Chapter- III

REVIVAL OF BUDDHISM:
Role of Political Movements and Intellectuals Before, During and After Ambedkar

The movement against caste hierarchy created awareness among the masses regarding their rights and that they have been oppressed at the will of the high caste Hindus. Thus people come in large numbers to support such movements. Like 2500 years back, Buddha rose against caste supremacy of the brahmins and welcomed everyone in his religion. In 10th-15th centuries, Bhakti movement tried to cater to the needs of low castes and untouchables. Later, in 19th-20th centuries, a number of social reformers appeared, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Jyotiba Phule, Sri Sayajirao Gaikwad, Gopal Baba Walangkar, Balwant Phadke, Bhima Bhoi and so on. However, they also could not do much to improve the condition of the untouchables.

Part III of Indian Constitution, under article 17, provides for the right against untouchability and articles 25-28 provide for the freedom of Religion to its citizens as their fundamental rights.

With the establishment of the colonial rule, the westerners also felt the need to reform Hinduism to gain the support of Indians to consolidate their power and supremacy. Thus they started social reforms and many of them took to the cause of untouchables, and supported Buddhism, thus, helping in the cause for revival of Buddhism in India.

Western Scholars

The movement for the revival of Buddhism was started long back in the 18th century by British civil servants like Captain Polier (who discovered the Delhi-Topra pillar at Ferozshah Kotla, Delhi in 1785); Sir William Jones (who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784); James Princep (a high official of Indian Mint and Secretary of Asiatic Society of Bengal and who deciphered the Brahmi inscription of Ahsoka); Sir Alexander Cunningham, (Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, who made excavations at different places like Sanchi and Sarath, out of his own personal account) and; James Burgess (Director General of Archaeological Survey of India).
A number of western literary geniuses like T. W. Rhys Davids, C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Colonel H. S. Olcott, Madam H. P. Blavatsky compiled and translated a number of works on Buddhism. George Tourou (transliteration of Mahavamsa in 1837), Professor Vincent Fausboll (Latin translation of Dhammpada in 1855), E. Burnouf, B. Clough (edition of Jataka) and J. Lewis had already published works on Pali language. Hermann Oldenberg, H. Kern, Childers, were also instrumental in translating and publication of Buddhist literature. The Pali Text Society (PTS), created by T. W. Rhys Davids, also brought some scholars into prominence. These include V. Trenckner, R. Chalmers, K. E. Neumann, Leon Feer, F. L. Woodward, R. Morris and E. Hardy, H. C. Warren and E. W. Burlingame. Some other scholars of repute were also there and included Max Muller, C. Bendall, I. P. Minayeff, Max Wallessar, Sylvain Levi, J. Takakusu, Louis de La Vallee Poussin, Th. Stcherbatsky, E. Obermiller, E. Senart, I. B. Horner, E. B. Cowell, A. B. Keith, Cosma de Koros etc. They also have written and translated volumes on Buddhist literature.

B. C. Law was another veteran Buddhist Scholar. He has to his credit around 55 volumes in different fields of Indology including Buddhism, Jainism, History, Geography and Sociology of Ancient India. His works include History of Pali literature (in 2 vols., 1933), and he edited Thupvamsa (Pali Text Society, 1935), the Dathavamsa (1925) and the Cariya Pitaka (Bhandarkar Oriental Series Vol. IV). He has done a tremendous amount of work on Buddhism including Life and Work of Buddhaghosha (1923); and Woman in Buddhist Literature (1927). He also edited Buddhist Studies (1931), in which eleven out of twenty seven essays were by Indian scholars.

Education during the Colonial period was dominated by the higher castes. However, gradually, some of Sudras and ex-untouchables also began to get access to education, and Brahmanic literature-prohibited for them earlier. Some of these Sudras and ex-untouchables being educated, thus, started the mass movements for the emancipation of their fellow beings. They demanded access to education, public employment and public water tanks. The low caste movements started the search for an alternate religion, a religion which could provide them equality, a religion which is based on reason. In search of such new religion, they were attracted to the advaita bhakti, to the Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj, some were converted to Christianity, and some created their own mixed religion. These mass movements began to trace a
rational and equalitarian religion in the early 19th century and which culminated around the close of the 19th century in Buddhism itself. The movement represented the wide protest of the oppressed and also challenged the varna order. This terrified the elite class, which is evident from the famous mass protest of 1881.

Jyotiba Phule (1827-90), a well known figure of Indian History, is the initiator of the anti-caste movement, farmer movement and the women’s movement. He also founded schools for the untouchables and girls in 1849 and 1851. He made a comparative study of blacks in the USA, and the condition of lower classes in India. He drew his inspiration from the Orientalist canon, and called the Aryan invasion as the destruction of the purer indigenous civilization of which the lower castes were the heirs. Another figure was Bhima Bhoi of Orissa. The anti-caste movement started by him in Orissa and Jyotiba Phule in Maharashtra, created awareness among the people, who belonged to the lower castes including the sudras and the untouchables. These anti-caste movements led to the beginning of the search for a new religion which could provide equality to the people of all castes and which is also favoured by reason.

While the Constitution was being drafted, there was an argument going on in the Constituent Assembly regarding the fundamental right of freedom of religion, and if it also provides the right to conversion, or to what extent the freedom of religion is granted and on what grounds. As they doubted the Christian missionaries who might get a lot of tribal population living in the areas of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa to get converted to Christianity and, in turn, might lose out their old traditional cults. Thus, these states formulated their own legislations regarding the conversion like Orissa Freedom of Religion Act (1967). It states that “conversion in its very process involves an act of undermining another faith. This process becomes all the more objectionable when this is brought about by recourse to methods like force, fraud, material inducement and exploitation of one’s poverty, simplicity and ignorance.” According to the Chief Justice of India A.N. Ray “the freedom of religion is exercised in the act of conversion only when it is the voluntary decision of an individual without the intervention of another person, notwithstanding the latter’s goodwill and good faith (no pun is intended here).”

This was also the age of industrial revolution, capitalism and imperialism. This led to an intellectual and moral decline, and harmony and stability of the feudal
age vanished. Everything everywhere was in a state of flux. Everything, including religion, was being questioned. The slogan of the French Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity, was becoming popular, power of the press and print-capitalism (the printing press under a system of capitalism) gained importance like never before. These were the means used by the masses to end oppression. (The magical cults and supernaturalism were not quite followed without reason). However, all that did not lead to the rejection of old religions but to their reinterpretation.20

Around 6% (375 million) of the population of the world is Buddhist. The religion is quite popular in the countries like Bhutan, Cambodia, China, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries.21 According to the Census of 2001, there were 7.9 million Buddhists in India constituting around 0.8% of the total population. The maximum of them are in Maharashtra (i.e. 5,838,710; 6%) followed by Karnataka (393,300; 0.7%), Uttar Pradesh (302,031; 0.2%) and West Bengal (243,364; 0.3%).22 However, the actual number of Buddhists in India may be greater than this figure for as Eleanor Zelliot states, “Buddhists themselves claimed that the census figures are not accurate because census takers minimize the extent of conversion.”23 The renewed interest of people of India in Buddhism began around a hundred years earlier than the mass conversion led by Ambedkar in 1956. There are many scholars and activists who led the conversion movement among the lower castes before Ambedkar. These mainly include Dharmanand Kosambi, Rahul Sankrityayan, Anand Kausalyayan and Jagdish Kashyap.24

The modern revival movement did not begin in India, but in Myanmar (former Burma) and Sri Lanka. However, its most striking manifestations have appeared in India.25 Its revival began in the late 19th century. Two new Buddhist Councils i.e. the 5th and the 6th, were convened. The Fifth Council was organized at Mandalay (in Myanmar) in 1871, where the Pali texts were inscribed and preserved on 729 marble slabs.26 And the Sixth Council was held at Kaba Ayo (Myanmar, 1954-56), which undertook the translation of the Buddhist canonical literature. New Viharas and monasteries were established and provisions were made for the study of Pali in different Universities to propagate Buddhism.27

Eastern and Northern India

The first Buddhist scholar of modern India was Rajendra Lal Mitra (1824-91). He wrote nineteen articles and books between 1855 and 1889. He was largely
fascinated by the living Buddhism of North India. He, along with Hara Prasad Shastri, reproduced the “Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal” in 1882. In 1897, H. P. Shastri wrote *Discovery of Living Buddhism in Bengal*, and translated the *Ashta-Sahasrika-Prajna-Paramita*. He has some sixty books and articles to his credit. He was the first person to be aware of the survival of Buddhism in India.

