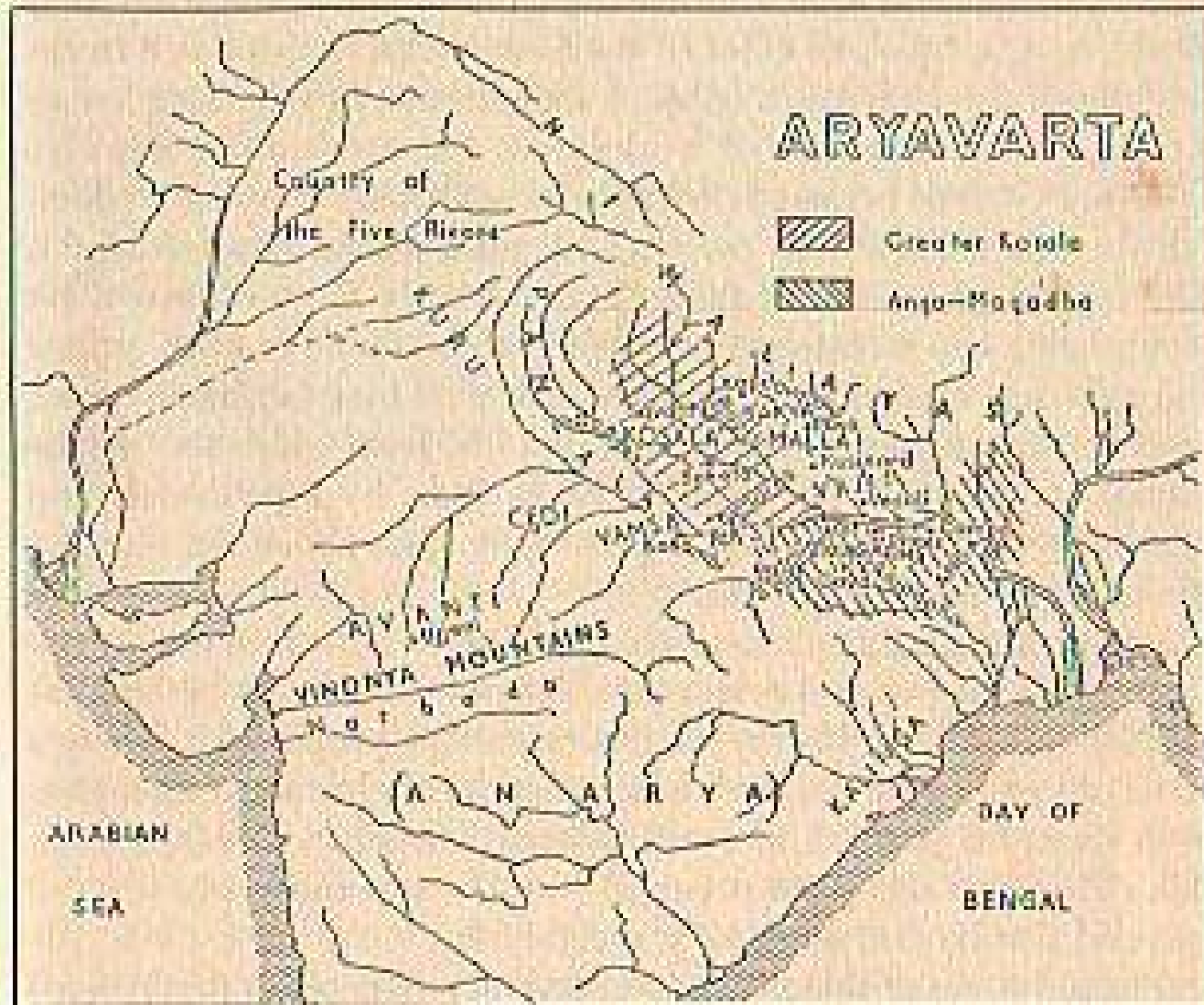


Buddhism in India: a brief strategic study by Piya Tan



MAP III

The Āryan Kingdoms, Principalities and Republican States of India in the time of Gotama

2. Buddhism & History

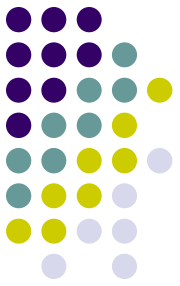
What is “strategic study”?

- (1) What are the strong points of Buddhism?
- (2) How were these strengths used by Buddhists & others?
- (3) What are the weaknesses of Buddhism?
- (4) What do we learn from the patterns in Buddhist history?

- Time: linear & cyclic.
- The Axial Age (Jaspers): 700-800 BCE.

6th century BCE:

- Persia: Zoroaster
- Middle East: Deutero-Isaiah
- Greece: Pythagoras
- China: Confucius
- India: Buddha



3. Pre-Buddhist India

- Iron Age.
- Iron: better weapons for warfare.
- Urbanization: more town and cities.
- Buddha's public ministry in urban areas
—intellectual character of his teachings.
- Buddha, a guide.
- Buddhists: liberal spiritual education.

4. Historical periods

- 1st period: 500-0 BCE (Early Buddhism)
 - Ascetic & monastic Buddhism
- 2nd period: 0 CE-500 (Mahayana)
 - Popular Buddhism
- 3rd period: 500-1000 (Tantra & Chan)
 - Magical & contemplative Buddhism
- 4th period: 1000-2000 (Modern B'sm)
 - Pragmatic Buddhism

5. Religious focus

- ◆ 1st period: psychological questions.
- ◆ 2nd period: ontological questions.
- ◆ 3rd period: indigenization; socialization.
- ◆ 4th period: pragmatic; globalization.

6. Religious virtuosi



- Religious virtuoso: expert, specialist:

One who is perceived as having a command of Buddhism by sheer personality and social status.

- 1st period: Arhat
- 2nd period: Bodhisattva
- 3rd period: Siddha
- 4th period: Śreṣṭhī

7. The Sangha after the Buddha

- 1st Council: Rājagṛha (sponsor: Ajātaśatru), 543 BCE
- Purāṇa of Dakkhiṇa, giri:

“Well recited are the Dhamma and Vinaya, but I will remember the Buddha’s teaching from what I have heard directly in his presence, what I have received directly from him.” (V 2:290)
- 2nd Council: Vaiśālī (sponsor: Kālāśoka), 350 BCE:

Mahāsaṅghika broke away → Mahayana.

