CHAPTER II

PATRONAGE TO BUDDHISM IN KARNATAKA

In the middle of the 6th century B.C. took birth on Indian sky a new luminary, the Gautama, who have brought new thought, which turned into the foundation of a new religion called the Buddhism.

It had exerted influence upon the existing Vedic religion by introducing its new thoughts and ideas. They didn’t give importance to Yajna Yagadis, rituals etc. Buddhism is one of the oldest faiths of India. Historically, it is more than 2500 years old.

From the beginning of his very childhood, Siddhartha by his nature, appeared distracted from the materialistic world. He advocated the theory of Sanyasa or renunciation, after experiencing the misery and suffering of the people and having experienced the life. In order to carry out this, he proposed right way. Hence forth, the religion and the philosophy of early Buddhism was preached by Buddha to his disciples. The followers of his preachings are known as the Sthaviravadins and were called as the Theras also. In the later stage there were differences in their interpretations about their philosophy which lead to the different divisions in Buddhism. In the religion of Buddhism, there was a single sect, earlier, called Hinayana which opine about the past, present and future existence. Hinayananists believed in the Buddha as a human being. Therefore, they believed in the Bodhisatva concept. According to one Jataka story,
Gautama was born as Sumedha Brahmana, he was practised meditation and at last was born in this mortal world.

The followers of Hinayana used to worship relics of Buddha, lotus foot prints, bodhi tree, vajrasana, stupa, chaitya, casket with the remains of Buddha like teeth, hairs, nails etc. The fundamental principles of his teachings are represented by the four noble truths, his simple and practicable precepts, appeared to the masses as they pertained to their daily life experiences, like their pain and pleasures and also to their remedies therefore naturally impressed them.

The four noble truths are as follows: which impressed the masses to a greatest extent.

1) The world is full of sorrow

2) Suffering is created in the world, due to selfish desires of human beings

3) It can be stopped by the destruction of thirst.

4) That in order to do this, one must know the right path called ashtangika marga.

The most significant feature which helped for the spread of Buddhism, through the means of missionaries, specially meant for the spread of Buddhism, is organization of Bhikshu sanghas and the movement of the disciples, throughout the country, spreading the message of their master in Ceylone. In the 6th century, B. C., it covered whole north India, South India in general Karnataka in particular like -
Amaravati, Karle, Kanheri, Ajanta, Nasik, Junnar and Bhaja apart from these Aihole, Kadri, Balligave, Torke, Kolivada Indi(Vijapur), Lokapur, (Kadiyur) etc.

**Buddhism during Mauryas Period:**

In the history of Buddhism in South India with particular reference to Karnataka, patronage of Buddhism appeared from the great king Ashoka but not before.

Some scholars now aging that, the region of Karnataka was not only included under the control of the Ashokan kingdom but also it was included earlier under the control of his predecessors like his grandfather, Chandragupta and Nanda dynasty... “in this regard in different periods in various parts of India. Buddhist councils were held they are the first council held at Rajagriha.2 (U.P.) The second council at Vaishali3 (Bihar), The third council at Patna or Pataliputra4 (Bihar) and the fourth council held at Kashmir. This religion maintained its influence even after Buddha’s Nirvana.

“After, his Nirvana, his body has been divided among the Mahajanapadas in the 6th century B.C. thereby Ashoka in the 8th century A.D. had constructed 8,800 stupas, among them Piprawa was the first of its kind.5

Buddhism even though took birth in India, unfortunately, it lost its existence in India itself but still it is existing in China, Tibet, Japan, Burma and other foreign countries.
The legends, with regard to the Mauryan territory, inform us that imperial Nandas of the North, held over Kuntala i.e. the territory which comprised a great portion of north Karnataka.

"Dolmens a historian, known as megaliths found in different parts of Karnataka are locally called as Mores, Marie, Moresa means Mauryas."6

It is a well known fact that Ashoka was instrumental greatly, for the spread of Buddhism in various parts of the country and outside. But the Buddhist Chronicles like Deepavamsa and Mahavamsa7 inform about his rough behaviour before his coming to the throne later on conversion to Buddhism and thereby spread of Buddhism.

"The Ceylone chronicles"8 give two different stories relating to the account of his conquest of the throne. According to first one, Ashoka had killed ninety-nine brothers born of different mothers before he ascended the throne of the Mauryan empire.

"V.A. Smith"9 a great historian did not agree with the information provided by Ceylonese Chronicles, because it was quite certain that Ashoka's brothers and sisters were alive in the seventeenth and eighteenth year of his reign, whose house holds were objects of his anxious care.

"The second story of the Mahavamsa"10 describes that after murdering his eldest brother, Ashoka became the emperor of the Mauryan dynasty, but the Divyavadana states that Bindusara on his death bed asked his eldest son Susima to accept the charge of the
administration of the kingdom and for this reason, he told his ministers to arrange a ceremony to appoint him, but his ministers asked Ashoka to capture the throne in place of Susima. Ashoka accepted their proposal, by successfully calling upon the goals to give him the diadem if it was by right.\textsuperscript{11}

Ashoka ascended the throne in 273 B.C. but his coronation took place after four years in 269 B.C. The above accounts show that, at the beginning he was a cruel man later on changed himself hence Ashoka’s period is known as the golden era of Buddhism.

The Ceylonese Chronicles Mahavamsa provides the information that therā named Rakhita was sent to Vanavasa, even it contained about the conversion of Banavasi people, the passage from the Mahavamsa is as follows.

“The Thera Rakkhita, who had gone to Vanavasa, preached, floating in the air in the midst of the people, the Anamatagyasamyutha. The conversion of sixty thousand persons took place, thirty seven thousand in number received, the Pabbaja from him, five hundred viharas were founded in the country. Thus did the theras establish the conqueror.”\textsuperscript{12}

The great scholar Jeen Jiluski opine that Fahien got the manuscript, belonging to mahishasaka sect at Ceylone. He further stated that, Theravada Hinayana tradition started in South from Kausumbi the coastal area, southwards that is Avanti and Mahishamandala thereafter might have reached to Ceylone and thereby influenced on Banavasi of Karnataka.\textsuperscript{13}
ASOKAN EDICTS
IN ANDHRA - KARNĀṬAKA

Asokan Edicts in Andhra-Karnāṭaka
"The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang visited Banavasi in the 7th century and described that Banavasi was one of Buddhist centre, he referred to a Konkanapura, even historians agreed that Konkanapura is the present town Banavasi. But it is difficult to accept this view because Konkanapur area is located away from Banavasi."\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Inscriptions :}

Ashokas edicts display no sense of insecurity or weakness from first to last and the probability is that, he succeeded possibly in accordance with his predecessor's nomination.

