

## **Description of Megalithic Culture in Kashmir: Some Observation**

**\*Dr. Tirtharaj Bhoi**

### **Introduction:**

This paper takes up a study of the megalithic practices in Kashmir region. Archaeology in recent times has become a generic term that appears in different fields of enquiry ranging from the social sciences to humanities to physical sciences like geomorphology. The first archaeological research on Neolithic-megalithic has been taken up in 1935 by H. de Terra and Paterson in this region. In this paper, the author analyzes the observation of two megalithic sites from Kashmir. The observation from Kashmir is based on the report from ASI and field observation by the author. The term “Megalith” was originally introduced by antiquarians to describe a fairly easily definable class of monuments in Europe, consisting of huge undressed stone and termed as Celtic dolmens, cromlechs and Menhiris. Indian megaliths’ burials and monuments generally belong to the Iron Age and are largely sepulchral in character. However, the sepulchral aspect of this tradition was not a new feature of the Iron Age. One can find the burial practices in Mesolithic and Neolithic period as well. The term “megalith” derived from the Greek words “meghas” meaning “large” and “lithos” meaning “stone”.<sup>1</sup> In the earlier stages of research, the term ‘megalith’ was used to refer to large stone monuments. However, subsequently, in India, the term was applied to all the burial and habitation sites yielding the pottery with black-and-red ware surface in southern India, irrespective of their association with megalith in the early Iron Age context. Though the incompatibility of the term “megalith” has been discussed by many scholars like Childe,<sup>2</sup> Deo,<sup>3</sup> Ramanna,<sup>4</sup> Krishna Sastry,<sup>5</sup> Gururaja Rao,<sup>6</sup> Kantha,<sup>7</sup> Rao,<sup>8</sup> Sundara<sup>9</sup>

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**\* Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Jammu, Jammu, J&K**

it has been widely used and accepted by a large section of archaeologists and has become a well established term.

### **Adopted Methods:**

Standard Archaeological tools and techniques have been applied for collection of empirical data. The case study method and interview techniques using detailed questionnaire schedules were adopted to understand the people's perception on megalithic monuments in this region. Since this region is important for heritage tourism.

### **Stages of Transition:**

Based on the method of disposing of the dead, it could be said that there are three stages of transition; burying the dead individually inside the pits with full articulation, exposure of the dead and collection of skeletal remains, cremation of the dead and collection of important bones for interring in family vaults. Very less attention has been given to research and investigation about the megalithic culture in Kashmir. In Kashmir smaller number of megalithic site has been discovered so far. The important sites are Burzoham, Gufkral, Begagund, Hariparigom, Pampur, Brah, Sombur and Semu. Out of above mentioned sites, Burzoham and Gufkral are excavated so far. The excavation reports show the availability of early man in the Kashmir valley.

### **Burzoham:**

The site<sup>10</sup> is located in the direction of (latitude 34° 10' N, longitude 74° 54'E). The megalithic period of this site is represented as the continuation of Neolithic period without any stratigraphical gap. The found Menhiris in the site suggested that the burials are secondary and commemorative in nature. However, an adult human male skeleton was found below one of the menhir. The structures of this period were generally built of mud and rubble. Some platform sorts of structures made with rubble masonry were also found. The artifacts found in the megalithic site are similar to the Neolithic artifacts. The Neolithic people maintained their tradition and culture as a continuing process up to historical period. The two cultures got assimilated in this site. The artifacts found in this site are wheel made pottery and burnished wares, copper arrow head, stone-axes, adzes, spearhead and bones tools.

### **Gufkral:**

The site<sup>11</sup> is located in the direction of (latitude 35° 54' N, longitude 75° 60'E). Both the habitations and burials are available in this site. Since the site is disturbed, not a single menhir is in proper standing position and huge quantities of broken pebbles are littered all over the site. The outer appearance of the areas shows that

the Menhiris did not have very deep foundation pits. They erected huge memorials in honors of their departed souls. The people have the idea about the use of iron, cultivation of rice and millet. The habitation deposit contains 10 cm. thick floors, almost running the site. People of this period were living in huts made of wattle and daub whose roofs supported by wooden poles. The floors were made by *karewa* silts and then plaster with lime. The artifacts found in this site are four ring stones, three cylindrical pestles on sandstone, one pounder, one small ball, one broken sharpener and one large harpoon. Thirty animals bone sharpener tools were recovered from the site. The other objects recovered from this site are cowries shell, copper object include a point, a bangle, beads and wooden carnelian. Three long iron needles were also found.

**Pottery:**

The various potteries are hand made burnished ware, gritty red ware and wheel made dull red ware, long neck jars, bowls and basins.

**Fauna and Flora:**

The people at Gufkral herded cattle, sheep, goat and pig. They also practiced poultry. As compared to cattle they had more sheep and goat wealth. This was natural as the latter animals provided both food and wool for winter clothing though single cattle will provide many times the amount of meat produced from the slaughter of a sheep or goat. Due to plentiful of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food available with them in and around their settlement itself, there was not much need for hazardous task of hunting wild animals, as such occasionally only ibex and like were hunted or captured, more so for the sake of horns for making agricultural and other implements. Apart from the grains of wheat, six row barley and naked variety, lentil, pea, clover, apricot, rice and millet grains were also recovered from the last levels of the Neolithic period-IC, it is certain that rice was introduced to the valley by the Megalithic people. Rice dominates numerically whereas barley and wheat occupy the second and third positions respectively.

**Chronology:**

On the basis of 14C dates for iron from Gufkral ranging from 1550 to 1300 B.C. and 1850-1550 B.C. from the Megalithic period indicate possible diffusion from Iran-Afghanistan area to Kashmir valley most probably by north-eastern route passing through Baramulla, Dwi-ekam-pura etc. which are also prominent Megalithic sites.

(Table- 1) List of Megalithic Sites from Kashmir

Sites from Kashmir	Cultural Assemblages
Burzahom (Excavated)	Menhirs
Gufkral (Excavated)	Menhirs
Begagund	Menhirs
Hariparigom	Menhirs
Pampur	Menhirs
Brah	Menhirs
Sombur	Menhirs
Dwi-ekam-pura	Menhirs
Semu	Menhirs

**Location:**

The location of the megaliths of this region could be based on physical condition. The megaliths are concentrated on high rock-bench areas, where the large quantity of iron ore and traces of gold is available. The burials are noticed over rocky high land near the water sources. In this region, they lived near by burial, where the bounties of stone were available. One can find both habitation and burial sites within a small distance. The majority of megalithic site of this region are only burial in nature.

**Economy:**

The megalithic people of this region were partly agriculturist and partly hunter as shown by the excavated evidence of iron tools and implements. Most of the settlements are noticed to be close to water sources and in hilly areas. All the above evidences show that, they were primarily agrarian. Pottery was another profession they adopted. The people were expert in different profession to fulfill the demand of the whole community. They indulged in community hunting of different animals and birds as shown by the implement of offence found, like arrow-head, spearhead etc. They also had knowledge in iron ore smelting.

**Conclusion:**

The Kashmir megalithic monuments are commemorative in nature and one can not locate the primary burials. Kashmir site is Neolithic-megalithic-historical continuation. In the sites, the monuments are found in groups and not associated with skeletal remains. In Kashmir, the monuments were erected towards the end of the Neolithic period. And no direct connections can be seen with the other part of the India. They may have some contact with other parts of India but do not follow uniform sequence of culture. A new group of people arrived in Kashmir and started living with the Neolithic settler. This is an evidence of earliest introduction of iron

and rice in Kashmir. Tradition of megalithic culture has not died because of the continuing tribal social customs and obligation and beliefs. In Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and North-east region, it still continues to be a living culture. Whatever we do with megaliths in the present, e.g. study them, excavate them, restore them, erect an information board and a counter next to them, is a contribution of contemporary history of culture to the monuments' present and future lives. These physical features have considerable influence on its history.

