Perspective on Mysticism in Buddhism

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Dr. Anil Kumar Tripathi

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Reverential Homage



Pandit Shree Basudeo Tripathi

(1921-1999)

Adept in Astrology, Tantra and religious rites, my father gained popularity as a social worker in Allahabad (U.P.) and regions of Gaya (Bihar). He nurtured and raised me to the height where I am. May his soul rest in heavenly peace and keep inspiring us!

Courtesy
Dr. Anil Kumar Tripathi
Dr. Sangita Priyadarshani

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Dedicated
to
Mrs. Lal Pari Tripathi



(1951 – 2000)

A woman is the quite circle of creation, affection and dedication. Similarly, my elder Sister-in-law a motherly figure was a symbol of courage to us. Being the role model, she emerged as a strong pillar to our family.

Courtesy
Dr. Anil Kumar Tripathi
Dr. Sangita Priyadarshani

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Foreword

The book **"Perspective on Mysticism in Buddhism"** is a sincere endeavor to account mysticism and its perspective. The author, **Dr. Anil Kumar Tripathi** has tried to depict not only the major themes of the Buddhist texts but has also focused on his description of recently ecology, environment, good and evil of society and major factors of mysticism in it. To him, man is just a part of this natural ecosystem and his healthy existence is connected with the overall balance of the environment.

The book draws our attention to our need of a detailed study in Mysticism. The writer has presented variegated manners of God and demon in the book. He handles themes like the Dharma net, religious tolerance and Cognitive psychology which belong to individual domain as well as many ways of mental development that make us prepared to purity our mind. Even minor characters have been well portrayed to make a comprehensive study while dealing with Mahayana and Vajrayana tradition as well as the new Kadampa Tradition. The work also deals with Buddhist image, dynamics of enlightenment, devotion and music and so on from the Budhhist point of view. These offer readers not just a theoretical account of mysticism, but also practical measures for understanding the same.

A look at the topic of the book shows that the author has analysed how Sukumari Bhattacharji, John Brough, Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, I.B. Horner, T'ienJu, William Montgomery Megovern, Dr. K, Jamanadas and

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Nayanaponika Thera have dealt with the important aspects of discourses, characters, historical events, the selfish people, hymns of the Gandhari Dhammapada and Buddha's Diamond Mind.

Written in simple language, the book evokes interest and optimism. I congratulate the writer for his attempt and the conclusion which has humanistic essence combined with spirituality, love of nature and splendor of the earth.

Prof. (Dr.) Sushma Yadav,
Vice Chancellor, Bhagat Phool Sing Mahila Vishwavidyalya, Haryana

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Preface

Mysticism is a school of philosophy which offers direct intercourse with God. It is elevated religious feeling on ecstasy. It has spiritual apprehension of truth beyond the grasp of the intellect. Its subject-matter is drastic alterations, curtailments, telescoping, etc based upon logic and reasoning. The cardinal virtue of free verse lies in the intensified movements of poetic expression. Infact, destiny and fate are the controlling and often unseen powers of the universe. Men and ecology are interdependent. They try to protect and destroy each other. If the relationship between them is friendly and humane, both grow and flourish but if the relationship is strained and is inimical both are affected. In Buddhism, we find the tradition of India. Its message is spiritual and its universalism spreads throughout the world and true religion offers faith in the good of man rather than faith in unknown forces. There is no religious value in blindly observing any commandment without proper conviction and understanding. In this way, Buddhism echoes mysticism which emerges from the quest for enlightenment.

In Buddhism, we find various poems, hymns, discourses, prose–pieces related to mysticism. Our environment comprises all that surrounds us, i.e.; the living and non–living components of the biosphere and the geosphere. Man is just a part of this natural ecosystem

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and his healthy existence. Buddha was the pioneer as he advocated for respect and care to Nature and human beings.

