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India and Central Asia: An Interpretation of Mutually Indelible Historical Relationship and its Multi Faceted Impact

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Abstract

Across the Great Himalayan terrain; the culture, the lifestyle and the religion have got enriched by both geographic boundaries of India and Central Asia by integrated efforts down the ages. Historically, both the regions are interconnected in numerous ways. This relation witnessed vast and deep dimensions of culturally socio-religious and intellectual exchanges. The current paper has highlighted the indelible mutual impacts of both the regions which are earnest and very deep into history. These mutual influences are multidimensional and vast which incorporates multifaceted aspects like governance, architecture, art, trade and commerce, social customs, language, dress, lifestyle, philosophy, astrology, science, music, etc. among the few which are easily visible from ancient to modern period. Indian history cannot be defined without inclusion of a Central Asian segment. On the other hand Central Asia imbibed Indian fragrance within its deeper dimensions. The paper emphasizes only some of the social, monarchical, linguistic, intellectual and religious aspects of these dimensions towards establishing the possible bridge across the two major regions and it concludes the inseparable influence of these two regions is not merely from the recent decades but from the ancient times. The relationship interweaves through multifaceted dimensions of trade and commerce, socio-religious, socio-political and ethnic exchanges over the period beyond 3,000 years.

Key Words: Central Asian Region, Historical Connections, Buddhism, Kushana Dynasty

Introduction

Many Scholars like Harold Baailey, Bongard Levin, Litvinsky, Arnold Toynbee, Ravindra Nath Taigore, Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, James Tod, MN Roy, Raja Mahendra Pratap, and Rahul Sankrityayan have given their unique contribution towards the study of Mutual Historical Influences of Central Asia and India. Many ancient religious texts reinforced this mutual relationship and propounded the theory that the ancestors of these two 'histories' were the same. It is mentioned in the Zend –Avesta, The Persian Holy Book, the ancestors of Iranian, Turanians and Indians were three sons of Tratoria; Namely Tura, Sairimia and Arya.¹ Geographical evidences points the same as Toynbee gave an account on study of History between the Oxus and Jumna and proven Aryans earlier habitat was in the Oxus Jaxartes plains. Thus the Aryans came from Central Asia to India. The findings of Bal Gangadhar Tilak established the fact that the Indo- Iranian settlement was in Valley of river Oxus and Jaxartes before they migrated south to India and Iran while he also certified the original home of the Aryans was in the Arctic region. On the basis of words like 'Pinda ' and 'Pandita', scholars like Burrows and Emeneau concluded that the native dwellers of the Indians were Dravinians and

¹ Haider , Mansur. India and Central Asia linkage and Interaction. In: Joshi , Nirmla (eds.) Central Asia- The Great Game Replayed. Delhi: New Century Publications. 2003. p. 257.

Aryans migrated into India from the outside. They proved these words are drawn in Sanskrit from Dravinian language. They recognized and listed many Sanskrit words borrowed from Dravinian language.

Very interesting account about the genealogy of India and Central Asia is given by Farista. Fazil Khan in his book *tarikh-e-munaji- e-Bukhara* gives significant information. It is a well known fact that Sufism came to India from the Central Asian region. Great scholars like Albaruni and Abdul Rajjak Samarkandi came to India from Khwarism. Great Central Asian cities like Bukhara and Samarkent were the Centre of Sufi saints. Poets like Nasim, Masafi, Maharam, Mushrib and Shaukat popularized Indian poetry style in the Central Asia.² Al-Baruni, the Great Scholar from Central Asia in his masterpiece 'Tarikh-UL-Hind' provided encyclopedic information about India. Al-Kwarezmi contributed in Astronomy at large. Ganges khan, Taimur, Babar and Nadir shah have great imprints on Indian history, all these came from the Central Asia. Great Scholars like Abdul Raja Samarqandi, Zia UL Naqsbandi (author of Tutinama) and Albaruni (author of Kitab-UL-Hind) migrated from Central Asia to India which has left the impression of their wisdom. They played an effective role in the exchange of the legacies of these two countries that have notoriously short distances.

In 1925, Prabodh Chandra Baghchi did survey on Central Asian Nomads and highlighted interesting facts regarding entire sub-continent whereas Dev Dutta Ramakrishna Bhandarkar highlighted evidence of the origin of foreign elements in the population of India. Even Buddhism is deeply influenced by Central Asian culture. Nirmal Sinha assigned the emergence of 'Tathagata' epithet for Buddha and spotless white horse, which is associated with the birth of Buddha are mortgaged from Central Asia.³ Babur in his memoir Baburnama, Abul Fazl in his book Ain-I-Akbari and Akbar name gives a nostalgic picture of Central Asia. Further, it is mentioned that Raja Ranjit Singh sent his envoy to Central Asia. Russian Orientalist Pyotr Pashino gives an account of the Indian residences in Tashkent, Bukhara during early 1870s.⁴ The Scholarly description about mutual influence is available in abundance which proved the relationship of mutual prosperity and growth.

