

AT THE LOTUS FEET OF THE BUDDHA
VENERABLE
Dr. ACHARYA BUDDHARAKKHITA

Life, Teachings and Works
a Buddhist monk in Modern India

A Dissertation by
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On the occasion of
150th Birth Anniversary of
Ven. Anagrika Dharmapala

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and
Among all gifts the gift of Dhamma is the
best

With folded hands salutations on the
occasion of 1st death anniversary of
Ven. Dr. Anandharakkhita

This book is offered as hammadana by

Students of

Anandhitha Math, Mysore

May all beings share merits and be

PREFACE

It has been now one year since Venerable Acharya Buddharakkhita passed away. But his presence is felt in every part of lives of our monks at the Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore. That was the dynamism he instilled with values among monks and lay people. In the modern history of Buddhism in India, one cannot but refer to Ven.Acharya Buddharakkhita no less than often. Such is the contribution of this Buddhist master, lovingly called by his disciples as Bada Bhanteji.

He was truly a dedicated monk whose aim was to realize higher stages of enlightenment for him and also make others to follow the path of the Dhamma to achieve these stages. His dedication was so strong that nothing could stop him from taking steps on the path of the Dhamma, be it in his personal practice or be it with his activities of compassion.

His life has been such a series of inspiring events. Greatest of his qualities was to drop all kinds of prejudice, concepts, and dogmas and make the mind empty for the search of truth. So, when he explored true meaning in life, he was able to judge things on their face value without any influence of what others said or taught. This is a quality of true seeker and only when one is so free of all prejudice and concepts can one explore truth freely and correctly. This is what we can see from his life at every step.

Mr.Jeik Hyun, of Won Buddhism in South Korea, had visited two years back to make an interview with regard to global peace and harmony. He was so impressed by Bada Bhanteji's answers, and more than that his calm and peaceful personality, that he decided to make a small research work on Bada Bhanteji for his M.Phil dissertation to submit to Gautama Buddha University, Noida. We

are thankful to him for this work. May he be successful in his endeavours of doing Dhamma work for peace and harmony in the world! We are also immensely thankful to Mrs. Poornima Ramakrishnan who went through the proof meticulously and gave some valuable suggestions.

No doubt one can keep on digging the mine of wealth left behind by this illustrious teacher, not just in the Maha Bodhi Society but in the hearts of thousands who were relieved from sufferings in their lives. Many more volumes of information will come out. Though earlier Mr. Jeik thought of adding interviews and experiences of lay people into this work, he found out that, it will be another voluminous work. So he has given limited amount of information about life of Bada Bhanteji, which still covers substantial events of his life.

On the occasion of Bada Bhanteji's first death anniversary our hearts go out to recollect his valuable compassionate words for which he lived and worked '*Jotetu Buddha sasanam, Bharatasmim ratthasmim* May the Light of the Dispensation of the Buddha illuminate this land called Bharat, India.' Let us rededicate ourselves with higher vigor to walk on the path he taught. He was clear in his words that only when one practices himself or herself can he/she be of helpful to others. He used to tell so often that just a signboard that 'I am a Buddhist' is not enough. One becomes real follower of Lord Buddha only by practicing his teachings.

May this work inspire truth seekers, spiritual workers, future Dhammadutas both monastic and lay, to live a life of Dhamma enshrined in the Buddha Vachana - Words of the Buddha in the Tipitaka. May all beings be happy!

Ven. Kassapa Maha Thera

President, Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore

23-09-2014

INTRODUCTION

Venerable Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita (1922-2013) was one of the most respected Buddhist monks of the 21st Century in the Theravada tradition. He is more known as “Bada Bhanteji”¹. He dedicated his whole life for Dhamma and the revival of the teachings of Lord Buddha in its motherland – India.

After working tirelessly until his last breath, his only mission was to guide and lead all the sentient beings on the path of Dhamma. He passed away peacefully on 23-09-2013 at Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore and it was the same place where he worked hard to spread the teachings of Dhamma throughout his life.

I met him personally in March 2012 for an interview on the movement of United Religion when I was a student of the Asia Pacific leadership program at the East-West Center in Hawaii, USA. I have never forgotten his smiling face and his compassionate attitude during the interview. While taking the interview he first advised me for a short meditation time saying, “Before talking about peace, first you must be a peaceful person within yourself.” I have always cherished Bada Bhante’s advice.

When I met him in 2012, I did not know much about him. But when I attended his funeral ceremony, I realized that he was a great spiritual teacher and a social reformer of India. At Bangalore during his funeral ceremony, I had got the opportunity to read a pamphlet prepared for the funeral ceremony, written by his disciple Ven. Ananda Bhante, who is also the Secretary of Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore. From the writing, I came to

Bada Bhanteji Bada is a hindi word which means elder or big. Bhante is the pali word for Buddhist monk. Ji is again a hindi word which is the honorific form equivalent to sir in English.

know about his spiritual journey that began from a very young age to becoming a Buddhist monk, and engaging himself in various social activities. I thought if Buddha reappears in this world then he would do the same thing that Bada Bhanteji has done throughout his life.

Dawn of revival of Buddhism in India had started in 1784 by Asiatic society. On 15 January 1784, Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta.² The Society has a museum of its own which possesses a rock edict of Asoka (c. 250 BCE) and a significant collection of copper plate inscriptions, coins, sculptures, manuscripts and archival records.³ The best-known Brahmi⁴ inscriptions are the rock-cut edicts of Ashoka in north-central India, dated to 250-232 BCE. James Prinsep, who was the founding editor of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, deciphered the script in 1837.⁵ Through this decipherment, Buddha's holy places such as Bodh-Gaya, Kushinagar, Sarnath, and Rumnidei etc were excavated. In July 1879, *The Light of Asia*⁶, subtitled *The Great Renunciation*, was published by Edwin Arnold in London. In 1885, Sir Edwin Arnold, Editor of "The Telegraph", published a few articles, drawing the attention of the

2. "The Asiatic Society", Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Mitra S. K. May 2013. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014.

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TheAsiaticSociety>>.

3. Ibid, "The Asiatic Society"

4. Brāhmī is the modern name given to the one of the oldest scripts used on the Indian Subcontinent and in Central Asia, during the final centuries BCE and the early centuries CE. "Brahmi script", Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. May 2011. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bramiscript>>.

5. "James Prinsep", Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JamesPrinsep>>.

6. In the form of a narrative poem, the book endeavors to describe the life and time of Prince Gautama Siddhartha, who after attaining enlightenment became The Buddha, The Awakened One. The book presents his life, character, and philosophy, in a series of verses. It is a free adaptation of the Lalitavistara. "The Light of Asia", Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TheLightofAsia>>.

Buddhists to the deplorable conditions of the Bodh-Gaya Temple and its surroundings.⁷

Anagarika Dhammapala's trip to Bodh-Gaya was inspired by an 1885 visit there by Sir Edwin Arnold who soon started advocating for the renovation of the site and its return to Buddhist care.⁸ He visited Bodh-Gaya on 22nd January 1891. His heart broke when he saw the appalling conditions of these holy spots; with absolute dedication he resolved to start his great mission for the restoration of Bodh-Gaya Temple and regeneration of Buddhism in the land of its birth.⁹

"It was on April 29, 1933 that Anagarika Dhammapala passed away at Saranath at the age of 69 at the Mulagandakuti Vihara, where he spent his last days. Anagarika Dhammapala founded Maha Bodhi Society, India. The inspiration to work for the revival of Buddhism in India came to him at Bodhgaya. The name of Maha Bodhi Society came from the Maha Bodhi temple. He contributed his whole life to return back the Maha Bodhi temple from Hindu Mahant to Buddhists. He also established in Calcutta, the then capital of India, the headquarters of the Maha Bodhi Society."¹⁰

Buddharakkhita had visited Maha Bodhi Society, Calcutta in 1946 and Saranath in 1949 before his ordination in Kushinagar. As a spiritual seeker he wanted more guidance which he could not get at that time from these societies. So he went to Sri Lanka and Burma to study the dhamma and meditation. After coming back to India he worked in the Nava Nalanda Post Graduate Institute

7. "Founding member", Maha Bodhi Society of India. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014. <MahaBodhisociety.com>.
8. Anagarika Dhammapala, Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Web. 1 May 2014. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AnagarikaDhammapala>>.
9. "Founding member", Accessed on 1 May 2004. www.MahaBodhisociety.com
10. M.P. Amarasuriya, Anagarika Dhammapala Trust, London Buddhist Vihara, web. Accessed on 1 May 2014. <www.anagarika.org>.

which was not satisfying for him to carry out the Buddha sasana work. So when Anagarika Dhammapala's niece offered the land in Bangalore to develop a Buddhist center similar to the one at Bodh-Gaya in 1956, he accepted the land, registered it and managed it locally without any interference from anybody.¹¹ That is the reason why Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore has been independent from Maha Bodhi Society of India.

Since the inception of the society he carried out many great works in different dimensions of the Indian Buddhist community such as education, social engagement and Buddhist publication. Even though his physical body is no more, his legacy will be continued forever by his ardent followers and it remains as a remarkable way of life in the Buddhist history of India in particular and the world in general.

1.1. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to focus on the thoughts of Ven. Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita for the revival of Buddhism in India during his lifetime. *Actually Buddhism in India declined from 1150 A.D. to 1750 A.D. Buddhism fell into the pessimistic historic conditions before it had risen again from the time India became independent. Buddhism started reviving itself since the year 1950.*¹²

So in 1956 Ven. Acharya Buddharakkhita founded the Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore and therefore it can be said that his life's mission started almost at the same time as the revival of Buddhist movements in India.

I hope that this dissertation will contribute to the study of the revival of Buddhism movements in India by following the footprints of Ven. Dr. Acharya Buddhisrakkhita.

11. Ven. Anada Bhante, "Our Compassionate Teacher Bada Bhante", *BUDDHADASA*, Ven. Ananda bhante, Bangalore, Buddha Vachana Trust, Mar. 2011: 5

12. C.D. Naik, *Ambedkar's Perspective on Buddhism and other Religions*, Delhi 2009: 24

1.2. Research Design

In this study, I would like to mention that to change the world, one should change one's mind. And I would like to explain the revival of Buddhism movement in India from the post Dr. Ambedkar period as a spectrum of Buddhist monks.

1.3. Research Methodology

The research methodologies used to write this dissertation are both qualitative and quantitative. In this study I have also done literary research on the many books published by Venerable Acharya Buddharakkhita in his life. I have opted to take interviews and survey all the people who were directly or indirectly associated with Ven. Dr. Acharya Buddharakkhita. These people include his disciples, those who have taken monkhood as well as the laities.

1. Childhood, Education and Spiritual Journey

In this chapter I have tried to highlight the main events that have taken place in his childhood, military service, livelihood and spiritual journey. Before he became a Buddhist monk, he had many different kinds of experiences as a school boy, a college student, a prisoner, an engineer, a spy, a medical volunteer, a businessman, a manager of NGO, a truth seeker and a Hindu missionary. These experiences have helped him to be lead to the truth of Buddha Dhamma.

This chapter has four sub-sections - the first is *Childhood and School days* (1922-1942), the second is *Military Service* (1942-1945), the third is *Livelihood* (1946) and the fourth is *Spiritual Journey* (1946-1949).

For information from 1922 to 1945, Ven. Anada Bhante's article in *Buddadasa* and his personal interview were the main resources. For information from 1945 to 1949, I referred to a book written by Sangharakshita who was a British military companion. Sangharakshita's *Rainbow Road* is his autobiography. After

World War II, they resigned from the army in 1945 in search of truth and they traveled all over India until 1949.

Rainbow Road is based on Sangharakkhita's viewpoint, however there are limitations. Even though there are some limitations in this book, I could get diverse information related to the spiritual journey for a period of 3 years from this book as there are detailed informations about name of the place and people, etc. So, I could understand the circumstances of various situations cited in the book.

In this chapter, we are able to know how a small boy grows up to be an engineer and then a soldier; the reasons he resigned the military and became a truth seeker and the reasons he could not adjust in a Hindu *ashram*.

1.1. Childhood and School days (1922-1942)

Ven. Dr. Acharya Buddhharakkhita's *Dhamma* name was Buddhharakkhita. His original name was Rabindra Kumar Banerjee. Rabindra Kumar Banerjee was born on March 12th 1922 – which was an auspicious full moon day - in Imphal, the capital of the present state of Manipur in India. Manipur – the farthest state in East of India- has different tribes of people that include the *Meitei*, *Pangal* (Muslims), *Naga*, *Kuki*, *Zomi* and *Gorkhali* (Nepali) who speak different languages, which brought about the different branches of the Tibeto-Burman family. Nagaland bound the state to the north, Mizoram to the south, and Assam to the west; Burma lies to the east.¹³

“The *Meitei*, who live primarily in the state's valley region, form the primary ethnic group (60% of the total population). The term *Meitei* now refers to five social groups – the Meitei marup (believe in only *Meitei* culture and God), *Meitei* Christians, *Meitei goura Chaytonya*

13. Laishram, Dhanabir (2013), *Trust Deficit in the Largest Democratic Country: A Study on Civil Society and Governance in Manipur*. Ruby Press & Co. Accessed on Feb. 6. 2014 <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manipur>>

(believe in both *Meitei* and Hindu gods), the *Meitei* Brahmins (Manipuri Brahmin locally called “*Bamons*”) and the *Meitei* Muslims (called *Miah Meitei* or *Pangal*). All of them have *Meiteilon* as their mother tongue. Their language, *Meiteilon* (also known as *Manipuri*), is the lingua franca in the state.¹⁴

It is not difficult to envisage that he had an understanding of the diverse cultures and philosophy right from his birth. His family was a conservative Bhandopadhyaya Bengali Bramin family, which is considered highest among Brahmins¹⁵.

“Indian (Bengal) and Bangladeshi: Hindu (Brahman) name, the first element of which, *Ban-*, is a shortened form of the village name *Bandoghat*. The final element *-jee* is derived from *jha* (greatly reduced form of Sanskrit upadhyaya ‘teacher’); thus, Banerjee ‘teacher from the village of *Bandoghat*’. In Bengali, names formed with *-jee*, the initial element is believed to indicate a village granted by Ballal Sen, a legendary ancient king of Bengal, to the ancestor of the person bearing the surname. A Sanskrit version of this name, Vandyopadhyaya, was coined later, from the elements *vandya* ‘venerable’ + *upadhyaya* ‘teacher’.”¹⁶

There are different interpretations for the surname Banerjee; one interpretation is that Bandopādhyāya is a Sanskritized form of ‘*Banodha* + *upādhyāya*’, *Banodha* being the ancient name of *Raebareli-Unnāva* whence their ancestors had come from.¹⁷ Even

14. Ibid.

15. Ananda, BUDDHADASA, op cit: 5

16. “Banerjee”, Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 23 Apr 2014. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014.
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banerjee>>.

17. Rāśtriya Brāhamana Mahāsabhā, *A History of Brahmin Clans (Brāhmaa Vashō kā Itihāsa) in Hindi*, Dorilāl Śarmā published, Vimal Building, Jamirābād, Mitranagar, Masūdābād, Aligarh-1, 2nd ed-1998. (This Hindi book contains the most exhaustive list of Brahmana gotras and pravaras together their real and mythological histories). P. 287. Accessed on 1 May 2014.
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BengalBramin>>.

with two different interpretations of the root of origin, the fact is that Banerjee means chief *Vedic* teacher. The traditional occupation of his family was teaching the *Vedas*. Young Rabindra was naturally exposed to rites and rituals, religious practices, philosophy, Sanskrit and astrology. He was the 2nd eldest child among 10 siblings born to Late Sri Vishnupada Bandopadhyaya and Late Smt. Sailavaladevi Bandopadhyaya. His baby-sitter, a *Gorkhali* servant brought him up when he was a toddler speaking a few words. Young Rabindra had learnt to speak Nepali from him by asking countless questions. In his childhood, he made friends with the *Naga* tribal kids because of their innocent, straightforward and intelligent behavior. But the villagers looked down upon them and he could not understand the discrimination of races. From that point, he started loathing the caste system even though he belonged to the highest cast.

When he was taught *Gayathri* (Hindu goddess) mantra¹⁸ and was told that women should not hear it, he purposely chanted in front of his family women folk.¹⁹ He liked to join the discussions of his father, a devout person, who always invited his friends home and talked about various things such as morality, spirituality and current affair. He especially enjoyed listening to his *Kundali*²⁰ (Indian horoscope) and his father told him that he would renounce and will be a sanyasi in future. His elder brother had a special talent in astrology and he predicted two things about the young Rabindra. First he would become a monk and the second he had a brief span of life.

In 1939, when he was 17 years old, he got admission in the Institute of Engineering Technology, Kolkata²¹ from where he graduated

18. Gayathri mantra is a highest revered mantra from Vedic tradition which is considered in a sacred recitation. 1. Om bhur bhuvah suah 2. tat savitur rareniyam 3. bhargo devanya dhimahi 4. dhiya yo nah parachodyat

19. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op.cit:3

20. Kundali is a natal card in Hindu mythology which helps to make predictions.

21. S.P. Janakrajan, *Ever Shining Gem*, Bangalore, Budha Vachana Trust, 2001, Venerable Acharya Buddhharakkhita His life.

later. He thought that science and technology could make the world a better place to live. But when the Second World War began in 1939 he soon found that his thought about science and technology was wrong. The so-called advanced societies, which were developed scientifically and technologically, started warring with each other. It was a time that he felt he should find an alternative way to change the world. At that time the freedom struggle movement in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was a famous movement. Rabindra decided to participate in this movement famously known as the “Quit India Movement”.

“The Quit India Act or the August Movement (August *Kranti*) was a civil disobedience movement launched in India in August 1942 in response to Mohandas Gandhi’s call for ‘*Satyagraha*’. The All-India Congress Committee proclaimed a mass protest demanding what Gandhi called “an orderly British withdrawal” from India. The call for determined, but passive resistance appears in his call to Do or Die, issued on 8 August at the *Gowalia Tank Maidan* in Mumbai in the year 1942. The British were prepared to act. Almost the entire INC leadership, and not just at the national level, was imprisoned without trial within hours after Gandhi’s speech—at least 60,000 people. Most spent the rest of the war in prison and out of contact with the masses. The British had the support of the Viceroy’s Council (which had a majority of Indians), of the Muslims, the Communist Party, the princely states, the Imperial and state police, the Indian Army, and the Indian Civil Service. Many Indian businessmen were profiting from heavy wartime spending and did not support Quit India Movement. Many students paid more attention to Subhas Chandra Bose, who was in exile and supporting the Axis. The only outside support came from the Americans, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressured Prime Minister Winston

Churchill to give in to Indian demands. The Quit India campaign was effectively crushed.”²²

The young Rabindra was also arrested because he led a group of students and attended and supported the ‘Quit India Movement’. He was put into prison for a month in Calcutta. After his release from the jail, he had doubts about Subhas Chandra Bose’s dynamic approach.

“Subhas Chandra Bose (23 January 1897 – 18 August 1945 {aged 48}) was an Indian nationalist whose defiant patriotism made him a hero in India, but whose attempt during World War II to rid India of British rule with the help of Nazi Germany and Japan left a troubled legacy. The honorific *Netaji* (Hindustani language: “Respected Leader”), first applied to Bose in Germany, by the Indian soldiers of the Indische Legion and by the German and Indian officials in the Special Bureau for India in Berlin, in early 1942, is now used widely throughout India.”²³

Though he agreed with Subhas Chandra Bose’s passion for independent India, he questioned the use of violence for achieving his goals.

1.2. Military Service (1942-1945)

In 1942, he always questioned how the British were considered superior when Indians had brains, moral and spiritual values and enough intelligence to come up to any level. As the proverb goes ‘Nothing ventured, nothing gained’, he joined British army at Fort William in Calcutta (Now Government of India Defense Ordnance).

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22. “Quit India Act”, Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 23 Apr 2014. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014.
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QuitIndiaAct>>.
 23. Sisir Kumar Bose, Alexander Werth, Narayan Gopal Jog, Subbier Appadurai Ayer, Beacon Across Asia: *A Biography of Subhas Chandra Bose*, Orient Blackswan, 1996. Accessed on Feb. 6. 2014 from
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subhas_Chandra_Bose

“The history and development of Indian Ordnance Factories is directly linked with the British reign in India. East India Company of England for their economic interest in India and to increase their political hold considered military hardware as vital element. During 1775 British authorities accepted the establishment of Board of Ordnance in Fort William, Kolkata. This marks the official beginning of the Army Ordnance in India. In 1787 a gunpowder factory was established at Ishapore, which started production from 1791 (at which location Rifle Factory was established in 1904). In 1801 a Gun Carriage Agency at Cossipore, Kolkata (presently known as Gun & Shell Factory, Cossipore) was established and production started from 18th March 1802. This is the first Industrial establishment of Ordnance Factories, which has continued its existence till date. The growth of the Ordnance Factories leading to its present setup has been continuous but in spurts. There were 18 ordnance factories before India became independent in 1947. 21 factories have been established after independence - mostly, in wake of defense preparedness imperatives caused by the three major wars fought by the Indian Armed forces. 40th Factory is under establishment at Nalanda, Bihar.”²⁴

He worked as an engineer in manufacturing of military supplies and automobiles. He used to take care of army trucks and heavy machines. He also taught the soldiers basic skills for managing the machines and how to spy in the war field. At that time, for Indians it was not easy to be close with the British. There were some exceptions, which were only for the very skillful and intelligent people like Rabindra. He was selected by the British army and was taught skills for spying and fixing of military machines. During his military service, he appreciated the hard, dedicated work and discipline of the British people.²⁵

24. Indian Ordnance Factory, History,
<http://ofbindia.gov.in/index.php?wh=history&lang=en>

25. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op. cit: 3

Dr. Bipan Chandra mentions that, ‘There were two types of people in the modern India, one is Nationalist and another is Colonialist.’²⁶ For the first time, Rabindra was a nationalist and fought for the freedom of India, but he understood that the method of fighting was wrong and limited. So he just followed another method, which was diametrically opposite.

