Appendix I

Buddhist Monasteries of the Pala Age

The Buddhist Sangha (‘monk-fraternity’ or ‘monk-community’) born out of the ancient community of India’s wandering almsmen, developed into a settled order through an evolutionary process. Gradually the unitary Sangha became plural and the monk-communities, called a Sangha, went on steadily multiplying till they were widespread all over the country. In the final phase of their history emerged a number of monastic establishments which started functioning as seminaries of learning. Initially, a monk-settlement was called an avasa or arama. Later on it developed into a lena, a settlement of a single fraternity and of the various structural types of lena, the vihara and the guha are well-known, the former being the typical monastery to the north of the Vindhyas and latter to its south.

While most of the viharas have been ruined beyond recognition, a few are known in standing fragments and excavated foundations. Nalanda, Somapura and Mainamati are three such famous viharas, other viharas known from literary records and old traditions include Vikrama, Odantapura and Jagaddala. Viharas of lesser note, again known from literature and traditions, are
Traikutaka, Pandita, Vikramapura etc. It seems that from the fifth century on, the merely conventional character of several monasteries was oriented by their growth as centres of scholarship and higher studies. The learning was no longer confined to monks, but was made available to all seekers after knowledge, Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike. Some of these seminaries subsequently developed into large-scale academic establishments entitled to the name of 'Universities', and Nalanda is justly the most representative of them.

Nalanda

Mentioned in 'Kutadanta Sutta' and 'Brahmajala Sutta' of the Dīgha Nikāya and 'Ambalatthika Babulavada-sutta' of the Majjhima nikāya as a Brahmana village with mango groves, Nalanda was converted into a sprawling monastic establishment probably in the time of Aśoka.

Though it is difficult to determine when exactly Nalanda came to limelight, it may be fairly assumed that the rise of Mahayana Buddhism in the beginning of the Christian


2. This supposition is made on the basis of Taranatha's statement. See Taranatha (DPC), p.101.
era synchronized with its ascent to fame in the Buddhist world. Taranatha, the Tibetan historian, associates Nagarjuna, the famous philosopher of the Mahayana school (c. 2nd century A.D.), Aryadeva (c. 2nd century A.D.) and Asanga (5th century A.D.) and his brother Vasubandhu with Nalanda. The absence of Nalanda in the account of the 5th-century Chinese pilgrim, Fa-hien may prove that it did not attain the international celebrity till that period. The descriptions of Nalanda in some details in the travelogues of the 7th-century Chinese pilgrims, Yuan Chawang and I-tsing, bear however, fair testimony to its eminence which it achieved meanwhile in the academic world, here and abroad. Whoever may be the actual founder of this Vihara, evidence is not wanting to prove that some members of the Imperial Gupta dynasty substantially contributed to its development into a great centre of academic learning. The example of the Guptas was followed by Bharavardhana. This is the brief history of this establishment prior to the coming of the

3. Ibid., pp.106-9; 123.
4. Fa-hien simply mentions Nala (Nalanda) as the birthplace of Sariputta and states that he went to see the stupa built on his mortal remains. Legge, p.81.
5. For detailed references, see Watters, I, p.348; II, 107, 109, 165-70.
6. For detailed references, see I-tsing (Takakusu), pp.XVII, XXXI, XXXII, XXXIII, 9, 30, 35; For rites, pp. 65, 85, 103; For clepsydra, p.145; For number of priests, pp.154, 177, 211.
7. For a short account of the patronage of the Guptas to it, see BMH, pp.329ff.
8. Life (Beal), p.159.
Excavations have ascertained the site of Nalanda at Bargaon, about 7 miles north of Rajgir in Bihar. The ruins of this far-famed establishment now extend over a large area. The structures which have been disclosed by excavations represent only a part of the colossal establishment of bygone days. The monuments consist of monasteries, stupas and temples. Lengthwise the structures extend from south to north, the monasteries on the eastern flank and the stupas and temples on the west. The plan of the monasteries in most cases identical; it consists of rows of cells produced by a corridor round a spacious courtyard and a shrine against the back wall, opposite the entrance. It appears from their excavated ruins that they underwent successive repairs and renovations. It has also been apparent that these monasteries were storeyed structures, and even in their present dilapidated condition, they can conjure up a vision of their stately appearance and an imposing past.

