

Yohei Shimizu, *Bodhi Tree Worship in Theravāda Buddhism*, Studia Asiatica No. 9, Nagoya: Nagoya University Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, 2010, vii + 109 Pp.¹ (Paperback)

The book under review represents the English version of the author's doctoral thesis submitted to Otani University in 2006.

The Buddha's life-history is closely associated with particular trees. His birth took place under the Śāla tree (Śālabhañjikā),² his enlightenment was under the Bodhi-tree and his *nirvāṇa* again between the Śāla trees. It is rooted in the ancient Indian tree worship,³ but the bodhi-tree worship among Buddhists is traced back to the second century BCE. Given this fact, the subject of trees in Buddhism has attracted the attention and interest of art historians in general and Buddhist scholars in particular.

The book is a concise study of the Bodhi-tree, which combines textual and iconographic approaches with the author's field work. The book consists of four chapters, each of which is followed by brief Concluding Remarks.

Chapter One (pp. 4-15) deals with the historical roots of bodhi tree worship which is composed of three sections, viz., Indian Views on Plants, Early Buddhist Views on Plants and the Aśvattha and Bodhi Tree Worship.

Chapter Two (pp. 16-48) deals with The bodhi Trees of Sakyamuni and the Past Buddhas which is composed of five sections, viz. Accounts of the Buddha's Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, The bodhi Trees of the seven Buddhas of the Past, Problems in the Interpretation of the bodhi Trees of Vipassī Buddha, Problems in the Interpretation of the bodhi Tree of Sikhi Buddha, The Stone Monuments of the Twenty eight Buddhas of the past in Myanmar.

Chapter Three (pp. 49-77) deals with Bodhi Tree Worship as Seen in the Pali Literature which is composed of four sections, viz. Accounts of Bodhi Tree Worship from the Pali Tipiṭaka, Aspects of Bodhi Tree Worship in the Pali Tipiṭaka, Bodhi Tree Worship and Renunciants, Changes in the Perception of Bodhi Tree.

Chapter Four (pp. 78-86) deals with Bodhi Tree Worship in the *Mahābodhivaṃsa* which is composed of three sections, viz the *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, Summary of Chapter Twelve of the *Mahābodhivaṃsa*, Bodhi Tree Worship in the *Mahābodhivaṃsa*.

¹ I would like to express my deepest thanks to Professor Dereanne Florin of the International College of Advanced Buddhist Studies, who kindly took the trouble to read through my original manuscript and to correct my English, and who gave me many suggestions for the interpretation of the texts.

² Cf. G. Roth, "The Woman and Tree Motif. Śālabhañjika-Ḍālamālikā in Prakrit and Sanskrit Texts with special reference to Śilpaśāstras including notes on Dohada," *Journal of Asiatic Society Bengal, Letters and Science*, Calcutta 23 1957, pp. 96-116 = Indian Studies, Selected Papers by Gustav Roth (Delhi 1986) pp. 19-44.

³ For the studies on Indian trees in general, cf. for example, J. Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship* (London 1868), O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'inde ancienne* (Paris 1954), beside the books listed in his Bibliography.

The last portion of the book contains a brief Conclusion (pp. 87-88) and two Appendices, one being photographs of present day bodhi trees and the second being Details of bodhi Tree Worship; A Contrast Table. The book ends with a list of abbreviations and bibliography, and Index.

In the first chapter, first (1-1) the author reviews briefly historical background of the Buddhist tree worship in general, Jain as well as Brahmanism, prior to the Buddhist views of plants and trees as reflected in the Vinaya-piṭaka and Sutta-piṭaka (1-2). Then he proceeds to examine how is the depiction of the *aśvattha* tree, under which the Buddha attained the final enlightenment, in archaeological remains of the Indus civilization and in textual documents including Vedic, Upanishadic and Epic literature (1-3). He concludes that the *aśvattha*-tree was considered sacred and immortal (*amṛta*) already in pre-Buddhist India (1-4).

