

COMPARISON BETWEEN BUDDHA'S SANGHA AND SCIENTIFIC COMMUNISM OF MARX

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Abstract

Religion is an opium of the society as Karl Marx claims but the ultimate stage of human development is scientific communism which is approximately equal to Buddha's meaning of Sangha. To analyze the final stage of human development by Marxian philosophy and Shakyamuni Buddha's philosophy on the concept of Sangha, the study is being conducted. Methodologically, the study has analyzed the meaning of Sangha of Buddha and different stages of human development of Marxist's communism from relevant literatures. Ultimately there is not any significant value of personal property in both ideologies.

Keywords: Buddha, Communism, Marx, Sangha,

Introduction

A comparison between Karl Marx and Buddha may be regarded as a joke (Ambedkar, 1956). There need be no surprise in this. Marx and Buddha are divided by 2381 years. Buddha was born in 563 BC and Karl Marx in 1818 AD. Karl Marx is supposed to be the architect of a new ideology-polity a new Economic system. The Buddha on the other hand is believed to be no more than the founder of a religion, which has no relation to politics or economics (Ambedkar, 1956). Both the philosophies seek the equality and peace in society with ending personal property. Therefore, the statement by Ambedkar in 1956 is questionable. Marx and Buddha are brothers (Waistell, 2014). So the Ambedkar's comment is full of prejudices.

Ideology is a powerful tool. It has the power to inspire, the power to enlighten, the power to change the world. Some might say that religion is the most powerful ideology. For as long as religion has existed, people have died in its name (Hutchison, 2009). However, Buddhism is free from any kind of violence. Buddhism, on the other hand, stresses detachment from the material world. It values merit and spiritual development in a life that is viewed as more cyclical than linear. Whereas Marxism promotes the altering of relationships and initiation of class conflict, Buddhism stresses harmony over conflict and opts to minimize class distinctions. Economic inequality too, is legitimated by Buddhist requisites of harmony (Hutchison, 2009). Private property has its

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place, as does community support for the local sangha. Organizationally, the Buddhist sangha is not all that different from the Marxist party.

Following Lenin's October Revolution in Russia, all communist leaders were expected to be important theorists, and even beforehand Marxist parties were essentially small collections of scholars devoted to the text and theory (Hutchison, 2009). Buddhist and Marxist institutions are like two academies teaching rival theories. Marx's concept of economic determinism corresponds to one aspect of the Buddhist concept of karma and bondage. There are, then, two central points on which Marx and the Buddhists are in agreement but on which the Western and capitalist view differs. These are, first, that man is neither born free nor can he attain freedom through the present social and political institutions; and second, that the realm of genuine freedom begins where the realm of economic, social, and political institutions ends. But the differences between Marx and the Buddhists are as important as the similarities (Puligandla & Puhakka, 1970).

Problem Statement

The Buddha was against violence (Ambedkar, 1956). But he was also in favour of justice and where justice required he permitted the use of force. This is well illustrated in his dialogue with Sinha Senapati the Commander-in-Chief of Vaishali. Sinha having come to know that the Buddha preached Ahimsa went to him (Ambedkar, 1956). As ideological opponents, Marxism and Buddhism provided a powerful motivation for conflict between the communist revolutionary governments and Buddhist Sanghas (Hutchison, 2009). A comprehensive historical study of Buddhism and politics, if such were possible, would reveal numerous permutations on the relation between sangha and state. Surely there is no one single answer to the question: What is or are 'Buddhist politics'? (Shields, 2016)

"The Bhagvan preaches Ahimsa. Does the Bhagvan preach an offender to be given freedom from punishment? Does the Bhagvan preach that we should not go to war to save our wives, our children and our wealth? Should we suffer at the hands of criminals in the name of Ahimsa.?" " Does the Tathagata prohibit all war even when it is in the interest of Truth and Justice?" (Ambedkar, 1956). These questions are not scientifically settled yet.

