

SOURCE REFERENCES FOR
“THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA”

Abbreviations: DN-Dīgha Nikāya
 MN-Majjhima Nikāya
 SN-Saṃyutta Nikāya
 AN-Aṅguttara Nikāya

BUDDHA

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THE APPENDIXES

BRIEF HISTORY OF BUDDHISM
-Transmission from India to Japan-
1. INDIA

One of the greatest epoch-making events in the spiritual history of mankind was marked when the “Light of Asia” was set out brightly in the central part of India, or, in other words, when the Spring of Great Wisdom and Compassion gushed up there, which, in the course of time has come to enrich the human mind over many centuries up to the present day.

Gautama Buddha, who came to be known by later Buddhist followers as Shakyamuni or the “Sage of the Shakya clan,” abandoned His home, became a mendicant and turned His steps toward the south, to Magadha. It is believed to have been in the middle of the 5th century B.C., that He finally attained Enlightenment under a Bodhi-tree there. He continued His untiring efforts for forty-five long years, from this time on to His “Great Death” by which He entered Maha-pari-Nirvana, all the while preaching the teaching of Wisdom and Compassion. As a result, great Buddhists steadfastly continued to appear in the kingdoms and various tribes in mid-India.

During the time of King Asoka (reigning: 268-232 B.C.), the third ruler of the Maurya Kingdom, the teaching of Gautama Buddha spread throughout the whole of India and was also being propagated beyond the boundaries of the country.

Maurya had been the first of the consolidated kingdoms in India. This kingdom at the time of its first ruler, Chandragupta (reigning: 317-293 B.C. or thereabouts,) was already occupying a vast domain, extending from the Himalayan mountains in the north, to the Bay of Bengal in the east, to the Hindu Kush mountains in the west, and beyond the Vindhya mountains to the south. King Asoka further expanded this domain to the Deccan Plateau, by conquering Kalinga and others.

This King is said to have been very furious in nature, being called by his people Chandāsoka (the Furious Asoka); but his character showed a complete change when he witnessed the disastrous conditions caused by the war in which Kalinga had been conquered. He became an earnest devotee of the teaching of Wisdom and Compassion. After that, he did many things as a Buddhist believer, among which the following two undertakings are most noteworthy.

First was the “Asoka’s carved edict,” or the administrative concepts based on the Buddhist teaching carved onto stone pillars, or on polished cliff walls, which he ordered done at numerous places, thus spreading the teaching of Buddha. Secondly, he sent missions beyond his kingdom to countries in all directions conveying the teaching of Wisdom and Compassion. Especially remarkable is the fact that some of the missions were sent out to such places as Syria, Egypt, Kyrene, Macedonia and Epeiros, spreading Buddhism far and wide to the western world. Moreover, Mahendra (in the Pāli language Mahinda), the envoy sent to Sri Lanka, was successful in “Establishing the beautiful teaching on the beautiful Lankādvīpa (Pāli, Lankādīpa)”, and thus founded the starting point of the Buddhist teaching for its successful propagation on the island.

2. THE RISE OF MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

The “Eastward Movement of Buddhism” has often been spoken of by the Buddhists of the later years. But during the B.C. centuries, the face of Buddhism was evidently turned toward the West. It was sometime around the beginning of the Christian Era that this “face” of Buddhism began to be turned toward the East. However, before we refer to this matter, we must speak of the great change that was occurring in Buddhism. This change was none other than the “New Wave” which is known as “Mahayana Buddhism,” or Greater Vehicle Buddhism, that was taking strong root and appearing as a conspicuous element in the teaching of the time.

When, how and by whom was such a “New Wave” started? Nobody is as yet able to definitely answer these questions. All we know is: First, the trend must have been brought about in the so-called thought-genealogy constituent of the Mahāsaṅghika school by the progressive priests of the time; Second, the fact is that there had already existed some of the important elements of the Mahayana scriptures during the period from one or two centuries B.C. to the first century of the Christian Era. And when the superb thought of Nāgārjuna, backed by the Mahayana scriptures, developed, Mahayana Buddhism vividly presented itself in the foreground on the stage of the history of the religion.

