- The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in this field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field -

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BUDDHA IN ART: FROM SYMBOL TO IMAGE
Kalyenkumar Ganguli

There is a common impression about Buddhism that its impact was completely lost sight of in India long before the present age. Facts bearing to the contrary are, however, not quite rare to trace. One of the positive outcomes of the impact of Buddhism was probably the realization of objects of veneration into tecktonically formulated shapes held as images which have been used for the purpose of divination and worship. Realization of deities in visual form of idols and the worship of the same have been existing as a common phenomenon among many ancient civilizations of the world. But in India there has been a marked difference in the phenomenon of image worship from the same as existing elsewhere. Here, the figure of the deity put into visual form is found to have evolved as an aid in the endeavor on the part of the worshipper to attain concentration. It came to be technically known as a yantra or instrument, which has been processed in order to help the worshipper to imbibe within his or her inner consciousness a complete identity with the object of veneration and full realization of the essence of the same within one’s own inner self. In every possibility, as traditions may help in establishing, it had been through the endeavors of some thinkers owing allegiance to Buddhism that this aspect of image worship was evolved as a means of absorption and fulfillment. The realization of this highly efficacious measure had not been accomplished all at once at a particular time. The process had probably started when the followers of Buddha had developed the idea of looking upon the master as an ideal to be meditated upon as a means of attaining arhat-hood. As long as the master was alive and present in the company of his followers, the very effulgent personality of the master could keep them inspired and drawn towards the ideals of nirvana. As Buddha had obtained mahaparinirvana, there had ensued a void in the wake of visual perception and at this state the Stupa symbolizing the mortal remains of the master was held as a perpetual reminder of the very presence of the master. The Stupa had thus come to be held as a visual embodiment of the ideals that Buddha had propounded and lived for. This abstract symbol and several other motifs such as the Bodhi-trees at Gaya, supposed foot prints of the master at places sanctified by his presence or the Wheel of Law symbolizing the master engaged in preaching had held the ground for long as sustaining the message and ideals preached by Buddha. But a demand for a likeness of the master in the concentrated attitude of the fulfillment of his ideals was being increasingly felt and some visualiser ultimately had taken the daring step of bringing into realization an idealized likeness of the master in order to provide the seeker an instrument
to gain access to the ideals sought for. An attitude commonly known as bhakti could have been an element leading to the realisation of the Oneness of Buddha in visual form but the basic factor which could have inspired the artist to bring it into realisation, the image can probably be discerned from such texts dealing with the Dhyanas of the dieties, as the Nippana Yogavali attributed to Abhayasana Gupta (c. 1124 A.D.) and the Sadhanaamala. In these texts the devotee is enjoined to meditate upon some one as one and identical with the deity held in invocation. These texts bear affiliation to Buddhist thinking of quite late development, pertaining to the philosophical system known as Yogachara descending from the tenets known as Mahayana propagated by the celebrated proponents of Buddhism, Asanga and Vasubandhu. There is every reason to believe that concrete realisation of Buddha image had been brought into being not by the orthodox followers of the Theravada school but had been accomplished by those belonging to this new dispensation known as the Mahayana school.

A more representation of a person of veneration in visual form cannot be held as an icon; to be held as an icon a figure has to have some definite characteristics indicating the significance of a figure to be deemed as an image. It has been pointed out by some in this respect that the Râyveda has a passage wherein a person is stated to have offered his Indra for sale. (RV IV. 24.10) From this it has been concluded by some that this indicated the existence of image in the Vedic tradition. There is however, no positive indication that this Indra offered for sale had actually been a figure of Indra in human form. It could as well have been a symbol representing Indra. Even if this Indra was a figure of the deity in human form, this was definitely not an image put into shape for the purpose of worship, but could have been something like a protective talisman. The same holds good for many symbolic or human representations of deities to be met with upon the punch mark or cast coins of ancient age.

With the passage of time the accounts pertaining to the life of Buddha had gained very wide popularity and in artistic representation of such accounts symbols of various denotation such as the foot print, the vacant seat, the dharmachakra wheel and a tree with a ring around its bottom came to be used as indicating the presence of the Master. In literature and accounts dealing with the life of Buddha, the presence of Buddha is always described in human form. In the artistic representations, however, the artists, it appears, had been prevented by some powerful injunctions from the representation of the master in human form for quite a length of time. This tradition of non-exhibition of the master in human form was pursued with great strictness in such monuments as Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodhgaya, all belonging to the pre-Christian era. In the art of Gandhara, artists are found to have worked under no such inhibition and the stories pertaining to the life of Buddha here are all through shown with representation of the master in
human form. At Mathura also events from the life of Buddha are represented almost uniformly with figures of Buddha in human form. It is only in the Krishna-Godavari region of Andhra at Amaravati and such other places, where scenes from the life of Buddha are found represented with the use of symbols in some of the panels of the same age with figures of the master in human form. As it is the case with the figures of Buddha shown in the life-stories at Gandhara, at Amaravati region also the figures appearing in these life-stones are found to represent the master as a monk engaged in dispensations as required in the particular scene and not as an image, commanding worship. Though the presence of the Buddha had come to be shown in human form in such life scenes, at these centres of Buddhist art, when and how the Buddha figure had come to be accepted as an image for worship does not appear to have been established yet with any amount of certainty.

Born as Siddhartha, the son of a patriarch of the oligarchic tribe of the Sakya, Buddha had been reared up in a cultural environment which prevailed among people pursuing the Vedic traditions. Some old texts hold that the Sakya were actives of the Iksvaku (Oxaka) descended from the legendary name called Manu. Though some modern scholars are sceptic about this claim, poet Arvaghasis is known to have upheld this idea. This association probably indicates a link with the family of rulers known as Janaka, also claiming descent from the ancient Iksvaku; one of the five Janakas, has been celebrated as the patron of Yajnavalkya of Upanishadic fame. The Brhadaranyak Upanishad, attributed to Yajnavalkya is considered to have given a new turn to the philosophical quest developed in India. This Upanishad is known to have laid supreme stress upon the pursuit of wisdom, laid emphasis on the doctrine of Karma and rebirth, and had virtually nullified the efficacy of sacrifice. The way of fulfillment as laid down by Gautama after attaining Buddhahood, is found to bear intimate awareness of those Upanishadic principles. Though growing out of Vedic thinking, the Upanishads had emphasized on the pursuit of wisdom and a right course of action and behaviour but did not promote any idea conducive to image worship.

In this perspective it may be worthwhile to point out that nowhere in the accounts dealing with the life of Buddha there is any indication of existence of image in worship. As Buddha moved about, meeting people and admitting eager persons to the Sangha by giving pravrawa, he was growing in estimation and respect of his followers who had given him such adulation as would be given to a person of unparalleled veneration. In the dispensation preached by Buddha there was no prescription of any rites or rituals. The veneration commanded by Buddha during his life time could not have taken the place of any functional ritual; however, offerings were brought to him with great respect and he was certainly adulated with great
touching his feet. Performances of Vedic rituals and pouring oblation into sacrificial fire invoking such deities as Indra, Vayu, Agni, Pushana etc. were abandoned and to those in the Sangha and to the lay discipies, Buddha had become the supreme recipient of veneration, homage and prostration (Parinama).

Mahaparinirvana of Buddha and the rise of the Stupa:

After a long and eventful life after the attainment of Bodhi, the Master had obtained Mahaparinirvana at a village called Kusinagara situated in the kingdom of the Mallas. The death of the master had cast a spell of deep sorrow and gloom and had brought about a sense of void among the followers of Buddha. The sacred remains of the body after cremation were distributed among the tribes who had contended to gain possession of the sacred remains and monuments in the form of stupas had come to be erected at different places upon such remains. The erection of the stupas and the shape of those stupas appear to have been ordained by Buddha himself. It is on record that on the eve of his parinirvana Buddha had stated that in his absence all advice given by him in his lifetime regarding Dhamma and Vinaya would remain as the all time guide for his followers. It is further known that Buddha had made a sign with his two hands indicating a spherical shape, apparently suggesting a stupa which would be symbolical of his presence for all times. All these facts had laid the way for the establishment of the stupa and acceptance of the same as symbolic of the presence of the master and as such a symbol of supreme value to the Buddhists after his mahaparinirvana.

The practice of erecting stupa upon the mortal remains of a deceased person was probably in vogue long before the time of Buddha and such stupas had been erected not only by the Buddhists but the Hindus as well. Though the practice appears to have been discontinued by the Jains, with the Buddhists the stupas came to acquire characteristics of very significant nature, having come to be recognised as important as the very presence of Buddha himself. Some early Buddhist texts tend to indicate that the stupa had come to be recognised as a symbol of the presence of the Buddha and commanded respect and veneration as such. Buddha himself is known to have stated that after his mahaparinirvana his Sariputta would be performed by Kassapa, Brahma and Gahapata (Sukamadana khattiya panditani bahimana panditapi/Gahapati panditapi rathapate abhiptomana/Sariputto sariputapu karisath). This idea of Sariputta had given rise to the acceptance of the stupa as an object of veneration in course of time as would be apparent from the stupas surviving at different places and also scenes showing stupas being venerated as objects of worship as found depicted in the sculptures panels at Bharhat Sanchi and
other places. In the process of its being held as an object of veneration, the stupa came to be known as a chaitya. The term chaitya as a place of veneration finds mention in the Ramayana as having seatings (Vadikas), seats and high roof. Coomaraswamy felt that this indicated a temple (Coomaraswamy, A.K., History of Indian and Indonesian Art, p.48). The Athavasara has mention of chaitya-vrishaksas. This may be held as the earliest mention of the word chaitya, here attached to vrishka or tree, indicating that such trees as were held in veneration. Pali texts have mention of rakkhacakas and the celebrated Budhi tree at Gaya had been held as a nukkhecetra.

