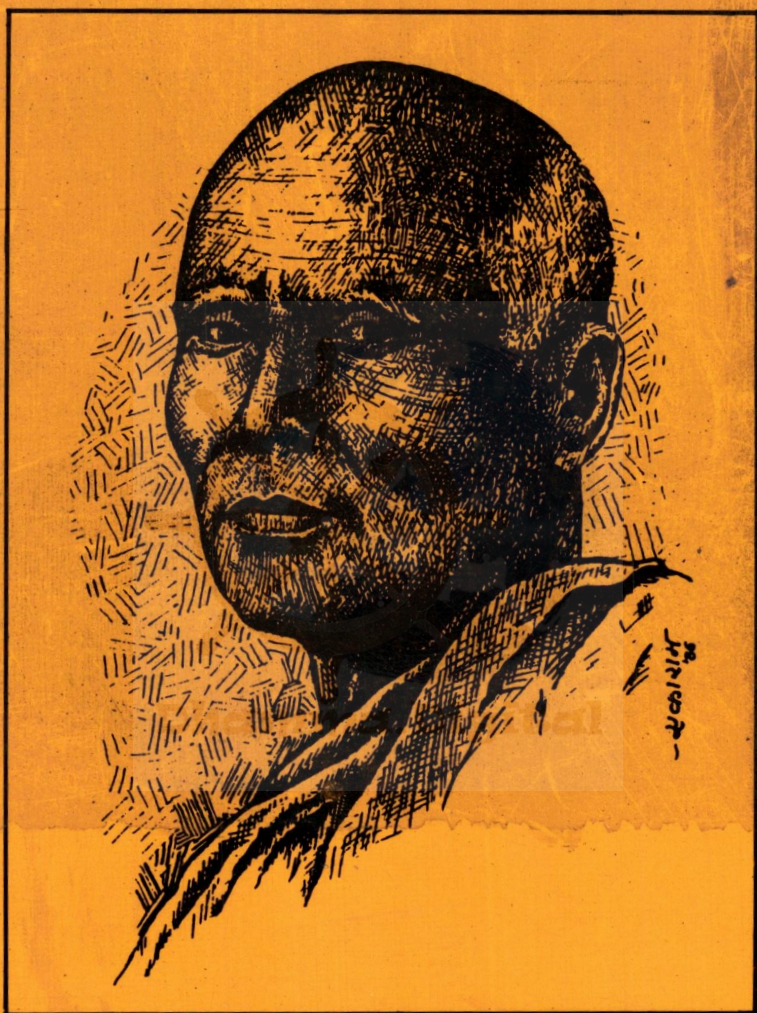


# A PILGRIMAGE IN CHINA



**Bhikkhu Dharmaloka Mahasthvir**



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Sramanera Aniruddha, 1930



Bhikkhu Aniruddha, 1937

# A PILGRIMAGE IN CHINA

by

**Bhikkhu Dharmaloka Mahasthavir**

Translated from Nepalbhasha (Newari)  
with an Introduction, Notes, etc.

by

**Kesar Lall**

**Dhamma.Digital**

Published by: Bhikkhu Aniruddha Mahasthavir,  
Kathmandu

Copyright: Publisher

New English Edition, 1999

Price Rs. 100/-

Computer layout: Pramila Shrestha



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Printed at

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## INTRODUCTION

Das Ratna (Ten Jewels) was the name chosen by his parents, Keshasunder and Bekha Laxmi Tuladhar, when he, their second son, was born in 1890 in their home in a hidden courtyard off the busy marketplace of Asan in the old city of Kathmandu. When he grew up and true to the Tuladhar tradition he followed in the footsteps of his older brother, who was a trader in Lhasa, he was known by the nickname of Baran Sahu. A simple soul with deep convictions and a great determination, he firmly believed in myths and legends and travelled long distances until he proved to himself that he had been listening to the tall tales of the ancients. From his own travels and trade he learnt that travelling was an education in itself and that education was essential for a reasonably good life. He found that money corrupted merchants as well as monks and power and glory did not last forever.

A great traveller, he walked and never rode a horse throughout his numerous journeys across immense plains and high mountains in Tibet. He never had milk in his tea. He didn't touch meat. That was how he expressed his empathy with other living beings. On the eve of a journey to Tibet, his wife, Dibya Laxmi, died suddenly, leaving him a six-month old baby and an eight-year old boy. The traumatic event and a growing distaste for "trade's unfeeling train" eventually made him Dharmaloka, a Buddhist monk, in 1933. Three years earlier, his older boy, Gajaratna, had entered the Sangha and been renamed Aniruddha in Sri Lanka.

Without understanding a word of the Chinese language, he spent a year in China in 1936. He had gone there fully expecting to meet Manjusri, the founder of Nepal in pre-historic times, in flesh and blood. He was the first ever known Nepalese to reach Pancasirsha Parbat, which the Chinese called Wu Tai Shan, both words meaning "The Mountain of Five Peaks." Face to face with an image of Manjusri, he pondered for days until it dawned on him that the word meant an embodiment of Wisdom. The delusion was over.

He literally followed the Buddha's teaching, "Do not go merely by hearsay or what is found written in Scriptures," and

although hardly lettered, he has left among other publications, an account of his pilgrimage in China entitled *Mahachin Yatra* in Nepalbhasha. It is hoped that this translation of the interesting book into English would enable many readers to share with us the story of his incredible journey through life. The recollections and anecdotes about him included in this book would help further in understanding the author and his work.

The Venerable Bhikkhu Dharmaloka Mahasthvir passed away in 1967 in his peaceful retreat Anandakuti, the foundation of which he had laid by erecting a tiny, little shack amongst the trees in the sacred Swayambhu Hill in Kathmandu valley in 1942.





## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In 1950, the Dharmodaya Sabha published Bhikkhu Dharmaloka Mahasthavir's *Mahachin Yatra*, an account of a pilgrimage in 1936 to the sacred mountain in China called Pancasirsha Parbat by the Nepalese and Wu Tai Shan by the Chinese, the meaning of the words in both languages being "The Mountain of Five Peaks." The mountain is sacred to Buddhists in Nepal and China because it was the home of Manjusri. Written in Newari or Nepalbhasha, the language of Nepal and the author's mother tongue, a soft-spoken Tibeto-Burman language, it is a very interesting book indeed. In the next three decades, translations in three other languages (Hindi, 1974; Nepali, 1978, and English 1980 by Bhikkhu Aniruddha, Nanimainya Manandhar and Prof. Shrinivas Pathak respectively) were published.

In the course of a conversation in 1998, I suggested to Venerable Bhikkhu Aniruddha Mahasthavir a new edition of *Mahachin Yatra* in English- and this is the result, an altogether new edition with a glossary, notes and appendices.

Efforts have been made to make the translation in English as faithful as possible both in letter and spirit to the original in Newari. However, it is necessary to mention certain problems inherent in the task, not made easy, for instance, by the use of different calendars and the lunar and solar systems of reckoning time. Certain events were even dated by other events. Conversion of the year according to the official Vikram era into the Western calendar has been made by deducting 56 years, which could be 57 years as well because the Nepalese year begins in mid April. It means that the year in question is either six months ahead or behind in the reckoning.

Geographical names have proved another problem, specially those of China, which the author had mentioned as he had *heard* and not according to the map. Consequently, it has not been possible to give the correct spelling in some cases. The author has mentioned the five sacred peaks of Wu Tai Shan by "colour", presumably according to local usage, and not by their proper names, Wang Hai Feng, Gua Ye Feng, Jin Xiu Feng, Ye Dou Feng and Cui

Ye Feng. The Chinese currency had been mentioned only in a few instances. The author had used the Indian currency (Rupee, anna, paisa) throughout the book.

Certain individuals had been identified by their relationship with someone else or by their titles. It is hoped that the notes and other additional information would be of some help in these matters.

A brief account of another visit to Pancasirsha Parbat in 1996 has been included in this book. It underlines the many changes that have taken place in the world since the first pilgrimage 60 years back. These changes include not only new names for some cities and countries (Peking/Beijing; Siam/Thailand, etc.) but also a change in the spelling for transliteration of Nepalese words into English (Chandramani/Candramani; Chhauni/ Chauni, etc.). Inevitably and regrettably an inconsistency in the spellings of some Nepalese proper names could not be avoided.

It is also to be regretted that none of the 15 illustrations in the original *Mahachin Yatra* were available for inclusion in the book. I thank Mr. Sharad Kasa for providing the fine sketch of the author done by Mr. Yekaram and published in *Paubha*.

I am grateful to Mr. Bidya Man Sakya not only for the account of his own visit to Wu Tai Shan but also for helping me with suggestions and in proof-reading the translation.

Finally, let me express my happiness that the Venerable Bhikkhu Aniruddha Mahasthavir has not only agreed to my suggestion about a new English version of one of the most interesting books in Nepalbhasha but he has actually been able to publish it himself.

**K.L**

August 23, 1999

## CHAPTER I

### An Inspiration for the Pilgrimage

In my early days, as a householder in Kathmandu, I used to listen with great interest to the stories told in different quarters of the town during certain months by Buddhist and Hindu priests<sup>1</sup>. I was also very interested in tales handed down orally from one generation to another. Therefore, during a visit to Calcutta<sup>2</sup> on a business trip, I was very surprised to meet some people from Ceylon because they were human beings just like us. In the epic Ramayana,<sup>3</sup> it was stated that the country was inhabited by *rakshas* or fearsome giants. I could not believe that there would be human beings in the land of the giants. In my disbelief, I inquired about it with various people, and those who had actually been to Ceylon regarded me as a great fool.

I also heard Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder of the Mahabodhi Society at College Square in Calcutta speak about Ceylon. I was nonplussed and my belief in the myths was shaken. However, I could not really believe Anagarika Dharmapala either.

Likewise in Lhasa,<sup>4</sup> I met Tibetans who claimed that they had seen Manjusri,<sup>5</sup> in the mountain called Pancasirsha Parbat in China. I could not believe them at all. In the course of my inquiries, I came across a number of other people who had made the pilgrimage and supported the claim. So I said to myself, "If they can go, why can't I?" and determined that if I have an opportunity, I shall make a pilgrimage to the Pancasirsha Parbat.

The next time I visited Lhasa, I took my son Gajaratna, who was eight years old, along with me. I had to keep moving back and forth from Lhasa to Phari and to

Calcutta. Gajaratna was full of mischief then and I had to take him along wherever I went. Finally I admitted him at Central Hindu Boarding School at Banaras. The fee was Rs.30/- per month. A couple of years in the school changed him completely; he had learnt the importance of education. As he was about to return to Nepal from Banaras, I called him back to Lhasa. Everyone was surprised at the change that had come over him. It led me to believe firmly that there was nothing like education for boys to make their future bright.

### **Kindol Vihara,<sup>6</sup> Kathmandu**

When I returned to Kathmandu<sup>7</sup> with my son, I had no longer a desire to lead a householder's life. So, I went to live at Kindol Vihara at the foot of Swayambhu Hill. I took Gajaratna along with me. His younger brother Triratna had been living with his grandmother since his mother's death when he was merely 10 months old.

Kindol Vihara was being restored and I contributed my mite by paving the rooms with planks. Gajaratna went to work daily in the weaving mill belonging to Jogbir Singh at Sighah, while I spent my time in reading *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita*<sup>8</sup>. The caretaker of the vihara who was a Shakya<sup>9</sup> of Thimi, got severe diarrhoea and died that year. Gajaratna did his best to nurse him. He was not repulsed by the most foul odour. It occurred to me that it was the result of the years he had spent at the school at Banaras. He was obedient and willingly did anything.

Manjuharsha of Bhaktapur who was living at Namobuddha, was appointed the next caretaker at Kindol. His *guru* was Serap Dorje, a lama who had come from Bhutan to repair Swayambhu *stupa*<sup>10</sup>. Instead of returning to Bhutan, he visited Helambu, Keyrung and Kuti. He taught

the people about a religious practice called *nyuni*. It was a fasting designed to purify people physically and mentally. They ate one meal on the first day of the fast and on the next morning they got up at dawn and recited prayers to Karunamaya, the god of compassion, for 24 hours, during which period even saliva was not swallowed and complete silence was maintained. Manjuharsha observed the fast regularly on the eight day of the fortnight, the full-moon day and on the day of the new moon. I also undertook the fast and many others followed suit. A year and half was spent in this manner at Kindol Vihara.

### **Rahul Sankrityayana**

Rahul Sankrityayana had arrived in Kathmandu during the Shivaratri.<sup>11</sup> He was a Hindu *sadhu* then. He wanted to go to Lhasa and went to Boudha to look for a companion for the journey. He met the lama Serap Dorje, who was very impressed by him. The lama promised to help Rahulji and let him stay at Boudha. However, he had to remain indoors all the time, because a month had passed since Shivaratri and the police were after Indians, who were overstaying, to be sent back to their country.

My first meeting with Rahulji took place at Kindol Vihara. When the lama Serap Dorje was invited to preside over a religious function he had taken Rahulji along with him. I learnt that he was known previously as Ramodar Baba.<sup>12</sup> A few days later he confided to me that he wanted to visit Lhasa to collect the Buddhist texts called Kengyur and Tengyur for the Nalanda University<sup>13</sup> which was being revived. I thought that he was after a good objective and that we ought to help him. Rahulji was very apprehensive that before he could leave for Lhasa the police would find him and send him back to India. He told me that he did not want to meet anyone, but people kept coming to see him.

The lama was kept busy at Kindol Vihara for months and Rahulji asked me almost everyday, "Where can I be safe until the lama departs for Tibet?" So, I found another place for him to stay. It was a small farmhouse in the middle of a field and Gajaratna took food for him in the morning and in the afternoon. I did not know exactly what the two talked about. After a fortnight in the farmhouse, Rahulji became depressed and developed a temperature. He sent for me and said: "If I stay any longer like this, I shall surely die. Please find out from the lama whether he will go or not, and if he did, which way will he go?" However, the lama was unable to give a definite date for his departure. So, I asked him which way will he go. He threw on the floor two chips used in the Tibetan dice call *sho* and indicated that he would travel via Helambu.

I reported accordingly to Rahulji and he became very sad. I was much concerned and suggested to him: "If you feel very uncomfortable here, let me take you to Helambu and you can wait there. It is not hot there and I know someone with whom you can stay. The lama has said that he will take that route to Tibet." He replied: "It has become very difficult for me here. Let me go to Helambu and wait for the lama."

A few days later we left Kathmandu. However, Rahulji began to have a problem with his shoes at Sundarijal. The blisters broke and he bled profusely. He started to limp and I wondered how I was to take him up the mountain. I walked up to a nearby shop, where I found a strong and tall Tamang<sup>14</sup> man. I asked him if he could carry Rahulji on his back up to Helambu. He said that he could and demanded a wage of one rupee per day in addition to his meals. I agreed with him at once. He tried to lift up Rahulji, who was quite big. As I had promised him as much as he wanted, he agreed to go with us. I told him to bring his

basket. He said that a basket won't do, but if he had a plank with two holes in it, he would be able to carry Rahulji on his back. "Go and get the plank then," I said to him.

It was about 10 o'clock in the morning then and he went away. We bought milk and beaten rice in the shop. The man returned by the time we had our meal, and in another hour, we climbed up the hill. By evening, we arrived at Tarangmarang. We had supper and spent the night in a shop. The next day, we left early in the morning and that night we took shelter in a house. On the following day too we began our journey early in the morning and by 10 o'clock, we reached the house of my Sherpa acquaintance, Dhamdur, at Tarkyaghyang in Helambu. In addition to his wages, I gave the porter an extra rupee and he went away happily. I asked Dhamdur to let Rahulji stay with him until the arrival of lama Serap Dorje. If the lama failed to come for any reason he was to take Rahulji up to Kuti. The next day, on my way back to Kathmandu, I met some nuns and the lama's servants. I told them that I had left the Indian scholar at Helambu and asked them to take care of him. I arrived back at Kindol Vihara on the following day and informed the lama.

### Gajaratna

Many women became interested in my religious practice at Kindol Vihara and they began to take part in the *nyuni* fast. However, it gave rise to all sorts of gossip in the town about myself, my son and Manjuharsha. Eventually, it came to my ears that a plot was afoot to find a pregnant woman with a dubious character and make her take the fast, and later, when she had given birth, to make her claim that the child was mine. The vihara was crowded with women and I felt that I was bound to be censured. So, I lost my interest in the fasting, but I could not give it up at once.

I knew that I had to stay away from female company. So, I went to Calcutta with Gajaratna and left him with his maternal uncle Mahadhar *Sahu*. Then I went with Tuyukaji of Yetkha Baha and Mahadhar's son to Dewalgiri Godown in Assam on another trading mission. It transpired that Gajaratna had also arranged with Rahulji to go to Ceylon for his education.

The trade fair in the jungles on the border between Assam and Bhutan went on for three months during which the government provided police protection while the traders built their own bamboo huts. Marwaris, Assamese, Bhutanese, Nagas and other Indians came to the fair with their merchandise. The Bhutanese brought raw sealing wax worth *lakhs* of rupees while the Nagas came with silk cocoons and *bhulaya* shawls. With the money from the sale of their products, these people bought many other items for themselves.

Before my visit to the fair in Assam, I knew two kinds of *bhulaya* - one from Lhasa and another from Calcutta. I did not know where it actually came from. Now I found that the Tibetans and Indians bought it from the tribesmen and took it to Lhasa and Calcutta respectively. There was also a great deal of trading in other textiles as well as in tea in the fair. There were many tea gardens in Assam.

Before there was a road from Kalimpong to Tibet, all goods were taken to Lhasa from Nepal, which made the Tibetans think of Nepal as a very great country and the Nepalese as talented and skillful workers. They spoke of the Nepalese as *norbu* or a jewel. With the opening of the Kalimpong-Lhasa road, the Nepalese lost much of their glory as far as the Tibetans were concerned. The Tibetans themselves came to Calcutta and became great merchants.



With a change in the attitude of the Tibetans towards them, many Nepalese merchants were out of business. As long as they had business in Lhasa, these merchants were very prosperous. Now they had to confine themselves within Nepal only and the business in Lhasa had gone out of their hands. Just as I had thought before my visit to Assam that the bhulaya came from Lhasa, the Tibetans had believed previously that all the goods that came to Lhasa originated in Nepal itself. Travelling was quite an education.

A month after my departure from Calcutta, Gajaratna told his uncle that he wanted to go to school in Ceylon. His uncle replied that he could not go without my permission. That annoyed Gajaratna and he gave a lot of trouble to his uncle. Finally I got a letter in Assam. "Your son has gone mad," he wrote, "Come back soon." I left for Calcutta the next day and found a wretched Gajaratna, who gave way to tears as soon as he saw me. When I asked him what was the matter, he replied: "You have brought me to be admitted to a school. Why are you keeping me here? Let me go to school in Ceylon." I asked him: "How will you go there? You know neither the language nor anyone there. And there is no one to take you along." He replied: "There is no need to worry much. All I need is your permission and some money." I suggested that he could go to a school in Calcutta itself, but he said: "Not here, but permit me to go to Ceylon." I concluded that there was no point in trying to reason with him. When he had become a nuisance in Calcutta previously, he was admitted to a boarding school in Banaras and in a little over two years he had learnt much. He became fearless and he did whatever took his fancy. So, I told his uncle to provide him with whatever he might need and returned to my business in Assam.

Having purchased bhulaya shawls for about 1000 Rupees, I was ready to return to Calcutta but I developed a high fever and had to travel with great difficulty. Gajaratna was still looking for a companion to go to Ceylon. Everyone advised me that I would recover soon if I returned home. Moreover, Calcutta was an expensive place. So, I gave some money to Gajaratna and made my way back home.

In Kathmandu my illness took a turn for the worse and I was bound to my bed. I sent for Siddhiratna of Duche and asked him to find out if I could get admission in the hospital. He came back with a palanquin and took me to the hospital in it.

Four days later when I was administered a medicine, I vomited a great deal of black matter, both solid pieces and liquid. The vomiting didn't stop and I was very ill indeed. I thought my end was near and I asked Jagaratna Sahu of Tanlachi to take me to the public shelter<sup>15</sup> at Kalmochan. My friends informed the doctor about my worsening condition and he came and examined me. The doctor sent for about two pounds of milk, boiled it and squeezed a lemon in it. The curdled milk was then strained through a piece of cloth and he made me drink about a pound of it while it was still hot. That stopped the vomiting. From the next day I got better. But then something else troubled me. I could not sleep a wink. I got indigestion, the back ached and I became restless. Then I had an idea. Jagaratna had provided me with some cigarettes costing half a rupee per packet to be given to those who brought my meals and medicine. Although I had never smoked before, it occurred to me that I should try it. I gingerly took one cigarette, lighted it and inhaled it deeply. The cigarette had opium in it and I felt weak and sleepy. I took a few more puffs and put out the cigarette. Sleep overcame me soon and I woke up quite late in the next morning. I found that my

body had become light and I was hungry. The next day, I asked for more food from home. Ideas are great indeed! An idea put the vomiting to an end and another idea made me sleep. Fourteen days later, with a stick in my hand, I returned home.

A month later, I received the news that Gajaratna had left Calcutta for Ceylon. However, I did not know his whereabouts for nearly seven months. Finally I received a letter in which he enclosed his photograph in the monk's robe. The monk Sharanankar had taken Gajaratna to his own vihara in Colombo and taught him the Sinhali language. Six months later, Ananda Kausalyayana saw Gajaratna in the vihara and asked him, "Who are you?" "My name is Gajaratna and I have come from Nepal," he replied. "Oh! So you are here!" exclaimed Anandaji, "Rahulji has written to me about you. I did not know where you were and this is not the place for you. You are to stay with us at Vidyalankara Pirivena." Accordingly, Gajaratna went to Vidyalankara Pirivena and devoted himself to his study. Soon he became a *sramanera* and was given the name Aniruddha.

Gajaratna's letter made me very happy. It also reminded me of an event about which I had heard in Lhasa. It was the news of the religious instructions given to five persons including Mahapragya by a lama named Tshering Norbu at Nagarjun in Kathmandu. Eventually the men became monks but when they went begging for alms, the police arrested them. They were expelled from the country when they refused to give up their robes.

I was convinced then that it was an indication of the resurgence of Buddhism in Nepal.<sup>16</sup> The expulsion of the monks did not worry me much. On the contrary, I thought that even if Aniruddha was expelled upon his return to Nepal, it was not going to matter much. I was very excited to

see my son in the monk's robe. I sent as much money as I could afford to Aniruddha. I also sent him white yak tail,<sup>17</sup> books, etc. Whenever I visited the post office in Kathmandu some people were very surprised to know that letters and parcels could be sent as far away as Ceylon. They were even more surprised to know that my own son was there.

Aniruddha asked me to send his brother Triratna, then 14 years old, also to Ceylon. I had also heard many stories about Ceylon. It was stated in the Ramayana that Bibhishana was immortal. "If he is really living," I said to myself, "I must see him." I made up my mind to pay a visit to Ceylon and Triratna could go with me. Meanwhile, Hastiratna Bichari of Maru asked me to take another boy named Mohanratna also with me. I had no idea how he came to know about my plan. The boy's mother too begged me to take her son with me. I decided that education would certainly do the boy some good and I agreed to take him too with me. One son had already become a monk and it would be good if another followed suit. I recalled the troubles, the sorrow, tyranny, betrayal and helplessness in a householder's life and concluded that a monk's life was better.

## Ceylon

I left for Ceylon<sup>18</sup> with the two boys, Triratna and Mohanratna, via Calcutta where we were the guests of my brother-in-law in Madho Bhavan at Harrison Road. I visited the Mahabodhi Society to enquire if anyone was going to Ceylon. I heard of a man employed in the jetty at Howrah who was departing in a few days. I traced the ship and the man. "I have come to take two boys to Vidyalankara Pirivena in Ceylon," I explained to him, "I have learnt at the Mahabodhi Society that you are going to Ceylon in a few days. Is it true?" "Yes," he said, "but my boss has not approved my leave. I shall come to you as soon as I have my

leave, and I shall take you along with me." He invited me to stay for tea with him. A week later, he came and said, "I have my leave. When can you leave?" I said, "Any time." He told me that we should go within one week.

The boys had their clothes made and we were all prepared to leave Calcutta. We spent a night at the Mahabodhi Society and the next morning, after breakfast, we took a taxi to the Howrah station where we bought tickets and boarded the train for Madras. The man took great care of us during the train journey. As he had some business in Madras, we stayed two days in a *dharmasala* and toured the city. I noticed that the women wore very heavy jewellery that resulted in elongated earlobes and reminded me of the Buddha's ears. The women put on the *sari* with one end tucked behind as men did with their *dhoti*. The sea was very salty and water from the wells was not good for drinking either. Only the water from the taps was good for drinking.

On our third day in Madras we bought inter-class tickets for Ceylon. When I inquired why we had to travel inter-class, which was costly, I was told that otherwise we might have to stay at Mandapam for a whole week for a medical check up. It would cost us more in the end and if we caught fever in the meantime we would not be allowed to proceed to Ceylon. The doctor himself came to the inter-class compartments and checked the travellers. We arrived in Colombo in comfort. The man asked me to wait for him while he went away in a taxi to leave his luggage in his home. Colombo was a beautiful city. I saw some monks in the distance and imagined one of them to be Aniruddha. When the man did not return for a long time, I was much worried but hoped that he would not leave us in the lurch. He finally appeared and took us to Vidyalankara Pirivena but Aniruddha happened to be out. I knew no one else there and my guide spoke with Aniruddha's teacher, the Venerable

Dharmananda, and he provided a room for our stay. Aniruddha returned soon and our friend from Calcutta left for his home.

