

## CHAPTER – VI

### SAUNDARĀNANDA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

The person who has deep faith and devotion on the Buddhist religion and religious philosophy must be mistaken if he neglected the pious epic ‘Saundarananda’ which is created by the famous Buddhist devout Asvaghosa. But this is the actual truth which happening for a long time that the epic ‘Saun’ ignored by some Buddhist scholar. The epic ‘Saundarananda’ also having some distinct ideas and values which differently interpret by different scholar in different time. The founder of Buddhism was a prince of a North Indian tribe who lived about the year 500 B.C. (about the time of Confucius in China). His name was Siddhartha Gautama and he was a member of the Shakya tribe; he is often called Shakyamuni. His religious name, the Buddha, means “the awakened one,” and at the heart of the Buddha's teaching was a call to people to adopt certain practices that would show them that they were living in such deep ignorance that they could be said to be asleep to the truth--only those who followed the Buddha's path could awaken to reality.

During the Buddha's lifetime, as later, the predominant religious tradition of India was Hinduism, a religion that includes an extensive array of devotional practices that bring people closer to a world of superhuman gods, and also a strong strain of ascetic self-cultivation

practices, including many forms of yoga, that are designed to purify the soul and bring the person closer to an ideal state of being. Among Hinduism's many complex features is a belief in the “transmigration of souls”: that is, the idea that after our physical death, our eternal soul migrates to a new form, through which it is physically “reincarnated”.<sup>45</sup>

Siddhartha Gautama's teachings grew from an unusual mid-life crisis. Sheltered by his royal family from all the pain and suffering of life while young, an unexpected encounter with the miseries suffered by others shocked the adult Gautama into a radically new view of human existence, a perspective from which only suffering seemed real and all the comforts to which he was accustomed seemed an illusion. Disillusioned with palace life, he left to follow the example of Hindu yogins, retreating to the forests of North India to lead a life of meditation and self-denial. In the wilderness, Gautama developed new methods for meditation and a new vision of life, mind, and the universe. These form the core of the philosophy of Buddhism. <sup>46</sup>

So far as our vision goes, now-a-days we find so many chaos or tumult and jealousy every where in the earth. To solve these present problems the each and every person should purify themselves first by adopting the path of truth and non-violence. In this regard Buddhism is

the right path to follow for the reformation or purification of impatient society and social entity of the earth.

For an ambiguous study we remember that, the both side interpretative explanation must be conducted that is, positive and negative explanation with illustration. In this regard, it is needed here to analysis the whole epic “Saundarananda”. The famous author Asvaghosa also criticised by several scholar in different time. 47

The last chapter of the present study “Saundarananda of Asvaghosa: A critical study”is needed to be consideration of critical analysis. After analyzing the whole epic ‘Saundarananda’; its strength and weaknesses of various critical aspects of the present study are summarised s under:-

(A) Virtually adherent or partisanship analysis of the epic Saundarananda:-

Similarities with Srimadbhagwadgita: - The famous religious (both) epic ‘Saundarananda’ and ‘Srimadbhagwadgita’ can be compared equally for the holistic advices by the Buddhist and Hindu follower.Both “Saundarananda” and “Srimadbhagwatgita”have the similarity of wisdom and complete emancipation. The every individual soul has some bondage and he wants to relief himself from this bondage by accepting some moral thoughts and ideas which is followed by some virtual path. The

Srimadbhagwatgita and Saundarananda both have directed an individual that how a man can get the extinguishment from all such bondage.<sup>48</sup>

Like the Srimadbhagwatgita, "Saundarananda" also follow the Yoga philosophy which is specially known as Avyas Yoga practice and karmayoga (self dedication) present in both the holistic book. However, in the famous epic Mahabharata God Krishna has let Arjuna to see the real picture of the universe by showing his "Biswarupa" where all the fainting thoughts presents in Arjuna which is removed or vanished automatically and one kind of a ray of knowledge has raised within him.

