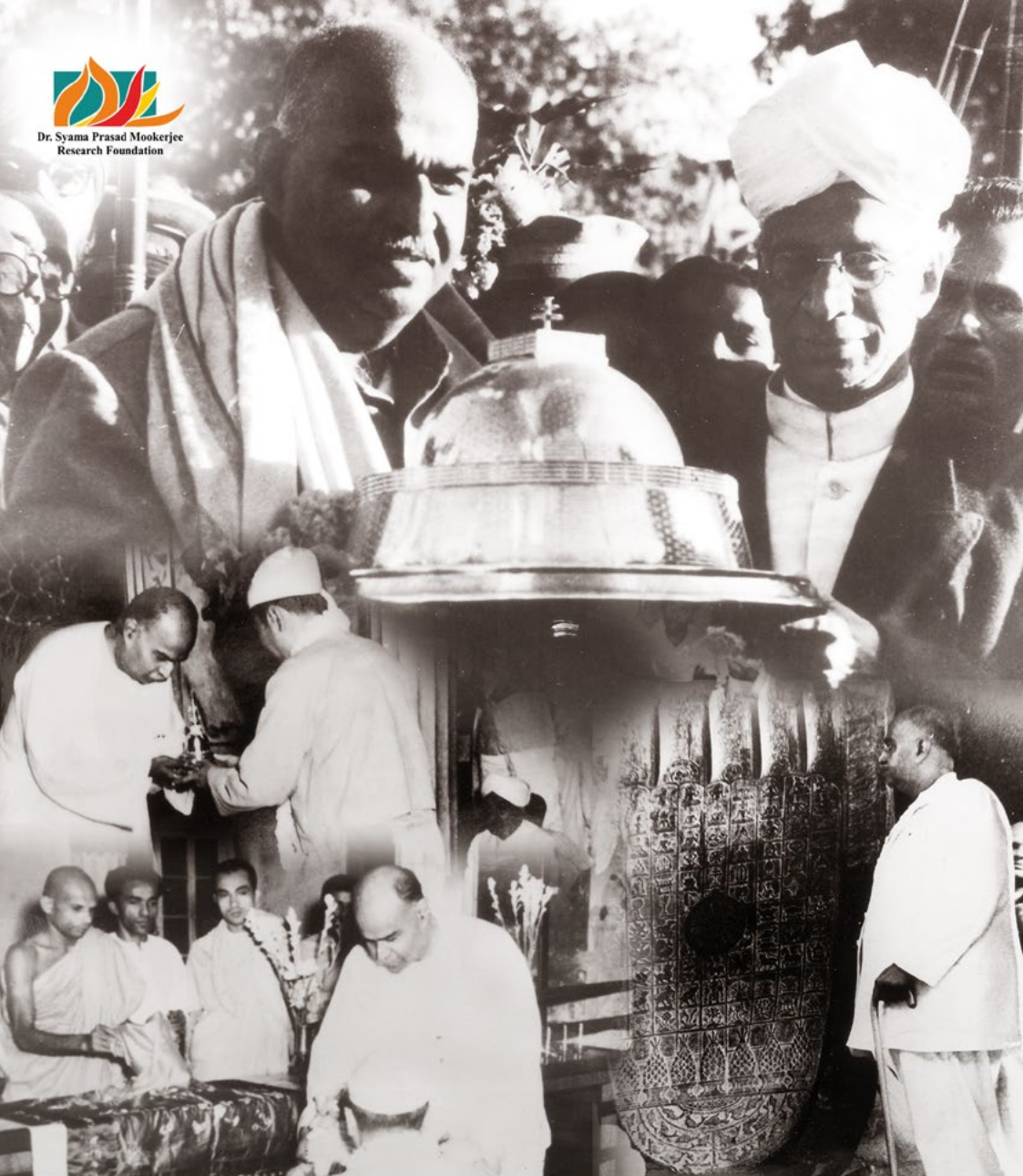




Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee  
Research Foundation



**Spreading the Eternal  
Message of Lord Buddha**  
Towards the Asian Century

# Tribute



## Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee (1901-1953)

Patriot, Educationist, Statesman

Vice Chancellor, University of Calcutta (1934-1938)

President, Mahabodhi Society of India (1942-1953)

Member, Constituent Assembly of India (1946-1950)

Independent India's first Minister for Industry & Supply (1947-1950)

Founder, Bharatiya Jana Sangh (1951)

Member of Parliament - Lok Sabha (1952-1953)

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# Some Thoughts...

This short booklet is a tribute to one principal dimension of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's persona, that of a Buddha-bhakta and an envoy of Sakyamuni's eternal message in modern times. Among the many



important and historic roles that he adorned in the history of modern India, Dr Mookerjee's role as President of The Maha Bodhi Society of India, between 1942-1953, was an important one. His contribution to spreading the message of Lord Buddha and in revivifying, rekindling and relaying India's civilisational linkages with the Southeast Asian countries and civilisations, in the early years after independence, was crucial for a free India then trying to rediscover her Buddha heritage and legacy.

