

Mahayogi
Goutam Buddha

Dr. Subhash K. Desai



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Mahayogi Gautama Buddha

Dr. Subhash K. Desai

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Mahayogi Gautum Buddha

Author

Dr. Subhash K. Desai (M.A. Ph. D.)
102, Salunkhe Nagar, Kolhapur 416 002
(0231-2324583) cell – 09423039929

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This book is dedicated to
my childhood spiritual companion and
my younger brother.
Shivkumar alis Sarjerao.

Acknowledgement

Many friends took the initiative to publish my Marathi and English book 'Mahayogi' Gautaum Buddha.

The cover design for Marathi book was appreciated by each and every person so it continued to the english edition. Thanks to my artist friend Anant Khasbardar and Shirish Khandekar.

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Preface

Written mainly in 2008, this book appeared in Marathi on 9th Dec. 2008. It was very kindly treated by the reviewers from The Times of India to Marathi dailies in Maharashtra. The public gave encouraging response. I had very positive impression that many praised but few disagreed. I decided to publish the second edition in Marathi with good proof reading and ventured to write it in English. As my mind was full with the enlightened one, the work was completed within twenty days. I tried to express the Buddha Darshan in as simple an English as possible.

Since ancient times the spiritually evolved saints and sadhus were called Bhagva. Their preachings were more important than their personal lives. The preachings were preserved orally. The saint who had self realization or had attained enlightenment is called Buddha.

After the 'parinibban' or parinirvan of Siddarth Gautum Buddha in 483 B.C. at Kushinara, a great assembly (Mahasangini) was invited and the systematic record of Buddha's life and teachings was done. It was in Pali language. It was the period when the concepts like a biography or an autobiography was not evolved. There is no reference of Buddha's biography or it was lost or destroyed. Society valued the teachings more than events in the saint's life. The same thing happened after five hundred years when Jesus Christ was born or the

contemporary of Buddha, the Greek philosophers like Socrates.

Emperor of Magdha Ajatshatru helped Mahakashyapa, Anand, Upali and other bhikhus who had seen and heard Buddha to organize an assembly in Rajgrah near Saptaparni caves. Mahashyapa asked a few questions to Arhat Upali regarding Buddha's law for male and female bhikhus. The answers were confirmed by five hundred other bhikhus and these laws we know as Vinay Pitak. Similarly questions were asked of Anand, the answers compiled and are known as Dhamma.

The second conference after 100 years was attended by seven hundred bhikhus that continued for eight months. It gave birth to Buddhists sect Mahayan. Original sect remained as sthavirvadi or Thervadi.

The third conference was invited in Patliputra by Emperor Ashok after 200 years from Mahanirvan of Buddha. During nine months the Buddhism was well documented in Pali language and is known as Tripitatk.

- (I) Sutrapitak
- (II) Vinaya Pitak
- (III) Abhidhamma Pitak.

Sutrapitak includes Buddha's preaching in five parts.

- (1) Dighnikay (2) Mazimnikay (3) Sunyukta (4) Angutarnikay

(5) Suddaknikay

(II) VinayPitak contains laws for male and female bhikhus in five parts

(1) Parajik (2) Tachitriya (3)Mahavagga (4) Chuddvagga (5) Paripar.

(III) Abhidhama Pitak had seven chapters in which deep philosophical questions are discussed.

(1) Dhammsangani (2) Vibhang (3) Dhatukatha (4) Puggalpamtri

(5) Kathavathu (6) Yamak (7) Pathan

All the literature is in Pali or Magdhi language. The oral language of people of Magdha.

To explain the meaning of Pali, Tripitak Buddha Ghoshacharya wrote Athakatha during 4th and 5th centaries A. D.

The cause of religious advice given by Buddha is understood in four reasons.

- 1) Athajzasaya – because he felt.
- 2) Parjzasaya – considering others inclination.
- 3) Puchavasik – advice given to answer the questions asked.
- 4) Thataparik – because of an event that took place on the same occasion.
- 5) Buddha used to advice considering the inclination of listeners, their grasping capacity, in the atmosphere they were brought up and general atmosphere. Buddha advised

them in a very simple language using stories and similies.

6) The periferi in which Buddha walked seemed to be Kosi-Kurukhetra, Vindhya-Himalya-Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Zarkhanda.

This book is the synthesis of three things. Reading, extensive travel, discussions with great souls and the personal spiritual experiences while following the path for more than forty five years.

Lord Buddha was a great social revolutionary, he had a practical approach, superb logician but it does not mean he was confined to the material dimension only. In Tripitak itself there was a clear reference that he possessed extra sensory perception, he also had occult knowledge and power. He was well aware of the inner world but he opened and expressed that much of the secretes of the inner world that were essential for that period and for that society. His yogic practice has been reflected in Patanjali Yogsutras 150 years after his parinirvan.

It seems to me an illusion to compare science with religion. The birth of so called science is the womb of philosophers like Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Arya, Bhatta, Nagarjun and many others.

At present, the wave of bio-tech is spreading after the wave of I. T. The difference between man and machine is reducing, science, understanding its limitations is entering in the field of philosophy to solve unsolved mysteries of

the universe. At the same time two extremities in science and religion are becoming the cause of human sorrow and violence.

The middle path and message of non violence advocated by Buddha is the only solution to overcome human sorrow and miseries.

My humble effort to make some notes is not to support or oppose any previous writer, I just want to express what I found, understood and experienced. My convictions may turn into a new way of thinking.



Buddha period

Age	B.C.	Event
1	563	Birth
9	554	Childhood
16	554	Marriage
22	541	Helping the King
32	531	Renunciation
32-35	528	Enlightenment
35-37	527	Bimbisar, Mongalayan, Kashyapa.
39	22	Spirithal power.
43	520	Conflict in Sangh.
45	518	Niganta Natputh
47	516	Varanasi, Vaishali
55	508	Sariputta
58	504	Angulimal
78	486	Parinirvan of Sariputta & Mongalayan.
80	483	Mahanirvan.

THE TIMES OF INDIA SAYS...

On the path of Enlightenment

The book, Mahayogi Gautam Buddha penned by a Kolhapur writer, deals with life and works of Lord Buddha and City's Association with the great sage.

Several social and political workers have failed in promoting Lord Buddha in true light and instead claimed them to have founded a new religion. He is a true scholar in philosophy of religion and science, says Subash Desai, city-based writer, in his book on Lord Gautum Budha.

Desai has penned the book-Mahayogi Gautum Buddha after visiting Tibet, Nepal, Leh-Ladakh, Spiti valley, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa to gather detils about the great sage.

In his book, Desai claims that the Buddha hierarchy had three Brahmin Buddha's and three Kshtriya Buddhas. Siddhartha Gautum Buddha was the seventh. He was not against Brahmins but opposed the caste system in 500 BC.

Pointing out that Patanjali composed his yoga sutras 150 years after Buddha, the writer says it's possible that the sutras might have evoloved out of 'Anapman yoga', controlling of breath practiced by Lord Gautam Buddha.

Desai has quoted from a Swami Vivekananda's speech

at the Chicago world conference of religion on I am a Buddhist because Buddhism is the culmination of Hindhuism. The swami is wrongly portrayed as a staunch 'Hindutwadi', he says.

The writer has mentioned in the book that history of Kolhapur city goes 2000 years back as Buddha relics were found here during an excavation on October 27, 1887. To support his claim, he has published a map and a few papers from the Asiatic journal of British India.

Chapter I

SHAKYAS

Lord Gautam Buddha had no intention to form a new religion or a sect. He had not put forth thoughts to oppose any existing thought. He said what he had experienced as truth. It came from the bottom of his heart and reached the spiritual vibrations to another beings' heart.

Those saints, aetics who had realization of truth were called as Bhagav. Their inspired speeches were not preserved in writing but learned by heart. Their knowledge of supreme principle (Tatva) gave them the title of Budha.

After Bhagvan Budhas Mahanirvana seven hundred Bhikus assembled in a mahasangini. Probably in 380 B.C. in the presence of those who were with Lord Buddha and who had witnessed his life and teachings. The questions answered unanimously were recorded.

Ashoka, son of Bindusara succeeded to the throne of Maurya empire in 273 B.C. He declared war with Kalinga that took place in 261 B. C. His conversion from a tyrant ruler to a staunch Buddhist as a result of Kalinga war on the bank of Daya river purified his life and introduced the spirit of Buddhism into his administration. Chanasoka changed into Dharmasoka. It had a great significance on Buddhism. It changed from moral preachings to world religion. It spread to the lands beyond the boundaries of his empire. His son Mahindra and his daughter Sanghamitra were sent to Sri Lanka.

Emperor Ashoka installed a large number of Rock edicts all over the empire and spread holy ash and bone, relics of Lord Budha to 80,000 places where (mounds) stupas were built. One of them was at Kolhapur (Maharashtra).

It is true that the Buddha Bhikus went from village to village, town after town, one nation after another to spread the wonderful message of Lord Budha. In their own language they talked; they shared their joys and sorrows. They were part of their culture and kept themselves detached.

It is a historical truth that Buddha's life and teachings were rolled into one in Pali language but no biography of Budha was written. Rather the concept of a Biography or an autobiography was not developed 2500 years ago. 'Buddha's biography was not found or destroyed.' Such references are not found in Tripitak. People and disciples

paid more attention to the life transforming message. The events in the life of the master were considered subordinate.

The same was the case with Jesus Christ and also with the Greek philosopher. Their teachings are not recorded chronologically as they were not in written form. They never expressed his thoughts in writing. These are in the form of questions and answers.

As Buddha's teachings were given prime importance it spread all over the globe. Till today we are lucky to have it in most pure and vibrant form.

People, generation after generation wanted to know what Buddha told. Which moral religion he insisted upon? which form of knowledge, he achieved by enlightenment? In view of these queries all other details were neglected. Even his inner struggle was neglected. Biographers were successful in associating his inner struggle with Mar. The daughters of Mar are symbolized for lust, restlessness and physical pleasures and further disturbed the meditation and mental state of equilibrium of Siddhartha before he attained enlightenment. All these struggles were from the inner world on the deep psychological level and still Siddhartha overcame them and proceeded to a higher stage of spiritual progress. It suggests that our vision of Buddha's life and message should not be clouded by allegories and miracles.

The Buddha's life and teachings had influenced many Greek souls and many philosophers. Half of the world is under the sway of Buddhism. From Afghanistan to Japan,

Tibet to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan, Indonesia, China to India Buddha's thoughts have spread like rays of the sun. Theosophical school of thought of Swami Vivekanand, J. Krishnamurthy, Mahatma Gandhi, Osho were illuminated by the light of Asia.

Sir Edveen Erhold's book 'Light of Asia' has influenced many minds.

Earlier in 1980 I translated and published a book on Lama Milarepa as Buddha in North east Sikkim, Nepal, Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh, Spitalahol valley Leh-Ladakh. I personally visited many such places, read books and had discussions with Lamas and tried to follow Buddha's advice in thought and practice.

This book is a product of such research in Buddhism. Here I remember swami Vivekanand's speech in the famous world parliament of religion held at Chicago (U.S.A.) in which he gave special lecture on the topic. 'I am Buddhist because Buddhism is the fulfillment of Hinduism.' I adore this statement.

BIRTH OF SIDDHARTH

Maya gave birth to Siddhartha. Maya meant for shakyas a mist before sunrise. Which disappears after the sun rises. For the philosopher, Maya meant cosmic force, for some vaidic pandits Maya was the power behind miracle but for Sidharth Maya is the nectar that makes mortal human being

immortal. It was Amrut. When Siddhartha was a grown up youth he was told about his birth and his mother.

In the month of Ashadha Shakya community used to celebrate a festival. Everybody in society used to participate forgetting the differences of caste and social status. There was no gender bias. Queen Mayadevi was very enthusiastic for this celebration. She was very liberal in donating food and wealth to the needy.

The shakyas were a high caste Kshtriya family. Shudhodan was the head of Shakya republic in Himalayan foothills. To the south was the prosperous Ganges plain.

Queen Mayadevi dreamed of a great soul to be born to her. In a dream she was transported by spirits to a high plateau of Mount Kailas (in Tibbet) Mahamaya laid under a tree where a white royal elephant walked three times around her and entered her womb.

The queen narrated her strange dream to king Shudhodan. He could not understand the meaning. He invited eight religious priests attending his court. They were Ram, Dhan, Lakhan, Mantri, Yamma, Suyam, Bhog and Sudatta. King offered them good gifts and requested for the meaning. They analysed and interpreted the dream as the queen will give birth to a son, either he might abandon the king's palace and be a great enlightened spiritual teacher or he would be a world emperor (Chakravarti) 'turner of wheel of the power.'

Queen Mayadevi desired to go to her parents. Ten months later king arranged for her travel from Kapilavastu to Devdah where her father Anjan and mother Sulakshana lived. They belonged to Koliya dynasty? As per the custom, the first birth of a child takes place at her mother's house. While travelling towards Devdah one had to cross a dense forest full of waterfalls, flowers, fruits. The forest was known as 'lumbini van' The Queen desired to stop and enjoy the beauty of nature. She was in a very peaceful and happy mood. She camped under a huge shal tree. While playing with the lower branches of the shal tree, touching the ground she started experiencing labour pains. Soon after she gave birth to a beautiful child. It was Vaishakh month as per Hindu calendar and a full moon day. Full moon gives a mind a sense of profound peace, a reflection of soft and pleasant light.

Outwardly Shudhodan was happy but engrossed in a dilemma whether his son would be a world emperor or a great spiritual teacher.

It was discovered that the son carried on his body thirty two marks of a great being. One of these marks was the wheel (Chakra) found on the soles of his feet. The wheel was known as a symbol of kingship. (Later the Buddha's first discourse was appropriately called the first turning of the wheel of dharma or law.)

Shudhodana was one of the great and wealthy landowners of Sakya race. His capital was Kapilvattha (Red place or

Red earth). It was a densely populated place in the narrow streets on which thronged elephants, carts, horses and men. In the training of children of nobles in these lands more attention was paid to martial exercises than to the knowledge of the veda.

Shakya family was blessed with prosperity and great opulence. They also owned lot of gold. The chief source of their wealth was undoubtedly rice cultivation, an advantageous position of their territory. Commercially it was a medium of communication between the mountain range and Gangetic plains. The villages were hidden among the rich, dark-green foliage of mangoes and tamanrind trees. In the background, over the black masses of the mountains of Nepal rise the towering snow-capped summits of the Himalayas.

The King Shudhodan did not want to lose the heir to his kingdom and see the son as an ascetic wandering in the streets with a begging bowl in his hand and dressed in saffron robe. He decided to arrange all possible means to change the direction of his life already carved by destiny.

On the fifth day of the child's birth he was named 'Siddharth,' traditionally he was also called Gautam. As an unknown, unseen beast chases a man in the forest, bad luck was chasing Siddharth. In a name giving ceremony queen Mahamaya became ill. The relatives gathered for the ceremony thought it must be because of her over exertion. Moment by moment she was sinking and became weak.

The queen realised that she was close to her death. She called her sister Mahaprajapati and the king. Both of them rushed near her bed. They saw death in her eyes.

Even though she was undergoing physical pain there was no trace of it on her mental state. She reminded the king of the priest Kaladevi (Asit) who was crying. The king had asked the reason. He had answered, "I am crying for myself not for child's future." This child would attain enlightenment and he would do the Dhamchakra Pravartan (Revolution in the nature of Dharma) But the end of my life has come and as I may not be the witness of the great revolution, I feel sad and therefore I am crying."

The dying queen said "I am experiencing the same feeling like the saint Asit. I too may not be alive to see the glory of my son and his enlightenment.

I handover my six days' old son of to you. You, my sister, would raise him with all the love better than me."

The queen with folded hands, prayed to the king and asked for his permission for final farewell. The king put his hand on her palm to pacify her.

DEATH OF HIS MOTHER

She closed her eyes and was on her final journey to the unknown destination. All this happened when Siddharth was seven days old.

Sidharth means achieving the ideal. In his childhood, as a prince, he had to attend many religious ceremonies, festivals, sports and martial arts most of the people in shakya community were illiterate, but there was no dictatorship. Whatever decided by all unanimously would be a law binding for everybody. The Emperor of Magadha, Bimbisara, was the most powerful ruler, during that period.

King Shuddhodana had three palaces, which were constructed to be occupied by turns corresponding to the changes of winter, summer and the rainy season. Sidharth passed his early years in three such palaces. The wonderful splendour surrounded the shady gardens with lotus pools on which the gently waving coloured lotus flowers gleamed like floating flowerbeds and in the evening diffused their fragrance. Outside the town of Kapilavastu pleasure grounds were created.

Prince Siddhartha would rest in solitude far from the bustle of the town Kapilavastu, beneath the shade of tall and thick foliage of mango, and pipal and sal-trees.

Whenever the king took the prince to farm, he would prefer to sit under a big jamun tree and close his eyes. Hundreds of farm hands and labourers would plough the farm land and do odd jobs. Bullock carts would be used. The king would watch the work riding on a horse. But all the sound and all the activities did not disturb Siddhartha. Where was he then? He was deep in the realm of the

unknown, but his father never knew that his son was meditating.

The prince was quietly walking on his way, lost in thought. His peaceful countenance was neither happy nor sad. He seemed to be smiling gently inwardly with a strange smile, not like that of other children. He walked peacefully, quietly. He returned to the palace but his face, his steps, his peaceful downwork look and his hanging hands and every finger of his hand spoke of peace, spoke of completeness, sought nothing. Imitated nothing. Reflected a continued quiet, an unfading light.

King Shuddhodana inwardly realised that his son was showing early signs of spiritual master who would bring the Dhamchakra Pravartana, a great historic revolution.

But the king was still adamant about not losing his hair? With all his wisdom he chalked out war strategy to change the track of destiny, because he knew that the footprints in childhood determine his destiny.

YOUTHFUL DAYS

Siddhartha had step a brother, and a step sister renowned for her beauty, children of Mahaprajapati. One evening Siddhartha was walking in the garden and suddenly a big white bird came down from space and fell in front of him. It was wounded by an arrow that deeply pierced its wing and was bleeding profusely. He rushed forward to help and

lifted the bird and pulled out the arrow. The bird screamed. He applied herbal medicine and tied the wound with a strip of cotton. The bird was shaking with fear and pain. Siddhartha wrapped the bird in his shawl. He wanted to feed it.

Meantime his cousin brother Devdatta rushed in and running to kitchen enquired whether Siddhartha had seen a wounded white bird.

Siddhartha confirmed but declined to handover the bird to Devdatta. There was a hot exchange of words. Devdatta argued that the bird was flying in the air, so neither he nor Siddhartha had a right to own it, but as he had wounded it by an arrow he had right to claim the bird.

Siddharth argued that those who love one another live together, that those who hate one another live apart. “You are the bird’s enemy and as I have saved its life I am his friend. Birds need a friend not a foe.”

The quarrel reached the king’s court. Everybody listened to both sides and finally decided to agree with Siddhartha.

The wounded bird recovered and gathered strength in its wings on the back. Siddharth took it to the jungle and allowed it freedom. It flew so high and far that Devdatta’s arrows never reached him again.

In Kosal kingdom two great saints lived Alarkalam and Uddak Ramputta. Both of them were called yogis. They had their own yoga schools. Samadhi was the ultimate goal

of their way. By practising meditation the concentration of mind could be achieved. They gave importance to pranayam, a control over breathing. It was known as Anapansmruti.

The Royal family would to send their princes to learn different forms of education useful for running their kingdom. It included from martial art to economics to agriculture to law judiciary. At the same time some spiritual practice was also taught. Prince Siddhartha was a disciple of Alarkalam and had a school in Kapilwastu. Siddhartha joined the school. Now he understood some claims and counterclaims made by some spiritual people. He was not satisfied with the debates on spirituality. It was a dry discussion for him. He wanted to know if the spiritual claims were true or false.

Rushi Bhardwas taught him some simple techniques. Siddhartha practised yogic postures and ways of concentration of mind. He used to stare at the sun and moon. His mind started concentrating, but he could not experience a spiritual peace or a bliss.

Prince Siddhartha was sent to Brahmarshi Vishavamitra who was in his early life a king and renunciated the worldly life and became sanyasi. He was practising worship of sun God and the holy mantra that was inspired by him was known as Gayatri. It reverbarated the prayer that sun which illumines inner world, mind, subtle mind, not of the

individual but of the masses. The prayer for well being of collective consciousness. Greater good of greater people.

Prince Siddhartha was impressed by a prayer that talked of Bahujan Hitaya-Bhaujan Sukhay. The general masses should be benefited and we should work for their happiness.

Prince Siddhartha also became an expert in archery, sword fighting, horse riding and wrestling. He would seat by his father's side during the court session. He took part in imparting impartial justice in cases put up before the king. He had acquired many skills of handling day to day affairs of ruling the kingdom such as food supply, natural calamities, education, agriculture and irrigation.

He was once confronted with a water distribution problem between his clan Shakya and Koliyas. Rohini river was flowing between these territories. During the summer season due to a shortage of water, villagers would quarrel, sometimes using swords.

This conflict went on for years with no solution. Nobody knew when a spark of conflict would turn into a war. Prince Siddhartha tried to avoid war as a war mean loss of lives and unnecessary bloodshed.

He also noticed rich people exploiting the poor. Corrupt practices of merchants and also he saw court offices. As a prince he had no right to punish anybody. Only he could talk right to punish anybody. Only he could talk to his father. King Shudhodana was very pleased with his son's

interest in the well being of his people. He was now sure prince Siddhartha would take the reins of his kingdom and later prove to be the emperor of the region, Chakravarti emperor and not a spiritual teacher.

MARRIAGE

The king also thought of his son's marriage. The wedlock would seal his road to spirituality.

