

## References

1 For the sake of consistency, in this article the reading *vyāpāda* will be adopted throughout, though the texts at times may read *byāpāda* instead.

**WAR AND PEACE** will be treated in the present article predominantly from the perspective of the Pāli canon,<sup>1</sup> examining the existence of warfare at the time of the Buddha; the problem of killing through actively engaging in war; Buddhist conceptions of victory gained by peaceful means; the Buddha's attitude to contemporary kings engaged in warfare; the establishment of communal peace; and the development of mental peace.

**Warfare at the time of the Buddha**

From a historical perspective, the period of ancient Indian history that saw the rise of Buddhism was characterized by an incipient political centralization. As is common in political history all over the world, the early stages of such political centralization are often marked by a ruthless push to power among petty kings and rulers. Thus various forms of violence related to warfare appear to have been common at the time of the Buddha and as such form a recurrent motif in the thought world of the early discourses (see also VIHIMSĀ).

Awareness of the fragility of peace appears to be reflected in a description of the questions someone would ask about his hometown, from which he had been absent for some time. These questions begin with the inquiry if the inhabitants of his hometown are still living in peace and safety, *khemattañca ... puccheyya* (*M.* II, 253). Fear of war seems to also underlie some of the prognostications that were given by contemporary Brahmins, which include a prediction about whether peace will prevail (*D.* I, 11).

The actual conditions of war are reflected in the *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta*, which focuses on the suffering that human beings inflict on each other through warfare. This discourse describes how after "having taken up sword and shield, having girded on bow and quiver, both sides charge into battle with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing. There they are wounded by arrows and spears, their heads are cut off by swords, whereby they incur death or

deadly suffering ... they charge up slippery bastions ... there they are ... splashed with boiling liquids, crushed under heavy weights ... whereby they incur death or deadly suffering" (*M.* I, 86). Paradoxically enough, according to the *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta* the underlying driving force for engaging in war, with all its resultant suffering, is none other than the wish to obtain sensual pleasures.<sup>2</sup>

The occurrence of war is referred to in the Vinaya and in the discourses. The Vinaya records King Bimbisāra at war with the Licchavis (*Vin.* III, 108), and King Pasenadi setting out for battle (*Vin.* IV, 104). A discourse in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* begins by reporting that King Pasenadi came to visit the Buddha after returning from a victorious fight;<sup>3</sup> and two consecutive discourses in the *Samyutta Nikāya* depict King Pasenadi engaged in repeated battle with King Ajātasattu (*S.* I, 82-85; cf. also *Jā.* II, 403 and *Jā.* IV, 343).

Probably taking into account King Pasenadi's familiarity with warfare, on one occasion the Buddha explained to him the fruitfulness of giving to those who are virtuous with the help of an example taken from the battlefield, contrasting a trained and courageous warrior's performance in combat to one who is untrained and fearful (*S.* I, 99). The imagery of a valiant warrior is in fact a recurrent motif in the discourses in order to illustrate recommendable qualities (e.g. *A.* I, 284; *A.* II, 170; *A.* II, 202; *A.* III, 89; *A.* III, 93), and the *Padhāna Sutta* frames the struggle for awakening of the Buddha-to-be in terms of a battle between the bodhisattva and the army of Māra (*Sn.* 436-443).

**War and the problem of killing**

However much the imagery of a valiant warrior may have been used in the discourses in a positive sense, active participation in warfare is, from an early Buddhist perspective, certainly not commendable. This is so above all because active participation in warfare is incompatible with the keeping of the first precept against killing. Thus, much against the ancient Indian ideal of the warrior who dies on the battlefield in fulfilment of his duty,<sup>4</sup> according to the Buddha to be active as a soldier in battle can only have negative karmic repercussions (*S.* IV, 308; see in more detail YODHĀJĪVA SUTTA).<sup>5</sup> The importance of not encouraging warfare is also reflected in the early

Buddhist conception of right livelihood, according to which a Buddhist should not engage in trade in arms (A. III, 208). Thus it seems as if "the Buddha's attitude to war was absolute, context-independent and non-negotiable".<sup>6</sup>

The need to avoid violence at all cost goes to the very heart of early Buddhist ethics. The importance of not retaliating when having to face violence is vividly expressed in the famous simile of the saw in the *Kakacūpama Sutta*. According to this simile, even if cut to pieces by bandits a true disciple of the Buddha will react with *mettā* (M. I, 129). The message of this passage is that to react with violence can never be the solution, as violence itself constitutes the problem that needs to be solved. Therefore, to respond to violence with violence merely perpetuates the real problem.

