

"इदं नम ऋषिभ्यः पूर्वजेभ्यः पूर्वैभ्यः पथिकृत्भ्यः ॥" (Rg.X.14.15)

## *Isi* and *Rṣi* : A Comparative Study based on Pali Literature and Mahābhārata.

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### Introduction:

Human beings are mostly organized to solve the problems they face. As a group, they organize themselves to live in various situations. And noteworthy persons arise because each and everybody does not have secluded enough knowledge. Those kinds of persons are considered as wiser than the common people. They might have been named as '*Isi*' or '*Rṣi*' and meaning as "Seers" "Seers who see better than the others or "who proceeds". It is true, according to the *Bhagavadgītā* they are awakened while other beings are sleeping (*yā niśā sarvabhūtānaṃ tasyāṃ jāgarti saṃyamī Mbh.vi.26.69*)

So far as we know the concept of *Rṣi* has been drawn since remote past, of which exact time can not be mentioned. Here it is a brief discussion about *isi* and *rṣi* reflected in both Buddhist and Hindu traditions. Therefore, we have discussed here only about few main points, which can be seen in Pali Canon and Commentaries and has been compared with Hindu view, which can be seen in the *Mahābhārata*. As an introduction to the concept of *rṣi* the *Rgveda* draws attention at its beginning.

### Two Traditions:

*Rgveda*, the great resource of ancient human behavior which is protected by Indians for thousand years, has initially mentioned about two kinds of *rṣis*: the previous (*pūrva*) and the recent (*nūtana*)

अग्निः पूर्वैभिर् ऋषिभिर् ईदृयो नूतनैर् उत । स देवाएह वक्षति ॥ (Rg.I.1.2)

According to the explanation of *Sāyana* on this *ṛc* (hymn), previous *rṣis* (*pūrvebhiḥ ṛṣibhiḥ*) means old *rṣis*: like *Bṛghu*, *Aṅgiras* etc. and recent *rṣis* (*nūtanaih*) means, *Sāyana* interprets 'who are living in the present like us' (*idānīntanaih asmābhiḥ api*) (*Rgvedasamhitā* I.p.36). Moreover, *Rgveda* the