Shudhodana expressed his worry to Dronoden, father of Anand. Both of them shared the fear that one day Siddhartha may resort to go in jungle to become Shraman and would be followed by Anand, his nephew. Dronoden agreed to arrange their marriages at the earliest.

King Shudhodana's younger sister Queen Pamita, wife of king of Koliya clan Dandapani used to stay in Ramgaon, capital of Koliya and sometimes Kapilavastu.

River Rohini was divided by two Kingdoms of Koliyas and Shakyas, Close relatives were living in both the kingdoms. In a day long walk, one could reach from this place to that. There was a beautiful lake on the border of the kingdoms. It was well known as lake Kunau. On the bank of the lake there was a large playground.

Every year sports competition would take place for youth of both communities. All sorts of sports was played. Young beautiful girls used to encourage the youths to exhibit their skills publically. This year Princess would garland the best

sportsman. Many people were aware of prince Siddhartha introvertness but had not witnessed his sports skills. But everybody was shocked and surprised to see prince Siddhartha was the best champion in sword fighting, horse riding, Archery, wrestling competitions. The princess of Koliya, Yashodhara, garlanded the champion, Prince Siddharth. It also meant her acceptance of him as a life partner.

Queen Mahaprajapati and King Shudhodana were delighted by the event. They convinced Siddhartha that Yashodhara was not only beautiful but possessed a beauty of rare character and royal manners.

On the other hand King Dandapani as a father of his only daughter, Princess Yashodhara, was not very happy. He knew the prediction of astrologers regarding Siddhartha. If he became Shraman, his daughter Yashodhara would lead the rest of her life like a widow even though her husband would be alive.

But as everybody present for the swaymavara (where a princess chooses the best princes among all princes who participated in the sports) said “Strive no more, Prince Siddhartha is by far the best.” The magic of Siddhartha’s manhood had won the treasure of competition.

Princess Yashodhara bowing before the Prince to touch his feet with proud glad eyes said, “Dear Prince behold me, who am thine” She offered a fragrant flower garland

to the prince, and all the people rejoiced seeing them walk hand in hand and heart beating with heart.

The wedding feast was arranged for the Sakyas and the carpet was spread. The wedding garlands offered and the arm-threads tied. The sweets were distributed, and the poor were fed first. The perfumes were sprayed. Every senior member from Sakya and Koliya blessed the couple with words “live for each other till death.”

As a religious ceremony Siddhartha and Yashodhara took seven steps thrice around the sacred fire. It meant that they would remain husband and wife for the next seven births.

King Shudhodana and Queen Mahaprajapati bestowed gifts on holy men. They made temple offerings. Mantras were chanted while blessing the couple. King Dandapani and Queen Pamita became emotional and said “Prince Siddhartha till now our daughter Yashodhara was ours. Henceforth she is thine. Be good to her. You are everything to her.

Sakyas brought Yashodhara home with songs and trumpets. Everywhere joy was experienced.

The Royal palace was filled with many young and beautiful women around Siddhartha. He realized why the sexual pleasure is called as Agni, (fire) which encompasses whatever comes in its contact. The power of physical pleasure is so deep and powerful as it could distract the concentration of yogi’s also. Many beautiful women tried

to attract the mind of the prince. King Shudhodana had deliberately arranged all this show.

Some young women were really beautiful, some were experts in discussions, some had beautiful eyes. Some were good singers and some were experts in dancing.

But all their performances could not affect the prince. He did not even look at them or gave a laughing response or took pleasure in their physical closeness.

Prince Siddhartha was alone and started thinking, could not these beautiful women understand what they are today may not be so tomorrow. The approaching old age would engulf their beauty, voice, even youthfulness, and everything would change and perish?

Daily occurrences were reported to King Shudhodana that the prince did not indulge in pleasures and remains unattached. The prime minister was also aware of the king's concern.

Once at a leisure time he contacted the Prince Siddhartha while talking like his well wisher and a friend, the minister commented to Prince "Oh my friend Siddhartha, as you are remaining unattached to pleasures your old father is worried. Oh, Prince! by your handsome personality why you do not please the beautiful women around you?"

God has endowd upon you beauty, riches, and many women and variety of wine you should enjoy, Sex instinct

is the main mark of manliness of human beings. The whole human race seeks after pleasure and you are the only person who disowns them, you turn your back on them. This is all surprising for all of us senior people in you kingdom."

Siddhartha remained unmoved. He did not envy those who were sunk in the material pleasures nor did he dislike them. He could understand the natural union of a man and a woman, but that could not be the ultimate aim of life or everything in life. The happiness derived from body does not last forever. Not the minister, nor the king could change the way of thinking of the prince. The prince was silently walking towards a lonely path.

King Shudhodana had ordered his staff in the palace premises not to mention of any death, sorrowful events should not be discussed, sickness or pain should not be expressed around Prince Siddhartha. Any harsh punishment to the guilty should be executed without the notice of the Prince. All evil sights were to be removed.

King thought if Siddhartha so passed his youth. The shadow of becoming ascetic and denying the world will not fall on him. But for Prince Siddhartha it was a pleasure prison-house. His observation was keen. He himself witnessed again the process of aging in his father and mother. Sometimes he himself became sick and recovered. In his childhood he had visited ashrams of Shramans and Rushis. As a Prince he had witnessed many poor people

begging for justice. He had seen his father ordering punishment to the criminals.

Udichya was a state near Kapilavastu. There lived a philosopher Sablmit. He was an Indian philosopher, and a master of languages, grammar, vedic, jain, sankhya and charvak thoughts. His method to educate his pupils was through discussion. Prince Siddhartha sometimes used to take part in the philosophical discussions.

Once Sablmit told Prince Siddhartha that life was not permanent. It's like a bubble on the water, but we were still caught in the web of sadness and happiness. If people rely on the changing form of money and power, the rate of conflict over these things would go up.

While contemplating over these thoughtprovoking discussions, the Prince would think that sorrow or happiness only originates in our mind. They do not come into our life from outside. Jain shramans gave importance to anant dyan, Anant vidhya, anant sukha, anant darshan, knowledge, creativity, happiness and seeing beyond physical senses.

Once Prince Siddhartha questioned pandit Sablmit 'whether happiness was achieved by leaving behind wealth, son and a wife' With a loud laugh the pandit answered "The Prince was unmarried. and had no experience and no question of sacrificing them and it would be better to recount your experience when you are older." The Prince too laughed.

At another meeting the Prince raised a fundamental question. 'Why did God create the world? At his whim? If it was then why is there systematic evolution. How did sorrow enter human life. Whether there were laws of Karma binding on God also. Whether one God created the world or many? If so, they would fight like shakya and kolluya people for the distribution of water of Rohini river?

Pandit Sablmit would admire the questions raised by the Prince but at the same time worried perhaps he may become an atheist.

Kapilrushi was a philosopher who lived in Kapilavastu. He believed in the three forms of sorrows

1) Material sorrow caused by thief, tiger, snake, weapon.

2) Natural sorrow caused by elements such as flood, drought, earthquake, thunder, storms.

3) Mental and spiritual sorrows. Kapil muni gave a solution of realizing that Purush which is untouched by such sorrows.

He is neither sorrowful nor happy. He is beyond that.

Prince Siddhartha appreciated the theory of Sankhyas but did not find a solution to overcome sorrow.

Chapter II

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

Yashodhara loved her husband very intensely. She was his companion, friend who shared joy and sorrow with him equally, but she was still well aware of the inner impulse leading Siddhartha in the direction in which the Prince was going ahead in life. Once she held him close to her as tears rolled from her eyes. The prince asked her very kindly, “Yashodhara, are you unhappy? Do you have any problems?” She kept quiet.

She opened her heart to him and said, “ I know your mind is not involved either in marriage or the kingdom. You are like a free bird. The walls of the palace no longer confine you. You cannot be bound by my love and affection. Rather you are not born for the royal family, palace or

kingdom. The whole world is your family. In such circumstances how can we claim our ownership on you? I have a prayer at your feet wherever you go take me with you as I am your life companion.”

Siddhartha listened carefully and ultimately asked her if she could sit for meditation with him. At once she agreed and since then both of them had been meditating together.

It was a fullmoon night. Yashodhara cuoldled up to him and asked a sudden questions “what would you like to have, a son or a daughter?” The Prince was surprised and answered, “no difference for me” Yashdhara raised a querry “but our kingdom needs a son to be on the throne.” The Prince expressed a doubt suppose I become a Shraman and latter my son too?

Yashodhara held her delicate palm on the prince’s mouth and stopped the further prediction. Siddhartha kept quite but the words of destiny had already irruped from him like a volcano.

In the early hours one winter Yashodhara called for Siddhartha who was fast asleep and asked, “Are you afraid of any bad dreams”? She said ‘yes’, she had three strange dreams. In the first dream she saw a white cow. A glittering dimond was put on her head. It was attracting attention of everybody like the polestar in the north side of the horizon. The cow moved from Kapilavastu town and every citizen

was running after the cow but nobody could stop her. She went out of town.

In the second dream, four gods gathered at the holy Kailas mount. They threw floodlight on the town. The flag of the main god Indra fell down by a storm. Flowers fell from the sky and music of the spheres was heard. In the third dream there was thunderous sound. Yashodhara heard a voice telling her “Now the time has come, that time has come” Yashodhara with fear in her mind rushed to the palace court, where Siddhartha would sit on a seat near the King. His royal robe suddenly he dropped down, turned into a big snake and went out of the palace doors.”

While narrating these three dreams she started sobbing as she realised enough to understand the meaning of the dream.

After thirteen years of their marriage. She gave birth to a beautiful son. The King, Queen and everybody celebrated the birth of their son. Trumpets were blown, drums were beaten, sweets were distributed and everybody was in the mood of rejoicing. When Prince Siddhartha was informed of this words came from his mouth automatically that a bondage is born in the form of Rahul.

When the King and Queen were informed about Siddhartha’s utterance they said the name of our grandson will be Rahulkumar.

Yashodhara was afraid that her husband was thinking of leaving her alone. Siddhartha was surprised how she could read his mind. He tried to console her but in vain.

Ultimately he told her, “You are a very sensitive woman, you are my life companion. You know what my inner impulses are. Who else other than you can understand what I want to achieve in my life and suppose even if I leave, you will take every care of Rahul and my aging parents. Intensity of your love will not be reduced by time. When I find a solution, a new way to overcome sorrow in individual life and society I shall return to you with a new understanding and enlightenment.”

In the palace all lovey fantasies were present. The entrance of the palace was laid with square marbles, open to the sky. In the middle was a milk marble tank built with lotus in it. During the summer full moon light glittered on the marble when sunbeams dropped in reflected a golden light. A silence in the area invited different colour birds and butterflies on flowers in the garden. It was a sweet, beautiful, wonderful world. Nobody would like to leave it.

King Shudhodana had disturbing dreams. In one dream the head of the gods Indra presented a flag on which golden sun was glittering. By a stormy wind the flag with the big stick collapsed in dust on the road. In the second dream huge elephants walked on the highway in the capital Kapilavastu. Their trunks were glittering like silver. When

these elephants walked on the road there were loud thundering sounds like earthquakes in front of the elephant. Siddhartha was sitting.

In the third dream the king saw a chariot with four horses smoke and fumes coming out of their nostrils. In the fourth dream when a chariot was rotating with a great speed the axis were studded with diamonds. Music was played. In the fifth dream, Siddhartha himself was beating large drums. The sound was echoed in nearby valleys.

In the sixth dream king saw a tower so high that it touched the sky. Siddhartha was sitting on it and with both hands lavishly distributing colourful diamonds. People from all over the world rushed to collect the diamonds.

In the seventh, he dreamt that people were crying with pain and six people walking silently putting both the hands on their mouths.

The King became disturbed and lost his peace of mind. Nobody could explain the meaning of the seven dreams. A shaman came to the gates of the palace and confidently sent a message to the King that he knew the meaning. He was summoned by the King. He said, “These dreams have a positive meaning in your palace, your son is as bright as the sun and would show to the world the path of enlightenment.

The first dream revealed that the past religious dogmas

and outdated ideas would be destroyed and would mix with dust. New religious laws would come.

The Prince would walk on the path of truth and with a power of ten elephants would move the whole world.

The fourth dream with four horses foaming from their nostrils means the Prince would preach four noble truths. He would bring people out of doubts and distress.

The wheel indicates new religious laws. The drumming of the prince means far and wide. The last dream means six pandits would realize their foolishness listening to the Prince’s religious sermons.”

The shaman bowed eight times and asked the King to celebrate his dreams

This was Siddhartha’s 29th year. He has long been urging his parents to agree to his decision of renunciation (pabbaja). They had made their consent dependent on the birth of their grandson. Siddhartha now realized that he should not lose time in realizing his intention to renounce the world accepting a hard life of a wandering monk.

The Prince decided to take a night round in the capital town of Kapilavastu. While taking the round in a chariot through the peaceful town, he heard a singer Krusha Goutmi singing a song.

The Prince understood the meaning. When mother sees this form she is at peace. The heart of a father becomes

quiet and a wife also becomes peaceful, one's heart is at perfect peace.

The anger, lust, envy, temptation all vanish and mind becomes clean; the attachment is gone and peace is experienced.

The Prince was pleased with the song. He asked his servant to take the necklace of pearls, he was wearing and present it to the lady singer. When the singer received the gift she thought the Prince had sent it because he was in love with her. But the song boosted the decision of the Prince to renunciate the world. For the Prince, the singer was an instrument through which God spoke.

When the Prince returned to the palace the celebration still continued, beautiful women surrounded the Prince to please him. They danced, sung songs, shared jokes but the Prince was unattached and fell asleep. The women thought that there was no point in continuing to dance so they also went to sleep.

Siddhartha woke up and saw the half naked women sleeping like dead bodies. He once again realised the futility of the pleasure of the world.

He walked to the north terrace of the palace and called for the attendant 'Channa' his loyal servant. The Prince asked him to prepare a horse for a ride. Channa obeyed and his favorite horse Kanthak was made ready.

Siddhartha felt a strong desire to see the newborn son's face and depart with this strong human attachment as if he was pulled towards the bedroom of Yashodhara.

The scented lights were burning. Yashodhara was in deep sleep, her one hand was on the child. A thought disturbed Siddhartha whether to lift her hand and see the child, but realised the danger of waking Yashodhara which could delay his departure.

There he decided to drop the human, natural attachment and see the son only after enlightenment. He came out of the palace, patted the horse. He told Kanthak to help him only one day so he could travel and when he got enlightenment he would help the human beings and deities to cross the sea of sorrow.

His favourite white horse, Kanthak, was strong, had tremendous speed. Channa along with the matser reached thirty yojanas from their border. They came to the bank of river. When the Prince enquired he found that they had crossed the borders of Koliya, Sakya and Ramgram and now they had to cross the river Onama.

Of the Himalayas broad feet many rivers flow. Cold wind blows from the snow peaks. To the north was the huge Himalaya wall. Snowpeaks on the background of deep blue sky were seen. Green slopes leading to higher and higher mountains. They stood high above as if they were speaking with the gods.

Beneath the snow dark forests spread veiled with clouds on the lower ranges. Oak trees grew and great fir groves catch the eye.

Peasant, farming work was in progress and in between a panther's cry would be heard. This was Prince Siddhartha's new kingdom. He wanted to be alone in it.

On the bank of Onama river in the sand Siddhartha stood firm. He removed his ornaments, princely robe and holding his long curly hair with his left hand he cut it. His servant Channa and even the loyal horse Kanthak looked at him. The Prince told Channa, "Take this robe and ornaments with you. You are liberated from slavery. You can live an independent life. This horse too is yours. I need it no more."

Channa started weeping. He said "Oh master, if you do not need all these things. I also do not need them without you."

Siddhartha told him, "Channa, at least go back to my father King Shudhodana and tell him that I have come here not to acquire a palace in heaven. Even though we lived together there is a limit to it. Tell my mother that she has a great fortune to serve my father. I was unworthy of her love."

Channa with in a deep sadness told him, "I feel like an elephant sunk in mud of a river full of water."

At last Channa obeyed his master and left with tears

rolling down his cheeks, even the horse Kanthak sensed the sadness.

Siddhartha started walking alone on the untrodden path filled with stones and thorns.

Siddhartha walked to the ashram of yogi Bhardwaj. He gave Siddhartha initiation of Parivrajya, some religious ceremonies were performed. Fire was lit and virija yadnya was performed. This ritual meant one had to sacrifice everything the name, clothes, caste, creed, old one's social prestige and decide to lead a life of a Shraman. A begging bowl and a stick was in Siddhartha's hands. He looked beautiful in yellow clothes and with clean-shaven head.

On the first day he went into the town, stood before huts and houses. People offered him food. He collected it together and went outside into Anupiya village and sat beneath a mango tree and he ate the food, never before tasted. No tears rolled from his eyes. He was firm on his path towards liberation. Feeling thirsty he walked towards river. He drank some water and came back to the mango tree. He laid down for some rest. He wanted to proceed to ashram of Yogi Alarkalam.

Khatriya Prince Vardhman was 25 years older than Siddhartha. He had also accepted Parivrajya. He belonged to the Shraman Sangh called Jains. Earlier 23 Jain shramans reached the state of enlightenment. They were known as Tirthankars. They followed rigorous astatic life. Vardhman

was born in Kundupur. He did not consider himself as a founder of new religion. He preached simple message of non violence, truthfulness, good character, minimum needs. Ego is the cause of sorrow. Dissolve it and you are free from sorrow. Lack of knowledge is the cause of sorrow.

Siddhartha was well aware of the changed life of Prince Vardhman. However, he was not convinced about the analysis of sorrow given by Vardhman. He wanted to find out the real cause.

Siddhartha arrived in Alarkalam's Ashram. He expressed his desire to stay in the ashram following the religious vow of (Brahmcharya) chastity. Alarkalam assured him whoever come there with the faith achieved special knowledge and evolved to the level of Guru.

Alarkalam revealed Siddhartha the secret meaning of nothingness. He told him of his own experience of that spiritual state.

Siddhartha followed the path. Soon he experienced the state of nothingness. His mind became introverted and he experienced thoughtless state of mind.

He also once watched Alarkalam meditating and five hundred bullockcarts passed nearby but during that period Alarkalam remained unmoved and no ripple of disturbance was found in his meditation.

Here Siddhartha realized that the state of nothingness does not lead to ultimate peace of knowledge.

When Alarkalam saw Siddhartha's attainment he offered him the seat of Acharya, head of his institution equivalent to himself. But Siddhartha humbly denied the offer and left the ashram in search of his ultimate aim

EMPEROR BIMBISAR

In one day Siddhartha walked a distance of 30 yojans and reached Rajgrah. He was tired and rested outside the town. In the morning he gathered strength to take a bath in a nearby well. Refreshing himself he walked into the town for alms. This was a very strange sight for men, women and children of the town. A handsome man with a begging bowl in his hand. His arrival was marked by even soldiers of the palace. One day as he was walking on the road near the palace, Emperor Bimbisar saw this handsome saman. He ordered his servants to find out if he was really a saman or a spy. They obeyed the King and told him that he was as former prince Siddhartha from Kapilvastu. His father was king Shudhodan.

Next day the king silently followed the Shaman. After the morning bhiksha, the saman walked by the hill, climbed it and rested in a cave. The emperor of Magadh Bimbisar followed in a chariot and climbed the hill. As he was clambering up Siddhartha saw him and came out of the cave and welcomed him. He asked him to sit on a big boulder and himself sat on a smaller stone.

Emperor Bimbisar enquired about the Shaman's health. With elderly man's commanding tone he told him. "For me Prince Siddhartha, you are still a prince of Shakya. Your family and we had been good friends for a few generations. You are so young. This sort of ascetic life does not suit you. Come along with me in my palace and stay with me comfortably."

Siddhartha with his folded hands humbly denied the offer and answered, "Oh, kind emperor, I am quite comfortable here. I am now used to this sort of life. I have not left my home with some difference or frustration." Bimbisar tried to convince him that this sort of a life is too hard for a delicate prince like him. No soft bed, no servants, no good food. No good clothes. He said with all the love, " Oh, prince you are like my son. Even if you do not want to go back to your kingdom. Come along with me. I offer you half of my kingdom, be a king of Magdha. Accept this offer. Behave with religious nature, utilize wealth for happiness of people of your new kingdom. The pleasures are meant for youths like you, wealth is for middle aged people and religion is for old people like me."

Siddhartha realized that the noble and large hearted and compassionate emperor Bimbisar was talking from his heart. Otherwise who would offer half of his kingdom to a youth who is already a Shaman?

Siddhartha explained his inner impulses. He said, "Oh, Emperor Bimbisar, friend of my father, your suggestions

are not only friendly but a sign of your noble heart. I have no doubt about your truthful intention. I am not afraid of wild animals nor am I afraid of natural calamities, cold, heat, wind or thunder but rather, I fear the material pleasures. These perishable pleasures engulf real happiness and peace of life.

As you add fuel to fire, it remains unsatisfied. Similarly even if one has material pleasures, desired pleasures he becomes unsatisfied and becomes intoxicated by them. Ultimately, he is ruined. He is beset with many difficulties.

Food, clothes, shelter are outer things to remove sorrow but they do not deliver real happiness. I have left home not out of anger. I am disturbed by the conflict in different communities in society . I am trying to find peace. I do not expect to rule the kingdom of the earth nor the kingdom of heaven. Self control, annihilation of lower instincts is a religious ideal for me.

The emperor Bimbisar became calm and quiet and as an elderly person blessed Siddhartha reach to his goal. Before departing he asked Siddhartha to promise him that he would return after he gets enlightenment. Siddhartha gladly promised him.

PRACTICE OF YOGA

Next day Siddhartha decided to leave the cave. He knew if he stayed a few more months there, Bimbisar would visit

often or send gifts to him regularly. He walked towards the north.