Ashoka's fifth rock edict, which has a description of the harems of Ashokas brothers and sisters, does not corroborate the fact, as narrated in the Mahavamsa and the Dipavamsa.\textsuperscript{15} Fifth rock edict neither indicate that his brothers themselves were alive, nor before us that they were dead.

In many of his edicts, Ashoka's preaching the religion of Ahimsa or non-violence, which he followed throughout his life. He was always interested to see that, his subjects should be law-abiding as well as virtuous, under his personal care and observations, his subjects were always dutiful to their parents, offered gifts to the poor and deserving persons and practiced non-injury which led a pious life. He was always anxious for the welfare of his subjects. He played a great role in the religious history of the country and devoted a greater part of his time and energy to the welfare of the religion, but he never neglected his royal duties and his primary task of governing his kingdom. As a
prince, even before the Kalinga war, he showed his great ability as a soldier and a statesman. He not only showed himself as a religious person but he also proved himself how capable he was as an administrator.

It is analysed that the intensity of Ashoka's devotion to matters spiritual is better understood when it is remembered, the kind of men his father loved to gather round himself. It is said in the seventh pillar edict that kings in times past also desired that "men might be made to progress by the promotion of Dhamma, Bindusara might well claimed a place among these past rulers. From him and some of the brilliant men, who graced his court, Ashoka may well have imbibed ideas in later times, when he came into close touch with the Buddhist Sangha.

The reign of Bindusara may with plausibility be regarded as prelude to that of his great son.

Ashoka's edicts show that although he accepted Buddhism as his religion and sacrificed everything for its purpose, he tolerated other religions also, under the shade of his umbrella, almost all the prevailing religions flourished.

The Dharma-Mahamatras i.e. religious censors or inquisitors, who were employed among the Buddhists, Brahmans, Ajivikas and Nirgranthas, always worked for the establishment and promotion of the Dharma and for the welfare and happiness of those who had offered their lives to the cause of the Dharma. His edicts exhibit his
non-sectarian policy. His grant of cave dwellings to the Ajivikas at Barabar and Nagarjuna hills, was effected to the same spirit as he displayed in the erection of stupas for the Buddhists or offered to Brahmanas elsewhere. It is difficult to believe that, the king who honoured all sects and who in many edicts preached, the religion of Ahimsa or non-violence followed by him throughout his life, persecuted the Nirgranthas and the Ajivikas.

Rock edict XIII is silent about the war-drum (bheri ghosha) which was replaced by the Dharma ghosha, there was no longer any summon to war or call to but only a call to moral life. Thus Ashoka stands out as the pioneer of peace and universal brotherhood in history.

B.M. Barva, remarks His conversion to the Buddhist faith is to be dated from the time, he approached or came in contact with the sangha. "I abandon my old position that, here Ashoka distinguished between the two stages of his career as a Buddhist by worshipper, the first when he had been only privately cultivating the company and receiving the instruction of an individual Buddhist teacher and the second when he publicly declared himself to be follower of the sangha and entered upon a career of direct service to the sangha. As I now maintain the intended distinction is between the earlier stage when he had adhered to other sects and the later stage when he began to follow the guidance of the Buddhist sangha in matters of religious faith."
B.M. Barva expressed his opinion that in the "Babru edict, in the Sanchi pillar edict and in Lumbini pillar edict, Ashoka always show himself as a king and a lay disciple of the Buddha." N. Dutt remarks that there is no hint in the inscriptions and Buddhist traditions to show that Ashoka became an ordained monk. He was a lay devotee and most probably he remained in a monastery for a certain period of time.

According to some scholars, Ashoka made a state visit to the Buddhist Sangha and he publicly announced his faith in Buddhism. Some scholars even hold the view that, Ashoka never became a Buddhist monk but he lived with the Buddhist sangha for more than a year.

According to the Buddhist legends, he was ordained in his old age and he attained to the stage of Pratyeka Buddhahood. It can be easily inferred from this that, when he established his contact with the Buddhist sangha he became a devout follower of Buddhism and in the beginning of his fervent aspirations towards perfection, he possibly became a Buddhist monk for a short period. This is corroborated by the statement of the Chinese traveller Itising who mentions that "while he was visiting the Buddhist sacred place in India, he saw a image of Ashoka with monks robe, but his statement cannot be accepted as authentic because there is no historical or epigraphical evidence to support it". Whatever may be the differences of opinions among the scholars regarding his close association with the Buddhist
Sangha, there is no room for doubt about his implicit faith in Buddhism and his immeasurable contribution to the Buddhist world for its propagation.

Ashoka's edicts give certain information about his unflinching faith in Buddhism. In the Bhabru or Bairat edict, he makes an open confession of his firm faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. It states "His gracious majesty king of Magadha, saluting the Sangha and wishing them all health and happiness, addresses them as follows, known is it to you. Reverend sir's to what extent is my reverence as well as faith in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, whatsoever has been said reverend sir; by the Lord Buddha, all that has of course been well said. But of such what had been selected by me that true Dharma may be everlasting I may be privileged to state."\textsuperscript{23}

Ashoka's Nigliva pillar\textsuperscript{24} or Nigali Sagar pillar inscription, refers to his pious work and his pilgrimage to an important sacred place in the \textit{Nepalese Tarai}. It says, By his sacred and gracious majesty, the king consecrated fourteen years was doubly enlarged the stupa of Buddha \textit{Konakamana} and consecrated, coming in person and reverence being made, was set up (a stone pillar)

Ashoka's pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birth place of the Buddha and his inscribed pillars erected at Rummindei and Nigali sagar provide sufficient reasons to believe that the Nepalese Tarai was included in his empire. Ashoka patronage to Buddhism is to be found in his minor pillar edict at Sarnath, Kausambi and Sanchi.

