Buddhist community at Ellora was either coming to an end or had already ended. The caves at Aurangabad with their very obvious Brāhmaṇical Hindu influence in architectural and sculptural elements represent the terminal phase of Buddhism in Maharashtra. With the emergence of a reinvigorated Paurāṇika type of Brāhmaṇical Hinduism, Buddhist monastic communities appear to have found it more and more difficult to stay afloat. Increasingly, under such circumstances, Buddhism tended to act as if it were a sect of Brāhmaṇical Hinduism. Images of the Buddha were set up along with those of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras and Śiva as is shown by the Śilāditya Gandarāditya inscription.

In sharp contrast to Jainism, Buddhism does not appear to have made any attempts to keep its identity intact. As a result, the remaining scattered monastic communities of Buddhism lapsed into Brāhmaṇical Hinduism.

f. The Deccan

Archaeological and literary evidence put together suggests that urban settlements with Buddhist connections at Patiṭhāna (Paithan), Koṇḍapura, Amarāvatī, and Arikamedu declined in the pre-Gupta period, Takkarā/Tagara (Ter), and Dharaṇikota from the Gupta period onwards and Banavāsi during the post-Gupta period. A few settlements such as Kaveripaṭṭinam and Nāgarjunakoṭḍa survived till much later period. On the whole, archaeological evidence indicates that Buddhist influence in peninsular India was confined mainly to the coastal towns and

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218 CI, vi.113.


220 Though Kaveripaṭṭinam continued to exist in the sixth-eighth centuries, at Nāgarjunakoṭḍa the archaeological records suggest a break in occupation after the fourth century CE (R.S. Sharma, Urban Decay in India, 99).
inland urban centres where commercial activities were taking place.\textsuperscript{221} With the onset of decline of urbanization in south India in the third century CE, at least some of the monasteries must have lost support and fallen on bad days. When Xuanzang arrived in south India, Buddhism was declining in most parts. In the country of Andhra with its capital at Veṅgipura, according to Xuanzang, there were more than twenty vihāras with over three thousand monks, the number of deva-temples being more than thirty with numerous heretics.\textsuperscript{222} In the country of Dhānakaṭaka (Amrāvatī), except ten vihāras with over one thousand monks, Xuanzang saw numerous vihāras in ruins, whereas there were over one hundred deva-temples with innumerable heretics.\textsuperscript{223} In the country of Cola (Tamilnadu), the vihāras were dilapidated with very few monks but there were several tens of deva-temples with many naked heretics.\textsuperscript{224} In the country of Dravida with its capital at Kāṭcīpura, Xuanzang saw over one hundred vihāras with over ten thousand monks.\textsuperscript{225} He also saw over eighty deva-temples.\textsuperscript{226} In the country of Malakūṭa (Kerala), Xuanzang saw the ruined foundations of many old vihāras, the existing ones being very few with few monks.\textsuperscript{227} But the deva-temples in Malakūṭa numbered several hundred.\textsuperscript{228} Xuanzang saw over one hundred vihāras with more than ten thousand monks in Koṅkaṇapura, the number of deva-temples being several hundred.\textsuperscript{229} When about a hundred years later, Hye Ch’o arrived in south India, he saw that in the kingdom of the Cālukyas (covering the present-day Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh) Buddhism was highly revered

\textsuperscript{222}Xiyu Ji. 313.
\textsuperscript{223}Ibid., 315 – 316.
\textsuperscript{224}Ibid., 318.
\textsuperscript{225}Ibid., 319 – 320.
\textsuperscript{226}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{227}Ibid., 321.
\textsuperscript{228}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{229}Xuanzang. 120; Xiyu Ji. 334.
and there were many Mahāyāna and Hinayāna monasteries and monks. But he also saw a large monastery in the mountains which was ruined and had no monks.\textsuperscript{230}

It is sometimes suggested that the persecution of Buddhism contributed to its decline in south India. In support of this, the example of Kāṇcī is cited from where “the Buddhists had to flee when the king changed his faith. The vihāras were burnt and some of the Buddhist shrines and vihāras became Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite.”\textsuperscript{231} Sufficient evidence of overt persecution of Buddhists in south India is lacking to support such a view. Stray examples such as that of the Pallava (Andhra-Tamilnadu region) kings, Śivāvarman and Trilokana having built Brāhmaṇical-Hindu temples by demolishing some Buddhist stūpas, are not sufficient to support such a hypothesis. It has also been proposed sometimes that the Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkarācārya which is said to have attracted vast populations and his establishment of the Brāhmaṇical-Hindu maṭhas as counterpoints to the Buddhist vihāras quickened the phase of decline of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu.\textsuperscript{232} His defeat of the Buddhists in a debate at Kāṇcī is cited as a quintessential example of such a fate that had befallen the Buddhists.\textsuperscript{233} Further, the emergence of the imperial Coḷas with their allegiance to Śaivism is also viewed as having worked to the disadvantage of Buddhism in the Tamil land.\textsuperscript{234} However, in reality the ascendance of the agrarian class and its alliance with Brāhmaṇical-brāhmaṇas during the heydays of the Bhakti movement, the former supporting the Śiva and Vaiṣṇavite

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Hye Ch'o.43} Hye Ch'o.43.
\bibitem{R. Champakalakshmi} R. Champakalakshmi, “Buddhism in Tamil Nadu: Patterns of Patronage,” in John Samuel et al., op. cit., 89.
\bibitem{R.S. Murthy} R.S. Murthy, “Introduction,” in ibid., xv.
\end{thebibliography}
faiths and the ruling authorities switching patronage from the Buddha to Brāhmaṇical-Hindu deities, may have tilted the scales against Buddhism which was supported mainly by the mercantile community. Besides, Buddhism had become “interlarded with Śaiva ideas, and with practices of Hatha yoga in the South and was thus in a state of imperceptible dissolution amidst forms of Tantric Hinduism.”

However, remnants of Buddhism survived in nooks and corners of south India until at least the sixteenth century, if not later. Talking about the people of Malabar in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Chau Chu-Kua calls them “extremely devout Buddhists.” Large number of Buddha images ranging from seventh century to fourteenth century have been found in and around Kāñcipuram. The Caitanya Caritāmṛta, written by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in CE 1582, talks about Śrī Caitanya having discussions with several Buddhists and defeating them in debates along with their guru at Veṇkaṭagiri near Arcot. According to a tradition, Tāranātha became a disciple of the Tantric Buddhist, Buddhagupta, who belonged to Rameswaram in south India. Tāranātha mentions that Jñānakaragupta along with one hundred other Buddhist teachers fled from the north and arrived in south India after the fall of Magadha to the Khalji rule. Archaeological evidence from Nākappaṭṭinam and its

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236R.C. Mitra, op. cit., 122.
237Chau Ju-Kua.88. However, as pointed out earlier, Hirth and Rockhill have suggested that in this context the word Fo (the Buddha) has been used in the sense of “an image of a god,” and not in its literal sense (Chau Ju-Kua.90).
239Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, with the original Bengali text, Roman transliteration, synonyms, translation and elaborate purports, by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, New York: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1975: Section 1: v.4.
240IHQ, 1931.684.
241Tāranātha.319.
neighbourhood has yielded as many as 350 Buddhist bronze images ranging from the ninth to the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. Kalyāṇī inscription of Dhammaceti (king of Pegu) engraved in CE 1476 narrates an interesting anecdote of the travel of some Theravāda Buddhists to Nākapaṭṭīṇam and their visit to the site of Padarikārāma vihāra for worship. This inscription talks about an image of the Buddha in a cave constructed at the instance of the Mahārājā of Cīnadesa, on the spot, on the seashore, where the Holy Tooth relic was deposited in the course of its transit to Laṅkādvipa in the charge of Daṇḍakumāra and his wife Hemamālā. Valentyn who visited Nākappaṭṭīṇam in CE 1725 also refers to one “China Pagoda” at this place later destroyed by the Jesuits in CE 1867.

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243 IA. xxii, 1878: 11—53.
244 Ibid., 45.
245 Ramachandran, op. cit., 14—20.
Moral and Ethical Degeneracy

IT HAS BEEN sometimes suggested that moral and ethical degeneracy of the members of the Buddhist saṅgha was the core cause of the decline of Buddhism in India.¹ An examination of the sizeable Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist textual material spanning the entire period of the history of Buddhism in India indicates that many members of the saṅgha were men and women who had put on the kāsāyavattha under circumstances of compulsion. Many among these were disgruntled and frustrated persons who had left the world in disgust. Quite a few desperate characters including vagrants, thieves, and idlers of all sorts existed in the saṅgha who could not cope with the responsibilities of running a household and thus chose saṅgha-life faute de mieux. Such undesirable and irresponsible elements were clearly not expected to live up to the ideals set by the Buddha.

