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# INSIGHT

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## EARLY REFERENCES ABOUT EMERGENCE AND SPREAD OF BUDDHISM IN ANCIENT MAHARASHTRA.

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### Research Paper

#### Abstract

Religion and Philosophy increases the moral and ethical values in the mind of people. Lord Buddha's Teaching and dictums were came into exist for the welfare of people. In ancient time Maharashtra was a great cultural center of Buddhism and it has many Buddhist monasteries. In this modern world of globalization these monasteries becomes tourist centers and becomes earning source. The present study is conducted to pay attention towards early references about Emergence of Buddhism in Ancient Maharashtra. Also this paper explains the spread of Buddhism in Ancient Maharashtra. This paper will throw lights on Early Buddhist followers in ancient Maharashtra.

**Keywords:** Religion, ethical, dictums, monasteries, early, followers.

#### Introduction:

Within a few hundred years after its establishment in India, Buddhism had exerted an important influence on the arts in India. Many Buddhist sites containing Chaitya, Stupa, Vihara, idols of Buddha were created during the period of ancient Maharashtra, having a great effect on the dissemination of Buddhism India after the Common Era. The Buddhist architecture has its root deeply implanted in the Indian soil- the birthplace of the Buddha's teachings. The Buddhist architecture began with the development of various symbols representing aspects of the Buddha's life.

Due to the tolerance approach of Rulers in ancient Maharashtra towards religion, also their patronage and support; Buddhism get awesome popularity in mass. Buddhism reached in Maharashtra at the time of Lord Buddha. But due to lack of Historical / Literary sources many of peoples don't know the early history of Buddhism in ancient Maharashtra and it is

neglected. In this paper researcher will focus of early references about emergence and gradual spread of Buddhism in ancient Maharashtra.

### Buddha's Early Followers-

After preaching the first sermon in Sarnath, Buddha preached Buddhism to a trader Yash who was well-known and wealthy Merchant and his 54 Friends. Now Buddha has made total 60 followers. Buddha had inspired them to spread and Propagate Buddhism in different places. Buddha conveys them for the welfare of mass we must have to spread the Buddhism. For the systematic spread of Buddhism Buddha have created the idea of Sangha. Buddhist sangha is made up from monks of various caste i.e. Sariputra, Mogglan, Kaundinya and Katyayan were the bramhin Caste; Anand, Rahul, Anuraddha are Kshtriya; Sunit was a sweeper; Angulimal was robberer; Swati-Fisher man; Nand was Gavali and Upali was barber. Also Buddhist Sangha was made by all Caste of nuns; i.e. Purna was bastard(illegitimate daughter), Vimala was the girl of Prostitute, Amrapali was Ganika(Dancer). In Buddhist a worshiper/devotee-Bimbisar the king of Magadh, Kosal prince Prasenjeet, a wellknown surgeon Jeevak Kumarbhrtiya, Chief tone / general of Lichhavi, Princes Khema and Malika these were the Buddhist worshiper and who also given patronage to Buddhism.

### Buddhism reached in Maharashtra

Traders were attracted towards Buddhism From beginning. For Trade and Commerce purpose Merchants must had to wander different places. At that time Avanti to Dakshinapath was an important trade route. Due to systematic spread of trader and Buddhist monks Buddhism had reached in Maharashtra at the time of Buddha.

Early references about the early followers and spread of Buddhism in ancient Maharashtra.

#### 1) Bavari

Bavari was a Bramhin who lives in a hermitage (ashram) which is near big village on the bank of Godavari River. Once Another needy Bramhin came towards Babvri's Ashram and demanded him 500 Karsharpan(Silver Coin). At that time Bavari had told him that he don't have money. Then another Bramhin become angry and given him a curse within seven days your head will broke in seven parts. Due to this curse Bavari becomes upset he left food and water also he was not able to concentrate on Meditation. One well-wisher Bramhin told to Bavari only Gautam Buddha can tell you the absolute meaning of this curse and will give you a boon. Meanwhile Bavari become exited and then he sent his 16 followers who were well-known, satisfactory and scholars.

At first 16 followers came to "Pattithan" the capital of Alak, then Mahismati, Vidisha, Vanasa, Kosambi, Saket, Shravasti, Kavilvastu, Kushinara Pava, Bhognagar, Vaishali and at last Magadh. i.e. Rajgrah. They interacted with Buddha and asked them Bavari's Question, What is mean by Head? And breaking of head? Tathagatha answered them, knowledgelessness (Avidya) is head and shraddha (belief), smuti, Samadhi and pradnya were the Head-broker.

