CHAPTER IV

CULTURE OF BUDDHIST MONASTERIES
IN BODHGAYA

Gāme vā yadi vā raññe  nine vā yadi vā thale
Yatth ārahanto viharanti  tam bhūmim āmaneyyakaṃti. 420

Whether in village or in forest, in vale or on hill, wherever Arahants dwell,--- delightful, indeed, is that spot. 421

The word “culture” has many different meanings. It refers to an appreciation of good literature, music, art, and food. However, for anthropologists and other behavioral scientists, culture is the full range of learned human behavior patterns. The term was first used in this way by the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, Primitive Culture, published in 1871. Tylor said that culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. It is not limited to men. Women possess and create it as well. Since Tylor’s time, the concept of culture has become the central focus of anthropology. 422

Culture is a powerful human tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in our minds. Our written languages, governments, buildings, and other man-made things are merely the products of culture. They are not culture in

420  Dhammapada, Verse,78.
themselves. For this reason, archaeologists cannot dig up culture directly in their excavations. The broken pots and other artifacts of ancient people that they uncover are only material remains that reflect cultural patterns—they are things that were made and used through cultural knowledge and skills.

Cultures are as varied as nations, ethnic groups, religious sects, companies and clubs. Linton defined a culture as the configuration of learned behavior and results of behavior whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the member of particular society. According to William A. Haviland, culture is a set of rules or standards that when acted upon by the member of a society considers proper and acceptable.

Some social scientists have divided culture into two parts. One is called ‘culture proper’ and the other ‘cultural equipment’ or ‘civilization’. However, most of anthropologists regardless of other difference, and regard civilization merely as a more developed proliferated or complex type of culture.

Thus, culture can be defined as everything produced by the capacities of human beings, including both material and non-material. Clothes, utensils, weapons, tools, products of technological advancement etc., are known as material culture. Beliefs, thoughts, languages, knowledge, skills to use in the creation or invention of materials, traditions, customs, rituals and so on, are the examples of non-material culture. There would pass down from one generation to the next through learning or participating in interactions with others.

It is necessary that human beings living in every society in the world have their own culture. These are differences between various cultures in societies.

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The languages used in each country are also different from each other, and the people’s way of life in each country from birth to death is very different. However, culture still maintains its own good and beautiful characteristics which are specific features of each country.

Budhgaya is a religious site and place of pilgrimage associated with the Mahābodhi Temple Complex in Gaya district in the Indian state of Bihar. It is famous as the place where Gautama Buddha is said to have obtained Enlightenment (Bodhimandala). After being invited to establish monasteries in Bodhgaya from the first Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharah Neruh, in 1974, several Buddhist monasteries have been built by the people from many Buddhist countries such as Bhutan, China, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sikkim, Taiwan, Tibet Thailand, Sri Lanka and Vietnam in a wide area around the Mahābodhi Temple. These buildings reflect the architectural style, exterior and interior decoration of their respective countries. The statue of Buddha in the Chinese temple is 200 years old and was brought from China. Japan’s Nippon temple is shaped like a pagoda. The Myanmar (Burmese) temple is also pagoda shaped and is reminiscent of Bagan. The Thai temple has a typical sloping, curved roof covered with golden tiles. Inside, the temple holds a massive bronze statue of Buddha. Next to the Thai temple is 25 meter statue of Buddha located within a garden which has existed there for over 100 years.

Now more than 50 Buddhist monasteries of both the Theravāda and Mahāyāna are established in Bodhgaya. These play the important role for Bodhgaya development. They have worked together and co-operated among Buddhist monasteries in many ways
4.1 Buddhist Chanting

A Buddhist chanting is a form of musical verse or incantation, in some ways analogous to Hindu, Christian or Jewish religious recitations. They exist in just about every part of the Buddhist world, from the Buddhist temples in Thailand to the Tibetan Buddhist temples in India and Tibet. Almost every Buddhist school has some tradition of chanting associated with it, regardless of being Theravāda or Mahāyāna. In Buddhism, chanting is the traditional means of preparing the mind for meditation, especially as part of formal practice (in either a lay or monastic context). Some forms of Buddhism also use chanting for ritualistic purposes. While the basis for most Theravāda chants is the Pāli Canon, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna chants draw from a wider range of sources.

In the lifetime, the Buddha’s teaching was oral (spoken). The place where he lived was called “Maghadi”. This was spoken form of Sanskrit, one of the classical languages in India. The Buddha advised the Saṅgha to teach the language of the people they spoke to. As Buddhism spread to the various parts of India, Asia and the world, the Dhamma was translated into various other languages. 427

Memory training was, and still is, an important part of education in India. The Saṅgha memorized the teaching, some of them possibly specializing in certain parts of it. There were group recitations of the teachings at festivals and other special occasions. These group or communal recitations helped the Saṅgha to remember the teaching. The one of them had forgotten a part he could learn it during the recitation. This oral tradition depended the continuous stream of teacher passing down the teaching to student. The teaching was

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handed down from generation to generation accurately by means of these group recitations.  

Three months after the Buddha’s passing away, a conference of senior member of Saṅgha called the First Council was held in Rājagṛha, the capital of Magadha. One monk, Ven. Upalī, explained and recited Vinaya (monastic rules) and another, Ven. Ānanda, recited the Dhamma (the teaching). The 500 members of the Council then agreed on the wording. This division of teaching into Vinaya and Dhamma had come into existence during the lifetime of the Buddha.

About ten years later, a Second Council was held at Vesālī. Again the Vinaya and the Dhamma were recited and agreed upon. Although differences arose later, the Saṅgha were united at this time. The Vinaya and the Dhamma agreed at the Second Council from the foundation of the teaching in all the traditions of Buddhism.

The oral tradition of Buddhism continues today. The Saṅgha memorize section of the Dhamma and chant portions of it at festivals and ceremonies, both in the temples and in the homes of Buddhists. Though the occasion differs, what is recited is more or less the same. This chanting is considered to be a sacred act. It also helps to teach children and adults because after hearing it several times, they begin to remember the words. They also associate the different circumstances and occasion of chanting. Sometimes the lay people join in the chanting a meditative and devotional experience. The sound of chanting has calming effect on the mind. Modern day Buddhists listen to cassettes of chanting at home and in their cars.

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428 Ibid., p. 12.
429 Ibid., p. 15.
Many Buddhists feel that reciting and listening to the chanting of specially selected texts from the scriptures is a blessing, giving them protection, and produces a sense of mental well-being. In Sri Lanka on special occasions such as moving into a new house etc. in all Buddhists communities, chanting is part of the funeral service to bless the dead person. This is especially important as Buddhists believe in the continuity of life. In Bodhgaya, there are two important chanting ceremonies held by two Saṅghas, Theravāda Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism, namely; International Tipitaka Chanting and Kālachakra.

4.1.1 International Tipitaka Chanting

On the occasion of the 2550th Buddha Jayanti in 2006, two hundred and fifty Theravādin monks from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, India, Thailand, Cambodia, India and Bangladesh gathered to chant the Tipiṭaka under the Bodhi Tree. This historic event marked the first time in 700 years that the international Theravādin Saṅgha chanted the Buddha word together at the place of enlightenment. The Abbots of Bodhgaya called a council and agreed to hold the Chanting Ceremony annually in order to promote the development of the Buddha Sasanā in India, the Theravādin School in general, and peace for all the world. The International Tipiṭaka Chanting Council now organizes the event annually.

The main objectives the International Tipiṭaka Chanting are as follows:-

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430 Main Supported by The Light of Buddhadharma Foundation International, Odiyan, USA.
431 Honoring the 7th Annual International Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony Bodhgaya, India, p. 44.
1) To support, encourage and organize the annual chanting of the sacred texts of the Lord Buddha, known as the Pali Tipitaka, at Bodhgaya, where the Lord Buddha was enlightened, or at other holy places.

2) To spread the original teachings of the Buddha throughout the holy land of Aryadesha and to dedicate the merit to all sentient beings in this world and all universe.

4) To help achieve peace, harmony and brotherhood of all humanity through the teachings and philosophy of Lord Buddha.

5) To promote co-operation, unity and good will among the Theravādin Sangha of all lands.

6) To promote mutual respect among all beings through worldwide co-operation of men and women of goodwill.

7) To promote the social welfare through providing for health, education, and other basic needs.

8) To co-operate with other organizations, trusts, study centres, benevolent institutions and monasteries, which are engaged in activities similar to the object of the Pali Tipitaka Chanting International Council.

9) To publish and distribute literature and provide other aids in order to propagate and disseminate Buddhist Principles.

The Ninth annual Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony will be held in every year. The entire Saṅgha will be chanting Catukkanipātapāḷi, Pañcakanipātapāḷi, Chakkanipātapāḷi, Sattakanipātapāḷi from the Anguttara Nikaya. Romanised copies will be made available for all participants. Nowadays this ceremony has
become the most significant culture of Theravada Buddhism having been held continuously.

### 4.1.2 Kālacakra Pūjā Ceremony

The biggest event that took place at Bodhgaya during 2011-12 was the 32nd Kālachakra Initiation by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in January, 2012. There was a gathering of over 3,00,000 pilgrims from all parts of the world during that occasion.

Kālachakra tradition is very important ceremony in Tibetan Buddhism. Dalai Lama commended that we believe that the Kālachakra ceremony is very good for eliminating negative forces such as warfare. So the Kālachakra is something useful for peace. While I do not know what the real reason for this is, whenever the Kālachakra is performed and people sit together and develop good motivation and meditate for a few hours, that produces some kind of unified energy that helps not only the individual, but also the environment, the area.  

The word Kālachakra is usually used to refer to a very complex teaching and practice in Tibetan Buddhism. Although the teaching is very advanced, esoteric, and difficult to comprehend, there is a tradition of offering it to large public audiences. The history and mythology of the Kālachakra, the “Wheel of Time” is a fascinating subject. The Bodhisattvas and Vajracharyas responsible for the transmission of this unique Vajrayāna Buddhist tradition are a colorful group, and their deeds are often astonishing.

The Kālachakra means “Wheel of Time” which is tradition of Buddhist theory and practice whose root text treats a fantastic expanse of knowledge ranging from observations of the cosmos to investigations of meditative states.

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432 Public interview at Kālachakra initiations given at Tabu, Spiti, North India, 1996.
and vital bodily energies. In the Tibetan-speaking world, a public Kālachakra initiation remains the most sought-after event in the life of a devout Buddhist. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama has long had a strong connection with the Kālachakra Tantra; he brought the initiation to the West in 1981, performing it in the U.S., Switzerland, Spain and Australia. This volume has been created to celebrate his long involvement with the Kālachakra teachings. 434

Robert A. F. Thurman, the author of Why the Dalai Lama Matters, commended that I welcome this rich volume of learned studies by all sorts of scholars and practitioners of the Kālachakra arts and sciences, assembled by the Namgyal institute in Ithaca to honor and celebrate His Holiness the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama... May it please not only His Holiness but also all people who are interested in a positive world, a realized Shambhala or Land of Peace, where everyone, no matter what their religion or race or gender or culture, keeping them all and upgrading them all, can live in peace, enjoy their hard-earned human lifetime, and seek its essential potential by educating himself or herself in all the arts of wisdom, kindness, love and joy. 435

Kālachakra Pūjā was held in Bodhgaya, Bihar, India from December 31 to January 10: During the first three days of the Kālachakra, from December 31, 2011 to January 2, 2012, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, along with the monks of Namgyal Monastery and senior lamas assembled conducted rituals to prepare and consecrate the teaching venue. These included chanting of prayers, creation of the sand Mandala and other rituals. From January 3 to 5, His Holiness gave preliminary teachings on Kamalashila’s The Middling States of Meditation (gomrim barpa), Gyalsey Thokme Sangpo’s 37 Practices of A Boddhisattva (laklen sodunma), Geshe Langri Thangpa's Eight verses of Training the Mind (lojong tsik gyema) & Nagarjuna's The Praise to the World Transcendent (jigten

434 Edward A. Arnold. “As long as space endures”, p .468.
435 Ibid., p. 469.
ley deypar toepa). On January 6, the Kālachakra Ritual Dance was performed by the monks of Namgyal Monastery. His Holiness conferred the main Kālachakra Initiation from January 7 to 9. The historic Kālachakra Pūjā was concluded very peacefully and successfully on 10th January, 2012 with impressive closing ceremony in which Shri Nitish Kumar, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Bihar was present to join in the Pūjā and felicitate His Holiness the Dalai Lama.  