It seems that the central courtyard of each of the monastery was used for lectures and discourses and daises were used by the Acharyas or preceptors for this purpose. The cells of the monks of varying dimensions are single seated and double seated with the provisions
of stone beds, lamp holders and book cases. There were also common kitchens and dining places for the use of residents.

As regards the inner life of the Nalanda Mahavihara it is learnt from the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims that there was no separate hall for congregation of all inmates of the monastery to perform religious rites, since they numbered as many as three thousand. There were eight halls and three hundred apartments (i.e., blocks of monk-cells) in this monastery. It was the custom in Nalanda that the worship was performed by resident monks privately and for this there was a preceptor whose duty was to visit the different halls within the monastic complex from the morning to twilight and to chant five and six slokas loud enough to be heard by the people around. The preceptor used to get some special gifts for his service.

The fame of Nalanda was not only for providing accommodation to a spectacular number of monks, but also for its being a magnificent educational institution. The range of studies in Nalanda included a variety of subjects: Philology, Law, Philosophy, Sanskrit Grammar, Astronomy and even Brahmanical studies. The study of practical sciences and arts received a prominent place in its curriculum including secular subjects. Nalanda provided completely free education, in addition to four

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9. For details, see Life (Beal), pp. 107, 121, 125.
requisites, i.e., clothes, food, bedding and medicine to its students. The number of students exceeded 10,000 during the time of Xuan Chwang and 3,000 during the time of I-tsing. It seems that the University was run as a centre of post-graduate studies and research. The admission test was strict, only 20% of the candidates could secure admission. In spite of this, students from different parts of India and foreign countries, viz., China, Korea and Tibet flocked in this University for admission, a fact attesting its eminence in the Buddhist world. Its celebrity as an educational centre largely lay in the high scholarship of its professors and teachers. Dharma-pala and Silabhadra, illustrious authorities in Buddhist studies, were on its staff, the latter being its Patriarch in the pre-Pala period. The other renowned teachers of this period were Chandrapala, Gunamati, Sthiramati and Jnanachandra.

The old ideal of Nalanda was to bring harmony in the diversity of studies and to maintain 'liberty of teaching'. This was sought to be perpetrated during the period of the Pala kings. Though the Pala rulers inherited the tihara in all its glory from their illustrious Gupta predecessors as the part of cultural legacy, they tried their best to preserve its great tradition, as a seminary of learning. They requisitioned the services of eminent Buddhist scholars thereby converting it into a real University and their zeal in this respect continued.
unflagging till its final collapse consequent to the Muslim invasion.

The history of Gopala and Dharmapala's reigns provides us a picture about the mobilisation of state's resources for erecting new monasteries and some of the outstanding Pala establishments came into existence during this time. It seems that they took up the construction of several Buddhist monasteries with apparent intention of extending the influence of Buddhism and enlarging its sphere of activities. Nalanda was already at the height of eminence and fresh efforts for adding its laurels were not much in need. However, their reverence for this age-old site of Buddhist learning is clearly demonstrated from their attempts of building new monasteries on the model of Nalanda. The illuminating example of patronage of the Nalanda by the Pala kings is witnessed during the reign of Devapala, the son of Dharmapala, who donated five villages for the maintenance of the monastery built by the contemporary king of Suvarnadvipa (supra, p.47).

Though there was a fall on the number of foreign scholars in the Pala age, the demand in China and Tibet for the Nalanda scholars remained unabated. These Indian scholars from Nalanda not only took up the propagation of Buddhism in these countries, but also engaged
themselves in composing and copying Buddhist texts or translating selected Buddhist works in Sanskrit into Tibetan or Chinese language. The names of Indian Pandits figuring in Tibetan Tanguyur include, inter alia, Samantarakshita, Kamalasila and Buddhakirti and Dharmadeva (upto 981 A.D.), the latter being the most outstanding among the Indian scholars in China; he was a member of Imperial Bureau under Sung dynasty of China (960-1127 A.D.) and he translated 46 Buddhist texts into Chinese language.

