

## Acharya Dharmananda Damodar Kosambi

**Acharya Dharmananda Damodar Kosambi** ([Marathi](#): धर्मानंद दामोदर कोसंबी) (9 October 1876 – 24 June 1947) was a prominent [Buddhist](#) scholar and a [Pāli](#) language expert. He was the father of the illustrious mathematician and prominent Marxist historian, [Damodar Dharmananda Kosambi](#).

### Biography

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Kosambi was born in the Sankhval village of Goa in 1876 in orthodox brahmin family. He was married at the age of sixteen.<sup>[1]</sup> He was passionately interested in knowledge and felt that married life would not allow him to pursue this goal. He thus attempted to leave home several times, but lacked the courage to do so and he returned to his family. However, after the birth of his first daughter, Manik, he did leave his family not returning for nearly four years. Needless to say, his wife, Balabai, suffered during these years, as it was uncommon at the time for a married man to leave his wife and family. Later, Kosambi first traveled to Pune with an intention to learn Sanskrit. From Pune, he traveled to Varanasi after brief sojourns in Ujjain, Indore, Gwalior and Prayag. At Varanasi, he diligently learnt Sanskrit under the tutelage of Gangadharpant Shastri and Nageshwarpant Dharmadhikari. He faced umpteen difficulties in Kashi on the sustenance front. He had to fight hard for his meals and accommodation and to make matters worse, Kashi was hit by a severe plague epidemic during the same time. Yet he made phenomenal progress in Sanskrit. Some time later, he moved to Nepal to study Buddhism in its original language, Pāli. However, he was rather disappointed with the dismal state of Buddhism there and instead traveled to [Calcutta](#) and then on to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), where he enrolled himself in the Vidyodaya University. He studied there for three years under the tutelage of Shri Sumangalacharya and was ordained as a Buddhist monk in 1902. Later, he went to [Burma](#) (Myanmar) and undertook comparative study of Buddhist texts in [Burmese language](#). After spending seven years abroad, Kosambi returned to India.

He started working as a reader at the [University of Calcutta](#) and brought his wife and daughter Manik to Calcutta. His son Damodar was born in 1907. Later, Dharmananda gave up his university job to work as a research fellow in Baroda. Later, he started lecturing all over Western India, and finally moved to [Fergusson College](#) in Pune. In Bombay, he met Dr. James Woods from [Harvard University](#), who was seeking a scholar adept in Sanskrit, Ardhamagadhi, and Pāli. Woods invited Kosambi to Harvard, to complete the task of compiling a critical edition of [Visuddhimagga](#), a book on Buddhist philosophy. At Harvard, Kosambi learned Russian and took keen interest in Marxism. He traveled to the [USSR](#) in 1929 and taught Pāli at [Leningrad University](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

When the Indian independence movement was at its peak, Kosambi returned to India and taught at [Gujarat Vidyapith](#) without remuneration. He also started recruiting volunteers for [Salt Satyagraha](#).

He was imprisoned for six years for participating in the Salt Satyagraha, which certainly took a toll on his health.<sup>[1]</sup>

Dr. [B. R. Ambedkar](#) got to know Acharya Kosambi during Indian's fight for independence, and Kosambi's influence on him played a part in Ambedkar's decision to convert to Buddhism when he decided to change his religion.

Besides Buddhist works, Kosambi also studied and translated many [Jain](#) works. Later, Kosambi founded *Bahujanavihara*, a shelter house for Buddhist monks in Bombay, which exists to this day.

## Death

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Under the influence of Jainism, Kosambi decided to give up his life through [sallekhana](#) (voluntary fasting). Gandhiji requested that he move to Wardha for naturopathy and reconsider his decision to fast unto death. He moved to Sevagram, near Wardha, but kept his diet to a spoon of bitter gourd (karela) juice in order to respect Gandhi's wishes. He wanted to die on Buddha Pournima but lived beyond it for a few days. The end came after 30 days of fasting in June 1947.

## Works

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He authored one of the most popular biographies of Buddha, *Bhagwan Buddha* (1940) in Marathi.<sup>[2]</sup> It was later translated in English and in other Indian languages by Central [Sahitya Akademi](#).