A different perspective emerges in later literature. According to the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvamsa*, several monks (presumably *arahants*) comforted King Dutthagāmaṇi, who was in sorrow on account of the killings caused by a war he had fought. They told him that he had killed only one and a half human beings, since only one had taken refuge and another one had taken the five precepts. Others who had died were mere beasts, as they were of wrong view and without virtue, *dīyaḍḍhamanujā c' ettha, ghātītā manujādhipa, saraṇesu thito eko, pañcasīlepi cāparo, micchādiṭṭhi ca dussīlo, sesā pasusamāmatā* (Mhv. 25: 109-110).<sup>7</sup>

This passage is difficult to reconcile with the canonical stance of early Buddhism. The precept against killing does not intend to only prevent killing other Buddhists, but covers killing any human as well as other living beings. Here the *Mahāvamsa* seems to be influenced by a type of reasoning that makes its appearance in attempts to legitimate warfare and violence throughout human history and in various cultures, where the enemy is divested of his or her status as a fellow human being in order to feel justified in depriving him or her of life.

In the history of Buddhism, the *Mahāvamsa* is certainly not the only instance of a change of attitude towards the issue of killing. Another example would be the *Mahā-Upāyakauśalya Sūtra*, which reports that in a former life the Buddha-to-be was travelling in a company of five-hundred men. A group of robbers, planning to ambush the travellers, had sent a man

ahead to act as a scout. This scout was an old friend of the bodhisattva and thus warned him of the impending danger. The bodhisattva, realizing the evil that would accrue for perpetrators and victims if the planned ambush should be carried out, decided to kill his former friend in order to prevent the planned raid (T. III, 161c4).<sup>8</sup> The bodhisattva carried out his decision without hesitation, even though his former friend had just giving him a warning in order to save his life. The evaluation given to this deed in the *Mahā-Upāyakauśalya Sūtra* does not take the rather treacherous act of the bodhisattva towards an old friend into consideration, but instead provides a positive evaluation of his willingness to commit a major breach of conduct in order to prevent others from performing evil.

Another example for a re-evaluation of the precept against killing can be found in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. This discourse reports that, in a former life as a king, the Buddha-to-be had some Brahmins put to death merely because they were slandering *Mahāyāna* teachings (T. XII, 434c18). As the same discourse explains, such killing is not really an offence, but should be seen as comparable to felling a tree or cutting grass (T. XII, 460b15). In fact, to protect the Dharma one should not be concerned about the five precepts, but should be willing to take up sword and bow (T. XII, 383b22). In short, one who disregards the five precepts for the sake of protecting the Dharma is indeed a follower of the *Mahāyāna* (T. XII, 384a24).<sup>9</sup>

Though these two discourses do not explicitly speak of war, the latitude they give to killing can easily be applied to the context of warfare. In fact, the stance taken in the *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* on the demerit incurred by killing follows the same pattern of reasoning as the above passage from the *Mahāvamsa*.

#### Victory by peaceful means

In contrast to the latitude given in later texts to killing, victory by peaceful means through the power of righteousness alone is an essential part of the early Buddhist conception of a *cakkavatti*, who rules without any violence. The canonical descriptions of such a *cakkavatti* ruler present non-violence as an integral aspect of his righteousness, indicating that the *cakkavatti* exercises his rule over the whole earth

without resorting to rod or sword, solely by the power of righteousness, *adaṇḍena asatthena dhammena abhivijjiya ajjhāvasati* (*M. II*, 134). Though one of the endowments of a *cakkavatti* is his possession of an army, to engage in an actual battle would defeat the *cakkavatti's* nature of being a righteous ruler, since it would imply that he resorts to rod or sword establishing or maintaining his reign. Thus, for the *cakkavatti* to be in the company of his fourfold army appears to be just an aspect of his majestic appearance in public. This much could be deduced from the circumstance that he would take this army along even when he goes for a pleasure outing (*M. III*, 176). Instead of engaging in actual fighting, the *cakkavatti* deals with opponents by instructing them in keeping the precepts, first and foremost in abstaining from killing (*M. III*, 173).<sup>10</sup>