The trend of admission of students from different parts of India for studying Buddhist theology during the pre-Pala period continued during the Pala epoch. Buddhist scholars from other parts of India adorned the prominent places in Nalanda. As for example, Vrīḍdeva of Nāgarahara in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, was elected by the Sangha or assembly of monks and he probably presided over the monastery at Nalanda. This international

10. For example, (1) copy of the Ashtasahasrika Prajñā-paramita belonging to Mahipala’s reign found in Nepal. (11) Copy belonging to Rampala’s reign, see, Bodleian Catalogue, Vol.II, p.250. (111) Copy belonging to Govindapala’s reign, see, JRASB, NS, (1876), p.3.

11. The photostat copy of Arthavinschaya-sutra and its commentary, recovered from a monastery in Tibet, is now in possession of the Delhi University.

recognition and prestige of Nalanda scholars amply demonstrate that Nalanda's fame as the centre of Buddhist learning remained intact under the stewardship of the Pala monarchs.

The accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, Yuan Chwang and I-tsing of earlier age, show that Hinayana predominated in its earlier phase, but soon Mahayana occupied a preeminent place in Nalanda monastic establishment. This characteristic feature of Nalanda completely changed during its career in the Pala age. Nalanda grew up in the atmosphere of liberal cultural tradition of the Gupta period and seems to be continued during the beginning of the Pala epoch, but Tantric Buddhism stepped into the arena and as a result Mahayana Buddhism, imbued with Tantricism, shortly paved the way for Tantrayana Buddhism. Numerous Tantric images discovered from the ruins of Nalanda is regarded as a convincing testimony to this contention. The high standards of catholicity in its cultural and intellectual life was superseded to a great extent by the practice of appointing scholars of outstanding merit but with Tantric orientation. Thus we find that Abhay-

A. Karagupta, a noted Tantrik Pandit and a writer of several texts, was appointed the head of the Nalanda monastery along with Vikramasila during the reign of Mahipala. The Tantric doctrines and rituals were included in the curriculum of studies and Tantrik Acharyas (professors) like Vikritideva were also appointed for teaching.

Glories of the Pala epoch were also on the increase to a large extent for the development of art and sculpture at Nalanda. According to scholars Dhiman and Bitopala mentioned by Taranatha as the founders of Pala school of sculpture and painting were perhaps teachers of Nalanda for arts and crafts. Whether they were connected with Nalanda or not, it is reasonable to presume that arts and crafts were taught to the students of Nalanda. Like other academic-cum-monastic establishments of the time, Nalanda suffered its doom at the hands of the Muslim invaders in the beginning of the 13th century.

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14. Pag-Sam-Jon-Zang, (Ed. S.C. Des) mentions him as adhyaksa (Head) of Buddhagaya, Nalanda (Nalanda) and Vikramasila during the reign of Ramapala, vide p.120; also see, Indian Culture, Vol.III, July 1936-April 1937, pp. 369-72.

15. Datta, Mystic Tales of Lama Taranatha, p.66.

16. AIE, p.585.
Somapura

The discovery of the ruins of Somapura or Somapuri Mahavihara at Ompur village, near Pabarpur in Rajshahi district of the present-day Bangladesh, brings to light one of the magnificent architectural achievements of the Pala monarchs. The structural remains exposed to view consist of a colossal monastic complex with a lofty central temple, apart from a Jaina shrine of an earlier period. Perhaps the site was initially affiliated to Jainism and later it was converted into a Buddhist establishment by Dharmapala. This Mahavihara was not only one of the largest Pala establishments, providing congenial accommodation to renowned Buddhist scholars and monks, but it also came to be reckoned as a splendid architectural monument in respect of conception and execution. Moreover, this monastery used to serve as a platform for Indo-Tibetan cultural intercourse.

The architectural remains reveal that this monastery was built on a well-drawn plan; the monastery was, as usual, walled up all around with a large gate on the north; inside the monastery, and facing the gate, a massive temple dominated the centre of place; small rectangular small rooms or cubicles without stone bed around large quadrangle were provided for the lodging of the resident monks. There were also a community kitchen and a dining hall. The dried-up channel at this
site indicates that the water of Padma was diverted through it in order to provide bathing and sanitary amenities to the residents (see, ante, p. ).

