CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM INTO NEPAL.

There is no direct reliable historical evidence of the time when Buddhism entered Nepal. But from a Nepalese inscription of samvat 157 (= A.D. 733-34) we find that Buddhism prevailed in Nepal as early as about the beginning of the fifth century A.D. during the reign of Vṛṣadeva (A.D. 383-408). From some other existing historical records it appears that Buddhism was introduced into Nepal in the middle of the third century B.C. by several Buddhist missionaries sent by the Emperor Asoka. The legendary tales of the Nepalese Buddhist chronicles, however, tell us that six mortal Buddhas preceding Śākyamuni and Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, as well as Śākyamuni Buddha and Asoka visited the Nepal valley in different ages. There are further two episodes found in the Mulasarvastivāda Vinaya which speak of the visits of Ānanda and several other Buddhist monks to the Nepal valley during the life time of Śākyamuni Buddha.

THE ACCOUNTS OF THE NEPALESE BUDDHIST CHRONICLES.

The accounts of the Nepalese Buddhist chronicles based on mythology and legends about the introduction of Buddhism into the Nepal valley are narrated briefly herein:

In Satya Yuga Vipasyi Buddha came to the lake named Nāga Vāsa

in Nepal with his many disciples and Bhikshus in the course of his customary religious peregrinations from Bandhumati Nagara of Madhyaya Desa. He circumambulated the lake three times and then repeated several mantras over the root of a lotus and threw it into the water of the lake. Then he returned to his former abode in Madhyadesa, leaving his disciples on the spot. In the same Satya Yuga the lotus-root sown by Vipasyi Buddha brought forth a lotus-flower in the middle of which Svayambhu appeared in the form of light. Having heard of this, Sikhí Buddha came to Nepal from Aruna city many years after Vipasyi with a large number of followers. He offered many laudatory forms of prayer to 'Jyotí-rūpa-Svayambhū' and then walked three times round the lake. Then he threw himself into the water of the lake and was absorbed into the essence of Svayambhū. In the Treta Yuga Visvabhu Buddha came to Nepal from Anupama-puri-nagara of Madhyadesa and visited the lake accompanied by a great many followers and disciples. After worshipping the Svayambhū, he circumambulated the lake three times and returned to his native country. In the same Treta Yuga after Visvabhu Buddha, Manjusri Bodhisattva visited the lake called Āga Vāsa in Nepal from the 'Pañcasīrī-Parvata in Mahācīna Desa with many disciples and followers including his two wives and a king named Dharmakara. Having paid his devotions to the Svayambhū, he began to walk round the lake and finally struck the mountain named Mount Mahābhārat with his sword. The mountain was split into two and the waters of the lake rushed through that passage and the lake was converted into dry land which is now known as the Nepal Valley. Then he erected the shrine of Guhyesvari over the root of the lotus and raised the hill of Svayambhū around and over the flower. Then he founded a city called Mahājupattana and peopled it and installed
king Dharmakara as ruler over the country. Then he returned with
his wives to his own home in China. Some years after the disapparance of Mañjusri, Krakucchanda Buddha came to Nepal from Kṣenavat-
ingara in Madhyadesa as a Pilgrimage in the same Treta Yuga with
a large number of followers and disciples. After paying his devot-
tions to Svayambhū and Guhyesvari and praising the merits and Mañju-
sri, he preached the good religion to his followers. Seven hundred
disciples of Krakucchanda became Bhikṣus. Then he returned to his
native land. In the Dvapara Yuga Kanakamuni Buddha came to Nepal fr-
om Sobhavatınagara of Madhyadesa accompanied by his numerous disci-
plines and followers. After spending some months in the worship of Svaya-
ymbhū, Guhyesvari, and the Tri Ratna, he returned with most of his
followers to his native land. After Kanakamuni Buddha, Kāsyapa Buddh
came to Nepal on a Pilgrimage from Benares in the same Dvapara Yuga
with his followers. After visiting the shrines of Svayambhū and Guhy-
esvari, he preached good religion to the people. Then he returned
to Benares with some of his followers. Following Kāsyapa's instruct-
don king Pracandadeva of Gauḍa went to Nepal and became a monk under
Gunakara Bhikṣu, a follower of Mañjusri. He covered the Svayambhū
light with a stone and built a caitya over it.

