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### DISTRIBUTION OF BUDDHISM AND MANICHAISM IN SOGHD

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**Abstract:** On this article was investigated information of written sources and archeological materials in last years on distribution of Buddhism and Manicheism in Sogd. Data of Chinese sources, wall painting, small plastics, which found in the territory of Bukhara, Samarkand and Southern Sogd are involved and analyzed. It is actively used articles and monographic researches connected with the given problem, including publications which have been published recently. On the basis of available archeological and written sources and the rests of material of culture is done conclusion, that available materials are not enough to judge about degree of distribution of Buddhism and Manicheism in Sogd. Probably, there were not monumental temples here but constructions made by clay and even from felt as brotherhood did not require any special household convenience. Similar is noted, for example, in Altai mountain.

**Key words:** Sogd, Sogdian, Buddhism, Buddha, China, India, Sogdian preachers, Sogdian iconography, small plastic, pakhsa-clay wall.

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It is known that Soghd (Soghdiana) from very ancient times has played a role of the hub for various cultures, religions and ideologies, which met, competed and inter-influenced here.

Especially, towards the Antiquity Period these processes were enforced and radicalized. Perhaps this was the

reason why G.A.Pugachenkova has called this period as "Hellenized" (Pugachenkova1979, 47). Buddhism started penetrating to Central Asia in the second century BC. Establishment of the Kushan Empire has played a progressive role in development and distribution of Buddhism, because the Kushan

rulers themselves converted into Buddhism and paid attention to its distribution.

Starting from the first century BC the religious ideologies of the Antiquity Period faced crisis and Buddhism became the dominant religion in Central Asia including Soghd (Bongard-Levin, Karpyuk 1982, 44-45).

This new religion in its turn has gained its position in Soghd and Samarkand (Afrasiab), which was its political and economic center. That is the Soghdians as well as other people of Central Asia have played an important role in distribution of Buddhism in China and Far East (Litvinsky, Zeymal 1971, 130; Bailey, 1971). In particular, the Chinese written sources (second century AD) inform that the Soghdian monks Kan Mensian and Kan Tsuy were Buddhist missionaries. In the sources belonging to later period there is information about the Soghdian interpreters who translated the Buddhist texts from Hindu to Chinese (Rtveladze 1998, 21-22). These interpreters have also translated those texts into Soghdian. This certifies that Buddhism was widely spread in Soghd. This is also supported by the fact that the Chinese chronicles Sui and Wei inform that the Soghd people practice Buddhism (Bichurin 1950.272,281).

Using written and archaeological sources we can observe that Buddhism had strong position in Soghd during the 1-5th centuries

AD. However, it had lost its position with the arrival of Hephthalites and distribution of other religions, especially the Manichaeism (Belenitsky 1954, 39). Particularly, by the 8th century AD there was only one Buddhist monastery with one monk in Samarkand (Belenitsky 1954, 123; Compareti 2008). This idea was proposed by V. Livshits, who studied the Mugh documents, according to whom Buddhism was almost lost by this period in Samarkand Soghd (Livshits 1962, 165-166).

However, according to numismatic data, some coins carried names close to Buddhist etymology (Belenitsky 1959, 50-51); this certifies that prior to the Arab invasion Buddhism kept its certain position among the ordinary and high-ranked people. This is clearly seen in the coins found in Ustrushana. In particular, the coins provide not just the names of the rulers (Afshins) but also the iconography borrowed from India (Smirnova 1981, 32-33).

According to V.V. Bartold, Buddhism has kept its influence in Soghd during the later periods. Particularly, he relates the name of the village Sanjarfagan in the south-east of Samarkand with the name of the Buddhist monastery Sangharama (Bartold 1963, 215-216).

The place of Buddhism in Soghd is also reflected in the archaeological materials gained during excavations. In particular, the remains of the building on the border between

Soghd and Ustrushana were evaluated as the Buddhist monastery, and according to the bronze mirror and the lion figurine found herethe complex was dated to the 1-2ndcenturied AD (Albaum1955, 57-60). This temple is considered the only one found on the territory of Soghd.