The role that was played by Mahayana Buddhism was very great in the long history of Buddhism. Now, as to China and Japan, Buddhism in these countries through almost all their history has developed under the influence of the Mahayana teaching. This does not seem strange because there was already worked out a new ideal for the salvation of the masses, envisaging living saints in the form of Bodhisattvas to practice this ideal; moreover, to support them, the intellectual results in the metaphysical or psychological domains that were brought about by the Mahayana thinkers were really magnificent. In this way, although it was linked with the teaching of Gautama Buddha on the one hand, many new phases of Wisdom and Compassion were added. With these new additions, Buddhism became full of ardor and energy and came to enrich the countries in the East like the rushing stream of a great river.

3. CENTRAL ASIA

It was through the Central Asian countries that China came to learn of Buddhism for the first time. Therefore, to tell of the teaching spreading from India to China, it is necessary to speak of the Silk Road. This road passed through the boundless territories in Central Asia to connect the West and the East, and it was during the age of King Wu of the Han dynasty (reigning: 140-87 B.C.) that this trade route was opened. At that time, the domain of Han extended far westward, and in such adjoining countries as Ferghana, Sogdiana, Tukhara and even Parthia, the spirit of mercantilism which had formerly been inspired by Alexander the Great was still vigorously active. Along this ancient route that ran through these countries silk played the most important role, hence the name Silk Road. From the time a little before or after the beginning of the Christian Era, India and China started their cultural contacts first by means of the trade route. Thus, the road can be said to have been the route for Buddhism as well.

4. CHINA

The history of Chinese Buddhism starts from their acceptance of the Buddhist scriptures and translation thereof. The oldest work from the ancient times is said to be the "*Ssu-shih-êr-châng-ching* (Sutra in Forty-two Sections Spoken by Buddha)" a translation done by Kāśyapamātaṅga and others during the Ying-p'ing Era (58-76 A.D.) of King Ming of the Latter Eastern Han, but it is today regarded as a doubtful legendary story. The corroborated opinion now gives the credit to An-shih-kaio who was engaged in translation at Lo-yang from about 148 to 171 A.D.. From this time to the time of the Northern Sung Dynasty (960-1129 A.D.), the translation work continued for nearly one thousand years.

During the earlier years, those who played pivotal roles in the introduction of the scriptures and in making translations thereof were mostly the priests from the Central Asian countries. For instance, An-shih-kao, mentioned above, came from Parthia; K'angsêng-k'ai, from the Samarkand region came to Lo-yang in about the 3rd century and translated "*Sukhāvativyūha*" (the Book of Limitless Life). Moreover, Chu-fa-hu or Dharmaraksha, who is known as the translator of the "*Saddharmapūṇḍarīka*," came from Tukhāra and stayed in Lo-yang from the latter part of the third century to the early part of the fourth century. When Kumārajīva, who came from Kucha, appeared in the early part of the fifth century, the translation work in China reached a high point.

From about that time priests began visiting India from China to learn Sanskrit. The pioneer of such priests was Fa-hsien (339-420? A.D.). He left Ch'ang-an in 399 for India and returned home fifteen years later. The most distinguished of these priests visiting India was Hsuan-chuang (602-664 A.D.) who left for India in 627 and returned home in 645, after nineteen long years. Further, I-ching (635-713 A.D.) (not to be confused with the book I-ching) left for India by sea in 671 and returned home by the same route twenty-five years later.

These priests visited India by themselves to learn Sanskrit and brought home those scriptures they had chosen, playing the leading role in the scriptures translation work. The linguistic ability that Hsuan-chuang showed was especially outstanding, and by his energetic work, the translation of the scriptures in China reached another peak. The works of the former days done by those represented by Kumārajīva are called the "Old Translations" and the works by Hsuan-chuang and the later translators are called the "New Translations" by Buddhist scholars in later periods.

Based on this enormous number of volumes which they had translated from Sanskrit, the tendency of thought and religious activity of these learned men gradually but strongly turned toward Sinicism. There appeared plainly the racial nature, needs and confidences. That the priests in the early stages turned their minds metaphysically towards "Non-substantiality" especially, which is dealt with in the Prajñā of the Sutras, was a manifestation of this tendency. Later, they cast away the so-called "Hinayana", or the Lesser Vehicle, and turned their attention exclusively toward "Mahayana", the Greater Vehicle. Moreover, this tendency gradually became notable in the Tendai Sect and may be said to have reached its height when the Zen Sect appeared.