During the reign of the seventh king of the Kirati dynasty na-
med Jitadasti Sakyasimha Buddha came into Nepal from a city named
Kapila-Vastu. There he visited Svayambhū / Caitya, Mañjusri Caitya,
Puchagra Caitya, Guhyesvari Caitya, etc.

While he was residing there, he made 1350 proselytes. He des-
cribed the glory of Svayambhū to several Bodhisattvas. After preach-
ing his doctrines to the people, he realised that the time of his
death was approaching. So he went to a city called Kosi where he disappeared. Some of his followers remained in Nepal and professed his religion.

In the reign of the 14th ruler of the Kirati dynasty named Shunko, Asoka, the king of Pataliputra, having heard of Nepal as a sacred place, and having obtained permission of his spiritual guide, Upagupta Bhiksu, made a pilgrimage to Nepal, accompanied by his family and followed by a large number of his subjects. He visited every holy place there. He built several ceityas there. His daughter Carumati determined to remain Nepal. Therefore gave her in marriage to a descendant of a Cheti named Devapala. Then he returned to his own country. After this, Carumati and her husband Devapala founded and peopled Deva Patan. In her old age Carumati built a vihara and lived a life of a bhiksu and died in her own vihara.

THE EPISODES IN THE MULASARVASTIVADA VINAYA.

The Mulasarvastivada Vinaya relates two episodes which are:

1. While Buddha was dwelling at the Jetavana in Sravasti, a group of Bhiksu. visited Nepal to find out about this country accompanied by a troop of merchants who were proceeding towards Nepal for exchanging their goods. But the Bhiksu. found no pleasure in Nepal and wanted to leave the country as early as the next day. Nevertheless they had to stay there until these merchants exchanged their goods. When these merchants loaded their chariots with wool for their return journey, the troop of Bhiksu. journeyed with them.

(ii). Here is the second episode: When the son of king Mal- 
ne (Virūdhaka) massacred the race of the Śākyas of Kapilavastu, so-
me of the Śākyas including the parents of the venerable Ānanda ent-
ered Nepal and settled there. Having seen some merchants of Śrāvas-
ti in Nepal, the parents of Ānanda requested them to ask Ānanda to 
visit them in their distress there. When these merchants returned 
to Śravasti from Nepal, they conveyed the words of the parents of 
Ānanda to the venerable Ānanda. Having heard these words, the Ven-
erable Ānanda was moved and afflicted and proceeded to the Kingdom 
of Nepal which is cold and snowy. As a result of the cold wind and 
snow, the venerable Ānanda got chapt on his hands and feet. There-
upon he returned to Śravasti. Having seen the hands and feet of 
Ānanda in that state, the Bhikṣus enquired him about the cause of it. 
The venerable Ānanda replied that he did not wear paśa-la (pīla) as 
others did in Nepal, because the Buddha had not then allowed to 
wear any. Then the Bhikṣus went to the Buddha and humbly asked him 
about the subject and in reply the Buddha told them that in cold 
and snowy countries ‘Paśa-la’ could be worn by the Bhikṣus.¹

AN ESTIMATE OF THE ACCOUNTS OF THE NEPALESE BUDDHIST 
CHRONICLES

The aforesaid visits are all fancible. The accounts of the Bu-
ddhist chronicles of Nepal given above are full of myths and lege-
nds which have no bearing upon the historical facts about Buddhism 
in Nepal. The so-called Mortal Buddhas preceding Śākyamuni are my-
thical, the Śākyamuni Buddha alone being historical personage. So

¹. Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya, Ed., Tokyo (a section, the Sarvā- 
Vastu), XVII,4, P.111b Col.9; S. Levi, Le Nepal, 3rd Vol. Appendice 1, 
P.181; Regmi, Ancient Nepal, 1960,
the preaching of Buddhism in Nepal by the mythical Buddhas and the Bodhisattva in the legendary period long before the advent of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni is indeed fancible.

