

RAHUL SANKRITYAYAN'S (1893-1963) SHIFT FROM BUDDHISM TO MARXISM: SOME REFLECTIONS

Sreyanjana Basu*

Abstract

Rahul Sankrityayan, who knew more than thirty languages, travelled more than tens of thousands of miles, taught at well known universities without formal education, a activist who was jailed thrice and whose published works numbering more than 135 ranged from travelogues, sociology, history, religion, philosophy, autobiography, biography, folklore, fiction, science, drama, essays etc.

Sankrityayan's drift to Marxism from his Buddhist ideological position has been a subject of interest for many. He was an enthusiastic Buddhist who was bent a revival of Buddhism in India in 1920s. But, his progressive outlook towards the common people pushed him towards the Marxist literature and philosophy. He had shown his basic inclination for a classless egalitarian society in one of his early book—*Baismi Sadi*. Now, with exposure to Marxism he found a philosophy which could translate his vision into reality. He decided to go for Marxism and sought to create a synthesis of Buddhist & Marxist philosophy and Marxist practice. This paper seeks to address this drift on the basis of literature of Rahul to argue that he did not disown Buddhism and he always sought to bring a creative synthesis of these two philosophies.

Keywords: Sankrityayan;Buddhism;MarxismAutobiography;Marxist Literature.

*** Phd Research Scholar, Department of History, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata-India**

1. Introduction

India is known as land of great saints and scholars and there is a tradition of wise men travelling through the real world in search of knowledge. One of the greatest examples of these kinds of scholars and saints in modern India is Rahul Sankrityayan.

Rahul Sankrityayan – popularly known in Bihar as ‘Rahulji’ was born on 9 April 1893 at Pandaha, a remote village of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh. His childhood name was Kedarnath Pandey. He was a versatile genius working on many fronts, and an indefatigable writer. He received formal education only up to class VII, through the medium of Urdu. But he managed to educate himself outside schools and colleges. He became a part of the non-cooperation movement initiated by Gandhi against the British, joined the peasant movement, went to jail many times, once even for three years. After 1947, he became an unofficial adviser of the new indigenous Indian government, regarding re-construction of states or the social financial development of people living in the northern fringe, in the hilly region of India, and also the spread of education, among other responsibilities. At one point in his life he adopted asceticism, and later on he became a family man with wife and children and also an owner of property. In 1915, at twenty-two, he was a propagator of Veda because he followed the *Arya Samaj*. Later, he went on to become a Buddhist monk, a philosopher and even later he became an active member of the communist party of India. In his own words, ‘at one time I was a stoic, then became a member of the *Arya Samaj*, also became a disciple of Marx even after keeping absolute faith on Buddha.’ Every stage of his life prepared him for the next. Thereafter, to propagate Buddhist philosophy and Marxism, he began writing. He had written nearly one hundred and fifty books that include stories, novels, dramas, history, philosophy and essays on social culture, and travel. Actually his writing on Buddhism was revolutionary step. He was tried to refute all the prevalent myths of the Lord Buddha with many evidence. In the adverse condition he has taken the knowledge of Buddhism. It is really astonishing that although Rahul kept on moving all the time from place to place in India and outside the country, he found time for writing so many books. ‘Rahul’s thirst for knowledge was insatiable and his commitment to rationalism was firm. Rationalism came to him through the process of constant questioning. This led to his conversion to *Arya Samaj* and was followed by that to Buddhism and finally to Marxism.’

This paper seeks to address this drift on the basis of literature of Rahul specially *Meri Jivan Yatra, vol-i-v, Volga Se Ganga, Ghumakkar Shastra, Buddhism: Marxist Approach, Bhago Nahi Duniya Ko Badlo* etc. to argue that he sought to bring a creative synthesis of Buddhism and Marxism.

