

Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK)

Buddha was born more than 2600 years ago at Lumbini in Nepal. His teachings of existence of suffering and the way out of the suffering are applicable today as it was applicable then. The middle way he preached is more appropriate now than ever before.

For centuries Buddhism remained the religion of the East. Recently, more and more Westerners are learning about it and practising Dharma for the spiritual and physical well-being and happiness. As a result of this interest many monasteries and Buddhist organisations have been established in the West, including UK. Most have Asian connections but others are unique to the West e.g. Friends of Western Buddhist Order.

Nepalese, residing in the UK, wishing to practice dharma for their spiritual development, turned to them as there were no such Nepalese organisations. Therefore, a group of Nepalese met in February 1997 and founded Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) to fill this gap. The society is non-political, non-racial, non-profit making voluntary organisation and open to all, both Nepalese and non-Nepalese, whatever their faith.

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Objectives

1. To make Buddhism known to the wider public and to help them understand the benefits of his profound teachings.
2. To have a forum for the meeting of Nepalese residents in the UK and others with an interest in Buddha Dharma as a spiritual practice for discussion, exchange of ideas, constructive dialogue and to build Nepalese Buddhist community in the UK etc.
3. To establish links with similar organisations in the UK, Nepal and other countries.
4. To organise voluntary work to help reduce human suffering in Nepal and other countries, and
5. To promote and publish religious and cultural heritage of Nepal



L u m b i n i

Journal of The Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK)

Lumbini is the journal of LNBDS (UK) and published annually depending upon funds and written material; and distributed free of charge as Dharma Dana. It is our hope that the journal will serve as a medium for:

1. Communication between the society, the members and other interested groups.
2. Publication of news and activities about Buddhism in the United Kingdom, Nepal and other countries.
3. Explaining various aspects of Dharma in simple and easily understood language for all age groups.
4. Discussion on Dharma through a readers column.

Lumbini is run purely on donation. Therefore, any donations are welcome and greatly appreciated. Cheques/Postal orders should be made payable to Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) or LNBDS (UK) and forwarded to the society.

Lumbini for you...

For the forthcoming issues of Lumbini, we welcome your articles, anecdotes, short stories or news features, which are linked to Nepal and/or Buddhism. Send your contributions and comments to:-

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Please include your full name, address and telephone number. We regret we cannot acknowledge or return items we do not publish.

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Printed by: Genesis Designs, 2 Station Parade, Northolt Road, South Harrow, Middlesex HA2 8HB

Articles and opinions expressed in the journal are not necessarily the opinions of the society.



Editorial

Happy 2551st Buddha Jayanti and warm wishes from LNBDS! It was 2551 years ago that Buddha passed away (*Mahaparinirvana*). 'One who sees the teaching sees me', said the Buddha. The greatest way to pay our respect and homage to the great teacher is to practice his teachings.

This year is the 10th anniversary of LNBDS. The society was established in February 1997 with a few interested members. Since then the numbers of members have steadily increased. Celebration of the Buddha Jayanti, Meditation classes, Dharma talks, sponsorship of children's at Ramechhap, Nepal are some of the activities of the society. The society is thankful to all its members, supporters and well wishers. Please continue your support and send your constructive suggestions, views and opinion for further improvement of society's activities. 'Sabba Danam Dhamma Danam Jinati' The gift of Truth excels all other gifts.

Although Nepal is the birth place of the Buddha, Buddhism in Nepal has taken many twist and turns. According to historians, Buddhism was the dominant religion in Nepal until the time of King Jayasthiti Malla. He imposed caste system according to *Manudharmasastra*. Buddhist culture and tradition was banned and celibate monks were forced to disrobe and to marry. Revival of Theravada Buddhism started in the closing years of 19th century but the earliest Buddhist monks had to face many hardship. Venerable Bhikkhu Sujana describes the type of hardship they have to face in his article 'Theravada Buddhism in Nepal – a brief account'.

David N. Gellner, on the other hand mentions in his article 'Vajrayana Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley' that Vajrayana Buddhism which was once very wide spread in Asia has died out in India and Kathmandu valley is the last place in the whole of south Asia where Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism is still practised using the original Sanskrit scriptures and liturgies.

Buddha said nothing can survive without food. Dharma Shakya shares his experience of a week long family retreat in Plum village in France with Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh in his article 'Watering the seeds of love'.

Five precepts (Panca Sila) which is the basic moral code for lay Buddhist is the subject of Dr. Dinesh Bajracharya's article on 'The Critical analysis of Panca Sila'.

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'Happy is the unity of Sangha' Venerable Bhikkhu Sumana writes in his article 'All Rivers meet in the Ocean: The Story of Buddhists world over' how various Buddhist traditions have been successful in maintaining unity within their diversity.

Ratna Bahadur Sakya, Min Bhatta, Padma Tara Sakya and Pramila Shakya write a brief but succinct articles on 'metta on Ignorance and Habit', 'Peace is the key to prosperity', 'Compassion (*Karuna*): A lay person's account', and 'Dana'. We have included a brief biography of late Bhikkhu Mahaprajna who was the first Theravada Buddhist monks in 20th century Nepal.

We have also included two articles in Nepali which came first in the essay competition held in Nepal in collaboration of Buddhist Youth Group of Kathmandu. These are "Buddha Dharma and Human rights" by Dr. Kabindra Bajracharya and "Significance of Dana Sila and Bhavana in daily life" by Louise Maharjan.

We hope all our readers will enjoy reading this journal, as much as we have enjoyed presenting it to you.

'Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam'

LUMBINI'S FACTS AND FIGURES

1. Lumbini is the birth place of the Buddha and situated in present day Nepal.
2. It is located at 22 km south-west of Siddharthanagar (Bhairawa).
3. Lumbini was visited by the Buddha several times.
4. After the Buddha's demise Lumbini became a Buddhist holy place.
5. In 249 B.C. Emperor Asoka visited Lumbini and erected an inscribed stone pillar marking the birth place of the Buddha.
6. The account of Shui-Ching-Chu of 4th century A.D. recorded the existence of the Asokan pillar and seven stones marking first seven steps of the Buddha.
7. Fa-Hsian (403 A.D.) and Hiuen Tsiang (636 A.D.) Chinese travelers visited Lumbini.
8. 1312 A.D. Ripu Malla from Kathmandu Valley visited Lumbini.
9. 1893 A.D. Major Jaskarna Singh of Nepal rediscovered it.
10. 1896 A.D. Due to the efforts of General Khadga Shamsher Rana, the then Governor of Palpa, and Dr. A. Fuhrer, the Asokan Pillar was discovered on Dec 1, 1896 A.D.
11. 1899 A.D. P. C. Mukherji, Indian archaeologist surveyed and excavated the site.
12. 1908 A.D. and 1924 A.D. P. Landon, a renowned historian on Nepal visited Lumbini.
13. 1932-1939 A.D. General Keshar Sumsher J.B.R. excavated and restored the site.
14. 1956. The idea of developing Lumbini in the right perspective was originated during the 4th General conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhist in Katmandu, Nepal
15. 1967 U.N. Secretary General U. Thant visited Lumbini and made Lumbini Development Project an international concern.
The International Committee for the Development of Lumbini consisting of 15 members was formed under the Chairmanship of Nepal's Permanent Representative to the UN to help prepare the Master Plan and to mobilize the resources.
16. 1970-1971 A.D. B.K. Rijal, a Nepalese archaeologist located and excavated Lumbini village as mentioned in Asokan Pillar.
17. 1978 Master plan for Lumbini's Development was completed in by the renowned Japanese architect Prof. Kenzo Tange. The Master Plan was divided into three main constructions –conservation zones:
 - a. The New Lumbini village
 - b. The Cultural centre/Monastic Zone
 - c. The Sacred garden
18. 1978 The Lumbini development Trust was established.
19. 1978. Reiyukai decided to construct and donate the Lumbini International Research Institute facilities.
20. 1992 A.D. an archaeological excavation of the Mayadevi shrine was started with Japanese archaeologists' assistance.
21. 1994, Reiyukai agreed to cooperate with the Lumbini Development Trust in administering and managing the Lumbini International Research Institute upon its completion in 1995.
22. 1995, July 25 a rare terra-cotta panel depicting Prince Siddhartha at royal ease in his bed chamber with Princess Yosodhara was found at the excavation. The image is of Gandhara art and its date could be 4th-6th century A.D. Its size is 68x37 cm.
23. 1996, February 4, the Prime Minister of Nepal declared the discovery of the exact location of Buddha's birth spot with the Marker Stone and a monastery complex nearby.
24. 1998, Nov. 30 – Dec. 2 the World Buddhist Summit was held at Lumbini
25. 2000, February 1-7, Sixth Sakyaditha International Conference on Buddhist Women was held at Lumbini, Nepal
26. 2001, November 30 – December 2. An International Buddhist conference was held at Lumbini.
27. 2001. An international technical meeting, organised by Lumbini Development Trust and UNESCO, met to discuss the conservation and presentation of the archaeological site of the Maya Devi Temple.
28. 2003 May 16. Late king of Nepal inaugurated newly constructed Maya Devi temple to mark 2547th Buddha Day celebration.
29. 2003. Various programmes were held in Lumbini and in other parts of Nepal for the world peace in general and peace in Nepal, birth place of the Buddha, in particular.
30. 2004, November 30 – December 2. Second world summit was held at Lumbini
31. 2005, September. The 16 member International committee for the development of Lumbini decided to reactivate the almost defunct body in order to develop Lumbini as a world city. The high level mission decided to meet at least once a year in New York to take stock of the ongoing development in Lumbini.
32. 2007. Young Men's Buddhist Association of Nepal announced holding of 4th International Conference of Young Buddhists. This week long conference will be held from 27 -31 March 2007 at Lumbini, Kathmandu and Patan.

Theravada Buddhism in Nepal - a brief account

✍ Bhikkhu Sujan

History of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal is very vague. There are some evidences that Buddha visited Nepal during his lifetime, preached to his relatives and friends and ordained some people.

Theravada tradition is believed to be the oldest unbroken tradition. The teaching- the Dhamma was divided into two sects- Sthaviravada and Mahasanghika in the second council held 100 years after the death of Buddha. Sthaviravada later developed as Theravada and Mahasanghika developed as Mahayana, which also includes Vajrayana.

More concrete evidences of existence of Buddhism in Nepal were found from the visit of king Asoka of India and some more from descriptions of Chinese travellers. King Asoka visited Lumbini in Nepal in 250 BC and erected a stone pillar, which is still standing. The inscription in Bramhi script in this pillar reads in English as follows: “King Piyadasi” (another name for king Asoka), beloved of the gods, having anointed 20 years, came here himself and worshipped saying ‘Here Buddha Sakyamuni was born (*Hida Budhe Jāte Sākyamuni*)’.

Chinese travellers Fa Hian (AD 403) and Hiuen Tsang (AD 636) also described the existence of dilapidated stupas, monasteries and palaces. (*Source: Holy places of Buddhism in Nepal & India – Trilok Chandra Majupuria and Indra Majupuria*).

According to historians, Buddhism was a dominant religion until the time of King *Jayasthiti Malla* who ruled Nepal during medieval period (around 1382 C.E.). He imposed caste system in Nepal according to *Manudharmasastra*, a Hindu holy book.¹ Buddhist culture and tradition were banned, the celibate monks were forced to disrobe and forced to marry. Vajrayana or *Newar* Buddhism was developed following the demise of Theravada Buddhism. The situation of Buddhist became worse during the time of Rana government who ruled Nepal from 1846 to the dawn of democracy in 1950. That was the age, when Buddhism was totally forgotten by non-Buddhist of Nepal. It was known and practised by only certain castes- *Vajracharyas* (*Bajracharyas*), *Shakyas*, *Tuladhars* etc. The Rana government banned all Buddhist religious activities. They also banned people converting from Hindu religion to Buddhism but traditional Buddhists were allowed to become Hindus.

Revival of Theravada Buddhism started in the closing years of 19th century. Mr. Jagat Man Vaidya (later known as *Dharmaditya Dharmacariya*) of Patan, Nepal started

publishing Buddhist journals from India where he was studying to promote Buddhism. He also started Buddha Jayanti (Vesak Day) Celebration to commemorate birth, enlightenment and death (parinibbana) of the Buddha. This was first celebrated in modern Nepal in 1926.

According to Lalit Bistara in Newari language, influences of Dharmaditya’s campaign and Tibetan Lamas motivated some Nepalese to take ordination according to Theravada tradition. The first Nepali to take ordination according to this tradition was Venerable Mahapragna, a Hindu Shrestha by birth in 1928 in India under Venerable U. *Chandramani*, a Burmese monk at Kusinagar. Other Nepalese followed his example and took Ordination under the same Burmese monk in India. But when they return to Nepal, they were arrested, imprisoned and then exiled. Towards the later year of Rana regime the attitude of the government towards Theravada Buddhism and Theravada monks and nuns softened and the exiled monks were allowed to return to Nepal to practice the religion according to Theravada tradition. Until that time, only Vajrayana monks (*Bajracharyas*), who are really a householders and Tibetan Lamas were known to Nepalese. After the advent of the democracy in 1950 Theravada tradition thrived and made rapid in road into Nepalese society. Both His Majesty King Tribhuvan, the father of the nation and his son king Mahendra were supportive to Theravada revival movements. Because of the enthusiasm of Theravada monks and nuns, their lay supporters and encouragement from their Majesties Theravada tradition progressed and became a part of Nepalese religious life. Many more Nepalese men and women took ordinations. Theravada monasteries were opened in different parts of the country. At present there are 96 Theravada Viharas in the country, 303 Bhikkhus and Samaneras Sangha members and 135 Anagarikas. Some are resident in Nepal and others are either studying or practising dhamma in other countries of Asia and Europe; and in Australia and United States of America. (*Source: The Ananda Bhoomi; year 33; issues 32 and 33*).

Late Venerable Amritananda Mahasthavir deserves special mention in Theravada revival movement in Nepal. He played a prominent role in promotion of Theravada Buddhism in Nepal. He founded Dharmodaya Sabha, All Nepal Bhikshu Association (Akhil Nepal Bhikshu Sangha), travelled widely promoting dhamma and translated and published many Buddhist texts.

Late Venerable Bhikshu Sudharshan added a different dimension to the movement. He started training centre

with the aim of broadening ordination to other ethnic groups. Until then, Newars – original inhabitants of Kathmandu Valley were the only ones who have taken ordinations in this tradition. Because of his foresight and timely action many people from other ethnic groups have accepted Theravada Buddhism and some has taken ordination. Ven. Nyanapurnika of Viswasanti Vihar who established Novice Training Centre, Ven. Ashowghosa of Sangharama, who trained most of the present leading monks of Nepal and Anagarika Dhammavati of Dharmakirti (Now Bhikkhuni according to Mahayana), who established Nunnery training centre are also well known figures in Theravada in Nepal.

At present all three traditions Newar Buddhism (Vajrayana), Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism have become acceptable Buddhist traditions in Nepal. Theravada Buddhist monks and nuns with their saffron coloured robe, along with Tibetan Lamas and Bajracharyas are familiar features in Nepalese society, especially in Kathmandu valley.

Metta on Ignorance and Habit

-Ratna Bahadur Sakya

When one says, 'I like this, I want this, I don't like this, I do not like that'; this is the creation of confusion. This is the prison one has created. If one cannot see this creation, this process- this is ignorance, not seeing, not being present.

What is created has an inherent ability to dissolve, of its own nature. The nature of origin is its dissolution.

What prevents the 'the nature of origin is dissolution', to be obstructed is the process of continual creation, which one does not see happening. So that is habit. There is no quality of seeing in the habit formation.

One can see how the habit is formed during the process of formation. Once the habit is formed, it is no longer transparent. It is opaque.

Habit is comfortable. That is what pleasure is. Pleasure comes into being with the formation of a habit. So is pain. Pain and pleasure are the creations of habit.

If one can bear, be with the pleasure and pain, the habit begins to unwind itself and begins to dissolve.

Habit, delusion, concept, thought cannot withstand, the heat and light of seeing, being with, metta rigpa – just as darkness cannot exist with light.

Grant yourself a moment of peace,
And you will understand
How foolishly you have scurried about.

Learn to be silent,
And you will notice that
You have talked too much.

Be kind, And you will realize that
Your judgement of others was too severe
- Ancient Chinese Proverb

DANA

✍ Pramila Shakya

Dana means - giving from heart for the sake of other people. One can help others in different ways.

We give *Bhojan dana* (Alms giving) and other necessary things to monks and nuns. We contribute to different charities to help poor people. Teachers give good education to students, doctors treat patients, etc. which benefit both sides.

With the practice of *Dana*, we can learn about compassion. *Dana* helps us to reduce attachment and selfishness. *Dana* helps us to improve the positive state of mind.

Dana has to be given in a wise way. Otherwise it will be harmful for both parties. Therefore it has to be given in the right way, at the right time and at the right place with pure mind.