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## Minting Technology of Kuninda Coins

**\*Dr. Yasvir Singh**

A coin is a piece of metal of a prescribed weight embellished with designs and or legend and produced under the direction of an authority (private or public) for its use as a medium of exchange.<sup>1</sup> Production of coins obviously involves procurement of the metal (s), preparation of the blanks, and manufacturing of the apparatus for minting and the actual process of minting. Archaeological sources other than coins, literature and the Coins themselves gave us information regarding the technique of minting in ancient India. We got coins made with silver, copper, gold, lead, billion, potion, bronze and brass from different regions of our country. In the present paper an attempt has been made to focus the light on technology of minting of Kuninda coins.

### **Minting Techniques:-**

Before dealing with the minting techniques of Kuninda coins, we would like first to discuss the various techniques prevailing in ancient India. Broadly speaking four techniques of minting coins were prevailing in ancient India. These are: (i) Archaic die striking including so called punch marked coins (ii) Casting (iii) Repouse and (iv) Die-strucking.<sup>2</sup> The archaic issues or the earliest known Indian coins termed as punch-marked<sup>3</sup> have enigmatic symbols but no writing or legends. These were manufactured by taking a prescribed amount of metal and alloying material by melting them in a crucible and then molten was left for cooling up to it's become a lump or was casted in to sheets of required thickness. After that strips were cut out in pieces of equal weight having square, squarish, rectangular, oblong, round and nearly round shapes. These pieces known as ingots were probably slightly heated and then impressed with devices from different die punches on one or both of their two sides. All these verities of specie were struck with dies. So all of them can be broadly called die struck coins, however, they lack the more sophisticated technique and appearance of regular die struck pieces.

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**\*Associate Prof. in History, J.V.M.G.R.R.College, Charkhi Dadri, Haryana**

The casting technique of coin manufacturing involves preparation of mould (s), meting of metal and casting of later in the mould (s). In this process two negatively designed moulds were somehow joined together and molten metal was poured in to the moulds through a common hole or crater and finely when the metal was thus poured into the moulds took the design incised in them and solidified, the two moulds were taken apart and then the coin cast in them were taken out.<sup>4</sup> The two moulds (one and the other with that of reverse device) so necessary for casting coins were apparently made of terracotta. Each of them was probably prepared by impressing on it a lump of heat resisting plastic play, specially prepared according to the shape (round, rectangular, square, etc) and size of the intended coin. The mould has intended negative impression. The mould with raised rim around the coin-socket was than backed<sup>5</sup>, this simple casting technique was much improved at later time and instead of casting a single coin a number of coins was casted by arranging in an indigenous manner a number of moulding dies one over the above.<sup>6</sup>

The process of transferring impression from the matrix to a piece of metal is popularly known as 'repose' technique. In this method a larger number of coins can produce by one matrix. The matrix also left good impression on coins. This technique device is a laborious and time consuming process. Through this method impressions of two district devices on two sides cannot be made. This method (repose) of production was least popular among moneyers in ancient India.

The die-striking technique had two distinct stages of evolution.<sup>7</sup> In the first stage only one side of the coin blank was impressed with devices by a single die, while on the second stage devices were impressed on both sides of the coin blank by two separate dies. First, the required amount of the basic material was melt down. The molten metal could have been mixed with prescribed quantities of alloying material. Then the required amount of the molten metal was probably poured in to a circular shaped mould of regulated size. The blanks produced from the moulds were placed on a hard surface were impressed with a device (formed by either a group of symbols or a board design) with the help of the die-punch, which is but a cylindrical bar having at one end, the device intaglio coins produced in the second stage involved a rather different process and needed an anvil die in addition to the die-punch. The anvil die is an intaglio cut in an anvil and it also bears a group of symbols or a broad device. Now preparing a coin with devices on both sides, the coin blank is first heated to a semi-molten state and placed over the anvil die and then the die punch is put on the blank and heavily struck by a hammer, so that the blank would have on its underside the impression of anvil die and on its upper side that of punch die. Coins of second stage are called 'double-die' one and this technique is known as hammer and anvil process. The dies were made of hard material which was naturally some metal like brass and bronze. It is possible that iron which can be subsequently be hardened was used for preparing dies.<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to add that the technique of casting coins was evolved and used before the invention of die striking process<sup>9</sup>. So it can be fairly said that when

the coins of a particular locality or tribe include both cast and die striking specimens, the former are generally earlier in date than the later.

From the above discussion it is clear that in the ancient India generally punch marking, die-striking and casting techniques were prevalent for manufacturing coins. From the study of tribal coins it appears that punch marking process was not adopted by any of them and it is also fairly certain that no ancient India tribe except *Yaudheyas* produced coins by casting them in to moulds.<sup>10</sup> In almost all cases the tribal states of ancient India produced their coins by die-striking process, which generally underwent a gradual but natural evolution. After having a look of various techniques of manufacturing coins in ancient India now we will discuss the technique of Kuninda coinage.

The Kuninda coinage is represented by both silver and copper pieces, all of round shape. It falls in to two or three district categories belonging to two or three district periods. From the various hoards<sup>11</sup> of Kuninda coins found from various parts of Northern India it is evident that most of them were manufactured by die-striking technique. It is interesting to add that Smith<sup>12</sup> and Devender Handa<sup>13</sup> refer about the casting technique adopted by the Kuninda's for manufacturing coins at *Chakkar* and *Sanghol*. Excavations at *Sanghol* in Punjab have yielded about forty Kuninda clay moulds besides a hearth in a room in the fortified palace area which was supposed to be a mint.<sup>14</sup> This statement shows that the casting technique was also known to *Kunindas*. In this regard it can be presumed that *Kunindas* may learn this technique from *Yaudheyas*, their contemporaries who used casting technique for issuing their coins. Hence, it can be fairly said that *Kunindas* issued their coins by casting as well as die-striking technique.

#### **A Die-striking Technique:-**

*Amoghabhuti* type silver and copper coins of *Kunindas* are of neat fabric, were produced by a sophisticated process of striking. Both the obverse and reverse designs were carefully and then artistically cut to the anvil die and the die-punch respectively. The anvil die bearing the obverse device in the negative had itself a slightly sunken surface, which fact resulted not only in the concavity on the obverse side of the coins but also made the reverse side a convex. The die-punch was big enough to cover the coin.<sup>15</sup> The minting technique of these purely indigenous types of coins betrays foreign influence.

*Amoghabhuti* type copper coins were evidently manufactured as carefully as the latter. These copper coins bear on the reverse a pellet border in place of Kharosthi legend that occurs on the silver pieces. This fact perhaps indicates non-Indian influence. *Amoghabhuti* type copper coins of class 2 are of course fabric, even though their mode of manufacture is the same as the coins of class 1. Evidently, the die-cutters were not so efficient, and their workmanship was somewhat crude.<sup>16</sup> The coins of category II bearing the name of God *Chhatresvara (Siva)* are of crude fabric and were evidently produced in the same striking process.