Pre-Historical and Historical Connections

History of India and Central Asia are indebted as well as accredited to each other. Various sites in both the regions are found which indicates clear transactions even in pre-historic periods. In Central Asia, Excavation of Tak-Mak region of Kyrgyzstan, Amu Darya Valley in Southern Uzbekistan, North-East of Samarkand in Uzbekistan, many places in Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, provide ample evidence of Indo -Central Asian links from ancient times.⁵ Many Central Asians places like Kara Tapa, Isykata, Kranayerzka, A K Beshin, Yer Kurgan, Dalvergin Tapa, Fayaz Tapa etc. have got remarkable findings which indicate deep internal links between India and Central Asia.⁶ In India, Harappan excavations have found direct evidence of mutual fellowship. This is further confirmed by the ruins of Afrasiab of South Uzbekistan and Nakichikan in Azarbaijan. Ancient cultural diffusion between both the regions goes from the Paleolithic age to the Bronze Age. Sohan Culture which is one of the most prominent Paleolithic cultures had expanded into the very vast region in Central Asia. Excavation shows its evidences across the terrain of the Pamir and

² Ibid. 261.

³ Inner Asia and India through the ages [Online]

Available from: http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/bot/pdf/bot_1987_01_full.pdf

[Accessed August 2014]

⁴ Gopal, Dr. Surendra .India and central Asia: Cultural, economic and political links. Delhi: Shipra Pub.2001. p. 7-8.

⁵ . Kumar, B B.India and Central Asia : Links and Interactions India and Central Asia. In: Roy , JN . Kumar, BB. (eds.) Classical to contemporary periods, Delhi: Astha Bharti Pub. 2007. p. 4.

⁶ Ibid

Hindukush in the Oxus Valley to its tributaries in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and other places. Historian Ronov denoted Sohan culture in the Central Asia is the first stage of evolution in Paleolithic Culture.⁷ Similarly, Gissan Culture of Central Asia and Kangra Valley, Neolithic culture of India shares significant similarities. Places like Anau, Altin Deep and Namazga Depe of South Turkmenistan share significant similarities with the Indus Valley Civilization.⁸

Since evidences of cultural and traditional links were seen from Paleolithic age. However, but one of the highly renowned Historian T. Shrinov has established the fact by several researches in the 3rd and 4th century BC the relation between both the regions was much closer, intermingled and deeper.⁹ This was close to the post-Vedic period in India. Further, it is texted in greatest epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana that several Central Asian warriors were invited by Kauravas and Pandavas both and get participated in the Great War that took place in Kurukshetra region i.e. Saka, Pahlava (Persians), Kambojas (Galcha Speaking people of Tajikistan), Rishik (Yueh-Chi or Kushanas), Chena, Huna and Yavana.^{10,11} Jaina and Buddhist as well as Sanskrit literatures throw ample lights on the mutual activities of people of both the regions. After victory of Bactria, Sagdiyana and Fargana in 329 BC, Alexander the Great reached Afghanistan and crossed Sindh River. Later he returned after leaving precise imprints of Greek art and Culture on some part of North Indian States during 327 BC. Considering these many rationales, it can be safely argued that two distinct civilizations were enriched by mutual transactions since pre-Historic period and it has continued till the present time.

Linguistic Similarities

Central Asia was predominantly in Iranian influence during pre-Islamic and early Islamic period where residents were primarily Sogdians, Choramians, Scythians, Alans and Bactrans. All these were of Iranian origin and language.¹² With time, the region came into Turkic influence and became the homeland of Turkic people while Kazakh, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and Uyghurs had been natives of the land. Due to this effect Central Asia is now termed as Turkistan. Due to long connections and interactions between Central Asia and India, the language has also got influenced mutually which is confirmed by the phonetic similarities. Indian language adopted several Central Asian words like Ratna, Guru and Mani which are prevalent in Mangolia and Tibet as well. Bokhara comes from Vihara or Bihara and Sartha is derived from Sart in western Turkistan. Pre-Aryans in Inner Asia were the people who gave the words like Ganga, Anga, Vanga and Kalinga. The word 'Linga' comes from Tibbeten word 'Gling' which later by Indianization became 'Ganga'. Another similarity exists for the word Ganga as it comes from Sanskrit word 'Gang ri mo' or 'Gang mo'. This means 'Daughter of snow'.¹³ One Central Asian scholar claims that Lord Buddha knows Kanishka's Yu-Chi language.¹⁴ Sanskrit word for 'Turk' is 'Turushka' and with same syllable 'Shka' it is found suffix

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Gupta, S.P. Pre-Historic Indian Culture in Soviet Central Asia. In: Chandra, Lokesh (eds.) Indias Contribution to world thought and culture. Chennai: Vivekanand Kendra Prakashan, 1970. p 239-40.

