

A TRANSITION FROM SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT TO SOCIAL ACTION: A SURVEY ON BUDDHISM

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Abstract

This paper intends to discuss how Buddhist ethical guidelines lead to practical engagement. There is discord regarding Buddhism's activeness towards society in the beginning. Here, we would know how individual awareness leads to social welfare in Buddhism. Buddhism has evolved, starting from Pratyekabuddhas up to Engaged Buddhism. The main point of contention is- Whether theravadins were socially active before the nineteenth century. An awakening mind tends to be congenial with humans and other living creatures. As we know, a Bodhisattva always wants to alleviate the sufferings of others. The Bodhisattva tradition also evolved with time. How do contemporary Buddhists respond to current issues? A theravadin is patently socially and politically active, but what about in the pre-contemporary period? Here, we would know about the shift from self-liberation to liberation for all.

Keywords: *Pratyekabuddhas, Sravakas, Engaged Buddhism, Secularism, Self-revelation, Samyojana*

Introduction:

Not only do all religions emphasize the worship of Gods and Goddesses, but Buddhism is a religion where spiritual awakening is the sine qua non for every mind. Life is a notebook of happiness and trouble. Buddha diffused his realization with the help of the Four Noble Truths. We can experience suffering until we become Enlightened. The path to Enlightenment needs the knowledge of Buddha's ontological doctrines and Buddhist Ethics. Spiritual transition is not about detaching people from society. Instead, it raises an interest to forward our hands towards the sufferers.

Buddha always advised his adherents to be their own refuge and not to ask others for help. One can do everything with effort and intellectuality. Buddha realized the true nature of oneself and the world. But, his intellectuality made the way for Dharma or spiritual teachings. His ontological deliberation and moral reflection are complemented on a serious note. The historical Buddha or Gautama Buddha urged people's emancipation from the notion of self. Many scholars have negative thoughts about this religion. They criticized that Buddha only promoted the world as full of suffering and we should come out of *samsaric* existence. Our foremost priority is to

attain *Nirvana*. Buddha's message is to cure the fundamental disease, i.e. Dukkha, which ceases our mental purification.

Let us first understand the interconnection between philosophical doctrines and *Dharmavinaya*. Then, it would be quite straightforward to sort out how Buddhism is engaged in various aspects. A practical mind needs theoretical motivation as much as one can. We can admit one thing: the world is changing day-by-day in phenomenon. So, our minds always go through various incidents now and then. Our responses also vary depending on multiple factors. Buddhism involvement might affect our minds when it comes to the earlier stage of Buddhism. However, a consensus remains about the engagement of Buddhists in different regions. Buddha taught one thing: how to realize one's true nature. This thought never urges an indifferent attitude towards others. Instead, *Nirvana* is the state where we are free from the notion of self and other, good person and bad person, one and many.

Buddha's notion about this world and its impact on life:

After experiencing the world as it is, Buddha thought about how to share his insight. He also knew that having actual knowledge from an ordinary standpoint is difficult. Buddha found a way to preach the truth embellished with '*Dharma Mudra*' or *Seals*. We know Buddha's teaching is known as The Heart of the Dharma, and to realize the Dharma, Buddha found three seals. One is Impermanence, the other is Nonself, and the third is Enlightenment. In verse 126 of the *Dhammapada*, Buddha states-

“Some are born again. Those caught in evil ways go
to a state of intense suffering; those who have done
good go to a state of joy. But the pure in heart enter nirvana.”¹

Buddha, by his first Dharma Seal, i.e. Impermanence or *Anityavada*, conveyed that everything in this world is impermanent. Impermanence does not only remain within physical objects. Even our consciousness is passing through changes. It does not imply we should cling to our parents, relatives, associates and favourite things. This adherence provides us suffering. Everything comes, changes and passes on. A thought might come to our mind: What do we do if everything is impermanent? Should we not do our duty towards this society? In this respect, Buddha never said not to love our parents, relatives and other people. Cherish them with this insight: nobody or nothing remains in this world forever. What about the change? If everything changes, our positive and helpful attitude becomes lousy. Yes, it quite happens with most of us. It is natural; as ordinary beings, our insight could be more developed at a higher level. But,

¹ Easwaran, Eknath, *The Dhammapada*, USA: Nilgiri Press, 2007, p. 142

the path of meditation leads to the evolution of consciousness. We realize the continuous flux of everything, and this thought can generate a change in our minds. We should be much more careful and responsible towards every living being.

