

A Study about Leo Tolestoy's Awareness and Influence on Buddhism

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Leo Tolestoy (1829-1910) the revolutionary writer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia, who was focused on Russian Orthodox Church in Tzar Kingdom in his young age that he was aggressive against the church. Tolestoy was also interested in religious studies, read books on other religions as well as Buddhism. Martin Wickramasinghe, pointed out that some of Tolestoy's narratives have similarities with Sinhala Buddhist stories also. Most of the people who are interested in Tolestoy's literary work had not identified that theme exactly. The research problem of this study is whether Tolestoy was truly aware of Buddhism or not. Methodology of this study is based on intra-textual reading. Selected Buddhist stories, Tolestoy's selected narratives and other essays related to Buddhism were primary sources for this study. Secondary sources were literature books and critical essays of Sinhala critics. According to those sources, we understood the fact that Tolestoy was interested in Buddhism because he had been writing a booklet named "Lord Buddha and His lessons" in his maturity. In 1905, he had searched about the concept of *Paspau* in Buddhism, written articles and given his best contribution to motivate G.A.Buanshe to distribute a book regarding Lord Buddha. He shared ideas with Mahathma Gandhi, improved his knowledge of Buddhism. We can identify the similarities in the structures and the characters of Jataka Stories and Anna Karenina (1873). His article about killing animals in a bull yard recalls "*The story of Chunda Huuru Vedda*" in Saddaramarathnavaliya because of the exact words. In Tolestoy's last stages of life he ran away from the house. Some critics says that the incident is similar to Lord Buddha's renunciation (*Abinishkramanaya*). The conclusion is Tolestoy was aware of Buddhism.

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