Several discourses report that regular fighting took place between the *devas*, headed by Sakka, and the *asuras*.<sup>11</sup> Since in the thought world of the early discourses Sakka often assumes the role of an exemplary Buddhist lay disciple, one might wonder how far such accounts convey an implicit acceptance of the need to engage in warfare. Closer inspection brings to light, however, that references to such battles are introduced as something that happened in a bygone past, *bhūtapubba*.<sup>12</sup> According to the *Sakkapañhā Sutta*, Sakka had attained stream-entry during his first meeting with the Buddha (*D. II*, 288). As a stream-enterer, he would have firmly kept the precept on abstaining from killing, so that his warrior activities must indeed belong to the bygone past, before his conversion to Buddhism. Sakka's change of perspective appears to be reflected in a discourse in the *Samyutta Nikāya*, which reports how he approached the Buddha and asked what type of killing the Buddha would approve. In reply, he was told that he should kill his own anger (*S. I*, 237). Thus the way the ancient Indian warrior god Indra/Sakka was integrated into the Buddhist pantheon appears to be yet another expression of early Buddhism's clear stance against war and killing.

The same is also reflected in the *Mahāsīlava* and *Seyya Jātakas*, which record how in former times the Buddha-to-be as a king was not willing to let himself be drawn into violence even to the extent of giving up his kingdom to an enemy, instead of resisting an attack (*J. I* 263 and *J. II*, 401). Though it remains open to question to what degree such accounts should be

interpreted as realistic recommendations, the set of values they convey is pronouncedly pacifistic.

A discourse in the *Samyutta Nikāya* reports the Buddha reflecting on the possibility of ruling without killing and causing others to kill (*S. I*, 116). The discourse continues with Māra suggesting that the Buddha should exercise such rule, since his possession of the four roads to [spiritual] power would enable him to do so. The Buddha does not deny this, so that one has the impression that he would indeed have been able to rule in such a non-violent manner. Yet, for one who has seen *dukkha* and its cause, he comments, it is impossible to become involved again with what pertains to the world of sensual pleasures and acquisitions. That is, though early Buddhism has a conception of righteous rule carried out without resorting to violence, it sees freedom from bondage as a more important and worthwhile goal. With such freedom attained, the root cause for violence and warfare has forever been overcome.

#### The Buddha and contemporary kings

This priority of the goal of liberation over social and political concerns also provides the background for the Buddha's relationship with contemporary kings. The canonical sources do not report the Buddha delivering teachings on the need to abstain from warfare to the kings whom he met. To give such advice to a king would probably have been inappropriate for a wandering ascetic in the ancient Indian setting, where the role of political advisor was rather in the hand of the Brahmins. Thus, instead of directly addressing kings on the evil of warfare, the Buddha apparently took a more indirect approach.

An example for such an indirect approach can be found in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*. According to this discourse, on being informed that Ajātasattu had the intention of waging war on the Vajjīs, the Buddha described to Ajātasattu's minister the sources of the strength of the Vajjīs (*D. II*, 73). The minister thereon drew the conclusion that the Vajjīs could not be defeated in battle, but had to be overcome through other means. Thus it seems as if in this instance the Buddha's pronouncement prevented a war.<sup>13</sup>

According to the *Dhammapada* commentary, the Buddha once directly intervened to avert a battle between the Koliyans and his own clan, the Sakyans



(*DhpA.* III, 254). The quarrel had started at a time of drought over the right to use the water of a river that ran between the territories belonging to the two parties. To bring the two contending factions to their senses, the Buddha inquired if the water was worth more than the lives of their kinsmen. Since both parties had to concede that this was not the case, a way of settling their conflict could be found without bloodshed or violence.