8. Mahāsaṅghika

- Mahāsaṅghika = “the Great Sangha Party”
- Roots of Mahayana.

Differed from the Sthaviras (Theras) :

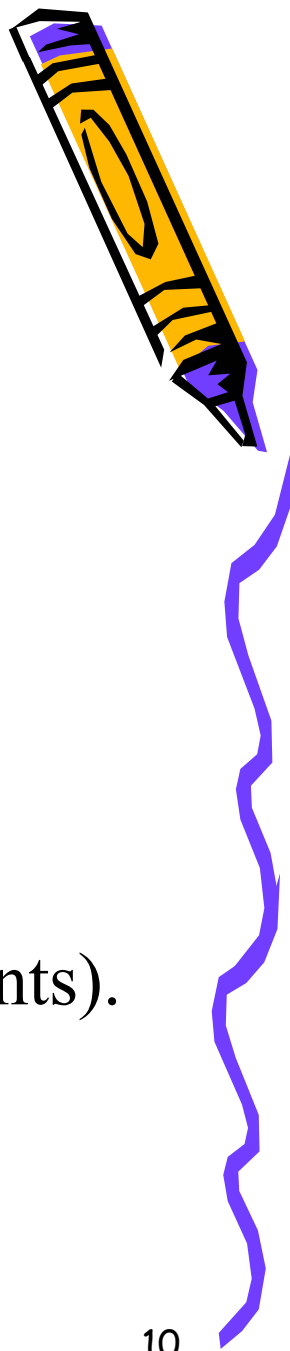
- Buddha as supramundane (*lokottara*).
- Bodhisattva ideal:
 - The Buddha could live “for a kalpa or the remainder of a kalpa” (D 2:104)
- Centres: Amarāvātī & Nāgārjunakoṇḍā

9. Early Buddhist canons

- Oral tradition.
- Prosody: system of versification.
- Communal chanting (*sangīti*).
- Sthaviravāda: Pali canon → Theravāda.
- Common textual materials predate schism.

10. Original teachings

- Hīnayāna Buddhism = Nikāya Buddhism.
- Sthaviravāda = Vibhajjavāda = Theravāda.
- Sarvāstivāda canon in Chinese.
- Vinaya (Theravada):
 - Sutta Vibhaṅga: Pāṭimokkha (Prātimokṣa)
 - Khandhaka: procedural rules (historical accounts).
 - Parivāra: summaries & classification of rules.



11. Sutra

Dīgha Nikāya	Dīrgha Āgama	(Long Sayings)
Majjhima Nikāya	Madhyama Āgama	(Middle-length S.)
Samyutta Nikāya	Samyukta Āgama	(Connected Sayings)
Anguttara Nikāya	Ekottara Āgama	(Numerical Sayings)
[Khuddaka Nikāya]	[Avadāna]	

- Khuddaka Nikāya (Minor Collection)
- Avadāna (Edifying Stories)



12. Abhidharma

- 1st Council: “Dhamma-vinaya”
- “Abhidhamma”: 1st mention in Commentaries.

Theravāda

- 1.Dhamma.saṅgaṇī
- 2.Vibhaṅga
- 3.Puggala Paññatti
- 4.Dhātu,kathā
- 5.Yamaka
- 6.Paṭṭhāna
- 7.Kathā,vatthu

Sarvâstivāda

- 1.Jñāna,prasthāna (Katyāyanī,putra)
- 2.Prakaraṇa,pāda (Vasumitra)
- 3.Vijñāṇa,kāya (Deva,śarman/Deva,kṣema)
- 4.Dharma,skandha (Śāriputra)
- 5.Prajñapti,śāstra (Maudgalyāyana)
- 6.Dhātu,kāya (Pūrṇa)
- 7.Saṅgīti,paryāya (Mahā Kauṣṭhila)

