

MANIHARSHA JYOTI: A GLIMPSE

NAME: Maniharsha Jyoti Kansakar
BORN: 1974 BS Margh Krishna Saptami
1038 Ne.S. Kachala Ga 7
1917 AD December 5th
PLACE OF BIRTH: Keltole, Takhache, Kathmandu
FATHER: Bhajuratna Kansakar
MOTHER: Gyanmaya Kansakar
EDUCATION: Primary education - Siddhiharsha Bajracharya
School Education – Kalimpong
B. Com – Calcutta University
DHARMA TEACHER: Dharma Aditya Dharmacharya
VIPASSANA TEACHER: Satyanarayan Goenka
MARRIAGE: 2001 BA, with Mrs. Kesari Lakshmi Kansakar
WORKPLACE: Kalimpong, Kolkata and Kathmandu.
BUSINESS:

- ❖ Chairman, Jyoti Group (Himal Iron and Steel, Bhajuratna Engineering and Sales, Himal Wires Ltd., Himal Oxygen, Syakar Company, Syamukapu, Jyoti Spinning Mills Ltd., Bhajuratna Pharma Pvt. Ltd. etc.).
- ❖ Chairman of the Industrial Research Commission.
- ❖ Vice President, Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry.
- ❖ Member, Board of Directors, Nepal Rastra Bank (for three consecutive terms)
- ❖ Board of Directors, Nepal Industrial Development Corporation.

SOCIAL AND OTHER SERVICES:

- ❖ Member of the General Assembly (2015-2017 BS).
- ❖ President – Bir Hospital Development Committee, Rotary Club of Kathmandu, Nepal China Cultural Council.
- ❖ Vice-President - Dharmodaya Sabha, World Buddhist Brotherhood Association, Santan Dharma Sewa Akshay Kosh.
- ❖ Treasurer - Nepal Leprosy Prevention Association; Nepal Eye Hospital; National Coordination Council for Social Services; Nepal Bhasa Ekademi; Lumbini Development Fund; Shri 5 Tribhuvan Memorial Committee.

- ❖ Founding member - Lumbini Dharmodaya Samiti.
- ❖ Senior member, Board of Director – Paropakar Organization
- ❖ Founder - Dharmodaya Sabha; Nepal Trans Himalayan Trade Association.
- ❖ Member - Tribhuvan University.
- ❖ Head of Trust - Nepal Vipassana Centre, Kathmandu.
- ❖ Chief Advisor - Nepal Bhasa Council.
- ❖ One of the main organizers of the World Buddhist Conference, Kathmandu. (4th 1956 AD, 15th 1986 AD)
- ❖ Participant, World Buddhist Conference 1st in Colombo, 3rd in Rangoon, 8th in Tokyo, 11th in Bangkok, 12th in Tokyo, 17th in Seoul (elected vice-president).

AWARDS:

- ❖ Gorkha Dakshina Bahu 4th 2033 BS.
- ❖ Prasiddha Prabala Gorkha Dakshina Bahu 2nd 2042 BS.

LETTER OF APPRECIATION:

- ❖ Silver Jubilee Commemoration of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry 2047 BS.

DEGREE:

- ❖ Bhasajwa – Chusapasa 1083 Ne.S.

OFFICIAL TOURS:

- ❖ He went to China in 1960 AD as a member of the delegation led by the then Prime Minister late Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala.
- ❖ He went to China for the second time in 1992 AD as a member of the delegation led by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

WORLD TOURS:

India, Burma, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Republic of China, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, France, West Germany, Italy, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, Qatar, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Israel and United States of America.

DEATH:

2049 BS Magh Krishna Nawami (Magh 3rd)

1113 Ne.S. Pchelaga 7

1993 AD January 16th

MANIHARSHA JYOTI

Maniharsha Jyoti's life was as bright as a gem. His nature was like his name. It is appropriate to call him a sparkling diamond. However, a diamond does not sparkle when it is first mined. It begins to sparkle after it is chipped piece by piece, and scrubbed layer by layer. Chipping and scrubbing are another name for struggle. Since childhood, Maniharsha Jyoti was chipped and scrubbed into a diamond by his struggles revealing his sparkling personality.

