

Symposium on Diplomacy and Buddha's teachings: A path to Global Peace

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Topic= “Lord Buddha’s concept of Global Peace and Bharat Vision 2047”

Author's Biography–

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Keywords = Buddhism, Global Peace, Humanity, Dhamma Mangal, Gender Equality, Therigatha, Non-Violence, Co-operation, Asoka’s Inscription, Bharat Vision 2047.

Introduction

Indian Buddhism has today become a global religion, nurturing the basic sentiments of freedom, equality and fraternity. Lord Buddha has been called 'the Light of Asia' because of his great thoughts and teachings of humanity. In the 3rd century BCE, after the Kalinga war, the beloved emperor Asoka, inspired by the spirit of Dhamma Mangal, declared ‘Dhamma Vijaya’ instead of war victory. This was such a beginning of world history, which became the foundation stone of the great mantra of world brotherhood “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”. When we look at the contemporary context, we see that Emperor Asoka was not satisfied with just this, but he also sent many Dhamma messengers to his nearby states for the welfare of world humanity. Seeing the owner of a powerful and vast empire doing this, the rulers of nearby states also accepted the importance of Buddhism and spread the teachings of Buddhism in their states for the public welfare.

Discussion

War between the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu and Koliyas of Ramgrama over river Rohini's water. There was a small river by the name of Rohini between Kapilavatthu and Koliya. The two kingdoms took turns, in perfect harmony, to water their respective arable lands by controlling the flow of the channel with a single dam. The level of the water in the channel was at its lowest in the month of Jetthamasa and the crops usually withered. The farmers of the two states called a meeting to discuss the matter of sharing the water in the channel.

At the meeting the farmers of Koliya said: "Friends, if the small amount of water in the reservoir were to be divided and shared by both of us, none of us would receive sufficient amount to water our fields. One more flood of water would suffice to bring maturity to our crops. We request you therefore to let us make use of this small amount of water." Farmers of Kapilavatthu had their say also in this manner:

"Friends, we can't go from door to door of your houses carrying baskets and our purses filled with gold, silver and precious jewels in search of paddy, in a dejected manner, while you all sat down with your minds at ease having filled your granaries with paddy to their full capacities. Our early crops, too, are about to mature and need watering in like manner."

Heated arguments ensued, one side saying 'we are not going to yield', the other side retorting in the same words. Exchange of words eventually led to blows, a farmer on one side starting to attack a farmer from the other side and the latter retaliating in a like manner. The affray that started between the farmers on both sides ultimately grew into hostilities (like a small bush fire which grows fierce and finally burns down a palatial mansion) to the extent of decrying the royal clans on both sides.

The Koliyan farmers began the quarrel:

"You have threatened us by placing your reliance on the royal clan of Kapilavatthu. These Kapilavatthu royal clan you depend upon behave like common dogs and jackals of the forest making their own sisters their wives[1]. What harm can their elephants, horses and armours can do to us?"

The Kapilavatthu farmers retaliated in no less acrimonious tone:

"You threatened us by relying on your little lepers inflicted with horrible leprosy. The Koliya descendents on whom you lean for support are themselves in a miserable plight ever since they were banished from the city and lived like animals in the hollow of Kola trees. What harm can their elephants, horses and armours can do to us?"

The farmers returned to their respective cities and reported the matter to the Ministers of Agriculture, who in turn, brought the state of affairs to the notice of their chiefs.

Consequently, the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu prepared to wage war on Koliyas and came out of the city, shouting the war cry: "The husbands of their own sisters will demonstrate their feat of arms." The rival royalties on the side of Koliyas also prepared for war and came out, their war cry being: "Those taking shelters in the hollows of Kola trees will display their feat of arms."