13. Asoka & Buddhism

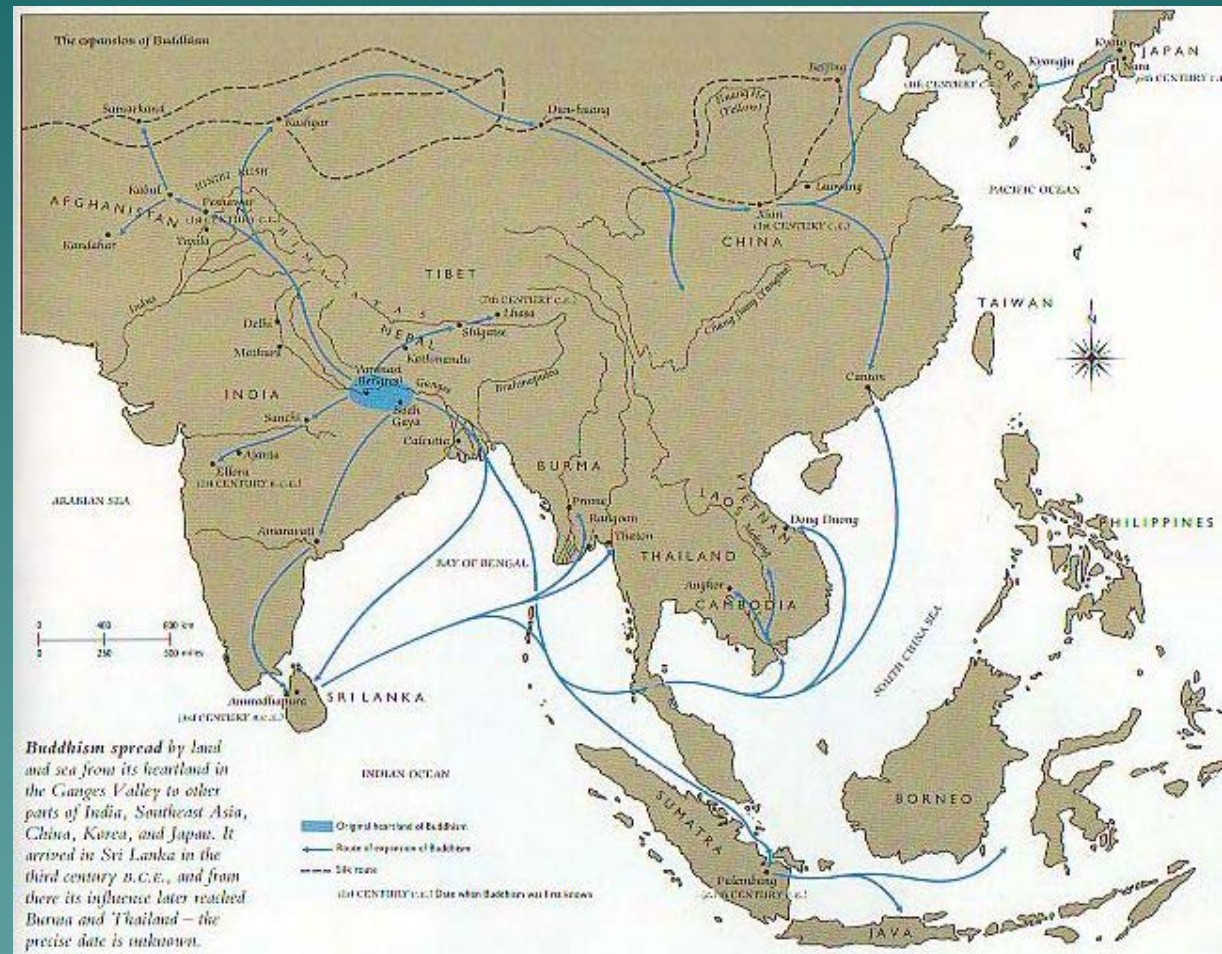
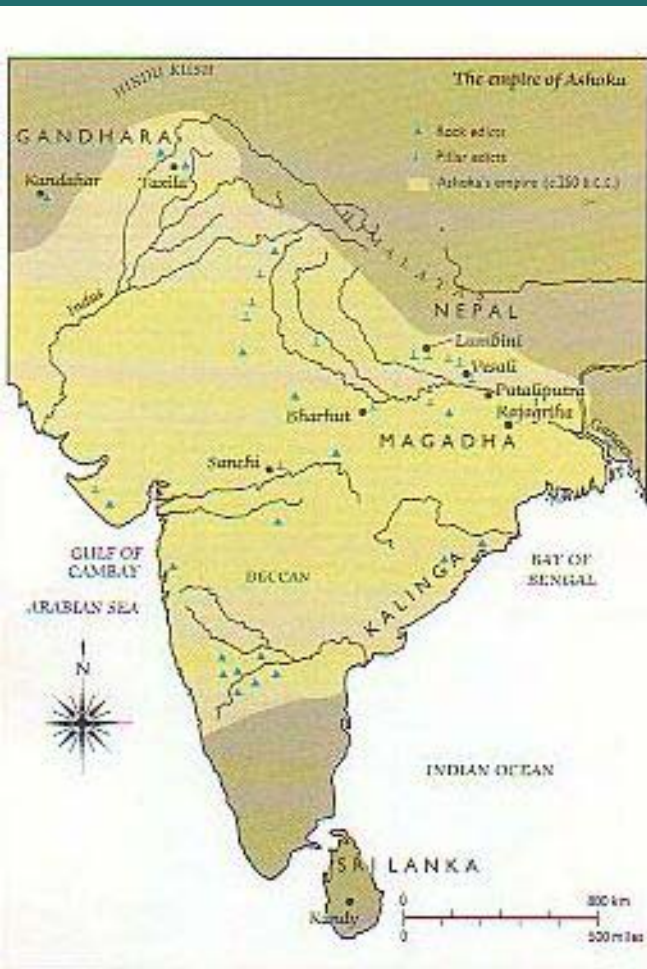


- Asoka (r. c.268-239 BCE).
- Edicts (stones, cave-walls, granite pillars).
- Buddhism: India's 1st state religion.
- **3rd Council (Pataliputra)**
—Moggalī,putta Tissa: Kathā,vatthu.
- Schism: Kauśambī, Sāñcī, Sārnāth.
- 18 schools of Buddhism.

← *Asokan pillar, Lumbini*



14. Spread of B'sm Outside India



15. Greek Buddhists

- Alexander the Great (336-323 BCE).
- Chandragupta Maurya (r. c.321-297 BCE).
- Asoka: sent Majjhantika to NW India.
- Theodoros (*meridarkh*) donated stupa.
- Dhammarakkhita, Greek monk.
- Menander & Nāgāsenā: Milindapañha

16. Foreign powers in India

Śaka (a Scythian tribe of C. Asia):

- ◆ 180 CE: Uighurs → Śaka → Bactria
- ◆ Xiongnu → Uighurs → (Bactria) → Śaka → NW India.
- ◆ 100 CE: Maues, 1st Śaka king.

Pahlava (of Parthia) (Chin. *anxi*):

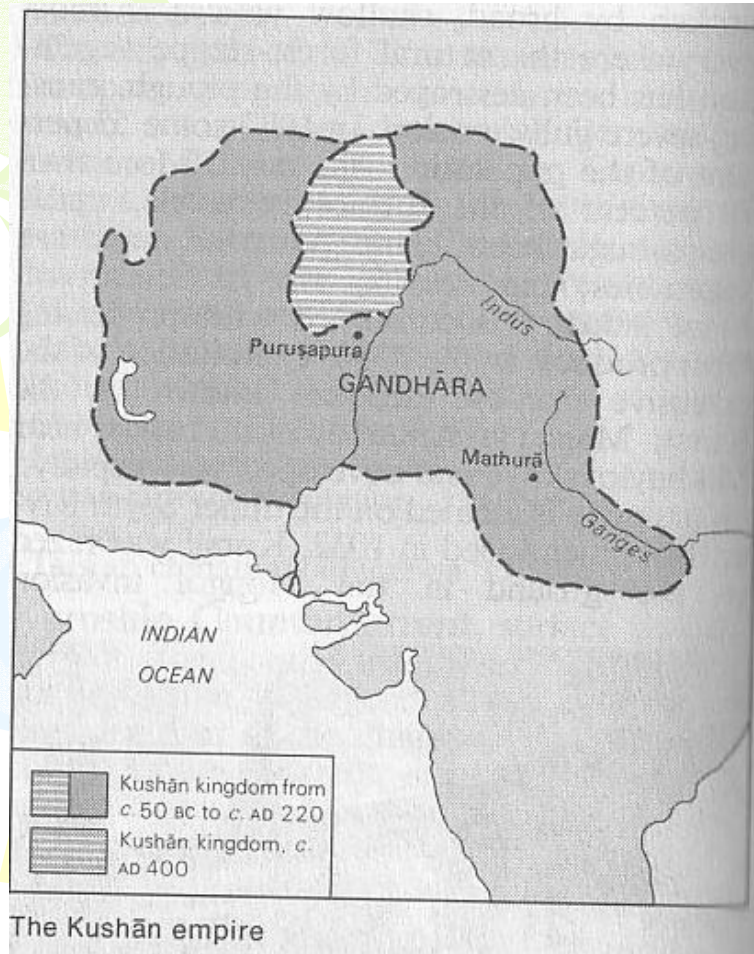
- ◆ 3rd century: king Arsakes
- ◆ King Gondopharnes: ruled NW India.