One can observe that from the 5-6th centuries AD the Soghdianscontinuously developed the local iconography. They used various traditions but 'adjusted' them to their own needs (Marshak1987, 237). This is clearly seen in the usage of the Indian pantheon.

The archaeological works in the Palace of Nasr ibn Sayyar located in the north of the Afrasiab Settlement have resulted in finding of a ceramic placket with the image of Kirtmukha dated to the second half of the 8th century AD. This lion-shaped image was borrowed from Indian iconography and was spread in Central Asia starting from the Kushan Period (Marshak1971, 59). The image of Kirtmukha, placed on ossuaries or other types of pottery besides Afrasiab, was also found in Penjikent and Tali-Barzu sites (Monchadksaya1960, 125-127; Meshkeris1989, 302; Belenitsky1959, 52).

The excavations by the Joint Uzbek-French Archaeological Mission in the area close to the

citadel of Afrasiab have resulted in finding of an ivory in shape of wrest, which is iconographically close to Buddhist art[1]. The image of wrest is still widely used in the people's theatre Kathali, which pays attention to mimics. According to this theatre there are twenty four positions for fingers, which can produce several hundreds of positions with meanings. Wrest is the fourth position and is n a m e d m u s t i ( B a b k i n a , Potabenko1964, 100-103).

The influence of Buddhism is also seen in fine arts. Although many researchers state that the Soghdian monumental art is unique (Litvinsky, Zeymal, 1971, 124;Shishkin1963, 205-208), A.M. Belenitsky proposes to apply to the Buddhist artistic tradition while studying the origins of the Soghdian fine arts (Belenitsky1964, 189).

There are many images related to India in the medieval Soghdian art and one of them is the image of elephant. Some researchers think that the image of elephant was directly borrowed from India (Ashrafi1984, 168). The elephant image is also used in the coins of the Ustrashana ruler satachari (meaning 'master', 'teacher') (Smirnova1981, 32-33).

As it was mentioned above, Buddhism lost its positions with the arrival of Manichaeism in the 5-6th centuries AD. Although the

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1. This finding is currently located at the Institute of Archaeology, Uzbek Academy of Sciences. It is not dated since was found out of the cultural layers.

Manichaeism has arrived to Soghd after Buddhism, it has borrowed some Buddhist practices (Henning 1936, 5). In particular, the Manichaean monasteries were highly influenced by Buddhism.

The fact that the Soghdian ambassador, who visited the Chinese Emperor in the late 7th century AD, had a high rank in Manichaeism shows that Manichaeism played an important role in the socio-political life.

Although these religions co-existed for a long time it is difficult to evaluate their inter-influences, because there are no written or material evidence directly related to this issue. But the fact that the establisher of Manichaeism in Soghd Mar Ammo tried to influence the people by converting the high-ranked people to Manichaeism demonstrates that there was a competition between these religions.

According to orientalist V.B. Henning the main supporter of Manichaeism in Central Asia were Soghdians (Henning 1936, 13-14) and this is supported by the fact that the leader of Manichaeism has placed its castle in the early 8th

century AD in Samarkand. Also one of the decrees of the Chinese Emperor published in the early 8 century AD states that 'the Manichaeism ideology is the local religion of the western Hu people'. It is believed that the expression 'the Hu people' here corresponds not to the entire Central Asian population but only to Soghdians (Litvinsky, Zeymal, 1971, 121). There is still no material evidence of Manichaeism in Soghd. Perhaps, this was resulted by the fact that the monumental buildings were adobe-made or made of woolen fabrics; similar tradition is seen in the Mountainous Altay (Kyzlasov2004, 127-128).

In conclusion we can say that distribution of Buddhism and partially Manichaeism in the 1-8th centuries AD has resulted in intensification of cultural relations between people and the Soghdians played an important role in this process. Importantly, the Soghdians not just tolerated other religions but contributed to distribution of those religions (Buddhism, Manichaeism, and Christianity) to Eastern Turkestan, China and Far East.

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