Siddhartha Essay, Research Paper

Siddhartha begins his life on the side of knowledge. He is a member of the highest caste, and has spent his childhood studying and practicing the art of the Brahmin. Siddhartha lived with is family, dined on decent meals, practiced good hygiene, and wore the best clothing; but he was not happy. His thirst for knowledge was not being quenched, and there was not a sense of peace within his soul. With that in mind he departed from the village in search of answers. He chose to spend a number of years living in the forest as a Samana. He begins fasting, lets his beard grow, and meditates. He is forced to beg for food, therefore receiving little food, and of poor quality. he does not bathe, and wears only a loin cloth. he gave up his wealth and power to be titled as a beggar, a vagrant. Siddhartha then has an experience with the Gotama that only reinforced his belief that he must find his ?own? answer, it could not be found in another.

As a Samana, Siddhartha tries to destroy his Self. One way in which he attempts this is by entering other animals, and becoming them temporarily. He learns many methods of self-denial, and thinks that if he kills his Self, with its passions and emotions, he will find the great secret. The Self-deprivations had given him comfort in striving towards a goal, and he manages some escapes from the Self as well. He did soon realize the escapes were temporary and that even the old Samanas have not attained Nirvana. He is his own, he will not find peace by learning from a master, the only way for him to find peace, is by finding it for himself. Siddhartha, at this point, has an awakening; he becomes upset with himself for his past stupidity. How could he believe the world of materials and appearances was an illusion? He threw off many of the beliefs he had carried for so long and started on the way to finding himself.

It is now, at this point, that Siddhartha crosses the river, entering into the realm of experience. He now sees things as real and beauteous, instead of as an illusion or Maya. Upon crossing the river he realizes he must gain experience for himself and so he pays increasing attention to the world around him. He meets the ferrymen, Vasudeva. Vasudeva listens to what the river is saying and he knows that Siddhartha will return.

The world of experience causes Siddhartha to become a man of means. It takes him years, but eventually Siddhartha becomes overwhelmed by his new freedoms, he is indulging. He arrives at a town and becomes rich from his business as a merchant. This allows him to have fine clothing, shoes, and an excess of money. He once again begins to practice good hygiene and eat decent meals. In the beginning his new lifestyle was only a game, soon he began to take it more and more seriously. He becomes lazy and starts drinking and gambling. He reaches a point of realization and sees how disgusting he has become. Upon arriving at this realization, he leaves the village.

After forsaking his desires, he returns to the river a desperate man. Here he experiences another awakening. After many years of living in Samasara, Siddhartha becomes depressed. All of the thoughts and beliefs he had and felt in his soul had disappeared, but only for a time. When he reaches the river, he hears a message from the depth of his soul. Siddhartha had made a decision to commit suicide. However, he decides no to kill himself just before falling into a river. Why? Because he hears the holy Om. Siddhartha is happy because he knows that the years of Samasara have not taken over his soul. He treats the experience as a rebirth, and once again begins his life.

Siddhartha decides to stay by the river after his experience. He once again returns to the life of little clothing, simple meals, and a lack of hygiene. He resides with the ferryman who becomes his teacher. Vasudeva, like the Buddha has found peace with himself. Siddhartha learns to listen to the river, just as Vesudeva had done. From this, Siddhartha learns that he must love everything, since everything has something good in it. He also realizes that the difference between the past, present, and future is merely a myth. He learns to that through the river one can hear all the voices of the universe. those voices will blend together into one sound . . . Om.

The river teaches him, more that any human teacher could have, such as the fact that time is an illusion, and that all things are as they always have been and always will be. Siddhartha finally finds peace in this. He now knows that each individual must learn for themselves

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