Similarly, in Saundarananda when God Buddha has taken Nanda to the heaven and showed him a one-eyed monkey surrounded by some celestial nymph, then "Nanda" after seeing these sudden felt of freedom from passion to family life. So, here is the similarity lies between the two epic "Saundarānanda" and Srimadbhagwat Gitā.<sup>49</sup>

In Gita Lord Krishna has encouraged Arjuna to fight in the battle field just like thinking that it is his duty. Infact it is the duty of all the worriors. Similarly in "Saundarananda", Lord Buddha taught Nanda by giving some spiritual instruction about Nirvana and removed all kind of sensual thirst by stoicism.<sup>50</sup> The further similarities between Srimadbhagwatgita and Saundarananda have been recognised by the following verses:-

(1) "ततः स्मृतिमधिष्ठाय चपलानि स्वभावतः1

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यो निवारयितुमर्हति 11" ( Saun ; Chap=13; Ver=30)

एवं हि

(1) "तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः1

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्योस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता11" ( Gita ; Chap=2; Ver=62)

And such as

(2) "विषयैरिन्द्रियग्रामो न तृप्तिमधिगच्छति1

अजस्रं पूर्यमाणोऽपि समुद्रः सलिलैरिव 11" (Saun ; Chap=13; Ver=40)

तथा हि

(2) "रागद्वेषदियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन्1

आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति 11" (Gita ; Chap=2; Ver=64)

RASHA CONSIDERATION: - Mahakabi Asvaghosa considered Rasha as 'Sadhan', or performance not to be accomplished or 'Sadhya', for that reason the presence of 'Rasha' in poetry of Kalidasha more gratified than Asvaghosa. But also Asvaghosa applied unparalleled sweetness of 'Rasha' in his all poetic creation.51

ALAMKĀRA UNITY: - There is a valuable place in unity of Alamkara in Kavya. Some observers think that without Alamkara Kavya never is covered as a significant one. Acharya Bhamaha, Bamana and Joydeva consent full importance of Alamkara. But only the use of Alamkara beauty of kavya not increases although it is considered that Alamkara must be present in the kavya. As like other epic, the use of Alamkara has occupied a distinct place; in this way following the same 'Saundarananda' of Asvaghosa has set all the Alamkaras in their respective place in a proper and sequenced manner.<sup>52</sup>

KAVYA LITERATURE AND BEAUTY OF PHILOLOGY: - The soft expression of beautify truth is said to be 'Literature', although kavya literature is based on the feeling of facts, when a poet includes the soft feeling of different moods in his creation, then only that particular subject matter considered as an excellent one, Asvaghosa was such type of conscious poet that he introduced such type of feeling and mood in his poetic fancy and as well as all around of his literature.<sup>53</sup>

PROSODY (छन्दः) CONSIDERATION: - The combination of vanishing or disappearance (लयः) and the voice or sound (स्वरः) is considered as prosody (छन्दः). There is a strong bondage between poetry and prosody. Asvaghosa come to know that fact and for that reason he adopted several types of prosody in his exquisite or super excellent creation. In this epic

‘Saundarananda’ he used an ‘anusthup prosody’ or ‘अनुष्टुप-छन्दः’ frequently and with this he used upajati, praharshini, ruchira, basanta-tilaka, shikhorini etc.

**POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE EYES OF BUDDHISM:** - The ancient Indian culture and civilization bears ample example regarding the vital position of women in Veda and Upanishada. Women occupied an important place for a long time. So, in Buddhistic era women also played a valuable role for each and every aspect of the life and society, such as religious performance, marriage and several social customs. In the Buddhistic period women got equal opportunity and equal right in the society. As for an instance it can be included that in the field of worship, Brahmin women can take part as equal manner with men in sacrificial ground. They had been gone through the occasion of “thread ceremony” just like Brahmin men. 54

Kshatriya class of women has been taken part in the battle field along with men. As for example, ‘Kaikeyi’ the wife of ‘King Dasharatha’ faught against the enemies once in a battle-field and saved her husband’s life.

Vaishya or marchant class and Sudra class of women has taken part equally in their respective field. Mythology also proved by the term

“Ardha-nariswara”, that woman occupied the half of everything of men. In the last part of Saundarananda we find out that ‘Sundari’ the beloved wife of Nanda, came out from her luxurious palace and followed the path of her husband for proclaiming Buddhism and formed women team for performing and maintaining the religious activities, rules and regulations and ethics of Buddhism like male ‘Vikshu’ or Buddhist mendicant.<sup>55</sup>