It was in the latter half of the sixth century that the Tendai Sect saw its completion in China, which was perfected by Tendai Daishi, Chih-i (538-597 A.D.), its third patriarch. He was one of the most outstanding figures in Buddhist thought, and the critical classification of Buddha's teaching into the Five Periods and Eight Doctrines worked out by this saint have long maintained a wide influence on the Buddhism of China as well as of Japan.

A review will show that in China the various sutras were brought in without regard to the order of the time of their origins and were translated as they were taken in. In the face of the enormous number of these sutras, the problem was how to understand their origin and evaluations. It was necessary to appreciate Buddhism as a whole and to show how one should stand according to one's own understanding of it. As to the evaluation of the sutras, the trend of the Chinese thought, first of all, comes to the fore. Above all, that of Chih-i was most systematic and, therefore, splendidly persuasive. But, with the appearance of the Buddhist research work of modern times, even such a dominating influence was to come to an end.

In the history of Buddhism in China "The one that came last" was the Zen Sect. Its founder is said to have been Śramana, of a foreign country, or Bodhidharma (-528 A.D.); but the seed sown by him had seen its glorious flower only after the time of Hui-nêng (638-713 A.D.), the sixth patriarch of the line. After the eighth century, the sect in China had sent out many priests of talent in succession, bringing about the prosperity of Zen for a period of several centuries.

It can be seen that there was a new way of thinking in Buddhism, which was deeply rooted in the nature of the Chinese people. It was nothing other than a Buddhism colored by the Chinese way of thinking. And yet the stream of the teaching of Gautama Buddha, with this fresh current added, had grown into a still larger river and came to enrich the countries to the east.

5. JAPAN

The history of Buddhism in Japan began in the sixth century. In 538 A.D., the King of Paikche (or Kudara, Korea) dispatched his envoy to present a Buddhist image and scroll of sutras to the Imperial Court of Emperor Kinmei. This marked the first introduction of Buddhism into this country. The history of the religion in Japan is therefore more than 1,400 years old now.

In this long history, we can think of Japanese Buddhism in connection with three foci. The first can be placed on the Buddhism of roughly the seventh and eighth centuries. To show this materially we can refer to the Hōryūji Temple (607 A.D.) and the Tōdaiji Temple (752 A.D.), which were constructed during this period. In looking back to this time, the one thing that can not be overlooked is the fact that the tide of culture rose unusually high throughout the whole of Asia during this period, while the civilization of the West was shut up in deep darkness. The East was developing an astonishingly active and magnificent movement. In China, in Central Asia, in India and in the South-sea countries, the activities in the intellectual, religious and art fields were going on strongly. Joining these movements, Buddhism was washing the Eastern world with its vast tide

of humanism. And this new movement of the Japanese culture as witnessed by the construction of the brilliant Hōryūji and the magnificent Tōdaiji, and also in the colorful religious and art activities that came about in connection with these events, shows this absorption at the extreme eastern end of the general cultural tide that was covering all the vast area of Asia.

The people of this country, which had been in an uncivilized state for a long time, now bathed in the current of a great culture; the flower of civilization opened up all of a sudden. Such was the good turn of fortune that favored Japan in those centuries. And the chief champion responsible for the rise in this culture was none other than Buddhism, the Buddhist temples of the time became very important social centers, and the priests were the leaders of the new learning. There developed a wide and great culture rather than just a religion. This was the actual state of Buddhism that was first transplanted to this country.

In the ninth century, two great priests, Saichō (Dengyō Daishi, 767-822) and Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi, 774-835) appeared on the scene and founded two Buddhist denominations usually referred to together as Heian-Buddhism. This was the establishment of a purely Japanese Buddhism. They grasped Buddhism in its original standpoint and practice, and founded the central monasteries on Mt. Hiei and Mt. Kōya respectively. During the three hundred years after their founding, until the Kamakura Period, these two esoteric denominations, the Tendai and the Shingon, prospered chiefly among the aristocrats and in the Imperial courts.