2. Finding and Discussion

Of the three major transitional periods in Sankrityayan's life the first and foremost was his association with the *Arya Samaj*. He got interested in the study of Sanskrit and Vedanta at an early age when his grandfather wanted him to pursue English education. But it was in the *Arya Samaj* that he developed in him the true sentiment of nationalism.

The second major turning point in his life was his initiation into Buddhism. He found out in it the hidden glory of Indian history that had been carried to Tibet at different times. So, for recovering this pride possession of India he paid four visits to Tibet and was successful in his mission. He was inspired in this respect by the Buddhist monks who would toil hard for propagating Buddhism far and wide. For studying Buddhism, Sankrityayan followed Indian scholasticism because it was essential for knowing Buddhism adequately. In fact, it was Rahul Sankrityayan who for the first time made Indians aware of the leading role of Buddhist India in spreading social development throughout Asia.

As a follower of Buddhism, Sankrityayan could leave behind the narrow outlook of Vedic communal life; but the anti-British nationalist sentiment, the feeling of cultural superiority, the pride in Indian history and the determination to sacrifice life for the nation—all of which were infused in him during his relationship with the *Arya Samaj*—remained unchanged.

Sankrityayan's post-independence activities constitute the third major sphere of his life. In Bihar, he took the initiative of establishing the Communist Party of India and gradually got interested to Marxism. He took part in the peasant movement there as a result of which he was imprisoned. Sankrityayan then shifted his role as a political activist to that of a writer with a nationalistic intent. Keeping the majority of people in mind he laid great importance on Hindi and the Devanagari script. He advocated strongly that Hindi be recognized as the national language of

India for its rich literary tradition. Through his writings he tried to make his countrymen aware of India's glorious heritage and also to let them know the history, religions, philosophies, languages, politics, places, customs and usages and peoples of India as well as of the world.

Rahul had an interesting journey from being a *Sanatani* Hindu to a staunch Marxist. First he moved from orthodox Hindu to *Arya Samaj* position. In 1917 when Sankrityayan lost all faith in the principles of the *Arya Samaj* for being rigid and blind, then he by chance met Ven. Bodhananda at Lucknow. This was undoubtedly a decisive moment in the prospective course of his life. Sankrityayan came to know of Buddha in 1910. Almost in the middle of that year when he returned from his first knowledge acquiring tour of Badrinath to Bareilly he met Sadhu Khunnilal Shastri in the Dharamshala there. From him he received a pamphlet on Buddhism written in Sanskrit. It had no immediate effect on him. The very next year when he was on his way to Benaras from his native village he came across some Burmese mendicants praying at Sarnath. But owing to language bar they could not interact. The mendicants uttered '*Chakkhu, Chakkhu*' but Sankrityayan could not follow then. Later he learnt from someone that in Pali '*Chakkhu*' means '*Chakshu*' and that the Bhikkhus meant to say 'Buddha is the eye of the world'. He also heard something about the preaching's of Buddha when he was closely associated with the *Arya Samaj*. From that time onward he developed an interest in Buddhism. But as then there was no book on Buddhism written in Hindi, he could not satisfy his curiosity. An opportunity came in his way in 1917 when as an *Arya Samajist* he got the chance of going to Lucknow. There in the *Arya Samaj* he heard of a Buddhist monk. He was quick to meet the monk Bhadant Bodhananda Mahashavir. The two had a long discussion on many issues including Brahmanical caste theory in which it was clear but none of them believed. Many scholars belonging to the *Arya Samaj* would strongly defend caste-system in the name of Swami Dayanand's theory of '*Guna-Karma-Sabhav*'. So as a member of the *Arya Samaj* he was greatly disappointed. At least Sankrityayan found peace of mind in whatever he learnt from Bodhananda about Buddhism and was attracted by the sublime and rational doctrine of the Buddha.

