

## My Life with Anirvan

### Part - IV

In March 1958, I went to a short pilgrimage of Gaya and Buddha-Gaya in Bihar.



Sri Anirvan

Goutam Buddha has always meant and remained a guiding star in my life - as it was with Swami Vivekananda and Sri Anirvan. It is very difficult to say whom Anirvanji preferred more - Sri Krishna or Buddha! I think though for the nation Anirvanji would put up Sri Krishna as the guiding star of India, in his personal life and attitude, sadhana and ideals pursued, his leanings were more towards Buddha - with his akasha bhavana, stoic silence and isolated Baul's life.

I first visited the places of pilgrimage for Hindus especially in Gaya - the main city. The most famous place is the Temple of Vishnu's Lotus feet - Pada-padma. Gaya is the place where Sraddha Ceremony (rituals to be performed after death) of parents and manes are most beneficial. It is the ancient paurnanic place where Lord Vishnu vanquished Gayasura and blessed him, placing his feet on his (Gayasur's) head.

It was here at Gaya that Sri Gauranga (Krishna) Chaitanya was transformed into a Vaishnava - devotee of Hari and Sri Krishna - when he went there for performing the Sraddha Ceremony of his father. Before that he was a Pundit - a master of Nyaya philosophy, almost an agnostic and revelled in criticising the Vaishnavas of Navadvipa - his

home town famous all over India for its schools of Navya-nyaya (Neo-logic).

It was here at Gaya that Vijaya-Krishna Goswami (a descendent of Adwaita Goswami, the teacher and prominent promoter and follower of Chaitanya, turned into a Brahmo Teacher under the influence of Debendranath Thakur - father of Rabindranath -, who often visited Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar - and at the end returned to his forefather's Vaishnavafold and himself became a Sad-guru) - received his great mantra and its sadhana from a paramhansa who descended at the small hill from the sky (taking physical form by his psychic powers) where Vijaya was meditating. Gouri Dharmapal's parents and other members of the family, brothers and elder sister also took the same Mantra-Diksha from a third generation Guru in the line of Vijaya Krishna Goswami !

After visiting the important places in the Gaya city, I went to Buddha Gaya - 8 to 10 miles from Gaya. It is almost a village with the Big Temple dedicated to the place - where there was a big Fig Tree - then a Vata-Vriksha - a Banyan Tree whose roots go up into the branches as well as descend - under which Siddharth Goutam received his enlightenment and became Goutam Buddha. Now at present there is only a big Pippul Tree - another variety of a Fig Tree and a Vajrasana is built under it. The place where Goutam Buddha did his "Chaukramana" - walking in meditative mood - for seven days after his enlightenment is also preserved with sixteen lotus steps carved on it.

In Bodha-Gaya I lived for eight days in a guest house but passed my days with a Buddhist monk of Mahabodhi Society and passed many hours meditating at the place of

Buddha's enlightenment.

Anirvanji very much appreciated my retreat to Bodha-Gaya and blessed me. Unfortunately the letter is not found in my files! A great peace had then descended over me at that time - which I cannot describe in words.

It was much later, in 1982, that I had the occasion of learning the famous Vipassana meditation of Buddha, which leads to that wonderful peaceful state.

In June 1957, Sandhya Das - one of the girls who had accepted to go to Almora and join the Shanti Ashram under Lizelle Reymond, came over to Kolkata to prepare for her M.A examination in Bangla from the Calcutta University. In fact, it was because of her and the other girls who had opted for the Shanti Ashram that Sri Anirvan had decided to transfer his Haimavati to Shillong - to train and mould them and transform them into human Haimavatis! Sandhya was chief among them and Anirvanji paid much more attention to her and on her part, she was the only girl of the lot who remained faithful and completely attached to Anirvanji. So much so, that even now she is completely absorbed in Anirvanji and his works; she played a great part in Anirvanji's life especially from 1954 to 1964, when Anirvanji shifted his Haimavati to Kolkata. In fact, rather her marriage with Sri Binoy Lahiri, was one of the reasons why Anirvanji came over to Kolkata.

All this time between 1954 and 1957 Anirvanji along with spiritual instruction was tutoring her for her M.A examination in Bangla. And therefore he came down to Kolkata rather early than before and in between his regular visits to Ranchi - Patna - Allahabad and Delhi, he coached Sandhya, took her examinations in which she did quite well and passed mostly in First Class!

Whenever, Sri Anirvan would be in Kolkata, he would hold regular classes -

meetings - at Sri Aurobindo Path Mandir - College Street - Kolkata and Upanishad classes at 6H, Keyatala Road - our residence where he would stay.

The same pattern was maintained in 1958 too. In 1958, Sandhya had shifted to our house as a guest - so that Anirvanji can teach her even at night! Sandhya gave her examination in November 1958 - The result? She passed in Third division! Reason? Opinions and comments of the Teacher were not approved and appreciated by the examiners! However brilliantly she might have written ! Fate of many good students are thus marred by such inefficient, unworthy examiners!

