

**18. Dictated letter from Ven. W. Subhuti, High Priest of Waskaduwe Vihara, Kalutara, Ceylon, to W. C. Peppé in Birdpore, dated 17 June 1898**

*Has received Peppé's letter of 14<sup>th</sup>. Has heard that the Piprahwa relics and other articles are now 'in charge of Govt' and that Peppé has been allowed to keep some for his own disposal. Talks of 'false rumours' about the bone relics and therefore has a series of questions to which he seeks answers. List five questions about the relics. Asks about legends of the large size of the Buddha's relics. Major Deane has written to him about bone relics found by him in a stupa in Chitral which he sent to a museum. Deane has also sent him two boxes of ancient Buddhist sculptures found by him at the same time. He now waits anxiously to receive some bone relics from Peppé. Informs him that Prince Priest Jinawarawansa is now at Buddha-Gaya.*

Waskaduwa, Kalutara, Ceylon, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1898

Dear Sir,

I received your favourable letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> ultimo, and much pleased reading the same and am obliged to write this as I did not hear from you up to this, although you have mentioned in your letter that you will do so.

I hear that the relics & other articles you have discovered were taken in charge of Govt, but you have been allowed to have some of those for your disposal. I hear also some false rumours given out by some people who were in India regarding these relics, i. e. that there were only a few bone relics of Buddha and all the rest were bones of those Sakyas who were died at the battle of Widudhaba war, etc. I therefore am anxious to know some facts with you with regard to those relics and I beg that you will kindly order your Assistant to answer to favour me with to the following questions as I believe you have hardly leisure to spare your valuable time to do so, viz:-

1. Are the bone relics which were in the wooden decayed vessels big pieces or were they also of the same size and placed them as those that were in other shrines? (vessels)
2. Were these relics in all of the 5 or 6 vessels?
3. Is it possible to separate distinctly those relics that were in the vessels (if missed with those that were in others) which you find some inscriptions round the edge of it?
4. Were there bigger relics in the same vessel, than the size of half pieces of green peas, pieces of rice and mustard seeds?
5. Was there the same quantity of relics in each vessel? And were there any vessel only with gold flowers and other offerings without bones?

My object in questioning you in these subjects [is] to test whether the statements appearing in the books written in past time as to the above size of the Buddha's bone relics is, true or not by comparing with the size of those relics you have found out, and another reason is, that there are many kind of relics of similar size and said to be of Buddha asnd deposited in many Viharas (temples) in the countries where Buddhism exists, as it is hardly possible to have any reliance on them not knowing what they are.

Major Dean has written to me that he had found out some bone relics from an ancient stupa when he was in Chitral war and he sent them to a Museum. He has sent me akso at his own expenses, as a present two boxes containing some ancient sculptures of Buddhism and stone images of Buddha which were discovered by him during the same time and they were received by me today and are very valuable and useful to us.

I am now most anxiously waiting & aiming at my mind always towards that quarter with the expectation of receiving from you some of those bone relics of every size as you have kindly intimated me your desire of doing so.

If you require any books or any kind of seeds to be planted I shall always be ready and willing to supply you what I can.

Prince Priest Jinawarawansa is now at Buddha-Gaya.

I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely

W. Subhuti<sup>i</sup>