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Ashoka’s pillar edict V gives an idea about Ashoka’s regulation of piety (Dhamma Nigama) motivated by the spirit of ahimsa. It impresses that Ashoka as a true Buddhist, observed the rules and regulations of the Dharma strictly. For the welfare of his subjects and for the propagation of Dharma he issued the above mentioned statement in his edict and he wanted that his subjects should follow in his daily life.

Ashoka in his minor pillar edicts at Sarnath, Kausambi and Sanchi was bold enough to declare that, if any monk, who would break up the sangha or would bring a schism in the Sangha, would receive the punishment of expulsion from the Sangha.

The inscriptions on the Sanchi relic caskets, mentions that the teacher of Hemavate school, which, was a branch of the theravada sect probably had its origin in the Himalayan country and Kassapagotta or Kasapagota was perhaps the teacher who converted this region (Himalayan region) and its people into Buddhism.25

The arrival of the Bodhi tree, the sacred relics, the Alms bowl of the Buddha and the Buddhist texts from India was an important event associated with the introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon by Mahendra, from that time until now, Ceylon has been the home of the orthodox sangha and has kept intact the teachings of the Buddha in its purest form. This form of Buddhism is generally known as Theravada.

Buddhist rulers like Ashoka and Dasaratha bestow cave-dwellings to the Ajivikas at the Barbar and Nagarjuna hills, in the
same spirit as they build stupas for the Buddhist order, alms to the Brahmanas, elsewhere - Ashoka, who had so long followed the traditional beliefs and practices of the Brahmanical religion, turned over a new leaf and being inspired by the underlying truth and spirit of the lofty teachings of Gautama Buddha, he declared the Saddhamma or Bauddha dharma as his personal religion.

Huen - Tsang:

In his account, depicted that at Banavasi 400 Bauddha Sangramas, more than ten thousand Buddhist monks near royal palace, a big sangrama having 300 Buddhist Bhikshus, who are renowned scholars, stucco head of Siddhartha having 2 feet, kept in the vihara, carved beautifully and kept in Karanda, one fine day it was worshipped again, There was a vihara to the side of it.

Buddhism In Ashokan Edicts of Karnataka:

When Ashoka became a king and he waged war against the ruler. He won in the battle but he felt bad by seeing the pains and sufferings in the battlefield, later became a follower of Buddhism. He made various contributions for the welfare of his subjects both in his country and outside.

In the beginning of his 13 yrs, Ashoka followed his grand father's aggressive policy. His conquest of Kalinga, which roughly corresponds to modern Orissa, was an important event in the history of magadha and of India in general and Karnataka in particular as already known fact.
It marks the close of that career of conquest which was ushered in by Bimbisara’s annexation of Anga. It opens a new era, an era of peace of social progress of religious propaganda and at the same time of political stagnation and perhaps of military inefficiency during which, the martial spirit of imperial Magadha was dying out for want of exerciser. The era of military conquest or Digvijaya was over, the era of spiritual conquest or Dharma Vijaya was about to begin.

The edicts of Ashoka are purely written largely on the rocks. They are divided into 3 categories.

1) Major Rock edicts

2) Minor Rock edicts

3) Cave Inscriptions

The edicts of Ashoka are found at different places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and in India found at more than twenty-two places. The interesting point to be noted here is that 17 edicts of Ashoka are found in Karnataka itself. The edicts are distributed in India like Khalsi, Meerut, Allahabad, Aharaur (UP) Girnar (Gujarat) Sopara (Maharastra) Dauli. Jaugada (Orissa) Yergudi, Rajamahendri (Andhra Prades) Bairut(Rajasthan) Gujara, Rupanath (MP) Sahasram, Lauriyaganj, Lauriyanandanaghar, Ramapurva (Bihar) Topra(Punjab) and in different places.

The reading of Ashokan edicts first started in 1715, thereafter to read them found it very difficult. The first time, they were published in 1801 in the Journal of the Asiatic Research. Therefore, the
edicts of Ashoka are served as means for the propagation of Buddhism and Karnataka also. They are 17 in number among them 13 are minor rock edicts and remaining 4 are major rock edicts found at Sannati.

1. Brahmagiri Edict:

The Brahmagiri edict consisted of 13 lines which is in Brahmi script of Pali language. A word in the edict is written in Kharosthi.

2. Jatingaramesvara:

Interestingly, the figures of elephant is engraved on the Ashokan edict at Jatingaramesvara. It is engraved one, Besides, the footprints of Buddha are also engraved at the place. In the first part of edict, even though, after two and half years was in the fold of Buddhist principles but he involved himself in sangha and devotedly worked out well in the propagation of Buddhism in the whole of Jambudvipa or India. Even he wished in making to his neighbours to understand the principles of Buddhism and code of conduct. This he ordained after 256 days of his journey for the propagation.

3. Nitturu Edict:

It came to be noticed in 1977. It is also a significant edict it contains the depiction of the original name of Ashoka. Even Gujarat, udegollum edicts also depict the same. Therefore, this edict was studied by various scholars like Bedan (1915) Srinivasa, J.F. Fleet. E Senart etc.
4. Siddhapur Edict:

The Siddhapur edict was known as “Emmi Timmanagundu. It is in Brahmi script of 22 lines of which the last lines are in Kharosthi reads as “Ekathataviye cha-pada.” The name of several places including suvarnagiri, Isila etc are mentioned.

In his rock edict II the independent border kingdoms, the cholas pandyas in plural, satiyaputa, mostly Atiyaman of the Kongu region and Keralaputa with whom, the Mauryan king maintained good relationship.30

5. Udegollam Edict:

This Udegollam edict, also depicts the name of Ashoka. In the edicts of Gavimatha, palkigunda, at Koppala, not only refers to minor edicts of Ashoka but also shows an engraving of Buddha’s foot print is noteworthy.31

6. Maski Edict: In the Maski edict, Ashoka says that after two and half years also he was an upasaka, then afterwards started to show interest and started the propagation. Even the laymen can attain the Buddha hood, according to him, he acts on it hence, one more interesting feature of this edict is through this edict, the real name came to be noticed as the Devanamapriya Priyadarshi Raja Asoka.32

Suvanagiri:

The Brahmagiri and Siddhapur Edicts of Ashoka provide the information about Ashoka’s presence at place called Suvanagiri. It
was one of the most important centers of Buddhism. Many scholars have tried to recognize Suvarnagiri with different places. Suvarnagiri was considered and identified with Kanaginahalli, a Buddhist center. Earlier, Kanaginahalli was known as Kanakanahalli in Kannada, Kanak means gold or Suvarna in Sanskrit there by called as Suvarnagiri.

