

An Introduction to Buddhist Archaeology

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## Abstract

This introduction to the volume provides background information necessary for understanding the arrangement and content of the succeeding articles. The origin and general concepts of the Buddhist religion as they affect material culture are set out, with a glossary of terms keyed to all the articles. The spread of Buddhism is then briefly described through Sri Lanka into Southeast Asia, and through Afghanistan into East Asia. The articles are subsequently arranged in this geographical order. Because of the cumulative nature of the information presented, following the chronological development and spread of the religion, the volume is best read from beginning to end.

## Keywords

Asia; Buddhism; historic archaeology; standing monuments; sculpture; ritual sites.

## Buddhist origins in India

Buddhism as a religion grew out of the teachings of an historic individual, Siddhartha Gautama, who lived in the sixth century BC in north-eastern India. Born in Lumbini (now in Nepal) overlooking the Ganges river valley, he was a prince in the Gautama clan of the Śākya tribe. Much of his life is legendary, but the outline of his development as usually presented is as follows (see Bechert and Gombrich 1984 for details). At the age of 29, disgusted by the poverty and injustice he saw in his father's kingly capital of Kapilavastu (Fig. 1) and resentful of the traditional claims of contemporary priests, the *brahmins*, that 'the *Vedas* [texts] were the sole and infallible source of religious truth' (Ch'en 1968: 11), he rejected his luxurious worldly ways for the life of an ascetic. After six years of severe austerities, enlightenment (*bodhi*; for Buddhist terms, see glossary on p. 183) occurred to the 35-year-old Siddhartha as he sat meditating under a banyan tree in Bodhgayā. The lecture 'Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of the Law' (Ch'en 1968: 24), which he gave in the Deer Park in Vārānasi immediately after his shocking realizations, forms the essence of Buddhist doctrine. Siddhartha thereafter became known as the *Buddha* (meaning 'one who had attained . . . enlightenment' [Ch'en 1968: 13]) or Śākyamuni

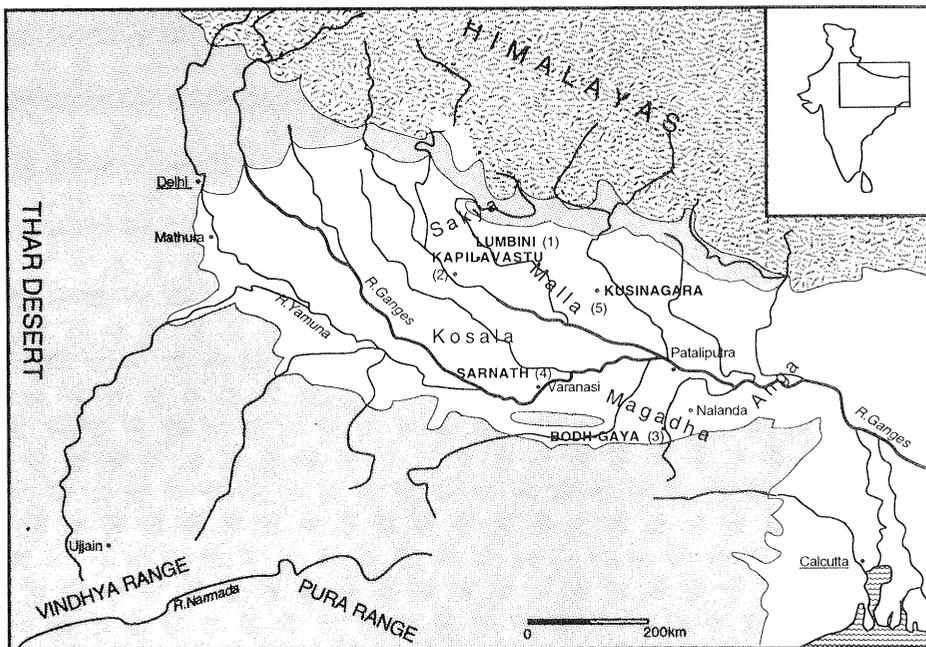


Figure 1 The Ganges river valley, home of the Buddhist tradition. The historic Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was born at Lumbini (1: modern Rummindei), renounced the secular world at Kapilavastu (2: modern Tilora-kot), attained perfect enlightenment under the *bodhi*-tree at Bodhgayā (3: modern Buddh Gaya), gave his first sermon in the Deer Park at Sarnath (4: modern Vārānasi [Banaras] and died at Kuśinara (5: modern Kuśinagara). (Redrawn, after Zürcher 1962, by J. Wright.)

(meaning ‘the sage from the tribe of the Śākya’ [Conze 1959: 34]). He continued teaching his doctrine (*dharma*) until he died at Kuśinara perhaps at the age of 80. Thence he entered absolute *nirvāṇa*, the final and permanent release from continuing reincarnation. The four sites of Lumbini, Bodhgayā, Vārānasi and Kuśinara – all in the lower Ganges river drainage – are said to have been chosen by Siddhartha himself as ‘places which should be honored after his death’ (Conze 1959: 34). Several have formed the major sites of Buddhist pilgrimage in north-eastern India throughout the millennia (Plate 1).

Upon his death, the body of the historical Buddha was cremated, and his remains (fragments of bones and teeth) were allegedly ‘distributed among the nine ruling clans from various regions’ (Zürcher 1962: 24). These bodily ‘relics’ became objects of worship themselves and came to be enshrined in architectural structures called *stūpas*, whose form had evolved from traditional north Indian burial mounds (Chakrabarti Fig. 4, this volume). These form some of the earliest archaeological remains of Buddhism in India. As a shrine for the Buddha’s relics, *stūpas* were transformed into other architectural structures (such as *dagobas* in Sri Lanka, pagodas in East Asia) as Buddhism spread beyond the sub-continent.