The second of the foci can be placed on the Buddhism of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There appeared such great priests as Hōnen (1133-1212 A.D.), Shinran (1173-1262 A.D.), Dōgen (1200-1253 A.D.) and Nichiren (1222-1282 A.D.). When we talk of the Buddhism of Japan we can not do so without mentioning the names of these great priests. Why then did only those centuries in question produce such outstanding men? It is because of the fact that a common problem was facing them all at that time. What was this common problem, then? Perhaps it was the fact that Buddhism was being accepted, but in a unique Japanese way.

This might lead to the question, "Why? Was it not true that Buddhism had been introduced to this country long before that time?" It is so historically. But it is also true that several hundred years were needed for the people of this country to sufficiently digest and remodel the imported religion so as to make it completely their own. In short, it was in the seventh and eighth centuries that the efforts in this country for the acceptance of Buddhism began, and as a result of these efforts, the religion bloomed through those Buddhists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

After this, Buddhism in Japan, based on the foundation built up by those prominent priests, has kept up its work to this day. Since the time those distinguished men appeared, no more of the brilliancy of those centuries has ever again appeared in the history of Japanese Buddhism. However, it seems to the present writer that there is another thing that attracts our attention and that is the fruit of the research into original Buddhism made in our modern times.

Since the time of its first acceptance, practically all of Buddhism in Japan, was Mahayana, under the influence of Chinese Buddhism. Especially after the appearance of the great teachers during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Mahayana teaching formed the main current with the sect founders as its center; this view has continued to this date. In the history of Buddhism in Japan as such, the study of original Buddhism was started after the mid-Meiji Era. The figure of Gautama Buddha vividly reappeared before those who were apt to forget that there was also the founder of Buddhism besides the sect founders, and it was

made plain to those who did not heed anything other than the Mahayana teaching that there was also the systematic creed of Buddhism. These new phases still remain within the sphere of scholastic learning and as yet are not strong enough to awake religious enthusiasm among the masses. But it seems that the knowledge of the people of this country in regard to Buddhism appears to be taking a turn. The writer would like to put a mark on this phase, to make it the third or the last of the three foci referred to above.

TRANSMISSION OF BUDDHA'S TEACHING

Buddhism is a religion which is built up on the teaching Shakyamuni had preached for forty-five years of his life. The words he used in his teaching, therefore, have absolute authority in this religion, and in spite of the fact that there are 84,000 dharma gates and a large number of schools, all of them are related to the scriptures of Shakyamuni. Those books in which the Buddha's teaching is recorded are known as the *Issaikyō* or the *Daizōkyō*, that is, a complete collection of the sacred scriptures.

Shakyamuni strongly advocated the equality of human beings and preached his teaching in the plain and simple words of everyday usage so that everyone could fully understand them. He continued his preaching for the benefit of multitudes of people up to the very minute of his death at the age of eighty.

After the demise of Shakyamuni, his disciples preached the gospel according to what they had heard. However, as the teaching was transmitted and retold, there might possibly have occurred some variations due to unconscious errors on the part of the disciples as to what they thought they had heard or understood. And, yet, the words of Shakyamuni must always be transmitted precisely and correctly, and opportunities of hearing the teaching must be afforded to every and all people without discrimination. Therefore, many of the senior priests got together for the purpose of adjusting and consolidating the words and teaching by mutually reciting what each thought he had heard, and they spent many a month on their discussions. The work that resulted in this way is known as the *Ketsujū* or regimentation. This shows how piously and deliberately they had tried to transmit the very words that had been spoken by the great teacher.

The teaching thus adjusted had come to be put into writing. To the teaching recorded in a written form were added the comments and interpretations made by the learned priests of the later ages, which came to be known as Ron or comments. The Buddha's teaching itself, the comments

added in later ages and the Buddhist precepts all came to be called as the *Sanzō* (Three Sections of Buddhist Scriptures) or Tripitaka in Sanskrit.

Sanzō or Tripitaka includes *Kyōzō*, *Ritsuzō* and *Ronzō*; the word *Zō* means a receptacle or container. *Kyō* refers to the Buddhist scriptures, *Ritsu* to the precepts for the Buddhist Brotherhood, and *Ron* to the comments written by the high priests.

Almost all the schools maintained their own Canon (Sanskrit: Tripitaka, Pali: Tipitaka), but the only complete set that has survived is the one in Pali that belongs to the Theravadins. This Pali Canon has played an important role as the common written source among the Buddhist countries of South and Southeast Asia.