He thought of staying in Ashram of Udak Ramput. He was an advanced spiritual master, and had a large following. Three hundred disciples were admitted in his ashram, some of them used to worship Udak Ramput as God.

Siddhartha was admitted for practising meditation. Soon he was instructed with primary lessons of meditation and within a few weeks Siddhartha became an expert in breathing control (pranayam) and in thoughtless state of meditation.

Ramput gave him further instructions. Siddhartha showed wonderful results. He reached to the stage of Samadhi. When he came out of that stage he experienced bliss, peace and new knowledge of the inner world.

Siddhartha was still dissatisfied. The experience of Samadhi was meant of self realisation. but it was not the path of liberation from the shackles of life and death. Siddhartha did not find the key to solve the riddle of sorrow.

After attaining the state of Samadhi, Siddhartha went to take the blessings of Udak Ramput. The master held his hand and said 'Siddhartha, you have proved to be the best disciple, till now admitted in my ashram. The stage attained by me you too have attained it. You have reached a great spiritual height. I am now old, If you stay with me

we would both guide a large number of disciples. When I take the mahasamadhi you can be a head of this sect and guide the people.

This was a very difficult moment for Siddhartha, he became emotional but with a firm mind he denied the offer, expressed his gratitude towards the master and his co-disciples and left the ashram. Kondanna was his co-disciple. He loved and respected Siddhartha. He was very unhappy when Siddhartha decided to go away. He went with Siddhartha some distance and promised to serve him in his effort to realize the noble truth.

Shaman Siddhartha was now Sangrahi not to possess anything. He did not have enough clothes. It was winter and he was shivering with cold. He increased the practice of meditation and spent more time in concentrating on one point maybe on the nostrils, maybe the moon, maybe on the sun or a star, hours together in one posture.

Sometimes when shepherds and cowherds gathered at his place, their playing and singing used to disturb him but he still continued his Sadhana. Sometimes beautiful women from nearby villages would come. Some villagers asked him a lot of questions but they saw the Shaman did not need, or paid attention to them. He did not answer their questions and would get angry as some cursed him and others abused him. But it made no difference to him he

was trying to reach a state of mind that was beyond praise or abuse, anger or favour, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly.

His practice of Hathyoga was also a point of admiration for some people. They used to invite him for community functions, marriages, dance, singing programmes. They all had respect and love for him. But still he was not ready to spend his valuable time in amusement. Some wrestling bouts used to take place in villages and some exhibition of martial arts. Some religious sermons used to take place. But Siddhartha was not interested in any such activities. At the same time he knew everybody had his own way to go to the almighty.

Now the tranquility of his mind made him see things more clearly. He saw nature not as a thing dead but throbbing with life. The earth, water, fire or a plant all were full with life. There was only one energy that filled everything around us. Oneness existed in all the things. Nobody was superior or inferior to each other.

The practice of nonviolence and Brahmacharya helped him to make his body and mind more transparent and healthy. With the practice of these two values he achieved control over food. If the food was faulty, it disturbs the following of values when you achieve Ahinsa, automatically brahmacharya is purified. He used to take so much of food as required for the movement of his body.

Siddhartha came on foot to the bank of Niranjana river. It was surrounded by deep forest. The place was known as Uruvwela. He fell in love with the beautiful nature and decided to stay there for spiritual practices. When he was at Rajgrugh he had been acquainted with five spiritual aspirants, Kondona, Bhaddiy, Bapa, Mahanam and Asaji who were staying in Iruwela. They were also happy to see Siddhartha again. All of them decided to intensify their upasnas i.e. spiritual practice. Siddhartha was much advanced in the group.

There were many sadhakas with faith in vedic rituals and mantras. Siddhartha started reciting Gayatri mantra that inspired Brahmarshi Vishwamitra. The mantra deity is the sun. The meaning of Gayatri mantra Is oh, Sun who illumines the three worlds earth, innerworld and heaven.

Illumine the intellect. Siddhartha wondered how the material sun can illumine inner sun? By reciting several times the mantra Siddhartha had strange experiences. The colour of his physical body became golden, mind was also illumined. The glow of light is of four types of pradnya. The supreme glow of pradnya (knowledge) is the best. Sun, moon and fire spread light at day or night time, but the glow of knowledge exists everywhere and every time Now secrets of nature were automatically revealed to Siddhartha.

Gradually Siddhartha started realizing the relation between breathing and Pranshkti (the vital energy). He

knew the importance of outer Kumbhak (controlling breath outside); while practising Khechari Mudra the flow of nectar from upper side of mouth gave him experience of (Bramanand) supreme bliss. He called it Pritisukha, Dhyansukha. Once Siddhartha was in a deep stage of Samadhi. He was steady, breathless. Body became like a log of wood. Some people visited him and came to a conclusion that Sakyamuni was dead. But soon some spiritual masters came and explained to everybody that it was a rare stage of Nirwikalp Samadhi. He was very much alive. Arhantas live in this highest state. Protect his physical body from wild animals. On and off Sakyamuni went in this stage. Kondanna and four other companions started protecting Siddhartha and looked after his food and well being.

Bang desh was full of many Tantriks. They worshiped Kali and Kamakhya deity. The tantric performed some occult experiments and they used to be called black magicians. They used cemetery grounds, human skulls, wine, meat and navmundi (nine heads buried under ground). For occult power to create storms, enemy killing. They practised panchmakar sadhana. Most of them were of bad character. They used to practise with the motive to acquire food grains, animals, beauty and women to fulfil their sensual desires. The Vaidik worshipper used some tantrik designs like shree chakras. By worshiping such yantras

Vaidik worshipper promised people to take them to heaven where all pleasures were available. They also promised people to save them from going to hell where all the sorrows exist.

DENIED RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Siddhartha denied all these religious practices. He denies the very existence of a heaven or hell. He discouraged men from practice tantra. He wanted people to become more practical and with a good character. He did not even discuss subjects like whether Atman exists or not. One should not follow imaginative paths and shortcuts to achieve enlightenment.

He wanted his mind to become like a mirror, the mirror does not accept anything; neither it envies anybody. The mirror does not collect anything for itself. Then the dust of sorrow is not collected on the mind.

From the river Niranjani it was a half days walk to work. Uruvela village and from there a stiff ascent towards the hillocks. The picks were sharp and there many existed deep natural caves. Siddhartha and his five comrades occupied some caves.

The view from Siddhartha's cave was one with a natural beauty. He could observe sunrise and sunset. On full moon day the whole region was covered with spiritual calmness.

Fresh and crystal clear. River water flowed nearby which sounded like music.

Siddhartha decided to stay there till he achieved enlightenment, a way of salvation. He was ready to bear any suffering, even to sacrifice his physical body, but would not leave this place.

Though he practised and achieved the same result by practising different ways he did not achieve what he desired.

He had come to a conclusion that he himself had to walk on the untrodden path and find out a way to salvation.

He sat down for meditation. In the beginning he saw his past quickly in his mind's eye. Of course the pictures were not of his relatives but the efforts he had made during the past five years to find out the way to salvation.

He felt the need to lead the ascetic life. When the wood is wet it does not burn. Similarly, if the body is wet with lust or with lower instincts the fire of realization is not kindled. Siddhartha started undergoing strict physical torture.

During dark, moonless nights Siddhartha would walk into the thick forest. Someone else would have trembled with fear but Siddhartha was fearless. A deer would jump from a nearby bush and Siddhartha would understand a panther jumping after the deer. When a rabbit would scream he knew that some big snake was swallowing the rabbit,

like the line of red ants, fear would flow within the body but Siddhartha would overcome all forms of fear that existed in the body and mind. Fear also becomes a cause of sorrow.

During winter his half covered body started trembling with cold but he did not give up his meditation. When summer came he was wet with sweat but still he continued his meditation. He suffered severe pain in his head, feet and hand. It was a very terrible experience. It also created pain in his body and mind.

His five comrades decided to bring food from a nearby village and looked after Siddhartha. But soon he stopped eating food. Grass and tree leaves was his food. Day and night Siddhartha would be in deep meditation. His companions were worried about him.

He became very weak but he would go to the cemetery and meditating on burning dead bodies he would instruct his mind.

Everything is momentary, not permanent. He even stopped taking a bath. When he saw his reflection in the water he could not recognize himself.

When he touched his head, his hair came off in his hand, his skin became dry and dead. His eyeballs sunk inside as the reflection of stars in water. When he touched his stomach his fingers touched his backbone.

Kondanna and Bhadiya were afraid of this extreme ascetic life. They even wondered if the Shakyamuni remained alive to attain the self realisation. They told him that they could not follow him on such a difficult path.

One day while walking, Siddhartha fell unconscious, and suffered severe pain. Some deities saw this and went to King Shudhodana and told him that his son Siddhartha was dead. King Shodhodana did not believe the deities. He asked them “whether my son died after enlightenment or before? They answered “before enlightenment.”

The King was not ready, to trust. He categorically said without enlightenment my son would not die.” When Siddhartha returned to consciousness the same deities informed the King and confessed to their misjudgement about the state of Siddhartha.

When he was returning from the cemetery meditating, a cold breeze touched his body which sent a sense of joy within him. A flash came in his mind. Body and mind are not separate. If you touch your body, your mind does not experience peace of knowledge. Something wrong denying your body is denying your mind. Siddhartha silently observed the different practices he had undergone. Asceticism, extreme fasts, control over breathing, did not give birth to new wisdom, peace or bliss. He remembered when he was a child King Shudhodana was celebrating the ploughing he was in deep meditation under jamun tree.

This memory gave him a message that extremity should be dropped. A middle path should be followed. This path would lead him towards enlightenment. Now he became free from the fear of pleasure too.

To create equilibrium in the body and mind he discarded the way followed by Jain Shramans. It was a full-moon-day. His spiritual mind bloomed and he had a deep sleep. Early in the morning he was awakened by the melodious singing of the birds.

The first thought that arose in his mind was to clean his body full of sweat and dirt. He walked slowly to the Niranjana river and on the way noticed good clothes hanging on a thorny bush. He took it. These were used to cover the dead bodies while performing the last rites in the nearby cemetery.

He went down in to the flowing water, washed himself and brushed his skin with a soft stone. He felt rejuvenated but became totally exhausted. With great effort he came out of the water and fell on the ground. After some rest and drinking some river water he was able to walk up to a nearby tree.

SUJATA

He sat for meditation. During that time an event took place that changed the lifestyle of Siddhartha. In Uruwella village a rich man stayed, who had a daughter named Sujata.

After praying to her god her wish was fulfilled. She had promised to offer food to God. She sent her maidservant into a nearby forest to find out a suitable place to keep the food offering. The maidservant searching a suitable place suddenly found a god like figure with closed eyes sitting in yogic posture under a big tree. She bowed before him and came running to Sujata. She told Sujata that she had seen a forest god physically present.

Sujata with all her devotion and faith came there. She had brought sweet rice boiled in milk, sweets, lotus flowers in a golden plate and she waited till Siddhartha opened his eyes.

She offered him the food. Siddhartha could not speak due to exertion. He ate very slowly. After some time he gathered the strength enough to speak. First thing he clarified that he was a human being and not a deity as she thought.

She sent a barber from Uruvela, Who shaved off the Shaman's untidy beard and hair. Now he looked handsome. He decided to solve his own problems. Every day he bathed in the river. He stopped running away from thoughts and emotions. He understood that the thinking of whether Atman existed or not? The riddle of reincarnation? The location of heaven and hell? All these enquiries did not lead to realisation.

Siddhartha's view to look at the universe totally changed.

He lived, thinking of the present time only. The past was dead and the future was not in one's hands. He scanned the thought process.

When his five comrades saw him taking a bath, eating food and talking with the young girl, they thought of him differently. They discussed a lot and came to a conclusion that the shaman, ascetic Siddhartha had fallen from being spiritual and become Yogabhrashta. He has gone on a wrong path, he is no more Shaman, a yogi. He left the golden path of self realisation, he has frustrated us all. We should leave his company and go.

Siddhartha did not stop them nor tried to convince them of his stand but he felt sorry for their misunderstanding. But he was still very firm about his decision. He knew that he was not away from the path of realisation. On the contrary he had secured a golden key to unlock the treasure of enlightenment.

One day Sujata offered him new clothes. When she found out that the clothes Siddhartha wore were once used to cover the dead bodies in the cemetery. She wept bitterly. That day she decided to offer him new clothes. She offered him sweet rice boiled in milk in a golden bowl. which he accepted and went to the Nirvana river. He threw the bowl in the flowing water and prayed that if he achieved the enlightenment, let it flow against the current.

His prayer was answered and the bowl flowed against

the current and went down near the residence of Nagaraj Kal. Siddhartha understood the meaning and felt he would achieve the enlightenment. After that he would preach the knowledge of the message which would work against the present religious thought and practices.

ENLIGHTENMENT

After the departure of his five companions he got new companions, the forest, the river, birds, animals and hundreds of beings living on earth all were his kith and kin. He had some visions but certainly they were not dreams.

In one vision he was kneeling down on his knees on the Himalayan mountain, his left hand touching the sea towards the east and his right hand touching the west shore. The toes of both his feet were touching the south shore.

In another vision he saw a lotus as big as a wheel of a bullock cart emerged from his naval. It went on spreading and went so high in the sky that it touched the clouds moving high in the sky. In the third vision he saw many birds coming towards him from different directions. Siddhartha felt all these things were a good omen. These were the early days before his enlightenment. The moment of wating was very close. Shakyamuni sat in the Padmasan posture. He saw slow flowing river. and a cold bereeze passing through the tall grass grown wild on the bank of the river The forest was calm but full of life. The night

insects were making sounds and some insects were radiating faint greenish light.

He concentrated on his mind and went in deep meditation. He felt his consciousness was expanding. It had engulfed living and nonliving alike. In one breath everything melted; awareness of the past and future also melted.

Siddhartha saw in a flash all his previous births and deaths. He also again experienced the sorrow and happiness in previous births. Such a wonderful experience of the present moment in which the whole universe was absorbed.

This was strange experience of universal consciousness and transcendental awareness. But there was no human face or a face of any unseen deity visible.

It was a great awareness now that the consciousness was not confined only to the limits of Siddhartha's body and mind, but knowledge was filled in every cell of his body. It was the first part of night.

The vastness of this experience and the depth was gradually expanding. The stars, planets in the sky were melting in each other and taking new birth. The play of birth and death in the universe was a wonderful play of nature. The ripple on the flowing river water were rising and falling. The death was meant for ripples not for the river. The ripples that would realize this truth no more

remained part of the water but became the river itself. They were liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

At that moment a lightening cracked in the sky. A beam of light thundered through the cloud. At this Siddhartha's mind also was full of light. Ultimately knowledge was light. Rain started pouring fell on him and he got drenched. It was a blessing coming from space. He fully realized that ignorance is the cause of sorrow. Yes! there is sorrow in the world and you can remove it and live happily.

This realization did not take place on one day or one night but it took four weeks. The answer to remove sorrow was Samyak Samabodhi (acquiring true knowledge) Full moon was toward the west when the dawn came, bright stars were shining like diamonds. Towards the east, a play of different colours had started. Bright light was gradually spreading. The sky, the colours were not new to Siddhartha. He had witnessed it several times sitting under the Bodhi tree. But today it was something that he never before he had experienced. The morning was full with knowledge.

It was a dialogue without words or thoughts or emotions. Everything, everybody in the universe was full of knowledge, full of light but still we were in bondage of birth and death. This was happening only on that day but thousands of years we were slaves to birth and death.

Siddhartha fully realized that a new illumined path opened before him. Complete peace dawned in his heart;

expressing itself. His aim was achieved. For this, many years he had to cross the valley of failure and stand on the peak of success. He remembered the promise given to his father. His wife Yashodhara, emperor Bimbisar and his people in the kingdom. He must free them from the shackles of sorrow. Tremendous compassion emerged in his heart. A fountain of selfless love sprang within him.

For the last few weeks he was experiencing an evil force that was trying hard to retard him from achieving his goal. Siddhartha called it Mar and his daughters. Mar, the evil force, was outside but it was deeply rooted in his subconscious and Mars' daughters were lower instincts in him. The evil force wanted to attack Siddhartha and defeat him.

There was a struggle between good and bad, light and darkness. When the evil force was confronted Siddhartha's concentration withdrew with the help of systematic control and practice of eight fold path. Siddhartha stood on firm footing.

When Mars' daughters tried to tempt him, he used the weapon of consciousness (vivek) he remained unattached to thought and his purity defeated the evil force. Thus, ultimately Siddhartha could achieve his goal. At last he got enlightenment.

One morning there were different golden rays of the sun

spreading on the Niranjana river flowing and green blades of grass dancing in the breeze. Small flower buds were blooming, butterflies romancing on colourful flowers. Everything looked freshly bloomed. On the background of the deep blue sky, white coloured clouds were travelling. and the world looked absolutely fresh.

As usual the children from nearby villages did not come to the green pastures with animals except one dark skinned boy. He came near Shakymuni and stared at him strangely. When asked, the boy said, “oh, Shaman, everyday I see you, but you seem strange today. You are not the same as I saw you yesterday.”

Siddhartha called him near and patted him and asked ‘what is strange?’

The boy boldly said “you look like twinkling stars in the sky. Yesterday thundering followed and rain came and my family members were worried about you and I got up. They sent me here to enquire if you were all right.”

Siddhartha started strolling on the bank of Niranjana river in the morning and in the afternoon. Sujata came with food. She bowed before him and in a very joyful mood said, “Today by your darshan all my worries, sorrows, problems have vanished. My mind has become quite light, the whole atmosphere is blissful.”

Siddhartha revealed his heart. “Yes, this day is a golden day in my life. The light and spiritual bliss that I have

achieved is a great treasure. Now, my duty is to spread it everywhere and to every one. You have correctly sensed the change in the atmosphere.”

Sujata knew that Siddhartha would leave the place, but he promised that one day he had to leave but a few more days he would stay there.

Sujata offered him fresh hot rice and curry. She was very happy seeing him eat the food she prepared for Shaman.

Siddhartha instantaneously sang a hymn (Gatha) for her. “For your betterment, for your spiritual betterment, for your spiritual progress I suggest you a path. The Trishna, the thirst, in your life should not take you towards destruction. When the roots of a tree go deep in the ground, even if the branches were cut again the new offshoots come; similarly, the subtle form of attachment brings material sorrow in life.”

Sujata knew well when Buddha desires to go nobody can stop him. With the help of a friend she stitched a new saffron robe and offered him. Next day he came to see them off. “Sujata, and the boys started crying. Buddha said “Sujata, one day I have to say goodbye. I had promised emperor Bimbisara, my companions Kondanna and others that I would meet them and share my experience.” Many villagers too came to see him off.

On the way one Shaman saw Buddha. With folded hands he asked,

“Oh Shaman what is your name? Who is your Guru your illumined face indicates that you had achieved something. My name is Udak. I have recently left Udak Ramputta’s Ashram.

Buddha told him “ I am free from temptation, I have left attachment to everything. I have no traditional Acharya as Guru. I am Arhat, unique controller, Shasta. I am peaceful, I am pure, I had attained enlightenment. I am going to move the wheel of religion.”

Buddha learnt from him that Udak Ramputta had passed away when asked about Rushi Alarkalam, he too had passed away.

Buddha asked about Alarkalam’s disciple Kondana and his whereabouts. The shaman told him that “Kondana and his four friends were at deer park, Sarnath, near Varanasi. Buddha decided to cross the Ganga river at the confluence of Ganga and Niranjana and reach Varanasi.

While walking towards Varanasi Buddha tried to solve his own question, ‘should I share my experience and knowledge with others or remain in the state of peace and bliss. I do not believe in existence of Atman. Many people would not trust me. Human nature is selfish. How can he trust in good character, sacrifice, compassion. Human beings are prone to get physical pleasures, how would they listen to my advice.’

‘Everything is perishable. If I tell married people to

abstain from indulging in sex who would listen? Youths would have no time to listen to my experience. What is the use of showing them this new golden path?’

Buddha started spending his time in (Vimukti Sukha) happiness of liberation. The Brahma Sahampati was worried at the thought of samak sambudha seems to be inclined to negative thinking. It is not good for masses. So he requested Buddha “give religious advice to masses without proper guidance they are in the sea of sorrow. There would be many people who could understand your message and change their lives. Bring transformation in them.”

Buddha respected the request and with a compassionate heart saw that the people are were sorrowful, they did not know how to come out of it.

He would like to share his knowledge and experience with Alarkalam and Udak Ramputta but they were no more.

Chapter III

SERMON AT DEER PARK

Finally he reached in deer park Varanasi. The five friends saw Buddha approaching. They were unaware about his enlightenment.

They remembered Gautam meditating along with them in Uruvela but he left ascetic life and accepted food the five discussed among themselves. 'As' Gautum returned to life of ease let us not talk to him.

Let us not receive him not get up, not go forward and take his begging bowl or his cloth chiva. At the most we will offer him a seat but will not request him to sit. If he wants to sit let him sit.

As Buddha came near, their decision to insult him started

melting like the snow as the sun rises. They got up, greeted him with words, "Come our friend, Avasu. One came forward and took his bowl. one put asana, an another went inside to bring water.

Buddha washed his feet and sat on the seat they had offered and drank water. He inquired about their wellbeing. Then told them not to call him Avasu (friend) because now" I am a person with eternal knowledge. call me that who has been enlightened. I am Buddha. Do not keep your mind prejudiced. I have come to tell you what I have found. Now I know the secret of overcoming death. I can show you a path of true religion. If you follow, you will also get enlightenment. You have up till now sacrificed everything for ultimate realization. Only in this birth you can achieve it."

Listening to Buddha's self experienced message all the doubts in the minds of the five Shamans vanished. One among them asked Buddha "Siddhartha, are you telling us based on you imagination your view? Buddha asked him, do you ever remember my lying to you?" He said, "never". Then how can I lie today? He said, "Gautum, when you left the strict ascetic life, how could you walk on the path of religion?"