⁹ Srinov, T. India and Central Asia in Pre Islamic Period. Paper Presented in a seminar: Contact between Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinents in the second millennium BC. 2000 June 12-13. Tashkant. Uzbekistan.

¹⁰ 5.4.15 Mahabharata

¹¹ 2.47.19 Mahabharata

¹² Guha, Amalendu, editor. Central Asia: Movement of peoples and Ideas from Pre-historic to Modern. Delhi: ICCR and Vikas Publications; 1970. pp. 159

¹³ Bagchi, Prabodh Chandra. Pre Aryans and Pre Draviniyans in India. Calcutta: ICCR; 1929.

¹⁴ Aalto, Penlti. On the role of Central Asia in the spread of Indian Cultural Influence. In Chandra, Lokesh (eds.). Indias Contribution to world thought and culture. Chennai: Vivekanand Kendra Prakashan; 1970. p.249.

'Kanishka' which in Sanskrit stands for 'youngest Son'.¹⁵ Turkistan is the earlier name of Central Asia the suffix 'Stan' comes from Sanskrit word 'Sthan'. The word 'chest armor' came to Sanskrit from Iranian.¹⁶

Urdu Language flourished due to the interconnection between Central Asian and Indian people during the medieval period. The literal meaning of the word 'Urdu' is 'the camp of Turkish Army'. Initially this language was known as Hindustani or Hindavi, by travelling through different Sufi and Hindu Mystics it absorbed freely many regional influences and later came to be known as Dakhani or Dehalavi.¹⁷ The Hindi language also inherited many Turkic words like Chaku (knife), Kainchi (Scissors), Biwi (wife), Bahadur, Qabu (in control), Chammach (Spoon), Topachi (gunner), Barud, Chehak (small pox), Sarai (inn), Bawarchi (cook) etc.

Noted scholar Dr. Bhola Nath accounted about 125 Turkic words are usually being practiced in Hindi.¹⁸ According to famous Russian-Indian expert Bonguard Lebin, Dravinian language is largely similar to Brahmi language.¹⁹ During early years of Christian era, 764 Kharosthi documents of wooden tablets were found in the Prakrit script which throws light on political, social and cultural conditions of Central Asia. In this way both the regions has got enriched by mutual linguistic influences which continued even to the modern times.

Ancient Indian Literature based Perception of Mutual Influence

In Ancient Sanskrit literature we found many descriptions about Central Asian lifestyle, culture, civilizations, philosophy, literature, scholars etc. Apart from Mahabharata and Ramayana various Sanskrit texts like Kavyamimansa by Rajshekhara, Kalhan's Rajtarangini, Gunadhy's Vrihatkatha, Sarit Sagara of Somdevas Katha, Kshemdras Vrihat Katha Manjari, Kalidasa's Meghdoota and VikramoVarshiyam are the major source of our knowledge about mutual influences and interactions of both the regions. Regional details are texted in many mythological books. Markandeya Purana mentioned the geographical aspect of Central Asia and India collectively. In Markandeya Purana we find detailed description of 'Jambudvipa' which is significantly mentioned as 'a vast land which is elevated and broad in the middle and depressed on the south and north'.²⁰ Description of Jambudvipa depicts a very vast area from the Aral and Caspian Sea to the Yenisei and from Tien Shan range of Turkistan to the Arctic.²¹ Sage and author of Great Indian epic Valmiki has also given geographical details of Central Asia in Ramayana.²² It is said in many Ancient Indian Texts that 'Meru' Mountain is the famous Pamir plateau which is considered as the roof of the World, which was used to churn the sea to get fourteen Ratnas and Amrit was one among these Ratnas.²³ Mahabharata also gives the lists of the Warriors who were invited for the Great War of Kurukshetra by the King Yudhishtira. It says them Kshatriya of good birth Saka, Darada, Pahlva and Kirata.²⁴ These Central Asian warriors fought from the both sides of the Kauravas as well as Pandavas. It is mentioned in Mahabharata that Nakula defeated Hunas, Sakas, Yavanas and Pahalvas of the Kaurava's

¹⁵ Shrimad Bhagawat Purana, 2.4.18.