Although Śākyamuni Buddha is unquestionably a historical personage, who was born and brought up, propagated his doctrine and died within the close proximity of the Nepal Valley, Indian source materials, however, are wanting to corroborate Śākyamuni Buddha's visit to Nepal. Pali works as also Sanskrit Buddhist texts are quite silent about Buddha's missionary activities in Nepal as well as other countries outside India. It seems that the account of the Nepalese Buddhist chronicles about Śākyamuni Buddha's visit to the Nepal Valley is obviously fanciful and lacks historical evidence. Speaking of the Gautama Buddha's visit to Nepal, Percival London observes, "More definite assurance of Gautama's visit to Nepal is given by the undoubted conviction of the great Emperor Asoka in 250 B.C. that Gautama Buddha had not only visited the Valley but that some incident of unusual importance to the Buddhist faith had taken place there. For in Kathmandu Asoka left more ponderous evidence of his visit than anywhere else in all his long career. 1 Percy Brown writes, "Buddha appears to have made a pilgrimage to most of the holy places in the Valley - not a particularly arduous undertaking, as the Great Teacher was born, spent most of his life, and died, within close proximity to the Nepal Terai. His visit seems to have occurred at a fairly late period of his career, as by this time he was making his presence felt as a reformer. However, we can

not definitely prove Asoka’s visit to the Nepal Valley for lack of evidence in reliable source material.

AN ESTIMATE OF THE EPISODES FOUND IN THE MULASARVASTIVADA VINAYA

As regards the episodes found in the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya, Dr. D.R. Regmi writes that the episode of Ananda’s journey to Nepal may be considered a late addition, introduced by interested monks at the end of a section of the Mulasarvastivada Vinaya. The episode of the massacre of the race of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu by Virudhaka is also found in the Pali canonical texts. Whatever may be the truth behind the episode of the massacre of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, it is not unusual to believe that some of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu and their descendants have been living in the Nepal Valley, which is so near to Kapilavastu from the time immemorial. But there is no trace of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu anywhere in the Nepal Valley throughout the ages. However, the references to Sakyabhikṣu are found in the Nepalese inscriptions and Buddhist mas. of all ages since the 7th Century A.D. The earliest notice of the Sakyabhikṣu is found in the Cabahil Caitya inscription of about the time of Narendrādeva (A.D. 665). The Tebahal inscription of the period between the time of Anśuvṛkṣa and Narendrādeva mentions one Sākyabhikṣu named Priyapāla. Dhanavajra Vajrācārya, the compiler of the 'Liṅgavikāka Abhileśa', identifies Priyapala Sākya with Priyapāla Sākyabhikṣu, but at the same time he writes that Sākyasimha Buddha was born in the family of the Sākya of Kapilavastu. So —

anybody, who belonged to the Sākyas, was respected by all other Buddhists and the Bhikṣu, who came from the Sākyas, was paid special attention and was called Sakyabhikṣu. He further states that as Babhili inscription also mentions one Sakyabhikṣu and many references to the persons, who were born in the family of the Sākyas, are found in the Nepalese inscriptions of the middle ages and Buddhist texts mention the flight of many Sakyas of Kapilavastu to Nepal during the life time of Buddha, it seems to him that the Sakyas lived in Nepal during the Licchavi period. But Dhanvajra Vajrācārya's inference is not satisfactory, as from the Nepalese inscriptions and colophons of Buddhist manuscripts copied in Nepal as well as in India it is quite evident that since the beginning of the 7th Century A.D. Buddhist monks of all ranks who belonged to the Mahāyāna School of Buddhism were called Sakyabhikṣu as well as bhikṣu. It is also evident that the expressions like 'Sākyavaniśodhijāta', 'Sākyavaniśottama', 'Sākyavaniśodbhava', 'Sākyavaniśapsasutah', etc., which are figured in different Nepalese inscription of different ages of the medieval period since the very beginning of the reign of Jayasthitimala (A.D.1388-1395) indicate the persons who were born actually in the family of the Buddhist married monks called Sakyabhikṣu or their descendants. The subject is discussed in detail in the third chapter of this book. However, from the episodes of the Mulasarvāstivāda vinaya narrated above it looks quite certain that Nepal maintained some sort of cultural and commercial contact with the different parts of India like Pataliputra, Sravasti, etc. constantly and regularly since 1. D. Vajrācārya Op.Cit. (Explanation in Nepali), P.455.
the very ancient times. This fact is confirmed by the Kautilya's Arthasastra of the 4th Century B.C., where Kautilya talks of a woolen Nepali blanket to have been selling in Pataliputra. So it will not be wrong to say that Buddhism might have been known to the Nepalese at least as early as Kautilya's time.

