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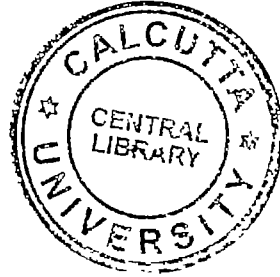
**UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA**

# **JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PALI**

**Volume : XIV, 2007**



*Editor of this Volume*  
**Bela Bhattacharya**



**UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA**

*Journal of the Department of Pali*

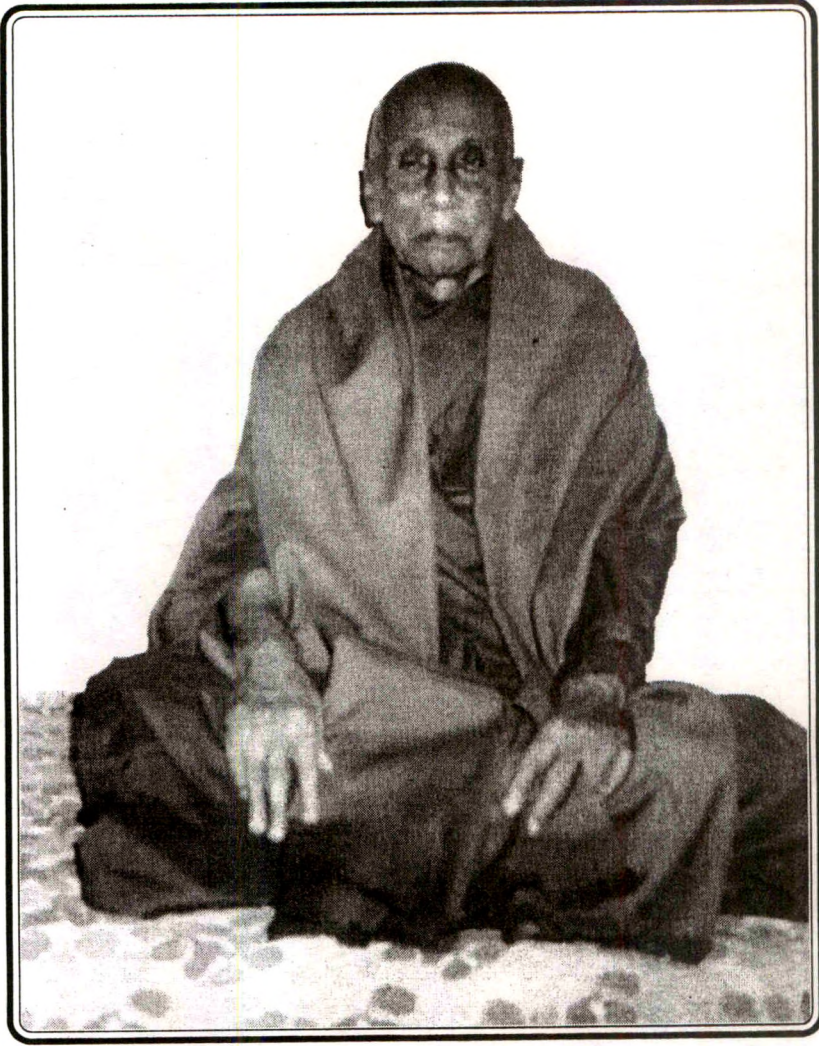
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**Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthavira,  
Tipiṭaka Visārada & Winner of  
Rastrapati's Certificate of Honour**

**DEDICATED TO**  
**LATE DHARMADHAR MAHASTHAVIRA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PALI**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA**

## EDITOR'S NOTE

We, the faculty members of the Department of Pali of the University of Calcutta, are very happy to publish this fourteenth volume of the Journal of the Department of Pali, 2007. The present volume is dedicated to Late Pandit Dharmadhar Mahāsthavira, Tipiṭaka Visārada and recipient of Rastrapati's Certificate of Honour, Guest-lecturer Department of Pali, University of Calcutta.

In 22nd May, 2007, the teachers and the students of the Department of Pali, observed of 2551st BUDDHA PURNIMA DAY, a day of triple important events in the Buddha's life, day of Birth, day of Enlightenment and the Demise. In this connection, Pali Department, Calcutta University published a Commemoration volume, 'Haraprasad Smarane' in memory of Late M.M. Haraprasad Sastri. Prof. Asis Kumar Banerjee, Honourable Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University was the President of the Ceremony. Prof. Satyajit Choudhury, Director, Bankim Bhavan Gavesana Kendra, Naihati, graced the ceremony as a chief-guest. Prof. Biswanath Banerjee, President, Asiatic Society, Kolkata, graced the Ceremony as a guest of honour. Prof. Devaprasad Guha, retired teacher of Rangoon University, enriched the ceremony as a guest of honour. Prof. Arun Kumar Bandyopadhyay, Dean (Arts), Calcutta University, graced the ceremony by his kind presence as a guest of honour. Prof. Binayendra Nath Choudhury, Ex-Research Professor in Pali and Buddhism, The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, Prof. Sukomal Choudhury, Ex-Principal, Govt. Sanskrit College, Kolkata, Dr. Asha Das, Ex-Head, Department of Pali, Calcutta University, had enriched the ceremony. In this connection many dignitaries were present and the teachers of the Pali Department and the teachers of other Departments also participated. Prof. Bela Bhattacharya, delivered welcome address and Dr. Manikuntala Halder (De) gave the vote of thanks.

This volume contains twenty valuable articles from eminent scholars both in India and abroad. We take the opportunity here to offer our sincere thanks

and profound gratitude to our respected patrons for contributing their valuable research papers which enriched the Journal with their scholarly approach on different aspects of Pali and Indology and hope to receive their sympathetic attitude in future.

Lastly, I would like to express my hearty gratitude to Prof. Asis Kumar Banerjee, the then Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University and Prof. Suranjan Das, the then Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Calcutta University, for their sincere help and encouragement. I further, express my hearty gratitude to Prof. Tapan Kumar Mukherjee, Pro. Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs and Finance, Calcutta University, for the financial assistance to publish this volume in time and also convey my heartiest thanks to Mr. Pradip Kumar Ghosh, Press Superintendent, Calcutta University for his untiring help in the publication of this volume quickly.

Department of Pali  
University of Calcutta  
12.03.2008

Bela Bhattacharya

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# **Most Venerable Sangharaj Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthavir**

## **A Grateful Homage**

*Santosh Bikash Barua*

It was indeed a rare and happy occasion for us when we had an opportunity of offering our felicitation to Venerable Sangharaj Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthavir in his pious presence at a function arranged by the Sangharaj Dharmadhar Centenary Celebration Committee at Vidarshan Siksha Kendra on completion of ninety-nine years of his holy life in July 2000. We then had heartily prayed and hoped to celebrate his birth centenary in his presence, but unfortunately to our deep disappointment Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthavir passed away on 4 November 2000.

During the long period of his holy life Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthavir has earned wide reputation in India and neighbouring Buddhist countries for his invaluable dedicated service to the Buddhist world through the propagation of Lord Buddha's teachings, his erudite scholarship and profound knowledge in Buddhist doctrines.

It is well-known that the pioneering missionary work done for the revival of Buddhism in India where it had been dead for a millennium and its spread abroad by Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder of the Mahabodhi Society of India and Ven. Kripasaran Mahasthavir, founder of the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha, inspired some of their immediate eminent successors, Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthavir is distinctly one of them who greatly contributed to this noble cause.

I had an opportunity of coming in contact with Ven. Mahasthavir and having his affectionate blessings for a long time.

It is significant to note that his way of life was conducted from the beginning in a well planned manner, conducive to his future attainments.

Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthavir was born on 27 July 1901 in the village of Dharmapura in Chittagong (now Bangladesh) and grew up in atmosphere of devout and traditional Buddhist family. In 1914 he was ordained as Sramana (noviciate monk) and in 1922 as Bhikshu (higher ordination) under the direct supervision of the most revered Dhammakathika Mahasthavir. He studied Pali

Texts under the guidance of well known scholar Acharya Vishuddhananda Mahasthvir.

In 1928 he went to Sri Lanka for higher studies of Dhamma and Vinaya. He studied at Panadure Saddharmodaya College, Matara Minioluva Kirinda Aryanasram and Jetavana Vihara, Colombo, under reputed teachers like Mahapandit Upasena Mahasthvir, Pandit Buddhadatta Mahasthvir and others. After Completing his study in Sri Lanka he returned to Chittagong via Rangoon in 1932.

I came to know from Ven. Mahasthvir that after his return he gave a speech at a meeting held at Buddha Vihara of Chittagong where Birendralal Mutsuddi, the able exponent in Bengali of Anuruddha's Compendium of the Abhidhamma sytem (Pali text: Abhidhammattha Sangaha), and Secretary of the Mahananda Vihar of Mahamuni Pahartali was present. Mr. Mutsuddi highly appreciated his speech and after the meeting was over he requested Ven. Dharmadhar to join Mahananda Vihara.

In 1933 Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthvir joined as Chief Priest of Mahananda Vihara where the first Pali Tol was established in 1885.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that Mahamuni Pahartali was well-known as a progressive village in Chittagong during that period. Among the Buddhist-inhabited villages, where the first signs of re-awakening of the Buddhists were noticed as a result of proper propagation of Buddha's teachings by Sanghanayaka Saramedha Mahasthvir of Arakan and the organisational activities of Ven. Jnanalankar Mahasthvir of Mahananda Vihara, Mahamuni Pahartali was reckoned as the foremost one. Mahamuni High School named, "Mahamuni Anglo Pali Institution", Mahamuni Post and Telegraph Office and a charitable dispensary had already been established there when Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthvir joined Mahananda Vihar.

Among the eminent Buddhists of this village whose pioneering contribution to the field of religious, educational, social and cultural activities are well-known were Gagan Chandra Barua, Hargobinda Mutsuddi, Professor Mahima Ranjan Barua, Professor Dr. Benimadhab Barua, Jogendralal Barua, Birendralal Mustuddi, Umesh Chandra Mutsuddi, Dr. Arabinda Barua and others . Thus Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthvir got a comparatively congenial environment to engage himself in further advancement of his acquired knowledge, propagation of Dhamma and social welfare activities. Through his efforts and co-operation of the members of the Vihar committee the Tol was upgraded into Mahamuni Pali College and he was appointed its first Principal. Many wellknown Bhikshus and lay persons had studied at this premier institution.

In the meantime he came to Calcutta and appeared at the three Upadhi (Title) examination on Abhidhamma, Vinaya and Suttapitaka held by Bangiya Sanskrita Shiksha Parishad in 1934, 1935 and 1936. For his outstanding results at these examinations he was conferred the title of 'Tripitaka visharada' and awarded 'Anagarika Dharmapala Gold Medal'.

Due to the distinction of having acquired a thorough knowledge in Buddhist doctrines and his organizing ability he was elected Secretary to the Sangharaj Bhikshu Mahamandala. Through His initiative Chattal Bhikshu Sangha was established and in 1940 when Sangharaj Bhikshu Mahasabha was founded he was elected its first General Secretary.

In 1943 under his able guidance relief was extended to the famine-stricken people in some villages in Chittagong. For this purpose he organized village committees.

After 12 years of his dedicated service at Mahamuni Mahananda Vihara where he had earned profuse admiration and regards from all, he came to Calcutta in 1945 and joined Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha as its vice-President. He plunged himself into a wider field of activities including research work, writing of books and articles and humanitarian and social welfare work. He stayed at the Bauddha Dharmankur Vihara and was elected its Chief Priest. He was also appointed Principal of Nalanda Vidyabhavana established under the initiative of Professor Benimadhab Barua and under the auspices of Bengal Buddhist Association in 1935 and continued in this post till he stayed at Bauddha Dharmankur vihara. A good number of students were highly benefited through his teaching and subsequently become well-known as teachers and Professors.

In 1965 he was appointed a lecturer in the department of Pali, University of Calcutta and held this post for more than a decade.

He was the founder-editor of Nalanda, a quarterly Buddhist journal in Bengali.

In 1954 Ven. Mahasthvir participated in the Sixth Buddhist Council held in Burma (now Myanmar) as one of its Sangitikarakas. He made a significant contribution there and received high appreciation for his learned deliberation.

After partition in 1947 when a large number of displaced persons from East Pakistan came to India. Ven. Dharmadhar made considerable effort for rehabilitating them and preserving their traditional faith and culture in the new environment. At his initiative and persuasion a number of monasteries and temples were constructed at different places of West Bengal and other parts of India.

When under the epoch-making leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar a large number of his followers were converted to Buddhism, Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthavir made continuous effort to have close relationship between the Buddhists of Bengal and the newly converted Buddhists. He had been in constant touch with them extending his preaching and guidance to them with utmost care and sincerity. When the Bharatiya Sangharaj Bhikkhu Mahasabha was founded at Buddhagaya in 1974 Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthavir was unanimously elected Sangharaj.

Among his unique contribution to Buddhist world special mention has to be made of his valuable books, articles containing analytical interpretation of Buddhist doctrines and masterly translation into Bengali of most popular and important classical Buddhist texts. His literary works include: Adhimasavinischaya, Dhammapada, Majjhimanikaya (Vol II), Milinda Prasna, Sasanavamsa and Buddher Dharma O Darshan (collection of his articles).

Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthavir was awarded Certificate of Honour by the President of India in March 1992 for his erudite scholarship in Pali and Buddhism.

In 1998 Ven. Mahasthavir was awarded B. C. Law Gold Medal by the Asiatic Society of Calcutta.

Another outstanding feature of his dedicated life was his humanism. He used to meet all classes of people, high or low, rich or poor and touched their lives with his sincere and loving behaviour. From my humble experience I would like to mention that by virtue of my long association with the Broadcasting media, I had an opportunity of coming in contact with many distinguished scholars, educationists and religious leaders in connexion with the planning and preparation of programmes and during conversation whenever any reference was made about Ven. Dharmadhar Mahasthavir, I felt proud on hearing their respectful appreciation and regards for his scholarship.

One of the most remarkable personalities of recent time, Ven. Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthavir, commands universal respect, love and admiration from all categories of people irrespective of caste and creed.

On this auspicious occasion of his holy birth centenary I pay my grateful homage to the most Venerable Sangharaj Pandit Dharmadhar Mahasthavir.

# Ayaṃ vesākha-puṇṇamiyā gurutta-mahattaṃ sandhāya vaṇṇitanibandho

(The significance of vesakha-fullmoonday...)

S. Sāsanānanda

Pubbaṇhasamayam imāyam dhammasabhāyam tiguṇa-subha-maṅgaladivasa-  
vesākha-puṇṇami-mahussava-sabhāyam paccupaṭṭhitā sannipatantā sādārā sa-  
janā!

Sabbappaṭhamam tena mahākāruṇikena lokanāthena bhagavatā  
sammāsambuddhena sakalalokahitāya atthāya pañcacattālisā vassāya  
desitappakāsito anuttaro saddhammo'ti tañca ekato saṅgahitaṃ tepitakattayaṃ  
tathā ca ratanattayaṃ saddhācittena gālhaṃ abhivādetvā ca ajjeva tiguṇa-  
vesākha-puṇṇamim sandhāya pāliyaṃ likhitanibandho vācito hoti.

Tato bhagavā sammāsambuddha-parinibbānato kālato paṭṭhāya yāvajjatanā  
ca ajj'eva pāyena BE. 2547, saṃvacchara-vassā atikkantā atiagatā'hesuñcā'ti.

Imāyam Jambudipa-dharāyam aññatarasamim atīva manohara-  
rammaṭṭhāne lumbinīnāmaka-supupphita-uyyāne rājāsuddhodanassa  
aggamahesi-rājini - māyādeviyā rājaputto jāto'ti ca visesato so divaso' hosi'  
ti ajj'eva vesākha-puṇṇamiyañcā'ti.

Gacchante kāle yathāvutto rājakumāro Siddhattha-gotamo  
puṇṇayobbanappatto yeva yathucchitakāla-samayam Yasodharāya pāṇim gahito  
bhūto ajānīti iha loka manussajīvane kevalam dukkham hi saṃvijjati'ti ca.

Tasmā ca kho so ekūnatimsatippamān'āyuni ekāyam timirarattiyam  
sirigabbhe sirisayanamañce sayamāna-patipaṇṇa-atīva-sinehappiyatama-  
puttadāram antimaṃ sadātanāya oloketvā ca manussa - saṃsāra-vatṭadukkhato  
vimuttimaggam gavesana-anvesanāya sobhaggappatta-rājappasādato  
abhinikkhamitvā ca anagāriya - anagāriyam isi viya bhūto pāyo chavassam  
atikkantā atitagatā'hesuñcā'ti.

Chavassam accayena (after the lapse of 6 years) pariyosāne  
Nerañjarānadiyā tīrato nāvidūre tasmim kāle nātattāhāna-uruvelāyam ekasmim  
aññatarasmim bodhi-rukkhamūle'va ekantena nisinno vasundharāyam  
sahatthena phuttho evam dalham abhisapanappatiññam akar' ti tañca yathā.

Ihāsane sussutu me sarīram  
cāgariyamamsam palayañca yātu,  
appattabodhim bahukappadullabham  
nevāsanam kāyameṭam calissati.

Atha ca kho so pañcatimsatippamān'āyuni anāntarañca tayameva rattiyam

antimayāme pāto'va paccūsakāle tasmim divasavāsare vesākhapuṇṇamiyaṃ  
anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ sopādisesanibbānaṃ pāpuṇī'ti ca so hi imasmim  
manussaloke sabbappaṭhamam abhisambuddho'hoṣī'ti ca.

Tamhi muhutte vimutti-sukha-khaṇe idaṃ udānaṃ udānesī'ti tañca yathā:-

Anekājāṭisaṃsāraṃ  
sandhāvissaṃ anibbisam  
gahakāraṃ gavesanto,  
dukkhā jāti puṇappuṇaṃ.  
Gahakāra! diṭṭhosi,  
pun gehaṃ na kāhasi;  
sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā,  
gahakuṭam visaṅkhitam,  
visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ  
taṇhānaṃ khayam-ajjhagā.

[DP-153-154]

Tato pacchā ca anantaraṃ so bhagavā sammāsambuddho bhūto sayameva  
vimuttisukhaṃ sacchikato imassa bodhirukkhasa sannikaṭe sattatṭhānesu  
ekūnapaññāsā-divasaṃ atikkamitvā ca tato paraṃ Bārānasiṃ abhimūkhaṃ  
gantvā ca Bārānasiyā nābhidūre yena isipatanamigadāye vāsantānaṃ  
pañcavaggīyānaṃ isīnaṃ sabbappaṭhamam tena avikatadhammacakkappa-  
vattana-suttaṃ desetvā ca desitaphalavasena te sabbe pañcavaggīyā anantarañca  
bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gantvā ca bhikkhusissā bhūtā sabbappaṭthamasāvaka  
bhaviṃsu c'evā'ti.

Tena mahākāruṇikena lokanāthena sabbaññūtā lokavidūnā arahatā  
bhagavatā sammāsambuddhena yathāvutto desitappakāsito dhammo'ti; na ca  
kho sakalapāṭhavī-bhūmaṇḍala-loka-vasantānaṃ bahujana-hitāya bahujanasu-  
khāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya bahunnaṃ sabbadeva-  
janamussānañca kho kula-vaṇṇa-diṭṭhi-laddhi-nibbisesānañca api ca pana  
tathariva sabbasattānaṃ sabbabhūtānañca sabbappakāra-dehi-jīvisattanañcā'ti.

Tadantare so bhagavā sammāsambuddho<sup>1</sup> mahatā bhikkhusaṅghena  
saddhiṃ sakalajambudīpe disā-disaṃ catuddisaṃ gantvā ca yameva  
navavikatahetuppabhāva dhammaṃ visesena yaṃ dhammaṃ ādikalyāṇaṃ  
majjhakalyāṇaṃ pariyosāne kalyāṇaṃ pañcacattālīsā vassāya yathāvuttaṃ  
dhammaṃ desesī'ti'ca.<sup>2</sup>

Gacchante kāle - (in course of time) - kālantare so bhagavā  
sammāsambuddho pakati-jarādhamma-vayapatto imamhi, asītivassikkapp-  
amāṇāyuni Kusinārāyaṃ aññatarasmiṃ ṭhāne sālavane'va dverukkhañca antarā  
nipanno vimutti-sukha-paṭisaṃvedī-anupādisesanibbānaṃ pāpuṇitvā taṅkhaṇe  
parinibbāyī'ti'ca. So vāsaradivaso'pi ahoṣī'ti ajj'eva vesākha-puṇṇamiyañcā'ti.

Aniccā vata saṅkharā  
 uppādāvāyadhammino  
 uppajjitvā nirujjhanti  
 tesam vupasāmo sukho'ti

Sannipātantānaṃ bhikkhūnameva imassa maraṇa-mañca-patipanna-bhagavantassa antimaṃ ovādañca yathā: bhikkhave! sabbakattabbakiccaṃ appamādena sampādettha sadā.

Tathā ca yo ca mayā dhammo ca vinayo ca desito - so mama accayena tumhākaṃ anāgate bhikkhusāvakaṇaṃ satthā ve bhavissati sadā ca.

“Ciraṃ tiṭṭhatu saddhammo tathā ca vuddhiṃ virūhiṃ vepullaṃ pappotu navaṇālandāmahāvihāre dine dine devasikañcā'ti.

Pariyosāne yathā vutta-vesākha-mahussava-avassare imāyaṃ sabhāyaṃ paccupaṭṭhitānaṃ sannipātantānaṃ sotārānaṃ sabbesānaṃ sa-ussāhaṃ thometvā ca - “The significance of the vesākha-fullmoonday” - yathāvutta-vesākha-puṇṇamiṃ sandhāya sankhittaṃ buddhavacanaṃ pāliya bhāsivā ca bhāsaṇaṃ samattaṃ. Sādhū'ti.

- ciraṃ tiṭṭhatu saddhammo --

## Notes

1. Sayameva Bhagavā sammāsambuddho ca āyasmantā Pañcavaggīyabhikkhavo - Koṇḍañño, Vappo, Bhaddiyo, Mahānāmo, Assajito ca āyasmā yasabhikkhu atha ca āyasmāyasassa kalyāṇa mittā ye cattāro bhikkhavo bhaviṃsu te nāmaññātā ca yathā-Vimalo Suvāhu, Puṇṇajito Gavampati ca. Atha ca kho tesānaṃ paññāsā Kalyāṇamittā bhikkhavo bhaviṃsu cā'ti.  
 lhaloke sabbe te sabbappaṭhamāṃ ekasaṭṭhi arahantā bhikkhū'hesuñ cā'ti tena mahākāruṇikenaekanāthena sabbavidūnā arahatā bhagavatā sammāsambuddhena saddhiṃ c'evā'ti. Tato paraṃ Pañcavaggīyānaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ āyasmantena Assajitabhikkhu-dhammasāsanappabhāvena anantarañca Sāriputto ca Mahāmoggallāno ca yena bhagavā sammāsambuddho tenupasaṅkami upasaṅkamitvā ca taṃ bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gantvā ca te dve yeva arahantā bhavantā aggasāvakasissā'hesuñ cā'ti.
2. The Dhamma - teachings for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. And the doctrine which is perfectly glorious from the beginning, in the middle and at the end. Thus the Enlightened One with his worthy - (1+6+1+4+50+2=63) sixty three disciples who were arahants - summum bonum - started the work of preaching the message for the first time - 'pariyatti-paṭipattidhammasāsaṇaṃ bahujaṇamanussānañ-cā'ti'. [Mahāvaggo'nusārena evaṃ me likhitañ cā'ti].



# Historical Perspective of Contemporary Buddhism and its followers in India

*Dipak Kumar Barua*

## PROLOGUE

Ultimately it became a stern reality that by the 12th Century AC Buddhism in India became practically confined only to some areas of East and North-East India within the four boundaries of the monasteries. Due to the march of the Muslim army and regeneration of the Brāhmanical Faith celebrated Buddhist establishments like Nālandā, Vikramaśīlā and Odantapurī with their inmates were completely destroyed. In course of time those Buddhist monasteries along with the members of the Buddhist Order gradually began to disappear and consequently the layworshippers became guideless and overpowered by the Brāhmanical rites and rituals. And thus commenced the 'Period of Slow Continuance of Buddhism in India.' Buddhism became weaker to the weakest during the period from AC 1150 to 1800. The most famous Mahābodhi Temple at Bodh-Gaya in Bihar was occupied by a Brāhmanical Mahanta in about the 17th Century. Likewise, the Aśokan Stūpa at Sarnath was dismantled in 1794 by Jagat Singh, Diwan of Raja Chait Singh of Varanasi, only because of the bricks needed to install a new market called Jagat Ganj at Varanasi. Many Buddhist temples were converted into either the Brāhmanical or Muslim places of worship. Hence Buddhism seemed to disappear slowly from India, the land of its origin although many scholars would like to comment that every trace of Buddhism was effaced from India, the fact was not that. It might be that Buddhism had to face hard days and it could not shine so brilliantly as before. Still Buddhism maintained its firm footing in India with its distinctive characteristics and very much influenced the Indian life and thought and its undercurrents flooded the attitudes, philosophy, psychology of the majority of the Indians who were not formally Buddhists. Hence Buddhism should be viewed from this perspective which would definitely reveal the fact that it has been flourishing in the country of its origin since the sixth century BC and has been continuing till date.

In fact, the history of Buddhism in Modern India, thus, is intermingled with the political developments in Eastern India, particularly in some portions of Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Cox's Bazar, Comilla, Laksam, Bukherganj, Patuakhali, Noakhali in present Bangladesh and Assam, Tripura,

West Bengal as well as in the regions under the northern mountainous areas of India, since due to the Muslim invasions as well as predominance of the Brāhmanical Faith in the north and in other parts of India during the mediaeval period Buddhism and its followers of both the Theravāda and Mahāyāna Schools had to seek safe shelters in those regions.

In 1666 politically Chittagong and some portions of Eastern India were annexed to the Mughal Empire. Originally the region now known as Chittagong Hill Tracts was united with the District of Chittagong. But during the British rule it was made a separate and independent District by the Act XXII of 1860. After the annexation of the Lushai Hills by the British in 1891 this region lost its importance and was reduced to the status of a sub-division, while it was again formed into a District under the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation 1900 which was amended and the newly constituted District Administration was formed under Chittagong Hill Tracts (Amendment) Regulation 1920 barring the outsiders from settling in that District permanently. However, since January 10, 1964 the District ceased to be a tribal region.

The East India Company on September 27, 1760 got hold over Chittagong, the citadel of the Indian Buddhists of those days, having financial power only to collect taxes and to run the business from Mir Muhammad Kasem Khan. But in 1774 the British who did not interfere into the indigenous religious affairs, captured the sovereign power not only over Chittagong but also over the entire eastern region of India, and compelled the Buddhists in those areas to serve in the army and police services. But having foreseen the uprise of the British power they gradually left those services and began to live on agriculture since by this time they could acquire large plots of land and started to recover most of the villages and property lost due to Muslim aggression. Even some of them could hold large plots of cultivable lands and came to be known as 'zamindārs' with the titles of 'Chaudhuri', 'Mutsuddi', 'Sikdār' and 'Talukdār', and erected quite a large number of Buddhist temples and monasteries for the monks as well as of the nuns to live in and for the lay devotees to worship and pay their homage to the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha.

In the meantime waves of the Arakanese refugees who were Buddhists came over to Chittagong being oppressed by the Burmese Army after the annexation of Arakan to Burma, now called Myanmar, in 1795 by King Bodowpaya (1742-1819). In 1797 the Arakanese revolted without any positive result against the Burmese tyranny under the leadership of Nga Chin Pyan. Therefore, in 1789 again the Arakanese had to flee over to the southern part of Chittagong, where the British Government allowed them to settle under

the supervision of Captain Hiram Cox, after whose name that portion of Eastern India was named 'Cox's Bazar'. But there was no sign of peace on the border of Burma and British India. The third wave of the Arakanese refugees came over to the easternmost portion of British occupied India in 1824 and were allloded by the British to settle down in the District of Buckherganj. And ultimately commenced the First Anglo-Burmese War which continued from 1824 to 1826, after which the Burmese were completely defeated by the British.<sup>1</sup>

Mahāyāna Buddhism being to some extent liberal could survive in the Himalaya regions under the natural protection with sundry gods and goddesses. But the Theravāda School in India had to face hard days with its puritan ecclesiastical rules, regulations and theological concepts. That was why the revival of Theravāda Buddhism in India became almost obligatory and thus from Eastern India such a movement was first initiated with some drastic developments during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In general the Theravāda and Non-Mahāyāna Buddhist Schools in India would be grouped under four periods. The First Period or the 'Age of Genesis' covering about five hundred years from BC 500 to AC 99 with its monastic discipline and Buddha's basic texts - both popular and philosophical - in Pāli, represented Orthodox Buddhism which later on became known as 'Theravāda' or 'Hīnayāna'; the Second Period or the 'Age of Springtime Efflorescence' comprising the next five hundred years from AC 01 to 500 became conspicuous through the contributions of 'Hīnayāna' School to the commentarial and exegetical literature - both in Pali as well as in Buddhist Sanskrit - and through the rise of Mahāyāna; the Third Period or the 'Age of Continuance' from AC 501 to 1000 was distinguished by literary and philosophical compositions; and the Fourth Period or the 'Age of Renewal' from 1001 to 1956 was marked by occasional resiatance, persistence and regeneration of Theravāda ideas. The Fourth Period may further be subdivided into three phases, namely, (i) Restoration of Theravāda Buddhism by Ven. Sāramedha Mahāthera in 1856, (ii) Intellectual Efflorescence haralded by Ven. Kripāsaran Mahasthavira as well as Professor Benimadhab Barua and Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala in 1891, and (iii) Mass Conversion to Theravāda Buddhism with popular base initiated by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 1956.

#### **FIRST PHASE: RESTORATION OF THERAVADA BUDDHISM (1856-1890)**

"Till the beginning of nineteenth century", rightly commented Professor Sunitikumar Chatteerjee, "Buddhism was a forgotten creed in the land of its

origin".<sup>3</sup> After the fall of the Pāla Dynasty in Eastern India, Buddhism practically got a degenerated form due to ignorance of the glories of its unique tenets, although it did not completely disappear from this country. Even during the period of its decadence in the eighteenth century Buddhism still remained a living faith in some parts of India, particularly in Eastern India including Orissa, Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Tripura and remote areas of the east of the land. That was why the Buddhist renaissance movement in India practically began from the eastern portion of India, especially from Bengal. In spite of vicissitudes during the late eighteenth century in East India, Buddhism here at that period was not purely Theravāda. It became a mixture of Tantricism, Brahmanical Faith and sundry obscure religious cults, while Buddhist Tantrayāna itself later on was divided into three different Sects, namely, Kālacakrayāna, Vajrayāna, and Sahajayāna.

Prior to that political event a Buddhist monk called Ven. Cāṅga Ṭhāur (Bhikkhu) of Pahartali at Chittagong visited Mrohaung (=Mibang, also called Patharkilla), the ancient capital of Arakan, and witnessed there the beautiful Image of Mahāmuni, the Great Sage Buddha, in a big temple founded at a distance of about eight miles from the capital. Having seen that Image he became overwhelmed and desired to have such an Image to be installed in his native village. Hence he drew a replica of the Image with all its details, e.g. height, circumference, etc. Having returned he immediately busied himself to construct the Mahāmuni Image with some sculptors using bricks, lime, brick-dust, marble-stone-chips, white cement and paints and completed it in 1813, in which year on the Full Moon Day of the month of Fālguna (March-April) many well-known bhikkhus from all over Chittagong were invited to the *jīvanyāsa*, 'life-giving', ceremony of that newly constructed Image which looked like the original Mahāmuni Image of Arakan. This new Image was also called Mahāmuni and the village in which it was installed was named after Him. Since the Temple to accommodate this grand Image was not impressive one, with a request for financial support to build a grand Temple for the Image, Ven. Cāṅga approached Kuñca Dhāmāi, Chief of the Palang Community of twelve villages at Cox's Bazar, who readily responded to it and within a year built and provided maintenance of the Mahāmuni Temple introducing an annual fair called the *Mahāmuni Melā* on the occasion of the Viṣuva-Saṃkrānti, i.e. 29th Caitra (April 13), the last but one day before the Bengali year-ending. Further, Kuñca Dhāmāi established there the first *Bhikkhu-Sīmā* in Modern India for holding the *Upasampadā*, 'Higher Ordination' Ceremony by the Buddhist monks. After his death, his son Kyājā Cāin Chaudhuri continued to look after the conveniences of the pilgrims and built a spacious hall near the

Mahāmuni Temple which, thus, gradually attracted notice also of the foreign visitors like Colonel Henry Steele Olcott from U.S.A.<sup>4</sup>, Dr. R. Kimura from Japan, Anāgārika Dharmapāla from Sri Lanka, Bhikkhu Lokanātha from Italy. For such munificent activities Kyājā Cāin Chaudhuri was honoured with the title of ‘Mān Rājā’ by the British Government of India.

Instead the years from 1760 to 1855 were full of intellectual confusion as well as chaos and political instability and the fate of Buddhism in India became extremely grim. Before its formal revival in India Theravāda Buddhism, as already stated, faced a great setback. The Buddhists who were claiming themselves as the descendants of the Śākya Clan and came over to these eastern areas of India from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh being harassed by the Mughal Administration, completely had forgotten their rich heritage. Truly speaking, the “Buddhists forgot their own religion, their philosophy and their ideals...There remained a group of ignorant bhikkhus or married persons in the garb of ‘bhikkhu’, and they reformed Buddhism in their own way, according to their will”.<sup>5</sup> During this period the Theravāda Buddhists in this region became unaware of the monastic rules and regulations as also their cultural legacies. There were also constant threats from the British authorities to unconditionally surrender to them. Under these circumstances, the Theravāda Buddhists in religious affairs were in utter confusion. The lay people began to worship Durgā, Kālī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaṇeśa, Kārttika, Śani, Magadheśvarī, Iṣāmatī (Ichāmatī), Aśvinī Kumāra, Manasā, Nava-Grahas and other gods and goddesses of the Brāhmanical pantheon for the welfare of their families. They even used to worship Muslim Pīrs and to offer *sinni* as oblation in the names of Satyapīr, Mānikpīr, Badarsāhib, and others. The Buddhists were in such a wretched condition mentally and physically that during the worship of Magadheśvarī they themselves used to slaughter she-goats in the place of worship called Sevākhola on the outskirts of the village and fresh blood as well as uncooked meat were offered to Magadheśvarī without any image or priest.

The condition of the Theravāda Buddhist monks was more pathetic. They had almost forgotten to prepare and wear, the *Ticīvara*, ‘Threefold Robe’, according to the Pali *Vinaya* Rules. Even a boy of ten years old was given *Upasampadā*. These so called monks began to participate in almost all social activities, e.g. matchmaking, marriage, serving the guests, taking food even at night without knowing the meanings of the terms *Upasatha* and *Pravāraṇā*. Such monks were generally called *Rāulis* (=Rāūli=Rāri) who used to lead family lives having wives and children. The term *Rāuli* was probably derived from the word ‘Rāhula’, the name of the son of Prince Siddhārtha Gautama and

subsequently it was used to signify the 'sons or disciples of Buddha'. The *Rāulis* after their initiation used to follow the *Daśa-Śīla*, 'Ten Precepts', for seven days only without having actual knowledge about the significance of the traditional ten moral precepts. After seven days they would come back homes without leaving the *cīvaras*, 'holy robes', which they used to wear or place them on their heads only during religious ceremonies. But in their daily lives they used to behave themselves as the lay people. These *Rāulis* consisted of three groups, viz., *Māthe* (*Mahāthera*), *Kāme* and *Pāñjāng*. During their tours the *Māthe-Rāulis* used big umbrellas on their heads, the *Kāme-Rāulis* wore conical head-caps, and the *Pāñjāng-Rāulis* used to cover their heads with pieces of yellow robes. Afterwards, however, such Buddhist priests became known as *Ṭhāur* (= *Ṭhākur*, 'Priest', like the Brāhmanical *Ṭhākur*), e.g. Lālmohan Ṭhāur, Kamal Ṭhāur, Hari Ṭhāur, Sukcān Ṭhāur.

But in the first half of 1856 Ven. Rādhū Māthe or Rādhārāma Māther or Rādhācaran Mahāthera, a Bengalee *Rāuli* priest (*bhikkhu*) of the village Baidyapara at Chittagong, visited on pilgrimage *sītakuṇḍa*, a holy place near Chittagong town, where by chance he met Ven. Sāramedha or Sāramitta or Sāramitra Mahāthera (1801-1882) who was born and brought up at Harbang, Chittagong, and later went to Arakan where after the demise of his Upādhyāya Ven. Sārālaṅkāra Mahāthera was appointed the Saṅgharāja of Arakan by the King with the title *Sāramedhālaṅkārabhitisāsanadhara-mahādhammarājādhirājaguru* in March 1846 in the assembly of 105 Buddhist monks. District Judge Hon'ble Uphā Tha Htwa was present on this occasion as the Government observer.<sup>6</sup> Ven. Rādhū Māthe discussed with him about the deplorable condition of the Buddhists in India where Buddhism was still strangling to survive and invited him to visit Baidyapara in February 1856. According to another tradition Ven. Rādhū Māthe first came across with Ven. Sāramedha in Kolkata while the later was to go to Buddha-Gayā<sup>7</sup> on his first visit to India on pilgrimage from Arakan. Being invited later on by *Zamindar* Kalicharan Mutsuddi in March 1856 Ven. Sāramedha attended the famous Mahāmuni Melā, the annual Buddhist Fair to commemorate the installation of the Image of Mahāmuni at Pahartali at Chittagong, and delivered a sermon there on Buddhism to the assembly of all groups of the Buddhists, viz. Baruas including Chaudhuris, Mutsuddis, Sikdārs, Talukdārs and Sinhas, as also the Chakmas, Maghs, Marammas, Rakhains. He stayed at Mahāmuni for about two years and endeavoured to convince the Buddhists to abandon the corrupt practices and rituals observed by the *Rāulis* who used to perform the duties of the priests in religious ceremonies including animal sacrifices and advised them to follow the genuine Theravāda Buddhist Way of life. During his stay

at Chittagong Ven. Sāramedha also visited the Chakma Kingdom, then a feudal State under the British Government in the region now known as Chittagong Hill Tracts, of which the ruler was Queen Kālindī (=Kālīñjī, 1830-1873), a follower of the Brāhmanical as well as Tāntric Faiths, who was personally not happy with the religious affairs in her Kingdom. At one opportune moment Ven.Saṅgharāja Sāramedha along with Ven.U.Gunāmeju Bhikkhu (= Gaṇamitra Mahāthera of Harbang) met the Queen and delivered a sermon on Buddha's true gospel according to the Theravāda tradition. She was very much impressed and became instantly ready to accept Theravāda Buddhism and spread the tenets of Buddha in her Kingdom.<sup>8</sup> This incidence had a great impact on the Buddhists of India. In 1857 she honoured Ven. Sāramedha with the title *Saṅgharāja Vinayadhara*. Because of the prosylitizing activities of Ven.Sāramedha and imperial power of Queen Kālindī some of the *Rāuli* priests as well as Buddhist laity could realise their faults and ultimately decided to replace the prevalent corrupt form of Buddhism by Theravāda Buddhism. In fact, during his first visit to India Ven. Sāramedha, as already mentioned, for two years had been trying to convince the Buddhists - both monks and laity - about the then pitiable condition of Buddhism in India as at that period negligible remnants of Theravāda Buddhism existed only in the eastern part of the country. He further tried to teach the *Vinaya* Rules to the monks, some of whom did not agree to surrender to him because of the three factors, viz. (i) the *Vinaya* Rules, although based on the Pāli *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, prescribed by Ven.Sāramedha were very rigid and quite against their life-style; (ii) many *Rāulis* were older in age than Ven.Sāramedha and so it was not likened by them to give up their authority and seniority; and (iii) reordination at an old age was also not comfortable to them.