Sarat Chandra Das was another Bengali scholar, whose work, *Contribution on the Religion and History of Tibet* was published in 1881, and was reprinted in 1970. He published *Bodhicharyavatara* (1894) and a few chapters of *Visuddhimagga*. He had around fifty articles to his credit. He also founded the Buddhist Text Society in 1882. For his contribution, he was also called the *Cosma de Koros* of India.

Rabindranath Tagore also used some Buddhist stories in his writings like the play, *Malini* (1890), *Natir Puja* (1932), *Chandalika* (1933) and a work involving the brief legend of Upagupta and Shrimati. But he could not do much for the Buddhist revival.

Sir Edwin Arnold (author of the famous *Light of Asia*), in 1885, visited Bodh Gaya and written a series of articles in “The Telegraph” (a London weekly), which he edited. He wrote about the deplorable condition of the Bodh Gaya Buddhist Temple, also known as the Maha Bodhi Temple, and urged to save it from further defacement.

After reading these articles, Anagarika Dharamapala (David Hewavitarne of Sri Lanka) reached Bodh Gaya in January, 1891. Having seen the deplorable condition of the Maha Bodhi Temple, he resolved to regain control of the shrine from the Shaivite Mahants, whose ancestors might have occupied it in around the 16th century. In 1891 itself, the Maha Bodhi Society of India was established in Kolkata by Dharamapala. After the restoration of Buddha Gaya temple by 1899, Dharamapala undertook an extensive lecture tour of North India. He visited and lectured at places like Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Nawshera, Mardan, Hasan Abdal, Abbottabad, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Ambala, Saharanpur, Thanesar, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Delhi, Meerut, Aligarh, Hathras, Mathura, Agra, Kanpur, Benaras, Gaya, Bodh Gaya and Bankipur. As soon as the lecture tour ended, he was invited to Madras. There, he not only gave lectures but also opened a branch of Maha Bodhi Society in 1900, in association with Professor Laxmi Narasu. In 1900 itself, another branch of Maha Bodhi Society was opened at Kushinagara (site of Buddha’s *parinirvana*) and Anuradhapur.
Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, a member of Maha Bodhi Society, started studies in Pali in the Kolkata University. Satish Chandra Vidyabhushan, who was associated with the Buddhist Text Society, received the first M.A. in Pali in 1901. He then published the *Kaccayana’s Pali Grammar* and translated it into English. He is known to be the initiator of the Buddhist revival movement in India. The same year, he founded the *Bhikkhu Sangha* at Bodh Gaya on the full moon day of Ashadh (June-July) and appointed four Buddhist monks there.

In May 1880, Colonel H. S. Olcott (an American) and Madam H. P. Blavatsky (a Russian) visited Colombo and were so much impressed by the success of Migettuwatte Gunananda (an indomitable orator from Sri Lanka) over his Christian adversaries in a public debate in 1873, that they embraced Buddhism on 21st May, 1880. In 1884, Dharamapala joined the ‘Theosophical Society’, founded by Colonel Olcott and Madam Blavatsky in 1875 at New York and started preaching Buddhism. During the period between 1885-89, Dharamapala, in association with Colonel Olcott, established a printing press and started the first Buddhist weekly, *Sandaresa* in Sinhalese and in December, 1888 founded its English version, *The Buddhist* under the editorship of Leadbeater. In May 1892, he started publishing the Maha Bodhi journal and united the Buddhist world which was to be used as an instrument for the propagation of Buddhism not only in India but in all those countries where English is understood. The next year, in 1893, he spoke at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago. He was invited there as the representative of the Theravada Buddhism. While he was in America, he delivered many lectures and converted C. T. Strauss of New York to Buddhism, making him the first American to get converted to Buddhism in America. On his way back to India, Dharamapala met Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Mikhaila Foster on board. She was so impressed with the Buddhist ideology that she started giving donations for the cause of Buddhism. Thus, with the efforts of Dharamapala the Maha Bodhi Society was finally registered in 1915, with Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee as its President (elected in 1916) and he remained in office till his death in 1924. Meanwhile, Dharamapala constructed the *Dharmarajika vihara* in Kolkata and later *Mulagandhkuti vihara* (1931) in Saranath, both with the help of K. Sriniwasa. Dharamapala died in 1933, and before that he entrusted D. Valisinha the responsibility of being the General Secretary and Treasurer of the Society in his place, which the latter continued to hold for the next 35 years.
In 1933-35, Valisinha published a number of Buddhist works and translations which include: *Dhammapada*, *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Digha Nikaya* and *Majjhima Nikaya*. He also edited the Maha Bodhi journal and wrote books like: *Buddhist shrines in India*, and *A Guide to Buddha Gaya*. He also got constructed a Dharamshala each at Saranath and Kushinagara, with the help of Seth Jugal Kishore Birla of Pilani (Rajasthan). He popularized Buddhism in India as well as outside India. In 1934, he participated in the Pan-Pacific Buddhist Conference in Tokyo and was elected as its senior Vice-President. On his way back, he delivered several lectures in Japan, Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Singapore and Penang. In 1938, again, he took an extensive lecture tour of Myanmar, Singapore, Malaya and Hong-Kong. He built Buddhist vihara in Delhi and Sanchi for which land was provided by Sarbananda Barua and the cost of construction was given by Seth Jugal Kishore Birla. This was almost an international temple of understanding, catering to the needs of the Buddhists from all over the world. He was also instrumental in securing back the relics of Sariputra and Moggalana (Buddha’s chief disciples) from London and restored them to their original place, i.e. Sanchi in November, 1952. In 1896, *Buddha jayanti* was celebrated as a festival after around 700 years. The president of the celebrations was Narendra Nath Sen, editor of *The Mirror*. He was mainly responsible for the 2500th *Buddha jayanti* celebrations on such a large scale by the Government of India in 1956. He also attended the grand Nagpur Deeksha ceremony, and opened the Indian Buddhist Fund.

N. Jinaratana joined the Maha Bodhi Society as a Dhammaduta worker in 1936. He also opened a Maha Bodhi orphanage and Welfare Home, as a consequence of the famine in Bengal in 1943. This Welfare Home provided for free education Boarding and lodging to the poor and the needy children. He took part in various conferences like: “World Fellowship of Buddhists”, Conference of Asian Buddhist Council for Peace, Asian Peace and Anti- Nuclear Arms Congress held in Japan. In recognition to his services to Buddhism, he was honoured with the title of Sanghanayaka of India in 1958.