I found that all new comers in Ceylon had to visit the hospital for a checkup and get a medical certificate. Otherwise a heavy penalty was imposed. For the next ten days I went for the free medical checkup. However, before long I was laid up with flu for some days. I found that the coconut oil in which all the food was cooked was not good for me. The climate too was not suitable for me. There was so much difference between my assumption about Ceylon and what I actually found there. The people were very religious minded and I was much impressed by their politeness.

I went to Anuradhapura in a car and saw among other sites, the spot where Arhat Mahindra had alighted from the sky; a 18 cubit long image of Lord Buddha; a huge rock with five cells; Lord Buddha's tooth relics; the Bodhi Tree; ancient palaces of King Dutugamunu, etc. At Ravankot beyond Anuradhapura, a huge stupa was being built in cement, but only half of it had been completed. It was so big that the music played on one side was not heard on the other side and the labourers up in the ladders appeared very small from below. They must also find those on the ground equally small. I made a donation of Rs.10/- for the stupa. After the sightseeing, I took the two boys back to Aniruddha in Colombo. I had been but a month in Ceylon when I had to return for I received a telegram from Calcutta, saying "Jogman dead. Come soon."

I thought I should take a monk's robe back with me to Nepal, where monks were seldom seen. I requested Aniruddha's teacher for a robe and a begging bowl. He was surprised at my request and I had to explain that people in

Nepal had never seen a monk's robe, and I would like to keep it and worship it. The teacher smiled and gave me a robe and a begging bowl. As it was a new robe, I had to pay four rupees as customs duty. I disembarked from the ship and reached Mandapam and bought a ticket for Madras, where I stayed two days before returning to Calcutta. Then I made my way back to Kathmandu in a light frame of mind.

### **Imprisonment in Kathmandu**

Upon my arrival in Kathmandu, I returned to Kindol Vihara. Once more I was busy with my religious practices including a fast called *astamibrata*. I kept the monk's robe and begging bowl beside a *mandala*. The number of participants in the *astamibrata* increased day by day which gave me an idea. I got a pamphlet printed in Nepalbhasa in which I made an appeal for alms of a handful of rice from each person to observe the fast. However, many people became jealous of my success and spies frequented Kindol. Then all sorts of rumours reached the ears of Maharaja Bhim Shumshere. A year later, Saptaratna, a Uraya<sup>19</sup> of Neta, reported to the government that an *adambara* or alien faith was being practiced at Kindol Vihara.

A dispute concerning infringement of caste laws<sup>20</sup> was going on at that time. It involved those Gubhaju<sup>21</sup> who took rice cooked by the Uraya and those who did not. All those people who were in favour of one party or other as well as those in favour of social reforms, such as cutting short on the expenses in different traditional customs and practices, and even those who had never even visited Kindol Vihara were harassed by the officials for a year. Altogether 11 persons were implicated in the case. These included Jogbir Singh, Manikman, Karunaratna, Siddhiratna, Mandas, Harkhadass, Mandev, Chittadhar, Dharmaman, Manjuharas and myself. We were required to go to Jawalakhel<sup>22</sup> on

different dates. All sorts of rumours reached the Maharaja and he was outraged. Jogbir Singh, Manikman, Siddhiratna, Karunaratna and Mandas were whipped publicly on the lawns of the Maharaja's palace and then taken to the police station to be exiled the following day. That evening Jogbir Singh was shifted from the police station to the guardhouse at the Maharaja's palace.

When the trial ended,<sup>23</sup> Mandas, Chittadhar and I were confined in the guardhouse. However Harkhadass could not be found. The guards talked to us at night and they wondered why we were so severely punished. Those who were taken to the police station were brought early the next morning to Tundikhel. Manikman and Mandas were exiled to the west and Siddhiratna and Karunaratna were sent to the east of the Kathmandu valley. Jogbir Singh and three others were detained in the guardhouse. In the afternoon, Commander-in-Chief Juddha Shumshere arrived in a car at the Maharaja's palace and we were taken before them. The Commander-in-Chief then said: "You must give your word of honour that you will engage in mischief no more. The Maharaja has pardoned you." As soon as the Commander-in-Chief pronounced these words, Jogbir Singh placed a silver coin on the ground<sup>24</sup> and made a hasty exit through the gate. The three of us were then taken to the Commander-in-Chief's mansion at Jawalakhel and detained in the guardhouse.

That night the Commander-in-Chief came and said: "The Newars become ill if they don't eat rice. Give them a place to cook, and pots and pans and rice and whatever else are needed." The next day the guards were courteous to us and provided us with a place where we could cook rice. We were provided toilet facilities too. There was a public holiday which ended six days later and we were taken to the office and made to sign some documents. I was fined Rs.50/-



for printing the pamphlet. Having done that, we were released.<sup>25</sup> Those who had been expelled were recalled, made to sign the documents and released.

## **Burma**

I had no longer a wish to stay on in Nepal. I wanted to go to Burma to learn more about Buddhism. Five young women also expressed a similar wish and six months later we departed from Nepal. We visited the Buddhist sacred places in India first and then with a letter of introduction from Guru Chandramani Mahasthavir of Kusinagar, we travelled to Akyab.

The people of Akyab were very kind to us Buddhists from Nepal. The monk Mahapragya had been sent there earlier by the Guru. The sramanera Karmashila had taken Buddharatna along with him. I learnt much about the Buddhist way of life in Akyab. A month and half later I reached Rangoon where I stayed with U. Maun, the householder, who was the benefactor at the *upasampada* or higher ordination of the monks, Mahapragya and Shasanajyoti. The Guru had told me to go to Rangoon if I wished to see Burma. However he did not come and a letter was received instead. He wrote to me, "My visit depends upon your wish." I did not suspect that he lacked the wherewithal to travel nor did it occur to me to send him some money. I stayed in Rangoon for about one month. My host was again U. Maun, who looked after me very well indeed. As the Guru did not come, I returned to Calcutta with the intention of bringing him along with me to Burma.

## CHAPTER II

### Sramanera at Kusinagar

Upon my arrival in Calcutta, I met Gyanman. We stayed together at Madho Bhawan. He asked me about my travels, for his business was done and he was also thinking of a visit to Rangoon. In the meantime the two women, Laxmi Nani and Danmaya, came back with the sramanera Sange Dorje from Akyab and stayed at Dharmanukura Vihara in Calcutta. Three other women and the monk Karmashila and Buddharatna were still in Burma. I sent the two women back to Nepal and then Gyanman and I left Calcutta for Kusinagar. "I was expecting you in Rangoon," I told the Guru, "But you did not come, So, I have come to fetch you." He replied, "You sent me a letter but you did not provide me with legs." I asked him if he still wished to go. He said that he would go if he had legs. Only then did I comprehend the matter. I assured him that there was no problem for I had about one thousand rupees with me. I did not want to take it along wherever I went. Gyanman also had about eight hundred rupees with him. It then occurred to me that I should give a donation to a fund to feed the monks at Kusinagar. Gyanman agreed with my idea. So I gave away six hundred rupees in the presence of Mahendra Baba of Shravasti who happened to be there to purchase a piece of land for the purpose of feeding the monks who come from all directions. Meanwhile, Gyanman received a letter from his wife dissuading him from travelling with me to Burma.

At that juncture Moti Krishna of Nasanani arrived in Kusinagar from Bombay. He had learnt about our presence at Kusinagar, but he was slightly deranged and the people were soon fed up with him. One day no rice was cooked for him. Gyanman took it very badly and he returned to Nepal on the same day. I felt very lonely and sad. I reflected that

both my boys were no longer with me, and I could expect no help from anybody. Money was the source of all sufferings and however much one earned, one longed for more. Money corrupted even great men. Because of money, love was lost between brothers and between parents and their children. I knew the deceit practised by merchants when I was engaged in trade. I was disgusted with everything. I recalled my own temptations and fears when I had money with me. I also remembered the story of Sarbagyamisra.<sup>26</sup>

I asked myself whether there was any advantage in having money and came to the conclusion that it was better to remain poor. So, I said to the Guru: "There is no hope that other people would do anything for the Buddhist cause in Nepal. Nor should I expect it. Therefore, I wish to be a monk myself. If possible, I shall stay in Nepal and spread the *dharma*. If I am expelled, let me face it. There are so many places to go. They cannot banish me from the surface of the earth and I shall not die of hunger. I wish to give up my householder's life." The Guru was pleased with me and quoted a saying of King Ashok. He then found a good date for my renunciation<sup>27</sup> and I became a sramanera in the temple containing the image of the Buddha. Then I made a parcel of my clothes, shoes, etc. and sent it to my nephew Tulsiratna in Kathmandu. The news of my renunciation had reached Nepal before the parcel.

### **Burma - A Second Time**

I returned to Burma once more with Guru Chandramani. I stayed for some days at the vihara called Jetavana in Rangoon. The government had given the *mahasthavir* of that vihara the task of administering *shila* vows to prisoners once a week. Three days after my arrival the monk said to me, "Come along with me if you like to see the prisoners." I accompanied him to the jail. After a short

while in the guardhouse one of the guards took us inside the jail. Half a dozen locks on the gate were opened before we got inside. There were holes in the wall for communication with the inmates. The family members of the inmates crowded near these holes. As we passed, the people paid their respects to us. We were taken where an image of Lord Buddha was installed and chairs were brought for us. The *mahasthvir* administered the five and eight *shila* vows to all the prisoners and gave a talk on the *dharma*. Then we went to the cells where a dozen murderers were waiting to be hanged. There were two rows of iron cages, in which these men were kept in chains and with iron shackles around their necks. There were chairs for us in the centre of the hall. After a short talk, the vows were given to all these men. Then we were taken upstairs, where ranking officials, a few of them Englishmen, were confined. A talk was given to them too, followed by the vows. It seemed that sufferings turned men towards *dharma* for these men were apparently as devoted as those who followed it sincerely and strictly. We were served tea, bread, and biscuits. From the window I saw prisoners come out with cups and plates in their hands. They entered an enclosure and emerged with rice on their plates. I went for a closer look and saw rice and soup being ladled out of holes to the prisoners. Soon we were ready to leave; the gate was opened and we came out of the prison. For a while we were also locked up like prisoners. As we walked out we were given two rupees for taxi fare. I did not know what else the government gave the monk.

Next we went in a car to the lunatic asylum located at some distance. We asked the guards to let us in and they opened the gate for us. A dozen men with a touch of insanity came running towards us. They embraced and lifted us and danced around the place. Some held our hands or touched our feet. They seemed to be very happy. We arrived in a hall where nearly 60 men took the vows. Then they gave us the

food that they had saved for us. How devoted they were to the dharma and to the *sangha* even in madness! The place was neat and clean and they were given medical treatment in the asylum itself. Some of the mad men laughed all the time, some shouted and some played musical instruments while others stood in silence. There must be more than 100 mad men of all sorts. As we came out of the gate we were given two rupees for the return fare to the vihara.

One day we were invited by Khezari Babu's daughter to her house. Her father was the *data* or benefactor of Mahavir Baba, who had constructed a *dharmasala* at Kusinagar. We were not only treated to a nice meal by her but she begged Guru Chandramani to accept meals from her during his stay in Rangoon. Thereafter, she sent a nicely prepared meal consisting of rice and lentil soup to the vihara daily. The monk U. Janinda Sthavira in whose vihara we were staying had many followers. One of them mentioned to the Guru his wish to construct a *sima* at Kusinagar for the initiation of monks. The Guru thought it was a good idea. A few days later the man invited 60 monks to his house for a meal to which he asked his relatives and friends as well. He gave a cash donation for the *sima* and the guests also contributed to it. After a *paritrana* recitation, we returned to the vihara.

The Swedagon in Rangoon was as famous as the Swayambhu stupa in Kathmandu. It was a very large pagoda built high up on a hill top as in Swayambhu. It was close to the Jetavana Vihara where I was staying. People came in crowds every day from all over Burma and covered the pagoda with gold leaf so that it looked all yellow and bright. There were stone stairways on all the four sides from the bottom of the hill to the top. On either side of the stairways were covered sheds where numerous shops sold incense, candles, flowers, monk's robes, begging bowls, umbrellas,

etc. At the bottom of each stairway stood an impressive gate. The place was well lighted with electricity. There were spittoons, trash cans and foot rugs all over the marble pavement around the pagoda and it was very neat and clean. The laymen came to the pagoda accompanied by one or two monks. They prayed, lighted lamps, burnt incense and gave alms to the monks. The majority of Burmese were very devoted Buddhists. The pinnacle of the pagoda decorated with innumerable precious stones had been removed for repairs at the time of my visit. One day all the jewels were put on public display and hundreds of thousands of people came and left more than 4000 rupees in donations. It was so crowded that I got nowhere near the jewels.

### **Mandalay**

I was invited to some houses during my stay of about 12 days in Rangoon. Then we took the train to the old capital city of Mandalay, where we stayed in the vihara of Chakkhapala Mahapandita. We were provided with meals at the vihara but the Guru was uneasy as the benefactor who provided the meals seemed to be in poor health. So he said to me, "Let us move to another vihara." Next he took me to the monk Gyanottara at his vihara called Khemagauthai where hundreds of monks were studying the Abhidharma.<sup>28</sup> The monk had many benefactors and I visited many places during my stay in that vihara. In the days gone by the king of Burma provided all necessities to the monks who came to study at Mandalay. With the English takeover of the country, the king could no longer support the monks. However, to this day the local people themselves continued to support the monks who came to study Abhidharma. From 7 to 11:30 a.m. the whole city of Mandalay was covered with yellow-robed monks out for alms but only a few of them were seen in the afternoon. The inhabitants of this country knew that

giving alms was a great dharma. For this reason there were so many monks in Burma.

King Mendug had the whole Tripitaka<sup>29</sup> engraved on marble. The marble blocks, with carvings on both sides, were 4 cubits in height, 2 cubits in width and 6 finger lengths in thickness and stood in rows evenly spaced at 2 ½ cubits. A roof of corrugated iron sheets protected the scriptures from the rain. At the sight of the Tripitaka in stone I wondered how much it must have cost. I also admired the great industry and devotion of the people who had made these. Oh, how many marble images of Lord Buddha were to be seen in this country!

We crossed the Irrawady River, which came from China, in a boat to reach the retreats where the monks, having studied Abhidharma, practised meditation under ideal conditions. I was also taken to a place where the nuns lived under similar conditions. There were many pagodas in these hills as well as small houses where a single person could stay for the purpose of meditation. There were three large tanks at the top of the hill, to which water was pumped up from the Irrawady River to supply to every house. The nuns crossed the river once a week to beg for food which they shared with the monks. On the bank of the river there was a home for the disabled founded by a lady Mau. There was a small thatched wooden house for each of the 60 inmates. On my way to the home, I saw a huge bell seven or eight times bigger than the Big Bell<sup>30</sup> of Kathmandu. It was stricken with a wooden mallet. Close to the bell, there was a huge unfinished pagoda. The man who built it had died before its completion. Nearby stood two lions four times as big as elephants, one of them in ruins.

We returned two days later to Mandalay, where a large number of monks lived in numerous viharas. One day

a householder invited us to his house. His only son, who was highly educated and occupying a high position, had died a week before after a short illness. The Guru and I sat together with the father, who gave away to the Guru whatever articles were there in the room including the three chairs in which we were seated. His servants however resented his action but dared not say anything to him. In his grief at the loss of his son, the master had already given away many household articles in *dana* and the servants had become allergic to monks. We left the place soon thereafter.

There appears to be a greater number of charitable people in Burma than in other countries. On birthdays and memorial days, on different phases of the moon and on every other occasion they listened to religious stories in which the importance of giving alms to the monks was stressed. They had recitations of *paritrana* too. They were unwavering in their devotion to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, as a way of deliverance from suffering in the world. Burma had great scholars of the Tripitaka, and Buddhism has remained very strong in the country to this day. Students from Ceylon, Siam, China and Europe came to Burma to learn about Buddhism.

One day I bought a one-rupee ticket and visited the royal palace at Mandalay. There was a wall around the palace, with gates on four sides, and a water-filled moat, about 25 cubits in depth. All the gates were locked. There were cannons and balls on the grounds, in the middle of which stood three one-storey buildings. There was a collection of royal dresses, shoes, caps, etc. in one hall while the other halls were empty. The palace was not particularly impressive and compared to the imperial palace in China it looked like a child's toy.



After 20 days in Mandalay, I learnt that our host had a large vihara in Maymyo also. We took a train up the granite hills through a number of tunnels. I found many settlements of Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs and Lepchas from Nepal<sup>31</sup> in these hills. We arrived at Maymyo early in the morning the next day and a short distance away from the railway station was the vihara, where I found a dozen monks. The houses were made entirely of wood. I found it much cooler than in Mandalay. There were many kinds of flowers and fruits in the jungles. The governor of Burma stayed there during the hot season. His bungalow was located in a very pleasant place with swans swimming among lotus flowers in the ponds.

Beyond Maymyo was Siam, from where many monks came to live in the vihara under the guidance of Burmese teachers. There were only a very few Burmese monks. There were some Indian Sikhs in Maymyo. The climate was similar to that of Nepal and life was pleasant. The jungle was extensive and there were many tea plantations. In old days, *ghee* was not known until the Nepalese came and reared cattle. Although some of the Burmese kept cattle they did not drink milk nor made *ghee* and the very few persons who did, were held in contempt in the community. Oxen were used for ploughing. The animals appeared in a far better condition than those in Tibet or in China for the Burmese took great care of them. The calves were allowed to drink from three udders and only the milk from one udder was used by men. Some let the calves have all the milk. It was only recently that they had learnt to use *ghee* because of their association with the Hindus. After a week's stay in the hills, we returned to Mandalay where we remained a few more days.

## **Pegu**

Our next destination was Pegu. We were taken to a jungle where serene, old monks spent their days in meditation. They were looked after by a couple of sramaneras who went to beg in the villages and by some servants who kept the grounds clean, fetched water and served in other ways. The monks lived peacefully and apparently very happy with a few possessions that none coveted. I said to myself: "To live in the world without conflict is possible only if one were to forego honours and pleasures. Striving for worldly success only brought unrest in the mind." So long as I remained with the old monks, I enjoyed peace of mind and felt a strong sense of renunciation. I believed that anyone who went there was likewise impressed.

Then we came to a vihara where I saw an image of the Buddha in a lying posture under a corrugated iron roof. The length of the well-proportioned body must be about 150 cubits. The head supported by the hand was visible from a distance. It was a very impressive image and I admired the great devotion of the people who must have spent a great deal of money in making it.

## **Moulmein**

The next day I arrived at Moulmein and stayed for about 20 days at the vihara called Tampo Khyau where the monk Chakkhapala Mahapandita was living. With the sea close by and the hills and forests in the background Moulmein looked very pretty. The viharas were built on the top of the hills. Water was scarce on the upper reaches and big tanks had been built to collect water for bathing, drinking, cleaning and washing clothes. The roof had gutters that took rainwater into the tanks. Rainfall was frequent as

the city was close to the sea. The monks in the big viharas got up early in the morning and came down the hill to beg for alms. The city was divided into different parts and the monks went to specific parts. All of them gathered at a place before entering the city. A hollow log was beaten with a mallet to summon the monks. As soon as they heard the gong, the monks gathered at the appointed place. The elder monk went ahead followed by the rest in a row with their begging bowls.

While it was still dark, the people took their bath and cooked the rice. They put on clean clothes, and with the pot of rice on a table in front of their door, they waited for the monks, to each of whom they ladled out the rice, lentil soup, fruits, sweets, etc. The monks did not go beyond their own areas. By the time they returned from the alms round, the sun would be high up in the sky. In the vihara, the food obtained in alms was handed over to the cooks who sorted and heated it. Meanwhile, the monks drank the gruel prepared early in the morning and took rest for a while in their own rooms. By 11 o'clock, they would have bathed and then, in fives or sixes, they sat down by the tables for their meal of hot rice and vegetables. The benefactor of the vihara provided lentil soup and one kind of vegetables for all monks. As rice was received in alms there was no need to cook it in the vihara. There must be about 60 monks in the vihara where we stayed.

A man named U. To Lun had established an alms house where food as well as education were provided to the monks. I also wanted to go on an alms round in order to have an experience and I accompanied the monks four or five times, although they told me I need not do so. Once the benefactor provided two cars for a day and I went with a dozen monks in the cars to a place called Kyaikkami, where I found a temple on an island connected by a bridge on

wooden pillars. It was said that the *nagaraja* had come there to welcome Lord Buddha. There was a large image of a *naga* with numerous images of Lord Buddha on its back. Women were not allowed to go beyond a public building in front of the temple.

We were invited by a householder dwelling on the seashore, and upon our return from the temple we found meals laid out for us. The monks had carried food for themselves but the man insisted that they take his food instead. While we were returning in the car, after spending a couple of hours in the man's house, we met an ex-monk who was very well versed in the Tripitaka. He inquired the Guru about the state of Buddhism in Nepal. I got only a gist of what the Guru told him in the Burmese language. It was to the effect that I was somehow instrumental in spreading the dharma in Nepal in the early years. The man owned a press and had brought out some publications. We returned to Tampo vihara in the evening.

Three days later the man came and begged the Guru to permit him to stand as a benefactor in my higher ordination that would make me a full fledged monk. Later in the evening, when the Guru spoke to me about it, I was unwilling to go through the rituals. I was yet quite ignorant. At this the Guru took great offence. He indicated that he would not even take me back to India and he no longer spoke to me. However, I remained adamant in my resolve and bore the burnt of his anger patiently.

Once more I was back at Akyab on my way back to India. Shilprabha, Gyandevi and Sanu as well as Nandagopal's son, Gyangopal, and three other young women named Dharmapali, Ratnapali, and Sanghapali, who had later come with the monk Karmashila, were still at Akyab. They were about to return home as they could no longer stay

there. The Guru urged them to stay on but it was soon learnt that one nun named Mahadhammachari had driven them away on the pretext that they were good-for-nothing. Sanghapali had reluctantly accepted one rupee or two when she went begging for alms. It was against rules to touch money and Sanghapali and the others were told to go away. Finding themselves helpless, they went to the Gurkha camp<sup>32</sup> and begged the soldiers to help them to return home. With some money given by the soldiers they were preparing to take the ship. The Guru then sent the women back to Nepal. He sent Karmashila to stay somewhere else and found two benefactors to support Gyangopal. He sent Mahapragya to the jungle. The Guru, having made these arrangements, stayed in Akyab for about a fortnight and then returned to Rangoon, from where we came to Calcutta and finally to Kusinagar.

During the next six months at Kusinagar I translated the Buddhacharya into Nepalbhasa. The Guru helped me with some of the passages and I finished the translation by the time the monsoon retreat was over. In the meanwhile I bought a piece of land at a place called Tharughat in Bettiah district with the money I had donated earlier at Kusinagar to feed the monks.

### **A Monk in Kathmandu**

A permit to travel to Kathmandu had to be obtained at Amleklegunj. I was in my monk's yellow robe. The clerk objected to my appearance and questioned me closely. I explained to him that I had donned the robe in order to improve my future. In the end when everyone else had their permit the driver of the vehicle in which I had come spoke on my behalf and only then the permit was issued to me. I spent the night at Bhimphedi and arrived at Chisapanigarhi at about 8 o'clock the next morning. I was interrogated once

more. I stayed overnight at Chitlang which I left early the next morning and arrived at Kindol Vihara at about 2 o'clock. Within an hour a policeman appeared. He was polite but very inquisitive. At about 9 o'clock that night, two policemen came and asked me to accompany them to the police station.

The next day, the chief of police, Major Chandra Bahadur, was not so courteous. "You should not be a monk in Nepal,"<sup>33</sup> he said, "What have you done in Burma with so many young people from Nepal?" I told him that all of them have returned to Nepal. He asked me many other questions and I answered him truthfully. He said that he must keep me until he had reported the matter to the Maharaja. I told him to go and report. I was not taken to the lockup nor allowed to leave the office. The day of an appointment with the Maharaja was postponed from one day to another, while I suffered from acidity from the beaten rice<sup>34</sup> that Danmaya brought daily for me to eat.

Finally on the sixth day, I was taken to Maharaja Juddha Shumshere, who had assumed his high office only about six months before.<sup>35</sup> The Maharaja asked, "What harm is there to the kingdom if he became a monk?" The *Subba* heaped additional accusations against me, which only incensed the Maharaja. "You can also go and become a monk if you wish," said the Maharaja, "It is not going to harm me." That silenced the official effectively and he came back with his head hanging low. The next day I was released and I returned to Kindol.

The following day I went to the city to beg for alms for the first time. I had no uneasy feeling as I came out of the vihara in my monk's robe with the begging bowl in my hand until I crossed over the Vishnumati River. However, as soon as I reached Tamsipah, whether it was a feeling of shame or

worry I did not know, something happened within me and I thought I should not go further because my relatives lived along the route at Tunche and at Neta "Shall I return?" I asked myself, "or follow the rule laid down for the alms round, to walk with eyes fixed on the ground only a few feet ahead of me?" I did the latter. With a vacant mind and eyes on the ground I walked slowly through Neta, Tenga and Nheokha, where my maternal uncle lived. From there I came to Asan, my own locality. I went around the "Stonefish,"<sup>36</sup> walked past Janabaha to Indrachok and the police station at Hanuman Dhoka and Maru Thence to Chikanmuga and Lhugha and down to Kwahiti. I crossed over the Vishumati bridge, went past Chauni and arrived back at Kindol.