Many scholars and philosophers of this period resided at this monastery and enhanced its glory and fame. More than 177 cells used to accommodate resident monks ranging from 600 to 800. Presumably it was 'the largest single sangham found in India for Buddhist monks.' According to the Tibetan tradition Atisa stayed at this monastery before his departure for Tibet and the Nalanda inscription of Vipulasrimitra of Somapura informs us that he constructed a monastery at Nalanda and a Tara temple at Somapura. He also repaired the cells of the latter monastery. The same inscription contains the names of his predecessors in the spiritual field, viz., Karunasrimitra, Maitrisrimitra and Asokamitra. Karunasrimitra became a martyr at the time of burning down of the monastery hundred years earlier of this inscription in the middle of the 11th century by the invading soldiers of an East Bengal ruler. This instance of sacrificing

19. ft (NR), p.519.
his own life at the lotus-feet of Buddha by a Somapura monk speaks of the devotion of the monks of Somapura Vihara towards their own religion and also indicates the impending downfall of this monastery.

The example of close and warm relation of Somapura Vihara with Tibet may be found from the Tibetan translations of a number of Buddhist works in Sanskrit, undertaken by Indian monks in association with Tibetan scholars at this monastery. Atisa himself collaborated with Vīryasimha and his Tibetan disciple Ngag-tsho in translating Bhavya's work into Tibetan during his stay in this monastery.

It seems that the Somapura Vihara inherited the tradition of Nalanda like other two Pala establishments, i.e., Odantapura and Vikramasila. This monastery has remained in the limelight for more than four centuries from the time of its establishment by either Dharmapala or Devapala up to the time of Muslim invasion in the last quarter of the 12th and early years of the 13th century A.D. That Somapura Mahavihara also came under the spell of Tantricism is attested by the Tibetan tradition that

Valrocana Rakshita, a renowned Tantric monk, was the disciple of Pandita Sarana, who was the head of the assembly of Yogins at Somapura. The remnants of the Somapura Mahavihara do not bear any large-scale vandalism. The actual reason of the downfall of this colossal monastic establishment is not clearly known, but in all probability the Buddhist monks at the time of Muslim invasion abandoned this place and took shelter in Nepal and Tibet.

Mainamati

One of the largest centres of Buddhistic culture of early medieval Bengal remained anonymous under the mounds Lalmai-Mainamati hill range of Comilla District of Bangladesh. It was just an accident that this famous establishment, closely connected with the efflorescence of Buddhism in East Bengal under the patronage of Buddhist minor dynasties of the Pala epoch, was discovered on the slope of a mound known as Salbanpur mound. Excavations carried out here since 1955 have revealed the remains of a 550-feet square Buddhist

monastery at a place called Salban Vihara. Three distinctive levels of construction, now exposed to view, reveal that the vihara belonged to different periods and it enjoyed the patronage of different dynasties. A terracotta sealing with the legend *Sri Bhavadeva-Mahavihara-Arva-Bhiksu-Sancharya* found in the ruins of first period indicates that Sri Bhavadeva, the fourth ruler of the Deva dynasty who reigned during the first half of the 8th century A.D., was the founder of this monastery.

Salban Vihara was a fairly large monastic establishment, consisting of 115 monks' cell built along a spacious courtyard; a cruciform shrine adorns the centre of the monastery. A 174-ft.-long and $\frac{2}{3}$ ft.-wide brick-paved way passed through a 74-ft.-wide gateway. An entrance hall of 32 feet by 23 feet, contains a flight of steps leading towards interior of the monastery. Two guard-rooms(?), followed by monastic cells, flanked on both sides of this hall. The vihara is surrounded by a boundary wall, which also provides the back walls of the monastic cells. The cells measure uniformly 12' x 12' in average, but there are also some rectangular

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rooms for the monks. Each cell is separated from another by $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick walls with provision of $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide door passages with wooden doors. The remnants of the excavated site, as mentioned above, suggest that the monastery was occupied during different generations; it is revealed from deep excavations that it underwent four major phases of repair and renovation.

The treasures of Salban Vihara unearthed by archaeologists include, inter alia, copper plates, silver coins, terracotta plaques, seals and sealings, gold ornaments, silver ingots and images of Buddha and Buddhist deities.

