



DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR'S *BUDDHA AND HIS DHAMMA: AN ENCOMIUM*

DR. UMESH B. BANSOD

Associate Professor

Department of English

J. M. Patel College, Bhandara

[MS] INDIA

ABSTRACT

The character of Buddha sketched by Dr. Ambedkar reveals literary consciousness while carving his character. The simple but a language full of various literary devices leads to a poetic language. Dr. Ambedkar never wrote poetry but he has lived an epic life. There are many sentences and paragraphs in BHD which are not less than a poetry. There is a rhythm in his logic. He has had to use a simple at the same time a dignified language suitable to the theme. There is another issue to choose a suitable language for the Buddha and other common characters. It must have been a difficult task for a highly qualified of Western influence like Dr. Ambedkar. But for the sake of his commitment Dr. Ambedkar uses simple language. Simple delivery of dialogue. If there is any ambiguity, it is not due to language. It is due to subject matter. At the same time, he is aware of the literary requirement of the theme.

Key Words: *Buddha and His Dhamma, encomium,*

INTRODUCTION

The Buddha and His Dhamma is a Magnum Opus work by Rd. Babasaheb Ambedkar. By default, is a classic example of literature of praise. Here is the plenty of encomium. Encomium comes from a Latin word meaning "to celebrate." It's a speech, poem, or other text written in praise of a specific person or thing. There are many passages devoted by Dr. Ambedkar in praise of the Buddha. The abundance of praiseworthy words shows writers

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inclination towards the Buddha but his appreciation never turns exaggeration. The scholars of Ambedkarite literature definitely finds here a different Ambedkar.

There are many characters in *BHD*. But characters of Buddha, Yashodhara , Rahul , Shudhodhana, Channa , Visaka, and Angulimala are easily recognizable. All the characters are real characters. Dr. Ambedkar did not create any fictitious character. As a man of literature, he has listed well as well as bad characters in the story. He has also taken care of not celebrating villainous characters. Nor he narrates adventures of villainous characters to make them appear hero-like. Though there are number of major and minor characters, the entire story revolves around the Buddha.

In an unpublished preface, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar clarifies, “To disarm all criticism I would like to make it clear that I claim no originality for the book. It is a compilation and assembly plant. The material has been gathered from various books. I would particularly like to mention Ashvaghosha's Buddhavita [Buddhacharita], whose poetry no one can excel. In the narrative of certain events, I have even borrowed his language.” Dr. Ambedkar claims the only originality in the order of presentation of the topics. He has tried to introduce simplicity and clarity.

All characters in *BHD* are human-like characters. No character is superhuman . They represent ordinary life. They are full of vices and good qualities as well. Though they have vicious tendencies, they also contain a lot of opportunities. Ordinary characters become unordinary due to the miraculous, rational, logical and scientific preaching of the Buddha. But the story the combination round and flat characters. There are certain characters like Angulimala, Anand, Yashodhara who change in the due course of action. But there also characters Ajatsatru, Devdatta who do not change in the due course of time and remain. The great personality like the Buddha also fails to bring change in them. This is not the Buddha's defeat but the victory of Dr. Ambedkar's characterization which succeeds in projecting human limits and prevents the story from being a fairy tale. It also underlines that good and bad both tendencies exist in the society.

The important and notable fact about the characterization of Dr. Ambedkar is that there is no ambiguity in understanding characters. They can be understood in relation with Buddha and also isolated. The gigantic character of the Buddha in the story also allows other characters to grow individually. Other minor characters also have their individual identity and specialty. The characters like Anand, Yashodhara, Amrapali, and Angulimala have their own separate identity.

In praise of Buddha :

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The Buddha And His Dhamma is full of beautiful examples of the literary from of encomium, or Parise. Asita visits and meets the new born Siddhartha who has divine eyes and shining with all brilliance. He observes the child, beheld that it was endowed with the thirty-two marks of a great man and a domed with the eighty minor marks, his body surpassing that of Sacra, Brahma, and his aura surpassing them a hundred thousand-fold.

Describing the feature of Siddhartha Dr. Ambedkar further writes that he had large eyes, sweet voice, kind disposition and he never liked exploitation of man by man. He appears to be self-controlled and shows real courage when he visits Rajgruha and meets Yeshodhara and Rahul after his enlightenment. When people used to see his they thought from his gentleness and his majesty that it was the moon with its ambrosial beams as it were visibly come down to the earth.

People admired him and sighed for him; saying: " Here was a Sakya blessed with high lineage, noble parentage, possessed of considerable riches, in the bloom of youthful vigour, accomplished in mind and body, brought up in luxury, who fought his kinsmen for the sake of maintaining peace on earth and goodwill towards men. (BHD p.34-35)

Having seen his personality and dignity and his splendid beauty, surpassing all other men, the people of that region were all astonished at him wearing the clothes of a sanyasi.

On seeing him, he who was going elsewhere stood still, and he who was standing there followed him on the way; he who was walking gently and gravely ran quickly, and he who was sitting at once sprang up.

Some people revered him with their hands' others in worship saluted him with their heads, some addressed him with affectionate words; not one went on without paying him homage. (BHD p.45)

His eyebrows, his forehead, his mouth, —his body, his hand, his feet, or his gait,—whatever part of him anyone beheld, that at once rivetted his gaze.(BHD p.45)

With fixed eyes, seeing only a yoke's length before him, with his voice hushed, and his walk slow and measured, he, the noblest of mendicants, went begging for alms, keeping his limbs and his wandering thoughts under control. (BHD p.46)



Muchalinda, seeing the Lord seated, his face glowing with peace and serenity, felt as though he was in the presence of a great divinity, and bending his head, began to worship. (BHD p.139)

When the Buddha visits Rahgruha after his enlightenment Suddhodana and Mahaprajapati went out with their relatives and ministers to meet their son. When they saw their son from afar, they were struck with his beauty and dignity and his lustre and they rejoiced in their heart, but they could find no words to utter. (BHD p.163)

Then the king went across to the Lord and after salutations seated himself to the one side, saying; " It is wonderful, sir, it is marvelous, what a tamer of the untamed the Lord is, how he quells the unquelled, and how he calms the uncalmed ! Here is one whom I could not subdue with cudgel and sword; but without either cudgel or sword the Lord has subdued him! And now, sir, I must be going, for I have much to do and attend to." (BHD p.205)

Dr. Ambedkar further illustrates the praise literature. As the Pali text truly says: *Diva tapati addicco Ratin abhati candima; Sannaddho khathio tapati Jhayi tapati brahamano; Atha Sabbain ahorattain Buddho tapati tejasa.*

"The sun shines only in the day and the moon makes bright the night. The warrior shines when he is in his armour. And the Brahmin when he is meditating. But the Buddha shines over all by day as well as by night by his own glory. "He was beyond question the light of the world." (BHD p.556)

CONCLUSION:

The skill of Dr. Ambedkar makes all characters free from the bondage of myth. It makes the story reliable and presentable before the modern world. The characters appear relevant in the modern century as well. There is no to drag them to modern time. They are representatives of the modern world and universal thought since Buddha's time. The timelessness is one of the import factors of Buddha's character.

It must be accepted and appreciated here that Dr. Ambedkar is highly selective in characters. He knows better how much weightage should be given to which character. In some episodes, the character of Channa and Anand appears superior to Buddha himself. Many of us know about the Buddha's life story. But it gives different experience and pleasure to understand Buddha through Dr. Ambedkar's perspective. It will not be irrelevant here to say that readers should try to understand the Buddha through Dr. Ambedkar's spectacles. Reading Buddha through traditional canons may invite misunderstanding the Buddha.

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