There was a handful of rice and six pice in the begging bowl. People made all sorts of comments as I walked along the streets; sometimes I did not hear them at all. Some shed tears upon seeing me while others turned away. I did not look anywhere else and I was not aware of much that happened, but I do recall my uneasiness and clenched teeth. The next day too I went along the same route. It was not so difficult as on the first day. Later on, the bowl was full of rice and the coins altogether added up to three rupees.

Then I went begging only when it was necessary to do so. When Kulman *gurju* held the great festival of alms giving known as Pancadana, I went to his house at Lagan. All the people who were assembled there shouted, "The monk .... The monk ...." I did not stop but kept on walking.

## CHAPTER III

### Higher Ordination at Sarnath

No more complaints were made to the government about me being a monk. I kept visiting India every year. Once I happened to be at Kusinagar when Guru Chandramani received an invitation to visit Sarnath. Some people had come from Rangoon to build a *sima*. Many monks were needed for the occasion. I wished to see how the *sima* was established and I asked the Guru if I could go with him. He said that it was all right and we left the next day. On the third day about two dozen monks and sramaneras were assembled at Sarnath. It seemed that after the rituals had been completed, one of the donors suggested that I should undergo my higher ordination on the following day. The Guru sent for me during the night and with a smile he said: "You are very fortunate. At Moulmein you had a benefactor for your higher ordination but you declined the offer even when I was unhappy. Now, that is past and gone. But, here in this place where Lord Buddha had ordained the first monk, and within 2400 years since then, with a newly built *sima*, someone else has come forward again for your ordination in the presence of many monks. What a great fortune! Now, don't miss this opportunity." I did not agree at Moulmein to go through the higher ordination because I was quite ignorant then. Now I had no excuse. All I could say to the Guru was: "I do not know much yet. What shall I do?" "Don't worry," said the Guru, "I'll help you." "With due respect, I shall undergo the ordination," I replied. All those present in the hall were very pleased.

An announcement was made at once that I would have my higher ordination. and I returned to my bed. The next day<sup>37</sup> I became a *bhikkhu* and the Guru said to me, "I shall teach you all the rules at Kusinagar." On the following



day I accompanied the Guru back to Kusinagar. Within the next few days the Guru explained to me the rules I had to follow as a full-fledged monk.

U. Nyani Daw, a Burmese monk living at Kusinagar, and a compatriot of his, were very interested in paying a visit to Lhasa. I told them that it was a very difficult journey but they were unconvinced by my words. On the contrary they convinced me that they were really determined to go. They sent a telegram to their benefactor and having received some money, the three of us prepared to leave Kusinagar in the beginning of the month of Magh<sup>38</sup>. I proposed an endurance test for the long journey on foot to Lhasa, and said to them, "I would like to visit Lumbini before going to Kalimpong." They replied that it had also occurred to them to visit Lumbini first. So, we made our way to Nautanwa and stayed there. We woke up early the next morning and walked to Lumbini where we arrived at about 11 o'clock. As we found nothing to eat in the bazar we made our way to the house of Sitaram Chaudhary in the village, to whom the government had given the task of looking after pilgrims. When we arrived, he was preparing to take his bath. He received us respectfully and asked, "Have you taken your meal?" "Not yet," we replied. "It is the last hour,"<sup>39</sup> he said and entered his house in a hurry. He served at once a meal of milk, sugar and vegetables to our great satisfaction.

A couple of hours later, we returned to Nautanwa. The two monks had not found it easy to walk to Lumbini. As they were not much used to walking, on the return journey, they found it more difficult and before we had come halfway, they felt great pain in their legs. By that time it was evening and the cart road full of pot holes, was no longer visible. It was 9 o'clock by the time we arrived at Nautanwa.

One monk's feet were swollen and both of them found it very hard to put up with the pain. Before going to bed, I boiled some water with salt in it and washed their feet. The feet were still swollen the next morning and they could not walk. "How can we go to Kalimpong now?" I asked them. "But we don't have to walk," they said, "We are going in the train or in a motor car. We shall reach there somehow." But it was not at all that easy even to get to the railway station. One limped his way, and finally we found ourselves in the train to Siligari from where we went in a car to Kalimpong and stayed at Bhajuratna Sahu's place. I had to take the monk to the hospital for about a fortnight for treatment.

Meanwhile, it snowed at Nathu La and the road was closed for some days. The snow brought cold winds to Kalimpong. It became chilly in the morning and in the evening. The Burmese monks were unable to bear the cold and they bought a cloak made of lamb skin as well as woollen underwears, socks and caps. As the Lama Dhomo Rimpoche happened to be visiting Kalimpong then, we went to pay him our respects. The lama was very pleased to hear of our proposed visit to Lhasa. He gave us 25 rupees despite our protests. The Burmese monks were very impressed by the courtesy shown by the lama.

The cold became intense and the Burmese monks heard more about the hardships to be encountered on the way. They became discouraged and gradually changed their tune. They thought of visiting Rangoon for the time being to avoid the cold at Kalimpong. However, they became very uneasy when I told them that since I had told everyone of visiting Lhasa, I had to go. They were embarrassed by the fact that they had not paid heed to my warning that they could not possibly undertake the journey. On the contrary they had boasted and insisted on going to Lhasa. Understanding their predicament, I told them that if they

wished I would stay on in Kalimpong and wait for their return. They agreed to my suggestion with alacrity and left Kalimpong, promising to return after a month's stay in Calcutta

### **Pilgrimage in Tibet**

The Burmese monks arrived in Calcutta the next day but a telegram was received in Kalimpong on the third day, saying, "U. Nyani Daw taken to hospital with plague. Died the same day." I was very sad and it occurred to me that the monk was taken to Calcutta by Death itself. What a transient world is this! I could not even believe the news, but for the fact that an appeal for a donation for the funeral was also made in the telegram. A letter was soon received from the other monk expressing his inability to come. However my own desire to go to Lhasa didn't go.

A fortnight later, Rahul Sankrityayana came to Kalimpong on his way to Lhasa. He said that India was in great need of the Buddhist texts he had found earlier in Sakya monastery. He was taking a camera to take photographs of these texts as well as an assistant named Rajnath. When I spoke of my own travel plans with him, he said to me, "Let go together." We stayed together for about a month in Bhajuratna Sahu's place. Finally on 22 April, 1934,<sup>40</sup> three of us left Kalimpong for Lhasa. We were delayed one day in the house of the *theba* or muleteer, at a place called Dhomopemu, and Rahulji began the translation of Vinayapitaka into Hindi. We stayed overnights at various places and finally arrived at Gyanchi, where we stayed for a few days. There too he spent his time in translating, a task he continued until we arrived in Lhasa on 19 May.<sup>41</sup> It was the day of the fullmoon in the month of Chaitra. We stayed in the *kothi* of Dharmaman Sahu of Chusinsyapala.<sup>42</sup>

A week later, I went to live at Phorankha, located about four miles from the city. From time to time I visited the city. There was a place in the neighbourhood of Phorankha where dead bodies were fed to the vultures. Then with a 14-year old boy as companion and guide, I began a tour of many places where I had not gone all the years that I had been engaged in business in Lhasa. My first destination was Dhayerwa where I spent five days. The strangest sight there was a large, black rock, in which the words *Om Mane Padme Hum* appeared in milky white characters. There was also a cemetery in the neighbourhood.

## Ganden

My next object was Ganden. The monastery lay two days' away and the monks welcomed me heartily and provided me with a room and food during my weeklong stay. They dubbed me *gyakar gelong*, an Indian monk, and took me to all the important places and pointed out various objects from Nepal and India. One day the body of an important official, who had died in Lhasa, was brought to Ganden with great pomp and ceremony and all the monks went down the mountain and met the funeral procession. About three thousand monks must have gathered there on the occasion, and each of them was given a present of two silver coins. I was also the recipient of the gift. While the monks recited a holy text and an elaborate religious service went on, sandalwood and camphor and sweet-smelling herbs were thrown into the flames that consumed the body of the great man.

Soon I was on the road again. I met some people who were going to a festival at the monastery of Samye. I was tempted to follow them but it was quite late in the afternoon when, beyond a river, I saw some houses in the woods. The water was deep and it was with some difficulty

that we were able to ford it. We called aloud in the dark but only the dogs barked back and we feared them. After a long time, a man called back, "Who's that?" We shouted to him, "Please tie up the dogs." And then we heard him say, "They are tied up. Come on, they won't hurt you." Yet we advanced with some trepidation and when we approached the house, a man emerged and held the dogs. We found some other travellers too on their way to Samye. The next morning all of us went together.

By early afternoon, we were atop a mountain, where neither a blade of grass nor a stone was to be seen. It was all covered with snow and the sun was bright. I didn't have goggles, and it was becoming difficult for me to look anywhere. At the pass, a lama, who was also an oracle, was having his lunch. He had seven followers and horses and yaks. The lama asked where I was going. "To Samye," I replied. "That's good," said the lama, "We are also going in the same direction. Come along with us." The lama then asked whether I had my meal. When I said "No," the lama's men gave some of their food to me and my companion. They also offered me a drink of *chang*, which I declined. After the meal, I went down the mountain along with the lama and his men. In the meanwhile, my eyes began to give me trouble. As evening approached, we parted company. The lama went towards his monastery at Imalung and I to Samye.

We spent the night in a village. My suffering was great and I thought I was going to lose my sight. Our hosts were helpful but to no avail. One of them told me about his own experience. "Don't be frightened," he said, "The blindness caused by snow is usually cured a day later, by the time you are afflicted with it. There is no treatment for it, but you might wash your eyes with *chang*."

Accordingly, I sent for some chang and followed his instructions. The eyes became somewhat cool but the terrible pain persisted during the night. The next morning when I looked at a mirror, both eyes were red and the pupils dilated. I kept it up with great fortitude. As the day wore on, I seemed to get some relief but the eyes remained red.

Except for an occasional irritation, there was no pain the next day. As the lama of Imalung had urged me to come to his place, instead of going to Samye, I retraced my steps and made for his monastery. The bright sunshine still gave me some problem. Seeing my plight, a man at Imalung gave me a pair of goggles which gave me much relief.

On the following day the lama put on a suit made of silk and brocade. His boots had designs that looked like eyes embroidered on them. He put on a silk cap decorated with bird plumes, and from his neck hung a golden amulet. He ascended a high chair, took a handful of rice and recited secret words until he became possessed. His complexion changed. He came down from the chair and began to move and jump about. No one was able to hold him and the people began to pray. I was feeling uneasy at the sight. The first deity that took possession of the lama uttered a shrill cry like that of a bird and the next moment he barked like a dog. For about an hour, he spoke of events that would come in the course of the year. The possession came to an end then and the lama was overcome with sleep. When the lama woke up an hour later, he was quite normal. The next day I left for Samye.

## Samye

A great wall surmounted by a number of *stupas* encircled the monastery at Samye. There was also a wall on which was hung a huge *thanka*, about 30 cubits long, with

silk embroidery that depicted Padmasambhava. Among many images there was a large one of Shakyamuni in the main monastery. Samye had three oracles who made prophecies about future events and the government in Lhasa sent a special *kudrug* or officer with the ceremonial *khata* to them.

My arrival at Samye coincided with a week-long festival, during which the oracles made prophecies. One day, one of the possessed lamas hit the people assembled there with a sword about one and half cubits long. One man was hit on his head so hard that he began to bleed and everyone was pleased, because it was an act of god.

After a week at Samye, I walked a whole day towards the east and arrived at a retreat where a lama from Kham lived. He had long hairs and a shell hung from his ears. As he was a well-known astrologer, I asked him if I would succeed on my pilgrimage to China. He threw the sho chips on the floor and pondered the configuration for a considerable moment before he declared, "You will go within a year." I was very pleased to hear it.

Returning to Samye, I stayed two more days before resuming my pilgrimage. Three days later and having crossed a river in a *syame*, as the boat with a wooden horse head at the prow was called, I arrived at Chitisho. Quite a number of Newar offsprings by their Tibetan wives lived in the village and I joined them in a six-mile long circumambulation<sup>43</sup> of a sacred mountain. They carried food with them and made the pilgrimage a picnic too.

### **Champaling**

After a few days, I went to Champaling with its big stupa-like monastery, where a large number of Newar

merchants had gathered. My own brother<sup>44</sup> had come from Lhasa for the annual fair, which began with the offering of a *pata* or a long, narrow strip of cloth from the top of the big monastery. A feast was held by the merchants at the conclusion of the week-long fair.

Two days later I was on my way again, first to a monastery and then to the caves of Dhanyaju. I climbed a ladder with as many as 30 rungs to attain a height, from where I had to take hold of a rope to get to a cave, from where another ladder led me to yet another dark but spacious cave. I found an image of Padmasambhava in yet another cave. Coming out of the caves, I took my meal together with my young Tibetan friend. Then, we visited Jhokhambu, where a small stream issued from a huge crack in the mountain. It was dark as we made our way along the course of the water to come to a pond, where we found images of different gods. We kept walking for about two hours when we came to a spring. It was said that all kinds of food tasted like curd at the spring. At last, we came out of the crack in the mountain and spent the night in a nearby village.

I had originally planned to be away from Lhasa for a few days only but five weeks had gone by the time we returned to the city. The parents of my young guide had thought the worst and they had lost all hope of our returning. They had visited the soothsayers and despite assurances to the contrary, they concluded that we had come to a sorry end at the hand of the robbers. When my young companion described all the places we had visited, his parents were very impressed. They believed that we were very fortunate and possessed great fortitude.

### Sera

I spent the next month listening to religious lectures given by the abbot of Sera. The spacious hall in the



monastery had accommodation for thousands of people. A long, narrow platform, about three cubits higher than the floor, was built in the centre of the hall, and the audience sat on either side. They brought their own mats to sit upon. It was possible to get the front seats only by humouring a certain priest.

The discourse began with an exhortation to the audience to listen with the utmost attention. It occurred to me that religion was rooted deeply in Tibet because the learned lamas made great efforts to explain the texts clearly and the people followed the teaching with great sincerity. The teachers were not only proud of their faith but also very strict in the observance of their religious code. Service to humanity was the motto that guided both the lamas and the laity. One had to visit Tibet, Burma and Ceylon in order to fully appreciate the precept and practice of religion.

Once a nun, who was believed to be knowledgeable in religious matters, but who had lost her sense, questioned the validity of the discourse being given by the abbot of Sera. The audience forced her out of the hall but she continued to rant outside the monastery gate. Towards the end of the discourse, each and every member of the audience presented the lama with gifts, such as umbrellas, rosaries, flowers, etc. Being a monk, he had no use for all the gifts and he took only some of them and distributed the rest among the different monasteries in Lhasa. On the last day, the people brought wheat, flour, ghee, sweets, fruits, etc. for a religious service. It was a good custom and all the people took part whole-heartedly in the belief that it was a very meritorious undertaking. At the end of the month-long discourse in the monastery I returned once more to Phorankha.

About a month later, during one of my visits to Lhasa city, I found Rahulji ready to return to India. "My work is done," he told me, "I am going back to Nepal and then to India." "But I am not ready to go yet," I informed him, "I must go on a pilgrimage to Pancasirsha Parbat in China to pay my homage to Manjusri."

He was surprised at my words. "How will you go?" he asked, "Where will you get the money for the journey? With whom will you go?"

"I have my begging bowl," I said, "I've my legs and I will go along with whosoever I come across."

"But will you meet Manjusri there?" he asked again.

I told him what I had heard from various people and expressed my belief that I would meet Manjusri, who had visited Nepal, in flesh and blood.

"So, you are not returning home," he said at last, "Well and good if you meet Manjusri."

"I am determined to go to China," I said, "I will return if I can. Otherwise, let me see what will happen."

Some days later, I learnt from Mahila, son of Ratna Das Sahu, what Rahulji had told him about me: "It would be well and good if he makes the pilgrimage. There are three things in life that are blameless. The first is to be very learned and learn to keep the mind under control. The second is to travel extensively to know both happiness and sorrow so as to be able to keep the mind under restraint, and the third option is to remain quietly in one place and devote oneself to meditation and contemplation in order to keep the

mind under control. These are all equally great and worthy pursuits in life.”

I was more than ever encouraged to undertake my pilgrimage to China. Rahulji left for Nepal soon and I returned to Lhasa and devoted myself to find ways and means to reach Pancasirsha Parbat in China.

I called on some of the merchants of Kham – Pandatsang, Gyapuntsang and Tsenitsang- in their homes. They used to travel often as far away as Tachindo. “Do me a favour,” I implored them, “I wish to go on a pilgrimage to pay my homage to Manjusri at Ripuchengna in China. I have heard that there is a railway line from Tachindo. Kindly send me with your men up to Tachindo.” The merchants were sympathetic and assured me of their help, but when it was time for their men to undertake the journey, none of them dared to take me along. They said to their masters: “The monk does not ride horseback; he wants to go on foot. He does not eat in the evening. How can he go?” And they said to me: “The journey takes four to five months in very difficult terrain. You cannot make it.” I came to the conclusion that if they were unwilling to take me, I could not possibly go with them.

When I lost all hope of joining a caravan to Tachindo, I paid a visit to the lama of Phorankha, who, I learnt, had been invited to give religious lectures by the people of Kham. I thought that I could at least travel with him as far as Kham. “I wish to go on a pilgrimage to Ripuchengna,” I told the lama, “Please permit me to accompany you up to Kham.” The lama agreed to take me with him. However, I learnt later that he would go only up to Kongo. It didn’t help me much to go only that far.

## Drepung

It was then that Tshering Tashi, Maharatna Shakya's son by his Tibetan wife, learnt about my proposed pilgrimage, perhaps, from his guru, Dorje Chopa Ghese, who hailed from China. Tashi sent for me and said: "There is a lama who can take you to China. When I mentioned your intention to go on a pilgrimage, the lama asked me to bring you to him." He got a woman to take me at once to Drepung, where the lama was staying.

"I have heard a great deal in Nepal that Manjusri lived in China," I said to the lama, "Years ago, when I was a trader in Lhasa, I had met men who had been to the mountain where he lived. I had then made up my mind that I too would make a pilgrimage and pay my homage to Manjusri. Now I am a monk and it is the proper time to go on the pilgrimage. I have talked to the Khambas who go to Tachindo to buy tea. but none would take me along with them."

I don't know what he thought of my idea, but he was sympathetic and said with apparent sincerity: "You cannot go alone. I am going to China next year. I have work here at Drepung in connection with the installation of 1,000 Buddha images. When my task is done, I'll take you to China or wherever else you wish to go. Don't worry." There was not much time to discuss the matter further that day, but he told me to see him often.

Within a week I was back at Drepung, and the lama said: "China is not India. It is a very crowded country. Wait a year and I'll take you there myself."

"You have so much work," I replied, "Perhaps, next year too you may have much more to do. And you have

become old too. Anything can happen in a year. I would like to go soon.”

“I am looking for some people with whom you could go,” the lama told me, “Don’t be in such a big hurry.”

Whenever I visited the lama, I observed that he did not have much free time. So, I had to wait a few more months. Meanwhile, he invited me to stay at Drepung itself while he conducted a religious service. He gave me a room for myself. There must be about 5,000 monks as well as four Chinese novices at Drepung. After the service, I returned to Lhasa.

When I called on him the next time, the lama said: “No one is going to China just now. However, you have lost your sleep and your patience. But you don’t even know the Chinese language. What shall I do?”

“Kindly do as much as you can,” I implored him once more, “I don’t need much but I would like to go as early as possible.”

He was lost in thought for a while. Then he called his Chinese secretary and instructed him, “Write some letters to the people in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Peking, Nanking and Wu Tai Shan.” The man took paper, pen and ink and entered his room. He reappeared soon with eight letters in Chinese language for the lama’s approval. The lama then sent for one yard of yellow cotton cloth, with which a bag was made and Chinese characters were written all over it.

Giving me the letters and the bag, the lama said: “If you meet the people to whom the letters are addressed you don’t have to worry. They will help you. However, if, by any chance, you miss them, stand at the crossroads with the bag

hanging from your neck. Keep silent and count your beads. Someone will come to help you. You can be sure of that. What more can I do for you since you don't want to wait until I can go? I believe you will come to no harm, as you have not the least fear in travelling so far. The most important thing in the world is the mind." He also gave me 30 rupees. And his last words were, "Now, you may go. You will come to no harm."

I returned to Lhasa and went to see Tshering Tashi. "You have introduced me to a great lama," I told him, "He gave me these letters and this bag. Now, I am sure to get to Pancasirsha." Tashi was very pleased and he asked me to see him once more before my departure. Soon I was back at my place at Phorankha and within a couple of days I took leave of all my friends and returned with my belongings to Lhasa, where I stayed with my nephew, Tulsi Ratna, at Nanisya.

Once more it was a round of visits to my friends and each of them gave me some money for my journey. Finally, I went to see Tashi. "I am leaving the day after tomorrow," I told him and he also gave me some money. I had now 250 rupees in total. It was enough for my travel, I thought.

With a porter carrying some provisions, I left Lhasa on the full moon of Chaitra, fully a year after my arrival. At long last I was on my way to China by the sea route.

## **Phari**

We stayed overnight at a place called Dhunkar. The next morning we got up early and walked until we came to Jhyang where I found a merchant from Dhomo named Wanchuk with his wife and their servants and ten horses. They saw me coming along and asked where I was going. I told them that I was on my way to Kalimpong. The merchant

then asked if I had no horse. "No," I replied. "How only the two of you can go?" he said, "Aren't you afraid?" I said, "I don't think so." "It is very dangerous," the merchant's wife said, "Come with us. It would be easy to have your meals. Your luggage could be put on the back of one of the horses. If you like, you could ride the horse too. Don't you think you could go with us? "It is all right," I said, "But I shall not ride. Let the horse carry my things only." "That's fine," she said, "Please come with us. We shall go together." Then we put down our bags and drank tea and ate *tsampa*. After the meal, they got the horses ready and our things were also put on the back of one of them. They said again that I could have a horse to ride but I declined the offer. That day we stayed the night at a place called Chusu. However, as the horses belonged to the traders of Dhomo and they had to take the pasturage into consideration and reach their *nechan* or stopping place. To cover the distance from one *nechan* to the next, they had to go 25 to 30 miles every day. Having decided to go along with them, I too had to reach their destination whether I could or not and, of course, I continued to do so. Only on one day I could not reach their *nechan*.

On the morning we had left Nagachi and walked about five miles to the interior of Lhulu and spent the night somewhere. We must have covered about 32 miles that day, and I was very tired. The next day we had to reach Nhinhupetung for there was nowhere else to stay. That day too we had to cover the same distance and it was late when I left in the morning. I was also slow that day and could not summon the strength to keep on going. There was great pain in my legs and I was alone all the day long for my porter had gone ahead with the party. By 5 o'clock, I could not walk at all. Nor did I know how far I had still to go. I thought that I should stop where it was possible to be out of the wind.

So I kept on plodding. Then I came across some persons returning from a trading mission to Calcutta. They had already pitched their tents and the horses were grazing. They saw me limping along and as it was getting late they sent a *theba* to find out where I was bound for. I told him that I had come with Wanchuk Dhomo, but the party had gone ahead and I was late because my feet were hurt. The *theba* told me that I could not possibly catch up with my party. I told him that I would go as far as possible. The man asked me to wait and he went back and informed his master about my plight. He ran back and asked me to go with him to his master's tent. The merchant told me that I could not reach the Wanchuks that evening. "Where would you stop at night?" he said, "The wind would be very cold at night. Can't you stay here tonight?" I was tired and it was getting late. So I was persuaded to stop with them. They gave me warm blankets and food. I said I didn't eat in the evening. However, I had copious drinks of tea. He asked about my travels and he told me that he had also been to Pancasirsha Parbat. The next day we got up while it was still dark, and they served me tea and *tsampa*. They were very pleased with me and sent someone to accompany me to some distance.

The Wanchuks had worried much to miss me the whole night. The next morning my servant retraced his steps to look for me and seeing me coming along from afar, he ran back to inform them. They were very relieved when I joined them at last and they gave me a hot meal at once. We then climbed up a mountain and went down the other side. That day we stopped somewhat earlier than usual and from then on, we stopped only at designated places. To reach Phari one had to cross three large plains - Kalapatan, Langur Huthan and Dhuina. As I had gone that way many times, I was not much worried. Only at Nhinupetung I had great hardship for two days for I had never walked that stretch before. And so I arrived at Phari.



I stayed with a merchant of Chusinsyapala at Phari. Wanchuk had his own house and he said to me. "Please come and stay a few days in my house at Dhomo before you leave for Kalimpong. Tell me when you wish to come." I said, "Let me rest a few days here. When I come to Dhomo, I shall certainly come to stay with you." "Please do come," said Wanchuk, "I shall also give you something to offer at Pancasirsha Parbat."

### **Monsoon Retreat<sup>45</sup> at Duyu, Bhutan**

The monsoon retreat was at hand and I thought of spending it at Duyu in Bhutan before going to China. After a fortnight at Phari I made my way to Bhutan. A descent from the town for about 25 miles took me to a river at the bottom of the hills. I walked along the river bank for a day and half and came to Parodzong where I met a *pambu* or official. I had known him at Phari and when I told him I had come for my monsoon retreat in a convenient place in a forest for a few months, he was pleased. He informed me that there were many small houses built specially for old people to spend their days in religious activities as was customary in Bhutan. Their children supplied them with provisions and they had no other worries. The rich people who let their parents lead such carefree life were highly respected in Bhutan. When a person died, the house was abandoned unless there was someone else to occupy it. "You can stay in one of these houses," he said "and I shall provide you food." After four days at his place, the *pambu* got together enough rice, beaten rice, tsampa, ghee, etc. to last me for about two months, loaded that on a horse and instructed a servant to take me to a monastery called Chuchayashi in a forest about half a dozen miles from Parodzong.

