wall. The peculiar head-dresses which look almost like the wigs of English judges may be noticed with interest.

B. *Southern Block*.—This block is reached again across an open arch. Immediately on the left there is a huge image of Krishna holding on his palm the Govardhana mountain. This piece of sculpture has nothing to do with Buddhism or even with Sarnāth. It was brought here from Arrah and is preserved in the Museum as an unusual piece of Hindu sculpture. The visitor should now turn to the right and see the many interesting exhibits in this block. The elaborate and profuse ornaments on the female figures, dresses and ornaments of Bodhisatvas and goddesses may be examined with care. There is a good collection of seals and pottery kept inside an almirah against the south wall. In it are also a heap of small shells (*kawri*) which were used as small coins in ancient days, a practice which is still prevalent in some remote parts of the Gorakhpur District. In one of the glass cases kept in the middle of the room, there is a small piece of sculpture depicting Avalokitesvara. It is hardly three inches high and is made of white stone which appears almost like ivory. For minute and delicate workmanship, it has no equal in the museum and is very well preserved.

Against the western wall is kept a colossal statute of Siva slaying a demon with his trident. That it has not been completed by the sculptor is obvious from the numerous chisel marks visible on the body. The discovery of this statue proves beyond doubt that Hinduism was slowly invading this sacred place of the Buddhists. It was probably under

construction when Mohamammad Ghori's armies swept over the place, and put an end to the activities of both the sculptor and the monk.

On the right hand side can be seen the Sanskrit inscription of Kumāra Devi who built the last monastery at Sārnāth. Other interesting objects are the window screens and a piece of sculpture illustrating the fight between a lion and an elephant.

Instead of retracing his steps, the visitor should now come out into the verandah through the only exit available in the South block. He should proceed along the verandah towards the main entrance. At the end of this verandah over a door, he will see a fine stone lintel containing decorative carvings. On this stone doorway are depicted scenes from the famous *Khāntivāda Jātaka*. The story runs as follows.

In a previous life, Buddha became a hermit and was called Khāntivāda and spent his time in meditation and preaching. Once he came to Kalābu and took up his residence in the Royal Park. Attracted by his holiness and instructive sermons, people flocked to hear him. But the king of Kalābu was not at all a religious man. He had a troupe of dancing girls who entertained him with dance and song. One day, hearing about the hermit's presence, when the King had fallen asleep, these women too came to hear him preaching. While they were thus listening, the King awoke and noticing their absence inquired as to why they had disappeared without his permission. Learning that they had left him to listen to the hermit, he became highly enraged and had Khāntivāda brought to his presence. The King inquired as to his name and on hearing that he was called Khāntivāda meaning "Upholder of Patience," the King retorted, "Upholder of patience ! I shall examine the strength of your patience." So saying he had his hands cut off. The

hermit bore the pain patiently and when the King jestingly inquired whether he was still Khāntivāda, he admitted that he was still so. Thereupon his legs were cut off, and giving a kick on his chest and abandoning him to die in that terrible manner, the cruel King departed with his women into the inner apartments of his Palace. Soon after the hermit was miraculously cured and his limbs were restored.

The scene of the women dancing in front of the King, their listening to the sermon of the hermit, and the cutting of the hands are strikingly portrayed on the lintel.

C. *North Block.*—The visitor should now proceed to the north block. Here the exhibits are not so interesting as those in the other two blocks. The images preserved here are very badly mutilated. The huge earthen vessel kept on the left hand corner of the room may be specially noticed. Such vessels are used for storing grains and other foodstuff in the monasteries. There are a number of specimens of unusually large bricks, small votive *stūpas* and freezes containing minute figures of the Buddha.

2. THE EXCAVATED AREA.

(a). *Kittoe's Monastery.*—After seeing the museum, the visitor will now cross over to the excavated area on the north. The first place he will arrive at is the monastery marked "Kittoe's Monastery No. VI." It is named after Major Kittoe who carried out excavation work here from 1834 to 1877. Only the foundations of the monastery are intact. They measure 107 feet each side from outside the walls. It had in all 28 rooms. The building was evidently destroyed by fire as burnt rice-cakes were found in one of the rooms. Remnants of cooked rice were also discovered by Rai Bahadur Dayā Rām Sāhni while he was in charge of the excavation

work at this place. The well in the court-yard from which water is now drawn to sprinkle the museum lawns is actually the original well of this monastery.

(b) *Brāhmanical Sculpture*.—The visitor should now climb up the raised ground on the right and see the shed containing the Brāhmanical sculptures. This *annexe* to the museum is reserved exclusively for Hindu antiquities discovered at Sārnāth. There is, however, nothing very important here to detain one long.

Standing in front of the *annexe*, the visitor will see a foot-path leading towards the main shrine strewn with coloured *surki* with a notice entitled "Inspection Path." He should follow this path so that he may not miss any of the valuable monuments.

(c) *Srī Dharmarājika Stūpa*.—Before passing the two stone pillars set up on two sides of the inspection path close to the main temple, he will see on the left a circular accumulation of earth with a sort of ditch round it. The board reads "Srī Dharmarājika Stūpa." This mound is all that remains of the *stūpa* which, in size, equalled the huge Dhamek *stūpa*. The visitor could not but have noticed the latter by this time. How the Srī Dharmarājika Stūpa disappeared from the holy site is interesting reading. Similar must have been the fate of many others of that type all over India.

About 100 years ago this stone *stūpa* was still in existence. Fa Hien who visited the sacred place in the fifth century saw it and has left a record of his impressions. In 1794 long before the Archaeological Department came into existence, one Jagat Singh, Minister to Mahārājah Chet Singh of Benares, was in need of materials to build the locality known as Jagatgunj in the city of Benares. He conceived the convenient idea of utilising the bricks and stones of this *stūpa*. So he sent here a gang of labourers who removed every

bit of stone and brick he wanted for his work ! In the course of the destruction of the ancient memorial, he discovered a stone box inside and on opening the same he found a green marble casket containing a quantity of "ashes" which were undoubtedly some relics of the Buddha or some Buddhist saint. Not knowing what to do with the ashes, he followed the usual Hindu custom by religiously throwing the same into the holy Ganges. Thus were lost for ever some valuable relics which the Buddhists would have treasured with veneration. Many a Buddhist *stūpa* met with a similar fate at the hands of builders before the Archaeological Department came into existence. In this *stūpa* were also found the inscriptions of Sthirapāla and Vasantapāla. The Vihāra in Calcutta built by the Ven. Anagārika Dharmapāla and opened in 1921 was named after the "Sri Dharmarājika Stūpa."

Heaving a sigh at such wanton destruction, we should now pass on to the Main Shrine sheltered with an asbestos roof. It is the central shrine at Sarnāth round which all the other buildings grew up in course of time. This temple is called "Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra." "Mūla" means "first" or "original" while "Gandhakuṭi" means "perfumed chamber." The latter is the appellation used in connection with all the residences of the Blessed One. This particular one is called "Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra" as the Buddha spent the first rainy season here after His enlightenment.

(d) *Shrine enclosed by Asokan railing*.—As one steps into the paved outer court-yard of the temple one will see a stone door frame standing on the right. The frame is in fact fixed into the wall of the main temple. Inside it is a small votive *stūpa* surrounded by a monolithic stone railing. From the excellent polish of the stone and the design, scholars opine that it is an Asokan railing. It is, however, difficult to say why it is in such an awkward place. Some are of the

opinion that it is a part of the Dharmarājika *stūpa* (*devatā-koṭṭava*) fallen there when it was dismantled. Others think that it is the actual enclosure of a small shrine. Both explanations are probably partially correct as here, too, as in other places, the main Vihāra has been rebuilt again and again in the course of centuries. I personally think that the railing was deliberately placed round the small votive *stūpa* by Jagat Singh or his workmen with a view to converting this into a Mahādeva temple. The existence of a long round piece of stone fixed on the *stūpa* to give it the appearance of a *linga*, lends weight to my explanation.

The main shrine as we now see it was erected over the ruins of smaller shrines built in earlier times oblivious of the existence of their foundations below it. This is not an uncommon practice in India where dust storms are a regular annual event. When a building crumbles down due to age or other reasons, the dust storms bring particles of dust which fill up the crevices and, in course of time, the whole building is covered with layers of earth. After the lapse of centuries there is such a collection of earth over the ruins no ordinary layman can divine what is beneath. Later builders come and put up new structures over these mounds not bothering to dig up existing foundations. This is how there is one building upon another at all ancient sites.

Before we describe the main temple, let us examine the Asokan pillar which is to the north-west of the temple.

(c) *Asoka Pillar*.—Under a flat roof and surrounded by an iron railing, the visitor will find the base of this famous pillar erected by Emperor Asoka about 250 years B.C. It probably stands at the very site where Lord Buddha delivered the first sermon to His five disciples whom He met at the place already described, *viz.*, Choukhaṇḍi, and who accompanied Him to this place. The inscription on the pillar is unfortu-

nately silent on this point and we are left to make our own guesses. As Asoka set up a similar pillar at Lumbinī in which he definitely says it was the site of the Lord's nativity, we can reasonably conclude that this pillar too marks the place of the first sermon, though for some reason or other, the fact is not mentioned in the inscription. Some scholars are of opinion that the main shrine is the actual spot where this important event took place, while others consider it to be the Dhamek stūpa and yet others the Dharmarājika stūpa. As Asoka's pillar is the earliest of the monuments discovered here, we have no reason to think that Asoka had made such a serious mistake or had deliberately chosen a different place.

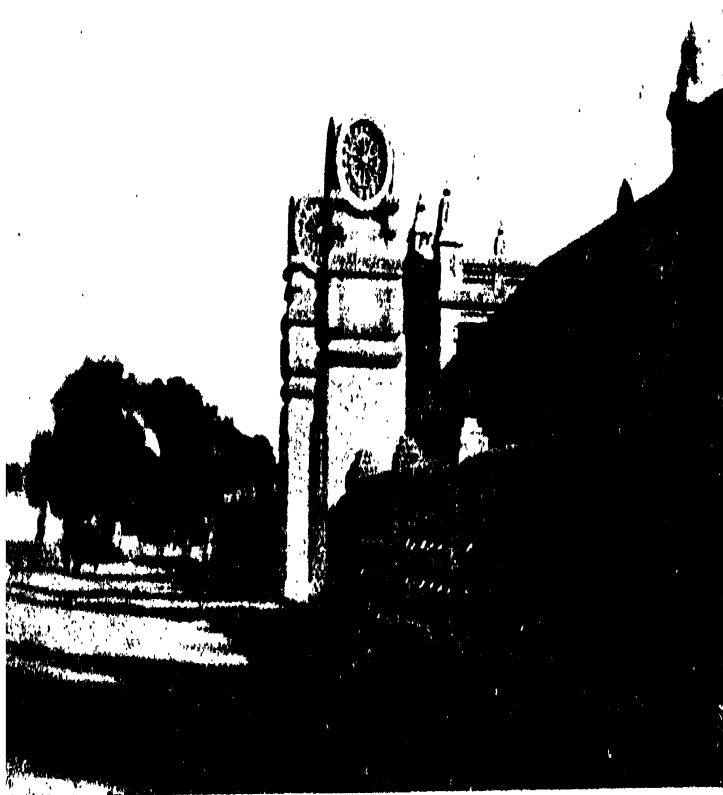
The First Sermon which the Lord Buddha delivered here is known as the "*Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*." On hearing it all the five disciples regained their faith in their former companion, now teacher, while one of them, Kondañña, attained to Arahathood. This sermon gives in a nutshell the whole of Buddha's teaching which avoids the two extremes of sensual pleasures and self-mortifications. He enunciated the Four Noble Truths and the Middle Path which avoids both these extremes. It is called "*Ārya Aṣṭhāṅgika Mārga*" or the "*Noble Eightfold Path*", the eight steps of which are Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Endeavour, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. In a stone umbrella discovered by Sir John Marshall in 1907-8, there is a short inscription referring to these four truths. One who follows this Path attains the highest happiness, "*Nirvāna*."

Sometime later, the other four disciples also became Arahats while Yasa, heir to a noble family of Benares, too joined the company with his fifty four friends. In due course these too attained to the high state of Arahathood. There were thus sixty well qualified disciples at the place. After the rainy season was over, the Buddha exhorted these Arahats

to go forth into the world and proclaim His new found doctrine. His memorable words to them were :—" *Caratha bhikkhave cārikaṃ bahujana hitāya bahujana sukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ. Desetha bhikkhave dhammaṃ ādi kalyāṇaṃ majjhe kalyāṇaṃ pariyosāne kalyāṇaṃ sātthaṃ savyaṇjanaṃ kēvalapariṇnaṃ parisuddhaṃ brahmacariyaṃ pakāsetha.*" "Go ye, oh bhikkhūs and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of the gods and men. Proclaim, oh bhikkhūs, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure." (*Mahāvagga, Vinaya*).

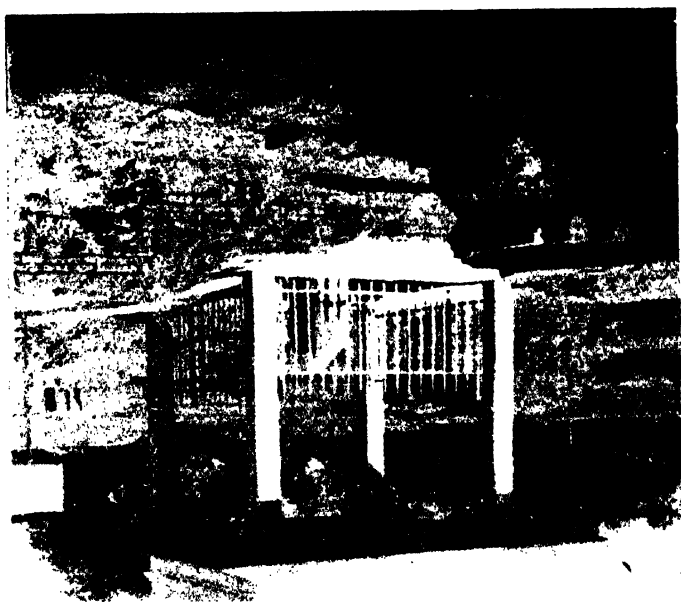
With this heartening message as their inspiration, these sixty disciples went in different directions determined to spread the Master's teaching while Lord Buddha Himself left for Gayā to convert the formidable Uruvela Kassapa and Gayā Kassapa.

To come back to the Asokan Pillar, an account of which we have yet to give. As already stated, there is at present only the stump, the height of which is about eight feet. Another seven feet are buried under ground. The diameter is 2' 9". The polish of the pillar is as perfect as that of the Capital. Hiuen Tsiang who saw the pillar found it intact and in perfect condition. The original height was about 70 feet and the lion capital preserved in the Museum surmounted it. The following account by Hiuen Tsiang may be read with interest— "To the south west of the Vihāra is a stone stūpa built by Asoka-rājā. Although the foundations have given way, there are still 100 feet or more of the wall remaining. In front of the building is a stone pillar about 70 feet high. The stone is altogether as bright as jade. It is glistening and sparkles like light; and all those who pray fervently before it see from time to time, according to their petitions, figures



Arya Dharma Sangha Dharmasala for Buddhist visitors
at Sarnath.

ASOKA PILLAR AT SARNATH



with good or bad signs. It was here that the Tathāgata (*ju-lai*) having arrived at Enlightenment, began to turn the wheel of the law (to preach).''

At the base there is the inscription of Asoka in Brahmi script which the Chinese pilgrim does not mention. The following is the actual text and its translation:—

*Devānaṃ piye Piyadasi lājā . . . ela-pāṭali putā . . . ye
kenāpi saṃghe bhetave echuṃ kho bhikkhūvā bhikkhunīvā
saṃghe bāḷāti se odālāni dūsāni saṃghaṃ payeyianāvasāse
āvāsīyīyaṃ hevaṃ iyaṃ sāsane bhikkhusaṃghaṃ bhikkhunī
saṃghasica vimna payitaviye . . . hevaṃ devānaṃ piye āha
bhedisaca ikā līpitu phākaṃṭhikaṃ huvāti saṃsalana si nikitā
ikaṃca līpim hedīsameva upāsakānaṃ niluṭṭhā tatthe pīca
upāsakā anuposathaṃ yāva eta meva sāsanaṃ viṣuṃ sayitave
anuposathaṃ ca dhuṃvaye ikike mahāmāte posathāye yāli
etameva sāsanaṃ viṣuṃ sayitave āchānitave ca āvatake
catupākāṃ āhāle savala vivāsayaṭṭha tve etena vyañjanana
hememva savesu koḷavisavesu etena vyañjanana vivāsāpayā
thā . . .*

“ Thus said the beloved of the Gods, ‘ the Sangha is not to be divided. But whosoever monk or nun, shall break up the Sangha shall be made to don the white garments and dwell in a place which is not a residence for the clergy.’ Thus must this edict be announced in the Order of monks and in the Order of nuns.

“ Thus saith His Majesty, one such edict hath been inscribed for you in the place of assembly that there it should remain. And even such another ye must inscribe for the laity. The lay people too should attend each fast day in order to be inspired with faith in this edict. Also in each fast day, without fail, every officer should attend

1. Buddhist Records of The Western World by Samuel Beal, Vol. II, p. 46.

the fast day service to be inspired with faith in this edict and to make himself acquainted therewith.

“ And as far as your district extends, you must everywhere make known the edict according to the letter thereof.”

This inscription gives an inkling into certain differences that had arisen among the Bhikkhu Sangha during Emperor Asoka's time. The party holding wrong views became so dangerous, that at the request of Moggaliputta Tissa Thera, Emperor Asoka had to hold a Buddhist Council at which the whole Tripitaka was rehearsed and those who held false views expelled from the Order. There are two other inscriptions on the pillar, one dated in the reign of Aśvaghosa and the other *circa* 300 A.C. caused to be engraved by the teacher of the Sammitiya School.

During the invasion of the iconoclastic generals of Mohammad Ghori, this pillar was hurled down but luckily the beautiful lion capital did not fall under their hammer. It lay buried under the earth till it was recovered by the Archaeological Department. Its discovery was a revelation to the world at large as it showed in an unmistakable manner the high state of civilization to which India had attained during the time of this great monarch about whom H. G. Wells, the famous English author, says :—

“ Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses, serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star.”

Several broken pieces of the pillar are kept inside the enclosure.

Before the visitor goes in to examine the main temple he may pay a visit to the Burmese Rest House which is conveniently reached from here (*for description see No. 14*).

(f) *The Main Temple*.—The main temple as it is now exposed to view cannot be older than the 2nd or 3rd century A.C. Its walls are made of stone and bricks, stones at the base and bricks above them. The use of both these materials points to the fact that the original temple was wholly constructed in stone and that the later reconstruction was in bricks. The walls are ten feet thick, thus indicating the great height of the Vihāra.

The chief entrance to the vihāra is from the east. There is a road leading to it from the boundary wall near the Dhamek stūpa. On both sides of this road, there are rows of votive stūpas of various sizes. The hall of the shrine is quite large (45 ft. 6 in. square) and from the ruins, it appears that the Vihāra had been a magnificent one. The huge altar is still in existence with two stone pillars on two sides. About the centre of the altar there is a depression in the wall which definitely indicates the place where the image of the Buddha was enshrined. The markings suggest that it was a colossal standing figure. This image has not been identified.

Before passing on to the other monuments, the visitor may mark the concrete floor round the Vihāra. The *chūnam* coating is still intact and well preserved.

To the right of the road leading from the main shrine towards the Dhamek stūpa, there is the foundation of a small stūpa sheltered with a concrete roof erected by the Archaeological Department. The stūpa is made of burnt bricks containing some fine designs. The efforts of the Archaeological Department are to be highly praised for the infinite care they are taking to preserve these priceless relics of a bygone age. While the roof prevents rain water from falling

directly on the *stūpa*, it is not protected from the water which soaks from the sides. Arrangements may be made to drain off the water from the sides, so that the *stūpa* is left absolutely dry.

The visitor should now return to the main temple courtyard and take the path pointing towards the north. Round about he will see numerous votive *stūpas*, large and small, in different stages of preservation. On the left hand side of the path among the small *stūpas* was discovered the lintel containing the "Khāntivāda Jātaka" already described.

(g) *Kumāra Devi's Temple*.-- After crossing over a long thick wall which extends almost over the whole length of the excavated area, the visitor will reach "Dharmacakra Jina Vihāra." The wall above mentioned is the boundary of this monastery which, according to the inscription of Kumāra Devi found here, was constructed by her about 1136, A.C. Kumāra Devi was the wife of Govinda Chandra, the King of Kanouj. We have further evidence regarding her faith in Buddhism from the inscription granting rent-free villages for the benefit of the monks residing at the Jetavana monastery. As she hailed from South India, scholars think that this monastery was probably built in South Indian style. Unfortunately hardly anything of importance has been left intact to form our conclusions. A few bricks on the side walls containing fine carvings give us a faint idea of the magnificence of the temple. The plaster of the court-yard and an old wall can still be seen. This monastery was destroyed in 1194. Thus it seems to have had a very short lease of life. An interesting fact about Kumāra Devi's life is that she was herself a Buddhist while her husband, the King of Kanouj, was a Hindu.

(h). *Subterranean passage*.-- To the left of the visitor as he enters the court-yard of this temple, there is an intrea-

guing architectural feature. He will see a subterranean passage covered with stone slabs stretching almost to the brink of the lake. This passage is entered by descending a few steps from the court-yard and is only three feet and six inches broad. As the height is only six feet one who is not a sixfooter can just manage to walk erect inside. There are two stone doorways, the first one at the entrance is very low and one has to creep through it. The passage ends at a distance of about 70 yards where the foundations of what appears to be a small shrine were discovered. Many funny and absurd theories are broadcasted as to the purpose of this passage. But what one can reasonably guess is that it was either a covered path to go to the lake during the heat of the summer or a *caṅkamaṇa* (cloister) for meditation. Cloisters are generally made on the surface where fresh air is plentiful but those who have experienced the summer heat of Benares will know why such an underground cloister is far preferable during the hot days.

After retracing our steps we should now proceed on towards the east over the court-yard of the Dharmacakra Jina Vihāra. As the visitor descends the steps towards a lower strata of monasteries, he will see on his left an ancient drain which releases the flood water from this locality into the lake. Climbing up, he will come to another flat ground which is a continuation of Kumāra Devi's temple compound. He should proceed on and cross over the boundary wall of this monastery, but before doing so, he may pause for a few minutes near the wall and examine a partly uncovered monastery on his left at a lower level. The reason for not fully excavating the same is to give the visitor an idea as to the different layers of monasteries which have been built at different periods, one upon the other. Here the compound of Kumāra Devi's temple and even the boundary wall of the same monastery pass over the earlier temple now partly un-

covered but unnoticed by the builders of Kumāra Devi's temple as it had then at least fifteen feet of earth over it. From the exposed area of the earlier monastery, we can readily guess that it is a square building with a court-yard in the middle and a colonnaded verandah all round. If the earth to the right is removed, we shall discover the other part of the monastery and perhaps a well also in the court-yard. But this would destroy the compound wall of Kumāra Devi's temple above it. Hence the excavation work has been suspended after a part of the monastery had been exposed.

We now take a turn to the right and walk towards the Dhamek Stūpa, noticing on the way an old drain. As we approach the *stūpa*, we shall see on our right a low wall and a flight of steps. This is the principal gateway to the main shrine which can be seen towards the west. The dried up square tank to the left of the steps may also be noticed. When the temple was in use, this must have been always filled up with water for pilgrims to wash their hands and feet before entering the compound of the sacred temple.

4. DHAMEK STŪPA.

From here we pass on to the Dhamek stūpa. This word " Dhamek " is said to be a vulgar form of Dharma mukha or Dhammika. Scholars are not decided as to the purpose of this *stūpa*, some maintaining that it is meant to mark the spot where Lord Buddha prophesied the coming of the future Buddha Maitriya. Whatever the purpose, it is the most conspicuous structure at Sārnāth and can be seen for miles around. Its height is 104 feet and the lower portion is faced completely with stones having beautiful carvings all round. The design consists of a broad band of *swastikas* worked into different geometrical patterns with a finely chiselled lotus wreath running over and below the *swastikas*. The whole

design is so well proportioned that one cannot but form a very high opinion of the skill of the sculptors of those days.

There are four well-marked sides of the *stūpa* in relief with niches in each of them. In ancient days these niches contained images which are no longer there. Some of those discovered from the excavated area close to the *stūpa* might have belonged to them. But the images seen by Hiuen Tsiang were "golden" ones which must have been good booty for the invaders. The *stūpa* has been bored into and some of the stones removed from the south-east side. The opening thus made has been filled up with ordinary blocks of stones. As we see this massive monument with its stone facing containing the valuable carvings, we feel a sigh of relief that at least this *stūpa* has escaped the spoliation of invaders and treasure-hunters, though, of course the valuable images and other treasures have been stolen.

There is inscriptional evidence to show that Sarvāstivāda School of Buddhism was in possession of Sarnāth about the 4th Century A.C. In the fifth century probably the Sammitiyas were in power. We have already mentioned the inscription inscribed by them on the Asokan pillar.

This completes our visit to the ancient monuments. Sitting in the comfortable shade of the great *stūpa* and looking towards the magnificent modern Buddhist temple to the east built by the Mahā Bodhi Society, we may contemplate for a while on the transitoriness of all earthly things. Ever since Buddha's visit, for hundreds of years, Sarnāth had been full of life. Thousands of monks dressed in their saffron-coloured robes moved about these beautiful buildings performing their allotted duties. One could almost hear their voices even now as they chanted *sūtras* in the melodious Pāli language. Then came a period of utter desolation when Buddhists were driven out from their sacred places. They

could neither stay here nor even occasionally visit the sacred monuments in those dark days. However it makes one's heart leap with joy to find that, thanks to the untiring efforts of the late Ven. Anagārika Dharmapāla, the place has obtained a new lease of life. If nothing else, the building of the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra alone is sufficient to keep his memory fresh amongst all lovers of Indian culture and religion.

Hiuen Tsiang's Account.

Before we proceed to see the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra, we may turn to the pages of Hiuen Tsiang's memoirs and read what that indefatigable traveller and scholar saw when he visited this place as a pilgrim and the impressions left in his mind. He writes in his well-known "Travels":—

"To the north east of the river Varunā, about 10 *li* or so, we come to the Sanghārāma of Luye (stag desert). Its precincts are divided into eight portions (sections), connected by a surrounding wall. The storeyed towers with projecting eaves and the balconies are of very superior work. There are fifteen hundred priests in this convent who study the Little Vehicle according to the Sammitiya School. In the great enclosure is a Vihāra about 200 feet high; above the roof is a golden covered figure of the *amra* (*An-mo-to*-mangoe) fruit. The foundations of the building are of stone, and the stairs also, but the towers and niches are of bricks. The niches are arranged on the four sides in a hundred successive lines, and in each niche is a golden figure of the Buddha. In the middle of the Vihāra is a figure of the Buddha made of *teou-shih* (native copper). It is the size of life and He is represented as turning the Wheel of the Law (preaching).

"By the side of the building and not far from it is a *stūpa*. This is the spot where Ajñāta Kaundinya (O-jo-kio-ch'in-ju) and the rest, seeing the Bodhisatva giving up his austerities, no longer kept him company, but coming to this place gave themselves up to meditation.

"By the side of this is a stūpa where five hundred Pratyeka Buddhas entered at the same time into Nirvāna. There are moreover three stūpas where there are traces of the sitting and the walking of the three former Buddhas.

"By the side of this last place is a stūpa. This is the spot where Maitriya Bodhisatva received assurance of his becoming a Buddha. In old days, when the Tathāgata was living in Rājagriha (Wang-she), on the Griddhrakuṭa mountain, he spoke thus to thebhikkhus: "in future when this country of Jambudvīpa shall be at peace and rest, and the age of men shall amount to 80,000 years, there shall be a Brahmin called Maitriya (Se-che). His body shall be of the colour of pure gold, bright and glistening and pure. Leaving his home he will become a perfect Buddha, and preach the Threefold Law for the benefit of all creatures. Those who shall be saved are those who live, in whom the roots of merit have been planted through my bequeathed law. These all conceiving in their minds a profound respect for the three precious objects of worship, whether they be obedient to the precepts or not, will all be led by the converting power (of his preaching) to acquire the fruit (of Buddhi) and final deliverance. Whilst declaring the threefold law for the conversion of those who have been influenced by my bequeathed law, by this means also hereafter others will be converted.

"At this time Maitriya Bodhisatva (Mei-ta-li-ye-pu-sa) hearing this declaration of the Buddha, rose from his seat and addressed Buddha thus :

"May I indeed become that Lord called Maitriya". The Tathāgata spoke thus : "Be it so ! You shall obtain this fruit (condition), and as I have just explained such shall be the power (influence) of your teaching."

"To the west of this place there is a stūpa. This is the spot where Sākya Bodhisatva (Shih-kia-pu-sa) received an assurance (of becoming a Buddha). In the midst of the Bhadra Kalpa when men's years amounted to 20,000, Kasyapa Buddha (Kia-she-po-fo) appeared in the world and moved the wheels of the excellent law (*i.e.*, preached the law), opened out and changed the unclosed mind (of men), and declared this prediction to Prabhāpāla Bodhisatva (Hu-ming-pu-sa). 'This Bodhisatva in future ages, when the years of men shall have dwindled to 100 years, shall obtain the condition of a Buddha and be called Sākya Muni.'

" Not far to the south of this spot are traces of where the four Buddhas of a bygone age walked for exercise. The length (of the promenade) is about fifty paces and the height of the steps (stepping spots) about 7 feet. It is composed of blue stones piled together. Above it is a figure of the Tathāgata in the attitude of walking. It is of a singular dignity and beauty. From the flesh knot on the top of the head there flows wonderfully a braid of hair. Spiritual signs are plainly manifested and divine prodigies wrought with power (fineness eclat).

" Within the precincts of the enclosure (of the Sanghārāma) there are many sacred vestiges, with Vihāras and stūpas several hundred in number. We have only named two or three of these, as it would be difficult to enter into details.

" To the west of the Sanghārāma enclosure is a clear lake of water about 200 paces in circuit; here Tathāgata occasionally bathed himself. To the west of this is a great tank about 180 paces round; here Tathāgata used to wash his begging dish.

" To the north of this is a lake about 150 paces round; here Tathāgata used to wash his robes. In each of these pools is a dragon who dwells within it. The water is deep and its taste sweet; it is pure and resplendent in appearance, and neither increases nor decreases. When men of a bad character bathe here, the crocodiles (kin-pi-lo, kumbhīras) come forth and kill many of them; but in case of the reverential who wash here, they need fear nothing.

" By the side of the pool where Tathāgata washed his garments is a great square stone, on which are yet to be seen the trace-marks of his Kāshāya (kia-sha) robe. The bright lines of the tissues are of a minute and distinct character, as if carved on the stone. The faithful and pure frequently come to make their offerings here; but when the heretics and men of evil mind speak lightly of or insult the stone, the dragon king inhabiting the pool causes the winds to rise and rain to fall.

By the side of the lake, and not far off, is a stūpa. This is where Bodhisatva, during his preparatory life, was born as a King of Elephants provided with six tusks (chaddanta). A hunter, desirous to obtain the tusks, put on a robe in colour like that of a religious ascetic, and taking his bow, awaited the arrival of his prey. The elephant King, from respect to the Kāshāya robe, immediately broke off his tusks and gave them to the hunter.

" By the side of this spot and not far from it, is a stūpa. It was here Bodhisatva, in his preparatory career, grieved to see that there was little politeness (reverence) amongst men, took the form of a bird and joining himself to the company of a monkey and a white elephant, he asked them in this place, ' which of you saw first this Nigrodha (Ni-ku-liu) tree ? ' Each having answered according to circumstances, he placed them according to their age. The good effects of this conduct spread itself little by little on every side ; men were able to distinguish the high from the low, and the religious and lay people followed their example.

" Leaving this place, and going two or three *li* to the southwest of the Sanghārāma, there is a stūpa about three hundred feet high. The foundations are broad and the building high, and adorned with all sorts of carved work and with precious substances. There are no successive stages (to this building) with niches ; and although there is a standing pole erected above the cupola (fan poh), yet it has no encircling bells. By the side of it is a little stūpa. This is the spot where the Agnāta Kaundinya and the other men, five in number, declined to salute the Buddha."

This account of Hiuen Tsiang is one of the very few records of the glorious days of this sacred place that has come down to us for our edification. While Indian pandits composed many a work on religion, philosophy and grammar, it is sad to reflect that none of them thought of writing an account of the historic places for the benefit of future generations.

5. MŪLAGANDHAKUṬI VIHĀRA

Let us now proceed to the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra by the red road. This magnificent Vihāra was completed in 1931 after many years of strenuous effort on the part of the late Venerable Dharmapāla and his disciples. It is the last and, perhaps, the noblest achievement of the great Buddhist missionary.

As the visitor approaches the Vihāra he will notice that it is faced entirely with Chunār stone. The tower itself is 110 feet high and the building is designed after Buddhagayā

temple with the addition of a long hall and a colonnaded passage in front. The entrance to the Vihāra is from the south. On reaching the colonnaded passage, one will see a large gold-gilted bell above his head. It is a present to the temple from the Buddhist Society of Japan. It has a vibrating and melodious sound which keeps on humming for a considerable time after it is rung and it can be heard from a long distance. To the right and left of the front wall, there are marble tablets giving the names of the chief contributors. The silver casket mentioned in one of them is a gift of Daw Goon, a Burmese devotee. It is the receptacle in which the relics of Lord Buddha are exposed to the public for worship on the occasion of the anniversary of the Vihāra. This event always take place on the full moon day of the month of November.

On entering the main hall, the visitor will be struck at once by the magnificence of the shrine. Though simple in design and free of unnecessary decorative motifs, the Vihāra cannot but impress the visitor as well conceived and faithfully executed. After paying homage to the image of the Lord, the visitor should go round examining the fine frescoe work. These paintings contain a full narrative of Lord Buddha's life painted by Mr. Kosetsu Nosu, a famous Japanese artist. The donor of the paintings is an English Buddhist, Mr. B. L. Broughton, M.A. (Oxon.), who was President of the British Mahā Bodhi Society for some time. The Ajantā style of painting has been followed. On request the caretaker will have the pictures explained, or the visitor can purchase the illustrated guide book available at the counter for eight annas. Before leaving, the visitor should not fail to obtain a copy of the "Wall Paintings of the Vihāra" which contains a full reproduction, in natural colours, of the paintings with a descriptive account by Mr. Basil Crump. The price is Rs. 3-8-0.

This Vihāra is fortunate in possessing some of the most authentic relics of Lord Buddha. The Government of India have presented to the temple the relics of Lord Buddha discovered at Taxila¹ (N.W.F.P.), Nāgarjunikoṇḍā (Madras) and Mir' Purkhas in Sind. On the occasion of the anniversary of the Vihāra they can be seen after they are carried in a procession round the holy place. This procession is unique on account of the number of different nationalities taking part in it. Sinhalese, Burmese, Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese, Korean, Siamese and even European Buddhists join in their national costumes. Visitors happening to be near Benares at the time should not fail to be at Sarnāth for the event.

Here the visitor can buy books on Buddhism in case he is interested in the study of this religion which is professed by at least one third of the human race.

We now come out to the Dharmapāla Road and turn to the left in order to visit the Chinese temple and the various humanitarian institutions run by the Mahā Bodhi Society.

6. CHINESE TEMPLE

The Chinese temple is situated to the east of the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra. It is built in Chinese style and the visitor will thus have an opportunity of learning what a Chinese place of worship is like without having the necessity of going all the way to China for the purpose. As the image and other objects are not exactly Chinese, the temple cannot strictly be regarded as an entirely typical Chinese temple. Nevertheless there are several features—especially the curved roof and the arrangement of the shrine—which give it a definitely Chinese touch. When the walls are decorated with

1. For an account of this discovery and the text and translation of the important inscription found along with them, see chapter on Taxilā.

Chinese frescoes as intended, the building will have the true atmosphere of a Chinese temple.

7. MAHĀ BODHI VIDYĀLAYA

Opposite this temple is the Mahā Bodhi Vidyālaya which is one of the several humanitarian institutions the Society conducts at this place. There are altogether three schools which give cheap education to the boys of the locality. They are the English High School, the Hindi Primary School, and the Dharmapāla Kumāra Vidyālaya (Orphanage) all managed by the Society.

8. MAHĀ BODHI FREE DISPENSARY

The visitor should now take the *kucchā* (unmetalled) road going towards the south. At the end of the barbed wire fence on the right, there is a yellow building called "Mrs. Ma Pha Phee Building." It houses the free dispensary run by the Society for the benefit of the local inhabitants. From 40 to 50 patients attend it daily. Allopathic medicine is distributed free of charge. It is well equipped with medicine as well as surgical instruments for performing minor operations.

9. MAHĀ DEVA TEMPLE

We should now turn to the left and proceed by the *kucchā* road till we reach the small Mahādeva temple which is generally known as the "Sārnāth Temple." It is about 150 years old and contains symbols of Śiva, the great Hindu God. In the compound are two stone figures of bull (*vāhana* of Śiva). An annual fair is held here in the months of July and August when thousands of villagers gather from different parts of the District. In the compound can be seen some pieces of Buddhist sculpture which must have been removed there from the Buddhist ruins.

10. ĀRYA DHARMA SANGHA DHARMASĀLĀ

After this we should turn back and passing by the Mahā Bodhi Free Dispensary, School building, etc., return to the Dharmapāla Road in front of the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra. The visitor will find on his left the enormous double storeyed rest house of the Mahā Bodhi Society built by Seth Jugol Kishore Birlā in the name of his father Rājā Baldeodās Birlā.

This building is erected according to ancient Buddhist architecture and has no less than 32 living rooms, besides bath rooms, store rooms, kitchen, etc. The building cost the donor well over Rs. 50,000. It is a great boon to the Buddhist pilgrims as well as other visitors who find here free accommodation during their sojourn.

From this place we should start on our return journey towards the museum and see several other places of interest. As we proceed from the rest house immediately to our left is a space enclosed by a boundary wall with six stone pillars at the six corners. It is the consecrated site called "*Sīmā*," where the ordination of Buddhist monks is performed. The first ordination here was that of the Ven. Anagārika Dharma-pāla. The small building next to it is the Sarnāth Post Office.

11. MŪLAGANDHAKUṬI VIHĀRA LIBRARY

The large yellow building in the same row is the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra Library. It has a very fine collection of Buddhist books as well as other works on religion, history, etc. A few minutes may be profitably spent here examining the books. The Library contains full sets of the Tripiṭaka or the Buddhist scriptures in Sinhalese, Burmese, Siamese and Chinese characters.

In a glass almirah are kept some interesting souvenirs. The silver replica of the Indian national flag presented by the Indian National Congress, a stylo-pen from Ceylon for writing on *ola* leaves and a number of Sinhalese manuscripts are some of the contents of this almirah. The offices of the Society are also situated in this building. The visitor can pay his subscription to the "Mahā Bodhi Journal" and the "Dharma-dūta," the two monthlies published by the Society.

12. MONASTERY OF THE BHIKKHŪS

The building on the opposite side across the road is the monastery where the Buddhist monks reside. The room in which the late Ven. Dharmapāla, the founder of the Mahā Bodhi Society, spent his last days is in this building and it contains some of the articles used by this saint. These can be seen on request.

13. JAIN TEMPLE

From here the visitor should proceed to the Jain Temple just by the side of the Dhamek stūpa. It was built in 1824 and contains the image of Shreansnāth, the 11th Tīrthankar of the Jains. He is said to have attained the status of a Tīrthankara in a village called Singhpur about a mile away from here. Scenes from the life of Mahāvira, the founder of Jainism, are painted on the walls. The throne of the image and the canopy over it are fine specimens of Benares workmanship.

On the other side of the road is the Jain Dharmasālā where Jain pilgrims are accommodated when they come to take part in the annual festival of the Temple. It is old and neglected though great improvements have been effected to the temple itself since the erection of the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra.

14. THE BURMESE TEMPLE AND REST HOUSE

The Burmese Temple and Rest House are situated to the west of the Main Shrine and can be reached from it as there is a foot path over the ruins. The first building to be erected here was the double-storeyed one in the middle. It is the main residence for pilgrims. The buildings to the right and left of the passage as the visitor approaches the centre building were added later. The one on the left is a "*Sīmā*" for the ordination of monks as well as a temple. Inside the building is a fine Burmese image of the Buddha. The building to the right is the library which contains the Tripiṭaka in Burmese character as well as other books. There is also a shrine on the first floor. Burmese pilgrims are accommodated in both these buildings.

History of Sārnāth.

This completes our survey of Sārnāth both ancient and modern. The visitor will have by now spent two or three happy hours. He will go back home wondering at the marvels of ancient India and highly pleased with the conditions existing at present and the various institutions which have grown up at the place. But, if he will pause a few minutes to consider the actual conditions prevailing fifty years ago, he will realise how hard and difficult had been the path of the workers headed by the late Ven. Dharmapāla.

