

# **The Travail of Religious Liberalism: My Epic Fall after Visiting the Hindu Dhakeshwari Temple in Dhaka, Bangladesh**

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Although my family and I are Buddhist, we are very liberal in religious matters and so I was exposed to all religions since my childhood. Hinduism is one such religion that I was exposed to although I and my family vehemently oppose idolatry. Since the Hindus are going to celebrate Durga Puja soon, it is worthwhile to mention that Acharya Shantideva, an ancient Indian monk and a staunch Buddhist, has a single reference to Durga in his book, Bodhicharyavatara - and it is not flattering. If anything, Acharya Shantideva's testimony proves that Durga was an even more wrathful goddess among Hindus at that time than she is now.

However, I could not resist my interest in visiting the Dhakeshwari temple in Dhaka, Bangladesh, one December morning. This temple is the largest Hindu temple in Bangladesh and I looked around and donated Bangladeshi Taka 500 for its upkeep.

After coming out of the temple, I took a rickshaw and the rickshaw was going extremely fast through old Dhaka. Somewhere on the way, it caught the tail of another rickshaw which was also moving at a tearing speed. There was hardly any gap between the two rickshaws. It was a recipe for disaster.

The accident occurred soon after. The rickshaw in front stopped all of a sudden and the rickshaw I was in rammed in its back. Due to the momentum, I was thrown onto the street of Dhaka. I was wearing a business suit for some professional engagements later in the day. I was bruised but in one piece with no bones broken. My good luck saved the day for me.

Although aching in multiple places and with sores in my arms and legs especially, I was man enough to hide my discomfort and kept all my professional engagements throughout the day as if it was business as usual.

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