It makes mind peaceful. With peaceful mind we can live everyday heavenly. As a human being we need *Dana* to help each other. You cannot help yourself without helping others. So give what you can and take what you need etc.

An example from Anthony De Mello's book:-
Once upon a time there was a farmer who lived in a village. He used to grow the best corn in his corn field. Its result was his corn always won the first prize in the state fair.

This farmer always shared his seeds with his neighbours. People used to ask him why he shared his best seeds with others. His reply was "It is really a matter of self interest. The wind picks up the pollen and carries it from field to field. The cross pollination brings improvement to one's own corn."

From this point of view we learned that "All that you give to others you are giving to yourself" - is true.

Vajrayana Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal

✍ David N. Gellner,
University of Oxford

The origins of Vajrayana Buddhism lie in the middle of the first millennium of the common era. Similar currents arose within Hindu traditions at the same period. There are striking parallels between some early Buddhist Tantric scriptures, iconographic forms, and rituals and the Vaishnava traditions known as Pancaratra, and likewise between the later Buddhist Tantras and rituals traditions and many Shaiva and Shakta Tantric rituals and iconography. Furthermore, there are many Siddhas (Tantric saints) who are found in both Buddhist and Shaivite (Hindu) traditions, such as Matsyaripa (otherwise known as Machhendrapada or Matsyendranath).

One sees immediately that the spirit of Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism is very different from the modernizing and rationalist forms of Theravada, which have come to dominate the representation of Buddhism in many quarters.

Vajrayana Buddhism was once very widespread in Asia. It was widely practised in Southeast Asia: the great monument of Borobudur in Java is a testament to all forms of Buddhism, including the Vajrayana, and in the Hindu island of Bali there are still Buddhist priests who practise rituals containing some of the same liturgical Sanskrit uttered by Vajracharya priests in Nepal. Tibetan Buddhism, even the strict, Vinaya-observing Gelukpa school, is thoroughly Vajrayana in its orientation; the other schools are all the more involved in Tantric ritual and a Tantric approach to life. Vajrayana Buddhism also spread to China, though there the notion arose that particular temples and traditions would specialize in specific scriptures, so that Vajrayana Buddhism became a speciality of some schools only. This approach to Buddhism was continued in Japan where Tantric Buddhist rituals are the preserve of Tendai and Shingon schools only. Both these schools give an important place to *goma* (= *homa*) or fire sacrifices and to the utterance and inscription of *mantara* (= *mantra*). Indeed the special holy script used to inscribe the holy syllables on funeral markers and *sutoba* (= *stupa*) bears an uncanny likeness to the Nepalese Ranjana script. Many of the mantras are in fact the same, with slight differences of pronunciation, as mantras used in Nepalese and Tibetan Tantric Buddhism.

As is well known, Buddhism died out in India, the land of its birth, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It was already in decline in many places, and had been overtaken by Islam in Kashmir and elsewhere in the northwest. It depended on monastic foundations, and the great monasteries of north India (which were the origin of the name Bihar) were attacked and destroyed by Muslim

invaders. Those monks who survived fled to Nepal and some continued on to Tibet. This means that the Kathmandu Valley is the last place in the whole of South Asia where Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism is still practised using the original Sanskrit scriptures and liturgies and in its original South Asian cultural context. That is why Sylvain Lévi, the great French Sanskritist and historian, came to Nepal in 1898 and wrote his history of Nepal in three volumes. He wrote that Nepal, by which he meant the Kathmandu Valley, was a laboratory where one could observe Buddhism and Hinduism co-existing as they had throughout the first millennium in India, and thus by studying Nepal one could understand how modern India emerged from that Hindu-Buddhist civilization. Nepal was, in short, “India in the making”.

Vajrayana Buddhism survived among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley because it was embodied in the persons and institutions of Shakyas and Vajracharyas. Vajracharyas are the priests of Newar Buddhism: that is to say, they form a caste, rather like Brahmins within Hinduism, who alone have the right to be domestic priests for Buddhist lay people. At least half of all Newars (and the majority in the cities of Kathmandu and Lalitpur [Patan]) have Vajracharya domestic priests. Shakyas and Vajracharyas intermarry, at least in principle, and therefore together form a single Buddhist sacerdotal caste. Their religious lives are focused on sacred complexes known as *baha* or *bahi* in their mother-tongue (Nepal Bhasha or Newari), and honorifically by the Sanskrit term, *vihara* or monastery. Only Shakya and Vajracharya men may be members of *viharas*, and thus only they may take a turn as the god-guardian (*dyahpala*), which comes round on a regular basis, except in Kwa Baha, Lalitpur, where the membership is so large that members have to do it for one month once in their lifetime. Though membership, in this sense, is restricted to Shakyas and Vajracharyas, anyone may come and worship in these Newar Buddhist monasteries, and many outsiders do indeed come in the early morning to make offerings at the more important shrines.

There are also important religious cults, such as that of Karunamaya-Matsyendranath, Swayambhu, and the ‘living goddess’ Kumari, which are maintained by Vajracharya (and sometimes Shakya) priests. These cults are shared by all Newars and indeed by many other Nepalis as well.

Vajrayana Buddhism as a spiritual practice is built on ritual. It is through ritual, and in particular through personal daily ritual that is conceived of as a kind of meditation, that personal transformation is achieved. Thus all serious Tantric

Buddhists aspire to take Tantric Initiation (*diksa* or *dekha*). Ideally this should be taken with one's wife or husband, but it can be taken alone if circumstances do not permit it being taken as a couple. Tantric Initiation is a long, expensive, and secret series of rites which take at least two weeks to enact. During these rites the guru imparts to the initiands a series of ever more secret mantras, which they have to keep and recite on a daily basis for the rest of their lives. This recitation has to be performed each day without fail, before eating. For this reason it is not often taken when young, except by those planning to devote themselves to the priesthood.

The numbers undertaking Tantric Initiation have dropped drastically as it is considered little compatible with modern life. Before 1951 most of those born into the Vajracharya caste would take Tantric Initiation as a matter of course, whether or not they earned their living as a priest. More than half of all Shakyas likewise were committed to it, as a part of their vocation as a religious caste. Nowadays only a small minority of Vajracharyas and Shakyas choose to take on this onerous path, others preferring alternative ways of expressing their Buddhist identity, whether through the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, Theravada, or Goenka-style vipassana meditation.

Vajrayana Buddhism is undoubtedly in decline in present-day Nepal. Much of the patronage from rich men that would in the past have been used to renovate traditional Newar Buddhist shrines goes instead either into more secular forms of consumption or is offered to Theravada or Tibetan religious practitioners. At the same time, most Vajracharya young men do not wish to take up the priesthood, saying that they receive scant respect for an extremely tough lifestyle: they must fast all day while

performing rituals for others, and at the end they are offered paltry *daksinas* (ritual stipends). (Vajrayana priests cannot specify their fees but must accept whatever their parishioners or patrons offer to them.) Thus many Vajracharyas, even those who are themselves practising priests, encourage their sons to become doctors, engineers, teachers – anything but priests. Some do continue to be priests, but often only those who fail to make their way in any other career, and this of course reduces still further the respect in which the laity hold the priests of Vajrayana Buddhism.

None the less, there are some who are working actively to preserve and revive the tradition. Among these are the Lotus Research Centre (www.lrcnepal.org), Min Bahadur Shakyas and his Himalayan Buddhist Education Centre (www.nagarjunainstitute.com), Badri Guraju and his training centre in Kathmandu, and the new Buddhist Studies programme at Tribhuvan University, run by Naresh Man Bajracharya and others. There are, in addition, many initiatives by young Vajracharyas seeking to maintain the tradition of Tantric rituals, songs, and dances. It is, no doubt, inevitable that the tradition should be simplified to some degree and that there should be a simplification of the amazing profusion of shrines and temples, and the enormous amount of land that was designated as *guthi* (that is land for religious purposes), that was characteristic of the Kathmandu Valley a hundred years ago. Large festivals, such as that of Bungadyo (Karunamaya) will continue, but many minor observances are no longer considered necessary. Large shrines, such as Kwa Baha and Swayambhu, will last forever; many smaller ones have been abandoned. In the same way, some Vajracharyas will maintain the tradition even while most adopt secular careers.

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*Heartfelt Greetings
On the Occasion of
2551st Buddha Jayanti Celebrations*

Watering the seeds of Love

✍ Dharma Shakya, UK

“When my father came to visit us from Paris we were so happy. I was happy. My children were happy. On the night before he was suppose to leave he told us ‘He was going to take early retirement so that he could spent more time with us’. We were so pleased and excited to hear him say that. Unfortunately he never woke up. He died in his sleep. I was devastated. My children were devastated”

This was the story recounted by young American-Vietnamese mother during Dharma discussion on the second day of retreat.

My wife and I joined a week long summer retreat with venerable Thich Nhat Hanh (Thây) – a Vietnamese Zen meditation master in August 2006 at Plum village in France.

On the second day of the retreat there was a Dharma discussion in the afternoon in our group. The discussion started with the sisters leading our group asking us what were our expectation? What brought us to the Plum Village?

There were 16 people in our group from seven countries - Denmark, Sweden, USA, UK, France, Vietnam and Nepal. One lady from Denmark opened the discussion saying that she had stayed in Plum Village about 10 years ago and found very comforting and inspiring. She was very sad about her father’s impending death and had come specifically to learn how to say goodbye compassionately to her dying father, who was in the terminal stage of cancer and she then started to cry.

This set the mood for the whole group. After this an American lady told us that she was having difficulty with her sister. She had very much wanted to see her sister and her nephews. She had tried very hard but so far she had failed in her effort. She did not want to do anything that might be construed as intrusive. Even though she had double breast cancers her sister’s attitude towards her had not changed. She had come to Plum village to get inspiration how she can over come this current impasse with her sister.

Hearing this, the lady who recounted the above incident of her father’s unexpected death told the group that she found listening to one of the Thây’s tape helped her enormously. She came to USA from Vietnam with her younger sister about 15 years ago. She got married and had two children. A few years later she started having problem with her husband. Her younger sister also blamed her for every thing that went wrong with her life. On top of all these she had to look after her mother. Her mother

was dependent on her father. Now that he was dead her mother felt helpless and came from Paris to live with them.

She suggested that listening to this tape might give her inspiration.

It was about a young couple from Paris who was having difficulties in their relationship. She told us she used to listen to this tape going to work, at home and at every opportunity she had again and again. This gave her inspiration and confidence to deal with her problems which at first seemed insurmountable. We all wanted to know the title of this tape. As if to answer our questions Venerable Thây recounted this story next day at upper hamlet.

After this heart rendering stories the reasons given by others for attending seemed trivial. Some said they came to France to see Thây because he was not visiting USA in 2006. Others said they have heard so much about Thây that they wanted to spend time in Plum village, have personal experience and learn from him etc.

The next day we went to Upper Hamlet which was about half hour’s drive from new hamlet to listen to Thây’s talk and to participate in walking meditation. Plum village in France was divided into three hamlets - **upper, lower and new hamlets**. We stayed at new hamlet.

Venerable Thây gave a talk in French which was translated simultaneously into English, Italian, German, Spanish, Vietnamese etc. We stayed with English speaking group.

I. The greatest gift parents could give to their children:

The first session was aimed at children, their families and others and he spoke in simple and practical language about the greatest gift parents could give to their children i.e. ‘Their own Happiness’. “If parents are happy their children will be happy as well. If there is no peace and harmony between the parents there will be nothing parents could offer to their children. They can not give what they do not have”. He emphasised the importance of cultivating four sublime states of mind - the Brahma Vihara (heavenly abode) for our and our children’s happiness i.e. Maitri (Loving Kindness), Karuna (Compassion), Mudita (Joy) and Upekkha (Equanimity/balanced view). Children left the hall after this to play outside.

II. Love needs food – nothing can survive without food:

In the second half of the session he told us a story about a young Vietnamese couple living in Paris to illustrate the

above point.

Buddha said – love needs food, nothing can survive without food.

There was a difficulty between a couple who were living in Paris. They were living in French culture. In the beginning there was a great love. After marriage they were happy for some time but it did not last long. They did not know how the situation came apart. They did not know how to bring back that happiness.

The wife did not find any joy in cooking for her husband, did not find any joy doing house works. She did not find happiness on hearing her husband's footsteps coming home from work. The husband also no longer felt happy when he came home. There was no happiness at all. Without love life became unliveable.

One day the young woman was at home on her own. She did not work because her husband's salary was enough for both. One morning she opened the closet and suddenly saw a beautiful Vietnamese cookie box in which she had saved her love letters, magnificent letters her husband had written before they got married. She smiled. Out of curiosity she opened the box and took out a letter and read it. Some thing happened inside her while reading this letter. She really felt better in her body and mind. The language in the letter was truly the language of love. When she read this letter she watered the seeds of love. She felt refreshed.

Since she felt good she took another letter and read it. After this she took the whole box down, sat in the kitchen table and read one by one all fifty of them, sweet letters full of love. Her husband did not use this type of language any more. Her prince charming who had used this type of language was no longer there. Yet he was there somewhere. She remembered the man she had married.

She also used to write similar letters to her husband. After reading these letters she was revived and had a desire to write a letter and started with 'Darling' using the same language she had used before. Her husband had not read the letter but she already felt better. Before reading these letters it was impossible for her to write this type of letter. The seeds of love were still there. Her prince charming was still there but buried with layers of sufferings. The seeds had not been watered for so long that they had dried up. When she read these letters it was like watering a barren land. The seeds of love had chance to grow.

She put the letter in an envelope and left on the table of her husband's study.

"In Buddhism we speak of consciousness in terms of seeds. We have all sorts of seeds - seeds of happiness, seeds of love, seeds of understanding, seeds of despair, seeds of

hatred etc. The name given to this type of seeds is 'totality of consciousnesses. It is like the earth containing all types of seeds. If they are watered they will have chance to grow'.

Love and happiness in the past did not last because they did not know how to maintain it. They had become dry. When she read those letters she could hear that young man.

She was capable of writing this kind of letter after having read 50 letters. Even if you did not save love letters, it was still there in the depth of your consciousness. You could read them mentally and water them.

"We should not underestimate our capacity to love. It is still there in the depth of our consciousness. It is possible to revive the love that is the teaching of the Buddha. Suffering can be used as a compost to make a beautiful garden. Suffering can be very useful. We can use it to transform our life".

That morning that lady had practised watering positive seeds of love and happiness. "In Buddhism we practice watering the seeds. In Plum village we practice selective watering. We water seeds of love, understanding and compassion. We do not water seeds of hatred and despair. One hour of practice of watering can make a big difference".

That evening her husband came home and told her, "I have to go to New York". He did not notice any changes in her wife. They were used to him travelling from work. It did not matter because she was not happy at home. He was not happy at home. A couple of days later her husband called her from New York and told her, "I have to stay a few more days in New York". She told him in sweet voice full of love "If it is necessary of course you can stay in New York, but please come home as soon as possible". After that they hung up. A few hours later her husband rang back. He has recognised something has changed in her wife's way of speaking. They had not spoken like this for a long time. There was always a kind of bitterness in her voice. Now it was full of love. He arranged to come back home quickly.

When he came home she knew he would go straight to his study. He stayed there in his study for a long time and very quiet. He has found his beloved again. He had rediscovered his sweetheart by reading this one letter.

"Love is an art. It depends on you. It begins with you. Do not wait for other person to change".

Both people were responsible for their situation. "Watering the seeds of love in you can water the seeds of love in other person. Transformation in one person can bring

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The Critical Analysis of Panca Sila

✍ Dr. Dinesh Bajracharya

Buddhism is considered to be a democratic faith as it believes in the principles of equality and reciprocity. The principle of equality holds that all living beings are the same in their basic orientation and outlook. In other words, all living beings want to be happy, to enjoy life, and avoid suffering and death. This is just as true of other living beings as it is of us. Similarly, as we would not like to be abused, robbed, injured, or killed, so all other beings are unwilling to have such things happen to them. Therefore, we must not act toward others in a way we would not want them to act toward us. This is the main foundation of Panca Sila in Buddhism. Panca sila are the way of life based on morality. They shape us to be compassionate, kind, mindful, forgiveness, helpful and so on. Any negative action in the name of equality and reciprocity, however, is against the Panca sila. If one thinks that it is reasonable to act negatively under the principle of equality and reciprocity then we can imagine how the world will be i.e., complete lawlessness, chaos, mess etc. etc.

What is Panca Sila?

Panca sila is five basic precepts of morality in Buddhism. They are: Not to kill; Not to steal; Not to indulge in sexual misconduct; Not to lie; and Not to indulge in intoxication

Panca sila is the first step towards the achievement of enlightenment. By observing panca sila one can live very disciplined and balanced life with peace, through which one can progress to meditation and wisdom. One can't achieve mental power without observing panca-sila. In the same manner panca-sila can be well observed with the help of meditation. It is therefore panca-sila and meditation which can go hand in hand. Meditation without panca sila can be very dangerous because it can lead to mental instability if the meditation is overruled by negativities in the mind. Similarly, mental power generated through meditation without observing panca sila can lead to misuse of the power. Further, panca sila without meditation can be in stake in the time of difficulties. For example, observing panca sila when everything in life is smooth, is easy but when things are difficult or in difficult scenario observing Panca sila will be very tough e.g. when we lost job, or someone dear, or in the situation of lawlessness like in Iraq at present.

