

## New Chapter of Buddhism in Berar

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Buddhism is the real physical path to make our life more prosperous and meaningful. It is the real religion which developed human mind towards physical reality. It encourages human to take any decision with your own mind. One should take in his mind that only physical world is global truth and the problems which human being faces in his daily life is arises from the physical causes so the remedy of that problems must be of physical background. India is always the destination to those who have to learn philosophy of spirituality, Lord Buddha is the lighthouse to them all truthseekers. Lord Buddha’s philosophy is balance between spiritual and physical life. All other religious paths are one sided developed towards spiritual life only. But Buddha’s path is the answer to all problems of physical and spiritual life. That’s why the foreign travelers were attracted towards India ; that attraction is only for Lord Buddha. He was the most enchanting personality; having the solution of all problems of human being. So the attraction towards Buddhism and its literature fetches out the scholars to India.

**Berar Region** – Berar is Western part of Vidarbha region. The eastern part of Vidarbha called as **‘Zadi’** and The Western part of Vidarbha called as **Berar**. The Wardha river divided Vidarbha in above mentioned two parts. The name of Berar developed from the name of **‘Varhad’**. The name of **‘Varhad’** also developed from the name of ‘The Wardha’ river. The name developed as **‘Vardatat –Vardatah –**

***Vaarad – Varhad - Barar to Berar***'. <sup>1</sup>Today's Berar is made of Amravati revenue division. There are five districts in that division and they are Amravati, Akola, Yavatmal, Washim and Buldana.

**Buddhism and Berar** – About Maharashtra '*Waghali*' inscription of Jalgaon District suggest us that the Mauryan empire must spread in Maharashtra. The '*Supparak*' (Shurparak or Sopara) was the most important trade city of Buddha era. The '*Thergatha*' mentioned one tradesman named '*Punna*' or '*Purna*' of Thane. He accepted Buddhism from Lord Buddha at '*Shravasti*'. He built a wooden '*Vihar*' at '*Sopara*'.<sup>2</sup> Lord Buddha was invited by this '*Purna*' and Lord Buddha visited the Sopara. This incident mentioned in '*Papanchsuyani*' and '*Sarathyappakarini*' books. The oldest inscription of Vidarbha from was belong to Ashokan period. This inscription found in Deotek village Districts Chandrapur. This inscription engraved by Mahamatya of Ashoka. They have been engraved religious message of Ashoka. There are many no. of inscriptions was found from Adam and Paoni. Mahakshtrapa Rupiamma Pillar Inscription reported from Paoni. These inscriptions related Sunga-Satvahana period. Chandala, Patur, Mohadi in this rock-cut cave also having inscription. Nashik cave inscriptions also related to Buddhism of Vidarbha. Copper plate inscription related to Vakataka period and later Vakatak period. From this copper plate inscription we got information which is useful for study of Vidarbha Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> This reveals that the Buddhism was well settle in Maharashtra from the age of Lord Buddha. Vidarbha also have great heritage of Buddhism. Pavani the famous archaeological site reveals that the Buddhism was settle down in Vidarbha far ago of 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Berar also have great heritage of Buddhism. There are many famous archaeological sites which reveals that the Buddhism have great heritage in this region. Some points from which we can

verify the facts of Buddhism and we can reinvent the new facts about Buddhism in Berar.