Since, a stone slab, along with relief of Ashoka, with two female figures, mostly his wife, and a label inscription, mentioning his name was also found in the stupa at Kanaginahalli. This itself is the evidence to prove that, he stayed in this site in person, he visited and stayed at Kanaganahalli and paid homage to the stupa. The above stated statement show that Kanaginahalli may be the Suvarnagiri (Kanaganalli/Kanakanahalli/Kanakagiri/Kanakagiri where Ashoka is said to have camped.33

8. Mahishamandala:

It is considered as the most important feature of the Ashokan inscriptions where the names of some locations, boundaries, were referred and it is clear in the Mahavamsa the Ceylonese literary work.

After the pataliputra council, it is assumed by Guru-thera moggaliputa, thought of future & its development (Buddhism) in the Kartika maasa, teras were sent to different neighbouring countries. One among them was mahishamandala, which according to scholars was modern Mysore.
According to Rice. It is assumed that mahisha maisa Mysore in Kannada was used by the localities. In the Mahishmati, the site name was used as “Mahishamandala” because mahisati is pali language.\(^{34}\)

According to V.V. mirashi, on the basis of the coins, belonging to 2nd 3rd century AD there was a dynasty called mahisha, but D.C. Sarcar agreed with this fact. He opined that, it was belonged to Karnataka state.\(^{35}\)

An inscription belonging to 5th century AD of Kadamba dynasty Vishnuvarma of Tumkur taluk of Tumkur district. In that Mahisha was used and Satipalli jarivata of Herbata constructed an Agrahara and donated to a brahmana of Yajurveda hence it is very clear here that, surrounding of the Mysore was called as the Mahishamandala. The Mahishamandala was covered by Maski of Raichur, totally, it was part of South Karnataka.

The Tamil Brahmi inscriptions of 1st and 2nd century BC refer to Kannada words Erumaninati, posil, kouirti, chenna etc Erumai is a Tamil Word, It means Buffalo. Not in Sanskrit is mandala obviously, it is Erumemandala or Emme Nadu. This Emmenadu is identified with Mahishamandala, which was located in Mysore region. Therefore, the antiquity of the Kannada words goes back to post Asoka period.\(^{36}\)

9. Sriparvata (Nagarjunakonda) :

In an inscription of the time of Ikshvaku king Ehavala chantamula dated 11th regnal year 291 century AD Kodabalasiri, the daughter of virapurushadatta and sister of Ehava Chantamula and
the queen of Maharaja of vanavasa is stated to have set up a chaitya and a monestry at Vijayapuri.

These were the incharge of the Mahishasaka sect. It is assumed by the scholars that anonymous Banavasi king patronized the Mahisasaka sect in Banavasi region.37

10. Isila:  

In the Brahmagiri edict of Ashoka, name of Isila was used. It was important site during the Mauryan period. There are different opinions regarding the location of the sites. According to him Isila was the name of the site. According to D.L. Narasimhacharya, it was the word used in Kannada language.

Ancient Kannada word Esila [ESU+IL=>Esil>Isil = Isila was the protective place to the court. In the Buddhist literature, Isila city were the alternative names. In the edict it mentions as follows. “Suvanam Girite Ayaputasa Mahamaata (Nam) Nam Cha Vachanena Isilasi Mahamaata Arogiyam Vataviya hevam cha vataviya.”

11. Ceylone (Srilanka):  

According to Mahavamsa38 five lovable disciples were sent to Ceylone under the leadership of Mahinda for the establishment of Dharma. In other edicts, it is suggested that they (theras) have been sent to different places for the spread and development of dharma, but whereas in this case, it is different because the word establishment of the dharma was stressed of course in the north and west wards side, it has already taken roots.
12. **Officers**:

If the border according to Ashoka maintain confidence, welfare and happiness in this world and in the other world and attain heaven. He appointed mahamatras, who strived at all the times to inspire borders with confidence and to practice morality. In every four months on (the day of) Jestha, everyone should listen.

It is presumed that, Edicts XII & XIV of Ashoka found at Sannati on these basis, Ashokan empire under the charge of the mahamatra and Erragudi and Jonnagiri (Suvarnagiri) served as head quarters of the southern part of the empire with the Aryaputra (prince) at its behest.

The most important point to be noted here that, for the first time Upali has became the disciple of Buddhism. In the beginning of the Buddha's spread of dharma, his disciples were Brahmins and Vaishyas, thereby the number started increasing and afterwards "Yash" by name converted himself to Buddhism who was the richest person he even ordered and converted his wife, his family members, and even his friends who became the followers of Buddhism.39

Bimbisara, king of Magadha, who helped them financially for the development of the Buddhism, Kosala's king prasenajita and a rich merchant called Anathapindaka also helped for the spread of Buddhism.

Even, Bimbisara's army men abdicated the army forces and joined Buddhism. One of the merchants from Banavasi, Sangamayya
settii also caused for the construction of Baudha vihara at Karle. Suttanipata Buddhist gives a graphic account of the very early stage of Buddhism i.e. Hinayana. As regards the date, this work has been assigned to the close of the 6th century B.C. or the early part of the 5th century BC Sutanipata Buddhist text refers to Dakshinapatha and Vouch safes for the existence of Buddhism on the banks of the river Godavari.40

Satavahana Period:

About three centuries, the Satavahanas ruled over Deccan which includes major part of North Karnataka called Kuntala, the parts of Madhya Pradesh, Gurajat and complete part of Maharashtra and Andhrapradesh right from the 1st century BC to 2nd & 3rd century AD.

