



AWAKE ! BUDDHISTS OF NEPAL

Dhamma.Digital

By Nhuchhe Bahadur Bajracharya
Founder Principal
Maitri School
Chhauni

Publisher's Note

There are Lots of Gods....! A Lot of shrines & Temples.....!! A Lot of Pagodas (chaityas).....!!! And, many of worships, Poojas & religious ceremonies as well; where we live in; it's called Nepal !

But unfortunately most of Nepalese are in suffer, in pain and in restlessness. No Gods or shrines Nor Poojas or ceremonies help them ridding from their sufferings ! Nepal; birth place of Great Massenger of Peace & Harmony; the lord Buddha; lacks peace & harmony. Nepalese suffer from unpeaceful activities !

O' Nepal, O'Nepalese ! it's high time to get up from your misleading, misusing, mistaking & misfollosing; from your ignorance.

We should thank to the writer of this booklet for explanation of the meaning of 'wake' up in fact and how & why we all indeed wake up for. I think his writing will be able to fulfil the gap between reality & concept of our glance at Dharma (doctrine). So publisher really hope you may actually wake up after reading this small book-let. That's why we're happy to say that it's our pleasure to republish it and handover to you for your betterment.

I would like to thank to the printer who published it well in time and to all who helped for bringing out it on behalf of Anandakuti Vihar Trust. Excuse me if there's any mistake as I've read the proof.

May you all be happy.

Bhikkhu Dharma Murti
Member Secretary
Anandkuti Vihar Trust.

80th Publication published
Ananda Kuti Vihar Trust
Swoyambhu, Kathmandu
Nepal

First Edition - 1995
Second Edition - 2004

Copyright : Ananda Kuti Vihar Trust

First Edition : 1000 copies
Second Edition : 1000 copies



Dhamma.Digital

Price Rs. 15/-

Printed in Nepal
by **NEW NEPAL PRESS**, Kathmandu
Phone : 4259032, 4434850

AWAKE !

BUDDHISTS OF NEPAL

This pamphlet is addressed to all those who follow the teachings of Bhagavan Buddha-these we call Buddhists. We hope that it will not only be read by them, not only thought about but it will be acted upon; only then will this little book have achieved its aim.

The title says, "AWAKE". Now if one tells someone to wake up this implies that they have been sleeping. As this book is for Buddhists of Nepal, it means that many of them are sleeping. So first it is necessary to define what is meant by a SLEEPING BUDDHIST. This we will do point by point.

I WHAT IS A SLEEPING BUDDHIST?

1. When you ask him why he is a Buddhist, he says, "My family is Buddhist," or, "I was born a Buddhist." Apart from this he has no idea why he is a Buddhist. Why not be Christian or Muslim?.

A real live Buddhist will never answer the first question in these ways. He would say, "I am a Buddhist because the great personality of Lord Buddha inspires me, or because the Dharma (teachings), he taught is practical in our life, because of its great depth of understanding and wisdom, or, Buddha Dharma is a religion praising the kind and equal treatment of all, a Dharma of Karuna (teaching of kindness) in such ways he might answer.

2. One who sleeps does not know what is true and what is false. He does not know what is the right way towards happiness in this life and what are misleading ways. Neither does he know what is the Samyak Drishti (right view) of the Buddhist teachings, nor why we must say that other Dharmas are leading either in spiritually wrong directions, or only giving direction for part of the path-thus they are Mitthya Drishti (wrong view).

The Buddhist who is active and knowledgeable knows that the right to judge any Dharma is, Is it the good of all beings as well as for my own freedom? Does it lead to the great happiness and peace of Nirvana (internal happiness)? The Buddha encouraged his followers to question what He taught, not just to blindly follow. But if one is asleep how is it possible to question what is true and

what is not true, how then can a man know the right from the wrong path?

3. If we see a Buddhist performing some old custom, then we should ask him, "Why are you doing that?" If he is a sleeping Buddhist, he may reply, "It is the tradition, the custom of our family, the way my Guru instructed me etc. "And he will answer with faith, faith that whatever he is doing is really the correct thing.

