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THE EARLY CONTACTS BETWEEN ISLAM AND BUDDHISM

Introductory

IN TERMS of Hegelian dialectic, the arbitrariness of the Brahmans in a caste-ridden society overburdened with ritual gave rise to its antithesis viz., the common enlightenment of Buddhism with its social democracy and emphasis on moral responsibility. The new light brought deliverance to the mass of the people and there was indeed a revolution in thought and deeds, in religion and in politics. Significantly enough, however, Buddhism could never oust Brahmanism and the latter never ceased to contrive to regain its former position. The result was a series of vicissitudes in the long-drawn-out struggle between the thesis and the antithesis; there was also some transformation on either side which may be said to stand for synthesis in Hegel's proposition. Yet though the two forces appeared side by side, sometimes even in the domain of politics, they remained distinct from, and opposed to, each other. Eventually Buddhism was banished from the land of its birth though it survived and continues to flourish to the present day in other lands.

Buddhism was also distinguished from Hinduism by its universal outreach in space. There was every reason why it should spread west as it spread east. And actually history has recorded, though the records are meagre, the firm implanting of Buddhism as a force of considerable importance, though perhaps it was not suffered to continue undisturbed as popular religion, on the North-West border of India and the regions immediately adjoining it viz., the present-day Afghanistan, East Persia and Transoxiana. The strong Hellenistic influence prevailing in these regions proved to be an important factor in the formulation and later development of Buddhism. And here in these regions too Buddhism had to face the atrocities of a state religion like Zoroastrianism and strong competition from rivals like Nestorian Christianity and Manichaeism. With the ravages of the Ephthalites added to the above factors it can confidently be asserted that towards the seventh century A.D. the position of Buddhism in the above regions had been shaken and robbed of all splendour and strength while at the same time Brahmanism was hotly pursuing it on the other side of the

border i.e., within India itself, which is exemplified in the character of the last dynasty of Sind and the Sahis of Afghanistan. It was at such a time that a new religious and political force as represented by Islam appeared on the scene. The rapidity and the completeness of the revolution brought about by Islam as well as the permanency of its effects through centuries of time and very severe setbacks of political fortune, have been the object of wonder of all the historians. And somehow Islam and iconoclasm are both conjured up together in popular mind so much so that the latter is presupposed where there is no certain proof of it¹ and it is often regarded as a convenient peg to hang any contemporary change or development on. In view of this it is proposed in the following pages to investigate into the nature of the early contacts between Islam and Buddhism. For purposes of the enquiry the regions of East Persia, Transoxiana, Afghanistan and also Sind will be taken up as the history of the progress of Muslim arms demands. In point of time the scope of the present articles is limited to the early period by which is meant the period of Arab dominance as distinguished from the rule of the local dynasties. That, it must be remembered, is an important turning point in the history of many an Islamic country. The length of the period, it is hardly necessary to point out, is not uniform in all the regions named above.

Ascendancy and Decline of Buddhism

A new era of Buddhist missionary expansion into foreign lands dawned under the auspices of Asoka (reigned 264-227 B.C.), whose conversion to the new faith illustrates full well the point made at the opening of the present article. The first two kings of the Maurya dynasty suffered indignities at the hands of their Hindu subjects on account of their ignoble birth. Asoka, the third king of the dynasty, could only find refuge where no importance was attached to caste. It is no surprise that he should be fired with a zeal to carry unto others the message that had rid him of an incubus which threatened his temporal authority and cramped his soul. The reference in the Ceylonese Chronicle Mahawansa to missionary activity in the land of

1. I cannot help quoting just one example of it. Rene Grousset in his book 'In the Footsteps of Buddha' (1932) goes quite out of his way to blame the Muslim shepherds for laying waste the hermitage of Visvantara at Shahbaz Grahni, the po-lu-sha (in Gandhara) of the Chinese writers. "Islam, in stripping the country of its woods, here as everywhere has dried up the springs and killed the very land itself," he comments. In the very next sentence, however, he proceeds to say, "In revenge the site of Shahbaz Grahni, has yielded us the splendid statue of the Bodhisattva—a young Rajah of supreme elegance—which is the pride of the Alfred Foucher collection at the Louvre." (p. 109) If the statue is there it is only in revenge for the destruction of the wood !! The reaction of a future Sung Yun, who, on visiting the Holy Land, will be told of the transfer of the statue to the Louvre, can very well be imagined.

the Yavana (Ionians = Greeks) is taken as meaning the Seleucid Empire in Persia. It is fairly certain that Asoka inaugurated missionary activity in his traditional way in the region with which we are concerned. The traditional way of Asoka consisted in having his edicts engraved on pillars and, in the neighbourhood of the pillars, building viharas and monasteries staffed with a number of priests. It must be remarked that the mere existence of these monasteries does not in itself constitute a proof of the adherence of the population of the surrounding area to Buddhism (unless supported by other positive evidence) in the same way as the discovery of the pillars cannot be taken as representing the political boundaries of Asoka's empire. Anyway, Buddhism did actually make headway among the people of Bactria and Sogdiana and the process must undoubtedly have continued, if it was not accelerated, under Milinda = Menander (ruled Sagala until 145 B.C.).² The occupation of Bactria and Sogdiana about this time by the Saka tribes of the Yuch-chi (who crossed the Jaxartes and the Oxus about 128 B.C.) ruined the Greek kingdoms in Central Asia but meant an accession of new strength to the Buddhist religion which was readily adopted by the invading tribes. It was not long afterwards that Buddhism was vouchsafed in that region—now a Holy Land visited by Buddhist pilgrims from far and near—an able and powerful ruler, Kanishka, whose championship of the faith did in no way lag behind that of Asoka. All circumstantial evidence supports the belief that under Kanishka, the convener of the fourth Great Council, Buddhism became the predominant religion of the area and consolidated itself well enough to be able to travel along the silk route to the ultimate destination in the Far East. It would, however, be dangerous to neglect the fact that, like Brahmanism in India, Zoroastrianism continued to exist side by side with Buddhism. Zoroastrianism, it will be remembered, was the old religion of Persia and its antagonism to Buddhism was only paralleled by that of Brahmanism. There are perhaps adverse references to Buddhism (Buiti and Gaotema the heretic) in the Persian scriptures.³ At any rate, while the empire of the Kushans was still strong i.e., till about the beginning of the third century A.D. Zoroastrianism lay marking time and awaiting a revival of Persian nationalism, which had been torn to shreds since the overthrow of the Achæmenians by Alexander, in order to assert itself once again as the national religion under the protection of the strong

2. "Most of his (Menander's) subjects were Buddhists who favoured the Greeks, whom they regarded as friends and saviours from the Hindus who persecuted Buddhism." De Lacy O'Leary: *How Greek Sciences Passed to the Arabs*, p. 114. This ought to be borne in mind in order that a similar phenomenon at the time of the Muslim conquest of Sind should cause no surprise.

3. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism* Vol. III (1921), p. 218.

arm of the state. Such a consummation was brought about not long afterwards when the Sasanian dynasty came into power in 226 A.D.⁴ The rise of the new Persian dynasty coincided with, rather contributed to, the decline of the Kushans and, judging from all viewpoints, put Buddhism at a serious disadvantage. Henceforward we find Buddhism continuously on the defensive in a series of violent struggles, suffering casualties and retreating before numerous adversaries. Of course, at the top of the list of those adversaries stood Zoroastrianism which, apart from being a religion, was cherished as the very symbol of Persian national honour and glory. If this old foe needed organisation and fury, those weapons were provided for it by the outburst of Mazdakism in the reign of Kawadh (488-531 A.D.). Even when Mazdak had suffered a violent death at the hands of his erstwhile patron and his followers were being persecuted, it remained a fact that his movement had given a fillip to Zoroastrianism. In the meantime a severe strain on the stamina of Buddhism was caused by the rise of Manichaeism. It is a curious fact that the danger of this new religion (founded by Mani in 242 A.D.) lay in its eclecticism. Its acknowledgement of Buddha as one of the prophets provided it with an entry visa into the domain of Buddhism and gave it the potentiality of subversion from within. This aspect is amply borne out by the Chinese edict of 739 A.D. 'which accuses the Manichaeans of falsely taking the name of Buddhism and deceiving the people' (Elliot III, 216). Obviously it was a warning to the customers against an imitation product exploiting the established reputation of a popular trade mark. Anyway though Manichaeism suffered the same fate as Mazdakism at the hands of Zoroastrian nationalist zealots, it did harm to Buddhism by inveigling the unwary among the devotees of the Enlightened One. And then finally towards 425 A.D. there came the eruption of the Ephthalites or the White Huns. These barbaric hordes continued to ravage Eastern Persia and the land of the Kushans during the period of their occupation which extended up to 566 A.D. when they succumbed before the coalition of Sasanid Persia and the Western Turks. The extent

4. To quote the words of O'Leary: "This (the Sasanid) revolution, like most such movements in oriental lands, had a religious bearing. It not only set on the throne a legitimist claimant who was accepted as descended from the demi-gods of ancient times, but it led to a drastic reformation of the religion founded by Zoroaster. The first Sasanid monarch, Ardashir, began his reign with a general council of Mazdean clergy which resolved the many sectarian difficulties between the various sections into which the Persian community was divided, and standardised the worship and scriptural canon. In history Mazdeanism appears generally as a tolerant creed, save in dealing with dissenters from itself, such as Mani and Mazdak, but it seems to have passed through a period of active propaganda, of which there are no details, in the course of which the religion of Zoroaster spread over the eastern provinces of the kingdom, so that at the coming of Islam Bactria, Sogdiana, and Ferghana were largely, but by no means entirely, Mazdean, with a strong Buddhist minority...." (p. 119).

and the magnitude of the disaster are amply reflected in the references of Hsuan-tsang, whose evidence we shall have occasion to examine presently. Lastly, it must be remarked that the religious pattern of the land would remain incomplete without taking into account Nestorian Christianity, which undoubtedly had wide ramifications throughout the East, though all the details may not now be available.

Evidence of H. Tsang

Having seen Buddhism at its zenith under the Kushans and then traced the various factors (viz., Zoroastrianism, Mazdakism, Manichaeism, the Ephthalite invasion and Nestorian Christianity) that contributed to its steady downfall, we are now in a position to assess the condition of it about the middle of the seventh century A.D. when the advance of Islam upon the lands began. For this purpose we have to rely mainly on two kinds of sources: (1) the travels of H. Tsang who passed through the country in 630 A.D. and (2) the Muslim historians. The memoirs of H. Tsang, though faithful, have to be studied with the very important reservation that he was too engrossed with what concerned his own religion; his records do not represent an overall picture.* As for the Muslim historians, whatever their shortcomings the charge of suppressing or extenuating what Grousset calls 'pious vandalism' cannot be laid at their door. The sober and the unprejudiced may sometimes plead for due allowance for their rhetorical exuberance but even those bent on taking them at their word would not assert that the iconoclasm of the Muslims ever exceeded what their own records bear out.

With these remarks in mind we shall join H. Tsang at the court of the Great Khan of the Western Turks, T'ung the Yabgu, near the town of Suiyeh, the Toqmaq of today on the north-west of the Issiq-kul or the 'Warm Lake.' The empire of the Western Turks, who overthrew the Ephthalite Huns in the middle of the 6th century (towards 566 A.D.), extended from the Altai to the Oxus and Badakhshān, the region which formed a very important link between the Sasanid empire on the one hand and the empire of the T'angs on the other, and the potentiality of whose situation for political intrigue and commercial profit was fully realised by the Byzantines. Further, it is this region which was soon to be the scene of the exploits of the Muslims vis-a-vis the Western Turks and sometimes also the Chinese. It is therefore essential to our theme to ascertain the religious pattern of it and here is what we glean from H. Tsang about it:

* "Yuan-chuang in his travels cared little for other things and wanted to know only Buddha and Buddhism." Watters I, 15.

In the words of Grousset, "H. Tsang only credits them (the Western Turks) with a sort of fire-worship, no doubt inspired by Persian Mazdeism. But they also revered Buddhism." (p. 73)

Having left the court of the Khan, H. Tsang went through Transoxiana where culture 'leaned wholly towards Sasanid Persia..... The dominant religion was always that of Zoroaster, Mazdeism, the national religion of the Iranians and more especially of the Sasanid dynasty.' (Grousset p. 78) Further, on arriving at Samarkand "H. Tsang seems to have had the feeling of being transplanted to another world. It was in very truth Iran, the world of Parsecism, instinctively on the defensive against the Sino-Indian beliefs. Doubtless there were ancient Buddhist monasteries in the town, dating probably from the days of the Indo-Scythian rule, but, in consequence of the Mazdean reaction which must have spread from Sasanid Persia, they had long been deserted. "The king and the people have no belief in Buddha's law. Their religion consists in fire-worship." (Grousset p. 80) In religion, observes Grousset, the country 'hovered, at the dictates of its commercial relations and its political interests, between Buddhism and Mazdeism. More or less Mazdean under the Achaemenids, more or less Buddhist under the Indo-Scythians, it had next undergone a Mazdean reaction during the Sasanid period.' (p. 81) A significant incident which took place at this town is noticed by Watters thus : "The Life represents the people of Samokan as being Fire-worshippers. Other accounts describe them as being Buddhists in the sixth and seventh centuries although they worshipped also the gods of other religions and their own ancestors. They probably were not all Fire-worshippers, but they were evidently haters and persecutors of Buddhism at the time of Yuan-chuang's visit. There were two monasteries in the capital and when the young Brethern of Yuan-chuang's party went to perform their religious services in one of these, the people drove them out and burned the monastery. The king, however, punished the evil-doers. . . ." (1,94: cf. also Sir Charles Elliot III, 202). Grousset detects in the apparent solicitude of the king for the Buddhist pilgrim a desire on the part of the subtle Transoxanian 'to conciliate the great re nascent China, which was an essential counterpoise to the double attraction of the Turks and the Sasanids.' (p. 80)

Crossing the Oxus, H. Tsang proceeded to Bactria which, under the name of Tokharistan, formed a special fief of one of the sons of the Great Khan, the prince Tardushad : "Balkh, the ancient Bactria, still presented at this period the peculiarity of being both Iranian in its substratum and fervently Buddhist in its religion. No doubt the Buddhist evangelisation dated back to the middle of the third century B.C., a period when Bactria must have

been visited by missionaries from the great Indian emperor Asoka. M. Foucher thinks that Buddhism was established here only by the Indo-Scythian king Kanishka (80-110 A.D.), but so solidly that three centuries later, the Ephthalite suzerainty was not able to destroy it." (Grousset p. 85) "In spite of the passage of the Ephthalite Huns, there were still a hundred monasteries in the country, rich in relics of Buddha and inhabited by three thousand monks." (Ibid, p. 86)

Next H. Tsang visited the very important town of Bamiyan. It "numbered ten Buddhist monasteries containing several thousand religious, all Hinayanists. The pilgrim visited the grottos hollowed out of the northern cliff of the valley and converted into monastic cells. He also mentions (attributing to them not more than 150 and 100 feet respectively) the two gigantic statues of Buddha, which measure actually about 170 and 115 feet, and are still standing in two clefts in the cliff." (Ibid, p. 87-8)

Next we find H. Tsang in Kapisa, whose king, of Turko-Mongol blood, was at that time a devout Buddhist, although his forefather was denounced just a hundred and ten years ago (in 520 A.D.) by Sung Yun as pagan and barbarian. The country, however, must throughout have remained essentially Buddhist. "In the seventh century the valley of Kabul was already India. Thus Hsuan-Tsang met at Kapisi the first Jains and the first Hindu ascetics of his journey, the former entirely naked, or rather 'clothed in azure' lest they should break the vow of poverty by possessing a garment ; the others (no doubt Saiva ascetics) had their bodies rubbed with ash and wore a chaplet made of skulls. Nevertheless, the majority of the population still remained Buddhist." (Ibid. p. 93)

