

A DETAILED LEGACY OF BUDDHISM IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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Abstract

Both the Nilamata Purana and Kalhana's Rajatarangini show the significance of Buddhism in classical Kashmiri culture. According to Buddhist history, Buddhism was introduced to Kashmir by a Varanasi monk named Majjhantika, a student of Ananda. During his administration of Srinagar in the 13th and 14th centuries, Mauryan ruler Ashoka introduced Buddhism to Kashmir. The Kushans, who ruled across Pakistan and Afghanistan in the first century, are supposed to have dominated this region. So far, there hasn't been much of a distinction in the history of Buddhism in Kashmir and the rest of the country. Before the arrival of the Aryans, the valley was inhabited by Naga, Pishacha, and Yakshas. Nagas, for example, are revered for their historical and cultural value. Both the proponent of Sankhya Darshana, Kapil, and the author of Patanjali are thought to be local Nagans. Two of the most famous Buddhist philosophers and intellectuals, Nagarjun and Naga Budhi, are also supposed to be Nagas. Following the entrance of the Aryans, these Kashmiri aborigines appear to have converted to the Vedic faith and eventually to Buddhism. The teachings of Buddhism have tremendously improved India's mentality, culture, religion, and civilization. The aim of the study is to explain the foundation and culture of Buddhism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: a Unity; Diversity; Strength; constitution; Caste and Steps etc.

1. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism played a significant role in the traditional culture of Kashmir, as evidenced by the Nilamata Purana and Kalhana's Rajatarangini. Although it was widespread in Kashmir long before Emperor Asoka's time, and enjoyed the patronage not only of Buddhist rulers but also of Hindu rulers, it is generally believed that Buddhism did not become the dominant religion in Kashmir until the time of Emperor Ashoka. However, this is not the case. It began in Kashmir and quickly expanded to the surrounding regions of Ladakh, Tibet, and China. The book known as the Rajatarangini, along with the writings of three Chinese travelers who travelled to Kashmir between the years 630 and 760 AD, both provides tales of the monarchs of Kashmir's support of Buddhism. According to many Buddhist texts, the introduction of Buddhism to Kashmir can be traced back to Majjhantika, a monk from Varanasi who was also a pupil of Ananda. According to the Ceylonese Chronicle, after the Third Buddhist Council came to a close, Ashoka dispatched missionaries to various kingdoms so that Buddhism may be disseminated throughout the world. Majjhantika was dispatched to Kashmir and Gandhara (modern day Afghanistan). The tale of Majjhantika can also be found recounted in a number of other Buddhist writings, including the Ashokavadana and the Avadanakalpalata, for example. The Buddhist literature known as the Divyavadana, on the other hand, claims that Emperor Ashoka summoned a number of monks from Kashmir to Patliputra (present day Patna, Bihar). On the other hand, Kalhana provides an account of the founding of several Viharas during the time of King Surendra, who was Ashoka's predecessor.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Buddhism has had a significant impact on India's mentality as well as the country's culture, religion, and overall level of civilization. As a result, the main objective of the research is to provide an explanation for and conduct an analysis of the Buddhist legacy and culture in Jammu and Kashmir.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current investigation is exhaustive and exhaustively looking backward. This suggests that the audience might view the research. The research is supported by both mandatory and optional sources of data. Additionally, some subjective research was done. The study took into account information from supplemental sources such books, websites, paper articles, and international journals and publications.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In what year did the first Buddhists arrive in Kashmir?

Theories and opinions about history are diverse among historians. Kashmir had many Buddha Viharas even before Ashoka, according to Kalhan's Rajatarangni. Within a few decades of Tathagata's death, Chinese sources claim that Buddhism had spread to Kashmir. Mogaliputra Tissa, the great Ashoka's Buddhist minister, despatched Majhantika, the famous Varanasi Buddhist authority, to spread Buddhism in Kashmir and Gandhar, according to most authorities. It is possible that Gandhar, according to some Greek historians and Jakatas, also comprised Kashmir. However, no Ashoka the Great's stone-druggers have yet been uncovered in Kashmir. According to Chinese Buddhist scholars, Madhyantik (Majhantik), a pupil of Anand, was the first person to spread the religion of Buddhism in Kashmir. According to legend, he is the one who first introduced the formation and cultivation of Kashmir saffron to the region.

