

Acharya Dharmanand Damodar Kosambi

By: - Vishwa Konkani Sardar BASTI VAMAN SHENOY

The Original name of this famous Buddhist scholar was Dhoba Kosambi, He was born on the 9th October, 1876 at Sankhaval near Madgaon in Goa. His family originally belonged to Lotli in Sasasthi, Goa. He had to discontinue his school education on account of health problems. He assisted his father in the cultivation of family lands. He was married in June 1891.

He was very studious by temperament. He happened to read the lives of Tukaram, the famous saint of Maharashtra and Gauthama Buddha. The latter had a profound influence on his mind and he decided to devote his life to the study of Buddhism from the original Pali books. On the 2nd December 1899, he left his home and went to Poona to Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar and had his doubts cleared, but could not regain his peace of mind. He then went to Indore, Ujain and Gwalior where he received some financial help from Dr. Dwarakanath Shankar Wagh. He went to Benares where he studied Sanskrit for a short period. He went to Buddhagaya, Nepal and Burma etc. and visited some Buddhist Viharas at those places but was very much disappointed that he could not even learn Pali. On the 21st March, 1902 he left Burma for Ceylon via Calcutta and Madras.

He obtained admission, to the Vidyodaya Vidyalaya, the head of which was the well-known Sumangalacharya and where Pali was taught in Sinhalese script. This famous Institution attracted a number of students of Pali and Buddhism from many countries. He embraced the Buddhist faith and became a bhikshu and adopted the name Dharmananda . Very soon he became proficient in Pali, he mastered Vinayapitika, studied all the material available in Sinhalese script and became an Asharya of Buddha Dharma. He left Ceylon in 1905 and went to Burma where he spent a good deal of his time in various Buddhist shrines and returned to Calcutta on the 30th of June 1906.

On the 25th of October, 1906 he was appointed a lecturer in Pali in the newly started National College, Calcutta where he came into contact with Aurobindo Ghosh, who was then Professor in that college. In July 1907 Dharmananda Kosambi was appointed Reader in Pali in the Calcutta University.

He returned to Maharashtra in 1908 on a scholarship instituted by the late Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad and worked in Bombay and Poona. He wrote "Vishudda Marga" "Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha" and translated "Bodhicharya into Marathi,

His profound scholarship attracted the notice of James H. Woods of the Sanskrit Department of the Harvard University. On the 23rd of April, 1910 he left for America and worked under Prof. Leinmann of the Harvard University.

He returned to India when, due to the efforts of Dr. R.G. Bhandarkar, Pali was recognized as a separate language by the Bombay University. From 1912 to 1918, he worked as a lecturer in Pali in the Ferguson College, Poona. He was also appointed Examiner in Pali and Ardhamagadhi in Bombay. He attracted many students to the study of Pali and Buddhism, and many of the Professors of Pali in the country were his students.

From 1918 to 1922, he was a lecturer in Philosophy at the Harvard University where he did some research in Pali and Buddhism. In 1922 he joined the Gujarat Vidyapit founded by Mahatma Gandhi and taught Pali from 1923 to 1927 he became the Honorary Secretary of the Gujarat Vidyapith. In

1929 he was called to Russia as a lecturer in Ancient Indian History and Culture at the Leningrad University.

On his return to India, he joined the Civil Disobedience Movement and underwent imprisonment for breaking the Salt Law. From 1931 to 1936 he was again called at Harvard University. In 1936 he joined the Banaras Hindu University from 1937 onwards where he wrote “Hindu Samskriti and Ahimsa”.

And he spent his time in the “Bahujana Vihara” opened by Sri G.D. Birla and did a great deal of propaganda on Buddhism and ahimsa among the workers. In 1944, he was appointed to the Faculty of Arts of the Bombay University.

His health had suffered as a result of his strenuous activities. He undertook a self-imposed fast to death and died in the Sevashram at Wardha on the 4th of June, 1947. On the next day Mahatma Gandhi paid a tribute to him at the prayer meeting at Delhi.

At a public meeting held on the 5th of July, 1947, presided over by the late Shri B.G. Kher, a committee was formed with Shri P.M. Lad, I.C.S, as its Secretary to collect funds to perpetuate, his memory. It was decided to send students on scholarships to study Pali and Buddhism in Ceylon, to collect and print Pali books in Devanagari script and translate them into Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati and to collect all his works and publish them.

He had a daughter and a son. His daughter Manik Dharmananda Kosambi accompanied her father when he went to America to take his appointment at the Harvard University and joined the Radcliffe College, Cambridge (Massachusetts) and graduated in Philosophy and psychology with French and German as her second languages. She returned to India in the year 1921.

Kosambi's son Prof. Damodar Dharmanada Kosambi, who graduated from the Harvard University, is a distinguished mathematician whose research works in “Path Geometry and operators “etc are well – known. He is a Founder Fellow of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangaluru. He was awarded a scholarship of the United Nations Educational & Cultural Organisation and was a visiting Professor of the Princeton University.

India's famous and foremost writer, historian Ramachandra Guha has published “Democrats and Dissenters” his latest book. There is an article about The life and Death of a Gandhian Buddhist Dharmananda Damodar Kosambi.

KONKANI TONGUE TWISTER

Puttur Pandu Pai le puttale puttaana paanch pikkile Popashphala Peskatina pessunu pithle poleraanthu pathlayle....!