H. Tsang next proceeded to Lampak (Lamghan) and Nagarahara (Jalalabad), which districts had in fact been a Holy Land for Buddhism. Referring to the ravages of the Ephthalite Huns he says : "The inhabitants are full of respect for the Law of Buddha, and few among them have faith in Brahman doctrines. Nevertheless, although there are a great number of monasteries, one meets with but few religious. The stupas are in ruins and covered with wild vegetation." Grousset was forced to admit cryptically : "The Arab invasion, twenty years later, only dealt the final death-blow." (p. 100-101)

Thereafter H. Tsang proceeded to Gandhara, with Peshawar as its capital. Describing how this part of the country suffered at the hands of the Ephthalites, he writes : "Towns and villages are almost empty and abandoned, and only a few inhabitants are seen in the country. . . . There are a million Buddhist monasteries which are in ruins and deserted. They are overgrown with weeds and they make only a mournful solitude. The

majority of the stupas are also in ruins." The disaster that had befallen the Buddhist communities of the district was so great that the relic of relics, the alms-bowl of Buddha, preserved until then in a Peshawar monastery, had been removed and after many vicissitudes had been taken away into an infidel land, Sasanid Persia." (Grousset p. 106)

Islamic Laws of Conquest

We can now part company with H. Tsang in order to trace the advance of the Muslim Arabs in these very regions. Before we do so, however, it is necessary to be quite clear as to the aims and the methods of the conquests by the Muslims of non-Muslim lands in the early period of Islamic history. According to the Islamic laws governing warfare, conquests are classified into two broad categories : (1) Conquests by Force i.e., conquests resulting from a clash of arms and the virtual defeat of organised resistance on the part of the enemy, and (2) Conquests by Treaty i.e., annexation by means of a treaty concluded before a trial of strength. In the former case, direct rule by the Muslims is established, the administration of the country is taken over by them, and an Islamic order is introduced. The most important features of the Islamic order so far as it affects the non-Muslims are : (a) full freedom of conscience in accordance with the Quranic injunction "there is no compulsion in regard to religion," (b) guarantee of religious practices and places of worship, (c) safety of person and property and (d) the right to economic activity. The non-Muslims were also exempt from military service because they were not expected to fight for the establishment of an order which they did not believe in. In return, they had the obligation of loyalty to the state and the payment of the *jizya*-tax in lieu of military service and such other taxes as may be prescribed on produce from agricultural lands and income from various occupations. Of course, measures, the severity of which was determined by the state of tension between Islam and the neighbouring non-Muslim powers, were always taken to safeguard that the above freedoms and privileges were not misused in any way to the detriment of the solidarity and the integrity of the state. It may be added that these privileges were in the first instance expressly sanctioned in the Quran and the canonical texts in favour of 'The people of the Book' i.e., those who possessed a Revealed Book of Divine Guidance such as the Jews and the Christians. But as the Muslims came into contact with other faiths and other peoples who were above the level of animism and professed principles of morality, they were by common agreement among the community declared to be on the same footing as the Jews and the Christians for all practical purposes of political administration. As

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will be seen later on, the question was frankly and squarely considered in relation to the Buddhists and finally decided on the lines indicated above. (cf. Ency. of Islam "Balkh.")

In the case of Conquests by Treaty, local rulers and their administrative systems were left untouched in exchange for (a) a pledge of good-will and fidelity, particularly in the sphere of foreign relations, to what we may term the Protecting Power of Islam and (b) the payment of an annual tribute representing an agreed commuted sum of *kharaj* = land-tax and *jizya* (the tax due from non-Muslims in lieu of military service). As will be seen anon, even the collection of these taxes was left in the hands of local rulers, who not infrequently discriminated against the converts to Islam within the jurisdiction of their authority.

Arab Conquests in Khurāsān and Transoxiana

Bearing the above remarks in mind, we should now turn to an account of the Arab conquest of the lands with which we are concerned. For this purpose it seems best to confine ourselves to the narrative of al-Balādhuri (—892 A.D.), a trustworthy historian who gives a coherent account of the progress of Islam in various directions region by region. Of course, we shall be supplementing his account with such vital and useful information as can be gleaned from other sources.

In 639 A.D., just seven years after the death of the Prophet, the Persians suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Arabs in the battle of Nihāwand, "a battle which must rank high amongst those which have influenced the current of the world's history." (Skrine and Ross : *The Heart of Asia*, 1899, p. 37) Thereafter, the entire Persia lay prostrate at the feet of the Arabs. The easternmost province of Khurāsān was first conquered by < Abdullāh B. < Āmir, the governor of Basra, during the reign of the third caliph, < Uthmān (644-657). It was he who conquered Nisābūr and annexed Herāt by treaty. The terms of the treaty of Herat are too important for our purpose to be left out here. It ran as follows :—

"In the name of God, etc. This is what < Abdullāh B. < Āmir commands the chief of Harāt and Būshanj and Bādaghīs : he orders him to fear God and keep faith with the Muslims and to preserve peace in the lands under his control ; and he makes a treaty of peace with him for Harāt, its plains and its mountains, on condition that he pay the *jizya* which he has contracted to pay, and divide this tribute on the lands fairly among

them.⁵ Whoever refuses what is laid on him, shall have no covenant and no protection. Rabi < B. Nahshal wrote this and > Ibn < Amir sealed it."

It was during the governorship of < Abdullāh B. < Amir too that al-> Ahnaf B. Qais advanced upon Balkh, annexed it by treaty and then retired, leaving a resident behind. The reign of the fourth caliph < Ali (656-661) was characterised by instability, strife and turmoil at home. This gave Khurāsān, which had only nominally acknowledged the suzerainty of the Arabs without its political and social set-up being touched in any way, an opportunity to become independent i.e., withhold the payment of the tribute due from it under the terms of the treaties for the various cities. When the government at the centre ultimately settled down under Mu< āwiya and < Abdullāh B. < Amir was once again sent as the governor of the Eastern Provinces, the cities of Khurāsān had to be conquered anew one by one. It appears natural that this time (42 A.H. = 662 A.D.) the Muslim commander, Qais B. al-Haitham, should be bent on a display of force as a retribution for the infidelity of the local chiefs to their word and agreement. In the course of the operations incidental to the reduction of the city for the second time, the famous NawBahār (-Vihara), an old Buddhist temple⁶ but curiously enough designated by Muslim writers as a fire-temple, was, it is recorded, destroyed. Up till now, however, the Arab conquests were lacking in planning and method. It was only under Ziyād B. > Abīhi, who was sent as governor of Basra and the East in 45 A.H. = 665 A.D., that the administration was centralised at Merv and systematic campaigns undertaken to consolidate the Arab power, for the moment at least, in the Cisoxanian lands. (cf. Gibb: *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, 1923, p. 17)

The consolidation of the base in Khurāsān was the necessary first step towards further extension into Sogdiana. A forward policy of penetration in that direction was launched during the same reign of Mu< āwiya. In 54 = 674 < Ubaidullāh B. Ziyād crossed the Oxus and penetrated into the mountains of Bukhara. Like Balkh, Bukhara, (probably a Turki-Mongol

5. It was expressly stated in the treaty of Marv al-Shahijan that "they (the local people) should provide space for the Muslims to settle and that it was their function to apportion the quota of their taxes, and not that of the Muslims, who would merely receive them." These treaties were negotiated either by the municipal authorities for their city, or by the reigning prince or chief of a territory. All Khurasan was thus *ahd* (i.e., conquered by treaty). The inhabitants paid a fixed tribute which they collected themselves. What the Arabs had done was to create a series of protectorates. . . . Daniel C. Dennett, JR.: *Conversion And the Poll Tax in Early Islam*, 1950, p. 118.

6. H. Tsang also mentions a Na-fo(Nava)-Sangharama which is the Nava-vihara and Hsin-ssu (with the same meaning) of I-ching. cf. Watters pp. 108 and 110.

