

ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY IN BUDDHIST INDIA

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'He (Buddha) was born a democrat and died a democrat.'

- B. R. Ambedkar¹

Aryan/Western Eurocentric political theoreticians and philosophers manufactured a striking historical legend that democracy, as we know it today, is the product of Ancient Greece, primarily Athens, as the ubiquitous place of origin. Scholarly work studying and interpreting Athenian democracy and its facets thoroughly and comprehensively examined and exaggerated the most impressive widespread conviction that democracy originated in ancient Greece.² These writers on the origins of democracy asserted that the experience of democracy in ancient Greek city-states is the only worthwhile historical model of democratic experience that they invented for the modern world.

According to Hansen 'the democracy that existed in Athens roughly from the middle of the Fifth century BC was a remarkable system, unprecedented, unparalleled in world history' (Hansen, 1999: 313).³ Kurt A. Raaflaub stated that, directly or indirectly, Athenian democracy was an extraordinary experiment in social history, thus stimulating our thinking about crucial issues of our present democratic theory (Kurt A. Raaflaub, 2007:13). In Europe, the year 1993 marked the 2500th anniversary of a comprehensive set of reforms enacted in ancient Athens in 508/7 B.C.E and, especially in America, a series of public programs and exhibitions were initiated in the name of the 'Democracy 2500 Project', the 'Greek Miracle' (Kurt A. Raaflaub, 2007.1). Further the 'Demokratia means the power (Kratos) of the people (demos), a concept born in Athens at the end of the sixth century BC and flourished until 322 BC.' (Alev Scott & Andronike Makres, 2020: 3).

Ronald M. Glassman says, 'We all know that ancient Greek democracy was unique and the most fully developed form of democracy the world had ever known' (Ronald M. Glassman, 2017: v). Further, in his monumental work on *The Origins of Democracy in Tribes, City-States and Nation-States, Volume I*, 2017, Ronald M. Glassman focused on the forms of democratic governance in tribes, city-states, and nation-states. This four-part work exhaustively (1721 pages) dealt in detail with how democracy evolved from ancient

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Greece's tribal democracy to Greek city-state democracy, all across the Aegean and Mediterranean region and later in post-Roman Europe city-states of Renaissance Italy and Hanseatic Germany, England. Further, this comparative historical framework traces the 'campfire democracy' of the African Bushmen, the Pygmies, and other band societies of Cheyenne, Iroquois, Huron, and other tribes (Ronald M. Glassman, 2017: v-vii). Ironically, Ronald M. Glassman's work has not given even the slightest attention to the ancient Buddhist society of the sixth century BC, which established an assembly, the Council of Elders, popularly known as the Sangha, as the democratic institution which had become a citizen's democratic assembly in ancient Buddhist India.

The second set of Western/Aryan Eurocentric scholars further advanced the view that the Ancient Greek democracy vanished from the world and returned in spirit with the Atlantic democratic revolutions in America and France in the later Eighteenth century, causing complex structural changes in the phenomenon of democracy. These scholars claimed that the significant period of re-creation of democracy began with the revolutionary period of the American (1776) and French (1789) revolutions. Jonathan Israel says that 'the story of Atlantic democratic revolutions of the late-eighteenth century in Europe and America in the eighteenth century, radical thought burst into the open in the 1770s and 1790s during the revolutionary era in America, France, Britain, Ireland, and the Netherlands, as well as in underground democratic opposition circles in Germany, Scandinavia, Latin America and elsewhere.' (Israel Jonathan, 2010: vii). Further, the concept of democracy has been termed a secularised version of the basic tenets of Christian theology (Seymour Martin Lipset: 141).

