CHAPTER VII

LIFE OF BUDDHA

AFTER RENUNCIATION

Subsequently the next stage in the life of Buddha, which is the fifth stage viz. penances in the forest after having abandoned all, is given in Konjaku 1 as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku Prince Siddhartha, renouncing everything came to the forest where Saint Bhragu lived doing penances. The saint reverently welcomed the Prince and said, "Only a few holy men claim such magnificence as yours. You are welcome to stay here". There the Prince saw hermits in meditation, some wearing dark clothes while others lived on water and fire. Looking at them he enquired from saint Bhragu "What do they seek for?". The saint replied, "They wish to be reborn in the heaven". The Prince thought, if they are meditating not to attain Buddhahood but something else then why am I here, and thus he spoke his mind to the saint. The saint told him, "Prince if you do not wish to remain here then you may go towards the north. There lives a saint named Aradha Kalam. You should meet him".

On the other side Chandak returned back to the palace pulling the horse Kanthaka.

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1 Konjaku Monogatari: Vol.I, 5
In the capital people informed Mahaprajapati and Yashodhara saying, "Chandaka and Kanthaka are back alone". On learning this Mahaprajapati wept and informed the King about it. The King fainted and fell down on the ground. Then after a while he ordered his ministers to search for the Prince all over in all the directions and dispatch thousands of carts loaded with food items. He ordered, "Take it to the Prince and offer him whatever he needs so that he does not have a shortage of anything". Then Chandaka visited the Prince along with all this but the Prince did not accept anything at all. Then Chandaka sent back the loaded carts but he himself stayed back and remained beside the Prince day and night without leaving him at all. The Prince arrived at the dwelling of Sage Aradha. Various gods told the Saint, "Prince Siddartha has abandoned his kingdom and left his father in order to seek for the path of Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi, unsurpassed and righteous wisdom to seek deliverance for the sentient beings. He is thus coming here".

On learning this from the gods Saint Aradha came out to see the Prince and was pleased beyond description. Immediately he invited him to his dwelling and making him comfortable said, "In the past there have been several Kings who enjoying the peak of their power and authority have been enamoured by the worldly desires and none thought of renouncing his kingdom to follow this path of truth. Oh Prince, you at the prime of youth, have abandoned desires and have come here. It is something extraordinary." The Prince replied, "Your words are pleasing. You have to explain to me the way to get rid of the 'chatvaro-dukhatah' viz., the four sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death." The hermit said, "Sattva originates from
illusions that leads to Atman manan, pride in self, which in turn causes Mudha or ignorance. This is the root cause of Moha or defilement which in turn produces the five kinds of senses of form, sound, smell, taste, and touch. These produce the pancha-mahabhutani the five elements which give birth to the various desires like greed and wrath which transmigrate into the cycle of birth, old age, sickness, death and suffering. I have explained this to you in short, O Prince!

The Prince replied, "I have understood the root cause of suffering through your explanation. Please tell me how this cycle could be broken" he asked. The saint replied, "If one wishes to break this cycle of birth and death, one should renounce the world, observe sila, develop perseverance, meditate at a quiet place and remain away from the 'akushala-karman', the desires. This is Vimukti meaning Nirvana." On hearing this the Prince enquired, "When did you enter this path and for how many years have you been meditating?" The hermit replied, "I renounced the world at the age of sixteen, and it has been a hundred and four years since I have been practising austerities. Prince thought, if this is the level of truth perceived after the penances for hundred and four years, I had better adopt some other way.

Thinking thus he got up and bid farewell to the hermit. On seeing him leave the two hermits thought that the Prince's intellect was so deep that it was beyond their comprehension and with folded hands they bid him farewell. From there the Prince proceeded to the dwelling of hermit Kalan. There the five bhikshus including Kaundinya lived. From there he came to the bank of river Neranjara. There he continued penances by eating a
grain of sesame in a day, or sometimes alternately a grain of sesame and rice once in seven days. Kaundinya and others also performed penances, held pujan and remained with the Prince. Then the Prince thought, it has already been six years since I started meditation. I have still not experienced the truth. Due to these hardships if my body is wearied and life lost without attaining enlightenment, the heretics will say that I merely starved to death. Therefore I should proceed, get some food and then try to attain the absolute. Thus rising up from his seat he walked towards the river Neranjara and bathed in the river. Since he was very weak and tired he could not walk back to the bank after bathing. Then gods appeared and mounting him on the branch of a tree brought him to the bank. In the river there was a big Aranya tree. A god lived there on the tree. He extended his jeweled arm to support the Prince. The Prince held his hand and crossed the river. Then he ate the sesame and rice and threw the gold container in which he ate into the river and then proceeded towards the pipal tree. In that forest there lived a cowherd girl named Nand-bala. The Suddhadhivamsa god came to her and suggested, "The Prince has come to the forest. You should perform the Pujan for him". She happily consented and from the pond a thousand petalled lotus flower appeared on which was kept the milk gruel. Astonished she took the gruel bowl and gave it to the Prince immediately. As the Prince accepted it his body glittered with light and he regained his energy. On watching this the five mendicants were astonished and suspected, if we accept this offering we will fall from the level that we have attained after all the penances, and thinking thus they went back.
to their respective places. Only the Prince sat under the pipal tree, it has thus been told to us successively.

Here his journey in pursuit of the ultimate truth is given up to the stage of his adoption of the middle path. The age at which Buddha renounced the world is given to be eighteen or in some cases nineteen. In Shaka no Honji version it is nineteen and is described in short "at the age of nineteen, he left the palace, went to Mt. Dandaka renouncing all and undertook hardships and penances." ¹ Konjaku too points it to be nineteen when the Prince approached his father to allow him to leave as he longed to renounce the world. According to the Seiryoji accounts it is eighteen as the text points, "at the age of thirty after completing twelve years of meditation...." ² This slight discrepancy could be merely by chance in the course of its being handed down from one version to the other.

On the other hand in the Indian accounts the age factor is not highlighted much. It is mostly indicated by general terms, like in Majjhima Nikaya it says, 'Later while still young....., a black haired boy blessed with youth', or, 'In the first phase of my life I shaved off my hair and beard, though my father and mother wished otherwise and grieved with tearful faces.....and I put on the yellow cloth and went forth from the domestic life into homelessness.' ³ However in Dirgha Nikaya it mentions that Buddha had left home at the age of twenty nine. ⁴

¹ Muromachi Jidai Monogatari Taisei: p.104
² Zokugunshoruiju: p.392
³ The Life of Buddha: Nanamoli, p.10
⁴ Dirgha Nikaya: 16
The sequence of his spiritual pursuits begins with his visit to Saint Bhragu. On his guidance he proceeds to the North to the dwelling of another saint named Aradha, who expounds the message of Vimukti or Nirvana to him. Unconvinced, the Prince proceeded further and came to the abode of yet another Saint Kalan. There, along with the five mendicants, he underwent rigorous penances for six years on the banks of the river Neranjara. According to the Nidana Katha, he met Alara Kalam and Udaraka Ramputra who accepted him into the order with respect but not being convinced by their dogmas he reached the place called Uruvela and undertook exacting meditations for six years along with the other five mendicants.

The Buddha Charita also accounts the same in a descriptive and vivid manner. Unconvinced by Aradha Kalan's way and his doctrine of 'void', a doctrine rejected by the Prince because of its fallibility in that, according to the Prince, as long as the soul existed it was likely to be bound to the body in the cycles of birth and rebirth, and it was this very cycle that the Prince sought to break. In his desire to hear something higher, the Prince proceeded to the hermitage of Udaraka but did not accept his system because it too involved the tenet of the soul's existence although, although according to Udaraka, the soul existed in a state of being neither conscious nor unconscious. Konjaku too gives the accounts of his visits to three saints before joining the five mendicants. However here the name Aradha Kalan has been split into two to denote two saints one Aradha and the other Kalan besides the Saint Bhragu. According to the other Japanese versions of Shaka no Honji, after bidding farewell to his horse and his charioteer, he simply proceeded to Uruvela to
undertake the path of the mendicants. On the other hand the Seiryoji accounts point to his visit to saint Bhargva and then to Aradha and Kalan as given in Konjaku the name being split to indicate the two different saints.