DIFFERENT VIEWS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF ASOKAN STUPAS IN THE NEPAL VALLEY

Although the Nepalese Buddhist Chronicle and tradition relate that the Emperor Asoka personally visited the Nepal Valley and built several large mount temples, we have neither any historical evidence nor any other sufficient ground to believe this statement of the Chronicle and tradition. Nevertheless some of the scholars assert that the Emperor Asoka visited the Nepal Valley and the six large ancient stupas, which have been existing in the Nepal Valley from the time immemorial, were really built, as tradition relates, during the reign of the Emperor Asoka. Speaking of Asoka's visit to the Annapak Nepal Valley perceivable London writes that the four great stupas with which Asoka surrounded Patan are still standing almost unchanged. But the plain mounds of bricks and earth that he erected have been so ornamented by later generations that they have practically lost all resemblance to Asoka's monuments. He built also other shrines which may be traced in the valley. He further writes that like the pillar at —

1. Kautilya, Arthasastra, 2 adhikarana II adhyaya 29 Prakarana — "Asaplotisanghatya Krna bhingisi Varsavaranam, apasarakiti Naipalakam".
Rummindei they constitute definite proof of the visit of the Emperor Asoke in the Nepal Valley in the middle of the third century B.C.\(^1\) Percy Brown, too, writes that king Asoke journeyed from his capital of Pataliputra to the various Buddhist holy places in the Nepal Valley in 249 B.C. He further states that exactly in the centre of the city now known as Lalita Patan, Asoke erected a temple which still stands near the southern side of the palace or Durbar.\(^2\) Regarding the existing large so-called Asokan stūpas in Patan, D.L. Snellgrove observes, "Leglend once again connects the early history of the people there with the Indian Emperor Asoke and this at least is plausible, for it is well known how concern he was to spread the good law beyond the limits of his own domains. Also the earliest monuments are definitely Buddhist, for they are stūpas similar to those in India. It is likely therefore that Buddhist communities established themselves in this valley well before the beginning of the Christian era. It seems also that a very special sanctity was associated with Patan, which at that early period was certainly the Chief and perhaps the only settlement there. Four great stūpas were constructed at the four points of the compass and one in the centre of the town. All five are still standing and Patan may well claim to be the oldest Buddhist city in the world; which has retained its Buddhist character to the present day.\(^3\) S. Levi states that the Nepalese stūpas attributed to the Emperor Asoke are on the model of the stūpas at Sāṇci and Taxila.

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but these do not enshrine any relics. In this connection Dr. Regmi writes, "on any consideration it looks most unlikely that Asoka had at any time visited the valley of Nepal and could impose his suzerainty over this country. Any suggestion leading to the acceptance of the old thesis will be absolutely imaginative. All our information about Asoka's visit to the Valley comes from the later chronicles. The visit is unknown to the ancient chronicle as far as the 14th Century A.D. The Stūpas attributed to Asoka cannot be very reliable materials for any conclusive statement. Their antiquity is also disputed.

