

to it. Significantly, it has been suggested that the feudal pattern of social control constrained economic within towns and instead of looking for urban origins of capitalism, one should look for its rural roots. A feudal society, therefore, does not negate the very tradition of urbanization; it only makes the town bereft of meaningful economic initiatives. The suggestion that some of the early towns declined and got transformed into centres of pilgrimage underscores a similar functional mutation. Trade primarily due to the new social context was sought to be localized, a development well-articulated with the popularity of *hattas* (local market). They were periodical in nature and near the religious centers.

In the early medieval economic and social circumstances, religious centers developed, which further led to the construction of temples by the rulers as well as by the locally powerful communities. It must be noted that these temples were not as gigantic or of great artistic value either as compared to the Buddhist monasteries of contemporary eastern India. The reason behind this was probably the fact that the Buddhist monasteries were built by the state or supported directly by them as well as patronized by the rich business community. On the contrary few of the Brahmanical structures were getting these advantages and they were having support of the local followers. From the various excavation and exploration reports by archaeologists temple structures of this period have been reported very often. But the ancient historiography of eastern India, obsessed with the Buddhist, Jaina and other heterodox monuments, has tended to just ignore it. The question why such a large number of temples came up during this period, which is spread over the whole of modern Bihar and West Bengal, particularly near the important Buddhist sites, was never posed. Moreover, the question why the Pala rulers who were known for their Buddhist inclination later extended critical support to Brahmans has also remained unaddressed.

References regarding local markets near these temples are examples of economic activities being carried out in these places. The growing importance of *Tirthayatras* succeeded to some extent in establishing a worthwhile contact between the other centres of the contemporary period. Religious centres were well connected to each other by the land and river routes. The majority of these centres was situated on the ancient trade routes of Bihar i.e. Mithila-Rajgriha, Mithila-Kapilavastu, Mithila -Champa, Mithila-Tamralipti, Pataliputra-Champa, Rajgriha-Gaya and Pataliputra-Gaya.

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