Meanwhile, 16 followers also asked their own doubts to the Tathagata and he answered them, up to their satisfaction. After the Dhammadiksha (initiation) 16 followers (disciples) of Bavari came to Paithan they Built a monastery (Vihar) and started to propagate Buddhism.

### 2) Arhat Purnn

We have the information about Arhat Purnn and Arhat Easiddina in Thergatha. Arhat Purnn was trader Sopara (Dist-Thane) Suppraka the name of Sopara in pali Literature. At that time Sopara was a well known port of international trade and commerce in west India. Tathagata had Preached (initiation) Buddhism to Punn the trader of supparika. After perceiving whole knowledge of dhamma he built Vihara (monastery) and started propagation of Buddhism.

### 3) Easidinna

Also we have the indormation about Easidinna who was the trader of Sonarpanth country. After getting the knowledge of dhamma and initiation from Buddha he also built Vihara's (monastery) and preached Buddhism to mass.

4) Also we get the reference in Papanchsuyani and Sarathyappakarini about Buddha went to sopara for invitation of Purnn. At the same time Buddha had given initiation to the two prominent kings Krishna and Gautam in Sopara. Due to king Krishna the name of mountain near Sopara becomes Kanheri.

5) According to Divyavadan, Bhav - A lay man of Sopara also initiated by Buddhism from Buddha. (Divyavadan-24)

6) According to Apadan, A trader Bahiya Daruchiriya the Arhat from Sopara also preached Buddhism.

7) Also we get a big stupa of 4<sup>th</sup> century in exploration of Pavani in Nagpur; which is massive and old compare to stupas of Sanchi and Bharut; According to stone inscriptions of Pavanar lay peoples had given donations for construction of the stupa.

8) We may also found the remarks/footprints of big stupas in Kolhapur, Kanheri, Sopara, Ter and Pavnar regions of Maharashtra.

### Second Buddhist council and Maharashtra

We can find the remarkable impression of Buddhist monks in Second Buddhist council of Vaishali which held near about 100 years after the death of Buddha. We get the information about second Buddhist council in chulvagga of Vinaypitaka.

According to this, "Kakandakputra Yasha" realized that Buddhist Monks/Bhikkus of Vajji have not behaving in order to 10 rules of vinaya; He proclaimed that of Vajji Bhikku are breaking the codes of Buddhism and behaving out of rule. So he ordered them the Punishment of 'Patisarniya Kamma', due to which vajji's Monks become temper also Yasha also Presented this issue of breaking code of Vajji Bhikku in front of Upasaka and Vajji Monks had boycotted by them.

After this Vajji Bhikkus went to Aparant, Avanti and Dakshinapath for creating sympathy among them about vajji. By accepting the invitation of Yash, 60 Arhat from Aparant, 88 Arhat from Avanti and Dakshinapath went to participate the second Buddhist council.

On above discussion it is prove that in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Buddhism has reached in Maharashtra and also got the popularity among the mass.

### Third Buddhist Council and Maharashtra

Emperor Asoka had conveyed the third Buddhist council in 250 B.C. i.e. after the coronation, to achieve following two main objectives

- i. For the systematic spread of Buddhism.
- ii. How Buddha's teaching will remain Holy as they are.

Mogaliputta Tissa was the chair person of this council; Ashoka had sent Buddhist cleargies (Monks and Nuns) in the different parts of India and World to Propagate Buddhism. Also he sent 'Maharakhit Sthavira' to propagate and spread Buddhism in Maharashtra.

According to Asoka's stone inscription of Devtek in Modern Chandrapur district and Sopara in Modern Thane District; Ashoka incurred that the Rastik and Petnic and Bhoj have more morality, righteous and virtuous.

From above description on sculpture we may say that Maharashtra was the Part of Asoka's empire.

### Conclusion

I would like to spend a few moments by way of conclusion to reflect upon what we have done over the past and relate it to what we can do now and in the future. Most of this knowledge belonging to different areas of intellectual activity such as religion, philosophy,

systems of science, arts and literature is preserved in the form of manuscripts, sculpture, stone inscriptions, cave monuments etc.

Maharashtra has the largest collection of Buddhist Monuments in the India. The rich Monuments wealth of Maharashtra today faces a threat of survival. However, Maharashtra has possibly lost a vast amount of this wealth. Many of scholars and lay peoples were unaware about the early references about Buddhism in Ancient Maharashtra. This is the small attempt to aware the mass about the early references of emergence and spread of Buddhism in Ancient Maharashtra.

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