When this great pioneer of the Buddhist revival in India visited Sārnāth for the first time in 1891, he found the place overgrown with jungle and the locality utilised as a pig breeding ground by the Bhar community. Writing about his experiences later, he says that the place was so full of filth he could hardly step into it without a feeling of repugnance. He was sad at heart at such desecration by ignorant people and even more at its utter neglect by the

Buddhists themselves. Then and there he determined to buy up the place and revive it as a centre of Buddhism once again. The first piece of land where the monastery is situated at present was purchased with a donation given by his mother Mallikā Hewāvitārṇe Lamāteni. The second plot was purchased with a donation given to him by the late Rājā of Bhingā. Ven. Dharmapāla's first efforts to revive the place and start educational work of a modern character, however, met with strenuous opposition. He started an Agricultural Institute and tried to induce the peasants to adopt improved tools and methods. He even engaged an American expert. He also tried to establish cottage industries but the introduction of anything new or foreign being anathema to the orthodox inhabitants in those early days, his efforts ended in complete failure. There is, however, nothing surprising in this as such ideas were too novel and revolutionary at the time, and the great awakening which helped Mahatmā Gandhi to make such a complete success of his cottage industries scheme, had not yet come into existence. Nevertheless, we may give the great "visionary" from Ceylon, the credit of being one of the earliest leaders to foresee that India's progress lay in introducing cottage industries and the improvement of the sad plight of the villagers by adopting modern scientific methods of agriculture. It is a pity that these two great men did not come in touch with each other at that early period. In that case the history of India during the past fifty years would probably have been somewhat different.

Let us now, in leisure, recapitulate the history of Sārnāth from early times. We have reserved this to the last as we feel that the visitor will find greater pleasure in reading the history after he has seen with his own eyes the actual sites.

The known history of Sārnāth really begins with the coming of the Buddha there in search of His five disciples. Were it not for the fact of His visit, this place would have

remained an obscure spot like thousands of unknown villages all over India.

Before we go into the history, a word may be said regarding the term "Sārnāth." This word does not occur in Pāli and Sanskrit literature. It is a later corruption of the word "Sāraṅgānātha" (Lord of the deer) used for it at one time. The term is due to an interesting story which we shall relate later. The name given to this locality in Pāli books is "Migadāya" or "Isipatana," these two words being often used in juxtaposition. Thus we have "Isipatane migadāye," taking the latter word to include a lesser area than that included within Isipatana. A good deal of discussion has taken place with regard to the exact meaning of the word "Isipatana" (in Sanskrit R̥sipatana). There is hardly any doubt that it simply means, "the place of the Rishis" or saints. The word Patana no doubt has several meanings such as "falling," "ruin," "abode," etc., but none of these except the last one has sense. Fa Hien took it to mean "falling" and relates the story how a number of Pratyeka Buddhas died in the air and how their bodies fell on the ground. Hence the place was named "Risipatana" (the place where the Rishis fell). Whatever interpretation one may give to the word, Isipatana must have been a large area including Migadāya or Deer Park, utilised by hermits for their residence and meditation. Being close to the great city of Benares, it had all the various requirements of a suitable habitation for monks as mentioned in Pāli literature.

As regards the word "Migadāya," the meaning is obvious *viz.*, Deer Park or Deer Sanctuary. This was the animal sanctuary or the preserve of the King of Benares in which deer were allowed to live peacefully unmolested by the hunters. Hermits could not have, therefore, chosen a more charming place for their residence. Surrounded by this forest full of deer, Migadāya must have been an ideal spot

for the anchorites who had retired from the turmoils and strifes of worldly life. It may be mentioned here in passing that the present Mahārājah of Benares has a sanctuary for deer not far from this spot. No one is allowed to hunt or capture them or to do them any injury. We have seen herds consisting of hundreds of deer roaming about the place. The Mahārājah has thus kept up the tradition of the Kings of old in sparing the lives of these innocent animals.

There is a charming Jātaka story called Nigrodhamiga Jātaka, connected with this place in which the chief role is played by a golden deer who was no other than Lord Buddha Himself in one of His former births. As it teaches a valuable moral lesson, we shall give below a summary in the words of Hiuen Tsiang who quotes it in his diary :—

“ Not far from this, in a great forest, is a stūpa. It was here that Devadatta and Bodhisatva, in years gone by, were kings of deer and settled a certain matter. Formerly in this place, in the midst of a great forest there were two herds of deer, each 500 in number, belonging to the two deer kings respectively. At this time the king of the country (Benares) wandered about hunting through the planes and the morasses. Bodhisatva, king of deer, approaching him said, ‘ Mahārājah, you set fire to the places enclosed as your hunting ground, and shoot your arrows and kill all our followers. Before the sun rises they lie about corrupting and unfit for food. Pray let us each day offer one deer for food, which the king will then have fresh and good, and we shall prolong our life a little day by day.’ The king was pleased at the proposition, and turned his chariot and went back. So on each day a deer from the respective flocks was killed. [Such an arrangement would not be bad even now, but unfortunately for the dumb creatures, modern hunters kill more for “ Sport ” than for their flesh—Author.]

“ Now among the herd of Devadatta there was a doe big with young and when her turn came to die, she said to her Lord (Devadatta) “ although I am ready to die yet it is not my child’s turn. Let some one else take my turn. When my child grows up we shall have two bodies to offer.”

"The king of the deer (*i.e.*, Devadatta) was angry and said, "Who is there but values life?"

"The deer answered with a sigh, "But, oh King it is not humane to kill that which is unborn." But Devadatta would not listen to her.

"She then told her extremity to Bodhisatva, the king (of the other herd of deer). He replied, "Sad, indeed, the heart of the loving mother grieves (is moved) for that which is not yet alive (has no body). I today will take your place and die. I have no right to pass on the lot to someone else."

"Going to the Royal Gate (*i.e.*, the Palace), he laid his head on the block for the butcher to cut it. The people who travelled along the road passed the news along and said in a loud voice, 'That great king of the deer is going now towards the town.' The people of the capital, the magistrates, and others hastened to see.

"The king hearing of it, was unwilling to believe the news; but when the gatekeeper assured him of the truth, then the king believed it. Then addressing the deer, the king said, 'Why have you come here?'

"The deer (king) replied, 'There is a female in the herd big with young, whose turn it was to die; but my heart could not bear to think that the young, not yet born, should perish so. I have therefore come in her place.'

"The king, hearing it, sighed and said, 'I have indeed the body of a man but am as a deer, you have the body of a deer, but are as a man.' Then for pity's sake he released the deer, and no longer required a daily sacrifice. Then he gave up the forest for the use of the deer, and so it was called 'forest given to the deer' and hence its name the 'deer plain' (Migadāya)."

This story shows that the name given to the place was most appropriate and ever since that incident, it has probably remained a sanctuary for deer even up to the time of the Buddha.

All sculpture showing incidents of Buddha's life at this holy place have two deer on two sides of a wheel (*dharmacakra*) as unfailing symbols. The modern name of Sarnāth, therefore, has been derived from this idea of the deer and their

righteous king who lived here long ago. "*Sāranga*" means "deer" and "*nātha*," "Lord." Hence this was the abode of the Lord of the deer who was no other than Buddha Himself in a previous life.

As already stated, Lord Buddha spent here the first rainy season after His attainment of Enlightenment. At the end of the season, He and His disciples departed on their allotted missions. It appears that Sārnāth was not converted into a place of permanent residence by the Buddha or His immediate disciples although Buddha visited it twice or thrice after delivering His first sermon. Besides *Dhammacakka Sutta* He delivered here *Ādiccapariyāya Sutta* and *Saccavi-bhaṅga Sutta* (Majjhima Nikāya), *Pañca Sutta* (Saṃyutta iii, 66), *Rathakāra* or *Pacetana Sutta* (Angut. i, 110), *Pāsā Suttas* (Saṃyutta i, 105), *Samaya Sutta* (Anguttara iii, 320), *Kaṭu-viya Sutta* (Anguttara i, 279), *Metteyyapañhu* of the Parāyana (Ang. iii, 399), *Dhammadinna Sutta* (Saṃyutta v, 406). We do not know when this place was actually converted into a place of permanent abode for Buddhist monks. Probably it was not long after the preaching of the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*. As the site of such a historic happening, it was natural that some of the Master's followers should consider it a sacred duty to reside at Sārnāth. Be that as it may, by about the end of the 4th Century B.C., Sārnāth had grown in importance and when Asoka ascended the throne, it was a flourishing Buddhist centre.

It is most likely that Asoka erected *stūpas* and monasteries in addition to the pillar, though none of them can be definitely identified with those which have come to light so far. Neither the inscription on the pillar nor the few fragments of inscriptions found at other sites give us any satisfactory account of the many institutions which must have flourished with the Emperor's generous patronage.

It is a pity we do not have a connected history of Sarnāth after Asoka. Our information regarding this period is very meagre indeed. It is to Fa Hien who visited it in the 5th Century A.C. that we have to turn for our knowledge. As he speaks of flourishing establishments, the place must have had many years of progress before his visit.

But the most active and prosperous period of Sarnāth appears to have been between the 3rd and the 7th century (250-650 A.C.) as evidenced by the numerous pieces of sculpture belonging to that period. Almost all the great temples whose foundations have been unearthed show by the material used and the various inscriptions discovered among them that they belong to this period, the notable exceptions being the Asoka pillar erected in about 250 B.C. and Kumāra Devi's temple built in 1192 A.C.

We have already quoted extracts from the Travels of Fa Hien. Hiuen Tsiang who visited the site in the 7th Century gives the best account from which we have given several extracts. As his is the most authentic record, we make no apology for quoting below three more paragraphs dealing with "Benares District."

"This country is about 4,000 *li* in circuit. The capital borders (on its west side) the Ganges river. It is about 18 or 19 *li* in length and 5 or 6 *li* in breadth; its inner gates are like a small toothed comb; it is densely populated. The families are very rich and in the dwellings are objects of rare value. The disposition of the people is very soft and humane, and they are earnestly given to study. They are mostly unbelievers, a few reverence the Lord Buddha. The climate is soft, the crops abundant, the trees (fruit trees) flourishing, and the underwood thick in every place. There are about 300 Sanghārāmas and 3,000 priests. They study the Little Vehicle according to the Sammitiya School (Ching-liang-pu). There are about a hundred or so Deva temples with about 10,000 sectaries. They honour principally Mahesvara (Ta-tsen-tsai). Some cut their hair off, others tie their hair in a knot and go naked, without clothes (*nigranthas*); they cover

their bodies with ashes (pasupatas), and by the practice of all sorts of austerities they seek to escape from birth and death.

"In the capital there are 20 Deva temples, the towers and halls of which are of sculptured stone and carved wood. The foliage of trees combine to shade (the sites), while pure streams of water encircle them. The statue of the Deva Mahesvara made of teou-shih (native copper) is somewhat less than 100 feet. Its appearance is grave and majestic, and appears as though really living.

"To the north east of the capital, on the western side of the river Varuna, is a stūpa built by Asoka Raja (Wa-yan). It is about 100 feet high; in front of it is a pillar; it is bright and shining as a mirror, its surface is glistening and smooth as ice, and on it can be constantly seen the figure of Buddha as a shadow."

In the sixth century A.C. Mihirkulā, the notorious Hun vandal, devastated the sacred place but it appears from Hiuen Tsiang's account that the place had been entirely rebuilt before the latter's arrival as he does not mention any traces of the vandal's destructive hand.

For several centuries after Hiuen Tsiang's visit there is nothing to report. Probably the place enjoyed an unbroken period of peace and development.

About the 10th century A.C., the place began to decline finally though there seems to have been several attempts later on to rebuild the monasteries, one such effort being that of Kumāra Devī of Kanauj. An inscription engraved on the base of a figure of Buddha mentions that two brothers, Sthirapāla and Vasantapāla, repaired the monasteries during the reign of Mahīpāla, King of Bengal, in 1026 A.C. They also built a "new shrine of stone pertaining to the eight great places." In spite of these efforts Brahmanism was gaining ground rapidly and at Sārnāth itself its votaries had started erecting their own shrines. The place had another severe blow at the hands of Sultan Mahmud Gaznavi in the 11th Century. The final and fatal blow came soon after

in the 12th Century (A.C. 1194). Kutbuddin, one of Mahmud Ghori's generals, invaded the country and destroyed what remained of the sacred edifices, thus closing the last brilliant chapter in the history of Sārnāth. After this the place was completely abandoned by the Buddhists whose sad fate has not even been related by historians. Many must have perished at the hands of the invaders while others left for Tibet, Nepāl and other friendly neighbouring countries. Monasteries were plundered and razed to the ground except the two colossal *stūpas* which are still standing as silent witnesses to the glory that had departed.

From the 12th to the 17th Century, we have no knowledge again as to the events at Sārnāth. It must have been a period of utter desolation, not even the villagers daring to meddle with the debris left behind by the invaders. The dust storms which are such a great nuisance in the United Provinces were, however, kindly to these monuments. In the course of a few centuries these storms covered with dust from the sight of unfriendly eyes what yet remained of the edifices. Thus nature ensured the safety of whatever remained after the vandals had done their destructive work. As centuries rolled on, at first, these mounds were overgrown with luxuriant grass and later on shrubs and trees thrived, thus completely concealing the remains from the "madding crowd." Not till the science of archaeology came to their rescue did these forgotten monuments tell their sad tale and reveal themselves to the gaze of strange but appreciative eyes.

Meanwhile history rolled on and many an event of far-reaching importance took place. The conquerors who laid waste to these priceless treasures were in their turn conquered by those who came later, this time from the distant West. The arrival of European conquerors was a blessing in disguise as with them was brought the growing scientific

spirit of the West which took some pleasure in probing into the past history of the conquered country. The mere plunder and destruction of its monuments and art treasures which characterised the previous conquests did not satisfy their inquisitiveness. With their arrival began an altogether new and fruitful period of scientific research. Archaeologists and Indologists began taking keen interest in these sacred places as far back as 1815 when Col. Mackenzie made excavations at this place. More systematic excavation work was begun in 1834 under the supervision of that indefatigable archaeologist, Sir Alexander Cunningham, who at first, spent his own money in this connection. His finds are kept in the Indian Museum at Calcutta. By this time a good deal of stones and bricks had been removed to construct various buildings in Benares City. Queen's College, Duncan's Bridge over the Varunā, and the Railway Station in Benares, were provided with a vast quantity of stone from this sacred site. Ordinary official's lack of appreciation of sculpture in those early days can be gauged from the fact that "no less than 48 statues and numerous fragments were used up in the construction of the breakwater of the Duncan Bridge." If this was possible in a comparatively enlightened age what must have been the condition years before?

Another period of excavation work began in 1851 with Major Kittoe after whom a monastery has been fittingly named. Later, Mr. E. Thomas, Judge and Collector, continued the same work followed by Fitz Edward Hall, Prof. of Queen's College, and C. Horns, I.C.S., in 1865. In 1877 Arthur Carnac, I.C.S., found a Buddha statue.

The Archaeological Department came into the field in 1905 and unearthed most of the valuable finds described above. There is still a large area to be excavated, and we hope the Government will sanction the necessary funds so

that the work of excavation could be completed and a full history of the place written on the evidence of the remains.

Though the discoveries of the Archaeological Department brought the site to the notice of scholars and a good deal of interest created among them, it, however, remained a place of interest only to a few scholarly people. Actually it was the activities started by the late Ven. Anagārika Dharmapāla that caught the imagination of the Buddhists and gave it world-wide publicity. Unlike the work of the Archaeological Department, it was a living religious movement that he started with monks once again living there as permanent residents. Thus after 800 years of oblivion Sarnāth has obtained another lease of life.

For many years the Ven. Dharmapāla had to struggle hard in order to make this place a centre of Buddhism. He was thwarted in his efforts by many opponents but his indomitable will won at last. What was a pig-breeding ground in 1891 when he first visited the place, is now a beautiful park with fine buildings which bear comparison with work done by former kings.

As mentioned above, the most important building which has been erected here in modern times is the Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra. The foundation stone was laid by His Excellency Sir Harcourt Butler, Governor of the United Provinces, in 1922 and it took no less than nine years before the actual completion of the temple. Such were the innumerable obstacles that had to be overcome. The opening of the Vihāra in 1931 was a memorable event in the history of Sarnāth as well as Buddhism, for, with its opening, there has sprung up a popular and a rapidly growing interest in Buddhism in India.

The Mahā Bodhi Society's programme of work includes many schemes which, if successful, will make Sarnāth once

again the great Buddhist centre that it was in ancient days. In addition to the Schools and Dispensary already mentioned, an International Buddhist Institute for training Buddhist monks, a library containing Buddhist books, and a Publication Department to issue religious texts and translations are some of the other activities already started. The school is to be converted into a College and finally into a University worthy of the sacred place. Bhikkhūs are to go forth once again from Isipatana carrying the message of the Buddha throughout the world. These are the high aims of the Society and we trust that it will have the fullest support and sympathy of all who visit the sacred place.

CHAPTER IV

KUSINĀRĀ

KUSINĀRĀ (*Kusinagara*) is the sacred site of Lord Buddha's entry into Mahāparinirvāna after forty five years of strenuous activity for the welfare of both gods and men. At the time of this sad occurrence, it was a small town belonging to the Mallas whose Park called "Upavatana" was the actual locality chosen for the event.

Kusinārā is situated about a mile and half to the north of Kasia in the Gorakhpur District of the United Provinces and its current name is "Mathā Kunwār" (*Mṛtakumāra*) meaning "Dead Prince."

The site of Kusinārā can be reached either from Gorakhpur City or from Tahsil Deoria. The former situated at a distance of thirty two miles, is the headquarters of the District by that name as well as of the Oudh and Tirhut Railway, while the latter is a wayside station on the same railway line, the distance from here to the sacred spot being twenty miles. Cars and other modern conveyances are available at Gorakhpur while a bus service operates between Tahsil Deoria and Gorakhpur, the road passing through Kasiā. For the payment of an additional sum of four annas per passenger the buses will carry visitors right up to the actual site.

There are two Rest Houses at Kusinārā where the visitor can take up lodgings during his sojourn. The first belongs to the Burmese Mahā Thera, the Ven. U Chandramani, and the other is the "Ārya Vihāra," a commodious and comfortable Dharmasālā erected recently by Seth Jugol Kishore Birla.

Objects of Interest.

1. THE TEMPLE containing the reclining image of the Lord Buddha.
2. MAHĀPARINIRVĀNA STŪPA just behind this Temple.
3. THE EXCAVATED AREA round about the Temple.
4. ANGĀRA CHAITYA at a distance of about three quarters of a mile, where the body of the Tathāgata was cremated.
5. MATHĀ BĀBĀKI MURTI MANDĪR recently erected to house an image discovered at the site.
6. THE BURMESE REST HOUSE built by the late Mr. Khee Zarhee, an Arakan Buddhist.
7. ĀRYA VIHĀRA erected by Seth Jugol Khishore Birlaji.
8. CHANDRAMANI PRIMARY SCHOOL started by the late Ven. N. Saddhānanda.
9. BUDDHA (ANGLO VERNACULAR) SCHOOL started by Bābā Rāghavadāsa.
1. THE TEMPLE CONTAINING THE RECLINING IMAGE OF THE LORD BUDDHA

By the side of the Mahāparinirvāna Stūpa, is a low insignificant looking building coloured with white *chūnam* which the visitor will reach first on his way to the Stūpa. But within this poor shapeless structure is the famous colossal image of the Lord Buddha in the attitude of passing into the deathless state of Nirvāna. The space inside is so limited that one can only with difficulty prerambulate the image which has been set up exactly in the position in which He laid Himself down for the final act on this earth. The image is a fine specimen of ancient sculpture and no pilgrim or, for the matter of

that even an ordinary visitor fails to be impressed and moved by the influence pervading the same. Burmese pilgrims have covered the image literally with layers upon layers of gold leaf and silken robes. The image which measures 20 ft. in length reclines on a couch 23 ft. 9 in. long, 5 ft. 6 in. broad and 2 ft. 1 in. high, both the image and the couch being carved out of one solid piece of Chunār stone. It was Mr. A. C. Carlyle who discovered the image in 1833 in a state of dilapidation and successfully pieced together the fragments found scattered about. The couch contains the figures of Ānanda, Subhadda and Vajrapāni, a Malla Chieftain, and five others whose identity is yet unknown.

We are fortunate in being able to know definitely the names of the donor and the clever sculptor who carved out this fine image. Their names occur in an inscription engraved on the couch. It reads :

"Deyyadharmoyaṃ Mahāvihāre svāmīno Haribalasya Pratimāceyaṃ ghaṭitā Dīne . . . masu Māthurena."

"This is the religious gift of Haribala Svāmī of the Mahā Vihāra. This image is made by Dīna . . . of Mathurā."

The characters and the style of the language place the time of the erection of this statue in the 5th Century A.C.

It is to be hoped that some devout Buddhist will come forward to bear the cost of erecting a suitable Vihāra to replace the present structure which, though fairly ancient, is devoid of any architectural beauty.

2. MAHĀPARINIRVĀNA STŪPA.

This stūpa, as the name indicates, marks the place where the Lord Buddha left His mortal body and attained to the supremely blissful state of Nibbānadhātu. Three months before the full moon day of Vaisākha, Lord Buddha announced

to Ānanda that He would pass away and selected the Sāla Grove of the Mallas for the purpose. Ānanda expressed surprise at the selection, for it was then a remote and unknown township. Not having attained to the full fruition of an Arahant, Ānanda, ignorant of cosmic reasons, naturally preferred the great cities of Srāvasti and Rājagaha where the Lord's disciples lived in their thousands and who could perform the obsequies in a befitting manner; but to the Lord there were other weighty considerations, so He deliberately selected this peaceful place.

We are not aware of the name of the builder of this stūpa which seems to have undergone repairs at different periods, one such repair taking place in the 5th Century A.C., as already noted. During the excavations recently carried out at the site, there was discovered a large copper vessel containing a number of valuable articles. Of these, the first in importance is a copper plate with a long inscription and the second, a hoard of six coins belonging to the period of Kumāra Gupta (413-455 A.C.). The inscription which is a Sanskrit version of the Paṭiccasamuppāda in full, concludes as follows :—

" This is the religious gift of Haribala Svāmi. This is the copper plate placed inside the Parinirvāna stūpa." It is certain that Haribala who is mentioned as the donor of the great image was also connected with the reconstruction of the Stūpa though the fact is not mentioned here in so many words. The Stūpa which Hiuen Tsiang saw when he visited the place is obviously this one. The present height of the stūpa is 167 ft.

It is impossible to say when this stūpa again fell into disrepair but we can imagine that it was one of the many thousands of Buddhist monuments destroyed by Moslem invaders. The Archaeological Survey of the Government of India completed the excavation work in 1912 but it was left to a devout Burmese to have the stūpa fully restored. The

donor's name is U Po Kya and hails from the town of Henzada in South Burma. The repairs, which cost the donor who was financially assisted by other members of his family Rs. 18,000, were completed in 1927 and he followed this up by providing another Rs. 11,000 to have the whole edifice pasted with gold leaves as it is done in his country. When the rays of the sun descend on the stūpa, it sparkles brilliantly as if the whole dome is on fire—an unforgettable sight.

3. EXCAVATED AREA.

The excavated area in Kusinārā lies in front of the Mahā-parinirvāna stūpa and is small in comparison with the sites at Sārnāth and other historic places. The area contains the foundations of a few monasteries and cells of the usual type which need not be described in detail. It is, however, interesting to note that inscriptions found at the site describe the whole establishment as "Mahāparinirvāna Viṇāra," while the names of individual monasteries are Śrī Vishnu dvīpa Viṇāra, Bhadanta Suvīra Viṇāra and so on.

4. ANGĀRA CHAITYA.

This stūpa is situated at a distance of about three quarters of a mile from the site of the Parinirvāna Stūpa and is now locally known as "Rāmbhār." It is said to have been erected on the very site where the body of the Tathāgata was cremated. We have no information regarding the date of its construction but it cannot be earlier than the third century A.C. Treasure-hunters have bored into the stūpa and the valuables misappropriated long ago. Thanks, however, to this pilferage, the bottom can now be reached through a narrow passage where the burnt earth can be examined. Devout pilgrims carry handfuls of earth as mementoes. It is sad to reflect that no efforts have been made to repair and conserve this valuable stūpa. It is overgrown with shrubs

and trees of which a banyan tree thrives luxuriantly ; and, on its spreading branches an enterprising Chinese monk has made a hut for his residence, and leads a precarious life. It is high time that the Archaeological Department took more stringent measures to safeguard this historic monument.

5. MATHĀ BABĀKI MŪRTI MANDĪR.

A couple of furlongs from the Burmese Rest House stands a small shrine constructed recently to house an image discovered on a hillock. The inhabitants of the locality call it Mathā Babāki Mūrti Mandīr i.e., the Temple of the Dead Saint's Image. The image is a Dhyāna Buddha figure measuring 5 ft. 6 in. and belongs to the age of Kanishka (79-110 A.C.). The temple is usually kept closed but on a request being made to the Burmese High Priest he will get it opened for the visitor who wishes to have a better view.

6. THE BURMESE REST HOUSE

The Burmese Rest House consists of two buildings—the first being the older structure standing to the left of us as we approach the site from Kasia. It is the gift of the late Mr. Khee Zarhee whom we have already mentioned. An Arakanese by birth, he was a rich trader in Calcutta. The second is the new double storeyed building behind this Dharmasālā where the Venerable Chandramani Mahā Thera resides with his disciples. It contains a small shrine on the first floor.

7. ĀRYA VIHĀRA (DHARMASĀLĀ).

To the right of the road leading from Kasia is situated the commodious Rest House erected recently by the ever generous Seth Jugol Kishore Birlaji for the benefit of the increasing number of pilgrims. It has a large hall, at the far end of which is an image of the Lord Buddha installed by the

donor. Offerings are made by a Hindu pūjāri engaged for the purpose. Flanking this hall are the rooms set apart for the use of visitors.

8. CHANDRAMANI PRIMARY SCHOOL.

It is gratifying to note that Kusinārā too is making headway in imparting education to the village children. The late Bhikkhu N. Saddhānanda, a Sinhalese monk whose Upasampadā ordination took place in 1933 along with that of the late Ven. Dharmapala, established this School and generously financed it with the pension granted to him by the Ceylon Government as a retired Railway official. The School is named after the Venerable Chandramani Mahā Thera who has rendered very valuable service to the sacred place. The Mahā Thera's love for the place is proved by the fact that he has lived here continuously since his first arrival forty years ago and gives inspiration to all the activities carried on at the place.

9. BUDDHA ANGLO VERNACULAR SCHOOL.

This School owes its origin to Babā Rāghavadāsa, a well known Congress leader of the United Provinces, who is anxious to make Buddhism known among the inhabitants of Kusinārā whose ancestors had the rare and blessed opportunity of cremating the remains of the Tathāgata. A fine new building has been put up with the assistance of local land-lords to accommodate the School.

History of Kusinārā.

Kusinārā is the fourth most important Buddhist Site where, from very ancient times, Buddhists have carried on religious and cultural activities. Of all the sacred places in India, it is to Kusinārā alone that we turn with emotions of sadness and melancholy ; for it was here that our Lord Buddha

left His earthly existence for ever. To a devout Buddhist the very atmosphere of the place is full of pathos and everything in and about it seems to be sorrowing for the departed Lord. It is with tears rolling down the cheeks of devotees that they reverently prostrate before the image of the Lord inside the Temple already described.

The incidents of the last few days of Lord Buddha's life are so minutely and graphically described in the Mahāparinivāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya that I cannot do better than quote the entire passage for the benefit of my readers :

Now the Exalted One addressed the Venerable Ānanda and said, " Come, Ānanda, let us go on to the Sāla grove of the Mallas, the Upavattana of Kusinārā, on the further side of the river Hiranyavati."

" Even so, Lord," said the Venerable Ānanda, in assent, to the Exalted One. And when He had come there He addressed the Venerable Ānanda and said :—

" Spread over for me, I pray you Ānanda, the couch with its head to the north, between the twin sāla trees. I am weary, Ānanda and, would lie down."... And he spread a covering over the couch with its head to the north, between the twin sāla trees. And the Exalted One laid Himself down on his right side, with one leg resting on the other ; and He was mindful and self-possessed.

Now at that time the twin sāla trees were all one mass of bloom with flowers out of season ; and all over the body of the Tathāgata these dropped and sprinkled and scattered themselves, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old. And heavenly Mandārava flowers, too, and heavenly sandal wood powder came falling from the sky, and all over the body of the Tathāgata they descended and sprinkled and scattered themselves, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old. And heavenly music was sounded in the sky, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old. And heavenly songs came wafted from the skies, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old.

Then the Exalted One addressed the venerable Ānanda and said :—" The twin sāla trees are all one mass of bloom with flowers out of season ; all over the body of the Tathāgata these drop and

sprinkle and scatter themselves, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old. And heavenly Mandārava flowers, too, and heavenly sandalwood powder come falling from the sky, and all over the body of the Tathāgata they descend and sprinkle and scatter themselves, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old. And heavenly songs come wafted from the skies, out of reverence for the successor of the Buddhas of old !

" Now it is not thus, Ānanda, that the Tathāgata is rightly honoured, revered, venerated, held sacred or revered. But the brother or the sister, the devout man or the devout woman who continually fulfils all the greater and the lesser duties, who is correct in life, walking according to the precepts—it is he who rightly honours, reverences, venerates, holds sacred, and reveres the Tathāgata with the worthiest homage. Therefore, Ānanda, be ye constant in the fulfilment of the greater and of the lesser duties, and be ye correct in life, walking according to the precepts ; and thus Ānanda, should it be taught.

* * *

" There are spirits, Ānanda, in the sky, but of worldly mind, who dishevel their hair and weep, who stretch forth their arms and weep, who fall prostrate on the ground, and roll to and fro in anguish at the thought :—' To soon will the Exalted One die ! Too soon will the Exalted One pass away ! Full soon will the Light of the world vanish away.' "

* * *

" There are these four places, Ānanda, which the believing clansman should visit with feelings of reverence. Which are the four ?

" The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say :— ' Here the Tathāgata was born ' is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

" The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say :— ' Here the Tathāgata attained to the supreme and perfect insight ' is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

" The place, Ānanda, at which the believing man can say :— ' Here was the kingdom of righteousness set on foot by the Tathāgata ' is a spot to be visited with feelings of reverence.

" The place, Ānanda at which, the believing man can say :— ' Here the Tathāgata passed finally away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain behind ' is a spot

to be visited with feelings of reverence. These are the four places, Ānanda, which the believing clansman should visit with feelings of reverence.

"And there will come, Ānanda, to such spots, believers, brethren and sisters of the Order, or devout men and devout women, and will say :—' Here was the Tathāgata born ' or, ' Here did the Tathāgata attain to the supreme and perfect insight ' or, ' Here was the kingdom of righteousness set on foot by the Tathāgata ' or, ' Here the Tathāgata passed away in that utter passing away which leaves nothing whatever to remain behind.'

"And they, Ānanda, who shall die while they, with believing heart, are journeying on such pilgrimage, shall be reborn after death, when the body shall dissolve, in the happy realms of heaven."

* * *

"What are we to do, Lord, with the remains of the Tathāgata?" asked Ānanda :

"Hinder not yourselves, Ānanda, by honouring the remains of the Tathāgata. Be zealous, I beseech you Ānanda, in your own behalf ! Devote yourselves to your own good ! Be earnest, be zealous, be intent on your own good ! There are wise men, Ānanda, among the nobles, among the brahmins, among the heads of houses, who are firm believers in the Tathāgata ; and they will do due honour to the remains of the Tathāgata."

"But what should be done, Lord, with the remains of the Tathāgata?"

"As men treat the remains of a king of kings, so Ānanda, should they treat the remains of a Tathāgata," replied the Buddha.

"And how, Lord, do they treat the remains of a king of kings?"

"They wrap the body of a king of kings, Ānanda, in a new cloth. When that is done, they wrap it in carded cotton wool. When that is done, they wrap it in a new cloth, and so on till they have wrapped the body in five hundred successive layers of both kinds. Then they place the body in an oil vessel of iron, and cover that close up with another oil vessel of iron. They then build a funeral pyre of all kinds of perfume, and burn the body of the king of kings. And then at the four cross roads they erect a cairn to the king of kings. This, Ānanda, is, the way in which they treat the remains of a king of kings.

"And as they treat the remains of a king of kings, so Ānanda, should they treat the remains of the Tathāgata. At the four cross roads a cairn should be erected to the Tathāgata. And whosoever shall there place garlands or perfumes or paint, or make salutation there, or become in its presence calm in heart—that shall long be to them for a profit and a joy."

* * *

Now the venerable Ānanda went into the Vihāra, and stood leaning against the lintel of the door, and weeping at the thought :—" Alas ! I remain still but a learner, one who has yet to work out his own perfection. And the Master is about to pass away from me—He who is so kind !"

Now the Exalted One called the brethren, and said :—" Where then, brethren, is Ānanda ?"

"The venerable Ānanda, Lord, has gone into the vihāra, and stands leaning against the lintel of the door, and weeping at the thought :—" Alas ! I remain still but a learner, one who has yet to work out his own perfection. And the Master is about to pass away from me—he who is so kind !"

And the Exalted One called a certain brother, and said :—" Go now, brother, and call Ānanda in my name, and say :—" Brother Ānanda, the Master calls for thee."

"Even so, Lord!" said that brother, in assent, to the Exalted One. And he went up to the place where the Venerable Ānanda was ; and when he had come there, he said to the venerable Ānanda :—" Brother Ānanda, the Master calls for thee."

"Very well, brother," said the venerable Ānanda, in assent, to that brother. And he went up to the place where the Exalted One was, and when he had come there, he bowed down before the Exalted One, and took his seat respectfully on one side.

Then the Exalted One said to the venerable Ānanda, as he sat there by his side :—" Enough, Ānanda ! do not let yourself be troubled ; do not weep ! Have I not already, on former occasions, told you that it is in the very nature of all things most near and dear unto us that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them ? How, then, Ānanda, can this be possible—whereas anything whatever born, brought into being, and organised, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution—how then, can this be possible, that such a being

should not be dissolved ? No such condition can exist ! For a long time, Ānanda, have you been very near to me by acts of love, kind and good, that never varies, and is beyond all measure. For a long time, Ānanda, have you been very near to me by words of love, kind and good, that never varies and is beyond all measure. For a long time, Ānanda, have you been very near to me by thoughts of love, kind and good, that never varies and is beyond all measure. You have done well, Ānanda ! Be earnest in effort, and you too shall soon be free from the Intoxications—(of sensuality, and individuality, and delusion, and ignorance)."

Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren, and said :—
 " Whosoever, brethren, have been Able Awakened Ones through the long ages of the past, they also had servitors just as devoted to those Exalted Ones as Ānanda has been to me.

" He is a clever man, brethren, is Ānanda, and wise. He knows when it is the right time for the brethren or for the sisters of the Order, for devout men and devout women, for a king, or for a king's ministers, or for other teachers or for their disciples, to come and visit the Tathāgata.

" Brethren, there are these four wonderful and marvellous qualities in Ānanda. Which are the four ? . If, brethren, a number of the brethren of the Order should come to visit Ānanda, they are filled with joy on beholding him ; and if Ānanda should then preach the Truth to them, they are filled with joy at the discourse ; while the company of brethren is ill at ease, brethren, when Ānanda is silent. If, brethren, a number of the sisters of the Order, . . . or of devout men . . . or of devout women should come to visit Ānanda, they are filled with joy on beholding him ; and if Ānanda should then preach the Truth to them, they are filled with joy at the discourse ; while the company of sisters is ill at ease, brethren, when Ānanda is silent."

* * *

When He had thus spoken, the venerable Ānanda said to the Exalted One :— " Let not the Exalted One die in this little wattle-and-daub town, in this town in the midst of the jungle, in this branch township. For, Lord, there are other great cities, such as Campā, Rājagaha, Sāvattthi, Sāketa, Kosambi and Benares. Let the Exalted One die in one of them. There are many wealthy nobles and brahmins and heads of houses, believers in the Tathāgata, who will pay due honour to the remains of the Tathāgata."

" Say not so, Ānanda ! Say not so, Ānanda, that this is but a small wattle-and-daub town, a town in the midst of the jungle, a branch township.

" Long ago, Ānanda, there was a king, by name Mahā-Sudassana, a king of kings, a righteous man who ruled in righteousness, Lord of the four quarters of the earth, conqueror, the protector of his people, possessor of the seven royal treasures. This Kusinārā, Ānanda, was the royal city of the King Mahā-Sudassana, under the name of Kusāvati, and on the east and on the west it was twelve leagues in length, and on the north and on the south it was seven leagues in breadth."

* * *

" Go now, Ānanda, and enter into Kusinārā, and inform the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying :-- ' This day, O Vāsetṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the final passing away of the Tathāgata will take place. Be favourable herein, O Vāsetṭhas, be favourable. Give no occasion to reproach yourselves hereafter, saying :--In our own village did the death of our Tathāgata take place, and we took not the opportunity of visiting the Tathāgata in His last hours.' "

" Even so, lord," said the venerable Ānanda, in assent, to the Exalted One ; and he robed Himself and taking his bowl, entered into Kusinārā attended by another member of the Order.

Now at that time the Mallas of Kusinārā were assembled in the council hall on some (public) affair.

And the venerable Ānanda went to the council hall of the Mallas of Kusinārā ; and when he had arrived there, he informed them, saying :-- " This day, O Vāsetṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the final passing away of the Tathāgata will take place. Be favourable herein, O Vāsetṭhas, be favourable. Give no occasion to reproach yourselves hereafter, saying : --In our own village did the death of our Tathāgata take place, and we took not the opportunity of visiting the Tathāgata in His last hours.' "

And when they had heard this saying of the venerable Ānanda, the Mallas with their young men and maidens and their wives were grieved, and sad, and afflicted at heart. And some of them wept, dishevelled their hair, and stretched forth their arms and wept, fell prostrate on the ground, and rolled to and fro in anguish at the

thought :—“Too soon will the Exalted One die! Too soon will the Happy One pass away! Full soon will the Light of the world vanish away!”

Then the Mallas, with their young men and maidens and their wives, being grieved, and sad, and afflicted at heart, went to the Sāla grove of the Mallas, to the Upavaṭṭana, and to the place where the venerable Ānanda was.

Then the Venerable Ānanda thought:—“If I allow the Mallas of Kusinārā, one by one, to pay their respects to the Exalted One, the whole of the Mallas of Kusinārā will not have been presented to the Exalted One until this night brightens up into the dawn. Let me, now, cause the Mallas of Kusinārā to stand in groups, each family in a group, and so present them to the Exalted One saying :—‘Lord! a Malla of such and such a name, with his children, his wives, his retinue, and his friends, humbly bows down at the feet of the Exalted One.’”

And the venerable Ānanda caused the Mallas of Kusinārā to stand in groups, each family in a group, and so presented them to the Exalted One, and said :—“Lord! a Malla of such and such a name, with his children, his wives, his retinue, and his friends, humbly bows down at the feet of the Exalted One.”

And after this manner the venerable Ānanda presented all the Mallas of Kusinārā to the Exalted One in the first watch of the night.

* * *

Now the Exalted One addressed the venerable Ānanda, and said :—“It may be, Ānanda, that in some of you the thought may arise, ‘The word of the Master is ended, we have no teacher more!’ But it is not thus, Ānanda, that you should regard it. The Truths, and the Rules of the Order, which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the Teacher to you.”

* * *

Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren, and said :—“It may be, brethren, that there may be doubt or misgiving in the mind of some brother as to the Buddha, or the Doctrine, or the Path, or the method. Inquire, brethren, freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought :—‘Our Teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to inquire of the Exalted One when we were face to face with Him.’”

And when He had thus spoken the brethren were silent.

And again the second and the third time the Exalted One addressed the brethren, and said :—" It may be, brethren, that there may be doubt or misgiving in the mind of some brother as to the Buddha, or the Doctrine, or the Path, or the method. Inquire, brethren, freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with the thought :—' Our Teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to inquire of the Exalted One when we were face to face with Him.' "

And even the third time the brethren were silent. Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren, and said :—" It may be, brethren, that you put no questions out of reverence for the Teacher. Let one friend communicate to another."

And when He had thus spoken the brethren were silent.

And the venerable Ānanda said to the Exalted One :—" How wonderful a thing is it, Lord, and how marvellous ! Verily, I believe that in this whole assembly of the brethren there is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, or the Doctrine, or the Path, or the method."

" It is out of the fullness of faith that thou hast spoken, Ānanda ! But, Ānanda, the Tathāgata knows for certain that in this whole assembly of the brethren there is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, or the Doctrine, or the Path, or the method. For even the most backward, Ānanda, of all these five hundred brethren has become converted, is no longer liable to be born in a state of suffering, and is assured of hereafter attaining to the Enlightenment (of Arahatship)."

Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren, and said :—" Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying :—' Decay is inherent in all component things ! Work out your salvation with diligence !' "

This was the last word of the Tathāgata.

Then the Exalted One entered into the first stage of Rapture. And rising out of the first stage He passed into the second. And rising out of the second He passed into the third. And rising out of the third stage He passed into the fourth. And rising out of the fourth stage of Rapture, He entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of space is alone present. And passing out of the mere

consciousness of the infinity of space He entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of thought is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of thought He entered into a state of mind to which nothing at all was specially present. And passing out of the consciousness of no special object He fell into a state between consciousness and unconsciousness. And passing out of the state between consciousness and unconsciousness He fell into a state in which the consciousness both of sensations and of ideas had wholly passed away.

Then the venerable Ānanda said to the venerable Anuruddha :—" O my Lord, O Anuruddha, the Exalted One is dead."

" Nay, brother, Ānanda, the Exalted One is not dead. He has entered into that state in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be !"

Then the Exalted One passing out of the state in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be, entered into the state between consciousness and unconsciousness. And passing out of the state between consciousness and unconsciousness He entered into the state of mind to which nothing at all is specially present. And passing out of the consciousness of no special object He entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of thought is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of thought He entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of space is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of space He entered into the fourth stage of Rapture. And passing out of the fourth stage He entered into the third. And passing out of the third stage He entered into the second. And passing out of the second He entered into the first. And passing out of the first stage of Rapture He entered into the second. And passing out of the second stage He entered into the third. And passing out of the third stage He entered into the fourth stage of Rapture. And passing out of the last stage of Rapture He immediately expired.

