

BUDDHIST CULTURE AND ASOKA'S COMPASSION: HAKIRI BY SIMHALA SAVAGERY

The current President of Sri Lanka governs the lovely island wonder of Sri Lanka with Buddhism as its majority religion and Simhala as its majority faith. The glorious gift to humanity is the Light of Asia called Siddhartha Buddha. India boasts of Bihar the birthplace of Gautama Buddha, the Enlightened One Siddhartha, the Prince who renounced all material pleasures of life and renounced even his right to command as a royal prince, went into meditation and austerity and discovered the truth which he preached to his disciples and practiced as a reality, of him Swami Vivekananda has said:

Let me tell you a few words about one man who actually carried this teaching of Karma-Yogi into practice. That man is Buddha. He is the one man who ever carried this into perfect practice. All the prophets in the world, except Buddha, had external motives to move them to unselfish action. The prophets of the world, with this single exception, may be divided into two sets, one set holding that they are incarnations of God come down to earth, and the other holding that they are only the messengers from God; and both draw their impetus for working from outside, however highly spiritual maybe the language they use. But Buddha is the only prophet who said. "I do not care to know your various theories about God. What is the use of discussing all the subtle doctrines about the soul? Do good and be good. And this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is." He was, in the conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives; and what man worked more than he? Show me in history one character who has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced but one such character, such high philosophy, such wide sympathy, yet had the deepest sympathy for the lowest animals, and never put forth any claims for himself. He is the ideal Karma-Yogi, acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest man ever born; beyond compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul power that has ever been manifested. He is the first

great reformer the world has seen. He was the first who dared to say, "Believe not because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it is your national belief, because you have been made to believe it from your childhood; but reason it all out, and after you have analysed it, then, if you find that it will do good to one and all, believe it, live up to it, and help others to live up to it." He works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. This man represents the very highest ideal of Karma-Yogi.

The royal disciple of Lord Buddha was Asoka who after victory in war and beholding the ravages and carnages of bloody battle currently marring the charm of Colombo. How to revert to the felicity of faith? Buddha's teachings was of total commitment against war and deep concern for peace and for freedom of faith and transformation of a Buddhist new world order. Of Lord Siddhartha's royal disciple Asoka, H.G. Wells has written in his 'Outline of History':

For eight-and-twenty years Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majestic and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish the memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.

The glorious Indian culture has Buddha and Asoka as part of our legendary values in Article 51 and 51A of the Constitutional Authority. Sri Lanka culturally an integral part of India and for historical reasons the epic story of Ramayana having close spiritual nexus with India as imperial part of the British Empire and won its independence together

with our country is now estranged as two sovereign nations. They both have a socialist Constitution creating a Republic with a huge majority of Buddhists and a fifth of its population a strong minority of Tamil Saivaitis. Brave Buddha notwithstanding a culture of horror and terror and internecine violent discord has culminated to a barbarian chaos—a glaring contrast to the glow of global beauty of Kinka, Buddhism being butchered by insane brute majority waging war on the Hindu minority with no scruples of Asoka. On the contrary innocent Tamils have been assassinated. Impossible to imagine that hospitals being bombed what with SAARC membership and Buddhist faith and human rights a terrible martyr of genocide of Tamilians. India, a big neighbour the home of Buddha and Asoka is impotently watching and doing nothing while the war is on with none to ask the President of the little Island to stop at once both sides to lay down arms and adopt a reasonable federal constitution order and non-violent policy of democratic development. Alas! We have a glowing humanist world with a limited perspective and a contradiction with an affirmation of declaration of human rights idly beholding innocent civilian's dying in despair. Is the Indian Constitution not a mere paper collection of pompous articles with an impotent Cabinet at the center? O! The pity of it!

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