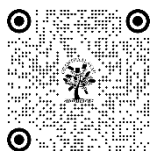


THE HISTORY OF THE BUDDHIST JANAPADAS IN NADIA DISTRICT OF BENGAL: A REVIEW

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.5154](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.5154)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

The history of Buddhism in Nadia district is very old. Buddhism flourished in Bengal in the sixth century BC when Goutama Buddha was engaged in the propagation of Buddhism in Eastern India. From that time BouddhaJanapadas were established in places like Tamralipta, Poundrobardhan, Ghosuri in Bengal. BouddhoJanapadas were also established in several places in Nadia. Examples include Subarnabihar, Gosthobihar, Panshila, Debagram and Alpa. It is difficult to say when these Janapadas were built. However, it is certain that BouddhaJanapadas were built in several places in Nadia due to the spread of Buddhism during the Pala rule. The Buddhist Janapadas of Nadia were built around different rivers. For example, Subarnabihar was built on the banks of Jalangi & Alakananda rivers, Gosthabihar on Chitra river, Alpa on the banks of Bhairab river. Many times it has been seen that due to the popularity of Buddhism, rivers or reservoirs have been named after the names of the Buddhist gods and goddesses. The naming of Anjana river, a branch of Jalangi river after the Buddhist goddess Anjana, indicates that rivers and canals had a deep connection with Buddhist culture in Nadia. This subject matter is highlighted.

Keywords: Anjana, Alpa, Bank, Chitra, Goddesses, Ghosuri, Janapada, Old, Pala, Propagation

1. INTRODUCTION

The Buddhism emerged in Bengal before the Pala period, it was confined to a few geographical areas. This restriction was removed during the Pala period. During this time Buddhism became the state religion and spread throughout Bengal. As a result of this, a Buddhist Janapada was formed in Nadia district. But there is no evidence that Buddhism spread everywhere in Nadia. Rather, Buddhist Janapadas and Buddhism spread in some areas of Nadia. For example, Subarnabihar, Gosthabihar and Alpa to name a few. But all these Buddhist Janapadas have not come up in the history of Nadia or Bengal. That is what is revealed in the literature review below.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research article claims its originality, because there was no work on this topic before. Kamal Choudhury's (ed.) 'NadiarItihasProthamparbo' (in Bengali, Dey's Publishing, Kolkata, 2012) and 'NadiarItihasDwitiyoParbo', (in Bengali, Dey's Publishing, Kolkata, 2012) are very important sources of information about this district. But in both the texts, no

word was spent on Buddhist Janapadas. The same applies to Tapas Banerjee's, 'UnishSatakerRanaghat' (in Bengali, Sahityashri, Kolikata, 1995), PabitraChakrabourty's, 'Chakdaha:Itihas o Sonskriti' (in Bengali, NabapatraPrakashan, 2010), MaloySankarBhattacharjee'sNadiyar Itihaser Chinno Potro'(in Bengali, The Kyanopi Books, Krishnagar, 2003). All these texts have basically described the cultural history of Nadia district but there is no discussion about Buddha & Buddhist Janapadas of Nadia. The books 'NadiyaCharcha'(in Bengali, Amar Bharati, 2014) and 'NadiarItihas Charcha'(in Bengali, Amar Bharati, 2016), by Mrityunjay Mandal are mainly collection of essays. Although these two books contain a total of one hundred and twenty articles, there is no discussion about the Buddhist Janapadas of Nadia. Kantichandra Rarhi's (ed.) 'Nabadwip Mahima' (in Bengali, Nabadwip Puratatta Parishad, Nabadwip, 2004) was 1st published in 1291. This book only discusses the Buddhist influence in Nabadwip. The Buddhist influence of other regions of Nadia has not been discussed. Pradyut Kumar Goswami's book 'NabadwiperSamaj o Sangskriti' (in Bengali, PustakBiponi, Kolkata, 2006) also discusses Buddhist influence in Nabadwip. But it is nothing but an exact imitation of KantichandraRari's discussion of 'Buddhist influence on Nadia'. So this article can be said to be totally unique and never discussed before anywhere. This time, we will proceed to the discussion of the main topic based on this research gap. First, let's start with the discussion of how Buddhism appeared in Bengal in a small scale, then to the context of Nadia district.

