

GANDHAR (KANDHAR)

Dr. Vasant Patel

Assistant Professor of History

Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidhyanagar

Email ID: vpatel716@gmail.com

Abstract

In the past decades a lot of excavation has been done in ancient Gandhar (Kandhar), from which many things belonging to the Buddha period are been found like old cloister, dagoba, idols etc.

Sir Orelstin and Dr. Leacock has obtained many curtains, pictures, coins, furnishings and idols through excavation from the area of TakalaMakan of Khotan and Gobi regions of Chinese Turkestan. This establishes that that was the main road of traders and pilgrimers of China.

THE ARYAN ERA OF AFGHANISTAN

The Aryans were residing in Afghanistan since the Rugveda period and the ancient name of it was Gandhar. The mother of Kauravas', Gandhari was from Gandhar.

Prior to the rise of Buddha religion, the sixteen Mahajana Pads were popular. Kamboj and Gandhar were among of them. In 350 B.C. great grammar expert Panini's birth was in a village of Gandhar.

Many mythological Buddha stories have taken place in Afghanistan.

Takshashila was then great Vidyapith (University) and students from far regions were coming over there for higher education.

According to the 'Vinay Pitak' written in 'Pali' language, 'Jivak' of Magadh region went to Takshashila to learn 'Vaidak' (Medicine Science) from the great and world famous 'Vaidraj' (medicine expert) over there. After getting graduation from Takshashila, 'Jivak' became 'Raj Vaidya' (king's medical expert) of the king 'Ajatshatru', and later became the 'Vaidya' (medicine expert) for the entire Buddha followers.

Introduction

According to the political economics of Kautilya, the union of Kamboj was of the Kshatriya series, and further says that the Saurashtra and Kamboj unions are different unions from the Lichvi and Malla unions. Lichvi and Malla unions were continuing their

king's name. Thus, it indicates that during the period of Panini and Kautilya, the Kamboj will be a democratic country rather than a kingship.

During the Ashoka period, Gandhar, Kamboj and Yawn were the Border States and were known as the directly sphere of influence areas.

After the Alexander period, the incidents which became popular indicates that how the culture of India spreaded beyond to the mountain areas of Sindhu river. During that period, Hindu king Shashiupta was the king in the Hindukush mountain range area and Ashipashioi and Ashakansh Hindu tribes were residing in the valley area of the Kunar, Panjkora and Swat River. There was a city named Pushkaravati situated in the western region of the Sindhu River.

Upto the second century, Tolemy has mentioned about the Hindu names of the Rivers Suvastu and Gavari. The description of these Rivers Suvastu and Gavari is also found in the Mahabharata.

After the death of Sikandar (Alexander), Chandragupta Maurya captured major region of Afghanistan. Cellux tried many times to recapture that region but was defeated and became refuge of Chandragupta Maurya.

Takshashila became a capital city in that era. In that period Ashoka sent his religious saints to Greek country, and those saints were residing in the Greece, Gandhar and Kamboj. That victory of Ashoka was for the establishment of the religion and not for any political purpose.

The historians of Srilanka has wrote in that period that, Thera Majjantika visited to Kashmir and Gandhar with the group of saints in yellow cloths and there they presented preach of Buddha religion. This fact is been established from the inscriptions of Ashoka.

In the seventh century Huein Sang has wrote that Ashoka built the tumulus in the Kapisha (Kashmir) region.

In 206 BC, after the 25 years of Ashok's death the south region of the Hindukush Mountains was captured by the king named Subhagsen, and he made a treaty with Siriya.

Then after, the Bactrian and Indo-Greek kings have to write the Prakrut and Kharosti language on their coins along with the Greek language.

Other Indo-Greek kings were Penteleon and Agathocles. They introduced the square coins in their period with the Daskats written on it in the Brahmi script of Hind. Then after it was found that the copper coins in that area were been introduced by writing on it “ Kavisiye Nagar Devata” in the Kharosti script, which indicates that the Prakrut language was been used in the Kapisha region.

