

# CHAPTER V

## SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL

### SĀRTHAḤ – THE CARAVAN

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter

Nāgabhaṭṭa met Nārāyaṇa Dikṣita, sixty years old man of his own village in Mathurā. There he came to know from him that his wife Śālinī had betrayed him and had relationship with the king in his absence. This news made him to take revenge. He felt betrayed by his wife as well as his friend. This altogether gave him unsatisfactory feeling.

Next day morning as the caravan moved towards Tamralipti, while he was interacting with the administrator of caravan he came to know about the management of caravan (Sārtha). One evening the Sārtha stopped on the bank of a lake and decided to spend a night. At midnight after having their meals, the Sārtha was attacked by some robbers residing in the forest. They decided that they will keep them as prisoners for whole night and leave them in the morning. This whole incident builds up close relation between the Nāgabhaṭṭa and the administrator, which gave Nāgabhaṭṭa confidence to ask about some secrets of Sārtha. However, Bhudhaśreṣṭhī smartly twisted his questions towards Nāgabhaṭṭa to test his Vedic Knowledge.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter

As Sārtha had to go to Puṣkalvati in Gāndhāra from Mathurā, Nāgabhaṭṭa could not accompany them further. So, he waited there for another Sārtha which would take him to Kāśī for higher studies. Mathurā was a bi-commercial centre where all great roads met. The Sārtha that came from Sindha and Gāndhāra had to pass through Mathurā to go to the Southern, Northern and Eastern part of Bharata.

Hence, there were many arrangements made along with army protection which met the needs of even twenty Sārthas together.

After the establishment of Sārtha, Bhudhaśreṣṭhī and Ādityaśreṣṭhī went to see the stone temple of Maṇibhadra Yakṣa. There they offered hundred golden coins in the collection box of the temple and met the main Ācārya Vajrapāda. Vajrapāda offered his benedictions (blessings) to their Sārtha. He recognized both Bhudhaśreṣṭhī and Ādityaśreṣṭhī. They introduced Nāgabhaṭṭa as a Vedic scholar, the student of great preceptor Maṇḍana Mīśra. Now he was going to Kāśī for higher studies. Vajrapāda advised him to go to Nālandā, study the Buddhist literature, and become Buddhist master. He then showed *caitya* which was under construction. These *caityas* were different from the temples and been constructed by different parts as *navaraṅga*, *ankaṇa*, *garbhaguḍi* and in the *caitya* as soon as entered; there was a statue of Buddha in the big hall. All three stayed there at night and Nāgabhaṭṭa cooked his own food by the grains, provided by them. By that time, Muslims occupied the Sindh completely and Sārthas were forced to sell all their products to Muslims. Our Sārthas could not carry any trade with overseas directly and thus incurred great loss. Then, Bhudhaśreṣṭhī and Ādityaśreṣṭhī decided to go towards north for trade.

As they left, Nāgabhaṭṭa felt lonely, as he did not have any objective. Mathurā was the big trade center. The Sārthas were coming from all directions. He collected information by asking questions about robbery, taxation, roads etc., which was serving his motive of being in Mathurā. Being a Vedic scholar, he daily cooked his own food separately, offered that food to gods, and then he ate it. However, gradually he started eating with them that made Vajrapāda and others happy.

After some days a problem had arisen in the work of *caitya*, a sṭhapati (a sculptor) from Ajameru, was appointed and he was about to start his work. Meanwhile he received the news of his father's illness and he went away. He did not come back. The co-workers also left after some days. Vajrapāda appointed another

sculptor named Viśvakarmā from Kaushambi, who came with his twenty co-workers.

Viśvakarmā sthapati, who touches his equipments only after his morning bath and the performance of *agnikāryas* - a daily worship of fire god, became a good friend of Nāgabhaṭṭa. One day Viśvakarmā said to Nāgabhaṭṭa that Vajrapāda told him to carve and convert the statues of gods and goddesses into Yakṣas and Yakṣāṇi's look. He could not do this because in a way they were stealing the theam of *Purānas*. He said, that,he can visualise figure in his mind and could carve the statue after meditation. So, how could he convert our gods into Buddhist gods without visualisation? Further he said that a sculptor did not posses that kind of power. Only a *Ṛṣi*, a visionary sage could do it. He discussed it with Vajrapāda in detail but he advised him to convert himself to Buddhism.

Nāgabhaṭṭa could not stay there any more. Jayasimha, the king's representative and the supervisor of the camp, became his friend. He got opportunities to talk directly with the Sārthas from all over the country, which helped him in collecting more information about Sārthas. Meanwhile, Jayasimha was decided that as it was birthday of Lord Śrīkṛṣṇa – A play should be performed for seven nights. Nāgabhaṭṭa was asked to perform the role of the youthful Kṛṣṇa. He refused but Jayasimha, the writer Vāsudeva Śarmā and director of the play Ānanda Dutta forced him to act in the play.

As he was grown up in the Vedic tradition, he acted in the *dharma* effortlessly. Stage manager ordered him not to cut hair until the play was over. After some days, Nāgabhaṭṭa was bathing in river Yamunā in the morning. He met Candrikā, who played Rukmiṇī's role. She was very talented. She could dance, sing and was very beautiful. She invited him to her home.

In the mean time, Jayasimha and others decided to perform the play once again. That evening he went to Candrikā's home and was received by her servant

with traditional *Namaskāra*. She said that Candrikā was meditating. Nāgabhaṭṭa was surprised to hear that and she came to know by herself that she was expecting him. She also asked him about the renovation of play and by meditation she came to know about the changes that would be done in the play in future.

Nāgabhaṭṭa was surprised to know about the power of meditation of Candrikā, when Jayasimha told him that, they had decided to add an important incident to the play and he had to dance.

Nāgabhaṭṭa was taught dancing by Candrikā. In between he liked her expressions, beauty, style and he started loving her. They performed their play in almost all places. People admired very much. Nāgabhaṭṭa became popular as Kṛṣṇānanda.

Kṛṣṇānanda of Mathurā grew long hair, started wearing the “Vaishnava tilak”. The organizers arranged curtained chariot for Kṛṣṇānanda in order to protect him from the common people. The rich merchant Balarāmaśreṣṭhī had given him one of the house on the outskirts of the city

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter

They performed the play in almost all northeastern places and became popular. They toured with their small caravan of ten carts, carried their equipments, costumes and stage props. Nāgabhaṭṭa became a regular actor as Kṛṣṇānanda.

At this stage, Nāgabhaṭṭa started suffering from powerful feelings of lust. He had left his home two years ago. His mind was attracted towards Candrikā. He was longing for her. Even he could not manage to act naturally.

Candrikā came to know all the things through the power of meditation and called him to her residence through her maidservant Cārumati. She told him that her *guru* had instructed him that the power of the mind should not be used in other ways. She sensed the hollowness of his acting. She returned to home and meditated with

the intention of finding the reason and learnt all about his turmoil and begged his pardon with eyes wet.

Even she told that he decided to send her out of the company. So, that he could have an affair with anyone else. Nāgabhaṭṭa asked her that she might be angry on him. But, Candrikā told him that love was the inner motivation for anger.

Nāgabhaṭṭa experienced the touch of a wooden cot, covered by only a thin bed sheet, without soft bed and pillows. On the stage, she played the role of the lover, the bride, and wife of lord Kṛṣṇa. She discharged the duties of crowned queen with dignity and decorum and she lay on a soft bed made of swan's feather. Nevertheless, in real life she was actually a *Sannyāsini*.

He asked her about all this. She explained everything about the author of play Vāsudeva Śarmā and herself added the four verses of *Kāthopaniṣad* in the context of *Gītopadeśa*. She told that those verses complement the *Gītā* and complete the meaning. It depicts the value of spiritual life. She advised him that the senses were like mischievous horses, one should not be lead by them and that unless the wild stallion of lust is controlled, the inner journey would not be accomplished.

From that day, Nāgabhaṭṭa controlled all sensual thoughts. Candrikā was an ascetic at heart and had no feeling that relates to love, eroticism, pangs of separation and such emotional involvement. For Nāgabhaṭṭa it was very difficult to control on the stage. He began to get angry with Candrikā. One day, the stage manager Ānanda Dutta met and told him that Candrikā had informed him that she wished to return to Mathurā as it had been a long time since she had left the place and she wanted her role to be given to some other actress. She would train the actress in all ways. Both the play writer and the stage manager decided Sugandhi to be an actress in palce of Candrikā.