No literary source can be cited as bearing any sure evidence as to when exactly a stupa came to be known as a chaitya or chaitya and as such an object of veneration. In this connection mention may be made of the Rummindel inscription of Asoka. In this inscription it has been stated that "Twenty years after his coronation king Priyadasa, beloved of gods, visited this spot in person and offered worship at this place. The Buddha, the seer of the Sakyas was born here. He had caused a stone wall to be built around the place and also erected this stone pillar to commemorate the visit." (Pillar inscription of Asoka at Rummindel). This inscription mentions of Asoka’s offering of worship at this place but there is no indication as to what specific object this worship was offered. That the place was marked can be inferred from the fact that a stone wall was set up around the place. A similar pillar existing at Nugasela (Nagbihas in U.P.) bears another inscription of Asoka states that the king Priyadasa, beloved of gods, had visited the place after fourteen years of his coronation and had enlarged the thuva (stupa) existing there enshrining the relics of the Buddha Kanakamuni and had offered worship at this place. The word for stupa used here is thuva. From this record it is apparent that the parv of worship by Asoka at this place was directed towards the stupa enshrining the relics of Buddha Kanakamuni. It may be inferred from this evidence that though there is no mention of the existence of a stupa at Rummindel, there could have existed a stupa here as well, built to enshrine some holy relic of the Buddha of the Sakya clan.

It is quite possible that Asoka had set up the wall that is mentioned in the inscription round this stupa existing at Rummindel and he had actually offered worship to this stupa. Thus it can be inferred that formal offering of worship to a stupa as a symbol representing the Buddha had already come into practice before Asoka the emperor had followed a practice well in existence from an earlier age.

**Stupa turns into Chaitya (Chaitya):**

A stupa is usually held as synonymous with Chaitya, but nowhere it can be found clearly stated as to when and how a stupa came to be accepted as a
chaitya. The word chaitya derived from the root chhi probably indicated some high rising object held in veneration. Coomaraswamy held chaitya as standing for an altar or fire-altar. Earliest mention of the word chaitya in any inscription is probably found in a rolling pillar of the stupas of Bharhut. The inscription reads as Mappaopatiksha-chaitya. An inscription found at Jagatpur near Berhampur (O.R.) there is mention of the erection of a chaetya to commemorate the fourth Avemada sacrifice by a ruler, named Silavarmana, datable from about the third century A.D. All these references would establish that a chaetya or chahtay (or chaitya) would stand for a shrine commanding respected veneration, where people would come to offer worship. As a thupa or stupa grew to command respect and worship, it also came to be known as chaitya or chahtay. Though Aoka does not explicitly mention that the thupa at Nigaliwas was a chahtay, the thupa, as it has been stated, can be presumed that the chahtay had already come to be held as an object calling for worship. This was because of the stupa did enthronize the holy relics of the person held in reversion. The very saying about Satta-puja put in the mouth of Buddha had given rise to, and established the validity of relic worship enthroned in stupas. The famous relic inscription from Piprava mentions Buddha as Bhagavata and the relics as Setts (Satta) from satta-anthana Budhara Bhagavata sakyanami. The stupa containing satta remains had thus come to be held as an object of veneration, and had come to be known as satta-simha stupa. Though the idea of satta-puja is found attributed to Budha himself, the actual promotion of the idea of worship of the stupa as a chahtay could not have taken place all at once unless the initiative was taken in this direction by somebody at some particular time, after the Maha parinirvane and before Emperor Aoka, by which time it had come to be an established practice.

In this connection mention may be made of one Mahadeva who is credited to have brought into practice of a cult known as chaitya-saka. This Mahadeva is held by some as different from the person of the same name who is widely known as the convener of the Second Buddhist Council. According to this creed of Chaitya-vada, great merit could be earned by worship of chahtayus by offering of flowers, garlands and incense. Also by circumambulating the same. After the Maha parinirvana, eight stupas containing the sacred relics of Buddha were reported to have been built by king Xiastasun at different places as stated in the Maha parinibbana Sutta. Later Aoka is credited to have distributed these relics to be enthroned in numerous stupas set at different places under his auspices. Inscriptions of Aoka, however, do not preserve any mention of such an endeavour on the part of the emperor. The inscriptions at Rummnedi and Nigaliwas would prove that Aoka had undertaken pilgrimage to places sanctified with the memory of Buddha Sakyanami as well as such previous Buddhas as Karkamuni. In the Rummnedi record Buddha has been referred to as Bhagevan and offering of worship by Aoka is indicated by the
word Mahayana. It may be concluded from these records that a stūpa-
containing sarira dhatu relics of Buddha had come to be held as an object
fully symbolic of Buddha held as Bhagavan deserving of worship and as
such had come to be held as a chaitya or a shrine of utmost respect and
veneration. Numerous representations may be found of scenes showing
stūpas being worshipped by devotees with flowers, garlands etc. and
devotees prostrating before such stūpas and circumambulating the same,
on the sculptured panels at Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodhgaya, Mathura and
Amaravati, indicating how the stūpa had come to be a symbol of the ever
existing presence of Buddha, even after his Mahaparinivāna. Other
symbols, such as the seat with Lotus marks, foot prints, Bodhi tree,
Dhammachakras were, however, used in art to indicate only the presence
of the master during his life time.

From the Stupa symbol to the rise of the image:

Early Buddhist monuments such as the works sponsored by Emperor
Asoka, the stūpa balustrades and gateways at Bharhut and Sanchi, the
sculptures at Bodhgaya, Mathura and Bhaja bear positive proof of non-
existence of any representation of Buddha in human form. The earliest
Buddha figures so far known, hail from Gandhara and date from either the
closing parts of the pre-Christian era or the beginning of the first century
A.D. It is probable that Buddha in human figure had appeared for the first
time in the sculptured panels showing stories from the life of Buddha at
Gandhara. There was a strong inhibition against the realization of the figure
of Buddha in human form in Indian tradition for many centuries after
Buddha. There have been several reasons advanced in explaining this
phenomenon by scholars, none of which, however, can be held as quite
convincing.

The balustrades of the stūpa of Bharhut bear representation of a number of
male and female figures identified by accompanying inscribed labels as
Yakshas, Yakshinis, Nāgas and Devatas. Prof. J.N.Banerjee, depending on
Jaïne source had called those as Vyanandevatas, who according to him
were held in worship by ordinary folks of people.\(^8\) It is to be noted in this
connection that though such vyanana devatas are found represented upon
these balustrades, no Vedic deity has been found represented in the same
way, as showing respect to Buddha, upon these Buddhist monuments. In
every possibility, figures of such Vedic deities were not put in iconographic
form or worshipped as such by people pursuing the Vedic creed of
performing yajna or sacrifices. It has been generally held that the worship of
such yakshas, nāgas and the like had been influenced by folks of non-Aryan
or un-Aryan or pre-Aryan stock and bore evidence of ‘contact of the Aryans
with the previous settlers of India’ as stated by Prof. Banerjee.\(^8\) Europeans
scholars had tried to establish that the Buddha image was brought into existence for the first time by artists in Gandhara under Greco-Roman influence and this Buddha type had served as the model of Buddha images produced by artists in India. Coomaraswamy had, however, strongly urged that the Buddha figure in the Indian tradition had been modelled on Yaksha figures existing in Indian artistic tradition from a much earlier age. The strong sense of avoiding the display of the figures of Buddha in the anecdotal sculptures had held the ground for long as would be evident from the Buddhist monuments of the pre-Christian era. It was in the monuments of Amaravati region that the phenomenon of the appearance of the figure of Buddha in such panels dealing with the life of Buddha appears for the first time. However, here at Amaravati region also, in many of the panels dealing with the life of Buddha, the old tradition of non-representation of the figure of Buddha was followed. This region in Andhra country had become a centre of artistic activity already in the third or second century B.C. and this activity had continued to flourish here till the third-fourth century A.D. almost in a continuous stretch. In the style of modelling, physical features, grace and liveliness the art at Amaravati region stood significantly different from the art forms of other art centres like Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodhgaya, etc. However, in the images of Buddha found here scholars have found influence from Gandhara and Mathura.