In 1974 BS (1918 AD), a devastating fire broke out in Machendra Bahal. Although the terrible fire encircled Maniharsha Jyoti's home at Takhache, it remained untouched. It was unharmed because for generations the house was used as a workshop for forging bronzeware. Maniharsha Jyoti, born in the year 1974 BS (1917 AD) in Takhache, passed away at the age of seventy-six.

The fire destroyed the raw yarn and cotton shops belonging to Maniharsha Jyoti's uncle, Kulratna Kansakar, and his father, Bhajuratna Kansakar. The shops were their major source of income, and it was destroyed. To rebuild, loans had to be taken. However, loans are easy to take but difficult to repay. The debts began to accumulate, and it heavily burdened the brothers. It was during these trying times that Maniharsha Jyoti grew up.

It is said misery loves company and sorrow follows the miserable. Gyanmaya, the loving mother of Maniharsha Jyoti, passed away after a few days of illness, leaving her only son bereaved. To a child, a mother is his entire universe. The motherless Maniharsha Jyoti grew up living sometimes at his home and sometimes at his maternal and granduncle's home. Bhajuratna remarried but no matter how good a surrogate is, a mother cannot be replaced. This is not only true in the pages of fiction but also in reality.

The flames of debt engulfed Bhajuratna, and it became increasingly difficult for him to leave his home. After taking a personal loan from his close friends and teachers, he ran away to Kalimpong in secret. Since he did not have sufficient funds to establish a good shop, he first started by selling tobacco. After earning some money, he brought his wife to Kalimpong. With his mother deceased and his father abroad, Maniharsha Jyoti spent his childhood as an orphan.

At the age of five years old, Maniharsha Jyoti started his education. Sometime later, his father decided to take him to Kalimpong and enrolled him in a school there. Kalimpong was a melting pot of people. There were not only Bengalis and Biharis from India living there but also people from other states. With the opening of new trade routes to Lhasa, Nepalese, Sikkimese and Tibetans also made Kalimpong their trading hub. The nearby Darjeeling was a summer retreat for the British. Kalimpong was growing and so was its economy. Hence, Bhajuratna started selling brass and copper pots from his tobacco shop. To increase his business, he brought in copper craftsmen from Kathmandu to work at his workshop there.

As a child, Maniharsha Jyoti spent his waking hours playing Bas-Ut (a children's game) with the children of different castes and creed in Kalimpong. He grew up listening to his father's woeful stories. When he was an adolescent, his father sent him to his friend, the then well-known Lhasa trader Dharmaman Tuladhar's (Dharma Sahu) Calcutta Kothi (office with residence), to live and learn the business trade from him. Maniharsha Jyoti would study and cook for the staff in Calcutta.

He was a son of a businessmen. So, it must have been heartbreaking for the teenage Maniharsha Jyoti to work as a cook; but instead, the lessons he learnt was that if he studied hard and the acquired good knowledge about the trade then one day, he too could and should establish his own business Kothi.

Even with adversity, Maniharsha Jyoti graduated from Calcutta University with a Bachelor of Commerce degree. Under the influence of the Buddha Dharma Support Association in Calcutta, he became involved with Jagatman

Vaidya, who was editing and publishing the magazine 'Buddha Dharma Wo Nepal Bhasa' under the alias Dharma Aditya Dharmacharya. Maniharsha Jyoti considered him his religious teacher and gained knowledge about Theravada Buddhism from him. Maniharsha Jyoti contributed to the magazine 'Buddha Dharma Wo Nepal Bhasa' as much as a student could. From this time, he began following Panchasheel (the basic tenets of Buddhism) and he continued to follow Panchasheel throughout his life. Moved by Dharma Aditya Dharmacharya, he provided financial support for the upliftment and preservation of Theravada Buddhism in Kalimpong and Kathmandu.