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's father, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee (1864-1924), the formidable scholar, towering educationist, mathematician, jurist and thinker, had served as President of The Maha Bodhi Society of India from 1911 to 1924. His historic association with Bodhisattva Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) helped lay deeper the foundations of various activities connected to the dissemination of the Teachings of Lord Buddha across India, in the early years of the twentieth century.

Later, as one of the most active Presidents of The Maha Bodhi Society of India, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee was at the forefront of taking the essence of Lord Buddha's Teachings far and wide, both within India and abroad. Till almost the very end of his life he carried out this

responsibility and mission with great devotion, dedication and energy.

For Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Buddha's Teachings and that of His followers were eternal, as he once said, while addressing a mammoth public meeting abroad in 1952, 'They are ancient, they yet throb with new life and are capable of bringing about peace and goodwill amongst all people of the world, no matter which particular religion sections of them may pursue.' India's messengers who went out to the world, especially to Asia, centuries ago, Dr Mookerjee said, 'carried with them the torch of learning and wisdom, of truth, justice and equality and paved the way for world-fellowship.' Dr Mookerjee himself, in modern times, carried that torch of learning, wisdom, of justice and equality across countries and continents.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has indefatigably and on a mission-mode, worked to rejuvenate the sacred civilisational and spiritual linkages, between India and the world, by spreading the message and preserving the legacy and heritage of Lord Buddha. A historic move in further disseminating the Buddha Legacy was his decision to confer the status of Classical Language on Pali and Prakrit. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has often reiterated that to envisage the Asian century one needed to walk in the path of Buddha. That message is the most significant message for our times when we are aspiring for and dreaming of an Asian Century. It is a century that has to be shaped and driven by Dharma and Dhamma.

Dr Anirban Ganguly  
Chairman

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation



# Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee's Reflections on Lord Buddha

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Buddhist culture has to be examined not in isolation but in relation to the magnificent march of Indian thought and civilisation down the centuries.

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Gautama Buddha gave to the world his message of love, peace and understanding 2,500 years ago in a simple manner which carried faith and conviction not only to the learned but, what is more, which carried hope and inspiration to the masses of the people. They gave solace and strength to millions throughout the world. It needed no sword ; no arms helped the spread of the doctrine to countries far and near.

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Buddha showed the path of peace, peace not of the grave but of the living, peace born out of deep understanding and proper appreciation of the realities of life. Peace can only be permanent if it conquers evil and brings about a true harmony between spiritual and material impulses of man so that both by his preaching and practice, he may prove himself worthy of the Master.

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Many of the countries in South-East Asia, after attaining independence, are striving hard to revive the highest elements of Buddhist cultural and religious thought. In this respect, India occupies the role of their spiritual mother. With a true sense of humility and responsibility we must re-establish bonds of friendship and understanding with them so that this fraternity would not only be welcomed by the peoples of the countries concerned but would also create a mighty source of strength and solidarity which would worthily contribute to the maintenance of world peace and freedom.

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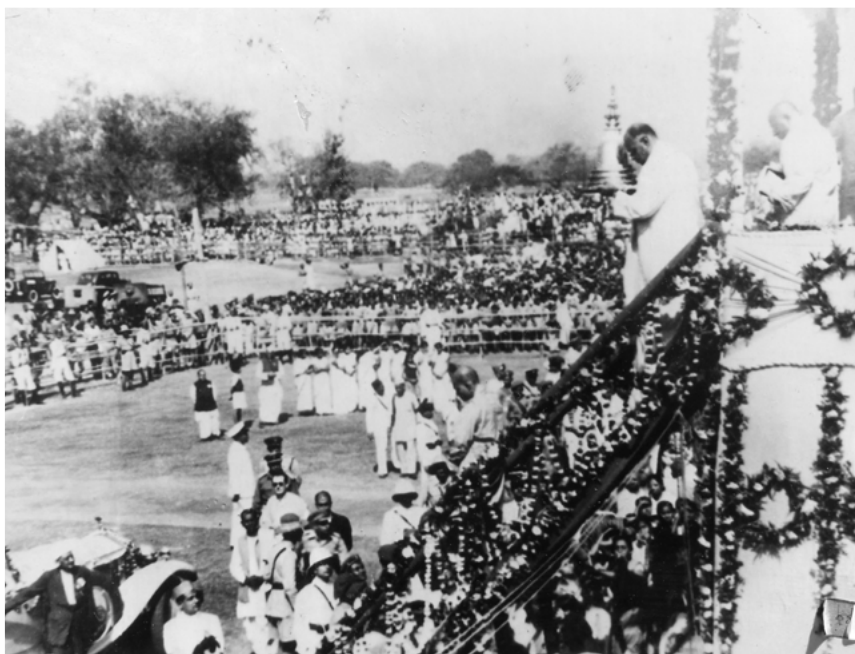
There are many holy places in India which are sanctified by their associations with the life and activities of Lord Buddha and they would naturally attract pilgrims and visitors from all Buddhist countries throughout the world. I fervently hope that these places would not only be preserved and protected by our Government and the peoples of India but, in and around them, would develop institutions and monasteries which should become active centres of beneficent activities both in social and cultural spheres inspiring masses of the people and also attracting those who want to devote themselves in the cause of higher studies and research.