My own fascination, partly temperament and partly a literacy conviction and taste that grew with the passage of time led me to read and re–read the works of Buddhism dealing with Mysticism but I was mainly impressed by mode of John Brough, Dr. K. Jamanadas, Sukumari Bhattacharji, Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey and Nyanaponika Thera. They have accounted for mysticism in detail and their characteristics have been discussed in the present project. However, the passing reference of other pieces of work on mysticism may also be found. Sukumari's *Myths Vedic Buddhist and Brahmanical*, Brough's *The Gandhari Dhamapada*, Geshe's *Tibetan Tradition of Mental Development, Dr. K. Jamanadas's Tirupati's Balaji was a Buddhist Shrine* and Nyanaponika Thera's *The Buddhist Outlook* depict major factors of Mysticism. Having read the texts we gain characteristics of Mysticism which is an eminent part of Buddhism. The Buddha also believed in Mysticism. So, He suggested us to conserve Nature and its aspects doing the practice of Mindfulness. After that He continued to explain the importance of Mysticism to the whole group of the Sangha. In this way, the disciples knew mysticism.

The proposed division of chapters in the book will be as follows :

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	God and Demon
Chapter 3	Mental Development
Chapter 4	Buddhist Images
Chapter 5	Dynamics of Enlightenment
Chapter 6	Devotion and Music
Chapter 7	Conclusion

I am deeply indebted to all those who are my mentors in the field of research, to those in particular who have worked on mysticism in Buddhism. I cannot find words adequate enough to express my sense of deep gratitude to Dr. Ram Naresh Pandey who has helped me during the progress of the present book. In the mist of numerous engagements and heavy work, he found time to look into the chapters and made vital discussions for the improvement. I am thankful to all the scholars of Buddhist

I am thankful to my revered spiritual teacher, like father, Dr. Vaidhya Nath Mishra, Shree Karya Nand Tiwari, the former Vice-chancellor, Dr. Arvind Kr. Pandey, KSDSU, Darbhanga, Dr. Sushil Kumar Singh, Head of the Department of Buddhist, Dr. Jitendra Kumar, M.U. Bodhgaya, Dr. Jay Deo Mishra, Arcology Department of Head, Patna University. Dr. Vijay Kumar Yadav, the Principal, MSY College, Gaya who gave me valuable suggestions in which I have gone a long way in improving the quality of my book. I am also thankful to other teachers and all the scholars of Buddhist Philosophy as it is an outcome of the quintessential guest of academic fraternity for their encouragement and valuable suggestions.

I am indebted to Uncle Ven. Shree Keshri Nath Tripathi, the Governor of Bihar and Bengal, and Ven. N. N. Pandey, (IAS) Home Secretary, Jharkhand, Shree S.K. Bhardwaj, IPS (Director General Police) Bihar who tried to shape my personality and raised me to the height where I am. I invoke his grace for any good that I may do in this life. It is my sacred duty to express my gratefulness to my parents Late Basudeo Tripathi. and Sumitra Tripathi, Brother Shree Sachida N. Tripathi, Vijay Kumar Tripathi, Ravindra Nath Tripathi, Nagendra Nath Tripathi, IPS department of Vigilance in West Bengal, and Sunil, Vimal, and Deepak Kumar Mishra, Brother in-law Dr. Surendra Kumar

Shukala, Shree Umesh Dutt Pandey who have inspired me to go forward not retreat. They tried to shape my personality and raised me to the height where I am. I invoke their grace for any good that I may do in this life.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not record my thanks to my wife, Dr. Sangita Priyadarshani whose active and ungrudging help proved in completing the work requiring sustained and patient labour undivided attention and pointed concentration. I also bless my sons Kumar Abhinav, Paritosh and a daughter, Kumari Sanchita Tripathi and my handsome nephew Mr. Pawan Kumar Tripathi for releving me of the monotony work of my book.

I feel much pleasure to the authorities of the British Council Library, Kolkata, the National Library, Kolkata, The Central Library B.H.U, Varanasi, the Central Library, Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi, The Central Library, Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University, Kameshwar Nagar, Darbhanga, and the Central Library, Magadh University, Bodh- Gaya for providing me books and materials ungrudgingly.