The Buddha preached rather differently for He said that faith and wisdom must balance each other and one without the other only produces a top-sided spiritual development. Thus faith (Sradhha) without wisdom (Pragya), is blind faith. There is no place for blind faith in Buddha Dharma and a wise Buddhist will always ask himself "Are these customs and traditions which I follow really the Buddha taught, are these really spiritually profitable, am I wise as well as faithful in following these? Such is the awake Buddhist way of thinking.

4. A sleeping Buddhist may everyday carry out his worship of all the Buddhas, Bodhisatwas (future Buddhas) and Devas but for all this he is no nearer freedom if his actions are done without knowledge. He does not know anything about the Pancha Tathagata (previous Buddhas), or of the meaning of Avalokiteswara and Manjushree, then why should blindly worship them? There is little benefit from rituals of rice, colour, water and flower-offerings if these are made ignorantly.

Now Buddha Dharma is pre-eminently a religion of knowledge where nothing is done without meaning. In all the different types of Buddhadharmas - Srawaka Yana, Mahayana, Vajrayana - in all there is meaning but people forget the meanings and only cling in their doctrine to the outward forms of religion. A Buddhist really alive does not act in this way. Before doing anything he wants to know "Tell me the meaning of this so that I may understand." Where there is nothing to understand, where worship and ritual are meaningless or un-Buddhist - this he does not do himself and discourages others from these ignorant practices.

5. Full of sleep a Buddhist may even support, an ignorant priest (Gubhaju), doing as he says, having whatever pujas the priest says are 'necessary' performed, and of course paying the priest the 'necessary' amount of money for these services, which from ignorance the jajaman (client) thinks are essential for him and his family's welfare.

A lively Buddhist well knows the value of puja but he knows also that he can do it himself without a priest (gubhaju). Did the Buddha teach priests are necessary? No, for He taught against the ignorant Brahmin priests of his own day. The Awakened One surely be surprised to see the same sort of priests in his own religion. Instead of doing as a priest says, a real follower of the Dharma (religion), asks "Why?" If the priest can give intelligent explanation it is good but if otherwise then that Buddhist will turn away from such ignorance. An intelligent Buddhist seeks the good advice of well-trained and learned Bajracharya, and Bhikkhus whether from Nepalese, the Sreelankan or Tibetan traditions, in all-matters spiritual.

6. Buddhists who have ideas in their minds about Buddhist castes are soundly asleep. They believe that there are different sections of Buddhist society just like the Hindu society has its Chatur Varna (four main castes). And because of this erroneous belief they observe all sorts of restrictions themselves as though they were caste-Hindus.

This is strange because the Buddha preaches often against the idea of castes, He saw the harm that it does to state, society, individuals and moreover to the mind. A wise Buddhist in Nepal knows that caste restrictions were imposed on him in the past by the repressive measures of Hindu Kings. Castes has never been in anyway connected with Buddhadharma-this he knows-and, that the Buddha's message preached for all in this world means that Buddhist are above all ideas of caste-they are an international, inter-racial community beyond all petty divisions.

7. Another sign of the sleeping Buddhist is when he blames all lack of morality (seela) and failure of religious effort onto the Kali Yuga (iron age). He will shring his shoulders and think or say, "What is the use of trying, it is Kali-Yuga. "This is excuse for doing nothing, and his chance to continue sleeping-this is his deadly fatalism which if it continued can kill Buddhadharma.

Buddhists with even a little knowledge of their Teacher's instructions, know that He never encouraged fatalism. Always He told his followers to be energetic, to live and decide now what shall be done and then to do it. This a wise knows; and he acts upon this advice, never thinking that the decay of Dharma depends upon the Kali-

Yuga but realising that the growth and downfall of the Buddha's message depend only upon the state of our own minds. If we try, we can do, we will do-thus thinks the awake Buddhist.

8. If sleepers among Buddhists cannot enjoy the Kali-Yuga excuse then they will be sure to have some other way of escaping from the problems of the present. Either they will turn to the past and linger over its glories-the times of the Buddhas and their great disciples-in this way they escape today's failures. Or, they will fly in imagination into the splendid future time of Maitri Buddha (Coming Buddha) anything to get away from what needs doing NOW.