At that time, the Buddha was still residing in the Jetavana monastery of Savatthi. On the very day on which the two rival communities of Kapilavatthu and Koliya were all prepared to go to the battlefield, He surveyed the world early at dawn and perceived that a bloody battle was imminent between the two opposing sides that very evening. He further perceived that He would be able to avert the war by going to the scene of hostilities and expounding three Jātakas, namely, Phandāna, Duddaba and Lathukika. This would bring about peace, after which, He will have to teach the two Jātakas of Rukkhadhamma and Vattaka and lastly, followed by Attadanda Sutta to bring home the benefits of unity and harmony. Having heard the discourses, the Sakyans and Koliyans will each give Him two hundred and fifty youths to enter the Order: “I will ordain them to become bhikkhus culminating in the convening of the Great Assembly of Mahā Samaya.”

Having perceived thus, the Buddha decided to go to the place of hostilities and save the warring kinsmen from mutual destruction. He went early for the usual round of receiving alms-food and stayed the whole day in the Scented Chamber. Towards evening, He left the Chamber, carrying the big robe and alms bowl himself, for the scene of strife all alone, without informing anyone. On arrival at the spot, He sat cross-legged in the sky in the middle of the rival groups, and caused dark-blue rays to be emitted from His hair so that darkness prevailed all over, although the sun had not yet set. This was meant to cause contrition in the heart of the warring factions.

While all the people were greatly frightened by the strange phenomenon, the Buddha, sending out six-coloured rays from His body, manifested Himself to them.

When members of the Sakyan clan saw the Buddha, they began to contemplate thus: “The Buddha of our own blood has come, perhaps He has full knowledge of our strife.” They discussed among themselves and decided: “It is not right and proper for us to let our weapons fall upon the bodies of others in the presence of the Buddha; let Koliyans kill us or take us captives, should they desire to do so.” By mutual consent they abandoned all their weapons and sat down respectfully making homage to the Buddha.

The Koliyans also arrived at the same decision among themselves. They too abandoned their weapons and sat down paying obeisance to the Buddha who then descended from the sky and sat on a reserved seat on the delightful sandy plain, with all the grace and glory of a Buddha.

Discourse on End of Strife

The Buddha knowingly asked: “Why have you all come to this place?” The kings of both the states replied: “Most Exalted Buddha, we have not come just to see the river, nor to sport in the river; as a matter of fact we have come to wage war upon one another on this sandy plain.”

The Buddha again asked: “Your Royal Highnesses.... What is the actual cause of your strife?” Then they replied: “Water of this Rohini stream is the actual cause of it.”

The Buddha then asked: “Your Royal Highnesses.... What is the value of water of this Rohini stream?” They replied: “Exalted Buddha, it is of small value.” The Buddha asked an additional question: “What is the value of the earth?” “Its value is limitless,” was the reply. Where upon, the Buddha made this direct question: “How would you evaluate the noble royal Khattiya race?”

They replied: “The value of noble royal Khattiya race is unlimited.” The Buddha then made this address:

“Your Royal Highnesses... For some water of this Rohini channel that is of small value, why do you wish to destroy the priceless royal race of Khattiya by fighting one another. Not the slightest amount of pleasure could be found in worthless conflicts and wasteful strifes. O! Your Royal Highnesses... there was a glaring instance where the seed of enmity sown by a tree deva and bear remained potent throughout the Bhadda world-system.” (UNESCO, A Buddhist Fable, by Raja Rao 1949)

The Buddha then went on to expound the Phandāna Jātaka (of Tesasa Nipata).

Discourse on Attadaṇḍa Sutta

The Buddha after expounding the five Jātakas, proceeded to teach the Attadanda Sutta of Suttanipatta Pāli Text, as the final discourse.

The members of the royal families of the two countries finally reconciled and appeased, and, with devotional faith and full of gratitude, agreed amongst themselves: “Had not the Buddha come and intervened, we would certainly have destroyed one another and made the blood flow in a stream. We have been saved from mutual destruction only because of Him. Above all, had He not chosen to renounce the world, He would have been enjoying the life of a Universal Monarch, ruling over the Four Continents surrounded by two thousand smaller islands. Accompanied by thousands of His sons of great intellectual and physical strength, He would have roamed over all His dominions followed by a large retinue. But our royal kith and kin of noble blood, the Buddha, had renounced all the pleasures and luxuries of a Universal Monarch to become a recluse and He had blossomed forth as a Fully Self-Enlightened Buddha. It would be only right and proper, now that He had become a Buddha, we should let Him have *bhikkhus* of royal blood to attend upon Him.” With this unanimous decision, the royal members of the two countries offered two hundred and fifty princes, from each country to the Buddha, for ordination.

