

July 2013

Buddhist Voice

Year 1, Issue 2

Worlds First International Buddhist E- Magazine From The Land Of Buddha

Buddhism

Religion of Royals and Loyals

Pioneering Social Justice

International Activism

Dr Ambedkar's Embracing Buddhism

Buddha and The Future of His

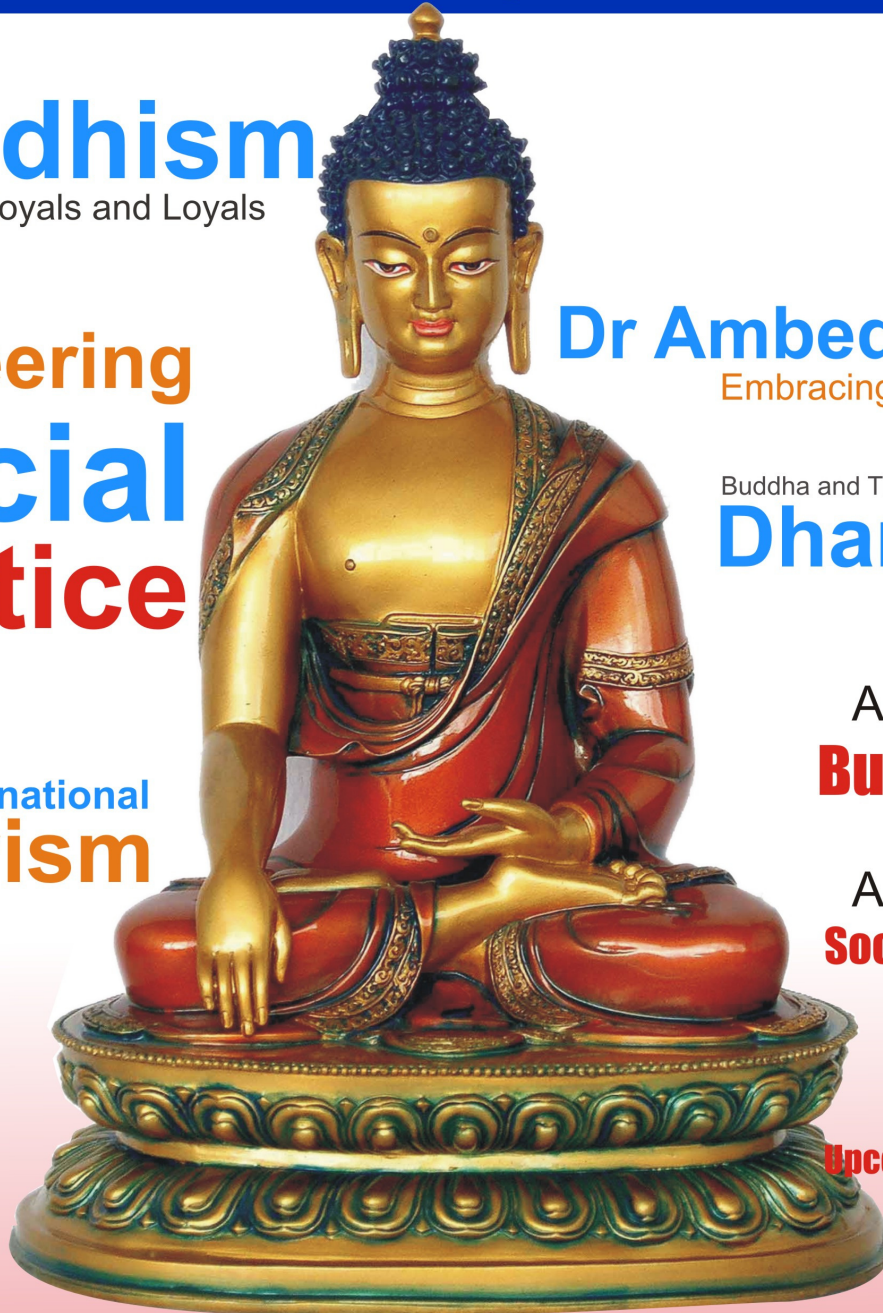
Dhamma

Articles on
Buddhism

Articles on
Social Issues

News

Upcoming Events



Dhammachhakapavattan

**World's First International
Buddhist E-Magazine From
The Land of Buddha**

July 2013 Year - 1 Issue - 2

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Greetings on Full Moon Day!

We have mixed emotions while releasing this issue. Our first issue of Buddhist Voice was well received by our readers. We have received numerous phone calls and messages congratulating us for release of the first issue of **Buddhist Voice**. We have emailed the issue to more than 50000 individuals and organizations across the world from our contact list. By the known statistics, we are sure that minimum 25% of the recipients must have read at least a few articles in the issue. For the first issue, it is certainly a big number. Besides emails, we have also published the e-magazine on various digital publishing platforms such as www.readwhere.com from India and other countries.

There were many suggestions from the readers. One of our readers mentioned that the full moon day (Purnima) plays a very vital role in Buddhism. Right from the Birth, Enlightenment, First Preaching of Dhamma to Nirvana, all events in the life of Lord Buddha happened to be on a Full Moon Day (i.e. Purnima). Therefore, he suggested that Buddhist Voice should be released on every full moon day. Accepting this valuable suggestion, we have henceforth decided to release **Buddhist Voice** on every full moon day. The full moon day, occurring on 22nd July, 2013, is called as Guru Purnima. On this Full Moon day, Lord Buddha gave his first preaching to his five ascetic friends at Sarnath after two months from the day of Enlightenment.

The month that passed by was a disheartening month for the Buddhist across the globe. First, the Time Magazine came out with an issue with front page showing a monk's photo with the title as "The Face of Buddhist Terror". The cover story "How Militant Monks are Fueling Anti Muslim Violence in Asia" by Hanna Beech does not really cover the whole issue in detail and he does not attempt to find out the roots of the cause of attack on a particular section of society in his article. Terrorism in any form is bad. This kind of an act cannot be a religious act. The Buddhist in Myanmar are addressing their own issues in a violent way and such action cannot be justified in any manner. However, it is wrong on the part of Time magazine to blame the Buddhist Monks from entire Asia to be involved in violence. We condemn and register our protest against the Time magazine for calling Buddhist monks from entire Asia as Militants.

The second incident was a terror strike on Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya at early hours on 7th July 2013. The explosions, the first of its type to target the town and the temple, a UNESCO heritage site, took place between 5:30 and 5:58 am. The explosives were set off by timers. In all, 13 bombs were planted at various locations, of which 10 exploded. The temple was clearly not sufficiently protected, to the extent that the perpetrators went undetected even while they placed an explosive device at considerable height on an 80-foot Buddha statue. Five people, including two monks, were injured by the blasts. Three other devices were defused by bomb disposal squads at various locations in

Gaya. The temple itself and the Holy Bodhi Tree (where Lord Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment) were undamaged. However Archaeological Survey of India has confirmed damage to various new structures of the temple complex. It was the most painful day for the Buddhist across the world. We are sure that the investigating agencies will come out with a detailed report and eventually will catch the culprits in due course of time. We condemn the attack on the Mahabodhi Temple. This is not the first time that a Buddhist Religious site has been attacked. In 2001, destruction of the two giant Buddhas in Bamiyan is the biggest assault against the historical and cultural heritage of Afghanistan in recent time. Various Buddhist heritage sites in India are always under threat and being attacked in one form or other by a section of society who do not like Buddhism or hate Buddhist people. In case of terror attack on Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, few questions come to our mind which remain un-answered so far and may remain un-answered in future too. One of the prime questions is:

"Why the Bomb explosions took place early in the morning when there is not much crowd?"

It is normally observed that the terror attacks are aimed at having maximum destruction and loss of life. In case of Bodh Gaya attack, there was no loss of life and no major destruction of property. Although we are relieved, it is surprising. The culprit also ensured that there will not be any damage to the main temple. It is evident that the culprit wanted to spread terror but did not want to damage anybody or the temple. Why? If this is the case, then the question remains, "Who was behind the attack?" Was there any internal political influence of Bihar or was national political influence involved? We have to wait for the outcome of findings by National Investigation Agency to know the truth or partial truth. Sooner or later, we need to join all dots to complete the actual picture.

Wish you a very happy Full Moon Day and Guru Purnima!



The Debate at large

The indigenous people are in the centrality of all discussions in recent times, particularly in the context of land rights, forest rights and industrial operations. These have given rise to multiple crisis in many Central Indian states. Glaring uncertainties revolve in the Central Indian states on the questions of development, economic growth, utilisation of natural resources, ethnic cleansing, militarisation, violation of human rights and dismissal of constitutional rights. The political segment and social system of this country smartly discusses the means and modus operandi of combating the Maoist menace, however, unconvincingly yet conveniently forgets to discuss the core issues at the ground level. This paper discusses the reality of the mining on indigenous land in the context of Chhattisgarh, one of the states which is faced with this critical calamity.

Industrial revolution, which made a colourful and dreamy entry, is turning out to be the worst form of human development. The steady economic growth of industries with active support from the state is directly proportional to the unchecked exploitation of masses. Most of them belonged to marginalised communities such as Dalits, Adivasis, women and working class. Displacement, migration, repercussion of workers, loss of land and livelihood, pilfering state revenue and depletion of forest resources had outgrown with impulsive concerns. Altogether these had resulted in the amplification of the pre-existing social and cultural conflict of caste.

With the concept of Planned Development, planned mining was introduced in 1951. The Private Sector and the Public Sector were clearly demarcated giving the Public Sector a bigger role in India's mineral wealth. There was spectacular progress in Indian Mining Industry from 1947 to 1985 when mineral production grew by about 120 times. The Indian Peninsular had a varied and complex geology, as a result of which rich mineral endowments covering a variety of mineral types are found. All Five Year Plans have focused on mining to achieve 'development', demanding the forfeiture of people's lands for 'national prosperity'.

A sizeable percentage of mineral and mining operations are found in forest regions, habituated by Adivasis and other indigenous communities. Mining projects vary from rat hole mining, small-scale legal and illegal mining, to large-scale mining – most of which has been historically managed by the public sector. Since the introduction of private sector participation in the 1990's, a number of mining related community conflicts have arisen with far reaching consequences.

Mining industry gives employment to a large proportion of the industrial workforce. But are the developments in the mining industry in keeping with national interests? This

draws a lot of controversies; including flouting the Constitutional and other rights of the people in mining areas, which is a matter of grave concern.

Mining and the Question of Land – The Case Study of Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh is the richest State in terms of mineral wealth, with 28 varieties of major minerals. Chhattisgarh, along with two other Indian States has almost all the coal deposits in India, and with this the state has planned the power hub strategy. All the tin ore in India is in Chhattisgarh. A fifth of iron ore in the country is here, and one of the best quality iron ore deposits in the world is found in the Bailadila in south Chhattisgarh, which is exported to Japan. Rich deposits of Bauxite, Limestone, Dolomite and Corundum are found in the State. The State has large deposits of Coal, Iron Ore and Limestone too.

All doors for private participation in the mining sector are widely open in the state. The State's Mineral Policy, 2001 has created conducive business environment to attract private investment in the State, both domestic and international. Procedures have been simplified. At the same time, the state is willing to provide resources and manpower having trained in tailor-made programs in geology, geophysics, geochemistry, mineral beneficiation, mining engineering, etc.

The State is ensuring a minimum lease area with secured land rights so that investors can safely commit for large mining projects. For surmounting the long-drawn process of getting mineral-related leases, at the State level, quick processing of applications is given top priority. For major minerals under the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, where approvals are required from Government of India, the State Government is helping in strong advocacy to get such approvals quickly.

Sarguja, Raigarh and Bilaspur districts are the coal zones in Chhattisgarh. It is estimated that more than 72 thousand acres of land have leased out to South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) for coal mining, by which hundreds of villages have already been affected. Bastar and Durg districts have some of the rare quality of steel in the world. Nearly 20 thousand acres of land have been occupied for mining steel in Bailadeela and Dalli Rajhara area of these districts. New deposits have been explored and ready for prospecting, for which the prospecting license has been provided to Tata Steels and Essar.

Heavy deposits of limestone are also found in Chhattisgarh region. In an area of three districts Raipur, Durg and Bilaspur, there are 12 big factories of all big industrial houses and with many more small ones and its auxiliary units. Most of these have been established in the last 20-22 years. Huge diamond deposits in Devbhog (Raipur) and

Bastar are also in the eyes of the MNCs. In all, for cement industry 6990 acres, 14530 acres for rice mills, 14665 acres for steel industry, for ferry alloys 940 acres and 285 acres for re-rolling mills have been already acquired in the area. Apart from these, 18652 acres of land has been rendered on lease for other mining purposes. Therefore, land acquisition followed by the adverse impact on the people, is a major issue in Chhattisgarh.

In Janjgir-Champa district alone, in the last 10 years, 65 MoUs have been signed, mostly for power plants. An approximate estimation of 140000 acres of land is required for these, which includes establishment of plants, establishment of ancillary units, dumping space for overburden, fly-ash, colony development for staff, etc. For all these projects coal will be brought from Jashpurnagar, Raigarh and Korba districts. Water would be drawn from Mahanadi, Maand, Sheonath and Kelo rivers.

Between 2005 and 2007, Jindal alone had applied for the prospecting licence (PL) and mining licence (ML) for 6111 sq km and another 1559 hectare (3853 acres) in Dantewada, Bijapur, Narayanpur, Rajnandgoan, Bilaspur, Janjgir-Champa, Raigarh, Jashpur and Surguja districts. The minerals in this area are iron ore, limestone, dolomite, coal, diamond, precious & semiprecious gemstone, etc. The area for which Jindal Group has applied for mining activity falls mostly within forests areas.

Apart from the various minerals mentioned above, the state is also rich in the deposits of precious and semiprecious stones like diamond, corundum, alexandrite, garnet, etc. The main bauxite producing areas are Phutka Hills, Main Pat, Samri Pat, Keshkal Valley and Maikal Ranges. The state is also a huge producer of limestone and dolomite and is being targeted for diamond prospecting and mining in a big way. Deposits of kimberlitic pipes are reported in Payalikhand and Behradih villages of Deobhog area of Raipur and Tokpal of Bastar district. These are present in the form phenocrysts in kimberlite-like volcanic rocks. The main coal producing areas are: Korba Colliery, Hasdo-Rampur Colliery, Mand-Raigarh Colliery, Vishrampur Colliery, Lakhanpur Colliery, Tatapani-Ramkola Colliery, Jhilmili Colliery, Sonhat Colliery, Jhagrakhand Colliery, Chirmiri-Kurasiya Colliery.

The following areas within the state containing different minerals are being looked at for future exploitation: Deobhog in Raipur district and Tokpal in Bastar district has been identified for the exploration of Diamond; Bijapur in Bastar district for Corrandum; Saraipali of Mahasamund district for Gold and Tin (Cassiterite); Bailadila, Raoghat and areas in Rajnandgaon district for iron ore; Jhanjhar, Meru, Durg, Bhaupratapur, Kondal area of Kanker district for gold; Renger, Markanar, Vasanpur area of Dantewada district for tin; Chhirahi-Newari, Saradih, Garrabhata and Patharkundi village of Raipur district and Sakti area of Janjgir district for limestone. In addition 500 lakh tonnes of high grade dolomite has been found in Lagra-Madanpur in Champa-Janjgir district; 5 lakh tonnes of metal grade bauxite in Dorima (or Barima) of Surguja district; 220 lakh

tonnes of coal has been identified in Hardi Bazar-Kertali in Korba district; 170 lakh cubic metres of flagstone having different shades and colours has been demarcated in revenue land of Chitrakot and Matkot area of Bastar district; clay and Banded hematite quartzite (BHQ) in the Balod area in Durg district.