Without going into details about the stylistic peculiarities of the Buddha figure of the Amaravati school, certain matters may be taken into Amaravati art. Broadly speaking, as in the case of earlier monuments, here Amaravati also, the stupa was held as the principal object of veneration as the living symbol of the ever existent presence of the Master. Mention has earlier been made of Chetiya-vado according to which sect a chetiya was to be worshipped with flowers, garlands and incense etc. Likewise as at Bharhut and Sanchi, the carvings upon the stupas here at Amaravati have numerous panels showing worship of stupas by devotees. There is no mention of chaityavardha at Bharhut and Sanchi but at Amaravati there is an inscriptive reference to chaityavardha. In Tibetan translation of a canonical book attributed to a noted monk named Bhavya there is mention of this sect of chaityavardha being founded by a monk named Mahadeva. This sect was held as a branch of the celebrated Mahasanghika school which broke away from the orthodox Theravada school on principles of the true character of Vinaya. According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutran, Buddha, before his decease had enjoined a stupa of the Tathagata to be erected at the crossing of four roads: 'whoever shall there place garlands or perfumes or paint or make adoration there shall be to them a source of kusala and sukho (hitaya sukhaya). According to Suttanipata commentary a dhatu-gaha was a chetiya (Dhatupaghram kata chetiyam patthapar) thus a stupa became a receptacle of worship. Originally the body of the stupa was left in the form of a plain dome with the harmika and the chhatra, the chhatra being a symbol of the Chakravartihou of Buddha.
At Vesali region there are stupas without any decoration. But some panels belonging to the pre-Christian era have representation of the stupas shown with snakes are shown as covering the anada of the dome. In one such panel showing a Stupa, dated by Coomaraswamy in the second or first century B.C., a snake having fire hooda is shown, represented as occupying a rectangular panel at the front while two human figures fitted with snake hoods upon their heads are found shown on two sides of this firehood snake standing with folded hands in pose of worship (Coomaraswamy, HIIA, Pt. XXXIV, 146). Another similar panel has the representation of a bigger stupa, shown covered by a number of snakes entwining each other. Here on either side of the stupa are shown quite a few human figures with similar snake hoods upon their heads, paying homage or bringing offerings and puja. Then in a number of other panels showing representation of stupa, Buddha is found shown in human form, either seated or standing, often with ornamentations of very wide nature around. Of these panels, one may call for particular attention. In this panel, seated as a votisthala, upon the central position in the front of the stupa, a figure of Buddha is shown as standing in the abhaya pose, as if he has descended there from above. At a height on two sides of Buddha are shown two human figures and beneath the plinth upon which he stands are also shown two figures in kneeling posture. On two sides of the enormously tall figure of Buddha are shown a male and a female figure with folded palms as if receiving the master with great devotion. The male figure here is shown with a big auricle of snake hoods behind his head while the female figure has one snake hood upon her head.

The appearance of the figure of Buddha becomes almost a certainty in the front of the stupa onwards from this time as would be evident from the stupas found in the chaitya caves at Kadambaperi, Badda, Nasik, Ajanta, Ellora, Aurangabad and such other places. When the idea of devotion as such, commonly expressed by the word bhakti found admitted into the tradition of Buddhism cannot be said, though these had been very little scope for this phenomenon in a pursuit mainly based on wisdom, and logic Conservative theravada creed had never given any consideration to this cult of bhakti and the eight-fold path of ancient Buddhism bore no credence to devotion to Buddha as such. It was not probably before Buddhaghosa who flourished about the 5th century A.D. and lived in Sri Lanka, that the creed of insarnna or taking refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha had come to be sanctified in the Theravada creed. But Buddha had come to be qualified as Bhagavat in the inscriptions associated with the stupas found at Bharhut and other places. The inscription found upon the relic casket found at Pipirawa also bears the qualifying word Bhagavat before the name Sakya-muni (Buddhas bhagavat sakya-muni). This attitude of worshipfulness associated with the Saiva dhatu of Buddha as can be inferred from the relic casket of Pipirawa and the chaityas enshrining such reliquary had probably a definite
influence in bringing about the aspect of deification of Buddha and ultimately the realisation of the figure of Buddha as an image.

Now the question may be posed as to whether the image had preceded the emergence of Buddha figures to be put in the visual representation of the life stories of Buddha or such figures used in anecdotes were formulated earlier than the image. A study of the two types of figures would definitely show that the import of the two had been quite different in character and ideation. The image had a clear import of commanding veneration and worship while a figure shown in illustrations of the life stories had the bearing of a living being engaged in affairs of his many wanderings and involvement in many events. The figure found at Katra bearing an inscription qualifying the figure as that of a Bodhisattva and the figure found at Aniyar with the inscription stating this figure as that of Buddha would probably bear out the inhibition which had been operative in the realisation of the figure of Buddha as an image. In every possibility the visual form of Buddha represented as an image commanding worship had made its appearance for the first time upon a stupa as an ancillary of the relic or stupa-dhara which was installed inside such stupas.

In this connection some reflections may be dwelt upon regarding the contribution of a group of people known as the Nagas. In the Indian tradition frequent mention is found of a people known as the Nagas from quite an early time. These people very probably came to be known as Nagas from their adherence to the cult of snake worship. The Atharvaveda has mention of a number of snake-gods, who are sometimes mentioned in this text along with Gandharvas, Yaksas (Punyagunas), Pitras, etc. Here is also found mention of the name of Airavata’s son, Dhritrastra who, according to the Mahabharata, was the best of the Nagas. In the Rigveda, Vatra the formidable antagonist of Indra, the king of gods, had been mentioned as Ash or a snake. In the Gthyastutras there is mention of snake worship as Sarpabali. Coming to the Buddhist tradition, mention is found about a tribe Aiharo-kulani in the Chullavaggo. Here, four snake kings are named as Virupaksha, Sesputra (Ekaputra), Chabhpolutra, and Kanhegopamaka. There had been a very widespread distribution of these Naga people over the whole of India, and the cult of Naga worship was in a flourishing condition in different places from a very ancient time. From Mathura region have been recovered several figures bearing Naga-hood. One such figure found at Changram, five miles south of Mathura, is held as a typical cult object where a figure delineated in a vigorous gait is shown standing in front of a polycephalous serpent. This naga figure, as well as a similar figure found from Kakargarh have their right hands raised in abhayamudra pose. All these figures are attributable to early Kushana age revealing that Mathura had been a centre of Naga cult; probably from a much earlier age.
The Vaishnava Puranas have the legend of the Naga king Kalya dominating over the region around the river Jamuna near Mathura. This Kalya had been overwhelmed by Krishna during his childhood. Krishna, after his being deified as Narayana-Vahnu came to be held as one and the same with the primeval serpent Ananta while Bahurupa also was held as an incarnation of this same serpent Ananta or Seha.

In the balustrade of the stupa at Bharhut are found representations of several figures shown with snake hoods upon their heads. One of these figures is named by the accompanying inscription as Nagastra Chakravatta (Chakravarta) while in a sculptured panel there is a story represented in continuous narration about the Nagas and named Elapatra, who got redeemed from a curse through the grace of Buddha. The accounts dealing with the life of Buddha have the story of how Nagatora Machulanda had spread his enormous hood upon Buddha to protect him from the great storm which had broken out after Buddha had obtained Nirvana. These accounts in the Buddhist sources and the representation of Naga figures with human body and snake hood upon their heads as showing their devotion to Buddha would undoubtedly reveal that quite some people of the Naga community had come under the influence of Buddhism. But among common people there was a general apprehension about the thickness of the Naga since they were believed to be capable of assuming human form at will though they were actually fearsome reptiles. That is why they were held in apprehension because of their superhuman powers. It is held in some Buddhist accounts that a candidate destined of admission into the Buddhist order was often asked whether he was a Naga or not. Though there was such apprehension about the people known as Nagas, many celebrated adepts to Buddhism are known to have hailed from the Naga community. Of such celebrated Naga followers of the Creed, mention may be made of Nagasena who has been immortalized by the extremely reputed Buddhist text known as Milinda-panha. The book has records of the very learned discussions which had transpired between the Indo-Greek ruler called Milinda (Mintendr - 1100 B.C) and the Buddhist monk Nagasena whose exposition of Buddhist creed is acclaimed as of a very high order. In this discourse with Milinda, Nagasena had revealed his great wisdom and independent thinking. Regarding the worship of the relics (Samaksara) he is said to have observed that this was meant for the lazy only, while the monks should rather practice “understanding and meditation.” The entire tenor of the discourse of Nagasena, delivered to meet the scepticism and doubts of his distinguished and learned disciple Milinda was imbued with deep contemplation of metaphysics not met with in the general types of Buddhist texts like the Kathavatthu where it had been stated that all legends about Buddha were heresies and Buddha had never existed in this world as a man. Thus Buddha was raised to the status of a celestial sphere, and virtually held as divined. Nagasena’s clear exposition regarding this
problem has been held as having a considerable importance in respect of the development of Buddhist philosophy. The venue of this dispute as mentioned in the Milindapanha was at Sagala, modern Stagli, one of the capitals of ancient Gandhara. Nothing is, however, known about where Nagaara was settled. Gandhara itself was associated with Naga tradition; the Mahabharata has mention of Vakhshana in Gandhara as the venue of the well known snake sacrifice. In historical times a Naga dynasty called the Siunag rés are known to have ruled in Magadha sometimes after the advent of Buddha. A powerful Naga dynasty had established itself in Pedavari (Paisa daya near Gwalior) after the Kushanas while one of the Satavahanas rulers, Setakadi, I, known as a great conqueror had a queen named Nayanika or Naganika, apparently a daughter from a Naga family. The empire of the Satavahanas extended over wide areas including what are presently known as Naga-Vidarshana region and Nagpur area in Maharashtra. The famous city of Dhanakotaka, modern Amaravati has been the capital of the Satavahanas, where Nayanika had exercised her power. The remains of the stupas and the wide range of Buddhist artistic remains from the area around Amaravati bear out very close association with a powerful Naga tradition that had been prevalent over this area. The human figures with naga hood upon their head at Bheerhut would remind one of the association of the locality of Bheerhut with Naga tradition having been known as Nagogdi. Similarly the name Nagarjunakonda in the Andhra area recalls the name of the celebrated Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna who is known to have been a founder of the Mahayana creed. Traditions held close connection of the Satavahanas with the propagation of the Mahayana school. It is claimed that Buddha himself had predicted that “There will be a king named Satavahan in South India. When the Law is on the point of extinction,...... he (Satavahan) will appear and propagate the Vaisputra-stha of the Mahayana and will save the Law from extinction.” Apart from the stupas at Dhanayakotaka (Amaravati) region, the caves at Karla, Nasik and the earlier Chaitya caves at Ajanta belonged to the period of the Satavahanas. Nagarjuna held as the founding mentor of the Mahayana school is known to have been a close friend of the Satavahan king, Gautamiputra Satakarni, to whom he had addressed an epistle named Sunthakesha.