They established the kingdom by defeating the Sungas. The important rulers of this dynasty are Simukha, Satakarni, Gautamiputra Satakarni, Pulumavi etc. They had several feudatories, officers etc. The important feudatories are Kurus, Maharathis, Ananda etc.

During this period, the trade and commerce was quite brisk between India and Rome, also both within the centers and outside, considerable number of merchants came to India by sea route and carried out exporting or importing varieties of merchantiles, spices, silk, Sandal wood, glasswares and gold, ivory precious stones. Their coins were found in various parts of Deccan. In this period, the
cultural contact further lead to the development of the Buddhism in various parts of the country. The important such centers are Banavasi, Sannati, etc. (Karnataka Nagarjunakonda, Amaravati, Satanikota etc(Andhrapradesh) Karle, Bhaja, paithan etc (Maharashtra) and other places.

An outstanding Buddhist writer of the period was Nagarjuna "He was a mostly Yajnasri Satakarni's friend in the 2nd century AD. The founder of the Madhyamika school of Buddhism and an expounder of Sunyavada, he flourished in Sri parvata (Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh)\textsuperscript{41}

The literary account of Pliny\textsuperscript{42} i.e. prakrit literature of 1st century AD and Vinaya pitaka are informed about the existence of Buddhism in South India. Another literary work like Mahavagga\textsuperscript{43} though edited during the Ashokan period, inform about Buddhism in South India.

The Satavahana inscriptions are twenty five in general but only a few of them are royal records and the majority of them were issued by the private individuals. Except Nanaghat inscription of Queen Naganika's all the others are Buddhist in their contents.

One of the inscriptions\textsuperscript{44} of Sannati, belonging to Satavahana period, depicts about the stupa as sakyamahachaitya. This was obviously constructed during the period of Ashoka in honour of Gautama Buddha, who belonged to the saky clan. But during the satavahana period, the stupa was enlarged and decorated with a
number of sculptured slabs, images, of various Buddhas. Panels with label, informs about the royal patronage of the stupa during the period and the sculptural remains of the Satavahanas either found in the site like stupa site or in the habitation in isolation are providing significant details of the Buddhism during the period.

For example: In Sannati region, about half a dozen sites within the stupa structural remains were found. An excavated stupa site at Kanaginahalli located 3 KM from Sannati shrine called chandralamba near the river Bhima are found scattered, large number of Buddhist panels and Buddha sculptures in the stupa site etc are found therefore this place may be considered as the biggest site in Karnataka. It includes sculptures of Buddha, various sculptural panels, some with inscribed panels and inscriptions. The inscribed panels, the sculptural panels, the plan of the stupa structure etc are belonged to the period of the Satavahana only.

The names of various Merchants officers etc mentioned in the inscribed panels found at Sannati are given below

1. Ganaputasa Solasas
2. Amachi Yakshanika
3. Amachi Sanghanika
4. Rajamachasa Gaganaka Bhariya
5. Ye Rajamachiya Masariya
6. Ahimarikaya
7. Bhikkuniya Ahimaritraya

8. Akhapatalika

9. Pemanusa

10. Manjanasa

11. Amatya Yakshanika

Another excavated stupa mound site located near the above said site called Benagutti reveals certain brick structures and cultural materials like pottery etc. They belonged to the period of the Satavahanas only of 1st and 2nd century A.D. The other sites located within the village limit of Sannati does show the remains of the stupa only are said to be the period of the Satavahanas.

Harasagundgi Stupa encompassing, the entire mound of about 2 metres height which yielded a complete plan of a highly disturbed circular brick stupa and ayaka platforms. Originally enclosed by a lime stone, a few damaged figures were found scattered around the main brick structure.

At Tunnuru, a village near Sannati, potteries, memorial stones, Jataka sculptures, most of them fragmentary are found. All these sites showing the Buddhist relics in the form of stupa or sculptures or memorial stones or sculptural panels or narrative panels referring to Buddhism of the place, obviously they were important Buddhist centers during the period.
The most notable features of Jewargi taluk of Aurad is inscribed panel which is written as “Rakka Bodhinasa Vijaya” which according to sitaram Jagirdar (According to his paper, was “Buddhist university.” Hanumakshi Gogi read the inscription as “Rakkasa Buvanasa Vijayalaya.”

At Hampi, inscription belonging to 2nd century AD records a donation mostly to the Buddhist Sangha

In the reserve collections, of the site museum at Hampi, besides lime stone members excavated at the Mahanavamidibba and a mint area, a stucco head of Buddha was found. Dr. Sundara compared them to Gandhara images. West of the audience hall, have yielded five big lime stone panels (Cornice beams) depicting in bas relief, anecdotes from the life of Buddha as well as Jatakas.

At Vadagao Madhavapur terracotta figure of Buddha found at the place. It also belonged to the period of the Satavahanas.

At Banavasi, Naga stone, maitreya, yaksha, a fragmentary footprint of Buddha etc of the Buddhism are also belonged to the period of the Satavahanas.

Karle:

Chaityalaya at Karle is a magnificent, the inscription reads “vaijayantitho settina Bhutapalena, selagharam parinitta pitham Jambudeepam he uttamam” the above study show that during the period of the Satavahana especially various officers, ministers and
merchant guilds made various contributions for the growth of Buddhism in Karnataka and outside.54

Chutus And Contribution to Buddhism:

After the decline of the rule of the Satavahanas, the Banavasi region was under the control of chutus. They were ruling from Banavasi. They had mentioned matrimonial alliance with the rulers of Ikshvakus, ruling from Sriparvata.

Some records of these rulers, inform about the patronage of Buddhism. The Banavasi inscription of Vinhukuda Chutukulananda Satakarnis 12th year of about 247. The record refers to the mother of Yuvaraja, Nagamulanika is said to have given a gift of Naga, Tank and Vihara. The construction of these three works took under the leadership of Amaty, Skandasati or Kadasati.55

Besides, Nagarjunakonda inscription, depicts the most interesting event with regard to the flourishing condition of Buddhism through matrimonial alliance between Ikshvaku and Banavasi rulers.