The above historic event was followed by the celebrations of Bodh Mahotsava at the international level for the first time from 3rd to 5th February, 2012, organised jointly by Bihar Tourism and Gaya District Administration and co-ordinated by BTMC.

On the first day of the three day festival, there was performance by international cultural troupes and ethnic groups from Buddhist regions of India to show case in the traditional song and dance form the divine sublimity of Buddhism. The second day was a tribute to the spirit of Bihar. Third day was dedicated to the nation with participants from many other States of India.

A part from Cultural shows for three days, there was an international Seminar on Buddhism, Exhibitions, book fair, Peace Walk and Inter-faith religious Prayers under the Holy Bodhi Tree dedicated to World Peace during that celebration of Buddha Mahotsava which was very successful.

4.2 Culture of Bowing as Revealed in Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya

According to Buddhist tradition, bowing is very important greeting expressed by Buddhists all over the world. South Korea Zen master, Seung

436 Ibid., p. 307.
Sahn, used to say, “Buddhism is a religion of bowing”. By this meant two things:

1. Bowing expresses the surrender of self-centered preoccupation, which is one of the core teachings of Buddhism.

2. Buddhists bow a great deal.\textsuperscript{437}

Both statements are true. In every tradition of Buddhism, bowing plays an important role. Buddhists bow to their altars, their teachers, their robes and so on. As a traditional expression of gratitude, respect, veneration, acknowledgement and surrender, bowing occurs both spontaneously and in prescribed situations and contexts. In the other words, sometimes people bow because they like it, and sometimes they bow because they are expected to.

Because of establishing of numerous international Buddhist monasteries in Bodhgaya, people from worldwide can visit and learn how to bow. Bowing is a common practice in traditional Asian societies. Buddhism, bowing and Asian culture are inextricably entwined. Bowing in Buddhism takes different forms, depending on the culture and circumstance.

\textbf{4.2.1 Culture of Bowing as Revealed in Southeast Asian Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya}

In Bodhgaya, there are several Buddhist monasteries established by Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia, namely; Thailand, Republic of Lao, Cambodia, and Myanmar. Mostly they are Theravāda Buddhists. In Theravada Buddhism, as part of daily practice, one typically prostrates before and after chanting and meditation. On these occasions, one does typically prostrates three times: once to the Buddha, once to the Dhamma, and once to the Saṅgha.

\textsuperscript{437} Jonathan Landaw and Stephan Bodian. \textit{“Buddhism for Dummies”}, p. 167.
More generally, one can also prostrate before “any sacred object of veneration.”

Theravāda Buddhists execute a type of prostration that is known as “five-point veneration” (Pali: patitthitapanca) or the “five-limbed prostration” (Pali: pañcanga-vandana) where the two palms and elbows, two sets of toes and knees, and the forehead are placed on the floor. More specifically:

... In the kneeling position, one’s hand in Añjali (palms together, fingers flat out and pointed upward) are raised to the forehead and then lowered to the floor so that the whole forearm to the elbow is on the ground, the elbow touching the knee. The hands, palm down, are four to six inches apart with just enough room for the forehead to be brought to the ground between them. Feet are still as for the kneeling position and the knees are about a foot apart. This is repeated three times in respect to the Triple Gem of Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. This ritual bowing is most commonly referred to as Wai Phra in Thai word.

In Thailand, traditionally, each of the three aforementioned prostrations are accompanied by the following Pāli verses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Prostration</th>
<th>Araham sammā sambuddho bhagavā Buddhham bhagavantam abhivādemi.</th>
<th>The Noble One, the fully Enlightened One, the Exalted One, I bow low before the Exalted Buddha.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Prostration</td>
<td>Svakkhato bhagavatā dhammo Dhammam</td>
<td>The Exalted One’s well-expounded Dhamma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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439 Khantipalo (1982)
440 Lawrence Whiting, “Buddhism in Thailand”, p. 35.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Prostration</th>
<th>Supatipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho sangham namāmi.</th>
<th>The Exalted One’s Saṅgha of well-practiced disciples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I bow low before the Dhamma.</td>
<td>I bow low before the Saṅgha.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Theravādin countries such as Sri Lanka, when one goes before one's teacher, in order to “open one’s mind up to receive instructions” (one bows and recites the phrase), “Okāsa ahaṃ bhante vandāmi” (I pay homage to you venerable sir).441

The thing most commonly bowed to is the Buddha image. At the risk of repeating this information it is very important to be clear that the image is a symbol not an idol. The image symbolises the realisation of the highest human potential, representing so much that is worthy of respect, worthy of bowing down to. The act of bowing not only acknowledges the value of this potential, these sublime human qualities, but it sets up a very tangible connection with those qualities in myself. We are all capable of wisdom, kindness, patience, etc., to some degree, and in one way bowing points back to one’s own ‘Buddha nature’. Buddhists commonly bow to images, stupas, teachers, parents, the four directions. Bowing is also used as a training in mindfulness. It is customary that when one enters or leaves a shrine room one bows. This sets up a point of stopping, of recollection; ‘I am in this room, relating in this way, at this time’. It is also customary at various times of the day to bow to senior members of Saṅgha. Again, this requires a sensitivity and presence of mind; ‘am I junior, what is the situation now, what is the time?’ As there are these traditional times of paying respect, one needs to be in touch with time and place, to be prepared.

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441 Bhikkhu Bodhi, Right Conduct lecture at Bodhi Monastery in 2006.
Bowing is ideally a beautiful and graceful act and it is very un-beautiful to see someone rushing in at the last.  

4.2.2 Culture of Bowing as Revealed in Japanese Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya

In Boddhgaya, there are two Japanese Buddhist monasteries, Daijokyo Buddhist Temple and Indosan Nipponji Temple. In Japan Zen, execute a half bow by holding your hands together at chest level and them bowing from the waist. For a full bow, start off with the half bow and then continue with the Southeast Asia style of bow except with palm up rather than down. In Zen Buddhism, both half and full prostrations are used. Zen master Robert Aitken writes:

The Zen student is taught that in *raihaï* [prostration] one throws everything away. Pivoting the forearms on the elbows and raising the hands [palms up] while prostrated is the act of raising the Buddha’s feet above one’s head.  

Roshi Philip Kapleau writes:

The act of unself-conscious prostration before a Buddha is possible under the impetus of reverence and gratitude. Such “horizontalizings of the mast of ego” cleanse the heart-mind, rendering it flexible and expansive, and open the way to an understanding and appreciation of the exalted mind and manifold virtues of the Buddha and patriarchs. So there arises within us a

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442 Quoted from the article as Lifestyle and Ritual, www.buddhamind.info
desire to express our gratitude and show our respect before their personalized forms through appropriate rituals.\footnote{Kapleau, Philip. Zen: "Merging of East and West", p. 21.}

4.2.3 Culture of Bowing as Revealed in Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya

Tibetan Buddhism\footnote{Lopez, Donald S. Jr. "Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West", p. 6.} is the body of Buddhist religious doctrine and characteristic of Tibet, Mongolia, Tuva, Bhutan, Kalmykia and certain regions of the Himalayas, including northern Nepal including India (particularly in Ladakh, Dharamsala, Lahaul, Arunachal Pradesh, Spiti in Himachal Pradesh, and Sikkim). It is the state religion of Bhutan.\footnote{The 2007 U.S. State Department report on religious freedom in Bhutan notes that “Mahayana Buddhism is the state religion...” and that “Bhutanese Government supports both the Kagyu and Nyingma sects".} It is also practiced in Mongolia and parts of Russia (Kalmykia, Buryatia, and Tuva) and Northeast China. Texts recognized as scripture and commentary are contained in the Tibetan Buddhist canon, such that Tibetan is a spiritual language of these areas. A Tibetan diaspora has spread Tibetan Buddhism to many Western countries, where the tradition has gained popularity.\footnote{Statistic on Religion in America Report...the 2007 Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life Survey estimates that although Tibetan Buddhism adherents are less than 0.3 percent of the population, Buddhism has had a 0.5 net increase in reported adherents.} Among its prominent exponents is the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet. The number of its adherents is estimated to be between ten and twenty million. So nowadays Tibetan Buddhism plays the important role among Mahāyāna Buddhism that creates several Buddhist culture so that we can find it in Bodhgaya.

Bowing is one of significant traditional feature of Tibetan Buddhists. Bowing or prostration is crucial preparatory activity in which one prostrates oneself on the floor, generally in front of an image, altar, painting or some other religious symbol. Because it involves physical activity, it is considered to be
particularly effectively in overcoming negative physical Kamma. It requires a complete physical abasement of the individual before symbols of deities---who are viewed as completely surpassing the meditator in good qualities and so it is a counteragent to false pride. In bowing down, the meditator recognizes the superior wisdom and compassion of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas requests their aid in attaining their exalted state.\textsuperscript{450}

Prostration begins in a standing position. The practitioner’s hands are in the gem-holding position, in which the base of the palm and the tips of the fingers are touching with a space between the middle of the palms. The thumbs are tucked in. The folded hands are raised above the head, and with them the practitioner touches either three or four points on the body. In the first method, one touches the crown of the head, throat, and heart, and in the second, the crown, forehead, throat, and heart are touched. Touching the crown symbolizes one’s wish to attain the body of a Buddha; touching the throat symbolizes one’s goal of attaining the speech of a Buddha; touching the heart symbolizes the aim of actualizing the mind of a Buddha.\textsuperscript{451}

Because prostration combines physical movements with verbal recitation and mental visualizations, it simultaneously purifies the three doors of body, speech and mind and provides a powerful counteragent to afflictions. When used as a preparatory practice for Tantra, it is customary to perform one hundred thousand prostrations, but Tibetans commonly to many more. There is no outer limit to the amount of merit one may acquire, and so practitioners are encouraged to do as many as possible, since prostration serves to undermine the power of affective emotions. It is important to note that prostrations as well as the other preliminary practices are not performed only prior to entry into tantric practice. Because they serve to diminish the force of affections, they are said to

\textsuperscript{450} John Powers. “A Concise Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism”, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{451} Ibid., p. 87.
be effective at all levels of the path, and it is common for even advanced meditators to begin retreats the proper tone for religious practice. It is also common for committed tantrists to make them a part of their daily practices.  

4.3 The Buddhist Art: Buddha Image in Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya

The most essential study in Buddhist monasteries in Bodhgaya is Buddha Image. Bodhgaya is the main center for Buddhist art study especially Buddha Image because there are numerous Buddhist monasteries established by Buddhist countries and each one has brought their own Buddhist arts to Bodhgaya. Each country has shown the individual identity to visitors.

In the earliest centuries of Buddhism, statues of the Buddha were not used. Instead, Buddhist art consisted of images symbolizing the Buddha and his teachings, such as the lotus, the Wheel of the Law, the Bodhi tree and the Buddha’s footprints. Eventually, the Buddha image became one of the most popular representations in Buddhism, but these early symbols remain important and are frequently used to this day. They are especially important in Theravāda Buddhist countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand and Myanmar.

The discovery of sculptures of Bodhisattvas seems to have reinforced this view of the Mahāyāna origin of Gandharan art. “The Bodhisattvas…belong only to the northern of Mahāyāna schools. Except Maitreya, they are unknown in Ceylon, Siam and Burma.”  

In the representation of Bodhisattvas,” observed Vogel, “we find in the Graeco-Buddhist arts the beginning of the Mahāyāna.”

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452 Ibid., p. 88.
According to Rowland, "In early Buddhism… there was no need for representation of the Master. It was believed that the Buddha who has gone beyond the fetters of the body could be endowed by art with the likeness of a body…” He, therefore, maintains that “the anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha almost certainly went hand in hand with a change in the religion from the Hīnayāna to the Mahāyāna doctrine.” He further traces the portrayal of Sakyamuni in human form to the emergence of devotional (bhakti) cults in Buddhism at the time of Kaniṣka. Bachhofer asserts that “the execution of the first Buddha figure, by a Gandhara sculptor, was rank heresy…” and the heresy was the Mahāyāna.