Many schools of thought arose as a result of the Tathagata's Mahanirvana. All of these professors were Buddhists who believed that 'Moksha,' or liberation from suffering, was the ultimate goal of life. Buddhism's many schools of thought were shaped by differing interpretations of "Vinaya" and "Abhidharma," the foundational texts of the religion. Sarvastivada is said to be one of the oldest and most revered Buddhist teachings. Rahul Bhadra, a well-known Tibetan scholar, is credited as the founder of this ideology. However, it is commonly thought that Uggupta of Mathura is the originator of this notion. According to some researchers, this school of thought was founded by Maghantik in Kashmir. The most prominent northern Indian philosophy, Sarvastvad, was born at Mathura, yet it had a strong connection to Kashmir, even though it was founded in Mathura. The purest form of Sarvastivad's thought is supposed to have been decided in Kashmir by a group of notable Buddhist philosophers in order to preserve the original thinking of Sarvastivad. Only in Kashmir was a commentary on this philosophy known as "Vaibhashika" written in great detail and authenticity. "Sarvastivadi," the foundational scripture of Abhidharma, has six volumes, according to legend. Vasubandhu, the son of Katyayani, finished this huge project in Kashmir. It was supposedly translated into Chinese in 383 A.D., according to legend. Vasubandhu, according to Parmartha's account of Vasubandhu, recruited renowned Sanskrit poet Ashvaghosh from Sakat to help write Abhidharama for Vibasha (Ayodhya) A 12-year stay in Kashmir by Ashvaghosh culminated in the preparation of the literary forms of "Vibasha" in ten lakh cantos of verse. Abhidharma Mahavtbbhashashastra is the term given to this work. '

The famous Chinese traveller Huang Suang (7th Century A. D.) says that during the period of Kanishka there were five hundred Buddhist scholars, inclusive of Vasumitra who after detailed discussions on ' Pitakas ' following which ' Sutrapitaka ' ' Vinayapitaka' and ' Abhidharma Pitaka ' were written down, which are known as ' Upadeshashastra', ' Vinaya Vibhashashastra' and ' Abhidharma Vibhashashastra ' respectively.

It's not quite known how Buddhism developed in Kashmir after the Maurya Empire fell. However, it appears that Buddhism has progressed further here. The character 'Menandara' of the popular book, 'Milindapanha ', must be mentioned here. King Menendar (Minander) of Gandhar ruled from Siyalkot, the capital of the Gandhar Empire. During a conversation on Buddhism between Milind or Menender and Nagsen, it is reported that Milind adopted the Buddhist faith and became a "Arhat." In the second century B.C., a man named Milind lived in India.

In Kashmir, it was King Kanishka who established Buddhism on solid ground. Sinha or Sudershana 'the monarch of Kashmir, is mentioned in the text that precedes him. Kanishka is supposed to have only accepted Buddhism as a religion after meeting this ruler. Like Ashoka, Kanishka is a revered figure in Buddhist history. He is credited with organizing Kundal Vanvihara's final Buddhist council, the fourth and final one. Jullunder may be the name given to this location by some researchers. Most experts, on the other hand, believe that Kundal Vanvrhara is the modern-day 'Harwan' of Kashmir. At this council, the primary goal was to compile and finish a commentary on the basic Buddhist principles in conformity with the Sarvastivadi school of Buddhist philosophy. This council presided over by Vasumitra and featuring the celebrated Sanskrit poet Ashvaghosha as vice chairman, could not have convened anywhere other but Kashmir, the birthplace of Sarvastivadi philosophy. This is where Sarvastivadi wrote his three most important treatises. The Chinese version of the Maha Vibhasha Shastra, one of these texts, is still in existence today. King Kanishka gave Kashmir to the 'Sangha' once the council was finished. Many Viharas and Stupas were built here by Kanishka. Kanishkapur, currently known as Kanisapur, was founded by him and is located in the district of Baramulla.