How differently the awake Buddhist think! He knows that the Buddha taught the importance of living in the present moment and that it is no use escaping to the past-deed and gone, on to the future-an uncertain dream. Whatever it is necessary to do today do NOW-not tomorrow. More even than that, do in the morning what should be done then and not leave it until afternoon. In such a way a real Buddhist thinks, advises, and does himself.

II WHY WAKE UP?

1. No one can truly call himself a Buddhist unless he practises what the Buddha taught. Buddhism is the most practical of all religions and so one may truly say that there is little excuse for sleeping Buddhists. But there is no chance of practice while people are drugged with the sleep of ignorance already described. Buddhist must wake up to practice! They must awake if they would truly call themselves Buddhists. No practice, no Buddhism!

Buddhadharma is like the most precious jewel-the diamond. As the diamond is crystal clear so the Dharma teaches the practice of Sila (morality). The diamond unequalled brilliance flashing forth an infinite range of beautiful colours is the power of Upaya (means) for leading beings towards Enlightenment-it is the great power of Karuna (kindness). Third excellence of the diamond is its hardness able to cut even glass. This represents the penetratingly sharp lokuttara (spiritual) wisdom (pragya) able to cut off even the most degraded passions and worldly defilement (klesh). If a man was foolish he might not be able to tell a diamond from a piece of old glass whereas a wise man would sure understand "This is diamond, this glass." A fool might indeed even throw a diamond into the mud.

In Nepal, many Buddhists are like unwise men who, even though the Diamond-Dharma is in their hand, even though they are born into Buddhist families, still throw away this jewel. For many Buddhists here do not know how valuable their Dharma is, they do not know its great teachings and so are careless of it.

They should think how many beings there are, in this world and how few of these know the Buddha's teaching (Dharma.) How few men even have heard of the Buddhadharmā? Among those who have heard of it, how many call themselves Buddhists? And among Buddhists are there many who practise the Buddha's teachings?

If we have been born into a Buddhist family then this is very fortunate for us. As the Buddha was the wisest of teachers, his followers must try to develop His wisdom (Pragya) in themselves. Then they are truly Buddhists, then as wise men they will value their priceless and beautiful gem-the Diamond-Dharma. Should not Buddhists WAKE UP for this?

2. Every living being longs to be happy. No creature likes unhappiness. Therefore any teaching which gives happiness is something to be valued highly. Now the Buddha's Dharma teaches not only one's own happiness but also that the happiness of everyone has to be considered. We should try not only for our own happiness but also for well-being and joy of everyone else.

Not only that, but the Buddha teaches a Way of Happiness for many (Mahasukhayana). Those who practise in the good ways He taught are practising happily; their Sila (moral) kept pure and unbroken gives happiness; their practice of Samadhi (meditation) gives calmness and concentration and so-happiness of mind (chitta), and their practice brings the happiness of freedom-freedom from all bonds and unhappiness of Greed, Hate and Delusion (Lobha, Dwesha, Moha)

This freedom is called "Nirvanam paramam sukham." Buddhists then, are those who desire not only their own happiness-but the happiness of many. Their practical ways of achieving this are ways of happiness (such as Astangika marga (eight noble path), Dasaparamita). And the goal for themselves is the highest happiness. How foolish to sleep while so much happiness is offered to you and when you can offer so much happiness to others.

Should not Buddhists WAKE UP for this?

3. The Buddha is often called Mahakaruniko Natho-the Lord of Great Compassion and so with every living being he was gentle, giving them whatever help they needed. Buddhists also try to follow the example of their Teacher. They try to make all happy: those who need clothes, to them they give cloth; for those who are hungry to them they give food; those desiring money have their desire fulfilled; those needing medicine, to them the correct treatment are given; for the ignorant, schools are provided; and for those who wish to hear the freedom-giving Dharma, for them there is this highest gift, the preaching of Dharma.