On the other hand, Candramohan (1835-1909), a boy of sixteen years of the village Unainpura, Chittagong, was newly ordained in 1851 and came over to Kolkata to stay in the Mahānagar Vihāra in Central Kolkata, where in 1855 he met Mr. Paul, an expert in Buddhism and in 23 languages including Pāli and Sanskrit, who also coming from Sri Lanka was staying in the same Vihāra. Being enthusiastic he started learning Pali and true doctrines from Mr. Paul. Thus while studying the Pali *Pātimokkha* he knew that no person below twenty years of age could be ordained as a *Bhikkhu*. So he became mentally very disturbed and decided to visit either Sri Lanka or Myanmar for reordination at the stipulated age. The opportunity was available to him in 1860 to visit Akyab in Arakan, where he was reordained by Saṅgharāja Sāramedha and staying there for two months learnt the Pali *Vinaya*. Thereafter, he returned to Chittagong and urged upon the monks of Chittagong to learn the *Vinaya*

in its true perspective and accordingly to act. In the meantime he became seriously ill and was compelled to give up monkhood. Having recovered after a few months he went to Kolkata for practising *Kavirājī* treatment. There he met a group of Sri Lankan monks and lay devotees who were on their way to Myanmar to take valid ordination from the Myanmarese Saṅgha. Candramohan, as the Sri Lankan tradition would relate, proceeded to Mandalay, Myanmar, with them in 1861. On an auspicious day all of them including Candramohan were ordained by the then Saṅgharāja of Burma in the *Kalyāṇī-Sīmā* in Pegu, ancient Rāmañña-deśa, under the patronage of King Mindon. During his *Upasampadā* Ceremony Candramohan was newly named as Puṇṇācāra Dhammādhara, later on most popularly known as Puṇṇācārī Dhammadhārī Vinayasthavira in Eastern India. After this Ceremony Ven. Puṇṇācāra along with all his associates visited Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka, where in 1864 they founded a new Sect of Buddhist monks called Rāmañña-Nikāya. He stayed for few years at the Vinayālaṅkāra Pirivena in Sri Lanka and thereafter returned to India in 1866 to preach the true doctrine of Buddha and became pleased to see Ven. Sāramedha's success in reconverting the Indian Buddhists to Theravāda Buddhism. Ven. Puṇṇācāra had further added fuel to the flame of Buddhist revival in India during the 19th Century by (i) introducing Pāli teaching and Buddha's original gospel in Pāli, (ii) inviting some monks from Myanmar and Sri Lanka to propagate the true religion of the Blessed One, (iii) sending some monks and lay people from Eastern India to Myanmar to learn Pāli and Buddhism, (iv) despatching some *sāmaṇeras* to Myanmar and Thailand for training, and (v) founding three Buddhist model schools, each one at Mahāmuni, Sātbaria and Hārbāng, the birth-place of both Ven. Sāramedha and Ven. Guṇameju Mahāthera, in 1868. For all such pious activities he became known as *Ācariya*, 'Teacher', and in all those deeds he received spontaneous support - moral and financial - from Ven. Guṇameju Mahāthera of Hārbāng, Zamindar Haragovinda Mutsuddi of Mahāmuni-Pāhārtali, Nazir Krishna Chandra Chaudhuri of Sātbaria, Tālukdārs and Sīkdārs of South Hāshimpur called Totārapārā under P.S. Patiya at Chittagong. Ven. Saṅgharāja Sāramedha visited Chittagong for the second time in 1864 being invited by the newly converted Theravāda lay devotees and brought with him a full Chapter of trained monks in order to offer *Upasampadā* staying at Mahāmuni during the annual Buddhist Fair there giving afresh Higher Ordination to the following seven *Rāuli* priests, viz. Lālmohan Ṭhāur named Nāṇālaṅkāra (=Jīñālaṅkāra) as well as Kamal Ṭhāur of Mahāmuni-Pāhārtali, Hari Ṭhāur of Dharmapura Firiṅgirkhil, Sukhcān Ṭhāur of Mirzapur, Durāj Ṭhāur of Gumaṇmardan, Abhayacaraṇ Ṭhāur also called Abhaya Māthe of



Damdāmā, Hari Ṭhāur of Binājūrī, at Chittagong in the *Udaka-Ukkhepa-Sīma* of Hancāorghonā near the village Mahāmuni. This was the first historic *Upasampadā* Ceremony through which the revival of Theravāda Buddhism in Eastern India, nay in the whole of India, was officially initiated.<sup>9</sup> But Ven. Rādhū Māthe who was initially in close touch with Ven. Sāramedha was not reordained because subsequently he realised that to accept the ordination under the guidance of Ven. Sāramedha would lapse his seniority, although he had constantly helped Ven. Sāramedha to initiate the reformaiton movement among the Theravāda Buddhists of India.<sup>10</sup> In due course, however, many other *Rāuli* priests or *Ṭhāurs* were reordained accordingly by the *Vinaya* Rules. So after sometime the newly ordained monks constituted a separate group called 'Saṅgharāja Dal', also known as the 'Saṅgharāja Nikāya'. But those monks who did not agree to be reordained were known to belong to the 'Māther Dal' or 'Mahāsthavira Nikāya' or the 'Group of the Mahātheras of the Past'.

But some of the senior monks belonging to the Mahāsthavira or Mahāthera Nikāya, as already mentioned, were reluctant to undergo valid ordination of the reformed Theravāda Saṅgha and remained separate from the Saṅgharāja Nikāya. The two Sub-Sects, however, later on appeared in the Mahāthera Nikāya, viz. Titan Māther Dal and Dasya Māther Dal. The second one became extinct in course of time. The Mahāthera Nikāya also like the Saṅgharāja Nikāya introduced certain reforms by themselves. Since the monks of the Mahāthera Nikāya were not reformed according to the rules laid down in the Pali *Vinaya-Piṭaka*, the monks of the Theravāda Saṅgha did not recognise them as regular members of the Saṅgha. Thus the difference in the observance of various rites and rituals still remained between the Mahāthera and Saṅgharāja Nikāyas. The primary difference, however, lay in the ordination process. But since the nineteenth century members of both the Nikāyas began to follow almost the same principles of taking the *Tisarāṇa*, 'Threefold Refuge', and the *Pañcasīla*, 'Fivefold Precept', the lay devotees of both the Nikāyas, however, made no discrimination in their religious performances and equally respected monks of these two Sects.

During that period at Chittagong, however, there was another group of Buddhist priests known as the *Puṅgri* or *Phuṅgi*, a term used to denote the the Myanmarese Buddhist monks, e.g. Arippā Puṅgri, Anappā Puṅgri, Haripā Puṅgri. But in the Chittagong Hill Tracts three groups of Buddhist monks, viz. *Rāulis*, *Ojhās* with magical powers, and *Gāṅkulis* or Singers of religious songs like the *Bāul* singers, were seen.

As mentioned already, the Chakmā Queen Kālindī constructed a Buddhist monastic temple at Rājānagar,<sup>11</sup> the former capital of the Chakmā Rulers, and

installed therein a Buddha Image which was the replica of the Mahāmuni Image of Mahāmuni village, and named it Śākyamuni arranging an annual fair called Śākyamuni Fair there during the Mahāviṣuva Saṅkrānti. Ācariya Puṇṇācāra stayed at Rājānagar for some time preaching the gospel of Buddha. At that time he felt the necessity of building a *Bhikkhu-Sīmā* for the purpose of the *Upasampadā* Ceremony as the *Udaka-Sīmā* was not always suitable there. So he advised the Queen for making the arrangement and asked her to invite Ven. Saṅgharāja Sāramedha from Akyab, Arakan, for that purpose. Accordingly on Caitra 08, BS 1275, i.e. 1870, a *Bhikkhu-Sīmā* which was the first one named *Bhikkhu-Sīmā Sthala-Kula Ratnāmkur Cīṅg* in India after the revival of Buddhism in this country. This was Ven. Sāramedha's third visit to India. After a few days of this Ceremony Ven. Puṇṇācāra left Chittagong for Myanmar and Sri Lanka for a long period. In his absence Ven. Bhikkhu Jñānālaṅkāra with his headquarters at Mahāmuni took up the proselytising activities in Eastern India and established an association of monks called *Saṅgha-Sammilānī* for training the young monks to take up the reformation work. Ven. Saṅgharāja Sāramedha came over to India for the fourth and last time in 1877 and handed over the charge of the Saṅgharāja Nikāya to Ven. Puṇṇācāra who in that year went to Sri Lanka and stayed there till 1884 and in his absence Ven. Jñānālaṅkāra took up the charge of the Theravāda Buddhist Saṅgha of the Saṅgharāja Nikāya.

After the demise of Ven. Sāramedha in Akyab in 1882 Ven. Jñānālaṅkāra was elected the Saṅgharāja of the Saṅgharāja Nikāya of India. But after the return of Ven. Puṇṇācāra in 1884 from Sri Lanka, the charge of the Saṅgharāja was handed over to him. In 1885 Ven. Puṇṇācāra encouraged to establish a Pāli institution (*Toḷ*) at Mahāmuni village. While coming back from Sri Lanka Ven. Puṇṇācāra brought from that country a replica of Buddha's *Pada-cihṇa*, 'Foot-print', from the Samantakūṭa Hill of Sri Lanka and installed it 1886 at Unāinpurā, Chittagong, where to commemorate the installation of the *Buddha-pada-cihṇa* annually a Buddhist fair called *Ācāryar Melā* named after Ven. Puṇṇācāra had been organised on the Full Moon Day of the month of Fālguna. Ven. Puṇṇācāra who had positively contributed to the revival of Theravāda Buddhism in India passed away untimely on the Full Moon Day of Māgha of 1909. After his demise Ven. Jñānālaṅkāra became again the Saṅgharāja, during whose life-time six high schools run by the Buddhists but open to all communities were established in the Buddhist villages of Chittagong in Undivided India.

Besides, the Buddhist lay people played a vital role in the Buddhist revivalist movement. Thus Nazir Krishna Chandra Chaudhuri (1844-1910)

founded in 1887 the Chattagrām Bauddha Samiti (Chittagong Buddhist Association), himself being the General Secretary and Ven.V.Guṇameju Mahāthera as its President. Afterwards, Ven.Puṇṇācāra became elected its life-time President and represented to the British Government demanding separate identity of the Buddhists. This was the first Buddhist Association in the Indian Sub-Continent in the modern age. It also began to publish in Bengali and English the *Bauddha-Bandhu*, 'Friends of the Buddhists', the first Buddhist periodical ever published in Indian language, edited by an erudite scholar Kalikinkar Mutsuddi Vidyāvinode. Krishna Chandra Chaudhuri was also elected a Member of the Governing Body of The Maha Bodhi Society established by Ven.Anāgārika Dharmapāla in 1891. He also attended the famous Buddhist Conference convened by Colonel H.S. Olcott in 1891, which adopted the *Fourteen Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs* to be acceptable by the World Buddhist Community.

The Buddhists of India, as already mentioned, during the Muslim period began to forget their Holy Scripture, the Pali *Tipiṭaka*. Even in the early years of the 19th Century the Buddhists of Eastern India having lost their literary legacy could only possess the following three texts in a language which was a mixture of Pāli, Sanskrit and Ārākānese, viz. (i) *Dhātuvān* or *Thātubām* or *Tātubāim* (-Pāli *Dhātuvamsa*), a biography of Buddha written in Ārākānese-Burmese language; (ii) *Maghā-Khammaujā*, a very old Buddhist handbook type poem composed by an unknown author in Bengali which is very much close to Ārākānese; the term *Maghā* means a Buddhist text, while the word *Khammaujā* would indicate *Avadāna* or *Apadāna*, 'Heroic Deeds', in Ārākānese; (iii) *Āgar Tārā* (=Agra Dharma), containing the doctrines of the past, with some *Parittas* written in the distorted forms of the Pāli and Sanskrit languages and in the Chakmā Script close to the Shān Characters. The *mantras* chanted by the Buddhist priests were in a mixed language with distorted forms of Pāli, Sanskrit, and Ārākānese. Also being very much influenced by the Arakanese the Buddhists of this remote eastern corner of India uttered the words *Buddha* as *Pharā*, the Myanmarese form of *Phayā*; *Dhamma* as *Tārā*, the Myanmarese *Tayā* (*Tārā*?), a Mahāyāna Goddess; and *Śaṅkha* as *Caṅkā*. They further used to pronounce the word *Buddha* as *Bhokta* or *Bogdha*. Thus they followed a form of Buddhism which was not purely Theravāda Buddhism, but a mixture of Theravāca, Mahāyāna, Tantrayāna as als Brāhmanical Faith. Initiating the Bengali Buddhist literary movement the Chakmā Queen Kālindī ordered her court-poet Nilkamal Das of the Village Betāgi, Chittagong, to compose a complete biography of Gautama Buddha in Bengali. Since Nilkamal Das was not a Buddhist, he knew little about Buddha and Buddhism.

Hence some Buddhist scholars from Chittagong, among whom Phul Chandra Barua was the Chief, were requested by the court-poet for that purpose. Phul Chandra Barua had already earned fame for his literary works. So he rendered into Bengali verses from the aforementioned Buddhist book titled *Dhātuvān*. This translated poem contained the biography of the previous Buddhas including Dīpaṅkara Buddha, the life of Gautama Buddha from birth to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, and an explanation of some selected Buddhist tenets. Truly speaking, Nilkamal Das was not the author of this book. While the original Ārākānese-Burmese work *Dhātuvān* was rendered into Bengali in verses by Phul Chandra Barua in 1872, Nilkamal Das gave it a final touch by adding note about him in the text itself and came over to Calcutta, now renamed Kolkata, by the order of the Queen for its printing. But the Queen Kālindī suddenly died in 1873 and the printing work of the said translated work titled *Bauddharañjikā*, the first book in Bengali with the Buddhist theme and virtually in any Indian language on the same subject, could not be finished. Only the half portion of that work was ultimately published in 1890 from Chittagong with the homages to Icchāmatī, Sarasvatī, and Jagadīśvara, quite unlikely of any Buddhist work.

It is to be noted that there was a gap of about 18 years between its date of composition and printing. During this interval some handwritten copies of the *Bauddharañjikā* were prepared. In one of those manuscripts almost all the Colophons bear the name of Nilkamal Das as its author and based on that particular copy the book was published ultimately without mentioning the author's name in the title-page. Probably having followed the Colophons of that sole partly printed copy of the *Bauddharañjikā* a new edition of it had been published with the title *Sri Nilkamal Das Vṛcīta Bauddha-Rañjikā Arthāt Bauddhāṅger Mūl Dharmagranthā* (Written by Sri Nilkamal Das the *Bauddha-Rañjikā* or the Basic Religious Text of the Buddhists) edited by Bipradas Barua and Dr. Dany Kumar Barua and published by Navayuga Prakashani, Dhaka, Bangladesh, in April 2005. In support of this publication the editors had made the following sweeping generalizations: "In spite of all these facts this printed book (itself) should be considered as the original copy. This book, under the supervision of the royal house or after the demise of the Queen (Kālindī) with the co-operation of (the then) King had been written, even though Queen's death occurred before (the completion of the printing work) of this book, it should be understood that the actual work had been printed, there is no scope for controversy in this regard. And no further edition of (that) printed book (was prepared). In all other (copies of manuscripts of this work) the influences of the Scribe and the Orderer were visible" (*op. cit.*, p. 40). But the authorship

of the *Bauddharañjikā* cannot thus be outright assigned to Nilkamal Das since, as already mentioned, it was originally composed by Phul Chandra Barua. Professor Dr. Benimadhab Barua in his long essay on *Bāṃlā Sāhitye Śatavarṣer Bauddha Avadāna* (Buddhist Contribution to the Bengali Literature during the 'last' hundred years) published in the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Patrikā*, Nos. III, IV, 1352 B.S. had also noted: "Immediately after the unknown author of the *Maghā Khamujā* (Khammaujā?) during the 'Guruṭhākuri' period appeared the famous writer Phul Chandra. His birth place was the village Noapara situated on the eastern side of Aburkhill... In the first half of his life he was a Buddhist monk and in the elderly age he became a lay householder. During that dark age of literary history of this country there was no other second person who was conversant equally with the two languages, Pali and Bengali... Thereafter, she (Queen Kālindī of Chittagong Hill Tract) thought of a Buddha-biography to be composed in lucid Bengali for daily recitation and free distribution of the same to the ordinary people. In order to materialise this difficult job, when the name of Phul Chandra was proposed she caused to call him from his own village. It was decided to prepare an easy versified translation (into Bengali) of the Pali *Dhātuvam̐sa*. Phul Chandra as Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana and Nilkamal Das of the village Betagi as Gaṇeśa acted during its (i.e. Bengali rendering of the Pali *Dhātuvam̐sa*) composition. This translated work was titled *Bauddharañjikā*. Some say that because of the prose translation by Phul Chandra and versification by Nilkamal was composed the *Bauddharañjikā* which has become popular (and known) among the Baruas of Chittagong in their every house as the *Tādhuyāin Puthi*, of which many (handwritten) manuscripts with slight variant readings may be collected from the Baruas and Chakmas. The earnest desire of Queen Kālindī was to print one thousand copies of this splendid Buddha-biography and distribute the same freely before her untimely death. Her great desire later on was, however, partially fulfilled by her grandson religious-minded Bhuvanmohan Roy". Thus Professor Benimadhab Barua had also ascribed the first Bengali poetic work called *Bauddharañjikā* to Phul Chandra Barua and not to Nilkamal Das.

Other non-printed handwritten manuscripts, as mentioned above, of the *Bauddharañjikā* bear the following Colophons mentioning the name of Phul Chandra Barua as its author :

*Ei duḥkhe kānde bhāse jaladhir jale,  
Bhagavān carit ye prakāṣilā Phule.*

(*Granthārambha*. Here the word 'Phule' stands for Phul Chandra Barua).

OR

*Bar peye Sumetā rahilā manānande,  
E Bauddha Rañjikā bhane Phuleta ānande.*

(Chapter on *Buddha Bodhiyāṃ mutta mociyāṃ tinnā tāriyāṃ*. 'Phuleta' is evidently Phul Chandra Barua).

OR

*Ei pañca kalpa haila saṃsāre sṛjan,  
E Buddha Rañjikā Paṇḍit Phuler racan.*

(Chapter on *Kalpe Kalpe Buddher Janma*. Here also the words 'Paṇḍit Phuler' obviously indicate Phul Chandra Barua).

OR

*Śrīmatī Kāḷindīrāṇī* *Dharmabux rājarāṇī*  
*puṇyavatī suśilā mahilā*  
*Tār. ajñānu vale* *racyā Paṇḍit Phule*  
*E Bauddha Rañjikā prakāśilā.*

(Chapter on *Buddhāṅkurer Janma*. Here also it is clearly stated that the *Bauddharañjikā* was written by Paṇḍit Phul Chandra Barua).

From the above Colophons it is evident that Phul Chandra Barua who was supposed to be inferior in respect of the so called social position, official status, and financial condition to Nilkamal Das, was the actual author of the *Bauddharañjikā*. Having taken advantages of those points Nilkamal Das during the work of printing after so many years of composition put his name as the author in the Colophons of that particular handwritten manuscript of the text. Therefore, the editors of the second edition of the *Bauddharañjikā* published in 2005 from Bangladesh should carefully consider all these factors and avoid the controversial name Nilkamal Das as the author of the *Bauddharañjikā* as printed on the basis of the Colophons of its incomplete first edition prepared depending on only one of its handwritten manuscripts submitted to the printing press for publication.

But due to the aforementioned reformation movement a change became visible in the literary composition. Among the Buddhist authors who wrote in Bengali, apart from Phul Chandra Barua, was Dharmarāja Barua (1860-1894) who composed the *Dharmapurāvrta* (Calcutta, 1246 Magābda) based on the *Maghā-Khammaujā* already mentioned. The *Dharmapurāvrta* might also be considered to be one of the early Bengali Buddhist books. It was written in the Ārākāṇese Script in a mixed language of Pāli as well as Ārākāṇese. Dharmarāja's book (i) presented a faithful history of Buddhism at Chittagong

from its Arakanese domination till the date of its composition, and (ii) revealed an endeavour to write books on Buddhism in Bengali instead of Ārākānese. Dharmarāja Barua also composed a handbook on Buddhism in Bengali with the title *Hastasāra* and the *Sūtranipāta*, a Bengali rendering of the Pāli *Suttanipāta*. Mention may also be made of Rāmacandra Barua also called Rāmacandra Sūyāna (1847-1922), Nabarāja Barua (1865-1896), and Sarbānanda Barua (1870-1908), a well-known Bengalee Buddhist poet who composed 25 books in Bengali prose and poetry including the *Śrī Śrī Buddhacaritāmṛta*, *R̥ṣi-Sandarśana*, *Mahābodhi-Sandarśana*, *Jagajjyoti*. Since Sir Edwin Arnold described Buddha as the *Light of Asia* (London, 1921) in his epoch-making poetic work, Sarbānanda with a sense of pride designated the Blessed One as the 'Light of the World' in his epic *Jagajjyoti* which was being published in his own edited periodical *Bauddha-Patrikā* which unfortunately discontinued at a late period and the complete text of the *Jagajjyoti* could not be available. A contemporary poet of his time Nabinchandra Sen, a renowned personality, having gone through the manuscript of the *Jagajjyoti* emotionally said: "Sarbānandabābu! If I would know, you have already composed the *Jagajjyoti*, I would not write the *Amitābha*." Such a compliment would reveal poetic excellences of Sarbānanda Barua. There were other Indian Buddhist authors like Girish Chandra Barua, Govinda Chandra Barua, Kalikinkar Mutsuddi who used to write books in Bengali on Buddhism in those hoary days accelerating the Buddhist revivalist movement in Modern India. But the most eminent among the contemporary Buddhist authors of India was certainly Benimadhab Barua (1888-1948) who was the first Asian to obtain the D.Litt. Degree from the University of London in 1915 and became the first University Professor and Head of the Department of Pali, University of Calcutta. Apart from his scholarly writings in English on Pre-Buddhistic Indian and Buddhist philosophical works, he wrote in Bengali three very significant books, namely, *Bānlā Sāhitye Śatavarṣer Bauddha Avadāna* (Buddhist Contributions to the Bengali Literature of one hundred years) in the *Bānglā Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā* (Vol. 52, BS 1352), *Bauddha Granthakoṣa* (Calcutta, Indian Research Institute, Vol. I), and *Bauddha Parinaya-Paddhati* (Buddhist Marriage System, 1922).

Besides non-Buddhist writers who helped the Buddhist revival in India during its first phase mention may be made of Rajendra Lala Mitra (*The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, Calcutta, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1882), Satyendranath Tagore (*Bauddhadharma*), Swāmī Vivekānanda (*Chicago Addresses*), Sister Nivedita (*Śiva and Buddha*), Haraprasad Sastri (*Hājār Vacharen Purāṇe Bānglā Bhāṣay Bauddha Gān O Dohā*), Sadhu Aghornath Gupta (*Śākyamuničarita O Nirvāṇatattva*), Sarat Chandra Das, Satish Chandra

Vidyabhushana, Charuchandra Basu, Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay, Ratilal Mehta (*Pre-Buddhist India*, Bombay, 1939), Vidhusekhar Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh Bhattacharyya (*Buddhist Iconography*, Calcutta), Har Dayal (*The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, 1932), Bimala Churn Law, Nalinaksha Dutt and many others who wrote both in English and Bengali.

Even the Buddhist women of India or more particularly of Eastern India began to take a lead role in the Bengali literary movement. Among those celebrated female literary personalities mention may especially be made of Ms. Jyotirmala Devi Chaudhuri (1903-1981), daughter of Mr. Nagendralal Chaudhuri and the grand daughter of Nazir Krishna Chandra Chaudhuri, Founder of the *Bauddha-Bandhu*, a Buddhist Journal in Bengali, of the village Sātbāria in the District of Chittagong. During her lifetime her published works included two novels titled respectively *Raktagolāp* (Red Rose) and *Sandhāne* (In Search) in B.S. 1347; a collection of stories called *Bilet Deśtā Māṭir* (The Country of England is a reality); a collection of poems titled *Śakuntālār Svapna* (The Dream of Śakuntala) in 1941; after her death were published *Jyotirmālār Kavitā* (The Poems of Jyotirmālā), 1st Vol., ed. Nirodbaran in 1986 and *Jyotirmayīr Caturdaśpadī Kavitā* (Sonnets of Jyotirmayī), ed. Nirodbaran in 1999 from respectively Kolkata and Sri Arabinda Ashrama, Pondicherry. Ms. Jyotirmala was closely associated with Sri Arabinda, a great saint, and Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate of India. Tagore had openly praised her literary works. Many modern literary critics of India have assessed her literary contributions to Indian Literature. In 1996 Dr. Gautam Ghoshal had written on her a book titled *Jyotirmālā: New Trend in Bengali Poetry*.

Again apart from such literary contributions of the Buddhists, some archaeological excavations also revealed that the degraded condition of Buddhism evidently began to improve from 1750 facilitating the first phase commencing from 1856 of Buddhist Renaissance in India. Some illustrious westerners started to unearth the hidden Buddhist treasures. In 1750 Padre Tieffenthaler discovered fragments of an inscription of Emperor Aśoka on the Delhi-Meerat Pillar that is at present situated on the Ridge, Delhi. Since then other scholars like Captain Polier; William Jones; Captain James Hoare; Major James Todd; Lt. T. S. Burt; James Prinsep who for the first time could deciphered the inscriptions of Aśoka; Alexander Cunningham; Lewis Rice; Alexander Csoma de Körös; Hermann Oldenberg; Maurice Winternitz; E. Burnouf; V. Fausböll; Kern; Poussin; Sylvain Levi; Th. Stcherbatsky; T.W. Rhys Davids & C.A.F. Rhys Davids who established the Pali Text Society in London; and other scholars who contributed much to the Buddhist Renaissance in India through their works.



**SECOND PHASE: INTELLECTUAL EFFLORESCENCE (1891-1947)**

But the Second Phase and probably the most creative one of the Buddhist Renascent or Revivalist Movement in India was initiated, as already stated, by Ven.Kripāśaran Mahāsthavira (1865-1926), a Bengalee Buddhist monk who came over to Calcutta from Chittagong for the first time in 1881 and during his second visit founded in 1891 the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha (Bengal Buddhist Association) in this metropolis with the help of the intellectuals of India. Prior to that in 1885 he established a small Vihāra called the Mahānagar Vihāra in a rented house at 21/26 Bow Street, near Bow Bazar Street, now known as Bepin Behari Ganguli Street, Calcutta. Even before that Ven. Kripāśaran founded a small Buddhist Monastery in a rented house at 72-73 Malanga Lane, also in Central Calcutta. In fact, the year 1891 became the most significant in the history of Buddhism in Modern India because in the same year (i) the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha was established by Ven.Kripāśaran Mahāsthavira in Calcutta; (ii) a young Sinhalese David Hewavitarne, later known as Ven.Anāgārika Dharmapāla (1864-1933) having personally observed the uncared and neglected condition of the Mahā Bodhi Temple at Bodh-Gayā founded the Maha Bodhi Society of Buddha-Gaya in Colombo, Ceylon, on May 31, 1891 primarily for the restoration of this great Temple from the hands of the Śaiva Mahanta there;<sup>12</sup> (iii) a casket containing the sacred relics of Gautama Buddha was discovered by Mr. Rea at Bhattiprolu in Andhra Pradesh; (iv) Bhim Rao Ambedkar who initiated the Third Phase of Buddhist revivalist movement in India was born on April 14, 1891; and (v) Ven.Mahāvīra Swāmī, the first non-Buddhist Indian becoming a *Bhikkhu*, began to dwell in the ruins of the sacred site of Kuśīnagara, the place of attainment of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* by Buddha. The Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha with its branches at Darjeeling, Jamshedpur, Lucknow, Shillong and Rajgir became the first Indian Buddhist association with its Headquarters in Calcutta and a modest monastic accommodation for the Buddhist monks, nuns and pilgrims in the city.<sup>13</sup> In 1915 the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha (Registration No. 2665) and thereafter the Maha Bodhi Society (Registration No. 2666) were officially registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1861. But considering the all-India activities in the branches situated in different States the members of the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha in a general body meeting in 2001 unanimously resolved to amend the name of the Sabha as BAUDDHA DHARMANKUR SABHA OF INDIA deleting its English sub-title 'Bengal Buddhist Association'. Accordingly the proposal was sent to the Registrar of the Societies, Government of West Bengal, for approval. It was learnt that the same had been favourably considered. Also the year 1892 became another landmark in the

history Buddhism in Contemporary India since in that year (a) Ven.Anāgārika Dharmapāla shifted the Office of the Maha Bodhi Society of Buddha-Gaya to Calcutta from Colombo having dropped the word 'Buddha-Gaya' from the Society's name; (b) from May of that year Ven.Dharmapāla began to publish *The Maha Bodhi*, an international Buddhist monthly; (c) intellectuals of Bengal being inspired by the learned works on Buddhism of the European Scholars and of the Pali Text Society of London established in Calcutta the Buddhist Text Society which subsequently began to publish many scholarly books on Buddhistic Culture; (d) again in the year 1892 three Rock Edicts (R.E.) of Emperor Aśoka were discovered at Brahmagiri, Jatinga-Rāmeśwara and Siddhapura in the District of Chitaldrug in the State of Karnataka.

In order to propagate Buddhism in other Parts of India Ven.Kripāśaran Mahāsthavira with the help of others became successful to construct in 1901 the Bauddha Dharmankur Vihara at I Buddhist Temple Street, Calcutta 700012, which became the first Theravāda Buddhist monastery in Modern India outside Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts. Mahāsthavira Guṇālaṅkāra Jñānaratna Kavidhyaja (1874-1924) of Silak, Chittagong, began to assist Ven.Kripāśaran in his religious activities. He along with Swāmī Pūrṇānanda began to edit and publish from 1908 a Buddhist periodical titled *Jagajjyoti*, 'Light of the World', in Bengali on behalf of the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha. In 1905 Ven. Kripāśaran being accompanied by Ven.Guṇālaṅkāra blessed the Prince of Wales who later on was known as Emperor George V in Calcutta and in 1911 representing the Indian Buddhists in the Royal British Durbar in Delhi wished him long life according to the Buddhist tradition. During their second meeting they maintaining the dignity of their robes in that glittering pageantry of pomp and power, where many notables of the British Empire had assembled, these two Buddhist monks serenely approached to the throne in the normal, upright attitude and consecrated the Emperor by raising simply their hands and pronouncing benedictory verses from the Pāli text. Through such an act Ven.Kripāśaran displayed the spiritual and patriotic impulses mingled with a supreme desire to uplift the Buddhists of India with a view to restoring them to their dignified position among the Indians and the peoples of the foreign countries. He believed that the existing warring world could only be saved by the spiritual teachings of Gautama Buddha.

On the other hand, like Emperor Aśoka Ven.Dharmapāla did promulgate the Buddhist Culture in the form of a Humanised Culture in the Parliament of Religions in 1893 at Chicago, U.S.A. He was, in the modern era, probably the first Buddhist whose personality won demonstrative recognition in the western countries. His own paper titled *The World's Debt to Buddha* which

was read there on September 18, 1893 was bereft of either theology or anthropomorphism.<sup>14</sup> Both Ven.Dharmapāla and Swāmī Vivekānanda made the Indians active and prominent in the world history. Through the Maha Bodhi Society of India and the Ramakrishna Mission established respectively by these two savants, the peoples of the whole world could realise the greatness of India in various spheres.<sup>13</sup>

The commencement of the new century in 1900 became also remarkable for the revival movement of Buddhism in India. In this year the South India Buddhist Association was established with its Headquarters in Chennai and its six branches in Tamilnadu and Karnataka by Pandit Ayodhya Dasa, its First President, who was followed by Professor P.Lakshmi Narasu for the propagation of Buddha's *Dhamma* in the South.

Further, this phase of Buddhist revival movement gained momentum in India when some Indians of other regions in India embraced Buddhism and became the *bhikkhus* dedicating their lives to the propagation of Buddha's tenets through their writings and prosylitizing activities. Of them mention may be made of Venerables Dharmānanda Kosambī (1902; 1876-1947) who was the first Indian to transliterate the Pali texts into the Devanāgarī Script, Bodhānanda (1914), Ānanda Kausalyāyana (1928), Rāhula Sāṅkṛityāyana (1930; 1893-1963), Nandavaṃsa Mahasthavira who wrote some books on Buddhism in Assamese, and Bhikkhu Jagadish Kāsyap (1934) who had taken over himself the herculean task of reviving Pali learning in India having started teaching Pali and Buddhism in the Department of Sanskrit, Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh, and ultimately shifted his place of activities from Varanasi to Nalanda in Bihar where with the full support from His Excellency Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the First President of India, started the work of revival of Nalanda and urging upon the Government of Bihar to establish an international institution at the ancient seat of Buddhist learning with the name 'Nava Nalanda Mahavihara' at Nalanda, in 1951, which was, however, taken up by the Government of India for further academic and infrastructural development with full financial liabilities on February 15, 1994.

The Theravāda Buddhist monasteries built in India were by Venerables Kripasaran Mahasthavira in Kolkata and by Ven.Mahavīra Swāmi, the first non-Buddhist to become a *bhikkhu*, at Kushinagara in 1903. These were followed by Sri Dharmarājikā Caitya Vihāra in 1920 in Kolkata, and The Mulagandhakūṭi Vihāra in 1931 at Sarnath, established Ven.Anagarika. Subsequently were established the Ānanda Vihāra in 1931 in Mumbai, Bahujana Vihāra in 1937 also in Mumbai, the Buddha Vihāra in 1939 in New Delhi, and the Veṇuvana Vihāra in 1946 at Agartala, Tripura.

Again from 1909 to 1917 some outstanding archaeological discoveries in the North and North-West of India revealed the rich Buddhist legacy.

On the other hand, Ven.Bodhānanda Bhikkhu of Uttar Pradesh under Ven.Kripasaran Mahasthavira became a bhikkhu in Kolkata in 1914. He was initially attracted to Buddhism in 1896 when he met some Buddhist monks at Varanasi. Since during those early days there was no consecrated *Bhikkhu-Sīmā* in this part of British India for the purpose of *Upasampadā*, Ven.Kripasaran arranged the *Upasampadā* Ceremony of Ven.Bodhānanda on a boat in the Gaṅgā, the river, in Kolkata. On this historic and sacred occasion Anāgārika Dharmapāla and the Buddhist monks from Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Chittagong were present. Being a full-fledged *Bhikkhu* Ven.Bodhānanda returned to Lucknow where he concentrated himself for the propagation of Buddhism having established the Bharatiya Bauddha Sangha, 'Indian Buddhist Association'. He also constructed a Buddhist monastery at Risaldar Park in Lucknow in 1925 paving the way for the Buddhist revivalist movement in Northern India.

The Buddhist revival movement of the second phase was commenced in Western India by Ven.Dharmānanda Kosambi and Dr.Anandarao L.Nair by establishing the Buddha Society in Mumbai in 1922. Dr.Anandarao erected the Ananda Vihara, the first Buddhist monastery in that part of India, in Mumbai in 1931. The Buddha Society began to prosylitise Buddhism in that region through the publication of books and journals like *Buddha Purnimā* and *Dharma-Chakra: The Wheel of Moral Law*. Ven.Dharmānanda Kosambi was a great Pali scholar. He became the first lecturer in Pali of the University of Calcutta at the instance of Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyay, Vice-Chancellor of that University, and after a few years he was invited by and joined the Harvard University, U.S.A., to translate the Pali *Visuddhimagga* into English. Apart from this he wrote several books on Buddhism in Marathi and Gujarati. Also he constructed in 1937 the Bahujana Vihara, a small Buddhist monastery, at Parel in Mumbai to facilitate the spiritual knowledge of the labourers and workers there. N.K. Bhagwat, one of the disciples of Ven.Dharmānanda, through his activities and books popularised Buddhism in Western India.

During this phase Buddhism made a significant progress in Kerala with the conversion of C.Krishnan, Editor of the *Mitavādi*, who also became the President of the Kerala Buddhist Association established in 1925 with its Headquarters at Calicut, Quilon. C. Krishnan was assisted in his *Dhamma* work by the first Malayi monk, Bhikkhu Dhammakhandha, who was trained in Ceylon, and M. Rama Iyer. Through their joint effort Buddhism found a solid ground in the Malabar region.

The Great Stūpa at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa which was erected probably during the third century AC in Andhra Pradesh was unearthed in 1928. In December of the same year the All India Buddhist Conference, which was first of its kind, was arranged in the Maha Bodhi Society Hall in Calcutta under the Presidentship of Shiv Charan Lal of Lucknow. About 300 delegates from different parts of the country participated in this national congregation of the Indian Buddhists, of which Chairman of the Reception Committee was Professor Dr Benimadhab Barua, an internationally reputed Buddhist scholar. This Conference resolved to request the British Government to return the sacred relics of Sāriputta and Moggallāna to India from the British Museum, London.

In the mean time two Aśokan Rock Edicts were again discovered in 1929 at Erragudi in the Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh. The Mūlagandhakuṭi Vihāra with a spacious Temple in which was installed a serene image of Buddha in the *Dharmacakrapravartana-mudrā*, was inaugurated by the Maha Bodhi Society of India in 1931 mainly due to the initiative and labour of Ven. Anāgārika Dharmapāla who in that year having entered the Buddhist Saṅgha, assumed the name of Sri Devamitra Dharmapāla. During this period Ven. Dharmapāla's health began to deteriorate because of excessive labour and ultimately he passed away at Sarnath in 1933 leaving his worthy successors like Devapriya Valisinha, Ven. Saṅgharatana Mahāthera, and Ven. Jinaratana Nāyaka Mahāthera, to continue his unfinished missionary activities. After his sad demise the Sarnath Centre began to publish from 1933 a Buddhist periodical titled *Dharmadūta* in Hindi to reach the Hindi-speaking people. Further, the Rock Edicts of Aśoka were discovered in 1931 at Gavimath and Palkiguṇḍi in the Raichur District of Andhra Pradesh.

During the pre-Independence period, i.e. up to 1947 August 15, numerous Buddhist associations, monasteries and temples were founded in India for the propagation of the *Dhamma*. Among of those mention may be made of the following: (i) Burmese Buddhist Temple and Rest House at Bodh-Gaya in Bihar in 1888(?), (ii) Tibetan Temple (Gaden Phelgay Ling) with the *Dharmaśālā* for the pilgrims built in 1938 at Bodh-Gaya, (iii) Chinese Buddhist Temple and Monastery in 1940(?) at Bodh-Gaya, (iv) Himalayan Buddhist Society in Kulu-Manali in 1942 with Ven. Kushak Bakula as the President, (v) Buddha Vihara on December 22, 1940 at Bangalore constructed by the Maha Bodhi Society on a plot of land donated by the State Government; (vi) Japanese Buddha Vihara with the Monastery constructed by the Japan Buddha Sangha in 1945 at Lake Road, Kolkata; (vii) Vaṇa Vihara established by Ven. Aryamitra Mahāthera under the patronage of His Highness the Maharaja Sri Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur of Tripura at Agartala in 1946;

(viii) Cetiyaigiri Vihara designed by Col. Ryam and Mr. Swamy Rao, where the sacred relics of the two chief disciples of Buddha, viz. Sāriputta and Moggallāna, were enshrined in November 1952 on the extremity of the northern facade of the Cetiyaigiri Hill at Sanchi on January 08, 1946; (ix) Buddha Vihāra at Egmore, Chennai, founded in 1947 by the Maha Bodhi Society of India; and (x) Chalapather Buddhist Temple at Chalapather, Sibsagar, in Assam by All Assam Bhikshu Sangha Samiti in 1947.

### THIRD PHASE: MASS CONVERSION TO THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM (1948-1956)

With the transfer of the political power from the British to the Indians on August 15, 1947 some radical developments could be witnessed in the history of Buddhism in Modern India and among the Buddhists. Thus in course of time Aśoka Mission with its Monastery and Buddhist Temple was founded by Ven. V. Dharmavara Mahāthera, an eminent Cambodian monk, in 1948 in New Delhi with the friendly support from Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the public. Ven. V. Dharmavara left India for the U.S.A. in 1975. It had commenced the Centre For Studies in Transnational Buddhism & Civilizations for study and research on Contemporary Buddhism.

During this third Phase the Constitutional Assembly of the Republic of India, presided over by Dr. Rajendra Prasad adopted the Buddhist Wheel of Law (*Dharmacakra*) and the Lion-Capital of Emperor Aśoka as the National Symbols of Independent India. The Constitution of the Republic of India, which was drafted by a Committee chaired by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was finally adopted with those National Symbols on November 26, 1949. This year was again significant because in this year the sacred relics of Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Moggallāna were sent back to India from U.K. where they were taken in 1851. About 50,000 people of Bihar, the birth-place of both these disciples of Buddha, welcomed the relics with great veneration, when they reached Patna on March 26, 1946 and on this occasion Srikrishna Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar, said: "The history of Bihar was the epitome of the history of India and nay, in a way, the history of the world itself. India has been the leader of the world through the ages and the credit for this leadership goes to Lord Buddha and His band of selfless disciples." In this year again after a long demand the Government of Bihar abolishing the age-old control of the Brāhmanical Mahanta over the Maha Bodhi Temple at Bodh-Gaya, the most sacred Temple to the Buddhists of all over the world, enacted the Buddha Gaya Temple Management Act, under which the Buddha Gaya Temple Management



Committee consisting of four Buddhist and four Hindu Members and its Ex-officio Chairman being the District Magistrate of Gaya, who must be the Hindu, was constituted.

Again the year 1950 was another remarkable year for Buddhism in Modern India, because in that year Dr. B. R. Ambedkar publicly declared to revive Buddhism in India and asking his followers to celebrate the Buddha Jayanti from that year contributed an article to the Vaiśākha Number of *The Maha Bodhi Journal* with the title *The Buddha and the Future of His Religion* with his own remarks that Buddhism was the only religion which the world could have beacuse of its emphasis on reason, equality, fraternity, liberty, morality and rationality. The home-coning celebration relating to the relics of Ven.Sāriputta and Ven. Moggallāna was ended with a grand Conference held at Sanchi near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, in Novemeber 1952 and attended by the Buddhist scholars, leaders, and monks from all over the world. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, concluded his speech addressing the Conference: 'Out of this Conference a seed will bloom and spread happiness.'

The Nava Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda in Bihar was founded by the Government of Bihar at the instance of Ven.Bhikkhu Jagadish Kasyap in 1951 and taken over in 1994 considering immortal and undying legacy of Nalanda by the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, its full administrative and financial liabilities from the State Government, and ultimately declaring the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara as a Deemed to be University by the University Grants Commission, Government of India, on November 13, 2006.

The year 1956 became the most significant one for Buddhism in Modern India. The Buddha Eara which commenced on the day of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, Great Demise of Gautama Buddha, completed 2500 years. In order to observe this historic event the Buddhists all over the world made elaborate programmes. In India, too, to celebrate this occasion in a dignified way, the Government of India constituted the Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, with Dr. Sampurnananda, Chief Minister of U.P.; Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar; Sri S. D. Sharma, Chief Minister of Assam; Ven. Kushok Bakula, Head Lama of Ladakh; and the Mahārāj Kumar of Sikkim, as Members; while Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, was its Associate Member. The Buddha Jayanti continued in India for one year till May 1957. The Government of India had taken up the following projects to observe the Celebration during 1956-1957:

- (a) In the Buddha Jayanti Park, New Delhi, laying the foundation stone of the Memorial Monument by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, on May 23, 1956.
- (b) Mass public meeting under the Chairmanship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, on May 24, 1956.
- (c) In New Delhi opening of the Buddhist Art Exhibition which was later taken for display to other important cities of India on November 03, 1956.
- (d) Holding of a Symposium on Buddhism on November 17 & 18, 1956 in New Delhi.
- (e) Publication of a book titled *2500 Years of Buddhism*, ed. by P.V. Bapat in 1956.
- (f) Release of an Album titled *The Way Of the Buddha* containing photographs of Buddhist objects of art--Architecture, Painting and Sculpture in 1956.
- (g) Publication of a book on the Edicts of Asoka in 1956 by the Government of India.
- (h) The Government of the People's Republic of China as a symbol of friendship and partnership at the suggestion of the Chinese Buddhist Association, Beijing, and at the instance of Venerable Jagadish Kasyap, Founder Director of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda under the State Government of Bihar of the Republic of India, decided to present to the Govt. of India in December 1956 a portion of the skull-relics of Xuan Zang (Hiuen-tsang), an alumnus and later a Professor of the Nalanda Mahavihara, together with a donation of Rs. Six Lakhs only for the construction of a Memorial Hall to be named 'Xuan Zang Memorial Hall at Nalanda for handing over the same to the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara. The Hall was constructed in 1963 and was formally handed over to the authorities of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara in 2001, the Golden Jubilee Year of the Mahavihara, by the Govt. of India to organise academic and cultural activities therein.
- (i) Printing of the Pali *Tipiṭaka* in the Devanāgarī Script by the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, Bihar with the financial assistance from the Government of India.
- (j) Release of the commemorative postal stamps on Buddhist themes by the Department of Post of the Government of India.
- (k) Face-lifting of the ancient Buddhist shrines in India.