17. The Kushans

- Kushan or Kuṣāṇa (Chin. *Dayuezhi*)
- China → Xiongnu → Kushan → Greek kingdoms → NW India.
- Kanishka (r. c.78-123)
- Mahayana “Asoka”.
- 4th Council (Kashmir): Mahāvibhāṣā
- Gandhāra school of art.



Gandhari Buddha image



The Kushan Empire,
50 BCE-220 CE



Gold coin by Kanishka, with
Greek word "BODDO", 100 CE

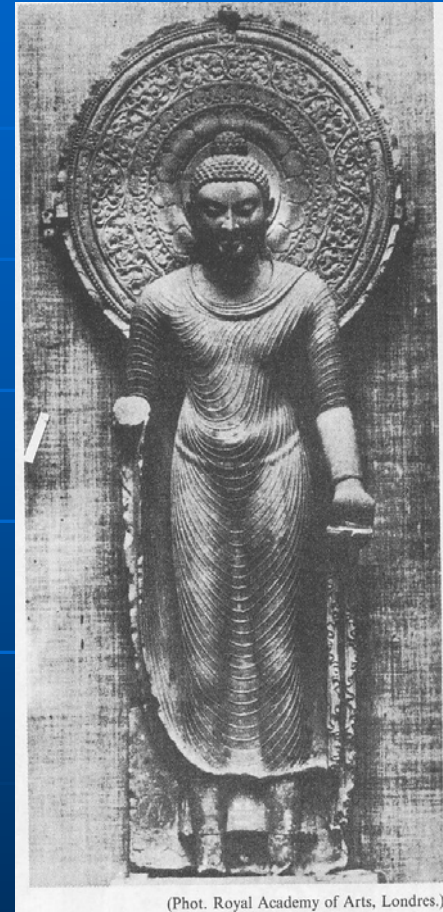
18. The three shrines (*cetiya*)

1. **Analogous (bodily) forms** (*sarīrika cetiya*)
—relics, hair, footprint.
2. **Chrematographic forms** (*paribhogika cetiya*)
—robe, almsbowl, Dharma-seat, Bodhi tree.
3. **Memorial forms** (*uddesika cetiya*)
—dharma, cakra, trident, stupa, image.



"Aniconic" = symbolic.

19. The first Buddha images



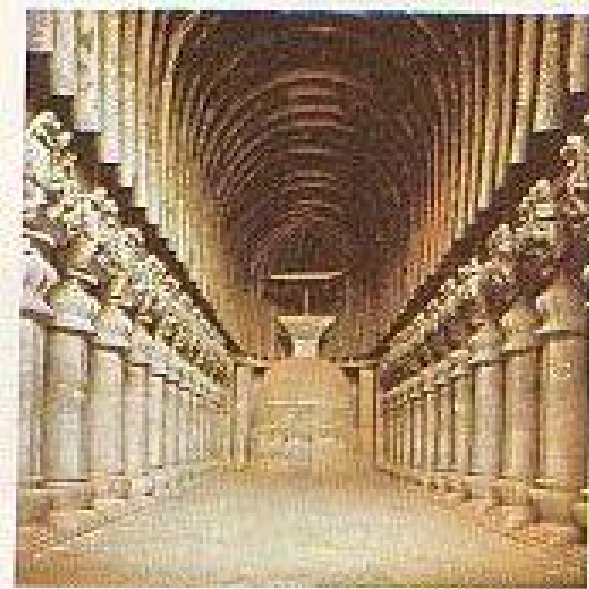
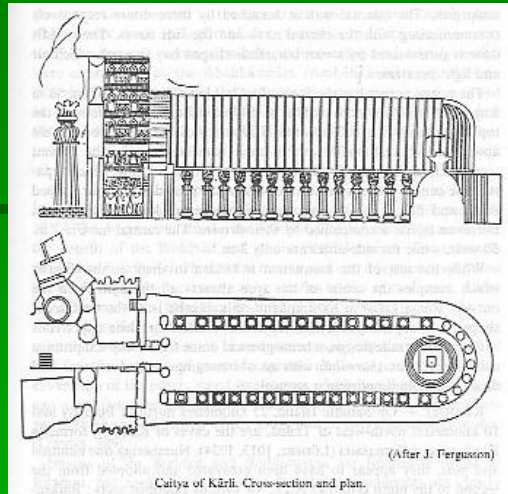
(Phot. Royal Academy of Arts, Londres.)



