

Here And Now

Gautama Buddha, after attaining enlightenment, went from village to village, to preach the sermon that had the power to deliver the masses from their sufferings. People thronged to see him, hear him, and receive his blessings. Contrary to most other preachers of his times, he spoke the language of the people. He spoke about their concerns. He gave them insights and offered solutions. He was one of them.

A woman came to him carrying the lifeless body of her child in her arms. "Breathe life into this child, O enlightened one," she pleaded, weeping helplessly at this bereavement. She was inconsolable.

"Mother, bring me a handful of mustard seeds," said the Buddha in a serene voice, "from a house where there has never been a death, and I'll bring your child to life."

Hope rekindled, the woman went from house to house, door to door, begging for a handful of mustard seeds. She found no such house, and came back distraught and empty-handed. "Death is the inevitable destiny of one who is born," said the Buddha. "One must get on with life by addressing the here and now. It's the only way to transcend pain."

Centuries later, Dr Babasaheb



Ambedkar, whose birth anniversary was celebrated recently, and who is regarded by devout dalits as an incarnation of the Buddha, gave the same eternal message to his followers. Ages of oppression is an undeniable truth, but equally true is the need for rising above it and constructing a better future for oneself and those who come after us. Accordingly he advised them to take to education, get organised and launch a struggle, even if it meant hardship and travails.

Many individuals have an uncanny insight into this here and now, and

they move forward not only to grab the opportunity, but also to turn it to the advantage of people around them. One such individual was Haso Nenumal Thadani, who has crossed 93, and who strove to establish industrial engineering as a profession. His lifelong efforts bore fruit with the setting up of the National Institute for Training in Industrial Engineering (NITIE), Powai, Mumbai and later, the Indian Institution of Industrial Engineering, Mumbai (I.I.I.E.) which is celebrating its 49th year of establishment in 2006. Thus was laid a foundation on which rests the economic future of the nation.

No different is the message conveyed by the statement: Today I'm going to love my life. It is a clear statement of a commitment to here and now. On a materialistic level it exudes the vigour to face and solve problems, and on a philosophical level, it is a powerful persuasion to remain in a robust state of mind. The Dialogue section explores these elements in this issue, and senior citizens addicted to dwelling in the past could possibly profit by it.

With that, dear readers, I leave you to enjoy the offering.

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