The Prince, unconvinced by the paths of either of the hermits, finally resolved to undertake severe penances along with the five mendicants by the shore of the river. Although the Prince renounced all on divine instigation, the course of his path to attain the ultimate truth was charted by himself only. Moreover, the Japanese accounts do not mention much about the reasons for rejecting their doctrine.

The realisation to adopt the middle path came as given in Buddha Charita which states ..... "carrying out many kinds of fastings that are difficult for a man to perform, six years in his desire for quietude he made his body emaciated..." but ultimately realised, "this is not the way of life for passionlessness, for enlightenment for liberation." Then he takes the gruel offered by "the daughter of the cowherd chief, Nandabala and he sat under the pipal tree determined to attain the enlightenment. In the case of this stage, the Buddha Charita version is closer to Konjaku. According to the Seiryoji accounts "the prince after having undertaken penances for twelve years was now aged thirty one. He exhibited the two signs of overcoming the evil". Then on the instructions of Suddhadhivamsa god, the woman Nandabala offered him the divine gruel. Thus the prince regained energy and sat crossed legged under the pipal tree in meditation.

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1 Zokugunshoruiju: p.391
2 Buddha Charita: canto XII, pp.83-84
3 Zokugunshoruiju:vol.789, p.392

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In the Honji version it is not mentioned in detail as to what kind of penances he undertook. An ascetic guides him constantly and shows him to the Vulture Peak where the former Buddhas had preached.

As evident in all the versions, the sequence of events is more or less the same with some degree of variation. Just as the names of the hermits he met vary the identity of the girl who offered him food too differs. Some point her to be a resident of Uruvela, while mostly she is given to be a cowherd girl, whereas Buddha Charita gives her the status being the daughter of the cowherd chief.

Similarly the rice gruel she offered, as stated in Nidana, is cooked by herself, amidst several unusual happenings, and carried it to the Buddha to be in a gold plate.

As pointed out earlier, the basic sequence of events is identical. The central point here is his realisation about the futility of the penances that he undertook. Nidana Katha relates that he realised that undertaking hardships was not the way to attain Buddhahood and thinking thus he began to wander about the villages and towns to beg for alms.

Ultimately the Bodhisattva on adopting the middle path is deserted by his associates the five mendicants, and sat under the pipal tree determined to attain his objective. At this point Mara, the symbol of evil, emerges like a villain determined to dissuade him from his path using all kinds of evil designs to check him. These attempts of Mara are related in the next story titled, "The Evil Mara's Attempts to Distract Bodhisattva" and

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1 Konjaku Monogatari Taisei: Vol. I, 6
constituting an indomitable part of this stage of penances, is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku Bodhisattva, seated under the Bodaiju, the tree of enlightenment thought, What would have been the seat of the various Buddhas in the past when they had attained the ultimate truth, and realised that the Kusa grass had been used as their seat. Just then, the god Taishakuten (Sakro devanam Indra) transformed as a man appeared before him carrying fresh soft green grass. "Who are you?," enquired Bodhisattva. "My name is Kichijo (good fortune)" he replied. Delighted Bodhisattva said, "I am subjugating the inauspicious desires to obtain the auspicious ones. Will you give me the grass that you are holding ...." KichiJo handed over the grass to Bodhisattva and requested ardently, "Promise O Bodhisattva! that you will first preach the law to me on attaining Buddhahood." Bodhisattva took the grass and sat cross legged on it in a position just like the past Buddhas did and vowed to himself, I shall not rise from this seat unless I have attained the perfect enlightenment. On watching this the Ganas, the group of the eight kinds of heavenly beings, dragons and others were all overjoyed and with the other heavenly beings eulogised the Bodhisattva exceedingly and sang in his praise. Then the abode of the evil Mara, the greatest devil on the sixth heaven quaked by it self. The King of devils, on perceiving the cause thought, It must be due to the meditation of the Sraman (religious medicant) Gotama, who sitting under the tree of enlightenment in the upright position, abandoning the five desires, and performing the proper meditations would be able to attain the perfect enlightenment. If he succeeds in attaining the ultimate and absolute path and emancipates all the creatures,
he will become mightier than I am. So before he is able to attain perfect enlightenment let me approach him and interrupt him.

The Devil King Mara had a son named Satta (Sattha). On finding his father writhing with agony he enquired the cause. Mara told him the reason for his anxiety, "The mendicant Gotama, sitting under the tree (of enlightenment) and determined to attain the absolute path would become all the more powerful than I am. I am concerned about how to distract him and interrupt his meditation." Satta reproved his father saying, "The Bodhisattva is immaculate and undefiled, no one can surpass him in dignity. Even the Ganas, the group of heavenly beings, dragons and others are keeping guard around him. No one can excel him in supernatural powers and wisdom. Therefore you should give up such an idea. I am afraid that you may not be accused of harbouring evil designs."

Mara had three daughters who were distinguished beauties known even among the heavenly nymphs, the first one named Zen-yoku (representing the carnal desires), the second named No-etsu-nin (symbol of sexual pleasures) and the third named Kai-ai-raku (symbol of carnal affection). These three daughters approached Bodhisattva and said, "O, Sir you have attained perfection in virtues and now are extremely revered by all the heavenly as well as earthly beings. We are matchless in youthfulness, charm and beauty. Our father has asked us to be in your service day and night." Bodhisattva replied, "Due to your past deeds you are born in the heavenly sphere. Although you have graceful figures and beauty you are not aware of its impermanence. After your death you would fall into the three evil states of hell. I
definitely do not intend to accept any such service from you."

As Bodhisattva said this all the three heavenly beauties changed instantly into aged women with grey hair, wrinkled faces, broken teeth with saliva dribbling from their mouths. Their backs were bent and stomach swollen like a drum, making it difficult for them to walk even with a stick.

The devil King Mara watched this sight with disgust yet he did not give up his evil designs and tried once again to tempt Bodhisattva by saying, "If you do not wish to enjoy the pleasures of this world then ascend to our palace in the heaven. I shall bestow the position of a heavenly King upon you and provide all kinds of sensual pleasures for you". Bodhisattva replied, "Due to a minor good deed in your previous birth, you could acquire the title of Jizai Ten in heaven (the heavenly world of devils). However do not regard it as eternal or permanent. After the period of good fortune and happiness you would sink deep into 'Sanzu' the three evil states of hell and would not be able to come out of it again. This is the root cause of sin, so I would not accept your proposal. Your craving for sensual pleasure shall bring you suffering."

The devil King said, "You say that you know the account of my past deeds. Then tell me who knows of your past deeds". "The heavens as well as the earth can tell that". As Bodhisattva thus replied the earth tremored in six ways and the earth god appeared from it holding the jewelled pot in which lotus flowers bloomed and said, "Bodhisattva has in his youth abandoned all i.e. his mind, intellect, palace and his family for all the creatures and has set out in search of the ultimate and supreme enlightenment. You should stop troubling him now." Mara was petrified to hear...
these words, trembling in awe. The earth god paid his respects by touching Bodhisattva's feet, offered him flowers and disappeared.