Buddhist *dharma* was drawn from the traditions of contemporaneous Brahmanism

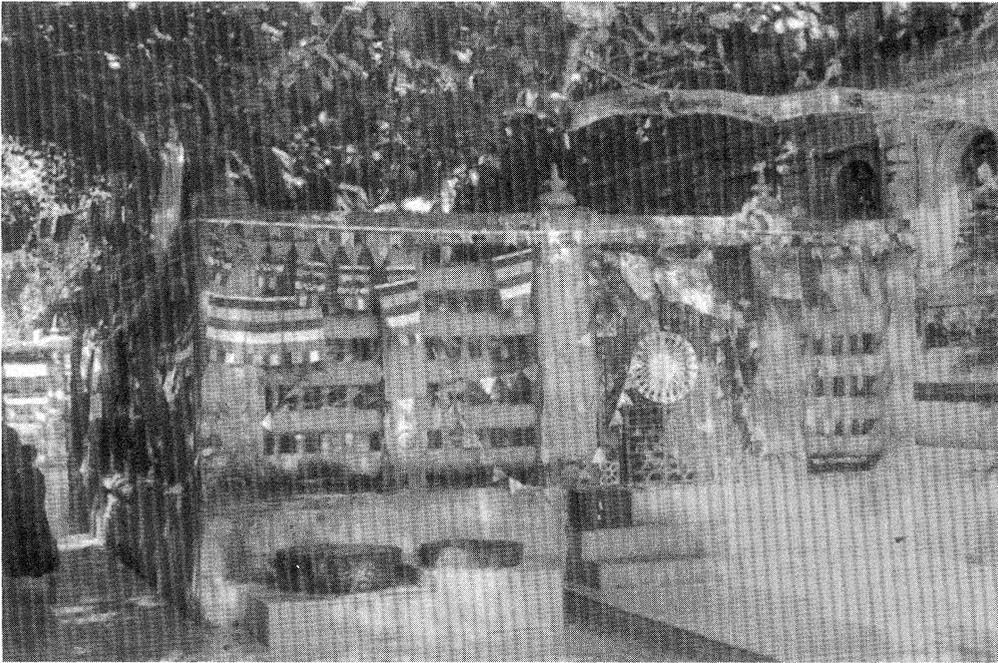


Plate 1 The *bodhi*-tree at modern Buddh Gaya, in Bihār state of north-eastern India, surrounded by a ceremonial carved-stone railing and hung with banners to welcome pilgrims (photo J. Wright).

(Conze 1959: 34), a metaphysical system which has dominated Indian thought before and after the brief flourishing of Buddhism in its native country, eventually becoming known as Hinduism. In particular, Śākyamuni adopted the native view of reincarnation and the cycle of birth and death – from which escape was the essential goal of the living being. Progress to such an escape (enlightenment/*bodhi*), followed by entrance to *nirvāṇa* (the extinction of greed, hatred and delusion), could best be achieved by leading a religious life cut off from family and society (Ch'en 1969: 12). Thus Buddha's followers were encouraged also to renounce secular life and become monks, spreading the Buddhist doctrine far and wide.

For the first several centuries of Buddhist history, disciples and monks led an ascetic life, often entailing wandering and/or seclusion, and they depended on donations of food and begging. Once institutionalized, this lifestyle allowed the pursuit of enlightenment among the monkish community (*sangha*) which formed around the Buddhist doctrine. It became customary for itinerant or hermit monks to meet for periodic retreats at monasteries, often for two or three months during the rainy season, to confirm the teachings of the community. Later, settled monasteries were established and maintained through donations by lay persons of both high and low status. Such donations were made with the intent of improving the donors' *karma* in the cycle of death and rebirth. In north India, a brick or brick-and-stone building called a *vihāra* became the standard monastery form (Chakrabarti Fig. 6, this volume). In south India, caves carved into cliffs formed the earliest monasteries; many of the more elaborate of these have a similar floor plan to the free-standing *vihāra*.

From early in the history of Buddhism, the doctrine attracted the attention of powerful rulers who wished to improve their spiritual status (*karma*) by performing good deeds. King Aśoka (r. c. 274–236 BC) was the first royal patron of Buddhism. Having established the military supremacy of the Mauryan clan over northern India and areas now included in Pakistan and Afghanistan, he forsook violence as a means of unification and pledged to consolidate his rule through the non-violent teachings of the Buddha. Aśoka's moralizing edicts, engraved on stone, form some of the earliest Buddhist remains, and he is said to have created an apocryphal 84,000 *stūpas* in his lifetime (Zürcher 1962: 42), including those still extant at Sarnath and Sanchi.

In this volume, the evidence for early Buddhism in the material culture of India is reviewed by Dilip Chakrabarti in conjunction with the social context underpinning the development and spread of Buddhist teachings. Contrary to popular image, early Buddhist sites are found by Chakrabarti to be located primarily in cities, whereas the secluded monasteries are a later development. His analysis reveals an explosive growth of the religion in India under royal and merchant patronage between the third century BC and the third century AD, during which time many *stūpas*, worship halls (*chaitya*), monasteries (*vihāra*) – some rock-cut as at the famous sites of Ajantā and Ellora – were built.

Ajantā and Ellora are in the region of the western Deccan (Morrison Fig. 1, this volume), which was occupied by a strong state, Satavahana, in the period of Buddhist expansion. Kathleen Morrison in this volume traces the socio-political development of this region to assess not only the Buddhist impact but also the urbanizing influences heretofore thought to have emanated from the early northern polities in the Ganges river valley. Her identification of considerable pre-Mauryan complexity in the region argues against wholesale importation of urban systems from the Gangetic valley. And the beginnings of Buddhism in the region, she finds, were closely associated with the local production capacity of the Satavahana polity, rather than being directly linked to trade with the Gangetic valley.

In Gupta-period India (AD 300–650), Buddhism flourished, with occult tantric forms arising in the north-eastern Indian provinces and Nepal. Tantric Buddhism was later adopted as the major form in Tibet (cf. Snellgrove 1987) and thence exported to Mongolia. This form of Buddhism was based on a group of texts known as *tantras*, which described yogic practices, magical chants (*mantras*), geometric diagrams of the cosmos (*maṇḍala*), and other iconographic or ritual aids for achieving the Void (Saunders 1964: 75–81).