It was perhaps in response to the presence of such undesirable elements in the saṅgha that the Buddha was compelled to enact rules banning their entry. As a result, those who had been highway robbers, jail-breakers, and thieves were declared ineligible for entry into the saṅgha.² Although such rules did not necessarily keep unwanted elements from making way into the saṅgha, yet,

²Vin.i.72—84.
Moral and Ethical Degeneracy

in order to justify their existence in the samgha, such people had to pretend to follow the dhamma. Thus wearing kāsāya cīvara and making a show of sincerity towards the Tiratana was only a façade put up by such persons to retain their membership of the samgha. In other words, the samgha abounded with people who were not only mere babblers of the dhamma but were also, as it appears from the different references in the Tipiṭaka, perversely self-willed and unbearably quarrelsome. Though many of the examples given in the Vinaya Piṭaka of pregnant nuns and of monks committing theft and murders may have been imaginary rather than true, it would be impossible to deny that moral and ethical corruption existed in the samgha. But at the same time, one must differentiate between instances of corruption as individual and stray instances on the one hand and rampant corruption in an institution affecting it as a whole on the other. Furthermore, it may be pointed out that the so-called period of corruption in Buddhism has not been viewed exactly as such by everybody. For instance, N.N. Bhattacharyya has pointed out that “The period which has been stigmatised by most historians as that of the decline and disappearance of Buddhism was in reality the only period in which it was able to come out of its dry academic shell and renovate all the existing traditional and popular spiritual disciplines by its own spirit.”

Tibetan texts mention the followers of Devadatta as having manufactured weapons for waging war. Though well-documented research has shown that Devadatta has been maligned unfairly, the parting of ways between the Buddha

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and Devadatta in connection with the five punctilious practices (*dhūtāṅgas*) indicates that all was not well within the saṅgha even at the time of the Buddha.\(^6\) It has been suggested that the most important reason for the vilification of Devadatta was his strict identification with forest Buddhism as it did not go well with settled monasticism. Devadatta considered settled monasticism “as a form of laxity, a danger for the future of the community and for Buddhism altogether.”\(^7\) Early texts like the *Theragāthā* lament that bhikkhus “desirous of gain, inactive, devoid of energy; finding their woodland wilderness wearisome, will dwell in villages.”\(^8\) The same text refers to monks “who once forsook wealth, wives and children, now do evil for the sake of a spoonful of rice,”\(^9\) are “cheats, frauds, false witnesses, unscrupulous, with many stratagems they enjoy the things of the flesh,”\(^10\) who “accumulate much wealth,”\(^11\) “cultivate practices which are not to be done,”\(^12\) and who in the future “will accept silver and gold, fields, property, goats and sheep, male and female servants”\(^13\) and “will be angry and full of hatred, hypocritical, obstinate, treacherous, envious and with different doctrines.”\(^14\) In the same text, there is a reference to a monk who “is lazy and a glutton, a sleeper who rolls as he lies, like a great hog fed on grain.”\(^15\) The *Theragāthā* also admits that “although lacking virtuous qualities, running affairs of the saṅgha, the incompetent, the garrulous, and those lacking wisdom will be powerful.”\(^16\) The *Jātakas* acknowledge that easy life in the saṅgha began to tempt many undesirable characters

\(^6\) *Vin.* ii.196—198; iii.171.
\(^7\) André Bareau, op. cit., 542.
\(^8\) *Th.* 962.
\(^9\) *Th.* 934.
\(^10\) *Th.* 940.
\(^11\) *Th.* 941.
\(^12\) *Th.* 934.
\(^13\) *Th.* 957.
\(^14\) *Th.* 952.
\(^15\) *Th.* 17.
\(^16\) *Th.* 955.
and that there were certainly some people who entered the saṅgha because they found living easier inside the saṅgha than on the outside. One of the Jātakas relates the story of a young man who fervidly declared: “Day and night I am labouring with my own hands at all sorts of tasks, yet never do I taste food so sweet. I must become a Bhikkhu myself.” It cannot be denied that laxity in the saṅgha grew to the point where monks in large numbers were pocketing individual or community wealth and engaging in several other indiscretions.

Different Councils called from time to time also point to the fact that the saṅgha was faced with matters relating to indiscipline and moral turpitude. The frivolous utterances of Subhadda at the news of the demise of the Buddha were quite alarming to say the least. When the First Council was held under the presidency of Mahākassapa, dissident aged monks like Purāṇa and Gavāmpati chose to remain aloof from the Rehearsal declaring that it did not fully accord with what they had heard from the Buddha. There is sufficient evidence to show that there were monks who did not fully cooperate with the Buddha during his lifetime and with his chief disciples like Mahākassapa, Upāli, and Ānanda after his death. The refusal of the Buddha to appoint any person as his successor and his declaration that after him his dhamma alone would be the instructor of the saṅgha must have given opportunities to centrifugal tendencies for different considerations, thus leading to the formation of different groups. Moreover, the years following the parinibbāna were marked by a process of growth with respect to wealth, membership, and complexity of the saṅgha. The aggrandisement in wealth actually appears to have been the main cause of the factious dispute which led to the convening of the Second Council and the first major schism which took place when a large number of Vajjian monks from the eastern regions like Vaiśālī advocated Ten Extravagances (dasavatthūni), which, according to orthodox monks, were violations of the rules of the Vinaya. In this connection, Bhavya

\[17\text{i.311.}\]
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reports that “the bhikṣus of Vaiśālī said—‘Venerable sirs, enjoy yourselves,’ and they made enjoyment lawful.”¹⁸ The advocates of the Ten Extravagances seceded from the original group called Sthaviravādins or Theravādins and styled themselves as the Mahāsāṃghikas. According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, they convened their own Council and drew up resolutions in keeping with their own views. This council became known under the name of Mahāsāṃgha or Mahāsāṃgīti. On the occasion of the Third Council, Aśoka is said to have expelled 60,000 bogus monks from the saṅgha for practising many things that were a breach of the Vinaya rules.¹⁹

Chinese pilgrims Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing refer to the Buddhist saṅgha owning movable and immovable property in substantial quantities.²⁰ Yijing censures such monks who were avaricious and did not divide the produce of the monastic lands according to rules, and instead grasped the whole share. He observes, “It is unseemly for a monastery to have great wealth, granaries full of rotten corn, many servants, male and female, money and treasures hoarded in the treasury without using any of the things, while all the members are suffering from poverty.”²¹ Xuanzang laments that Buddhist monks in Sind were not only ignorant and given to indulgence and debauchery but they also did not study with an aim to excel.²² It had become quite normal

¹⁸W.W. Rockhill, op. cit., 171.
²¹Yijing.194.
²²Xiyu Ji.345–347.
for Buddhist vihāras to own servants, cattle, land, granaries, and villages for the purpose of maintaining their residents. There is evidence to show that some of the prominent vihāras had become so influential that they not only began to issue their own seals and coins, but as a result of the possession of property in such proportions they were also in a position to extend their power and influence in their respective localities.23 Many greedy monks associated with these vihāras are stated to have hoarded wealth and invested it like the lay supporters. It is not surprising that the Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa talks about monks who had become industrialists (bhikṣavo bahukarmāntā).24

The Sūtra of the Face of Lotus translated into Chinese towards the close of sixth century CE prophesies about monks who will take pleasure in doing only evil deeds such as “theft, pillage, tending of meadows and cultivation of lands.”25 Similarly, in the Vibhāṣā it is lamented that

bhikṣus will have taken up the homeless life in order to acquire advantages and ensure their subsistence. They will lack diligence in reciting the holy texts and will not seek solitude in order to meditate and reflect. During the day, they will gather in order to discuss worldly matters (lokadharma), they will become excited and give confused cries; during the night, tired and lazy, they will prolong their sleep. They will be devoid of reasoning (vitarka) and reflection (upanidhyāna). Since they will all neglect the true teaching of the Buddha, they will no longer follow the practices.26

24AMMK.235.
The *Caturbhāṇi* mentions Buddhist monks frequenting sex-workers and being caught in *flagrante delicto*, nuns acting as procurresses, and both monks and nuns playing the roles as go-betweens (*pithamardaka*). The *Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchāsūtra* talks about gallivanting monks who “without shame and without virtue, haughty, puffed up and wrathful...intoxicating themselves with alcoholic drinks... possessing of wives, sons and daughters... indisciplined and uncontrolled in eating and sex-play... as unrestrained as elephants without elephant-goad.” According to the *Rājatarāṇī* of Kalhaṇa, in the *vihāra* built by king Meghavāhana’s queen Yūkādevī, one-half was assigned to regular monks and the other half to those who deserved blame because they had wives and family. In the *Mālatī-mādhava* of Bhavabhūti, an old Buddhist nun called Kāmaṇḍakā and her two associates are used for bringing about a private union of lovers. She even intrigues to stage a mock marriage between Nandana and Makaranda. Similarly, in the *Daśakumāracarita* of Daṇḍi and the *Mālavikāgnimitra* of Kālidāsa Buddhist nuns are shown acting as “go-betweens.”