A new technique of manufacturing the coins of *Kunindas* came in to light from the Pandoha hoard.<sup>17</sup> Some coins of this hoard still preserve the straight edges of the strip of the metal sheet from which the blanks were cut. In this technique the planchets were cut from sheets and rounded by clipping the corners. They were then heated and struck.<sup>18</sup> This technique of preparing the blanks was popularly adopted for the punch marked coins. So, the coins of Pandoha hoard seem to have been a legacy of the technique of manufacture of punch-marked coins.

### B. Casting Technique:-

Some times in 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> century B.C, a new technique of manufacturing coins was introduced in India. It was the technique of casting coins by moulds.<sup>19</sup> Instead of punching several symbols by separate dies, dies were put together and then form that model moulds were made in to which molten metal was poured to cast the coins. It was a new device which brought about revolutionary changes in the old age technique of preparing dies and it also saved a lot of time and labour. Moreover, it gives uniform look to the coins made from a particular mould.

However, it is fairly certain that *Yaudheyas* were the first in India who produced coins by casting them in moulds. But, as we earlier referred that Chakkar and Pandhola hoards reveals casting technique adopted by *Kunindas* also. Further, Devender Handa refers that broken pieces of beautiful prepared clay moulds for casting Kuninda copper coins of *Amoghabhuti* type have been found from the stratified strata of the excavation of the place area of Sanghol.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, in one of the rooms were stored 40 terracotta moulds of Kuninda coins and nearby was found a circular furnace built on a brick platform suggesting its use for minting. These clay moulds recovered from the fortified palace area clearly indicate the existence here of an official Kuninda mint during the first century B.C. It can be fairly said that only on the basis of such a small quantity of coin moulds recovered from Sanghal the it is very different to examine the degree of skill and intelligence shown by Kuninda in casting the coins.

It is however, interesting to add that the highly complex technique involved in casting the coins by moulds has been elaborately described by Birbal Sahani in connection with the *Yaudheys* coins recovered from Khokharakot (Rohtak). Since the *Kunindas* were the contemporaries of *Yaudheyas* and at a number of sights both of the *Kunindas* and *Yaudheyas* coins were recovered hence, we have to presume that the *Kunindas* may have employed the technique of casting coins as employed by *Yaudheyas* at Khokharakot (Rohtak), Sunet etc. We can inter from this also that both the *Yaudheyas* and the *Kunindas* might have been employing more or less the same technique.

Lastly, it can be conclude that *Kunindas* adopted the die-striking as well as casting techniques for manufacturing their coins. However, the further discoveries of cast coins or coin mould can improve our knowledge regarding the casting procedure adopted by *Kunindas*. So, it is fairly said that they prefer die-striking technique which was influenced by foreign elements.

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## **Nâga Worship µ A Non-purânic Religious System Of Early Kashmir**

**\*Dr. Hina S. Abrol**

Among the non-Puranic religious systems that prevailed in early Kashmir, Naga worship was the earliest and the most prominent of them. Several literary and archaeological evidences belonging to early and early medieval Kashmir, which will be cited subsequently, point to the fact that worship of the nâga deities was observed by the people of the valley in the said period.

### **Who were the Nagas?**

As per the testimony furnished by the *Nîlamata Purâna*, a Sanskrit text hailing from Kashmir and belonging to the sixth-seventh centuries A.D., Nâga worship was the earliest known religion in Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> But the question which arises is, as to who were the Nâgas? The opinion of Ved Ghai that the Nâgas were aboriginals inhabiting Kashmir and other parts of North India before the advent of the Vedic Âryans and that they were called Nâgas after the serpent deities they worshipped, seems justified.<sup>2</sup> A detailed perusal of the **Nîlamata** points out that the God Visnu Himself clearly stated that the valley of Kashmir came to be called Kashmir after the name of its builder, Prajâpati Kaúyapa.<sup>3</sup> Kaúyapa was the father of the Nâga King Nîla. The mentioned sloka clearly implies that the Nâgas were indeed the earliest and the original inhabitants of the valley. Further, God Vishnu's statement that if men wished to live happily in the "territory of the Nâga", they will have to worship the latter with the prescribed ceremonies, also points to the elevated position of the original inhabitants of Kashmir, i.e. the Nâgas.<sup>4</sup>

The Nâga chief Nîla exhibits several characteristics in the **Nîlamata Purâna**, which indicate his human nature. Firstly, the residence of Nîla is stated to be under the mountain Dhanada, where he sits on a couch.<sup>5</sup> His complexion is dark, he

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**\*Sr. Asstt. Prof. Of History, Directorate Of Distance Education, University Of Jammu, Jammu.(JSK)**

wears a single shining garment and ornaments like the ear-rings and the diadem.<sup>6</sup> Infact apart from the mention of hoods there is no indication whatsoever of the serpent-like nature of Nîla in the **Nîlamata Purâna**.

According to the evidence furnished by Kalhana in his **Râjataranginî**, the popular opinion prevalent in Kashmir during the early medieval period was that the Nâgas were residents of springs, lakes, pools and ponds of Kashmir. Nîla was the lord of all Nâgas and he resided in the Nîlakunda.<sup>7</sup> Nâgas like the Úankha and Padma protected the valley from calamities.<sup>8</sup> The legend mentioned by Kalhana concerning the Nâga Suúravas, his daughters Iravatî and Chandralekhâ and the Brahman youth Viúâkha conveys that the Nâgas were residents of ponds, were mâyâvî, i.e. they could assume human form as and when they wished, were benevolent to those with good intentions and malevolent, if dishonoured and disrespected. They had immense supernatural power and had the capability to bring about the worst kind of destruction.<sup>9</sup> Another incident mentioned by Kalhana concerning a 'human faced snake, Mahâpadma by name, who resided in the vast Mahâpadma lake, also suggests that Nâgas were residents of lakes.<sup>10</sup> Kalhana further describes Nâga Pindaraka as resident of a pool. This Nâga also had the power to assume the form he liked.<sup>11</sup>

We know that the **Nîlamata Purâna** was the basis of Kalhana's information as far as the Nâga cult is concerned. But while the study of the Nîlamata suggests that the Nâgas were a tribe of people, the perusal of Kalhana's opinion suggests otherwise. The incidents concerning Nâgas Suúravas, Mahâpadma and Pindaraka somehow betray a legendary character. How else does one explain the appearance of a human being with his hair tufts dripping with water?<sup>12</sup> Same is the case with the 'human faced snake Mahâpadma' and the Nâga Pindârka 'who rose from his lake in the form of a jackal to punish the Darad King Acalmangala.<sup>13</sup> Here, it is pertinent to mention that it is an agreed point that the first three books of the **Râjataranginî** are legendary in nature and not historically authentic. But it is a mute point as to why an enlightened historian like Kalhana, who was well versed in the craft of writing history chose to resort to legend in his fourth and seventh book?

The detailed perusal of the **Nîlamata**, the **Râjataranginî** of Kalhana and the opinion of Ved Kumari Ghai enables us to arrive at a reasonable explanation as regards the identity of the Nâgas. It appears to us that the Nâgas (Serpents) were residents of the water bodies existing in Kashmir. They were having immense supernatural powers and were benevolent as well as malevolent to the people with good and evil intentions respectively. They were, most importantly, the tutelary deities of the people who lived in Kashmir before the arrival of the Âryans.<sup>14</sup> These people came to acquire the name of their tutelary deity, i.e. the Nâgas, whom they held in great esteem and reverence.

