



Ambedkar Times

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GREETINGS ON THE BUDDHA PURNIMA
Ambedkartimes.com & Deshdoaba.com congratulate all its worthy writers, readers and well wishers on Lord Buddha's Jayanti and wish you all happy, healthy and peaceful life.
(Prem Kumar Chumber)

BAHUVANA HITAYA BAHUVANA SUKHAYA

Prem K. Chumber (Editor: Ambedkartimes.com)

The history and the contemporary texture and structure of Hindu society are caste ridden. It is basically an exploitative society. What further distinguishes it from rest of the varied forms of exploitations and exploitative social systems is its birth-based-purity-pollution principle of graded caste hierarchy that perpetuates hereditary occupation laced discrimination. Traditionally it draws its sustenance from the Varna system social stratification having its roots in the Hindu Dharmasastras. The most horrible aspect of this India-specific system of social exclusion and exploitation is that it has been able to inculcate in the minds of its victims that the latter are supposed to undergo such discrimination rather willingly as a penance of their bad deeds they have had accumulated in their earlier enumerable low births.

Religion of the Hindus is nothing but a sacred reinforcement of the above obnoxious system of social exclusion of their inhabitants cursed as ex-Untouchables. However, as far as the hard labour of these lesser human beings and its expropriation is concerned that is welcomed! For centuries no one objected to this inhuman social practice. On the contrary, this inhuman social practice was considered as a normal practice and an integral part of the Hindu social and political order. So much so that the Hindu religious texts were designed to justify such a horrible social muck meticulously.

Tathagat Buddha was the first rational and forceful voice against the Hindu caste system and its consequent system of untouchability. He contested the Hindu system of birth-based social stratification with his new and innovative slogan of Bahujana Hitaya Bahujana Sukhaya. He took on the Hindu socio-religious system head-on and turned it upside down while coming out with a scientific interpretation of the maladies of the society and its rational ground-based practical solutions. He categorically discarded the supernatural/ extra-worldly/mythological God/Avatar based Hindu world view. He very politely but equally firmly emphasized on the equality of all Human beings and very strongly rejected the rotten institution of caste.

He very strongly advocated that looking after the interests of all would definitely give way to the much desired goal of the welfare of the all.

Tathagat Buddha came out with four noble truths: (a) suffering is an inherent part of existence, (b) the origin of suffering is ignorance and the main symptoms of which are attachment and craving, (c) the cause of suffering can be removed, (d) the way for its removal is Ash-tangika Marga (the eight-fold path).

The eight-fold path includes: (1) right understanding, (2) right thought, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right efforts, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration.

Let us follow Tathagat Buddha's Ashtangika Marga in properly understanding the real problem of the community and finding its practical solution by bringing everyone on a common platform for furthering the cause of Dalit liberation and empowerment without accusing each other.

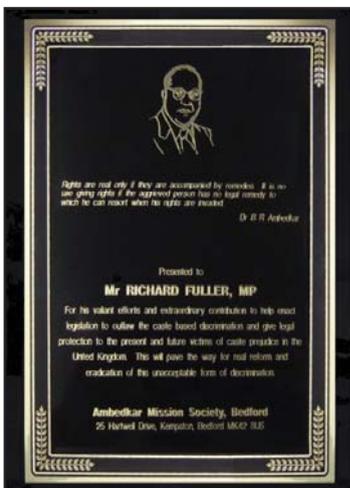
Ambedkar Birthday Celebrated at Bedford



Arun Kumar,
Ambedkar Mission Society,
Bedford (UK)

Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford organised a function to commemorate the birth anniversary Of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar on 12th May at the Queens Park Community Centre, Bedford. Numerous people from far and wide came to participate in the programme. Mr. Richard fuller, MP

tion and also sponsored one of the Ambedkarite scholars, late Mr. Bhagwan Dass to give testimony regarding the atrocities on Dalits to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Mr. Ram Murti Suman, President, (FABO, UK) felt deep concern about those people who are strengthening caste by maintaining separate identity and at the same time they talk about eradicating caste. Balwant Saroye, presenter, Kanshi Radio, clarified that some people have misconception about Buddhism. It is a religion



presided over the function as a chief guest. Function opened with the Buddhist prayer, Trisharan conducted by the resident monk, Bhante Tejwant of the Punjab Buddhist Society, UK based at Wolverhampton followed by the screening of a short film on the life and works of Ambedkar 'The Greatest Indian-Ambedkar'. In his opening speech, Arun Kumar, general Secretary of Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford explained that portraying Babasaheb as the leader of Dalits only is to reduce his importance. His popularity is increasing day by day. Even the members of other communities get inspiration from him and work towards their emancipation. The Roma community in Hungery have set up schools and named after Dr. Ambedkar. He also thanked Richard fuller, MP and congratulated those who supported and campaigned to outlaw caste discrimination in the UK. Because of their hard work, it has become a reality.

Ram Pal Rahi, President Punjab Buddhist Society, UK felt concern about the deteriorating condition of personal belongings of Dr. Ambedkar. He appealed to everybody especially the Indian leaders, officers in high positions and intellectuals to preserve the history. He posed the question to them, "Do they feel ashamed of or not?"

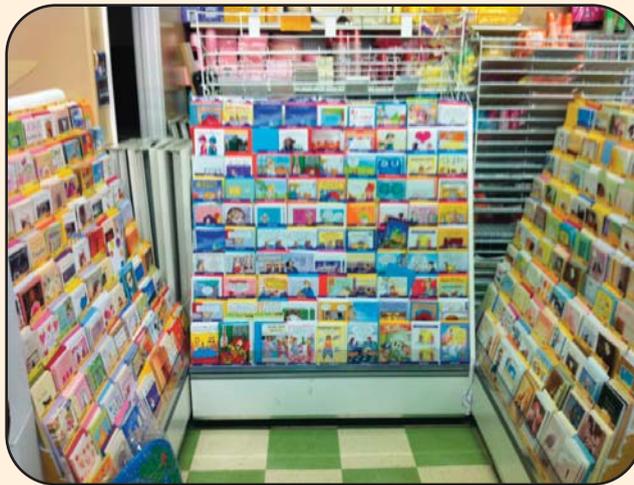
Showering praise on the members of Ambedkar Mission Society, Gautam Chakravarty, General Secretary, Federation of Ambedkarites and Buddhist Organisations, UK (FABO, UK) mentioned that B Ambedkar Mission in Bedford was the first organisation in the UK which raised the issue of caste discrimina-

unlike others. It is based on morality and rationality. It doesn't create a dependency upon some super supernatural power but show a path of self reliance. Mr. Jeet Chand, Managing Director of Kanshi Radio explained the importance of media in this modern age and appealed for support so that it continues to become the voice of the voiceless people.

Pirithi Kaeley saw wider implications of the legislation against caste prejudice which would pave a way for other countries to enact such laws against discrimination. Richard Fuller, MP stated that for some people caste discrimination was a complicated issue but for him it was a straight one. If there was an evidence of discrimination, it should be outlawed; that is it. He firmly believed that if discrimination based on race, colour, gender or disabilities are outlawed, caste prejudice should also be outlawed. There is no room for any discrimination in the British society. For his valiant efforts and outstanding support for the legislation inside and outside the parliament, he was presented with a plaque by the Ambedkar Mission Society, Bedford. Gurdevinder Kumar, President, Dr. Ambedkar Buddhist Organisation, Birmingham, Dhanpat Rattu, Mrs. Nirmala Chahal and Bhikkhu Tejwant also paid tributes to Dr. Ambedkar. KL Chand and group entertained the audience with his sweet voice. Sukhdev Jassi, Mrs. Santosh Gill, Charan Kanwal and Pari also rendered missionary songs. Joginder Mahay and F. Subarao recited poetry in praise of Babasaheb Ambedkar. Vote of thanks was proposed by Ram Pal Rahi. Arun Kumar anchored the programme.