Nāgabhaṭṭa lost his spirit. He knew that Candrikā left because of his behaviour. She could read his mind through meditation. As long as she would be

there he could not had sex with anyone else. This thought made her to take that serious decision.

After leaving Kampilya the company moved to Indradhara no one had seen Candrikā's acting there. Everybody appreciated Sugandhi's acting, singing and dancing. After singing and dancing on two moonlight nights at Indradhara on the sands of the river Yamunā, on the third day, Sugandhi held his hand as Rukmiṇī and led him away from stage and asked about her acting. Everybody knew that in the expression of emotions Sugandhi could not hold a candle to Candrikā. She was a natural actress, while Sugandhi was a well trained actress. She knew that without gaining his approval, she could not survive and grew as an actress.

He appreciated her acting as perfect and he told her that she had involved his mind in real life and he felt like dragging her away to his home. Afterwards Sugandhi started living with Kṛṣṇānanda. His sickness cured. But, this is the kind of sickness for which the medicine has to be continued. Otherwise, there would be a relapse. Nāgabhaṭṭa could not love Sugandhi as he was always filled with the feeling that only Candrikā could be his companion and without her he would be alone.

After he started living with Sugandhi the memory of his wife that had left behind began to bother him. She was very innocent in sexual matters and not very well experienced woman. But, Śālinī was his wife. He married her traditionally in presence of Agni. He recalled his duty and thought of going back to Tārāvati and even he thought of getting his mother and wife over to Mathurā. Though Jayasimha had to tell him that he was a secret agent who wanted to find the working of Sārtha and Jayasimha may take actions against him. So, he left that thought and continued acting in drama in Mathurā.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter

After one and a half year, the drama troupe company returned to Mathurā. The cherished desire of elders like Vāsudeva Śarmā and Ānanda Dutta to return merely

to a comfortable life with their families took a new turn within a month. All the actors and actresses were also felt bored. All of them wanted to revive their stage life.

Jayasimha found a small house for Kṛṣṇa on Śarmā's and Datta's instruction. Monthly salary was also going to be arranged by the king's treasury. Kṛṣṇa started living in Mathurā with a servant. Now Kṛṣṇa was alone. Sugandhi lived with her mother and she sang and danced in evening for the affluent patrons. He experienced a momentary twinge of anger and envy. But, he consoled himself. The same play was going to be played again in Mathurā on the next *Janmāṣṭamī* – the celebration of birthday of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The fame and scintillating performance of the actor Kṛṣṇānanda again gained recognition scruffily.

It was already four and a half years passed after Nāgabhaṭṭa left his home. As soon as he had been sent away, Amaruka and Śālinī started their affairs. He thought about the age of child. The thought of his mother's death came in his mind. If he had stayed back there only, then not all these events would have taken place. The king Amaruka knew the weakness of Nāgabhaṭṭa that he loved travelling to various places and misused it, betrayed their friendship.

After hearing the affair of his wife Śālinī and king Amaruka, he did not stir out for a week. Then he realized that as long as he stayed cooped up alone, he could not get past thoughts of Śālinī. So, he went out to see Viṭvakarmā Sthapati.

The sthapati talked to him intimately. He took him to his home. He had three children and expecting the fourth one. Sthapati enquired politely about the places where he had performed the drama. He said that he too saw the drama twice, but his character did not inspire a lot, as his mind was filled with Buddhist and *Purāṇa*.

Nāgabhaṭṭa used to meet sthapati now and then. It was easy to forget the betrayal of Śālinī and Amaruka when he was discussing drama, sculpture and the *Pauranic* creations. Sthapati also came to meet him in his house. One day he

confessed his inner turmoil. Previously sthapati had told him that Buddhist had lifted the stories of our *Pauranic* Gods and goddesses and put a Buddhist garb on them, creating situations from their *Purānas*, they were asking him to carve the statues accordingly. He started carving the statues according to their instructions. Then Vajrapāda told him to become a Buddhist to know the Buddhist *Purānas* and could carve the statues with clear visualization. Since then every day, some monk or the other advises him to convert. They have been hammering him so much that he simply could not concentrate on his work.

He told that to his co-workers too were eager to leave this work and join the temple constructions if the Gurjar Pratihāras start the temple construction. He told that he was surrounded by the Buddhist. They treated him with great affection. But, all of them were enthusiastic about propagating their religion, which was an essential aspect of their religious practice. He even said that his wife too wanted to convert into Buddhism. According to her opinion religion does not matter, the happiness matters. Nāgabhaṭṭa had not seen Vajrapāda returning from his tour. He wanted to talk to him about why they were compelling the sthapati to convert and ask why people could not stay in the religion into which they were born. There is a *mantra* in Veda, “*ekam sat viprāḥ bahudā vadanti*”. There is a sentence in *Bhagavad Gītā* also “*Yo yo yam yam tanum bhaktaḥ śraddayarchitumicchati tasya tasyachalam shraddam tamava vidadhamyaham*”-whoever the devotee, who wishes to worship the image of god in his own favorite form with total devotion I will appear to him in that form and strengthen his devotion.

But, the experience of playing in drama for more than two and a half years had given him a feeling that truth lay in the emotional understanding and that nothing would be gained by argument. Besides his mind was turmoiled ever since he learnt that his wife and friend i.e. king Amaruka had deceived him. Certain emptiness filled his mind.



Four days later, a monk came to him and told him that Vajrapāda wanted to meet him. He told that he too wanted to meet him. The next morning Nāgabhaṭṭa went there. Vajrapāda welcomed him with the smile as he already knew about the play of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Nāgabhaṭṭa enacted as Kṛṣṇa. So, he said that in the entire Pratihāras kingdom, no one had conquered more hearts than him and also he invited him to perform the play of Lord Buddha's incarnations.

Nāgabhaṭṭa explained all about the play which should be full of *Rasas* especially *Śṛṅgāra* otherwise the audience would not accept it. Buddha's life is not that entertaining piece. Vajrapāda told him that one scholar has already written marvelous series of plays. They have an idea of bringing to existence and enacting those *Nāṭakacakra* – the series of plays.

Nāgabhaṭṭa did not feel enthusiastic. People everywhere looked at him as Lord Kṛṣṇa. There was a plan to re-enact the Kṛṣṇa's play in Mathurā. He told him the truth that he was developing the feeling of utter emptiness in his life. It had been decide to play *Kṛṣṇacarita* for a week before *Janmāṣṭamī*, the birthday of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He had decided to reject the request. The play could not go on and all the people of Mathurā might be angry with him.

Vajrapāda said him that his courage was praiseworthy. His compassion filled heart was always wild open to him. Nāgabhaṭṭa made no reply. He was smart enough to know the intention of Vajrapāda. Śarmā and Datta decided to perform a play of *Mahābhārata* like *Kṛṣṇacarita* and decided that Nāgabhaṭṭa himself would play the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Meanwhile, some scholars and art lovers who were inspir by *Kṛṣṇacarita* had planned to perform the complete *Rāmāyaṇa* and they too decided to take Nāgabhaṭṭa as Rāma. He had that dignity of *Kṣatriya*.

Whether it was playing the part of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa or Buddha, the emptiness that pervaded eyes, nose, forehead, and ears were incomparable and no one else could

play the roles of Kṛṣṇa or Buddha or Rāma. This time in his life, he should have been in *Gr̥hasthāśrama*, the second stage among four, the state of a married man. It was the time to work hard, earn and make sure that there was always plenty of food at home. With the framework of wedded life, one could satisfy one's sexual desire. The children born had to be fed and trained well so that they become good citizens. Even a single minute was not to be wasted.

In the cities of Tārāvati and Māhiṣmati meditation was not very popular. If there were people who had mastered it, Nāgabhaṭṭa did not know them. The only person who practiced real meditation was Candrikā. The memory of Candrikā would interfere with his peace of mind. He wanted to request her to be his *guru* and teach him meditation. But, his mind rejected her as she rejected to fulfill his desires and her rejection was the reason for his *Śūnyabhāva*. It was clear that she was not really the focus of the meaning of his life.