Panca Sila and Karma Formation

Karma is action that is intentional, conscious and deliberate which is motivated by volition or will. The action can take place through three doors namely body, speech, and mind. The Panca sila are mainly observed by these three

doors of action. These are the channels through which the mind acts upon the material world, thereby creating karma. Material world include the five physical sense organs and the corresponding material objects of those sense organs: the eyes and visible objects, the ears and audible objects, the nose and olfactory objects, the tongue and objects of taste, and skin and tangible objects. Lay people are very much attached with these sense organs and have mainly difficulties to get control over them. In fact the trouble all over the world or in human life arises because of lack of control over sense organs. Therefore, some religion suggests to suppress these sense of organs i.e. (*panca indriya damana*). To control sense organs does not mean to suppress them rather to use them in disciplined way. In Buddhism Panca sila are the main tools to control over these sense organs to have their use in disciplined way. There is one more sense organ apart from five sense organs that is mind which links with all other sense organs in the Buddhist philosophy. A sense organ has no effect on karma unless and until a sense of mind is associated with it. For example merely eyes contact with visible objects does not form karma e.g. if one sees a beautiful girl and becomes conscious that she is beautiful then it is neutral karma. But if he starts to think (mind sense) about that girl from sexual sense then the mental formation take place and if he molests the girl by speech or body then an action takes place which forms negative karma. In Buddhism karma formation take place from the stage of mental formation after the stage of consciousness about an object, event etc. because mind occurs in a continuous stream that consists of an unbroken succession of separate conscious events called *cittas*. The mental factor of volition (will) in any one of these *cittas* is Karma. Although volition arises and passes away simultaneously with its *citta*, the karmic energy created by it does not dissolve until it has given its effect or in some cases until it becomes defunct.

Refrain from killing

According to the principle of equality and reciprocity we should not kill any living creature as we don't like others to kill us. Now the question here is what if we kill some living creature unknowingly, for instance, if we step on some insect or creature in the dark without any notice. Here, as discussed above, no intention is involved in action. Hence, the action by body of killing without intention doesn't form karma. It has nothing against the panca sila. However, we must try to be vigilant always so that we can make sure that we didn't kill a tiny insect even unintentionally. That is why meditation is important so that mind can be vigilant always i.e. even while walking or stepping.

On the contrary, if we kill living being/creature intentionally that is totally violation of panca sila hence, leads to negative karma. Here the argument is what if we kill some one in the course of self-defence. Here again as per the principle of equality and reciprocity, the action of killing someone without intention and with good intention of defence doesn't lead to negative karma. Here a question may be raised as whether killing unintentionally in self-defence or defence of others leads to positive karma. According to Panca sila, killing is breach of it hence no matter whether it is intentional or non-intentional and in self-defence or in defence of others. Only difference is if it is intentional then it forms negative karma but if it is unintentional the formation of karma is neutral e.g. taking medicine to get well by removing germs.

Again there is an issue about mercy killing which is intentional. Apparently, killing with intention for the benefit of one who is being killed with or without the consent of him or her to ease from suffering seems positive karma. But, it is also against the principle of panca sila. Hence, it forms negative karma. If we consider it as positive karma then there will be blood shed in this world as suffering in one way or other is everywhere with everyone except those who are arhants.

Next issue is intentional killing for trade and business. Butchers kill animals and birds intentionally to sell the meat with a motive of profit. Here again the killing is intended for the sake of benefit of mass people hence, a question may be raised whether it forms negative karma or positive karma. According to the principle of equality and reciprocity it is absolutely against Panca sila. If a butcher thinks that killing an animal is good for the sake of benefit of mass then does that butcher be ready to be killed for the sake of benefit of mass animals. The answer will be no.

Refrain from stealing

We all want safety of our property, not being robbed or cheated, and so on. Similarly, we don't want anybody to take anything which is not been given. Likewise, we don't want others to get undue benefit particularly by business people e.g. black marketing, adulteration, unfair trade practices, smuggling etc. Many people feel that cheating to government or business houses are justifiable as they take benefits from people by charging undue profits. This concept is negative in the sense of equality and reciprocity as discussed above. Any negative action in the name of equality and reciprocity form negative karma as it is linked with intention of the doer. Similarly, the employer who does not pay his employee an honest wage, commensurate with the work performed, is guilty of taking what is not given. Further, when we find something unattended or unclaimed on the road or in the public places then we

think that it's reasonable to keep that thing as its not cheating or robbing or stealing from anybody. Apparently it looks justifiable however, it is also other form of stealing as it is taking something which is not given. Usually people keep things found unattended because of greed which is outcome of negativity of mind.

Refrain from sexual misconduct

The next precept of Panca sila is not to indulge in sexual misconduct, that is, to respect personal relationships. Everybody who follows the panca sila must avoid sexual liaisons with people who are liable to be harmed by such relations. This precept is mostly applicable to married people as extra marital affair may not only destroy the family life but also cause more physical, mental and social harm as it causes dangerous diseases, family break down making children deprived of family love, loses respect in the society and ultimately causes mental distress. In the modern day world, one of the main reasons of trouble in communities and societies, particularly in developed countries, is due to extra marital sexual relations resulting to divorce or separation. The ultimate victims of this malicious act are the children who mostly suffer mentally due to pain of quarrel, separation or divorce between parents. As a result, these children are more vulnerable to have anti-social behaviour coupled with crime and drug addiction. However, sexual relation before marriage or before settlement with a partner is not violation of panca sila as long as it doesn't harm any one physically, mentally and socially.

Refrain from lying

Probably the most difficult precept of Panca sila is to refrain from lying as it is based on the speech. So, within panca sila to observe speaking truth is the first step to climb the other precepts as speaking is most common and frequent in our everyday life. In other words, to observe panca sila we must start from speaking the truth. It is believed that a person who speaks lie is not trustworthy. To put in other way, a person who breaks the precept of refraining from lying can't be trusted for observing other precepts. However, it doesn't mean that the person who breaks any precept other than refraining from lying is trustworthy.

Speaking truth is most important to progress in other precepts as well as for mental development. Most of the time we speak the truth as long as the situation is favourable to us. But the moment we land up in difficult situation we tend to distort our speaking so as to be in comfortable situation. So we mostly think about the short-term benefits in our life and ignore its consequences in long-term.

Refrain form half truth and Exaggeration

Speaking half truth and exaggeration has become very

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All Rivers meet in the Ocean: The Story of Buddhists world over

[Unity within the Diversity in Buddhism]

✍ Bhikkhu Sumana

Introduction

Buddhism is one of the oldest of the great world religions. It has become a world religion in the sense that it has been able to adapt itself to a variety of social systems. It manages to survive and tolerate any local culture it enters. Buddhism also manages to co-exist with other religions because the main concern in Buddhism is happiness. The Buddha achieved Enlightenment and taught the way to salvation he had discovered. Therefore the Buddha's teaching for all mankind was liberation, release from the world of *dukkha* - suffering, unhappiness. When theists believe that the creation of the world, our happiness and our salvation is in the hands and the will of the Creator God, Buddhism denies such attribution. Both the statuses of heaven and hell are impermanent in Buddhist belief. The existence of unhappiness is survived by *samsara* - endless rebirth cycle. Liberation for Buddhists means the termination of this cycle, the destruction of the cause of it. What is it that binds us to this *samsara*? It is not the soul like in many religions, but our own attachment. Personalisation of all external factors to oneself or one's ego creates all unhappiness and conflicts. Therefore the release of, letting go of all things is liberation. The simple path to this is morality, meditation and wisdom/gnosis, and has to be done by oneself. No external entity, God, can liberate you. Therefore, Buddhism is DIY, and salvation comes through one and one's efforts alone.

TRIPLE GEM / THREE JEWELS

The Buddha

Buddhists worldwide take refuge in the Triple Gem / Three Jewels in order to find deliverance. The term Buddhism roots in the word Buddha itself which means the Enlightened One who has discovered the Four Noble Truths. The Buddha is one who sees the truth and expounds a doctrine. Hence Buddha is a title, not a name. The historical Buddha who we refer today was known as Siddhattha Gotama. However as Buddha does not refer to an individual, Buddhism is less focused on the person or its founder. The emphasis is on the teachings of the Buddha(s). Nevertheless, Buddhists show great reverence to the Buddha for the great guidance as a supreme teacher.

The Dhamma

In the first sermon '*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*' (the Discourse of putting the Wheel into motion), the Buddha referred to these two extremes: the annihilation and eternalism. After a good pragmatic research, Ascetic Gotama, avoiding these both extremes – luxurious princely life and rigorous ascetic practices, inculcated a balanced

way of life, the Middle Way, getting rid ignoble thoughts and all self-considerations, and, attaining the state of balance and awareness. This he presented as the Four Noble Truths. They are:

- 1) The Truth of Suffering
- 2) The Truth of the Cause of the Suffering
- 3) The Truth of the End of Suffering
- 4) The Truth of the Path leading to the End of Suffering

In other words:

- 1) The fact that unhappiness exists (*dukkha*)
- 2) The cause of that unhappiness (*samudaya*)
- 3) The fact that unhappiness may cease (*nirodha*)
- 4) The Way leading to the cessation of unhappiness (*maggā*).

If we interpret this in a medical model:

- 1) Diagnosis of the illness
- 2) Its etiology (study of the cause of the disease) or origin
- 3) The prognosis for a cure
- 4) The medicine prescribed.

These Four Noble Truths are the foundation of all the teachings of the Buddha. The Way to end suffering is following the Middle Way. In his second sermon, the Buddha taught something unique: that **Impermanance** is a fact; that the experience of **suffering** is our reaction; suffering which we can reduce only if we develop **selflessness** / **ego-lessness**(non-soul identity) which the Buddha termed *anatta*.

The Sangha

The followers have been responsible for the preservation of the Dhamma. The Buddha did not wish to form an Order as the existing ones [I. B. Horner] who were a monastic organisation having an elaborate set of guiding rules for clergy and laity of both sex. He frequently asked the followers to regard his teachings only as a **raft to cross the oceans of suffering**, and not a livelihood. This newly founded institution was known as *Sangha* or community of monks. Conventional *Sangha* includes monk, nuns, lay men and lay women. However, the *Sangha* gradually increased in number.

THE RIVERS FLOW ON AND ON

The Early Schools

During, the first several centuries of Buddhist history a number of different schools took form and developed particular traditions regarding the Buddha's teaching and its proper interpretation. Paul Williams categorizes the early divisions into four groups. (i) Some schools drifted away,

dividing themselves from 'the *Sangha*'. (ii) Others grouped themselves around noted teachers. (iii) Flexibility in the rules of discipline caused some schools to arise. (iv) The Buddha's preference for preserving and teaching the Dharma in local languages rather than the pan-Indian Sanskrit which may have led to misunderstanding and differences between traditions. By the 3rd century BCE, the division in the Buddhist community were eighteen: the Sthaviravadins split up into eleven sects and the Mahasanghikas divided into seven sub-sects (N. Dutt).

Although these monastic fraternities started to be known for their specific doctrinal interpretations; no one but monks themselves distinguished each other as different schools. Some differences were reasonable, for, some scholars find the phenomena presented by them helpful to interpret Buddhism. But in some, connections between each other can be traced. However, they play a significant role, by laying foundations for the later phases of Buddhism, such as Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions. Most scholars agree, how the Sthaviravada (Theravada) tradition has come to their present existence with its full value and strength.

Theravada and Rise of Mahayana

Scholars accept that the rise of Mahayana dates some time between 150 BCE and 100 CE and the culmination of the 18 schools. According to Harvey, there are three main factors for the rise of Mahayana:

- 1) A wholehearted adoption of the Bodhisattva-path, which various early schools have outlined
- 2) A new cosmology arising from visualization practices devoutly directed at the Buddha as a glorified, transcendent being
- 3) A new perspective on Abhidharma, which derived from meditative insight into the deep 'emptiness' of phenomena and led to a new philosophical outlook.

Mahayanists modified Buddhism in two important ways: the attainment of *nirvana* by the individual and one who enters enlightenment is expected to work for the good of his fellowmen. Such people are known as *bodhisattva*, 'Wisdom Being'. The Buddha was a *bodhisattva* in his previous lives. The ideal for these practices are love and compassion. **Theravada Buddhists** see Buddha as a human being whereas the **Mahayana Buddhists** deify him and some Schools adopted worship him as a way to salvation (Pure Land).

The early Mahayana ideas on the nature of the Buddhas were systematised by the Yogacarins into what is known as the Trikaya or Three-body doctrine. This central framework of Mahayana belief sees Buddhahood as having three aspects, namely: (i) the nirmana-kaya or

Transformation-body (earthly Buddhas), (ii) the Sambhoga-kaya or Enjoyment-body (subtle body of limitless form, heavenly), and (iii), the dharma-kaya or Dharma-body (knowledge, the inner nature shared by all Buddhas). It is also the self-existing body, the ultimate nature of reality, emptiness, the Tathagata-garbha or the Bodhi-citta.

Among the Mahayanist schools, the most influential schools are Madhyamika and Yogacara. The profoundest teaching of the Prajnaparamita scriptures is the teaching of emptiness (*sunyata*). The Mahayanists have added to the three characteristics of existence: *anitya*, *dukkha* and *anatman* making the fourth, a kind of extension to the last to include the 'egolessness of things'. Conze points out that it would be a mistake to regard it as a purely intellectual concept, or to make it into a thing (emptiness of emptiness = emptiness itself is 'empty').

So far, we have discussed the origin of Buddhism and its fundamental teachings which are common to all schools of Buddhism. Today, there are two major schools of Buddhism: Theravada (Southern) and Mahayana (Northern). Some claim Vajrayana (mixture of Tantric form) as the third.

Spread of Buddhism

The teachings of the Buddha seem to have been mainly spread in the **Indo-Gangetic** valley during his lifetime. The landmark in the history of the spread of Buddhism lies on the conversion of Emperor Asoka after the battle of Kalinga in the early 3rd century BCE. Under the auspices of Asoka, the third Buddhist Council was held. This council of Theravadins ended with Asoka sending missionaries in different directions as far as **Macedonia**, **Sriya** and **Egypt** in the West, and **Sri Lanka** in the South to propagate the Theravada doctrines.

The spread of Buddhism during the 1st century CE was the support extended by foreign rulers such as the Indo-Greek king Menander with a vast dominion and King Kaniska who flourished in the 2nd century CE. His contribution in the lands of his conquest included today's **Afghanistan** where the massive Bamiyan Buddhas had existed for two millennia.

After the introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, in 3rd century BCE, it has played an important role in the history of Buddhism. The Tripitaka which was preserved so long in memory or oral tradition was committed to writing by the monks. According to the history of Sri Lanka, two monks were sent to **Burma** by Emperor Asoka to propagate Buddhism there. Buddhism seems to have been introduced to **Thailand** during the 1st or 2nd century CE. Although some argue that it was introduced by one of the

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Mahaprajna - the Buddhist Yogi (1901-1978)

The late Bhikkhu Mahaprajna was the first Theravada Buddhist monk in the 20th century Nepal. He became a Mahayana monk and then re-ordained as a Theravada samanera in Kushinagar in 1928. He received full ordination in Myanmar in 1931. Born Prem Bahadur Shrestha, a Hindu from Kathmandu, he became a follower of the famous Kyantse Lama in 1924 at the age of 23. He followed him back to Tibet and became a Tibetan Buddhist monk in Kyirong. Returning to Kathmandu, he was again ordained with four others by Tsering Norbu; they were all expelled from Nepal by the Rana regime, principally because Mahaprajna had converted from Hinduism to Buddhism. After going to Calcutta and meeting the members of the Maha Bodhi Society he proceeded to Tibet. He acquired both teachings and followers in Lhasa and Shigatse, but he returned to India after about a year, where he was reordained as Theravadin monk. He spent 5-6 years in Burma, returning once to east Nepal only to be expelled once more in 1936. When the Theravada movement was permitted to return to Nepal in 1942 he should have joined it as the oldest monk, and the guru of many who were destined to become its leader. But in the meantime he had 'fallen' and acquired a wife while living in Kalimpong. He fathered two children, earned his living as a photographer, and continued to



publish in Buddhist journals as 'M.P. Pradhan'. Eventually he renounced again, returning to Kathmandu as a 'Buddhist Yogi' (Bauddha Rishi) with long hair, a beard, and orange robes. He was much respected and in demand as a speaker. He was invited along with monks on many occasions, though he had to be seated slightly apart from them. Many people had and still were attracted to Theravada Buddhism by his writings, by the experience of singing the Buddhist hymns he composed (for one of his most famous, see below), or by his moving sermons. But he could never return to the Buddhist Sangha having once committed the *parajika* of openly cohabiting with a woman. In his combination of Mahayana and Theravada experiences, as one of the famous five who were expelled by the Ranas in 1926, as the teacher of many of the Theravada monks who were expelled from Kathmandu in 1940, and with his experience of renunciation, lay life, and re-renunciation, Mahaprajna sums up the experience and contradictions of the whole early period of the Theravada Buddhist revival in Nepal.