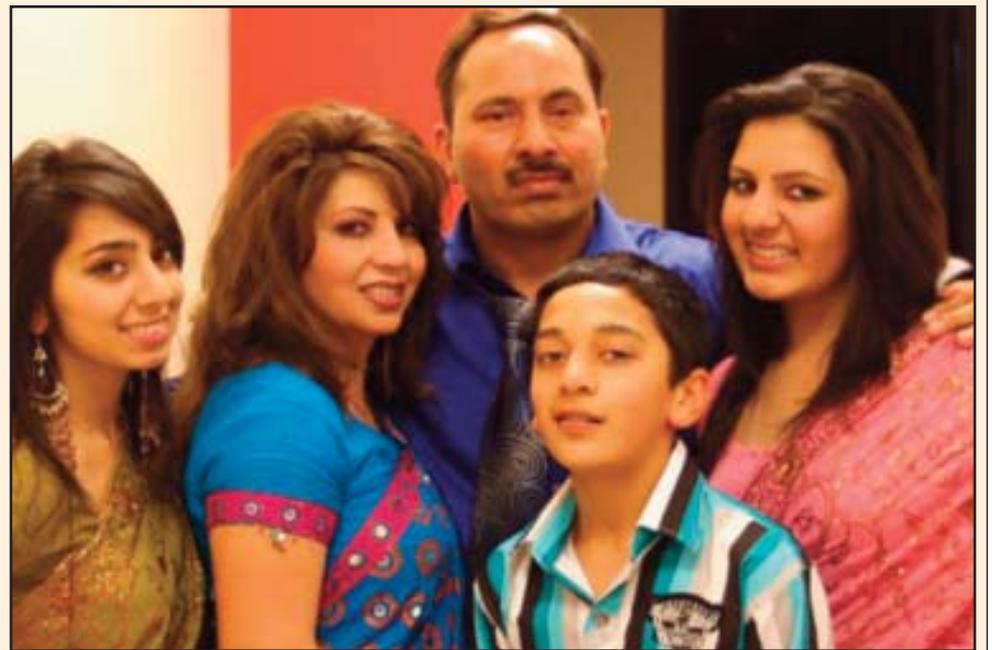
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We would like to
request all to join us on
Baba Sahib Dr. Ambedkar's
122nd birth anniversary
celebration on
**SUNDAY, May 26, 2013 at
Mehran Restaurant Pittsburg
(California).**



Mr, Vinod Kumar Chumber and his Family

VINOD KUMAR CHUMBER

Vice President: International Bahujan Organisation (California)

Vice Chairman Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Bay Area

510-733-3300

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS



Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

We would like to request all to join us on Baba Sahib Dr. Ambedkar's 122nd birth anniversary celebration on **SUNDAY, May 26, 2013** at **Mehran Restaurant Pittsburg (California)**.



ਵੱਲੋਂ
ਸਵਰਗਵਾਸੀ
ਸ੍ਰੀ ਲਾਹੌਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਜੀ
(ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਰ)
ਦੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਜਗਦੇਵ ਰਾਮ ਅਤੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਜੇਪਾਲ ਰਾਮ
(ਸਖ਼ੰਤਰ ਸਵਰਗਵਾਸੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਲਾਹੌਰੀ ਰਾਮ) ਅਤੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ

Buddhism in Lucknow: History and Culture from Alternative Sources

The history of Buddhism in India is mainly brought back to its glory by the colonial periods's excavations, where many statues, and other buddhist symbols were found by archeologists. Besides, the bhikkhus who came to India from Srilanka during the last and the first quarter of 20th and 21st century contributed immensely in the revival of buddhist history and culture in northern part of the country, for instance, bhikkhu Dhammapal, Bodhanand and Pragyanand. The Buddhists in Lucknow quickly name these bhikkhus in the history of Buddha-Dhamma in Lucknow. Among Barau Buddhists bhikkhu Kripasaran is very much credited to spread Buddha-Dhamma here. The role of Dr. Ambedkar is due credited by both- Ambedkar-Buddhists as well as Barau-Buddhists.

