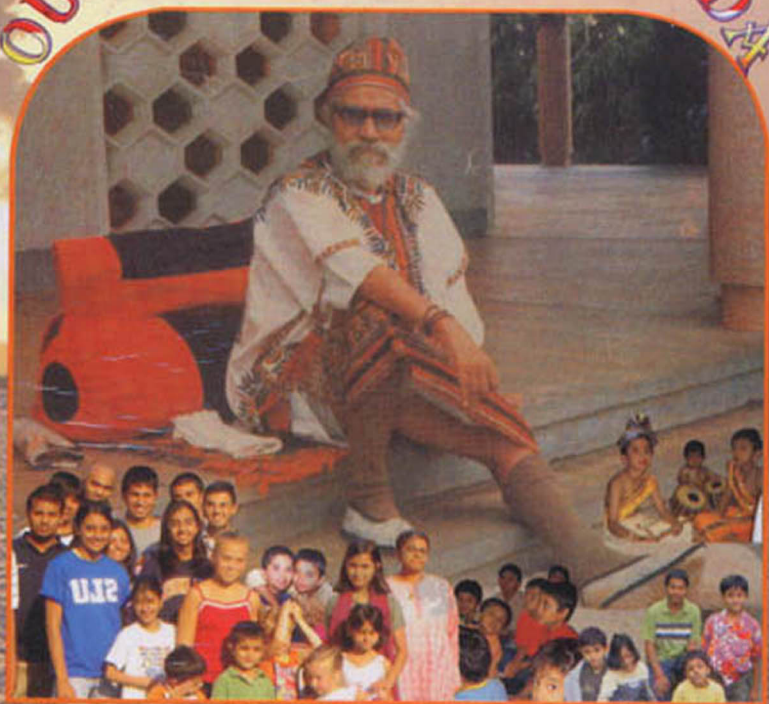


OUR BELOVED RANGDADA

PART-I



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Rang Avdhoot Maharaj
(Nareshvar)



Dineshchandra M. Dave

Date of Birth :
Sept. 29, 1939
Bhadarva Vad Ekam,
Samvat 1995

Passing :
June 16, 1993
Bhadarva Vad
Ekadashi,
Samvat 2049

Blessings

My dear children,

You have been worshipping Rangadada, singing his bhajans, hearing about him from elders and thus are in touch with him. I am sure many of you might be keen to know more about him as to who he was, how was he as a kid, as a student, with his mother, how did he become ‘Avadhoot’, how come he is being worshipped by so many people around the world, what is so special in him? There could be many such questions in your little minds.

“Our Beloved Rangadada” is a series of small booklets trying to answer many of your questions. I hope you will enjoy reading them, understand Rangadada better and live your life on the path shown by him.

May Rangadada bless you.

Dt: Sept 07, 2007.

With Blessings,

Yours

Premoodada

Foreword

I feel privileged and pleased to offer the first part of this series of booklets in the feet of Pujya Bapji.

On seeing the elderly people attending various religious functions, I always wondered when would the youngsters be attracted to such programmes? I sincerely feel that this series of books will play a pivotal role in making my dream come true.

The onus of cultivating young minds lies on the parents. They themselves need to set an example for their kids to emulate. To acquaint our kids to Bapji's life, his deeds, his virtues such that they learn the valuable lessons for their life, was the need of the hour. I congratulate Kulinbhai from the depth of my heart for this endeavor of his.

I also wish that in future this book is published as a picture book. A child finds place also as one of the twenty four Gurus of Lord Dattatreya. This enhances our responsibility to cultivate a child into a good human being. This creation of Kulinbhai is an outcome of the immense blessings bestowed on him by P.Pu.Bapji and Pu.Prem Avadhootji. I appreciate his feelings of honoring me by inviting me to write foreword to this book.

Viranchi Pathak,
Tilakwada

Author's Note

A kid's mind is like a blank page on which we can inscribe as we wish. The values and virtues inculcated at a tender age have a long bearing on one's life. With this at the back of the mind, I felt that knowing about Bapji and his life would be immensely helpful to mould our children. This series of booklets for children was thus born.