In 1920, at the age of 27, he for the first time visited Lumbini, where the Buddha was born; Bodh Gaya, where he had attained Enlightenment; Sarnath, where he had delivered first Sermon; and Kushinara, where the Buddha had attained *Parinirvana*. He also visited other Buddhist historical places like Rajgir, Nalanda and Sravasti. In his autobiography (*Meri Jivan-Yatra*) he describes

his visit to these shrines in an emotional and poetic language. It is evident that the *Arya Samaj* itself enkindled in Sankrityayan an interest in and respect for Buddhism. This further instigated him to go to Tibet with a view to collect the manuscripts of Buddhist literature—the pride possession of India’s age-old tradition. During his two years stay in the prison he was engrossed in Buddhism—neither in the *Arya Samaj* nor in Congress politics. The spirit and sincerity that he noticed among the Buddhist monks for propagation of the religion at the time of his interaction with them during the Gaya Conference and a visit to Ladakh took him even more close to Buddhism.

Towards the end of 1928, he felt an urge to go to Tibet in search of the Buddhist sacred books which had been taken there by the fleeing monks from India who had to run for their life when the Muslim fanatics in the closing years of the 12th century attacked and razed to the ground the universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila in Bihar. So early in 1929 Rahul secretly entered Tibet via Nepal. His most outstanding achievements were made in his four trips to Tibet from where he brought altogether more than 4500 zylographs and manuscripts now preserved in the Bihar Research Society, Patna.

On return from Tibet, he decided to say ‘good-bye’ to his Hindu garb. On 20th July 1930, therefore, he donned the yellow robes of a Buddhist monk with the new name of Rahul Sankrityayan.

Being a rationalist and a free thinker, he was attracted by Marxism. Rahul’s drift to Marxism from his Buddhist ideological position has been a subject of interest for many. His progressive outlook towards the common people pushed him towards the Marxist literature and philosophy. Sankrityayan’s first involvement in politics was between 1921-7. He worked with the Congress in Bihar, when he imprisoned for almost three years. In 1938, he decided to engage himself with Indian politics again but by then the situations had changed. Congress was then part of the Bihar ministerial government. The party won in five provinces, including Bihar, in absolute majority during the 1937 elections. Sankrityayan, however, was worried about the farmers in Bihar. The issues of the down-trodden had been his motivation for joining and returning to politics in the first place—

I came to politics to relieve the pain of my own heart—I considered poverty and humiliation a curse. The Swaraj I had imagined during the non-cooperation movement was not a Raj of black Seths and babus; it was a Raj of farmers and workers, because only by it could people's poverty and humiliation be relieved. Now, after travelling in and outside the country, I felt all the more grief. I had not seen poverty like that in India anywhere else. The studies of Marxism had already told me that the hands that fight the revolution are these same workers and farmers, for it is they who have to endure all the torture; moreover, they do not have any property to lose. But be that as it may, until they have a strong organisation in place, they will not have the strength to revolt. And their organisation can only be strong when they struggle to rid themselves of day-to-day grievances.

Sankrityayan wanted to remove poverty from India which is why he emphasised on political involvement. His philosophy of life provided a theoretical basis through his study of Marxism. Sankrityayan considered Marxism as a weapon for eradicating poverty – ‘Marxism needs to be applied in every country according to the local situation, which is a most difficult task.’

From 1930-2, Sankrityayan read some books by Karl Marx. Till then he was unable to wholly accept Marx's materialism. Sankrityayan read that Marx breathed his last in London and was buried at Hygate. He visited the burial ground during his visit to England. Sankrityayan observed that a person from the oppressed class, for whom Marx fought all his life, did not know him. The grave of Marx was most ordinary, covered with grass all over. The saviour of the world's labour class, toiling hard to the last of his life with standing poverty, was silently sleeping here with his wife Jenny and grandson. A small red flag had been kept there by someone.