Besides *Bhagwan Buddha*, Kosambi also authored eleven books on Buddhism and Jainism. He also wrote a play titled "Bodhisatva" in Marathi which sketches the life of Gautama Buddha in story form. His autobiography, written in Marathi, is called *Nivedan* which was a serialized column published in a Panjim-based periodical called 'Bharat' from November 1912 till February 1916.

## Bibliography

- *Dharmanand Kosambi: The Essential Writings*, ed. by Meera Kosambi. Orient Blackswan, 2013.
- *Bhagawan Buddha* by Dharmanand Kosambi, Sahitya Akademi.
- *Nivedan: The Autobiography of Dharmanand Kosambi*, trans. by Meera Kosambi. Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011.



## Rahul Sankrityayan

**Rahul Sankrityayan** (9 April 1893 – 14 April 1963), is called the *Father of Hindi Travelogue Literature*. He is the one who played a pivotal role to give travelogue a 'literature form', was one of the most widely travelled scholars of [India](#), spending forty-five years of his life on travels away from his home.<sup>[2]</sup>

He travelled to many places and wrote many travelogue approximately in the same ratio. He is also famously known for his authentic description about his travels experiences, for instance- in his travelogue "Meri Laddakh Yatra" he presents overall regional, historical and cultural specificity of that region judiciously. He became a Buddhist monk (*Bauddha Bhikkhu*) and eventually took up [Marxist Socialism](#).<sup>[2]</sup> Sankrityayan was also an Indian nationalist, having been arrested and jailed for three years for creating anti-British writings and speeches.<sup>[2]</sup> He is referred to as the 'Greatest Scholar' (*Mahapandit*) for his scholarship.<sup>[2]</sup> He was both a [polymath](#) as well as a [polyglot](#).<sup>[2]</sup> The Government of India awarded him the civilian honour of the [Padma Bhushan](#) in 1963.<sup>1</sup>

## Childhood

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He was born as Kedarnath Pandey in a poor [Bhumihar Brahmin](#) family on 9 April 1893 in Pandaha village, [Azamgarh](#) district, in Eastern [Uttar Pradesh](#).<sup>[1]</sup> He received formal schooling at a local primary school, though he later studied and mastered numerous languages independently, as well as the art of photography.

## Philosophy of his Life

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In his initial days he was a keen follower of [Arya Samaj](#) of Swami [Dayananda Saraswati](#). Buddhism came to him and changed his life. He lost faith in God's existence but still retained faith in reincarnation. Later he moved towards Marxist Socialism and rejected the concepts of reincarnation and afterlife also. The two volumes of *Darshan-Digdarshan*, the collected history of World's Philosophy give an indication of his philosophy when we find the second volume much dedicated to [Dharmakirti's Pramana Vartika](#). This he discovered in Tibetan translation from Tibet.

## Travels

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Sankrityayan's travels took him to different parts of India including [Ladakh](#), [Kinnaur](#), and [Kashmir](#). He also travelled to several other countries including [Nepal](#), [Tibet](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Iran](#), China, and the former [Soviet Union](#). He spent several years in the "Parsa Gadh" village in the [Saran district](#) in [Bihar](#). The village's entry gate is named "Rahul Gate". While travelling, he mostly used surface transport,

and he went to certain countries clandestinely; he entered Tibet as a [Buddhist monk](#). He made several trips to Tibet and brought valuable paintings and [Pali](#) and [Sanskrit manuscripts](#) back to India. Most of these were a part of the libraries of [Vikramshila](#) and [Nalanda](#) Universities. These objects had been taken to Tibet by fleeing [Buddhist monks](#) during the twelfth and subsequent centuries when the invading Muslim armies had destroyed universities in India. Some accounts state that Rahul Sankrityayan employed twenty-two mules to bring these materials from Tibet to India. [Patna Museum, Patna](#), has a special section of these materials in his honour, where a number of these and other items have been displayed.