It also means several hundred million tonnes per annum of solid wastes and fly ash will be indiscriminately dumped on land. These wastes contain highly contaminative elements that over the years would leak into both surface and ground water, turning the water unfit for human and animal consumption. This would endanger all other forms of life and vegetation. The entire ecological balance indigenously evolved over several millennia will get destroyed in a very short period without any reason.

So far the people are concerned, the situation is grim. They are pushed beyond the margins. Usurpation of thousands of acres of land is a usual phenomenon of all mining and industrialisation operations. Automation and mechanisation almost eliminates the employment opportunity provided by these industries. Health in general in these areas and more specifically occupational health is another area of severe concern. Children's education of the already battered strata becomes a distant dream in such places.

Rights of Mineworkers

Eight years back, I was part of a survey of Vedanta's bauxite mines in Mainpat and Daldali. While Mainpat is in Surguja district, Daldali falls in Kabirdham district. At Mainpat – the biggest single bauxite-mining complex in Chhattisgarh – we met with some thirty Adivasi workers, un-helmeted, clad in shirts and sarees under the blazing sun, as the lateritic overburden was blasted. They then moved in with a few iron rods and hammers, to break and sort the ore before loading it by hand onto waiting trucks. The same story is that of the workers in the Daldali mines of Vedanta.

Virtually all Vedanta's bauxite miners are contract labourers. The labourers at Mainpat informed during 2005 that, on a good day they can earn over 60 rupees (less for women), for delivering one ton of ore. In Daldali it is different story since the rates are different for different group of people. Those who could bargain better rates get better and those who couldn't bargain it to their level are the lost ones. Particularly the Baigas (a primitive tribe) couldn't bargain to the extent of the Gonds (a much better tribe). However it won't be more than 60 rupees per person per day in either case.

Employment issues are of deeper concern in mining areas. Dalli-Rajhara is an iron ore-mining town. It meets the total iron ore requirements of the Bhilai Steel Plant. In Dalli-Rajhara, since 1958 onwards mining activities have been continued. The preparations for mechanizing the Dalli mine began in 1977. By 1978, the situation of mechanization became even more clear and lucid, when at deposit no. 5 in Bailadila mines, 10000 labourers were rendered jobless at one stroke. All resistance was crushed. Hundreds of huts

were burnt down, numerous women raped, and labourers fired upon. The orgy of mechanization forced nearly 10000 labourers to face the desperation of hunger. A growing argument was that machinery in question was produced in Russia and was therefore socialistic, progressive machinery – however it did not mitigate the grim fate of these labourers.

Land Acquisition versus Land Purchase

In recent times, a new tendency is observed among the corporate houses to appropriate farmland. Instead of engaging the state in acquiring land, the corporate house has started buying land directly from the farmer. This trend is widely seen in parts of Janjgir-Champa district where the corporate house directly bought land from the farmers. In fact, the latest amendment in the LAA bill also speaks about these aspects. The amendment says that land acquisition wouldn't be the responsibility of the government. 70% should be directly either acquired or bought by the company itself. State's responsibility would only be limited to provide 30% of land either through acquisition of public land or by transferring government land in favour of the company.

Mining on Forestland

The mining areas have a huge overlap with the forest and Adivasi-Indigenous land in the state and the increasing mining activities and allied industries have had a tremendous negative impact on these. An on-going study, by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), looking at 'Forest cover in metal mining areas' shows some revealing statistics. In the Bastar district, one of the biodiversity rich areas of Chhattisgarh, out of the 13,470 hector area under leases for iron ore mining, 11,657 hector is covered by forests. This of course indicates the forest within the actual lease, but the impact on the forests, biodiversity and the communities dependent on this region due to ancillary impacts of mining extends far beyond the actual lease area.

And...

Conflicts over industrialization and particularly mining in Chhattisgarh have existed for more than five decades in different forms. In earlier days it wasn't taken to be conflicts as such, but only as immediate questions related to the question of inadequacy. The standpoints of trade unions were also only one-dimensional, related to increment in wages or related matters of labourers. It could never address the entire question of mining in totality. Moreover, mining has been strongly presupposed as a major means of industrial development contributing to the state economy. So how a means of development could be understood as a conflict is another point. Over the course of time, the very definition of state and its economy has changed.

It is under this context that we need to develop a wider understanding and proper perspective about the diverse dynamics of Dalit and Adivasi rights over natural resources. To understand the dynamics of the problem in totality, one needs an understanding of the logic of the underlying forces that govern the current pattern of ownership. The specific economic form in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped

out, determines the relation of the rulers and the ruled. Hence, the crisis of indigenous people and rights over natural resources has to be understood in its historical perspective. Historical evidences are ample to prove the conception of depeasantisation as a net result of the uneven structural changes, land holding patterns that have taken place from time to time due to the commoditization of the economy in which land plays a critical and predominant role.

It is beyond all doubts that industrial land acquisition and free market economy goes hand in hand. The mechanism of compensation and rehabilitation is a supportive kitty of the corporate sector; this only pauperises the poor instead of changing their destiny. The principles of compensation never estimates or often forgets that on the very first day of reaching a rehabilitation colony, a poor family has to buy firewood, which they procured free from the Common Property Rights (CPR).

The tripartite of politicians, bureaucracy, and capitalist on the edifice of Brahminical Social Order raise a whole range of questions. The hire and fire formula of the capital-fascist brigade and the coherence of world capital with Hindutva fascism is the greatest of the challenges. In the globalised era, the sweeping changes in political structures, coupled with the disempowerment of state, it won't be so easy for the people to survive. Dr. Ambedkar's dream of a 'welfare state' has disappeared in the whirlwind of centralising caste in nation-state rule and further outgrown with the Globalization – Privatization - Liberalization policies. Perhaps this is where the crux of the problem lies.

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Discussions and Letters

We encourage you to comment on the articles published in Buddhist Voice. Your comments / letters should be restricted to 300 words. If found suitable, we will publish your comments / letters in our e-magazine.

The Buddha, the Enlightened, Siddharth Gautam, or whatever you wish to call, I see just as a human being, who was a rebel, revolutionary person, who challenged the times with his rational and radical approach.

Today we have N number of books on Buddha and his teachings; lots of authors give their interpretations on his teachings and him. The schools had differences and they separated and incorporated their own rituals and practices diving themselves majorly into Mahayana, Hinayana or Vajrayana. We also have a recent school coming from Osho who also preached on the lines of Buddha, which many may not agree. But the question remains. What was Buddha and what did He stand for?

“The Buddha and His Dhamma”, written by Dr B R Ambedkar, and published post his Mahaparinirvan, portray Buddha as a radical human being in his earlier days. He questioned each and every action, ritual and tried to find his own answers. He also was a revolutionary, He went against what He felt was wrong and challenged it. He was also a law-abiding person who followed the rules and left Sakya Sangha, post the dispute on water of River Rohini.

Today, most of the followers of Buddha are lost in ritualistic approaches. It is not important that one wear white or coloured clothes in a Buddhist ceremony, or one knows the sutta’s at any instant. I believe if I am a follower of Buddha, I should try and be like him in rational and revolutionary approach.

Buddha had to leave the Sakya Sangha because of the dispute of sharing of water from River Rohini. Dr Ambedkar went on his maiden satyagraha in March 1927, much before Gandhi, over human needs of water at Chavdar Lake in Mahad, Maharashtra. Today, government of India has privatised water. By definition, water is not a natural resource but a commodity. Seems all the Buddhist and Ambedkarites are waiting for someone to start the protest or wait for problem to reach its peak. My Buddha doesn’t allow me to rest, He asks me to revolt against the system, be a revolutionary and fight for the justice of water for the people at large. When it comes to water, there is no left, Ambedkar or Buddha. It is just human need of water.

Buddha was so radical that he questioned each an every action of his own and that of others. He questioned the rules, as to why they are in place, what are their implications, and if broken, what is the punishment. On His entry into Sakya Sangha we see, he questioned what are the rules of disqualification of his membership from the sangha, which eventually happened. But the approach to be built within us, as followers of Buddha, is to question, be radical.

Today in Maharashtra we see number of people promoting 22 vows, to the youths. I do not disagree or see it wrong or right. My conscience questions the vows. Are they relevant as it is after completion of 57 years since conversion, are they reaching the right audience, are they making the right

impact, and so on. I see a huge number of youth being fascinated by vipassana. Again, I question it as my Buddha taught me, to evaluate before accepting it.

The retired population today is getting back to Dhamma, a good sign, but they are getting into the ritual aspect of Buddhism, not the radical or revolutionary aspect. It is their moral duty and responsibility to impart radical and revolutionary outlook into the minds of the youth, starting from their own children and grand children.

Buddha, is eternal, if he has survived 2500+ years, he will survive forever, we do no need to put efforts to promote or propagate him, his philosophy. We need to see if we can try and be like him, walk his path and show the world that it is possible to walk that path today. The path of peace, the path of being human, path of being radical, path of being revolutionary for the society and the world of all living creatures at large.

I get disturbed when I read the word Buddhist terror on the front page of internationally acclaimed TIME magazine, with respect to Myanmar Buddhist monks. I have not been there, I don’t know the ground realities, but somewhere I feel one can not clap with one hand. Is Terror word to be associated with Buddha? Who has failed the Buddha? The monks or his followers or his teachings? One needs to re-look at it from multiple angles the same way Buddha would have. I can give my interpretation or views, but that’s not important. It is important that we research; we find who is at fault, and then amend if needed. Buddha was open to change. He believed change. Nothing is permanent, except change, was his teaching. We have stagnated Buddha in time. We have not evolved Buddha. Buddha needs to evolve with respect to today’s time.

What and how would Buddha react is the basic question one should ask to him/herself at any incident or juncture. The answers lead to the rightmost path of Buddhism. My Buddha doesn’t come in a ready to serve plate, where his teachings can give all the answers. The answers are to be seeking, researched and derived, as per the local needs of geography and time.

My Buddha is in me. Its only when I feel I can be Buddha, I shall be a Buddhist. If I place Buddha in a position which I believe I can not reach I shall be a masked Buddhist.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar converted to Buddhism; he did not replace his earlier religion with Buddhism. Today we may fail him by replacing religions and not converting, or may be with time we evolve a new Buddhist school of thought. But the fundamentals of Buddha’s teaching and his way of life will be same.

Its time we bring Buddha out from the idol and put him in our hearts, soul, breath and blood. Let’s begin by living the Buddha way, Radical and Revolutionary. That is my Buddha.



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आवाहन

महाराष्ट्रातील सर्व बौद्ध ठिकाणांक यांना आपापला वक्तव्यात येथे पोली, आपला आपल्या तपिकाल्या बुद्ध विहादामी बाबिरतय आहिली वगळीय विहादामी अधिकृत वेबसाईटवर पाठवावी. जेणेकरून आपले बुद्ध विहाय वेबसाईटवर जाणवतात व जगजातीत बौद्ध ठिकाणांवरती पोहोचू शकेल.

बुद्धाने जगाला धम्म दिला
आपल्याला मार्ग दाखविला
उगवणाऱ्या सूर्याप्रकरि प्रकाश
दिला
तरीपण आजही पाहिजे तसा
प्रकाश आपल्या विहारवर आणि
बुद्धांनी सांगितलेल्या धम्मावर
पडला नाही.
अजूनही अंधारात आहे
म्हणून जागे व्हा!
विहाराला भेट द्या आणि
मेणबत्तीच्या प्रकाशाने
धम्म जगाला दाखवा!

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औरंगाबाद । जालना । बीड । नांदेड । परभणी । हिंगोली । उस्मानाबाद । लातूर । पुणे । मुंबई । बुलडाणा । यवतमाळ । याशिम । अकोला । अमरावती । नागपूर । सोलापूर येथून एकाचवेळी वितरित होणारे महाराष्ट्रातील एकमेव वृत्तपत्र.

We have read about the Yamaka Vagga, first verse in previous issue of **Buddhist Voice** (published in June 2013) where the Lord Buddha's main message was "Suffering is Mind-Made". If we observe, any anger or suffering is because of our thoughts and nothing else. If we decide to not to get disturbed with any event in our life, we can avoid our suffering.

In this column, we are mainly referring to the Pali version of Dhammapada in our discussions as readers may have come across various other versions of Dhammapada such as The Gandhara Dharmapada, Patna Dharmapada and The Chinese Version of Dhammapada.

The second verse of Yamaka Vagga is very much similar to the First Verse. Yamaka Vagga Verse One and Verse Two are parallel verses and were uttered by the Lord Buddha on two different occasions to show the inevitable effects of evil and good karma respectively.

Yamaka Vagga (Verse Two)

Main Message from the verse is "Good Begets Good"

Pali Version

Manopubbangama dhamma
Manosettha manomaya
Manasa ce pasannena
bhasati va karoti va
Tato nam sukhamanveti
Chaya va anapayini || 2 ||

Meaning

Mind is the forerunner of (all good) states.
Mind is chief; and they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one's shadow and that never leaves.

All that man experiences, springs out of his thoughts. If his thoughts are good, the words and deeds will also be good. The result of good thoughts, words and deeds will be happiness. This happiness never leaves the person whose thoughts are good. Happiness will always follow him like his shadow that never leaves him.

Commentary

How we experience our circumstances, depends on the way we interpret them. If we interpret them in the wrong way, we experience suffering. If we interpret them in the right way, we experience happiness. In other words, our happiness or unhappiness depends on the way we think.

Thought also creates circumstances in a futuristic sense. If we harbour ill will and speak or act with ill will, people will begin to hate us. We will be punished by society and the

law. After death, we will also be reborn in a realm of suffering. Here, 'thought' refers to kamma (action) and 'experience' refers to vipàka (consequences).

The message finally conveyed by this pair of verses is: "Think wrong and suffer. Think right and be happy." This pair of verses was spoken by the Buddha to show the inevitable consequence (vipàka) of good and evil thought (kamma). Man reaps what he has sown, both in the past and in the present. What he sows now, he reaps in the present and in the future. Man himself is responsible for his own happiness and misery. He creates his own hell and heaven. He is the architect of his own fate. What he makes, he can unmake. Buddhism teaches the way to escape from suffering by understanding and using the law of cause and effect. Buddhism is very realistic and optimistic. Instead of blindly depending on unknown supernatural powers, hoping for happiness, Buddhism finds the true way to happiness realistically.

The Story of Matthakundali associated with Verse 2

While residing at the Jetavana monastery in Saravasthi, the Buddha uttered Verse (2) of this book, with reference to Matthakundali, a young Brahmin. Matthakundali was a young Brahmin, whose father, Adinnapubbaka, was very stingy and never gave anything in charity. Even the gold ornaments for his only son were made by himself to save payment for workmanship. When his son fell ill, no physician was consulted, until it was too late. When he realized that his son was dying, he had the youth carried outside on to the verandah, so that people coming to his house would not see his possessions.

On that morning, the Buddha arising early from his deep meditation of compassion saw, in his Net of Knowledge, Matthakundali lying in verandah. So when entering Saravasthi for alms-food with his disciples, the Buddha stood near the door of the Brahmin Adinnapubbaka. The Buddha sent forth a ray of light to attract the attention of the youth, who was facing the interior of the house. The youth saw the Buddha; and as he was very weak he could only profess his faith mentally. But that was enough. When he passed away with his heart in devotion to the Buddha he was reborn in the Tavatimsa celestial world.