In 1945, he was deputed to Malaysia; he was a witness to the horrors of that war. He traveled to various parts of Malaysia and Singapore.²⁷ Sangharakshita, who was a future companion of his spiritual journey in India, met him for the first time in Singapore. He mentions about Rabindra.

“Rabindra Kumar Banerjee was a tall, well-built Bengali in the prime of manhood. From the moment Buddha Maharaj (Swamiji of Ramakrishna Ashram in Singapore) introduced us to each other we were friends. Like me, he was in khaki, but on his epaulettes he wore the tricolor insignia of the Indian National Congress. Being of a frank, communicative nature, with more than a touch of naïve boastfulness, it was not long before he was telling me about himself without either restraint or reserve. Politics were the passion of his life. Though respecting Gandhi for his moral character, he did not believe that independence could be won by non-violent means. His hero was Subhas Bose, who had broadcast his intention of wading through a sea of blood to Delhi. In fact, in the days when the future ‘Commander-in-Chief’ of the Indian National Army was President of the Congress he had worked under him as a volunteer. After Bose’s arrest and subsequent dramatic escape to Axis territory he had joined the Royal Indian Air Force in order to work as a saboteur. After his discharge he

26. Bipan Chandra, *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*, New Delhi, Orient BlackSwan, 1979, 9th Repr, 2011: 216

27. Ananda, Buddhadasa, P.4.

had apparently been associated not only with the Congress but with the more explicitly orthodox right-wing Hindu *Mahasabha*. At the time of our meeting he was a member of the Mobile Medical Unit which the Congress, as an expression of goodwill from the people of India to those of Malaya, had dispatched to render free medical aid to the towns and villages of the interior, where drugs were still in very short supply.”²⁸

They were supposed to meet each other after World War II because Sangharakshita came to Singapore in Nov. 1945. He resigned from the British army on 15th Aug, 1945 but he still was in Singapore for Medical Service to the Indian people in Malaya until end of 1945.

There were two events during this time that revealed his strong and determined character.

“Banerjee returned to Singapore full of indignation against the other members of the Medical Mission, who, instead of distributing the medicines and drugs free to the sick and suffering, had sold practically the entire valuable stock to the proprietors of pharmacies, thus making small fortunes for themselves. The intensity of his indignation did him credit, for it was the recoil of a truth-loving nature from an exceptionally despicable kind of dishonesty.”²⁹

From the above incident it is observed that Rabindra was very upright and he never showed willingness to compromise with immorality.

“He traveled to large parts of Malaysia and Singapore. This was also a time, which made him to renounce smoking, which had become a quite strong addiction. On an inspection tour with a

28. Sangharakshita, *The Rainbow Road: From Tooting Broadway to Kalimpong*, Windhorse Publication, London, 1997:121, Accessed on 7th Feb. 2014. From www.sangharakshita.org/_books/rainbow-road.pdf

29. Ibid: 125

British boss he had forgotten his cigarette pack and felt so irritated and angry to the extent that he showed his anger on others for the whole day. Upon his return from the inspection tour when he was relaxing and smoking cigarette after cigarette, this officer came and said just one sentence, which changed him effectively. He said: “Who is the master, you or the cigarette?” He burned all the stock of his choicest cigarette and that was the last.”³⁰

Therefore going through his military life and service we find that the character of Rabindra was very strong, self-controlled and a person imposing strict discipline on himself.

1.3. Livelihood (1946)

In January 1946, Ravindra came back to Kolkata and opened a coal business agency.

“One of the first things I did in Calcutta was to contact Banerjee. We met at the Institute of culture, where I introduced him to Kantaraj. On his return from Singapore he had bought a partnership in a small retail coal business, on behalf of which he travelled in and around Calcutta in quest of orders.”³¹

Sangharakshita mentioned his point of view on Rabindra’s renouncement.

“Here at last was common ground. But though we discussed long and earnestly the question of the kind of life we proposed to lead together, and the type of work to which we aspired to dedicate our energies, in the face of the vast difference, which existed between our respective temperaments, and backgrounds it was impossible for us to come to any immediate conclusion. I wanted to work for Buddhism and, if possible, become a Buddhist monk. He, for all his repudiation of social orthodoxy, was still at

30. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op.cit:4

31. Sangharakshita, op.cit: 130

heart very much the Bengali Brahmin, and his appreciation of Buddhism was in my eyes nullified by his point-blank refusal to consider it anything but a branch of Hinduism. In this he was by no means guilty of mere intransigence. Like all English-educated *Caste* Hindus, the depth of his emotional commitment to Hinduism was so great that he belonged to it even when he rebelled against it, so that to repudiate it for the sake of another religion would have meant a tearing up of roots such as no one born into a more youthful and secularized tradition can imagine. However much Buddhism may appeal to him, no *Caste* Hindu finds it easy to renounce his 3,000 years of cultural and spiritual tradition, especially when that tradition affirms his own 'sacred, innate priority' over the Untouchable mass. Small wonder, then, that in an attempt to make the best of both worlds he should maintain, against all evidence that Buddhism and Hinduism are one. A year later, in a heroic act of renunciation, Banerjee cut the Institute; the problem of the next step to be taken remained unsolved. So for the time being he continued his request for customers, while I remained with Uncle Dick."³²

Besides while Sangharakshita was determined to become a Buddhist Monk, Rabindra was not yet prepared mentally to convert his religion.

"The only difficulty was my relation with Banerjee, which had rapidly developed into a strong mutual attachment. Like the blind man and the lame man in the parable, we complemented each other to such an extent that neither felt capable of moving without the other. Besides, Banerjee had been cheated by his partner and, being as disgusted with business as I was with the social life of the English in India, was ready to devote himself to some kind of religious or cultural activity."³³

Rabindra also did not show interest in business at all while he enjoyed discussing religion and politics with people.

“Banerjee, who was trying to extract money from his former partner, was out most of the day. In the evenings we discussed religion. More often than not he harangued the dozen or so student inmates of the Institute about politics while I read St. John of the Cross or Meister Eckhart. Once, in fulfillment of a promise made in Singapore, he took me twenty miles out of Calcutta to the Bengali village, all coconut palms and fishponds, where his widowed mother lived with his uncle, brothers, sisters, cousins, and various other members of their large joint family.”³⁴

In 1946, Rabindra’s father, who was Late Sri Vishnupada Bandopadhyaya, passed away at the age of 55 due to heart disease. I guess Rabindra must have struggled to make money to look after his big family even though he was not interested at all. But after his father’s death, his elder brother took charge of the family and Rabindra was more close to the renunciation.

After quitting the coal agency, he and Sangharakshita worked for Maha Bodhi Society of India Head quarters in Kolkata.

“His Holiness alone was well-groomed and immaculate. Freshly shaved, his baldhead agleam with scented oil, and clad in a bright new yellow robe, he sat at his desk rapping out others. With his bold eye and brazen manner he looked like a saffron- colored crow, the crow being in Indian folklore the most impudent of birds. To callers his first question was ‘Well, what have you brought me today?’” His drawers were filled with boxes of chocolates, fountain pens, and other presents. But though not very monk-like in his behavior he was shrewd and businesslike and evidently managed the Society’s affairs with commendable efficiency. Banerjee and me he treated extremely well. Unlike the Secretary Swami at the

34. *Ibid*:132

Institute, he had enough common sense to assign each of us the work for which he was best suited. I typed and read proofs in the office. Banerjee went calling on government officials. When a white face was needed to open ministerial doors His Holiness dispatched me too. Before long our relations with the bold, efficient bhikkhu were quite cordial. Like most capable men he was extremely ambitious. ‘You’ll see’, he used to tell us ‘within two years I shall be General Secretary of the Society.’³⁵

Learning and teaching skills were Rabindra’s strong points from the time he was young. So He took charge of training children at Maha Bodhi Orphanage.

“One day he took us to the Maha Bodhi Orphanage. This institute occupied a small double-storied house near Park Circus in a predominantly Muslim locality. The ages of the thirty-odd inmates ranged from five to fifteen, the younger boys being the more numerous. Later we learned how the Orphanage had been started. During Hindu-Muslim riots, His Holiness had gone out with an escort of armed police picking up off the street boys whose parents had been killed. With the same intrepidity he had rescued Dr. Beni Madhab Barua and his family, who had been marooned in a Muslim neighborhood. At the Society’s headquarters, situated in the predominantly Hindu College Square, he had sheltered ninety Muslims from the fury of the Hindu mob. Once, with a short laugh, he told us how he had rescued both Hindus and Muslims and accommodated them in different parts of the same Buddhist building. For these exploits, as well as for the competent though unsentimental manner in which he cared for the orphans, it was impossible not to admire him. A few days later it transpired that his taking us to see the Orphanage had not been without a purpose. In his brusque, direct way he told us to shift from the

35. *Ibid*: 136

headquarters building to the Orphanage. Banerjee was to be in charge of the boys, as the resident bhikkhu, a meek young Bihiri, was not sufficiently strict, returning to the Orphanage in the evening. This arrangement worked very well. Within an hour of our establishing ourselves among them, Banerjee, who was nothing if not a disciplinarian, had the boys well under control. One of his first actions was to make them turn out the contents of their small tin boxes. To our astonishment we discovered that a number of them possessed lewd pictures of women. These were destroyed. Besides dividing the boys into classes and teaching them, Banerjee drilled them every morning and improved their diet. Before long the Orphanage had a distinctly military atmosphere. Meanwhile I was typing letters for His Holiness, who was at that time dabbling in municipal politics, and learning to edit the *Maha Bodhi Journal*.³⁶

When Rabindra took charge of the Orphanage, an incident called “Direct Action Day” took place in 1946, which was the mass massacre by the Kolkata Muslim community.

“We had been barely three weeks at the Orphanage when the world of politics, which we had hitherto been able to ignore, suddenly erupted in a most disturbing manner into our small world of cultural and educational activities. After two centuries of British rule the great subcontinent was to be free. But the price of freedom was bisection. Already the creation of the twin dominions of India and Pakistan had been agreed upon. The Punjab and Bengal were also to be divided, or would it fall intact into the hands of one or other of the two claimants? Determined to uphold Pakistan’s right to the city by violence if necessary, the Muslim League declared 20th March Direct Action Day. This was the signal for fresh outbreaks of communal rioting. Though less serious than those of the

36. *Ibid*

previous year, in which the boys had been orphaned, they were sufficiently horrible. For a week we were shut up in the Orphanage, which was to some extent protected by its high brick walls. Only after dark did Banerjee and the cook, disguised as Muslims, steal out by the back door to buy provisions from the nearest bazaar. At night one of us always kept watch.... Two trips were needed to complete the evacuation.... With thirty boys in the building, the headquarters' routine was to some extent disrupted. Banerjee spent most of his time keeping them out of mischief.”³⁷

Even though Rabindra liked to teach children, he was dissatisfied with the behavior and attitude of His holiness’.

“Banerjee was still showing visitors around the exhibition when His Holiness was invited to send a representative of the Society to speak on Buddhism at the Dhamma Parishad, or All-India Religions Conference, to be held in Ahmedabad that April, I had already lectured in the Society’s hall, he decided to send me. Before I left, Banerjee and I had several serious discussions. The worldly, unspiritual atmosphere of the Society’s headquarters, where we had a constant sense of something unpleasant going on behind the scenes, depressed and disgusted us. Moreover, His holiness’s promise to recommend to the General Secretary that we should be officially enrolled as full-time workers had not been kept, and our position in the Society was undefined. We therefore agreed that, while in Ahmedabad, I should get in touch with other Buddhists attending the Parishad and try to make arrangements for us to join an organization more conducive to our spiritual growth. ‘Do your best for both of us’ Banerjee shouted as the train bearing me on the first lap of my 1,500-mile journey slowly steamed out of the station.”³⁸

After coming back from World War II, he opened business for his family. But it couldn't continue because his partner had committed a fraud on him. Then he worked for the Maha Bodhi Society in Kolkata but he thought it didn't fit his strict and upright character. All these things pushed him to the spiritual Journey.

1.4. Spiritual Journey (1946-1949)

According to '*Buddhadassa*', he was not interested in worldly life. On 15th August 1947, the Independence Day of India, he decided to be independent from mundane world.

"On his return to India after the war he was deeply contemplating on meaning of life. The violence on the eve of independence as partition took place; brutal fighting of Muslims and Hindus and killing of innocent people on the streets of Kolkata moved his heart enough to dedicate his life to help distressed people. He volunteered in Dharamshalas and refugee camps and then he decided to find much deeper meaning in life."³⁹

But in my view, his spiritual Journey had already started from his brief coal business in 1946. After Maha Bodhi Society in Kolkata, he joined Anandamayi ashram in Kishengunj until 15th August 1947, which was Indian Independence Day. He was also independent from the all-religious organization and seeking the truth because he felt the limitation of Hindu *Caste* system in the organizations. There was one incident in Anandamayi ashram.

"We had just been served and were about to begin eating when a late arrival, an elderly man wearing a sacred thread, sat down in the empty place. Hearing Banerjee and I talking in English he leaned forward and gave me a suspicious stare. What he saw was apparently not reassuring, for he started fidgeting uneasily. Finally, bending towards Banerjee, he asked in a low voice, 'What

39. Anada, Buddhadassa, *op.cit*: 4

is your *Caste*?' My friend looked up from his plate with a mischievous expression. 'My *Caste*?' he repeated in a loud, cheerful voice. 'I'm an Untouchable.' The old gentleman sprang up as though he had seen a cobra. Presently we saw him a few rows away talking in an agitated manner to a group of ashramites and pointing towards Banerjee. The ashramites shook their heads. Evidently they were trying to explain that Banerjee was a Brahmin. A few minutes later, having been unable to find another vacant place, he returned and gingerly sat down again. 'Why didn't you tell me you were a Brahmin?' he demanded.

'I'm not a Brahmin, I'm an Untouchable,' again declared Banerjee, more cheerfully than ever. 'After all, I should know my own *Caste*.' The old gentleman was so obviously torn between fears of possible pollution and fear of missing his meal that neither of us could help laughing. Eventually, with a long dark look at Banerjee, he pulled the strip of matting at the end of the row out of alignment with that on which we were sitting, so that technically he would not be eating 'with' us, and slowly started on what was evidently a far from enjoyable meal.⁴⁰

He struggled with cast system at the kitchen in Anandamayi Ashram. Even though Anadamayi was a woman, her teaching was evolutionary way of the spirituality, and he was named by her as 'Satyapriya', which means 'Lover of Truth', but she did not deal with the cast problem in the Ashram. This was the reason why he left Anandamayi Ashram.

"Three days later Satyapriya and I celebrated our personal 'Independence Day'.... There was only one way out. Religious societies, organizations, and groups, far from

40. Sangharakshita, op.cit:164-165

being a help to spiritual development were only a hindrance. However lofty the ideals with which they were founded, they had a natural tendency to degenerate, in the hands of selfish human beings, into instruments for the acquisition of money, position, power, and fame. Instead of trying any longer to work with them we would follow the example of the Buddha and sever at one stroke our connection with an incorrigible world. We would renounce the household life and go forth into the life of homelessness as wanderers in search of Truth. For the last few months we had only sat hesitantly on the shore of the vast ocean of the spiritual life. Now, casting aside all fear, we would plunge boldly in.”⁴¹

He made up his mind to find the Truth and traveled all over India. The experiences of Maha Bodhi Society and Anandamayi ashram made him to go further seeking for the Truth.

“He went to ashram of Anandmayi in Khankal in Haridwar. He formally decided to renounce household life and search for freedom on the day of Indian Independence in Kasouli. Then he began to search for truth. He had a British colleague who too accompanied him on his journey from place to place, ashram to ashram, guru to guru. They walked from the Himalayas to Kanaykumari. In the end they landed up in a Kerala Ashram. But soon they realized many social issues were involved which they did not like. So their next stop was Ramanamaharshi ashram at Tiruvannamalai where they settled with meditation and practice. Bhante liked the simple meditative way of life taught by Sri Ramana.”⁴²

They wanted to learn Buddhism so they headed to Sri Lanka. When they arrived in Sri Lanka, the immigration officer did not

41. *Ibid*: 182-183

42. Anada, Buddhadasa, *op.cit*: 4

allow them entry into the country because of their undefined identities. So they traveled as swamis in South Indian ashrams in places like Cape Comorin, Trivandrum and Muvattupuzha. When they stayed in Muvattupuzha, one Swami of Ramakrishna Ashram welcomed Satyapriya as Hindu missionary because he was opposed to Christian missionary.

“Swami Agamananda concluded by appealing to the public of Muvattupuzha to support the Ashram and co-operate with its new incumbent. On our return to the Ashram a committee was set up with Swami Aganmananda as President, Anagarika Satyapriya (Buddharakkhita) as Secretary, Anagarika Dhammapriya (Sangharakshita) as Assistant Secretary, and Mr. Ramaswami, a lawyer, who, with about a dozen other gentlemen, had walked back with us – as Treasurer. ... From the first of December, therefore, our daily routine underwent an important modification. Every morning after breakfast we crossed the bridge on Muvattupuzha and made the rounds of as many houses as possible, returning to the Ashram at about midday. In the beginning we had assumed it would be possible for us to collect the subscriptions of all the members of the Ashram, as they were styled, within two or three days.”⁴³

One day, a Christian missionary came to nearby village; he converted almost all villagers into Christians. When Satyapriya came to this village, these villagers were wearing cross. He was completely surprised and after convincing them converted them again back into Hindus. When he came back to the ashram, he told the incident to Swami Agamananda. After the Swami heard him out, he asked, “Well, you have converted them, but in which *Caste* did you put them? You cannot change the caste and it comes only from birth. So you cannot convert somebody to Hinduism.”

43. *Ibid*: 207

Satiyapriya was shocked and disgusted by Hindu *Caste* system and he quit his position and left the Ashram.

After that, he went to Ramanamaharishi Ashram at Tiruvannamalai to practice meditation.

“Sri Ramana Ashram, also known as Sri Ramanashramam, is the ashram which was home to modern sage and *Advaita Vedanta* philosopher Ramana Maharshi from 1922 until his death in 1950. It is situated at the foot of the Arunachala hill, to the west of Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, where thousands of seekers flocked to be in his presence. His *Samadhi* shrine continues to attract devotees from all over the world.”⁴⁴

Satyapriya liked the simple meditative way of life taught by Sri Ramana. When he was there, he read all major religious scriptures like *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Koran*, the *Bible* and the *Dhammapada*. And he finally thought teaching of Buddha was supreme of all.

“Bhante sincerely wanted to study the Bible, the *Koran*, the *Gita* and the *Dhammapada*. Ultimately the *Dhammapada* could convince him of realities of life. This was also the turning point when Bhante realized something of his long trodden path of Buddha’s Dhamma in his meditation. Then and there he took the Three Refuges-*Tisarana*”⁴⁵

For almost 2 years in his spiritual journey, he tried to find the Truth, travelling all over India. He meditated in the Ashram and asked the swamis to preach but he was not satisfied. After deep meditation and his encounter with the *Dhammapada*, he was convinced that the Buddhism was the great way of the Truth. I

44. Abram, David (2003). The Rough Guide to South India. Rough Guides. ISBN 1-84353-103-8. Accessed on 17th Feb. 2014
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Ramana_Ashram

45. Anada, Buddhadasa, *op. cit.*: 4

think it was similar to the moment when Bodhisatva Siddhartha Gautama after six years of austere practices gave up all of them and decided to find his way to enlightenment.

2. Monkhood

In this chapter, I would like to mention about his ordination. He was ordained by Chandramani Maha Thera who was a Myanmar monk and a pioneer of revival of Buddhism in India. Dr. Ambedkar was also later initiated by Chandramani Maha Thera in 1956.

After his ordination, Ven. Chandramani sent Buddharakkhita to Nepal and later he and Ven. Jagadish Kashyap advised him to go to Sri Lanka and Myanmar for Buddhist studies. And when he came back to India in 1954, he taught in Nalanda University *Pali* language and Buddhism. This chapter has 4 sub-sections. The first is *Ordination of a Buddhist monk* (1949), the second is *Study of Buddhism in Sri Lanka* (1949-1951), the third is *Study of Buddhism in Myanmar* (1951-1954) and the fourth is *Teaching at Nalanda University* (1954-1956).

For research of this chapter, I could get the resource from *Rainbow Road* for the period until 1949. Chandramani Maha Thera ordained Sangharakshita, but he did not go to Sri Lanka instead of that he studied in Saranath under Jagadish Kashap Bhante who was a *Pali* professor from the Benares Hindu University. From there, they went their different ways in their lives.