GAUD DESH (BENGAL)

By: - Prof. K. R. Prabhu, Cultural Anthropologist

History: The Sahyadri Khand of Maha Bharat says that Sage Parashuram had brought Gaud Saraswat Brahmins of 96 families belonging to 10 Gotras (Dasha Gothris) to his own created land of Gomantak. The object of migrating the said Gaud Saraswat Brahmins were with an intention of performing the 1. Yajna Karya 2. Pitra Karya and 3. Brahmin Bhojan on the Holy land (Punya Bhoomi) of Gomantak (Goa) to wash the sins he possessed by killing Kshatryas in revenge of his mother's death. Gaur and Gaud are the words which are interchangeable in use.

What is Gaud Desh? Gaud Saraswat Brahmins left the Saraswati River Banks to other places on account of facing draught for 12 years. The said migration of Brahmins touched places like Haryana, Utter Pradesh, North of Bihar DHARBANG – MALDA (presently a district in West Bengal). The bottom of Himalayas where a higher plateau was found suitable to perform Yajna –that place is called the Gaud Desh (means elevated place). In anthropology, the name Gaud Desh might also have come to the place because Gaud Saraswat Brahmins colony was there. The third possibility is HIGHER (GAUD) DHARMIC OR VAIDIC PERFORMANCES were conducted by these Gaud Saraswat Brahmins dwelling in that place may also have brought the name as Gaud Desh.

The Gaud Desh is also Punya Bhoomi due to the rituals performed by Gaud Saraswat Brahmins for centuries from Treta-Dwapar yugas has added the Dharma-Karma Phalam to raise it as a Centre for Knowledge and today we find the “GAUR BANGA UNIVERSITY” in that place

Local influence: When migration takes place, over a period of time the local factors influence on language – words, ascent, adoption of words, quotations from Bengali language on ne part and In terms of food (fish eating), customs, rituals (Durga Pooja and Panchayatan) etc. on the other. In this the said Gaud Desh Saraswat Brahmins learnt Fish Eating, Durga Pooja, social customs in marriages, funeral and dharmic rituals. Gaur/Gaud Brahmins are known for their Vedic excellence in practice. The Bengali ascent like “ toshen, ashen, javkka, divkka, khavchen, jevchen and so on is in Konkani Language of Goa.

“Gaud Bangali” as a title: This is a tile for “Intelligence” “ shrewd” “wisdom” and for “strategist” (planner for operation to Success). Gaud Bangal Saraswats were Maha Mantries, Ministers in the erstwhile Maharajas and Dynasties for their strategic skills. Like Chanakya the name indicates “intelligence” and “strategist” (plans for success from any worst event), Gaud Saraswat Brahmins also earned the name.

Chanakya is a title today to anyone who is shrewd, intelligent and strategist. The negative use is also there. He is a Kutilya means he is a crook or most intelligent to come out from the critical situation. Similarly, Gaud Bangla Saraswat Brahmins. Someone is crook, fraud and harmful, they call him with a slang language as ,”He is a pakka (great) “Gaud Bangali” (budhimaan) Today “Gaur Banga University” stands on the same place in the Gaud Desh reminds us the strength of the soil of Gaud Desh by the result of the Yajna, Yagas , dharmic rituals held on that place for centuries by Saraswats.

To fix the Muhurtham for the Coronation (Pattabhishek) of Sri Rama at Ayodhya, there were sharp difference of opinion among sages, vidwans aasaan Purohitas like Vasisht, Sumant, other Astrologers etc. Not able to come to unity, finally they decided to invite the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins (GSB) from Gaud Desh. He prescribes the auspicious ‘ABHIJIT “ muhuratham i.e. 12.00 noon. For which there is no reference to horoscope and tarabalas to examine to fix the Muhurtham. All accepted the verdict. That is what a Gaud Saraswat Brahmin is.

KONKANI TIP

If Bob Marley were a Konkani, what would be his sister's name?

Answer: Kinchi Marley !?!

This NIT-K researcher gives rural houses pedal power

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MANGALURU: A research student of NIT-K, Surathkal has developed a technology that can light houses by using a bicycle.

Named 'simple low-cost human muscle energy-based battery charging scheme for rural household lighting', this technology uses a bicycle to generate power. "By fixing a permanent magnet direct current (PMDC) generator to the rear wheel of the bicycle, energy can be generated and stored in batteries to use it for lighting the houses," explains **Basti Bharath Shenoy**, a research scholar and the man behind the project.

He undertook this research under the guidance of **U Sripati Acharya**, head of department, electronics & communication (E&C) and **Laxminidhi T**, a faculty member, NIT-K, Surathkal.

He said that the plight of the rural people who live in dark either due to no electrification or long power outages made him come out with such a technology. He took two years to complete the project.

Explaining the working of this technology, Shenoy, said one needs to put the bicycle on a specially designed platform where the rear is coupled with the PMDC generator and pedal it to generate power. "The quantum of power generation depends on the speed and duration of pedaling. The unregulated DC voltage from the PMDC generator is regulated through the power management circuit (PMC) for storing the energy in a battery for later use.

The PMC can be implemented using a linear or switching regulator to obtain the desired voltage to charge the battery," he said adding that he will apply for patent for his technology soon.