Another Dharma Seal is the Nonself or *Anatmavada* theory. Buddha preached this insight to his disciples. They were not firstly unanimous with Buddha. But Buddha explicitly explained the matter. Nonself means nothing in this world lives independently and without changing. We are not made up of a single entity. Different elements aggregate us. We all are dependent on something else for our existence. This thinking might make us mentally weak. But, in a true sense, when we realize we are interconnected in this world. This awareness changes our minds, i.e. from selfishness to altruism. The term 'Self' leads to minimizing our thinking about others. We are earnest about our happiness, health and dignity. But Buddha's conviction urges a fraternal feeling towards every living and non-living being. The word self comes with a separate attitude, but the reality is entirely different. We are within this nature, and nature is within us. Then why do we use the term 'self' to distinguish ourselves from this blissful world?

Nirvana, this Dharma Seal, seeks more intellectuality to attain it. We must be completely aware of the prior two seals before conceiving the notion of *Nirvana*. The state of *Nirvana* allows us to free our minds from all negativities. An Enlightened being can actuate the truth as it is. This state does not entail detachment from this society. Moreover, we can overcome all the dualistic phenomena. We can realise the truth, and the truth is we all are interconnected. Tranquillity exists after attaining the truth, which remains veiled by our negative dispositions. One kind of internal peace will be within one's mind, and that inner peace urges into outer peace.

Three fundamental ways of spiritual awakening in Early Buddhism:

Buddhism has different schools of thought, and their ways of attaining Enlightenment are also different. But, there remains a progressive nature of spiritual growth with the eons. This knowledge came just like a ray of the sun in different discourses. Buddha had in his mind only 'one vehicle' or 'eka-yana', the Buddhahood. But, he intuited every person could not have that much potential to spiritualize their minds on a higher level. So he used three ways to reach the ultimate, i.e., *Sravakayana*, *Pratyekabuddhayana* and *Bodhisattvayana*. Now, we should make sense of each way to become a conscious being (in a real sense).

- First is 'the yana of *Pratyekabuddha*' or Solitary Buddha. Pratyekabuddhas were found in the pre-Buddhist period. From the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Sutra* and *Ekottarika Agama*, we can learn about the *Pratyekabuddhas*. Many great

scholars of the early Mahayana tradition knew around five hundred *Pratyekabuddhas* existed at the same eon as the Buddha. They passed away just some years before his birth. By name, we understand a kind of Buddha. But they are separated from the other schism—an individual who has attained Enlightenment independently without the guidance of any prior Buddha. *Pratyekabuddha* should be revered, and their nature of attributes needs appreciation. They maintained a harsh asceticism and became enlightened with their rigorous meditative way and moral discipline. However, Buddha attained his Perfect Enlightenment, while those solitary Buddhists did not proceed to this state. Many Buddhist schools have made a hierarchy of self-revelation. Early Theravadins believed they were the real followers of Buddha's teaching, and other schools modified it in their own ways. But Buddha never exclaimed. *Bodhisattvas* were placed at the top below the *Sravakas* and at the bottom, *Pratyekabuddhas*. In an inclusive sense, *Pratyekabuddhas* were not the original Buddhas, as 'Buddha' means the Awakened One. But the question is- Did they really awaken? They had an insight into the ultimate truth. But how can one awakened mind remain indifferent towards others suffering? *Pratyekabuddhas* lived an isolated life that a true Buddha could not do. They should be revered for their self-guidance and high level of intellectuality.