(Information derived from 'Rebuilding Buddhism: The Theravada Movement in Twentieth-Century Nepal, Harvard University Press, 2005, by Sarah LeVine & David N. Gellner; Mahaprajna's hymn from 'Three Buddhist Hymns from Nepal' Guthi Nepal Sambat 1125: 12-13)

ज्ञान मत सित

(भिक्षु महाप्रज्ञा)

भ्यालनं फय् वया, मत जक सित,
यो माँ भ्याः तीगु गय् ? ॥१॥
भ्रींच्याता लक्षणगु, नर-गुण तनाचन ।
थ्व गुण मालेध्यां, मत जक सित ॥१॥
अतिकन बाँनलागु ? ज्ञान रत्न तना चन ।
माला मालाँ ल्वीके मफु, मत जक सित ॥२॥
पञ्च तत्व यागु गृह, अतिकनं बानलागु ।
बाँलासां हिमिमदु, मत जक सित ॥३॥
भ्यालेतेगु चुकू दुसा भ्याःतिना केने फैगु ।
ज्ञान रुपी चुकू मदु, मत जक सित ॥४॥
बुद्धया दासनं, धाल न्यव साधुपिं ।
इन्द्रिया न्यापाः भ्यालं मन स्यंका बिल ॥५॥

The Light of Wisdom has Died (*Gyân Mata Sita*)

by Bhikshu Mahaprajna

chorus:

Wind came through the window, the light just went out.
Oh mother! How shall I close this window?

The eighteen good human qualities are missing,
While trying to find them, the light just went out. (1)

Exceedingly beautiful, the jewel of understanding is lost;
Searching searching, you cannot find it; the light just went out. (2)

The house of the five elements [i.e. the human body], it is so beautiful,
It may be beautiful, but it has no grace; the light just went out. (3)

A window may have a bolt, and you can make a window seem closed,
But there is no bolt of understanding; the light just went out. (4)

Oh devotees, listen to what the followers of the Buddha have said:
[Peering out] through the window, the five senses have spoilt the mind. (5)

Peace is the key to prosperity

Min Bhatta

Peace creates harmony at work. When we work either in a team or at home with family we should appreciate good deeds and discourage bad deeds. This kind of reconciliation brings harmony at work and perfect harmony gives birth to good deeds. No work can be done perfectly alone but can be achieved by mutual efforts. Everyone needs help from others to live in any society. Society is a body of harmony where people from different parts of the globe live together with their own unique attitudes.

Peace and harmony go together. There should be harmony between employer and employee to have smooth run of any organization. There should be peace and harmony between teachers and students to come up with new results. Similarly, there should be perfect harmony in nature to sprout seeds and for its growth; among lyrics, music, and vocal to create a beautiful song; in family to have its smooth run. This kind of harmonious environment gives outlet to various kinds of virtues; among them satisfaction, happiness, peace and prosperity can be taken for example.

According to Buddha's teachings there are six noble ideas that will help to lead a harmonious life. They are: sincerity of speech; sincerity and kindness of action; sincerity and sympathy of spirit; equal sharing of common property; following the same pure precepts; and all having right views. These teachings are purely practical and attainable if we think and apply them seriously in our lives.

We must respect the nature because nature is the king and gives us life. We should respect the sun which gives us warmth; respect the trees; water and soil that bring perfect harmony in nature to live in. We should respect seniors; care juniors and be trustworthy with colleagues that will bring peace and harmony in our daily lives and develop harmony of minds. Harmony of minds and harmony in nature can bring peace in any society. Peaceful society is always ahead in progress and in humanity. Peace is the key to prosperity.

Compassion (*Karuna*):

A lay person's account

Padma Tara Sakya

Compassion is a sympathetic feeling towards other beings. It is a feeling of responsibility and concern towards other beings, especially those in difficulties of some sort.

It arises when one realises that after all we are all human beings. Any misfortunes can hit anybody at anytime. Nobody is immune to any kind of suffering in this world. It makes us think what is there to be proud of? After all we belong to the same human community. Hence we need each other's help and co-operation.

As Dalai Lama put it in the book "*Healing emotions*" edited by Daniel Goleman "Compassion is a natural state of human life and it is intrinsic to human nature evident in the caring attentiveness between parents and children and general caring attitude towards other beings. Still it needs to be cultivated."

A devoted mother is the perfect example of compassion. She devotes her life looking after her offspring and continues to care for them as much as possible.

We all thrive in compassionate environment. We all feel confident and happy and not be afraid of expressing our thoughts in such surrounding.

Compassion brings a peaceful atmosphere and promotes understanding and unity amongst people where as a hostile environment, negative thoughts and negative actions create an unpleasant atmosphere, and division and bad feelings amongst people.

As Gandhi says "An eye for an eye makes the whole world go blind."

Children should be taught earlier on in their life to be compassionate and kind towards fellow beings so that they would grow up to be compassionate and kind adults.

BUDDHA VIHARA FUND APPEAL

With aim of having our own Vihara for the benefits of all we have established a Vihara Fund.

Vihara in Pali, the language used by the Buddha himself, means a dwelling place where Buddhist monks and nuns dwell. In the Buddhist text it is written that to build or participate in any form in building a Vihara is considered highly meritorious act. This is the spiritual place where the nobleness is practised by many for the harmonious life and salvation of all

We would like to appeal to all our well-wishers to help the society to fulfil its aim by donating whatever you can. Please forward your donations to LNBDS (UK), 11 Mulberry Drive, Slough, Berkshire SL3 7JU. Cheque should be made payable to **Lumbini Buddha Vihara Fund**.

To mark the 10th anniversary of the Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK), the Society in collaboration with Buddhist Youth Group, Kathmandu, organised an essay competition in Nepali was held in Nepal on February 2007. It was conducted on Senior and Junior levels. Topics were 'Dainik jeevan ma Dana, Sila ra Bhavana ko Mahatwo' (Significance of generosity, morality and Meditation in daily life) for Juniors and 'Buddha Dharma ra Manav Adhikar' (Buddha Dharma and Human rights) for Seniors. We have published following two articles which came first.

बुद्ध धर्म र मानव अधिकार

डा. कवीन्द्र बज्राचार्य

जगतपाल महाविहार, कीर्तिपुर

बुद्ध धर्म अहिंसा, मानवता र समानताको धर्म हो। जन्मले कोही ब्राम्हण र शुद्र नभई कर्मले हुन्छ भनी जातिय प्रथाको विरोध गर्ने धर्म हो। महिला र पुरुष दुवैलाई प्रवर्जित गरी समान अधिकार र फल प्राप्त गर्ने अवसर प्रदान गरिएको धर्म हो। शिक्षाको राम्रो प्रचारप्रसारका लागि बुद्धिने भाषाको प्रयोग हुनुपर्छ भनी तत्कालिन मगधी भाषा (पाली) को प्रयोग धर्मदेशनामा प्रयोग गरी भाषिक अधिकारको प्रमाणित आधार देखाइएको धर्म हो। धर्म, ज्ञान र शिक्षाबाट धेरैलाई लाभ होस भनी कुनै दुई भिक्षुलाई एकै ठाँउमा नजान र बहुजन हित, बहुजन सुखको कामना गर्ने धर्म हो। कुनै एक प्रान्त वा देशमा मात्र सिमित नरही विश्वका जोसुकै मानिसले ग्रहण गरे पनि सजिलै फल प्राप्त गर्न सक्ने धर्म हो। धर्म, दर्शन र जीउने मार्ग कोही गुरुले भन्दैमा मात्रै, शास्त्रमा लेखिएको मात्रै, धेरै जनाले भनेर मात्रै र सुन्दै आएको भन्दैमा मात्रै विश्वास नगर्न, बरु आफ्नै ज्ञानमा तौलेर, कारणको ख्याल गरेर र धेरैलाई भलो हुने भएका मात्रै स्वीकारन अनुरोध गरिएको कारणवादयुक्त वैज्ञानिक धर्म हो। दुःख, सुख, भय, रोग, आनन्द र निर्वाण समेत अरुको कारणले नभई आफ्नै कर्मका कारणले हुन्छ र कुशल कर्म गरेर नै सबै दुःख निरोध गर्न सकिन्छ भनी सुमार्गतिर अग्रसार गराउने धर्म हो। लाग्छ मानव अधिकारको पक्षमा विश्वमा अन्य कुनै पनि धर्म बुद्ध धर्म अधि हुन सक्दैन। मानव अधिकार र बुद्ध धर्म समानुपातिक ढङ्गले अधि बढेको प्रतीत हुन्छ। यस्तो मानवीय धर्मको सुत्रपात गर्ने विश्वका अद्वितीय मानवको संक्षिप्त जीवनलाई यहाँ प्रस्तुत गरिन्छ।

आजभन्दा २६३० वर्ष अघि ई.पु. ५६३ मा कपिलवस्तुका राजा शुद्धोदन र रानी मायादेवीको सुपुत्रको रूपमा, वैशाख पुर्णिमाका दिन नेपालको लुम्बिनी वनमा बोधिसत्व सिद्धार्थ गौतमको जन्म भएको थियो। सिद्धार्थ जन्मेको थाहा पाई नामक ऋषि उनको दर्शनार्थ आएको थिए। बालकलाई देखि एक पटक खुशी भई फेरि आँखाबाट आँसु पनि झारेका थिए। कारण बुभुद्धा बालक भविष्यमा बुद्ध हुने तर त्यस बेलासम्ममा आफु जीवित नरहने बताएका थिए। जन्मेको ७ दिनमै आमा मायादेवीको मृत्यु भएकोले सानीआमा प्रजापति गौतमीले उनको पालन पोषण गरेका थिए। सिद्धार्थको बारेमा जान्न शुद्धोदनले १०८ ब्राम्हणहरूलाई भोजनमा निम्त्याएका थिए। तिनीहरू मध्ये ७ जनाले सिद्धार्थ राजकाजमा रहे चक्रवर्ती राजा हुने र गृहत्याग गरे वृद्ध हुने घोषणा गरेका थिए। कौण्डिन्य नामक ब्राम्हणले भने उनी बुद्ध नै हुन्छ भनी ठोकुवा गरेका थिए।

एकरो छोरा राजकाज त्यागेर जाला भन्ने डरले रम्य, सुरम्य र शुभ नामक तीन महलहरू बनाएर सुख र यसमा भुलाई राखेका थिए। उनको १६ वर्षको उमेरमा यशोधरासँग विवाह भयो। एकदिन सारथी छन्दकसँग वगैँचा घुम्न जाँदा वृद्धलाई देखे। फेरि एकदिन रोगीलाई र एकदिन मरेको लाशसहित मलामिलाई देखे। सारथीले वृद्ध, रोग र मृत्यु सबैको हुने बताएपछि जीवनको दुःखको बारेमा उनलाई अन्तर्बोध भएको थियो।

फेरि एकदिन प्रवर्जित भएको व्यक्ति देखेपछि आफू पनि जीवन छुट्टै दुःखबाट मुक्त हुने उपाय खोजी गर्न गृहत्याग गर्ने विचार गरेका थिए।

सिद्धार्थ २९ वर्षको हुँदा छोरा राहुलको जन्म भयो। राहुल ७ दिनको हुँदा उनको महाअभिनष्कमण गरे। अनोमा नदीको किनारमा पुगेर सबै गर गहना त्याग्नु भयो, आफ्नो केश आफैँ काटी प्रवर्जित हुनुभयो। छोटो अवधिमै उनीहरूमा भएको ज्ञान लिई, आफुले खोजेको ज्ञान अबै प्राप्त नभइसकेकोले आफैँ पत्ता लगाउन बुद्धगयाको बोधिवृक्ष मुनि ६ वर्ष सम्म दुस्करचर्या गर्नुभयो। जब उनी ३५ वर्षका भए, वैशाख पुर्णिमाका दिन सुजाता नामक उपासिकाको खीर भोजन गरी ज्ञान प्राप्त नभए सम्म नउठ्ने अधिष्ठान गर्नुभयो। उनले वैशाख पुर्णिमाको रात प्रथम याममा पुर्वानुस्मृति ज्ञान प्राप्त गर्नुभयो। द्वितीय याममा च्युतोत्पत्ति ज्ञान र तृतीय याममा आश्रवक्षयज्ञान प्रतीत्यसमुत्पाद अवबोध गर्नु भई सम्यक्सम्बुद्ध हुनु भयो। त्यसपछि उनको मुखबाट उद्गार प्रकट भयो।

“अनेक पटक जन्म लिएँ दौडिदै एकपछि अर्को गृहकारकलाई खोज्दै दुःख जन्म भए बारबार हे गृहकारक तिमिले फेरि घर बनाउन सक्दैनौं तिम्रा सारा सामाग्री भाँचिदिए, धुरी चुर्ण गरिसके संस्काररहित चित्त भयो तृष्णा विनाश भइसक्यो।”

बोधिज्ञान लाभ पश्चात सात हप्तासम्म आफुले प्राप्त गरेको ज्ञानको प्रतिसुखमै विताउनु भयो।

आफुले प्राप्त गरेको ज्ञानलाई सर्वप्रथम सारनाथमा पञ्चभद्रवर्गीय भिक्षुहरूलाई चतुरार्य सत्य विषयमा प्रथम धर्मचक्रप्रवर्तन गर्नुभयो। दुःख छ, दुःखको कारण छ, दुःख निरोध गर्न सकिन्छ र दुःख निरोध गर्ने उपाय छ भन्ने धर्मदेशनासँगै मानिसले शरीरलाई अति कष्ट दिने र अति सुखविलासी जिउने नभई मध्यम प्रतिपदा, शील, समाधि र प्रज्ञायुक्त आर्य अष्टांगिक मार्गमा जीउनुपर्छ भन्ने शिक्षाको उद्घोष गर्नुभयो। उनको धर्मदेशना ४५ वर्षसम्म अबिरल रूपमा चलिरह्यो र ८० वर्षको उमेरमा अनित्य देहलाई कुशिनगरमा बिसाउनु भई महापरिनिर्वाण हुनुभयो। उनको अन्तिम उपदेश थियो “भिक्षुहरू सबै संस्कार धर्महरू अनित्य हुन्, अप्रमाद भई कुशल सँग सम्पादन गर्नु”। आफ्नो निर्वाण पश्चात भिक्षुसंघको गुरु उनीद्वारा निर्देशित धर्म र विनय नै हुने पनि आज्ञा गर्नु भयो। यसरी विश्वका महामानव, सम्यकदृष्टा, जीवन र मुक्ति पथप्रदर्शक आजभन्दा २५५० वर्ष अगाडि संसारमा बुद्ध धर्मको वीजारोपण गरी मानवताको इतिहासमा जीवन्त रहनुभयो। अब उनको धर्म, उपदेश र मानव अधिकार विषयमा चर्चा गरिने छ।

मानिस चेतनशील प्राणी हो। जो कोहीलाई पनि स्वतन्त्र भएर बाच्ने अधिकार हुन्छ। एक मानिसले अर्को मानिसलाई उसको विचार, जीउने तरिका, बाँच्ने अधिकार आदिको हनन् गर्न हुँदैन वास्तवमा यही मानव अधिकार हो। आजभोलि मानव अधिकारसँग सम्बन्धित प्रमुख कुराहरू हुन्

उचनिच जातको भेदभाव, महिला पुरुषको भेदभाव, हिंसा, चेलीवेटी, बालबालिका बेचबिखन, भाषिक असमानता, रुढिवाद आदि । प्रमुख रूपमा मानव अधिकारसँग सम्बन्धित र बुद्ध धर्ममा रहेका देखिएका विषयहरूलाई प्रस्तुत गर्ने प्रयास गरिन्छ ।

१. जातिवाद

“यस्स कायेन वाचाय, मनसा नत्थि दुक्कतं
संवुतं तीहि ठानेहि, तमहं ब्रूमि ब्राह्मणो ॥”

धम्मपद, ब्राह्मण वर्ग ३९१

अर्थात्, जस्को कार्यले बचनले, मनले छैन दुस्कृत
संयुक्त तीनै स्थानहरूमा, उसैलाई भन्दछु ब्राह्मण ।

वैदिक कालमा जन्मको आधारमा ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रि, वैश्य र शुद्र भनी चार जात (वर्ग) छुट्याइन्थ्यो । भगवान् बुद्धले मानिस जन्मले नभई कर्मले ब्राह्मण हुने कुरा अधि सार्नुभयो । अस्सलयत सुत्त (मज्झिम निकाय) मा पनि ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रि, वैश्य र शुद्र यदि नुहाएको खण्डमा के ब्राह्मणको मात्र मैलो पखालिन्छ ? त्यस्तै एउटै ब्राह्मणका दुई छोराहरूमा यदि एकजना शिलवान् र अर्को दुबुद्धि भएको मुख भए कसको स्वागत गरिन्छ? भनी जन्मले ब्राह्मण नै भएपनि कर्म, आचरणको आधारमै ब्राह्मण हुने कुरा बताएका छन् ।