It has already been shown earlier how the art at Dhanayakotaka region reveals very close imprint of Naga tradition. The worship of stupas had been brought into being very probably by the foundation of Chaitrayaoda, a school of the Mahasanghiyas. Here at Amaravati region the representation of quite a few stupas are found as being guarded or intertwined by snakes. Finally appears, what may be held as the figure of the Buddha, which can be held as an image, occurring at the outset upon the body of the stupa. As a matter of fact the worship of the sāraha-dhatu had the sanction of this creed, and since this sāraha-dhatu was enshrined in stupa, such stupas came to be
held as objects of veneration. The image in itself had no sanctity as an object of veneration, but it was its association with the stupas that the image had come to earn its sanctity being held as an object of worship. Cannanore was strong about the origin of Buddha image from Yaksha figures depending on a study of the figures representing Yakshas found from Patna, Perkham, Gwalior and other places. Traditions hold that Asoka had entrusted a large number of Yakshas with the sacred remains of the master for erection of stupas enshrining those relics.

A sculptured medallion found at Amareswati bears representation of a small stupa installed upon a throne around which appear a throng of figures in pose of deep devotion and profound submission. It is worthwhile to note in this representation that snake hoods are invariably to be found upon the heads of all the male and female figures shown around the throne, particularly a big male phallic canopy behind the head of one having the most dignified appearance, shown standing with folded hands just behind the stupa bearing the throne. This representation showing worship of the stupa by people bearing Naga affiliation may be held as holding some close relationship with such panels where the stupas are shown as being protected by snakes and finally may be cited the case of the appearance of the image of the Buddha upon the body of the stupa almost invariably shown as being flanked by couples with Naga hoods upon their heads. This aspect of veneration, an outcome of the cult of bhakti might have been a phenomenon developed by the community of people who had this Naga affiliation. In Brahmanism, tradition the cult of Bhakti is found associated primarily with Vashnavism in which tradition the god Narayana-Vishnu's connection with the serpent Sesa is well established. In case of the other most popular Brahmanical deity named Siva, the images of Siva are also always found represented with a snake hood upon his head. In the Jain tradition the images of Parvanath are invariably shown with a snake hood canopy. The earliest association of this attitude of Bhakti may be traced in a seal sealing from Mohenjo-daro in which a snake human figure show. seated in yoga pose upon a raised seat flanked by two persons on either side bent down on their knees in an attitude of supplication. The most interesting feature to be noted in regard of these two side figures happens to be the representation of two snakes holding their raised hoods upon the heads of these two persons on the two sides of the central figure, which can unmistakably be identified as an image. A few similar seals showing the same scene have also been reported from Mohenjo-daro revealing the widespread distribution of the motif. No other artistic representation from Harappan sites reveal so clearly the idea of bhakti and worship of image as such and it may not be unreasonable to think that the cult of bhakti could have been conceived and promoted by people having Naga totem affiliation, as these scenes from Mohenjo-daro would strongly uphold.
The development of image and the worship of the same could have been a direct outcome of the cult of Bhakti and it may be concluded that the image of Buddha could have been actually brought into being by the people of Nagpatrika, who had taken to the cult of Buddha and had given a new turn to the creed under the dispensation of the lamas of Nagpatrika, the founder of the Mahayana creed. That is why such figures of Buddha, held as worthy of worship as images are to be found represented only upon stupas at the initial stage and are shown, as being reverence and worshiped by persons shown, with Nagpatrika hood upon their heads, indicating their Nagpatrika affiliation.

1. Mahasanghikas Sutras, V. 26
2. Tantrasastra, V. 15, 15
3. Aristopondita Paratipada, LXXI
4. C. J. De, A.K. Hil, A. A. p. 47
5. Bara, B.M., Bodh. P. 56
7. Sircar, D.C., op. cit., p. 91
11. Maha P. Sut, VI, p. 2
13. A.D. V. II, 26, 27, V. II, 3, 6, etc.
14. A.D. V. VIII, 4, 15
15. Maha., IV, 2, 17
16. G. J. D. V. 7, 6
17. Vogel, J.P.H., Indian Sarpul Lore, p. 10
18. Vogel, J.P.H., ibid., p. 42, Pl. 7, a & b
19. Ibid., Pl. 4, b
20. Grundy, C. A., Buddhist Art, p. 44
22. Kath sincere, XVII, 1
23. The Questions of Māndhātā (B.E.), Lp. 199
25. Western, T. M. Ch. W. II, p. 120
26. Dalal, Buddha, Buddhist, etc., II, p. 58, also Int. Hist. of India, p. 12
27. Zimmer, H., op. cit., II, p. 98, a
28. Zimmer, H., op. cit., Pl. 1C
SVAYAMBHUNATHA : NEPAL
The quiet competence with which many Tibetan exiles from their own land have found success in a new life in India, Europe and America is a fine example of their national resilience and initiative allied to a natural friendly charm and good manners.

That is no surprise to those who knew them in Tibet and remember when Dr. David Snellgrove and I went in 1960 to discuss the future of the Tibetan refugees with the U.N. High Commission and were faced by a generally gloomy view that they would find it very difficult to adapt themselves to strange conditions, we vigorously maintained that, given a helping start, the Tibetans would rapidly do very well in their new surroundings.

Now among the many successful and popular figures in a variety of activities, there are many learned Lamas. Some have established teaching and meditation centres where they inspire their disciples by their dedicated sincerity and conviction. The most notable of the Lamas is, of course, the Dalai Lama.

On 17th March after two shells from Chinese batteries had fallen in the grounds of his summer palace when the hope of finding a peaceful outcome for the growing tension and hostility between Tibetans and Chinese had broken in violence. His Holiness left his capital secretly at night to seek refuge in India. A month later a journey full of danger and hardship, he arrived at Tezpur in Assam. Instead of the carefree exile some may have expected, the assembled pressmen saw a serene figure of great dignity and presence. He might have been a ruler seized in his throne paying a ceremonial visit; but behind the ease of manner and unfeigned friendliness many could perceive the spiritual depth which without affectation set the Dalai Lama apart from familiarity and made him eternally master of his surroundings.

There is beyond doubt something about a high lama that is outside the ordinary experience of our Western civilization. Even among the lesser lamas, of whom there were many, I found as well as calmness, benevolence, dignity and humour, the unfeigned certainty — so much part of the man that it would never occur to him to analyse or explain it— that he was not only the person we see but the same who had lived in the bodies of many predecessors. He is as sure of that as that he is himself. I shall not speculate

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how that comes about but now H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama has become an international figure, the friend of religious and political leaders all over the world, but also accessible with direct simplicity to many thousands of ordinary people whom he influences by his teaching of peace, mutual understanding and goodwill. I am not going to attempt the impossible task of explaining him; charisma is not something to be put into words, only to be experienced in personal contact. What I set out to do is to recall how some earlier lamas, who were never seen outside Asia, appeared to the eyes of the more western visitors who chanced to see them in the seven centuries or so preceding this.

The first foreigners to meet Tibetans were Franciscan friars in the 13th century, braving the arduous journey to the court of the Mongol Khan who took pleasure in assembling round them representatives of every available religion whose blessings they accepted, indeed demanded, indiscriminately. They also enjoyed hearing debates between champions of the different faiths. In 1254 William of Rubruck met at that court a red-robed Tibetan priest with whom he had a long conversation - in what language it is not specified - and from whom he acquired some ill-digested information. He also saw a ten-year old child-monk said to be a reincarnation of two predecessors. He took part in a debate with the Buddhists in which he claims to have triumphed. If the Tibetans were his opponents they probably enjoyed debating them as much as they do today and, in the end, it was they who won the Khan's favour. William brought to the west the first version of the six letter prayer which he represents as Om Mani Padme Hum. About half a century later another Franciscan, John of Montecorvino, was at the Mongol capital in Peking where he met a red-hatted 'Tibetan' pope - the Grand Trutuus, (perhaps the Tatr who was at that time Sa-skra Lama Ye-shes Rin-chen) but he has nothing significant to say about him.

Then and for many years to come, foreigners who came in touch with Tibetans were mainly missionaries and so, professional critics and rivals of Buddhism. Further, lack of a common language stood in the way of mutual understanding. An exception, at least to the extent that he was a layman, was Marco Polo who was in China and Mongolia some years before Montecorvino. It is not clear whether he actually spoke to a Tibetan, but he has a good deal to say about the priesthood whom he describes in general as "idolaters" and "Bakai". He never uses the word lama but mentions some idolaters as leading an ascetic life in great monasteries where the monks were of a superior kind. Marco's chief interest was in the more spectacular activities of the Bakahis who were able to control the weather and to perform miracles such as raising the Khan's drinking cup from one place to appear on the table in front of him. These persons whom he describes as generally dirty and unkempt, resembling perhaps some types of modern ngags-po, were also credited with good deeds such as persuading the Khan to make charitable donations to the poor.