The above-stated assertions on the origins of democracy and its evolved roots are commonly traced to singular moments. These moments, in turn, are labelled as the 'Athenian model of democracy' or 'Greek democracy', characterising this model as the radical political innovation of people's power notable for their civic unity under the legitimate binding authority called democracy. However, this view of the ascription of universal authority to original founding events to a specific context/singular moment is problematic because it limits our understanding of equivalent democratic foundational innovation contexts in other parts of the world. The idea that democratic ideas and traditions were unknown in non-Western/European parts of the world is undoubtedly untrue regarding the democratic tradition that prevailed in ancient Buddhist India.⁴

Is it true that the *Demokratia* means the power (*Kratos*) of the people (*demos*) are the Greeks alone? Is it true that ancient Greece was the only place where democracy originated? It underestimates the democratic content of Buddhism and its far-extended legacy of

contemporary democratic struggles, which transformed the socio-economic, political and cultural spheres in South, Southeast and East Asian regions.

Even from India, many writers displayed a paradoxical and arbitrary treatment of Buddhism in ancient India. They asserted that Buddhism was considered one of the numerous religious movements in ancient India. Buddhism has been considered a kind of protest movement within Hinduism, which convergences with the basic ideas of Hinduism and its philosophy. Swami Vivekananda said, 'Do not mistake Buddhism and Brahmanism ... Buddhism is one of our sects.'⁵ He (i.e. the Buddha) taught the very gist of the philosophy of the Vedas.⁶ Indian philosopher and writer S. Radhakrishnan observes, 'Buddhism did not start as a new and independent religion. It was an offshoot of the more ancient faith of the Hindus, perhaps a schism or a heresy.'⁷ 'The Buddha utilised the Hindu inheritance to correct some of its expressions.'⁸ P. V. Kane, the most outstanding modern Indian scholar of the Brahminical tradition, says that the Buddha was only a great reformer of the Hindu religion as practised in his time.⁹

The main argument of this paper is that there has been an unjustified assertion that Buddhism had no historical role in the origins of democracy and its advancement and practice in ancient Buddhist India. This paper further argues that, instead of concentrating on a single uniform vision, as inspired by the model of classical Athens, there is an indispensable need to understand and appreciate various context-specific political origins of democracy and its potential for radical change. Western/European or Aryan scholars gave little credence to the possibility of such scenarios, requiring re-examination in multiple historical contexts. Indeed, Buddhism as a universal humanist philosophy has been discussed and debated widely; it is beyond this paper to deal with the mammoth philosophical contents of Buddhism. However, this paper argues that there has been a historical relationship between Buddhism and the origins of democracy. In this context, this paper aims to understand the origin of democracy in ancient Buddhist India and its contribution to the modern democratic principles of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and freedom of thought as that of ancient Greece.

Democratic Revolution of Buddhism

Another ambiguous imperative facet that requires explanation is whether democracy burst into life with a magnificent 'eureka' moment, a stroke of pen instituted it, and lastly, was a collective aspiration of the people created through revolution. In the general understanding of the term 'revolution,' it implies a valuable and progressive change if it reduces inequalities and provides greater justice by overthrowing established order and institutions. Josiah Ober strongly believes that famous uprising conflicts caused the

breakthrough to democracy at the end of the sixth century and says that revolution is necessary for the emergence of democracy.¹⁰ Paul Cartledge thinks that between 550 BCE and 450 BCE, something that should be called a political revolution took place in Athens.¹¹

Looking back at ancient Buddhist India from this perspective, the original birth of democracy in Buddhist India was not an accident. Historically, the emergence of the Buddhist revolution did not result from an instant moment, instead, the continuous struggle against oppression and immorality marked its development. Buddhism struggled against the Aryan's entrenched interests of birth-related ascriptive status and influence. Buddhism was the struggle to reduce inequality and provide greater justice, freedom and equality in ancient India. In B. R. Ambedkar's view, Buddhism was a revolution. It was as great a revolution as the French Revolution but became a social and political revolution.¹² This revolution certainly could not have come about accidentally or by magic, it required a prior history of volatile mass/elite relations and the emergence of democratic self-consciousness. Russian Buddhist scholars openly upheld the view that Buddhism was not a religion but a popular philosophy created by the masses in an era of social crisis. It was a movement of suffering masses directed against the social monopoly of the Brahman, and it was an embodiment of revolutionary protest and revolutionary hopes (Kernig C. D, 1972: 295-306).