However, it is a fact that there are six large ancient stūpas of bricks and earth in the Nepal Valley attributed to Emperor Asoka. Five of these Caityas are in Patan. Of these one Caitya is in the Centre of the town and the remaining four are in the four corners around the two. The sixth Caitya is in the city of Kirtipur. Although these stūpas have been ornamented by later generations, the hemispherical domes of these stūpas have all resemblance to Asoka's stūpas in Sāṇcī. Undoubtedly the stūpas were built in ancient times. But unfortunately there is really no reliable historical document preserved to-day to determine the age of their construction. Nepalese inscriptions of the Licchavi period are quite silent about the existence of these so-called Asokan stūpas. This silence of the Nepalese documents suggests that either these stūpas did not exist in Nepal at that time or they were destroyed so badly that they were not worthy to have been worshipped.

Although it is uncertain whether the Emperor Asoka himself actually visited the Nepal Valley or not, the existing historical documents definitely prove that a batch of Buddhist missionaries was sent to the Himalayan regions for the propagation of Buddhism in the middle of the third century B.C. The Sinhalese chronicles the 'Dīpavaṃsa' and the 'Mahāvaṃsa' gave an account of the missions dispatched by Moggaliputta Tissa during the reign of Asoka to the different parts of India. Each mission contained of a leader and his four assistants. According to the Mahāvaṃsa (Chapter XII) Majjhantika was sent to Kashmir and Gandhara; Mahārakkhita was sent to the Yona (Yavana), on the north-western frontier; Majjhima (accompanied by Kassapa, Mallikadeva, Dhundabhiṣṭassoka, and Sahasadèva) was sent to Himavanta (the Himalaya); etc. Cunningham opened the stupas at and near Sāñcī and found in them some relic-caskets with inscriptions on them. In stūpa 2 at Sāñcī these relic-caskets were found. The relics of Majjhima and Kassapa were found enshrined together in one of the caskets in No. 2 stūpa at Sāñcī. The brief inscriptions on the lids of this casket described them as "Hemavata Cariya". But Kassapa was described as the apostle (ācārya) of the Himavanta. These inscriptions on the lids of the relic-casket in No. 2 stūpa at Sāñcī gives the legend: "of the good man Kassapagotta, the teacher of all the Himalayan region." Thus according to the inscription on this relic casket of Sāñcī the person who is spoken of as the teacher of the Himalayan regions is not Majjhima but Gotiputra-Kassapa-gotta. However, the information of the Sinhalese chronicle, 1.Cunningham (A), The Aih sla Tope or Buddhist Monuments of Central India, London, 1854, p. 140, PL XX, It is repeated on a second casket containing his relics which was found in No. 2 Tope at Somānī, PL XXIV, inscription on No. 3 Tope, P.I, 20.
the Mahaavaisa, about the dispatching of missionaries by Moggali-putta Tissa to the Himalaya (Himavanta) during the reign of the Emperor Asoka is authentic, although Asoka's thirteenth Rock Edict, which enumerates the neighbouring foreign countries as far as six hundred leagues to which Asoka dispatched his missionaries to spread his Good Law, is quite silent about these missionaries. The Himalayan regions is a very vast extensive area. But according to the list of countries given by the Mahaavaisa, the Himavanta region is excluding Kashmir, Gandhara and Yavana, as these regions are mentioned separately in the list. But still there are many populated regions in the Himalayan regions since the very ancient times. So it is difficult to mention the particular area where these missionaries were directed to visit. Nevertheless, for the whole of the Himalayas the Nepal Valley is the most favourably placed on account of its climate and soil. Of all the Himalayan regions Nepal is the nearest place to the capital of Asoka's kingdom. The snowy mountains of Nepal are clearly visible from many parts of Asoka's dominions. Moreover, the Nepal Valley was accessible to the Indians from the ancient times, as Nepal maintained some sort of commercial and cultural contact with different parts of India according to Kautilya's Arthasastra and the Manasarvastivada Vinaya. Hence it is very unlikely that these missionaries should have left unvisited Nepal. Thus it appears that Buddhism was introduced into the Nepal Valley formally in the middle of the third century B.C. under the patronage of the Emperor Asoka.
ADOPTION OF BUDDHISM BY THE KIRATAS OF CINA-CILATA IN THE
THIRD CENTURY B.C.