Another such instance involves again the Sakyans, who were under threat of being attacked by the newly crowned king of Kosala, the successor to Pasenadi. According to the account given in the *Dhammapada* commentary (*DhpA.* I, 357; cf. also *Jā.* IV, 152), for altogether three times the Buddha intercepted the approaching army and, through indirect means, was able to induce them to turn back. But on a fourth occasion the king proceeded and all the Sakyans were killed. Thus, according to this account the Buddha also prevented a war, though in this case his intervention did not have a lasting effect. Independent of the historical reliability of this report,<sup>14</sup> it indubitably presents the Buddha as a peacemaker and thereby makes desire for peace and abstention from violence exemplary qualities for those who follow his teaching.

### Communal Peace

Clear awareness of the need to go to the very root of what causes warfare pervades the early Buddhist treatment of the complementary theme of peace. Most of the discourses related to peace deal with the development of the mind, with only few instances turning to the more mundane aspects of peace. One of these is the *Kūṭadanta Sutta*, which sets forth the conditions by which a ruler can ensure that peace prevails in his realm (*D.* I, 135). According to its account, by giving proper wages to government employees and material support to those engaged in trade and production, prosperity will spread and lead to peaceful living conditions throughout the realm.

A complementary perspective on how to ensure peace in the realm can be gathered from the *Cakkavattisihanāda Sutta*, which reports how, due to the king inflicting capital punishment on theft, a general increase in violence occurred throughout the realm (*D.* III, 67). Thus another factor for ensuring communal peace would be an impartial and compassionate administration of law and punishment.

Other passages indicate that for establishing peace within the monastic community the ordained disciples of the Buddha should have recourse to a set of seven methods for settling a litigation, *adhikaraṇasamatha* (*M.* II, 247 and its parallel *T.* I, 754a21; cf. in more detail *Vin.* II, 73ff). These set out proper ways to deal with an allegation, stipulate how a monastic can be cleared or else should be further interrogated, and indicate how to settle a quarrel between two factions of a community. The last of these methods is literally called "covering over with grass", *tiṇṇavathāraka*, and the principle it proposes is that, in order to put an end to disputation, both sides make a summary confession and then consider what has happened earlier as settled for good.

The *Cūḷagosiṅga Sutta* describes the peaceful cohabitation of a group of monks who dwell together "blending like milk and water", *khīrodakābhūtā*, interacting with each other as if, though having different bodies, they had a single mind, *nānā... kāyā ekañca pana maññe cittaṃ* (*M.* I, 206). According to this discourse, central factors that led to such peace were the monks' practice of loving kindness towards each other and their willingness to set aside their own desires in order to comply with the wishes of the others. Acting in this way would indeed lead to the establishment of communal harmony, which then becomes a source of happiness for all members of that community, *sukhā saṅghassa sāmaggi* (*Dhp.* 194), and thereby provides the ideal condition for their progress on the path to liberation and therewith to true mental peace.

### Mental peace

The main factor for ensuring peace, from an early Buddhist perspective, is to remove the causes for quarrel and fighting in one's own mind and thereby establish the conditions for true and lasting peace of mind within. As a verse in the *Sutta Nipāta* succinctly proclaims, pacification should be carried out within, instead of searching for peace elsewhere, *ajjhataṃ eva upasame, nāññato bhikkhu santim eseyya* (*Sn.* 919). Thus, when challenged by a visitor to proclaim his teachings, according to the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta* the Buddha replied that what he teaches leads beyond quarrelling with anyone in the world (*M.* I, 108). Asked by one of his monks to explain further, the Buddha pointed out that by overcoming unwholesome qualities

in the mind, the root cause for resorting to rods and weapons will be left behind.

Just as a rain cloud settles all dust, so the noble eightfold path pacifies all unwholesome states (S. V, 50), and thereby pacifies all *dukkha* (Dhp. 191). Therefore, the four noble truths are a peaceful refuge indeed, *saraṇam khemaṃ* (Dhp. 192).