Buddhism and Marxism: Harmony and Disharmony

The four stages of the inner life of Rahul Sankrityayan are quite evident: Vedantic, Arya Samaji, Buddhist and Marxist (not a theoretical Marxist, but a true communist in belief and practice). After clearing the first two stages, he never looked back. But even after being a communist, he

remained an ardent follower of Buddha. In his own words, ‘Buddha would go with the period of time’– he would deliver his invaluable sermon considering the place, period and persons. This was Sankrityayan in 1942. He was equally devoted to Buddha and Marx. The question naturally arises that when the interim period between these two were more than a couple of thousand years, why did he venture to compare them instead of comparing Shankar, Ramanuj and Swami Dayanand. Is there anything in common between these two epochs or is it a passing or personal fancy like putting Marx with Freud, Sartre on the same platform?

The Same River: two banks?

Marxists do not comply with many things in Buddhism; similarly, the Buddhists will object to many theories of Marxism. Even then the question is raised if in the history of Idea, they can be identified as two distinct banks of the same river? Even if the dissimilarities or discords are kept aside, is there something to supplement each other? If so, is Buddhism relevant still today?

The fact is, there are others who, like Sankrityayan, have put Buddha and Marx on the same platform. According to Sankrityayan, Buddha did not believe in eternal and perpetual truths. The philosophy of Hegel and Marx also primarily says that everything on earth is transient. It is from here perhaps that Sankrityayan concluded that society changes continuously. After the counter-revolution in the countries of Soviet Union and Europe, American-Japanese bureaucrat – thinker Francis Fukuyama had turned back to the age-old, unreal, obsolete ideas in a new garb. Sankrityayan refused to accept that. On the contrary, he was aware that socialism and capitalism also was not permanent. Looking at himself he might have felt, like the continuing progress in the world of thought – from Buddha to Hegel and Hegel to Marx, Buddhist Sankrityayan has to move forward towards being the communist Sankrityayan. In the field of philosophy, this fighting spirit in him helped him in ascertaining the goal of his life. There are many who acknowledge Buddhist transience or Hegel's argumentalism. The non-Spiritualism that Sankrityayan spoke of is almost equivalent to transition in the history of imagination. Neither in the east nor in the west anyone had ever dared to speak of this before Buddha. Atheism or infidelity was there both before and after Buddha but to deny the existence of the inner soul in human body is really a spiritual revolution. In this regard, Marx is the successor of Buddha. Thus, for a non-spiritualist to become a combatant materialist is only a few steps away.

3. Analysis

Social Awareness of Buddha: In the Eyes of Rahul Sankrityayan

Sankrityayan had not seen or tried to see similarities between Buddha and Marx. He had accepted Buddha only as a predecessor who had dared to go against the prevalent notions and ideas. But from his article 'Buddha Darshan' (1942), on the sociology and the political views of Buddha, it is clear that he opposed Buddha particularly in this field and in others as well. Barring Buddha's philosophy and lifestyle, Sankrityayan did not think highly of Buddha. In this context, he was not only conscious of Buddha's limitations; he was a vehement critic too. In short, in some areas of philosophy, such as the doctrine of momentariness and non-spiritualism, and livelihood, Sankrityayan was almost a blind follower of Buddha along with being a true Marxist with regard to sociology, economics and politics.

The reason behind Sankrityayan inclination towards Buddha might lie somewhere else. Marx and Engels have written much about the problems faced by the inner self of an individual. Some sparse or incoherent remarks in memoirs and personal letters are proof of the same. Here, Buddha was the answer to Sankrityayan. Again, when Buddha was silent with regard to the problems of social life and social transformation, Marx was his solution. But this was quite natural for Buddha who was acquainted neither with capitalism nor with feudal system. He learnt from Buddha to take shelter in one's own self, to be enlightened, religious and united. This very lesson led him to Marxism. From Buddha he realized Marxism is the religion of his day.