The same Inscription depicts about Chantamula’s reign of 11th year Datta’s daughter (sister of Yahavala Chantamula’s of Ikshvaku dynasty and queen of Vanavasi king Kudabalasiri, constructed vihara and chaitya at Vijayapuri (Nagarjunakonda) these were identified as the followers of Mahishasaka sect.57

One more Inscription of Nagarjunakonda of Ikshvaku’s dynasty’s virapurushadatta’s in about 270 AD informs that the sect known as Achantaraja of the Banavasi got success in
converting to Buddhism from different provinces. The followers of this sect were well understood about the teachings of Buddhism. It can be noticed as Mahishasaka Achantaraja sects were in existence during Chutunanda’s reign.

**Kadambas Contribution To Buddhism:**

After the decline of the Satavahanas, the Banavasi region was under the control of Chutus. They were ruling from Banavasi. They had mentioned matrimonial alliance with the rulers of Ikshvakus, ruling from Sriparvata. Some records of these rulers inform about the patronage of Buddhism.

After the rule of the Satavahanas and the Chutus, the Kadambas became the ruler of Major part of Karnataka. They were ruling from Banavasi which was called as Vanavasa or Vaijayanti. They had ruled from 4th century AD to 6th Century. The important rulers of the dynasty are mayurasharma, Shantivarma, Ravivarma etc.

They were Brahmins in clan and belonging to manavyagotra and the lineage of Hariti. They also patronaged different religions, art and architecture etc. The contemporary rulers of the period were the Gangas, the pallavas in the south and Vakatakas in the north. The study of the contemporary records indicate certain information about the prevalence of Buddhism during the period in Karnataka.

The lord is here described as one endowed with the infinite qualities, refugee of virtues born in the family of Suddhodhana. In its invocatory part, Buddha is praised as one, whose feet are licked by
the rays of the shining jewels in the coronets of Gods and demons and one who is a reservoir of countless virtues. The record registers the gift of the village of sundarika in Dipaka Vishaya, made over to the Arya Sangha for the enjoyment of a Buddhist Vihara.\textsuperscript{59}

The stone images of Buddha from Babrawada (near Ankola) Malagi and Bidirahalli (near Sirsi) and Bedagao (near Mundagodu) all in Uttara Kannada District may be ascribed to this period.

The Kadambas were the followers of the vedic religion, even though they were vedic follower and fanatic Brahmins but were tolerant towards other religions.

The Davanagere\textsuperscript{60} (Chitradurga District) copper plate record of Kadamba Ravivarma's 34th regnal year (early 6th century AD refers to an invocation to Buddha describing him as sarvajna at the beginning.

The record registers a grant of land called Kanasapukkolli along with a garden in Napitapalli to the Aryasangha, on the full moon day of Asvayuha month by Chitrasena Mahakella of the Kekeya family.

From, the inscriptions of Nagarjunakonda,\textsuperscript{61} one can analyse that the members of the Arya Sangha had close association with the Aparamahavanasailiya sect of Buddhist, which itself was a subsect of the later Mahasanghikas. That the Arya Sangha played dominant role in the coastal belt of Karnataka during the period is further attested by the Hiregutti (Ankola taluk Uttara Kannada District)
Gangas of Talkad:

Gangas are known for their long time reign in the Karnataka history itself. The capital of the Gangas was known in the inscriptions as the "Gangawadi, 96,000" and was also a region of peace and prosperity hence was called as the "Sri-rajya".

Sri Vallabha permanandi etc the important rulers of the period, their other capitals including Talkad of Mysore, Kuvala (Kolar) Nandagiri(Nandibetta).

Gangas followed the vedic religion, which was the traditional religion of Hindus and also they were responsible for the growth and the prosperity of this religion.

During their period, they gave great patronage to Jainism. The greatness lays in their work, that equally they gave patronage to Buddhism, even though they were having individual interest of the following vedic religion.

One of the copper plates the only evidence belonging to Madhava II of 800 AD, originally is in sanskrit, which gives information about the donation to "Bodhisatva" and used the words as "sakyasila" during the measuring of field are interesting from the Buddhist point of view, because Bodhisatva referred in the inscription, most probably a Buddhist monk and Charvadatta, a senapati, who caused for erection of an inscription.

It may be reasonably assumed that the Mahayana form of
Buddhism had larger following than the Hinayana sect in Karnataka during this period. In the inscription the words like manigrama shrenis were used, which was assumed by the scholars as Haralakunte of melkote of the Srinivasapur Taluk. Infront of the Chaturveda's with the evidence of Mahapratiharas 3 Khandugas below Rakta tataka tank and near the Sakyasila hill, a little land was donated.

Totally, about 30 Khanduga land was donated by Madhavavarma. In that 16 Khanduga land North east of Avani river and 12 Khandugas to west of Shakyasila donated a land.

Dr. M.G. Manjunath discovered the same Bauddha vihara in the field of Narayanaswamy, which is full of Nilgiris. He found only the remains of the apsidal brick structure.

It has an adhisthana, hence it could be a supporting evidence for the Madhavaverma's inscription.

First of all Narasimhachar published it in the year 1910 Mysore Archaeological Report, thereafter K.A. Nilkantha Shastri Dr. K.V. Ramesh Dr. M. Chidanandamurthy, Dr. S. Nagaraju K. Abhishankar, Dr. B. Sheik Ali, Dr. M.H. Krishna.

The record thus appears to take back to a period, when Buddhism prevailed and commanded some influence in the Ganga period.
Badami Chalukyas:

In the history of Karnataka, a new era was started by the establishment of Chalukyas empire. They were known as the early Chalukyas of Vatapi. They held sway over the Deccan over a period of two centuries, save an interval of about fifteen years. Their capital was Badami of Bagalkot district. The most important and significant kings were Pulikeshi I. Mangalesha. Immadi Vikramaditya. They were the contemporaries of Pallavas, on the South and Vardhana dynasty in the north. Even though they followed Vedic religion but simultaneously patronised other religions also. Their empire started from South of Cauvery to the north of Narmada.

The most important trade centres, were Aihole, Badami, Pattadakalu, Mahakuta, Politically religiously literary, artistically became famous.

The contemporary records of the Chalukyas of Badami informs that they patronised Vedic religion as well as Jainism. Their records does not show any indication of the patronage of Buddhist i.e. with any Buddhist Vihara or edifies or installation of Buddhist deities. But in a few places are found a few Buddhist remains of the period.