In these ways charitable institutions, hospital and dispensaries, schools, Dharmasalas and Viharas have always been provided by Buddhists compassionate for the well-being of living creatures. Think for example of Emperor Ashoka in India and of the many kings in different countries who have also been inspired by the principle of compassion. To lessen the sufferings of others in all these ways is this important? "Very important" would be the Buddhist answer.

Should not Buddhists WAKE UP for this?

4. We are now living, it is said, in the Age of Science. What does this mean? It means that certain principles discovered by a particular method are applied to our lives. If we are educated in school then we are soon taught what is the basis of science and scientific thinking.

A theory is only justified if it fits all the facts that we know. We should then be able to prove that theory by experiment with those facts. Proof of a theory consists in accounting for all the known items of information in such a way as to fit in with other proven discoveries or to conform other theories (except where a new theory is proved and previous ideas are corrected).

A Dharma for this age and this way of thinking must be able to stand up to these principles of scientific testing. You must be able to apply to your Dharma the spirit of scientific enquiry as you would use to test any theory.

The Buddha did not ask people to believe blindly. He asked them to test his Dharma and find out whether or not it led to their good. He presents people with many teachings (these are equivalent to theories), all He asks is that people prove them by their own experience.

He does not ask that you should believe anything which the scientific mind could not accept (for instant we can find no proof of Iswora, Atma, so the Buddha taught, that since we cannot prove the existence of these things, it is wrong to be concerned about them). All the Dharma that He teaches was this scientific method but cannot be directly compared to the science of the present day since it goes far beyond them. The scientist investigates the world 'out there'; the Buddhist, aided by the Enlightened Teachings of the Buddha, not only concerns himself with the 'exterior' world but also turns the scientific method inwards upon the working of the mind. He thus has clear and practical teachings to guide his spiritual progress.

Should not Buddhists WAKE UP for this?

5. The Lord Buddha had while a Bodhisatva searched for many years and had gone along many wrong spiritual paths before he found the Way to Supreme Perfect Enlightenment (Anuttara Samayak Sambodhi) at Buddha Gaya.

But He did not want others to waste so much time and spend so much energy in searching after useless ways and He therefore taught others the way to come to Enlightenment (bodhi) or to experience Nirvana.

The Way He taught is surely practical. He says that we should ask ourselves if we are completely happy or not? Do we at all times experience happiness unmixed with any sorrow? Even if a person is leading an extremely happy life without the sorrows of sudden death or painful illness, still such a person must come to old age when the body grows weak, he must slowly lose the sharpness of his senses and after this, he comes together with everything that is born, to death. But if we observe life carefully we see that there are many sorrows, the most painful of which are not physical but mental ones. Whenever our minds are overcome by Greed, Hatred or delusion-these are the sources of greatest suffering-then we are mentally unbalanced, sick with mind diseases.

A man sick needs a doctor to tell him what is wrong with him. The Buddha is the great doctor who says of all men that they are diseased through Craving (Trishna)

If a doctor did nothing more than tell a patient his disease he should be of little comfort. But the Buddha

prescribes the treatments known as Trishikchhya¹, Astangika Marga² or the Dasa Paramita³ etc.

The cure is complete when all selfishness is removed from us, when there is no longer Lobha, Dwesha, or Moha, (greed, Hate, and Delusion) and when we experience the peace and happiness of a Lokutra attainment even in this life.

The Buddha has in the past healed many of their sicknesses and will give medicine to many more in the future. The medicines of practice are all there but who will take them?

Should not Buddhists WAKE UP for this?

6. Just as when we are on a journey where only one road will take us to our goal, it is even the same with a spiritual journey. If one wishes to attain to that state found by the Buddha, then one must go along the correct road and go according to the direction given. It is useless on any journey to mix up the roads for by so doing one gets nowhere.

Therefore the Dharma of Supreme Enlightenment should not be mixed up with anything else. It should not for instant other religions. If the latter is mingle with Saddharma (true teaching) then this, the pure teachings of the Buddha become impure and the directions along the Way become confused.

Pure teachings of the Buddha are to be found in all schools of Buddhism which give clear instructions and practical methods on how to attain Enlightenment (as in Theravada, Mahayana, Vajrayana) Mixture of these teachings with others not deriving from the Buddha's Supreme Enlightenment only confuses the Way.