Sankrityayan was always eager to learn which made him a liberal and inquisitive person. Anything human or revolutionary intrigued him. He came to know that Socialist Revolution in Russia was building an ideal communist society. Being born in a feudal society under the terrible tortures of the British, he had many bitter experiences. He used to create a communist world in his fantasy. While leading the life of a saint, he was always ready to help the poor and helpless, in Chapra and elsewhere. This sympathy towards to helpless made Sankrityayan a Marxist. He wrote the evolution of *Manav Samaj* in two volumes, inspired by Engels Sankrityayan followed the Arya Samaj because he believed that the progress of the country can be only possible through Arya Dharma's special authority. He was convinced about nation-building through Arya Samaj, and thus became a politician. His visits to Tibet were aimed at bringing back lost artefacts of

Indian heritage. He had a desire to become a communist because the end goals of economic equality in Buddhism and communism, matched. He was always standing up for Hindi and Devnagari Script because he believed they represented the most appropriate linguistic means of binding the Indian people and as a whole, representing their identity. He was a writer, extensively writing in Hindi such that the common people get the message. To conclude, it can be safely said that his nationalist sentiment moved him towards socio-political movements. Making Hindi the most common print language, and Devnagari the common print script, were two most important ways he showcased his nationalism.

Sankrityayan adopted and propagated a kind of communism that could resonate with Indian culture and systems. One of the first ways he proved the procedure was by putting his nationalism beside Buddhism and then deciding how the latter enhances the former's quality. He followed this process in the domains of religion and language as well, which is why the Communist Party revoked his party membership. Sankrityayan never stopped being a passionate devotee of communism, with the same order passion as he felt for Indianness or Hindi. He could not bear the dismissal from the Communist Party, so, in February 1955, he returned to Delhi, filled in an application and re-obtained the membership.

Social thinking of Sankrityayan was deeply influenced by the Buddhist philosophy. Not only philosophy, the united or combined life-style of the Buddhist society had its effect on him. He believed that Gautam Buddha introduced financial socialism in the society. The idea that he got from Buddha was of change and financial equality which drove him towards Marxism.

The Social Thinking of Buddha: Some Other Opinions

The explanation that Buddha & Marx could perhaps satisfy Sankrityayan from two different angles might not be completely correct. But a question is sure to crop up. Was Sankrityayan right in denying Buddha to be a socially and politically conscious person? It has been found that Buddha and Marx are in the same stream so far whenever their aims and purposes are analyzed. Even differing at many points with Buddhist thoughts, Marxists contemporaries have discovered distinctive originality and analyzing power in the preaching of Buddha. The European Marxists were not apprised of it. But we cannot ignore Debiprasad Chattopadhyay, the great historian,

who has referred to Buddha as 'the first sociologist'. When during 'the second urbanization' (first Indus civilization) or the civilization of the Ganges Valley were destroying people's republic and were establishing autocracy in its place, at that juncture Buddha (or someone from his primary disciples) consciously formed a well-balanced theory about the origin of family, personal property, and the state. The complete analysis of the doctrine of social contract (advocated by Rousseau, though some others before him hinted at it) is found in Dirgha Nikaya a Buddhist scripture. This interpretation is both political and moral. It says, the urge for personal security and gain, robbed the proletariat of their absolute right over lands leading to private property. To avoid that Kings and Statehood came into being. Buddha did not think of a titular or urban-centric state like Plato (approx 429-349 B.C.) and Aristotle (approx. 384-322 B.C.), between the decaying or waning 'mass' system and the ascending monarchy he would prefer the first one. The rules of Sangh also were made keeping the mass in view. There would be no private property and no fixed rule. But there would be strict discipline violation of which would mean punishment. Buddha was only the regulator or director of the Sangh, which was similar to the ideal society that Buddha dreamt of. His dying desire was that all mendicants be self-established, self-sheltered, devout and looking at or thinking of nothing other than the Sangh. Buddha was thus not only a preacher in millions but was also unparalleled in proclaiming solemn religion where there is nothing eternal. There the first and foremost condition for development of the Sangh and for that matter the society, depends on the scope provided to everyone for self-revelation without any interference. These transparencies of thought twenty-five hundred years ago arouse awe and reverence still today.