In Sri Lanka, Buddharakkhita learned *Pali* language and *Sutta* from Nyanatiloka who was a German Bhikkhu. And he was taught *Vinaya* by Widurapola Piyatissa Mahathera who won the *Pandit* degree of oriental studies together with a golden plate for his erudition in three languages: Sinhala, *Pali* and *Sanskrit*. He also studied under well renowned strict vinaya master Ven. Rerukane Candawimala Mahathera. In Myanmar, he learned meditation from Mahasi Sayadaw who was the father of *Vipassana*

meditation in modern times and other well versed teachers. He was also invited to the 6th Buddhist Council as a member of the Editorial Board which brought out complete *Pali Tipitaka* in 1954-56.

After his studies in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, he came back to India and taught at Nalanda University from 1954 to 1956. In this period, he wrote one of his earliest books, “*Living Legacy of the Buddha.*”

2.1. Ordination of a Buddhist monk (1949)

When he read the *Dhammapada* and meditated he could see that he was a Buddhist monk in his previous lives. And finally he found the answer for his search for over two years. After his determination for devotion in Buddhism, he tried to find out where he could learn Buddhism in India. One visitor at Maharishi Ashram told him about Saranath and took him to Mumbai. Before he moved to Saranath, he visited *Kanheri* cave.

“As he searched for a Buddhist teacher, a Mumbai devotee promised to send him to Saranath where he could find Buddhist monks. He first took him to Mumbai and as Bhante visited the *Kanheri* Buddhist caves he could not control his tears, feeling that it was his real home.”⁴⁶

“Most of the caves are used as the Buddhist viharas, meant for living, studying, and meditating. The larger caves were chaityas, or halls for congregational worship; are lined with intricately carved Buddhist sculptures, reliefs and pillars; and contain rock-cut stupas for congregational worship. The Avalokiteshwara is the most distinctive figure. The large number of *viharas* demonstrates the well-organized establishment of Buddhist monks. *Kanheri* was a University center by the time the area was under the rule of the Mauryan and Kushan empires. In the late 10th century, the Buddhist

46. Anada, Buddhadasa, op.cit: 4

teacher Atisha (980-1054) came to study Buddhist meditation under Rahulagupta.”⁴⁷

When he reached the Kanheri cave, he was feeling that it was his real home. It was very difficult to find a Buddhist site at that time in India and only archeologists interested in Buddhism could take interest in them. From there he went to Sarnath, to Maha Bodhi Society of India. Though he went to meet a Buddhist Dhamma teacher, he only met one group of monks on a pilgrimage from Sri Lanka. They advised him that if he went to Kushinagara, he might meet Buddhist monk teachers and they even named Ven.Candamani Mahathera who had settled in Kushinagar. Taking their advice he followed the train track from Saranath to Kushinagar on foot because he had no money.

“From there he arrived at Saranath and later to Kushinagara and met the Ven. Chandramani Mahathera. Bhante requested for admission into the sangha. But the old Mahathera bluntly said that he has come from another tradition and that he will have to go through observation for six months before he is given admission. Bhante totally surrendered to the advice and guidance of Chandramani Mahathera.”⁴⁸

I guess the reason why Chandramani did not give him the ordination directly was because of the experience in Maha Bodhi Society Kolkata. Chandramani was very much related with Maha Bodhi Society from a young age.

“The Sayadaw was born on the 25th May 1875 (Burmese era Tuesday afternoon, on the 16th day after the full moon month of Kason in the year 1237) to the family of U Kyaw Aung and Daw Mi Win Yae of *Pauk-pin-kwin* village,

47. Ray, Niharranjan (1993). *Bangalir Itihas: Adiparba* in Bengali, Calcutta: Dey's Publishing, ISBN 81-7079-270-3, p.595 Accessed on 18th Feb. 2014 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanheri_Caves

48. Ananda, Buddhadasa, *op.cit*: 4

Myo-haung Township, Sittwe District, Rakhine State, Myanmar. His name at birth was Tha Pan Oo. When he was 10 years old, his parents sent him to Sittwe to study at the *Sandimar-Rama* Monastery where his uncle, Sayadaw Ashin U Sandimar (Candima) was famous for Buddhist literature. After 2 years at this monastery, he was initiated a novice *samanera* title: Shin Chandra (Shin Sandar) and continued Buddhist studies. Around the mid-1889, Anagarika Dhammapala of Sri Lanka, a celibate full time worker for Buddhism, who despite donning a yellow robe did not shave his head according to the Buddhist tradition, accompanied by Colonel Ollcotte from England, arrived in *Sittwe* to promote and establish a branch of Maha Bodhi Society, similar to those they helped established in Yangon and Mandalay. There, the visitors exchanged views on how best to promote and re-establish declining Buddha *Sasana* in the middle-land – *Majjhimadesa*, and of their fervent intention to relocate a suitable person there, which they had come to seek. Their choice for a candidate they propose to put to further training when chosen, would be a young Buddhist monk with good moral courage and qualifications. From the Maha Bodhi Society in Sittwe, they found young Shin Chandra, whose credentials matched those in their resume. When Shin Chandra, still a novice, was approached for a decision by the visitors, he agreed, and further proposed that he would be better encouraged if he was companied by his friend and colleague, Shin Thuriya (Suriya). They were thus chosen and assigned to join the monastery in *Majjhimadesa*. The teen-aged novices, Shin Thuriya and Shin Chandra, whose names if translated meaning - ‘sun and moon,’ were both happy to accept the responsibility and tasks of staying and propagating Buddhism at *Majjhimadesa*. On November 1890 (Tazaungmon of Myanmar era 1252), Shin Chandra and Shin Thuriya,

were brought to India by a Government Official, U Tha Doe Wai, and an Inland Revenue Official, who were visiting Calcutta (Kolkata), the capital of British India. After passing through Calcutta, the two novices arrived and stayed at Maha Bodhi Society in Bodh Gaya. At that period in time, Bikkhu Ashin Sandazawti (Candajoti), a Sri Lankan monk, was the chief resident at the Kuthodaw Myanmar Buddhist Temple, which was built and donated by King Mindon of Myanmar. Along with an attendant Thar Doe Oo from Myanmar, Anagarika Dhammapala arranged for the two Myanmar novices to join the Sri Lankan monk. There, the two novices together with Thar Doe Oo would visit the Maha Bodhi Ceti and the Bodhi Tree daily to do religious rites and to clean the compound. Among the littered rubbish and leaves, they also had to clean food offerings discarded by the Hindu priests after their ancestral religious rites.”⁴⁹

As a novice, he worked for the Maha Bodhi Monastery in Bodh Gaya, Kushinagar, and Saranath until he was 28 years old. And he was ordained full-fledged Bhikkhu titled Ashin Chandramani (Ashin Sandaramani), in Panwar (which is situated now in southern Bangladesh).

“A few months after the ordination in Sittwe, Ashin Chandramani went back to Kushinagar to join Sayadaw Mahawira. He assisted Sayadaw complete the building of Kushinagar Monastery, and spent time teaching three fellow Myanmar monks in Hindi and Sanskrit, and Buddhist literatures to five local Indians. For the next few years, Venerable Ashin Chandramani, who was well versed in Hindi and *Pali* languages, translated and

49. U Than Sein, The Life Story of Sri Bhaddhanta Chandramani Mahathera, U Chandramani Foundation, Myanmar Buddhist Temple, Sarnath, Varanasi, 2 January 2008, Accessed on May 1 2014, http://www.myanmarvihara.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=38&limit=1&limitstart=1

published many books, which include ‘The *Dhammapada*’. Other religious books included *Mahasatipatthana Sutta*; *Anatta-lakkhana Sutta* and *Singi-ti Sutta*. Sayadaw had written many other Buddhist books, documents and journals and also translated them into Hindi to enable the Indians to understand and develop interest in Buddhism.”⁵⁰

It is not difficult to understand that Buddharakkita had met his Dhamma teacher at the right time, place and the right person. Under his Dhamma teacher, he could learn true Buddha Dhamma. At last, on the *Vesakha* full moon of 1949 he was ordained as a Buddhist monk and was given the name Buddharakkhita by Chandramani Mahathera.

When the young Buddharakkhita inquisitively asked where he could see the Buddhist community, the Mahathera asked him to tour Nepal.⁵¹

Chandramani Mahathera had devoted his whole life for the revival of Buddhism in India. I assume that he would have sent Buddharakkita to Nepal and North India for seeking a community of Buddhism.

“As he walked from village to village crossing the country side, once he arrived at *Sultangunj*. Lunchtime was getting nearer and he was very thirsty. In the outskirts of that village a girl was drawing water from a well. He went to her and asked for water. She put her head down and did not give. When he asked for two three times she told him that she cannot give water. He asked ‘why’. She said, she belonged to lower *Caste* and it is prohibited for her to give water to anybody of higher *Caste*. Bhante told her that he is thirsty and needs water, not her *Caste*, and she poured water into his bowl.”⁵²

50. *Ibid*.

51. *Ibid*

52. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op.cit: 4

When he practiced Hindu spirituality in India, he always struggled with the *Caste* system. Even in a small village in Nepal he met the same social evil. We may understand inequality in different *Caste* system during the Buddha's era about 2500 years ago, but it was very hard to accept *Caste* system in modern society. Even when he was a Hindu Swami, he could not understand why people were segregated and given different places for eating based on their *Caste*. Without a word he decided to become a Buddhist monk at that time. He felt that root of *Caste* system is very deep and wide in the people's sub-conscience. This episode influenced him to go against *Caste* all his life.

“As he went for *pindapata* (alms) in a village, he met a short Muslim man who asked Bhante to come to the back entrance as he feared other Hindus will take objection if he offers *dana* (food). Bhante told him not to worry and once Bhante finished his alms round in the village and went to a nearby grove to eat his meal, more and more villagers including that Muslim man came with many eatables. That was his first teaching and explained to them about the five precepts. That was how *pancasila samiti* started getting shape from the very beginning.”⁵³

Like the Lord Buddha's first teaching was in Saranath to five Bhikus, Buddharakkhita's first teaching was in a Muslim village. Now-a-days in India there are so many conflicts between the Muslims and the Hindus, this is shining example of love and harmony he tried to bring about based on human feeling towards everybody. After his visit to Nepal, where he also tried to cross over to Tibet, he came to Saranath.

As mentioned above, Nepalese were by and large Hindus and in the mountain areas Buddhists lived for a long time. But this Buddhist community was Tibetan Mahayana and they did not know Pali tradition. I presumed he was a little bit disappointed about that. He made up his mind to study in Sri Lanka for revival of Buddhism in the Indian sub-continent.

53. *Ibid.*

2.2. Study of Buddhism in Sri Lanka (1949-1951)

When he came back to Maha Bodhi Society in Saranath from Nepal, Ven. Bhikkhu Jagadish Kashyap advised and helped Bhante with ticket and a hundred rupees to go to Sri Lanka for Buddhist studies.

“Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap was born in 1908 in Ranchi, Bihar, India; he died on 28th January 1976. His birth name was Jagdish Narain, and the name Kashyap was given to him at his bhikkhu ordination in 1933. He studied at Patna College for BA, 1929, MA in Philosophy - Banaras Hindu University, 1931 and MA in Sanskrit - Banaras Hindu University, 1932. After finishing his MA, Bhikkhu Kashyap, desiring to do doctoral work in Buddhist philosophy, was advised to study Pāli, and so resolved to go to Sri Lanka, to his parents’ dismay. They relented in 1933 and he joined the Vidyāṅkara Pirivena (now the University of Kelaniya). Venerable L. Dhammananda Nayaka Mahathero ordained him. During his time at the Vidyāṅkara Pirivena he translated the Dīgha Nikāya into Hindi. On a trip to Japan, he was stopped by the police in Malaysia due to his involvement in Gandhi’s non-cooperation movement. He spent a year living in Penang, learned some Chinese, lived in a Chinese *vihāra*, and published a collection of lectures. In 1936 he returned to Sri Lanka to spend time in a forest hermitage to practice meditation, which was quite unusual for a bhikkhu in his day, so much so that his teachers tried to dissuade him. Bhikkhu Kashyap continued to practice meditation throughout. Towards the end of 1936 he returned to India and in 1937 settled at Sarnath where he was involved in scholarly and translating work, principally of the Pāli Canon into Hindi. In Sarnath he became associated with the Maha Bodhi Society and was soon helping with the institutional organisation and social services. He became

the headmaster of a new high school founded by the Maha Bodhi Society General Secretary, Devapriya Valisinha. While in Sarnath he also worked for Benares Hindu University to offer courses in Pāli by walk for 22-mile journey to Varanasi. Some accounts say this was because he persuaded officials to start these courses and even taught them for free.”⁵⁴

The separation from Sangharakshita, who was a good company for his spiritual journey, happened at this time. Sangharakshita has mentioned this in “*Rainbow Road*”.

“Though the rainy season was now well advanced, we were still no nearer to finding a place in which to spend the Rain Residence than we had been in Nepal. Buddharakshita was strongly in favor of our making another attempt to enter Ceylon, where we would be able to study and where we could take the higher ordination. Partly because I was without means of identification, and partly because I did not feel well enough to embark on further wanderings, I was against this plan. It was Bhikkhu Kashyap who resolved the dilemma. With characteristic generosity he made it clear that, if it would be of any use, there was room for one of us at Buddha Kutī, but only for one, and that he would be happy to provide not only board and lodging but instruction. This of course meant the end of the partnership between Buddharakkhita and me, which had now lasted uninterruptedly for two and a half years. After prolonged discussion, my impetuous friend suddenly announced that his mind was made up. He would go to Ceylon. I should stay in Benares with Bhikkhu Kashyap. Since I was unfit to travel, and needed a bit of looking after, this was clearly the best arrangement. In any case, he

54. D.C. Ahir. *The Pioneers of the Buddhist Revival in India*. (Delhi, Sri Satguru Pub. : 1989) Accessed on 1 May 2014.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagdish_Kashyap

added, unable to resist a parting shot, it was me that Bhikkhu Kashyap wanted as a disciple, not him. Within twenty-four hours I had moved into Buddha *kuti* and Buddharakkhita was on his way to Calcutta.”⁵⁵

From this point, Buddharakkhita and Sangharakshita went in their own different ways. While one went on the path of Theravada Buddhism, and the other went on the path of Mahayana Buddhism. What is important is that Buddharakkhita had a mission of revival of Buddhism in India by spreading the Truth of Buddha. In my understanding through his autobiography, Sangharakshita had a dream about individual enlightenment from his younger days. Buddharakkhita had a strong mind to revive Buddhism in India and that determination could not be altered by any circumstances but strengthened only what is true Dhamma. So he decided to go to Sri Lanka for studying the original Buddhism.

“Bhante was very lucky to get some of the best teachers. He studied *Pali* and Abhidhamma under great scholar and pious monk Venerable Nyanatiloka Mahathera of German origin. Ven. Nyanaponika, Ven. Nyamoli and others were his senior colleagues whose association was as valuable.”⁵⁶

Nyanatiloka Mahathera was one of the earliest westerner in modern times to become a Bhikkhu, a fully ordained Buddhist monk.⁵⁷ Buddharakkhita went to Sri-Lanka in 1949 with a letter of introduction by Ven. Jagadish Kashyap. Ven. Nyanatiloka founded Island Hermitage on full moon of July in 1911.⁵⁸

“After arriving in Sri Lanka, Nyanatiloka stayed in a hall built for *KoG añño* in Galle. Ludwig Stolz was given

55. Shangarakshita, *op.cit*: 355

56. Ananda, Buddhadasa, *op.cit*: 5

57. Bhikkhu Nyanatusita and Hellmuth Hecker, *The Life of Nyanatiloka: The Biography of a Western Buddhist Pioneer*, Buddisht publication society, Kandy, 2009: 25

58. *Ibid*: 3135.

novice ordination at a nearby monastery and given the name *Vappo*. From *KoG añño*, Nyanatiloka heard about an abandoned jungle island in a lagoon at the nearby village of *Dodanduva* that would be a suitable place for a hermitage. After inspecting the snake-infested island and getting approval of the local population, five simple wooden huts were built. Just before the beginning of the annual monk's rainy season retreat (*vassa*) of 1911 (which would have been started the day after the full moon of July), Nyanatiloka and his companions moved to the Island. The hermitage was named Island Hermitage. The island was bought by Bergier in 1914 from its Burgher owner and donated to Nyanatiloka. In September 1911 Alexandra David-Néel came and studied *Pali* under Nyanatiloka at the Island Hermitage while staying with the monastery's chief supporter, Coroner Wijeyesekera. Visitors such as Anāgārika Dhammapāla and the German ambassador visited the Island Hermitage during this period. Several Westerners—four Germans, an American-German, an American, and an Austrian—were ordained at the Island Hermitage between 1911 and 1914. In 1913 Nyanatiloka started a mission for the Sri Lankan “outcastes”, *rodiya*, beginning in the area of Kadugannava, about 20 km west of Kandy. Some of the *rodiya* lived and studied on the Island Hermitage. The son of the *Rodiya* chieftain was accepted by Nyanatiloka as a novice with the name ÑāGāloka. After the death of Nyanatiloka he became the abbot of the Island Hermitage. Nyanatiloka mentions that there were reproaches because of the *Caste* egalitarianism at the Island Hermitage.”⁵⁹

Buddharakkhita was excited with this organization because of their sincere meditation practice and non discrimination of caste, etc. Under Ven. Nyanatiloka, Ven. Buddharakkhita learnt *Pali* and

59. *Ibid*: 3539.

Abhidhamma, and he was concerned especially about the meaning of the Pali words and concepts. (This was the reason why Maha Bodhi Society Bangalore still publishes Ven.Nyanatiloka's famous book "Buddhist Dictionary.) Ven.Buddharakkhita learnt the proper meaning of original Buddhist *Pali* texts under Ven.Nyanatiloka along with his distinguished disciples Venerables Nayanaponika and Nayanamoli.

Then he studied Vinaya from Vidurapola Piyatissa Maha Nayaka Thera.

"The Thera later to become the Mahanayaka of the Udarata Amarapura Nikaya was born on June 15, 1880 in the village of Vidurupola in the Badulla District. The Thera's father was Weerawanni Mudiyansele Appuhamy, a popular Ayurvedic physician and the mother Ekanayake Mudiyansele Muthumenike.... He was ordained on May 26, 1890 under the tutorship of Ven. Panakanniye Amithasara Thera and under the guardianship of Vidurupola Rathanaajothi Mahanayake Thera, the incumbent priest of the temple. After four and half years, the child now aged 15 was admitted on February 22, 1895 to the *Parama Dhamma Chetiya Pirivena*, of Ratmalana, a great place of learning of that time that continues even to date as an acclaimed and recognised seat of learning for the Sangha.... The Thera's formal induction to the order (*Upasampada* ceremony) was held on August 18, 1899 in the temple of Vidurupola village in presence of the Udarata Amarapura Sangha Karaka Sabha, presided over by the Most Ven. Vidurupola Rathanaajothi Mahanayake Thera. He completed with several awards of prizes, the Pracheena Preliminary Examination conducted by the Buddhist Theosophical Society in 1903. The death of the Ven. Vidurupola Rathanaajothi Mahanayake Thera occurred on April 25,

1905. He completed the Pracheena Intermediate Examination in the same year and was awarded five prizes. Again with similar awards of prizes, the Pracheena Final Examination was completed in 1910. One of the medals awarded on the passing out the final examination was the coveted medal ‘*Swarna Mudrika*’. With the demise of Ven. Rathanajothi Mahanayake Thera and the post rendered vacant, the Karaka Sabha of the Udarata Amarapura Nikaya unanimously decided to confer the title on Ven. Vidurupola Siri Piyatissa Nayaka Thera. The Thera acquitted the responsibilities of the Mahanayake of the Udarata Amarapura Nikaya with utmost sense of dedication that the first responsibility he discharged in the new post was to appoint a ‘*vinayavadini*’ Committee charged with the duty of maintaining the discipline of the *Nikaya*.... In 1919 he was selected to attend the ‘Bharath Maha Panditha Conference’ in India. The Ven. Thera was accorded the singular honor of presiding over the ‘*Dhamma Sangayana*’ held at Vidyalandara Pirivena in 1953 and the ‘*Chattha Sangayana*’ held in Burma in 1954. The contribution made by the Ven. Mahanayake Thera towards the spread of Buddhism and the revival of literature was immense. After leading an extremely meritorious life making himself devoted to the cause of the Buddhist clergy and community, the Mahanayake Thera blissfully passed away on December 10, 1954.”⁶⁰

Under him, Ven. Buddharakkhita studied the Vinaya and out of gratitude he translated his heart touching book called Kamalanjali – Pali verses in veneration of the Triple Gem. Even today it is an outstanding modern work in Pali poetry. He had higher ordination in *Udarata Amarapura Nikaya* under this

60. “A great scholar of Sri Lanka”, U. B. Wijekoon, Daily News, Sri Lanka News paper, 1 January 2009, Accessed on 1 May 2014.
<http://archives.dailynews.lk/2009/01/01/fea21.asp>

teacher.⁶¹ At that time, Ven.Buddharakkhita's ordination sponsor was Mrs.Moonasinge who was the niece of Anagarika Dhammapala. This destiny meeting had made Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore in the future.