Scathing attack on the laxity and luxury of Buddhist monks is made in the *Matta-vilāsa*, a seventh century dramatic work by king Mahendravarman. As possibly the worst example of degeneration, the Buddhist monk, in this drama, is found quoting the holy books to justify his being a bibber, a womanizer, and a glutton. It may be worthwhile here to quote this Buddhist monk, Nāgasena, who bore the same name as the celebrated monk of

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29 *Rājatarāṇī*.iii.11 – 12.
30 *Mālatī-mādhava*, Act I, scenes 1 et seq.
the famous *Milindapañha*, but whose lifestyle appears to be in glaring contrast to that of the latter:

Ha! Our supremely gracious Lord the Tathāgata has favoured the congregation of us friars with his instructions ordaining for us lodging in fine buildings, lying on bedsteads with well-made beds, eating in the forenoon, savouring drinks in the afternoon, chewing betel flavoured with the fine kinds of fragrance, and wearing soft robes; but why did he not think of sanctioning possession of women and use of strong drink? No, as he knew everything, how could he fail to see that? It is certain, I think, that those poor-spirited and spiteful-minded Elders from envy of us young men have blotted out sanctions of women and use of strong drink in the books of Scripture.33

Kavirāja Śaṅkhadhara’s *Laṭakamelakam*, written in the first-quarter of the twelfth century, talks about a monk’s amatory behaviour who makes advances to a washerwoman.34 There were obviously many monks whose moral standards must have been lower than Bhārtrihari’s who “Having desired to embrace the excellent Law he became a homeless priest, but overcome by worldly desires he returned again to the laity. In the same manner he became seven times a priest, and seven times returned to the laity.”35 Thus, it is not surprising, as pointed out in the *Mrucchakaṭika*, that Buddhist monks were disparaged at places such as Ujjayinī and their sight was considered highly inauspicious and avoidable.36

On analyzing the above stated examples, one is tempted to say that corrupt practices had become widely prevalent in the Buddhist samgha. However, at the same time it must be said that not all practices could really be called corrupt as such, much less harmful to the health of the samgha. For instance, it would be difficult to understand the logic behind ownership of land, servants, granaries, and precious metals by vihāras being the cause of the

33Ibid., 707.
35Yijing.179.
36Acts VII and VIII.
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decline of a religion even if its founder had advocated otherwise. Interestingly, “it was in the supposed declining period . . . in the eleventh century that Atśa went to Tibet. Was he a product of decadence?”

Furthermore, it would be unscholarly to say that corrupt practices in a religion would necessarily lead to its decline. In any case, laxity in discipline of religious life was not Buddhist *sui generis*. It existed in other contemporary religions as well. The Vaiśṇavas, the Bhāgavatas, the Paurāṇikas, and the Śrotṛyas have also been ridiculed and chastised from time to time. Many religious trusts, temples, and shrines are run in the present times like money-grabbing business houses and their managements are not exactly paragons of virtue. But still they continue to thrive. In other words, it is not possible to establish relationship between the decline of a religion and its moral and ethical corruption. Moreover, as pointed out above, though moral laxity did corrupt the Buddhist sangha at certain times and places, still it would be manifestly wrong to say that it had assumed a universal character. It is also important to remember here that alongside these corrupt monks and nuns, we are reminded of the existence of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis who lived remarkably clean and exemplary lives. Thus, it would be wrong to create an impression that the Buddhist sangha had become corrupt lock, stock, and barrel. The sangha had never turned into an institution in disgrace. There is no well-documented evidence to prove that Buddhism was abandoned by its supporters for the reason that it had turned into a corrupt religion. Besides, as many of the examples of corrupt bhikkhus and bhikkhunis are from an early period, then the question arises as to how did Buddhism manage to keep its presence felt as late as the early medieval times? Clearly, moral and ethical degeneracy cannot be considered as the *causa sine qua non* for the decline of Buddhism in India.


38 See, S.C. De, op. cit., 252n.
Role of Brahmanical-Hinduism and Brahmanical-Kings

Role of Brahmanical-Hinduism on Buddhism

Buddhism was overpowered and wiped out from India. G. Verardi claims to have found sufficient evidence on the violent end of Indian Buddhism at the hands of brahmanas. He feels that religious tolerance was alien to pre-British India and that there is sufficient actual or circumstantial evidence available all over India, from Kathmandu to Orissa and the Deccan, in the Brahmanical sources (inscriptions, literary works, oral tradition) as well as in the archaeological record, testifying to the destruction of monasteries by the brahmanas and the creation by them of special militias aimed at intimidating the Buddhist monks and the laity. He further points out that the great monasteries of north eastern India like Saranatha, Nalanda, and Vikramashila had been or were being appropriated by the brahmanas at the time of the Turkish conquest. In his opinion, the heretics, identified with the asuras of the endless deva-asura war, are often depicted as Buddhist princes or monks and in some cases, as in the Kalki Purana, the final battle against the Buddhists is overtly described. Traditional doctrinal controversies between learned brahmanas and Buddhist teachers, we are told, turned into ordeals where the latter might be killed or exiled, or obliged to convert. Attack on Anugulimala by a frenzied mob, the murders of Moggallana and Aryadeva, anti-Buddhist crusades of Kumarila Bhatta and Samkaracarya, and an attempt by brahmanas not only to burn the pavilion where Xuanzang was to be honoured by king Har–avardhana but also to kill pro-Buddhist Harshavardhana himself, are given as important instances in support of such an hypothesis. The description of the Buddha in some of the Puranas as a grand seducer who brought the asuras to their ruin and the view in the Yajnavalkya (Hindu Vedic sage) that a bhikkhu in yellow robes was an ill omen, are further quoted as examples of the contempt in which the Buddhists were held by the brahmanas. According to A.L. Basham “some kings were strongly anti-Buddhist and took active steps to discourage Buddhism. More serious opposition came from certain medieval Hindu philosophers and their disciples. Teachers such as Kumarila and Shankara are said to have travelled far and wide throughout India preaching their own doctrines and attacking those of their rivals, and Buddhism seems to have been singled out for special attention by those reformers. Anti-Buddhist propaganda of one kind or another may have had a significant influence in the decline of Buddhism.”

According to L.M. Joshi, “Among the external factors the most important was the Brahmanical hostility towards Buddhism. . . . This hostile attitude was vigorously sustained till Buddhism was overpowered in India and disappeared from the land of its birth.” Similarly, Yamakami was of the opinion that “there is no reason to doubt that the Sanskrit Tripiaka met, at the hands of the Brahmin persecutors of Buddhism, a treatment not dissimilar to that which the Indian Buddhists themselves received.”

Some scholars have pointed out that it is not uncommon to find Buddhists being referred to as “outcastes” (vasalaka) and “devils/ demons” (daitya, danava). It has also been
pointed out by some scholars that Brahmanical-Hindu incorporation of Buddhist ideas, what Arnold Toynbee once called “the philosophical plunder of Buddhism.” was also in the later period accompanied by “mean-spirited ridicule.”

S.B. Pillai has pointed out that architecturally several Cola period temples were originally Buddhist shrines. In the Cola-ruled Kaveri delta areas, several huge Buddha granites have been recovered within or close to Brahmanical-Hindu temples. Pillai argues that in several Cola temples the sculptors’ guilds left clues about the original shrines. Examples are also cited of temples such as the Thiruvadigai temple (Cuddalore district) where apparently during the annual temple festival the temple elephant knocks the Buddha sculpture, kept in one of the corners, thrice with its trunk to symbolise the victory of Saivism over sramanic religions.

There were also instances of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis being beleaguered or sometimes even murdered. In the Vinaya Pitaka there are several examples of brahmanas who spoke of bhikkhunis as harlots:

“Now at that time several nuns, going to Savatthi through the Kosalan districts, having arrived at a certain village in the evening, having approached a certain brahmana family, asked for accommodation. Then that brahmana woman spoke thus to these nuns: ‘Wait, ladies, until the brahmana comes.’ Then that brahmana having come during the night, spoke thus to that brahmana woman: ‘Who are these?’ ‘They are nuns, master.’ Saying: ‘Throw out these shaven-headed strumpets,’ he threw them out from the house.”

Over forty per cent of the leading monks and nuns mentioned in texts such as the Vinaya Pitaka, Theragatha, and Therigatha belonged to the brahmana caste. Thus, stray examples quoted in support of Brahmanical enmity and the resultant persecutions are not enough to show that they caused the violent decline of Buddhism in India.

The case of the disappearance of the bhikkhuni-sangha is one such example. One has only to go through the Pali canonical literature to see how strong in numbers were the monks of brahmana castes who rarely gave up their claim to brahmana-hood by birth in practice.

Buddhism became a pan-Indian religion from Asoka’s period onwards and began to enjoy sufficient socio-political clout, the Brahmanical-brahmanas for their own survival began a systematic subversion of institutional Buddhism so that the Buddha could be assimilated into the Brahmanical-Hindu pantheon and lose his cultic veneration.