- Another group of people existed since the time of the Buddha's age. They are known as *Sravakas* or the 'vehicle of Disciples' or the listeners. They were the first group of members to accept the three refuges, i.e., *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*. They attained Enlightenment by listening to the Buddha's preaching directly or indirectly. The names of ten veterans and main disciples of Buddha enlisted in the Mahayana text *Vimalakirti-nirdesa*. They are- Sariputra, Maudgalyayana, Mahakasyapa, Subhuti, Purna Maitrayaniputra, Katyayana, Anuruddha, Upali (compiled the Vinaya Pitaka), Rahula and Ananda (compiled the *Sutta Pitaka*). Here, we find progress regarding a responsible attitude towards this society. They promoted the Buddha's teachings in various regions. The disciples also maintained a fraternal relationship with other community members.
- The most advanced vehicle for understanding the real motive of Buddha lies in *Bodhisattvayana*. This is the ultimate stage where we would not only realize the distinction between 'I' and other is relative. Furthermore, we have insight and feelings about living for others, which gives us immense happiness. A *Bodhisattva* has *Bodhicitta* with wisdom and compassion for all sentient beings. They delay attaining the state of nirvana till others become enlightened.

Mahayana tradition believes the *Bodhisattva* path is for all. However, there is a shift from *Sravakayana* to Engaged Buddhism (in the contemporary era). *Pratyekabuddha* has yet to be found or heard in the modern period. But, another group of members can practise the path of *Bodhisattva*. This thought depends on which vehicle the individual is part of. Spiritual revelation is the ultimate in Buddhism.

Pratyekabuddhas: Before the historical Buddha or Gautama Buddha's emergence, there was also a desire to become enlightened. Now, some questions come- how was the state of enlightenment achieved? Who guided the aspirants? Was there any Buddha in pre- Buddhist period? We know that Gautama Buddha was the first enlightened being to achieve the title Buddha. Then, who were the *pratyekabuddhas*? A response is that some male individuals attained a state of liberation or awareness with their own ideas. Those individuals did not receive any specific moral guidelines or belong to any religious school. They became enlightened but never came forward to preach the way to others to become enlightened. Now, a question comes- Did they attain Buddhahood or perfect enlightenment? A pertinent response is that they lived their life with incomplete enlightenment. Absolute enlightenment is possible when a noble person decides to preach the path of enlightenment to others. Then, Buddhahood can be attained by that compassionate mind. A person attains Buddhahood when they want to alleviate the suffering of others. *Pratyekabuddhas* lived their lives with partial enlightenment. They never urged to direct others to reach the state of enlightenment. In one of the early Buddhist texts, the life of *Pratyekabuddhas* is intensified by *Rhinoceros sutta* or Khaggavisana Sutta, where deep respect is conveyed to *Pratyekabuddhas* for their self-guidance and self-sufficient nature. Just like a rhino wanders alone, the *Pratyekabuddhas* tradition shows solitariness rather than unification. They lived as solitary ascetics, so they constituted no Sangha to restore their teachings in the form of *Dhamma*.

What about *Arahat*:

When we hear the term '*Arahat*', most of us generalize the being who has become Enlightened and emancipated oneself from the endless cycle of rebirth. But this group never comes forward to help others overcome their sufferings. They do not propagate the moral guidelines to live a wholesome life as the *Pratyekabuddhas* may have done by providing ethical principles known from traditional sources. If we read the original Buddhist text, we understand there is a distortion regarding the concept of *Arahat*. In Jainism, the term '*Arahat*' is also ascribed to one group of spiritual teachers. Various schools and their division of thought lead us to lose the original characteristics of every state. Buddha, in his first sermon, introduced himself as an *Arahat*. *Arahatship*

was the only goal in the ancient period of Buddhism. A question arises: Why do we not find the name of this way in early Buddhism? If we read the *Mahavagga Pali*, their *sravakas* are those persons who attain the state of *Arahat*. However, there is a hierarchy found at the level of spiritual Enlightenment. After listening to their teacher about Dharma, they became *Arahats* named Kolita and Upatissa.