According to tradition, Buddhism is said to have been introduced in China in 67 A.D. during the reign of King Ming of the Latter Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.). But, actually, it was eighty-four years later that the Buddhist scriptures were introduced to and translated in China (in 151 A.D.) by King Huan of the same dynasty. As Mahayana Buddhism had already been established in India by that time, both the scriptures of early and Mahayana Buddhism were transmitted to China without any distinction. For over a period of more than 1,700 years since then, efforts in the translation of the scriptures into the Chinese language continued. The number of books and volumes thus translated reached 1,440 scriptures in 5,586 volumes. Efforts toward the conservation of these translated scriptures were begun as early as the Wei Dynasty, but it was about the time of the Northern Sung Dynasty that their printing was started. However, from about this time the works of the high priests of China came to be added to the Buddhist scriptures and it was no longer appropriate to call these books Tripitaka. When the era of Sui came, the title of *Issaikyō* or a complete collection of all the sacred writings was given to the books, and in the era of Tang they came to be called by the new title of *Daizōkyō* or the collection of all the Buddhist scriptures, laws and treatises.

Buddhism was introduced into Tibet around the seventh century A.D., and for about 150 years during the ninth through eleventh century, A.D.,

efforts in the translation of the Buddhist scriptures continued, and practically all of them had been translated by that time.

In view of the fact that the scriptures had been translated into not only the Korean, Japanese, Sinhalese, Cambodian, Turkish and almost all of the Oriental languages but also into the Latin, French, English, German and Italian tongues, it may safely be said that the blessing of the Buddha's teaching has now spread to every corner of the world.

But, on second thought, in reviewing from the standpoint of the quality of the translations, and the history of the religion's development and origin during more than two thousand years, with ten thousand or more translations of the books having been written, it still seems difficult to grasp the true meaning of the words spoken by Shakyamuni, even with the aid of "*Daizōkyō*". It is, therefore, indispensable to pick out those essential points from the "*Daizōkyō*" and make them the criteria or foundation upon which one can base one's faith in the religion.

In Buddhism the supreme authority are the words uttered by Shakyamuni. Therefore, the teaching of Buddhism must be the teaching that is closely linked to and intimate with the realities of our everyday life; otherwise, it will but fail in inspiring the human mind from its very depths toward a belief in the teachings. In this sense, for the teaching to be one that we can make our own, it is desirable to be plain and simple, impartial in its quality, sufficient in representing the whole and yet accurate and familiar in the words that are used in our daily life.

This book has come into being under the above considerations, inheriting the "stream" of the *Daizōkyō* with its history of more than two thousand and several hundred years. Of course, this publication can not be taken as perfect in its contents. The words of Buddha are infinitely deep in their meaning and His Virtues are so boundless that one can not easily appreciate them.

It is sincerely wished, therefore, that this book will be improved into a still more truthful and valuable one as the revised editions come out in the future, as is intended.

HISTORY OF “THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA”

This Buddhist text was compiled and revised on the basis of the Japanese edition of the *Newly Translated Buddhist Text* published in July, 1925, by the Association for Spreading “*Newly Translated Buddhist Text*” headed by Rev. Muan Kizu. This first Japanese Edition was compiled by Prof. Shūgaku Yamabe and Prof. Chizen Akanuma, in cooperation with many Buddhist scholars in Japan, taking almost five years to publish.

In the Shōwa Era (1926-1989), the *Popular Edition* of the *Newly Translated Buddhist Text* in Japanese was also published by the Association and distributed widely throughout Japan.

In July, 1934, when the Pan-Pacific Buddhist Youth Meeting was held in Japan, *The Teaching of Buddha*, the English translation of the above *Popular Edition of Buddhist Text* was published by the All Japan Buddhist Youth Federation, with the assistance of Mr. D. Goddard, as one of its works. In 1962, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the introduction of Buddhism to America, Mr. Yehan Numata, founder of the Mitutoyo Corporation, published an English edition of *The Teaching of Buddha*.

In 1965, when Mr. Numata founded Society for the Promotion of Buddhism in Tokyo, the popularization of this English text all over the world was planned as one of the activities of the Foundation.