Initiating the young minds to Bapji's way of life is a challenge for the elders. In an endeavor to groom my grand daughter Nirjari, the need for such a booklet was reaffirmed. It so happened that I came across a booklet "Balakona Mota" of Hari Om Mota Parivaar authored by Shri Mukul Kalarthi. Talking to Shri Subhashbhai Dave about this, he encouraged me and asked me to become 'Mukulbhai of Rang Parivaar.' By Pujya Bapji's blessings, his good wishes have fructified. I am pleased to acknowledge the trust he has put on me.

Eventually, it was felt that many children of our parivaar, especially those dwelling overseas, would be deprived of the great wealth of Bapji's values for the lack of knowledge of Gujarati. Thus was born the English version of this book.

One seldom misses to acknowledge the efforts of one's near and dear ones. But it is important nevertheless. I sincerely thank my elder brother Shri Dineshbhai Upadhyay, Dr. Pranav Dave, and my daughter Hetal for translating the booklet into English. Shri Pankaj Dave (USA) has been an online support of editing the English version. Shri T.R. Joshi, Gandhinagar has been kind enough to give his scholarly inputs, notwithstanding old age. I am really thankful to Helley, 8 years old child has completely done DTP works in Graphics for this Part I.

I do not know how to acknowledge the eternal blessings bestowed upon me by Pujya Prem Avadhootji. He is in fact the driving force behind all these humble efforts. I can only bow down in the feet of Param Pujya Shri Rang Avadhoot Maharaj and Pujya Shri Prem Avadhootji.

Dt: Sept 04, 2007.
Ahmedabad

Kulin Upadhyay,

(1)

INTRODUCTION

Let us first know about the origin of our Ranga-dada.

His original name was Panduranga.

His father's name was Vitthal and mother's name Rukmani.

He had a younger brother named Narayana.

His surname was Valame.

Thus, his full name was Panduranga Vitthal Valame..

He was born in Godhara, a well-known town of Gujarat.

He was born on Monday evening of the 21st of November, 1898.

As per the Vikram Era, it was the 9th day of the bright fortnight of the first month i.e.Kartak Sud Navmi.

'Kartak Sud Navmi' is also known as Krutyug Tithi.

Do you know what is meant by Krutyug Tithi ?

Satya (Krut) Yug began from this tithi (date as per Vikram era).

Our Rangadada was born on such an auspicious day.

Jayaram Valame was Panduranga's grandpa. He lived in the village Devle of Ratanagiri District.

Ratnagiri is a district of Maharashtra, a neighboring state of Gujarat.

Panduranga's grandpa had a friend, who lived in Godhara, named Sakharam Sarpotdar.

He looked after the temple of Vitthalnathji, (Lord Krishna) in Godhara.

Sakharam was in search of a dedicated and devoted person to work as a poojari (priest) of the temple.

Once, Sarpotdar came to Devle, he requested Panduranga's grandpa and brought Vitthal to Godhara as a priest of Vitthalnathji temple .

Thereby, Rangadada was originally a Maharashtrian, born in Gujarat.

He brought pride and glory to Gujarat by his meritorious deeds.



(2)

GOT THE CHANT OF RAM NAAM

Now let us know about Rangadada's childhood; how he gradually developed and imbibed the values and divinity.

Our Panduranga was a child of one and a half years.

Once he was sitting with his father in the Verandah.

As any small child would, he observed at things happening around and curiously asked questions.

One day he saw a funeral procession.

A dead body was being carried on the shoulders by four men and people were crying.

He asked his father why they were crying. His father replied that they were crying because the man had died. Panduranga asked curiously what would happen to the dead man who was being carried.

His father replied that he would be cremated (burnt as per the Hindu rituals). “Will he not feel pain while being burnt?” asked Panduranga.

His father explained that once a person dies, he does not feel anything.

Thereafter, Panduranga came across such scenes a couple of times and kept on asking questions every time.

Once he asked: “Can we not save ourselves from death?”

‘Yes, of course. Why not?’ replied his father.

He asked: ‘How?’

Father said “By chanting Ram, Ram.”

And thus, our Panduranga got the mantra of chanting “Ram Ram”.