(a) Ancient History of Lucknow in Buddhists Folklores

Gautam Buddha spent 24 monsoons, a major part of his life, in Uttar Pradesh. Generally people know that Buddha had spent some time of his life in Shravasti, Sarnath and Kushinagar etc., but the Buddhists in Lucknow strongly believe and argue that he might have visited many more places as well and modern Lucknow might be one among those.

The modern Lucknow, according to hindu version, is said to be established by Lakshman, a mythical character in the epic, Ramayana. But there is another version of this nomenclature which says that Lucknow was earlier known as Nucklow (नखलऊ) (still used by aged people) and the history behind this is that the nails (नख) of Buddha were brought here and placed in a stupa. Thus placing of Buddha's nails (नख) at this place gave it the name which later on changed from Nucklow (नखलऊ) to Lucknow (लखनऊ). Another story talks about Buddheshwar Chowraha where once was a buddhist shrine which was captured by hindus and later converted it into Lord Shiva temple. There is one more folklore among Buddhists in Lucknow that there was a Baudh vihar called as Amavasi Baudh Vihar where Buddhists used to gather on the day of new moon (Amavasa). The contemporary airport named as 'Amousi airport'

stands there now and the name Amousi came from that vihar. Thus, it is a strong belief among buddhists that the history of Lucknow is very much rich with Buddhist culture and invites sincere attention of archeologists and excavation.

(b) Demography of the Buddhists in Lucknow:

According to 1951 census the number of Buddhists in Lucknow district was 73, which reached to 216, 322, 347, 2816, 4327 in 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 census respectively. The 73 Buddhists in 1951 census, before Dr. Ambedkar's fully fledged campaign for Buddhism for ex-untouchables, are mainly the Bengali Barua Buddhist families who came here from Chittagong after the partition of Bengal in 1905.

These Bengali Buddhists worked for the Britishers as their servants and cooks and also looked after their horses and stables. Now, the number of these Buddhists has been reached 300-400 people.

The biggest jump in the numbers of Buddhist population is observed in the census of 1991 and 2001. As per my observation, one of the most viable reasons seems to be the advent of the plethora of literature on Ambedkar, Asoka and Buddha written largely by the government employees after 1990 and their active involvement in the dhamma activities.

The census office in India for the first time in its history also revealed that almost 70% of the Buddhist population in Uttar Pradesh is from the scheduled castes background and 30% from others. It signifies that it in 'others' there might be the Buddhists from non-SCs. The case is further strengthened by some of my interviews and observations in Lucknow.

Upon enquiry, many buddhist activists and all the interviewees also accepted that backward castes are also getting inclined towards Buddhism. As a whole Buddhists in Lucknow are mainly from a diverse social backgrounds (barau bengalis, scheduled castes and backward castes). Visual 20th & 21st Century Architecture and their Related Figures

The foundation of twentieth

century Buddhism in Lucknow was laid by the Bengali Barua Buddhists much before Dr. Ambedkar took deeksha. The Bodhisattva Vihar at Latus Road, Lucknow is built by Bhikkhu Kripasaran Mahasthavir (1865-1926) in 1907, affiliated to the Bengal Buddhist Association. By keeping intimate relationship with the then Education Secretary in government of India, who later on was appointed as governor of Agra and Oudh, Hercourt Butler (1869-1938), Kripasaran could manage the land where the existing vihara is situated.

The second oldest Buddha Vihar at Risaldar Park, Lucknow affiliated to Mahabodhi Society of India was built by Bhikkhu Bodhanand, as he came back from Srilanka to revive Buddhism in India, closely became associated with Bhikkhu Kripasaran & Bodhisattva Vihar. His disciple, bhikkhu Pragyanand (1928-----), who is currently the head of the vihara is one of the bhikkhus (lead by bhikhu Chandramani) who gave deeksha to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in 1956. This Vihara is an important meeting place for dalit, bahujan and buddhist activities.. Dr. Ambedkar also stayed here twice, once in 1932 and later in 1948.

A park called as Gautam Buddha park which is situated near Rumi gate is also one of the significant development as far as buddhism in lucknow is concerned. This park is built in around 10 acres by LDA in the year 1980 with a huge buddha statue in sitting position. This is one of the biggest buddha statues we came across in Lucknow. Many people assemble here on various occasions which are significant in buddhist traditions and calendars.