Another Buddhist scholar of Bengal was Uruwala Dhammaratana. He edited the Hindi journal *Dhammaduta*, published by the Maha Bodhi Society from Sarnath for at least 10 years. He wrote various books on Buddhism like: *Visuddhimagga ki Ruparekha, the Buddha and Caste System, A Study of Patisambhidamagga*, the
Buddha and His Message and An Introduction to Visuddhimagga. He also translated some Buddhist works into Hindi like: Theragatha, Suttanipata, and Khuddakapatha. After the death of Valisinha, U. Dhammaratana was appointed as the editor of the Maha Bodhi journal. After his retirement, he was involved mostly in lecture tours and Vipassana meditation camps in India as well as in UK, US, Japan and Canada.

Another person involved in the propagation and expansion of Buddhism was M. Sangharatana. In 1937, he was appointed as one of the Joint Secretaries of the Maha Bodhi Society and Bhikkhu incharge of the Mulagandhakuti vihara at Sarnath. In 1961, he was given the title of Sanghanayaka of India. His major contribution lay in the embellishment of Sravasti (an important ancient Indian trading centre in the state of Uttar Pradesh), with a rest house with all modern amenities, a school and the Sri Lankaramaya temple.

Venerable U. Chandramani is credited with the work of making Kushinara a living shrine. In 1903, after his higher ordination in Myanmar, he returned to Kushinara where he founded the famous Nirvana temple in the hands of archeological survey of India. He took up the cause of its possession as well as the right to worship and secured it. As a consequence, the number of pilgrims to Kushinara increased. He translated the Dhammapada and a number of Pali suttas into Hindi and Burmese and published them as pamphlets for wider circulation. He established a free primary school at Kushinara (1929), the Buddha High School (1934), which was later upgraded to a Degree College, Mahaparinibbana Sanskrit Pathshala at Kushinara and the Mahavir Junior School (1944). He also had the distinction of being the Dharma-Guru of Dr. Ambedkar.

Nandabansha, an Assamese, under the influence of Uttamnanda, became a Buddhist at Rahanpather Buddhist temple in 1930. He received his higher ordination in 1937, at the hands of Ushumangala, Uttamananda and Tejbanta Bhikkhu. In 1939, he founded the All Assam Buddhist Association to unite all the Buddhists living in Assam. He also established a Govt. aided High school in Desangpani, in 1944, and Chala Jnanodaya Pali Vidyalaya in 1948. He also established Buddhist viharas and schools in different parts of Assam like: Pandu, Tinsukia, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Digboi, Dibrugarh and Shillong. He was also a writer of good repute and has around 25 books to his credit on Buddhism as well as on the history in the Assamese language.
Beni Madhab Barua (1888-1948) was an eminent Indologist and an acknowledged authority on Buddhism. He continued the Buddhist Philosophical Studies started by S. C. Vidyabhushan. In 1914, he joined the University of London and earned the degree of D. Litt. for his thesis *Indian Philosophy- Its Original Growth from the Vedas to the Buddha* in 1917. On his return to India in 1917, he was appointed as lecturer of *Pali* in the University of Kolkata and elevated as the professor of *Pali* in 1925, which post he continued to hold till his death in 1948. He wrote a number of monumental works on various facets of Buddhism like, *A History of Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy, A Prolegomena to a History of Buddhist Philosophy, The Ajivikas, Gaya and Buddha Gaya, Bharhut Inscriptions* (3 vols.), *Inscriptions of Ashoka* (2 vols.). He also published 75 papers in various journals and old Brahmi Inscriptions in the Udaigiri and Khandagiri Caves.

He was closely associated with the Bengal Buddhist Association for the task of revival of Buddhism in India. He held various posts from time to time like Chairman of Reception committee of All India Buddhist Conference held at Kolkata in 1928; President of the Nalanda Vidya Bhavan (established by the Bengal Buddhist Association in 1935); also edited *Jagajjyoti* and editor of *Buddhist India* etc. He went to Sri Lanka in 1944 on a lecture tour and received the award of *Tripitakacarya* from Vidyalankara Parivena. He was associated with many institutions like the Maha Bodhi Society, the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, the Bharati Mahavidyalaya of Kolkata, Vidyalankara Parivena, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, All India Oriental Conference etc. He founded the Jogendra- Rupasibala *Tripitaka* Trust Board and co-founded the Indian Research Institute.

In 1890, Mahavir Swami became a Buddhist *bhikkhu*, and established a *vihara* at Kushinara, for which the funds were provided by a devout Burmese lay follower Khee Zarhee. Another Burmese *bhikkhu*, Ven. Sangharaja Saramedha, on his way to Bodh Gaya in 1956, stopped at Chittagong after seeing the corruptions in Buddhism there. He stayed there for two years and preached Theravada Buddhism. He also converted Queen Kalindi of Cakma kingdom to Thervada Buddhism, who helped them in financing their project of first modern Buddhist publication in Eastern Bengal.

Before Sangharaja Saramedha, *Bhikkhu* Punnasara (first *Thervada* monk from old Bengali Buddhist community), had ordained a new generation of Bengali
Buddhist bhikkhus. He also established a school and a Pali Tol. With the help of Acharya Punnasara and Ven. Kripasaran (another Bengali bhikkhu, a member of Mahā Bodhi Society), the old Bengali Buddhist community started participating in the Buddhist revival movement.\(^7\)

Another Buddhist scholar from Bengal in late 19th century and early 20th century includes P. C. Bagchi\(^7\) (D.Litt., Paris and Vice Chancellor of Vishva Bharati University at Shantiniketan), who conducted research in Sanskrit-Tibetan and Sanskrit–Chinese studies. Several of his papers and books have appeared in the Vishva Bharati Studies since 1932, in Vishva Bharati Annals since 1947, and in Indian Studies since 1945. He also produced works like *Studies in Tantra* and works in Sanskrit Lexicography. R.C. Mitra\(^7\) (Shantiniketan) gave a comprehensive description of history of the decay of Buddhism in his *Decline of Buddhism in India* (1955) and Prof. Gokuldas Dey\(^7\) wrote *Democracy in Early Buddhist Sangha* (1955). The works of Benoytosh Bhattacharya,\(^7\) Head of the Baroda Gaikwad Institute, like *Indian Buddhist Iconography* (1924); and *Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism*, (1932) are the works of excellent scholarship; Vidushakhar Bhattacharya\(^7\) wrote *the Basic Conception of Buddhism*, (1934) and was associated with Shantiniketan as well as with Kolkata University; Nalinaksha Dutta,\(^7\) successor of B. M. Barua as Head of Pali Department at Kolkata University, wrote *Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and its Relation to Hinayana*, (1930); Sukumar Dutt\(^8\) wrote *Early Buddhist Monachism*, (1924); *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries in India*, (1962); U. N. Ghoshal worked on *Early Buddhism in Afghanistan*. Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray\(^8\), who has written Sanskrit Buddhism (1936) Theravada Buddhism (1946), Satkari Mookherjee,\(^8\) who wrote *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, were all great scholars and preachers of Buddhism in India.

Another Buddhist scholar from Eastern India was Rahul Sankrityayana, who has gone only through Urdu Middle School in formal education. He, in his early life, ran away from his home several times and joined a Vaishnava saint and then Arya Samaj, but he found his true solace in Buddhism.\(^8\) In 1928, he joined Vidyalankara Parivena in Sri Lanka to teach Sanskrit and learnt Pali. In 1932, he along with Bhikkhu Anand Kausalyayana went to England to preach Buddhism among Europeans. But at the invitation of Professor Stcherbatsky, he moved to the Soviet Union. As a consequence, in 1938, he joined the All India Communist Party. In 1944,
he, once again, visited Tibet and the Soviet Union for the next three years. He was expelled from the Communist Party in 1948. He devoted the later part of his life to writing and as a leader of peasant movement of Bihar and then as a leader of All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. He returned to Vidyalankara Parivena and taught Sanskrit there for the rest of his life. He has around one hundred and fifty literary works to his credit which include a *Russian Sanskrit Dictionary*, a *Tibetan Sanskrit Dictionary*, a book on the life of the Buddha, books on Buddhism in Tibet and he wrote several books which are still important for the Hindi literature like novels, travelogues, biographies of eminent personalities. He championed many schools of Indian philosophy and wrote books on Indian philosophy and translated a lot of Buddhist texts into Hindi like the Vinata Pitaka. He, then, again went to Tibet and ordained as a monk and brought back to India 22 mules laden with the Sanskrit manuscripts, Paintings and *Thangkas* (a Tibetan scroll painting), which developed his interest in Buddhism more profoundly.