Should not Buddhists WAKE UP for this?

7. The richness of Buddhism in stories of the life of the Buddha and His disciples has been a strong factor in the

-
1. Sila, Samadhi, Pragya.
 2. Smayak dristi, Samyak sankalpa, samyak vacha, Samyat karmanta, Samyak ajiva, Smayak Vyayayam, Samyak smriti Samyak samadhi.
 3. Dana paramita, Sila paramita, Chhyanti paramita, Virya paramita, Samadhi paramita, Pragya paramita, Pranidhana paramita, Upaya-Kausalya paramita, Bala paramita, Gyana paramita.

production in all Buddhist countries of painting, sculptures, metal work, poetry, dramas and music and other arts. The great advantage of these artistic works besides their own beauty, is their educational value. People learn Dharma with some difficulty from books but they learn easily from paintings and songs in fact from all arts. Even the great Buddhist philosophy of Pratitya Samutpada (cause and effect) is painted as the Sansara-Charkra (wheel of life) on so many temple-walls so that people may easily know its meaning. From the many different postures (asana) and gestures (mudra) it is possible to learn much of the Buddha and all the best representations of Him radiate the three qualities which He showed in his life- Maha-Visuddhi, Mahapragya, and Mahakaruna. The lives of Bhikkhus and Bodhisatvas are often shown so that a whole story and good teaching may be learnt from a single painting or sculpture.

These are some examples of practical and inspirational value of the precious arts. As they are so valuable it is important that not only should the ancient treasures be well preserved but also that traditions of all these arts should be maintained. If there are no good painters or image-makers trained today then how can the tradition be maintained for the benefit of people in the future?

Should not Buddhists WAKE UP for this?

We have seen what a sleeping Buddhist is and what he is losing by his careless sleep, now we must consider how to wake him up.

HOW TO WAKE UP?

1. A Buddhist is one who goes for refuge (sarana) only to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (and in some teachings to the Guru also). These three being the most precious things known in this world are called the Triratna.

What does Sarana means? Its meaning is that we believe that it is necessary to have the best guidance for our spiritual progress and so we go with every part of ourselves for refuge to the Triratna. That is, the first time we repeat "Buddham Saranam gachhami, Dhammam....., Sangham" we are taking refuge with our bodies (kaya) the second time (Dutiyampi) with our speech (vaka) and the third time (Tatiyampi) with our minds (chitta).

But what are the Triratna? We cannot take refuge properly unless we know that the Buddha in this case our undefiled (akleshika) mind which makes it possible for us to attain to what Gautama Buddha attained, to become in fact a Buddha. The Dharma Sarana is the method we use to gain this goal, the method being the right instruction which we receive from our teachers. Sangham Saranam means the secure refuge of the Enlightened Sages, those Ariyas, Bodhisattvas and Arahants etc., who have used their methods and gained the secure and tranquil peace from which they cannot fall.

Others say that the Triratna are the Teacher, the Teaching and the taught (those who have been taught), which is a good explanation.

If a man calls himself a Buddhist then it is quite sufficient for him to go to these three only, for these are truly helpful refuge and the aid that a proper understanding of them gives is far superior to other so called refuges. A wise Buddhist does not go for refuge to sacred forests or holy mountains, nor to peculiar pieces of stone, nor to great rivers nor to shrines (Chaityas) or temples, he certainly does not go to any devatas or Iswara (God) seeking help. What is the use of all these when the Buddha-mind is within ourselves, the Dharma our method of realising it, and Sangha our inspiration and guide?

So in Pali language we have the verses:

“Natthi me saranam anyam

Boddho me saranam varam.” (Dhammo.....
Sangho.....)

A wise Buddhist guards well these three precious things—the Triratna. He does not think that it is possible to keep only one or two of these Jewels without the others. All these are necessary and for real spiritual growth, they should not be separated. It is specially necessary to have a well-trained Sangha of Bhikkhus who can teach Dharma to others while practising it intensively themselves. Wise Buddhists therefore not only respect the Bhikkhu-Sangha, they support it and see that proper facilities are available for teaching young Sramaneras and Bhikkhu—as these are the teachers of the future.

