

Buddhist conquests

Preventing future shock

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In 1900, China's Empress Dowager CiXi declared war on the Eight-Nation Alliance: Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and the US. They all had the same colonial ambition: to carve up a weak old empire for themselves. This was the age of colonial wars.

China's main defence was the Qing dynasty-backed **Boxer Rebellion**, led by the "Fists of Righteousness and Harmony." It was a xenophobic secret society whose members practised martial arts and performed rituals supposed to make them bullet-proof.

The Boxer Protocol

The superior armies and collective onslaught of the foreign powers defeated the Boxers and Qing troops. In 1901, China was forced to sign the **Boxer Protocol**. She had to pay 450 M taels of fine silver (about 18,000 tonnes) as indemnity over 39 years. The Qing never recovered from this devastation and was toppled in 1911.

In 1908, in what seemed to be a rare generous move, the US, under President Theodore Roosevelt, used the remainder of her share—7.32 per cent of the total indemnity—to grant **scholarships** to Chinese studying in the US, and set up a preparatory school for the US-bound Chinese students, Tsinghua College (later one of China's leading universities, as China's MIT).

This generous gesture was as good as the US waiving her rights to war indemnity. Or, it was an astute move by the US to be seen as cultivating Chinese talent, but the real gain was that it exported US culture and values to China. But the Chinese are adept in sinicizing whatever they want.

Open China

In the next 60-year-cycle (by 1960) China had painfully risen under Mao Tse-tung. In another such cycle (in our own time), China is the leading world power with the US quickly waning. In 1978, China launched economic reforms and opened up to the outside world again. US imports of cheap Chinese goods gathered momentum.

Mao suits now changed into jeans, shirts and business suits. China's streets glittered with Coca-Colas, KFCs, McDonalds and Starbucks. Hollywood movies and western music filled their lifestyle. US degrees are a status symbol. The young dyed their hair blond.

When the US faced huge failures, the politicians played Machiavelli, and blamed their major woes, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, on China. But like the Boxers who saw themselves as immune to bullets, the US leader had boasted that they were immune to the Corona Virus.

Covid-19

When the US became the epicentre of the Pandemic, a couple of US senators tried to seek compensation from China for their losses from it, that China should forgive US debt of US\$1 trillion, and face trade tariffs for its role in the Pandemic. By the same logic, who then should compensate for Ebola (1976), AIDS (1983), Sars (2003), H1N1 (2009), or Mers (2012). The point is that US politicians see China as a convenient scapegoat for their own failures and in their desperation, they tried to mislead their own for their own politics.

Forget the past, repeat its mistakes

Politics does not interest me, except when it reminds us of what will happen to us as Buddhists. When we forget the past, we will repeat its mistakes, and posterity will pay dearly for it, and not even know it. We will continue as slaves, only now we have new masters. We will be reborn as religious slaves to a priestly **elite**, in a sad, painful cycle.

Religion enslaves; spirituality frees us. We must touch the spirit of Dhamma.

An opening

Today, we see Buddhism as an attractive alternative to the tired old-world religions. Despite being hijacked by sectarian and worldly powers in every age, the Buddhist-core spirituality quietly still flourishes in the stillness of forest monks and meditating laity who value the suttas. History is written by the powerful about themselves. Buddhist spirituality is an “**opening** out of the crowd” of power, pleasure and politics for higher happiness and freedom. Only diligence and self-reliance can awaken us to these.

Deadlier than the 8-Nation Alliance are the foreign Buddhist missions (or any mission for that matter) who pretend to bring Buddhism to us. The Sinhala monks, for example, have for generations ignored the Vinaya. They teach us to receive blessings from them (their leader calls himself the Chief High Priest); they claim to be able to “transfer” our merit to our dead: the dead are reborn and only need our lovingkindness.

These brahminized priests favour the rich for their career plans and salaried jobs. They eat when they like; their dress and hair look ever more like those of the laity. The suttas speak against all this: no wonder they dread the suttas.

Racist Buddhism

The foreign ethnic missions do not teach us what the Buddha teaches for our freedom. They are smuggling their culture through our **faith**, so that we and our children will house, feed and enrich them, and they don't even pay tax. We have countless **poor** who need our generosity and support. True local Buddhism can help them.

On account of their ethnic (racist) missionary work, our people, invest faith in them and their culture, **not** in the timeless **3 jewels**: we become divided by the same religion. So we have Sinhala Buddhists, Burmese Buddhists, Thai Buddhist, Tibetan Buddhist, Japanese

Buddhists (notice that race comes first): Buddhism is used to serve the race. Following this logic, we should work for a **Filipino** Buddhism, **African** Buddhism, **Chilean** Buddhism, and so on.

Local Buddhism, global Dhamma

This is not turning Buddha Dhamma into a racial class elite, but rather we, as Filipinos, as Africans, as South Americans, as Westerners, as Australians, as Buddhists, go **directly** to the Buddha and the Dhamma as refuge; not through the backyard of others, and having to pay toll for eternity. Buddhism is to liberate us to rise above race, priests, even religion. It should awaken ourself to the truth and reality that we are **one**.

To see that Oneness, be that Oneness, as a global community, we need to grow healthily as **local** Buddhists, identifying our local problems, studying their roots, resolving them, and moving together on the noble eightfold path. No outsiders can do this for us, much less should they distract us from bringing the Buddha Dhamma home.

When we forget our history, we will repeat the mistakes of others and the past.

We must grow the Bodhi tree in our community.

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[an occasional re-look at the Buddha's Example and Teachings]

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