In order to realize this plan, a committee to revise this *Teaching of Buddha* was organized in 1966. Members of the committee were Professors Kazuyoshi Kino, Shūyū Kanaoka, Zennō Ishigami, Shinkō Sayeki, Kōdō Matsunami, Shōjun Bandō, and Takemi Takase. Prof. Fumio Masutani, Mr. N. A. Waddell, and Mr. Toshisuke Shimizu also worked on the revision. Thus, an English-Japanese edition of *The Teaching of Buddha* was published on modern principles.

In 1972, on the basis of this English-Japanese edition, Professors Shūyū Kanaoka, Zennō Ishigami, Shōyū Hanayama, Kwansei Tamura, and Takemi Takase undertook the compilation of an English version, which was published in the same year.

Next, a committee consisting of Professors Ryōtatsu Shioiri, Takemi Takase, Hiroshi Tachikawa, Kwansei Tamura, Shōjun Bandō, and Shōyū Hanayama (Editor-in-Chief) was organized to recompile the Japanese version of *The Teaching of Buddha*, and this was published in 1973.

Again, in 1974, a committee consisting of Professors Kōdō Matsunami, Shōjun Bandō, Shinkō Sayeki, Dōyū Tokunaga, Kwansei Tamura, and Shōyū Hanayama (Editor-in-Chief) was organized to recompile the English version of *The Teaching of Buddha*, which they did with the cooperation of Mr. Richard R. Steiner. This was combined with the Japanese version (published in 1973), resulting in the publication of the English-Japanese edition of *The Teaching of Buddha*.

In 1978 Professors Shigeo Kamata and Yasuaki Nara joined the committee. In 2001, Professors Kenneth Tanaka, Shōgo Watanabe, Yoshiyasu Yonezawa, and Sengaku Mayeda (Acting Editor-in-Chief), joined the editorial committee.

In 2013, the Society for the Promotion of Buddhism (the Buddhist Promoting Society) changed its organizational status from “Incorporated Foundation” to “Public Interest Incorporated Foundation.” On the occasion of this change, the editorial committee membership was reconstituted with Professors Sengaku Mayeda (Editor-in-Chief), Zennō Ishigami, Kiyotaka Kimura, Kenneth Tanaka, Makio Takemura, Yasuaki Nara, Chizuko Yoshimizu, Yoshiyasu Yonezawa, and Shōgo Watanabe. Since 2017, with Prof. Makio Takemura serving as the new Editor-in-Chief, the committee has met annually to strive toward making *The Teaching of Buddha* respond effectively to the needs of contemporary society.

May, 2017

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SANSKRIT GLOSSARY (Alphabetical Order)

ANĀTMAN (Egolessness):

This is one of the most fundamental points in Buddhism. All existence and phenomena in this world do not, ultimately, have any substantial reality. It is very natural for Buddhism, which advocates the impermanence of all existence, to insist that such an impermanent existence could not therefore possess any perpetual substance in it. Anātman may also be translated as Non-Soul.

ANITYA (Transitoriness or Impermanency):

Another fundamental point in Buddhism. All existence and phenomena in this world are changing constantly and do not remain the same for even a single moment. Everything has to die or end someday in its future, and such a prospect is the very cause of suffering. This concept should not, however, be interpreted only from a pessimistic or nihilistic viewpoint, because both advancement and reproduction are also manifestations of this constant change.

BODHISATVA (The One Striving for Enlightenment):

Originally, this name was used to indicate Gautama Siddhārtha before he had attained the state of Enlightenment. After the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, all those who are striving for the Buddhahood have come to be called by this name. Finally, even those who are trying to lead others to the Buddhahood by means of their great compassion while striving themselves for the same goal, have been symbolically personified as Bodhisattvas; Avalokiteśvara (Kwannon), Kṣitigarbha (Jizō), Mañjuśrī (Mon-ju) are only a few of the better known ones.