Young Panduranga began chanting “Ram Ram” sincerely and religiously with full faith in his father’s words.



(3)

STARVING IS BETTER THAN BEGGING

Panduranga was two years old now.

His mother gave birth to a baby boy.

He was named Narayana.

But the happy family suffered a shocking blow when Panduranga was only five years old.

His father died.

Panduranga lost the shelter of a loving father at a very young age.

Now, his mother Rukmani had to look after three of them.

Their financial condition was ordinary.

Rukmani brought them up facing all odds.

She loved her sons a lot.

Rukmani called Panduranga by a nick name “Babu”.

Once it so happened that there were no vegetables in the house to make curry.

The mother worried as to how they would eat roti (bread) alone without a vegetable curry.

A lady from the neighborhood came for some work and found that there was no vegetable in Rukmani’s house.

She brought some brinjals from her home on her own accord and gave to Rukmani. Rukmani refused to accept but the lady gave her earnestly.

When they sat to take their meals, Panduranga was surprised to see vegetable curry in the plate.

He asked his mother, where did it come from?

Mother narrated what had happened.

Panduranga got unhappy.

He told his mother, ‘Do not forget that you are the mother of a lion’.

He further added “to beg and to die are the same thing. We might starve but would never demand.”



(4)

MEETING HIS SADGURU

Our Panduranga was now eight years old and his younger brother six.

Mother Rukmani wished to perform the sacred thread ‘janoi’ ceremony for them.

They came to their native place- Devle in Maharashtra.

The sacred thread ceremony was performed, Panduranga and his brother thus became ‘Dwij’.

Do you know that Dwij is a very interesting and significant word in Sanskrit?

‘Dwij’ means twice born: (Dwi=Twice, aJ=Born).

Who else is also called ‘Dwij’?

A bird too is a Dwij. Its first birth takes place when it comes out as an egg and then from egg it gets born into a bird.

Our teeth are also dwij. In early childhood first the milk teeth come and go and then come the permanent teeth.

Yet another dwij is a Brahmin. First time he is born from the womb of the mother. Second is when he wears janoi (sacred thread) after undertaking rituals.

So our Panduranga and his younger brother became dwij.

It is a tradition in Maharashtrian community to take a child to a saint for his blessings after performing such a ceremony.

Incidentally, Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati Maharaj (Tembe Swami) was in Narsoba Wadi, in Maharashtra at that time.

Mother Rukmani took both of her sons there for his blessings.

Surprisingly, on seeing Swamiji, little Panduranga ran towards him suddenly to bow down to him.

His maternal aunt tried to stop him from approaching the saint.

She asked him not to touch Swamiji as it was not permitted.

But in the meanwhile he attracted the attention of Swami Maharaj.

Swami Maharaj asked Panduranga:

‘Whose son are you?’

Instantly, reply of “Yours” came from an eight-year old Panduranga.

This was the first and the last meeting of Panduranga with Swami Maharaj.

One meeting, one question, and one reply-and the little Panduranga surrendered himself at the feet of Swami Maharaj.

He accepted him as his Guru.

Thereafter, Panduranga never met Swami Maharaj in person.



(5)
**COMMAND TO READ
‘POTHI’- A HOLY BOOK**

Our Panduranga and his younger brother Narayana were now full pledged Brahmins with the sacred thread (Janoi).

At Narsobawadi they got Swami Maharaj’s blessings too.

From there they went to Kolhapur, another town in Maharashtra.

One of their relatives worked as a Mamlatdar (a local official) there.

They stayed overnight at his place.

As per his routine, Panduranga offered prayers at night and then went to sleep.

But this is wasn’t a routine, usual night for him.

He got a nice divine dream.

He heard the words “Pothi vaanch” (meaning “read the holy book”).

In the morning when he woke up, he still remembered the dream.

He just could not forget the dream.

He did not reveal this to anybody but he kept on pondering about it.

‘Who must have told me to read Pothi?’

‘What could be this Pothi be about?’

‘Where could I get it from?’

The words “Pothi vaanch” kept on hovering in his mind and he became keen to know about it.