The Buddha accepted them and ordained them as *ehi-bhikkhus* and took them to Mahāvana Grove near the city of Kapilavatthu. From the following day onwards, He took alternate turns to receive alms-food from Kapilavatthu and Koliya in the company of these five hundred *bhikkhus*. The people of the two countries offered the Sangha large amount of alms-food. - The Great Chronicle of Buddhas, By Ven. Mingun Sayadaw, 1990

By the 6th century BCE, the Shakyas, the Koliyas, Moriyas, and Mallakas lived between the territories of the Kauśalyas to the west and the Licchavikas and Vaidehas to the east, thus separating the Vajjika League from the Kosala kingdom. By that time, the Shakyas had become a vassal state of the larger Kingdom of Kosala.

During the 5th century itself, one of the members of the ruling aristocratic oligarchy of the Shakyas was Suddhodana. Suddhodana was married to the princess Māyā, who was the daughter of a Koliya noble, and the son of Suddhodana and Māyā was Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha and founder of Buddhism. During the life of the Buddha, an armed feud opposed the Shakyas and the Koliyas concerning the waters of the river Rohiṇī, which formed the boundary between the two states and whose water was needed by both of them to irrigate their crops. The

intervention of the Buddha finally put an end to these hostilities. After the death of the Buddha, the Shakyas claimed a share of his relics from the Mallakas of Kusinārā on the grounds that he had been a Shakya.

Conquest by Kosala

Shortly after the Buddha's death, the Kauśalya king Viḍūḍabha, who had overthrown his father Pasenadi, invaded the Shakya and Koliya republics, seeking to conquer their territories because they had once been part of Kosala. Viḍūḍabha finally triumphed over the Shakyas and Koliyas and annexed their state after a long war with massive loss of lives on both sides. Details of this war were exaggerated by later Buddhist accounts, which claimed that Viḍūḍabha exterminated the Shakyas in retaliation for having given in marriage to his father the slave girl who became Viḍūḍabha's mother. In actuality, Viḍūḍabha's invasion of Shakya might instead have had similar motivations to the conquest of the Vajjika League by Viḍūḍabha's relative, the Māgadhi king Ajātasattu, who, because he was the son of a Vajjika princess, was therefore interested in the territory of his mother's homeland. The result of the Kauśalya invasion was that the Shakyas and Koliyas merely lost political importance after being annexed into Viḍūḍabha's kingdom. The Shakyas nevertheless soon disappeared as an ethnic group after their annexation, having become absorbed into the population of Kosala, with only a few displaced families maintaining the Shakya identity afterwards. The Koliyas likewise disappeared as a polity and as a tribe soon after their annexation.

The massive life losses incurred by Kosala during its conquest of Shakya and Koliya weakened it significantly enough that it was itself soon annexed by its eastern neighbour, the kingdom of Magadha, and its king Viḍūḍabha was defeated and killed by the Māgadhi king Ajātasattu.

War over the Buddha's Relics at Sanchi (1st century BCE/CE). The Buddha died in Kushinara, the capital of the Mallakas, who initially tried to keep all the relics of the Buddha for themselves. A war erupted in which the chiefs of seven other clans waged war against the Mallas of Kushinara for the possession of the Buddha's relics. In the center of the architrave, the siege of Kushinara is in progress; to right and left, the victorious chiefs are departing in chariots and on elephants, with the relics borne on the heads of the latter. - John Marshall, A Guide to Sanchi 1918