¹⁶ Litvinsky, B.A. Tajikistan and India, Chennai: Abha pub. 1964. p. 143-165.

¹⁷ Haider, Mansur. India and Central Asia linkage and Interaction. In: Joshi, Nirmla (eds.) Central Asia- The Great Game Replayed. Delhi: New Century Publications. 2003. p. 257.

¹⁸ Vatsyayan, Kapila. The Cultural Heritage of India. Vol.5. Calcutta: Ramakrishna Pub. 2009. p. 642-43

¹⁹ Sinha, Nirmal, C. Inner Asia and India through the ages. Bulletin of Tibbatology, Siikim Research institute of Tibbetology, Gangtok, 28 feb. 1987, p 8-9.

²⁰ Mahabharata, 8.13, 37-38

²¹ Muzaffar Ali, Sayad. The Geography of the Puranas. Delhi: Peoples Pub. House; 1966. p. 37.

²² Valmiki Ramayan, Kishyakintha Kand, 43. 39-59.

²³ Mahabharata, Sabha Parva, 53.17.

²⁴ Mahabharata, Adi Parva, 17.

side.²⁵ Further, Tushara or Yu-Chi clan (of which Kanishka belonged) was present in Raj Suya Yajna of Yudhishtira.²⁶ Matsya Purana and Vayu Purana describe Chakshu River which is recognized as Amu Darya.²⁷ Patanjali in his Mahabhashya, considered Saka and Yavana to be the migrants from the India.²⁸ Kumar Jiva, the personal Vaidya of Buddha, mentioned about the great city of the North Alasanda and Tashkent in his writings.²⁹ In ancient Indian texts the multidimensional description about Central Asian region indicates the easy mobility and continuous touch and transactions of the people from both the sides. Vedic and Epic age decodes significant factors which indicate expeditiously to the proximity of the two above mentioned territories.

Religious Influences on the Bilaterals

Religion plays major role in bilateral transactions of Indian and Central Asian region. Religious transactions are much visible from Paleolithic age. However, it became more evident at the time of Kushan dynasty as for the first time in history many religions sects like Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, Jorashtrian etc. thrive together. This was the time when Mahayana Buddhism and Indian Art and culture reached to China, Japan and Korea via Central Asia. Export of Indian Ayurvedic Medicines and Herbs began along with it. Many Buddhist Mathas of Kushana age are found in territories of Central Asia. Even today, in many places in Central Asia Buddhist traditions are kept alive. Places like Karataipia near Tarmej at the boarder of Afghanistan and Russia are found to be practiced Buddhist traditions and cultures. A long Buddha statue is found on the crossroad of ancient city 'Dal Warij Tepe' which evident the influence of Buddhism in ancient time in Central Asia. Many Buddhist ancient documents have been found in South Tajikistan.³⁰

In India, Central Asian ruling dynasties pretended themselves as protector of local culturally socio-religious aspects of India. They adopted titles like "Kshatrapa" and "Mahakshatrapa". Saka patronized Bhagvata movement, Vaishnavism and worship of Sun (Surya) through Sakadvipi Brahmins who were supposed to have come from Central Asia to India. Parthian patronized Surya worship. Saka, Parasika and Kushana brought number of icons like Amitabha and Avalokitesvara.³¹ Saka Era, which began from 78 AD by Kanishka was advised by leading Astro Physicist to Indian Government to adopt it as National Calendar and it came in to existence on March 22, 1957 by the Government of India.

In addition to this, different religious arts and culture have left its impact on each other. Numerous paintings have been found in Central Asia which has bright visible impact on the paintings of Ajanta and Alora in India while evidence of Lord Shiva as a cave painting is found in Penjikent (Tajikistan) and painting of Buddha in sleeping posture has been found in Adena Tepe in Tajikistan. Some very significant paintings of Heenyana Buddhism, Pastured Cow by Krishna, Kalidasa's Raghuvansham and Dancing pose of Rani Chandra Prabha have been found in the cave of Kijil in Central Asia.³² All these reflect possible Indian impacts on the art of Central Asia.

²⁵ Mabharata , Sabha Parva, 28,11-15.

²⁶ Mahabharata, 51. 23-24, 30.

²⁷ Harsha Charita, Kavya Mimansa, Last Part of Chapter 3.

²⁸ Manu Smriti 10, 43-44.

²⁹ Agnihotri, Prabhu dayal. Patanjali Kalin Bharat. Delhi: Eastern Books; 2007. p. 92-93.

