

THE LIFE OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA

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Abstract:

The Buddha, or Siddhartha Gautama, was born around 567 B.C.E., in a small kingdom just below the Himalayan foothills. His father was a chief of the Shakya clan. It is said that twelve years before his birth the Brahmins prophesied that he would become either a universal monarch or a great sage. To prevent him from becoming an ascetic, his father kept him within the confines of the palace. Gautama grew up in princely luxury, shielded from the outside world, entertained by dancing girls, instructed by Brahmins, and trained in archery, swordsmanship, wrestling, swimming, and running. When he came of age he married Gopa, who gave birth to a son. He had, as we might say today, everything. In the present article researcher discussed about life of Gautama Buddha.

Keywords: Buddha, Sakya, Kapilvastu, Siddhartha, Lumbini, Bodhi Tree, Karma, Nirvana, Noble Truths.

Introduction

Gautama Buddha, the light of Asia, was one of the supreme men of all period. Great was his teaching which the mightiest religion of humanity became. Wonderful, too, was his life. No other person of human history came to be look upon as a god as was Buddha. No other person had so many followers for so long as a time as he had. In every sense, he was unique. There was as small state named Kapilvastu in ancient India. It was located in the Tarain region of modern Nepal. There lived as Kshatriya tribe called Sakyas. In the sixth century B.C. they were ruling themselves as a republican people. The chief ruler of that republic was Suddhodana. According to tradition, of course, he was a king. His wife was Maya Devi.

It was 566 B.C. in the year Maya Devi gave birth to a son in the garden of Lumbini outside the city of Kapilavastu. But within seven days of the birth of the

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child, Maya Devi died. The child, for that reason, was placed under the concern of its mother's sister, Gautama by name. According to her name, the name of the child was specified as Gautama. That Gautama was Buddha in future. At a much later date Emperor Asoka erected a pillar in the garden of Lumbini at the Birth place of Gautama. The Lumbini of those days is known to-day as Rummindei or Rupandhei.

According to tradition, Prince Gautama grew up in the palace of his father along with prosperity and pleasure. King Suddhodhana paid maximum attention to the cheerfulness of his son. But the son was of a diverse nature. The pleasures of the palace were painful to him. From early days, young Gautama remained isolated and thoughtful. As he grew upon in the years, he little by little drew away from worldly cheerfulness. This was too much for father Suddhodhan to endure. He tried his best to employ the mind of the son in worldly relationships. When Gautama Buddha was merely 16, his marriage was performed with gorgeous Yasodhara .The net of affection was tightened around him. But, all in vain To Gautama everything appeared unreal. The life and the world did not present to him any desirability. He was extremely anxious about the miseries of human existence.

At the same time as his mind was in profound distress, he came across four scenes one by one. Those were the normal scenes for everyone everywhere. But for Gautama they became matters of grave concern. One day, as he driving the chariot through the beautiful Kapilavastu, his eyes fell only and old man with wrinkled face and bent body. Gautama stopped, observed and thought if it was the destiny of everyone to experience the unhappiness of age.

One more day he came across as man, diseased and miserable, with his body writhing in pain. To Gautama, diseases appeared as the companion of this earthly body. It was yet only another day, he came across the scene of dead body being carried only the bear towards funeral pyre. Gautama thought, for all mortals, death was the predictable end. How unreal was the body and its survival!

Lastly, he came across yet one more sight. One day on the streets of Kapilavastu he saw as Sanyasi walking without any fear or care, in complete freedom from bonds of desires. Gautama started thinking. If old age, disease and death were the realities of life, how unreal and worthless was the life itself! Was it not superior to give up the whole thing and go to the way of that carefree Sanyasi in quest of real cheerfulness? The above four scenes brought a turning point in Gautama's life. He required getting away the chains of the globe.

Time was running fast. At the age of 29, a son was born to Gautama and Yasodhara. To Gautama; it was yet an additional bond of worldly attraction. Without waiting further he determined to depart the palace and disappear into the unknown.

It was also as night like every other night. But in the spiritual history of mankind, it was a night of immeasurable consequence. Gautama was 29. In the dark deep night when everyone was asleep, he secretly came out of the palace and went out of Kapilavastu. He had renounced the globe.

From Kapilavastu Gautama proceeded towards Rajagriha. There he tried to obtain knowledge from two educated pundits. But his internal thirst for truth could not be satisfied. He required finding out it himself. From Rajagriha Gautama proceeded to the forests of Uruvilva close to Gaya. There he began rigid and aching reparation. His body was condensed to skeleton for incessant fasting and self-torture. For long six years he endured self-imposed sufferings. He was almost in dying state towards the end of the period. But he had got no reply to his everlasting questions.

Consequently, at last he gave upon the unproductive course. Taking a slight food from the hands of Sujata, a village girl, Gautama sat down to meditate under a papal tree. And there he got the answers at last. He got enlightenment. From that moment, Gautama was the Buddha or the Enlightened One. The tree under which he got enlightenment became famous as 'Bodhi Tree'. And the place came to be known as Bodhi Gaya. Buddha was at that time at 35.

The truth, which Buddha got, was the everlasting fact of human survival. Life is full of suffering; desire is cause of the suffering; suffering ends at the destruction of desire; desire is destroyed by noble and right living. From Bodhi Gaya Buddha proceeded to Saranatha near Benares. There he preached for the first time before five Brahmins the truth of his discovery. The occasion became well-known as the Dharma Chakra Pravartana or the revolving of the Wheel of Law. Those five Brahmins became the first disciples of Buddha. Buddha's work as the preacher began. There, too, began the Buddhist order of Monks or the Sangha.

