NAGPUR ALS „ZENTRALER ORT“ DES NEO-BUDDHISMUS

Am 13. Oktober 1935 hatte Dr. Ambedkar erstmals erklärt (AHIR 1988:104), daß er nicht als Hindu sterben werde: „Unfortunately, I was born a Hindu. It was beyond my power to prevent that, but I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu.“


This day was chosen as it was the auspicious day of ‘Dhamma Vijaya’, the day on which Asoka the Great had embraced Buddhism in B.C. 262 and had declared that henceforth he would conquer the people by love and persuasion instead of by force.


Those who have studied the Buddhist history of India know that the people who worked in the beginning for the propagation of the religion of Buddha were the ‘Nagas’. It were the Nagas who spread the religion of the Buddha throughout the world. These people were predominantly the inhabitants of Nagpur. Through the soil of this city there flowed a river named the ‘Nag’. It appears that the Nagas lived on the banks of this river. This is mainly the reason for selecting Nagpur for this great occasion.


On the bright morning of Sunday, 14 October 1956, lakhs of people, men and women, who had been pouring into the Nagpur city by train
Trailokya Baudhaka Mahasangha Sahayak Gana and Bahujan Hitay celebrate

DR. AMBEDKAR CENTENARY YEAR

APRIL 14th, 1990 – APRIL 14th, 1991

Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism in 1956
and bus from all parts of Maharashtra or had trekked on foot hundreds of miles, prepared themselves for the ceremony wearing white clothes. Procession after procession of white clad men and women with Buddhist flags in their hands made their way to the Deeksha Bhoomi or the Initiation Ground. By 9 a.m. they had reached the site and turned into a vast ocean of humanity.

When Babasaheb Ambedkar, accompanied by his wife, and N.C. Rattu, his private secretary, reached the pandal, the vast crowd lustily cheered their uncrowned king. Wearing the white silk dhoti and white coat, he was seated at the dias next to Venerable U Chandramani Maha Thera, the oldest and seniormost Buddhist monk in India. Seated in the second row were Devapriya Valisinha, General Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, Venerable monks, and some leading members of the Buddhist Society of India founded by Babasaheb. About four lakhs people witnessed the auspicious ceremony which began at 9.40 a.m. The 80 year old Ven. U Chandramani of Kushinagar administered in Pali to Dr. Ambedkar and his wife, the Tisarana (Triple-Refuge). Standing solemnly before the shining image of Lord Buddha, they recited three times „Buddham saranam gacchami, Dhammam saranam gacchami, Sangham saranam gacchami. “ The three Refuges were followed by the Five Precepts (Panca-Sila). They repeated the same in Marathi. Then they vowed thrice with clasped hands before the Buddha image and offered white lotus flowers before it. With this, the conversion ceremony was over. When Dr. Ambedkar’s entry into Buddhism was announced, the vast concourse of humanity gathered there gave thunderous applause and raised full-throated cries of ‘Victory to Lord Buddha’, ‘Victory to Babasaheb Ambedkar’. Thereafter, Dr. Ambedkar was profusely garlanded by D. Valisinha and other dignitaries present there.

The historic Nagpur ceremony marked the end of a pilgrim’s journey. Addressing the vast gathering, Dr. Ambedkar, now a Buddhist, said in an emotional voice: „I started the movement of renouncing the Hindu religion in 1935 and since then I have been continuously struggling. This conversion has given me enormous satisfaction and pleasure unimaginable. I feel as if I have been liberated from hell.

Nach der öffentlichen Zufluchtnahme von Ambedkar und seiner Frau folgte die „Massen-Konversion“: Mehrere Hunderttausend standen auf und wiederholten die von Ambedkar vorgesprochene Dreifache Zuflucht und die Fünf Sila; sodann aber sprachen sie auch noch die
zweiundzwanzig Gelübde nach, die Ambedkar verfaßt hatte (vgl. hier Seite 7 f.), um deutlich zu machen, daß für ihn und seine Nachfolger die Hinwendung zum Buddhismus zunächst (und vor allem?) eine Abwendung vom Hinduismus bedeutet.


More than 500,000 people joined the funeral procession, the biggest such procession ever seen in the city of Bombay, and it took nearly four hours to cover a two mile distance from Rajgraaha, his residence,
in Dadar to the local burning ghat, near Shivaji Park. Babasaheb had planned a mass conversion ceremony in Bombay on 16 December. To fulfill this wish, about 100,000 people insisted that they be admitted into the fold of Buddhism. Hence, an impromptu conversion ceremony was organised at the cremation ground, and they were administered the Three Refuges and Five Precepts on the spot by Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan.