The function of philosophy is to reconstruct the world and not to waste its time in explaining the origin of the world. That there is a conflict of interest between class and class. That private ownership of property brings power to one class and sorrow to another through exploitation. That it is necessary for the good of society that the sorrow be removed by the abolition of private property (Ambedkar, 1956). But when do these problem will be solved? To quench the thirst of

these intellectual discourses the study is must. Revolutions, religious or otherwise, have provided many of the watershed moments in human history. Take for example, the French Revolution and its cries for liberty, equality, and fraternity, or the American Revolution and its protests against taxation without representation. How many monarchies have fallen, and how many independent democratic republics have been created because of those ideas? In the same vein, how much of the fabric of world culture has been shaped by Christian crusades or Islamic jihad? Some modern day revolutionaries attempt to impose their ideology on large swaths of the population, while others, like Peru's Shining Path and Nepal's Maoists, try to influence just their corner of it (Hutchison, 2009). The reality is clear where is the Nepalese Maoists movement and the shining path movement of Peru?

Objectives

To find out the similarities and differences between Marxism and Buddhism, the study is being conducted.

Methodology

The current study is completely based on secondary data and literature review. It is a qualitative descriptive analysis of Buddhism and Marxism.

Discussion

Buddha,

Buddha- Shakyamuni Shiddhartha Gautam, born in Lumbini in 623 BC, is the central theme of the study. According to this understanding, it is incumbent upon visionary leaders to work for comprehensive personal and social transformation, so that a 'Buddha land' can be realized in which there is peace and prosperity for all beings. This includes what we would today call politics, as well as economics, education, and various aspects of culture (Shields, 2016). "The Buddha prescribed Six Concords, six principles of community life" one of which is "sharing material resources." (Waistell, 2014). It has even been claimed that the Buddha's Sangha was "the world's first communist social grouping" and that early monastic "rules are far more rigorous than are to be found in Communism in Russia" (Waistell, 2014). Buddhism opposes Capitalism, with its notions of property, ownership and possessions as ends in themselves, because they are non-conducive to freedom but instead reinforce and perpetuate the ignorance that Buddhism tries to eliminate (Waistell, 2014).

Buddhism was believed to have started in India by Siddhartha Gautama. Siddhartha was born around the fifth century BCE to a tribal chief of a clan in southern Nepal. According to Buddhist literature, it was prophesied that he would become a king if he stayed at home or a great sage and the savior of humanity if he left. Siddhartha's father did not want his son to leave home because he wanted his son to be a king and follow in his footsteps. As the story goes, Siddhartha grew up surrounded by riches and luxury and knew only pleasures. He lived in palaces and was shielded from any pain or ugliness by his father so that he would not experience human suffering. But Siddhartha became restless with his life of luxury. He wondered what else there was to life and demanded to see the outside world. His father gave in to his demand and allowed him to see the outside world, yet he tried to limit his experiences with others to young and healthy people.

Communism

What is the answer of Buddhism to the ideologies of capitalism and communism and to the challenge of the "one-dimensional society" (Puligandla & Puhakka, 1970). Marxism, works in practice. Of all the distortions to which Marx's ideas have been subjected, probably none have been as difficult to correct as this one, for the problem lies not only in what happened (or what most people believe happened) in these two countries but in the all too popular separation of Marx's vision of communism from its historical roots in capitalism. Unaware of capitalism as the proper space in which to investigate what communism is and could be, it was easy to substitute what was happening in a few underdeveloped countries, subjected to the constant threat of foreign invasion, that called themselves communist, to determine the worth of all Marx's theories (Brincat, 2014).