I am aware that despite much help rendered by my colleagues, friends and well-wishers, the work might contain many mistakes for which I alone am responsible.

I am also thankful to Mr. Jhapsu Yadav, Akhand Publishing House, Delhi for neat, clean and timely printing of my book. He deserves thanks who designed and printed the medium issue of the book.

Dr. Anil Kumar Tripathi

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Introduction

As regard, mysticism offers religious and spiritual apprehension of truth of God (Nature). It compels us to undergo an enigmatic experience along with our eco-destruction and eco-preservation. The technological advancement has led us to urbanisation and industrialisation in a big way. Urbanisation and industrialization had made our life far more comfortable and easy going lent. Nature has inspire countless poets and they glorified Nature in their poems. William Blake loved Nature, lent all Nature for him is 'a fire' with God. He became the first to introduce the romantic note of mysticism. Wordsworth made Nature, the teacher of man. We find that there is essential kinship between the soul of man and the indwelling soul of the universe. P.B. Shelley found joy in Nature. He loved the physical beauty of Nature and could be as sensuous as Keats. As well as being a sheer poet, Tagore's achievements included notable contributions in the fields of mysticism. His early poetry was influenced by the devotional Indian poets Ramprasad and Kabir. Throughout his work, we find mystical devotion and universal humanitarianism which is imbued with a tinge of the traditional Indian mysticism. While there is a lot of emphasis on inter–dependence of life, in various living forms leading to the concern for environment, in Buddhist scriptures.

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One glimpse of Nature can conjure up for us vision of a beautiful cosmos and extract the jewels of wisdom.

So far as the question of balancing the environment is concerned qualities of sea, earth, water etc. are noteworthy. The sea does not book any contact with a corpse but throws it away. It keeps the treasure of various valuable gems in it, allows different types of living organisms to stay in its womb, and never overflows its short etc. despite the fact that lakhs of crores of tonnes water is poured into its numerous rivers. A steneous recluse should get inspirations from these qualities of the sea by doing away with all associations with evils of greed, ill will and ignorance etc. By preserving secretly the gems of the path and respective fruits, the four jhãnas eight rimokkhas, samãdhi etc. by associating himself with a fellow disciple who desires little and is contented, pure in speech, strives for eradication of evil, is righteous. The earth remains just the same. The sum too, contributes to the cause of balancing the ecosystem through seven qualities, such as it evaporates all water. Most important events of the Buddha's life took place in the lap of Nature. He was born in Lumbini forest, he practised meditation at Uruvela near Gaya – a very beautiful spot on the bank of river Neranjana, attained Bodhi under the Bodhi tree, set the wheel of Dhamma in motion in the Deer Park at Sarnath and attained mahãparinibhãna in Pawa lying down between twin sal trees.

The concept of Eco-Dharma seems to be a novel idea of unit mysticism. As Dharma is the reflection of good virtues, fasting brotherhood, equality, love and compassion and the purity of mind. The Buddha initiated the sense of Eco–Dharma and Ecological Ethics. As we know that ecology is a branch of biology dealing with relations of organisms to one another and to their surroundings. But he in mysticism, we are not so much

concerned with this ecology as we are with Ecological Ethics which makes relation between man and man on the one hand and between man and the flora and fauna on the other friendly, affectionate and human so that not only men, birds and beauty live happily without any fear, but even their surroundings and sanctuaries also grow without any fear of destruction and pollution from men. In the Buddhist enumeration of six realms of animate existence of beings (bhavacakra) (i) all the human beings (manusya) and (ii) the animals and biological non–vertebrate beings (tiryog) reside. About the enumeration of four other realms, as the Bhavacakra enumerates, the spherical concepts become emphatic. Such as, (iii) the realm of the divine beings is wide enough in biosphere, hydosphere and lithosphere. Those divine beings are said to hold the capacity of roaming in different spheres wherever the effulgence of light spreads. The devas however paid homage to the Buddha, after his achievements of Bliss. (iv) contrarily, the titans (asura) who indulge in performing antagonistic deeds against the divine beings also roam in different spheres as much as they like, then they belong to the dark ream of the Great Universe (G.U.). The asuras are believed to hold efficient power to rule of the biosphere and demand a high biomass to rule over. (v) Similarly the beings belonging to the realms of the hell like Avici are the habitat of the dark sphere where they reap the harvest of the deeds they performed earlier and thereby endure the turbid fruits of their past deeds. Presumably, they are confined within the biome and bio–atmosphere. Thus, the subject matter of mysticism offess drastic alterations, curtailments telescoping etc. based upon logic and reasoning.