Besides *Kanjur* which consists of the *Vinaya* and *Sutta* (105 volumes) and *Tanjur*, which consists of various *Abhidhamma* works (225 volumes), he brought around 1619 Tibetan manuscripts and 150 rare paintings. In his three visits to Tibet in 1930, 1934 and 1935, Rahul Sankrityayana brought as many as 80 Sanskrit Buddhist works, many of which he, himself, edited and published. In all, there are around 150 books to his credit on almost every subject. R. Sankrityayana, Ananda Kausalyayana, and Jagdish Kashyap worked together, for some time, at Allahabad.

He along with Jagdish Kashyap and Anand Kausalyayana played an important role in the revival of Buddhism in India. Major contribution of the trio was the translation of the Pali texts into Hindi from 1933 onwards. These were published by the Mahabodhi Society. These include – *Dhammapada*, *Vinaya Pitaka*, *Majjhima Nikaya*, *Digha Nikaya*, *Samyutta Nikaya*, *Udana*, *Suttanipata*, *Jatakas* and *Milindpanho*. He wrote several books on Buddhism which include *Buddha Charya* (1930), *Dhammapada* (1933), *Majjhima Nikaya* (1933), *Vinaya Pitaka* (1935), *Digha Nikaya* (1935), *Tibet mein Buddha dharma* (1935), *Baudh darshan* (1942), *Mahamanav Buddha* (1956), and *Baudh Sanskriti*.

*Bhikkhu* Anand Kausalyayana (born in village Suhana near Chandigarh) met Rahul at Lahore. In 1928, he was ordained as *bhikkhu*. He was a prolific writer and wrote around sixty books and pamphlets including works on Buddhist philosophy and
translation of *Jatakas* in Hindi. He initiated around one lakh people into Buddhism at Mumbai, ten days after the death ceremony of Ambedkar in 1956.  

Buddhism, according to him, was not a revealed religion but a religion supported by reason. The intellectual freedom and depths of its social commitment impressed him. The writings of Hardayal “take the least, give the most to society” made him to change his religion and become a Buddhist *bhikkhu*.  

Some of his works include *Buddha Vachan*, *Bhikshu ke Pattar*, *Bhagwadgita ki Buddhivadi Sameeksha*, *Tulsi ke Teen paat* and *Bahanebaazi*. A few important translations by him include *Mahavansa*, *Jatakas* (in six parts), *Anguttara Nikaya* (in 4 parts), *Dhammapada* and *Abhidhamma* and *Sangho*. *Pacheesvan Ghanta* etc. He also translated Ambedkar’s *Buddha and his Dhamma* in Hindi with extensive bibliographical foot notes, not mentioned in the original work and, later, translated it into Punjabi. In 1968, he wrote a biography of B R Ambedkar *Yadi baba na hote*. Then he published a series of books and pamphlets on Buddhism, some of these are *Kranti ke Agradoot Bhagwan Buddha*, *Tathagat ka Shaswat Sandesh*, *Bhagwan Buddha ka Dharma*, *Buddha Jnana*, *Buddha Jeevan Padhiti*, *Buddha Dharma was Marxwad*, *Bhagwadgita Tatha Dhammapada* and *Manusamriti Jalai Gai Kyon*.  

He remained in Sri Lanka for around nine years but also kept on visiting India to keep in touch with the revival movement. On his return to India in 1968, he founded *Bhikkhu Niwas* at the *Deeksha bhoomi* which later became a centre of learning and training of young *bhikkhus*. After the death of Ambedkar in December 1956, Maharashtra became his main area of activity. He, extensively, visited the state of Maharashtra, including the countryside areas, and preached and influenced people towards the new faith. Earlier an Arya Samajist, Jagdish Kashyap met Rahul Sankrityayana in Patna. Through these contacts, he managed to go to Sri Lanka in 1933 and joined Vidyalankara Parivena. In 1934, he was ordained as a *bhikkhu*. He along with Rahul Sankrityayana visited Japan but was not allowed to stay in the country and had to stay at Penang where he delivered several lectures and also translated Sanskrit speeches of Sankrityayana into English. At Penang he stayed at a Chinese monastery and learnt Chinese. A collection of his lectures there was later published under the title “Buddha dharma” in 1935. He also visited places like Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar. In 1937 Jagadish Kashyap became associated
with the Maha Bodhi Society and settled at Saranath. He, then, joined Ananda Kausalyayana and Rahul Sankrityayana and started translating Pali Tripitaka into Hindi. But he was not satisfied. And he planned to get himself associated with institutional organization as well as social service.

While in Saranath, he met Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and S. Radhakrishnan through Seth Jugal Kishore Birla. With their help, he succeeded in instituting studies of Pali in Benaras Hindu University and agreed to teach free. But to teach there, he had to travel 22 miles daily. So Seth Jugal Kishore Birla got constructed a cottage in the premises of the Benaras Hindu University which later came to be known as Buddha Kuti (now permanent residence of Pali teacher). After independence in 1947, he seriously undertook the work of reviving interest in Buddhism and Buddhist studies in India, thus to introduce Pali studies in schools and colleges in Magadha and also to re-establish the glory of Nalanda. Therefore, in 1949, he made a Charika in Magadha, in keeping with ancient tradition of living on alms (pindapata), and started preaching in the local dialect Magadhi (a dialect of Hindi).

Meanwhile, even the state government of Bihar was planning to start institutes for the study of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit representing Brahmanic, Buddhist and Jain cultures and the places for the institutions selected were Mithila, Nalanda and Vaishali respectively. Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap was invited to organize the institute of Nalanda, which developed into Nava Nalanda Mahavihara. The foundation stone of the institute was laid by Rajendra Prasad on 20th November 1951. The newly built institute received special message of goodwill, gifts and rare Buddhist books from Buddhist countries. The Dalai Lama sent a special representative on the occasion with a complete set of Tibetan scriptures and an image of the Buddha. It was destined to grow as an advanced centre of research and learning, and has been elevated to the status of a Deemed University, quite recently.

Lastly, he produced 41 volumes of Pali Tripitaka translated into Hindi in 1961. The first volume was released on the occasion of the 2500th birth anniversary of the Buddha. The ambitious task took 5 years to complete and it was jointly sponsored by the Bihar government and the Government of India. This was presented to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru at the celebration function held in Sarnath. He also donated a land measuring 1.25 acres and six buildings at Nalanda to the Thai Buddhist Sangha of Bodh Gaya in 1974. Besides, he also donated some lands in Saranath to the Tibetan
refugees. He remained in constant touch with Ambedkar and his movement in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. He even presided over some of the conversion ceremonies. He was instrumental in establishing a meditational school in Nalanda and also in the organization of the Vipassana meditational training camps in India.