3. ORIGIN OF BUDDHISM IN BENGAL

In the territory of India, first in East India, Buddhism arose in the sixth century BC by Goutam Buddha. Then, through North-West India, Buddhist culture and philosophy spread throughout South- East Asia. Buddhism came to Bengal at the same time.¹ Buddhism was introduced in Bengal especially long before the Mauryan rule.² Despite the spread of Vaishnavism in India during the Gupta period, Buddhism flourished in Bengal. Fa-Hien came to India in fifth century during the reign of Chandragupta II and Visited Tambralipta in Bengal during his stay here he visited 22 Buddhist monasteries.³ The spread of Buddhism in Bengal is also known during the post Gupta reign of Harshavardhana. Hiuen Tsang came to India during the reign of Harshavardhan in 637.⁴ During his stay in India, he came to Pandrovardhana in Bengal and visited twenty Buddhist monasteries.⁵ He also visited Sompurbihar in Paharpur, East Bengal. Hiuen Tsang discovered seven monasteries at Konjal and ten at Karnasubarna adjacent to the palace.⁶ Then there were 97 Buddhist monasteries in Bengal from Munger to Bay of Bengal. 1150 monks Lived in these monasteries. Each monk had to be bear the annual burden of at least one hundred householders.⁷ After that Buddhist influence temporarily declined of Bengal. After becoming a king, Shashanka became determined to abolish Buddhism from Bengal with the help of Brahmins and he achieved success.⁸ After Shashanka's death, there was a re-awakening of Buddhism in Bengal. But this view is not acceptable at all. Because if Shashanka was a Buddhist exterminator, ten Buddhist monasteries would not have existed in Karnasubarna. Therefore, it cannot be said that Buddhism had completely declined during his time. Rather, it is reasonable to say that Buddhism did not spread that much during his time. During the Pala period, Buddhism flourished again in Bengal under suitable conditions.

That is, the history of Buddhist culture and philosophy in Bengal is very old. At least in the eighth century during the Pala period, the whole of Bengal became Buddhist. Gopal, the founder of the Pala dynasty, became the king of Bengal on the call of the people. He was Buddhist by caste and a feudal lord. The Pala rulers established their first capital at Gaurbanga in Malda and concentrated on governance. They established the second capital of Bengal at Subarnabihar in Nadia.⁹ This suggests that before the establishment of the Pala Dynasty in Bengal, Buddhism was the common religion among the masses. Otherwise, why would people put a Buddhist on the throne of Bengal? So it should not be said that Buddhism arose and developed in Bengal only by the Pala rulers. Rather, it is better to say that Buddhism became more popular during the Pala rulers of Bengal as Buddhism was the state religion. In other words, it can be said that Buddhism was the state religion during the Pala period, so the rise of Buddhism and Buddhist Janapadas in Bengal. Many Buddhist Janapadas were born in this fertile land.

4. ORIGIN OF BUDDHISM IN NADIA

Buddhism penetrated Nadia when the Palas built their second capital at Subarnabihar¹⁰ between the Alakananda, Jalangi and Bhagirathi rivers near Nabadwip. Then Buddhism spread throughout Bengal as the state religion. During the Pala rulers, as Buddhism was the state religion, numerous Buddhist Janapadas were formed in different parts of Nadia district. On this basis, Buddhism spread in Nadia, one of the oldest towns in Bengal, and Buddhist Janapadas were