The above mentioned theory derives strength from the archaeological data available to us. Shali suggests that the Nâgas were a tribe of people, who were civilized as compared to the barbaric stock of the Piúâcas.<sup>15</sup> They had the required

knowledge of the structures, i.e. houses, baths and reservoirs made by the residents of the Indus Valley.<sup>16</sup> It is evident that the importance attached to bath by the Indus Valley people had left its impact on them, for we notice that their residences are often near springs and lakes in Kashmir.<sup>17</sup> The opinion of Percy Brown also lends strength to our theory. Brown is of the view that the Nâgas may have mediated between the Piúâcas and the Indo-Aryan settlers.<sup>18</sup>

**Antiquity of Nâga worship in Kashmir**-Our attempt to trace the antiquity of the Nâgas in Kashmir makes us go through the verses of the **Nîlamata**. According to this Purâna, the Nâgas were the progeny of Sage Kaúyapa and Kadru, the daughter of Daksa. Garuda and Aruna were the sons of Vinatâ, another wife of Kaúyapa.<sup>19</sup> The Nâgas and Garuda were hostile to each other. Garuda obtained a boom from Indra and began to eat up the Nâgas. Under the circumstances, the Nâgas rushed to God Visnu and sought his help. Thereafter, on the instructions of Visnu Himself, the Nâgas, headed by Vasuki migrated to the holy lake in the Satideúa.<sup>20</sup> The prayers of Kaœyapa to God Visnu bore fruit and the country called Kashmir was brought into existence.<sup>21</sup> It was decided that the Nâgas who were the permanent inhabitants of Kashmir would live with the Piúâcas' for six months and with men for the remaining period. God Visnu makes it amply clear that Kashmir is the original home of the Nâgas.<sup>22</sup> And the men who come there to live will have to worship the Nâgas in the prescribed manner. The rituals to be observed by them were offering of flowers, burning of incenses, offering eatables and performing dramatics. The people who follow the customs religiously would be blessed with prosperity.<sup>23</sup> The important position of the Nâga cult in Kashmir is reflected again in the episode related to the Brâhmana Chandradeva by the Nâga King Nîla. Accordingly, we are told that an old Brahman Chandradeva succeeded in pleasing the Nâga Nîla through his prayers. The pleased Nâga told Chandradeva to ask for a boon. Chandradeva then said that he wished that the human beings could have a permanent residence in Kashmir. Nîla granted him the boon but stressed that the people desirous of living permanently in Kashmir must follow those instructions which were conveyed to him by God Keœava himself.<sup>24</sup> These instructions are related at great length in the **Nîlamata Purâna**. They include the worship of God Keœava with the aid of elaborate rituals along with the worship of other gods, the Brahmins, fire, the worship of Nâga Nîla and also of the local Nâga.<sup>25</sup>

The **Nîlamata Purâna** mentions the names of as many as six hundred Nâga Chiefs, including the guardians of directions in Kashmir.<sup>26</sup> It is further given that as the number of their family members are numerous, it is difficult to enumerate them all.<sup>27</sup>

It is explicit from the above mentioned account that a very large number of Nâgas lived in Kashmir and received worship from the people of the valley. The continued prevalence of the Nâga cult in the early centuries of the Christian era is known to us through the memoirs of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang. Hiuen Tsiang visited Kashmir in 631 A.D.<sup>28</sup> In his narrative, the pilgrim informs us that Kashmir was formerly a Nâga's lake.<sup>29</sup> Thereafter, he elaborates how the arhat

Majjhantika, the disciple of Ānanda compelled the dragon who lived in a lake to make place for him. The arhat who possessed supernatural powers influenced the dragon completely. The latter, then accepted his supremacy willingly. After this episode, Majjhantika settled five hundred arhats in the valley of Kashmir and also built five hundred monasteries by using his miraculous powers.<sup>30</sup>

**Conclusion**-An in-depth perusal of several literary evidences from early and early medieval Kashmir enables us to arrive at the following conclusions μ

The Nāgas (serpents<sup>1/2</sup>) were the residents of the water bodies existing in Kashmir. They possessed tremendous supernatural powers. They were the tutelary deities of a tribe of people who lived in early Kashmir and came to be known as the Nāgas. The Nāga cult or Nāga worship had strong roots there and it continued to prevail in the vale for a considerable length of time. The testimony of Hiuen Tsiang and Kalhana provide strength to our contention. The testimony of Jonarāja who mentions that there are seven hundred Nāgas living in Kashmir, also deserves our attention.<sup>31</sup> This can be taken to mean that the Nāga cult continued to wield its influence as late as the fifteenth century A.D.

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## Historical Perspective of the North Eastern Part of India

**\*Dipak Roy**

Khan Choudhury Amanatullah Ahmed in his *Kochbeharer Itihas* mentioned that the ancient scriptures viz *Puranas*, *Yoginitantra*, *Mahabharata*; *Copper plates*, foreign travelers accounts and historical and anthropological evidences have recorded different names of this region viz. *Pragjyotishpur*, *Kamrup*, *Pundrabhumi*, *Lohitya*, *Goudabhumi* or *Barendra Bhumi*, *Kamatapur* and *Kamata Cooch- Behar* etc.

### **Pragjyotishpur:**

North Bengal has been mentioned as ‘PRAGJYOTISHPURA’ in the scriptures like *the Ramayana*, *the Mahabharat*, *the Haribansha*, *the Brahma Purana*, *the Vayu Purana*, *the Matsa Purana*, *the Shrimad Bhagbata*, *the Mahapurana*, and *the Raghubansha*. The *Brihatsanhita* indicates the name “Upjyotish” and in the *Mahabharat* it has been indicated as “Uttarjyotish”.<sup>1</sup> Narakasura was the ancient king of this region. His successor Bhagadutta established his kingdom called Kamrupa (Present Assam). The copper plates of Indrapala indicate as ‘Pragjyotishpura’, ‘Uttarkula’ and ‘Durjaya’. Ratnapala established himself as ‘kamrupa nandi’ and “Pragjyotishpati” in his copper plate. Kalahan’s *Rajtarangini* indicates the name “Pragjyotish” and “Strirajya”.

### **Lohitya:**

In the *Mahabharata*, *the Kalikapuran* and *the Markandeya Purana* this territory has been mentioned as ‘Lohitya’<sup>2</sup>. Another name for Brahmaputra was ‘Lohitya’. It is considered as a sea due to her largeness. ‘Lohitya’ has been described in the *Kalikapurana* as “Barnashaya Dakshinasat Lohitya name Sagara”. The term ‘Lohitya’ is common to the *Raghuvamsa* and the *Brihat- Samhita*.

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\*Asst.Prof: Dipak Roy, University B.T. & Evening College, CoochBehar, W B.