However, the noble disciples of Buddha who became *Arahat* differed in number and in different traditions (16, 18 and 500). The most important thing is Buddha did not accept any gender inequality. Three members of a group of renowned *arahats* are nuns. Buddha introduced both the men's and women's orders. At the time of spiritual awakening, they are free from all ten fetters (*samyojana*)² and cankers (*asava*)³. They engaged themselves by delivering the Buddha's *Dhamma* in a precise manner. An *Arahat* is also kind and responsible, just like a *Bodhisattva*.

Development of the idea of *Arahat* in the Theravada tradition:

Theravada tradition is one of the oldest influential schools in Southeast Asia. This tradition's ultimate goal is *Arahat*, the highest stage of Enlightenment. The former renowned thinker of the Theravada school found a way to categorize the *sravakas*. Though all of them are enlightened, a difference is observed in the qualities of Enlightenment among them. Most of them could not reach the highest state, i.e., *Arahat*. The different kinds of *Sravakas*- Agga Savaka, Maha Savaka, and Pakatisavaka- have been mentioned in the Theravada tradition.

The Theravadins thought that the propagation of Buddha's *Dhamma* should not be entangled within the monastics. The lay Buddhist practitioner should know how to become spiritually awakened by one's effort. So, they explicated it with the four stages of Enlightenment. They are Stream Enterer or *Sotapanna*, Once-Returner or *Sakadagami*, Non-Returner or *Anagami*, and the final step, named The Perfected One or *Arahat*.

Can we recognize Theravadins for Humanitarian:

It is unequivocal for early Mahayanists to recall them for human welfare. A *bodhisattva*, monastics, and lay practitioners of this school live with the thought of

² There are ten constraints as follows: personal identity (*sakkaya ditthi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), attached to rites and rituals (*silabbataparamasa*), sensual desire (*kamarāga*), ill-will (*patighā*), craving for material realms (*ruparāga*), craving for formless realms (*aruparāga*), conceit (*mana*), restlessness (*uddacca*) and ignorance (*avijjā*)

³ Three types of cankers are mentioned in the *Suttanta Pitaka*: the canker of sensual desire (*kamasava*), the canker of becoming (*bhavasava*) and the canker of ignorance (*avijjasava*). One more name of a canker is found in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, the canker of wrong view (*ditthasava*), along with the former three cankers.

helping others. Regarding Theravadins, the former Theravadins mainly lived in the monastery and remained inactive in social affairs. Suppose we remember the story of the eighteen *arahats* who were asked to spread the *Dharma* until the next Buddha appeared. *Arahats* are not selfish and carefree about others. If a practitioner desires to reach the highest state of Enlightenment or *Arahat*, they must culture their mind by ten perfections.⁴

A gross misinterpretation of facts arose due to depending only on secondary pieces of literature. Classical Theravadins mainly focused on self-liberation. Buddhist philosophy primarily focuses on the cultivation of the human mind. Individuals are the central pillar of a society. If individuals change their outlook from egoism to altruism, societal welfare would be possible. In the *Madhupindika Sutta*, Buddha intended to change the mental outlook of the individuals first, and then society could automatically be in a better place. *Arahat* is a state that many monks and nuns desire to attain. However, an *Arahat* can also be a *Bodhisattva*, which can be known during Buddha's existence. Buddha himself was an *Arahat* as well as a *Bodhisattva*.

For further concern, two types of Theravada Buddhists have been found: The forest dweller monastics and the village dweller monastics. There is a tradition found in the Southeast Asian regions (nowadays, it is not so convenient). The lay Buddhist practitioners wanted monastics to stay in the monastery only rather than being engaged with social welfare. Those laypersons wanted it so that they could offer alms-giving to earn merit. But Buddha never promoted this kind of attitude one should be with. As has already been stated, village monastics remain engaged with society as teachers, doctors, advisors and saviours. On the other side, the forest dweller monastics lived isolated to attain Enlightenment. But, it depends on the practitioner whether to live in isolation or return to society.