established in several places. Examples include Subarnabihar, Gosthobihar, Panshila, Pardanga or Paharpur, Debagram, Deypara, Nabadwip and Alpa. These Janapadas were built around different rivers. For example, Subarnabihar was built on the banks of Jalangi & Alakananda rivers, Gosthabihar on Chitra river, Alpa on the banks of Bhairab river. Many times it has been seen that due to the popularity of Buddhism, rivers or reservoirs have been named after Buddhist gods and goddesses. Naming of Anjanariver, a branch of Jalangi river after the Buddhist goddess Anjana, indicates that rivers and canals had a deep connection with Buddhist culture in Nadia. Therefore, the good geographical environment of Nadia, the love of Buddhism of the Pala rulers and the influence of Buddhism in other parts of Bengal worked behind the development of the Buddhist Janapadas in Nadia district.¹¹ Now let's talk about the Buddhist Janapadas in Nadia district of Bengal.

5. BUDDHIST JANAPADAS IN NADIA

The question whether Buddhist Janapadas were established everywhere in Nadia district is still not settled. However, until now the existence of several Buddhist Janapadas has been found or not possible. For examples Subarnabihar, Gousthabihar, Panshila, Paharpur or Pardanga, Devapalli or Deypara, Debagram, Alpa and Nabadwip etc. should be mentioned.

Subarnabihar was known to all as a prominent Janapada in Nadia district during the Pala king. Subarnabihar is more important to us because it was the second capital city of Bengal during the Pala rulers. But during the colonial rule, this prosperous Janapadas was transformed into a mere village.¹² The name Subarnavihara proves that this region was once an area influenced by Buddhism. Bihara refers to a stupa temple of Buddhists. And the Pala rulers in Bengal were all Buddhists. As the royal power of Bengal was a fan of Buddhism, it was convenient for the Buddhist priests to propagate Buddhism. Based on this, the center of Buddhism was established in Subarna Bihar, between Bhagirathi and Jalangi Rivers in Nadia, and a Buddhist Bihar was built. From this Bihar, this Janapada is named Subarnabihar. Three rivers flowed through this region: Bhagirathi, Jalangi, Alkananda River. Alkananda River is a tributary of Jalangi River. However this river does not exist today but during the time of the Pala rulers its course flowed around Subarnabihar. As the communication system was very good and the supply of all logistics was easy, the Buddhists were attracted to this region and prosperous Janapadas (townships) developed around Buddhist monasteries.

Under the colonial rule, this prosperous Janapada became a mere pile of rubble. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar visited the Subarnabihar of Nadia in 1325 B.S and said that this stupa has survived in almost completely broken condition. To the people of Nadia, this stupa is known as 'Me(e)der forest mound'. The perimeter of this mound is about 480 cubits, the length is about 135 cubits, the width is about 125 cubits and the height is about 10 cubits.¹³ Now the question is why the glory of this place suddenly came to the bottom of the colonial rule? Basically, the importance of Buddhists faded after the Pala kings. Moreover, the Sena kings after the Palas were of Vaishnava religion. As a result, Buddhists gradually lost royal favour. Later they gradually abandoned this place. Another reason for the decline in importance of the region was the drying up of the Alaknanda River and the loss of communication and commercial activities as the Jalangi River changed its course.¹⁴ As a result of these two processes, Subarnabihar, a Janapada popular during the Pala kings, turned out to be a ruin and an ordinary village during the British period.

Another historical place of Nadia district is Buddhist Janapada Alpa. The location of this ancient Janapada on the banks of river Bhairab is Meherpur sub-division (Now Bangladesh). Once upon a time, King Hiranyapala of the Pala dynasty built his capital around this Alpa Janapada. But during the colonial period this Janapada became only a high mound. The glory of Alpa Janapada can be traced till the forties of the eighteenth century. In 1744, the Bargi's (Maratha's) under the leadership of Bhaskar Pandit attacked Alpa Janapada of Meherpur. The glory of Alpa was destroyed by the impact of this attack.¹⁵ However, not only Bargi's attack destroyed the glory of this Janapada. Later, as the Bhairab moved far away from this Janapada and the flow of the Bhairab was blocked, the Janapada remained just an ordinary Janapada under the colonial rule.¹⁶