The maturation of Buddhism between the sixth and twelfth centuries AD on the Indian sub-continent is shown by Chakrabarti to have involved entrenchment in certain geographical areas while decline marked other regions. Monasteries underwent a transformation into large institutions of learning, resembling universities. These unfortunately became rich targets for Turkish Muslim invaders in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Ling 1981: 144–5). Finally, in the thirteenth century, Buddhism disappeared in its Indian homeland, as Hinduism and Islam became the dominant religions and philosophies. By this time, however, the Buddhist doctrine had been carried to the far ends of East and Southeast Asia, where it remains strong today in several different sectarian formats.

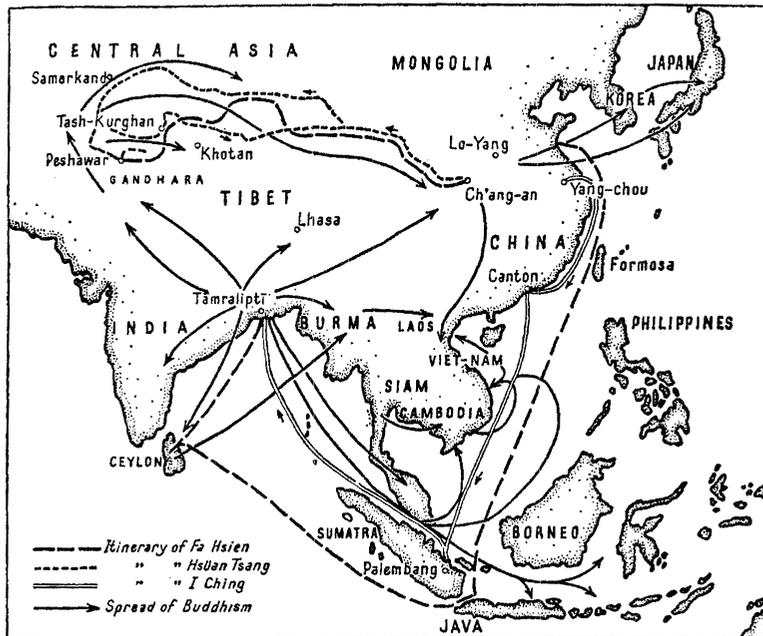


Figure 2 The spread of Buddhism from north-west India from the first millennium bc and the paths monks travelled from China in the fifth to seventh centuries in quest of Buddhist knowledge (Boulnois 1966: fig. 7).

## Sect and art

It is said that there were originally perhaps eighteen different forms of Buddhism in pre-Mauryan India (Ling 1981: 48). These were challenged by a new Buddhist philosophy in the first century bc which argued that the means to enlightenment was not 'the eradication of desire', as traditionally taught, but rather 'universal compassion'. The latter was thus called the 'greater vehicle' (*mahāyāna*) carrying one towards enlightenment, whereas the former means was disparaged as the 'lesser vehicle' (*hinayāna*). The earlier, regionally distinct forms of Buddhism – because they all preached the 'eradication of desire' – thus became lumped into the unflattering category of Hinayāna Buddhism.

By the end of the Mauryan empire in 185 bc, the Buddha's doctrine in many of these various forms had been carried by proselytizing monks and king Aśoka's enthusiasm into all corners of South Asia, Sri Lanka, perhaps Myanmar (former Burma), into Central Asia and perhaps all the way to China (Fig. 2). Both Hinayāna and Mahāyāna forms were spread in all directions beyond India in the early centuries, but many areas saw the predominance of one or the other at different times. In general, Southeast Asia – after an initial period of entertaining both types – became strongly Hinayānan in the medieval era, whereas Mahāyāna Buddhism seemed to win over in Central and East Asia.

The development of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its gestation in Central Asia have had great impact on Buddhist art. Subscribers to the 'greater vehicle' believed that anyone could become a *buddha* through the help of beings who were in the penultimate stage of



Figure 3 A *jātaka* story from a mural painting at Dunhuang, China, showing the Buddha in a previous life sacrificing himself to feed a starving tigress and her cub (after DRA 1981).

being, preceding enlightenment. These compassionate beings, who turned back to this world to help fellow travellers on the path to enlightenment, were termed *bodhisattvas* and became worshipped in their own right as saviours. Furthermore, Mahāyāna Buddhism received its greatest early developmental impetus in the north-west under the Hellenistic state of Bactria and its successor, the Kushan state, occupying areas now in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan (Fig. 6). Mahāyāna Buddhism thus absorbed the Hellenistic tradition of monumental human sculpture.

In the early centuries of Buddhism, pictorial art was used to decorate the stone gates and railings of *stūpas* in northern India. Themes were often drawn from the corpus of 547 *jātaka* (stories of the Buddha's previous lives) written in the Pali language (Fig. 3), and a series of motifs were developed from scriptural references to refer to the historical Buddha 'in absentia'. The four major motifs were the white elephant (symbolizing Siddhartha Gautama's conception as the entry of a mythical elephant into his mother's womb), the banyan tree under which he attained enlightenment, the wheel of the law (symbolizing Śākyamuni's first sermon), and a mound for his 'great decease' (Dutt 1957: 181). Minor symbols consisted of the Buddha's footprints, a lotus flower, a parasol, a ladder, etc. (ibid.).

Such aniconic representations stand in stark contrast to the great iconic sculptures of the *buddha* and *bodhisattvas* that developed in Mahāyāna Buddhism. By the medieval period, iconic representations had also penetrated the Hīnayāna traditions, and large *buddha* sculptures are found even in Southeast Asian countries. The hands of these *buddha* representations are often arranged in meaningful gestures (*mudrā*) (Fig. 4), and *bodhisattva* figures can always be iconographically identified by their jewelry and rich robes, showing they have not yet fully rejected this world (Fig. 5).

