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THE VISIT OF HIUEN TSIANG TO KASHMIR





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ABSTRACT:

At the time of Hiuen Tsang's travels in India Buddhism had already existed for twelve hundred years and during that long period the form of worship had not varied; for it had retained its simplicity, although superstitions had increased with the legends. The images of Buddha and his relics were still worshipped, as well as the monuments which contained them or which have been erected on the spots sanctified by the presence of Reformer. The miraculous appearance of two statues of the Buddha had formally converted the kingdom of Kustana. One statue had come to Kashmir through air. In answer to the prayers of former king, who have gone to meet it at the head of his army.

KEYWORDS Development of Buddhism, Art and various buddhist monasteries.







1.INTRODUCTION

Hiuen Tsiang was Chinese pilgrim who came to India for the study of Buddhism.He visited various Buddhist monastries in india. He came to Kashmir nearly for two times and copied original texts. He has valuable information about the large number of Buddhist monartries existing at that time Kashmir. He says that there are various viharas stupa in the kingdom. He mentioned various stupas namely Khamnoh Zabervan which was near chismashahi. Hiuen Tsang studied in Kashmir under the famous kashmir'i teacher Bhadsta who was scholarly person. When Hiuen Tsang came to Kashmir he spends his first night at Uskar. He came from Uri route. The large number of people welcome him and flowers were showered up on him.