The Buddha religion spread in the western region of the Sindhu River, central Asia and the East Asia, thus, again the East – west cultures met over there. On the Kanisk and Havisk coins of that period, the mix presentation of Irani (Jarthosti), Hindu and Greek God-Godess idols was been found, and in that period a new art presentation technique named Gandhar Kala was been emerged which was a mix presentation of the Hindu concepts in the Greek style.

But, in that era, the Hindu Sculpture style was very strong and thus, the Greek style like Gandhar Kala vanished successively and the pure Arya Sculpture emerged.

Prior to the Jesus Christ, the Buddha religion was been spread in the region of the Auxus River. It is been found in the 2 BC that, a Chinese Ambassador sent some Buddha religious books from hunching region. Hunching means Afghanistan. The first two Buddha saints went to China were Kashyap Matang and Dharmaratna, who were priorly preaching at Afghanistan.

King Kanishak was influenced with the Buddha religion. He served a great of Buddha religion by inviting and establishing the great Buddha religion experts Vashumitra and Aswagosh. He also made many tumulus and rest houses.

The names of the donors of Afghanistan were also been found on the Gold-Silver boxes and clay utensils found while excavation of the tumulus. Among those donors one was the Theodorus, a Greek officer, Horamurt, the Governor (Satrap) of Veshpassi, a son of the Governor of Kapasi (Kashmir) – who was not agreed to present his name, but his grandfather’s name was Rahul.

Looking at the list it is been observed that not only the poor people and the saints were following the Buddha religion, but the big officers from the other countries and religion were also following the Buddha religion.

Along with the spread of the Buddha religion, the then Hindu languages used were also been spread.

The archaeologists found some hand written Sanskrit books from the Gobi desert and TakalaMakan regions of Asia, which were written in some secret writing style. And along with it, some other books were also been found which were written in the Kharosti and other local languages based on this language. The residue found from the Uplaan valley of Kabul River also contains some books written on the Bhoj Patra and the thousands of coins of those era are also been found.

The scripts found of the 1st & 2nd A.D. are been written in the Hindu Prakrut language. The Kharosti language of Khotan is also the similar era language.

It is been observed on the base of scripts of Kurram Valley that the SarswatiVadin path of the Buddha religions may be established over there as the scripts are found in the Kharosti language.

Upto the seventh century the border of Hindustan was far beyond to the Sindhu region in the west.

Upto the Ninth century, Nagarhar was the main city was Utrapath; and Nagarhar is today Jalalabad.

On the second side of the Hindukush Mountain range and on the bank of the Kabul River, there was a main road connecting western Asia to the Central Asia. Thus on that whole way and the in plain areas of Jalalabad there are many sculptures, residues and tumulus, of which some are been analyzed in the last hundred years, and still there is a vast availability of the history search in that entire region.

A village named Hada is situated 5 K.m. away from Jalalabad. The Skull of Gautam Buddha was kept there in a historical temple. Still today there are many residues available like the idols made by Gandhar Kala and much more architects.

There was an old way in the Kohistan area of Kabul. Still there are many residue of the Buddha Nagar (town) available. While excavation three places were found, which were half round in shape and were looking like the play stages, named Sehtopan, Kamari and Shevaki.

There was a famous monastery in the beautiful valley of Kapasi. In the era of King Kanisk, this it was built with the money of the political prisoners of China. Many other such places are found here as described by Xuanzang.

There is an old city 'Bamiyan' is situated under the icy mountain tops of the Hindukush Mountains, which looks like a hanging city. On the one side of this city is Hindukush Mountain range and on the other side is Kohibaba Mountain range.

The temples, caves and idols carved from the mountains are still standing and surviving though facing the time and the cruel strikes of human.

All the visitors from the Xuanzang period to the till date are been attracted and impressed of such creations.

As Abul Fazal described in the end of Seventeenth century there were total twelve thousand such cave temples. The saints were residing there. Still at many places the idols of Buddha, scriptures and the places of such scriptures are been found.

There are two standing position and three sitting position large sized idols available, plastered with 'Sagor' and painted in such a way that Xuanzang thought they were the bronze idols.