Kripasaran Mahavir (1865-1926) founded in Kolkata the Indian Buddhist Society, which was loosely affiliated to the Buddhist Society of India. Again, in 1892, he founded the Buddha Dharma Movement Sabha (Bengal Buddhist Association) and its branches were later opened in Lucknow, Darjeeling, Shillong, Jamshedpur and Chittagong. A Bengali journal Jagajyoti, was also started by him under the editorship of Gunalankara Mahasthavir and Swami Puranand in 1908. He also founded in 1909, the Gunalankara library which consisted of the rare books on Buddhism even to this day. He founded the Dharma vihara in Kolkata in 1903. He established a series of branches of the Bengal Buddhist Association at Shimla (1907), Lucknow (1907), Dibrugarh (1908), Darjeeling (1910), Ranchi (1915), Shillong (1918) and Jamshedpur (1922). He convened a convention of the Young Men’s Buddhist Association at Kolkata to discuss the problems faced by the students in 1940. He also organized a Buddhist Women’s Conference in 1918 to consider the problems faced by women. At last, he convened the World Buddhist Conference in December, 1924 at Kolkata.

A Sri Lankan monk Bodhananda started preaching Buddhism and came to settle permanently in Lucknow in 1904. He became a Buddhist in October 1914. He founded the Indian Buddhist Society in 1916 at Lucknow. In 1925, he got a Buddha Vihara built at Risalder Park, Lucknow. He also established a Buddhist Library in which he placed a number of books in Pali, Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and English. He also wrote books like Bhagwan Gautam Buddha- Jivani aur Upadesh, Mul-Bharatvasi aur Arya and Baudha Charya Padhiti.

In 1928, he founded Nava Ratna Samiti which later came to be known as the “Backward Classes League.”

Dharamarakshita of Kushinara had earned his Ph.D degree for his research on “Buddha Yoga Sadhana” from Ranchi University. In 1944, he received higher ordination and went to Sri Lanka to study the Tripitaka and Pali literature at Maha Matinda Oriental College. There he received the degree of Tripakacharya and
returned to India. Here he joined the Maha Bodhi Society as a Dhammaduta worker. He even edited the Hindi monthly periodical of the Maha Bodhi Society, *Dhammaduta*. He also became the principal of Mahabodhi College Sarnath for around 15 years. He was invited to the sixth Great Buddhist council held in Myanmar in 1956 and was selected as the Samgayaka. He also took part in the activities of Kushinagara Bhikshu Sangha, Vaishali Sangha and Bharitya Bhikshu Sangha.

He was a prolific writer and wrote a number of books including *Jati bhed aur Buddha* which was published on the recommendation of Dr Ambedkar by the Jat Pat Todak Mandal.

He wrote and translated as many as 50 books on Buddhism in Hindi, Marathi and Pali. Some of his works are: *Buddha Dharma hai Manav Dharma*, *Samyutta Nikaya* (two parts), *Dhammapada, It-vuttaka, Mahaparinirvana Sutta, Sutta Nipata, Vishuddhamagga* (two parts), *Jataka Athakatha-part I, Chariya Pitaka, Nidana Katha, Pali Vyakarana, Milinda Prashana, Pali Sahitya ki Ruprekha, Pali Sahitya ka Itihas* and *Tathagat ke Pratham Upadesh* etc. Now Nalanda Mahavihara adorned him with the degree of *Vidyavaridhi* (D. Litt) in 1971.

Lakhera Ariyawansa of Chittagong (now in Bangladesh) was ordained as a samanera in 1928 by Prajnalankara Mahathera. In 1932, he went to Sri Lanka for further studies and obtained the highest degree of *Sri Saddharmacharya* after nine years in 1941.

From 1942-45, he earned the degree of *Tripitaka Visharad* in India and joined the Maha Bodhi Society in 1949 as a Dhammaduta worker. He was made the Bhikkhu incharge of the New Delhi Buddha Vihara in 1950 and came to be associated with the *Buddha jayanti* celebration, organization of seminars, lectures, sermons and discourses on Buddhism and publication of Buddhist literature. He also had contacts with national leaders of repute like Ambedkar, J. L. Nehru, R. Prasad, Kailash Nath Katju, who helped him in various ways. He was instrumental in the declaration of Buddha *Purnima* as a public holiday in 1935 by the government of India.

Ariyawansa also established, in 1968, the *Jagajjyoti vihara* in South Delhi. He wrote numerous books on Buddhism in Hindi, English and Bengali, which include *Subodhalankara* (first book), *Buddha Niti Shiksha Karya*, *Bauddha Upasana tatha Mangal Paddhiti*, *Bauddh Jeevan Path*.
He was also the Vice President of Maha Bodhi Society and associated with various other organizations, which include, World Buddhist Sangha, Asian Buddhist Conference for promoting Peace. He was also appointed as the International honorary advisor to the International Buddhist Research Institute, Seol, South Korea. In 1978, he was the chief guest at the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Japan, and was honoured with the title of the chief Sangha Nayaka of North India the next year.121

Another North-Indian Kashi Prasad Jayaswal also wrote a number of articles on Buddhism from 1918 onwards. He housed the large number of Tibetan Manuscripts brought back from Tibet by Rahul Sankrityayana, which are now preserved at Jayaswal Research Institute of Patna.122

The Buddhists and Pandits, living in Kashmir, had propounded an organization called the “Kashmir Raj Bodhi Maha Sabha” with the aim of propagating Buddhism in the area where it once flourished, and rehabilitating the Buddhists of Kashmir, especially, Ladakh in each and every way. The organization was affiliated to the All India Buddhist Conference and Council.123

The interest of Kashmiris in Buddhism increased with the increase in Archaeological excavations and researches by different scholars and with access to English education. The Kashmiri Pandits also began to adopt Buddhism and started preaching the same under the auspices of the “Kashmir Raj Bodhi Maha Sabha”.124

The International Buddhist Mission (Myanmar) and the Maha Bodhi Society of India (Kolkata) also showed some interest in the welfare of Kashmiri Buddhists through the activities of the Kashmir Raj Maha Bodhi Sabha.125

In 1966-67, The Ambedkar Buddhist Mission organized in Jammu, Bashnah and Dalhousie the mass meetings of the Scheduled Castes to commemorate and celebrate Buddha jayanti. However, these meetings were reported as mass conversions by the press. On the other hand, L. R. Balley and Milkhi Ram view it as a part of the long term program of conversion when the conversion would no longer snatch the benefits given to the scheduled castes by the government.126 It intended to preach Buddhism and strengthen Buddhism where it is being followed (in a mimeographed copy of the Constitution of the Ambedkar Buddhist Mission received from L. R. Balley, in April 1967).127
Kushaka Bakula was the head Lama of Ladakh and was considered as the reincarnation of the previous head Lama and the 20th incarnation of the Arhat Bakula. He studied at Depung monastery, Lhasa, for 14 years and obtained the highest degree Geshe Lharampa specializing in Mahayana school.\textsuperscript{128}

He was the head of Pethub monastery in Ladakh. After the Chinese occupation of Tibet, he started imparting traditional and modern education to Buddhist monks in India to keep the rich cultural heritage of Buddhism in Ladakh lively. He initiated the construction of Ladakh Buddha Vihara in Delhi in 1963.\textsuperscript{129} He was a scholar of Tibetan language. He wrote several commentaries on Buddhist philosophy and metaphysics. He had participated in many conferences like World Fellowship of Buddhists, International Conference on Peace, Disarmament and Apartheid. He was also the vice-president of the Asian Buddhist Council for peace. But in 1949, at the instance of J. L. Nehru, joined active politics.\textsuperscript{130}

In 1933, Rahul Sankrityayana and Anagarika Brahmachari Govinda (a German bhikkhu) visited the state and delivered various lectures at Srinagar to give a boost to the cause of Buddhism. They also submitted the representation to the Government of India about the critical state of the Buddhists in Ladakh.\textsuperscript{131}