## Books

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Sankrityayan was a [polyglot](#), well versed in several [languages](#) and [dialects](#), including [Hindi](#), [Sanskrit](#), [Pali](#), [Bhojpuri](#), [Urdu](#), [Persian](#), [Arabic](#), [Tamil](#), [Kannada](#), [Tibetan](#), [Sinhalese](#), French and Russian.<sup>[2]</sup> He was also an [Indologist](#), a [Marxist](#) theoretician, and a creative writer.<sup>[2]</sup> He started writing during his twenties and his works, totalling well over 100, covered a variety of subjects, including sociology, history, philosophy, [Buddhism](#), [Tibetology](#), [lexicography](#), [grammar](#), textual editing, [folklore](#), science, drama, and politics.<sup>[2]</sup> Many of these were unpublished.<sup>[2]</sup> He translated [Majjhima Nikaya](#) from [Prakrit](#) into [Hindi](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

One of his most famous books in Hindi is [Volga Se Ganga](#) (*A journey from the Volga to the Ganges*) – a work of historical fiction concerning the migration of [Aryans](#) from the [steppes](#) of the [Eurasia](#) to regions around the [Volga river](#); then their movements across the [Hindukush](#) and the [Himalayas](#) and the sub-Himalayan regions; and their spread to the [Indo-Gangetic plains](#) of the [subcontinent of India](#). The book begins in 6000 BC and ends in 1942, the year when [Mahatma Gandhi](#), the Indian nationalist leader called for the [quit India movement](#). It was published in 1942. A translation into English of this work by Victor Kiernan was published in 1947 as *From Volga to Ganga*.<sup>[4]</sup> It was translated by K.N. Muthiya-Tamilputhakalayam in [Tamil](#) as *Valgavil irundu gangai varai* and is still considered a best-seller. The Kannada translation done by B.N Sharma as "Volga Ganga" . The Telugu translation (Volga nunchi Ganga ku) inspired many readers. *Volga muthal Ganga vare*, the Malayalam translation, became immensely popular among the young intellectuals of Kerala and it continues to be one of the most influential books of its times. The [Bengali](#) version is *Volga Theke Ganga* [ভাঙ্গা থেকে গঙ্গা], which is still acclaimed by the critics.

His most important travelogue literature is- "Tibbat me Sava varsha(1933), "Meri Europe Yatra" (1935), "Athato Ghumakkad Jigyasa", "Volga se Ganga", "Asia ke Durgam Bhukhando Mein", "Yatra Ke Panne" and "Kinnar Desh Mein".

More than ten of his books have been translated and published in [Bengali](#). He was awarded the [Padmabhushan](#) in 1963,<sup>[5]</sup> and he received the [Sahitya Akademi Award](#) in 1958 for his book *Madhya Asia ka Itihaas*.

He maintained daily diaries in Sanskrit which were used fully while writing his autobiography. In spite of profound scholarship, he wrote in very simple Hindi that a common person could follow. He wrote books of varied interest. He was aware of limitations of Hindi literature and singularly made up the loss in no small measure.

The historian [Kashi Prasad Jayaswal](#) compared Rahul Sankrityayan with Buddha. Rahul's personality was as impressive and memorable as are his achievements. He traveled widely and wrote in five languages – Hindi, Sanskrit, Bhojpuri, Pāli and Tibetan. His published works span a range of genres, which include autobiography, biography, travelogue, sociology, history, philosophy, Buddhism, Tibetology, lexicography, grammar, text editing, folklore, science, fiction, drama, essays, politics, and pamphleteering.

## Soviet Union

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Although he had little formal education, in view of his knowledge and command over the subject, [University of Leningrad](#) appointed him Professor of [Indology](#) in 1937–38 and again in 1947–48.

## Contributions

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Many of Rahul's personal collections including the ones he gathered from his multiple trips to Tibet were distributed across to multiple Universities and Museums. Patna Museum has an extensive collection of Buddhist scrolls which he assimilated through his journeys across Tibet. Many of these are considered rare gems of Indian scriptures translated into Tibetan.