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form of 'vihara'), also had a Buddhist monastery and was at that time ruled by a princess named Khātūn, who acted as regent during the minority of her son Tughshād. She saved the evacuation of her capital by entering into a treaty, by which she bound herself to pay a yearly tribute. (Skrine and Ross p. 40) Next Sa< id B. < Uthmān, who was appointed governor in 56 = 676 carried the Arab arms more deeply into Transoxiana. On his crossing the Oxus, Khātūn at first renewed her allegiance but soon withdrew it when a large army of the Turks and Sogdians came to her succour. Sa< id, however, gained the victory and made a triumphal entry into the city. Later he also reduced Samarkand, where the existence of a Buddhist monastery on the pattern of Balkh and Bukhara is indicated in Muslim records by the reference to a gate called the Gate of NawBahār.

In 61 = 680-81 Salm B. Ziyād, the new governor, came with the avowed intention of renewing the expeditions into Transoxiana. At that time there appears to have been a revolt on the part of the Bukharites combined with the Sogdian forces. The Muslims gained a signal victory over the opponents and the leader of the Sogdians called Bandūn, was killed. Khātūn once again sued for peace and paid tribute.

It appeared that Arab rule was for the time firmly established in Transoxiana. Soon, however, the Muslim empire was rent with civil war at the centre and tribal feuds among the provincials. As usual, the local princes in Transoxiana were quick enough to seize the opportunity to regain their independence. Not only was Lower Tukhāristān lost in part to the Arabs, but the rebel forces took the initiative to carry their raids into Khurāsān too. Though some order was in the meantime restored and punitive expeditions undertaken, the independent local princes were still in a defiant mood when towards the close of the year 85 = 705 the appointment of Qutaiba to the governorship of Khurāsān was announced. Qutaiba possessed superb military ability and was fully backed by the directive genius of al-Hajjāj, the governor of the Eastern Provinces at Basra. The new governor soon entered upon a prolonged and brilliant career of conquest and, not being content with that, also initiated new policies of permanent military control and administration in the light of the experience of the past.

Qutaiba's career of conquest has been divided by Prof. Gibb (*Arab Conquests* p. 31) into four periods:—

1. 86 = 705 : The recovery of Lower Tukhāristān.
2. From 87 = 706 to 90 = 709 : The Conquest of Bukhara.
3. From 91 = 710 to 93 = 712 : Consolidation of the Arab authority in the Oxus valley and its extension into Sughd.
4. From 94 = 713 to 93 = 715: Expeditions into the Jaxartes provinces.

The earnestness and the efficient mobilising efforts of Qutaiba seem to have made such a deep impression that the inhabitants of Balkh, the King of Chaghanian and the archleader of the revolt, Nezak, all surrendered without resistance and Lower Tukhāristān was recovered in no time. During the second period Qutaiba conquered the great emporium of commerce, Paykand, and gave it an exemplary punishment when it attempted soon after his withdrawal to throw out the small garrison which he thought fit to station there. The city of Bukhara was also reduced once again. These early exploits of Qutaiba amply demonstrated that 'those who accepted Arab dominion would be humanely treated, but any attempt at rebellion would be inexorably crushed.' (Gibb p. 34) Soon Tarkhūn, the king of Samarkand, opened negotiations and terms were agreed upon, probably on the basis of the old treaty made by Salm B. Ziyād. This act of Tarkhūn was, however, thwarted by the local population, mostly merchants, who deposed the king and set up Ghūrak in his place. The new king organised resistance, appealed for help to Shāsh and Ferghāna and perhaps also to the Khāqān of the Turks. Ghūrak perhaps succeeded in evoking in the neighbouring principalities a realisation that Samarkand was their last bulwark of defense. Their help was, however, of no avail. Ultimately Ghūrak had to sue for peace and the Arabs entered the city. The tradition in Balādhuri to the effect that Qutaiba treacherously attacked Samarkand in spite of the treaty of Sa'id B. < Uthmān, is partial and disproved according to the conclusions reached by Prof. Gibb. (Arab Conquests p. 42) There is, however, no doubt that Ghūrak must have been sadly disappointed when, probably in violation of a promise previously made to him, Qutaiba refused to hand over the city to him. It is also significantly true that Qutaiba could not revert to the policy and the terms of Sa'id B. < Uthmān. He established a strong garrison in the citadel and imposed restrictions and surveillance upon the local population.

There is also a weak report to the effect that it was stipulated in the treaty with Ghūrak that he should hand over the wealth of the idol-temples and the fire-temples to Qutaiba. Accordingly the idols (statues of Buddha?) were stripped of their ornaments and melted. It was a common belief in regard to some of the idols that any one who dared do harm to them would suffer death and destruction. In order to expose the belief, Qutaiba set fire to the idols with his own hands and the act did not fail to impress the onlookers, some of whom accepted Islam.

Anyway, this act of greed or sacrilege does not find mention in the petition submitted by the people of Samarkand to < Umar B. < Abd al-< Aziz a few years later. < Umar B. < Abd al-< Aziz, who ascended the

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throne at Damascus in 99 = 717 was renowned for piety and strict adherence to the injunctions of Islam. It is perhaps a great tribute to Islam that as soon as the people heard of an orthodox caliph they rushed with a deputation to him urging that Qutaiba "had treacherously entered their city and colonised it with the Muslims." (Balādhuri) This indeed could have been the real grievance and it was promptly attended to. Eventually an agreed settlement was arrived at and the inhabitants thenceforth accepted the Muslims in their midst by choice, and promised to be sincere in their effort to cultivate good relations with them.

Another concerted attempt at revolt on the part of the local rulers of Tukhāristān, particularly Nezak and Jabghū, could not fail to convince Qutaiba of the necessity of conferring fuller powers on the Arab governors installed in each district. Nezak was executed on direct orders from Hajjāj in violation of Qutaiba's promise of pardon, while Jabghū was held as a hostage in Damascus, though the other native princess continued to exercise at least a nominal authority.

When Arab authority was secure in Cisoxania and the former Ephthalite lands, Qutaiba turned once again to Bukhara where he installed Tughshād in the position of Bukhār-khudāh (the ruler of Bukhara) and established a military colony in the town. Qutaiba also initiated at this time the policy of levying auxiliary corps of local troops to serve with the Arab armies. These two measures, the establishment of Arab cantonments and the enlistment of the local people, were the first effective step towards Islamisation.

Towards the end of his career Qutaiba planned and carried out a few campaigns in the Jaxartes region. It is, however, noteworthy that modern research has laid bare the unauthenticity and the improbability of the attack on Kasgar attributed to him 'because of the great renown which attached to his memory.' (vide Gibb p. 52-53) One can be sure that Sir Charles Elliot would not hesitate to revise his remark that 'the position of Kasgar exposed it to the destructive influence of Islam at an early date.' (III, 119)

It must also be remarked that just because of his firmness in executing systematically planned policies of annexation and consolidation, Qutaiba is often stigmatised with ruthlessness. A well-informed scholar would, however, testify that 'the ruthlessness and ferocity of his conquests have been much exaggerated. He was always ready to use diplomacy rather than force if it offered any hope of success, so much so that his lenience was misconstrued on occasion by both friends and foes. Only in cases of treachery and revolt his punishment came swift and terrible.' (Gibb p. 56)

It cannot be denied that frequent revolts and their suppression entailed some inevitable destruction of cities like Bukhara, which is reflected in Muslim accounts.