As a teenager, one learns things without thinking if something is good or bad. Taking after his friends, Maniharsha Jyoti picked up the habit of smoking. He would secretly smoke, hiding it from his father. However, one day, while he was smoking in the toilet, his father caught him. His father not only scolded him but also beat him up. After which, Maniharsha Jyoti not only stopped smoking, but he also kept away from all intoxicants.

Studying in Calcutta, the hotbed of revolutionaries Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ashutosh Mukherjee, Subhash Chandra Bose, Maniharsha Jyoti heeded Mahatma Gandhi's call for Swaraj (Indian Independence Movement). He wore khadi clothes and Gandhi cap and became a devout follower of Gandhi while attending classes. Every day, he would wake up early in the morning and take a bath, and in the evening, he would wash his clothes and always wear dry clean clothes.

In turn for cooking, Maniharsha Jyoti was offered breakfast, dinner and lodging but no lunch. It was natural that he was hungry when he returned from college. He endured for a few days but when hunger ravished him, he sold his gold ring given to him by his father to eat. He did not inform his father until his father questioned him about his missing ring.

While studying in Calcutta, Maniharsha Jyoti spoke a mishmash language mixed with Nepal Bhasa (Newari), Nepali, Hindi, Bengali, English etc. When Bhajuratna heard his well-educated son, who had lived in Calcutta for many years, speak in a muddled way, he got angry and said to his son, "You have studied and lived in Calcutta for so many years, and this is the hodgepodge language that you speak. I do not like this language. You should go to Kathmandu and learn to speak your mother tongue Newari well." He then sent his son to Kathmandu.

Maniharsha Jyoti returned to Kathmandu to do business, where he opened a pots and pans shop. Even after a year and a half, his shop did not earn a profit. His first business in Kathmandu was a failure. One wonders, if Maniharsha Jyoti had succeeded, would he have become Nepal's famed industrialist and social worker or like other businessmen of Nepal, he would have only become a rich one. This failure hurt him badly. To add salt to the wound, his father chided him telling him that even though he was the son of a businessman, he could not run a shop well. Maniharsha Jyoti was dismissed to Kalimpong by his father. This was a major turning point in his life.

In Kalimpong, Maniharsha Jyoti's fortune changed. At first, he helped his father in his work. Later he focused on his own business. He bought coin mint metal scraps from Pharijong, Tibet and sold them in Kalimpong. At the time, World War II was raging on. Market prices would go up and down. He benefited greatly from this scrap business. Soon, he bought a large square piece of land in Kalimpong.

In time, Maniharsha Jyoti started a venture of delivering, clearing and forwarding goods of traders in Kalimpong, Calcutta and Lhasa. This business was profitable. Bhajuratna always wore a white cap. The traders from Tibet used to call him 'Samu Karpu' meaning white cap. This name was well-known even in Tibet. For this reason, Bhajuratna, with the help of his sons and nephews, opened a business Kothi in Lhasa with the name Syamukapu. Planting himself in Kalimpong and Calcutta, Maniharsha Jyoti sent his cousin Ratnajyoti and brothers Gyanjyoti and Devjyoti to Lhasa as office heads.

During his studies, Maniharsha Jyoti not only learned to speak English, but he was also fluent in Hindi and Bengali. While in Kalimpong, he also learnt the Bhote (Tibetan) language. Off course, Nepal Bhasa was his mother tongue. His multilingual skill was greatly beneficial to him for his business.

To recognize a person's personality is a gift, how to behave or communicate with a person, is another. Maniharsha Jyoti had both these gifts. Even at a young age, he befriended many prominent people. His Bengali friends supported him greatly in his business in Calcutta while his Tibetan friends aided him in his business in Lhasa. He was a religious person and a philanthropist. He had great faith in Buddhism and was generous to the upliftment of Buddhism. When he needed help, even monks and lamas would provide the necessary assistance to him.

As a warrior must be take risk in a battle, so too must a businessman take risk to succeed. Maniharsha Jyoti also took risks to invest in big business and industry. Inherently, great opportunities are accompanied by great obstacles. But no matter the obstacle, Maniharsha Jyoti was never discouraged. Once, he took up the job of collecting abandoned and used World War II vehicles scattered in the jungles of Assam and Burma to sell at Batuli Chowrangi Maidan. It was a risky job, but he triumphed.