भिक्षुसंघमा प्रवेश गरेपछि पहिलेको जातयुक्त नाम हटाएर नयाँ नाम दिने गरिन्छ, साथै जातलाई राखिदैन । यसबाट पनि बुद्ध धर्ममा जातिय भेद नभएको पुष्टि हुन्छ ।

उपालि भिक्षु सहित अनिरुद्ध आदि शाक्यहरू प्रव्रजित हुन आउँदा, हजाम उपालिलाई पहिले प्रव्रजित गरेबाट बुद्धले जातभातको कुरामा भेद नगरेको देखिन्छ ।

आजको एक्काइसौं शताब्दीमा पमि कैयन् मानिसहरू “फलाना जातको मान्छे मन्दिर प्रवेश गर्नु हुन्न भनी भन्दछन् ।” फलस्वरूप मानव अधिकार वादीद्वारा कानुन लगाउनु परेको हालसालैका घटना हुन् । जातको आधार मा पानी नचल्ने, विवाह नहुने आदि जस्ता रुढिवादी चलन अबैदिक देखिन्छ । तर यस्ता दोषरहित, सबै जातलाई समान दृष्टिले हेर्ने बुद्धले २६०० वर्ष अगाडि नै जातिय समानताको नारा चलाएको देखिन्छ । उनी लोकविदुलाई सबै जातका मानिसहरूको सदा नमस्कार रहिरहने छ ।

२. लैङ्गिक अधिकार

बुद्धको पालन पोषण गर्ने प्रजापति गौतमीले आफुलाई पनि प्रव्रजित गर्न अनुरोध गर्दा पहिले मान्नुभएको थिएन । तर भिक्षु आनन्दको अनुरोधमा महिलाहरूलाई प्रव्रजित गरेर भिक्षुणी परम्परा पनि चलाउनु भयो । महिलाहरू पनि श्रोतापन्न, सकृदागामी, अनागामी र अर्हत भएको उनकै जीवनकालमा देखिन्छ । भिक्षुणी खेमा, पटाचारा, धम्मदीना आदि यसका उदाहरण हुन् । भिक्षुहरूलाई जस्तै भिक्षुणी विनय पनि प्रदान गर्नुभएको थियो । भिक्षु र भिक्षुणीको प्रव्रज्या परम्परा आफैबाट हुनुपर्ने नियम दिनुभएको थियो । यसबाट नराम्रो सम्बन्धको दोष नलान्ने र बुद्ध धर्म धेरै लामो समयसम्म टिक्ने बताउनु भएको थियो । पुरुषले महिला र महिलाले पुरुषमा गर्नु पर्ने भावना, व्यवहार, सम्मान आदिको बारेमा पनि बुद्धले ठाउँ ठाउँमा देशना गर्नु भएको थियो ।

विश्वमा पुरुष प्रधान राष्ट्रहरू बढी देखिएतापनि एक रथका दुई पांग्रा सरी पुरुष र महिलाको संसारमा समान भुमिका रहने कुरा नकार्न सकिदैन । तसर्थ स्त्री र पुरुषको समान अधिकार रूपी मानव अधिकारलाई

सुगतद्वारा चरितार्थ गरेकै देखिन्छ ।

३. बाँच्न पाउने अधिकार

सबैलाई बाँच्न मन लाग्छ । सबैलाई चोटपटक लाग्दा दुख्छ । यो कुरा बुझी आफु जस्तै सम्झी अरुलाई चोटपटक नगर्नु, हिंसा नगर्नु भन्ने उपदेश भगवान बुद्धद्वारा देशित छ । भिक्षु विनयमा प्रातिमोक्ष अन्तर्गत होस वा ग्रहस्थहरूका लागि दिइएको पंचशीलमा कुनै तरिकाबाट पनि हिंसा नगर्ने नियम राखिएबाट उनको अहिंसावादी पुष्टि हुन्छ । मानवहिंसको त कुरै छोडौं पशुपक्षीको समेत अहिंसाका प्रवर्तक बुद्धले वेद कालिन पशुवली, नरवलीको घोर विरोध गरेका थिए । बलि दिएका प्राणीलाई स्वर्ग प्राप्त हुने भए किन आफ्नै आमा बाबुलाई वा आफै बलिमा नहोमिने त ! भन्ने बुद्धको तर्क थियो ।

बाँच्न पाउने मानवको मात्र नभई प्राणीको अधिकार हो भन्ने शिक्षा तथागतले प्रदान गर्नुभएकोले उनको स्मरण इतिहासमा अग्रस्थामा रहेको छ ।

४. भाषिक अधिकार

वास्तमा शिक्षाद्वारा दिन मातृभाषा जति सजिलो हुन्छ अरु कुनै भाषा हुनसक्दैन । भाषिक स्वतन्त्रता पनि एक मानव अधिकारको नियम हो । भगवान बुद्धले धर्मदेशनाहरू तत्कालिन प्रचलित मगधि (पाली) भाषामा गर्नुभएको थियो । यसको कारण पनि यही थियो कि यो जनभाषा थियो । विशेष भाषा सिक्ने पर्ने, त्यसपछि मात्र शिक्षा पाउने भन्ने जस्ता अमानवीय विचारले समाजलाई आधोगति तिर लम्काउँछ । काठमाडौंका आदिवासी प्रायः नेवार छन् । तसर्थ नेवारी भाषाको प्रयोग गर्न पाउनु मानव अधिकारको सवाल हो । सम्यक्सम्बुद्धले देखाएको र सिकाएको शिक्षालाई अंगिकार गरी भाषिक अधिकार दिनु वास्तवमा मानवताको माग हो ।

५. बाल अधिकार

बालकहरू अवोध हुन्छन् । के गर्नु हुन्छ, के गर्नु हुँदैन, कहाँ जानु हुन्छ, कहाँ जानु हुँदैन आदि जस्ता कुराहरू उनीहरू जान्दैनन् । तर उचित वातावरण प्राप्त भएमा तिनीहरूनै भविष्यका कर्णधार हुन्, देशका वाहक हुन् । तसर्थ उनीहरूलाई उचित वातावरण, इच्छा अनुसार सुमार्ग देखाउने, राज्यको, समाजको र आमाबाबुको कर्तव्य हो ।

भगवान् बुद्ध बोधिज्ञान लाभ पछि जब कपिलवस्तु फर्कनु भयो, छोरा राहुलाई पनि प्रव्रजित गरिदिनु भयो । यसले गर्दा राजा शुद्धोदनको मन दुखित भयो । शुद्धोदनले अब उपरान्त बालकहरूलाई आमाबाबुको अनुमति बिना प्रव्रजित नगर्न अनुरोध गर्नुभयो जसलाई बुद्धले स्वीकार पनि गर्नुभयो । यो बाल अधिकारको एक उदाहरण हो । किनकी यदि आमाबाबुले उचित ठानेको खण्डमा मात्र श्रामणेर हुने भयो । त्यस्तै श्रामणेर जब २१ वर्षको हुन्छ, त्यसपछि उसको आफ्नै विचार अनुसार उपसम्पदा गरी भिक्षु हुने वा ग्रहस्थमा फर्कने रोज्न पाउँदछ । यो उमेर सम्ममा मानिसको दिमाख परिपक्व भैसकेको हुन्छ र आफ्नो हितको लागि निर्णय गर्न सक्दछ । यी नियमहरूले बाल अधिकारलाई पनि बुद्ध धर्मले यथास्थान दिएको प्रतित हुन्छ ।

६. राज्य संचालन

भगवान बुद्ध शाक्य गणतन्त्र राज्यका राजकुमार थिए । उनलाई सबैभन्दा मन पर्ने राज्य पनि वैशालि गणतन्त्र थियो । उनले अजातशत्रुका मन्त्रीलाई जवसम्म वज्जीहरू निम्न सातवटा नियममा रहने छन् तबसम्म नफुट्ने आज्ञा भएको थियो । क) हरेक दिन छलफल गर्ने । ख) कार्यमा एकता

continued on page 21...

पृष्ठभूमि:

यस संसारका कुनै पनि चेतनशील प्राणीहरू दुःख चाहँदैन। भगवान बुद्धले चार असंख्य अनि एक लाख कल्पसम्म अनेक पारमिता धर्महरू पुरा गरेर २६२६ वर्ष अगाडि नेपालको लुम्बिनीमा जन्मनु भई भारतको बुद्धगयामा ३५ वर्षको उमेरमा बुद्धत्व प्राप्त गर्नुभएपछि संसारको आधार भुत शाश्वत सत्यको रूपमा दुःख सत्यलाई पाउनभयो। अनि बहुजन हिताय बहुजन सुखायको हेतुले धर्मोपदेश गर्ने क्रममा चतुरार्य सत्यको घोषणा गर्नु भयो। यसरी २५९० वर्ष अघि नै भगवान बुद्धले यो संसार वास्तवमा दुःखमय छ, अनित्य छ र सारभुत तथा स्थिर केही नभएकोले अनात्मामय छ भनी सिंहनाद गर्नुभए पनि यो संसारका मानिसहरू दुःखलाई घृणा गर्दै सुख - शान्ति प्राप्त गर्ने अभिलाषामा जीवनभरि अनेकौं दुःख भेल्ले जीवनसँग संघर्ष गर्दैछन्। मानिसहरू दुःखदेखि डराउँछन्, भयभीत रहन्छन् र दुःखलाई सहीरूपमा चिन्न असक्षम हुन्छन्। मानिसहरू सुखको लालसमा अनेक प्रकारका व्यक्तिगत घात - प्रतिघात, कलह, विग्रह र संघर्ष गर्छन्, अनि आफ्नै कर्मबाट आफैले नरुचाएका दुःखलाई निम्त्याइरहेका हुन्छन्। आफ्नो व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ र पलभरको सुखानुभुतिको लागि राम्रा नराम्रा गर्न हुने नहुने तथा अवांचित कुकृत्यहरू लोभ, द्वेष र मोह जस्ता अकुशल मुलहरूको कारण सम्पादन गरिरहन्छन्। अनि आफैले आफुलाई नै दुःख र अशान्ति ल्याउने कामहरू गरिरहन्छन्। यस्ता दुःखबाट मुक्त हुन भगवान बुद्धको मध्यम मार्गमा आफुलाई ढाल्नुपर्छ। यदि उहाँले भन्नुभए अनुसार दान, शील, भावनाको निरन्तर अभ्यास र शील समाधि प्रज्ञाको सम्यक आचरण बनाउने हो भने संसार का दुःखहरूबाट विचलित हुनुपर्ने छैन।

दानको अर्थ:

आफुले पसिना बगाएर मेहेनत गरी कमाएको दुई चार पैसा, चीजबस्तु अरुको उपकारलाई ध्यानमा राखी त्याग चित्तले श्रद्धापूर्वक दिनु नै दान हो। मङ्गल सुत्रमा उल्लेख गरिए अनुसार ३८ प्रकारका मङ्गलमध्ये दान प्रदान गर्नु पनि मङ्गल हो।

^(१) दातव्वन्ति दानं। दातव्वं दिनुपर्ने रहेछ, इति त्यसैले दानं दान भनिन्छ। चेतना भएर मात्र दान दिइन्छ। चेतना भन्नाले दानं नाम दान भनेको, परं उद्दिस्स = अरुलाई उद्देश्य गरी, सुबुद्धिपुब्बिका = सिधा सत्यको बुद्धि अगाडि भएकोले, अन्नादि दस दानवत्थु परिच्चागचेतना = अन्न आदि १० प्रकारका दानवस्तुलाई परित्याग गर्नुको कारण चेतना हो भनेर अर्थकथामा भनिएको अनुसार ज्ञान पूर्वगामी भई, दिनेलाई दान भनिन्छ। दान त्यो हतियार हो, जुनले लोभ, द्वेष र अविद्यालाई हटाउँछ। लोभ त्यो आगो हो, जुनले हाम्रो मनको सुखलाई हटाइदिन्छ, पीर र चिन्तालाई बढाइदिन्छ अनि दान त्यो औषधि हो, जुनले लोभलाई निर्मूल पारिदिन्छ। हामीले जुन वस्तु दान दिँदा अरुको हित र उपकार हुन्छ, त्यसलाई मात्र सही रूपमा गरिएको दान भनिन्छ। अरुलाई विगर्न गरिने दान, दान होइन। त्यस्तै अरुलाई देखाउन, लाज, भय र परम्पराले दिनुपर्छ भनेर गरिने दान पनि वास्तविक दान होइन। दान दिने भनेको त अरुको उपकार गर्न आफुसँग भएको चीजबस्तु लगायत रुख रोपी, बाग-बगैँचा, पाटीहरू, टापु, विहार बनाई दान दिनु हो।

शीलको अर्थ:

आचरण, व्यवहार राम्रो पार्ने तथा कायिक र वाचिक दुष्कर्मबाट टाढा र

हने चेतना आदि धर्म नै शील हो। शील मानवशरीरको टाउको जस्तै महत्वपूर्ण र आधारभुत छ। प्रतिसम्भिदा मार्ग (१) ग्रन्थानुसार भनिएको छ - शील के हो? चेतना शील हो, चैतसिकशील हो, संवरशील हो, अनुल्लङ्घन शील हो। व्रतप्रतिपत्ति अर्थात्, जीवहिंसा आदिबाट विरत रहने व्यक्तिको चेतना नै चेतनाशील हो, त्यस्तै यस्तो चेतना भएको व्यक्तिको विरति नै चैतसिकशील हो। पाँच संवर - प्रातिसंवर, स्मृतिसंवर, ज्ञानसंवर, क्षान्तिसंवर र वीर्यसंवर अनि पापमा भय देख्ने कुलपुत्रहरूको अगाडि आएको पापका वस्तुहरूबाट विरति नै संवरशील हो। अनि ग्रहण गरिएको शीलको काय र वाणीद्वारा उल्लङ्घन नगर्नु नै अनुल्लङ्घनशील हो। शील भन्नाले दश अकुशल कर्म त्यागेर तीन प्रकारका मार्ग क्रमशः सम्यक्कर्मन्त, सम्यक्वचन र सम्यक आजीवमा संयमित र स्थिर हुनु हो। शील त्यो हीरा हो जुनले हातखुट्टा बाँडिएको सवै बन्धनलाई छुटाइदिन्छ। शील नै पृथ्वीजस्तै यो मानिसहरूको आधार हो कुशल र अभिवृद्धिको यो मुल हो, सवै बुद्धहरूको शासनको यो मुख हो, मोक्षका लागि उत्तम बाटो हो। (२) शील हाम्रो जीवनको आधार हो, त्यसैले यसलाई रक्षा गर्नुपर्छ।

किंकी व अण्डं चमरी व बालधिं पियं व पुत्तं नयनं व एकं
तथेव सीलं अनुरक्खमानका सुपेसला होथ सदा सगारवाति।

अर्थात्, जसरी बट्टाई चराले आफ्नो अण्डालाई, चौरीले आफ्नो पुच्छर लाई, आमाले एकलो प्रिय पुत्रलाई, कानोले आफ्नो एउटै आँखाको रक्षा गर्दछ, त्यसरी नै शीललाई राम्ररी रक्षा गर्दै शीलप्रति प्रेम र गौरव गर्नुपर्छ।

भावनाको अर्थ:

चित्तलाई निग्रह गर्ने उद्देश्यले गरिने प्रयत्न नै भावना हो। अनुशासनहीन चित्त स्वभावतः यता उता गइरहन्छ। यस्तो चञ्चल चित्तलाई चञ्चलता नभएको अवस्थामा स्थिर राखिराख्नु नै भावना हो। आफ्नो असमाहित चित्तलाई कुन आरम्भणमा केन्द्रित गरी समाहित बनाउने उद्देश्यले अभ्यास गरिन्छ, त्यही आरम्भणमा चित्तलाई केन्द्रित भइरहने बनाउनु नै भावनाको अर्थ हो। भावना जीवनको महत्वपूर्ण काम भएकाले यसलाई कर्मस्थान पनि भनिन्छ। भावना विशेषत दुई प्रकारका छन्: समथ र विपस्सना। नीवारण आदि क्लेश र वितर्क आदि ध्यानाङ्गलाई उपशमन गर्ने ध्यानलाई समथ भावना भनिन्छ, भने नामरूपको अनित्यता, दुःख, अनात्मा र अशुभ आदिलाई प्रज्ञादृष्टिले देख्नु वा नामरूपको उत्पत्ति विनाशलाई देख्ने धर्मलाई विपस्सना भावना भनिन्छ। भावनाको कारण हाम्रो मनमा रहेका राग, द्वेष, मोह लगायतका फोहोरहरू हटाई चित्त स्वच्छ हुन्छ।