One morning in the rainy season, he was bathing on the banks of the Yamunā. The flowing mud coloured water had covered half of the base of the river. The bit of slay that appeared through the gap in the dark blue clouds was reflected in the seven colours that shone on the river. In that light the expanse of the river acquired an unearthly splendor. Knowing that this marvelous sight would not last long, he tried to arrest the sight physically. However, the dark clouds of the rainy season gradually altered the scene. Though the clouds scattered and the sunlight reappeared, his spellbound eyes did not waver nor did his neck straighten to this normal position.

He immediately understood that the '*Sahasrara*' which is a state attained during the practice of *Yoga* would be brighter and more powerful than the one he had just seen. He looked back, there he saw a *Sadhu* whose eyes had a wealthy shine, and his head was clean-shaven. He was about seventyfive years old. He stood in knee clap water wearing only a lion-cloth. Nāgabhaṭṭa thought that he had appeared there during the flood of this rainy season only to give him some direction. He wondered. Nāgabhaṭṭa asked him whether he had the power to read the minds of

others. His immediate answer made it clear that he was a *yogi* and not a tantric. He looked at him for a while and he went away.

Nāgabhaṭṭa went home and ate his meal and after a long sleep he woke up. With an intense desire to find the *Sadhu* that he had seen. He got up and walked along the riverbank where there were many *Sadhus*. He wondered about all over the vicinity of the birthplace of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He searched carefully. All the *Sadhus* looked and dressed alike. But that, *Sadhu* he had met was distinctive, with clean-shaved head. He was extra-ordinary and he was a *yogi*. He made enquires describing him. Some laughed, as he even did not know the name. He searched for a long time. He felt hungry and tired and thus went back home. After food, he had the habit of taking rest. That day he could not sleep after heavy meal. He went again to search him. He went back and could not sleep at night. He went back to the same bathing *ghat* on the next day morning. Until afternoon, he sat there and slept and again went back and sat at the same place.

One morning as he sat there a *Sadhu* came up and spoke to him that he had been watching him for several days. He sat there without meditating, if he meditates, his feeling of emptiness would disappear. He replied in Sanskrit that he was searching for a *guru*. He enquired where he was from and where he studied. He told him that he was a student of *pāṭhaśālā* of Ācārya Maṇḍana Mīśra and his approach to teaching was that unless the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* had been totally mastered one should not learn the text. The *Sadhu* agreed entirely with that view. Then Nāgabhaṭṭa confessed all about his life and how he was overcome by a sense of total emptiness.

It was midday. Both bathed in river and went home. He told Nāgabhaṭṭa that he should not prepare any food because he would have only three handfuls of cooked rice. From the five fistfuls that served, he offered one handful to the birds outside. One handful he put aside for the ants and other little creatures and he ate just three hands full. Saying that a *sannyasi* should not stay in anybody's home, he left. Nāgabhaṭṭa realized that he had talked a great deal about himself, but not asked

him for anything nor requested him to guide him. He rushed immediately and searched for him, but could not find him.

Next morning when he went to bank of the river, he was there. Nāgabhaṭṭa approached him. He touched his feet and requested him to teach him meditation.

Without any *gurudakṣiṇā*, he taught meditation to Nāgabhaṭṭa. Sometimes he himself went to him under the peepul tree where he stayed. Sometimes he too would come to teach him.

He had taught Nāgabhaṭṭa the inner relationship as well as the aim of *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyama*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, and *Samādhi*. Even at the *pāṭhaśālā* of Ācārya Maṇḍana Miśra the performance of *yogāsana* was compulsory. He now understood that the ultimate aim (i.e. culmination) was not in *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, and *Samādhi*. They were performed only as physical exercise. All the details about the various *āsanas* were taught theoretically as well as practically to Nāgabhaṭṭa.

With *ahimsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-covetousness), *bramaçarya* (Celibacy), *aparigraha* (non-acceptance of anything from others), *śauca* (dearliness), *santoṣa* (happiness), *tapasyā* and *svādhyāya* (self study), *Īśvara praṇidhāna*, one can achieve all things. He mastered *prāṇāyama* during the month he was away in Kurukṣetra. After his arrival, he taught him *pratyāhāra* and *dhyāna*.

He instructed that he should root himself in the state of meditation as long as he can. *Ahimsā* should be practice continuously and they should become his very nature, as effortlessly as breathing. He said that as he will mature in his meditation, he would acquire a certain power. At any point if he finds himself at the crossroads, he has to think of *guru* and meditate. Even during his meditation he would guide him. He himself would make consciousness flow into him, identify his problem and teach him. The *guru* need not be physically present. Then he left for southern region.

Nāgabhaṭṭa's *guru* did not need any particular name, because he was a detached person. He was far away from worldly affairs. So Nāgabhaṭṭa designated him as *sannyasi* for the purpose of calling him into his mind.

He took a year to progress in his meditation. By following the preachings of *sannyasi* he began to experience a new and growing inner power. When he meditated with some specific person in mind and when the meditation reached the level of fruition he could read the person thoroughly. It was more than two years since he had parted from Candrikā. Now he was curious to find out what she was thinking. There also arose the drive to test his newly acquired powers. One afternoon he concentrated on her and engaged himself in meditation.

He saw that Candrikā was in Śravastī. The drama company was performing *Rāmāyana*. She was playing the role of Sītā and was totally dedicated to that role. She had no special feeling for Udayasiṃha who was playing the role of Rāma. Then entire audience was full of admiration for her portrayal of Sītā. She meditated every day. He was thrilled to find that she still entertained a soft corner for him. He thought that she joined the company again because he was not there. Nevertheless, she loved him deeply. He was very much surprised to know that there was no one else who had found a place in her heart!

This question occupied his mind the whole day and he could not get back to meditation. He unknowingly went to Candrikā's house. The door locked. He came back and wanted to enter the minds of Vāsudeva Śarmā or Ānanda Datta, the stage manager.

He entered his room and tried to meditate. Meditation became an arduous task. After a long time, he did succeed. Ānanda Datta was watching the play. So many people in the auditorium had come for second or third time to watch the *Rāmāyana*. Quite few of them were Buddhist. Ānanda Datta thought in his mind that if the role was played by Nāgabhaṭṭa it would be alive.

He was thrilled to know that Datta still remembered him. He began to wonder why he should not continue to act in the play and meditate during his spare time as Candrikā was doing. He enjoyed the thought for two days and then he neglected it.

The next day he tried to enter Jayasimha's mind. Again, it was difficult to meditate. After repeated trials he achieved success. Jayasimha had received information from Kānyakubja. The Gurjara pratihars were engaged in efforts to drive out the Arab Muslim invaders who had occupied the western region and planned to occupy the western Indian ports and gradually establish their empire and region in India. Taking advantage the Rāṣṭrakuṭas were planning to annex some south Gujarat territory. Jayasimha had been given the job of explaining about the situation to the kings of Māhiṣmati and Tārāvati and help to protect their faith at least prevent them from helping Rāṣṭrakuṭas. He was getting ready to go.

Nāgabhaṭṭa's mind, which perceived all this in meditation, did not try to understand the intricacies of politics. He got excited and wanted to tell Jayasimha that Amaruka was senseless and quite undeserving to trust. He desired to see him arrested and bound at which point he could face him.

He was perturbed. Why had he, who for a whole year controlled such thoughts, got caught in this tempest? He could not meditate that day. Next day also he was very much disturbed. Another curiosity aroused that evening to enter the minds of Śālinī and Amaruka before going back to Jayasimha. For the last four days he was not able to meditate. He closed the door of his room and started meditating. But he failed. After dinner he could not sleep for a long time. Śālinī's betrayal filled his mind that even sleep eluded him. After a long time he dozed off. But in that sleep he heard an internal voice a warning which clearly said, "Give this up- entering others minds". If you persist' you will ruin yourself. It was not a dream. It was clear warning given in the state of meditation. This was the first time it had taken place during sleep. Since he had been unable to meditate for the last four days, his *guru* had warned him clearly in his sleep.