On the commencement of the 2500 Buddha Jayanti Celebration Dr. Rajendra Prasad in a message to the nation remarked: 'On this auspicious occasion of the 2500th anniversary of Lord Buddha, I send greetings to my countrymen and indeed to every citizen of the world. It is a solemn day for all those who believe in the supremacy of virtue and the superiority of human spirit over things mundane and ephemeral. People of the land, where he underwent a process of rigorous penance in search of truth and where he preached the gospel of absolute tolerance and universal peace, are bound to experience a special joy on this occasion.'

Also in this year the sacred relics of Moggaliputta Tissa Thera and others who were contemporary of Emperor Aśoka were brought on February 05, 1956 by Ms. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the then High Commissioner of India in U.K., and received by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the First Prime Minister of India, from the British Museum, London, in three replicas of the original caskets in which they were discovered.

Still the most remarkable event of the 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebration was that on October 14, 1956 when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar took formal Refuge in Buddha and Dhamma according to the Theravāda tradition, along with a half a million of his followers, at the historic ceremony held at Nagpur, Maharashtra, urging upon them to follow the Path of Buddha. From that date onward indeed Buddhism entered into a new era of mass movement as the Third Phase of Buddhist Renaissance. It was a unique event in the history of world religions, because never before so many people under one leadership had changed their religion. After two months of Nagpur *Dīkṣā* Ceremony Dr. B. R. Ambedkar passed away. But conversion to Buddhism had been continuing unabated. The Census Report of India for 1961 revealed an unprecedented increase of over three millions. The Census of 1991 had also recorded a sharp rise of 64 lakhs of the Theravāda population in India.

Indeed the 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebration became an important milest one in the history of Modern Buddhism. Also the conversion of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in 1956 was mentioned here because of the fact that such a decision had already been taken by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar as early as in 1933 and this event became so an important happening in the history of the humanity that without mentioning the same, the annals of Buddhism in Modern India would be incomplete.

Also it is to be noted that the Implementation Committee for observing the 50th Anniversary of Independence of India, at its meeting on 5.3.1997 decided that the Logo should depict the *Cakra* from the Sarnath Aśoka Pillar

indicative of Buddhist legacy in Indian Culture, on top and the colours of the unfurling National Flag below; positioned in between was the figure of '50' signifying the celebration of 50 years of Independence.

Till date the followers of Theravāda or Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions have been flourishing in India. Nearly 80 per cent of the Indian Buddhists are Theravādins, while the remaining 20 per cent of the Indian Buddhists are Mahāyānists. These two broad divisions of the Buddhists of Modern India may be classified under the five following categories, namely, (i) traditional Theravāda Buddhists represented by the Bengalee Baruas and various Buddhist ethnic groups like the Chakmās, Maghs, Marmas, Rakhaines and others, some of whom before and after August 15, 1947 had migrated from Bangladesh and Myanmar to the Indian States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Sikkim, Mizoram and West Bengal; (ii) Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhists who had come over to India from Mainland China, Hongkong and Tawain long ago and settled mainly in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh; (iii) traditional Mahāyāna Buddhists who had been residing in the Himālaya region adjacent to China; (iv) followers of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who had embraced Theravāda Buddhism in 1956; and (v) the Tibetans of the Mahāyāna School, who had come down to India from China in 1959 along with His Holiness the Dalai Lama to settle in different States of India. The Buddhists of all groups, except who belong to the Scheduled Tribes, have been recognised by the Government of India as belonging to the 'Minorities' along with the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsees, and Jains and are represented in the National Commission For Minorities constituted by the Government of India as well as in the States' Minorities' Commissions formed by the various Governments of the States of the Republic of India.

## EPILOGUE

Instead, the Indian Buddhists of all groups - whether as Minorities or as Scheduled Tribes - still have to face numerous problems to be classified under three categories, namely, Academic, Cultural and Financial, which could be overcome through the following remedial measures:

(i) The Buddhists in India should be offered adequate opportunities so that they can pursue higher studies, especially in medical, engineering and professional courses.

(ii) The Government of India and the State Governments should encourage Pāli learning in schools and colleges and also patronise the PĀLI TOLS for teaching the Pāli Language and Literature in the traditional

atmosphere. For monitoring such a programme the National Pāli Academy at the national level and the Pāli Sikṣā Parishad in every State could be established.

(iii) The Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda, a Government of India institute for Pot-Graduate Studies in Pāli and Buddhistic Learning, along with Xuan Zang (Hiuen-tsang) Memorial Hall, an outstanding monument of China-India partnership in accademic and cultural fields at Nalanda,<sup>17</sup> should immediately be given the status of a full-fledged University to be named as the NAVA NALANDA MAHAVIHARA (UNIVERSITY), NALANDA, like Sampuranananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi, under the Department Education, Government of India, in order to materialise the aims and objectives of this great Seat of Learning in Modern India, established by Venerable Jagadish Kasyap, a great Pali scholar, initially under the Government of Bihar and subsequently taken over by the Department of Culture of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, to continue the past glories of ancient Śrī Nālandā Mahāvihāra at Nalanda. Besides, the Project of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina may be a model of a proposed *Bibliotheca Nalanda Mahavihārica* at Nalanda. Such a name has been suggested for wide renown of the Nalanda Mahavihara as a University, a celebrated centre of learning throughout the modern world and its potential universal acceptance. The entire Library Complex, as in the past, may be called *Dharmaganj* while its main Library may be named *Ratnasāgara*.<sup>18</sup>

(iv) Further, for the advancement as well as supervision of Pāli teaching throughout India at all levels and also to emphasize the significance of Pāli which had already been declared in 2004 by the UNESCO as one of the 'endangered Indian Languages', an organisation to be called the RASHTRIYA PĀLI SANSTHAN like the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan should be founded by the Government of India in New Delhi.

(v) Also a Central Buddhist University should be established by the Government of India in the model of Banaras Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University for the advancement of Pāli and Buddhistic Studies and for the promotion of national integration.

(vi) At least one women from the Buddhist Community should be nominated as a Member in the National Commission For Women and a Member in the States' Women Commissions for improving the status and for reviewing the conditions of the Buddhist women.

(vii) To be secular the Government of India must immediately declare at least the Buddha Purnimā Day a compulsory national holiday, which is of prime importance from the point of view of the cultural history of India, since

there is still no such holiday to pay homage to Buddha, the Great Personality of India.

(viii) For the improvement of the financial condition of the Indian Buddhists the Government of India should prepare Statewise action plans for the Buddhist concentration States keeping in view of local special occupations/trades for implementing the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)/ Training of Rural Youth For Self Employment (TRYSEM) with the cooperation of the State Governments.

(ix) In pursuance with the Article 16 of the Constitution of India for equality in matters of Public employment the composition of the Selection Committees should be representative to maintain impartiality, objectivity and suitability in the matter of selecting the candidates in various posts. So at least one Member from the Buddhist Community should be invited to act as the Advisor in the Union Public Service Commission/State Public Service Commissions, and also the Selection Committees must be constituted by the Universities and other Appointing Authorities accordingly.

(x) The Buddhist temples and monasteries and registered Buddhist associations and societies should be *suo motu* recognised as voluntary and non-profitting organisations for allocations of different schemes and funds for education, socio-economic welfare and other employment generation and developmental programmes by the Government of India and various State Governments.

(xi) The problems relating to the Buddhist Community need to be attended to on a continuing process so that all apprehensions are allayed and genuine grievances redressed. To facilitate these, a special cell should be set up in the Home Ministry both at the national level and at the State levels.

As a peaceful law-abiding people the Buddhists in India are eager to contribute enthusiastically and positively to the all-round development of this country. But apart from the problems mentioned above unfortunately enough they are acutely facing *Identity Crisis*, mainly *Cultural Identity*, for which both the Union and State Governments should take immediately adequate steps.<sup>17</sup>

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# Medium of Instruction of Buddhavacana

*Binayendra Nath Chaudhury*

Before entering into the question of medium of instruction of Buddhavacana, i.e. the words of Buddha, we should be aware of Buddha's philanthropic spirit for preaching his Dhamma by delivering discourses to people at large. It was mainly through the missionary zeal of Buddha, a great son of India and a great reformer, Buddhism could spread successfully in ancient mahāhanapadas (great localities) all over Central and Northern India during his life time. The Vinaya Mahāvagga contains on accounts of Buddha's early converts and formation of Buddhist Saṅgha. After attainment of supreme Enlightenment (abhisambodhi) Buddha while passed a few weeks at Uruvela (Buddhagaya) he received two traders Tapussa and Bhallika hailing from Ukkalā (probably Utkala) as the first lay devotees (Upāsaka). Buddha considered his former friends the group of five celibates (Pañcavaggiyas) who were residing at Isipatana (modern Saranath) in Benares, as the fittest persons to realise his newly acquired truth. Then he went to Isipatana and delivering the first discourse the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta converted the Pañcavaggiyas into his discipleship and again delivered to them the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta. Then Buddha accompanied by them passed from Isipatana to Benaras and there converted persons like Yasa, a son of rich man who along with family members became laydevotees, Yasa's four friends, fifty other friends. With these sixty one monks including Buddha himself the Bhikhu-saṅgha was formed. Buddha wanted to propagate his religion far and wide. From the Vinaya Piṭaka we come to know that he sent out the monks in different directions to preach his teachings and he himself moved towards Magadha and converted three Jaṭila ascetics, Nadī Kassapa Gayākassapa and Uruvela Kassapa along with one thousand disciples at Uruvela by delivering to them the Ādittapriyāya Sutta. Then Buddha and his large number of followers proceeded to Rājagaha. The king Bimbisāra accompanied by his ministers, courtiers met Buddha who admonished and converted them as lay devotees. At the request of the king he accepted ceremonially the Vaṇuvana Vihāra, the first monastery for residence of monks. Buddha ordained many disciples of whom the most distinguished were Sāriputta, Moggallāna and, Mahākassapa.

During his missionary life Buddha came to Magadha for many times, stayed there and delivered discourses. Of the remarkable achievements of Buddha in Magadha mention may be made of his converting the adherents

of the rival preachers like Sañjaya Paribbājaka, devotee of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta (Mahāvira), etc. as well as the most orthodox brahmins.

While staying at Rājagaha Buddha received several invitations from the king Suddhodana to pay visit to his native town of Kapilavatthu. Buddha with retinue went there and converted the whole royal family with other noted Śākyaṇs. He ordained there the distinguished disciples like Ānanda, Anuruddha, Upāli, Devadatta, Rāhula, etc. It was Anāthapiṇḍika at whose invitation, Buddha went to Sāvatti (Skt. Śrāvastī), capital of Kosalan kingdom under king Prasenajit (Pali Pasenadi). Anāthapiṇḍika purchased the Jetavana Park at high cost and constructed a large monastery called Jetavana Vihara which was the biggest resort of monks and presented to Buddha. In Kosala Buddha spent a greater part of his missionary career, delivered the largest number of discourses, Jātakas and Vinaya rules. According to Nalinaksa Dutt, 'on scanning the names of places in the Pali Nikāyas, it appears that Sāvatti was the scene of the largest number of discourses, the next place in importance being Rājagaha, Vesāli (Skt. Vaiśālī) and Kapilavatthu may be counted as the third and fourth localities of importance though the number of discourses delivered at these places is comparatively much less. At the other centres very few discourses have been delivered' (Early Monastic Buddhism I, 135).

Buddha thus wandered about from town to town, village to village and janapadas to janapadas through out the vast area of Central and Northern India again and again for long forty five years to propagate his mission of life to save humanity from worldly suffering and to achieve supreme bliss of Nibbāna.

By his commanding personality, power of debate, strength of super sensual vision and excellent technique of proselytizing he gained very soon patronage of kings nobles, rich men and also wide-spread popularity among common men and women. During Buddha's life time Buddhist Saṅgha was firmly established in the almost all mahājanapadas of Majjhimadesa (Mid-India) covering the area of aṅga-Magadha (modern state of Bihar) in the east, Kuru-Pañchala (Delhi-Hariyana) in the west, Sakya-Malla (Gorakhpura and Nepal border) in the north and Vamśa-Surasena (Allahabad and Mathurā) in the South.

Naturally various spoken dialects as vehicle of expression were current in different parts or localities of India. Vedic language, however, remained as medium of instruction in education of the students of upper castes especially of the Brahmins to compose the śāstras and mantras. For the proper appreciation of his teachings and popularity of religion, Buddha adopted the vernacular dialect of people of all grades and localities as medium of instruction,



Moreover, the Bhikhu Saṅgha, the community of monks living in a monastery (Vihāra) especially during the rainy season (Vassāvāsa) was like a school made of different forms or classes representing different grades of talent, maturity and progress in studies. The Bhikkhus also differed from one another in other respects, hailing from different parts of the country, they differed in their dialects, besides, differing in lineage, birth and family. The junior monks got their lessons under senior monks and positively they discussed and studied through the medium of language intelligible to both the Teacher and the taught.

It is certain that Buddha did not allow Veda-dialect as the medium of instruction to learn his teachings which is evident from a passage of the Vinaya Cullavagga (P. 139): 'teṇa kho pana samayena yamalutekulā, nāma bhikkhū dve bhātikā honti brāhmaṇajātikā kalyāṇavācā kalyāṇavākkaraṇā. Te yena bhagavā, tena upasaṅkamimṣu, upasaṅkamitvā bhagavantam abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisidimṣu, ekamantaṃ nisinnā kho te bhikkhū bhagavantam etad avocum: etarahi bhante bhikkhū nānānāmā nānāgottā nānājaccā nānākulā pabbajilā, te sakāya niruttiyā buddhavacanaṃ dūsentī, handa mayaṃ bhante buddhavacanaṃ chandaso āropemāti, Vigarahi Buddho Bhagavā, Kathaṃ hi nāma tumhe moghapurisā evaṃ vakkhatha: handa mayaṃ bhante buddhavacanaṃ chandaso āropemāti etam, moghapurisā appasanna pasādāya, pasannānamabhiyy-obhāvāya-bhikkhū amantesi, Na bhikkhave buddhavacanaṃ chandaso āropetavvaṃ, yo āropeyya āpatti dukkaṭassa. Anujānāmi bhikkhava, sakāya niruttiyā buddhavacanaṃ pariyāpknitum 'ti, the passage may be translated into English thus - at that time the two brothers who were bhikkhus of the yamalutekula, were of brahmin origin, excelling in speech and excelling in good pronunciation. They approached Buddha where he was and having approached the Blessed one, saluted him and sat on one side. Those bhikkhus who were seated on one side spoke to the Blessed One thus, 'Venerable sir, these Bhikkhus, who embraced pabbajjā, possess different names and are of different lineages, births and families. They are polluting the Buddha's words (Buddhavacana) by preaching them in their own local dialects. And now, Venerable sir, we shall render the Buddha's words into Chandaso'. But the Buddha rebuked them thus, 'how you foolish persons speak thus: And now venerable we shall render the Buddha's words into Chandasa'. At this those persons who are not pleased towards religion will not be pleased and the faith of those who are pleased, will not increase. O bhikkhus, you should not render the words of Buddha into Chandasa, whoever does so he commits the offence of misdeed. O bhikkhus, I allow you to learn and promulgate the teachings of Buddha (Buddhavacana) through the medium of sakānirutti.'

The great Pali Commentator Buddhaghosa interprets the term *chandasa* in the sense of the Sanskrit language which served as a diction of the Vedas (*Vedaṃ viya Sakkata bhāsāya vācanāmaggaṃ*). He has taken the term *chandasa* indiscriminately as a synonym for Sanskrit language 'But we know that the term *Sanskṛitabhāṣā* is of later origin, we mean later than the time of Buddha and Pāṇini. In Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī bhāṣā* (i.e. Sanskrit language) is divided into Vedic (*Vaidika*) and current (*laukika*) and by the term *chandasa*, Pāṇini meant the Vedic language as distinguished from the current form of Sanskrit. With Buddha *Chandasa* or Vedic language was the proto-type of languages that had become archaic and obsolete, dead as distinguished from living speech' (B.C. Law, *History of Pali literature, Part-I, Introduction*). The other term *sakānirutti* is explained by Buddhaghosa as signifying that form of the *Māgadhaka* dialect which was used by Buddha himself (*ettha sakāniruttināma saṃmāsambuddhena vutta-ppakāro Māgadhaka Vohāro-Samantapāsādikā, Cullavagga Commentary, Sinhalese edition, P-306*). It is clear that Buddhaghosa has taken the term *sakānirutti* as synonym for the *Māgadhī* dialect used as a medium of instruction (*Vācanāmagga*) by Buddha. In this connection it should be mentioned here that it is in commentaries and *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa and *Cūlavamsa*, a later supplement to the Cylonese chronicle *Mahāvamsa* the term Pali came to be regarded as a synonym for *Buddhavacana*, *Tripitaka*, *Tanti* and *Pariyatti*. The transition from Pali the text to Pali the language came about by a natural process. The language of Pali was characterised by them as *Māgadhīnirutti* or the *Magadhi* idiom or which was held out by the commentators as a word of praise, claiming thereby that the *Māgadhī* idiom of the Pali texts was the primary speech of all men. (*Sā Māgdhimūlabhāsā narānaṃ ādikappikā*).

"The story of *Māgadhīnirutti* is a pure invention of the theas of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), if not exactly that of Buddhaghosa. It is a matter of curiosity how this myth had originated and gradually established to mislead even the modern scholars of the East and the West, at least some of whom opined that Buddha preached his religion in old *Māgadhī*. One will look in vain through all the canonical texts and other early Buddhist writings for any hint to imagine that *Māgadhī* was the dialect used by Buddha as a sole medium of expression and that he had used no other dialect as medium of instruction." We have mentioned above that the great reformer Buddha propagated his religion not only in *Anga Magadha* but also in *Kāśi-Kosala* and other *mahājanapadas* of India. *Śrāvastī* was the centre where Buddha spent the largest number of rainy seasons (*Vassā*), delivered largest number of discourses (*sūtras*), *Jātakas* and formulated *Vinaya* rules. So it is not a sufficient reason to maintain that the

Māgadhika form of speech was the language of Buddha and that of the Buddhist canon (Tripitaka). It is beyond our idea how Buddhaghosa went so far as to suggest that by the term *sakānirutti*, Buddha meant his own medium of instruction and nothing but Māgadhika or the Māgadhi dialect. The rational thinker like Buddha could not hold such an opinion which is irrational, erroneous and dogmatic. To express that Māgadhi is the only correct form of speech for the promulgation of his teachings and every other dialect would be incorrect form is an erroneous opinion which the Buddha would ever fight shy of, Buddhaghosa has misled us all. We should rightly interpret the injunction of the Buddha ‘*Anujānāmi bhikkhave sakāya niruttiyā Buddhavacanam pariyāpunitum*’, i.e., I allow you, O monks, to learn the word of Buddha each in own language’ (M. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, 11, pp. 60-3).

“The term *Sakānirutti* just means a mode of expression which a member of the Buddhist Saṅgha might claim as his own, that is to say, an idiom, a language or a vehicle of expression with which a bhikkhu was conversant, which a person could easily use with advantage, a mode of expression which might be regarded as own by the bhikkhus representing diverse names, cultures, races and families, Buddha did not intend to restrict the study and elucidations of his teachings to any particular dialect, consistently with the general tenor of his thoughts and teachings, we may interpret his injunction as implying that avoiding a language which has become dead, archaic and obsolete, one should use with advantage a, language with which one is really conversant. We say that in rightly interpreting Buddha’s injunction in the Cullavagga of the Vinaya Pitaka, ‘I allow you, monks, to learn the word of Buddha (Buddhavacana) each in own language’, the guidance is not to be taken so much from Buddhaghosa’s commentary as from the canonical texts themselves.”

Though the Bhikkhus, hailing from diverse localities (Janapadas) and speaking diverse local dialects and allowed by Buddha to learn Buddhavacana each in his own dialect, as a result the system might not be impediment for religious discussion or doctrinal explanations of the monks with each other in the Saṅgha, Buddha warned bhikkhus that undue importance should not attach to the dialect of particular Janapada (*Janapadaniruttiṃ nābhiniveseyya*), i.e., a monk should be accommodating to dialectical variations but not insist upon the use of a particular word. It is stated in a passage of the Araṇavibhaṅga Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya, the translation of the Pali passage is that ‘the local forms should merit too much attention, the local designation should not be stressed too much. Thus it is said, ‘Why is it thus said? How, O Bhikkhus, a man pays too much attention to the local forms (*Janapadanirutti*), and lays

too much stress on the local designation? Here, O monks, it so happens that in some locality a thing is known by the name of Pātī, in some by the name of Patta, in some by the name of Vittha, in some by the name of Sarāva, in some by the name of Dhāropa, in some by the name of Pona and in some by the name of Pisila. Now the people of different localities pay too much attention and lay too much stress on the different names of same word and boastfully say regarding their own form, for the word : This is the only correct form, and others are incorrect.' Thus a man, O monks, pays too much attention to the local forms and lays too much stress on the local designations. How, O monks, a man does not pay too much attention to the local forms and does not lay too much stress on local designations? Here, O monks, it so happens that .... Pisila. Now a man of particular locality, when he is in other localities where different names of the same thing are in vogue, knowing that in different localities different names of the same thing are used conventionally by the gentlemen, uses different names in different localities without any attachment to his own local form. Thus a man does not pay too much attention to the local forms and does not lay stress on the local designations. 'Accordingly, it is stated that the local forms should not merit too much attention and the local designation should not be stressed too much.

From the quotations of Vinaya Cullavagga and Araṇavibhaṅga Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya it is clear that Buddha allowed the monks to learn and promulgate Buddha's teachings (Buddhavacana) through the medium of each in his own dialect but not through the medium of Veda dialect (Chandasa) and at the same time he instructed them not to lay too much attachment to particular dialect or designation and should utilise, if necessary, different words of same meaning in different dialects to avoid disadvantage in religious discussions or exchange of views of the bhikkhus hailing from diverse grades, diverse localities, etc. and they discussed all religious and other matters in a common language with some local variations intelligible to all members. Most probably Buddha himself spoke the dialect of his native Province Kosala including Sakya Kingdom and in the same dialect he first began to proclaim his doctrine. Later on, however, when he wandered and propagated Dhamma in Aṅga-Magadha, Kuru Panchala, Maccha-Surasena, etc. he probably preached in the dialects of those provinces (mahājanapadas) using local words when it was necessary. It is certain that the language of words of Buddha (Buddhavacana) is not Vedic or Laukka Sanskrit rather it is a common dialect intelligible to people of different provinces.

The Grammarians have named this common dialect 'Prakṛta' and the

modern scholars have classified it as Middle Indo-Aryan group of languages which were divided into various forms including literary and inscriptional Prakrits but all having common characteristics with variations distinguished from Vedic and Sanskrit which are called Old Indo-Aryan. Probably from the time of Buddha and Mahāvira (Sixth century B.C.) and some what earlier some of these colloquial dialects began to develop into rich literary languages due to continual religious and philosophical discussions and literary activities by the jainas, Buddhists, Paribrājakas, Ājīvkas, etc. who travelled all over Northern and Central India throughout the year, so we easily infer that a common lingua franca was current in India though there were various local dialects in different parts of the country. It is proved by the language of Asokan inscriptions engraved on rocks and pillars in 3rd century B.C. Inscriptions of Aśoka were found in vast area of his empire from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka in the south to Nepal border and N.W.F. Province in Pakistan to the north, from Bihar in the east to Gujrat and Rajathan in the West. The language of these inscriptions is Prakrit and if these were unintelligible to people, the emperor did not engrave them. He used Greek and aramaic dialects intelligible to local people at Kandahar in Afghanistan and used Kharosthi script instead of Brāhmi at North Western Frontier Province in Pakistan.

The linguistic form of the Buddhavacana comprising probably of a great mass of short texts, rules of conduct, speeches, dialogues, aphorisms in verse, even minor collection of texts which were regularly memorised and recited by the monks and the wise desciples of Buddha and others, by discussions and expounding the doctrine and disciplines, arrangement and grammatical modifications, developed into a completely composite literary form. As the date of literary evidence is uncertain, it is not sufficient enough to furnish us the exact linguistic form of the Buddhavacana, rather the epigraphic records, of the 3rd century B. C. may shed light on obscurity and thus corroborating to the literary evidence give us scope to have glimpse of original form. Of the epigraphic records one is the inscriptions of Aśoka of which we may cite here as an example, the Bhabru edict which runs thus:

1. Prlyadasi lājā Māgadāho saṃghaṃ abhivādetunaṃ āhā apābādhatam ca phāsuvihalaṃ cā, 2. Vidite e bhaṃte āvatake hamā Budhasi dhammasi saṃghasi ti gālave caṃ prasāde ca e keci bhaṃte. 3. bhagavatā Budhena bhāsīte sarve se subhāsīte vā e cu kho bhaṃte hamiyāya diseyā hevaṃ sadhamṃe. 4. Cilathitike hosati ti alahāmi hakaṃ taṃ vātave imāni bhaṃte dhamma-Paliyāyāni Vinaya samukase. 5. Aliyavāsāni Anāgata bhayāni. Munigāthā Moneya sute upatisa pasine e Cā Laghulo vāde 6. musā-vādaṃ adhigicya bhagavata Budhena bhāsīte etāni bhaṃte dhammapaliyāyāni ichāmi 7. kiṃti

bahuke bhikhupāye ca bhikhuniye cā abhikhiṇaṃ suneyu cā upadhālayeyu cā  
 8. hevaṃmevā upāsakā cā upāsikā cā etāni bhaṃte imam likhāpayāmi  
 abhipretaṃ me jānmatū ti, i.e. The Magadha king Priyadarsin, having saluted  
 the order, said: I wish you health and welfare. It is known to you venerable  
 Sirs, how far goes my veneration for and sincere faith in the Buddha, the  
 Doctrine and the order. Whatever, venerable Sirs, is addressed by Buddha  
 Blessed one is well addressed indeed. What, however, venerable Sirs, suggests  
 to me. 'Thus will the Good Faith long enduring,' that I consider proper to  
 declare - These, venerable Sirs, are texts of the Doctrine;

1. The Vinaya Exalted
2. The course of conduct followed by the sages modes of ideal life.
3. The future Dangers (of faith)
4. The Poem on Muni
5. The Discourse on Quietude.
6. The Questions of Upatisya.
7. The Admonition to Rāhula which was addressed by Buddha the  
 Blessed one concerning falsehood.

I wish, venerable Sirs, that many monks and nuns shall constantly hear  
 and bear in mind these texts of the Doctrine; so else shall the lay worshippers,  
 male and female. For this purpose, venerable sirs, I cause this to be written,  
 that they will know my intention (Inscriptions of Asoka, Translation and  
 glossary, by B. M. Barua, P. 25). Bhabru Edict proves Asoka's deep knowledge  
 in Buddhist literature and sincere faith in the greatness of Buddha, Damma  
 and Saṅgha.

In his Asoka and his Inscriptions - Part - II Chapter - IV, Dr. Benimadhab  
 Barua says : They epigraphas read as so many autobiographical sketches of  
 Aśoka. In going through them one is apt to feel that they were written either  
 to his dictation or, at any rate, under his direction. Thus they are intended  
 to reproduce and preserve the very words of the Maurya emperor. So far as  
 their phraseology and style go, they are very closely related to the Pali  
 Discourses of the Buddha. There is no other recorded literary tradition which  
 so wonderfully fits in with them. And this alone may suffice to indicate that  
 none was, perhaps, more steeped in the knowledge of the Buddhavacana than  
 Asoka, that none drank deeper at that fountain of inspiration. Dr. Barua  
 furnishes us the list of phrases in Buddhavacana and similar correspondings  
 in Asokavacana (inscriptions), cites Mr. S. N. Mitra's List of parallels and  
 remarks that, 'The Buddhavacana and Aśokavacana show a very close

correspondence as regards the construction of sentences, so much so that one cannot help regarding former as literary basis of the latter' gain he remarks (Ch.v) that 'We have seen that the style or diction of Aśokavacana in prakrit is closely akin to that of Buddhavacana in Pali. The phrases and idioms were mostly prose adaptations from gāthās and ślokas, in short, traditional verses, such as those preserved in the Pali Nikāyas including the Jātakas.'

Another inscription on a stone vase containing relics of Buddha was discovered by W. Claton Peppe in 1898 from Piprahawa in Vasti district of Uttar Pradesh records : Sukiti - bhatinaṃ Sabhaginika-namiyam salila-nidhane budhasa bhagavate Sakīyanam, i.e. This relics of Lord Buddha, the Sakyas along with brothers, sisters and children (journal of the royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1898, pp. 573-78). This inscription is written in Brahmi Script, the language is Prakrit contemporaneous to the time of Aśoke and is akin to Buddhavacana (Haraprasad Sastri, Granthāvali, Part- III, p. 549), Buddha's preference for provincial dialect (Sākānirutti) as medium of instruction is responsible for the growth of piṭakas in later days in different languages when after the Second Buddhist Council Buddhist Saṅgha was gradually divided into several sects who developed and compiled their scriptures in different languages originally based on Buddhavacana. Of them the language of the literatures of the Haimavatas, and the Kāśyapiyas is not known to us, because they are extant only in Chinese translation, originals being lost. Considering language of the Prakrit Dharmapada discovered from Central Asia similar to that of Asoka Edicts of North-Western India, we think the Dharmagupta sect adopted Prakrit dialect of that area. The Piṭakas of the Sammitiya and the Mahāsaṅghika sects were composed in mixed Sanskrit with abundant use of Prakrit. Early texts of the Sarvāstivāda and Mahāyāna are composed in mixed Sanskrit and later on in pure Sanskrit. There is close similarity in contents and arrangement between Sanskrit Piṭaka and the Pali Tripiṭaka which is the most complete and is the contribution of the Theravāda which spread all over South East Asia. Thus Buddha made a radical departure from the ancient Indian custom of recording the scriptures in particular language, and this can well be pointed out as one of the causes of the success of Buddhism.

# The Image of Buddha in Rāmchandra Kabi Bhāratī's 'Bhaktisatakam'

*Asha Das*

Ramchandra Kabi Bharati was a great creative thinker of Buddhism whose text-books and commentaries were a valuable contribution to Buddhist scholarship. He was a Brahmin by birth. The Siṃhalese commentator of his work says that he was born in Bengal at his native village 'Vīravatī', in that part of Varendra which lies close to Rāḍh i.e. he was an inhabitant of either Maldah or Rajshahi. Pandit Haraprasad Sastri says that the author belonged to the Katyayana gotra of the Brāhmanaṣas of Bengal. From the very childhood he earned proficiency in all the branches of ancient literature viz. Śruti, Epic, Astrology, Drama etc. including all kinds of verses and rhetoric. He was also renowned as one well-versed in Logic, Grammar and various other sciences and Hindu Mythology.

Pandit Haraprasad Sastri says that, we know from the early Bengali literature that the memory of coastal Voyages from Bengal to Ceylon in fleets navigated by Bengali boatsmen still survived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Rāmchandra Kabi Bhāratī might have gone to Ceylon in one of these fleets. The Bengali writers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries speak of Ceylon as still inhabited by Rākshasas and ruled by Vibhīṣaṇas. This shows that as to actual knowledge of Ceylon there was none. This is an additional argument for throwing the date of Rāmchandra Kabi Bhāratī back to twelfth century. It is therefore certain that in the middle of the 13th century he left for Ceylon from his native place and lived there. At that time Ceylon was the centre for cultivation of knowledge and culture in Buddhism. It is likely that Rāmchandra's thirst for knowledge in Buddhism was the cause of his departure from India although some maintain the view that he was driven out from his native place on ground of his change of religion from Hinduism to Buddhism. Ramchandra all along kept himself silent on this issue. But he did never lose his regard for his native country nor did he ever forget to be proud of being identified himself as a Bengalee.

Parākramabāhu<sup>1</sup> was the King of Ceylon when Rāmchandra Kabi Bhāratī went there. Parākramabahu was religious minded, vastly learned and always devoted to the well being of his subjects. He cordially received Rāmchandra and adorned him as the poet laureate in his royal court which was at that



time predominated by the world famous poet Śrī Rāhul<sup>2</sup> who was conversant with all sacred scriptures. Śrī Rāhul was then the head of all learned men and astrologers in Ceylon. Not only was he regarded as the God-master of six languages, but also as the God-master of three Piṭakas. His 'Panchi-kapradip' 'Padasāadhan' and 'Buddhipasadhini' which are grammar and commentary books and the poetry book like 'Kaliyasekar', 'saleḷihini', 'Sandesh' and 'Pratap Sandesh' on Ceylonese language are his mentionable contribution. Rāmchandra was very much attracted to Śrī Rāhul for his remarkable knowledge and character and took Śrī Rāhul as his preceptor and earned erudition and complete authority over Buddhism. This proficiency led him to be fully devoted to Buddha and Buddhism and ultimately made him a devotee and worshipper of Buddha.

Kabi Bhārati wrote three famous books in Ceylon, viz. 'Bhaktiśatakam', 'Vṛittamāla' and 'Vṛittaratnākarapañchikā', According to reverend Haraprasad Shastri who collected old manuscripts in Sanskrit for 40 years, no original Sanskrit books written in 13th & 14th centuries could be found out. Kabi Bhārati's 'Bhaktiśatakam' written in 13th century in Sanskrit thus is an exception. 'Bhaktiśatakam' consists of more than hundred verses (107 verses) in different rhymes denoting full religious devotion. The poet offered his books to King Parākrambahu. The king was so highly pleased with the composition that he ornamented the poet with the title 'Boudhāgamchakraborty' (i.e. chief ruler of Buddhism or the great worshipper of all-knowing Lord Śākya Muni) engraved in a golden plate with jewels and pearls. The poet was even inaugurated as the Minister to the King afterwards.

'Bhaktiśatakam' occupies special place as poems composed in hundred verses expressing full devotion to religion? These poems denote the sound of intense desire for divinity and indifference to the worldly affairs coming out from the very core of the Poet's soul. The poet's dedication to divinity and his thrust for liberation are the main characteristics of these poems.

In the branch of devout poetries of hundred verses composed by other poets, Rāmchandra's 'Bhaktiśatakam' is considered to be the unparalleled contribution because of the spontaneous note of the Poet's self dedication and renunciation. The Bhaktiśatakam has the ring of the best of the Śatakas and does not yield to any in the depth of feeling to which it gives expression. The Sanskrit poets in their Poetry books belonging to this kind of poetry of hundred verses are found to have composed poems in the old stereotyped way of old Sanskrit poetry wherein worldly desire and enjoyment of earthly goods surpassed their desire for liberation or the purpose of composition for a particular sect is predominated. Rāmchandra Kabi Bhārati applied new methods

and style which flowed spontaneously from the dedicated soul of the poet to the feet of Lord Buddha. The works of famous poets like Mayūr's 'Mayūrāṣṭakam' and 'Sūryaśatakam' or Bāṇa's 'Chandīśatakam' or Bhartihari's composition are no doubt of much higher standard than that of Rāmchandra's 'Bhaktiśatakam' but 'Bhaktiśatakam' excelled works of all these poets by its sincere, deep and restrained emotion of self dedication. Besides, 'Bhaktiśatakam' brings metrical varieties in the wave of rhymes by dividing them sometimes into two and sometimes into three rows with the help of pauses and middle alliterations. Every stanza of every verse of this book is like a flower blooming from the depth of the sea of self dedication, sublimity and renunciation of the poet from the sphere of the earth to the divine feet of Buddha.

Viśuddhānanda Mahāsthvir wrote that like Arjun who could see nothing other than the eye of the bird which was his only aim, Rāmchandra could see nothing but 'Buddha' in this world. A question arises if Rāmchandra's devotion was devoid of reasons. But his was the rare combination of devotion with reasoning and wisdom with love. And this rare combination springs forth the best of which is expressed in the 14th verse of 'Bhaktiśatakam' as below:-

'Tribhubanam Sakrinnirupya Yusmāt

Padasarasīruhareṇumāsri tohaham'. (No. 14)

... that is by ransacking times without number the heaven and the heaven and the earth, the poet took shelter into the dust of the feet of Lord Buddha. After examining the three worlds again, I have taken refuge with the dust of the lotus of your foot, this is my refuge, this is my God, I have no alternative, none, to be sure, none.

In the biographies like the 'Jātakanidānkathā', the 'Lalitavistar' and the 'Buddhacharit' of Aśwa Ghosh we find bright image of Buddha. But Rāmchandra did not follow this path. In 'Bhaktiśatakam' he painted the image of Buddha in the background of his self dedication and tranquility by quenching his thirst of inquisitiveness of his mind and thereby making the original image of Buddha more beautiful and divine. His Buddha is that divinity from which wisdom is spread over every thing, whose message is unimpeachable, who is above all temptations and malice and whose kindness to living things is immeasurable. His Buddha in one hand is eternal, omniscient, all pervasive, serene, blue-naked like God Śiva, non decaying, incorporeal like Brahmā of 'Upaniṣad and in another hand is a beloved god like Kṛiṣṇa of 'Bhāgavat Geetā loving humanity with his immeasurable kindness. 'Bhaktiśatakam' combines

Monothesim of Upaniṣad with the devotional method for communion with God like Kṛiṣṇa-Bāsudev.

Kabi Bhārati's self dedication to Buddha is a light-house that focuses to the human sea-the path of life. There is not a drop of artificiality in Rāmchandra's devotion; a splendour is coming out from his steady and undoubted faith of self realization and self dedication to Buddha. In the desert of intellectual search after divine truth in Buddhism about transitoriness on ever-lastingness of human soul, Rāmchandra acted like Bhagīrath by bringing forth the stream of devotion and dedication inviting the humanity for bathing into this loving stream for attainment of salvation.

According to the learned council there is no mention of the word like 'devotion' in Vedic literature. They state that 'devotion' took its birth in mythological age i.e. in 'Puraṇas'. In 'Maṇḍuk' Upaniṣad the aim of a devotee is to attain only the grace of God. In 'Taittiriya' Upaniṣad God is full of love. 'Setaswetar' Upaniṣad first mentions the word like 'devotion'.

After the spiritualism in Upaniṣad we find Buddhism was considered to be a severe blow upon Brahmanical religion. But this blow gave rise to new efforts leading to revival of Brahmanical religion in a new method. Bhāgabat Geetā is a testimony to this firm step where Arjun could not bear Kṛiṣṇa's Viṣwarūp and devotion arose within himself in place of friendly feeling for Kṛiṣṇa.

Thus devotion germinated in Śreemat Bhāgabat Geetā and ultimately in that sea of devotion Śrī Chaitanya blossomed as a hundred petalled lotus. It has to be analysed to what extent the flow of devotion as we find in Upaniṣad, and Śreemat Bhagabat Geetā influenced 'Bhaktiśatakam'. Devotion in Upaniṣad never flowed centring any particular God or superman. This devotion was indiscriminating love for God, eagerness of the dedication of the individual soul for the supreme spirit but not for any relationship between the devotee and the supreme being. This devotion can be defined as devotion for Monotheism or attributelessness. In Śreemat Bhāgabat Geetā the possibility of descendance of supreme power in the earth as superman in ages after ages according to the need for upliftment of degenerated humanity has been declared. Rāmchandra's 'Bhaktiśatakam' embraces these two different channels of devotion i.e. Monotheism in one side and dualism in another.

Rāmchandra was wise and thoughtful; -a poet and a philosopher. He studied Buddha-philosophy with fully deep concentration. His subject for study never ended in scholarshipism. His erudition was cooked with his pensiveness. The structure of 'Bhaktiśatakam' is of form and theory, its flesh and blood

are of poetry and its soul is of full devotion and self dedication. It is a combination of three channels, that is, theory, poetry and devotion. Rāmchandra remained a poet even in his theory and forms.

## References

1. Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasād Śāstri in his note on Bhaktiśatakam says - "My friends (Simhalese) place him in the reign of Parākramavāhu VI (?) who belonged to the fifteenth century just before advent of the Portuguese. They say that Buddhism was perfectly unknown then in Bengal. How could Rāmchandra get a knowledge of it in that country? Even though this chronology be correct, there was no difficulty for Rāmchandra to have learnt Buddhism at home. From Bendall's Cambridge catalogue of Buddhist Manuscripts it appears that Buddhist works used to be copied in North Bengal so late as the year 1473, and Buddhism flourished in all its glory in Nepal. Buddhists are mentioned in Vaiṣṇava literature, and Jagannāth Pandits' 'Deśāvari Vibriti' written about 270 years ago, gives an account, though legendary, of the conquests of the Eastern Peninsula and Bengal by a Buddhist King named Sumati Chandra.

I would rather like to place him in the reign of Parākramavāhu III, by the latter end of the thirteenth century. Though Bengal was at that time conquered by the Muhammadans, still there were everywhere independent Hindu Kings wielding authority over their co-religionists. Buddhism was then still lingering in its ancient seats of Gaya and Nalanda. It was about this time that Sulapani, the great founder of the Bengal school flourished.

Mr. Hirendranath Datta in his note also says that - 'It seems that Pandit Rāmchandrābharati made his acquaintance with Śrī Rāhula at Coṭṭa. We have heard of several learned men who arrived in Ceylon from time to time, where they spent their days, receiving great honours from Simhalese Kings. Although we do not know exactly in what years this illustrious Pandit arrived in Ceylon, yet it appears from his book, 'Vṛtharatnākara Pañchikā' that it was compiled in Ceylon in the year 1999, i.e. 438 years ago, i.e. 1455 A.D.' (Journal and Text of the Buddhist Text Society of India, S.C. Das, Part III, Vol. I, 1893). But unfortunately the fact is that his age can not be fixed with any certainty with the data before us. We must patiently wait till further light is thrown on the subject.

