

HINDUISM IS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL THOUGHT IN INDIA

“Bombay, Wednesday*

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Minister for Law, Government of India, who arrived in the city from Delhi this evening declined to comment on reports about his *conversion to Buddhism*.

Dr. Ambedkar told pressmen that he intended to start a college at Ahmednagar on the lines of the Siddhartha College. The College which will give instruction in both Arts and Science subject will be started before July next, he stated.

He is leaving for Poona tonight and returning to the city tomorrow evening.

He said, as one interested in the subject, he had been collecting pieces of information as to the causes leading to the birth and fall of *Buddhism in India*.

Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that the significance of *Buddhism* would not be understood unless the exact circumstances which gave birth to it were understood. He disagreed with most people who were under the impression that the religion of India had all along been Hinduism “Hinduism is the latest development of social thought in India,” he declared.

Causes of Decline

Turning next to the causes which led to the decline of *Buddhism*, Dr. Ambedkar refuted suggestions made by many people in India that *Buddhism* was destroyed by the dialectic of Shankaracharya. “This is contrary to facts as *Buddhism* existed for many centuries after his death.”

Dr. Ambedkar believed that *Buddhism* faded away in India because of the rise of *Vaishnavaitism* and *Saivaism*. Another cause was the Muslim invasion of India. “When Allauddin marched into Bihar, he killed over 5,000 *Bhikkus*. The remaining

*The 3rd May 1950.

Buddhist monks fled to neighbouring countries like China, Nepal and Tibet. Efforts were subsequently made by *Buddhists* of India to raise another priesthood in order to revive *Buddhism*. But these failed as by then 90 per cent of *Buddhists* had embraced *Hinduism*.

Answering the question why *Hinduism* survived in India and *Buddhism* had died, Dr. Ambedkar said, “this religion is difficult to practise while *Hinduism* is not.”—P.T.I.¹

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¹ : The Free Press Journal, dated 4th May 1950.