CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM IN CENTRAL ASIA.

From the dawn of history the regions beyond the Himalayas was not unknown to the Indians. As early as the later Vedic period, the Indian writers were cognizant of the peoples living beyond the northern and northwestern frontiers of India. In the Atharvaveda the fever 'takṣaṇa' was washed away from Brahmersides not only to the country of 'Gandharīs' but also further beyond, to that of the Bahlikas. Post-vedic tradition indicates that the Hīnas - a body of Aryans, entered into India from the Oxus valley.

In the early Buddhist tradition, repeated mention is made of four continents, viz., Pubbavideha, Aparagoyāna, Uttarakuru and Jambudīpa. In the Papancaśudāni, it is stated that the peoples of Pubbavideha settled in the Videharaṭṭha, those of Aparagoyāna in Āparantajanapada, and those of Uttarakuru in Kururaṭṭha. Buddhaghosa speaks highly of the advanced culture of the people of the Kururaṭṭha and writes that Buddha found the people of this country as suitable for comprehending his deeper teachings and so he delivered there the Mahāniddanasutta and Mahāsatipaṭṭhānasutta of the Dīghanikāya, Raṭṭhapāla-sutta, Sāropamasutta ṇāgāṇḍiyasutta of Majjhimanikāya.

1. Ker, The Vedic, p. 294-96
2. 3bid., p. 63
Three of the four continents evidently belonged to trans-Himalayan region which encompassed the Iran plateau and the table land of Central Asia.

Besides the Buddhist tradition there are ancient Sanskrit texts, which show that the Indian compilers were aware of the existence of the peoples of the Central Asia and the neighbouring regions, e.g., cina, katśika, khaśa, Bahli, Tukhara, Pahlava, Pārata, Śaka and Vokkana.

The puranic accounts attach importance to the foreign dynasties that ruled in India after the fall of the Imperial Andhras has come to an end there will be Kings belonging to the lineage of their vassals: 7 Andhras, 10 Abhiras also 7 gardabhins, 18 śakas. There will be 8 yavanas, 14 Tuseras, 13 Murūṇdas and 11 Hunas.¹

It is evident from the above-mentioned evidences though scanty that the countries beyond the Himalayas maintained their contact with India and vice-versa.

NOMADIC MOVEMENTS IN CENTRAL ASIA.

From very early times Central Asia was divided into two zones: One migratory and the other non-migratory. The northern steppes from south Russia constituted the migratory or nomadic to the south of which region lies the zone occupied by non-migratory i.e. sedentary people.³ It included the oasis of Eastern Turkestan. The region from South Russia upto the valley of Ienessei was occupied by the

². Pargiter. Dynasties of the Kali age p.72.
nomadic hordes, one of which were the Scythians, who according to Megovern and others belonged to the Aryan stock. The earliest information about the Scythians is found in the account of Herodotus and in old Achamenian inscriptions. They were known in India and in Persia as Sakas. In the old Persian inscriptions there are references to the division of the Scythians into three different tribes.

Sakas and Kushanas (yue-chih)

in India:

According to the Puranic accounts the Sakas conquerors preceded the yavanas i.e., the Greeks in India. The Chinese evidence has been relied upon to prove that the Sakas could not have entered into India before the 1st Century B.C.

We learn from T'sien Han Shu that the Huns chief King Chi-yu inflicted a crushing defeat on the Yueh-chih who were at that time in the farthest eastern and north eastern parts of Kashgar. The Yueh-chih King was killed and compelled to move to the west and the south.

About the migration of the Yueh-chihs to the west Rapson writes: “In the country of the Hs river the Yueh-Chih came upon a tribe called Wu-Sun. The

4. Tarn. The Greeks and Bactrians in India p.27.
The Wu-sun were routed and their King was slain and the Yueh-chihs continued their journey westwards towards the Issyk-kul lake. On account of the movement of the Yueh-Chih and their pressure on the Sakas or Ss£, as they are called in Chinese, the Sakas reached Kashmir and the Pujiab in about 110 B.C. and from there the Sakas started extensive and successful raids in Northern India.