Then Ven. Buddharakkhita went to Most Ven.Rerukane Chandawimala Maha Thera, another great monk of high repute for his sincere practice.

Rubel Gunawardana was born on July 19, 1897 at Rerakana. His father was Don Basthiyen da Pawulis and mother Munasinhage Podi Nona. He studied only upto 2nd class in school only to discontinue as his inclination was towards monastic life. He became monk in 1908 and got the monastic name Chandawimala. Under the tutorship of Venerable Vinayalankara Mahathera of Burma he went to Burma to study and practice Buddhism for ten years. He took his higher ordination in Burma at Dhammikarama Sima. On his return he went on to become one of the most accomplished Buddhist masters and the number of followers increased. He got several highest titles and awards and lived a life of a hundred years before he passed away on July 4th, 1997. Venerable Buddharakkhita had this distinguished opportunity to study Dhamma and Vinaya under this illustrious monk Sri Saddharma Shiromani Mahacharya Venerable Rerukane Chandawimala Mahathero, living in a humble monastery with just basic needs, shining with the glory of renunciation.

There was one significant incident that took place between him and Ven.Buddharakkhita.

“Bhante was going every day for *pindapata* (alms) walking long distances. When his teacher asked him why

61. *Amaparapura Nikaya*, which named from the former capital of Myanmar, is one of the three lineages of ordained monks in Sri Lanka. *Udarata Amaparapura Nikaya* is one of the 21 sub-orders among them.

he takes such big trouble to walk when lot of *dana* also comes to monastery, Bhante told him that he needs to earn *punya*, merit, so that he can bring back Buddhism in India where Buddhism has declined. He told him that by going for pindapata, offering it to the Buddha and teachers and other monks and living according to *Vinaya* brings great merit. His teacher appreciated him and blessed him to work for the Buddha *sasana* in India.”⁶²

Under the great *Pali* and *Vinaya* teachers, Ven. Buddharakkhita had been taught not only knowledge of Buddha *Dhamma* but also sincerity and dedication of their attitudes about Buddha *Dhamma*.

2.3. Study of Buddhism in Myanmar (1951-1954)

“For further studies and practice of meditation he went to Burma. There he practiced meditation under the Most Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw U Sobhana, Aggamahapandita. He studied *Patthana* under the Most Venerable Mulapatthana Sayadaw Venerable Narada, Aggamahapandita and then *Abhidhamma* under the Most Venerable Yamaka Abhidhamma Sayadaw Sobhita Maha Thera.”⁶³

In Sri Lanka, his study focused on *Pali* language, *Sutta* and *Vinaya*. But he studied Meditation and *Abhidhamma* in Myanmar. Especially he studied under the masters of *Patthana* (conditional relations) and *Yamaka* (pairs) that are among 7 books in *Abhidhamma*. *Yamaka* is called ‘The Pairs’ because it contains paired questions on the distribution of terms in a proposition. The second question of the pair is the converse of the first, reversing the order of the terms, follows the first pair.⁶⁴ The *Patthana*

62. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op.cit: 5

63. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op. cit: 5

64. Karen C. Lang, “*Yamaka*”, *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Karl H. Potter, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 2006: 327vol. VII

discusses in terms of conditions the relations among the items identified in the *Dhammasangani* and the other six *Theravada Abhidhamma* treatises.⁶⁵

Sattipatana, which is a method of meditation also known as *Vipassana* meditation, has been made popular by Mahasi Sayadaw.

“The Venerable U Sobhana Mahathera, better known as Mahasi Sayadaw, was born on 29 July 1904 to the peasant proprietors, U Kan Htaw and Daw Shwe Ok at Seikkhun Village, which is about seven miles to the west of the town of Shwebo in Upper Myanmar, once the capital of the founder of the last Myanmar dynasty. At the age of six he began his studies at a monastic school in his village, and at the age of twelve he was ordained a Samanera, (Novice) receiving the name of Sobhana. On reaching the age of twenty, he was ordained a Bhikkhu on 26 November 1923. He passed the Government *Pali* Examinations in all the three classes (lower, middle and highest) in the following three successive years. In the fourth year of his Bhikkhu Ordination, he proceeded to Mandalay, noted for its pre-eminence in Buddhist studies, where he continued his further education under various monks of high scholastic fame. In the fifth year he went to Mawlamyaing where he took up the work of teaching the Buddhist scriptures at a monastery known as “*Taung-waing-galay Taik Kyaung*”. In the eighth year after his Bhikkhu ordination, he and another monk left Mawlamyaing equipped with the bare necessities of a Bhikkhu (i.e. alms bowl, a set of three robes, etc.), and went in search of a clear and effective method in the practice of mediation. At Thaton he met the well-known Meditation Teacher, the Venerable U Narada, who is also known as ‘Mingun Jetawun Sayadaw’. He then placed himself under the guidance of the Sayadaw and at once proceeded with an intensive course of mediation. He had progressed so well in his practice that he was able to teach the method effectively to his

65. *Ibid*: 337

first three disciples in Seikkhun while he was on a visit there. The example of these three expanded gradually to as many as fifty villagers who joined the courses of intensive practice.”⁶⁶

U Narada Sayadaw’s way of meditation was called ‘*Satipattana system*’. His disciple, Mahasi Sayadaw, helped popularize what is now known as the “New Burmese Method” or the “Mahasi method.”⁶⁷

“It did not take long before the reputation of Mahasi Sayadaw as an able teacher of Insight Meditation (*vipassana*) had spread throughout the Shwebo-Sagaing region and attracted the attention of a prominent and very devout Buddhist layman, Sir U Thwin, who was regarded as Myanmar’s “Elder Statesman”. It was his wish to promote the inner strength of Buddhism in Myanmar by setting up a mediation centre to be guided by a mediation teacher of proven virtue and ability. After meeting Mahasi Sayadaw and listening to a discourse given by him and to the mediation instructions given to nuns in Sagaing, Sir U Thwin was in no doubt that he had found the ideal person he was looking for. In 1947 the Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization was founded in Yangon with Sir U Thwin as its first President and with its object the furthering of the study (*pariyatti*) and practice (*patipatti*) of Buddhism. In 1948 Sir U Thwin donated five acres of land at Kokkine, Rangoon, to the organization for the erection of a meditation center. It is on this site that the present *Thathana* (or *Sasana*) *Yeiktha*, i.e. “Buddhist Retreat”, is situated, which now, however, covers an area of twenty acres, with a large number of buildings. In 1949, the then Prime Minister of Myanmar, U Nu and Sir U Thwin

66. Mahāsī Sāsana Nuggaha Organization, Accessed on 1 May 2014.
www.Mahasi.org.mm

67. Robert H. Sharf, *Buddhist Modernism and the Rhetoric of Meditative Experience*, Numen 42, 1995:242

requested that the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw come to Yangon and give training in meditation practice. On 4 December 1949, the Sayadaw introduced the first group of 25 meditators into the methodical practice of *Vipassana* mediation. Within a few years of the Sayadaw's arrival in Yangon, similar mediation centers sprang up all over Myanmar, until they numbered over one hundred. In neighboring Theravada countries like Thailand and Sri Lanka, such centers were also established in which the same method was taught and practiced. According to a 1972 census, the total number of mediators trained at all these centers (both in Myanmar and abroad) had passed the figure of seven hundred thousand. In the East and in several Western countries as well, *Vipassana* courses continue to be conducted.”⁶⁸

Ven. Buddhārakkhita studied and practiced in Mahasi meditation center in Yangon from 1951 to 1954 with breaks for studies under other sayadaws. Under Mahasi Sayadaw's teaching, he was one of the most dedicated meditator among students.

Then came one of the most historically significant event - The Sixth Buddhist Council which was held in Myanmar during this time from 1954 to 1956.

“The council was a general council of Theravada Buddhism, held in a specially built cave and pagoda complex in Yangon, Myanmar. The Council lasted from *Vesak* 1954 to *Vesak* 1956, its completion coinciding with the traditional 2,500th anniversary the Buddha's Maha Parinibbāna. In the tradition of past Buddhist councils, a major purpose of the Sixth Council was to preserve the Buddha's teachings and practices as understood in the Theravada tradition. Over the two-year period, monks (*sanghī-kāraka*) from different countries recited from

their existing redaction of the *Pali Canon* and the associated *post-canonical literature*. As a result, the Council synthesized a new redaction of the *Pali* texts ultimately transcribed into several native scripts. As in the preceding councils, the Sixth Council's aim was to affirm and preserve the genuine *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*. The council was attended by 2,500 monks and these participating Theravada elders came from eight different countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India and Nepal. A temple in Japan also sent delegates. The only western monks to participate were German-born, Sri-Lanka-residing Ven. Nyanatiloka and Ven. Nyanaponika.”⁶⁹

Chandramani Mahathera, who had given an ordination to Ven. Buddhārakkhita, participated as a representative of India.

“Sayadaw also participated as a representative of Buddhist monks from India at the Sixth World Buddhist Council Conference, organized by the Government of Myanmar under the leadership of Prime Minister U Nu, held at the *Mahapasana* Cave in Kaba-aye, Yangon in May 1954. The Sayadaw was involved in the discussion of a topic in Hindi and Sayadaw U Kittima of Migadawon translated them into Myanmar.”

Ven. Buddhārakkhita also got invitation to participate in the *Cattha Sangayana*, the Six Buddhist Council of monks, which brought out the entire *Pali* Tipitaka, *Attakatha* and *Tika*. Ven. Buddhārakkhita was a member of the Sri Lanka delegation to the Sixth World Buddhist Congregation held at Yangon (Burma) in 1954 because Buddhārakkhita had read the opening address in the 6th Buddhist council on behalf of Widurapola Piyatissa Maha Nayaka Thera from Sri Lanka.⁷⁰ And he served as a member of

69. The Chaha Sagāyana (1954 - 1956) , Pariyatti , web. Accessed on 1 May 2014. <http://www.pariyatti.org/ResourcesProjects/Treasures/ChatthaSangayana/tabid/78/Default.aspx>

70. Anada Bhante interview, 28 April 2014

editorial board, which published a complete edition of the *Pali* canon.⁷¹ In the life of a monk it is a very rare opportunity to get such great teachers at the right time and participate in a *Sangayana*. Bhante was such a fortunate monk from India, which he always remembered as great opportunity.⁷²

From the beginning of his study of Buddhism, Ven. Buddhārakkhita had great mission, that was revival of Buddhism in India. Because of noble intention the great chances have come his way, it seems. After finishing his studies in Myanmar, he came back to India.

2.4. Teaching at Nalanda University (1954-1956)

When he came back to India, Bhikku Jagadhish Kashyap asked him to teach Abhidhamma at Nava Nalanda Maha Vihara and *Pali* Post Graduate Institute under the support of Government University because he was the only person who could teach Abhidhamma in Hindi in India at that time.⁷³

Bhikkhu Jagadhish Kashyap, who had helped to go to Sri Lanka, asked him to teach at the Nava Nalanda *Pali* Post Graduate Institute.

“In 1947 India became independent and there was a new sense of identity for Indians. In 1949 Bhikkhu Jagadhish Kashyap toured his ancestral homeland, the ancient province of *Magadha*, which was also the center of ancient Buddhism. For the first time in many centuries the villagers in *Magadha* saw a yellow robed bhikkhu, and were pleasantly surprised to find that he spoke their local dialect *Magadhi*. The locals had long forgotten their own history and Bhikkhu Kashyap was able to furnish many details. The very name of the state of *Bihar* comes from presence of so many Buddhist viharas in the past. He was

71. U Than Sein, *op. cit.*

72. Ananda, Buddhādassā, *op.cit*: 5

73. Ananda Bhante interview, 28 April 2014

able to point out the true identity of the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas which were being worshipped as Hindu gods or local deities. Villages such as Sari-chak, near Nalanda, had previously had an association with the Buddha's chief disciple Sariputta. Finally he was able, by quoting passages from the *Pāli* texts, to demonstrate that *Magadhi* is still closely related to the *Magadhi* dialect. After this visit Bhikkhu Kashyap offered to teach Pāli at Gaya College and at Nalanda College in Bihar-Sharif. Later, when the Bihar state government decided to start an institute for Pāli studies at Nalanda, he was the obvious choice to head the project. In 1951 the institute became the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara.⁷⁴

I assumed Ven.Buddharakkhita was happy to accept the offer because the Institute's goal was also the revival of Buddhism in India. Ven.Buddharakkhita had many ideas about the mission during his studies in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. But the role of the Institute was very limited and moreover he did not fit into the salary conditions as a government employee. Being a monk he resisted accepting salary and any other kind of financial remuneration. This he expressed often to Bhikkhu Jagadish Kashyap. But he insisted that in India Buddhism is new and for some time they have to bear with those conditions.

“Bhante started teaching *Abhidhamma* and *Pali* at this institute which was run purely on government rules and did not have much essence of monastic life nor serious spiritual atmosphere. As he did not like to take salaries as a monk, he decided to quit the job. That was the most important year in the history of Buddha *Sasana*, the 2500th Buddha *Jayanti* year in 1956.”⁷⁵

74. “Jagdish Kashyap”, Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 2 January 2014. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014.
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JagdishKshyap>>

75. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op.cit: 5

During this time, he also got B.A. degree in Hindi, because even though he had plenty of knowledge about Buddhism, he did not have a University degree. At that time he has already begun to translate *Tipitaka* in Hindi. He also wrote one of his earliest books for teaching students. The name of the book is “*Living Legacy of the Buddha.*”

“Buddhism flows out of the Enlightenment of the Buddha. Therefore, its core consists of the Super mundane Insights constituting Enlightenment. This Transcendent Insight is reflected in the pre-eminently practical approach known as the Middle Path. The middle Path is both a Teaching (*Paraiyatti*) and a Practice (*Patipatti*) otherwise called the *Dhamma* (Doctrine) and the *Vinaya* (Discipline), giving concrete shape to philosophy in daily life. Thus Buddha, the fount and embodiment of Enlightenment, Dhamma, His discovery, the Path to Enlightenment, and Sangha the Holy Order of Enlightened Saints who exemplify the Teaching of Enlightenment, constitute the frame work into which is woven the fabric of the Living Legacy of the Blessed One, the Lord of Infinite Light and Boundless Compassion.”⁷⁶

His ideal sangha was the balance between teaching and practice, but it was very difficult to make that goal in Nalanda University because their atmosphere was only focused on teaching. Finally he quit his position of professor at Nava Nalanda University in 1956.

3. Propagation of Dhamma In India and Abroad

In this chapter I have tried to highlight the propagation of Buddha Dhamma in India and abroad. In 1956, he founded Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore. It was the same year when India was celebrating 2500 years of Buddhism. In India, many activities happened related to Buddhism that year. One of them was that

76. Acharya Buddharakkhita, *Living Legacy of the Buddha*, Buddha Vachana Trust, Bangalore, 2002:preface

Government of India has published “2500 years of Buddhism” under editorship of P.V. Bapat, on many facets of Buddhism and its culture, containing scholarly articles written by reputed Indian scholars.⁷⁷ And also Dr. Ambedkar became a Buddhist in Nagpur on 14th October 1956.

But still people in general were not aware of Buddhism. Especially in south India, there was not a single active Buddhist organization. For the first time, Ven. Buddharakkhita also struggled with the propagation of Dhamma. So he started it with social activities in Bangalore. In this chapter, there are 4 sub-sections. The first is *Foundation of Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore* (1956), the second is *Initial step of propagation of Dhamma* (1956-1962), the third is *Ideas and Thought in Social Spectrum* (1962-1980), and fourth is *Propagation of Dhamma Outside of India* (1980-2000).

Even when the situation was difficult for propagating Dhamma, he never gave up his mission. The mission is from Chandramani; “Later after the *Dhamma Deeksha* of Dr. Ambedkar, the most Ven. Chadramani advised Bhante to propagate the Dhamma earnestly, as more and more people will come to Buddhism, He took his advice as order and faithfully did his best by giving *Dhamma deeksha* to countless people and by writing relevant books to educate them.” He started with hospital service when he saw the pain and suffering of the patients. After that he did an education project for Tibetan refugees, Bangladesh refugees and then Ladakhi students. He brought them to Bangalore and gave them free accommodation, food and education. His social work got enhanced. If he saw people in pain, he began a project immediately. Now there are 2 hospitals, 1 university, 1 college, 2 secondary schools, 5 students’ hostels, 1 home for the elderly and several projects of social engagement in Karnataka, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura under Maha Bodhi Society.

77. “The first ever English medium Encyclopedia of Buddhism”, Dr. W.G. Weeraratne, Mahintala Aloka Puja Trust, Web, 26. Apr. 2014, accessed on 1 May 2014.
 <<<http://www.lakehouse.lk/mihintalava/sasana03.htm>>>

For research of this chapter, I visited the Maha Bodhi society in Bagalore, Carla Home and Mettaloka in Mysore, Girls hostel and home for the elderly in Tawang, Maha Bodhi Society in Namsai, and Maha Bodhi Society in Diyun. There is one more branch in Tripura where I could not go. During this research, I felt that every branch of Maha Bodhi is a beehive of activity because of the monks, laities and the volunteers. Even though he is no more, his legacy will continue forever.

3.1. Foundation of Maha bodhi Society in Bangalore (1956)

After quitting the Nalanda University, he went to Buddha Gaya for a one-month *pooja*. During that time he made a vow to offer one lakh lamps to Lord Buddha on the occasion of 2500 years of Buddha Jayanti. He took the help of Tibetan Buddhist Monks to make oil lamps.

“He went to Bodh-Gaya during Vesakha celebrations and worshiped the Enlightened One for one full month by offering one lakh lamps with the help of some Tibetan monks and meditated. Ms. Bianca Moonasinghe, niece of Venerable Anagarika Dhammapala who was in charge of Maha Bodhi Society in Sri Lanka also came to Bodh-Gaya to offer worship.”⁷⁸

Mahabodhi Mahavihara in Bodh-Gaya, being the most sacred place for Buddhists, as it was here that Lord Buddha was enlightened, was built very early just after the Buddha's demise and it was further developed by many devout kings and devotees including Emperor Ashoka. After the Mughal attacks Buddhism declined and with that there was neglect of this temple. A local priest took over this temple and because of that some troubles erupted between Buddhists and local Hindu priest since 1889.

“At the beginning of the 18th century a wandering *Sanyasi* (Monk) named Gossain Ghamandi Giri arrived at the

78. Ananda, Buddhadasa, *op.cit*: 5

village of Bodhgaya and ultimately decided to make it his home. Close to the ruins of the Maha Bodhi temple, he erected a Saivite temple and gathered around him a large number of followers. Many images and statues were moved from the ruins of the Maha Bodhi temple to his compound, where they are still found today. Gradually his devotees grew and he became a *Mahant*, a very powerful person in the area. In the years that followed, the *Mahant* staked a claim on the Maha Bodhi temple and made it part of his expanding domain. There is no evidence, however, that he was officially granted the Maha Bodhi Temple by the Muslim Emperor in Delhi. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Anagarika Dhammapala a devout pilgrim from Sri Lanka claimed the Maha Bodhi Temple for Buddhists. The *Mahant*, however, insisted it belonged to him. In spite of opposition from both the British and Hindu quarters, Dhammapala continued to wage a campaign to restore the Maha Bodhi temple to Buddhists. For a number of years he and the *Mahant* were embroiled in legal battles over the ownership. Finally in 1906 the trial ended in defeat to Dhammapala, yet this did not discourage him. He continued to wage a relentless appeal. Finally in 1949 the Bodhgaya Temple Act was passed, making provision for a committee of four Buddhists and four Hindus to manage the affairs of the temple.”⁷⁹

I assume that even after this new Bodhgaya Temple Act, the Buddhists were worried about missing the temple again. So many Buddhists came to Bodhgaya not only as pilgrim but also protectors and Ms. Bianca Moonasinghe was one of them. Like her uncle, Anagarika Dhammapala, she too was determined about revival of Buddhism in India. So she asked Ven. Buddharakkhita to run the monastery in Bangalore. Both of them already knew each other as a monk and sponsor in Sri Lanka.

79. “A Short History of the Mahabodhi Temple in Bodhgaya”, rootinstitute, web. Accessed on 1 May 2014. http://www.rootinstitute.com/bodhgaya_stupa/bodhgaya-stupa-history.html

“She requested Bhante to develop a center in Bangalore where a piece of land was donated by the *Maharaja* of Mysore and it was laying vacant as Sri Lankan monks cannot come all the way to develop it and run a Buddhist center in a non-Buddhist area.”⁸⁰

Maharaja of Mysore was His Highness *Maharaja* Sri Sir. Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur, Maharaja of Mysore,⁸¹ GCB⁸², GCSI⁸³ (18 July 1919 – 23 September 1974) was the 25th and the last Maharaja of the princely state of Mysore from 1940 to 1950. He was a noted philosopher, musicologist, political thinker and philanthropist and the Founder-President of Vishva Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council).⁸⁴ For the first time he donated land to a Buddhist association belonging to Sri Lanka because he wanted to promote all kinds of different religions in Mysore. But this organization did not have any activities in this land because they could not find any Buddhist in Bangalore. So this organization gave the land to Maha Bodhi Society.