The understanding and preservation of the Three Jewels is the first thing necessary for awakening.

The Buddha taught a Dharma which is clearly explained (swakhato) and which leads one onwards in understanding (opaneyiko).

When Lord Buddha preached to anyone, He always explained its meaning very clearly so that the listeners would understand each point before He started to explain the next. Everything is explained in detail, analysing each statement to show its whole meaning. Only when the first point had been grasped would the Lord pass on to the second. In this way He led his listeners on and increased their power of understanding. In three great ways of training has the Buddha explained His teaching (sasana)—the Trishikchhya.

*“Sabba papassa akaranam
Kusalassa upasampadā
Sachitta pariyodapanam
Etam Buddhāna Sāsanam”*

“Sabba papassa akaranam”. Not to do evil. “This means the training of Sila. Now all Buddhists Sila is taken with two ideas in mind,” Not to do anything harmful to others, “and not to do anything harmful to my own welfare.” ‘Harmful’ means ‘causing any dukkha (suffering), either mental or physical’ and ‘others’ means ‘any living beings, humans, animals or others.’ For these reasons upasakas take the Pancha Sila (five precepts) which is the first step we must take.

The result of keeping the Sila pure is that our minds become peaceful because there is then no difference between what we ought to do (sila) and what we really do (papa).

“Kusalassa upasampada”—“To learn to do good”. This is the training of Samadhi or Dhyana. Why should we trouble to practise this? A mind well-trained on meditation is easily controlled, easily concentrates, quickly learns and is calm and happy. Dhyana is the refinement and training the emotions so that we are full of Maitri, Karuna, and Mudita for others. Apart from these results which are surely desirable, those who gain the super-human states of Dhayana enjoy the pleasures of the gods (devas) themselves, while being able to give others great help in the problems of their lives.

“Sachittapariyodapanam”—To cleanse one’s own heart. “This is the training in Pragyā. This is the highest

development of intelligence attainable only when the mind is already quietened by the practice of Dhyana. Pragyā is the sword with which all the defilement (klesha) of Lobha, dwesha and moha are cut off.

The result is that where lokuttara pragyā is experienced, the mind is brilliantly sharp, having insight not only into one own character but into that of others also.

“Etam Buddhāna sasanam”-“This is the teaching of all the Buddhas” The Buddhas have these three trainings for removal of dukkha amongst all peoples and so that they may realize Great Way of Happiness. This is only won when all three of these teachings are practised together- this is the second thing necessary for awakening.

3. There are many different schools of Buddhist thought and practice all of which offer methods for the attainment of peace and happiness. In the 2539 years of Buddhist history there have never been any wars between these different groups. It is a splendid tradition to be long maintained and for this no violence of body, speech or writing should be made against these holding other ideas.

Each of the great Yanas should be seen as strong in one particular point. These points together make up a complete Buddhādharma, thus: Hinayana (Theravada) insists on the necessity of Sila and so is strong in purity (visuddhi), Mahayana always teaches the Bodhisatva ideal and so is strong in Upaya or Karuna; and the Vajrayana gives instructions (or should do) in the practice of Dhyana and development of Pragyā and so is strong in these.

Let us have harmony between these teachings, let us practise them together and let there be no quarrelling- this is the third necessary for awakening.

4. If people are truly to awake then they must be able to read the inspiring words of the Buddha. For this reason, translations of the Sutras are essential, beginning with those having the practical bearing on household life and going on to others teaching the deeper doctrines. These Sutras (whether from Pali or Sanskrit) should then be published together with translated articles and material written in Nepal, in the form of cheap booklets to be issued as a series (as is being done in the Wheel series of pamphlets in Sri Lanka).

Later, translations of whole collections of Sutras can be published in book form together with useful comments

upon them pointing out what is particularly applicable to the present day.

Another urgent need in the present, is the publication in National language—so that all may read it—of a Buddhist monthly magazine.

All these—pamphlets, books and magazine are together the fourth thing necessary for awaking.