The Buddha, Siddhartha Gotama, belonged to the aristocratic clan of the Sakyas, who lived in North India in the 6th century BC. Buddhism of Buddha marked a significant departure from the Aryan society and represented a new phase of Indian history. Buddhism was rooted in the profound impulsive struggle for humanism and freedom in its historical rise and growth as the socio-political revolution. Buddhism was undoubtedly a historical rupture or a revolution. This new philosophy, under the leadership of Buddha, maintained that only a revolution led by proactive actors could bring about moral, social, and political transformation. The new democratic and egalitarian concepts inspired the revolutionary movement and the Buddhist Revolution's 'reason' and social paradigm based on equality.

For Buddha, man is his own master, man has the power to liberate himself from all bondage through his effort and intelligence (WalpolaRahula, 1978: 1). The principles of individual responsibility and freedom of thought are essential in Buddha's philosophy. Freedom is necessary because, according to Buddha, man's emancipation depends on his realisation of Truth and not on the benevolent grace of a god or any external power as a reward for his obedient good behaviour. Along with freedom of thought, Buddha taught tolerance in human relations (WalpolaRahula, 1978: 2).

Popular revolts are always the result of oppression and tyranny, and they develop a broad critique of social inequality. What proved to be the great strength of the Buddha's revolution was that it was an ideological system that answered long-standing and intrinsic grievances and needs of large portions of society and had to combat firmly against the traditional beliefs and attitudes as well as ancient regime institutions and authority. Buddha developed the idea of a highly civic consciousness among the people- the general ability to formulate a widespread consensus and act upon common knowledge. Buddha anchored moral and political philosophy.

Buddha's 'Buddhism stood in striking contrast with Vedic Brahmanism. It did not recognise the religious authority of the Vedas and rejected their sacrificial ritualism. By rejecting and refuting the religious authority of the Vedas, Buddhism rejected the very basis of Vedic Brahmanism' (Joshi L. M, 2012: 20). The 'Virtues extolled in Buddhism are compassion, friendliness, impartiality, truth, non-attachment, self-denial, selflessness, chastity, liberality, forbearance, humility, freedom from greed, anger and conceit, self-reliance, watchfulness, satisfaction, benevolence, meditation, wisdom and mind turned towards Enlightenment (Joshi L. M, 2012: 21).

Aryan Vedic Society and Its Crisis

Thus, without addressing the nature of social relations or the concrete circumstances that prevailed in ancient Buddhist India in the sixth century BC, it is impossible to comprehend the genesis of this democratic revolution fully. B. R. Ambedkar analysed the state and society before the revolution and rooted instability and dismal failure of Aryan civilisation (Babasaheb Ambedkar, Vol.3, 2019: 153). Before or by the time of Buddha, the Vedic Brahmanism or Aryan community was immersed in a deep socio-economic, moral and political crisis, and contradictions aggravated and reached the juncture at its historical level, where it speedily ceased to be an ideological weapon of social progress and began to fester. Thus, many factors combine to perpetuate the prevailing disorder and misery.

According to Ambedkar, the crisis of the Aryan society 'steeped on the worst kind of debauchery: social, religious and spiritual' (Babasaheb Ambedkar, Vol.3, 2019: 153), and it broke down totally as the ruling operating principles of the Aryan civilisation. A morally blind politics guided by interests entirely contrary to those of society does not allow men to become enlightened about their rights, actual duties, or the proper ends of the association, which it continually subverts. Thus, social life was rocked by the evils of gambling, drinking, and sexual immorality, which ruined the whole social fabric, creating social chaos and mass discontent.

Another most prevalent regular phenomenon of the horrible carnage was Yagdna or Yagna. The Aryan society consisted of twenty-one Yagnas divided into three classes of seven each. The first set of sacrifices primarily consisted of expensive items of household foodstuffs: butter, milk, corn, etc.; the second class covered Soma (sacrificial wine) sacrifices and, lastly, animal sacrifices (Ambedkar, Vol.3, 2019: 173). The great mass of the people has been forced to live in misery and utter poverty by the colossal wastage of wealth because of the Yagnas or sacrifices. As a result of these mindless sacrifices of animals like cows and oxen, the primary means of production, the agriculture and pastoral life of the whole society, particularly the lower castes, were jeopardised.