**Kamrupa:**

Vishnu *Puran*, Kurma *Puran*, Brahma *Puran*, Kalika *Purana* and Raghubansha mention the name as 'Kamrupa'. In the *Brahmapurana* it has been mentioned that the region is known as 'Brahmakundu' and 'Kamakshya.' Ashoka's inscription at "Prayag" mentions the name 'Kamrupa' in connection with Skanda Gupta's Victory over this region. Copper inscription of Bhaskara Barman (7<sup>th</sup> century from Karnrsubarna) also indicates the name Kamrupa. "Kamrup" has also been mentioned in Hieun Tsang's account "*Si-u-k i*" and Banabhatta's *Harshacharita*, *Tabaqut-i-Nasiri* etc.. In fifteenth century, the coin of Hussain Shah of Gouda also indicates the name Kamarupa. This place came to be more widely known as '*Kamakshya*' from the legend of a part of the body of *Sati* having fallen here. Kamrupa is another name of '*Bhagabati*'. Another belief inclined to derivation from the tribe 'Khambo' of Assam; yet another, that because Madan and Kama, after being destroyed by the fire from Shiva's eye regained His body (Rupa) this place name- became 'Kamrupa'. *Allahabad Prasasti* of Samudra Gupta (c.325-76 A.D.) mentioned that 'Kamrupa' was a frontier kingdom. However, the *Raghuvamsa* of Kalidas, produced in the Gupta empire (Fifth century) mentioned two names of the region viz. 'Pragjyotish' and 'Kamrupa'.<sup>3</sup> But Kamrupa became the general political identity of the region since the fourth century particularly with the rise 'Varmanas' as ruling dynasty. During the reign of Vaskarvarman (600-650 AD) Kamrupa emerged as a significant political power. During his reign Yuan Chawag, the Chinese traveler, visited Kamrupa. In Yuan Chawng's account, Kamrupa has been described as Kia-Mo-Leo-Po situated in the eastern side of the Pundravardhana after a great river (the Karotoya).<sup>4</sup> The natural boundary of Kamrupa was, however, defined in the *Yogini Tantra* (a late medieval sanskrit text) that Kanchangiri was the northern boundary, the Karotoya was the western frontier, the Dikar Basini formed the eastern boundary and the confluence of the Brahmaputra and the Lakshya rivers stood as the southern frontier of Kamrupa. During the medieval period, western part of Kamrupa was depicted as Kamata. The Khens ruler established a kingdom in the fifteenth century with its capital at Kamatapur.

**Pundrabardhan:**

Northern part of West Bengal is also popularly known as "Pundrabardhan". The *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* indicate that "Pundra State" was extended up to present Rangpur of Bangladesh, Dinajpur (Eastern), Bagura and northern part of Rajshahi, up to eastern part of Karotoya river. It is situated to the south of Kamrupa. In fourth century Chinese traveller, Hieun Tsang reached at Pundra, the small state after travelling Kamrup. We come to know from Hieun Tsang's account that from fifth century to eighth century some *Kshatriya* people fled from Pundradesh, reached, and settled at Ratnapith of Kamrupa State. Ratnapith was situated at the adjacent area of Jalpesh Temple of Jalpaiguri. Basudeva, the *Kshatriya* King of Pundra and the last king of this dynasty along with his kins took shelter to escape from danger

of Buddha kings of Mahapadma. This view is also supported in the *Kalika Purana* .

Mahapadmananda, the son of Nandi was the king of Mahastangarh in Bogora district of present Bangladesh, is popularly known as Parshurama, the wrath of Kashtriya. The Kashtriya people of “Pundra State” settled in “Ratnapitha” to escape the wrath of Parshuram, gave up ‘kashtriya status’, and identified themselves as ‘Rajbanshi’. The second *patala* of *Bhramari Tantra* reiterates that the sons of Vardhana of Paundradesh discarded Kshatriya practices, sheltered in Ratnapitha (Kamrupa), and were known as ‘Rajbanshi’. The later successors extended their inhabitation in this region. There were some Rajbanshi kashtriya vassal kings in present Rangpur district of Bangladesh (Dimla and Donar) such as –Manikchandra, Gopichandra, Harish Chandra and it was their enlightens the songs of *Gopichander Gan*, *Mayanamatir Gan* enhance the *Rajbanshi* or *Kamatapuri* literature.

### **Varendra Bhumi:**

This tract is commonly known as ‘Barinde’, ‘Barind’, and ‘Barendra’ corrupted from of Varendri. Sandhyakar Nandi, who styles himself as *Kalikala Valmiki* (Valmiki of the Kali Age) ,in his Sanskrit *Kavya Ramcharit-* describes Varendri as a tract lying between the Ganges and the Karotoya. “Varendri’ has been described as the ‘Janakabhu’- Father land of the Palas- and in the *Kavi Prasasti* Sandhyakara Nandi, the author of the *Ramcharita* has eulogized Varendri as ‘Basudhashiravarendri Mandalchuramani’, the chest Jewel of the earth” and as ‘*Punyabhu*’, ‘the land of holiness or bliss”.<sup>5</sup> It includes the portion of Rajshahi, Malda, Dinajpur, Bagura and Rangpur districts. Varendra occupied a section of the country of *Pundra* or *Paundra* situated in a country, which went by the general name of Gouda.

Varendri was intimately connected from the earliest ages with Mithila, Magadha, Utkal, Sikkim and Bhutan on the North; and the kingdom of Karaka beyond the Karnataka on the East. By land as well as by sea it was in touch with various foreign countries relics of ancient connection have now come to be discovered and recognized during the Buddhapala Dynasty. The early history of Varendra, therefore, is intact the history of the northwestern part of the present Bangladesh.

### **Kamatapura:**

One of the popular names of present North Bengal of West Bengal is Kamatapur. The Sena rulers of Gouda and the Ahom kings both of them extended their power to Northeastern part of Kamrupa simultaneously and a political conflict had been occurred in this region. Taking this opportunity Niladhwaja belonged to *Khen* Dynasty established capital at Kamatapur on the west bank of Dharla at Gosanimari of Dinhata subdivision about 14 miles south-west of Cooch Behar district.<sup>6</sup> The ruin of this kingdom is known as “Kamateswar garh”. During the period of Chakradhaj and Nilambara, the Kamatapur state has been extended from Goalpara district of Assam to the North and South-West of Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Dinajpur,

Malda, Bagura, Rajshahi, Pabna districts with the help of local Rajbanshi *Kshatriya* soldiers. According to *Gosanimangal*, the Mughals defeated the last king of Kamata called Kanteswar and the king however, managed to escape himself from the Mughals. Thus, Kamatapur state came to an end.

Khan Choudhury Amanatullah Ahamed says that Hussain Shah of Gauda captured Kamatapur in 1493 A.D. He extended his empire not only to Kamatapur but also defeated the Ahom King of Kamrupa. The *Rajbanshabali* of Durgadas serves that Biswa Singh and Ahom King signed a treaty to defeat the Muslim ruler.<sup>7</sup> But in the later period, Dulal Gagi, the son of Hussain Shah of Gouda was defeated and killed in 1497 A.D. by the Ahom King Tsu-Hung –Smung . Biswa Singh thus regains his heritage from the Muslim ruler. Because of Hussain Shah's invasion at Kamatapur, huge number of lower caste Hindus have been converted into Muslims. There is a large number of Muslim society called 'Nasya Shekh' have been living in North Bengal of West Bengal particularly at Cooch Behar since ancient Kamatapur State. Their culture is same as the Rajbanshi *Kshatriya* people.<sup>8</sup>

Though Nilambara was called to Khen –dynasty, he was originally belonging to one of the member of Rajbanshi *Kshatriya* who had come to Ratnapitha of Kamrupa from Pundravardhana to escape from wrath of Parasuram. According to the 'Bhramari Tantra', the *Kshatriyas* who had come from Pundrabardhan to Ratnapitha of Kamrupa gave up *Kshatriya* identity and recognized themselves as 'Rajbanshi.'<sup>9</sup> The word "Kshatriya" generally pronounced as 'Kshatri' and 'kshatri' is told as 'kshatri', 'kshe' from 'kshetri' and 'Na' from naught corresponds the word 'kshen'. The paternal relation of this dynasty comes from 'kshetri' or 'kshatri' and maternal relation comes from naught. This maternal and paternal relation corresponds as 'Kshatriya'.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the Rajbanshis are related to the *Kshatriya* indirectly or directly.