³⁰ Gujral. Sheela. Hmare padosi, Soviet Pradesh, New Delhi :Goversons publishers ;1989. pp-2

³¹ Inner Asia and India through the ages [Online]

Available from: http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/bot/pdf/bot_1987_01_full.pdf
[Acceced August 2014]

³² Bhattacharjee, Chhaya. India- A Major Source of Central Asian Arts. In Chandra, Lokesh (eds.). Indias Contribution to world thought and culture. Chennai: Vivekanand Kendra Prakashan ; 1970. p 292.

As far as Buddhism is concerned many Central Asian elements are imbibed in it. Evidence of first Buddhist monastery goes back to 211 BC. Fa-Hian and Hiuen Chwang described significant Buddhist influence in Central Asia. Marcopolo had given them title of 'Idolators'.³³ Kucha was considered as important Buddhist Centre since first century AD. Buddhist Scholar Kumar Jiva, who was personal doctor of Buddha, was born from Kuchian mother and Indian Father. Balkh was known as little Rajgriha with hundred convents and five hundred monks. Tirmij and Aksu was greatest Buddhist Centers with one thousand monks. Northern Xingxiang was famous as a center of Heenyana sect of Buddhism.³⁴ Basic Mahayana scripture came from the border region of Mangolia and Manchuria which was the earliest habitat of Yu-Chi race. Buddhist terminologies like Dharmakaya, Sambogakaya, Nirvanakaya was inspired by Greek deities.³⁵ Further, fusion of Hinduism and Buddhism is found in Balawaste.³⁶

In west Central Asia, Vedic traditional funeral rights were in practice in Sogdiana. Brahma as Ravan, Indra as Adbad and Shiva as Vishparkar were worshipped in Sogdiana. Durga has also been worshipped there but with new incarnation of four arms.³⁷ The worship of water deities 'Gandharvas' and Vishwakarma³⁸ was also practiced in the Central Asian region.³⁹ This water based worship shows extreme Indian religious connections. Scholars also relate Kank with Ganga. Paintings and idols of Narayana, Shiva, Ganesha, Kartikeya, Mahakala, Diggals, Krishna are being found in various places which shows strong Hindu linkage.⁴⁰

According to Dr. M.Kh Abuseitova "spread of Buddhism in Central Asia under the Kushanas was accompanied not by blind acceptance of the idea of ancient Indian culture but by their understanding and combination with local cultural traditions".⁴¹ There are Buddhist manuscript on brick bark and palm leaves, which were found in Central Asia. Along with Gandhara art it is the Mahayana form of Buddhism that emerged from Gandhara and spread along the Silk Road through Afghanistan, Central Asia, Tibet, Cina, Koria and Japan. Monks carried Buddhism from India to Central Asia and Sufis brought the contemporary culture from Central Asia to India. The first Madarsa in Central Asia was created in influence of Buddhist Vihara. Buddhist Monasteries remains of the period from 525 BC to

³³ Ibid. 297.

³⁴ Haider , Mansur. India and Central Asia linkage and Interaction. In: Joshi , Nirmla (eds.) Central Asia- The Great Game Replayed. Delhi: New Century Publications. 2003. p. 257.

³⁵ Gufro, Bongard. Levin in Kushan Studies in USSR, Calcutta: M.B pub.; 1970.

³⁶ Puri, B.N. Buddhism in Central Asia. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas; Reprint, 1993. p. 292.

³⁷ Sulmanov,R.H. Indian Parallels in ancient cults of Sogdiana .Paper Presented in a seminar. India and Central Asia in Pre Islamic Period. 2000 june 12-13.Tashkant. Uzbekistan .

³⁷ 5.4.15 Mahabharata

³⁸ Gupta , S.P. Hindu Gods in Western Central Asia: A Lesser known chapter of Indian History. Dialogue. 2002. April-june ; 3(2) : 142-43.

³⁹ Haider , Mansur. India and Central Asia linkage and Interaction. In: Joshi , Nirmla (eds.) Central Asia- The Great Game Replayed. Delhi: New Century Publications. 2003. p 273-74.

⁴⁰ Burayakov, Yuriy. The issue of relation between Sogd and Indian in the ancient times and the early middle ages. Paper Presented in a seminar. India and Central Asia in Pre Islamic Period. 2000 june 12-13.Tashkant. Uzbekistan .

⁴¹ Abuseitova, M. Kh. Historical and Cultural Relations between Kazakhstan, Central Asia and India from Ancient times to the beginning of the XX century Dialogue.2004. oct-dec; 6(20).