No evidence, literary and otherwise, affords us any picture about its hey day and its royal patrons. One copper plate bearing the name of Bhavadeva and belonging to the first phase of occupation only proves Bhavadeva's authority over this monastery. The identity of the occupants of next phases is not known. More and more diggings are likely to make the picture of the Salban Vihara, which we have already obtained, clearer.

**Vikramśila**

The renowned academic-cum-monastic establishment of Vikramśila came into existence during the Pala age. Like other contemporary establishments it was also largely an outcome of the patronage of Buddhism by
Paramasaugata Pala monarchs. But while the history of the Nalanda University has been illuminated by the writings of the Chinese pilgrims like Yuan Chwang and I-tsing, no such useful foreign accounts concerning Vikramasila is available, since no such foreign student was directly associated with this centre of learning. The location of the site of the monastery also has not yet been settled with certainty.

According to Sumpa, the Vikramasila monastery was situated to the 'east of Magadha'. Taranatha locates it on a precipitous hill in Magadha on the right bank of the Ganges. These literary allusions have not been of substantial help and attempts to identify the site of monastery since the days of Cunningham have not met with any noteworthy success. The recent view, however,

26. The various identifications suggested are: Silao (Cunningham, ASE, III, p.83; ASE, VIII, p.75), Sultan-ganj (S.C. Vidyathusan, JASS, XXX, 1864, pp.360ff); Patherghata near Coigong, i.e., Kahalgaon (N.L.De, JASS, No, 1909, pp.1-19; VI, 1910, p.7), and Four near Bulaganj in the Patna district in direct line with Nalanda within a distance of 24 Kilometres and Odantapuri (A.P.Banerjee-Sastri, JBORS, XV, 1929, pp.264-76).
seeks to look upon Antichak (25.34°N and 87.36°E),
district Bhagalpur, as the most probable site of this
renowned Mahavihara. Though it is not definitely
known how this renowned place passed into oblivion,
it may be surmised that it could not withstand the
ravages of time and the vandalism of the Muslim
invaders.

Our knowledge-gap about this great monastery
of Pala age has been filled up to a fair extent by the
information furnished by the Tibetan Chronicles. The
Tibetan tradition, credits Dharmapala with the founda-
tion of Vikramasila.

The administration of Vikramasila was in the
hands of a Board of renowned teachers or Panditas and
the same body was also in charge of the affairs of
Nalanda. The teachers were exchanged between two monas-
tic universities as we find the names of Dipankara and

27. Excavations carried out at Antichak by the depart-
ment of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology of
Patna University from 1960-1969 have brought to light
a massive though ravaged structure with stupa-complex
measuring about 48' high and 76' wide, along with
other antiquities. These excavations, coupled with
surface explorations, have undoubtedly proved the
antiquity of Antichak suggesting it to be an exten-
sive site of the Pala period. Further excavations are
expected to settle the problem of the identification
of Vikramasila. See, JRAS, LVIII, 1971, pts.1-4, p.57f.

28. Vikramasila was in existence during the time of visit
of Lama Dharmasvami, senior (1153-1216 A.D.) and Sakya
Gribhadra of Kashmir (1145-1225 A.D.). Dharmasvami,
junior, however, did not find its trace during his
visit in 1235 A.D. See, Biography of Dharmasvamin,
ed. by Roerich, p.64.
Abhayakara Gupta who were on the staff of both of these two institutions.

According to Sumpa\(^2\), the entire monastery area was encompassed by a wall; a lofty central temple housing an image of the Lord dominated the landscape; the total number of temples being 108, 108 Panditas (i.e., Professors) lived in 58 institutions or Samsthas within the area of the monastery. We learn from Taranatha\(^3\) that this establishment had 6 gates each of which was under the supervision of an eminent Pandita. There were also non-teaching staff, viz., Acharya for wood-offering, Acharya for ordination, etc.

The University campus consisted of 6 colleges with 108 panditas as mentioned above. There was a central hall, called House of Science, with openings for six colleges. The surrounding wall of the monastery was artistically decorated and the portraits of Nagarjuna and Atisa adorned the principal gate of the monastery. The portraits of other eminent scholars were also painted on the wall of the University.