## The spread of Buddhism

### South Asia

Robin Coningham in this volume examines the documentary, inscriptional, and archaeological evidence for establishment of the religion in Sri Lanka. He concludes that modern



Figure 4 Various Buddhas with different hand gestures (*mudrās*) signalling such things as ‘concentration’ (second from left) and ‘fulfilling of the vow’ (second from right) (after Sullivan 1973: 112).

Buddhism on the island might be very similar to that first introduced to the island’s king Devanampiya Tissa by Aśoka’s son Mahinda. Of the eighteen original sects of Buddhism practised on the Indian subcontinent in pre-Mauryan times, the Sri Lankan form, Theravāda Buddhism, is the only survivor. Thus it is the sole representative of Hinayāna Buddhism in the world today. In the twelfth century, this Buddhist sect was reaffirmed and strengthened through the reforms of a Sinhalese king and was exported to the countries of continental Southeast Asia – which had already experienced earlier diffusions of the religion from India.

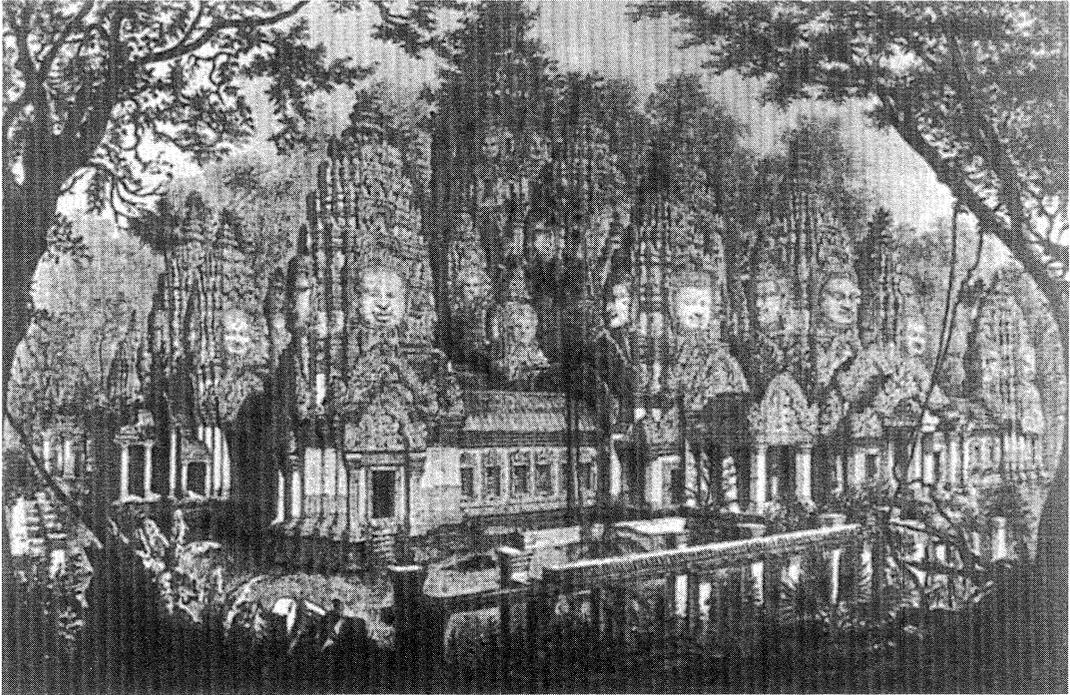
### *Southeast Asia*

From the early centuries AD, insular South-east Asia was exposed to many South Asian trends via the ocean trade routes established along the coasts of Indonesia and Malaysia. Until recently, the dominant paradigm of state formation in this region was ‘Indianization’, which implied wholesale implantation of South Asian status systems and bureaucratic apparatus in the region (Coedès 1968). This model is now being discarded in favour of indigenous complexity achieved and sustained through outside trading contacts (Christie 1995; Ray 1994); still, it seems that many Buddhist elements (both Mahāyāna and Theravādin) were imported at this time. The kings of the trading state Srivijaya (in Sumatra, modern Indonesia) became patrons of Buddhism from the latter half of the seventh century; and under the late eighth-century Sailendra dynasts on the Malay peninsula (modern Malaysia), Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished. Borobudur, a large temple in central Java, was constructed in this period of prosperity, but the religion was eclipsed in insular Southeast Asia by the coming of Islam in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The history of Buddhism in continental Southeast Asia has a different trajectory. Buddhism was transmitted westwards from north India from the third century AD into the areas of modern Myanmar (Burma), Thailand (Siam), Cambodia (Khmer) and Laos – primarily in conjunction with sea trade. Various sects (both Mahāyāna and Theravāda, among others) existed in complicated spatial and temporal distributions across these areas during the late first millennium AD, as discussed by Peter Grave in this volume. Among the early Buddhist monuments in this region, the temple of Angkor Wat in modern Cambodia is probably the most famous, but it shows a syncretism with Hindu elements. Equally



*Figure 5* A splendid *bodhisattva* from a mural at Mogao Caves, Dunhuang, China (after DRA 1981).



*Plate 2* The towers of the Bayon at Angkor Thom, sculpted in the likeness of King Jayavarman VII who built the complex as the centre of his capital and, by extension, of the world (engraving by C. Delaporte from 1867; cf. Mazzeo and Antonini 1978).

notable is the Bayon, centrepiece of the Khmer city of Angkor Thom built by King Jayavarman VII (r. 1181–1219?). Serving as the physical centre of the capital and philosophical centre of the world, this temple contains a multitude of towers, each of which has carved on all four sides the face of Jayavarman VII, keeping watch over the world (Plate 2). The king's countenance also appears on the *buddha* sculpture lodged inside the monument, identifying him as a *cakravartin*, a righteous king in the *Buddha* mould.