In 1963, a bust of Dr. Ambedkar was installed at the historic site standing where he had embraced Buddhism, and given a clarion call to his people to do so. The grand Memorial Stupa which had been under construction at Deeksha for more than 30 years has since been completed, and is the greatest land mark in the architectural heritage of Nagpur. Dr. Babasaheb Memorial College established at Deeksha Bhoomi in 1964 has since become a premier educational institution.

The Deeksha Bhoomi also has a Buddha Vihara, Bhikkhu Niwas, and a flourishing Bodhi Tree, all established by Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, a Punjabi Buddhist monk, who stayed at Deeksha Bhoomi from 1969 to 1982, and greatly made Deeksha Bhoomi a living religious centre.

Nagpur, the capital of neo-Buddhist movement initiated by Dr. Ambedkar in 1956, has now over 40 Buddha Viharas.

Birth Centenary
of
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
Founder, People's Education Society, Bombay

14th April 1891 14th April 1991

Photo Dr. Ambedkar, etwa aus dem Jahr 1954


Coming as I do from the lowest order of the Hindu Society, I know what is the value of education. The problem of raising the lower order is deemed to be economic. This is a great mistake. The problem of raising the lower order in India is not to feed them, to clothe them and to make them serve the higher classes as the ancient ideal of this country. The problem of the lower order is to remove from them that inferiority complex which has stunted their growth and made them slaves to others, to create in them the consciousness of the significance of their lives for themselves and for the country, of which they have been cruelly robbed by the existing social order. Nothing can achieve this purpose except the spread of higher education. This is in my opinion the penacea of our social troubles.

„Babasaheb Ambedkar“ wird von seinen Anhängern heute als ein BODHISATTVA verehrt, auch auf dem Campus der „Milinda Maha
भारतरत्न बोधिसत्व डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर

जन्म
14 एप्रिल 1891

महापरिनिर्वाण
6 डिसेंबर 1956

Bharatratna Bodhisatva Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar,

Dr. Ambedkar übergibt die Verfassung des unabhängigen Indien an Staatspräsident Rajendra Prasad
At the time when Babasaheb passed away in 1956 our Society was conducting the following Institutions and building the Foundation of the Democratic and Socialistic set up our country by making the unprivileged aware of their self respect, human dignity and capabilities:

1. Siddharth College of Arts & Science, Bombay.
2. Siddharth College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay.
3. Siddharth College of Law, Bombay.
5. Mulba Multipurpose High School, Aurangabad.
7. Savitribai Maharastraj Vidya Pratishthana, Pandharpur.

After 1956, institutions and our own buildings:

After 1956 our Society continued its activities to the weaker and backward people of our country and has now added more institutions all over Maharashtra as well as at Bangalore and coexisting colleges in many buildings constructed by us of brick and concrete, Vocational Courses, High Schools, Model Laboratories, Libraries and, and has also purchased large areas of land for the purpose of different places. After the Mahaparinirvan of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar we have acquired and added many educational construction at high cost other than followed:

Bombay:
1. Siddharth College of Arts & Science, Bombay.
2. Siddharth College of Commerce and Economics, Bombay.
3. Siddharth College of Law, Bombay.
5. Mulba Multipurpose High School, Aurangabad.
7. Savitribai Maharastraj Vidya Pratishthana, Pandharpur.

New Bombay:
1. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Public School in an acquired high cost building.
2. PES's Jr. College of Education.
4. PES's Mahadev W. Gaikwad Primary School.
Aurangabad

Where Baba wanted the Capital to be, because it is Central and more secure:
1. Milind College of Science
2. Laboratory Building for Milind College of Arts
3. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Arts and Commerce, Aurangabad - Constructed is Hostel, Library and Canteen buildings and Residential Quarters for its staff members.
4. Hostel for Working Women
5. Dr. Ambedkar College of Law
6. College of Physical Education with all Gymkhana arrangements.
7. Satoshri Ramabai Ambedkar High School after acquiring large area of land and constructing a building.
8. College Girls Hostel
9. "Rang Bhavan Auditorium
10. "Milind Primary School

Mahanagar

Where Baba burnt to ashes Mandirini, which enslaved the untouchables; and where Baba first fired the gun for struggle of human liberty for Untouchables by breaking the stratified caste system.

1. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar College of Arts, Science, and Commerce with its hostel and library.
2. Subedar Sawarkar Vidya Prithi Ashram.

Pune

Where Baba signed the Poona Pact with Mahatma Gandhi, which was then recognised for the first time the Scheduled Castes as a separate entity and their right to separate seats reserved in Legislature for the first time in thousands of years, in Federation.

1. Dr. Ambedkar College of Arts and Commerce
2. R.E.S. Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary School

Nanded

1. Nagsen Vidyalaya and Jr. College
2. Nagsen Primary School

Pandharpur

Blessings from Ghage Maharej.

1. Gautam Vidyalaya

Bangalore

Where Baba desisted to establish Buddhist Seminary and Institute to spread Buddhism in India.

1. Nagassen Vidyalaya
2. Seminar and Institute of Research (Foundation laid)

All these educational institutions were started with selfless and dedicated assistance of hundreds of the institutions and their staff.
An Appeal

April the 14th, 1891 will remain a GOLDEN LETTER DAY in the annals of Indian history. It was on this day that Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, popularly known to millions as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was born to give the millions of oppressed masses of India a new vision of self-respect, self-reliance and self-identity which was denied to them for centuries.

A political leader, a social revolutionary, a religious evangelist. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has left the impress of his powerful personality on several spheres of activity. As the first Law Minister of Free India, he was the architect of the Constitution of India which is a permanent monument to his legal genius.

He played many important parts on the stage of life. His popular image as an iconoclast represented only a part of his personality; for he was also a constructive statesman, who regarded education as a nation-building activity.

With the true vision of a sage, he founded the People’s Education Society on the 8th of July 1945, the purpose of which he set out is as follows:

"The People’s Education Society’s objective is not merely to give education, but to give education in such a manner as to promote intellectual, moral and social democracy. This is what modern India needs and this is what all well wishers of India must promote."

He firmly believed that education was the only effective lever for the uplift of the down-trodden.

As an educationist, Babasaheb has carved an abiding niche for himself in the temple of fame. He firmly believed that it was only through education the suffering Indian masses could be made conscious of their rights as human beings. He said to his people:

"My final words of advice to you is educate, agitate and organise, have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of the human personality."

Under its well-spread umbrella, People’s Education Society runs 12 University affiliated Colleges, 6 of which are affiliated to the University of Bombay, 5 to the Marathwada University and one to University of Pune imparting University education to as many as 30,000 students of whom over 15,000 belong to the underprivileged Classes. Besides these, the Society runs many High Schools, Diploma Institutes and Hostels.

Ambedkars Vermächtnis an die Jugend:
Educate, Agitate, and Organize
Das Vermächtnis in Hindi als Postkarte
Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb
Dr. BHIMRAO AMBEDKAR
Architect of Social Justice
Bharat Ratna Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar

In 1990, the Bharat Ratna was presented to late Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, chief architect of the Indian Constitution. The same year Dr Ambedkar’s life-size portrait was also unveiled in the Central Hall of Parliament. The period from 14th April, 1990 to 14th April, 1991 was observed as 'Year of Social Justice' in the memory of 'Babasaheb', the champion of the poor and downtrodden.

Genius Par Excellence

Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar was born on 14th April, 1891 in Mahu Cantt in Madhya Pradesh. He was the fourteenth child of his parents. Young Bhimrao’s father, who was serving in the Indian Army at the time, constantly encouraged his children, specially Bhimrao to pursue his studies.

The life of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar was marked by struggles but he demonstrated that every hurdle in life can be surmounted with talent and a firm determination. The biggest barrier in his life was the caste system of Hindu society for which the family in which he was born was considered as 'untouchable'.

In the year 1908, young Bhimrao passed the Matriculation examination from Bombay University with flying colours. It was a unique and rare accomplishment for an 'untouchable' child, which led to his being felicitated at a public meeting.

Four years later, he graduated in Political Science and Economics from Bombay University and got a job

als Architekt sozialer Gerechtigkeit aus regierungsamtlicher Sicht
in Baroda. Around the same time his father passed away. Although in a sad state of mind, Bhimrao decided to accept the opportunity to go to U.S.A. for study at Columbia University for which he was awarded a scholarship by the Maharaja of Baroda. This achievement was unprecedented but he did not let matters rest there. He was of the firm view that knowledge was power and without this power he could not break the shackles which forced millions of 'untouchables' to live in virtual slavery. By this time he had personal experience of this and had realized that these shackles were quite formidable.