It became clear to him that because he had misused the little power he had gained, he could not enter into meditation. He decided to start there, purify himself by repentance and get back to serious training and then practice *yoga*. This decision melted in two days. On the third morning, he went to the river, took his bath and sat under the peepul tree. He felt that if he will try now he could achieve meditation. He got up, went home to his room performed the obligation, concentrated entirely on Śālinī and he felt that he would succeed.

It was not just Śālinī's mind that he saw but her entire surroundings including a garden outside the town, plenty of fruit bearing trees like mango and sweet citrus and flowering champak in addition to jasmine etc. He saw a compact regal house, a guard at the entrance and a five years old girl climbing on the campaka tree. Her nose and eyes resembled Śālinī's – and her complexion was that of king Amaruka. Śālinī was bathing. Her body had turned flabby and it was loaded with heavy shining gold ornaments. As she poured hot water over herself she cursed Amaruka as a cheater, a bastard, a flattering philanderer who used to give her goose pimples by saying that she was an unpatrolled beauty. Let him die of epilepsy. By the time she got through her period of confinement he had made preparations for his third marriage. After considerable difficulty she sent words through her attendant. Was it true that he was negotiable for another marriage? The shameless bounder replied that even the queen did not have the right to ask this question. He asked her that was there any shortage in her food, clothing, lodging or ornament? His infrequent visits stopped altogether three years ago and no other man would even dare to look at her. Even her female attendant was his spy. Śālinī was contemplating poisoning the rouge who sent her husband away and cheated her. These were the thoughts that Nāgabhaṭṭa read and his meditation broke off.

He wanted to penetrate her mind and learn her thoughts about him, her child and his dead mother another day, as he was exhausted. The peace of mind and the joy of life usually obtained after meditation were absent. Amaruka was not

interested in Śālinī and she was suffering from sexual starvation. Two months passed, Nāgabhaṭṭa could not meditate. He could not restrain the mind by his thoughts. He struggled for three days. Now he remembered the *guru*, as he needed help. He prayed continuously for three days. Nothing happened. There was no suggestion, advice or inner instructions. It was clear that he had given up as he had used his powers against his advice. He had been rejected and thrown down. His mind could not extricate itself from the feeling. He engulfed helpless.

## 5<sup>th</sup> Chapter

Some days he used to wander about for eight miles away from the city of Mathurā. He was sitting on a boulder in a lonely place. Soon a *sadhu* came to the *mantapa*. He had a bag on his back, a small dog's carcass in his right hand and a trident in his left hand. He was a man who followed the left path of action: He cooked the dog in fire. He cut out pieces of the dog's flesh and while he ate them, he drank mouthful of the liquor and even water once.

Nāgabhaṭṭa was observing all this. The wind blew in his direction and brought bad collective smell of all. He wanted to leave that place. But, suddenly gripped by a fear that he might have killed the day himself and he would not hesitate to kill a man and ate him. He knew that he would be overpowered by his will power. He grew more afraid. But, he was curious to see his next activity.

He finished eating and drinking. He belched with satisfaction and stretched his limbs. Suddenly he started walking towards Nāgabhaṭṭa. He was alarmed when he stood in front of Nāgabhaṭṭa. He offered some liquor and the meat that was sticking to the bones. Nāgabhaṭṭa mastered enough courage and said that he did not drink liquor and did not eat meat.

He asked Nāgabhaṭṭa that he had not given up his ego and still he thinks that he was high born. So, he could not meditate successfully. His *guru* told him not to



read minds of his wife and the king. But, he could not control his curiosity. Therefore, his *guru* abandoned him.

Nāgabhaṭṭa felt more humble than even the tantric (Vamachari) continued. *Yogis* had a stupid rule that one should not use the power that one had acquired. Strict celibacy was the focus of one's path, which is meaningless. He said to think of a person whose thoughts he wants to enter he will make sure that he would do it.

He said to close the eyes and placed his hand on Nāgabhaṭṭa's head. A picture of king Amaruka leapt to his mind and his mind penetrated the thoughts of the king. He was sitting comfortably in his chair. Jayasimha brought the message of Gurjara Pratihāra was true and the king was thinking that the Rāṣṭrakūṭas were close to him and if they invaded his kingdom and if he could not defend them? He sent Nāgabhaṭṭa to find means to earn money with the help of Sārtha which would enable him to strengthen the army and he thought about his betrayal done to Nāgabhaṭṭa.

Tantric removed his hand. His mind returned to its normal state in few moments and he remembered the surroundings. The tantric collected all his things and disappeared from sight. Now, Nāgabhaṭṭa was suddenly swept by a feeling of utter loneliness as if he did not belong to any kingdom.

He reached home, ate his food. He but could not sleep whole night as he wanted to read Amaruka's mind further. Then he remembered that his *guru* had withdrawn his grace. Therefore, he had not been able to contain his curiosity. Again, he was being sucked into a whirlpool, which he could not resist.

He decided that the tantric enabled him to enter effectively into another's mind and he placed no restrictions on how to use that power. In *yoga* this curiosity was forbidden and considered as an impediment to the purification of the mind. He debated for a week to take up the tantric way or not. He even thought of marrying a girl and settling down in life. But, he thought that there was no point of living without acquiring some power.

He did not know any other tantric. So, he decided to find the same tantric he had met. He felt strongly that he would certainly come there and help him.

One morning he went to the same rock on which he had sat previously. He was sure that tantric knew he was waiting seated there and that he would come. He did not come till evening. He could not bear his hunger. So went to the stream nearby and drunk some water and returned. It was getting dark, then also he waited. He slept on that stone slab. The wild animals, snakes and lizards might find him. But, he realized that overcoming fear was the first step that he had to pass. He could not sleep properly. But, again he did not want to lose this man, as he had lost his *guru* earlier on account of his weakness. He bathed in the stream and having drunk water, returned to that rock. That day also he fasted.

Next day morning he thought of killing an animal and eating as the tantric did. But, he was an orthodox Brahmin. He could not do it. He searched for fruits and roots even he could not get them there. In the afternoon, he saw a bullock cart. He went near it and asked for food, saying that he was waiting for his *guru*. He had not eaten anything for four days. They gave him some *avalakki* (flatted rice, which can be eaten raw) and some jaggary. There was enough *avalakki* to keep him alive for eight days if he ate twice a day only. He ate in the afternoon as well as at night and used the bundles as his pillow. He slept well that night.

The tantric arrived on the fifth evening with a woman, who past thirty. He looked at Nāgabhaṭṭa and said that he want to perform *Yoni Pūjā*. So, he should go away and come back before sunrise. He went one mile along the cart path. He saw a flat slab and sat on it. He felt no fear at all, as he believed that *guru* would protect him. He slept at night and woke up in the morning. He felt an inner backing from the tantric.

Next day morning, when he came near him, he had finished his meditation. He became a totally dedicated pupil. He adopted himself gradually to liquor, meat, fish and so on quite heartily. They left Mathurā and travelled from the Yamunā to Gaṅgā.

Two years passed. His *guru* had the power to read the mind of others, which was enough to earn their respect and awe. Nāgabhaṭṭa learnt penetrating into other's mind. He made Nāgabhaṭṭa to practice certain bodily exercise and breath control that facilitated meditation.

He entered again and again Śālinī's mind. He found that Amaruka had not been meeting her at all. In the beginning of their affairs, he would tell her that he felt like shouting her name like a mad man and chasing her. She was now pained to realize that she was mere an object used and discarded. Amaruka was busy contemplating the newly blossomed beauty of the daughter of Narasimha Deva.

He had often longed for the chance to stab Śālinī in the chest through remote powers. Though he had entered her mind ever so often, he found that she had not thought of him even once. That was why the *guru* had asked him to forget her. So, he got angry on her.

After being depressed for a week, he realized that all human beings are alone. He needed a *Śakti* for the *Yoni Pūjā*. He remembered Candrikā was more suitable than anyone else. He knew that she was a *Yoginī* and an accomplished spiritual being but she would not consent to participate in this ritual. His courage collapsed.