\(^3\) Taranatha (Schiefner), pp.234-35.
Of the renowned scholars, who were in charge of the gates of the monastery, were called 'Dvarapanditas' and Taranatha\textsuperscript{32} mentions the names of six 'such gate keepers' or Dvarapanditas, such as Ratnakarasanti, Vagisvarakirti, Naropa, Prajnakaramati, Ratnavajra and Jnanaarmitra. The Tibetan tradition also preserves the career and works of many versatile Buddhist scholars, including the Dvarapanditas, who were closely connected with Vikramasila. It appears from the Tibetan tradition again that the first adhyaksa of this University was a certain Buddhajnanapala who happened to be a contemporary of its founder, Dharmapala. Jetari was another eminent scholar, who was appointed first as a Dvarapandita, but promoted later to the high-seat of adhyaksa. Other versatile Buddhist scholars of Vikramasila were Abhayakaragupta, Dipankara-Srijnana and Sakyasri Bhadra, the most illustrious of them being Dipankara. Dipankara was not only one of the most renowned Tantrik theologists, revered by the Pala king Nayapala and people of the land, but he was also the contemporary cultural ambassador to Tibet\textsuperscript{33}.

\textsuperscript{32} Taranatha (DPC), Ch.33, pp.295-303.

\textsuperscript{33} Dipankara initially refused invitations of the Tibetan king to visit his country for the purpose of reforming Buddhism prevailing there. Eventually, however, he accepted the invitation, went there and worked relentlessly for reforming Tibetan Buddhism and founded the Lamaistic Order. He also produced several works, original as well as translations.
Besides Dipankara, many other distinguished scholars of Vikramasila visited Tibet and similarly many Tibetan scholars were drawn to this University in search of knowledge of Buddhist theology and philosophy.

It seems that Vikramasila fell on bad days when the Tibetan monk Nags-tsho visited it to extend the invitation of the Tibetan king to Dipankara in the 11th century. He then found the strength of the Vikramasila's professors and resident-monks much reduced. Like other monastic-cum-academic establishments Vikramasila was also destroyed by Muslim vandals.

Odantapura

Similar to other renowned monastic establishments of the Pala age, Odantapura or Odantapuri Mahāvihara was also a prominent centre of Buddhist learning. As the ruins of this Vihara have not yet been found, we know very little about this University and its glorious past. It is usually believed that the site of this establishment was in the vicinity of the modern town of Bihar-Shariff in Bihar.

The Tibetan texts are the only source of information, from which we learn that Gopala, the founder of the Pala dynasty, established this monastery in the vicinity of Nalanda (supra p.40). It appears from the
Tibetan source that the Tibetan king Khris-rson-dew-tsan built a Buddhist monastery in Tibet on the model of Odantapura on the advice of his preceptor Santarakshita. This shows that Odantapura enjoyed eminence in the Buddhist world.

This monastery was built by Gopalas not far from Nalanda with apparent intention of developing it on the line of Nalanda. Though we do not get any information about this monastery, even from the Tibetan tradition, it contains some occasional references to Odantapura Mahavihara, described as a great seat of learning. If it is true that the Tibetan monastery was built on the model of Odantapura, it may be inferred from the architectural plan of the former that it was built on a grand scale. Among the renowned Buddhist scholars and monks of Odantapura found in the Tibetan legends, Atisa Dipankara was the most venerable and illustrious. Atisa, who was originally known as Chandra-gartha, studied in this Mahavihara under acharya Silarakshita for two years and also under a distinguished acharya named Dharmarakshita.

According to another Tibetan tradition, the Odantapura Monastery contained 12,000 inmates and hence

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34. For Bam-Yas monastery of Tibet, see Pan-sam-Jan-zang, II, p.171.

35. For the Life and career of Atisa, see, Blue Annals, Book V, Vol.I; Atisa and Tibet (Chatterjee).

it may be inferred that it enjoyed great prosperity under the patronage of generations of Pala monarchs. But its population dwindled down to 53 monks as mentioned by Nag-tabo, the Tibetan disciple of Atisa. Nag-tabo visited Bengal and Bihar just before the Muslim invasion in this part of India and these remaining Buddhist monks were either killed by the Muslim soldiers or they fled to the neighbouring countries to save their life. The pattern of destruction of Buddhist monasteries in Bihar and Bengal was same and in this way Odantapuri Mahavihara, one of the celebrated seats of Buddhist learning, passed into obscurity.