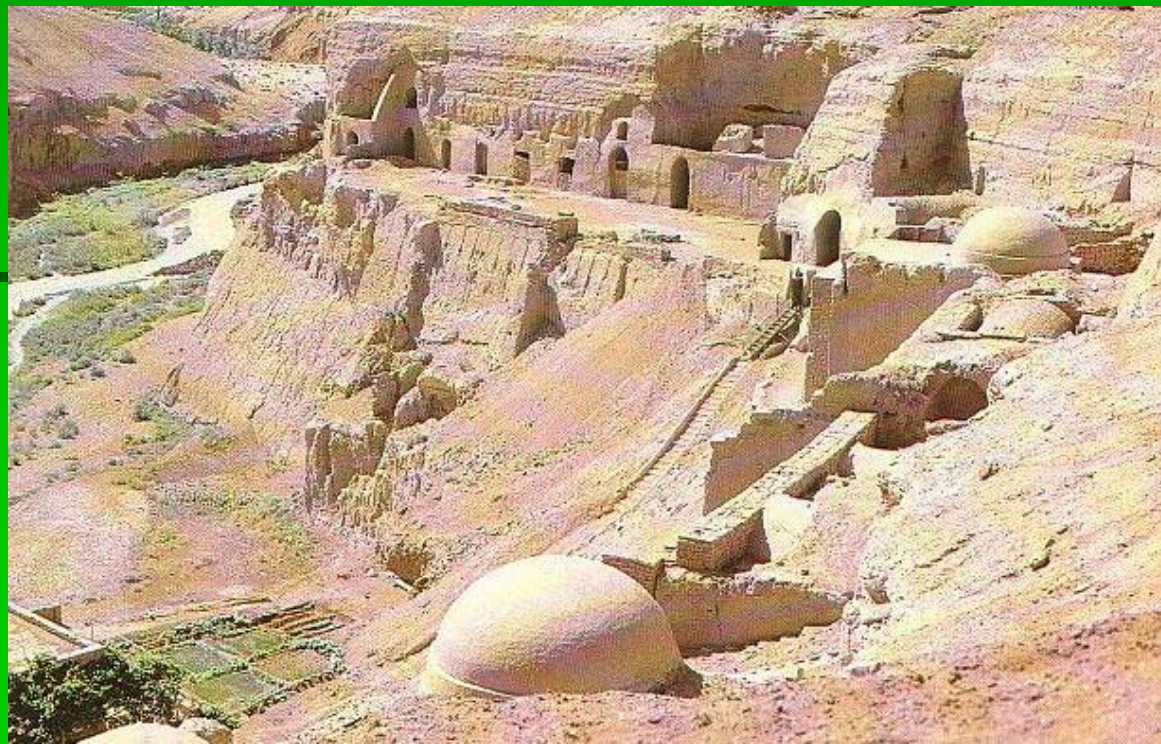
- Gandhari Buddha images: Greek.
- Mathura Buddha images: Asian & Mixed→

20. Cave temples

- India: about 1200 cave temples
- —75% Buddhist.
- —oldest: 2nd/1st centuries BCE.
- **Ajantā (1817)**, Bhāja, Nāsik, Kārli, Ellora.
- *Cetiya, ghara; vihāra.*