The man who took me to the monastery returned the following day with the horse. The caretaker of one of the small houses made necessary arrangements for my stay. He took water to the house through a bamboo pipe and a pile of fuel wood was provided for my use.

Many of the good old people in the neighborhood visited me with gifts of tsampa, tea, curd and milk. They were very kind to me as if I was one of their own kinsmen. The monsoon retreat lasting three months was spent very comfortably, without a worry.

Upon my return to Parodzung, I stayed a week with the official again. My good host asked me about my next destinations, Kalimpong, and then the Pancasirsha Mountain in China. He was very impressed with the letters provided me by the lama Dorje Chopa Ghese in Lhasa. He sent two men to carry my baggage up to another *dzong*.

The master of the *dzong* invited me to stay with him as there were no men going towards Phari. Five days later, he sent two men with me up to Phari, where I stayed five days and then I went to Wanchuk's place called Chube at Dhomo. I stayed for four days with him; he gave me a *khata* to be offered at Pancasirsha Parbat as well as some money. Then I made my way to Kalimpong where I stayed once more at Bhajuratna Sahu's place.

I inquired among the local Chinese if anyone among them was going to China. They promised to let me know if and when someone would go. Scarcely a week was over and I was informed that a dozen Mongolians, who knew both Chinese and Tibetan languages, had arrived at Kalimpong from Lhasa and that they were going as far as Peking. I hastened to meet the Mongolians and they said that it would be all right for me to go to Peking with them but they would

not be responsible for my expenses. I assured them that I had enough money for my travel. They asked me to be ready to leave in four days.

I was very happy. I asked the Mongolians what I should take with me. It was very cold in China, they said, and I would not survive in my thin monk's robe. I would have to take warm clothes and bedding. I had only one *chuba* and a set of monk's robe. I thought of buying a warm blanket and asked Purnabir to do so. He said he had a blanket and gave it to me. He also purchased for me about 150 *bodhichi* beads without holes. He declined to accept payment for the blanket. I came to Calcutta with the Mongolians.<sup>46</sup>



Dhamma.Digital

## CHAPTER IV

### On Board the Ship in Calcutta

I stayed with a *nayabu* named Samdhen in Calcutta. The next day I had my photograph taken and had a medical checkup, which cost me altogether six rupees. I went to the Chinese Pambu or Consul General with the medical certificate and received my travel document endorsed by an English officer. Having gone through all the process with the *nayabu's* help, I bought a ticket to Hongkong. I had to pay 44 rupees, and with meals it came to about 73 rupees. I gave five rupees to the *nayabu*. No Nepalese knew about my presence in Calcutta. I made some purchases and on the fifth day I went to the harbour with the Mongolians.

As we were about to embark the ship, an Englishman interrogated the passengers and checked their bodies. Suspicious persons were not allowed to proceed. When it was my turn, he noted me down as a lama and checked my body. Everything went well. No further questions were asked and I was put down among the monks. As I was not known to anyone and no Nepalese knew about my plan, I got into the ship without any hindrance. It was most fortunate. But still I was very worried and stayed quietly in the ship the whole night. The ship left Calcutta the next morning and I let a sigh of relief. As I had an earlier experience of a ship ride to Rangoon, I expected it would be just the same. We crossed a narrow sea past an island<sup>47</sup> and then lost sight of the land. There was now only the sea of a dull yellowish colour followed by black and then clear white water. In four days we arrived at Penang, where we stayed one day. The people were black; they looked like Tamils and Muslims and spoke a different language. I gathered that there was a great trade in areca nuts in Penang. Some of the

cargoes were unloaded and then more goods were taken into the ship by the time we left the next day.

I saw hills occasionally at a distance all the way from Penang to Singapore, which was reached in five days. Once more goods were taken out of the ship and replaced with others. It took a day and half to do so. In the meanwhile I went round the city of Singapore, which looked small but there were so many people in the streets with banners and signboards all over the place. I was told that the very rich merchants there were Chinese. The police were mostly Sikhs from Punjab in India.

Later on, there was a check on board the ship. The passengers were immunized, if found necessary, one by one, and their baggage were opened. The inspectors looked at every nook and corner. When no boat was left around the ship, a siren sounded and the ship sailed from Singapore. One day later it began to get as hot as at Banaras during March and April. The sea gulls appeared over the ship and people on the deck could not leave anything out in the open. There were also many flying-fish. The colour of the water varied at places, yellow, black, and grey. It was clear in some places.

More inspectors arrived again unexpectedly from nowhere and sometimes aeroplanes circled above the ship, some of them landing in the sea itself. Lighthouses visible from a distance at different places guided the ship during the night. Later on there were high winds and the ship tossed about as if it would turn upside down. The passengers suffered much and they could not eat anything. They vomited and they could not stand still. Storms came frequently. Once, after three days in the sea, huge waves like mountains drenched the ship all over and I thought that the end had come. I was scared, but moments later there was no

water left in the ship. The meals served in the ship for third class passengers included rice, soup and vegetables at noon. In the morning a soup made of a mixture of different things was served. At 7:30 in the evening the meal again consisted of rice as in the daytime. There were special caterers for second class passengers.

As the people were unable to eat much because of seasickness the caterers made a nice profit. The passengers numbered about 3,000; and perhaps only one third of them ate anything at all. Everybody just lay around, vomiting most of the time. One of the sons of Pandatsang of Lhasa was an inter-class passenger and he had a cabin all to himself. However, the poor fellow could not stay in the cabin, nor was he able to eat much. He was quite sick and sat with his head held low. He got an infection of some sort all over the ears. He had paid 250 rupees for fare and food, but he was obliged to stay with me in the third class compartment all the time. By the grace of God, I was all right and able to appease my hunger.

## **Hongkong**

I arrived happily at Hongkong on the twelfth day from Singapore. In the midst of the sea there were hills all around as in our own Nepal valley<sup>48</sup> and a large number of big and small boats and ships were to be seen in the sea.

Within the ring of hills, there was a great deal of noise. And what a crowd! As our ship advanced, boats swarmed on all sides, except in the front. The ship moved slowly until it could not move at all for there were boats everywhere. The ship had to stop, but before the anchor was cast the sight of the people struggling to come up the ship scared me.

The Mongolians however were not dismayed as they had made many trips. They kept all their goods heaped in one place for these men were coolies eager to carry the baggage. Chains and ladders were lowered and the agents from different hotels came up and persuaded the passengers to stay in their hotels. Once the passengers had hotel reservations in their hand, the crowd gradually thinned out.

The coolies then took the passengers and their baggage away in one or more boats ashore and to the warehouse in the hotel. Receipts were given for the goods so there was no danger of these being lost. Our hotel was located in a street named Chai-tau. It was a dozen storeys high and it had a number, 124. The owner of the hotel asked us the class we wanted to stay in and showed us the tariff and regulations. There was no need to bargain or haggle about. The location of the room determined the tariff. The higher the room the cheaper was the rate, from one to five rupees. The payment for food was extra.

The hotel owner was very helpful whether the customers had come for trade or for something else such as making purchases, sending mail or goods or even a loan of money. I showed him the letter given me by Dorje Chopa Ghese in Lhasa. He checked a book and indicated to me a certain place. Then with a Mongolian who spoke Tibetan and a man from the hotel, I went to the address. The streets went up and around hills, sometimes as many as four tiers. First we went to the address at the top of the hill but we found that the man had moved lower down. Finally we traced the gentleman.<sup>49</sup> The door was closed, as it was customary, and a telephone call had to be made from outside. Someone then peeked through a hole and inquired before the door was opened. Thus entry into the house of the rich was restricted. At least that was my experience.

My letter was taken inside to the master of the house. Later the door was opened and we walked in. After a long while, the master came and seeing me, made his obeisance. He happened to be a physician. Without any loss of time he took us to a restaurant. When I told him I did not eat at all hours he asked what could I possibly take. Tea was served to me and the Mongolian ate to his heart's content. Then he took us to a large, bright photographic studio for a group photograph before returning to the hotel. As the streets lay in tiers, the car had to go a long way to get down, where a tramway was also operating. All the streets were black topped and there were stairways for pedestrians in some places. In the hotel the physician spoke with the Mongolians in Chinese and he was very pleased to hear news about Lhasa. When he learnt that they would be leaving the day after tomorrow, he promised to return the next day. I spent some time in the markets that afternoon.

In the evening, there were electric lights everywhere and it was a beautiful sight with the boats and ships in the sea surrounded by hills. At about 9 o'clock beams of light from searchlights placed along the ridge of the hills lighted up the sky and it looked as if the whole of Hongkong was covered by a pyramid of light. Some aeroplanes came flying and the numbers in them were quite distinct. The searchlights went on and off frequently.

The physician came again the next morning. He gave me 20 rupees and one khata and invited me to see him again on my return journey. After my morning meal I went once more to the market with its abundance of woollen clothes, underwear, socks, etc. There were many women out in the streets. Their hair were cut in the English style, their faces were painted and they wore coats. Used as I was to see the Chinese women depicted in old pictures, I was shocked by the sight of these modern ones. I was sad that there was



not even a sign of the virtuous women of the past left and I no longer wanted to go out into the streets.

As I was staying in an upper storey, I went down once to see how it was lower down in the hotel. It was then that I met a Tibetan woman named Ninila, the wife of Chikaji Sahu. She was very surprised and called me by my lay name. She asked me where I was going. I told her that I was on my way to Pancasirsha Parbat and I asked her how she came to be in Hongkong. She said that it was almost two years since she had come from Lhasa. There was a legal suit going on in Lhasa and she was on her way to Nanking with her present husband, Kusheo. They had just returned from Kalimpong after a business trip. It was a very pleasant meeting. The next day she came to visit me, and seeing me sitting only on a mat, she returned with a carpet. She also gave me five rupees. It was very nice to meet an old acquaintance.

A ship was going to Shanghai the next day. I paid the hotel four rupees for four days. The food cost me one and half rupee. Altogether I spent Rs. 13/- including a tip to the porter.

## CHAPTER V

### China

It was very crowded aboard the ship and I could not find a place for myself. I learnt that it would take six days to reach Shanghai. However, I had to adjust myself to the situation and bought a third class ticket for six rupees. The fare was cheap but I suspected little of what was to follow. About ten hours after departure from Hongkong, the ship stopped at an island where some people disembarked but many more came into the deck. The wind was strong and it became very cold. The ship took many more passengers as it sailed from one island to another. And there were so many islands! The ship became very crowded and many passengers lost their baggage. The cold became so intense that I could not bear it any longer. I got one Mongolian to inquire on my behalf if there was a place where it was not so windy. I learnt that I could get into an inter-class cabin. So, I paid 20 rupees and was taken to the cabin where Pandatsang's son was staying. Only then I thought that my life was saved.

I looked out of the window whenever the ship made a stop at the numerous big islands. Men with naked swords and pistols in their hands stood guard as large crowds of people got into the ship and I gathered that there were many thieves and hooligans among them. I concluded that the extra payment of 20 rupees was nothing when I found the worsening condition in the ship. The inter-class cabin was comfortable and safe. I was shielded from the bitter cold, and having a companion, the passage became easy and comfortable. For one and half day it had been very hard for me.

The coolies in these islands lived all their life in boats; even weddings took place in the boats. They had nothing to do in the land. It was a wonder how life went on in different parts of the world. Compared to Nepal, India, Tibet, Burma and Ceylon, the density of population, the poverty and the suffering of the people of China seemed so much great. Early in the morning of the sixth day, the ship arrived in Shanghai. The jetty stretched endlessly and it looked very pretty from a distance. Those who saw it for the first time could be very surprised indeed by the hectic activity and the mountain of cargoes lying there but there were no great crowds and rickshaws and cars rushing in to take the passengers to their destination.

The shipping company had hotels of its own and we were taken to their place and provided with a room. There was a qualitative difference in the rooms provided to the third and inter-class passengers. Pandatsang's son and I had a room to ourselves. One could go to the dining hall to eat but there was also room service. There were rooms on both sides of the long corridor, complete with electricity and bathroom. The inter-class passengers had their own telephone and letterbox and it was only two rupees for lodging.

After sightseeing in the afternoon, my companion went out again in the evening but as I had no desire to go I remained in the room. Later, at night I saw many pretty women walking back and forth in the corridors. They peeked into the room and I thought that they were looking for an acquaintance. They spoke to me but not knowing Chinese I kept quiet. I locked the door but there were knocks every now and then. When I opened the door, I found the same type of women standing outside. So I concluded that it was not a good place and despite all the knocks on the door, I kept quiet. At about midnight Pandatsang's son returned. It

was very cold and he sat with his hands over a brazier. One of these women soon entered the room and engaged him in conversation. I did not know what he said but they talked for a long time. I covered myself with a blanket and tried to sleep. Finally he sent the woman away, bolted the door and slept.

I lost my desire to stay in Shanghai. Pandatsang's son woke up at 9 o'clock. After a bath, we went to the market with another Tibetan who spoke Chinese. In cleanliness, Calcutta was not to be compared with Shanghai. It was very peaceful and the behaviour of the people was better. The trams were noiseless while those in Calcutta were very noisy. No rails were laid in the black-topped streets, as the buses ran on electricity and there was no dust nor dirt. The motor cars, rickshaws and bicycles moved swiftly and orderly. On every crossroad, policemen regulated the traffic so that when there were vehicles on one side of the street, it came to a stop without a hitch on the other side. Everything was orderly day and night. The first impression of the crowds in the streets was one of a big disorderly city, but it was not so. I was very impressed with Shanghai. After two days in the city I bought a ticket for Peking for 25 *dhayan*.

## **Peking**

The train ran on wider rails than the broad gauge railway in India. Two persons sat together, so that four persons shared one window and there was a cubit and half wide space in between the benches. From the front to the rear, from the first-class to the third, there was a passage through all the coaches. According to the local custom, a weak tea was served to the passengers thrice a day all the way from Shanghai to Peking. Each person was charged Rs.4/- for water for drinking and washing. The passengers had their choice of food for there was a shop within the train

itself and salesmen walked back and forth with their goods. Armed with guns and knives, guards paced the passage. It was very cold outside and the windows were white with frost. The door could not be opened because of snow. A hot pipe alongside the passenger's feet kept the wagon heated. It was cold only in the windowless corridor connecting the wagons.

The train arrived in Peking four days after departure from Shanghai. It went past the city wall and came to a stop at the station. A Chinese merchant of Peking, who had business in Lhasa, was also travelling with me in the train and he invited me to his place. Meanwhile, my Mongolian companions were lost in the crowded station. So, I went with the merchant in a rickshaw to his place. He gave me hot water to wash my face. Then he took me to a restaurant and told the waiter to serve me what they had, except meat. After the meal, I was back in his home and a few hours later he took me to my destination.

There was snow and a cold wind was blowing. We went in two rickshaws for about two miles. The streets were wider than in Shanghai and there were no large crowds. We met the resident monk named Yam Lama at the gate of the Hunkaku monastery. He was about to go out and I gave him the letter from Dorje Chopa Ghese in Lhasa. He was very pleased and took me to his room. After my Chinese guide had left, he served me tea and told a servant to prepare a room for me.

"I may be late in returning," he said, "Please tell the servant what you need. He understands Tibetan language." Then he left, instructing his man to take care of me until his return. The servant brought me a brazier and I sat alone warming myself by the fire. The lama returned at

about 10 o'clock in the evening and we talked about Lhasa before retiring at midnight.

The next morning the servant brought me tea and cookies. I washed my face and had breakfast. The man asked when I wanted the main meal of the day and I told him that it had to be sometime before noon. Exactly at 11 o'clock he came in again with my meal. Meanwhile, the lama, having read the letter from Lhasa, said to me: "He has written that you are going on a pilgrimage to Ripuchengna to pay your homage to Jambeyan and that you are to be provided with all possible help to reach there in comfort. He has also written that I am to ask you about the religious service at Drepung since you were there throughout the service." He assured me that he would find someone going to Ripuchengna." It is very cold there," he told me, "Your clothes and the mattress and blankets are not adequate". He said that a *dagam* with a thick layer of cotton as well as other necessary things would be made for me.

I showed him the beads I had brought from Kalimpong. He sent for a craftsman at once and had him make holes in the beads. He bought cloth and cotton and had the *dagam* made. He also bought a bag to carry my things and gave me a warm fur mattress. Then he told some visitors to the monastery to let him know if there was anyone going to Ripuchengna.

Six days later a man came with the news that a monk from Kham had come to China to seek donations to repair his monastery named Dhakya. He had three Tibetans and a Chinese with him who were going on the pilgrimage to Ripuchengna. The lama went at once to meet these people and learnt that they were going the next day. But the *dagam* was not ready and the beads had not been bored. So he asked them to postpone their departure for a few days, but they

were unwilling. Having failed to persuade the men, the lama came back and said to me: "They are indeed going to Ripuchuenga but they insist upon going tomorrow. What shall we do, *gelong*?" "Let me go and speak with them," I said, "Where are they staying?" I went to their place with a guide and found that the Chinese pilgrim was an old acquaintance from Calcutta. I was able to persuade the pilgrims to wait two more days for me.

The dagam was made in all haste in two days and the lama took me to the railway station at 8 o'clock that same evening. He would send a man with me all the way if I could not go with the party from Kham, he told me. I bought a ticket, which cost six *dhayan*, and got into the train.

### **Wu Tai Shan ( Pancasirsha Parbat)**

We arrived at Tinghsien at dawn the next day. We had' to spend three days at the railway station itself. From there we had to hire horses to go further. Many guides were available there to take pilgrims to Wu Tai Shan. But bargaining about the fare was very hard and people were much harassed. Finally we went with one of the guides to his house and he demanded 40 rupees. With great difficulty we obtained two mule litters at 24 rupees each, plus meals.

After a few days it became very cold. There were many low hills and villages along the way where travellers could stay overnight. Old Chinese customs and manners were preserved in the area. The women had small feet, their hair was braided and they were neat and clean. Food and drinks were moderately priced.

We were a week on the road and arrived at Wu Tai Shan at 5 o'clock on the evening of the tenth day of our

departure from Peking. As advised by a Mongolian, I was taken to the monastery built by a previous Dalai Lama during his visit to China. I gave the letter from Lhasa to the resident lama who was apparently pleased with my arrival. My companions then left for another monastery. It was very cold. The lama noticed my thin robe and kindly gave me a shawl. The next morning he brought me tea and cookies. Then he took me to his room and asked me about Lhasa and my pilgrimage. I replied that I would like to rest for some days and then I would know how long I could stay. He said that I could do as I wished. Four days later, I thought I should first go around the place. It was the month of Magh and the short days were spent very quickly. On the fourth day, I went to the various temples with a guide.

I went first to the principal monastery where I expected to find the living Manjusri. "Where is Manjusri?" I asked. "That's it," said the caretaker, pointing to a large lotus flower, with four leaves, each two cubits long. There was a different image of Tathagata on each leaf. Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi occupied the leaves while Vairocana sat in the petal of the lotus. "I mean the living one," I reiterated, "who can move about like ourselves." The man was very surprised and stared at me. He must have said to himself, "What a strange monk!" I concluded then that the legends I had heard in Nepal were all wrong. However, I thought I should first listen to the explanation being given and later ask for clarification. I offered khata at the images and made a circumambulation and returned to my residence.

I recollected all the stories I had heard about Manjusri; his arrival in Nepal; the hills around the lake<sup>50</sup> that he cut open; the naming of Dharmasri<sup>51</sup> as Gyanasri; and the river Silanadi<sup>52</sup> in the country named Ghoramukha.<sup>53</sup> But there was nothing at Wu Tai Shan according to the stories. I



thought about it deeply for the next few days and I simply could make neither head nor tail of the whole matter. Finally, I came to the conclusion that it was all an allegory, that Manjusri was a name given to a being composed of the five elements who had grasped the wisdom of the five Buddhas. *Manju*, of course, meant great beauty and *sri* meant grace. Therefore, a being with the wisdom of the five Buddhas was appropriately called Manjusri.

As for Silanadi, it simply meant a river full of stones and the country named Ghoramukha or the fearsome face, was possibly the home of ignorant fools who were unable to grasp the wisdom by themselves and so came to have the face of the horse, the elephant, the bird, the bear, the dog, etc.

After a few more days in the monastery I thought that I should not waste my time any more. So, I said to the lama, "Please let me live in a solitary place, and find me a man to bring me food. I would like to meditate for twenty one days." He took me to a quiet place where a Khamba lama was staying. It was a right place and I wished to go there the next day. The lama instructed his cook to attend to me: "Take a brazier in the morning along with tea and tsampa and rice or bread with vegetables or whatever else he prefers before noon." Having ensured that I see no one else but this one man, I went to live there. The man served me during the entire period without a hitch and nothing untoward happened to disturb my meditation. I expressed my gratitude to the lama for his help and further wished to spend a few more months in another place.

There were three rooms in a row where the lama himself was living. The very next day one room was cleaned up and paper pasted over the cracks to keep out the wind. A fire was lit underneath the bedstead to heat the room. Unless

one slept in a hot bed, it was not warm enough with all the blankets. It was very cold and I was advised to do likewise. "I don't need the fire," I replied, "As long as I sleep without the fire, I would be able to sleep anyhow. If I get into the habit, I may not be able to sleep at all without a fire. So, I won't have the fire." The lama agreed with me. "That's true," he said, "Habits are hard to give up. If you can endure the cold, it's all right. But our body has become used to sleep with a fire under the bed and we can't sleep otherwise and the body aches very much." So I went to stay in the room. My food was provided as before. My daily routine was as follows: get up at 3 o'clock; recitation of the *dharani* of the five Buddhas until 5 o'clock; ablutions; breakfast; recitation of the same *dharani* until about 11 o'clock; meal; rest for about half an hour; translation of *Gurumaldala*; recitation of *dharani* until about 6 o'clock; half an hour's respite; meditation until about 10 o'clock; recitation of the *dharani* again and sleep; wake up the next morning at the same time.

The lama supplied me with my needs and I was quite comfortable. I did not let my mind stray anywhere else, but kept it under constant control. It was too cold to venture outside. Occupied with the recitation, writing and meditation, I was not bored and without knowing it, the days passed quickly.

Once a Mongolian lama invited me to his room and showed me a manuscript. It was a *mantra* and *dharani* written in the Newari script. I read it to the best of my ability and I confessed my ignorance about some portions of it. He asked me about Lhasa. When I was about to leave, two dishes of ghee and cheese were placed before me. Later, the gifts were sent to my room. As ghee was not available locally but brought from Mongolia, it was indeed a rare gift.

During my five months of seclusion at Wu Tai Shan, I recited different texts- the dharani of the five Buddhas- 500,000 times; of Manjusri- 100,000 times; and of Aparimita- 100,000 times. I also completed the translation of *Gurumandala*. Then I wished to visit the five sacred peaks and said to the lama: "Can you get me a guide?" Fortunately, he heard of a Tibetan from Amdo who was also looking for a companion. The Tibetan however lacked the wherewithal for the pilgrimage. "If that is so," said the lama, "I will provide you food and pay you wages too. Can you carry the monk's things?" The Tibetan was happy to be my guide and porter and he was asked to spend the night at my place so that we could go the next day and the lama got our things ready.

After an early breakfast the next morning, we left on the pilgrimage to the five peaks. I was very pleased with the Tibetan and gave him a pair of new boots that had been presented to me by a Mongolian at Peking. We arrived late that day at the White Peak. The next morning we were served with food at the monastery and we went to worship at the shrine. The principal figure was that of Vairocana Tathagata. There were also many other images. I went around the hall and offered worship. Oil lamps could be bought for offering in the temple itself. I learnt that it was the custom in China to have a stamp of the temple as a memento of the pilgrimage. So I had a big, round red stamp put on my yellow bag with Chinese characters given me by Dorji Chopa Ghese in Lhasa. Returning from the temple, we took our meal and set off along the mountain ridge.

We arrived at the Blue Peak in the evening. In the monastery we were received very warmly. The people were very pleased. They lit a fire for us and served tea. Early in the morning the next day we went to worship in the temple, the principal image of which was of Akshobhya Tathagata.

There were many other images too. I had the stamp of the temple duly put on the bag and left for the next temple.

We arrived late in the monastery at the Yellow Peak. The monks there were also very pleased and we stayed overnight in the monastery itself. As I had come from such a long distance they took great care of me. Early in the next morning I went to worship the main image of Ratnasambhava Tathagata. I had my bag stamped, took my meal and took leave of the monks.

About half way on the road on the mountain ridge I met a Tibetan pilgrim from Amdo. He was doing the pilgrimage in the hardest possible way by laying down the whole length of his body on the ground at every step. I stayed with him for some time. Seeing his great devotion, I said to myself, "How could a man endure so much suffering in the name of religion?" The road was very rough. It was very cold and the wind blew hard. His boots were old and torn. His old clothes would hardly warm him. His hands were cracked. His eyes were red because of the wind. Seeing his condition, I took back the boots that I had given to my companion, and gave it to the pilgrim along with a few rupees. Whenever I thought of the pilgrim, I could not but wonder at his faith and fortitude.

We reached the Red Peak in the afternoon. The main image in the monastery was that of Amitabha Tathagata and I worshipped it the same day. There also I duly got the stamp.