Aryan society was divided into the Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras. These vertical divisions, one above the other, created a rivalry marked by class war and class degradation. Politically, Aryan society utterly failed to serve as the ruling ideology. Its supremacy has been questioned and challenged by the Kshatriya rulers, which has resulted in the bitterest regular class war between the two highest classes, namely the Brahmins and Kshatriyas. The Kshatriyas refused to share the exploited surplus booty with the Brahmin priest class. The kings like Venu, Pururava, Nashusha, Sudas, Sumukh and Nimi all had bitterest struggles with the Brahmin priest class on different issues, and it has been stated that the Parushuram, a Brahmin, fought against the Kshatriyas twenty-one times and killed every Kshatriya (Ambedkar, Vol.3, 2019: 170).

Thus, this utterly confused, chaotic society needed the possibility of solving the problems which were the creation of itself. The concentration of wealth and increased magnitude of exploitation created a horror and barbarous society, which again increasingly consolidated the ranks of the oppressed lower castes. Most lives were unnecessarily impoverished, miserable, dependent, and oppressed. For a divinely ordained order cannot be one that reduces the majority to avoidable degradation. The crisis of Aryan civilisation, its socio-cultural, religious rituals, defunct moral values and caste repression created objective conditions for the emergence of new material thought against the sanctified, divine, superstitious ideology of the ruling dispensation. With ranks, nobility, and wealth inequality, the pre-revolutionary society presented a scene of chronic deprivation and disorder and demanded to know why and how to change it. What remedy can there possibly be, asked Buddha? Buddha argued that there is only one way to cure such a mass of ills: abolish the corrupt system of rank, privilege, and prejudice and substitute a more equitable society.

Buddha believed that if men are vicious, intolerant, oppressed, and poor because they have wrong ideas about 'their happiness' and everything else, it can only be fought with courage and resolution by showing men their true interests and propagating the right

kind of truth. Buddha claimed that society is driven by mysticism, and tradition has nothing to do with 'reason' or principles. Reason has not yet developed sufficiently, the realm of reason, the capacity to conduct one's own life as an independent being by curtailing the power of superstition and ignorance among ordinary people. Buddha believed it possible to improve men's ideas about the world and the structure of reality. Buddha's teachings sought to liberate human beings from the self-system (atmavada) and paved the way for the social emancipation of men and women. The Brahmanical theory of the four castes was criticised as ridiculous, and the practice of untouchability and social inequality was condemned as unjust and irrational. The Buddhist tradition recognised the freedom of faith. It offered equality of opportunity in religious culture to men and women without regard to their caste, colour or social status (Joshi L. M, 2012: 22).

Under the Aryan social domination that incapacitated human values, Buddha, as the victim and sufferer of that outrageous social order, started an alternative moral, ethical and rational philosophical movement. His first sermon highlighted the sorrowful aspects of human life, 'birth is suffering, decay is suffering, sorrow, lamentation, grief and despair are suffering, not to get what one desires. In short. Five aggregates of existence (forms, sensations, perceptions, psychic disposition, and consciousness) are suffering (Hajime Nakamura, 1992: 237).'¹³ Further, 'everywhere one sees the struggle for life, consumption, misfortune, privation, disease, despair and death. Disappointment, anguish, tears, sighs, and groans fill the bank and shoal of time (Lakshmi Narasu, 2012: 188).'¹⁴ Buddha was appalled by the masses' material and moral wretchedness and suffering. Buddha said that 'individuality involves limitation, and limitation ends in suffering. All sorts of suffering are each simply a result of individuality (Hajime Nakamura, 1992: 237).'¹⁵

Thus, the Buddhism of Buddha marked a significant departure from the dehumanised social system and pioneered a new phase of human history. The Buddha constructed an alternative Sangha without showing any fascination with the ritualistic, idealistic, supernatural power or revelation. The Sangha was to secure a higher life, collectivist based on pragmatic and democratic principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, and all the more, it was for the collective aim against the individualistic rapaciousness involved in suffering. Thus, the historical emergence of the Buddhist Sangha itself has been a vivid manifestation of the aggravation of contradictions within the cosmological dogmas of Karma doctrine.