'Hushaka' and 'Jushaka,' two Buddhist kings who succeeded 'Kanishka,' King Turushka in Kashmir. 'Hushakpura' and 'Jushakpura' were the names of two cities founded by these two men. Today, 'Ushkar' in Baramulla district and 'Jushakpura' in Zakura are two different names for the same place. Kushana kings in Kashmir were followed by Abhimaniyu according to Kalhana. Naga worship in Kashmir was claimed to have been all but eradicated as a result of Nagarjun's study and preaching. Chandadeva, a Brahmin, was the driving force behind the resurrection of the Naga cult at this time.

Raja 'Nara' led the first organized Buddhist crusade in Kashmir. He is reported to have terrorized and persecuted Buddhists to the point where Nagarjun, a great Buddhist scholar, had to flee Kashmir to the south because of it. The infamous terrorist monarch of Kashmir, Mihirkula (or Mihirula), persecuted Buddhists in this region in the sixth century A.D. He destroyed Buddhist temples, monasteries, and shrines, and slaughtered monks and nuns mercilessly. Even in the midst of such terrorism, Buddhism was still practiced in Kashmir. Huang Suang, the famed Chinese traveller, was in fact a state guest. Here, he immersed himself in Buddhist texts like the "Sutras," "Shastras," and other canonical works of literature. He was given twenty clerks by Raja Durlabhawardhana to copy religious literature for him. According to the foremost Buddhist scholar of the day, Huang Suang is one of the finest Buddhist academics in the lineage of the great Acharya Vasubandhu. Huang Suang is one of the greatest Buddhist scholars of all time.

The efforts of Jagadguru Sankaracharya nearly eradicated Buddhism from India as a whole, but in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., Buddhism was given formal protection by famous Kashmir King Lalitaditya Muktapada. In Kashmir, Lalitaditya served both Hindus and Buddhists. Afterwards, Buddhism began to decline in Kashmir due to its intrinsic flaws. Nishpalaka Vihara was the home of Raja Shankara Varmana's wife, Sugandha, according to Kalhana's account. Known as a Shaivite, Maharaj Kshemgupta (950-958 A.D.) destroyed the Jaindera Vihara and used its stones to construct a magnificent Shiva temple. Kashmiri Shaivism and Indian literary criticism scholar Acharya Abhinavagupta was one of the most influential Kashmiri Shaivist intellectuals of this age. In Kashmir, Queen Didha and her successors did little to promote Buddhism. The morals of Buddhist monasteries had already begun to deteriorate. In Kashmir during the rule of the Lohara kingdom, Buddhism was briefly revived. When King Harshvardhan arrived in Kashmir, the sun had already set. Harshvardhan is referred to as amalecha by Kalhana, who appears to have had a high regard for Buddhism. Throughout Kalhana's history, Kashmir has been ruled by Buddhists. Slowly but surely, Buddhism had succumbed to the influence of Kashmir Shakatmata. Kshemendra and Somadeva's literary works contain several references to this reality.