1. **Bhon** – This archiological site is in Sangrampur tahasil district Buldana. There found the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC stupa of Mauryan era. This site is most important through the eyes of Buddhism and Indian heritage. This site show that the Buddhism was settled down in this region far ago of 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC. Most amazing fact is that the *Stupa* was built with stone and bricks. Bhon must be that spot where famous Chinese traveler Hue – en – tsang have visited. He written about that capital and region named Mo – Ho- La- Cha. So the **Bhon** must be game changer archeological site of Berar about the view towards Buddhism.<sup>4</sup>
2. **Coins and Trade route** – There found Roman coins at many archiological sites of Berar. This archiological proof reveals the traderout towards Pavani via Bhon –Kholapur - Kaundinyapur. These coins found at Kholapur, Tadli, Adam, and Sapegaon. Satvahana coins also found at Bhon and many other sites of Berar.<sup>5</sup> One seal found from Mahurzari excavation and this is related to Buddhism. We can conclude that the trade route of Buddhist trade cities must gone through Berar and that trade route connect the Buddhist archeological sites of that time. The trade route may be Bharuch to Bhon via river route and then Bhon – Kholapur – Kaundinyapur – Pavani. The other trade route must be Bhon – Pimpalgaon Raja- Chandol – Bhokardan- Paithan third one route Bhon – Pimpalgaon Raja – Jaipur – Ajanta.
3. **Caves** – Manjari (Amaravati district), Patur(Akola Disrict), Pipalgaon Raja, Savali (Buldhana district), Kalanb, Nibdyarvha (Yeotmal District) etc. cave of Vidarbha region. We need to study all the sites very minutely. Patur caves are of Buddhist period , there found inscription in

Dhamm Script over the cave. One other inscription found at the cave pillar and architraves.<sup>6</sup> This cave must be of 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The caves must be ruined by the time or must be demolished by any invader of opposite religious side. **Salbardi** Caves of Morshi tahasil in Amravati district is related to Buddhism. But today that cave converted into lord Shiva temple and the cut headed sculpture which worshiped as goddess is actually the idol of Lord Buddha.<sup>7</sup> The sangharama mentioned By Hue en Tsang<sup>8</sup> must be the **Salbardi** Cave Sangharam and not of Ajanta Caves. Cisterns from the Mailgad fort of Buldana district must be the Buddhist rock cut caves. Chandol tahasil Buldana District Buldana was the famous Buddhist study center of then time.

4. **Mahavans** – The famous Buddhist religious book **Mahavans** reveals the names of preachers which was sent after the 3<sup>rd</sup> **‘Buddha Sangiti’**.<sup>9</sup> In that book the name of Maharashtra and the preacher which was send to Maharashtra was mentioned in it.<sup>9</sup> The line

महारठट्ठं महाधम्मरक्खित्थेर नामकं ।

suggests that **‘Mahadhammarakkhit’** was send to **‘Maharattha’** (Maharashtra) as preacher. This Mahadhammarakkhit spread Buddhism in this region.

5. **Inscriptions** – **Sanchi** and **Bharhut** Stupa of Madhyapradesh are famous Buddhist Stupas have inscriptions of that stupas. The inscription denotes the names of donationars of various places of Berar<sup>10</sup>. Thas places are Bhatkuli (Amravati – The name of Bhatkuli actually mentioned as Bhijakatak) and Bhogwardhan (Now in Jalna District but it was part of Berar for long time). This reveals that the follower of Buddhism was in major numbers in Berar and also those followers seems to be well established community. Because if any community donating

for building the stupas in another region that means that community must be well established or they must be trademan and profit gainer of Buddhist trade routes.

6. **Nagarjuna** - Famous Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna was friend of Satvahan king Yadnyashri Gautamiputra Satkarni ( 166 AD to 196 AD). Nagarjuna wrote famous letter cum book to named '*Suhrullekha*' to preach to the Yadnyashri Gautamiputra Satkarni. This Nagarjuna was from Vidarbha region. He was teacher at Nalanda Buddhist university.<sup>11</sup> He spread Buddhism in Krushna Besin and was living at '*Srisailam*' in todays Andhrapradesh. We can imagine that if a person from Vidarbha teaches at Nalanda and written more than 20 books on Buddhism, that Vidarbha was the thinktank of Buddhism then. His 20 books of Buddhism are found in Chinese language. He was the founder of the '*Shunyativada*' philosophy. He was also the founder of '*Madhyamika*' philosophy.
7. **Kaundinya and Purna** – Kaundinya and Purna was names of Buddhist monks.<sup>12</sup> The name of them have regional reference from Berar. The origin of these name must be from the geographical name of the place and river from Berar.

**Conclusion** – *Berar was the most important center of Buddhist period. Buddhism established in Berar in the time of Lord Buddha. Now time have come to reinvent the history of Buddhist Berar with these new chapters and visions.*

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