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# AJANTA

**AJANTA PRAKASHAN**





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## 19. Globalization of Buddhist Philosophy: For the Protection of Environment Changes and Challenges Ahead

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### I. Introduction

Buddhism as religion is based on human values. Humanity is the essence of Buddhism. In new world Buddhism has to play a key role in maintaining the balance in the east and west. East is spiritual and west is materialist. Buddhism can bring awareness regarding consumption and control on human needs. J. Elart has noted that, man ecosystem and culture are closely related to each other.<sup>1</sup> (Elart J., Man Ecosystem Culture pg. 1) Culture can develop only in the protected Environment. In ancient India the period of Ashoka was the best period for the protection of environment because it was based on Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> (Ibid,pg.11) Ashoka's Dhamma was very much meaningful and he tried to develop Buddhism systematically by correlating man, ecosystem and culture. Ashoka has appointed Dhamma Mahamtra and Nirichhikas to see whether people were rightly following his dhamma or not. Ashoka correlated economic development and spiritual development during his period. Hence India flourished its culture outside India in Asia and Europe.

The environmental aspects in Buddhism can also be observed in Dhamm pad written by Lord Buddha. These principles are also reflected in Kopenhegan document on global warming. Thus it reveals that, we have to share equally for the protection of the environment, both by western and eastern countries. In this aspects the human values in Buddhism can be described as basis of sustainable development.

### II. Philosophy of Buddhism

Buddha was a great philosopher and thinker He had evolved his own ideas which were based on truth and nonviolence. These ideas were not related to vaidik philosophy. They were originally Buddhist. Buddha had developed his ideas based on own experiments and practices. It has been rightly pointed that Buddha taught for 45 years through conversation, lectures and parables. His method of teaching was unique. He walked from town to town accompanied by his favourite disciples and followed by as many as 1200 devotees. Ordinarily, he stopped at some



village and pitched his camp in some garden or on some river bank. The afternoon was given to meditation and evening to instruction. His favourite Sutra was the "Four Noble Truths" which emphasized the fact that life was full of pain which could be removed! Only by removal of all desires. Hear! Oh Bhikkus! The Noble Truths of suffering. Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, illness is suffering. Hear! Oh Bhikkus! the Noble Truth of the cause of suffering. Thirst for pleasure, thirst for life. Thirst for prosperity, thirst that leads to new birth. Hear! Oh Bhikkus! The Noble Truth of the rebirth. The cause and source of Nirvana is the extinction of self-desires. The basis of the teachings of Buddha is the law of Karma which is inexorable. No one can turn it aside or stay its operation. It is wrong to say that Buddha ignored the material interests of the layman.<sup>1</sup> (Ibid, pg.63) Thus Buddha had studied religion in a microscopic manner and his every point was very much methodical. His dhamm padas explain ethical message for the development of ideal human being. There is a need to examine Buddhism for the welfare of humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dr. Ambedkar accepted Buddhism and reestablished India's cultural integration because he knew that Buddhism was the only religion which spread all over the world in large scale. He pointed that, accepting Buddhism means accepting a new way of life and a new outlook.<sup>4</sup> (Ambedkar B. R., Buddha & His Dhamma, See last chapter)

### III. Relevance of Buddhism

1. Buddhism as a religion is relevant today due to terrorism, communal riots and war because humanity is in need of peace and tranquility.
2. Samuel Huntington pointed that, there will be clash of civilization, but today we require social cohesion, which Buddhism can provide.
3. Will Durant pointed that, Buddha was a man of strong will, authoritative and proud, but of gentle manner and speech and of infinite benevolence.<sup>5</sup> (Will Durant, Our oriental heritage, Vol-I)
4. Buddha claimed enlightenment but not inspiration He never pretended that God was speaking through him. In controversy, he was more patient and considerate than any other of the great teachers of mankind. <sup>6</sup> (Ibid) Even today world requires all acceptable teachers, who can communicate all to promote peace.
5. Buddha founded a religion which spread in various parts of the world. He was a great debater and was always able to put his opponents on the defence <sup>7</sup> (Mahajan, Opcit, pg-63) Today world requires dialogues and communication, Environment can be protected only through dialogue between east and west.
6. It was difficult to defeat him. He was impatient of his praise by his pupils and he was unmoved by slander. He was anxious about the truth and wanted the same to be



followed by his disciples<sup>8</sup> (Ibid) Buddha was balanced and rational and world today requires such balance between east and west.

#### IV. Buddhism changes & challenges

Buddhism had undergone many changes after lord Buddha. There was original Hinyana later on it become Mahayana and in the third phase it became Tantrayana or Vajrayana. A few weeks after the death of Buddha, the first Buddhist,- Council was held at Rajagriha in about 487 B. C. The discourses of Buddha were collated, classified and adopted as authoritative canonical texts by an assembly of 500 monks representing the various Samghas. The teachings of Buddha were divided into two parts called Vinaypitaka and Dhammapitaka. The second Buddhist Council was held 100 year after the dath of Budhha in about 387 BC . The Thired Budhhist Council held at patliputra in the region of Ashoka. The Concil was made a new classification of the Buddhist canonical texts by the additiona of a third Pitaka called the Abhidhammapitaka which contained the philolsophical interpretations of the doctrines of the two already existing Pitakas. The canonical literature was definitely and authoritatively settled. The fourth and lasr Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir or a Jullundur under the leadership of Vasumitra and Asvaghosha during the reign of Kanishaka. Buddhism spread not only in India but also in Central Asia and the Far East. <sup>9</sup> (Mahajan V. D., Opcit, pg.63-64) Buddhism became a global religion, it was simply based on truth on moral code of ethics. Even today Buddhism is the largest religion in the world, because in the new form it is described as Sahajyan, simple to follow.

#### V. Summary

Buddhism is thus the philosophy of love and truth. It is very much useful for mankind. Buddhism if it has to be successful. It must be related to environmental protections. Buddhism must evolve as a way of life to comeback pollution, war and terrorism. Man can become more happy if he understands Vipshana, the philosophy of yoga which Buddha preached and practiced. Thus Buddhism can be more successful if it becomes a religion of humanity in the next century.

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