According to the Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta, after the death (parinirvana) of Buddha in Kushinagar, the remains of the Buddha were cremated at that location. Originally his ashes were to go only to the Sakya clan, to which the Buddha belonged. However, six other clans and a king demanded the ashes of the Buddha. In order to resolve this dispute, a Pandita named Drona divided the ashes of the Buddha into eight portions. These portions were distributed as follows: to Ajātasattu, king of Magadha; to the Licchavis of Vesālī; to the Sakyas of Kapilavastu; to the Bulis of Allakappa; to the Koliyas of Rāmagāma; to the Brahmin of Veṭṭhadīpa; to the Mallas of Pāvā; and to the Mallas of Kusinārā. In addition to these eight portions, two other important relics were distributed at that time: Drona (the Pandita who distributed the relics) received the vessel in which the body had been cremated, and the Moriyas of Pippalivana received the remaining ashes of the funeral pyre.

In the context of Indian culture and philosophy, India's culture has gifted non-violence to the world. Today, the United Nations organizes October 2nd every year as World Non-Violence Day

and also promotes this day. Which is the birthday of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi in Bharat. Mahatma Gandhi is the same personality who, after being born in British India, extracted the weapon of non-violence from his own ancient Jaina and Buddhist philosophies and presented it to the modern world for the liberation of India from the slavery of the British. The world which was surrounded by dense clouds of violence since his birth. Where one man was a slave and slave to another man. From apartheid to violence and any form of hatred that could come to a human being's mind, the world was plagued by all forms. Man did not consider people of other color, language, region, caste, creed etc as his equal. While there was discrimination between blacks and whites in the continents of Asia, America and Africa, in Europe there was hatred and hatred even among whites on the basis of different language, race and region. People from the African continent had slave markets in many parts of Europe, where they were sold. At the same time, African women were also stripped naked and sold like slaves in the market.

“Non-violence is the greatest duty. If we cannot follow it completely, then we must understand its spirit and follow humanity by staying away from violence as far as possible.” – Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi

These inequalities and inhuman acts of the European continent ruined the world with two great world wars within just 20 years. In which immense violence was resorted to. Whereas earlier wars were fought on land and water, in these wars battles were fought across water, land and sky. Due to which more than half the world's population was affected and crores of people became extinct. At such a time, Mahatma Gandhiji had presented before us the path of truth and non-violence for the independence of India. On whom Indians used to have unwavering faith. But we forgot them due to medieval Islamic invasions. “Ahimsa Paramo Dharma” is the basic principle of Buddhism. Whereas in Buddhism, non-violence has been described as the best quality of human being. And middle-way Buddhist philosophy, condemns animal violence of any kind, including animal violence.

Asoka's policy after Kalinga war when he become Buddhist...

When he had been consecrated eight years the Beloved of the Gods, the king Piyadassi Asoka conquered Kalinga. A hundred and fifty thousand people were deported, a hundred thousand were killed and many times that number perished. Afterwards, now that Kalinga was annexed, the Beloved of the Gods very earnestly practiced “Dhamma”, desired “Dhamma”. On conquering Kalinga the Beloved of the Gods felt remorse, for, when an independent country is conquered the slaughter, death, and deportation of people is extremely grievous to the Beloved of the Gods, and weighs heavily on his mind. What is even more deplorable to the Beloved to the Gods is that those who dwell there, whether Brahmanas, Sramanas, or those of other sects, or householders who show obedience to their superiors, obedience to their mother and father, obedience to their teachers and behave well and devotedly to their friends, acquiescence, colleagues, relatives, slaves and servants—all suffer violence, murder and separation from their loved ones. Even those who are fortunate to have escaped, and whose love is undiminished (by the brutalizing effect of war), suffer from the misfortunes of their friends, acquaintances colleagues and relatives. This participation of all men in suffering weighs heavily on the mind of Beloved of the

Gods. Except among the Greeks, there is no land where religious orders of Brahmanas and Sramanas are not to be found, and there is no land anywhere where men do not support one sect or another. Today, if a 100th or 1000th part of those people who were killed or died or were deported when Kalinga was annexed were to suffer similarly, it would weigh heavily on the mind of the Beloved of the Gods.”