Gousthabihar is another ancient & popular Buddhist Janapada of Nadia district. Gousthabihar was under Chuadanga subdivision (Now Bangladesh) of Nadia district during British rule. 10 miles east of Chuadanga railway station is the village of Goushta bhihar on the banks of river Chitra. Its other name is Teghri Gosthabihar. Philosopher Surendramohan Bhattacharya was born in this Gousthabihar village. Gousthabihar was formerly the main centre of Buddhists. So Buddhist Stupas or Biharas had been established here. A large Buddhist activity spreaded through the Chuadanga subdivision mainly during the Pala rulers.¹⁷ For this reason, this Janapada is known as Gousthabihar.

Debagram is one of the oldest Buddhist Janapada in Nadia district. In this district, there are two Janapadas called Debagram during the pre-colonial rule. A Devagram near Plassey on the banks of Bhagirathi river. Another one is Devgram near Madanpur under Ranaghat subdivision. Among these two Janapadas, the one near Plassey is the oldest Janapada. Debagram Janapada near Plassey was a prosperous Janapada during the Pala kings. Mahamahopadhyay Harprasad Shastri identified Plassey Debagram in Nadia as 'Ramcharit Balbalvi' land. 18 This Balbalvi is the 'Bagari' region according to Pandit Shastri. Under colonial rule 'Bagari' comprised most of the Presidency Division. Besides, Prachyavidya Maharnava Nagendranath Bose has accepted Debagram near Plassey as the Debagram mentioned in the Ramcharita text of 'Balbalvir' land. He also says that during the time of Goudadeep Rampal, a feudal king named Bikram lived in Debagram.¹⁹ So it can be said that Debagram is an ancient Janapada. During the colonial period, Prafulla Kumar Sarkar witnessed 'Deval Bazar Garh' at Debagram in the southern part of Nadia district.²⁰ In this context, Nagendranath Basu says, Debagram was the 'matulaloy' of Gaudeswara Narayan Pal's Prime Minister (Pradhanmantri) Gurab Mishra and the Janapada was famous even before the 10th century. But during the colonial rule, the Janapada was the debut in only one village.²¹

Buddhist culture also flourished through Nabadwip and its surrounding areas. There are still many evidences in favour of the spread of Buddhist culture in Nabadwip, Pardanga, Panshila and Bhaluka.

Panshila is situated on the bank of the Bhaluka Bil, north of Bhaluka. After crossing the bil, the Ganga river is seen flowing in a rough and thin body after going some distance. This bil is not an abandoned channel of the Ganges but a trace of the extinct flow of Alkananda. Now the question is whether Panshila is Buddhist Janapada. One, the main reason for considering Panshila a Buddhist Janapada is that this name is similar to Taxila and Blikramshila. But another meaning of the word Panshila can also be expressed. Majida village is situated on the banks of Bhaluka Bil. The north-west of the present Panshila is seen to follow Buddhist culture. Bhaluka's bil is known here as Hansbahan bil. This bill has a caged Buddha statue reclining on a stone duck.²² At present he is worshipped as Shiva. This place may be named Panshila as this rock lives in water. Lord Buddha or Shiva had been lifted from the water during the Gajan of Chaitra (Chaitra is a last month of Bengali year) month. This custom has been observed by the residents of this village for a long time. In other words, traces of Buddhist culture can be found in the long-standing tradition. Two, a high mound can be seen in Panshila. There is a stone near him. An inscription in ancient Bengali script is engraved on this stone. It is written on it - 'Khaleta Aayog Ms. Shiva, KhaletaAayogMs.Manju Ghosh, KhaletaAayogMs.Yogesh.'²³ Its meaning is difficult to understand. But it is clear that there is a name of one God at the end of each chhatra. The deities mentioned are Shiva, Manju Ghosh and Yogesh. Shiva is Mahadeva, Manju Ghosh is Bodhisattva and Yogesh is Buddha. That is, the three jewels of Buddhism - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha can be said to have transformed here into Shiva, Manju Ghosa and Yogesh.

