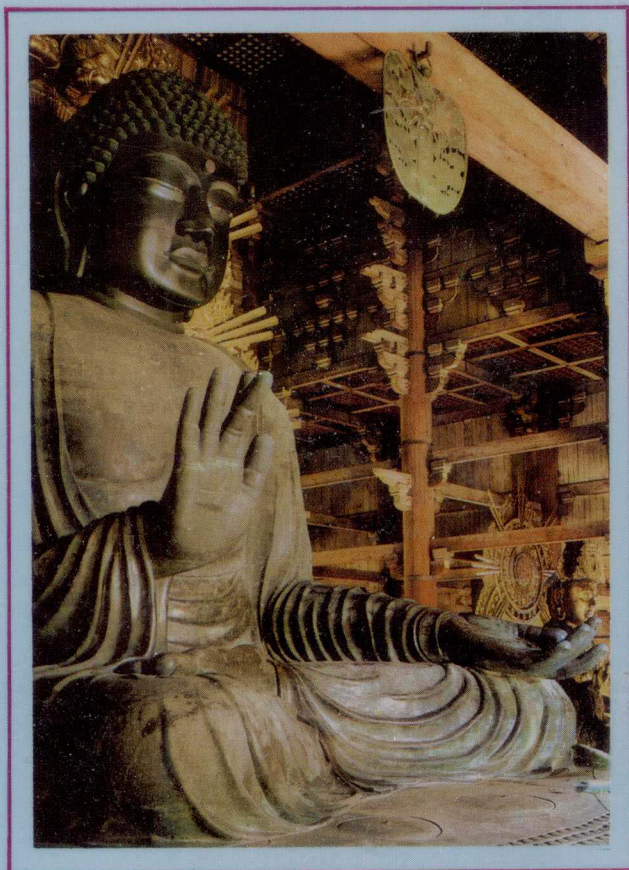


BUDDHISM IN INDIA AND ABROAD

*An Integrating Influence
In Vedic and Post-Vedic Perspective*



Edited by
Kalpakam Sankarnarayan
Motohiro Yoritomi
Shubhada A. Joshi

COMPLIMENTARY COPY

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In Vedic and Post -Vedic Perspective*

*Papers presented at the International Seminar on Buddhism
jointly organized by K.J. Somaiya Centre of Buddhist Studies, Mumbai, India
Shuchin University, Kyoto, Japan and Department of Philosophy
University of Bombay, India, March 6-10, 1995*

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Editors

KALPAKAM SANKARNARAYAN

MOTOHIRO YORITOMI

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Preface

DECEMBER 6, 1993 was a memorable day in the annals of Somaiya Vidyavihar, Mumbai, India when one of the most distinguished contemporary spiritual leaders and Nobel Prize Winner for Peace, His Holiness, The Dalai Lama of Tibet visited the Campus to inaugurate the Centre of Buddhist Studies.

Later, during the meeting between Dr. Kalpakam Sankarnarayan and Prof. Dr. Motohiro Yoritomi in Japan in September 1994, it was agreed to hold an International Seminar on Buddhism as the maiden venture of the K. J. Somaiya Centre of Buddhist Studies. The Centre is dedicated to the promotion of Historical, Cultural and Philosophical Research on Buddhism. Shuchin University, Kyoto, Japan, is engrossed not only in teaching Buddhism but has been engaged in excavations in Orissa, India and has published several reports in Japanese language of their findings, specially of Buddhist Art. University of Bombay, Mumbai, also readily collaborated with the Centre in holding this Seminar.

The main objective in holding the Seminar was to provide a National and International Forum for Scholars from different Centres/Countries to present and discuss new findings/interpretations of the related aspects concerning Buddhist Studies. There are books which deal with what they call "Indian Buddhism", "Chinese Buddhism", "Tibetan Buddhism", "Japanese Buddhism" or what may be called "regional" Buddhisms like Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma and so on. There was an International Seminar on "Tamil Buddhism" also. All these were more concerned with textual and philosophical studies of the doctrines. Keeping this in mind, the International Seminar on Buddhism was organized to discuss problems relating to all aspects of Buddhism, in a transnational and cross-cultural perspective, incorporating the inputs from the various disciplines of Buddhist Studies. Thus the title was conceived to be *Buddhism in India and Abroad: An Integrating Influence in Vedic and Post-Vedic Perspective*. This broader field of Buddhist Studies, as we believed, more as a cultural system or as a civilizational factor of global dimension than mere religion and philosophy, served the purpose of bringing international/national scholars devoted to the study of Buddhism from such diverse disciplines as Philosophy, Religion, History, Sociology, Anthropology, Art history, Archaeology, Language and Literature for the first time on the same platform. It provided thus an International and Interdisciplinary group to exchange ideas and in the process gave a transparency to Buddhist Studies, as an independent discipline in its own right.