Examining the types of business and industry established by Maniharsha Jyoti, it appears he achieved most success with endeavors related to metal. His business, which started with the trade of coin mint scraps, expanded to mining of iron and manganese ore from various parts of South India, to selling and exporting them. He prospered in this. Afterwards, he took up the contract of Bhilai iron mines. For a Nepalese businessman, it was a very risky contract. Although he faced a lot of troubles in the beginning, he overcame them to be prosperous. Maniharsha Jyoti returned to Nepal to establish a steel rolling mill in Parwanipur. This was the first sizable factory built by a civilian. Despite facing many sorrows, sufferings, hardships, obstacles and troubles, Maniharsha Jyoti achieved success in this too.

According to their caste, the ancestral occupation of the Kansakars is crafting bronze plates and bowls. Kularatna Kansakar and Bhajuratna Kansakars left their ancestral profession to trade in yarn and cotton, but they had to face great difficulty due to the fire. After many years, Maniharsh Jyoti established the vast Jyoti Spinning Mill to produce yarn. When this factory was thriving, he passed away.

Although Maniharsha Jyoti was a successful businessman and industrialist, he was equally involved in social service and was a good human being. Wherever he lived, Kalimpong, Calcutta and Kathmandu, he never stopped performing social service. In business, he was the Chairman of Jyoti Group, Vice-President of Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chairman of the Industrial Inspection Commission, Founder of Nepal Trans Himalayan Trade Association, Board member of Nepal Rastra Bank , Board member of Nepal Industrial Development Corporation, Founder Treasurer and Vice-Chairman of the religious organization Dharmodaya Sabha, member of Sanatan Dharma Seva Samiti Fund, Treasurer of Lumbini Development Fund, Vice-President of the World Buddhist Brotherhood Association and a trustee of Nepal Vipassana Center Kathmandu. Similarly, in the field of social services, he was the Chairman of Bir Hospital Development Committee, Treasurer of Nepal Eye Hospital, Senior Board member of Paropakar Organization, Treasurer of Nepal Leprosy Prevention Association, President of Rotary Club Kathmandu, Treasurer of King Tribhuvan Memorial Committee, Treasurer of Social Service National Coordinating Council. In the field of literature, he was the Treasurer of Nepal Bhasa Ekademi, member of Tribhuvan University Assembly. Similarly, in the cultural field, he was the President of the Nepal China Cultural Council.

It would seem Maniharsha Jyoti did not directly participate in politics after returning to Kathmandu. However, being a nationally renowned businessman, he was nominated to Nepal's first parliament.

Maniharsha Jyoti was a member of the delegation that visited China under the leadership of the then two Prime Ministers and, as a representative of Buddhism and, industry and trade, he toured worldwide.

Bees are drawn to fragrant flowers and refrain from flying to scentless ones. Similarly, students, travelers, writers, social workers and religious workers visited Maniharsha Jyoti for financial assistance, and those he met did not return empty-handed. Many got financial assistance from him. It is known to many that he generously donated to earthquake and flood victims. However, he only donated after understanding if the donation would be put to good use or not. He would not even give a single penny to a beggar who had hands and feet and could work for a living. He believed that giving donations to those beggars would only increase their numbers and encourage people to eat without working.

Even though Maniharsha Jyoti was a multi-millionaire, he did not hesitate to recount to people his stories of struggle. He would tell people that his success was a result of his hard work rather than fate's gift, and he inspired people to strive for success with hard work.

Since he was a devotee of Mahatma Gandhi, if necessary, he would be the first to step forward to work. By working, he would demonstrate how to work and show there was no shame in working. This was witnessed by all that were close to him.

As much as possible, Maniharsha Jyoti preferred to travel in lower-class train compartments. He would travel in higher-class only if he was accompanied by women and children. Observing this habit of his, people would call him miserly. But he would say that the money saved this way could be spent on good deeds.