Now the question is when Panshila emerged as a Buddhist Janapada. A review of the artefacts found at Panshila suggests that the rise of this Janapada was at the very end of the Pala dynasty. Because Hindu deity worship system penetrated into Buddhism in Bengal towards the very end of the Pala rule. However, worship among Buddhists began during the Third Buddhist Sangita. Among the Buddhists who split into this session were the Mahayana Buddhists who worshipped idols. During the time of Kanishka, worship of Buddhist idols started on a large scale. It is not known whether the inhabitants of the Buddhist Janapada of Panshila worshipped Buddha as a deity since this time or not. It is not known whether the Janapada of Panshila arose at all during this period or not. The point to be judged in this context is that if Buddhism spreaded in Bengal before the Sen period, then the Janapada of Panshila arose at this time. Through not unusual, still there is no proper source of information about this. Rather, there is a similarity between the naming of Nadia as Panshila along with Bikramsila, Taxila. So it can be said that Panshila, Bikramshila and Taxila are contemporary Janapadas. In this logic it can be said that Panshila Janapada of Nadia was formed in Pal realm.

A Buddhist Janapada was built at Bhaluka on the banks of Bhaluka Bil. But this Janapada arose on the eve of the union of Buddhism and Hinduism. When the rule of the Pala dynasty declined, Hindu practices entered into Buddhism. New religious beliefs and principles of worship also came in vogue. They cannot exactly be called Hinduism or pure Buddhism, they are a mixture of both, eg. Lorakrti Buddhist statues. He is worshipped as Dharmaraj.²⁴ This worship started at the end of the Pala period. Evidence of this is found in Ramai Pandit's 'Dharmapujabidhana'. He wrote-

"Bari MorBallukar/ Puji Shrinoirakar

ShanibarBrataKariloBallukar Tire"²⁵ (in Bengali)

(Meaning in English-Home is my Balluka/ Worship Sri Nairakar/On Saturday we observe the vow on bank of Balluka.)

This word Balluka has become Bhaluka at that time and Balluka bank refers to the bank of the Bhaluka's bil. A map of 1854 shows a river starting from Gadigacha, Majidah, passing through Panshila, Baluka and falling into the Ganges south of Satkulia.²⁶ This river flowing at the foot of Ballukapalli was probably also known as Balluka. After the river breaks down, the bill that forms in its womb is still known as Bhaluka's bil. In fact, a large Buddhist Janapada developed around Bhaluka, Panshila and Majida. And its centre was Panshila. It was from this Panshila that the Dharmaraja or Buddha image was brought to Bhaluka.²⁷

Now let's talk about Devapalli Janapada. Another name of Devapalli is Depara. It was famous as a Buddhist Janapada during the Pala period. Geographically, Devapalli is situated three miles south-west of Krishnanagar and on the bank of Deypara or Chamta tributary adjacent to Bhaluka. A 3.75 inch 'Ugratara' Buddhist idol was found in the womb of Depara Bil. This idol is more like 'Chamunda' goddess.²⁸ The name Chamta is derived from the word 'Chamunda' - the slayer of the demon Chamunda & Munda and Chamta Bil was named after this goddess. Not only the 'Ugratara' Buddhist idols, but also the tall stupa visible from the main road of Deypara, the Nrisimhadeva edifice and many stones spread over the temple premises over an area of 20 bighas testifies the existence of Buddhist Janapada itself.²⁹ In fact, the place was popular even during the decline of Buddhism, when the Buddhist idols were being transformed into Hindu deities.