### **Kamata-Cooch Behar:**

The latest name of North Bengal was Kamata Behar, which was popularly known as 'Koch Behar State' under the British rule. During the reign of Nilambara, Kamatapur state has been extended through out the completely Northeastern part of India but after Kamateswar the last king of Kamatapur, it gradually becomes delineated and its kingdom Gosanimari also faced to ruin.

Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal says that the Koch tribe under the General Hajo defeated the Khens and ruled the western portion of Kamrup from 1510 to 1587 A.D. Hajo had two daughters Hira and Jira; both were married to one Haridas Mech of Mount Chikna (in Goalpara, Assam). At that time Koch and Mech could inter-marry freely. Haridas was the head of the Mech Tribe of Goalpara. Chandan and Madan was the son of Jira while Sisui and Bisui was the son of Hira . Chandan, the son of Jira defeated the Chikna and proclaimed him the King of Chikna and Madan was killed in the battlefield. The era of Koch Behar State starts from Chandan in the year 1510 A.D., when he was proclaimed king at Chikna, ruled for thirteen years, and after his death Hira's younger son Bisui named Biswa Singha become

king of Cooch Behar. <sup>11</sup> Thus on the ruin of the Kamata kingdom, the Koch and Mech tribe established the Koch Kingdom territorially which was almost identical with Kamata under the leadership of king Naranarayan (1540-87), the Koch kingdom got its highest territorial boundary and began to be known as 'Koch' or 'Behar'. However, Prof. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya called it as 'Kamata-Koch Behar'.<sup>12</sup>

The Western part of the Koch kingdom called Baikantapur (Jalpaiguri) extending up to the present Siliguri, formed part of Bengal (Goud) from the time of Palas and Khens and Biswa Singh wrested this area in 1545A.D. from the Mohamadan King of Goud soon after the death of Sher Shah. Siswa Singh took a fancy to this tract of land and was allowed to settle there. His successors were popularly known as the ruler of 'Raikat' dynasty.

The extended Kingdom of Biswa Singh was called Koch Behar. Afterwards Koch Bihar State became the British Feudatory State through the Anglo- Cooch Behar Treaty concluded between East India Company and Dharendra Narayan, the King of Cooch Behar on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1773 named 'Kuch Behar' under the British reign. <sup>13</sup> After Post Independent, an agreement was signed on 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1949 made between the Government of India and His Highness Jagadeependra Narayan, the Maharaja of Kuch Behar State to merge the state with India Government. Finally, the State has been merged with West Bengal as a district on 1<sup>st</sup> January in 1950.

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## 5

## Riverine system in Ancient Jammu Region

\*Dr. Monica

Rivers, whether in India or elsewhere in the world, have always played a prominent role in the evolution of various civilizations and cultures. Himalayan middle mountains and Shivalik hill region of Jammu, drained by many rivers like *Chenab*, *Tawi*, *Punch Tohi*, *Neru*, *Ujh*, *Sewa*, *Manawar*, *Basantar*, *SukhiTawi*, *DarhalTawi* and *Devika*. In literary evidence we find the references of many rivers of Jammu region such as *Chenab*, *MarudWardhwan*, *Devika*, *Ravi*, *Ujh*, *Apaga*, *Tawi* etc. The detail of which are given as under:

### Chenab:

The term *Chenab* is comprised of two words 'Chen' means moon and 'ab' means river/water. *Chenab* river of Kishtwar find mention in *Rigveda* by the name of *Asikanya*. *Asikanya* literally means, the daughter of the Sword. The historians of Alexander have named it *Arkisinei*. i.e. river of ill omens. This Greek word *Arkisine* for the *Chenab* river is not doubt derived from the Vedic term *Arikanya*. Potelmy (A.D. 150) calls this river by the name of *Sandalbal* which indicates, that around this time, the river had begun to be called as *Chandrabhaga*, the etymological meaning of the term still remaining un-explained.<sup>1</sup>

*Chenab* river is formed of two main feeders, *Chandra* and *Bhaga*. *Chandra* has their origin on the opposite sides of Baralacha pass in the Trans Himalayan region at an elevation of about 94,44m (16,277 ft.) above sea level in Lahol and spiti district, whereas *Bhaga* river rises in a small *Tarn* called *Suraj Tal*. Both these rivers unite at *Tandi* (7,500 feet) and continue to flow through Pangi valley in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh and then enters the Jammu division through a gorge in a narrow deep stream at an elevation of 1,829m (6000 ft.) at Paddar in district Kishtwar. From *Tandi* the *Chenab* Pursue a north westerly direction to a point about 8km (5 miles) north of Kishtwar town. The entire length of the river to this point is

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\*Dept.of History.University Of Jammu, Jammu, J&K

about 531 km (330 miles) and the fall is 6.58 mts/km.<sup>2</sup> At this point the *Chenab* receives the water of *Maruwardan* river on its right bank. *Maruwardwan* river of Kishtwar find mentions in *Rigveda* as *Marutvridha*.<sup>3</sup> After crossing Kishtwar the river *Chenab* flows to the west passing through, Doda, Ramban and Reasi to Akhnoor.<sup>4</sup> It is fast flowing river in India after Brahmaputra river. It flows through mountains upto Akhnoor tehsils. It is at Akhnoor that the river for the first time became navigable.<sup>5</sup> This is the reason why so many settlements right from Pre-historic times have been found in and around Akhnoor.<sup>6</sup> *Chenab* is used for floating down the timber logs and construction of hydle projects like that of Salal (Reasi) and Dulhustihydal project in Kishtwar.<sup>7</sup> At some distance from Akhnoor it enters into the boundaries of Pakistan where owing to the flat tract, it spreads out in a big fan.

### **Maruwardwan:**

*Maruwardwan* river of Kishtwar finds mention in *Rigveda* by the name of *Marutvridha* along with *Yamuna*, *Sarasvati*, *Sutudri*, *Purushni*, *Askini* and *Vitasta*.<sup>8</sup> *BhotKol*, the chief source of *Maruwardwan* river takes its rise from the saga glacier near Lanwi pass 4,380 m (14,370ft) in the Great Himalayas at the North eastern extremity of the Kishtwar district.<sup>9</sup> The river collected the water from various streams such as *RinNai*, *MandikSar*, *Kiar Nail*, *Nanthnai*, *KabarNala* and *ChatruNala*.

### **Tawi:**

We find the reference of group of streams of Jammu region under a common name *Tausi* or *Tohi* which finds mention in other ancient literature like *NilamataPurana*. These rivers rise in the hills of *SudhMahadev* and joins the *Chenab* near Sialkot. *NilamataPurana* mention *Tawi* as *Taushi* and *VishnodharmotarraPurana* as *Tohi*.<sup>10</sup> According to Vignie, the word *Tawi* means a "Torrent".<sup>11</sup> The river *Tawi* Originates from *Seojdhar* range north-east of Ramnagar Tehsil.<sup>12</sup> In its upper course it drains Dudu valley that penetrate deep into the far east for about 64 km (40 miles) from Chennai. The river flows through the middle Himalayas along town like Ramnagar, Chenani, Udampur. Several tributaries join it at different places in its way to Jammu such as LamberKhata, Phiroz, PachoundLatti, Tarkund, Bermin, SulahKhad, DuddarNala and Ramnagarwali Khad.<sup>13</sup> After flowing in a zigzaq course the river reaches the town of Jammu, which is on its right bank.