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Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee receiving the Relics  
of Arhants Mogallana and Sariputta from then  
Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru,  
Brigade Parade Ground, Kolkata, 1949





Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee with the Relics,  
Kolkata, 1949



Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, President of The  
Maha Bodhi Society of India handing over the  
Relics of Mogallana and Sariputta to Prime  
Minister U.Nu (Thakin Nu) of Myanmar (Burma),  
Sri Dharmarajika Vihara, Kolkata, February, 1950



The Relics being handed over to then  
Prime Minister of Myanmar U.Nu, Sri Dharmarajika  
Vihara, Kolkata, February 1950



Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, President of  
The Maha Bodhi Society of India & Member of  
Parliament with Prime Minister Pandit Nehru  
and Prime Minister of Myanmar U.Nu





Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee and  
Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, then  
Vice President of India, holding the Relics,  
for installation at the new Vihara, Sanchi,  
December, 1952



Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, President,  
The Maha Bodhi Society of India,  
Dr S. Radhakrishnan, Vice President of India,  
Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Prime Minister of India  
at the first International Buddhist Conference  
(IBC) in Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, December, 1952



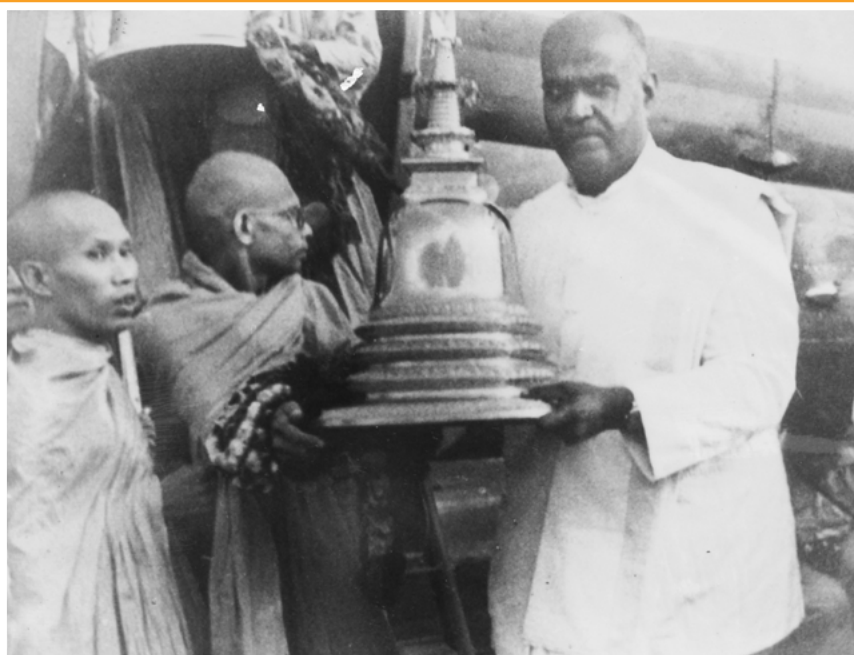
Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, President,  
The Maha Bodhi Society of India and Member  
of Parliament, addressing the first International  
Buddhist Conference in Sanchi, December 1952.

Also seen are Dr S. Radhakrishnan,  
Vice President of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru,  
Prime Minister of India, U.Nu Prime Minister  
of Myanmar.



Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee carrying the  
Relics to be installed at the new Vihara in Sanchi,  
December, 1952.





Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, President,  
The Maha Bodhi Society of India and Member of  
Parliament, lands in Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
with the relics of Arhants Mogallana and  
Sariputta, 5 October, 1952.



Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee with the Relics  
in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to his left King  
and later Prime Minister of Cambodia,  
Norodom Sihanouk and senior monks.



Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee worshipping  
the Relics with King and later Prime Minister  
of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, Phnom Penh,  
October, 1952.