Paharpur or Pardanga was one of the Buddhist Janapada adjacent to Nabadwip. There is a very high and stony land in the western part of the present Nabadwip called Pardanga. Pardanga had a Buddhist stupa or hill. The word Pahar is derived from the deviation of the word Bihar.³⁰ We know that Pardanga is located near Nabadwipa in the ancient texts of 'Chaitanya Bhagavata'. For example-

“SarbbaNabadwip a NacheNabadwip Ray

Gadigacha, Pardanga Adi Diya Jay” 31 [in Bengali]

[Meaning in English-Nabadwip Roy [Sri Chaitany Dev] dances everywhere in Nabadwip/ Gadigacha, Pardanga passes in front.]

Again in some books, Pardanga is mentioned as Paharpur. For example-

“Paharpur Nabodwiptorito Bahira

Mrijapurur Ghate Dinga Dilo Chapaiya.” 32 [in Bengali]

[Meaning in English- Nabadwip Paharpur is fast/Left the canoe at Mirjapur Ghat.]

There are two ancient places named Paharpur in Dinajpur and Rajshahi districts (Now Bangladesh). It is proved that there were Buddhist stupas in those two places as well. Those places are named Paharpur because of Buddhist stupas or hills. The location of Pardanga is also marked in the survey map of 'Sahar-Nadia' of 1854.³³ So there is no doubt about its location.

Many examples of Buddhist culture can also be observed in Nabadwip. Among the ancient idols found at Nabadwip, Siva at Pardanga, Yugnath, Shasthitakurani near Siva at Malo, Jayadurga and Dandapani are Buddhist. We will try to show them one by one.

Scholars have mainly divided Buddhist sculptures into these categories, namely, 1. Faceless Tortoise shell, 2. Tortoise shell, 3. Chaityakriti, 4. Shovel, 5. Quadrangular altar with three faces etc.³⁴ The shape of the idols found in Nabadwip shows Buddhism. All the Buddhist-influenced statues and broken stones found in Nabadwip were brought from this Paharpur or Pardanga Bihar. But it was possible because of the union of Hinduism and Buddhism. And mixed with it was, the purity of the heart, love, devotion and faith. This truth is revealed in the portraits of the gods and goddesses discussed below.

- **Pardanga Shiva:** This is a handleless kurmakrti stone block. This category of idols is non-informative and very ancient. According to historians, this type of statue was established during the time of Maharaja Ashoka. This stone block was found by Barujeebi (a class of Bengali society) about 200 years ago at Pardanga or Paharpur near Nabadwip. Shiva is called 'Shiva of Pardanga' after Pardanga. It is kept in the Yugnath Shiv Mandir and it is here that he is worshipped.³⁵
- **Jugnath(a large stone block.):** This class of idols was also installed by the Buddhists in ancient times. They were established during the time of Maharaj Harshvardhan.³⁶

- **PadmapaniBuddhamurti:** A metal-made PadmapaniBuddhamurti was worshipped in the Yuganatha Shiva temple. Not more than 50 statues of this class have been found in Bengal. On March 22, 1930, Superintendent K, N, Dixit of the Bengali Archaeological Department took this Buddha statue for examination.³⁷
- **Sasthitakurani:** One large upalkhanda has a meditating Buddha figure clearly carved. Taxation is established by Janupari. Something is blurred from the lower part of the foot. Two lion-faces are carved on both sides of this idol. These are two panjamarks. Another stone similar to this fragment is worshipped as Jaya Durga in the temple of Dandapani. Another goddess named Jayadurga is located on a horse stall on the side of the municipal road. It is only a broken stone pillar. This pillar was brought from the broken Bihar of Paharpur.³⁸
- **Dandapani:** A man with a hetmund stick is standing on the left thigh in a Dakshapada on a large stone platform. When you see it, it looks like a Buddha statue. The name Dandapani does not appear at the level of Mahadev's name. There is a Shiva called Dandapani in Kashidham. His shape is also like this. So many say that Kashikhanda was founded during the wane of Buddhism. The main meaning of the word Dandapani is Yama or Dharmaraja i.e. Buddha.³⁹ For all these reasons, we think it is also called a Buddha statue.

