

From the desk of the editor

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THE BUDDHA'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL DECLARATION: 'RACE IS A MYTH'

- Chandra B. Varma

BUDDHA'S ANTHROPOLOGICAL DECLARATION ON ONENESS OF RACE

The Anthropological Declaration on the oneness of the Human Race discussed by the Buddha over twenty-five hundred years ago is not only unique but also fascinating to the modern Anthropologist for its original insight. Surprisingly, The Buddha has given the most modern definition of the race that convincingly challenges any racist or casteist outlook or criterion or claim.¹

There the Buddha's definition of the race with the author's verbatim translation is shown below:

Every species is unique due to its reproductive character *liṅga* that accounts for its race or *jāti* as being the differentia from other species:

***Tesaṃ vo ahaṃ byakkhissaṃ, anupubbaṃ yathātathaṃ
Jātivibhaṅgaṃ pāṇānaṃ, aññamaññā hi jātiyo;***

¹ For references and other details see Chandra B. Varma, *Facets of Buddhism* ch. 7. Sineru International Publications. Delhi-NCR: 2017 ISBN 978-81-934658-0-6.

(तेसं वो अहं ब्यक्खिस्सं, अनुपुब्बं यथातथं ।
जातिविभङ्गं पाणानं, अज्जमज्जा हि जातियो ॥)

Further, to substantiate the above thesis the Buddha has given the following arguments:

Every species viz., grass or tree vegetation has a unique reproductive character as the *differentia*:

Tiṇarukkhepi jānātha, na cāpi paṭijānare
Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo;

(तिणरुक्खेपि जानाथ, न चापि पटिजानरे ।
लिङ्गं जातिमयं तेसं, अज्जमज्जा हि जातियो ॥)

So is the case with the worms, insects and ants:

Tato kīṭe paṭaṅge ca, yāva kunthakipillike;
Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo.

(ततो कीटे पटङ्गे च, याव कुन्थकिपिल्लिके ।
लिङ्गं जातिमयं तेसं, अज्जमज्जा हि जातियो ॥)

So is the case with small and big quadrupeds:

Catuppadepi jānātha, khuddake ca mahallake;
Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo

(चतुप्पदेपि जानाथ, खुद्दके च महल्लके ।
लिङ्गं जातिमयं तेसं, अज्जमज्जा हि जातियो ॥)

So is the case with vertebrates like serpents or crawling creatures:

Pādūdarepi jānātha, urage dīghapittṭhike;
Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesam, aññamaññā hi jātiyo

(पादूदरेपि जानाथ, उरगे दीघपिट्ठिके ।
लिङ्गं जातिमयं तेसं, अज्जमज्जा हि जातियो ॥)

So is the case with the fish or the living beings of the water world:

***Tato macchepi jānātha, oḍake vārigocare;
Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesaṃ, aññamaññā hi jātiyo***

(ततो मच्छेपि जानाथ, ओदके वारिगोचरे ।
लिङ्गं जातिमयं तेसं, अञ्जमज्जा हि जातियो ॥)

So is the case the birds or the living creatures that fly in the sky:

***Tato pakkhīpi jānātha, pattayāne vihaṅgame;
Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ tesaṃ, aññamaññā hi jātiyo.***

(ततो पक्खीपि जानाथ, पत्तयाने विहङ्गमे ।
लिङ्गं जातिमयं तेसं, अञ्जमज्जा हि जातियो ॥)

However there exists some differentia
that makes one species different from the other
But there is no differentia among the humans
That would differentiate the human race:

***Yathā etāsu jātīsu, liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ puthu;
Evaṃ natthi manussesu, liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ puthu.***

“यथा एतासु जातीसु, लिङ्गं जातिमयं पुथु ।
एवं नत्थि मनुस्सेसु, लिङ्गं जातिमयं पुथु ॥

Neither by hair; nor by head,
Neither by ears nor by eyes;
Neither by face nor by nose;
Neither by lips nor by brows:

***Na kesehi na sīsena, na kaṇṇehi na akkhibhi;
Na mukhena na nāsāya, na oṭṭhehi bhamūhi vā.***

(न केसेहि न सीसेन, न कण्णेहि न अक्खिभि ।
न मुखेन न नासाय, न ओट्ठेहि भमूहि वा ॥)

Neither by neck, nor by shoulders;
Neither by belly nor by back;
Neither by buttocks, nor by chest;

Neither by genitals; nor by copulation:

***Na gīvāya na aṃsehi, na udarena na piṭṭhiyā;
Na soṇiyā na urasā, na sambādhe na methune:***

(न गीवाय न अंसेहि, न उदरेन न पिट्टिया ।
न सोणिया न उरसा, न सम्बाधे न मेथुने ॥)

Neither by hands, nor by feet;
Neither by fingers; nor by nails;
Neither by legs, nor by thighs;
Neither in complexion; nor by vocal cord
There exists no differential mark within the human species

Like the differentia for a species:

***Na hatthehi na pādehi, nāṅgulīhi nakhehi vā;
Na jaṅghāhi na ūrūhi, na vaṇṇena sarena vā;
Liṅgaṃ jātimayaṃ neva, yathā aññāsu jātisū.***

(न हत्थेहि न पादेहि, नाङ्गुलीहि नखेहि वा ।
न जङ्घाहि न ऊरूहि, न वण्णेन सरेन वा ।
लिङ्गं जातिमयं नेव, यथा अञ्जासु जातिसु ॥)

There exists no distinct (**Paccatta**) physiological character
Among the humans;
The peculiarities or differences (**Vokāra**) among the homo sapiens,
are explained in generic terms (**samaññāya**) for the name sake:

***Paccattañca sarīresu manussesvetam na vijjati;
Vokārañca manussesu, samaññāya pavuccatī.***

(पचत्तञ्च सरीरेसु मनुस्सेस्वेतं न विज्जति ।
वोकारञ्च मनुस्सेसु, समञ्जाय पवुच्चति ॥)