< Umar B. < Abd al-< Azīz, who was mentioned above, was more concerned with the propagation by preaching and persuasion of the faith rather than with military conquest. As a matter of fact, had it not been that Muslim colonies were by that time firmly implanted in many of the cities, his policy would have led to complete evacuation of Transoxiana. < Umar was only content with writing letters to the local chiefs asking them to embrace Islam and promising, rather actually practising, such non-interference that it appeared to them that a show of Islam was the best and the easiest way of preserving their vested interests. Some of them responded to his call and nominally accepted Islam. It was, however, none other than < Umar B. < Abd al-< Azīz who made the greatest contribution to the stability of Islam in the region. He assured to the new converts perfect equality with the Arabs in military service and granted them not only freedom from *jizya* but also maintenance and pay. Financial considerations, which overwhelmed his predecessors as well as successors, would not stand in the way of < Umar's 'pious Utopia'; he declared he was ready to contribute from the chief treasury of the state if the revenue of Khurāsān were not sufficient to give effect to the principle of equality between the Arabs and the non-Arabs. (cf. Wellhausen : *Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, p. 298)

In the meantime a new development took place. In 716 A.D. the Turgesh established their kingdom under Su-lu in the Irai basin and the local princes of Transoxiana lost no time in courting their intervention and help against the Arabs. Simultaneously embassies and appeals to the Chinese court were also resorted to, though they did not bear any fruit except the conferment of bombastic titles. The Turgesh, however, were not slow to act. During the years 720-21 they maintained such pressure and encouraged the Sogdians to such an extent that a very stern governor had to be sent. He was Sa<id B. < Amr al-Harashī, whose policy caused merchants and nobles to migrate to the mountainous district of Ferghāna, but it was only through such a policy that he could reclaim the whole of Sogdiana for the Muslims. Again in 724 the Arabs suffered a very severe set-back, which was long remembered as the 'Day of Thirst.' By now it became clear that the ruling princes and nobles who had succeeded in playing the Turgesh against the Arabs and also hugged the hope of prodding the Chinese emperor into intervention, could not be relied upon for conciliation simply because they would brook no curtailment of their authority.

Wisely enough, therefore, the Arab governors decided to bypass them, so to say, and embarked upon a deliberate policy of appeasing the populace which, or at least a section of it, felt that the best interests of the country lay "not in an opposition whose final issue could scarcely be in doubt, but in cooperation with their new masters as far as possible." (Gibb p. 67) The first step in this direction was to appoint agents of known probity, Magians, Christians and Jews (but, significantly enough for our purpose, no Buddhists) and converts who retained the sympathy of the local people. This policy was initiated some time ago by a former governor, Muslim B. Sa<id al-Kilābī, and was further promoted by another one, > Asad B. < Abdullāh. > Ashras, who was appointed governor in 109=727, took another important measure when he despatched a few missionaries to preach and propagate Islam, which was the sure guarantee of fidelity. The missionaries, however, accepted the task only on condition that the stipulation of Islam regarding the freedom of a convert from the poll-tax (because of his liability to military service) be fully given effect to, and not ignored, as heretofore, for fear of the loss of revenue to the exchequer. Ghūrak and the other princes and nobles, however, soon raised a great hue and cry that the people were 'turning Arabs' and that if the process continued there would be none left from whom to collect the tax. > Ashras was cowed down and revoked his projected measure, thus causing serious discontent among the non-Arab converts.

In 731 the Turgesh, in league with the local chiefs, again made heavy inroads into Sogdiana and the towns of Bukhara and Samarkand changed hands twice. It was not long before Ghūrak, some time before his death in 737-38, became virtually independent at Samarkand. > Asad, who came as governor a second time in 736, had to take some drastic steps in order to accomplish the task before him. First of all, he transferred the provincial capital from Merv to Balkh, which had both a strategic and a sentimental value. Balkh was better suited to control the areas of Lower Tukhāristān and Sogdiana, which had been the scene of upheaval from time to time. Moreover, Balkh was the traditional capital and on it was focussed the local sentiment of Eastern Khurāsān. Merv, on the other hand, had always been the capital of the foreigners, of the Sasanians before the Arabs." (Gibb p. 80) The effect of this transfer heightened when > Asad carried out the rebuilding of Bukhara, and that not by the Arabs, but by the local people under the supervision of the Barmak, the hereditary priest-ruler of the ancient shrine of NawBahār. Later, > Asad had a decisive battle with the Turgesh and their allies from among the local chiefs at a place called Khāristān, in which the Muslims gained an overwhelming success. This victory was followed by yet another more important development which

was the break-up of the Turgesh empire at home. > Asad's policy thrived well in such favourable circumstances and the conversion of many *dihqans* (feudal lords), among them probably also the Barmak, dates from this period. > Asad's task in Sogdiana was, however, still incomplete when he died in 120=738. He was succeeded in governorship by Nasr B. Sayyār, who 'had seen the futility of trying to hold the country by mere brute force and the equal futility of trying to dispense with force.' (Gibb p. 89) He at once addressed himself to the task of reforming the system of taxation and granting amnesty, which made him very popular. His army marched through Sogdiana without opposition, and Arab garrison and administration were re-established at Samarkand. A little later Shāsh and Ferghāna were also reduced once again. Nasr also distinguished himself by his solicitude for the middle classes and the agriculturists and his personal influence and honesty were such that even those who had migrated under Sa'id B. < Amr al-Harashī staged a come-back.

Again it was the local princes who were alarmed at the pacification of Transoxiana, which undoubtedly sounded the death-knell to their own authority. Though the Turgesh were no more ready at hand to help them in their designs, they cast their glances far at the Chinese court. In the meantime the Abbasid revolution swept Khurāsān and Transoxiana in 130=748. Under the new regime, Ziyād B. Sālih effectively annexed Khuttal to the Arab government for the first time and led expeditions into the Turkish lands beyond the Jaxartes. He also had a battle with the Chinese under the command of Kao-hsien-shih, (a Corean officer despatched by the governor of Kucha), near Taraz in July, 751. Though the Muslims came out with flying colours, the event did not fail to rouse new hopes in the minds of the princes of Sogd. They again planned a concerted rising but, in the absence of Chinese aid, were overawed. Ere long the tradition of Chinese overlordship in Western Central Asia was finally banished due to the internal weakness of China herself.

Thereafter till the accession of Māmūn (813), the Muslims held their position fairly well in Transoxiana, confining their activity to biting at the border and exercising such firm pressure on local chieftains as to make them faithfully observe the terms of the treaties. Annexation of new territory was not very large and any large scale military operations were unnecessary in view of the settled conditions within. Māmūn, who had an intimate personal knowledge of Khurāsān, concentrated on Islamisation by persuasion and addressed letters to the local chiefs, which evoked some response. Still more important was the throwing open of the honorable and lucrative military services of the Empire to the local population. Full

advantage was taken of this opportunity by the people, who swelled the ranks of recruits as well as of converts. This policy was continued by the successors of Māmūn, who began to depend on these non-Arab levies for their personal safety. Soon these Transoxianian guards began to dominate the court at Baghdad. About the same time their position and influence within the body politics of Islam became so consolidated that local national dynasties of the Saffārids and the Sāmānids easily took over from the Arabs.

Conquests in Afghanistan

The territory from Lake Zarah up to Kandahar in the East (included by the Arabs within the province of Sijistān) was conquered by al-Rabi' < B. Ziyād about the year 30=650 and reconquered by < Abdur Raḥmān B. Samura a few years later. The latter further extended the conquest to the border of India, passing through the country of Dawār where he came across *Zur*, an idol made of gold and set with two eyes of corundum. He cut the hand of the idol and took out the corundums and then turned to the *marzubān* (the feudal chief) saying: Here are for you the gold and the corundums; I just wanted to demonstrate that the idol possessed no power of doing good or harm. < Abdur Raḥmān also concluded some sort of an agreement with the ruler of Zābul (the country around Ghazna). As in Transoxiana, these parts also cast off the treaties during the interval between the murder of < Uthmān and the accession of Mu'āwiyā, the latter of whom appointed < Abdur Raḥmān once again to the province. < Abdur Raḥmān re-established Arab protection over the lands and advanced as far as Kabul, which submitted in 43=663. The two powerful local chiefs, Kabul Shah (the ruler of Kabul) and Rutbil (the ruler of Zābul), were, in accordance with the traditional policy of the Arabs, left undisturbed in the rulership of their territories. Later, a confederacy between the two confronted the Arabs with a veritable perpetual sore, entailing a heavy drain on resources and loss of life. In consequence of a heavy disaster, it appeared circumspect to Hajjāj to conclude a no-war treaty with Rutbil for a period of 7 or 9 years on the usual promise of the payment of a tribute by the latter. Qutaiba B. Muslim, whose forward and unrelenting policy we saw in Transoxiana, also behaved with unusual restraint towards Rutbil, declaring the latter's country to be an 'unlucky frontier' for the Arabs (a reference to the difficulties of physical terrain in the mountainous country). As the later Umayyid caliphs could not maintain military pressure, Rutbil withheld the payment of tribute throughout. It was during the reign of Mansūr, the second Abbasid caliph, that he was compelled once again to pay the tribute, which continued to be extorted from him during