BUDDHA (The Enlightened One):

Originally, Gautama Siddhārtha (Śākyamuni), the founder of Buddhism, was called by this name, as he was the one who had attained the state of Enlightenment at 35 about 2,500 years ago in India. The final goal for all Buddhists is, irrespective of their school or stream, to become a Buddha. Because of the difference of means as to how to reach this state, Buddhism has divided into various sects and schools. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, besides the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, many Buddhas such as Amitābha (Amida), Mahāvairocana (Dainichi), Bhaiṣajyaguru

(Yakushi), etc., are generally accepted as symbols of Buddhist teachings. Being influenced by the concept of the Pure Land type of Buddhism in Japan, (one becomes a Buddha after rebirth in the Pure Land), all those who have passed away are usually called “Buddhas,” or HOTOKE in Japanese.

DHARMA (True Teaching):

This is the Teaching taught by the Enlightened One, the Buddha. There are three types of canons in the teachings: Sūtras, (teachings taught by Buddha Himself), Vinayas, (disciplines provided by Buddha), and Abhidharmas, (commentaries and discussions on the Sūtras and Vinayas by scholars in later periods). These three are called the Tripiṭaka. Dharma is one of the Three Treasures of Buddhism.

KARMAN (Deeds):

Although the original meaning of this term simply meant “Deeds”, it has, in relation with the theory of causation, come to be regarded as a kind of potential power gained as a result of each deed done in one’s past. That is, each of our acts results in either good or bad, suffering or pleasure, depending upon the act, and it has an influencing power upon our future and this is regarded as one’s Karma. It is believed that if a good deed is repeated, good will be accumulated, and its potential power will function upon the future as a beneficial influence. There are three kinds of deeds; physical, oral, and mental, in this concept.

MAHĀYĀNA (Great Vehicle):

In the course of Buddhist history, there appeared two main streams of thought, Mahāyāna and Theravāda (or Hīnayāna). The Mahāyāna type of Buddhism spread to Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, etc., while Theravāda to Myanmar, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Thailand, etc. The term means a “Great Vehicle” which can accept all beings suffering in this world of birth and death, and can lead all of them, without any discrimination, to the state of Enlightenment.

NIRVĀṆA (Perfect Tranquility):

Literally, it means “to blow off.” This is the state where all human defilement and passion have been completely extinguished through certain practices and meditation based upon Right Wisdom. Those who had attained this state are called Buddhas. Gautama Siddhārtha had attained this state and became a Buddha at 35. However, it is now believed that it was only after he had passed away that he reached such a state of perfect tranquility, because some residue of human defilement would continue to exist as long as his physical body existed.

PĀLI (—Language):

This is the language used in Theravāda Buddhism. The oldest type of Buddhist canons are believed to have been written in this language. As this is a kind of Prakrit, a dialect of Sanskrit, there is not a big difference between Pāli and Sanskrit; Dharma in Sanskrit, Dhamma in Pāli; Nirvāṇa in Sanskrit, Nibbāna in Pāli. See—Sanskrit.

PĀRAMITĀ (To cross over to the Other Shore):

“To cross over to the Other Shore” means to reach the Buddha Land by means of practicing various Buddhist disciplines. Usually the following six practical disciplines are regarded as those which enable one to cross from this world of birth and death to the world of Enlightenment: Offerings, Morality, Patience, Endeavoring, Concentration, and Right Judgment (or Wisdom). The traditional Japanese HIGAN weeks in spring and autumn are derived from this Buddhist concept.

PRAJÑĀ (Wisdom):

One of the Six Pāramitās. The mental function which enables one to perceive life without error and to distinguish between what is true and what is false. One who had acquired this perfectly is called a Buddha. Therefore, this is the most refined and enlightened wisdom, distinct from ordinary human intelligence.

SAṄGHA (Buddhist Brotherhood):

It consists of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. In early times, it consisted of monks and nuns. Later, when the Mahāyāna movement arose, those who aimed at the state of Bodhisattva, regardless of being layman or monk, joined together in a Brotherhood. One of the Three Treasures of Buddhism.

SANSKRIT (—Language):

The classical literary language of ancient India; one of the Indo-European family of languages. It is divided into Vedic and Classical Sanskrit. The scriptures of the Mahāyāna tradition had been written in this language which style is called Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

SAMŚĀRA (Reincarnation):

Perpetual repetition of birth and death from the past through the present to the future through these six illusory realms: Hell, Hungry Spirits, Animals, Aśura or Fighting Spirits, Men, and Heaven. Unless enlightened, one cannot be freed from this wheel of transmigration. Those who are free from this can be called Buddhas.