The King of devils Mara contemplated, This time I have failed to distract Gotama's mind. I must adopt some other means now. Let me call my forces and threaten him with my strength. As he resolved thus, the sky was filled with various kinds of forces. Each of them was different some carrying swords and halberds, with their heads covered with big trees while others carried the Kongs (Vajra) in their hands. Most of them appeared dreadful as some had the head of wild boar while others had the head of a dragon. Moreover there were two devil sisters also one named Mika or Mrga and the other Kari or Kali. Both of them carried skull receptacles in their hands, and came closer to Bodhisattva appearing in various strange and dreadful forms. The other devils also hurled many different and bizarre objects to threaten Bodhisattva. Yet they could not harm even a hair of his body. Therefore they moaned and lamented more and more. At that time the heavenly god of thunder called Inta (Indra) appeared. He spoke without showing himself, "I can see the holy saint calm and composed as ever without even a trace of grudge and malice on his face. Oh, devils! you better abandon your evil plans to harm him." On hearing this voice from above the devils were filled with shame and repentance and giving up all arrogance and jealousy for ever, returned back to their respective heavenly abodes, it has thus been told to us successively.

This character of Mara appears in all the texts and is like a villain trying in all the possible ways to obstruct Buddha's path. He symbolises distraction and surfaces time and again.
whenever Buddha resolved to take a step. According to some texts he tried to dissuade the Prince even at the time when he was leaving the palace having renounced all, by offering him the universal rulership.¹

The basic character of Mara is the same in all the versions with marginal differences in the ways he adopted. According to Nidana Katha,² Mara attacked the Bodhisattva with his terribly large force in order to bewitch him. He made ten attempts to kill him by using water, rocks, swords, ashes, smoke, burning charcoal, sand, mud and darkness respectively. Bodhisattva countered it using the ten paramitas respectively each and finally the earth goddess helped him crush the evil Mara and his forces. Subsequently his three daughters attempted to overpower him but in vain.

According to Buddha Charita, Mara first struck Bodhisattva with his bow made of flowers and the five world deluding arrows. On finding it ineffective on Bodhisattva he summoned his huge big army but when the great sage was still unshaken, "Mara's efforts were frustrating and he went away dejectedly, struck with the arrows by which the world is smitten in the heart."³ Here the evil Mara's army its size and nature is described in detail. According to the Nikayas, Mara first approached Bodhisattva, when he sat by the Neranjara river and chased him for seven years but did not get a chance to distract his attention. Mara's daughters Tanha, Arati and Saga aided their father in his designs.⁴

¹ Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha: Beal, p.137
² Nidana Katha: stanza 165-171
³ Buddha Charita: canto XIII, 7, 70
In the Japanese accounts of Seiryoji, the episode of dispatching the three daughters is given. Then the evil Mara mobilized his forces using various means to kill Bodhisattva but was overpowered by Bodhisattva's great compassion. The swords hurled by him halted in the sky while the arrows turned into lotuses without harming the Bodhisattva one bit. Thus Bodhisattva overcame this major obstacle in his attainment of the Buddhahood and succeeded in his mission. This achievement, a major landmark in his life, constitutes the sixth stage of his life viz., the attainment of salvation. This is accounted in Konjaku as follows titled, "The Bodhisattva Attains Enlightenment Under a Tree": Once upon a time in Tenjiku, the evil Mara adopted all kinds of ways to interrupt the meditation of Bodhisattva but the Bodhisattva was not one bit moved. With the power of his compassion for the masses he could drive away the celestial nymphs and could also sail through the conspiracy of swords. Then on the night of the seventh day of the second month, he could overcome the evil Mara completely. He emitted light and sitting in dhyana (the meditation), at midnight he attained divya chakshu, the divine eye. In the third watch of the night, breaking through the darkness of avigya (the ignorance) about the real nature of the things, he obtained the light of wisdom and cutting off the shackles of desires for ever he attained the Sarvatha Jnana, one of the three types of wisdom and thereafter he was called Sakyamuni Tathagath.

1 Samyutta Nikaya: IV, 24-25
2 Zokugunshoruiju: vol.789, p.393
3 Konjaku Monogatari: vol.1,6
The Sakyamuni was sitting in meditation when the Mahabrahman approached him and said, "Preach the law to the sentient beings." Sakyamuni with his divya chaksu the divine eye observed the true nature of human beings as well as the Bodhisattvas for twenty seven days. Then he thought, Let me preach the law which is as pure as the elixir to the hermit Aradha. Just then there was an announcement, "Saint Aradha passed away last night". Sakyamuni Buddha said, "I knew this fact that he had passed away the previous night." The Buddha contemplated, Kalan is a tikshendriya, the one having a sharp mind. Let me preach the law to him first. Again there came a voice saying,"Kalan Passed away last night." Then Buddha said,"I knew that Kalan had passed away the night before", it has thus been told to us successively. Thus not misled by Mara's overtures, the Bodhisattva finally attained Buddhahood which is called the sixth stage of his life viz., the enlightenment, thereby attaining the "Sarvatha Jnana", one of the three kinds of wisdom. Thereafter he was called Buddha or 'Sakyamuni', meaning the Sage of the Sakya clan.

The process of enlightenment that he attained is accounted step by step in various works. For example in Majjhima Nikaya it is described systematically stating that in the first watch of night he directed his mind to the knowledge and recollections of his former habitations and recalled all those in great details. The ignorance being dispelled knowledge arose and he recalled all his previous births in places and forms. In the second watch of night, he with his divine eye saw people pass away and being reborn as per their karmic deeds. Then in the third watch of the night he fixed his mind through meditation on the real nature of the world, the source of suffering, cessation of suffering,
realised and got the knowledge of causation, that the world is produced by the law of cause and effect and attained unexcelled enlightenment and came to know of the annihilation of birth, old age and death, and attained the Buddhahood. Thus he accounts in first person, "Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose as happens in the one who is diligent, ardent and self-controlled. But I allowed no such pleasant feelings as arose in me to gain power over my mind."  

Buddha Charita accounts that soon after overcoming Mara, Buddha had put himself into a trance in order to obtain the exact knowledge of the ultimate reality. Then in the first watch of the night he could recall the succession of his previous births. Then in the second watch of the night he could see with his purely divine eye sight the entire world as if reflected in a crystal clear mirror in which every one faced the consequences good or bad according to their acts. Then meditating in the third watch of the night he penetrated the truth to the core, understanding the root cause of things, for example that old age and death are caused when there is a birth. Then contemplating about how to remove the root cause of all sufferings he attained Buddhahood at dawn.  

According to the Nidana Katha after defeating Mara, the same night he attained Buddhahood passing through the four watches of the night, as given in the other accounts. On the other hand according to the temple accounts of Seiryoji ¹, he attained Buddhahood on the seventh day of the twelfth month at dawn. The

¹ Majjhima Nikaya: no. 36  
² Buddha Charita: canto XIV, stanzas 2-87  
³ Zokugunshoruiju: vol. 789, p. 392
time span between Bodhisattva's adoption of the middle path and his attainment of enlightenment here appears to be eight months as according to it the Prince after completing twelve years of meditation was aged thirty in the fourth month of the year. Then he attained enlightenment in the twelfth month. During this time he sat under the 'tree of enlightenment', cross-legged on Kusa-grass and was subject to the evil designs of Mara. On attaining the enlightenment he remained there only, under the Bodhi tree in meditation.

Konjaku indicates that he remained there only for twenty seven days watching the real nature of the creatures and the past Bodhisattvas through the eyes of the Enlightened One. During this time he was approached by Mahabrahman only who asked him to preach the law to the masses. However all the accounts point out that, after the attainment of Buddhahood he remained at that site only for some time, ranging from seven days to seven weeks. During this time he contemplated on the truth as attained by him and also possibly his future course of action in the light of this truth.