“Bhante contemplated. He had already visited Bangalore on a few occasions as wandering monk and on army duties. He had liked the salubrious atmosphere of Bangalore and peaceful nature of people. He took up this challenge and agreed to develop a Buddhist center provided he is given the land, which will be registered and run locally without any interference from anybody. She happily agreed.”⁸⁵

80. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op.cit: 5

81. Ikegame, *Princely India Re-imagined: A Historical Anthropology of Mysore from 1799 to the present*. Routledge. Aye 2013: 67. 4 May 2014. Accessed on 1 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jayachamarajendra_Wadiyar#cite_note-book1-1

82. The Most Honourable Order of the Bath (formerly the Most Honourable Military Order of the Bath) is a British order of chivalry founded by George I on 18 May 1725. Accessed on 5 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_the_Bath

83. The Most Exalted Order of the Star of India is an order of chivalry founded by Queen Victoria in 1861. Accessed on 5 May 2014. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Order_of_the_Star_of_India

84. Ikegame, op, cit.

85. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op. cit: 5

Buddharakkhita had strong opinion about starting a Buddhist center because he was not satisfied with the way Buddhist centers were run in India at that time. He did not want any interventions even from the donor of the land.

“Bhante arrived in Bangalore on 5th June 1956 with a sapling of the sacred Bodhi Tree put in cigarette tin can. With the planting of that Bodhi sapling Maha Bodhi Society was established and as it started growing, the great saga of Maha Bodhi Society too started unfolding.”⁸⁶

The year 1956 AD was exactly 2500 years after Lord Buddha's Maha *Pari Nirvana*. And Buddhharakkhita has established in that year Maha Bodhi Society Bangalore.

3.2. Initial step of propagation of Dhamma (1956-1962)

“With just 30 rupees in hand he settled down in a thatched kuti of coconut leaves. The first task was to restore the land, which was used as public toilet by the slum inhabitants nearby. As the land was a stone quarry he requested the municipality to dump city garbage and fill up. Loads of trucks of rubbish came into Maha Bodhi and it was levelled with some good soil. With the help of Lalbagh botanical garden chief he planted coconut trees and different fruit and flowering trees. Soon the atmosphere changed and ashram was created.”⁸⁷

His way of teaching was based on the debate with others. He always welcomed the other religious people and enjoyed talking about doctrine of their religion.

“From the very beginning he started giving discourses and teaching meditation. Some people came with good intention of seeking truth. Some came to argue and debate. Some came out of curiosity. Those who argued later became his disciples and helped to develop the *Vihara*. He had to build confidence among people and build a dedicated group of supporters.”⁸⁸

But the teaching method through debate was limited because it consumed too much time and energy. So he tried to change the way of propagating Buddha Dhamma.

“Bhante understands deeply that without creating human resource it is not possible to carry out the *Dhamma* work. So he started monastic training center and meditation center. People from India and abroad were ordained and he put forth great effort in teaching them. He also started visiting schools and colleges teaching the *Dhamma*. Even today we hear some people telling how and when they saw him giving talks.”⁸⁹

October 14, 1956, Ambedkar and his wife took the oath of Three Jewels and Five Precepts from the Burmese monk Mahasthavir Chandramani at *Dicksa Bhoomi* in Nagpur.⁹⁰

“Sayadaw received thousands of lower *Caste* ‘untouchable’ Indians to become Buddhists, and one of the largest one was the ordination of over 200,000 people on a single day at the gathering at Nagpur in the presence of their leader Dr. Ambedkar in October 1956.”⁹¹

Chandramani Mahathera gave an important assignment to Ven. Buddhārakkhita after this function.

“Later after the *Dhamma Deeksha* of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the most Ven. Chandramani advised Bhante to educate the newly initiated Buddhists about Buddhism, which Bhante took as an order and faithfully did his best by giving *Dhamma deeska* to countless people and by writing relevant books to educate them.”⁹²

89. *Ibid*:

90. Sangharakshita, "*The Great Mass Conversion*", Ambedkar and Buddhism (1st South Asian ed. ed.). New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2006: 127138, Retrieved 30 June 2013.

91. U Than Sein, *op. cit.*

92. Ananda, *Dr. Venerable acharya Buddhārakkhita 1922-2013*, Funeral Pamphlet of Badabhante, 2013: 4

This mission from Chandramani Mahathera continued until his last breath. We can understand how strong was his loyalty to his Dhamma master and how strong his determination to teach Buddha Dhamma was.

In 1959, he founded Maha Bodhi *Maitri Mandala*, devoted to humanitarian service in the field of medical and educational services. Under this organization services to the poor students by giving them free education and hostel facilities are conducted; many camps for leprosy patients, eye donation for blind people; cancer patients' services are being conducted.

“Once when he was sick with a stomach trouble, he went to Victoria hospital where he saw many poor patients and thought to do something. He started hospital *dana* service by distributing fruits and buns.”⁹³

Starting any social engagement by Ven. Buddhharakkhita was always a very simple occasion. Such events have happened in our lives also but his determination for that was different from the ordinary public. Hospital *dana* service is still going on every Saturday which was started in 1959 when he had decided to donate food. The start was very simple but that simple work has never stopped even as years have passed by.

3.3. Ideas and Thought in Social Spectrum (1962-1980)

His ideas of social engagement were based on compassion and loving kindness to sentient beings. He had never ignored the suffering people even when he met them by chance. In 1964, he founded a model rural Hospital at Sakalavara, Anekal taluk for training medical personal for rural service.

“When he saw poor disabled people without proper limbs, he started artificial limbs donation. He got eyes from Sri Lanka for implantations and served the leprosy patients. It was his nature to respond to suffering people instinctively.”⁹⁴

93. Ananda, Buddhadasa, op.cit: 6 94. *Ibid*.

In 1969, he built the Maha Bodhi Burns and Casualty Center at the Victoria Government Hospital, Bangalore and Burns wards at various district hospitals, such as Mysore, Hassan, Mandya, Tumkur. This great work also had started from a very simple incident.

“One day he saw a young woman burnt and crying. There was no adequate facility for burns patients. He was determined to build a burns hospital. He wandered, contacted people of all stature and collected donations from people as small as 5 *paise*. That is how Maha Bodhi Burns and Casualty center came up in Victoria hospital.”⁹⁵

Likewise he established Maha Bodhi Maitri Medical mission and Maha Bodhi Artificial Limb Center in 1971. This medical mission is continued even now by running hospital and medical services. A new hospital Mahabodhi Karuna Medical Center is coming up in this place to give totally free treatment both for body and mind.

Not only did he help suffering people but also he taught meditation as a therapeutic technique in the hospital. So Maha Bodhi medical center is going to be constructed with essentials such as a meditation and *Ayurvedic* therapy in Bangalore.

When H.H. Dalai Lama came to India in 1956, he visited Ven. Buddhārakkhita in Bangalore Maha Bodhi along with H.H. Panchen Lama. After 1959 invasion of China in Tibet he came to India as refugee. Soon after arriving in India he visited the Maha Bodhi Society which was his second visit to India.

“His Holiness the Dalai Lama made his first foreign visit outside Tibet in 1954 when he spent almost a year in China meeting with its leaders and touring various places. In 1956, His Holiness made his second visit abroad to India at the invitation of the Maha Bodhi Society of India to attend the 2500th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Lord

95. *Ibid.*

Buddha. In 1959, His Holiness once again returned to India, this time as a refugee escaping the brutal Chinese occupation of Tibet, thus beginning his life in exile. With the initial years of exile being focused on the rehabilitation of tens of thousands of Tibetan refugees in India, His Holiness made many visits within India visiting the refugees and their newly established camps.”⁹⁶

In early 60s the government of India was looking for place to give to Tibetan refugees who were coming in hundreds. When the possibilities were explored by the government of India in all states, the Chief Minister of Karnataka too was requested to find some places if possible. The chief minister of Karnataka was a very close friend of Bada Bhante, so he asked Bada Bhante information about Buddhism and history, particularly Tibetan Buddhism. Bada Bhante told him very positively about Tibetan Buddhism how they are innocent and humble faithful followers of Buddha. That was the reason why they got the area, which is one of the largest Tibetan refugee camps in India, at Bylakuppe.⁹⁷

“In 1960 thousands of Tibetan refugees came to India and he was one of the earliest to respond with relief. He accommodated over a hundred people in monastery and gave shelter. He also helped the monks to get donations and construct monastery in Bylakuppe.”⁹⁸

When 80 Tibetan monks came to Maha Bodhi Bangalore, one monk among them was from Ladakh. After Tibetan monks went to the refugee camp in Bylakuppe, he remained in Maha Bodhi and wanted to become a disciple of Ven.Buddharakkhita. His name was Dhammananda. He was one of the first disciples of Ven.Buddharakkhita. In 1968, Ven.Buddharakkhita started Maha Bodhi Residential School for boys at Bangalore because of Ven.Dhammananda’s request.

96. “Travels by His Holiness the Dalai Lama”, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet, accessed on 5th May 2014. <https://www.dalailama.com/biography/travels>

97. Anada Bhante interview 28 January 2014

98. Anada, Buddhadasa, *op. cit.*: 6

“Mean time a Ladakhi monk, Venerable Dhammananda, who had been a very devout disciple of Bada Bhante, introduced about Ladakh and the problems faced by Ladakhi people in frontier region. Bhante started educating Ladakhi students which continues till date.”⁹⁹

This Residential school has taken the role of a foster parent like Carla Home students hostel for boys in Mysore and Rita Home students’ hostel for girls in Diyun and Tawang.

“He is a visionary from the very beginning. He clearly saw that a three-pronged approach is necessary for the revival of Buddha Dhamma in India. The first one is spiritual practice. For that he was running monastic training center, discourses and meditation camps. Second one was education. Without education no society can come up in this intellectually driven world. So he took up moral and secular educational programs to empower the minds, which was the basic necessity for poor people to come up in life. The third development is economic development. This can come through right livelihood, which means to work hard to gain different skills. To achieve this he started branches in Mysore, Arunachal Pradesh, Triupura and Ladakh. This holistic developmental approach is still what is followed in Maha Bodhi institutions serving the needy without any distinction of caste, religion, language, state, etc.”¹⁰⁰

All the activities are based on the moral teachings of the Buddha. In every branch of Mahabodi residential school, they learn *Pali* chanting and hear Dhamma discourse every day from monks. This is compulsory if someone wants to stay in the hostel. They usually wake up at 6 o’clock and do puja and meditation until 7 o’clock and from 6:30 pm to 7:30p.m they once again do puja and listen to Dhamma discourse because his concept of Education was based on development of morality and humanism.

99. *Ibid.* 100. *Ibid*

“Presently a student is educated to get a degree and join a government or private organization. With this objective the first thing one needs to do is grease the palm of somebody, so as to promote his/her maximum self-interest to the detriment of the society as a whole. Corruption is widespread in India in spite of technological and other developments. India still is known as a corrupt country. And why? Because of this rotten belief that money alone matters. At the base is cynicism and lack of moral sense. A good educational process can change the atmosphere radically. When students not only learn about morality, but are taught how to practice the moral precepts and develop a deep sense of moral obligation to others, then the person will not stoop so low as to bribe or be bribed.”¹⁰¹

I assume his pragmatic approach of the moral education came from experience of teaching the Buddha Dhamma in original version of *Pali Tipitaka*.

101. Achariya Buddharakkhita, “Education and Human development”, *Buddhadasa*, Buddha Vachana trust, Bangalore, 2011: 52

**Table 1 - Branches of Maha Bodhi Bangalore in India
as on April 28th 2014**

Category	Name	Place	Activity	Number
Monastic Training Center	Maha Bodhi Nalanda Vijjayatana	Bangalore	Monastic and Normal Education	130 (Samanera) 15 (Bhikkhus)
		Namsai	Monastic and Normal Education	50 (Samanera)
Educational Center	Maha Bodhi School	Mysore	Primary, Secondary (1 - 10 th)	400
	Carla Students Home	Mysore	Boys Hostel (1 - 10 th)	190
	Mettaloka Youth Center	Mysore	Boys Hostel (Up to 10 th)	70
	Maha Bodhi School	Diyun	Primary, Secondary (1 - 10 th)	500
	Rita Students Home	Diyun	Girls Hostel (1 - 10 th)	175
	Boys Home	Diyun	Boys Hostel (1 - 10 th)	40
	Maha Bodhi Lord Buddha College	Namsai	B.A. (History, Economics, Political Science) B.C. (Commerce)	260

Educational Center	Maha Bodhi Children Home	Tawang	Girls Hostel (1 - 10 th)	50
	Maha Bodhi Tripura Branch	Chichingchera	Monastery, Primary School (1 - 5 th)	40 monks 55 students
		Sukanachari	Monastery, Primary School (1 - 5 th)	27 monks 75 students
	Maha Bodhi Deomali Branch	Deomali	Monastery, Boys Hostel	20
	Maha Bodhi Center for Theravada Buddhist Studies	Bangalore	Diploma 1 year, BA, MA and Ph D Course for Buddhist Studies	800 (enrolled until now)
	Student Scholarships	All over India and abroad	Different courses	75
Economic Development	Cow and Vegetable Farm	Diyun	Cows for milk and Organic Vegetable	27 (cows)
Social Service	Elderly House	Tawang	Care for Elderly	20
	Maha Bodhi Dammaduta Vihara	Alur	Moral and Spiritual Education	48

3.4. Propagation of Dhamma Outside of India (1980 – 2000)

He taught Buddhist philosophy as a visiting professor at University of California, Santa Barbara from 1980 to 1984. During that time, he had a heart problem similar to the one his father had which was the reason for his father's demise at the age of 55. He visited U.S.A for the first time as one of his lady disciples Karunamma organized him to teach in the university and other places. But after finding out his heart disease, it became another reason to visit U.S.A for treatment.

He came back to India from the U.S.A in 1984 and he stayed at Maha Bodhi temple in Bangalore until 1987. In 1986, Bhante Ananda was ordained monk under the Bodhi tree at Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore. From 1987 to 1994, he had come to India for 9 to 10 months and went back to U.S.A for 9 to 10 months to get treatment for his heart disease.

In 1990, he was invited as a visiting professor of the Theravada Buddhism and *Pali* by Fo Guang Shan University in Taiwan.

“Fo Guang Shan (Chinese: 佛光山; literally “Buddha’s Light Mountain”) is an international Chinese Mahayana Buddhist monastic order based in the Republic of China (Taiwan), and one of the largest Buddhist organizations. The headquarters of Fo Guang Shan, located in Kaohsiung, is the largest Buddhist monastery in Taiwan. The organization itself is also one of the largest charity organizations in Taiwan. The order also calls itself the International Buddhist Progress Society. Founded in 1967 by Venerable Master Hsing Yun, the order promote Humanistic Buddhism, a modern Chinese Buddhist thought developed through the 20th Century and made popular by this and other modern Chinese Buddhist orders. Humanistic Buddhism aims to make Buddhism relevant in the world and in people’s lives and hearts. While Hsing Yun is a Dhamma heir in the Linji

Chan(Chinese: 臨濟宗;) school, his stated position within *Fo Guang Shan* is that it is an “amalgam of all Eight Schools of Chinese Buddhism” (八宗兼弘), including but not limited to Chan. In this sense, it is a monastic order and not a doctrinal school of thought per se. This is the case for much of Chinese Buddhism, as the lineage of the founder or Abbot does not necessarily dictate the thought or practices of members of the monastery.”¹⁰²

We can imagine how informative his teaching was about Theravada Buddhism because he taught in one of the biggest Mahayana Buddhist universities in the world. But after teaching for one semester, he returned back to U.S.A again because of his heart disease. It was quite a serious situation that all the four arteries were blocked and he had to go through an open-heart surgery done with four by-pass.

After that he came back to Bangalore in India for establishing Maha Bodhi Loka Shanti Buddha Vihara from 1994 to 1996.

“This historic project work started with Bumi Pooja on 27th March 1994, the 73th Birthday of Bada Bhanteji with a calculated planning of its completion within a period of two years, involving support of the devotees both in kind and cash and honoring them during the week long celebrations and transference of merit to them and their family members.”¹⁰³

The construction work continued with great speed and the construction of the basement was completed on 17th March 1995.

“On 17th March in 1995, the 74th Birthday of Buddharakkhita, the basement was ready and the Maha

102. “Fo Guang Shan”, Wikipedia: The free Encyclopedia. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 23 March 2014. Web. Accessed on 1 May 2014.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fo_Guang_Shan

103. L Shivalingaiah, “The History of Maha Bodhi Loka Shanti Buddha Vihara”, *Buddhadassa*, 2011: 42

Bodhi Community Center was inaugurated. And in the same year, in May, the ground floor hall was partially completed. Ven. Sanghasena Bhante went to Thailand and got, as donation, a brass Buddha statue of 6.5 feet high together with a small 3 feet high standing statues of the two chief disciples of the Lord, Venerable Sariputta and Moggallana, On the Sacred Buddha Jayanti day, 14 May 1995, the statues were installed.... On March 5-1996, the 75th birthday of Venerable Acharya Buddharakkhita, the two front gopurams were inaugurated. By May 3rd, 1996, on the 2540th Sacred Buddha Jayanti, the whole temple project was over.”¹⁰⁴

From 1956 to 1996, Ven. Buddharakkhita had longed for 40 years to build the replica of the Sacred Bodhgaya Maha Bodhi Temple at Bangalore. It was a historical event of revival of Buddhism in India because from the beginning it was the most monastically built Buddhist temple. Finally, he established a vihara for the sangha that had taken 40 years to start in a proper way. His first dream had come true at Bangalore in 1996. The members of sangha started with 15 monks and 40 laities in 1997. At that time, one of the first monastic education novices was Buddhapala Bhante from Ladakh.

“When I was as a student of Maha Bodhi residential school in 1997 Oct., there were 3 or 4 classes for normal studies. Fortunately we had the chance to learn about dhamma from Bada Bhante. He was teaching us *Dhammapada* with the background stories for every verse. It continued until June 1998, till his health problem again erupted.”¹⁰⁵

In June 1998, he went to U.S.A. for getting his heart treated and teaching as a visiting Prof. at University of California in

104. *Ibid.*

105. Buddhapala Bhante Interview.

Santabarbara until 2000. And finally, he had come back to India in Aug. 2000. He went for opening ceremony of nunnery in Ladakh Maha Bodhi international meditation center. After visiting Ladakh, he came to Bangalore and stayed in Tumkur for 6 months in the place offered by Upasaka Gangadharaiah, the founder of Sri Siddhartha Education Society which runs various educational institutions. Then he moved to Mahabodhi monastery in Bangalore and spent his time there until his last breath.

4. Vision about Future of Buddhism in India

According to Buddhadasa, Ven. Buddhārakkhita had three clear visions for Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore in 50 years. For next fifty years he has given enough tasks – to train at least a thousand monks, to translate the entire *Tipitaka* into all major languages of India, to establish a good practicing Buddhist society, to attain Bodhi.¹⁰⁶

So in this chapter, I would like to mention about what the visions are and how these visions have been achieved by his disciples. There are 4 sub-sections, the first is *Training of Buddhist Monks*, the second is *Translation of Tipitaka*, the third is *Establishing Sangha*, and the fourth is *Publication*.

To develop monks who are well accomplished, most of the time he was training them. To understand his first mission that is to train 1,000 monks, I orally interviewed 11 senior monks in Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore for the first section. To understand his second mission that is to translate entire *Tipitaka* into all major Indian language, I would like to mention about his thoughts about *Pali* language and translating *Pali Tipitaka* in to all Indian languages. To understand his third mission that is to establish a good practicing Buddhist society, to attain Bodhi, I would like to mention about his thoughts of good sangha. And in the fourth section, I would like to mention about his publication. In this

106. Ananda, Buddhadasa, *op.cit*: 10

chapter, we can understand what his thoughts of Buddhism are and what his messages to the people are. Through his visions, we can understand the future of revival of Buddhism in India.

4.1. Training of Buddhist Monks

No doubt Ven. Buddharakkhita was compassionate and loving Dhamma teacher full of kindness which also flowed for training monks in the monastery as strict Dhamma teacher.

“His way of training monks was not to compromise with anything and stick to the *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* scrupulously. That way nothing will harm the interest of Buddha *Sasana*. He is very much against the trend in modern times that *Vinaya* is not relevant or we have to adjust to the modern way of life. The Buddha taught to the monks the path of enlightenment and if you want enlightenment it is possible by following the *Patimokkha Vinaya* rules. Similarly for lay people there is no other way but following the *Dana, Sila, Bhavana* practice.”¹⁰⁷

Some senior monks have their own special experiences of Dhamma teaching from him. The first episode has been Panyarakkhita Bhante’s experience, who is the Director of Maha Bodhi Tawang Branch in Arunachal Pradesh.