He tried to enter her mind through meditation but failed. It was difficult to enter the minds of those who perform meditation. So he thought of a plan to get to know about Candrikā. He entered the mind of Ānanda Datta. The company had been performing in Pāṭaliputra for the last four months. After performing *Rāmāyaṇa* for three months, they had started *Kṛṣṇacarita*. She held herself totally aloof. Ānanda Datta had appointed two powerful bodyguards, who were also the doorkeepers of

her house. The bodyguards escorted her to the theater and back to her chariot. He started walking towards Pāṭaliputra.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter

Nāgabhaṭṭa reached Candrikā's house in the morning. The guard did not let him in. He did not agree to inform about him. He shouted. Candrikā came out. She took some time to recognize him. She just having taken bath and came there in a white sari. She looked very beautiful like a sixteen years old virgin. He begged her permission to go in. She told the guards, they let him in.

They seized his trident and bag, examined his overgrown matted hair and searched him to make sure that he was not hiding any weapons or poisonous powders. After satisfying themselves, they let him in.

He said that since two years he took to tantric practice. He can now enter anybody's mind. There was just one more ritual to performe to become a tantric. He needed a *Śakti* to worship and he cannot look upon anyone else as *Śakti* and worship her. She disagreed bitterly and she became angry. She advised him to give up the path itself. He used the final weapon that he would worship her as *Śakti* on the coming new moon night. If she loves him, she must allow him to worship her.

On the fourth day, she agreed. On the night of the new moon day, there was no performance at the theater. After sunset, she came to *Pūrṇimā Ghat* wearing black sari and red upper covering, so that people would not recognize her. It was his responsibility to bring back to the same place after *pūjā*.

In a big city like Pāṭaliputra there was no privacy at night. Nāgabhaṭṭa had discovered a forest on the south. There was a horizontal stone slab at the bottom of the ditch. The place was totally deserted with vegetation, without much breeze. There was no possibility of the lighted lamp going out. He had spent four nights there to discover all these.

He brought Candrikā and made her *Śakti*. He performed the ritual successfully. He felt a sense of power in his mind along with the feeling of purpose achieved. After the ritual, Candrikā offered him her house with a separate room and food for his stay. He agreed to stay there and told further that he would teach her a *mandala*. She agreed to learn and told that he must stay with her for a month. He agreed and both reached her house.

She slept till the afternoon. Then both of them sat opposite to each other and had their meal of rice lentils and sweet porridge served by Cārumati. After resting for a while she went to the theatre in the chariot sent by the company escorted by the bodyguard. He realized that she had made great sacrifice for his sake and disregarded the possible scandal that would have rocked the entire Magadha region.

He could not sleep that night as he had slept during the day. After two years, for the first time he was sleeping on cotton bed with a blanket to cover. He felt guilty at breaking his vow. So, he got off the cot and lay down on the floor. After some time he slept. In the morning, he brushed his teeth, only to respect etiquette. She asked his permission to enter his room. Then she entered in his room with a vessel of oil in her hand. It had smell of ginger. She sat besides him and started massaging his entire body. Initially he hesitated, but she did not listen to him and kept on massaging him completely. She then took him to the bathroom for bath. There also he hesitated, but Candrikā did not listen to him and made him bath with hot water. After bath, she offered some porridge and food.

He went to sleep after eating and slept suddenly. The whole night he slept with a dream of his mother. He recalled his joyous days of childhood. The next morning also Candrikā came and did the same.

While rubbing the oil, Candrikā suddenly argued about his tantric *pūjā* and even questioned him. He could not answer and was plunged into confusion. When he

sat down to meditate, he could not concentrate. He felt like stabbing Candrikā to death with his trident.

The next day morning, when she was massaging him he asked her that if she did not respect *tantric* practice, then why she had agreed for *Yoni pūjā*. She frankly replied that she had come firstly to make him realize what a wrong path he had chosen and secondly to make him free from such practice. She convinced him that he can also acquire such powers by practice of *yoga*. She too had such powers. But she did not use them because of her *guru*'s strict restrictions. He asked Candrikā about her *guru*. She answered that her *guru* had no name.

She explained him her *guru*'s features. He recognised him as his *guru* also. He said her that he too learnt the practice of *yoga* from the same *guru*. Then Candrikā asked him why he gave it up. He replied that he has misused the yogic power by entering into others minds and knew about Śālinī's betrayal. His *guru* had asked him to stop the experiment, but he had disregarded his instructions and lost his powers.

Candrikā became silent. She complained him why she never told her about his sufferings. Thus scolding him, she went to her room. Next morning, Cārumati informed Nāgabhaṭṭa that Candrikā had fever. He asked her to care for Candrikā. That day also he had the same kind of bath and food by some attendant. He observed that during these days, he has put on weight. After two days, Candrikā recovered herself from fever.

The next day she came to him. He expressed his curiosity to know about her life. She was also eager to inform him about her life. Thus, she lifted her face, looked at him with intimacy and started telling him. She said her mother used to sing devotional songs, when she had not learnt music. She sang melodiously. There was a feeling in her town Brahmaputra that only prostitutes can learn this art, otherwise her mother would have become a famous singer. Her mother was her *guru* and her father encouraged her, as she was eldest daughter. She had learnt everything from her

mother. Her father was a scholar who taught her Sanskrit literature. But, she was interested only in melody of music. At that time, a musician named Yadubhadra came to that town from Takṣaśīlā. He was thirty years old and born blind. But, he was born talented with full of creativity in himself. He sang every evening in the temple of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Her mother also admitted that he was a real musician. She arranged him to teach her. He came to earn a livelihood. Many started learning music from him. He came to her house everyday to teach music lessons and taught her with all his heart. One day he said that getting a student like Candrikā must be the result of some good deed he must have done in previous birth. She too felt that finding a teacher like him was due to some spiritual merits she must have acquired in past life.

She completed four years of her study. She acquired the ability to innovate. Once she asked him why he was not married and not set up his own home. He replied with burning sorrow and frustration that no one would marry him, the ugly blind man. She became speechless. She thought of marrying him. She was seventeen years old and even her parents were trying to get her married since last two years. One day she told him that she would marry him.

When she told her parents, they denied. One day she left her home and ran away with him. They reached Salvapura, a small village. They started singing in some Śiva temple by arranging a concert at the place of nobleman. Within two months, they had their own house, started a music school and led a comfortable life. One day they even sang in the palace. The affluent people, merchants, rich traders, noblemen and army came to their house to listen to their music and they were generous in their appreciations. People admired and worshiped her voice as well as beauty. She was flying high. There was no dearth of money. She employed a cook and another servant to do other works. She appointed doorkeeper also.

She started receiving messages through servants. The nobleman Indrasena was anxious to meet her secretly outside the garden. She became angry on servants and said that she was not a prostitute. Her refusal shamed and hurt him.

However, her husband became jealous of her. He began to express displeasure by saying he would not accompany her in singing. She should sing alone, because nobody admired him. He started hurting her when they were alone. She was ignoring him, as he was blind and could not appreciate her beauty, but his harsh words hurt her.

One day a young man came in search of Yadubhadra. That young man was Śrīmukha, his sister's son from Takṣaśīlā. He was twentythree years old and wanted to learn music from someone like his uncle. Yadubhadra asked her permission to let him stay with them to learn music. She agreed.

She became his teacher. He addressed her as aunty. Every morning he would touch her feet in the prescribed manner and started his work. She felt very enthusiastic in teaching him music and feel inspired by his concentration, involvement, admiration and reverence.

On Śivarātrī Yadubhadra and she had to sing in the temple. Yadubhadra had fever and was unable to sing. So she took Śrīmukha with her. She was the main singer and he was the accompanist. At the end of the concert, many people appreciated the pair.

The next day they sat for the practice of music alone. Śrīmukha praised her charm. She was thrilled. Gradually he started addressing her in first person. It sounded natural and made her happy. She started wearing the colors that he admired.

One day he demanded to see her naked. Firstly she denied by punishing him. Later she agreed and they started loving each other. More than three months passed thus.



One day Yadubhadra caught them red-handed at home and he shouted a lot on Candrikā in front of the servants.

He turned her reputation down. That night she asked Śrīmukha of running away and marrying. He did not answer and himself ran away alone. Seeing all this, Yadubhadra committed suicide. When Candrikā reached this stage of narrative, Cārumati called out her that Ānanda Datta had come to meet her.