Following this bird's eye view of Kashmir's Buddhist development and deterioration, one might infer that Kashmir is one of the world's major centers of Buddhist study. Buddhism reached Ladakh and Tibet via Kashmir. The author of this article, Pt. Rahul Sanskritayana, recounts an incident that illustrates this point. He was a Buddhist, but Jnanprabha, the son of Tibetan King Shiyen Shung, disagreed with Tantrika Buddhism as practiced in Tibet. For ten years, he educated twenty-one young academics about Buddhism. After that, he sent them to study in Kashmir. Only Rattanbhadra Suprajnya was able to withstand Kashmir's harsh winters without succumbing to the harsh conditions. As one of the best interpreters and scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, Rattanbhadra is still regarded as an important figure. When he arrived in Kashmir, Acharya Vasubandhu, renowned as the second Buddha-author of *Abhidharma Kosha*, reached the height of his reputation. He is reported to have travelled to Kashmir to study Sarvastivada, one of the most popular Buddhist doctrines. His *Abhidharma Kosha*, written in 60 volumes in Chinese and originally from Peshawar, is still protected today. Vasubhadra, another well-known Buddhist scholar, is also mentioned. As a pseudo crazy man, he is claimed to have entered Kashmir and memorized Saravastivada's *Vibhasha Shastra* by heart and then returned to Ayodhya, where he taught his findings to Indian intellectuals.

Many Buddhist intellectuals were born in Kashmir. One of the eight most important Buddhist professors at Vikramshila, the famed Buddhist Vihara, was Kashmiri *Smrityakara Siddha*. Pt. Kumar Vijaya, a Kashmiri and student of the renowned Buddhist scholar *Bandhudutta*, was the person responsible for spreading the "Madhyamika," "Satyashidi," and "Nirvana" schools of Buddhism throughout China. Many Kashmiri academics, including Jayanta Bhatta, Vamana Bhatta, Damodaragupta, Kshirswami, Kshirswami, Bhatta Udbhatta, Vasugupta, Bhatta Kalata and Kayyata, among others, were either Buddhists or influenced by it.

Buddhism has had a profound impact on my life. Buddhism, despite being born in India, was unable to completely eradicate Hinduism from Indian life; rather, it became so entwined with Hinduism that it is nearly impossible to separate it from Hinduism. The Buddha was born, raised, and died as a Hindu, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan. In reality, 'Tathagata' was an embodiment of India's and the Aryan's finest values and ideologies. He was not born to conquer, but to be nurtured by his mother and father. Considering Buddha's role in modern Hinduism, it seems likely that he was placed in the pantheon of Hindu deities.

Even the Shaiva philosophy of Kashmir has been impacted by Buddhism. The Brahmins reacted angrily when Kanishka gave Kashmir to 'Sangha', according to legend. With the help of his official status and academic prowess Nagarjun was able to promote Buddhism throughout Kashmir. *Neelmata Purana's* numerous religious cults opposed him and the Shaivite Brahmins were beaten in debate. Shaivites and Buddhists engaged in a ferocious battle over this. As a result of this battle, Kashmiri Shaivism emerged victorious. When Kashmiri Shaivism was first introduced, it was a one-to-one transmission from teacher to student. During this time period, this ideology was first documented in writing. According to legend, a well-known Brahmin named 'Yogi Chandradev' was the one to pen the first Kashmiri Shaivism text (1st Century A.D.). Even more so, according to *Abhinavagupta* by K. C. Pandey, this is the only historical fact found in *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*. A commentary on *Vamagupta's* well-known treatise, the "*Shivasutra*," by *Vardharaja* supports this claim. Buddhist philosophy has had a profound impact on the three primary types of Trika philosophy: *Agam Shastra* (*Agama Shastra*), *Spanda Shastra* (*Spanda Shastra*), and *Pretivhijna Shastra* (*Pritivhijna*)

When it comes to this topic, we must cite *Sankaracharya* (8th Century AD). This place had a profound effect on him because of its Shaiva and Buddhist teachings, as well as its *Sangha* structure and idealistic *Matha'* system. Buddhism appears to have had an influence on *Shankara's* notion of *Maya* and the various dimensions of truth. Even though Kashmir is generally non-vegetarian, Buddhism is thought to be responsible for transforming them into vegetarians on holy days like "Ashtami," "Amavasya," "Ekadashi," and the "Khirbhawani Mela." Additional vegetarian

days are held by Muslims in this area on the Rishi Molsaheb and Batmalu Saheb days, respectively, in the Anantnag and Srinagar districts. However, it's possible that this is the result of "Vaishnavite's" impact, as the Buddhist world as a whole is now non-vegetarian. Pork poisoning was the cause of Buddha's demise. In truth, Buddha disapproved of the practice of murdering. Despite his opposition to the act of witnessing the killing, he never prohibited the consumption of flesh.