In the second chapter, he first quotes the five passages from the Vinaya- and Sutta-piṭaka, which delineate Buddha's enlightenment under the tree (*bodhi-rukkha-mūle*), more specifically *assattha* tree (*assattha-rukkha-mūlaṃhi*) (2-1). Then, he proceeds to the problem of the Buddhas of the past (*atīte buddhe, pubba-buddha, buddhānaṃ sāsanaṃ*), particularly that of the seven Buddhas (*satta buddhā*: 過去七仏 (DN.2.8, SN.1.140, Vin.2.10, *Thera-gāthā* 490), which is followed by the detailed descriptions of their name, family, clan lifespan, two prominent disciples, etc. The same problem, however, was once studied carefully and listed systematically by Ch. Akanuma in his Dictionary in 1930 [p. 265 (拘樓孫佛: Kakusandha), pp. 291-2 (迦葉佛: Kassapa), p. 313 (拘那含牟尼佛: Koṇāgamana). p. 617 (尸棄佛: Sikkhī), p. 759 (毘沙浮佛: Vessabhū), p. 769 (毘婆尸佛: Vipassī)]. The different bodhi-trees are also allotted to each of the seven Buddhas, viz. *pāṭalī* and *asoka* to Vipassī, *punḍarīka* to Sikkhī, *sāla* to Vessabhū, *sirīsa* to Kakusandha, *udumbara* to Koṇāgamana, *nigrodha* to Kassapa, and *assattha* to Gotama. The author also gives the botanical explanations to each of them with their photographic presentation. (2-2)

Yet, as is evident in the above list of allotment, unlike the case with the other six Buddhas, to Vipassī are allotted the two trees of different name, that is, *pāṭalī* and *asoka*. They are often considered as different names of one and the same tree which has a red blossom and green leaves, but in reality they are different from each other. This is proved by textual evidence (*Apadāna-atthakathā* and *Visuddhimagga*) as well as art-historical testimony (Bhārhut and Sañcī). Yet, the same point was already carefully investigated by H. Lüders in his monumental work *Bhārhut und buddhistische Literatur* (Leipzig 1941) pp. 26-31 (Bodhi-bäume) (2-3).

Next the author examines the meaning of *punḍarīka* as the bodhi-tree of Sikkhī. Since the word is used often in the sense of the white lotus flower, some scholars took it mistakenly in the sense of the flower instead of tree. Here the author examines the word as interpreted in the commentarial literature (Sv. Mv. DAT) in the sense of *setamba-rukkho*, that is, "the white mango tree," which is also testified in the reliefs of Sañcī (2-4).

In the last section (2-5), the author gives the result of his field work in Myanmar. It is traditionally believed that in 288 BCE, the princess Saṅgamittā, daughter of king Asoka, transplanted a branch of the *aśvattha* from Budhgaya to Ruwanvaliseya monastery near Anuradhapura. Unfortunately, however, the place was destroyed for military and political reasons around ten years ago. Therefore, the author had to renounce his initial plan to study this place and choose a new location in Mahāpāsāṇa-guhā near Yangon. He gives a list of the names of the past Buddhas, starting from Taḥaiṅkara and ending with Gotama, and their bodhi trees found on 28 stone monuments (pp. 46-7). In this chart, Vipassī's bodhi-tree is *pāṭali* and that of Sikhī *puṇḍarīka* (*Mangifera indica* Linn), that is, a mango tree.

It should be emphasized that the bodhi-tree played an important position in the history of Buddha's worship, particularly prior to the period when the Buddha's images were sculptured, since in the early relief, the physical form of a buddha is never portrayed but represented is by a bodhi tree instead.

In the chapter III, the author investigates the actual form of the the bodhi-tree worship (*bodhi-pūjā*, *bodhi-mahas*) among Buddhists. First, he collected 26 textual evidence of the bodhi-tree worship from Jātaka and Apadāna literature (3-1), and then classifies them into the three categories: thought (*vand-*: pay reference, etc.), action (*kāresim vedikam*: constructed a ledge, etc.) and offering (flower, lamp, fragrant water, flag) (3-2).⁴ It should be noted here the fact that the bodhi-tree is the symbol of Sakyamuni himself. A similar story is met with also in Fa-hien's record of the words of Asoka (「若樹不生我終不起」法顯伝 大正 51. p. 863c25)(3-2-2).