Pandit Sheo Narayana of Lahore (a leading advocate of Punjab High Court in Lahore) worked in 1920s, propagated the idea that “Buddhism represented the highest stage of Indian culture.”\textsuperscript{132} He wrote several articles in the Maha Bodhi Journal mainly in 1923 and 1927.\textsuperscript{133} His articles supported the view point of propagating the religion through the texts made available in translations. For him the religion should be supported by reason, and “Buddhism will be the only religion for the whole world to fall back upon.” He donated his library of Buddhist works to the International Buddhist Institute at Sarnath.\textsuperscript{134}

Lala Har Dayal, a Punjabi revolutionary, was an exponent of Buddhism. He went to the USA to study Buddhism at Harward in 1911. But within a few months he planned the famous Ghadar Movement. He founded the Ghadar Party in 1913 at San Fransisdeo. Every member of the Ghadar Party was declared to be in honour and duty bound to participate in the fight against slavery, carried on anywhere in the world.\textsuperscript{135} Later in 1927, the British Government allowed him to study at the school of Oriental and African studies in London, where he wrote a book called \textit{the Bodhisattva}
Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature. This is considered a standard work on the subject even today. He gave many statements regarding the age of the Buddha like “India achieved her greatest triumphs in science, ethics, education, art and international prestige during the Buddhist period.”136

L. R. Bailey and his associates, in 1966, founded the Ambedkar Buddhist Mission with its headquarters at Jullandhar in Punjab. However, in 1969, it got united with (or was absorbed by) the Buddhist society of India.137

In 1967, there were a number of Buddhist organizations in New Delhi, which were associated with the Ambedkar Bhavan, which contained in its premises, a Buddhist temple, guest rooms, meeting halls, a library, and a permanent residential house for the caretaker. This was used for weekly meetings and evening studies in Buddhism. Mrs. S. Ambedkar (widow of Dr Ambedkar) served as head of an autonomous Buddhist group with a branch in Lucknow, which was administered by Bhikkhu Pradhyanand of Sri Lanka. This branch maintained a free school in which 700 students from 500 villages studied.138 In other parts of Delhi, the meetings used to take place in the Mahabodhi temple, inside the Birla temple or in the Ashoka Mission Vihara or Mehrauli road.139

Western India

In 1909, Pali studies were instituted at the University of Bombay with efforts of R. G. Bhandarkar. However, Bhagwanlal Indraji was already pursuing research work on Western cave temples and the Nepalese inscriptions with the European scholars like James Burgess and Johann George Buhler.140

Earlier some people even wrote on Buddhism towards the end of the 19th century, which, in fact, popularized Buddhism among the masses. These works included K. A. Keluskar’s (a school teacher at Wilson High School in Bombay) Life of Gautama Buddha (in Marathi in 1898). Incidentally, this book was young Ambedkar’s first introduction to Buddhism. Vinayaka Kondadeva Oka also published a serialized life of the Buddha in the Marathi children’s magazine, “Balbodh” in the 1890s. This influenced Dharmananda Kosambi (the first Indian Buddhist scholar in modern India).141 He was converted to Buddhism in 1902. He taught Pali at Kolkata University. He also played a part with Bhandarkar in instituting Pali language department at the University of Bombay. He also taught Pali to James H. Woods, who
later on, with the help of Kosambi, translated *Visuddhimagga*. He published various inscriptions, a *Pali Reader* with C. V. Rajawade (student) in 1914-16. His most important book is *Bhagwan Buddha* (1940), which profoundly influenced Ambedkar’s rational interpretation of the Buddha’s life. P. V. Bapat, the editor of *2500 Years of Buddhism*, was also his student.142 Later on, even his son D. D. Kosambi worked for popularity of Buddhism by writing literature on it.

In 1936, Kosambi founded the *Bahujana Vihara* (Buddhist temple for masses) in Bombay, which later on was handed over to the Maha Bodhi Society. His most famous work is *Bhagwan Buddha*, published in 1940. It has been translated and published in various languages like Hindi, Assamese, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Sindhi, Tamil and Urdu by *Sahitya Academy*, New Delhi.143

A. L. Nair (a doctor in Bombay), founded a Buddha Society in 1922 and got *Anand Vihara* constructed in his hospital. He also published a journal called the *Buddha Prabha* from 1933 onwards which was continued by K. A. Padhiye on the insistence of C. Krishnan. The Maha Bodhi Society sent a Buddhist Mission to Calicut in 1935, under the leadership of Anand Maitreya. In 1935, C. Krishnan was elected the President of Malabar branch of Maha Bodhi Society after Nair’s death.144

Some other Buddhist scholars from Maharashtra included G. R. Nandargikar, who translated the *Buddha Caritam* of Ashvaghosha; V. V. Gokhale, who published Tibetan Studies and was a teacher in Fergusson College; P. L. Vaidya, who edited an edition of *Dhammapada* with R. D. Srikhande (1923) and wrote a book on *Rise and Spread of Buddhism* in Marathi; and J.K. Nariman (a Parsi), who undertook comparative studies in Zoroastrianism and Buddhism and also wrote *Buddha’s Message to the Lowly* for an issue of *Maha Bodhi* journal.145

Another person, Vitthal Ramji Shinde was a member of Prarthana Samaj. In 1927, he declared at a meeting of the Brahma Samaj in Kolkata, that he was a Buddhist, which, according to him, caused uproar. He was an active social reformer, who has done work for the emancipation of the downtrodden and along with other Buddhist scholars he was of the view that the revival of Buddhism in India was possible through the involvement of the scholars as well as of the reform minded masses who were not, necessarily, Buddhists but sympathetic towards Buddhism.146

Another figure was Hari Singh Gaur (a lawyer, a member of Central Legislative Assembly and the Vice-Chancellor of Nagpur University), who wrote *The
Spirit of Buddhism, which was appreciated by Mahatma Gandhi as the greatest work on Buddhism. Rabindranath Tagore wrote the book’s foreword (in the Dictionary of National Biography). He was of the view that Buddhism was the ‘high point of Indian civilization’, and it was a religion akin to Hinduism but purer and more compassionate.147

The Maha Bodhi Ashoka Mission of India was founded at Ajmer (Rajasthan) in 1961. Its first President was Mrs. Freda Bedi, who later became a Buddhist nun and settled in Himachal Pradesh.148 It shares centers with the Buddhist Society at similar places like Ajmer, Akola, Bombay, Kolkata and Nagpur, but it is not known whether it was a branch of the Buddhist Society. It also claims centres at Mukteshwar (Nainital) and Sri Lanka.149

The mission underlines its functions “to promote peace, love, harmony, fraternity, equality and the right views among the human beings through educational, physical, social, cultural and spiritual services.”150 It also started a periodical Samyaka Drishti (Right view) in English as well as two vernacular languages, for its converts.