Early morning dreams are said to be meaningful and suggestive.

Our Panduranga waited for his dream to come true.



(6)

PANDURANAGA GETS POTHİ

God always answers to a true prayer offered from the depth of the heart.

Especially when it comes from a child, He answers it sooner.

Children, being innocent, frank, truthful and honest are loved by God all more.

Our Panduranga always offered his prayer before going to bed.

‘Pothi’ was at the top of his mind those days.

So his prayers also included a request to the Almighty to guide him where to get the pothi.

One day his mother’s brother, named Monghe and popularly called Monghemama, came to meet Rukmani.

While chatting on various issues, Monghemama shared his small worry with his sister.

He said that he had a holy book “Pothi” with him but it was becoming difficult for him to preserve it with requisite sanctity.

The nature of his job was such that his schedule was very uncertain.

He had to travel often and hence was not able to read the ‘Pothi’ regularly as per the rules prescribed.

So he felt that he should give it to someone who could take its care properly and read it regularly, following the rules.

Upon hearing the word “Pothi”, Panduranga stretched his ears.

He could see his dream come true.

He immediately pitched in and requested “Please give it to me.”

Mama said: “You are too young to observe the rules of preserving the pothi. They are very hard.”

Panduranga assured his uncle and promised to observe all the rules.

Mother Rukmani too supported his keen interest.

Finally, Monghe Mama got convinced.

Thus, by the grace of God, our Panduranga got the 'Pothi'.

When prayers rise up, blessings are showered down.



(7)

ABOUT POTHİ, THE HOLY BOOK

You might be wondering what this Pothi is all about?

A Pothi is a religious book of loose pages. The pages are long and narrow.

Maharashtrians are basically devotional people, with more affinity towards Lord Ganesha and Lord Dattatreya.

As you know Lord, Dattatreya is the son of Atri and Ansuya.

Around 1500 A.D., two saints, believed to be incarnation of Lord Dattatreya, existed.

They were Shripad Shri Vallabh and Shri Nrusinh Saraswati.

Shripad Shri Vallabh himself reincarnated as Shri Nrusinh Saraswati later.

These two saints transformed lives of many people during their times and there are quite a few miraculous deeds to their credit too. Their deeds and the incidents of their times are narrated beautifully in a holy book called '**Shri Guru Charitra**' (meaning a biography of Guru).

This holy book is a compilation by Gangadhar Saraswati, the grandson of Sayamdev's grandson.

Sayamdev was one of the close devotees of Shri Nrusinh Saraswati

Guru Charitra is the Pothi our Panduranga gets from Monghe Mama.

And from where did Monghe Mama get it? Saibaba of Shirdi gave him this 'Pothi', with his blessings and commanded him to read it regularly.

Monghe Mama did so and God bestowed upon him a son.

Just think how God arranged getting the 'Pothi' for Panduranga!

The wish was born from God's inspiration and He fulfilled it.



(8)

KNOWLEDGE SHINES BY POLITENESS

Panduranga studied in a school those days. Being intelligent and clever, he always ranked first in the class.

But he was equally obedient too.

He sincerely observed the rules and regulations of the school.

He respected his teachers.

In the Hindu culture teacher is considered equivalent to Guru for the students.

Once it so happened that a student played mischief in the class.

The teacher doubted Panduranga for the mischief.

So he punished him, and asked him to stand up on the bench.

Panduranga, an obedient student, immediately did accordingly.

While he did obey the order, he was bold enough to tell the teacher that he had been punished wrongfully; it was not he who had played the mischief.

However, the teacher did not believe him and stuck to the punishment.

So Panduranga was standing on the bench silently.

The Principal of the school, walking around of the classes, saw Panduranga standing on the bench.

He was astonished.

He had a very high opinion of Panduranga and could not imagine Panduranga playing mischief.

He asked Panduranga what the matter was. Panduranga, politely but firmly, said to ask the teacher instead.

The teacher was embarrassed since he had punished Panduranga merely on a meek doubt, just for the sake of it.

He himself was not too sure about it.

The Principal reaffirmed to the teacher that Panduranga was not a mischievous boy and the teacher asked him to sit down.