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After the fourteenth century there was a long interval before a further meeting between foreign missionaries and Tibetan and the scene moved from the east to the western spheres of Tibetan influence when the Jesuit Antonio d'Andrade paid a short visit in 1634 to the kingdom of Tashang. His mission had been sparked off by a report from a Portuguese merchant Digo de Arredia who claimed to have lived two years in Tibet, perhaps undetected, and affirmed that there were traces of Christian practice in that country, among them a bishop called Lama. That appears to be the first mention of the word in the western vocabulary. Andrade won favour with the lay ruler of Tashang who pressed him to return, describing him in a letter as his Lama. Andrade did go back the following year and met many lamas with whom he could communicate after a fashion through one of them who spoke Hindi. But close relations or any real study of Tibetan religion were not possible because his patron, the king, was on very bad terms with his priesthood who before long brought about his fall; and with it the Christian mission too came to an end.

A nearly simultaneous Jesuit mission reached central Tibet by way of Bhutan under fathers Caselli and Cabral. In Bhutan they saw the great reverence in which the Dharma Raja - the Zhaba-drung Rin-po-che - was held and the great state in which he lived but they were still seeking for traces of Christian practice and did not get the least idea of Tibetan religious beliefs. When they went on to Shigatse they became, like the Jesuits in Tashang, involved in rivalry between their protector the lay king and the lamas of differing sects, and learnt little more about Tibetans and their ways except that they gradually perceived that they were not relics of past Christianity. Moreover they did not display the bigotry of another pair of Jesuits, Graceber and D'Oryville, travelling from China to India who were the first foreigners to see Lhasa. They declined to seek a meeting with the Dalai Lama, describing him as "that devilish god, the father who puts to death those who refuse to adore him". Doubtless he kept that unprejudiced thought to himself as that time for he admits that they were treated with great kindness by the Dalai Lama's own brother.

At last, in the early years of the 18th century there came to Lhasa the first foreigner to acquire a sound knowledge of Tibetans and an insight into Tibetan thought and learning. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of Ippolito Desideri and impossible in a few words to summarise his achievement. On his arrival in Lhasa in 1716 he was graciously received by the actual ruler, Latsang Khan. Within nine months he had learned enough Tibetan to write, in traditional verse form, an exposition of Christian doctrine which he presented to the King and which created a great stir of interest. The King arranged for him to continue his studies first in Ramoche and later in Sera where he was allowed to celebrate mass for himself. His command of Tibetan led to many discussions with lama priests and he was employed on
composing a refutation of Buddhism when his studies were interrupted by the Drungpa invasion. The work, sadly now lost, was completed just before he had to leave Tibet in 1721. Later he wrote a careful account of Tibet, its people, customs, administration and, of course, its religion. In general he shows a respect for the institutions and conduct of the lamas and monks and he summed, as has been agreed many times since, that there is much in common in the moral principles and aims of both faiths; but his Christian beliefs made him denounce some aspects of Tibetan Buddhism as idolatrous and abominable. The sticking points then as later were Tibetan denial of a God and their doctrine of transmigration. Although he knew many lamas and had one special favourite who taught him Tibetan, he paints no picture of the character and personality of any of them; it is only of his patron Labrang Khan, to whom he was much indebted and whom he obviously liked, that he gives any personal description.

He records the amazing veneration accorded to the Dalai Lama and to other lamas too: "would to God", he says "that Christian Catholics showed one-hundredth part of such sentiments to ... Religious of our Holy Church". And having seen the devotion of the common people to "Urgyen" which made them ready to sacrifice everything they had rather than give up their faith in him Desideri comments "I confess I blamed myself and was ashamed to have a heart so hard that I did not honour, love and serve Jesus, sole and true Redeemer, as this people did a traitor and deceiver".

Desideri's view of reincarnating lamas carries Christian logic to a conclusion which modern readers may find an excess of dogma. He was impressed by the recognition of past possessions and associates and by the claims by newly discovered lamas to remember past existences and he rejects the idea that this is simply due to deceit and collusion; so, since it cannot be the work of God, it must be that of the Devil. But his careful examination of other Tibetan religious doctrines is generally impartial and acute.

The Capuchin missionaries who briefly preceded Desideri and continued after his departure until 1745, like him, enjoyed the protection and friendship especially of the lay chief administrator Pholha Miwang, and also of the Dalai Lama and other monks. But they had no one of the calibre of Desideri among them and although several of them must have acquired the rudiments of Tibetan, only one, the gentle, devout Orazio Della Penna's said to have been fully proficient in the language. They had many close acquaintances among the lamas with whom they held lengthy discussions; and they met the Fifth Dalai Lama on several occasions. They seem to have been more concerned with preaching their own beliefs than with attempting to understand those of the Tibetans and some of their letters show an
amusing novelty. They claim to have proved in argument with learned lamas that the Buddha was neither a deity nor a saint, that it was no sin to kill animals, and that the lamas with whom they were debating could not possibly be reincarnations. The lamas listened attentively. Orozio himself presented the Dalai Lama with a copy of his work refuting Buddhism. The Lama accepted it with interest and politely advised Orozio not to condemn the religion of other people. Nevertheless, one of the Capuchins reported that the Dalai Lama was teetering on the verge of conversion. All such opinions came to an abrupt end when a handful of lowly Tibetans whom they had converted were persuaded to disown their loyalty to the Dalai Lama. After being given every opportunity to recant, they received a comparatively mild flogging of twenty strikes and the fathers who tried to intercede were told by their patron Pacho Miwang that they should not interfere with the faith of other people, adding "we do not do so". After a short time when Pho Lha and the Dalai Lama declined to receive them, they were once more granted audience and were treated with the customary kindness but it was made clear that their actions were, in Tibetan eyes, an unworthy and discourteous return for years of tolerant hospitality. That was in effect the end for the Capuchin fathers and for a permanent Christian mission in Central Tibet. Disenrolled and cut off from funds, the good Orozio Della Penna, who had been for twenty years in Tibet, left Lhasa in April 1745 only to die of weakness and sorrow at the age of sixty five soon after his arrival in Nepal.

Nearly forty years later there was a mission of quite a different sort when Warren Hastings despatched George Bogle as his envoy to Tashihumpo with the aim of encouraging friendship and commerce between India and Tibet. Bogle, an intelligent, observant and charming Scotsman, was singularly fortunate to meet in the person of the Third Panchen Lama the most powerful and popular figure in Tibet of the time and he was left the first lively description of a great Lama as a warm human personality as well as a charismatic leader.

On his first receptions at Tashirabgaye Bogle was charmed by the engaging manner of the Lama and thereafter for the best part of five months was frequently in his company and in that of his hospitable, light-hearted family. The Lama clearly enjoyed Bogle’s presence and treated him with the greatest consideration, sending dress and food to make his stay more comfortable. Bogle attended the Lama on his journey to Tashihumpo, at formal reception and at religious ceremonies; and more important, he had about thirty private meetings when the Lama who had a fair knowledge of Hindi, received him with friendly informality, spoke freely about all aspects of the political situation and approved of Bogle’s hopes of closer relations between India and Tibet. Bogle was regularly invited to religious services and, from courtesy and in the interest of occupying his time, he always attended. He has described well enough what he saw of temples, services
and so on but shows no real interest in the meaning of it all and on the one occasion when the Panchen initiated a conversation about religion Bogle seems to have absorbed little of his explanation of Buddhist doctrines and, on his part, made it clear that he was no missionary with an evangelistic axe to grind and was politely vague and non-committal in his interpretation of Christian tenets. They came to the usual agreement that the moral aims of their faiths were similar.

His close acquaintance with his host moved Bogle to admiration, respect and affection. He wrote:

"His disposition is open, candid, and generous. He is extremely merry and entertaining in conversation and tells a pleasant story with a great deal of humour and action. I endeavoured to find out in his character, those defects which are inseparable from humanity, but he is so universally beloved that I had no success and not a man could find in his heart to speak ill of him."

He has much more to say about his gentleness, his preference for conciliation, his diplomatic sagacity, and of the profound veneration and devotion in which he was held; and, in general he says "I never knew a man for whom on so short acquaintance I had half the heart's liking."

No foreigner has lived on terms of closer confidence and intimacy with a Great Lama, and Bogle parted from the Panchen, his family, Tibet and its people, with genuine sadness. Later, writing to his sister, he regrets the absence of his friend the "Teshu Lama" for whom I have a hearty liking and could be happy again to have his fat hand on my head."

Bogle may not have achieved any great practical success but he had paved the way for future friendly relations and Hastings determined to follow this up by another mission. Sadly the Panchen and Bogle were not to meet again; the former died in China in 1780 and Bogle a year later in Calcutta.

So, the next envoy to Tashilhunpo, in 1783, was Captain Samuel Turner, an English officer in the East India Company's army. Hastings was good at choosing men and Turner like Bogle was able, observant and intelligent, also he was patient and able to get on well with Tibetans but from the rather formal language of his account he seems to have lacked Bogle's warm spontaneity and sense of fun, and he did not have Bogle's advantage in meeting any figure comparable to the Third Panchen Lama for at his visit the new reincarnation was only eighteen months old, but he has left, in the
rather staid language of the eighteenth century, an enchanting account of his reception by the child.