Again, the information obtained from the craftsmanship, structure and construction of Balladhibi belonging to Bamunpukur adjacent to Nabadwip proves in favour of Buddhist monastery. According to the sources of the Indian Archeology Department, the Pankha idols, terracotta human and animal figurines found here belong to the eight-ninth century. And at this time the Buddhists returned to Hinduism.⁴⁰

Furthermore, none of the ancient Shiva idols in Nabadwip are Linga idols. Most are just pebbles. Millions of eyes and faces have been painted on that stone. They are also either a Buddhist statue or a broken stone fragment of a temple. It was during the time of the Buddhists that the stone-craft in our country flourished considerably, and the Buddhists often constructed buildings with the help of stone. For this reason, we believe that the broken stone pillars that can be seen are from the ruined Bihara. At present, Buddhist influence is felt in the idols of temples in Nabadwip and other places, but the former charm has completely faded.

Kayetpara and Anulia are ancient Buddhist Janapadas located on Churni river. This Janapada flourished during the Pala period. In Anulia lived the Buddhist monk Shatacharjya. He went to Tibet with Atish Dipankar. At present, the worship of Dharma Tagore in Kayetpara carries the identity of Buddhist culture.⁴¹

Buddhist culture flourished in Krishnagar, the capital of Nadia. The special influence of Buddhist culture is still observed in Malopara on the banks of Jalangi river. The residents of Malopara have been worshiping Dharmaraj Thakur (God) for a long time.⁴² This Dharmaraj is a form of Buddha.

Thus it can be seen that Buddhist culture spread throughout the undivided Nadia district. Monasteries were established in Buddhist Janapadas. But now nothing remains of those monasteries. The Buddhist Janapadas in Nadia has been lost from people's minds.

6. WHY THE BUDDHIST JANAPADAS IN MEMORY

At present there is no Buddhist monastery architecture in Nadia district. But in our discussion, it was seen that during the Pala period, several Buddhist Janapadas were built in Nadia district. Even if those Janapadas exist now, there is no Buddhism there and no jaulus(Jaulus means glory). So the question is why this happened.

Buddhism began to wane in Nadia after the rule of the Pala dynasty. After the Pales, when the Sena rule was established in Bengal, Hinduism became stronger with rituals and rituals. The Sena rulers were Vaishnavas. In such a situation, when the Buddhist philosophical sentiments in the heart of the nation, the rules and principles of Hinduism sat in the hearts of the people, the Buddhist tradition began to fade away. In fact, long before the Sen period, Buddhists had adopted the rituals of Hinduism. After Ashoka, Kanishka reformed Buddhist Council. It was during this time that Buddhism and this newly formed liberal Buddhism was named Mahayana.⁴¹ The transformation of Mahayana Buddhism into Bajrajana-Mahayana-Kalachakrayana and Sahayana etc. Mantrayanaists were attracted to the Tantric system. During Nityananda's time Sahajiya Buddhists were also in this country, Nityananda hated them.⁴² Nityananda's son Birbhadra placed the Buddhist Sahajiya panthis into the vaishnava society during the festival of Kheturi.⁴³ Branches of Vaishnavas such as Jatvaishnava, Sakhi, Bhekhdhari etc. are said to be the conversion of Sahajiya group of Bouddhists.⁴⁴ With the incorporation of Sahajiya group into Vaishnava religion, the influence of Buddhists decreased in Nadia.