Marshall emphasized that one of the salient feature of Gandhara was that “...it deified all tradition and revolutionized liturgical worship by portraying the Buddha in bodily form.”

Snellgrove also explains an iconic, symbolic, representation of the Buddha before he attained enlightenment as a product of Mahāyāna ideology. “…probably the concept of a Buddha’s nature had already developed not early as teacher and founder of the community but according to the doctrine that later was to be termed Mahāyana as a manifestation of the super human and super mundane Buddha essence (buddhatā).
4.3.1 Buddha Image in Southeast Asian Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya

Buddha images are object of religious worship, not mere decoration items. The sculpture of the Buddha is by far the most common in Southeast Asian Arts, however, sculptures of Hindu deities are also created until the 16th century. In later years, sculptures of disciples and monks became more popular, especially in Burmese Art. Different from East Asian and Himalayan Art, the Buddha only comes in the form of Buddha Shakyamuni. Buddha statues are not supposed to be portraits of the actual Buddha and are not created to be his likeness. The vast number of different styles of Buddha statues would be difficult to explain if that was the idea. The Buddha images are a reminder of the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of Buddhism. The purpose is not to remember the person but the doctrine. In the early years of Buddhism stupas built over a relic of the Buddha (like a hair or tooth), served as reminders of the Buddha’s teachings. The earliest Buddha images are about 2000 years old. The Buddha images have very different appearances in different countries and regions, differing in poses, facial and body features, materials used and different levels of craftsmen’s skills. They all have in common, however, that they are not a man, but the doctrine in human form. Southeast Asian Buddha images come in 4 main positions: sitting, standing, walking and reclining. The walking style is by far the rarest, mostly found in the Sukothai period in Thailand and to an even smaller extent in later Thai and Lao sculptures. The reclining position also does not come in much variation, though it can be found in most countries and periods. The standing and sitting positions have a large number of different poses each. The most common poses of the standing Buddha are: pacifying the ocean, stop fighting, disclosing the 3 worlds and holding an alms bowl.

The most common posses of the sitting Buddha are: calling the Earth of witness, protected by Muchlinda and meditation. Beside these posses with crossed legs the rare, Western style, in which the Buddha sits in Western style
on a throne or tree truck can be found. Many more poses for standing and sitting Buddha images exist, but they are far less common in South East Asian Art. Again, for East Asian and Himalayan Art, other poses are more popular. The most common materials are stone, bronze (including gold and silver) and wood, however materials like ivory and glass are found as well. Wooden images are much less likely to survive the elements for a long time, so wooden images over 200-250 years are rare. Bronze comes in many different alloy compositions that give the sculpture its decisive patina and helps to identify an image. In identifying and dating a Buddha image, the following factors (among others) have to be taken into consideration. The stylistic details (flame, hair, head, face, eyebrows, ears, mouth, neck, shoulders, hands, arms, body, feet), the pedestal, the pose, the material and especially for bronze images, the alloy composition, weight, sound, casting core inside the image, the patina, the lacquer and gilding remnants and many more.

The Buddha Image in Thai tradition has the special identity. The current era which is known as the Rattanakosin period began when King Rama I established Bangkok as the capital of Thailand in the 10th century AD. From the time of the collapse of Ayuthaya in 1767 to the beginning of the Chakri Dynasty in Bangkok, there was strong support and endorsement for classical Siamese artistic traditions. Efforts were made to move artworks, including sculptures, from war-torn regions to Bangkok to preserve as archive for the country. The period can be categorized into two distinct phases as follows:

**Phase 1:** In the early Rattanakosin period (from the rule of King Rama I to King Rama III), characteristics from different periods were revived, particularly from Ayuthaya era. As many as 1200 Buddha images were moved from temples in the north for restoration work. Because of this, principal

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Buddha images in many important temples in Bangkok and Thonburi belong to older periods, mostly from Sukhothai (though U Thong and Ayuthaya styles can also found). There was more emphasis on adornments than on the Buddha’s expression. Feature became more humanlike through the integration of influences from the Ayuthaya and Sukhothai periods. The aureole came to resemble an elongated flame. The cranial protuberance, the fine hair curls, long ears and the robes were retained. The robes, however, are distinguishable from the former Ayuthaya style by the decorative floral motifs.

**Phase 2:** From the reign of King Rama IV onwards, a greater exposure to Western styles began to have some influence on the Buddha images. The King had redesigned the Buddha image to appear more humanlike omitting the cranial protuberance, the pleated robe and the cross legged meditation posture.\(^{461}\) However, during the reign of King Rama V and VI, the styling of the Buddha images was future changed to follow the Indian Gandhara style. This style retained the more human appearance but re-established some of the Buddha’s traditional characteristics such as the flame aureole, the cranial protuberance, the curled hair, the long ears and the robes.\(^ {462}\)

In Wat Thai Buddha Gaya, the most impressive Buddha image known as “Phra Buddha Jinaraj” was established in Upostha or chanting hall. Phra Buddha Jinaraj is cast in a posture of the Buddha subduing the Māra. Legend has it that the Buddha was sitting under a tree when he was suddenly surrounded by thousands of heavenly beings. Then came the Māra, or the Devil, with his army, which aimed to prevail over virtue with vice. But the Buddha's absolute power conquered the Mara, hence giving rise to one of his most

\(^{461}\) Ibid., p. 121.
\(^{462}\) http://www.buddhanet.net/
famous postures in the making of Buddha images. It is also a sign of the victory of virtue over vice.\footnote{463 \text{G. Coedes.} “\textit{The Making of South East Asia}”, p. 150.}

In Cambodia Buddhist Monastery, there is also the Buddha image which had gotten influence from Angkor.\footnote{464 May M. Ebihara and group (ed.). “\textit{Cambodian Culture Since 1975: Homeland and Exile}”, p 3.} The Khmer Empire was the dominating power in mainland South East Asia from the 10th to the 13th century. Unlike in Thailand and Laos, the Khmer sculptors where heavily influenced not only by the Indian Buddhist styles but also by Hinduism, so the Hindu deities play an important role for Khmer sculptors as well. The most popular ones are Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma with their respective consorts Uma, Laksami and Suratshvadi. Vishnu, Shiva and Uma and Laksami are often found in Khmer sculptures as well as Avalokiteshvara and Prajnaparamitr, the goddess of wisdom. During the pre Angkorian time (6th until 10th century) they are much more common than Buddha images.

During the pre Angkorian time, most sculptors used stone; bronze is rare, except for the Kampong Phra Prakon Chai period in the 8th century, where beautiful bronze statues were created. Bronze became more popular from the Baphuon period onwards (11th century), at the same time when the Buddha images also became more popular than in the earlier periods.

During the golden centuries of the Khmer empire from the 10th to the 13th century it ruled over most of today's Thailand and Laos. The Buddha images produced in the parts of the Khmer empire in today's Thailand resemble the Khmer style almost to the point of being impossible to distinguish. One of the main cities of the time was Lopburi, therefore images created in Central Thailand during this period are called Lopburi style. However, there are fewer Hindu deities than in Angkor. With the fading of the Khmer influence the
Lopburi style continued its independent development and led to the U Thong (early Ayutthaya) style.

After the 13th century, the political influence of Angkor deteriorated up to a point where the magnificent temples of Angkor and Bayon lay completely forgotten in the jungle. Together with the Empire, the craftsmanship declined as well. Almost as if the whole civilization was lost after the 14th century. Post Angkor Cambodia produced few mostly unspectacular Buddha images and only in the 19th century some interesting pieces can be found again.

Myanmar Buddhist Monasteries have also the Buddha image in their own style. They carefully are preserved Theravāda Buddhism for nearly one thousand years. ⁴⁶⁵ King Asoka, the great Indian Emperor, is known to have sent mission here (Known as the Golden Land) during the 3rd century BC. A second wave is thought to have arrived via Sinhalese missionaries from present day Sri Lanka, sometimes between the 6th and 10th centuries. By the 9th century, the Pyu of Northern Myanmar were combining Theravada with elements of Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism brought from their homeland in the Tibetan Plateau. During the Bagan era (11th century), Bagan king Anawratha decided that the Buddhism practiced in his realm should be purified from all non-Theravada elements, a task he set for Mon monks captured by his armies in Thaton, in Southern Myanmar. However, Buddhism here has never completely shed Tantric, Hindu, and animist elements, but remains predominately Theravada (only 1% of the Buddhists, most of whom are of Chinese descent, practice Myanmar Buddhism today). ⁴⁶⁶ So Myanmar is an important Theravāda Buddhist country.

⁴⁶⁶ Robert Reid. “Myanmar (Burma)”, p. 57.
During the last 2000 years, many rulers and kings have ruled over Burma. The land was divided into many kingdoms and dynasties. During each period, Buddha images were made in a different style. Each kingdom gave its own character to the images. Here is an explanation about the biggest and most important Burmese periods, styles, and kingdoms. For example:

(A) **Buddha images from the Pyu period:** The Buddha images from this period are the oldest images of Burma. Mostly they are seated in the crossed-legged position, some with an outer robe (Sanghati) over both shoulders and some with only a civara (Jivorn) across the left shoulder. The foreheads of most Buddha images were marked with the Urna and at the top of the head a clear ushnisha. Most images at this time were made from thin cast bronze with a high silver and tin content. Mostly their faces do not look very friendly.

(B) **Buddha images from the Bagan period:** Buddha images from the Bagan period are easy to recognise because of their round face. Their expression is mostly strict and not very friendly. The body is strong and muscular. A half-circle or triangle is shown in the top of the head (Uṣṇiṣa). The Urna is frequently short. At most sitting Bagan Buddha images the dress (Saṅghāti) is worn around the left shoulder. At standing Buddha statues, the Sanghati is worn around both shoulders. Many Buddha images from the Bagan period have been made of bronze, iron, sandstone or wood but the most images are located in pagodas and have been made of bricks and plaster.467

(C) **Buddha images from the Mandalay period:** Youthful, sweet-faced image of the Buddha wearing a robe elaborately folded, edged and decorated often with inset mirror glass, has attained great popularity and become known as the ‘Mandalay Buddha’. For many people, it came to epitomize the Burmese

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representation of the Buddha. Mandalay Buddha statues often have a broad band across the forehead. The hair hugs the head in tight curls and covers a broad prominent ushnisha. There is no lotus finial above. The images are frequently seated in the Bhumisparsa mudra and the left lying in the lap. The uttarasanga is worn in the open mode and the sanghati is folded decoratively on the left shoulder. Wood, alabaster and bronze have been the favoured materials. Many Buddha images are lacquered and gilded, including the face and body. Most standing Buddha images wear the uttarasanga in the closed mode, covering the arms and chest and held at each side of the lower body by downward-stretched hands. Below, at its lower centre, appears the antaravasaka. The sanghati flows in multitudinous folds from the left shoulder. In his right hand the Buddha holds the medicinal myrobalan fruit.