From the existing inscriptions of Nagaryunakonda and the stone railing at Sānci it is evident that Kiratas or Cilatas of the Cina-Cilata adopted Buddhism. In the Nagarjunakonda inscription Cina-Cilata is mentioned as one of the countries where an attempt was made for expansion of Buddhism. The stone railings inscription at Sānci has the expression "Ciratiya Bhichunodanam" meaning Kirata monks. Dr. Jayawal attributes the snub-nosed relief images of Sānci and Bharhut to the social types identified with the Kiratas.

According to Prof. S. Levici, Cilata was a part of Mahacina which included Nepal. Dr. N. Dutta writes that Cilata mentioned in the Nagarjunakonda inscription is identified with the Kiratas living in the eastern Himalayan region, that is the frontier of Nepal, the vast forest adjoining Lumbini.

DISCUSSION ABOUT IDENTIFICATION OF THE KIRATAS OF THE CINA-CILATA WITH THE KIRATAS OF ANCIENT NEPAL

The Nepalese Chronicles, however, mention 29 rulers of the Kirata dynasty who ruled over the Nepal Valley. According to legends there were three main heads of Kiratas which invaded the Nepal Valley from the east in the course of three centuries. The last of the three heads of Kiratas is supposed to have settled down in the Nepal Valley in the beginning of the 6th century B.C. and ruled over the Valley for 25 x 29 or 725 years. At present the portion of the Eastern territories of Nepal called Kiratadesa is occupied by

1. "(a)Camata-(re)Jacariyanam Kasmiragandhara-Cina-Cilata ".
4. Regmi, Ibid.
Kiratadesa is occupied by the Kirata tribe. It is inferred that Kiratas spoken by the chronicles and legends were an offshoot of the tribe now living in Kiratadesa of the eastern Nepal. But from the statement of Regmi in his 'Ancient Nepal' it is evident that the Kiratas of the Kiratadesa in the Eastern territories of Nepal did not come under the influence of Buddhism in ancient times. Dr. Regmi writes, "The fact that the modern Kiratas do not betray the least sign of having adopted Buddhism must mean that they were not the people to come under its influence at a very early age. We cannot take them as representatives of the people habiting the valley 20,000 years ago, who were definitely Saivo-Buddhists. However, many words like 'Brenguuni, Mogunii, Choguuni, Guni Vihara, etc., which are not Sanskritic derivatives, occur in the inscriptions of the Licchavi dynasty of the Nepal Valley. According to Mr. Dhanavajra Vajracarya the word 'Guni' belongs to the language of the Kirata family. Therefore, the 'Guni Vihara' which is figured in the Amisuvarma's Harigaon inscription of Samvat 32 (= A.D. 600-5) might have been constructed during the reign of the Kirata dynasty in the Nepal Valley. The 'Guni Vihara' is identified with the 'Gvan Vihara' or 'Gumbahal' situated on the site of Vajrayogini above the hill of Sankhu which is known as Guni Bahal until now. Moreover it appears that of all the Viharas existed in the Nepal Valley during the Licchavi period the Guni Vihara was the most ancient as well as famous Buddhist monasteries, as in the Amisuvarma's Harigaon inscription.

the name of 'Guṃ Vihāra' was placed at the top of the list of the names of all famous Buddhist monasteries existed then in Nepal to receive donations in monetary units of Purana and Pana. Therefore, it is highly probable that Kiratas (Cilātas) of Cina Cilata who adopted Buddhism long before the beginning of the Christian era belonged to the Nepal Valley. This is also corroborated by Dr. N. Dutta who writes that the ancient Kiratas were the earliest people of Nepal to receive the teachings of Buddhism.

THE EXISTENCE OF A BUDDHIST MS. OF ABOUT 2,000 YEARS OLD AND TWO IMAGES OF BODHISATTVĀ OF THE SECOND CENTURY A.D.

