

Post Graduate Diploma in Socially Engaged Buddhism

Introduction:

Buddhism was born in India. Buddha was the first universal teacher of humanity whose Dhamma spread all over the world. He was also the first and foremost social and religious critic, reformer and free thinker who advocated rationality and humanity. The Buddha told his followers to move around the world and spread the message of Dhamma for happiness and wellbeing of the people. As a result Buddhism was spread in many countries in Asia. Though Buddhism withered away from India after 10th century, in 1956 it was revived on large scale under the leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. In 20th century Buddhism was also appreciated in other countries due to its rational appeal and the message of love and compassion. Buddhist principles and practices were applied for seeking solution of many social and political issues. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen Master used Buddhist principles to find a middle way between Capitalism and Communism. He coined the expression “Engaged Buddhism” and explained its implications. It can be said that Buddhism itself has socially engaged aspects, which have been highlighted and extended by Buddhist thinkers and leaders in recent times to render Buddhism more relevant and fruitful. The post-graduate diploma course in Engaged Buddhism aims at introducing socially engaged character and role of Buddhism in its different dimensions.

Objectives:

1. To learn and understand socially relevant teachings of the Buddha through selected readings from Buddhist texts
2. To learn theoretical foundation, history and models of Socially Engaged Buddhism
3. To help students apply Buddhist principles to solve social problems

Course Outline

The course is supposed to be completed in two semesters. In each semester there will be two papers to be studied of 4 credits each. Each credit will consist of 15 contact hours.

There would be semester end written examination for 50 marks and internal assessment for 50 marks which will include short essays, book review, field work, research project and meditation retreat.

Course Content

Semester I: Paper I: Introduction to Buddhism and its socially engaged aspects

Credit 1: Buddha’s life and teachings

Credit 2: Socially engaged aspects of Buddhism (Theravada and Mahayana sources): Rational approach, philosophical foundation, Rites and rituals, Varna, Caste and gender issues, social conflicts, social and political order

Credit 3: Socially engaged aspects of Buddhism (Theravada and Mahayana sources): Bodhisatva ideal, Ideal social order, interpersonal relationship, householder's discipline, monastic order, language and culture

Credit 4: Contemporary issues before Buddhism: (i) Compatibility with science (ii) Karma and Rebirth (iii) Capitalism, Communism (iv) Caste and gender inequalities (v) Environmental crisis (vi) Post-Modernism (vii) Conflict resolution and world peace

Semester I: paper II: Resources of Buddhism in India: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Credit 1: Rediscovery of Buddhism and Resurgence of Buddhism in Modern India

Credit 2: Dr. Ambedkar: Life and mission: His social philosophy and Constitutional vision

Credit 3: Dr. Ambedkar's writings and speeches on Buddhism

Credit 4: Dr. Ambedkar's "The Buddha and His Dhamma"

Semester II: Paper III: Buddhism in the modern world

Credit 1: Post-Ambedkar Buddhist movement in India: activities of TBMSG, Goenka's Vipassana movement, Buddhist Society of India etc.

Credit 2: Socially engaged Buddhism in countries with Theravada background: Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar etc

Credit 3: Socially engaged Buddhism in countries with Mahayana Background: Vietnam, Tibet, Japan and Korea etc.

Credit 4: Socially engaged Buddhism in other parts of world: Europe, America and Africa

Semester II: Paper IV: Interdisciplinary Role of Buddhism

Credit 1: Role of Buddhism with reference to social issues: Caste, Class, Status of Women

Credit 2: Buddhism: State, politics and economics

Credit 3: Buddhist engagement with science: psychology and ecology

Credit 4: Buddhist engagement with culture: language, media, arts and religious practices

Books for Reading:

(a) Primary sources in translation

Vasetāha Sutta

Ambañña sutta

Kūñadanta sutta

Madhupiṇḍaka sutta

Tevijja sutta

Brahmajāla sutta

Kālama sutta

Kalahavivāda Sutta

Attadaṇḍa Sutta

Isukārī Sutta

Aggañña Sutta

Vasala Sutta

Rahulovād sutta

Chakkavatti Sinhanāda Sutta

Important passages from Vinaya Piñaka
Paticcasamuppada and its various
interpretations in Pāli text

(b) Secondary Works

Ambedkar, B.R.: The Buddha and His Dhamma, Writing and Speeches: relevant Material

Books for Reference

Jones, Ken. The New Social Face of Buddhism: A Call to Action. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003.