Kashmiri Hindus' religious freedoms were impacted by Buddhism. Buddhist 'Triratnas' are still celebrated in 'Yajnas' and 'Pujas' nowadays. In addition to the Kashmiri, there are many more, such as the "Buddhists," "Jineshwarys," "Jinmatas," and "Vajrahastas," among others. Buddhism has a longstanding history of handing scrolls to their Jitmana by Kashmiri on the first day of the New Year -'Navreh.

In Kashmir, Buddhism has had a significant impact on the local Muslim population. 'Chatiyas' and 'Stupas' were part of the Buddhist tradition. The Muslims, on the other hand, have continued the practice in their own Islamic way after they were lowered to the ground. Muslims in Kashmir, despite the fact that Islam forbids the practice of such cults, continue to practice Buddhism. Relics from Prophet Mohammed's sacred hair can be found at the Hazratbal Mosque, one of the world's most famous. In Kashmir, it appears that Muslim converts were primarily Buddhists. Buddhism also had an impact on Kashmiri literature and philosophy. In Kashmiri Sufi and sant poets, it is readily apparent. Bead-telling and other Sufi practises are greatly influenced by Buddhism and Indian ideas, according to Dr. S. C. Roy. Buddhism has also had an impact on Kashmiri folklore.

Kashmiri architecture is heavily influenced by Buddhism. There are three distinct types of Buddhist architecture in Kashmir: An excellent example of 3rd century B.C. architecture may be found in Harwan (Srinagar). Indo-Parthian style is the origin of this piece. Kushan monarch Hushka, who built the city of 'Hushkapura' in the first century AD, follows. Following the Gandhara style, Gupta-style architecture and sculpture can be found in the nearby town of Pandrethan, just outside of Srinagar. Mahayana (Buddha's mother) and her sisters are shown on a magnificent sculpture found there. Dejeharu, Kashmiri Hindu women's traditional ear adornment, is still worn by married Kashmiri Hindu women nowadays. Ear adornments of this particular kind are thought to have originated in Kashmiri Naga culture. This evidence suggests that Buddhism was influenced by the local culture.

As far back as the 9th century BC, Kashmir was a Buddhist-dominated region of India. That's why we still see traces of Buddhist influence in our culture today. The majority of the Viharas that Kalhana has described have not yet been found. This much is certain: they cover the whole Kashmir valley. It's possible to pinpoint the location of specific Viharas. These include 'Jalora Vihara' at Zalur Zainageer (Sopore in Baramulla Dist.) and 'Vitastatra in Anantnag district. Today's Budgam has a stupa' erected by King Ashoka (not the renowned King Ashoka of the Maurya dynasty), whereas Srinagar's Queen Shukdevi established her Vihara in Nadvana, Srinagar. One of the oldest parts of the ancient city of Srinagar, Nadvana, was renamed Narvora after the Vihara, which is no longer visible. While in Srinagar City, Huang Suang visited the "Jinder Vihara," a Buddhist temple he found with a massive Buddha idol within. This Vihara was where Huang Suang had stayed, but its exact location is still up for debate. Many other places in Kashmir serve as reminders of Buddhism's presence and effect on the region, including "Parihaspora," "Anderkut," "Ahen," "Khandhbhawan," "Rattani Pura, Harwan," and "Raithan," for example.