(D) **Buddha images from the Amarapura period:** Buddha images from this period are called “Pra Nong” in Thailand. In actual fact the Amarapura style is a distinctive form of Burmese art which has never before been defined. Through King Bodawpaya’s demand that the Arakanese sacred image, the Mahamuni Buddha be brought to and installed in the royal shrine at Amarapura, his newly founded capital the legacy of Arakan is prominent during this period. The Mahamuni Buddha became the most sacred image of Burma and its muscular torso influenced the Buddha images that were made during this period. Crown Buddha images (Jambupati) and those made from metal or paper mache/lacquerware were rare in Amarapura art. Instead, images were usually made of wood and gilded with gold leaf, covered with red lacquer and painted with red color and decorated with white glass inlays. The face, was round and a bit plump and resembled that of the Mahamuni Buddha, was turned downwards. A distinctive feature of these Buddha images was the circular pattern on the robe, shins and knees.468

468 [http://www.burmese-art.com/]
4.3.2 The Buddha Images in Mahāyāna Buddhist Monasteries

Mahāyāna Buddhism spread from India to various other Asian countries, namely: Bangladesh, China, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Singapore, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Bhutan, Malaysia, and Mongolia. Major traditions of Mahāyāna Buddhism today include Zen, Chinese Chán, Pure Land, Tiantai, and Nichiren. It also includes the Vajrayāna Buddhist traditions of Shingon, Tendai and Tibetan Buddhism, which add esoteric teachings to the Mahāyāna tradition. The Mahāyāna tradition holds that pursuing only the release from suffering and attainment of Nirvāṇa is too narrow an aspiration, because it lacks the motivation of actively resolving to liberate all other sentient beings from Saṃsāra. One who engages in this path is called a bodhisattva. Bodhisattvas could reach nirvana, but they believed it was more important to help others on their path of finding nirvana rather than committing fully to nirvana themselves.469

The most unique culture of the Buddha images in Tibetan style is Thakgha.470 A Thangka, also known as tangka, thanka or tanka (Nepali pronunciation: (तङ्का; Tibetan: ཐང་ཀ; Nepal Bhasa: पौभा) is a painting on cotton, or silk appliqué, usually depicting a Buddhist deity, scene, or mandala of some sort. The thangka is not a flat creation like an oil painting or acrylic painting but consists of a picture panel which is painted or embroidered over which a textile is mounted and then over which is laid a cover, usually silk. Generally, thangkas last a very long time and retain much of their lustre, but because of their delicate nature, they have to be kept in dry places where moisture will not affect the quality of the silk. It is sometimes called a scroll-painting.

These thangka served as important teaching tools depicting the life of the Buddha, various influential lamas and other deities and bodhisattvas. One subject is The Wheel of Life, which is a visual representation of the Abhidhamma teachings (Art of Enlightenment). Thangka, when created properly, perform several different functions. Images of deities can be used as teaching tools when depicting the life (or lives) of the Buddha, describing historical events concerning important Lamas, or retelling myths associated with other deities. Devotional images act as the centerpiece during a ritual or ceremony and are often used as mediums through which one can offer prayers or make requests. Overall, and perhaps most importantly, religious art is used as a meditation tool to help bring one further down the path to enlightenment. The Buddhist Vajrayāna practitioner uses a thanga image of their yidam, or meditation deity, as a guide, by visualizing “themselves as being that deity, thereby internalizing the Buddha qualities (Lipton, Ragnubs).”

Historians note that Chinese painting had a profound influence on Tibetan painting in general. Starting from the 14th and 15th century, Tibetan painting had incorporated many elements from the Chinese, and during the 18th century, Chinese painting had a deep and far-stretched impact on Tibetan visual art.\textsuperscript{471} According to Giuseppe Tucci, by the time of the Qing Dynasty, “a new Tibetan art was then developed, which in a certain sense was a provincial echo of the Chinese 18th century’s smooth ornate preciosity.”\textsuperscript{472}

Another attractive the Buddha statue in Bodhgaya is the Giant Buddha well known as “Daibutsu (Great Buddha)” which was built in Japanese style. The unveiling and consecration of the Great Buddha Statue took place on November 18, 1989. The consecration ceremony was graced with the presence of His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, who blessed the 25-meter statue, the

\textsuperscript{471} Alex Mckay. “The History of Tibet”, pp. 596 - 597.  
\textsuperscript{472} Ibid., p. 600.
first great Buddha ever built in the history of India. The Statue is now a symbol of the holy place Bodhgaya, next to Mahabohdi Temple which is a World Heritage site, and enjoys constant visits of pilgrims from all over the world. Among local people, it is nicknamed “the 80-foot (25-meter) Buddha Statue.”

In the precincts of the Great Buddha Statue, the Statues of Ten Great Disciples of Buddha stand on either side of the Great Buddha, as if protecting or following him. Of the ten standing statues, those of Sariputta and Mahamoggallana were unveiled and consecrated in November 1993. The statues of the other eight great disciples, namely Mahakassapa, Subhuti, Punna, Mahakaccana, Anuruddha, Upali, Rahula and Ananda, were consecrated in March 1996. The ten statues are made of sandstone from Chunar, near Benares - the same material as was used for the Great Buddha Statue.\(^\text{473}\)

### 4.4 Buddhist Symbolism in Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya

In the earliest centuries of Buddhism, statues of the Buddha were not used. Instead, Buddhist art consisted of images symbolizing the Buddha and his teachings, such as the lotus, the Wheel of the Law, the Bodhi tree and the Buddha’s footprints. Eventually, the Buddha image became one of the most popular representations in Buddhism, but these early symbols remain important and are frequently used to this day. They are especially important in Theravāda Buddhist countries like Sri Lanka and Thailand. There are also numerous Buddhist symbols in Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Buddhist monasteries in Bodhgaya are just like Buddhist symbolic center for people from worldwide to study.

\(^{473}\) Yoga Journal issued in July - August 1994, p. 68.
4.4.1 Footprints of the Buddha

The footprints of the Buddha are venerated in all Buddhist countries. These highly schematized footprints generally show all the toes to be of equal length, and are incised in stone. They often bear distinguishing marks - either a Dharma wheel or cakra at the centre of the sole, or the 32, 108 or 132 distinctive signs of the Buddha, engraved or painted on the sole and inscribed in a sort of checkerboard pattern. These imprints are especially venerated in countries such as Sri Lanka and Thailand, where they are protected in a special structure, sometimes highly elaborate. Finally, the Buddhapāda image can also be found on Tibetan Thangkas. The prints of the hands and feet of holy personages are generally applied during the ceremony when the Buddhapāda is consecrated.

The Buddhapādas or footprints of the Buddha were discovered in many Buddhist countries such as Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Laos and so on. It also can be found in the main Temple of Bodhgaya. All Buddhists respect the footprints of the Buddha as a symbol of the Buddha. According to Dr. Waldemar C. Sailer, who awakened the academic world to the importance and significance of the Buddha footprint, the Buddha footprints are not all the same. Old versions in Pakistan, southern India and Sri Lanka have few markings. Those from the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods in Thailand are significantly different. Other keys are also required to interpret their images.

With many years of study behind him, Dr. Sailer compares the Buddha footprint to the Christian cross, as it is a symbol of identification. Furthermore, he also suggests that the footprint is a visualization of the methodologies used in the teachings of The Lord Buddha, as revealed in the ancient Pali text of Netti, written some 2,000 years ago. This text has also been significant to Dr. Sailer throughout several years and has influenced much of his thinking and approach to his studies and occupations. Throughout his long and arduous search and study he believes that the collection and cataloguing of
Buddha Footprints has provided him with an improved understanding and deeper appreciation of Buddhism. In this respect he states that “it has answered all my questions about life: Why I exist, how to live and most importantly, how to understand other people. It's a very tolerant philosophy; there is nothing negative about it.”

4.4.1 Dhamma Wheel or Dhammachakra

Dhammachakra is the most popular symbol in Buddhism that decorated at the significant places such as main gates, chanting hall and so on, by every Buddhist Monasteries. The Dharma wheel, or Dhammachakra in Sanskrit, is one of the oldest symbols of Buddhism. Mostly Buddhist countries around the world use Dhammachakra as the most significant symbol of Buddhism. Around the globe it is used to represent Buddhism in the same way that a cross represents Christianity or a Star of David represents Judaism. It is also one of the Eight Auspicious Symbols of Buddhism. A traditional dharma wheel is a chariot wheel with varying number of spokes. It can be in any color, although it is most often gold. At the center sometimes there are three shapes swirling together, although sometimes at the center is a yin-yang symbol, or another wheel, or an empty circle.

The most fitting representation of Dhamma is a many spoked wheel (which sits in the center of India’s present flag). As a wheel it carries the meaning of being complete with as all encompassing span. And as a wheel its still and central hub is supported by a range of duties and practices (mental, physical and social), by which it is turned through the living cosmos thus bestowing its order and balance on the created world.

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A Dharma wheel has three basic parts -- the hub, the rim, and the spokes. Over the centuries various teachers and traditions have proposed diverse meanings for these parts, and explaining all of them possibly would take a book. Here are some common understandings of the wheel’s symbolism:

- The circle, the round shape of the wheel, represents the perfection of the dharma, the Buddha's teaching.

- The rim of the wheel represents meditative concentration and mindfulness which hold practice together.

- The hub represents moral discipline. The three swirls often seen on the hub are sometimes said to represent the Three Treasures or Three Jewels -- Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha. They may also represent joy.

The wheel was a common symbol in early Buddhist art, before the introduction of Buddha images. In those days, the Dharmachakra symbolized not only the Buddha’s teachings but the Buddha himself. On the tops of the pillars built by Emperor Ashoka (272-32 BC), four carved lions and four wheels face the four directions to proclaim the Buddhist Dharma throughout India. Today, the Dharmachakra appears in the art of every Buddhist culture. On images of the Buddha, the wheel appears on the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet, where it is one of the 32 Marks of a Great Man. It is especially prominent in Tibet, where it is one of the Eight Auspicious Symbols and often flanked by two deer — the whole image representing the Buddha’s first sermon in the Deer Park. The wheel is usually central to mandalas, geometric representations of the Buddhist universe. It also appears in the Dharmachakra Mudra, in which the Buddha forms a wheel with the position of his hands.

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4.4.2 Lotus Flowers

We can easily see lotus flowers in every Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya. The lotus flower symbolizes purity and divine birth. It also figures as a metaphor in the Buddha’s teaching: the lotus grows in mud at the bottom of the pond but can rise through the murky water to the surface to become a beautiful flower. The metaphor is sometimes explained as the journey from ignorance through suffering to eventual Enlightenment. The Buddha is most often responded as seated or standing on a lotus and as a symbol it is found in and around temples in a huge variety of stylised forms.478

Buddhists also believe that each color of lotus is meaningful, namely;

(A) **White lotus:** This symbolizes Bodhi, the state of total mental purity and spiritual perfection, and the pacification of our nature. It generally has eight petals corresponding to the Noble Eightfold Path of the Good Law. It is the lotus found at the heart of the Garbhadhatu Mandala, being the womb or embryo of the world. It is characteristic of the esoteric sects, and the lotus of the Buddhas.

(B) **Red lotus:** This symbolizes the original nature of the heart (*hrdaya*). It is the lotus of love, compassion, passion, activity and all the qualities of the heart. It is the lotus of Avalokitesvara.

(C) **Blue lotus:** This is the symbol of the victory of the spirit over the senses, of intelligence and wisdom, of knowledge. It is always represented as a partially opened bud, and (unlike the red lotus) its centre is never seen. It is the lotus of Manjusri, and also one of the attributes of Prajnaparamita, the embodiment of the 'perfection of wisdom.

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(D) **Pink lotus:** This is the supreme lotus, generally reserved for the highest deity, sometimes confused with the white lotus it is the lotus of the historical Buddha.

(E) **Purple lotus:** This is the mystic lotus, represented only in images belonging to a few esoteric sects. The flowers may be in full bloom and reveal their heart, or in a bud. They may be supported by a simple stem, a triple stem (symbolizing the three divisions of Garbhadhatu: Vairocana, lotus and vajra), or a quintuple stem (symbolizing the Five Knowledges of Vajradhatu). The eight petals represent the Noble Eightfold Path and the eight principal acolyte deities of the central deity on the mandalas. The flowers may also be depicted presented in a cup or on a tray, as a symbol of homage.\(^{479}\)

4.4.3 **Nāga**

An outstanding art that we can see in Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya particularly in Theravada Monasteries is Nāga. Buddhists respect in Naga because they believe Nāga is associated with the history of the Buddha’s life as told in *Jataka* stories and other Buddhist literature. We are told that when the Buddha was meditating a terrible storm rocked the area and there was much of rainfall. The Naga king named *Muchlinda Nagaraja*, who was living in the large pond near the *Muchalinda* tree, then appeared there and through his miracle powers spread out his seven hood head to cover the Buddha to protect him from the strong storm and heavy rainfall. The Nāga King coiled his body into seven cycles surrounding the Buddha and the tree to save it from the storm till the rain stopped. Later, *Muchalinda Nagaraja* disguised himself in human form and came to pay homage to the Buddha.\(^{480}\) This story later on became an

\(^{479}\) Buddhist Study: Buddha Dhamma Education Association & Buddhanet (http://www.buddhanet.net/)

\(^{480}\) Siriwatanaanatorn. “*Suvarnabhumi or Golden City*”, p. 113.
important source of inspiration as regards the creation of the special type of the Buddha image, called Buddha under Nāga.\textsuperscript{481}

The stairway or staircase of the Bot (It is called as Viharn)\textsuperscript{482} or Mondop and other religious buildings in Thailand is also characterized by the Nāga balustrade which at the end of stairs is responded through the resting hood of the Nāga head above the ground. These architectural features were no doubt adopted and imitated from the bridge on the moat of Khmer architecture at Angkor Vat and Angkor Thom.