As the next peak was not far away, we continued our journey and arrived at the Green Peak before sunset. The next morning I worshipped the main image of Amoghasiddhi Tathagata and got the stamp. As it was all down hill, we

could have gone back that day, but I decided to stay overnight at the Green Peak.

Exposure to the wind had made my hand and face as dark as that of an Indian. The strong wind made one unsteady on one's feet. Fortunately, there was no rain, but it was bitterly cold even in June! How cold it must be in December? Truly there were no limits to heat and cold in the world for men lived under all conditions. At Banaras the heat was so intense and yet people were able to live there. We returned to my lodge in the monastery at about 4 o'clock the next day, the fifth day of my pilgrimage. If I had tried, I could have made it in four days. I learnt that the length of the pilgrims' road was 80 miles. My companion was happy and I paid him his wages and gave some extra money to buy himself a pair of shoes.

A week after the pilgrimage, I wished to return to Peking and asked my host if he could find a companion for me. The lama asked me what was the need to hurry back. I told him that I would like to spend the monsoon retreat, beginning from the full moon day in July in Peking. It turned out that a Chinese gentleman was leaving in a day or two. When I confessed my ignorance of the Chinese language, I was assured that there was no need to worry for the man was very good and he would take care of me. Then I thought that I should have a photograph of myself taken at the temple of Manjusri. A photographer was sent for and I went back to the temple. He produced a good photograph except for my face. I wondered what had happened, for none would recognize me in that photograph.

I purchased three copies of a print of Wu Tai Shan for one dhayan and one embroidered picture of the whole area for four dhayan. It occurred to me that its must be due to my *karma* in a previous life that I was able to travel so far

under the most fortunate circumstances. My success must also be the result of a single-minded devotion in my present life. I felt proud in having arrived at Pancasirsha Parbat where no Newar had ever come before. If the legends were to be believed none could ever think of the journey since the Silanadi River turned everything into stone.

Three days later, two litters and four horses arrived at the monastery and the Chinese gentleman himself appeared soon afterwards. "He does not know Chinese language," the monk said to the gentleman, "Please look after him and take him to the lama at the Hukakun monastery in Peking. Then send me a letter." The man assured the lama that he would gladly do his best. After my meal, I took leave of the lama and others at Pancasirsha Parbat and made my departure.

### **Return from the Mountain**

The weather was nice; it was neither cold nor hot and we often walked. When I came before, it was very cold. Sitting in the litter and wrapped up in my robe I did not see much then. On the return journey, as I walked, I was able to have a good view of the rural area dotted with innumerable villages. All the women appeared traditional, both in their dress and in hairstyle. It was still the practice to bind their foot. Donkeys were used to grind wheat, turn the oil mill, carry loads and work in the fields. There were also horses and some cows. I did not see a single buffalo. I was told that it was treated almost like a god. Like the bullock in India, horses and donkeys were used in China and they suffered as much. The sheep were big and had lumpy tails. We often saw horses for sale. Silkworms were reared in the villages and mulberry plants grew in plenty. Ham was the common meat. The pigs were to be found everywhere, very big ones with large ears unlike their cousins in Nepal. It was said that

the Chinese were very choleric because they ate the pig. The baskets were carried across the shoulder as in Nepal. The hills were rocky and there were not many trees. Every hollow or ditch with a layer of earth was used to grow something or other. There were neither straw nor weeds in the fields.

Coal was found in plenty and everybody used it. Few people burnt wood as it was more costly than in our country. Drinks were common but I did not come across any drunken man. Opium was very costly but many men smoked it. At a slight illness, they resorted to the opium. My companion was also an addict to opium and as soon as we came to a lodge, he was in a hurry to smoke it. He seemed to be popular all along the route and he was shown much respect wherever we went and thanks to him it was a very comfortable journey.

People walked along in ones and twos. In the rural areas only they went in groups over long distances. It looked to me as if travelling was not easy, not that I inquired about it, but that was my guess. A week after departure from Pancasirsha Parbat we arrived back at Tingshien. We stayed the night in a village and in the early hours of the next day we took the train to Peking. My previous train journey had taken place at night and I did not see much. It was daytime the second time and I was able to see all along the route. Some of the stations were quite attractive. Leaving the station at 6 o'clock in the morning, we arrived at Peking at 3 in the afternoon. The gentleman took me back to Yam Lama's monastery.

## CHAPTER VI

### Monsoon Retreat in Peking

Yam Lama asked me about my pilgrimage and I handed him a letter given to me by the lama of Wu Tai Shan, which pleased him very much. The next day the lama gave me a separate room, and he sent me food but after a few days I paid for the food.

A fortnight later, the representative of Lhasa arrived with an entourage of a dozen male and female servants. The group was taken to stay at a goldsmith's house located at Peshingchau. I was also provided with a room above the shop. The monsoon retreat was approaching. I stayed there for over a week and found it to be a proper place for the retreat and the Chinese who lived there was quite a gentleman and I thought that there would be no problem. I made an arrangement with a restaurant in the neighbourhood to send me food every day. I had no difficulty during the monsoon retreat. By great good fortune a Chinese who had lived long in Calcutta and who was fluent in Hindi came to live next door to me. Because of him, I was able to go all over Peking and everything went well. Then there was another person from Amdo, who was almost a hermit. I spoke to him about a visit to Japan. He was also of the same mind and we decided to travel together to Japan.

Living right in a street, I witnessed festivals and funerals from time to time. The funeral of an important person was a grand affair in which effigies of men and animals, such as horses and elephants, made of paper, were taken along with the coffin wrapped up in silk. A band of musicians and a crowd of people, many of them carrying flags and beating drums, went ahead while the relatives and the children, with white turbans wrapped around their heads,



followed in a single file. On either side of the street other friends and relatives stood beside tables laden with fruits, sweets and kettles of tea which they offered to the mourners. Whether they wanted to eat or not, the mourners had to touch the offering with their hands but it was impossible to drink all the tea and eat the sweets offered along the route. The names of those who gave the tea and food and the quantity were noted down and the bereaved family had to give a feast to them as well in return. It was similar to the custom of taking *byaha* presents in Nepal. On the seventh day after death, animals and objects made of paper were again taken in a procession to the crossroads and burnt down. China had many different customs as in other countries.

One day an acquaintance took me to a *stupa* at a place called Dhunhasi about three miles away. It was made many years before in honour of a lama of Lhasa named Penjaramuchi (Pancha-Dharma?). A dreadful stench assailed me on the way and I learnt that all the human waste in the city was taken there and mixed with earth to turn it into manure that was then exported mostly to Japan in shiploads. It was a very profitable business and it explained why the latrines were placed along the streets.

There was also a monastery at Dhunhasi. The stupa made entirely of marble was located in a garden. It was about 14 cubits high and there were beautiful sculptures depicting the life of the Buddha from birth to *nirvana* in bas relief all around it. However, many of the images on the lower parts of the stupa were damaged and white cement had been used to repair these. Built more than 200 years ago at the height of Chinese glory, the sculptures were as good as new even now. The Chinese artists were very skillful and I recalled the saying that their skill was due to the presence of Saraswati<sup>54</sup> there.

On another occasion I went with the same man in a rickshaw to the Imperial Palace. Tickets were available outside the gate at one dhyana per person. I hired a guide and we went in. The pools in the garden had fish of different colours. Chairs and tables were placed at different places. There were many old objects in the throne room. The guide explained that the most valuable objects had been taken away to Nanking and only the heavy ones had been left behind. There were three throne rooms- in the outermost one, nobles were granted audience; secret conferences were held in the inner one and the emperor lived in the innermost room. There was an image of Karunamaya just behind the throne. It was about twenty and half cubits tall, with eight hands and eleven heads. Statues of men in armour and iron helmets stood on either side of the throne. There were also tables, bookcases, etc. fashioned out of antlers. About a dozen large pictures, some of them embroidered, in gilt frames, were hung on the walls. Hot iron pipes kept the rooms warm during the winter. However, the courtyards, overgrown with weeds and negligence everywhere, reminded me of traveller's tales of the glories of old China.

One of the stories related a weekly battle with the sun to show that none were left on earth to equal the emperor of China. The soldiers gathered in the parade ground and fired their guns at the sun in the sky. When the sky was covered with smoke and the sun was hidden the soldiers jeered at the sun. Another story concerned the war with Nepal,<sup>55</sup> in course of which the soldiers were ordered to march over some green bamboos until no bamboo was left. The Chinese soldiers arrived as far as the Trisuli River but a truce was concluded and they returned without seeing the Nepal valley. Alas! where had these emperors gone? I wondered what had overtaken the empire within the Great Wall and possessing such a large force? There was a time

when there were none who did not fear the emperor of China, the greatest of all the emperors in the world. All the grandeur and magnificence of the Chinese throne had now disappeared. I thought then that nothing, however great, remained forever. Everything had to come to an end.

Of the four kings in a set of playing cards, the king of spade was the greatest for it represented none other than the emperor of China. What had happened to such a great emperor? Such was the way of the world from the very beginning. It was their knowledge of impermanence that made Gautam Buddha and other great saints attach great importance to renunciation and it was for this reason that they gave up worldly pursuits and aspired for something beyond the world. I felt tired at once and wished to return. The guide mentioned many other sights worth visiting but I had lost all desire to see anymore.

The image of Karunamaya in the throne room and the numerous monasteries and historic places gave me the impression that Buddhism had been very strong in ancient China, but it had declined at present. The Imperial Throne and the great changes that had taken place in China gave me much food for thought. I had often seen women singing to the accompaniment of a musical band in the streets and lanes. I heard the singing again while returning from the Imperial Palace at about 5 o'clock. My companion explained that it was a call to the people to convert to Christianity.

During a visit to a monastery called Yan Chin No.3 Wanhausi I saw a press where religious prints were made. There were many prints depicting Karunamaya in different forms and I selected some to take back with me. The prints were being sold at the rate of three for one rupee. The whole lot cost more than 60 rupees but alas! I had only a few rupees with me. I concluded that China was indeed ruled by

Karunamaya in ancient times. "What a great fall the country had seen since then!" I said to myself.

A Chinese monk named Fuchi Lama had returned from India to raise funds to build a pilgrim's rest house at Buddha Gaya. Having learnt about me he came to see me and spoke about his mission. "As you have come from India," he said, "it would be a great help to me in raising funds if you come along with me." I was persuaded by him to give up the idea of visiting Japan but to return to India with him.

When I had paid my bills, I found that I had not a single *paisa* left with me. So, I borrowed ten rupees from Yam Lama who said that I should repay him if I possibly could, otherwise I could forget about the loan. I took leave of the good Yam Lama and went with Fuchi Lama to live at the large Hoshya monastery which I had visited once before with the letter from Dorje Chopa Ghese. However, the man to whom the letter was addressed did not give me any help and I had returned empty handed. A few days later, a group of householders came to offer meals to the monks at the monastery. In the group was the man to whom I had carried the letter. He saw me in the dining hall but he pretended not to know me, and I had to ignore him too.

In China monks and laymen ate together with chopsticks from a common pot. I had not yet learnt to use chopsticks efficiently. Also the fact that the monks were to eat together with laymen from the same pot did not appeal to me. These people also engaged long in conversation with the food in front of them. By and by it was 1 o'clock and everyone sat down with his bowl and chopsticks. I was invited to do likewise. "I eat only before noon," I told them, "Fuchi lama knows about the custom. Ask him." They

expressed ignorance and regrets and said that I could have informed them earlier.

While they ate I sat apart. I did not know what they talked among themselves but it seemed that the man who got my letter mentioned to them that I had come to the monastery once before. They inquired if it was true. I told them that I had come with a letter from Dorje Chopa Ghesé in Lhasa. The man was then ashamed and he kept his head low. Later, when he was about to leave, he said he was sorry and he gave me 20 rupees. "Please pardon me," he said politely. I was also given two rupees for the meal I missed. Then I went back to my room. With the money I bought a pictorial book priced six rupees which depicted Gautam Buddha from birth to nirvana.

A week later, Fuchi Lama and I left Peking by train at 5 o'clock and arrived at Thyankin at 8 o'clock the next morning. While we were looking for rickshaws to go to a monastery, a very unruly crowd of men gathered around us, one pulling one way and another in another direction. Seeing strangers being harassed, the policemen drove them away even as we requested them to spare the stick. The police got two rickshaws for us and we went to a monastery where we were received with much respect. Within a week, he was able to collect about 300 rupees. Thereafter, we left by train for Nanking.

## **Nanking**

Nanking was more beautiful than Peking and the population was greater too. We went to a monastery called Lola, which had been built by very important people. Fuchi Lama and I were provided with a room. There were three groups of monks in that monastery. Fuchi Lama undertook a

fast for twenty-one days during which, except for something to drink, he took no food, and met nobody. I spent the time in revising my translation of *Gurumandala* Emerging from his seclusion. Fuchi Lama went about collecting donations and succeeded in getting twice as much as before.

Religious discussions took place regularly with the monks who took a liking to me. They invited me to their place and to the bathhouse, which was almost an institution in China. One of the ways of showing respect to a good friend was to send for hot water worth two *paisa*. The water was brought in a pot along with a towel and the guest was invited to wash his hands and face. Only after the wash, ensued the conversation. It was like the offer of a tobacco smoke among us. When relatives and friends arrived, they were taken to the bathhouse. The charge ranged from four *annas* to three rupees for a bath in hot or cold water. The temperature of the bath was adjusted by mixing hot and cold water. Other facilities and service included towels, oil, scent, cots with warm sheets, and servants to scratch the back, etc. When the hot water produced heavy perspiration, the man laid down in a cot and covered himself with warm sheets. It produced more perspiration, a towel was then used to rub oneself dry. The process was repeated a few more times and the result was that the body remained delightfully light for over a week.

Ninila and her husband whom I had met at Hongkong were in the city. They visited me frequently or invited me to their place. The man taught Tibetan language to the Chinese. He was also a master in religious discussions. He helped me too.

Once I received an invitation from some members of the Shigatse Lama's entourage. They sent a car for me. I was provided a special seat and water to wash my hands and then

tea and snacks were placed before me. They asked me about Lhasa, about Dorje Chopa Ghese and about my pilgrimage to Wu Tai Shan. At 11 o'clock a very good meal was served to me. After they had their own meal, they asked me about Nepal. They produced some images made of China clay. There was one of Mahisashambar<sup>56</sup> with his spouse and another of Manjusri. They asked me if these were known and worshipped in Nepal. I told them that these deities were known in Nepal, but not exposed about in public. "That's how it should be," they said, "The monks here have no deep knowledge, and they expose the secret deities in order to appear themselves as knowledgeable. It appears that the knowledge about these deities has been preserved in Nepal by keeping it secret. There is nothing secret here anymore nor is there true knowledge." They spoke highly of Nepal. They presented me with some images, a picture of the Shigatse Lama, a scarf and 25 rupees and sent me back to my place in the car late in the evening.

## Shanghai

After six weeks in Nanking, Fuchi Lama and I took the train to Shanghai, where he took me to a rich man's home and both of us were provided with a very well furnished room. We were treated very nicely and Fuchi Lama raised about 2500 rupees during our stay. As I had two more letters written by Dorje Chopa Ghese in Lhasa, I set out with Fuchi Lama to meet these people.

One letter was addressed to a man in a shipping company in a big building right in the centre of the city. He read the letter, thought for a moment and showed it to other people in the office. He asked me how long I had been in China. I told him that I had been a year altogether-five months at Wu Tai Shan, five in Peking and Thyankin before arriving in Shanghai a fortnight earlier. I told him also that I

intended to go on a pilgrimage to some other holy places in China. He asked for proof of my visits to the various places. I produced the yellow bag with stamps from the five monasteries in Wu Tai Shan. He passed the bag around and many other people also came to have a look. One of them quietly placed a ten-rupee note in the bag and everyone else then put something, making a total of 132 rupees in no time.

They asked me where I planned to go next. I told them that I intended to visit three <sup>2</sup> places - Chyuhwasan, Womisan and Futhosan- but apart from Tibetan, I did not know the Chinese language. Then, they sent for a man from Amdo who had been to various places on pilgrimage and knew both Tibetan and Chinese languages. "Can you take this monk wherever he wants to go?" they asked him, "The monk himself will bear all expenses. Can you take care of him and show him the holy places?" The man happened to be looking for a job and he agreed to go at once. "Yes, I shall serve him to the best of my ability and take him wherever he wants to go," he replied. A free pass was issued to us so that I didn't have to pay fare in their ships and I was provided with 50 rupees out of their contributions, the rest of the money to be picked up upon my return. It was not safe to carry money; one may even be murdered, I was warned. I went with the Amdo man and made some purchases. After five days in Shanghai I was ready to leave but I found the ship had already left. However, as I had already taken leave of my hosts, I was ashamed to return to them. Fortunately as my guide was quite familiar with all the nooks and corners of the city, he took me to a place where strangers slept. The rent for one cot, bedding and mosquito curtain was eight annas per night. The poor porters also slept there. They were charged eight paise only for pigeonholes in which they could just crawl in. We paid eight annas each and stayed there for four days.



In the meanwhile, I visited many places, including the large Hoshya monastery, where many people came to offer alms. There was another monastery, the largest in Shanghai, where 500 monks were in residence. I went there for two days and learnt all about their regulations. The monks did not stay long in one place; many wandered about, staying in one monastery for a few days at a time. The benefactors of the monastery kept food reserves for 100 or more monks. In a monastery with a food reserve for 100 monks, there would be only 40 or 50 of them most of the time. They worshipped thrice a day at dawn; at about 11 o'clock; and in the evening. It was customary to serve rice and soup every time they worshipped. In some monasteries, pickles and vegetables were also given with rice. No monk went hungry in China.

### **Other Holy Places**

With the Amdo man as a guide and companion, I boarded the ship in Shanghai and two days later, I came to Nanhe and visited the local monastery called Chyasan. It appeared to be quite rich with nearly 100 monks in residence and all the images were typically Chinese. After a night's stay there, I went on foot to Chyuhwasan. There was a heavy snowfall and I had to spend a week as a guest of the monks.

Two days on foot and one night in a ship from Chyuhwasan took me to a place where porcelain wares were made. Many men came up the ship with beautiful wares. Although I was reluctant to buy, the venders succeeded in selling me a basketful of plates, teapots and tumblers for about seven rupees which in Calcutta would have cost more than ninety rupees.

The next morning I arrived at Futhosan, the local name of which was Dhechan and the Karunamaya in the

monastery was called Kwayasanphu. I stayed for four days before leaving for Womisan.

Two days after boarding the ship I had to change to another ship which took us along the sea shore, with an escort of battleships which fired guns from time to time. I heard rumours of an impending Japanese invasion and of houses being fortified with sandbags. Warnings were sounded every day. After travelling for about four hours in a rather frightful atmosphere, we landed at Hangchou. Here I met three compatriots of my Amdo guide and they also came with us in rickshaws to a large monastery where Tibetan pilgrims stayed. I wished to go to another place as no word came from the master even after a long wait. Finally we were called in and the master asked numerous questions. I answered in Tibetan and the Amdos spoke in Chinese. The man was polite enough and a room was provided to the five of us and of course we were fed at the monastery.

Hangchou was a very pretty place, with a rich and renowned monastery. Four days later a great annual event took place in the city. All great merchants and officers contributed floats, dance groups or musical bands to the festival. The monastery also took part in it and I was included in their group. Everybody went on foot to a large open space, twice as big as the Chauni in Kathmandu. In the center of the ground, the officers, with soldiers all around them, watched the pageantry. When all the people were assembled, the name of each troupe was noted down as was done during the Indrajatra<sup>57</sup> festival in Kathmandu. I was tired and came back in a rickshaw with a companion late in the evening while a great many men remained throughout the night. The next afternoon I went to look at the market. Hangchou was a very big city with a canal in the middle. There was also a big college with spacious grounds and ponds. I visited the library and found a great many books but

not a single publication in the Hindi language. So, I gave a copy of my *Majhimanikaya* to the library. In one boarding school I found nearly 600 students. The principal said to me: "Let me know if there are students who would like to come here. Tuition, boarding and fooding would be free for them. Please inform me." The address was "Hupe, Wuthan."

I stayed at Hangchou for over a week, but my desire to go on a pilgrimage to Womisan had to be given up. I was told that no boat could go these days because of the low water level and it was a long way off to go on foot.

### **Return from China**

I returned to Nanking by ship and went to the Lola monastery where I had stayed before. All the monks I knew including Fuchi Lama were still there. Fuchi Lama visited some more places and raised about 2000 rupees. He presented me with three orange-coloured silk robes. He had some pearls from Nepal called *fitun*.<sup>58</sup> These were said to have fallen from the sky and thought to be some kind of relics. He presented a few of these pearls to some people who appreciated them very much. I had also with me 20 of these pearls. They had actually fallen from the sky at Swayambhu Hill in Kathmandu. Fuchi Lama's pearls looked artificial when they were placed besides mine and an official seeing the difference asked for an explanation. Fuchi Lama professed ignorance. Later, the official requested Fuchi Lama to get a couple of my pearls for him and I gave him three. The official was very pleased. Fuchi Lama gave me 20 rupees for the pearls but he was sleepless that night. The next morning, at breakfast, he produced 20 more rupees and said to me: "Please take this cash and give it back to me." He gave me the money and I returned it to him. I asked him for an explanation. "Oh, it's nothing," he said. But when I pressed, he said that the money was given in alms and as I

was senior to him, I had to have it first and only then he could have it. So, I knew that the money had been given to me for the pearls by the official, but he had kept it for himself. Then realising that he was not keeping the rules for monks, he gave the money to me and got it back from me. It occurred to me that I should no longer trust him with my money and he was very annoyed when I asked him to return it. He threw it back to me. He had supposed that I would not take the money back in the face of his temper. But I took it and put it away at once. That made him really mad and asked me to leave his place.

How money can mislead people! He had already received nearly 4000 rupees in donations and yet he coveted my small amount and I had to part company from him. A fortnight later he came to me and was quite contrite. "Let us go back to India," he said politely. But I did not want his company any more and I told him that I was not going back although I did not have the least idea how I could go alone. All the monks were unhappy with Fuchi Lama's misbehavior, and they continued to help me.

In the meanwhile a lama from Gyarong asked me to go with him to his country and he assured me of all possible help. Fortunately, the lama of Wu Tai Shan arrived in Nanking before long for his successor had arrived from Lhasa, and he was returning to Tibet. I went to see him and he was also pleased to find me still in China. I told him how I had gone to Hangchou, but failed to visit Womisan because the water level was low and I was waiting in Nanking for a companion to return to Lhasa. He told me that I could go with him. And so I planned my return journey and I came back to the Lola monastery.

I told everybody that I was going back to Nepal. However, I had only 80 rupees with me and I required at

least 150 rupees to pay for my lodging and boarding. When people knew I was going back, donations were received from many of them. The lama of Gyarong also said to me: "What do you wish to take back to Nepal?" I told him that I was interested in a box of printing material and that I would be going away within the next few days.

On the following day the lama and I went to a big shop and purchased a box of printing material, four bottles of ink, writing material, paper, etc. Despite my protest, the lama paid the bill totalling 45 rupees. Upon our return to the monastery he asked me if there was anything else I needed. He had already been very generous to me. It would be a shame to ask for more. I said I had enough money with me and declined his offer.

As I found it rather difficult to carry with me the crockery I had purchased earlier in the ship, I donated these to the monastery. The accountant of the monastery gave me 20 rupees despite my protests. Two days later, the representative of Lhasa sent a message asking me to see him. He had been informed by the lama from Wu Tai Shan that I was returning to Nepal. I went with a guide and saw the representative who asked me about my travels. He was very pleased and gave me 25 rupees. Back in the monastery I counted my money and found that I had enough money for the travel paper and fare. I needed money only for my food and I thought that everything would be all right once I reached Shanghai.

The next day I left for Shanghai and I did not have to pay the fare as I was accompanying some government officials. In Shanghai I collected the money left in the shipping office. A Chinese woman learnt about my presence in Shanghai and she invited me to her place. Her English husband, who was an important official, had died, leaving her childless and alone. She had considerable income from

the rent of buildings and shops. She said to me: "It is time for me to die and I am alone. I wish to build a pilgrim's rest house in each of the four sacred places in India. Lumbini lies in the kingdom of Nepal and I have heard that foreigners are not allowed to build there. If I could have it done through you, my wish would be fulfilled." I said to her through an interpreter who spoke Hindi: "You have a very great objective in mind. However, I can give you a reply only after I have made inquiries in Nepal." She replied: "Do me the favour. I would like to do it as soon as possible, before I die. I shall send you funds through a bank in Calcutta." "I shall find out when I reach Calcutta and let you know," I assured her. She was very pleased and gave me ten rupees and sent me back in a motor car.

I found that I required 180 rupees for the fare, travel document, doctor's fee, etc. Everything went well and after a week's stay in Shanghai I found myself in a group of 20 people from Tibet that came on board the ship.

On the third day from Shanghai there was a typhoon. The ship tossed about and it was almost upset. The passengers were thrown together on one side or other and their belongings were either broken or spilled all over the ship. Some people had bumps while others were hurt. The passengers were very scared and sought refuge in the lower berths, but they still had a hard time. After a couple of hours the typhoon passed away and the passengers returned to their own places. Their belongings were scattered all over the deck and were retrieved only two days later but nothing was lost.