2. In the 'Vṛtharatnākara Pañchika' Pandit Rāmchandra-kabi bhārati says :-

श्रीमद्हुलपादतीस्त्रकाचार्य्याद्गुरोर्निर्मल.....

This commentary was written by a proficient in all the sciences, who having learnt the good law of Buddha under the Venerable Śrī Rāhula - Teacher of the Three Piṭakas, followed the three Guides, and received from his Majesty

the King (Parākramavāha) of Ceylon, the title of 'Buddhāgama Chakravartī'. - The poetical genius and literary career of Śrī Rāhula Saṅgha Rāja made him famous both in Ceylon and in other countries. At the time of his arrival in Ceylon Śrī Rāhula was living at Coṭṭa, although his permanent residence was at the Vijayabāhu Parivena of Tottagamuwa. He was known by several names, such as 'Principal of Vijayabāhu Parivena' (College), 'Chief of Tottagamu Vihāra', 'Vāchissara' (a title given by Parākramabahu at his installation as the Chief of all the monks in the Island) and 'Śrī Rāhula' as he was called by his tutor.

In the Vṛttaratnākara Pañchikā (a commentary on 'Vṛttaratnākara' by Pandit Śrī Kedar (Bhatta) the poet writes :-

राहुलनामा मुनिरिति विद्वान्

May it happen that the virtuous Śrī Rāhula - a profound scholar, having a thorough knowledge of the Three Piṭakas - like unto the moon shining above the (milky) ocean like Maurya race, that they may be my friend in all my subsequent births:

it has been heard that Śrī Rāhula belonged to the Mauryya race, which was a sub-division of the Śākya race. As the prince of this race, who arrived in Ceylon, was in the habit of invoking the blessings of the diety Skandha, it became famous by the name, 'Skandhavāra race'. Hence it has been mentioned in some books that Śrī Rāhula was born in the 'Skandhavāra race' which is identical with the Mauryya race.

# Buddhism and the Environment in Assam

*Bela Bhattachary*

Assam stands in one of the remarkable migration routes right from the early period of history. In the process Assam stretched out her bountiful arms to receive without reservation people coming from alien countries during several centuries like the Indo-Chinese, Mongolia, Tibet and Burma (Myanmar). This huge migration of people to Assam moulded the cultural life of the then aboriginals in no small measure. Incidentally, the earliest inhabitants of the region were kirats followed by the thrust of Aryans coming from the west. As a result of this mingling, a new mode of living emerged. Assam was conspicuous in acting as a melting pot where different ethnic groups of diverse culture came and were assimilated in the local way of life. Thus rigidity of caste system saw an end and the resulting culture may be termed as Assamese culture. Very little is, however, known to the historians till the fourth century A.D. when the Varmans assumed power. Speaking of the period during the administration of the Varmans even, historical, archaeological epigraphic evidences are absolutely scanty to reach a definite conclusion as to the state of affairs obtaining in the period in question. What help to some extent in ascertaining the undated history of ancient Assam are the neoliths, megaliths and pottery. These throw some light on Pre-Aryan and non-Aryan elements. Some epigraphs although speak of grand structures erected in the period a complete absence of any structures in its original form baffles historians and researches greatly. Assam contributed to enjoy her independent existence right upto the time the British interrupted and held the rein of power there. This resulted in losing out Assam's regional identity to some extent as she joined the Indian main stream.

Nature has showered all her beauties on Assam. Because of favourable natural phenomena, plant life has grown there abundantly. Along with thick forests sheltering animals of various kind, hills, valleys, falls and rivers are plentiful in numbers. Assam is thus blessed with rich and variegated flora and fauna. Apart from the picturesque view one gets all the material value of several trees and herbs here is quite high which has, accordingly, added to the economic prosperity of the region. Besides this abundant flora, the forest regions contain a number of animals like one-horned rhinoceros, wild buffaloes, Himalayan bear, black panthers, different kinds of monkeys and deers, pigmyhog, yellow

primula and so on. Reputation of kiziranga wild life sanctuary goes on attracting tourists from all over the world.

Coming to the subject of social divisions in ancient Assam, one finds prevalence of varnasrama dharma there and the Brahmanas enjoying a privileged position in society. The duty of Brahmanas was not confined to diffusing learning only but included other preoccupations too. These Brahman's aim was to propagate Aryanism through the existing varnasram system and establish the supremacy of their royal patrons. But in due course, Brahmins had to yield much of their hegemony and arrive at some sort of a compromise with the non-Aryan, tribals of the region who were opposed to the Brahmanic missions. It may be recalled that one unique feature in Assamese life in that hoary past which was seen to a lesser extent elsewhere in India, was the remarkable transformation of Aryan culture to be in harmony with the local non-Aryan life having distinctive taste, spiritual belief, their own aspirations, perception and temperament.'

Assam had several names in the early part of history. Pragjyotishpur, Kamrup, Vaishali etc. The details of process, how Pragjyotishpur took the name of Kamrup, are not conclusively available. The epigraphical evidence of royal kingdom of Assam is found in the Allahabad rock inscription of Samudragupta (336-376 A.D.). The founder of the royal dynasty is known as Pushya Varaman. (355-380 A.D.), who solicited help from Samudragupta to fight against Bajradutt, the king of Pragjyotishpur. The last king of this dynasty is said to be Bhaskarvarman. After 910 A.D. Chaotic conditions prevailed. During this period of turmoil, certain influential chieftain of Aryan origin gave a death blow to Kamrup kingdom.

Ahoms invaded the reign circa 1226 A.D. and the event can be considered to have far-reaching consequences and following a series of aggressive ventures, annexed almost the entire old kingdom of Kamrup.

The fall of Ahoms is marked by the violent revolt of the Moamari in 1769 A.D. After series of wars fought between rival power, the British in 1826 A.D. finally took over the administration of Assam and there after further annexations followed. The state reorganization committee, in 1954, made some recommendation which were not acceptable to the hill people. As a consequence, quite a few political knits emerged such as Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Manipur, Divided Assam lost a lot of territory in the process. These development were not quite unthought of. Undivided Assam was a polyglot and multiethnic state having ethnic groups of diverse nature who all wanted an identity of their own.

Before coming to the topic of religion in Assam, a brief discussion on different tribals in Assam may not be out of place. The Bodos (Boros) are referred to as plains-dwelling tribals of Assam. Their main concentration is seen in the Northern bank of the Brahmaputra extending upto the foot hills adjoining Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. Bodos are presumed to have hailed from Tibet and are supposed to be one of the early settlers in Asam and that appears to have taken place prior to the Indo-Aryans made their way into Assam. The original Bodo tribe is at present divided into a number of subgroups. Most of the Bodos practise traditional religion called Kairat which comprises of animism and nature-worship.

The Garos are comparatively low in number in Assam and are located in extreme north in Assam only. The distinctive feature in the Garo society is their matrilineality. Christianity is their dominant religion.

The khasis are now inhabitants of Meghalaya after division of Assam. Originally they came to Assam via Myanmar. Those Khasis who still adhere to their traditional religion worship mostly male deities. The introduction of christianity amongst khasis played an significant role in the life of khasis bringing with it a wind for changes not only in their social life but also in the domain of education and health-services.

As regards the sphere of religion in Assam, it may be said that Kamarupa associated herself to Vedic culture in remote past. Shiva-worship was also much in vogue in distant past apart from the worship of Sakti in various forms. Sun-worship too was not uncommon. Vaishnavism was also established at a later period.

A section of scholars are of the opinion that Kamarupa remained inaccessible to Buddhism by and large. But this assessment does not appear to be correct. Evidences are aplenty to testify to the prevalence of Buddhist faith even before Huen-Tsang paid a visit to the region. In this connection Sri S. L. Barua in his 'A comprehensive History of Assam, says 'Kamarupa was a stronghold of Vajrayana of Tantrik Buddhism and most of the Vajrayana Siddhas are associated with this land. The Pala kings patronised Vajrayana and some of them even acquired mastery over the lore. The wide spread prevalence of the cult is proved by the voluminous Tantrik works - dealing with magic and sorcery which were written or compiled in 'Kamrupa.'

The Gujhiyasamaja Tantra, amongst the Buddhists provides for an escape route from the strenuous path and a Sakti standing for divine inspiration for Sadhana.

Sri Pradip Sarma says in his 'Holy shrines of Assam', p. 121, 'probably



in no period of history, Buddhist faith could entrench deeply and prosper widely in the Brahmaputra Valley. Though a few archaeological evidences are there to prove that this religion made its influence felt in this region since the earlier centuries of the christian era, it was mostly restricted to a limited spots at the western districts of Assam. It is also a fact that the Theravada Buddhism gained some popularity when the Tai Ahom dynasty had their rule in Assam since early 13th century A.D. but it is confined to some locations of eastern Assam and mostly to the people who mainly migrated from Upper Myanmar to the river valleys of Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Jorhat and Golaghat.' Therefore, the Buddhist shrines that have survived in Assam are limited compared to the Hindu temples, and their popularity is limited to their followers only."

Opinion is sometimes expressed that Animism was practised by the primitive sects in Assam. In fact they believed the natural happenings like flood, lightning etc. were caused by extraneous spirits such as the sun etc. who were adored. The protective natural objects were equally worshipped. 'Shamanism' is yet another term assigned to the native religion which involves belief in gods, spirits etc.

Legends have it that Thera Sona and therā Uttara, the two missionaries were deputed to 'Suvannabhumi', It is quite probable that during their sojourn to Suvannabhumi, they travelled through Assam preferring the land route. It is equally likely that missionaries spread Buddha's message to the people of Assam also as they did it all over India. L.W. Shakespear opined that the Buddhist faith was prevalent prior to spread of Hinduism in that land. In this connection Dr. S. Sasanananda, in his 'Buddhism in Assam' p. 101, writes, 'Taranatha, well known Tibetan scholar, mentions the fact that during Emperor Asoka's reign. Thera Dhritika who first brought Buddhism to kamarupa (Assam), was a disciple of Thera Upagupta, a preceptor of Emperor Asoka. He propagated Sarvastivada Buddhism (a Buddhist sect of Southern school of Buddhism or orthodox Buddhism also known as Theravada Buddhism) in this region where he converted the rich Brahmin, Siddha, and established the religion in the land.'

As discussed above, it may be concluded Buddhism spread to this land as early as in 3rd century B.C. concrete evidences, in support of the contention, are however not available.

The earliest evidence of Buddhism in Assam is obtainable at Suryapahar area of Goalpara district where a votive stupa exists. The vihar i.e. shyamgaon Buddha Mandir, Titabar has a brick temple. Assam Buddha.vihara, Amingaon is built recently so also the case with New Guahati Buddha vihara and Pandu

Bauddha vihar, Guahati. Dichangpani vihar at Shyamgaon, Lakuwa Buddha vihar in Chalapahar and Barphavial vihar in Tinsukia district. Dibong vihar, Enthem Bauddha vihar and katateng vihar, Margheria are the other ones.

Buddhism exerted great influence over Assamese literature. The writings of Buddhist Siddhas by mostly Assamese are treated as the oldest examples of Kamarupa script. The language of Buddhist Dohas very much resemble the modern Assamese. Buddhism had a significant role as far as cultural development and environmental awareness are concerned.

Like many other regions in India, Assam too is afflicted by recurring incidence of violence and terrorism owing mainly to changed circumstances. Bodos voice their grievances over the demand for a separate Bodoland disruptive forces are active and disorder-lieness is all-pervasive.

In the present disturbing geo-political scenario, the need for carrying the message of peace and non-violence of Buddha cannot be overemphasised. A renewed endeavour has to be made therefore to reach the masses in Assam with the invaluable teachings of the great Master.

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# The Jaṭila-Kassapas and the Buddha

*Mani Kuntala Haldar (De)*

The Jaṭilas were a class of Brahmanical ascetics, so-called on account of their long matted hair<sup>1</sup> (*Jaṭila ti tāpasa, te hi jatādhāritāya idha Jaṭila ti vutta*). The conversion of the Jaṭila Kassapas is an important event in the missionary life of Buddha. It is the first big religious venture of the Master to establish his ministry. During his missionary tour through Uruvela (Gaya), Buddha came across the Jaṭilas. These Jaṭilas segregated themselves from the society and lived in forest forming a community of their own. In practice, they were fire-worshippers and adherents of *Vedic* rituals. Like the *Vedīc* ṛiṣis they eulogized the sanctity of fire which they preserved in a fire-storing house where the fire was kept burning all the time.

Although customarily they were very much sectarian, they used to help common people during draughts and distresses. For these philanthropical activities, they exercised great influence on the people who looked upon the Jaṭilas with veneration.

Having reached Uruvela, the Blessed one went to the hermitage of Uruvela Kassapa and presented himself as his guest. A Kassapa was the Head of the biggest sect among the Jaṭilas, he was proud and was puffed up with a sense of ego. He, therefore, took little cognisance of the Blessed one. At the request of Buddha, Kassapa half-heartedly allotted his fire-house to accommodate the Master at night. In this firehouse there lived a venormous serpent. Knowing it fully well, Buddha thankfully accepted the offer and passed the night in that firehouse infested with the snake. At the next dawn, Kassapa and his followers found to their utter surprise that Buddha was seated alive on the fire-place with the snake on his lap inside his bowl. This event deeply impressed the hermits who became interested into Master's superhuman ability. Buddha thus continued to stay at Uruvela Kassapa's place for about two months. During his period of stay, Buddha performed a series of miracles to convince and edify Uruvela Kassapa and his followers. The narration runs thus that when the Kassapa was performing a great sacrifice Kassapa could not kindle a fire without the Buddha's permission and when the fire kindled, there was great flood. The Buddha however, saved the sacrificers. However, Kassapa was overwhelmed by show of these supernatural powers and it is said that one thousand Jaṭilas were converted to his doctrine and Kassapa along with his followers joined the *Sangha*.

In a nutshell these miracles included -

1. Bringing the submission the snake-king in the fire-house (ayyāgāra).
2. Visit by four guardian-angels in the hermitage.
3. Decent of the Mahābrahmā Sahampati in the hermitage.
4. Summoning Indra before him.
5. Disclosing Kassapa's thought of aversion during a sacrifice.
6. Causing emergence of a pond (to cleanse), a washing-stone (to wash), a big-slab to dry garments and a bended bough (to lend him grip) for rendering personal service to the Blessed one.
7. Presenting to Kassapa the fruit of the original *Jambu* (blackberry) tree, after which their ancient land was designated.
8. Bringing down the celestial *Paricchattaka* flower.
9. Indenting *Āmlaka* and *Haritaka* fruits from void.
10. Causing splitting of faggots, not susceptible breaking.
11. Igniting faggots which couldnot be set fire.
12. Extinction of fire from burning faggots.
13. Creating 500 vessels of fire in wintry night for busking purpose of the Jātīlas.
14. Saving Jātīlas from being washing out by sudden flood.

However, Buddha delivered his famous sermon on burning (*Ādityapariyāya Sutra*) in which he explained that the real fire consisted of attachment (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*) and delusion (*moha*) and that the same was produced by sense-perceptions caused by the contact of sense-perceptions with their objects<sup>2</sup>. Again it is said in the *Gilgit Manuscripts*<sup>3</sup> that although he become shaky he couldnot made up his mind as to accepting the discipleship of Buddha. Buddha's sweet words of remonstrance and convincing mode of argument however, brought a change within Kassapa and dispelled all his apprehension. Finally Kassapa accepted the supremacy of the Blessed One and become Buddha's follower. On listening to this discourse Uruveḷa Kassapa realised what the real fire was and gave up his belief in the efficacy of maintaining sacrificial fire. He became his disciple and threw away in the flowing stream his clothes and sacrificial utensils. Kassapa's two brothers and influential leaders of the Jātīlas viz., Nadī Kassapa and Gayā Kassapa who lived down the stream were frightened to see their elder's belongings carried by the river and went quickly to him, and to their great astonishment, found him dressed in the

role of a Buddhist monk. They also listened to the 'Fire Sermon' and followed the steps of their elder.<sup>4</sup>

However, the conversion of the Jāṭilas thus brought within the fold of Buddha more than one thousand adherents who constituted the bulk of the first '*Saṅgha*' in the real sense of the term. Otherwise, it is called that this eventful episode of the conversion of the Jāṭilas practically laid to the first major foundation of the Order of Monks on which was raised the future edifice of Buddhism.

### Notes

1. Vinayapīṭakam I (PTS), p. 30
2. Vide-Gilgit Manuscripts ed. N. Dutt Vol III pt. 1 Intro. p. 25.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

# Fable-Literature in Buddhism

*Jayanti Chattopadhyay*

Like in many other religions, in Buddhism also we find numerous Fable-Literature composed both in Pali and Sanskrit languages. The most popular Fable-literature in Buddhism are the Jātakas (more than 500 in number) which are written in pure Pali language. Then we have the Sanskrit Avadāna literature composed in the same pattern which the Jātakas adopted. Side by side we have the Avadānas written in mixed Sanskrit, otherwise called Buddhist Sanskrit. All the Jātaka and the Avadāna stories intended to show that 'black deeds bear black fruits, and white deeds white fruits' (ekāntakṛṣṇāṇām karmaṇām ekāntakṛṣṇavipākāḥ, ekāntaśuklāṇām karmaṇām ekāntaśuklavipākāḥ, vyatimiśrāṇām vyatimiśrah)<sup>1</sup>. They are also Karman stories, which show how the actions of one existence are very closely connected with those of former or future existences.

Scholars are of opinion that the Buddhist Jātaka stories fall within the earliest Fable-literature of the world. They have given attractive descriptions of the spread of the Jātaka tales in Europe via Arabic and Persian translations. Fortunately, however, this stream of story-telling did not confine itself to the Jātakas. It got itself spread through the Tantrākhyāyikā and its versions like the Pañchatantra and Hitopadeśa on the one hand, and on the other hand through the Avadāna literature as well. In this, one part represents the Brahmanical culture and other the Buddhist one.<sup>2</sup>

The Avadānas occupy a large and significant part of the Buddhist literature. The stream of story-telling in ancient India that sprang from the Jātakas ultimately found its development in the Avadānas. The Avadānas in reality are nothing but the Jātaka-stories narrated and adopted with necessary alteration of details.<sup>3</sup>

The Avadāna literature also has got a great tradition behind it. This tradition made its presence felt from the 3rd century A.D. and its culmination in the 11th century A.D. in Kṣemendra's Bodhisattvāvadāna-kalpalatā.<sup>4</sup>

Like the Jātakas, the Avadānas too consist of three sections, viz. (i) incidents taking place in a particular time (i.e. current one), (ii) the events of a past birth and (iii) the moral or the identification of the characters of the present with those of the past. Buddha narrates to his disciples an event of a particular time of a person; then he revives the parallel incident of the

same person in his previous birth and then gives advice and sermon drawing morals from the events.<sup>5</sup>

The Buddhists strongly believe that Siddhārtha Gautama (who became Buddha under the Bodhi-tree of Buddhagaya at the age of 35 and propagated his Dhamma for the good and welfare of the beings for long 45 years) had to make preparatory penances through several births for attaining Buddha-hood. The central figure of the stories of previous births, of course, is the Bodhisattva (i.e. would-be-Buddha). From that angle of view these Avadāna stories may be taken as the events of the former births of the Buddha. There are, however, some Avadānas where stories of the present and past births of the persons, directly or indirectly are connected with the Gautama Buddha and other past Buddhas. There are also stories where the present Buddha forecasts something of a person which will take place in future (in some cases during the future Buddha Maitreya).<sup>6</sup>

There are innumerable Avadāna stories whose nucleus is to be traced in popular folk culture and tradition. These stories got themselves originated or evolved and enriched in folk stories and popular tales through hundreds of years and traces of such development can be found in the stories collected in diverse Avadāna Texts. The earliest Avadāna text is the Mahāvastu Avadāna of the 2nd - 3rd century. Next comes the Avadānaśataka (having 100 stories) which is followed by the Divyāvadāna (having large-sized 38 stories). Then we find the Bodhisattvāvadāna-kalpalatā of Kṣemendra of the 11th century (having 108 stories composed in verse). Among the other Avadāna Texts of the later origin, mention may be made of: Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna, Mañicūḍāvadāna, Avadānasāra-samuccaya, Avadānamālā, Dvāvimśatyavadāna, Kalpadrumāvadānamālā, Vicitrakarṇikāvadāna, Aśokāvadānamālā, Aśokāvadāna, Ratnāvadānamālā, Vratāvadānamālā, Bhadrakalpāvadāna, and the like.<sup>7</sup>

Another narrative work which is just as copious as the Jātaka is the Pali Apadāna (included in the Pali Khuddakanikāya). The word 'Apadāna' (Sanskrit Avadāna) means heroic deeds, glorious deeds, the sense being extended also to glorious deeds of self-sacrifice and piety. The Apadānas like the avadānas which are their counterpart in the Buddhist Sanskrit literature, are tales of the heroic deed i.e. the pious works of the saints (which often consist of very commonplace action performed in adoration of a Buddha). The Apadānas, too, like the Jātakas, have a story of the present and a story of the past. Whereas the Jātakas always describe a previous existence of the Buddha, the Apadānas, as a rule, deal with that of saint, an Arhat. These stories are, therefore, legends

of saints. The collection of Apadānas, written entirely in verse, begins with a Buddhāpadāna followed by Paccekabuddhāpadāna. The main portion of the Apadāna book, however is the Thera-Apadāna (having 550 stories). The last part is the Therī-Apadāna (having 40 stories)<sup>8</sup>.

The Apadāna is certainly one of the very latest works of the Khuddakanikāya and of the Canon generally, if we are really justified in including it in the Canon. At all events, judged by its general character, it is much more closely allied to the Sanskrit Avadānas than to the remaining works of the Pali Canon.

There is ample opportunity for the researchers to determine the chronology of the Pali Apadānas and the Sanskrit Avadānas.

### Conclusion:

The query which haunts the present author now and then is that as to why in the mid period between Early Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism the popular phase of Buddhism raised its head and reigned supreme in the entire Buddhist world. In the said period under question huge Fable literature like the Jātaka, Avadāna and Apadāna grew up. But why? Most probably in this period the common mass did not bother about the Buddha's serious doctrines of Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, Pratītyasamutpāda, Nirvāṇa, and the like. In the mean time the Enlightened Buddha, the Mahāmānava Buddha became deified. He became Bhagavān Buddha and he was being worshipped like the gods and goddesses of other religions. His statues were built for the purpose of worshipping. Prayers were composed both in Pali and Sanskrit. The ordinary people were happy to see their Bhagavān face-to-face and were satisfied by worshipping him with their choicest objects. In return they prayed to their beloved Bhagavān to bestow on them worldly objects of happiness (e.g. rūpaṃ dehi, jayaṃ dehi, yaśo dehi, pativratāṃ bhāryāṃ dehi, guṇasampannāṃ putrāṃ dehi, dhana-dhānyāṃ dehi, and so on). This form of popular and devotional Buddhism was responsible for the growth and development of enormous Fable literature in Buddhism.

### Notes and references:

1. Common motto in all Avadāna-stories.
2. Chatterjee, J., *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*, Kolkata, 1994, p. 1.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*



5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid*
7. Chaudhuri, S., *Bauddha (Samskrta) Sahityer Rūprekhā*, Chatuskon, Kolkata, 1390, p. 2-3; Sarkar, S. C., *Studies in the common Jātaka and Avadāna Tales*, Kolkata, 1990, pp. 28-35.
8. Winternitz, *History of Indian Lit., Vol. II.*, p. 152-153.

# Buddhist Sāmaneri tradition: past & present<sup>1</sup>

*Saswati Mutsuddy*

## Introduction

**Tradition** synonymous to the transmission of knowledge, opinions, customs, practices etc. from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth and by example; or the body of beliefs and usages so transmitted; also any particular story, belief or usage of this kind.<sup>2</sup> **Buddhist Sāmaneri tradition** follows the culture of Buddhism. The word ‘**culture**’ belongs to it’s own history and the term synonymous to the sum total of the attainments and activities of any specific period, race or people; civilization, knowledge, good taste, refinement etc.; acquired by training the mind and faculties.<sup>3</sup> Actually, culture in relation to tradition bridges the past to the present. Therefore, culture has its historical context which is a significant as the cultural form itself. The continuity of culture is generally related to traditions which in turn are made up of cultural forms. According to **Ramila Thapar**, cultural history implies looking analytically both at what goes into the making of a tradition as well as that which is interpreted by historians as tradition. A tradition therefore has to be seen in its various phases. Even the concept of **paramparā** which at one level appears to be frozen knowledge, sometimes it reveals on investigation, variation and changes. Tradition which we today believe have long pedigrees may on an historical analysis be found to be an invention of yesterday. In other words, what we regard as tradition may well turn out to be our contemporary requirements fashioned by the way we wish to interpret the past. Interpretations of the past have also come to be treated as knowledge and are handed down as tradition.<sup>4</sup>

So, **the tradition of Buddhist Sāmaneri should be focused by the past history of its origin.** The word ‘**sāmaneri**’ is the feminine of ‘**sāmaṇera**’ which is basically associated with monastic Saṃgha of ordained Buddhist monks and nuns. Buddhist traditionally considers monastic life to provide the environment most conducive to advancing toward enlightenment and the Saṃgha is responsible for maintaining, translating, advancing and spreading the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>5</sup> There are two ordination processes in Theravāda tradition --sāmanera and sāmaṇeri. When a young man aspires to join the Saṃgha of monks, a bhikkhu will first ordain him as a sāmaṇera i.e. novice either for a year or until the age of 20. If he is acceptable to eligible by the order, he will then received a full ordination and start to live by the

monastic rules of Pātimokkha (227 rules for Theravāda monks). A young woman ordained by both a monk and nun, first as a sāmaṇeri. Then after a year or at the age of 20, she will be ordained as a full bhikkhūṇī. Therefore the tradition of bhikkhūṇī follows the culture of Sāmaṇeri.

The characteristic feature of the samaṇas was their state of homelessness, described in Pali texts as going forth from the home into homelessness (agārasmā anagāriyū). To them the whole world was a family. Gotama Buddha advised the Saṅgha of Bhikkhus, 'Go on wandering for the welfare of the people, for the happiness of the people.' The samaṇa culture recognized the regardless of caste, class or sex, everyone had the potential for salvation. But Gotama Buddha was the first one to allow women into this tradition, though he was very much concerned about the safety and security of these wandering women. This sāmaṇeri tradition established by the Buddha, himself became dormant for more than a millennium until very recently when it is rejuvenated with zeal and vigour. **This paper aims to study this tradition, ... its origin, hiatus and revival as a part of a movement for the socio-cultural activism.**

### Dispensation and the Bhikkhūṇī Saṅgha

As per introduction 'bhikkhūṇī' is the fully ordained Buddhist nun. If the word 'saṅgha' of Pali and Sanskrit define as 'association' or 'assembly', but it is commonly used are several senses to refer to Buddhist or Jain groups. Traditionally, in Buddhism it has two meanings; most commonly, saṅgha means the monastic saṅgha of ordained Buddhist monks or nuns and in exact sense, saṅgha can mean the assembly of all beings possessing some high degree of realization referred to as the ariyasāṅgha or noble saṅgha. This **article contains** mainly with the subject of the monastic saṅgha. Buddhists traditionally consider monastic life to provide the environment most conducive to advancing toward enlightenment and the saṅgha is responsible for maintaining, translating, advancing and spreading the preachings and doctrines of the Buddha.<sup>6</sup> Now the term 'dispensation;' defines primarily the 'distribution', 'administration'.<sup>7</sup> Here the exact meaning follows the special exemption granted from the requirements of a law, rule or obligation.<sup>8</sup>

As we know that Buddha was not only the pioneer of the origination of Bhikkhūṇī saṅgha but he also ameliorated the position of women in the then society, when a women's existence is described a centering round men, adornment her son, and being without a rival. They were expected ideally to be like slaves and be obedient to their husbands. Women who led their lives as daughters, wives and mothers were therefore quite clearly subjected

to the authority of men and this attitude was projected even into the asocial world of the sangha.<sup>9</sup> Even then, it has been focused in the 'Culla Vagga'<sup>10</sup> that the Buddha's foster mother *Mahāpajāpati Gotamī* approached Him to be ordained but He refused for thrice. Later, Ananda one of the principle disciple of Buddha requested Him (Buddha) for thrice and he refused. Lastly, Ananda tactfully handled the situation and Buddha finally consented and said him that *Mahāpajāpati Gotamī* should receive the *Atthagurudhamma* or the Eight chief Rules.<sup>11</sup>

- i. A nun must always pay their respects to a monk as a junior to a senior, regardless of the actual seniority of the nun to the monk. (*Vassasatū -pasampannāya bhikkhuṇīyā tadahupasampannassa bhikkhuṇo abhivādanam paccuṭṭhānam añjalikammaṃ sāmīcikkammaṃ kātabbam; ayam pi dhammo sakkatvā garukatvā mānetvā pūjetvā yāvajīvam anatikkamanīyo*).
- ii. A nun must not spend the vain season retreat in a place where there are no monks (*na bhikkhuṇīyā abhikkhuke āvāse vassam/vastiabbam; ayampi dhammo .....anatikkamanīyo*).
- iii. Every two weeks the nuns should expect the monks to appoint for them the day of the Uposatha observance and for a monk to come and instruct them (*anvaddhamāsam bhikkhuṇīyā bhikkhusamghato dve dhammā paccāsinsitabbā Uposatha pucchakamca ovādupasankamanamca; ayampi dhammo .....anatikkamanīyo*).
- iv. At the end of the rainy season retreat a nun should invite criticism regarding her observation of the precepts from both the other nuns and from the monks (*vassam vutthāya bhikkhuṇīyā ubhatosanghe tīhi ṭhānehi pavāretabbam-dīṭṭhena vā sutena vā parisankāya vā, ayam pi dhammo...anatikkamanīyo*).
- v. A nun who has committed a grave offence should do penance before both the monks and the nuns. (*garudhammay ajjhapanṇāya bhikkhuṇīyā ubhatosanghe pakkhamānattamcaritabbam; ayam pi...anatikkamanīyo*).
- vi. A probationer who wishes to be a nun must seek admission from both the monks and nuns after two years of training (*dve vassāni chasu dhammesu sikkhitasikkhāya sikkhamānāya ubhatosanghe upasampadā pariyeṣitabbā, ayam pi...anatikkamanīyo*).
- vii. A nun must not find fault with or abuse a monk (*na bhikkhuṇīyā kenaci pariāyenā bhikkhu akkositabbo paribhāsitabbo, ayam pi... anatikkamanīyo*).

- viii. From that day on the nuns are not allowed to teach the monks but the monks are allowed to teach the nuns (*ajjatagge ovaṭo bhikkhūnānam bhikkhūsu vacanapatho, anovaṭo bhikkhūnam bhikkhūnāsu vacanapatho; ayam pi...anatikkamanīyo*).

The *Bhikkhūnī khandhaka* of the *Cullavagga*, Pali described above rules and established Mahāpajāpati Gotamī was the first woman rather runs to the Bhikkhūnī sangha, whereas *Apadāna* inform that Yasodharā, the former wife of Gotama was the first nun or Bhikkhūnī of the saṃgha.<sup>12</sup> There is a controversy like Jaina order of nuns. According to Svetāmbaras at their head was 'Candā' the first cousin of Mahāvīra or as other accounts have it, his aunt.

According to Miss I.B.Horner,<sup>13</sup> 'It is possible that Mahāpajāpati came late into the order, after her husband had died and that the first woman really to make the order open for women as Yasodharā, possibly the former wife of Gotama, who in her verse in the *Apadāna* is said to represent many woman and herself.' Dr. Shubhra Barua opines that Yasodhara is mentioned as founder of nunnery only in *Avadāna* and *Apadāna*. These two books belonging to a later period and later Buddhist literature try to glorify Yasodhara because she was the wife of Gotama. On the contrary *Vinaya Piṭaka* gives the oldest history of Buddhist monasticism.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the orders of the Buddhist nuns have been established. But the historicity of the record concerning the inauguration of the nuns order and the laying down of the eight important observances as recorded in the *Cullavagga* are questionable, which arose in the writing of some scholars<sup>15</sup>

**Firstly**, Buddha had refused six times the request of Mahāpajāpati because women were thereby led naturally to be more careful as they had received ordination with difficulty by repeated request, so they would try to conduct themselves well.

How far is it reasonable to adopt such a negative attitude towards a step which was to be taken shortly?

**Secondly**, if the order of nuns was set up by laying down the eight important observances as a precaution by the Buddha Himself, how far is it reasonable for the theas to persuade Ananda to confess an offence of wrong doing (*dukkata*) at the first council?

**Thirdly**, if the order of nuns was established solely on the persuasion of Ananda, should he not have been commended at the council for the initiative taken by him in paving the path of realization for womenfolk of different social grades?

**Fourthly**, why does the *Cullavagga* account mention that *Mahāpajāti Gotamī* alone received Higher Ordination by accepting those observances?

According to the *CullaVagga* the rest of the Sakyan Ladies were ordained by monks, not by the Buddha, nor did they claim any allegiance to adhere to those observances.

**Fifthly**, as given in the sixth observances, a woman should seek ordination from both orders. Is it not an impossibility as the nun's order had not been set up yet at the beginning?

According to the record referred to, there were **three phases in the evolution of the institution of Higher Ordination for nuns**. In the *first phase* it was the monks who ordained them. But in the *second phase*, nuns were twice given Higher Ordination by both communities respectively; monks and nuns. In the *third phase* the nuns themselves, as a separate independent body, conferred Higher Ordination. This shows that the nuns order was made an independent institution after the training they received under the supervision of the senior monastic institution.

**Sixthly**, what is the reason for re-working some of these observances as rules of the *Pātimokkha* to be adhered to by nuns while all the eight rules had been designated as observances not to be transgressed as long as life lasts?

The second observance speaks of the same transgression found in the sixth rule of the *Ārāma Vagga* of the *Bhikkhūnī vibhanga*. The third is worded in the ninth rule of the same *Vagga*. The seventh and the eighth can be considered as an echo of the quarrels between two monastic groups and not laid down on imaginary grounds of transgression. Particularly the seventh is found as a rule in the *ĀrāmaVagga*.

**Seventhly**, why do these observances not mention the type of transgression involving them?

**Eighthly**, what is the reason for imposing these observances on nuns upon purely imaginary grounds of transgression?

The disciplinary rules both in the *Bhikkhu Pātimokkha* and *Bhikkhūnī Pātimokkha* have been laid down as a result of concrete cases of misbehavior, but not on imaginary grounds.

**Ninthly**, there is an apparent contradiction in the record of the behavior of Mahāpajāpati Gotamī.

If she first willingly accepted those observances professing to protect them as long as life lasts, then why did she later ask for an alteration of the first observance?

**Tenthly**, how far is it historically correct to ask nuns to inquire the date of observance (Upasatha) from the monks as the rules of the *Bhikkhunī Pātimokkha* has not been promulgated yet?

The code of the Pātimokkha rules had to be recited at the fortnightly gathering for observance or confessional meetings. However, at the outset no rules as such had been promulgated by the Buddha for nuns. Therefore the question of Upasatha sessions would not have arisen.

**Eleventhly**, is not the conferment of Higher Ordination on the rest of the Sakyan women an infringement of the sixth observance as it has stated that it is only after two years training in six precepts that a nun could seek Higher Ordination?

Their ordination was performed by monks after Gotami's. The six precepts mentioned here are: abstention from killing, stealing, sexuality, lying, consuming liquor and eating at wrong times. Had they accepted the eight observances, that in it could have been their higher ordination? since they had not received higher ordination accordingly, they should have been ordained in conformity with the provision of the sixth observance.

If these eight observances are historical we will have to consider that the Bhikkhuni Vinaya is anterior to the Bhikkhu Vinaya, because the Buddha is supposed to have begun levying disciplinary rules for monks only after some twenty years of his career, whereas according to circumstantial evidence, the Bhikkhuni order was set up about five years after the Enlightenment. However words such as upasampadā, vassa, pavāraṇā garudhamma and mānatta found in the observances clearly indicate a post-Vinaya period of the order of nuns.

**Prof. Dhammananda Kosambi** rejects the eight important observances and the prediction in the *Cullavagga* categorically and calls them inauthentic. 'Even before any transgression', he says: 'it is unprecedented to impose these observances on bhikkhunis.' He maintains that this is a deviation from the normal method of levying Vinaya rules. According to him, by the word **Saddhamma** in the account, Theravāda is meant, the monks might have composed those observances somewhere in the 2nd or the 1st century B.C. when Mahāyāna was flourishing vigorously and might have been interpolated into the *vinaya Piṭaka* in the order to sustain their prestige in the dispensation. The import of the prediction is that Mahāyāna was coming into prominence some five hundred years after the Buddha, the record is worthy of our attention. But as revealed Indian religious history there were many kinds of pre-Buddhist nuns including the Jain nuns order.

Presumably, the genuineness of the report of the setting up of the order of nuns is questionable in many respects. The anachronism of the record is more real than apparent.

### **Some modern Bhikkhupī Sangha**

Before the modern era, Bhikkhupī sangha spread most Buddhist countries including Burma, with the notable exceptions being Tibet and Thailand. However in Srilanka (as we know that Sanghamittā, daughter of king Asoka went there to propagate the Dhamma), it died out in the 11th century during a civil war and was not revived consequently as Theravada Buddhism spread to Thailand, the Theravada sangha consisted only of monks.

In recent decades there has been a serious attempt to revive the Theravāda Bhikkhupī sangha with the assistance of Mahāyāna bhikkhupī from the Chinese lineage. These were introduced from Srilanka in 433C.E. following the Dharmagupta Vinaya and subsequently spread to Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan. This has resulted in a small but thriving community of nuns in Srilanka who in turn ordain the first Theravāda Buddhist nun in the history of Thailand, Ven. Dhammananda.

However, the validity of these ordinations is strongly disputed by some of the conservative Theravada establishments.

Meanwhile, a similar process has produced the first fully ordained Bhikkhunis in Tibetan Buddhism, where only the novice ordination for Bhikkunis existed. In west, where feminism has been a strongly influence, there have been many remarkable Buddhist nuns; two notable examples are Pema Chodren and Avya Khema.<sup>16</sup> There are some important existing Bhikkhuni Sangha's which are as follows:

#### **i. The nun's community of Amaravati**

The order of Siladhara (Ten Precepts Nun) started in 1979 with the Anagarika ordination (Eight Precept Nuns) of four Western women at Chithurst Monastery. for the first five years, women lived as anagarika in a cottage about ten minutes walks from the main monastery. In 1983, they were given the ten precepts and in the following year all of the nuns by then four Siladhara and four Anagarika moved to Amaravati monastery, which was to be their new residence. Since then a training structure has been established consisting of the ten Precepts and additional observances. There are currently 17 siladhara and 6 Anagarika residing at Amaravati and Chithurst Buddhist Monastery.



**Nuns residing in this monastery:**

**Sister Mettā** she was born in Germany, in 1953 and become anagarika in 93 at Amaravati and took higher ordination as a Siladhara in 1996. She had a son before her monastic life. Now she is taking care of visiting nuns.

**Sister Santacitta** she was born in Australia. She was graduating in Hotel Management. She was Anthropologist and stage performer; founding member of the community of ecologists, artists and social workers near vienna, which is still thriving today. In 1988 she met her teacher Ajhan. Buddhadasa spent several years in Thailand before coming to Amaravati in 1992. In 1998 she received Siladhara ordination with Ajhan Sumedha as per preceptor. Currently she looks after school visits and teachers meditation classes and retreats.

**Sister Cittapala** She was born in German and worked nearly 20 years as a teacher and artist in Hamburg. In 1990-1991 she went to Indonesia to study awareness movement. Since 1996 she has been living in Amaravati.

**Sister Brahmavara** she was born 6th August, 1964 in England. She studied medicine at Sheffield University and trained as a doctor in Auckland, Newzealand. She was medical student of S. N. Goenka and spent few years in India at Goenka centers. She was studying Pali. Since October 2000, she was in Amaravati as a retreat center manager. She was ordained as a Siladhara in October 2004.

**Sister Sumedha** was born in 1973 in England. At the age of 15, she first goes to Amaravati. In 1998, she returned to Amaravati as a Librarian. In, 2004, she was ordaining as a Siladhara Wang Por Sumedha. She has been inspired by thanks paintings.

**Sister Chandasara** was born in Johannesburg, grew up in Christian family and ordaining as Siladhara in 2006.

**ii. Sākyādhītā**

**The International Association of Buddhist Woman** means the daughter of the Buddha. The objectives of Sākyādhītā, as expressed at Bodhgaya, India are:

1. To promote world peace through the practice of the Buddha's teachings
2. to create a network of communications for Buddhist women through the world
3. to promote harmony and understanding among the various Buddhist traditions
4. to encourage and help educate women as teachers of Buddhadharma
5. to provide improved facilities for women to study and practice the teachings
6. to help establish the Bhikkhuni sangha (community of fully ordained nuns) where it does not currently exist.

There are various projects which were taken by Buddhist women's, such as

**Jamyang Foundation** is an innovative education project for Himalayan women. It aims to help women pursue learning that is harmonious with their personal interests and unique Buddhist cultural background.

**Garden relief project** helps support Chuchikjall Nunnery in Sanskar, Ladakh (India).

**Sakyapa Nuns Project** based in Dickson, Australia, is raising funds for the first Sakyapa nunnery outside Tibet. It is near the residence of H.H. Sakya Trizin in Dehradun, India. The project is organized by Australian nuns Tenzin Wangmo and Jampa Tsedron.

**Kurukulla Center** in Boston helps support Tibetan Buddhist nuns at the Khachoe Ghakyil Nunnery (Geluk) in Nepal.

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be said that Buddhist Sāmaneris rather Bhikkhunis established the truth that women are the pillar of the society and they are the real follower of Buddhism. Though Buddhism has already passed its 2500 years, Bhikkhunis or Buddhist nuns spread its wings for the welfare of human beings throughout the world. 'Bahujana sukhāya bahujana hitāya' is the proper ideal for Bhikkhunis. Various establishments of modern nunneries and the involvements of well educated women in there are the real amelioration and propagation rather establishment of Buddhism. Thus, Buddhism long live not only for 2500 years but more above than that for the welfare of the society. So, the Bhikkhuni Sangha's are keeping the tradition of bridge from past to present.