subsequent regimes. During the days of Māmūn, as a result of his policy of propagating Islam noted above, the king of Kabul accepted Islam and his territory was integrated with the empire. The Muslim historians exult in the fact that thenceforth myrobalan reached fresh from Kabul to Baghdad, but the independent administration of the territory still remained undisturbed. It was only when a dynast from among the local Muslims (Ya < qūb the Coppersmith) sprang up that the position was altered about 870. "For the past hundred years or so (before Ya < qūb) it had never entered the mind of any Eastern governor to disturb the independence of the Turkish king of Kabul." (Skrine & Ross p. 105)

Remarks Anent Islamisation

The following points emerging from the objective narrative given above may be noted :—

1. The wave of Muslim conquest had toned down before it reached Khurāsān so much that the Muslims showed themselves contented enough with nominal acknowledgement of suzerainty and payment of tribute. The local people also seem to have by that time got a fair idea of Islam's rules of war and conquest. Convinced of the military power of the Muslims which was amply demonstrated by the defeat of Imperial Persia, they always avoided a showdown in their anxiety to escape a 'conquest by force.' The advantages of a 'conquest by treaty' were invariably coveted and actually there was no interference with the internal affairs—the system of administration and taxation or the social and religious life of the people—in the various principalities. Very often the Muslim commanders did not even enter the cities, and if they entered at all, their entry was merely symbolical. The patience with which the Muslims persisted in the 'treaty' method was remarkable. Ultimately, however, the experience of infidelity and the interminable cycle of revolts and reconquests, coupled with the fresh vigour infused into the administration of the Eastern provinces under Hājāj, brought about a change. Whether the charge of treachery and perjury is proved or not, the fact remains that Qutaiba was anxious to establish permanent garrisons of Muslim soldiers in almost all the principal cities. He actually did so, and thus may be said to have initiated the process of Islamisation. Narshakhī's story that he paid a reward of two dirhems to each attendant at the mosque built by him at Bukhara (Skrine & Ross p. 66) mayor may not be true; in fact the probability is that it is only a later embellishment because it is not mentioned by any earlier historian and has no parallel elsewhere. The really important step taken by him was, of course, the admittance of the local people to the ranks of the Muslim army—a

move which was stoutly opposed by the Arabs under his command, so much so that it could only be partially given effect to. Soon many disabilities, without any regard for their effect in retarding the process of Islamisation, came to be attached to these new recruits quite unwelcome to the Arab soliders until the matter engaged the attention of the pious caliph, < Umar B. < Abd al-< Azīz. By giving effect to the orthodox Islamic principles in regard to the waiving of the poll-tax and admittance on pay to the army of the new converts, < Umar gave the greatest fillip to the process of Islamisation. The levy and the collection of the taxes, was however, still in the hands of the local chiefs. The conduct of these administrators is analysed thus by Daniel C. Dennett :—

"The different cities and districts of Khurāsān had to pay a fixed sum of money each year. This sum was raised from a land tax and a poll tax. The assessors and collectors of these taxes were the native princes, acting in cooperation with the heads of the religious communities. The Arabs, following the rules elsewhere, had ordered these assessors to release converts of their poll taxes. This order had not been obeyed. A man named Bahrāmsīs, for example, assessed the taxes of the Magians, and when one of his people turned Muslim, Bahrāmsīs not only did not free him from his poll tax but penalized him further, and to make his position invidious relaxed the taxation on the Magians. The son of Gregory (> Ibn Jarījūr) who assessed and collected the Christian taxes treated Christian renegades in the same manner, as did < Aqība the Jews. The result was that 30,000 Muslims were paying their poll taxes unjustly, while 80,000 unbelievers were getting off scot free. Moreover, these assessors were discriminating unjustly in the land tax, bearing down heavily on converts and letting their own people off lightly. This patent injustice Nasr B. Saiyār proposed to correct. He appointed a commissioner with full power to see to it that no Muslim paid a poll tax and that all unbelievers did. The result was that 30,000 Muslims were freed, and 80,000 unbelievers had to pay. The commissioner also examined the charge that Muslims were assessed land taxes unfairly. This grievance, too, he rectified." (Conversion & Poll Tax p. 126)

By the way, there seems to be no reason for the omission of the Buddhists from among the assessee religious communities unless it be that their number was insignificant or that they somehow got mixed up with the Magians.

As has been amply shown above, Islamisation was the greatest danger to the authority of the local princes, who went on contriving for their ends even when they themselves nominally accepted Islam. It was not until

the Turgesh empire came to an end and all hope of Chinese intervention was finally buried, until a strong and stable government under the new dynasty of the Abbasids was able to maintain its position without interruption, and until the disabilities of the converts were redressed and the opportunities for service in the Muslim army liberalised—it was not until then that large scale conversions took place. The fact is very often overlooked that 'the so-called conquests, which were mainly under the orthodox caliphs, were in reality the conquest of Arab arms and Arab nationals.....During the first century of Abbasid rule the conquests entered upon their second stage, the victory of Islam as a religion (though many conversions were, to be sure, concurrent with the early military conquests).' Pointing out the above fact, Prof. Hitti notes : 'Persia remained unconverted to Islam until well into the third century after its inclusion in the Arab Empire. It counts among its population today some 9,000 Zoroastrians.' (*History of the Arabs*, pp. 359-60)

We have also noted above that Transoxiana and the regions with which we are concerned were far more loosely governed by Muslim arms than Persia proper. Being on the fringe of the Empire, it is no surprise that it did not take them very long to break away from it under their own dynasties as soon as they were sufficiently Islamised.

2. The idea that we gained from H. Tsang * about the strength of Buddhism in Cis- and Transoxiana is fully confirmed by the Muslim historians. The existence of the NawBahārs of Samarkand, Bukhara and Balkh is noted but nowhere is there an indication of any considerable following of Buddhism. At Balkh, however, the Buddhists may be said to have been prominent, if not innumerable, which is quite in harmony with the picture drawn by H. Tsang. The importance of the monastery at Balkh and the exalted position enjoyed by its priests is fully brought out in Muslim accounts. It is significant that in those days many of the municipal functions of the city attached to the culturally advanced, if not numerically strong, religious community headed by its priests. In Balkh these functions belonged to the illustrious Barmaks (= ParMukhs), the hereditary priests of the NawBahār. It was they, and none else, who were entrusted with the task of rebuilding the city by the Muslims. By way of comparison, it may be observed that the task of supervising and maintaining the water works of Samarkand was assigned to the Zoroastrians, who were on the same account exempted from the poll tax by the Muslims.

* It is useful for our purpose to compare the account of H. Tsang with that of Fa-Hien. The task has been done by James Bissett Pratt, who declares : "A comparison of the accounts of outlying regions given by Fa-Hien and H. Tsang shows unmistakable and rather striking signs of rapid decay." *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, p. 112.