\textit{Nāga} or Nag (in Thai) also refers to the Thai young men before their ordination as Buddhist monks, designated as such by society and tradition. The story goes that once a \textit{Nāga} (serpent) disguised itself in human form so that he could be ordained as a monk by the Buddha, but he was detected by the monks. The Buddha told him that only human beings could be ordained as monks and not animals. The Nāga became very sad and requested the Buddha to instruct the Sangha to preserve his name forever by calling young men as Naga before their ordination as monks. His prayer was accepted and since then Thai young men have been called as Naga before ordination, which is current even today.\textsuperscript{483}

\textbf{4.4.4 The Buddhist Flag}

From early stages of their civilizations, people sued different types of flags to symbolize their victories, events, groups, occasions and so many other opportunities. This reflects that the flag is a common instrument shown very essential for each of the important human involvements form early ages. There are evidence that flags were used in India from ancient periods by people and also by Gods. When Queen Mahāmaya, the Royal mother of the Prince

\textsuperscript{481} Promsak Jermsawatdi. \textit{“Thai Art with Indian Influences”}, p. 124.
\textsuperscript{482} Chami Jotissalikorn. \textit{“Classic Thai: Design, Interiors and Architecture”}, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{483} Ibid., p. 125.
Siddhartha went to her parental palace at Devdaha for her confinement, the road from Kapilawastu to Devdaha was decorated with flags, says early Buddhist texts. In Buddhist history, we can find several places that used flags for decoration at religious festivals. As mentioned in Buddhist texts, devotees have hoisted flags on the chambers to receive the Lord Buddha and his disciples. And also it was a known fact that from early ages, flags were used to honour the Bodhi-tree in temples. Mahawansa, the great chronicle of Sri Lankan history has mentioned that King Duttagamini or Dutugamunu was accompanied by one thousand and eight youths carrying multicolored flags, when he turned up the enshrine the Buddha relic in the Great Stupa, the Ruwanvaliseya in Anuradhapura. In ancient times, flags were used in such occasions to symbolize victory, power, leadership, dignity, honour and unity.484

Buddhist in different countries and different regions used different types of flags in their religious occasion, but earlier there was no any consensus to use a common flag to symbolize the unity of Buddhist or to present the whole Buddhist community. The story of the present Buddhist flag was originated in Sri Lanka in connection with the celebrations of Vaisak full moon day. Vaisak full moon day is very important of Buddhists because of all three events of birth, enlightenment and the death of Lord Buddha happened on the Vaisaka full moon days. In this respect each year all Buddhists celebrate Vaisaka full moon day by devoting in religious activities.

Origination of the idea of having a Buddhist flag is directly linked with the Puja holidays, particularly the Vaisaka Puja holiday. From ancient kings’ periods, Sri Lankan Buddhists were used to devote in religious activities in each Puja day and it was a holiday for them to do religious observances. By introducing Sunday as a holiday from 1770 in coastal areas by Dutch they

disturbed local people for their religious observances in puja days for the first time in their history. Later in 1817 British rulers declared Sunday as a holiday for the whole country instead of Puja holiday. By this decision Buddhist in Sir Lanka who was the vast majority of the population in the country were forced to avoid unofficially to engage in religious activities during Puja days which was religiously important. Even Vaisaka full moon day obviously became a working day and people were not allowed to celebrate even Vaisaka full moon day as their important religious day. People became unrest with this situation and they made several representations to the rulers to reintroduce Puja holiday in the country. But the British rulers did not change the decision and then the unrest among the people developed and some religious troubles also took place by attacking one procession organized by the Buddhists at Kotahena, Colombo. After these troubles, British rulers imposed banning on all religious activities in the country for Buddhist. This resulted a religious unrest against the British rulers and as result Buddhist leaders organized to respond the rulers. Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumanagala Nayake Thera gave the leadership for this movement and they formed a Committee (Defence Committee for Buddhist) or Colombo Committee for purpose of restoring the rights of Buddhists.\(^{485}\)

This Committee comprised of Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumanagala Nayake Thera, (Chairman) Ven. Migettuwatte Gunanadarana, Messra Don. Carolis Hewawitharana, Muhandiram A.P. Dharmagunawardana, William de Abrew, Charles A. de Silva S.N. Fernando, Peter de Abrew, H. Willam Fernando and Carolis Pujitha Gunawardana (Secretary). On an invitation of this Committee in January 1844, Colonel Steel Olcott who was the pioneer of Buddhist education in Sri Lanka, came to Colombo from Madras to attend a meeting of the Committee. He was assigned to be the representative of the country to inform all these to the British Government and he was able to submit a letter to the

\(^{485}\) Ibid., p. 26.
British Government, emphasizing 6 matters to be fulfilled. Among those six matters, important request was made to re-introduce the Vaisaka Puja Holiday in Sri Lanka. This attempt was successful and Queen’s Government in Britain allowed Sri Lanka to re-impose the Vaisaka Puja Holiday again. This decision was declared in Sri Lanka on 27th March 1885 and next Vaisak Puja day fell on the 28th of the following month, April 1885.

With that decision, Sri Lanka Buddhist decided to celebrate the coming Wesak Pujā Holiday in full scale and Baudhharkshaka Committee led the role of celebrations. Amongst the other activities, Committee wanted to hoist a flag having Buddhist significance to highlight the celebrations. This was the first important historical juncture that showed the need of a flag to symbolize Buddhist identity in the world. Committee was formed to organize the celebrations and all members of the Committee made their suggestions for a design of a flag to hoist at the occasions for a design of a flag to hoist suggestion. This Committee was headed by Ven. Hikkaduwe Summanagala Nayake Thera and the other members were Ven. Migettuwattee Gunananda Thera, C.P. Gunawardana (Secretary), Don Carolis Hewawithararaa. A.P. Dharmagunawardana, William de Abrew, Charles A. de Silva, S.N. Fernando, Peter de Abrewa and H.William Fernando. Colonal Henry Steel Olcott also was a member of this Committee. It is believed that considering all suggestions made by the members of the Committee C.P. Gunawardana forwarded a design which included six colours of the rays evolved from the body of Lord Buddha. Therefore these colours are of great significance to Buddhists. There was a precedency of using six coloured flag by Ven. Migettawatte Gunananda Thera, the famous debator with missionaries. When he brought a six coloured triangular flag to symbolize the side of Buddhists. Since he was one of the
leading members of the Committee the idea of six colours might be taken from him.\textsuperscript{486}

However, Committee accepted the design of the flag with six colours of Buddha considering the sanctity of the six colours for Buddhists. These colours were blue (Neela), yellow (Peetha), Crimson (Lohitha), white (Odatha), Tawny (manjesta) and the colour made up of mixture of the above five colours (prabhassara). These colours we believe evolved from the body of Lord Buddha in the following manner. We used to call these rays or radiance as Buddha Rusmi or sareeaprabha,

\textbf{Blue (neela)} evolving from his hair and the yellow parts of the eyes.

\textbf{Yellow (Peetha)} evolving from his skin and the yellow parts of the eyes.

\textbf{Crimson (Lohitha)} evolving from flesh, blood and red part of the eyes.

\textbf{White (Odatha)} evolving from his bones, teeth and the white parts of the eyes.

\textbf{Prabhassara} mixture of these colours evolving from different parts of his body.\textsuperscript{487}

This flag was published in Sri Lankan newspaper called “Sarasawi Sandaresa” on the 17\textsuperscript{th} April 1885. Flag was hoisted at the occasion of celebration of Wesak full moon day, that was the 28\textsuperscript{th} April 1985, the first Wesak full moon day declared as a public holiday under the British rule. Ceremonial hoisting of the flag was done by Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera at Deepaduththaramaya, Kotahena, and Colombo. This was marked the first occasion of hoisting a Buddhist in the Buddhist history.

\textsuperscript{486} Ibid., p. 27.
\textsuperscript{487} Maha Bodhi Society of India, “Dharmadoot”, p. 28.
This flag was narrow and slender from the left to right in shape. After the occasion, Colonel Olcott arrived in Sri Lanka and came to know that the Buddhist flag was introduced and he having a Buddhist flag was introduced and he was greatly impressed by the concept of having a Buddhist flag. But he was unhappy with the size and the shape of the flags only. He made some suggestions to amend the size and the shape of the flag to match with the common size of the national flags in other countries. Those suggestions were accepted and modifications were made accordingly for the size and the shape and not to six colours. Finally leading priests in Sri Lanka approved the modified flag and the was published in the paper as the Buddhist flag in Sri Lanka. Modified Buddhist flag was hoisted first time on Wesak full moon day of 1886. The Buddhist flag currently we are using at all Buddhist events IS that modified flag.

Later, in 1889 Anagarika Dharmapala and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott went to Japan to visit Emperor in Japan and there they introduced the Buddhist flag to the Emperor. Then they started to use that six coloured flag as the Buddhist flag in Japan. Subsequently, Anagarika Dharmapala and Colonel Steel Olcott introduced this six coloured flag to Mayanmar, then Burma, as the Buddhist flag. Now this six coloured flag has become the Buddhist flag of all Buddhist in the world. Introduction of this flag to the world Buddhist was the pioneered by famous intellectual, Professor G.P. Malalakara when he was the founder President of the World Fellowship of Buddhist (WFB). He made the proposal at its inaugural convention held in Kandy, Sri Lanka in 1950. That convention was attended by Buddhist delegates from 29 countries. They accepted the proposal unanimously and since then international recognition was received to the six coloured flag as the Buddhist flag of all Buddhist communities in the world to symbolize religious unity and solidarity of Buddhists.
Today, Buddhists all over the world honour the Buddhist flag as their symbol and they use this six coloured flag to hoist at all religious events as the Buddhist flag. Buddhists respect the Buddhist flag in the way they respect their national flag. Size and the shape of the flag has been accepted as the standard size and shape of the national flag and the arrangement of colours is also decided as seen in the present Buddhist flag. Now all Buddhist in the world use this Buddhist flag respectfully without any dispute.