The ultimate goal of Mahayana Buddhism:

Theravada and Mahayana schools both have the same admiration for the Buddha's *Dhamma*. Even both of these schools have the same standpoint on metaphysical doctrines. But, they differed in one point. Mahayana Buddhists, whether ordained monastics or lay practitioners, have a vocation to help others. Theravadins also have a benign attitude towards the sufferer. But, they delivered the teachings of Buddha in the Pali language, which is unintelligible to the local people. The teachings of Mahayana Buddhism after its emergence became more influential than Theravadins

⁴ Ten perfections or *Dasa* are- *Paramita* namely, generosity (*dana parami*), morality (*sila parami*), renunciation (*nekkhamma parami*), wisdom (*panna parami*), effort (*viriya parami*), forbearance (*khanti parami*), truth (*sacca parami*), determination (*aditthana parami*), loving-kindness (*metta parami*), and equanimity (*upekkha parami*).

for two reasons: One is that they propagated the Buddha's Dhamma in local languages, and the other is that they gave more importance to the well-being of others. There are two ways to the path of Bodhisattva: One who is reincarnated in this world as a representative of former Bodhisattvas such as the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso of *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara (embodied with compassion). The other type of *Bodhisattva* is categorized as the aspirant who follows ten perfections and, through intensive meditation, cultivates wisdom, i.e., *Bodhicitta* and compassion. The latter type of *Bodhisattva* is accessible from the subject and object duality. In every path from the historical period up to the Bodhisattva path, there is a gradual modification found among the Buddhist practitioners. In the path of Bodhisattva, spiritual awakening about the true nature of existence arises, but Mahayana school prompted social welfare as the essence of this schism.

According to Mahayana Buddhism, Bodhisattva is the highest state that everyone desires to attain. Unlike Theravadins, we need help finding two groups of Mahayana followers: forest dweller monks and village dweller monks. Whether a novice or a veteran monk, each section of monks attains the state of Bodhisattva, and there is no lower and higher realm of Bodhisattvas. Each Bodhisattva, with their rigorous meditation and high intellectuality, became an embodiment of great qualities such as wisdom, compassion, meditation, willpower and others. When they became the models of specific attributes, they tried to become much more attentive towards the sufferers. When a mental outlook becomes qualified with wisdom and compassion, our actions will definitely shift from one's happiness to everyone's happiness.

Theravadins or Mahayanists: A Comparative Outlook

The Theravada and Mahayana schools are categorised as mainstream Buddhist schools. As far as we know, Theravada school is popularly known as the 'School of Elders' and is the oldest existing school. Mahayana school is popularly known as the 'Great Vehicle'. Compared to the Theravada school, people from different sides are urged to be a part of the Mahayana tradition. If we are concerned with knowing the origin of the Theravada school, then it might be the third century BCE. In the case of the Mahayana tradition, it emerged in the land of India maybe in the First millennium. The primary difference between these two schools lies in their language of propagation of Buddhist *Dhamma*. Theravada tradition promulgates the Buddhist Dhamma in Pali, and Mahayana teachings are found in Sanskrit. In Theravada culture, individual, self-effort, wisdom, and meditation are the centre of discussion. The Mahayana tradition emphasises society, grace, compassion, and laypeople. Theravadins' goal is to become an Arahant and Mahayanists wish to become a *Bodhisattva*. Both of these two cultures endeavour to attain the state of Enlightenment. But Mahayanists took one step further

to come forward and guide others to be enlightened. We have to accept one thing: an evolution of thinking came forth in response to Buddhist culture.

Religion and Secularism:

Generally, the terms 'secularism' and 'religion' are incompatible with each other. But, in Buddhism, we can perceive how these terms complement one another. Firstly, a thought arises: How did Buddhism respond to secular matters? Remember that religion allows people to deal with personal issues with faith in a personal God. But, in Secularism, there is nothing to take personally. It is about discussion of social, political and economic matters. Buddhism is such a religion that its pioneer discussed secular issues. Buddha, while preaching about human suffering, either physical or mental, said that the immense lack of material things is one of the causes of it. Buddha, when he realized everything in this world is interconnected, means a political or economic issue must affect social life.