In six days we arrived in Hongkong, where we stayed just one day. The next morning we boarded the ship again and arrived in Singapore in seven days. In six more days we touched Penang where we spent a day. In four more

days we passed Gangesagar and the same day we reached Calcutta at about 3 o'clock. Many officials came on board between Hongkong and Calcutta to check as if the passengers were not trustworthy and their possessions were examined very thoroughly.

I went in a car from the Calcutta jetty to Ramjidas Jetia Lane (Bada Bazar) and my brother paid the ten rupees I had borrowed to get there. I stayed a week in Calcutta and had one Chinese named Sundila write a letter to the lady in Shanghai who wished to build a pilgrim's rest house. However, before a reply was received from her, all communications with China were severed, for within a month the Japanese invaded Shanghai.



## CHAPTER VII

### Back in Nepal

After a week in Calcutta I returned to Kathmandu and went back to live at Kindol Vihara. I celebrated the Buddha's Birthday<sup>59</sup> in the vihara by holding an exhibition of the pictures I had brought back from China. A great many Buddhists came to see the pictures. The Buddha's Birthday came to be observed from that year in some localities. The importance of the occasion was also appreciated in Lalitpur where Dharmaditya Dharmacharya had organized a celebration but it was discontinued later. Now-a-days the Buddha's Birthday is celebrated in Kathmandu and Lalitpur every year.

The number of monks and nuns in Kindol Vihara increased by ones and twos. To live in solitude for a couple of months I went once to the lake of Manichuda above the temple of Vajrajogini<sup>60</sup> at Sankhu. Purnaman, son of Juman Sahu of Mahabaudha, learnt about it and he came and stayed nearly a week with me. We talked about many things—religion, sufferings, my pilgrimage in China, etc. His parents came to look for him and finding him at Sankhu, they took him home with them. Later, when I returned to Kindol, Purnaman came to see me and brought me a pot of ghee. A fortnight later he came again and said. "*Bhante*, please do me a favour."

"What is it?" I asked. "My mother had some money," he explained, "Before her death she had wished to use the money for some religious purpose. What can be done with the money now?" I asked him what he had in his mind. "Would it be all right to make a bronze stupa and install it in the courtyard at Manjusri?" he asked. "If you make a stupa, it will be stolen soon," I replied, "What will you do then?"



Make another stupa to replace it? It does not seem to be a good idea. Even stone stupas are being destroyed these days. How long will a bronze stupa be spared?" He said, "That's true, but what can I do then?" Neither I could not tell him what to do and so we kept the matter pending. He came back soon with 300 rupees in cash and asked me to use it for some religious purpose. Later it occurred to me that if a home for nuns could be built, it would bring merit to the donor and it would be good for me too, for it was very unbecoming for both monks and nuns to stay together at Kindol Vihara.

I sent for Purnaman and said to him: "It would be very good if your money is used to build a home for nuns. The house cannot be stolen by anyone. Don't you think it would be an appropriate way to use the money? Only you may have to give some more money." "That's all right with me," he replied, "Please do as you think it right. If more money is required, I'll consider it."

There was a piece of land below Kindol Vihara where Jogbir Singh's mother was staying. I thought of purchasing the land for the nuns' home. There was already a wall around it. However, I soon found that the ownership of the land was rather complicated and it would be difficult to buy it. So, I wanted to give the money back to Purnaman but he refused to take it. "How can I take back a donation?" he said. The problem of the money remained unsolved. Then I recalled the book *Gurumandala* which I had translated into Nepalbhasa during my five months' stay at Pancasirsha Parbat. Perhaps I could use the money to print this book, I said to myself, and asked Purnaman if he agreed with my idea. He said that I could do whatever I liked. Having obtained his consent I went to Banaras to get the book printed.

## Buddhist Publications

No press in Banaras was willing to print the book, as none understood our language. Finally, the Indian Press accepted the job. As they had never printed a book in Nepalbhasa before and having no experience myself, there were many printing mistakes despite my repeated corrections. There was none to help me and the composers too became very disheartened. To keep them happy, I gave a few rupees as tips. "Once you get this book done," I said to the press manager, "all the books in Nepalbhasa would go nowhere else but come to you." I was full of energy in those days and walked all the way to Banaras many times from Sarnath where I was staying. When the press copy was finally ready I was asked to sign a statement. They told me that they did not know the language and having never printed it before, they must produce the document if there was any problem with the authorities in the future. I too had suspicions that something might come up. However, I decided to get the book printed come what may and signed it as desired by them. I brought 1000 copies of the book to Kusinagar for safe-keeping and taking 300 copies with me, I made my way back to Nepal. The packet was opened at Chisapanigarhi, and having noted that it was a religious book in Nepalbhasa, I was allowed to take it along with me. The next day I arrived at Kindol Vihara. Everybody was interested in the book, and eagerly bought it. It received wide publicity and many copies of the book were sold and soon I had no copy left.

I told a farmer from Nayatwa who asked for a copy of the book, "Go to Kusinagar and bring it and I will give you the fare." Then one man named Haram (who later became the monk Mahapantha) and a companion visited Kusinagar and brought the book in a bag. At the Chisapanigarhi the *Hakim* did not open the bag, but sent it to

the Customs Office in Kathmandu with a note. I went to the Customs Office and got the book released.

Within a year, I had some money from the sale of 500 copies of the book. Then I thought of some other books that I had written: *Buddha Guna*, *Gyanmala*, *Ishwarmhasike*, *Pragyadarshana* and *Sattipathana*. The Ven. Karmashila had also a book entitled *Paritranapatha*. I went often to Banaras to print these books and the Indian Press was no longer reluctant to do the job as they now knew enough about our language. Paper was very cheap in those days and the cost of printing too was low. The printing cost was seven or eight rupees per forma and the price of the "double crown" paper was about the same per ream. The number of printed books in Nepalbhasha increased gradually. Dharmacharya had earlier printed a journal called *Buddhadharma wa Nepalbhasha* in Calcutta. However, as he received no help in the task from any quarter, the publication stopped soon.

The publication of books kept me busy for about five years until Amritanda took over the job. None came forward to distribute the books in Nepalbhasha, the only outlet was Kindol Vihara.

### **Anandakuti Vihara**

Many women and men had to live together at Kindol. It was a situation that gave rise to gossip and unseemly incidents, which sometimes made it unpleasant for me to stay at the vihara. However there was nowhere else to go; I had to stay there whether I wanted or not. Sometimes I went to Baghduwar or Manichuda. At other times, when I was depressed I went for a circumambulation of Swayambhu Hill. When I reached the spring popularly known as Kwaumbunga I climbed up the hill to the north-west to a

small, open ground with tall trees all around. I found some solace there and recovered my peace of mind. Eventually it became almost a habit with me to go there.

Soon it occurred to me that I should spend my monsoon retreat in the same place and asked the forest guard, "Would it be possible to build a tiny little hut in the woods here?" "Yes, it can be done for holy men," he replied. "Then, please do make for me at this spot a small hut with a door and a window so that I can spend the night here. It is a very peaceful place." "All right," he said. "I will make it for you." "How much money you will need?" I asked him next. "Maybe 30 rupees," he said. "Can you get it done soon?" I asked him, "The monsoon retreat is near." "Anytime," he replied, "It won't take long when all the villagers work together. The stone and earth are available right here. Get the door and window made and I'll build your hut in no time."

We agreed upon 28 rupees as the cost of construction and I gave him half the amount. The stones were brought the very next day and the foundation was laid within a few days. However, when about one third of the work was done, it came to a stop. "We have lost, *Bhante*," said the workers, "It cannot be done within the estimated amount. We live a hand-to-mouth existence and no other workers are to be found." I assured them more money if they only finished the hut soon. When it was all done, it cost me 70 rupees.

I moved to the hut for the monsoon retreat. It was very damp for the plaster on the walls was still wet. I lined up the walls with a straw mattress which I put out to dry in the sun in the daytime. Two other monks, Amritananda and Shakyanda, were still staying at Kindol Vihara.

One day during my absence the lock was broken and my bed and blanket were stolen from the hut. When there was a theft for the second time, I made a bed of hay.

After the monsoon retreat, I made an arrangement for Amritananda to stay at Parbatsthan in the Swayambhu Hill and to give a discourse during the month of Kartik<sup>61</sup> on the Vessantara Jataka.<sup>62</sup> Getting up very early in the morning, I climbed up to Parbatsthan and made seating arrangements for the people who came to listen to Amritananda's discourse. Monks, nuns and householders from Kathmandu and Lalitpur came in increasing numbers to listen to Amritananda as he proved himself very good at the task and none wanted to miss the discourse. At last people began to have a clearer understanding of the Buddhist teachings.

It was a pleasant time of the year and the discourse on the Vessantara Jataka came to an end on the full-moon day of Kartik. The people did not seem to have enough of the discourse. On the same day, a *mandap* was made according to the Ceylonese custom and the monks recited *mahaparitrana* throughout the night, something unprecedented in Nepal. The place was brightly lit with electric lights and many people from the towns stayed overnight. At the conclusion of the recitation, holy water and strings were distributed to all participants. On the following day monks, nuns, and laymen conducted a grand Buddha *puja* at Swayambhu. The people gave alms to the monks and nuns at the vihara. After this event, everybody took a greater interest in the pure form of Buddhism.

Once again shutters were removed from the door and window in the hut and stolen. It was still a good place to live. I usually arrived around 4 o'clock and sat under a tree in the warmth of the afternoon sun. One day Dwarikadas,

Purnaman and some other laymen came to me. We were engaged in a long discussion about religious matters, when it rained heavily. We were all huddled together in the hut until late in the evening, and it was almost time for the night gun,<sup>63</sup> and they had to return home. What they thought on their way home in the rain, I did not know but they came back a couple of days later and asked, "Bhante, would it be possible to build a house here?" "May be," I said, "Ask the forest guard." The guard complied with their request and the task of building a small house was entrusted to him.

There was a spot nearby that had been dug up and was called the "gold mine" but no gold was found and so it was abandoned. However, a large heap of stones was dug up. The forest guard made good use of the stone to build a small house next to the hut. As the house conceived by Dwarikadas, Purnaman and others was almost complete, Batulinani of Chhetrapati came to me one afternoon while I was sitting alone under a tree and said, "May I say something?" "Go ahead, if it is all right I shall say 'yes'," I said, "If it is not, I shall say 'no'." She said, "It should be all right." "Then tell me what is in your mind?" I said. "Let me make your little hut into a house like the one built by Dwarikadas. Please let me do it," she said. I told her that I did not need a bigger place and all the troubles that come from it. But she kept insisting despite my objection until I told her, "Do as you like."

Within ten days the woman returned and gave me 200 rupees for stone, which was soon acquired and the work was begun. Dwarikadas, Purnaman, Bhaktilal and other devotees also raised some funds. However, as soon as the construction began the monsoon rain came and the stone wall fell down repeatedly. But the good laymen were not discouraged and they completed the house and put on a thatch roof. I left Kindol to live in the house in the woods.

Our Guru, Chandramani Mahasthvir, arrived in Kathmandu with Amritanada on the occasion of Shivaratri and stayed in the new vihara in the woods which we named Anandakuti, which mean "The Little House of Joy". One day I said to the Guru, "I wish to construct a temple here and install an image of Lord Buddha in order to offer prayers in the morning and evening." "If you really build a temple," he said, "I shall give you either one of the two marble images of Lord Buddha kept in the pilgrims' rest house at Kusinagar. You may make your choice." "I shall surely build a temple," I replied. The Guru stayed for about a month visiting all the places in the Kathmandu valley, and returned to Kusinagar.

I began building a temple with some money I had accumulated from the sale of 2000 copies of *Gyanmala* and donations from various people. I had also Rs.2600/- from the sale of a shop located at Maru. It was donated by Anagarika Vishakha to the Sangha. I also used Rs.600/- for the construction of the temple. With the balance of Rs.2000/-, I paid a debt of Rs.900/- incurred earlier at Anandakuti and the balance of Rs.1100/- was spent for the roof.

Then I went to Kusinagar to fetch the image of Lord Buddha. It was quite big and not easy at all to transport it all the way to Kathmandu. When I reached Bhimphedi with the image at last I received a message that I had better not return to Kathmandu. No one knew the reason but the monks in Kathmandu were being detained and questioned by the government. The news only made me eager to reach Kathmandu at once. So I cancelled the transportation of the image, for which payment had already been made to the porters. I came in all haste early in the morning the next day and arrived at Balambu.

## Expulsion of The Monks

The next day when I arrived at Anandakuti I was told that the monks were to be taken to the Maharaja the same day. No one knew exactly what was happening. They were taken to Singha Durbar<sup>64</sup> in the morning. I also went with them. The nuns were made to stand in a row and the monks formed another row. Then the Hajuriya General<sup>65</sup> arrived and a guard of honour was presented to him. When he was informed that I had also arrived along with other monks, he said, "Well, it seems that they could travel during the monsoon retreat. If they won't listen, send the men beyond Chisapanigarhi, and let the women go after the monsoon retreat." He singled out the monk Pancha. "Keep him in jail," We thought it was the Maharaja's order, but later on I found it was not true.

We came from Singha Durbar to Kindol under police escort. We took our meal and had porters carry our bedding and baggage. Then we were taken from one office to another- the Police Station, the Kotwali at Pulan Bhansar and Chaparsi Office at Bhotahiti and escorted out of the town by the police.<sup>66</sup> Many people saw us off as we were sent into exile. We heard various comments, but there was no sorrow in my mind and none of the monks were crestfallen. The lay followers, both men and women, were waiting for us at Kalimati, and they arranged a car to take us to Thankot, from where they turned back.

We stayed overnight at the village and climbed Chandragiri the next morning. As my legs began to trouble me, I arranged for a porter to carry me in a basket. There was a slight drizzle and I had to hold an umbrella over my head. About midway up the pass a lay follower of Majipat named Kunja Bahadur came in a hurry to meet us. He was deeply



touched by our exile and gave way to tears. Seeing him sobbing loudly I was deeply moved and I tried to console him and finally he turned back. We stopped at the pass for a while and had tea. The policemen escorted us to Chisapanigarhi, from where they returned after handling us over to the *Hakim*.

### **On The Move Again**

We stayed at Dwarika Prasad Manandhar's house at Bhimpheedi. The next day we went to Raxaul from where some headed for Nautanwa while others went to Calcutta or Kalimpong. Subodhananda, Pragyarashmi and I left for Kusinagar, where we told our Guru Chandramani Mahasthavir what had happened to us.

Meanwhile, Maniharsha Sahu arrived at Kusinagar. He was worried that the nuns would have no place to stay when they were expelled from Nepal. So, we decided to make some small thatched huts for the nuns, some of whom had already arrived at Kusinagar. "How much would it cost to make a camp?" he asked. "Perhaps 3000 to 4000 rupees," I said. "Then I shall give you 4000 rupees," he replied.

After the monsoon retreat we went to Sarnath. Maniharsha Sahu and others also came there and in a meeting<sup>67</sup> the Dharmodaya Sabha was founded with Chandramani Mahasthavir as Chairman. At the same time Maniharsha Sahu gave me 4000 rupees for the construction of a nuns' camp at Kusinagar and he returned to Kalimpong. I still had a balance of 2000 rupees. So, I had altogether 6000 rupees with me. Before my own departure from Sarnath, I left 3000 rupees with U. Kitima Baba and took the balance with me. We purchased 50,000 bricks and later Chandramani Guru ordered 100,000 more. He said that any surplus bricks could be sold. However, something went

wrong about the purchase of the land and we could not build the camp.

As the scheme went wrong, I went to Kalimpong and stayed at Bhajuratna Sahu's place at the 11<sup>th</sup> mile and explained to him how the scheme had failed. It occurred to me that instead of getting involved in the matter, it would be better if I went to Duyu in Bhutan and spent some time in meditation. The Sahu agreed with my plan. He said: "That's all right. I shall go myself to build the pilgrims' rest house. You can go where you like. You are wise to do so. If you wish to go to Lhasa, I shall provide you with food as long as I live. Please don't worry." "Many, many thanks to you," I said and handed over to him the 3000 rupees that I had with me and told him about an equal amount left with U. Kitima Baba at Sarnath.

Then, with the idea of spending some time again in Bhutan where I had stayed before my journey to China, I left Kalimpong. The Sahu's *khayama* accompanied me as far as Phari in Tibet, where another employee named Muditadhar supplied me with all my needs. By mere chance my younger son, Triratna, also arrived there from Lhasa. He had been left in Ceylon with his brother Aniruddha. After three years, something went wrong between the two and he returned to Calcutta. I came to learn of it from a letter from his maternal uncle Mahadhar Sahu. I had thought it would be unwise to have Triratna return to Kathmandu and so I had written to him to go to Lhasa to my elder brother. Since then, I had seen him only once in Lhasa, and now after so many years I was meeting him at Phari. He stayed for a week there and left for Kalimpong. After a fortnight, I too went to Parodzong and thence to Duyu..

I went back to the Chucyasri monastery and spent four months in the same place in the forest, where everybody

took care of me as before. After wandering about for a week or so, I went to the Pambu who had helped me previously, and lived as his guest for four days. Then I returned to Phari and stayed for a week. Thence I went to Pasang Temba, Pandatsang's clerk, at Dhomopipithan, with a letter from Maniharsha Sahu. Pandatsang had also invited me to his place. He had become a *Bada Hakim* of Dhomo since my previous visit to Kalimpong.

Pasang Temba told me to choose a suitable place for myself and that he would take care of the rest. I told him of my preference for a hut in the forests where it was peaceful and where wood and water were available. Pasang Temba's brother said that he would think about it and he went to Pandatsang and told him: "Bhikkhu Dharmaloka has arrived and he wishes to stay in a lonely place. Where can he stay?" "There is a lama of Kham staying since long. Find out from him where he can be put up," Pandatsang instructed his man, who then made inquiries and heard of a vacant house belonging to one Dhomo named Tsungi. The man gave his permission at once and said that I could take the key from the resident lama. Pasang Temba's brother then came to me and said, "When do you wish to go?" "Tomorrow," I replied. But he said, "Wait, let me first send someone to see if there is fuel wood. You can go a few days later."

He sent a servant to cut some trees if there was no wood and to check if there was anything else I might need. The servant came back with the information that there was adequate wood and the lama had many utensils. A day later I went to take a look. The lama said that I need not bring anything. He also showed me the house. It was a peaceful place and I was happy. The spring lay at some distance, and one had to go to the lama's place for water. In winter, however, one had to go farther to another hill for water. Four days later, I went to live at the place.

The lama gave me all necessary pots and pans, a large cauldron to store water and a tin can to fetch it. So, I lived there happily. Once a week I fetched water. There was no worry that anyone would disturb me and I had enough provisions. At the end of the month Pandatsang sent me a sack of rice.

After a pleasant month, it began to get cold. I had with me a bale of *nabu* and a furred blanket from Phari. When the snow began to fall heavily Pasang Temba's sister-in-law dyed the *nabu* a yellow colour and brought it to me. The lama made me an inner vest and a jacket with sleeves and a cap of the *nabu*. Some Dhomo people often left alms for me at the lama's place, which I picked up once a week along with my letters.

As Syasima post office was near enough my correspondence went on with everybody. At Duyu, where I had stayed before, there was no question at all of receiving any letter. Now, I had no dearth of news about Nepal. I learnt that Maharaja Juddha Shumshere had resigned<sup>68</sup> and he was succeeded by Padma Shumshere, and that Amritananda was going to take Narada Mahasthavir and others from Ceylon to Nepal. Then came the news of the arrival of Narada Mahasthavir, Priyadarshi Mahasthavir, Amritananda, Dr. Ratna Surya and Professor Aryapal, in a delegation with the sacred relics of Lord Buddha. These relics had been found in the ancient stupa at Anuradhapura when it was renovated some time before.

Eventually a letter came in which Amritananda suggested that I return to Kalimpong in order to come back to Nepal as soon as I get a signal.

So I came out of the jungle and after spending two days at Pasang Temba's, I was on the road again. A day and

half later, I found a good road being built from Dhomo along the mountain ridge which I had not seen before. I was told that the road would link Gangtok with Phari. The new road made it easier to travel and, in four days, I arrived at Gangtok. The next day a car took me to Kalimpong.

### **Back at Anandakuti Vihara**

Soon after my arrival at Kalimpong, I received a letter asking me to return to Kathmandu. With the arrival of Narada Mahasthavir in Nepal, the image of Lord Buddha, which I had left at Bhimphedi, was taken to Anandakuti and installed in the temple. Maharaja Padma Shumshere had also told Amritananda that the monks could return to Nepal. I received a telegram and came at once to Raxaul. However, no official notice had been received at Birgunj *Goswara* and I had to wait for some days. It was the month of July and used as I was to the cold Himalayas, I found it too hot and I was beginning to think of returning to Kalimpong. Then a telephone call came and the Birgunj *Goswara* issued me the travel permit. At Bhimphedi, I received another call to hasten back, but I had to stay overnight.

The next day,<sup>69</sup> I arrived in Kathmandu. I was welcomed by some lay followers. As I was very tired, I rested for a short while at Chauni before arriving at Anandakuti at about 7 o'clock in the evening. I found the vihara brightly lit and a number of lay followers with bright, smiling faces were gathered there. I stepped in the temple, and in my mind, I gave a great many thanks to the lay followers who had put up the image of Lord Buddha.

The house that I had left with a thatch roof had been turned into a nice-looking building with a verandah. I gave many thanks again to the lay followers who had made it all possible. I was very happy that these good people had saved

the vihara from vanishing and turned it into a heavenly place. I had left the temple unfinished. I learnt that it had to be torn down and rebuilt from the foundation. I had not imagined the temple would be so impressive. I was never so happy before. I went before the image and paid my homage to Lord Buddha. In the bluish electric light the image of Lord Buddha made a lasting impression upon me. I offered thanks to Maharaja Padma Shumsher also. Then, I went to Narada Mahasthvir and paid my respects to him. He was very pleased. "I am just waiting for you," he said, "It is good that you have come." An exchange of news then followed. My happiness knew no bounds to see everybody happy at the great achievement.

Many people came to Anandakuti Vihara to see me the next day. They had almost given up all hope for the return of monks. Now, they were so happy to see me once more among them. Great was the kindness and compassion of Narada Mahasthvir! But for him, true Buddhism would not have returned to Nepal so soon.

**The End**

Dhamma.Digital

## GLOSSARY

(Hin.= Hindi; Nep.= Nepali; New.= Newari;  
Pal. =Pali; Skt.= Sanskrit; Tib. = Tibetan)

- adambara (Skt.) - show; heresy
- anna (Hin.) - a monetary unit common to both India and Nepal consisting of 4 paisa. In Nepal, 25 annas made 1 rupee; in India, 16 annas made 1 rupee.
- astamibrata (Skt.)- a religious fast undertaken on the eighth day of the lunar fortnight
- Bada Hakim (Nep.) - the chief officer in a district
- banja (New.) - merchant's assistant; a small trader
- bhante (Pal.) - a Buddhist monk; a honorific word used in addressing a monk of the Theravada tradition.
- bhikkhu (Skt.) - a Buddhist monk in the Theravada tradition .
- bhulaya (New.) - a kind of raw silk cloth made by the tribesmen of Assam in India.
- bhut (New.) - ghost
- bodhichi (Skt.) - a kind of seed used to make rosary.
- byaha (New.) - an offering of fruits and sweets by relatives to a bereaved family.
- chang (Tib.) - a drink of fermented grain.
- chuba (Tib.) - a long, loose Tibetan garment.
- dagam (Tib.) - a thick, cotton quilt.
- dana (Skt.) - alms
- data (Skt.) - a benefactor
- dharani (Skt.) - a hymn in Sanskrit language in praise of Buddhist deities.
- dharma (Skt.) - the teaching of the Buddha; religion; duty; faith; natural law; a meritorious act
- dharmasala (Hin.) - a pilgrims' rest house
- dhayan (Tib.) - a large Chinese silver coin

- dhoti (Hin.) - a long sheet of cloth used to wrap around the lower part of the body by men in India and Nepal.
- dzong (Tib.) - a fortress
- fitun (Tib.) - a pearl (see note 58)
- gelong (Tib.) - a monk
- ghee (Nep.) - clarified butter, a great favourite among the Nepalese
- Goswara (Nep.) - district administrative office.
- gurju (New.) - an honorific title for a Buddhist priest.
- guru (Skt.) - teacher
- gyakar (Tib.) - an Indian
- hakim (Nep.) - an officer in charge of a department
- ji (Hin.) - a suffix to a name to denote respect
- karma (Skt.) - action; fate
- khata (Tib.) - a ceremonial scarf
- khayama (Tib.) - a mule caravan
- kothi (New.) - a business house
- kudrog (Tib.) - an officer, a nobleman
- lakh (Hin.) - one hundred thousand.
- mahaparitrana (Pal.) - a night-long recitation of Buddhist scriptures in the Pali language by monks on special occasions.
- mahasthvir (Pal.) - a title granted to a senior monk after 20 years of monkhood in the Theravada tradition.
- mandala (Skt.) - a symbolic circular diagramme that illustrates religious ideas
- mandap (Pal.) - a platform
- manju (Skt.) - beautiful
- mantra (Skt.) - a charm; Sanskrit words or syllables to express the quintessence of energy and uttered to conjure good and often ill effects.
- mohar (Nep.) - a silver coin worth half a rupee



- nabu (Tib.) - a kind of thick woollen cloth used to make Tibetan garments
- naga (Skt.) - a mythical serpent benevolent to mankind.
- nagaraja (Skt.) - the king of the mythical serpents.
- nayabu (Tib.) - landlord
- nechan (Tib.) - a stopping place; a lodging for the night
- nirvana (Skt.) - the attainment of absolute peace and happiness; the final liberation or goal sought in Buddhism; the passing away of a Buddha.
- norbu (Tib.) - jewel
- nyuni (Tib.) - a fast undertaken for mental and spiritual development in the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism.
- Om Mane Padme Hum (Skt.) - literally, the jewel in the lotus; the most popular form of prayer among the Tibetans. Also popular in Nepal.
- paisa (Hin.) - a monetary unit of the lowest denomination common to both India and Nepal, 100 paisa making 1 rupee.
- pambu (Tib.) - an official
- paritrana (Pal.) - a summary recitation of Buddhist scriptures in Pali language by monks on different occasions.
- pata (New.) - a long, narrow strip of cloth fixed to the pinnacle of a temple and reaching to the bottom or further away, as an offering to the deity enshrined therein.
- puja (Skt.) - worship; religious ceremony
- rakshas (Skt.) - a fearsome giant possessing great strength and demonic nature.
- rupee (Hin.) - (abbrev. Rs.) the standard monetary unit common to both India and Nepal.
- sadhu (Hin.) - a holy man in the Hindu tradition.
- sahu (New.) - a merchant; an honorific title for Newar merchants.
- sangha (Skt.) - the brotherhood of Buddhist monks.