Buddha silently told him, "I have no sensual desire of eating and drinking. I have no temptation, no attachment, even unto birth and death. I am not a fallen yogi."

They continued to express their doubt. still further. Buddha asked them, "Have I not promised you to lead the path of truth? Now, with an open heart, accept what I am telling you. There is a great sorrow in the world. This sorrow is because of desire. If you can free yourself from this desire, you will be free from sorrow. I will show you the way to remove sorrow from the mind."

Then the five Shamans became his disciples. They were the first five people. Kondinya, Bhadiya, Vappa, Mahanam, Assaji. The first discourse given to them by Gautum Buddha is well known as Dhamchakra Pravartan. This revolution would continue for years to come.

Buddha advised them to drop the extremes and choose a middle path. Right air, faith, speech, action, life style, efforts, thoughts and right concentration is the middle path.

Buddha advised them to fix in their mind four noble truths.

- 1) World is full of sorrow.
- 2) Attachment (Trushna) is the root of all sorrow.
- 3) There is an end to sorrow
- 4) There is a way to end sorrow.

Buddha also told them that he followed this path and he is free from the cycle of birth and death. Any man of any religion or caste can follow this path,

"Everybody is equal here."

It was the modest beginning of Buddha Sangh.

RECALL FROM SHUDHODAN

King Shudhodan was informed by the King of Kashi that his son prince Siddhartha was there now. It was six years since Siddhartha has left his parents, wife, son and for a long time there was no trace of him. Now Shudhodan had become old and his grandson Rahul was just a child. How was he to rule the kingdoms? He felt that Siddharth should come back to Kapilavastu and shoulder the burden of the kingdom. His most trusted minister and a Brahmin Priest were chosen as ambassadors. They were entrusted with the responsibility without disturbing the prince's religious bent mind that he should now return home. King Shudhodan will close his eyes peacefully for ever. As a prince he should rule the kingdom, protect the people and guide them lawfully. Please remind him of these things with love and respect it being his first duty. The King told his ambassadors.

The minister and the Brahmin priest came on a horse to Sarnath. They had an appointment with Prince Siddhartha when he was on his way to Uruvela. Under the shadow of a big tree they greeted him with love and respect.

They conveyed the message of King. The Brahmin priest argued, "oh, prince this is not your age to renunciate the world. You are just 35. At a proper age you can take the sanyas, but right now please come back and as a King of Kapilavastu, make your father, mother, wife and son and also all the people of the Shakya community happy."

The Brahmin was an expert in the religious scriptures, he told the Prince. “No where in scriptures it is mentioned that married people go in the forest to realize god. The transformation of mind is important. Wearing saffron clothes only does not mean the change of mind. It is written in religious books that those who avoid their responsibility do not reach heaven. Apart from religious books think of your aging parents, your wife and son, you lack love and compassion. Your beautiful wife is leading a life of a widow and caring your son when you are alive. She is alive on the only hope that one day you would return home. Think about your only son. Would our enemies allow him to be king and rule after king Shudhodan?”

The Brahmin priest was very clever, he knew his religion, logic and expressed it well. He was trying to confuse the prince from all sides as if firing cannon balls of emotions on unbroken walls of Siddhartha’s mind.

Buddha very peaceful and respectful, expressed his view. He said, “Oh Brahman priest, I respect your emotions. You are a well wisher of the king, his family members and the people. Because of your good intentions I am not hurt. Neither am I angry with you. My request to you would be to express my mind before the King so that the burden of his sorrow will be reduced.

I can understand my father’s expectations of me and his trust in my abilities. Its true that people in the kingdom are feeling different forms of sorrow. Rather the whole human

race is sick with sorrow. I had left home in search of a solution. Eradication of sorrow from individual and public life is the motive behind my ascetic life.

Everybody has to leave behind his most loved things or individuals. Father and son are to be separated. Death will separate us for ever. My father can not deny this reality. Oh! Clever Brahmin you should understand that particular thought perceptions are the cause of sorrow. Then you will know that not son or relative is the cause of sorrow but lack of knowledge. If the light of knowledge remove darkness in life, should we not try?

When fetus comes out of womb it starts travelling towards death. Quality of time. Kingship, kingdom all are illusory, palace, physical pleasures are companions of the moment.”

When Gautum Buddha was talking with the Brahmin priest the minister was appreciating the argument and logic used by the Prince. With folded hands he said “Shakya prince Siddhartha even if you are seen in a saffron cloth you are the main pillar of our kingdom. The king and all of us know you, only as a future king. Forgive me, prince, what the priest had said is true. Your decision to renunciate the world is wonderful but it does not match the timing. The time is not proper.

Oh! Prince, I am materialistic in nature. Minister is another eye of a king. I am not a Brahmin priest. I have no faith in heaven or hell. I do not believe in reincarnation. I

do not want moksha by running away from my duties. Our moksha (liberation) is on the battle ground. We can reach heaven by fighting with the enemy. We, Khatriyas, do not recite mantra or practice yoga.

Oh, prince! You can understand that fire is hot and water is cool. Similarly we, Khatriya, have special qualities. The god we have not seen and the heaven, we never visited. What is the use of chasing them? It is fruitless. You are insulting nature. It has given you youthfulness. Why do you hate it? Leave this adamant attitude. Let us return to Kapilavastu. We all will celebrate your return all over the kingdom.”

Apart from this, Oh! Prince, you cannot forget the obligation to your father and mother. You have a responsibility to protect your people and the kingdom. You also have responsibility as a husband and a father.

The person who completes this responsibility achieves to the Moksha. The protector of Shakyas and guide Siddhartha, do you suspect that if you come back it would be a cause for criticism, then forget it. Since ancient times many kings like Ambrish, Drumkesh have returned home. So Prince, come back with doubtless mind. Let us go back now.”

The minister and the priest begged the prince with all their intellectual ability coupled with sincerity and respect. They were expecting change in the prince’s attitude.

Gautum Buddha was pleased because with their loyalty towards the king. He said, “when people like you are around my father, the king, there is no cause for worry.”

The thoughts, you have expressed are very similar to mine. I am also not ready to spend my valuable life by thinking about heaven, hell, reincarnation. Any wise man will not trust the concepts of heaven, hell, soul that nobody has seen. We should follow the truth, find out truth, and experience it yourself.

You may ask if we do not understand the truth clearly, what one should do. I say even if you do not understand it and have doubt, still you should always concentrate only on good things.

And regarding my returning home, unless I achieve what I want, only for physical pleasure of a family man I can not return.

I know full well that my ageing father, the king had sent you to me with great hope but I pray for his forgiveness and convey my regards to him.

The priest and the minister returned with trembling feet but Gautum Buddha went away a firth with decision. He was like a swan swimming in the sea of bliss. He was walking on the right path.

YASH

Yash was a son, born with a golden spoon in his mouth. His father was a rich merchant in Varanasi. He had spent his youthful years enjoying every physical pleasure available to him. But this did not make him happy. Day by day the fire of lust increased. A day came in his life when he went in a deep mental depression. He had never experienced such form of painful mental state. He became restless and left home at midnight and came to deer park where Gautum Buddha was residing.

He realized Yash's cause of frustration, his cause of sorrow. With loving words he called him near and gave him advice on character, control of senses, compassion, knowledge. Buddha's compassion created catalistic effect on Yash. His mind became calm, he listened to Buddha's sermon on how to solve the riddle of sorrow. Four superior forms of truth and his eightfold way.

His father came there in search of his son. When he himself listened to Buddha's dhamma he was impressed. He said "It is like making straight what is bent, it is to open what was concealed. It is to show right path who had lost it. Buddha has shown me the real path of true religion. He accepted Buddha's path, his way of life. Yash observed this change. The merchant asked Yash to go home with him and meet his mother who was ill and crying since Yash had left home.

Buddha told them that Yash was changed. He was useless for married life. Yash become Buddha's first married disciple. Yash's father invited Buddha for lunch. During the conversation all the family along with his relatives joined Buddha's sangh. Now sixty bhikus became the first team of Buddha sangh.

Buddha entrusted the work of spreading the message of getting relief from sorrow. He tells them, "Oh Bhikus, for betterment of many, for happiness of many

'Bahujan Hitay, Bahujan Sukhay!'

With a compassionate heart go from door to door and enlighten the masses. Go each one of you on a separate path. Remove the prejudices and wrong perceptions of people and show them the real path of enlightenment. I am also going towards Uruvella."

As the message started spreading like fire, many people desired to take upsampada. For bhikus and people it was not possible to come to Buddha and take the initiation. For this, Buddha gave the bhikus the right of conducting the initiation. He also gave the bhikus the permission to conduct the initiation the new cormers. He made some religious laws about the method of conducting initiation. The method was very simple after shaving the head and wearing saffron clothes called 'Chivar', a newcomer would bow before a senior bhiku and say 'I surrender to sangha, I surrender to dhamma.' Buddha then proceeded to Uruwela.

On the way, in a dense forest, he sat under a tree. Thirty youths from well off families had come into the forest on a picnic along with their wives. They asked Buddha if he saw a woman running along the nearby road.”

Buddha asked the reason for their search.

They told, “Out of thirty youths one had no wife so we brought a concubine for him. When we were drunk the woman stole our valuables and ran off so we are searching her.”

Buddha asked them, “Oh youths, what is more beneficial to you, is it the search for a woman or a search for your true nature?”

The youths told him ‘search of oneself.’ Then Buddha advised them. That changed their direction of life and they became bhikhus in sangh.

Buddha reached Uruvela. He met three jatadhari brothers. One was Uruvela Kashyapa, Nadi Kashyapa and Gaya Kashyapa. They were engaged in religious rituals. They used to perform Vadnyas, Hatyoga and worships. After Buddha’s advice they were convinced about the futility of religious rituals. The three Kashapas along with their one thousand disciples joined Buddha sangh and became Bhikus.

Buddha stayed there for some time and reached Gayasis and then to Rajgraha. He camped in Lattivan along with one thousand bhikhus.

Emperor of Magdha, Bimbisar had earlier met Siddhartha seven years ago and had taken a promise from Siddhartha to meet him after he reached the height of enlightenment. During the period of seven years Bimbisar had many stories of Buddha which created an eagerness in his mind to see Gautum Buddha. The news of Buddha’s arrival spread from door to door in Magdha. Bimbisar along with the Royal paraphernalia came to receive the enlightend one. He bowed before Buddha and silently listened to his spiritual advice. Bimbisar confessed to Buddha “Bhante, when I was a child I had five desires. All those are fulfilled today. I wanted to sit on a throne as an emperor, second was self realized souls should come to my capital and third was, I should recognize a self relaized soul. Now my all five desires are fulfilled.”

Bimbisar invited Buddha along with his disciples for lunch. That day he asked Bhante “Where would you like to stay?”

Buddha told him “I like solitude but the place should not be in town, but close enough for people to come and discuss.”

Bimbisar offered him the place Venuvan. It was the first piece of land donated to Buddha sangh. Buddha lived there for three successive years during the rainy season. Bimbisar ruled Magdha for about 37 years. his support to Buddha dhama laid a firm foundation for it.

SARIPUTTA

Near the capital city of Magadh in a small village called Nalka or Upatissa lived folk famous in arts. Sariputta and Mongalyan were youths with spiritual bent of mind. Sariputt's mother Rupsari. named her son Sriputta. Once Sariputta and Mongalyan went to see a stage performance. When they saw the marvellous acting they were deeply impressed. They got a message of futility of richness. They were greatly upset. For peace of mind they approached their family's religious Guru who had considerable following in the region. They went to Guru, but did not get the peace of mind. They decided to find out their own path. Promised each other that whoever gets realization first would instruct the other.

During that time one of the first five disciples of Buddha Ashwajit or Asaji was wandering in Rajagraha for morning alms.

Sariputta was awestruck by the very darshan of the arhat Asaji. He told him "Your very appearance gives me peace of mind. You are a holy Shaman. Whom did you follow? Who is your master?"

Asaji said "The former prince of Shakya Mahashraman Gautum Buddha is my master. I follow his way of life. I am not matured enough to explain his views to you but whatever I understood I will pass on to you."

For Sariputta the spark of religious knowledge was

enough to kindle the light in his heart. Sariputta expressed his gratitude. He informed his friend Mongalayan. Other disciples of Sanjay also joined them. All of them proceeded towards Veluvan where Mahashraman was staying.

Buddha saw them approaching and predicted that these two aspirants would be his chief disciples. When they reached as per their prayer they were all introduced in to Buddha's faith.

Saripautta had three brothers Chundas, Upsers and Devdatta and three sisters Chala, Upchalla, Shishupchala. All these brothers and sisters were already wellversed in religious thoughts and faith. Afterwards they too joined the sangh. This became a cause of anger for their mother Rupsari. She became very sad and strongly criticized Sangha for many years and here her son was called as Dhamma Senapti by Buddha himself.

When he was in Rajagrah King Shudhodan was informed about his son's advocating his new path of removal of sorrow and thousands of people including King of Magdha Bimbisar had become his followers and admirers. Naturally the King Shudhodhan had a very strong desire to meet his dear son. He sent his messenger after messengers to invite Gautum at Kapilavastu but the messenger reached there, heard his sermons and merged in the sea of sangh. They even forgot to convey the Kings message to Buddha. This happened successively, for nine times. The King in return was puzzled. He chose Gautum's childhood friend Kaludai

and sent him, but he too joined the sangh and became bhiku but did not forget to pass on the message.

Buddha decided to obey. He walked for two months and reached Kapilavastu. In between he preached his gospel to whoever was thirsty of golden thoughts to revolutionise his life.

Buddha stayed in Nyagrodh park. People and his relatives were very eager to see this former prince. They carefully listened to his sermon and with peaceful mind returned home.

Next morning as usual Buddha with a begging bowl in his hand walked into the city. The poor people greeted the former prince with flowers, fruits, lamps and sweets. He was a homeless Shaman but in the heart of the citizens he was still their loving Prince Siddhartha.

Some senior people bowed before him and prayed, “oh, respected prince you have achieved that for which you had left us seven years ago now its time to shoulder your responsibility as a future king. You are our hope.”

Buddha listened silently because he knew his own aim of life. Now no power, no throne no property could attract him. He remained unattached.

His father was informed that the prince was begging. The King was annoyed and angry he took the chariot and went to the lane, where Buddha was begging. Some of his bhikhus were also with him. He saw his father approaching.

He felt, yes, I am his son and meeting after seven years. Time is a flowing entity. Seven years went by and I myself and the world has changed. I am no more prince, do not belong to shakya dynasty. The powerful current of seven years created a hiatus between father and son.

King Shudhodan came and climbed down from the chariot, he expressed his respect towards the saffron clothes and greeted Gautum with warm tears rolling on the Shaman’s back. Buddha, as his son, sat at the feet of his father as a sign of respect.

He told his son. “Last seven years I was waiting for this moment of your return. You can not imagine the intensity of our eagerness. I have no daring to call you prince Siddhartha. But still come back; take the responsibility as a ruler. Then only can I very peacefully close my eyes.”

Helplessly, the king folded his hands before the shaman. “The kingdom is yours but I am afraid, you will consider it as no more valuable than a blade of grass.” The King’s heart was filled with joy and sadness. He was happy that he got his son but sad that he may not really come back.

Buddha experienced a sudden gush of fountain of inspiration. He said, “Oh! King, your mind is attached to me as a son. Let your love break the bondage of relation and spread towards all humans. Expand the horizon of your love. Parivrajak in me who preach good conduct, good character and the path of peace is certainly more important than the prince in me.”

The king said “oh! Siddhartha why do you beg in the capital where you have once ruled? Do you think the King cannot feed all your bhikus? Oh! Prince up till now nobody from Shakyas have begged in the town. Your act of begging is disgracing all of us.”

Buddha politely told king. “Oh! King, here I am begging as a rule of sangh which is binding on everybody including me who has made the laws. And I am no more of shakya community I belong to the dynasty of arhat, dynasty of enlighten end Buddha. We accept food once in a day and preach the path of happiness and preach non-violence.

I had fought war within myself and I got the treasure. Earlier the princes used to surrender the treasure at the feet of the king. Now I have treasure of dhama. Allow me to present it to you. Open your heart for the truth and you will also get the treasure of peace.”

The King was pleased. His agitated mind became cool and before bidding farewell he requested Buddha to visit the palace and take food there with the members of the Royal family and all the bhikus. Buddha accepted the invitation.

Everybody from the Royal family came forward to receive Buddha, trumpets were blown, drums beaten, garlands of different flowers were offered. In the garden the King received shaman Gautum respectfully. It was noticed from the gallery by Yashodhara and Mahaprajapati.

Food was served in many different plates. Almost all the Royal family members took the initiative in serving the food to Buddha and his bhikhus. The only absent members were Yashodhara and Rahul.

Yashodhara had sent a message. “I had not abandoned the prince. He himself left me and Rahul. Now it is his turn to come to me and accept my respects.” Buddha along with his two chief disciples, Sariputta and Mongalayan went to Yashodhara’s apartment in the place. He instructed his two disciples to allow Yahshodhara to express her love or anger in her own way.

When Buddha entered and sat on a chair. Yashodhara came and put her head on his feet and the river of choked emotions burst in to tears. There were no words. Only her gazing in the eyes of Siddhartha transmitted her love and respect. She, at the end said, “I am a lucky woman whose husband turned to be a mahashraman and reached the stage of enlightenment. He becomes the liberator of human beings from sorrow. He becomes a polestar to show the right direction to society.”

In return Buddha gave her spiritual advice and shared some of his valuable spiritual experiences and left the palace.

The King had arranged for a chariot but Buddha professed to walk. On the seventh day at Kapilavastu a strange thing happened. Yashodhara told her seven year old son Rahul that, “The mahashaman among thousands of bhikhus who

is shining like the sun is your father. He is very rich. As a son, you have a right to demand that and ask your father to hand it over to you.”

Rahul obeyed his mother and followed his father with his demand.

Buddha felt that if he received material treasure as a grandson of King Shudhodan it could be troublesome to him ultimately; instead of that, I shall give him the treasure that I got under the bodhi tree.

Buddha called Sariputta and asked him to give pravija to Rahul. Accordingly his head was shaved . he was given a saffron cloth and a begging bowl and included in sangh as an ordinary bhikhu. It was three sharan shramner prabraja. I surrender to sangh, I surrender to Dhama. Of course when Rahul became twenty years old all the religious practices would be taught. Sarputta gave him lessons in yogic postures, pranayam and meditation. Sometimes Buddha himself instructed Rahul.

Earlier when shakya family members came to see Buddha his step brother, Nanda, was with them, while Buddha waved his hands to see them off Nanda took the bhikshapatra in his own hand. Buddha turned and started walking. Nand was puzzled. What was he to do with this begging bowl was the question Nanda had, but he simply followed.

Buddha was already requested by the king. Recently Nanda was not in good company of youths hence some good sanskars, advise should be given to improve Nanda. Here Buddha asked Nanda if he could stay in sangh for a few more days. Nanda gladly accepted the offer. Nanda was also included in sangh as Bhikhu.

This was shocking news for King Shudhodan. He was in deep depression. He wept with sorrow. He rushed to Buddha. He said “oh! Bhante! What have you done? When you renunciated the kingdom, I was very sad, when you gave pravrajya to Nanda, your step brother I felt too bad. You should have improved him and sent him back to the palace.

But when I understood the pravraja given to Rahul, your son and my only hope as grandson, an heir to a shakya throne. You have made my life useless, hopeless. Every moment the event is drilling every muscle of my body like a sharp weapon. I am a seriously wounded soldier. My only request and the desire for every father and mother in my kingdom that hence forth before giving pravraja to anybody ask them to seek permission from their parents. Buddha realized the new dimension of responsibility on bhikhus. This became a new law of sangh (law recorded in vinay pitika)

Rahul was a cultured, obedient and disciplined boy and eager to receive advice from senior bhikhus. He was the youngest among bhikhus. He was just seven years old boy.

Everyday in the morning he would go to take a bath at the river and would hold a handful of sand, and drop it again. He used to tell himself as much sand particles I have dropped so much number of spiritual advice I should receive from my master, senior bhikhu.

Rahul was once staying in Ambalattka and saw Buddha coming towards his residence. He prepared a seat and offered him water to wash his feet. Buddha came, washed his feet and kept some water in the pot. He asked Rahul, “can you see some water remaining in the pot?”

“Yes Bhante.”

“This water becomes useless. If somebody deliberately lies his spiritual behaviour becomes senseless and useless and of low quality.”

Buddha threw the remaining water and said the spiritual life of a bhikhu after pretending becomes worth throwing away.”

Then Buddha turned the pot and said, “who deliberately lies, his life becomes empty like this pot.”

After seeing the pot empty Buddha said.” The Sainthood is empty and meaningless if he lies.”

“Rahul! The people who lie can commit any sin. So even in jokes you should not lie.”

Through small practical things Buddha taughts important lessons to his son.

Once he showed a piece of mirror to Rahul and asked him “what is the use of this mirror?”

“To see reflection.” -Rahul.

Similarly, Rahul, first see the effect of your speech or action. Think about the effect of your action on yourself and others. Otherwise, only sorrow would be the outcome of our action. Buddha taught Rahul Anapansati (Prnayam) and also taught him how to meditate.

Buddha showed Rahul how to absorb the qualities of five elements in nature. Earth, vayu, tej, water, Akash. Earth accepts the good and bad things thrown on it. Tej (fire) burns good and bad things. Vayu, flows far and near the bad things. We want good and bad things in water. And Akash (space) is independent, it does not rest on anything.

These five elements are in everybody. But meditate and see these five elements objectively and you become unattached to them.

Rahul similarly meditated with friendliness and a compassionate heart. All things are perishable. All pleasure are not bad. neglect some bad things.