He was also excited to see Ānanda Datta. She informed him that Kṛṣṇānanda (i.e. Nāgabhaṭṭa) was also staying with her since last few days. He met him. He did not ask anything about the *tantra* but he just said that let his hair remain as it was, as they wanted to do a play on Viśvāmitra. He could play that role without any makeup. Further, he said that everyone wanted to perform *Kṛṣṇacaritra* for a month in Vaiśālī, Kuśavati and Mithilā. Ānanda Datta had come to enquire about her health and to find out how soon she could resume acting. Then he went off.

After This, Nāgabhaṭṭa expressed his eagerness to hear her story. She sat and resumed her narration. She was arrested and was put in the prison. She was sentenced to two years in prison. She caused distress to her parents by marrying a blind singer and caused distress for self by cheating him who was both husband and *guru*.

After two years when she came out of prison, she left Salvapura and went to Mathurā. She used to get free food in some temple as *Prasāda*, which was enough to keep her alive and slept in the open ground of the Dharmasālā for the women.

One day a group of women from Dvārka were singing and dancing there. It was the song on Kṛṣṇa. That night the tune played in her head. The next evening when the group started singing and dancing, she sang it in the classical style with *ālāpa* and *svara*. From thereon she had to sing and dance. Not only women but also the common people as well as the noblemen used to come there to see her programme.

The gentleman Jayasirṃha came to know about her talent and genius in music, dance and acting. He invited her to his place and warmly welcomed her. He offered her a house with a servant and fifty gold coins every month. Firstly, she refused but later she agreed. She started living there. Every morning she used to go to the river Yamunā for her bathe. One day a *yogi* met her and said that, 'more music cannot cleanse and purify the inner being, meditate.' He instructed her in the practice of *yoga*. After a month, he disappeared. Afterwards whenever she encountered any difficulty, he taught her from within and solved her problems. She adopted meditation as the goal of her life.

At this point Nāgabhaṭṭa asked her that she was totally committed to the moral path of *yoga*, then why she consented him to *Yoni pūjā*. She replied him that she agreed just to help him. Further, she said that she took bath after *Yoni pūjā* and that day she had struggled very hard to engage in meditation. The difference between both of them became clear. She was by nature *sāttvik*. Thus, she had completed her story.

He revealed that what she said was true. He then strongly felt that he should give up tantric path. Four days later, he shaved off his hair completely and wanted white dhoti and shirt to wear. Her face lit up with happiness.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter

He felt very light with his shaved head and normal clothes. She suggested him to act as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa - roles he excelled. As he was neither progressing in meditation nor in *tantra*, he started feeling a sense of emptiness. One day he thought of becoming a householder and asked Candrikā for marriage. She agreed to serve him, but did not agree for marriage.

Candrikā immersed herself in meditation and acting. He stayed in her house ate and slept without goal. One morning as he was walking aimlessly along the bank of the river, he met Vajrapāda and Viśvakarmā sthapati. He observed that sthapati

had embraced Buddhism They were going to study the shape of the main idol and some statues of the *caitya* to Nālandā. They took Nāgabhaṭṭa to Vihāra.

After the evening prayers, Vajrapāda spoke to him in one of the inner chambers. He talked freely as he wanted to unburden himself. He told all about himself to Vajrapāda. He listened to him and replied that he would made arrangements, for his admission in Nālandā without converting him to Buddhism. He asked for a week to think about it.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Chapter

Finally, Nāgabhaṭṭa became a student of Nālandā without converting to Buddhism. It was possible because of the magnanimity of non-Buddhist kings, emperors, merchants and rich Gurjara Pratihāra people who donated liberally there by showing their tolerance of another religion. So non-Buddhist scholars all over the land came to study in Nālandā.

After twelve years again he started studies. His mind was sophisticated and disciplined in matter of logic and reasoning. There were nine thousand students in all and one thousand teachers who personally knew their students. There were three hundred lecture halls.

The important works like *Prajñāparimitasūtra* and *Guhyasamaja* were preserved. Nāgabhaṭṭa copied *Prajñāparimita* in the flawless handwriting. He continued that work.

He knew that unless he forgot Candrikā, he would never be free from his sense of emptiness. But, he began to feel that if he continued to immerse himself in activities, one day he might ever be able to enter the state of meditation.

There was a venerable old man. He was eighty years old and was a great scholar of Vedic tradition. A year ago he had become Buddhist and wanted to learn the intricacies of fundamental principles of Buddhist logic and thoughts. Many

Vedic scholars were converted to Buddhism. In Nālandā, they offered idol worship in both morning and evening. There was another daily ritual called *caityavandanā*. They performed it during afternoon.

After a month, Vajrapāda returned to Mathurā. The sthapati stayed for one more year. As Nāgabhaṭṭa was an ideal listener sthapati talked all about *tantra* with him.

One afternoon sthapati informed Nāgabhaṭṭa that tantrayani was going to achieve a Yuganaddha. So, they went to see it. Sthapati observed closely and carefully the curves. Nāgabhaṭṭa felt that they should not linger there any longer.

After coming back Nāgabhaṭṭa did not see sthapati. The following new moon day he took Nāgabhaṭṭa in the corner of one room. There was a sculpted idol of the tantric-couple in exactly the same posture that they had seen. Nāgabhaṭṭa was surprised to see it

Nāgabhaṭṭa had gone to Nālandā in order to enjoy the sweetness of Buddhist philosophy. But, the path of Buddha had been subdivided into Vaibhāṣika, Sutrāntika, Yogācāra and Mādhyamika. Simple teachings of Buddha were also hijacked by the commentaries of learned pandits as Vedas and *Upaniṣads* had been replaced by *Sūtras* and *Bhāṣyas*. So one midnight Nāgabhaṭṭa decided to go to Gayā where Buddha got enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. He took the permission of *guru* Guṇaśīla and went.

Nāgabhaṭṭa was overjoyed by reaching there. It was a place of real peace. Many days he sat there. He felt that the life in Gayā was more pleasing than Nālandā, without any restrictions. He thought that he must give up all his desires.

One morning he sat under a tree. He came to know from the others that Lord Buddha was one of the ten incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu.

Nāgabhaṭṭa found it strange. He was performing the rituals of *agnikārya* even in Mathurā. He gave up everything, when he became a tantric. Memory of his mother grew vivid as he sat near the Bodhi tree. He remembered all about her childhood love, affection, protection and caring. Those thoughts filled him with sadness. Then, he decided to perform the *śrāddha* of his mother in Gayā. But, after thinking for eight days, at last he decided not to perform the *śrāddha* and threw all material in the river and started moving towards Nālandā.

## 9<sup>th</sup> Chapter

When he returned to Nālandā, he learnt that something very distressing had taken place as far as non-Buddhist students were concerned. Pragnanaghana the eighty-years-old and the student of Dharmapāla was thrown out.

One day Dharmapāla had condemned the Vedas. Pragnanaghana started crying. Dharmapāla questioned him of his intension whether he has come to write and publish works condemning the Buddhist intellectual position. He replied no. So he forced him to take an oath. He refused to swear on Vedas. Then Dharmapāla screamed out that he was Kumārilabhaṭṭa, a Vedic scholar, who condemned their *dharma* and invited Buddhist scholars for public, debates and defeated them, a name struck terror in the hearts of Buddhist scholars all over the world.

Pandit Dharmapāla ordered him to leave Nālandā the same day. The moment Dharmapāla left, all the Buddhist students started beating Kumārilabhaṭṭa mercilessly. Someone poked a finger in an old man's eye and it started bleeding. If Dharmapāla had not heard the noise and interfered, Kumārilabhaṭṭa would have been killed. Dharmapāla arranged for first aid to revive the unconscious man. Kumārilabhaṭṭa regained consciousness and walked out of the university after rest.

Nāgabhaṭṭa never met Kumārilabhaṭṭa. However, he had great respect and love for him, as he was the preceptor of his preceptor. His teacher Maṇḍana Mīśra often quoted him and his famous works were *Ślokavārttika*, an explanation of

Śabarāsvāmī's commentaries on the *Mīmāṃsā*, *Tantravārttika* and *Tuṣṭika*. His *guru* often said that his teacher was a ploygot and his sister Bhāratīdevī was an excellent student of her brother and profound scholar in her own right. According to his teacher's wishes, he married her.

