

**Report of One-day workshop on
Applied Buddhism as an academic discipline in LBU
held on 12th February 2016
at Uniglobe College, Baneswor, Kathmandu**

Introduction

The new Buddhist Movements led by Buddhist Masters, Scholars in different Buddhist Masters, Scholars and Practitioners in different names, such as Humanistic Buddhism, Crypto-Buddhism, Neo-Buddhism (*Navayana* Buddhism), Secular (Pragmatic) Buddhism, Modern Buddhism or Green Buddhism, Protestant Buddhism, Social Buddhism, Engaged Buddhism or Socially Engaged Buddhism, Elite Buddhism and so on emphasized the practical aspects of Buddhism for greater social benefits. Later on in order to overarch these new concept of applied aspects of Buddhism, Applied Buddhism phrase was coined in early 2000s. However, the concept of Applied Buddhism in academic context was not the consequences of research on Buddhism Studies nor it was initially conceptualized as the subject of academic study or the subject of conferring the degree.

After a half decade of establishment, LBU intended to conduct Master level degree courses in five different subjects including Applied Buddhism. LBU organized a seminar in 2010 AD which was aimed to develop and prescribe the curriculum of the subjects. At that seminar Dr. Manik Man Bajracharya from Nepal and Dr. Anita Sharma from India presented outline of curriculum for MA in Applied Buddhism consisting of four papers each for first part (1st Year) and second part (2nd year) respectively. After sometime, LBU had finalized the curriculum and subsequently introduced MA in Applied Buddhism in Lotus Academic College in affiliation of LBU which has produced two batches of MA graduates in Applied Buddhism.

The LBU stood as the first university to provide with MA degree in "Applied Buddhism" per se however, it seems to be hastened to introduce the newly emerging subject such as Applied Buddhism and to confer degree without having adequate academic exercise. With this backdrop, one should not ignore the confusions arise amongst the teachers as well as students of Applied Buddhism regarding its definition, scope and limitations. Hence it is highly commendable that LBU initiate this academic exercise to redefine, re-conceptualize, to demarcate well defined scope and limitations of Applied Buddhism, which would be LBU's contribution in widening the horizon of Buddhist Studies. It is worth to mention here that LBU has included Applied Buddhism under the New Buddhist Studies in its Academic Master Plan. Subsequently LBU has developed a draft technical paper with specific meaning, definition, scope and limitations of Applied Buddhism and intended to have academic discourse on it so that a meaningful conclusion could be drawn from it. Prior to presentation followed by discussion on the draft it would be worth highlighting the following points:

Aims and Objectives

1. To discourse on Applied Buddhism as an appropriate umbrella term to overarch newly emerging social science subjects from Buddhist perspective.
2. To assess relevance and significance of study of Applied Buddhism under Buddhist Studies
3. To define concept of Applied Buddhism as intended with its meaning.
4. To establishment of Applied Buddhist as an academic discipline in LBU.

Expected Outcome

1. Applied Buddhism would be considered as an appropriate umbrella term to overarch newly emerging social science subjects from Buddhist perspective.
2. Relevance and significance of study of Applied Buddhism under Buddhist Studies will be well defined.
3. Clarity in the concept of Applied Buddhism as intended with its meaning.
4. Establishment of Applied Buddhist as an emerging academic discipline in academic programme of Lumbini Buddhist University academically recognized.

Participants

Teachers of Applied Buddhism from Central Campus Lumbini and Lotus Academic College, Lalitpur, Selected passed out students of Applied Buddhism, University Authorities, Buddhist Scholars and other interested persons

Workshop procedure

The workshop was divided into two segments, the first segment was Inaugural session Chaired by Rev. Prof. Dr. Naresh Man Bajracharya, Vice Chancellor of Lumbini Buddhist University and Hon. Dr. Yuba Raj Khatiwada, Vice Chair of National Planning Commission was Chief Guest of Honor who inaugurated the workshop. Hon. Dr. Khatiwada took a delight in the efforts of LBU to formalize Applied Buddhism as an academic discipline. He also emphasized that the teachings of the Buddha should be put into practice in order to end human sufferings.

Rev. Prof. Dr. Naresh Man Bajracharya, Vice Chancellor of LBU, on behalf of LBU Master Plan Drafting Committee, presented a working paper on “Applied Buddhism as Academic Discipline.” The paper highlighted contributions of Applied Buddhism to: the contemporary Buddhist movements; application of Buddhism to everyday life; and bringing about national happiness and peace and justified the need for LBU's endeavor to formulize the Applied Buddhism as an academic discipline. The presentation was followed by the floor discussion from the faculty members of Central Campus of LBU, Lotus Academic College, Boudha Multiple College, Lumbini College of Buddhism and Himalayan Studies, Sugat Buddhist College, and Theravada Buddhist Academy including Buddhist academics and scholars.

Prof. Dr. Hridya Ratna Bajracharya, Technical Advisor of University Grants Commission, chaired the session. As a chair, in his concluding remarks Prof. Dr. Bajracharya, said the working paper would contribute to the courses of study in Applied Buddhism and appreciated LBU's effort to formulize the subject through such an academic exercise and suggested to address the issue came up in the floor discussions.

Discussion

After the presentation of working paper on "Applied Buddhism as an academic discipline in LBU" by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naresh Man Bajracharya, the floor was opened for discussion. Following are the key points raised in the floor discussion:

- Study of Applied Buddhism was began in mid 1950s, when E F Schumacher published his book entitled Small is Beautiful in which a separate chapter is devoted to Buddhist Economics. The concept of Applied Buddhism was not new. It has been developed in different names well before hand.
- It the theory Applied Buddhism a new development or the already established theory.
- Sutras are being repeated while teaching different subjects within the Applied Buddhism
- Buddhist theory and practice mentioned in the LBU's definition of Applied Buddhism need to clarified with explanatory note
- Nan Tian Institute and Nagananda International Buddhist University have introduced study of Applied Buddhism even before LBU

The during the floor discussion, above issues were thoroughly discussed on some of the issues were clarified in due course of discussion while some of the issues were decided to carry forward to yet another one day intensive workshop on the subject.

Concluding Remarks

The Chief Guest Dr. Yubaraj Khatiwada, the Vice Chairperson of National Planning Commission and Prof. Dr. Hridaya Bajracharya, the Technical Advisor of University Grants Commission both praised the academic exercise initiated by LBU in order to establish Applied Buddhism as an academic discipline in LBU. Similarly other participants overwhelmingly welcomed the LBU effort to bring teachers and other stakeholders on board to discuss on working papers on Applied Buddhism which elucidated different aspects definition, scope, limitation, significance of study Applied Buddhism and as an academic discipline in LBU.