Ganasangha: Classical institution of Democratic Ideal

The development of democratic thought in India at the time of Buddha could be traced to the political emergence of the Ganasanghas or the 'Republics of tribes.' These Ganasanghas, like ancient Greek Polis or City-states, were marked by unity and egalitarian

practice. The Ganasanghas were democratically and collectively governed; nevertheless, they were incipient class societies. Like the ancient Greek city-states, they rested on the labour of a subservient class, the *dasa-kammakaras* or 'slave and servants'- a category that included both paid and unpaid labour (Gail Omvedt, 2003: 28).¹⁶ Thus, there was a simple two-tier division of society between the property owners and a class of domestic workers and wage labourers (NalinSwaris, 2006: 14).¹⁷ This kind of division was not ideologically justified by appealing to innate nature or divine ordination. Strikingly, social segregation was not enforced through the practice of ritual purity and impurity (Ibid).¹⁸ As a small and specific self-governing political institution, the Ganasanghas possessed minimal characteristics of the modern democratic state. Prof K.S.Chalam has brought to our attention that Sidhodhana father of Buddha was elected by 7707 families of sakyana tribe (Boudha Vignanam-Loukika Jeevanam Telugu).

The Ganasanghas, as the political institutions of concord, however, had an enduring impact and had been the source of inspiration. The Ganasanghas were the Republics of tribes, 'united by kinship and holding their property in common, and the extra societal communes of persons who renounced household life withdrew from civil society, shared a common teaching and discipline and collectively owned their meagre possessions (NalinSwaris, 2006: 14).'¹⁹ Ganasanghas, in which all citizens could have participated in creating an everyday life. There is no evidence that ordinary people faced obstacles to their involvement in public affairs. Sharing in public functions, some amount of dedication to the common good, and tolerance could have been the essential order that people might have enjoyed. These small republics were governed by *Khattiyas* (Pali). Still, these *Khattiyas* were not identical to the *Kshatriyas* (Sanskrit) of sacred scriptures, and there is no evidence that these *Khattiyas* followed/adherent notions like purity and impurity. Despite all these positive aspects of Ganasanghas, it is still a puzzle how far the accurate democratic power distribution represented these little republics. Gail Omvedt said, 'Given time, they may have evolved beyond traditionalism into citizen-based political societies like the Greek city-states (Gail Omvedt, 2003: 28).'²⁰

However, the Ganasanghas came under attack and steadily eroded. They were vulnerable and were finally overwhelmed by the rising monarchical kingdoms (Gail Omvedt, 2003: 28).²¹ Their newly emerged monarchies were characterised by rising urban-based economic structures controlled by somewhat organised, powerful kings. Omvedt says that 'kingdoms fought each other and fought to undermine the Ganasanghas by out-and-out conquest, treachery, and fomenting dissension from within (Gail Omvedt, 2003: 29).'²² Further, 'the emerging urban-based, commercial prosperous, dynamic class society, with

its mature tribes and peoples of languages... was thus characterised by intense turmoil and often great immorality (Gail Omvedt, 2003: 29).²³

Added to this, 'the growing population and the crisis in agriculture must have pushed the vast masses into continuous starvation, misery and even death (Kanchallaiah, : 52).²⁴ We see 'slavery and runaway slaves, robbers, war-fare between clans, patricide in the new monarchies, sons not caring for parents, wicked women provoking their husbands, immoral individualism rampant (Gail Omvedt, 2003: 29).²⁵ As the old society was in transition, the old politico-religious ideologies and beliefs ceased to be effective; people entered a newly mobile society with no established moral-philosophical code (Gail Omvedt, 2003: 29)²⁶ Buddha gave a discourse that the world is in a ceaseless flux of becoming. It has been said that the Buddha borrowed the Ganasanghas model of his bhikkusangha, which acted as a core of the democratic collective. We can ask how the Buddhist Sangha did things, how they tried to resolve specific problems, what worked and did not, why, and how the founders of Indian democracy learned from Buddhist India.

