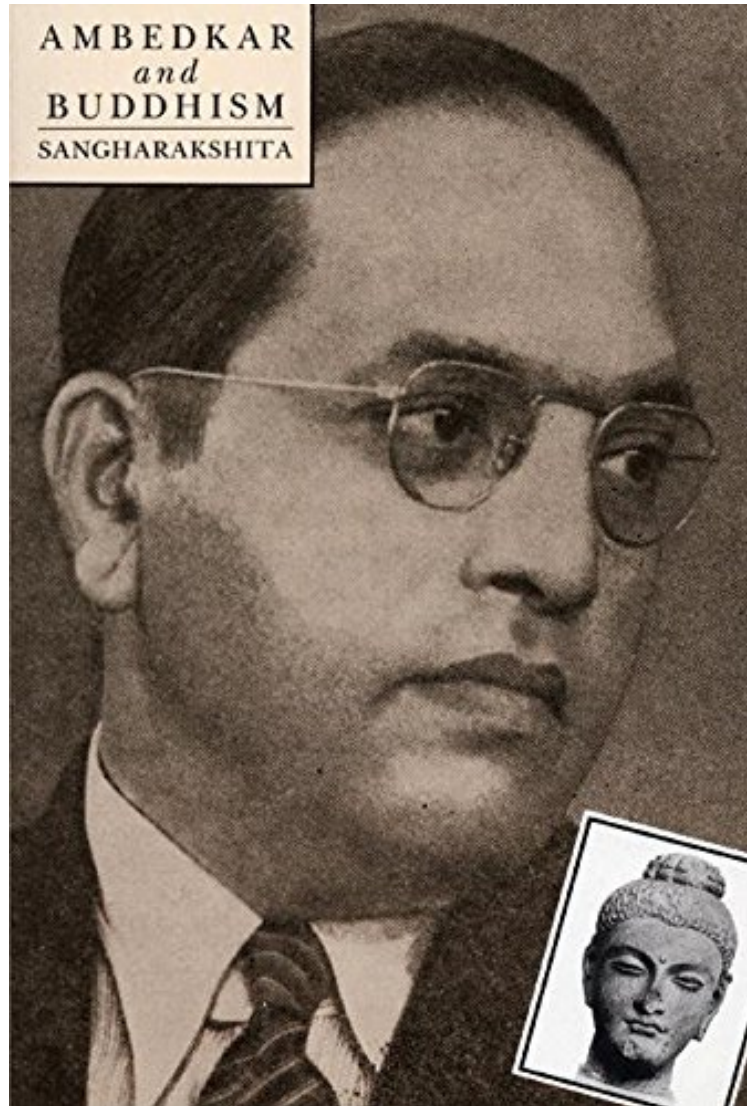


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## Ambedkar and Buddhism

*Sangharakshita*

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#3403367 in Books 2004-08-01 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.80 x .60 x 5.301, #File Name: 0904766284192 pages | File size: 15.Mb

**Sangharakshita : Ambedkar and Buddhism** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ambedkar and Buddhism:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A great light of the 20th century By Daiho Everyone has heard of Gandhi, almost no one of Ambedkar. If that's true for you, then you might like to pick up this slim volume by one of Europe's most prolific Buddhist writers. In under 175 pages you will be introduced to perhaps the most remarkable man of the 20th century. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born at the end of the 19th century as the last child of 14 into a family of untouchables. The lowest caste in Indian Hindu society, untouchables were not allowed to drink the same

water as other castes, could not walk the same streets, in fact had to be careful of the sun so as not to cast a shadow over higher caste persons. They were denied education or any but the most menial employment. They were forbidden even to hear, sing or read the Vedas, the very scriptures underpinning the moral order enslaving them. The penalty for defiance could be death. Despite having been born with few advantages, Ambedkar would go on to become not only one of India's first university educated untouchables, but also one of the first of his caste to do post-graduate work overseas, earning degrees at both New York's Columbia University and the London School of Economics. Returning home he took up the cause of emancipation of the lower caste, tussling with Gandhi, whom he found patronizing, and after independence serving the Nehru government as chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. He is remembered in India today as the father of the constitution. After establishing a college for untouchables and an unsuccessful run for political office, he retired to writing about Buddhism and in his final days led a mass ceremony of conversion to Buddhism for nearly half a million untouchables before passing away in 1956. The author of this book, Sangharakshita, has an equally compelling story that is only briefly reviewed within its pages. An Englishman stationed to India during WWII, he stayed on after the war to become a Buddhist monk, spending 14 years in India during which he met Ambedkar on three occasions, participating in campaigns to empower untouchables through Buddhism. After returning to the UK, Sangharakshit founded the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order and became a prolific speaker and writer on Buddhist topics, including this biography, in which he attempts to trace the origin and development of Ambedkar's interest in and later adoption of Buddhism, as well as to summarize Ambedkar's major writings. Beginning with the time he was presented as a child with a biography of the Buddha, the reader is given a thorough overview of Ambedkar's life, as well as his major ideas, including the origin of caste and untouchability, and his conception of a stripped down, socially engaged Buddhism for a new age. Unfortunately in such a survey not everything can be described in great detail and so some particulars are glossed, but nothing so much that it leaves the story incomplete. Despite having been written by a Buddhist, Ambedkar and Buddhism is pitched to the general reader, does not proselytize, and requires only a passing familiarity with Buddhism and 20th century Indian history. This book is also a worthy companion to the 2000 film, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, helping to fill in some of the detail in Ambedkar's thinking. #

On the morning of 14 October 1956, at a mass rally in the Indian town of Nagpur, four hundred men and women turned their backs on a millennium of degradation and slavery. Finally renouncing Hinduism, with its cruel system of graded inequality, they turned instead to Buddhism, in search of dignity, hope and a path to self-improvement. Over the coming months, Hindu India shook as hundreds of thousands more followed their example, and as the Buddha Dhamma came back to life in the land of its birth. The man solely responsible for this historic revival was Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar; politician, and educationalist; India's first law Minister, chief architect of her constitution- and lifelong champion of her downtrodden million.

About the Author A respected translator and author of over fifty books, Sangharakshita began studying Buddhism at the age of 16. After 20 years studying in India he returned to England and set up the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order which has over 65 centres worldwide, including the USA.