According to Nidana he remained there for seven weeks without eating or bathing and then on the forty-ninth day only he felt the urge to do so. During this time the Mara's three daughters attempted once again to allure him back to the ways of the world in spite of his enlightenment.

Buddha Charita accounts too that Buddha remained at that spot only, under the pipal tree, for seven days "free from discomforts of the body he sat looking into his own mind his eyes never winking." 1 Hereafter the Japanese version accounts his resolve

1 Buddha Charita: canto XIV, stanza 94
to proceed to Varanasi in search of the five associates of his. The *Konjaku* gives it in the story titled "Buddha Preached Law to the Five Monks" and is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku, Shakyamuni Buddha came to Varanasi where the five monks including Kaundinya lived. From a distance, these five saw Buddha coming and said, "The wanderer Sramana Gotama has given up meditation and has come to us begging for food. Let us receive him," and as the Sakyamuni came closer they got up, bowed and received him. Then Tathagatha told the five, "Due to your immature minds do not have even the slightest doubts about whether I have attained enlightenement or not. I am saying so because the more we undergo hardships the more the mind is distorted. The more we seek for pleasure the more the mind is captivated by desires. Thus after having abandoned the extreme paths of pleasures and penances, I followed the middle path and thus could attain Buddhahood." Then he preached *Chatvarya*, the four noble truths of *Dukha Satya* i.e. all existence is suffering, is illusion and desires, *Nirodha Satya* i.e. nirvana is the realm free from suffering, *Satya Marga* the means for the attainment of Nirvana is the practice of *hasshodo* the eight fold noble path. The five bhikshus heard these and getting rid of the sufferings of desires could attain *Dharma chaksu* or *vissudha*, the eyes of law. Among these five one was Ajnata Kaundinya, one was Maha Kasyapa, Asvaki Bhadraka, Vaspa, and Mahanama. Why these five are together like this is because in the past in the times of Kasyapa Buddha the sixth of the seven Buddhas, there lived nine scholars. Out of these, four were basically wise and so could attain enlightenement but the other five were dullwitted and are

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1 *Konjaku Monogatari*: vol.I-VIII
the present five bhikshus. They are the first ones to attain enlightenment because they prayed to be born at the time when Sakyamuni Tathagath would be born in this world, and to be with him, it has thus been told to us successively.

This stage in the life of Buddha viz. the one related to the dissemination of his doctrine among people is the most eventful one in his life. Needless to say this stage constitutes the bulk of stories of the Indian section of Konjaku numbering ninety eight stories. This stage coincides with the next fifty years of his life until his death at the age of eighty, and his various deeds in all these years provide substance for these stories.

The Buddha on perceiving that all the saints he had met after embarking on the path of penances, like saint Bhragu, had passed away he thought of the five monks who had deserted him earlier and came to the holy city of Banaras in search of them. The Indian sources point out that the five had decided to ignore him but as Buddha came closer they greeted him and became his first disciples. Nidana points that this was done on divine instigation. The Konjaku version does not mention about his earlier discord with the five mendicants and indicates simply that when approached by Buddha the five got up and bowed down thereby receiving him reverently. These five were taken by Buddha as his first disciples and to whom he preached his doctrine in Sarnath at Mrgadeva near Banaras, even though the first persons to meet him after enlightenment were the two merchants named Tapussa and Bhalluka who were travelling in that area and who approached Buddha to feed him but to whom Buddha did not preach as they were acting on divine instigation and were not seekers of the truth.
In the order of the conversions next to the five Bhikshu's is the conversion of Yasa or Yasoda in Varanasi preceded by that of his father and followed by his other associates. In *Konjaku* the chronological order is not taken into consideration i.e. the stories are not given in the order in which Buddha initiated various persons but are classified systematically with the evolution of the doctrine in mind beginning with the stories about the heretics. Thus the story next to the conversions of the five monks is the story of Shariputra, one of the Buddha's major disciples who is addressed as the "son of a heretic who attained wisdom while in the womb of his mother and attempted to come out on his own by tearing it open. Thus his mother wore an iron belt." Later on, listening to the discourse of the monk Asvajit, Shariputra entered the order and attained arhatship within seven days. *Mahavastu* records, "a fortnight after he had been ordained as a monk, the venerable Shariputra attained control over the super knowledges and realised the four branches of logical analysis...."

In *Konjaku* it is the inclusion of the above mentioned legends and also the description of the challenges posed by the major heretics to compete with Buddhism which give a realistic touch to it. It states how "the news spread all over the sixteen kingdoms of Tenjiku and the spectators were young and old, rich and poor" and how ultimately, with the defeat of heretics, the prestige of Buddha's glory came to be known all over Tenjiku resulting in several heretics joining Shariputra...."

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1 *Konjaku Monogatari*: vol.I,9  
2 *Mahavastu*: vol.III, p.70  
3 *Konjaku Monogatari Shu*: vol.I, p.73
In *Konjaku* the term heretics refers to the brahmins and the other followers of Brahminical and Vedic tradition. Generally speaking such episodes of the competition with heretics although not found commonly symbolise the resistance to the new doctrine which became stronger and bigger after Shariputra had joined it.

Reverting back to the arrangement of stories, the story next to the conversion of Shariputra, is about the misdeeds of Buddha's cousin Devadatta, starting with their quarrel over a bird struck by an arrow of Devadatta who came to the protection of the then Prince Siddhartha. This enmity between the two is the subject of several popular tales in India. In *Konjaku* his attempts to create a schism persuading the newly indoctrinated five hundred monks to shift to his palace at Mt. Gaya in Sirsa in Bihar are included, although Shariputra with the help of Modgalana is able to get them back, using supernatural powers. Devadatta made several unsuccessful attempts to kill Buddha. The ultimate aim of these is to portray the fact that by committing such sins like killing a nun, attempts to disrupt the discourse and to harm Buddha, Devadatta sank into hell underground, the site being marked by a hole which is still there. The crux of the matter is that retribution for his misdeeds followed accordingly.

Subsequently there are the stories of unsuccessful attempts by the other heretics to kill Buddha by various means and to defame him. These stories represent the opposition that Buddha had to face. Gradually it gives way to the stories about the miraculous powers of the Buddha being symbolised by his great

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1 *Konjaku Monogatari: Vol.I*, 10
2 *Konjaku Monogatari: Vol.I*, 12
compassion who gave the position of Arhat, which means the monk who is free from all the cravings and rebirth, to the heretics who accepted defeat. It is also symbolised by the miraculous retributions of making even the slightest offerings to the monks, even an offering of rotten left over rice gruel. This is followed by the conversions made by Buddha of different people starting with his son Rahula, cousin Saudarananda, foster mother Mahaprajapati as well as other people including that of the Kings, poor people, women folk, old people and even the animals. These stories although not chronological portray the evolution of Buddhism. Eventually the disappearance of the stories about the heretics symbolise the establishment of a relatively stronger Buddhist Order without any opposition. On the other hand more and more stories about the miraculous power of Buddha abound, who preaches the doctrine of impermanence on the death of his father and in order to expound the dharma to his dead mother ascends to Tusita heaven remaining there for three months. Subsequently, the dharma is at times expounded by his disciples rather than himself.

The stories relating the cause and effect relationship of various people including monks and nuns (Bhikhshunis), the important followers of Buddhism like King Asoka, the rich Sudatta etc. are there besides that of the commoners. All these stories

1 Ibid: vol.I,34
2 Ibid: vol.II, 2
3 Konjaku Monogatari: vol.II,566
4 Ibid. : vol.II,4
5 Ibid. : vol.II,14
6 Ibid. : vol.II, 15
7 Ibid. : vol.II, 33
are about the cause and effect relationship of the past and present which is central to the Buddhist doctrine. The incident occurs in the present and Buddha explains the cause by analysing the events of the past. At times it is extended to the future whereby Buddha expounds the miraculous retributions to be obtained by the person in future, at times in that very birth only. The cause and effect rule applied in the case of other creatures and animals like the story of a strange fish with hundred heads.

