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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Tracing the Role of Hinduism and Buddhism in Defining Socio-Cultural Relations between Pre-Islamic India and Afghanistan

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**Abstract:** The study of civilizations of South and Southeast Asia seem meaningless without an insight on Hinduism and Buddhism that exerted an enormous influence in the region before the arrival of Islam. The two beliefs, though originated in India, but contributed greatly to the development of socio-cultural relations among countries as far as Afghanistan in the west and China, Japan, and Indonesia in the east. About the beginning of the Common Era, Indian merchants may have settled there, bringing Hindu and Buddhist priests with them. These religious men were patronized by rulers who converted to Hinduism or Buddhism. The earliest material evidence of Hinduism in Southeast Asia comes from Borneo, where late 4th-century Sanskrit inscriptions testify to the performance of Vedic sacrifices at the behest of local chiefs. Chinese chronicles attest an Indianized kingdom in Vietnam two centuries earlier. The dominant form of Hinduism exported to Southeast Asia was Shaivism, though some Vaishnavism was also known there. The current study tries to explain how Hinduism and Buddhism could influence Socio-Cultural Relations between Pre-Islamic India and Afghanistan taking into account of historical records and inscriptions.

**Keywords:** Hinduism; Buddhism; Socio-Cultural Influence; Pre-Islamic India, Afghanistan.

## Introduction

Historical evidences bear witness that the cultural connections between pre-Islamic India and Afghanistan were established on the basis of religion much like the Islamic era. If Islam was a factor behind socio-cultural ties between Afghanistan and India, pre-Islamic socio-cultural ties of the two found to be based on Buddhism and Hinduism. Thus, in both cases the religion acquired the important spot in defining the cultural relations between the two neighboring states. Much like post-Islamic Afghanistan where Islam played the crucial role in defining the socio-cultural fabrics of the Afghan society- the archeological evidences and Hindu and Buddhist religious scriptures record the presence of Hinduism and Buddhism too in every walk of human life in pre-Islamic Afghanistan. Rig Vedas mentioning of Gandhara, Ramayana's reading about the naming of Pushkalavati and Taxila, Mahabharata's recording about Bamiyan hill ranges and Pandavas' period of exile and making magnificent statues there, all tell the story of religio-cultural proximity between these two countries. Besides deriving its name Afghanistan from the Sanskrit word *ashvaka* which means horsemen the country had great influence from the time of Mauryans of India who ruled the region after Alexander's successor Seleucids. The popularity of

Afghans in India has been recorded with the popularity of words like *Pathans* and *Rohillas* to denote the bravery and hardships. This paper will discuss the role religion particularly Hinduism and Buddhism played to define the cultural ties between pre-Islamic India and Afghanistan. The paper will be divided into two sub chapters where the first will deal with Hinduism and Buddhism and their engagement to the Afghan society and second part will bring into notice the famous Empires and dynasties who were the followers of Hinduism and Buddhism and will try to highlight their contributions in spreading these religions in Central Asia.

## Hinduism and Buddhism in Afghanistan

Before proceeding to the religious segment it's important to unearth the relations between these two countries through linguistic proximity which is clear from the naming of the country itself. Salman Rashid, a Pakistani travel writer and historian has provided a powerful explanation for the naming of the region as Afghanistan, refuting the theory of British historians. He claims that the word Afghan comes from the Sanskrit root of *ashv* which means horse. The same word becomes *asp* when it goes to ancient Persian language. The word *Ashvaka* of Sanskrit which becomes

*Aspagan* in Persian is the genetic term for horsemen. These terms were denoting both the people and the region where usual mode of transportation was horse, which made the ancient land of *paktyik*, *Aspaganisntan* transcending it to Afghanistan. As the *paktyik* was the name of Pashtun / Pakhtun in its classical form (Rath, 2013:2).