From Anirvanji's visit to Kolkata in 1957 till he came down to stay in Kolkata in November 1964, whenever he will be in Kolkata, the following was his daily routine. - Generally he will arise from sleep early in the morning between four to five morning. After ablutions, he will have his morning exercise of Pranayama and Asanas; write letters or will read something. From 7.30 to 9.00 A.M. He held classes for reading and explaining Upanishads. Now he started talking on Upanishads serially in Bangla, starting from Isha-Upanishad. By 1971 August 1st., from when he had to stop taking classes because of his illness, he had completed talking on all the major Upanishads including Kaushitaki and Svetasvatara Upanishads. After permanently coming over to Kolkata, he held his talks at 6H, Keyatala Road, or 9/3, Central Park, Jadavpur or 9/2, Fern Road, every Sunday morning from 9.00 A.M to 12.00 noon - three hours at a stretch. From May 1965, he had begun his talks on RigVeda, at the request of Gouri - then Chowdhury, who had met Anirvanji first in December 1964 at Keyatala Road after her return from England where she had gone on study leave from her Lady Brabourne Col-

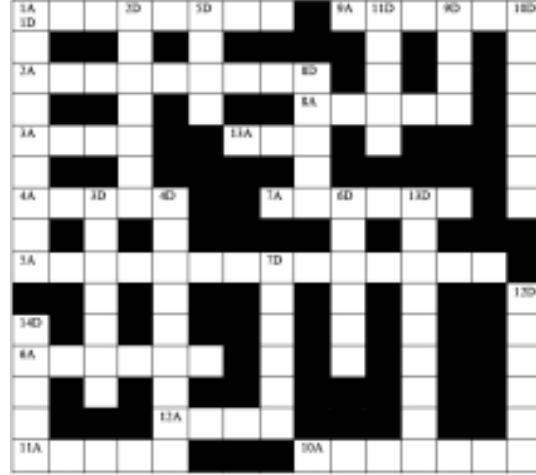
lege - which she later called Barbarnini College, where she was a reader in the Sanskrit Department. And from January 1966, at the request of his niece Narayanidevi, who had translated the Life of Sister Nivedita by Lizelle Reymond in Bangla, Anirvanji added to his classes, his talks on Srimad Bhagavat Purana. Thus from January 1966 his Sunday morning classes were extended for three hours at a stretch. He sat almost the whole time in one posture, in one particular asana and rarely changed his posture or got up leaving the asana. He had so much mastered the asana!

Coming back to his programme till 1965 after the Upanishad class in the morning, after 10.00 A.M. he would go to a walk at the lake, which was very near our house at Keyatala Road. As he came to Kolkata only during the winter, this time was quite comfortable. After returning from the lake, he will take his bath and finish his lunch generally by 12-00 noon. From 12.00 to 4.00 P.M he read newspapers, rested and did his personal work. From 4.00 P.M to 5.00 P.M he generally gave individual interviews and then from 5.00 to 7.00 or 8.00 P.M.- three days in a week, he will go to Sri Aurobindo Path Mandir for giving talks on Life Divine or Synthesis of Yoga and last of all on Savitri - the epic poem of Sri Aurobindo. On other days he held open sessions, i.e., talks on questions from people who would come to meet him in the evenings. At 8.00 P.M he will have his dinner and then will meet the family members, having light talks with close devotees who remained at our Keyatala Road house till night. Two, three friends even stayed at our house, till Sri Anirvanji remained! For us Dharmapals, it was a happy time peaceful and yet full of joy - the time passed away like festivals!

*To be continued...*

-Sri Gautam Dharmapal

## Cross Word



### Across

1. Her curse destroyed Ravana (8)
2. Prince who took a great vow (9)
3. Husband of Tara (4)
4. God
5. Philosophy popularized by Adi Shankaracharya (7,7)
6. Indra as the Lord of the eight Vasus (6)
7. King of the Nagas (6)
8. Mother of 2 Across (5)
9. Part of Pranayama (6)
10. Rama's foster mother (7)
11. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (5)
12. Raga (4)
13. Subtle Left-channel (Nadi) for prana flow (3)

### Down

1. Grandson of Rishi Shaktri (4,5)
2. Last minute call to Lord Narayana cleaned all his sins (7)
3. Sons of Rama (3,4)
4. Devi, born of the Himalayas (9)
5. Durvasa's father (4)
6. Krishna's childhood friend (6)
7. Demon digested by Agastya (6)
8. Ancient Scripture (5)
9. Two-petalled Chakra (4)
10. Wife of 5 Down (7)
11. Traditional Greco-Arabic Medicine (5)
12. Grammarian (6)
13. Pandava mother twice, forward and reverse (9)
14. Sensory carrier reversed (5)