दानको महत्व:

अरुको राम्रो र भलो चिताएर आफुसँग भएको चीजबस्तु दान दिनु पुण्य संचय गर्ने अवसर हो जसले गर्दा असङ्ख्य पाप हट्छन्। दानको कारण राम्रो फल लाभ हुन्छ। तृष्णा रहितको दान गर्नाले संसारचक्रबाट चाँडै मुक्त हुन पाइन्छ। हामीले श्रद्धाचित्त राखी दीन दुखी लगायत भिक्षुसंघलाई दान दिनु भनेको पुण्यरूपी बीज अब्बल जग्गामा रोप्नु समान हुन्छ। दान दिनाले हाम्रो व्यक्तिगत, समाज र देशको उन्नतिमा सहयोग मिल्छ। दान दिँदा दाताको मन अरुलाई सहयोग गर्न पाउँदा हलुङ्गो हुन्छ। दान लिनेहरू पनि सहयोग पाउँदा प्रसन्न हुन्छन्। दान प्रदान गर्ने बानीले समाजमा विद्यमान रहेको आर्थिक असमानतालाई पनि हटाउन मद्दत पुग्छ। धनीहरूले गरीवहरूलाई दान दियो भने गरीवहरूको गरिवीमा राहत मिल्छ।

भने उनीहरुबीच विवाद हुँदैन बरु सुमधुर सम्बन्ध कायम हुन्छ। असमानता समानतामा परिणत हुन्छ। त्यस्तै हामीले दान गर्नु भन्ने हाम्रो मनमा उत्पन्न हुने सम्पत्तिप्रतिको लोभ, आशक्तता पनि घट्छ। सम्पत्तिप्रतिको आशक्तता घट्नु भन्नेको सम्पत्तिको क्षति भएपनि मनमा डाह हुँदैन र हाम्रो मन विक्षिप्त हुँदैन। त्यस्तै दान दिनाले हाम्रो वर्तमान जीवन लगायत मृत्युपछिको गति पनि राम्रो हुन्छ भनी भगवान बुद्धले पञ्चगुत्तर (३३) मा देशना गर्नुभएको छ, दान-प्रदान गर्नु भन्ने हामीप्रति धेरै मानिसहरुको मान-मर्यादा र स्नेह बढ्नेछ, हामी सबैका प्यारा हुन्छौं। दानी व्यक्तिले सञ्जन र सत्पुरुषसँग नजिकिने अवसर पाउँछन्, जसकारण कुशल उत्पन्न हुन्छ, अमृत्यु धर्मको उपहार प्राप्त हुन्छ र लाभ हुन्छ। त्यसैगरी, अरुको हित र उपकार चाहेर दान दिने व्यक्तिको गुण-वर्णन सबै ठाउँमा हुन्छ, जस्तोसुकै परिषदमा पनि निर्भीक रुपमा बाँच्न सकिन्छ। कोहीसँग पनि हटनुपर्ने छैन अनि परिवारमा सुख, समृद्धि बढ्दछ। त्यस्तै मृत्यु भयो भन्ने पनि सुगति, देवलोकगामी हुनेछ।

शीलको महत्व:

शील नै उन्नति र प्रगतिको आधार हो। शीलको महत्व हाम्रो जीवनमा धेरै नै छ। धम्मपदको यो गाथाद्वारा पनि शीलको महत्व प्रष्ट हुन्छ।

यो चे वस्ससतं जीवे - दुस्सीलो असमाहितो।

एका'हं जीवितं सेय्यो - सीलवन्तस्स भायिनो।

अर्थात्, सयवर्ष शीलरहित र अज्ञानी भएर बस्नुभन्दा एकै दिन शीलवान भएर ज्ञानपूर्वक बाँच्नु राम्रो।

शीलविनाको मानिसको महत्व कम हुन्छ। ज्ञान, रुप र धन छ तर शील छैन भन्ने त्यो मानिस बासना आउने लाश जस्तै हो, हेर्दा राम्रो तर काम भन्ने लाग्दैन। शीलले हाम्रो जीवनमा महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेलेको हुन्छ। हाम्रो समाजमा आइपर्ने हरेक समस्याको कारण नै शील पालन नगर्नु हो। शील पालन गर्नु भन्ने पापकर्महरु कम हुन्छन् अनि दुःख कम हुन्छ। मानजीवनमा न्यूनतम रुपमा पाल गर्नुपर्ने शील पञ्चशील हो, प्राणीघात नगर्ने, चोरी नगर्ने, काम मिथ्याचार नगर्ने, झुठो नबोल्ने र नशालु पदार्थ सेवन नगर्ने। यी शीलहरु पालन गर्ने हो भन्ने समाजका पापकर्महरु हट्छन् जसले गर्दा समाज उन्नति तर्फ लम्किन्छ। शील पालन गर्नाले हाम्रो जीवनमा हुने प्रत्यक्ष फलहरु दीघनिकाय (२, ३, १) र उदान (८, ६) अनुसार यस प्रकार छन्: शीलवान व्यक्ति अप्रमादी हुने भएकाले धेरै धनसम्पत्ति प्राप्त गर्छ, त्यस्तै उसको शीलाचरणको कारण उसको ख्याति र इमान्दारी पनि सबै ठाउँमा फैलिन्छ। शील पालन गर्ने व्यक्ति जुनजुन समाजमा जान्छ, ऊ निर्भीक निःसंकोच रुपले जान्छ। उसमा संयमता र सहनशीलता हुन्छ तसर्थ दुःखमा विचलित हुँदैन। ऊ बेहोशीमा मर्दैन बरु संयमित भई आरामले मर्छ। त्यस्तै उसको मृत्युपछि उसलाई सुगति प्राप्त हुन्छ। उसले निर्वाण पनि प्राप्त गर्न सक्छ।

भावनाको महत्व:

चित्त एकाग्र राख्नु नै भावना हो। सबै प्रकारका मानसिक समस्यालाई समाधान गर्नु र चित्त राम्ररी निक्षेप र विप्रकीर्ण नभई स्थिर हुने अवस्था नै भावना हो। भावना गर्नाले हाम्रो चित्त शुद्ध र पवित्र हुन्छ। यदि हामी दान र शीलमा निपुण छौं भन्ने हामीले अरुलाई उपकार गरिरहेका हुन्छौं। हामीले त अरुलाई हानी गर्दैनौं तर अरुले त हामीलाई गर्नसक्छन्। अरुले हामीलाई गर्ने क्रोध, इर्ष्या, डाहजस्ता अशुचिहरु उत्पन्न हुन्छन् जसको कारण हामीले हाम्रो जीवनमा बाधाहरु भेलिरहेका हुन्छौं, जसलाई हामी सहज रुपले लिन सक्दैनौं अनि आफुले आफैलाई दुःख दिइरहन्छौं। भावनको अभ्यासले हामीलाई यस्ता कुराहरु सहज ढङ्गले अपनाउन

सहयोग मिल्छ। भावना गर्नाले हाम्रो चित्त एकाग्र, निर्मल हुन्छ। चित्त हाम्रो वशमा रहन्छ र विकार उच्छेदन गर्न सकिन्छ। त्यस्तै भावना गर्नाले सम्पूर्ण क्लेश दमन गरी जन्म व्याधि र मरणको बन्धनबाट मुक्त रहेको निर्वाण समेत साक्षात्कार गर्न सकिन्छ।

निष्कर्ष:

हाम्रो जीवन सारपूर्ण र सफल बनाउन कुशल कार्यहरु गर्नुपर्छ। अकुशल कर्महरु त्यागेर दान, शील र भावनाको अभ्यास गर्नु भन्ने हाम्रो मनका क्लेशहरु हटी हाम्रो मन निर्मल र कञ्जन हुन्छ अनि जीवनमा समस्या हुँदैन।

त्याग चित्त उत्पन्न गरी दान दिँदा मनको लोभ हट्छ जसको कारण हामीमा सम्पत्तिप्रतिको आशक्ति घट्छ र आशक्ति घट्यो भन्ने हाम्रो आफ्नो चीजबस्तुहरु हराउँदा पनि हाम्रो मन विक्षिप्त हुँदैन र हामीलाई दुःख हुँदैन। त्यस्तै, हाम्रो शिरसमान रहेको शील पालन गर्नु भन्ने समस्याहरु हट्छन्। समस्या अकुशल कर्मको कारणले उत्पन्न हुन्छ तर जब शील शुद्धरुपमा पालना गर्छौं, हाम्रो आचरण र व्यवहार शुद्ध हुन्छ अनि कुनै कार्य गर्दा पनि सहजै सफलता हाँसल गर्नसक्छौं। जीवनमा हाम्रो कारण मात्र नभई अरुको कारणले पनि दुःख हुनसक्छ। अरुहरुले पनि हामीलाई दुःख दिन सक्छन्, जसको कारणले हाम्रो मन अस्थिर हुन्छ र दुःख बढ्छ, अनि हाम्रो कार्यहरु सफल हुँदैनन्। हाम्रो मनलाई संयमित पार्न र तनावहरुबाट मुक्त राख्न भावनाको आवश्यकता पर्छ। भावना गर्नाले हाम्रो चित्त स्थिर र एकाग्र हुन्छ, जसले गर्दा हाम्रो काम सफल हुन्छ र लक्ष्य प्राप्त गर्न सक्छौं। त्यसैले दान-शील-भावनाको निरन्तर अभ्यास गर्नु भन्ने हाम्रो जीवन आनन्द, आराम र सोहार्दपूर्ण ढङ्गले व्यतीत गर्नसक्छौं भन्दा उचित होला। अस्तु:

(१) न्हुगु परित्राण नित्रय, पेज १०१

(२) मिलिन्द प्रश्न: अनु - भिक्षु शोमन (नेपाली) प्रथम संस्करण शिलादि लक्षण प्रश्न, पेज नं. २६

Letter to Editor

Dear Editor

We enjoyed reading the articles and we are very happy to go through them. Sorry to inform you that Venerable Subodhananda Mahasthabir, who you have mentioned in para one of page 11 is no more with us. He passed away in June, 2006.

As Venerable Sudarsan Mahasthabir has passed away for his heavenly abode some three/four years ago, "Late" could have been mentioned in the article he has written.

In the case of the Lord Buddha, on his Maha Pari Narwana, the synonym of "Dead" was used in the text in para one of page 21, so a milder word other than "Death" could have been more appropriate. Maha Pari Nirawana is much higher than "Death".

To end we enjoyed reading the magazine very much and thanks for the effort you and your Dharma friends have made to bring out the publication. !

With warm regards,
Vinaya Dhakhwa, Chakupat, Patan, Nepal

। ग) पुराना कुरामा विचार घ) ठूलाको आदर ङ) पुजा प्रार्थनाको लागि ठाउँको व्यवस्था च) महिलाको आदर र छ) अर्हत, ज्ञानी गुरुहरुको रक्षा यसरी हेर्दा राज्य संचालनको प्रमुखमा जनताद्वारा चुनिएको व्यक्ति नै नियुक्त हुने पढ्ती बुद्धलाई मन परेको देखिन्छ । राज्यको सुव्यवस्थाका लागि दैनिक छलफल गर्ने, ठूला, महिला तथा भिक्षु, गुरुहरुको आदर हुनुपर्ने, सबैको एकता हुनुपर्ने जस्ता कुराहरु पनि मानवअधिकार सम्मत भएको देखिन्छ ।

७. बहुजन हित

पञ्च भद्रवर्गियलाई गरेको प्रथम धर्मदेशना पश्चात संघको पनि स्थापना भयो । त्यसपछि उक्त संघ भन्भन् बढदै गयो । वर्षावासको समयमा बाहेक अन्य समयमा बहुजन हित र सुखका लागि उनी र उनको संघको पाइला ४५ वर्षसम्म अनवरत चलिनै रह्यो । उनको आदेश थियो कि कुनै दुई भिक्षु एकै ठाउँ र दिशामा नजानु यस वाक्यले बहुजन हित र सुखको लागि अभिप्रेरित गरेको देखिन्छ । यसमा नै बुद्ध धर्मको सफलता पनि निहित रहेको देखिन्छ । नेपालमा जन्मेर भारतमा प्राप्त गरेको र देशना गरेको बुद्ध धर्म दक्षिणपूर्वी एशियामा श्रीलंका, थाइलेण्ड, बर्मा, उत्तरपूर्वी एशियामा चीन, तिब्बत, जापान, कोरिया आदि जस्ता देशहरुमा समेत आज बौद्ध धर्मनै प्रमुख धर्म भएको देखिन्छ । बुद्ध धर्म अंगिकार गरेर नै तिब्बतका राजा स्रोङचोङ गम्पोले आफ्नो देशलाई सभ्य, भाषा, लिपि र साहित्यको धनी बनाए । जापान, चीन, कोरिया जस्ता विकसित राज्यले पनि उनिहरु आजको स्थितिमा पुग्न बुद्ध धर्मको देनलाई मुल श्रेय नदिई रहन सक्दैनन् । सन् १९५९ मा चीनले तिब्बतमा आक्रमण गरेबाट, तिब्बती बौद्ध धर्म भन् संसारभरि फैलिने मौका पाएको छ । संचारको विकासमा कारणले पनि बुद्धको सर्वकालिन, सर्वमानव जातिको हित गर्ने धर्म चाँडै नै मौलाउदै जानबाट कसैले रोकन सक्दैन ।

बुद्धधर्मलाई हेतुवाद, कर्मवाद, अनिश्वरवाद, मध्यमवाद (मार्ग) अनित्यवाद र अनात्मावाद पनि भनिन्छ । हरेक कार्यका पछाडि केही कारण (हेतु) हुन्छ र हरेक कार्य नै कारण बनेर भविष्यमा केही कर्म गराउने कुरामा विश्वास गर्ने हुनाले हेतुवाद र कर्मवाद भनिन्छ । बुद्धका अग्रश्रावक सारिपुत्रलाई अस्सजि नामक भिक्षुले बुद्ध धर्मको संक्षिप्त परिचयका रुपमा भनेका थिए,

“ये धम्म हेतुप्रभवा, तेस हेतु तथागत आह
नेसंच यो निरोधो एवं वादी महाश्रमणो ॥”

अर्थात्, हेतुबाट उत्पन्न सबै धर्म वा विषयवस्तु छ, ति सबैका कारण तथागत भन्नु हुन्छ र त्यसको निरोध पनि, यही महाश्रमण (बुद्ध) को वाद हो ।

सुख र दुःखको अन्य कुनै पनि कारण (जस्तै ईश्वर) भनिएका कसैले पनि कुशल कर्म गर्दैन । कर्म गरेको फल हुनेपछि र छ पनि । यदि आफु बाहेक अरुमा कारण खोजेको खण्डमा ईश्वरवादी भईन्छ, जुन बुद्धको धारणामा सम्यक (ठिक) छैन । यो शिक्षाले पनि मानवतालाई कुशल कर्म गर्नेतिर अभिप्रेरित गरेको देखिन्छ । त्यसैले बुद्धवाद अनीश्वरवाद पनि हो । चार्वाक दर्शन जस्ता (उच्छेदवादी) हरुले ऋण लिएर पनि घ्यु खाउ, जसरी पनि यो जीवन सुखमय बनाऊ भन्ने जस्तो अतिभौतिकवादी शिक्षाले पनि मानवतालाई सही निर्देशन गर्न सक्दैन । आफ्नो खुशीका लागि हिंसा, चोरी, व्यभिचारी, मादक पदार्थसेवन, आदि बढ्नेछ । त्यसैले त बुद्धको पंचशील मानवताको कति हितमा छ, विचार गर्न सकिन्छ ।

जीवित प्राणी होस् वा भौतिक वस्तुहरु, सबै हरेक क्षण परिवर्तन भईरहेका छन् । कोही र केही नित्य छैन । अनित्य शरीर र चिजवस्तुको आलम्बनमा आत्मा मानेर बसेको हुनाले नै परिवर्तन धर्मले मानिसहरुलाई दुःख जगाईरहेका छन् भनी बुद्धका त्रिलक्षण दर्शन उभिएको पाउँछौं । अनित्य शरीर भएको कारणले शरीर छुदै शील, समाधि र प्रज्ञाको मार्गबाट विमुक्ति वा निर्वाणतिर अग्रसर हुन बुद्ध धर्मले प्रेरणा दिईरहेको देखिन्छ ।

सबै प्राणीहरु मित्र हुन् “मैत्री भावना”, दुखी पिडीत माथि “करुणा” दृष्टि जगाउन, अरुको खुशीमा ईश्या नगरी मुदित हुन र अन्त्यमा उपेक्षा भावमा स्थित भई चतुर्ब्रह्म विहारमा विहर्न आज्ञा भएको छ । कायबाट हुने हिंसा, चोरी, व्यभिचारी, बचनबाट हुने झुठो बोल्ने, चुगली, कडा बचन र व्यर्थकुरा, र चित्तबाट लोभ, द्वेष र मिथ्यादृष्टि आदि दशअकुशल त्याग्ने उपाय बताउनु भएको बुद्ध वास्तवमै मानवताको इतिहासमै धर्मको अद्वितीय वैज्ञानिक हुनुहुन्छ ।

कुनै ईश्वरको आवश्यकता बिना नै जीवन मरणको चक्र व्याख्या गर्ने प्रतीत्यसमुत्पाद दर्शन होस् वा यस चक्रको निरोधबाट पुग्ने निर्वाणको अवस्था होस्, सबै मानवताको प्रमुख समस्या ‘दुःख’ जुन सबैले मान्ने पर्ने हुन्छ, यस सत्यको, यसको कारण, निरोध र निरोधको उपाय समेत देशना गर्नु हुने भगवान् बुद्ध सर्वश्रेष्ठ डाक्टर हैन भनी को भन्न सक्छन् ?