### Footnotes

1. Paper read in the three days national seminar organized by Parsvanath Vidyapith & cultural division, Varanasi from 23-25th December, 2006.
2. *The New International Webster's pocket Dictionary of the English Language*, CBS publishers and distributors, Drya Ganj, New Delhi, p. 599.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
4. *Social scientist*, vol. 15, no. 2.1987, p. 4
5. [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com).
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Bhargava's concise Dictionary of the English language*, p. 156.

8. *The new International Webster's pocket dictionary of the English language*, p. 142.
9. Chakravarty Uma, *The social Dimensions of Early Buddhism*, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1987, p. 33.
10. Cullavagga is the second part of Vinaya Pitaka of Tipiṭaka (the first part is Mahāvagga).
11. *Cullavagga*, P.T.S.vol.x.p. 255.
12. Barua Subhra, *Monastic life of the Early Buddhist Nuns*, Atisha memorial publishing society, Calcutta. 1997, pp. 57-58.
13. Horner, I.B. *Women Under Primitive Buddhism*, Oriental publisher & distributors, 1975, p. 102.
14. Barua Subhra, *Monastic Life of the Early Buddhist Nuns*, p. 58.
15. Ven. Granarama Potegama, *The Mission Accomplished*, Ti sarana Buddhist Association, Singapore, pp. 70-76.
16. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

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# Some Mādhyamika Āchāryas in India during its last phase

[Circa 8th - 11th century A.D.]

*Aiswarya Biswas*

‘Mādhyamika’ - this very term is used both for the system and its advocates. Indeed it is unique in the sense that they derived the name and doctrine of their school from the ‘Madhyamāpratipad’ (Middlepath doctrine) expounded by the Buddha during his ‘Prathamadharma-deśanā’ (First Sermon) known as ‘Dharmacakra-pravartana’ in the religious history. Mādhyamika owes its origin to the celebrated philosopher Nāgārjuna of the second century B.C. In the Eastern World he exerted a historical influence of such vastness and depth that it can only be said to have been surpassed by that of the Buddha.<sup>1</sup> Nāgārjuna’s historical figure was mystified and to his substantial achievements the Indian, the Tibetan, the Chinese and the Japanese traditions are added magical and tantrik accomplishments and produced biographies of this image far a reality to the faithful. Thus one composite Nāgārjuna image was the -

1. Philosopher or Logician
2. Tantrik or Siddha
3. Magician
4. Alchemist

and ofcourse ‘Bodhisattva’ or incarnation of Ānanda.<sup>2</sup> However, Mādhyamika system has had a continuous history of development from the time of its formulation to the disappearance of Buddhism from India (circa 11th century A.D.). Historically the Mādhyamika in India comprises three periods:

- (a) the early period (circa 2nd to 5th century A.D.) represented by the activities of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva;
- (b) the middle period (circa 5th to 7th century A.D.) exemplified by Buddhapālita and Bhāvaviveka founders of the Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika schools respectively and Candrakīrti, Śāntideva etc;
- (c) the later period (circa 8th to 11th century A.D.) which includes Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, who fused the ideas found in the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra systems.

We find a new phase in the development of the Mādhyamika system with the appearance of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla. They accept the Sautrāntika-Vijñānavāda position with regard to the empirical, and the Mādhyamika with regard to the ultimate reality. On the otherhand these latter two Buddhist scholars culturally conquered Tibet and made it a land of Buddhism. Many of the Indian Mādhyamika scholars of this age contributed to Mādhyamika developments in Tibet.<sup>3</sup>

The special characteristics of the later period were : (1) the influence of Dharmakīrti's logico-epistemological school; (2) the fact that most philosophers belonged to the Svātantrika school; and (3) the incorporation of tenets of the Yogācārā tradition.<sup>4</sup> The evidence for this contention is two fold: the nature of their works and the testimonies of the Tibetan historians. Specially Bu-ston who writes - 'Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti are the chief representatives of the Mādhyamika-Prāsaṅgika school. The teacher Bhavya and the rest are the Mādhyamika-Sautrāntikas. Jñānagarbha, Śrīgupta, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Haribhadra and others belong to the school of the Yogācārā - Mādhyamikas.'<sup>5</sup> Śāntarakṣita laid the foundation of another school of the Mādhyamikas which denies the 'Empirical Reality' of the 'External World', acknowledges the introspective perception, but on the other hand does not consider consciousness to have an 'ultimate reality.'<sup>6</sup> According to T. R.V. Murti this is the differing point between Yogācārā-Vijñānavādins and Yogācārā-Mādhyamikas.<sup>7</sup> Kamalaśīla as well as Vimuktisena, Haribhadra, Buddhajñānapāda, Abhayākara-gupta and others agree with Śāntarakṣita as to the main standpoint which is that of the Yogācārā-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika. Bhāvaviveka and Jñānagarbha express the point of view of the Sautrāntika - Mādhyamika - Svātantrikas.<sup>8</sup> There were others, such as Jitari, Bodhi-bhadra and Advayabajra, who wrote expositions of the doctrines of the various Buddhist schools, while others for example, Kambala (Cira 700A.D.) Ratnākara-śānti (Cira 11th century A.D.) and Atīśa (Circa 982 - 1055 A.D.) were active in the synthesis of Mādhyamika and Yogācārā in India and in development of Mādhyamika Buddhism in Tibet.<sup>9</sup> Needless to say that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla introduced and spread Buddhism in Tibet. Owing to their efforts and those of other eminent teachers mentioned above, the Mādhyamika has continued to be the dominant philosophy in Tibet and Mongolia even to this day.<sup>10</sup> We are also told that even in distant Japan it constituted the faith of the Sanron sect. However, among them, these following personalities belonged to the same lineage as Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla :

1. Jñānagarbha (C. 8th century A.D.)

2. Śāntarakṣita (C. 725 - 784 A.D.)
3. Kamalaśīla (C. 740 - 797 A.D.)
4. Vimuktisena (C. 8th Century A.D.)
5. Haribhadra (C. 8th century A.D.)<sup>11</sup>

*Jñānagarbha*<sup>12</sup> was Śāntarakṣita's teacher and the author of 'Satyadvayavibhaṅga' (Analysis of the two Realities), the 'Satyadvayavibhaṅgavṛtti' (Analysis of the Two Realities Commentary) and 'Yogabhāvanāmārga' (Path to the Practice of Yoga) - all extant in Tibetan only. Infact nothing is known about him except that he was Śāntarakṣita's teacher and consequently may have entered Tibet before him written those treatises and translated texts on Mādhyamika and epistemology in Tibetan.

*Śāntarakṣita*<sup>13</sup> was one of the most important personalities in the history of Buddhism in India and Tibet and the greatest philosopher of the 8th century A.D. He composed the *Tattvasaṃgraha*,<sup>14</sup> the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, and its Commentary - the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra-Vṛtti*,<sup>15</sup> a commentary on Jñānagarbha's *Satyadvaya-vibhaṅga*. With the exception of the first one, which can also be found in Sanskrit, all are extant in Tibetan only.

His other logical work is a commentary, the *Vādanyāyavṛttivipaṇcitārtha*. A Tibetan translation of Diñnāga's *Hetucakraḍamaru* is also attributed to him.<sup>16</sup> Some Tāntrik texts extant in Tibetan and *Tattvasiddhi* extant in Sanskrit, are also attributed to him. But scholars are a bit sceptical whether they are from the pen of the author of the *Tattvasaṃgraha*.<sup>17</sup>

In criticising the Indian philosophical traditions, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist, Śāntarakṣita gives a wealth of information regarding the philosophical status of the time.<sup>18</sup> The reason for his critical analysis was ofcourse to establish Madhyamaka as the highest doctrine of all. Although he considered Śūnyatā as the highest truth, he claimed that from the worldly-level (*Vyāvahārika-satya*) one should accept the *Yogācārā* claim of *Vijñaptimātratā* (mind only), and thus he can be seen as an adherent of the *Yogācārā-Mādhyamika*.<sup>19</sup>

*Kamalaśīla* was a worthy pupil and commentator of Śāntarakṣita.<sup>20</sup> According to Tibetan sources Śāntarakṣita had recommended in his will on his death bed that if need be, his pupil Kamalaśīla should be invited from India. Then, invited by king khri-srong-ide-bstan, Kamalaśīla entered Tibet in 794 A.D.<sup>21</sup> Kamalaśīla wrote brilliant commentaries on his teacher's works, the *Tattvasaṃgraha-pañjikā* and *Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā*. This work is a monument of his phenomenal learning, sharp wit and uncommon power of reasoning and debating. He has rendered the terse *Kārikās* of the

Tattvasaṃgraha intelligible and has supplied the names of the thinkers criticised by his master.<sup>22</sup> His another work is Nyāyabindu- pūrvapakṣasaṃkṣepa, extant in Tibetan. Bu-ston attributes to Kamalaśīla a work called Mādhyamika-āloka.<sup>23</sup> The Tibetan Tanjur ascribes the following works also to the authorship of Kamalaśīla:

1. Āryasaptaśatikāprajñāpāramitā-ṭīkā
2. Āryavajracchedikāprajñāpāramitā-ṭīkā
3. Prajñāpāramitāhṛidayanāma-ṭīkā
4. Dākinīvajraguhyagītīnāma-mahopadeśa

Besides these, he is said to have translated into Tibetan a work called 'Mahāmudropadeśavajraguhyagīti'.<sup>24</sup>

*Vimuktisena* was a well known figure in Tibetan tradition, but his biography is not clear. Tibetan tradition mentions him as a philosopher of the same school of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla.<sup>25</sup> His only known work is Abhisamayālaṃkāra-vṛtti, a commentary on the Abhisamayālaṃkāra, attributed to the founder of Yogācārā school of Maitreya-nātha.<sup>26</sup> It is even difficult to determine the extent of Vimuktisena's dedication to Madhyamaka thought as much is not known about his work. He was a teacher of Haribhadra.

*Haribhadra* explained the basic Madhyamaka teaching of no-self nature (niḥsvabhāva) for all entities in his only known treatise called- 'Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-vyākhyābhisamayālaṃkāra-āloka'. In this treatise, he criticised the Sarvāstivāda, the Sautrāntika and the 'Alikākāravāda-Yogācāra' as well as 'Satyākāravāda-Yogācāra' by following the method of critique in Śāntarakṣita's Madhyamakālaṃkāra.<sup>27</sup> It is interesting to note that he composed that treatise as a commentary on the 'Aṣṭasahasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra' in accordance with the divisions of the 'Abhisamayālaṃkāra' of Maitreya-nātha.<sup>28</sup> Confusion regarding his philosophical position may arise, so L. M. Joshi refers him as a Yogācārā teacher who specialised in the Prajñāpāramitā literature. But, Kawamura, following his literary compositions places him as a representative of Mādhyamika school. T.R.V. Murti also referred him as a follower of Yogācārā-Mādhyamika-Śvātantrika school of Śāntarakṣita.<sup>29</sup> Infact, observations of Kawamura proves how Haribhadra and others represent a syncretism of the Mādhyamika with the Yogācārā. Buston<sup>30</sup> attributes the following works to him :

1. A summary of the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā in eight chapters;
2. the Abhisamayālaṃkāra-āloka;
3. the great commentary on Aṣṭasāhasrikā, called Sphuṭārtha;

4. the commentary on the Sañcaya called Subodhinī;
5. the Prajñāpāramitābhāvanā

Haribhadra was the first spiritual teacher of Dharmapāla (C. 770-810 A.D.)<sup>31</sup>. His disciple Budhajñānapāda<sup>32</sup> was also the second spiritual teacher of Dharmapāla and performed the consecration ceremony of the Vikramaśīlā-Vihāra founded by Dharmapāla. He died in the twenty-second regnal year of Dharmapāla.<sup>33</sup>

### Notes

1. Murty, K. S. Nāgārjuna, p. 2, Kalupahana, D. J. Mūlamadhyamakakārikā of Nāgārjuna, pp. 2ff.
2. Even, Alberuni who visited India about 1030 A.D. wrote that one Nāgārjuna, native of fort Daihak near Somnath, lived hundred years before his own time, and that he was 'a famous representative' of the art of rejuvenation' (rasāyana) in which he excelled and on which he wrote a book containing the substance of all literature on it. He may have recorded a tradition about the composite Nāgārjuna, or a practitioner of rasāyana may have actually lived in Western India about 900 A.D. It may be recalled that according to tradition Nāgārjuna knew this art, and one source speaks of his belonging to Western India. So Alberuni's story may be about that composite figure, Murty, K.S., p. 39. also Vaidya, P.L. (ed.) Madhyamakasastraṃ, Introduction, P. xxviii.
3. Buddhism, Mādhyamika : India and Tibet, an article by L. S. Kawamura in the Craig, Edward (ed.) Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, vol.-II, pp. 58ff.
4. Ibid p. 61f. also Joshi, L.M. 'Studies In the Buddhist Culture of India', pp. 142-49.
5. Bu-Ston, vol-II, p. 135. also note 996 on the same page for an account of the Mādhyamika-ācāryas and their respective views based on the work of Tsonkha-pa's pupil khai-dub (Mkhas-grub) Called Ston-thun-bskāl-bzanmig - hbyed (Tsan edition Vol. I, 37a. 1.Sqq.)
6. Ibid.
7. Murti, T.R.V. p. 103
8. Bu-ston, Vol-II, p. 136n. Obermiller's 'The Doctrine of the Prajñāpāramitā' p. 90n.
9. Cheng, Hsueh. Li, Empty Logic, pp. 29f
10. Ibid
11. Craig, E. Ibid. p. 61
12. Ibid
13. The only reliable source to determine the date of Śāntarakṣita is the Tibetan



tradition which, however, is liable to different interpretations. B. Bhattacharya, relying on the information given from Tibetan sources by S. C. Das, placed Śāntarakṣita in A. D. 705-762, giving him a life-span of 57 years. (Forward to the Tattvasaṃgraha, by Dr. Bhattacharya in G.O.S. XXX-XXXI, Baroda) according to Vidyabhushana, Śāntarakṣita was born in A.D. 728 and died in A.D. 864. Rahula Saṃkṛityāyana, Śāntarakṣita enjoyed a life-span of one hundred years, C. 740-840 A.D. (Bauddha Sanskriti, pp. 404-405; Purātattvanibandhāvali, p. 181). Kawamura has placed him circa 725-84 A.D. Craig, E. Ibid. p. 61.

14. Edited with Commentary of Kamalaśīla by Embar Krishnamacharya in G.O.S. Baroda 1926 Nos. XXX, XXXI.
15. Winternitz, M. Ibid. p. 317.
16. Craig, E. Ibid. p. 61 also Joshi, L. M. Ibid. pp. 159ff.
17. Joshi, L.M. Ibid. P. 160f.
18. Winternitz, M. Ibid. p. 137, Joshi, L.M. Ibid. pp. 194-207.
19. Joshi, L. M. Ibid.
20. Crag, E. Ibid. p. 61.
21. Pag Sam Jon Zang, pt. 1, pp. XCLX, 49; pt. 11p. 112 quoted by L.M. Joshi in Ibid. Ch-VII, note 105.
22. Johsi, L.M. Ibid. p. 160.
23. Bu-ston, II, p. 136.
24. Johsi, L.M., Ibid. p. 161.
25. Murti, T.R.V., Ibid. pp. 102-103, Craig, E. Ibid. p. 62.
26. Craig, E. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid. Besides their own compositions.
30. Bu-ston, II, p. 158.
31. Schiefner, Tāranāth, pp. 229-232; Pag Sam Jon Zang, p. XCIV.
32. Blue Annals, I, 367; Bu-ston, II, p. 159.
33. Bu-Ston, II, p. 158.

# Buddhism In Tripura: The Early Phase\*

*Arindam Bhattacharyya*

Tripura is a small state in the North-eastern part of India, with its capital at Agartala, measures about 10,491 sq. km. It has a total population of around 32 Lakhs (2001 census) among which 99 thousand are Buddhist. With respect to the proportion of Buddhist population to total population (3.1%) it ranks 5th among the Indian State after Sikkim (28.1%), Arunachal Pradesh (13%), Mizoram (7.9%) & Maharastra (6%). *Theravada Buddhism* is practised among three communities of this state namely *Chakma*, *Mag* & *Barua*. The Barua are subgroup of the Mag. *Mahayana Buddhism*, though prevalent in the early phase, is not practised in Tripura at present. Though Tripura can boast of a rich and varied tradition of Buddhism, the history of Buddhism in this state is never highlighted in the Buddhist study circle. The introduction of Buddhism in Tripura is shrouded in mystery due to lack of evidences but early phase of Buddhism can be documented thanks to the recent discovery of many icons and antiquities, belonging to the early mediaeval period of Indian History, from every corner of Tripura. The accounts of Chinese and Tibetan travellers also throw light on the subject.

Tripura, known as '*Hill Tipperah*' during the British period, is bounded by the *Sylhet* district (Bangladesh) in the north, *Cachar* district (Assam) in the northeast, the *Mizoram* State in the East, the districts of *Chittagong* and *Noakhali* (Bangladesh) in the West. As a kingdom under the *Manikya* rulers it also included Tippera and portion of Sylhet and in an extended sense it comprised the districts of Noakhali (*Bhuluya* of medieval times) and Chittagong. Hence the History of Tripura in the Pre-Manikya period (ancient to early medieval period) is intertwined with that of *Samatata*, a region roughly corresponding to the present districts of Sylhet, Noakhali and Chittagong.<sup>1</sup>

Though ancient, the country of Tripura is not mentioned in any old literary or epigraphical record. Attempts to identify Tripura with '*Traipura*' of the *Mahabharata* (Webster, East Bengal District Gazetteer, '*Tippera*', P. 10) or to trace it in the *Allahabad* pillar inscription of *Samudragupta* (C.A.D. 335-75) have not met with any success.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest archaeological relic that has been discovered within the limits

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of ancient *Samatata* is a fragmentary image with an inscribed pedestal, the exact find-spot being *Silua*. The relevant inscription is in *Brahmi* of about 2nd Century B.C.<sup>3</sup> No other archaeological record from the *Samatata* region between the 2nd Century B.C. and the end of the 5th Century AD has been reported so far.<sup>4</sup> A copper plate charter found at *Gunaighar* (Comilla, Bangladesh) of the year 188 of the Gupta Era (A.D. 507-8) proves the rule of the certain *Maharaja Vainyagupta* in the Tripura region ('*Plains Tipperah*' of the British days). This charter records grants of lands to the *Avaivarttika-sangha* of the Mahayana school in the *Asramavihara*, which was dedicated to *Arya Avalokitesvara*. A mound in *Pilak* (*Belonia*, South Tripura) containing a colossal image of *Avalokitesvara* is still known as *AsramaTila* and whether this place can be identified with *Asramavihara* will be in a state of assumption until we get some more definite record.<sup>5</sup> Names of *Acarya Santideva* and *Jitasena* are mentioned in this record. What is of more historical importance is that *Maharaja Vainyagupta*, himself being a *Saiva*, was of opinion that the religious merits of his parents and himself would be enhanced if he made such a grant of lands to a Buddhist *Vihara*.<sup>6</sup> This fact bespeaks most eloquently the spirit of religious tolerance prevailing in *Samatata* in as early as the 6th century A.D. The *Gunaighar* plate further refers to another neighbouring monastery called *RajaVihara*, evidently established by a king, in connection with demarcating the boundaries of the above granted land. All these prove that by the beginning of the 6th century, *Mahayana Buddhism* had been firmly established in *Tripura*. The renowned Chinese Pilgrim, *Hiuen-tsang*, came to India during the seventh century A.D. During his visit of Bengal, he found in *Samatata* about 30 *sangharama* having more than 2000 monks of the *Sthavira* School. He also found an *Asokan tope* near the capital. Besides the Buddhist monasteries he found about 1000 *Deva-temples* and a good number of *Digambar Nirgranthas*.<sup>7</sup>

*Bhiksu Silabhadra*, the famous *abbott* of the *Nalanda University*, and the teacher of *Hiuen-tsang*, hailed from *Samatata*. According to the *Kailan* (13 miles west of the Lalmai railway station, Comilla) Copper plate of *SridharanaRata Pandit Silabhandra* belonged to the *Brahmanic Rat* (or *Rata*) dynasty of *Samatata*.<sup>8</sup> the *Kailan* Copper plate records that *SridharanaRata*, son of *JivadharanaRata*, lord of *Samatata*, granted lands in favour of the *ratanatraya* at the request of his minister of war and peace named *Jayanatha* within the jurisdiction of the *Kumaramatya* of *Devaparvata* (Mainamati-Lamai range of hills.) for the worship of Buddha for the reading and writing of the Buddhist religious texts and for the provision of food, clothing and other necessities of the monks. This was done in the 3rd quarter of the 7th century.

This copper plate testifies to the co-existence of Brahmanism and Buddhism in the kingdom of *Samatata* in the 7th century.

After *Hiuen tsang's* departure from and before *I-tsing's* arrival in India (C.A.D. 671), about 56 Chinese travellers came to India. In his *Memoirs of eminent priests who visited India* *I-tsing* refers to Chinese pilgrims resorting to *A-Li-Ki-Lo* or *O-Li-Ki-Lo* (identified with *Harikela*, modern Sylhet district of Bangladesh). Of them *Wu-hing* stayed for one year and *Tan-kwong* settled and died there. It is said that *Tan-kwong* won the respect of the king of that country and got a Buddhist temple built there. *Seng-chi* came to *Samatata* while *Rajaraja-Bhatta* of the *Khadga* dynasty was ruling there. *Seng-chi* has furnished us with a glowing description of the condition of Buddhism in *Samatata* during the *Khadgas*. He came to *Samatata* in the second half of the 7th century. He found here 4 thousand monks and nuns. The king *Rajaraja-Bhatta* was an ardent worshipper of *Tri-ratna* (*Buddha, Dharma & Sangha*) and played the part of a great *Upasaka*. It is said that being attracted by the generosity and sincerity of the king, the best and the most learned monks from the whole of India used to assemble in the kingdom of *Samatata* at that time. According to *Seng-chi* the king used to have conducted royal processions in honour of the Buddha with an image of *Avalokitesvara* at the front.

From the discovery of a bronze votive *stupa* along with two copper plates of the *Khadgas* at *Asrafpur* (30 miles northeast of Dhaka) we come to know about the *Khadga* dynasty<sup>9</sup> ruling over *Samatata* in the period between 630-700 A.D.<sup>10</sup> The two plates were issued from *Karmanta* (Now Badkamta, about 3 miles from Bharella and 12 miles west of Comilla town) by king *Deva Khadga*, the 3rd king of the *Khadga* dynasty, recording grants of lands to the Buddhist monasteries for the sake of the *Tri-ratna* as well as for the longevity of his son *Rajaraja-Bhatta*. In the opening verse of both the copper plates the Buddha has been invoked. In one of them it has been described that *Khadgodyama*, the founder of the dynasty, made *digvijaya* after having shown devotion towards the *Tri-ratna*.

Many other recent discoveries also corroborate the fact that during the *Khadgas* the position of Buddhism in *Samatata* was flourishing. A magnificent life-size image of *Avalokitesvara* was discovered from *Belasa*, near *Badkamta*; a life-size image of *Vajrapani-Bodhisattva* was discovered from *Subhapur*, 50 miles of *Badkamta*; an image of *Jambhala* was discovered from *Viharamandala*, near *Subhapur*; a *Dhyani-Buddha* image was found at *Bagherpur*, near *Viharamandala*; and an image of goddess *Marici* was found from *Pion*, 4 miles southeast of *Badkamta*. The royal symbol of the *Khadgas* was a bull, a mount of the *Anhants*.

After the *Khadgas* the next important royal family of *Samatata* was the *Deva* dynasty of the *Devaparvata* standing on the *Candimura* peak at the southern end of the *Mainamati* hills. The rule of this *Deva* family also seems to have been testified to by the coins bearing the name *Pattikera*, paleographically assignable to the 8th century A.D.; all of them hail from the *Comilla* region. We have come to know about the *Devas*, a new Buddhist line of kings, from the discovery of two copper plates of *Sri Anandadeva* and *Sri Bhavadeva* during *Mainamati* excavations. These plates contain two royal grants and the geneology of the successive *Deva* rulers-*Sri Santideva*, *Sri Viradeva*, *Sri Anandadeva*, and *Sri Bhavadeva*. The seal on the plates contains below the *Dharmacakra* and the *two-seated deer* symbols. All the kings mentioned in the plates bear imperial titles like '*Parama-saugata*' (a devout worshipper of the *Sugata*, i.e. Buddha). The discovery of the *Salban-Vihar* (Salban monastery) at *Salbanpur* about 6 miles from *Comilla* town testifies the evidence how Buddhism was in flourishing condition during the *Devas*. Many a number of seals, bronze image of *Buddha*, *Tara* and *Bodhisattvas* like *Padmapani* were found in the cells of this monastery. From another copperplate *Bhavadeva* is known to have granted lands to the *ratnatraya* of the *Vendhamati vihara*.<sup>11</sup> Another monastery similar to the *Bhavadeva* monastery was discovered in a mound standing at the eastern side of the cantonment road, one mile north of *Comilla*. This is popularly known as '*Anandaraja's place*'. It was a quadrangular monastery with a central cruciform sanctuary as at *Paharpur*.

The *Devas* had been contemporary to the early *Pala* rulers of North Bengal.<sup>12</sup> The *Palas* were devout *Buddhists* and under their active patronage a number of new Buddhist centres of international reputation sprang up in the Bengal region. Among them mention may be made of (i) *Pattikeraka*-a monastery in *Mainamati-Lalmai* range and (ii) *Pandita*-a stronghold of *Tantric Buddhism* in *Chittagong*. Another promising site of the *Pala* period has been discovered at *Pilak*-south *Jolaibari* area in the *Belonia* subdivision of *Tripura* wherefrom images of *Buddha*, deities of the *Mahayana-Vajrayana Pantheon* and a bronze image of *Padmapani Bodhisattva* have been discovered.

Under the patronage of the *Pala* rulers *Mahayana Buddhism* became a powerful international force, and exercised dominant influence from *Tibet* in the North to the islands of the *Malaya Archipelago* in the southeast. A direct cultural interlink between *India* and *Tibet*, *India* and *Southeast Asia* was firmly established during the period which popularised Buddhism immensely in this subcontinent. There had been cultural exchanges of *pandits* with *India* and other Asian countries that maintained the growth and preservation of immense

Buddhist literature, art and architecture. This cultural exchange remarkably paved the path to the growth of *Tantric Buddhism*, 'which developed a highly esoteric yogic system of *Sadhana* with a belief in the efficacy of magic spells, *mantras* and *dharanis* and practice of *mudras* (Physical postures), *mandalas* (mystical diagrams), *kriyas* (rites) etc.' The *Mahayana Buddhism*, with these adventitious elements, transformed itself almost beyond recognition into *Tantrayana* and *Vajrayana* (a convenient name of *Tantric Buddhism*) 'which dealt with certain metaphysical problems which had greater attraction for the religious man.'<sup>13</sup>

Shortly after this, in the 9th century another Buddhist kingdom flourished, as is known from an incomplete copper plate hailing from *Chittagong*.<sup>14</sup> Palaeographically assignable to A.D. 750-850, this record supplies the names of three successive members of a Buddhist family each being the son of his predecessor: *Bhadradata* (or *datta*) his successor *Dhanadatta* and the latter's son and successor, *Kanti Deva*, who issued the charter. The record seems to indicate *Kanti Deva's* sway over the whole or a part of *Harikela* or *Harikelamandala*.<sup>15</sup>

The first three *Pala* rulers, namely *Gopala* (750-770 A.D.), *Dharmapala* (770-810 A.D.) and *Devapala* (810-850 A.D.) most probably had never gained supremacy over Southeastern Bengal though their fame overshadowed the history of *Samatata* for the time being. But from the beginning of the 10th century and onwards *Samatata* regained its glory under the *Chandras* (*Candra*) of *Rohitagiri* (Mainamati-Lalmai range extending up to Chittagong hill tracts in the south). These *Chandra* kings undoubtedly had some connection with nine *Chandra* kings of *Arakan* who ruled in 788-957 A.D. Though all the *Candra* rulers from *Sricandra* to *Govindacandra* ruled from their new capital at *Vikrampura*, *Samatata* had always been their main source of power and the centre of their political and religious activities. The *Candras* were the followers of the *Tantric Buddhism* that, by that time, accepted many of the popular beliefs and Hindu cults. By their patronisation this form of Buddhism, which took its formal shape during the early *Pala* rulers, developed widely and gave birth to Buddhist mystic songs (*Caryagiti*), which influenced and helped to develop the Bengali language and literature.<sup>16</sup> The *Rampal copper plate* of *Sricandra* in its verse No. 3 stated, '*Suvarnacandra became a Buddhist*'.<sup>17</sup> It is, therefore, probable that until his time the family followed *Brahmanical* religion. Anyway, from the time of *Suvarnacandra* the family was undoubtedly Buddhists as is evidenced by the invocation of the Buddha at the beginning of some of their copper-plate grants, the epithet '*parama-saugata*' before the names of the kings and the emblems of the *Dharmacakra*

and *two seated-deer* in their seal. Moreover, one of the inscriptions found in the *Vikrampur Pargana*, palaeographically dated to 10th-11th century A.D. invokes both *Vasudeva* and *Buddha*. All these indicate that in this period too *Brahmanism* greatly influenced the Buddhist kings. Or, it might be that the *Candra* kings were influenced by the ancient tradition of their ancestors who had been *Brahmanas*.

Practically from the time of *Ladahacandra* (1000-1020 A.D.) the *Candra* rule deteriorated due to successive invasions by *Rajendracola* (*Rajendra Chola*) in 1025 A.D. and finally by the *Varmans* with the help of *Karna*, the *Kalachuri* ruler, in 1045 A.D.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand the *Pala* power was on the verge of total collapse due to *Kaivarta revolt* in 1080. The successive rulers of the Brahmanical *Varman* dynasty ruled in *Samatata* up to 1150. During their rule of about a century (c. 1055-1150) Hindu Brahmanism definitely flourished in this region, and Buddhism, no doubt, had to struggle for its existence for want of royal patronage. Of course, some of the *Varmans* were tolerant of Buddhism because the *Vajrayogini* copper-plate of *Syamalavarman* speaks of his gifts towards the temple of *Prajnaparamita*. Again, three Buddhist manuscripts were copied in the 9th, 19th and 39th regnal year of *Harivarman* (about the end of 11th century).

*Vijayasena*, the founder of the *Sena* dynasty of Bengal in 1150, ousted *Bhojavarman*, the last king of the *Varman* dynasty. The *Sena* kings do not seem to have had any special leaning towards Buddhism, and also there is no evidence to prove it they directly did revolt against Buddhism. On the contrary, in the *Gita-Govinda* of *Jayadeva*, the court-poet of *Laksmanusena* (1172-1206), *Buddha* is invoked as the 9th incarnation of *Visnu*. The *Somapura* and the *Jagaddala Mahavihara* still existed during the *Sena* supremacy.

In the meantime, *Ranavankamalla Sri Harikaladeva* (1204-1220) who ruled over the kingdom of *Pattikera* (*Patikera* or *Paitkera*, a pargana which extends to the Mainamati hills, 5 miles to the west of Comilla) asserted his independence at *Samatata*. According to his *Mainamati* Copper Plate, the king granted in his 17th regnal year a land measuring 20 *dronas* in a village named *Bejakhanda* in favour of a Buddhist monastery built in the city of *Pattikera* (*Pattikera Mahavihara*) in *Saka 1141* (A.D. 1219). In verse 3 of the copper plate, the granter is described as being proficient in the rites of the famous *Sahaja*-cult. Though *Harikala Deva* flourished in the early part of the 13th century, the antiquity of his kingdom may be traced as far back as the 11th century A.D. The earliest reference to it is met with in a manuscript of the *Astahasrika-Prajnaparamita*, belonging to the collection of the library of

the *Cambridge University (Add. 1643)*. The *Myanmarese Chronicles* replete with references to this kingdom clearly indicate that there was an intimate contact between the rulers of *Pattikera* and *Myanmar* in the 11th and 12th centuries.<sup>19</sup>

After the Candras, the Buddhist institutions practically disappeared one by one for want of royal support, and those, which lingered on did not appear to have long survived the Muslim invasion. But remnants of Buddhism lingered even afterwards in Tripura, Chittagong and some other places though in a different form, i.e. Theravada.

### Conclusion

Tripura and its adjoining regions became an important centre of Buddhism since the period of *Asoka* and continued to be so for several centuries at least up to the 14th century. Before the 6th century, the *Mahayana* form of Buddhism, had found its way all over Tripura. It is from the 8th century onwards that *Tantric* Buddhism flourished and it became the most widely prevalent and popular religion of Tripura till the 12th centuries. Tantricism gradually found expression in iconography and the gods and goddesses of Tantric Buddhism became the common deities in the Tripura of the 8th century. The art and iconography of the same period prove that the *Mahayana* form began to be eclipsed by *Vajrayana* Buddhism during this time and ultimately replaced by *Sahajayana* in the 11th century till 14th century.

The Buddhist *Viharas*, viz. *Salavana Vihara* and *Pattikera Vihara*, became an important religious and cultural centre of Tripura from the 6th century onwards. There is yet enough scope of study as regards the *Pilak Vihara*. On the evidence of the mounds still found at *Pilak* we know that this place was a *Mahayana* Buddhist centre during the 8th and 9th centuries. This *vihara* is infested with various icons of Buddhist and Hindu deities and ruins of temples. A number of old images, gold coins, terracotta temple plaques and sealing with the depiction of the *stupa* and the Buddhist motifs have been found here. These antiquities of *Pilak* inform us that *stupa* was as popular here as elsewhere. However, the lack of *votive-stupas* as well as any other *stupas* justifies that in Tripura *Stupa-worship* was not probably given due importance. The icon, instead, became the main object of worship.<sup>20</sup> Numerous standing and seated images of Buddha of this period have been discovered at different places in South Tripura and also very recently in some places of West Tripura (*Takarjala*). The icons indicate the great popularity of image worship.



In stone, the most notable example is the standing image of Buddha at *Pilak*. A miniature *stupa* is placed on the left side of the head of Lord Buddha. The image may be dated to circa 8th century A.D. Another sandstone image of seated Buddha also found at *Pilak* is datable to the 9th century. *Avalokitesvara*, popular in *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* sects of Buddhism, was a favourite God of Tripura. A broken image of standing *Avalokitesvara* endowed with two arms was found at *Pilak* and is now preserved in the Tripura Government Museum. This image may be assigned to 9th century. Also an image of *Avalokitesvara* of the same period is found lying on the *Asramtila* at *Pilak*. An image of the Goddess *Cunda* made of sandstone was found at *Pilak*. The image is badly mutilated and is dated around 8th-9th century. This *18-armed* Goddess is shown seated in *Vajraparyankasana* on the central *Padmapitha* and is identical with the miniature of *Cunda* found in the previously quoted manuscript of the *Astasahasrika*, dated in the year 1015 A.D. under the caption '*Pattikera Cundavarabhavane Cunda*'. The *Pilak* image is the only one, so far noticed, found in the area near the *Mainamati-Lalmai* Range. The miniature is *16-armed* while the *Pilak* image has 18 arms. We can also find the images of *Hevajra* at *Dharmanagar* in North Tripura, *Vajrahumkara* and *Marici* in different places of Tripura and dated between 9th-12th century, confirms the view that *Tantrayana* replaced *Mahayana*.

The reference of *Ṭilā* as in '*ṭālat mora ghara nāhi puḍavesi*' (*Dheṇḍanapāda*, *Caryā*, verse 33) and '*ūcā ūcā pāvat tāhi vasai sabarī balī*' (*Śabarapāda*, *Caryā*, verse 28) in the *Caryāpada* also probably hints that they were written by the inhabitants of *Hilly Tripura*, the only place in Bengali speaking area having hillocks as a major topographical feature. Also the term *dulī*, in the verse '*dulī duhi piṭā dharāṇa na jāi*' (*Kukkurīpāda*, *Caryā*, verse 2) signifies 'turtle'.<sup>21</sup> This term is still in use in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh and Cachar district of Assam and Northern Tripura that shows a close link of the language of these verses with this region.<sup>22</sup>

Hence, we can conclude that Buddhism flourished in Tripura for more than a thousand years in its early phase in the *Mahayana-Tantrayana-Sahajayana* form before being replaced by the *Theravada* form, which most probably had been imported from *Myanmar* and *Arakan* regions after a long state of hibernation. In the words of *Prof. S. Chaudhuri*<sup>23</sup> we may say that *Buddhism in Tripura* as in Bengal did not entirely disappear, but it 'transformed itself into those living forces which inspired and guided the religious and literary life in Bengal [as in Tripura] for centuries even after disappearance of its distinctive features.'

## Notes

1. For the varying limits of *Samatata* see J. F. Fleet's Topographical list of the Brihat Sanhita (ed. K. K. Dasgupta) p. 86.
2. K. C. Sinha advocated the view. The country in question, which acknowledged the supremacy of *Samudragupta*, was *Kartripura* and not *Tripura*.
3. ASI, AR, pt.I, 1930-34. pp. 38-39.
4. Ranimohan Sharma, *Political History of Tripura*, p. 21.
5. Projit Kr. Palit, Buddhist Gods and Goddesses of Pilak in Tripura: an important religious centre in Northeast, *Souvenir-Pilak Festival 2004*.
6. Sukomal Chaudhuri; *Contemporary Buddhism in Bangladesh*, p. 4
7. Chaudhuri, op. p.6
8. D. C. Sircar, The Kailan Copper Plate Inscription of King Sridharanarata of Samatata, *IHQ*, XXIII p. 235. pp. 279-285.
9. Asrafpur copper plates-*El*, XVII, p. 357; *Proc. ASB*, 1890, p. 249, 1891, p. 119; *Mem. ASB*, I, No. 6, pp. 85-91.
10. A.K.M. Shamsul Alam, *Mainamati*, 1975, p. 10.
11. Debala Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments*, 1971, p. 245.
12. S. Chaudhuri, op. cit, p. 11
13. *Journal Asiatique*, 1934, pp. 209-11; R. C. Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, I, p. 327 fn. 1; S. Chaudhuri, op. cit, p. 12
14. *El* XXVI, pp. 313-18.
15. Ranimohan Sharma, op. cit, p. 26; Debala Mitra, op. cit, p. 237
16. Md. Shahidullah, *Bangla Sahityer Katha*, pp. 76-77.
17. *El*, XII, 136f, XVII, 188f; N.G. Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, 1f
18. *El*, XX, 229 f, Belava copper plate of Bhojavarman.
19. Phayre, *History of Burma*, London, 1883, pp. 49-50.
20. Priyabrata Bhattacharya, Art and Archaeology, *Tripura the Land and its People*, ed. J. Ganchaudhuri, Delhi, 1980, p. 66.
21. 'Kacchapi', vide Sukumar Sen, *Caryagiti-padavali*, Eastern Publishers, Calcutta, 1973, p. 259.
22. Dr. Upal Sen, my teacher and colleague of Sanskrit College has pointed out this characteristic.
23. S. Chaudhuri, op. cit, p. 19.

# Buddhist Way of Mind Training

*Varasambodhi Thera*

Although generally regarded as a religion, Buddhism is basically a method of cultivating the mind. It is true that, with its monastic tradition and its emphasis on ethical factors, it possesses many of the surface characteristics that Westerners associate with religion. However, it is not theistic, since it affirms that the universe is governed by impersonal laws and not by any creator-god; it has no use for prayer, for the Buddha was a teacher and not a god; and it regards devotion not as a religious obligation but as a means of expressing gratitude to its founder and as a means of self-development. Thus it is not a religion at all from these points of view.

Again, Buddhism knows faith only in the sense of confidence in the way recommended by the Buddha. A Buddhist is not expected to have faith or to believe in anything merely because the Buddha said it, or because it is written in the ancient books, or because it has been handed down by tradition, or because others believe it. He may, of course, agree with himself to take the Buddha-doctrine as a working hypothesis and to have confidence in it; but he is not expected to accept anything unless his reason accepts it. This does not mean that everything can be demonstrated rationally, for many points lie beyond the scope of the intellect and can be cognized only by the development of higher faculties. But the fact remains that there is no need for blind acceptance of anything in the Buddha-doctrine.

Buddhism is a way of life based on the training of the mind. Its one ultimate aim is to show the way to complete liberation from suffering by the attainment of the Unconditioned, a state beyond the range of the normal untrained mind. Its immediate aim is to strike at the roots of suffering in everyday life.

All human activity is directed, either immediately or remotely, towards the attainment of happiness in some form or other; or, to express the same thing in negative terms, all human activity is directed towards liberation from some kind of unsatisfactoriness or dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction, then, can be regarded as the starting point in human activity, with happiness as its ultimate goal.

Dissatisfaction, the starting point in human activity, is also the starting point in Buddhism; and this point is expressed in the formula of the Four

Basic Statements, which set out the fact of dissatisfaction, its cause, its cure, and the method of its cure.

The First Basic Statement can be stated thus:

### **Dissatisfaction is Inescapable in En-self-ed Life**

In its original meaning, the word which is here rendered as 'dissatisfaction' and which is often translated as 'suffering' embraces the meanings not only of pain, sorrow, and displeasure, but also of everything that is unsatisfactory, ranging from acute physical pain and severe mental anguish to slight tiredness, boredom, or mild disappointment.

Sometimes the term is rendered as 'dissatisfaction' or 'unsatisfactoriness'; in some contexts these are perhaps more accurate, while at other times the word 'suffering' is more expressive. For this reason we shall use both 'suffering' and 'dissatisfaction' or 'unsatisfactoriness' according to context.

In some translations of the original texts it is stated that birth is suffering, sickness is suffering, old age is suffering, and pleasure is suffering. In English, this last statement fails to make sense; but if we restate it as 'pleasure is unsatisfactory' it becomes more readily understandable, for all pleasure is impermanent and is eventually succeeded by its opposite, and from this point of view at least it is unsatisfactory.

Now the Buddha-doctrine teaches that dissatisfaction or suffering is inescapable in en-self-ed life; and the term 'en-self-ed' life needs some explanation. In brief, the doctrine teaches that the self, considered as a fixed, unchanging eternal soul, has no reality.