Buddha taught Rahul how to come out of a feeling of self.

Buddha travelled from Kapilavastu to Anupiya and stayed there. Some youths knew that many youth from other communities had become bhikhus. So Anand, Mahanam,

Bhaddiya, Anurudha, Brugu, Kimbal, Devdata decided to listen to Buddha and join his sangh.

They came to the border of their state. They took out the ornaments that were tied in a cloth. Now the question arose as to what should be done with that. They searched for a right person. At the roadside they found a barber. They told him these things were not useful to them please accept them which may be useful for your future. Uppali showed the road in the forest that led to Buddha's monestry. The youths crossed the river and disappeared in the forest. Upali opened the cloth bundle and was wonderstruck to find rich ornaments.

Uppali became afraid. If some robber sees this he will be killed for these valuable ornaments. And what is more valuable than this for which the youths had abandoned this treasure? Upali felt it was worth while to find out that more valuable thing. He kept the ornaments in the cloth and tied it to a nearby branch of a tree so that nobody should find it. He himself ran after the youths and crossed the river and joined them.

Among the youths was Devadatta. He asked "Upali, Why are panting? Where have you kept those ornaments? Is there anyone chasing you for your life?"

Uppali answered, "I want to become bhikhu like you people." Devdatta laughed, you are a barber, how can you become bhikhu? "Anirudha stopped Devadatta in between

and assured Upali Buddha does not believe in caste discrimination. His sangh is like the sea, even though rivers come from in different directions they became one ocean. No difference remains." All of them reached Anupiya. Next day they came to Buddha. Bhahiya prayed for renunciation and also asked to initiate Upali first.

Buddha asked the reason. Badhiya explained, "Oh! Shakya muni, we belong to rich Shakyas and Upali is born as a barber. Up till now we make no caste discrimination and consider them as inferior. When he is initiated first, he would become senior to us. He is our co-disciple and we will respect him. Otherwise after renunciation the feeling of superiority will continue."

Buddha was happy as the wheel of Dhamma was moving in a right direction.

All were initiated as bhikhus.

One evening emperor Bimbisar and Buddha were discussing personal matters. Bimbisar revealed to the master that he had another son, but not from, the queen Videhi but by the second wife Ambapali and her son Jeevak. "They came and informed them." Buddha agreed while returning from morning bhiksha, alms a beautiful lady come in a chariot of two white horses. A sixteen year old boy accompanied her. Buddha understood she is Ambapali , Kaludai, Nagyamla, sariputa also saw her.

Ambapali introduced her son Jeevak. He bowed before Buddha and said, "I'm studying medicine, when my study is completed I would like to come in your contact."

Ambapali stayed on the north side of Patliputra in a mango grove. She was not interested in the titles like Maharani or queen. She was not interested in staying in the palace but preferred to stay outside. She narrated her lifestyle to Buddha when tears flowing. She told Buddha, "she thought your meeting would be like any other priest or religious teacher; but somehow the burden on my mind and sadness in my heart that existed for many years disappeared. This is the golden day in my life as a dancer happiest day in my life up till now."

Many people look at me with lust and attraction but not you. I have seen innocent eyes like you for the first time in my life." She felt calm.

Buddha told her, "Ambapali, the beauty rises and diminishes and is lost ultimately like any other thing in the material world. The fame also of the same nature; it comes and goes. Only peace, bliss and freedom are an outcome of meditation. Hence utilise every moment of your remaining life which is very important. Use this moment for good work. Practice pranayam, work with awareness, practise panchsheela."

Amrapali was very pleased. She was satisfied. She

requested Buddha to accept her invitation to lunch for all the bhikkhus at her mango grove.

Buddha accepted the invitation Amrapali and her son returned in a chariot. On the way some rich landlords from Lichavi community were driving in chariots in opposite direction. When they saw Amrapali they stopped and told her they were going to invite Buddha tomorrow for lunch. Amrapali revealed that Buddha had already accepted her invitation. They offered Amrapali money to transfer the invitation. But she refused. They went to Buddha who also told them his inability to accept the invitation for the same day.

After Amrapali left Kalandai, Sariputa, Nagasamala gathering courage asked Buddha "Tathgat! How bhikhu should look at the beauty of a woman. Does the beauty of a woman hinder the bhikhu's" spiritual progress? Buddha advised them the quintessence of all religion is above beauty or ugliness. They are mental replicas. A river, cloud, leaf, flower, sunrays, golden morning are all the spots of beauty but the beauty of a woman can disturb the heart of a man. If any bhikhu is impressed by it his fall is predictable.

But if you have walked on the spiritual path, beautiful things look more beautiful.

Real beauty never diminishes nor fades. Real beauty rests in the compassionate heart. Unconditional emotion without

any expectation filled with compassion grants you real peace. Have a good, unattached meditation and you will have realization of the beauty.

Buddha sang a hymn for his disciple bhikhus.

Do not get lost in thoughts of the future.

Past does not exist now.

Future is yet to come.

See life as it is. Here and now.

Life is freedom and steadiness.

To wait till tomorrow makes for delay, death comes unexpectedly.

How can you bargain with it?

Bhikhu embraces it. Bhikhu remains in awareness day and night.

Bhikhu also knows how to remain in loneliness.

Suddatta was a religious man living in Shravasti. He always helped the orphans. He was known as a person who helps (anath) orphans so he was named as Anathpindak. For some work he came to his relatives in Shravasti. They were busy with arranging a function. Suddatta inquired about it. His relatives told him Buddha was coming.

The very name of Buddha created a wave of happiness in a Suddatta. He had a strong desire to see him. Somehow he would not even sleep and very early in the morning proceeded towards the place where Buddha was staying.

The road was through cemetery. He reached and was surprised to see Buddha awake and walking to and fro.

Buddha was waiting for him. Buddha gave him religious advice to attain mental peace.

Sudatta requested Buddha to spend rainy season in Shravasti. When he learnt Buddha likes the place which is isolated, Sudatta selected a place called Jetvan. It was a garden of a prince. He purchased it from the prince at a high price. He sold all his gold. A monastery was built. It was called Jetvan. Buddha had spent maximum time of his life there. He had spent eighteen rainy seasons. Maximum laws of Buddha sangh, for bhikhus and family holders were laid down. Buddha advised him that ordinary people were happy with four things; property, ownership, loan free and spotless life.

Anathpindak was seriously ill. He knew his end was close. Sariputta gave him his last sermon and with great appreciation of Buddha's disciples progress Anathpindak breathed his last

BLIND BHIKHU

While Tathagat was staying in Jetvan, many aspirants would come to visit Buddha Vihar. They used to search for senior bhikhus with spiritual attainment. During that period Chakshupal bhikhu was practising dhamma. He was born

blind. He used to clean his hut and walk outside the hut. When the visitor saw that while walking outside the hut a row of ant was crushed under his feet. The visitors were sad and also disappointed as the ants were killed. They avoided meeting Chakshupal and went to Tathagat and complained of the violence committed by Chakshupal. They also demanded punishment for his behavior.

Buddha understood the situation and summoned the bhikhu and asked in front of his visitors “Whether he had committed violence deliberately?”

Chakshupal humbly replied “Tathgat you are aware that I am blind by birth. and hence I did not notice the ants. I was not at all aware of their presence. In my mind and in my heart I had no desire to kill any ant or any other insect, nor I had any intention to do violnce. I have explained what my position was, still if you believe that I have committed a crime, you can order punishment and I would obey happily.”

Listening to Chakshupal’s reply, Buddha sang a hymn for visitors.

Mind is prone to past impressions but it is great. Good and bad deeds are committed by the mind. Mind is the central place here. If with crooked mind somebody, tells lies and kills someone, then as the wheels of a bullock cart follow the feet of walking bulls, bad deeds would follow the doer.

One day bhikhu Malukyaputta who was a religious scholar thought to seek some explanations from Buddha. Whether world is temporary or pemanent? Whether the world was finite or unbound? Whether Jeeva and body are one or separate? Whether Buddha will exist after death or not?

Malukyaputta came to Buddha and said, “if you do not clearly express your stand or admit that you cannot answer my questions, why I should call you my Guru? Better to leave this life of Bhikhu and reenter married life or why I should not seek another Guru?”

Buddha was not offended by such a blunt question from his own bhikhu. He silently asked Malukyaputta.

“Did I ever tell you to become bhikhu and join sandh?”

‘No, Bhante’

‘Had you said that, unless I answer your questions you could not become bhikhu?’

‘No, Bhante’

“Had you said that if you do not answer my questions I will discard you as bhikhu?”

‘No, Bhante’

“Then oh! Foolish man, what are you abandoning and for what?”

The Buddha explained his point narrating him a story of a man wounded by an arrow. Many of his relatives and

friends gathered to take him for medical treatment. The wounded man told them.” I will not allow you to take out the arrow from my body unless you tell me certain things. Whether the man who wounded me was Khyatriya or Brahmin, tall or short and belonged to which place?

Buddha concluded, Malukypatta if the man goes on asking such questions he would die without getting medical treatment. Similarly end of our life would come seeking answers for unwanted, unnecessary questions. Our life does not depend on the answers to questions, you pose.

Even if we get the answers or not our fundamental questions remain the same. The sorrow of birth, sickness, old age, death, poverty remain as they were. We should give priority to solve these problems.

“What I have told you is that are sorrow exists, it has a reason, and we can remove sorrow from life by following certain rules.”

Malukyputta understood and became silent. Buddha was in Kutagraph of Mahavan in Vaishali. Bhudiya Lichava came to see him. He had a strange doubt about Buddha. He had an impression that Buddha is a juggler, had some tantric tricks by which he attracts people towards him. By same occult powers he can attract people and defeat the opponents.

Bhadiya wanted to know the truth. He asked Buddha,” if people are making false allegations against Bhante? I

do not blame you but would like to know the truth behind it”

Buddha told him very clearly. Every bhikhu should examine him. If bhiku has any doubt in his mind he should get it clarified. You should not accept anything because he had not heard it before. You should not accept as the thing is followed by people for many years. You should not accept only because it is according to religious scriptures or logical in nature or it is according to laws of justice. Even if the preacher is a great man and his method of preaching is effective you should not accept it. Even though the preacher is respectable person, you should not accept even if the opinion is similar to your opinion.

Only when you are convinced that a thing is bad, wrong and will bring bad results drop it and when you are sure these things are good and will make good for you accept them and behave accordingly.

The freedom given by Buddha to bhikhus to enquire, ask and examine things and even he himself clarified all doubts from the mind of Bhadiya Lichavi.

LONLINESS

In Vihar of Jetvan of Shravasti one elderly bhikhu was well known for his lifestyle. He was older and was called as Therbhikhu. He loved loneliness. Whoever met him he talked about loneliness. If he wanted to go in town for alms

he would be alone. If he wanted to meditate he would seat himself alone.

Some bhikhu narrated his lifestyle to Buddha. He summoned him. He came and bowed before the master.

Buddha asked him in front of all the bhikhus. Is it true that you love to stay, meditate and eat food all alone and do not like to seat along with other bhikhus?"

Thera said "yes master". Buddha told him "what you are doing is not bad, I do not criticize you for that but I can teach you better lifestyle to live in isolation. That is deep observation. To see that past does not exist, future is yet to come, live in the present very naturally. It is to live free from the lust. If somebody lives like this then there is no hindrance in his heart."

He has no repentance, restlessness, so he experiences unconditional state and freedom. This could be the best way to enjoy loneliness. This state results in peace and bliss.

Bliss was clearly visible on his face and the faces of other bhikhus present. All of them saluted the master and left.

Buddha was walking on the road that connected two towns, Ukkath and Setatva. Dron was a Brahmin youth and he started following Buddha. At a beautiful place under a big tree he sat for meditation. He was in deep meditation. Dron waited till he opened his eyes and introduced himself

and requested him to answer a few question. All answers were negative.

He asked 'Are you God?'

'No.'

'Are you Gandharva?'

'No.'

'Are you Yaksha?'

'No.'

'Are you human being?'

'No.'

Dron got puzzled he asked again if you were not extraterrestrial being and also not human being then who are you?

Buddha replied oh! Brahmin I was really god, Gandharva, Yaksha and human till I was under the influence of attachment. If you destroy the roots of a tree then the tree cannot have new branches or leaves. Even if lotus leaf springs out of water, water is not attached to it.

Oh! Brahmin, I was born in the world, brought up here, I have won over the drawbacks of the world. Because of this achievement some people call me a person who know the truth or knowledge, you can call me Tathagat or Buddha."

While walking in the streets of Shravasti one morning Buddha stood before a house for alms. It was a priest's

house and he was performing yadnya (sacrifice). The flames of the fire rose to the ceiling. The priest got angry and cried aloud “oh Shrman, you have betrayed your religion, you do not trust Vedas, and you are an outcast. Do not come inside, stop where you are.

Buddha asked him who has betrayed true religion. The man, who is the victim of anger, keeps anger in mind, who hates somebody, who is a hypocrite, who commits sin. He who is filled with bad karmas, is morally corrupt. He is an outcast.

The person who increases hate, enmity, in whose mind bad desires exist, who has no shame. Who does not hesitate to sin he should be called an outcast. Nobody is bad or of lower category only because he is born in a particular caste. Good deeds always evolve a good person.”

Between the cities of Kapilavastu and Koli ran the river Rohini. Across the river earthen dam was built to store the water. This enabled the people of both countries to irrigate their fields.

There was a great drought and farmers on both sides claimed the sole right to the little water that remained. The rival claimants called each other by the worst possible names. This exaggerated by rumours led to the outbreak of Shakya and Koliyas gathered on the opposite banks of the river. At this crisis Buddha perceived what was going on and arrived at the place of battle.

The very presence of Buddha the Shakyas threw down their weapons out of respect for him. He was the jewel of their race. Koliyas also followed suit.

Buddha asked the people of both the countries. ‘What is the value of water and what is the value of men?’

Both groups told him that water had very little value compared to the value of human life, life of their people.

He asked, “Why then do you propose to throw away that which is of great value for the sake of that of little value?”

This convincing argument by Buddha nullified the war euphoria. Many people from both sides turned to be bhikhus.

During Buddha, stay in Ghosari Vihar, he used to meditate under a tamarind tree. After the evening meditation he would hold a handful of the leaves of tamarind tree. many bhikhus would gather in the ground and Buddha would raise his hands and asked the bhikhus whether the leaves on the tree were greater in number or leaves in his hands?

All the bhikhus would cry aloud and answer “of course those on the tree in the jungle.”

Buddha gave them complements and said ‘you are absolutely right. A greater number of things exist in the spiritual world than the things I preach to you. I teach limited things that are useful to lead you to nibban.

One of the bhikhu went in the city for morning alms. On the road he experienced a strong wind. Suddenly his loin cloth dropped from his body. People around started laughing and clapping hands. Bhikhu was ashamed. This event was narrated to Buddha. Then he gave bhikhu permission to use a thread around his waist. The thread would hold the cloth tied around his waist.

After a few months the bhikhus started using waist thread of gold, silver and expensive material. Observing this trend of bhikhus he banned the use of waist thread of gold and silver and he asked them to use only cotton threads.

SIMPLE LIVING

Once a young bhikhu experienced a strange encounter. He used to enjoy living fashionably. He had long hair and long finger nails, and was of very good character. He would go for alms everyday in the morning and was observed for few days by a young lady.

One day the lady was alone in her house. When the bhikhu came for alms, she offered him food and asked him to have sex with her. The bhikhu called her sister and reminded her of his celibacy.

The young lady threatened him, that if he did not agree to have sex with her she would shout loudly and tell everybody that he was molesting her.

The bhikhu remained silent. The lady scratched herself with her nails and started crying. Soon many people gathered and caught hold of the bhikhu.

One senior person observed every thing carefully and did not believe the young lady's charges. He observed that she had scratched her own skin. He explained the real fact to the gathering. The bhikhu was acquitted from the charges against him.

The bhikhu narrated the whole incident to Buddha. After hearing this Buddha made it compulsory for every bhikhu, not to live a fashionable life and not have long hair or long nails. This became a law of behaviour for the bhikhus.

ILLNESS

Buddha told everybody that he was not a god or messenger of god but a human being like all others. He suffered physical illness and pain. He also suffered stomach pain and felt uneasy, he had a fever. He sent Anand to bring medicine from Jeevak.

Jeevak came and examined Buddha and asked him to observe his diet. After three days he gave him three spoonfuls of herbal powder. By smelling one spoonful of powder Buddha had ten loose motions. By taking the second type of powder he had three loose motions. The third time it should have been ten times loose motions but one would be less. It exactly the way it should have happened.

Jeevak asked Anand for hot water for Buddha's bath. After the bath he had the last loose motion and within few hours Buddha was healed completely.

Often Buddha was in a pleasant mood and Jeevak asked him for one favour.

Buddha gave his consent. Jeevak told him "king Pradyot desires to offer clothes (Chivar) to all the bhikhus. The offer may be granted."

For twenty years of enlightenment Buddha and others were pansukulik. They were using torn clothes. Jeevak had observed it so he had a strong desire to offer new ones.

After this incident Sangh made a few more rules regarding saffron clothes, and decided on the color and size and number of cloths bhikhu should wear. It was taught to bhikhus how to prepare the saffron colour. How to test the colour on nail or dropping it in water. How long the colour would last. If the cloths were torn they were taught to stitch.

Buddha was preaching his doctrine to every one from king to the slave, rich and poor, Khatriyas, Brahmins to Shudras. His blessings spread everybody, whoever came in his contact he preached the doctrine to all who heard him. Bimbisar, King of Magdha was already his disciple. Buddha also visited his native city. King Shudhodan sent a group of noblemen asking him to visit Kapilavastu. Buddha perceived that the time had come when it would be proper for him to visit his native city.

When the King bowed, the princes also made their obeisance, like bending of a forest of bamboos before the wind.

Buddha gave them spiritual advice and left. He knew this would certainly help the King to follow the path and change his life.

The King practised what Buddha told him and peacefully breathed his last. He could attain Arhat stage.

Two hundred fifty princes formed Kosal and Shakya community became disciples of Buddha and joined Sangh. Their wives no sooner heard of this than they complained bitterly.

WOMEN ADMITTED

The wives of the five hundred princes, along with Prajapati, now the widow of Shudhodan who had died recently requested Buddha that they might be admitted to the order of priesthood. Buddha refused their request. He refused it three times, after which they did not ask him again.

But after returning home all the ladies decided and determined to achieve the target differently. They cut off their hair, assumed cheap garments and set out on foot for the place where Buddha was residing.

Their delicate feet started bleeding, their white skin turned black by the scorching sun, the wind and heat made them exhausted. Some of them fainted. When they ultimately reached the destination Anand pleaded for them on account of their determination and hardship they had undergone, but Buddha refused.

Anand asked Buddha, “Whether a woman can attain release?”

Buddha said ‘yes.’

‘Whether the path is meant only for men?’

Buddha said “the way is open for men as well as women”

Anand reminded him in the past on some occasion he had announced that women in advance age would be admitted. Buddha then saw that the time had come to establish the order of nuns.

His reluctance had been caused by the nature of existing society. By admitting women early in the sangh would have raised doubts and scandals about his order. Later on when he got a large following, time was proper to give permission for women to join Buddha sangh.

OPPOSITION

The order of Siddhartha Gautum Buddha was spreading like fire in the north India near Himalaya and Ganga-yamuna river basin. But everything was not unopposed.

The Vaidik Brahmins were afraid that their superiority would vanish if Buddha’s preaching of equality spreaded among masses. At the same time Mongalayan, Sarriputta, born as Brahmins were leaders of sangh.

Opposition to a new thought was natural phenomenon but Buddha’s own cousin and bhikhu Devdatta opposed and agreed to harm Buddha physically. Basically Devdatta from his childhood was of evil nature. Devdatta created a group of fellow bhikhus and gained the support of prince Ajatshatru of Magdha. He chose a group of archers to kill Buddha.

Buddha was well aware of Devdatt’s intentions when the people of Devdatta came to him, by the kind preaching of Buddha they converted and became his disciples.

On another occasion Devdatta threw a big rock at Buddha as he was walking on the road, but it broke into pieces when it hit the ground and merely made a wound on Buddha’s foot.

Devdatta planned another evil plot. As Buddha was walking one morning in a narrow lane for alms, Devdatta chose a fierce elephant, Malagiri, who was given alcohol to become more fierce in his attack. It was walking in one direction, but some Bhikhus alerted Buddha. Devdatta wanted Buddha’s renown to dip because he was influencing the masses and his dream was to be the head of Sangh.

But when the elephant confronted Buddha, all its fury vanished and it approached and knelt before Buddha.

Buddha transmitted his peace in the animal so that the creature would never harm anybody but would be kind to all.

When people saw this wonder they started clapping and uttered slogans of victory of Buddha over evil.

After this Ajatshatru turned to be Buddha's disciple and became a supporter of Buddha throughout his life. Devdatta became unsupported and disgraced but Buddha felt no ill will towards Devdatta.

YADNYA

Kashyap once informed Buddha about the decision of Emperor Bimbisar to perform a big Yadnya (sacrifice). For this a huge pendal was erected on the ground outside the city on a raised platform. Various fire places were built, many priests were invited and special food arrangements were carried out.

When Buddha heard this story he, along with Kashyap, started their journey towards Rajagrugh. On the way they saw a herd of goats among which a small goat was limping. Buddha picked it up and caressed it with love. The shepherd observed it from a distance. He recognized Buddha, came near and paid his respects.

Buddha asked him where he was going. He herd replied, "Sir, the belongs to the king of Magdha. He is about to perform a big sacrifice for the welfare of his society. The priests would sacrifice these goats by throwing them into fire chanting mantras".

The King was informed about the arrival of Buddha, he along with his ministers went to welcome the spiritual master. The King saw Uruvella Kashyap along with Buddha and was puzzled. Who is the master? Who is the disciple? Buddha put the small limping goat on the ground.