The width of the river at Jammu is about 300m at the bridge site and finally meets *Chenab* river at Akhnoor. Prof. Buhler regards *Tausi* as the ancient form of term *Tohi*, *Tao* or *Tawi* in Dogri District. It is used for several streams of this region which rises in the Southern slopes of the PirPanjal range and fall in the *Chenab* or *Jhelum*. *Tausi* of the *Rajatarangini VII*<sup>14</sup> is identified with the *Tohi* of Puncha. There are two *Tohis*, one is the district of Nausherra, and the other in Jammu,

which are tributaries of *Chenab*. The *Tohi* mentioned in the *NilamataPurana* seems to be the *Tohi* of Jammu.<sup>15</sup> Too many settlements Paleolithic, Neolithic, Kushana have been reported in and around the Tawiriver.

### Devika:

River *Devika*, also known as Gupta Ganga flows through Jammu region. *Devika* river finds mention in the ancient lore recorded in the *Mahabharata* and some Puranas like *Vishnu*, *Padma*, *Kalika*, *Matsya*, *Vaman* and *Amarkhosa*, *Brihatsamhita*, *Ashthadhyayi* and the *Mahabhashya*.<sup>16</sup> *NilamataPurana* mentions *Devika* along with other rivers such as *Apaga*, *Chandrabhaga*, *Iravati*, *Tausi*, *Udda*, *Vishvamisra*.<sup>17</sup> Among these *Devika* was considered the most sacred. *VishnudharmottaraPurana* and *NilamataPurana* mention river *Devika* as incarnation of the *Uma* (Parvati) wife of Lord Shiva and it was brought in the land of *Madra* for the welfare of its people. *Vishnu Purana*, refers to the famous *tirthpurnow* called as *Puramandalin* Jammu region, located on the banks of *Devika* river.<sup>18</sup> River *Devika*, also known as *Guptaganga* flows through Jammu region.

*Devika* is mentioned earlier by Panini and Patanjali associates a particular kind of rice growing near its bank. It was called *Davika-Kulah Satayah*.<sup>19</sup> Patanjali refers to *Panchananda* which is taken in the sense of the country of five rivers but the mentions only *Sutudri*, a tributary of the river Indus, along the *Ganga*, *Yamuna* and *Saraswati*. Other rivers noticed by *Bhashyakara* are *Ikshmuti* and *DrumatiYavamati*, *Davika*, *Domati* and *Rathaspa*.<sup>20</sup> It was identified by Pargiter with river *Deeg*, a tributary of *Ravi* on its right bank, but according to B.C. Law (Geographical essays) citing *VishnudharmottaraPurana* and *NilamataPuranas*, this river flowed through the *Madradesh* Country. It originates in the *SuddhaMahadev* hills at a place called *Sahastardhara*. From there it travels through Jammu region and finally joins *Basantar* river in Kathua district.<sup>21</sup> In Jammu region this river is still known as *Devika* where as it flows through the Punjab (Pakistan) under the name of *Deg* or *Dek*.

### Ravi:

During Vedic times river *Ravi* was known as *Parushani* or *Iravati* to Indians<sup>22</sup>. It is called by Arrian, the *Hydraotes* and by Strabo the *Hyarot*. Arrain assigns to it three tributaries – The *Hyphasis* the *Saranges* and *Neudros*. This is not correct as the *Hyphasis* joins the *Askini* below the function of the *Hydroates*<sup>23</sup> *Iravati* river mentioned in *NilamataPuranais* identified with *Ravi* of Jammu region.<sup>24</sup> According to *Rig veda* part of the battle of the ten kings was fought on the bank of *Parushani* or *Ravi* river.<sup>25</sup>

It has its origin from the Himalayas at Bara Bhangal near Rohtang pass in Himachal Pradesh. It flows through PirPanjal and Dhauladhar range on its south and north respectively, leaving the Himalayas at Basholi. It passes close to Kathua

and through madhopur it enters into the plains of Punjab and finally flows into Pakistan to meet the Indus river. The main tributary of the *Ravi* river is *Sewa* river. The *Basantar*, *Bein*, *Bhini* and *Ujh* also tribute their water to the *Ravi* during the time of Periodical rains of summer. The river *Ravi* is source to a number of small canals and *Khul* of the area. RanjitSagar Dam is also built on this river. In and around Kathua many Kushana sites such as Basantpur and Kotli have been reported.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Apaga:**

According to *NilamataPurana*, *Apaga* is mentioned in the list of the Tirthas of *Madra* and *Himavan*, and identified with the *Ayaka* arising in Jammu hills to the North-east of Sialkot<sup>27</sup> *Panini's Ashthdhyayi*, refers *Apaga* with other rivers of the region such as *Tawi*, *Bai* and *Ujh*. *Ayak*,<sup>28</sup> According to Cunningham and Stein, *Ayaka* known as *Apaga* in ancient times.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Ujh:**

*Panini's Ashthadhyayi*, refers to numbers of rivers flowing through Jammu region/ *Madra* land. The text identifies *Uddaya* River with *Ujhriver* flowing through the Kathua district and falling into the *Ravi* below Gurdaspur. *NilamataPurana* calls it *Udda*. Another river *Bhidya* has been identified with the *Bein* river, which flows in the neighbourhood of *Uddhya* or *Ujh* river and Anjikul has been identified with *Anji*, a tributary of *Chenab*.<sup>30</sup> Kalidasa refers to *Ujh(Uddya)* and *Beinas Biddhya* in his literary works.

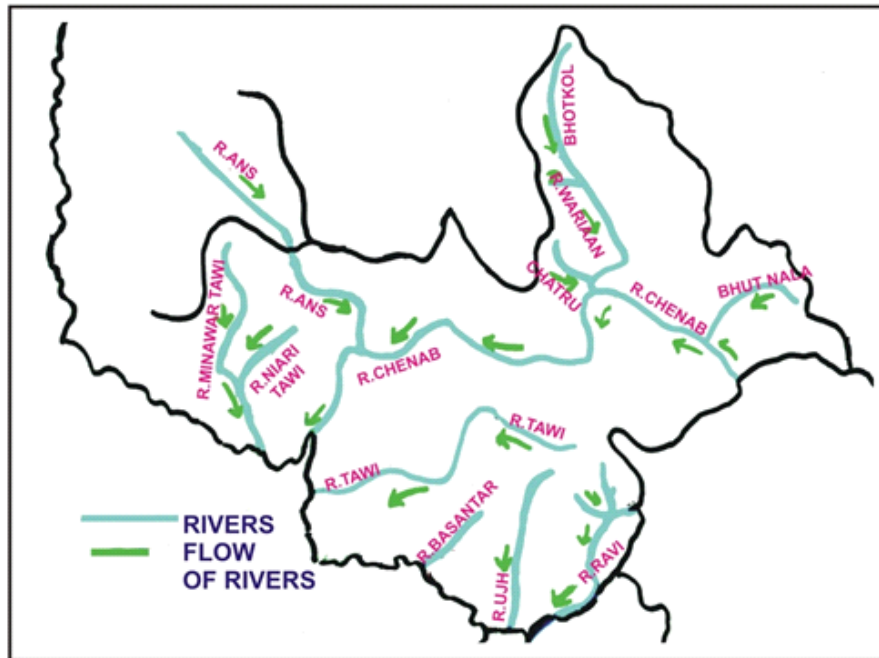
*NilamataPuranareferUdda (Ujh)* as a *Nada* which is identical with the *Uddhya* mentioned by *Panini* and the *Urddha* mentioned in the *VishnudharmottaraPurana*. It is identified with *Ujhriver* flowing through Kathua district and falling into the *Ravi*. Present day *Ujhriver* source lies in the mountains of Basantgarh range at an elevation of 3,962 m (13,000 feet). *Ujhriver* merge with river *Ravi* below the Jasrota.<sup>31</sup> The river flows through hilly terrain for about 80 km (50 miles) before it reaches the plains. It is the river of Perpetual flow. It is liable to floods during the period of summer monsoons.