The central core of every being is not an unchanging soul but a life-current, an ever-changing stream of energy which is never the same for two consecutive seconds. The self, considered as an eternal soul, therefore, is a delusion, and when regarded from the ultimate standpoint it has no reality; and it is only within this delusion of selfhood that ultimate suffering can exist. When the self-delusion is finally transcended and the final enlightenment is attained, the ultimate state, which lies beyond the relative universe is reached. In this ultimate state, the Unconditioned, suffering is extinguished; but while any element of selfhood remains, even though it is a delusion, suffering remains potentially within it.

We must understand, then, that the First Basic Statement does not mean that suffering is inescapable; it means that suffering is inescapable in enselfed life, or while the delusion of selfhood remains.

We can now move on to the Second Basic Statement, Which says:

### **The Origin of Dissatisfaction is Craving**

If you fall on a slippery floor and suffer from bruises, you say that the cause of your suffering is the slippery floor. In an immediate sense you are right, of course, and to say that the cause of your bruises is craving fails to make sense.

But the Second Statement does not refer to individual cases or to immediate causes. It means that the integrating force that holds together the life-current is self-centered craving; for this life-current - this self-delusion - contains in itself the conditions for suffering, while the slippery floor is merely an occasion for suffering.

It is obviously impossible, by the nature of the world we live in, to cure suffering by the removal of all the occasions for suffering; whereas it is possible in Buddhism to strike at its prime or fundamental cause. Therefore the Third Basic Statement states:

### **Liberation May Be Achieved by Destroying Craving**

It is self-centered craving that holds together the forces which comprise the life-current, the stream of existence which we call the self; and it is only with self-delusion that unsatisfactoriness or suffering can exist. By the destruction of that which holds together the delusion of the self, the root cause of suffering is also destroyed.

The ultimate aim of Buddhist practice, then, is to annihilate the self. This is where a great deal of misunderstanding arises, and naturally so; but once it is realized that to annihilate the self is to annihilate a delusion, this misunderstanding disappears. When the delusion is removed, the reality appears; so that to destroy delusion is to reveal the reality. The reality cannot be discovered while the delusion of self continues to obscure it.

Now what is this reality which appears when the delusion is removed? The ultimate reality is the Unconditioned, called also the Unborn, the Unoriginated, the Uncreated, and the Uncompounded. We can, inadequately and not very accurately, describe it as a positive state of being. It is characterized by supreme bliss and complete freedom from suffering and is so utterly different from ordinary existence that no real description of it can be given. The Unconditioned can be indicated - up to a point - only by stating what it is not; for it is beyond words and beyond thought.

Hence, in the Buddhist texts, the Unconditioned is often explained as the final elimination' from one's own mind, of greed, hatred and delusion. This, of course, also implies the perfection of the opposite positive qualities of selflessness, loving-kindness, and wisdom.

The attainment of the Unconditioned is the ultimate aim of all Buddhist practice, and is the same as complete liberation from dissatisfaction or suffering. This brings us to the last of the Four Basic Statements:

### **The Way of Liberation is the Noble Eightfold Path**

The eight factors of the path are these:

1. Right understanding, knowledge of the true nature of existence.
2. Right thought, thought free from sensuality, ill-will and cruelty.
3. Right speech, speech without falsity, gossip, harshness, and idle babble.
4. Right action, or the avoidance of killing, stealing and adultery.
5. Right livelihood, an occupation that harms no conscious living being.
6. Right effort, or the effort to destroy the defilements of the mind and to cultivate wholesome qualities.
7. Right mindfulness, the perfection of the normal faculty of attention.
8. Right concentration, the cultivation of a collected, focused mind through meditation.

Now you will see that in this Noble Eightfold Path there is nothing of an essentially religious nature; it is more a sort of moral psychology.

But in the East as well as in the West people as a whole demand external show of some sort, and -- on the outside at least -- the non-essentials have assumed more importance than the essentials.

While some external features in the practice of Buddhism must of necessity vary according to environment, the essential and constant characteristics of that practice are summed up in the following outline of the Noble Eightfold Path, the Middle Way, between harmful extremes, as taught by the Buddha.

Although it is convenient to speak of the various aspects of the eightfold path as eight steps, they are not to be regarded as separate steps, taken one after another. On the contrary, each one must be practiced along with the others, and it might perhaps be better to think of them as if they were eight parallel lanes within the one road rather than eight successive steps.

The first step of this path, right understanding, is primarily a matter of seeing things as they really are -- or at least trying to do so without self-deceit or evasion. In another sense, right understanding commences as an intellectual appreciation of the nature of existence, and as such it can be regarded as the beginning of the path; but, when the path has been followed to the end, this merely intellectual appreciation is supplanted by a direct and penetrating discernment of the principles of the teaching first accepted intellectually.

While right understanding can be regarded as the complete understanding of the Buddha doctrine, it is based on the recognition of three dominating characteristics of the relative universe, of the universe of time, form and matter. These three characteristics can briefly be set out in this way:

1. Impermanence: All things in the relative universe are unceasingly changing.
2. Dissatisfaction: Some degree of suffering or dissatisfaction is inherent in en-selfed life, or in life within the limitations of the relative universe and personal experience.
3. Egolessness: No being -- no human being or any other sort of being -- possesses a fixed, unchanging, eternal soul or self. Instead, every being consists of an ever-changing current of forces, an ever-changing flux of material and mental phenomena, like a river which is always moving and is never still for a single second.

The self, then, is not a static entity but an ever-changing flux. This dynamic concept of existence is typical of deeper Buddhist thought; there is nothing static in life, and since it is ever-flowing you must learn to flow with it.

Another aspect of right understanding is the recognition that the universe runs its course on the basis of a strict sequence of cause and effect, or of action and reaction, a sequence just as invariable and just as exact in the mental or moral realm as in the physical. In accordance with this law of moral action and reaction all morally good or wholesome will actions eventually bring to the doer happiness at some time, while unwholesome or morally bad will-actions bring suffering to the doer.

The effects of wholesome and unwholesome will-actions -- that is to say, the happiness and suffering that result from them -- do not generally follow immediately; there is often a considerable time-lag, for the resultant happiness and suffering can arise only when appropriate conditions are present. The results may not appear within the present lifetime. Thus at death there is

normally a balance of 'merit' which has not yet brought about its experience of happiness; and at the same time there is also a balance of 'demerit' which has not yet given rise to the suffering which is to be its inevitable result.

After death, the body disintegrates, of course, but the life-current continues, not in the form of an unchanging soul, but in the form of an ever-changing stream of energy. Immediately after death a new being commences life to carry on this life current; but the new being is not necessarily a human being, and the instantaneous rebirth may take place on another plane of existence. But in any case, the new being is a direct sequel to the being that has just died.

Thus the new being becomes an uninterrupted continuation of the old being, and the life-current is unbroken. The new being inherits the balance of merit built up by the old being, and this balance of merit will inevitably bring happiness at some future time. At the same time, the new being inherits the old being's balance of demerit, which will bring suffering at some time in the future.

In effect, in the sense of continuity, the new being is the same as the old being. In just the same way -- that is, in the sense of continuity only - - an old man is the same as the young man he once was, the young man is the same as the boy he once was, and the boy is the same as the baby he once was. But the identity of the old man with the young man, and with the boy, and with the baby, is due only to continuity; there is no other identity.

Everything in the universe changes from day to day and from moment to moment, so that every being at this moment is a slightly different being from that of the moment before; the only identity is due to continuity. In the same way, the being that is reborn is different from the previous one that died; but the identity due to continuity remains as before.

These teachings are basic to the Buddha-doctrine -- the illusory nature of the self, the law of action and reaction in the moral sphere, and the rebirth of the life-forces -- but there is no need for anyone to accept anything that does not appeal to his reason. Acceptance of any particular teaching is unimportant; what is important is the continual effort to see things as they really are, without self-deceit or evasion.

So much for a brief outline of the doctrine under the heading of right understanding. The second step, right thought or aim, is a matter of freeing the intellectual faculties from adverse emotional factors, such as sensuality, ill-will and cruelty, which render wise and unbiased decisions impossible.



Right speech, right action, and right livelihood together make up the moral section of the path, their function being to keep the defilements of the mind under control and to prevent them from reaching adverse expression. These defilements, however, cannot be completely eradicated by morality alone, and the other steps of the path must be applied to cleanse the mind completely of its defilements.

Now in the next step -- right effort -- we enter the sphere of practical psychology, for right effort in this context means effort of will. In other words, the sixth step of the path is self-discipline, the training of the will in order to prevent and overcome those states of mind that retard development, and to arouse and cultivate those that bring about mental progress.

The seventh step of the path is also one of practical psychology; this is the step called right mindfulness, and it consists of the fullest possible development of the ordinary faculty of attention. It is largely by the development of attention -- expanded and intensified awareness -- that the mind can eventually become capable of discerning things as they really are.

The primary function of the, seventh step, right mindfulness, is to develop an increasing awareness of the unreality of the self. However, it functions also by continually improving the normal faculty of attention, thus equipping the mind better to meet the problems and stresses of the workaday world.

In the Buddha-way, mindfulness consists of developing the faculty of attention so as to produce a constant awareness of all thoughts that arise, all words that are spoken, and all actions that are done, with a view to keeping them free from self-interest, from emotional bias, and from self-delusion.

Right mindfulness has many applications in the sphere of everyday activities. For example, it can be employed to bring about a sharpened awareness, a clear comprehension, of the motives of these activities, and this clear comprehension of motive is extremely important.

In right concentration, the last of the eight steps, the cultivation of higher mind-states -- up to the meditative absorptions -- is undertaken, and these higher mind-states serve to unify, purify, and strengthen the mind for the achievement of liberating insight.

In this ultimate achievement the delusion of selfhood, with its craving and suffering, is transcended and extinguished.

This penetrating insight is the ultimate goal of all Buddhist practices, and with it comes a direct insight into the true nature of life, culminating in realization of the Unconditioned. While the Unconditioned is the extinction

of self, it is nevertheless not mere non-existence or annihilation, for the extinction of self is nothing but the extinction of a delusion. Every description of the Unconditioned must fail, for it lies not only beyond words but also beyond even thought; and the only way to know it is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path to its end.

This, then, is the original Buddhism; this is the Buddhism of the Noble Eightfold Path, of the path that leads from the bondage of self to liberating insight into reality.

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# Concept of Saddhā from the Buddhist point of view

*Subhra Barua*

Devotional act calls into play many forces and faculties of the mind. The most important of these is Saddhā, faith or confidence which is associated with other factors such as gratitude, love, joy etc. Devotion, from the Buddhist stand-point is *ñāna-sampayutta*, i.e. accompanied by knowledge, so that it is both philosophical and emotional. The philosophical aspect bears two important mental faculties viz. the rational and volitional. The function of this rational faculty is to investigate and probe into the true nature of existence in order to understand, at least intellectually, its reality in the proper perspective. The emotional aspect brings together several mental factors, such as reverence, gratitude, love, faith, joy etc. The balancing of the two mental faculties, emotion and reason is considered in Buddhism most essential for a harmonious spiritual development which is required for the attainment of Nibbāna.

It should clearly be understood that this 'Saddhā' is essentially different from 'blind faith', since there is in it no element of affection nor any personal relationship or blind following. Faith in the theistic sense is not found in Buddhism because of its emphasis on understanding. "Referring to the unintelligible and 'blind' nature of faith", Voltaire said, "Faith is to believe in something which your reason tells you cannot be true; for if your reason approved of it, there could be no question of blind faith."<sup>1</sup> In Buddhism faith is directed towards an ever-present reality and not towards a dead teacher or empty abstractions. This faith has the background of understanding with regard to the nature of *saṃsāra* and also with regard to the significance of the Triple-Gem-the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha. These three embody and culminate in one idea, one Truth. Hence it is said:-

Dhammakāyo yato Satthā, Dhammo Satthā tato mato,  
Dhamme ñhito so Saṅgho ca, Satthu sankham nigacchati.

'Since the Teacher is the Truth-embodiment, so is the Truth the very Teacher, And the Noble Order being established on the Truth,

Also goes by the name of the Teacher.'

Buddha is an honorific expression implying the attainment of Supreme Enlightenment (*Sammā Sambodhi*). Buddha implies a state of perfection and

not a person. It is an attribute of a perfect and holy guide, who has discovered the nature of Truth, known as Ariya-Saccas-Noble Truths, through long and painful struggle and out of compassion preached it to the suffering people. Dhamma in this context, is the Transcendental Truth i.e. Nibbāna. It is also the Supermundane Path, leading to that perfect Truth. Reflection on Dhamma means reflection on the nature of its transcendental attributes, reflection on that state of perfect Deliverance from the circle of deaths and rebirths. Saṅgha is the Order of Noble Disciples who have achieved the Goal or have entered that path which leads to the Goal, thus forming the 'living example' for those who are still striving. In its highest i.e. Super-mundane sense 'saddhā' becomes 'aveccappasāda', 'unshakable faith in the Triple Gem, achievable through the attainment of the Noble-Path (Ariya Magga). Only in this sense it is 'self surrender' which is the culmination of devotion. When a person experiences Nibbānic peace for the first time after reaching the first stage of Holiness, Stream Entry (Sotāpatti) and three mental fetters (Samyojana) called 'Personality Belief (Sakkāya diṭṭhi)', 'Sceptical Doubt (Vicikicchā)' and 'Clinging to Rites and Rituals (Sīlabbata Parāmāsa) are eliminated, then his faith automatically becomes firmly rooted. When one removes the lid of 'Self' or 'ego-centric consciousness' from the jar of life and lays it bare for objective analysis and observation only then does true understanding spring up in the mind.

Since Saddhā is an indispensable factor governing all spiritual growth, it is called the seed (bījaṃ) from which is born the tree that bears the fruit of deliverance:-

Saddhā bījaṃ, tapo vuṭṭhi, paññā me yuganaṅgalaṃ  
hirī īsā, mano yottaṃ, sati me phālapācanaṃ.<sup>2</sup>

Among the five factors of spiritual powers and spiritual faculties, called Bala and Indriya i.e. Saddhā, Viriya (effort), Sati (Mindfulness), Samādhi (concentration), Paññā (Intuitive Wisdom), the primary factor is this Saddhā, which if properly cultivated, conditions the development of the rest.

Saddhāya tarati oghaṃ, appamādena aṇṇavaṃ  
viriyena dukkhaṃ acceti, paññāya parisujjhati<sup>3</sup>

By faith one crosses over the stream, by earnestness the sea of life, by steadfastness all grief one stills, by wisdom is one purified.

In Buddhism faith can be classified as follows with reference to the persons concerned (1) The faith of the ordinary man (2) faith of an inquirer before he receives instruction (3) faith of an inquirer who is undergoing preliminary courses of training (4) faith of a Sotāpanna, an Aryan who has

attained the first grade of sanctification (5) faith of the Aryans who have not as yet reached the goal and (6) faith of an Arahant who has attained final sanctification. According to Buddhaghosa there are four types of faith<sup>4</sup>:-

1. Āgamaniya Saddhā - adventitious faith e.g. faith of a Bodhisatta who is destined to become a supreme Buddha.
2. Adhigama Saddhā - realised faith gained by the Ariya puggalas in the 8 higher stages of experience.
3. Pasāda Saddhā - unshaken faith (aveccappasāda) of a stream - attainer (Sotāpanna) in the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Order.
4. Okappana Saddhā - professed faith, it appears to mean outward or seeming faith which makes a man keep up appearances, but does not touch his heart. 'Faith is perfected', says Aśvaghoṣa, 'by practising the following 5 deeds : Charity (dāna), Morality (Sīla), Patience (Khānti), Energy (Viriya), Tranquillisation (Samatha) and Intellectual Insight (Vipassanā).

Saddhā is one of the Sobhana Cetasikas or Beautiful Mental States which arises with such Sobhana Citta : With the Kāma Sobhana Cittas or Sobhana cittas of Sense Sphere, the Rūpāvacara Cittas, the Arūpāvacara cittas and the Lokuttara Cittas. It is confidence in wholesomeness, there cannot be any form of wholesomeness without Saddhā. It is the 'forerunner' of wholesomeness. It is called the seed of all wholesome states because, according to commentarial explanations, it inspires the mind with confidence (okappana, pasāda) and determination (adhimokkha), for launching out (pakkhandana) to cross the flood of saṃsāra--

Tassa ajjhataṃ suññataṃ manasikaroto ajjhataṃ suññataṃ  
Cittaṃ pakkhandati pasīdati santiṭṭhati Vimuccati<sup>6</sup>

Tranquillisation (Sampasādanalakkhaṇa) and Aspiration (Sampakkhandana-lakkhaṇa) is the characteristic mark of faith. Milinda Pañha<sup>7</sup> refers a simile to explain 'sampasādanalakkhaṇa' - A universal monarch crosses a small stream with his army. The water is polluted by the army but his water-purifying gem purifies the water so that mud, sand and waterweeds subside and water becomes clear and undisturbed. The water which is disturbed by pollution is like the mind which is disturbed by defilements. Faith purifies the mind so that it becomes clear and undisturbed. As to the characteristic of 'sampakkhandana-lakkhaṇa' Milinda Pañha gives other simile to explain it - A crowd standing on the bank of a river full of water and being ignorant of the real breadth or depth of the water, is afraid to cross over. A hero knowing

his own strength and power, crosses the river and leads the crowd so that they can cross over as well.

'Faith in Buddhism should be reasoned and rooted in understanding (ākāravatī saddhā dassanamūlikā) and is asked to investigate and test the object of one's faith' - We have found it in the Majjhima Nikāya 'yassa kassaci imehi ākārehi, imehi padehi, imehi vyañjanehi tathāgate saddhā niṭṭhitā, hoti mūlajātā patitṭhita, ayaṃ vuccati ākāravatī saddhā dassanamūlikā.' True understanding must necessarily have the support of Saddhā in order to free itself from the dryness of being merely theoretical, and determination must be based on Saddhā in order to maintain their firmness and vigour by which theory is translated into practice.<sup>9</sup>

The proper way to express one's faith is to say and feel<sup>10</sup> and this faith is a product of reason, knowledge and experience and so it can never be blind faith. Freedom is attainable by this faith, although human perfection requires the proper cultivation of other faculties and powers.

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# Heart Sutra Reconsidered

*Rameshchandra Mukhopadhyaya*

We propose hereby to read the Heart Sutra from fresh standpoint. Let us at the outset explain why we are drawn to a study of the Heart Sutra. To answer that, we shall refer to Edward Conze who avows that the judgement of thirty generations of Buddhists in China, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia have singled out the Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra as the holiest of holy; both perhaps of the fourth century of our era, as Conze observes. In view of the fact that the Heart Sutra which has been deemed as one of the holiest of holy for thirty generations by Buddhists of different nations, we had better read it once again to see what wealth the Sutra brings to us.

Why say that the Heart Sutra could be read from fresh standpoint? Well, there are commentaries of the same by such masterminds like Asanga Vasuvandhu and Kamalasila and no less a scholar than Edwar Conze has composed commentary of high watermark on the same sutra. Still, just as anyone must find out or make his own road to enlightenment, similarly everyone must read a text in his own way to find the Tao or the road. A text cannot have one and only one meaning. Or else why should there be so many interpretations of the text? The very text of the Heart Sutra avows that form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form. On one level atleast every form has emptiness in it. Emptiness speaks of something which is beyond the ken of perceptions trammelled by time and space. And surely interpretations through words which are bound by time and space cannot exhaust the meaning of a text, albeit no interpretation of a text could be wide off the mark of the meaning of a text. since words cannot exhaust the meaning of emptiness, emptiness could have meaning on numerous levels. Modern linguistics and philosophy of language point out that language cannot have one definite meaning. Any text whatever is capable of meaning on more than one level. This is very much true of a text which is being read through the generations and is a classic. Every generation has its own unique point of view and aspirations. The text which satisfies the different aspirations of different generations must be capable of meaning on different levels. Where is the text? There could be no text without its reader apprehending some meaning. And surely there are as many texts embedded as there are readers. Because every reader decodes the text from his own standpoint. Hence the proposal to read the Heart Sutra afresh. And we propose to read the Heart Sutra on more than one level. And to that end

we invoke the skill of close reading and *explicatio de texte*. Beardsley recommends that *explicatio* be used as a name for the critic's effort to disclose implicit meanings at the lexical level of a poem such as the connotations of a word, the implications of a complex or ambiguous syntax, or possible meaning of a metaphor or other tropes (Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics, pg 395, Princeton University Press, Princeton). Close reading method is very akin to *explication*. It focuses on the text itself and does not give importance to any extra-textual context.

The title of the Sutra is known as the Heart Sutra. Does the Sutra reach us to the heart of the things or to the heart of the scriptures? Or did the Sutra itself spring from the heart? Or else the Sutra though explicit in the text is implicit in every heart?

The Sutra opens with the invocation

ओं नमो भगवत्यै आर्य-प्रज्ञापारमिताय।

Prajna means wisdom. Prajnaparamita means perfection of wisdom or else it might mean wisdom and its beyond. Since gender in Sanskrit is grammatical and not natural, Bhagavati Prajnaparamita might mean the deity of the spirit of wisdom. It is not necessary to attribute any natural gender to it. Paramita might be a god or goddess or both or none. Be that as it may the addresser in the poem pays his / her homage to Arya Prajnaparamita. Conze tells us that Arya stands for both noble and holy. Wisdom has been deified and hence to distinguish it/him/her as noble and holy.

Wisdom has been deified and hence to distinguish it/him/her, in the contingent world the addresser attributes it/him/her as noble and holy.

Why does the addresser pay his or her homage to Wisdom? Perhaps because s/he seeks to disclose some truth hidden from the eye and which needs wisdom to encode.

आर्य अवलोकितेश्वर बोधिसत्वो गम्भीरं प्रज्ञापारमिताचर्या चरमानो  
व्यवलोकयति स्म पञ्चस्कन्धास्तांश्च स्वभावशून्यान् पश्यति स्म।

The word Arya could be derived from verb (ॠ) and could mean moving or dynamic as well. So the Arya Avalokiteswara is one who moves from falsehood to truth. Iswara is Lord. Avalokiteswara is the Lord of Avalokana or seeing; he sees into the life of things. At the same time he is also being seen. He is Bodhisattva. In other words his essence is awareness or enlightenment. Be that as it may, according to Buddhist mythology a Bodhisattva is one who strives to become a Buddha or the Enlightened One. This is not all. According to the Mahayana School of Buddhism, Bodhisattva



is one who does not seek his own emancipation. On the contrary, a Bodhisattava seeks to emancipate everything of the world. According to Buddhist mythology, Avalokitesvara is an ideal Bodhisattva, because he refused enlightenment or emancipation. As long as the smallest particle of the existence is not emancipated, Avalokitesvara will not embrace the eternal bliss or nirvana. This Arya Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva was seriously plunged in the practice of wisdom that takes one beyond the perceived and the nonperceived. In this state he looked about and found the pancaskandhas. And he found that pancaskandhas were by nature or svabhava empty. The wide wonderful world with such abundant variety were looked upon by the seer Bodhisattava as merely made of five constituents and by nature they are empty or svabhava-sunya. On the surface whatever Avalokitesvara sees is empty by nature. If everything were empty then the speaker alone pervades the existence. But the self is also made of pancakandha and empty. So Avalokitesvara is not there and nothing is there. When neither the object nor the subject is there, there is neither the speaker nor the listener nor the speech. Here is the aesthetics of silence eloquent about suchness. This is why it has been said that despite the Tripitaka Buddha did not utter a single word. In the light of Avalokitesvara, whatever is not.—Avalokitesvara can see into the thingness of things, finds that all things and beings are mere appearances before a myopic eye. They exist and yet by nature they do not exist. They are like castles in the air. The word 'sunya' however has its antonym in purna. A thing or a being could be really empty when they appear otherwise. Or else emptiness or sunya would have no meaning. 'As a technical meaning it denotes in Buddhism the absence of self'. (Conze) The next section explicates his proposition

इह शारिपुत्र रुपं शून्यता शून्यतैव रुपं रुपत्र पृथक् शून्यता  
शून्यताया न पृथग् रुपम् एवम् एव वेदना-संज्ञासंस्कार-विज्ञानम्।

On the surface it implies that one's own-being and marks of the skandhas, elements and sense-fields are imagined. Since they are devoid of self --a mere agglomeration or heaps closely tied to their root cause, ignorance, karma, and craving, proceeding from mutual conditioning inactive--therefore the Skandhas are also without the special and general marks. The variety of such marks is the result of fancy and they are distinguished from one another by fools and not by saints.

But, no. What Avalokitesvara says does not point that all appearance is illusion. He does not claim that all appearance vanish like bubbles in the air before a discerning eye. On the contrary he posits that appearance and emptiness are identical. Appearance means emptiness and emptiness means

appearance. In other words, the world of appearance neither is, nor is not. And existence is at bottom unreal. And yet it is not unreal. Avalokitesvara observes that emptiness does not differ from form. But we mortals are never focussed on the opposites simultaneously. Heisenberg's Theory of Indeterminacy has proved that we cannot have total knowledge in this contingent world. Because if we want to measure the speed of an electron, we shall not know its location. Again if we want to know the location of an electron, we shall not know its speed. But Avalokitesvara's eye can know both at the same time. He can be focussed on the opposites at the same time. Form is one of the five skandhas or five constituents that create all things in the multiverse. The other four are feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness. Earlier Avalokitesvara saw everything and every being of the existence made up of these five constituents. Now Avalokitesvara points that forms as well as all other constituents are identical with emptiness and emptiness is identical with form. In other words, both appearance and reality are taken into account. The addressee of this Heart Sutra, as it has been revealed here is Sari Putta. This is very significant because this distinguishes the Heart Sutra from any other sutra. Any speech is determined by its addressee. Sari Putta as we know was predestined to be a buddha. Hence his perceptions of the world and things are quite different from that of the ordinary run of men. As Conze observes Sari Putta mastered Abhidhamma pitaka. And one wonders whether Avalokitesvara teaches him some thing which beyonds the Abhidhamma.

Avalokitesvara affirms that emptiness is form and form is emptiness. This puts in one's mind the benediction of the Isopanishada-

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदम्  
 पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते।  
 पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय  
 पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥

This is full, that is full.  
 Full springs from the full  
 If you take away the full from the full  
 Fullness alone persists

In the contingent world we do not find the truth of it. If a cup spills its tea, there is no more tea in it. And yet the risi asserts that emptiness in the cup is not real. There cannot be emptiness. But fullness is a word which has its antonym in emptiness. The very notion of fullness stands in relation

to emptiness; then fullness and emptiness are the same. And hence the rejoinder of Buddhism is that everything is full and yet everything is empty.

What is form but a combination of our material elements in earth, water, fire and air, five sense organs, and five sense objects. Feelings are pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Perception is made through six senses. Samskara is difficult to translate into English. It could be described as the a priori impulse of every man with which s/he is born. And finally there is vijnana. What is vijnana but awareness of difference. The world of eye and ear which we half perceive and half create exists through differences alone. The tree is different from the stone and the stone is different from running waters.

The Heart Sutra asserts that these differences do exist and yet donot exist. Impulses do exist and yet they donot exist. Perceptions do exist and do not exist. Feelings do exist and donot exist.

What could such arguments mean? The Heart Sutra doesnot discard the world of appearance. And yet the Heart Sutra doesnot deny that appearance is hollow and empty.

Such deliberations might sound strange to us locked up in the world of eye and ear. We distinguish a piece of diamond from a pale of water. We distinguish an engineer from an ayah that looks after the presently born baby. This is not all. We value the engineer more and donot pause to see how much the ayah is paid for her job. This valorisation and such hierarchy is hollow sham. Who is more important, an ayah or an engineer? Surely an ayah is more important because she saves the human child from death. Men are born helpless. A child left alone in a sequestered place unlike a newly born calf or kitten cannot survive even a day. so an ayah gives us life. Why is she ill-paid then, while an engineer is paid enough so that she can live a comfortable life? The economist will say, to produce an engineer, we have to spend a lot. So he is highly paid. Well which is more important -- a pale of water or a piece of diamond? The utility of water cannot be overemphasised. We could not live without water. Still why is diamond so costly and water is sometimes available free of cost? The economist will answer that to produce another pale of water incurs no cost whereas to produce another piece of diamond one has to spend a fortune. Fine. But who said that diamond is precious? A woman who has not learnt the value-judgement laid down by the civilization might find diamonds littered on her way to gathering mango fruits. But she will not touch a single diamond. Mangoes will cater to her taste and satisfy her hunger. It is the civilization, therefore, that has ceated the hierarchy where diamond is more precious and water cheap. The Heart

Sutra points out that such hierarchies are hollow sham. This is not all. To a seer all things are at bottom the same made of pancaskandha. It is something like the vision of a physicist who finds both a mountain and a man as made of the same fund of energy. Matter has vanished in the light of modern physicist. Well, if energy is non-mental it is non-physical also. So, reductionism doesnot help unless we say that difference pervades this existence or difference through which this existence is revealed is true and yet not true. The Heart Sutra or Buddhism embraces, being and non-being, self and non-self as the same. Presence and absence, momentariness and eternity, and all such dichotomies of existence dissolve at the magic touch of Buddhism. Every assertion is therefore as true as any other assertion in such a world. Hence Buddhism asserts that the existence is what it is and suchness is the truth. It cannot be analysed or described with the help of vijnana.

The Heart Sutra further observes:

इह सारिपुत्र सर्वधर्माः शून्यता-लक्षणा, अनुत्पन्ना  
अनिरुद्धा अमलाअविमला अनूना अपरिपूर्णा।

O Sariputra! All the dharmas are characterized by emptiness. Dharma is a word, which could mean on many levels. It could mean physical laws of science. In that light we could say that the dharma of water is liquidity or the dharma of wind is to move to and fro. Again dharma might mean those values which hold the mankind together. It might refer to different religions as well. Avalokitesvara asserts that these dharmas do exist. And yet they are marked by emptiness. The laws of dharmas were never created. They were never repressed. They were never defiled. They were never immaculate. They were never incomplete. They were never complete.

This clearly states that Buddhism doesnot pin its faith on fundamentalism or foundationalism. There are myriads of human communities under the sun. Each of them has its own culture or dharma which holds its followers in a system. If Heart Sutra is properly understood, it points out that no culture is superior and no culture is inferior. No culture has any root into timelessness. So no culture is to be believed. But one must treat a different culture from the standpoint of cultural relativism.

Once Buddha while living at Kosambi (near Allahabad) addressed the monks and told them-

This is suffering--this I have declared

This is generation of suffering--this have I declared

This is the path leading to suffering--this I have declared.

On the surface these declarations announce the possibility of our transportation to the world of bliss from the sphere of sorrow.

Buddha speaks of three types of sorrow in dukkha-dukkhata, sankhara-dukkha dukkhata and viparinama dukkhata.

Dukkha dukkhata is our everyday sorrow. We look before and after and pine for what is not. This is dukkha dukkhata. Association with unloved ones and separation from loved ones, old age, disease and death constitute dukkha-dukkhata.

Sankhara dukkhata has philosophical import. Sankhara could be interpreted as an innate mode of perception with which one is born. It is because of this sankhara one cannot realize that anything under the sun that one perceives is an aggregate of five skandhas in matter, sensations, perceptions and mental formations and consciousness. They are known briefly as nama-rupa -- the psycho-physical entity. They constitute a sentient being or a person. This pancaskandha are hollow in essence. But one doesnot perceive that viparinama dukkha results from the transitory nature of the world. Nothing is stable here, Happiness, if it comes at all, soon vanishes like snow flakes in the sun, pushing one to despair. Even the happiness attained through meditation or jhana is also anicca or transitory. And whatever is transitory causes sorrow, *yadaniccam tam dukkham*.

And did not Buddha announce that he had shown the way out from the sphere of sorrow?

The Heart Sutra observes that when one gets at the heart of things one knows that the world of appearance is true and yet not true.

Avalokiteswara observes:

तस्माच्छारिपुत्र शून्यतायाम् न रूपं न वेदना न संज्ञा न संस्काराः  
न विज्ञानम् न चतुप्रोत्रघ्राण-जिह्वा-कायमनांसि न रूपशब्दग-धरस-स्पर्शव्यधर्माः न  
चक्षुर्घातुर्यावन्-न मनो- विज्ञानधातुः न अविद्या न अविदयाक्षयो यावन् न जरामरणम्  
न जरामरणक्षयो न दुःख-समुदय-निरोध-मार्गं न ज्ञानम् न प्राप्तिर्नाप्राप्तिः।

Therefore O Sariputra in emptiness there is no form, nor feeling, nor perception, nor impulse, nor consciousness. No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind. No sight-organ element, and so forth until we come to 'No mind-conscious element. There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so forth until we come to.' there is no decay and death, no extinction of decay and deaths.

There is no way out from the sufferings. There is cognition, no attainment, and no non-attainment.'

(cp. Conze's translation)

The famous French philosopher Jaques Derrida discarded the whole of western philosophy as logocentric where a particular word such as light, soul, God or consciousness is deemed as the centre. But a centre cannot have a centre. If light were the centre of a discourse, one must not forget that darkness is at the centre of light. Once we are focussed on darkness we are decentred again being aware of the fact that light is at the centre of darkness. Life and existence is the text of Avalokitesvara. He interprets the same without being logocentric. Buddha promised cessation of suffering. How is that? Avalokitesvara observes that there is no suffering and no cessation of suffering. There is no attainment and no non-attainment. Commonly we understand that cessation of suffering implies the attainment of nirvana. But Avalokitesvara explicates the same as the attainment of the fact that there is no attainment and no non-attainment. What is nirvana then? It is *naiva-sanjna nasanga*. It is neither consciousness nor not-consciousness. It is neither not-consciousness nor not-not-consciousness. The awareness of such a stage baffles description in truth, as Avalokitesvara points out that there is neither ignorance nor wearing out of ignorance. In common parley we posit the dichotomies like

Bondage and freedom  
 Ignorance and knowledge  
 Sorrow and Happiness

We value the motifs in the right side as desirable and the motifs in the left column as undesirable. But this is logocentric and false. One cannot exist without the other. And yet if the antonyms are brought together we don't get the truth. Ignorance depends upon knowledge or cessation of ignorance. Hence neither ignorance could be real nor cessation of ignorance could be real. Once again, neither absence of ignorance can be real nor not-absence of ignorance is real. Thus the Heart sutra is free from logocentrism in its legitimation and could be called Post-modern in essence.

Post-modernism is a cover-term for those avant-garde ideas that discard fundamentalism, foundationalism, essentialism and reductionism. They claim that there is no absolute foundation of truth and hence there is nothing called absolute truth or universal truth. The Post-moderns claim that we are in a virtual world, which is neither real, nor not-real.

But Avalokitesvara and the Heart Sutra seem to go further.

तस्माच्छारिपुत्र अप्राप्तित्वाद् बोधिसत्त्वस्य प्रज्ञापारमिताम्  
 आप्रित्य विहरति अचित्तावरणं चित्तावरण-नास्तित्वाद्  
 अत्रस्तो विपर्यास-अतिक्रान्तो निष्ठा-निर्वाण-प्राप्तः।

‘Therefore O Sariputra, it is because of his non-attainmentness that a Bodhisatta though having relied on perfection of wisdom dwells without thought-coverings. In the absence of thought-covering he has not been made to tremble he has overcome what can upset and in the end he attains Nirvana’ (translation Conze)

If one seeks the path he misses it. If one seeks knowledge, he loses it. In other word, since nothing could be affirmed or negated in the existence, one’s thoughts vanish. Once, thoughts vanish, the mind is not there. Patanjali posited that *yogascittavritti-nirodha*. Yoga implies the wearing out of thought. Avalokitesvara reaches our mind to a thoughtless or no mind state. In fact thought always percieves half-truths. It cannot see the world steadily and as a whole. Thought reads the world in fragments and it fragments the world. Truly speaking the world or existence are neither complete nor incomplete. Since a Bodhisatva gets rid of thought-coverings, he has no fear. He has overcome what could upset him. And there by he attains nirbana. The phrase *acittavaranam* might also mean devoid of coverings that shroud the chitta or awareness when karma-avarana, klesa-avarana and jneya-avarana are peeled off, there is awareness withal and the world turns into awareness of Bodhisattva or else Bodhicitta is all pervasive. This attendant of Bodhicitta is nirbana. If there were nothing else than Bodhicitta, Bodhicitta wouldn’t be there. And hence nirbana does not mean any attainment of any kind.

Thus nirbana doesnot necessarily mean a journey to a different sphere. Bodhisatta may tread on the very earth where we move about. But he looks upon the earth from a different perspective that language fails to describe and thus Bodhisatva attains nirbana.

An ontological change in the existence takes place.

The next sentence reads

त्र्यध्वाव्यवस्थिताः सर्व-बुद्धाः प्रज्ञापारमितामाश्रित्य  
 अनुत्तरां सम्यक्सम्बोधिम् अभिसम्बुद्धाः।

‘All those who appear as Buddha in the three periods of time, fully awake to the utmost right and perfect enlightenment because they have relied on the perfection of wisdom.’ (Tr. Conze)

So what Bodhisatvas learn and attain-nirbana is also learnt by Buddhas.

What do they learn? They learn that nothing is to be learnt. That is the perfection of wisdom.

तस्माज्ज्ञातव्यम् प्रज्ञापारमिता महामन्त्रो महाविद्यामन्त्रोऽनुत्तरो मन्त्रो समसम-  
मन्त्रः सर्वदुःप्रशमनः सत्यम् अमिथ्यत्वात् प्रज्ञापारमितायाम् उक्तो मन्त्रः तद्यथा  
गते गते पारगते पारसंगते बोधि स्वाहा। इति प्रज्ञापारमितृहृदयं समाप्तम्।

The last sentence clinches the sutra eulogising Prajnaparomita mantra or a mantra embodying highest wisdom. The sutra ends with the chant of that mantra

गते गते पारं गते पारसं गते बोधि स्वाहा

Conze translates the mantra as

Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond. O what an awakening, all hail!

Who is gone? The self is gone and the non-self is gone. Beyond what have they gone? They have gone beyond the world torn with dichotomies. Language belongs to the world made up of the stuff of difference. Language pervades the world made up of the stuff of difference. The world made up of the stuff of difference is the vast chasm to cross. That which has crossed the chasm cannot be described. The realm beyond the chasm cannot be described. So one must avail oneself of the mantra which surpasses language. Chanting of the mantra will rescue us from thought-covering-

Those who cross the chasm of dichotomy-torn contingent world attain the right understanding which is no understanding at all.

Since like Buddhism, Post-Modernism also does not pin its faith on anything as fundamental or essential in the existence, the critics of Postmodernism often posit that such philosophies cannot have any ethics and the human society cannot run on such nihilistic legitimations.

One asks whether it is possible

that without sensuous pleasures life could be endurable

that without faith in immortality man could be moral

that without any help from an external agency man could march towards righteousness

that without rites and rituals man could remain religious

that without beliefs and emotion man could be religious

that without having any fear in the mind man could be virtuous

Heart Sutra seems to be a fitting reply to such queries.



# Contribution of Foreign Buddhist Monasteries Towards Propagation of Buddhism in India

*Jinabodhi Bhikkhu*

## *Synopsis:*

*History of Buddhism in India is connected intimately with the gradual development of monasteries through different ages. We find in history famous ārāmas in various parts of ancient India. These developed in the course of centuries into a seat of learning, a means of scholarship, a place where the faculties were sharpened for the understanding of the Dhamma and meditation. By a perfectly natural transition, these 'seats of learning' developed, though never foregoing their original monastic character, into educational seminaries where admission was thrown open not only to monks but also to other seekers after knowledge. But it is a pity that by the ravages of time coupled with foreign aggression those important nerve-centers of Buddhism were despoiled and went into heaps of ruins. There was, so to say, an interregnum of nearly seven centuries beginning roughly from twelfth century.*

*During the last nineteenth century through twentieth century some scholars and veteran reformers from home and abroad devoted themselves for revival of Buddhism in British India. As a result, Buddhism, finds its place again in its birth-soil.*

*In line with the tradition revival of Buddhism on Indian soil was launched by monastic foundations of their founders who devoted their heart and soul to this end.*

*Non-Indian Buddhist countries, such as Japan, Thailand, Myanmar, Tibet, China, Sri Lanka, Korea, Bhutan, Cambodia etc. started their foundations on Buddhist sites of India. Specially, the monasteries surrounding Mahabodhi Temple of Buddhagaya are symbols of newly awakened Buddhism in its birthplace.*

*A brief account of some of these monasteries are given below.*

*Truly speaking, at every seat of Buddhism, the existence of a Sangha, a fraternity of monks, was indispensable. The building of monasteries was an act of piety and sometimes the monastery was a considerably large establishment. The Sangha life functioned and flourished there and a monastery became also a centre of religious studies and discussions.*

*The Founder's injunction had bound the life of the monks with the life*

*of the laity and it was never the object of Buddhist monachism to shun society, to live a segregated life, indifferent to the activities of lay people. In every Buddhist country, monks are seen to come into relation in certain recognised capacities with the people's day-to-day life. Normally they are regarded as 'teachers', 'instructors of religion', priests and 'custodians of religious rites', 'social workers' and 'promoters of the people's Hita (well-being) and Sukha (happiness).'*

*In this context we can understand Contribution of Foreign Buddhist Monasteries Towards Propagation of Buddhism in India.*

History of Buddhism in India is connected intimately with the gradual development of monasteries through different ages. Truly speaking, Buddha attained supreme enlightenment, preached his Dhamma or Philosophy of life and passed away under the canopy of open sky. In course of time preliminary stages of monastery in crude form sprang up in different places to shelter one or more monks which were termed as *vihār*, *ārām*, *āvās*. First *vihār* or *ārām* was Veluvanārām in Rajgir donated by king Bimbisara. Afterwards we find in history famous *ārām* as in various parts of ancient India. These abode of monks were not only their dwelling places and meditation center but they naturally culminated into monastic universities first of its kind in the world. Through patronage of kings & well-to-do devotees these universities flourished in full swing and they offered various learning of practical life. "The system remained monastic throughout: it was regulated and conditioned by the rules and by the ethos of monastic life. A time came, however, when the urge to know, to think and to reason for oneself seems to have outweighed the original purpose of secluded spiritual cultivation. Slowly the convent was transformed: it developed in the course of centuries into a seat of learning, a means of scholarship, a place where the faculties were sharpened for the understanding of the Dhamma and meditation. The learning naturally outgrew its original confinement to the texts of the Buddhist Canon: it became larger and more liberal; it took in both sacred and secular subjects; it enabled the Buddhist scholar monk to hold his own among the rivalries of sects and systems. But it had also the effect of producing subtle and gradual changes in the old framework and cast of Buddhist thought, introducing into it new elements from outside.