From his celestial abode, the young Matthakundali, seeing his father mourning over him at the cemetery, appeared to the old man in the likeness of his old self. He told his father about his rebirth in the Tavatimsa world and also urged him to approach and invite the Buddha to a meal. At the house of Adinnapubbaka, the question of whether one could or could not be reborn in a celestial world simply by mentally professing profound faith in the Buddha, without giving in charity or observing the moral precepts, was brought up. So the Buddha willed that Matthakundali should appear in person; Matthakundali soon appeared fully decked with celestial ornaments and told them about his rebirth in the

Tavatimsa world. Then only, the audience became convinced that the son of the Brahmin Adinnapubbaka by simply devoting his mind to the Buddha had attained much glory.

At the end of the discourse Matthakundali and his father Adinnapubbaka attained Sotapatti Magga and Sotapatti Phala. Adinnapubbaka also donated almost all his wealth to the cause of the Buddha's Teaching

Note : Tavatimsa – Heaven, is an import world of devas in Buddhist Cosmology

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“Invest time to discover ways
for connecting yourself to
the ethereal , cosmic energy”
If you can do it, then you have solutions
for almost, every man made problem.
Be in harmony & have oneness with NATURE.
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“By trainings, ∞
Results beyond
imaginations
are achieved.
When there is
trust &
harmony
amongst
1. Learners.
2. Life coach &
3. Sponsors”
“One
average,
trained
person gives
far better
results than
hundred
Untrained
Strong
Followers”
How many
trained people
do I have, in
my team?

In the global era of internet revolution, country borders are just physical reality. Because from three fundamental dimensions of physics: distance, time and mass; distance and time is overcome by technology. Everyone have equal access to information in fraction of seconds. If Einstein's Philadelphia Experiment is true and reproduced, then man can move anything from one place to another place in few minutes. It's a miracle of science.

However, understanding and decoding **"HUMAN BRAIN and BEHAVIOUR"** is still a mystery beyond reach of science (partially solved by Neurologists). Across the world, leading organisations are investing in imparting leadership skills to their employees to effectively run their companies in profit. To be a leader means to be in charge and in full control of situation and guide people depending on leader to achieve common objective. To be a leader means to first understand self, conquer own emotions and then imitate for others benefit. It's like first using match stick to ignite own candle within and then using the ignited candle, ignite hundreds of candles. It's simple mathematics on paper, but very difficult in practical reality.

As a trainer life coach, I have been coaching people over last 15 years and I am experiencing how challenging it is to deal with human brains and behaviour. Lord Buddha has provided solutions to all leadership development skills. In these series of articles, I would be sharing with you, learning's from interactions with participants and some simple, easy to follow techniques to develop leadership skills thus acting as a catalyst in your journey for self enlightenment.

Story of "Mongoose, the Baby Sitter" from Jataka tales.

We begin with story of "Mongoose the Baby Sitter" from Jataka tales. To discuss supporting real life examples, followed by an action steps to implement learning's in small steps to benefit you and followers of Lord Buddha. Since leadership is vast subject, on monthly basis one leadership parameter would be discussed.

Once Bodhisattva was born as a mongoose in jungle. A young couple living near village borders of jungle, give birth to a cute baby. Since the village was nearby the jungle, many times poisonous snakes used to sneak into village huts in search of food (Mouse). The couple made this mongoose as their pet and kept him as a baby sitter. The cute baby started playing with mongoose and soon both become good friends. As the baby was growing, mother used to feed both baby and mongoose at same time. When baby was drinking milk, mother used to give milk to mongoose in bowl. Toys were common to both. Parents started loving the mongoose. Soon mongoose realised and felt that he is second child of couple and started calling them Mom-Dad. Days past happily.

Father used to go to the jungle for food and mother used to fetch water from nearby village well in two pots. Holding

one pot on her head and other by her waist. On one fateful day, when mother was out to fetch water, the heartbreaking episode took place. Somewhere inside her subconscious mind mother feared about this incident and it did happen in reality. Mother was shocked.

With pots full of water, the moment when mother was about to step into house and put her foot in door, mother saw mongoose jumping and trying to catch her wrist. Mother was stunned to see Mongoose face smeared with blood and Mongoose trying to eat her wrist, she could see Mongoose teeth clearly. Mother got bewildered to see the scene and within fraction of a second, a lighting thought came to her mind of mongoose killing her baby and as he tasted human blood, he is now attacking her. The very next moment, the mother reacted sharply in fury and directly threw the water pot on mongoose head. Mongoose died on the spot. Traumatized mother rushed to see her dead baby in the bedroom. The mother went into life time guilt after seeing the scene in bed room. Her cute little baby was sleeping peacefully in the cradle and a huge long yellow Cobra Snake was lying dead besides the cradle. Cobra was terribly wounded near neck and all over body and blood was spread across the floor. Soon the mother realised that Mongoose had a bold, tough fight with this poisonous yellow cobra snake and blood spread all over the floor is testimony of how intensely the Mongoose fought with the poisonous cobra to protect her baby. Mother connected the events and got the actual real sequence of events. Mongoose was very proud to protect his baby brother from attack of poisonous snake and was excited to inform his mother that he has performed his duty as an ideal baby sitter. Mongoose had seen many times that the baby used to hold the mother's finger and used to drag mother to get things/toys of his choice. After killing the poisonous cobra snake, the mongoose also was eager to inform the mother and he said I am also mothers' second baby, after mother comes "I will also hold mothers finger and will take her to place where snake was lying dead". But for mother, somewhere deep in her brain at subconscious level, one perception was stored and that perception was "How much should I trust the mongoose? There are chances that Mongoose might also kill my baby" the moment when mother saw the Mongoose mouth smeared with blood, this perception deeply hidden in brain shot up with the speed of a volcano, so fast that she didn't have time to think and check the situation and she reacted immediately to punish the mongoose by killing him with the water pot in her hand. Mother connected all dots and understood entire sequence of event and fainted instantly.

"Learning's from 'Mongoose, the Baby Sitter' Story "

Friends, there is huge void between reacting and responding. Leadership skill is all about responding to situations and those who fail to be a leader irrespective wealth, support and talent is that they react to situations. There is big chasm

between perception and reality. Only genuine great leaders could understand and decode this gap. If one has to lead an organisation, teams, family and society, that individual must acquire skill to differentiate between brutal facts and wrong perceptions. In short run, those adhering to wrong perceptions would win (Sprint) but history has many proofs, in long run (Marathon) only those leaders who have self control for not to react on wrong information provided (miss-fed) by their dear and near ones (here I mean stooges) wrong perceptions are winners and recorded as victorious. I could see many senior people in organisation (kindly note: I am not using word leader) take their decisions without evaluating brutal facts; they take decisions based on information provided by their team members. Hence, I avoid them calling as Leader and hence mention them as seniors. By seniors it can be any person in hierarchy, who got his / her current designation by some competitive examinations, by way promotion for serving long duration at one place, hereditary designation as heir to parents /ancestral empire, by natural default hierarchy as parents, eldest brother or sister.

Perception is further extended to Selective Perception and Paradigm Paralysis (Rigid Perception). Selective Perception divides two minds. Rigidity and stubbornness of an individual to stick to it, is one of the basic causes of sour relationships between two human beings. Open mind willing to explore alternative thoughts by other person unites, binds two minds. Sign of healthy venture. Famous “Lateral thinking” Author Edward de Bono in his book “How to have beautiful mind” has clearly mentioned about this. “Selective Perception means perceiving things in such a way as to support pre-formed ideas. The mind has fixed patterns and then notices only those things which fit the pattern. Racial prejudice is an obvious example.”

Effect of Selective Perception

Every day our team is recording incidents where many genuine mongoose are being killed in various associations. You see data of any HR company and read the exit interview or read interview remarks for joining new company. You will notice many mongoose are being killed just by seniors (Not Leaders) falling prey to wrong perceptions and terminating employees, relationships, business associations, etc. Yes. There is a solution and way out. Partial answer is mentioned in succeeding paragraphs and remaining solution you have to find on your own.

Few more examples of Selective Perception are “People from South Korea Against North Korea”, “People from Western Culture and Eastern Culture”, In India, Caste System is the best example of Selective Perception. It’s in increasing levels with respect to harmfulness, Perceptions, Selective Perceptions and Rigid Perceptions. Great physicist Galileo discovered that the Earth is round. Before that it was strongly (rigidly) perceived by then dominant religious power that earth is flat and it was very difficult to accept and digest the universal truth which Galileo was talking about. It’s a history, in how merciless situation Galileo died in prison. That’s the price one has to pay to discovering the truth and talking the truth. It’s called Rigid Perception or Paradigm Paralysis where brain is unable to think and accept

new change. Many honest people who discovered truth were suppressed in past and will be continued to be suppressed in future too. Following are 8 types where truth can be suppressed by perception 1. Having Muscle power, 2. Religious Power, 3. Having Power to punish, 4. Having Power to influence others by wealth, 5. Majority Power, 6. Obligatory power (This has unspoken communication something like this “I have helped you, so whatever I say is correct, you have to listen to me even if it’s wrong). 7. Higher in hierarchy (this type selective perception is often found in two relationships Manager to Junior and Parents to Children. Whatever superior says he pushes it down by way of his/her default hierarchy situation, comes the famous quote “Boss is Always Right”). 8. Comparisons with only one parameter of one’s favour.

Then how do I become a better leader? How do I overcome selective perception? What is the way out?

Solution for this is Maturity shown by leaders for open discussions and listing alternatives and seeking suggestions to make things better in small steps. It’s called “Kaizen”. Once Toyota conducted Kaizen brain storming sessions on generating new idea’s more than one thousand suggestions came which were sorted out and implemented as per situations. Trust and decision making is always from leader to followers and never from follower to leader. It means Leaders (Mother) have to first proved by real action that they trust follower (mongoose). Followers mostly join leader to work and give their life for leader. It is a leader’s responsibility to show unconditional trust on followers. Since 2009, I am doing a practical real time leadership training, life coaching experiment on six youths in locality near IIT, Powai, Mumbai. The findings are miraculous. Its over four years we are together and we are a team of eight people. Six youths, my wife and myself. We had certain plans to convert this leadership life coaching learning’s into physical business to earn profits. But however we all are facing huge practical challenges and we have had to pause our actions on many occasions. But each member is determined to achieve the final target. During this process we faced many painful incidents. Some of them were very insulting and disgusting but we all are together. Some of the management scholars’ and seniors informed me not to continue with these six youths as there is not result yet and was asked to close ties, because I was the sole sponsor for this voluntary training project. But I am following Learning’s from Mongoose Jataka tales and leadership statement “Leaders must trust followers” and I was surprised to learn that these six youth leaders started taking meeting in my absence and drafted a blue print to come out victorious. Finally it was victory of Leader showing trust on followers. Now we are just waiting for right venture capitalist to come in picture that fits in our blue print for success. Come what may do not conclude anything before knowing facts from both sides and verifying it from third angle.

Can there be simple techniques to avoid problems faced by wrong Perception (Avoid killing Mongooses)?

Answer is yes. The first step is to get answers to following questions. What is your measurement unit? Can you measure

Gold with Litters scale? Compare two behaviours/ events with minimum 5 standard parameters. What is the sequence of event and interdependency order (PERT/CPM Chart? Search Internet)? What is the universal measurement unit? If you want to measure any liquid, you won't take weight measurement blocks of 1 Kg, 5kg and 10 Kg. It will be foolish to do so. To measure quantity of liquid you required Jars or vessels marked in litres, ½ Litres, 1 Litre, 2 Litres, 5 Litres, and 10 Litres etc.

Similarly, Prepare Questionnaires and give weightage to each parameter. Sort of Key result area and Performance index in Human resource performance appraisal systems.

Trust is generally from Superior to Junior, Trust is one of basic universal parameter.

Drunken / Drugged family member is not to blame, but the member who is conscious and alert is to blame. Physical visible druggist addiction is far better than invisible camouflaged addiction of exploiting people. Highest purest form of integrity. The person not in influence of any drug is considered as Leader having wisdom and person using drugs is considered as blindfold follower. It is the responsibility of open eyed leader having wisdom to remove blindfolded fellow member who is under influence of drugs. One who sees the solution is mentor and who seeks solution is disciples. Disciples are generally afraid to take initiatives; hence leaders must take charge of situation and pull disciples

out their problem. Leaders must give small assignments and small action steps for disciples to follow. Initially do it on daily basis, then on weekly, forth nightly, monthly and gradually as disciple becomes expert leave him to do it on his own.

It is an open secret everywhere in the history, when battles are won the first credit goes to the chief leader who is shouldering the entire responsibility and when the soldiers lose battles it's the Leader who is first imprisoned. If you are thriving to enjoy benefits of becoming leader and its laurels then you must also be prepared to face the brutality of leader's faith in case you lose the battle. Real leader shows courage to face it. Leaders take responsibility of almost everything happening under their wings. Remember the famous quote of leadership and management "Success has many fathers and failure is orphan". One Army is marching towards final destination and if convoy is stranded due to bad weather or vehicle failure, it means they have taken temporary halt to recover themselves, it need not be stamped as failure to achieve target. Success and winning is a state of mind, a culture of never giving up.

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The young Royal Prince Gautama Siddhartha left his royal palace in search of Truth. After six years of various austere practices, he finally attained Buddhahood through the middle path in 6th century B.C. at Buddha Gaya in India. Alongwith other class of people, there were many from royal families who followed him to experience peace, happiness and final liberation called Nibbana. Through this royal lineage and patronage, the Buddha Dhamma finally landed in Sri Lanka. This was due to the missionary zeal of Emperor Ashoka who sent his own son Arahant Mahinda to the then king Devanampiyatissa of Sri Lanka.

Apart from the royals, the loyals group consisted of bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, upasaks and upasikas coming from all classes of society. Thus this dhamma, not only in India but also in Sri Lanka flourished through the support of the Royals (i.e. kings, ministers) and the firm commitment of the faithful Loyals (i. e. bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, upasaks, upasikas). When this support and commitment of the Royals and Loyals started dwindeling, Buddhism started disappearing in its own land and neighbouring lands. Thus, we find that the then strong holds of Buddhism ie. Afganistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and India have now become foreign to Buddhism.

In this background, the Poson Poya has an important significance for recollecting the past and recommmiting ourselves for the preservation and propagation of Buddha's Dhamma. On this very Poson Poya month, the Emperor Ashoka sent his own son Arahant Mahendra as a missionary monk to Sri lanka to establish the Buddhas Dhamma in its pristine purity. From that day onwards Sri lanka has acquired a unique place in the history of Buddhism.

It is relevant to discuss here the circumstances which led to the ordination of Mahendra and Sanghamitra and which eventually inspired them to take up this historic and noble mission to Sri Lanka.

The story goes that, one day Emperor Ashoka enquired of the Arahant Moggaliputta Tissa, "Lord is one like unto me a kinsman of the Sasana of the Blessed One!". And the Thera replied, "Even a lavish giver of gifts like unto thee is only a giver of requisites, not a kinsman of the Sasana. But he who offers his son or daughter to the Sasana, he who lets his children enter the order of the Sangha, he alone is true kinsman of the Sasana". Immediately, Emperor Ashoka asked his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra who stood near, "Do you wish to enter the holy order, dear children? Ordination is prized a great gain". On feeling their father's wish, they said "Father this very day we would enter the holy order. For our ordination will be a blessing to thee and to us". So they renounced their royal state and entered the Sangha. Thus, these very son and daughter of Ashoka became the source for establishment of Buddha Dhamma in Sri Lanka.

But if we see in today's context, how many royal and well to do parents are willing to give their children to the service of Sasana? They seem to be inclined to make their own children Engineers and Doctors or some other money and status earning machines but they do not encourage or inspire them to take up a monk's or Nun's life. And on the other hand, young children are also not inclined to take up this calibrate, pious life in Buddhas Dhamma due to lack of proper inspiration and encouragement from their parents and the society.