4.4.5 Eight Auspicious Symbols

When pilgrims from over the world who have an opportunity to visit Buddhist Monasteries will see several styles of symbol. The remarkable symbols in Buddhism are known as Eight Auspicious Symbols. Mahayāna and Vajrayana Buddhist art frequently makes use of a particular set of eight auspicious symbols, ashtamangala, in household and public art. These symbols have spread with Buddhism to many cultures’ arts, including Indian, Tibetan, Nepalese and Chinese art. The eight auspicious symbols, also called “Eight Precious Symbols” (Sanskrit aṣṭamangala, Tibet. Bkra-shis-rtags brgyad), constitute one of the oldest and best known groups of symbols (including objects, animals and plants) of Tibetan culture, already present from the canonical texts of Indian Buddhism written in Pali and Sanskrit. Always been used in traditional ceremonies and on special occasions, have assumed increasing importance over the centuries. The eight auspicious symbols are often depicted on kata (a scarf Tibetan auspicious and blessing), banners, tapestries, thangkas, flags and engraved on bracelets, necklaces etc.. They can also decorate the walls and beams, the sides of the thrones and many other articles used in religious or secular, are also plotted on the ground with white

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powder when it is expected to pass some important personalities religious or civil.\textsuperscript{489}

1. **Shell** (in Sanskrit Sankha, in Tibetan dung gyas’khyl) is represented in white, dextrorotatory and with the terminal part to the tip. Used since ancient times, in pre Buddhist, as a symbol of female deities, such as container and as a musical instrument. In Tibetan Buddhism is also used as a water pot with saffron and, primarily, as a musical instrument used to call the monks to meetings and to make offerings of sounds during puje. Represents the glory of the teaching of Dharma, as the sound of the shell, spreading in all directions. Also appears in “8 SUBSTANCE OF GOOD HOPE”.\textsuperscript{490}

2. **Parasol** (Sanskrit chattra, gdugs in Tibetan) is the symbol of royal dignity and represents the spiritual power. Derived Indian art, is represented in different forms and variations. Single or triple, yellow silk, white or colored, is represented open and wide enough to accommodate four or five people. Eight strips of silk of one color or multicolored, decorated with fringe, hanging down from the top edge. The symbolic significance of the sun comes from its function of protection from inclement weather or excessive sun, a possibility which has always been identified as a sign of wealth. That has become a symbol of power and kingship. The parasol symbolizes compassion and protection of all sentient beings from suffering, disease, ignorance and mental poisons.\textsuperscript{491}

3. **Banner of Victory** (dhvaja in Sanskrit, in Tibetan-rgyal mtshan) refers to different objects of Tibetan culture. It 's made of wood and fabric, rarely metal. Classically it is a narrow cylinder of tissue with three or more strips of silk adorned with ribbons of five colors (white, red, green, blue, yellow). Serves

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{490} J.R. Santiago. “Sacred Symbols of Buddhism”, p. 25.
\end{flushleft}
as decoration and usually is found in temples and monasteries, suspended from the ceiling, as ornaments of the roofs of buildings or private, or religious ends of long poles of prayer. It represents the victory of the Buddhist teachings, knowledge over ignorance and fear, the Dharma of all obstacles and achieve the ultimate happiness.

4. **Goldfish** (suvarnamatsya in Sanskrit, Tibetan gser-nya) is a religious symbol used since ancient times. Originally in India represented the holy rivers of Ganga and Yamuna with the fish. The two fish are parallel and face each other vertically or intersect slightly. In Tibet, the two golden fishes are represented only in conjunction with eight other symbols. Represent the overcoming of all obstacles and the attainment of liberation, freedom in having acquired the knowledge of the ultimate nature, as well as the fish swim free in the water, and the preciousness of samsaric beings, which should be freed from ignorance.

5. **Vase of wealth** Tibetan images in the jar (kalasa in Sanskrit, Tibetan chen-po'i gter-bum-pa) is a round container with a short neck and narrow and then widens to form a rim. The mouth of the jar is closed with a great jewel. The use of vessels of this type dates back to early Buddhism and other religions and symbolizes the idea of achievement and satisfaction of material desires. In Tibetan Buddhism using vessels of different shape depending on the ritual practices, in particular for that tantric. The vase symbolizes wealth of spiritual fulfillment, the perfection of the dharma, longevity and prosperity.  

6. **Lotus:** The lotus (padme insanscrito, but in Tibetan-pad) does not grow in Tibet, for this is drawn so much more simple and stylized representations with respect to Indian art, or Japanese. The fact that it is occurring in Tibet indicate that its use is strictly symbolic and iconographic.

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492 Ibid., p. 7.
indicating purity and beauty in that, although rooted in the mud of ponds, produces white flowers above the water. It represents spiritual purity, and that is why often the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and seed syllables are represented on a pillow shaped like a lotus flower. The symmetry of the petals of the lotus flower, represents the order of the cosmos and this is used as a template for the creation of a mandala. The image of the lotus is used in the practice of self-healing Ngal-know to identify and redress the 5 I 7 Chakra.

7. **Node;** Infinity (in Sancritus Srivatsa, in Tibetan dpal be'u) is a closed node consists of intertwined lines at right angles. And 'one of the favorite and most used symbols Tibetan iconography. There are no clear indications as to its origin: it is often compared to the symbol nandyavarta, a variant of the swastika that has many similarities with this node. In Tibetan Buddhism is a classic symbol of the way in which all phenomena are interdependent with each other and depend on the causes and conditions (tendrel) that are represented by the geometric lines that intersect each other. Having neither beginning nor end it also symbolizes the infinite knowledge and wisdom and eternity of his teachings. Because of its importance and graphic simplicity, this symbol is also used alone.\(^{493}\)

8. **Dharma wheel** (in Sancritus cakra, in Tibetan ‘khor-lo) is composed of a central hub, of 8 or more spokes and a rim outside. The image of the wheel is a universal symbol and is present in all cultures. Already in pre Buddhist was widespread in the double sense of the weapon or the Sun rotates in Buddhist culture, is closely associated with the concept of the Wheel of Dharma by the Buddha set in motion at the first public exposition of his teaching at Sarnath near Benares (now Varanasi) in the deer park. For this reason often the Wheel of Dharma is represented between two gazelles. The meanings of the Wheel of

Dharma can be manifold. According to the three trainings of Buddhist practice, the hub is training in moral discipline which stabilizes the mind; rays represent the understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena that eliminates the root of our ignorance, and the outer rim, finally, identifies the concentration that allows you to keep a steady practice of Buddhist doctrine.

4.4.6 Tibetan Bell

Bodhgaya is well known as the Holy Buddhist place that has attracted Buddhist pilgrims from around the world to visit. Tibetan pilgrims are the strongest believable one. Every morning they usually come along with bell and chant nearby the Holy place. This has become the familiar picture to everyone. The ritual hand-bell or ghanta represents the feminine principle of the ‘Perfection of Wisdom’ (Skt. Prajna-paramita), which directly realizes emptiness. When the bell is rung it is said to proclaim the sound of emptiness, and this bell is also known as a Vajra-ghanta (Tib. Rdo-rje dril-bu). The feminine bell is always held in the left wisdom hand of a deity or practitioner and is commonly paired with the masculine Vajra, which is held in the right method hand. Together they symbolize the perfect union of wisdom or emptiness (bell) and method or skilful means (Vajra) with the bell presenting emptiness and the Vajra form. The five prongs of the Vajra represent the five male perfections of generosity, morality, patience, perseverance and concentration. The open mouth of the bell represents the sixth female perfection of wisdom.494

Tibetan bells are traditionally individually cast from bronze or bell metal by a skilful technique of sand-casting. An inner and outer mould are prepared for the bell casting, formed from finely compacted sand which is mixed with a cohesive binder, such as radish juice or raw brown sugar. The ritual set of a

Vajra and bell essentially represents the practitioner’s main personal or Yimdam deity and the deity’s mandala. The sound of the bell varies depending on the proportion of the components of the alloy, the shape and thickness of the metal. It is used in rituals and it is believed that vibration is useful to encourage the concentration during meditation.

4.4.7 Mala

Buddhist prayer beads are a traditional tool used to count the number of times a mantra is recited whilst meditating. They are similar to other forms of prayer beads used in various world religions; thus some call this tool the Buddhist rosary. Mala is very popular and well known for Buddhists, both Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

There are numerous explanations why there are 108 beads, with the number 108 bearing special religious significance in a number of Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Ananda Coomaraswamy holds that the numerology of the decimal numeric system was key to its inception. One for bindu; zero for shunyata and eight for ananta. In traditional Buddhist thought, people are said to have 108 afflictions or kleshas. There are six senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and consciousness) multiplied by three reactions (positive, negative, or indifference) making 18 “feelings.” Each of these feelings can be either "attached to pleasure or detached from pleasure” making 36 “passions”, each of which may be manifested in the past, present, or future. All the combinations of all these things makes a total of 108, which are represented by the beads in the ojuzu. This same number is also used in Japanese New Year services where a bell is rung 108 times. In addition, practitioners of Vajrayana Buddhism, use the number 108 for a different

495 Ibid., p. 93.
purpose. After reciting 100 mantras, eight extra mantras are done to compensate for any errors.

4.5 Catiya or Stupa

It seems to be Buddhist tradition that Catiya or stupa is usually established in Buddhist Monasteries. We can see the different style of Catiya or stupa located in Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya. A Stupa is a mound-like or hemispherical structure containing Buddhist relics, typically the ashes of Buddhist monks, used by Buddhists as a place of meditation. It is a religious structure exclusively Buddhist. It was originally small, a repository of the ashes of holy monks and thus a monument to the departed monk.496

Mostly the purpose of stupa is classified based on form and function into five types, namely;

1. Relic stupa, in which the relics or remains of the Buddha, his disciples and lay saints are interred.

2. Object stupa, in which the items interred are objects belonged to the Buddha or his disciples such as a begging bowl or robe, or important Buddhist scriptures.

3. Commemorative stupa, built to commemorate events in the lives of Buddha or his disciples.

4. Symbolic stupa, to symbolise aspects of Buddhist theology, for example, Borobuddur is considered to be the symbol of ‘the Three Worlds (dhatu) and the spiritual stages (bhumi) in a Mahāyāna bodhisattva’s character’.

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5. Votive stupa, constructed to commemorate visits or to gain spiritual benefits, usually at the site of prominent stupas which are regularly visited.\textsuperscript{497}

The design and outside ramification of stupas varied from country to country. This has been very significant in Theravada Buddhist countries. In Sri Lanka, a country hallowed by several visits of the Buddha, stupa is popularly known as “dagaba, chaitya, thupa or seya”. The word “dagaba” is derived from Pali “dhatu gabba”, the Sanskrit “dhatu garbha”, meaning ‘containing relics in the womb’. The word “chaitya” is derived from Pali “cheti”, which in turn comes from the root cit, to burn, and so means ‘containing that which has been burned’. “Thupa” is the Pali from of the Sanskrit “stupa”. Seya is the indigenous form.\textsuperscript{498}

In Myanmar, the term “ceti” and “zedi” are used for a stupa or pagoda, while “phaya” is used for a temple. In Thailand and Cambodia, “chedi” and “wat” are used for a stupa, “wat” and “vihārn” for a temple complex. In Lao, a stupa is referred to as “wat” or “that”. The terms “stupa” and “pagoda” are used in India and Nepal, and in Sri Lanka they are referred to as “chaitya, seya and stupa”. In Mahayana Buddhist states such as Bhutam, Ladakh, Mongolia, Sikkhim and Tibet, a stupa is referred to as “choten” and a monastery as “gompa”.\textsuperscript{499}

In Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, the main body or drum of the stupa takes an elongated form, gradually tapering from the base upwards with a pointed pinnacle with a miniature stupa mounted on it. The dome is terraced with ornate designs in between the tapering layers. The trunk of the pinnacle is ringed up to the spire. In Cambodia, Laos and Thailand the stupa

\textsuperscript{497} Le Huu Phuoc. “Buddhist Architecture”, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{498} W. Vivian De Thabrew. “Buddhist Monuments and Temples of Myanmar and Thailand”, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{499} Ibid., p. 23.
tapering at each level has the end cornices pointing upwards.\textsuperscript{500} In Thailand, there were several styles of stupas and the most popular shape for the early Thai stupa was the bell, but regional variations emerged over time. There was the Prang shape at Aytuthya, the lotus shape at Sukhothai and the bell shape over high square base at Lan Na.\textsuperscript{501}

The Nepalese stupa, like that of India and Sri Lanka, maintained the rounded dome-shape, broad at the base but with a less rounded dome, somewhat spherical, and with a tall spire. Mostly Nepalese stupa are established following as Swayambhunath.\textsuperscript{502}

In most Tibetan-style stupa, known as chotens, the drum or dome is decorated at the base and at the top below the spire with brightly coloured designs. The Nepalese stupa or bodhi is dome-shaped with a rectangular brick wall or platform at the top of the dome, bearing a pair of eyes painted on each side. These eyes represent the eyes of wisdom or knowledge (\textit{bodhyakshi}). The nose-like marking below the eyes resembling an elongated question-mark is the Nepalese numeral one (\textit{ek}), symbolizing unity. In Nepal, Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism merge into oneness, maintaining their individual ritualistic and architectural features. Thus the Nepali and Tibetan forms of stupa (\textit{bodhi} and \textit{choten}) exist side by side.\textsuperscript{503} The Tibetan-style chorten has a shape similar to the stupa, but the rounded part flares outward instead of being a dome shape. Thimphu’s National Memorial Charten is an excellent example of this style.\textsuperscript{504}

\textsuperscript{500} Ibid., p. 24.
\textsuperscript{502} Michael Hann, Symbol. “\textit{Pattern and Symmetry: The Cultural Significance of Structure}”, p. 117.
\textsuperscript{503} Eric Stratton. “\textit{The Evolution of Indian Stupa Architecture in East Asia}”, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{504} Stan Armington. “\textit{Bhutan}”, p. 82.
The Bhutanese design comprises a square stone pillar with a Khemar near the top. The exact origin of this style is not known, but is believed to be a reduced form of the classical stupa, with only the pinnacle and square base. Some Bhutanese chortens have a ball and crescent representing the moon and sun on top.  