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A word about the monastery of Balkh before we proceed further. The Muslim authorities have preserved very copious accounts of the monastery which leave no doubt about its Buddhist character. And yet it is a curious fact that they have throughout designated it as a 'fire-temple,' so much so that it required the ingenuity and critical faculty of modern scholars like Sachau and Barthold to recognise its true character. It was, of course, quite natural for the Arabs to class the Buddha statue and the ritual associated with it under the general terms 'idol' and 'idol-worship,' though very soon we find them using the distinctive term 'al-Budd' precisely for Buddhist temples. But there is no conceivable reason for their confusing a Buddhist monastery or an idol-temple with a fire-temple. This apparent confusion is significant inasmuch as probably it shrouds the fact that the old Buddhist monastery had at one time been overlaid with fire-worship, which is quite consistent with our estimate of the resurgence of Zoroastrianism under the Sasanids. In the words of Prof. O'Leary : "No doubt it (the NawBahār) was converted into a fire temple during the Mazdean revival which preceded the Muslim conquest. Tradition associated Khurāsān with the rise of the religion of Zoroaster in Achaemenid times, and it is quite possible that Mazdeanism was inclined to treat Bactria and Sogdiana as sacred from that association." (p. 129) We come across a typical instance of this kind in the story of the Moque of Mākh in Bukhara. On the spot where the mosque stood, it is related, there had been successively, first, a Buddhist temple and, then, a fire temple. There twice a year fairs were held at which idols (probably Buddhist figures) were sold ; the custom continued long till the end of the third century of Islam. (Barthold : *Turkestan*, p. 107) Of course, at that time the figures must have been merely regarded as toys. (*Ency. Islam* "Bukhara")

It is also important for our purpose to note that when the Arabs began to settle in Bukhara the rich merchants called Kash-Kushans (supposed by Tomaschek to have been descendants of the Kushans or Ephthalites) retired from the town and built for themselves a new locality which later became very important. This locality was called 'Kushk-i-Mughān' (Castle of the Magians) and had fire temples, which gives us an indication of the religious character of the population. (Barthold p. 108) Still more significant is the absence of the Buddhists from among the religious communities which paid taxes under the Islamic regime and whom the Muslim governors contacted in pursuance of their deliberate policy of appeasement of the general public.

3. On the testimony of H. Tsang the region of the Hindu Kush and the NW Frontier of India was still Buddhist in the seventh century*, though vast damage had been done to shrines and monasteries by the Ephthalites. This is not at variance with the Muslim accounts though, in the very nature of them, they are scanty. The fact is often overlooked that the region was actually the dread of the Muslim commanders, who never showed concern with anything beyond a mere semblance of treaty relationship with the two powerful monarchs, Rutbil and Kabul Shah. As we have seen, the independence of these two rulers remained untampered with even after Kabul Shah accepted Islam. There was no direct rule of the Muslims till the appearance of the local dynasts about the middle of the III/IX century.

It is nevertheless true that the decline of Buddhism in this region coincided with the advance of the Muslims eastwards. But whatever success the Arab arms achieved, it never extended beyond Kabul proper. East of Kabul there was the Hindu kingdom of Gandhara, with its capital at Udabhandā = Waihind on the Indus, which came into being as a result of the final suppression of the Shahi kings by their Brahman viziers. As the writer of the article "Afghanistan" in the Ency. of Islam remarks, it was 'a phase in the suppression of Buddhism by Brahmanism, then in progress all over northern India.'

4. No acts of inconclasm other than those mentioned in the above narrative are recorded :—

(a) The NawBahār at Balkh was damaged in the course of reconquest after a revolt. The damage was perhaps only partial for we find people worshipping at the shrine at a later date. (cf. Ency. Islam "Barmakids") Though the traditions concerning the change of faith by the Barmaks have assumed a legendary character, it seems certain that they did so out of their own free choice and perhaps under protests, if not threats, from their coreligionists. The vast estates that attached to the monastery always remained in the family of the Barmaks who, in recognition of their cultural merits, provided the ablest ministers of the Empire.

(b) The idols at Samarkand were included in the tribute for their wealth.

(c) The mutilation of the idol of Zūr was frankly explained as the demonstration of the impotency of a statue.

As against the above, the following testimony of the writer of the article on Balkh in the Ency. of Islam is noticeable :— "The ruins of the

city (Balkh) are noteworthy, of which those of the Buddhist period, which are associated in characteristic fashion with names from the Iranian sagacycles (cf. Takht-i-Rustan) are better preserved than Muslim ones."

Also the gigantic Buddha statues at Bamiyan have throughout been noted by Muslim historians. Not only the statues but also the wall painting of which no account is given by H. Tsang (cf. Grousset p. 88), are noticed by the geographer Yāqūt. The prince of Bamiyan accepted Islam under the Abbasids and held influential positions at the court of Baghdad. (cf. Ency. Islam "Bamiyan")

Conquest and Administration in Sind

We have now only to review the events in Sind. It will be remembered that Sind (including the Lower Panjab) was the only region conquered by Arab arms within the borders of India. Moreover, it appears that in Sind we come across Buddhism for the first time as a political force. It must be frankly acknowledged that though Islam as a religion is exceptionally tolerant of other religions yet as a political force it is no exception to the general rule of intolerance of a rival political force. But, as it happened, by the time the Muslims reached the valley of the Indus, Buddhism had been reduced to the position of a mere unwilling ally of Brahmanism in the domain of politics. As actual events proved, the unwilling ally was quite understandably prone to welcome anyone who could supplant its erstwhile supplanters, the unrelenting Brahmins. Fortunately also, the Arab conqueror of Sind, Muḥammad B. al-Qāsim, has an unrivalled reputation for wise, just and tolerant administration. If we believe the Muslim historians, he was so popular with his subject peoples that on his recall his statues became the object of the latter's adoration. As the establishment of Arab rule in Sind was from the very beginning quite firm and the policies governing relationship with the non-Muslims were fully and clearly laid down, we need not go into a detailed narrative; it is just enough for our purpose to note certain important aspects of early conquest and administration :—

(a) During the very opening phase of military operations certain temples were damaged. It should not be forgotten that as a matter of tradition temples in those days were fortified enough to form the pivot of the defences of a city and on their fall depended the submission of the people. The important temple at Daibul (not far from modern Karachi) was actually so and Muḥammad B. al-Qāsim had deliberately to aim his catapults at its dome. But the absence of any spirit of religious vindictiveness is amply proved by the fact that as soon as the town opened its gates and submitted,

* But even in H. Tsang's time, "the non-Buddhists (at Lampā) had a score or two of temples and they were very numerous." cf. Watters I, 181.

all hostile operations were stopped. The building continued to exist thereafter until it was partly used as a prison in the III/IX century.

(b) The temper of the Buddhist population as well as the part played by them in the Arab conquest of Sind are best illustrated by the following examples :—

(i) The Buddhist governor of Nīrūn (Hyderabad) entered into direct secret negotiations with Hajjāj (the governor of the Eastern provinces at Basra) and surrendered the town, which he ruled on behalf of Dāhir, to Muḥammad B. al-Qāsim. This governor of Nīrūn, Bhandarkan by name, also accompanied Muḥammad B. al-Qāsim when the latter advanced for further conquest.

(ii) The Buddhist inhabitants of another town, Maoj (Bahraj ?) also warned their governor of their intention to surrender saying : ‘ We have come to know that >Amīr Hajjāj has, under the order of the Khalifa, instructed them to grant pardon to those who ask for it. So when an opportunity offers, and when we consider it expedient, we shall enter into a solemn treaty and binding covenant with them. The Arabs are said to be faithful to their word. Whatever they say they act up to and do not deviate from.’^a

(iii) In the beginning it was the Buddhists like Kaka of Budhiah who acted as advisers to the Arab commander. Later on when the conquest was well on its way to success and the advantages of it became manifest the Brahmans also came forward to claim their share of high offices on the basis of their predominance in the old order.

(c) In fairness to all, any judgment about tolerance or otherwise should be based on the policy of administration after the end of military operations and the establishment of a new order. In this connection the following documents are noteworthy :—

(i) While settling the terms of surrender with the inhabitants of Aror, Muḥammad B. al-Qāsim declared in unequivocal terms that the temples of the Buddhists were entitled to protection in the same way as the places of worship of the Christians and the Jews and the fire temples of the magians.