The King bowed before Buddha and Kashyap and requested them to be present at the sacrifice, guide them and bless the occasion.

Buddha told the king "To sacrifice innocent lives in the fire cannot be a good spiritual act. If you want the wellbeing of your people it would not be a result of violence and littering blood. Yadnya is not the way to achieve peace, happiness and satisfaction."

King thought, at least Kashyapa would support him as Kashyapa's reputation was as a staunch supporter of Yadnya. The King bowed before Kashayp and asked him to clearly express his opinion.

Kashyapa kept silent. He bowed before Buddha and told him that he was a follower of Buddha's order."

The King said “I am also a follower of Buddha order but your faith in Yadnya had attracted many people in the society.”

Kashyap replied, “Oh! King, Buddha has shown me right path. Sacrificing innocent men or animals does not relieve us from sorrow.”

The King turned towards Buddha and asked for his guidance and promised to follow.

Buddha gave him spiritual advice and accordingly the king dropped the idea of the sacrifice. The King ultimately donated a large piece of land for building Buddha Vihar.

Buddha also advised the king to follow five principles, nonviolence, not to steal, celibacy, not to be greedy and store. He also asked him to keep away from alcohol. If the king decides to concentrate on the wellbeing of his society he would do wonders. Buddha advised four hundred young people in a most lucid and simple language. He did not miss a single chance to communicate with the young people who were the pillars of their country. King Bimbisar, Queen Videhi and Prince Ajatshatru all became satisfied by the guidance from the Master.

ANAND’S EXPERIENCE

Even though Anand became bhikhu his handsomeness was the sign of his Royal heredity. During summer he was walking in a small village for collecting food and became

very thirsty. He saw a well and a young girl drawing water with a pot. Anand asked for some water but she refused. When asked for the reason she replied “I belong to schedule caste, Matang. I do not want to make bhikhu unholy by giving water with my hand.”

Anand clarified, “We bhikhus treat everybody as equal. We do not evaluate human beings on the basis of their caste. All castes are equal. Please share some water with me.”

She ultimately gave him some water. But by Anand’s look, walk and speech she was attracted to him. Everyday she would wait for him but her mother warned her not to but she continued to daydream of marrying him.

Ultimately Buddha had to intervene. He called the girl and asked her a few questions. “Do you love Anand?”

She said, “Yes”.

“Exactly what do you love about Anand, is it his eyes, mouth, his nose or his voice?”

She said, “everything”.

Buddha said, “ but apart from it Anand possesses many good qualities. He loves the path of Nirvan. He is trying to see that everybody possesses bliss and happiness. If you truly love Anand, you should also love his qualities. Love that which would last forever. Youthfulness, beauty are perishable. If you come out of this selfish love then you will also possess bliss, happiness and peace.

The girl was convinced. She bowed before Buddha and ultimately joined Sangh.

When some bhikhu asked Buddha. “How to behave with women?” He said always be alert. Elder than you consider her your mother or elder sister. If she is younger than you consider her as your sister or daughter. If possible talk less with them or avoid their presence.”

Sometimes it happened that a bhikhu would tell another bhikhu that, “friend what I have heard from the Master, I accepted as religion, that is the law for me and that is the discipline of Sangh. This created contraversies among bhikhus and everybody started claiming what he said was the true version.

When these differences reached his ears he categorically told all the bhikhus that when any bhikhu tells you confidently you should not congratulate him nor blame him. Study what he is reporting and tally it with the laws of Sangh. If it does not match reject it as false. The same version may be the bhikhu himself. Besides I am with you. you can ask me, you can clarify your doubts but don't keep it in your mind. I will tell you my views. Of course, we have to make small changes according to different space and time.

Buddha added one more condition before giving Prabaja to a newcomer. Earlier three surrendering sentences were uttered. I surrender to Dhamma Sangh. Fourth one was the

newcomer would request Sangh and would ask for permission to join. It would be asked three times with all bhikhus if they had any objection for granting the permission, If none came forth he would be included in sangh.

It also happened some people especially family members objected their children to join Sangh. They would say Shaman Gautam snatches the sons from their fathers and mothers. Gauam makes women live without their husbands. In general Buddha was destroying families after families. Buddha's answer would be “we do not force anybody to join Sangh. Those who want to be bhikhu we simply help them. There is no reason to object anybody's free will.

Day by day the number of bhikus started increasing. It became essential to give them proper discipline. Earlier every bhikhu was equal. Everybody had the same status. Buddha discussed with Anand, Sariputta and Mongalayan for new ways of discipline. He gave the senior bhikhus special status and rights. They would be addressed as Acharyas. Newcomers would behave with them with respect and obey their orders.

LIVE TOGETHER

In Kosal, many bhikhus, who were puzzled over certain things during their stay together in one Vihar. Once they decided to stay together without any quarrel, they would

live peacefully and happily. They came to a conclusion, that it could be achieved, only when we stop talking to each other. The housework was equally distributed e.g. Household chores, shopping, and water supply. Those who were senior in age should not shout at each other but should take assistance from young bhikkhus. No quarrel, no dispute. This experiment became very successful.

Every year after rainy season the bhikkhus from different places used to come to Buddha and report their year long activities. This was a law to be followed by each and every bhikhu in Sangh.

Bhikkhus in Kosal came to Shravasti where Buddha was camping. All of them paid respects to the Master. Reciprocally he enquired about their well being, and asked how they spent three months of the rainy season. Had everybody had enough food. Any problem? Any quarrel? Was everybody happy?

Everybody narrated that they were all happy. No arguments, no quarrels and everyone had enough food.

Buddha, knew certain things still he would not talk. He would asking useful things and neglect useless things. Buddha's way of asking questions was to educate his bhikkhus, to make them aware of Sangh laws.

Buddha asked them, how was it that they lived without a quarrel, they had good time and everybody had good food.

They explained, "we all made a law that we would not speak to one another avoid quarrel. Buddha clarified, "You lived like goats and animals and birds. They are noncreative, still you claim you lived together and made progress. This is hallucination. Henceforth when you all live together do not observe silence. It should be treated as fault in behavior. Young bhikkhus should seat in front of old bhikkhus and pray that they should look at each other while talking, and working and if they observe anything wrong they should tell me so that they could try and remove the defect and become clean, faultless bhikhu's.

SOMA BHIKHUNI

A Brahmin from Shravasti was not pleased over the inclusion of women in Buddha sangh. He saw Soma bhikhuni meditating. The Brahmin commented that the place of Nirvana is very difficult to achieve even for great Rishis and how a woman whose intellect is only useful to inspect rice if it is cooked or not (she tests it by putting her two fingers in the pot) can achieve Nirvan?"

Soma bhikhuni answered, "if your mind is satisfied and you have achieved knowledge and if you rightly understand what is a true religion, how one's womanhood can become a hindrance?"

Oh! Brahmin tell your thoughts to those whose ego is confined to concept like a man or a woman or somebody else. Oh! Brahmin do not tell your ideas to me.”

Hence the Brahmin became very sad and left. While walking in a village for alms Buddha was near the farm of Bhardwaj Brahmin. He was serving food to his farm labourers.

When Bhardwaj saw a Shraman waiting for food he said in a harsh tone “oh! Shraman work like me on the farm, plough the farm, sow the seeds and when the crop is ripe collect it and then eat. Why do you ask for alms?”

Buddha replied in a soft tone “Oh! Brahmin has forgotten not that I am also a farmer. I sow a seed of faith, shower water of efforts, away from sin is my plough, ropes are my mind, awareness is an iron instrument to cultivate land. I follow the control of my body, regularly unwanted grass is removed by sharp cutter of truth. Satisfaction is my rest, enthusiasm are my bulls and then my bullockcart goes in a proper direction where there is no question of repentance.”

Bhardwaj realized that he is enlightened Buddha, no ordinary Shraman. He surrendered to the master and became his follower.

TRUE FARMER

Shakya community was basically a farming community. Buddha said if farming has a moral base, then it proves to

be happy for the society. If there is exploitation of somebody, it becomes unhappy for the society. If somebody steals the ready up crop of a farmer it becomes a cause of conflict. The relation between landlord and labour or should be non violent and free from exploitation. The most important thing is to cultivate the land of mind first. Otherwise the material farming becomes fruitless.

King of Magdha Bimbisar had a big mango grove. It was full with

different varieties of sweet mangoes. The King gave permission to bhikhus to eat mangoes from the trees. The young bhikhus become enthusiastic and climbed the trees and ate the ripe mangoes everyday some of them even plucked raw mangoes.

The King was in need of mangoes to serve to his relatives and asked the servants to bring some from mango groves. When the servants went they were shocked, even the raw mangoes were plucked by the bhikhus. They reported it to the king. The King remarked that it was all right because they are eaten by good people in my society.

But Buddha was unaware of it. When he was informed he called all the bhikhus together and advised them the king gave you permission but that did not mean you should eat even the raw ones. He made it mandatory that without permission of the host that have should touch the smallest thing.

SERVE THE SICK

Along with Anand he visited a centre. Almost all bhikhus had been to the town for alms. As Buddha went near the residential area he heard a voice of an old man screaming with pain. In the small hut they saw an old bhikhu was lying in a corner in the dirt and he was smelling. Buddha felt compassion towards him and asked with love “are you sick?”

Bhikhu said, “Yes, Master. I am down with severe dysentery and unable to walk or move.”

Buddha asked, “Does anybody help you?”

He explained, “In the beginning they looked after me but as I have become old they feel I am useless, so they neglect me. All of them had gone for alms in town.”

Buddha asked Anand to bring some water and they both cleaned the hut. They also bathed him and washed his clothes. Till then all bhikhus returned. They were ashamed to see Master serving old bhikhu. They apologised to the master and begged for Master’s order.

Anand asked them to bring hot water and some medicines. Buddha called all bhikhus together and advised them. He said, “Oh! Bhikhus, all of you left your homes, comfortable living, left behind father, mother, brothers, sisters and joined Sangh. Now you should support each other. In case of difficulty help your teacher or a student.

Till he is completely recovered you should serve him. And suppose if I were sick what would you have done?”

All replied in a coarse tone, “Master we would have served you with all sincerity.”

Buddha advised them, “Consider me in the form of your co-brother who is sick.”

Everybody with folded hands saluted the Master and bowed before him.

ANGULIMAL

In his childhood, Angulimal became a victim of some powerful people in the society. To take revenge the youth turned to violence. He was strong and an expert in hunting men and animal. His physical strength turned into a mental perversion. He used to kill anybody passing through the forest in Kosal kingdom. He killed many men, women and also children . After murdering he would cut the little finger of the victims and add to his necklace. Hence he was known as Angulimal. Even the soldiers of king Prasenjit were unable to arrest him.

Buddha heard about him and a thought flashed in his mind, “I advice everyone in the society of non-violence. But the real test would be to transform Angulimal and make him a good man.

One day after lunch Buddha started walking in the forest in search of Angulimal. The shepherds and farmers, on the way tried to avoid him from walking on the road alone as Angulimal was a very cruel murderer and would also kill Buddha. Buddha thanked them all but continued to enter the deeper part of the forest. Angulimal noticed a Shraman was going. He cried aloud and asked him to stop but Shaman, did not obey, he continued to walk. Angulimal got angry and jumped on the road and caught hold of Buddha's hand and cried, "Oh! Shaman, why did you not stop when I ordered you to stop?"

Buddha looked deep into Angulimal's eyes and said, "Angulimal, I had already stopped. It's your turn to stop now."

Angulimal was shocked to hear for the first time in his life such fearless words. He asked, "what do you mean."

Buddha told him, "I had stopped violence long back, now the time has come in your life such to stop this violence. Leave this path of bad deeds, of violence."

Angulimal said, "Oh! Shaman, do not tell me which is not true. Men do not love each other, On the other hand they behave cruelly, they cheat. They had treated me cruelly and deceived me, then why I should treat them with love?"

Buddha advised him, "Man is not cruel by birth, you were also not cruel by birth but violence leads to violence. Love increases by love. The act of cruelty and violence is

committed out of ignorance. But by knowledge one can understand one's mistake. Then compassion and sympathy is born. There are many people in the society who protect one another and live in peace and harmony. Would you like to lead such a life? Angulimal was shocked and surprised and enquired if the Shaman before him was Gautum Buddha?"

When he got the confirmation he took the knife which he had tied at the back, put it at the feet of Buddha and started crying.

When he became calm he told, "if I had met you earlier the heaps of sins committed by me would not have taken place. Even if I desire to follow you who will trust me? People will lynch me to death. Pelt me with stones and give my flesh to the vultures."

While he was confessing, Buddha was silently listening. During that time Anand, Rahul and fifteen village youths reached the place. They were concerned for the safety of the Master. Their tension released when they saw Angulimal had already surrendered.

Buddha asked Anand to initiate Angulimal in Sangh. After ten days in Upali, Sariputta taught him the laws and discipline of Sangh. Gradually everybody observed a positive change in him. He was a calm and peaceful bhikhu now.

During Buddha's stay in Shravasti, Kosal, King Prasenjit

was going on a mission along with his selected army. When he saw Buddha, he got down from his horse and paid his respects. He was looking worried. Buddha asked him for the reason Whether the King of the neighbouring county was troubling him?"

He said, "No! but a cruel man called Angulimal is killing innocent people and for capturing him alive or dead I am myself going on the mission. The King asked Buddha to forgive him for the proposed violence."

Buddha laughed and clarified that there was no need for forgiveness. Angulimal has stopped killing people had started living like a bhikhu. If you see Angulimal in a new form how would you treat him?"

King Prasenjit said, "Bhante! I would salute the new bhikhu, offer him food, cloth, medicine and give him protection. But oh! Master how a dreaded criminal can turn a bhikhu?"

Buddha showed the King a bhikhu in saffron cloth and clean shaven, with bowl in his hand, he saw the former Angulimal."

King was frightened for a moment, after sometime the went near the bhikhu and talked to him. He confirmed his identify and promised to give him food, cloth, medicine and protection.

The King came near Buddha and said "Lord! this Simply a divine miracle."

Buddha made some correction and said, "king saw divine miracle as being successful appeal to divine values hidden in man."

Even after a few years the people expressed their anger to Angulimal. Some beat him, some pelted him with stones. He silently tolerated everything. As he was now on the path of sainthood.

Once he was walking in a forest and heard a crying woman in labour pain. Nobody was near her and Angulimal was surprised but went back to Buddha for advice.

Buddha told him to go and pray that he had not committed any killing deliberately since his birth and let the child and the mother be safe."

Buddha wanted to test if Angulimal follows the truth. Angulimal immediately said, "Oh! Master it may not be a true prayer. I had killed many people deliberately."

Buddha was satisfied and said, "Then pray that since I had accepted Dhamma I had not killed deliberately a single being."

Angulimal again went to the forest and prayed sincerely and the woman safely gave birth to a healthy child.

Everybody in Sangh realized the progress made by Angulimal.

SORROWFUL VISHAKHA

One night Buddha was fast asleep in Purvaram Vihar in the rainy season. Anand heard a voice of an old woman calling Buddha. He got up and opened the door. She was Vishakha mata, an old woman. She was totally soaked in the rain. Anand called her inside and inquired what she wants to tell Buddha. She insisted to see him for urgent reason.

Anand informed Buddha. He got up and came outside in the hall and inquired what was the problem? What is the difficulty she was facing? Vishakhamata told him, “Her granddaughter died.”

Buddha asked, “Vishakha how many sons and grandsons do you want? As many as the people residing in Shravasi?”

She said, “Yes! Bhante”

Then Buddha asked her a simple question, “How many people die here every day?”

She said, “sometimes 10 people in a day sometimes 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 2 But a week does not pass when nobody had died.”

Then Vishakha, consider that one or the other son or grandson of yours is dying and would you cry everyday in such a condition like wet clothes every night? Buddha asked her.

Vishakha understood what the Master was saying to tell her. She said “master, I do not want any more sons or grandchildren.”

Buddha said, “Those who have one hundred loved ones they experience a hundred sorrows and those who have one he will experience only one sorrow. Those who have nobody they would have none. He lives trouble free, sorrow free life.”

Buddha explained this event in the life of Vishakhamata and advised his bhikhus that people experience sorrow like Vishakha in one form or the other. The cause of this is attachment to a person. If no attachment, no sorrow is experienced. Those who want to live without sorrow (A-shok) they should not keep things which are loved but it does not mean you should create enemies in life. You should be careful to live with no attachment.

Buddha had now over 80 years of age and, entered in the last decade of his worldly existence.

After meditation, in the evening he was sitting in the sunlight on his back. Anand came and started massaging Buddha’s back to relieve him from the back pain.

Anand said, “Bhante, I am watching you after many days and notice that the colour of your skin is not bright. The muscles have become loose and wrinkles appear on the skin. You are often sick, and your eyes have become weak you cannot hear properly and your food intake has reduced.”

Buddha agreed what Anand noticed. He said, “Yes! Anand this is called the old age. Old age is hidden in youthful days. Death is hidden in life. Old age makes the body shapeless and weak but one has to accept old age. One may live for a hundred years but ultimately everybody has to surrender to death. Death does not live anybody free.

KING’S GRATITUDE

In the meantime Ajatshatru, Prince of Magdha, killed his father emperor Bimbisar and within few a days his mother also died. He came to power. Kosal King Prasenjit gifted Kashi town to his daughter, but there was conflict over Kashi between Ajatshatru and Prasenjit as they were close relatives (maternal uncle and cousin). But Ajatshatru was surrounded by bad advisers.

King Prasenjit defeated Ajatshatru twice. The Second time, instead of punishing him with death he decided to snatch all his elephants, horses and his soldiers and left Ajatshatru alone but alive. It was a great insult and punishment too.

After this war King Prasenjit went to take Darshan of Buddha. During that period Buddha remained in isolation. But when the king knocked on the door, Buddha came out. The King prostrated at the feet of the Master and kissed his feet. Buddha held his shoulders and asked the king, “What

have you seen in this perishable body that you kneel down before it?”

The King told him with reverence “Oh! Bhante! My Master! I am just expressing my gratitude because you showed me the right path. You had always seen the greater good of society. You thought of everybody’s good. You established a path of true religion for everybody. My gratitude to the God incarnated in your form on the earth.”

WHO IS SUPERIOR?

Five hundred Brahmin priests gathered in Shravasti. To attend a conference in which the main theme that was discussed was the Buddha Dhamma and its threat to the very existence of there caste system laid by Vedic scriptures. The conference concluded by a thought to oppose Buddha and his Dhamma of equality. So the main priests decided to defeat Buddha’s religious arguments. They approached the very great scholar Ashvalayan who belonged to their community. He was well versed in Vedas, Charvak Darshan, Vaiyakaran and History.

The priests requested him, “Oh! Ashwalayan Manavak, the Shraman Gautum is advising people that four caste system should not be believed and followed. Please go and tell him that he is wrong. “Manavak realized the motive but expressed his inability to defeat Buddha. He said, “Buddha is a person who had realized the truth. It is not

easy to discuss with him who has the knowledge of scriptures. No one can argue with him and defeat him.”

The Brahmin priests repeatedly requested him and told him, that if the wave of Buddha Dhamma is not stopped or controlled it would destroy our own community. At last Ashwalayan submitted to their request and along with a few intellectuals went to Buddha.

After formal greetings he told Buddha, “Oh! Gautum, these Brahmins say that Brahmin caste is the supreme, the best caste and all the others are inferior. Brahmins are pale and others are coloured. Brahmins are pure and non Brahmins are impure. Brahmins are the descendants of lord Brahma. They are born from the mouth of Brahma.

Brahmins represent earth. They are the gods of the earth. Gautum, “what is your opinion about this?”

Buddha said, “But Ashwalayan! Brahmin wives have menstruation, they become pregnant, and deliver and bring up their children. A Brahmin is born out of Yoni but still they are considered by you as supreme?”

Ashwalayan again said, “Oh! Gautum, you people think in that perspective. But we believe as Brahmins we are great in every aspect.”

Buddha reminded Ashwalayan of the fact that in Greece and Tajikistan only two caste exist. One owner and the other slave they are interchangeable.

Ashwalayan agreed to this. Buddha then asked him, if a man is a liar, thief, and opportunist, killer, greedy, hates others, harms others, whether he would go to hell as Brahmin scriptures say? He may be a Brahmin, Kashtriya, Shudra?”

Ashwalayan agreed that such people or of any caste would go to hell but continued that Brahmins were superior.”

Buddha asked him a question, if a Brahmin follower of non violence commits no theft truthful, not a hypocrite, with a good conduct would go to heaven but people from other castes behaving in the same manner would not go to heaven?”

Ashwalayan answered, “Whoever has a good conduct, behaviour would certainly go to heaven.”

Buddha further asked, “Is it a fact that only Brahmins can live in a friendship of love and keep their minds free of hate or greed?”

Ashwalayan said, “people of four varhas or castes can have mind with good thoughts and emotions. Buddha asked him, “ Ashwalayan, do you believe that only Brahmins with a detergent material can use and bathe in the river and clean themselves and not people of other castes?”

Ashwalayan answered, “Anybody from any caste can do that and can have holy bath.”

Buddha asked, “Ashwalayan, if a Khatriya King invited a hundred people of different caste, including Chandal and these people were given a piece of shal wood, saral, sandal or padma tree, a uttarani is prepared from these different trees and by friction fire was created. Ashwalayan, would the fire created by people of different caste be different or the same?”

Ashwalayan answered, “oh! Gautum the fire created by Chandal or Brahmin would be the same.”

Now, Ashwalayan, if a Khatriya boy and a Brahmin girl marry and they have a child would it be similar to its parents or not?”

“Similar human”

And if a Brahmin boy and Khatriya girl have a child would it be human or not?

“Human.”

And if a horse and donkey mate would the new born animal be a horse or donkey?”