According to history, on the full moon day of Poson in the year 308 B.C., the great and noble Arahant Mahendra of wondrous powers along with few others, rose up in the air departing from Vadissa Giri in Gwalior alighted on silakuta, the northern peak of Mihintale in Sri lanka.

On the first day, Arahant Mahendra preached the lesser discourse on the "Simile of the Elephant's footprint". At the end of the sermon, the king Devanampiya Tissa took the Three Refuges. The next day, he expounded Devadutta Sutta to a vast concourse of people. This sermon was mainly designed to the audience to desist from following the path of moral depredation which has a special significance to the present day society which seems to be inclined to neglect the spirit and practice of five precepts.

On the fourth day, he preached the Aggikhandhaopama Sutta which emphasises in the utmost unequivocal terms the imperative duty of a monk to live an exemplary life in keeping with the Vinaya rules and warns that dire consequences would overcome him if he lives a life unworthy of a monk. This discourse which was preached after king Devanampiyatissa gifted the Mahameghavena park to Sangha, has a particular bearing in the context of life of a bhikkhu in present day society. The admonition given by Buddha to the monks and which was reiterated by Arahant Mahendra on this memorable Poson should be strictly adhered to if the Buddha Sasana is to flourish in all its glory and splendour in the years to come.

In the past, the wisdom of those at the helm of Lanka made them realize that here in Buddhism was a spiritual treasure that would guide this small yet courageous nation along a righteous path for the millennia to come and so they chose this loyal country Lanka as its custodian.

Thus now on this Poson Poya let us all (the royals & loyals) who owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Triple Gem for the moral, intellectual, cultural and spiritual development of the human race, take an oath and recommmit ourselves to the preservation and propagation of Buddhism for the good and well being of all in the times to come.

On this very Jayshta Purnima day
Arahant Mahendra landed at Mihintale.

He preached the dhamma in such a way
That it got established in Sri Lanka that very day.

Thus if we can give up the Greedy way
And live our life the Charity way.

If we can give up the Hatred way
And live our life the Loving way.

If we can give up the Deluded way
And live our life the Mindful way.

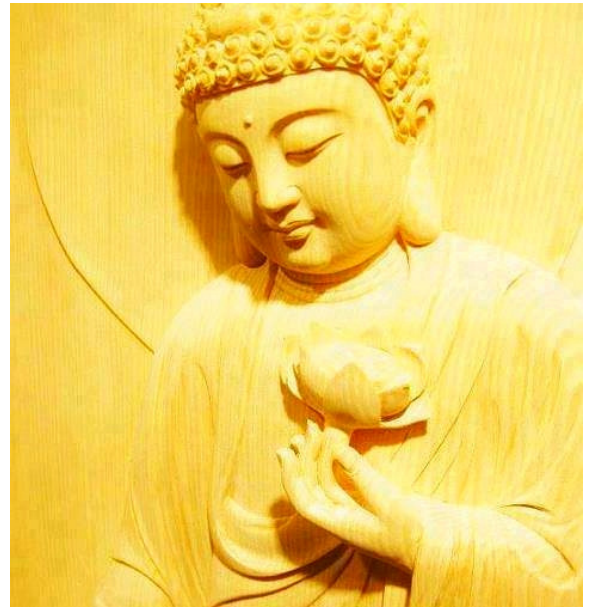
Then know that we are living our life
THE BUDDHIST WAY.

Ven. Vinayarakkhita Thero
Email: vrakkhita@gmail.com

Bhante Vinayarakkhita hails from the city of Secunderabad in Andhara Pradesh, India. He is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from Osmania University, Hyderabad. After working for few years as an Engineer he left his job to travel to Sri Lanka to get ordained as a Buddhist Monk. He received his Samanera ordination at Perakumba Pirivena, Kotte in 1998 and then Bhikkhu ordination in 1999 at the Sri Vajiragnana Dharmayatanaya, Bhikkhu Training Center, Maharagama, Sri Lanka. He returned back to India in 2004 and since then he has been teaching meditation and giving dhamma talks in India and abroad. He was the Principal of

Mahabodhi Monastic Institute, Bangalore before taking up the present new responsibility as the Chief Monk of the upcoming Lokaratna Buddha Vihara

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The self image of existence that we carry in our mind is created by the personalization of impersonal phenomena. Our existence or being is the continuation of this self image called personality. When we have removed this self image through depersonalization, we cease to exist. When we cease to exist, we cease to die. This is the deathless state. To observe the experience, as it comes and goes, without personalizing it, is to experience the deathless Nibbàna here and now!

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A single day's life of a wise person, who is aware of reality, is greater than even hundred years of life of an individual who is bereft of wisdom and insight!

Out of the many founders of Religion there are four whose religions have not only moved the world in the past but are still having a sway over the vast masses of people. They are Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and Krishna. A comparison of the personalities of these four and the poses they assumed in propagating their religions reveals certain points of contrast between the Buddha on the one hand and the rest on the other which are not without significance.

The first point which mark off Buddha from the rest is his self abnegation. All throughout the Bible, Jesus insists that he is the son of God and that those who wish to enter the kingdom of God will fail if they do not recognise him as the son of God. Mohammed went a step further. Like Jesus he also claimed that he was the messenger of God on the earth. But he further insisted that he was the last messenger. On that footing he declared that those who wanted salvation must not only accept that he was a messenger of God but also accept that he was the last messenger. Krishna went a step beyond both Jesus and Mohammed. He refused to be satisfied with merely being the son of the God or being the messenger of God he was not content even with being the last messenger of God. He was not even satisfied with calling himself a God. He claimed that he was 'Parmeshwar' or as his followers describe him 'Devadhideva', 'God of Gods'. Buddha never arrogated to himself any such status. He was born a son of man and was content to remain a common man and preached his gospel as a common man. He never claimed any supernatural origin or supernatural powers nor did he perform miracles to prove his supernatural powers. The Buddha made a clear distinction between a Margadata and a Mokshadata. Jesus, Mohammed and Krishna claimed for themselves the role of Mokshadata. The Buddha was satisfied with playing the role of a Margadata.

There is also another distinction between the four religious teachers. Both Jesus and Mohammed claimed that what they taught was infallible and beyond question. Krishna was according to his own assumption a God of Gods and therefore what he taught being a word of God uttered by God they were original and final and the question of infallibility did not even arise. The Buddha claimed no such infallibility for what he thought. In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta he told Ananda that his religion was based on reason and experience and that his followers should not accept his teaching as correct and binding merely because they emanated from him. Being based on reason and experience, they were free to modify or even to abandon any of his teachings if it was found that at a given time and in given circumstances they do not apply. He wished, his religion not to be encumbered with the dead wood of the past. He wanted that it should remain evergreen and serviceable at all times. That is why he gave liberty to his followers to chip and chop as the necessities of the case required. No other religious teacher has shown such courage. They were afraid of

permitting repair. For they felt that the liberty to repair may be used to demolish the structure they had reared. Buddha had no such fear. He was sure of his foundation. We knew that even the most violent iconoclast will not be able to destroy the core of his religion.

Such is the unique position of Buddha. What about his religion? How does it compare with those founded by his rivals?

Let us first compare Buddhism with Hinduism. In the short space available, the comparison must be limited to a few important points indeed only to two.

Hinduism is a religion which is not founded on morality. Whatever morality Hinduism has, it is not an integral part of it. It is not imbedded in religion. It is a separate force which is sustained by social necessities and not by injunction of Hindu religion. The religion of the Buddha is morality. It is imbedded religion. Buddhist religion is nothing if not morality. It is true that in Buddhism there is no God. In place of God there is morality. What God is to other religions, morality is to Buddhism.

It is very seldom recognized that he propounded a most revolutionary meaning of the word "Dharma". The Vedic meaning of the word. "Dharma" did not connote morality in any sense of the word. The Dharma, as enunciated by the Brahmins and as propounded in the Purvamimansa of Jamini, was nothing more than the performance of certain Karmas or to use terminology of the Roman religion observances. Dharma to Brahmins meant keeping up observances i.e. Yagans, Yagas and sacrifices to Gods. This was the essence of the Brahmanic Vedic Religion : It had nothing to do with morality.

The word Dharma as used by the Buddha, had nothing to do with rituals or observances. In fact, he repudiated the Yagas and Yagnas of being essence of religion. In place of Karma, he substituted morality as the essence of Dharma. Although the word Dharma was used both by the Brahmanic teachers as well as by the Buddha, the content of both is radically and fundamentally different. In fact, it might be stated that the Buddha was the first teacher in the world who made morality the essence and foundation of religion. Even Krishna as may be seen from Bhagvat Geeta was not able to extricate himself from the old conception religion being equivalent of rituals and observances. Many people seem to be lured by the doctrine of Nishkam Karma otherwise called Anasaktiyoga preached by Krishna in the Bhagvat Geeta. It's taken in Boy Scout sense to mean the doing of good without the expectation of reward. This interpretation of the Nishkam Karma is a complete misunderstanding of what is really means. The word Karma in the phrase Nishkam Karma does not mean action in the generic sense of the word Karma meaning 'deed'. It is used in it's original sense-sense in which it is used by the Brahmins and by Jamini. On the point of observances there is only one point of difference

between Jamini and Bhagvat Geeta. The observance which used to be performed by the Brahmins fall into two classes:

- (i) Nitya Karmas and
- (ii) Naimitika Karmas

The Nitya Karmas were observances which were enjoined to be performed regularly for which reasons they were called Nitya and as a matter religious duty, for which there was not to be any expectation of reward. On that account they were also called Nishkam Karmas. The other category of Karmas was called Naimitika, that is to say, they were performed whenever there was occasion, that is, whenever there was a desire to perform them and they were called Kamyas Karmas because from their performance some benefit was expected to come. What Krishna condemned in the Bhagvat Geeta was Kamaya Karmas. He did not condemn Nishkama Karmas. On the other hand he extolled them. The point to be borne in mind is even for Krishna, religion did not consist of morality. It consisted of Karmas i.e. of Yagnas and Yagas though of the Nishkama Karma category.

This is one point of contrast between Hinduism and Buddhism. The second point of contrast lies in the fact that the official gospel of Hinduism is inequality. For the doctrine of Chaturvarna is the concrete embodiment of this gospel of inequality. As against this, Buddha stood for equality. He was the greatest opponent of Chaturvarna. He not only preached against it, fought against it but did everything to uproot it. According to Hinduism, neither a Shudra nor a woman could become a teacher of religion nor could they take Sannyasa and reach God. Buddha on the other hand admitted Shudras to the Bhikshu Sangha. He also admitted women to become Bhikshnis. Why did he do so? Few people seem to realise the importance of this step. The answer is that Buddha wanted to take concrete steps to destroy the gospel of inequality. Hinduism had to make many changes in its doctrines as a result of an attack made by Buddha. It gave up Himsa. It was prepared to give up the doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas. On the point of Chaturvarna, neither side was prepared to yield. Buddha was not prepared to give up his opposition to the doctrine of Chaturvarna. That is the reason why Brahmanism has so much more hatred and antagonism against Buddhism than it has against Jainism. Hinduism had to recognise the force of the Buddha's arguments against Chaturvarna. Thus it did not by yielding to its logic but by developing a new philosophic justification for Chaturvarna. This new philosophic justification is to be found in the Bhagvat Geeta. Nobody is able to say for certain what the Bhagvat Geeta teaches. But this much is beyond question that the Bhagvat Geeta upholds the doctrine of Chaturvarna. In fact it appears that this was the main purpose for which it was written. And how does the Bhagvat Geeta justify it? Krishna says that he as God created the system of Chaturvarna and he constructed it on the basis of the theory of Guna-Karma- which means that he prescribed the status and occupation of every individual in accordance with his innate gunas (or qualities). Two things are clear. One is that this theory is new. The old theory was different. According to the old theory the foundation of Chaturvarna was the authority of the Vedas. As the Vedas were infallible so was the system of

Chaturvarna on which is rested. The attack of the Buddha on the infallibility of the Vedas had destroyed the validity of this old foundation of Chaturvarna. It is quite natural that Hinduism which was not prepared to give up Chaturvarna and which it regarded as its very soul, should attempt to find for it a better foundation which the Bhagvat Geeta proposes to do. But how good is this new justification given by Krishna in the Bhagvat Geeta? To most Hindus, it appears to be quite convincing, so that they believe it to be irrefutable. Even to many non-Hindus, it appears to be very plausible, very enticing. If the Chaturvarna had depended only on the authority of the Vedas, I am sure it would have long disappeared. It is the mischievous and false doctrine of the Bhagvat Geeta which has given this Chaturvarna-which is the parent of the caste system- apparently a perpetual lease life. The basic conception of this new doctrine is taken from the Sankhya philosophy. There is nothing original about it. The originality of Krishna lies in using it to justify Chaturvarna. But in doing so he has landed himself into many fallacies. Kapila, the author of the Sankhya system held that there is no God, that God is necessary only because matter is believed to be dead. But matter is not dead. It is active. Matter consists of three Gunas : Raj, Tamas and Satva. Prakriti appears to be dead only because the three gunas are in equilibrium. When the equilibrium is disturbed by one of the gunas becoming dominant over the other two, Prakriti becomes active. This is the sum and substance of the Sankhya philosophy. There can be no quarrel with this theory. It is perhaps true. It may therefore be granted that each individual as a form of Prakriti is made up of the three gunas. It may even be granted that among the three gunas there is a competition for dominance of one over the other. But how could it be granted that a particular guna in a particular individual which at one time- say at the time of his birth-happens to dominate his other gunas will continue to dominate them for all times, till his death? There is no ground for this assumption either in the Sankhya philosophy or in actual experience. Unfortunately, neither Hitler nor Mussolini were born when Krishna propounded his theory, Krishna would have found considerable difficulty in explaining how a signboard painter and a bricklayer could become dictators capable of dominating the world. The point of the matter is that the Prakriti of an individual is always changing because relative position of Gunas is always changing. If the gunas are ever changing in their relative position of dominance, there can be no permanent and fixed system of classification of man into varnas and no permanent and fixed assignment of occupations. The whole theory of the Bhagvat Geeta therefore falls to the ground. But as I have said the Hindus have become infatuated by its plausibility and its "good look" and have become slaves of it. The result is that Hinduism continues to uphold the Varna system with its gospel of social inequality. These are two of the evils of Hinduism from which Buddhism is free.

Some of those who believe that only the acceptance of the Gospel of Buddha can save the Hindus are filled with sorrow because they do not see much prospect of the return or revival of Buddhism in India. I do not share this pessimism.

In the matter of their attitude to their religion, Hindus today fall into two classes. There are those who hold that all religions are true including Hinduism and the leaders of other religions seem to join them in the slogan. There cannot be a thesis more false than the thesis that all religions are true. Hindus who have raised it, support the followers of other religions. There are other Hindus who have come to realize that there is something wrong with their religion. The only thing is that they are not ready to denounce it openly. This attitude is understandable. Religion is part of one's social inheritance. One's life and dignity and pride are bound up with it. It is not easy to abandon one's religion. Patriotism comes in. "My country" right or wrong. "My religion" right or wrong. Instead of abandoning it, the Hindus are finding escape in other ways. Some are consoling themselves with the thought that all religions are wrong, so why bother about religion at all. The same feeling of patriotism prevents them from openly embracing Buddhism. Such an attitude can have only one result. Hinduism will lapse and cease to be a force governing life. There will be void which will have the effect of disintegrating the Hindu Society. Hindus then will be forced to take a more positive attitude. When they do so, they can turn to nothing except Buddhism.

This is not the only ray of hope. There is hope coming from other quarters also.