Dr. Lohuizen writes on the basis of the Chinese sources that the great Yueh-chih went towards the west and made themselves masters of Tašia (Bactria) but the Saiwang (Sakas) went southwards and made themselves masters of Chipin (Kashmir or Kapisa) and the routed followed was the hanging pass or Bolari pass to Kashmir. Chavannes concluded that "Le Kipin est le Kapisa à l'époque des Tang, c'est le Cachemire à l'époque des Harides". Sir Aurel Stein in his "Ancient Khotan and Smith in his Early History of India accept this view.

Dr. Tarn thinks that as the Bolari pass was not easily accessible, the Sakas reached Kabul and not Kashmir. (CBI Tarn p. 756).

1. Revson "Cambridge History of India" p. 565
3. The Scythian period of Indian History. Van Lohuizen de Leeuw p. 327.
The *Saka*, Tocharis and Others formed the mixed tribe and were living in Seistan = Sakastan. They became independent of Parthia between 110 and 80 B.C. The *Saka* under the leadership of Moga moved towards the Punjab.

The Yueh-Chih on the other hand settled in Bactria. After their settlement in Bactria they broke into five divisions each of which was ruled by a Chieftain with the title of *Yabgu*. One of their sub-clans were the Kushans whose Chieftain Kadphises succeeded in gaining a leading position among the other tribal chiefs. He is the Founder of the well known Kushan dynasty. Upto this time Yuh-chih had been bounded on the south by the Hindu Kush mountains and it was Kujula who first crossed over these mountains and by invading and conquering the Kabul valley secured control over most of the region now known as Afghanistan. Shortly afterwards he extended his forces to the North-western India. He died at the age of 80 and was succeeded by his son Wema Kadphises. He proceeded to invade and conquer the whole of the region watered by the Indus river, which was then in possession of various saitan princes most of whom acknowledged the Parthian supremacy.

Kanishka was the third of the line. He consolidated the Kushan domain in India. He pushed the Kushan conquests far to the south and East, annexing the Ganges valley certainly as far as

as Beneras. North-western India where the Kushan centralized their power was then known as Gandhara.

Unfortunately none of the contemporary Chinese accounts even mention Kanishka by name, though the later Chinese Buddhist literature makes frequent mention of Kanishka, practically all of these Buddhist books are either based or translated upon Indian originals hence are less valuable. But at least European archaeologists advanced in their work to make us feel sure that Kanishka ruled about the close of the first Century A.D.

The time during which Kanishka ruled in Northern India is marked by a full development of Buddhism. The political influence of the Kushanas extended far into Central Asia and consequently we find a vivid traffic between the northwestern India and it adjacent countries on the one side and the Tarim Valley i.e., Central Asia on the other.

From very early times important trade routes passed through the Tarim basin from the frontier of China to the west. Chinese silk became famous in the west and an extensive trade developed along the great caravan routes through Central Asia. These became known as silk-routes. From about the 1st Century A.D. these were used not only for trade between China and the West but also for the dissemination of Buddhist culture through Kabul to the tribal settlements of Central Asia and thence to China.

The Buddhist monks of Central Asia made their way to China from the middle of the second Century A.D. The names of a few distinguished monk-translators and a list of their works are found in Chinese accounts, catalogues. These are as follows:

1. An-shi-kao (安世高) hailing from Farthia was the most renowned of the earliest batch of Buddhist apostles reaching China. Shi-Kao was an Arsacid (Ansi) prince who renounced the world giving up his kingdom to his uncle to become a Buddhist monk. He went to China in 148 A.D. and settled in White horse monastery. During his 22 years stay in China at the Lo-yang Monastery he himself to the introduction of the Buddhist literature in China. He is said to have translated 179 Sanskrit sutras into Chinese language. Out of these 96 texts are mentioned in one of the most important Chinese catalogues of Buddhist books, the Kai-yuan-lu compiled in 730 A.D. While 65 works are mentioned in Nanjio's catalogue. All the 179 texts are however, mentioned by Dr. Bagchi in his 'Le canon Bouddhique en Chine'. A large section of Shi-Kao's works are extracts from the Agamas, 21 sutras of Shi-Kao with the existing Chinese texts of

the Āgamas have been identified by Anesaki.