The development of peace within then leads to the ability to patiently bear hostilities. An inspiring example of such ability is described in the *Puṇṇovāda Sutta*. According to this discourse, after initial hesitation the Buddha gave his monk disciple Puṇṇa permission to go and live in a part of India inhabited by fierce people. The permission was given since through a series of questions the Buddha had been able to ascertain the degree of inner control and peacefulness, *damupasama*, with which Puṇṇa was endowed (M. III, 269).

This series of questions had begun by asking Puṇṇa what he would do if others were to abuse him. Puṇṇa replied that if he were to meet with abuse, he would reflect on the kindness of the people in as much as they did not give him a blow. The Buddha continued by asking Puṇṇa how he would react if they were to give him a blow, to which Puṇṇa replied that he would bear it by keeping in mind that they did not throw a clod at him. Their exchange continues in the same manner, with Puṇṇa mentioning each time a worse alternative he would reflect on in order to maintain patience, followed by the Buddha inquiring what he would do if that worse alternative should happen. This exchange takes up the possibility that Puṇṇa might have a clod thrown at him, or be hit with a stick, or be attacked with a knife, or even be deprived of life. In case he should be deprived of life, Puṇṇa explained that he would still be able to consider this in a positive light, as other disciples had to go searching for means to commit suicide, whereas he would be achieving the same result without having to do any searching. This exchange throws into relief how, even in the most adverse circumstances, someone possessed of true inner peace will be able to avoid reacting with violence.

Notably, the *Puṇṇovāda Sutta* reports that Puṇṇa's attainment of liberation took place only at a later point in time, so that at the time of this exchange he was not yet an *arahant*. This goes to show that the principle of not retaliating can be put into practice even at stages

of development that fall short of the attainment of supreme peace within. To endeavour one's best at remaining peaceable when confronted with the anger of others is thus the proper course of action for a disciple of the Buddha, a course of action that will be for one's own benefit as well as for the benefit of the other party, *ubhinnaṃ atthaṃcarati, attano ca parassa ca, paraṃ saṅkupitaṃ nātvā yo sato upasammati* (S. I, 162).

The theme of mental peace also pervades the context of meditation practice. Here a mind that has been internally calmed and pacified, *ajjhataṃ vupasanta citta*, is free from the hindrance of restlessness (D. I, 71). Mental peace is also related to overcoming the hindrance of doubt, whose removal is comparable to the experience of a traveller who, after crossing a dangerous desert, reaches a village that is safe and at peace, *khema* (D. I, 73). Removal of all five hindrances then leads to progressive stages of calmness and mental pacification. With the first *jhāna*, speech has been stilled and pacified, *vūpasama*, followed by the pacification of initial and sustained application of the mind with the second *jhāna*, pacification of rapture with the third *jhāna*, and stilling of the process of breathing with the fourth *jhāna* (S. IV, 217). Hence the happiness experienced with the four *jhānas* can be reckoned the happiness of pacification, *upasamasukha* (e.g. M. I, 454).

Based on having pacified the mind to such a degree, the peaceful immaterial liberations, *santa vimokkha*, can be developed, which require the progressive pacification, *vūpasama*, of perceptions of form, of space, of boundless consciousness etc., until finally feeling and perceptions are also pacified with the attainment of cessation. The peak of pacification in its true sense, however, requires the complete destruction of the influxes, whereby lust, anger and delusion are forever pacified (S. IV, 217).

The pacification of these three unwholesome roots in the mind constitutes a supreme and noble form of peace, *varamo ariyo upasamo* (M. III, 246). Hence peace, *khema*, is a synonym for the final goal, wherefore the whole range of meditation practices that conduce to this goal can be reckoned as leading to peace, *khemagāmin* (S. IV, 371). Besides, pacification can itself become an object of meditation as *upasamānusati*, recollection of peace (A. I, 42). An instance of such practice can be found in a discourse

in the *Udāna*, which describes Sāriputta seated in meditation and reviewing his achievement of peace within (*Ud.* 46).