When the Exalted One died there arose, at the moment of His passing out of existence, a mighty earthquake, terrible and awe-inspiring : and the thunders of heaven burst forth.

When the Exalted One died Brahmā Sahampati, at the moment of His passing away from existence, uttered this stanza :—

“ They all, all beings that have life, shall lay
 Aside their complex form—that aggregation
 Of mental and material qualities,
 That gives them, or in heaven or on earth,
 Their fleeting individuality !
 Even as the Teacher—being such a one,
 Unequalled among all the men that are,
 Successor of the prophets of old time,
 Mighty by wisdom, and Insight clear
 Hath died ! ”

* * *

When the Exalted One died, of those of the brethren who were not yet free from the passions, some stretched out their arms and wept, and some fell headlong on the ground, rolling to and fro in anguish at the thought :—“ Too soon has the Exalted One died ! Too soon has the Happy One passed away ! Too soon has the Light gone out in the world ! ”

But those of the brethren who were free from the passions (the Arahats) bore their grief collected and composed at the thought :—“ Impermanent are all component things ! How is it possible that (they should not be dissolved) ? ”

Then the Venerable Anuruddha exhorted the brethren and said :—“ Enough, my brethren, weep not, neither lament ! Has not the Exalted One formerly declared this to us, that it is in the very nature of all things near and dear unto us, that we must divide ourselves from them, leave them, sever ourselves from them ? How then, brethren, can this be possible—that whereas anything whatever born, brought into being, and organised, contains within itself the inherent necessity of dissolution—how then can this be possible that such a being should not be dissolved ? No such condition can exist ! Even the spirits, brethren, will reproach us.”

“ But of what kind of spirits, Sir, is the Venerable Anuruddha thinking ? ”

“ There are spirits, brother Ānanda, in the sky, but of worldly mind, who dishevel their hair and weep, and stretch forth their arms and weep, fall prostrate on the ground, and roll to and fro in

anguish at the thought :— ' Too soon has the Exalted One died !
' Too soon has the Light gone out in the world ! ' "

* * *

Now the Venerable Anuruddha and the venerable Ānanda spent the rest of that night in religious discourse. Then the venerable Anuruddha said to the venerable Ānanda :—" Go now, brother Ānanda, into Kusinārā and inform the Mallas of Kusinārā saying :— ' The Exalted One, O Vaseṭṭhas, is dead ; do then whatever seemeth to you fit ! ' "

" Even so, Lord," said the venerable Ānanda, in assent, to the venerable Anuruddha. And having robed himself early in the morning, he took his bowl, and went into Kusinārā with one of the brethren as an attendant.

Now at that time the Mallas of Kusinārā were assembled in the council hall concerning that very matter.

And the venerable Ānanda went to the council hall of the Mallas of Kusinārā ; and when he had arrived there, he informed them, saying :—" The Blessed One, O Vāseṭṭhas, is dead ; do, then, whatever seemeth to you fit."

And when they had heard this saying of the venerable Ānanda, the Mallas, with their young men and their maidens and their wives, were grieved, and sad, and afflicted at heart. And some of them wept, dishevelled their hair, and some stretched forth their arms and wept, and some fell prostrate on the ground and some reeled to and fro in anguish at the thought :—" Too soon has the Exalted One died ! Too soon has the Happy One passed away ! Too soon has the Light gone out in the world ! "

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā gave orders to their attendants, saying :—" Gather together perfumes and garlands, and all the music in Kusinārā ! "

And the Mallas of Kusinārā took the perfumes and garlands and all the musical instruments, and five hundred suits of apparel, and went to the Upavattana, to the Sāla Grove of the Mallas, where the body of the Exalted One lay. There they passed the day in paying honour, reverence, respect, and homage to the remains of the Exalted One with dancing, and hymns, and music, and with garlands and perfumes ; and in making canopies of their garments, and preparing decoration wreaths to hang thereon.

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā thought :—

“ It is much too late to burn the body of the Exalted One today. Let us now perform the cremation tomorrow.” And in paying honour, reverence, respect, and homage to the remains of the Exalted One with dancing, and hymns, and music, and with garlands and perfumes ; and in making canopies of their garments, and preparing decoration wreaths to hang thereon, they passed the second day too, and then the third day, and the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth day also.

Then on the seventh day the Mallas of Kusinārā thought : “ Let us carry the body of the Exalted One, by the south and outside, to a spot on the south, and outside of the city,—paying it honour and reverence, and respect, and homage, with dance, and song, and music, with garlands and perfumes,—and there, to the south of the city, let us perform the cremation ceremony !”

And thereupon eight chieftains among the Mallas bathed their heads, and clad themselves in new garments with the intention of bearing the body of the Exalted One. But, behold, they could not lift it up !

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā said to the venerable Anuruddha :—“ What, lord, can be the reason, what can be the cause, that eight chieftains of the Mallas who have bathed their heads, and clad themselves in new garments with the intention of bearing the body of the Exalted One, are unable to lift it up ?”

“ It is because you, O Vāseṭṭhas, have one purpose, and the spirits have another purpose.”

“ But what, lord, is the purpose of the spirits ?”

“ Your purpose, O Vāseṭṭhas, is this :—‘ Let us carry the body of the Exalted One, by the south and outside, to a spot on the south, and outside of the city,—paying it honour, and reverence, and respect, and homage, with dance, and song, and music, with garlands and perfumes,—and there, to the south of the city, let us perform the cremation ceremony. But the purpose of the spirits, Vāseṭṭhas, is this :—‘ Let us carry the body of the Exalted One by the north to the north of the city, and entering the city by the north gate, let us bring it through the midst of the city into the midst thereof. And going out again by the eastern gate,—paying honour, and reverence, and respect, and homage to the body of the

Exalted One, with heavenly dance, and song, and music, and garlands, and perfumes,—let us carry it to the shrine of the Mallas called Makuṭabandhana, to the east of the city, and there let us perform the cremation ceremony.' ”

“ Even according to the purpose of the spirits, so, lord, let it be.”

Then immediately all Kusinārā down even to the dust bins and rubbish heaps became strewn knee deep with Mandāra flowers from heaven ! and while both the spirits from the skies, and the Mallas of Kusinārā upon earth, paid honour, and reverence, and respect, and homage to the body of the Exalted One, with dance, and song, and music, with garlands, and with perfumes, they carried the body by the north to the north of the city ; and entering the city by the north gate they carried it through the midst of the city into the midst thereof ; and going out again by the eastern gate they carried it to the shrine of the Mallas, called Makuṭabandhana ; and there, to the east of the city, they laid down the body of the Exalted One.

* * *

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā wrapped the body of the Exalted One in a new cloth. And when that was done, they wrapped it in carded cotton wool. And when that was done, they wrapped it in a new cloth,—and so on till they have wrapped the body of the Exalted One in five hundred layers of both kinds. And then they placed the body in an oil vessel of iron, and covered that close up with another oil vessel of iron. And then they built a funeral pyre of all kinds of perfumes, and upon it they placed the body of the Exalted One.

Now at that time the venerable Mahākassapa was journeying along the high road from Pāvā to Kusinārā with a great company of the brethren, with about five hundred of the brethren. And the venerable Mahākassapa left the high road, and sat himself down at the foot of a certain tree.

Just at that time a certain naked ascetic who had picked up a Mandāra flower in Kusinārā was coming along the high road to Pāvā.

Now the venerable Mahākassapa saw the naked ascetic coming in the distance ; and when he had seen him he said to that naked ascetic :—

“ O friend, surely thou knowest our Master ? ”

“ Yea, friend ! I know Him. This day the Samana Gotama has been dead a week ! That is how I obtained this Mandārava flower.”

On that, of those of the brethren who were not yet free from the passions, some stretched out their arms and wept, and some fell headlong on the ground, and some reeled to and fro in anguish at the thought :—“ Too soon has the Exalted One died ! Too soon has the Happy One passed away ! Too soon has the Light gone out in the world ! ”

* * *

Now just at that time four chieftains of the Mallas had bathed their heads and clad themselves in new garments with the intention of setting on fire the funeral pyre of the Exalted One. But, behold, they were unable to set it alight !

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā said to the venerable Anuruddha :—“ What, lord, can be the reason, and what the cause (of this) ? ”

“ The purpose of the spirits, O Vāsetṭhas, is different.”

“ But what, sir, is the purpose of the spirits ? ”

“ The purpose of the spirits, O Vāsetṭhas, is this :— That venerable brother Mahākassapa is now journeying along the way from Pāvā to Kusinārā with a great company of the brethren, with five hundred brethren. The funeral pyre of the Exalted One shall not catch fire until the venerable Mahākassapa shall have been able reverently to salute the feet of the Exalted One.”

“ Even according to the purpose of the spirits, so, sir, let it be ! ”

Then the venerable Mahākassapa went on to Makutabandhana of Kusinārā, to the shrine of the Mallas, to the place where the funeral pyre of the Exalted One was. And when he had come up to it he arranged his robe on one shoulder ; and after bowing down with clasped hands, he thrice walked reverently round the pyre, and then, uncovering the feet he, bowed down, in reverence at the feet of the Exalted One.

And those five hundred brethren arranged their robes on one shoulder ; and bowing down with clasped hands, they thrice walked reverently round the pyre, and then bowed down in reverence at the feet of the Exalted One.

And when the homage of the venerable Mahākassapa and of those five hundred brethren was ended, the funeral pyre of the Exalted One caught fire of itself.

Now as the body of the Exalted One burned itself away, from the skin and the integument, and the flesh, and the nerves, and the fluid of the joints, neither soot nor ash was seen. Only the bones remained behind. Just as one sees not soot or ash when Ghee or oil is burned, so, as the body of the Exalted One burned itself away, from the skin and the integument, and the flesh, and the nerves, and the fluid of the joints, neither soot nor ash was seen. Only the bones remained behind. And of those five hundred pieces of raiment the very innermost and outermost were both consumed.

And when the body of the Exalted One had been burnt up, there came down streams of water from the sky and extinguished the funeral pyre of the Exalted One ; and there burst forth streams of water from the storehouse of the waters (beneath the earth), and extinguished the funeral pyre of the Exalted One. The Mallas of Kusinārā also brought water scented with all kinds of perfumes and extinguished the funeral pyre of the Exalted One.

Then the Mallas of Kusinārā surrounded the bones of the Exalted One in their council hall with a lattice work of spears, and with a rampart of bows ; and there for seven days they paid honour, and reverence, and respect, and homage to them with dance, song, and music, and with garlands and perfumes.

Now the king of Magadha, Ajātasattu, the son of the Queen of the Videha clan, heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā.

Then the king of Magadha, Ajātasattu, the son of the Queen of the Videha clan, sent a messenger to the Mallas, saying:—" The Exalted One was a Kshatriya and so am I. I am worthy to receive a portion of the Relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will I put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will I celebrate a feast !"

And the Licchavis of Vesālī heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā. And the Licchavis of Vesālī sent a messenger to the Mallas saying :—" The Exalted One was a Kshatriya and so are we. We are worthy to receive a portion of the Relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will we put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will we celebrate a feast."

And the Sākyas of Kapila-vatthu heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā. And the Sākyas of Kapila-vatthu sent a messenger to the Mallas, saying :—" The Exalted One was the pride of our race. We are worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will we put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will we celebrate a feast !"

And the Bulis of Allakappa heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā. And the Bulis of Allakappa sent a messenger to the Mallas, saying :—" The Exalted One was a Kshatriya and so are we. We are worthy to receive a portion of the Relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will we put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will we celebrate a feast !"

And the Koliyas of Rāmagāma heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā. And the Koliyas of Rāmagāma sent a messenger to the Mallas, saying :—" The Exalted One was a Kshatriya and so are we. We are worthy to receive a portion of the Relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will we put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will we celebrate a feast !"

And the Brahmin of Veṭṭhadīpa heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā. And the Brahmin of Veṭṭhadīpa sent a messenger to the Mallas, saying :—" The Exalted One was a Kshatriya, and I am a Brahmin. I am worthy to receive a portion of the Relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will I put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will I celebrate a feast !"

And the Mallas of Pāvā heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā.

Then the Mallas of Pāvā sent a messenger to the Mallas of Kusinārā, saying :—"The Exalted One was a Kshatriya and so are we. We are worthy to receive a portion of the Relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will we put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will we celebrate a feast !"

When they heard these things the Mallas of Kusinārā spoke to the assembled crowds, saying :—"The Exalted One died in our village domain. We will not give away any part of the remains of the Exalted One !"

When they had thus spoken, Doṇa the Brahmin addressed the assembled crowds and said :—

"Hear, gracious Sirs, one single word from me.
 Forbearance was our Buddha wont to teach.
 Unseemly is it that over the division
 Of the remains of Him who was the best of beings
 Strife should arise, and wounds, and war !
 Let us all, sirs, with one accord unite
 In friendly harmony to make eight portions.
 Wide spread let cairns spring up in every land
 That in the Light of the world mankind may trust !"

"Do thou, then, O Brahmin, thyself divide the remains of the Exalted One equally into eight parts, with fair division."

"Be it so, sirs," said Doṇa the Brahmin, in assent, to the assembled brethren. And he divided the remains of the Exalted One equally into eight parts, with fair division. And he said to them :—"Give me, sirs, this vessel, and I will set up over it a sacred cairn, and in its honour will I establish a feast." And they gave the vessel to Doṇa the Brahmin.

And the Moriyas of Pipphalivana heard the news that the Exalted One had died at Kusinārā.

Then the Moriyas of Pipphalivana sent a messenger to the Mallas, saying :—"The Exalted One was a Kshatriya and so are we. We are worthy to receive a portion of the Relics of the Exalted One. Over the remains of the Exalted One will we put up a sacred cairn, and in their honour will we celebrate a feast." And when they heard the answer, saying :—"There is no portion of the remains of the Exalted One left over. The remains of the Exalted One are all distributed," then they took away the embers.

So the King of Magadha, Ajātasattu, the son of the Queen of the Videha clan, made a cairn in Rājagaha over the remains of the Exalted One and celebrated a feast.

And the Licchavis of Vesālī made a cairn in Vesālī over the remains of the Exalted One and celebrated a feast.

And the Sākya of Kapilavatthu made a cairn in Kapilavatthu over the remains of the Exalted One, and celebrated a feast.

And the Bulis of Allakappa made a cairn in Allakappa over the remains of the Exalted One, and celebrated a feast.

And the Koliyas of Rāmagāma made a cairn in Rāmagāma over the remains of the Exalted One, and celebrated a feast.

And Veṭṭhadīpaka, the Brahmin, made a cairn in Veṭṭhadīpa over the remains of the Exalted One and celebrated a feast.

And the Mallas of Pāvā made a cairn in Pāvā over the remains of the Exalted One and celebrated a feast.

And the Mallas of Kusinārā made a cairn in Kusinārā over the remains of the Exalted One and celebrated a feast.

And Doṇa, the Brahmin, made a cairn over the vessel (in which the remains had been collected), and celebrated a feast.

And the Moriyas of Pippalivana made a cairn over the embers, and celebrated a feast.

Thus were there eight cairns (Thūpas) for the remains, and one for the vessel, and one for the embers.*

The above account of the passing away of the Lord Buddha given in the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutta is, indeed, a moving and inspiring one to all true Buddhists. These charming passages are evidence enough to indicate to the reader the holiness of the sacred place in their eyes.

Just as at other sacred places here too Buddhist Kings, nobles, merchants and even humble peasants have contributed their share, big or small, towards the erection of the numerous monuments some of which have already been described in this

*Translation by T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids in *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, Vol III, pp. 149-190.

book. However, it is a pity that none of Emperor Asoka's famous works which included two stone pillars has been discovered as yet though Hiuen Tsiang testified to their existence at the time of his arrival there.

Lack of connected and authentic records precludes us from giving a chronological account of this place. We may, however, note briefly some of the known events.

Soon after the passing away of the Lord Buddha the Republics of the Mallas and the Vajjians were subjugated and incorporated into the Magadha Empire. When Fa Hien visited the sacred site in the fifth century A.C., he found the districts sparsely populated and most of the monasteries in decay. On another page we have described the rebuilding of the main stūpa by Haribala Svāmi in the fifth century A.C.

Modern history of Kusinārā commences with the visit of Cunningham in 1852. Excavation work was started in 1853 under the supervision of Mr. A. C. Carlyle. As already stated it was he who discovered and repaired the old image. In the course of his excavation work, burnt objects including bones of human beings were unearthed from inside as well as from outside the Temple. This fact points to a sudden calamity in which the inmates seem to have been burnt alive along with the sacred edifice. In all probability this catastrophe took place during the invasion of the Moslem iconoclasts.

Excavation work went on intermittantly^{*} and finally stopped in the year 1912. Dr. Vogel and Pandi Hirānanda Sāstri who later on became the Government Epigraphist were two of the scholars prominently connected with the excavation work.

It is interesting to recall that Mahābīr Bhikkhu, the first North Indian to embrace the Buddha Dhamma and join the Order of Bhikkhus in modern times, was also the first to set

up a monastery at Kusiṇārā and thus lay the foundation of the present Buddhist activities at the site. Mahābīr Bhikkhu's life was a most hazardous and adventurous one, being a near relative of Kunwar Singh, a nobleman, who took a prominent part in the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Kunwar Singh fought valiantly and was killed in battle and after the Mutiny had been suppressed by the British, Mahābīr, who was a fine athlete, disguised himself as a professional wrestler and worked his way right down to Tuticurin. From here he crossed over to Ceylon safely and devoted himself to a study of Pāli and the Buddha Dhamma. Inspired by the pious life of the late Venerable Indasabha Nāyaka Thera, he entered the Order of Bhikkhūs to devote the rest of his life for the cause of Buddhism.

On returning to India, patriot that he was, he decided to settle down at Kusiṇārā which was not very far from his ancestral home and bring back the sacred place to its former pre-eminence. He put up a modest hut for himself and began the work in right earnest. Later on with the financial assistance of Mr. Khee Zharee, whom we have already mentioned, he purchased a plot of land and with the generous help of the same merchant he succeeded in getting a Dharmasālā erected for the use of visitors as well as for his own residence.

Another great Bhikkhu whose name will always be associated with the sacred place is the Venerable U Chandramani Mahā Thera who is still in charge of the centre. An Arakanese by birth, he accompanied the late Ven. Anagārika Dharmapāla to India and made a study of Sanskrit and Hindi. Inspired by the missionary zeal of the late Venerable Dharmapāla, he decided to stay back in India and contribute his mite to the cause of Buddhist revival. He joined Mahābīr Svāmi

and supervised the construction work of the Dharmasālā above mentioned and after the former's death, he himself took over the work of revitalising the place.

Among the activities sponsored by the Mahā Thera mention may be made of the Melā (fair) which takes place in the month of Vaisākha as an item in the celebrations connected with the birthday of the Lord Buddha. The Melā lasts for a full month and during this period thousands of villagers congregate at Kusinārā who are thus given an opportunity to visit the shrines and to come in contact with Buddhists.

I must not fail to mention the labours of three other lovers of the sacred place. The first is Babā Rāghavadāsa, an influential Congress leader who yearns to see the place revived to its ancient grandeur. Through his strenuous efforts the English High School already mentioned came into existence. Study of Buddhism, especially the Dhammapada, is encouraged at this School. Babā Rāghavadāsa's co-operation with the Buddhists is a very healthy sign and it is to be hoped that this valued co-operation will continue to grow. The second is the late Venerable Ñ. Saddhānanda, a monk from Ceylon, who started the Chandramani Primary School. Though his stay at the sacred place was cut short by his untimely death, his brief stay was very fruitful as it gave the necessary impetus to educational activities. The last but not the least is Seth Jugol Kishore Birlaji whose princely donations towards various charitable works in India have earned for him the appellation of "Anāthapindika of modern times." The Dharmasālā built by him has already been described. His great influence among the Hindus should go a long way in inducing them to welcome Buddhism back to India from where it had disappeared centuries ago.

It may be stated in passing that, though the Maha Bodhi Society has no centre of work here, it was one of the earliest places where the Society began its activities. The Venerable U. Srī Sārānanda, one of the first four Ceylon Bhikkhūs who arrived in India for missionary work, was sent here by the late Ven. Dharmapala but was subsequently withdrawn to Sarnath leaving Venerable Chandramani Thera to continue the work at this place.

In conclusion I earnestly hope that all Buddhists and all liberal minded Hindus will extend their hand of co-operation in the work Venerable Chandramani and his associates are engaged in at this fourth sacred place.

Hiuen Tsiang writes on Kusinārā as follows:—

“ The capital of this country is in ruins, and its towns and villages waste and desolate. The brick foundation walls of the old capital are about 10 li in circuit. There few inhabitants, and the avenues of the town are deserted and waste. At the north-east angle of the city gate is a *stūpa* which was built by Asoka-rājā. This is the old house of Chunda (*Chun-to*) ; in the middle of it is a well which was dug at the time when he was about to make his offerings (*to Buddha*). Although it has overflown for years and months, the water is still pure and sweet.

To the north-west of the city 3 or 4 li, crossing the Ajitavati (*O-shi-to-fa-ti*) river, on the western bank, not far, we come to a grove of sāla trees. The sāla tree is like the *Huh* tree, with a greenish white bark and leaves very glistening and smooth. In this wood *are* four trees of an unusual height, which indicate the place where Tathāgata died.

There is (*here*) a great brick *Vihāra*, in which is a figure of the Nirvāna of Tathāgata. He is lying with his head to the north as if asleep. By the side of this *Vihāra* is a *stūpa* built by Asoka-rājā ; although in a ruinous state, yet it is some 200 feet in height. Before it is a stone pillar to record the *Nirvāna* of Tathāgata ; although there is an inscription on it, yet there is no date as to year or month.

By the side of the Vihāra, and not far from it, is a *stūpa*. This denotes the place where Bodhisattva, when practising a religious life, was born as the king of a flock of pheasants. (*chi-S. kapiñjala*), and caused a fire to be put out.

* * *

By the side of this, not far off, is a *stūpa*. On this spot Bodhisattva, when practising a religious life, being at that time a deer, saved (*or, rescued*) living creatures.

* * *

To the west of this place, not far off, is a *stūpa*. This is where Subhadra (*Shen-hien*) died (*entered nirvāna*).

* * *

Beside (*the stūpa of*) Subhadra's Nirvāna is a *stūpa*; this is the place where the Vajrapāṇi (*Chi-kin-kang*) fell fainting on the ground.

* * *

By the side where the diamond (*mace-holders*) fell to the earth is a *stūpa*. This is the place where for seven days after Buddha had died they offered religious offerings.

* * *

By the side of the place where the coffin was detained is a *stūpa*; this is where the queen Mahāmāyā wept for Buddha.

* * *

To the north of the city, after crossing the river, and going 300 paces or so, there is a *stūpa*. This is the place where they burnt the body of the Tathāgata. The earth is now of blackish yellow, from a mixture of earth and charcoal. Whoever with true faith seeks here, and prays, is sure to find some relics of Tathāgata."

Buddhist Records of the Western World, Translated by Samuel Beal, Vol. II. pp. 31-37.

CHAPTER V

RĀJAGRIHA (RĀJAGAHA)

RĀJAGAHA was the capital of the powerful kingdom of Māgadha during Lord Buddha's time. It was also called Giribbaja and Vasumatī in very ancient days. Another name was Kusāgāra mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang. Surrounded by hills on all sides, it was a very picturesque and healthy city. The modern name of the place is Rājgir and it is entirely in ruins. King Bimbisāra held his Court here at the time of Lord Buddha.

Rājgir is the terminus of the narrow gauged Railway known as Behar Light Railway. To reach Rājgir, the visitor should detrain at Bhaktiārpūr on the East Indian Railway and change into the Light Railway which will bring him to Rājgir at a distance of 36 miles. The journey can also be made by car from Bhaktiārpūr or Gayā, the latter being about 75 miles away.

The ruins of the city are close to the Railway Station but Gijjhakūṭa hill where Lord Buddha resided often is situated at a distance of about 2 miles. The place is served by a Dak Bungalow and two Buddhist Rest Houses and several Dharmasālās belonging to the Jains.

Rājgir is specially important to Mahāyāna Buddhists whose sūtras are said to have been almost all delivered at this place.

Places of Interest.

The following are the places of interest :—

1. GIJJHAKŪṬA, the hill residence of Lord Buddha.
2. THE ANCIENT CHAITYA called " Maniyār Maṭh " in the centre of the valley.

3. TAPODĀ NADĪ or the hot water springs.
4. SATTAPAṆṆI CAVE, now known as "Sonabhandār" in front of which the First Buddhist Council was held.
5. EXCAVATED AREA including the ramparts of the old city.
6. VELUVANĀRĀMAYA, the famous Bamboo grove residence of the Buddha.
7. BIMBISĀRA'S JAIL.
8. PIPPALA STONE HOUSE near the hot springs.
9. THE FIVE HILLS round the city viz., Vebhāra, Vepulla, Gijjhakūṭa, Isigili and Pāṇḍava.
10. JAIN TEMPLES on the hill-tops.
11. BURMESE AND JAPANESE REST HOUSES where the pilgrims are accommodated.

1. GIJJHAKŪṬA

Gijjhakūṭa or "Vulture's peak" is famous in Buddhist history as the residence of the Lord Buddha during His sojourns in Rājagaha. It is one of the highest of the hills surrounding the city. King Bimbisāra made a flight of steps to reach the summit where the monastery was situated. The jungle has been cleared lately from the site and the steps can once again be used to climb up to the top. Some distance from the summit there are a number of small caves which were used by monks. It was from the summit of this hill that Devadatta hurled a stone at Lord Buddha who had a narrow escape from death, only a toe being slightly injured. To hurt the Buddha is one of the five *ānantari* crimes a human being could commit; Devadatta was in consequence taken alive to hell in spite of his confession and repentance at the last moment.

Sūkhara khana cave where Pariggaha Sutta was delivered to Dīghanaka, former teacher of Sāriputta and Moggallāna, is also situated in the Gijjhakūṭa.

2. THE ANCIENT CHAITYA CALLED MANIYĀR MATH

Almost in the centre of the valley and to the west of the main road, there is a *stūpa* and other structures sheltered by a corrugated iron roof of conical shape. It is called "Maniyār Maṭh" after a small shrine which existed on the mound before the place was excavated. On removing this shrine and digging deeper below, a curious monument was exposed. It appears to be a *stūpa* with a hollow inside and stucco figures on the outer walls. Round the building are a number of platforms probably used as altars. The original plan and the purpose of the building are obscured by the additions and alterations it had undergone at different periods.

Among the antiquities discovered here are several pieces of Buddhist sculpture, the figure of a five-hooded *nāgi*, and some jars having spouts all round them. The discovery of the *nāgi* figure and other factors point to its being originally a temple dedicated to snake-worship. Its prominent situation and the reference to Rājagriha as the "abode of the Mani *nāga*" in the Mahābhārata lend further support to the theory. "Mani *nāga*" must have been the guardian deity of the city for whose worship this shrine was dedicated. Pāli books mention a "*Manimāla chaitya*" in Rājagriha belonging to Manimāla yaksha. It could not have been anything other than this.

3. TAPODĀ NADĪ

Tapodā nadī or the hot water springs are situated on the slopes of the hills to the right as we enter the basin of the

hills from the direction of Gayā. These are in existence from the time of Lord Buddha who mentions them in His sermons. He used to bathe here occasionally. A monastery called "Tapodā Monastery" was in existence in proximity to the springs. At present these springs are in the hands of Hindu Paṇḍās who have a small temple close to them. Buddhists and Hindus are allowed to bathe at the springs and the opportunity should not be missed by any visitor. These mineral water baths are curative of many illnesses. In winter season, people flock here from various parts of India to enjoy the delight of a hot mineral water bath. It is regrettable that the place is not kept very clean. With a better appreciation of the value of the springs and some modern ideas, the place could be converted into a prosperous health resort.

4. SATTAPAṆṆI CAVE

This famous cave now known as "Sonabhandār" is situated on the inner slopes of the Vebhāra hill which stands to the right as we come to the middle of the basin enclosed by the hills. The road from Maniyār Maṭh runs up to the foot of the caves.

Sir Aurel Stein identified Sattapaṇṇi cave with a group of 4 caves on the outer slope of the Vebhāra hill. These can be examined by crossing over the mountain and descending for some distance from the Ādināth Jain temple situated on the summit. On the other hand Sir John Marshall identified Sattapaṇṇi with a spot further down to the north where the remains of a stone house have been discovered. Both the theories deserve consideration on account of the reputation held by these two famous scholars. The discovery of a fourth century inscription on the outer wall above the door of the "Sonabhandār" cave as well as the fact that the places suggested by these eminent savants are outside the city and,

therefore, likely to have been preferred by the monks, add weight to their conclusions. For the information of the reader, I quote below the actual text and translation of the inscription above mentioned :—

“ *Nirvāṇa-lābhāya tapasvi-yogye subhe guhe-rhat-pratimā pratishṭhe āchārya-ratnam(?) muni-Vairadevah vimuktaye kārayad dīrghatejah(?)*.”

“ The sage Vairadeva of great lustre(?), the jewel(?) among teachers, caused to be made for the purpose of attaining salvation and for liberation two auspicious caves worthy of ascetics, in which were placed the images of Arhats.”

This inscription is, however, no conclusive evidence as to the late origin of the cave. It is quite possible that the cave was already there and Vairadeva merely improved it for the purpose mentioned in the inscription.

The image of Vishnu found in front of the cave was set up in later times.

5. EXCAVATED AREA.

The excavations of Rājgir have not been so thorough as at Nālandā but there is reason to believe that here is a very fruitful field for an industrious archaeologist to keep himself busy during an indefinite period. Only a minute fraction of the expansive area has been explored so far, these being the so-called new city, the boundary walls and the monasteries which are dealt with elsewhere. The survey of the site and the trial excavations made indicate that the old city had two boundary walls, the outer having a circuit of no less than 25 to 30 miles, it being carried over the surrounding hills. The inner wall has a circuit of 4 miles and it perhaps enclosed only the King's Palace and the mansions of the nobility. Both these walls are made of massive stone

boulders but they are in a state of extreme decay. The thickness of the wall extant is 14 feet 9 inches while the height at places is 11 feet. Bastions strengthen the walls at intervals. The modern road to the hot springs runs through one of the principal gateways though it is unrecognisable at present.

The foundations of the new city erected by either Bimbisāra or his son Ajātasattu can be seen from the Railway Station itself. The greater area of the site is now under cultivation.

6. VEḤUVANĀRĀMAYA.

The actual site of this monastery built by King Bimbisāra has not yet been identified. As the whole area is covered with impenetrable jungle and exploration work has been confined to a small portion only, we shall have to wait till the place is fully explored to know its location. Some scholars identified it with the mound situated at a distance of 150 yards from Satdhārā hot springs. A few antiquities were unearthened here but they are no conclusive evidence as to the location of this important monastery. The nearby tank is identified with the Karandaka tank mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang. He says that this monastery was one *li* from the northern gate of the city. It was originally inhabited by heretics but they were removed and the place given over to the true disciples of the Lord. Veḥuvaṇa means "Bamboo forest." It is not difficult to understand why it was called so from the numerous bamboo thickets growing even today over the whole locality. Lord Buddha spent several months in this monastery. Some of the *suttas* delivered here are Mahākassapa, Mahāmoggallāna and Mahācunda bhojjhangas.

In front of Veḥuvanārāmaya passed away Mahāmoggallāna who had the unique honour of having a *stūpa* erected at the spot on the suggestion of the Lord Himself.

7. BIMBISĀRA'S JAIL.

On the main road through the valley three-fourth of a mile to the south of the Maniyār Maṭh temple, there is a place enclosed by a stone wall 6 feet thick. This is supposed to be the jail in which Bimbisāra was kept confined as a prisoner by his son Ajātasattu. It is said that from the prison, the captive king could see the Lord Buddha walking up and down in Gijjhakūṭa, which sight was a great consolation to his sad heart. The peak is undoubtedly visible from here and the fact that an iron ring with a loop to which convicts could be tied was found at the site, is also evidence of the accuracy of the identification of the ruins.

8. PIPPHALA STONE HOUSE.

On the eastern side of the Vebhāra hill and to the right of the pathway leading to the Hindu temple, there is a rather strange stone structure identified with Pipphalaguhā mentioned in Pāli books, and presently called "Jarasandakibaiṭak." It measures 85 feet by 81 feet while the height is 22 to 28 feet. It does not really look like a monastery. Sir John Marshall was undoubtedly right when he described it as a watch tower, the openings on the sides being sentries' posts. Their subsequent utilisation by monks for purposes of meditation probably earned it the appellation of "Pipphalaguhā." The cave where Buddha came to succour Mahākassapa Thera during his illness, was probably behind it but it has now entirely disappeared. On the summit of this structure there are now five Moslem graves.

9. THE FIVE HILLS.

The five hills above mentioned form a sort of natural boundary and a helpful fortification for the city. They are difficult to cross over, so the city had to be guarded by soldiers only on the south. The hill on the left as we enter the basin is called Isigili. This was so called on account of

the fact that it had a cave into which hermits used to enter and no trace of them could be had from outside. They disappeared from sight as if the mountain had almost devoured them up, hence the name. Kālasīla was a monastery built by the side of this hill. The next is Vepulla. Vebhāra is to the right. On the incline of this hill is situated the Sattapaṇṇi cave. It is carved out of a rock of sandstone. Other residences of Lord Buddha on this side were Sappa-sonḍika, Pabbhāraya, Gotamakandaraya, Tinduka guhā, Tapodā Kandaraya, Tapodārāmaya, Indasāla guhā and Pipphali guhā. In the Pipphali guhā Lord Buddha delivered the Sakkapaṇṇa sutta. It was also here that He delivered the Kassapabojjhaṅga to the ailing Mahā Kassapa Thera. On the conclusion of the sutta he became fully restored to health. The other mountain is Pāṇḍava but it does not seem to have had any residences for the monks. We have already dwelt on Gijjhakūṭa. Some of the other monasteries near about the place utilised by the Buddha were Corapapātaya, Tālavanaya, Maddakucchi Migadāya, Jīvaka Ambavana, Moranivāpa, and Laṭṭhivanaya. All these places have yet to be identified.

10. JAIN TEMPLES ON HILL TOPS.

Dotted on practically every hill-top at Rājagriha are small temples belonging to the Jain community but none of them is of any great importance either from the point of view of size or of architecture.

11. BURMESE AND JAPANESE REST HOUSES.

The Rest House built by the Burmese for the use of Buddhist visitors is immediately to the left of the road on emerging out of the station. It is situated on a hillock commanding a view of the new city of Rājagriha.

The Japanese Rest House is further down on the spur of hills to the left.

History of Rājagriha.

Rājagriha is one of the oldest cities of India. According to Rāmāyana, the well-known Hindu epic, it was founded by King Vasu and called "Vasumati" after his name. Its many other names have already been given. The name Rājagriha was applied during the Buddha's time on account of the many palaces which adorned it. As the capital of the powerful Magadha Kingdom, it became famous throughout India for its wealth and magnificence. Its vastness is indicated by the boundary walls. Buddhaghōṣha mentions that the city had 32 main gates with 64 minor ones but the prosperity of Rājagriha declined after the building of Pāṭaliputra by Ajātasatru on the river Ganges. It is said that he also strengthened the walls of the old city to resist a contemplated attack by King Padyota of Avanti.

Rājagriha was a favourite residence of the Lord Buddha and He visited it very often during His wanderings. The first visit was before His enlightenment in quest of alms. It was then that King Bimbisāra saw Him and, learning that He was the son of a Sākya ruler, invited Him to abandon religious life and accept a portion of his own Kingdom. Buddha who had already renounced a throne, declined the honour with thanks. The King, however, obtained from Him the promise to visit him directly on achieving His purpose in life. This He faithfully kept and the King became a life-long devotee.

At the time of Fa Hien's visit, the old city had been almost completely abandoned. Here is his account :

"Thence going to the west the distance of one *yeou yan*, you come to the *new town*, of the Royal Residence.¹ This new town was built by the King *Acheshi*.² In the midst there are

-
1. Rājagaha.
 2. Ajātasattu.

two *Seng Kia lan*.³ On leaving by the western gate, you arrive, at the distance of three hundred paces, at a tower raised by the King *Ache shi*, when he obtained a portion of the relics of *Fo*; it is lofty, grand, beautiful and majestic.

"Leaving the town on the southern side, and proceeding four *li* to the south, you enter a valley which leads to the five hills. These *five hills* form a girdle like the walls of a town; it is the ancient town of the king *Ping she*.⁴ From east to west it may extend five or six *li*, and from north to south seven or eight. Here is the place where *She li fo*⁵ and *Mou lian*⁶ first beheld *O hi*; the place where *Ni Kian tse*⁷ made a pit filled with fire, and served poisoned food to *Fo*⁸ and that where the black elephant of the king *Ache shi*, having drunk wine, sought to injure *Fo*.

"At the north-east angle of the town, the ancients erected a chapel in the garden where *An pho lo*⁹ invited *Fo* and twelve hundred and fifty of his disciples to do them honour; this chapel still exists.

"The town is entirely deserted and uninhabited.

"Entering the valley and going to the mountains above fifteen *li* to the south-east, you arrive at the peak of *Khi che*.¹⁰ Three *li* before reaching the summit of the mountain you come to a tavern situated amongst the rocks and facing the south. *Fo* was seated there in meditation. At thirty paces to the north-east there is a stone grot: *A nan*¹¹ was sitting there in meditation. The demon of heaven, *Phi siun*¹² transformed into a vulture, stopped before the grot and terrified *A nan*. *Fo* by his supernatural power opened the rock, took *A nan* by the arm with his hand, and removed his fear. The trace of the bird, and the hole through which *Fo* protruded his hand still exist. It is from this circumstance that the hill is called the "*Hill of the cave of the vulture*." Before the cave is the place of those of the four

3. Sanghārāma (monastery).

4. Ajātasattu.

5. Sāriputta.

6. Moggallāna.

7. Perhaps Nighanṭhā.

8. Buddha.

9. Ambapāli.

10. Gijjhakūṭa.

11. Ānanda.

12. Pisuna.

Buddhas. All the Arahans likewise, had each his cave when they sat to meditate. The number of these caves is several hundreds.

"Fo, being in front of the stone house, was passing from the east to the west. *Thiao tha*,¹³ standing on the steep edge towards the north of the mountain, threw down a stone which wounded Fo on the toe. This stone still exists. The hall in which Fo taught the doctrine is in ruins; there are but the foundations of a brick wall remaining. The peaks of these hills are regular and majestic; they are the loftiest of the five mountains.

"Fa Hien having purchased in the new town perfumes, flowers and oil lamps, hired two aged *Pi Khieou*,¹⁴ to conduct him to the grot and to the hill *Khi che*. After having made an oblation of the perfumes and the flowers, the lamps increased the brilliance. Grief and emotion affected him even to tears; he said, "Formerly, in this very place was Fo; here he taught the *Sheou leng yan*;"¹⁵ Fa Hien unable to behold Fo in life, has but witnessed the traces of his sojourn. Still, it is something to have recited the *Sheou leng yan* before the cave and dwelt there one night.

"Proceeding to the north three hundred paces, he saw to the west of the road the Bamboo gardens of *Kia lantho*,¹⁶ where was constructed a chapel which remains to this day; ecclesiastics sweep and water it. To the north of the chapel, at the distance of two or three *li*, is the *Shi mo she na*.¹⁷ *Shi mo she na* signifies in Chinese, the *Field of Tombs where they lay the dead*. On crossing the southern mountain and proceeding westwards three hundred paces, there is a stone building called the grot of *Pin Pho lo Fo*, after his meals habitually he sat in this place to meditate."—*Pilgrimage of Fa Hien*, pp. 288-9, 298.

Here are a few extracts from Hiuen Tsiang's account:—

From this spot proceeding eastward through the mountains about 60 *li*, we arrive at the city *Kusāgāra-pura* (*Kiu-she-kie-lo-pu-lo*), or "the royal city of best grass (*lucky grass*)." This is the central point of the kingdom of *Magadha*. Here the former kings

13. Devadatta.

14. Bhikkhūs. They could not have been "hired." This is probably a mistranslation.

15. *Sigālovāda*(?).

16. *Kalandaka*.

17. *Susāna*.

of the country fixed their capital. It produces much of the most excellent, scented, fortunate grass, and therefore it is called "the city of the superior grass." High mountains surround it on each side, and form as it were its external walls. On the west it is approached through a narrow pass, on the north there is a passage through the mountains. The town is extended from east to west and narrow from north to south. It is about 150 li in circuit. The remaining foundations of the walls of the inner city are about 30 li in circuit. The trees called *Kie-ni-kia* (Kanakas) border all the roads, their flowers exhale a delicious perfume, and their colour is of a bright golden hue. In the spring months the forests are all of a golden colour.

Outside the north gate of the palace city is a *stūpa*. Here Devadatta (Ti-po-to-to) and Ajātasatru-rājā (Wi-sing-yun), having agreed together as friends, liberated the drunken elephant for the purpose of killing Tathāgata. But Tathāgata miraculously caused five lions to proceed from his finger-ends; on this the drunken elephant was subdued and stood still before him.

To the north-east of this spot is a *stūpa*. This is where Sāriputta (She-li-tseu) heard Aśvajita (O-shi-po-shi) the Bhikkhu declare the law, and by that means reached the fruit (*of an Arhat*)

To the north of this place, not far off, there is a very deep ditch, by the side of which is built a *stūpa*; this is the spot where Śrīgupta (She-li-kio-to) wished to destroy Buddha by means of fire concealed in the ditch and poisoned rice. Now Śrīgupta (Shing-mi) greatly honoured (*believed in*) the heretics, and his mind was deeply possessed by false views.