The third volume also starts with the stories of Buddha's disciples starting with the virtues of the various aspects of Buddhism as well as the objects associated with it. For example, the virtues of discourse and its effects on various creatures like birds etc, are related besides the virtues of making obeisance, importance of the robe and the statue of Buddha, the desirable nature of a monk, importance of penances and austerities and even the meritorious retributions of filial piety etc. are there. In this chapter the stories of cause and effect center around the dragons, ugly princes and princesses, Arhats, Bhikhshus and structurally the pattern of referring back to the past is replaced by the prophecies of Buddha about the future.

1 Ibid. : vol.II, 34
2 Ibid. : vol.III, 10
3 Konjaku Monogatari: vol.III, 10
4 Ibid. : vol.III, 6
5 Ibid. : vol.III, 6
All throughout, the passage of time is felt as in the stories of disciples, monks, commoners benefitted by Buddha's guidance and teachings, representing the growing popularity of Buddhism and its strength. The stories about conversions represent the extent of the acceptance of Buddhism not only by the most dreadful of sinners like Angulimal but also by the conversion of the whole country symbolising that the evolution of Buddhism was both quantitative as well as qualitative. Certain events like the death of King Shushodhana, Buddha's disciples competing among themselves to spread dharma, proclamation of Buddha about his parinirvana are some of the landmarks that indicate the passage of time. The evolution of Buddhism could be represented as follows:

Initiation of various people into the order
starting with that of the five monks

Opposition to the doctrine by the heretics

The resistance overcome and inclusion of the opponents into the order along with their entire family

Conversion of various people

Buddha expounding dharma pointing to the cause and effect of things

\[1\] Ibid. : vol.I, 16

\[2\] Ibid. : vol.I, 9
Buddha's major disciples spread the dharma while others extend material support to the order.

A well established order attracting more and more people.

However in the other Japanese versions that account the life of Buddha the contents of his discourse are narrated and not much is said about those who were subjected to his discourse. Generally it is accounted that, "Buddha realised that man's mind is overpowered by eighty four thousand types of illusions so he had established eighty four thousand types of Dharma Prayaya or the teachings for enlightenment, for some instantaneous while others graded with various stages. As there are medicines for various diseases, in the same way these are used accordingly". It continues that Buddha in the span of fifty years of his discourse held more than three hundred councils and preached four doctrines in five stages. In the first stage he expounded Kegonkyo the Avatam Saka Sutra. Next he preached Agonkyo the Agma Sutra for a period of twelve years at Rokuyaon the Mragadeva in Varanasi. In the third period he did not preach any specific sutra but discoursed on the four kinds of teachings. In the fourth period when Hannyakyo or Prajana Paramita Sutra was preached sixteen councils were held at four places in the span of thirty years. The fifth period is of the Hokkekyo or the lotus Sutra and the Nehankyo or Paranirvana Sutra. In the first phase he preached the Lotus Sutra in two councils held at three places. First through the fourteen Paramitas the teachings of Sadharma Pundrika Sutra, another name for the Lotus sutra, are related
revealing the true nature of all the elements. In the three sermons he expounded the theory, the parables and the cause and effect relations. It was followed by the Mahaparinirvana sutra or the sutra of the great demise which accounts the last stage in his long and eventful life originally accounted, as suggested by the name, in detail in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta of the Dirgha Nikaya¹ of the Sutta Pitaka. The Buddha Charita also accounts it in the final chapters whereas most other accounts like Nidana-Katha conclude with the stage of the rolling of the wheel of law by Buddha without any mention of it.

On the other hand in all the Japanese accounts in accordance with the concept of Hasso, all the eight stages including the last stage of his life are mentioned although at varying length and not always in detail. In Konajaku this stage is given towards the end of volume three after the various episodes relating his conversions and preachings are narrated, for the obvious reason of presenting it in a systematic and natural manner. This cluster of stories representing the last stage in the life of Buddha viz. his Parinirvana are initiated with his own prediction that his end is nearing in the story titled, "Buddha Pronounces to the Masses the Time of his Parinirvana"², which is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku, the Sakyamuni Tathagath, aged eighty, who had been preaching the law to people by travelling all over for more than forty years in order to enlighten them in heavens as well as on the earth, reached Vaishali and there he told Ananda, "My whole body is aching. I shall attain Parinirvana in another three months." Ananda asked him,"Buddha! you ought to

¹ Dirgha Nikaya: no.16
² Konjaku Monogatari:vol.III, 28
be above all this then why there is pain?" At that moment Buddha
got up, illuminating the whole world with the light emitting from
his body and then as he sat cross-legged the masses basked in
that light and got deliverance from the suffering thus attaining
joy. From Vaishali he proceeded to Kushinara and in the sala
grove he rested beneath the twin Sala trees. Then he called
Ananda and said, "Listen carefully, the time of my parinirvana is
approaching. You know well that those who ascend must descend
and those who are born must die". Then he called Manjushree, the
Boddhisattva of wisdom, and said, "Explain the reason for my
backache to all those present here. I am above disease due to
the two Karmic deeds of my past. One is due to the compassion
for all living beings and the other for curing the sick. As in
the remote past when I was born and reborn as Bodhisattva
infinitely, I saved people from suffering and gave medicine to
the ailing. Then the question arises that why am I suffering now
like this. The only reason that I can recall is that in the past
I happened to hit a deer on its back. Owing to that misdeed
possibly my back is aching now at the last moment of my life."
Then Kashyapa called his minister Jivaka and enquired about the
ailment of Buddha. The minister, who was an expert physician,
replied, "No medicine on the earth will work at this moment as
Buddha is going to attain parinirvana soon". On hearing this
statement of the mendicant, Kashyapa and all others present there
lamented with grief. The ministers too were in a deplorable
state. In other words every one starting with human beings,
monks, celestial beings failed to control themselves on hearing
about his Parinirvana and lamented grievously it has thus been
told to us sucessively.
In all the Indian versions too Buddha proclaims about his parinirvana to Ananda although this decision is taken on the instigation of Mara. Buddha Charita points that in Vaishali on the bank of Markata's pool, Mara appeared and ordered, "--- now many have attained salvation or similarly wish to do so or will do so. Therefore enter Nirvana." Then on hearing these words the best of Arhats said to him,"In three months time I shall enter Nirvana, be not then impatient". According to Dirgh Nikaya Buddha refused twice for the sake of Dharma but when Mara insisted the third time Buddha agreed.

Similarly his sickness is also accounted in Dirgha Nikaya though missing in Buddha Charita. However, the Konjaku version presents it logically through the cause and effect relation to justify the sickness of the One who is above pain. However, the timing of three months is common to all the versions. On the other hand in the other Japanese versions as this stage is accounted chronologically such episodes are not found. In Konjaku the next link to this stage appears as "Buddha Accepts Cunda's Offerings Just Before Attaining Parinirvana". It is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku, when Buddha was going to attain parinirvana, there lived a Upasaka named Cunda. He was the son of a blacksmith in Kushinara. He along with other fifteen persons got up and came near Buddha. All of them with folded hands and tears dropping from their eyes made salutations and addressed the Buddha as well as the other monks present saying, "Lord Buddha we wish to make our last request to you, which you

1 Buddha Charita: canto XXIII, 67 & 68
2 Dirgh Nikaya:16
3 Konjaku Monogatari: vol.III, 29
have to accept thereby showering your compassion mercifully on us. After you there will be nobody to help us and so we will suffer due to poverty and starvation. With your immense power provide food to us so that we can live hereafter. Have mercy on us and accept our last offering of whatever little is there."