(ii) When the people of Brahmanabad prayed permission to rebuild their temples, Muḥammad B. al-Qāsim referred the matter to Hajjāj and the latter wrote back as follows :— “ With regard to the request of the chiefs of Brahmanabad about the building of the Budh temples, and tole-

a. *Chachnamah*, Translated by Mirza Kalich-beg Fredumbeg, Karachi, 1900, p. 93. Again, it was the Samani party (Buddhists) who would not fight on the side of the local ruler at Siwistan. Ibid, p. 94.

ration in religious matters, I do not see (when they have done homage to us by placing their heads in the yoke of submission, and have undertaken to pay the fixed tribute for the Khalifa and guaranteed its payment), what further rights we have over them beyond the usual tax. Because after they have become *dhimmis* (protected subjects) we have no right whatever to interfere with their lives or their property. Do, therefore, permit them to build the temples of those they worship. No one is prohibited from or punished for following his own religion, and let no one prevent them from doing so, so that they may live happy in their homes.’^b

(iii) Another manual of instructions from Hajjāj relating to revenue administration and the economic development of the newly conquered province, ran as follows :—

“ My distinct orders are that all those who wage war should be assassinated, and their sons and daughters imprisoned and retained as hostages. Spare those who submit. . . . Those in whose lands streams of fresh and limpid water flow let tributes and taxes be fixed on them. As for the merchants and artizans, let them have light burdens. Those who know the work of building houses and cultivating land, let them carry on their callings freely and diligently. Show kindness and leniency to them in revenue matters. Take only one-tenth on the property and land-produce of those who receive the honour of Islam ; while those who remain in their own religion should be required to pay to the officers the usual tax from the income of their handicraft or cultivation.’^c

(iv) And now when Muḥammad B. al-Qāsim was busy ordering the affairs of the province and “ the Brahmans saw the consideration shown by the Arab General to the headmen, they came to him with a petition (praying that a similar favour be shown to them), and all the great and chief men of the place testified to the fact that, in the last reign, they were much honoured and revered. Muḥammad Qāsim therefore paid them proper respect, and issued an order that they be shown the same reverence as before. They were thus in every way free from trouble and violence. Muḥammad Qāsim (also) gave every one of them a proper appointment. As he was quite sure now that no harm or mischief would result from them, he conferred on every one of them the same post which he had held in the reign of Rai Chach. He then called a conference of all the Brahmans in the town, and addressed them as follows: ‘ In the reign of Dāhir, you held responsible posts, and you must be knowing all the people of the city as well as of the country all around. You must inform which of them are noteworthy

b. Ibid., p. 168-9.

c. Ibid., p. 173-4.

and celebrated and deserve kindness and patronage at our hands ; so that we may show proper favour to them, and make grants to them. As I have come to entertain a good opinion of you, and have full trust in your faithfulness and sincerity, I confirm you in your posts. The management of all the affairs of state, and its administration, I leave in yourable hands, and this (right) I grant (also) to your children and descendants hereditarily, and you need fear no alteration or cancellation of the order thus issued."^d

Then the country people "enquired from him (Muhammad Qāsim) as to what amount they had to pay to Government, and what to the Brahmans whom the Arab commander had appointed to collect the revenue. Muhammad Qāsim then counselled his officers, telling them : 'You should behave honestly towards the king as well as towards the people. When you have to divide among sharers, divide justly and equally. Tax every person according to his means and circumstances. You should co-operate with one another, and never let disagreement creep among you, so that your country may not be devastated.' Then Muhammad Qāsim spoke words of comfort to every one of them separately, and told them all : 'Be of good cheer, and do not entertain any anxiety, or fear of (arbitrary) punishment on my part. I am not going to compel you to pass a bond or written document ; but be paying regularly, of your own accord, the tribute fixed on you. I shall try to show you favour and disregard your little failings. If any of you has any request to make, let him make it openly, that I may hear it and give a proper reply to it, and gratify the wishes of each.'"^e

Finally, how anxious Muhammad B. al-Qāsim was to leave the traditional order of things unmolested is exemplified in the following : "He (Muhammad Qāsim) called all the chiefs, headmen and Brahmans and told them they were thenceforth permitted to build the temples of their gods, to freely carry on commerce with the Mussalmans, and live happy and safe. (He also told them) to work for their own welfare, to give charity, to show kindness to the Brahmans and Fakirs, to follow their customs, to celebrate their holidays like their fathers and grandfathers, to continue their offerings to their Brahmans, as in ancient times, and to give three out of every hundred dirhems of revenue to them, and to pay the rest into the treasury to be accounted for by the officers and the deputy. It was also settled that the Brahmans were at liberty to go about begging at the doors of houses with a copper bowl, and collecting corn in it, and to utilise such corn in any way they liked."^f

d. Ibid., p. 165-6.

e. Ibid., p. 167.

f. Ibid., p. 169.

THE EARLY CONTACTS BETWEEN ISLAM AND BUDDHISM

This, in brief, was the policy thoughtfully laid down and pursued immediately after the conquest of Sind. Let us remind ourselves once again that until the advent of Mahmūd of Ghazna Muslim domination over India never extended beyond the borders of Sind. The fortunes of Buddhism in India outside Sind during the period, have, therefore, nothing to do with Islam. Competent scholars have not failed to note : "Before the Muhammadans fairly came upon the scene Buddhism as a popular faith had disappeared from India." (Ency. Brit. Vol. 12, p. 166).

An Impression of Buddhism

To conclude, certain impressions of Buddhism upon the Muslim mind have to be noted. It is true that Islam has a great antipathy to idol-worship. In pre-Islamic Arabia as well as in Pre-Buddhist India, idol-worship was not associated with the fostering of any sense of moral responsibility in man. Buddha's dissatisfaction with, and protest against, it was only anticipating Islam by a little more than a thousand years.* The absence of idols in Buddha's teachings is quite in conformity with his revulsion from everything Brahmanic such as the "superstitious" belief in the sanctity of the Ganges. (cf. Grousset p. 125-6) However, when Muslims came into contact with Buddhism (curiously enough, in the very land where the Greek Apollo was transformed into the figure of Buddha) the form of idol-worship was found to exist side by side with the moral teachings of Gautama. This was something quite unexpected for the Muslim Arabs. It must have naturally taken some time for the initial revulsion from idolatry to allow a knowledge of the paramount emphasis on good thoughts, good intentions, and righteous deeds that lay behind the blissful expressions of

* From the Islamic viewpoint, this is undoubtedly the most important aspect of Buddha's teachings. The present writer cannot help recalling the tremendous impression made on his mind when he, as a secondary school boy, visited Sanchi and was told that Buddha could only be represented in the carvings by mere symbols. Anyway, statues of Buddha have since been incorporated into Buddhism and accepted without any dissent. The recent controversy regarding the filming of Buddha's life provided an occasion for recalling the history of the introduction of the present-day practice, but there was no questioning of the practice as it is. That really cut the ground under the feet of the opponents of the filming proposal and they seemed to have lost the battle on the same score, though, for some reason or the other, the proposal had to be put into cold storage. By way of comparison, it may be pointed out that enthusiasts for the western methods of propaganda have not been unknown among Muslims, but they could not make any headway just because of Islam's total ban on any kind of human representation whatsoever. It may also be added that certain practices (though not involving a human figure) like grave-worship or reverence for relics are found on a large scale among the present-day Muslims, but they have never been accepted as orthodox by the community as a whole. That is why every now and then the Muslim world is rocked by such attempts at purification as the Wahhabi movement of the 18th century.

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Buddha's face in stone. But once the fact dawned upon the Muslims they could not withhold their appreciation of it. > Ibn al-Nadīm, referring to an old history of Khurāsān, records :—

“ These people (Buddhists) are the most generous of all the inhabitants of the earth and of all the other religionists. This is because their prophet, Būdāsaf (Bodhisattva), has taught them that the greatest sin, which should never be thought of nor committed, is the utterance of ‘ No. ’ Hence they act upon this advice ; they regard the uttering of ‘ No ’ as an act of Satan. And it is the very religion of them to banish Satan.”

“ To banish Satan (the source of all evil in Islam) ” is given as the essence of Buddhism albeit in Islamic terminology.

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