By a perfectly natural transition, these "seats of learning" developed, though never foregoing their original monastic character, into educational seminaries where admission was thrown open not only to monks but also to other seekers after knowledge, irrespective of sect, religious denomination and nationality. They partook of the character of the *studium generale* of mediaeval Europe

and from the fifth or sixth century onwards, several of them were organized as universities and functioned as such.”<sup>1</sup>

But it is a pity that by the ravages of time coupled with foreign aggression those important nerve-centers of Buddhism were despoiled and went into heaps of ruins. There was, so to say, an interregnum of nearly seven centuries beginning roughly from twelfth century.

During British period the nineteenth-twentieth centuries are earmarked for renaissance. It is true for Buddhist community also.

In 1885 Sir Edwin Arnold, the celebrated author of *THE LIGHT OF ASIA*, visited Buddhagaya and saw the plight of Mahabodhi Temple and attracted the attention of the Buddhist world to come forward to redress the condition.

A brave illustrious son of Ceylon - Anagrika Dhammapala - came forward and established the Mahabodhi Society in 1891 and through its multifarious activities became the champion of Buddhist revival. An internet release entitled *Sri Lanka's Contribution to Buddhism* described about this thus:

‘There is at the moment a great Buddhist revival in India, the land where Buddhism had been lost for almost seven hundred years due to foreign rule and influence. It was a brave Sinhalese who went to India more than a century ago to arouse the people of India and to reveal to them the lost heritage of the Indian people. He showed them how the whole world respected India because of a great son that mother India produced and who was none other than Gotama the Buddha. All those who had ignored the name of the Buddha all those years have once again come to realize the true value of this great religious Teacher who had brought real credit to India. Almost all the Buddhist shrines which had escaped destruction by foreign invaders were at the time found neglected and many of the small Buddha images were found used in building walls and houses in place of bricks, the ignorant builders of course not knowing what those images were. Even today one can see such images still embedded in certain walls. That brave Sinhalese Buddhist missionary who went to India had to fight with those who had thus misused the Buddhist shrines and managed to get the lands in many parts of the country and eventually established the ‘Maha Bodhi Society’ to promote Buddhism not only in India but also in other parts of the world was Anagarika Dharmapala.

It was only after his coming to India that many other learned people and the Indian government itself opened their eyes and gradually gave their support to this great man in the noble task of restoring the Buddhist shrines. After independence, the Indian government gave its support and thanks are

particularly due to the late Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, for his kind co-operation and for the assistance given to the Maha Bodhi Society. According to his instructions almost all the neglected Buddhist shrines were restored and modern facilities were provided for the benefit of pilgrims visiting the shrines. If this noble son of Sri Lanka had not gone to India the situation of the Buddhist shrines and Buddhism there would have deteriorated and would have by now become extinct.

The great man, Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala who educated in a Missionary school in Colombo was once punished for observing the eight precepts in a temple on a full moon day while he was schooling. It was after this incident that he was determined to go forth as a Buddhist missionary to promote Buddhism in the world. He could not bear the injustices shown towards Buddhists in Sri Lanka by the foreign Missionaries at that time. His dream was fulfilled and today we can see Buddhism spreading from day to day not only in India but also in many parts of the world.<sup>2</sup>

In line with the tradition revival of Buddhism on Indian soil was launched by monastic foundations of their founders who devoted their heart and soul to this end. A new life was given to abandoned sites and shrines in India. "The institution of a band of disciplined, selfless workers was at the very foundation of the Buddhist organization. The Buddha's injunction to these workers was always to go from place to place, preaching his teachings throughout the year except during the rainy season. He asked them to have compassion on the people and to work for their happiness. One of his important instructions was, as he said, 'Let not two of you go in one and the same direction' (*Mā ekena dve agamittha*). Herein lies the secret of success of the Buddhist missionary activity. This practice naturally inspired the Buddhist missionaries to create new spheres of activity for each group."<sup>3</sup>

Non-Indian Buddhist countries, such as Japan, Thailand, Myanmar, Tibet, China, Sri Lanka, Korea, Bhutan, Cambodia etc. started their foundations on Buddhist sites of India.

Specially, the monasteries surrounding Mahabodhi Temple of Buddhagaya are symbols of newly awakened Buddhism in its birthplace.

A brief account of some of these monasteries are given below:

At first few words about Mahabodhi Maha Bihara as preface.

### **Mahabodhi Mahavihar**

The Mahabodhi Mahāvihāra or more popularly known as the Bodhgaya Temple

or the Great Stupa, is one of the shrines out of the 84000 shrines erected by King Asoka the Great in the 3rd century B.C. The Mahabodhi Mahavihara is the sole surviving example of what was once an architectural genre.

Throughout the centuries, this blessed site has retained its deep spiritual vibration and inspired countless beings towards a saintly life and the *vihāru* itself stands out as an eye catching artistic landmark as if standing testimony towards the presence of the greatest Teacher of all time mankind has ever witnessed.

Buddhagaya renowned for its Mahabodhi Vihara or Buddhagaya Temple has inspired many and attained the international assistance and patronage for its importance as the seat of Buddhism.<sup>4</sup>

### **Mahabodhi Society of India**

Anagrika Dharmapala of Sri Lanka founded the Maha Bodhi Society in Buddhagaya in May 1891 followed by an International Buddhist Conference in October 1891 at Buddhagaya where representatives from China, Japan and India (Chittagong) assembled. Maha Bodhi society started its branch in Calcutta in 1892 and in the month of May 1892, it published its journal 'The Mahabodhi' for the propagation of the teaching of the Buddha. Maha Bodhi Society by this time had its branches at Buddhagaya, Sarnath, Sanchi, New Delhi, Lucknow, Shravasti, Bombay, Naugarh, Madras, Bangalore, Ajmer, Bhubaneshwar and in foreign countries such as England, America, Japan, Korea and China.<sup>5</sup>

### **Burmese Vihara**

The present Burmese Vihara is located 1 kilometre north of the Mahabodhi Temple on the banks of the river Niranjana on the Bodhgaya-aya road and was founded by Ven. Nandamala in the year 1936.

The Monastery consists of two worship halls, each containing the statue of Lord Buddha. Besides, there is also a newly constructed meditation Hall and a spacious guest house for the use of pilgrims.<sup>6</sup>

### **Tibetan Monastery**

This monastery represents the Mahayana sect of Buddhism and is one of the biggest monasteries at Bodhgaya, where Tibetan monks reside. It was founded by Lama Kanpo-Ngawang Samten in 1934. The monastery exists at about 100 metres away west of the Mahabodhi Mahavihara. Its architectural style is very

unique as it has been influenced by Tantrayana Buddhist Art & Paintings. A 'Dharmachakra-Wheel', very big in size is located on the ground floor weighing about two hundred quintals. It is believed that if rotated one may get remission from their committed sins.

They also have a guest house and a Dharmashala which can house many pilgrims at affordable rates.<sup>7</sup>

### Chinese Temple

The Chinese Monastery stands about one hundred metres north-west of the Mahabodhi Mahavihara. The Temple was one of the oldest and had extricate decorated woodwork but due to decay was rebuilt in the year 1997.

Chinese temple or vihara of Bodhgaya was built in 1945 by SITINGCHEN, a Chinese monk. The temple then had enshrined a black stone image of *Mukutdhari Buddha* with golden polish. At present the Temple houses three very beautifully carved Buddha Statues in three different forms in golden colour.<sup>8</sup>

### Thai Monastery

An example of exquisite art and architecture, the Wat Thai, Bodhgaya stands two furlong West of the Mahabodhi Mahavihara.

In course of cultural contact between India and Thailand, the then Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru invited the Royal government of Thailand to build a monastery to commemorate the 2500 years of Buddhism. Accordingly, His Majesty the King of Thailand, on behalf of the people of Thailand, built the Wat-Thai (Thai Monastery) Bodhgaya in 1957.

The *uposatha* building (Temple), is a replica of Wat-Benjamabopitra (Marble Temple) a classical example of Thai architecture. Inside the *Uposatha* building (temple) there is a huge *Astadhātu* statue of the Buddha. There are beautiful paintings in the niches of the walls of the building. This Temple also has a guest house where pilgrims from Thailand come and stay.<sup>9</sup>

### Indosan Nipponji (Japanese Temple)

The construction of Indosan Nipponji was completed in November 1973, and was formally inaugurated by Sri V. V. Giri, the then President of India on 8th December 1973, under the auspices of KOKUSAI BUKKYO KORYO KYOKAI (International Buddhist Brotherhood Association) Japanese temple of Bodhgaya is built on the pattern of an ancient Japanese wooden Temple

and it seems to present a natural beauty without any artificial decoration and design. Interior of the Temple wall depicts paintings connected with some of the important events of the life of the Buddha.<sup>10</sup>

### **Dai Jokyo Buddhist Temple**

The Daijokyo Buddhist Temple has been constructed on the 2 acres of land allotted by the Government of Bihar. This Temple was inaugurated on Feb. 13, 1983 by the then President of India, His Excellency Giani Zail Singh. The Temple is a two storey concrete building with a three storey pagoda on the top in Japanese style. The Buddha image enshrined inside the Temple is in the meditaion posture made of bronze and brought from Japan.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Great Buddha Statue**

The construction of the eighty (80) feet high Buddha statue was completed and its unveiling ceremony was performed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the 18th November, 1989.

The great Buddha statue was designed in Japan and its one fourth size model was prepared by an Indian artist of Calcutta. This statue's interior construction is of concrete pillars and several cells inside where more than 20 thousand small bronze Buddhas have been enshrined. This Great statue, however symbolises the greatness of the Buddha Dhamma as followed by his disciples. At present this statue is the highest Buddha Statue in India.<sup>12</sup>

### **International Meditaion Centre**

The International Meditation Centre, Buddhagaya was established on the 29th of January 1970. With the noble mission of making available the practical and scientific aspect of Buddhism among others and to facilitate on abiding mental peace and right wisdom through the training of the Insight system of meditation (Vipassana) under the instruction and care of adept Vipassana Guru (teachers). The crying need of such an institution of the Vipassana in India was deeply felt and the idea of establishing an ideal Vipassana Centre specially in and around Bodhgaya inspired and impressed Ven. Dr. Rastrapal Mahathera so much that he took the initiative to Perform the task and dedicated himself for the noble cause.<sup>13</sup>

### **Root Institute For Wisdom Culture**

Root Institute is a charitable trust which was founded in 1984 by the late Lama

Thubten Yeshe, a Tibetan Buddhist Scholar and teacher. It was Lama Yeshe's wish to create a high quality Cultural, Social, Educational, Religious Centre as an offering in recognition of India's kindness as the original source of Buddhist Philosophy and Culture and for the support to the Tibetan people after the political events of 1959.

Root Institute has established a building in which they have a meditation hall and guest rooms for visitors and students attending meditation classes. The institute also has 'outreach Projects' which include Root Village Reconstruction Project, Community Project, Leprosy Project, School, Cultural Programmes and a Destitute Home. At present the premises has a beautiful Temple enshrining the statues of Kadampa Lama, two chief disciples of the Buddha, Medicine Buddha, Manjusri, Avalokiteswara, Tara etc.<sup>14</sup>

### **Royal Bhutan Monastery**

Just north of the Japanese Temple is the Bhutan Monastery of the Royal Government of Bhutan. The land was donated by the State Government for building the monastery.

The Temple is very beautiful in the sense that every inch of wall and ceiling has been used to depict the life events of the Buddha. The walls are not painted but decorated with Clay-Carvings and in variety of fast and deep colours.<sup>15</sup>

### **Vien Giac Institute (Vietnam Temple)**

This institute has been established in the year 2002. It belongs to Lin Tzi Zen Tradition but practises Pure Land Buddhism. This is situated at the west of the Kalachakra Ground and is at the distance of five minutes walk from the Mahabodhi Mahavihara. The one pillar Temple at the entrance represents the symbol of Vietnamese Buddhism. In the temple is a statue of relaxed Avalokitesvara. On the third floor there is a Prayer hall with the Buddhas of 'he three times' Amitabha of the Past, Sakyamuni of the present and Maitreya of the future. In the temple there are statues of Eighteen arhats also. The Library of the institute contain books in Vietnamese and English.<sup>16</sup>

### **Karma Temple**

This Kadgyu Karma Tibetan Temple is a beautiful Tibetan Temple situated just beside the Daijokyo Japanese Temple and just west of Indosan Nipponji. This temple was opened some fifteen years ago.



The Temple wall is finely depicted with the paintings of the event of the Buddha's life. These paintings preach unique mixed view in the sense that the theme is Indian, the style is Tibetan and the painter has given western influence through their brush-work.<sup>17</sup>

### Shechen Monastery

Shechen Monastery is a Tibetan Nyingma Monastery situated beside the Chinese Temple. This is a very beautiful temple with many other massive structure in its premises. It was opened in 1997 by H. H. the Dalai Lama. It has a Meeting hall, Prayer hall, Library and Research Institute.<sup>18</sup>

Other Monastic settlements in Rajgir, Nalanda, Vaisali, Sarnath, Kusinagar and Shravasti have been made with great enthusiasm by Asian Buddhist countries. In these places various institutions have been started by them even for the welfare of general people, specially the down-trodden sections of Indian society.\*

Holy banner of the great movement of revival of Buddhism started by Anagarika Dharmapala and Other eastern and western scholars etc. was held later by several Buddhist monks and their organisations under the leadership of their pioneers from China, Korea, Japan, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal etc. The name of Ven. Fuji Guruji, the greatest monk follower of the Nichiren sect of Japanese Buddhism and the most benevolent Buddhist saint of the modern time rendered commendable service to the revolutionary propagation of Buddhism in India. His best creation, the Santi Stupa at important places associated with the life of Lord Buddha and Asoka and Kanishka will be ever remembered.\*

To evaluate the importance of monasteries and its contribution in general a passage from a famous book is worth quoting: 'In the light of this differentiation made between monks and lay people, the famous passage in the Pali canon which purports to give the Buddha's first exhortation to his monk-followers, being at the same time the canonical sanction for the proselytising character of the faith, becomes really meaningful:

'Go forth, O Bhikkhus, on your wanderings, for the good of the Bahujana, for the happiness of the Bahujana,—in compassion for the world—for the good, the welfare (Hita) and the happiness (Sukha) of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way.

O Bhikkhus, proclaim the dhamma which is beneficent at the beginning, —in the middle and beneficent in the end.'

Weighing what is explicitly said in this passage and what is kept implicit, it seems clear that the Founder's injunction to his ordained monk-followers was not to make efforts to convert the laity to monkhood, but through the teachings of the religion help them attain their own 'well-being' (Hita) and 'happiness' (Sukha). It would be far-fetched to attribute to Sukha and Hita in this context any exclusively spiritual signification: *prima facie* they were secular concepts, applicable to those in secular life. In the Buddhist faith alone they could secure their 'welfare' and 'happiness',—and it was this feeling no doubt that made Buddhism a way of life among people in the lands where it spread. Where it was taken as a 'philosophy', as in China by the scholarship, it was tardy in its diffusion.

The monks, as distinct from the Bahujana, were however, an inalienable part of the religion. The Three-Jewel (Triatna) creed of Buddhism places the Sangha (Monkhood) on a par with the Buddha and Dhamma,—the three concepts completing the cycle of the faith.

At every seat of Buddhism, therefore, the existence, of a Sangha, a fraternity of monks, was indispensable. The building of monasteries was an act of piety and sometimes the monastery was a considerably large establishment. The Sangha life functioned and flourished there and a monastery became also a centre of religious studies and discussions. Seeing that the formation of a sect in Buddhism was easy and was not under inhibition by the rules of the canon, it is not surprising that this intellectual occupation of the cloisters led to proliferation in the monk-community of sects and schools. Sects grew up in all Buddhist countries among monks,—the largest number, nearly 150, in Japan. Sectarianism however was purely monkish in origin.

The life of lay people was neither expected to be subject to monastic discipline nor directed to the ideals of monastic life. Living with fellowmen in society, their business was to encompass their own Hita and Sukha consistently with the teachings of the Dhamma. The Dhamma was not meant to be their all-absorbing occupation in life, but only a normative and regulative principle in the conduct of life.

The Founder's injunction had bound the life of the monks with the life of the laity and it was never the object of Buddhist monachism to shun society, to live a segregated life, indifferent to the activities of lay people. In every Buddhist country, monks are seen to come into relation in certain recognised capacities with the people's day-to-day life. Normally they are regarded as 'teachers', 'instructors of religion', priests and 'custodians of religious rites',

'social workers' and 'promoters of the people's Hita (well-being) and Sukha (happiness)'<sup>19</sup>. I like to conclude the paper with this remarks:

The message of Buddhism and the principle on which it rests have assumed new significance in the world of today, and the peace of which the U.N.O. speaks is but an indication that the whole world is gradually veering round to the beliefs embodied in the religion of the Buddha.<sup>20</sup>

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2. Internet release: Sri Lanka's Contribution to Buddhism by Ven. Dr. K. Sri Dhammananda PP. 7-8 of 10.
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20. Same as No. 1 pp. 414.

# Buddhist concept of mind for promotion of world peace.

*Bandana Mukherjee*

*Manopubbaṅgamā dhammā  
Manoseṭṭhā manomayā  
Manasā ce paduṭṭhena  
Bhāsati va karoti vā  
Tato naṃ dukkhaṃ anveti  
Cakkam'va vahato padarū ti. [Dhammapada v.1.]*

*Manopubbaṅgamadhammā  
Manoseṭṭhā manomayā  
Manasā ce pasānena  
Bhāsati va karoti vā  
Tato naṃ sukhaṃ anveti  
Chāyā'va anapāyini. [Dhammapada v.2].*

This pair of verse of the *Yamaka vagga* (Twin verses) contains the core of the teaching of Lord Buddha. That is, mind and its right control. Through these two verses Buddha emphasized on the great part the mind plays in man's life and then explains how deeds become good or evil according to pure and impure state of mind. He explains the inevitable consequences of such deeds by giving two homely illustrations of wheel of the cart that follows the hoof of the draught-ox and one's shadow that never leaves.

Throughout the Buddhist literature the nature of mind is clearly delineated as fickle, flickering and difficult to control. (1) Therefore it is better to control your mind [*cittassa damatho sādhu*, (*Dhp.* v-35)], guards your thoughts and realizing that this body is as fragile as a jar fortify your mind, and subdue it from attachment. One whose mind is well directed towards ten kinds of meritorious deeds (2) namely generosity (*dāna*), morality (*sīla*), meditation (*bhāvanā*), reverence (*apacāyana*), service (*veyyāvaca*), transference of merit (*pattidāna*), rejoicing in others merit (*anumodana*), hearing the doctrine (*dhammasavaṇa*), expanding the doctrine (*dhamma-deśana*), and straightening one's right views (*ditṭhijjukamma*), only he can be free from the bonds of Māra i.e. passion.

A perfectly wise person guard it; a guarded mind is conducive to happiness.<sup>3</sup>

Then a question arises; what is the way of controlling mind?

The answer is: through self-effort, self-purification and self-discipline only mind can be controlled. In the words of *Dhammapada*:

*Attā hi attano nātho attāhi attāno gati  
Tasmā saññamay' attānaṃ  
assam bhadraṃ' vā vāṇijo. (4)*

Thus Buddhism wants man to be thoughtful and inquisitive about meaning and goal of life and should understand the reason of sorrow, discontentment which are common human experience in life all over the world and ponder how these *dukkha* can be eliminated and removed after knowing the 'roots', or after gaining 'perfect wisdom'.

Then which is 'root' of all sorrows and sufferings and of all social evils?

It is mental defilements: *Rāga*, *Lobha* *Dosa* and *Moha*-the fundamental blemishes of consciousness. So you cleanse yourself outside while you are filth within (*abbhantaraṃ te gahanaṃ bāhiraṃ parimajjasi*). (5) The above state is applicable to all human beings who have not visualized the light (*pavassara*) or awakenment (*Bodhi*). Because Gautama Buddha said that people are fond of attachment and that allurements of sensual pleasure and enjoyment.(6)

In fact, as long as man's mind remains filthy within, the ventures like 'Peace Mission' 'Peace Movement' would be meaningless. Buddha lays much stress on purity of mind, which plays a greater role in modern Society. In present material world most of the people are mainly self-centered, full of greed and reactionists with their vested interest. People have lost their value under high speed of machines and super advancement of technology. Man and his totality have now been insignificant. His phenomenal dynamism has subdued his mental efficiency and thereby showiness, propaganda and competitive mentality fill in the vacuum. Therefore social and international restlessness increase more. Political awareness, class-consciousness, colonialism, expansionism and religious fanaticism are the burning problems of modern world. They are mainly the misleading factors for nerve wars, internal tension for exploitations and depriving each other. Here is no room for doubt that the main reason behind it is our craving for power, superficial egotism (*ahamkāra*) and self-interestedness, which in this advanced age of science and

technology instead of being destroyed are being multiplied. Therefore, we are in the midst of a serious crisis where instead of truth, untruth is dominating, instead of justice and fellow-feeling injustice and hatred are in dominance. World peace is threatening-it is far away, the result of all these are distrust, faithlessness and misrepresentation all over the world.

To overcome this situation UNO and other International Institutions adopted various devices and instructs various concepts for curing these diseases and for bringing world peace. It is surprising to note that at least 2600 years ago Gautama Buddha as Master physician prescribes some positive measures to fight against these counterforce by sprouting *Bodhibija* latent sentient minds or advise his followers for cultivation of *Bodhicitta* for developing *Bodhicitta* or Immanent mind which has bearing upon both individual mind and group mind or collective mind. The Buddhist literature analyses mind and its faculties in detail in *Lankāvatārasūtra*.(7)

The Buddhist literature devoted mainly on the mind of a being under different circumstances and show the way or prescribes measures how to elevate mental efficiency to the state of perfection. The mental states of being in this world are beautifully analyzed in the *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*. Here mental condition or states are compared with lotus. The analogy is that: in a big lake many lotus prevail. Some of them are blossomed after being above the water level, some are not yet blossom but they are above the water-level, some are with water and some are under water and some flowers are lying on mud and so on.

On the present context this analogy is very pertinent. As here are some who tries to bring world peace through the arm and war. Some who claims to uproot all injutive and discrimination between man and man by showing violence, again some who want to bring peace by mutual understanding, some wants to serve their personal interest from this violence while other remains completely indifferent and so on.

Therefore as soon as the *Bodhicitta* arises and people by practicing *Brahmacariya*. (8) and *Brahmavihāra* (9) make their mind free from all sorts impurities, then only it is possible to bring world peace.

Buddhism lays down some practical guidelines, which are very relevant in present world to develop a practical 'mind' and its 'right' application for achieving world peace and happiness. Buddhism lays great emphasis on being a perfect man. As a perfectly good man can build up a good family. Several good families can create a good society and

people of this society can make a good international community. A perfect man knows that enmity never cease by enmity; but they cease through love alone. (10) Buddha admonishes his followers- "one should not regard the fault of other instead he should mark his own faults". (11) Mention may be made here that Sri Sri Śāradā Devī also said: 'He who has pure mind sees everything pure', and "if you like to get peace do not find other's fault."

Moreover, Buddha's admonition to his followers that 'not to retaliate but to practice patience at all times, and in all circumstances' is very relevant in present world when peace is endangered due to our egoistic and self-centered nature. Because retaliation does not lead to peace. (12) So he who is free from *Rāga, Dosa, Moha, Lobha* etc. *akuśala citta vṛtti* is perfectly a wise man. Lord Buddha's admonition 'overcome anger by love, conquer the liar by truth' (13) is very relevant and important factor for bringing peace in world.

Thus it may be concluded that the practice of *Sammādiṭṭhi* [Right view] and *Sammā saṅkappa* [Right Intention] also the only way to attain world peace. It can save mankind from international cold war, confrontation, nuclear death and destruction.

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2. ibid. verse. 43; Norman H.C.edited *The Commentary on the Dhammapada*. v-I, p. 332.
3. ibid. verse 36 *Cittam rakkhethā medhāvī/cittam guttam sukhāvaham*; Dhpa. A. v-I p. 299-300
4. ibid. verse 380 Self indeed the protector of self, self indeed is one's refuge. Control therefore your self as a merchant controls a noble steed.
5. ibid. verse 394.
6. Oldenberg, H. edited *Vinaya Piṭaka-Mahāvāga* (London, P.T.S. 1964) p. 4. *Ālayarāma kho panāyam pajā ālayarato ālaya sammuditā*.
7. Suzuki D. T. *Studies in Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*. (London, George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1930) pp. 248-282. In the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra various mental states have been broadly divided under the head of Citta, e.g. *kusalacitta* and *akusalacitta*. Here 'citta' refers to that by which *kamma* and *vipāka* (action and its result)

is gained over occupied. According to the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* the definition of citta is *cittena ciyate karma*. In the Tibetan Bstan-'gyur series of texts also functions of mind have been elaborately discussed. (PKG No. 4356, 4366-4375).

8. *Brahmacariya* suggests the practice of *caryā* and observance of moral precepts (*śīla*).
9. *Brahmavihāra* refers to amity (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), rejoice in other's prosperity (*muditā*) and indifference to pleasure and pain (*upekkhā*).
10. Narada Thera edited, *Dhammapada* (Colombo, BMS publication, 1978) verse no. 5.  
*Nu he verana verāni sammanti'dha kudācanam*  
*Averena ca sammanti-esa dhammo sanantana.*
11. *ibid.* Dhp verse no. 50.  
*Nu paresam vilomāni na paresam katākatam*  
*Attano' va avekkheyya katāni akatāni ca.*
12. *ibid.* verse no. 4 & 5.
13. *Akkodhena jine kodham usādhum sādhanā jine*  
*Jine kudariyam dānena succena alikavādīnam* (Dhp. 223)

### Abbreviation:

- Dhp. - Dhammapada  
Dhp. A.- Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā.

### Select Bibliography:

- Narada Thera. edited *Dhammapada* (Colombo, BMS publication 1974).  
Norman, H.C. edited *The Commentary on Dhammapada* (London, PTS, 1970).  
Oldenberg, H. edited. *Vinaya Piṭaka* (London, PTS, 1964).  
Suzuki, D.T. *Studies in Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (London, George Routledge & Sons Ltd. 1930).



# The Publications of the 'Buddhist Mission' of Burma (1928-1941): Its role towards the awakening of the Bengali Buddhists\*\*

*Mohammad Mahbubul Hoque*

[**Abstract:** The Buddhists awakening in India was begun in the mid nineteenth century. It was initiated by the western scholars. Afterwards the Buddhist organizations were found to establish in different parts of India and other places of the world. This tradition continued upto the first half of twentieth century. The Bengali Buddhists played an important role in this awakening movement. Even the Bengali Buddhists continued such an endeavour in migrant life of Burma in this regards. Through founding the Buddhist Mission the migrant Bengali Buddhists of Rangoon published the Bengali periodical, Bengali translations of the *Tripitak* and sacred Pali books to awakening of their own community].

Originating in India the Buddhist religion spread up sub-continent and even beyond, in places like Srilanka, Burma, Central Asia, China, and Tibet etc. But in course of time, its influence reduced to almost nothing existing only in name in remote areas. In the mid nineteenth century many Western Scholars devoted themselves to the study of the ancient Indian civilization and culture and established the 'Bengal Asiatic Society' (1837), 'Royal Asiatic Society' (1885), 'Theosophical Society' (1873), 'Pali Text Society' (1881), etc. Through the establishment of such organizations began the Bengali translation of the ancient Indian books. Thus the practice of pervading the ancient Buddhist civilization and culture began by the endeavors of the Western scholars. Following them, in the last leg of the nineteenth century the Buddhists established the 'Chattagram Bauddha Samiti' (1879),<sup>1</sup> and then Anagarik Dhammapal (1864-1930) of Srilanka and Kripasaran Mahasthavir (1865-1926) of Chittagong founded respectively, the Mohabodhi Society (1891) and the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha or the Bengal Buddhist Association (1891) in Calcutta contributing to the progress of the Buddhist religion and society.<sup>2</sup> Then the Buddhist organizations started established being different places of the world

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including India. This continued in large scale upto the first half of twentieth century. Even the 'Bengali Buddhists'<sup>3</sup> living in Burma were also continuing such an endeavour. Although the Head office of the Buddhist Mission was in Rangoon, its working ground was undivided Bengal and the Bengali Buddhists Association. Among the different organizations of Bengali Buddhists of Burma, the Buddhist Mission was one of the main ones. The activities of the Mission are given below.

In 1902, the migrant Bengali Buddhists established the Dhammadut Vihar (monastery) in Rangoon under the leadership of Venerable Prajnatishya Mahasthavar (1871-1932) for the purpose of worship and progress of their own community. In the same year they established the 'Chattal Bauddha Samiti' or 'The Chittagong Buddhist Association'.<sup>4</sup> For the maintenance of the Vihar and its monks, increasing friendship among themselves and observing various religious and national festivals Venerable Prajnalok Mahasthavar (1879-1971) selected the permanent president of the Vihar and the Samiti in 1927.

**Establishment of the Buddhist Mission and the Mission Press:** Prajnalok Mahasthavar wrote nine books during 1910-12 while he was in Akiyab Vihar. While he was in publishing these books, he deeply felt that the Bengali Buddhists need to establish a press of their own and tried to create a consensus in this regard in the Bengali Buddhists in the prefaces of his books. He discussed with his disciples to set up a press owned by the Bengali Buddhists, in 1924. At that time, the migrant Bengali Buddhists of Rangoon requested him to take the responsibilities of the Rangoon Dhammadut Vihar and he took the responsibilities in the month of December, 1927 with a firm determination to set up the press.<sup>5</sup> Then Prajnalok discussed with the eminent migrant Bengali Buddhists of Rangoon about the necessity of establishment of the Buddhist Mission and the Mission Press. Then the Buddhist Mission and the Mission Press were established on Aug 12, 1928.<sup>6</sup> There was made of its registration on Oct 8, 1936. Prajnalok Mahasthavar was selected the permanent president of the Mission and the Mission Press.

**The motive of the Mission:** a) To translate into Bengali the Tripitak and the Pali Literature, b) to set up an ideal Pali School, c) to publish Bengali periodical.<sup>7</sup>

**The Buddhist Mission Karmi Sangha:** To conduct missionary activities smoothly, the 'Buddhist Mission Karmi Sangha' was established primarily with five principal monks and equal number of assistants.<sup>8</sup> After

ten years the number of members of the Mission Karmi Sangha rose to 81.<sup>9</sup> From the entitled 'The necessity of Karmi Sangha at the Bauddha Mission Press' in the *Sangha-Shakti* it was we come to know that the world-wide influence of the Ramakrishna Mission, Hindu Mission, American Baptist Mission and Ceylon Buddhist Mission is mainly due to hundreds of monks working there. Working unitedly, the monks of Ceylon created a considerable impact in England within a short time. In order to again create 'Buddhang Kolahalang' that is a great uproar of Buddhism in India and beyond the Buddhist Mission invited the Bengali Buddhists monks of India, especially those of Chittagong, to devote themselves unitedly to the service of the Mission being adept in different languages.<sup>10</sup>

### Publications of the Mission

**The mouthpiece of the Mission:** On the 19 May of 1929, it was resolved in the fifth session of the Mission that the *Sangha-Shakti* be published as mouthpiece of the Mission.<sup>11</sup> The *Sangha Shakti* was published as a quarterly on Aswini Purnima, 2473 Buddhist Era (1929). Afterwards, it turned into a monthly and continued to be published until 1941.<sup>12</sup> Aryavamsa Bhikkhu, Jyotipal Bhikkhu, Shilalankar Mahasthavir, Nikunja Behari Chowdhury, Nirad Baran Talukdar, Dwarika Mohan Mutsuddi, and Dhammapriya Bhikkhu served as editors of the *Sangha-Shakti* from 1929 to 1941:-

**The Tripitak and other sacred books:**<sup>13</sup> The scholarly monks were assigned the responsibility of translating the *Tripitak* books into Bengali.<sup>14</sup> The printing of Bengali translations of the *Tripitak* and Pali literature started from the days of its establishment. It has been known that about 50 books, both small and large in size were published by the Mission.<sup>15</sup> The 'Tripitak Publishers Association' was established in 1935 for publishing the *Tripitak* with the financial help of people who were pious and sages learn. Apart from the Bengali Buddhists expatriates in Burma many commons and prominent people of Bengal became the members. the most important members of the Tripitak Publishers Association outside Burma were Professor Rash Mohan Chakravorty P.H.B. Puranratna, Bidyabinode and Priya Ranjan Sen, M.A., P.R.S., Calcutta University.<sup>16</sup>

Of the 52 volumes of the *Tripitak*, the Buddhist Mission published Bengali translations of 13 volumes, it also published 16 books on the *Tripitak*, while Bengali translations of 12 more volumes of the *Tripitaks*

were under publishing and the manuscripts of the all original *Tripitaks* were prepared within eight years of the establishment of the Mission.<sup>17</sup>

**Picture Publishing:**<sup>18</sup> The Buddhist Mission published the pictures of the Buddhist sacred places and sages to infuse religious influence in the mind of people. Upto 1938 from its establishment the Mission has published 17 pictures in total including 9 sacred places, 4 of the sacred places, and 4 of the Buddhist sages.<sup>19</sup>

The price of the publications of the Mission was comparatively low. As for example, a small book of the Mission named *Vidarsan Bhavna* costed Ana 2 only. Besides, the *Mahāvaggo* one of the largest *Tripitak* book containing 576 pages in demai size costed Tk. 2.50 only. And the price of each picture was Paisa 1 only. Honorary services of the monks of the Mission Karmi Sangha, the religious Buddhists' contribution and the private own press of the Mission, made the price of the publications reasonable.

The honorary monks of the Mission Karmi Sangha, living at the Dhammadut Vihar of Rangoon and the Bangeeo Bauddha Vihar at Akiyab, and receiving the daily essentials for them from the locals Published various sacred books from the Mission. The devotee Buddhists were gave their contribution to the Mission. It is known that since its establishment upto 1935, the Mission received nineteen thousands Taka as contribution. Besides, the books were published from the own press of the Mission, the Mission authority would always aware as the clients to get the publications in low price. The Mission opened the branches at 1, Buddhist temple street, Calcutta; at Gahira and Saroatali in Chittagong and at Rangamati in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in addition to the Akiyab branch as the published books and the *Sangha-Shakti* to reach to the people in economy price. Their postal charges were increased highly after the Burma was separated from India. The publications of the Mission from Burma were dispatched to the branch offices at Chittagong through the steamer parcel. They were distributed the publications to the clients of Bangladesh and India, to a cheaper price. Professor Rama Prasad Chowdhury in his article entitled 'Banga Bhashay Pali Sahitya' (Pali literature in Bengali) described about the low price and standard of the Mission publications,

The prices of the books are very low according to the size of a book. The rate of a demai size book containing 400-500 pages is Taka two only. These low rates of the books were possible due to personal printing press of the Mission. It costs at least

Taka six to buy such a size of book printed in Ceylonese or Burmese letter. For the printing of these books, some new alphabets and combined alphabets were to be created, because there were no such alphabets in Bengali. These Bengali-Pali books have been edited with the composition of the books of Roman, Thai, Ceylonese and Burmese letters. Editing is very good, printing is neat and tidy.<sup>20</sup>

The Missions publications gained much appreciation from the contemporary influential newspapers. *The Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *The Mahabodhi*, *The Joysrhee*, *The Udbodhan*, *The kayastha Samaj* etc. are few of these renowned newspapers.

**Donation made by the Tripitak:** The presentation of the *Tripitak* to different libraries of India and Burma was one of the major contributions of the Mission. Before that, the Thai king presented the original *Tripitak* in Thai alphabet and presented copies of this publication to the major libraries of the world. The Mission could not afford to print the whole of the *Tripitak* at a time due to economic insufficiency. Due to the unexpected retard of the publication of all volumes of the *Tripitak* at a time, the Mission authority decided to distribute the ten volumes published upto 1936 to some 71 leading libraries of India and Burma.<sup>21</sup>

**Remarks about the publication of the contemporary scholars:** The contemporary scholars and the newspapers paid their glowing tribute to the Mission Publications. Among of the scholars Professor Rama Prosad Chowdhury, Professor Rash Mohan Chakravorty, Professor Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyaya, Sreemat Tattachaitarya Brahmachari B.A. principal secretary of Rangoon Ramkrishna Mission and others. Professor Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyaya writes about the *Udanam*, "At the first sight I understood that your first edition is very fine. There is no doubt about the understanding of the common Bengalee readers of Pali. This type of book will be helpful to preach the Pali in Bengal."<sup>22</sup>

There was much estimation printed in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* about the *Buddhavamsa* and the *Ajatasattu* as follows:

The *Buddhavamsa* is an ancient book. It is written in the Pali Poetry. No translation is found in other languages of India till now. Sreemat Dhammatilak Sthavir is a venerable, learned and a saint of the Buddhist Society. The whole Buddhist community was very much benefited by his great holy necessary Bengali translation book. The Bengali translation is included with the

original poetry in this book. The translation is easy to understand, and the readers will be satisfied and obtain knowledge through reading it.'<sup>23</sup>

**Dispute between Chattal Bauddha Samiti and the Mission:** There were three sections of the Chattal Bauddha Samiti: (i) General and Vihar management, (ii) the Mission management and (iii) the Education fund. There had been created a dispute between the Mission and the Samiti from the year 1936. After the Mission had registered as an individual organization, this dispute started and it reached to the court and Police Station. In 1939, both the parties were lodged 5 criminal and 5 civil cases in the High Court to each against the other. The main cause of the dispute was ownership of the Mission and the Mission Press, and the Dhammadut Vihar and its property. The leaders of the Samiti were demanded the property of the Mission, the Dhammadut Vihar and its property is the owner of the Samiti. On the other hand the Mission Karmi Sangha was demanded that property for the Bengali Buddhists Community, and the Mission was a separate organization from the beginning time. In this matter of dispute the migrant Bengali Buddhists of Rangoon including the monks were divided into two groups.

There was made a lock up in the Mission Press, which was situated on the 1st floor of the Dhammadut Vihar from the dated 24.05.1939, the various works (Meeting/Seminars etc.) of the Mission would hold in the Bengal Buddhist Club at Rangoon.<sup>24</sup>

The final results of these cases were not known. But afterwards the Mission Press transferred from 158, Upper Foyer Street to Luis Street at the beginning in 1941.<sup>25</sup> It is mentioned that during the cases were running both the parties were agreed in a point that the Prajnalok Mahasthavir would be in the position of Chief of the Dhammadut Vihar for all over of the life and he would control about the religious matter of the Vihar. During the World War II, the Japanese bombing in Rangoon destroyed the Mission and the Mission Press in 1941.

There were a few numbers of Pali books in Bengali language and letter before the publications of the Mission. Except the publication of the Mission, it was learnt that total 61 Pali books in Bengali letter and Bengali Language were published. Among them the Buddhists of Chittagong were published the Pali Books named the *Sutra nipat*, the *Avidhan Prodiipika*, the *Balabatar*, the *Vishuddhimarga*, the *Bhikshupratimoksha*, the *Avidhammartha Sangraha* etc. Out side of the

Buddhist Society, the *Milinda Prashna* (incomplete) with Bengali translation, the *Pratimoksha* (with Bengali translation) of Professor Bidhu Shekhar Sastri, the *Dhammapada* (with Bengali translation) of Charu Chandra Bose and the *Therigatha* (with Bengali translation) and the *Udanam* of Principal Bijoy Majumder, translation of all the *Jataks* were Published by Ishan Chandra Ghosh. The writers those were noted to write the Buddhist religion books were Satish Chandra Bidya Bhusan, Satyendra Nath Thakur, Ramdas Sen, and Krishna Kumar Mitra and others.<sup>26</sup>

The Bengali Buddhists even the monks were have a little knowledge about the Pali in the early of eighteenth century, even it was unchanged in the first half of twentieth century. Through founding the Buddhist Mission and the Press the Bengali Buddhists published the periodical in mother Language even in the migrant life in Burma mainly to the view of creating consciousness of own religions and welfare to the own community, had been founded the Buddhist Mission and the Mission Press. Publishing the Bengali translation of the *Tripitak* and preaching is the most successful event by the migrant Bengali Buddhists of Rangoon. The Buddhist Mission, by their publishing of the *Tripitak* and sacred Buddhist books in Bengali and sale in economic price and free distribution was the trial to construct the lofty character under the religious principles, to creating the practice of worship and eagerness of the religious education to the Buddhist. There was prepared all manuscripts of the original *Tripitak*, but because of financial disability of the Mission and opposition between the Samiti and the Mission there was no possibility to publish all volumes of The *Tripitak*. The mouthpiece of the Mission was more durable than other periodicals in the same time. Many Buddhist scholars and litterateur in that time were Published their writings in the *Sangha-Shakti*. The *Sangha-Shakti* had been performed the important role to creating the number of writers and litterateur in the Bengali Buddhist Society. It is no doubt that the Pali literatures were preached to the Bengali specially to the Bengali Buddhist Community, and common Bengalees learned many new things on Buddhism by the publications of the Mission. The contribution of the Buddhist Missions Publications undeniable in the field of creating of religious consciousness and increase of social awareness in the Bengali Buddhists Society.

#### Notes and References:

1. The first President and the General Secretary of the Samiti were Gunameju Mahathero and Krishna Chandra Nazir Chowdhury.