In the fourteenth century, the newly consolidated Sinhalese form of Theravāda Buddhism spread into continental Southeast Asia (Burma, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia) – routing most other forms of Buddhism and becoming the powerful, major religion of those societies. Today, these four countries share the same canon of scriptures with Sri Lanka, written in the ancient Pali language, and their monks adhere to the same strict codes of monastic behaviour (Ling 1981). Nevertheless, Theravādin practices were initially integrated into those societies in different ways. Peter Grave examines in this volume how small *chedi* (*stūpas*) were integrated into highland settlement patterns between AD 1200 and AD 1650 under the Sukhothai kingdom of northern Thailand and its successor, Ayutthya [Ayudhya], ruling from south-eastern Thailand. Denis Byrne, in this volume, examines more recent Thai Buddhist structures and their physical transformation through ongoing ritual activities. The conflict in Western and Eastern ideas of function and protection of cultural properties triggers Byrne's thought-provoking discussion of world heritage issues.

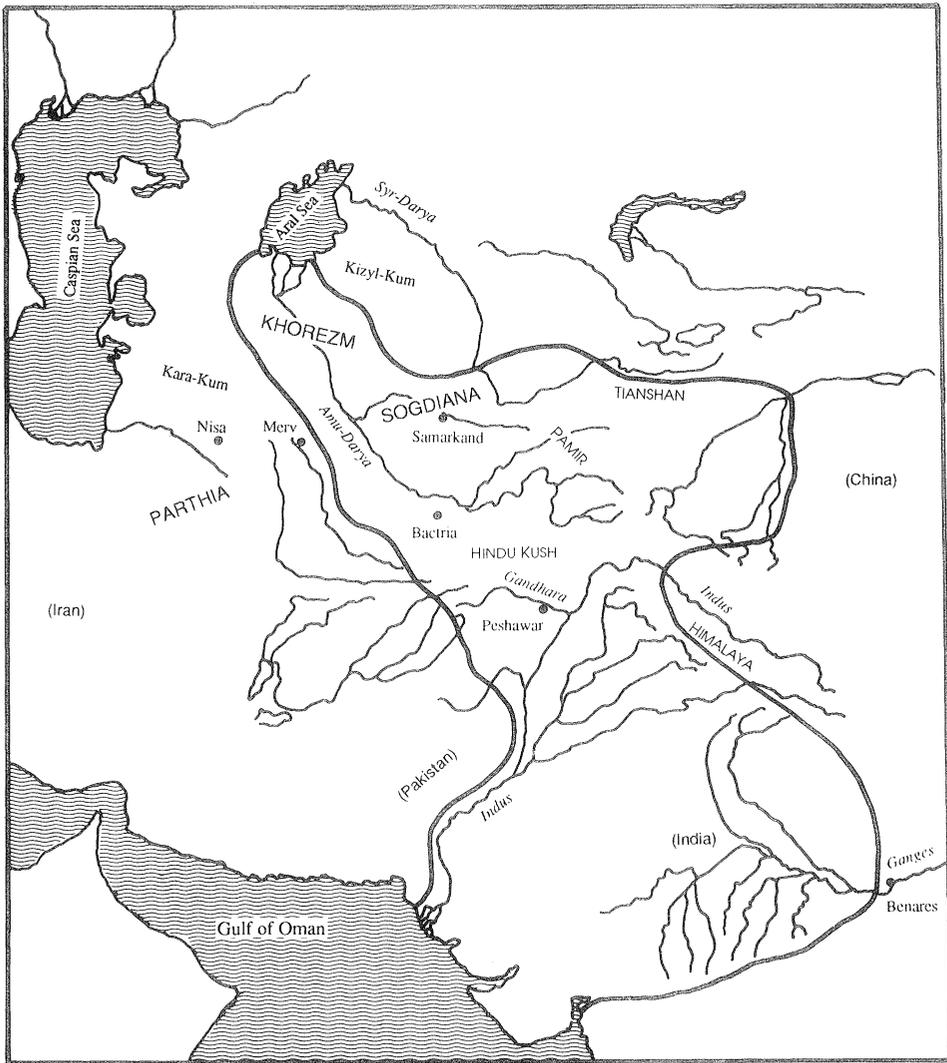


Figure 6 The extent of the Kushan Empire under Kaniska in the early second century AD. Peshawar, located on the Gandhara river, became the centre of a monumental sculptural tradition with Hellenistic sources (Frumkin 1970: map 9).

### Central Asia

From the time of the historical Buddha's birth in the mid-first millennium BC, the area beyond the Indian subcontinent to the north-west began to be incorporated into the Persian Empire, with Scythian nomadic tribes (including the Parthians) occupying the northern fringes. Persia's expansion to the west brought it into conflict with the Greeks, igniting the Persian Wars and Alexander the Great's eastern conquests. In 328 BC two satrapies (provinces) of the Persian Empire, which were extremely important to the later development of Buddhist art, were taken by Alexander and subsequently ruled as Greek states: Bactria (the upper drainage of the Amu Darya [Oxus] river now split between

modern Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tadzhikistan) and Gandhāra (the north-western Indus drainage now incorporated into eastern Afghanistan and Pakistan).

Bactria declared its independence in 260 BC, becoming a powerful Greco-Bactrian state supporting an influx of Hellenistic culture. In 130 BC, however, it was overrun by Parthians and other Scythians (known alternatively as Sakas) being pushed south by nomadic tribes from north-western China – particularly the Yuezhi [Yueh-chih]. In the mid-first century AD, one branch of the Yuezhi founded the Kushan Empire, which ultimately incorporated the upper Ganges, Indus and Oxus drainages (Fig. 6).