The Lama's eyes were scarcely ever turned from us and when our cups of tea were empty he appeared uneasy, throwing back his head and contorting the skin of his brow, and continued to make a noise, for he could not speak, until they were filled again. He took some sugar out of a golden cup... and stretching out his arm made a motion to his attendants to give it to me'. Turner then addressed the child briefly for 'it was hinted that notwithstanding he is unable to reply, it is not to be inferred that he cannot understand'. During Turner's speech 'The little creature turned, looking steadily towards me, with the appearance of much attention while I spoke, and nodded with repeated but slow movements of his head, as though he understood and appreciated every word but could not utter a reply. His parents who stood by all the time eyed their son with a look of affection and a smile expressive of heartfelt joy at the propriety of the young Lama's conduct. His whole attention was directed toward us; he was silent and sedate, never once looking towards his parents, as if under their influence at any time, and with whatever pains, his manners may have been so correctly formed, I must own that his behaviour, on this occasion, appeared perfectly natural and spontaneous, and not directed by any external motive or sign of authority'.

The child, Betan-pei Nyi-ma, grew up to be a personage of almost equal importance to his predecessor, Bogle's friend, and lived to the age of seventy three.

The promising start to relations between India and Tibet was marred by the closing of the country after the Gorkha invasion in 1792, and it was left to Thomas Manning, a sensitive, intellectual, English eccentric to find his own way to Lhasa in 1811, apparently without serious obstruction. Manning was a friend of Charles Lamb who was fascinated by his incomparable genius, congenial nature, sparkling eccentricity and addiction to occasional levity'; he was also a considerable linguist who became specially attracted to China and having mastered the language and manners, wanted to travel in remote parts. He arrived at Calcutta in Chinese dress which did little to disguise his nationality, and with a Chinese servant and the help of Chinese living in Tibet, he found his way through Bhutan to Lhasa. His fragmentary diary, though containing several significant observations, is largely given up to the discomforts of the journey. At Lhasa he paid his respects to the Chinese Amban and seems to have received official hospitality from the Tibetans, apparently in his role as a foreign physician. He had no difficulty in securing audience of the Ninth Dalai Lama, Lung-ripo, rgya-mtho. At his reception Manning prostrated himself three times and offered a scarf and presents. His
account is another classic: "The Lama's beautiful and interesting face engrossed almost all my attention. He was at the time about seven years old (actually he was just six), had the simple, unaffected manners of a well-educated princely child. His face was, I thought, poetically and affectingly beautiful. He was of a gay and cheerful disposition; his beautiful mouth perpetually unbuttoned into a gracious smile, which illumined his whole countenance. Sometimes, particularly when he had looked at me, his smile almost approached to a gentle laugh. No doubt my grim beard and spectacles somewhat excited his curiosity. There was an exchange of formal compliments and compliments before Manning withdrew. He says 'I was extremely affected by this interview with the Lama, I could have wept through strangeness of sensation. I was absorbed in reflections when I got home.' He paid five more visits to the Lama, but has left no detailed comment on those occasions.

In 1945/46 missionaries appeared once more at Lhasa. The Lazarist fathers, Evariste Hué and Joseph Genter had set out in 1844 from the borders of China, north of Peking, on instructions from the Pope to survey the mission field in Mongolia. A long journey brought them to the end of 1845, by way of Nogchukha to Lhasa where they were received kindly by the Tibetans but with suspicious hostility by the Chinese Amban who expelled them after about three months and compelled them to return eastwards through Tibet instead of proceeding by the short journey to India. During their stay, like all missionaries before them, they received the patronage of the key authority; in this case the senior minister, Shatra, whom they wrongly describe as the Regent. They were allowed to make a chapel and preach their faith and they had the usual anecdote discussions about religion with Shatra and a few monks. Owing to a smallpox scare they were unable to meet the Dalai Lama, Maha's grub eye misho, who was then about eight years old, and have little to say about him as a person. But they were much impressed by what they heard of the Panchen Lama, the same whom Turner had met in 1784, now sixty-five years old, a figure of more presence with a great respect for sanctity and learning. He had also acted as Regent for eight months from September 1844 to May 1845. Pelouch appears to state that he remained at Lhasa until about September 1846; but this seems improbable for the missionaries evidently did not meet him but were advised to go to Tashilhunpo to do so, which they were unable to do.

After the Lazarists the age of explorers and adventurers in the competition to be first into Lhasa, set in. The arrogant bullying and not infrequent deceit by some of these travellers did nothing to enhance the reputation of foreigners in Tibetan eyes. They met few Tibetans of any standing, had no common language and were generally more interested in the topography than the people.
It was not until the mould of exclusion was broken by the rough wooing of the Youngusband expedition that a Great Lama was seen again by foreigners. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, after his enforced flight to China was met by the American diplomat W. W. Rockhill who spent a week with him at Wu-tai shan. He comments on the Lama's undoubted intelligence and ability, great natural dignity, quick temper but kindly cheerfulness; his thoughtfulness and courtesy as a host. He also describes his personal appearance in considerable detail. The Vicomte D'Ollonne also met the Dalai Lama at Wu-tai shan for a short rather formal visit from which he got an impression of the Lama as a statesman and man of action. Later, the friend of longest standing and closest intimacy was Sir Charles Bell who looked after the Dalai Lama when he took refuge in India in 1910 and was in constant contact with him when he was invited to Lhasa in 1921. Bell has written about the Dalai Lama with deep affection and respect in 'Portrait of the Dalai Lama', which I cannot attempt to summarize; enough to quote him that the Dalai Lama and he were "men of like minds". From Bell's account the powerful personality of the Lama emerges clearly but it is as a strong-minded man of action and administrative ability and political interests rather than of deep spirituality and that is the impression conveyed not only by Rockhill and D'Ollonne but also by the Japanese Kawaguchi and by Political Officers who visited Lhasa after Bell until the death of the Dalai Lama in 1933. He was nevertheless profoundly learned in Buddhist doctrine but apparently in an intellectual way and he was eager in his position as head of the church to see that the standard of teaching and achievement in religious studies was improved.

By contrast, his contemporary the Sixth Panchen Lama impressed all who met him by his gentleness and spirituality. Sir Frederick O'Connor, who was fluent in Tibetan, enjoyed a warm friendship with him beginning with visits to Tashilhunpo in 1904 and 1905; he later accompanied the Lama on his visit to India. O'Connor tells a pleasant story that on their first meeting, the Panchen Lama, referring, without the need of explanation, to the visit of Bogle and Turner to two of his predecessors, expressed his pleasure at meeting British officers "again" and recalling the happy relations he had had with them. He also showed O'Connor a number of presents - watches, china, silver and so on - received on such occasions. O'Connor writes with affection of the gentle and saintly character of the Lama and the love and reverence of his people towards him. Unfortunately he was drawn innocently into a short-lived plot in which O'Connor, perhaps carried away by his admiration for the Lama, sought to set him up as a substitute for the absent Dalai Lama. This had tragic consequences for the Panchen Lama who was to end his life in exile, and for the peace of Tibet. Sir Charles Bell wrote of him: "Truly the Tushu Lama has a wonderful personality. Somewhat short in stature, with a fair and healthy complexion, the smile with which he regards you is touched with the quiet saintliness of one who prays and works.
for all mankind, but it is at the same time the smile of a friend who takes a personal and sympathetic interest in your own concerns. It is not surprising that he should be loved by his people. It is good that there is such a man in Tibet, it is good that there are such men in the world". The great explorer Sven Hedin described him in even more enthusiastic terms: "Wonderful, never to be forgotten, incomparable Tashi Lama", and related the deep impression made by his calm, dignity and courtesy and his wide humanity: "Extraordinary, unique, incomparable!"

The participation of the Panchen Lama, whether willingly or not, in political matters began with the plans of Frederick O'Connor and continuing through his emmensement in Chinese designs on Tibet since his flight from Tibet in 1926 until his death in 1937 are a sadly uncharacteristic story. And the involvement of the two Great Lamas in international politics to some extent robbed them of their remote mystery but, although there remained an aura of spirituality it made them more credible human beings.

Today the balance has changed. The present Panchen Lama is something of an enigma. In the early days of the Tibetan tragedy he appeared as the political creature and puppet of the Chinese and contentious and offensive words were put into his mouth. But people who have met him lately emphasize that when he is able to speak for himself he is a true Tibetan and Buddhist.

The Dalai Lama - Chos-seng-gnyis-lshan, Master of Religion and State - is inevitably and deeply concerned with the politics of his country and when he speaks of them, which he does mainly on special occasions and when he is specifically asked about them, he makes his views and meaning clear but in balanced and temperate language. In his daily life and in his public utterances politics are subordinated to his deep, innate feeling for religion, and the good of all beings. His radiant generous spirituality in all he says has restored the mystique of the incarnate Lama underlying his warm humanity and approachability.

As I have said, charisma is not to be described, I make no further attempt to do so and will only add my twentieth century workaday account of a child Lama to the incomparable descriptions by Turner and Manning.

