

ANCIENT ODISHA

Landmarks in Life of Goutam Buddha and Kalinga

By **Brajabandhu Mahanta** • December 13, 2021 • 8 min read

Goutam later known as the Buddha was born to father Suddhodana and mother Mahamaya (Maya Devi) in Kapilavastu, which was the capital of Lumbini estate in the then Kalinga empire in the year 569 BC. Now Kapilavastu is known as Kapileswar, which has become a part of Bhubaneswar old town.

Kapileswar Pillar Inscription

In the year 550 BC, he was married with Gopa the princess of Devadaha, then neighbouring estate of Lumbini belonging to Kolas in the Toshali region of the Kalinga empire. He was then 19.

9 In 540 BC at the age of 29, Goutam left home, renounced the world, accepted asceticism, and met Bimbisara, Emperor of Magadha and took to meditation. For seven years he moved in deep forests from place to place and conducted deep penance.

In the year 533 BC he attained Enlightenment at the Uruvela forest and preached first to Tapusa and Bhallika, the two merchants of Kalinga. He then went on to declare Pravartana of Dharma Chakra at Varanasi.

In 532 BC at the age of 37 Buddha returned for the first time to his home at Kapilavastu (present Kapileswar), receiving information about grief of his father

Suddhodana and wife Gopa. Being mistreated by subjects and relatives for having gone against the Vedas and preaching a new religion, he went back again to North India. Son Rahul and wife Gopa who were sermonized and baptized by the Buddha, accompanied him.

In 529 BC at the age of 40, Buddha again returned home and this time sermonized his step-mother, Mahaprajavati, visited Chhandaka his horse-groom who was in his death bed and then left his native place for good. This time also he did not have many disciples.

In the year 489 BC at the age of 80, Buddha breathed his last at Kusinagra and the funeral rites were conducted by the Mallas. Before the funeral, Therakshema of Kalinga took away his left molar tooth, went to Kalinga and handedover it to Brahmadutta the Emperor. The left molar tooth of Buddha was kept in a golden casket and was worshipped by the Emperor of Kalinga Brahmadutta. After he received it from Therakshema, Brahmadutta renamed his capital Kalingapattan as Dantapura in 489 BC.

In 487 BC, two years after the demise of Buddha, Emperor Brahmadutta built a Stupa at Kapilavastu (Kapileswara) and kept inside that the sacred relics (ashes and bones) of Buddha in an earthen container after receiving it from Mallas who had migrated from Kusinagra to Kalinga.

In the year 480 BC, nine years after the demise of Buddha the statute of Konakamana (Kona-Buddha) was established by Emperor Brahmadutta at the Charitra Port,

now called Konarka with a Stupa. The statue of Mayadevi, mother of Buddha was established there along with a Stupa.

30 years after the death of Buddha in 459 BC Brahmadutta, the then emperor of Kalinga died.

In 410 BC Kasiraj, the son of Emperor Brahmadutta attracted the attention of all the people of Kalinga by worshipping in pomp and grandeur the sacred relics of Buddha.

In 402 BC Kashiraj breathed his last. Attracted by the fame of the tooth relic, Kshiradhara the king of Asmaka, (now-a-days known as Kerala) attacked Kalinga, was defeated and he absconded after that. Sunanda the son of Kashiraja becomes the king of Kalinga after death of Kashiraja in 399 BC. Kshiradhara attacked Kalinga again to take possession of the tooth relic, but he died that very year.

The impression that Kalinga had become invincible because of the tooth relic had got spread to every corner of India and there was a hue and cry everywhere to destroy the tooth relic. Throughout his life Sunanda son of Kashiraja of Kalinga acted as a sentinel for the sacred tooth relic. He died in the year 356 BC.

In 349 BC there was a combined attack of the Kings of Cheta, Rastrika, Bhoja and Avanti of Kalinga during the reign of Guhashiva, son of Sunanda. The attack again failed.

In 343 BC, Hemamali, the daughter of Guhashiva sailed for Shri Lanka (Sinhala) with her husband

Dantakumar, concealing the sacred tooth relic inside her hair braid. Attacks on Kalinga stopped after that.

In 269 BC, 220 years after the demise of the Buddha, Ashoka was coroneted as the Emperor of Magadha. The Magadha empire set up by Chandragupta Mourya had the rest of India except Kalinga under it. Whereas Kalinga had three famous ports on its coast, Mouryan 'empire had no access to the South and South East Asia.

In 262 BC, Ashoka established friendship with Ahira, the Brahmanical king belonging to Chaitra dynasty of Kalinga. He sent a proposal of marriage to princess Karubaki, one of the foremost beauties at that time and the daughter of a Buddhist Dhivara King. Karubaki denied the marriage unless Ashoka embraced Buddhism.