Thus, the conflict of interests cannot be denied. But there are not sufficient examples of overt hostility shown by the brahmanas to label them as communal. In other words, the wrangles between the followers of the Buddha and the followers of different sects of Brahmanism must be seen more as internal petty altercations within a broader Indian religious system rather than frenzied communal riots. Moreover, the Brahmanical malevolence, having an intellectual flavour uber alles or disambiguation i.e. clarification
that follows from the removal of ambiguity, appears to have been directed primarily at the monastic movement and to some extent at the comparative opulence of the monasteries.

Early Buddhist sources do not refer to any persecution and they certainly do not betray any feelings of mutual animosity bordering on violent and aggressive altercations between the Buddhist monastics and the Brahmanical followers. The Buddha made respectful reference to brahmanas who observed their vows in contradistinction to those who were mere brahmanas by birth, and he classed the worthy samanas with the brahmanas.

“[I]n dozens of Suttas, meetings of brahmanas and Buddha or his disciples and missionaries . . . almost always seem to be marked by courtesy on both sides. No meetings are recorded in the early Pali texts or brahmanical texts about Sakyans condemning the tenets of ancient brahmanism or about brahmanas censuring the Bauddha heterodoxy.”

As far as the Brahmanical followers were concerned, to them Buddhism was a mere sect within the Brahmanical system. According to a tradition, Aryadeva, the pupil of Nagarjuna, was murdered by one of the fanatical pupils of a teacher whom Aryadeva had defeated in a debate. Aryadeva had asked his disciples to forgive the killer.

The murder of Moggallana (supposedly committed at the behest of Niganthas), described only in the Dhammapadatthakatha, was an individual act of crime. Similarly, the assault on Angulimala had no religious motive behind it. As put by R.C. Mitra, “[t]he attitude of the Hindus might have graduated from cold to scorching contempt, but a policy of harrying the Buddhists out with fire and sword sounds like a myth.”

In a study, based on the data collected from the Encyclopaedia of Indian Philosophies, it has been shown that over forty important Buddhist thinkers from the eighth to the first-quarter of the thirteenth century lived in India. The century-wise breakup of the list shows that from 700-800 eight, from 800-900 seven, from 900-1000 five, from 1000-1100 fifteen, and from 1100-1200 eleven Buddhist thinkers existed in India.

However, during the same period Brahmanical-Hinduism had just about half a dozen thinkers of comparable repute. It seems that though these five centuries were a sun-set period for Buddhism, yet the few surviving Buddhist mahaviharas due to the particular attention that they paid to academic and intellectual work, succeeded in producing quite a few thinkers of substance. However, compared to this, Brahmanical-Hinduism during the same period appears to have been greatly agrarianized by the Bhakti movement and was rather focussing on displacing Buddhism from the socio-political pedestal, leaving the path of wisdom (jnanamarga) almost entirely to Buddhism.

Brahmanical-Hindus had no consciousness of belonging to a religious community, and, therefore, their stand against other sects was segmented and episodic But Indian history
does not bear out the fact of a continued and organized persecution as the state policy of a dynasty in a measure sufficient to exterminate an established faith. On the other hand, even from purely epigraphical evidence one can make out numerous instances of tolerance of Buddhism by Brahmanical rulers or of reverence to Brahmanical-Hindu deities by Buddhists. A glimpse into the Gupta period may be illuminating as it is generally held as the *belle époque* of Brahmanical revival. Amarakardava was a Buddhist general of many victories in the service of Candragupta II and the general in his grant to an *Arya-samgha* at Kakandabhota of Sanci, pronounces the guilt of the slaughter of a cow or a brahmana on anyone who would disturb it. This shows that the psyche of a Buddhist in the matter of taboos and inhibitions differed very little from that of a Brahmanical-Hindu and had the same notion of heinous sins.

Harshavardhana pays homage to Shiva and the Buddha in his *Ratnavali* and *Nagananda* respectively. As time went by, the borderline between the Buddhists and the Brahmanical-Hindus became thinner and thinner.

**Vedic Scriptures verses Buddhism**

Had the Buddha been hated by the Brahmanical society, the same society would not have accepted him as an incarnation of Vishnu. The *Garuda Purana* invokes the Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu for the protection of the world from sinners and not for deluding *asuras* to their ruin as in the *Vishnu, Agni* or other early Puranas. The *Varaha Purana* also refers to the Buddha as an incarnation in no deprecating sense, but he is adored simply as the god of beauty.

Superior contempt is the distinctively Hindu method of persecution. It is true that Puranas such as the *Vishnu, Vayu*, and *Matsya* mention the Buddha as the grand seducer and the *Yajnavalkya* considers the sight of a monk with yellow robes as an execrable augury. But this kind of attitude was not always one-sided and some scholars have gone so far as to say that Buddhism was much more unfriendly towards Brahmanical-Hinduism than the other way round.

**Buddhism on Divinity**

It is no secret that the Buddhists “criticised severely the doctrines of the Hindus, attacked their caste-system, insulted the Hindu gods and, in fact, did everything that is far from being friendly.”

In fact, there is sufficient evidence to prove that the Buddhists tried to show different Brahmanical deities in bad light. For instance, the Siddhas are expected to be served in heaven by Hari as gatekeeper. There are images in which Indra always serves to bear the parasol, and Ganesha is at the feet of Vighnnataka.

Each of the Hindu gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva is stigmatized as Mara or the seducer. In the *Sadhanamala*, Vishnu is mentioned in an undignified position of being the *vahana* of *Hariharihariharihavanodbhava*, one of the forms of the all compassionate Bodhisattva.
Avalokitesvara. Similarly, major Brahmanical gods are shown in a humiliating position of kowtowing to Marici.

**Conclusion**

Indian Buddhism attempted to seek space within space rather than carving out its own space to the exclusion of others. In this sense, Buddhism did not pose any danger to Brahmanical-Hinduism. However, Brahmanical-brahmanas as a priestly class did feel threatened by Buddhism from the time of king Ashoka onwards when institutional Buddhism acquired the character of a pan-Indian religion with significant socio-political clout whereby the Buddha rose to the status of the most popular religious figure in the whole of Jambudvipa. Ashoka’s Buddhistic rendition of dharma ostensibly had become, at least for the time being, a matter of implemented public policy.

In response to such a development, the Brahmanical-brahmanas, as a priestly class with socio-political vested interest, came up with well-thought out two-pronged agenda for their own survival:

1. They became designedly agreeable and assimilative towards those issues in Buddhist weltanschauung (जीवनदर्शन) or view of life as a comprehensive view of the world and human life which had become socio-religiously commonsensical or exhibiting native good judgement. A trend towards assimilation of Buddhism by Brahmanical-Hinduism appears to have begun during the Gupta period. Kane has suggested that the Puranic practices and religious rites undermined the power and prestige of Buddhism and weaned away large sections of the supporters from the attractive features of Buddhism by securing to them in the reorientated Hindu faith the same benefits, social and spiritual, as promised by Buddhism. In his opinion, the Puranas played a substantial role in bringing about the decline and disappearance of Buddhism by emphasizing and assimilating some of the principles and doctrines of the Buddha. Slowly and steadily the Buddha was assimilated into the pantheon of Vishnu and the Bhakti movement contributed significantly by providing a congenial environment for such a development.

2. They began to, slowly and steadily, but systematically, subvert institutional Buddhism. As suggested by Ronald Inden, this is clearly visible in the shifting of the theories and political orientation of kingship from Buddhist to Vaishnava and Shaiva rationales. From the eighth century onwards the Brahmanical-Hindu gods, Vishnu and Shiva, usurped the place of the Buddha as the supreme, imperial deities. The Buddha lost his position to both Vishnu and Shiva as the ishta-devata of the royalty. In the end, the assimilation of the Buddha into Brahmanical-Hinduism was so comprehensive that the Buddha lost all cultic veneration.

As the support base of Buddhism became narrower with the decline in urbanization, the sangha began to shrink and became confined to fewer and fewer monasteries. From the Gupta period onwards, building monasteries and providing for their upkeep began to be regarded more as a service rendered to the cause of learning and culture than to the cause of Buddhism.
As a consequence of such risqué developments, Buddhism began to make dangerously close calls upon Brahmanical-Hinduism, especially when the latter was just beginning to broaden itself to include the Buddha in its pantheon. Such a palsy-walsy trend is clearly visible in the artistic tradition that began during the Gupta period and was largely a combination of Brahmanical-Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Such a development may have in the end turned out to be an important contributory factor towards the ultimate assimilation of Buddhism into Brahmanical-Hinduism.

**Role of Brahmanical Kings on Buddhism**

A large number of Buddhist texts hold Brahmanical kings like Pushyamitra Sunga and Shashanka responsible for following deliberate and systematic policies of persecution against the Buddhists. Withdrawal of royal patronage and persecution by these kings, it has been suggested, removed the ground from under the very feet of Buddhism.