Though this was the first time for us to be honoured as host to this International Seminar of the Centre, it received overwhelming response from the scholars. The Seminar was held from 6th March to 10th March 1995. There were forty participants. Thirty-five papers were presented. However, the papers which were not returned duly revised for publication, have not been included in the present Volume. However, two papers which could not be presented at the time of the Seminar, are included in this publication. We are very happy to bring out the Seminar proceedings in print. It gives us great pleasure to express our thanks again to the contributors for their co-operation in bringing out the

present Volume.

Going through the list of papers included in this Volume, it may be noted that while almost 50 % of them deal with Buddhism in India, there were others dealing with that in Tibet, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Japan. There are nine papers on *Early Buddhist Philosophy and Religion*, five papers on *Buddhism in Vedic Perspective*, two papers on *Buddhist Logic*, two papers on *Buddhism as Found in Sanskrit and Tamil Literature*, three papers on *Mahāyāna Buddhism and its branches*, one paper on the *comparative study of Atharvaveda and Buddhist Tantra in Tibet*, one paper on *Inner Homa in Japanese Shingon Buddhism*, three papers on the history of *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, and two papers on *Buddhist Culture in India and Sri Lanka*; with reference to *Buddhist Art and Architecture*, there are four papers; two are on *Buddhism in the contemporary Thailand and Minnesota (USA)* and one on the *Role of Women in Early Buddhism*. Periodwise the papers cover Buddhism from its origin down to this day.

Manuscripts of most of the papers duly revised reached us by the middle of November 1995. Since the contributors of the Volume were spread all over the world, it was not an easy task to get the papers on time. We appreciate the patience and co-operation of Shri S. G. Nene, Chief Editor, Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd., Mrs. Kamlesh A. Malhotra, Production Executive, Shri Prakash Kerkar, Artist and Shri D. R. Amladi, Assistant Director (Retd.) Maharashtra State and printer in dealing with the global mail problems and the *charikā* of the Scholars in bringing the Volume out.

In the most pleasant duty of expressing our gratitude, we must first record our special thanks to Shri K. J. Somaiya, Founder and Trustee, Vice-President Dr. S.K. Somaiya and Ven. Enmyo IMAI, President of Shuchin University, Kyoto, Japan, for their enthusiastic support both financially and organizationally, in the planning and at every stage of the Seminar and later in the production of the Volume. We sincerely acknowledge the suggestions extended by the members of the Advisory Committee at every stage of the preparation. We will be failing in our duty, if we do not mention Dr. S. Gorakshkar, Director, Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai, who organized the fabulous exhibition with the very rare collection of photographs on Buddhism in Tibet, as the festive treat to the eyes. Special mention should also be made of Dr. Prof. S. Nagaraju, who volunteered to supplement with his scholarly description the appreciation of Kanheri Caves, Mumbai, as part of the Seminar programme. We are pleased to acknowledge with thanks the grant-in-aid we received from the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi, and University of Bombay, without which the International participation in the Seminar would not have been possible.

As members of the Editorial Board, Dr. V.V. Gangal, Director, K.J. Somaiya Indological Research Institute, Dr. G.K. Pai, Director Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute and Dr. Kala Acharya, Director K.J. Somaiya Bharatiya Sanskriti Peetham, whole-heartedly participated and extended helping hand in smoothly conducting the Seminar and editing the present Volume. Ms. Soma Basu, Research Fellow, an asset to K.J. Somaiya Centre of Buddhist Studies, worked in the preliminary editing of the papers and proof correction very meticulously. We owe our sincere thanks to all the members of K.J. Somaiya Bharatiya Sanskriti Peetham. We must mention particularly the names of the staff members of K. J. Somaiya Centre of Buddhist Studies, Jayaprakash V.T., Jayant D. Tambve and Arun N. Sonawane for their valuable assistance not only at the time of the Seminar but more particularly in the editorial work at every crucial stages.