Starting from the Hindu religious scriptures, where the documentation of names of places lying in the national boundary of today's Afghanistan reveals the proximity of both the nations in terms of geography, religion and culture. *Rig Veda* is the first to mention Gandhara in it, following that *Ramayana* another one of the most sacred books of Hindus notes the names of Pushkalavati and Taxila which were named after the two sons of Bharata the brother of Rama. Another ancient epic Mahabharata noted the stories of Pandavas and their days of exile in Bamiyan and making the magnificent statues there in the hill ranges of Bamiyan. Notes Dr S. K Rath:

The earliest documentation of Afghanistan in Indian scripture is in *Rg Veda* that mentioned Gandhara once.<sup>1</sup> The ancient epic Ramayana informs us that Pushkalavati and Taxila were named after the two sons of Bharata, the brother of Rama.<sup>2</sup> Mahabharata, another ancient epic, is liberal in

describing India's intense engagement with Gandhara.<sup>3</sup> In the Bamiyan hill range, many noble images and statues were made by Hindu Rajas, especially by the five brothers or *Pandavas* of Mahabharata fame. When the *Pandavas* mortgaged the whole of their empire to *Durjodhan*, their uncle's son, in order to pay him their gambling debts, he immediately banished them from the area for a period of 12 years. The poor *Pandavas* chose their ground in Bamiyan, and spent their unhappy days in making these magnificent statues, which they and their followers worshipped for a long time. (Ibid, 2)

Archaeological evidences suggest that the strong wave of comprehensive contact were there between the regions today called Afghanistan to the rest of India during the era of Gautama Buddha. Some accounts bear the witness that, during his search for the truth, Buddha himself had travelled to parts of Afghanistan (Ibid, 22). During the reign of Chandragupta Maurya (340 –298 BC), Buddhism was defining force for not only the political fabrics of the region but also the socio- cultural proximity has been woven in the same area. Chandragupta retrieved the regions of Gandhara, Kabul and Herat from

Seleucus, the general of Alexander who had inherited the countries from Asia Minor (Turkey) to India from Alexander. After this event, India's administrative control was firmly established over Afghanistan. Ashoka the Great increased the empire farther to Iran and imprinted a remarkable moral authority in the region by way of some rock edicts in Kandahar and Laghman (Kulke and Rothermund, 1986: 64-67).

Historical Sources show that this Buddhist period of Bamiyan was interrupted in 770 AD by a hundred years of Muslim rule. In 870 the region returned to Buddhism again and remained under it till 977 AD when Islam irrevocably took over. Therefore Xuanzang passed through the area around 630 and claimed that the area was a flourishing Buddhist Centre then (Blänsdorf et al, Dating of Organic Material).

Likewise when the famous Korean monk, Hui-chao arrived in Afghanistan in 827 AD, he noted that the King of Bamiyan was a Buddhist. It was the Ghaznavids who finally established Islam in Bamiyan in 11<sup>th</sup> century AD. History has the abundance of proves which claim that with the decline of Buddhism, Afghanistan slipped to Persian and Arab proximity distancing itself from Indian culture and religion. So eleventh Century onwards Indian way of living in the soil of Afghanistan

which prevailed for centuries faced challenges in the region" (Rath, 2013:2).

When it comes to the presence of Buddhism in Afghanistan the caves and widely spread statues of Buddhas throughout the country bears the witness. The cave temples of Jalalabad: the Fil-Khana caves cut into the sandstone formations on the north bank of the Kabul river shows the proximity between these two countries at that juncture.

Three cave groups at the foot of the mountains to the west of the Jalalabad basin; the Al-khanazar caves on the Chaharbagh plateau at *Siah Koh* the southern rim of the basin undulating hillocks near Hadda; the Hodara-shah caves near Tepe Zargaran; and the caves at Basawal, near the Pakistani border, carved into the schist hills on the north bank are rich archeological remains of that era which attracts the history readers. Claims Takayasu and Gina

The largest and most important of the Afghanistani sites is Bamiyan, a Buddhist cave-temple complex located in a basin of the Hindu Kush mountain range about 250 km. north-west of Kabul, The basin is situated on an ancient crossroads leading to China in the east, India in the south, Persia in the west and Bactria in the north. The caves cluster into three groups: those of the

principal Bamiyan cliff group in the north, the Foladi Valley group in the west, and the Kakrak Valley group in the east. The Kakrak Cave group consists of about 100 caves located along the foot of the cliff on the eastern bank of the Kakrak River. There is only one standing buddha sculpture, about 6.4 m in height in a niche-cave, and murals are not abundant. Some murals, however, remain in the Foladi Cave group in the western part of the basin; about 50 caves are scattered along the cliff of the small valley (Higuchi and Barnes, 1995:302).