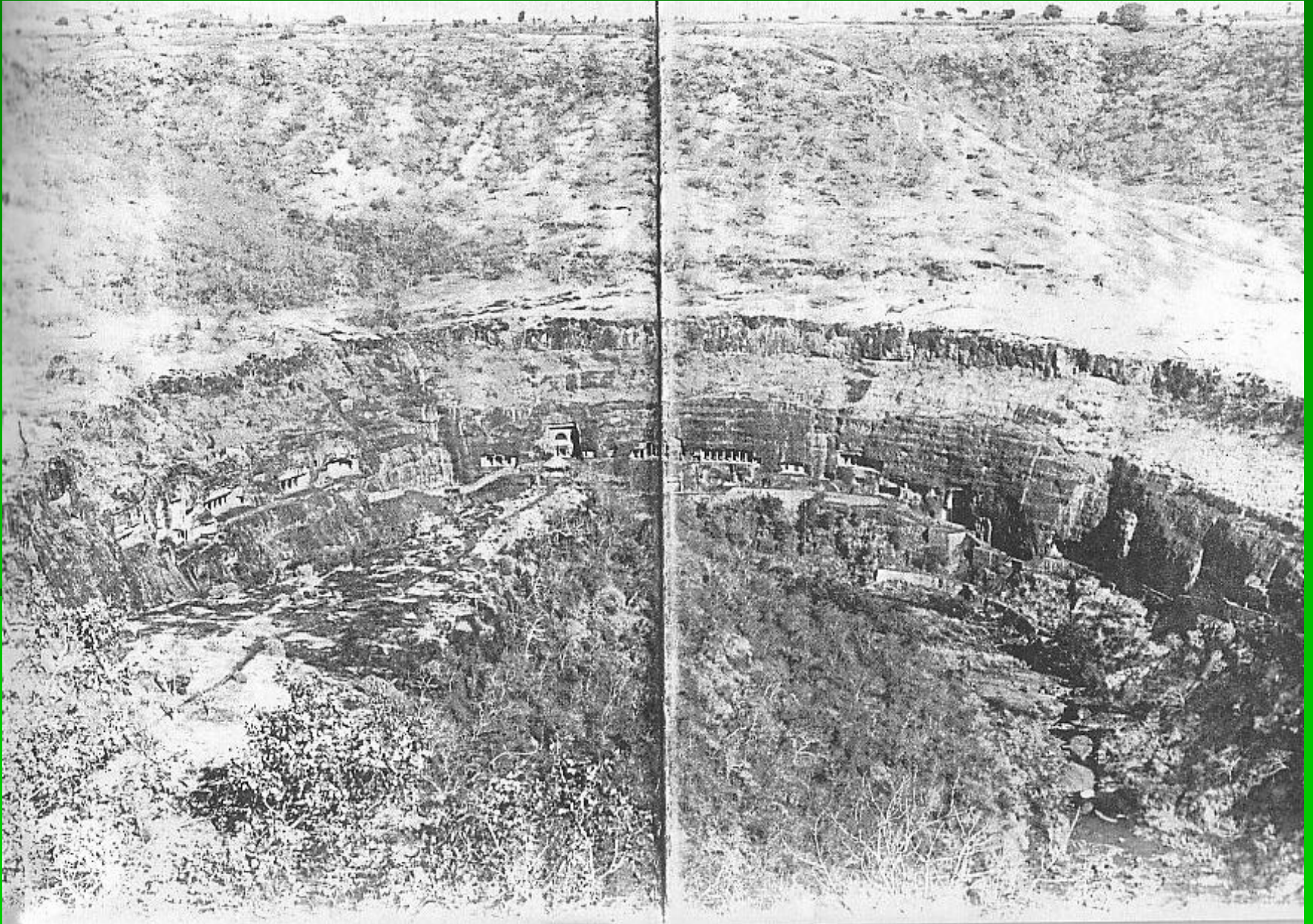


Central nave of the Cetiya of Kārli, near Pune (Poona), India



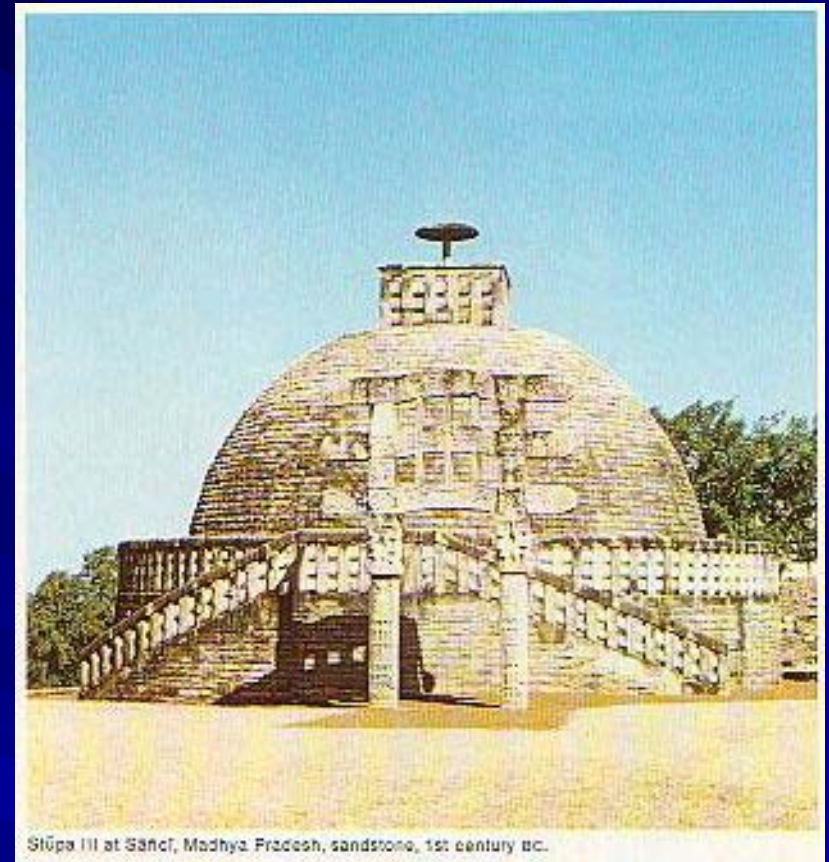
Bezeklik, n. Turkestan

Ajanta caves on the Wagora river

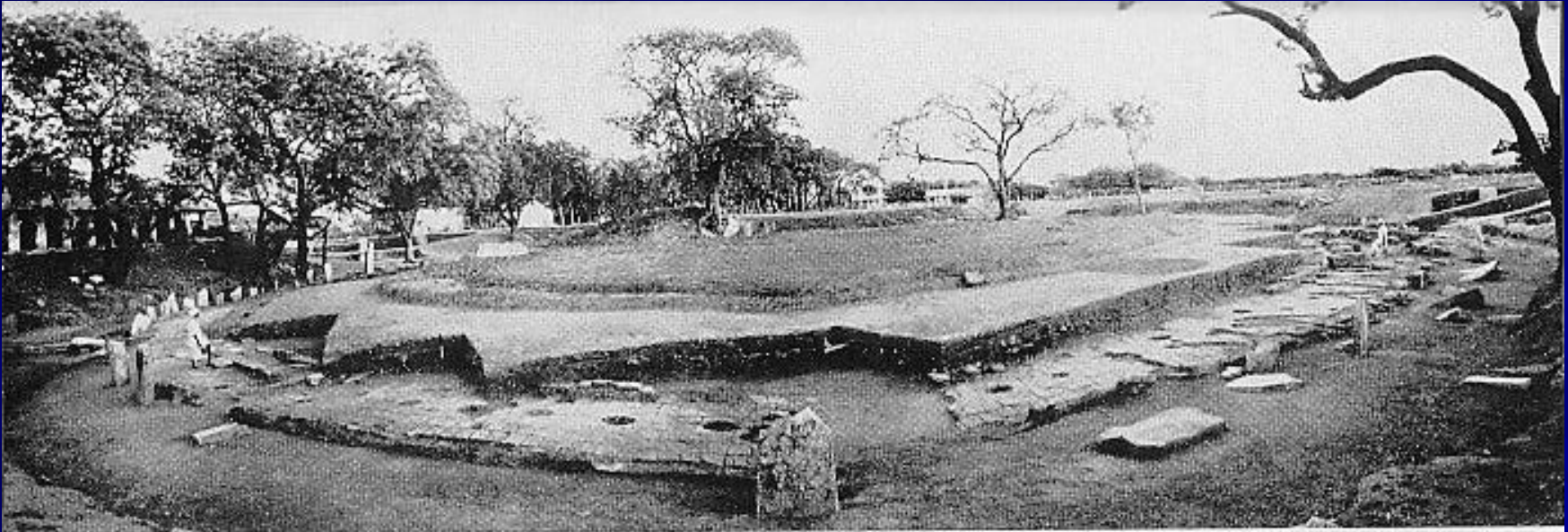


21. Stupas

- *Stūpa* = a memorial mound or shrine.
- Amarāvātī (begun 200 BCE):
 - about 50 m ϕ , 30 m high.
 - discovered in 1797.
- Śātavāhana king Pulumāyi (2nd cent.)
- Nāgārjunakonda (s. India)
- Śrīparvata: Culadhammagiri monastery.

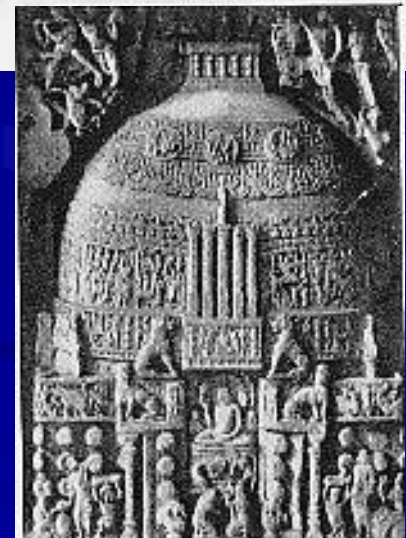


Amaravati stupa (foundations)



7. *The great Amaravati Stupa (of which only the foundations remain).* (Photo: Department of Archaeology, N.E. Project, Guntur)

How the Amaravati Stupa originally looked like.



22. Stupa worship

- ◆ Mahayana: initially lay-oriented.
- ◆ Dependence of Buddha as saviour.
- ◆ **Mahāparinibbāna Sutta:**
And whoever lays wreaths or puts sweet perfumes and colours there with a devout heart, will reap benefit and happiness for a long time. (D 2:141 f.; see also 1:143)



Stupa worship 2nd cent.
(Gandhara)

23. Lay specialists

- CE: Stupas built within temples premises.
- Sarvāstivāda & Mahāsaṅghika Vinaya:
 - mention Buddha images.
 - defines “stupa property”.
- Stupa specialists: “neither lay nor monastic”.
- Visualization of Buddha.
- Vimutti Sutta:
 - “the monk recites Dharma in detail” (A 3:21)
- Bodhisattva,gaṇa.