According to the Jātaka-passages, people performed the bodhi-tree worship even during the lifetime (*dhārante yeva tathāgate*) of Sakyamuni when he was absent, but the author rightly conjectured that it originally started after his demise and the custom was later projected to his life-time when the custom became common with the intention of giving authority to the custom.

It appears that it was mostly lay followers who actively engaged in tree-worship as a form of gaining merit (*guṇa*, *puñña*) and the bhikkhu-s participated in such ritual act only indirectly. It was because of the lay people's need to have a substitution of their refuge (*patisarāṇa*) of the Buddha during his absence and it was Ānanda who mediated between these lay people and the Buddha himself for the establishment of bodhi-tree worship. (3-3) Originally, the *assattha* tree was the tree under which the Sakyamuni attained the final enlightenment, it became identified with the Buddha himself (*sammukkhā viya sambuddham*) as the *uddesika cetiya* and more abstractly as his enlightenment itself (*jñāna*, or *dhamma*). That is to say, *buddha-pūjā* (*buddhānusarāṇa*) became *bodhi-pūjā*, *bodhi* being used in the sense of enlightenment as well as tree. (3-4)

⁴ The event of the king Kālīṅga (J.479) which is quoted by the author, cf. also Strong "When Fight Falls," *The Mahachulalongkorn Journal of Buddhist Studies* 1 (Bangkok 2008) pp. 117ff. (Failure to fly over the Buddha).

Chapter four deals with the history of the transplantation of the bodhi-tree from India to Sri Lanka, as described in the twelfth chapter of the *Mahābodhi-vamsa*, a historical treatise (*vamsakathā*) written by Upatissa in the tenth century on the basis of the *Dīpavamsa* and *Mahāvamsa*. For his explanation, the author used two palm leaf manuscripts (Sinhalese and Khmer) beside PTS edition (4-1). After giving a brief account of the bodhi-tree's miraculous travel from the main land to the Mahāmegha grove to be planted together with the *sirīsa* of Kakusandha, the *udumbara* of Koṇāgama and the *nigrodha* of Kassapa (4-2), the author proceeds to examine the actual form of worship (4-3). It becomes evident that those who actually joined the service with various offerings such as flowers and incense are lay people (kings, queens, men, gods, *nāgas*), and there is no reference to the renunciants like Mahinda who simply supplied help and advice to the lay people's activity without being involved in the service itself. Answering the needs of lay people, the bodhi-tree displayed various miracles which are not found in Jātaka and Avadāna literature on the main land (4-3). In the last section the author listed the peculiarities of the practice in Sri Lanka as compared with those on the main land. The last part of the book contains a brief summary of what he has discussed in this book and two "Materials," the one being four photographic representation of "Present Day Bodhi Tree" and the other entitled "Details of Bodhi Tree Worship": A Comparative Table, which enables the reader to grasp at a glance the names and forms of worship of twenty seven Buddhas in the past.

As mentioned above, the book is a concise study on the Bodhi-tree worship in Theravāda Buddhism, based upon textual and iconographical evidence with occasional reference to the field work which the author conducted in the South east Asian countries. Readers can get an outline of history and ideas, as well as actual practices behind the bodhi-tree worship. But many, including the present reviewer, cannot help feeling that it was mostly based upon studies written by Japanese scholars and often misses important studies written in Western languages. This is evident from the Bibliography attached to the end of the book (pp. 95-103) and Western readers, while enjoying reading this booklet, may be disappointed with the omission of serious research works written by eminent predecessors, such as Lüders' work which was published more than fifty years ago.⁵ It is expected of serious Japanese scholars writing in English to be well prepared to refer to the foreign books of great importance on the subject. The present writer is reminded in this connection of the fact that É. Lamotte quotes many passages on the Bodhi-tree from Chinese texts, including those of Fa-hien and Hiuan-tsang.⁶ Here are quoted some out of Lamotte's quotations.

⁵ H. Lüders, *Bhārhut und die buddhistische Literatur* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes xxvi.3 (Leipzig 1941) pp. 26-31 (Bodhibäume)).

⁶ É. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme indien, de origins à l'ère Śāka* (Louvain 1958) pp. 265-7, 293-5, 346, 424-5.