ŚŪNYATĀ (Non-Substantiality):

This is the concept that everything has neither substance nor permanence and is one of the fundamental points in Buddhism. Since everything is dependent upon causation, there can be no permanent ego as a substance. But, one should neither adhere to the concept that everything has substance nor that it does not. Every being, human or non-human, is in relativity. Therefore, it is foolish to hold to a certain idea or concept or ideology as the only absolute. This is the fundamental undercurrent in the Wisdom (Prajñā) Scriptures of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

SŪTRA (Scriptures):

The records of the Buddha's teachings. The term means originally "string", which signifies compendium threading through the vast quantity of studies in religion or science. One of the Tripitaka.

THERAVĀDA (Elders' Advocators):

The southern tradition of Buddhism is represented generally by this appellation. "Thera" means elders. This is the school of elders which was historically a group of conservative senior monks who advocated a strict adherence to the precepts as opposed to another group of rather freer progressive monks (whose beliefs were to develop later into Mahāyāna, that is the northern tradition). This kind of opposing trends in Buddhist Orders is said to have started in an early period, a few centuries after the decease of the Buddha, when Mahādeva, a progressive monk, insisted upon the freer interpretation under the five categories of the Buddhist precepts. This provoked the split into Theravāda and Mahāsāṅghika which was the fountainhead of later Mahāyāna.

TRIPITAKA (Three Baskets):

The three branches of the Buddhist scriptures, Dharma, are meant by this. They are Sūtras, which contain the Buddha's teachings; Vinayas, which contain his disciplines; and Abhidharmas, which contain various commentaries and essays on Buddhist doctrines and precepts. Later, Buddhist writings by Chinese and Japanese high-priests were also included in the Buddhist canons. See-Dharma.

SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF BUDDHISM
AND DISTRIBUTION OF

“THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA”

In describing Society for the Promotion of Buddhism it is necessary to speak of a businessman, and this gentleman is Mr. Yehan Numata, the Founder of Mitutoyo Corporation.

He established a company to manufacture precision measuring instruments in 1934. His solid conviction is that the success of an enterprise depends on the harmonious association of Heaven, Earth and Man and that the perfection of the human mind is attainable only by a well-balanced coordination of wisdom, compassion and courage. He did everything he could under this conviction towards the technical improvement of measuring instruments manufacture, and the development of the human mind.

It is his belief that the attainment of world peace is possible only upon the perfection of the human mind, for the purpose of which there is the teaching of Buddha. Therefore, along with managing his enterprise, he has been exerting his efforts ever since the establishment of his company in the spreading and modernization of Buddhist music and the spreading of Buddha's pictures and teaching.

In December, 1965, he had a foundation incorporated with his private funds to engage in the propagation of Buddhism, and at the same time, to be an aid towards world peace. Thus, Society for the Promotion of Buddhism was initiated as a public organization.

What is being done to diffuse the Teaching of Buddha far and wide so that every human being can benefit by it and enjoy the Light of His Great Wisdom and Compassion? It is the work of this Society for the Promotion of Buddhism to seek the solution to this problem, keeping up the will of its founder.

In short, every possible effort toward the propagation of the Buddha's teaching is the very heart and soul that this Society for the Promotion of Buddhism is undertaking.

This book, "The Teaching of Buddha," is a result of our reflecting on the history in this country of the religion, that there has hardly been anything written that we can call a book of Buddhist teaching as interpreted in the Japanese way, in its real sense, in spite of the fact that we have always regarded our Buddhist culture with great pride.

This book will serve as spiritual "food" for each and everyone who reads it. It is so prepared that anyone can keep it on one's desk or carry it with him and come in contact, at will, with the Light alive spiritually.

Though still not as perfect as we would like, the present edition of "The Teaching of Buddha" has come a long way, through the work and efforts of many people, to meeting the need by contemporary people for an accurate, easy to read and authoritative introduction to Buddhism that is, at the same time, a practical guide and daily source of inspiration and truth.

It is the wish of Society for the Promotion of Buddhism to see a day come soon when as many homes as possible will have this book and as many as possible of our fellow-men will enjoy and bathe in the Light of the Great Teacher.

Readers' comments are always welcome. Please feel free to write to Society for the Promotion of Buddhism any time.