700 AD have been found in Transoxiana.⁴² It is mentioned that the first Guru of Sikhs Nanak Dev visited Oxus Valley many times. This further confirms the argument that there exist strong cultural and religious connections.

From Ancient to medieval age, Buddhism was medium of cultural and religious exchange of India and Central Asia which was later replaced by Sufism. Buddhist texts and missionaries are medium to spread philosophical thoughts and ideas into the region. Central Asia knew different Buddhist School of thought including Lamaism, which was Tibetan version of Buddhism and prevalent in the state mainly Kyrgyzstan. Lamaism was well enough in practice in Central Asia. Lamaism terminology may be found in 'MANAS' epic. With introduction of Islam, Buddhism disappeared from Central Asia but the Buddhist religious and cultural practices were already absorbed in the bone marrow and flesh of the local people in a deeper manner that Buddhist thoughts may be found in folklore, fairy tales and epics of Central Asian local regions.

Buddhism was later dominated by Islam in and after 8th century AD. The 751 AD proved to be transforming when Arab checked the spread of Chinese Empire in the battle of Talas River. This battle was breakthrough in the Central Asian and Indian mutual transactions because the Arab victory resulted in domination of Buddhism by Islam and afterwards India suffered continuous invaders. All invaders had Islam as common defining element of their culture. Unlike India, Islam did not make its approach aggressively in Central Asia but it was introduced by Persian Islamic Missionaries. Next splash in India and Central Asia relation can be seen with the advent of Muhammad Gori. Sufism entered into India as a by product of Gori military campaign. With the introduction of Sufism, India witnessed a new dimension of Islam which comprises liberal principles and adhere many Indian practices within. Many Sufi saints came to India with convoy of Gori and settled in Delhi, Kashmir, Multan, Punjab, and other places. Through this route the traces of Buddhism, with little different fragrance which came back to India.

Apart from Buddhism and Islam, Christianity has also made inroads in the said region. This penetration is related to very important phenomenon. It is believed by some tribes in Central Asia, especially by shepherd, that Jesus the Christ was not dead when he was crucified. Instead at third day of crucification he was rescued by one of his female disciple Merry Megdaline who brought him in Kashmir safely. The place where Jesus lived in Kashmir is a well known pilgrimage today and there is a village Pahalgam in Kashmir which literally means the village of shepherds. Jesus was shepherd in his early life and many of his gospel points that he speaks in style of shepherd. In Pahalgam there is a Christian shrine where the people from around the world come to visit and do worship of Grave which is believed to be the grave of Jesus, the Christ.⁴³ The place where this grave is established is called 'Takht-e-Suleman'.⁴⁴ Another place of the similar name and belief is situated in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan at Osh city. Many people believe it the tomb of Jesus and also many Nestorian Christian monasteries are also there.

Mutual influence in the Monarchy

Monarchy is the most influential dimension after the religion. The latter deals with people's sentiments, faiths and to some extent norms of the people whereas monarchy deals with administration, international transactions and sovereignty of the state. Without sovereignty nation cannot define itself. Both the regions have witnessed exchange of

⁴² Haider , Mansur. India and Central Asia linkage and Interaction. In: Joshi , Nirmla (eds.) Central Asia- The Great Game Replayed. Delhi: New Century Publications. 2003. p.264.

⁴³ Faber-Kaiser, Andreas. Jesus died in Kashmir. London: Gordon Cremonesi Ltd; 1977. P.1-166.

⁴⁴ UNESCO, World Heritage Report, No. 1077, [Online] Available from: <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1077.pdf> [Accesed August 2014]

monarchy. Central Asian dynasties like Huna, Kushanas and Saka ruled India while Indian dynasties had ruled Khotan and elsewhere in the Central Asia.⁴⁵ Before the advent of Kushana Dynasty Central Asia and North India were divided in smaller territories under many chieftains. Kushana rulers unified them under one kingdom. Kushanas not only unified them but also provided a common culture, administration and a monetary system. Under Kushanas agriculture, irrigation, handicrafts, trade and commerce, architecture went through a revolutionary and dramatic change. Under the Kushana sovereignty flags were the same in Saket (modern day Ayodhya in India) and Fergana valley. Evidence of the extent of spread of the Kushana influence are still to be found in Central Asia. One of the greatest ruler Kanishka's coins from Bihar to the Aral Sea is found in the abundance.⁴⁶ Quite recently, the 1515 coins of the utmost historical importance are found in Turkmenistan which belongs to Kushana Dynasty king of Vasudeva of 3-4th Century AD. At present, these coins are kept in a museum in Turkmenistan.