To the north-east of this fiery ditch of Śrīgupta (Shing-mi), at a bend of the city, is a *stūpa*; this is where Jivaka (Shi-fo-kia), the great physician, built a preaching-hall for Buddha. All round the walls he planted flowers and fruit trees. The traces of the foundation-walls and the decayed roots of the trees are still visible. Tathāgata, when he was in the world, often stopped here. By the side of this place are the remains of the house of Jivaka, and the hollow of an old well also exists there still.

To the north-east of the palace city going 14 or 15 li, we come to the mountain Gridharakūṭa (Ki-li-tho-kiu-ch'a). Touching the southern slope of the northern mountain, it rises as a solitary peak to a great height, on which vultures make their abode. It appears like a high tower on which the azure tints of the sky are reflected, the colours of the mountain and the heaven being commingled.

When Tathāgata had guided the world for some fifty years he dwelt much in this mountain, and delivered the excellent law in its developed form (*kwang*). Bimbisāra-rāja, for the purpose of hearing the law, raised a number of men to accompany him from the foot of the mountain to its summit. They levelled the valleys and spanned the precipices, and with the stones made a staircase about ten paces wide and 5 or 6 li long. In the middle of the road there are two small *stūpas*, one called "Dismounting from the chariot" (*Hia shing*), because the king, when got there, went forward on foot. The other is called "Sending back the crowd" (*T'ui-fan*), because the King separating the commonfolk, would not allow them to proceed with him. The summit of this mountain is long from the east to the west and narrow from north to south. There is a brick *Vihāra* on the borders of a steep precipice at the western end of the mountain. It is high and wide and beautifully constructed. The door opens to the east. Here Tathāgata often stopped in old days and preached the law. There is now a figure of him preaching the law of the same size as life.

To the east of the *Vihāra* is a long stone, on which Tathāgata trod as he walked up and down for exercise. By the side of it is a great stone about fourteen or fifteen feet high and thirty paces round. This is the place where Devadatta flung a stone from a distance to strike Buddha.

South of this, below the precipice, is a *stūpa*. Here Tathāgata, when alive, in old times, delivered the *Saddharmapundarika Sūtra*.

To the south of the *Vihāra*, by the side of a mountain cliff, is a great stone house. In this Tathāgata, when dwelling in the world long ago, entered *Samādhi*.

To the north-west of the stonehouse and in front of it is a great and extraordinary stone. This is the place where Ānanda (O-nan) was frightened by Māra.

By the side of the *Vihāra* there are several stone houses, where Sāriputta and other great Arahats entered *Samādhi*.

To the north-east of the *Vihāra*, in the middle of a rocky stream, is a large and flat stone. Here Tathāgata dried his Kāshāya garment.

* * *

By the side of this, and upon a rock, is a foot-trace of Buddha. Although the "wheel" outline is somewhat obscure, yet it can be distinctly traced.

On the top of the north mountain is a *stūpa*. From this point Tathāgata beheld the town of Magadha, and for seven days explained the law.

To the west of the north gate of the mountain city is the mountain called Pi-pu-lo (*Vipula-giri*). According to the common report of the country it is said, "On the northern side of the south-western crags of this mountain there were formerly five hundred warm springs; now there are only some ten or so; but some of these are warm and others cold, but none of them hot." . . . At the mouth of the various hot springs there are placed carved stones, sometimes shaped like lions, and at other times as the heads of white elephants; sometimes stone conduits are constructed, through which the water flows on high (*aqueducts*), whilst below there are stone basins, in which the water collects like a pond. Here people of every region come, and from every city, to bathe; those who suffer from any disease are often cured. On the right and left of the warm springs are many *stūpas* and the remains of *vihāras* close together. In all these places the four past Buddhas have sat and walked, and the traces of their so doing are still left. These spots being surrounded by mountains and supplied with water, men of conspicuous virtue and wisdom take up their abode here, and there are many hermits who live here also in peace and solitude.

To the west of the hot springs is the Pippala (Pi-po-lo) stone house . . .

On the top of mount *Vipula* (Pi-pu-lo) is a *stūpa*. This is where in old times Tathāgata repeated the law. At the present time naked heretics (*Nigranthas*) frequent this place in great numbers; they practise penance night and day without inter-

mission, and from morn till night walk round (*the stūpa*) and contemplate it with respect.

To the left of the northern gate of the mountain city (Girivājja, *Shan-shing*), going east, on the north side of the southern crag (*precipice or cliff*), going 2 or 3 li, we come to a great stone house in which Devadatta formerly entered *Samādhi*.

Going about one li from the north gate of the mountain city we come to the Karaṇḍavenuvana (Kia-lan-t'o-chuh-yuen), where now the stone foundation and the brick walls of a *Vihāra* exist.

To the east of the Karaṇḍavenuvana is a *stūpa* which was built by Ajātasatru-rājā. After the *Nirvāna* of the Tathāgata the kings divided the Relics (*she-li*) ; the king Ajātasatru returned then with his share, and from a feeling of extreme reverence built (*a stūpa*) and offered his religious offerings to it. When Aśoka rājā- (Wu-yau) become a believer, he opened it and took the relics, and in his turn built another *stūpa*. This building constantly emits miraculous light.

By the side of the *stūpa* of Ajātasatru-rājā is another *stūpa* which encloses the relics of half of the body of Ānanda.

* * *

To the south-west of the bamboo garden (Venuvana) about 5 or 6 li, on the north side of the southern mountain, is a great bamboo forest. In the middle of it is a large stone house. Here the venerable Kāśyapa with 999 Arahats, after Tathāgata's *Nirvāna*, called a convocation (*for the purpose of settling*) the three *Pitakas*.

* * *

North-west of the place where the great Kāśyapa held the convocation is a *stūpa*. This is where *Ānanda*, being forbidden by the priests to take part in the assembly, came and sat down in silence and reached the fruit (*position*) of an Arahāt. After this he joined the assembly.

Going west from this point 20 li or so, is a *stūpa* built by Aśoka-rājā. This is the spot where the " great assembly " (*Maha-sangha*) formed their collection of books (*or, held their assembly*).

To the north of the Venuvana Vihāra about 200 paces we come to the Karaṇḍa lake (Karaṇḍahrada).

* * *

To the north-west of the Karaṇḍahrada, at a distance of 2 or 3 li, is a *stūpa* which was built by Asoka-rājā. It is about 60 feet high ; by the side of it is a stone pillar on which is a record engraved relating to the foundation of the *stūpa*. It is about 50 feet high, and on the top has the figure of an elephant.

To the north-east of the stone pillar stone, not far, we come to the town of Rājagṛiha (Ho-lo-shi-li-hi). The outer walls of this city have been destroyed, and there are no remnants of them left ; the inner city (*walls*), although in a ruined state, still have some elevation from the ground, and are about 20 li in circuit.

* * *

It is also said that Ajātasatru-rājā first founded this city, and the heir-apparent of Ajātasatru having come to the throne, he also appointed it to be the capital, and so it continued till the time of Asokarājā, who changed the capital to Pāṭaliputra, and gave the city of Rājagṛiha to the Brāhmans, so that now in the city there are no common folk to be seen, but only Brāhmans to the number of a thousand families.

CHAPTER VI

NĀLANDĀ

ALTHOUGH Nālandā is not a sacred place to the Buddhists in the same sense as Buddhagayā or Sārnāth, nevertheless it occupies an important place in their itinerary on account of the famous Buddhist University which came into existence there about the 1st Century A.C. In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta mention is, however, made of Lord Buddha's visit to Nālandā during His last journey.

Nālandā is situated near a village called "Bargaon" and is on the Behar Light Railway. Rājgir, the terminus of the Line, is four miles to the south. Patna, the capital of Behar, is 55 miles to the north-west and is situated at the site of the famous city of Pāṭaliputra which was the capital of Magadha during the reign of Emperor Asoka.

Visitors to Nālandā and Rājgir have to break journey at Bhaktiarpur Junction on the East Indian Railway and travel by the Light Railway. The most convenient way is to see Rājagriha first and reach Nālandā by a morning train so that the visitor can spend a couple of hours at this site and then catch the return train to Bhaktiarpur. From the station, one has to walk about a mile and a half to reach the site of the University. No cars or other vehicles of any kind are available here. The custodian of the Nālandā Museum renders every possible help to all visitors. An entrance fee of As. 2 is charged from the visitors.

Objects of Interest.

The following are the chief objects of interest :—

1. THE ROW OF STŪPAS which are all in a line in front of the monasteries.

2. THE MONASTERIES AND THE UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS. They are parallel to the above.
3. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM. This contains the finds of Nālandā and is well worth a visit.

1 & 2. THE STŪPAS AND MONASTERIES.

As it is more convenient to deal with the above in one section, we shall not separate the two items as we have done in the case of other places.

In the course of his survey of the ancient historical sites, Buchanan Hamilton discovered Nālandā close to the village of "Bargoan" but it was left to Sir Alexander Cunningham to identify the place definitely. In his report he has given a full account of the ruins and he himself undertook some trial excavations.

It was in 1915 that the Archaeological Department commenced systematic excavation work and thus unearthed the wonderful monuments which have won today the admiration of the whole world. The ruins of Nālandā are very extensive and, from a distance, they appear as a great fortress. The general plan of the establishment was to have a row of *chaityas* and other public buildings on one side and just opposite them a row of monasteries and colleges running parallel. Some of these buildings are several storeys high and of enormous proportions justifying the account of the Chinese pilgrims that Nālandā was the greatest centre of learning in India. There are also several layers of buildings indicating the fact that the place was revived again and again by erecting new buildings on old foundations which had disappeared under earth in course of centuries.

With this introduction, let us now visit the remains. The actual site is reached by an old passage with monastery No. 1 on the left and monasteries Nos. 4 and 5 on the right.

The visitor should proceed straight till he reaches the open ground and then examine the *stūpa* marked No. 1. It is the most imposing of all the monuments. The summit of the *stūpa* can be reached by a broad staircase which is also ancient. From the top, the visitor can obtain a panoramic view of the whole site.

From the variety of sculpture and stucco figures round this *stūpa*, it is self-evident that it is not one single structure but has been added on to at different times. The sculptures belong to the Gupta period and are some of the finest specimens extant. The main *stūpa* is surrounded by a large number of small votive *stūpas*.

Inside the wooden shed on the north east of the main *stūpa* is the fine figure of Avalokitesvara Bodhisatva. It is one of the biggest images found at the place. The image in the south-east side is supposed to be that of Nāgarjuna, the first Principal of the University. Those who are interested in inscriptions will find here several small dedicatory ones.

The visitor should now proceed to the east and examine the various monasteries in that Section. It is not possible to give detailed accounts of each and every one of them. We shall only give a brief sketch of the most important buildings.

From several points of view, the most important monastery is the one marked No. 1. It is large and has no less than nine strata. The entrance is from the north wall. As one enters the monastery, one will notice the stone bases of pillars which supported a verandah round the court-yard. There is evidence to show that this monastery was once gutted down by a fierce fire. The lower strata is probably the monastery built by the Sumatran King during the reign of King Devapāla, the third king of the Pāla dynasty (815-854 A.C.). This was a double-storeyed building originally. The

existence of upper and lower walls is explained by the fact that the upper monastery was erected on the ruins of the lower one. The shrine of the lower monastery is on the east side. There must have been a colossal statue of the Buddha in this shrine.

An interesting feature of the monastery is the platform on the other side of the shrine evidently used as a seat by the teacher who delivered his lectures to the students squatting on the court-yard floor. There is a well on the north-west corner. The cells at the sides were undoubtedly the living rooms of the scholars. A feature of these rooms is the vaulted roof which, according to Mr. A. Ghose, the author of the "Guide to Nālandā," is the first true example of such arches in ancient India. Among the finds of this monastery is the "fine grained stone plaque representing the eight principal events of Lord Buddha's life." This is now in the Museum. The broad stairs of this monastery as well as the excellence of the concrete material used are important features to be remembered. These show the high level the science of engineering had reached at the time.

Monastery site No. 4 is worth mentioning on account of two interesting features. The first is the opening in the wall adjoining the staircase. This is probably the remains of a skylight to obtain light for the staircase, a feature seldom noticed in old buildings. The second is the discovery of a coin belonging to the reign of King Kumāragupta (A.C. 413-55). This is one of the earliest coins discovered at Nālandā.

Passing through the monastery site No. 5, the visitor reaches monastery No. 6, which has two brick court-yards. This too was a double-storeyed building as evidenced by the staircase. A peculiar feature of this monastery is the double set of ovens in the middle of the upper court-yard. It is not known for what purpose these were made. Mr. Ghose

suggests that they were meant for cooking. This is hardly likely as no cooking would be permitted in such a prominent place. These were most probably used as containers of dyes for colouring the robes of monks, a very essential part of their monastic life.

To the north-east of the monastery No. 7, is the stone temple site No. 2. This is interesting on account of the " dado of 211 sculptured panels over the moulded plinth." These panels contain many different scenes such as human beings in different postures, *kinmaras* playing on instruments, *makaras*, the god Agni, Kuvera, Gajalakshmi, Kārtikeya on his peacock etc. Among the Jātakas represented here is the Kacchapa Jātaka. These sculptures belong to the sixth or seventh centuries.

We now turn back and reach the monastery site No. 8. The features of this monastery are the same as in others but this is a very spacious and imposing one. Here too there are two levels. Let us now reach monastery No. 9. In this there are six dye-containers in the court-yard. An underground drain runs right along the whole length of the court-yard. No other important features are to be noticed here.

Then we come to the 10th and the 11th monastic sites. The tenth site is interesting on account of the use of arches for doors. Mud mortar is used here in a clever manner.

While the above mentioned monasteries are fairly well preserved—at least in their foundations and walls—No. 11 is in a very bad condition. The chief feature of the latter monastery is the set of 25 fragmentary pillars whose bases are still to be seen on the parapet walls. Here were discovered a number of jars containing dried up mortar.

The architectural features of most of these monasteries are more or less uniform. The general plan is to have a square

or rectangular structure with rows of rooms on two or three sides with a court-yard in the centre. A verandah, the roof of which is supported by pillars made of stone or brick, runs on two or three sides in front of the cells round the court-yards. The side facing the main entrance locates the shrine containing an image of Lord Buddha or a Bodhisatva. Sometimes there is a well in a corner of the court-yard just as in monastery No. 1. The walls are plastered and the floor is made of concrete or laid with stones or bricks. The row of monasteries except No. 1A and 1B face west while the row of *chaityas* and *Vihāras* face the east separated from the former by a wide passage.

To the north of *chaitya* No. 3, is *chaitya* site No. 12. Here too there are two layers belonging to two periods. This *stūpa* is most interesting as its walls contain niches and pillasters of various designs which enhance its beauty. All these niches contained images but only a few remain at present. This is one of the *stūpas* excavated at a very early date by Mr. Broadley. Two *chaityas* are seen at the north and the south. These appear to have housed large stucco images of Buddha. Measurement at the base of the *chaitya* is 170 ft. by 165 ft.

Again to the north of this *chaitya* we come across another numbered 13. This was badly damaged and the Archaeological Department has made necessary repairs to it. It too had decorated walls. To the east of this *stūpa* is a court-yard where there was formerly a shrine. At present there are no objects of interest except a few votive *stūpas*. This site is, however, important on account of the discovery of a furnace to manufacture metal images.

Chaitya site No. 14 is interesting as it contains the pedestal of an image with fragments of paintings. This is a special feature not found anywhere else in North India. There must have been a colossal image on the pedestal.

There are other interesting sites near about Nālandā. Images of the Buddha are to be seen at a modern temple in Bargoan, and at Jagadishpur, two miles away. The latter place has a huge image of the Buddha with a high halo at the back. The Buddha is depicted as sitting under the Bodhi tree and several episodes of his life are sculptured into the base of the image.

Excavation work is not yet complete at this vast and fruitful site. There are still a number of mounds, which when examined, will enable us to form an accurate picture of the whole University site. But what has been unearthed so far is sufficient to show what a grand and populous institution it must have been.

3. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

No person should fail to pay a visit to the Archaeological Museum where all the valuable images, coins and plaques discovered at the site are now safely housed. The custodian in charge of the Museum is always willing to oblige the visitors by explaining the interesting objects under his care. The antiquities kept in the Museum can be classified under the following heads :—(1) The inscriptions. (2) Images. (3) Sealings and Plaques and (4) Pottery.

(1) *The Inscriptions*.—The inscriptions are very important on account of the fact that they give us an idea as to the true history of Nālandā. These inscriptions are either in copper plates, stone images or stucco work. Mention has already been made of the inscription of King Devapāla. The copper plate inscriptions of Samudra Gupta, Devapāla and Dharmapāla discovered here are preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

There are two interesting inscriptions on stone in the Nālandā Museum ; the first is that of Yasovarmadeva and the second that of Vipulasrīmitra.

The first records the gifts of Māladā, son of a Minister of Yasovarmadeva, King of Kanouj, in the 8th Century, to the temple erected by King Bālāditya. More interesting than the mention of gifts is the description of Nālandā though somewhat high-flown. We quote below some extracts which give a vivid account of the University :—

“ Nālandā with her learned men, famous on account of their learning (knowledge of) good scriptures and arts, mocks as it were the cities of great Emperors.

“ The row of whose monasteries with their pinnacles kissing the clouds, is, as it were, designed by the creator to be a beautiful garland of the earth shining high (in the space), and being the delightful home of the community (of monks) who are the abode of good learning, with the palaces and temples brilliant with the network of rays (issuing out) of various jewels, assumes the splendour of Sumeru, the beautiful home of hordes of noble *Vidyādharas*.

“ Here King Bālāditya erected this spacious, unique and white palace of the Lord (Buddha), the son of Suddhodana, as if out of a desire to insult mountain Kailāsa.

“ The Palace, it seems, went round the whole earth, disgracing the splendour of the moon, putting a stop to the beauty of the chains of peaks of the Himālayas, then defiling the white river of the sky and silencing the sea of critics ; having realised that it was futile to wander about in a world where there was nothing to vanquish, it (now) stands aloft, as if a pillar of the great fame it has won.”

The inscription of Vipulasrimitra was discovered in monastery site No. 7, and records the work done by this monk. It mentions the building of a temple for Tārā with adjoining court and tank and a monastery which is described as “ an ornament of the world, surpassing in a wonderful manner the palace of Indra.”

In addition to these there are other shorter inscriptions on pedestals and halos of images as well as on some bricks. These are mostly dedicatory inscriptions. Some of them,

however, contain well-known Buddhist verses such as "Ye dharmā hetupprabhavā etc." Pāli version of this is :

*"Ye dhammā hetu pṇabhavā, tesam hetum Tathāgato āha
Tesam ca yo nirodho, evam vādi mahāsamano."*

Paṭiccasamuppāda is also inscribed on some of the antiquities showing that the "chain of causation" was a cardinal doctrine common to both the Northern and as well as Southern schools of Buddhism.

The image of Jhambala, the God of wealth (No. 1-4707) contains an inscription which says that it was the gift of Kaka.

The stone image of Trailokyavijaya (No. 1-224) contains the following inscription at the back :—

*"Ākāsa-lakṣanāṁ sarva ākāsaṁ ch-apy-alakṣha-
nāṁ(1) ākāsa-samāta yo gat-sarvavāgra-samālasphuṭeḥ(11)
udayabhadrasya."*

Tārā's image (No. 1A-304) has the following :—

*"Om Tāre Tuttāre Tāre svāha. Om Padmāvati
Om kurukulle svāha. Ye dharmā . . ." (incomplete).*

The language of the inscriptions is Sanskrit which was then used by the Mahāyānists in composing their religious texts.

(2) *Images*.—The most important collection of antiquities in the Museum is that of images of Buddha, Bodhisatvas and gods of the Northern Buddhists. As Nālandā was the centre of Mahāyāna Buddhism, in addition to images of the Lord Buddha, a great number of images of Bodhisatvas, gods and other Mahāyāna deities were discovered. Most of the images are of the Pāla period, though there are a few belonging to the Gupta period as well. Unlike at other Buddhist centres, the images here are of small size and

a considerable number of them made of metal. A few Brahmanical images were also discovered at the site. This shows that, at some period or other, Hinduism had tried to occupy Nālandā just as it had done at other places.

It may be safely said that in spite of the great eminence to which Nālandā attained as a centre of learning, its art of image making never reached the excellence of Sarnāth or Mathurā. The images and other art products found here fall far short of the high standard of design and execution attained by the Sarnāth school. Nālandā, however, has specialised in casting small scale images in metal. In the Museum the visitor will see a variety of these, some of which are extremely delicate.

Among the bronze statues of the Buddha, the one that stands out as a striking example is that numbered 1-532. It is placed on a circular lotus pedestal. Among the Bodhisatva figures there are a number of fine specimens which compare well with those discovered at any other place. Of these mention may be made of a few. Padmapāṇi, the goddess holding a lotus stalk in one of her hands, is represented by several images. There are three large images of this Bodhisatva.

Images of Avalokitesvara marked No. 12-8 may also be examined. He is here holding a rosary, lotus stalk and nectar pot.

Seated on a lion throne, the image of Vajrapāṇi, marked No. 9-157, is a striking one. There are images of Manjusrī, Jambhala, Tārā, Trailokyavijaya, Praṇhāpāramitā, Marīchi, Haritī, Sarasvatī, Aparājitā and other gods and goddesses.

In addition to these images a few Brahmanical images were also unearthed. No. 4-63 is a representation of Siva and Pārvatī seated in an amorous attitude.

(3) *Sealings and Plaques*.—Another interesting item is the seals and plaques found in the various monasteries.

A vast collection of these is preserved in the Museum which experts will find useful. Some of these seals contain the images of Buddha, others a verse from the Tripiṭaka. Of surpassing interest is the official seal of the Nālandā University. There are many specimens of this. The following inscription is engraved on them: "*Sri Nālandā Mahā Vihārāy-arya-bhikkṣu sanghasya*," "Of the Community of venerable monks of the great monastery at Nālandā." Above the inscription is a Dharmacakra with two deer on two sides of the same. Some of the seals indicate that each of the monasteries or hostels, as we call them now, had its own particular seal.

There are also seals belonging to Narasinhagupta and Kumāragupta II of the Gupta Dynasty, Bhaskaravarman of Assam, Harshavardhana of Kanouj and several other Kings and princes. They are an index to the interest taken by Royal Houses throughout India in the welfare of this cultural centre. Royal patronage could not have been bestowed on a better seat of learning than Nālandā, the fame of which is still ringing in our ears. One cannot move among these antiquities and the mighty monuments without a feeling of awe and pride at so much achievement. But suddenly comes the sad recollection that the greatness of Nālandā is no more and that one is only moving among the remnants of a great University which can, perhaps, never be revived at the place in a manner worthy of its past.

(4) *The Pottery*.—The pottery at Nālandā as at other places is also interesting. There is a very representative collection. They indicate a very high standard of development of the art of making earthen articles for domestic use.

History of Nālandā.

As already mentioned, though Nālandā did not attain the status of a sacred place in the eyes of the Buddhists, it

has often been mentioned both in Buddhist and Jain literature. Sāriputta, the chief disciple of Lord Buddha, was born near this place and Buddha Himself visited it on His way to and back from Rājgir. The birth place of Niganthanāthaputta, the founder of Jainism, is close to Nālandā. The King of Magadha had a royal pleasure garden not far from it. The real importance of the place, however, began with the establishment of the Nālandā University which became world famous on account of its galaxy of brilliant professors and the high standard of teaching imparted to the students.

As in the case of many other Buddhist places, Emperor Asoka is the founder of Nālandā as a monastery. He is said to have built a Vihāra and made offerings to the *stūpa* of Sāriputta at this place.

The actual date of the foundation of the University is not known but it must have been about the beginning of the Christian Era, as Nāgarjuna, the famous founder of Mahāyāna form of Buddhism, who lived in the 2nd Century A.C., is said to have studied here and later on become its Principal. This fact is mentioned in Tāranātha's History.

In the course of a few centuries Nālandā grew into enormous proportions and, at a certain period, the students numbered no less than ten thousand. All necessary arrangements for their board, lodging and education were made by the University free of charge so that they could devote their entire energies to studies free from all worries. This was made possible by the munificence of the ruling princes who made liberal endowments to this University. It must have been a tremendously difficult matter to supply the needs of such a large number of students at one spot but the task seems to have been well performed as there is no mention of any deficiency in any of the supply departments.

Among the Gupta Kings who supported the University was Sakrāditya. According to Huien Tsiang, he built here

a monastery for the residence of monks. His successors Buddhagupta, Tathāgatagupta, Bālāditya, Kumāragupta and Vajra also emulated his example by adding other monasteries.

Fa Hien who visited India in the fifth century A.C., does not mention the existence of the Nālandā University. This can be explained by the fact that Nālandā attained its reputation only in the following centuries and, at his time, it was probably one of the many similar institutions existing in different parts of India and, therefore, not requiring any special mention.

Hiuen Tsiang who came in the seventh century, however, gives a vivid account of the place as a centre of learning. He spent about seven years as an inmate of the University studying the different Buddhist Philosophical systems under its Principal Śīlabhadra who was recognised as the leading scholar in India at the time. He also studied Hetuvidyā (logic), Sabdavidyā (grammar), Cikitsāvidyā (medicine) as well as the Vedas of the Brahmanical School. The following extract from his account of Nālandā will give an idea as to the literary activities of the place :—

“ The priests to the number of several thousands are men of the highest ability and talent. Their distinction is very great at the present time, and there are many hundreds whose fame has rapidly spread through distant regions. Their conduct is pure and unblamable. They follow in sincerity the precepts of the moral law. The rules of the convent are severe, and all the priests are bound to observe them. The countries of India respect them and follow them. The day is not sufficient for asking and answering profound questions. From morning till night they engage in discussion ; the old and the young mutually help one another. Those who cannot discuss questions out of the Tripiṭaka are little esteemed and are obliged to hide themselves for shame. Learned men from different cities, on this account, who desire to acquire quickly a renown in discussion, come here in multitudes to settle their doubts, and then the stream (of their wisdom) spread far and wide. For this reason some persons usurp the name (of Nālandā students), and in going to and fro receive honour in consequence. If men of other quarters desire to enter and take part in the discussions, the keeper of the gate

proposes some hard questions ; many are unable to answer and retire. One must have studied deeply both old and new (books) before getting admission. Those students, therefore, who come here as strangers, have to show their ability by hard discussion ; those who fail compared with those who succeed are seven or eight to ten."

Epigraphical references also testify to the greatness of Nālandā and the part played by the different Kings in its upkeep. The copper plate of Devapāla (815-854), for instance, mentions the grant of 5 villages in the District of Rājgir for "the upkeep and maintenance of monks and copying of manuscripts in the monastery built by the Sumatran King." The mention of the Sumatran King is significant as it shows that Nālandā received the patronage of Kings outside India as well.

Among those who patronised the University mention must be made of King Harsha of Kanouj, the last great Gupta King who was a devout Buddhist. It was during his reign that Hiuen Tsiang visited India. The latter mentions that King Harsha built here a monastery in brass and, according to the biography of Hiuen Tsiang, the King remitted the "revenue of about 100 villages as an endowment of the convent and two hundred householders in these villages contributed the required amount of rice, butter and milk."

The cosmopolitan nature of the University is proved by the fact that one Suvishnu, a Brahman contemporary of Nāgārjuna, built no less than 108(?) monasteries of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna schools.

Famous Professors of Nālandā.

Nālandā produced a large number of eminent philosophers, grammarians, logicians and leaders of religion whose writings are extant to this day. Mahāyāna philosophy had its completest development here and, through it, this form of Buddhism spread far and wide.

Only a few of the names of those who made Nālandā famous have come down to us but they are a formidable array by themselves. These names are sufficient to show why this University earned such world-wide reputation.

Nāgārjuna, the founder of Mahāyāna, was the first principal. Arya Deva, the exponent of the Madhyamika School who hailed from Ceylon, Asanga of the Yogācāra School and his brother Vasubandhu, whose fame exceeded even that of his brother, became heads of Nālandā in succession. Next came Dignāga, the founder of the medieval School of Logic. He was a Dravidian just as Nāgārjuna was. He defeated a famous Brahmin in dispute and won the title of *Tarkapungava*. Next was Dharmapāla. He was followed by Śilabhadra. It was during the latter's principalship that Hiuen Tsiang visited Nālandā. Hiuen Tsiang, in his memoirs, has paid a glowing tribute to the qualities of Śilabhadra as a scholar and a saint. Then came Dharmakīrti, perhaps the greatest Indian logician, who is reputed to have defeated Kumarilla, the famous Hindu philosopher and disputant. The next great head of Nālandā of whom we have a record is Shāntarakṣita. He was invited to Tibet by the King of that country to translate Buddhist works into Tibetan. After accomplishing this task, he died there in 762 A.C. Another famous name is Padmasambhava who also went to Tibet and there established the Lamaist form of Buddhism which is prevalent to this day.

If the greatness of a University depends on the literary work of its teachers and their ability to spread learning and culture, Nālandā easily ranks as the greatest University in ancient as well as modern times.

Famous Visitors.

Nālandā was visited by a large number of foreigners—especially Chinese. Mention has already been made of

Fa Hien and **Hiuen Tsiang** who arrived in India in the fifth and the seventh centuries A.C. Hiuen Tsiang was followed by eleven Chinese and Koreans in quick succession. They too studied at Nālandā for some time.

Another important Chinese visitor was **Itsing**. He reached India in 673 A.C. and stayed at Nālandā for a considerable time. His description of the place is even more minute and complete than that of Hiuen Tsiang. He says that the Bhikkhūs led an ideal life which was a model to all Buddhists. Subjects taught at the place did not confine to Buddhism alone but included all Hindu systems of thought. The time at the monasteries was kept by a "water clock."

Destruction of Nālandā.

Whatever fame a place may win for itself, it cannot escape from the working of the law of *Anicca* which is a cardinal doctrine of Buddhism. Nālandā too came within this inexorable law. By about the 8th Century, Nālandā began to decline, partly as a result of the vast political and other changes that were taking place in India. At the same time there was a revival movement among the Hindus who were able to produce philosophers of the rank of Sankarāchārya.

The final blow was delivered by the Mohammedan invaders who were no respectors of other forms of religion. They not only drove away or killed the monks but also made it a point to set fire to the monasteries, thus destroying even the sites of Buddhistic importance. Minhaj, a Moslem historian, gives an account of Bhaktiyar Khilji's conquests. It was the latter who invaded Magadha and destroyed the last vestiges of Buddhism. Tāranātha, the Tibetan historian says, "The Turks conquered the whole of Magadha and destroyed many monasteries; at Nālandā they did much damage and the monks fled abroad."

From the accounts of other historians we gather that even after this destruction, there were feeble attempts to revive the place as a centre of Buddhism but none of these succeeded, and so this Oxford of India which would have rivalled its prototype in England if fortune had been less unkind, ceased to exist and today we have only a faint echo of its lost glory.

The following extracts are from Hsuen Tsiang's account of Nālandā:—

Going north from this 30 li or so, we come to Nālanda *Saṅghārāma*. The old accounts of the country say that to the south of this *Saṅghārāma*, in the middle of an Amra ('An-mo lo) grove, there is a tank. The Nāga of this tank is called Nālandā. By the side of it is built the *Saṅghārāma*, which therefore takes the name (of the Nāga). But the truth is that Tathāgata in old days practised the life of a Bodhisatva here, and became the king of a great country, and established his capital in this land. Moved by pity for living things, he delighted in continually relieving them. In remembrance of this virtue he was called "charity without intermission"; and the *Saṅghārāma* was called in perpetuation of this name. The site was originally an Amra garden. Five hundred merchants bought it for ten *kotis* of gold pieces and gave it to Buddha. Buddha preached the law here during three months, and the merchants and others obtained the fruit of holiness. Not long after the *Nirvāṇa* of Buddha, a former king of this country Sakrāditya (Shi-kia-lo-'o-t'ie-to) respected and esteemed the (system of the) one Vehicle, and honoured very highly the three treasures. Having selected by augury a lucky spot, he built this *Saṅghārāma*. When he began the work he wounded, in digging, the body of the Nāga. At this time there was a distinguished soothsayer belonging to the heretical sect of the Nirgranthas. He having seen the occurrence, left this record: "This is a very superior site. If you build here a *Saṅghārāma*, it must of necessity become highly renowned. Throughout the five Indies it will be a model. For a period of a thousand years it will flourish still. Students of all degrees will here easily accomplish their studies. But many will spit blood because of this wound given to the Nāga."

His son, Buddhagupta-rājā (Fo-to-kio-to), who succeeded him, continued to labour at the excellent undertaking of his father. To the south of this he built another *Sanghārāma*.

Tathāgatagupta-rājā (Ta-tha-kie-lo) vigorously practised the former rules (*of his ancestors*), and he built east from this another *Sanghārāma*.

Bāladitya-rājā (Po-lo-tie-lo) succeeded to the empire. On the north-east side he built a *Sanghārāma*.

* * *

This king's son, called Vajra (Fa-she-lo), came to the throne in succession, and was possessed of a heart firm in the faith. He again built on the west side of the convent a *Sanghārāma*.

After this a king of Central India built to the north of this a great *Sanghārāma*. Moreover, he built round these edifices a high wall with one gate. A long succession of kings continued the work of building, using all the skill of the sculptor, till the whole is truly marvellous to behold. The king said, "In the hall of the monarch who first began the *Sanghārāma*, I will place a figure of Buddha, and I will feed forty priests of the congregation every day to show my gratitude to the founder."

* * *

The other two or three of moderate talent, when they come to discuss in turn in the assembly, are sure to be humbled and, to forfeit their renown. But with respect to those of conspicuous talent of solid learning, great ability, illustrious virtue, distinguished men, these connect (*their high names*) with the succession (*of celebrities belonging to the College*), such as Dharmapāla (Hu-fa), and Chandrapāla (Hu-yueh), who excited by their bequeathed teaching the thoughtless and worldly; Gunamati (Tih-hwui) and Sthiramati (Kin-hwui), the streams of whose superior teaching spread abroad even now; Prabhāmītra (Kwang-yeu), with his clear discourses; Jinamitra (Shing-Yeu) with his exalted eloquence; the pater and fame (*sayings and doings*) of Jnānachandra (Chi Myueh) reflect his brilliant activity; Sigrabuddha(?) (Ming-min), and Śīlabhadra (Kiai-hien), and other eminent men whose names are lost. These illustrious personages, known to all, excelled in their attainments (*virtue*) all their distinguished predecessors, and passed the bounds of the ancients in their

learning. Each of these composed some tens of treatises and commentaries which were widely diffused, and which for their perspicuity are passed down to the present time.

The sacred relics on the four sides of the convent are a hundred in number. For brevity's sake we will recount two or three. On the western side of the Sanghārāma, at no great distance, is a *Vihāra*. Here Tathāgata in old days stopped for three months and largely expounded the excellent law for the good of the Devas.

To the south 100 paces or so is a small *stūpa*. This is the place where a Bhikkhu from a distant region saw Buddha.

* * *

On this southern side is a standing figure of Kwantsztsai (Avalokitesvara) Bodhisatva. Sometimes he is seen holding a vessel of perfume going to the *Vihāra* of Buddha and turning round to the right.

To the south of this statue is a *stūpa*, in which are remains of Buddha's hair and nails cut during three months. Those persons afflicted with children's complaints, coming here and turning round religiously, are mostly healed.

To the west of this, outside the wall, and by the side of a tank is a *stūpa*. This is where a heretic, holding a sparrow in his hand, asked Buddha questions relating to death and birth.

To the south-east about 50 paces, within the walls, is an extraordinary tree, about eight or nine feet in height, of which the trunk is twofold. When Tathāgata of old time was in the world, he flung his tooth-cleaner (*danta-kāṣṭha*) on the ground here, where it took root. Although many months and years have elapsed, since then, the tree neither decreases nor increases.

Next to the east there is a great *Vihāra* about 200 feet in height. Here, Tathāgata, residing for four months, explained various excellent laws.

After this, to the north 100 paces or so, is a *Vihāra* in which is a figure of Kwan-tsz'-tsai Bodhisatva. The disciples of pure faith, who offer their religious gifts, do not all see the place he occupies alike; it is not fixed. Sometimes he (*i.e., the figure*) seems to be standing by the side of the door; sometimes he goes out in front of the eaves. Religious people, both clerics and laics from all parts come together in numbers to offer their gifts.

To the north of this *Vihāra* is a great *Vihāra*, in height about 300 feet, which was built by Bālāditya-rājā (Po-lo-'o-tie-to-wang). With respect to its magnificence, its dimensions, and the statue of Buddha placed in it, it resembles (*is the same as*) the great *Vihāra* built under the *Bodhi* tree.

To the north-east of this is a *stūpa*. Here Tathāgata in days gone by explained the excellent law for seven days.

To the north-west is a place where the four past Buddhas sat down.

To the south of this is a *Vihāra* of brass built by Silāditya-rājā. Although it is not yet finished, yet its intended measurements, when finished (*to plan*), will be 100 feet.

Next to the eastward 200 paces or so, outside the walls, is a figure of Buddha standing upright and made of copper. Its height is about 80 feet. A pavilion of six stages is required to cover it. It was formerly made by Puṇḍarīkavarman-rājā (Mwan-chu).

To the north of this statue 2 or 3 li, in a *Vihāra* constructed of brick, is a figure of Tārā Bodhisatva (To-lo-p'u-sa). This figure is of great height, and its spiritual appearance very striking.

* * *

Going south-west 8 or 9 li from the *Sanghārāma*, we come to the village of Kulika (Kin-li-kia). In it is a *stūpa* built by Asoka-rājā. This is where the venerable Mudgalaputra (Mo-t-kia-lo-tseu) was born.

* * *

East of the old village of Mudgalaputra, going 3 or 4 li, we come to a *stūpa*. This is the place where Bimbisāra-rājā went to have an interview with Buddha.

* * *

South-east from the spot where Bimbisāra-rājā met Buddha, at a distance of about 20 li, we come to the town of Kālapināka (Kia-lo-pi-na-kia). In this town is a *stūpa* which was built by Asoka-rājā. This is the place where Sāriputra, the venerable one, was born.



ANANDA BODHI TREE AT JETAVANA, SAVATTHI



RUINS OF JETAVANA MONASTERY, SAVATTHI

CHAPTER VII

SRĀVASTI

SRĀVASTI, or Sāvattthi in Pāli, now called "Sahet-Mahet," was the capital of Kosala, the most powerful Kingdom during the sixth century B.C. It is situated on the river Aciravati. This city became famous in Buddhist literature on account of the fact that Lord Buddha resided no less than 24 rainy seasons in the Jetavanārāma monastery situated on its outskirts. The romantic story of the purchase of land and the building of this monastery will be given elsewhere.

Sāvattthi is seven miles from the town of Balarampur in the Gonda District of the United Provinces. It is the Headquarters of the Zamindari of the Mahārājāh of Balarampur, the leading landlord of the Province with an annual income of Rs. 40 lakhs. The Oudh and Tirhut Railway brings the visitor to Balarampur from Gorakhpur in seven hours and from Nowgarh in five hours. Pilgrims can stay in the commodious Rest House in the town built by Revd. U Ahsaya. Two more Buddhist Rest Houses are found at the actual site.

Places of Interest.

The following are the main places of interest :—

1. **RUINS OF THE CITY OF SĀVATTHI.** They are now covered up with thick jungle but the walls and the towers are easily discernible.
2. **JETAVANA MONASTERY,** situated at a distance of about 500 yards to the south of the above ruins.

3. ĀNANDA BODHI in front of the ruins of the Jetavana monastery.
4. PURVĀRĀMA built to the east of the city.
5. RĀJAKĀRĀMA built by King Pasenadi.
6. THE BURMESE TEMPLE and Rest House.
7. OLD REST HOUSE to the right of the road from Balarampur.
8. THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED CHINESE BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

1. RUINS OF THE CITY OF SĀVATTHI

The remains of the City of Sāvatthi cover a vast area which is now thickly overgrown with shrubs and trees. The outer walls and some of the gates can be distinguished from the town by the line of trees which appear taller than the rest. Though the remains are a protected area, no excavations have been made as yet. At the east end of the ruins, side by side, are two large structures which, in all probability, are the towers guarding the main gate of the city. The excavation of the site is certain to reveal valuable data regarding the history of this once populous and thriving city.

2. JETAVANA MONASTERY

A student of Buddhism, when he arrives at Sāvatthi, would naturally be very eager to see the remains of the famous Jetavana monastery about which he has read so much in Buddhist literature. He would expect to obtain at least a glimpse of the magnificence of this residence of monks; but in this he would be greatly disappointed, for, there is now not even a trace of the original monastery. The foundations that exist at present belong to buildings put up during much later periods, which never approached the grandeur

of the original monastery erected by Anāthapindika. His monastery must have met the same fate vouchsafed to hundreds of others throughout India.

To realize the poignant sorrow felt by a Buddhist when he visits these ruins, one has only to recall the story of the building of this monastery.