D.P. Chattopadhyaya has pointed out that with the withdrawal or collapse of royal patronage, Buddhism as a religion had to go into pieces.

Pushyamitra Sunga (c. 184–148 BCE) is generally regarded as the symbol and leader of the Brahmanical revival that took place when the dynasty of the Mauryas, the alleged supporters of non-Brahmanical faiths, was brought to an end. Pushyamitra who was the commander-in-chief of the last Mauryan king, Bhradratha, assassinated his master, captured power, and laid foundations of the Sunga dynasty.

Many Indologists including H.C. Raychaudhury, R.C.Mitra, E.Lamotte, K.P.Jayaswal, R.S.Tripathi, Romila Thapar and D. Devahuti, have expressed scepticism about the truthfulness of the Buddhist legends connected to the persecution of Buddhism by Pushyamitra Sunga.

Some accounts about the rule of Pushyamitra Sunga are available from the Buddhist literature. Divyabhadana describes him as a king who was hostile towards the religion of the Buddha. It is said that he attempted to destroy the famous Buddhist monastery at Kukkutarama built by Emperor Ashoka near the capital Pataliputra. For instance, it is known from a small inscription found at Ayodhya that the king performed an Ashwamedha yajna or the ceremony of Horse-sacrifice in accordance with the ancient monarchical tradition. This would have certainly pleased the Brahmins who saw no such religious rites during Ashoka’s days when the Buddhists opposed the practice of animal-sacrifice.

It may not be possible to deny that Pushyamitra Sunga showed no favour to the Buddhists, however, it cannot be said with certainty that he persecuted them. Although, the Sunga kings, particularly Pushyamitra, may have been staunch adherents of orthodox Brahmanism, they do not appear to have been as intolerant as some Buddhist texts shown them to be. The only thing that can be said with certainty on the basis of the stories told in Buddhist texts about Pushyamitra is that he might have withdrawn royal patronage from
the Buddhist institutions. This change of circumstances under his reign might have led to discontent among the Buddhists. Secondly, as a consequence of the shifting of patronage from Buddhism to Brahmanism, the Buddhists became politically active against Pushyamitra and sided with his enemies, the Indo-Greeks.

“The Greek struggle with Pushyamitra gave the Buddhists the prospect of renewed influence... What may be sensed is that strategic reasons made some Greeks the promoters of Buddhism and some Buddhists supporters of the Greeks.”

After Ashoka’s lavish sponsorship of Buddhism, it is quite possible that Buddhist institutions fell on somewhat harder times under the Sungas, but persecution is quite another matter. Thus, it would be fair to say that where the Buddhists did not or could not ally themselves with the invading Indo-Greeks, Pushyamitra did not beleaguer them. In any case, after the end of the Sunga dynasty, Buddhism found congenial environment under the Kushanas and the Sakas and it may be reasonable to assume that Buddhism did not suffer any real setback during the Sunga reign even if one could see some neglect or selective persecution of Buddhists.

“Far more than the so-called persecution by Pushyamitra, the successes of the Vishnuite propaganda during the last two centuries of the ancient era led the Buddhists into danger, and this was all the more serious in that it was long time before its threat was assessed.”

**King Shashanka**

Shashanka (c. CE 603-620) was another ruler who is viewed in Buddhist literature as possibly the worst enemy and persecutor a sort of fer-de-lance and an obdurate oppressor of Buddhism who apparently did not spare any efforts to snuff life out of Buddhism. He ruled over the kingdom of Gauda (Bengal) with its capital at Karnasuvarna in the first-quarter of the seventh century CE. He was a bien-pensant / well-thinking devotee of Shiva and a fierce rival of King Harshavardhana.

Shashanka was blamed by Xuan zang and other Buddhist sources for the murder of Rajyavardhana, a Buddhist king of Thanesar. According to Xuan zang, “king Shashanka persecuted the Buddhist dharma and went to the place of the (footprint) stone intending to destroy the holy object. He erased the footprints with a chisel, but they reappeared with the same traces and patterns. Then he threw the stone into the Ganges, but it returned to its original place at once.”

Giving an account of Kushinagara, he states that “when King Shashanka persecuted the Buddhist-dharma, no company of monks came this way for many years.”

“King Shashanka, being a heretical believer, denounced the Buddha-dharma out of jealousy, destroyed monasteries, and cut down the Bodhi Tree. When he dug the ground so deep as to have reached spring water and could not get at the ends of the roots, he set fire to burn it and soaked it with sugarcane juice with the intention of making it rotten, so as to prevent it from sprouting.”
Other sources:

The author of *Aryamanjushrimulakalpa* also supports the tradition of Shashanka’s hostility to Buddhism and reports that Shashanka, “of wicked intellect, will destroy the beautiful image of the Buddha. He, of wicked intellect, enamoured of the words of the *tirthikas*, will burn that great bridge of religion (Dharma), (as) prophesied by the former Jinas (Buddhas). Then that angry and greedy evildoer of false notions and bad opinions will fell down all the monasteries, gardens, and chaityas; and rest-houses of the Jainas [Nirgranthas].”

Modern Scholars

The evidence for the anti-Buddhist policy of Shashanka has been evaluated by modern scholars quite vigorously. According to G.S. Chatterji, Shashanka was quite clearly one of the rare rulers of ancient India who followed a policy of persecution against the Buddhists. Similarly, Sogen Yamakami points out that Shashanka was responsible for “commanding the utter extermination of Buddhists from the face of India with the unwholesome alternative of the penalty of death to be inflicted on the executioners themselves in case they neglected to carry out the inhuman order of their king and master.”

It is also pointed out in support of this opinion that Xuanzang himself observed that in Karnasuvarna there were not only ten Buddhist monasteries but also over 2,000 monks. Thus, the flourishing condition of Buddhism in the capital city of Shashanka, as described by Xuan zang, is hardly compatible with the view that he was a religious bigot and a cruel persecutor of Buddhism. At the root of Shashanka’s ill-feeling towards Buddhism was probably the fact that the Buddhists of these places in Magadha and elsewhere entered into some sort of conspiracy with Harshavardhana against him, and therefore he wanted to punish them by such oppressive persecution. B.P. Sinha has given a very interesting analysis of the background to the anti-Buddhist actions of Shashanka. He points out that it is quite reasonable to assume that the Buddhists were probably the most fully organized “sect” in India who, through their numerous monasteries and seats of learning, exercised sufficient leverage in the politics of Magadha. At the same time, whatever might have been the motive and the measure of his persecution, its effect was not disastrous for Buddhism whether inside his kingdom where Xuanzang found Buddhism in a fairly flourishing condition shortly after the death of Shashanka or outside his kingdom.
of malice and resentment against the Brāhmaṇical brāhmaṇas, but are occasionally downright apoplectic and bellicose.\footnote{Xīyu Ji.299.}

According to Xuanzang, in the country of Kāmarūpā (Assam) people did not believe in Buddhism and up to the time of his visit no vihāra had been built there to invite Buddhist monks.\footnote{R.M. Eaton, The Rise of Islam, 10.}

Interestingly, the tribal territories of Assam remained terra incognita for Buddhist missionaries. Thus, brāhmaṇas had a free hand in this region. Moreover, as pointed out by Eaton, what perhaps made immigrant brāhmaṇas welcome in the "non-Aryan" society was the agricultural knowledge they made available.\footnote{D.D. Kosambi, “The Basis of Ancient Indian History,” Journal of the American Oriental Society 75, pt. 1, 1955: 36.}

Brāhmaṇa rituals were accompanied by a practical calendar, fair meteorology, and sound working knowledge of agricultural technique unknown to primitive tribal groups which never went beyond the digging stock or hoe.\footnote{Nayanjot Lahiri, “Landholding and Peasantry in the Brahmaputra Valley c.5th-13th centuries AD,” Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 33, no. 2, 1990: 166.} Basing her observations on an analysis of inscriptions of the fifth to thirteenth centuries from Assam, N. Lahiri has pointed out that in the process of detribalization and inclusion of the tribes in the traditional Brāhmaṇical-Hindu fold, the brāhmaṇas played an extremely significant role in Assam.\footnote{“Thou art, O Khodā, I know, superior to all others. How I wish to hear the Korān from Thy lips! Niraṅjana transformed to Āllā will confer blessings. May the enemies of Āmin fall under the wrath of Kutub.” (B.K. Sarkar, Folk Elements in Hindu Culture, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1917: 228.)}

c. Sindh, the Punjab, and the Northwest

An examination of the Islamic and Buddhist literary source material as well as archaeological remains indicate that geographically Buddhism in Sind was largely confined to lower Sind with main concentrations in central Indus delta, west bank
of the Indus (the region termed Budhīyah at the time of the Arab conquest), and an elongated belt extending along the east bank of the Indus from Mīrpur Khās in the southeast to Sirar, just south of Aror (Roruka, capital of Sovīra). Overwhelming majority of these Buddhists belonged to the Saṃmitīya sect of the Hiṇayāna school who had three hundred and fifty of the total four hundred and fifty Buddhist vihāras. According to Xuanzang, more than ten thousand monks living in these vihāras were “mostly indolent people with a corrupt character.”