Influence of Buddhism in Kashmir

Prior to Kalhana, it appears that there was no distinction between "Hindus" and Buddhism in Kashmir. As a Buddhist, Kalhana utilized Buddhist terms and idioms in his speech. It was the sacred text of Nila Naga worshippers in Kashmir, where the practice of Naga worship was

prevalent. It is stated that Kashmir is a predominantly Buddhist nation. These quotations are from the Kashmiri Nilamatapurana (translated by Dr. Ved Kumari). It is a wonderful picture of the spirituality of ancient India.

709-710a. During the period of Pusya's conjunction with the moon in the Vaisaksha month of the twenty-eighth Kali Age, the god Visnu, the lord of the world, shall be born as Buddha, the world's preceptor.

710b-12 is the area to turn for advice concerning the worship of God by the brilliant half. In accordance with Sakya teachings, the Buddha's image should be immersed in holy water containing all therapeutic herbs, gems, and scents. The Viharas of the Sakyas should be whitewashed with care.

There should be paintings in multiple spots throughout the Caitya, the god's residence. The event's actors and dancers should be honored. You may provide food and books as a sign of respect for the Sakyas, if you so want. Until Magha's arrival, all of this must be completed. Three days of sacrifices are required for the twice-born. In the form of flowers, clothing, and other items, prayer and almsgiving for the destitute (should continue for three days).

According to the Rajatarangini, there was once an immense Buddha statue in Srinagar, which was subsequently destroyed by Sikander Butshikan. The preservation of a sizeable collection of superbly made Buddhist bronzes. During the 13th century, a Buddhist monk known as a bhikshu resided in Baramulla. Still venerated among Kashmiri Pundits is Triratna. The majority of Kashmir's Hinduism was eradicated by sultans such as Sikander Butshikan, while some Buddhism remained. After travelling His Majesty to Kashmir's lovely valley for the third occasion, Fazl states, "I saw a few elderly adherents, but none among the learned." There is evidence that the Kashmiri style significantly influenced Tibetan art between the 11th and 13th century. Even though Buddhism is no longer practiced in the Kashmir Valley, Buddhist artifacts' from Kashmir may be found in several museums throughout the globe.

5. CONCLUSION

Kashmir was Buddhist for almost a millennium. Buddhist influence remains evident today. The majority of Kalhana's Viharas remain undiscovered. However, they are dispersed throughout the Kashmir valley. Viharas were discovered. Kashmir is one of the most important Buddhist centers in the world. Buddhism influenced the culture of classical Kashmir, as evidenced by the Nilamata Purana and Rajatarangini. Before Emperor Ashoka, Buddhism was common in Kashmir, but it became prominent at that time. It was supported by Buddhist, Hindu, and early Muslim monarchs. Kashmir to Ladakh. Between 630 and 760 AD, the Rajatarangini and the accounts of three Chinese traveler's detail how Kashmir's kings fostered Buddhism. In contrast to Kashmir, Buddhism is thriving in Ladakh. After Sikander Butshikan Islamized Kashmir, Hinduism and Buddhism declined. When Fazl followed His Majesty to Kashmir for the third time, he encountered a few elderly Buddhist men but none of the educated. Buddhism in Kashmir is comparable to the rest of India. Before Aryans arrived, Nagas, Pishachas, and Yakshas rose and fell in the valley. The Naga are historically and culturally significant. Kapil, author of Sankhya Darshana and Parmarthasar-Patanjali, may have been a Naga. It is believed that both Nagarjun and Naga Budhi were Nagas. After the Aryan invasion, the indigenous people of Kashmir adopted Veda and eventually Buddhism. Buddhism influenced the psychology, culture, religion, and civilization of India. Buddhism ultimately collapsed as a result of the alleged persecution of Buddhists by Brahmans. Additionally, Brahmans withdrew imperial support to convert Buddhists. Then, Muslim invaders wiped out all Buddhist communities. Lastly, it is essential to understand that the conflict against Buddhism was multidimensional and lasted centuries.

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