“In 1995, I came to Bangalore from Tawang which is near the borders of China and Bhutan. When we reached here we did not know about this place. Geshe Pulpha, one of the famous Tibetan Buddhist Lamas, took us here. He had a monastery in Belakupe. He knew Bada Bhante and he used to come once or twice a year. At that time, Bada Bhante asked the children if they would like to become monks. Back then only 15 senior monks were there. Almost 50 boys from Ladakh were here for studies. I did not know about Theravada monks and Buddhism; I was only familiar with Mahayana Buddhism. When I met him,

107. *Ibid.*

he gave us a sweet. And after two days Bada Bhante asked me to become a monk. One morning he called about 50 children in his *Kuti*, and then he asked who would like to become monk. He used to call us every day and asked us this question. At that time, 5 of us said yes. In 1995, the day before Buddha Jayanti we were ordained under the Bodhi tree. Of course the rest of the students were there, but they did not become monks. Bhante used to call us *Pota*. *Pota* means a grandson. He used to call us every morning from 8 to 9 30 am. It was a very special program at that time when he used to advice us “After learning Dhamma here, you should go back to your place one day and teach Buddha Dhamma to your parents and villagers.” I was only 11 years old then, but I remember very clearly his words which I can recall even today. We 5 were the first young generation novice monks and he gave us very special names like his own name ending in Rakkhita. I am Panyarakkhita, and other names were Vinayarakkhita, Sangarakkhita, Dhammarakkhita, and Cittarakkhita. Among the 5 one was from Ladakh and 4 from Arunachal Pradesh from Changlang district. Except me, they have all disrobed. But after my generation, the other novice kept coming group after group until now. Bada Bhante was quite strict about *vinaya* rules. Bhante used to tell me to be humble. But I had forgotten that. So he called me to his *Kuti*. “You have become arrogant. Now I will give you punishment.” He gave me a punishment - to write the sentence 100 times ‘I was arrogant. I will be humble’. Of course, it was not a normal punishment but it reminded me to be humble when I wrote down, 3, 4, and 5 times. That was not only writing down on the paper but also writing on my mind because deep inside my mind, that was the message. I have to be humble and polite. And other monks also had to be very alert when Bhante was teaching us. He sometimes talks for more than 3 hours. At that time, all

monks have to focus on his Dhamma talks with the folded palms kept together. If somebody is found putting their hands down or looking around here and there, Bhante would catch him and give punishment of various kinds which were always educative. The punishment time for a monk was time for relaxation for other monks. At that time the topic for Dhamma was the attitude of the monk who had lost his attention and this topic kept going for a while. Like that every moment was teaching of the Dhamma. There was no particular topic of the Bhante's teaching. So we had to be full of attention to his talks so we would know what to say. We could not move even our eyes. If so, he also used to suddenly ask a question to a monk. It was very difficult to stay without moving for 2-3 hours, but Bhante also had full energy to give a long Dhamma talks. That was the reason why we also could focus on his Dhamma talk for 2-3 hours.”¹⁰⁸

From this incident, we can understand how serious his Dhamma talk was. His attitude to Dhamma was never just simple teaching but dedicated and full of his effort at that time. That was the reason, novice monks did not move even their eyeballs during his Dhamma talks. I feel his Dhamma talk time was one of the most important times in his life.

The second incident came from Buddhadatta Bhante's experience and he is in charge monk of Dhamma Vinaya Meditation Center in Narasipura, 25 kms just in the outskirts of Bangalore.

“In 2007, I started a new life in Maha Bodhi. When I came for the first time to meet him as a novice, he put me at the first stage of our training, that was Anagarika. Monk system of Theravada Buddhism is Anagaraika, Samanera and Bhikkhu. So I wore yellow color robe. Under him I

108. Panyarakkhita Bhante Interview.

took meditation for 7 days. And after 7 days, I was very happy. From Dec. 7 to Oct. 8, almost 7 or 8 months, everyone had to take care of various issues like Bada Bhante's Kuti management, etc. One day Bhante said, "Ok, you will now serve the teacher as guru seva, selfless service." For two months we had a duty to attend to Bada bhante's particular food, as he couldn't eat the usual food. His diet consisted of rice porridge in the morning, some soup, little ginger paste and black pepper every day which was the first duty for a novice monk. I usually did the duty along with two other monks whose turns changed every day as they were under training. Bhante usually told us that a monk should know everything. From kitchen to conference, whether it is a small task or a big task, it should not be difficult and that is why I gave simple example of preparation of food. Now-a-days, it is difficult for monks to go for alms, that's why he taught us to cook our own food. Bhante gave the instructions from how to cut the vegetables for making curry. So for all these issues bhante gave very clear instructions which are very interesting. I did not know before that Bhante's diet was same every morning - Gangi, soup and brahmi leaves which is very good for the brain. Every day he took these leaves. But for lunch he used to give us instructions as what to cook. My duty was to ask Bhante like, "What kind of food we have to prepare?" He used to ask us, "What is there in the refrigerator?" I would reply what vegetables and other things were available. Bhante would reply giving us instructions as how to prepare the food. Bhante tried different cuisine each day. Sometimes we made food in Thai style where we would add milk and sugar. Sometimes Chinese food was also prepared. He would ask us to put the yellow sugar cube and milk like Thai food and it would be a sweet curry. Whatever food we prepared, sweet was compulsory. He also liked green vegetables and

put green patta leaves. Sometimes even though our preparations were terrible to eat he would eat with smiling face and always thanked all those who cooked on that day.”¹⁰⁹

From this episode, we can understand his style of teaching the monks which was based on the real life, beginning from the duties in the kitchen. His teaching started from small things to big things. He did not teach difficult task in the beginning but simple tasks like how to cut the vegetable for curry. He thought that monks have to learn how to cook food because it is difficult to get alms everyday.

The third episode has been from Dhammaloka bhante's experience, who is a Treasurer in Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore.

“When Bhante came back from U.S.A in 2000, he stayed at Tumkur. At that time, I helped in the kitchen and prepared food for Bhante. Bhante always eats ginger paste during the breakfast. I did not know ginger paste was only for breakfast and how much to prepare. So I prepared ginger paste for lunchtime and it was a little big ball. At that time, Bhante asked us, “Who prepared this ginger paste?” I replied it was me. Bhante said, “Ok, come beside me and eat this.” I should eat all ginger paste without anything. Bhante asked me, “How was taste?” I said, “It is so hot.” I had to finish all ginger paste. After that, for 3 days he told about my mistake to others. At that time, I was thinking about going back to my home. But fortunately, I got a chance to escape that situation by going to pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya. Otherwise, it was very difficult to endure with Bhada Bhante's special concern. He used to push us to edge and we had to practice very high patience and sacrifice. These trainings made us very strong inside to face any difficult situation.”¹¹⁰

109. Buddhadatta Bhante interview.

110. Dhammaloka Bhante interview.

From this episode, we can understand how strong his determination was to teach monks. If he found some monk with an impolite attitude or doing something wrong, Bhante taught him not only once but he would teach for a week or even a month. Bhante checked that repeatedly until the monk had totally agreed and changed his attitude. He never let the monks do anything wrong however small it was. So monks were alert always in front of Bhante. This also helped to develop endurance and determination to face problems.

From these three episodes, we can understand his style of teaching the monks. In terms of numbers there are four Maha Bodhi monastic education centers. One is Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore and another is Maha Bodhi Namsai Branch in Arunachal Pradesh. Chichingchera and Sukanachari in Tripura are new Monastic education centers started since 2 years.

4.2. Translation of *Tipitaka* (*Pali*)

To translate the entire *Tipitaka* into all major languages of India was his second vision for revival of Buddhism in India. He could speak about 14 different languages. Among them, he was very good at *Pali*. Because of that he could be a member of the the Sixth World Buddhist Congregation held at Yangon (Burma) in 1954, and served as a member of editorial board, which published a complete edition of the *Pali* canon.

“The word *Pali*, strictly speaking, means Buddha Vacanam, ‘the word of Buddha’, or ‘the text’ of the *TIPITAKA* containing the original teaching of the Buddha. Acharya Buddhagosa, the celebrated Buddhist savant and scriptural commentator, (412 A.C.) used this definition to distinguish the text of the canonical literature from the extra-canonical literature, such as, the commentaries, sub commentaries, chronicles etc.”¹¹¹

111. Acharya Buddharakkhita, “Pali Language and literature”, Buddhadasa, p.66

His thought of *Pali* as the original teaching of the Buddha. So he tried to bring back the original Buddha's teaching to India again. That was the main reason for translating *Tipitaka* into major Indian languages. Another reason was *Pali* was not difficult to learn when compared with Sanskrit as it was a spoken language.

“As to the literary merits of *Pali* language, there can be no doubt. Even a cursory glance at the *Pali* literature would show its abundant richness, refinement and precision. And, as to it being a cultivated spoken language, not a rustic language (Gamma, gramya), as made out by Sanskritists, the canon itself is evidence enough.”¹¹²

He also mentioned about the root of *Pali* in ancient India.

“It is, however, well-known that the Buddha began his mission, lived, preached and established his Sangha, in an organized way, in the kingdom of *Magadha*. Further, since *Kosala* became part of *Magadha* even in the time of Buddha, *Magadhi* would also include *Kosalan*. *Magadhi*, having become the official language of a large area of North, East and Central India, incorporated elements of various local dialects. This is evident from the variety of inflexions in *Pali*. Thus *Magadhi* formed itself into a composite language and became the standard vernacular understood by all, in much the same way as modern standard Hindi is understood in an even larger area, in spite of dialectical and linguistics peculiarities.”¹¹³

He thought that Buddha Dhamma should be easy and practical because Buddha equally gave the Dhamma to all sentient being so there is no reason that Dhamma is too difficult to understand.

“In the *Vinaya Pitaka*, two ex-brahmin monks with a predilection for Chandas sought Buddha's permission to render the Buddha-vacana into the chandas, the Vedic

112. *Ibid.*

113. *Ibid*: 67

scriptural language. If granted, only a small group of priestly Brahmins, conducting rituals, sacrifices etc., would have benefited. They said: ‘*Handa mayam, Bhante, Buddha-vacanam chadaso-aropima ti-* ‘Most Venerable Sir, if we might render the word of the Supremely Enlightened One (*Buddha-vaccana*) into the scriptural language (i.e., *Vedic Chandas*)’. The Buddha promptly rejected the request and gave a clear instruction saying that the *Buddha-vacana* should be acquired and mastered in Buddha’s own language, that is, *Magadhi*, the standard vernacular of the masses, in which he taught.”¹¹⁴

Actually he insisted *Pali* was older than Sanskrit.

“With regard to the chronology, *Pali* is the early form of Middle Indo-Aryan language. From Geiger’s observation mentioned above, it may be noted that *Pali*, being pre-Buddhistic, is pre-Yaska and, therefore, pre-Panini, who quotes Yaska. The celebrated western grammarian, A.A. Machdonald, assign 500 B.C. to Yaska, and 300 B.C. to Panini, whose grammar is oldest preserved in Sanskrit. From his observation, it is therefore clear that *Pali* is older than Sanskrit both having descended from the earlier language- primitive Prakrit. While *Pali* is the earlier form of the Magadhi Prakrit, Sanskrit originates from Chandas, Vedic language. Again, while *Pali* shares various grammatical forms in common with the Vedic language, Sanskrit has done away with them.”¹¹⁵

Though I am not trying to prove the above statement true, I look from another angle too about his understanding of the history of *Pali* language. He was born in a Brahmin family and learned Sanskrit from a very young age. But he knew that Sanskrit was not suitable to teach to the public. After becoming a monk, he studied *Pali* in Sri Lanka under Ven.Nyanatiloka who was a

114. *Ibid*: 68

115. *Ibid*.

German monk. I assume he realized the merits of *Pali* to teach Dhamma which contained the original teaching of the Buddha. So he thought that revival of *Pali* is same as revival of Buddhism in India.

For completing this mission, he established Bhagavan Buddha University of *Pali* and Theravada Buddhism in 2010. He started to translate *Tipitaka* in all major Indian languages. It was completely transliterated into Kannada, the language of Karnataka and now Andhra Pradesh Government has supported the project to translate *Pali Tipitaka* into Telegu. Already 15 volumes in Kannada and 2 volumes in Telugu language have been published by the Maha Bodhi Society.

4.3. Establishing Sangha

His third mission of revival of Buddhism in India was to establish a good practicing Buddhist society, to attain Bodhi. It is based on monastic discipline (*Vinaya*). His concept of good Sangha is following the rule of *Vinaya*.

“Theravada monastic discipline (*Vinaya*) consists of rules of monastic training laid down by the Buddha for regulating the conduct of Buddhist monks (bhikkhus) and nuns (bhikkhunis) and their monastic under-training disciples. Basically all these rules are meant to enable the renunciation to exercise restraint over bodily and verbal actions, and thus help in the purification of spiritual life.”¹¹⁶

His view of the Sangha rules was being followed quite strictly. If somebody broke the rules, he or she deserved a corrective measure through proper practice.

“Transgression of this training rules means committing an offense, which attracts penalties necessary for rehabilitation of the guilty bhikkhu or bhikkhuni. The

116. Acharya Buddharakkhita, “Buddhist Monastic Discipline”, Buddadassa, p.77

Buddha laid down these rules whenever the monastic disciples committed an unwholesome act, or behaved in an unbecoming way. For, wrong conduct or behavior affects the transgression's spiritual life, and threatens to disrupt the lives of fellow monastics. And these to the detriment of spiritual progress for everyone in the Buddha's dispensation, which consists of bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, uppasakas and upasikas."¹¹⁷

Under his thought of spiritual community of monastic members of Maha Bodhi Society are managing very well until now. For understanding his thought about Buddhist community, I did an interview with Ananda Bhante who is the General Secretary of Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore.

“Bada bhante had been practicing Buddhism not for the sake of just as a ritualistic pactice as it is useless. They should follow Panca Sila at least. Even if they cannot follow, they must have faith in Panca Sila. Someone may not follow all the five, maybe two, three or four but at least they have the faith and one day they will be able to follow. But if they thought two out of five were not Dhamma and only three were Dhamma and if they have their own standard, they will never succeed. But if you have faith “Ok I am now not so strong but next time I will follow. Let me try. Let me try.” That man will one day succeed. So we should have faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, Pancasila, meditaion and wisdom.”¹¹⁸

The most important aspect of his teaching were the faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha. The faith makes people to progress in their spiritual lives. It starts from Panca Sila, which are the five precepts for lay people. (Destroying living creature, taking that which is not given, Sexual misconduct, speaking lies, drinking intoxicating things)

117. Ibid.

118. Anada Bhante Interview.

“We, that is the practicing Buddhists, should establish a community of sincere practitioners at Maha Bodhi society. For that we started meditation and training center near Alru at Narasipura. We will have different kinds of courses like the meditation courses and the introduction of Buddhism course for 3, 5, 7 and 10 days program of intensive Dhamma teachings. People don’t have long time vacations and we need to teach within short time as many as things possible for their peaceful lives. So Bada Bhante founded Maha Bodhi *Dhamma Duta* Center for moral and spiritual Education in 2001 but the actual work got started in 2012 and it was opened on 14th March 2014 with a meditation retreat for devotees from Switzerland, Germany, Korea. *Dhamma Duta* means Messenger of Truth. Ashoka sent missionaries to all over the world and they were called Dhammadutas.”¹¹⁹

All his missions started from the inspirations of Chandramani Maha Thera who was his master. Ven. Buddharakkhita was a very sincere and faithful disciple of his teachers. Chandramani Maha Thera said to him. “So many people are becoming Buddhist because of Dr. Ambedkar. They need proper guidance on what is Buddhist life. So we have to teach them what Buddhist life is for the sake of bringing peace and happiness within and in the world.”

When he met Dr. Ambedkar in Myanmar, he was a member of editorial board in 6th Buddhist council.

“Dr. Ambedkar had come to Myanmar for attending the function of Buddha Jayanti when Bada Bhante was in the 6th Buddhist Council in Yangon in 1954. They met each other at the 6th great council. At that time, he already decided to become a Buddhist. But still he doubted about Sangha. He agreed to take refuge in the Buddha and

119. Anada Bhante Interview.

Dhamma, but he asked Bada Bhante, why he should go for refuge to the Sangha, because he thought Sangha meant some monks. Bada Bhante explained the real meaning of Sangha. There are 4 different levels of enlightenment and those who have reached these stages form noble Sangha in whom we take refuge. The Bhikkhu Sangha represents of that noble Sangha, because they are also on the path of enlightenment. After this explanation he had developed deeper conviction about Triple Gem. Later on Dr.Ambedkar took deeksha from Bada Bhante's teacher Ven.Chandamani Mahathera."¹²⁰

So we can understand his clear understanding about Sangha through this interview. That is a group for enlightened disciples of Lord Buddha who through training in the Dhamma reached higher stages. And this path is open for all people irrespective of their background. Sangha is not just name for group of Buddhist monks. It has both meaning of enlightened noble disciples and Bhikkhu Sangha

4.4. Publication (1954-2013)

From his books published from 1954 to 2013, we can understand his philosophy of teaching Buddha Dhamma to the public. He has written over a hundred titles in these years. 'Dhamma' is a monthly Buddhist magazine in English published since 1972. He was translating one sutta for Sangha members every month for this magazine. Bhante Ananda collected all his articles and compiled into few books. There are now more than 52 books available written by Bada Bhanteji. Among 52 books, there are 3 categories. The first is Sutta, the second is Meditation and the third is Social Justice.

The first category is Sutta, especially Ven.Buddharakkhita's choice about practical Dhamma from *Pali Tipitaka*.

Life blessing vol. 1-16

These books are about daily Buddhist life. As a Buddhist, these books show how to live the practical life every day. For example volume 1 is about association. Many people manage good people and bad people. We should know who good people and who bad people are and stay close to good people and away from bad people. This book shows each of those examples from *Tipitaka* stories. It shows us something in detail and practical dhamma in daily practice.

Buddhist Monastic Discipline

This is about monastic discipline, about Vinaya rules, which he always said was the heart of Buddha Sasana. Always he said if Buddhism has to remain, monks have to be respectful and practicing *Bhikkhu Patimokkha*. If it is there Buddhism is there, if it is gone Buddhism is gone. That is the why he took a picture with this book. He wanted to give a message to monks and laity about the moral precepts and training.

Classical Buddhist dictionary And Thesaurus vol. 1 and 2

He was a great scholar of *Pali* language and he had written Classical Buddhist dictionary which is the translation of a thousand year old dictionary. He had found all the words' synonyms andonyms. This is one of the toughest task which only a scholar of deep conviction, study and mastery in both languages can accomplish.

Buddha and his Dhamma

Somebody asked him “Who was Buddha and what is his Dhamma?” Bhante said “Ok I will write a book. Now whatever I write will be based on *Pali* Tipitaka.” So this book had been written based on authentic sources from *Pali Tipitaka*.

Dhammapada vol. 1-7

There are two books titled *Dhammapada* written by him. One is *Dhammapada* with verses in Pali, which is a small book and the

other is detailed story from Tipitaka for each verse of the *Dhammapada*. Bhante translated from *Pali* to English seven volumes right now. And 8 and 9 will be published soon because he translated one more volume which is in the form of manuscript and passed away. Bhante Ananda is thinking of completing these two volumes and publish.

Great Book of Protection

This book is titled *Great book of Protection* for chanting many protections Sutras. There are 29 protection Suttas in *Pali Tipitaka*. This book has two versions, one is only in *Pali* for the chanting and another is with the English translation.

Halo'd Triumphs

This book has 8 stories about how Buddha was always winning the bad forces.

History of *Pali* literature and Languages

This book is an overview for the beginner to study *Pali* grammar and history.

***Sutta Sangaho* part 1 to 3**

Sutta Sahngagho is collection of Suttas. He chose some Suttas which are practical to today's life. Most of them are very easy. *Sangaho* means collection. He used to translate and publish every month one sutta in Dhamma magazine. Some years back, Bhante Ananda collected the entire magazines and compiled into three books. Bhante Ananda told, "When we made these books he was happy. Each book has 27 suttas. Ven.Buddharakkhita likes number 9 because it is highest perfect number and there are nine super qualities of Buddha. For us, he used to give this number to remember again and again about 9 qualities. So I also collected 27 suttas in each book."

Setting in motion the wheel of truth

That is the first *sutta* of Buddha in Saranath. The original name is *Dhamma Chakka Pavattana Sutta*. The main topic of this book is the Four Noble Truths.

The Unborn Enemy *Ajatasattu*

It is the story about king Bimbisara's son Ajatasattu.

Devotion in Buddhism

This book explains what devotion exactly is and means. It is not blind faith.

Wayfaring

It is a book of poems. He wrote poems sometimes in English which came spontaneously out of joy.

Invisible Protection

How we can get protection from devas, what is the exact mechanism of worshiping, giving, and various other things. When we walk on the Dhamma way, why do they want to protect and how do they protect. There are two Suttas- Maha Samaya Sutta and Atanatiya Sutta.

Wheel of life

It is about life according to Paticcasamuppada – Dependent Origination. It means everything is interdependent.

Living Legacy of the Buddha

It was one of the earliest books written by him. When he was teaching at Nalanda University in 1954, he wrote this book for teaching the students. It is an overall view of Buddhist history and has some basic teachings of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha and meditation.

Manual of Buddhist Devotional Practice

This book has contents similar to the ones in Devotion in Buddhism.

Supreme Benefactor

This book is the story of Buddha who gives the grace to mankind.

Lotus offering

Widurapola Piyatissa Mahanayaka Thera, who was Bada Bhante's teacher, wrote this book. It is a book of Buddhist devotional chanting. There are so many inspiring verses. Bada Bhante translated the original into English.

Khuddaka Patha Compact collection

Khuddaka Patha is the first collection of discourses in the *Khuddaka Nikaya* of the *Pali Canon* of *Theravada* Buddhism. It includes text essential to Buddhist disciples.