Anāthapindika whose family name was Sudatta was the wealthiest merchant of Sāvattthi. On a visit to Rājagriha in connection with his country-wide business, he met the Lord Buddha there and became an ardent follower. Before his departure from that city, he invited the Lord Buddha to come and reside in Sāvattthi. Ever since that invitation was extended, Anāthapindika was on the look-out for a suitable piece of land to build a monastery for his worthy guest. In the course of his search, he came across a garden just outside the city called "*Jetavana*" belonging to Prince Jeta, a wealthy member of the royal family. Finding it quite the place he had been looking for, he made a proposal for its purchase. The Prince who was extremely fond of this attractive garden, refused to entertain the wealthy merchant's proposal. Anāthapindika, however, again and again pressed him to part with it but the prince remained adamant. The merchant was not a person to be so easily discouraged. In order to induce the prince, he said that he was willing to pay any price demanded by him and requested him to fix it without hesitation. The prince was still reluctant and, as a good stratagem to get rid of the troublesome merchant, he decided to fix an absurd price which, he imagined, the merchant would never agree to pay. "Well, if you are so anxious to buy this park of mine," said the prince, "you will have to cover the whole ground with gold coins. That will be the only price I would accept." To the utter surprise and amazement of the prince, the merchant replied, "Very well, the bargain

is closed. I shall have the ground covered with gold as you desire." Still the prince was reluctant but he had no alternative as he himself had fixed the price and he was well aware of the law of the country. Then and there the merchant ordered his men to bring gold and have the same spread over the ground. While this was being done, the prince stood marvelling at the merchant's wealth and his extraordinary ways. On enquiry he learnt that this vast expenditure of money was not for his personal glory but to do an act of charity; the prince was greatly moved by the piety of the merchant and he magnanimously agreed to accept half the value as fixed between them, so that he too may share in the merit of the work. Even that half cost the merchant no less than 18 crores of "wealth"! Another 18 crores were spent in putting up the building which surpassed the palaces of the kings. The building was seven storeys high and every necessary convenience was arranged. On the completion of the buildings a great festival was held at the end of which the Lord accepted the gift and came to reside therein. As already stated, here the Lord spent the largest number of rainy seasons *viz.*, 24 in all and it was while residing here that most of the important discourses were also delivered.

Anāthapindika was ever solicitous of the welfare of the Buddha and His congregation. He used to visit the monastery twice a day in order to inquire about the Lord's health and to provide all the necessities of the residents. Thus he became celebrated in Buddhism as the chief lay disciple of the Lord Buddha and the greatest benefactor of the Sāsana.

3. ĀNANDA BODHI.

This Bodhi tree stands immediately in front of the ruins of the Jetavana monastery and, from its hoary appearance and the great height, we may safely conclude that it was the

very tree which stood there at the time of the Buddha, though, of course, we cannot be so positive about this as in the case of the tree at Anurādhapura (in Ceylon), concerning which the Buddhists have kept an accurate record of its history ever since it was planted.

The following is the story of the plantation of the Ānanda Bodhi as given in Pūjāvalīya, a Sinhalese classic.

In spite of the many amenities available at the Jetavana monastery, Lord Buddha spent there only three months in the year *viz.*, during the rainy season, and during the other nine months, He was away on tour carrying the message of hope He had discovered to each and every hamlet of the vast country. His followers in Sāvattthi desired His permanent residence in the city but this being impossible they begged Him for some token so that they may at least venerate it during His absence. To satisfy the craving of the people, Ānanda obtained the Lord's permission to plant a sapling of the Buddhagayā Bodhi tree. Mahāmoggallāna who was famous for his supernatural powers volunteered to bring the sapling which he did by going through the air. After the sapling was brought, it was the wish of every one that King Pasenadi should plant it but he declined the honour saying that the tenure of Kings was uncertain and that it were better for a great merchant to do it so that he and his successors may take care of it for all time to come. Thereupon Anāthapindika was selected for the honour and, with great ceremonies, he planted it in front of the monastery he himself had built. Lord Buddha blessed and sanctified it by passing one whole night under it in meditation. From that time, it took the place of the Teacher during His absence for the devotees to make their offerings.

4. PURVĀRĀMA.

To the east of the city was situated the monastery known as Purvārāma erected by Visākhā, the chief lay female supporter of the Lord. She was also known as Migāramātā and was the wife of a rich merchant by the name of Pūrṇavardhana. She had a priceless ornament called *melaḥalandanā* and one day, while listening to a sermon, it dropped in the lecture hall. Only on her return home did she discover the loss of the valuable piece of jewellery. A search being made, it was found exactly where it had fallen. As it was discovered within the monastery she had no desire to wear it again; so she decided to sell it and with the proceeds build a temple. No one was however wealthy enough to buy it as it was so valuable. Thereupon she herself purchased it for nine crores of wealth and with the proceeds built this monastery which was second in magnificence to Jetavana only and Lord Buddha spent sometime out of his sojourn at Sāvātthi at this place.

5. RĀJAKĀRĀMA.

The monastery erected by King Pasenadi of Kosala was known as Rājakārāma but we do not know its location. Probably it lies still buried under the ruins of the city.

6. BURMESE TEMPLE AND REST HOUSE.

Close to the ruins of the Jetavana monastery, there is a small modern temple and a Rest House in charge of Bhikkhu Mahinda, a Burmese monk. The visitor can find accommodation here if he wishes to pass a day or more at the hallowed spot.

7. THE OLD REST HOUSE.

There is an old rest house on the road from Balarampur which used to accommodate pilgrims before the above mentioned one was built. It is now not in a fit condition to receive visitors.

8. THE SITE OF THE CHINESE TEMPLE.

Recently a Chinese monk has bought a plot of land near the Jetavana monastery to erect a Chinese temple. The place can be easily recognised from the gate made in Chinese style and the signboard. It is a matter for satisfaction that the Chinese are taking an interest in the sacred places in India.

History of Sāvātthi.

Not only is Sāvātthi famous on account of the Jetavana monastery, but its fame is also largely due to its pre-eminence amongst the cities of ancient India. As the metropolis of the powerful Kingdom of the Kosalas, it was the centre of much trade and commerce.

According to Buddhist books the population was seven crores but this is obviously an exaggeration. However, there is no doubt that it had a very large population which was both industrious and prosperous. The King at the time of the Buddha was Pasenadi who was also a devout follower of the Lord. Often did he visit the Buddha both to listen to His religious discourses as well as to obtain His advice on secular matters. He was related to the King of Rājagriha who was another supporter of the Lord. When Ajātasattu ascended the throne after imprisoning his father, he came in conflict with Pasenadi whom he once defeated in battle. The next round was won by the latter. Mallikā, queen of King Pasenadi, was equally devoted to the Buddha.

Though Pasenadi was the overlord of the Sākya tribes, he was of inferior birth. He, therefore, wanted to raise his status by marrying a Sākyan princess, a fatal mistake. The Sākyas were too proud to give one of their pure blooded princesses to the king. They therefore sent him a daughter by a slave woman. To her was born Viḍūḍabha who ascended

the throne after Pasenadi's death. When he came to know about the trick played on the King, he was highly infuriated and had the Sākya's massacred wholesale. Only a few saved themselves by escaping into the neighbouring kingdoms.

Both Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsiang visited Sāvattthi and have left their impressions of the city. By the time the former visited it, Sāvattthi had lost its position as a great city. The following is what Fa Hien says :—

" Thence proceeding south to the distance of eight yeou yan you arrive at the kingdom of *Kiu salo*¹ and the town of *She wei*.² The population of this town is very inconsiderable. They reckon only about two hundred families (or houses). It is there that the King *Pho sse no*³ resided. They are there extremely attached to the Law ; and within the enclosure of temple, at the spot where was the wall of the old man *Siu Tha*⁴ well ; at the spot where the wicked genius *Yng Kiue*⁵ obtained the doctrine ; and at the spot of the *pan ni honan*⁶ where the lady was burnt ; men of after ages have built towers, which remain to this day. The heretical Brahmins of the town, excited by feelings of jealousy, desired to destroy these ; but the heavens thundered and the lightning flashed, so that they could not approach to overturn them.

" On issuing from the town by the southern gate, at twelve hundred paces to the east of the road, you find the temple which the patriarch *Siu tha* caused to be erected. The gate of this temple faces the east. There are two pavilions and two stone pillars. On the pillar to the left side is executed the figure of a wheel ; on that to the right side is placed that of an ox. The reservoirs are filled with the purest water, and the groves are formed with bushy trees ; the rarest flowers grow there in abundance and charm the sight by their lively hues. There too is the temple called *Chi honan*⁷.

" The temple of *Chi honan* had originally seven storeys. The kings and peoples of all countries were full of veneration for this place and came hither to celebrate the festivals. Canopies and streamers were hung up, flowers were scattered, perfumes burnt. Lanterns supplied the place of day, and even in day time were never

1. Kosala.
2. Sāvattthi.
3. King Pasenadi.
4. Sudatta.
5. Angulimāla.
6. Jetavana.
7. Tathāgata.

extinguished. A rat having taken into its mouth the wick of one of these lanterns, set fire to the flags and the drapery of the pavilions; and the seven stories of the temple were utterly consumed. The kings and the peoples experienced profound sorrow at this event. They thought that the image of sandal wood had been burnt; but five or six days after, on opening the little eastern temple they suddenly beheld the ancient image! They reconstructed the temple, and when they had completed the second storey, they installed the statue in its former place.

"On arriving at the temple of *Chi honan*, Fa Hien and Tao Ching reflected that in this place the *Honourable of the age*⁸ had passed twenty-five years in austerities! By their side was a multitude of people animated with the same thoughts who had traversed many regions, some to return to their own country, others to experience the instability of life. That day on seeing the place where *Fo* no longer was, their hearts experienced a lively emotion. Other ecclesiastics addressing Fa Hien and Tao Ching, "From what country come you?" they asked. "We have come from the land of Han," replied the former. The ecclesiastics then replied and sighing, observed, "How marvellous! that men from the extremity of the world are enabled to come in search of the law even to this place!" Then they spoke among themselves "We other masters of *Ho Shang*,"⁹ said they, "since we succeed each other, have never before seen the priests of Han¹⁰ come hither."

"To the north east of the temple of *Chi honan*, at the distance of six or seven *li*, the mother of *Pi She Khin*¹¹ caused a temple to be built, and invited *Fo* and the ascetics thither. This place is in strict dependence upon the temple of *Chi honan*. The town has two gates, one facing the east, the other the north. There is the garden that the patriarch *Siu tha* caused to be made after having paid money to buy it. The temple is situated in the midst, on the very spot where *Fo* stayed and for a long time preached the Law for the salvation of man. At the places where he passed or where he sat, everywhere they have erected towers, and all these places have appropriate names; such as that where *Sun to li*¹² accused *Fo* of murder.

"On coming out of the temple of *Chih honan* by the eastern portal, and proceeding northerly, at the distance of 70 paces to the west of the road you come to the place where *Fo* formerly disputed with the adherents of ninety-six heretics . . ."—*Travels of Fa Hien*, pp. 180-1.

8. Tathāgata.
9. Upāsaka.
10. China.
11. Migāramātā.
12. Cincā.

This is what Hiuen Tsiang writes about Sāvatti:—

"The Kingdom of Srāvasti (Shi-lo-fu-shi-ti) is about 6,000 li in circuit. The chief town is desert and ruined. There is no record as to its exact limits (*area*). The ruins of the walls encompassing the royal precincts give a circuit of about 20 li. Though mostly in ruins, still there are a few inhabitants. Cereals grow in great abundance; the climate is soft and agreeable, the manners of the people are honest and pure. They apply themselves to learning, and love religion (*merit*). There are several hundreds of *Saṅghārāmas*, mostly in ruin, with very few religious followers who study the books of the Sammatīya (Ching-liang-pu) school. There are 100 Deva temples with very many heretics. When Tathāgata was in the world, this was the capital of the country governed by Prasenajita-rājā (Po-lo-si-na-chi-to-wang).

Within the old precincts of the royal city are some ancient foundations; these are the remains of the palace of King Shing-kwan (Prasenajita).

From this not far to the east is a ruinous foundation, above which is built a small *stūpa*; these ruins represent the Great Hall of the Law, which King Prasenajita built for Buddha.

By the side of this hall, not far from it, above the ruins a *stūpa* is built. This is where stood the *Vihāra* which King Prasenajita built for Prajāpati Bhikṣuṇī, the maternal aunt of Buddha.

Still east of this is a *stūpa* to record the site of the house of Sudatta (Shen-shi).

By the side of the house of Sudatta is a great *stūpa*. This is the place where the Angulimālya (Yang-kiu-li-mo-lo) gave up his heresy. The Angulimālyas are the unlucky caste (*the criminals*) of Srāvasti. They kill everything that lives, and maddening themselves, they murder men in the towns and country, and make chaplets for the head of their fingers. . .

* * *

To the south of the city 5 or 6 li is the Jetavana. This is where Anāthapiṇḍada (Ki-ku-to) (*otherwise called*) Sudatta, the chief Minister of Prasenajita-rājā, built for Buddha a *Vihāra*. There was a *Saṅghārāma* here formerly, but now all is in ruins (*desert*).

On the left and right of the eastern gate has been built a pillar about 70 feet high; on the left-hand pillar is engraved on the base a wheel; on the right hand pillar the figure of an ox is on the top. Both columns were erected by Asoka-rājā. The residences (*of the priests*) are wholly destroyed; the foundations only remain, with the exception of one solitary brick building, which stands alone in the midst of the ruins, and contains an image of Buddha.

* * *

To the north-east of the garden of Anāthapindada (Ki-ku-to) is a *stūpa*. This is the place Tathāgata washed with water the sick bhikkhu (Pitsu), who cherishing his sorrow, lived apart by himself in a solitary place. The Lord of the World seeing him, inquired, "What is your affliction, living thus by yourself?" He answered, "My natural disposition being a careless one and an idle one, I had no patience to look on a man sick (*to attend on the sick*), and now when I am entangled in sickness there is nobody to look on me (*attend to me*)."

Tathāgata, moved with pity thereat, addressed him and said, "My son, I will look on you! and then touching him, as he bent down, with his hand to the outside of the door, he spread a fresh mat for him, and himself washed his body and changed his clothes for new ones.

To the north-west of the garden of Anāthapindada is a little *stūpa*. This is the place where Mudgalaputta (Mo-te-kia-lo-tseu) vainly exerted his spiritual power in order to lift the girdle (sash) of Sūriputta (She-li-tseu). . .

* * *

Not far from the *stūpa* just named is a well. Tathāgata, when in the world, drew water from this well for his personal use. By the side of it is a *stūpa* which was built by Asoka-rājā; in it are some *śarīras* of Tathāgata; here also are spots where there are traces of walking to and fro and preaching the law. To commemorate both these circumstances, (*the king*) erected a pillar and built a *stūpa*. . .

* * *

Not far behind the *Saṅghārāma* (of Anāthapindada) is the place where the Brahmachārins killed a courtesan, in order to lay the charge of murdering her on Buddha (*in order to slander him*)...

* * *

To the east of the *Saṅghārāma* 100 paces or so is a large and deep ditch; this is where Devadatta, having plotted to kill Buddha with some poisonous medicine, fell down into hell. . .

* * *

To the south of this again there is a great ditch, where Kukali the Bhikkhuni slandered Tathāgata, and went down alive to hell. . .

* * *

To the south of the Kukali ditch about 800 paces is a large and deep ditch. Chanscha, the daughter of a Brahmin, calumniated Tathāgata, and here went down alive into hell. . .

* * *

East of the *Saṅghārāma* 60 or 70 paces is a *Vihāra* about 60 feet high. There is in it a figure of Buddha looking to the east in a sitting posture. When Tathāgata was in the world in old days, he discussed here with the heretics. . .

* * *

Three or four li to the east of the *vihāra* " which covers with its shadow " is a *stūpa*. This is where Sāriputta discussed with the heretics. . .

* * *

On the south. . . is the place where Virūdhaka-rājā, having raised an army to destroy the family of the Sākya, on seeing Buddha dispersed his soldiers. . .

* * *

By the side of this place is a *stūpa*; this is the spot where the Sākya maidens were slaughtered. . .

* * *

By the side of the *stūpa* commemorating the slaughter of the Sākya, and not far from it, is a great lake which has dried up. This is where Virūdhaka-rājā went down bodily into hell. . .

* * *

To the north-west of the *Saṅghārāma* 3 or 4 li, we come to the forest of *Obtaining-Sight* (*Aptaṇetravana*) where are vestiges of Tathāgata, who walked here for exercise, and the place where various holy persons have engaged in profound meditation. In all these places they have erected posts with inscriptions or else *stūpas*.

* * *

To the north-west of the capital 16 li or so, there is an old town. In the Bhadra-kalpa when men lived to 20,000 years, this was the town in which Kāśyapa Buddha was born. To the south of the town there is a *stūpa*. . .

* * *

To the north of the town is a *stūpa*, which contains relic of the entire body of Kāśyapa Buddha. . ."

Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol. 2. pp. 1-13.

CHAPTER VIII

KAPILAVASTU

KAPILAVASTU of which the present name is "Padaria" was the capital of King Suddhodana of the Sākya Race, whose only son was Prince Siddhārtha who became the Buddha. Kapilavastu was a dependency of Kosala at that time and in modern times it has come into the possession of the Nepal Government as it formed part of the territories granted to them by the British Government in appreciation of assistance rendered during the Mutiny of 1857.

Kapilavastu was a pleasant city situated at the foot of the mighty Himālayās and washed by the cool and transparent waters of Rohini now called "Kohān." On clear days a magnificent view of the snow-capped peaks of the Himālayan range can be obtained. A Hindu Brahmin maintains a small temple at the site but it has no connection with Buddhism.

The ruins can be reached from Saharatganj, a station on the O. T. Ry. From the station to the Nepal border there is a fine metalled road followed by a *kucchā* road on the Nepal side, which takes you to a small township called "Tawlihwā" from where the actual site is only a mile distant. Kapilavastu can also be reached direct from Lumbinī, the distance being only ten miles; but as there is not even a cart road, one has to walk over fields and meadows during the greater part of the journey.

No passport is necessary to visit this District but the visitor is advised to call on the Nepalese Magistrate at Tawlihwā on his arrival as his assistance is essential if the visitor is compelled to pass a night there as no Rest House is available.

Not far from here are situated two other objects of archaeological interest *viz.*, the Nigliwa Pillar set up by Asoka and the Piprāwā Stūpa from which some undoubtedly genuine Buddha relics were recovered in 1898. These relics must have formed part of the remains obtained by the Sākya immediately after the cremation of the Buddha's body at Kusinārā. They were found inside a perfectly made crystal casket crowned with a fish, which was placed again within a huge stone box. Both these as well as gold leaves, precious stones and other interesting contents, are now exhibited in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The precious relics were presented to the King of Siam.

History of Kapilavastu.

The foundation of Kapilavastu is ascribed to Kapilamuni, a great Rishi of prehistoric days. He is also said to have stayed there for some time. Kapilavastu was a sort of republican State with the King as its head. Siddhodana who was the ruler in the sixth century B.C. claimed descent from King Ikṣvāku of the Solar Dynasty. Though the Government was republican, Kingship was hereditary as evidenced by the anxiety of Siddhodana and his subjects for a successor. The birth of Siddhārtha fulfilled this want but at the age of 29 he left home, leaving the throne to be ascended by his son after his father's death. This too, however, did not materialise, as, on a visit to Kapilavastu, Lord Buddha took away His only son Rāhula and ordained him a monk. This was the greatest blow to Siddhodana who was just recovering from the shock of his son's renunciation, but he bore this new anguish with the thought that, though his dynasty was extinct for ever, his son had created an Empire which had no limits to its boundaries and was to exist for all time to come. Almost all members of Buddha's family became monks and obtained spiritual happiness.

Perhaps they did well for soon after, the Sākya were mercilessly massacred by Viḍūḍabha sparing only those who had embraced the religious life.

When Fa Hien visited Kapilavastu, it still bore unmistakable signs of the terrible fate that befell the proud Sākya. It is difficult to say how many were able to escape from the King's wrath. At present there is only one family in India which claims direct connection with the family of Lord Buddha. This is the Raja of Aragal, a petty chieftain of the United Provinces.

The account of the place given by Fa Hien in his book is as follows :

" Thence proceeding easterly one *yeou yan* you come to the town of *Kei Wei lo' wei*.¹ In this town there are neither King nor people ; it is literally a vast solitude. There are only ecclesiastics, and some tens of houses of inhabitants. This is the site of the ancient palace of the King *Pe tsing*,² and it is here that they made a representation of the Prince and mother, taken at the moment when the Prince, seated on a white elephant, entered the womb of the latter.

" At the place where the Prince issued from the town by the eastern gate, at that where at the sight of a sick person, he caused his chariot to turn and retraced his way ; everywhere they have erected towers. At the place where *Ai*³ contemplated the Prince ; at that where *Nan tho*⁴ and others struck the elephant, in that where they drew the bow, the arrow of which proceeding to the south-west entered the ground at the distance of thirty *li*, and caused a spring of water to issue (arranged by men of after times in the form of wells from which drinking water is supplied to travellers) ; At that where *Fo*, after having obtained the doctrine, came back to visit the King, his father ; at that where the five hundred dons of the Sākya embraced monastic life and paid homage to *Yeou pho li*,⁵ at the place where the earth trembled in six ways ; at the place where *Fo* preached in favour of the gods, the king of whom so guarded the gates thereof that the King,

1. Kapilavastu.
2. Suddhodana.
3. Asita.
4. Nanda.
5. Upāli.

his father, could not approach the assembly; at the place where *Ta' ai lao*⁶ gave a *Seng kia li*⁷ in alms to *Fo*, who was seated facing the east under a *Ni keou liu*⁸ tree, which exists still ; in the place where the King *Xieou li*⁹ destroyed the family of the *Sākya*s, which had first attained the rank of *Siotha wan*;¹⁰ in all these places, they have erected towers which still remain.

" To the north-east of the town, at the distance of several *li*, is the Royal Field. Here is the place where the Prince, under a tree, watched the labourers "—*Travels of Fa Hien*, pp. 207-9.

The following account of the foundation of the city as related in the *Rājāvaliya*, a Sinhalese historical work, may be of interest :—

" Upon hearing this all the following people left the country and accompanied the four princes ; viz., the daughter of the said King with their attendants and property, 1,000 ministers, Brahmins, rich men and several thousands of merchants ; and on the first day the whole company proceeded on their march as far as a mile, on the second day they marched eight miles, and on the third day they marched twelve miles, pursuing their march in the wilderness, and on one side of the city called Benares ; and there the princes took counsel and spoke among themselves, saying, " If we take a town not belonging to us by force it will greatly tarnish our fame," and so they determined to build a new town. One of the said princes remained there with the multitude to clear the wilderness, and when the others were through the wilderness in search of a good place to make a town, they found a hermit called " *Kapila* " at the foot of a *Bo* tree, in front of a lake, which hermit had devoted himself to piety and religion. He asked the princes what they inquired for? And the princes related to him that which they searched for ; then the hermit advised them to place their city where his own hermitage stood, and also he gave them encouragement by reciting to them a good account of the said ground, saying, that when the foxes happened to run after the hares, as soon as the hares came to that hermitage they used to turn about and run after the foxes, and in like manner he does after the tigers etc., likewise that any person . . . and also the hermit requested the princes, after they made the city, to call it by his own name, *Kapilavastu*, then according to the advice given by the hermit, the four princes built the city, and gave it the name of *Kapilavastupura*."—*Travels of Fa Hien*, p. 212.

6. *Tapasvi*.
7. *Sanghāti*.
8. *Nigrodha* tree.
9. *Vidūḍabha*.
10. *Sotāpanna*.

It is surprising to find that the little Kingdom of Kapilavastu had diplomatic relations with distant China, as mentioned in the book called "History of the I and Man." The preference given to this kingdom may be due to the fact that it was the birthplace of Lord Buddha. The Kingdom of Kapilavastu is mentioned by *Ma touan lin* under the name of Kapila. In the article "India," he says: "In the 5th of the years Yuan kia, in the reign of the emperor Wen ti of the Soung (428 A.D.), Yu ai, King of Kia pi li in Thiancluu, sent an embassy to the emperor. It conveyed a letter and presents consisting of diamond rings, bridle—rings of gold and rare animals, amongst which were a red and a white parrot. Under the Emperor Ming ti of the same dynasty, the second of the years Thai Chi (A.D. 466) Kia pi li again sent an ambassador to China bearing tribute."

The Ly tai ki szu also mentions an embassy from the king of Kia pi li in the year 428 A.C., adding that the letter to the emperor was conceived altogether in the style of the sermons of Buddha.—*Travels of Fa Hien*, p. 209.

We give below a few extracts about Kapilavastu from Hiuen Tsiang's Travels:—

"The country is about 4,000 li in circuit. There are some ten desert cities in this country, wholly desolate and ruined. The capital is overthrown and in ruins. Its circuit cannot be accurately measured. The royal precincts within the city measure some 14 or 15 li round. They were all built of brick. The foundation walls are still strong and high. It has been long deserted. The peopled villages are few and waste.

There is no supreme ruler; each of the towns appoints its own ruler. The ground is rich and fertile, and is cultivated according to the regular season. The climate is uniform, the manners of the people soft and obliging. There are 1,000 or more ruined *saṅghārāmas* remaining; by the side of the royal precincts there is still a *saṅghārāma* with about 3,000 (*read* 30) followers in it, who study the Little Vehicle of the Sammatiya School.

There is a couple of Deva temples, in which various sectaries worship (*live*). Within the royal precincts are some ruined foundation walls; these are the remains of the proper palace of

Suddhodana-rājā; above is built a *vihāra* in which is a statue of the king. Not far from this is a ruined foundation, which represents the sleeping palace of Mahāmāyā, the queen. Above this they have erected a *vihāra* in which is a figure of the queen.

By the side of this is a *vihāra*; this is where Bodhisatva descended spiritually into the womb of his mother. . .

To the north-east of the palace of spiritual conception is a *stūpa*; this is the place where Asita the R̥ṣhi prognosticated the fortune (*took the horoscope or signs of*) the royal prince. . .

At the south gate of the city is a *stūpa*. This is where the royal prince, when contending with the Sākya princes, cast the elephant away. . .

By the side of this is a *vihāra* in which is a figure of the royal prince. By the side of this again is a *vihāra*; this was the sleeping apartment of the queen and the prince; in it is a likeness of Yasodharā and (*the child*) Rūhula. . .

At the south-east angle of the city is a *vihāra* in which is the figure of the royal prince riding a white and high-prancing horse, this was the place where he left the city. Outside each of the four gates of the city there is a *vihāra* in which there are respectively figures of an old man, a diseased man, a dead man, and a Sramana. . .

To the south of the city going 50 li or so, we come to an old town where there is a *stūpa*. This is the place where Krakuchchanda Buddha was born, during the Bhadra-kalpa when men lived to 60,000 years.

To the south of the city, not far, there is a *stūpa*; this is the place where, having arrived at complete enlightenment, he met his father.

To the south-east of the city is a *stūpa* where are that Tathāgata's relics (*of his bequeathed body*); before it is erected a stone pillar about 30 feet high, on the top of which is carved a lion. By its side (*or, on its side*) is a record relating the circumstances of his *Nirvāṇa*. It was erected by Asoka-rājā.

To the north-east of the town of Krakuchchanda Buddha, going about 30 li, we come to an old capital (*or great city*) in which there is a *stūpa*. This is to commemorate the spot where, in the Bhadrakalpa when men lived to the age of 40,000 years, Kana-kamuni Buddha was born.

To the north-east of the city, not far, is a *stūpa*; it was here, having arrived at complete enlightenment, he met his father.

Farther north there is a *stūpa* containing the relics of his bequeathed body; in front of it is a stone pillar with a lion on the top, and about 20 feet high; on this is inscribed a record of the events connected with his *Nirvāṇa*; this was built by Asoka-rājā.

To the north-east of the city about 40 li is a *stūpa*. This is the spot where the prince sat in the shade of a tree to watch the ploughing festival. . .

To the north-west of the capital there are several hundreds and thousands of *stūpas*, indicating the spot where the members of the *Sākya* tribe were slaughtered. . .

To the south-west of the place of massacre are four little *stūpas*. This is the place where the four *Sākyas* withstood an army. . .

* * *

To the south of the city 3 or 4 li is a grove of *Nigrodha* trees in which is a *stūpa* built by *Asoka-rājā*. This the place where *Sākya Tathāgata*, having returned to his country after his enlightenment, met his father and preached the law. . .

By the side of the *saṅghārāma*, and not far from it, is a *stūpa* ; this is the spot where *Tathāgata* sat beneath a great tree with his face to the east and received from his aunt a golden-tissued *kāśhāya* garment. . .

Within the eastern gate of the city, on the left of the road, is a *stūpa* ; this is where the Prince *Siddhārtha* practised (*athletic sports and competitive*) arts.

Outside the gate is the temple of *Isvara-deva*. In the temple is a figure of the *Deva* made of stone, which has the appearance of rising in a bent position. This is the temple which the royal prince when an infant (*in swaddling clothes*) entered. . .

Outside the south gate of the city, on the left of the road, is a *stūpa* ; it was here the royal prince contended with the *Sākyas* in athletic sports (*arts*) and pierced with his arrows the iron targets."

—*Buddhist Records of the Western World* translated by *Samuel Beal*, Vol. ii, pp. 13 to 24.

CHAPTER IX

SANKASSA

SANKASSA is the place where Lord Buddha descended on earth after preaching to His mother who had been born in Heaven. Sankassa is also the place where the future Buddha Maitriya was born as the son of Sirivaḍḍa, during the lifetime of our Lord Buddha. On a visit to this city He prophesied his attainment of Buddhahood in the distant future. Though Sankassa is not so important to the Southern Buddhists, it is looked upon with great regard by the Mahāyānists.

The ancient Sankassa has been identified with modern "Sankissa" Basantipur, a village five miles from Pakhna Station on the Shikohabad and Farukhabad line of the East Indian Railway. The site can also be reached from Mota, another station on the same line, the distance being 5 miles from there too. Only a *kucchā* road runs to the site which may be the reason for the comparative obscurity of this otherwise fruitful field for excavation. Neither is there any Rest House, so the visitor has to go there fully supplied with necessary provisions and in readiness to make himself as comfortable as possible at the tiny Railway Station.

As regards the ruins themselves, they are very extensive and the prospects of finding valuable antiquities are very bright. Why it has been so much neglected we are unable to say. Only the villagers seem to have profited by the ruins as they have helped themselves with the abundant supply of bricks at no cost to themselves whatever. Unlike the other mud villages of India, little Sankissa is built entirely of stone and bricks !

In addition to the ruins, there are two objects of interest here *viz.*, the pillar of Asoka and the temple over the ruins dedicated to the worship of snakes. The capital of the pillar is surmounted by an ox.

Sir Alexander Cunningham who identified the site writes as follows :

“ This capital still exists in the village of Sankissa, situated on the north or left bank of the Kali nadi, three quarters of a *kos*¹ from Aghatsarai, twelve *kos* from Farukhabad, and 25 *kos* from Kanouj. The village consists of only 50 or 60 houses, on a high ground which has once been a fort ; but all around it for a circuit of six miles there is a succession of high ruined mounds of brick and earth which are said to be the walls of the old city. My Munshi's² expression of wonder after having visited these ruins, ‘ Kanouj se barā haye—it is even larger than Kanouj,’ will convey some notion of their great extent.”

After describing the modern temples surmounting the ancient mounds and some fragments of Buddhist sculpture, Cunningham proceeds :—“ Close by to the southward is the most interesting point in these ruins. It is a small mound of ruined bricks dedicated to the worship of the Nāga. Nothing whatever is erected there, but whenever rain is desired the people proceed to the spot and pray for it. The period of annual worship is, however, the month of Bysakh, just before the commencement of the seasonal rains, when the village women go there in procession and make offerings of milk which they pour over the spot. This is no doubt the identical dragon (nāga) which Fa Hien mentions as appearing *once a year*, from whose favour the people of *Seng kia shi*³ obtained

1. 2 miles.
2. Overseer.
3. Sankassa.

propitious rains and abundant harvests. It is most interesting thus to trace back with certainty this local worship for nearly fourteen centuries and a half, to A.D. 100, which though most probably not the period of its origin, yet undoubtedly must be close to the time of its engrafture upon Buddhism."

Cunningham then records a tradition about the destruction of this capital in *samvat* 1240 (A.C. 1183) by "Raja Jayachandra of Kanouj, who, at the instigation of the Brahmins, marched against it and ploughed it up into fields, on the borders of which the large bricks are piled in dykes to the present day."

Sankassa is mentioned in the Rāmāyana and is one of the holy places claimed by the Hindus.

Let me now quote Fa Hien's own account of Sankassa :—

"Proceeding thence in a south easterly direction you reach a kingdom called *Seng kia shi*.⁴ This is the place where *Fo*, having ascended into heaven of *Tashi*⁵ and for three months preached in behalf of his mother, redescended to the earth. When *Fo* ascended to the heaven of *Tai li*,⁶ he so employed his supernatural powers that his disciples knew nothing of it. Seven days were yet wanting (of the time for his return) when these made use of their divine faculties. *A na liu*⁷ who was endowed with the sight of the gods perceived afar off the *Honourable of the Age* and said to that venerable personage, the great *Mou lian*,⁸ "Go inquire of the Honourable of the age." *Mou lian* then proceeded to prostrate himself and worship the foot (of the Buddha) and addressed the question that had been suggested. When he had spoken, *Fo* said to *Mou lian*, "In seven days hence I shall descend to *You feou thi*."⁹ *Mou lian* returned, and on his return, the great kings of eight kingdoms, their vassals and their people, who for a long time burnt with anxiety to behold *Fo* again, assembled like clouds in the kingdom (of *Seng kia she*) to await there the *Honourable of the Age*. Then said

4. Sankassa.
5. Tusita.
6. Tusita.
7. Anuruddha.
8. Moggallana.
9. Thaloka(?).

the female mendicant *Yeou pho lo*¹⁰ to herself, "This day the Kings and the people await with adoration the advent of *Fo*; how shall I, who am a woman, obtain the first sight of Him?" She then availed herself of the divine faculty to transform herself into the holy king turning the wheel and she was by much the first to render homage to *Fo*.

"*Fo* descended from the heaven of *Tuo li*. At the moment of descent he formed a triple ladder of precious steps. *Fo* descended on the middle ladder, adorned with the seven precious things. The king of the gods, *Fan*,¹¹ prepared also a ladder of silver; he was on the right side, holding in his hands a white chawry¹² and accompanying *Fo*. The Lord *Shy*¹³ constructed a ladder of burnished gold; he was on the left side, holding in his hand a parasol enriched with the precious things and accompanying *Fo*. An immeasurable throng of gods followed *Fo* whilst he descended. When he had descended, the three ladders disappeared under the ground, and nothing of them remained visible but the seven steps. Long after, the King (*A Yen*) desired to behold the foundation of them, and sent people to dig down to the base. These reached a yellow spring, without being able to penetrate to the foundations. The king felt sensible of a great increase of his faith and veneration. He caused therefore a chapel to be raised over the steps, and upon the middle one erected a full length statue (of *Fo*) six toises high.¹⁴ Behind the chapel was erected a pillar 30 cubits high and thereupon was placed a lion. Within the pillar on the four sides were images of *Fo*. The interior and the exterior were polished and resplendent as crystal

... A tower was also erected in the place where the religious mendicant *Yeou pho lo* rendered the first homage to *Fo*. At the time when *Fo* was in the world, they built a tower on the spot where he cut his hair, and his nails; on that where the three former *Fos* sat with *Shy kia wah*¹⁴; in the places where he had journeyed, and where images of *Fo* were erected; everywhere have they constructed towers which remain to this day. At the place where the Lord *Shy*, and the king of the gods, *Fan*, descended with *Fo*, they have likewise erected a tower. In these places there may be a thousand devotees, both male and female, who dwell together and eat in company, those of the *Great* intermingled with those who study the *less* translation."—*Pilgrimage of Fa Hien*, p. 130.

10. Uppalavanna.
11. Brahmā.
12. Chāmara.
13. Sixty feet.
14. Sākyamuni.

CHAPTER X

SĀNCHI

SĀNCHI is a place of absorbing interest from the point of view of ancient Indian art and architecture. Here are a number of *Stūpas*, ruins of temples and carved gateways, some of which go back to the time of Emperor Asoka. They are the finest specimens of such work extant in India.

Sānchi is a wayside station on the Great Indian Peninsular Railway line going from Delhi to Bombay. It falls within the territories of H. H. the Nawab of Bhopal whose Government takes punctilious care of these valuable monuments. Mail trains do not stop at Sānchi but if upper class passengers inform the guard about their intention to detrain here, he will arrange to stop the train. Otherwise one has to get down at Bhilsa and walk up to Sānchi which is not at all advisable.

The ruins are situated picturesquely on a hillock and the distance from the station is only about a furlong. They are visible from the Railway Station itself. There are remains of a stone wall which seems to have extended right round the whole establishment.

Bhopal Government maintains a well-equipped rest house for the use of visitors who can stay there by paying Re. 1.00 per head.

Places of Interest.

The following are the places of interest at Sānchi :—

1. THE GREAT STŪPA surrounded by an Asokan Railing with four beautifully carved gateways.

2. STŪPA IN WHICH THE RELICS OF SĀRI-PUTTA AND MOGGALLĀNA were discovered (marked No. 3).
3. STŪPA MARKED NO. 2 in which the remains of the saints who took part in Asoka's Missions sent to different parts of the world were deposited.
4. STŪPA MARKED NO. 4 and other antiquities.
5. ASOKA PILLAR on the main terrace and other pillars.
6. TEMPLES AND MONASTERIES in different parts of the site.
7. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

1. THE GREAT STŪPA.

The main object of interest at this historic site is the great *stūpa* which, owing to its enormous size, the visitor will notice at once when he approaches the site from any direction. It is in the form of a hemispherical dome with a terrace running right round it. The terrace is reached by two attractive stairways which meet on the south side of the *stūpa*. The terrace is well protected by a stone railing. This is a "*pradakṣhinā patha*" which the pilgrims must have taken keen delight in using. Another *patha* is below on the ground surrounded by a more elaborate Asoka railing with four superb gateways at the four corners. Thus this *stūpa* is unique on account of the fact that it is provided with two perambulating paths for the benefit of the devotees. Both the railings are made entirely of Chunār stone and are well-polished, while the *stūpa* itself is covered with stone blocks. The railings and the gateways match so well with the *stūpa*, the design of the whole structure seems to have been the idea of one master architect. The best view is obtained from the south-east side.

It is generally believed that the *stūpa* as it is now found was the work of Emperor Asoka, but the latest and the better-informed view is that the original one erected by this noblest of monarchs was in bricks and was covered by the present larger structure built subsequently. Though the actual *stūpa* may not be the personal gift of the Emperor, there is enough evidence to show that it belongs to his time in any case. The railings are typical of Asokan monuments. There is, however, no doubt that the gateways are of a later date, though it may not be surprising if their construction had commenced during the emperor's own time. On some of the pillars of the railings, the names of the donors are carved in Brahmi script—thus proving that the railings are not the gift of one person but the result of the cumulative effort of many pious Buddhists of several decades. There are signs that, at one time, the *stūpa* as well as the railings were coloured. The diameter of the *stūpa* is 120 feet while the height is 54 feet.

The destruction of this *stūpa* is ascribed to Pusyamitra, the Prime Minister of the last Mauryan King, who overthrew this dynasty and established his own line known as the "Sunga Dynasty" (184-148 B.C.).

The four massive and imposing gateways at the four corners are a contrast to the *stūpa* owing to their elaborate carvings and sculpture. They are fine specimens of Buddhist sculptural work and have no equal anywhere else in India. The gateway to the south is regarded as the earliest but it is apparent that there was not much interval between the construction of the first and the rest. From two inscriptions found on them we learn that "the right pillar of the western gateway," and the "middle architrave of the southern one" are the gifts of one "Nagapiya, a banker of Achavada and resident of Kurāra."¹

1. Sir John Marshall's "Guide to Sānci "

The designs of all the four gateways are similar. Each gateway consists of two massive square pillars surmounted by capitals consisting of animal figures. These capitals support the architraves which join them one above the other. The architraves are somewhat curved in the middle while the ends project beyond the pillars and twist slightly upwards. The third and the topmost one is surmounted by a large *Dharmacakra* in the middle with two *triratna* symbols on either side. All the ends of the architraves have animal figures standing on them as well as the spaces formed by them between the pillars. These latter and the architraves are elaborately carved and filled up with numerous scenes from the life of the Buddha, Jātaka stories and other events some of which have yet to be identified. The figure of the Buddha is, however, not engraved as it was then considered too sacrilegious to depict Him in stone or mortar. Wherever necessary, He is represented by His footprints, Bodhi tree, āsana (seat) or some other symbol. There are several important historical events engraved on the gateways. One is the visit of Emperor Asoka to the Bodhi tree at Buddhagayā, another is his visit to Rāmagrāma stūpa in which some of Buddha's relics were enshrined. These relics Asoka could not obtain owing to the opposition of the Koliyas. Two other interesting scenes are the visit of royal representatives to Kusinārā for the relics of the Buddha and the departure of King Bimbisāra from the city of Rājagriha probably to meet the Buddha. Figures of animals such as peacock, lion, horse, elephant, bull, camel and of several types of birds as well as delightful floral designs add to the wealth of decorations. The presence of the grape vine among the decorative motifs is regarded as a "sure" sign of foreign influence. But we cannot find adequate reasons for accepting such a view.

The southern gateway has the following inscription on the back of the top architrave:—"Rano Siri Satakanisa

avesanisa vasithiputasa Anamdasa dānam." "Gift of Ānanda, the son of Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of Rājā Sātakarṇi."

At the four entrances to the *stūpa* are four figures of the Buddha cut in relief against the terrace wall. These were probably later additions.

2. STŪPA IN WHICH THE RELICS OF SĀRIPUTTA AND MOGGALLĀNA WERE DISCOVERED.

About 200 feet to the north east of the great *stūpa* is the smaller *stūpa* which became famous on account of the valuable discovery in it of the relics of Sāriputta and Moggallāna. These two were the chief disciples of the Lord Buddha who passed into *Mahā parinirvāna* before Him. We have no evidence as to when these relics were brought to Sānchi. Is it possible that the original *stūpa* at this site was erected during the life time of the Buddha? These relics were discovered by Sir Alexander Cunningham and Capt. F. C. Maisey in two stone boxes, each with an inscription mentioning the name of the particular disciple whose relics they were. At present the relics are kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and they will soon be presented to the Maha Bodhi Society for enshrinement in a Vihāra at Sānchi.