“This inscription of Dhamma has been engraved so that any sons or great sons that I may have should not think of gaining new conquests, and in whatever victories they may gain should be satisfied with patience and light punishment. They should only consider conquest by Dhamma to be a true conquest, and delight in Dhamma should be their whole delight, for this is of value in both this world and the next.”

This is Asoka’s testament against war. It graphically depicts the tragedy of war and shows why he turned against it. It is a unique event in the annals of the ancient world because one does not know of any other contemporary monarch who renounced war. Asoka embarked on the policy of Dhamma after Kalinga war.

According to Romila Thapar, Asoka’s Dhamma is a superb document of his essential humanity and an answer to the socio-political needs of the contemporaneous situation. It was not anti-Brahmanical because respect for the Brahmanas and Sramanas is an integral part of his Dhamma. His emphasis on non-violence did not blind him to the needs of the state. In fact, he envisioned bureaucrats as doing the work of ensuring ethical progress on the part of his subjects. Also, Asoka warned the forest tribes that although he hates to use coercion, he may be required to resort to force if they continued to create trouble. By the time Asoka stopped war, the entire Indian sub-continent was under his control. In the south he was on friendly terms with the Cholas and Pandyas. Sinhala was an admiring ally. Thus, Asoka’s decline of war came when his empire had reached its natural boundaries. The plea for tolerance was a wise course of action in an ethnically diverse, religiously varied, and class divided society. Asoka’s empire was a conglomerate of diverse groups; farmers, pastoral nomads and hunter-gatherers, there were Greeks, Kambojas, and Bhojas and hundreds of groups with different traditions. In this situation a plea for tolerance was needed. Asoka tried to transcend the parochial cultural traditions with a board set of ethical principles.

The aspects of Dhamma were developed chronologically.

Major Rock Edict I prohibits animal sacrifice and holidays of festive gathering.

Major Rock Edict II relates to measures of social welfare. It mentions medical treatment for men and animals, construction of roads, wells and tree planting.

Major Rock Edict III declares that liberality towards Brahmanas and Sramanas is a virtue, and that respecting one’s parents is a good quality.

Major Rock Edict IV comments that because of the policy of Dhamma the lack of morality and disrespect towards Sramanas and Brahmanas, violence, unseemly behavior to friends, relatives and others, and evils of this kind have been checked. The killing of animals to a large extent was also stopped.

Major Rock Edict V refers to the appointment of Dhamma-Mahamatta for the first time in the twelfth year of his reign. These special officers were appointed by the king to look after the interests of all sects and religions and spread the message of Dhamma.

Major Rock Edict VI is an instruction to Dhamma-Mahamattas. They are told that they could bring their reports to the king at any time. The second part of the Edict deals with speedy administration and the transaction of smooth business.

Major Rock Edict VII is a plea for tolerance amongst all sects. It appears from the edict that tensions among the sects were intense perhaps in open antagonism. The plea is a part of the overall strategy to maintain unity.

Major Rock Edict VIII states that Dhamma yatras (tours) would be undertaken by the emperor. The earlier practice of the emperor going out on hunting expeditions was given up. Dhamma yatras enabled the emperor to come into contact with various sections of people in the empire.

Major Rock Edict IX attacks ceremonies performed after birth, illness, marriage and before going on a journey. A censure passed against ceremonies observed by wives and mothers. Asoka instead lays stress on practice of Dhamma and the uselessness of ceremonies.

Major Rock Edict X denounces fame and glory and reasserts the merits of following the policy of Dhamma.

Major Rock Edict XI is a further explanation of the policy of Dhamma. It emphasizes the respect of elders, abstaining from killing animals, and liberality towards friends.

Major Rock Edict XII is another appeal for tolerance among sects. This edict reflects the anxiety the king felt because of conflict between sects and carries his plea for harmony.

Major Rock Edict XIII is of paramount importance in understanding the Asokan policy of Dhamma. The Rock Edict pleads for conquest by Dhamma instead of war. This is logical culmination of the thought processes which began from the first Rock Edict, and by conquest what is perhaps meant is the adaptation of the policy of Dhamma by a country, rather than its territorial control.