4.6 Buddhist Holy Festival or Pujā Festival in Bodhgaya

There are many special or holy days held throughout the year by the Buddhist community. Buddhist Festivals are always joyful occasions. Typically on a festival day, lay people will go the local temple or monastery and offer food to the monks and take the Five Precepts and listen to a Dharma talk. In the afternoon, they distribute food to the poor to make merit and in the evening join perhaps in a ceremony of circumambulation a stupa three time as a sign of respect to the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha. The day will conclude with evening chanting of the Buddha's teachings and meditation.

Buddhist monasteries have become huge Buddhist community in Bodhgaya. Both of them, Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhist monasteries, have interaction to organize the Buddhist respectively till becoming annual activities in Bodhgaya.

4.6.1 Buddha Jayanti in Bodhgaya

The Bodhgaya Temple Management committee organised the Buddha Jayanti Celebration, as already mentioned, on the Vaisākhr Pūrṇimā (Full Moon Day of May). It was on the thrice Blessed Day of the Buddha Pūrṇimā, i.e. Prince Siddhārtha’s Birth at Lumbinī, Enlightenment at Bodhgaya and sacred demise or Mahāparinibbāna at Kusinārā. A large number of Buddhist devotees from many parts of the world gathered Buddhagaya on this occasion to pay their

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505 Ibid., p. 82.
respectful homage to Buddha. Besides decorating the Temple and its surroundings with colourful Buddhist flags and illumination, the committee made arrangements for morning ceremonial prayers under the holy Bodhi Tree, colourful peace procession of monks and devotees, worship with large offering, distribution of sweet and snacks to the school children, arrangement of religious discourses, Saṅgha Dāna to the Ven’ble monks, group meditation and symposium on relevant topics, Similarly, many Buddhist festive occasions were celebrated from time to time with great pomp, gaiety, dignity and devotion at Bodhgaya all around the year.  

4.6.2 Occasional Saṅgha Dānas

The Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee organized the Saṅgha Dāna on every Full Moon Day, besides the Anagarika Dharmapala Birth Anniversary on 17 September and Dr. Baba saheb Ambedkar Jayanti on 14 April as well as his death Anniversary on 6 December, and Peace Prayer meeting from time to time.

4.6.3 Kaṭhina Cīvra Dāna Ceremony

The Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee arranged the Holy Kaṭhina Cīvra Dāna Ceremony (Robe Offering Ceremony) which culminated with the end of the rainy season retreat of monks every year since 2001 at the Temple. This Ceremony was being held in the month of October-November. All pilgrims/devotees visiting the Temple during this occasion were loomed to participate in the Ceremony with prior intimation to the chief monk of Mahābodhi Mahāvihāra Temple.

With the end of the 3 months Rains Retreat, monks are free to move from place to place and are eligible to receive new robes in an annual presentation
ceremony called ‘Kaṭhina Cīvra Dāna Ceremony’. The word ‘Kaṭhina’ literary means the embroidery frame used in sewing the yellow robes which, in those days, were collected from rags on dead bodies in the jungle since clothes were not available in plenty as nowadays. Buddhists regard the ceremony as the most significant form of merit making next to ordination of their close kin.  

4.6.4 Nyingma Monlam and World Peace

The World Peace Prayer Congregation by the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism was being held every year for 10 days, i.e. from the 1st to 10th days of 12th month (January), according to lunar calendar, since 1994 at Bodhgaya. This Ceremony was being organised by the Nyingma Monlam International Foundation, a registered Dharma Trust, consisting of Members representing Nyingma lineage monasteries and institutions from all parts of India, Bhutan, Nepal and abroad. It was the biggest gathering of prayer ceremony according to Tibetan Buddhism held at Bodhgaya.  

4.6.5 Peace Prayer Ceremonies

All other traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and Theravāda Buddhism groups of India and abroad had joined in organizing Peace Prayer Ceremonies under the Holy Bodhi Tree every year. On such occasions, Buddhists and devotees form all over the world took part in such ceremonies. The present annually organised Peace Prayer Ceremony dedicated to World Peace was held at the Mahābodhi Mahāvihāra Temple under the Holy Bodhi Tree. The number of seeking permission from the Bodhgaya (Buddha Gaya) Temple Management Committee to hold such ceremony was increasing every year.

508 Ibid., p. 308.
4.7 The Special Occasions in Bodhgaya

Above from the Buddhist Holy festivals, Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya have co-operated to organize numerous special occasions, namely;

4.7.1 Dr. Ambedkar Birth Anniversary

Yearly Dr. Ambedkar Anniversary is established by co-operation of all Buddhist monasteries headed by Mahabodhi Society in the area of an elegant astadhatu (Bronze metal) statue of Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar which stands in Lokanayaka Jaiprakash Naranin Park behind the Māhābodhi Mahāvihāra at Bodhgaya. The foundation stone of the statue was laid by Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav of Bihar on 5 September 1992 AD. The statue was provided through the efforts of Ven’ble Bhadanta Arya Nagarjuna Surai Sasai. The statue represents Baba Sahed with a book in his life hand while his right hand points at the Mahābodhi Mahāvihāra. The statue is superb in its quality and art. Most of the Buddhist visitors to Bodhgaya come to see his statue and pay homage to Baba Saheb. All of us know that Baba Saheb is the architect of our constitution, but few may be knowing that he is knowing that he is also the one who revived and restored Buddhism in India. It is due to him that we see a throng of visitors, pilgrims and tourists at all the sacred Buddhist spots in India.\(^509\)

Dr. Ambedkar is a great Buddhist restorer of modern times. It is due to the awakening and consciousness brought about by Baba Saheb that we are now given to witess such huge crowds assembling at all Buddhists ports and priding in relating themselves to the Buddhist heritage of yore. Baby Saheb Dr. Ambedka had played a historic, crucial and important role in reviving Buddhism in India. It is all due to his efforts that the number of Buddhists has reached several millions in India. It is a bitter fact that cannot be denied.

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\(^{509}\) Shanti Swarroop Baudh. “Bodhgaya: The great Sacred Place of Buddhists”, p. 143.
Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar founded “The Buddhist Society of India” (Bhartiya Baudha Mahasabha) on 5 May 1955 to propagate Buddhism in India. The national president of the Mahasabha, Mahopassi Ambedkar, has also resolved to set up an office and a monument at Bodhgaya on behalf of the organisation.

This is worth mentioning here that while returning from International Buddhist Conference, Kathmandu, Babasaheb visited Bodhgaya in November 1957 AD along with his wife Dr. Savita Ambedkar and others. He venerated and saluted the Bodhi-tree under which Boddhisatta Siddhartha attained the full Enlightenment. He sat under the Bodhi-tree and practiced meditation for a while and chanted Bodhi-Suttas, which were repeated by others. On this occasion his eyes were wet.  

4.7.2 Birth Anniversary of Anagarrika Dharmapala

Yearly Birth Anniversary of Anagarrika Dharmapala is also held in Buddhagaya by all Buddhist monasteries headed by Mahabodhi Society. Anagarrika Dharmapala was the most significant person who struggled to take back Mahavihara Temple from Hindus influence. David Hewavitarne later on Anagarika Dharmapala was born on 17th September, 1864 in a rich Sinhalese Buddhist family in Colombo, Ceylon. The founder of Mahabodhi Society of India spear headed the Buddhist revival movement throughout his life. The Anagarika Dharmapala’s (Ven. Devamitta Dhammapala) died on 29th April, 1933, every year the day of this birth is observed by MBSI with all dignity and respect. Public meeting/seminar is held where renewed scholars participate every year.

510 Ibid., p. 144.
4.8 The National Traditional Festival

Because of coming from different countries and cultures, each country has their own culture. Pilgrims in each international Buddhist Monasteries have organised the essential national cultures to preserve their own culture and also people can study these cultures in Bodhgaya. For example;

4.8.1 Songran Festival

The most significant festival of Southeast Asian regions is Songkran festival that has been organized yearly by Buddhist Monasteries in Bodhgaya especially in Thai Buddhist Monasteries. This festival is the Thai traditional New Year and an occasion for family reunion. An important event on the Buddhist calendar, this water festival marks the beginning of the traditional Thai New Year. The festival falls on April 13 and the annual celebration is held through the kingdom. In fact, “Songkran” is a Thai word which means “move” or “change place” as it is the day when the sun changes its position in the zodiac. It is also known as the “Water Festival” as people believe that water will wash away bad luck.

Water is an important element of Songkran, especially in more recent times when the throwing of water has become a huge part of the annual celebrations. If you're visiting Thailand during this period don't be surprised if you get splashed. Crowds of people roam around throwing buckets of water, using water pistols and just generally soaking anyone in the vicinity. Appreciation of family is another important aspect of the festival, with many Thai people making their way to their hometowns to spend time with older relatives. Buddhists also visit temples throughout Songkran where water is poured on Buddha images and on the hands of Buddhist monks as a mark of

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respect. For traditional reservation, this festival is held in Thai Buddhist Monasteries every year.\(^{513}\)

Moreover, the Water Festival is the New Year’s celebrations that take place in Southeast Asian countries such as Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Yunnan, China. It is called the “Water Festival” by Westerners because people splash/pour water at one another as part of the cleansing ritual to welcome the New Year.\(^{514}\) Traditionally people gently sprinkled water on one another as a sign of respect, but as the New Year falls during the hottest month in South East Asia, many people end up dousing strangers and passersby in vehicles in boisterous celebration. The act of pouring water is also a show of blessings and good wishes. It is believed that on this Water Festival, everything old must be thrown away, or it will bring the owner bad luck.\(^{515}\)

The festival has several different names specific to each country, such as Songkran in Laos and Thailand, Chaul Chnam Thmey in Cambodia, and Thingyan in Myanmar. The New Year is celebrated in other South Asian countries, based on the astrological event of the sun beginning its northward journey. Traditional dance, singing and cultural shows are performed together during the festival. Religious activities in the tradition of Theravada Buddhism are also carried out at pagoda and monastery. Young people visit elders to pay respect during this period. The Burmese New Year *Thingyan* is announced by the traditional calendar of Myanmar Team and normally falls around 13 April. Cambodia celebrates the Cambodian New Year from 13 to 15 April. The Lao New Year, called Songkran (ສົງກຣານ) in the Lao language, is celebrated every year from 13 to 15 April.

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\(^{514}\) John Tudor Griffiths. “Pattaya Parables”, p. 3.

4.8.2 Aluth Avurudda

Sinhalese New Year, generally known as Aluth Avudda (Sinhala: අලුත් අවුරුද්ද) in Sri Lanka, is the new year of the Sinhalese people in Sri Lanka. It is a major anniversary celebrated by not only the Sinhalese people but by most Sri Lankans. The timing of the Sinhala New Year coincides with the new year celebrations of many traditional calendars of South and Southeast Asia. The festival has close semblance to the Tamil New Year, Thai New year, Bengali New year, Cambodian New Year, Lao New Year, Thingyan in Myanmar and Oriya New Year festival in India. It is a public holiday in Sri Lanka. It is generally celebrated on 13 or 14 April.

4.8.3 Chinese New Year Festival

Chinese New Year is an important traditional Chinese holiday celebrated at the turn of the Chinese calendar. In China, it is also known as the Spring Festival, the literal translation of the modern Chinese name. Chinese New Year celebrations traditionally run from Chinese New Year’s Eve, the last day of the last month of the Chinese calendar, to the Lantern Festival on the 15th day of the first month, making the festival the longest in the Chinese calendar. Because the Chinese calendar is lunisolar, the Chinese New Year is often referred to as the “Lunar New Year”. Traditionally, the festivities surrounding Chinese New Year was known as the Nian festival.