Jagaddala

Jagaddala Mahavihara seems to be the last architectural-cum-academic achievement of the Pala dynasty. It was a great seat of learning like other Buddhist monasteries of the period. It appears from the relevant description contained in the Ramacharita of Sandhyakara Nandi that this Mahavihara was located at Ramavati in Varendri (North Bengal). Thus in canto 7

38. For Muslim invasion, see, Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, p. 42.
of Chapter III in the said epic it is stated
"Varendri .... where in the great monastery,
of Jagaddala kindly love for all was found accumulated -
which country bore (in its heart), the image of (Bodhi-
sattva) Lokesa - and whose great glory was still more
increased (or pronounced) by (the presence of) the
great (heads of monasteries) and the image of Tara
(the Buddhist goddess)."

It may be said therefore that Jagaddala was
founded by either in capital Ramavati of the Pala king
Ramapala or in its outskirts in Varendri. The exact
time of the destruction of this monastery is not known
to us but we learn from the anecdote of Sakya Sribhadra
in Tibetan legends that the Kashmirian scholar took
shelter in this monastery when he found both Odantapura
and Vikramasila in ruins in consequence of the Muslim
invasion. If this anecdote is true, Jagaddala Mahavihara
may be said to have remained intact during the
initial phase of the Muslim invasion. It seems that the
destruction of Odantapura and Vikramasila, probably around
1205 A.D., by the Muslims was followed by the blow dealt
to this Mahavihara by the invaders.

40. This capital-city was built by Ramapala on the banks
of the river Ganga and Karotoya in Varendra. It is
not unlikely that the Pala monarch justly endowed his
capital with an educational institution called Jagaddala.
41. Pag-sam-jon-zang (ed.S.C.Das), p.122, and he also men-
tions in JASS, 1898, p.25 that to be situated in Odissa
(Orissa) in place of Varendra, Taranatha (DPC), p.319.
It seems that Jagaddala became the last forum of Tibeto-Indian cultural intercourse. The large number of original and the Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit works mentioned in Tibetan Bstan-Hgyur and bka-guyr in connection with this monastery bear testimony to this view. Sakya Sribhadra during his brief stay at Jagaddala became the disciple of Subhakara, a saint-scholar of this monastery and he had also two gifted pupils there, Vibhutichandra and Danasila. Both of them were proficient in Sanskrit and Tibetan. Though the Tibetan tradition endows them with the appellations Pandita, Mahapandita, Upadhyaya and Acharya, we know very little about their career. It seems that they along with their preceptor left Jagaddala via Nepal to take shelter in Tibet due to the insecurity created by the Muslim invaders. It is quite likely that the remaining inmates of this monastery either fled to Nepal, Arakan and Cambodia for safety or some of them were killed by the Muslims.

The exact location of this Mahavihara has been a problem for a long time to scholars. It has been variously identified with villages enshrining the name of the

42. The colophon of Tibetan translation of Subhakara's work by Danasila mentioned him as the Guru of Sakya Sribhadra, which is a commentarial work on Tantra entitled 'Siddhaik-Vira-Tantra-Tika', vide, Cordier-Catalogue, Part II, p.293.
Mahavihara in the districts of Bogra, Dinajpur and Maldah in North Bengal of the pre-partition days. It appears to us that the site of this renowned monastery may be located in the village named Jagdala, 4 miles south-east of Bamangaon, in the Maldah district of West Bengal.

Some Minor Monasteries

Of the minor Buddhist monasteries (minor from the point of view of insufficiency of data pertaining to them), mention first be made of Raktaamritika Mahavihara which was located in the vicinity of the capital of the Karnavaurna kingdom of Sasanka, the illustrious monarch of Bengal in the 7th century. During the reign of Sasanka this monastery was visited by Yuan Chwang. The Chinese pilgrim mentions it as Lo-to-wei-chi-sang-kia-lam (the Chinese transliteration of Raktaamritika Sangharama) and gives details about it in his travelogue. The name Raktaamritika also occurs in a fragmentary siste-

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43. Buchanan Hamilton as early as 1833 in his Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of the District of Dinajpur said that the Jagdal region of the said district enshrines the memory of the site of the monastery. Sukumar Dutt places it in a village called Jagaddeal in the Bogra district of Bangladesh, EMM, p.377, fn.3. D.D. Kosambi in his introduction to the Subhasita-ratna-kosha (Harvard Oriental Series, no.42, 1957, p.xxxvi) tries to ascertain the site of this Mahavihara at Jagdala in the Maldah district.