Buddha's *Dhamma* does not support any disparity. In the pre-modern period, material and financial crises were also significant concerns. Buddha stated that one crucial thing is scarcity. If it comes to our mind- Why do we face a crisis? A crisis is present all over the world. Buddha promoted a thought to overcome the situation to some extent. When we understand the difference between need and desire, then poverty cannot be allowed to exist. The label of affluent and indigent people is conventional. Buddha, through his self-revelation, came up with this thought: when we demarcate our needs and desires, the question of poverty would not arise. Many people have too many material possessions but never make a charity of it in a minimal amount. One who has an immense amount of food to eat, that person still wants more and more. However, Buddha only proposed distributing some of his wealth among others and wanted to get more. A balanced life is good for oneself and also for others. Poverty, this term makes the sense that one group of people is availing too much of wealth and another group of people does not have the least amount for survival.

Buddha taught us how to live an ethical life, but that moral life turns unethical. When poverty arises, people can do everything to fulfil their needs. Robbery, murder, and illegal trade of any material products become the means of livelihood. But, the right livelihood never urges these types of work. In the *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta*, Buddha recommended that a ruler rule the nation with watchful eyes and helpful hands for every person. We cannot remove crisis entirely from our society, but poverty can be assuaged by fulfilling their needs. Otherwise, a social disorder would appear on a large scale. We can adequately grasp Buddha's teachings if we take every portion of his teachings in a chain manner. His metaphysical view about *Karma* and Rebirth prompted the Noble Eightfold Path, followed by *Pancasila* and *Brahmavihara*, which

are completely practical. His religious doctrines support Secularism. A responsible person lives an ethical life while remaining in the Middle Way. In the ancient period, monastics were teachers, doctors, and advisors. They played all these roles with an attitude of being secular.

The term 'religion' derives from the Latin word "Religare", which means to bind together. In a denotative sense, Religion makes sense within the followers of the particular Religion that God and ordinary beings have an internal connection, which we need to realize. From the Buddhist context, a religion does urge a sense of unification with God. Instead, the canon of Religion is to cultivate a sense of inseparability in the human realm. Everyone does not need to formally attain the state of Enlightenment (formally) to realize what humanity means. In this reference, we can promote the name of the Great Chakravartin Samrat Ashoka. His spiritual awakening became the epitome for lay Buddhist practitioners and even non-Buddhists. Ashoka's Kalinga war had an effect of remorse in his mind, causing him to cultivate a compassionate mind. We can call him a *Bodhisattva* because his *bodhicitta* urged him to live for society. He understood the Buddha's *Dhamma* precisely as it is. He is always endeared to us as a lay Buddhist practitioner for his remarkable contribution. He is a religious person as much as a secular one. He built many *stupas* to propagate and preserve the Buddha's teachings. He was a Buddhist and also remained tolerant of other religions in his empire. He was always out there for social welfare. He contributed wealth and possessions to people in need for their standard survival. He did not think about Nirvana's ultimate goal but became a *Bodhisattva*. This approach does not entail that one who attains this state is superior to a lay practitioner. Here, nothing comes in a hierarchy. The ultimate is to cultivate oneself in a manner where one cries out for help. Helping hands would be there to take them out of the dark.

Engaged Buddhism: A Contemporary Movement

The term 'Engaged ' upholds whether Buddhism has engaged since its inception. There are various senses of the term 'engagement'- religious, ontological, social, political, environmental and economic. Buddhism has such characteristics that are pertinent in any of the stated forms. However, some critics have considered Buddhism a socially engaged religion. In the twentieth century, we became familiar with a revised edition of Buddhism named Engaged Buddhism or Socially Engaged Buddhism. This vehicle could be more innovative, but what makes it different from other existing schools? The adherents of the Theravada tradition also entitled themselves to the group of Engaged Buddhism. Mahayana tradition has always been intended for social welfare. Then, a question arises: Why is this vehicle named Engaged Buddhism? It means that Buddhism was not engaged socially in ancient and medieval

periods. But we do not need to think like this. If Impermanence is the nature of the world, then if the way of looking towards the world modifies, there would be nothing wrong. But, there is a difference in the clarification of suffering- in tradition, people are advised to get rid of suffering, and one can be free from this *samsara*. However, the scholars of Engaged Buddhism recommend being in this world while eradicating suffering.

