

The Status of Women at the Time of Buddha

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to clarify the status of women at the time of the Buddha in the 6 century B.C. in India. For this we have consulted the primary sources written in Pail and Sanskrit pertaining to Hinduism and Buddhism .We paid our attention to the Vedic and Sanskrit sources in order to explain the status of women in the Vedic tradition at the time of the Buddha. Further we gathered information from the Pail sources such as Theragatha and Therigatha to elucidate the position of women in India after the introduction of Buddhism

The methodology followed in this research was the normal procedure common to literacy research.

1. Data collection
2. Data analysis
3. Data classification and
4. Arriving at conclusions depending on the above factors

We tried our best to present the results historically, analytically, critically and comparatively.

There are various conclusions about the status of women at the time of the Buddha which have been incorporated in a large number of secondary sources. Through the survey of literature we found that those conclusions are mostly extremist due to the emphasis given to a particular set of primary sources (Vedic or Buddhistic). So our aim was to clarify the real status of women at the time of the Buddha by utilizing both the sources comparatively without a bias. Therefore we could arrive at a justifiable conclusion as follows

1. The status of women at the early stage of Vedic tradition had been satisfactory.
2. After the involvement of Brahamin priest the status of the women was condemned to the lower status.
3. As a result of the emergence of Shramana tradition such as in Buddhism and Jainism the women were fortunate to enjoy equal rights.
4. The new trend accelerated by the Shramana traditions was brought to a climax with the rapid expansion of Buddhism.