5. Buddhists should press for regular Radio time to be allotted to them. Lectures, the chanting of sutras, recordings of Buddhist celebrations etc. can reach large numbers of people are thus very valuable. Of greatest value though are those programmes which tell people "What Buddhadharma is." This the fifth thing necessary for awakening.

6. Buddhist organizations should regularly hold cultural programmes of song and poetry, painting, carving, and metal work. These not only raise the standard of the Buddhistic arts but will attract many non-Buddhist. For the finest examples shown or composed, suitable prizes should be offered by way of encouragement. All such cultural programmes, competitions and exhibition are the sixth thing necessary for awakening.

7. Although Buddhists are numerous in Nepal, effective Buddhist organizations are very few. It is very important to guard against the dangers listed under "Why wake up," as well as to accomplish all the methods listed of "How to wake up," that really alive and working societies and groups be formed as quickly as possible. Different organizations could well look after all the differing activities and necessities for awakening so far given. There should never be any quarrelling between them or within themselves if Sila (honest behaviour) and Maitri (loving-kindness) are always practised.

Active Buddhist groups, for it is no good having "sleeping" organizations, should always have for their motto and ideal "Reform of Buddhasasana" Besides the specialist organizations already mentioned, every village, every Vihara in town, every group of Buddhists wherever they are living, should have their own little organization. These local societies can be affiliated to more central bodies for the purpose of closely working together. What will be the programme of these locality groups? Five suggestions follow:

- a. The study of the scriptures. How can you practice Buddhism unless you know what the

Buddha has said? It is best to approach this study through regular meetings where introductory book is first read out section by section, and then discussed. After a number of such works have been studied in this way, then the Sutras, preferably with a commentary, can be tackled.

Besides giving all a general knowledge of Buddhism (for such meetings should be open to interested non-Buddhists as well as to all Buddhists), they will gradually give training to a number of younger people who can then preach the Dharma. To vary the programme Bhikkhus where and when available, should be invited to preach the Dharma.

- b. **Meditation meetings:** These can at first form part of the preceding kind of meeting where to begin with 5-10 minutes could be devoted to sitting still in silence. When people would like to practise together for longer periods, which is certainly helpful at the beginning, then advice should be sought from a Buddhist Bhikkhu or upasaka with meditation experience as to the correct methods and way of conducting such meetings.
- c. **Puja and Festival Meetings:** Much puja is done in Nepal with little understanding. In Buddhadharma, the puja is done not for the sake of the Buddhas or Bodhisatvas, but for ones own sake. That is, a puja is performed to gain certain states of mind and these can only be obtained if knowledge accompanies and guides faith. Buddhist puja should only be with this in mind (not as worship of a god—quite foreign to Buddhist practice).
Festivals should be celebrated even among small groups of Buddhists though they should be quite certain of what it is that they are celebrating and that the meaning is in accordance with the Buddha's teachings.
- d. We now turn to the expressions of practising Buddhadharma. Small Buddhist groups can do much valuable social work. They can suggest and work at improved standards of hygiene, thus lowering the incidence of disease. They can assist in the provision of dispensaries open to all. They can give advice in disputes between families and could organize some provision for the education and support of orphans and the relief of the poor. For all

such good work, local organizations should collect a fund adequate for these purposes.

- e. General discussions should be organized from time upon important matters of welfare; debates on interesting subjects are also very useful - in fact all activities which further education and decrease ignorance should be encouraged. The education of women and girls, the breaking of caste barriers by inter-caste functions (dining and marriage) and provision of evening schools and study classes to aid students are all worthy of Buddhist energy.

The points mentioned here, perhaps with many others are all activities possible to local Buddhist groups - together they form the seventh thing for awakening.

IV WHAT IS IT TO BE AWAKE?

The Great Teacher of our Dharma is called the Buddha - One who has Woken up. The Buddha is our guide - so we should try to perfect in ourselves what was perfect in Him. The Buddha is our ideal for the finest of all qualities were fully developed in Him. He was ever full of the spirit of Maitri and Ahimsa - never He harmed others; in Him, Pragya the light of knowledge always streamed forth. Never was His mind obscured by Avidya; and He is called the Mahakaruniko Natho - one who wishes the happiness of all.