Interestingly, Islam was most successful in those regions of the Indian subcontinent where Buddhism had been the strongest. When the Arab invasion of Sind took place, majority of the Buddhists, who were merchants, traders, bankers, financiers, and artisans, lived in the urban centres. Brāhmanical-Hindus at this time were mostly rural farmers. The Silk Road from China to the Sindī ports was studded with Buddhist vihāras. Apart from housing artisans, these vihāras provided capital loans and resting facilities to merchants, traders, and artisans who were the chief financial patrons of the vihāras. Interregional trade was the mainstay of mercantile Buddhism in Sind which due to the fact of Sind’s advantageous geographic position extended over several important trade routes. However, there are indications that the volume and importance of interregional commerce in the Sindī economy had begun to decline in the period immediately before the Arab conquest. This had far reaching consequences for Buddhism. International events, over which Sindī Buddhists had little or no control, negatively affected the transit trade from Central Asia and China, especially the trade in silk. By the sixth century CE, the Sassanians had begun to control almost single-handedly the maritime as well as land trade routes towards the

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118 Xiyu Ji.345; Yijing.14.
119 See Maclean, op. cit., 8, 154.
120 Xiyu Ji.345 – 346.
West. As a consequence of this, the ports of Sind and the Red Sea suffered greatly.\textsuperscript{121} When sericulture became introduced in the Byzantine Empire, it “drastically reduced whatever remained of the shrunken foreign commerce of North-Western India in Gupta times.”\textsuperscript{122} This severely affected Sind whose commerce was specifically dependent on the transit trade. Though trading was still taking place between India, China, and the West, but it was primarily through the sea via the Strait of Malacca and Sri Lanka. Since the major economic advantage of Sind lay in the location of its riverine system and seaports as the closest maritime transport to the land trade route, the changed situation worked largely to the disadvantage of Sind. While this was happening, feudalization of Sind further reduced the importance of interregional trade to the overall Sindī economy.\textsuperscript{123} Because of its earlier and broader dependence on transit trade, feudalism in Sind, it seems, was far more panoptic than in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. As Buddhist vihāras were dependent upon merchants, traders, bankers, financiers, and artisans for support, loss of business by the latter must have affected the former. Thus, it is not surprising that Xuanzang witnessed ruins of vihāras in Sind.\textsuperscript{124}

In CE 711, al-Ḥajjāj bin-Yusuf Sakafi, the governor of the easternmost provinces of the Umayyad Empire, sent his nephew


\textsuperscript{124}Xiyu Ji.351.
and son-in-law, General Muhammed bin-Qasim, with twenty thousand troops, to invade Sind both from the sea and by land. The initial target was the coastal city of Daybul, near present-day Karachi. After having defeated king Dahir, the forces of Muhammad bin-Qasim defeated king Chach of Alor in alliance with the Jats and other Buddhist governors. The Brahmansical-Hindus, along with their political and religious leaders, fought the twenty thousand-strong Arab army. The Buddhists, disillusioned with the anti-mercantilie policies of Dahir and Chach, showed a ready willingness to avoid destruction and “their ethics of non-violence inclined them to welcome the invaders.”

The Arabs brought with them to Sind a precedent for dealing with non-Muslims whereby the Zoroastrians (majûs) had been included into the category of ahl al-kitâb (people of the book or scriptuaries), irrespective of the fact that they neither had any written scripture nor did they belong to the Judeo-Christian tradition. The scriptuaries, after submitting to the Arabs, were granted the status of ahl al-dhimmah (protected subjects). Such a status guaranteed a certain amount of Muslim non-interference in religious matters in return for carrying out a number of obligations that went with such a status.

Since Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism had their scriptures, it was not conceptually difficult for the Arabs to extend the Zoroastrian precedent to them as ahl al-kitâb and ahl al-dhimmah. Under such an arrangement, all

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127 It must be noted that the Arabs were familiar with Buddhism before Islam was taken beyond the Arabian Peninsula. For instance, by the time of Arab invasion of Sind, many Indian communities, especially Jats (Arabic: Zut) had settled near Bahrain and present-day Basra. Aisha, the Prophet’s wife, is said to have been once treated by a Jat physician. In fact, it has been suggested by a scholar that the Prophet Dhu’l Kifl (The Man from Kifl), mentioned twice in the Qur’an as patient and good, refers to the Buddha. According to this scholar,
adult males were required to pay a graded jizyah (poll tax) in either cash or kind. Though the military policy of the Arabs in Sind was to kill all those who put up resistance (ahl-i-harb), those who submitted peacefully were readily granted the status of dhimmī. Most of the Buddhists appear to have had no problem in accepting the status of dhimmī as second-class, non-Muslim subjects of a state ruled by Arabs. The Arabs guaranteed the dhimmī status by making a legal contract (‘ahd) with any city that submitted by treaty (ṣulḥ). As two-thirds of the Sindī towns had submitted peacefully and made treaty agreements, with the consent of Governor al-Ḥajjāj, General bin-Qasim gave them the status of protected subjects. Such a policy substantially reduced resistance to the Arab conquest of Sind. Strictly adhering to the Islamic law that once granted a contract was inviolable and not retractable, the Arabs were able to win the trust of their new subjects. On the whole, as long as the non-Muslims submitted and paid the jizyah, their religious beliefs and practices were not of much interest to the Arabs. This entitled them to exemption from both the military service and zakāt (tax levied on Muslim subjects). The jizyah enforced was a graded tax, being heaviest on the elite and lightest on the poor. The dhimmīs in Sind were permitted to pray to their own deities and rebuild their temples. Besides, they were allowed to patronize their religious mendicants, celebrate religious festivals (a’yād) and rituals (marāsim), and were even allowed to retain up to three per cent of

“Kīfl” is the Arabic rendition of “Kapilavastu” and the reference in the Qur‘ān to the fig tree refers to the Buddha who attained enlightenment at the foot of one (H.A. Qadir, Buddha the Great: His Life and Philosophy (Arabic: Budha al-Akbar Hayatoh wa Falsaftoh). The Tarikh-i-Tabari by al-Tabari, a tenth century reconstruction of the early history of Islam, talks of the presence in Arabia of ahmaras (Red-Clad People) from Sind. Three of them, who were undoubtedly saffron-robed Buddhist monks, reportedly explained philosophical teachings to the Arabs towards the beginning of the Islamic era. [This information has been gathered from Alexander Berzin, The Historical Interaction between the Buddhist and Islamic Cultures before the Mongol Empire, www.berzinarchives.com/web/x/nav/n.html_1531328490.html#historical_interaction (accessed 17 December 2008).]
the principal of the jizyah for the priests or monks. Furthermore, religious mendicants were granted the right to seek donations from householders by going from door to door with a copper bowl.\textsuperscript{128}

While proselytization occurred, the social dynamics of Sind were similar to other regions where conversion to Islam was slow and generally came from among the ranks of Buddhists.\textsuperscript{129} Many Buddhist merchants, traders, bankers, financiers, and artisans in Sind voluntarily converted to Islam as it made better business sense. “The success of Muslims attracted—even sometimes economically necessitated—conversion.”\textsuperscript{130} It must be noted that at least during the initial phase of the Arab empire, the non-Arabs who had become Muslims in large numbers as mawālīs (clients) of an Arab lord, enjoyed an inferior racial and socio-economic status compared to the Arab Muslims. But, of course, these mawālīs themselves fared much better (as they paid lower taxes) than the non-Muslim subjects, the ahl al-dhimmah. Thus, with the rise in competition from Muslim quarters, dhimmī merchants viewed change of religion as financially beneficial considering that in addition to the poll tax, they had to pay double duty on all goods. Although General bin-Qasim welcomed conversion, his primary interest was to keep political power intact. He was in desperate need to raise as much money as possible to compensate al-Ḥajjāj for the enormous expenses incurred on his campaigns including those which had previously failed. The Arab General was able to accomplish his aim not only by means of the poll, land, and trade taxes, but also through the pilgrimage tax that the Buddhists and Hindus had to pay for visiting the shrines of their own religions. Interestingly, Buddhist monks of Sind, like their counterparts in Gandhāra, had the perverse custom

\textsuperscript{128}Maclean, op. cit., 43, 49.