N. K. Bhagwat, a pupil of Dharmanand Kosambi, kept the light of Pali and Buddhistic studies burning in western India. A professor of Pali at St. Xavier College in Bombay, he edited a number of Pali texts and also translated Dhammpada. He wrote a book called the Buddhist Philosophy of Theravada School. He also edited and published the journal “Dharma Chakra”. He also remained the head of the department of Pali in Siddharth College, Bombay.152

South India

The South Indian revivalist movement was more intended towards conversions, than to any scholarships. S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar started writing on Buddhism in 1904, and in collaboration with V.A. Smith, produced the first edition of Ancient India in 1911; V.R. Ramchandra Dikshitar wrote on early Buddhism in Andhra Pradesh and in Tamil literature; T.N. Ramchandran’s articles on Buddhist sites; N. Aiyaswamy Sastri worked on the Buddhist texts; and K.R. Subramanian got published “Buddhist Remains in Andhra and the History of Andhra”; A.S. Mudaliar wrote a pamphlet on Buddhism in 1903.153

The most notable figure in the South Indian revival movement is P. Laxmi
Narasu, author of “Essence of Buddhism”, which influenced Ambedkar. He established a branch of Maha Bodhi Society in Madras in 1900 with the help of M. Singaravelu. It is said that he worked more for conversion and the cause of the downtrodden than the original Maha Bodhi society, thus he alienated himself from it.155

In the beginning of the 20th century, Narasu and Pandit Ayothi Thass founded the South Indian Buddhist Association. Narasu also wrote a pamphlet, in the name of Madras Buddhist Association, in appreciation of Buddhism as compared to other existing religions. He wrote that “the dogma and miracles were wisdom to the Christian, kismet and fanaticism wisdom to the Muslim, caste and ceremonialism wisdom to the Brahman, asceticism and nakedness wisdom to the Jain, mysticism and magic wisdom to the Taoist, formalism and outward piety wisdom to the Confucian, ancestor worship and loyalty to the Mikado wisdom to the Shintoist, but love and purity are the first wisdom to the Buddhist.” The South India Buddhist Association claimed to have nine branches in Madras state and a few outside India in Indonesia and Africa in 1954.158

Narasu was successful in influencing and gaining support of some non-brahmin leaders towards Buddhism. These leaders include E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker and C.N. Annadurai. Narasu was also one of the earliest proponents of the idea that untouchables were Buddhists in Ancient India, which was later explained more meaningfully by Ambedkar. The formation of the Kerala Buddhist Association with C. Krishnan as its president also took place. The All India Buddhist Conference held in Calicut in 1924 and the speeches here emphasized the social justice and Buddhist principles of brotherhood and equality.161

D.C. Ahir has summed up Narasu’s contribution in the following words “Prof. Narasu was the stalwart of the 19th century who had fought European arrogance with patriotic fervor, orthodox Hinduism with iconoclastic zeal, heterodox brahmins with nationalistic vision and aggressive Christianity with a rationalistic outlook – all under the inspiring banner of his unflagging faith in the teachings of the Great Buddha.”162

At a meeting of the Indian Buddhists of Madras in 1920, it was declared that there were around 3,000 converts to Buddhism in the last twenty years. However, the recorded number of Buddhists in 1971 Census for Tamil Nadu was 1,148, in
1961, 777 and in 1951, 1179. There was an increase in the Buddhist population but the increase was not very significant.

Ayothi Dass was a Tamil scholar, native doctor and one of the early leaders of the untouchables. He founded a printing Press ‘Gowtham Printing Press’ in Madras, where he used to publish books and pamphlets that throw light on Buddhism. He wrote a book called *Buddha’s Adhivedam* to explain Buddhism to new converts. He persuaded the British Govt. to classify Buddhism as a different religion from Hindu cults and thus should be separately classified in 1911 census. They were also assigned separate cremation grounds. He convened a number of Buddhist conferences to spread and preach Buddhism among the untouchables.

In Kerala too, Buddhism was pursued by low-caste people. e. g. C. Krishnan became a Buddhist and opened the Maha Bodhi Society’s temple in 1927 and a Buddhist Vihara in 1937 at Calicut. He was then supported by Dharmaskandha (the first Malayali to become a bhikkhu). C. Krishnan, editor of ‘Mitavadi’, published from Calicut, was the first pioneer of Buddhism in Kerala. On the insistence of C. Krishnan, Maha Bodhi Society sent a Buddhist Mission to Calicut in 1935 under the leadership of Ananda Maitreya. In 1935, he was elected as the President of Malabar branch of Maha Bodhi Society. The only scholarly work evident from Kerala is “Buddhism in Kerala” by P.C. Alexander. It showed that Buddhism flourished in Kerala till 9th century CE.


In 1944, Tamil Nadu Depressed Class Christian Association handed over a Memorandum to Ambedkar, alleging the ill-treatment of the lower caste converts to Christianity. Probably because of this only, the Madras Union Leader, Mr. Aryashankar left Christianity to become a Buddhist.

Mr. Aryashankar, who headed the Cycle Rickshaw Drivers and Transport Coolies Union, established a Buddhist centre in Periamet (Madras) which was completely independent of the Maha Bodhi Society of India. They considered Ayothi Thass as their spiritual father and were more interested in their economic emancipation than their religious enhancement.
By 1967, under the leadership of C.M. Arumughum, Kolar Gold fields (Karnataka) became the centre of Buddhist movement in Mysore state. He was the regional head of three organizations established by Ambedkar, the People’s Education Society, the Buddhist Society and the Republican Party.\textsuperscript{175}

The Buddhist Society of India has established one of its active branches in Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh). A publication entitled Review of Our Activities in 1964-65 claims that the Buddhist Society of India has grown to a “mighty organization” with the earnest desire to propagate Buddhism “by establishing Buddhist Study Centres, \textit{Viharas}, Educational Institutions, Orphanages, Health and Relief Centres etc.”\textsuperscript{176}

In 1908, one thousand workers with their families took \textit{Panchsheel} under \textit{Bhikkhu} U. Visuddha, an Irish monk.\textsuperscript{177} In 1916, as a result of A.P. Periyasami Pulavar, M.Y. Murugesar and C. Gurucamiar, Patitamani G. Appatturayar and E.N. Aiyyakannu Pulavar, the Champion Reefs Mines Society was founded at Kolar Gold Fields.\textsuperscript{178} A library of this society was set up and to this library were added Buddhist works, inscriptions, manuscripts, foreign journals etc. making it a great Buddhist research centre.\textsuperscript{179}

However, a number of people involved in the Buddhist revival movement in India had a view that Buddhism and Hinduism are not separate religions. As S. Radhakrishnan\textsuperscript{180} and Rhys Davids\textsuperscript{181} said that, “the Buddha did not feel that he was announcing a new religion. He was born, grew and died a Hindu. Almost similar view is shared by the great art historian A. K. Coomaraswamy,\textsuperscript{182} who repeated this point in one of his early works. \textit{Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism}” (1916) and reiterated it in “\textit{Hinduism and Buddhism}” (1943). The more superficially one studies Buddhism, the more it seems to differ from Brahmanism in which it originated; the more profound our study, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish Buddhism from Brahmanism. The South Indian proponents of Buddhism like A. K. Nair and K. A. Padiye also shared a similar view.\textsuperscript{183}

\textbf{Role of the Dalai Lama}

The Dalai Lama is an honorific title derived from the Mongolian, the first part of which i.e. dalai means ‘ocean’. Altan Khan, the Mongol ruler of Kokonor, conferred this title on the early Gelukpa teacher Snam Gyatso in 1578. The same title
was then applied retrospectively to his two previous incarnations. Gendun Drup (1391-1474) and Gendin Gyatso (1476-1542) who later came to be known as the Dalai Lama I and the Dalai Lama II, respectively. From the time of the Dalai Lama V in the mid 18th Century, the Dalai Lamas were the titular heads of state in Tibet as well as the spiritual heads of state as well as the spiritual leaders of the Gelukpa.184

Tenzin Gyatso is the 14th Dalai Lama, the God king of Tibet and a supreme spiritual leader of the Buddhists in the World.185 Tenzin Gyatso, the XIV Dalai Lama is living in exile. As a result of 1959 uprising, he fled to India and started residing in Dharamshala (Himachal Pradesh).186 For his efforts in promoting peace in the world, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. He is the Head of Tibet and after him he had around 100,000 Tibetan exiles in India.187 It is considered that he was an incarnation of ‘Chenresi Avalokitesvara’ (the Buddha of mercy, This is the Tibetan name for the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara).188 There is a Tibetan belief that Avalokitesvara is assigned the work of protecting Tibet, and thus he had to reincarnate himself from time to time, continuing the tradition of Dalai Lama alive to this day.189