Jayaprakash V.T. is to be singled out for his typing of the manuscripts with diacritical marks. We would not like to complete the list without mentioning the Somaiya Parivar and the Faculty Members of Shuchin University, Dr. S.D. Karnik, former Vice-Chancellor, and the present Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Snehalata Deshmukh, University of Bombay, for their co-operation.

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Contents

<i>Contributors</i>		<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>		<i>xiii</i>
1. Introduction—Buddhism Outside the Indian Subcontinent: Early State of Dissemination	<i>B. N. Mukherjee</i>	1
Part I: Religion and Philosophy		
2. Concept of Purification of Mind in Early Buddhism	<i>Mahesh Tiwary</i>	13
3. The Buddha's Approach to Metaphysics	<i>N. G. Kulkarni</i>	23
4. Inherent Characteristics of Noble Truths	<i>O. P. Pathak</i>	31
5. Pāli Tipiṭaka: Some Random Thoughts	<i>Shyamdeo Dwivedi</i>	40
6. Vipassanā: The Buddha's Unique Contribution to the Human Civilization	<i>Ravindra Panth</i>	48
7. Buddhism: Where Philosophy and Religion Converge	<i>Angraj Chaudhary</i>	54
8. Silence of Buddha: A Study into Philosophical and Sociological Aspects	<i>N. H. Samtani</i>	63
9. Mettā in Pāli Buddhism	<i>N. Kashiwahara</i>	79
10. Vedic Antecedents of the Buddhist Paradigm	<i>V. V. Gangal</i>	90
11. The Ātmavāda of Advaita Vedānta and the Anātmavāda of the Buddha	<i>S. H. Dixit</i>	102
12. Buddhist Mysticism: A Comparative Study	<i>Shubhada A. Joshi</i>	104
13. Interpretation of the Word Kuśala in Vedic and Buddhist Tradition	<i>Kala Acharya</i>	114
14. The Buddhist Approach to Āyurveda	<i>P. C. Muralimadhavan</i>	127
Part II: Buddhist Logic		
15. Diñnāga and Bhartṛhari	<i>K. Kunjunni Rajah</i>	143
16. Dharmakīrti's Concept of Pramāṇa	<i>V. N. Jha</i>	146

Part III: Buddhism as Found in Sanskrit and Tamil Literature

17. Buddhist Tenets in Secular Sanskrit Literature	<i>C. S. Radhakrishnan</i>	157
18. Mahāyāna Buddhism in Mañimēkalai	<i>S. N. Kandaswamy</i>	166

Part IV: Mahāyāna Buddhism

19. Essentialism, Eternalism and Buddhism	<i>Pradeep P. Gokhale</i>	199
20. Pātañjali Yoga and Zen	<i>Surekha Limaye</i>	211
21. Non-Dualism in Zen Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta	<i>N. S. Siddharthan</i>	218
22. The Atharvaveda and the Indian Tantra in Tibetan	<i>S. K. Pathak</i>	225
23. Concept of Inner Homa in Japanese Shingon Buddhism	<i>Kalpaka Sankarnarayan & Motohiro Yoritomi</i>	235

Part V: History of Buddhism

24. History of the Kālacakra Tantra in Post-Vedic Perspectives	<i>S. S. Bahulkar</i>	249
25. Śāntideva in the History of Mādhyamika Philosophy	<i>Akira Saito</i>	257
26. Aśoka's Contribution to Universal Peace: An Introspection	<i>C. Panduranga Bhatta</i>	264
27. Buddhism and the Promotion of Composite Culture during the Chola Period	<i>V. Balambal</i>	271
28. Sri Lankan Buddhist Culture: A Model Evolved from Mauryan Culture	<i>M. Rohanadheera</i>	282