24. Devotional Buddhism

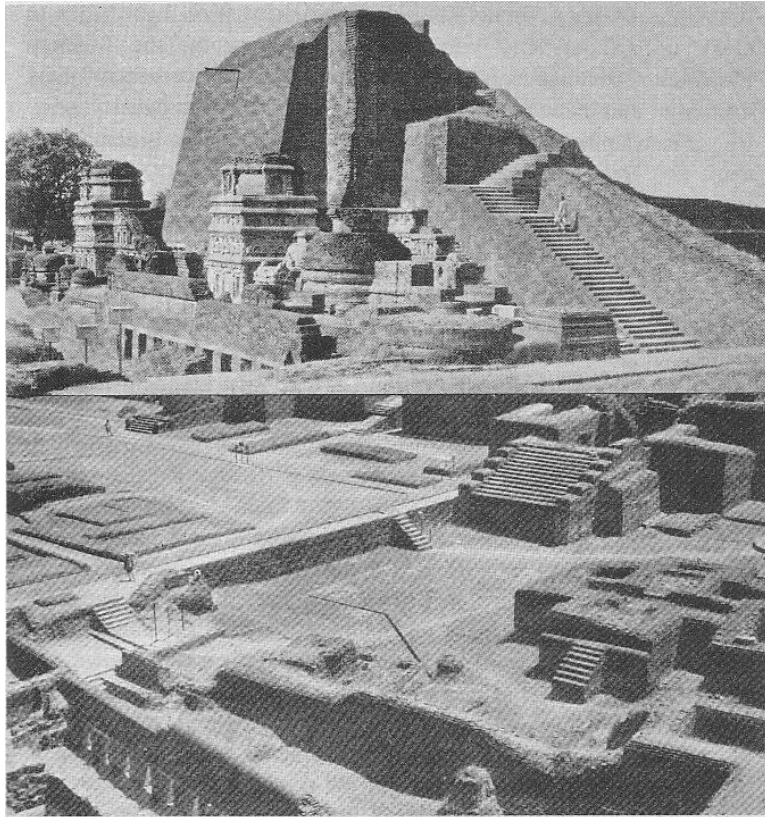
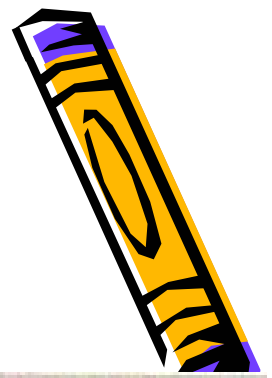
- Kanishka: patron of Mahayana
- Aśvaghoṣa: Buddha,carita.
- Inspirational biography of divinized Buddha.
- Mahāsaṅghika: Mahāvastu (divinized Buddha).
- Bhagavad Gītā:
- *“The world has no virtue,” they say, | “No basis, no Lord, | It has not come through causation, | It is caused by desire only.”*
- *Bhakti* movement.
- Zoroastrianism (Persia).

25. Philosophical Buddhism

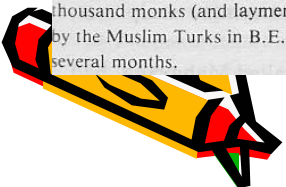
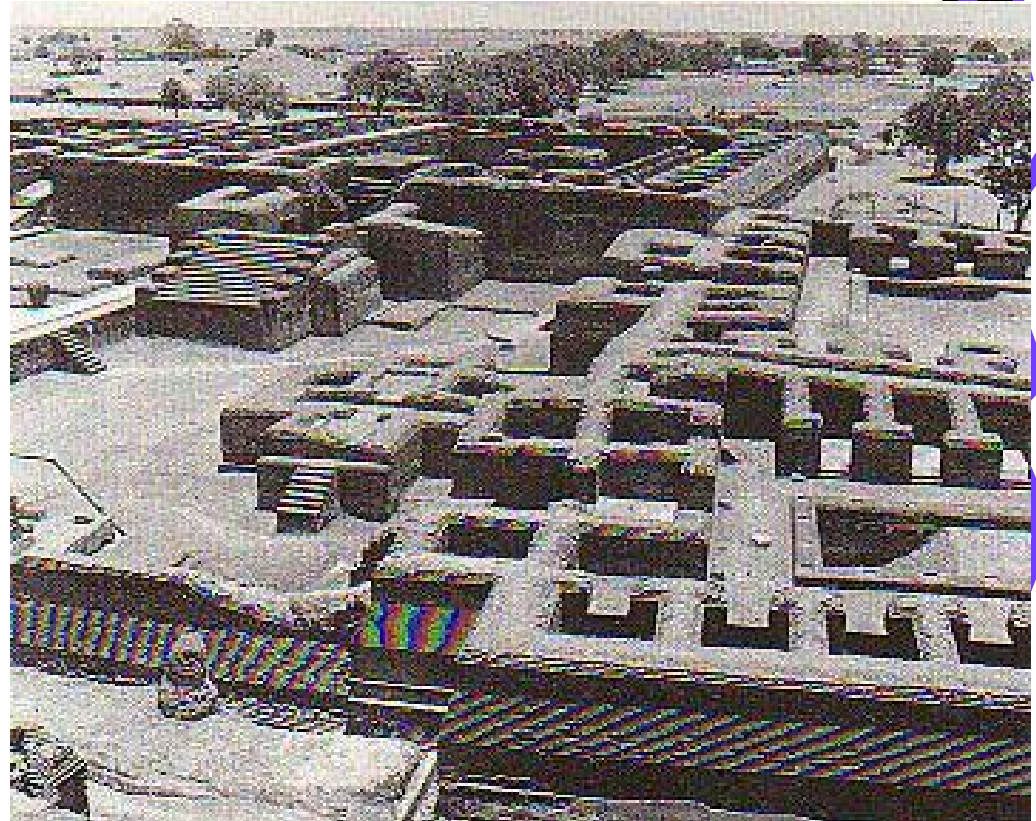
- Nāgārjuna & Āryadeva.
- Madhyamaka: everything is "empty".
- Mūla, madhyamaka Kārikā (Nāgārjuna)
- Prajñā Pāramitā = Perfection of Wisdom.
- Nālandā: oldest university in the world.
- Valabhī, Vikramaśilā, Odantāpurī.
- Sautrāntika; Pudgalavāda.



