



Sukumar Dutt

**BUDDHIST MONKS
AND
MONASTERIES
OF INDIA**

*Their History and Their
Contribution to Indian Culture*



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By the same author

EARLY BUDDHIST MONACHISM
THE BUDDHA AND FIVE AFTER-CENTURIES

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and
Monasteries of India

*Their History and their Contribution
to Indian Culture*

SUKUMAR DUTT

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Dedicated to

SAVITRI DUTT

*whose love, care and companionship
charmed away all hardships from my
strenuous wanderings in the Buddhist sites of India*

PREFACE

The SAṄGHA (Buddhist Monkhood) has received hitherto far less than its due measure of importance in extant studies on Buddhism. The Saṅgha originated in India: its history in this country, where Buddhism is now extinct as an institutional religion, is the history of the growth, progress and organization of a great culture that is interwoven in its historic culture-complex.

A sketch of primitive Saṅgha life and organization was attempted by me in my youth in the book, *Early Buddhist Monachism*, published in Trübner's Oriental Series, so far back as in 1924. In the preface to its recently published Indian edition (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1960), I have called attention to its inevitable lack and limitation:

'The book presents a picture in outline of the Buddhist Monastic Order in its growth and development during the first three or four centuries of Buddhism. The need remains yet for a longer dynamic view and more extended historical perspective, for the Buddhist Saṅghas, whose early evolution is the theme of this book, continued to function in this country, especially in the east and the south, for many more after-centuries. The great monastic universities in the east like Nālandā, Vikramśilā, Odantapura and Jagaddala represent the last fine efflorescence of Buddhist monachism, and they were wiped out only towards the close of the twelfth century by the fanatic violence of the Muslim invaders of Bengal and Bihar.'

The object of the present work is to supply this 'longer dynamic view and more extended historical perspective'.

The work has entailed concentrated research work over two and a half years and could not have been undertaken but for the generous encouragement and active support of Dr Malalasekera, renowned Buddhist scholar of Ceylon, recently ambassador for his country in Moscow. It was through his initiative that a Senior Research Fellowship of the University of Delhi was awarded to me enabling me to carry through this work and also making available to me the ripe scholarship of Professor P. V. Bapat, then Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies in the University. His suggestions and corrections, supplemented by Dr V. V. Gokhale's, were very helpful for which I remain grateful.

My source-materials come under two main categories—literary and archaeological.

The literary materials had to be gathered from four languages, Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese and Tibetan. For helping me in the last two, I am indebted to Miss Latika Lahiri of Lady Irwin School, New

Delhi, who studied Chinese for several years in Peking and provided me with translations from Chinese, and to Dr Lokesh Chandra and Lama Chimpa of the International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi, for translations from Tibetan.

For the archaeological materials, I had not only to investigate the reports and memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, but also to make extensive field-studies of archaeological sites where monastic caves and remains of ancient monasteries still exist. In describing or tracing the history of the monasteries, I have had in several instances to draw upon my own personal knowledge gathered on the spot. I am grateful to the officers of the Archaeological Department, especially to Mr Ghosh, Director-General, and Dr Patil, Deputy Director-General, for providing me with liberal facilities for my field-study as well as for a sheaf of useful photographs. Dr Moreswar Dikshit (now working in the Madhya Pradesh) was kind and generous enough to lend me an unpublished work of his and allow me to draw from it some materials for which acknowledgement has been made in the book in due place.

I am indebted also to my talented daughter, Miss Krishna Dutt, MSc, for the preparation of the Index, a task of great labour willingly shouldered by her, and to Mr Indra Varma for the maps and sketches included.

In writing this book, it was not the scholar and specialist that I had exclusively in view. The subject is likely to interest today the educated public in our country. Curiosity about our ancient Buddhist past is now more widely diffused. Visitors by hundreds who go to see the famous monastic caves of western India, Ajanta, Kanheri, Pandulena, Karle, etc. and the monastic remains of northern India at Nālandā, Sārnāth, Sānchi, Rājgir and other sites will derive a new zest from some knowledge of their historical background and some idea of the part these monasteries played in our ancient life and culture.

A reconstruction of the history of the Buddhist Saṅgha in India has, so far as I am aware, not been attempted yet. I have had to break new ground which seemed at places nearly intractable for the lack of reliable historical data. If those scholars to whose critical judgement I must leave this work be in a position to say that this humble attempt at historical reconstruction has been worthwhile, I shall deem my labours amply repaid.

New Delhi
June 30, 1960

SUKUMAR DUTT

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NOTES ON THE TEXT

In reading the text, the following points should be taken note of:

(i) *Use of Pali and Sanskrit forms of words*

In the present work a number of words will be found either in Pali or in Sanskrit form. The general principle which has been followed in this matter is to take the form which appears in the source drawn upon, Pali or Sanskrit. The language of Theravāda Buddhism is Pali, while that of later Hīnayānist schools (e.g. Sarvāstivāda) and of Mahāyāna Buddhism is Sanskrit. A considerable number of terms, relating to the religion, is common in Pali and Sanskrit variants. 'Buddhist Sanskrit', however, is not exactly 'Classical Sanskrit' and Franklin Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit* (Yale University Press, 1953) is a standard work on the subject.

Below are a few examples of variants between Pali and Sanskrit: P. *Ācariya*—S. *Ācārya*; P. *Amata*—S. *Amṛta*; P. *Bhikkhu*—S. *Bhikṣu*; P. *Bhatti*—S. *Bhakti*; P. *Cetiya*—S. *Caitya*; P. *Dhamma*—S. *Dharma*; P. *Hammiya*—S. *Harmya*; P. *Magga*—S. *Mārga*; P. *Paññā*—S. *Prajñā*; P. *Pātimokkha*—S. *Prātimokṣa*; P. *Sanḅhakkamma*—S. *Sanḅhakarma*; P. *Satthā*—S. *Sāstā*; P. *Thūpa*—S. *Stūpa*; etc.

(ii) *References in the Footnotes*

The system of reference in the footnotes is as follows:

- (a) Original texts in Pali and Sanskrit are referred to by chapter and paragraph (e.g. Mahāvagga, I, 11, 1; Mahāparinibbāna Suttanta, III, 8; Dīpavaṃsa, 5, 52; Chāndogya, 2, 23; Pāṇini III, 2, 97; Mahābhāṣya, III, 1, 26).
- (b) For published works, excepting well-known and standard ones (like Rhys Davids' *Buddhist India*, Nanjio's *Catalogue of the Chinese Tripitaka*, etc.), the author's name, the name of the publisher and the edition or the year of publication are given in the earlier references, but in later references only the author's name and an abbreviated title, as Beal's *Buddhist Records*, (Nilkanta) Sastri's *Comprehensive History*, Ray Chaudhuri's *Political History*, Lüders' *List*, etc.
- (c) Cross references are given according to Part and Section of the work (e.g. Part II, sec. 3).
- (d) In order to avoid repeating myself, I have made some references to my two earlier titles—*Early Buddhist Monachism*, published in 1924 by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. in Trübner's Oriental Series; and *The Buddha and Five After-Centuries*, published by Luzac and Co. in 1957.