- sari (Hin.) - a long sheet of cloth used to wrap around the lower part of the body by women in India and Nepal.
- shila (Pal.) - moral laws; vows
- sho (Tib.)- a dice-like game
- sima (Pal.)- a special building in which the rituals of the conversion of a layman to a monk takes place.
- sramanera (Pal.) - a novice in the Theravada tradition, who keeps ten vows, e.g., not to kill; not to steal; to remain celibate; not to lie; not to drink intoxicants; not to take meals after noon; not to witness dancing; not to wear adornments; not to seek high seats; and not to take silver or gold coins.
- sri (Skt.) - grace; a honorific prefix to a person's name.
- sthavir (Pal.) - a title granted to a monk after 10 years of monkhood in the Theravada tradition.
- stotra (Skt.) - a hymn in Sanskrit language.
- stupa (Skt.) - a dome-shaped Buddhist temple.
- sutra (Pal.) - a hymn in Sanskrit language.
- Subba (Nep.) - a middle-ranking civil official.
- syame (Tib.) - a boat with a wooden horse head at the prow.
- thanka (Tib.) - a scroll of cloth depicting gods or religious designs.
- theba (Tib.) - a muleteer
- tsampa (Tib.) - barley flour, the staple food in Tibet.
- upasampada (Pal.) - higher ordination that makes a sramanera, after ten years of novitiate, a bhikkhu.
- vihara (Skt.) - a Buddhist monastery.

## NOTES

1. Local people in towns and villages organized story-telling sessions, in which Buddhist priests told stories from the life of the Buddha while the Brahmins used the vast Hindu mythology to regale and instruct householders.
2. Calcutta was a commercial and industrial center and the seaport nearest to Nepal. More than a dozen Nepalese merchants, specially those connected with the trade in Tibet, had their *kothi* (business house) in Calcutta. The year of the author's visit was mentioned as 1977 Vikram Era (V.E./1921 A.D., apparently a printing mistake, for a hand-written note (in the possession of his son, Ven. Bhikkhu Aniruddha Mahasthvir) had the correct year as 1970 V.E./1914.
3. It is based on a Hindu myth popular in India and Nepal.
4. For centuries Nepalese merchants had gone to Lhasa to trade. The year of the author's visit was given as 1978 V.E./ 1922 A.D., another printing mistake. The hand-written note had the year 1973 V.E./1917 A.D.
5. The legendary founder of Nepal. Manjusri is a Bodhisattva who is the embodiment of wisdom in the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism. He came from Pancasirsha Parbat, the Mountain with Five Peaks, in China and turned a lake into the valley of Nepal. A modern publication from the People's Republic of China, *Buddhists in New China*, edited by the Chinese Buddhist Association, 1956, has the following description: "Mt. Wutai Pancasirsha in Shansi province, one of the four famous mountains revered by Buddhists in China, is the holy place of Manjusri Bodhisattva." The author has mentioned "Jambeyan" and "Ripuchvegna" as the Tibetan names for Manjusri and Pancasirsha Parbat respectively. "Wen Shu" is the Chinese name for Manjusri. A guide book by Zhong Xin and Wei Lingwen, translated into English by He Fei, has a description of Pancasirsha Parbat as follows: "Wu Tai Shan has five high terraces in the midst of mountain ranges, surrounded by white clouds. The "terraces" - so called, are mountain peaks that have spacious and flat ground. They are Wang Hai Feng (East Terrace), Gua Yue Feng (West Terrace), Jin Xiu Feng (South Terrace), Ye Dou Geng (North Terrace), and Cui Ye Feng (Central Terrace). Wu Tai Shan earns its

name on account of the shape of the five peaks which are like terraces piled high with earth.”

6. An ancient vihara located at the foot of the Swayambhu Hill. It had fallen into ruins for long.
7. The year of the author's return to Kathmandu was 1977 V.E./1921 A.D., yet another mistake, which was corrected in the hand-written note as 1981 V.E./1925 A.D.
8. “The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Slokas” is one of the most profound texts in Mahayana Buddhism. Written in Sanskrit, it is recited by many individuals in their homes or in the viharas at regular times.
9. A member of the Buddhist community, to which the Buddha himself belonged.
10. Swayambhu is the holiest and oldest Buddhist shrine in the Kathmandu valley.
11. A Hindu festival in honour of Lord Shiva. It attracted a large number of Indian pilgrims, who were allowed to stay one week in the Kathmandu Valley. According to Rahul Sankrityayana (*Vangmaya, Part I, Travels, 1994*), he arrived in Kathmandu on 9 March, 1929.
12. The author had given the name as Damodar Baba. It was a printing mistake. All other publications had it as Ramodar Baba.
13. Named after the famous ancient seat of Buddhist learning in north India.
14. A Buddhist ethnic group living in the hills around the Kathmandu valley.
15. Apparently the author had reached the end of his tether to wish to spend his last days in a public house by the side of a river.
16. A British observer, Dr. H.A Oldfield, who lived in Kathmandu from 1850 to 1863, had left a dismal picture of Buddhism: “It is now in the last stage of its existence; it is rapidly being supplanted by Hinduism; and before the lapse of another century, the religion of Buddha - after enduring for upwards of two thousand years - will, in all probability, be as extinct in Nepal as in the plains of Hindustan.” (*Sketches from Nepal, 1880*) Most Nepalese were familiar only with certain aspects of the Mahayana tradition, such as rituals and the Buddha's

- life stories, for the esoteric Vajrayana was the exclusive privilege of the Vajracharya, the priests and scholars among the Newars. Hence, it was hoped that the introduction of Theravada would bring about a greater awareness of the Buddha's teaching and a more open society.
17. It is used as a ritual object in temples.
  18. The year of the author's visit to Ceylon was mentioned as 1982 V.E./1926 A.D. yet another printing mistake. The handwritten note had it as 1985 V.E./1929 A.D.
  19. Some groups of Newars, the prominent being the Tuladhar, Kansakar and Tamrakar, made up the Uraya community. Traditionally the Tuladhars are businessmen, specially in the Lhasa trade, while the others are craftsmen. The author is a Tuladhar
  20. The Newar Buddhists are divided into a number of castes and the law forbids interdining among the various communities and of drinking water touched by those at the bottom of the hierarchy.
  21. A common name for the Vajracharya.
  22. It is a suburb of Lalitpur, where the residence of Juddha Shumshere, then the Commander-in-Chief, was located. Besides his duties in the army, the Commander-in-Chief was also the head of the civil administration.
  23. On 21 Kartik, 1988 V.E./21 Kartik (October -November), 1932 A.D.
  24. It is an old custom for a subject or servant to respectfully place a one-rupee coin on the ground before his liege lord to express gratitude for a favour done to him.
  25. On 28 Kartik, 1988 V.E./28 Kartik (October - November), 1932 A.D.
  26. A legendary person who sold himself in order to give alms to a Brahmin.
  27. In the year 1989 V.E. /1933 A.D. There is no mention of the day and month.
  28. Higher doctrine which deals with Buddhist philosophy.
  29. A collection of Buddhist texts according to the Theravada tradition.

30. A large bell installed in front of the Hanuman Dhoka palace in Kathmandu by Rana Bahadur Shah, King of Nepal, 1777-1798 A.D.
31. Many people belonging to different ethnic groups in the hills emigrated to India and Burma during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
32. A large number of Nepalese men from the hills collectively called Gurkhas were recruited into the army by the British Government in India. Some of them were also stationed in other parts of the British empire.
33. When five Newars became monks according to the Tibetan tradition, a law was hastily made forbidding them to do so, and they were expelled from Nepal in 1924 for refusing to abide by the law.
34. Where the caste law forbade cooked rice, beaten rice was allowed by custom and law.
35. On 1 September 1932.
36. A small fish made of stone marks a spot in the middle of the square in Asan, Kathmandu, where a live fish was said to have fallen from the sky as prophesied by an astrologer in ancient times.
37. In the year 1991 V.E./1935 A.D., according to a note by the author. There is no mention of day and month.
38. January-February.
39. According to rule, no monk shall eat the main meal of the day after noon.
40. Mentioned by Rahul Sankrityana (*Rahul Vangmaya, Part I, Jivanyatra* (Travels)).
41. Mentioned by Rahul Sankrityayana (*Rahul Vangmaya, Part I, Jivanyatra* (Travels)). Chaitra (March-April) is the last month in the Nepalese calendar.
42. One of ten social and religious associations of the Newars in Lhasa. Every Newar, reportedly 1,000 in number, belonged to one or other *pala*.
43. It is a custom to go round a temple or sacred site clockwise as a mark of respect.
44. Kesharatna Tuladhar, who was older than the author and had a shop of his own in Lhasa, in which he sold *nabu* cloth.

45. Buddhist monks do not travel for three months from the full moon of Asad (June-July) to the full moon of Aswin (September-October), the third and sixth months respectively. They stay in one place for meditation and other religious activities.
46. On Marga Sudi 2, 1992 V.E. i.e., the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the dark half of Marga, (November-December) 1992 V.E./1936 A.D.
47. The author has erroneously named the island of Gangasagar as Rameshwar, which is a holy site on the sea shore in the south of India.
48. The valley, 20 miles long and 15 miles broad, is encircled by mountains, 8000 to 10,000 feet high from the sea level.
49. The name and address was given as Kwan Pheri Hi Jvan Chaila Hai, Shop No.11.
50. The name of the lake was Nagabasa. However, the author had called it Kalidaha, a legendary lake in which Lord Krishna sported himself, according to Hindu mythology.
51. A scholar of Banaras in India who came to Kathmandu on his way to China to seek an explanation of a passage in a religious text from Manjusri, who happened to be in Kathmandu then and explained to him the text, after which he was given the name Gyanasri, the 'Knowledgeable One.'
52. A mythical river that turned anything that fell into it into stone.
53. A land of creatures with terrible faces.
54. The Hindu goddess of learning, who is often identified in Nepal with Manjusri, who is an embodiment of Wisdom in the Mahayan tradition.
55. In 1792 A.D.
56. An image of the Vajrayana tradition.
57. A festival in Kathmandu, named after Indra, the king of the gods in heaven, which is held in the month of Bhadra (August-September).
58. Ven. Bhikkhu Aniruddha Mahasthavir: "On one occasion when the Dukpa Lama was staying near the shrine of Manjusri at Parbatsthan in Swayambhu Hill, he undertook a fast for seven days and conducted a great puja. At this the gods were very pleased and they caused small pearls to fall

within a small wooded area where the Lama was staying. The little, white balls that came down from the sky were called 'fitun' in Tibetan. When a couple of the pearls were kept in a bottle, to which a perfume is added, and held in reverence and worshipped, hundreds of smaller but similar pearls appeared after some time. If there was only one pearl, none others appeared. I too had a couple of the pearls, which I kept immersed in perfume, in a small bottle. I had kept the bottle hidden in the statue of the Buddha in the temple while I was staying at Lumbini. Later, I found the bottle stolen. I have heard that if the pearl was not held in reverence, it melted away like snow in the sun. Some people in Kathmandu may still possess these pearls."

59. Swanya Punhi (The Full Moon of the Flower), as the Buddha's Birthday is known among the Newars, was traditionally observed by individuals but public celebrations were unknown until the 1940's. It became an official holiday in the 1950's.
60. A goddess of the Vajrayana tradition.
61. October-November.
62. A very popular story about Prince Vessantara who gave away his wife and children in *dana* to a Brahman.
63. There used to be a curfew during the night in Kathmandu Valley until the 1950's announced and lifted by firing a gun.
64. The official residence of the Prime Minister of Nepal, then the Maharaja Juddha Shumshere.
65. The General who served as the Secretary to the Prime Minister, a position held by his eldest son, then Bahadur Shumshere.
66. On Shrawan sukla 10, 2000 V.E. i.e., the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the light half of Shrawan (July-August), 1944 A.D.
67. On Sakimana Punhi in the year 2000 V.E./31 November 1944 A.D.
68. On 29 November 1945.
69. On Jestha sukla 6, 2003 V.E. i.e., the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the light half of Jestha (May-June), 1947 A.D.



## PLACE NAMES

### Bhutan

Chube  
Dhomo  
Dhomopipithan  
Duyu  
Paro dzong

### Burma

Akyab  
Irrawady River  
Kyaikkami  
Mandalay  
Maymyo  
Moulmein  
Pegu  
Rangoon

### Ceylon

Anuradhapura  
Colombo  
Ravankot

### China

Blue Peak  
Chai-tau  
Chyuhwasan  
Dechan  
Dhunhasi  
Futhosan  
Green Peak  
Hangchou  
Hupe, Wuthan  
Nanhe  
Nanking  
Peking  
Peshingchau  
Red Peak  
Shanghai

Tachindo  
Thyankin  
Tingsien  
White Peak  
Womisan  
Wu Tai Shan  
Yellow Peak

Europe

Hongkong

India

Assam

Banaras

Bettiah

Bombay

Buddha Gaya, where Siddhartha became enlightened,  
one of the four most important sites of Buddhist  
pilgrimage.

Calcutta

College Square, a street in Calcutta, where the  
Buddhist association, The Maha Bodhi Society  
founded by Angarika Dharmapala, is located.

Dewalgiri Godown

Gangasagar

Gangtok

Harrison Road

Howrah

Kalimpong

Kusinagar, where the Buddha attained nirvana,  
one of the four most important sites of Buddhist  
pilgrimage.

Madras

Mandapam

Nautanwa, the nearest railway terminus in India for  
Lumbini in Nepal.

Punjab

Ramjidas Jetia Lane (Bada Bazar), where the  
Calcutta office of Sahu Bhajuratna Maniharsha  
Jyoti is located.

Raxaul, the nearest railway terminus in India for

Kathmandu valley.

Sarnath, where the Buddha first preached to five disciples, one of the four most important sites of Buddhist pilgrimage.

Shravasti

Siligari

Tharughat

Japan

Mongolia

Nepal

Amlekhgunj, railway terminus

Anandakuti, a vihara founded by Dharmaloka in the woods in the Swayambhu Hill in Kathmandu.

Asan, a market place in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Baghdwar, the source of the Bagmati river on the northern side of Siphuco or Sivapuri mountain in Kathmandu Valley.

Balambu, a village in the southern part of Kathmandu valley.

Bhaktapur, one of the three main cities in Kathmandu valley.

Bhimphedi, a village at the foot of the Mahabharat range on the main highway from Kathmandu valley to the south.

Bhotahity, a street in Kathmandu city.

Birgunj, a town in the Terai plains near the border with India; a railway terminus and the location of a Goswara office, the administrative headquarters of the district.

Boudha, with the largest stupa in Nepal, it is a center of pilgrimage for Tibetans.

Chandragiri, the mountain to the south of the Kathmandu valley, through which lies the main highway to India.

Chikanmuga a street in the southern part of Kathmandu city.

- Chisapanigarhi, a fort at the top of the Mahabharat range to the south of the Kathmandu valley on the main road to the Terai plains and India. A day's walk from Kathmandu city, it is the main gateway and check point to the valley.
- Chitlang, a village in the Kulikhani valley between Chandragiri and Chisapanigarhi pass to the south of the Kathmandu valley
- Chauni, a parade ground of the Nepalese army at the foot of Swayambhu hill.
- Chhetrapati, a street in the northern part of Kathmandu city.
- Duche, a lane between Kel Tole and Asan in the central part of Kathmandu.
- Hanuman Dhoka, the old royal palace of Kathmandu and the area around it.
- Helambu, an area in the mountains north of Kathmandu valley, inhabited by Sherpas and Tamangs.
- Indrachowk, a market square in the central part of Kathmandu city.
- Janabaha, a Buddhist vihara in the central part of Kathmandu city.
- Jawalakhel, a suburb in the western part of Lalitpur or Patan city in Kathmandu valley.
- Kalimati, a locality in the southern part of Kathmandu city.
- Kalmochan, an area on the bank of the Bagmati river in Kathmandu city.
- Kathmandu, the capital city located in the valley historically known as Nepal.
- Kindol (Kimdol), an ancient Buddhist vihara located at the foot of Swayambhu hill which had fallen into ruins and was rebuilt in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Kwahiti, a street in the southern part of Kathmandu city.
- Lagan, a street in the southern part of Kathmandu city.
- Lalitpur (Patan), it is the second most important city in Kathmandu valley.
- Lhugha, a street in the southern part of Kathmandu city.
- Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha Shakyamuni in the southern plains of Nepal, one of the four most important sites of Buddhist pilgrimage.
- Mahabaudha, a locality in the central part of Kathmandu city.
- Majipat, a street in the southern part of Kathmandu city.

Manichuda, a sacred site for Buddhists in the hills north east of Kathmandu valley.

Maru, a street in the southern part of Kathmandu city.

Nagarjun (Jamacho), a hill in Kathmandu valley, sacred to the Buddhists.

Namobuddha, a sacred site for Buddhists in the hills to the east of Kathmandu valley.

Nepal Valley, the original name of Kathmandu Valley.

Neta, a street in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Nasanani, a courtyard in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Nayatwa, a lane near Asan

Nheokha, a street in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Pancasirsha Parbat, the Newari name of Wu Tai Shan in China.

Parbatsthan, a spur of the Swayambhu hill, where a shrine to Manjusri is located.

Pulan Bhansar, a street in the southern part of Kathmandu city.

Sankhu, a town to the east of Kathmandu city.

Sighah, a street in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Swayambhu, a hill in Kathmandu valley, where the oldest and most sacred Buddhist stupa is located.

Sundarijal, a hill in the north of Kathmandu valley.

Tamsipah, a road that leads to the Bagmati river in the west of Kathmandu city.

Tanlachhi, a street in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Tarangmarang, a small village in the hills to the north of Kathmandu en route to Helambu.

Tarkyaghyang, a Sherpa village in Helambu.

Tenga, a street in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Thankot, a village at the foot of the Chandragiri hill on the main highway to the south of the Kathmandu valley.

Thimi, a town between Kathmandu and Bhaktapur cities.

Trisuli, a river in the hills to the west within a day's walking distance from Kathmandu valley.

Tunche, a lane in Neta.

Tundikhel, a large open space in Kathmandu city, where the army drills and parades.

Vishnumati, a river that flows to the west of Kathmandu city.

Yetkha Baha, a vihara in the central part of Kathmandu city.

Penang

Siam

Singapore

Tibet

Amdo

Champaling, where an annual trade fair is held by Newar merchants.

Chitiso

Chusu

Dhanyaju

Dhayerwa

Dhomopemu

Dhuina

Dhunkar

Drepung, a monastic town.

Ganden, a monastic town.

Gyanchi, a trade center

Gyarong

Imalung

Jhokhambu

Jhyang

Kalapatan

Keyrung, a town near the border with Nepal

Kham

Kongo

Kuti, a town near the border with Nepal

Langur Huthan

Lhasa, the capital city.

Lhulu

Nagachi

Nanisya

Nathu La

Nhinhupetung

Phari

Phorankha

Sakye, a monastic town

Samye, a monastic town

Sera, a monastic town

## PERSONAL NAMES

Aggadhamma, Sramanera

Amritananda, Bhikkhu (1918 - 1990), who played a leading role in the Theravada movement in Nepal.

Ananda Kausalyayana, Bhadant (1905-1988), an eminent Buddhist monk of India.

Aniruddha, Bhikkhu (1915 - ), who became a sramanera in Ceylon before his father Das Ratna Tuladhar became one.

Aryapal, Prof.

Batulinani, a very devoted housewife who gave the seed money for the construction of Anandakuti Vihara.

Bhajuratna (Kansakar) of Kathmandu better known as Syamukapu (White Cap) in Tibetan circles, who made a name for himself in Kalimpong and throughout Tibet as a great merchant and benefactor whose door was always open to all monks.

Bhaktilal, a shopkeeper of Kathmandu.

Bhim Shumshere (Jung Bahadur Rana), Maharaja, Prime Minister of Nepal from 1 November 1929 to 1 September 1932.

Buddharatna, of Lalipur.

Chakkhapala Mahapandita

Chandra Bahadur (Thapa), Major, the chief of police in Kathmandu for many years, notorious for his heavy-handedness.

Chandramani, U. Mahasthavir (1876-1972), A Burmese monk who spent his life in the restoration of Kusinagar as a place of pilgrimage. He was the guru of many Nepalese monks.

Chikaji (Tuladhar), of Kathmandu, known as the only merchant who sold liquid gold in Lhasa.

Chittadhar (Tuladhar), of Kathmandu who made a name for himself as a poet and writer in Nepalbhasa.

Danmaya, who later became known as the nun Anagarika Visakha.

Dhamdur (Sherpa), of Tarkyaghyang in Helambu, who played host to Rahul Sankrityayana in 1929 during his first visit to Tibet.

Dharmaditya Dharmacharya, the name assumed by Jagatman Vaidya of Lalipur during his campaign for the revival of Buddhism in Nepal in the 1940's.

Dharmaloka Sthavir, Bhikkhu, the Author.

Dharmaman, a renowned Tuladhar of Kathmandu, both for his riches and piety, a benefactor to monks and scholars, with a well-known business house in Lhasa.

Dharmananda

Dharmapala, Anagarika, of Ceylon, who spent his life for the cause of Buddhism in India; founder of the Mahabodhi Society and the Dharmarajika Vihara in Calcutta.

Dharmapali

Dhomo Rimpoche (Dhomodhirimuchi Lama)

Dorje Chope Ghese, a Chinese monk in Tibet, who helped the author on his pilgrimage to Wu Tai Shan.

Dwarikadas (Shrestha), of Kathmandu, a shop keeper.

Dwarika Prasad Manandhar, who had a house and business at Bhimphedi on the main highway to the south and to India, who was a host to the monks.

Fuchi Lama

Gajaratna, the name of Bhikkhu Aniruddha, before he became a samanera.

Gyandevi

Gyanman (Tuladhar), a shop keeper in Kathmandu.

Gyaputsang

Haram, of Kathmandu, who was named Mahapantha when he became a samanera.

Harkhadass (Tuladhar), a brother of Mandas, a shop keeper.

Hastiratna, a middle-level government official, with the title of Bichari.

Jagatratna (Tuladhar), a merchant, distantly related to the author.

Janinda Sthavir, U.

Jogbir Singh (Kansakar), of Kathmandu, businessman, poet and social reformer.

Jogman, Shakya of Kathmandu, who was a banja or employee of Samyek Ratna Tuladhar, stationed in Calcutta.



Juddha Shumshere (Jung Bahadur Rana) Maharaja, Prime Minister of Nepal from 1 September 1932 until his resignation on 29 November 1945.

Karmashila, Bhikkhu

Karunaratna (Tuladhar)

Khezari Babu, of Arakans, Burma, who gave donations for the construction of the first pilgrims' rest house at Kusinagar in 1901.

Kitima Baba, U.

Kulman

Kumar Kashyap, Sramanera

Kunja Bahadur (Ranjitkar), a teacher

Kusheo

Kwan Pheri Hi Jyan Chaila Hai (?)

Laxmi Nani (Tuladhar), a housewife

Mahavir Baba, an Indian who became a monk in Ceylon

and devoted himself to the task of restoring Kusinagar as a site of pilgrimage in the 1890's.

Mahadhammachari

Mahanama, Bhikkhu, see Mohanratna

Mahapantha, see Haram

Mahadhar (Tuladhar), a merchant living in Calcutta, whose sister was married to the author.

Mahapragya Sthavir (Nanikaji Shrestha, 1901-1979), who became a monk in the Tibetan tradition and was expelled from Nepal along with four other monks in 1924.

Maharatna Shakya's son Tshering Tashi

Mahendra Baba

Mahila

Mandas (Tuladhar), a shop keeper

Mandev

Maniharsha (Jyoti Kansakar), son of Bhaju Ratna Kansakar, merchant with business houses in Kathmandu, Kalimpong, Calcutta and Lhasa. A benefactor of many monks.