of levying entry-fee on pilgrims for worshipping in their own temples. Thus, the Arabs merely took over the income. For the most part, Arabs did not demolish any further Buddhist or Brāhmaṇical-Hindu temples in Sind since they generated revenue by attracting pilgrims. While the Chachnāmah records a few instances of conversion of stūpas to mosques such as the one at Nīrūn (near present-day Hyderabad), the demolition of temples was forbidden under the adopted Hanafī school of thought which permitted Qasim to treat Brāhmaṇical-Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainas as dhimmiṣ. Under some Islamic rulers jizyah was not required, and even when it was, collection was not consistently enforced. There were later Muslim rulers who were far more orthodox than Qasim, but they nevertheless conceded that Brāhmaṇical-Hindus, Jainas, and Buddhists be allowed to live as dhimmiṣ. These rulers were restrained by the fact that, Hanafī clerics, barring a very few exceptions, were their chief religious advisors.\textsuperscript{131} In any case, it would have been impossible for a Muslim ruler to enforce a stricter version of Islamic law on all the subjects whereby enforcing conversion, killing those who resisted, and then ruling over a bitter and suppressed majority. The very fact that Brāhmaṇical-Hindus continued to administer their villages and resolve all disputes in accordance with their own law, rationally precluding an absolute rule of shari‘ah that an Islamic theocracy would have required. Thus, at the most, Islamic rule could be theocentric, but never theocratic. Brāhmaṇical-Hindus and Buddhists were not only tolerated, but they were recruited into Qasim’s administration as trusted and dependable civil as well as military officials, a policy that would continue under the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire.\textsuperscript{132} The Brāhmaṇical-Hindu Kaksa, the second most powerful person in Qasim’s government, took precedence in the army over all the nobles and commanders. He was not only in-charge of


\textsuperscript{132}N.F. Gier, op. cit.
revenue collection and the treasury but also assisted Muhammad bin-Qasim in all of his undertakings. Destruction of Buddhist vihāras in Sind by the Arabs was a rare and initial event in their occupation. In fact, attacks on places of worship largely took place at the cutting edge of the invasion ordered by victorious generals to punish or deter opposition. Of course, it is always possible for individual participants to have their personal agenda in such events, but as a whole, acts of vandalism against the Buddhist vihāras were politically, not religiously, motivated.

After having spent three years in Sind, General bin-Qasim returned to al-Hajjāj’s court and shortly afterwards the local Brāhmaṇical-Hindu rulers regained control of most of their territories. In CE 724, Arab-led forces under the command of General Junaid recaptured Sind but failed to capture Gujarat and the west Punjab. As Governor of Sind, General Junaid continued the previous Arab policy of collecting the jizyah as well as pilgrimage tax from both the Brāhmaṇical-Hindus and Buddhists. Although the Hindu Pratihāra rulers of the west Punjab had the resources to expel the Arabs from Sind, yet they shied away from such an action. The Arabs had threatened to demolish the major Brāhmaṇical-Hindu places of worship if the Pratihāras attacked Sind. Taking this fact into consideration the latter decided to maintain status quo indicating that the Arabs regarded the demolition of religious places of the non-Muslims primarily as an act of power politics.

The Arab policies towards Sindī non-Muslims were not necessarily non-discriminatory though. The dhimmīs were certainly second-class citizens who were generally perceived by Muslims as following inferior religions. While non-Muslims were free, within limits, to worship as they liked, Muslims were equally free to ridicule their worship. In such an atmosphere, regardless of what Arab policy may have been, some non-Muslims may

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133 H.M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians*, vol. I, London: Trübner, 1867: 203.
have perceived conversion as a means to escape the uncertainties let loose by the initial conquest of Sind. Furthermore, not all local Arab officials were necessarily as tolerant as others. There were occasions when the dhimmis were forced to put on special clothes so that they could be easily identified by the authorities and some harsh officials put a ban on the temple-building activities of these dhimmis who otherwise had the freedom of worship. In sharp contrast to this, those who attended the Friday prayers at mosques were sometimes given monetary rewards. Further, if any member of a non-Muslim family converted to Islam, he was given the right to inherit all the property of his family. In such an environment, many Brāhmaṇical-Hindus and Buddhists appear to have converted to Islam for social, economic, or political expediency, while internally still holding on to their own faiths. However, the children of such converts, growing up in the external framework of Islam, became much more genuine than their parents in adopting the new religion. In this way, the Islamic population of Sind began to gradually grow in a non-violent manner.

When the Arabs invaded Sind, they primarily focussed on two-pronged agenda. One, they wanted to preserve the economic infrastructure of the region so that it could be exploited to the maximum extent possible. Two, they wanted to achieve the conquest of Sind with the least number of Arab casualties. Hence, when Sindī resistance was intensive or protracted, the Arab response was equally severe. As towns such as Daybul (Dībal/Debal near Karachi), Rāwar (Alwar), Brāhmanābād (Maṣṭūrah), Iskalandah (Uch, Bahawalpur), and Multān had to be captured by force (‘anwatan) resulting in considerable casualties on both sides, wholesale massacres of the vanquished took place. As compared to this, towns such as Armābil (Lus Bela, Makran), Nīrūn (Hyderabad), Sīwistān (Sehwān), Budhīyah (Larkana), Bét (island near Karachi), Sāwandī (Sāwanderī), and Aror (Sukkur) were brought under Arab control through treaty (ṣulḥ) and they did not experience any casualties, either Arab or
In both cases, however, the Arab concern with securing a financially viable Sind impelled them to exempt artisans, merchants, and agriculturalists. On the whole, it may be said that the Arab policy of conquest and settlement focussed on the submission of the Sindhis and not their conversion.\(^{135}\) Thus, the simplistic model of coerced conversion cannot be applied to Sind. Whatever conversions took place they can neither be attributed to the overt pressures of a militant conversionist Islam nor can it be said that they took place due to the attractions of a posited principle of equality in Islam.\(^{136}\) In fact, there is no indication that the Arabs engaged in active proselytization of any kind, either coercive or peaceful. Geopolitical and economic factors rather than religion primarily motivated these conflicts, despite some military leaders on both sides having often issued calls for holy wars to rally troops. Moreover, sane and responsible rulers far outnumbered fanatical ones among the ranks of the warring parties in shaping policies and events.

As Brâhmanical-Hindus and Buddhists generally adopted diametrically opposite approaches towards the initial Arab conquest, they were affected differently by the invasion and occupation of Sind. Whereas Buddhism disappeared completely as a viable religious system during the Arab period, Brâhmanical-Hinduism continued to survive into modern times. The primary sources show clearly Buddhist communities (as compared to Brâhmanical-Hindus) collaborating with the invading Arabs.\(^{137}\) Buddhists tended to collaborate at an early date and more completely than did Brâhmanical-Hindus.\(^{138}\) Not only that nine

\(^{134}\)Maclean, op. cit., 38.

\(^{135}\)The hypothesis of a holy war proposed by S.N. Dhar (“The Arab Conquest of Sind,” \textit{IHQ}, vol. 16, 1940: 597) and others must be outrightly rejected.

\(^{136}\)Maclean, op. cit., 50.

\(^{137}\)Scholars like C.V. Vaidya (\textit{History of Mediaeval Hindu India}, vol. I, 173) and R.D. Banerjee (\textit{Prehistoric, Ancient and Hindu India}, 237) view the Buddhists of Sind as the knaves who were responsible for “India’s failure against Muslim invaders.”

\(^{138}\)Maclean, op. cit., 52.
out of the ten Buddhist communities mentioned by name in the primary sources were collaborators, in one case (the Nîrûnî Buddhists) envoys were sent to al-Ḥajjâj requesting a separate peace before the Thaqafite forces had even been dispatched to Sind.\footnote{Chachnâmah.118–120, 145–146.} However, it may not be correct to believe as does Friedman that Buddhist collaboration was simply opportunistic which was guided by “the desire to be on the winning side.”\footnote{Y. Friedmann, “A Contribution to the Early History of Islam in India,” in M. Rosen-Avalon, ed., Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet, Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, 1977: 326–327.} It is apparent from the narrative of Chachnâmah that the “Buddhists in Sind were guided not so much by motives of vengeance on the Brâhmanical-Hindus as by anxiety for their own safety.”\footnote{R.C. Mitra, op. cit., 33.} If one were to go by the information given in the Chachnâmah then the great majority of cases of Buddhist collaboration (e.g., Nîrûn, Bêt, Sâkrah, Siwistân, Budhiyâh) took place before there was any indication that the Arab side would be “the winning side”: they had only conquered portions of the Indus Delta, Dâhir and his large army were still intact, and the major and most productive part of Sind remained to be taken, Buddhists went out of their way to aid the Arabs in conditions of considerable personal jeopardy. The Siwistân Buddhists, for example, not only went over to the Arabs before their town had been conquered, but they were later put in some peril when the loyalist forces of Chand Râma Hâlah retook the town and the Buddhists opted again for the Arabs, closing the gates of the city against Hâlah during the ensuing battle.\footnote{Chachnâmah.118–120, 145–146.}

There is good reason to believe that the urban, mercantile Buddhists of Sind were not satisfied with their socioeconomic situation. The incorporation of Sind into the Arab empire, a rapidly expanding trade empire, held out certain advantages to a mercantile people involved in inter-regional commerce: the reopening of the overland trade through Central Asia to China,
the regularization of the disrupted maritime commerce (both Indic and Chinese) passing through Sind, and the access to the vital markets of the Middle East. As far as Sind was concerned, the Buddhist envoys from Nîrûn had been informed by al-Ḥajjāj before the conquest that the Arabs intended to invade Sind “up to the border of China.” With their long history of trade relationships with Central Asia and China, the urban, mercantile Buddhists of Sind must have immediately realized the possibilities inherent for their class in the Arab eastern front and taken them into account in opting for collaboration. That is, urban, mercantile Buddhists may have hoped that the Arab conquest would reopen interregional trade routes, both maritime and overland, and hence benefit their class and, indirectly, their religion. Thus, they had good reason to perceive that their mercantile interests would be better served under an Arab trade empire.