This *stūpa* is almost identical in design with the great *stūpa*, the only difference being the absence of the lower railing round it. It has also only one gateway which is 17 feet high. Here too the gateway has many scenes from the life of the Buddha but they are inferior to those in the great *stūpa* in their design and execution.

3. STŪPA MARKED No. 2.

Equally important is the *stūpa* marked No. 2 on account of the discovery in it of the remains of the great saints who carried Buddhism to different parts of the world during the

2. Sir John Marshall's "Guide to Sānchi"

reign of Emperor Asoka. This *stūpa* is situated at a place rather away from the rest of the ruins—hence it is treated separately in Sir John Marshall's guide to Sānci. To reach it one has to descend a distance of about 400 yards on the western side of the hill. Steps have been built to make the descent easy.

There is no marked difference between this and the previously described *stūpa*, either in size or in construction. This one, however, has no gateway. The ballustrade is well-preserved and has numerous reliefs on it. As already stated, the real importance of the *stūpa* lies in the fact that it revealed the relics of the great Buddhist missionaries who took an active part in Asoka's missions. The credit for this discovery again goes to Sir Alexander Cunningham who found them inside a chamber further away from the usual spot earmarked for the enshrinement of relics in such *stūpas*. The outer casket was made of white sandstone 11 inches by 9½ inches. Within it were four other caskets made of steatite in which were the actual relics. The bigger casket had the following inscription:—" (The relics) of all teachers beginning with the Arahāt(?) Kasapagota and the Arahāt(?) Vacchi Suvijayata, the teacher." The names engraved on the steatite caskets were:—" 1. Kasapagota (Kāsyapagotra), the teacher of all the Himavats, 2. Majhima (Madhyama), 3. Haritiputa (Haritiputra), 4. Vachhi-Suvijayata (Vatsi Suvijayata?), 5. Mahavanaya, 6. Apagira, 7. Kodiniputa (Kaundiniputra), 8. Kosikiputa (Kausikiputra), 9. Gotiput (Gauptiputra), 10. Mogaliputa (Maudgaliputra)."³

The discovery of these inscriptions was a revelation as they proved the accuracy of the Mahāvansa and Dipavansa accounts of the despatch of missionaries by Emperor Asoka. Except in the case of a few, names as found in the inscriptions

tally exactly with those mentioned in the chronicles. As works of pure history, these chronicles were looked down upon so much that even the sending of missions by Asoka mentioned therein was rejected by some western scholars as mere wishful thinking, but this discovery has silenced them once for all.

Scenes depicted on the ballustrade are from Buddha's life.

In this area there are several other remains such as the foundations of a temple and the base of a pillar.

4. STŪPA MARKED No. 4.

To the north east of *stūpa* No. 3, is another of smaller proportions marked No. 4. It was in a very bad state of preservation but the Archaeological Department has lately restored it. There are bases of several votive *stūpas* near about but they need no individual treatment. They all belong to a later date.

5. ASOKA PILLAR AND OTHER PILLARS

At Sānchi there seems to have been a considerable number of pillars unlike at other Buddhist sites. Even at present there are no less than four pillars of varying importance besides many other minor ones belonging to the Gupta period.

Of these, the earliest is the one erected by Emperor Asoka in front of the southern gateway of the Main *stūpa*. Unfortunately we have at present only the stump and the capital as it was demolished by a local Zemindar who wanted the stone for a sugar press. When standing, it was 42 feet high and was made out of one single piece of stone. The lion capital is preserved in the Museum. It is surprising how such an enormous piece of stone was cut out of the solid rock,

transferred to a distance of several hundred miles and, after finishing it without the slightest defect, finally erected at the required site without any mishap.

The second pillar which needs mention is the one to the east of the main *stūpa*. It belongs to the Sunga period. It is only 15 feet high and is different from the Asokan type on account of its octagonal base. Above the base it is sixteen-sided up to the top. The capital is bell-shaped but the animal figure which surmounted it is missing.

The third pillar which is set up close to the above belongs to the Gupta period. It is of a "pale buff hue splashed and streaked with purplish-brown."¹ The height is 22 feet 6 inches but is broken into three pieces. This pillar has an inscription in Gupta script mentioning the gift of a "Vajrapāni pillar, 2 pillars of a gateway, a maṇḍapa of a monastery and a gateway by one Rudrasena or Rudrasinha, son of Gosura Sinhabala, the superintendent of a monastery."²

The fourth pillar is near the northern gateway. This is probably the one referred to in the inscription mentioned above. It is of a bigger size but the present height is only 9 feet. This too belongs to the Gupta era as evidenced by its square base. Near the pillar was discovered a statue of Vajrapāni Bodhisatva which, according to Cunningham and Marshall, had crowned it. Probably this is why it was described as a Vajrapāni pillar.

6. TEMPLES AND MONASTERIES.

One of the chief temples at the site appears to have been the one opposite the southern gateway of the main *stūpa*. From the huge square pillars numbering nine, each 17 feet high, which stand up to this day, we can surmise that it must have been a highly imposing edifice. The temple seems to

1. Sir John Marshall's "Guide to Sāncī."
2. Sir John Marshall's "Guide to Sāncī."

have been modelled after the *chaitya* caves of Ajantā and Kārli, for, in the apse there is the invariable *stūpa*. Except the foundations and the side walls on one side up to a height of about four feet, there is nothing else here for us to form an accurate idea as to the exact nature of the building. The structure could not have been earlier than 650 A.C. A broken stone bowl, a few terra-cotta tablets and some tiles were the only finds of interest within the temple.

To the east of this site is a well-preserved but small shrine which has almost the look of a modern temple of Benares. It is built entirely of stone including the flat roof. It consists of the actual *sanctum sanctorum* and a verandah in front supported by four carved pillars and two pillasters.

Another temple is the one behind *stūpa* No. 5. It too has a flat roof supported by pillars. Inside it is a statue of the Buddha seated on a lotus throne. From this site was recovered the image of a *Nāgi* 7 ft. 6 in. high.

The southern area has a number of important monuments the chief of which is the great temple. At present it is entirely in ruins, only the foundations and the bases of the pillars stand to show what a magnificent building it had been. There are traces of reconstruction in later times but the original temple is of a very early date. The vastness of the temple can be realised from the fact that the plinth is 137 ft. by 91 ft. The hall had 50 pillars, the bases of which are *in situ* at present. Three monasteries have been discovered at this site.

In the eastern area there is an important temple marked No. 45 and several monasteries attached to the same. This is one of the latest to be erected at Sānchi, say about the 10th or the 11th century A.C. Here too there are several layers of temples. The latest structure is a square one reached by a small ante-chamber. Most of the roof has fallen down

but the *Sikhara* seems to have been crowned by an *amlakī* fruit design. This temple is richly decorated with sculptures and other motifs. It is, however, impossible to give an account of them here as space does not permit us to do so. Several other monasteries are also left out but the reader is referred to Sir John Marshall's well-known guide if he is further interested in their study.

7. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

The Museum which contains the statues, seals, etc., discovered at the site is to the left of the road immediately on reaching the top of the hill. Visitors will find here many interesting objects which it is impossible to describe in this book.

History of Sānchi.

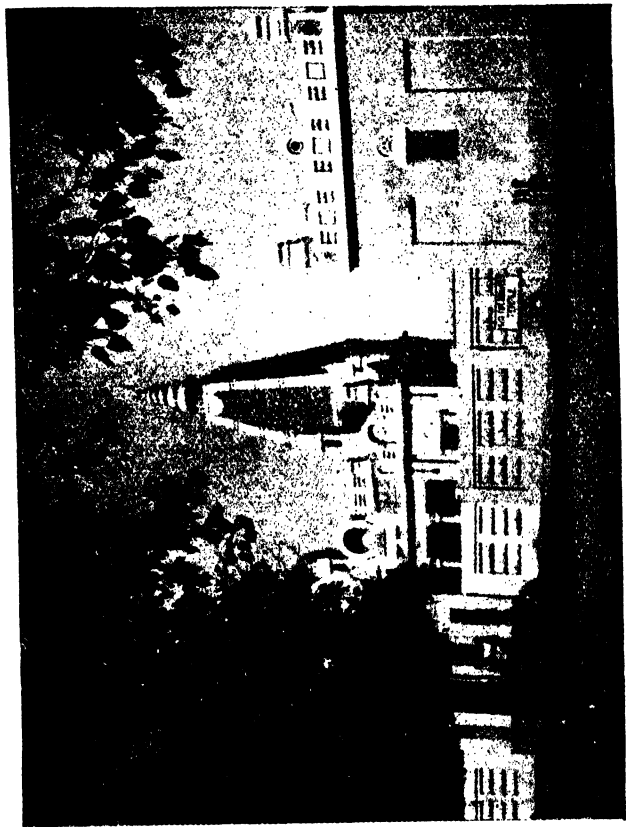
There is no mention in Buddhist literature that Lord Buddha ever visited Sānchi or its neighbourhood, and consequently, we do not know whether the Buddhists considered it a religious duty to visit this remote place in ancient days. However, as the relics of Sāriputta and Moggallāna were brought here at some time, it is reasonable to suppose that it must have been a place of much sanctity ever since. The fact that Asoka erected several of its important monuments is sufficient proof that Sānchi was held in great respect during his time.

The ancient name of the place is "Kakanaya" or "Kakanara." In Mahavansa it is called "Chetiyagiri," a more appropriate description. We do not know when the name "Sānchi" came to be in vogue.

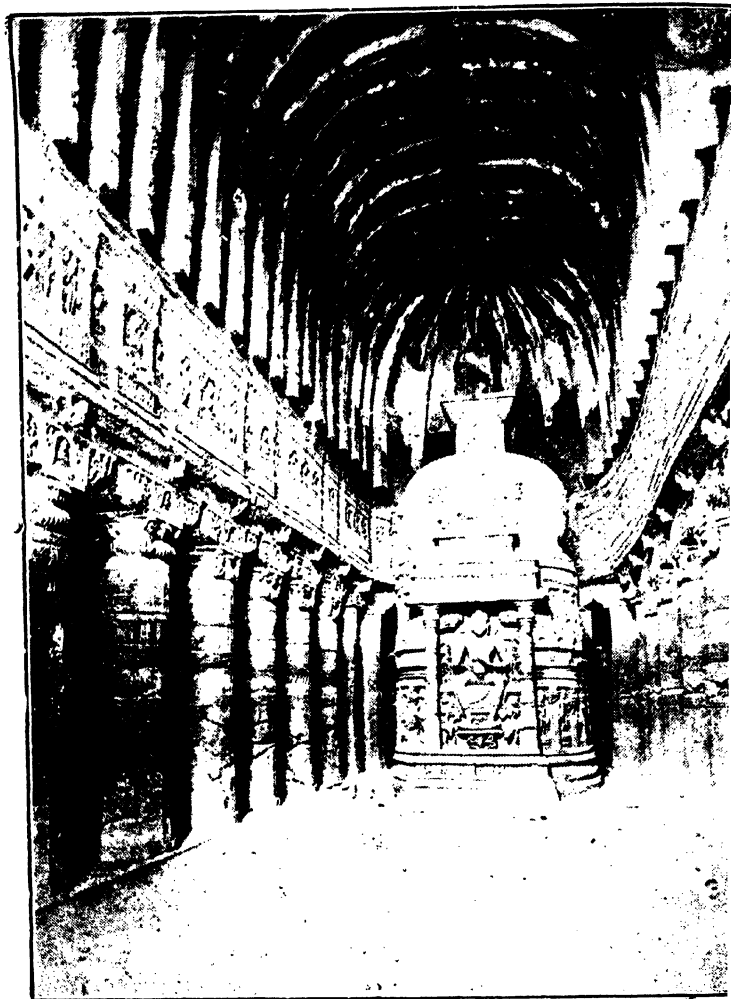
Asoka must have naturally taken a keen personal interest in the place as he spent several years of his youth at Ujjaini as the Viceroy of Malwā. It was during this period that he contracted the romantic marriage with one Devī of Vedisā,

a place only a few miles from Sānchi. This Devī was the mother of Mahinda, Asoka's famous son who became a monk and crossed over to Ceylon to disseminate Buddhism. Before his departure, it is said that he spent some time in a great monastery at Cetiyagiri built by his mother. This is definite proof that the royal house showed an unusual interest in this great Buddhist establishment.

Sānchi remained an important centre of Buddhism in Malwā up to the 11th century when it went into decay and oblivion. How this happened we have no means to know as there is no record in any book. Even the excavations have failed to give any definite clue. That it must have been plundered by the invaders at some time can only be conjectured. The monuments were, however, remarkably well preserved till the 18th century unlike those of other centres more open to destruction on the part of marauders. The lucky escape of Sānchi can only be ascribed to its inaccessibility. Situated on the summit of a hill, it was hidden from the plain by the dense jungle that grew round it on the sides, and few of the invaders cared to explore the site with a view to robbing a possible treasure-trove. It was only after Sir Alexander Cunningham published his book "*Bhilsā Topes*" in 1854, that treasure-hunters were attracted to the site and began their work of spoliation. It was one Capt. F. C. Maisey who caused the greatest damage but to him also goes the credit of discovering the relics mentioned above. After the establishment of the Archaeological Department, the place has received much attention and is now one of the most attractive sites looked after by the Department.



BUDDHA VIHARA, NEW DELHI



CHAITYA CAVE, AJANTA

CHAPTER XI

AJANTĀ

THE caves of Ajantā, famous throughout the world on account of their wonderful mural paintings, are situated within the Dominions of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad¹.

To reach Ajantā, the visitor has to detrain at Jalgoan Station on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, 261 miles from Bombay. From here there is a good motor road up to the Dak Bungalow at Faradpur, the distance being 27 miles. From the Bungalow the caves are only 4 miles away. Visitors starting from the direction of Madras will find it more convenient to get down at Aurangabad on the H.E.H. Nizam's State Railway and motor up to the Dak Bungalow mentioned above, a distance of 55 miles. Those who will not mind the inconvenience of train journeys and constant transshipments, can proceed straight on to and break journey at Pachora Station on the G. I. P. Railway and therefrom catch the Pachora Jamner Railway to Pahur. The caves are only 13 miles from this station. This is the cheapest of all the routes.

In addition to the Dak Bungalow at Faradpur, there is also a State Guest House; permission to occupy it must, however, be obtained from the Director of Archaeology at Hyderabad.

Cut on the scarped side of a huge rock in a deep ravine and skirted by several wooded hills, the caves at Ajantā are placed in a rugged and picturesque setting. From the

1. Since the above was written, with the grant of independence to India, the Nizam has proclaimed his Dominion a free and sovereign state. In a *firman* he assumed the title of "His Majesty" but later on signed a "stand still" agreement with the Government of India for a year. The question of the status of Hyderabad, it is hoped, will be satisfactorily decided before the expiry of this period.

opposite direction a fine panoramic view of the whole series is obtainable as they are chiselled out of the inner side of a semi-circular rock 600 yards long. Above the ravine is a small waterfall called "Satdhārā" and during the rainy season it is an attractive sight.

Although it is not possible to give the exact date when these caves were first excavated, it is generally accepted that the earliest ones go back to the 2nd century B.C. while the latest is assigned to the 7th century A.C. Thus their construction is spread out into many centuries and we are therefore in a position not only to judge the gradual development of rock cut temple architecture but also to ascertain the modes of life of the people at different periods. While the architectural features themselves are highly interesting, the chief fame of Ajantā is due to the many valuable wall paintings discovered in them and which have been admitted by competent critics as some of the finest of such work in the world.

In all, there are 29 caves at Ajantā of which 4 are of the chaitya type and the rest Vihāras and monasteries. The Archaeological Department has numbered them serially for the convenience of reference. In no less than 13 of these there seems to have been frescoes but, at present, only in 6 of them they are in a tolerable state of preservation *viz.*, Cave Nos. 1, 2, 9, 10, 16 and 17.

These unique caves were in complete oblivion till the year 1819, when they were first seen by some English officers of the Madras army. In 1836 Sir James Alexander gave a brief account of them to the Royal Asiatic Society of London followed by another account in the Bengal Asiatic Society Journal, in the same year. James Fergusson, the well-known author, visited them immediately after that and brought the importance of the caves to the notice of the

public. After this, the place began to draw wide attention chiefly on account of the marvellous paintings, and in course of time, the excellence of the frescoes was fully appreciated and the caves became almost a place of pilgrimage to lovers of art. Some time after Fergusson's visit, Major Gill was appointed by the East India Company to make copies of the paintings. After spending "twenty" years in doing this work, he at last submitted the copies to be exhibited in the London Crystal Palace. But unfortunately they were destroyed by fire except five. In 1875 Mr. Griffith, Principal of the Government Art School, Bombay, made another set of copies. Strangely enough these too were destroyed by fire but this time some 56 copies were saved. They are now exhibited in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Another artist who devoted much time to Ajantā was Lady Herringham who brought out a fine brochure containing the main frescoes which greatly helped to make these wonderful paintings world famous. In later times copies have been made by various artists. The latest publication on the subject is the Hyderabad State's superb official volumes containing the frescoes and a full description. The Government of the Nizam should be congratulated on the great efforts made by it to preserve for posterity this excellent art gallery of our ancient Buddhist painters.

It is impossible to give detailed descriptions of all the 29 caves in a work like this. I shall briefly deal with the more important ones only, leaving the reader to follow up the information contained herein by reading the more descriptive publications on the subject.

Cave No. 1 is a Vihāra and is one of the finest at Ajantā. It is full of sculptures and paintings and the scenes illustrated are some of the most famous at the place. The Vihāra is provided with a wide verandah decorated with

many a piece of sculpture. The interior arrangements are similar to those of the usual Vihāras with the shrine at the back, the assembly hall in the middle and the private rooms along the sides. The beds and even the pillows of some of these living rooms are carved out of the same solid rock.

Important scenes painted on the walls are "The Temptation of the Buddha," "Miracle at Srāvastī," "Sibi Jātaka" and the so called "Visit of the Persian Ambassador." But the most charming picture of all is the standing figure of the Bodhisatva near the shrine with a lotus in his hand. Professor Cecconi, the Italian expert, says that the painting "evinces a surprising portrayal of art on account of its pictorial qualities; this painting in its grandiose outlines recalls to memory the figures of Michael Angello in the Sistine chapel; while the clearness of the colour of flesh, so true to nature, and the transparency of the shadows, are very like those of Correggio. The design and the expression of the face are exceptionally surprising, the breadth of the technique, the interpretation of the shape of the hand made to realistic perfection, permit of a comparison with the two great artists of the Italian renaissance; . . . The hand holding the flower is also designed with exquisite skill and elegance." The scene of the "visit of the Persian Ambassador" is so called on account of the peculiar costumes worn by the visitors. To what incident it refers actually, it is, however, difficult to say. It is painted on the ceiling of the verandah.

Cave No. 2 is similar to No. 1. Its point of difference lies in the addition of two chambers on the two sides of the shrine room separated by columns and containing figures. In architectural and other features this is inferior to Cave No. 1 but contains a number of fine paintings. The scenes illustrated are "Devārādhana," "Māyā's Dream," "Visit to Lumbini Garden," "Birth of Prince Siddhārtha," "His

stepping on seven lotuses immediately after," "Khāntivāda Jātaka," and "Hamsa Jātaka." On the wall to the right is the story of two brothers Purāna and Bhabila who erected a sandal wood shrine in remembrance of their lucky escape from death while at sea.

Two other paintings of this cave which have found much favour with art critics are the "Messenger" and "The Punishment of the Slave Girl." They have been reproduced in many places and certainly deserve the great popularity they have attained.

Cave No. 4 is the largest of the Vihāra class of caves at Ajantā. Its verandah is supported by eight octagonal pillars. The keynote of its design is simplicity of style but on the walls of the verandah are carved numerous figures. That of "Padmapāṇi" to the right hand side is worthy of notice. A man and a woman running away in terror of an infuriated elephant is an interesting group. The decorations above the main door are typical of South Indian motifs.

Cave No. 6 is a double-storeyed Vihāra and is the only one of its kind here as all the rest have only one storey. There are no paintings worth mentioning in this but the decorations in the verandah, arrangement of the staircase etc., may be noted.

The verandah of cave No. 7 has beautiful columns which are somewhat similar to those of Elephanta caves in Bombay. This has no hall but is provided with two porches in the verandah and small chambers on the two sides. The shrine is well-decorated with flower and creeper designs interspersed with images of the Buddha.

Cave No. 9 is a chaitya. It is considered to be the oldest of the series at Ajantā. Unlike others, this is designed in the form of a square, but the pillars are taken round the stūpa in a semi-circle as customary. The two rows of pillars

which divide the hall are plain and octagonal. Two of these are damaged. The roof of the central hall is vaulted and contains ribs but those of the two side aisles are flat and plain. In addition to the main bo-tree leaf pattern window, this has two others which light up the side aisles.

The entablature over the pillars contains some paintings but they are in a bad state of preservation. In the back walls and the pillars too there are fragments of paintings which are perhaps the oldest examples of frescoe work in Ajantā. The stūpa is absolutely free from decorations.

Cave No. 10 is of the same pattern as No. 9 but of larger proportions—in fact the largest in Ajantā. There are signs that the roof had been beautified with many wooden rafters.

This cave has a group of important paintings which give us a good idea about the dresses, head-wear and other personal embellishments of the age. The group with the king and the queen may be specially noted.

Cave No. 12 is also one of the earliest of the caves here. Its interior decorations are plain with the bo-leaf pattern decorations over the doors of the cells and the window-like niches.

Cave No. 16 is one of the best Vihāras at Ajantā and on account of the blameless architectural features it has been recognised as a masterpiece. The verandah is supported by several massive pillars chastely decorated while the main door is most impressive with elephants guarding it. The image of the shrine is very well illuminated by light which penetrates through the main door. The skill of the designer is well manifested in this devise. Near the steps leading to the verandah there is a *nāga* figure neatly executed.

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1. This style of window is generally described by scholars as the "horse shoe" window but the actual motif is the leaf of the Bodhi tree.

This cave is also highly important on account of the many frescoes it contains but unfortunately they are very indistinct. This is all the more regrettable as some of them are considered as masterpieces. The scene of the "Dying Princess" painted on the left wall is the best of the series. It is full of pathos and shows a very high degree of artistic talent. Of this painting Griffith says, "for pathos and sentiment and the unmistakable way of telling its story, this picture, I consider, cannot be surpassed in the history of art. Florentines could have put better drawing, and the Venetians better colour, but neither could have thrown greater expression into it."

The other scenes painted on the walls are :—birth of Prince Siddhārtha, Asita's visit, Buddha's journey to Rājagriha, the four signs He saw on His visit to the city, Sujātā offering milk-rice, Tapassu and Bhalluka's offering, Nanda's conversion and Sutasoma Jātaka. Some of the paintings in this cave have yet to be identified.

In view of the many superb frescoes found in Cave No. 17, it may be considered to be the most remarkable of all the caves. Its verandah, the main door and the outside pillars are very imposing. On both sides of the verandah are apertures separated by pillars. Above them are sculptured scenes. The temptation of the Buddha and His Mahāparinibbāna are fine specimens of sculptural work to be found herein.

Regarding the entrance to this cave Prof. Cecconi says that it is "a thing of supreme artistic value. The small embellishment which adorns the upper portion is marvellous, as marvellous as are the eight panels which go to make up the decorations of the said entrance."

Let us now consider the paintings which are the greatest attraction in this cave. Here are many masterpieces of paintings which will keep an art student fully absorbed for a considerable time. To the extreme left of the verandah is the painting of the "*Saṃsāracakra*." Close to it is the well-known group showing a prince sitting with his wife while another princess is standing in a graceful pose with an umbrella held over her head. Through the window are visible two women in a contemplative mood. The lady with the umbrella is probably the same person who is sitting with the prince. It is difficult to say what the picture indicates but it is an extremely charming family group very much out of tune, if we may say so, with monastic life. The flying figures above this are also beautifully painted. As all of them carry musical instruments they are supposed to be *gāndhārvas* or celestial musicians. Regarding these paintings Dr. Burgess says, "whether we look at its purity of outline, or the elegance of the grouping, it is one of the most pleasing of the smaller paintings at Ajantā and more nearly approaches the form of art found in Italy in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries than any example there. The easy upward motion of the whole group is rendered in a manner that could not be easily surpassed."

This cave also contains the world famous picture entitled "The Mother and the Child." They are most probably the princess Yasodharā and Prince Rāhula, her son. It is the charming scene of the mother pointing out the Buddha to the little child, and asking him to go and obtain his inheritance from Him. There does not exist any other painting which equals this in its tenderness and beauty. E. B. Havell, the well-known art critic, says, "in its exquisite sentiment it is comparable with the wonderful madonnas of Giovanni Ballini." Prof. Lorenzo Cecconi says, "these two figures, the design of their heads and their expression are admirably

exquisite. The pose of their heads in the direction of the figure of Buddha, recall to mind that points of form which one encounters in the schools of Umbria and Tuscany of our most eminent Quattrocentists." Mr. Laurence Binyon says that it is "one of the most unforgettable things . . . no picture anywhere more profoundly impressive in grandeur and in tenderness."

Another series of paintings which deserve mention in this important cave is the "story of Vijaya landing in Ceylon." They are painted on the right side wall. Vijaya's landing, ship-wreck, his life with the Yakkhinis, internment, riding a white horse to destroy the rakṣhasas etc., are some of the incidents painted. Minute care seems to have been bestowed on this group by the artist.

Another painting of note is that of the queen who is attending to her toilet with a mirror in her hands while a servant woman holds perfume etc., on a tray.

The other important paintings of this cave are the following :—Taming of Nālāgiri elephant, Chaddanta, Mahākapi, Sutasoma, Miga, Matripasaka, Sarabha, Sāma, Matsya and Vessantara Jātakas. Jūjaka Brahmin who begged and obtained the two little children of Vessantara is painted with a fine sense of the man's cruel and greedy nature.

According to art critics the most important characteristic of the Ajantā School of painting is the excellence of the lines with which they succeeded in giving life to the figures. Capt. Gladstone Solomons says, "If Europe discovered the secret of tone values, surely it must have been the Orient that discovered line." Equally remarkable is the ease with which correct expressions are given to the figures in the different scenes, perhaps a more difficult thing for an artist to do without some shortcoming. Never since those days

of Ajantā have Indian artists succeeded in portraying human beings with such masterly understanding of their movement, physiognomy, feeling and posture.

Although there is not a single picture which is undamaged, it is surprising how well they have withstood the ravages of time and climate when we consider the long period they have remained exposed and uncared for. Twelve centuries are a pretty long period and it speaks highly for the technical perfection attained by the artists of those days in preparing the colours and the background. The frescoe art is at present almost completely forgotten except in Rājaputānā; even the analysis of the materials used at Ajantā have not given a clue to their composition. It is a matter for gratification that efforts are being made to revive this ancient art by a number of Indian painters especially in Bengal.

Cave No. 19 is a chaitya of the usual pattern but the finest one of its kind at Ajantā. It is profusely decorated both outside and inside and the workmanship is so excellent that it is considered as "one of the most perfect specimens of Buddhist art in India." Its chief distinguishing features are the porch added to the outer entrance, the beautifully carved facade, and the decorated *stūpa*. The carvings on the four pillars of the porch and the facade are faultless while the decorations round the main door are superb. The pillars inside the cave are more elaborately carved than those at Kārli. The architrave over the pillars is also sculptured with figures while above it there are niches at intervals. It is a pity that some of the pillars are damaged.

Another point of departure from the features of chaitya caves of Kārli etc., is the abandonment of the rail pattern round the *stūpa* so conspicuous in other places. It is replaced by sculptures, pillasters, cornices; and other decorations

have been introduced. In a large hollow in front of the stūpa is a standing figure of the Lord Buddha with smaller ones at other places.

While it is impossible to describe the large number of sculptures with which this cave is so profusely decorated, mention may be made of the Nāga King and queen seated together with one foot each on the seat.

Cave No. 20 is another Vihāra which is of much architectural importance. The columns on the verandah are decorated with strut-female figures. The flight of steps at the entrance is flanked by decorations similar to those of Anurādhapura and Polonnaruwa in Ceylon but not so elegantly executed.

No. 26 which is also a chaitya is very much on the lines of No. 19. It is distinguished from the latter by the colossal nature of its sculpture. The portico is unfortunately entirely destroyed but most of the decorations on the facade are intact. Internal decorations are more profuse than in others. The architrave above the rows of pillars is divided into different panels and is covered with sculptured scenes of Buddha's life, etc.

The stūpa is decorated in the same manner as the one in Cave No. 19 but the Buddha is made to sit here in European fashion and in the attitude of preaching the first sermon. The ribs of the vaulted roof are here very prominent. The architrave is supported by small brackets above each of the pillars. If the cave has any fault at all, it is the profusion of sculptures and decorations to be found in it.

This completes our survey of the chief caves of this most attractive series. Finally it may be added that there are about 25 small inscriptions, some of which are inscribed below the paintings.

Hsuen Tsiang, the pilgrim traveller from China, does not seem to have missed these marvellous Caves, as the following extract from his records testifies.

"On the eastern frontier of the country is a great mountain with towering crags and a continuous stretch of piled-up rocks and scarped precipices. In this there is a *Saṅghārāma* constructed, in a dark valley. Its lofty halls and deep side-aisles stretch through the (or open into the) face of the rocks. Storey above storey they are backed by the crag and face the valley (*water-course*).

This convent was built by the Arahāt Āchāra (O-che-lo)¹. This Arahāt was a man of Western India. His mother having died, he looked to see in what condition she was reborn. He saw that she had received a woman's body in this kingdom. The Arahāt accordingly came here with a view to convert her, according to her capabilities of receiving the truth. Having entered a village to beg food, he came to the house where his mother had been born. A young girl came forth with food to give him. At this moment the milk came from her breasts and trickled down. Her friends having seen this considered it an unlucky sign, but the Arahāt recounted the history of her birth. The girl thus attained the holy fruit (*of Arahātship*). The Arahāt, moved with gratitude for her who had borne and cherished him, and remembering the end of such (*good*) works, from a desire to requite her, built this *Saṅghārāma*. The great *Vihāra* of the convent is about 100 feet or so in height; in the middle is a stone figure of Buddha about 70 feet or so high. Above it is a stone canopy of seven stages, towering upwards apparently without support. The space between each canopy is about three feet. According to the old report, this is held in its place by the force of the vow of the Arahāt. They also say it is by the force of his miraculous powers; others say by the virtue of some magical compound; but no trustworthy account has yet explained the reason of the wonder. On the four sides of the *Vihāra*, on the stone walls, are painted different scenes in the life of Tathāgata's preparatory life as a Bodhisattva; the wondrous signs of good fortune which attended his acquirement of the holy fruit (*of a Buddha*), and the spiritual manifestations accompanying his *Nirvāṇa*. These scenes have been cut out with the greatest accuracy and fineness. On the outside of the gate of the *Saṅghārāma*, on the north and south side, at the right hand and the left, there is a stone elephant. The common report says that sometimes these elephants utter a great cry and the earth shakes throughout. In old days Jina (*or Channa*) Bodhisattva often stopped in this *Saṅghārāma*." (*Buddhist Records of the Western World translated by Samuel Beal, Vol. II p. 257-58*).

1. In the inscription on the Chaitya cave, No. XXVI, at Ajantā, we read that "The ascetic Śhāvira Achāra, who glorified the faith and was grateful, caused to be built a mountain dwelling (*Saṅgrāha*) for the Teacher, though his desires were fulfilled." (*Arch. Sur. West Ind. Reports*, vol. iv. p. 135). This apparently decides the name of the Arahāt mentioned here.

CHAPTER XII

ELLORĀ

A LONG with Ajantā caves, Ellorā forms one of the finest series of cave dwellings which devout Buddhists have offered to their spiritual guides who preferred the loneliness of forests and such caves to the glamour of populous towns. These caves are situated in the Aurangabad District of the Dominions of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, 14 miles to the north-west of Aurangabad town and 25 miles to the east of Ajantā. These as well as the Jain and Brahminical groups of caves are excavated on the side of a rocky hill which stretches for a distance of about a mile and half. Close by there is a fine Rest House overlooking the valley built by H. E. H. Nizam's Government, where the visitors can stay in comfort.

There are altogether 12 Buddhist caves which are to the south of the other two sets belonging to the Jains and the Hindus. The caves are so large and perfectly executed, that one cannot but wonder at the enormous amount of money and energy expended in order to have them hewn out of the solid mass of rock. Such caves, scattered all over western India number about 1,000. Though today nobody would dare to undertake such difficult projects, it appears that it was a very favourite occupation with the sculptors in those remote times.

Local inhabitants have given various names to these caves and the first one is called "Dhedavadā." This word now means the quarters of the low caste but probably it is a corruption of "Theravāda," the well-known term applied to the Southern School of Buddhism. The word may also have come from "Dheda" community who resided in the locality but the first derivation is more in keeping with tradition. This cave is 41 feet 6 inches wide and 42 feet

deep with 16 cells on the sides and back for the residential purposes of monks. The central hall is always used as a place of worship and meeting and the image of the Buddha is kept at its far end, so that the visitor could see it in front of him as he enters the hall. This cave is very plain and is probably the earliest one.

The next is a far more elaborate and interesting cave and was made much later on. From the incomplete sections easily noticeable, we may conclude that it was not finished at one particular time but continued intermittently for a long period. The cave is entered by a flight of steps above which is a verandah, the pillars of which have been damaged. The central hall, 48 feet square, is highly imposing on account of its size. On the sides are the aisles which add to its gracefulness. The main hall is supported by 12 pillars which are themselves interesting on account of their carvings. As usual the central hall has a huge image of Lord Buddha in the attitude of preaching the First Sermon. He is seated on a throne supported by lions. The door is guarded by two Bodhisatva figures which are each 13 to 14 feet high. Between them and the door there are two female figures.

From the main hall we enter the side aisles which too are supported by decorated pillars, four on each side. Fronts of the galleries are decorated with flower wreathes and other designs. The rooms behind the aisles also contain images of the Lord Buddha in the same attitude as the central figure.

To the right and the left of the main statue there are rooms in which numbers of Buddha and Bodhisatvas figures are carved. It is interesting to note that all the images and decorative work in these caves are excavated out of the same mass of rock and not superimposed on it from outside. Another fact which we may note is that the ceilings

are flat unlike those of the chaitya caves. Asoka railing pattern which is so common in other places is entirely absent here.

The third cave is situated lower down in the hill and is 46 feet by 46 feet. The height of the ceiling is 11 feet. It also appears to be incomplete in certain places. The main hall has 12 square pillars to support the ceiling. These pillars are meant more as decorations rather than indispensable props to support the roofs which can undoubtedly stand by themselves without any aid as the roofs form part of the solid rock. The general plan of the cave is similar to the previous one with rooms for monks on either side of the hall as well as at the back. The shrine and the images are smaller than those of Cave No. 2. On the walls is a scene of Mahāyāna Buddhist Litany with Padmapāṇi and other Bodhisatvas taking part.

The Cave No. 4 forms more or less a part of the next few caves. It is the lower floor of the series and is 35 feet by 39 feet. At the left side is a figure of Padmapāṇi Bodhisatva with his locks hanging down and a head-dress with a miniature Buddha as a crest. There are two female figures on two sides.

In the central shrine, the Buddha is sitting under the Bodhi tree with the foliage of the tree fluttering behind him. There are smaller shrines to the left and right, the one to the west being blocked up by rocks fallen from above.

The next cave which is numbered as five is the largest in Ellorā being 117 feet deep and 58½ feet wide with side aisles in addition. It can be reached by ascending a few steps. The aisles are also larger than those of others. The roof is supported by 24 pillars similar to those of Elephantā Caves in Bombay and are in two rows. There are two low benches between the two rows carved out of the floor. We

do not know the purpose for which they were made for; probably they were meant for sitting or to be utilised as tables for study and taking meals.

In this cave too there are aisles on either side with ranges of cells for the habitation of monks. The central shrine at the rear has an image of the Buddha as usual.

Cave No. 6 is reached by proceeding northwards and entering a hall with a stair-case. This hall is 26 feet by 28½ feet but the western portion is completely destroyed. To the north of this is a bigger cave with a high roof. The hall is 26½ feet by 43 feet. Two pillars separate another hall to the north which is 27 feet by 29 feet. These are all plain matter of fact excavations without elaborate carvings. There are, however, some sculptures in the ante-chamber in front of the shrine. The *dvārapālas* are graceful while the image of the Buddha is fairly large. On the side walls are rows of Buddha figures with devotees in the act of worshipping.

Cave No. 9 is entered from the north side of the previous cave through a passage. The facade of the cave is attractive.

We should now proceed to Cave No. 7 through Cave No. 6 which is situated at a lower level. It is a very plain one and the large roof is supported by only four square pillars. There are cells on the sides for the use of monks. The hall measures 61½ feet by 43½ feet.

The next cave (No. 8) is reached by a passage on the north side. The hall of this cave is 28 feet by 25 feet. It also has cells in the usual manner while the shrine has a circumambulating path (*pradakṣhinā*) unlike in others. On the wall at the south entrance to the *pradakṣhinā* is the figure of Sarasvatī, Goddess of learning, who was worshipped both by the Mahāyāna Buddhists as well as Hindus.

There is another cave attached to this which is 28 feet by 17 feet. When we come out of this from the south opening, we see on the rock a group of figures. The female has on her knee a small child. They are likely the donors of the cave.

Proceeding for some distance to the north, we come to cave No. 10 which is called "Visvakarma" cave. It is the only chaitya cave in Ellorā and is comparable to those at Ajantā and Kārli. Carpenters come here to make oblations to the image of the Buddha which they miscall "Visvakarma." There is a court-yard in front surrounded by a corridor. The chaitya hall is 85 feet 10 inches by 43 feet and the height of the roof is 34 feet making the cave most impressive. The central hall is separated from the aisles by rows of octagonal pillars 14 feet high. They are 28 in number and have bracketed capitals. The stūpa at the end of the hall is 27 feet high while its diameter is 15 feet. The front face of the stūpa has a sort of niche with a figure of the Buddha 11 feet high sitting in European fashion.

The vaulted roof has ribs like the chaitya caves of Ajantā, which start from the row of pillars and end on the ridge-pole in the middle of the highest point of the ceiling. Each rib has a figure of *nāga* at its end. There are two cells and two chapels at the end of the front verandah. The gallery above is reached by a flight of steps and consists of two portions divided by two pillars. There are thus three windows which admit light. Groups of fine sculptures are to be seen here which may be studied by those interested in such embellishments. It is to be noted that the common bo-leaf window is not given much prominence in this cave.

Cave No. 11 and 12 are remarkable on account of the fact that they consist of two and three storeys respectively. We know only a few other caves in India which are similarly storeyed.

Cave No. 11 is called "Do tāl" because it has two storeys. The lower floor has a verandah 102 feet long and 9 feet wide with two living rooms and a shrine behind. There is a similar verandah above which is reached by a flight of steps from the verandah below. There are five openings of the front wall which lead to five different rooms. The first leads to a cell while the second leads to a shrine, the third leads into a hall lighted by two windows. The fourth leads to another shrine while the last leads to another cell. Over the fourth door there is an architrave with fine carvings. The shrines above-mentioned have figures of the Buddha, Bodhisatvas and other deities as in the previously mentioned shrines. The top storey has two similar shrines and cells but the one to the south has not been completed. There are numerous small images of the Buddha and the Bodhisatvas on the walls.

Cave No. 12 is called "Tin tāl" as it has no less than three storeys. The ground floor is entered from the courtyard which itself is an imposing one. The roof is supported by thirty square pillars separated out of the rock in three successive rows. Attractive florid decorations are to be seen on the central pair of pillars.

As in other caves the main shrine is at the back. It has a huge image of the Buddha 11 feet from the seat to the top of the head. There are many other figures in sitting and standing postures on either side. To the right of the Buddha is a figure of Vajrapāṇi and to the left a figure of Padmapāṇi. The staircase leading to the first floor is on the west. On ascending, one reaches a long verandah from which a door between square pillars opens to the main hall. Two more entrances are to be found on either side of the verandah. The hall has two rows of eight pillars each, dividing it into three compartments. Two figures are set in the form of *dvārapālas* on two sides of the entrance to the

shrine room. Here too the image is a colossal one with attendant Bodhisatvas. In front of the seat is a female figure with a *lotā* (water vessel) in her hands. At the north end of the verandah there is a figure of the Buddha with a wheel and two deer, the familiar Sarnāth scene. The staircase to reach the second floor is also situated in this section. When we climb up to the first landing, we see a figure on horse back with two companions. The second floor is adorned with 42 square plain pillars. They bisect the floor into five cross aisles. Let us proceed straight to the main shrine at the far end. It has the invariable Buddha image in immense size but unfortunately it is disfigured. The local Hindus have repaired it with lime plaster and worship it as Rāma. On either side are images of Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi with their emblems. On the walls there are interesting pieces of sculpture. The southern wall has the figure of an opulent man, perhaps Jambhala, who holds a purse on his knees; and a flower pot is kept just below. At the two extremities of the aisles there are recesses which contain figures of the Buddha in sitting attitude. These depict the scene of the first sermon at Sarnāth. Many other images of the Buddha are to be seen on this floor along the walls. Seven fine images are carved in a line on the back of the wall and another seven to the south of the vestibule of the main shrine. This floor is much more elaborate and impressive than the other two.