### **Hindu and Buddhist Empires in Afghanistan**

When it comes to the religion in pre-Islamic Afghanistan along with Zoroastrianism and Greek religion, Hinduism and Buddhism acquired prominence throughout ancient and medieval history. Today's Afghanistan was ruled by different empires like Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanian, Greeks, Seleucids, Mauryans and Kushans and all had their religio-cultural impact on the Hindu Kush region. Political subjugation came with religious promotion of the ruler into the region. If Achemenids and Sassanians are the promoters of Zoroastrianism the Greeks

established their own belief in it. In this perspective, we find Mauryans, Kushans, Hindu Shahis and Turk Shahis not only adherents of Hinduism and Buddhism but also the promoters of these faiths.

### **Maurya Empire**

The Maurya Empire founded by Chanadragupta Maurya in 322 BCE -185 BCE was an extensive Empire based in Magadha and was a centralized power centre in Gangetic plains having its capital in Patliputra. A huge Army was raised by Chandra Gupt Maurya with the assistance of Chanakya and after taking the whole central India under his control he moved westwards and captured the areas south and north of Hindu Kush under his control. By 317 BCE the empire had fully occupied northwestern India by defeating Seleucus I and acquiring the territory west of Indus River (Runion, 2007: 39-44). After Kalinga War, the Empire enjoyed nearly half a century of centralized rule under Ashoka.

Ashoka's acceptance of Buddhism and sponsorship of Buddhist missionaries brought that faith to modern day Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Myanmar etc (Kulke and Rothermund, 1986: 67).

Under the Mauryas, it was not only faith but internal and external trade, agriculture, and

economic activities expanded across South Asia and Central Asia due to the creation of a single and efficient system of finance and administration. As, The Maurya dynasty built a precursor of the Grand Trunk Road from Patliputra to Taxila (Ibid, 118-19).

The Rock Edicts of Ashoka's period explains about the people and their faith of the territory northwest of Indian Subcontinent. An influential and large Greek population was present in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent under Ashoka's rule, possibly remnants of Alexander's conquests in the Indus Valley region. In the Rock Edicts of Ashoka, some of them inscribed in Greek, Ashoka states that the Greeks within his dominion were converted to Buddhism:

Here in the king's dominion among the Greeks, the Kambojas, the Nabhakas, the Nabhapamkits, the Bhojas, the Pitinikas, the Andhras and the Palidas, everywhere people are following Beloved-of-the-Gods' instructions in Dharma (Rock Edict Number 13) (Thapar, 1997: Appendix 256)

Now, in times past (officers) called Mahamatras of morality did not exist before. Mahamatras of morality were appointed by me (when I had been) anointed thirteen years. These are

occupied with all sects in establishing morality, in promoting morality, and for the welfare and happiness of those who are devoted to morality (even) among

the Greeks, Kambojas and Gandharas, and whatever other western borderers (of mine there are) (Rock Edict Number 5) (Ibid, 252).

Ten years (of reign) having been completed, King Piodasses (Ashoka) made known (the doctrine of) Piety (*εὐσέβεια*, Eusebeia) to men; and from this moment he has made men more pious, and everything thrives throughout the whole world. And the king abstains from (killing) living beings, and other men and those who (are) huntsmen and fishermen of the king have desisted from hunting. And if some (were) intemperate, they have ceased from their intemperance as was in their power; and obedient to their father and mother and to the elders, in opposition to the past also in the future, by so acting on every occasion, they will live better and more happily. (Trans. by G.P. Carratelli Edicts of Ashoka, from Kandahar. Kabul Museum}

The conquest by Dharma has been won here, on the borders, and even six hundred yojanas (5,400–9,600 km) away, where the Greek king Antiochos rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni (Sri Lanka) (Rock Edict 13) (Dhammika, 1998:10).

The Greeks in India even seem to have played an active role in the spread of Buddhism, as some of the emissaries of Ashoka, such as *Dharmaraksita*, are described in Pali sources as leading Greek ("Yona") Buddhist monks, active in Buddhist proselytism (the Mahavamsa, XII) (Runion, 2007: 70-72).

### **Kushana Empire**

The second most impactful Indian Empire which left a huge religio-cultural imprint on that part of land was Kushan Empire. The Empire was a syncretic one, formed by the Yuezhi, in the early 1<sup>st</sup> century in the Bactrian territories. It was spread on modern day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal and northern India at least as far as Saket and Sarnath near Varanasi (Benares). The

inscriptions dating to the era of the Kushan Emperor Kanishka the Great have been found here reveals the above details (Neelis, 2011:132).