One who, being free from anger, has become peaceful, *khemīn*, deserves to be reckoned a sage (*Dhp.* 258). Hence it comes as no surprise that thoughts related to peace, *khemō vitakko*, are the type of thoughts that a Buddha will frequently engage in (*It.* 31). The door to the deathless opened up by the Buddha for mankind conduces to peace, *vivaṭaṃ amatadvāraṃ khemaṃ* (*M.* 1, 227), and the final goal is a "state of peace", *santipada* (*Sn.* 208), also referred to as the "supreme peace", *paramaṃ santiṃ* (*Thag.* 364 and 434 etc.). Such happiness of [true] peace is superior to any other type of happiness, *n'atthi santiparaṃ sukhaṃ* (*Dhp.* 202).

*Jayaṃ veraṃ pasavati,  
dukkhaṃ seti parājito,  
upasanto sukkhaṃ seti,  
hitvā jayaparājayaṃ* (*Dhp.* 201).

Victory produces enmity  
[And] the defeated one dwells in suffering.  
[But] a peaceful one dwells in happiness,  
Having left behind [concern with] victory and  
defeat.

Anālayo

#### References

- 1 For additional perspectives on war and peace that take into account a broader range of sources, the reader is kindly invited to consult some of the publications mentioned in the notes below.
- 2 Besides sensual pleasures, Harvey: "War and Peace", *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics*, Cambridge 2000: 239-240, lists the desire for power, attachment to material possessions, grasping at views, and investing one's sense of identity in 'my country', 'my community', or 'my religion' as causes for war.
- 3 *A.* V, 65 indicates that this was a sham fight, though according to the commentary *AA.* V, 28 it was a real fight.
- 4 Zimmerman: "War", *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, New York 2004: 893 notes that the Buddhist position stands "in sharp opposition to the dominant view of the time, according to which it was the particular duty of a kṣatriya, a member of the warrior caste, to fight and, if at all possible, to die on the battlefield".
- 5 For a more detailed study of the Theravāda position that an act of killing is inevitably unwholesome cf. Gethin: "Can Killing a Living Being Ever Be an Act of Compassion?", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 11, 2004: 167-202.
- 6 Maitrimurthi: "The Buddha's Attitude to Social Concerns", *Buddhist Studies Review*, 22.1, 2005: 41.
- 7 Schmithausen: "Aspects of the Buddhist Attitude to War", in *Violence Denied: Violence, Non-Violence and the Rationalization of Violence in South Asian Cultural History*, Leiden 1999: 57, comments that perhaps "the argument of the Duṭṭhagāmaṇī story in the *Mahāvamsa* was stimulated by ideas documented, one or two centuries earlier, in some Mahāyāna texts", where "transgression of the precepts, including the precept not to kill living beings, is declared to be allowed or even required in certain exceptional situations".
- 8 *T.* stands for the Taishō edition.
- 9 Cf. in more detail Demiéville: "Le Bouddhisme et la Guerre", *Choix d'Études Bouddhiques*, Leiden 1973: 292.
- 10 However, as Zimmermann: "Only a Fool Becomes a King", *Buddhism and Violence*, Lumbini 2006: 217, notes, the description of a *cakkavatti* "offers very few concrete guidelines on what to do if crimes *do* take place and the stability in the country is *not* maintained" and thus "avoids a realistic discussion of the possible need for the application of punishment" or of warfare.
- 11 *D.* II, 285; *M.* I, 253; *S.* I, 218; *S.* I, 221; *S.* I, 222; *S.* I, 224; *S.* I, 227; *S.* IV, 201; *S.* V, 447; *A.* IV, 432.
- 12 Tanabe: "Some Remarks on the Stories Beginning with the Word Bhūtapubbaṃ", *Buddhist and Indian Studies in Honour of Professor Sodo Mori*, Nagoya 2003: 44, explains that *bhūtapubba* is mostly used to refer to events that took place before the lifetime of the Buddha.
- 13 McFarlane: "Buddhism", *World Encyclopedia of Peace*, Oxford 1986: 99 concludes that "the Buddha is described effectively averting a major military conflict". Schmidt-Leukel: "Das Problem



von Gewalt und Krieg in der Buddhistischen Ethik", *Dialog der Religionen*, 6.2, 1996: 132, notes that the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* not only begins with an episode where a war is averted, but also ends with a similar type of event, when the Brahmin Doṇa prevents a clash regarding the Buddha's relics by reminding the contending parties of the Buddha's teaching on patience (*D. II*, 166). According to *ibid.*, the positioning of these two events at the beginning and end of the discourse that reports the Buddha's *parinibbāna* highlights the importance of the teaching on the need to abstain from violence and killing, be it before or after the passing away of the Buddha.