Buddhist Sangha: The People's Power and Egalitarian Trends

This was a milestone in developing democratic revolutionary thought that roundly rejected the claims of the nobility and clergy. Thus, the early architects of the philosophical democratic revolution searched for a convincing solution to the problem of organising a workable and effective democracy. The critical political tool devised was representation to organise large-scale democracies through the Sanghas. The core meaning of democracy is popular participation, popular consent, aspiration for freedom and the protection of rights. Indeed, the Buddhist Sangha presents a vivid testimony of popular participation, stands for the ideals of democracy and provides the environment necessary for democratising social and political relations. Buddha made a rational choice about the form of organisation that best manifests the values of Dhamma, the highest life of human beings.

The 'Sangha founded by the Buddha may have been envisaged as the exemplar and catalyst of a society that holds and cherishes the values of universal and non-discriminating compassion, equality in rights and privileges and the brotherhood and sisterhood of all humans (NalinSwaris, 2006: 41).²⁷ Buddha thus organised his followers into a Sangha or 'fraternity' whose values and goals are oriented to those of the whole advantage of society. Thus, the Sangha was primarily an organised way of life that motivated people to attempt to resolve individualistic problems through collective effort. The Sangha contemplated that the individual cannot be part of a community living in a separate entity. Being part of a particular mode of organised existence in a collective setting is indispensable.

The Buddhist Sangha was constituted not as an exclusive separate congregational entity, but the prime emphasis was on the collective conscience or collective good over the individual. The collective good is the cornerstone of the unity and interdependence of society and the individual. The final analysis is the total of the good of all individuals in society. Individual suffering and alienation can be avoided only by active participation in the Sangha for the good of the collective whole. The Sangha was an effective communicative vehicle of Dhamma, which is, 'the way things truly are.'

The Sangha, the community of Buddhist monks, comprises both Bhikkunis (Women monks) and Bhikkus (Men monks) whose ways of life are governed by the democratic principles of collective consent. The most crucial democratic arrangement that the Sangha practised was that all its members collectively enjoyed equal rights to participate in its deliberations. Buddhist Sangha constituted solidarity relations, striving for a higher community life than rapacious individualism. The Sangha had the demonstrative associated life and adherent to the collectivistic and mutual protection of the collective. Thus, the Sangha's forthright practice of human companionship brought fundamentally agreeable comradeship among the masses. It is pertinent to hark back to Buddha's reply to his companion aide Ananda; Buddha replied, 'Truly, the whole of this life excellence consists in beautiful friendship, beautiful support and beautiful comradeship (NalinSwaris, 2006: 42).'²⁸ The Bhikkunis and the Bhikkus devoted themselves to the service of Dhamma and the good of others.

The Sangha was an institutionalised political structure that was the 'Popular Assembly.' It was a 'Democratic Assembly'; whenever the Sangha was called together to decide upon some critical public issue, a gathering of the entire grouping surrounded the deliberations. The council members would sit in a circle, and the adults would gather around them in a larger circle; the men and women usually seated closer to the council. Critical decisions were made, and unanimity among the headmen of the council was required upon all the public questions and essential to the validity of every public act. They institutionalised the unanimity principle and avoided the problem of majorities and minorities in the council process. This principle is critical, and solidarity of the group is so central that if no unanimity could be reached, then 'the entire matter was dropped and no action taken whatsoever rather than risking the permanent alienation of even a minority segment of the group. Unanimity is a critical group-unifying process.'²⁹

The Buddhist Sangha has three exceptional developments: the idea of common humanity as a single moral, biological totality; a distinct characteristic with its program of natural human rights warrants attention as a formative and enduring characteristic. Promoting

the idea of a common humanity and program of human rights were accompanied and to address poverty, hunger, disease and multifarious needs. It suggests that the core of this development is a universalising principle directed towards the construction of humanity as an idea and fact and that it was not altogether accidental. It has to be constructed and realised. The objective sense is that by denoting humanity as a single biological collective, the human species would only acquire moral meaning as a later endowment, which is an essence of the Buddhist Sangha.