From this we can say that whole ancient as well as present Jammu was surrounded with well develop riverine system. In various literary source such as *Vedas Purana*, *Panini Ashthdhyayi*, *Nilamatpurana*, and *vishnoodharmottarpurana* mention about the riverine system of the region along the riverine system of India. A part from the main rivers, there are many important tributaries shown in the (map I) Archaeological artifacts found near the bank of rivers suggest the early settlements were settled in this area. viz Paleolithic, Neolithic, Harappan, Kushanas and Guptas and Post Guptas. The people of these settlements used the water for irrigation and drinking purposes for their survival. Land near the river so fertile, and easily to cultivate and generate surplus production. Rivers were used for



transportation purposes, timber from high altitude were collected from downwards of rivers. e.g Chenab in Akhnoor. The ancient people may be used the water as a source of energy e.g Grinding of grains. Rivers were used as trading routes. Pasture lands were also provide by the river for their cattle to strengthen their economy.

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**MAP 1: RIVERINE SYSTEM OF JAMMU DIVISION**

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## 6

## **Impact of Tibetan Buddhism on the society of Ladakh: A Historical Perspective**

\*Skalzang Dorjey

**Background:** Ladakh is one of the big region in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (India) where Buddhism is professed by the people to this day, has till recently been almost forgotten land, except by daring mountaineers and adventurous explorers and the slow-winding caravans on the Central Asian trade route. “Ladakh, in Tibetan La-tags, is the most common name; but is also called Mar-Yul or Low-land or Red-land and Kha-chan-pa or Snow land by Alexander Cunningham.<sup>1</sup>Ladakh is one of the most elevated regions is the world with people living at elevations form 9000 to about 15,000 feet above the sea level.<sup>2</sup> It was remained a buffer zone for trader from many centuries towards central Asia, but Leh the capital of Ladakh was a meeting point of every businessman who came from Tibet, Yarkand, Khohtan and Skardu (now in PoK).

Though they inter-changed their commodities with each other, simultaneously they exchanged their culture too and the cross culture connections evolved a lot which became a part of society. But before it Buddhism played a vital role in the composite culture of Ladakh from time to time. Though from the close of the Karkota rule in Kashmir, Ladakh is having look towards the Tibet for spiritual guidance, yet they have much in common with the people inhabiting the valley. In fact Buddhism itself went to Ladakh from Kashmir.

Buddhism has been prevalent in Ladakh before the beginning of the Christian era. Buddhism was the prevailing faith about 400 A.D. when the Chines pilgrim Fa-Hien visited it. According to Alexander Cunningham the faith had been introduced into this northern-most region of India in the time of Ashoka. He says that the Ladakh is attributed the spread of Buddhism beyond the Indus to some *shramanas*(a range of traditional beliefs and practices concerned with communication with the spirit world) who came with sacred books about 243 B.C.<sup>3</sup>but the society experiences a lot from the Tibetan Buddhism as they

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\*Research Scholar Department of History University of Jammu, Jammu, J&K

amalgamated with each other easily. The progressive development in the religious cultural history of Ladakh takes place after the advent of Lotsava Rinchen (Rinchenb Zangpo 958-1055 A.D). He was a great scholar, translator and builder of hundreds of temples in Western Tibet of Tholing.

The enactment of a Tibetan Buddhism in Ladakh impacts a lot in the society of Ladakh which are divided into different forms of sub- sects as:

**Tibetan Buddhist sects:** There are four main sects in Tibetan Buddhism, the form of Buddhism practiced in Ladakh. They are *Sakyapa*, *Gelukpa*, *Kagyupa* and *Nyingmapa*. There are eight schools in *Kagyupa* and *Drigungpa* is one of the sub-sects of *Kagyupa*. In the monasteries of the four sects besides the religious and cultural ceremonies take places among them, the *dus-mchod*, and the religious service offering ceremonies of the Gonpa (monastery). These festivals ceremonies are conducted every year according to the lunar Tibetan calendar and last for three days. The believes of the Ladakhi people that they are performed for the health, prosperity and happiness of all human beings.<sup>4</sup>

**Monasteries and Lamas (Monk):** With the gradual process in the superstructure (society) with the development of Tibetan Buddhism and the people's responses in a positive manner leads to the establishment of community hall, prayer hall which became the monasteries later on. In nearly every villages, is a monastery of greater or less importance, it sometimes holds but one or two lamas (monks), sometimes it is the home of hundreds. The monasteries are the most conspicuous buildings in the country, they are always somewhat apart from the houses of the village, they are often situated in high places difficult of access-on a spur of the mountain or on as isolated rock, or they may lie in the nook, under the shelter of a lofty cliff. At the entrance of a monastery are fixed prayer-cylinders, sometimes a courtyard is fitted with them on all sides. These are cylinders with a vertical axis, tuning on a pivot, they are furnished inside with a paper on which holy names are written.<sup>5</sup> The large number of monks resides in the monasteries which are requested by the localized people for their religious ceremonies at particular home. It shows how village's people depended on the monks of the monastery and mingling with each other.

**Religious festivals:** These are important events throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world-commemorative the deeds of the Buddha or those of the great masters of the past associated with one tradition or another. In Ladakh, in addition to the standard festivals associated with the Buddha's life, the most renowned of these are the *HemisTsechu* (10<sup>th</sup> day) festivals commemorating the deeds of the Guru *Padmashambhava*, the eight century master of the *Kagyupa* schools who is credited with the introduction of the most profound Buddhist teachings into Tibet and Ladakh. Each 10<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar calendar is said to commemorate a special event in the life of *Padmasambhava*, and some of those are dramatized in the contact of a religious festival, which may last from two or three days.<sup>6</sup> Due to these kind of festival people believed toward the day to day life of the monastery activities and obeyed a lot if they get some order from it.

**Modes and Manners:** The most important domestic work next to the preparation of food is spinning, and it is rare to visit a house without finding some man or woman busy with a wool. First of all the raw wool has to be procured. The majority of this comes for the *Chanthang* the great “Northern Plains” beyond Leh, on the way of Greater Tibet, but some comes from Yarkand in those days, and there are many varieties and qualities of it. The best wool, called Lena, is of soft, silky texture, and is the short downy growth near the skin of the goat, which grows in winter under the long shaggy hairs, and is removed by expert in summer. A still finer quality of camel’s wool can be obtained from the breast and neck of the Tibetan antelope.<sup>7</sup> Due to this kind of production people of Ladakh progressed in the field of trade with the outsider for their daily needs and most of these trade existed was done on the pattern of barter system.

**Onpo (Horologist):** Next to the lama (monk) the *on poor horologist* is perhaps the most important individual, for if you wish to plough your field, to call in the lamas for the reading of holy books, or desire to choose the best day or time on which to marry, in fact for the decision of all the important affairs of life, you must get him to settle the auspicious day. On the occasion he may dress like a lama, even to the wearing of a priestly cap, but his pigtail will distinguish him from the ecclesiastic and the layman.<sup>8</sup>

**Conclusion:** So much towards the analysis is concern people of Ladakh more or much depends upon the Tibetan Buddhism in the initial stage of development in the both religion and society. It also resembles that monks were actively engaged with the village people and some are also take part in the decision making when the same was have a deep respect at that time. Tibetan Buddhism also boost up the ability of the people towards the progress in every corner of the society.

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