Opposition of Sankrityayan; Why?

It was not that Sankrityayan was unaware of this. He himself had either edited or translated the Buddhist manuscripts. He had even mentioned the system of equality demanded by the 'mass' in protest against the avarice and invasion of other lands by the kings. But he found the greatest blunder somewhere else. As per *Benoypitak* in Pali, Buddha forbade granting wandering asceticism to debtors, slaves and royal soldiers. From there Sankrityayan concluded:

'Thus the question of removing the factors causing sorrow after seeing the reality has come to an end. Now there remains its spiritual value only, so for this very reason the philosophy of Buddha is becoming like a snake without its fangs to the wealthy class. A judicious man like

Sankrityayan should have understood that those three parts (1/3/4) might have been interpolated. It has no reflection of the whole approach of Buddha. In the "Benoy" of some other communities (Mahasanghik, Mohisasak & Sarbastibadi) nothing has been said in affirmation or negation about prabrajya (wandering asceticism) denied to the royal soldiers or slaves. There is no reason to think that the "Benoy" in Pali (Pali Benoy) is the oldest and those of other communities or sects were written after. The six 'Benoy's obtained so far are only reiteration of the Benoy prevalent in the region of Bidisha around 250 B.C. the modern scholars think that Benoypitak was compiled at least hundred years after the death of Buddha (the history of the first Sangiti is not so very reliable). And the "Mahabagg" part came even later; it is not a part of the ancient segment of "Benoypitak". It is appropriate to think that the story of this approval-disapproval in the name of Buddha was fabricated according to the convenience – inconvenience of the local rulers.'

There is a conflict observed in the life of Sankrityayan with regard to the philosophy of Buddha and Marx. In 1928, Sankrityayan was travelling to different holy places all over India as a saint before heading for Tibet. He described his experience at a temple: 'After the greeting or salutation of the deity I did not bow down; for this offence the priest being annoyed called me atheist. What was his grief?' At another instance he writes, 'however, none of these virtuous people know how far I am, from both Ram and Khuda.' In the field of Indian philosophical thinking, first Charvak and then Buddha discarded the authenticity of Veda as well as the existence of God. In the Marxist philosophy, also there is analysis of the scriptures, investigation into its real ground work, but it was not intent on proving miracle or the scriptures related to the ancient Hindu sages.

The land for ascetic practice, as per Marxist philosophy, is the mind free of prejudice and devoted to science. The Marxists do not accept the notion of vice-virtue, heaven-hell, as examples of absolute truth; on the contrary, they take it as natural outcome of the progress of history and also consider them to be the tools of oppression. This mentality is reflected in the sayings of Dharmakirti. 'To accept Veda as an authority, to submit to someone (god) as the supreme lord, to have a dip in the Ganges for accumulating piety, to be egoist regarding higher-

lower cast, repentance (fasting etc) to destroy sin – these five are foolish ignorance. *Pramanavartika.*'

Buddha believed that the universe, its manifestations, and course of events, are only the continuity of eternal cause effect – 'whatever has been created is mortal'. In that context individual and society have their ups and downs. In the philosophy of Marx also theories of unending motion and transformation have been decided through thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. It is true that 'harmony of opposites and equal nodes' are not there in the philosophy of Buddhism but the twelve etiologies mentioned like illiteracy prejudice, science, fame etc have been so arranged that from one etiolog can get the root (origin) of the next one – thus helping in collecting a store of information comparing the two view-points.