Buddha said, "Cunda you are a noble soul. I shall cast off your poverty and shower the teachings of Anitya, the unsurpassed wisdom of Buddha upon you and thus accept as well as bestow the dana Paramita." On hearing this all his disciples joyously praised Buddha in one voice, "Wonderful, wonderful, Oh Cunda, Buddha has accepted your offerings as his last meal in this birth. You are his disciple in the true sense." Buddha told Cunda further, "You ought to make whatever offerings to the monks and myself just now only as, soon after I am going to attain parinirvana." He repeated it thrice. On hearing it Cunda screamed loudly and addressing people said, "We all should kneel down before Buddha and together request him not to take parinirvana". Just then Buddha asked Cunda, "Do not cry like this. I am attaining Parinirvana because of my compassion for you people and the masses. In this world every thing is subject to anihilation as nothing is permanent," saying this Buddha emitted different rays of blue, yellow, red, white crimson and violet from the curl in between his two eye brows which illuminated the body of Cunda. He, after assimilating this light in his body, held a tray filled with various delicacies and approached Buddha. With tears of sorrow rolling down he addressed Buddha, "Oh Buddha! I request you that for our sake you extend your life by one Kalpa". Buddha replied, "At this moment, instead of talking about this, you should make the last
danaparamita, the offering, to me immediately”. Then all the Bodhisattvas, celestial beings, other living beings together uttered loudly, "Cunda you have got the unique opportunity to perform Kusala-mula the virtuous deed. We have not done noble deeds like you and so the offerings prepared by us are of no avail". On hearing this, in order to fulfill the wish of those living beings, from each pore of Buddha's body a Buddha appeared each having a following of monks who accepted the offerings of all other beings. However Buddha himself accepted Cunda's offerings by extending his hand forward. Those eatables were so much that the entire Magadha was filled with it. Then due to Buddha's divine powers, it did not finish even after being distributed to the masses it has thus been told to us successively.

In Indian version Buddha visited Pava from Vaishali where he was offered food by Cunda, a goldsmith's son. However, Buddha Charita merely mentions it in passing, identifying Cunda to be one of his devotees who fed Buddha as well as his company of disciples at his mango grove there and accompanied him to Kushinara. Incidentally the Konjaku points to his presence at Kushinara itself where he makes the obeisances to Buddha. Dirgha Nikaya presents it in detail including some legends associated with this stage of Buddha's life including the past glory of the city of Kushinara.

The Indian version points out that Buddha complained of the sickness after accepting the food from Cunda which included a dish of sweet meat (pork) offered to Buddha alone, which is unlike the Konjaku version whereby Buddha already had the discomfort when he expressed his intention to attain parinirvana
and thus makes sure to absolve Cunda of any blame. Generally, speaking Cunda, the son of an artisan offered the last meal to him. However, Konjaku credits him with the task of requesting Buddha not to be in a hurry to attain parinirvana. This request was ignored as Buddha had already declared his intention. In Indian version this request was made by Ananda, Buddha's disciple, to stay for another Kalpa which he refuses as he had already promised Mara to enter parinirvana in three months.

As Buddha publicly declared his resolve, the condition of his son Rahul is described in Konjaku in a realistic way as a part of this stage of his life which otherwise is missing in the Indian accounts. This episode symbolising the filial piety and parental love is related under the title of "Buddha Meets Rahula Just Before His Parinirvana", which is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku, when Buddha was going to attain parinirvana Rahul thought, "I shall not be able to bear that deplorable sight of Buddha's parinirvana. I shall depart for some other world so that I do not have to watch him thus" and he ascended to one of the distant worlds of Buddha and remained there. After a while, when the Buddha of that land saw Rahul he said, "Rahula, your father is breathing his last and at such a moment you should have been besides him. It is strange to find you here." Rahul answered "I have shifted here to this world dreading the sight of his attainment of parinirvana". On hearing that Buddha said, "You are really ignorant. Your father Sakyamuni Tathagath is waiting for you only, to breathe his last. You should go to him immediately so that he can see you in his...

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1 Konjaku Monogatari: vol. III, 30
last moments". Thus Rahula guided by that Buddha returned back shedding tears of remorse.

When Sakyamuni Tathagath asked his disciples present there, "Has Rahul come?" Rahul was already there. The monks told Rahul, "Buddha is already going to attain parinirvana but because you had disappeared suddenly he has been waiting for you. You immediately show yourself to him". Rahula crying bitterly approached Buddha. When Buddha saw him he said, "This is my last moment in this world and hereafter I am going to be away from here eternally. This is the only time you can see me. Come more close." As Rahul approached him with his eyes brimming with tears Buddha held his hand and said, "Rahula you are my son. Oh Buddhas of the ten quarters (dasa-disha) have mercy on my child," and praying thus he attained parinirvana.

Thus even a holy person like Buddha had a special affection for his son different from the one he had for his other disciples. Moreover it is but natural that in this evil world polluted with Pancha Kashya, people are infatuated by love for their child. Even Buddha exhibited such a feeling it has thus been told to us successively.

This next link in this series merely relates the fact that Rahula was beside him at his last moment. It also emphasizes parental love, essentially a Japanese characteristic portrayed here and is typical of the Konjaku version and is missing completely in the Indian accounts. Subsequently the story given in Konjaku Monogatari is as follows being titled as "Buddha Attained Parinirvana and His Body Kept in the Coffin":

1 Konjaku Monogatari: vol.III, 31
Once upon a time in Tenjiku, when Buddha was going to attain parinirvana he told Ananda, "After I attain parinirvana keep my body for seven days like that of a Chakravarti Raja, the universal King with the divine wheel of righteousness, and place it in a coffin of iron case, filled with perfumed oil. The outside of the case should be magnificently decorated with jewels studded on all the four sides. In these seven days make the offerings of robes, flowers, perfumes and thereafter, removing from the case, wash the body with various kinds of perfumes and water, wrap it in a fine muslin cloth and subsequently cover it with a magnificent white cloth. Then place it back in the iron case, adequately filled with special perfumed oils, and close the lid of the case. On a carriage bejewelled with seven types of jewels and other precious stones, place fine sandal wood and perfumes and on top keep the coffin." Thus instructing Buddha attained parinirvana.

All his disciples and Arhatas starting with Ananda cried and lamented very bitterly. Even the Bodhisattvas, celestial beings, dragon gods and the eight ganas (the demi-god protectors) and every one else including the plants and beasts without exception cried. Kongorikishi the protecting deity who carries a Vajra in his hands fell down and rolled on the ground and lamented. The Kings of the sixteen kingdoms screamed loudly. Everything the earth, the mountains, the oceans as well as rivers shook violently and even the colour of Sala trees changed and the plants appeared to be dull as if in grief. Thus heavens as well as the earth mourned sorrowfully but all were helpless. Then as per the instructions of Buddha after seven days his body was kept in the iron case it has thus been told to us sucessively.
On the point of his attainment of parinirvana and subsequently the mourning, the Indian accounts dwell at length. *Buddha Charita* relates it in stages whereby Buddha entered the nine trances, the group of nine attainments (*Samapatti*) and then reversed to come back to the first one and then again rising to the fourth trance he attained Nirvana. The *Dirgh Nikaya* too relates it in stages.

Incidentally the instructions by Buddha just before his parinirvana, about his last rites are not unrealistic. As accounted in *Konjaku*, it is not unusual for the leader of such an order, on being asked by his disciples about his remains, to instruct them in detail about how to take care of his body after his death.