On 6th October 1939 the whole population of Lhasa, so it seemed, had congregated in bright cool autumn weather on the plain below Tashilhunpo monastery some two miles from Lhasa, where a great camp had been ornamented with auspicious designs in blue, sheltered the tent proper, the roof of which was even more splendidly decorated with religious symbols in gold, red and blue and with golden peacock figures perched on the roof
pole. The front was open showing the inner walls lined with splendid gold, red and blue brocade hangings and with bright banners hanging from the supporting poles. In the centre stood the tall throne of the Dalai Lama, covered in patterned gold and red brocade. There was a lower throne at one side for the Regent. The crowd waited in tense excitement which was heightened when the band of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard, which had gone out to meet him, was heard in the distance, and soon in a cloud of dust and of incense smoke from burners all along the route, the first banners of the procession came in sight. Long trumpets sounded from the monastery above and the crowd pressed forward eagerly. A small troop of Chinese soldiers in dusty quilted clothes came first at a quick pace and then a long line of mounted men, carriers of banners and symbols, and then the whole body of Tibetan officials in ascending importance in magnificent brocades and white or crimson topped hats. At last in the centre of the cavalcade we saw a small carrying chair draped in yellow silk, and through the glass window the face of the little Dalai Lama could be seen looking calmly but curiously at the mass of people prostrating themselves by the roadside, many weeping with joy. The procession moved at a rapid pace up the hill to the monastery where the child was to have a short rest and change his clothes. Soon he was carried down the winding path in the large gilded state palanquin with eight bearers in yellow silk and red tasselled hats. The whole official body accompanied him into the camp to the Peacock Tent where he was lifted on to the throne by his Lord Chamberlain. Everyone then took their proper places in the enclosure and we members of the British Mission and those of the Nepalese and Chinese, were led to our seats. Ours were just in front of the Dalai Lama's father, mother and family. The Regent opened proceedings by prostrating three times before the Dalai Lama and then offering him a scarf, after which the officials began to file past to offer white scarves and receive the blessing. The child, wearing yellow brocade and a yellow, peaked hat with a fur brim sat quietly and with great dignity, completely at ease in these strange surroundings, giving the proper blessing to each person, with both hands or one, or with a tassel on the end of a rod, according to their rank. He looked often in our direction, partly because we were so near to his parents but also it seemed, fascinated by our unfamiliar appearance; and when our turn came to offer our scarves he was smiling broadly and as I bent down for his blessing he took a pull at my hair. But a greater centre of amusement and interest were the rosy face and fair hair of Reginald Fox, the Mission Radio Officer; the Dalai Lama let his hair fall for quite a long time. After us the stream of worshippers continued to flow for over an hour until at last tea was brought in; the tea was first tasted formally by a high official then poured into a jade cup and offered to the Dalai Lama. He was then lifted down and carried back in state up to the monastery.

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Although not surprisingly he seemed a little tired at the end of the long day his behaviour through the whole ceremony was movingly impressive. He maintained a calm and interested appearance and a look of happy benevolence. That devotion of the Tibetan crowd could almost be felt and all of us like Manning experienced "the strangeness of sensation".

Later, Sir Basil Gould came to Lhasa for the installation ceremony. By then I had left Lhasa but Gould has left a very full account of the story of the discovery and recognition of the child as well as of the enthronement. He tells of his receptions by the Dalai Lama, describing his steady gate and absorption in what was going on, and using the language of Isaiah "Unto us a child is born".

When I returned to Lhasa in 1944 and on many later occasions, I was formally received by the Dalai Lama and never failed to be impressed, as he grew up, by his composure, his self-possession and his look of kindly interest. As he was a minor all my time in Tibet and state affairs were conducted by the Regent, I never had an opportunity to meet and talk to him privately. During much of that time my friend Heinrich Harrer was frequently in contact with the Dalai Lama whose curiosity about the outside world and things mechanical he was able to satisfy in many ways. Harrer has told his remarkable story in Seven Years in Tibet. I was fortunate in being able to exchange, through him, messages with the Dalai Lama to whom I used to send cinema films, illustrated magazines and books, and flowers from our garden. But it was only after he had reached safety in India that I was able to meet him personally on several occasions, first at Mussoorie in 1960 and then at Dharamsala in 1961 when I was privileged to enjoy his hospitality at delightful informal family lunch and dinner parties. At these meetings I could feel the immediate impact of his personality. Behind the simple often humorous friendliness of manner shone a transparent goodness, an inner peace devoid of hatred and a wide compassion not only for the pressing needs of his own people but for the wider troubles and cares of all humanity. That feeling perhaps developed even greater intensity in the travels he was later to undertake all over the world and in his meetings with leading religious and political figures in many countries.

For me, my experience in those meetings in India showed that 'His Holiness' was not merely a title but a reality.
A NOTE ON ATĪṢA DĪPANKARA, DHARMAKĪRTI
AND
THE GEOGRAPHICAL PERSONALITY OF
SUVARNAḌĪVĪPA

H.B. Sarkar

In a recent paper published by Helmut Beier in the *Journal of the Asiac Society*, Vol. XXVII, no. 4, on "Life and activities of Atiśa", the writer suggested (p.8) that Atiśa might have met Dhammakīrti in Bodh Gaya or some monastery and that the account of Atiśa's sojourn in Suvarṇadvīpa has not yet been confirmed. The learned Director of the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology having invited my comments to these two points, I wish to discuss them below but in a larger context, so that I may also present my current thinking in a somewhat newer orientation.

I

Atiśa's meeting with his future guru Dhammakīrti at Suvarṇadvīpa at Bodh Gaya or some monastery is apparently based upon a Tibetan tradition of legendary character, one of which has been translated by S.C. Das in *BRST*, i, pp. 8-9. It refers to the congregation of outstanding scholars of the Buddhist world of Varsanāna, i.e., Bodh Gaya. At this congregation, the great Śārva Mahā Śī. Rosa was present. According to the same tradition, Lama Shering-pa, the future teacher of Atiśa was also present there and he attached himself to the great Śārya for sometime. He was given the title of Dhammakīrti by his guru. It is not easy to determine the date of this congregation. There are however two considerations which make it likely that Atiśa and Dhammakīrti might have met at Bodh Gaya or at some monastery. First Dhammakīrti is reported to have stayed in India for several years to study the *Laws* and during this time he might have visited the famous sacred places of the Buddhist world like Bodh Gaya, Rāṣṭrapāla, Nālandā and Vikramāditya. Second, Atiśa is also reported to have studied the *Laws* at Nālandā, Rāṣṭrapāla, Vikramāditya, completing his studies at Māri Vihāra in Bodh Gaya. So it is not unlikely that Atiśa and his future guru might have met each other in one of these centres of learning, but at present there is no trustworthy document anywhere to authenticate this point, as far as my information goes.
The question of the geographical identity of Suvarṇapāṇī is however much more important and complex than the points discussed above. Unfortunately all previous authors including the present writer, have followed S. Levi in regard to the identity of Suvarṇapāṇī in his famous article “Palãsma, le Middes et la Bhakathā” published in Études Asiatiques, t. II, 1925 pp. 1-55 and 431-2. Research during the last sixty years or so convinced me that the paper had become obsolete in some major respects and was rather creating anomalies in the progress of research. I discussed these difficulties in a paper entitled, “A geographical introduction to South-East Asia: The Indian perspective,” which was published in the Bijdragen (Ebo) of the Royal Institute, Leiden, the Netherlands, vol. 137 (1981) pp. 293-324. In that paper, I have shown that Suvarṇaḥūm and Suvarṇapāṇī are two distinct geographical entities. Of these two, the former refers to lower Burma. I also pointed out in the same connexion that the geographical entity known as Suvarṇapāṇī did not figure at all in any authentic text prior to the date of the Nalanda Charter of king Devapādeva of the Pāla dynasty. Further research has led me to the conclusion that Sumatra was merely a segment of the much bigger geographical entity called Suvarṇapāṇī. As the date of the Nalanda Charter and the significance of what is Suvarṇapāṇī have very often been confused, these have led to the distortion of the history of the Malayo-Indonesian world also in some major respects. This distortion needs rectification by authors dealing with the history of that part of the world. For this reason also the geographical personality of Suvarṇapāṇī should be better defined.

The above mentioned Nalanda Charter (Ep. Ind. XVII, pp. 322-24), which mentions king Bālaputreadevas as a contemporary of Devapādeva, was issued on the 21st day of the Kārtika in the 35th or 39th regnal year of king Devapāla. The reading of the second numeral in the regnal year was uncertain, but it has probably to be read as regnal year 35. Due to the discovery of some new epigraphs, D.C. Sircar, in his Dynastic Account of the Pālas and Sora Epoch (in Bengali), 1982, pp. 12, 67, revised the regnal period of Devapāla as being from AD. 834-847, that of Bālaputreada from C. 847 to 860 and that of Vigrapāla from 860-861. So the date of the Nalanda Charter should be AD. 845. Many scholars, notably J.G. de Casparis, have placed date of the Nalanda Charter in C. 850 AD. in one place (Pres. Ind. I, p. 97) and between AD. 860 and 870 in another (Pres. Ind. II, p. 297). The fixation of the latter date is absurd, as it unseats the firm chronology of several dynasties of India. The date of the Nalanda Charter cannot therefore be later than AD. 847, when Devapādeva died. If this is admitted, the chronology of the later Sāleneja monarchs of Java, the account of civil war propounded by de Casparis and his theory about the flight of Bālaputreada to Suvarṇapāṇī will prove to be somewhat illusory.
or at least would demand a fresh assessment. Since the grandfather of Bilașputra-deva has been described in the Nālandā Charter as Yorajñgumūḷa and Bilașputra-deva has been described in contradistinction as "Sūva (maa)-dvijādhipa-mahārāja" in Verse 37, a difference in status between the two kings has been deliberately thrown in.