The source of Chinese New Year is itself centuries old and gains significance because of several myths and traditions. Traditionally, the festival was a time to honor deities as well as ancestors. Chinese New Year is celebrated in countries and territories with significant Chinese populations, Macau, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia,

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517 Kate Waters, Lion Dancer. “Ernie Wan’s Chinese New Year”, p. 3.
Mauritius, Philippines, and also in Chinatowns elsewhere. Chinese New Year is considered a major holiday for the Chinese and has had influence on the lunar New Year celebrations of its geographic neighbors.  

### 4.8.4 Tibetan New Year Festival

Tibetan New Year is the most significant festival in Tibet. Different areas have different ways to celebrate it, with Lhasa the most representative. The Tibetan New Year, also known as *Losar*, is the most important festival on the Tibetan calendar, falling very close to the traditional Chinese New Year. The festival season usually lasts for 15 days.

The first day of Losar is focused on family and offerings to the Dalai Lama. People will remain home and dress in their best attire to share a New Year feast. Food is an important part of the festival; monasteries will make special noodles, called Guthuk, out of grain and cheese to perform rituals with. People make dough balls filled with odd ingredients such as wool, chili peppers, rice, coal, and salt. When people find items inside the dough, it gives them insight into their character: salt is a good luck charm, a chili means that one is talkative, and coal can suggest that someone has a black heart. On the second day, Tibetans venture out of their homes to visit friends and celebrate community and national leaders. Traditionally, the Dalai Lama and other dignitaries meet to exchange greetings and celebrate. On the third day, people will make special offerings to deities by hanging prayer flags, burning incense, and chanting. Tibetan people will continue to celebrate the season even after the first three days by taking time away from their daily routine to attend parties and enjoy time with friends and family.

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520 Ibid., p. 200.
4.9 The Significant Occurrences in Bodhgaya

In the previous times, there have been a number of significant occurrences took place in Bodhgaya. In the present, there is also the significant incident which is a little turning point and effects towards many factors in society of Bodhgaya such as transport system, the way of life, security and so on. There are two significant incidents, namely; gold plating at Mahabodhi Temple Spire and Bodhgaya bomb blast.

4.9.1 Golden Plating at Mahābodhi Temple

In November 2013, the historic Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya got a new look: its 15 feet spire was plated with gold after Buddhist devotees from Thailand donated 290 kilos of the precious metal to the temple. According to report of Hindustan Times on November 13, 2013, the dome of the holiest Buddhist monument, Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, the only UNESCO world heritage site in Bihar, will get a gold veneer by the end of this month. The process for gold plating was set in motion after 289 kilograms of the precious metal donated by Thailand king Bhumipol Atulaya and devotees in that country arrived in the holy town two days ago. Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) member Arvind Kumar Singh said following a chemical treatment, the dome was ready for gold plating. Only the top 18 feet of the 180-feet-high structure would be covered with gold. “It is a big moment for us. The spire of the temple will glitter with the gold,” said BTMC secretary N Dorjee.

The gold landed in the custody of a 40-member team led by former Thai deputy prime minister General Pricha. The 13 sheets of gold were brought in 13 boxes in a special flight guarded by 23 commandoes two days ago. Seventeen gold plating experts, part of the team, will deposit the yellow metal on the dome. King Bhumipol Atulaya, who donated 100kg of the total consignment,
had last year offered to coat the spire with gold last year. Authorities had initiated the process soon after the Bihar government, archaeological survey of India (ASI) and the BMTC approved the king’s offer.

Now that the final phase of the work to be undertaken by Thailand-based company Kreign Thavorn Containers Co Ltd under ASI supervision gets underway, security has been enhanced around the temple campus. A special prayer will be held under the holy Bodhi tree, where Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment, on November 16. At least 500 devotees from Thailand, including those who donated the gold, are likely to participate, Dorjee said.  

4.9.2 Bodhgaya Bomb Blast

On 7 July 2013 a series of ten bombs exploded in and around the Mahābodhi Temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Bodh Gaya, India. Five people, including two Buddhist monks, were injured by the blasts. Three other devices were defused by bomb-disposal squads at a number of locations in Gaya. The temple itself and the Bodhi Tree (where Gautama Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment) were undamaged. However, the Archaeological Survey of India confirmed damage to new structures in the temple complex. International figures, including the Dalai Lama, Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Myanmar Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, condemned the attacks.

The Mahabodhi Mahavihara is an important temple for Buddhists worldwide. The bombs exploded between 05:30 and 06:00 IST (00:30 – 01:00 UTC), concurrently with the Sutta chanting and meditation which begin

522 The Times of India Newspaper, 7 July 2013.
523 The Hindu Newspaper, 7 July 2013.
524 The Times of India Newspaper, 9 July 2013.
the daily routine of the *mahavihara*.\textsuperscript{525} Four of the blasts occurred within the Mahabodhi Temple complex:

- The first bomb exploded at 5:30 IST, during prayers in the temple sanctuary.

- About two minutes later a bomb exploded on the east side of the complex, at the Animesh Lochna Temple. Wooden bookshelves, stacked with Buddhist scriptures, were damaged by this blast.

- A third bomb exploded on the south side of the complex, at the Butter Lamp House. This blast damaged the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) ambulance parked there.

- A fourth bomb exploded on the north side of the complex, inside a small shrine; however, an image of the Buddha in the shrine was unaffected by the blast.

Five blasts occurred in Gaya, within a 500-metre radius of the Mahabodhi Temple complex:

- A small bomb exploded at an 80-foot (24 m) statue of the Buddha.

- Three bombs exploded at the Tergar (Tibetan) Monastery. One bomb was placed behind the door of a classroom where children study Buddhism. The windows and classroom doors were damaged; there were no injuries, since the children were on holiday.\textsuperscript{526}

- One bomb exploded on a bus parked at the Sujata bypass.

Indian President Pranab Mukherjee called the blasts a “senseless act of violence targeting innocent pilgrims and monks who had gathered to worship at

\textsuperscript{525} Economic Times Newspaper, 7 July 2013.
\textsuperscript{526} India Today Newspaper, 9 July 2013.
this temple dedicated to the great apostle of peace Gautama Buddha”.  

Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh condemned the incident, saying that India’s composite culture and traditions teach us respect for all religions and such attacks on religious places will never be tolerated.  

A national organisation of Buddhist monks, the All India Bhikkhu Saṅgha, also reacted to the attacks. Its chairperson, Bhante Sadanand Mahasthaver, said: “Buddhist monks all over the country feel saddened by the attack. The international community is also shaken. We try to put people on the right path and we have been made the target of an attack. The All India Bhikkhu Saṅgha condemns this attack. This should not have happened. We spread the message of peace across the world. This is an attempt to spread terror and create discord among the messengers of peace”.  

The Rajya Sabha condemned the attacks on Mahabodhi Temple; Chairman Mohammad Hamid Ansari described the attacks as “senseless act of violence” and “a cause of anguish and deep concern to all”.  

The Government of Bihar proposed to establish an Anti Terrorist Squad unit in the state after the bombings.  

The 14th Dalai Lama called the attack “unfortunate”. Lobsang Sangay, Prime Minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile, said: “I am deeply saddened to learn about the series of bomb blasts at Mahabodhi Temple. My prayers [are] for the injured and their family members”.  

Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje said he was “saddened to hear of the senseless violence” and asked Buddhists to remain calm and refrain from any further escalation of the

527 DNA India (New Delhi) Newspaper, 7 July 2013.  
528 India Today Online, 7 July 2013.  
529 The Hindu Newspaper, 7 July 2013.  
530 The Economic Times (New Delhi) Newspaper, 5 August 2013.  
531 The Times of India (Dharamsala, India) Newspaper, 8 July 2013.
violence.\textsuperscript{532} Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje said he was deeply saddened to hear of the bomb attacks, and prayed that we are all able to respond with compassion to all those affected by this tragic event.\textsuperscript{533}

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa was shocked by the news of the explosions: “it is with deep sadness that I condemn the explosions within the hallowed precincts of the most venerated and sacred Bodh Gaya shrine in Bihar in India. Undoubtedly, it is one of the holiest shrines highly respected and venerated not only by Buddhists throughout the world, but by all peace-loving human beings”.\textsuperscript{534}

Burmese government and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her unhappiness over the blasts.\textsuperscript{535} The Government of Thailand was deeply disturbed by the bomb explosions, voicing security concerns.\textsuperscript{536} Delegates from a number of Buddhist traditions at the Eighth Global Conference on Buddhism in Singapore passed a resolution on the bombings: “We are deeply saddened, but we forgive those responsible for bombing the Mahābodhi Temple in Bodhgaya. You may damage the most important temple in Buddhism but you will not destroy our faith in forgiveness and compassion”.\textsuperscript{537}

The Northeast Indian Bhikkhu Saṅgha and Buddhists submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister of India: “It is indeed a sad incident that miscreants tried to cause damage to one of the holiest Buddhist shrines which is not only the place of Buddha’s enlightenment but from where the message of
love and compassion pervaded the entire universe. The Mahābodhi Mahāvihāra, also being a World Heritage Site, is venerated by the world Buddhist community and such acts of vandalism deserve our strongest words of disapproval. We condemn the dastardly act and request the Government to deal with such anti social elements with a strong hand so that such acts of mindless violence do not occur again in any place of worship of any religious denomination”.

Buddhist monks from Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, including the World Fellowship of Buddhists, condemned the Gaya attacks. Throughout India, protestors led peace rallies and bandhs against the Bodhgaya bombings. World Council of Churches general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit expressed heartfelt sorrow and solidarity over the bombings. In a letter to the Buddhist community, he said: “We wish and hope that this incident, despite its traumatic and tragic dimensions, may be transformed into an opportunity to offer the world a glimpse of the best of your morality and spirituality”.

4.9.3 Changing after the Significant Occurrences

After arising of both significant occurrences, Golden Plating at Mahābodhi Temple and Bodhgaya bomb blast, there have been several new management and development such as transport system, security, landscape management and trading center etc. According to a Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee or BTMC member, there should be no concerns for visitors anymore by announcing that “The temple has been made doubly secure. Security has been enhanced with minimum disturbances to devotees. There is individual checking.”

538 The Assam Tribune (Dibrugarh) Newspaper, 18 July 2013.
539 The Hindu Newspaper, 8 July 2013.
540 World Council of Churches, 16 July 2013.
Like most places of religious worship, the Bodhgaya bomb attack also became politically controversial with local politicians from the district of Gaya protesting, alleging failure by the Bihar State administration to ensure the safety of the Buddhists’ most revered place of worship.

At the time of the serial attack, it was averred by some groups that the attacks intended to target Sri Lankans to send out a message, a claim rejected by the Sri Lankan administration. There had been serious allegation of ‘security lapses’ on the part of the government with Bihar’s Nitish Kumar Government coming under extensive criticism for the alleged failure in duty to protect a site of international religious significance, also declared as a world heritage site by UNESCO.

However, according to a travel operator from Colombo, there is a slight increase in the number of bookings made to Bodhgaya. “There was a quick drop and this was a sector that improved during the season. Everyone wants to visit Bodhgaya and that is the primary reason for Sri Lanka Buddhists to go on pilgrimage. The place of birth and passing away are important, but the place of Enlightenment and where the first sermon was delivered evoke so much religious zeal. We suffered last year when planned visits were cancelled due to security fears,” the travel operator added. During peak season, which is October to March, four to five flights carry a daily average of about 1,500 passengers to and from the airport. The airport is connected with Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Bhutan, Singapore, Japan, Vietnam and Korea, besides operating domestic flights to various Indian destinations. A Sri Lankan woman who had joined a group of worshippers in Bodhgaya, standing just outside the inner chamber of the temple beamed: “I feel so fortunate to be here today. So happy that security has improved and we feel safe visiting here. It is wonderful to be able to pray at Bodhgaya again.”