What an amount of money must have been spent on the excavation of this enormous cave! Perhaps money alone could not have enabled those pious monks to obtain such unique dwelling places. These sculptors and stone masons must have been most devout and enthusiastic followers of the Buddha to have had the patience to carve out of hard solid granite these marvellous palaces. It may also be

mentioned in passing that this cave looks very much like a modern flat constructed from a utilitarian point of view without any outward decorations.

This completes our journey through the Buddhist caves of Ellorā which are undoubtedly one of the wonders which no visitor to India should by any chance miss.

An account of the Hindu and Jain caves is not within the purview of this book ; but those coming to this interesting place will certainly avail themselves of the opportunity to visit them. On no account should they fail to see at least the magnificent Kailās Temple. This temple dedicated to God Siva is by general consent the grandest temple cut out of the solid rock and one of the marvels of Indian architecture. While Taj Mahal is called a poem in marble we shall be justified in calling this a "poem in stone." It is entirely different from the other cave temples in India. Truly speaking it is not a cave but a monolithic temple excavated out of the solid rock each detail being separated from it. A wide passage has been cut all round the temple. There is no doubt that this temple was made during the Hindu renaissance period and was intended to surpass all previous attempts.

CHAPTER XIII

TAXILĀ

TAXILĀ (Takkasilā) is not a sacred place for the Buddhists but it obtained an unrivalled fame among them as the greatest centre of learning in very ancient times. To graduate from Taxilā was the highest ambition of a student in those days and there are numerous references in Buddhist books to Kings and nobles who had successfully passed out of its Universities. To mention only two, King Pasenadi of Kosala and Jivaka, the famous physician to King Bimbisāra, both contemporaries of the Lord Buddha, were distinguished graduates of Taxilā. Others were Angulimāla and Bandhula.

Taxilā is situated at a distance of about 20 miles from Rāwalpindi in the North Western Frontier Province and is thus on the extreme border of the north western frontier of India. There is a Railway Station at Taxilā from where the historic sites are almost within sight. The distance from Delhi to Taxilā is 497 miles and is served by the North Western Railway. Visitors are permitted to stay in the P.W.D. Bungalow on the usual terms. At the station there is a waiting room as well as a refreshment stall for the benefit of visitors.

Ruins of Taxilā are so vast and scattered over such a wide area, it is impossible in a handbook like this to give even an adequate summary. We shall, therefore, briefly touch on the principal Buddhist monuments and refer the reader to Sir John Marshall's excellent guide, for a detailed study. It may be mentioned here that three distinct cities have been discovered here in addition to the numerous Buddhist establishments near about them.

Places of Interest.

The following are the places of interest :—

1. CHĪR TOPE or the site of the Dharmarājika Stūpa along side the Tamrā nalā.
2. MONASTERIES IN THE GLEN OF GIRI.
3. KUṆĀLA STŪPA AND MONASTERY, situated on the northern ridge.
4. MOHRĀ MORĀDU situated to the east containing Buddhist stūpas and monasteries.
5. PIPPALA to further east containing stūpas and monasteries.
6. JAULIAN to the east containing stūpas and monasteries.
7. BADALPUR in the valley to the north containing Buddhist monuments.
8. LALCHAK in the valley containing Buddhist monuments.
9. BHALLĀR STŪPA on the east spur of the hills which is a conspicuous landmark.
10. JANḍIĀL to the north of Kacchā Koṭ containing a temple dedicated to fire worship.
11. SIRKAP on the western slopes of Hathial hill containing the city erected about the 1st Century A.D. by Indo-Scythian Kings.
12. SIRSUKH situated on the opposite side of Lunḍi nalā, containing the city built by Emperor Kaniska (78 A.C.).
13. BHIR MOUND between Taxilā Station and Tamrā nalā containing the oldest city.
14. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

I. CHIR TOPE OR DHARMARĀJIKĀ STŪPA.

The Dharmarājika stūpa, locally known as Chir tope, situated on a plateau over the Tamrā nalā, is a conspicuous object in the locality. Surrounding it are numerous other smaller stūpas and shrines. This stūpa was first excavated by Sir Alexander Cunningham and later by Sir John Marshall. It is a typical example of Gandhāran Buddhist architecture in which Western and Eastern ideas are combined harmoniously. The base of the stūpa is circular. Its striking features are the mouldings and niches on the sides between which are numbers of Corinthian pillasters. The stūpa is made of "rough rubble masonry" and the courtyard was probably paved with glass tiles as a few specimens of them were unearthed at one corner. On the eastern side there is the base of a pillar similar to those of Asoka. Many interesting coins were recovered from the site which are now placed in the Museum.

After the examination of the main stūpa, the visitor may see the numerous other votive stūpas, temples and monasteries scattered about the place. Particular notice may be taken of the chapel marked No. S5. In it was discovered a gold casket containing minute pieces of bones together with a silver scroll with an inscription in Kharoṣṭī script mentioning that they were the relics of Lord Buddha. The date of the inscription is "136" which corresponds to 78 of the Christian era. The following is the text and translation of the inscription:—

Line 1. " *Sa 100-20-10-4-1-1. Ayasa Ashaḍasa masasa divase 10-4-1 isa divase pradistavita Bhagavato dhatu(o) Ura(sa).*

Line 2. " *Kena(Im) tavhria-putrana Bahaliēna noachae nagare vastavēna tena ime pradistavitu bhagavato dhatuo dhamara-.*

Line 3. "*Ie Tachhasie tamuvae Bodhisatvagahami Maharajasa rajatatirajasa devaputrasa Khushanasa arogadachhinae.*

Line 4. "*Sarva-budhana puyae prachega-budhana puyae araha (ta) na puyae sarvasa(tva) na puyae mata-pitu puyae mitra-macha-ñati-sa.*

Line 5. "*lohi(ta) na puyae atmano arogadachhinae nianae hotu a (ya) de sama parichago.*"

"In the year 136 of Azes, on the 15th day of the month of Ashāḍa, on this day relics of the Holy One (Buddha) were enshrined by Urasaka, scion of Imtavhria, a Bactrian, resident of the town of Noacha. By him these holy relics of the Holy One were enshrined in his own Bodhisatva chapel at the Dharmarājika Stūpa at Taxilā, for the bestowal of health upon the great King, King of Kings, the son of Heaven, the Kushāna; in honour of all the Buddhas; the honour of the individual Buddhas; in honour of the Arahats; in honour of all sentient beings; in honour of (his) parents; in honour of (his) friends, advisers, kinsmen and blood relations, for the bestowal of health upon himself. May this thy right munificent gift lead to Nirvāna."

In view of this clear inscription, there is no doubt that these relics were those of the Lord Buddha. Along with the gold casket in which they were discovered, these relics were presented to the Maha Bodhi Society of India to be enshrined in the Mūlagandha Kuṭi Vihāra, Sarnāth, in 1931 by His Excellency Lord Willingdon, the then Viceroy.

In the small stūpa marked No. S8 were also discovered a number of relics of Lord Buddha inside a gold casket.

These were presented by His Excellency Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy, to the Tooth Relic Temple at Kandy, Ceylon, in February, 1917.

2. MONASTERIES IN THE GLEN OF GIRI.

In a secluded valley between the villages of Khurram Prachā and Khurram Gujār on the Margalla spur of the hills, there are the remains of a large Buddhist establishment on the hill side. As it is well closed in by hills and there is a fine spring which supplies pure water throughout the year, it served as an excellent place of shelter for monks from the wrath of invaders, who passed through Taxilā in wave after wave in the course of centuries.

The establishment consists of two sets of stūpas and monasteries—one immediately above the spring and the other a few furlongs to the west of it. There is also a fortress which must have been used as the actual place of refuge in times of danger.

The first set of monasteries cover an area of 120 yards by 60 yards. The stūpa is in a state of destruction. It is 62 feet square and 15 feet high at present.

The other set of monasteries is also greatly damaged by the rain water which rushes down the hill side. The stūpa here is even in a worse condition. From this site were recovered a colossal head of the Buddha and a number of plaster reliefs. The small stone sculptures recovered from here are some of the best found in Taxilā.

3. KUṆĀLA STŪPA AND MONASTERY.

The stūpa named after Kuṇāla, the ill-fated son of Asoka, is situated on the northern slope of Hathial from where a fine view of the Haro valley could be obtained. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang visited this stūpa and wrote

an account of it in his travels. According to him it was 100 feet high. He also mentions that the blind came there to worship at the stūpa in expectation of regaining their eyesight. It is said that this stūpa was erected by Emperor Asoka to commemorate the spot where the eyes of Kuṇāla were pulled out at the instigation of Tisarakṣhitā, the Emperor's proud queen, who fell in love with Kuṇāla. The story is that she fell violently in love with the Prince but on his spurning her importunities, she revenged herself by ordering his eyes to be pulled out. As she managed secretly to fix the Emperor's seal on the order, the prince, thinking that the order was a genuine one from his father, allowed the eyes to be removed, and wandering from place to place disguised as a beggar, he arrived at his father's capital. Kuṇāla had a melodious voice and as he passed singing in front of the Palace the Emperor saw him and recognising his voice had him called into his presence. On hearing the whole of this tragic story, he became highly enraged at the treacherous conduct of his queen. It was only at the earnest supplication of Kuṇāla himself that the life of Tisarakṣhitā was spared. It is said that Kuṇāla's eyes were miraculously restored.

Neither the present stūpa nor the one found buried inside it can, however, be ascribed to Asoka as their style and materials differ entirely from those of Asoka's period. The bigger stūpa was almost unrecognisable before excavation as it was in complete ruin. It stands on a rectangular plinth 63 feet by 105 feet. There are three terraces over which the dome is set. The sides of the lowest terrace have half-Corinthian columns—a special feature of Gandhāran stūpas.

To the west of the Kuṇāla stūpa are the remains of a large monastic establishment. The size can be gauged from the fact that the exterior walls measure 192 feet.

4. MOHRĀ MORĀDU

Of the Buddhist monuments in North Western India, the best preserved are those of Mohrā Morādu, Pippalā and Jaulian. They are also remarkable for the excellence of their workmanship.

Mohrā Morādu ruins are situated at a distance of a mile to the south east of the city of Sisuk. The monuments here consist of a couple of stūpas and a large monastery, all of which are fine examples of Gandhāran Buddhist art. The large stūpa is planned in the same manner as others but its speciality lies in the numerous stucco reliefs all round it. The whole face up to the dome is covered with large and small figures of Buddha, Bodhisatvas and devatās. These statues are some of the finest discovered in India. In portraying the figures in a realistic manner, the sculptors have shown great aptitude in adopting Greek technic in the plastic art to Buddhist needs. The figures of the Bodhisatvas and other laymen give us a vivid picture of the sort of dress, ornaments etc. worn by the people at the time. These figures seem to have been coloured in red, yellow, black and other suitable hues.

The other stūpa is similar to this one but is of smaller dimensions.

The monastery attached to the stūpa has 27 living rooms, an assembly hall, kitchen and other necessary apartments. It is a double-storeyed building. A peculiar feature noticeable is the addition of groups of figures in front of the rooms round the court-yard and in the niches on the walls. These add to the liveliness of the monastery which is otherwise a plain building.

An interesting discovery in the monastery is the fine small stūpa inside room No. 3. It is 12 feet high and is complete in every detail and excellently preserved.

5. PIPPALĀ.

From Mohrā Morādu we should proceed to Pippalā where is another group of Buddhist buildings. These are smaller in size than those of Mohrā Morādu but equally well preserved. These buildings also belong to the Kushān period.

The court-yards of two large monasteries have been discovered. Several small stūpas were unearthed from the inner court-yard and one of them is as well preserved as the one in Mohrā Morādu.

6. JAULIAN.

To reach the ruins of Jaulian one has to go about a mile towards the North East of Mohrā Morādu but the journey is well worth as the ruins are better preserved than all the others. The monastic establishment is on a hill 300 feet high.

Here the establishment consists of two large monasteries and several stūpas. At Jaulian the decorations and the figures are more numerous and elaborate. They belong to the second century A.C. It appears the place was destroyed by fire.

The main stūpa stands in the middle of the upper court-yard with numerous stucco figures round it. There are a number of companion stūpas round it with rich decorations. At this site there are numerous small inscriptions in Kharoṣṭī script giving the names of the donors of images, chaityas, etc.

From the lower court we reach the monastery. To the left of the entrance is a small chapel containing beautiful stucco figures.

In alcoves in front of some of the rooms are numerous groups of figures made of clay and stucco. Some of these have been removed to the Museum.

One of the most interesting objects recovered from this monastery is a burnt up birch bark manuscript in Brahmi script. It is the first of its kind to be discovered in India and consists of a Sanskrit Buddhist Text but is so badly damaged we are unable to know the exact contents.

7. BADALPUR.

The huge stūpa known as the Badalpur tope is situated near the village of Bherā. It is of the same pattern as those of Bhallār and Kuṇāla but this has been irretrievably damaged by treasure hunters. In its day it must have been a most impressive monument, its plinth being as high as 20 feet. The remains of the attached monastery are to the east. If time does not permit, the visitor is advised to abandon the trip to this far away place.

8. LALCHAK.

On the pathway to village Garhi-Sayyadan are situated the ruins known as "Lalchak." These consist of Buddhist stūpas and monasteries belonging to the 5th century but they are not of any great importance and may be left out if the visitor finds no time.

9. BHALLĀR STŪPA.

Bhallār stūpa is situated on the Sardā hill about 5 miles away from Taxilā Station. The stūpa is a large and impressive monument being visible from long distances. According to Hiuen Tsiang this was built by Asoka at the site where the Buddha, in a previous life, offered his head to a famished tiger.

This is similar to the Kuṇāla stūpa but the superstructure is better preserved. The lower tiers contain Corinthian pillars and other usual decorations.

Round about the stūpa are numerous other monuments including the remains of a large monastery. According to Hiuen Tsiang it was in one of these monasteries that Kumāralabdha, founder of the Sautrāntika School, wrote his philosophical works.

10. JANDIĀL.

The remains of Jandiāl are situated in the suburb known as "Kacchā Kot," at a distance from Sirkap. Here the main object of interest is the great temple but it is not considered to be a Buddhist monument, as no object of Buddhist interest was discovered therein. Built in Greek style, it was most probably a Zoroastrian Temple dedicated to fire worship.

There is, however, a mound close to it which contains Buddhist stūpas and monasteries but they are in a very sad state of decay.

11. SIRKAP.

The city of Taxilā discovered at Sirkap was the one built about the 2nd Century B.C. and which remained in occupation up to the end of the 1st Century A.C. It was a walled city as usual and the excavations give us an excellent picture of its lay out, size and other features. The principal high street which divides the city into two halves runs across the whole length. The palace is at the west end.

The biggest public building in the city is undoubtedly the huge Buddhist temple in the D block. It stands on a high and broad court-yard. The frontage is to the main street. It is an apsidal temple erected after the style of the cave temples. The stūpa is no longer there. The fact that the foundation of the apse goes down to 22 feet shows that it had a very high and dominating tower.

Another object of Buddhist interest in the city is the stūpa in the block No. F. It is attached, strangely enough, to a large private residence. As several other stūpas have been found in ordinary houses, these must have been private chapels ; but, in the case of some of these, a separate entrance from the street is provided for the public, so that they can come and worship without disturbing the privacy of the house. The plinth is about five feet high and the sides have the usual Corinthian half-pillars and niches which must have contained images in ancient days. Above each niche is the figure of an eagle which was and is the symbol of many a royal house. It is interesting to note that the same eagle figure finds a place in the banner of the Kandyan chiefs of Ceylon.

12. SIRSUK.

At Sirsuk, on the main road to Khanpur, are the ruins of the third city of Taxilā. It was built by the Kushan rulers about the end of the 1st Century A.C. It is, however, not so well preserved as the older cities probably on account of the fragile material used.

13. BHĪR MOUND.

The earliest city of Taxilā has been unearthed from the Bhīr mound which is situated very close to the Archaeological Museum. As a matter of fact, the Museum itself is within the old city. It dates back to the 6th or the 7th Century B.C. with sections belonging to the 3rd Century B.C. and others to the Mauryan period.

14. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

No visitor to Taxilā should fail to visit the Museum containing the valuable antiquities discovered at the site. From the point of view of well-preserved and valuable Buddha images, sculpture, coins, seals etc., Taxilā Museum

is certainly the foremost in India. There is a great variety of exhibits which have to be studied at leisure if one is fully to benefit by the facilities offered.

History of Taxilā.

Situated at the gateway of India through which peaceful traders bent on commerce as well as armies bent on conquests passed through, Taxilā had an eventful life throughout its long history. At times it was a populous and prosperous city while at other times, it was a mere heap of bricks and rubble as the result of the fury of invading armies.

History of Taxilā (Greek form of Takkasilā) goes back to immemorial times and its fame as a centre of learning and culture, more than anything else, spread all over India. In the Jātaka stories which are perhaps the earliest to refer to it, it is described as India's greatest seat of education to which students flocked from remote regions, making hazardous journeys. In the Mahābhārata too Taxilā is mentioned as the seat of King Janamejaya.

The great Persian Empire, during the height of its power, claimed it as its eastern-most Satrapy and was credited to be the most prosperous part of the whole Empire.

Taxilā, however, came into the picture of the world in a more prominent manner as a result of its submission to Alexander in 326 B.C. which paved the way for his Indian conquests. The ruling King Ambhi at the time not only welcomed Alexander to occupy the city but also took the unusual step of showing the invader over the passes, besides helping him with his own troops. Such was his infamy. This is the greatest blot in Taxilā's otherwise famous career. Though the conquest of Gandhāra was a political tragedy, it had its blessings in the introduction of Greek art and architecture which had the profoundest influence on the

development of art in the North West of India in the subsequent periods. All the monuments discovered at Taxilā bear testimony to this.

Greek domination did not prevail very long as Chandra Gupta, the founder of the Maurya Dynasty, drove away the foreigners and incorporated Taxilā within his own Empire. During his son's rule, however, Taxilā revolted and attempted to regain its independence. It was to put down this rising that Asoka, the heir-apparent, was sent there by his father. After quelling the revolt, he ruled at Taxilā as its Viceroy for some years. It may be mentioned here in passing that Chānakya, the famous Brahmin adviser of Chandra Gupta, was born in Taxilā.

After the break up of the Maurya Empire, the Scythians or Sakas, whose ruler Asez I is mentioned in the inscription quoted on page 215 occupied the city. Later on the Kingdom of Taxilā was united with Archosia under the rule of Godopharnes. The period of Parthian rule saw the erection of many of the buildings in Sirkap.

Kushans invaded and occupied Taxilā between 60 and 64 A.C. It was perhaps during this period that most of the Buddhist centres were established, for King Kanishka, the greatest of the Kushāns, who reigned in the 2nd Century A.C., was a devout Buddhist and was only second to Emperor Asoka in his support of the Buddhist cause. It may be mentioned here that not only the Kushāns but even the Greeks and the Sakas were converted to Buddhism and their rulers identified themselves with the local inhabitants in doing works of charity and supporting Buddhist monasteries.

Of the invaders, white Huns were the only people who did not appreciate Buddhism. They were a barbarous race whose one mission was the destruction of all cultural

institutions. About 450 A.C. they invaded and ravaged the country thus wiping out all traces of Taxilā's hoary civilization.

Fa Hien visited Taxilā in 440 A.C. and Hiuen Tsiang in the 7th Century. The former found Buddhism flourishing while the latter records that most of the monasteries were in ruins. Buddhism disappeared altogether from North Western India after the Moghul invasion and today we have only these wonderful ruins to speak of its golden days.

CHAPTER XIV

KĀRLI CAVES

KĀRLI caves are a very important and interesting series of Buddhist caves found in India. They are situated on the Borghat hills between Poona and Bombay. Others in this series are Bedsā, Bhajā, Kōṇḍān and Shelarwadi. They will be described in a later chapter.

Kārlī can be reached from Malavli on the G.I.P. Railway. The caves are 3 miles to the south of this Station. They can also be reached from the main motor road between Poona and Bombay (78½ miles from Bombay).

The chief object of interest here is the Chaitya Cave which is undoubtedly the most magnificent of all Chaitya caves discovered in India. In size too it is the biggest. Unlike others, it is fortunately well preserved and we are in a position to admire the ability of the architect and the sculptor who together conceived and fashioned this wonderful piece of work. It is perfectly proportioned in every detail and nothing can be described as not thoroughly thought out.

The main hall of the Chaitya is 124 feet long and 45 feet broad. The height is 46 feet which in itself is sufficient to make this cathedral most impressive. The side aisles are each ten feet broad. The entrance hall is also imposing, the size being 52 feet by 15 feet.

As one approaches the cave one will see on the left a fine pillar with four lions on the top. A similar pillar must have existed on the right hand side as well where there is now a small Siva temple. As we enter the outer entrance

of the Vihāra, we are at once struck by the majesty of the whole structure. The first thing that will attract one's attention is the huge bo-leaf shaped open window above the main door. Its enormous size is intended to admit as much light into the interior as possible, because, in a cave cut into the solid rock, no side opening can be effected. But here a thing of utility has been turned into a thing of beauty as well. On the outer walls of the entrance hall there are several pieces of fine sculpture. Two huge images of the Buddha attended by Padmapāṇi and other Bodhisatvas are carved on the front wall. Some of the sculptures seem to have been added later. There are rows of elephants on the side walls while the bo-leaf window design is worked into several rows from the ground right up to the roof level. These add to the grandeur of the entrance. There are three doors to enter the main hall.

The general arrangement of the hall with its main object *viz.*, the stūpa, its two rows of well executed pillars and the vaulted roof, is faultless; the proportions of each particular section matching with the others almost perfectly. As we enter the hall through the main door we are face to face with the huge stūpa at the far end well lighted by the enormous window. The rest of the cave is left comparatively dark and the effect produced on the visitor is one of unforgettable peace and joy. As intended the stūpa is brought into prominence by the light which falls on it. In design it is, however, comparatively plain—the only decoration being the two bands of the Asoka railing chastely cut all round it. These divide the stūpa into three stages, the lowest being the largest. It is surmounted by the usual tee which, being in straight lines, well harmonises with the general plan. Over the tee is an umbrella made of wood but is probably a later addition. The rows of pillars on either side of the main hall are simple in design but are highly attractive. There

are altogether thirty of them, 15 on each side surmounted by figures of men and animals. They go right round the stūpa in a semi-circle but the seven pillars at the back are kept absolutely plain. They have been purposely made so, in order to heighten the effect of the stūpa. The bases of the pillars are in the shape of *ghaṭas* (vessels). The vaulted roof has ribs at close intervals, the ends of which touch the animals on the capitals, thus joining the two rows of pillars. One of the pillars on the right hand side is sixteen sided while the rest are twelve-sided. Why this was made different from the rest we are at a loss to understand. The fifth pillar on the other side has a niche in it. It contained the "relics of a saint of Sopāra." These discrepancies, however, do not mar the general effect as it does in the case of the cave at Kanheri.

The side aisles are comparatively dark as there are no openings on the walls. One can use these for meditation without disturbing the worshippers gathered in the main hall.

We are not in a position to say when exactly this cave was excavated but from the sculpture which does not belong to one particular age, we may surmise that the work was completed about the 2nd or 3rd Century A.C. Several inscriptions have been discovered here from which we get the names of Nahāpana and Ushabhadata. The latter granted the revenues of some villages for the use of monks residing at this place. Another inscription on the pillar outside mentions the name of Bhūtapāla who is recognised as Devabhūti of the Sunga Dynasty.

It appears that the cave had some paintings on its walls but there is nothing left now to show exactly what they were like.

In addition to the Chaitya cave, there are several other Vihāra caves along the same rock which were used as monasteries. The one immediately to the left of the Chaitya cave is the most important having three storeys. It must have been used by the head of the whole establishment. The second floor verandah has a row of four pillars to support it. The first floor has no such pillars. Had there been any, they must have been destroyed. The Archaeological Department has fixed an iron railing as a protection now.

Though unimpressive in other respects, the cave to the south of the Chaitya needs special mention as it contains an inscription which says that it was donated by Haraphana, a Persian, during the reign of Gautamiputra of Pulumavi Dynasty of Andhra.

CHAPTER XV

ROCK CUT CAVES OF BARĀBAR, KANHERI ETC.

IN the previous chapters we have dealt separately with the cave temples of Ajantā, Ellorā and Kārli. There exist many other caves which are not so well-known but some of which are of considerable importance to students of architecture. Visitors should try to visit at least some of the more accessible ones.

Barābar Hill Caves.

Perhaps the oldest rock cut caves of India are those situated in the Barābar and Nāgarjuna hills of Behar, lying at a distance of about sixteen miles from the city of Gaya. They are locally known as Satgharās (seven houses) and some of them are unique on account of their walls being highly polished. These caves can be conveniently divided into two groups.

To the first group belongs Karna Kauper cave which is 33 feet 6 inches long and 14 feet broad. The height of the cave is not in proportion to its size, being only 6 feet. The vaulted roof is 4 feet 8 inches. At the western end of the cave there is a platform 7 feet 6 inches long and 2 feet 6 inches broad and one foot three inches high, probably utilised as a seat or altar. This cave was excavated by Emperor Asoka in the nineteenth year of his reign and bears an inscription which says that it was donated by him for the use of monks. The polish of the walls and the roof is remarkably fine—in fact as good as that of the Asokan pillars.

Sudamā cave which is opposite this was also excavated under orders of His Majesty who donated it to the Ājīvakas who were a sect of wandering *sanyāsis*. It is 32 feet 9 inches long, 19 feet 6 inches broad. This cave is different from others on account of its circular hall and hemispherical dome.

The next is Loma Rīṣhi cave which is almost like the Sudamā but is left unfinished. The entrance is, however, well made and polished.

Of the Barābar group of caves, mention may be made of Visva Jhōpri, which, as stated in an inscription, Asoka dedicated in his twelfth year.

Gopikā is the most important of the caves in the Nāgarjuni hill group. It is 40 feet 5 inches long and 19 feet 2 inches broad. This was given over to the Ājīvakas by Dasaratha, a grand-son of Asoka, as mentioned in the inscription. These caves are worthy of notice not only on account of their being probably the first caves to be made in India but because they bear witness to the extreme catholicity of Buddhist Kings who generously donated some of them to non-Buddhist sects.

Kanheri Caves.

The caves of Kanheri are situated at a distance of 20 miles to the north of Bombay City. Kanheri is five miles from Borivli Station on the B.B. and C.I. Railway. The road to the site is neglected, only tongas and bullock carts daring to rumble over the rough road. In spite of the difficulty of the road, the caves are well worth a visit.

Kanheri is a large group excavated on a huge circular rock in the hills. The surrounding hills are full of jungle but this one is almost bare. There are several features in these caves which distinguish them from other groups. They are connected with one another by steps cut into the rock in the

form of foot paths and you can easily walk from one to the other. In front of some of the caves there are stone seats for monks to sit and rest in the evenings. These caves are fortunate in having water springs which give pure cool water throughout the year. This must have, therefore, been an ideal place for the residence of monks.

The most important cave in this group is certainly the chaitya cave. It is built more or less on the same plan as Kārli and is 86 feet by 39 feet 10 inches with the usual aisles, pillars, chaitya and the vaulted roof. One thing peculiar about this cave is that some of the pillars in the same row are absolutely bare while others have well decorated capitals. This anomaly naturally spoils the symmetry of the cave and detracts from its impressiveness. We have not been able to find an explanation for this lapse on the part of the constructors.

The tee of the chaitya is broken and there are other signs of the misuse of this cave.

One more peculiarity of this cave is that the facade appears more like that of a Vihāra. The verandah in front has two large images of the Buddha each 23 feet high. Round the verandah are other numerous images of the Buddha and the Bodhisatvas. Here was discovered an inscription containing the name of Buddhaghosha. Has he any connection with the famous compiler of Buddhist commentaries? Inside a niche to the left of the Chaitya cave entrance is a stūpa of small dimensions.

The next cave of importance is the one locally known as "The Great Mahārājāh" or "The Durbar Hall." This is a large hall which was probably used as a place of meeting. It has two slightly raised benches cut all along the hall perhaps serving the purpose of a table.

There are several other caves of some importance. They contain a good deal of sculpture which deserves careful study.

Nāsik Caves.

The caves of Nāsik are situated on a hill at a distance of five miles from the city of Bombay. In the inscriptions the hills are called "Trirāsmi" but the caves are now named as "Paṇḍu Lena" by the villagers.

It is considered that most of these caves belong to the Theravāda School of Buddhism as they contain very few Mahāyāna sculpture. In all there are twenty three caves of different sizes, including both Vihāras and Chaityas.

It is not necessary to describe all of these as it would be tiresome, so we shall confine ourselves to the larger and more important ones only.

Cave No. 3 is the biggest Vihāra at this place as it measures 46 feet by 42 feet. It contains 18 rooms in all and is well suited as a place of residence for the monks. On three sides of the hall there are benches or tables well arranged. Above the door are engraved the symbols of the Bodhi tree, chaitya and Dharmacakra. The sculptures here include dvārapālas and the scene of the abduction of a woman.

An interesting feature of the Vihāra is the stūpa in relief on the back wall of the hall with worshippers on two sides. This appears to have been the chief object of worship and suggests an early date for its construction. According to an inscription this cave was excavated by Vajra Sātakarṇi Gautamiputra, one of the Andhra Kings (172-191 A.C.).

Cave No. 10 is almost a copy of this one but the pillars are less elegant. The hall measures 32 feet by 45 feet and

is entered by three doors. The back wall had a stūpa similar to the one in Cave No. 3 but it has now been converted into a figure of Bhairava by the local people.

Several inscriptions of the Nahāpana Kings of Ujjain have been traced in this Vihāra.

The Cave No. 17 measures 23 feet by 32 feet. It has a back room separated by two pillars with elephant designs. On the wall of this room is a Buddha image $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. This shows that the cave is of much later construction than Cave No. 3, the donor being "Indragnidatta, son of Dharmadeva, a Northerner, a Yavana (Greek), a native of Dattamari (in the Sauvira country)."

Cave No. 20 is 37 feet by 61 feet. This appears to have been enlarged a second time by one "Marma," a lay follower. The ante-chamber is somewhat raised and has two carved pillars in front. The dvārapālas here are large— $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. Inside the shrine there is a huge image of the Buddha, 10 feet high, in the attitude of preaching the First Sermon. An inscription discovered here states that it was completed by the wife of the Commander-in-Chief "after having been under excavation for many years." This inscription gives us an inkling into the stupendous task of completing one single cave, not to speak of such a big group.

The chaitya cave in this group is marked No. XVII. The facade has the usual bo leaf window and is very elegantly carved. On two sides of the window there are carvings in the form of niches and pillars and the space given to these appears greater than in others. The pillars inside the chaitya are again plain. The roof is vaulted but there are no ribs. The stūpa is in the traditional place, the base being almost twice the height of the hemisphere. Below is the Asoka railing pattern. On the whole, the stūpa is not so attractive as those in others.

Bhajā Caves.

The caves of Bhajā are situated at a distance of about a mile from Malavla Station on the G.I.P. Railway. They are about 80 miles from Bombay. Here there are altogether 15 caves of which two are of chaitya design. The Vihāra caves are of different sizes and need no special mention as similar and far more important ones have already been described in connection with other groups.

The chaitya cave marked No. XII needs explanation as it is somewhat different from all other similar caves. The point of difference lies in the fact that no front door or any partition cut into the stone is found as in others. The hall is kept completely exposed so that a full and unrestricted view of the interior can be obtained from a long distance. There are, however, markings on the sides which go to indicate the existence, at one time or other, of a wooden partition. The style of this cave proves to us that it is designed after the wooden houses of ancient days. Note specially the stone balcony to your right as you enter the hall ; it is the copy of a typical balcony of a wooden house, the only change being the bo leaf window decoration.

The chaitya hall is 60 feet long and 27 feet broad. This too has side aisles which are, however, only $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide. The roof is again vaulted and is supported by 27 pillars of plain design. The chaitya is only 10 feet high while its diameter is 11 feet. There is an opening which indicates that a relic was enshrined within the dome. One of the pillars on the right side also contains a hole probably used as a repository for a relic or some other valuable object.

The other chaitya cave is a plain excavation with no less than fourteen stūpas inside it cut out of the rock. Several of them have openings which were meant for the enshrinement

of the ashes of saints who had died here. The names of some of the saints were actually engraved on them. Close by is a fine water-fall which must have been well availed of by the residents.

Bedsā Caves.

The caves of Bedsā are situated in the same range but on the other side facing the river Paunā. They can be reached through a village road joining the main Bombay-Poona road at the 31st mile post.

The chief attraction consists of the chaitya cave and a Vihāra.

The chaitya cave is reached by a passage cut across the rock. The mass of rock thus divided has not been removed with the result the view of the façade is obstructed. It appears that this passage was cut in order to get a high and imposing frontage for the chaitya. In front of the verandah are two huge pillars which dominate everything. The cornice above is worked into the usual Asoka railing pattern with supporting beams. The verandah is very much similar to that of the Kārli chaitya except that the decorations on the walls do not contain human or animal figures as in the latter. Here the entire facing of the front and the side walls of the entrance are covered with bo leaf arches and Asoka railing designs. The sides have doors which lead to small cells. The verandah is 30 feet long and 12 feet broad.

The hall is 45 feet by 21 feet with the usual rows of pillars and side aisles. The chaitya is at the far end. All the pillars are octagonal and absolutely plain as also the cornice above them. In a few of the pillars, the blankness is relieved by a few lotuses and Dharmacakras. The vaulted roof has only slight markings as ribs.

The walls show definite signs of having had frescoes on them but they are all obliterated as the walls have been whitewashed by some foolish people in recent times.

Next to the chaitya is a Vihāra cave with certain features which are unique. It is 32 feet by 18 feet. The roof is vaulted and the walls contain niches of the bo leaf pattern and Asoka railings, both very unusual in this type of cave. While all the other Vihāras have rectangular halls, this one has a hall which is circular at the end. All round the main hall there are cells for the monks. This hall too has been white-washed thereby destroying the paintings which appear to have adorned it. At present the hall is used as a place of worship by the villagers whose deity is illustrated on the back wall.

There are several minor caves near about which hardly need describing.

The Caves of Junnār.

The Junnār group of caves is important not on account of any special features in them but on account of the fact that it has the largest number of caves to be found at any one place in India. There are no less than 200 caves of varying sizes. They include both Vihāras and chaityas but none of them is of any very great size or unique construction. Most of them are mere cells for the use of monks. We shall notice only a few which have certain special aspects.

These caves are situated near the historic town of Junnār 56 miles to the north of Poona city. In ancient days the town of Junnār was reputed to have been a place of greater importance than even Poona itself.

These caves can be divided into four main groups :

- (1) *Ganesh Lena Group* in Sulaiman Hill.
- (2) *Manmodi Hill Group* of 3 sets.
- (3) *Shivneri Hill Group* which contains several sets.
- (4) *Tuljā Lena Group*.

1. The Sulaiman hill group situated to the north of Junnār contains a large number of caves and cells for the use of monks, but the most important are the Ganesh Lena cave and the chaitya cave marked No. VI. Ganesh Lena is now converted into a place of worship by the local people. This is reached by a stair-case. The front verandah which is extremely narrow is supported by eight pillars. The hall is 56 feet by 50 feet but without any pillars to support the roof. Cells are excavated on three sides seven on each with five at the back.

The chaitya cave No. 6 is 24 feet long and 13 feet wide. There are two rows of pillars—five in each—surmounted by figures of lions, tigers and elephants. The stūpa is of the usual pattern but is remarkably well proportioned and finely executed.

2. Manmodi hill lies to the south-west of Junnār. Here are three groups of Vihāras and chaityas. Bhimshanker Lena group contains an inscription which gives the name of one "Ayama, the Minister of Mahākshatrpa Swāmi Nahā-pana." Several of the caves in this group appear to be half finished probably on account of the unsuitability of the rock. The most important in the group is the chaitya Cave No. II. The frontage is well made with four pillars and an Asoka railing below.

3. To the south west of Junnār lies the Shivneri hill group of caves. These hills are famous on account of the Fort in which Sivāji, the great Maharatta warrior, was born.

In this group the most important cave is the chaitya marked No. XLVIII. It is different from others on account of its flat roof which is no less than 18 feet high. The hall is 31 feet by 20½ feet. At the rear is the usual stūpa. Its umbrella is cut into the roof and the stūpa is thus joined to it. The roof had been elaborately painted with square designs, but the paintings are now in a bad state of preservation.

On the summit of the hill is a large tank cut out of the rock. It was probably the reservoir from which the monasteries were supplied with water.

4. The Tuljā Lena group is about 2 miles to the west of the town. Here too there are a series of caves excavated out of the face of a rock. The main object of interest is the circular chaitya cave. This is the only one of its kind we have come across. The rock is first bored into and then excavated in the form of a circle. In the middle is carved out the stūpa and all round it are twelve octagonal pillars which support the dome; the diameter of the circular hall is 25½ feet. Pradakṣhinā can be made all round the stūpa from outside as well as inside the pillars.

Caves of Mahākel.

About 12 miles to the north of Bombay city there is a place called "Mahākel" containing a number of Buddhist caves. These are not known sufficiently as the road leading to them is rather difficult. Up to Marol, a small village, one can come by conveyance and then one has to walk about half a mile to reach the actual spot.

Cave No. 2 is the most important here. It measures 27 feet by 14 feet, certainly small in comparison to those at Ajantā and Ellorā. It has a verandah with four pillars and Asoka railings on the plinth.

Cave No. VIII which is a chaitya cave has a special feature. It consists of a rectangular room at the end of which is the stūpa surrounded by a circular screen 8 inches thick with a door in front to enter the enclosure containing the stūpa. On both sides of this door there are windows with lattice work, a very unusual feature, indeed. A number of pillars support the roof. Nowhere else do we come across a cave of this pattern.

Bāgh Caves.

The caves of Bāgh are situated in the Indian State of Gwalior in Rajaputana. Bāgh is a small village, 25 miles from Malwa, a well-known name in Indian history. The nearest Railway station is Mhow, 70 miles to the east. It is possible to motor up to the caves as there is a fairly good road. Running in front of the caves is a small river. These caves deserve greater publicity and attention in view of their size and design.

All the nine caves of Bāgh are set in a single row, the full frontage being 750 yards long. Some of the caves are in a state of decay as the rock in which they are excavated is not of a strong texture. They have also been greatly damaged by people who seem to have used them for their residence. In their heyday these caves must have been a very excellent place of abode comparable with those of other groups.

The best cave here is known as "Rang Mahal" and is marked No. 4. It is connected with Cave No. 5. In front of these there was a portico 220 feet long supported by 22 pillars. The pillars are, however, all damaged at present. The interior of the cave is elaborately decorated both with sculpture as well as paintings which have disappeared almost

completely. The entrance to the cave is wide and imposing. With the straight lines of the doors and the windows, there is externally a touch of modern architecture in their design.

The Cave No. 2 is the best preserved in the series. It is also well decorated and very imposing. The length is no less than 150 feet up to the end of the inner shrine and, as such, it is one of the biggest caves in existence not omitting even the great Ellora Caves. On three sides there are cells for monks with the usual shrine on the fourth.

Cave No. 3 is called "Hathikhanā" by the local people. It is also well decorated with sculpture. The frontage is unfortunately badly damaged.

Cave No. 5 is about 95 feet by 44 feet with two rows of pillars to support the roof. The peculiarity about the pillars is that they are round and have no bases. They are all set up on a raised platform running all along the room.

Cave Nos. 6 and 7 are irreparably damaged. The debris has to be removed in order to obtain a correct idea of the caves. We hope the Government of Gwalior will consider it a sacred duty to clear the accumulated debris and take all necessary steps to preserve these wonderful series of caves which are a valuable asset to the State.

Udayagiri and Khandhagiri Caves.

Udayagiri and Khandhagiri caves are situated at a distance of about four miles from Bhubaneshwar near Cuttack in the newly formed Province of Orissa. These caves belong to the earliest period and are of peculiar interest as some of them are not cut into the sides of hills but excavated out of huge stones lying separate from one another. The two groups

are situated on two sides of the road opposite each other. No chaitya caves have been discovered here and those exposed are all meant for the residence of monks. One of them is a double storeyed one.

Among the Udayagiri group of caves, the most imposing one is that known now as "Rānikā Nūr" or "Queen's Palace." It consists of two storeys with an imposing verandah in front. The walls of the verandah contain a sculpture which depicts the scene of an abduction but it has not been ascertained what incident it refers to. These caves are classified as "Buddhist" by writers but there is nothing special to prove that they are definitely so. On the other hand they cannot be assigned to Hinduism as evidence to that effect is also equally lacking. Can the scene in the cave indicate the abduction of Sītā by Rāvanā or does it represent a Jātaka story? Till definite proof is forthcoming to the contrary, we may accept the prevalent opinion that they are Buddhistic in origin.

Ganesh Gupā and Hathī gupā are the other groups of this series of caves. On either side of the entrance to the Ganesh Gupā there are two elephants holding lotus buds.

Hathī gupā is well-known on account of the discovery of an important inscription but the cave itself is small. This is more a natural cavern than a rock cut temple. Of this group the most interesting is the Bāgh cave which is cut in the shape of a tiger. From outside it looks as if it is the head of a tiger with the entrance as its mouth.

The Pātālapūra and Yomanapura caves of this series contain railings similar to Asokan railings. They are, therefore, definitely Buddhistic.

Jayavijaya and Svargapuri caves in the same hills contain Bo tree symbols, so they too can be assigned to Buddhism. The former is a double storeyed one. These belong to the first century A.C.

The Khandagiri caves are to the west of the road. Here too they are not very large, the biggest being Ananta cave. These are assigned a very early date by scholars from an examination of the sculptures and other features. Bo tree symbol is used often. The image of Lakshmī is found in one of the caves. This goddess is common to Mahāyāna Buddhists and Hindus.