They are Padmapani Avalokiteshvara engraved on a rock in between the cave No. 2 and 3 at Badami as well as a Chaityalaya on a hillock at Aihole.65

Huen Tsang, The Chinese pilgrim dedicated himself for the study of Buddhist texts at the age of 20, hence he went to visit the
Buddhist Sangramas along with his brothers.

Huen-Tsang was in India from 630 to 644 century AD that is 14 yrs. He had collected some Taligere script which is written in Sanskrit language.

The interesting part of his life is that he had collected 657 books concerned to Buddhism and its philosophy even along with the books, he collected gold, silver of his disciples and sculptures of Buddha were taken to his native hence, he was welcomed by his people with great fervour. He carried holy things, were celebrated by keeping on the horse. He had in contact with India, often he wrote letters to his friends in order to get Buddhist texts. His letters are preserved safely in China even today.

He had contact with Jnanaprabha and prajnadeva, the Buddhist Guru who stayed in India. While writing, he had given preference to religion rather than social life of that period.

During the visit of Huen-Tsang, Pulakeshi II was in the south and Harshavardhana in the north were ruled. By this time, Buddhism was in a deteriorating condition, but he had not told about it, but he said it was in a good condition.

Its competitors were Shaivas and Digambaras, who were influencing on Buddhism Buddhism influenced on Kashmir, Gandhara, and Dravida regions like the Ganjam and Sindu and Vallabhi.
The Huen T-sang's account further inform that there were more than 400 Bauddha sangrahas located in Konkanapura, during this period. Besides, more than that 10,000 Bauddha followers were dwelling near the King's palace and 300 Baudha big sangramas were in existence. The followers had known its literature. He further quotes that a stucco head of Siddhartha of 2 feet height was located in a Vihara and was said to be kept in a decorated Karanda. It was said to be worshipped on every fasting day by the follower near the city which is identified to be Vanavasa or Banavasi. He also says there was one more Vihara in that region.

According to historians, Huen T-sang had provided most important information with regard to ancient India especially Buddhism.

A tall 10 feet heighted maitreya sculpture made out of sandalwood was said to be located at the place. About 10 lakhs arhats were said to be made this big sculpture. He says that a Taltree was located on the South of the forest. They were said to be very costly. Taltaje opines that Mayana Basadi of Badami could be a Buddhist Vihara, But he has not given any supporting evidence to prove that this was a Buddhist Vihara. It is both structural and rock cut which is 25 feet height.

It may be remembered here that between the cave No 2 and 3 there is a padmapani Avalokitsuara engraved on the rock. Another evidence of this period, within the (ancient) of the Chalukya capital
was at Aihole. A big Buddhist Chaityalaya was constructed on the top of the hillock and it is really called meguti hill at Aihole.66

Rashtrakutas of Malkhed:

Rashtrakutas defeated the Chalukyas of Badami and started their rule in the year 757AD. They ruled more than 2 decades. Their empire was extended over Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhy Pradesh and the Andhra Pradesh.

The most important kings of the dynasty were Druva, Govinda III Amoghavarsha, Krishna III.

Rashtrakutas were not due followers of Vedic religion, but instead followed Jainism. They even patronised the Buddhism, but Buddhism started deteriorating day by day. The study of their records does not indicate any Buddhist remains of the period in Karnataka.

The Chalukyas of Kalyana:

The Chalukyas of Kalyana were the feudatories of the Rashtrakutas. After killing the last ruler of the Rashtrakuta king Karka II by Tailapa II in 973 AD founded the Chalukyan rule in Karnataka. Their capital was Kalyana.

The Chalukyas of Kalyana were liberal in their outlook and hence they followed the liberal policy. This liberal policy had influenced them to patronise all the religions with equal zeal and reverence which helped to grow in their own way. Of course, the Chalukyas of Kalyana gave patronize to Buddhism along with other religions like Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Jainism, but very meagre
evidences are available to support the fact that they patronised the Buddhism.

Belur inscription\textsuperscript{67} of Jayasimha III refers to the reign of western Chalukyan king Jagadekamalla. While governing the district Kisukada seventy his sister Akkadevi, in memory of his elder brother Tribhuvanamalla, Vikramaditya V made a grant of perur agrahara.

The same inscription\textsuperscript{68} records her combined worship of the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva she practised the religious observance of Jina. Buddha, Vishnu and Siva hence it shows her reverence towards Buddhism and tolerance towards all the religions.

Kalyana Chalukyan period is marked as the downfall of the Buddhism in Karnataka. The religion and its saints and nuns started to look down because the Buddhist bhikshus were losing their morality and Character.

They started attracting towards the luxurious life or the material life. The Viharas became the place of entertainment. Jainism and Shaivism began to flourish. These stood as the opposit for the growth of Buddhism. The Balligave inscription\textsuperscript{69} of 1064 and 1067 AD are clear tantric Buddhist records. They registered a land grant for the construction of Vihara and worship of Tarabhagavati during the king Trailokyamalla. The same grants which were made by the approval of the Chalukya emperor, who was tolerant towards the Buddhism also. There was a Tara Bhagavati temple in Balligave according to the assumptions.
Hence, it is clear that there might be a yogishvarakeri or Kusulikere where the sanyasis stayed over there. Same inscription of Balligave states that Nagiyakka, wife of Hampabhatta, a close associate of Chalukya emperor Trailokyamalla, built a temple of Tara Bhagavati and having washed the feet of the Bauddhabalara's, she had granted a land gift. Tara temple in Balligave has now been traced. There is a reference to the pulleya Bayal of Balligave in Somanatha's works. It might be a mrigadeva.

In Dambal inscription, Tara praised is noteworthy and Tara according to that inscription, would remove fear from the lion, elephant, fire, serpent thieves, water, sea and spirit. The vihara also referred to, in the inscription as the Arya Taradevi Vihara and also refers to prajna, which is believed to be a technical term in tantric Buddhism and it also refers once again as prajna as the Tarabhagavati.