There is one question which every religion must answer. What mental and moral relief does it bring to the suppressed and the downtrodden? If it does not, then it is doomed. Does Hinduism give any mental and moral relief to the millions of Backward Classes and the Scheduled Castes? It does not. Do Hindus expect these Backward Classes and the Scheduled Castes to live under Hinduism which gives them no promise of mental and moral relief? Such an expectation would be an utter futility. Hinduism is floating on a volcano. Today it appears to be extinct. But it is not. It will become active once these mighty millions have become conscious of their degradation and know that it is largely due to the social philosophy of the Hindu religion. One is reminded of the overthrow of Paganism by Christianity in the Roman Empire. When the masses realized that Paganism could give them no mental and moral relief they gave it up and adopted Christianity. What happened in Rome is sure to happen in India. The Hindu masses when they are enlightened are sure to turn to Buddhism.

So much by way of comparison between Hinduism and Buddhism. How does Buddhism stand in comparison with other non Hindu Religions? It is impossible to take each of these non-Hindu Religions in detail. All I can do is to put my conclusions in a summary form. I maintain.

- (i) That society must have either the sanction of law or the sanction of morality to hold it together. Without either society is sure to go to pieces.

In all societies, law plays a very small part. It is intended to keep the minority within the range of social discipline. The majority is left and has to be

left to sustain its social life by the postulate and sanction of morality. Religion in the sense of morality, must therefore, remain the governing principle in every society.

- (ii) That religion as defined in the first proposition must be in accord with science. Religion is bound to lose its respect and therefore becomes the subject of ridicule and thereby not merely lose its force as a governing principle of life but might in course of time disintegrate and lapse if it is not in accord with science. In other words, religion if it is to function, must be in accord with reason which is merely another name of science.
- (iii) That religion as a code of social morality must recognize the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. Unless a religion recognizes these three fundamental principles of social life, religion will be doomed.
- (iv) That religion must not sanctify or ennoble poverty. Renunciation of riches by those who have it may be a blessed state. But poverty can never be. To declare poverty to be a blessed state is to pervert religion, to perpetuate vice and crime to consent to make earth a living hell.

Which religion fulfils these requirements? In considering this question, it must be remembered that the days of the Mahatmas are gone and the world cannot have a new Religion. It will have to make its choice from those that exist. The question must therefore be confined to existing religions.

It may be that one of the existing religions satisfies one of these tests, some two. Question is-Is there any religion which satisfies all these tests? So far I know the only religion which satisfies all these tests is Buddhism. In other words, Buddhism is the only religion which the world can have. If the new world-which be it realized is very different from the old-must have a religion-and the new world needs religion far more than the old world did-then it can only be religion of the Buddha.

All this may sound very strange. This is because most of those who have written about Buddha have propagated the idea that the only thing Buddha taught was Ahimsa. This is a great mistake. It is true Buddha Taught Ahimsa. I do not want to minimize its importance. For it is a great doctrine. The world cannot be saved unless it follows it. What I wish to emphasize is that, Buddha taught many other things besides Ahimsa. He taught as part of his religion, social freedom, intellectual freedom, economic freedom and political freedom. He taught equality, equality not between man and man only but between man and woman. It would be difficult to find a religious teacher to compare with Buddha whose teaching embrace so many aspects of the social life of people and whose doctrines are so modern and whose main concern was to give salvation to man in his life on earth and not to promise it to him in heaven after he is dead !

How could this ideal of spreading Buddhism be realized? Three steps appear to be quite necessary.

First : To produce a Buddhist Bible.

Second : To make changes in the organization, aims and objects of the Bhikshu Sangha.

Third : To set up world Buddhist Mission.

The production of a Bible of Buddhism is the first and foremost need. The Buddhist literature is a vast literature. It is impossible to expect a person who wants to know the essence of Buddhism to wade through the sea of literature. The greatest advantage which the other religions have over Buddhism is that each has a gospel which every one can carry with him and read wherever he goes. It is a handy thing. Buddhism suffers for not having such a handy gospel. The Indian Dhammapada has failed to perform the function which a gospel is expected to. Every great religion has been built on faith. But faith cannot be assimilated if presented in the form of creeds and abstract dogmas. It needs something on which the imagination can fasten, some myth or epic or gospel-what is called in journalism a story. The Dhammapada is not fastened around a story. It seeks to build faith on abstract dogmas.

The proposed gospel of Buddhism should contain:

- (i) A short life of Buddha
- (ii) The Chinese Dhammapada
- (iii) Some of the important Dialogues of Buddha and
- (iv) Buddhist Ceremonies birth, initiation, marriage and death.

In preparing such a gospel, the linguistic side of it must not be neglected. It must make the language in which it is produced live. It must become an incantation instead of being read as narrative or ethical exposition. Its style must be lucid, moving and must produce a hypnotic effect. There is a world's difference between a Hindu Sanyasi and a Buddhist Bhikshu. A Hindu Sanyasi has nothing to do with the world. He is dead to the world. A Bhikshu has everything to do with the world. That being so the question arises. What was the purpose for which Buddha thought of establishing the Bhikshu Sangha ? What was the necessity for creating a separate society of Bhikshus? One purpose was to set up a society which would live up to the Buddhist ideal embodied in the principles of Buddhism and serve as a model to the laymen. Buddha knew that it was not possible for common man to realize the Buddhist ideal. But he also wanted that the common man should know what the ideal was and also wanted there should be placed before the common man a society of man who were bound to practice his ideals. That is why he created the Bhikshu Sangha and bound it down by the rules of Vinaya. But there were other purposes which he had in his mind when he thought of founding the Sangha. One such purpose was to create a body of intellectuals to give the laymen true and impartial guidance. That is the reason why he prohibited the Bhikshu from owning property. Ownership of property is one of the greatest obstacles to free thinking and application of free thought. The other purpose of Buddha in founding the

Bhikshu Sangha was to create a society the members of which would be free to do services to the people. That is why he did not want the Bhikshu to marry.

Is the Bhikshu Sangh of today living up to these ideals? The answer is emphatically in the negative. It neither guides the people nor does it serve them.

The Bhikshu Sangha in its present condition can therefore be of no use for the spread of Buddhism. In the first place there are too many Bhikshus. Of these a very large majority are merely Sadhus and Sanyasis spending their time in meditation or idleness. There is in them neither learning nor service. When the idea of service to suffering humanity comes to one's mind, every one thinks of the Ramakrishna Mission. No one thinks of the Buddhist Sangha. Who should regard services as its pious duty? The Sangha or the Mission. There can be no doubt about the answer. Yet the Sangha is a huge army of idlers. We want fewer Bhikshus and we want Bhikshus highly educated. Bhikshu Sangha must borrow some of the features of the Christian priesthood particularly the Jesus. Christianity has spread in Asia through service-educational and medical. This is possible because the Christian priest is not merely versed in religious lore but because he is also versed in Arts and Science. This was really the ideal of the Bhikshu of olden times. As is well-known, the Universities of Nalanda and Taxila were run and manned by Bhikshus. Evidently they must have been very learned men and knew that a social service was essential for the propagation of their faith. The Bhikshus of today must return to the old ideal. The Sangha as composed, cannot render this service to the laity and cannot therefore attract people to itself.

Without a Mission, Buddhism can hardly spread, as education requires to be given, religion requires to be propagated. Propagation cannot be undertaken without men and money. Who can supply these? Obviously countries where Buddhism is a living religion. It is these countries which must find the men and money at least in its initial stages. Will these? There does not seem to be much enthusiasm in these countries for the spread of Buddhism.

On the other hand, time seems quite propitious for the spread of Buddhism. There was a time when religion was part of one's own inheritance. At one time, a boy or a girl inherited the religion of his or her parent along with the property of the parent. There was no question of examining the merit and virtues of religion. Sometimes the heir did question, whether the property left by the parents was worth taking. But no heir was there to question whether the religion of his or her parents was worth having. Times seem to have changed. Many persons throughout the world have exhibited an unprecedented piece of courage with regard to inheritance of their religion. Many have, as a result of the influence of scientific enquiry, come to the conclusion that religion is an error, which ought to be given up. There are others who as a result of the Marxian teaching have come to the conclusion that religion is opium which induces the poor people to submit to the domination of the rich and should be discarded. Whatever be the causes, the fact remains that people have developed an inquiring mind in respect of

religion. And the question whether religion is at all worth having and if so which religion is worth having are questions which are uppermost in the minds of those who dare to think about this subject. Time has come. What is wanted is the will. If the countries which are Buddhist can develop the will to spread Buddhism, the task of spreading Buddhism will not be difficult. They must realize that the

duty of a Buddhist is not merely to be a good Buddhist. His duty is to spread Buddhism. They must believe that to spread Buddhism is to serve mankind.

(Reprinted for our readers. This article was first published in 1951 in the MAHA BODHI, the journal published by Maha Bodhi Society of India, Calcutta).



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buddha

The Inspiration of life

The Full Moon, which falls in this month on 22nd July, 2013, is of great importance as it commemorates the significant event that took place in India. On this very Full moon day, Buddha set in motion the wheel of Truth (Dhamma) at Isipatana, Sarnath. This discourse came to be known as Dhammachakkapavattana Sutta. It was the occasion when Buddha preached his first sermon to his five ascetic friends Kondanya, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahanama, and Assaji, precisely two months after his enlightenment. This sermon, known as Dhammachakkapavattana sutta comprises the four Noble Truths centered on the universal malady called suffering.

On this memorable day, the Buddha's Saasana (dispensation) came into existence and then spread not only in India but also through out the world. Thus, Buddhism now is not considered as an Indian religion but as a world religion, which was recognized by the United Nation too on Vesak-2000.

Buddhism is the only Indian religion to become world religion and Buddha the only Indian Guru to become Jagat Guru. Thus, this Purnima is also known as Guru Purnima.

The importance of the four Noble Truths could be gauged by the fact that Buddha himself had said: "It was through not understanding, not penetrating the four Noble Truths, that I, as well as you have wandered so long through the countless rounds of birth".(DN-16)

The Noble truth of suffering is the fact of every day life in every one's life. It may be direct or indirect and coarse or subtle. This fact of existence of suffering in every one's life forms the base for Buddha's teachings. Having experienced this truth of suffering, Buddha taught the four Noble truths of suffering namely

- 1) There is Suffering i.e. Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering, association with the unpleasant is suffering, dissociation from the pleasant is suffering, one does not get what is desired that too is suffering, in short the five aggregates affected by clinging is suffering.
- 2) There is cause for Suffering i.e. Whatever there is greed which causes becoming in the next world, consisting of passionate delight, finding pleasure in this or that, to wit: greed for sensual pleasures, greed for becoming, greed for non-becoming.
- 3) There is cessation of Suffering i.e. of that very greed itself, that extinction, which comes through complete detachment, giving up, complete abandonment, release, non-attachment.
- 4) There is path leading to the cessation of suffering i.e. The noble eight-fold path to wit: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

In Majjima Nikaya Buddha categorically states that he teaches one thing only, namely Suffering and the path to cessation of Suffering and is not interested in any philosophical or intellectual quest. Though Suffering is pain, it is used as a wet stone to sharpen one's wisdom and to face the reality accordingly. It is a wise man's saying that: -

It is easy enough to be pleasant,
when life flows like a sweet song.
But the man worthwhile,
Is the one who can smile;
when things go dead wrong.

Hence, in order to overcome suffering, one has to work patiently and persistently on the Eight-fold path, which forms the fourth Noble truth, and through gradual progress one would ultimately make end of suffering as taught by the Buddha. This Noble eight-fold path is divided into three sections as Sila, Samadhi and Panya. The malady of suffering is not confined to any one particular caste, color, region, religion and nation. It is a universal malady and hence the remedy too must be universal. Thus the path of Sila, Samadhi and Panya, which has no trace of any sectarianism, is the universal remedy for the ills of the world called suffering.

In order to get established in Sila (morality), it is necessary to have complete control over one's own mind. The mind should be fully restrained and disciplined. For this it is necessary to practice Samadhi (concentration).

Practicing only Sila without Samadhi is like standing on only one leg and straining one's self. On the other hand Samadhi without Sila is like one leg hanging in air with out support.

Again it is not enough to just concentrate one's mind. It is also necessary to develop Panya (wisdom). By this Panya, it is possible to eradicate the ingrained habit pattern of the mind that generates, multiplies and accumulates Sankharas (reactions) of Raga (greed) and Dosa (hatred) out of Moha (ignorance) . So if Sila and Samadhi are two legs on which one stands, balances and walks, then Panya is like the eye which enables us to see things as they are, thereby avoiding the dangers and leading us through the safe Noble Eight-fold path, which forms the Fourth Noble Truth of Suffering.

The teaching based on Suffering seems to be pessimistic and definitely people would like to have an optimistic teaching. But, the question is not of pessimism or optimism; it is the question of realism on which the Buddha stresses. His teachings are not CUSTOMER ORIENTED to please individuals or masses but just TRUTH ORIENTED.

In Alagaddupama Sutta (MN-22 BPS), Buddha says: "Both formerly & now what I teach is suffering & the Cessation of suffering. If others abuse, revile, scold, and harass the Tathagata for that, the Tathagata on that account feels no annoyance, bitterness, or dejection of the heart. And if others

honor, respect, revere, and venerate the Tathagata on that account feels no delight, joy, or elation of the heart. If others honour, respect, revere, and venerate the Tathagata for that, the Tathagata on that account thinks thus: They perform such services as these for the sake of what had earlier come to be fully understood". Thus this Noble Truth of suffering may seem to be pessimistic or bitter because of our wrong perception and conditioning but if one compares it with the verifiable facts of day to day life, one will find the profound Truth of it. In the same sutta, **Buddha further says: "The Dhamma well proclaimed by me thus, which is clear... free of patchwork, those who are Dhamma followers are all headed for Enlightenment & those who have sufficient faith in me, sufficient love and regards for me, are all headed for heaven"**.

Thus July full moon is festival of Truth
On this day Buddha taught the Noble Truth
He preached the Dhamma as Noble Truth
And came to be known as embodiment of Truth.

Noble truth of Suffering is no secret,
It is a truth we refuse to acknowledge.
Truth undermines the Selfness of I, My, Mine
to which we cling so desperately
and shows the impermanence of all phenomena.
Truth is not hidden from us
We are hiding from it.

To develop Buddhist cultural identity, every Buddhist must visit nearest Buddha Vihara on Sundays and Full Moon of every month and not just once in a Blue Moon.

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“I regard the Buddha’s Dhamma to be the best. No religion can be compared to it.” - Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

“It was not with an empty mind that I went to the Buddha at that early age.” The question is being asked to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar that “Why Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar inclined towards Buddhism?” Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has answered this question in the book “The Buddha and His Dhamma” preface. He says “the year I passed the English Fourth Standard Examination, the people of my community wanted to celebrate the occasion by holding a public meeting to congratulate me. The meeting was held and Dada Keluskar presided. He gave me as gift a copy of his book on the life of the Buddha. Babasaheb was greatly impressed and moved by it.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar also said that “I had a background in reading the Buddhist lore and I could always compare and contrast”. That is also why Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar proudly and confidently said “It was not with an empty mind that I went to the Buddha at that early age. This is the origin of my interest in the Buddha and his Dhamma. This conviction has grown in me after thirty-five years of close study of all religions.”

We go through the detailed preface of Buddha and his Dhamma –

Original Preface of The Buddha and His Dhamma

“A question is always asked to me, how I happen to take such a high degree of education. Another question is being asked, why I am inclined towards Buddhism. These questions are asked because I was born in the community known in India as the ‘Untouchables’. This preface is not the place for answering the first question. But this preface may be the place for answering the second question.