Manikman (Tuladhar), a shop keeper  
Manjuharsha (Vajracharya), a priest  
Maun, U.  
Mohanratna (Kansakar), who later became well known as the  
monk Mahanama 'Kovida'  
Moti Krishna  
Muditadhar (Tuladhar), a banja of Bhaju Ratna Sahu.  
Nandagopal's son Gyangopal  
Narada Mahasthavir, a renowned monk of Ceylon.  
Ninila, a Tibetan woman who was first the wife of Chikaji Sahu in  
Lhasa and later of the Tibetan mentioned as Kusheo.  
Nyani Daw, U.  
Padma Shumshere (Jung Bahadur Rana), Maharaja, Prime Minister  
of Nepal from December 3, 1945 until his resignation in May,  
1948. (Son of Maharaja Bhim Shumshere)  
Pandatsang, a Tibetan official and merchant  
Pasang Temba  
Pragyananda, Bhikkhu  
Pragyarashmi, Sramanera  
Priyadarshi Mahasthavir  
Purnabir, (Shakya) a merchant of Lalitpur settled in Kalimpong.  
Purnaman  
Purnaman, son of Juman Sahu, a shop keeper  
Rahul Sankrityayana, a renowned scholar of India, who made four  
visits to Tibet in his search for Tibetan texts of Buddhism.  
Rajnath (Pande), an assistant taken by Rahul Sankrityayana to  
Tibet on his second visit to Tibet.  
Ramodar Baba, the name of Rahul Sankrityayana before he  
became a Buddhist.  
Ratnajyoti, Sramanera  
Ratnapali  
Ratna Surya, Dr.  
Samdhen

Sange Dorje  
Sanghapali  
Sanu  
Saptaratna, (Uraya/Tuladhar)  
Serap Dorje, better known as Dukpa Lama, who helped Rahul Sankrityayana to go to Lhasa for the first time.  
Shakya of Thimi  
Shakyananda, a Bhikkhu, of Bhojpur  
Sharanankar, a Ceylonese monk  
Shashanajyoti  
Shigatse Lama, better known as Panchen Lama, the second most important Lama of Tibet.  
Shilprabha  
Siddhiratna (Kansakar)  
Sitaram Chaudhary, a landlord who voluntarily looked after pilgrims in Lumbini.  
Subodhananda Sthavir, Bhikkhu  
Sundila  
To Lun, U.  
Triratna, younger son of Dasratna Tuladhar  
Tsenitsang  
Tshering Norbu  
Tshering Tashi  
Tsuingi  
Tulsiratna (Tuladhar), nephew of the author  
Tuyu Kaji  
Visakha (Anagarika) formerly known as Danmaya  
Wanchuk (Dhomo)  
Yam Lama

## Appendix A

### A Chronology

Name: Das Ratna Tuladhar/Baburam/Baran Sahu/Dharmaloka

Father: Keshasunder Tuladhar

Mother: Bekha Laxmi Tuladhar

Wife: Dibya Laxmi Tuladhar

Sons: Gajaratna, born 1915; Triratna, born 1920

Brother: Kesharatna Tuladhar

- 1890 - Born in Kathmandu. (December )
- 1914 - Surprised to find Singhalese in Calcutta to be normal human beings, not demonic giants as described in the Ramayana.
- 1915 - Birth of first son, Gajaratna. (December 13)
- 1916 - Met Tibetans in Lhasa who claimed to have been to Pancashirsa Parbat (Wu Tai Shan) and seen Mañjusri, the legendary founder of Nepal, and resolved to make a pilgrimage to the sacred mountains in far-away China.
- 1920 - Birth of second son, Triratna.
- Death of wife, Dibyalaxmi, and a visit to Lhasa postponed.
  - Visit to Lhasa with son Gajaratna.(1972 V.S)
- 1925 - Return from Lhasa with son. (1981 V.S.)
- Left home with son and lived at Kindol Vihara. Restoration of the vihara and experiments in religious practices as propounded by Serap Dorje, the Dukpa Lama, which attracted much public attention.
- 1929 - Meeting with Rahul Sankrityayana (then a Hindu holy man named Ramodar Baba) and taking him to Helambu to wait for the Dukpa Lama for his first visit to Lhasa. (April 3-8)
- Visit to Calcutta and Assam for trading.
  - Severe illness and return to Kathmandu.

- Gajaratna succeeded in reaching Ceylon for Buddhist studies and became a sramanera.
  - Visit to Colombo with second son, Triratna, and Mohanratna (who later became the Bhikkhu Mahanama).
- 1931 - Accused of involvement in the so-called "*adambar mat parba*" that preached social reforms and departure from traditional religious practices, which included 11 other persons: Jogbir Singh Kansakar, Karunaratna Tuladhar, Siddhiratna Kansakar, Manikman Tuladhar, Dharmaman Tuladhar, Khadgaraj Tuladhar, Manjuharsha Vajracharya, Mandas Tuladhar, Harkhadas Tuladhar, Chittadhar Tuladhar "Hridaya" and Laxminani Tuladhar (Anagarika Dhammabati).
- 1932 - The Maharaja, Prime Minister Bhim Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, pronounced judgement on those involved in the "*adambar mat parba*" (21 Kartic, 1988 V.E.). The author was fined Rs. 50/- for publication and distribution of a pamphlet in Nepalbhasa (Newari) seeking a "handful" of rice from each individual for a public religious function at Kindol Vihara, while the others were expelled from the Kathmandu Valley for a couple of days but recalled and released after giving their commitment in writing that they would not engage in similar activities in the future. (28 Kartik, 1988 V.E.)
- 1933 - Left for a pilgrimage in India with five young women, and with a letter of recommendation from U. Chandramani Mahasthavir in Kusinagar, went on to Burma, where the women were left to pursue their own quest for a life of religion in the Theravada tradition.
- Initiation as a sramanera at Kusinagar by U Chandramani Mahasthavir and change of name to Dharmaloka/Dhammaloka.
  - A second visit to Burma with U Chandramani Mahasthavir (1989 V.E.)
- 1934 - Higher ordination (upasampada) at Sarnath by U Chandramani Mahasthavir to become a full-fledged bhikkhu. (Poush, 1990 V.E.)

- Visited Kalimpong en route to Lhasa with Rahul Sankrityayana, departing 22 April and arriving 19 May in Lhasa.
  - Pilgrimages to various sites in Tibet and unsuccessful efforts to go to China direct from Lhasa.  
Left Lhasa with letters of introduction from a Chinese monk, Dorje Chopa Ghese, to various people in China for the pilgrimage to Wu Tai Shan by the sea route from Calcutta. (Chaitra full moon)
  - Monsoon retreat in Bhutan.
- 1936 - Arrive in Kalimpong and departure for Calcutta with a group of Mongolians for China (2 Marga, 1992 V.E.)
- Aboard a ship at Calcutta (6 Marga) and arrival in Peking, with stops at Penang, Singapore and Hongkong.
  - Five months at Wu Tai Shan; disappointed to find no living Manjusri; monsoon retreat in Peking; visits to different monasteries in various cities.
- 1937 - Return by ship to Calcutta before a month of the Japanese invasion of Shanghai.
- Back in Kathmandu and exhibition of Buddhist pictures brought back from China at Kindol Vihara on the occasion of the Buddha's Birthday.
- 1942 - A small hut built in the woods in Swayambhu Hill for the monsoon retreat. (1998 V.E.)  
Arranged to have Bhikkhu Amritananda give a discourse on the Vissantara Jataka at Parbatsthan in Swayambhu Hill during the month of Kartik.
- 1944 - Left Kindol Vihara and lived in the new, little vihara in the woods, named Anandakuti, in Swayambhu Hill.  
U. Chandramani Mahasthvir's visit to Anandakuti Vihara (2000 V.E.)
- Summary expulsion of 8 monks from Kathmandu Valley by Hajuria General Bahadur Shumshere, apparently without the knowledge and sanction of his father the Majaraja, Prime Minister Juddha Shumshere, for their refusal to commit themselves in writing not to worship

the Buddha, not to preach, not to give initiation and not to write in Nepalbhasa, as follows: Bhikkhu Pragyanda, Bhikkhu Dharmaloka, Bhikkhu Subodhananda, Bhikkhu Pragyarashmi, Sramanera Aggadhama, Sramanera Kumar Kashyap, Sramanera Ratna Jyoti, and Sramanera Pragyarash.

- Monsoon retreat at Kusinagar.
- Foundation of the Dharmodaya Sabha, a Buddhist society, at Sarnath

President - U. Chandramani Mahasthvir

Vice President - Bhadant Ananda Kausalyayana

Secretary - Bhikkhu Amritananda

Joint Secretary - Bhikkhu Mahanama

Treasurer - Maniharsha Jyoti Kansakar

Member - Bhikkhu U. Kitima Mahasthvir

Mahapragya Sthavir

Dharmaloka Sthavir

Subodhananda Sthavir

(31 November 1944/Kartik Purnima, 2488 B.E)

1945 - Monsoon retreat in Bhutan

1947 - Return to Kathmandu from exile. (Jestha bright half, 6, 2003 V.E.)

1967 - Passed away at Anandakuti Vihara (5 October /18 Aswin, 2024 V.E.)

### **Publications in Nepalbhasa, Nepali and Hindi**

1. Loka Kuchala Kubyebahara sudhar  
(An essay on social reforms.)
2. Anuttara Vijaya Gurumandala
3. Ishwar mhasiki
4. Buddhaguna, dharmaguna, sanghaguna  
(An essay on the Buddha, the Teaching and the Brethren.)
5. Pragyadarshan , Part I, and Part II.
6. Satipathana  
(A collection of hymns)

7. Gyanmala  
(A collection of hymns)
8. Paritrana
9. Mahachin yatra  
(Travel account of a pilgrimage to China.)
10. Triratna Bandana  
(Hymns in praise of the Three Jewels, e.g. the Buddha, the Teaching and the Brethren.)
11. Panchashil  
(An essay on the Five Vows)
12. Bhaba sudhara
13. Charyachara Buddhako gyanma panch gyan murti, Buddha nama rupa nirodha.
14. Charyachara Buddhako gyanma panch gyan murti  
Buddha dhayagu nhesaya lisahyata lisah
15. "Buddhaya putra prati upadesh" yata chagu pratibad
16. Buddhadharma he manabdharma  
(An essay on Buddhism as the dharma for humanity.)
17. Panchashil triguna puja.
18. Uttam bicharniya, nama rupa nirodha Buddhako panch gyan murti
19. Paribartanshil siddhanta
20. Uttam bichar, namarupa nirodha Buddha ke panch gyan murti
21. Suyagu dharma satya khah  
(An essay on the true dharma.)
22. Paribartan shil siddhanta tatha kiska dharma satya hai
23. Karma sudhara nikogu
24. Buddhism in Nepal - A Food for Thought
25. Ishwar mhasiki, Karma sudhar
26. Gurumandal, nikogu
27. Kiski dharma satya hai? tatha paribartanshil
28. Kiska dharma satya hai tatha sri Hemraj Sharma Timilsena ki panch bataun ki uttar



## APPENDIX B

### Recollections and Anecdotes

#### 1

My name was Gajaratna when I was a boy. My father was Das Ratna Tuladhar. He was also called Baran Sahu. My father was due to leave for Lhasa on a trading mission the next day, when my mother, Dibya Laxmi, returning from a feast, suddenly had cholera during the night. In the morning, while my father was out to buy medicine, my mother died. My brother Triratna was just six months old then but I too was quite young to remember much of those days. My father's visit to Lhasa was cancelled.

Immediately after the funeral, my father had to find a wet nurse and leave my brother in her care. When he was a little over one year and had begun to toddle about and lisp, he was left with my mother's mother, Beti Laxmi Tuladhar, at Tunche, Neta.

My father then left for Lhasa. He took me along with him. I was about eight years old, a heedless, wilful and naughty boy. A reminder of my wild ways was a cut in my right hand index finger, as a result of my meddling in the treadmill in which paddy was dehusked in our house. Fortunately, the finger was not cut off. Otherwise, I would not have been able to have my higher ordination as a monk when I reached 20 years. There was no tradition of a man with a deformation becoming a Buddhist monk.

In Lhasa, the Newars gave me a title, "De Thakali," which meant "The Oldest One in Town." It was a name in reverse, for I was the youngest one among them. Later I acquired a nickname, "Tupah Khun" (the Gun thief).

The main police station of Lhasa called Nanisya was located next to the nabu shop where we lived. Every evening, before going to bed my father and the other *banjas* sat together in the shop and recited *sutras* for an hour or so. As I was too young to join them, my father used to say to me, "Go to bed upstairs." I obeyed him but when I was about to fall asleep, I was startled by a loud gun fire.

One evening, while the recitation was going on as usual, I sat on the doorstep to find out more about the gun that startled me.

At about 9 o'clock, two men came out of the police station, one holding a lamp and another something, apparently very heavy. They went far from the building to a vacant lot and touched a string to the lamp and returned at once. After a short while I saw a spark but there was a drizzle and I waited. The gun powder that had been rammed into the cannon however did not go out with a bang. I was curious and made my way in the dark under the drizzle. I knew no fear then. I found an iron rod on the ground and it gave me the idea that it would make a nice plaything to show to my playmates on the following day. So, I took it into my robe and carried it with some difficulty and hid it under the stairs. If the trace of the gunpowder in the iron rod had somehow ignited, I would have met an instant death.

My father and the other men were talking among themselves. They had just finished their recitation. I went to my father and said, "I have found a nice toy for tomorrow." My father was not pleased. He berated me and took a lamp to investigate. When he found the iron rod, he scolded me roundly, beat me up and ordered me to take it back to the spot where I had found it. With that he turned me out of the door.

In the meanwhile, two policemen had come out to make their own investigation. I made my way cautiously and left the iron rod noiselessly on the ground unseen by them although I heard them say that the dogs must have rolled it away and they went farther to look for it. I made my escape and wondered what they would have done to me if they had found me. Fortunately, I was spared the punishment. There was no gun fire that night.

However, the secret was out and before long, every Newar in town knew about it. Thereafter, wherever I went they made fun of me. "Here comes the Gun Thief," they cried.



Soon after our return from Lhasa, my father had given up our home and we were living at Kindol, an ancient vihara that had for long been a neglected heap of ruins, covered with nettles and had just been restored, with funds provided by the government and

public donations. Wishing to put some money he had made in Lhasa to a good cause, my father laid planks on the ground floor in all the rooms.

Rahul Sankrityayana, who called himself Ramodar Baba then, had come to Kathmandu with the intention of visiting Tibet to search for Buddhist texts to translate from the Tibetan into Sanskrit, as the original texts had since long disappeared in India. He was staying at Boudha with the Dukpa (Bhutanese) lama, Serap Dorje, who was a living Karunamaya. When the great lama was invited to preside over a nyuni fast, Rahulji had come with him to Kindol Vihara. As the Shivaratri festival was over, Rahulji had to remain in disguise and in hiding in order to go to Tibet with the Dukpa Lama. During the daytime Rahulji kept to himself alone in a small, isolated house in the neighbourhood in order to avoid the people who flocked to the Vihara. I cooked the meal and took it to him in the morning and in the evening. I thought I should learn Pali and he told me I had to go to Ceylon. The idea of learning Pali took a firm root in my mind until it became an obsession.

In the evenings, Rahulji came to the vihara and my father, who knew Hindi and Tibetan, acted as an interpreter for him and the Dukpa Lama.



After a couple of years at Kindol Vihara, a letter was received from my maternal uncle, Mahadhar Sahu, who lived in Calcutta. He wrote: "The trade fair in Assam is about to begin. If you wish to go to the fair with my son Raju, please come to Calcutta at once." So, my father and I went to Calcutta. My father went to Assam with my cousin, leaving me in Calcutta.

In the meanwhile, I went daily to Dharmarajika Vihara in College Square and pleaded with Dharmaditya Dharmacharya to find someone who would take me to Ceylon. Within a fortnight, to my good fortune, he introduced me to Venerable Sharanankara, who was studying in Calcutta and was about to return home in Ceylon. For his kindness, I am much indebted to Dharmaditya Dharmacharya. But for him, I would not have reached Ceylon.

Venerable Sharanankar took me along to his vihara in a village called Ganpaha about 50 km. from Colombo. A few weeks later, visiting monks gave a series of lectures for an hour in the evenings at the vihara. One day the Venerable Ananda Kausalyayana came to the vihara. "Who is this boy?" he asked the Venerable Sharanankar as soon as he saw me. "He does not look like a local boy." "He is from Nepal," replied the Venerable Sharanankar, "He has come to learn Pali."

"Rahulji has written to me about a Nepalese boy," said Venerable Ananda Kausalyayana. "He wishes to study Pali and he is to be admitted at Vidyalankara Pirivena. Can this be the boy?"

He found the boy about whom Rahulji had written to him. He said to Venerable Sharanankar: "Let me admit him at Vidyalankara as instructed by Rahulji. This is not the place for him. With that the Venerable Ananda Kausalyayana returned to Vidyalankara after his lecture.

A fortnight later, Venerable Sharanankar took me to Vidyalankara Pirivena, where before many days were over, the Venerable Mahanayaka Lunupokune Dhammananda made me a samanera and named me Aniruddha. I was 15 years old then. My father was immensely happy when my letter enclosing a photo of myself as a samanera reached him. He believed then that a pure form of Theravada Buddhism would come to Nepal soon.



Five years later, upon my return from Ceylon, I found my father was in China on a pilgrimage to the temple of Manjusri. I went to Kusinagar and the Venerable Chandramani Mahasthavir said to me: "Your father is not here. You have spent five years learning Pali and Singhalese in Ceylon. Now, you had better go and learn Pali and Burmese language in Burma." Thereupon, he wrote some letters to the teachers and sent me and Sramanera Pranavibansha from Kusinagar to Burma.

I lived under the tutelage of the Venerable Chakkapala Mahasthavir of Tampoka Kyan vihara in Moulmein for 11 years.

However, during the Second World War, we had to go from one village to another in order to be away from the battles. It greatly hampered my study.

Bhikkhu Aniruddha Mahasthavira  
June 1999.

2

On my way to Lhasa, I arrived at Phari, where among other Newar merchants, I met Dasratna Sahu, who was also called Baran Sahu. He loved to argue and I found him quoting Bhrathahari. On one occasion, I asked him, "Have you never studied Buddhist texts?"

His reply was a question, "What makes you think so?" "You speak from the Hindu scriptures only and never a word about Buddhism," I said.

The next day Dasratna Sahu took me to his lodging and engaged me in a conversation about religion, but we just scratched on the surface, nothing of substance came out in the discussion.

I said to him: "You generally speak about the works of Bhrathahari - Bairagyasatak, Nitisatak and Sringerasatak- and not of your own ideas and experiences. I have not been a monk for long and I don't know much yet. But let me tell you something. Of course, you must have a daily routine of rituals and recitations of the sacred texts. After your routine of rituals in the morning, why don't you write down whatever good thoughts come to your mind? If nothing comes to your mind, just go over what you have written before. Perhaps, that may give you fresh ideas. Try it."

*An Autobiography of Late Mahapragya,*  
Compiled and edited by Darasha Newami,  
Part I, (memeograph), 1983

3

Upon my arrival at Kalimpong (on March 21, 1934), I was welcomed by Bhajuratna Sahu at his place, where I found Dasratna Sahu too. He had helped me in Nepal to reach the border in disguise

(on my first visit to Tibet in 1929). Now he had become the monk Dharmaloka and he wanted to go to China from Lhasa to meet the Bodhisattva Manjusri. It was very interesting to talk with him. One day I had a talk with him about the *bhut* or ghosts of Nepal, of which according to him, there are 18 kinds:

1. Mundkatta (Mulkatta) - a person who had been beheaded became a mundkatta.
2. Agati - a person who had died in great pain and in great ignorance became an agati.
3. Rakshas - If encountered in a forest, the bhut devoured a man's heart.
4. Kawan - a bhut who is merely a skeleton and made the sound of "kwan."
5. Kichkinni - a beautiful female bhut who wandered about and killed people.
6. Michyalakhe - a bhut who spat fire as it ran along river banks and across lonesome plains.
7. Hannyaghar - a bhut that threw stones and brickbats at houses.
8. Sikagati - a bhut who stayed in the house where the death had taken place.
9. Khyatuyumha - a white ape-like bhut, who is harmless and brought good fortune.
10. Bhwathagwarakhyah - a bhut that prevented a person's movement and laughed when he fell down.
11. Nansyukhyah - a bhut that called people by name in the roads.
12. Gurugurukhyah - a bhut that made noises in the house. A very good bhut.
13. Lanpanimhakhyah - a bhut that prevented a man from walking.
14. Gwayadamhamisa - a female bhut with a moustache.
15. Jangkiko - Yamaduta, the Messenger of Death
16. Jumi (Jhumi) - a bhut that misled persons.
17. Barakhkyah - a girl who had died during her first menstrual period became a barakhkyah.
18. Yokhyah - a female bhut who turned spindles.



On May 17, we reached the bank of the Brahmaputra River at 11:15 A.M. There was a sacred mountain called Cho-Sam-Chu-Bo-Ri in the vicinity. Dharmalokji informed me that this mountain did not belong to Tibet; it had been brought here from India. I agreed with him that it was quite possible, for in ancient times, mountains used to fly about.

“Mountains must have wings then.”

“Sure they did.”

“It is written in the myths of the Brahmins that it was Indra who had cut off the wings and so the poor mountains had not been able to move since then.”

“This mountain must have come here then.”

“Of course, otherwise who could have lifted and brought it here?”

Dharmalokji stated further that there are 108 viharas at the base of the sacred mountain.

On May 19, we approached Lhasa. Dharmalokji pointed out to me a distant range and said that the goddess Guheswari lived in a cave there.

*Rahul Sankrityayana Vangmaya, Jivan Yatra, Part I, 1994.*

4

There was a merchant named Sanu Sahu at Asan, who wished to give three *mohars* in dana to each and every Sakya and Vajracharya in Kathmandu Valley. Dasratna Sahu wrote a long letter to the merchant opposing the idea and suggesting instead the establishment of a free school. The merchant agreed with the suggestion and found a place to build his school. Learning of the plan, the Brahmins poisoned the ears of the Maharaja, Prime Minister Chandra Shumshere (1901 - 1929), who then called Sanu Sahu to his palace and made him give away three *mohars* as originally planned.

*Mahasthvir Dhammaloka Bhante*  
by Dharmaratna Yemi, 1970.

## APPENDIX C

### A TRIP TO WU TAI SHAN, 1996

Bidya Man Sakya\*

In the last week of April, 1996, I had an opportunity to visit Wu Tai Shan in China. Our entry into China was by aeroplane across Tibet. In less than two hours from Lhasa, we arrived at Chendu, the principal city of Shichuwan province. This city was known for its coal production. The afternoon was spent on visiting Buddhist monasteries and sightseeing in the city. In the evening, we boarded the plane again and in about two hours, we landed at Taiyuan, where we were booked for the night at Xianghuacun Fenwine Hotel.

After an early breakfast the next morning, we boarded the bus, which took us to Wu Tai Shan, the capital city of Shanxi province. The highway was very smooth and in about five hours we covered 240 kilometers. It was a long but comfortable journey across a hilly terrain. We were lodged in the newly built posh Friendship Hotel in the city. The first engagement in our programme was a meeting with the Abbot and Chairman of the Buddhist Association of Shanxi province. After a long and interesting discussion with the Abbot about matters of mutual interest, we visited Xian Tong, the main temple of Manjusri, located atop the Five-Terrace Mountain. There were many beautiful carvings in this ancient wooden building.

There was another famous monastery in the neighbourhood of Xian Tong. It was known as Fukwang. However, we had to go down the mountain and climb up 108 stone steps to reach it. Here we made a courtesy call on the Chairman of the Buddhist Association of Wu Tai Shan. There were three main buildings, in which we found various deities of the Mahayana pantheon. The famous White Pagoda, which was similar to the one in Beijing, was quite near Fukwang.

From the top of the mountain, there was a good view of the city of Wu Tai Shan. We could also see other peaks on three sides. The mountain range had altogether five peaks. Hence, the



name Wu Tai Shan, which meant "Five Peaks." Mule tracks and stone steps had been constructed to one of the peaks. Our plan to climb up to the peak on the following morning, however, was not fulfilled.

There were numerous big monasteries in the city of Wu Tai Shan. The statues of Mahayana deities in these monasteries were big and attractive in their new coats of paint. On our second day at Wu Tai Shan, the first visit was to Bi Shan, a huge temple with clean brick-paved courtyards.

Next, we stopped at a spring near the market place. It was a small square pond, about three feet by three. The hot water that bubbled out of the spring was believed to cure diseases. Then, we went to an old monastery called Shusiang, which, from the outside appeared in a state of disrepair, but once inside, we found many colourful and elaborately carved statues.

The last monastery in our itinerary was a very old one, which again contained many newly painted statues. Very broad stone steps led to the monastery up in the mountain and thousands of native and foreign visitors had an easy time going up, but the hawkers who kept souvenir shops all along the way were a rather trying lot for the visitors.

All the monasteries kept souvenir shops and charged an entrance fee. We were assured that the fee and the profit from the sale of souvenirs were used only for the maintenance of the monasteries.

We were able to visit all the main places of interest in two days. Great efforts were being made to attract visitors to Wu Tai Shan. The buildings as well as the areas surrounding the monasteries and the approach roads were constantly being repaired or maintained. New shops were coming up in the market places. Until a few years back, the people had experienced hard times, but with the inflow of native and foreign tourists an economic boom had come to Wu Tai Shan.

\*Deputy Leader of the Buddhist Delegation  
of the Dharmodaya Sabha, Nepal, 1996.

Wu'tai Shan

• PEKING

• Wu'tai

• Tinghsien

• Taiyuan

SHANSI

YELLOW SEA

CHINA

Nanking

Shanghai

Hangchou

EAST CHINA SEA

Dhamma Digital

HONG KONG

SOUTH CHINA SEA