Sanskrit: Need for self-renewal

Ven. Buddhharakkhita was a Sanskrit Scholar. *Sanskrit*, which is new form, was a reformed language by Panini. The *Vedic* language is called the *Chandas*. Self-renewal means we should also change ourselves just like the language from *Chandas* to *Sanskrit*.

The second category - meditations.

He showed in a very practical way, not just by teaching and lectures, how to touch the life. He had been teaching practical service and meditation. He used to teach 7-8 meditations. Within satipattana ways, there are breathing, walking, eating, death, body part, feeling sensation, citta, and body element meditations. *Satipattana* meditation is comprehensive type of meditation. All the 40 meditations have been explained in detail in the *Visuddhimagga*. It is 5th Century book written by Ven. Acharya Buddhagosa. Every meditation in this book is taken from Tipitaka. It is a Buddhist classic for meditation. Most of the meditation teachers follow it. So Ven. Buddhharakkhita also had written different kinds of meditation books by keeping this book as reference. The names of his meditation books are given below:

The Law of Life - Compassion, What meditation implies, Philosophy of Love, Overcoming Aversion, Meditation on Peace, *Satipatthana* system of meditation, Ethics and Buddhism, Going beyond conflicts, Positive Response, Meditation Service

The third category is social justice. His main approach to social justice is abolition of *Caste* system and social problems, how Buddhism removes social problems, crime and equality.

Householder's book of Discipline

This book is for laity. It is wonderful explanation of two sutras. As housewives, students, teachers and other members of society who can give support to the society get a clear picture of meaning of life. It is about how to contribute for individual progress, peace, happiness, harmony with others, mutual help and growth and social justice.

Buddhism and Social Justice

This book is the Buddha's message about *an ideal human society*. The main quotation is what the Buddha said: "By birth one is not a Brahmin; by birth one is not an outcaste. By deeds alone one becomes inferior and by deeds alone one is a Brahmin; Not by birth but by actions one performs."

Confluence of Indian Thought

There was a conference of all religions and this book shows what are the similarities and the differences of Indian religions. Ven. Buddhārakkhita put in this book all thoughts of religions in India together. He had a main role at this conference.

Way to achieve Communal Harmony

This book relates with religious harmony because when he came to Bangalore, in the beginning, people did not want to accept him. So he went to explain about Buddha Dhamma. In 1956 Bangalore was highly conservative. It was very hard to teach, that is why he

started services which was more practical rather than theoretical. So hospital service was very important and the first social engagement was hospital, second was education and third was economic program.

5. Introspection about Buddhahood

From his childhood until his demise, he had a strong determination to stick to truth, right, and justice. In his life, he strictly followed and respected *Vinaya* rules. He always said, “I want to be Lord Buddha’s good servant.” I surveyed what he taught to his disciples like monks and laities. The survey was disciples’ viewpoint upto his last moment.

So in the last chapter, I would like to mention about his introspection about Buddhahood. There are 3 sub-sections, the first is *Ascetic Practice in Daily Life*, the second is *Discipline of Dhamma* and the third is *Nirvana*.

For research of this chapter, I surveyed 65 novice monks and 162 laities in Maha Bodhi Society. I also interviewed Ananda Bhante who is the General Secretary of Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore. He served Ven.Buddharakkhita for almost 27 years as a secretary.

His last moment was also very unusual. I attended his funeral on 27 Sep 2013. At that time, I could see one circle of rainbow in the clean sky. It was an unforgettable moment for me. There is a Korean saying that says, “Heaven can know people who are same as heaven.” So I assumed his life was same as heaven, and a real servant of Buddha.

5.1. Ascetic Practice in Daily Life

As a sincere Theravada Buddhist monk, he had scrupulously followed *Patimokkha*, which is a list of rules (contained within the *vinaya*) governing the behavior of Buddhist monks (Bhikkhus) and nuns (Bhikkhunis). *Pati* means “towards”, and *mokkha* means liberation from cyclic existence (*samsāra*).¹²¹

121. Keown, Damien. Dictionary of Buddhism. 2003. p. 220

“When it comes to his daily *pūja* and meditation, he doesn’t compromise on anything. Even during serious sickness he would reach the *pūja* room and offer *vandana* and meditated. Normally he spends hours in meditation that begins in the early morning at 4:30, later in the day and in the evening that normally lasts 3 hours and before going to sleep.”¹²²

He took to meditation throughout his life. Especially he advised that the only way to emancipation from *samsara* is *Vipassana* meditation.

“He practices *Satipatthana* system of meditations and enjoys meditation in any posture. Particularly walking meditation. Often he explains, ‘there is nobody walking’. Only the four elements are changing – *tejo dhatu* is active while lifting the leg, *vayo dhatu* while moving forward, *apo dhatu* while landing and *pathavi dhatu* while balancing the leg. Or while breathing, it is only manifestation of real nature of mind and matter, which are *anicca* (impermanent). This is the wisdom which he experiences moment-to-moment, shares with disciples and explains sometimes with very very simple examples. Most of the time he is living in *paramattha* understanding.”

He did not pass his time in a usual way living in concepts, but instead he contemplated phenomena of life most of the time because of *Satipatthana* practice. That was the reason why he could deeply understand what the causes and effects behind the phenomena were.

“The basic power ultimately comes from deep understanding of things according to reality. Bhante’s approach to life was simple and clear – to live with understanding so that every moment of life is used for further spiritual progress. For him every situation was welcome, as something positive would happen out of it.

122. Ananda, Buddadassa, *op. cit.*: 8

Every situation he analyzes deeply according to ultimate reality. Being an *Abhidhamma* teacher it has become his natural way of looking at things. Even a simple action or word by a child, which normally nobody bothers, had been taken by him seriously for analysis and action. So in his scheme of things there are no such things as insignificant or simple. Everything has deeper cause and if it is a negative one it has to be set right and if it is a positive one it has to be developed. This deeper understanding also makes a person very compassionate in a true way. Because he could understand the deeper implications of thinking and actions which brought him much clearer understanding about how one would suffer in long run. And therefore his compassion bubbles up and he goes out of way to help people.”¹²³

According to Ananda Bhante’s interview, Buddharakkhita’s routine is as given below.

“At 4 o’clock he usually gets up and does puja and meditation in his small room. And in this last 1 year he taught 15-20 monks by giving them some instruction on how to do meditation at four O’clock and then he did meditation in his small room until 6:45 am. He usually eats rice porridge with *Aurvedic* powder and ginger paste between 7 and 7:45 or 8 o’clock. After Breakfast, all monks come to him and do *Guru vandana*, which means Homage to Guru, when disciples used to do salutations and ask for forgiveness. After this he used to teach for 40 or sometimes even 60 minutes; it has no time limits. After that, the monks attended the classes and Bhante used to ask what happened to the work that had to be done. “What happened to all the work? Ok, you do like this, you don’t do like this.” He gave the instructions to the officers. He

123. Anada, Buddhadasa, *op. cit.*: 6

used to be seen walking early in the morning in the garden but in last 3 years, he used to walk inside his *kuti* about 10 meters up and down. At that time, I (Ananda Bhante) used to tell him what made news; Then I would tell him what was happening in the world. He was more interested in the international news. Iraq war and various other things that happened, etc I reported. He used to analyze the news; what kind of mind it is and what kind of mind can produce this kind of action and what kind of result will emerge. He analysed the news in great detail after some discussion about the news; he used to go to deep analysis and tell me he wanted to study about the cause and effect. He was not really interested in the actual news or events but was interested more in law of cause and effect. Then he would give dictation of the books he was writing. That was his morning routine and at 11 O'clock he had lunch; after lunch he used to take a class for a selected group. He also used to meet outsiders at this time. In the last so many years he did not meet anyone except very important people, close people and some people who were suffering and wanted to see Bhante; like this normally he used to spend time after lunch. He used to give enough time to them to listen carefully and keep discussions for 1 hour or 2 hours or 3 hours until he finished and around at 1:30 or 2 o'clock he used to take rest for an hour. From 3:00 to 6:00 pm he used to give dictation and do some translation of *Tipitaka*, *Dhammapada* stories and his own articles and books. He can speak 14 languages few fluently and few broken: English, *Hindi*, *Tamil*, *Kannada*, Sri Lankan, Burmese, *Pali*, *Sanskrit*, Nepali, French, *Bengali*, *Manipuri*, *Urdu*, and Latin. And he can write English, *Hindi*, *Bengali*, *Kannada*, Sri Lankan, Burmese and Thai scripts. He has also studied Latin. He was a really good linguistic scholar. He used to explain the word in *Pali*, *Sanskrit* and Latin, and how words originated in Latin and developed into German, French, and English. He also

explained how to translate *Sanskrit* into *Hindi and Kannada*. He knew the root of word and the deeper meaning of that word. In the evening he used to do puja from 6:30 to 7:30 in his *kuti*. After that he used to have *Aurvedic* treatment; he made *Aurvedic* medicine by himself.”¹²⁴

In the evening from 8 to 9 o’clock, sometimes he told the novice monks *Dhammapada* stories as simply as possible for them to understand. He was a very good storyteller and that is the reason why even novice monks as young as 7 years old could understand the stories were interested to spend time with him. After that, normally he meditated before going to bed. It was Ven.Buddharakkhita’s routine almost every day. His life was that of a pure *Buddhadasa*¹²⁵ because his life itself was of practice, teaching, writing and discourse for Buddha Dhamma.

5.2. Discipline of Dhamma (2000-2013)

In Buddhism, the heart is Triple Gem - the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. In 1956, Ven.Buddharakkhita had established Maha Bodhi society in Bangalore and taught the Dhamma to numerous monks and laities. Maha Bodhi has been run by his disciples and became one of the most active Buddhist organizations in India. Good Sangha must have a good Dhamma teacher. Buddharakkhita was a great Dhamma teacher in this century. For his teachings, many good dedicated monks and laities are staying in Maha Bodhi society in Bangalore even now.

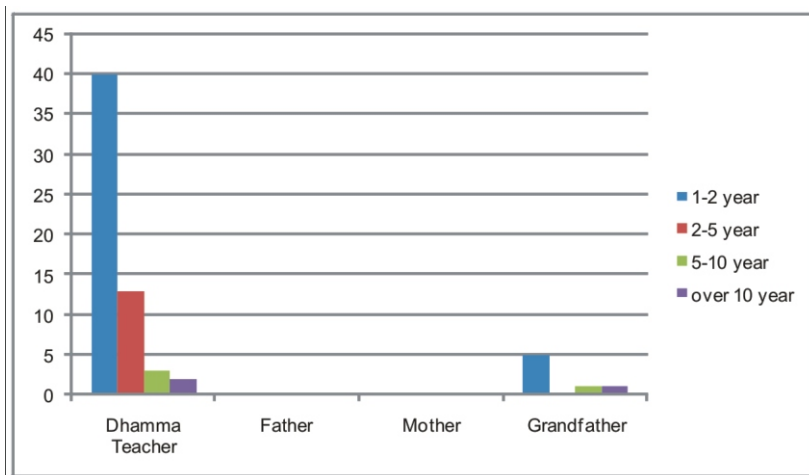
My questions are what did they learn from Bada Bhante Buddharakkhita and how did they learn it. To get answers for these questions, I conducted a survey of 65 novice monks and 162 laities. The hypothesis of this survey is that “Comprehension of his teaching to monks and laities in Maha Bodhi Society in Bangalore.” Through this survey, we may know what they learnt from his teaching.

124. Ananda Bhante Interview.

125. Servant of the Buddha

From graph 1 to 6 are the survey of novice monks and from graph 1-1 to 1-6 are the results of the laities survey.

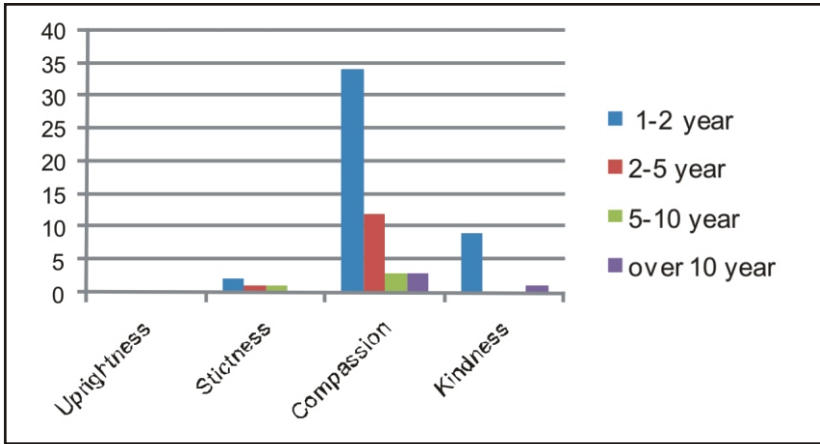
To the monks were (1-2 years in monkhood: 45 novice monks, 2-5 years: 13, 5-10 years: 4, over 10 years: 3)



Graph 1

Q1: Who was Bada Bhante for you?

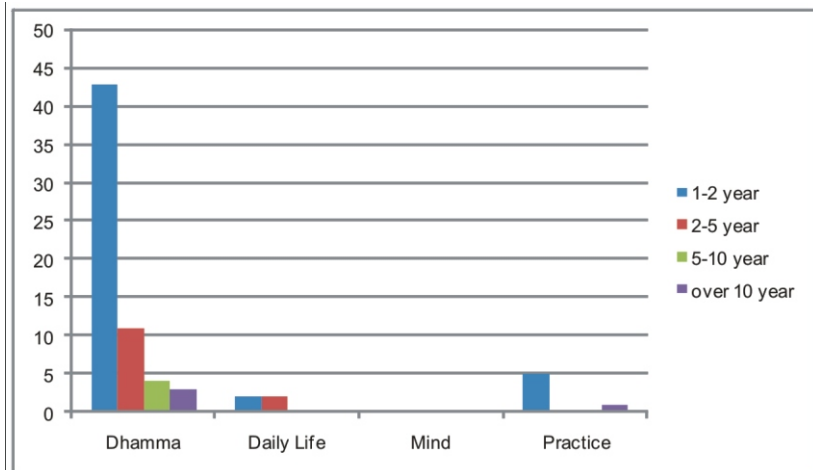
From graph 1 we know most novice monks think Bada Bhante was a dhamma teacher. And 7 monks thought he was a grandfather. For him there are no young or old monks. He treated every monk as a truth seeker. That is why novice monks with even one or two years' monkhood thought Bada Bhante was a dhamma teacher. According to my research, he also treated young novice monks like a grandfather. He normally said to young novice “*Hey, my grand son, what is going on?*”



Graph 2

Q2: Why did he feel like that?

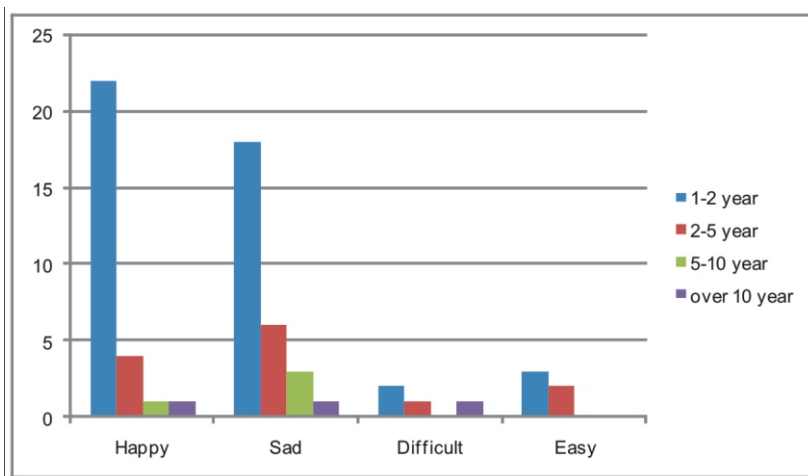
From graph 2, we can understand that most of the novice monks felt his compassion. 10 monks felt his kindness and 5 monks felt his strictness. His teaching of the Dhamma was based on compassion but sometimes he used to teach strictly to break the ego in the mind.



Graph 3

Q3: What is your best memorable learning from him?

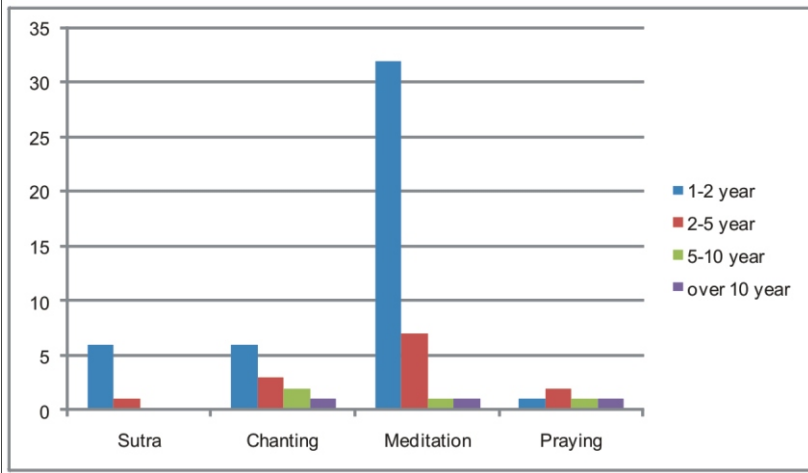
From graph 3, we know that he always tried to teach the Buddha Dhamma to novice monks. In his entire life, he was concerned about revival of Buddhism in India. He usually said “Even if somebody memorizes one sentence of Tipitaka, our mission is a success.” Compared to practice, mind and daily life, he focused more on teaching Dhamma to the monks which naturally turns into daily life.



Graph 4

Q4: When do you miss Bada bhante?

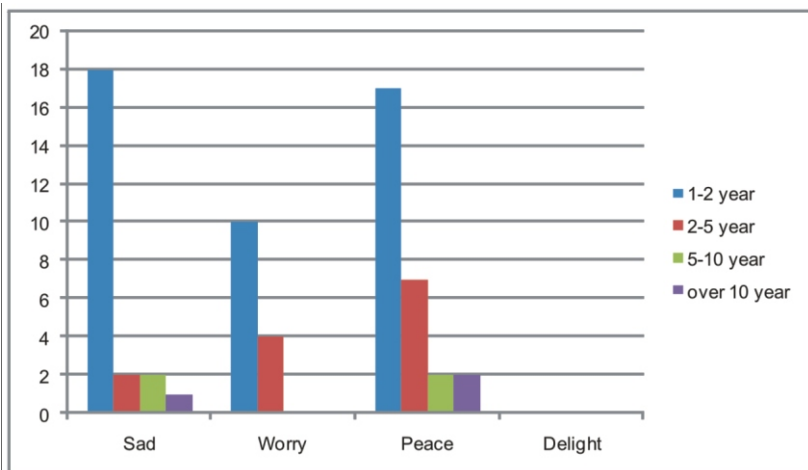
From graph 4, we know that 22 monks missed Bada bhante when they were happy and 17 monks missed Bada Bhante when they were sad. Other monks missed him when they found life easy or difficult. His Dhamma teaching was more related to emotion than reason because the learning was based on the stories of Buddha. It means they learnt from Bada Bhante not by thinking but by their heart.



Graph 5

Q5: What do you do when you miss him?

From graph 5, we know that 41 monks missed him and they did meditation, 12 monks when they missed him chanted, 7 learnt the Sutra when they missed him and 5 prayed when they missed him. Meditation was Bada Bhante's main teaching method to the monks. As a matter of fact, his daily life was a meditation itself.

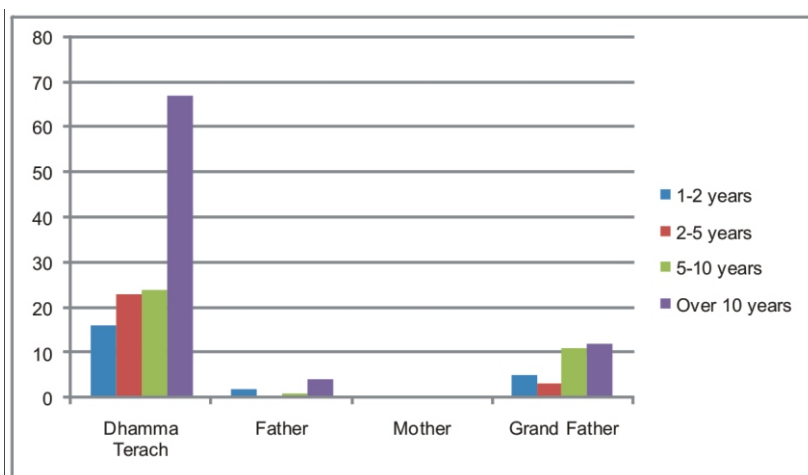


Graph 6

Q 6: How did you feel the Bada Bhante's Passing Away?

From graph 6, we can know 26 monks felt peaceful, 23 monks felt sad, and 14 monks were worried when Bada Bhante's death took place. From the time he was 80, when he went to bed, he usually said to his disciples, “Good bye, and see you if I am alive until tomorrow.” He was always prepared for his last day and that was the reason why monks felt peaceful when he attained the end. But still 37 monks felt sad and worried because they could not see him in person any more.