(1) 阿育王經

In the biography of the king Aśoka (阿育王經 卷二) we read that the king considered the bodhi-tree as the Buddha himself and cherished it to such an extent that his queen Tīṣyarakṣitā (Tissarakkhā) felt jealous and finally cause it to be killed by a Caṇḍāla named Mātāṅga. When the king realized that the bodhi tree was destroyed, he felt himself killed (啼哭而言。我見樹王猶如見佛。菩提樹壞我必定死。). Seeing this, the queen told him even when the tree was destroyed, she herself would entertain husband (帝舍羅又而白王言。菩提樹雖死。我亦能與大王之樂。). However, the king replied that, since the Buddha attained the highest enlightenment under the tree, it could not be replaced by anything else, including women (王言菩提之樹非女人也。乃是佛得無上道處。). She repented and ordered Mātāṅga to revive it (帝舍羅又聞是語已。心生敬悔語摩登伽言。汝今還能令菩提樹生如本不。). (大正 50 p. 105a6-12. Lamotte 265. For Tissarakkhaa, cf. also *Mahāvamsa* 20.4-5 Lamotte 276.)

(2) 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論

The Brahmin king Pushyamitra (補沙友) hated Buddhism. He felt jealous of Buddhist *dharma*, burnt the *sūtras*, destroyed *stūpas* and Buddhist *saṅgha*. When Buddhism becomes weak in Kashmir, he reached a bodhi-tree, in which the tree-goddess, named Satyavāk dwelt. She decided to transform herself into a beautiful woman and stood in front of him. The king was seduced and became enamored. She took advantage of it and killed the king and defeated his army, together with the evil gods.

如昔有一婆羅門王名補沙友。憎嫉佛法。焚燒經典。壞窣堵波。破僧伽藍。苦苾芻衆。於迦濕彌羅一辺境中。漸滅佛法。至菩提樹。菩提樹神。名為諦語。作如是念。即自化現。殊勝女身。佇立其杭。彼王見已。尋生貪染。護法善女。遂其使。殺王及軍。并惡神衆。(阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論。大正 27 p. 655b21. Cf. Lamotte pp. 424-5 *Vibhāṣā*.)

(3) (鳥史) Lamotte 276. *Mahāvamsa* XI. XII-XX, *Dīpa-vamsa* XI. 14, XII 7, XVII. 92.

(4) Hiouen-Thsang's record of the western world 8.6.3 大唐西域記 卷八、摩揭陀圖上)

In Book 8 of his record there is a description of his visit to the Bodhi-tree.

時淨居天。空中唱曰。此非如來。成正覺處。自此西南。十四五里。去苦行處。不遠有卑鉢羅樹。下有金剛座。去來諸仏。咸於此座。而正成覺。願當就彼。菩薩方起。(p. 915a26-29) Being accompanied by the heavenly beings (諸天前導。往菩提樹 p. 915b3), he left there for the place where the Bodhi-tree was located (前正覺山西南行十四五里。至菩提樹。周垣墨甌。崇峻險固 p. 915b7-8). There is the diamond seat (*vajrāsana*), over which is found the Bodhi-tree, that is nothing but the Pippala tree. When the Buddha was there, its height was of several hundred *ch'ihs*. Though it was destined to be cut and felled several times, it still stands with four or five *changs* tall. It is called the bodhi-tree, since the Buddha attained the enlightenment under this tree (金剛座上菩提樹者。即卑鉢羅之樹也。昔佛在世高數百尺。屢經殘伐。猶高四五丈。佛坐其下成正覺。因而謂之菩提樹焉。p. 915b7-29) Its trunk is yellow-white and its branches and leaves are all green and never fades during summer and winter. On the day of his *nirvāṇa*, all its leaves fall, but soon it revives again. Several hundred thousand kings, bhikkhu-s and lay people gather from various places

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without being summoned and they pour flowers and perfumes over it and light lamps. Day after day, they present offerings. (茎幹黃白枝葉青翠。冬夏不凋光鮮無變。每至如來涅槃之日。葉皆凋落頃之復故。是日也諸國君主異方法俗。數千萬衆不召而集。香水香乳以漑以洗。於是奏音樂列香花燈炬繼日競修供養。p. 915c5)

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