Nāgabhaṭṭa was full of admiration for Kumārilabhaṭṭa. Thus, he decided to go in search of him. He reached Prayāga and found Kumārilabhaṭṭa's *āśrama*. It had a big structure about half a mile from the sacred spot where the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā meet in a confluence. Kumārilabhaṭṭa met him there. He introduced himself as the disciple of Maṇḍana Mīśra. Hearing this Kumārilabhaṭṭa asked about the *pāṭhaśālā* of Maṇḍana Mīśra. He also said that he practiced *tantra* for two years. Earlier he practiced *yoga* and before that, he was an actor. Now he does not have *yajñopavitam*. So, Kumārilabhaṭṭa asked him to have bath and have food. Nāgabhaṭṭa came to know from Bhumadeva (one disciple of Kumārilabhaṭṭa) that Kumārilabhaṭṭa has imposed punishment on himself. The reasons were very clear. He planned to bury himself up to his neck in the pile of paddy husk and burn himself to death. Nāgabhaṭṭa was frightened and trembled at the thought of extremely arduous manner in which he had chosen to die.

Next day morning Nāgabhaṭṭa tried to stop Kumārilabhaṭṭa but he was not convinced. Govinda Bhagavatpāda too conveyed the message of not doing so. Śaṅkarācārya also tried to convince Kumārilabhaṭṭa that it was wrong to punish the self. Jayasīmha from Mathurā came there to meet Kumārilabhaṭṭa. Kumārilabhaṭṭa met him. Then Kumārilabhaṭṭa said that the Buddhist and Jains have derided *yajñas*, *yāgas* and rituals. He suggested him to perform *Aśvamegha* sacrifice and added that he could not be the *Brahmā* in that sacrifice as he has planned to burn himself. The king insisted him only to be the *Brahmā*, but he denied. So, he requested him to search for another capable *Brahmā*, the chief priest. Kumārilabhaṭṭa suggested the name of his disciple Maṇḍana Mīśra for that position, to perform the *Aśvamegha* sacrifice successfully.

Nāgabhaṭṭa went with Jayasimha to his camp and told him about his stay in Nālandā and narrated what happened to *guru* there. Jayasimha also expressed fear of Muslim invaders of Arabia who had occupied port Debal and Neran in sindh province. They terrorized inhabitants and captured local homes, lands and built a big prayer hall for their religion. The Buddhist monks with the Muslim commanders made the Vedic administration collapse. Thus, a large part of Sindha had come under Muslims. It was due to the betrayal of Buddhist monks.

Nāgabhaṭṭa spent the night with him in his camp. In the morning, both of them finished their bath and hurried to *Āśrama*. Kumārilabhaṭṭa as per his decision buried himself in the fire. The three disciples stood around him chanting loudly the *Sūrya Stuti*. Pain was evident on Kumārilabhaṭṭa's face. He became unconscious. At this point Jayasimha remarked that Kumārilabhaṭṭa was true Vedic Brahmin. His veins were full of *Kṣatriya* blood and even among the *Kṣatriyas* such blood were rare.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Chapter

Jayasimha and Nāgabhaṭṭa had decided to leave for Māhiṣmati. But, when they reached Mathurā, Jayasimha's wife fell ill. So he returned to his palace. He requested Nāgabhaṭṭa to go alone there. He left Mathurā for Māhiṣmati.

Nāgabhaṭṭa gave the news of Kumārilabhaṭṭa's sacrifice to Maṇḍana Mīśra and his family. He was upset. His wife was too shocked and thus fell unconscious. Further, he said that the king of Māhiṣmati has planned to conduct the *Aśvamegha* sacrifice and Kumārilabhaṭṭa has suggested Maṇḍana Mīśra's name for the post of *Brahmā* in it.

Viśvarūpa was the childhood name of Maṇḍana Mīśra. He was four years elder than Bhāratīdevi and had advanced so much that he was capable of discussing and pointing out any shortcomings of *Vārttikas* written by her brother. At the end of Twelve years, when he asked permission to go back to his native place, then her brother said him to marry Bhāratīdevi as the *gurudakṣiṇā*. He immediately agreed to marry, because it was asked as *gurudakṣiṇā*. After their marriage, Kumārilabhaṭṭa

left home and started traveling for debates, to establish the supremacy and sovereignty of the Vedic religion . Maṇḍana Miśra and Bhāratīdevī were propagating the Vedic religion in Māhiṣmati. They had two daughters viz. Mālinī and Maitreyī. Both of them were married. Mālinī was in Ujjaina and Maitreyī stayed in Campāvati, a day's journey from Māhiṣmati. Maitreyī's son was a year and half. Bhāratīdevī adopted him, as she did not have a son.

On the twelfth day of Nāgabhaṭṭa's arrival, it was the annual death ceremony of Pandit Maṇḍana Miśra's father. After meal, Nāgabhaṭṭa told about Śaṅkarācārya to Maṇḍana Miśra. As he hates such sadhus, he told that he did not have time to debate. Bhāratīdevī said Maṇḍana Miśra that as Śaṅkarācārya walked all the way directly from Prayāga, surely his goal would be only to have a scholarly discussion and debate with him. They sent Nāgabhaṭṭa to invite him for debate.

Indradatta was the chief organizer of the debate. Bhāratīdevī became the judge as per the suggestion of Śaṅkarācārya himself as he had total faith in her fair and impartial judgment. They started debating. Both were familiar with every word of the Vedas and displayed their tremendous scholarship. Both possessed an astonishing knowledge and unbelievable skill in that game of words. Mālinī and Maitreyī had fear of failure in debate of their father Maṇḍana Miśra. At last, ascetic Śaṅkarācārya won the contest. The aged scholars looked at Bhāratīdevī who was perspiring heavily and seemed to be struggling within herself. As his wife Bhāratīdevī tried to save him. So she asked a question which was related to experience of grahastasharam. Ratiocination did not help him. So he asked to give him about a month. She agreed.

The ascetic with his two disciples had left Mahishmati that evening and told M.M. to remain there till his return. After a week later the news of the king Amaruka of Taravati had come for hunting with his wife died due to sheer exhaustion in the forest near the border Mahishmati. The startling news was that he regained life on the way back to Taravati. This news reached Bhartidevi and even Nagabhatta.



Nagabhatta guessed what had happened. A yogi can leave his physical body with his astral body consisting of the five mortal organs, the five sensory organs the mind and the intellect enter the dead body through brahmarandhra an opening on the top of the head and occupy his entire body. Through physical body of the king the ascetic experience the senses. Nagabhatta determined to make sure by going to Taravati. He told his aunt that he needs a swift horse to go to Taravati for a month.

By night he reached the town. Nāgabhaṭṭa knew Maharani Tejeshwari very well when she married king Amaruka. The queen asked about him and his studies at Kāśī.

He told her that Maharaja sent him to find out the secrets of Sārthas. He had given him orders that no matter how long it took months or years. Tejeshwari understood his pain. She knew all about her husband i.e. the king, so she consoled him by saying that “the moment of reckoning has come.” Both of them spoke about the illness of the king. Nāgabhaṭṭa appreciated her administration. She told him not to leave the kingdom stay in Māhiṣmati only.

Nāgabhaṭṭa strongly suspected that the life regained by the king was not his own. But he wanted to collect more evidences. He was shifted to the palace guest house.

One day Nāgabhaṭṭa was standing at the door of the palace guest house he met the elder disciple of Śaṅkarācārya. Knowing the Nāgabhaṭṭa was the king's guest Padmapada requested him to arrange a meeting with the king. Nāgabhaṭṭa asked why he wanted to meet the king. Nāgabhaṭṭa promised him that he would maintain the secret. Then ascetic told that his preceptor decided that the answer to Bhāratīdevi should be given only by direct experience. So, he left his physical body in a hill top cave in the midst of thick forest. He travelled through his astral body with the speed of the mind, entered the body of Amaruka as it was being escorted by his followers. They were protecting his physical mortal body, from being eaten by wide

animals and by decomposing. He told that already a month passed, his *guru* had not left the body of Amaruka and returned. So he must remind him of his identity and free him, which was very urgent.

Nāgabhaṭṭa told the queen that a person who was studying with maharaja and who is an ascetic now, wanted to meet the king. She immediately agreed and arranged a meeting the next morning .

