



PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT OF BUDDHISM IN KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT:

Third Buddhist council held at Patliputra under Asoka, after the council and Asoka send Madhyantika in Kashmir to spread Buddhism in Kashmir. According to Kashmiri sources like Kalhana,s Rajtaragni that Viharas in Kashmir was before Asoka. Moreover he mentioned in his book Rajtaragni that Asoka invited BuddhistmissionariesfromKashmirtoparticipateinhisreligiouscouncil.ItisthusclearthatBuddhismin Kashmir was before reign of Ashoka.Kashmir was prominent centre of Buddhism learning, and it was meeting ground of Buddhists philosophy like Sarvastivadin School.

KEYWORDS: *Origin,Development,Philosophy,andSarvastivadin School.*

INTRODUCTION:

Once upon a time Kashmir the headquarter of Sarvastivadin school of philosophy. The origin of Sarvastivadin was at Mathura and then reached to Kasmir.The philosophy of Sarvastivadin was that Buddha and buddhistivas were ordinary people, and they will never free from birth and rebirth cycle. The Sarvastivadin believe on the theory of shunaya which means zero, in another words the world is neither stable nor fixed.

RESEARCH METHOLOGY:

This paper is based on primarysecondary as well as archaeology sources, so multidisciplinary approach is involved.

The valley of Kashmir from early times plays a tremendous role in the history of Buddhism. In crossing Kashmir, during the course of the north-west Indian journey accomplished by the Vinaya of the Mulasarvastivadin, would not Buddha himself declared. "The kingdom of Kashmir is where it will be easiest to lead the religious life. For contemplation and meditation, will that be the best place". The Sarvastivadin School was introduced in Kashmir by Madhyastika from the reign of Ashoka.ⁱ Kashmir played a very dominant role in the development of Buddhism. The valley of Kashmir became a great centre of learning and the headquarters of a particular school, the Mahayana and Sarvastivadin. The basic principle of the Sarvastivadin School is Sabbam Attithi or sarvam Asti. The whole reality is comprehended under a division into 75 kinds of existence or dharma's of which three alone are uncompounded, and are neither being produced nor dissolving.ⁱⁱ Asoka's third Buddhist council was called to smooth out the differences between the Theravadin and their main subject, the Sarvastivadin who had made Kashmir and Gandhara their home. It is however said that a minister of his misunderstanding his intentions beheaded some monks when they refused to carry out the emperor's order to observe a certain ceremony at which all the monks used to assemble and declare their acts of omission and commission. May be this was the reason why the Sarvastivadin living in Kashmir did not participate in the council in spite of repeated appeals to them to do so by the Emperor.ⁱⁱⁱ In the history of secession of schools, Sarvastivadins are found to be a branch of the orthodox group, the Theravadin; hence there are many points of agreement between the Theravada and sarvastivada doctrine. The latter had its sphere of activity in northern India extending from Kashmir to Mathura and was responsible for the propagation of Hinayana Buddhism in central Asia where it was carried to China.^{iv}

It is almost the same stellar story in the field of religion: Not only are the great Buddhist philosophers Nagarjuna (1st Century CE) from Central India and Vasugupta/Bandhu (4th century CE) suspected to have lived or preached in Kashmir at some point, but the fourth Buddhist council that recorded and reinterpreted the Buddhist canon is also believed to have organised by the Kushana king Kaniska in the Valley of Kashmir in the 3rd century CE. That is not all. It is Kashmiris such as Kumarajiva (4th century) and Arhat Vairocana who are believed to be responsible for disseminating early Buddhism, especially of the Sarvastivadin school and later the Madhyamika school to Kucha, Turfan, Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, and other centres in China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.^v Nalinaksha Dut mentions in his book Buddhist sects in India that Sarvastivadin was a Hinayana school with its pitaka in Sanskrit. The Sarvastivadins selected Mathura as the venue of their early activities



Plate 1

Image of Buddha, Pandrethan

Courtesy: S.P.S Museum, Srinagar

and it was from this place they fanned out to Gandhara and Kashmir and ultimately to central Asia and China.^{vi}

A.L Basham mentions in his book "The Wonder that was India" the Sarvastivadin was strong in the region of Mathura and Kashmir, according to a tradition preserved in China, that under the patronage of Kaniska a fourth Buddhist council was held at which the Sarvastivadin doctrine were codified in a summary the Mahavibhasa.^{vii} S.R Bhatt mentioned in his book Buddhist sects and philosophies Sunya is neither void nor negation of existence but absolute one. The Sarvastivadins believe in the theory of shunyata, the universe is not stable nor fixed. The Sarvastivadins are of the opinion that Buddha and Buddhists were ordinary people, they will never free from birth and rebirth cycle. They believe in present past and future which means Buddha or Buddhists will be among us, Buddha and Buddhists were and Buddhists will appear in future.^{viii} Kashmir was the centre of Sarvastivadin school of Buddhism. These doctrines entered Kabul, Qandhar, central Asia and Tibet. Kaniska patronised such activities and even made a gift of Kashmir to the sangha.^{ix} Apart from Buddhist philosophy it is Saiva mystic monism that is best associated with early Kashmir known as Trika. Or the philosophy of three, its early exponents were Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta. It is said to represent the most subtle integration of tantra with Siva worship and came to inform Saivism in parts of south India. But it is worth noting that Siva worship was evidently rooted in the valley well before these masters as reflected, for example in the Kusana coins and those of Meghavana and later Kashmiri kings and of course in the Saiva temples constructed.^x

Conclusion: During the conclusion we can say that Buddhism is the first religion of India which broke the isolation of India. Buddhism offers the unique example of a religion starting as a rigid moralism and ending as an elaborate and constant orthodoxy. When the third Buddhist council was held at Patliputra under Ashoka, who sent Mudyantika to spread Buddhism. But according to Kalhana Rajtarangini that Buddhist scholars were invited to participate in his council at Patliputra, so it is clear that Buddhism in Kashmir was before the Mauryans. Kashmir was once the headquarter of Sarvastivadin school of philosophy. The Sarvastivadin philosophy is that Buddha and Buddhists were ordinary people and they will never free from birth and rebirth cycle. They also believe in the theory of shunyata for example zero, that world is not complete or stable.

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- ^{viii}Buddhist sects and philosophies S.R Bhatt pp 37. ^{ix}Buddhists of Kashmir F.M Hassnain p.22.
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