

**Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti
&
Buddha Jayanti (Vesak Day)**

Celebrations at Greater Washington Area

Report on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar & Buddha Jayanti celebrations at Greater Washington Area

Executive Summary:

Ambedkar Association of North America ([AANA](#)) and Ambedkar International Mission ([AIM](#)) members celebrated Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti & Buddha Jayanti (Vesak Day) in Washington DC. This was a 2-Day event from May 29th through May 30th and was well attended by about 70 + members from across the North American continent – Seattle to Richmond, Detroit to Dallas. Members had diverse Indian roots and covered the Republic of India across its north-south and east-west borders and was well represented by scholars, students, professionals, entrepreneurs, activists and equally important – the young kids.

Program Details (at a glance):

- Day 1 (29th May) : Meet & Greet , Socialize and Sight-Seeing
- Day 2 (30th May) : Speech, Presentations, Discussions, Cultural Program , Brainstorming session

Details:

Day 1 (29th May): Sightseeing:

Tour to Capitol building was pre-arranged for 80 visitors and the group met at the Capitol Hill visitor center at around 9:30 am. The first group consisting of about 40+ members started the tour at 10:30 am followed by the next group of 20+ members at 11:00 am. After the tour, everyone re-grouped at Capitol Library and then headed towards Union Station for Lunch. Post lunch, smaller groups headed different ways to explore beauty of Washington DC – Monuments, Museum and parks.





Day 1 (29th May): Meet and Greet:

At around 7:00 pm, everyone gathered at Sandeep Phulluke's residence for a meet and greet session. Dinner, sponsored by Sandeep Phulluke, was followed by a formal introduction of individuals & family members and an overview of logistics and next day function details.

Mr. Raju Kamble then initiated a brainstorming session and welcomed questions around the need of having such celebration functions and its benefits. This session could not be completed for want of time and the debate was rescheduled for near future.

Day 2 (30th May): Function

The function started with a breakfast session to welcome additional guests and get to know each other better. The function officially started with a welcome speech by Sandeep Phulluke followed by an introduction of Buddhist Monk [Ven.Sharda Tissa Thero](#) by Millind Tamke. Bhanteji invited everyone to join him in Trisharana Panchasheela and Buddha Vandana and shared his thoughts on importance of Dhamma and panchsheel in our daily life and the need for having such Jayanti functions. He also raised the social issues in India in particular and encouraged the gathering to contribute our efforts for social cause.



Speeches

[Mr. Raju Kamble \(AIM, Houston, TX\)](#): He shared his thoughts about rise of Buddhism in India against Caste and Untouchability and how Buddhism propagated its Principles of Equality, Justice and Liberty for the welfare of one and all.

[Mahesh Wasnik \(AANA, Detroit MI\)](#): Presented AANA's current activities and future plans. He also mentioned the importance of various organizations getting together to celebrate such functions and the advantages of it. www.aanausa.org

[Bacchu Lal \(DANRI, Maryland\)](#): Shared the current and future plans for Dr. Ambedkar NRI association (DANRI) with the group and also highlighted some micro financing activities in India. <http://www.danria.org>

[Velayudam Shanmugam-vela\(New Jercey\)](#) - Vela is involved in helping poor students in Southern part of India and shared his personal experiences and how a paltry sum of contribution can make a big difference to a student's life in India. www.selfeducate.org/

[Rakesh Gupta \(New Jersey\)](#) – Rakesh appreciated the efforts put in towards the function and liked the effort to involve kids as part of function celebration. He shared his efforts to open libraries in northern India.



Speeches ...(contd)...

Vinaya Khobragade (New Jersey) : Vinaya highlighted the women's role with a special emphasis on woman development projects. She invited the women to attend regular monthly conference calls and also encouraged the audience to participate in regular fund raising activity to support women's educational cause.

Jagdish Bankar (Texas) – Jagdish shared his experiences of similar function from Texas. He emphasized the importance of such functions and also requested organizers to invest efforts to get more involvement from kids.

Vivek Nirala (Virginia): He presented Satya Guru Inc. activity and explained how it helps in Dalit education and economical development at Chhattisgarh, India. He mentioned that Buddha, Guru Ghasidas (a Satnami saint from the Chhattisgarh state of India), and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar were instrumental in developing a society based on equality, peace, justice, and liberty. <http://www.satyaguru.org/>

Amrit Lal(Virginia) : He shared the activities that he is leading or is part of towards supporting educational cause in India. He also shared his personal struggle and how he was able to overcome challenges to be at a place where he is now.

Shahu Bhalerao: He presented overall AMI current activity and future plans. He stated that AIM is an organization which is working in India & Abroad for constant propagation, spread of Ambedkarite Ideology to fulfill Dr. Ambedkar's mission. AIM Presentation and activity details are in <http://www.ambedkarmission.org>

Gynandra Kumar (New york) : He shared the initiatives addressed by 'Insight Forum' to help address caste based discriminations and assist students by providing them with resources. He also highlighted the achievements of this group so far, its network reaches and also mentioned the official launch of telephonic helpline. He requested various Dalit and Adivasi group activists to come together and collaborate to benefit from each other and facilitate upliftment of the society.

Tanmay Waghmare (Washington): He shared the need for the individual here to get as close to the grass root as possible. He emphasized that it is prime important to present good role models to our society in India and assist them to aspire for bigger dreams and achieve bigger goals.

Sudhir Waghmare (Michigan): He shared his experiences from earlier functions and emphasized the need to continue such efforts going forward.

Cultural Program

There was a festivity in the mood and this was well represented by the kids & the adults - all through the breakfast-lunch-evening snacks and in between.

- **Rambabu Gautamji** read his self written poetries on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Gautam Buddha. He also distributed his books to individuals.
- Piano play (Hindi Song) by **Viram Hirekhane**
- Piano play (English Song) by **Arsh Wasnik**
- 'Light a candle' peace song by **Sumeet and Suhani Chavan**
- Group song by **Ashok Bhagat's kids**
- Dance by **Mr & Mrs Ganga**.

The program concluded with distribution of gifts to the kids and vote of thanks.





Day 2 (30th May) : Post-Function Dinner

Dinner was sponsored by Mr Amrit Hall at his residence and was well attended by the group.

Post dinner, brain storming session was initiated by Mr. Raju Kamble to have more such functions at the Capitol and also to explore means and ways to involve senators in such functions. Mr. Amrit Lal has agreed to facilitate the search for a hall and raised a need for regular conference calls to plan/ manage the event more effectively.

Action items were taken to research the various aspects of this program and the group agreed to gather again to discuss the progress.



AANA and AIM would like to personally thank each one of you for your time, commitment and efforts to make this a successful and memorable event.