Major Rock Edict XIV Asoka said, My dominions are wide, and much has been written, and I shall cause still more to be written. And some of this has been stated again and again because of the charm of certain topics and in order that men should act accordingly.

In Vinaya Pitaka, which is the constitution of Buddhism, Lord Buddha has made a very rare attempt to establish nature, its conservation, welfare of living beings, spiritual upliftment of Bhikkhunis and Bhikkhus and the pinnacle of humanity. This is a book not only for Buddhism and the Bhikkhuni-Bhikkhu community but for the welfare of every living being in the entire world. Which should not only be studied but also respected and followed in one's life. Only then will everyone be able to attain the true fruit of this great book.

The Four Immeasurable Minds (Brahmaviharas) of Buddhism - Thich Nhat Hanh's Thought

During the lifetime of the Buddha, those of the Brahmanic faith prayed that after death they would go to Heaven to dwell eternally with Brahma, the universal God. One day a Brahmin man asked the Buddha, “What can I do to be sure that I will be with Brahma after I die?” and the Buddha replied, “As Brahma is the source of Love, to dwell with him you must practice the Brahma-viharas—love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.” A vihara is an abode or a dwelling place. Love in Sanskrit is maitri; in Pali it is metta. Compassion is karuna in both languages. Joy is mudita. Equanimity is upeksha in Sanskrit and upekkha in Pali. The Brahmaviharas are four elements of true love. They are called Immeasurable, because if you practice them, they will grow every day until they embrace the whole world. You will become happier and those around you will become happier, also.

The Buddha respected people’s desire to practice their own faith, so he answered the Brahmin’s question in a way that encouraged him to do so. If you enjoy sitting meditation, practice sitting meditation. If you enjoy walking meditation, practice walking meditation. But preserve your Jewish, Christian or Muslim roots. That is the way to continue the Buddha’s spirit. If you are cut off from your roots, you cannot be happy.

In the context of early Buddhism, violent activities can be broadly placed in the following four categories –

1. Violence caused by organized conflicts, such as wars, fights etc. and unorganized conflicts, such as murder, suicide, abortion and voluntary death etc.
2. Violence caused by sacrificial rituals, in which animal sacrifices and sometimes human sacrifices were made.
3. Violence at the hands of hunters, butchers, fishermen etc., which was done for the purpose of human food and other needs – especially medicine. Thus, eating meat and fish by humans was an important sequence of violence.
4. Agricultural work, housing construction and other related activities like digging, irrigation, plowing of fields, cutting of crops, grass and trees and destruction of single-sense organisms that lived in plants, trees, soil etc. Violence caused by such activities.

In Indian culture, vegetarianism has been given special respect to avoid animal violence. At the same time, there is a belief in some communities that plants also have life, hence getting food from plants cannot be called the right way to live life. Various types of medicines taken to recover from diseases also kill the bacteria present in the body. This type of belief reveals the ultimate meaning of non-violence which is impossible for an ordinary human being.

Therefore, the principle of balanced and rational non-violence is perhaps the most important contribution of Buddhism to human civilization. Here the meaning of non-violence is to deliberately avoid killing living beings. In other words, a Buddhist follower is expected not only not to commit violence but also not to incite others to violence. Non-violence towards living beings, which is the first teaching among the 5 teachings of Buddhism. It is based on the principle of mutual attraction and goodness found throughout nature. Intentional violence means disrupting and destroying the inherent integrity and frustrating the feelings of respect and compassion that are the basis of humanity. There was permission to drink water after filtering it.

It was forbidden to throw leftover food into green grass or water because it could harm the creatures living in both places. The monks were not allowed to dig the soil. Suicide is also prohibited in Buddhism. Those who earn a living through ruthless means such as butchers, fowlers, hunters, fishermen, robbers, executioners and jailers are all viewed as inferior in Buddhism. In Buddhism, the importance of non-violence has been explained in the teachings of Patimokkha Sutras of Vinaya Pitaka, Dhammapada, Samanyaphal Sutta, Panchasheel, Right Actions of Eightfold Path etc.