However, the calculations of Buddhist merchants of Sind went terribly wrong. Though the inter-regional commerce cycled through Sind did revive during the Arab period, it hardly helped them. The restored trade generally emphasized alternate trade routes, was supported by different institutions, and, most importantly, became the monopoly of a competitive urban, mercantile elite. This had a negative impact on those Sindî Buddhists who accumulated surplus, directly or indirectly, through inter-regional commerce. In addition, internal Buddhist industrial production at vihāras was supplanted by newly-built Arab industrial sectors. The Arabs built special industrial quarters within the Arab areas of Sind, to process material both for local consumption and for export. The ability of Buddhists to process goods of inter-regional trade was affected not only by the decline in their control of this commerce but also by the competition offered by the new Arab facilities. Further, Muslims, who were particularly urban in orientation during this period, displaced Buddhists as the dominant urban, mercantile class in Sind. Apart from settling down in existing

143See Maclean, op. cit., 68.
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towns or expanding some of them (e.g., Daybul), they also built new towns like Manṣūrah and Bayḍā’ completely replacing the old ones (e.g., Manṣūrah replacing Brahmanābād) or bringing others to a state of decrepitude. Moreover, the pan-Islamic international trade network to which Sind had been linked by conquest was controlled by the Muslim mercantile bourgeoisie. Discriminatory customs regulations considerably reduced the capacity of the Buddhist merchants of Sind to compete at par with Muslims in large-scale inter-regional commerce. After the Arab conquest, the major merchants of Sind belonged as well to the larger cosmopolitan Muslim bourgeoisie. While ordinary Muslims in Sind dressed like their compatriot non-Muslims, the merchants followed the fashions of Irāq and Fārs. This suggests that they were either drawn from these regions or, as is more likely, accepted the cultural dictates of the larger pan-Islamic mercantile community as their exemplar. They were in Sind, but not really part of it. “To participate in the new inter-regional trade was in many ways to become Arab, and if Arab then necessarily Muslim.”

As a result of these factors, Sindī Buddhist merchants found it increasingly difficult to compete with Muslim merchants on an equal footing in the revived commerce. And, as their share of the trade declined, so did their share of the accumulation of mercantile surpluses. “Where an individual or a group has a particular expectation and furthermore where this expectation is considered to be a proper state of affairs, and where something less than that expectation is fulfilled, we may speak of relative deprivation.”

The urban, mercantile Buddhists had collaborated with the Arabs under the expectation that the conquest would reinvigorate the economy of Sind and hence their

144 Ibid., 74.
share of the accumulation of capital. However, their share of
the accumulation of capital decreased while commercial capital
passing through Sind increased. The urban, mercantile Buddhists
of Sind experienced relative deprivation and lost control of certain
economic resources and capital which had previously belonged to
them.\textsuperscript{146} Moreover, as the accumulation of mercantile surpluses
by the urban, mercantile Buddhists as well as their ability to
allocate resources correspondingly declined, they could readily
perceive the deterioration of their socioeconomic position in
religious terms. They felt that their precarious condition was
caused by the fact that they were non-Muslims whereas their
Muslim counterparts were prospering because of the simple fact
that they were Muslims. Thus, it is no surprise that “the religious
solution of converting to Islam would have been a plausible option
among those urban, mercantile Buddhists experiencing relative
depprivation in Arab Sind.”\textsuperscript{147} Consequently, they felt that the
remedy to their problem lay in adopting the belief system of the
urban, mercantile Muslims. In this context, conversion appears
to be more of a historical process than simply an event whereby
the urban, mercantile Buddhists tended to reorient themselves
gradually to the milieu of their more successful class counterparts.
It may be noted that the conversion of urban, mercantile Buddhists
did not necessarily entail a sudden or dramatic change in the basic
structure of their belief system. The Islamization of the Buddhist
converts occurred gradually by way of such Muslim institutions
as the mosque, the school system, and the pilgrimage to Mecca.
During all this while, new Arab trade patterns which bypassed
the credit and transport facilities of the \textit{vih\text{	extregistered}aras}, must have
considerably corroded the solid fiscal base of the Buddhist monastic
system in Sind. Added to this, the decline in the Buddhist share
of the accumulation of mercantile surpluses must have further
aggravated the deterioration of Buddhist institutions. Further, the
new rulers not only put a stop to the enjoyment of tax-free lands

\textsuperscript{146}Maclean, op. cit., 75.
\textsuperscript{147}Ibid., 76.
by vihāras belonging to the kāfirs, they also would not forego the revenues alienated by the earlier rulers. As a result of this and the reduced capacity of urban lay followers to provide economic assistance, vihāras fell into decay. The disintegration of the monastic system must have accelerated as the urban, mercantile Buddhists converted to Islam since continuous monetary support in sufficient quantities was needed to build and maintain the monastic structures and institutions. Some Buddhists may have also been assimilated by Brāhmāṇical-Hinduism. Majority of the Sindi Buddhists belonged to the Saṃmitiya sect, whose emphasis on reality and on the importance of personality, brought them very near the Brāhmāṇical-Hindu doctrine of metempsychosis, and bridging the gulf over in a later period.\footnote{R.C. Mitra, op. cit., 33.}

Buddhism disappeared in Sind during the two hundred years of Arab rule and there is not a single Arabic or Persian reference to Buddhists actually living in Sind subsequent to the initial Thaqafite conquest. Bīrūnī, who visited Sind, was unable to locate any Buddhist informants for his encyclopaedia on Indian religions.\footnote{al-Bīrūnī’s \textit{Kitāb fi Tahqīq mā lil-Hind}, trans. E.C. Sachau, \textit{Alberuni’s India}, vol. 1, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1910: 249.} None of the surviving Buddhist structures in Sind were built after the Arab conquest or, with the exception of the stūpa at Mīrapur Khās (where Arab coins of an undetermined date have been found), can they be dated with confidence, by way of artifacts and debris, as inhabited beyond the eighth century. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that Buddhism died out in Sind during the course of Arab rule; indeed the absence of Arab-period artifacts in Buddhist sites suggests a relatively early date for its institutional deterioration and demise.\footnote{Maclean, op. cit., 53. Also see H. Cousens, \textit{The Antiquities of Sind with Historical Outline}, Calcutta: Archaeological Survey of India, 1925: 87, 93.} While some Buddhist monks definitely emigrated from Sind to other parts of India during the Arab occupation, it is extremely unlikely that any large-scale migration took place. It may be said that most...
of the Buddhists in Sind converted to Islam and towns, known to have been predominantly Buddhist at the time of the Arab conquest, were definitely Muslim by the tenth century.\textsuperscript{151}

As the archaeological remains from the Punjab and north-western parts of India generally show either desertion of urban centres after the Kuśāna times or a sharp decline in the Gupta period followed by a break in occupation,\textsuperscript{152} some of the Buddhist monasteries must have begun to lose support in these areas from the post-Kuśāna period. According to Faxian, in the country of Pi-cha in the Punjab, both the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna schools of Buddhism were prosperous and flourishing.\textsuperscript{153} However, in the country of Śatadru (Sirhind) in the Punjab, Xuanzang saw just ten vihāras—all of which were in desolation and had only a few monks.\textsuperscript{154}

In Mūladhānipura (Multan), according to Xuanzang, only a few people believed in Buddhism and there were more than ten vihāras, mostly dilapidated, with few monks, who did not belong to any particular school.\textsuperscript{155} Hye Ch’o, in the first-quarter of the eighth century, found Buddhism flourishing in Jālamdhāra where there were many monasteries and monks of both Mahāyāna and Hinayāna schools.\textsuperscript{156} He further points out that in Tamasavana (somewhere between the western Punjab and Kashmir), “there is a stūpa . . . where the hair and nails of the Buddha are preserved. At present, there are over three hundred monks. The monastery also has, inter alia, the relic tooth and bone of a great Pratyeka Buddha. There are seven or eight other vihāras. Each of these has five to six hundred monks. The monasteries are well managed. They are highly

\textsuperscript{151}Maclean, op. cit., 55–56.
\textsuperscript{152}R.S. Sharma, \textit{Urban Decay in India}, 27.
\textsuperscript{153}Faxian.51.
\textsuperscript{155}Xiyu Ji.347.
\textsuperscript{156}Hye Ch’o.44.