## Personal life and family

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Rahul was married when very young and never came to know anything of his child-wife, Santoshi. Probably he saw her only once in his 40s as per his autobiography: Meri Jivan Yatra. During his stay in Soviet Russia a second time, accepting an invitation for teaching Buddhism at Leningrad University, he came in contact with a Mongolian scholar Lola (Ellena Narvertovna Kozerovskaya). She could speak French, English, and Russian and write Sanskrit. She helped him in working on Tibetan- Sanskrit dictionary. Their attachment ended in marriage and birth of son Igor. Mother and son were not allowed to accompany Rahul to India after completion of his assignment due to restrictions imposed by Stalin regime.

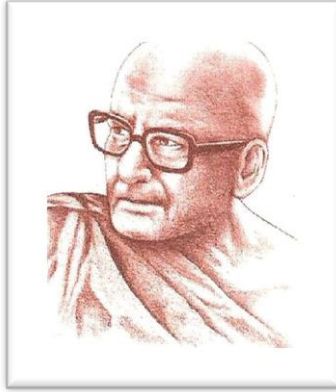
Late in life, he married Dr. Kamala, an Indian Nepali lady and had a daughter (Jaya), two sons (Jeta) and (Jayant) .

## Death

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Rahul accepted a teaching job at a Sri Lankan University, where he fell seriously ill. Diabetes, high blood pressure and a mild stroke struck him. Most tragic happening was the loss of memory. He breathed his last in [Darjeeling](#) in 1963.

His last residence at Darjeeling was at 21 Kacheri Road: Rahul Nivas.



## Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan

**Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan** (5 January 1905 – 22 June 1988) was a [Buddhist](#) monk, scholar, traveller and a prolific writer from India. He is considered as one of the great [activists](#) of Buddhism of the 20th century. He was influenced by the Buddhist scholar and [social reformer](#) [Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan](#) and [B. R. Ambedkar](#).

### Personal life

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Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan was born Harnam Das on 5 January 1905 in Sohana Village of [Ambala](#) District in [Punjab](#). He did BA from National College in [Lahore](#). His travels took him to different parts of World for promoting Buddhism like his mentor, Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan. He always wanted to have experience of travelling far distances across many countries and discover new things. His aim was to continue the tradition started by his inspirations. He is one of the pioneers of [Indian travel literature](#).

### Works

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He contributed a lot to Indian travel literature and [Hindi](#). He worked for [Hindi](#) Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, Rastrabhasha Prachar Samiti, Vardha etc. He used very simple language in his books that everyone can easily understand. He wrote many essays, novels, books on his travel to different places. He also wrote many books on Buddhism. More than 20 of his books were published.

Ambedkar left behind lacs of Buddhist followers who were in need of strong Buddhist(religious) leader, particularly in Maharashtra. Kausalyayan travelled and guided Maharashtrian Buddhists and also translated Ambedkar's work *The Buddha and His Dhamma* into Hindi. He also traced and collected original resources from Pali Tripitika and other Buddhist literature, which Ambedkar had not done.

### Books

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*This list is [incomplete](#); you can help by [expanding it](#).*

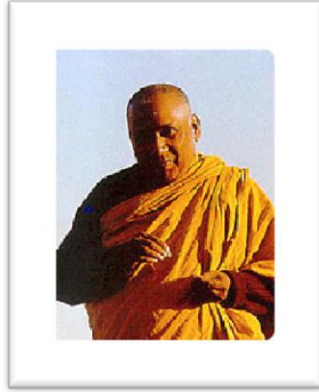
- *Bhikkhu Ke Patra*
- *Jo Bhula Na Saka*
- *Aah! Aisi Daridrata*
- *Bahanebazi*

