



# Buddhism And Its Importance In Indian Context

AJAY KUMAR DAS

Assistant Professor, Vidyasagar Mahavidyalaya, Hooghly, West Bengal

## Abstract:

*In this paper researcher covers the problem Buddhism and its importance in Indian Context. Authors note that Buddhism takes into contemplation the spirit of time and makes attempts to revolutionize. Buddhism has been increasing as one of the most influential elements of cultural landscape in India. It may be clarified by the fact that due to religious. Besides, individual character of self-fulfilment, inner spiritual freedom, private atmosphere of religiousness and variety that are typical for Buddhist tradition are consonant with the values of liberation and cultivated now. They are human rights and freedoms, thoughts of democracy and post-modernism.*

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Society, Importance & Indian.

## Introduction

Buddhism was founded by Gautama Buddha (563-483 B.C.). He was born in Lumbini province, now in modern day Nepal. His original name was Siddhartha. His father was Suddhodana, the ruler of Kapilavastu<sup>1</sup> and his mother was Mahamaya of the Kosalan dynasty. Mahamaya died at child natal and Siddhartha was brought up by his step-mother Prajapati Gautami. He wedded his cousin Yashodhara and had a son named Rahul. His father was provided with a comfortable and happy life. Yet the royal splendors did not make him contented; he was moved by human miseries in the form of old age, sickness, death and disillusionment. The wretchedness of the human life cast a deep spell on Gautama. After sighted an old man, a sick man, a corpse and an ascetic, he absolute to become a wanderer. In order to find a solution to the miseries of mankind he left his wife Yashodhara and son Rahul at the age of twenty-nine and moseyed from to place in ascetic garb. This event is known as the 'Great Renunciation.' Gautama spent six years as a wandering ascetic and had discussions with sages and Brahmins.

Buddhism is a religion which does not trust in the existence of God or a supernatural creator. The Buddha himself was opposed to the discussion of such subjects. The Buddha in his last message advised his disciples to take refuge in own self. Religion is a matter of faith. It is a faith in supernatural or superhuman navies. It considers some acts as righteous and sacred and endorses such acts. It deems other acts as immoral and profane and condemns such acts. Behaving in accordance with the religious laws is virtuous; going against them is sacrilegious. The virtuous acts are supposed to bring man good outcomes, on the other hand the profane acts outcome in calamity. The idea of heaven and hell are intertwined everywhere the sacred and profane acts. Man are the social animal and also a religious or spiritual being. Religion is a major concern of man. It is one of the earliest and the profoundest interests of the human beings. It is universal, eternal, pervasive and perpetual interests of man.

<sup>1</sup> Akira, Hirakawa, A History of Indian Buddhism, Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1990

The Buddha in Kalama Sutra asked his disciples to have a rationalistic outlook and not to believe in anything without verification. Buddhism is not a religion in that sense, but it is a mode of life. The true spirit of Buddhism is of rationalism and free thinking. That is unfair the intellectuals of the world. Buddhism is more a code of conduct than a religion. The Buddha has stated the Sila (Buddhist Precepts) on the basis of which people can live their life in peace and happiness. As long as man exists in this world the value of an honest and virtuous life cannot be diminished. Also, the Buddhist scriptures are filled with advice from the Buddha regarding environmental values and they are applicable to monastic and lay lifestyle. Buddhism is based on love and compassion, in other words with loving kindness. The Buddha asked his disciples to scatter all around for the good and happiness. The Buddha still continue to inspire Buddhists and non - Buddhists in their effort to make the world a better place to live.

## Literature Review

- In Russian social and cultural space, the interest to Buddhism is related to liberal and democratic ideas too. New Russian Buddha are as usual open-minded liberal people tending to comparatively soft and pluralistic character of Buddhism. Today scientists note that “fundamental Buddhist value dominants - rejection of any forms of violence, religious, ethnic and cultural, racial, social, gender tolerance, mediation, dissatisfaction of all forms of despotism, urge towards relating of religious and scientific world-view, recognition of human right of free choice - are well linked with the values of civil society<sup>2</sup>” (Ostrovskaya, 2009: 19)
- At the same time we should consider the history of development of Russian society after Soviet Union break-up. New Buddha who were natural opponents of the Communist party did not manage to become so called “new Russians.” So Buddhism in social and cultural space of Russia (apart from traditionally Buddhist regions) like in the other post-Soviet countries remains marginal phenomenon and a sort of alternative to any establishment (Agadzhanian, 2005: 250).
- Deterritorialization<sup>3</sup> of religion is one more important feature of today global religiousness. Religion starts to cross traditional confessional, political and civilization boundaries. Almost all main religions find the followers in regions where there was never be and lose congregation in the places of traditional prevalence, in their canonical territory. A certain person is more often the subject of choice of the religion despite the membership in some confessional tradition (Filatov, 2005: 13-14).

## Research methodology

Methodology is the essential part of the any research. In this paper researcher conduct qualitative research specially based on historical research and its nature in documentary analysis.

## Importance of Buddhism in Indian context

The Buddhist viharas were used for education purposes. Nalanda, Vikramshila, Taxila, Udyantpuri, Vallabhi and others cities established as high Buddhist learning centres. Buddhism helped in the growth of works in the popular language of the people. The literature written both in Pali and Sanskrit were improved by scholars of Hinyana and Mahayana sects. The Buddhist texts like Tripitakas, Jatakas, Buddha charita,

<sup>2</sup> Ostrovskaya, E.A. (2009), Russian Buddhist Non-State organizations: Perspectives of consensus. Philosophy in the dialog of cultures. Elista: Kalmykia State University Publishing House. p18-23.