After he came to India he said, “the Dalai Lama from the field of Buddhism, at least in Mahayana Buddhism, not only belongs to Tibet but also to whatever Mahayana teaching is practiced. Like the head of the Catholics, the Dalai Lama’s personal nationality is not of much importance. The institution somehow belongs everywhere. In ancient times also Mongolians and a large number of Chinese took the Dalai Lama as their own head. There is no feeling at all that the Dalai Lama is not Chinese or Mongolian or Tibetan.”190 He also proclaimed his wish to be reborn in India.191

“As a temporal and spiritual sovereign of Tibet, the Dalai lama faces two basic problems in exile. The national liberation of Tibet and the preservation of the great cultural heritage to which, he and his people belong. However, naturally his interests have been more of spiritual nature, and in this respect he has done much in promoting and preserving Tibetan culture.192

The form of Buddhism followed in Tibet is the Mahayana Buddhism of two kinds i.e. Sutra and Tantra. In practice they have adopted the Tantra form which is commonly known as mysticism. Out of these, four new sects of Buddhism grew in
Tibet i.e. Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Gelug. These sects, however, differ in their approach but as the Dalai Lama says, “the aim of all these schools is the attainment of Buddhahood and in this matter there is no school which differs.”

It effectively means that differences between the different sects of Buddhism are only superficial. The variations are the result only of local cults and practices. Dalai Lama’s Buddhism only reiterates what the Buddha had said and preached i.e. the humanistic philosophy without any outward formalities like rituals in temples. According to Lamaism and Buddhism of the Buddha, man must not look to temples but within one’s own self to attain salvation.

According to Dalai Lama, Buddhism has four schools of thought and philosophy i.e. Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Vijyanvada, and Sunyavada. And classify it into three vehicles i.e. Charavakayana or Hinayana, Pratyeka Buddhayana and Bodhisattvayana or Mahayana. On the other hand, he calls Pratyeka Buddhayana and Charavakayana as basically of same form, and call both of them as Hinayana, making basically only two vehicles i.e Hinayana and Mahayana. The Mahayana which they follow is further subdivided by them into the vehicle of Prajnaparmitayana (cause vehicle of perfection), Vajrayana (effective vehicle of the Adamentine wheel or the great secret) and the vehicle of esoteric teachings (Tantrayana).

According to the Dalai Lama, the world is changing and so do the individuals and their responsibilities. This is the era of globalization and people are becoming inter-connected and so independent that they cannot make their survival possible without inculcating the sense of universal responsibility. In this context, according to him Mahayana Buddhism has a great role to play.

To summarize his teachings we can say that he gave utmost importance to love, compassion, tolerance, will and altruistic attitude. According to Dalai Lama, the main purpose of Buddhism is happiness in this world and beyond.

About his exile and stay in India, he says that he does not feel alien in India as India is his spiritual home. He further says that in the field of culture, we are disciples of India. Our culture is mainly based on Buddhism and Buddhism came from India. The people of India living in the areas of Ladakh, Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnaur, Almora, Pithoragarh, Bundila, Tawang and Darjeeling have a close racial, religious and cultural affinity to Tibetans.
He wants the Tibetan culture to adapt according to modern world and thus he said, “Just as Tibet embraced Buddhism and clothed it in the Tibetan tradition, so that Tibetan culture and Buddhism are almost synonymous, Tibet must also embrace the modern learning of science and technology and social organizations and make it an integral part of Tibetan culture.” Indian government gave grants-in-aid as well as the plots of land to every three monks and as a result the Tibetans began to settle in India and started building temples and monasteries all over India with no objection from the Indian government.

On March 11, 1973, in a ceremony at Ramlila ground Delhi, Dalai Lama initiated as many as 1000 people into Buddhism by continuing the legacy of Ambedkarite movement. However, the sources call it not as conversion but embracing of Buddhism. And there is no missionary compulsion from the organizers or the Dalai Lama. The entire ceremony was in Pali recited slowly by the Dalai Lama and repeated thrice by those embracing Buddhism. They also repeated a 22 point pledge laid down by Ambedkar (mentioned in the next chapter) for the initiation ceremony. Victory to Lord Buddha, Victory to Dr Ambedkar and victory to his holiness Dalai Lama’ shouted the new Buddhists thrice at the end of the ceremony.

Another important event that happened was the Kalachakra initiation. (Kalachakra, wheel of time is the highest of all the Tantric initiations into occult knowledge). It is possibly the last great Tantra to be compiled in India around 10th Century CE. It is said to comprise three sections dealing with outer, inner and secret levels of teachings. It now began to be taught publicly, not only in India but also in Europe and America. This empowers the initiated to purify his body and soul and attain salvation within a single life span. It is given only by the Dalai Lama.

Another significant event was when the Dalai Lama and various political leaders along with 200 scholars delegation from different countries participated in the Buddhist leaders’ conference held in Darjeeling on 24-25 May, 1975. On this occasion he addressed a gathering of 20000 people, telling them the antiquity of Buddhism in the Himalayan region. The leaders at the conference decided to support the restoration and upliftment of Buddhism in different parts of Asia and Tibet under the spiritual leadership of the Dalai Lama. It was also resolved in the conference to establish monasteries in the border areas for the propagation of Buddhism and monastic schools for the eradication of illiteracy. A Post-graduate Buddhist studies
On 18th September 1978 Dalai Lama organized yet another Buddhist conference on religion, education and culture under the auspices of the All India Frontier Buddha Maha Sabha (formed on 11 January, 1974) by the Buddhist leaders and followers of Buddhism in frontier states of India to “preserve, strengthen and develop the Buddhist culture and thought, art and literature, morals and manners.”

The emphasis of the conference was on:

1. The development of Buddhist education and research in the world;
2. Promotion of cultural contacts among the Buddhists in the world; and
3. The role of Buddhism in the advancement of human values.

Under the guidance of the Dalai Lama, a number of Buddhist organizations and institutions were started with the aim of promoting and preserving the Buddhist culture. These include Indo-Tibetan Cultural Institute, Kalimpong (1954); the Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Samath (1968); Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala (1971); Tibet House, New Delhi (1965); Tibetan Music Dance and Drama Society, Dharamshala (1960); and Tibetan Young Buddhist Association, Dharamshala (1985).

In all it could be said that the revival of Buddhism did not began in India but outside. It was initiated in India not by Indians but foreigners. And later organizational base was provided by a Ceylonese monk AnagarikaDharmapala with the establishment of the Maha Bodhi Society. Most of the people involved in its revival were outsiders. The personalities associated with the movement include Historians, Indologists, Archaeologists, Army officials etc. and the people who were following Buddhism. These personalities as well as associations and organizations could only do a little to revive Buddhism. They only gave the revival movement a direction. They were instrumental in its initiation. But the real task for mass revival of Buddhism was undertaken by Ambedkar in its wholistic aspect.
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151. Fiske in Mahar, op. cit., p. 124.
152. Ahir, op. cit., p. 118.
154. The book is an assembling of essays written by Narasu in popular journals. The author was a teacher of Chemistry and Physics. The book first published in 1912 was republished by B. R. Ambedkar in 1948 with a biographical preface added to it
156. Pandit Ayothi Thass was from Tamil Nadu, and he first took up Buddhism at the beginning of the 20th Century and gave it a mass base in Tamil Nadu.
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