On the contrary in Indian versions gods instruct people about the site of his last rites. The body was prepared for it on the instruction of Ananda in accordance with the last rites of a universal monarch as asked by Buddha. Incidentally when the whole world mourned, Mara rejoiced that at last he could win over him. *Konjaku* does not touch upon it but the Indian versions do narrate his reaction. For example *Buddha Charita*: points out, "But the hosts of Mara who had obtained his heart's desire uttered loud laughs in their exultation and showed their joy by gambols, hissing like snakes, dancing and the beating ofattoos on great drums mridangas and patahas."

Then next link in this stage as accounted in *Konjaku* is the arrival of Mahakashyapa to the site, which is as follows:

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1. *Buddha Charita*: canto XXVI, 89-90
2. *Buddha Charita*: canto XXVI, 104
Once upon a time in Tenjiku, Mahakashyapa on learning that Buddha had attained parinirvana, set out from his mountain dwelling and on his way he met Nirgrantha Janatiputra one of the Rokushi Gedo, the nude hermit who always held red Mandarva flowers in his hand. Kashyapa enquired, "Have you heard some news about my teacher." Janatiputra replied, "Your teacher attained parinirvana seven days ago". On hearing this Mahakashyapa mourned and lamented endlessly and along with him so did the other five hundred monks who were accompanying him. Mahakashyapa proceeded to the capital city of Kushinara and reached the site after crossing the river Nirenjara. There he went to the place where Anand lived and told him, "I wish to see Buddha's body once. Ananda answered, "It is not possible because it is wrapped in a five hundred meter long cloth as per Buddha's last directions and is placed in the gold coffin which is kept inside an iron case." Mahakashyapa repeated his request thrice but Ananda answered in the negative and did not allow him to do so. Then as Mahakashyapa came near the coffin the feet of Buddha were seen protruding from the golden coffin. Mahakashyapa noticed that it was golden but of a different hue and got suspicious. He asked Ananda, "Buddha's body ought to be golden in colour. Why this change?" Ananda replied, "An old woman who cried and lamented while mourning for him, her tears fell on the feet and due to this the colour of his feet changed". On hearing this Mahakashyapa faced towards the coffin and cried bitterly while worshipping Buddha's dead body. His other disciples of all the four kinds as well as celestial beings also worshipped it. Then suddenly the feet disappeared. Thus Mahakashyapa, the closest disciple of Buddha could not see
Buddha at the last moment it has thus been told to us successively.

This incident of Mahakasyapa's visit is narrated in reference to the cremation of Buddha's dead body whereby the pyre could not be lit by dipa even though it was tried thrice. Then Aniruddha informed them that unless Mahakasyapa would come and worship the body, the pyre could not be lit and then when he had done obeisance to the best of sages the fire immediately blazed up of itself.¹ Mahakasyapa had perceived the death of Buddha through his divine eye as pointed out in Mahavastu and confirmed it from the ascetic carrying Mandarva flowers. The incident of feet is vividly given in the Konjaku version to show that Mahakasyapa could not see his face at the last moment.

Last link in the story too is typical of the Konjaku version only, which is titled: "After Buddha Attained Parinirvana Lady Maya Descends Down to the Earth" is given below:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku, when Buddha entered parinirvana, Ananda leaving Buddha's body in the coffin ascended to the heaven and said to lady Maya, "Buddha has attained parinirvana." On hearing this Lady Maya cried, mourned and fell down on the ground. Then after a while accompanied by other beings she visited the Sala grove and looking at Buddha's coffin she fell down again and became unconscious. When water was splashed on her face she regained consciousness and approached the coffin. While crying she worshipped it and said", "For anant Kalpas in the past, repeatedly we have been born as mother and son without

¹ Buddha Charita: canto XXVII, 74
² Mahavastu: vol.I
³ Konjaku Monogatari: vol.III, 33
being separated ever. Now you have already attained parinirvana and so it will not be possible to see you again. How sad!" Then the celestial beings showered beautiful flowers on the coffin and Lady Maya held Buddha's robe and staff in her right hand and stamped the ground with the staff. It sounded as if some mountain was going to crumble. Lady Maya pleaded again, "Buddha, my child do not leave these things and take them in order to guide the celestial beings". Then Buddha using his supernatural powers opened the cover of his coffin and came out with folded hands and confronted Lady Maya. Thousands of lights illuminated each pore of his body and from that light thousands of Kebutsu, i.e. transformed Buddhas were created. Buddha spoke to his mother in sanskrit. "Like this every thing on this earth is impermanent, please do not lament and cry over my parinirvana."

On watching Buddha coming out of his coffin, Ananda said to him, "If the masses ask what did Buddha preach at his last moment then what should I tell them?" Buddha replied, "You may tell them that when Buddha who had attained parinirvana was visited by Lady Maya who descended from Tusita heaven, he came out of the gold coffin and facing her with folded hands expounded gatha, for his mother as well as the masses." This discourse of his is named as Mahamaya Sutra. Thereafter both the son and mother departed.

The lid of the coffin closed as before it has thus been told to us successively.

This aspect of Buddha's visit to the Tusita heaven and the arrival of his mother from there representing the supernatural powers of Buddha and his discourse to her outside the coffin are found recounted in Konjaku vividly although missing elsewhere. Subsequently, the description of his last stage in the life of
Buddha continues in the form of next episode titled as, "The Body of Buddha Cremated" which is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku, as Buddha had attained parinirvana, his body was cremated just like the one of a chakravartin raja, the glorious King with a wheel, as per his last will. At that time from Kushinara, four strong muscle men were selected who decorating their bodies with the ornaments carried a jeweled fire torch. This fire was like a round big lighted wheel which illuminated each and every corner. As this was thrown to light the pyre it automatically extinguished. On watching it Mahakashyapa told those strong men, "The pyre on which the coffin of Buddha is kept cannot be lighted even by the fire from the three worlds. Then it is futile to light it with your power."

Next time again eight muscle men of the capital came who carried the jeweled torch and tried to light the pyre but did not succeed. Moreover, a group of sixteen muscle men held a seven jeweled torch each in his hand and threw it on the coffin but the fire was extinguished. Again, thirty six muscle men together tried to light the pyre by the torches but all the torches extinguished. Then Mahakashyapa addressed the muscle men and people, "All of you ought to know that even if all the earthly beings join hands together to light the pyre they will not succeed so give up the idea of lighting it like this". Every one in the capital men, women, celestial beings and seers all longed for Buddha and each one holding whatever he had, offered and worshipped his body while wailing uncontrollably. They walked around his body seven times from the right side and screamed loudly in despair. Their screams echoed through the whole world.

1 *Konjaku Monogatari*: vol.III, 34
At that time Buddha with the power of his compassion, blazed fire from his chest which spread outside the coffin. People watched it awestruck. Gradually, the pyre was burnt completely after seven days. Those men, women and masses continued to cry all this time while making offerings. Then all the four quarter Kings thought, "We shall pour perfumed water to extinguish the fire and take the remains and worship it", and thus they filled perfumed water in a jeweled pot and also uprooted four trees from Mount Sumeru. The trees were as long as hundred yojana each and a thousand men were needed to hold each one. Those trees too came with the four quarter Kings to the site of cremation. The sweet milk that oozed out from those trees was collected in a pot by the heavenly Kings and poured it onto the fire along with the perfumed water. But on the contrary the fire became all the more strong with no signs of extinguishing. Then the Naga King and the gods of rivers and bays each one looking at the blazing fire thought of pouring perfumed water on the fire to extinguish it and then take out the remains to worship it. Thus each one held pots filled with unlimited amount of water and together poured it over the fire. Yet the fire continued to blow fiercely and with no signs of its extinguishing.