44. For a detailed discussion on this issue, see Gauranga-gopal Sengupta's note in the Monthly Bulletin of the Asiatic Society, September, 1976.
stone inscription found in the Northern district of the Wellesley Province of Malaysia; this epigraph, accompanied by the figure of a Buddhist stupa, discloses the name of a great navigator (mahasayika) Buddhagupta, a native of Raktamritrta, who went to Malay, presumably in search of fortune. Recent excavations at Rajbadidanga near the Chiruti railway station in the Murshidabad district have revealed numerous antiquities, including some sealings with the name of Raktamritrta Mahavihara in the characters of fifth-sixth century A.D. The identification of this Mahavihara with Rajbadidanga has thus been settled beyond dispute.

Another monastery was probably Traikutaka Vihara of Radha. It was, therefore, located somewhere in West Bengal. Haribhadra is said to have composed his famous commentary on the Abhisamayalankara in this monastery under the patronage of Dharmapala. Devikota Vihara was in Pundaravardhana-bhukti and was thus located in North Bengal; it was probably situated near Bangarh in Dinajpur district. Acharya Advayavajra, Udhipa, Bhikshuru Mekhala etc. were residents of this monastery. Pandita

45. For details about the excavations, see S.R. Das, Rajbadidanga, Calcutta, 1968.
46. BAB, p. 525.
47. Ras-sam-ion-sang, pp. 110, 131.
Vihara was in Chattagrama (i.e., Chittagong) and with it was associated a distinguished acharya named Tailapada. 48 Phullahari Vihara was probably located somewhere in the present-day Monghyr district of Bihar. According to the Tibetan tradition, this monastery accommodated a number of celebrated Buddhist scholars and its Indian Pandits undertook Tibetan translations of Sanskrit texts in collaboration with Tibetan scholars. 49 The Sennagasa monastery, situated in East Bengal, was a prominent seat of Buddhist learning, a Buddhist Acharya named Vanaratna translated several Buddhist texts into the Tibetan language. 50 Vikramapura or Vikramapuri monastery, located in modern Vikramapur in the Dacca district, was patronised first by the Chandra kings and thereafter by the Sena kings. One Abhadbutacharya Kumarsachandra of this monastery is said to have composed three Tantric Panjikas or commentaries.

Of a few other small monasteries known from the Tibetan tradition as flourishing in the different parts of Bengal, bore the name Haluda Vihara. The name still survives in Dipaganja in the south-west of Furbpur.

48. Ibid., lxii; Cordier, Catalogue, Vol.II, p.27.
49. Ibid., lxviii; ibid., pp.102, 162.
51. Paz-sam-po, Index, II, XVIII.
There was another monastery at Pattikeraka where Acharya Vinayasrimitra and a few Kashmiri monks used to live. On their request Siddhacharya Nadupada composed a book named Vajrapada-Sara-samgraha. The famous Tantracharya Tailapada, a resident of Pandita Vihara of Chittagong, was his preceptor. This vihara was the centre of Tantrik learning and Sadhana and it was located near Comilla\(^\text{52}\). Haraprasad Sastri alludes to the existence of one monastery at Balanda on the basis of a manuscript of Ashtasahasrika-Prasnaparamita which was copied at Balanda and preserved at present in the Nepal Durbar Library\(^\text{53}\). These monasteries seem to have flourished in this period.

The foregoing account of the viharas and maha-viharas which flourished in Bengal and Bihar during our period thus bears a glowing testimony to an era of lively intellectual activities. And this was possible on account of the political solidarity which was brought about by the efficient rule of the Pala monarchs like Dharmapala, Devapala, Mahipala and Ramapala. It is presumable that the material relating to the centres of learning of the period which we have come across are by no means complete. More data are perhaps missing or are lying embedded in an

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\(^{52}\) HBR, p.258; B.C.Law Volume I, pp.213ff.
\(^{53}\) BI (NR), p.330.
unexplored chunk of Tibetan literature. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe that there were many more institutions of smaller dimensions whose names have not survived or are not yet known.