Let us now look for contemporary records to define the Geographical Personality of Suvarṇapūrṇa. Fortunately for us, the Perso-Arabic travelogues for at least two centuries throw considerable light in the elucidation of his point. In the shorter text of the Līgar inscription found in Malayu and dated AD 775, it was already stated of King Vīṣṇu "that the seilmahe (person) is known by the appellation of fat mahārāja because of the mention of his origin in the Satavāra dynasty." As a matter of fact, for a very long time thereafter, the designation mahārāja was applied to the rulers of the maritime empire of the Satavāras, and later on, of Śrīvāra. This vast empire figures in Arabic texts as Zībaq (var. Ṣevako, Ṣīvako), and Ibn Khuradadhībīch, writing in AD 844-46, said that the ruler of Zībaq is king of the islands of the southern ocean and is called the mahārāja. As Ibn Khuradadhībīch and Bilașputra-deva were contemporaneous, and the latter was ruler of Suvarṇapūrṇa, it is obvious that Zībaq of the Arabic text could only refer to Suvarṇapūrṇa, but its headquarters were in Java where Bilașputra-deva lived in AD 845. The position becomes clear from the statement of another author of a contemporary text (prior to AD 851), edited by Abu Zayd Hasan in C. 916 AD. We read there, "Kāśīvar formed part of the empire of Zībaq, which is situated in the South of India. Kāśīvar and Zībaq are governed by one king." Now, Abu Zayd Hasan has stated that the city of Zībaq, whose circumference is 900 parrasangs and ruled over by a king who is known by the name of Mahārāja." We read further: "the king is in addition, the Sovereign of a great number of islands that extend for 1,000 parrasangs and even more. Among the states over which he rules is the island called Šribīja, whose circumference is 400 parrasangs, and the island Ramsu (Achin, north of Sumatra). Also part of the possession of the mahārāja is the maritime state of Kāśīvar, which is situated half-way between China and Arabia...... The authority of the mahārāja is felt in these islands." Here Šribīja has been shown as a segment of Zībaq. Ferrand thought that Zībaq referred to Sumatra, but Pelletier understood it in the sense of Java-Sumatra. It seems to have been a bigger geographical entity, because a little later Mārizi, who had visited both Zībaq and China, wrote in C. 954 AD, "about the kingdom of the mahārāja, king of the islands of Zībaq and other islands in the sea of China, among which are Kāśīvar and Šribīja. ...Voyaging in the most rapid vessel, one cannot go round all these islands in two years," Zībaq is thus the metropolis country, exercising authority in various degrees over many parts of Sumatra, Malayu and smaller islands all about. This is explicitly stated another part of his text which reads: "Zībaq is the chief island of his kingdom and the seat of his empire."
Al-Biruni, the greatest scholar of his age, wrote about Suvarnadvipa in the following terms (Sachau, Alberuni’s India, i, p. 210): “The eastern islands in this ocean, which are nearer to China than to India are the islands of Zeboq called by Hindus Suvarnadvipa, i.e. the gold islands.” The same idea is repeated in pt II, p. 106 of the same text, but he was particular in distinguishing it from Suvarnabhumi, which, he rightly placed in his classified list under ‘IX, as being in the north-east (aśdīnya)’ (of India). In this context, it should not be forgotten that Al-Biruni and Abū Bishārā and Abū Bakr were contemporaries. So, the MS-versions about Suvarnadvipa receive better precision in the writing of Al-Biruni.

What all the relevant Arabic texts had not recorded specifically have been supplied by the Kāthādvarisagama (C. 1060 A.D.), in itoranga 54, Verses 97 ff, where we read that Kalasa (modern Calcutta) was the capital of Suvarnadvipa. As the earliest reference to Kalasa in connection with Buddhist worship occurs in the Kalasat inscription of Java, dated A.D. 778 and not long thereafter in the Sanskrit text called Aryamahārājagālakalpa, dated C. 800 A.D., this toponym could not have possibly been borrowed from the Bhāratagāl of Guṇapāla, usually believed to be the source of the Kāthādvaris text referred to above and placed in a date not later than the 6th century A.D. (S.N. De, A History of Sanskrit Literature: classical period, p. 695 and H.B. Sarkar in the Asianist article referred to earlier). As the East-West trade route passed by the maritime belt of Western India, particularly the Cambay region, traders of this region must have disseminated the information about the capital of Suvarnadvipa at Kalasa (n). It is also for this reason that I did not doubt this information lightly, as it concerns a problem whose solution is not yet in sight.

When I visited Java in 1938, I had this problem in mind. The temple of Kalasa was a royal temple established by raja Purnagupta (king Indra) with the assistance of the神器-prapratapad of the Salendra king” (no. 1, in H.B. Sarkar, Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java, Vol. II). As this was a royal temple established by the royal prince, it stands to reason that the royal palace, according to Indian religious conception, could not be far off, as the members of the royal house hold obviously worshipped here, irrespective of the change of dynasties among collateral branches. That struggle for power took place in its neighbourhood in subsequent times have been sought to be delineated by J.Gede Caspers in his Prasasti Indonesia II, pp. 244 ff, although I have reservations about the interpretation of the events.

The identification of the capital city of Suvarnadvipa, having central authority over the loose segments of the confederation having their respective zonal quarters, is as yet an unsolved problem, but it cannot escape one’s attention that most of the durable archaeological treasures,
monumental and sculptural art are found only in the Southern half of central Jaya and not in any other part of Suvarnpādīpīpa. As the founders of the Śrīvijaya kingdom in Sumatra were Śalendraksetra or Sambodhi, the latter term may have been used for Suvarnapādīpīpa, which is the modern name for Palembang. Suvarnapādīpīpa was the capital of the kingdom of Srivijaya, which flourished from the 8th to the 13th century AD. It was located on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia, and its influence extended as far as China and the Indian subcontinent.

In summary, the location and name of Suvarnapādīpīpa were confirmed through archaeological and historical evidence, and it is clear that the name Suvarnapādīpīpa was used to refer to the capital of the Srivijaya kingdom located in Sumatra, Indonesia.
have settled down at a place which came to be known as Malpuru after the name of their home-country on the Malabar coast of Southern India. It is usually identified with modern Tambi on the northern coast of Sumatra. A bigger influx organised by Srivijaya strengthened the demography of the place between AD 571 and 695. It gradually grew up in importance and its ruler sent a mission to China in 644 and again in 645.

In the days of I-tsing (AD. 671), there were more than 1000 Buddhist priests in the 'settled city of Bhoja'. They were told, "Study all the subjects that exist in the Mathuradāsa (India) ...." Pelliot thought that this Bhoja, i.e. Srivijaya, was located at Palembang a view I also share. It is very difficult to state why the Buddhist centre at Palembang declined and that at Malayu-Malayagiri prospered. Whatever be the reason, it saw its prosperity in the tenth century AD, at least in the reign of the Sailendra King Cakrākara-deva in the last quarter of the tenth century AD. The name of Malayu as Malay-giri seems to be justified, as it is a hilly terrain.

Alas came to Malayu in AD 1012, when the previous king of Srivijaya had already died and after Māhravindu-deva had ascended the throne in AD 1008. No evidence is however available at present from the Indonesian side regarding the existence of the Buddhist University at Malayu in the beginning of the eleventh century or Alas Dipakhara's sojourn there for advanced studies in Buddhism.

A critical study of the progress of researches on Srivijaya up to 1979 had been furnished by C.W. Walters in his "Srivijaya", published in the Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. 52, pt. 2, 1979, while a bibliography on the same topic up to the same year has been furnished in the Pros Seminar Penelitian Srivijaya, published by the Pusat Penelitian Bhubaksa 11an, Penang, 1979. The latest authoritative discussion on Srivijaya and some other matters related to it is to be found in R. Wheatley, Nāga and Commandery University of Chicago, 1983.
NOTES & TOPICS

STUPA SYMBOL

An authority on Buddhist as well as Hindu art forms, Kalyan Kumar Ganguli, in his article (Supra p. 3 ff) states that the Stupa, as an object of veneration or a receptacle for relics, is anterior to the life and times of Buddha Sakyamuni. This is in accord with Tibetan tradition, which holds that there were several Tathagatas prior to Buddha Sakyamuni. Tibetan tradition also confirms Dr. Ganguli's opinion that Buddha in iconic form is later than Stupa for Buddha and that first Buddha image, in high or low relief, was on the body of the Stupa or railings around.

Stupa as a common feature of all schools and sects of Buddhism is admitted by scholars as well as believers. The five illustrations suffixed to the learned article attest this fact.

An article from Tibetan sources describing the five steps to Sumeru, the Mandala and other features as in Mahayana sources will be published in the Bulletin shortly.

Portable metal stupa, containing relics or some Mantra, has been a special feature of Tibetan Buddhism. Its popularity dates from the time of Atisa Dipankara whose baggages were only two, a metal Stupa with Buddha's relics and a basket containing a few sacred texts. This Stupa known as Kadam Chorten has special structural peculiarities. This will also be noticed in the scheduled article.

- NCS

JAGANNATH UPADHYAYA

Professor Jagannath Upadhyaya, an authority on Mahayana and Northern Buddhism, and a member of the General Council of Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology passed away in September last. An obituary will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin.

- NCS

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