Background of gender-based violence and gender equality in Buddhism –

The history of the world has been the history of men, because it was written without any discussion of women. Siddhartha, born from the womb of Queen Mahamaya in the Sakya Republic in the sixth century BC on this land of India (present-day Lumbini, Nepal), after attaining enlightenment, came to be known as Tathagata Buddha. Five years after the establishment of Buddha Sangha for the welfare of humanity, his mother Mahapajapati Gotami, who nurtured him since childhood after the death of his mother, died. Considering that Buddha, by staying away from worldly life and giving the message of equality and compassion among all, is showing the way to free their lives from the bondage of birth and death. Now when there is no aim left in my life, then why not get initiated into the Buddha Sangha and do welfare of myself and the women's society. The great man Buddha agrees to establish the Bhikkhuni Sangha and initiates 500 other women who had come with Gotami into Buddhism. This was an incident which gave an opportunity to the women society, which had been entangled in the patriarchal bondage of family, marriage and society for the last several centuries, to attain liberation in the field of spirituality. This coincidence happened about 2550 years ago. The main female disciple of Lord Buddha –

Mahapajapati Gotami, Uppalavana, Patachara, Dhammadinna, Sundari Nanda, Sona, Sakula, Bhadda Kundalakesa, Bhadda Kapilani, Bhaddakachana, Kisagotami, Singhalkamata, Khema etc. Even in the post Buddhist period, when the beloved emperor Asoka the Great sent his daughter Sanghamitta to Sinhala Island, she was first initiated into the Buddha Sangha as a nun. There is no other example in the entire human history where a father dedicates his daughter to the service of humanity in this way.

Lord Buddha had made a successful attempt to eliminate not only the difference between men and women but also the difference between a queen and a sweeper. To ensure that there is no feeling of discrimination in the Bhikkhuni Sangha, Tathagat Buddha made the queens like Mahapajapati Gotami and Yasodhara and the maid queens (Chandala kanya) like Prakriti sit in a row after being initiated into the Sangha. Dr. Vimal Kirti considers Therigatha as the first immortal text of women's freedom.

“You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean, if a few drops of the ocean dry up then the ocean does not become dirty.” – Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhiji

Bhikkhuni Sangha in Sinhala Island :-

After the Third Buddhist Council held in Pataliputra, Thera Mahendra was sent to Sinhala Island to propagate Dhamma at the age of thirty-two. King Tisya of that country was astonished to see the beautiful form of Mahinda illuminated with spiritual light. He kept Mahinda at his home with great respect and hospitality. Thousands of men and women in Sinhala started accepting Buddhism after listening to the teachings of Mahinda. After a few days, Sinhala's princess Anula decided to take the vow of bhikkhuni-hood along with five hundred friends, at that time it came to Mahinda's mind that an educated person should be appointed to give proper religious education to all these women and to propagate religion among women. And there is a great need for religious Bhikkhunis. Therefore, he sent a message to his father Emperor Asoka to send his sister Sanghamitta to Sinhala. Princess Sanghamitta had no desire for any other material thing except Dhamma. When he heard that he had to go to Sinhala to his brother Mahinda for preaching Dhamma, there was no joy in his heart. The virtuous Sanghamitta left for Sinhala island to propagate Dhamma. This was the first time in the history of India; When the daughter of a very glorious emperor, after attaining the completeness of life through beautiful education and religious rituals, left the country to free the women of a distant country from the darkness of ignorance. At that time, the news of Sanghamitta's religious journey in India cannot even be imagined today, what kind of noble feelings would have arisen in the hearts of the people towards him. When Sanghamitta reached Sinhala, the men and women there were stunned to see her radiant facial expression, ascetic attire and extraordinary religious spirit. Sanghamitta established a bhikkhuni order there and along with her brother Mahinda, she spread the immortal light of Buddhism in every home of Sinhala Island, In the light of which, even after two and a half thousand years, Sinhala men and women continue their journey of life and shout in the shelter of Lord Tathagata, His preached Dhamma and Sangha. Sanghamitta is mentioned in the Buddhist text called Mahavansa. The author of Mahavansa writes that 'Sanghamitta had attained complete bodhi. While living in Sinhala, he had done many virtuous deeds for the advancement of Dhamma. The king of Sinhala performed his funeral with great respect and pomp.'