HIUEN TSIANG

Hiuen Tsang decided at the age of twenty six, to travel in the countries of the west in order to consult wise and learned men. On the many points of law which, he left he had not yet understood properly or fully. Huien Tsang who encouraged by the example of Fahien and other Chinese pilgrim entered the valley by the rocky pass which formed its north west approach. 1After a few days he was escorted to the capital, where he was received by the king of Kashmir, in person, who gave him as royal reception. Both he and the king were mounted on elephants and the procession was followed by officers and dignataries. A large number of people came to welcome the royal quest. They carried banners and standards in their hands. Flowers were showered up on him and the emperor 2 Hiuen Tsiang on arrival to the capital was lodged in the famous vihara known as Jayendra Vihare. 3 he was provided with all facilities by the king, who placed 20 copyists at his disposal. They did the copying work for Hiuen Tsiang. Besides this the king placed 5 attendents at his disposal4. Kashmir was a powerful kingdom when Hiuen Tsiang visited it. The celebrated pilgrim has himself recorded that Taxila (Rawalpandi district) Urasa (Hazara) Simhapura(salt region) and the hill states of Rajapuri (Rajouri) and parnotsa (Poonch) all owed allegiance to Kashmir and paid tribute to its ruler. Buddhism through prevalent in all three states was however in a state of decline but in Kashmir itself there were a hundred monastries (including four Ashokan stupas containing bodily relics of the Buddha) in which lived about five thousand monks.5Hiuen Tsiang reonined in Kashmir for nearly 2 years and copied original texts. He has given valuable information about the large number of Buddhist monasteries existing at that time in Kashmir. He says that there are hundred viharas in the kingdom. He further informs that in a stupa 2 miles towards the north of Srinagar, he sought by the king Harsha for worship. He mentions another stupa near khanomoh, where he found a standing state of Avalebiteshvara Buddhistatva6 The church of Kashmir according to Hiuen Tsang never has Kashmir'i Buddhism been so meticulously described as by the Chinese pilgrim who spend two full years touring the valley and being instructed there 7 Despite the persecution of Mihirakula, memory of which was still painfully vivid, a hundred monasteries were sheltering, in whole of Kashmir about five thousand monks8Huien Tsang who stayed especially at the vihara of che-ye-in-to-lo (jayendra) identified with the jayendravihara named by kalhan 9 gives some details about certain of those monestaries. The most famous, which was attracting the veneration of crowds ,possessed a precious relic : a tooth of Buddha. It was inhabited by some three hundred religious 10. its site is clearly defined in the su-yu-ki at about li to the south east of the new city of the old capital and facing south of a big mountain. that can only refer to some southern slopes of the gapadri, but no building has left in that spot any chaeacteristics ruins and M.A Stein soeager to gather all topographical indications does not mention that localization furnished by the chinease pilgrim. Further south by 14 or 15 li, He points out a small sangharama where a miraculous statue of Avalokitesvara is venerated "if any one desiring to see the Pou-sa (Bodhisattva), renounces all nourishment and swear to so deprive himself until death, he makes his exit directly from the middle of the statue, permitting to be seen his body which is of a marvelous colour11 that precise localization of a miraculous statue in a determined kashmiri convent is important, since it can furnish us with the origin of a ritual of devotion to Avalokitesvara which in course of time will be generalized, recognized by a kashmiri Nun and broadcast in Tibet12 Thirty li to the south – east, an antiwue convent of imposing proportions was, at the time of HIOUAN Ttsang, in a state of great dilapidation 13 according to the tradition, Sanghabhadra would have lived in that convent, which is doubtless one of the vestiges of the past grandeur of the old sect of the Mulasarvastivadin. That venerable place was surrounded atmosphere. At the time of his journey, some thirty religious were still there studying the Grand Vehicule. At about ten li to the east of the convent dedicated to the tooth of Buddha14 on the edge of a mountain situated to the north, that it is to say on the north slope of the mountainlink joining the Gopadri to the massif which comprises the right bank of the vitasta (Jhelum), a little convent was the resident of [skandhila], author, Hiouan tsang tells us, of the tchongsse-fen-pi-p'o-cha-lun, which S.Julien gives as Vibhasaprakarana. Huien Tsaign again mentions to north west of Srinagar the convent of the "venalforest" 15 which it is perhaps necessary to render in Sanskrit in the form of Vikritavanavihara, where purna would have composed a commentary of the Vibhasa, and about 150 li westward of the capital, a convent mahasanghika where a monk named Bodhila wrote out a treatise "where the verities are reassembled" so goes it for Kashmir proper, but we must be careful not to forget the districts directly subject to Srinagar which were then Urarsa, Parnotsa, Rajapuri and Simhapura. Convents there were more modest than in the valley, and many were in a state of neglect. In Urasa. "there is a convent where one sees only a small number of religious who all study the doctrine of the lesser vehicule", and a stupa nearly 200 ft.high16at parnotsa five convents are in ruins, another shelter a few religious, while a stone stupa is the source of many miracles 17 at rajapuri "there are about ten convents which encloses only a small number of religious" 18 it would be necessary also to mention taxila, since Hiouan Tsang affirm that kingdom was then a dependent of Kashmir. In actual fact the authority of Srinagar over that old university town and the state of which it used to be the capital must have been more theoretical than real some powerful barons were disputing by main force, which is hardly favorable to meditation and study. Many convents there were in ruins, and religious, all of the greater vehicular, few in number. Similar work discovered in Kashmir itself be it at Ushkar be it at Harvan19The si-yu-ki interest itself, not without melancholy in souvenirs from the past grandeur of Buddhism in Kashmir. Hoei-li fortunately completes these indications by enumerating a certain number of Kashmiri master – teachers contemporaries of Huien Tsang and specifying their sectary adherence. 20 The Chinese pilgrim has failed to give a full description of and of the monasteries in the valley, yet it may be safely be assumed that they did not differ masterially from the ones in the other parts of the country (india) 21

CONCLUSION:-

In conclusion we can say that Huien Tsagn visit to Kashmir to study Buddhism. He visited various monestries in Kashmir during his visit he was welcome by large number of people. He mentioned various stupas like khanmoh , zabervan etc. he studed in Kashmir another famous kashmiri teacher namely Bhadanta. He came to Kashmir through Uri route. According to Huien Tsaign Kashmir was a powerful kingdom during his visit.the celebrated pilgrim was himself recorded that Taxila ,Varsa , Simhapura and the hill states of Rajori and Ponch all owed allegiance to Kashmir and paid tribute to its ruler.

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