Metaphysics or *Paravidya* is not nursed in Marxist philosophy. On the other hand, whether the universe is eternal or not, whether the body and soul are the same or not if soul exists beyond death – ten such queries have been avoided by Buddha and he even discouraged his followers in this respect. Time and again, Sankrityayan had declared himself to be a non-believer in soul. The flow of the Ganges from Volga is imaginary, and later Sankrityayan had strongly expressed his dissatisfaction at the exaggerated support of spiritualism by King Janaka and Vedic sage Yajnavalkya. The following extract will show what the doctrine of Sankrityayan was regarding this:

Buddha believed in the present. He would deliver his much-valued sermon keeping in mind the place period and person or persons. He did not like to drive dagger in the air. The same is the principle of Sankrityayan – this not so significant follower of Buddha. I have not kept myself off from his discipleship. Buddha said 'Religion preached by me is like a boat – it is meant not for carrying on shoulders but for reaching the bank' (Majjhim Nikay). Following this advice of him I have arrived at conflicting materialism from momentary non-spiritualism.

The Buddhists speak of four Nobel Truths – there is sorrow on earth (in life) the causes behind this are there, there is possibility of preventing sorrow, and there are ways as well to overcome it. Marxism propagates that leaving aside a few a vast number of human life is full of grief and deprivation. The class-divided society alone is behind the root of all the grief which can only

come to an end through class-battle and the leadership of the have-not class. Both Buddhism and Marxism believe that inhumanity can end with the unity and amity among the oppressed. Unity and brotherhood is the goal for both the doctrines. Socialism aims at economical or financial non-violence which is quite impossible in the capitalistic frame work of a society.

Sankrityayan believed that Stalin was a true follower of Marxism. From that standpoint he analysed the life-stories, activities, and writings of the communist and wanted to let the Hindi speaking people know it. First of all he apprised them that as per Marx the earth is not only an idea – it is a reality. He had mentioned this reality as dialectical materialism. In spite of all the differences of opinion, everyone must agree that Marxism is careful observation of the world, to observe the world in totality- originating from matter it has gradually arrived at conflicting reasoning, termed ‘dialectical.’ Two object sitting side by side might be opposite in nature or if not opposite at least different which in common language is known as anti-thesis. If one is positive the other one is negative. Through the conflict of positive and negatives a third object is born which in English is called synthesis. Thus, the process of progress continues through the animal world and the history of man comes into existence. Human thought process was born and enriched to face the struggle for existence.

4. Conclusion

Sankrityayan wrote philosophy to make us understand this. Most of the old philosophers were idealist that means they considered ‘idea’ more important than matter. But even within it the conflict of positive-negative could be found. Through this conflict, philosophy, history, and the history of Philosophy also continued. For this, Sankrityayan had discussed in short of every single philosophy of the world including various philosophies of Greece, Rome, Europe and Hegel and Marx. He had also opened up the Indian philosophy. Unless and until he could have comprehended all this minutely, he could not have presented them within only a few hundred pages. Of course scholars might argue that he was wrong in his move. For some Marxists even Lenin was not right and for non-Marxist Marxism is an erroneous doctrine. But Sankrityayan did not write for the educated, but for the common people only.

Sankrityayan wrote the biographies of Lenin, Stalin and Mao in abridged form so that the common Hindi speaking people could know about their activities. He had also written about the leaders he had made and seen, not in biographical forms rather in rough sketches. Sankrityayan had seen many bigwigs and congressmen but had only written about those leaders who had tried to uplift the common people through communism.

Rahul was always in search for a utopian society or “the perfect society” which he did not found in *Arya Samaj* or in Buddhism. The ideology of Marxism had somehow quenched his thirst. But this shift was not sudden. Rahul realized that his dream for an ideal world was very closely reflected in the fundamentals of Marxism. This belief got more concrete with his travel in many countries like Srilanka, Europe and experiencing their cast and creed and social life. From a comparative study of the outlook and philosophy of Buddhism and Marxism it can be concluded that Buddhism was just a step back for Sankrityayan to become a communist. Sankrityayan switched over from one religious belief to another because he was always unyielding. But at the same time he had never ignored his responsibility. Here in lies the dignity and nobility of Sankrityayan.

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