Though Kujula Kadphises The founder of the dynasty, followed Greek religious ideas and iconography after the Greco-Bactrian tradition but it is also noted that he followed traditions of Hinduism and was a devotee of the Hindu God Shiva. And it is also believed that the Kushans in general were also great patrons of Buddhism. They played an important role in the spread of Buddhism to Central Asia and China (Harmatta et al., 1994: 305-306).

Kanishka sent his men north of the Karakoram mountains which was a direct road from Gandhara to China and remained under Kushan control for more than a century, encouraging journey across the Karakoram and facilitating the spread of Mahayana Buddhism to China (Ibid, 316). The Kushana Empire played a role to establish trade relations between China and Roman Empire according to Alain Daniélou, "for a time, the Kushana Empire was the center point of the major civilizations" (Ibid, 278).

When it comes to Buddhism in the Kushana Empire, it was one of the most practiced and protected religions of that time. It was practiced by rulers and spread by them to the other parts of Central Asia following the



footsteps of the Mauryan Empire. They built magnificent statues of Buddha in the Bamiyan as a tribute to the Buddha's path of truth and enlightenment.

As patrons of religion, the Kushan Empire was instrumental in spreading Buddhism throughout Central Asia and China, and King Kanishka particularly encouraged Asoka's beliefs of Mauryan Buddhism. As part of the Kushan Empire's penchant for religion and art, the world's largest Buddha figures were carved into a cliff in the Bamian (Bamyan) Mountains of Afghanistan (Runion, 2007:46).

The Kushan religious belief is extremely varied, as documented by their coins that were made in gold, silver, and copper. These coins showed more than thirty different gods, belonging mainly to their own Iranian, as well as Greek and Indian religions. Those coins had images of Kushan Kings, Buddha, and shapes from the Indo-Aryan and Iranian pantheons and Greek deities (Liu, 2010: 42-61).

The Indic entities represented on coinage which describes the huge impact of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs among Kushans speaks with a high volume. The following popular images have been discovered from coins.

- *Boddo* (Βοδδο): the Buddha
- *Shakamano* *boddho* (βακαμανο Βοδδο): Shakyamuni Buddha
- *Metrago boddo* (Μετραγο Βοδδο): the bodhisattava Maitreya
- *Maaseno* (Μαασηνο): Mahāsena
- *Skando-Komaro* (Σκανδο-κομαρο): Skanda-Kumara
- *Bizago*: Viśākha
- *Ommo*: Umā, the consort of Siva.
- *Oesho* (Οησο): long considered to represent Indic Shiva but also identified as Avestan Vayu conflated with Shiva.
- Two copper coins of Huvishka bear a 'Ganesa' legend, but instead of depicting the typical the riomorphic figure of Ganesha, have a figure of an archer holding a full-length bow with string inwards and an arrow. This is typically a depiction of Rudra, but in the case of these two coins is generally assumed to represent Shiva (Harmatta, 1999: 326).

The Kushans preserved the Greco-Buddhist traditions of the Indo-Greek Kingdom and they took care of Buddhist institutions. The renowned Kanishka's convening the great Buddhist council in Kashmir has been written hugely in the books of history.



The 1st century AD, witnessed Buddhist books were being produced and carried by monks, and their trader patrons through the silk road to China, and monasteries were being established along these land routes and other parts of Asia. With the development of Buddhist books, it caused a new written language called Gandhara. Gandhara consists of eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. Scholars are said to have found many Buddhist scrolls that contained the Gandhari language (Liu, 2010:42-61).

The reign of Huvishka corresponds to the first known epigraphic evidence of the Buddha Amitabha, on the bottom part of a 2nd-century statue which has been found in Govindo-Nagar, and now at the Mathura Museum. The statue is dated to "the 28th year of the reign of Huvishka", and dedicated to "Amitabha Buddha" by a family of merchants. There is also some evidence that Huvishka himself was a follower of Mahayana Buddhism. A Sanskrit manuscript fragment in the Schoyen Collection describes Huvishka as one who has set forth in Mahayan (Neelis, 2011).

Rajatarangini: The 12th century historical chronicle documents in detail the rule of the

Kushan kings and their benevolence towards Buddhism (Sen, 1999):

### **Turk Shahi Empire**

A very famous dynasty of Western Turk ruled from Kabul, Kapisa and Gandhara in 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries known as Turk Shahi or Kabul Shahi defended the Hindu India from Muslim Arabs and played a role of buffer zone between them.