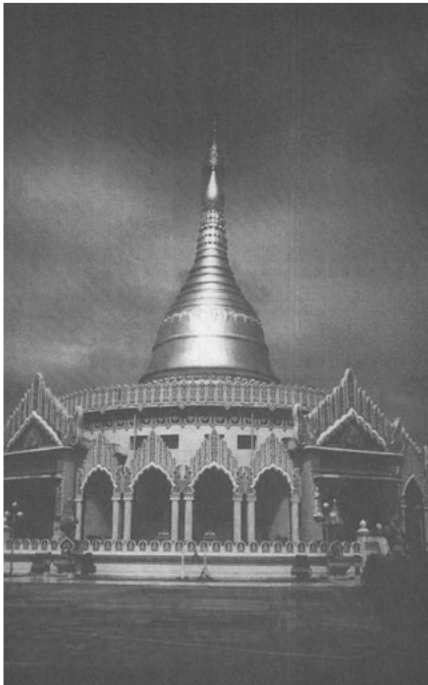


Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, President,  
The Maha Bodhi Society of India, addressing a  
mammoth public meeting on Lord Buddha's  
legacy, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, October, 1952.





Following Lord Buddha's Sacred Footprints  
in Southeast Asia



Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee,  
President,

The Maha Bodhi Society of  
India attends, as

special guest, the installation  
ceremony of the Relics of  
Arhants

Mogallana and Sariputta in  
Kaba Aye Pagoda,

Rangoon (Yangon), with  
Venerable Jina Ratna

Maha Thero of Sri Lanka,  
March, 1952.

**Special Initiative by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee  
Research Foundation and Sanatan Dharma  
Swayamsevak Sangh – Installation of Commemorative  
Plaque on Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee at Kaba Aye  
Pagoda, Yangon, February, 2019**







“The Teachings of Buddha and His followers are eternal. They are ancient, yet they throb with new life and are capable of bringing about peace and good will amongst all people of the world, no matter to which particular religion sections of them may pursue...Centuries ago India sent her ambassadors of peace and good will to many countries in the world, especially in Asia, and they carried with them the torch of learning and wisdom, of truth, justice and equality and paved the way for world-fellowship.”

**- Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee**

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## **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi participates in celebration of International Abhidhamma Divas and recognition of Pali as Classical Language at New Delhi**



### **Some Excerpts from PM Shri Narendra Modi's Speech**

- This year, a historic achievement is also attached along with the celebration of Abhidhamma Divas. The Pali language in which this heritage of the Abhidhamma of Lord Buddha, his words and his teachings was given to the world, has been declared a classical language by the Government of Bharat this month.
- This recognition of Pali as a classical language is an honour for the great legacy of Lord Buddha. You all know that Abhidhamma is inherent in Dhamma. To understand the essence of Dhamma, knowledge of the Pali language is essential.
- Unfortunately, today the ancient language of Pali, in which the original words of Lord Buddha exist, is not in common use. Language is not just a medium of communication! Language is



the soul of civilization and culture. Every language carries its own essence.

- Therefore, it is our responsibility to keep the Pali language alive to keep the words of Lord Buddha alive in their original spirit. I am happy that our government has humbly fulfilled this responsibility.
- The Buddha, who resides in the soul of Bharat, and the symbols of Buddha that were adopted as the symbols of Bharat at the time of independence, were gradually forgotten in the decades that followed. It took seven decades for the Pali language to get its rightful place.
- Along with the pride of Pali becoming a classical language, we all have a collective responsibility to preserve and promote this language.

## **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Prayed at the Mahaparinirvana Stupa in Kushinagar**







## **Prime Minister Shri Narendra with Monks & Spiritual Leaders in Lao PDR & Mongolia**





## **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi with Buddhist Monks from across India and the world in Bodh Gaya**



**Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi performed  
*Dana* followed by prayer at the Maha Bodhi  
Society, in Colombo**





**Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi with then President of Sri Lanka, Mr. Maithripala Sirisena offers prayers at the Sri Maha Bodhi Tree, in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka**



**Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi with  
then Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mr. Ranil  
Wickremesinghe, at the Gangaramaya Buddhist  
Temple in Colombo**



**Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and then  
Prime Minister of Nepal Shri Sher Bahadur Deuba  
at the foundation laying ceremony of the India  
International Centre for Buddhist Culture &  
Heritage, Lumbini, Nepal**





# Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Reflections on Lord Buddha

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"I say with great conviction that the solution for the world lies not in war but in the teachings of Buddha. On the occasion of Abhidhamma Day, I appeal to the entire world to learn from Buddha, end wars, and pave the way for peace, for Buddha teaches that there is no greater happiness than peace."

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"It is my privilege that the journey of connecting with Lord Buddha, which began at the time of my birth, continues unbroken. I was born in Vadnagar, Gujarat, which was once a major center of Buddhism. Over the past 10 years, I have had the opportunity to participate in many sacred events—from visiting India's historic Buddhist sites to seeing the birthplace of Lord Buddha in Nepal and unveiling his statue in Mongolia."

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