Whatever it may be, in this holy country of India there have been many women who have lived an ideal life; But Sanghamitta's work was similar to that of Emperor Asoka's daughter. Historians honored the emperor with the title of 'Great'. But the importance of Goddess Sanghamitta was much greater than that, the history of Sinhala is witness to this. Even today, our heads bow with reverence remembering the pious and exalted life of Devi Sanghamitta, daughter of our Emperor Asoka the Great.

“Attadeepa bhavath attasharanah” That is, you yourself become a lamp and do not seek refuge in others but seek refuge in yourself!

Its meaning is that you should understand the secrets of religion through the light that comes from your conscience and instead of taking refuge in a guru or religious preacher, you should guide yourself on your own path. Where other religions have described the Guru as greater than God and have made it the ultimate duty of the disciple to seek his refuge, Lord Buddha has limited the power of the Guru and has emphasized the importance of the disciple. - Acharya Baldev Upadhyay (Bauddh Darshan Mimamsa)

India aims to play a more prominent role in international forums and contribute to global solutions, enhancing its soft power and influence.

Our Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi places Buddhism at the heart of India's cultural diplomacy, emphasizing India's role globally. His visits to key Buddhist sites and initiatives like gifting relics and hosting summits underscore the commitment to strengthening spiritual ties and promoting peace through Buddhist philosophy.

Conclusion

The name of Mahatma Gandhi transcends the bounds of race, religion and nation-states, and has emerged as the prophetic voice of the twenty-first century. The world remembers Gandhi not just for his passionate adherence to the practice of non-violence and supreme humanism, but as the benchmark against which we test men and women in public life, political ideas and government policies, and the hopes and wishes of our shared planet.

Even though the exceptionally brilliant knowledge tradition of Lord Buddha got divided into different sects, it only increased the epistemology. Hundreds of philosophers of Theravada, Mahayana and Tantrayana benefited the world by sharing the wealth of India's knowledge with their neighboring states and countries. Today, when India was deprived of this treasure of knowledge, then countries like Tibet, China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma etc. gave new life to Indian Buddhism by distributing the same heritage back. Today the whole world is again looking towards India so that India can come forward to guide the world for the sake of world peace and welfare of humanity. The Government of India has also started it by organizing a 2-day Global Buddhist Summit in New Delhi in April 2023. In his inaugural statement, Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said that the welfare of the world can be achieved only by following the teachings of "Buddha, not Yuddh", that is, Lord Buddha. There isn't any problem in the modern world whose solution cannot be found in the teachings given by Lord Buddha hundreds of years ago. This conference was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India during the Amrit Mahotsav period of independence, keeping in mind the concept of sustainable development along with the upliftment of the teachings of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" and the ancient Nalanda University.

Let us remember Gandhi's wise counsel: "Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization." Let us heed his words today and re-commit ourselves to this essential purpose. - UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres

At this time when looting, tragedies and inhumane wars are taking place all over the world, the Indian Prime Minister's love for Buddhism and the adjustment of the Buddha's path in world politics is enough to underline that our country is ready for re-establishment. The great man is eager to implement the great mantra of world brotherhood 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' established by Buddha and Emperor Asoka the Great. After the global pandemic, the global public is horrified by the inhuman incidents occurring due to Russia-Ukraine war, Israel-Palestine, Israel-Iran war as well as global warming, wildfires, earthquakes, droughts, floods, storms, tsunamis etc. Arising from unbalanced behavior of humans with nature. Is In such a terrible situation, following the policy of 'Buddha, not Yuddh' i.e. the path of Lord Buddha,

many countries of Asia are still moving ahead maintaining peaceful co-existence. Other countries of the world should also follow this path and develop themselves for the welfare of humanity. Because Buddhism does not only teach the protection of humans but also teaches us to uplift ourselves with the co-existence of every living being in nature.

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