



The Impact of Buddhism on Contemporary Society: A Retrospective Discourse

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Abstract

Buddhism is seen as a system of psychological principles and practices that an individual can apply to the benefit of his own spiritual advancement and emotional wellbeing. Thus, the primary value of Buddhism in the modern world is that it shows a way to happiness and peace of mind regardless of the political and social environment. However, it would be wrong to assume that Buddha's doctrine was social and internalized to the exclusion of concern for human relations and society as a whole.

The reason for focusing on individual development is based on the principle that blind people cannot lead blind people. Or as the Buddha said, "One, who has been sunk in the swamp of greed and delusion, cannot get another out of that muck." One must first purify oneself in order to be able to show the way to others. The numerous cases in both antiquity and in modern times of religious and political atrocities perpetrated by men who genuinely believed they served causes of justice and righteousness demonstrate the wisdom of this hypothesis. We can only have a better world when we first have better people. Fear, jealousy, selfishness, hatred and greed are the root causes of human conflict, whether it is a petty crime or a world war.

Keywords: Spiritual; Erroneous; Justice; Doctrine

Introduction

Many religious traditions have flourished and flowered in India time to time. Almost all scholars agree that the Indus-Valley civilization is ancient even from the Vedic period. The remains of the Indus Valley lack written evidence and what has been received has not yet been read. On the basis of the remains found from excavation, scholars have presented the contours of the prevalent religion.

It is well known that religion has been widely recognized in India and this means that religion has affected society and politics more than any other institution. Although 'Dharmashastra', 'Rajashastra' and 'Samajashastra' are considered separate entity in India, they could not remain untouched and effected from theology and sociology-theology. Neither their existence without theology was possible. In fact, both Dharma Shastra and Rajashastra preach duty to the society on practical level, the difference is only of the abilities of both. Where theology can preach good and ethical life to the society, Rajashastra teaches the observance of the objectives of society.

One of such religion is Buddhism. Mahatma Buddha, in search of knowledge, wandered here and there and finally attained enlightenment under the Peepal tree at a place called Uruvela. After attaining enlightenment, Mahatma Buddha came to Sarnath and gave his first sermon here which is known as 'Char Arya Satya'. This event is known as 'Dharmachakra Pramanan' in Buddhism. Influenced by the teachings of Buddhism, Emperor Ashoka and Kanishka made it a state religion and did many philanthropic works for its propagation. After 'Mahaparinirvana', the bone relics of Buddha were divided into eight parts. Ajatashatru, the ruler of Magadha and the other republics of the region, built stupas with the relics and protected it. We get detailed knowledge of Buddhism from Pali-Tripitaka. According to Mahatma Buddha, there is enough sorrow in life. To get rid of this sorrow, he told us to follow the 'Ashtangika marga' i.e octagonal path. Before understanding the nature of Buddhism, it can be said that the broad and common elements in different sects should be considered the basic precept of the Buddha.

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Rosenvarg has also expressed his opinion in this regard that any theory that has been continuous since time immemorial does not remain unchanged. Even if history seems to follow the original principle from the later theories, it will be an evolved and metaphorical expression rather than its original form. In fact, by looking at the later theories, its basic form cannot be known with transparency. For this, ancient and original manuscripts can be considered as the primary. It is equally true that in the realization of these ancient principles, knowledge of their changed form and subsequent history can be of great help. In Buddhism, it is taken that all worldly material is degradable, and Nirvana is something which lasts forever. From this, it is known that ignorance is the root cause of sorrow. The chaotic world cycle keeps on taking recourse to karma, craving etc for ignorant people.

In Buddhism, the ultimate purpose of life means the door of Nirvana is open to all women, men, young, old, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, Arya, non-Aryan, native, foreign etc. The Dhamma-ghosha of 'Do not ask caste' conduct was for all human beings. The principles of Buddhism propounded by Mahatma Buddha can be divided into two main parts. First, the fundamental principles of Buddhism and second, the practical principles of Buddhism. Mahatma Buddha did not discuss or explain any separate religious element in his philosophical principles. The Tathagata had a belief that there is no connection with the Nirvana and religion and the exaltation of soul and God. Mahatma Buddha never claimed that he was rendering any religion. He said that I am just purifying the established path going on since the ancient times. In spite of all this, many philosophical principles are introduced to us by the ideas contained in the elements which were formulated as the basis of Buddhism. It is a universally accepted truth that every thought or belief has a philosophical basis. Morality is the foundation of karma and the philosophical principles of Mahatma Buddha are full of karmic nirvana.

The philosophical principles are indirectly found in their religious principles. they are certainly very practical and considerate. The basis of what Tathagata said definitely reveals evidence of faith in a philosophical theory. Buddhism believes in living life, so its approach in every sense is purely practical. Mahatma Buddha believed that 'religion is a matter of life, not death', therefore, the philosophy he preached gave special emphasis to practicality. Since Buddhism emerged in the sixth century BC, this religion criticized all the evil practices prevalent in the then society and insisted on following an ethical path based on logic.

Buddhism promoted that 'people of all denominations should live everywhere in a friendly spirit and propagate their marvelous principles, because everyone wants peace'.

Karma Siddhanta Buddhism has given much importance to the accumulation of past and future karma in a life span. The existence of the 'rebirth' and 'immortal soul' has not been accepted in

Buddhist philosophy which is against Brahmin beliefs. In Buddhist philosophy, the principle of karma is kept on top. Therefore, they do not accept that a person suffers from the wrong deeds of the past life. As per Buddhist philosophy, a person who did the deed may not even live until the deed actually bore the fruit. Although the change is not considered to be completely different, it is because all the organisms of the world are in a state of constant flow. In change, the virtue of karma plays an important role. In the Buddhist principles, it is said that karma divides life into inferior and superior state.