Bhimrao remained abroad from 1913 to 1917 and again from 1920 to 1923 and when he finally returned to India he was thirty two years old. During this period he had established himself as an eminent intellectual. Columbia University had awarded him the Ph. D for his thesis which was later published in a book form under the title "The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India". But his first published article was "Castes in India - Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development." He presented this paper at a seminar on Anthropology. During his sojourn in London from 1920 to 1923, he also completed his thesis titled "The Problem of the Rupee" for which he was awarded the degree of D.Sc. Before his departure for London he had taught at a college in Bombay and also brought out a Marathi weekly whose title was, 'Mook Nayak' (meaning 'Dumb Hero').

By the time he returned to India in April 1923, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar had equipped himself fully for waging a war against the practice of untouchability on

Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar
behalf of the 'untouchables' and the downtrodden. In the meanwhile the political situation in India had undergone substantial changes and the freedom struggle in the country had made significant progress. From then onwards till the achievement of Independence in 1947, Dr. Ambedkar's life is intricately linked to the history of modern India.

Saviour of the downtrodden

While Bhimrao was an ardent patriot on one hand, he was also the saviour of the oppressed, women and poor on the other. He fought for them throughout his life. In 1923, he set up the "Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha" (Outcasts' Welfare Council) which was devoted to spreading education and culture amongst the downtrodden, improving their economic status and raising matters concerning their problems in the proper forums to focus attention on them and finding solutions to them.

The problems of the downtrodden were centuries old and difficult to overcome. Their entry into temples was forbidden. They could not draw water from public wells and ponds. Their admission in schools were prohibited. Between 1927 and 1932 Dr. Bhimrao launched a non-violent but resolute movement to secure the right of entry into places of worship and for drawing water from public wells and ponds. Two of these agitations were noteworthy. In 1927, he led the Mahad march at the Chowdar Tank in Colaba, near Bombay, to give the 'untouchables' the right to draw water from the public tank where he burnt copies of the "Manusmriti" publicly. This marked the beginning of
the anti-caste and anti-priest movement. The temple entry movement launched by Dr. Ambedkar in 1930 at Kalaram Temple, Nasik is another landmark in the struggle for human rights and social justice.

In the meantime, Ramsay McDonald announced the 'Communal Award' as a result of which in the following year several communities including the 'depressed classes' were given the right to have separate electorates. This was a part of the overall design of the British to divide and rule. Gandhiji wanted to defeat this design and went on a fast unto death to oppose it.

On 24th September, 1932 Dr Ambedkar and Gandhiji arrived at an understanding which became the famous Poona Pact. According to this pact, in addition to the agreement on electoral constituencies, reservations were provided for 'untouchables' in Government jobs and legislative assemblies. The provision of separate electorates was dispensed with. Commenting upon the circumstances under which he had to accept this compromise Dr. Ambedkar said in one of his books, "I had two options before me. One was to protect the 'untouchables' and the rights granted to them by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay McDonald in the Communal Award and the other was to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi as a member of human society. I accepted the voice of humanity and saved the life of Mahatma Gandhi by agreeing to such modifications in the Communal Award as would satisfy him". Despite this, Dr. Ambedkar was misunderstood and maligned by both supporters and detractors of the Communal Award.

Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar
Thus the Communal Award was modified by the Poona Pact which carved a clear and definite position for the downtrodden on the political scene of the country. It opened up opportunities of education and government service for them and also gave them the right to vote.

Dr Ambedkar criticised British rule and made relentless efforts to remove social, economic, educational and legal bottlenecks for the benefit of the downtrodden. He was convinced that the interests of the downtrodden can be protected only by creating separate constituencies even if it was only for a limited period. This was the cause of his conflict with Gandhiji and the Congress party. In 1932 these differences came into the open and were eventually resolved in the Poona Pact.