Kushana, Seleucid and Achaemenian ruled both the regions together.⁴⁷ The concept of divinity in Indian religion and philosophy was unknown earlier and it was introduced by Central Asian invaders later. Like 'Devaputra' title comes with Yueh-Chis. Saka introduced the concept of semi-divine in the Indian monarchy system. Later Guptas adopted it as Param Bhattarka, Param Bhagwata, Param Daivata etc. However, with the dawn of Central Asian dynasties Divine Right became an integral part of the Hinduism. Evidences were found that Kshatriya dynasty has emerged from Central Asian creed. Huna later converted into different Kshatriya clans as Gurjaras, Pratiharas, Parmaras, Chauhanas, Rathoras etc. These Central Asian ruling dynasties started taking interest in protection of Indianness i.e. true spirit of Indian sect and virtues. They resisted against other foreign invaders like Arab, Afghans, Turks, and Indianized themselves.⁴⁸ The dynasties like Chalukya and Solanki were emerged from Sogdiana, which is the ancient civilization of Iran in the west Central Asia. In Sogdian language, words Solanki and Chalukya are Salika and Chulika respectively. Salika settled on North-West of India later these came to be known as Solankis whereas same dynasty in Southern part came to be known as Chalukya.⁴⁹

Asoka and Kanishka were the most powerful rulers in the Central Asian region and their impact was principally advocated by historians like Penliti Aalto. He had drawn the attention of the world towards the inscription on the wall of the gate of Chu-Yung-Kuan, a town on the road from Peiking to Kalgan, in different languages i.e. Sanskrit, Tibetan, His-hsia, Uighur, Mangol and Chinese which sheds light about the objectives of establishment of Stupas by the Great Ashoka.⁵⁰

In Medieval age, The Central Asian influence in India is very much perceptible especially in ruling dynasties we could find great its impact and it became much stronger in the Sultanate period and the Mughal Age. Further, it leaves some examples of Central Asian influence on the Indian system. Interestingly, the Sultan of Tuglaq Dynasty Muhammad Bin Tuglaq's fifty percent appointments was from the Amirs of Khurasan, Turks, Mongolia and Persia. A Famous clan of Ilbari Turk belonged to Western Kazakhstan. Coins of Delhi Sultanate were found in Central Asia and

⁴⁵ Kumar, B B. India and Central Asia : Links and Interactions India and Central Asia. In: Roy , JN . Kumar, BB. (eds.) Classical to contemporary periods, Delhi: Astha Bharti Pub. 2007. p. 4.

⁴⁶ Sankrityayan, Rahul. Madhy Asia ka itihās, part 1. Patna: Motilal Banarasi das; 2013.p. 205.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 6

⁴⁸ Inner Asia and India through the ages [Online]

Available from: http://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/bot/pdf/bot_1987_01_full.pdf

[Accessed August 2014]

⁴⁹ Baghachi, P.C. India and Central Asia. Calcutta: ICCR; 1955.

⁵⁰ Aalto, Penliti . Penliti Aalto. On the role of Central Asia in the spread of Indian Cultural Influence. In Chandra, Lokesh (eds.). Indias Contribution to world thought and culture. Chennai: Vivekanand Kendra Prakashan ; 1970. p.249.

Iran both. The Mughal Empire in India was founded by Central Asian native Babur which happened to be the first Islamic state outside the authority of the Caliphate. Nobility of Babur mainly comprises Turanian and Central Asian ethnicity and the policy remained similar for his immediate successor Humayun. When Humayun was in exile, 57 nobles accompanied him to India of which 27 were Turanis while 21 were Iranis and 9 were unidentified.⁵¹ The Mughal Court in its prime period, was always amassed by Central Asian nobles. Famous Fifteen luminaries in Mughal court like Jalalikitabar, Dastauri Nasafi, Khwaza Sami Sadat, Ghubar, Mulla Mustaifi Balkhi, Munim Bukhari, Mustaidi Bukhari and others were from Central Asia again and also 274 poets have been mentioned from Bukhara, Samarkand Nasaf and Badakhshan.⁵²

Trade and commerce was simplest medium of interactions of both the region because it belonged to the common people. Trade and commerce had started from the ancient period but at the time of Mughal emperor Akbar, Central Asian markets witnessed many Indian Traders like skillful jewelers, book binders, weavers, farmers etc. and some of them acquired monopoly over some trading items like tea trade of Bukhara and opened tea packing enterprises in Samarkand. Traders of indigo, muslin, silk, copper, cotton, dyes, iron-steel pots etc. were mainly Indians.⁵³ The Indian traders were also the medium of fusion of Indian and Central Asian cultures. They kept cordial relations with locals and intercourse alive between Russia and Central Asia when the state was under Russian rulers.⁵⁴

Many Scholars related to Central Asia made India their workspace. Ancestors of Ghalib and Abdul Rahim Khan-e-Khana were from Turkistan and thus both regions got an opportunity of an extensive architectural impact on each other. The great architecture built by Taimur in Bukhara and Samarkand is supposed to be Predecessor of Indo-Islamic style of architecture in India. Refined version of the pithy style of architecture was adopted by his descendants Mughal. Gur Emir mouslium and other monuments of Bukhara and Samarkand are the auspicious piece of architectural sophistication. Thus, it is evident that up to what extent both Monarchies were mutually influencing.