On the hills are several Jain caves which are somewhat larger than these.

At a distance of about six miles from here is Dhauli, where a full set of Emperor Asoka's Rock inscriptions are inscribed. Odantapuri which is famous as the city from where the Tooth Relic of Lord Buddha was taken to Ceylon, is only 30 miles from here. The modern name is Puri and its great temple known as "Jagannāth" is world famous. This locality, therefore, is full of Buddhist associations and scholars may not be far wrong in stating that all the caves have been the work of Buddhists.

The magnificent Bhubaneswar temple is also not far from here.

Caves of Kathiawar.

We have reserved the caves of Kathiawar in Sind to be treated last as they are the furthest in the route of visitors. Only a few will find the time and the wherewithal to visit them but those who can afford may do so as the journey will repay their troubles.

Caves of Kathiawar are also assigned to Buddhism. Except two or three, they have no particular decorations or symbols by which they can be definitely called Buddhistic. They are almost all plain and cannot in any way compare in grandeur to the great caves of Ajantā and Ellorā, in the Deccan.

The chief groups are at Talajā in the east and Sānā in the south of Junagarh, a small Native State. There are about 100 caves which are all small except a few. No chaitya cave has been discovered among them. These are similar to the caves of Orissa in that they are cut out of small hillocks with a thin roofing overhead.

On the east side of Junagarh town itself there is a series of caves called Bāwā Pyārā's *math* used as a cow shed at present !

Fort of Junagarh has a peculiar type of cave. The rock has been bored from top at two places and round these openings which can be described as court-yards, there are series of galleries. One of them has a chamber 36 feet by 27 feet with six decorated pillars supporting it. These pillars are worth noting as they are finely carved. Some of the recesses have the Asoka railing pattern which point to their Buddhist origin.

Another series of caves called " Kaprā Koḍā's Palace" are situated to the north of the city. They are also quite extensive.

Dhank Group.

Near the village of Dhank, 30 miles to the north west of Junagarh there is yet another series. These too are small and have nothing very striking by way of sculpture etc. The only characteristics which give them a Buddhistic touch are the railings in Asoka style found in the Jhinjuri-jhar section.

Talajā Group.

A series of 36 caves are on the north-west side of Talajā hill, 30 miles south of Bhavanagar, another Indian Native State. Among these caves, there is only one which needs special mention. It is the cave locally known as Ebhal Mandapa and is 75 feet by 67 feet, the height being 17½ feet. It is one big hall without any decorations, pillars or cells and was probably used as a meeting place or a rest house with cells for monks near about.

Sānā Group.

In the Lor hill about 12 miles west of Rajala is yet another series of 60 caves. These are also similar to the other caves in Kathiawar but very simple in design. The largest is 69 feet by 61 feet. It too has no pillars supporting the roof. The cave close by, which may be classed as a chaitya cave, is 31 feet by 18 feet. The roof is flat but the far end is made semi-circular. The cave is now used as a Siva Temple by the local Hindus. Owing to the simplicity of construction, these caves are assigned to about the 1st or 2nd Century B.C.

CHAPTER XVI

KOSAMBI (KAUSAMBI)

THE ancient town of Kosambi (Kausambi) is situated at a distance of about 38 miles from the modern city of Allahābād. At present it is a mere wilderness; the extensive ramparts and the numerous brickbats scattered over a wide area are the only visible signs of its past grandeur. The modern name is Kosam which is but a small village on the banks of the river Jumnā. To reach the site we have to go first by car and then on foot for four miles. Permission, however, can be obtained from the Irrigation Department to drive a car along the bank of the Jumnā canal which reduces the distance to be covered on foot to a trifle.

In view of the fact that there are neither sacred shrines for worship nor any remarkable old monuments to examine except a stone pillar, we do not advise the ordinary pilgrim or visitor to make the long journey unless, of course, he is keenly interested in ancient historic sites.

Places of Interest.

The following are the objects of interest :—

1. THE RAMPARTS OF THE OLD CITY.
2. STONE PILLAR WHICH IS PROBABLY ASOKAN.
3. THE AREA COVERED BY THE ANCIENT CITY.
4. STATUETTES, COINS, ETC., IN THE ALLAHABAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM.

I. THE RAMPARTS OF THE OLD CITY

The ramparts of the old city which look highly impressive as we approach the site over flat ground, have a circuit of

about 4 miles. The immensity of the fortifications can be gauged from the fact that they are even today thirty feet high while the bastions are between 50 to 60 feet.

2. STONE PILLAR WHICH IS PROBABLY ASOKAN

The most interesting monument at the site is the polished stone pillar which contains a number of inscriptions; none of these, however, belong to the Asokan period. We are, therefore, unable to say definitely whether this is one of the many pillars set up by Emperor Asoka or is the work of a later monarch. The height of the portion *in situ* is 22 feet while the whereabouts of its capital are unknown. Although Asoka's name cannot be conclusively coupled with this pillar, there is another pillar in the Fort at Allahabad which is, from all evidence, a typical one set up by this illustrious monarch. It was probably removed there from Kosambi by Emperor Akbar who had constructed the Fort and is still a peace-inspiring object in bellicose surroundings. The following inscription of Asoka, generally described as the "Kausambi Edict" because of its mention of a schism that arose at that place is engraved on the pillar :

"Whosoever breaks up the Church, be it monk or nun, shall be clad in white raiment, and compelled to live in what is not a residence (of the clergy)."

The same inscription occurs in the Sārnāth and Sānchi pillars.

3. THE AREA COVERED BY THE ANCIENT CITY

The area covered by the ancient city is today desolate with only two small villages existing amidst the ruins. These villages are called Gaḍhava and Gaḍhava Choṭā. The names are probably derived from the word Gar, meaning a fortress. Just as at Sankassa, the fortunate inhabitants have made good use of the bricks available free of cost in constructing

their hamlets. Apart from the brickbats strewn all over the site, there are no other monuments worth mentioning. Several residents of Allahabad interested in ancient history and archaeology have made excavations at this site and their finds are housed in the Allahabad Archaeological Museum.

4. STATUETTES, COINS, ETC., IN THE ALLAHABAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Students interested in the antiquities of Kosambi may pay a visit to this museum where a representative collection is very carefully preserved.

Among the finds mention may be made of the red sandstone image of a Bodhisattva kept at the left hand side of the entrance to the Museum. It is almost an exact copy of the image at Sārnāth, only the size is much smaller. The head and the right hand are broken. The following inscription occurs on the image :—

“ In the 2nd year of the reign of Kanishka Bhikkhuni
Buddhimitrā put up this Bodhisattva at this place
sanctified by the Buddha's visits.”

History of Kosambi.

The story of the city of Kosambi goes back to the times of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana as it is mentioned in both the epics. According to the former, it was founded by one Prince Kuśāmba, son of the Cedi King, Uparicāra Vasu. With Sahajāti as the entreport on the river Jumnā, it was a flourishing commercial centre throughout the ages.

Lord Buddha visited Kosambi several times and delivered here a number of sermons including Kosambiya Sutta. But the fame or rather the notoriety of Kosambi is due in Buddhist history on account of a dispute that arose among the Bhikkhus during the life time of the Buddha. The bone of contention

was a very insignificant Vinaya rule but factions waxed and the Lord Buddha Himself failed to settle the ever widening gulf. He, therefore, left Kōsambi in order to pass His time peacefully in the Parileyyaka forest.

The most famous monastery at Kausambi was the Ghositārāma built by the merchant Ghosita.

At the time of the Buddha the ruling King was Udayana who was at first antagonistic to Buddhism but later on a convert. In the Mahāyāna books his conversion is ascribed to the Lord Himself whereas the Pāli tradition gives the credit to Pindola Bhāradvāja. The King was a romantic figure and his marriage with Vāsuladattā, the beautiful daughter of King Pajjota of Avanti, is famous in legend and history. It is said that Udayana knew a charm to capture wild elephants, which King Pajjota determined to learn somehow or other. Getting ready an enormous life-like wooden figure of an elephant and filling it with soldiers, he had it placed in the forest nearby where Udayana used to go hunting. Mistaking the wooden figure for a live elephant, Udayana prepared to capture it whereupon the soldiers concealed inside rushed out and made him prisoner. They took him to Pajjota who had him imprisoned in his palace, promising to free him only if he would part with the valuable charm. Udayana, in this sad predicament, agreed to part with the charm and the King asked his daughter Vāsuladattā to learn it. He was, however, afraid of letting Udayana see his daughter; so he placed a curtain between them. He told his daughter that she was to sit on one side of the curtain and learn the charm from a certain dwarf seated on the other side while to Udayana he said that a hunch-back woman would sit on the other side of the curtain and learn the charm. Accordingly the lessons began but little progress was made by the rather stupid daughter of the King. Udayana lost his patience and called out to

her saying, "What a stupid hunch-back ! How thick-headed and ugly you must be !" Vāsuladattā was taken aback by this rude remark and retorted, "How dare you call me a hunch-back, you ugly dwarf ?" Whereupon Udayana raised the curtain to find that the supposed hunch-back was no other than the beautiful daughter of the king. He at once fell in love with her and then and there plotted to escape with her to his kingdom. He sent word to the king saying that it was necessary for his student to obtain a certain herb to complete the efficacy of the charm and asked that the hunch-back be sent on an elephant to the nearby forest. When this was done, Udayana joined the Princess and eloped to his Kingdom.

The Kingdom of Kausambi did not long remain independent. It became a part of the Magadhan Empire.

Fa Hien visited the place during his pilgrimage but has left only a passing reference to it.

Hiuen Tsiang too visited the place and wrote as follows :

"This country is about 6,000 *li* in circuit, and the capital about 30 *li*. The land is famous for its productiveness ; the increase is very wonderful. Rice and sugar-canes are plentiful. The climate is very hot, the manners of the people hard and rough. They cultivate learning and are very earnest in their religious life and in virtue. There are ten Saṅghārāmas, which are in ruins and deserted, the priests are about 300 ; they study the Little Vehicle. There are fifty Deva temples, and the number of heretics is enormous.

"In the city, within an old palace, there is a large *Vihāra* about 60 feet high ; in it is a figure of the Buddha carved out of sandal-wood, above which is a stone canopy. It is the work of the king U-to-yen-na (Udayana). By its spiritual qualities (*or*, between its spiritual marks) it produces a divine light, which from time to time shines forth. The princes of various countries have used their power to carry off this statute, but although

many men have tried, not all the number could move it. They therefore worship copies of it, and they pretend that the likeness is a true one, and this is the original of all such figures.

* * *

"About 100 paces to the east of the *Vihāra* are the signs of the walking and sitting of the four former Buddhas. By the side of this, and not far off, is a well used by Tathāgata, and a bathing-house. The well still has water in it, but the house has long been destroyed.

"Within the city, at the south-east angle of it, is an old habitation, the ruins of which only exist. This is the house of Goshira¹ (*Kun-shi-lo*) the nobleman. In the middle is a *Vihāra* of the Buddha, and a *stūpa* containing hair and nail relics. There are also ruins of Tathāgata's bathing-house.

"Not far to the south-east of the city is an old *Saṅghārāma*. This was formerly the place where Goshira the nobleman had a garden. In it is a *stūpa* built by Asoka-rājā, about 200 feet high; here Tathāgata for several years preached the law. By the side of this *stūpa* are traces of the four past Buddhas where they sat down and walked. Here again is a *stūpa* containing hair and nail relics of Tathāgata.

"To the south-east of the *Saṅghārāma*, on the top of a double-storeyed tower, is an old brick chamber where Vasubandhu Bodhisattva dwelt. In this chamber he composed the *Vidyāmārtasiddhi Śāstra* (*Wei-chi-lun*), intended to refute the principles of the Little Vehicle and confound the heretics.

"To the east of the *Saṅghārāma*, and in the middle of an *Amra* grove, is an old foundation wall; this was the place where Asaṅga Bodhisattva composed the *Śāstra* called *Hin-yang-shing kiau*.

"To the south-west of the city 8 or 9 *li* is a stone dwelling of a venomous Nāga. Having subdued this dragon, Tathāgata left here His shadow; but though this is a tradition of the place, there is no vestige of the shadow visible.

¹ Ghosita.

" By the side of it is a *stūpa* built by Asoka-rājā, about 200 feet high. Near this are marks where Tathāgata walked to and fro, and also a hair and nail *stūpa*. The disciples who are afflicted with disease, by praying here mostly are cured.

" The law of Sākya becoming extinct, this will be the very last country in which it will survive ; therefore from the highest to the lowest all who enter the borders of this country are deeply affected, even to tears, ere they return."

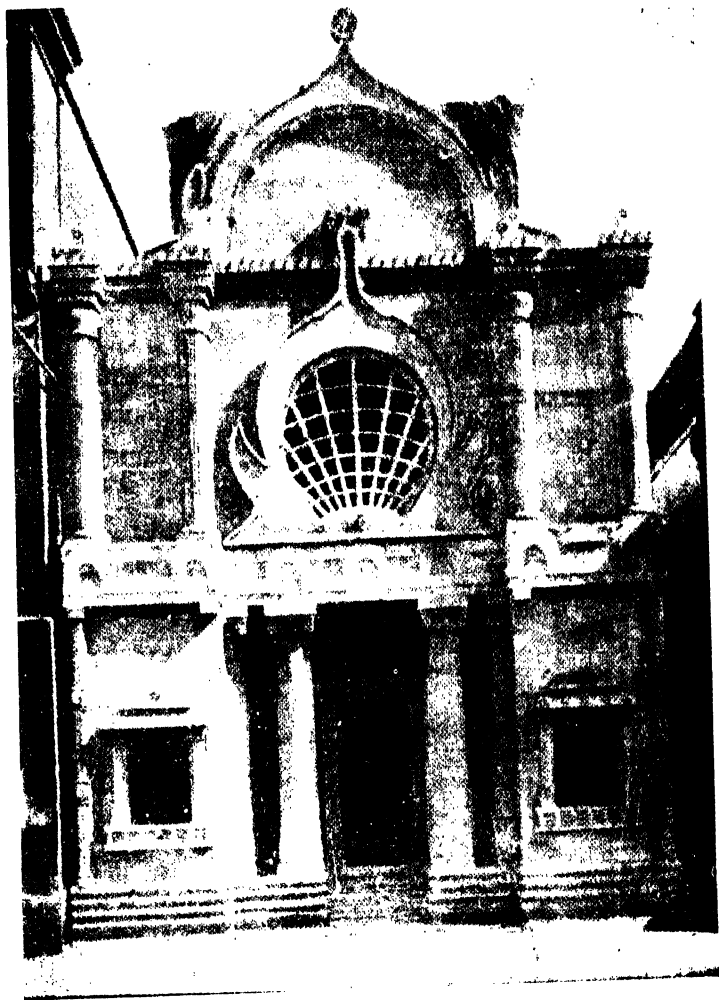
Buddhist Records of the Western World by Samuel Beal,
Vol. I, pp. 235-237.

CHAPTER XVII

DESCRIPTION OF IMAGES IN INDIAN MUSEUMS

IN all Indian museums there are so many images of Buddha, Bodhisatvas, gods and goddesses in numerous attitudes, the lay visitor finds himself in utter bewilderment as to the exact meaning of the images and their postures. Even the labels attached to the figures fail to give him an adequate knowledge. I shall, therefore, endeavour here to give a short descriptive account of the various Buddhist figures that the visitor is most likely to come across in these interesting museums.

At the very outset, it must be borne in mind by the reader that image worship by the Buddhists started in India only about the first Century B.C. Previous to that, Buddhists seem to have considered it sacrilegious to depict in stone or on canvas the likeness of the Lord whose extraordinarily handsome figure is so graphically described in Buddhist books. Upto the first century B.C., whenever it was necessary to show the presence of the Blessed One in any piece of sculpture, the artist did so by some kind of symbol or sign e.g., the Bodhi tree, the *Dharmacakra*, the vacant seat, or the soles of His feet. This ingenious method has been employed at Sāñchi, Bārlut and other places where the monuments are either pre-Asokan or belong to the Asokan period. This was the period of Theravāda Buddhism. Later, when the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism superseded the Theravāda, the artists seem to have discarded their former hesitation to carve images of the Lord Buddha.



SRI DHARMARAJIKA VIHARA, CALCUTTA



BUDDHA IMAGE FROM JAPAN

With the increased encouragement offered to outer ceremonials by the Mahāyānists and probably influenced by Greek sculptural art after Alexander's invasion, artists began their favourite work of depicting the Buddha in granite, stucco, terra-cotta and other materials. Thus their suppressed artistic sense found a very attractive avenue of expression, for what could be more inspiring to a devout follower than to create a likeness of the Great Master out of some tangible substance? Soon they made images by the thousand and the Buddhists including the Theravādins themselves gradually came to regard it as an act of great merit not only to worship an image of the Lord but also to dedicate one to a temple. This is why we find such a profusion of images in later times with the names of the donors duly inscribed on the pedestals or backs of images.

Buddha Images.

The images of the Buddha are either in sitting or standing postures. The sitting posture is generally known as *Padmāsana* in which He is shown as squatting with crossed legs keeping one leg over the other. Though very rarely, we also come across images which are made to sit in European fashion as at Ellorā and Ajantā. This may be due to Greek influence. The different postures are known as *mudrās* and the following are the most common :—

1. *Padmāsana Mudrā*.—*Padmāsana* (lotus posture) is the position invariably assumed for meditation. It consists of crossing the legs so that the upturned sole of the right foot rests on the left thigh while the sole of the left foot rests on the right thigh. The two hands are placed on the crossed legs one upon the other.

2. *Dharmacakra mudrā*.—Buddha is sitting in *padmāsana* posture while his hands are held near the heart. The right hand thumb and the first finger are joined together and they are made to touch the middle finger of the left hand. He seems to be unrevelling a knotty problem to the audience. This is the attitude of preaching the First Sermon at Sarnāth. Most of the images at Sarnāth have this posture.

3. *Bhūmisparśa mudrā*.—In this posture the Buddha is sitting in *padmāsana* while the right hand is made to drop downwards pointing towards the earth while the left hand is placed on the crossed legs. This depicts an important incident in Buddha's life as described on page 19. It has now become a favourite theme of Buddhist sculptors.

4. *Abhaya Mudrā*.—This posture is usually depicted by bending the right hand against its shoulder with the palm turned towards the audience. The other hand slings down. This is the attitude of giving protection or blessing to the devotees. In this *mudrā* Buddha is invariably standing. In Buddhist countries when a layman salutes a bhikkhu with folded hands, the latter does not return the courtesy in the same manner but instead he utters the words, "*sukhī hotu*," meaning "may you be happy." Probably at an earlier period the custom of raising the right hand at the same moment in the posture of giving blessings was prevalent but abandoned later on.

5. *Dhyāna mudrā*.—Here the figure of the Buddha is seen to sit in *padmāsana* with eyes half closed. The legs are crossed and the palm of one hand is placed on the other and both the hands are made to rest on the crossed legs.

6. *Piṇḍapāla mudrā*.—Here the figure is standing holding the begging bowl in His hands which are locked together. It is in this attitude that the monks go collecting alms for their meals.

7. *Parinirvāna mudrā*.—As at Kusinārā, in this *mudrā* Buddha is seen lying down fully stretched with His right hand placed against the cheek. He is lying on His right side. This is the position in which He used to sleep and also passed away into *Mahāparinirvāna*. Ignorant guides describe this posture as “sleeping Buddha” but it certainly does not signify that. It always indicates the attainment of *Mahāparinirvāna* at Kusinārā. It is a blasphemy on the artistic sense of the sculptor to say that he had portrayed Buddha in the act of sleeping.

A fact to be noted about Buddha images discovered in India is that in some of them both shoulders are covered while in others the right shoulder is laid bare. The general rule is to cover both shoulders while going out of doors whereas when relaxing in the monastery or worshipping in the Vihāra, one shoulder is to be invariably uncovered.

Some of the images may seem to be without clothes at all. They should not be confused with figures of Mahāvīra which are fully naked. In the former case the absence of clothes is only apparent. It is merely a defect in the execution of the piece of sculpture concerned. A minute examination of the image will, however, show that the robes are actually depicted with thin lines to indicate the edges.

These Buddha images may have a round disk behind the head with or without decorative work on it. This disk is a representation of the halo or the aura that surrounded Buddha's body.

Another peculiar fact about Indian sculpture is the fashion of depicting several incidents of the Buddha's life in one and the same scene. Thus, in one piece of sculpture, the visitor may see jumbled together the scenes of Buddha's nativity, bathing of the child, renunciation, cutting off His

hair, meditation at Buddhagayā, preaching the First Sermon and the final passing away. A fine example of this type of sculpture is to be seen in the Museum at Sarnāth.

Bodhisatva Images.

Images of Bodhisatvas are many and varied. We give below a short descriptive account of the principal ones.

1. *Avalokitesvara*.—He is a very popular and, important Mahāyāna Bodhisatva. He holds a lotus stalk in the left hand and a nectar pot in his right. Sometimes there are two female figures on two sides representing Bhrikūṭi and Tārā. On the pedestal there may be the figure of Suchimukha, an animal asking for mercy. Avalokitesvara as well as most of the other Bodhisatva figures have elaborate head dresses while the use of ornaments and even the sacred thread are not uncommon features. The head dress or the crown has a crest in front containing a small figure of the Buddha. If not for this small difference, these figures can easily pass off as Hindu deities.

2. *Padmapāni*.—Padmapāni is one of the important Bodhisatvas. As the name indicates he is holding a lotus flower stalk in the one hand while the other is held in the attitude of giving protection or preaching.

3. *Manjusrī*.—This is another popular Bodhisatva. He may be sitting on a seat or on the figure of a lion. In his hands he holds a lotus, sword and book.

4. *Vajrapāni*.—This Bodhisatva holds a conch shell (*shankha*) in the right hand and a *vajra* (thunderbolt) in his left. Serpents may form part of the head dress. Some times he may be depicted as having three heads and six arms which hold in addition to articles mentioned above, a rosary, arrow and bow. Sakti, a female figure, sits by his side.

5. *Tārā*.—This is a very popular female deity of the Mahāyānists. Images of Tārā are found in abundance at all Buddhist sites in India. She is the consort of Avalokiteśvara and is regarded as an unfailing protector. In her left hand she invariably holds a lotus stalk and the right hand is held in the attitude of giving protection. Sometimes she sits on a lion throne.

6. *Pragñāpāramitā*.—This is the goddess of learning in Mahāyāna Buddhism just as Sarasvatī is the goddess of learning among the Hindus. She is seated on a lotus throne with a book-on-lotus in one hand. Sometimes she is depicted as having ten hands holding a pot, noose, conch, book or lotus, banner, fruit, rosary, sword and the last held in *abhaya mudrā*.

7. *Marīchi*.—This is another Mahāyāna goddess. She has three faces, one of which is that of a boar. She may have eight hands holding a needle, piece of string, goad, noose, bow, arrow, vajra and asoka. She sits on a chariot drawn by pigs or horses.

8. *Jhambhala*.—He is the Mahāyāna Buddhist god of wealth. He holds a fruit in one hand and a purse in the other. Sometimes he is depicted as having four hands holding a pot, sword, flower and mongoose.

9. *Trailokyavijaya*.—This is an unusual god who is seen trampling the god Śiva and Pārvatī. His expression is angry.

10. *Haritī*.—This goddess is the consort of Jhambhala. She is probably a fertilising goddess. According to Itsing, the Chinese traveller, "the image of Haritī is found either in the porch or in the corner of the dining hall of all Indian monasteries depicting her as holding a babe in her arms and round her knees three or five children. Every day an abund-

ant offering of food is made before the image." The Yakkhini who attained Sotāpattiphala on hearing the Dhamma from Majjhantika who was sent to the Himālayās to preach Buddhism during Asoka's time, is probably the same person.

11. *Vasudharā*.—This goddess has similar functions as Hariti. In her left hand she holds "a lotus stalk and a pot with ears of corn while the lower right hand is held in varada mudrā."

12. *Sarasvatī*.—As there are images of this goddess too at Buddhist sites, she must have been worshipped by both the Buddhists and the Hindus. She holds a lute in her hands.

13. *Aparājītā*.—This is another female deity. She is a later Buddhist goddess and is depicted as trampling on Ganesha while Indra holds a parasol.



MRS. MARY E. FOSTER

CHAPTER XVIII

MAHA BODHI SOCIETY AND ITS WORK

NO visitor who makes even a flying visit to the sacred places described in the previous chapters will fail to hear of the Maha Bodhi Society founded by the late Ven. Anagārika Dharmapāla, as it is the pioneer Association engaged in the work of reviving these ancient sites to their former glory. As a matter of fact, it is the activities of this Society during the last fifty years, which have created among the Buddhists an impetus to make pilgrimages. The first organised party of pilgrims to India was taken by the late Ven. Dharmapāla in 1892. Previous to that pilgrims had gone very seldom. As far as we know the only record we have of such a pilgrimage from Ceylon is that of the party headed by Mudaliyar Edmund R. Gooneratne of Galle, which included Dullewe Adigar and two or three other Sinhalese. They visited Buddhagaya in 1888, two years before the visit of the Ven. Dharmapāla. Mudaliyar Gooneratne had also the privilege of setting up a flower altar under the Bodhi tree as a sequel to his visit. His activities were confined to this only and no one else thought of making a prolonged stay or of organising an Association to create a Buddhist centre at the place. It was left to the late Ven. Dharmapāla to start a substantial movement which has borne such marvellous results, as the reader must have realised by now. All glory to his cherished name.

As the pilgrim is bound to visit one or other of the Society's many temples and Rest Houses, we shall give below a short account of the main centres. Those

institutions which are situated within the sacred places have already been dealt with in the appropriate chapters.

The following are the other places of interest :—

Sri Dharmarājika Vihāra, Calcutta.

Sri Dharmarājika Vihāra, situated at 4a, Bamkim Chatterjee Street (formerly College Square) is a beautiful temple built in accordance with Ajantā architecture. It is situated in a picturesque part of Calcutta with a large tank in front where aquatic sports take place almost throughout the summer. All round are Colleges of the University of Calcutta with the imposing Senate Hall and the Asutosh Building where the administrative offices of the University are situated, opposite the Vihāra across the tank.

The frontage is completely faced with Chunār stone and the building is a double storeyed one. With its immense bo leaf pattern window and ancient Buddhist architecture, it is a conspicuous building in the locality.

The Vihāra was opened in 1920 by the Marquess of Zetland who was then the Governor of Bengal.

The shrine room is situated in the first floor. With its vaulted roof and the beautiful pillars in two rows as well as the Ajantā frescoes copied on the walls, the shrine has the atmosphere of a typical ancient Buddhist temple and transports one to the golden period of Indian history when such magnificent structures studded all over India.

At the extreme end of the hall is the black stone stūpa in which are kept the holy relics of Lord Buddha presented by the Government of India. The stūpa is in Gandhāra style. The relic enshrined is the one found at Bhattiprolu, Krishna District, Madras. On the left hand side of the stūpa is a fine Burmese image in marble. With its pedestal and altar

decorated with gold and vermillion in Burmese style, it is a dazzling object. To the right, inside a glass almirah, is the marvellously beautiful image of Buddha brought from Japan. It is made of sandal wood but looks like metal. It was carved by a famous Japanese sculptor about 700 years ago for the use of the Shogun. When the late Ven. Dharma-pāla was returning from Chicago Parliament of Religions, to which he went as the representative of Southern Buddhism, he passed through Japan and this historic image was presented to him by the Japanese Buddhists to be kept in the Buddhagaya temple. The story of its installation and the subsequent troubles, we have dealt with in another chapter. After wandering from place to place, it has at last found this fine resting place.

There are a number of other interesting images and art works kept in this Vihāra. The fine Buddha image from Buddhagayā may be specially noted. It is 1,200 years old. The well-known verse "Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā" is engraved round the halo in Gupta script. The silver pagoda sent by Marshall Chiang Kai Shek through His Holiness Tai Hsu, as a present to the Society, may also be seen inside the almirah to the left of the Burmese image.

A copy of a Sīgiriya (Ceylon) fresco and a Tibetan painting on a banner are kept at the other end of the shrine room. Another interesting object is the large Tibetan prayer wheel kept against the northern wall of the same Hall.

Behind the Vihāra is a three storeyed building called "Mrs. Mary E. Foster Building." The offices of the Society, the Library, rooms for the use of monks etc., are situated in this building. The library contains a valuable collection of Buddhist books. The Society's monthly organ, "The Maha Bodhi," is issued from here.

Rev. N. Jinaratana Thera is in charge of the many activities at this important centre.

Zawtikā Hall, Gayā.

This is a rest house which the Maha Bodhi Society has erected for the use of pilgrims going to Buddhagayā. It is only 15 minutes' walk from the Gayā station and is on the Mcleodgunj Road, the main road to the sacred place. It is a large building where the visitors can find accommodation if required.

Rev. Pandita P. Paññānanda Thera is in charge.

Maha Bodhi Āsram, Madras.

This āsram is at Perambur, about six miles from the Madras Central station and consists of a few rooms built for the use of the resident monk. Adjacent to it is the "Mrs. Foster Memorial Hall" erected for the benefit of the local Buddhists. No accommodation is available here but the monk in charge, Revd. N. Somananda Thera, is always willing to help pilgrims needing assistance.

The Society's efforts to procure a suitable building close to the Railway Station to serve as a pilgrims' rest as well as a centre for its work, have succeeded at last. A double-storeyed house situated at 10, Kennet Lane, Egmore, has been purchased at a cost of Rs. 62,000/- and will be made available to visitors at no distant date.

Bahujana Vihāra, Bombay.

This Vihāra is situated in a locality of Bombay known as Parel and is just opposite the Cricket Grounds of the St. Xavier's Club. It is built after the Bedsā cave but without attempting to copy any of its decorations. There is a stūpa with an image of the Buddha placed in a niche in front of it.

There are also a couple of rooms attached to the Vihāra for the use of monks. The donor is Seth Jugol Kishore Birlaji who had it erected at the request of Prof. Dharmānanda Kosambi for the benefit of the local working class people. It was recently transferred to the Maha Bodhi Society and is at present in charge of Revd. D. Sasanasiri Thera.

Buddha Vihāra, New Delhi.

New Delhi is the capital of the great Indian Union where the Governor-General resides in a magnificent building. All the Indian princes have their separate Palaces in this garden city created by Sir Edward Lutyens. There are a few Chittagong (Bengal) Buddhists employed in different offices. At the request of the late Mr. Sarbananda Barua, the author of this book applied to the Government of India for a plot of land to erect a small Vihāra for their use and to serve as a centre for Buddhist work in the metropolis of India. The request was granted and a fine plot of land in Reading Road, adjoining the great Lakshmī Nārāyan temple built by Seth Jugol Kishore Birlaji, was obtained. Appeals were sent to Buddhist friends for financial help but the response was disappointing. Seth J.K. Birlaji, however, came to the rescue of the Society, and with his usual generosity, undertook the construction of the Vihāra at his own cost. Thus was completed the fine Buddha Vihāra now visited by thousands of people from all over the world.

Attached to the Vihāra are the residential quarters for the monks and Reading Room, etc. Only Buddhist pilgrims are given accommodation here during their sojourn. The image of the Vihāra is an exact copy of the famous Sarnāth image in preaching attitude and the walls contain scenes from the life of the Buddha.

We do not know positively whether Lord Buddha visited Delhi proper during His ministration or not. Indraprasta is mentioned, however, in Buddhist books and the country of the Kurūs, which corresponds to the Delhi District, finds mention at several places. Migacīra, the King of Kurūs, whose capital was at Indraprasta, is said to have been converted to Buddhism by Raṭṭhapāla Thera who was a native of Hastināpura. Lord Buddha delivered several abstruse suttas in this country on account of the fact that the inhabitants were highly intelligent. Satipaṭṭhāna sutta was delivered at Kammāssadhamma village. Mahāsīhanāda, Sarpama, Rukkhopama, Māgandiya and Anejjasappāya were the others that He taught here. A high tribute is paid to the inhabitants for their knowledge of Buddhism, strict moral behaviour and active life. But today there is hardly one who calls himself a Buddhist in this part of the country.

A visit to the adjoining Lakshmī Nārāyan temple and its beautiful gardens should not be omitted as this temple is one of the finest modern Hindu temples in India. As mentioned, it was constructed by Birlāji at a cost of over four lakhs of rupees.

Rev. V. Dhammaloka is in charge of the Vihāra.

Maha Bodhi Buddhist Mission, Calicut.

There is a centre of Buddhist activities belonging to the Maha Bodhi Society in the sea-port of Calicut on the Malabar coast. Though it is outside the trek of the pilgrim, it is a place of interest on account of the fact that there is a growing community of Buddhists at this place. The mission has a temple, Reading Room, Library, etc., in a house in Customs Road which was gifted for the work of the Mission by the late Mr. C. Krishnan, a leading citizen, who had embraced Buddhism some years ago. In fact he was the founder of the Buddhist movement in Malabar.

Another centre of the Mission is situated in Manur about 7 miles from Calicut. The site is a picturesque one as it is situated on a hill with a winding river on three sides and the ocean at a distance on the other. Rev. Dharmaskanda, a Malabar bhikkhu, is in charge of the Vihāra.

Maha Bodhi Society's Centre at Bangalore.

Ceylon Buddhist Goodwill Mission of which the late Sir D. B. Jayatilaka was the President, obtained a valuable plot of land in Gandhinagar, Bangalore, for the construction of a Buddhist Temple and monastery. The foundation stone was laid by Sir D. B. Jayatilaka himself and the work of erecting the buildings commenced during his lifetime but, owing to the paucity of funds, very little progress was made. The time allowed by the Government of Mysore to complete the work expired and two extensions were given, but still the work did not progress beyond the foundation walls of the monastery. In these circumstances the Government of Mysore offered the land to the Maha Bodhi Society of Ceylon if it would undertake to complete the scheme within a reasonable period. The Society accepted the offer and arrangements are being made to restart the work. Mr. A. S. R. Chari, ex High Court Judge, who is a devout Buddhist resident of Bangalore, has, as the representative of the Society, taken up the cause energetically and has already commenced the erection of the much needed boundary wall. We sincerely trust that the money required for this scheme will be soon forthcoming from Buddhists of all countries.

Buddha Vihāra, Lucknow.

This Vihāra situated in Risaldarbagh owes its existence to the Venerable Bodhānanda Mahā Thera who is a Bengalee by race but had settled down in the United Provinces from

his early childhood. With hardly any resources at his disposal he has literally built up the place brick by brick in the course of several decades. Great credit is due to the Mahā Thera for his singleness of purpose and unremitting zeal. He has gifted the Temple to the Maha Bodhi Society. Centrally situated in a crowded locality, the Vihāra is bound to grow in importance as a centre of work. Buddhist pilgrims passing through Lucknow can halt at this place.

APPENDIX

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

Climate and Passengers' Equipment.

INDIA is a vast continent, its length being about 1,800 miles and the greatest breadth 1,360 miles. In such a huge country the visitor will naturally find varying kinds of climates. There are, however, three marked seasons *viz* , Summer (April to July), rainy season (July to September), and Winter (October to March).

Visitors generally come to India during the cold weather as it is the most pleasant part of the year. Buddhist pilgrim parties are also organised during this period. October and November are mild and, therefore, most ideal for Ceylon visitors. December and January are extremely cold. Every visitor should be well provided with warm clothings and woollen blankets. As there will be constant Railway travelling during the nights, they should bring their own beddings.

Most of the Buddhist sacred places are situated outside the big towns. No suitable hotel accommodation is therefore available at those places. Visitors should have the necessary utensils to cook their meals. Tinned food would be most handy at such sites. Where there are Government Dak Bungalows they have been mentioned in the appropriate places.

Although it would be most convenient to travel with light luggage, there are some things which are absolutely necessary. We suggest the following equipment for ordinary pilgrims. Those who wish for more comforts will know what

further things to be added. *Equipment*:—4 sets of usual dress, 2 blankets or 1 quilt made of cotton, 1 quilt for bedding, 1 holdall for carrying bedding etc., 1 pillow, 1 stove, 1 hurricane lamp, 1 torch, 1 thermosflask, 1 aluminium plate, 1 cup, 1 loṭā (water vessel) or bucket, 2 spoons, 1 kettle, 1 knife and 3 vessels for cooking.

As regards foodstuff, it is difficult to suggest anything as they depend on the taste of the visitor himself.

Language.

A knowledge of Hindi would be most useful as at some of the remote places, it is not possible to obtain competent interpreters. A servant speaking Hindi will be very helpful in making the journey successful.

Customs.

The visitor's luggage will be examined by Customs officers at Dhanuskodi when going to India and at Talai Mannar when returning to Ceylon. On both occasions the examination is on board the ferry-boat. Higher class passengers are given forms to be filled up which they should not fail to complete and keep ready before the officers arrive to avoid delay. Duty is free on personal effects.

Purchase of Tickets.

First and Second class visitors are well advised to obtain their tickets from Messrs. Thos. Cook & Son, the well-known travel agents, as they have arrangements with the different Railways to supply tickets to their customers. No extra charge is payable. No Inter or Third class tickets are however issued by them except for servants accompanying the higher class passengers. Most Railways have what are described as "Through round trip tickets" which are cheap and most convenient. Leaflets describing these tour tickets are available from the different Railways.

Buddhist pilgrims are, however, well advised to join the Maha Bodhi pilgrim parties arranged by the Ceylon Maha Bodhi Society, as it will be cheaper and more convenient in every respect. The Society arranges four parties, the first in October so that the pilgrims can be present at the anniversary celebration of the Mūlagandhakūṭi Vihāra at Sarnāth, the second in December to avail the Christmas holidays, the third in February and the fourth in March when the climate is much warmer. Trained guides accompany these parties to help the pilgrims. All communications regarding rates etc., should be addressed to the Maha Bodhi Society, Maha Bodhi Mandira, Maligakanda, Colombo, Ceylon.

Passports.

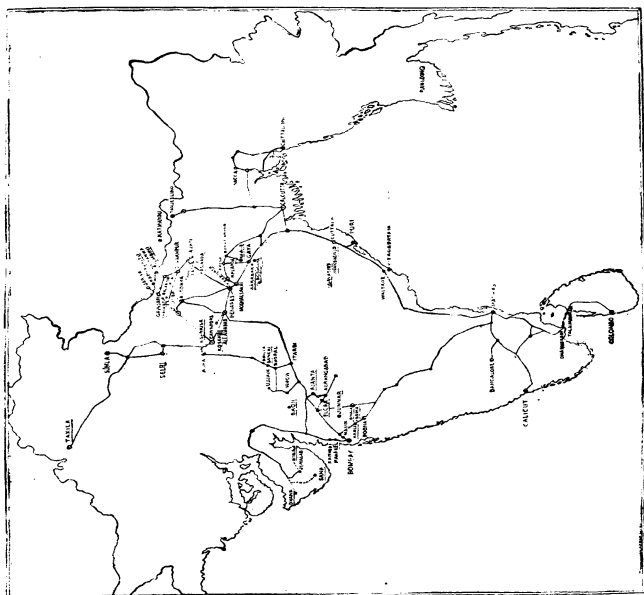
No passports are required for visitors from Ceylon and Burma but those from Ceylon should be provided with quarantine passes for their return journey as, otherwise, they would be detained one day at the Mandapam camp.

Money.

Indian money consists of Rupees, annas and pice or pies. 4 pices or 12 pies = 1 anna, 16 annas = 1 rupee. Visitors can convert their money into Indian currency on the ferry steamer. This can also be done at the offices of Messrs. Thos. Cook & Son.

Information Offices.

There are information offices attached to all important Railway stations for the benefit of visitors. All Buddhist visitors are requested to communicate with the Maha Bodhi Society, 4a, Bamkim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta or Holy Isipatana, Sarnāth, Benares. The Society will gladly supply whatever information is required to visit the sacred places.



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are urgently needed by the Mahā Bodhi Society of India for the maintenance and improvement of the following meritorious institutions:-

1. MŪLAGANDHAKUṬI VIHĀRA AND THE CONNECTED INSTITUTIONS at Holy Isipatana, Sarnath, Banares U.P.

- (a) *Mūlagandhakūṭi Vihāra* was built at the holy spot in 1931 after 800 years of neglect of the place, to enshrine the Holy Relics of Lord Buddha presented by the Government of India. Nothing can be more meritorious than to help the maintenance of this place of worship.
- (b) *Malagandhakūṭi Vihāra Library*. Built to serve as the central library of the Society. Funds are needed for the purchase of books, furniture and other equipment.
- (c) *Free Dispensary*. The building was erected with a donation received from the late Mr. Chan Chore Khine and his son, Chan Cheng Leang. Medical treatment is given free to all villagers as well as visitors. Your generous help to continue this humanitarian work for the benefit of the poor is needed.
- (d) *International Buddhist Institute*. Started for the proper training of Bhikkhūs and brahmachāris for Buddhist missionary work and for the study of Buddhism in all its aspects. This will serve as the nucleus of the proposed Buddhist University at Sarnath.
- (e) *Mahā Bodhi Free School*. Started in 1902, this School has been continuously giving elementary education to the helpless village children.
- (f) *Mahā Bodhi Vidyālaya*. Started in 1935 as a Middle English School. It has now grown into a High English School with over 300 boys. Examination results are the best in the District. Expansion of the building is urgently required.
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- (i) *Ārya Dharma Saṅgha Dharmasālā*. This magnificent building donated by Rājā Baldeodās Birla is the guest house of the Society.
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This is the first Vihāra built by the Society for the revival of Buddhism in India. Library, Free Reading Room and Hostel are attached. The offices of the Society are situated in the Mrs. Foster Building behind the Vihāra. Rs. 30,000 are required to redecorate the walls of the Vihāra with frescoes depicting the life of Lord Buddha.
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