The Turk Shahis arose at a time when the Sasanian Empire had already been conquered by the Rashidun Caliphate. The Turk Shahis then resisted for more than 200 years to the eastward expansion of the Abbasid Caliphate, until they fell to the Persian Saffarids in the 9th century CE, and the Turkic Ghaznavids finally broke through into India after overpowering the declining Hindu Shahis and Gurjaras (Kim, 2015:58-59). Kabulistan was the heartland of the Turk Shahi domain, which at times included Zabulistan and Gandhara (Drayae, 2018:20).

Artistic activities were high during the period of 7-8 century CE at the time of Turk Shahis in the area of Afghanistan influenced by Sasanian Cultural heritage and development of Buddhist art.

The Western Turks in Afghanistan are generally associated with a major revival of Gandharan Buddhist art between the 7th and 9th century CE, especially in the areas of Bamiyan, Kabul and Ghazni, with major new Buddhist sites such as Tapa Sardar in Ghazni, or Tepe Narenj and Mes Aynak near Kabul, which remained active at least until the 9th century CE. (Ibid, 56-72)

When it comes to the religion Turk Shahis were the followers of Buddhism as believes the famous Korean pilgrim Hui Chao who traveled through the region in 726.

in Jibin.(...) The natives of the country are Hu (Barbarian) people; the king and the cavalry are Turks (突厥, *Tūjué*). (...) The people of this country greatly revere the Three Jewels. There are many monasteries and monks. The common people compete in constructing monasteries and supporting the Three Jewels. In the big city there is a monastery called Sha-hsi-ssu. At present, the curly hair (ushnisha, 螺髻) and the relic bones of the Buddha are to be seen in the monastery. The king, the officials, and the common people daily worship these

relics. Hinayana (小乘) Buddhism is practised in this country. (Hui Chao, Memoir of the pilgrimage to the five kingdoms of India, 726 CE) (Rahman, 2002)

According to Chinese pilgrim Wulong who visited Gandhara in 753 CE the Country of Kapisi had two capital city one for winter and other for summer. Gandhara was Turk Shahis capital for winter while they would rule from Kashmir in summer. After visiting these regions from 756-760 CE he explained

Buddhist temples were dedicated by the *Tü-kiu* ("Turk") kings. Brahmanism too seems to have flourished, but to a lesser extent, under the Turk Shahis, with various works of art also attributed to their period (Neelis, 2011: 167-80).

Sun deity that Mitra or Surya of Khair Khaneh near Kabul and statue of Ganesha from Gardez which are attributed to Turk Shahis of 7- 8<sup>th</sup> century are great examples of their belief and affinity to main land Indian culture. Archaeologists believe that the construction of the Khair Khaneh temple is also dated to 608-630 CE, and it is the period of beginning of the Turk Shahi's rule. Likewise the beautiful

statue of Ganesha of Gardez is now attributed to the Turk Shahis.

### **Hindu Shahi Dynasty**

The Hindu Shahi (850–1026 CE) played a crucial role to safeguard the Hindu religion and culture in Kabul and Gandhara. It was a Hindu dynasty that ruled during the early medieval period in the Indian subcontinent over the Kabul Valley, Gandhara and western Punjab. Kallar an able minister of Turkic Shah- Kabul Shah Lagaturman ousted him and formed new government in 821 CE and this dynastic ruler were known as Hindu Shahi particularly by the Arabs (Rahman, 1967: 37-52). About Kallar R.C Majumdar believes that he was a Brahmin (Ibid, 48).

Since Kabul Shah Lagaturman was under the sovereignty of Abbasids to whom he was paying taxes the action of Kallar attracted the attention of Muslim rulers of that time. He first faced the wraths of Saffarids and Samanids which resulted in pushing him to Udabhandapura (Also called Waihund or Hund) located on the banks of the Indus in 870. The Kabul after witnessing the push and pull game between Muslims and Hindus throughout 9<sup>th</sup> century CE finally in 900 CE saw the culmination of Hindu Shahi Rule there. But Hindu Shahis remained ruling in Gandhar in 10<sup>th</sup> Century too (Ibid, 52).