Some paintings were also been created besides to the bow windows, which are now rubbed, but some French archaeologists restore those paintings on the back side of those bow windows with the original paints used at those time with immense hard work, which are very beautiful to be watched. In some pictures the people offering Prasada in dishes to the Buddha, saints and learners, followers and visitors are been found in those pictures.

In one picture, King Chandradev, the king of Iran coming on horse chariot is been painted.

These paintings are like the connection chain of the painting style of the central Asia and Ajanta caves paintings, which created the interest among the art lovers.

A big idol of Buddha of his death time is also been found. The local Muslims were claiming that it was a Chinese dragon and Hazrat Ali killed it, but the fact is that it is an idol of Lord Buddha, when he died. Xuanzang as prayed to this idol while his visit.

Monsieur Fuser has found many historical residues and tumulus from the relics from ancient places situated at Bulkh, which is at the other side of Bamiyan, and at the other places of Afghanistan and Turkestan.

The relics of various types are been found at many places in Afghanistan, which are bifurcated in tumulus and jaunts. The saints were residing in the jaunts and the god temples were also situated in these jaunts.

The tumulus were decorated, and looking great with pillars, arches and walk around paths. The western Archaeologists, who found these places, found boxes of gold & silver and having diamonds on it from this tumulus along with the residues of Buddha saints.

Apart from these places the tumulus and jaunts are also been found at various scattered places of Afghanistan just like Sanchi and Sarnath.

In the South-East corner of Kabul two tumulus are been established, out of which one is known as 'Minar Chakri', which is quite similar to the tumulus of Sarnath containing Lion face figures and "Dharmachakra" on it.

The major jaunts are been carved from the mountains and are quite similar to the Karli and Ajanta caves. The decorative tumulus were been placed at the entrance of such jaunts's entrance besides the stairs. There were many such jaunts near Bamiyan, Jalalabad and Kabul and thus, the surrounding people were getting the highest benefits of it.

At the time of Fahiyen's visit, Udayan, Gandhar and Kandhar were the prospours cities, and as the cloister situated in the surrounded area were quite supportive to those population.

This region was as important as the Magadh for the pilgrimers and visitors. Here the four temples were built of which idols were presenting the four great meditation stages of

lord Buddha and those idols were decorated with the gold and silver ornaments. The people were saying that, according to the Ashwaghosh, the meaning of Gandhar is good character. Later it was identified that those words about Gandhar were not been presented by Ashwaghosh but the fact about Gandhar was the truth.

But, as it is said that all the days are not equal, in the fifth and sixth century, Huna tribes arrived there and started their bad treats on Afghanistan, Iran and Hindustan.

In 890 A.D. Toraman lead Huna tribes towards Hindustan, and after winning many region of Hindustan he appointed his tyrant son Mihirgul to destroy the region.

He is known as the 'Trikotiya' (killer of three Crore humans) in the history of Kashmir.

The ambassador of the great Chinese Vu dynasty king Song yang visited here in between 512 to 522 A.D. He himself has seen the colonies established by the Huna's by robbing many countries. He wrote that, 40 countries were offering ransom to them and their capital was adorable with the gold and silver topped temples.

Huna's were not having faith on Buddha religion and they were killing animals. Even though Gandhar was powerful city till the end of 5th century. The two great persons of Mahayan – Aasang and Vasubandhu also took birth in this city. Udayan city was also following the Buddha religion and so there were many tumulus and jaunts established. The king was following the Buddha religion, and was trying to achieve the completeness, and was passing much time at meditation.

Mihirgul destroyed Gandhar and its architectures.

Then, in sixth century Turkestan captured Afghanistan. In that period Byzantine (turkey), Irani, Hindu and Chinese cultures merged which became helpful to all the countries.

In that period the Zarathustra religion of Parsis and Nestorian of Christians eligionsspreadedupto China.

The Then Turk leaders adopted Buddha religion. In 626 A.D., Turk General Sihukagan gestured and served Buddha saint Prabhakar Mitra and his followers while their journey to China.