This is to be AWAKE. Being His followers we must also begin to WAKE UP or surely we cannot call ourselves Buddhists.

It is all very well to write a booklet on the reform of the Buddhasasana in Nepal. To write a book is easy but whether that book has any effect or not - that is the important thing. The effect it has depends on YOU - every Buddhist who reads this. Your waking up is in your own hands so:

WAKE UP BUDDHISTS OF NEPAL !

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY !

APPENDIX

1. The Buddhadharma is preached for the complete removal of all dukha which is inseparably connected with all the worldly (lokika) sukha. The truth of dukha becomes apparent to anyone who examines his own and other people's lives. Thus the Buddhadharma starts from our own experience (not from theories and dogma).
2. The Buddha encourages His followers to question both about the Buddha and His Dharma - They Must not be accepted blindly. First intelligence, then faith and these two (sraddha and pragya) must be balanced.
3. Buddhadharma is the only religion which can stand up to the scientific method of investigation, since it has no fear of any question; nor can the material sciences or psychology destroy the Dharma - they only (in a limited degree) confirm some of the Buddha's statement.
4. Most religions teach: God, the creator, an atma, avataravada, and holiness and complete truth of some God-revealed scriptures none of which are satisfactorily provable. Buddhadharma teaches that God is a wrong idea, that atma is a subtle selfishness, and teaches utter selflessness - anatma. No God therefore no avatara-but all may attain to Buddhahood providing that they mature the paramita as Bodhisatvas, and the Tripitaka is not 'holy' for Buddhist - but it is a method, a finger pointing the way.
5. The Buddha taught Dharma clearly and step by step so that all-whether sweeper or Brahmin, could understand.
6. Buddhadharma is not concerned with exterior rites and ceremonies for these have no value in ridding us of dukkha: it is concerned with the deep working of the mind where we should practise the Dharma for our complete Freedom (vimukti).
7. The Buddha never forced anyone to follow Him and His Dharma has spread only by Peace. Buddhists of different schools have never fought each other nor have they persecuted those of other religions, though Buddhists firmly believe in the truth of their own Dharma.
8. All the religions of the world are easily accounted for (without distorting them) within the frame work taught by the Buddha. That in no other Dharma in the world can this be done illustrates the Buddha's depth and breadth of teaching.

When we know some points like these are there not good reasons for calling ourselves Buddhist?



THE AUTHOR

Nhuchhe Bahadur Bajracharya, educationist and teacher, was born in 1920 in Kathmandu. Even as a student at Durbar High School, he felt a keen urge to share his knowledge with boys younger than himself and he conducted a tutorial for half a dozen children of the neighbourhood. Later, while he was still a student at Pembroke Academy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, he made a solemn promise to impart to his countrymen whatever knowledge he was able to acquire himself.

Early in the 1950's he found himself teaching English to Tibetan and Newar merchants in Kalimpong and Lhasa. His dream of opening a school was fulfilled in 1952 when jointly with the late Venerable Amritananda, he founded Ananda Kuti Vidyapeeth in Kathmandu. The first class consisted of only six students, one of whom eventually became a Dean in Kathmandu University.

After his retirement from Ananda Kuti Vidyapeeth, he founded Maitri Sishu Vidyalaya, with the objective of inculcating among students a sense of civic responsibility, self reliance and obedience to parents.

He has devoted all his energy and time to the diffusion of knowledge, except for some years that he spent on travels around the world, making friends, "seeking instruction and gaining practical experience in several disciples of study and vocation." The greatest lesson he learnt was "there is no substitute for self-reliance and hard work to further one's own interest to achieve prosperity and attain success."

Besides an autobiography, '**The Story of My Life** (1998), he has to his credit some school text books: **The Story of Prince Siddhartha** (1993), **The Story of the Buddha** (1996), **The Story of Jataka Mala** (1999) the **Buddhist Way of Life** (2003), **Awake! Buddhists of Nepal** (1995) and **A General Knowledge Reader** book one (2003).