King Aśoka's great efforts at promoting Buddhism during the mid-third century BC thus occurred at the time of Bactrian independence and internationalism. Buddhist doctrine was absorbed into the north-west and was mixed with Hellenistic elements. Nearly four centuries later in Gandhāra, Buddhism received its second great era of patronage – from the third Kushan king, Kaniska, in the early second century AD. At his capital in Peshawar, Kaniska 'built a magnificent monastery and a *stūpa* which were regarded as wonders of the world' at that time, and nearby Taxila 'grew into an extensive centre of Buddhism with several monasteries, suitable for accommodating more than 2/3 thousand monks' (Saha 1970: 16) (Plate 3). Gandhāran art and sculptural styles, popular between the third and fifth centuries, are generally acknowledged to have drawn on the 'earlier presence of Greek artists working in the east' (Allchin and Hammond 1978: 411).

From the third century onwards, the Kushan Empire fell to the pressure of the Sassanian Dynasty of Iran (AD 226–640), and several dependent small kingdoms were established in the valleys of Afghanistan, including the Bāmiyān state with four or five major cities (Klimberg-Salter 1989: 21). The valley of Bāmiyān, which was not a political centre but a religious refuge, is known to the world for its rock-cut monasteries and two colossal *buddha* statues carved into niches in the rock cliff. There is considerable controversy over the dating of these monuments, with alternatives given as fifth century or seventh century AD (*ibid.*: 16). The date of construction of the large *buddha* sculptures is important for understanding the spread of Buddhist art further east, since they are often cited as the inspiration for the monumental rock-cut *buddha* sculptures of China and even of statues in Korea.

The Buddhist remains at Bāmiyān have been the object of art historical study over many decades, with Japanese contributions being some of the most recent. HIGUCHI Takayasu, the Director-General of the Kyoto University Mission to Bāmiyān between 1972 and 1979, describes in this volume the team's photogrammetric project to record the enormous *buddha* sculptures and cave temples before complete deterioration. These remains had by then suffered through a millennium of destruction. In the ninth century, the Sassanians fell to Arab rulers bearing Muslim culture. Buddhism disappeared in Central Asia under the spread of this new religion of Islam, and many monuments were intentionally defaced or left to deteriorate through total neglect (Plate 4). By this time, however, Buddhism had been transferred into China proper and on to Korea and Japan via the great Silk Road trading network (Higuchi Fig. 1, this volume).

### *Buddhism in East Asia*

Legend has it that a Chinese emperor of the Late Han dynasty (AD 25–220) bought a small *buddha* image that had been traded into China from Central Asia along the Silk Road

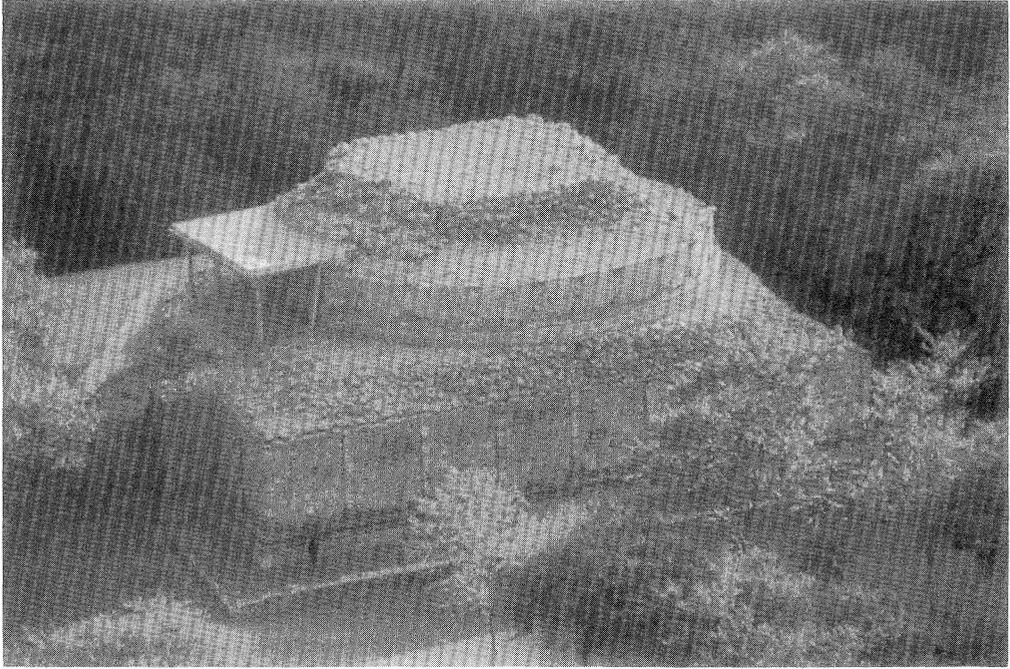


Plate 3 The Mohra Moradu *stūpa* at Taxila, Pakistan, dating to the late Kushan period (fourth to fifth centuries AD) (photo J. Wright).

(Saha 1970: 16). Many Buddhist monks accompanied the caravans into the Chinese capital of Chang'an, and a foreign Buddhist community allegedly grew up around the markets. Buddhism, which preached the rejection of this world and all in it, at first clashed directly with the dominant Confucian political philosophy; but in the politically unstable fourth and fifth centuries AD, Buddhism witnessed a remarkable expansion of religious communities and devotees, especially among the non-Han areas of northern and western China (cf. Zürcher 1972). The first caves were carved on the Central Asian model at Mogao near Dunhuang in 366. MA Shichang in this volume reviews the immense record of activity at Mogao under successive dynasts, contributing the results of his excavations to show a transformation of Buddhist cave structures under the influence of traditional Chinese wooden architecture.

Monumental Buddhist sculpture was continued at several other sites across north China (Fig. 7) as discussed in the latter half of Mark Harrell's article below, but a tradition of small Buddhist sculpture also developed in China in the early historic periods, allowing the transmission of Buddhism through the physical movement of *buddha* sculptures as well as *sūtra* documents. The religion was allegedly introduced into the proto-historic kingdoms of Korea in the third century AD by itinerant monks and their portable sculptures (Lancaster and Yu 1989; Grayson 1989), while a later convert, the king of the Paekche state in western Korea, sent icons and *sūtras* to his counterpart in sixth-century Japan, thus introducing the religion there.