In 261 B.C., Ashoka attacked Kalinga and after the famous battle of Kalinga, he embraced Buddhism, got married to Karubaki and returned to Pataliputra the Capital of Magadha with her.

In 259 B.C., Ashoka who was on a pleasure tour to the Uruvella forest for hunting, decided for reforms in administration in his empire after coming in contact with the ascetics and Buddhist monks in the same forest where Buddha had attained Enlightenment, Ashoka joined the Buddhist Sangha thereafter.

In 258 B.C., Karubaki gave birth to prince Tibara. In 257 B.C., Ashoka installed the rock edict (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) in Toshali and Samapa (Dhuli and Jaugada in Khurda and Ganjam district of Orissa

respectively). Besides, the copies of these four edicts were installed in six other places in different places of India.

In 256 B.C., Ashoka again installed another nine edicts in Kalinga at Toshali and Samapa and another ten edicts in six places of India, where the earlier four edicts were installed.

In 255 B.C., Ashoka doubled the Stupa of Konakamana at the port of Charitra (Konark) in coast Kalings Sagara (now Bay of Bengal) in honour of Konakamana Buddha.

In 249 B.C., Ashoka visited Kapilvastu, the birth place of Buddha, in Lumbini estate, twelve years after the great Kalinga War. After having been convinced that the Kalinga people have forgotten their defeat and misery, he established a Pillar at Kapilavastu (Kapileswar) and a put an inscription on it and worshipped Konakamana, Buddha (It is this inscription) which was discovered in 1928 at Kapileswar.

In 233 B.C., Ashoka installed an edict at Brahmagiri in Karnatak and Yeragudi in Andhra Pradesh.

In 232 B.C., Ashoka breathed his last.

In 225 B.C., Kalinga becomes an independent kingdom within seven years of the death of Ashoka. The fishermen dynasty migrated to the coastal areas.

During 192-170 B.C. for a period of 22 years Kharavela of Kalinga established a big empire defeating many princes in the north, west and south. He defeated Magadha twice and brought back the Jinasana from Magadha.

After Kharavela the Chaitra Dynasty ruled Kalinga for about sixty years, after which Kolas became quite powerful. The Bhubaneswar town then called Buddheswar was established in 129 A.D. Kolas occupied the whole of Kalinga, but left some areas where Buddhism existed at Lunibini estate, where the Sakyas accepted the supremacy of the Kolas but were not vanquished.

By 490 A.D., the Kolas became more powerful and Kalinga was known as the Kolan Empire. The Buddhist sculptures and architectures were completely destroyed from the Kapilavastu region. The Ashokan Pillar containing the relics of Buddha was also destroyed. With the help of Mallas and under the leadership of Om Debaputra Bhikshyu Shakasa, the Buddhist Monks took away one copy of the birth place plate of Buddha and the earthen urn found inside the Pillar to the distant Himalayan region for preserving the memorials of Buddha there..

In 484 A.D., the Pillar of Konakamana was destroyed. The Buddhists could only take away a copy of the inscription and the image of Maya Devi to the Himalayan region. The statue of Konakamana could not be taken to Himalayan region. It was taken to Puri later and it is still worshipped as the Konarkadeva in the Indra Temple within the premises of Sri Jagannath Temple of Puri.

From the 6th to the last part of 11th Century A.D., the Soma Dynasty also known as Kesari ruled different parts of Orissa. They were Saivites who also took to Vishnu worship. In 556 A.D., taking a portion from Ashokan Pillar installed at Kapileswar, the Bhaskareswara Linga was installed. The Kapileswar Linga was also installed taking another portion of the Pillar. The Mallas who had brought the relics but were converted to Saivism later under pressure continued to worship Lord Shiva. From this period the name of Kapilavastu was changed to Kapileswar. Buddhist fame was completely extincted from this place and Bhubaneswar became a Saivite Centre.

In 638 A.D., when Hiuen Tsiang came to Kalinga there was no Buddhist Sculpture left in Toshali. However, he wrote about the Buddhist Rock and Sculpture at Konakamana Port or Charitra Port which is the present Konarka.

By 720 A.D., the Buddhist sculptures were destroyed from the Konakamana region, but only the image of Konakamana was left. It was worshipped afterwards as the “Sun God”, although it was a statue of Buddha of Bhumisparsha Mudra. Purandar Keshari, the Emperor in 720 AD destroyed the Stupa and built a temple there which later on became the site for Konark Sun Temple built by the famous Ganga King Narasimha Deva.

Source: Goutam Buddha and Kalinga by Ajit Kumar Tripathy IAS (Grantha Mandir, Cuttack)

Category: Ancient Odisha

Tag: Goutam Buddha and Kalinga

Source: <https://historyofodisha.in/landmarks-in-life-of-goutam-buddha-and-kalinga/>

© History of Odisha · Generated on October 13, 2026