Conclusion

This paper argued that the story of the origins of modern democratic core values as a Western/European or Aryan model is a global historical phenomenon that requires re-examination in multiple historical contexts. Democracy is constituted through institutions, practices, mentalities, and ideologies. If democracy means that all citizens, the entire demos, determine policies and exercise control through assembly, council, and courts and that political leaders attempting to shape public opinion are subordinate to the demos, the first democracy that we can identify with certainly was not that of Athens from 460 BC, alone. The Buddhist revolution of ancient India emerged due to historically specific and even contingent factors.

Buddhism has three exceptional developments which accord to the origins of democracy of ancient Greek city-states: the idea of common humanity and the capacity for self-criticism and dissent. Secondly, a program of natural human rights warrants attention as a formative and enduring characteristic. To some extent, it is a cultural-transcending quality that explicitly contributes to common humanity as a single moral, biological totality with a collective society with notions of rationality and individuality. Thirdly, the faculty for self-criticism, which amounts to a state of mind broadly, can be described as a capacity for criticism, review, and dissent, which, through a long historical process, ultimately culminated in Indian constitutional democracy. Indeed, constitutional democracy involves several practices, attitudes, institutions, and representative and elective characteristics.

The powerful principle of universal inclusion and incorporation emerged as the most significant single legacy from the ruins of ancient Buddhist India. Humanity was not just a spiritual or moral endowment but rather a total collective that nevertheless respected the distinctive attributes of its members. The Sangha is a consolidation of the process of humanising that 'all the people of the world are human and there is only one definition of all humans and each of one that is rational-the Eightfold Noble thoughts path -the rich universal resonance of humanity to be entire. It constructed a view of humans in society as radically interdependent, connoting the democratic notions of Dhamma, Mitri, karuna and Sangha.

This objective sense denotes humanity as a single biological collective as the human species- this biological sense- would only acquire moral meaning as a later endowment.

End notes

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3. Quoted from Kurt A. Raaflaub, p.3
4. For this argument see, Nalin Swaris (2006) *Buddhism Human Rights & Social Renewal*, Critical Quest, New Delhi.
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6. Ibid.
7. *2500 Years of Buddhism (Ministry of Information, government of India, New Delhi, 1959)*. P. XIII. Actually quoted in Joshi L. M. (2012) "Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History", Critical Quest, New Delhi.
8. Ibid. P. XV.
9. *History of Dhammasastra (B. O. R. L., Poona, 1962) Vol. V. Part 11, P. 1004*. Actually quoted in Joshi L. M. (2012) "Aspects of Buddhism in Indian History", Critical Quest, New Delhi.
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15. Hajime Nakamura, p.237
16. Gail Omvedt (2003), Buddhism in India: Challenging Brahmanism and Caste, p.28.
17. NalinSwaris (2006) p.14
18. NalinSwaris (2006), p.14.
19. Nalin Swain, p.14
20. Gail Omvedt, p. 28.
21. Gail Omvedt.p.28.
22. Gail Omvedt, p.29.
23. Gail Omvedt, p.29.
24. Kanchallaiah, God as Political Philosopher: Buddha's Challenge to Brahmanism, p.52.
25. Gail Omvedt, p.29
26. Gail Omvedt, p.29.
27. NalinSwaris, Buddhism Human Rights and Social Renewal, p.41.
28. NalinSwaris, p.42.
29. For more on Sangha, see NalinSwaris (2006); LakshmiNarasu (2012); Gail Omvedt (2003).

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