The direct answer to this question is that I regard the Buddha’s Dhamma to be the best. No religion can be compared to it. If a modern man who knows science must have a religion, the only religion he can have is the Religion of the Buddha. This conviction has grown in me after thirty-five years of close study of all religions.

How I was led to study Buddhism is another story. It may be interesting for the readers to know. This is how it happened.

My father was a military officer but at the same time a very religious person. He brought me up under a strict discipline. From my early age, I found certain contradictions in my father’s religious way of life. He was a Kabirpanthi though his father was Ramanandi. As such, he did not believe in Murti Puja (Idol Worship) and yet he performed Ganapati puja, of course for our sake, but I did not like it. He read the books of his Panth. At the same time he compelled me and my elder brother to read every day before going to bed a portion of Mahabharata and Ramayana to my sisters and other persons who assembled at my father’s house to hear the Katha. This went on for a long number of years.

The year I passed the English Fourth Standard Examination my community people wanted to celebrate the occasion by holding a public meeting to congratulate me. Compared to the state of education in other communities this was hardly an occasion for celebration. But it was felt by the organizers that as I was the first boy in my community to reach this stage. They thought that I had reached a great height. They went to my father to ask for his permission. My father flatly refused saying such a thing would inflate the boy. After all, he has only passed an examination and done nothing more. Those who wanted to celebrate the event were greatly disappointed. They, however, did not give way. They went to Dada Keluskar, a personal friend of my father, and asked him to intervene. He agreed. After a little argumentation, my father yielded and the meeting was held. Dada Keluskar presided. He was a literary person of his time. At the end of his address, he gave me as a gift a copy of his book on the life of the Buddha, which he had written for the Baroda Sayajirao Oriental Series. I read the book with great interest and was greatly impressed and moved by it.

I began to ask why my father did not introduce us to the Buddhist Literature. After this, I was determined to ask my father this question. One day I did. I asked my father why he insisted upon our reading the Mahabharata and Ramayana which recounted the greatness of the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, and repeated the stories of the degradation of the Shudras and the Untouchables. My father did not like the question. He merely said. “You must not ask such silly questions. You are only boy; you must do as you are told.” My father was a Roman Patriarch and exercised most extensive Patria Protests over his children. I alone could take a little liberty with his and that was because my mother had died in my childhood leaving me to the care of my aunty. So after some time, I asked again the same question. This time, my father had evidently prepared himself for a reply. He said, “The reason why I ask you to read the Mahabharata and Ramayana is this. We belong to the Untouchables and you are likely to develop an inferiority complex which is natural. The value of Mahabharata and Ramayana lies in removing this inferiority complex. See Drona and Karna. They were small men but to what heights they rose? Look at Valmiki . He was a koli. But he became the author of Ramayana. It is for removing this inferiority complex that I ask you to read the Mahabharata and Ramayana.” I could see that there was some force in my father’s argument. But I was not satisfied. I told my father that I did not like any of the figures in Mahabharata. I said, “I do not like Bhishma, and Drona nor Krishna. Bhishma and Drona were hypocrites. They said one thing and did quite the opposite. Krishna believed in fraud. His life is nothing but a series of frauds. Equal dislike I have for Rama. Examine his conduct in the Sarupnakha episode, in the Vali Sugriva episode and his

bestly behaviour towards Sita.” My father was silent and made no reply. He knew that there was a revolt.

This is how I turned to the Buddha with the help of the book given to me by Dada Keluskar. It was not with an empty mind that I went to the Buddha at that early age. I had a background and in reading the Buddhist Lore I could always compare and contrast. This is the origin of my interest in the Buddha and his Dhamma .

The urge to write this book has a different origin. In 1951, the Editor of the Mahabodhi Society’s Journal of Calcutta asked me to write an article for the Vaishak Number. In that article, I argued that the Buddha’s Religion was the only religion which a society awakened by science could accept and without which it would perish. I also pointed out that, for the modern world, Buddhism was the only religion which it must have to save itself. That Buddhism makes slow advance is due to the fact that its literature is so vast that no one can read the whole of it. That it has no such thing as a Bible, as the Christians have, is its greatest handicap. On the publication of this article I received many calls written and oral to write such a book. It is in response to these calls that I have undertaken the task.

To disarm all criticism I would like to make it clear that I claim no originality for the book. It is a compilation and assembly plant. The material has been gathered from various books. I would particularly like to mention “Ashavaghosha’s Buddhadhavita” whose poetry no one can excel. In the narrative of certain events, I have borrowed his language.

The only originality that I can claim in the order of presentation of the topics in which I have tried to introduce simplicity and clarity. There are certain matters which give headache to the student of Buddhism; I have dealt with them in the introduction.

It remains for me to express my gratitude to those who have been helpful to me. I am very grateful to Mr. Nanak Chand Rattu of village Sakrulli and Mr. Prakash Chand of village Nangal Khurd in the district of Hoshiarpur (Punjab) for the burden they have taken upon themselves to type out the manuscript. They have done it several times. Shri Nanak Chand Rattu took special pains and put in very hard labour in accomplishing this great task. He did the whole work of typing, etc. very willingly and without caring for his health and any sort of remuneration. Both Mr. Nanak Chand Rattu and Mr. Prakash Chand did their job as a token of their greatest love and affection towards me. Their labour can hardly be repaid. I am very much grateful to them.

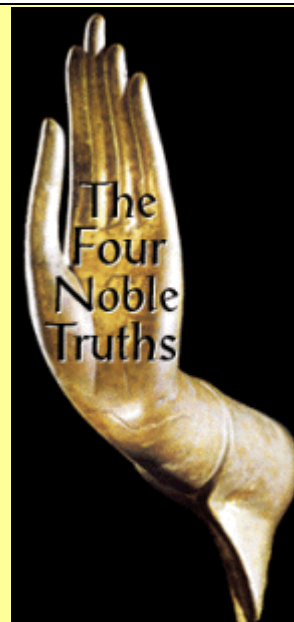
When I took up the task of composing the book, I was ill and am still ill. During these five years there were many ups and downs in my health. At some stages, my condition had become so critical that doctors talked of me as a dying flame. The successful rekindling of this dying flame is due to the medical skill of my wife and Dr. Malvankar, the Physician who has been attending me. I am immensely grateful to them. They alone have helped me to complete the work. I am also thankful to Mr. M. B. Chitnis, who took special interest in correcting proof and to go through the whole book.

I may mention that this is one of the three books which will form a set for the proper understanding of Buddhism. The other two books are:-

- (i) Buddha and Karl Marx, and
- (ii) Revolution and counter revolution in ancient India.

They are written out in parts. I hope to publish them soon.” -
B. R. Ambedkar.

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**There
is suffering.**

**Suffering has
an origin.**

**Suffering can
cease.**

**There is a path
out of suffering.**

14th October, 1956, is the historic day in the life of the Untouchables in India, when Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism along with his more than 5 lakh followers on the sacred Deeksha Bhoomi of Nagpur (Maharashtra), ancient capital of *Nag Lokas* (Nag People) - the original Buddhists. This was one of the greatest events in the socio-religious history of India. It was the greatest religious revolution which India had witnessed in modern times. This was also the greatest blow to the sovereignty of Hindu religion. It was a challenge to the stalwarts of Hindu way of life, as it indicated the discarding and rejection of the discriminatory social system. It was also an opportunity to the protagonists of Hinduism to introspect as to why those 5 lakh untouchables or even more people were compelled to discard their religion. Why did Dr. Ambedkar resort to such an extreme step? Did it not shake tremendously the foundations of Hindu religion?

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar did not resort to that extreme step suddenly, unthinkingly, under any pressure, terror or avarice. It was a very careful, well thought-out action and with a view to giving vent to his long-nourishing protest against the Hinduism and in-human Hindu Social Order. Dr. Ambedkar very clearly said, "I feel I should not consent to live in a society which cherished wrong ideals or a society which having right ideals will not consent to bring its social life in conformity with those ideals. If I am disgusted with Hindus and Hinduism, it is because I am convinced that they cherish wrong ideals and live a wrong social life. My quarrel with Hindus and Hinduism is not over the imperfections of their social conduct. It is much more fundamental. It is over their ideal."

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was well aware that the *Varnashram* social system was responsible for all the ills of the untouchables. The religion in which he was born did not give him equal treatment as it gave to other high caste people. He, therefore, took no time to realize that. "The root of the un-touchability is the caste system; the root of the caste system is religion attached to *varna* and *ashram*; and the root of *Varnashram* is Brahminical religion; and the root of Brahminical religion is authoritarianism or political power".

"Ultimately", Dr. D. R. Jatav opined, "in order to abolish caste and untouchability, Dr. Ambedkar suggested to kill the monster of *Varnaism* which was nothing but Brahminism incarnate. The ideology of Brahminism was poisonous which had petrified the whole of Hindu society, and at present, it has polluted the entire Indian political system, and created economic crisis, along with imbalance in human relations in the social life of the country."

Dr. Ambedkar at his own way, took appropriate measures to reform the Hindu religion and Hindu society. He had made an announcement in 1935 at Yeola Mahar Conference that

he would discard the Hindu religion and embrace some other religion to get relieved of the inhuman treatment, untouchability and discriminatory socio-religious system. He said, "I tell you, religion is for man and not man for religion. If you want to organise, consolidate and be successful in this world, change this religion. The religion that does not recognize you as human-beings, or give you water to drink, or allow you enter the temples is not worthy to be called a religion. The religion that forbids you to receive education and comes in the way of your material advancement is not worthy of the appellation 'religion'. The religion that does not teach its followers to show humanity in dealing with its co-religionists is nothing but display of force. The religion that asks its adherents to suffer the touch of animals but not the touch of human-beings is not religion but a mockery. That religion, which precludes some classes from education, forbids them to accumulate wealth and to bear arms, is not religion but a mockery. The religion that compels the ignorant and the poor to be poor is not religion but visitation". However, he was in agreement with Burke, whom the latter said, "True religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true civil Governments rest."

Dr. Ambedkar was a very pious and religious man. He imbibed this very quality of his character from his father, who was also very religious person. He read Ramayan, Mahabharat, Geeta and other religious books at a very young age under the guidance of his father. But he was not a blind follower of religion. Simultaneously, he was not irreligious also. He held that religion was a part of one's social life or inheritance; one's life and dignity and pride were bound up with it. He believed in the social force of religion; and that force laid in religion being a unified system of beliefs and practices. "Religion is not opium as is held by some," said he, "what good things I have in me or whatever have been the benefits of my education to society, I owe them to the religious feelings in me. I want religion but I do not want hypocrisy in the name of religion.....Some people think that religion is not essential to the society. I do not hold this view. I consider the foundations of religion to be essential to life and practices of society..... man could not live by bread alone. Religion created hope in human beings and drive them to useful and beautiful activities."

When Dr. Ambedkar decided and declared to discard Hindu religion and embrace some other religion, there were all-around uproars against the move from all corners and particularly from orthodox Hindus. It was tremendous jolt to the foundations of Hindu religion. Why the Orthodox Hindus and their leaders, including apex leaders Mahatma Gandhi, V. D. Savarkar and Dr. Moonje were afraid of Ambedkar's proposed conversion? The reason being that, "Ambedkar, the historian, gave a rude shock to the Hindu society, because he knew that conversion of Hindus to other faiths had convulsed Hindustan. It was the converted Hindus who had fought in the past for establishing Muslim suzerainty over the land..... Jinnah told Louis Fischer that seventy-

five percent of the Indian Muslims were former Hindus converted to Islam by Mohammedans, and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru improved upon this and put the figure, perhaps with secular pride, at ninety-five percent. It can be seen, therefore, why Ambedkar's declaration was a thunderbolt to the sensible Hindu leaders who realised that the Hindus were losing national strength through their suicidal apathy and inhuman attitude to the untouchable Hindus".

Despite very harsh, inhuman and poisonous attitude of caste Hindus towards the untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar never lost the balance of mind. He was a true nationalist and patriot of a sterling worth. He never thought of damaging or dividing this great country, though verbally he argued with Gandhiji asking him ".....How can I call this land (India) my own homeland and this religion (Hindu religion) my own wherein we are treated worse than cats and dogs, wherein we cannot get water to drink?" When some people asked him what advantages they would gain by changing their religion, his answer was, "what will India gain by Swaraj (independence)? Just as Swaraj (independence) is necessary for India, so also is change of religion necessary for the Untouchables. The underlying motive in both the movements is the desire for freedom".

Dr. Ambedkar could have done a great damage and destroyed the geography of this country, had he nourished the motive of revenge against the Hindu religion or caste Hindus. But he was not. In this context what he observed is very-very important. "What the consequences of conversion will be to the country as a whole, is well worth bearing in mind. Conversion to Islam or Christianity will denationalize the Depressed Classes. If they go over to Islam, the number of Muslims would be doubled; and the danger of Muslim domination also becomes real. If go over to Christianity, the numerical strength of the Christians becomes Five to Six Crores. It will help to strengthen the hold of Britain on this country".

The people of this country and particularly the caste Hindus must be grateful to Dr. Ambedkar that he saved this country from being bulkanised further after partition for Pakistan and his commitment and patriotism did not allow the Britishers to continue their hold over the country like South Africa where the rule of Ian Smith (then Prime Minister of South Africa & white leader practicing apartheid) and Dr. Verwoerd (1958) had made the life of native South Africans very very miserable and unbearable. And, therefore, he said to Gandhiji, the supreme leader of the caste-Hindus and custodian of the Hinduism that, "If in my endeavour to secure human rights for my people, who have been trampled upon in this country for ages, I do disservice to this country, it would not be a sin; and if any harm does not come to this country through my action, it may be due to my conscience. Owing to the promptings of my conscience I have been striving to win human rights for my people without meaning or doing any harm to this countryI will choose only the least harmful way for the country. And that is the greatest benefit I am conferring on the country by embracing Buddhism; for Buddhism is a part and parcel of Bhartiya

culture. I have taken care that my conversion will not harm the tradition of the culture and history of this land."

Dr. Ambedkar could have done the great harm to the socio political fabric of this country, had he embraced Islam or Christianity. "But Dr. Ambedkar, as a constitutionalist, a champion of peaceful change, never visualized a bloody revolution in India by plunging the Untouchables into a grim fight against either the Conservative Hindus or the Capitalists. The foremost question during pre-independence era was how to awaken these neglected people and make them realise their legitimate rights which were hitherto denied to them. It was Dr. Ambedkar alone who awakened the Untouchables from their centuries old slumber for demanding the human rights as independently as they could."

Why did Dr. Ambedkar embrace Buddhism and not any other religion? Some Petro-dollar intellectuals, earning their bread and butter with their pro-Muslim stand, once tried to defame Dr. Ambedkar by underrating his decision of embracing Buddhism as under the influence of Savarkar, Dr. Moonjhe and Mahatma Gandhi. I feel pity for those intellectuals whose wisdom, it seems, has been mortgaged to their self-interest and hence they could not understand that an intellectual of Dr. Ambedkar's stature could have come under the influence of his opponents. According to him, 'Buddha liberated man from the domination of priests, from the idea of institutionalised mediation between man and God, and from the spiritual and liturgical dogmatism of priesthood. By rejecting caste system, the Buddha became the greatest social reformer of his age. His teachings were directed to all men and not to a given caste or group. He opposed the bloody sacrifice of animals which was characteristic of Brahmanism. It was the liberalism and humanism of Buddhism whose influence went far beyond the sphere of religion and philosophy that contributed to the disruption of the Vedic religious and social pattern and ushered in a classless society..... Hinduism believes in God. Buddhism has no god. Hinduism believed in soul. According to Buddhism there is no soul. Hinduism believes in Chaturvarnya and caste system. Buddhism has no place for caste system and Chaturvarnya..... Buddhism gives these principles in combination which no other religion does. Buddhism teaches *Prajnya* (understanding as against superstition and supernaturalism), *Karuna* (Love) and *Samta* (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life. Neither god nor soul can save the society.....Buddhism is based on reason. There is an element of flexibility inherent in it which is not to be found in any other religion."