When the disciple met Amaruka he recognized and told him that he was returning at midnight. Nāgabhaṭṭa told the ascetic that if the king dies tonight he may be interrogated and even his *guru* may also be punished so as soon as possible he should cross the borders of the kingdom. Nāgabhaṭṭa also may be arrested on suspension. So Nāgabhaṭṭa got on his horse and rode away out of Tārāvati. He reached Māhiṣmati at midnight.

Next day, Śhankaracarya explained to Bharatidevi, the difference between sexual union and that of *Brahmānanda*. The sexual union depends on two individuals and when he wakes up, he once again is imprisoned in the familiar worldly problems. But in Brahmananda, the atma just merged into its very self, not in another entity. That is the very state of knowledge, Truth and Bliss. Finally it is an everlasting, permanent state. An individual who has attained that state will not return to the state of Bondage of the cycle of birth.

Bhāratīdevi satisfied by the answer. She asked the ascetic that if everyone jumps directly from brahmacharya to non attachment, to celibacy without passing through *Grhsthāśrama* how can the world go on?

Ascetic answered that there were very few powerful people who can achieve the act of sublimation by following this path. The world goes on far away according to the will of god. Nobody needs to worry about it. Bhāratīdevi agreed to that also and she confessed that she was not that sharp to argue with such intellectual personality. Her husband too was mesmerized by the power of his argument. The young

ascetic announced his victory. She prostrated to the ascetic. The entire assembly followed her example. The ascetic blessed everyone and went away.

Bhāratīdevi did not go to Shiva temple again to see Maṇḍana Mīśra. The same afternoon news came that as soon as the ascetic had returned, he had initiated Maṇḍana Mīśra in sansaya and had departed from there with all his disciples.

After two days Jayasimha came. Bhāratīdevi invited him in through Nāgabhaṭṭa. Jayasimha looked depressed. He said that his wife did not recover from her illness. She died and he completed the obsequies and then left the town. Jayasimha came in, greeted Bhāratīdevi by name, prostrated, sat down and said that he came yesterday only and camped near Shiva temple. He came to know the same morning about the great Pandit who was defeated in the debate, took sansaya and went away, which was not a good sign for the land.

He again said that Kumārilabhaṭṭa and Maṇḍana Mīśra were two capable persons who were engendering and encouraging the vedic tradition, manners and customs, rituals and sacrificial rites and who were instructing the *Kṣatriya* rulers. Who could take the lead authoritatively and occupy the prestigious position the *Brahmsthāna*. Now there is no one to occupy that position.

Jayasimha offered gifts of rice, fruits, jaggery and a plateful of coin to Bhāratīdevi and took permission to go back and requested Kṛṣṇānanda to come in his chariot. Nāgabhaṭṭa got a direction and so agreed to follow him. He finished his afternoon meal and joined Jayasimha.

## 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter

When they reached Mathurā, a big problem was waiting for Jayasimha. Five big Sārthas were camping there as Arabs were preventing the Indian trade in those regions. They threatened, killed and converted people in their religion and subjugated those who supported them. All the five Sārthas had incurred great loss,

yet the administrators in Mathurā were demanding tax once again. Ten people representing each Sārtha were waiting for Jayasimha, the regional representative.

Nāgabhaṭṭa recognized the Buddhaśreṣṭhī and Ādityaśreṣṭhī who brought him from Tārāvati. They too recognized and asked him about his studies. They decided to give their goods to Jayasimha, so that he could sell all their goods to Pratihāras and use the money to build an army for the protection from Arabs.

Jayasimha consoled that he would discuss it with the emperor of Kānyakubja. Then he left for Kānyakubja with Nāgabhaṭṭa. On the way, Jayasimha told him that the emperor was Jayasimha's relative and Kānyakubja was full of his friends. People recognized Nāgabhaṭṭa as Kṛṣṇa. Even the Chief Minister Aśvina Guptā welcomed him with golden necklace.

Jayasimha did not meet Nāgabhaṭṭa for five days. On the sixth day, Jayasimha told that they have abandoned the idea of performing the *Aśvamegha* sacrifice. They wanted to occupy the Northwestern part of Mūlasthāna, which was in the hands of Arabs, where the majority of people were still followers of Vedic persuasion. The drama troop should go there and perform Kṛṣṇa's story. Nāgabhaṭṭa firstly refused, but Jayasimha convinced him that he had to perform for his country. Lastly, he agreed.

Nāgabhaṭṭa and Candrikā met and left for Mūlasthāna. They reached there and started enacting. Vāsudeva Śarmā had given innovative touch to the old dialogues of the play. The story of Kṛṣṇa had been carefully adopted politically to instigate the struggle for freedom. The play saw a tremendous success in Mūlasthāna.

## 12<sup>th</sup> Chapter

They performed the play successfully for more than two months. One day they got to know that the army of Gurjara Pratihāras of Kānyakubja were marching

towards Mūlasthāna. They were camped a mile away from Mūlasthāna. Most of the citizens were in a state of revolt.

Every morning Candrikā and Nāgabhaṭṭa used to go to the Sun temple. But, one morning a shock awaited them. Hundreds of Arab soldiers with swords surrounded the temple. The mounted army officer spoke loudly addressing the entire assembly that people were not allowed to worship Lord until their army return. Otherwise they would destroy temples. Then they fled away. The atmosphere of the city had changed by the afternoon. In the evening, the leaders of the city held a secret meeting. Nāgabhaṭṭa had also been invited. Nāgabhaṭṭa told that let them destroy the temple. They should not help them. When the army of Gurjar Pratihāras attack and freed the city then they would build new temples.

Nāgabhaṭṭa went out in the city in the costume of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the conch in his hand. The two young men followed him. They walked in various streets and announced loudly that they would not support the Arabs and they should not stop worshipping Lord. Chandrica was also excited by this. Neither of them could sleep. In the early morning the Arab soldiers came there and arrested them. They took them far away from the city.

Nāgabhaṭṭa was imprisoned in a dark room. After sometime, they started interrogating him. They asked him to name the name who have sent there. He did not answer. Therefore they tortured him basly. They applied different techniques to torture. They hit him by the whip. They pierced the large needle inside in his forehead and twisted it. They burnt his right elbow with burning rod. Once he by mistake recalled Candrikā. Noticing this, they kidnapped both Candrikā and Cārumati. They raped Cārumati violently and thus she died. Candrikā was taken to Nawab, as she was beautiful. He asked her to answer that why they had come there and who had sent them. She did not reply. At last, he threatened him of killing Nāgabhaṭṭa. So she was worried. To save Nāgabhaṭṭa's life, she surrendered her celibacy to the Nawab. He kept on repeatedly raping her. At last finding no answer

they sat both Nāgabhaṭṭa and Candrikā free at one place. They met each other in a hut and then fled away from there to Mathurā. They were strongly terrified by such torture. They could not even concentrate properly while meditating.

Candrikā felt within that her *guru* was calling her. So, she alongwith Nāgabhaṭṭa started searching the abode of her *guru*. One day, she vomited badly and came to know that she has become pregnant. She became upset and thought of abortion or accepting *sannyāsa*. Nāgabhaṭṭa tried it hard to convince her. With the grace of *guru*, she again meditated successfully.

### 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter

They could not reach her *guru's* abode, on the full moon day. She began to weep. Later they found and reached her *guru's* abode. Nāgabhaṭṭa recognized him immediately. He was the same *guru* who had taught meditation to him at Mathurā.

Nāgabhaṭṭa confessed to the *guru*. He only smiled. He then looked at Candrikā. His gaze merged into her eyes. He signaled her to enter into meditation. She entered the state of deep meditation. After some time, an ascetic got up and walked out. Nāgabhaṭṭa too went out. An hour later, Candrikā came out and started cleaning the *Mantapa*. The *guru* had communicated his decision to Candrikā. Nāgabhaṭṭa was curious to know it. In meditation, her *guru* gave the message of marrying Nāgabhaṭṭa, as she was pregnant. In this way the *guru* suggested her to accept the *Grhsthāśrama* and to lead household life with Nāgabhaṭṭa. The *guru* has also suggested her to continue practicing meditation. Thus, Nāgabhaṭṭa and Candrikā were married as per ritual by the *guru*. Both resolved to lead a marriage life full of meditation.

\*\*\*\*\*