Kotler, Arnold (ed.). Engaged Buddhist Reader. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1996.

Nhat Hanh, Thich. Being Peace. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987.

Sivaraksa, Sulak. A Socially Engaged Buddhism. Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, 1988.

Queen, Christopher, and Sallie King (eds.). Engaged Buddhism: Buddhist (Liberation Movements in Asia. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Queen, Christopher (ed.). Engaged Buddhism in the West. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000.

Jayaswal, K. P. (1988). "The Discoverer" in Rahula Smriti Peoples' Publishing House (Pvt.) Ltd, New Delhi, 1988.

Ling, Trevor. (1979). "Buddhism in India: Residual and Resurgent" in Studies in Pali and Buddhism, Edited by A. K. Narain, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Company, 229-241.

Narain, A. K. (1979). (Ed.) Studies in Pali and Buddhism, Delhi: B. R. Publishing Company.

Rahula Smriti, Peoples Publishing House (Pvt.) Ltd, New Delhi, 1988.

Zelliot, Eleanor. (1979). "The Indian Rediscovery of Buddhism, 1855-1956" in Studies in Pali and Buddhism, Ed. A. K. Narain, B. R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 389-406.

Joshi Lal Mani (1983). Discerning the Buddha, MRML Manual

Joshi Lal Mani. Buddhism, Brahmanism and Hinduism, Buddhist Publication Society

Ahir D.C. (2005). Buddhism and Ambedkar, B.R. Publication Corporation

Gokhale, Pradeep (Ed.) The Philosophy of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Sugava Prakashan, Pune

G. Alyosius (1998). Religion as emancipatory identity: a Buddhist movement among the Tamils under colonialism, Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society

Braj Ranjan Mani. Resurgent Buddhism, Critical Quest

Maren B. Schempp: Ishwardatt Medharthi, Critical Quest

John Stavrellis (2009). CHANDRIKA PRASAD JIGYASU AND BHIKKHU BODHANANDA: BUDDHISM AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE DALIT PUBLIC SPHERE , University of Wisconsin-Madison

Swaris Nalin (2011). The Buddha'S Way: A Socio-Historical Approach, Navayana Publications

Meera Kosambi (2010). DHARMANAND KOSAMBI: THE ESSENTIAL WRITINGS, Permanent Black

Omvedt Gail (2003). Buddhism In India: Challenging Brahmanism And Caste, Sage India

Zelliot Eleanor (2009). Untouchables to Dalits, Manohar

Narsu Laxmi (2005. A study of Caste, Blue Moon Publication, New Delhi

Collected works of Anagarika Dhammapal

Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches (BAWS)

Ambedkar, B.R. The Buddha and His Dhamma. Bombay: Siddharth Publications, 1984 (originally published 1957).

Aung San Suu Kyi. Freedom from Fear & Other Writings (rev. ed.). New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu. Dhammic Socialism. Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, 1985.

Chakravarti, Uma. The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Jones, Charles. Buddhism in Taiwan: Religion and the State 1660-1990. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999.

Macy, Joanna. Dharma and Development: Religion as Resource in the Sarvodaya Self-Help Movement (rev. ed.). West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1985.

Narain, A.K., and D.C. Ahir (eds.). Dr. Ambedkar, Buddhism, and Social Change. New Delhi: D.K Publishing, 1994.

Nikam, N.A., and Richard McKeon (eds.). The Edicts of Asoka. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

Pilchick, Terry. Jai Bhim! Dispatches from a Peaceful Revolution. Glasgow/Berkeley: Windhorse Publications/ Parallax Press, 1988.

Rodrigues, Valerian. The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

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Dalai Lama. Ethics for the New Millennium. New York: Riverhead Books, 1999.

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Loy, David. The Great Awakening: A Buddhist Social Theory. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2003.

Payutto, Bhikkhu P.A. Buddhist Economics: A Middle Way for the Market Place (rev. ed.). Bangkok: Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1994.

Batchelor, Martine. Women on the Buddhist Path. London: Thorsons, 2002.

Gross, Rita. Buddhism after Patriarchy: A Feminist History, Analysis, and Reconstruction of Buddhism. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.