Due to the geological lack of soft rock cliffs, monumental Buddhist works in Korea and Japan tend to take an entirely different form from their Central Asian counterparts.



Plate 4 Ruined Buddhist *stūpas* and a Muslim grave outside Dunhuang in north-western China (photo J. Wright).

Monumental stone *buddhas* were executed as open-air sculptures in three-quarters round or in *haut relief* rather than as hollowed-out caves (Plate 5). One attempt to reproduce the Indian *chaitya*, however, is the Sokkuram grotto in Korea; it represents an ingenious solution of the seventh-century Silla rulers to this geological disadvantage, as described by Mark Harrell in this volume. But the more common solution took the form of wooden buildings, derived from secular Chinese architecture, in which wooden or bronze *buddha* figures were placed as the central icons (Plate 6). A characteristic of this architecture (cover

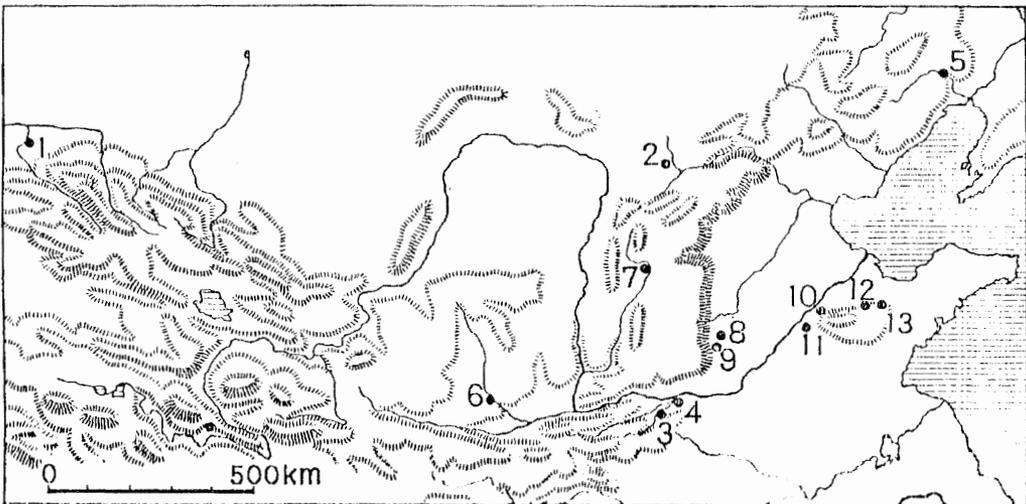


Figure 7 Locations of Buddhist caves across north China (Mizuno 1968: fig. 8). Those mentioned in this volume are 1. Dunhuang (including Mogao). 2. Yungang. 3. Longmen.



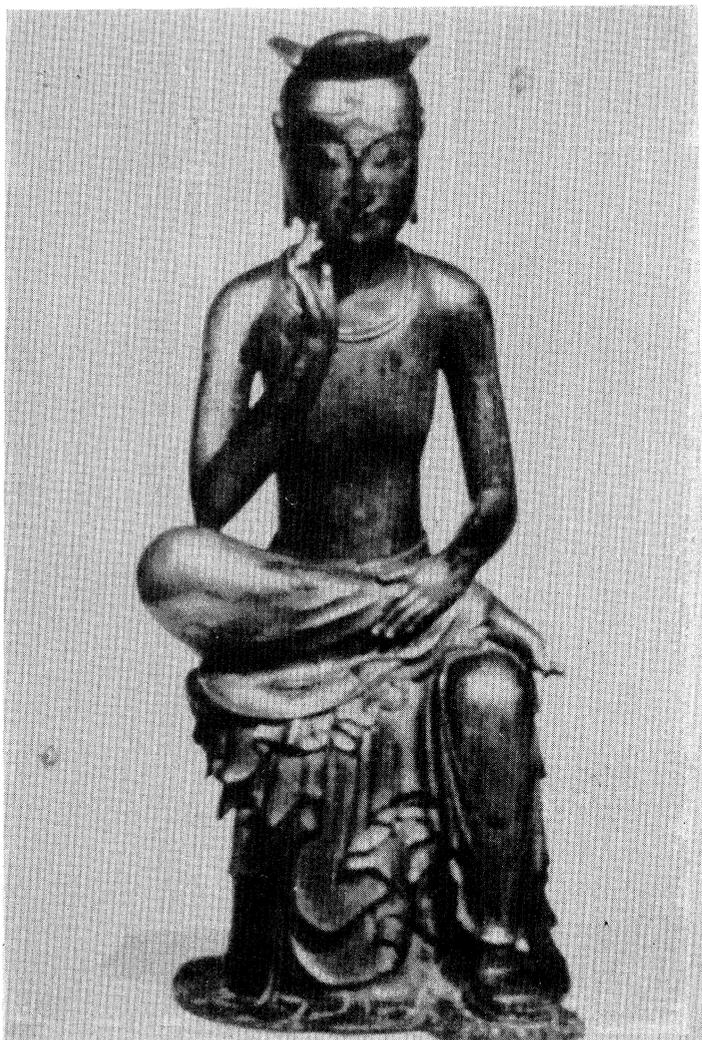
Plate 5 The open-air Buddhist sculptures in half-relief at Ch'ilbulam, Korea.

illustration) is the use of ceramic roof tiles (grey, unglazed, high-fired earthenware) necessitating heavy roof-bracketing support structures, pounded-earth foundation platforms, and load-bearing pillars often supported by stone bases. This is the form of building that was used as the fore-temple at the Mogao caves, described below by MA Shichang; and, in compound form, it became the standard independent temple structure of East Asia (cf. Kidder 1972). As the last entry in this volume, YAMAMOTO Tadanao and Walter Edwards offer an analysis of the socio-political context for the growth of Buddhism in early historic Japan, based on an analysis of the ubiquitous roof tiles excavated from early temple sites.