Besides the existence of Guṃ Vihāra, two broken stone images of Bodhisattvā of the 2nd Century A.D. and one Buddhist manuscript of about 2,000 years old are discovered and preserved in Nepal. The presence of these reliable historical documents in Nepal may indicate the prevalence of Buddhism in Nepal as early as about the very beginning of the Christian era. MS. Mahāyānasūtraratna Ketuparjāvaratāḥ was written in a very old Gupta script (madhyasīyākṣaraḥ). This is the earliest known MS. in Nepal. On the basis of its script its date of copying is fixed up by the Nepalese epigraphists. The MS. is preserved now in Rāṣṭriya Abhilekhalaya, Kathmandu, Nepal. A standing colossal headless image of a Bodhisattva of the 2nd century A.D. are discovered in Nepal and preserved now in Nepal National Museum. The Bodhisattvā image was found in Harīgāon, a few miles north east of the present city of Kathmandu and near Pasupati and Cābhānil during the excavation. The head of an image of Bodhisattvā was found into a drain in the Dhunbarahi area of Kathmandu.

near Baghbhal rava Handir. According to Dr. H.R. Banerjee, the archaeological adviser of His Majesty's Govt. of Nepal, this image resembles the Bodhisattva images of the Kathara School of Sculpture representing all the features of these images. Moreover, according to the great Tibetan historian, Taranatha, Vasuvandhu (A.D. 200-360), a eminent Buddhist teacher, visited Nepal accompanied by a large number of his followers in order to propagate his own doctrine and died there. However, the images of the 2nd century A.D. and the Buddhist manuscript of the beginning of the Christian era might not have existed in Nepal at such an early period, they might have been carried there at a late period. On the other hand, the genuineness of this information of Taranatha cannot be judged for lack of evidence in reliable source material. Thus, on the basis of these documents, no conclusion can be drawn in regard to the existence of Buddhism in Nepal before the fifth century A.D.

**DIFFERENT VIEWS REGARDING THE INTRODUCTION OF BUDDHISM INTO NEPAL.**

Regarding the introduction of Buddhism into Nepal, Dr. H.A. Oldfield writes that Buddhism was introduced into Nepal directly from India during the interval between the third century B.C. and the sixth century B.C. and had become so firmly rooted among the Newars of the Nepal Valley that it has continued to be their national religion until the present day. Mr. Burgess writes that Buddhism had got a strong foothold among the Newars undoubtedly at an early date not improbably in the time of Asoka. According to Charles Eliot, Buddhism was introduced into Nepal under Asoka.

Mr. Waddell writes that Asoka introduced Buddhism into Nepal. We have also every reason to believe that Buddhism was formally introduced into Nepal in the 3rd Century B.C. during the reign of Asoka. But we have no definite proof of the introduction of Buddhism into Nepal.

**BUDDHISM IN NEPAL DURING THE REIGN OF VRSADEVA (CIRCA 383-408 A.D.)**

The Pacupati inscription of Jayadeva II of Sambat 157 (A.D. 733-34) is the only known reliable historical document which records direct evidence of the prevalence of Buddhism in Nepal as early as the beginning of the 5th Century A.D. During the reign of the Licchavi King Vrsadeva (A.D. 383-303). In this inscription Vrsadeva is called as the supporter of Sugata's (Buddha's) doctrine. This inscription confirms the statement of the Nepalese later chronicle which states that having forsaken his ancestral faith, to which he owed nominal allegiance, Vrsadeva adopted Buddhism giving to it indirect patronage. The Devamālā, which is found in Nepal, also mentions the fact that Vrsadeva adopted Buddhism.

In this connection it should be mentioned that the Chahil inscription which is older than the Manadeva I's inscription of Sambat 386 (A.D. 464) and which is the earliest known inscription of Nepal records the pious donation of lands by one woman for worshipping of the Buddha as well as the feeding for the order of Buddhist monks. From this inscription it is quite evident that Buddhist monks and monasteries as well as large caityas and images of the Buddha were present in the Nepal Valley as early as the beginning of the 5th Century A.D.