Buddha's message is for all. It is imperative to make society better before that individual's spiritual awakening. Some Engaged Buddhists frequently face one question- Whether this form of Buddhism denies the traditional one. In response, they say Buddhism is engaged now and then by following Buddha's teachings. However, we can notice a shift, which is not a significant issue. In *Pratyekabuddha's* time with the Bodhisattvas, spiritual awakening was the prime goal; after that, social engagement was meaningful. The metaphysical doctrines are the reason for enhancing one's karma and society. According to many renowned Buddhists in the twentieth century, the fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet was named Tenzin Gyatso, a living Bodhisattva and an engaged Buddhist. But, there is no other Engaged Buddhist who is an *Arahat* or a *Bodhisattva*. It should not be a point of criticism. If the modern Engaged Buddhists desire to become an *Arahat* or a *Bodhisattva*, they can. But, if they do not think they should be on that level, it is okay because it is their choice. Nevertheless, every Buddhist practitioner can choose which way to go. Buddha never asked his followers to accept everything under his authority.

Health issues, economic crisis, and racism were also present to mitigate about as much as today. The traditional Buddhists knew how to handle those phenomena. The Buddhist pieces of literature are not only conducive to secular matters but also to medical issues. But, social disparity, political adversaries, racism, and civil war are the causes of changing attitudes. Engaged Buddhists grouped themselves with a thought to seize the turbulence by Buddha's ethical principles. If we explicitly know Buddhist ethics, it is all about social reawakening with courageous minds. Buddhist ethics can be as credible as social ethics.

Many Western scholars believe engaging with socio-political affairs is Westernized in nature. If so, what is wrong with it? Many venerable Asian Engaged Buddhists took education and spent some years there. They learned how to control those vulnerable situations delicately. Engaged Buddhists came forward with a canon to remain involved in any adverse situation but in a non-violent way. Violence cannot be a solution to any danger. Non-violence is the best tactic to make a peaceful land as much as possible. An illustrious Indian Engaged Buddhist is Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, admired in eastern and western regions, especially by the Dalit class, for his upright

voice against caste discrimination. Some Asian Engaged Buddhists are- Aan Sung Suu Kyi of Myanmar, Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne of Sri Lanka, and Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia. Some notable Western Engaged Buddhists are- Joanna Macy, Bernie Glassman, Gary Snyder and others. Everyone's contribution as environmental, political, and peace activists is remarkable. They aim only to make a society where everyone, including humans, plants, and animals, lives in harmony and peace. Individuals should act righteously by modifying themselves and be.

Conclusion:

In the third millennium, science and technology make everything possible. We are so advanced in education, travel, food and many other things. What about our actions towards this society? Would we find ourselves responsible for any vicious act? A scrupulous mind must say yes. Societal inconsistency, political-economic conjuncture and environmental degradation are the causes of our infirmities. We should sustain the environment and make a corruption-free society. For this outlook, spiritual awakening is imperative; otherwise, we could not overcome it. Buddha, during his preaching, never devalued other religious doctrines. We can follow anyone as we wish, but our prime concern is realising inner contentment, one's real jewel. Living for others leads to real happiness, which is possible when our minds really incline it. A paradigmatic shift remains from the state of *Pratyekabuddha* to the state of Engaged Buddhists. Those who desired to attain the state of *Arahat* (remained indifferent about social affairs), but the Theravadin monastics remained engaged with social matters. If a question arises- Who are the predecessors of Engaged Buddhists? Then, the answer is Mahayanists. Engaged Buddhism is an updated form of Mahayana Buddhism. However, engaged Buddhism is the course that every follower of Buddhist schism desires to follow towards the goal, i.e., peace and harmony.

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