The traditional Indian *stūpa* was transformed in East Asia into a multi-storeyed wooden pagoda structure, which now survives only in modern Japan (Plate 7). In China, it was superseded by a brick pagoda structure (Plate 8), which also gained currency in early historic Korea. These forms of monumental architecture continued the function of housing relics of the Buddha while endowing the Buddhist establishment with an image of grandeur and authority.

### **Buddhism and the state**

As can be seen from even the brief introduction above, Buddhism developed in close conjunction with the state. Its philosophical basis was developed by a member of a ruling



*Plate 6* A bronze sculpture of the Maitreya Buddha from Korea (courtesy of the Korean Overseas Information Department).

clan, and although he became a wandering ascetic and preached rejection of this world, other rulers supported his disciples in order to enhance their own *karma*. The symbiotic relationship that developed between the *sangha* monkish community and the rulers of many different states throughout historic Asia accounts for the more magnificent Buddhist establishments that still exist today, either as ongoing monasteries or as stupendous archaeological sites. However, much more modest features are also a part of Buddhism's history, and their investigation contributes to understanding the integration of the monastic community into everyday economics and lifestyles.

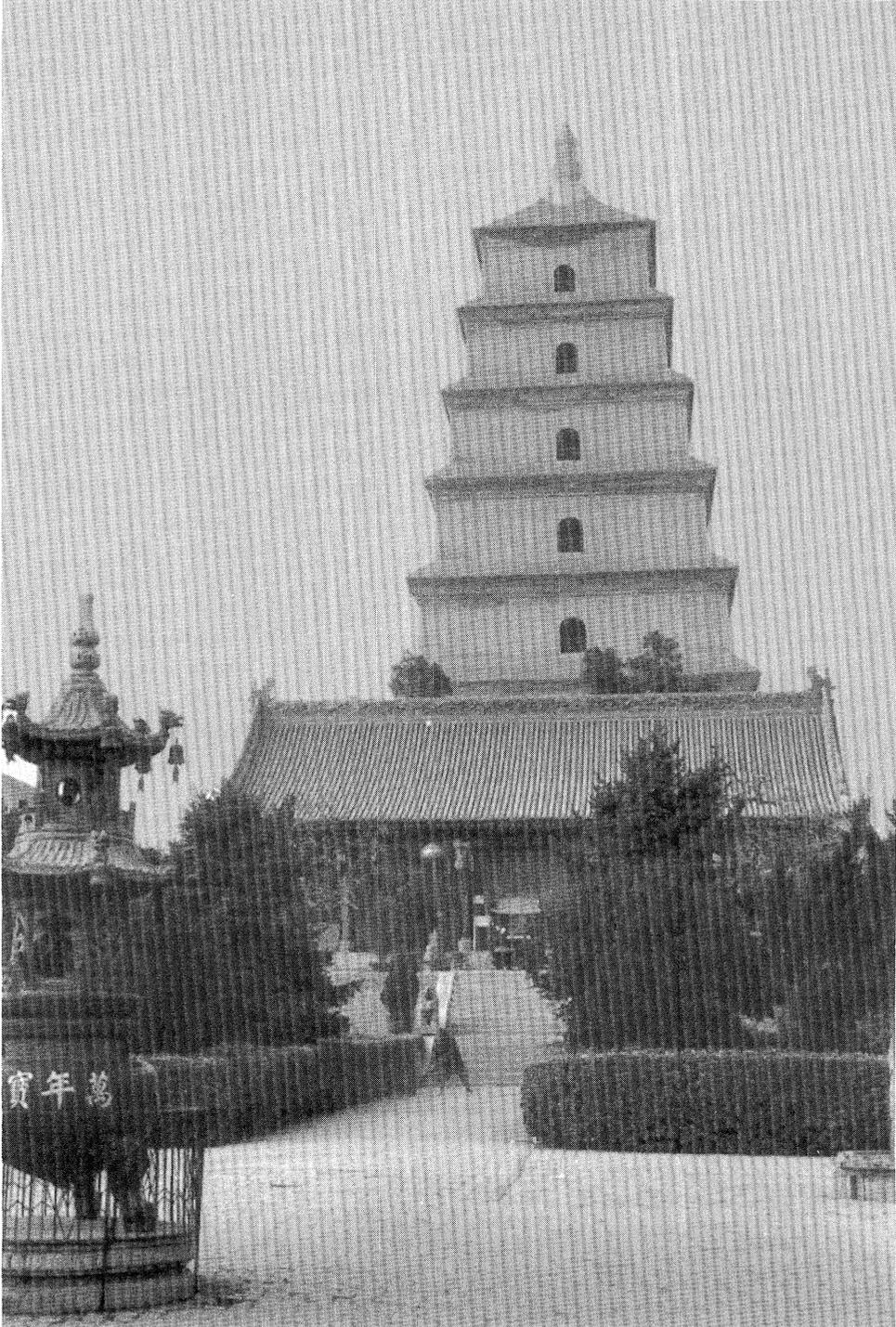
The contributors to this volume have been specifically asked to address the issues of Buddhism and the state, though not all the results rely on monumental art and architecture. Beyond the coffee-table books extolling the glories of Angkor Wat or Borobudur is a whole world of archaeology that still remains relatively unexplored and not yet synthesized to provide a clear history of Buddhism as a part of world culture. *World*



*Plate 7* The newly reconstructed West Pagoda at the Yakushiji Temple, Nara, Japan. A wooden structure, it is five storeys made to look like three.

*Archaeology* has in the past published issues on the archaeology of Islam and of the Christian church. This issue attempts to close the circle by beginning the investigation of Buddhist archaeology through a focus on one aspect of the phenomenon: its intrinsic relationship with the state. Future studies concentrating on the material culture in more limited time-space systematics must of necessity build on this broad structure.

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*Plate 8* The Great Goose pagoda dating to the Tang period in Xi'an, China (photo J. Wright).

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