After four he also served in the same way to Xuanzang and also helped him to travel to Hindustan with comfort. At that time the entire region from Iran to Karakorum and from the famous Lodhana doors to Hindukush (Tokhara region) as under Turkistan rule. The whole kingdom was divided into 27 small states. The whole road was dangerous and there were many thieves and bandits on that way, but due to the kind support of Shihukagan the saints were able to pass the way with very comfort and protection.

The Chinese visitor Vu Kung visited Hindustan in between 759 to 764 A.D. He visited two temples each in Kashmir and Kandhar respectively. These temples were built by the Turk King, Queen and their son.

In this period the Buddha religion spreaded and established well in the whole region.

The Buddha followers were in majority in the Kunduz region. In that time in the Balkh kingdom there were more than a hundred Buddha jaunts in which more than three thousand saints were residing.

The New Vihar or Nav Sanghram was famous over there and was the pride place for the whole country. A tooth of lord Buddha, a vessel and a broom of him were kept over there. In the northern region of the Hindukush, this jaunt was the cultural centre. Two tumulus were placed over there and according to the followers, these tumulus were established since the time of Kashyup Buddha.

According to Xuanzang, the capital of Balkh was very similar to the capital of Magadh.

In the southern region of Balkh another region named Gaz was situated. Ten jaunts were built in that region and three hundred saints of Sarvastivadin path were residing there.

In Bamiyan region, thousands of Lokattar path saints were residing in more than ten jaunts of that region.

The Chinese visitors described that the two big standing idols carved from the mountains and one sleeping idol of Lord Buddha were created in this region.

The sultan of Balkh was arranging a religious council of Buddha religion just like the king Harshvardhan, and at that time he was donating all the wealth he was having to saints, but from the back door, his officers were collecting back the precious gifts.

Kapasi was famous for its horses and Kesar (Saffron). Hundred jaunts were established in the region and six thousand saints from Mahayana path were residing there.

The king of the region was a Kshatriya and was following the Buddha religion, and Lampak, Nagaehar and Gandhar region were under his rule. Ten thousand saints of Mahayana path were residing in theLampak region.

Mahayana Buddha religion was also spread in the Jaguda. The saffron and Asafoetida of the region were famous and the king of the region was a Buddha follower.

The king of Humpiyan region was from Turk but was a strong follower of Buddha religion.

A saint named Narendrayasas translated 'Mitrasmput' in Chinese from Sanskrit. The description of the religious spread of Buddha religion is presented in it. According to that description, Tashishamejulo – Darshangyanmul saint was residing in Gandhar and KogoniKiyu – Kumkum Muni was residing in the Kapasi region.

Later on there is a description of Hevjitantra which describes about the jaunts and sub jaunts. It also describes that ShramanLampak translated a 'Tantrik' book in the Chinese language from Sanskrit. The name of that book was 'Dharnis'.

It seems that, in that period the eastern Hind region and the region beyond to the Sindhu River were having very good terms. In that time Utsing had wrote life story of fifty preachers of that period.

A citizen of Kang – Samarkand travelled at Mahabodhini along with the ambassador of China in the seventh century.

Magadh was the pilgrim place in that period, and so the people of Tokharistan built a temple and rest house over there, so that the people travelling from their country can stay. As Utsing describes, this temple and the rest house were beautiful and well managed in the economic and management terms.

The people from Kapasi (Kashmir) also built a temple and a rest house in Magadh for the people of their country, which was permitting all the north Indian people along with the Kashmiri people to stay there.

Along with the Buddha religion, the other famous religions of Hindustan were also been spread in Afghanistan.

A Write up, written in the Kharosti language was found, according to it, it was from the period of the Maharaja Gushan (second Kadfisis) the then king of the region. According to that letter, Mokai - the son of Usmunj built a Shiv temple over there.

The coins of secondKadfisis and Vasudev were having the photo of the king on one side and the photo of lord Shiv on the other side. This indicates that how much the foreign kings were been impressed with the Shiv religion.

The Mihirgul was a great opposer of the Buddha religion but was equally devotee of the Shiv religion.

He established many Shiv temples in Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir.