For long 45 years, Buddha preached his doctrines. At places like Banares, Uruvilva and Rajagriha, hundreds of citizens became his disciples. At Shravasti, Kapilavastu, Vaisali and Magadha, Buddha's message spread among myriads of men. Among his well-known disciples, the names of Sariputta, Mogaliyan, Sanjaya, Rahula Aniruddha, Ananda, Upali, and Sudatta occupy everlasting places in Buddhist history.

Buddha Preached until the last part of his life. He visited as numbers of places himself. To every corner of India, he sent his disciples to preach. Within as short time his Sangha developed into one of the most influential religious organizations ever. Buddha and his disciples preached in the simplest language so that ordinary people should understand. The messages of Buddha as well as the examples of his personal life touched the tender corners of human heart. Kings and beggars, the learned and the illiterate, people of all sections and of all professions felt attracted towards the sayings of Buddha.

He travelled until the age of 80. At last, at a place called Kusinara or Kusi Nagar, he attained his Nirvana. Knowing that his last moment was near, he advised his disciples to put to him their last questions. At last, he gave the following advice: “Be thou as lamp unto thyself. Be thou as refuge to thyself. Betake thyself to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the Truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides thyself.”

At the same time as uttering these words, he closed his eyes. The Nirvana of Buddha took place interest year 486B.C.

It was Buddha’s renunciation, his search for truth, his precious discoveries concerning the worldly sufferings of man, his serious make an effort for liberation of man from the bondage of desires and his final advice for a nobler and better life for deliverance, made profound appeals to human mind. The story of his life has been ever remained as foundation of spiritual inspiration to millions. In a globe of sufferings, he suffered himself to know the means of everlasting happiness. And he leaved to teach man the insignificance of worldly relationships.

Buddha’s own life was as life of highest commitment. At a time when his fame as his heights, and his name was only the lips of millions of men all over India, and when monarchs bowed before him in worship, he was himself moving with as begging bowl in hand for as morsel of food just for survival. That is how lived the greatest Indian ever born and the founder of world’s largest religion.

Teachings of Buddha: Buddhism

The religion of Gautama Buddha was well-known as Buddhism. The followers of the religion are called as Buddhists. The teaching of Buddha was simple. They were meant both for the masses as well as for the most learned and the wise. Buddha did not lay emphasis only the fatherhood of God. His emphasis was only the brotherhood of men. He did not preach dogmas. He preached ethics.

The following are the major fundamentals only which Buddhism rested as a religion.

Four Noble Truths or Arya Satya:

Buddha got his enlighten with the knowledge of four things. They were; life is sufferings; suffering is due to desire, suffering ends with the end of the desires, desires end with the dignified thoughts and actions. Buddhism developed its philosophy only these truths. To Buddha, the material existence of everything is momentary. The world is full of sorrows. The life is unreal. Sorrows, sickness, old age and death are predictable. It is compulsory to escape as sufferings. He searched for means to get away worldly sufferings. He exposed the causes of sufferings. The majority causes were man's desires. He required the demolition of worldly desires. For that reason, he exposed the "Noble Eightfold Path".

Noble Eightfold Path: Buddha saw how life rested only hopes and desires. He also knew how hopes and desires were root cause of sorrows and sufferings. He exposed the path to come out of these miseries. That path is well-known as the Noble Eightfold Path. They were; Right View, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Contemplation.

This Noble Eightfold Path is also called as 'Middle Path'. Buddha knows that it was not possible and uninvited for all men to give up the globe and became sanyasi. At the same time he required that man should not been too much emotionally involved to sophisticated affairs and pleasures. Consequently he gave as code of conduct which was possible for man to follow. Between a sanyasi and a tremendous worldly man, Buddha's code of conduct was like the Middle path. One could remain in the world without being worldly. The Noble eightfold was meant for that sort of life.

The Karma

The desires show the way men to karma. Bad desires show the way to vices. Man cannot get away the results of his karma. There is no run away even in death. After death, the life will once more take as new shape to suffer the karma of the last life. Transmigration of the soul will carry on. Thus karma, leads to sequence of many births. To the similar world of sorrows and sufferings the life returns again and again. To Buddha, it was indispensable to put an end to such eternal suffering. He revealed the path at last. It was the Nirvana.

Nirvana

The Nirvana was considered the ultimate goal of life. It was and escapes everlastingly, the extinction. It was possible to achieve nirvana by putting an end to the desire for life, for globe, for birth, for existence. When all desires and all cravings are extinguished for all, life enters into a state of eternal peace. When it

leaves the body, it does not take as re-birth. In Buddhist philosophy, the idea of Nirvana had a deep root. With the purpose of achieve that Nirvana as Buddhist was necessary to control his whole conduct.

The conduct of Nirvana was moral conduct. Man should give upon violence, killing of animals, falsehood, luxury, stealing, desire for wealth and many such immoral acts. Subsequently, he should try for Samadhi or meditation, and attempt to reach prajna or insight. In conclusion, he should aspire for enlightenment and salvation, that is, Nirvana. In substances, salvation was possible through moral and ethical practices. With salvation, there was to be neither thirst nor desire, neither sorrow nor decay and above all, neither life nor death.

At the same time as Buddhism emphasized only such faiths, it also stood to restructure the existing Indian religion and society. Buddha was, in fact, the supreme reformer in Indian history.

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