Dr Ambedkar attended all the three Round Table Conferences in London and, always, forcefully projected his views in the interests of the 'untouchables'. He exhorted the downtrodden sections to raise their living standards and to acquire as much political power as possible. He was of the view that there was no future for 'untouchables' in the Hindu religion and they should change their religion, if need be. In 1935, he publicly proclaimed "I was born a Hindu because I had no control over this but I shall not die a Hindu". He, thus, hinted at his desire for conversion to Buddhism. The same year he was appointed principal of Government Law College, Bombay. It was also the year that he lost his wife.

Formation of Independent Labour Party

After a while Dr Ambedkar organised the

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Independent Labour Party, participated in the provincial elections and was elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly. During these days, he stressed the need for abolition of the 'Jagirdari' system, pleaded for workers' right to strike and addressed a large number of meetings and conferences in Bombay Presidency. In 1939, during the second world war, he called upon Indians to join the army in large numbers to defeat Nazism which, he said, was another name for Fascism.

In 1947, when India became independent, the first Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, invited Dr Ambedkar, who had been elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly from Bengal, to join his cabinet as Law Minister. The Constituent Assembly entrusted the job of drafting the Constitution to a Committee and Dr. Ambedkar was elected Chairman of this Drafting Committee. While he was busy with drafting the Constitution, India faced several crises: The country had been partitioned and Mahatma Gandhi had been assassinated.

**Architect of Constitution**

In the beginning of 1948 Dr Ambedkar completed the draft of the Constitution and presented it before the Constituent Assembly. In November 1949 this draft was adopted with very few amendments. Many provisions have been made in the Constitution to ensure social justice for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes. In this context Articles 15, 16, 27, 46, 332, 335, 338 and 340 are significant.

Dr Ambedkar was of the opinion that traditional religious values should be given up and new ideas be

Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar
adopted. He gave special emphasis on dignity, unity, freedom and rights for all citizens as enshrined in the Constitution.

Dr Ambedkar advocated democracy in every field: social, economic and political. For him social justice meant maximum happiness to the maximum number of people. He gave utmost importance to individual dignity in his concept of democracy.

Dr Ambedkar wanted more powers to be given the Centre to strengthen the unity and sovereignty of the country. He wanted to safeguard the territorial integrity of India. He said that Indian society is divided not only by castes and communities but, also, there are regional, linguistic, traditional, cultural and ideological differences. Therefore, for territorial integrity and administrative discipline, a strong Centre is absolutely essential.

Dr Ambedkar favoured small linguistic states as opposed to multi-lingual states. He wanted the creation of linguistic states to be governed by certain conditions like (1) there should be only one language in the state, (2) linguistic states should be economically viable, (3) the official language of every state should be Hindi and as long as Hindi is not capable of attaining this status English should continue.

In the pages of history Dr Ambedkar is remembered as the chief architect of the Constitution. His life size statue in Parliament would always keep his memory alive in this role.

Re-exponent of Buddhism

Dr Ambedkar had differences of opinion with the

als Architekt sozialer Gerechtigkeit aus regierungsamtlicher Sicht
Government over the Hindu Code Bill which led to his resignation as Law Minister. On 24th May, 1956 on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti, he declared, in Bombay, that he would be ordained into Buddhism in October. On October 14, 1956 he embraced Buddhism along with many hundred thousands of his followers. The same year he completed his last writing "Buddha and his Dhamma". He devoted many years to the writing of this book and studied numerous scriptures on Buddhism. In this book he presented the teachings of Buddhism in their original form in a scientific way. This book has been translated and published in several Indian and foreign languages.

In a detailed analysis of the caste system Dr Ambedkar observed that it is neither based on the principle of division of labour nor on natural talents. Caste allocated work to people according to birth and not on the basis of their training and abilities. Caste of a person is determined by birth and the social status of the parents. The obnoxious principles on which the caste system is based breeds prejudice which inhibits change of vocation according to changing circumstances and, consequently, it generates unemployment. It also fosters the wrong notion that destiny is supreme and progress through hard work is impossible. He gave solid arguments to prove that the four 'varnas' and the caste system has handicapped a very large segment of India's population.

Dr Ambedkar's patriotism started with the uplift of the downtrodden and poor. He fought for their equality and rights. His ideas about patriotism were

Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar
not only confined to the abolition of colonialism, but he wanted freedom for every individual. For him, freedom without equality means democracy is incomplete and equality without freedom could lead to absolute dictatorship. Therefore, he wanted a system that offered guarantee of both equality and freedom.

On 6th December, 1956 Baba Saheb Dr Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar attained 'Mahaparinirvan'.