According to secondXuanzang, at the time when twenty to thirty Buddha temples were there in Kashmir, more than a thousand of Hindu temples were there in the country. Digamber Jains, PashupatShaiv and Kapaliks wearing Rundhmala were also residing in the country. According to him there were many Buddha temples in Sampak, Nagarhar, Jaguda and the far place Andabaran.

In the period of Xuanzang, Pashupat was an ancient Hindu religion. The followers of it were known as Maheshwar's and Banaras was their main religious capital.

Some Shaiv's were also wearing the skull bead. They were very ugly in look. Their other names were Kapaliks or Kalmukha.

In the middle of the seventh century, when Xuanzang was in the visit of Hind, it was just 50 years passed when Mohammad Paigambaraheb went to Madina. In that period thousands of Sarasin Muslims attacked and captured Afghanistan, Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Iran.

In that time the western region of Oxus River was under the western Turkey rule. The Chinese rulers defeated them and captured the region. But within the small period, the Tibetans attacked on the Chinese and draw them away from the region.

The Arabs took the advantage of this chaos. In the period of 644 A.D. to 656 A.D. of Khalif Orman, a huge Arab force attacked on Afghanistan from the south and captured many regions like Gizni, Kabul etc. In 663 – 664 A.D., the other Arab force attacked from the northern side and captured the Balkh region. They destroyed the Nav Vihar jaunt. The third force under the leadership of Kutubuddin Muslim and converted the entire population of Balkh to the Muslim followers.

According to the Arab authors, there were three hundred temples around the central temple in Nav Vihar, The priest of these temples was known as Barmek. They were having the right to manage the temples from generation to generation. The total area of those temples and the land obtained through donations was seven hundred forty square mile.

Looking at the destruction of the Buddha temples and idols, Barmek accepted the Muslim religion in the period of the famous Harun-Al-Rashid and established high sons at the higher positions in the Arab kingdom.

In the eighth century the Muslims destroyed the Hindu culture centers situated in the western region of the Sindhu. In that period the Arab leader Kutub attacked towards Tans Bocciana and and the other Arab leader Mohhammad Bin Kasim attacked and won the Baluchistan, the low ying area of Sindhu upto the north of Multan.

The people following the Hindu religion in the area of Punjab and Afghanistan were in very tricky situation.

In the period of Khalif Al Mansoor (744 A.D. to 775 A.D.), the Bamiyan kings were famous as the great warriors, but they also accepted the Muslim religion. And in last in the period of Khalif great Mumu of Abbas dynasty (813 to 833 A.D.), Kabul also accepted the Muslim religion.

Due to such many attacks, it can be commonly seen that in the western region of Sindhu the Hindu culture may have been destroyed, but it was not like that.

In 753 A.D., a Chinese ambassador Vu Fung visited in the region; he wrote that while his visit he found two Buddha jaunts safe, which were known as Sukhavati and Padmavati. There is no words' difference in the write up Xuanzang and mine.

In the Chinese history, there is mentioned about a Buddha follower of Kabul, his name was Pragya, he translated some Buddha books from Sanskrit to Chinese in the period of 785 to 810 A.D.

A write up of Pal kings reign of ninth century was found, according to that write up, the famous saint Virdev of the Brahmin family of Nagarhar (Multan) was a great warrior. He has also completed the Mahabodhini pilgrim tour. The king of west Bengal Devpal appointed Virdev as the chief of the Nalanda University.

In the middle of the ninth century, the great kingdom of Khalif Abbasside crashed. And thus the new small kingdoms of Turk and Irani dynasty emerged. These small kingdoms destroyed the rest Hindu culture from the mountains of Afghanistan.

In 871 A.D. Kabul shah was the king of Kabul. He was a Turk, but was following the Buddha religion. Since his forefathers rule, his family was known as the Turkey sahiya. The minister of the last Sahiya was Laliya. He deposed the king and himself became the new king. He and his accentors were known as the Hindusahiya's'. "O Hindusahiya of Hind'.

The historians have very much praised the Hindusahiya's'. Their enemies or friends were giving them equal honour due to his good qualities. The Laliya was a great warrior and maintained his kingdom between the kingdoms of Dorado's and Turks.