“No, it would not have similarity. It would be khechar.”

“Now, Ashwalayan there is a similarity in humans but not in animals. If among twin Brahmin brothers, one lives with Guru and learns and other does not, when you perform religious Yadnya or Puja whom would you give Prasad first?”

Ashwalaya answered, “Of course to a boy who lives with the Guru and learns.”

“Now if a boy lives with the Guru learns but has bad character and other one does not learn but has good character whom would you prefer to give the Prasad?”

Ashwalayan said, “Of course the boy with the good character, who learns deserves the Prasad, and not a boy with bad character.” Ultimately Buddha reminded, Ashwalayan, first you thought about caste, then of Mantra, Puja and then purification of four castes. You expressed your faith in commonness, similarity of all castes. No caste is superior or inferior, the real importance should be given to a good character. This is your trust. And I do not preach anything else than this.

Ashwalayan observed in silence, he became speechless. He put his head down, nervous and in a contemplative mood. Buddha advised him that to believe in caste discrimination is a mental weakness and a bad habit it should be stopped.

Ashwalayan bowed before Buddha and prayed to accept him as his disciple from that moment.

Buddha accepted his request and blessed him.

NEW WAY OF MEDITATION

Bahiya was a Sadhu living at separate Tirth place (holy place). He wore cloths of tree leaves. People nearby used to give him great respect. They used to offer him different

gifts. He started assuming himself among those great souls who were on the path of self realization. Bahiya, family god knowing his Vikalpa told him, “Bahiya, you are neither a self realized soul or a person who is on that path. You are far away from the goal.”

Bahiya politely asked the deities, “I accept your observation, in your world or on the earth do you know of any person has realization or is on that path?”

Those deities told him about Gautum Buddha.

Bahiya immediately left in search of Buddha, when he reached the destination he learnt that Buddha had gone in town for alms.

Bahiya waited for a long time and went in town and met Buddha. He asked Bhante to give him spiritual advice, so that he would benefit for ever.

Buddha told him that, “He was going for alms and that it was not proper time to give spiritual advice.”

Buddha told him the same thing twice but Bahiya was not in the mood to listen. He argued, “Bhante! Life is short and one must learn at the earliest.” Buddha gave him the advice. He said, “Bahiya, if you become only seer while seeing, listener while listening, smeller while smelling, eating, touching knowing. Every act with full concentration and objectivity without involving in it, then you will not get attached to it. If you learn how to remain unattached

you will not remain in the world or another world.”

Bahiya strictly started following the new method of meditating and soon his mind became free from all the worldly desires, and his mind became pure.

After some months a big bull attacked Bahiya and he died on the spot.

Bhikhus performed the last rites of his body and asked Buddha what would be his state in life after death?”

Buddha sang a gatha:

Where earth, water, fire or wind do not stop.

There is no star or sun shining.

Moon does not rise nor there is darkness.

Bhikhu knows himself.

Then he is liberated from- form and the formless.

He is free from happiness and also from sorrow.

DIRT OF MIND

Once Buddha advised bhikhus regarding the importance of a clean mind. He gave them an example and said, “If you have a dirty cloth with stains on it and you give it to a dyer, he would dye it in different colours but it would not catch the colour. What could be the reason? Because the cloth was dirty, and suppose the cloth is clean, then

any colour would look bright on the cloth. As the clean cloth your mind if clean, you would attain the good path.

The mind becomes unclean due to several causes. Following are a few.

1. Greed for somebody's wealth.
2. Anger
3. Hate
4. Enmity
5. Competition
6. Disrespect
7. Hypocrisy
8. Harshness
9. Ego
10. Expecting respect
11. Lying.
12. Violence
13. Committing mistakes
14. Too much of respect.

When all these forms of uncleanliness of the mind vanishes, faith in Dhamma and Sangh becomes strong. Then bhikhu achieves happiness. It brings bliss and peace to the mind and ultimately mind merges in the state of Samadhi.

Chapter IV

SPIRITUAL POWER

Senior bhikhu Sariputta went for alms in Vaishali town. After lunch he came to Buddha and paid his respects and narrate his experiences in town. A man from Lichavi had joined Buddha order, his name was Sunkhat. He left Sangh within a short period. While walking in Vaishali town wherever he saw a gathering of people, he would go and address the audience abusing Buddha.

He said, "Shraman Gautum has no knowledge like Aryas. He has no knowledge of the world other than his own he does not possess extra sensory powers nor divine powers. Buddha preaches principles based on logic (Tarka And Mimasa) and that if people follow Dhamma, they would

behave accordingly and could get rid of sorrow.”

After listening, Buddha told Sariputta “It is my prayers, if my advice makes the follower free from sorrow, it means my path is true.

Of course Sunkhat will not be able to know me fully. Some of my hidden life like, I am Aarhat, Samyak, with all knowledge (Sambudha) my act and thoughts are on the path of enlightenment. I am Lokvid (Who knows the secrets of this world and world beyond.) I run a chariot, those who are sitting in it will lead a life on the right path.

Oh! Sariputta, Sunkhat will not understand my occult powers. I experience many things. I can vanish, walk through dense things, walk through a wall, I can walk without anybody seeing me. As one can fly in the air or take a dip in water, I can take a dip on earth and walk on water like walking on the road without my clothes getting wet. By seating in (Asan) body posture I can fly in the sky like a bird. I can touch the sun and the moon. I can move in other world (inner world).

Sunkhat does not know that I can hear a word uttered at a distance. I know the different varieties of which is mind.

Sariputta! I know the results of the past, present and future Karma. This is the one of psychic powers like a floating raft by which I run a wheel of law, wheel of Dhamma.

Buddha would advise his bhikkhus through stories. Once he told a story of a man travelling to a river. The bank on which he was standing was not safe and also dangerous. The opposite bank was safe and good, but he did not know how to cross the river, no boat, no bridge. He decided to make a floating raft. A platform with the help of dry and light weight wood and wooden wires. With great effort he became successful in reaching the opposite bank of the river. He thought because of this floating raft he could save his life.” Now I will take it on my shoulder and will carry it wherever I go.”

He said, “Buddha after narrating this story asked the bhikkhus, do you think this man does a proper thing”?

Bhikkhus replied No, Bhante, “Then what did you expect him to do?” Buddha asked. They said, he should have left it behind and gone ahead.

Buddha concluded, similarly I preach you Dhamma to cross the river and go to the safe place. I advise not to catch hold of Dhamma permanently. Leave it behind and go ahead. Moreover forget a Dhamma.

Illiterate man considers name, form, pain, impressions and scientific thoughts as his own possession. He considers them as his soul. But the man who considers that these things are not mine and becomes victorious in life.

ACHARYA POTPAD

Potpad was a very rich man but he had a spiritual nature. One day he abandoned the material world and turned to be Parivrajak. He stayed in Ekshalak mango grove and soon became famous and had a large following. Three hundred people lived with him as his disciples. He was well versed in Shatras and an expert in arguments. He was called Acharya.

One day early in the morning Buddha went out for alms but it was too early to go in Shravasti so he decided to visit Acharya Potpad who asked his disciples to keep silent as Buddha disliked it. Buddha could hear people very loudly talking at potpad's ashram.

Acharya respectfully received Buddha and asked him if he had disturbed their discussion and what topic they were discussing?"

Acharya said, "That was not very important, and we can do it some other time but this is a good opportunity for discussing other points."

Acharya asked him many questions such as if the world was a permanent place or perishable. Whether the world has an end? Whether mind and body are separate? Does one exist after death or not?"

For each question Buddha replied, "I had never said thus."

Then finally Acharya Potpad asked Buddha "Sir, why did you not answer this way or that way?"

Buddha said, "The things that are not useful for development of spiritual life and the things which are meaningless for building good character, I do not discuss. I also avoid to discuss the things which do not lead towards control, purification of the body and mind and ultimately towards Nirvan."

Acharya Potpad asked, "Then, Bhante what have you said?"

Buddha told him in a nutshell "Sorrow exists, it has a reason, a cause, you can remove sorrow, which would lead you to Nirvan."

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Buddha was asked by a new bhikhu if anybody achieved the state of fourth Samadhi after listening to Dhamma?

Buddha felt it was a right question, of course, he had advised everybody and if somebody had any doubt in his mind he should express it, and Buddha would give them the freedom of thought. Even if he had advised them otherwise they were welcome to think independently.

Elder bhikhus like Sariputta and Moggalayan had achieved the highest stage of spiritual path. As you get older limitations of the body increases. Buddha was unable to

advise each and every newcomer but he entrusted this task to the senior bhikkhus. Buddha had watched the way they advised and welcomed the newcomers and instructed them. He thought it was wonderful and was satisfied.

Buddha called all the bhikkhus and revealed certain things about Sariputta because not every bhikhu understood their spiritual authority.

He said, oh bhikkhus! Sariputta is Mahapradnya, he is a sharp intellect, and is full of wisdom. He has control over instincts. He can reach the state of Samadhi. He has also achieved spiritual bliss and peace. He has complete awareness and analytical understanding. He has gone above sorrow and happiness. Hence the agony or anger of his mind have vanished. He can go beyond Akash and Vidyan. Sariputta keeps the wheel of law, Dhamachakra rotating. He is your senior most Acharya.

Other Acharyas are Mongalayan, Mahakasyap, Mahakalplyan, Mahakothit, Mahakapin, Mahachand, Anurudha, Revat and Anand. All have reached the Arhat stage by following Buddha's advice.

MAHAKASHYPA

Mahakashypa was one of Buddha's closest disciples who achieved the highest spiritual stage. He was born in Mahatiya village in Magdha. He was born in a Brahmin

family and since early childhood his mind was filled with thoughts of ascetic life. He was called Pipali Manavak.

He told his parents, "Till you are alive I will remain unmarried and serve you, after that I will take renunciation, I will be Pravrajit, but his mother insisted that he got married. He did not want to insult her love and sincere desire and worked on an idea. He made a beautiful gold image of a woman, showed it to his mother and laid a condition that if she chooses such a girl for him, then only he would be willing to marry.

His mother took the challenge and sent men far and wide; by luck at Sagla village in Madhya Pradesh a beautiful girl was found on the bank of the river. Her beauty was very similar to that of the golden image. Her name was Bhadra Kapali. She was the daughter of a very rich Brahmin. The marriage proposal was finalized. Bhadra Kapali was also of the same spiritual nature like Pipali Manavak.

They got married but did not live like a married couple. Both of them abstained from sex. Followed a vow of Brahmacharya. Both of them served parents till their last breath. After that they joined Buddha Sangh. Pipali Manavak was renamed as Mahakashyapa. After Parivrajak and within only eight days he reached a stage of Arhat, self realization. He was the most trusted by Buddha.

Mahakashypa advised bhikkhus that if they travelled with a group of people it becomes difficult to be in Samadhi

state. People of different habits and thoughts become troublesome and, painful company. The spiritual practitioner should not have the company of worldly people. As far as possible spiritual people should not be in the company of family members although they respect you and worship you, but for the people with the knowledge it is like walking in mud.

Once Mahakashyap went in town for alms. A leper offered him some food and he accepted ate it.

After returning from collecting alms Mahakashyap would seat in a cemetery meditating on the burning dead bodies. Sometimes he would seat on the hill top without fear and attachment and to meditate. He was one of the top disciples of Buddha. Some bhikkhus were more engaged in the outside work. Mahakashyap would advise them that young celibate bhikkhus should avoid bad company. If someone was interested in meeting such people, consider that he is away from spiritual bliss. Only reciting or chanting does not help, one should be ashamed to commit a bad deed and refrain from it. Such bhikkhu can maintain his Brahmacharya and he is away from reincarnation.

Mongalayan also reached the state of Arhat very soon after taking control over his body and mind. As an elephant cuts the old ropes and becomes unattached. "I have achieved that state. The purpose with which I left my home I have now achieved it."

THREE DHARMA BHAVNA

Buddha advised bhikkhus, "Oh! Bhikkhus, to understand what is greediness one should study three Dharmabhavna. They are Shunya, and Samadhi, choiceless Samadhi.

With these three Dharma Bhavana you can win over hate, temptation, anger, enmity, to consider others as inferior, hypocrisy, miserliness, attachment, heartless behavior, quarreling, false prestige, ego, carelessness. First you have to remove these lower qualities in you and try to establish vairagya, control, and detachment.

Buddha's advice was not only heard by the bhikkhus but practised every day by them. It gave them wonderful results. They lived ascetic lives, Parivrajak life. They followed the laws of religion and celibacy. Hence their mind became clean and pure, which resulted in spiritual bliss. The thirst or attachment towards material world vanished. These bhikkhus were recognized as Atidanbhikhu (bhikkhu with knowledge) or Shakirbhikhu or Therbhikhu. Their spiritual bliss would be expressed by their religious advice to families in the village and towns. Their spontaneous outburst of knowledge was filled with joy and bliss. Their poetic utterances were called as Udan or Gatha.

Such Gathas were sung by bhikkhus and bhikkhunis. It was a reflection of the experiences with human beings, with nature, birds, animals, rivers, different seasons and changes in nature.

One sthavirbhikhu said “I have served my Master and followed the laws laid down by Buddha. I was carrying it a great burden, is removed now and the attachment that gives birth to sorrow is totally destroyed.”

These spiritual experiences in the blissful state gifted bhikhus that knowledge which comes from the region beyond body, mind and intellect.

The residence of bhikhus was not far from the village or town but on the bank of a river or on a hilltop or in caves. The birds flying, rivers flowing, black clouds of rain in the sky thundering, and bright flashes of lightening and music of rain. These beautiful conditons of nature would give the bhikhus proper concentration of mind in a purey beautiful state.

Many such bhikhus composed poetry. Senior bhikhus like Mahakashypa also composed verses singing glory of nature.

In Buddha Sangh everybody was equal. From the Brahmin youth to Chandal youth everybody was called Shakya Putriya Shraman. Buddha insisted that not by birth but by the act one becomes a Brahmin or a Chandal.

All rivers originated from different parts and coming from different directions join the ocean. Similarly those who joined Buddha Sangh forgot their caste, name and gotra.

Buddha Sangh included sweepers, Sunit, Kumbhar, Dim, Slaves son, Herank Kani (Who punish thieves) cruel, Brahmin, Angulimal, Barber, Gotamiputra, Prince Tis, Prince Rahul, Ambapali all these people became part of Sangh.

Upali became one of the best Arhat bhikhu. He was one of the senior bhikhus with a spiritual authority. The sweeper in Rajgraha became a bhikhu in Sangh who was even respected by the emperor of Magdha, Bimbisar.

Yash Rathapal and Anirudha were very rich people. They were disgusted with their richness. Rich food, clothes and gold, did not give them peace of mind. Rathpal would say to the king who desired to spread his kingdom up to the ocean, after death would be is burned, wrapped in a single cloth on his body. When one dies, all his clothes are removed, relatives could not bring him back from the cruel jaws of death.

Angulimal after becoming a bhikhu confessed that some people tried to control with law, weapons or whip but Shraman Gautum Buddha did not use these arms or weapons but controlled me. Earlier I lived in a forest cave filled with fear and worry. But now I sleep in peace and live with dignity. My enemies should hear my story and live by the laws of Buddha Dhamma.

Sariputta at the time of Parinirvan sung Udan, without a mistake and achieved his goal, this was his way of life. He

was free from all the desires and now he would attain Parinirvan.

NIRVAN OF SARIPUTTA

Buddha was staying in Jetwan in Shravasti, one fine morning his most trusted Dharmasenapati Sariputta arrived. He bowed before the Master and held his feet. He said, “Bhante! for a long time I was able to serve these holy feet, from now on I will not get this opportunity to take birth along with you and remain in your divine presence but if I did not please my lord with the service of my body and mind please forgive me. Now the time has come when I have to say good by.”

With a firm decision Sariputta stood. He moved thrice around the Master and with folded hands, ten fingers joined he said, “Master, thousand years ago. I had your first Darshan and this is the last one. No more Darshan.” Without looking back Sariputta walked away.

Buddha stood up to pay his respect and asked all bhikhus, bhikhunis, Upasak, Upasika to stand up to show respect to Dharma Senapati. All were very sad.

Sariputta returned to his birth place, Nalak in Magdha kingdom. On his way he stayed at many places. He reached his native place in the evening and stood under a big tree outside. His nephew saw him there, and came, bowing before Sariputta.

He asked if his grandmother was at home.

Nephew said, “yes.”

“Then tell my mother that I have come and to prepare my birth place, keep it clean and make room for five hundred bhikhus, who have accompanied me.”

The boy went home and told his grandma. She was puzzled, she thought perhaps my son after becoming Parivrajak, is returning to married life!

Unfortunately when Sariputta returned home he was ill with dysentery and his mother realized that this was not a good sign.

During those few days many Mahatmas, saints, deities rushed in to take last darshan. His mother thought that if her son was spiritually so much advanced, his Master Gautum Buddha must be of a very great height. My son did not tell me anything about him or his master.

Sariputta narrated to all bhikhus “because of my speech or behavior if I had caused any pain or sorrow to anybody, please forgive me.”

All bhikhus told him “Bhante! We were brought up under your grace and blessings you have not done anything wrong. You blessed us all and forgave. Sariputta before Parinirvan advised them, “Without any mistake achieve your goals, like I have. I made myself free from all desires and now I shall attain Parinirvan.”

After this he drew Mahachivir on his face and turned on his right side. Gradually he passed on in the fourth stage of meditation.

His mother observed that her son was not talking and pressed his back and feet, when she felt them cold she cried aloud “my son has achieved Parinirvan but why did he not inform me about it?”

After the last rites a weeklong celebration took place in the village,

Chund took the precious things of Sariputta to Lord Buddha. Buddha respectfully took in his hand the Mahachivar and Pot of Parinirvan bhikhu. Sariputta will be no more in flesh. This thought disturbed humanness in the master. His body became loose and for some time he lost his outer consciousness. He did not understand time nor direction nor place. He remained unattentive to normal things.

Buddha asked “Anand whether Sariputta achieved Parinrvuti by Sheel Skandha? Samadi Skandh? Pradna Skandh? Vimukti Skandh or Vimukti Dyanskandh?”

Anand explained, “Bhante! Sariputta achieved Parinirvati by Sheel Skandh. But he had knowledge of known and unknown things. He lived a very pure life. He was a self realized person. We will always remember him and his contribution to Dhamma and Sangh.”

Buddha said, “Anand, earlier I had told you that one day or the other we have to depart from loving things or persons, immortality and permanancy is not possible for material things. You should live independently, surrender to Dhamma and even while I am alive, some of you should live like that.

Sariputta achieved Nirvana on Kartik full moon day and after fifteen days on krishnapaksh amavasya Mahamonglyan achieved Mahanirvan. Both these great men were two big supporting pillars of Buddha Sangh. They were two powerful wings of Buddha. One after another they left. Buddha himself felt, as if two major branches of Dhamma tree had been cut away.

Now Buddha was quite old. All bhikhus gathered at Vajii, beyond Ganga river. The place was Ukkawel. Without the two great men the conference looked empty.

Buddha spent a few days at Gandhrakut hills in Rajgruh. He called Anand and expressed his desire to go to Ambalathika (At present Sitav Dist. Patna).

Buddha stayed there for a few days, gave religious advice to bhikhus and proceeded to Nalanda. There they lived in Pravarik mango grove. From there he went to Patliputra.

During this period Chaitya of dharmasenapati Sariputta was built at Shravasti and Chaitya of Mahamonglayan at Rajgrah. At Patliputra many Upasakas heard that Master

had arrived, and asked the master to live in Avasthanagar (Guest house).

Buddha was in mourning (silence) but accepted the request. After the ceremony all the people were aspiring for advice from Buddha's mouth.

Buddha faced towards the east, sat with the support of a pillar and explained the bad effects of bad character and bad deeds.

The chief secretary (Mahaamatya) of Magdha kingdom Sunith and Varshkar were engaged in building a new township.

Some antisocial elements supported by Ajatshatru troubled the people, however, the new township was built.

On the night Buddha awakened Anand and told his strange experience. He said, "with divine eyes I had experienced the presence of deities in Patliputra. Wherever such deities, great forces live, the new townships, large kingdoms' capitals are built by the kings or their Pradhans (ministers).

The minister, Sunita and Varshakar requested Buddha to accept rice (meals) along with all the bhikhus. Buddha accepted the invitation.

They fed everybody. They served themselves. Buddha sung a uadan for them. "The place where food is served to

the men of knowledge, character and control, deities live. And by their blessings people become happy."

The gate through which he went was named as 'Gautumdwar' and from Tirthghat Buddha crossed the river Ganga. This place was named as Gautumtirth.

RAJGRAH TO KUSHINARA

This was Buddha's last journey towards Parinirvan or final release. Buddha suffered from a severe illness. He reached the age of eighty years. The past four years he spent for the greater good of the greater people. (Bahujan hitaya Bahujan sukhay) Buddha's bhiku called it his Buddhahood.

From Rajgraha, the chief town in Magdha kingdom Buddha walked towards the north. He crossed the Ganga near Patliputra, a newly built capital of Magdha. Buddha reached the town Vesali. Near Vesali was a village Beluva, Buddha asked all bhikhus to part so that he could spend three months of Varhshavas in solitary confinement. This was the last rainy season of his life.

At Beluva he became seriously ill and was on the point of death.

Buddha thought to himself, "I must not enter in to Nirvana, without addressing those who cared for me and without speaking to my followers." By his will power, Buddha recovered from illness.

Anand was happy. He was also thinking, that this would be his master's serious illness but he would not enter Nirvana without instructing us about the purpose of Sangh.

Buddha said, "Anand, I had declared the doctrine, I have made no distinction within and without. After me be ye to yourselves. Be your own light, your own refuge, seek no other refuge. Let the truth be your light and your refuge, seek no other refuge. My true disciples would be themselves their light and their refuge and shall seek no other refuge. He would walk on the right path.