Then Rudra the god of thunder and storm addressed the four quarter Kings and the Nagas,"You have been trying to extinguish the fire by pouring perfume water apparently with the intention of taking Buddha's remains with you in order to worship it. Isn't it?" The four quarter Kings and Naga gods admitted, "You are correct, we thought so". Then Rudra admonished the four quarter Kings, "It is selfish on your part. You live in heavens. If you carry Buddha's remains to that world then what would the
earthly beings worship." Then he addressed the Naga King, "You live in the oceans and bays. If you carry Buddha's remains to your dwelling how would the earthly beings worship it." On hearing this, the quarter Kings returned back to the heavens and the ocean and river gods too returned to their sources. Thereafter god Indra came to the site holding the jewelled pot of Saptratnani and other implements for the offerings and the fire extinguished immediately. Lord Indra opened the coffin case and took out one tooth from the relics in there and returned back to the heavens where he constructed a stupa to worship it, it has thus been told to us successively.

This story portrays the difficulty in lighting the pyre the reason being, as given in the Indian version only, the absence of Kashyapa. _Buddha Charita_ recounts "Kasyapa was coming along the road meditating with purified mind and it was by the power of his wish to see the holy remains of the dead-Holy One, that the fire did not burn". _Dirgha Nikaya_ points out, "then they built a pyre with all kinds of scents and kept the body on the pyre. As they wished to light the pyre they could not."

On the other hand _Konjaku_ accounts it as an example of the compassion of Buddha. When, even after several efforts to light the pyre it did not catch fire, the people cried in disgust and then out of compassion for the masses a flame rose from the body and lit the pyre. Here Kashyapa is not the sole cause for the delay in lighting of the pyre as the case in Indian versions. Likewise it recounts that the fire kept burning for seven days whereas in Indian version there is no such mention and it is plainly told that water was poured over it to extinguish it. In

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1 _Buddha Charita: canto XXVII, 73_
Dirgha Nikaya only it is stated that streams of water poured down from the sky, this being done to symbolise the intensity of the fire. Regarding this point too Konjaku account is vivid which shows the attempts of the heavenly Kings as well as Nagas to carry the relics with them to worship it but they could not do so as the fire was not extinguished in spite of all their efforts. This account gives an indication of the claim from the various quarters to possess the relics that eventually leads to almost a conflict but for the suggestion of a Brahmin, this being accounted in the Indian as well as the Japanese versions. In Konjaku Monogatari the next episode given is titled, "The Kings of Eight Kingdoms Divide the Relics" and is as follows:

Once upon a time in Tenjiku, on hearing that Buddha had attained parinirvana all the Malla people gathered and consulted among themselves, "We should go to Kushinara, take the relics and construct a stupa to worship it" and so leading the four kinds of soldiers they approached the capital of Kushinara and sent their messengers saying, "Buddha attained parinirvana on this land but he had been our teacher and is deeply revered by us. We wish to take his relics to our land where we will build a stupa and worship it". The King of Kushinara's reply was, "What you say is true but Buddha had attained parinirvana on our land. So the people of this country wish to possess and worship it. We will not give the relics to the neighbouring people."

In the meanwhile the Licchavis of Vesali, the Koliyas of Ramagama, brahmins of Vethadipa, Sakyas of Kapilvastu, Bulis of Allakappa as well as the King Ajatshatru of Magadh, when they learnt that Buddha attained parinirvana between the twin sala

1 Konjaku Monogatari: vol.III, 35
trees they all thought, "We should go and get the relics" and so each one leading their companies consisting of the four kinds of soldiers approached the site after crossing the Ganges river. As they came near Kushinara without losing time they met a person named Drona Brahmin and told him, "You should remember our names clearly and go to the capital of Kushinara to inform the Malla people that we wish to maintain peace without entering into any altercation with them. On the other hand we have heard that Buddha attained parinirvana here. We have been revering Buddha. Therefore we have come all the way to receive the relics and take them back to our countries where we shall erect a stupa and worship them there. If the relics are handed over to us we shall hold this land up and worship it like a treasure". The Drona Brahmin departed to the capital to convey this message to the Malla people. At that time Malla people answered, "What you say is true but Buddha attained parinirvana on this land. Thus the people here ought to worship him so we cannot give relics to those from the distant lands".

On learning this the Kings of various kingdoms gathered their ministers and consulted, "We have come all the way from far off places for the relics. If they refuse to share it with us we should fight without caring for our life and plunder it by force". On the other hand the people of Kushinara argued, "Those who have come from afar desiring the relics, if refused then they are going to take it by force using their armies. It will be something terrible." Then Drona Brahmin told those people, "All those seers who have adopted Buddha's teachings have pledged to follow the law in order to get deliverance for all. Now fighting like this for the relics would mean disturbing his dead body."
The relics should be shared with the other Kings." All those present appreciated it saying that it was a good idea and informed the other Kings about it. Then they all assembled at the site and discussed about who will distribute it. People pointed out, "Drona Brahmin is wise and just. He will be the ideal person for this job." Then all the Kings present there requested the Drona Brahmin to divide the relics in eight equal portions. The Brahman went to the site where the relics were kept, and prayed there. Then he picked up the upper tooth and keeping it in a container gave it to King Ajatshatru. Subsequently he had the relics distributed one by one to all by daybreak.

In order to divide it equally he filled stones in a pot to weigh it. After it was divided he told people, "Look at this empty pot used for weighing. I wish to take it to my house, erect a stupa for it and worship it." At that time the man from Piprahwa told the people, "I wish to take the ashes of the burnt ground beneath the pyre and shall pray to it by constructing a stupa", and the people allowed him to do so. The people of Kushinara also got a part of the relics, constructed a stupa there and worshipped it. The King of Vethalipa, Malla, Ramagama, Kapilavastu, Vaishali and the King Ajatshatru of Magadha each got a portion of the relics which they took to their respective countries where they constructed stupas and worshipped them. The Drona Brahmin received the pot and erecting a stupa worshipped it, whereas the people of Piprahwa received the ashes of the burnt ground and worshipped it by placing it in a stupa.

Thus eight stupas were erected for the relics. The ninth one was that of the pot, the tenth one of ashes and the eleventh one for
the hair of Buddha. The Buddha was born at the hour when stars appear and also he renounced at the same time when the stars appear and attained enlightenment also at the same hour. Likewise he was born on the eighth, renounced all on the eighth day and attained parinirvana on the eighth day. Again he was born in February, renounced all in February attained salvation in February and attained parinirvana in the month of February it has thus been told to us successively.

This final stage is accounted in the Indian as well as the Japanese versions in more or less a similar manner except for the tendency of the Konjaku writer to dramatise certain points by repetitions in the typical way found in the scriptures. The concluding part of the above story of summing up the important dates in the life of Buddha is a typical example of this style. In the Indian accounts it is missing totally. Here, there is some discrepancy also regarding the number of stupas constructed for his relics.

The Buddha Charita too gives the number to be ten whereas in Dirgha Nikaya an extended list of these relics is given. In addition to the ten it mentions "One tooth is honoured in Heaven and one in Gandhara city, and one in Kalinga realm and one more by the Naga race." Interestingly in the other Japanese versions, there is no mention about these relics and instead it talks about the distribution of scriptures. According to Shaka no Honji ¹, addressing twelve hundred monks and thirty thousand Boddhisattvas, Buddha points to the existing volumes of scriptures, books and sutras and then stipulates how they were to be distributed to the various countries and islands and

¹ Muromachi Monogatari Taisei:
Interestingly accounts "towards the east there is the Island of the Devil, (Onigeshima) known as Japan. After myself (Buddha), another Prince named Shotoku will be born there. To that Island eight volumes of Lotus Sutra (Hokkekyo), one volume of Sukhavati Vyuha Sutra (Muryokyo) and one volume of Avatamsaka Sutra (Fugenkyo), in all ten volumes should be handed over so that the Devil's heart is transformed."