Part VI: Buddhist Art

29. The Breath of Devotion	<i>Benoy K. Behl</i>	295
30. Some Evidences of Indian Influence on Japanese Ancient Arts	<i>Yamagishi Koki</i>	296
31. From Spirituality to Power: A Millennium of Buddhist Monastic Architecture as a Mirror of Social History	<i>S. Nagaraju</i>	301
32. The Dharmacakrapravartana-Mudrā	<i>D. C. Bhattacharyya</i>	315

Part VII: Buddhism Outside India

33. Buddhism and the Thai Youth	<i>Phraraja Visuddhi Medhi & Somboon Satalalai</i>	339
34. South Asian Buddhism in Minnesota	<i>Indira Y. Junghare, Stuart R. Sarbacker & Craig S. Hollander</i>	348

Part VIII: Status of Women in Early Buddhism

35. Female Reformers of the Buddhist Period (600 to 100 B. C.)	<i>Meena V. Talim</i>	361
<i>Index</i>		369
<i>Plates and Figures</i>		

Introduction — Buddhism Outside the Indian Subcontinent: Early State of Dissemination

B.N. Mukherjee

I

THE STUDY of the early history of Buddhism is continually inhibited by the problems of determining the period of Gautama, the Buddha, his authentic tenets and the area influenced by his doctrines during his lifetime. Though the date of the great demise of the Buddha at an age of over eighty years had been a topic of controversy for a long time, it was generally placed in the early second half of the sixth century B.C. or in the second decade of the fifth century B.C. But there have been, in the recent years, noticeable tendencies, especially among European scholars, to “bring forward” drastically the date in question. The latest phase of the debate was initiated by H. Bechert in 1982. In his opinion the death of the Buddha “should be dated between 85 to 105 years before Aśoka's coronation” in c. 269 B.C., i.e., sometime between 374 and 354 B.C.¹ However, there can be a cogent objection against this view. Gandhāra (Peshawar and Rawalpindi districts), the existence of which as one of the sixteen great kingdoms (*mahājanapadas*) during or shortly before the period of the Buddha is indicated by the earliest sections of the *Sutta* and *Vinaya Piṭakas*, was annexed to the Achaemenid empire before or shortly after the beginning of the reign of Darius I (c. 522-486 B.C.). So the independence of Gandhāra was lost by about the early years of the last quarter of the sixth century B.C. In that case the Buddha should have been living during these years or was born shortly after. This inference enables us to continue to date the Buddha to c. sixth-fifth century B.C. if not to a more precise period.

A serious impediment to the construction of the history of the origin and early growth of Buddhism is the absence of Buddhist literature datable to the age of its founder. Nevertheless, an idea about the preachings of the Buddha may be formed on the basis of old sayings and traditions recorded in early Buddhist canonical works like the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and the *Dīgha Nikāya*, *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and *Sutta Nipāta* (belonging to the fifth *Nikāya*) of the *Sutta Piṭaka*. The existence, in some forms, of these texts in the age of Aśoka (second and third quarters of the third century B.C.) is suggested by his

Calcutta-Bairat Edict. It refers to few expositions on *Dhamma*, containing the sayings of the Buddha, which are considered to allude to certain sections of the above mentioned compositions. These and some non-Buddhist texts of about or shortly prior to the age of the Buddha and results of certain archaeological excavations help us in understanding the background to the rise of Buddhism, its early tenets and the territorial limits of its influence in the pre-Mauryan age.²

No early and authentic source suggests that Buddhism became well known throughout the Indian subcontinent during or shortly after the age of the Buddha. In fact, there is nothing to prove that it was followed anywhere outside the limits of the territories now included in Nepalese *tarai*, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. On the other hand, by the time of Aśoka (i.e., by the second and third quarters of the third century B.C.) it had its followers almost throughout the whole of the vast Mauryan empire, embracing the major part of the subcontinent and parts of eastern Afghanistan. The Thirteenth Rock Edict of Aśoka states that “there is no *janapada* (in the empire) except that of the Yonas (meaning here Arachosia or the Kandahar region in eastern Afghanistan) where do not live the communities of the *brāhmaṇas* and *śramaṇas*” (denoting the Buddhist monks in this context). Thus by the time of Aśoka Buddhism was an all India religion.