बुद्ध धर्मको दार्शनिक पक्ष विचार गरेता पनि, बुद्धकै जीवनकाल पल्टाएर हेरेता पनि, बुद्ध पछि अनुवरत चल्दै आएको उनको मार्गमा हिड्ने मानव इतिहास पल्टाए पनि बुद्ध धर्म अंगाल्ने सम्राट अशोक होस्, सम्राट कनिस्क होस्, सम्राट स्रोङचोङ गम्पो होस्, सबैबाट मानव सभ्यताको विकास, मानवकै लागि आवश्यक अस्पताल, कुलो, शिक्षालय, वृद्धाश्रमको स्थापना भएको पाउँछौं ।

बुद्धले जातको विषयमा,

“कोही जन्मले ब्राह्मण हुँदैन
कोही जन्मले शुद्र हुँदैन
कर्मले नै ब्राह्मण हुन्छ
कर्मले नै शुद्र हुन्छ ।”

भनी जानको सही पहिचान गराउनु भयो । बलि प्रथाको घोर निन्दा गर्नुभई अहिंसाको प्रवर्तन गर्नुभयो । हरेक व्यक्ति चरित्रवान, नैतिकवान हुनुपर्छ भन्ने उनको भनाई थियो । बहुजन हितको लागि भिक्षुहरुलाई विभिन्न ठाउ र दिशामा जानु, जनभाषामा उपदेश दिनु भन्नु भयो । परम्परागत, सुनेको, धेरैले भनेको भनी आँखा चिम्लेर नस्वीकार्नु बरु आफ्नो ज्ञानमा तौलेर बहुजनको भलो हुने भएमा मात्र स्वीकार्नु भन्नु भयो । हरेक व्यक्ति बुद्धको वीज हो र प्रयास गरेमा परहित गर्दै अर्हत, बुद्धपदसम्म प्राप्त गर्न सकिने आज्ञा गर्नुभयो । “अत्ताहि अत्तनो नाथो कोहि नाथो परोसिया” अर्थात् आफ्नो नाथ आफै अरुको हुन सक्छ? त्यस्तै “अत्त दिप भव”, अर्थात्, आफ्नो दिप आफै बाल, भन्ने जस्ता हरेक मावलाई पुर्णता प्रदान गर्ने उपद्रष्टा विश्वको इतिहासमै अद्वितीय महामानव, शास्ता, सुगत, लोकविदू, तथागत, अर्हन्त, सम्यक सम्बुद्धलाई सम्पूर्ण मानवको तर्फबाट नमस्कार ।

नमो बुद्धाय ।

Contentment is happiness!

transformation in other person. To bring change you do not have to wait for other person to change. The change in you will be able to bring changes in others. This is for sure. If you change, transformation in other person is only a matter of time”.

Each of them was reflecting deeply in what they have done. They had not been skilful in maintaining their love.

“Some times you say you can kill two birds with one stone. I will say one can save two lives with watering seeds in one person. Everything is there. Nothing is lost. We must not become the victim of despair”.

“I wish every one good practice”.

Everyday Venerable Thây gave equally inspiring talks. The monks and nuns from Plum village organised equally inspiring activities. Plum village with its peaceful surrounding; kind and compassionate attitude of monks and nuns had a profound effect on us.

However not every one felt that way. There was young lady from Sweden who was not so impressed. She came because her boy friend had liked the place when he came in 2005. She told us so far she had found it very boring.

But for the rest of us in our group, after a week of staying together we really felt we knew each other very well and felt that we were a family unit. We exchanged our e-mails and other contact details and were very sad to take leave of each other. We had invitation to visit Denmark, USA and France from members of our group. We had gone on

package holidays for longer period but had never made this type of bond.

When we left the Plum village, monks and nuns prepared packed lunches for each of us to take with us in our journey. We were touched with this gesture of kindness.

As I have mentioned before this was a family retreat. There were many families with their children who stayed more than a week. There were about 100-150 children in the retreat. About seven hundred people representing 47 nationalities of different faiths like Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims etc. attended the retreat.

On the last day during question and answer session, one Muslim lady asked Thây if he would be willing to conduct such a retreat for Muslim leaders of Europe. To which he replied it would be difficult to arrange but if it could be arranged he would be happy to conduct it. If you could organised such a retreat not only for Muslims but include other faith groups as well, it will give you an opportunity to show to the world that “Islam is a truly peaceful religion”.

One more pleasant surprise was waiting for us. We went to buy some DVDs of talks from previous days but we did not have enough Euros and they did not have facilities for debit/credit cards. So the gentle man selling these told us “you write them down what you want in the order form and send the money from England”. The total came to 45 Euros. When I asked him “will you post the DVDs to us once you get the money?” He said “No, No”; you take them now and send the money once you are in the UK’.

I did not believe what I was hearing but it was the truth.

C a n d a l e n c e s

President and all the members of the Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) would like to express our sincere sympathy to families of the following. We wish them eternal peace *Nirvana*.

Mr. J B Tandon, ex-executive committee member of the society who passed away in August 2006

Mr. Laxman Thapa, who passed away in August 2006. Late Mr. Thapa was the elder brother of our society’s executive committee member Mr. Madan Thapa.

Mrs. Guna Laxmi Shakya who passed away on 18 February 2007 and **Prof. Asha Ram Shakya** who passed away on Tuesday 24 April 2007 in Patan, Nepal. They were parents of our society’s life member Dr. Rasana Bajracharya.

Mrs. Purna Maya Shakya who passed away on Friday, 23rd February 2007 in Kathmandu Nepal at the age of 79. She was the mother of our society’s advisor venerable Bhikkhu Sugandha

Mr. Padma Bahadur Tamrakar who passed away on Sunday, 22nd April 2007 in Kathmandu, Nepal at the age of 72. He was the beloved father of Mr. Bijendra Tamrakar. Late Tamrakar was uncle of our society’s President Mr. Amrit Sthapit.

Anicca Vata Samkhara
(All Conditions are impermanent)

On the auspicious occasion of 2551st Buddha Jayanti



*'May all misfortunes be warded off,
May all ailments cease:
May no calamities befall to any
May all live long in peace'*



Kathmandu Kitchen

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Nima and Sakuna Lama

Our Appreciations for providing supports to the Society in various ways:

Nepalese Embassy, London, Yeti, Nepalese Association in UK, nepalisamajuk.com, Sagarmatha Times, nepaluk.com, Greenwich London College, London Buddhist Vihara, Chiswick, Sri Saddhatissa Int'l Buddhist Centre, Kingsbury and all well wishers

*We wish all readers
Happy 2551st Buddha Jayanti!*

Lotus Restaurant

(Nepalese Cuisine)

**2 New Broadway
Uxbridge Road, Hillingdon, UB10 0LH
Tel: 01895 234 679, 01895 251 991**

Contact: Shubha Ratna Shakya and Shyam Darshan Kunwar

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common in modern day life as people feel that it contains a part of truth. It is in fact very dangerous and have negative consequences to everyone involved hence form negative karma. Business world virtually based on half truth and exaggeration in many aspects. For example, advertising, promotion activities, competition and so on. If we analyse a business advertisement we can find either it has only a part of truth or it is exaggerated. If we go for shopping we see lots of deals like SALE. In promotion claim of buy one get one free it gives impression that we can get a free when we buy the other. But in practice the price of product is increased in first hand then only it gives free offer. So it is a misleading act of the business.

Refrain from Slander, malicious gossip, back biting etc.

Slander, back biting, malicious gossip etc are the negativities of mind which can come out of jealousy, fear, anger, greed, ego, ignorance, complexions and so on expressed by the action of speech. These are the causes of breach of panca sila in most of the cases. As we don't like people to behave with us with jealousy, anger, fear, greed, ego etc. we shouldn't behave to others with those negativities in mind. In psychological term these are the latent feeling every human being possess during their life time in the form of citta. And, these are the mental formation which produce negative karma causing bad effects either in this life or in next life. The immediate effects of these actions can lead to high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, delusion etc. which may cause loss of social life.

Refrain from intoxication

Refrain from Intoxication is another difficult part of panca sila as drinking liquor is considered to be a part of so called social life. Besides, intoxication has been proved to have health benefit when taken in the form of medicine. Therefore many countries have allowed to consume liquor and certain form of intoxicating drugs to certain extent under the strict enforcement of laws. For example, drinking limit for driving, sale of certain class of controlled drugs for chronic drug users, sale of some tranquillising drugs etc. In spite of positive aspect of intoxication it has serious consequences if misused. It is in fact very important issue of panca sila because intoxication directly affects the mind. It not only make one loose mental balance but also make a kind hearted man or a woman who follows other precepts of panca sila to behave nonsensical way and break the rest of panca silas.

Conclusion

In practical life it is indeed difficult to observe panca sila in every step. It is mental formation (citta) or intention rather than actions which is more important as it is directly

link to action resulting karma formation. In other word if we can control over our mind it doesn't matter whether we break panca sila for the sake of good reasons. Usually people break panca sila because of negativity of mind hence, we must control the mind first from arising the negativities. Observing panca sila with negativity in mind is ineffective as it still forms negative karma. If we observe panca sila reluctantly or by force without good intention then it is unworthy. In Buddha's time a merchant offered Buddha a meal one day. When Buddha left after the meal the Merchant repented that he should have offered old food rather than fresh one so that he could have saved money. Because of good deed of meal offering he was reborn as a rich person but because of negativity of his mind in offering food to the Buddha in his previous life he always ate old food instead of fresh food in his present life. We can see people around us who despite being rich rely on inferior quality of life because of their past deed and negativity of mind. So to act according to panca sila with negativity in mind is more dangerous than to act against panca sila with positivity in mind. However, it doesn't mean that we kill someone with positivity in mind that we are saving many people from him. This type of act will have always effect of mixed karma as explained above. It is clear from the above example that it is mental formation (citta) which bears the effects of karma primarily. The action or deed is secondary for karma formation. Merely to have compassion is enough to lead to form positive karma. When we act positively with positive form of mind it directly leads to solid positive karma. So in a hypothetical case, if we observe the precept of refraining from killing of an animal but crave to eat the meat of that animal then we develop the mental formation which forms negative karma. In the same manner if we break panca sila say by telling a lie to a person, who is in the state of anger or drunkenness with a dagger in his hand looking for someone, gives more positive karma as the mental formation begins with compassion and good intention. The effect of negative karma for telling lie in this case will be negligible.

It is therefore panca sila which lead us to formation of karma that is, if we observe panca sila we form positive karma and vice versa. Panca sila can be observed by controlling the actions of body and speech. However, actions of body and speech are the outcome of mental factor. Without controlling the mental factor it will be very difficult to control the actions of body and speech. Mental factor, thus, is considered as the main action to be controlled which cause other actions of body and speech thereby forming the karma.

**The Buddha practised what he taught;
He taught what he practised**

Asokan missionaries. These three countries host the majority population of **Theravada Buddhists** today.

Although Buddha was born in **Nepal**, his teachings do not seem to have influenced the people of Nepal very much during his life time. The missionary activities of Asoka are records of first propagation of Buddhism there, led by Ven. Majjhima Thera. Nepal being a mountainous country where the highland inhabitants are composed of ethnic groups (Sherpas, Gurungs, Magars, Thakalis, Tamangs and Tharus) whose socio-religious and culture are heavily influenced by Buddhism. Buddhism practiced by these ethnic groups today is unique in their own ways. They have developed different styles of Buddhism, **Highland Buddhism**, (Anil M. Shakyas) from its main reference of Tibetan Buddhism.

The Tibetans were originally the followers of an animistic religion called Bonpo. Buddhism found its way to **Tibet** in the 7th century CE when the ruler Srong-Tsan-Gam-po married a Nepalese Buddhist princess. As Buddhism was flourishing even in terms of writing, Padmasambhava arrived in Tibet in the 8th century CE and introduced **Tantric Buddhism**. Tibetan Buddhism today is very popular around the world and has also been influential by the charismatic leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Buddhism was introduced in **Cambodia** during the 5th century CE. In the neighbouring country Vietnam, Buddhism seems to have been introduced during the 1st centuries CE. But the Chinese form of Buddhism has been predominant ever since China sacked the city of Campa in 605 CE. From Java, Buddhism was introduced to Malaysia during the 7th century CE.

According to Chinese tradition, Buddhism was introduced into **China** as early as 217 BCE when Confucianism and Taoism were already rooted in the social ideologies. It is recorded that some of the prominent monks from India visited China during the 4th and 5th centuries CE to help spread the popularity of Buddhism by translating and expounding Buddhist texts and philosophy. Buddhism continued to flourish in China under the patronage of T'ang and subsequent royal dynasties until the introduction of Lamaism in about the 13th century CE.

Buddhism was introduced to **Korea** in the 4th century CE and reached the heights of its power in the 11th century CE. Modern Korean Buddhism is, in fact, Zen traced with a belief of Amitabha Buddha or Maitreya Buddha. Mahayana Buddhism first flourished in China and gradually travelled to **Japan** via Korea, by 538 CE when the indigenous religious tradition of Japan was Shinto. Tendai (school) from China was introduced in 850 CE.

In the history of Japan, the Kamakura era (1192-1333 CE) has been a landmark. Though Zen meditation was included in Tendai and Ch'an, it never rooted as a separate school until the Kamakura period. The Nichiren school of Buddhism was established in the 13th century CE.

This is the spread of Buddhism in Asia. However the Asoka inscriptions state that missionaries were also sent to the kingdoms under the Greek rulers Philadelphus of Egypt. Due to Orientalists of the 19th century CE, Buddhism has been introduced to the West, and today it has become one of the growing religions not only in the West but worldwide. You can find all forms of Buddhism from all these countries all around the world even in the UK.

In the **United Kingdom**, Buddhist population is formed by native converts and Asian migrants. The **Asian Buddhists** bring with them from their birth-countries centuries-old Buddhist beliefs which are profoundly fused in their culture. In the United Kingdom, the Asian Buddhists founded Buddhist centres to preserve their religious belief and culture, and those centres are organized, as Cousins notes, along the ethnic lines.

The **British Buddhists**, on the other hand, retain their Christian-oriented culture while adopting a new faith. If the early converts can be categorized as "ex-colonials", "scholars" and "esotericists", they all shared one common feature: they adopted the Buddhist faith through self-reading. (Cousins) In other words, they were self-converts. The writings of various travellers, missionaries, diplomats made information on Buddhism available; the best known among them was the *Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold in 1879. Unlike their Asian counterparts who were born into and then maintain a certain tradition of Buddhism along ethnic lines, they owe no loyalty to any Buddhist school on the basis of their ethnicity. They practice **all forms of Buddhism** that are found in this country. Baumann categorizes the western followers of different Buddhist schools into four groups: Theravada (18.5%), Mahayana (Zen) (18.1%), Tibetans (36.9%) and non-aligned (26.5%). (Baumann 2002:94) According to *The Buddhist Directory*, there are 420 Buddhist centres but the number could be higher.

In the **USA**, centres set up by Chinese migrants early 19th century in San Francisco and the founding of the **Theosophical Society** in 1875 in New York by Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Helena P. Blavatsky established Buddhism in America. Similar form of establishment may have taken place in **Australia**. Arrival of Chinese migrants early 19th century and the founding of a branch of the Theosophist Society in Tasmania set roots to Buddhism in Australia.

Buddhism / Buddhism-s?

The Buddha's Teachings or Buddha Dhamma, according to the Theravada school, can be divided into three "Baskets" (Tipitaka): Sutta Pitaka (discourses), Vinaya Pitaka (monastic rules) and Abhidhamma Pitaka (systematic philosophy). These three Baskets are often referred to as **Pali Buddhism**, after the language in which they are preserved. Modern scholars have found that a great portion of the Theravada canonical literature can be considered as what they term '**Early Buddhism**'. Some call it '**Pure Buddhism**' (Cousins), or '**True Buddhism**' or '**Original Buddhism**' (Bechert; Southwold). The philosophical appeal of this '**Early Buddhism**' is, however, restricted to some scholars and monks. These early texts emphasise, as mentioned earlier, soteriological aspect of Buddhist practice.