II. A year or two after Hu-shi-Kao i.e. 147 B.D. another monk Lokakṣema (Chi-lu-kia-chau) a Saka of Central Asia went to China. The name of Lokakṣema have mistakenly read by Tibetan historians as Cilukākṣa. He is responsible for the first Chinese translation of a recension of the \( \text{Prajñāpāramitā} \) known as Daśasāhasrika Prajñāpāramitā. 3 23 works in 26 fasciculi are mentioned in k'ài-yun-lu and by Prof. Bagchi in his "Le canon Bouddhique en Chine". Out of 23 works of his, 12 are mentioned in Nanjio's catalogue.

III. The next Central Asian Buddhist, An Huien 4 went to Loyang monastery in A.D. 181 as a merchant and later on became "the Head Officer of cavalry". In collaboration with Chinese monks he translated ugra paripṛcchā, a work of great importance. An Huien's other work is the Āgamokta - dvāḍasa niḍāna sutra (Nanjio 1339), which is a treatise on the twelve causes or niḍānas explained according to the Āgamas of the Sarvāstivādins.

2. Bagchi p.38.

fn. "Il vint en chine tres peu de temps après
Nyang - che-kao et affrit a lo-yang sa collaboration dans l'œuvre de traduction et de propagation du Bouddhisme que Nyang-che-kao semble avoir commence si vigoureusement.
(Prof. Bagchi p.39).

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IV. The Saka or Yueh-Chih monk Chi-Yao * is said to have come from Central Asia. This Saka monk translated eleven sutras but 10 works are mentioned in the K'ai-yuen-lu. Two of his extant translations are from the Sanyuktâgama. One is a sutra on the eight characters of a bad horse compared with those of bad man, and the other a sutra on the three characteristic marks of a good horse (Nanjio col. 661, 662).

V. Besides these Central Asian there were two Indian monks Chu-ta-li or Mahabala and Tan-Kuo or Dhammaphala. Two others were Sogdian monks K'ang-kau and K'ang Hong-siang. 6 works of K'ang-mong Siang are mentioned by Prof. Bagchi. These are the following:

1) Kumaranidâna Sripâla sutra (Ch'ang-pen-ki-king).
2) Bidâna Carya sutra (Hing-ki-hing king).
3) Sutra on Sûriputra and Mandgalyâyana's going through the four roads (che-li-fo-Mou Lien Yecu sse k'iu King).
4) Bhramajâla sutra (Fan kaug King)
5) Pao fou King
6) Catus Sûtya sutra (sse ti king).

2. Bagchi p. 55, Nanjio App. VI ii.
Kumārajiva was born in Kieut-su (Kucha) in the year 343 B.C. when the Emperor Kang Ti of the Taïn dynasty ruled over China. His grandfather came from India and settled down at Kucha. His father Kumāryāna remained an Indian in his mode of life. He went to Kucha and settled there. The Chieftain of the Kucha state had a sister named Jiva, Kumāryāna married her. She gave birth to a child who was named Kumārajiva.

Kumārajiva in his boyhood visited Kashmir and several important centres of Buddhist culture in Central Asia with his mother and returned in Kucha in 362 A.D. The fame of the Kuchean monk soon crossed the desert and reached the court of Earlier Taïn. Tao-an, had spoken of Kumārajiva to Fu-K'ien, the emperor of that dynasty. Fu-K'ien sent an envoy to the Kuchean King for bringing the learned monk to China. But the Kuchean King refused to send the pious monk. The envoy though himself insulted and thereafter waged war on the Kuchean King. The monk Kumārajiva was taken prisoner and brought to the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an.