S. G. Barve in his Book - *Freedom and Organization* (1967) while analyzing and assessing the contribution of Dr. Ambedkar in the socio-political system of the country, observed that, "Dr. Ambedkar had succeeded in raising his caste fellows from the dust to the dignity of an equal citizenship. Before he came, they were prostrate, degraded and utterly demoralized. When he left them, they were standing up and fighting back lustily for their rights to social equality

which indeed the law and the constitution had bestowed on them..... Today the Dalits are politically as highly conscious and as well organized as any other community and as a political force in the country; they are sedulously courted and cultivated. This elevation of 8 Crores of Dalits from the state of near slavery to manhood is in itself a glorious chapter in the history of human freedom”.

W. N. Kuber, a leftist intellectual and critic of Dr. Ambedkar, had also to accept and confirm that Dr. Ambedkar was a champion of a revolution to be brought about by dynamics of public opinion, through a change in the laws of the land. He was not a utopian, but a realist?

Dr. Ambedkar made the national issue of untouchables international through his very strong pleadings in the Round Table Conferences and through his writings and speeches from international platforms. He was of the view that unless this issue is brought and publicized on the international fora, the caste Hindus would not and also could not have been compelled to accept the changing status and existence of the untouchables in India's emerging socio-political scenario vis-a-vis independence for India. Therefore, he had very correctly said that, “for the ills which the untouchables are suffering; if they are not as much advertised as those of the Jews, are not less real. Nor are the means and the methods of suppression used by the Hindus against untouchables less effective because they are less bloody than the ways which the Nazis have adopted against the Jews. The Anti-Semitism of the Nazis against the Jews is in no way different in ideology and in effect from the *Sanatanism* of the Hindus against the untouchables”. And he did it. Not once but many times. It was the outcome of his strenuous efforts that the world could know the severity of the oppression, exploitation and discrimination of the untouchables under the Brahminical Hindu Social Order.

As it would be observed from the foregoing paragraphs, Dr. Ambedkar was the complete answer to the Hinduism, while the views of Mahatma Gandhi on most of the subjects and topics did not stand to the test of time. As such Dr. Ambedkar alone could be a symbol of global inspiration for those who really desire and decide to bring about a peaceful revolution. It, therefore, becomes the moral duty of the followers of Dr. Ambedkar to carry his message to all the nook and corners of the world. The ruling Brahminical classes of India, supported and financed by the capitalists of the country, in collusion with the world imperialist - capitalists and exploiters, would never allow struggling societies/groups/communities world over to have access to the views and ideology of Dr. Ambedkar, so that they should not revolt against the oppressive systems prevailing in their respective nations.

The French Revolution of 1789 giving the message of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity could not be blacked-out by the opposition forces. The Russian Revolution of 1917 under the Communists could not also be stopped by the hurdles put in the way by the capitalists of West for nearly more than 75 years. The social apartheid of South Africa is on the way to wither away after the governance of the country by native majority. Burakumins of Japan are still hopeful to put an end to the discriminatory system under which they are struggling today. There are still many more societies struggling for self-respect and self-existence and dignified life, for them Dr. Ambedkar alone could become the ray of hope and inspiration.

(This article is one part of the book - Dr. Ambedkar: A Symbol of Global Socio-Political Revolution, written by Adv. Ram Khobragade)



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Today two and a half millennia after the birth of Mahatma Gautam Buddha, when we celebrate his Purnima, what strikes us most forcefully is the fact that while on one hand there is a great emphasis to pay obeisance to him, on the other hand, we realize that the noble ideas which he put forward then are still very relevant and necessary even today. Not only that, one is also pained to see that while the number of religious sects grew in his name, his mission of social justice for all, remains far from attained in his own land of birth.

Gautam Buddha, Siddharth was born in 536 B.C. and at the age of 29 left his home and hearth to find the solution to the misery of the society. After wandering for six years, he got enlightenment at the age of 35 under a pipal tree in Bodh Gaya, after which he spent all his life preaching the wisdom of social justice to the fellow beings.

His doctrine came in the backdrop of massive social changes. This was the time when collapse of clans, tribal ties and customs increased the class oppression. Large slave owning states were coming into being at that time. The central part of his teaching was that man, through his own efforts, without the mediators, could seek the attainment of nirvana. In changing social dynamics of the first millennium BC, Buddhism was amongst the major Shramanic traditions, which challenged the hegemony of Brahminic tradition. Like other Shramanic traditions, it refused to accept the authority of Vedas and Brahmins. Brahminism was the ideology, which supported the status quo of social hierarchy. In contrast to this, Buddha put forward the doctrine of 'impermanence', the idea of constant change in social production and social relations. In contrast to the blind faith, he emphasized the role of reason and individual effort in search for liberation. It is interesting to note here that, while the Brahminic precepts excluded Shudras and woman from the knowledge and used the exclusive elite language, Sanskrit, Buddha opened his path for all and preached in Pali and Prakrit, the language of the average people. He opened up his Sanghas to all the castes and to both the genders. He focused his attention to the worldly problems rather than getting dragged in the debates of soul and Brahma.

His Ashtangika Marg, eight fold path for elimination of human misery comprised of right observation, right determination, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right exercise, right memory and right meditation.

This simple message, away from the elite centric Brahminical discourses, appealed to the people in large numbers. It showed a path of liberation to the low castes from the upper castes and also to women for a better status. One of the remarkable aspects of Buddhist teaching is the emphasis on democratic norms. Collective community decisions were projected as the guarantee for the survival of the community and interests of all the members of community. Democratic norms, social justice and gender equality saw their emergence in the teachings of Buddha.

The interaction between Brahmanism and Buddhism changed and influenced each other. To begin with, the Brahminical rituals changed and adopted the principle of non-violence towards cattle. On the other side, the Buddhist Sanghas started getting corrupted and influenced by some of the Brahminical values of hierarchy and idol worship. They also started receiving rich-corrupting offerings from the affluent in society.

The conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism went on at various levels. Shankar forcefully brought back the philosophy of status quo, upholding the eternal and infallible nature of Vedas, which according to him is the only source of knowledge. It recognized the impersonal deity of Brahma as real, dismissing the whole world of phenomenon as unreal. Accordingly, as only upper caste males could have the access to Vedas, so path of liberation was open only to upper caste males. At political level, kings like Pushyamitra Shunga and Mihirakul persecuted Buddhists in large number. Also as a message of humiliation to Buddhist teachings and Buddhism, Hindu king Shashank of Gauda cut off the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya. The inner degeneration of Buddhist Sanghas and Brahminical counter-reaction practically wiped out Buddhism from the Indian soil, while it survived in different countries. The remaining job of destroying monasteries etc. was completed by the Turkish invaders who were lured by their wealth. Islam being against the idol worship gave these vandals the ideological cover for their evil acts.

It was during the freedom struggle and the accompanying secularization process, that Dr. Ambedkar and Dalits as a whole articulated their experience of oppressive character of prevalent Hinduism, i.e. Brahminical Hinduism. Dr. Ambedkar went on to say after exhausting his patience that "I was born a Hindu, I had no choice about that, but I will not die a Hindu" in 1935 and after a deep study of Buddhism he decided to embrace this religion in 1956 along with his followers. He also saw the Indian History as Revolution (Buddhist phase) and counter-revolution (the Brahminical reaction-Shankar, Pushyamitra Shung etc.) Since then, large mass of Dalits and other subalterns have been looking forward to Buddhism as a possible route to salvation from the miseries of this world, which are aplenty for them.

With the resurgence of communal politics clothed in the attire of Hindutva (Brahminical Hinduism based religious Nationalism, akin to Islamism, the most overt manifestation of which is Taliban), one is getting a feeling of roll back on the processes, which stood for Social Justice. The heightened importance being given to Sanskrit, the introduction of courses in astrology and training of priests in Brahminic rituals in Universities, are a newer counter-revolution to the secularization process, which has been going on in the country through the ideological and political activities of the likes of Jotiba Phule, Ambedkar, Gandhi, and Communists.

The current strategy of this Neo-Brahminical counter-reaction is quite diverse. On one hand, it wants to co-opt Buddha as the one who was a mere vehicle of 'traditional Hindu values'. Hindutva ideologues at deep level recognize the mass appeal of Buddhist teachings having a liberatory potential for Shudras and women, so they are cleverly sidetracking the social attention from his teachings by

asserting that Buddha said nothing new. Hope, this Buddha Purnima, the dalit politics will wake up to the threats to the teachings of Buddha from those who are out to convert him in to a mere ninth avatar of Vishnu.







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The recent incident of British Parliament's willingness to enact the law against Caste based discrimination is a pioneering step in the history of battle against caste discrimination. To outlaw the discrimination from the society apart from India; among its diaspora. When the news flashed about British Government's willingness to pass the Equality Act outlawing Caste discrimination, all the anti-caste International lobbying agencies and Dalit activism took a centre stage. Academics, media, activists and political agents started to intervene with the vulnerable issue of caste as one of the heinous crimes that has been in existence not only in India but has travelled overseas among the diaspora. The politics surrounding the caste discrimination is not new to the Indian and as well as the British parliamentary and monarchy. In British Parliament, the House tabled, debated and amended the Bill for three times in a month's time span. Initially, in March the bill was favoured by the Lords by a majority of 103 to include caste as a factor in the Equality Act. Later in the month of April, the bill was re-introduced by the Lord Harries of Pentregarth, who debated on the issue. The motion was agreed and disagreed, resulting in the denial of the house to consider caste discrimination under the Equality Act by 304 to 243. Immediately, in the following week, there was another reconsideration on the issue of caste discrimination, and the House of Lords had to vote twice on the same bill for protecting UK Dalits under the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill Amendment 37 pertaining to the Equality Act, 2010 Sec 9 (1) "(d)" to add caste as a factor of discrimination. Finally, on 23rd April, 2013 the House re-tabled this bill and UK Parliament passed the Act without voting on it, since there was a cross-party consensus. The shift in the turn of politics in a month's time, and the re-meeting of Lords in a week's time, gives a chance to look into the high level of diplomacy and lobbying by the civil societies, and action groups working internationally. This issue becomes important because the Hon. Parliament of UK has sought to seek referendum on the issue that was until yesterday considered simply a matter of Indian concern. However, this article does not seek to understand the political lobbying of activists and civil societies in UK but to overall look into the history of International lobbying of caste as a matter of discrimination on various International platforms. This piece will provide a general overview of the International lobbying of Dalit issues.

Historically, the first lobbying against caste discrimination on the International plane took place during the British colonial rule. Academics in India are obsessed with the colonial subjugation of making a colonised history; however, some authors like Fredrick Cooper draw a line between the development of state and colonialism. The era of colonialism, for the present day third world countries is an important factor to see itself on the international scenario. Hence, the colonial era of India captures the attention of modern historians to work on the line of socio-political development of the country. Therefore, the era of colonial administration will be considered as a first step of

International lobbying against Caste practices in India. The first lobbying was recorded during late nineteenth century when the Duke and Duchess of Connaught visited India on 02nd March, 1888. Jotirao Phule, a social activists from the gardener caste and his associate friend Hari Raoji Chiplunkar arranged a banquet in the Honour of the Duke of Connaught, who was also the grandson of Queen Victoria. Phule dressed as a peasant with rags and torn clothes, appeared in front of the Royalty. This was a mere shock to the organisers and the elites that were present in the diamond carved dress. Jotirao pleaded the reality of the region and warned the gathering that the representation of the riches is a mere farce and far away from the reality. He requested the Prince, if he was really interested in finding out the actual condition of the Indian subjects of Her Majesty Queen of England, then he should pay a visit to the areas in cities and villages occupied by the untouchables. The first demonstration against caste discrimination on International plane was pioneered by Jotirao Phule. Prior to that, Jotirao Phule in the year 1882 presented a memorandum to the Chairman of the Education Commission, Sir William Hunter which addressed the issues of primary education to the women, and children following suggestions for the education of children coming from deprived community.

Taking on from the literary history, there was another figure who was inspired by the activism of Phule, which helped him to manage the theoretical bonds of international activism. Dr Ambedkar, a western educated scholar, during his study at Columbia University in 1916, read his paper titled *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development* in a seminar conducted by the anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser¹. This paper examines the genesis of caste and complexity of the subject. Referring to the previous works on caste, Dr. Ambedkar analysed the development of caste system in modern India providing peculiar observations. This act of him can be considered as the second International lobbying on caste issues.

Moving further, Dr Ambedkar during his stay in UK and elsewhere in Europe intended to march the issue of caste with social approaches if not via his Academic thesis. Dr Ambedkar later is considered as the pioneering torch for International lobbying in the newly formed League of Nations, which later came to be known as the United Nations Organisations. W.E.B. DuBois the first Harvard Black Doctorate Scholar of America was petitioning the issue of Blacks (the Negroes) in the UNO through his organisation National Negro of Congress against Race discrimination. Dr Ambedkar sought to address the issue of Caste as a matter of serious discrimination when the 'Race' factor was being raised for the first time in the UN. The lobbying of the latter on the international foray was such a success that it remains a matter of high concern in present day politics. There are evidences of communication between

Dr. Ambedkar and DuBois, Dr. Ambedkar wrote to DuBois somewhere during the 1945,

“Dear Prof. Dubois,

Although I have not met you personally, I know you by name as everyone does who is working in the cause [sic] of securing liberty to the oppressed people. I belong to the Untouchables of India and perhaps you might have heard my name. I have been a student of the Negro problem and have read your writings throughout. There is so much similarity between the position of the Untouchables in India and of the position of the Negroes in America that the study of the latter is not only natural but necessary.

I was very much interested to read that the Negroes of America have filed a petition to the U.N.O. The Untouchables of India are also thinking of following suit. Will you be so good as to secure for me two or three copies of this representation by the Negroes and send them to my address. I need hardly say how very grateful I shall be for your troubles in this behalf.”

In reply to this, Du Bois replied to Ambedkar expressing his sympathy towards the fellow Untouchables of India and assured the presentation of the Untouchable's rights by the *National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People*

Du Bois's response, dated 31 July 1946:

“My dear Mr. Ambedkar,

I have your letter concerning the case of the Negroes of America and the Untouchables in India before the United Nations. As you say a small organization of American Negroes, the National Negro Congress has already made a statement which I am enclosing. I think, however, that a much more comprehensive statement well documented will eventually be laid before the United Nations by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. If this is done I shall be glad to send you a copy.

I have often heard of your name and work and of course have every sympathy with the Untouchables of India. I shall be glad to be of any service I can render if possible in the future.”

The struggle of Negroes and Untouchables was directed by two human rights campaigners of North and Southern part of the world. However, furthermore another celebrated intellectual C. Vann Woodward wrote on the oppression of blacks in America through his book *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1957). In his autobiographical accounts, Woodward claims, there were two main motivations for him to write that book, the first was burgeoning civil rights movement and second was Ambedkar. In his biography, he explained the experiences with Ambedkar when he visited New Delhi where Ambedkar hosted him, and explained the caste system drawing a parallel line with Black Americans and Untouchable Indians². George S. Schuyler, another important figure in the black intellectual history underscored the situation of Untouchables in India. He drew the analogy between blacks and the Indian untouchables, “who were, like blacks, segregated, denied access to education and

transportation, turned away from religious temples, and economically oppressed³.” These incidents refer to the International lobbying of caste by foreign actors during the post-independence era.