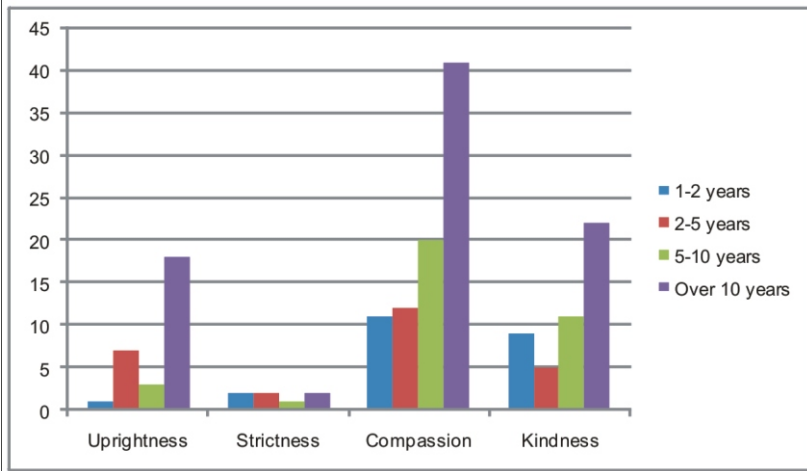
To the Laities (1-2 years of association: 23, 2-5 years: 24, 5-10 years: 34, over 10 years: 81)



Graph 1-1

Q1: Who was Bada Bhante for you?

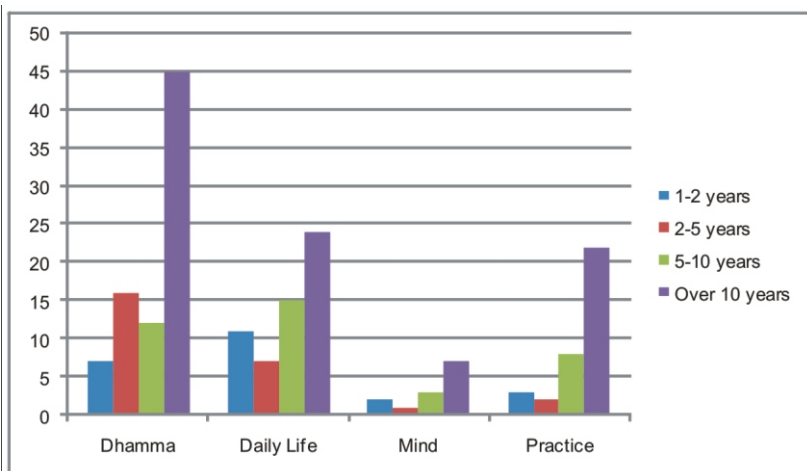
From graph1-1, we know that more laities thought that Bada Bhante as a Dhamma teacher than grand father or father. The result is almost same as monks' one. It means that he also taught the Dhamma to laities just like he taught the monks. He did not differentiate the monks and laities while teaching the Dhamma.



Graph 2-1

Q2: What did you feel from Bada Bhante?

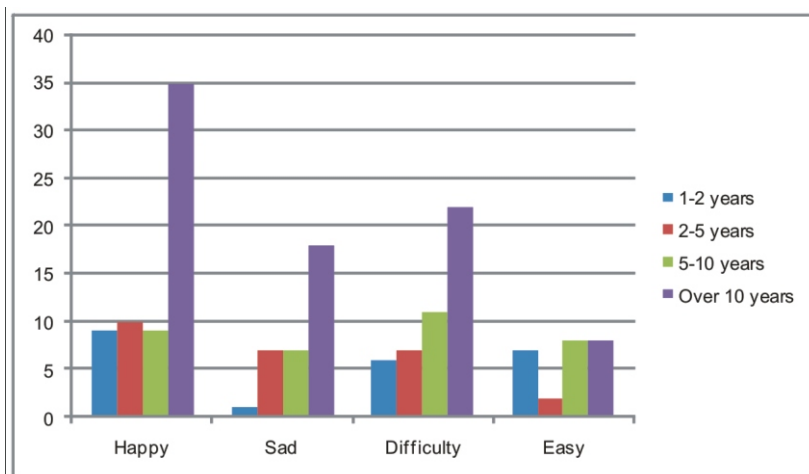
From graph2-1, we know that 84 people felt compassion, 47 people felt kindness, 29 felt uprightness and 7 felt strictness. Compared with the monks' result, his way of the teaching to laities was more based on experience because they came from many diverse backgrounds.



Graph 3-1

Q3: What is your best memorable learning from him?

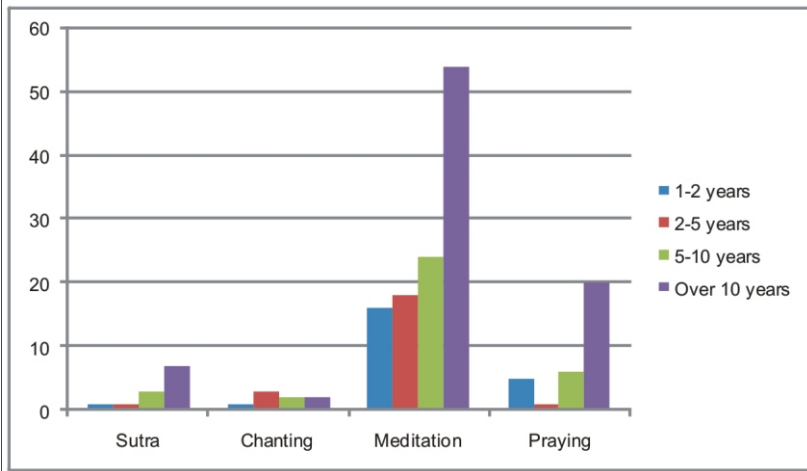
From graph3-1, we know that 80 people chose Dhamma, 57 people chose daily life, 35 people chose practice and 13 people chose mind. Compared with monks' result, best memorable teaching of Bada Bhante was not only just Dhamma but also how to protect Dhamma in their mundane lives.



Graph 4-1

Q4: When do you miss Bada bhante?

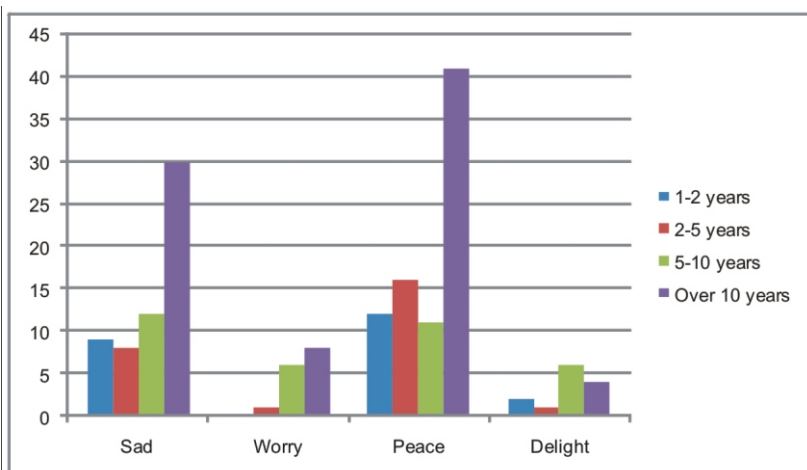
Through graph4-1, we know that 63 people chose happy, 46 people chose difficulty, 33 people chose sad and 25 people chose easy. Compared with monks' result, his way of the teaching to laities was more based on reason because of their rational background of knowledge.



Graph 5-1

Q5: When do you miss him what do you do?

From graph5-1, we know that 113 people chose meditation, 30 people chose praying, 12 people chose sutra and 8 people chose chanting. Compared with monks' result, primary way of the practice was the same as monk's result, meditation, but second way of the practice was different, monks chose chanting and laities chose praying. Laities are more familiar with praying than chanting and sutra.



Graph 6-1

Q6: How did you feel about the Badabhante's Passing Away?

From graph6-1, we know that 80 people felt peaceful, 59 people felt sad, 29 felt delighted and 15 felt worried. Compared with monks' result, peace, sad and worry are the same emotions for monks and laities, but delight was only laities feeling. I suppose some laities thought he had emancipated from *samsara* and they know how miserable *samsara* is because they are living in the mundane lives.

Through this survey, we know that Bada Bhante's way of the teaching Dhamma to monks and laities was very very effective. Bada Bhante was a Dhamma teacher for both of them, but his teaching to the monks was more emotional way than laities because they are not tainted with mundane lives and do not need too many intellectual words. On the other hand his teaching the laities was based more on reason than monks because of their diverse background and also he used different methods for teaching them to protect them from the mundane lives.

Feeling of his demise was also different between the monks and laities. Laities know how miserable *samsara* and mundane life is. That is the reason they felt delight when Bada Bhante had passed way so peacefully. But monks did not felt that much delight but sad and peaceful.

5.3. His Demise (23 Sep 2013)

At 3:48 am on 23rd September 2013, he passed away peacefully at his kuti in Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore at the age of 92. It was very peaceful because he had prepared not only himself but also his disciples, for this moment from the time he was 80 years old.

“He said ‘In front of death, money is not going to help. The property, house, children, husband or wife cannot help anyone. Only Dhamma can help.’ Almost for the last ten years he used to joke ‘Hey anybody will go. Even married or single would go.’ He used to ask when I brought more medicines, ‘Hey why do you buy so many medicines? If I

die, money will be wasted. So 10 days' stock is enough.' Since the time he was 80 years old, he used to tell us to buy medicines only for 10 days. He always ready and every day he used to say 'Good bye'. When I used to make salutation at night, he used to tell 'Ok we will see if I am alive' or 'see you tomorrow or who knows in next life.' All the time he was anxious to share his thoughts with me and if there was something he wanted to let me know or if some thought came to him he would call immediately and he used to tell 'Please I am very sorry, I disturbed you, but since I am not sure if I will live next 1 hour I need to tell you this.' He used to tell whatever comes in his mind so that there was nothing left in his mind unshared. He lived a real life, moment to moment peaceful and wise. He did not like to miss any second or minute. He was totally free of everything and he was completely free internally with any issue. He used to work in a totally detached way."¹²⁶

He underwent 7 major surgeries until 2000 and every day he took special ayurvedic medicines to maintain and allopathic medicine for his heart problem. But he was still in good health until June 2013 because he took good care of his body by regular exercise and meditation. On June 13, 2013, he had stroke and was hospitalized. Then after few days he came back to monastery and stayed smiling in the bed though he could be administered food only through nose.

"Even on June 13th 2013, when he had stroke, he said 'Do not take me to hospital. After all my age is over and let me die here.' But after his stroke, there was second one which was massive and he was unconscious. Of course, we took him to the hospital. After he had awakened, he said 'Where am I now?' I said 'You are in the hospital.' And then he smiled. Then when I asked him 'Do you want to be here or monastery?' He said 'You decide.' He used to

wave his hands and indicate he has renounced his body and that we may do whatever we like to. Even when we used to say ‘Shall I now put you in sitting position?’ he would reply ‘Would you like to do it, then do it?’ I saw that he was totally detached from body. He was free from fear. I thought may be he did not recognize some people and I thought maybe his memory had failed.”¹²⁷

Even though, his body was going to die his spirit was still strong and clear. On 15th of August 2013, Independence Day of India, he asked to call all the monks and when they came he asked to get Buddha statue and Bhante Ananda took a Buddha statue to him. For everybody’s surprise he chanted puja without any lapse in memory!

“But on Independence Day, 15th August 2013, he was here then. We went to him in his kuti and I told him ‘Bhanteji today is 15th August.’ He asked ‘so what?’ I replied ‘Today is your renunciation day.’ He had become a homeless monk on this day. Indians are celebrating Independence Day, but we are celebrating Bada Bahnte’s renunciation day. We did special pooja in the morning. When I told him that, he was happy. In the afternoon, he sat on the chair and he called us in his Kuti. He was talking about Dhamma, only Dhamma. He was sleeping most of the time and sometimes unconscious since his stroke. But that day he was very active. He spoke about Dhamma that day from 2 to 7 pm! And at 7 pm, he called all the monks, he asked what all the monks are doing. I told him each one’s name and what he is doing. Then he asked us to bring Buddha statue. When I took a small Buddha from his Kuti and held it in front of him, he took it and touched his head and asked me to hold in front of him. Then he started the pooja like routine chanting. We were totally surprised because we thought he did not have clear memories. He

127. *Ibid.*

chanted so correctly and fast. He had no mistakes; just twice he stopped and when I prompted him by saying one word he continued again. And then he gave individual teaching for all monks. When I told him ‘He is doing this and this.’ He said, ‘Very good, Now you do like this and this.’ He gave special advice to each monk until 10:30 pm. After that day, he spoke but not so much like during the day as he must have been exhausted speaking for 8 hours. I think it was the last verbal Dhamma teaching in his life to a group. Individually they had their Dhamma teaching from bhante while serving him and after one month, he passed away.”¹²⁸

On 22nd September, when Bhante Ananda came to Delhi to visit Ajita who is a Won Buddhist monk in Delhi and also disciple of Ven. Buddharakkhita from young age, he got a message from Bangalore.

“I was calling everyday, morning and afternoon. When I was in Delhi, I called the doctor in charge of him enquired about his health on a daily basis. The doctor said he was critical. I did not have a second thought. At that time, I asked Ajita to book the ticket and I just rushed. When I came to the hospital in Bangalore, I knew that now the end might come. So I told the doctor ‘Ok now we will immediately shift him to the monastery.’ Bhante never wanted to die in the hospital. He had told me many times his wish. I told him ‘Now I will bring you to your Kuti.’ He did not respond but was peacefully breathing. Then I felt his mind was very clear and he could hear. So we brought him to the monastery. We grouped the monks for being near to him for every one hour. Group after group did pooja and meditation. We started that at 9 pm. I was there up to 1 o’clock and I went to sleep. Other groups did pooja. When a group of monks were doing puja they could see the

128. *Ibid.*

numbers on the monitor and the heartbeat and breathing numbers started coming down to 20-25. They called me. The heart and breathing had begun to slow down, some monks were chanting and then slowly, slowly for 3 min that started falling down came to zero. Just then I entered and I felt very peaceful. In the morning at 3:48 am, he passed away very peacefully. We did a pooja and then we washed his body and kept him in a freezer box.”¹²⁹

When Ananda Bhante prepared his master’s funeral, he had a small conflict between his master’s thoughts and opinion of disciples. They wanted to show as much respect and honor for his master, but Ven.Buddharakkhita had always told him, ‘If I die, do not waste money and time for my death. Put my body in the electric crematorium.’

“We contacted Munglang Sayadaw who is a very senior monk, 95 years old in Assam near Arunachal Pradesh and we asked him which is the auspicious day for cremation. He told us the 5th day after his death. It was on 27th September and then I was clear how cremation had to be done. But sometimes I was in two minds as he used to tell us ‘Just put me into electric crematorium’. But he was not very particular. He used to tell we may do what we like also. I had planned mentally nearly one year ago that if Bhante passes away how we should show our respect. But as he used to tell me do not take any trouble, I was in a dilemma whether I should follow what I thought or what he told me. He was humble, it was his greatness. He said ‘Why do you make a big issue of my death? Do your work.’ That was his mind. Then I thought ‘Ok that is his greatness that he asked for the lowest and least but it is up to us now what to do.’ I thought we should give the best of honor because we should do something good that also remains in the memory of the people. So let us be dignified

129. *Ibid.*

and do accordingly as we have devotees. Cremation was not possible here as it is in the city and it is not allowed, so I was thinking we would do it in Narasipura near Aluru. We told Buddhadatta bhante and upasaka Rajanna to prepare the platform. They arranged everything in 3 days. I also don't know how everything happened; so many things happened, so many people came and helped us. I was a bit surprised but I was confident. Even we prepared the Helicam which I decided on the previous night of the funeral at 11 P.M. We had 3 young fellows who were to get ready the next day for the Helicam. They told me a number of problems but I convinced them. We wanted that to be ready the next day. Like that all the things happened without delay in the last moment. Flower decoration was done the previous day but a strong wind blew very hard and brought all flowers down the previous night. All structures had fallen down at night. The whole thing was rebuilt once again within few hours. On the day of the funeral, when the holy body of Bada Bhante was brought to Dhammaduta Vihara, a big circle of rainbow appeared around the Sun in the sky. I think it was very good funeral. He lived a peaceful life, died peacefully and had a peaceful funeral. 100 monks came from outside Bangalore, out of 100 maybe, I had called 10 to 15 monks only. The rest came out of respect and gratitude. Nine monks lit the pyre because number 9 is Bhante's favorite number.”¹³⁰

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I tried to make research on how one person can contribute to the change in the society at an individual level. Most of the people follow as a member of society. They do not have any idea how to change the world because they think it has to be very systematic and concrete. It is very difficult for an

130. *Ibid.*

individual to resist the society's system. Somebody who understands this system could then change this system and make it better. I think Ven. Buddharakkhita was one of them who tried to understand the system of the society and change the world. He resisted materialism, colonialism, *Caste* system and bureaucracy. Only thing he was concerned with was to find what was reality and truth for a better society.

In 1942, during World War II, a promising young engineer quit his path because he realized that he could not change the world through materialism. After that, he attended "The Quit India Movement" for changing the world. But there were two ideologies in the movement. The one was Gandhi's non-violent way and another was Subhas Bose's violent way. Both were extremes, one was idealism and another was radicalism. He understood that India did not have power for independence from British at that time. So he joined British Army to understand the enemy. After completing his assignment in World War II, he quit the military and opened a small business but his ideal was finding the truth. He felt that if he changed his mind, he could change the world and we understand his determination from the way he quit smoking in the army. For 2 years, he searched for the truth all over India. Finally, when he had read the *Dhammapada*, he found the way of changing one's mind. He became a monk in Kushinagar but at that time there was no place to learn Buddhism in India even though it was Buddha's home land. So he went to study Buddhism in Sri Lanka and Myanmar for a period of 6 years. After he came back to India, he taught at Nava Nalanda Institute for 2 years but he did not like the system of government institution since it was only at intellectual level. So he quit teaching and went to Bodh Gaya. When he got there, Mrs. Moonasige, who was the niece of Ven. Anagarika Dhammapala, asked him to open the monastery in Bangalore. In 1956, he founded Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore in the same year of 2500th Buddha Jayanti. This organization had grown

slowly like the Bodhi tree, which was planted by him. He had brought it from Bodh Gaya in 1956. And now this tree has grown so big that it can cover 200 monks in this shade. Maha Bodhi Society has also grown so much that it can cover the entire country with its influence. Maha Bodhi Society Bangalore is one of the most active Buddhist organizations in India.

For the first time, he wanted to change the world, but it was impossible. So he thought when he changed his mind, the world could be changed. He tried to find the path of truth for changing his mind. Buddha Dhamma was the way of changing mind. So he brought back Buddha Dhamma again in India when it had been lost from 1193 AD. Until his last breath, he never stopped the propagation of Dhamma in India.

Even though his physical body is no more, his mission of revival of Buddhism in India still is going on by his disciples.

Anada Bhante who is the General Secretary of Maha Bodhi Society Bangalore has a memorable teaching from Venerable Bada Bhante Buddharakkhita.

“So far Maha Bodhi work has been going on well because since 10 years I have a very good team. So the same work is going on. Bada Bhante also was not bothered about management, how we are getting money or how Cala home getting money. I used to ask him “Bhante how do I do this?” he used to say, “Ok, Ok. You decide it.” He allowed us to take the decisions, for he had given us full freedom because we were always informing him about everything. Even though he gave freedom, we were informing him all the time because we wanted to receive his blessings. If I took newly admitted children, even one thought of metta from him was a great blessing for those children and for me. If I told about somebody surely he would have metta for them and that was great blessing for them. Therefore also out of compassion for them I used to tell him everything. If somebody had given a donation, I would inform him about it and he would just say ‘Ok, ok, may he/she be happy.’

We were also very clear about our tasks and so the Society work or any activity has not been difficult one. Also because he made us to run programs for the last 12 years on our own it has been smooth with the transition from his presence to his absence. But the last 3 years I have spent with him for 6, 7, or 8 hours each day. In the beginning sometimes I used to be bored sitting for so many hours. But soon I understood that even a moment's small wisdom from him can be so peaceful that all worries used to just vanish. Sometimes I used to tell him 'Bhante I have plenty of work in the office.' He would just laugh and say 'Hey forget! Let us enjoy tea.' He used to relax me often. When I used to come to my office and start the work within an hour everything used to be finished! I had thought it was a day's work. In fact he knew better than me how much was my work! Then I just surrendered totally and enjoyed being with him hours and hours. When Bhante said 'Go', I went and when Bhante said 'Stay' then I stayed. I had full confidence and all my fears were gone when I got his blessings. Sometimes he used to tell 'Ok go and do your work.' but mostly he used to tell 'Forget! Come with me. Let us drink tea.' He used to tell 'Just be with me and enjoy. Many times he indicated his spiritual achievement. He used to say that he has fulfilled lot of his spiritual commitment and he is totally free from any suffering in the future. At the most only one time he will have to come back and that too at the age of seven he would become a monk and live a meditative life with strict vinaya practice and would like to give an example for future generation of monks. He also told me that he is concerned about me and that I should put forth more effort and achieve the higher stages. His compassion had no limit.'"¹³¹

His last teaching to Ananda Bhante was "Just be with me and enjoy." As a Buddha's good servant, he devoted his whole life for revival of Buddhism in India. And he had a peaceful end on 23rd September 2013, at age of 92.

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