Moving on from textual categorical analysis, let us look into some practices. Monastic life, theoretically, gives the best opportunity for one to fulfil one's potential in developing the Path. This central belief has led to monastic life being seen as the most important symbol of Buddhism in many schools and practices of Buddhism. However, the practical aspect of Buddha Dhamma would differ from this philosophical form. Some (Gombrich) argue that this **Pali originals** do not reflect the state of Buddhist religion at one given moment. Buddhism is a religion that is capable of absorbing local religious belief into practice. **Syncretism** is found throughout where followers have been able to cherish local ritual prospects that blended with local cultural features. According to Baumann and Prebish, the teaching reaches the lower strata of society as 'not by practice but by way of ritual and performance'. However syncretistic the religion may be, every Buddhist is aware of the goal of Buddhism, *nibbana* or *nirvana*.

The term 'popular' in comparison to Fuller's application of 'Popular Hinduism' with regards to the ritualistic aspect can also be applied to Buddhism as '**popular Buddhism**'. This '**popular**' or '**ceremonial**' label is also applied by Numrich (cited in Baumann 2002:61). This '**traditional**' form of Buddhism widely practised in the East where Buddhism has roots in the countries like Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar) and Thailand. Spiro discusses the practice of Buddhism, in Burmese context, which he terms as '**nibbānic Buddhism**' – religion of radical salvation, and '**kammatic Buddhism**' – religion of proximate salvation and the central concept of merit. For Southwold '**actual Buddhism**', which is popular Buddhism, appears to be 'more human and worldly, more ritualistic and superstitious'. It is inappropriate, he argues, to consider the Buddhist scriptures as the key or criterion to Buddhism and Buddhist practices.

Modern technological developments and deterioration in values and care of the world has led Buddhist monks and

laity to practice the religion in un-traditional way, but however incorporating the core teachings and putting faith into action. **Engaged Buddhism** is found in almost all countries where many people are looked after and global issues are dealt with efficiently by **Engaged Buddhists**. For example, ordaining trees in Thailand to avoid deforestation and camping drug rehabilitation programmes. Revival or re-establishment approach of early reformers was labelled as **Protestant Buddhism** (G. Obeyesekere; R. Gombrich) as it took form of reaction against and imitating Christianity and its associated Western political dominance.

Over the years, there have been certain developments in Buddhist world of some **non-monastic movements**. Initial and certainly oldest is the Newar Buddhism influenced by Vajrayana practised by the Bajracaryas. The **Friends of the Western Buddhist Order** (FWBO), an ecumenical movement, founded by Sangharakshita, whilst accepting the whole Buddhist tradition has adapted to its ethical, economical and spiritual paths. It is open to all regardless of nationality, race, colour, education, class or caste, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation, or age. Another such movement is the **Soka Gakkai International** (SGI), an international organisation with over 12 million members in over 180 countries, aims to realize the absolute happiness (enlightenment) of individuals and the prosperity of each country by spreading understanding of the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin (1222-1282). The SGI engages in various activities to promote peace, culture and education based on Buddhism.

ALL RIVERS MEET IN THE OCEAN

Although both Major schools of Mahayana (Northern) and Theravada (Southern) have many sub-sects they stay hand in hand without conflicts. While both groups support non-violence the former has produced many prominent peace promoting leaders. No violence is recorded within these groups. No matter whatever versions, schools or roots of Buddhism, they all aim to one and only one thing, individual or collective happiness, yet not forgetting the ultimate goal of *nirvana*, end of suffering. Teachings, philosophies, rituals, practices, beliefs all aim that end of suffering. However, to meet in the ocean, identities and differences have to be shed and Buddhists have been able to do so. Being ego-lessness in the ego-centric world; not personalising any external factors or events and letting it go, all forms of Buddhists have been able to leave their background identities and forms of practices behind to unite within the Buddhist world. Hence, unity within diversity, and here we are today, together as one in the ocean of Buddhism. The Buddha's appreciation was, "Happy is the unity of Sangha" (*Sukha sanghassa samaggi*) [Dhammapada: v194].

Buddhism in Sikkim, India Faces Fatal decline

“All it takes for Buddhism to Disappear –
- is for Buddhists to do Nothing”.

Sikkim merged with India in 1976. Influx of outsiders had gathered pace a year before that and Christian missionaries had been successful in wooing many Lepchas from their traditional Buddhist path. According to some monks ‘there is a deep malaise and the Buddhist religion has been marginalised. Their peaceful way of living is slowly and gradually disappearing’. Many monks felt that their culture of non-violence had allowed others to take advantage of them. “We are becoming like refugees in our own land” said Tseten Tashi Bhutia. The state’s few Buddhist schools are woefully under funded; their teachers paid just a fraction of the salary paid to school teachers in the state sector. Most of the children who studied at Sikkim’s monastic schools come from poor families, while rich Buddhists send their children to the Christian schools in the main towns. There is a real danger that Buddhism once the state religion will soon become a religion of minority. (*Daily Mirror Wednesday, 14th June 2006, Sri Lanka.*)

Construction of a stupa in Russia

Nepali Lama Rang Ring Rinpoche with the help of Guru Padmasambhava society of Russia has established a stupa in a small island in the Lake Baikal in 2005. Venerable Rang Ring Rinpoche has also travelled to various cities of Russia to promote Buddha Dharma. He has also laid foundation for construction of another stupa at Kalamiki in Russia. (*Sandhya Times, 8 Sept. 2006*)

Conversion of Dalits to Buddhism in India

Around 3 million people from various parts of India converted to Buddhism as part of 50th year celebration of Babasaheb Ambedkar’s deeksha. The programme of conversion started in the run up to Dusshera through Dr. Ambedkar’s birth anniversary in October 2006. These conversion ceremonies were the largest ever to be seen till now since India gained independence from Britain. (Personal communication from Punjab Buddhist Society, UK)

Takshila Maha Buddha Vihara in Punjab, India

The inauguration of Takshila Maha Buddha Vihara took place in Ludhiana, India to mark the golden jubilee of the mass conversion of Dalits to Buddhism under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar in 1956. Thousands of people from India and abroad attended the inaugural ceremony. The Vihara was constructed by the Punjab Buddhist society with donations received from Punjabi Buddhists across the world. (*Tribune News service, 8th Oct. 2006*)

First International Congress of Buddhist Women’s Role in the Sangha in Hamburg, Germany

The Foundation for Buddhist Studies, Hamburg is holding an International Congress on July 18/19/20, 2007 in Hamburg. The Mulasarvastivada transmission line of ordination for nuns in Tibet has been broken for many centuries. The only transmission line of ordination that still exists is the Dharmagupta transmission line, which allows the ordination of nuns in China, Taiwan, Korea and Vietnam. In 1987 H. H. XIVth Dalai Lama demanded the re-establishment of full ordination for nuns in Tibet, as was the previous tradition in the times of the historical Buddha (around 500BC). For many years Buddhist women from around the world have been involved in reviving the ordination for nuns of the Tibetan Sangha, so that they can live and act as fully ordained nuns. There are around 130.000 nuns living in various nunneries worldwide.

The objective of this congress is to bring the views and positions of monks and nuns of the Tibetan tradition together with other Buddhist groups, to finally achieve a consensus on the issue. This will then lead to a declaration of the reintroduction of ordination for nuns in Tibet through H. H. XIVth Dalai Lama at the Hamburg congress in 2007. (*The Buddhist Channel, Nov 8, 2006*)

World Peace Pagoda Pokahra, Kaski Nepal (*eKantipur.com 4-11-06*)



A pictorial biography exhibition of Peace Icons of our time

Nepal Art Council held an exhibition at their gallery (Nov 9-19, 2006), a day after government and Maoists signed the peace treaty on the theme “the power of one” portraying important events in the lives of three prominent Peace Icons- Mahatma Gandhi of India, Martin Luther King Jr of the US and Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International of Japan.

Gandhi is revered for national freedom through peace, King for upholding the human rights of blacks in America and Ikeda for promoting peace, fraternity and feelings of brotherhood propagated through Buddhist philosophy. These three people have sought to forge an existence filled with dignity, freedom and happiness for all people around the world.

Change cannot bring progress unless it is non-destructive and the initiator has feeling of love for all. As Gandhi said,

“In the moment of our trial and our triumph, let me declare my faith, I believe in loving my enemies.”

At a time we begin our peaceful transition, the stories of these three peace idols would help the people, especially the youngsters, for internal change in their perspectives to believe in peace and love, says Nabin Manandhar of Soka Gakkai Nepal, the organiser of the art exhibition. (*nepalnews.com Nov 13, 06*)

Venerable Dr. Vajiragnana passed away

The most venerable Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana, head of the London Buddhist Vihara and Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain passed away on 15 December 2006 at 9.15 AM at the age of 78 at Hammersmith Hospital, London. Late Venerable Dr. Vajiragnana was very kind to Nepalese community and has always provided support and encouragement to our society from the beginning. Many members of our society attended his funeral service on 21 December 2006. In the passing away of venerable Dr. Vajiragnana, our society has lost one of the great supporters of our society.

International Conference of Young Buddhists in Nepal

Young Men's Buddhist Association of Nepal has announced holding of 4th International Conference of Young Buddhists. This week long conference will be held from 27 -31 March 2007 at Lumbini, Kathmandu and Patan. The aim of the conference is to forge deep and meaningful relationship between International Young Buddhist Associations and young Buddhists of Nepal on the basis of Buddha's teaching. At a time when Nepalese are experiencing uncertainty, fear, and unhappiness, it is hoped that this conference will bring awareness of Buddha's teaching of peace and help re-establish peace, stability and harmony in the society. (*Sandhya Times, 23rd March 2007*)

Establishment of National Network of Young Buddhists

National Young Buddhist conference decided to establish 'National Network of Young Buddhists' to highlight to the world that Nepal is where a messenger of world peace was born. This decision was taken at a three day conference

held in Kathmandu, Nepal. Sixty Buddhist Associations from twenty five districts took part in this conference. (*Sandhya Times 27 March 2007*)

Missing 'Buddha boy' found meditating

Ram Bahadur Bomjon, popularly known as the 'Buddha Boy', has been found meditating inside a pit dug underground at Ratanpuri recently. The meditation hole is seven feet deep and seven feet wide.

Bomjon, who had started meditation under a Pipal tree in the village, had gone missing since March 11, 2006, and again reappeared on December 25 the same year. He had again disappeared suddenly from his earlier meditation venue on March 9.

After his mysterious disappearance last year, his 'disciples' had claimed that he had gone in search of a peaceful place for meditation, as thousands of curious people began visiting him daily then. Seventeen-year-old Bomjan claims that he has meditated without taking any food since May 17 2006. *nepalnews.com pb Mar 28 07*

Film about Patacara

Shyam Audio Video, Nepal is planning to make a film about Patacara. It was based on life of Patacara. Due to loss of parents, husband and children, Patacara lost her mind and wandered madly. With kind and compassionate words of the Buddha, Patacara came to realise the nature of the world and death. Following the teaching of the Buddha she became Bhikkhuni (nun). (*Sandya Times 2 April 07*)

His Holiness Dalai Lama's Visit to Milan, Italy. 7th - 9th December 2007.

His Holiness Dalai Lama will be visiting Milan, Italy from 7 -9 December 2007. He will give teachings on '**The Way Toward Inner Peace**'. For information and reservation: please contact Center for Tibetan Studies, Ghe Pel Ling Via Euclide 17 - 20128 Milan, Italy. mail: info@dalailama-milano2007.org; web: www.dalailama-milano2007.org Phone (+39) 02 2576015 - (+39) 02 25707338; fax (+39) 02 27003449

LNBDS (UK) Activities 2006/2007

May 2006:

2550th Buddha Jayanti Celebration in London, UK

Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) celebrated 2550th **Buddha Jayanti (Buddha Day)** on Sunday, 14th May 2006 at the Priory Community Centre, Acton, London. The celebration started with Buddha Puja followed by administration of Pan a Sila, chanting according to a Tibetan tradition by Venerable Lodro Thaye and blessing from Venerable monks. Mr. Pabitra Man Shakya sang two very beautiful devotional songs appropriate to the occasion. Mr. Bishwo Shahi accompanied him in harmonium. Mr. Dipendra Bista, Councillor, Royal Nepalese Embassy in

London and Mr. Nima Lama, president of Yet Nepalese Association in the UK gave brief speeches in Nepali. Mr. Bista emphasized the importance of remembering various suffering human beings have to endure from the time of birth until we die. He told the gathering that Buddha's teaching is more important today than ever before. Mr. Nima Lama also emphasized the importance of Buddha's teaching and expressed his happiness that Yeti is able to cooperate with Lumbini Nepalese Buddha Dharma Society (UK) in this celebration.

2550th Buddha Jayanti (Buddha Day) was celebrated all over the world on Saturday, 13 May 2006 to mark the birth, enlightenment and death (parinirvana) of Buddha. It was 2550 years ago that Siddhartha Gautama Buddha passed away at Kusinagar in India. In Nepal people enjoy national holiday to celebrate this day. In United Nation's headquarter in New York, it is celebrated as Vesak Day (Buddha Day) and Buddhist get day off to celebrate this auspicious event.

During the occasion Venerable Sumana spoke on **"Buddha's Message of Peace."** He emphasized the Buddha's message of need to conquer greed, hatred and ignorance – three fires to gain freedom and real peace. Mr. Amrit Ratna Sthapit, founder president of the society gave an excellent talk on **"Buddha's Basic Teaching–The Four Noble Truths."** They are: (1) there is suffering (*Dhukkha*), (2) there is cause for suffering which is desire/craving (*Tanha*), (3) the suffering can be ceased (*Nirodha*), and (4) the way out of suffering – the eight fold path (*Astangika Marga*). He reiterated stories to illustrate what he meant. Venerable Bhikkhu Sujana explained briefly in Nepali on 'what is meditation, why we should meditate and then led the audience through a short period of guided meditation practice. Dr. Prabhat Sakya thanked every one for their help and for attending the celebration.

The hall was decorated with Buddhist flags appropriate for the occasion. The arrangement of the dais itself gave religious atmosphere with Buddha Murti and venerable monks between the trees. About 150 devotees including presidents, general secretaries, and members of various Nepalese organisations attended the ceremony. The editor of Nepali Sandesh and coordinator of Nepali Samaj UK took notes and photos for their respective publications. Nepali TV took video of the proceeding. Sujana Shakya and Sidhir Shakya provided an excellent sound system. After the formal programme every one enjoyed the traditional Nepali refreshment generously provided by members and well-wishers of the society.

June 2006

Members attended Buddha Day celebration organised by London Buddhist Vihara, on Sunday, 25 June 2006 at Ealing Town Hall.

July 2006

LNBDS (UK) executive committee meeting held at the residence of Sujana and Reema at Hanwell, London

August 2006

Members attended condolence service for former executive committee member Mr. J B Tandon and Mr. Laxman Thapa, elder brother of executive committee member Mr. Madan Thapa organised by Pasa Puchah Guthi (UK) and Sagarmatha Times on Sunday, 27 August 2007 at the London Buddhist Vihara.

October 2006

The society's executive committee meeting held on Sunday,

8 October 2006 at the residence of Dr. Ratna and Mrs. Padma Sakya in Beckenham, Kent.

January 2007

Society's executive committee meeting held on Sunday, 14 January 2007 at Lotus Restaurant in Hillingdon. Venue was kindly provided by Shubha, Nani Shova Shakya and family.

February 2007

An essay competition was held in collaboration with Buddhist Youth Group of Kathmandu, Nepal on following two subjects

- 1). *Importance of Dana, Sila and Samadhi in daily life*
- 2). *Buddha Dharma and Human rights*

Following were declared first, second and third:

A. **Importance of Dana, Sila and Samadhi in daily life:**

- 1st Luis Maharjan
- 2nd Pranesh Shakya
- 3rd Shaker Maharjan

B. **Buddha Dharma and Human rights:**

- 1st Dr. Kabindra Bajracharya
- 2nd Sunita Manandhar
- 3rd Anita Buddhacharya

Prize distribution will take place in May/June 2007 in Kathmandu, Nepal. This event was kindly sponsored by Greenwich London College.

Members attended Pasupatinath pratisthapana at The Shree Ram Mandir, King Street, Southall, Middlesex on Friday 16 February 2007 and Democracy Day on Sunday, 18 February 2007 at Nepalese Embassy London.

March 2007

Editorial Panel meeting held at Amrit and Anu Sthapit's residence in Hayes, Middlesex to discuss publication of Lumbini 2007.

April 2007

- Editorial Panel meeting held at Dharma and Pramila Shakya's residence in Slough, Berkshire

- Editorial Panel meeting held on 9 April at the residence of Dinesh and Rasana Bajracharya in Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

- Members attended prabachan by Pujya Shree Nepal Baba at The Shree Ram Mandir, Southall, Middlesex on Sunday, 8th April 2007 PM

- Society's executive committee meeting held at Ram Babu and Durga's residence in Charlton, London to finalise the programme for the forthcoming 2551st Buddha Jayanti celebration.

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