The interesting point is that according to Dambal inscription, Tara was given primary preference rather than Buddha hence, here Tantric cult got prominence. Even though an inscription starts with invocation to Buddha as "Namo Buddhaya", it is believed as the tradition followed in the inscription, found at North Indian inscription according to Shri P.B. Desai 'Harim Sthirim Hrom fut is tara mantra.'

The Seunas:

The Seunas ruled about two centuries and popularised vedic religion.
It is stated that seuna king Ramachandra made several grants to Dambal Vihara. An earlier inscription says that several Bhikshus were stayed in that Vihara.\textsuperscript{73}

To prove the fact sculptures of Tarabhagavati was also found at Koliwada and Balligave. The Dambal and Balligave inscriptions inform about the Vihara as well as Tarabhagavati images. At Dambal, Vihara was constructed by a merchant called Sangamayyasetti. From the place near by place called Lakkundi. This vihara appears to have constructed about 1096 AD even though, the last reference to Buddhism in Karnataka belongs to the 16th century, it declined by the 12th century AD.

To prove this fact Akalanka. Mostly, he may be scholar, defeated Buddhist in the discussion.

An inscription of 1104 AD\textsuperscript{74} described a Sanyasi of the viranarayan temple as a lion to the Buddha elephant of rut (Buddha Madebha pancanana)

**The Kalachuri's of Kalyana:**

The Kalachuris were first appeared as sub-ordinate rulers of the later chalukyas. Next, they overthrew their masters, later chalukyas and their period was known for their disruptive rather than constructive.

In the short period of 20 years, Six princes of this family ruled the kingdom. The kingdom faced the anarchy for the succession of the
throne by the princes of the family. In this period, the country had witnessed political, social and religious revolutions.

**Patronage to Buddhism:**

People gave high respect to the religion, religious faith and practices they were liberal in their outlook. They were firm in their faith and practice of a particular religion. In the kingdom of Kalachuris, there were different types of followers like that of Siva, Vishnu, Surya, Ganapati, Kumara, sakti and others which is the essence of all belonged to the orthodox Hindu fold of Vedic traditions even those of Buddhism and jainism considered as heterodox, were treated with high respect.

Even, the common man believed in the common principle as God is one, his names are many. The goal of spiritualism is one, though the path of religion leading to it are numerous

The most noteworthy thing is that, the sense of toleration was very high.

**Hoysala's of Dorasamudra:**

The rule of the Hoysalas which spread over a period of more than three centuries, forms the brightest chapter in the history of medieval Karnataka. The Hoyasalas ruled over the southern part of Karnataka.

The most important rulers of the Hoysala dynasty were Vishnuvardhana, Ballala II and Ballala III. Their Military exploits
increased not only the power but also great cultural glory in the kingdom. They patronage religion, literature, art architecture etc

Regarding Buddhist remains of the period, very meagre information can also be seen in some records and art pieces.

An inscription\textsuperscript{75} of vishnuvardhana refers to the passing of Buddha as “padadolu Kormaswarupam, Nayanayugala dolu, Matsyarupam, Ghanagrivaddadikrodarupam, Naduvinolu, Nrisimhatvam, Athmaprabhavaspaddolu, Ramatrayatpam, Mithivikasanadolu, Buddharupagi, Kalkithpake, maidorade, Hariyenipam, Vishnu, Jishnu, Kshitisham.” It shows that Buddha appeared here in the incarnation of Vishnu.

In the sculptural art of the Hoysala, Buddha is shown as incarnation of the Vishnu.

The Laxmi Narayana temple at Banavasi, in the prabhavali instead of Krishna, Buddhas sculpture was inserted in its place.

At Hosaholali, Laxmi Narayana temple on the outside of door frame, Buddha's sculpture was erected.

In the Gopalkrishna temple of Chitradurga which is in dravida style instead of Krishna and the Baladeva, the incarnations of Buddha has been added.
At Balavadi of Viranarayana temple 2 feet highted, Buddha sculpture is found near to Venugopala sculpture.

At Hasana in Laxminarasimha temple of Ramanathpura, Buddha sculpture was depicted in naked.76

**The Rayas of Vijayanagara:**

The Vijayanagara kingdom came into existence and actually it took nearly a decade to attain a definite shape. The ruler of this dynasty Harihara was inspired by a set of high ideals like the protection, preservation and promotion of Hindu Dharma. At every step, the purpose of the Vijayanaga empire was challenged, the rulers of Vijayanagara, thus had a challenging task.

There were totally four dynasties, ruled over vijayanagara in succession. They are sangama, Saluva, Tuluva, Aravidu, dynasties. The most important rulers of the sangama Dynasty (1336-1485 AD) were Harihara, Bukka I Devaraya I and Devaraya II, Narasimha I was the most important ruler of the Saluva dynasty (1485-1505 AD) Regency of Tuluva Narasa Nayaka (1491-1503 AD) Timma and Narasimha V were important.

Important rulers of Tuluva Dynasty 1505-1567 AD were Vira Narasimha, Krishnadevaraya, Achyutaraya, Sadasivaraya and Ramaraya.
The important rulers of the Aravidu dynasty are Tirumala, Sriranga, III Venkatapati I, Ramadeva II, Venkatapati II.

During the Vijayanagara period Buddhism was declined so much. An inscription of 1398 AD\textsuperscript{77} Buddha durvakyanivarana uses the expression, a remover of the bad statements of the Buddha. By this time, a great revolutionary change took place and new sect came into emergence like tantric cult. Where unconditionally adopted some new features.

They became non vegetarian according to Someshwara's Yashastilaka's Champu.\textsuperscript{78} In the conclusion, through the account of Chinese traveller, it is learnt that, no doubt that the position of Buddhism in Karnataka was far from satisfactory however, Buddhism was not wiped out from the map of Karnataka as late as the 13th century. The last evidence of Buddhism can be glanced from an inscription belonging to 16th century.
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17. AIU p. 83
19. AHIS, pp.215-216
20. Ibid., p. 216
21. EMB, pp. 262-264
22. EBII Fascicle 2 p. 187 fn 22'
23. ARBRIMA, p 73 EB II fascicle, 2 p. 187
24. The third to precede Gautama Buddha or one of the previous Buddhas named Kanakamuni


25a. A.R., p. 199-243


35. Ibid., p. 44.

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