- *Yadi Baba Na Hote*
- *Rail Ke Ticket*
- *Kahan Kya Dekha*
- *Sanskriti*
- *Desh Ki Mitti Bulati hai*
- *Bauddha Dharma Yek Buddhiwadi Adhyayan*
- *Shri Lanka*
- *Hindi and Punjabi translation of [Buddha and His Dhamma](#) by Dr B R Ambedkar*
- *Manusmriti kyon Jalai Gai?*
- *Bhagwad Gita ki Buddhiwadi Samiksha*
- *Ram Kahani Ram ki Jabani*
- *An Intelligent Man's Guide to Buddhism*
- ' 'Bodhidrum ke kuch panne
- *Dharm Ke Naam par*
- *bhagvan buddha aur unke anuchar*
- *bhagvan buddha aur unke samkalin bhikshu*
- *Boudh dharma ka sar a hidi translation of essence of buddhism by P I Narsu*
- *Bhadant Anand Kaushalyan jeevan va karya – by Dr. M.L. Gautam ([Life and work of Ven. Dr. Bhadant Anand Kausalyan](#))*
- *Avashyak Pali (Basic Pali) – by Ven. Dr. Bhadant Anand Kaushalyayan*
- *The Gospel of Buddha : Translation by Ven. Dr. Bhadant Anand Kaushalyan of the book – [The Gospel of Buddha](#) by Paul Carus*
- ' 'Dhammapada Hindi translation
- ' 'Riddles of Hinduism hindi translation of Babasaheb ambedkars book

## Death

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Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan died on 22 June 1988.



## Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap

**Bhikkhu Jagdish Kashyap** was born on 2 May 1908 in Ranchi, [Bihar](#), India; he died 28 January 1976. His birth name was Jagdish Narain, and the name Kashyap was given to him at his [bhikkhu](#) ordination in 1933.

### Biography

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After finishing his MA, [Bhikkhu](#) Kashyap, desiring to do doctoral work in [Buddhist philosophy](#), was advised to study [Pāli](#), and so resolved to go to [Sri Lanka](#), to his parents' dismay. They relented in 1933 and he joined the [Vidyāṅkara Pirivena](#) (now the [University of Kelaniya](#)). He was ordained by Venerable [L. Dhammananda Nayaka](#) Mahathero. During his time at the Vidyāṅkara Pirivena he translated the [Dīgha Nikāya](#) into [Hindi](#).

On a trip to Japan he was stopped by the police in [Malaysia](#) due to his involvement in [Gandhi's](#) non-cooperation movement. He spent a year living in [Penang](#), learned some Chinese, lived in a Chinese [vihāra](#), and published a collection of lectures.

In 1936 he returned to Sri Lanka to spend time in a forest hermitage to practice [meditation](#), which was quite unusual for a bhikkhu in his day, so much so that his teachers tried to dissuade him. Bhikkhu Kashyap continued to practice meditation throughout his life. Towards the end of 1936 he returned to India and in 1937 settled at [Sarnath](#) where he was involved in scholarly and translating work, principally of the [Pāli Canon](#) into Hindi. In Sarnath he became associated with the [Mahābodhi Society](#) and was soon helping with the institutional organisation and social services. He became the headmaster of a new high school founded by the Mahābodhi Society General Secretary, [Devapriya Valisinha](#). While in Sarnath he also worked for Benares Hindu University to offer courses in Pāli - even occasionally walking the 22-mile journey into [Varanasi](#). Some accounts say this was because he persuaded officials to start these courses and even taught them from free, the accounts below varies slightly.

During this time Bhikkhu Kashyap took on a young English monk as a live-in student for about nine months. [Sangharakshita](#) went on to found the [Western Buddhist Order](#) in 1968, and considers Bhikkhu Kashyap to have been an important teacher in both the spiritual and secular senses.

Sangharakshita's version of the Benares university job, as he understood from Kashyap:

As he had already confided to me, he was there very much on

sufferance. Dominated as it was by orthodox brahmins, the University had not wanted to have a Professor of Pali and Buddhist Philosophy at all, and Kashyap-ji's appointment had been due to the insistence of the multimillionaire philanthropist [Jugal Kishore Birla](#), a benefactor whose wishes the



University could not afford to ignore. But though the University had been forced to appoint a Professor of Pali and Buddhist Philosophy it was not obliged to supply him with pupils. In fact it made it as difficult as possible for him to get any. Under University regulations, no one could take Pali without also taking Sanskrit. In other words Pali and Buddhist Philosophy were not allowed to become alternatives to Sanskrit and Hindu Philosophy. One could take Sanskrit and Pali, or only Sanskrit, but under no circumstances could one take only Pali. So effectively did these tactics limit the number of Kashyap-ji's students that he never had more than three or four, sometimes none at all. For someone as devoted to his subject as he was this was a bitter disappointment. He had accepted the professorship only because he hoped it would enable him to make some contribution to the advancement of Buddhist studies and thus, indirectly, to the cause of Buddhism; but as it became more obvious every year that Pali and Buddhist Philosophy were unwelcome guests at the Benares Hindu University, he had come to the conclusion that he was wasting his time there and he was now thinking of resigning.