In the last decade of 20th century and first decade of 21st century, the Bahujan Samaj Party, on coming into power in UP, constructed roads, chowks, hostels, parks etc. in the name of Buddha. One of the most significant projects is the construction of Baudh Vihar Shanti Upvan on VIP road which is 1.2 km long and is spread in 32.5 acres consisting of 18 feet tall four-sided marble statue of Gautam Buddha at the main entrance. On both sides of the statues there are two fountains (each 28 feet tall and

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24 feet diameter). Almost 10-12 bhikkhus reside in this vihara and there is a dining hall which can accommodate approx. 60 people. This premises also includes a library and a meditation hall and dormitories for bhikkhus and guest scholars.

Another important place which attracts buddhists in Lucknow is Parivartan Chowk (Change Square) where a four-sided Buddha statue in sitting position is installed. This statue is placed under a tower made out of black granite and above this tower a white marble sphere is placed. This tower is surrounded by the statues of Dr. Ambedkar, Shahuji Maharaj, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule and Narayan guru at four corners. The place historically seems to be very important as it is surrounded by Lakshman park, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee park, Subhash park, Tagore park and Begam Hazarat Mahal park, etc. As this modern structure symbolizes 'change' usually various rallies, processions and demonstrations for social justice and Buddhist activities start from here.

Besides the above buddhist monuments, in the contemporary era, as the number of buddhists are increasing, many viharas at individual or community levels are also being constructed at various places in Lucknow such as Mahendra Baudh vihar at LDA colony on Kanpur road, built by Mr. D. P. Varun (IAS Retd.), Mahamaya Buddha vihar at Teli bagh by Kallu Baudh etc.

To conclude, my submission is that the Buddhism in Lucknow has deep historical and cultural connections which is found in many folklores.

The socio-cultural composition of Buddhists in Lucknow consists of Bengali Barua Buddhists as well as from SCs and OBCs. In modern times, many bhikkhus, and baudh viharas, parks, chowk etc. are important catalysts to Buddhism.

DR. AMBEDKAR INTERNATIONAL CENTER (AIC) ACQUIRES PROPERTY IN WASHINGTON DC AREA

Washington DC - The Dr. Ambedkar International Center announced today that it acquired a 13 acres property in the Washington DC area with the aim of uniting all Ambedkarites and Bahujan (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Castes and Minorities) Organizations in the USA and abroad and establishing a collective leadership that would work to build an enlightened society in South Asia based on Ambedkar's principles and vision.

Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar-father of modern India and the Indian constitution, graduate of Columbia University, Doctorate from London School of Economics (LSE) and the first law minister of India after its independence-was from a Dalit (low caste) community and created constitutional rights for Dalits, women and other back-

ward castes who were denied human rights in a society dominated by upper castes in India. The Indian constitution guarantees equality, liberty, fraternity, and social justice for all; however, the subsequent state and federal governments have failed to protect Dalits by not following the constitutional law. Dr. Ambedkar, who fought to abolish caste and untouchability, made new India possible and envisioned new age society.

"The AIC was formed to strengthen unity among the Bahujan and their movements; establish a think tank within an umbrella organization; enable campaign and advocacy efforts, peace and justice awareness camps, educational seminars, and social and economical activities; and create a support base." said Mohan Nirala, President of AIC. The broad objective of the AIC is to provide

well-equipped facilities for learning, so academicians and students can undertake and disseminate the ideas of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

The AIC plans to establish a library containing speeches, books, pamphlets, newspapers, periodicals, microfilms, motion pictures, sound recordings, and other materials about Dr. Ambedkar and his ideas. The library will also host seminars, symposia, conferences, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, and fairs concerning the life and mission of Dr. Ambedkar. Acquiring property for the AIC in Washington DC area is a monumental historic achievement. Every great journey begins with a single step and acquiring this property is AIC's first step towards its vision and goals.

By: Dr. Mohan Nirala,
AIC (May 10, 2013)