Impact on the Social Structure and Caste System

In Vaidic age Indian Castes were classified in four Varnas and Gupta Age witnessed assimilation of many intermediate castes into pre-established Varna System. The Central Asian ruling dynasties were merging itself into Kshatriya Varna. In the early medieval period, we could see the emergence of Rajputa dynasty which absorbed all new Ruling Central Asian Dynasties in herself. Huna later converted into different Rajputa clans as Gurjara, Pratiharas, Parmara, Chauhanas, Rathora etc. and adopted Indian cultural and socio-religious norms. They resisted against other foreign invader like Arab, Afghans, Turks, and Indianized themselves thoroughly.⁵⁵ Many new castes emerged in the 1st Century AD. For the instance, Thakura who are prevalent in North India but has not been mentioned in Vedic and Classical Sanskrit literature before 500 A.D. Scholars like Sylvin Levi, Buddha Prakash, Fredric Thomas, Harold Bailey, Suniti Chatterji have concluded the Thakurs are related to state Tukhra in Central Asia after an exhaustive

⁵¹ Kumar, B B. India and Central Asia : Links and Interactions India and Central Asia. In: Roy , JN . Kumar, BB. (eds.) Classical to contemporary periods ,Delhi: Astha Bharti Pub. 2007. p.17.

⁵² Ibid. 18.

⁵³ Lubarasky, A. Indian Settlers in Central Asia. Vivekananda Kendra Patrika. 1973. Feb.; 2(1): 108.

⁵⁴ Haider , Mansur. India and Central Asia linkage and Interaction. In: Joshi , Nirmla (eds.) Central Asia- The Great Game Replayed. Delhi: New Century Publications. 2003.p. 267-68.

⁵⁵ Haider , Mansur. India and Central Asia linkage and Interaction. In: Joshi , Nirmla (eds.) Central Asia- The Great Game Replayed. Delhi: New Century Publications. 2003.p. 267-68.

research work.⁵⁶ The place 'Tukhara' is in Gilgit at present and Tukhara has been mentioned in the Mahabharata also.⁵⁷ Sakaldwipi and Maga Brahmins supposed to have their origin in the Central Asia. Therefore, it can be said that the ancient Indian social structure was highly influenced by Central Asian and the vice-versa.

Conclusion

It is ensured that the multi-faceted impacts of both the regions have rendered mutually which has shaped the different views of the regions towards a golden goal which is far away to be achieved in the times to come. The ancient Indian social structure was one of the important determinants for the socio-political dynamics of Central Asian regions. The mutual influence in history was such pervasive that even we can't imagine the present form of India in the absence of that and same is reciprocally true for the central Asian region also. India cannot define its Ruling Dynasties, Caste systems, social structure and religious norms by excluding Central Asia. In Medieval period Central Asian people ruled India and with stowed great contributions to it which made India known globally. Since Paleolithic age up to now both the region's mutual steps are moving in rhythm towards prosperity and cooperation.

The inseparable influence of these two regions is not merely from the recent decades, but from the ancient times. The relationship interweaves through multifaceted dimensions of trade and commerce, socio-religious, socio-political and ethnic exchanges over the known period of beyond 3,000 years. It is established how pre-Historical and historical connections have shaped the bilateral of two world's geographies and how religious influence has made the influence multi-faceted. Numerous linguistic similarities have been found that in turn reinforces the mutual dependency over the novice relationship. The influence did not remain restricted to linguistic or religious effects, but to a large extent because of monarchy system and later it impacted the modern day social structure and the caste system as well. More importantly, this multi-faceted, multi-dimensional study generates an opportunity to have a microcosmic study to find better strategic factors to strengthen the bilateral of the said regions of the world.

⁵⁶ Prakash , Buddha , Central Asiatic Journal, 1997. March. 3 (2). p..23

⁵⁷ Panwer,, Hukum Singh. The Jats, Their Origine, Antiquity and Migrants. . Rohtak:Mathan Pub; 1993. p. 324.

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