Ruins of Nalanda University

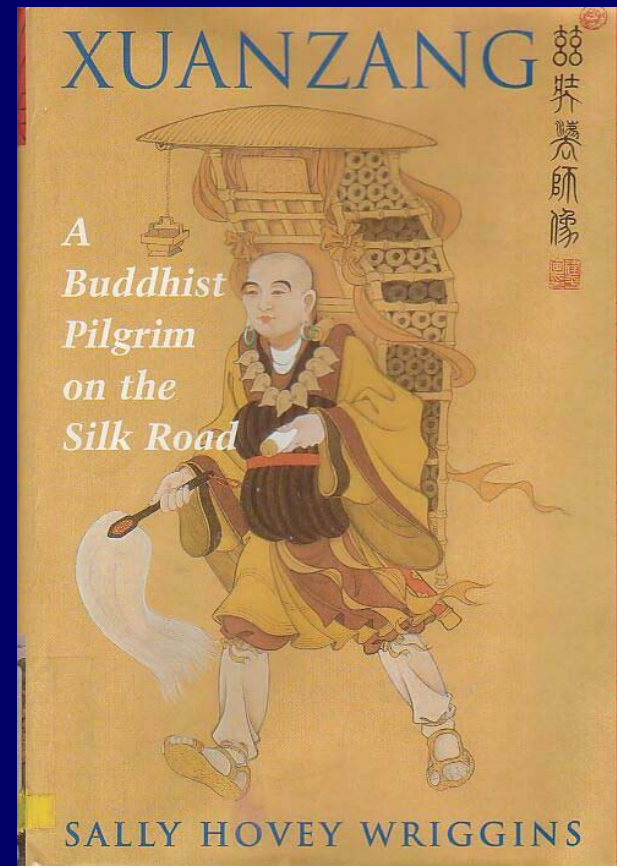


Remains of the great University of Nālandā (stupa, *above*, and monastery, *below*). About ten thousand monks (and laymen) lived, taught and studied here when it was burnt and destroyed by the Muslim Turks in B.E. 1740/1197 C.E. The burning away of the university library took several months.



26. Gupta period & after

- Gupta period (320-c. 500 CE): Faxian.
- Persecutions by Toramāṇa (c. 500) & Mihirakula (c. 515).
- **Emperor Harsha** (c. 590-c. 647)
 - Xuanzang (Chinese pilgrim).
 - 1st diplomatic relations with China.



27. Classical Mahayana

- Gupta period: Buddhism survived.
- Asaṅga (fl. 4th-5th cent.): Yogācāra.
—Mahāyāna, saṅgraha
- Vasubandhu (fl. 4th cent.): Abhidharmakośa
—Sautrāntika influence.

28. In what sense is Mahayana “great”?

- ◆ Origins: south & northwestern India.
- ◆ Lay-oriented.
- ◆ More comprehensive doctrines.
- ◆ Indigenization of doctrines.
- ◆ Positive responses to other religions.
- ◆ Roman Catholics: Buddhist influences
--Vatican II (1962-65): ecumenism.
- ◆ Writing & translations: bases of Mahayana.

29. Rise of Tantra

- Tantra: response to scholasticism.
- Tantra philosophy: Madhyamaka.
 - Method: rituals (some “secret”).
 - Goal: magical attainments.
- Richard Gombrich:

“Buddhist Tantra is so much more discontinuous with earlier B’sm than Hindu Tantra is with earlier Hinduism.” (*The World of Buddhism*, 1984: 86)
- Tantric master: ***siddha***.
- Atiśa (980/90-1055); Naropa (1016-1100)

30. Rise of Hinduism

- 637: Muslims sacked Ctesiphon (Persia).
- Buddhism “migrated” to NE India: Pāla dynasty
- 711: Muslims occupied Pakistan.
- Populist Hinduism.
- Śankara (700?-750?): crypto-Buddhist?
- Hindu assimilation of Buddhism.
- Bhagavad Gita: *avatāra* (incarnation).
- Buddha was never “Hindu” (anachronism)!

31. Disappearance of Buddhism from India

- Failure to respond to *bhakti* movement.
- Persecutions: Puśyamitra & Śaśanka, etc.
- Lack of royal patronage.
- Buddhist “brain-drain”: migrations.
- Muslim devastation.
- Pockets of Buddhists: Himalayas, far eastern states; southern areas.

32. Colonial India



- Colonial British non-interference of local religion.
- 1885: Edwin Arnold wrote to London *Telegraph*.
- Anagarika Dharmapala (Sri Lanka):
- 1891: **Maha Bodhi Society** @ Buddha Gaya.
- By 1900: Branches at Madras, Kushinagar; Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka)
- 1920: vihara in Calcutta.
- 1931: vihara in Sarnath with facilities.

Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya

33. Modern India

- ▶ Post-War India: Pandit Nehru (1st PM).
- ▶ Wrote *The Discovery of India* (1956).
- ▶ 1956: *2,500 Years of Buddhism & The Art of Buddhism*.
- ▶ B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) →
- ▶ 1956: harijans (untouchables) converted to Buddhism.
- ▶ 1959: Tibetan diaspora.



Maitreya project

JUST HOW BIG IS IT?



INDIA
Maitreya statue
152.4 metres



NEW YORK
Statue Of Liberty
93 metres



AFGHANISTAN
Bamiyan Buddha
53 metres



HONGKONG
Tian Tan Buddha
26 metres

QUESTION: Why so large?

ANSWER: The bigger the statue, the more people will go and see the statue; and the more sentient beings use the statue to purify the mind, the more sentient beings will benefit.

SOURCE: THE MAITREYA PROJECT
BOOK # 296 (DECEMBER 1999)



LOCATION, LOCATION

◆ The Maitreya Buddha in Bodhgaya is 3 km from the Mahabodhi Temple, where more than 2,500 years ago, under a pipal tree, Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment.

◆ At the moment, Bodhgaya attracts about 100,000 visitors a year. These visitors either take the three-hour, 120-km road trip to the place from Patna, Bihar's capital, where there is a domestic airport, or travel by train

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