Buddha showed the importance of karma and its fruits with his philosophy and told that karma bears fruit. Therefore, one should accumulate virtue and not the sinful karma. The mind should be purified with true knowledge. That is why one should always perform ethical karma. The greatest feature of karma theory from Buddhism is that all the living beings of the world are constantly flowing. Therefore, after the moment of one moment is over then only the second moment can be achieved. This also proves itself that the person who does the work, gets the result of it and this momentum continues. Many examples have been given for its accomplishment - such as seedling or tree is produced on the destruction of the seed, but the tree is not the same seed. In other words, when there is change due to land, water, air, heat, etc., then that seed is no more. The second feature of Buddhist philosophy is that every moment the change is accompanied by the ethical Karma.

India and the prosperity of Indian culture is extremely important. While Buddhism tried to bind different sections of society in the thread of social unity, on the other hand, by guiding the neglected and most backward classes for centuries, they also motivated them to achieve the ultimate goal of life, Nirvana. Buddhism not only enriched the ancient Indian culture, but also laid the foundation of an ideal and orderly lifestyle for the future generation, by promoting the importance of non-violence. Emphasizing the protection of domestic and wild animals and keeping animal sacrifices separate from religious acts proved undoubtedly useful in the direction of environmental protection. The utility of trees in Buddhist thought is attested by the fact that Mahatma Buddha attained enlightenment under the tree itself. In fact, the Bodhi tree is located in the Buddhist thinking stream as the center of faith.

Buddhism has also had an outstanding contribution towards women empowerment. In the context of globalization, the concept of human rights must have been strengthened, but its former form exists in Buddhism. Kindness, compassion, generosity, sympathy, service to the old, respect for elders, respect for Brahmins and modesty etc. are symbols of personal and social values. Buddhism has played an important role in the propagation of Indian culture. Indian art, philosophy, religion etc. have been influenced by his teachings from time to time. Buddhism is one of the recognized religions not only of India but of the world. Buddhism was not just

a religion like other religions, but it was the result of a mass movement that was changing many aspects of life, from personal beliefs to social beliefs. A clear vision of which was evident in the then thought and life. This religion developed a way of life that laid the foundation for a personal view of man, with lofty principles of non-violence, compassion, sacrifice, and cosmopolitanism. Buddhism is still relevant today. The life, work and thinking of Buddha is very inspiring for the suffering humanity. Buddhism is still seen as a living religion in many countries of the world. Countries like China, Korea, Tibet, Mongolia, Vietnam, Burma, Thailand, Kampuchea, Japan, etc. are much inspired by Buddhism. In Buddhism, ignorance is called the origin of all sorrows, and the end of it or the total destruction of mind's sufferings is called samadhi. Similarly, in yoga philosophy, ignorance has been accepted as the root cause of all sorrows. In Buddhist philosophy, five distinctions of meditation are told, and similarly in Yoga philosophy, 'Panchavidhi' Samadhi is discussed. Smriti has been considered a symbol of perseverance in the Buddhist religion, and it has also been accepted that it makes the faith as strong as granite. This is also considered by Patanjali to be the second most popular practice of the mind. He defines the memory of the sensed subjects as unsympathetic, stating that while memory is the instinct of the mind on the one hand, the same being present in the mind of the yogi, while keeping an eye on his side, keeps an eye towards samadhi. Thus, it clearly reflects the influence of Patanjali Yoga Sutra on Buddhism [1-8].

The eightfold path of Buddhism has accepted the eight parts of yoga. Along with religion many other parameters like restraint, courage and defecation, adherence to non-violence and truth is said to be very important for the monk. Calling the above restraint of yoga philosophy as Yama, it has been accepted as the first part of yoga. The renunciation of violence has been called the first human step, emphasizing the adherence to non-violence. The prohibition of wine has been promoted. Similarly, truth has been given an important place in 'Panchsheel', considering false speech as unethical. In Dhammapada, 'Lies' has been described as the origin of all sins. Possibly because of this type of prohibition of violence and untruth, Maharshi Vyas, the commentator of Yogasutra has given more emphasis on non-violence and truth.

Recognizing that civilizations have thrived under a variety of different political systems, and because of the universal law of change no society or culture will last forever, Buddha did not advocate any particular type of government. When he spoke of monarchies, he said that the responsibility rests with the king, and the king must cultivate justice, benevolence, mercy, and virtue for the prosperity of the state. There were a few democratic states in Buddha's time, and among them he said that they would continue to prosper as long as citizens were able to come together and meet in harmony and maintain good moral standards.

In the centuries following the Buddha, his followers built hospitals and rest houses according to his teachings on compassion. The great Indian Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century BC accepted Buddhism. He stopped all wars and conquests, built wells and "serais" and carried out many other acts of public good. Other Buddhist rulers followed this example. Buddha refused to preach his doctrine to a starving man until that man was fed. And about illness, he said: "Whoever honors me, and whoever follows me, whoever adheres to my advice, then he should take care of the sick." He told his disciples: "Go out into the world to spread the teachings for the benefit, welfare and happiness of all creatures." "Sarvajana Hitaya, Sarvajana Sukhaya" is the core of Buddhist philosophy [9-15].

Social ethics is only one aspect of Buddhism. Its primary concern is to reduce (and finally eliminate) greed, anger, delusion, and suffering. But these basic goals naturally and logically lead to a social ethic that operates independently of political, theological, or dogmatic ideologies. For it works as follows: when men learn to lessen the greed, hatred, and selfishness that burn in their hearts, and when kindness and compassion have gained a prominent place in human impulses, then men will endeavor to improve the world in whatever way allows their immediate status.

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