One of his principles was that anything that can be used should not be thrown away, it should be used as much as possible. Seeing a rich person like him writing a draft of a letter on the back of an old calendar, people who went to him to ask for donations would wonder how a businessman who would not even throw away a calendar, could give donations.

Having suffered in childhood, Maniharsha Jyoti valued time. He would never waste time. He would take advantage of every minute. He always kept a pen and paper with him and jotted down any tasks that needed to be done. If he had time, he would either write a letter to someone or he would meditate.

Due to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, Maniharsha Jyoti was interested in naturopathy (natural medicine), and he was also, a member of the Arogya Mandir of India. Although he did not eat meat or drink alcohol, he never despised people who did.

Since Maniharsha Jyoti spent his early life in Kalimpong and Calcutta, his religious association was with Dharma Aditya Dharmacharya and Theravada monks. He gave importance to the tenets of morality. It was only later he witnessed the prevalent Vajrayani rituals and idol worship in Kathmandu. Vajrayana, Tibetan, Theravada regardless of the branch, they were all Buddhism. He believed the paths were different, but the goal was the same.

Perseverance was a key quality that led to Maniharsha Jyoti's accomplishments. He would not rest until he had completed the task that he had started. It was perseverance, patience and courage that led him to the path of prosperity.

Language is a nature's gift to man. The more languages a person knows, the more people he can communicate with, and the more people he communicates with, the more people he can ask for help and help in return. Maniharsha Jyoti spoke 5/6 languages. Due to his stay in Kalimpong and Calcutta, he was eloquent in Hindi , Bengali , Tibetan and English. Many must have heard his sweet and fluent speeches in Nepali and Nepal Bhasa. His speeches in English were pleasant and courteous. Even the English people praised Maniharsha Jyoti's English speeches after hearing him.

Manisharsha Jyoti was a vocal speaker but during an event, when he was about to give his speech, his voice failed him. Despite his best efforts, he could not give his speech that day. Witnessing his state, his well-wishers advised him to see a doctor immediately as this was not a good sign. After this episode, he felt that his end was near.

Maniharsha Jyoti was diagnosed with lung cancer and was aware of it. Even when he was suffering from such a grave disease, he would talk to visitors like nothing was wrong with him. People would come to visit him upon hearing about his health, but they would return surprised by his behavior. The virtues of patience and self-confidence in him gave him the strength to stand strong.

Maniharsha Jyoti returned to Kathmandu after his cancer treatment in Bangkok. Right away, he went to a hospital to meet Asharam Shakya, the Secretary of Lumbini Development Fund, who was admitted there after an accident. Maniharsha Jyoti, the Treasurer of the fund, realizing that he did not have long to live due to cancer and seeing the Secretary incapacitated by a serious accident, his heart broke and his eyes welled up. In tears, he said, "Asharam guruju, I do not have long to live. Now, I cannot do much for the development of Lumbini. Please get well soon, make the development of Lumbini a success." Maniharsha Jyoti considered his probable death, a part of nature's law. He keenly desired to develop Lumbini, the birthplace of Nepal's greatest son Lord Buddha but due to cancer, he could no longer do anything, this saddened him.

Maniharsha Jyoti was not only a great devotee of Lord Buddha, but he was also a great devotee of teachers. People who witnessed his show of respect towards his religious teacher Dharma Aditya Dharmacharya, could not believe his dedication at this day and age. Subsequently, Maniharsha Jyoti would hold in similar reverence Satya Narayan Goenka, his Vipassana teacher. Even at the end, he kept in touch with the venerable teacher and continued to receive his teaching.

While practicing Vipassana meditation, Maniharsha Jyoti renounced this anitya (impermanent) world. After his death, many wished, prayed, worshiped and hoped, for his soul's eternal peace, his reincarnation in the heavens, and his attainment of Nirvana. His acts of charity, his good deeds and his pious acts performed during his lifetime, and the wishes of many, it can be hoped that Maniharsha Jyoti will certainly get salvation.

Today, Maniharsha Jyoti is no longer with us, but his labor stands, and his memories remain. His name is immortalized by those who remember him.

Sadhu !

Sadhu !!

Sadhu !!!