Again, Nadia being the capital of the Sena kings, the influence of Sena was strong in the whole of Nadia. On the contrary, the influence of Buddhists in Nadia was declining. In this situation, the worship of Gods like Dharmapuja, Bishalakshi, Bashuli, Chamunda, Indrani, Shiva, Brahmani, Bhairab etc. started in Buddhism. Buddhatantrikism emerged during this period. Under the shelter of this Tantra, violent animal sacrifice was practiced in place of non-violent Buddhism as a means of worshipping all those gods and goddesses. In other words, the importance of Buddhists from Nadia and Bengal decreased as Buddhism deviated from its ideals. After that the traffic of people's visit to Buddhist monastery decreased. In fact, during the resurgence of Hinduism in Bengal during the Sena period, when the Buddhist idols were being transformed into Hindu deities, the Buddhist Tantric idols came under the shelter of all Hindu tantras, then Buddhism and the Janapadas of Nadia became important. In other words, the Buddhism that was once born protesting against the Hinduism, that Buddhism became united with the Hinduism at this time. After that the need for Buddhism in the people of Nadia came to an end. Another reason for the wane of the Buddhist Janapadas of Nadia is, the degradation of the rivers and water bodies.

All the Buddhist Janapadas of this district were built around the river. Water bodies were one of the means of communication, drinking water, cultivation. For example, Alakananda, Chitra, Anjana, Jalangi, Bhairav, Churni rivers can be mentioned. When these rivers moved away from the Janapadas or dried up, the Buddhist Janapadas failed to retain its beauty. Then Buddhist monasteries were wiped out due to the lack of maintenance. Only the names of Buddhist Janapadas remain.

7. CONCLUSION

So it can be said that, as a result of the contribution of the awakening of Buddhists in Bengal during the Pala period, several Buddhist Janapadas were formed in the whole of Bengal including Nadia. Again, with the fall of the Pala rulers, the Janapadas like Subarnabihar, Gousthabihar, Panshila, Paharpur or Pardanga etc. also fell almost at the same time. It can be said that after Pala rulers there was no distinctiveness in the customs of Buddhists in Nadia. Rather, it was mixed with the Hindus. An example of which we can see in the idols of various temples of Nabadwip. Many say that the idols with Buddhist influence in Nabadwip came from Buddhist Janapadas. But the Buddhist influence of Nabadwip Janapada should not be seen as a result of migration only. We have to remember that the whole of Bengal including Nabadwip was once under Buddhist Pala rulers. So it is not unusual for Nabadwip Janapada to become Buddhist during the time of Buddhist Pala Kings. Another point is that when Buddhism merged with Hinduism at the end of the Pala period, it also influenced the temples of Nabadwip. In this argument, it cannot be said that Nabadwip was known as a Buddhist Janapada during the Pala period. On the contrary, now in Nabadwip, the idols sheltered by Buddhist culture are being worshipped, it can be said that it is the result of Hindu-Buddhist unity. But many Janapadas adjacent to Nabadwip and the Buddhist janapadas that developed elsewhere in Nadia are never like Nabadwip. For example, Gausthabihar, Subarnabihar, Paharpur or Pardanga, Alpa, Panshila, Debagram, Depara, Bhaluka can be mentioned. All these areas were developed as Buddhist Janapadas. There are many reasons for calling these areas Buddhist Janapadas. For example, geographically, one of the characteristics of Buddhist Biharas is- a) high Stupa place, b) having the word Bihara associated with the name of the place, c) presence of Pala rulers d) various tools used by Buddhists e) presence of many stones and bricks etc. These features prove in favour of Buddha Janapadas. The rise of the Buddhist Janapadas led to a variety in the cultural history of Nadia. Although this variation is more visible towards the fag end of the Pala rules. At that time, Buddhism and Hinduism became one. This was an episode of mahamilan (Mahamilan means united). This unity is still evident in the idols of ancient temples in various parts of Nadia. Anjana river is one of the examples of the spread of Buddhist culture in Nadia. Anjana was worshipped as a Buddhist goddess towards the end of the Pala rule, during the fusion of Hinduism and Buddhism. She was probably a goddess of fertility or water. That is why the branch of Jalangi river was named Anjana after the Buddhist goddess Anjana. Just as the influence of the Buddhists in Nadia has disappeared, the river Anjana has also dried up today. After that there is only dry river bed.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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