[1]

In 1947 India became independent and there was a new sense of identity for Indians. In 1949 he toured his ancestral homeland, the ancient province of [Magadha](#), which was also the centre of ancient Buddhism. For the first time in many centuries the villages in Magadha saw a yellow robed bhikkhu, and were pleasantly surprised to find that he spoke their local dialect [Magadhi](#). The locals had long forgotten their own history and Bhikkhu Kashyap was able to furnish many details. The very name of the state of [Bihar](#) comes from presence of so many Buddhist viharas in the past. He was able to point out the true identity of the images of [Buddhas](#) and [Bodhisattvas](#) which were being worshipped as Hindu gods or local deities. Villages such as Sari-chak, near [Nalanda](#), had previously had an association with the Buddha's chief disciple [Sariputta](#). Finally he was able, by quoting passages from the Pāli texts, to demonstrate that Magadhi is still closely related to the Magadhi dialect.

After this visit Bhikkhu Kashyap offered to teach Pāli at Gaya College and at Nalanda College in [Bihar-Sharif](#). Later, when the Bihar state government decided to start an institute for Pāli studies at Nalanda, he was the obvious choice to head the project. In 1951 the institute became the [Nava Nalanda Mahavihara](#).

1956 was the 2500th anniversary of the [parinibbana](#) of the Buddha, celebrated by the Indian government as the [Buddha Jayanti](#). As part of the celebrations, Bhikkhu Kashyap's work of bringing out a [Devanagari](#) edition of the Pāli Canon was accepted as an official project, and was jointly sponsored by the governments of Bihar and India. The first volume appeared in 1956 on the occasion of the Buddha Jayanti, and the rest followed over five years - guided to completion with enormous effort and marathon labour by Bhikkhu Kashyap. At one point he sold his house to pay the salaries of workers when payments had been delayed.

During the Buddha Jayanti project Bhikkhu Kashyap returned to Varanasi and in 1959 was asked to become the first Professor of Pāli and Buddhism at the Sanskrit University of Varanasi. He remained there until 1965 when he returned to Nalanda for a second term as Director of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara. He retired in 1973. Having earlier developed [diabetes](#), he became seriously ill in 1974 and spent his last two years bedridden in the Japanese temple in [Rajgir](#), from where he could see the [Vulture Peak](#) and the newly constructed [Peace Pagoda](#). He died in 1976.



## **Dr. Bheemrao Ramji Ambedkar ( Babasaheb Ambedkar )**

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was well learned, scholar and a rationalist. Specially he was interested in "Pali" literature. Babasaheb wrote and publish some Buddhism / Pali Books like Pali Grammer, Pali Dictionary Pali into English- Pali into Marathi – Pali into Gujarathi – Pali into Hindi, Buddha Pooja Path and Buddha and his Dhamma.



### **Dr. Meena Talim**

Dr. Meena Talim is the first person to be awarded a Ph.D. in Pali from University of Mumbai (1960). She has retired as Professor and Head, Department of Ancient Indian Culture and Pali, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai (1990). Her publications include Buddhavamso (1969), Woman in Early Buddhist Literature (1972), Bagh Paintings- Identification and Interpretation (2002), Science of Medicine and Surgery in Buddhist India (2009), Life of Women in Buddhist Literature (in press), Unidentified and Misinterpreted Painting of Ajanta, (forthcoming). She has also written seven books for children and contributed more than seventy-five research papers to reputed Indological journals and magazines. Dr. Talim is presently working as Honorary Professor at K.J. Somaiya Centre for Buddhist Studies, Mumbai and Visiting Professor at University of Mumbai.



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