(B) Vertually adversory or hostile analysis of the epic ‘Saundarananda’:-

Imagery aspects of ‘Saundarananda’:- Asvaghosa introduced so many imagery aspects in his epic ‘Saundarananda’. When Buddha has taken Nanda with him and reached to the Himalaya and Heaven respectively for the sake of changing his mental situation. In that time, Buddha has taken him by showing a one-eyed monkey surrounded by celestial nymph at the mountain and asked that ‘is this monkey more beautiful than your wife Sundari?’ Nanda replied- No! Then again Buddha asked, now you tell, “Is this celestial nymph’s are more beautiful than your wife Sundari?” he replied, ‘yes how could I get them?’ Then Buddha taught him only by practice of religious rules and maintaining spiritual path he could achieve them. <sup>56</sup>

From this fact, we can find out that the Heaven is a place which is not known and seen by any one rather it is only illusory or imaginary



aspect. Like this so many imaginary facts and figures he included in his kavya which is beyond of truth and reality.

Manuscript Problem: - we all people are familiar with the name of the famous writer or poite Asvaghosa. But, perhaps it may not properly know to the scholar or religious people that one of his famous epic 'Saundarananda'. The conflict or criticizing points rose in a limited way. Because, a few readers may has gone through this epic 'Saun' in a right way. Even though by visiting several places including Buddhist pagodas and other places related to Buddhist ideology and faith has not been found any extra unknown material related to this epic 'Saun'. In this regard it may be mention that few manuscripts has written in pali languages related to this epic but not understandable and readable by the common peoples those who does not familier with the pali language. Regarding this epic 'Saundarananda' famous critique writer E.H.Johnston has given his view as follows:-

“ The M.S. has been so badlyeaten into by white ants that in the middle of each leaf usually some three lines of writing occasionally as many as fine, are missing through the damage at theends is less and sometimes nil”. \*\* 57

It is true that 'Johnston's' view is quite correct in reality about the manuscript matter. It has also been searched by the study as a whole

of the 'thesis paper' that there is also finding some sort of mismatch of manuscript. As for an instance it is said that the first chapter, verse no. 17 maintaining a particular mood of description but next very verse divert suddenly that mood and included some other scenario based on other mood. So here may be some doubt arose regarding the missing of manuscript.

Linguistic Mismatch: - like manuscript missing there is some difference has been observed in the epic 'Saundarananda' which is specially involved in the language. It is clearly visible that the language which is used in the epic is not same. It seems to be creation of two different being looks like as way of writing is different, sentence formation, using prosody and others. So, it is found that there is some mismatch is present in that epic which is called linguistic mismatch. Language which is used in 'Saundarananda' is 'pali' and 'magadhi' in comparing with other epic it is distinct.

From the above study it may be conclude by saying that the present study has obtain various criticising way as the whole epic has some positive thing related with some criticism. Although the epic 'Saundarananda' is almost have all those quality which can be considered as an epic. By this epic we can say that it obtains the proper value and this particular matter comes to the society, for the sake of spreading

knowledge and wisdom. The quality of a human being must be possessed by every human being through practising some spiritual ideas and values have taught in this epic. So we can accept it that the epic 'Saundarananda' is a distinct epic which is fully covered by the morality and ethics for a person to become a real and pur human being.

### Notes and Refferences:-

- 45) Beal, Buddhist Record of the Western World, Page-11302 ff, cf.
- 46) Kale, 'History of Skt. Literature' Page no. 191—199.
- 47) 'History of Skt. Literature' by S.N. Dasgupta, Page-72 & 73.
- 48) "History of Classical Sanskrit lit." (1<sup>st</sup> part), Page no. 69.
- 49) 'Buddhacarita of Asvaghosa' by Jastine, Bhumika, Page no. 31.
- 50) Translated from, 'सौ.: सा.एवं दा. गवेषणा, Page no.31.
- 51) Translated from, 'सौ.: सा.एवं दा. गवेषणा, Page no.46.
- 52) Translated from, 'सौ.: सा.एवं दा. गवेषणा, Page no.56
- 53) Translated from, 'सौ.: सा.एवं दा. गवेषणा, Page no.71—85.
- 54) Translated from, 'सौ.: सा.एवं दा. गवेषणा, Page no.113—117.
- 55) "Vajrasuci of Asvaghosa" by Ramesh Bharadwaj, Page-44.

56) Translated from, 'सौ.: सा.एवं दा. गवेषणा, Page no.136—168.

57) "Skt. Sahitya Sambhar, nobom khanda", by M.M. Sen,Page no.1.