II

Though Buddhism was only a regional faith in the time of the Master, it could have even then transcended India's international frontiers as determined in the present age. The place of his birth, Lumbini or modern Rummindei in Nepalese *tarai*, is marked by the findspot and contents of an Aśokan Edict.³ This locality is not very far from Piprawah in the Basti district of Uttar Pradesh, which perhaps represents the site of Kapilāvastu or the capital of the Śākya territory or homeland of the Buddha.⁴ So, though he preached his doctrines for the first time well within the limits of India, these should have become known in Nepalese *tarai* during his own age. So, if the modern demarcating line between India and Nepal is considered, Buddhism can be believed to have become international even in its pristine stage.

The international character of Buddhism became well established when, according to the *Mahāvamsa*, Aśoka sent (a branch of) the *Bodhi* tree to Laṅkā or Tāmaparṇī, i.e., modern Sri Lanka.⁵ In the north-western direction of the Indian subcontinent itself Buddhism crossed its modern boundary (now politically that of Pakistan) and reached Kamboja to the south-east of the Hindu Kush (including the areas of Kabul and Begram).⁶ Nepal continued to be familiar with the faith. Two inscriptions of Aśoka, connected with Buddhism, have been discovered in the Nepalese *tarai*.⁷

The next stage of the territorial expansion of the faith was to the north of the Hindu Kush, in Bāhlika and in the area of Central Asia. Through the latter region Buddhism reached China and became an international religion of the first order.

So for determining the chronology of internationalization of Buddhism the date or the initial period of its introduction in Central Asia will have to be determined. Since it is a major chronological problem, we propose to discuss it at length.

III

Some scholars believe that Buddhism was introduced in Central Asia much before the commencement of the Christian Era. Efforts have been made to date the event to the period of the Maurya king Aśoka (c. 273-236 B.C.) or to the age of the early rule of the Bactrian Greeks (c. third-second century B.C.).

P.C. Bagchi observed that “Aśoka speaks of his efforts to introduce Buddhism among the people of Gandhāra, Kamboja and Yona” and that “the Yonas were no doubt the Greeks of Bactria.”⁸ But in fact, as we have noted above, Aśoka himself admitted of the absence of Buddhists (of whom śramaṇas were a very important section) in the Yona province of his empire, identifiable with Arachosia or the Kandahar area in south-eastern Afghanistan. There is also no reliable evidence to prove that he sent Buddhist preachers (and not only missions for doing humanitarian work) to the Yona (Greek) kingdoms beyond his empire.⁹

According to B.A. Litvinsky, the *Milindapañha* indicates that Milinda or the Indo-Greek ruler Menander I was a Buddhist. He further points out that the representation of a *stūpa* appears on a class of coins of the Indo-Greek king Agathocles and the figure of a wheel is noticeable on a variety of specie of Menander I. All these, according to Litvinsky, allude to the presence of Buddhism in Central Asia.¹⁰ But it may be pertinently observed that the coins of Agathocles bearing a Kharoṣṭī legend as well as a *stūpa* symbol and those of Menander displaying a wheel and a Kharoṣṭī inscription in addition to a legend in Greek¹¹ must have been meant for circulation to the south-east of the Hindu Kush where Kharoṣṭī was the main current script in c. second century B.C. The *Milindapañha*, which betrays king Milinda's inquisitiveness about Buddhism, locates his capital at Sāgala, identifiable with Sialkot (now in Pakistan).¹² Moreover, though Milinda can be identified with the Indo-Greek ruler Menander I of c. second century B.C. or (for the sake of argument) with Menander II of c. first century B.C., the treatise itself can never be dated before c. A.D. first century.¹³ In any case, neither the literary nor the numismatic evidence cited here proves the familiarity of Central Asia with Buddhism in the pre-Christian centuries.

The *Mahāvamsa* claims the presence of Mahādeva from Pallavabhogga and a large number of monks from Alasanda in the Yona country at the ceremony for laying the foundation of the great *stūpa* by king Duṭṭhagāmaṇi (c. 101-77 B.C.).¹⁴ Even if this claim has a historical base, the Yona country can easily be identified with Arachosia. Again, the identification of Pallavabhogga with a Parthian (Pahlava) domain, following W. Geiger and B.A. Litvinsky,¹⁵ may locate the territory in question in the early Indo-Parthian kingdom in NorthWest India and its borderlands.