2. Sangharaj Saramedha Mahasthavir (1801-1882), Acharya Punnachar Mahasthavir (1837-1908) et al scholars were maintained the important role to the waking up of the Bengali Buddhist.
3. The Bengali Buddhists are mainly the inhabitants of Chittagong. Most of the Bengali Buddhists are using the title 'Barua', yet some of them are using the title Sikder, Talukder, Chowdhury, Mutsuddi etc. the Persian title which denotes the profession of their fore fathers'. A few Bengali Buddhists who live in Comilla district use the title 'Sinha'.
4. See more details: Hoque, Mohammad Mahbulul, 'Oupanibashik Shasanamale Rangoon Probashi Bangalee Bauddha Samaj: Ekti Samiksha' (in Bengali) 'The Migrant Bengali Buddhists of Rangoon During Colonial Period: a Study', A.N.M. Wahidur Rahman (ed) *The Chittagong University Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Chittagong, 2001, pp. 155-56.
5. *The Sangha Shakti*, 8th yr. Prajnalok Joyanti issue, p.7.
6. *The Buddhist Mission Proceedings*, first part, 1928-29.
7. *The Sangha Shakti*, 1st yr. 1st issue, p.1.
8. *Ibid*, p. 87. the members of the Mission Karmi Sangha were following: Principal monks - Prajnalok Mahasthavir, Aryavamsha Sthavir, Dhammatilok Bhikshu (Akiyab branch), Jinavamsa Bhikshu, Jyotipal Bhikshu; Assistants - Buddha Rakshit Bhikshu, Jnananda Bhikshu, Jnabimol Shramaner, Priyashil Shramonera.
9. *Ibid*, 7th yr. 2nd issue, p. 157.
10. *Ibid*, 1st yr. 1st issue.
11. *Ibid*, 8th yr. *Mahashanghudan issue*, p. 248.
12. Bimalendu Barua, *Sangharaj Shilalankarar Mahathera Jibanalekhyā*, Chittagong, 1980, p. 33
13. For details for the list see Appendix I.
14. *The Sangha Shakti*, 7th yr. 2nd issue, p. 88

The part of the Bengali translations and the translators of *The Tripitaks* are following: the *Mahāvaggo* - Subodhiratna Sthavir, the *Pācittiyaṃ* -- Jinavamsa Sthavir, the *Cullavaggo* -- Uttamananda Sthavir, the *Jātaka* --Dhamaratna Sthavir, the *Suttanipāt* -- Sumangal Sthavir, the *Dhātukāhā* - Dhammalok Sthavir, the *Pārāṇikāya* -- Silalankar Sthavir, the *Culavaggo* -- Subhuti Ratna Bhikshu, the *Majjhimanikāya* -- Dhammapriya Bhikshu, the *Dīghanikāya* -- Anomadārshi Bhikshu, the *Theragāthā* -- Priyasīl Bhikshu, the *Puggalapaññatti* -- Jyotipal Sthavir, the *Apadānaṃ* -- Bimalachar Sramanera. In this time the *Majjhimanikāya* (original Pannāsakaṃ), the *Vinaya*, the *Mahāvaggo* and the *Theragāthā* were published, and there was arrangement to give the books as presentation of without price for the translators



through payment of the postages. -- The *Sangha-Shakti*, 7th yr. 1st issue, pp. 68-69.

15. *Ibid*, 4th issue, p. 343.

According to D. P. Barua, The Mission published 38 books on Buddhist religion and philosophy, *Śwaran*, Silalankar Mahasthavir Prokashana, Chittagong, 2000, p. 8.

16. *The Sangha-Shakti*, 1st issue, pp. 70-71.  
 17. *Ibid*, 8th yr, 3rd issue.  
 18. For details of the list see appendix 2.  
 19. *Ibid*, 9th yr. 2nd issue; 11th yr. 5th issue.  
 20. Translated from Bengali. *Ibid*, 7th yr. 2nd issue, p. 89.  
 21. The lists of the libraries were published in different issues of the *Sangha-Sakti*.  
 22. Translated from Bengali. The *Sangha-Shakti*, 2nd yr, 2nd issue, p. 94.  
 23. Translated from Bengali. The *Ananda Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta) 12 Vadra, 1341 Bengali Era, For the comments about the *Ajata Satru* to see the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* 19 Vadra, 1341.  
 24. *The Sangha-Shakti*, 10th yr. 11 & 12th issue, p. 690.  
 25. Bimalendu Barua, *op. cit.*  
 26. The *Sangha-Shakti*, 7th yr. 2nd issue, p. 88; 4th issue, p. 343.

### Appendix 1

The main publications and their particulars

(it has compiled from the *Sangha-Shakti* 1st yr. 1st issue - 10th yr. 12th issue)

year of publication	nature of books	name and particulars of the books
1928-1932	<i>The Tripitaks</i>	The <i>Buddha Vaṃsa</i> , the <i>Udānaṃ</i> and the <i>Chariyā Piṭak</i> .  The <i>Udānaṃ</i> (Pali with Bengali translations), there were 80 <i>Sutras</i> in this book, superscript Pali and subscript Bengali translation, it contained 274 pages of eight page Demai size and price: Taka One only. The <i>Khuddakapāṭha</i> (Pali in Bengali letter), there were five <i>Sutras</i> , with <i>Kumāra Pañha</i> , price: Anna four only.
	Sacred books	The <i>Buddha Nitimālā</i> , price: anna eight only. The <i>Pañcasīla</i> , price: Anna four only,

- The *Milindaprusna* (2 volumes) price: Tk. 1.50 only.  
 The *Rāhula Carita*, price: Anna three only.  
 The *Mahākassapa*, price: Anna three only.  
 The *Sarsamgraha*, (two volumes) for each volume contains 200 pages, price: Anna 12 only, for each volume and two volumes jointly with Tk. 1.50 only.  
 The *Lokaniti*, price: anna 4 only.  
 The *Grihiniti*, price: Anna 1 only.  
 The *Telakaṭāhagāthā*, price: Anna 3 only.  
 The *Prabhas-Suhrida*, price: Anna 1 only.  
 The *Sariputra-Carita*, price: Anna 3 only.  
 The *Sivali-carita*, price: anna 3 only.  
 The *Bhikshu Pratimoksha*, price: Tk. 2 only.  
 The *Dānda Manjuri* (poetry), Tk. 1 only.  
 The *Bhikshu-Kartabya*, price: Anna 8 only.  
 sacred books The *Bauddha Sisubod*, anna one only.  
 The *Pāli-Tripiṭak*, Anna 1 only.  
 The *Ajātasattu*, Anna 12 only.  
 The *Temiyakumār*, Anna 4 only.  
 calendar The *Sachitra Bauddha Prachir Panji*, Anna one only.  
 1935 *The Tripitak* The *Buddhavaṃsa* (Bengali translations with Pali, biography of 28 Baudhas, price: Tk. one only).  
 The *Theragāthā* (Bengali translations with Pali, biography of 264 Orhath Sthavirs, 1360 verse, price: Tk. two only).  
 The *Dhammapada* (Twin series, Bengali translations with Pali, it was the 1st section of 26, price: Tk. one & anna four only). *The Dhammapada* is in the publications list of the Mission in 4th yr 2nd issue of the *Sangha Shakti*, but there were mentioned in the next issue that the book under publishing. Actually it published in 1935 and several contemporary Newspapers comments were published in 6th yr 2nd issue of the *Sangha Shakti*.  
 1936 *The Tripitaks* The *Dīghanikāyo* (it was the 1st volume of the three, there were 13 *Sutras*, Pali in Bengali letter, price: Tk. two only).

- The *Majjhimanikāyo*, (it was the first volume of three, there were 50 original *Sutras*, Pali in Bengali letter, price: Tk. 2.50 only).
- The *Aṅguttaranikāya*, (Pali in Bengali letter, there were 11 *nipāt* in this book and it was 1-3, price: Tk. 2 only).
- The *Pācittiyaṃ* (second book of the *Vinaya*, Pali in Bengali letter, pages 574, and price: Tk. 2.50 only).
- The *Mahāvaggo* (3rd Law book of the *Vinaya*, Pali in Bengali letter, it contained pages 576, price: Tk. 2.50 only;
- sacred books The *Saddhamma Ratnākara*, price: Tk. two only.
- The *Kāya Viññāna*, price: Anna 6 only.
- The *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, price Anna 6 only.
- The *Gaṅgāmālā* (Drama) price: Anna 4 only.
- 1937 The *Tripitaks* The *Pārājikaṃ*, price: Tk. 2.50 only.
- The *Samyuttanikāyo* and price: Tk. 2 only.
- sacred books The *Nāmarūpa*, price: Anna four only.
- The *Buddhism in Brief*, prices: Anna 2 only.
- The *Vidarsan Bhāvanā*. There were mentioned the *Vidarsan Bhāvanā* under publishing in first and second issue of ninth yr. of the *Sangha Shakti*, but the name of the book was not in the next publication lists.
- 1938 The *Tripitaks* The *Vimānavatthu* (Bengali translations with Pali), price Tk. two only;
- sacred books The *Singhal-Abhijan*, price: anna six only.
- The *Buddher Dhamma Paricaya*, price: anna four only.
- The *Buddha-Sangkirtan*, price: Anna 3 only.
- The *Mahākassapa-Carita*, price Anna 4 only.
- Reprint The *Lokaniti*, price: anna four only.
- The *Sivali Carita*, price: Anna four only.
- 1939 sacred book The *Bouddha Janmantarvad* by Dwarika Mohan Mutsuddi.

## Appendix 2

### The list of Pictures

(It has compiled from different issues of the *Sangha-Shakti*)

Year of publication	Particulars
1928-1937	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Buddher Sargābataran</i>, (Arrival to the Heaven of the Buddha),</li> <li>2. <i>Bodhisutter Kaṭhor Tapassū</i> (Hard warship of the <i>Bodhisutta</i>),</li> <li>3. <i>Bodhimūle Buddha</i> (the Buddha under the Bodhi tree),</li> <li>4. <i>Animes sthane Buddha</i> (the Buddha in the Place of winkless),</li> <li>5. <i>Cankramane Buddha</i> (the Buddha in the wandering),</li> <li>6. <i>Ratnaghare Buddha</i> (the Buddha in the jeweled house),</li> <li>7. <i>Ajapāla Nyagrodhamūle Buddha</i> (the Buddha under the Ajapāla Nyagrodha tree),</li> <li>8. <i>Mucalindamūle Buddha</i> (the Buddha under the Mucalinda tree),</li> <li>9. <i>Rājāyatanamūle Buddha</i> (the Buddha under the Rajayatana tree),</li> <li>10. <i>Mahāmuni Cetiya</i> (the Buddhist shrine of <i>Mahamuni</i>),</li> <li>11. <i>Cakrasālā Cetiya</i> (the Buddhist shrine of <i>Cakrasala</i>),</li> <li>12. <i>Budagunsai Cetiya</i> (the Buddhist shrine of <i>Budagunsai</i>).</li> <li>13. <i>padacinha Cetiya</i> (the Footmark monument),</li> </ol>
1938	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. <i>Prāṇatissa Sthavir</i>,</li> <li>15. <i>Prajnāloka Sthavir</i>,</li> <li>16. <i>Sangha-Mitta</i>,</li> <li>17. <i>Sivali</i>.</li> </ol>

# Buddhist Karma Theory and the Question of Determinism?

*Siddharth Singh*

A popularly known fact is that, according to Buddhism, good action gives us reward and evil action leads us to the bad results. This belief has been the central point of the Buddhist doctrine of Karma since beginning. But most of the time, common readers, who do not have good understanding of Buddha's intention, and sometimes, the students of the Buddhism also, take this theory in the deterministic sense and take it for granted that what ever we have done and will do certainly has, without any exception, to give us the result of it in mathematically exact proportion. If it is so, then the question arises in one's mind, what are the benefits of doing good deeds now and in the future? An immoral person might think why should he try to become moral if he is bound to reap the fruits of what immoral deeds he had done in the past and, now after, there is no possibility of transformation of those fruits into pure and correcting the mistakes of the past? What is the position of free-will in the Buddhist doctrine of Karma?

Before we handle with the issue, we should keep in our mind a very simple definition of the Karma according to the Buddha. Buddha had personally verified Karma and its fructification as two aspects of life through his extra-sensory perception. He was one of the first to give a reasonable and moral definition of the Karma. Buddha throws the light on the importance of karma in the following way--

*Kammanā vattatī loko, kammanā vattatī pajā,  
Kammanibandhanā sattā, rathassāṇī'va yāyato.*<sup>1</sup>

*By Karma the world exists, by Karma mankind exists, beings are bound by work as the linchpin of the rolling cart (keeps the wheel on).*

In Buddhism, the word Karma is taken as an action motivated by volition. Karma is born from volition; Karma is done by volition that is why Buddha has said -- '*Cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*'.<sup>2</sup> Our future depends on our present volition, and our present state depends on our past volition. '*All [mental] states have mind as their forerunner, mind as their chief, and they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts, with a*

*defiled mind, suffering follows one even as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox.'*

*Manopubbāṅgamā dhammā manoṣeṭṭhā manomayā,  
Manasā ce paduṭṭhena bhāsatī vā karotī vā,  
Tato naṃ dukkhamanveti cakkam'va vahato padaṃ.<sup>3</sup>*

By giving gold while intending to give a stone, a gift of gold is indeed made, but as it has not been willed, the act is as if it were not done. It is not appropriate and 'stored up' (*upacita*); it will bear no fruit. In the same way, if a man kills his mother when striking at what is believed to be a pumpkin, there is no matricide, there is no murder, there is only destruction of a fruit. An action to be complete and really fruitful, apt to ripen must consist of three parts: (i) The preparation, which is the first volition and all the arrangements necessary to the principal action. For example, a butcher arises, takes some money, goes to the market, buys a goat, has the knife in his hand; (ii) The principal action: the killing of the goat; (iii) The back of the principal action: the cutting up and selling the meat.<sup>4</sup>

Buddhism divides the Karma into four categories with reference to its time of operation<sup>5</sup>: (i) *Diṭṭhadhammavedanīya* i.e. immediately effective Karma which produces fruit in this life, (ii) *Upapajjavedanīya* i.e. subsequently effective Karma which produces fruit in the next life, (iii) *Aparāparivedanīya* i.e. indefinitely effective Karma which produces fruit in any of the future lives (iv) *Ahosikamma* i.e. ineffective Karma. If *Diṭṭhadhammavedanīya* Karma does not operate in this life, it becomes ineffective (*Ahosi*). It is the gravity and intensity of the Karma which decides if it will fructify in this birth, next or in the future birth. Buddhism has classified the Karma again in the four categories according to the priority of effect (*Vipākadānavasena*) namely: (i) *Garuka* Karma i.e. weighty action, (ii) *Āsanna* Karma i.e. death-proximate action, (iii) *Āciṇṇa* Karma i.e. habitual action, (iv) *Katattā* Karma i.e. cumulative action. But the consequence of any action depends to a large extent on the moral status of the sinner. This situation can be illustrated by an instance of the *Anguttara Nikāya*. If a man throws a lump of salt into small cup water, the water becomes salty and undrinkable. If a man were to throw a similar lump of salt in the river Ganges, the water of the Ganges would not become salty and undrinkable. Similarly, if a man is deficient in merit, a slight evil deed will ripen into an infernal existence. But a similar slight evil deed committed by any good man may bring a slight punishment.<sup>6</sup>

Here we find two persons committing similar evil deeds but reaping the different results in different way because the past collection of merit of latter is richer than the former person. It depicts clearly that the Karma, according to the Buddha, does not possess the rigid nature of the fire which burns every thing irrespective of what it is. Buddha's karmic-law is different from the fire-law. It should also be borne in the mind that it is not all suffering that has its root in the Karma. There are eight causes by which suffering arise, by which many beings suffer pain. *Milindapañho*<sup>7</sup> speaks of these as follows: (i) superabundance of wind, (ii) and of bile, (iii) and of phlegm, (iv) the union of these humours, (v) variations in temperature, (vi) the avoiding of dissimilarities, (vii) external agency and (viii) karma. From each of these there are some sufferings that arise, and these are the eight causes by which many beings suffer pain. And therein whosoever maintains that it is Karma that injures beings, and besides it there is no other reason for pain, his proposition is false.

On the account of these factors, the justification of the physical pain of the Buddha, like injury by a piece of rock, dysentery etc. has been portrayed in the text. Yes, but it is not possible for these causes to deprive someone of life. Therefore, Karma is not the only but one of the contributory factors among eight factors which are responsible for the physical pain. It is evident from this fact that Buddhist Karma theory is in contrast to the deterministic theory of Karma according to which whatsoever is experienced in this life is due to one's past Karma.

Despite all the stress on the importance of Karma and all the different kinds of classification of it, considering volition as a nucleus of the Karma theory, this fact remains stagnant that one has all possibility of not only changing his present and future action but also has the chance to make the fruits of his past actions neutralize or ineffective. One is not bound to reap all that in the exact proportion what he has sown. If he is not the master of his Karma then he is not the servant also of it. It is the Buddhist law that we are changing every moment and becoming a completely new being. That new being depends on our own deeds. We are free to change any moment for the better or for the worse. Even the most wicked, most poor or most pitiable person should not be discouraged or despised on the account of his evil nature or bad destiny. He should understand the fact that whatever he is, if that is the fruits or effects of his past Karma, even then also those fruits or effects are not eternal and

unchangeable. As much as he will dilute his ill-fate by collecting more and more good deeds, as soon as those effects of his past bad actions will come to an end. Those who are rich, successful and high positioned in the society should neither be proud of their status nor should be indulged in the evil activities having understood the same law.

Some scholars like Poussin<sup>8</sup> have raised the question of free-will in the Buddhist doctrine of Karma and objects in the following way: 'The problem of free-will is a difficult one', 'Buddhism flatly denies freedom', and 'A man is not cruel or covetous because he chooses to be so but because he has just been a tiger or a lustful animal'. According to this opinion, a man is not free to do anything whatever he wants but his past Karma compels to act as he does.

This objection of Karmic determinism on Buddhism is not justified at all because Buddha himself has refuted to all kinds of determinism whether it is Karmic determinism (*Pubba-kamma-vāda*) or Theistic determinism (*Issara-karaṇa-vāda*) or Natural determinism (*Svabhāva-vāda*). Having refuted Karmic determinism (*Pubba-kamma-vāda*) Buddha spoke thus to the monks in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

*"So then if owing to a previous action, men will become murderers, thieves, abusive, liars, thus for those who fall back on the former deed as the essential reason there is neither desire to do, nor effect to do, nor necessity to do this deed or abstain from that deed. So then, the necessity for action or inaction not being found to exist in truth and verity the term 'Samaṇa' can not reasonably applied to yourselves (to those who hold this view), since you live in a state of bewilderment with faculties unwarned."*<sup>9</sup>

Buddha further says thus at another place in the same text:

*"O monks, if one should say: 'Exactly according a man does a deed, in such a manner will he experience the result of it'--that being so there is no holy living, there is no opportunity afforded for the perfect ending of ill. But, monks, if one should say: 'Exactly according as a man does a deed, that can be experienced hereafter'--that being so there is living of the holy life, there is opportunity afforded for the utter ending of the ill."*<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, Buddhism states that the man is conditioned by many factors and among them Karma plays a major role; one is not determined by any or all of them. One has an element of free-will or personal endeavour by practicing which he can change his own nature as well



as his environment. Actually, it is the spirit we should have within us whenever we think of changing the world in a better world. If this freedom had not been in the Buddhism, the elimination and neutralization of evil actions and salvation of Buddha's disciples would not have been possible. In this very sense Buddhism considers to man as master of his fate.

*Attā hi attano nātho, ko hi nātho paro siyā,  
Attanā'va sudantena nāthaṃ labhati dullabhaṃ.*<sup>11</sup>

*Self is the refuge of self, for who else could be?*

*By a fully controlled self one obtains a refuge which is hard to gain.*

Conclusively, the Buddhist Doctrine of Karma can be summarized in the following few points:

1. Karma is the major factor responsible for what we are and what we will be, but it is not the only factor. It is one of the many factors responsible for the differences among the human beings.

2. There is every possibility of moulding one's Karma here. Buddhism provides ample scope to a person to apply his free-will for the transformation of the fruits of his past deeds. One is free to diminish, increase or change the effects of his past good or bad deeds.

3. Had Buddhist Karma theory been deterministic, there must have been arisen the problem of self-contradiction in the Karma theory because of it's believe in the impermanence (*Anicca*) of everything (How the fruits of action can be unchangeable?) but, actually, it is not the case here. Buddhist Karma theory is in the accordance with its own theory that every thing can be changed.

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# Third Buddhist Council : Theravada Perspective

*Belu Rani Barua*

The conversion of Emperor Asoka, the great to the Buddhist faith is an event of great significance in the history of Buddhism. The knowledge of the Buddhist ecclesiastical history for some years before the reign of Dhammasoka was scanty. The fate of Buddhism was changed when this noble emperor made it a state religion. The significant success of the Third Council convened by him paved the way for the development of Buddhist thought, mainly Theravada tradition.

## **Purpose of holding the Council**

The Sinhalese tradition gives the immediate causes for holding the Council. It is said that with the conversion of Asoka, the material prosperity of the monasteries grew by leaps and bounds and the monks lived in ease and comfort. On the other hand, the heretics who lost their support and honor, found it difficult to maintain their livelihood. As a result large number of sixty thousand heretics attracted by the future prospect and gain constituted a part of the Buddhist Sangha. They dwelt in the royal monastery with the original sangha. These false monks continued to adhere to their old faiths and practices and preached their own doctrines as the teachings of the Buddha.

Moggaliputta Tissa Thera<sup>1</sup> seeing such extreme distress in the Sangha went to a secluded place on the Ahoganga Mountain up to the Ganges and stayed there for seven years. The result was that the purity of the Sangha suffered much. The members of the heretics and false monks became far larger than that of the true believers. The result was that seven years no Uposatha or Pavarana ceremony was held in any of the monasteries. The Buddhist Sangha refused to observe the festivals with the heretics. Emperor Asoka sent the minister requesting the Sangha to observe the Uposatha ceremony in the monastery. The minister was misguided and struck off the heads of several Theras who disobeyed the mandate of the king. The minister returned to the palace and reported the matter to the king. Emperor Asoka became extremely sad and worried shaken by the massacre. He was agitated over the tragedy that was caused by the wrong interpretation of his order. He sent a messenger

to Moggaliputta Tissa Thera to solve the matter and brought him from the Ahoganga Mountain to Pataliputra for removing his doubt and unrest.<sup>2</sup>

### **A short narrative of the Council**

Council of 1,000 Theras was held at Pataliputra under the patronage of Emperor Asoka in the Asokarama at about 236 A.N.<sup>3</sup> It was convened under the presidentship of famous monk Moggaliputta Tissa Thera. At first the king called the whole community of the Buddha. Some of them explained the wrong doctrines of their own and these heretical monks numbering sixty thousand were expelled from the Sangha by the king. Afterwards, he interrogated the true believers about the doctrines of the Buddha. Moggaliputta Tissa answered that the Buddha was Vibhajjavādin (analyzer) and he also corroborated the truth of this answer. The king requested that the brotherhood should hold the Uposatha ceremony so that the community might be purified of evil elements.

The main business of the council deliberated during a period of nine months is stated to have been in favour of the Theravadins. All the view points were refuted. The views discussed were recorded in the Abhidhamma text, the Kathavatthu which was composed by Moggaliputta Tissa Thera in the midst of the council. The rules of the order and the doctrines of the faith were once more rehearsed and settled. The compilation of the Kathāvatthuppakaraṇa by Moggaliputta Tissa Thera and its approval by the council clearly proves that the Dvīpitaka or the Dhamma and the Vinaya were fully shaped into Tipitaka which, without any doubt, were rehearsed in the session of the convention. The most important achievement of the Third Council of Dhammasoka is that the true faith was restored and the purity of the original teachings re-established.<sup>4</sup>

### **Recitation of the Canon**

We get evidence that the Dhamma and the Vinaya were recited in the first two councils. The Cullavagga<sup>5</sup> gives a short description of the recitation which may be entitled as part of the Dhamma and the Vinaya. On the other hand, there is no mention of Abhidhamma-recitation. In the Third Council, the Buddhist Scriptures were divided into Three parts: the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Sutta Piṭaka and the Abhidhamma Piṭaka. Thus the full shape or the Theravāda Tipitaka came into existence. Thera Mahinda brought the teachings of the Buddha handed down by Thera Paramparā (The succession of the Elders) over to Ceylon. Here is a brief survey of the Tipitaka following the order of division and dealing with the texts accordingly.<sup>6</sup>

- (I) The Vinaya Piṭaka or the basket of the Discipline contains the rules and regulations for the guidance of the Buddhist Sangha (order) and precepts for the daily life of the Bhikkhus (monks) and Bhikkhunis (nuns) including the episodes and events associated with the development of the Sangha. The Vinaya Piṭaka consists of (a) Khandhakas—(1) Mahāvaga, (2) Cullavagga; (b) Sutta vibhanga—(3) Pārājika and (4) Pācittiya and (5) Parivāra.
- (II) The Sutta Piṭaka is a collection of the doctrinal expositions, large and small. The Suttas are generally in prose, but occasionally interspersed with the verses. These are the most important literary products of the Buddhist literature. Sutta Piṭaka is thus the primary source for the doctrine of the Buddha and his early disciples. It consists of the five Nikāyas or collections, viz, Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya, Aṅguttara Nikāya and Khuddaka Nikāya. The last Khuddaka Nikāya comprises fifteen independent treatises: (1) Khuddaka Pāṭha, (2) Dhammapada, (3) Udāna, (4) Itivuttaka, (5) Sutta Nipāta, (6) Vimāna-Vatthu, (7) Peta-Vatthu, (8) Theragāthā, (9) Therīgāthā, (10) Jātaka, (11) Niddesa (Mahāniddesa & Cullaniddesa), (12) Paṭisambhidāmagga, (13) Apadāna, (14) Buddhavaṃsa and (15) Cariya-Piṭaka.
- (III) The Abhidhamma Piṭaka deals with the same Dhamma as taught in the Sutta Piṭaka and it differs from the latter in its arrangement and detailed treatment or it may be transmitted into a higher explanation of the Dhamma or a special treatment of the same analyzed and classified elaboration. The Abhidhamma Piṭaka is comprised of seven books:
1. Dhammasaṅgani or Enumeration of mental states.
  2. Vibhaṅga or Classification of the matter of the Foregoing.
  3. Dhātukathā or Discussion of elements.
  4. Puggalapaññatti or Description of individuals.
  5. Kathāvatthu or Points of Controversies.
  6. Yamaka or Book of Pairs or An Applied Logic
  7. Paṭṭhāna or An analysis of the Relations

### Despatch of Missionaries<sup>7</sup>

The outcome of the data furnished by the Buddhist texts roughly speaks that during the life-time of the Buddha, his missions were limited to the boundaries

within Madhyadesa and Pragdesa. It remains stationary until the conversion of Asoka, the great.

The main success of Asoka's contribution to Buddhism after the Third Council was the despatch of missionaries made by Moggaliputta Tissa Thera, the most outstanding figure in the Buddhist Sangha of the Theravada tradition. The most significant account of the spiritual conquest of Buddhism in the days of Asoka is the conversion of Ceylon.<sup>8</sup> All the traditions are unanimous and convinced of this historical fact in general. The conversion is ascribed to Mahinda, the son of Asoka and the pupil of Tissa Moggaliputta and the king's daughter Sanghamitta who entered the order almost simultaneously and who had established the Bhikkhuni Sangha (The order of the Nuns) in the Island. Soon after the Third Council, which was held in that year, Mahinda undertook the glorious task of converting the Island. Accompanied by Itthiya, Utthiya, Bhaddasala, Sambala and Sumana, he went to Ceylon and propagated Buddhism there.

Thera Majjhantika went to Gandhara and Kashmir where he subdued the Naga-king of wonderful power and also converted many human beings. Another thera Majjhima is said to have converted the crowds of Yakkhas in the Himalaya. He is named Sava-Himavata Cariya in the Sanchi inscription. Thera Mahadeva who conferred the Pabbajja ordination on Mahinda beheld the founding of the religion in the Mahisamandala. The Sinhalese tradition mentions the sending of several other apostles to other countries after the Third Council. They are Rakkhita to Vanavasi, Mahadhammarakkhita to Maharattha (modern Maharashtra), Maharakkhita to Yona country, Dhammarakkhita to Aparantaka Country. It is also reported that Sona and Uttara were sent to Suvannabhumi (the golden land of Burma) where they delivered sermon and many men became free from bondage. That the Theras of the missionaries are not mere legendary names, have been proved by the earliest monuments of Buddhism, Viz, The Stupas of Sanchi where some of their relics have been found.<sup>9</sup>

### Some observations of scholars

Prof. Kern<sup>10</sup> thinks that it was only a party meeting of the Vibhajjavadin after their separation from the Mahasanghikas. V. A. Smith<sup>11</sup> accepts that the council was actually held late in the region of Asoka, though all the details are not historical. N. Dutt<sup>12</sup> is of the opinion that the traditional account may not be purely historical, but the circumstances which led to the councils have historical basis on some specific grounds. Winternitz<sup>13</sup> believes that the council was actually held to uphold the Theravada doctrines which were greatly endangered

by the mixing up of the heretics. B.M. Barua<sup>14</sup> opines that the text of the schism-Pillar Edict of Asoka confirms the historicity of the Pali tradition concerning the Third Council. E.J. Thomas<sup>15</sup> is of the opinion that the accounts of the council are later inventions of the Sinhalese. Andre Bareau<sup>16</sup> observes that the synod parted the Sthaviras, proper into the Sarvastivadins and the Vibhajjavadins, leaving the other disputed events of the council aside. We think that the role of Emperor Asoka in the council undoubtedly was significant. The Third Theravada Council paved the way for the rise of Vibhajjavada and the doctrine of the Buddha where the original teachings of the Master handed down from Acariyaparampara (Lineage of teachers).

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# The Doctrinal Maxims in the Dhammapada

*Saheli Das*

**Dhammapada**, the sublime teaching of Buddha is a well known and most popular Buddhist literature. The book Dhammapada is the second book of the Khuddaka Nikāya, the 5th section of the Suttapiṭaka written in Pali. Actually, Dhammapada was so popular that it was translated in Prakrit, Mixed Sanskrit, Sanskrit, Chinese, Ceylonese, Burmese, Tibetan besides modern languages of the world.

The term '**Dhammapada**' is comprised of '**Dhamma**' and '**Pada**' and owes the ambiguity of both the components. The term 'Dhamma' means 'religion', 'ethics', 'sīla' etc. and 'Pada' means 'path', 'footstep', 'way', 'portion of verses' etc. and the scholars translated the name 'Dhammapada' in various ways like 'a collection of verses on religion' [**Fausböll**], 'footstep of religion' [**Gogerly**], 'the paths of religion' [**Hardy**], 'loi fondamentale' or 'base de la religion' [**Feer**], 'scriptural texts' [**Beal**], 'path of virtue or footsteps of law' [**Max Müller and Radhakrishnan**], 'worte der Wahrheit' [**Shroder**] etc.<sup>1</sup>

The Pali Dhammapada is a collection of dictums of Lord Buddha in the form of anthology. It has four twenty-three verses, which are distributed in twenty-six vaggas. These are Yamaka, Appamāda, Citta, Puppha, Bāla, Paṇḍita, Arahanta, Sahassa, Pāpa, Daṇḍa, Jarā, Atta, Loka, Buddha, Sukha, Piya, Kodha, Mala, Dhammatṭha, Magga, Pakiṇṇaka, Niraya, Nāga, Taṇhā, Bhikkhu and Brāhmaṇa.<sup>2</sup> The anthology has been compiled from various sources and brings together verses for popular use. Venerable Nārada Thera claimed that though it is the actual sayings of Lord Buddha, but the present form is collected-compilation of the monks assembled in the 1st Buddhist Council held at Rājagaha just three months after the Mahāparinibbāna of the Master.<sup>3</sup>

Though the subject matter of the text mainly the ethical teachings of Lord Buddha, but it throws a flash of light on the doctrinal sayings of the Master. Actually, Lord Buddha illumined about his doctrine in the grab of ethical directions. The present study is the gleaning of those valuable maxims dealing with the principle tenets of his doctrine, like, Four Noble Truths (Cattāri Ariya Saccāni), Noble Eightfold Paths (Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga), Doctrine of Action (Kammavāda), Doctrine of Rebirth (Punabbhava), Three Cardinal Doctrines (Tilakkhaṇa) and Nibbāna, i.e., the ultimate liberation from sufferings. As the study is based on the Dhammapada only, so the materials are garnered from



the verses of the various chapters or vaggas, like, the Appamāda, Pupphavagga, Bālavagga Pāpavagga, Jarāvagga, Buddhavagga, Sukhavagga, Kodhavagga Malavagga, Maggavagga, Taṇhāvaga and Bhikkhuvagga of the book.

In the **Buddhavagga** [14th vagga], Lord Buddha told -- ‘bahum ve Saraṇaṃ yanti pabbatāni vanāni ca | ārāmarukkkhecetiyaṇi manussā bhayatajjitā || Netam kho Saraṇaṃ khemaṃ netam saraṇamuttamaṃ | Netam saraṇaṃ āgama sabbadukkhā pamuccati || Yo ca Buddhaṇca Dhammaṇca Saṅghaṇca gato | cattāri ariyasaccāni sammappaññāya passati || Dukkhaṃ dukkhasamuppādaṃ dukkhassa ca atikammaṃ | Ariyañcaṭṭhiṅgikaṃ maggaṃ dukkhūpasamagāmiṇaṃ || etaṃ saraṇamāgama sabbadukkhā pamuccati ||’<sup>4</sup>, i.e., People when tormented by fear take refuge under hills, woods, gardens, trees, shrines etc. But these refuges are neither secure nor supreme, because resorting to such refuge one is not released from all sorrow. He who seeks refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, he who see with right knowledge the **Four Noble Truths (Cattāri Ariya Saccāni)**--Sorrow (Dukkha), the Cause of Sorrow (Dukkhasamuppādaṃ), the Transcending of Sorrow (Dukkhassa atikammaṃ) and the **Noble Eightfold Path (Ariyaṭṭhaṅgika maggaṃ)**, this path leads to the liberation from Sorrow. Indeed, this is the secured and supreme refuge and seeking such refuge one is released from all sorrow. He always spoke about this release from sorrow in the whole Dhammapada.

In the **Malavagga** (18th vagga), He told that as rust, sprung from iron, seized itself away when arisen, even so his own deeds direct the violator to a state of woe.<sup>5</sup> It seems that man is the creator of his own fate. A person is solely responsible about his beatitude or adversity whenever actions determine the way of his life. Master told -- ‘Na antalikkhe na samuddamajjhe na pabbātaṇaṃ vivaraṃ pavissa | Na vijjati so jagatippadeso yatthaṭṭhito muñceyapāpakammā ||’<sup>6</sup> [**Pāpavagga**, (9th vagga)], i.e., neither in the sky, nor in mid-ocean, nor in entering a mountain cave, there is no place on earth, where abiding one may escape from the consequence of an evil deed. In the **Pupphavagga** (4th vagga), he encouraged by giving a simile that as from the amass of flowers many a garland is made, even so many good deeds should be done by one born a mortal.<sup>7</sup> It indicates that love, compassion, benevolence and serve others -- all these honest instincts fragrant the man himself like full-blown flowers. Fruition does not come if the flowers are blown, but isolated. Fruition comes if the flowers wreathes as a garland, then they become more lovely, more useful. Similarly, perfect application of the accumulated honest instincts brings good and happiness of all beings. In the **Jarāvagga**

(11th vagga), Lord Buddha again, giving a comparison and ultimate effect of **Kamma** -- “Acaritvā brahmacariyaṃ aladdhā yobbane dhanam | jīṇṇakoñcāva jhāyanti khīṇamacchena pallale || Acaritvā brahmacariyaṃ aladdhā yobbane dhanam | senti cāpātikhīṇā’va purāṇāni anutthunam ||”<sup>8</sup>, i.e., they who in youth have not led the Holy Life or have not acquired wealth, aggrieved like withered egrets on a pond without fish, lie like feeble bows, sighing after the past. Actually, the first part of the life is period of self-preparation and a man earns whatever during this period, that will his viaticum of his late life. So, he, who indulges his youth, diminuates his self, lots of sorrow and repentance waits for him. All these gāthās definitely corroborates His **doctrine of Kamma** (action).

In the **Maggavagga** (20th vagga), he showed the **Three Cardinal Doctrines**, viz., **Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā**. According to him, all conditioned things are transient (sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā’ti)<sup>9</sup>, all conditioned things are sorrowful (sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā’ti)<sup>10</sup> and everything is soul-less (sabbe saṅkhārā anattā’ti)<sup>11</sup> and when one discerns this with wisdom, then he is disgusted with ill and this is the Path of purity. It may be mentioned here that the word ‘saṅkhārā’ is used in case of ‘Anicca’ and ‘Dukkha’, but the word ‘dhammā’ is used for ‘Anattā’, Here, the striking point is ‘dhammā’ which probably used consciously and perhaps it indicates ‘sūnyatā’. However, in the **Jarāvagga** also, theory of impermanency is enumerated in the garb of a number of similies. Thus, Lord Buddha depicted the essence of life in a very lucid manner.

Lastly, **Nibbāna** (Sanskrit Nirvāṇa) which is the ultimate goal of Buddhism, rehearsed in the gāthās of the Dhammapada. It is said in the **Bālavagga** (5th vagga) that the ways to the mundane achievement and to the ultimate liberation (i.e. Nibbāna), is distinct from each other. If one wishes to get Nibbāna, he should strive after separation from worldly achievement.<sup>12</sup> It is uttered in the **Buddhavagga** (14th vagga) that Nibbāna is supreme after the Buddhas (‘Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ vadanti Buddhā’<sup>13</sup>). The path that leads to the attainment of Nibbāna has been described in some verses of vaggas, like, **Appamāda**, **Magga**, **Kodha**, **Taṇhā** and **Bhikkhu**. According to **Maggavagga** (20th vagga), all conditioned things are transient and sorrowful and everything is soul-less and when discerns this with wisdom, then he is disgusted with ill and this is the path to purity, which is mentioned earlier. A verse in the **Appamādavagga** (2nd vagga) suggests that one who tries to attain Nibbāna, he would delights in earnestness and looks with fear on heedlessness, burying all fetters, great and small and advances like fire.<sup>14</sup> In the **Taṇhāvagga** (24th vagga), it is said that he who is free from worldly

attachment and affection, he who is skilled in words and their interpretation, who knows the orders of letters, he has received the final-body, he is wise and great.<sup>15</sup> Again, in the **Bhikkhuvagga** (25th vagga), we get that knowledge and meditation are complimentary to each other and who possess both of them, he is nearer to Nibbāna.<sup>16</sup> A verse in the **Kodhavadagga** (17th vagga) depicts that who are awakened, who study day and night and who strive after Nibbāna, their passions will come to an end.<sup>17</sup> It means that passionless persons can achieve Nibbāna. In the **Sukhavagga** (15th vagga), Nibbāna is praised more than one time along with comparisons. Firstly, there is no fire like lust, no ill like the body and no bliss higher than peace.<sup>18</sup> Again, hunger is the worst among the diseases and elements of the body is the greatest evil and having known the fact that the wise attain the highest bliss or Nibbāna.<sup>19</sup> Lastly, health is the highest profit, contentment is the greatest wealth, trustworthiness is the best kinsmen and Nibbāna is the supreme bliss.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, Lord Buddha praised the end of rebirth-cycle to terminate all sorrows.

Thus, the study unfolds that the Dhammapada, the ethical sermons of the Lord Buddha has also another importance due to the bearings of doctrinal maxims. As such, Lord Buddha when used to guided his pupils as well as common people about the morality, was gave a sketchy preaching on his doctrines which is no doubt precious and the language of the Dhammapada is so lucid and usage of similes from daily life makes it more popular that a lay man can easily understand his theory rather the aims and objects of life.

#### Endnotes:

1. Singh, N. K. & Baruah, B. (ed.), Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Pali Literature, (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1997) v.1, pp. 152-153.
2. Chowdhury, B. N. Bauddha Sahitya, (Calcutta: Mahabodhi Book Agency, 1996), p. 67.
3. Singha, N. K. & Baruah, B. (ed.), Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Pali Literature, op.cit., p. 152.
4. Dhammapada, verse nos. 188 to 192.
5. 'Ayaṣā'va malaṃ samuṭṭhitaṃ tadutṭhāya tameva khādati | evaṃ atidhonaṇāriṇaṃ sakakammāni nayanti duggataṃ ||' [ibid., verse no. 240]
6. ibid., verse no. 127.
7. 'Yathāpi pupphaṇāsimhā kayirā mālāguṇe bahū | evaṃ jātena maccena kattabbaṃ kusalaṃ bahuṃ ||' [ibid., verse no. 53]
8. ibid, verse nos. 155 & 156.

9. ibid, verse no. 277
10. ibid, verse no. 278
11. ibid, verse no. 278.
12. 'Aññā hi lābhūpanisā aññā nibbānagāminī | evametam abhiññāya bhikkhu buddhassa sāvako | sakkāram nābhīnandeyya vivekamanubrūhaye ||' [ibid, verse no. 75]
13. ibid, verse no. 6
14. 'Appamādarato bhikkhu pamāde bhayadassi vā | saññajanaṃ aṇuṃ thūlaṃ ḍaḥaṃ aggī'va gacchati ||' [ibid, verse no. 31]
15. 'Vītataṇho anādano nirutipadakovido | akkharānaṃ sannipātaṃ jaññā pubbāparāmi ca | sa ve antimasārīro mahāpañño (mahāpuriso)'ti vuccati ||' [ibid, verse no. 352]
16. 'Natthi jhānaṃ apaññassa paññā natthi ajhāyato | yamhi jhāyañca paññā ca sa ve nibbānasantike ||' [ibid, verse no. 372]
17. 'Sadā jāgaramānānaṃ ahorattānusikkhinaṃ | nibbānaṃ adhimuttānaṃ atthaṃ gacchanti āsavā ||' [ibid, verse no. 226]
18. 'Natthi rāgasamo aggi natthi dosasamo kali | natthi khandhasmā dukkhā natthi santiparaṃ sukhaṃ ||' [ibid., verse no. 202]
19. 'Jighacchā paramā rogā saṃkhārā paramā dukhā | etaṃ ñatvā yathābhūtaṃ nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ ||' [ibid., verse no. 203]
20. 'Ārogyaparamā lābhā santuṭṭhi paramaṃ dhanaṃ | vissāsaparamā ñāti nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ ||' [ibid., verse no. 204]

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