*The Mazare Sharif Inscription of the Time of the Shahi Ruler Veka*, recently discovered from northern Afghanistan and reported by the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilisations, Islamabad, states

“Veka (sic) conquered northern region of Afghanistan ‘with eightfold forces’ and ruled there. He established a Shiva temple there which was inaugurated by *Parimaha Maitya* (the Great Minister). He also issued copper coins of the Elephant and Lion type with the legend *Shri Vakkadeva*” (Kuwayama, 1999).

The ties between the people of Afghanistan and India date back to the Indus Valley Civilization. After Alexander the Great's brief occupation, his successor Seleucid controlled the region known today as Afghanistan. They ceded much of it, in 305 BCE, to the Indian Maurya, The Empire as part of an alliance treaty. The Mauryans brought the Buddhism to Afghanistan, in the late 2nd century BCE, much of Afghanistan has been influenced by Buddhist and Hindu cultures until the arrival of Islam. Buddhism from India had ruled the area south of the Hindu Kush throughout that period. Through the forbidding Khyber Pass over the mighty Hindu Kush monks, merchants and monarchs have established a strong

relation between the people of these two regions through kingdoms, religion, knowledge, culture, and commerce (Neelis, 2011: 97). Buddhist symbols of Aynak and Bamiyan of Afghanistan reveals the imprint of timeless relations of both the nations which were strengthened through languages, literatures, foods, and festivals in the subsequent historical epochs. All these illustrations explain that pre Islamic Afghanistan was influenced in terms of religion and culture under three fold of Hellenism, Buddhism and the kings like, Menander I (Milinda) and the Indian emperors Ashoka and Harsha Vardhana, Kanishka are the great service providers to this cause

## Conclusion

Pre-Islamic Afghanistan, as part of the Persian Empire, was influenced by Indian religion and

culture that fought for its political survival with the enemies coming from north, south and west. As they defended India from Alexander's successor and they fought with Chinese intruders, they faced the Arab wraths and even competed with the Turks before being defeated by Ghaznavids. Apart from political fights the region known as Afghanistan today not only embraced the Hinduism and Buddhism but played a crucial role to safeguard and propagate these religions to the countries south and central Asia and China. Their hills and mountains are bare the witness of these facts and archeologists today unearth those hidden treasures and tell the story to the world. It is obvious from the readings of those findings that the cultural contours of modern day Afghanistan was very much based on the Indian religion and Culture.

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## ریابیی نقش هندوئیسم و بودیسم در تعریف روابط فرهنگی - اجتماعی بین هند و افغانستان پیش از اسلام

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**چکیده:** مطالعه تمدن‌های جنوب و جنوب شرق آسیا بدون بینش هندوئیسم و بودیسم که قبل از ورود اسلام تأثیر زیادی در منطقه داشته‌اند، بی‌معنی به نظر می‌رسد. این دو عقیده، گرچه از هند سرچشمه گرفته‌اند، کمک زیادی به توسعه روابط فرهنگی-اجتماعی میان کشورهای تا افغانستان در غرب و چین، ژاپن و اندونزی در شرق کردند. در آغاز دوره مشترک، بازگنان هندی ممکن است در آنجا ساکن شده باشند و کشیشان هندو و بودایی را با خود آورده باشند. این مردان مذهبی توسط حاکمانی که به آیین هندو یا بودیسم گرویدند حمایت می‌شدند. اولین شواهد مادی هندوئیسم در آسیای جنوب شرقی از بورنئو می‌آید، جایی که کتیبه‌های سانسکریت اواخر قرن چهارم بر انجام قربانی‌های ودایی به دستور روسای محلی گواهی می‌دهند. تواریخ چینی دو قرن قبل از پادشاهی هندی شده در ویتنام را تأیید می‌کند. شکل غالب هندوئیسم که به آسیای جنوب شرقی صادر شد، شیویسم بود، گرچه برخی از ویشنوئیسم نیز در آنجا شناخته شده بودند. پژوهش حاضر سعی دارد با در نظر گرفتن سوابق و کتیبه‌های تاریخی، چگونگی تأثیرگذاری هندوئیسم و بودیسم بر روابط فرهنگی-اجتماعی بین هند پیش از اسلام و افغانستان را توضیح دهد.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** هندوئیسم بودیسم؛ نفوذ اجتماعی-فرهنگی؛ هند قبل از اسلام، افغانستان.

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