- 14 Bareau: "Le Massacre des Śākya, Essai d'Interprétation", *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient*, 69, 1981: 69 points out that the credibility of this account of the wholesale destruction of the Sakyans suffers from the fact that, according to the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (*D. II*, 165), after the Buddha had passed away the Sakyans were still powerful enough to be one of the groups who demanded a share of the relics. Lamotte: *History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain-la-Neuve 1988: 320 notes that the *stūpa* constructed by the Sakyans was discovered in 1898 in a Nepalese village, thereby lending support to the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* account and making it even less probable that already during the Buddha's lifetime the Sakyans had been exterminated in the way described in the *Dhammapada* commentary.

**WAT SRĀKET.** Wat Sraket (SRAKEŚĀ), in Bangkok, is noted for its Golden Mount which towers above the avenue linking the Grand Palace to the Throne Hall. During festivals it is the central point of illuminations in the palace area. The *cetiya* on the summit contains the best authenticated sacred relic in Thailand. During the 1800's the cremation facilities of this *wat* were much used, particularly during epidemics, because of its location outside the city wall.

In April 1782 the commander of the Thai armed forces, Cao Pya Cakri, returning from a military campaign in the east, stopped at this monastery for a purification ceremony in which lustral water was poured over his head. After he ascended the throne as Rāma I, and established his capital in Bangkok, he

began repairs on this and other monasteries on the Bangkok side of the river. Using prisoners of war he extended the Bang Lamphu canal along the west side of Sraket and dug the Mahanak canal along the north side. Smaller canals placed along the other two sides of the monastery completed the encirclement by water. The Mahanak canal bears the name of a monk at the Golden Mount Monastery near Ayudhya who had dug a canal in 1459 A.C. to defend the old capital.

In November 1801 Srakae, for such was the original name of this *wat*, celebrated its restoration. King Rāma I attended the seven-day consecration ceremonies, took the monastery under royal patronage, and altered the name to Sraket, (*sra* - pouring water; *ket* or *keśa* - hair) to commemorate the ceremony held in 1782 which preceded the king's accession to the throne.

In 1818 in this monastery was planted a cutting from the Bodhi tree at Anurādhapura, Sri Lanka. In March 1822 the chief monk of this monastery, Somdech Pra Vanaratana (Don), became "Supreme Patriarch of the Monastic order and took up residence at Wat Mahādhātu. He held office for twenty years.

During the reign of Rāma III (1824-1851) this monastery acquired most of its present features. Dwellings (*kuṭi*) for 300 monks were constructed of brick. The *uposata* hall (*bōt*) was restored and embellished.

The principal image in this building is that of Buddha seated in the posture of meditation. In the surrounding gallery are 163 seated images, and at each of the four corners a standing figure of Buddha. West of this *bōt* the king erected a *vihāra* of great height. He placed in the south chamber a bronze standing Buddha over 9 metres high. It is known as the Pra Attharasa Buddha, and it was brought to Bangkok about 1829 from Wat Vihāra Tong, Pissulok. In the north chamber is a bronze Buddha, brought from Wat Dusit when that monastery, was razed to make room for the Throne Hall. West of this *vihāra* is a pavilion for holding funeral ceremonies, and behind that is the crematorium.

Dominating all the buildings is the nearly seventy-five metres high Golden Mount, named after the great structure bearing that name near the old capital of Ayudhya. King Rāma III commissioned Pya Sri Vivaḍhana to erect a gigantic tower (*prāṅg*) with a

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