By reflecting on the concept of mysticism many poets and authors wrote works like **Divinar Commedia, King Lear, Paradise Lost, Gitanjali, Myths – Vedic,**

Buddhist and Brahmanical, Tirupati Balaji was a Buddhist Shrine, Tibetan Tradition of Mental Development and **The Gandhari Dhamapada.** Imagination inspired poets and authors and they affected from mysticism. Though Buddhism talks about the protection of the environment, it gives emphasis on the three–fold training of human mind and seven factors of the enlightenment, which are the basis of ethical sensibility to the environment. The Mahaparinibbanasutta of the Dighamikaya discusses about the three–fold courses of training like cultivation of ethical conduct (sila) meditation (Samadhi) and wisdom (panna). These three are inter–connected in the sense that the first is left behind when the second is undertaken. Without the development of these, it is impossible for one to lady happy and peaceful life. Wisdom (prajna) goes beyond knowledge attained through reading books or heasing the tales. The practice of morality (sila) and mental development (Samadhi) develops a penetrative insight and realization into the nature of everything in its proper perspective. When the realization (wisdom) appears the trained mind becomes and unshakable dynamic force that can handle any human problem without anxiety and thereby can remove the worldly problems. When the ethical conduct is firmly established, the meditation becomes effective. Though effect of meditation the transformative power of wisdom becomes possible.

The above mentioned three–fold practice has a tremendous influence on the Buddha's doctrine of seven factors of enlightenment viz., mindfulness (sati), discrimination of principles (dhammavirya), rapture (piiti), tranquility (passaddhi), concentration (samadhi) and equanimity (upekkha). It is mentioned in the Samyuthanikaya that these seven are essential for any kind of social or moral development. When a monk remaining scheduled recollects and reasons about the

doctrine, he tries to adher to the mindfulness factor of enlightenment, which is followed by other steps. After mindfulness he may discriminate, reflect on and investigate the doctrine with understanding. In this way, he can reach to the path of mysticism, which includes rapture (pitti), tranquility (passaddhi), concentration (samadhi) and equanimity (upekkha). The latters four are connected with the phenomenon of meditation, which is available through the cognitive and affective refinement. An individual having such moral qualities would be able to have sensitivity towards our environment. It is mentioned Tanhavaggo chapter of the Dhammapada that the thirst for enjoyable object makes a man blind of his own future and hence he can go to any extent for his enjoyment adopting, injury to human and non–human beings including environment. An individual having such freedom can have 'real sympathy' towards Nature, environment and non–human beings. His possessing such a mental state can do harm to others. If he cuts trees injures animals, etc., he will be condemned as found in Vinayapitika. It has also mentioned in Bhaisajya–Skanjhaka that how different trees serve us as medicines in our everyday life.

Let us now consider the Buddhist ideas that have been introduced into mysticism. Many people donot know that some of ideas have come from the impact of Buddhism when it flourished in mysticism. The Bodhi Tree is a sacred object to Buddhism because the Buddha attained Enlightenment under one such tree. South India produced many Buddhist teachers who made valuable contributions to Tamil, Pali and Sanskrit literature. They composed numerous works on a variety of subjects such as religion, Philosophy, History, Grammar, Etymology, Astronomy. References to their works are found in mysticism. Mysticism tries to remove religious discrimination in our life. The aim of the authors was to