References:
2. J. Nobel, Central Asia, the connecting link between East and West p. 22.
The following account of Kumarjiva is given in the Memoirs of Eminent priests:

"There were two princes of so-choe state who wished to be monks. The elder was named Sriyana Bhadra, and the younger Sriyana Somo. It is learnt that younger was a great scholar and bh followed Mahāyāna Buddhism. Kumarajiva sat at his feet and was influenced by him. Somo had explained to him the meaning of sutra of Anavatapta. From that time Kumarjiva decided to give up his faith in Hinayāna Buddhism and made up his mind to go deep into Vaipulya sutras and Dvādasanikāya śāstra.

Kumarajiva came to Chang-an in A.D. 401 and the emperor who was eagerly expecting the monk and made him at once the kuo-shih or Rajyajusu.

According to the Memoirs of Eminent priests, the number of works translated by Kumarajiva in Chaung-su was more than three hundred. Prof. Bagchi mentions 106 works of Kumarajiva. But in Nanjio's catalogue we find the existence of fifty works of Kumarajiva namely.

No. 3. Pañcasvamati. Sahasrika prajñā parami.
No. 6. Daśasahasrika prajñāparamitā.
No. 10. Vajracchedika prajñāparamitā.
No. 17. Prachjāparamitā sutras on a benevolent king who protects his country.

2. Prof. Bagchi p. 130.
No. 19. Pranjaparamita-hrdayasutra.
No. 23. Panniprajña.
No. 23. Subhū paripṛcchā
No. 40. Sumati dārīka paripṛcchā.
No. 82. Isvararāga – bodhisattva sutra.
No. 108. Daśabhumiśka. Sutra.
No. 122. Sutra of Buddha's last instruction.
No. 129. Sarvapunya Samukkaya – Sāmādhi sutra.
No. 134. Saddharmapūrṇḍarīka sutra.
No. 137. Avalokiteśvara – bodhisattva Samanta mūkha parivarta.
No. 146. Vimalakirti nirdesa.
No. 162. Mahādruma – Kinnaraka paripṛcchā.
No. 164. Sarvadharma parivritti nirdesa sutra.
No. 166. Vasudhāra sutra.
No. 206. Maitreya vyākaranā.
No. 209. Sutra on Maitreya's becoming Buddha.
No. 238. Geyā sutra.
No. 311. Mahāmayuri Vidyarajā.
No. 396. Acintyaprabhāsa – nirdesa sutra.
No. 425. Kusalamala śānaparigraha.
No. 511. Sahasrabuddha nidāna sutra.
No. 627. Sutra on a paster
No. 672. Sutra on the Rightgood qualities of the sea.
No. 720. Dipenkarāvedāka sutra.
No. 779. Sutra on the hidden and important law of meditation.

No. 1169. Mahaprajñā pāramitā - sastra

No. 1179. Prāṇyanūla - Sastra tika.

No. 1180. Dasabhumi Vībhasa - Sastra.

No. 1182. Sutralaṅkāra sastra.

No. 1186. Dvādasānikiṣṭha sastra.

No. 1188. Sāța sastra.

No. 1213. Sastra on raising the thought towards the Bodhi.

No. 1274. Satya siddhi sastra.

No. 1242. Sutra on the important explanation of the law of meditation.

No. 1350. Sutra on the doctrine of sitting in meditation.

No. 1366. Samyuktāvadāna- sutra.

No. 1373. Abridged law for importance of thinking.

No. 1416. Law of the Bodhisattva Asvaghoṣa.

No. 1461. Life of the Bodhisattva Nagarjuna.

No. 1462. Life of the Bodhisattva deva.

Kumārajīva was fortunate in his disciples and the work which he began was continued for several years by his working pupils. Of these Tao-Shen and Seng Chao are best known. Tao-Sheng was called "the Sage of Mahaparinirvāṇa and Seng-Chao the "Ancestor of Three Sastras."