In Vaishali Buddha went begging through town. Here Mara came and asked him to enter at once into Nirvan. Buddha rebuked him, and said you do not trouble me because after three months I am going to get Parinirvan. This announcement caused earthquakes and thundering in the sky.

In the evening he sent for all the monks in the nearby area. He sat in the middle and addressed, "Oh, my bhikhus, the knowledge which I have attained and has declared to you for practice and increase. It will help people to be happy and give relief from sorrow. It is a four-fold effort; four fold holy strength, the five organs, the five powers, the seven members of knowledge, the sacred eight fold path.

Oh! Disciples, all the worldly things are transitory, strive on without ceasing.

Buddha sang gatha for them, "My existence is ripening to its close, the end of my life is near. I go, hence ye remain behind, the place of refuge is ready for me. Be watchful without intermission; walk ever more in holiness, struggles for freedom from birth and death, press through to the end of all suffering.

On the following day Buddha once more went begging in Vaishali. Anand that was with him. He looked back upon the town and told Anand this Vaishali Darshan was for the last time. It was Nagavlokan. (like an elephant rotating all his body) he said "Anand, really Vaishali town is beautiful but we have to depart from the loving things."

From Vaishali Buddha came to Bhandgram and Bhognagar. He stayed there in Anand Chaitya. Many bhikhus gathered there. Buddha advised them of four Mahapradesh.

If somebody tells you that he had heard it form me, tally it with the laws of our order. If it tallies, consider it as my version. It is Sugrahit. Accept this Mahapradesh.

Secondly, if a bhikhu tells you that here Shavir Sangh resides and Sangh says that this is religion, accept it.

Thirdly, if a bhikhu tells you that there are many knowledgeable, experts in religion, humble, Sthavir, bhikhu reside, accept it as true religion.

Fourthly, if a bhikhu tells you that there are senior bhikhus, Sthavir filled with knowledge residing and telling religious laws, accept it as true religion,

Bhikhus accept these four versions of religious laws.

Buddha journeyed on, sick and weary to Kusinara.

A beautiful verse depicts it as follows - (Light of Asia)

‘Travel-worn Buddha came to the river Kakuttha.

The river was peaceful, pure with clear waters.

Down the water went the Master, weary

The supreme perfect one, without equal.

When he had bathed, the Master drank of the river.

And went up out of it with the bands of his disciples

The holy Master, the preacher of the truth

The Sage went on to the mango grove.

Then spoke he to Chunda, the monk, fold me.

My robe in four folds, that I may lay me down.

And Chunda did cheerfully as the master bade him.

He quickly spread out the robe folded in four folds.

There the master laid himself down, the weary one. And Chunda also sat down beside him.’

At last Buddha arrived at Kusinara. There he laid on the

bank of the river Hiranyavati. (chota Gandak) a grove of sal trees.

Buddha told Anand, “Go Anand and prepare a bed for me between two twin trees with my head to the north. I am tired, Anand, I shall lie down.

It was not the season for sal trees to bloom, but these two twin trees were covered with blossoms from crown to foot.

Buddha laid himself down under the blooming trees. Like a lion taking his rest and blossoms falling down on him and heavenly melodies sounded overhead, in honour of the dying saint.

MAHANIRVAN

Buddha said “Anand, this is not the time for flowers. Still flowers are showering on the body but if my male or female followers walk the true path in detail would bring me the highest honour, glory, praise and credit.

Anand asked, “Bhante! How do you want me to preserve your holy body?”

Buddha said, “like Chakravarti King’s body.”

Anand said, “We do not know.”

Buddha said, “Body is wrapped in silk cloth. Cotton is put and again cloth is wrapped. Then the body is kept in a big box of oil. The lid is closed. At a suitable time the

body is laid on sandle wood pipe and on the main road or square relics are preserved in a mound.”

While listening, Anand wept bitterly and went in the house and started weeping uncontrollably.

Buddha sent a disciple to call Anand saying Master wishes to speak with him.

Anand came in and said, “Master, I am not yet free from impurities, I have not yet reached the goal and my master who takes pity on me, will soon enter into Nirvan.’

Buddha said to him, “Not so, Anand, weep not, sorrow not. Have I not told you earlier that all that we love. we must part from, must give up. How can it be, Anand, that which is born, grows subject to decay should not pass away? That can not be. But Anand you had long served me with love and kindness. With loyalty in thought, word and deed. Only strive on, soon you will be free from impurities and attain Nirvan.”

Anand requested, “Bhante! instead of taking Nirvan here in a small place, let us go to big towns like Champa, Rajgrah, Shravasti, Saket, Varanasi, Rich and wealthy people live there. They would respect you, worship you.” Buddha told him, “Anand Kushinagr is not a small place. This is the capital Kushavati of King Sudarshan. Malla community lives there. You go in to the city and tell the senior people that I am going to attain Nivan to night.

Otherwise people may blame you. People will say why they were not informed.”

Anand went accordingly and informed them. Almost all the people, children, women, young and old came to get the last Darshan of the enlightened one.

Subhadra, a parivrajak, also came. He wanted to have some doubts cleared but Anand requested “As Bhante is tired do not trouble him.”

Buddha himself heard it and asked him to come. Subhadra narrated different opinions of different people and asked “what is the correct here?”

Buddha asked him to neglect the differences and listen to Buddha thought of eight fold way for Nibban.

Subhadra requested to give him prabrajya but Buddha told him, “after primary training as bhikhu, following discipline. Anand will give it to you at a proper time.

Anand reminded Subhadra that he is fortunate to have been blessed by the Master himself. It was the last initiation.

Buddha said, “Anand, perhaps you will think that, we heard the last words of the Master, we have no more Master. You must not think that. The law and the ordinance, which I have taught and preached to you, are your master after I am gone.”

Then turning to other disciples he asked thrice if anybody

has any doubt in his mind?

Nobody spoke.

Then he said, “*Everything that takes birth has to pass away. Strive without ceasing.*”

These were his last words.

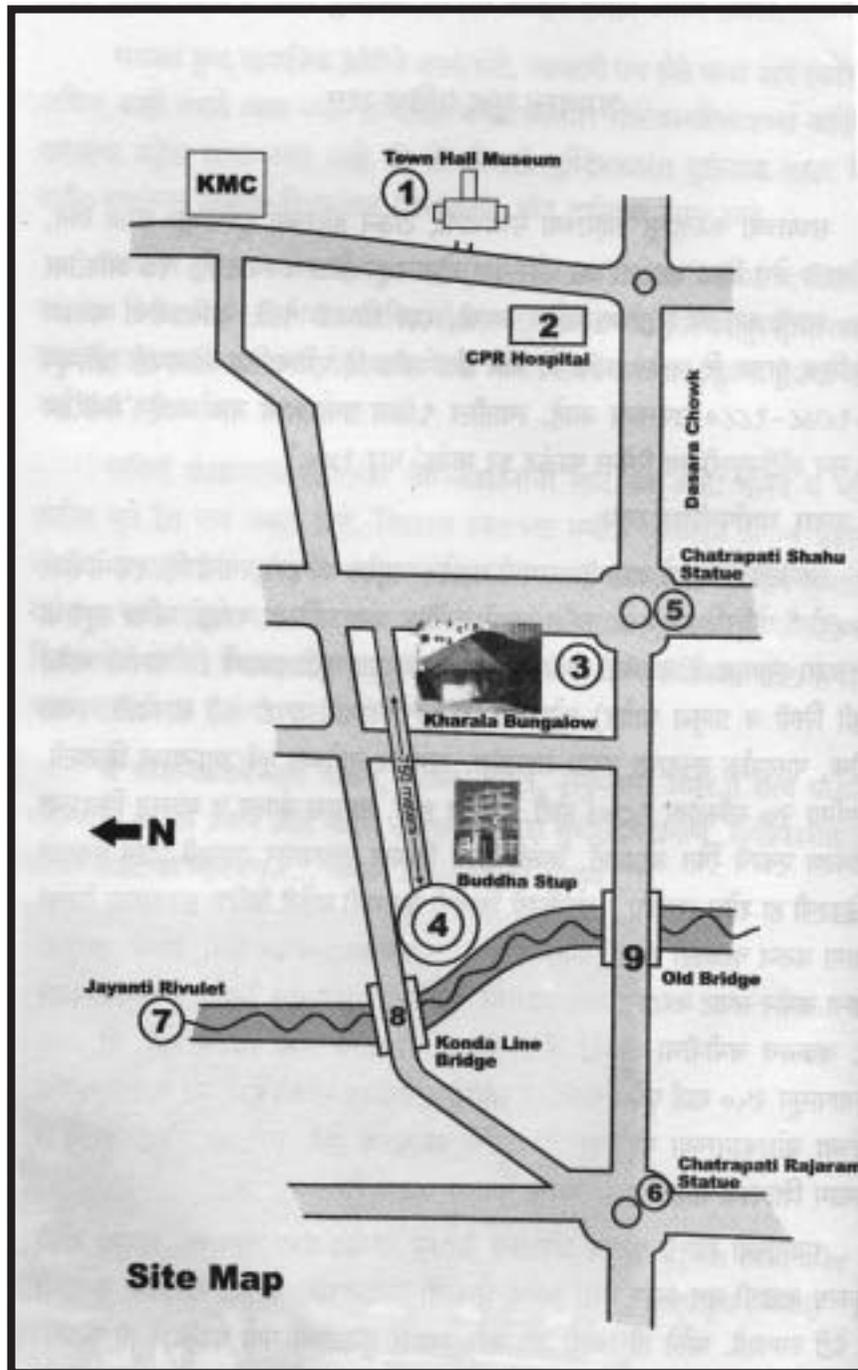
His spirit rose from one state to another. Sense of the body became weak, light and mind started merging in the ocean of light in zeroness. Nobody remained behind to tell and listen. What remained was the void. He passed in to Nirvan. The earthquake took place and thunder rolled in the sky.

Towards sunrise the nobles of Kushinara gathered. After they recovered from their sorrow, wrapped the body in fold upon fold of finest cloth, preserved it in oil box and for six days the body was laid in the state. Then it was burnt on a magnificent pyre of sandalwood. They were unable to set fire to the pyre, but in the end it ignited spontaneously. The body was entirely consumed, leaving only relics like bone and ash. Afterwards these were enshrined in glorious monuments.

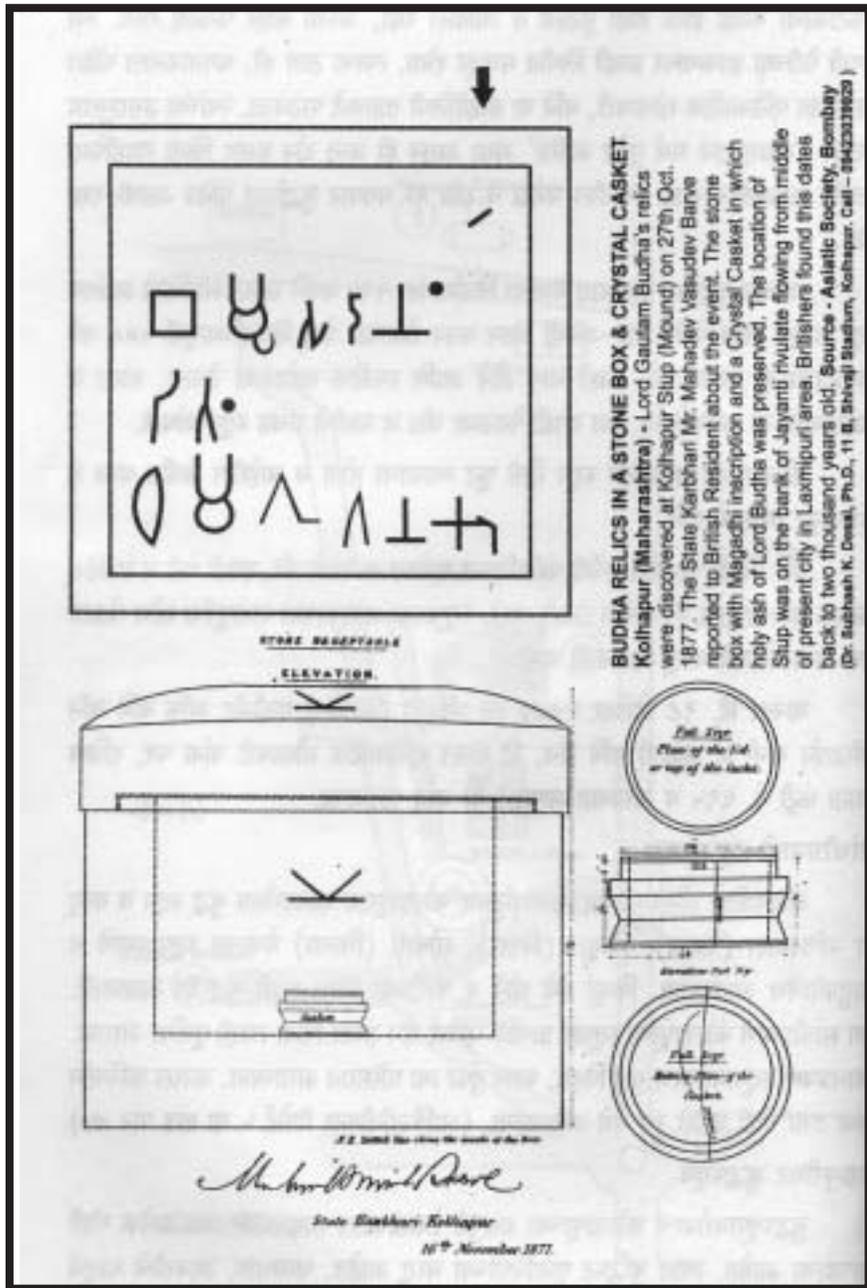
HOLY RELICS OF LORD BUDDHA FOUND IN KOLHAPUR MOUND

The excavation of historic mound at Kolhapur (Maharashtra) was carried out on 27th October 1877 and a stone box and Lord Buddha’s Relics in crystal casket were discovered. This fact is well recorded in the journal of the Bombay Branch of The Asiatic Society, Volume 14-1878-1880, 9th chapter names Memorandum on some Anticuriium Remains found in mound page 147.

The erstwhile state of Kolhapur had state secretary Mahadev Vasudev Barve who wrote to the Political agent Col F. Sachindar on 16th Nov. 1877. He wrote.” During repair works of Kharala Bunglow in Kharala garden extra earth was required for filling the gaps which were laid there. The convicts who were engaged in preparing the ground were ordered to take the earth for this purpose from a small



piece of a rising ground which stood uncultivated at the distance of about 250 yards to the east of the bungalow and which was shaded with a babul-tree grown over it. This rising ground was the shape of gently sloping irregular-shaped mound about eighty feet in diameter, its height nowhere exceeding seven or eight feet over the level of the adjoining fields. It was overgrown with grass and appeared of a proper place from where to take supplies of earth required elsewhere. About a foot beneath the grassy surface they encountered a layer of burnt bricks, which excited curiosity. Nothing extraordinary was at first expected as burnt bricks were often discovered in several places in and about the town, being the remnants of old brick clamps or mounds of ruined bricks structure. In the course of digging, the convicts came to what appeared to be a block of stone, which they once turned up by thrusting a crowbar under it. When it was extricated from the surrounding bricks it was found to be a soft red laterite, as is found in the bed of the Panchaganga river here, holding a small transparent crystalline casket within, and the other a lid of the same stone exactly filling the mouth of the trough. But unfortunately the act of extrication proved so violent that before it was discovered to be a box the lid fell off and the inside transparent casket was thrown out, which broke into two peaces that escaped the sight of those present at that time. This circumstance was reported soon after I arrived at the spot and made the necessary inquiries. Some old letters were seen engraved on the inside of the lid, and a



facsimile of the inscription was made and sent to Mr. Bhagavanlal Pandit of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay, who had considerable experience in deciphering old inscriptions.

Mr. Pandit Bhagwanlal is of the opinion that the inscription is in Magadhi characters and consist of the following words :

“Bhramhs Danm Dharmguten Karitm”

From the characters employed, the inscription appeared to be of two thousand years old or even older still and seemd to be a monument of the veneration in which the remains of Buddha were held by his followers long after the Nirvana or of the decease of their great founder. The Nirvana took place about 500 or 450 years before the Christian era and the remains were buried in four places, namely (1), Kushi Nagar, in the Gorakhpur Disstrict, where the dead body was burnt (2), Gaya Kshetra, where Buddha received his education (3) Benares or Kasi Kshetra, where he first proclaimed the tenets of his religion and (4) Kapilavastu, in the Gorakhpur district, where he was born. Splendid tombs were constructed to protect these remains, but in the time of King Asoka about 225 years after Buddha the devotional feeling ran so high, that the remains were taken out of several tombs and distributed among the numerous disciples scattered over the whole country. The fortunate receivers of these precious relics, which consisted generally ashes or bones of the body of Buddha , carefully

deposited their invaluable possessions in gold or marble caskets which were securely placed in stone receptacles prepared for the purpose, the whole being protected by mounds of bricks or stones.

The articles found in the Brahmapuri hill in Kolhapur contain amongst them objects of Buddhist adoration and also what may be called apparatus of Buddhist worship. An image of a stupa or chaitya, several circular things which look like prayer wheels and a flower or incense pot. Along with these a number of old copper or lead coins were also found and of these twenty have been presented to the society.

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BIO DATA

Name - DR. SUBHASH K. DESAI
Address - 11, B, Shivaji Stadium, Kolhapur- 416 012.
Phone Off. 0231- 2641635
Resi- 2324583
E-Mail - drsubhashdesai@gmail.com
Education - B.A. (Hons) Psychology.
M.A. – Philosophy
Bachelor of Journalism & Communication (B.J.C.)
Ph.D. Shivaji University (Science and Religion)
Birth Date - Tenth March Ninteen Hundred Forty Nine (10-3-1949)
Occupation - Proprietor, Sinhvani Advertisers & Publishers.
Senior Journalist- Accredited Govt. of Maharashtra Since 1976. Editor, Printer, Publisher of
a) Editor Pranav Magazine 1965 to 1974
b) Weekly Shinhavani 1974- 1984
c) Daily Sinhvani 1984 to 1990.
d) Editor, Udyam Varta. 1998
e) Editor Dyndoot Magazine 2001.
f) Editor, Gayatri Bulletin, Banglore 1982.
g) District Correspondent- Indian Express and Daily Loksatta- 1982- 1984- 1988
h) Correspondent, Daily Samna- 1994.
i) Correspondent, The Press Trust of India 1999- 2009
j) Columnist The Times of India Since 2008
Founder
President – Kolhapur Zilla Supahik Sampadak Sangh.
Editor - Special Book- Kailash Sparsh 2002
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2. Interviews of Army officer.
3. Western philosophers.

More than four Thousand Five Hundred Articles on Varieties of subjects published in Marathi Print Media and Akashvani.

Publisher - As a proprietor of Sinhvani publishers. 42 small and big Books have been Published.

Author of Following Books-

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15 Santanchi Mandiyali

16. Grahak Prabadhan

Director of Gulmohar Art Gallery-

- One hundred painting exhibitions, Demonstrations, Seminars at Kolhapur, Delhi, Goa, had been held.
- More than one hundred articles on Artists and their paintings have been published.
- Many interviews of Artists on Akashvani Kolhapur.
- Book on Abalal Rehemani published.
- Paintings Competitions held.
- Gulmohar kala puraskar given to noted Painters.
- Paintings in Oil and Watercolors.

Social Activities-

- Managing Trustee and PRO of Dattabai Mission Divine public Charitable Trust 1968 to 1982.
- Managing Committee Member. Shri Mouni Vidyapeeth 1982.
- Director, Mahalaxmi Free Diagnostic Centre, Kolhapur 1992- 94
- Medical Camps held at Gargoti.
- Secretary Dr. J.P.Naik Foundation Charitable Trust.
- Secretary Maharashtra Tatwadyan Parishad- 1999-2001.
- Local Secretary of 14th Session of Philosophical Congress held at Shivaji University.
- Founder- Paramarsh Vichar Kendra 1998-2000.

Visiting Lecture-

- Dalvi's Art Institute- Kolhapur Art Master (Psychology)
- Journalism- Mahaveer College (History of Marathi Journalism)
- Gandhi Study Centre , Shivaji University, Kolhapur.
- M.A. mass Communication
- BJC Course, MJC Course.

Research Papers-

Tem Research Papers were presented and published in

National and International Conferences in India & Abroad.

Participated in Three world Conferences on Religion & Science in Keniya, Pune Delhi.

Visits-

- Europe, Africa, Tibet, All over India.
- The Expedition of Mount Kailash and lake Mansarovar completed in 1986 and 2001.
- Interviewed and discussions with renowned people in India & Abroad from different fields e.g.
 1. Bishop Dismund Tutu. (Nobel Prize Winner)
 2. Sir Andrew Haxle. (Nobel Prize Winner)
 3. Dr. Homer A. Jack (Nobel Prize Winner)
 4. Capt. Edger Michel (Sixth man who walked on the Moon.)
 5. Senapati Bapat.
 6. Achutrao Patvardhan
 7. The Mother of Pondichery.
 8. M.P. Pandit.
 9. Khushwant Sing.
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 11. Probodhankar Thakre.
 12. Dr. E. K. Chitnis (PTI Former Chairman & Scientist)
 13. Dr. R.V. Bhosale, Space Scientist.
 14. Dr. Vasant Govarikar, Scientist.
 15. Dr. Jayant Narlikar, Scientist.
 16. Dr. Shivram Bhoje, Nuclear Scientist.

Lecture-

Delivered all over India, Paris. Nairobi on the Subject. 'Nature of Science and Religion in 21st Century.

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Member – SPSSI- The society for the Psychological Study of Social ISSUES.
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