Marx,

By the time Karl Marx took up his pen in the 1840s, these modern assumptions about the nature of politics had largely become commonplace, despite the work of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century liberal and radical thinkers, who sought to re-inspire some measure of political idealism in their pursuit of liberty, equality, and fraternity (Shields, 2016). Marx develops a conception of humanity that is, in the Western philosophical context, radical if not unprecedented. In doing so, Marx effectively displaces religion from the focus of his critique; Marx sees religion as one among many other manifestations of social servitude, rather than its root (Shields, 2016). Marx was wholly against gurus, personality-cultists with revelatory doctrines and worshipping adherents. He also had absolutely nothing to do with religious framings, Christian ones in particular.

He was resolutely for large-scale transformation (whether violent because in working-class self-

defense, or otherwise in some more peaceful transition toward socialism and communism). He had no time for historical anachronism and returns to a golden age of simplicity. Nor was he sympathetic to top-down governance and leadership by enlightened intellectuals. And he presumed that the mass production of necessities, at least, would raise the quality of life and reduce working time (Brincat, 2014). The first step in reestablishing Marx's approach to communism and providing the broad working class with a clear direction in which to carry on its struggles is to break the connection between communism and the former Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, this is how most people continue to think about communism. Instead, communism must be linked, as it was for Marx, to capitalism. Viewed in relation to the Soviet Union, communism cannot help but be sullied by the distortions that disfigured even the modest successes that occurred under that regime. Also, and what is of equal importance, whenever communism is viewed in connection with the Soviet experience (whether one approves or disapproves of the results), it seems to be an alternative available to people anywhere, at any time, and under any conditions.

What counts in this case are a variety of subjective factors ranging from the intelligence and commitments of the leadership to the type of party they create and the strategy it adopts. Viewing communism in and through its ties to capitalism, on the other hand, brings to the fore the objective conditions responsible for the particular problems from which people suffer together with the related conditions—most of which were completely absent in the Soviet Union—that provide a basis for their solution. It is this approach that allowed Marx to treat communism as an unrealized potential within capitalism (Brincat, 2014)

Sangha,

Buddha and Marx and that forms a tool of critical resistance to the 'nonsense' of forms of Buddhism that practice reverence to superhuman Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as well as to forms of Indian and Abrahamic theism (Shields, 2016). 'Original Buddhism was not an opiate. In the end, Buddhism is atheistic. To begin with, a "revitalized Buddhism" must assume this exalted position in order to liquidate the delusions of existing forms of Buddhism and completely destroy the opiate-like role played by existing Buddhism (Shields, 2016). So, Buddhism is closely related to Communism on this issue.

In Buddhism, the consequence of no self is no possession; thus Buddhism opposes capitalism's privileging of private property, instead advocating Socialism because it provides the best way to overcome contemporary economics (Waistell, 2014). The Sangha was very popular in ancient

Nepal. It was a place for women to take refuge for their spiritual quest against worldly sufferings. An aspirant usually renounced the worldly society for spiritual purposes. The Sangha provided leadership to the entire movement. From the date of the Chabahil inscription, the word Sangha is referred to repeatedly in various other Lichhavi inscriptions. The Sangha community remained so popular and sacred that they were occasionally entrusted with minor judicial rights also. All such descriptions found in ancient inscriptions prove that the Buddhist Vihara were very active centers of Buddhist activities in ancient Nepal (Thapa, 2006).

For many people, Marx's concept of historical development can be found in a few paragraphs of his 1859 preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy— despite the wealth of his discussion in Capital of production under capitalist relations and the development of a specifically capitalist mode of production. Unfortunately, several paragraphs from Marx's comments upon the Gotha Programme of 1875 similarly often serve as Marx's view of communist society—despite the fact that the concept of communism pervades Marx's thought (Brincat, 2014).

Conclusion

Marxian principal is only a philosophy not yet implemented because there is not any existence of scientific communism in the world. On the other hand, Buddha practically founded the Sangha and it is clearly seen all over the world in every Bihar and Mahabihar. Both the ideologies do not believe in the existence of super natural power and accept the change and development with reason or logic in humanity. Marx talks about the class conflicts but Buddha talks about eternal peace avoiding mental hazards.

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