His capital was the shelter home for many afflicted kings. His glory spread much more than any other northern king. His kingdom was also very big. The regions of Gandhar, Udayan and Punjab were under his rule.

During his descendants' rule in the north western region of China, Chinese Buddha saint Kiye visited Hind with his three hundred followers and passed through the Gilgit valley from Kansu.

He visited a mountain situated in the west of Kashmir, where a Buddha saint served himself to a hungry tigress.

The last emperor of Hindusahiya was Anandpal, the son of Jaypal. He fought for the freedom of his kingdom with the Sultan of Gazni and died. He was encouraging the Grammar. He acted very generously with his hardcore enemy the sultan Mohammad. Even though he was defeated, and the enemies destroyed him and his kingdom starting from Lampak, Nagarhar and inlast capital city Udbhandpur respectively.

In the south of Kashmir there is Tushi River. On the bank of that River, Trilochanpal, the son of Anandpal gave his last fight with Muslims, but in last the Muslims won, and then after the Hindusahiya were destroyed from the pages of the history.

That period was of insecurity for the kings and their kingdoms,, but the destruction of Sahiyas' effected to the neutral people.

This mourning his well described by Kalhan in his 'Rajtarangini'. He wrote. " People are asking that, there is no one left from the Sahiya dynasty, his ministers or relatives? Were they staying on the earth? Or were not?"

Even Albaru, the historian of Mohammad, describes in his history about this incidence with very respect. He wrote, "Hindusahiya dynasty is now destroyed. No one is left behind from that great and large family. We should accept that during their rule, they were the best rulers and have done the activities for the public welfare and justice. They were having the great nobility..." Mohammad destroyed their whole family. He did some magic! Though he was able to destroy the whole family!

Due to these reasons, the Hindus' shifted their scriptures, science and holy books to the Hindu kingdoms, and sent them to very far areas of Kashmir, Banaras etc. The defeat of Hindusahiya was the last show of Hindu culture on the land of Afghanistan. Then after, the Hindu culture was vanished from the Afghanistan region, but as the thousands of the years, the Hindus ruled over the region, their deep effects on the culture were maintained in the public. Even though after the nine hundred years rule of Muslims, the Hindu effects in their culture are still maintained. The example of it is the various languages been spoken in the different parts of Afghanistan. Pustu language itself and the other sub languages are very similar to the Sanskrit language. Thus, we can feel that it is our relative language. Today Pasay language is been spoken in only some valley region of Afghanistan, but once it was spoken in the entire north and central region of Kabul River.

Bibliography

1. B.M. Luniya, (1968). “Bhartiya SabhyataTathaSanskriti Vikas”, Laxminarayan Agrawal, Agra.
2. S. L. Nagori, (1999). “Prarambhik Bharat Ka Itihas”, R.B.S.A. Publishers, Jaipur.
3. Shivswaroop Sahay, (2001). “PrachinBharatiya Dharma evam Darshan”, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi.
4. Jiyalal Kachru, (1956). “Bharatvarsh Ka Itihas”. S.Chand& Co., Delhi.
5. HarfulsinhShray, “ Bharat Ka Rajnitik Evam SanskrutikItihas”, College Book Depot, Jaipur.
6. Pravinchandra C. Parikh (1982). “Bharat Darshan – 1”, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar.
7. V.D. Mahajan. “PrachinBharatiya (Hindu) RajyahastraAurRajnitik Chintan”.
8. DharmanandKosambi (1937). “Hindi SanskritiAneAhinsha”. JivanlalAmarshi Mehta, Ahmedabad Ane Mumbai – 2.
9. Dhanpati Pandey Ane Ashok Anant, (1918). “Prachin Bharat Ka RajnitikAurSanskrutikItihas”. Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi.
10. Vimalchandra Pandey, (2007). “Prachin Bharat Ka Itihas”. S.Chand& Co., New Delhi.
11. Ramanlal V. Desai, (1963). “Bhartiya Sansruti, Prachya Mandir”. MahajiravVishvavidyalay, Vadodara.
12. Chandragupta Vedalankar, (1936). “Buhattar Bharat”. Rajdhani Granthagar, New Delhi.