<sup>3</sup> Filatov, S. (2005), Religious life of Eurasia: Reaction on globalization, Religion and Globalization in Euro Asia Space. Moscow: Neostrom. p8-25.

Mahavibhasa, Miliand panho, Lalit Vistara are resources to Indian. Like Jainism, Buddhism went a long way in persuading the Indian society. The life and teachings of Buddha cast spell over the Indian frame. The kings utilized Buddhism and the people rendered their support to this religion. In due course of time Buddhism made great importance to Indian society. The importance is-

**Development of Language and Literature:** Gautam Buddha talked his ideas in simple languages. From the beginning he was using Prakriti linguistic. Later on, he resorted to Pali language. With the measured march of time, Sanskrit became the medium of evangelization Buddhism. In this way, languages developed.

**Opposition to Caste System:** Buddha fervently opposed the caste system in Indian society which was an ugly practice during that remote stage of history. Due to his opposition the difficulty of caste system vanished from the society. The society respired a healthy atmosphere. This trend sustained and Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar also adopted this principle of Buddha and became popular inside the society

**Simple Religion:** Buddhism was very simple. Its principles were very simple. It was easily followed by the people. It was not complex like Vedic religion. It also had no rituals. Due to the attractive personality of Buddha, it spread throughout India. People accepted it due to its simplicity.

**Character Building:** Buddhism taught various good qualities like truth non-violence, non-possession, kindness, brotherhood etc. All these qualities were meant to build up human character. These qualities were basically cultivated by the people in the society. The society grew with noble thought. The people by creation their character helped in the creation of a healthy society.

**Monastery System:** The Buddhist cloisters played vital role in Indian culture. The Buddhist monks and nuns stayed in those hermitages. For the first time, democratic method was found inside a Buddhist monastery. The head of the cloister was elected not by selection but by vote which exhibited democratic spirit. Later on, the Hindus also followed this arrangement. Sankaracharya arrangement four maths in four parts of India. Later on, others followed this system. Buddhism was able to be created, due to the contribution

**Influence on History:** Buddhism applied its influence on the course of Indian history. The land of Kalinga changed Chandasoka to Dharmasoka Buddhism also concerned Kaniska and Harshavardhan. Mahatma Gandhi also learnt the lesson of Ahimsa from Buddhism and started the fight for freedom against the Britishraj by following the path of nonviolence.

**Emancipation of Women:** Buddha was the manifestation of mercy. In his monastic direction he also received nuns. By this he made a noble effort for bringing the social emancipation of women. Now the women did not consider themselves as substandard to man. In each sense, Buddha was responsible for the upliftment of the women.

**National Unity:** Buddhism spread in the nook and corner of India It fostered the idea of national unity and morality. Asoka, Kanishka and Harshavardhan became the passionate champion of nationalism and they tried to unite India under one umbrella. This was followed by the Moughals and also by the British. Thus, Buddhism undoubtedly brought national unity.

In every sense of the term, Buddhism exerted incredible influence on Indian society and culture. It freed the people from the hold of Vedic religion. It raised voice against caste system and propounded the idea of peaceful coexistence inside the society. In the field of art, architecture, painting, monument, literature and so on. Buddhism left its marks.

## Conclusion

Buddhism originated in Ancient India sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BC from where it spread into foreign countries like China, Japan, Mongolia, Burma, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and Nepal and exercised substantial impact on the culture and civilization of those countries. It made appreciated and lasting contributions in the field of religion, philosophy, literature and art. Its contribution was not confined to construction and sculpture alone. It also made valuable contribution to the art of image. It gave us a simple, understandable and popular religion. It greatly appealed to the people on account of its simplicity; emotional element, easy ethical code, the use of philological language and the methods of teaching. One of the extreme contributions of Buddhism to India was that it sponsored a sense of national feeling amongst the Indians. It laid excessive stress on the principle of non-Violence which immensely affected the character of the people. It

maintained on virtues like charity, purity, compassion, self-sacrifice, truthfulness, control over passions, non-injury to living creatures in thought and action etc.

## References

Armstrong, Karen. *The Buddha*. New York: Penguin Putnam, 2001.

Bahm, A.J. *Philosophy of the Buddha*. New York: Harper & Row, 1958.

Blackstone, Kathryn R. *Women in the Footsteps of the Buddha: Struggles for Liberation in the Therigatha*. London: Curzon, 1998.

Carrithers, Michael. *The Buddha*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1983.

Meckel, Daniel J. and Robert L. Moore, eds. *Self and Liberation: The Jung-Buddhism Dialogue*. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.

Pio, Edwina. *Buddhist Psychology: A Modern Perspective*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publ., 1988.

Rao, Shanker C N. *Sociology*. Delhi: S. Chand & Company Pvt. Ltd., 2014.

Filatov, S. (2005), *Religious life of Eurasia: Reaction on globalization, Religion and Globalization in Euro Asia Space*. Moscow: Neostrom. p8-25.

Agadzhanyan, A.S. (2005), *Buddhism in modern world: Soft alternative to globalism. Religion and Globalization in Eurasia Space*. Moscow: Neostrom. p222-255.

Ostrovskaya, E.A. (2009), *Russian Buddhist Non-State organizations: Perspectives of consensus. Philosophy in the dialog of cultures*. Elista: Kalmykia State University Publishing House. p18-23.

*The Buddha and His Teachings* Venerable Nārada Mahāthera Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc.

Akira, Hirakawa, *A History of Indian Buddhism*, Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1990