Back in India, Dr Ambedkar presented the issues of caste in front of the British Delegation, Simon Commission, Round Table Conference and to the Parliamentary authorities in Britain (to Winston Churchill). After Dr. Ambedkar another prominent name comes into limelight, which grew up under the shadow of Ambedkarism, the parliamentarian from Deccan, B. Shyam Sunder. A Dalit himself, he represented the delegation of Nizam of Hyderabad to the United Nations Security Council in the year 1948. He was the first post-independent leader who presented the real picture of Dalits of India. His further trip to the Europe advocating caste issues was cancelled after the Government of India's Operation Polo in the year 1948 which forced him to return back to India.

Apart from the native struggle against Caste oppression in India, the Indian diaspora in USA and UK lobbied consistently on the issue of caste discrimination. Existence of Ambedkarite organisations in UK played a significant role in raising the issues of caste. First Ambedkarite organisation in UK was founded in 1969 which was called, *Bheem Association*, who congregated to celebrate the thoughts and ideas of Ambedkar and other contemporaries that fought against the caste practices in India. This organisation was formed by the Dalits diaspora from Bedford in UK. To align its interests with fellow contemporaries and connect with other mainstream Ambedkarite movements, it was renamed to *Dr Ambedkar Mission, Society Bedford*. This organisation hosted anti-caste activists from India. Mr Bhagwan Das, one of the scholar-activists, was hosted by Bedford group who came to brief the 36th Session of the United Nations Commission on Prevention of Discrimination of Minorities held at Geneva in August 1983. After presenting his views to the conference, he was later ostracised by the fellow Hindu, Muslim, Sikh representatives on his stand against caste discrimination. It went to an extent that he was excluded from attending the event of World Conference of Religion and Peace in Nairobi. High Commissioner of India to Kenya invited every Indian delegation to his residence for dinner but excluded Bhagwan Das. This moment, invited foreign civil societies attention and since then Mr. Bhagwan Das was invited to discuss on various forums about caste discrimination. Bhagwan Das also co-founded World Conference of Religion and Peace in Kyoto, Japan in 1970 which provided a platform to him and other Ambedkarite organisations in North America to fight against Caste discrimination.

Later organisation like Federation of Buddhist and Ambedkarite Organisations UK in 1988 organised a collaborative group of like-minded anti-caste groups to mark the centenary celebrations of Ambedkar, marketing Ambedkar in UK and USA. The events at the Royal Commonwealth Society and the House of Commons attracted International attention. During the same year under the direction of Bhagwan Das, International Ambedkar Institute, UK was formed to take Ambedkar's thoughts in

the premier Institutes in UK and encourage some related research on the topic of caste issues. Kenneth Griffiths was elected Chairman who later made documentary films on Dr. Ambedkar.

In the year 1991 in North America, a group of diaspora united to form the first anti-caste Ambedkarite group intended to lobby the United Nations and international agencies on the issues of caste violence in India. *Ambedkar Centre for Justice and Peace* lead by dedicated activists participated in various conferences and seminars organised by the United Nations and its organs. This organisation claims to have pioneered the study on the caste system, untouchability and descent based discrimination in the United Nations in the year 1999. They have been participating in various United Nation Conferences and Committees like World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, 1993, World Summit on Social Development at Copenhagen, 1995, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), 1996, Committee on Human Rights, 1997, Working Group of Indigenous population, Committee on Children Rights, and World Conference on Racism.

Later in the year 1992, Bhagwan Das started partnering with other International lobbying organisations like World Council of Churches and the Ambedkarite organisations in UK. He formed Dalit Solidarity Programme in 1992 whose one of the primary objectives was to internationalise the Dalit issue for total liberation of the marginalized sections across the world. On the auspices of this programme, Bhagwan Das presented the situation of caste atrocities in India. He participated in various events in UK, most notably the lecture on caste discrimination organised by the University of Edinburgh. Following the years of lobbying, Bhagwan Das and the fellow activists in UK and USA carried the baton against caste discrimination on various International events. In 1998 he and other activists led to the formation of International Dalit Convention which aimed to bring Dalit leaders from all over the world to fight against caste imperatives. Important event that strike the United Nations history against caste discrimination is in 2001 at the Durban Conference against Racism. Anti-caste activists around the world participated in this historic event to present their testimony and lobbied heavily on India's position to exclude caste as a matter of race. Indian government's unwillingness which was run by the Congress Party sent a delegation headed by Ms. Meera Kumari, now speaker of the House, a Dalit herself testified the existing of strong laws to protect Dalits and the Constitutional provisions against caste discrimination. At the end, this event united all the like-minded organisations in one thread to oppose against caste discrimination.

In the modern era, Dalit Solidarity Networks spread all over the Europe, headquartered in Denmark, lobbied on the issue of caste discrimination at the UN's recently formed Human Rights Council in 2006. Ambedkarite organisations that emerged with the past experiences started identifying the modern issues of caste affecting the Diasporas. And in the year 2003, the activities of discrimination by fellow Hindu and Sikh communities was raised by the Dalit communities,

this led to the formation of an alliance to *cast out caste discrimination*. The outcome of lobbying in the early years of twenty-first century provided vital grounds for emerging anti-caste groups in UK, Europe and USA to partner with other international lobbying agencies. Minority rights group, Human Rights Watch, Asian Commission for Human Rights, Lutheran World Federation, Anti-slavery International, Asian Centre for Human Rights, FORUM-ASIA, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, provided important support to raise the voice against caste discrimination but had limited stay on the caste as their main agenda. Continuing with the foreign alliance, diaspora lobbying groups situated in the overseas gathered the information of like minded groups and the NGOs like Liberation, a UK based human rights group chaired by Jeremy Corbyn, MP and various forums of Asian Human Rights partnered with other home based groups such as NACDOR, NCDHR. These internationally acclaimed groups offered their platform to raise the issue of caste on various agendas, sometimes on the discussion panel on Violence against Women, or Minority Rights, or Indigenous people's rights or against Racism. But there was no continuous *UN Watch* like lobbying on the important stage of UN Human Rights Council which has loosened the grip of international lobbying. Mentioning of UN Watch, a NGO based in Geneva, is important, since this organisation works to lobby pro-Israel issues on every UN mandated agendas, discussion and expert's report concerning Israel and the Middle East. It has demonstrated itself to attract the media attention and other international agencies attention within 20 short years of its operations in the UN.

On the other hand, organisations dealing with the caste issues elsewhere have very less control on such type of activism on international stage. It is surprising to notice that International Ambedkarites and other anti-caste groups in the modern era have never tabled an idea of having a lobbying group in the UN and other important organs. If ever they tried to emphasise the role of civil society in building a joint efforts at the UN, then it was certainly not surrealistic. Efforts should be channelized and vision should be determined, then only the result of international activism will discover its positive results. The event of UK's acceptance of caste as a factor of discrimination has given an opportunity to lobby the issues of caste on the UN's platform. British Parliament's acknowledgement is an evidence for the international law makers to punish the culprit on the caste issue. Also the High Commissioner of the UN Human Rights, Ms Navi Pillay, herself has acknowledged the growing discrimination of caste; brushing aside India's domination on the caste issue, calling it a matter of International concern. Concerning UK, various rights groups emerged to centralise caste issue as their modus operandi. *Caste Watch UK*, formed in 2003, was organised to counter the question of caste discrimination which led to a movement against caste discrimination in UK that has resulted in passing the legislation in 2013. Along with it, partnering the cause in UK as well as in India, *Voice of Dalit International (VODI)*, an International group based in UK has led to many development projects in India which is tapping the resources from various donor agencies,

especially UK Foreign aid agency for poverty alleviation and education in India. Considerably, VODI traces the mentioning of caste as a matter of poverty in India published by UK Dept. of International Development (DID). Dalit Solidarity Networks has indeed contributed in successful lobbying of anti-caste baton through its wide spread network with parent International Dalit Solidarity Organisation. The joint efforts of anti-caste groups in the alliance of Anti-Caste Discrimination Association (ACDA) has successfully lobbied the cause of caste discrimination and provided a hope for potential activities in other parts of the Global North and South. Presence of Dalit diaspora in the western and other parts of the world is an additional benefactor to the international activism. Brining consciousness and bridging the gaps of intellectual scholarship can lead to a vigorous movement.

The above mentioned pioneering efforts of activists in bringing down the horror of barbarism are commendable. It is a result of fore vision and dedication. They did their best, but much needs to be done. As Nelson Mandela in his biography writes, "...after climbing one mountain, I realised there are many other mountains to be climbed." Taking from the experiences, a strong audacious movement by the young, dynamic and visionary diaspora's should be lead with more concrete goals. UN Watch type lobbying and continuous pressure on Indian Government will shun India's effort to market itself as a vibrant democracy. When it is trying hard to have a strong hold in the UN, seeking for the Permanent seat in the Security Council will undermine any potential interference in the India's human rights situation, as it happens in present day China. India will cross the nexus of barbarianism ruled by fundamentalist who will go unchecked without International interference. The hope for Indian diaspora is international lobbying and let it not go unattended. Raising money for events and establishing international centres will definitely augment the anti-caste ideology but the actual paradigms of fighting caste

discrimination on international stage is political intervention, and this can only happen with continuous presence of Dalit sponsored lobbying groups in the UN accounting India for every atrocities. Life of Dalits in India, is no value, at least Dalits themselves should bring value.

The author acknowledges the effort of all the mentioned organisations but partly apologises if any International lobbying agency has been missed that works on the similar lines. Australian groups are not mentioned due to their absence on International database of caste groups.

Reference:

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Upcoming Events

National Conference on Health & Happiness at Bangalore

The objective of the National Conference is to fulfill the need of people interested in the teaching of Buddha and create awareness about the right path for Happiness and Healthy life. Everyone looks for health and happiness. Dhamma provides direction on how can this be done. Young generation is now open for knowing this due to modernization and technology. So it is the time for Dhamma Revolution in India. We need to spend time using right skills, talent and right set of people ahead. The conference is also aims to connect people across nation for Dhamma revolution.

Eminent Speakers

The national conference is bolstered by the participation of internationally known speakers, scholars and authors from Buddhist and other communities. The eminent speakers at the conference includes Dr. Yojana Bhagat (Mumbai University), Ven. Vinayarakkhita Thero (Bangalore) Ven. Khangser Rinpoche (Sera Ja Monastic University, South India) etc.

Research Papers

The organizers have invited the research papers which will be published on website and in the journal. The inductive topics suggested by the organizers are as follows:-

- Meditation for Health and Happiness

- Metta to Create peace, harmony, health and Happiness
- Middle path to happiness
- Importance of Sangha to develop Happy & Healthy Culture
- Disciplined Financial planning leading to health and happiness
- Why are we so busy? Productive and Effectiveness leading to happiness

The research paper should be maximum of 4 pages of A4 size using font "Arial-12" word format with normal margin (1 inch on all side of paper). The last date for submission of paper is **31st July, 2013** and the papers can be sent to nationalconference01@gmail.com or panchasheelasangha@gmail.com.

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Upcoming Events

Retreat on Heart of Human Development Process

Nagpur Buddhist Centre, a unit of Triratna Bouddha Mahasangha, Nagpur has organized a workshop at Hsüan Tsang Retreat Centre, Bor Dharan, Taluka Selu, District Wardha, Maharashtra State, India. The workshop will start at 4 PM on 15th August, 2013 and will continue till 4 PM 18th August, 2013. Anybody above the age of 5 can attend the workshop.

Who is Hsüan Tsang?

Hsüan-Tsang seventh century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who has left behind an account about India and Bengal. Born in Henan province of China in 603 AD, he displayed signs of intellectual and spiritual greatness even at an early age. From boyhood he took to reading sacred books, mainly the Chinese Classics and the writings of the ancient sages. While residing in the city of Luoyang, Hsüan-Tsang entered Buddhist monkhood at the age of thirteen.

Hsüan-Tsang developed the desire to visit India. Starting from China in AD 629, Hsüan-Tsang passed through Central Asia by the northern trade route via Kucha and reached Northern India, where, at the city of Kanauj, he was the guest of Harsavardhana, the great Indian emperor. He visited the sacred Buddhist sites in Magadha and spent much time studying at the great Nalanda monastery, then an important centre of Buddhist scholarship. The Pilgrim next travelled to parts of Bengal (western, northern and southeastern) and then to South and West India. He returned to China, again by way of Central Asia, though this time by the southern route via Khotan. Hsüan-Tsang recorded the details of all the countries he visited. He also included information on countries he had heard reports of; for example, he has recorded some stories about Sri Lanka when he was in South

India, though he had not visited the island. He stayed here for 15 years during which he traveled widely and closely observed the country and its people. On returning to China, he put down all his impressions in a book called Si-yu-ki or 'The Records of the Western World'.

On his return to China in AD 645 Hsüan -Tsang was bestowed much honour but he refused all high civil appointments offered by the still-reigning emperor, Taizong. Instead, he retired to a monastery and devoted his energy to translating Buddhist texts until his death in AD 664. Hsüan-Tsang obtained and translated 657 Sanskrit Buddhist works. He received the best education on Buddhism he could find throughout India.

During the workshop there will be talk on Hsüan Tsang on 16th August, 2013.

Venue	:	Hsüan Tsang Retreat Centre, Bor Dharan, Taluka Selu, District Wardha, Maharashtra State, India.
Contact	:	+91-712-3241512 +91-9823095903 +91-9371181404
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Dear Editor,

Heartiest congratulations for publishing first unique e magazine "Buddhist Voice". Content of the magazine were strategically selected. Since its first of its kind e magazine with base of Buddhism, I have a small suggestion for publishing date of "Buddhist Voice". Full Moon Day (Poornima) plays vital role in Buddhism. Right from Birth, Enlightenment, First Preaching to Nirvana all events took place on Poornima. Poornima is basic reference point for all rituals in Buddhism. Hence, I would like to request you to publish "Buddhist voice" Magazine every month on the Poornima Full moon day.

Regards,

Life Coach Mahendra Ingle
Mumbai, India

Dear Upasak Anil Gaikwad,

It is nice to see the Buddhist e-magazine launched by you. My well wishes to you and your team.

With metta,

Bhanteji,
Email from Ven. Vinayarakkhita Thero,
Bangalore, India

Dear Brother Anil,

Jai Bhim! Namoh Buddhaya!

The first issue of Buddhist Voice is impressive. I am really happy to see our media is rejuvenated in new electronic form available easily to the world of Buddhists and Ambedkarites in particular. Bro. Raju Kamble was telling about this sometime back. I know how much efforts and time you have invested to get it shaped to this level. I was publishing a monthly bilingual magazine "Dhamma" & "Sakya Dhamma" until I came to the US. The front page (wrapper) is beautiful. You can also improve the designing inner and outer pages in a very professional way. You can contact some young Ambedkarites from Tamil Nadu, particularly one Sridhar, who maintains www.ambedkar.in and he will do wonders in online designing in latest versions and styles.

Congratulations! Congratulations!! Congratulations!!!

Let me know if you want any specific articles about Buddhism in South India.

In Dhamma,
Sakya Mohan
USA

Dear Anil,

Jai Bheem!

Congratulations for launching the magazine, Buddhist voice. The contents look good and quite filling with 37 pages in it. More so there are plenty of advertisements. If done on a sustained basis could fill up the void which exists at India level as well as at International level.

I wish success to this endeavour.

Raju Kamble
Ambedkar International Mission
U.S.A.

Congratulations!!!

May Lord Buddha Bless this venture with millions of active readers....

Thanks for sending me the e-magazine Buddhist Voice,

Anil Patel,
Mumbai, India

It's mind blowing content Brother. Who has prepared this? Very impressive!

Santosh Shelke,
Mumbai, India



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