Thus Panduranga exhibited his qualities of being bold enough, clinging to the truth and at the same time politely obeying the teacher. Learning lies in politeness.



(9)

GOD LOVING PANDURANG

Our Pandurang had received the mantra of Ram's name from his father.

He began to chant it regularly.

Pandurang studied in school and kept on moving rosary.

He wrote 'Ram-Ram' on a big paper regularly.

Once a paper was full, he offered it to God Hanuman, on Saturday, which is considered to be the day of Lord Hanuman. Hanumanji was the most dedicated devotee of Lord Ram.

He was committed, intelligent and also known for physical strength.

So Hanumanji is considered to be an epitome of strength and fearlessness.

Devotees chant his name to drive away fear.

Our Pandurang was also fearless.

He firmly believed that only those who do wrong need to be afraid of others.

Why should an upright fellow fear anyone?

Pandurang appeared in the exam of Hindu Vedic religion.

He studied many religious books for the exam.

Pandurang was proud of Sanskrit language, and proud of Hindu culture.

He was a brave and strong student who neither frightened anybody nor feared from anyone.

He was always ready to help those in trouble or victim of someone's harassment.

Thus, our Pandurang was a popular and, loved by all the students.



(10)

GOD IS THE STRENGTH OF THE WEAK

Pandurang was a promising student.

He was loved by his teachers.

He was brilliant and brave.

He was always with the weak and stood by the truth.

Pandurang had a school friend named Hariprasad.

Hariprasad was wise but timid.

In their class, there was a rich boy who threatened Hariprasad to beat him to death.

Hariprasad, timid as he was, got afraid.

He told about this harassment to Pandurang.

Pandurang realized how badly the threats had affected poor Hariprasad.

He gave courage to his friend and asked him not to worry or fear.

He charted out a plan to set the rich boy right.

An idea flashed in his mind.

He asked Hariprasad whether he could manage to get a sword.

Hariprasad expressed his inability.

He said ‘How is it possible, from where can we get it?’

Pandurang suggested him something else and Hariprasad did accordingly.

One day the rich boy challenged Hariprasad, ‘Come to the riverside and I will show you.’

At the pre-decided time, the rich boy and his friends were waiting for Hariprasad, but Pandurang went instead.

Brave and confident as always, Pandurang came like a storm waving a sword, roaring loudly.

The rich boy and his friends ran away timidly.

Hariprasad was both thrilled as well as astonished.

He burst into laughter.

Do you know why Hariprasad was thrilled so much?

The sword that frightened the rich boy and his friends was merely a wooden sword. But the confidence and courage with which Pandurang waved it and the way he roared made the boys run away.

Pandurang thus brought security and smile to the weeping.

A truly strong person always stands by the side of the weak.



(11)

JOVIAL AND WITTY PANDURANG

Pandurang was good in studies.

He respected all his teachers.

But at the same time, if any teacher behaved wrongly he was smart enough to draw attention in his humble and witty way.

Here is an episode.

Pandurang's class teacher had a bad habit of asking his students to do his personal work.

Sometimes he ordered the students to do his household work. At times, he would order them to go to the market to buy things for his personal use.

Like others, Pandurang also did the work entrusted to him.

But at one point of time he felt that enough was enough.

He thought that the teacher was misusing respect and obedience of the students. Things needed to be set right.

And he got a chance.

The teacher gave him one rupee and asked him to bring eggplant from the market.

(In those days a rupee was very valuable).

The teacher told him to give the balance amount to his wife.

What did our witty hero do?

He went to the market and told the vegetable vendor that he wanted rotten and stale eggplant worth 90 paise (100 paise make one rupee).

Just imagine. 90 paise were so valuable and what Pandurang asked for was stale and rotten brinjals, so how much would he get? Oh! he got a sack-full of them.

He then hired a coolie to carry the sack. He went to the teacher's house and gave the sack of brinjals to the teacher's wife. He told her that the rupee given by the teacher was utilized, there was no balance left.

When the teacher came home, his wife showed the sack of eggplants brought by Pandurang.

He was amazed for a while.

Then he realized that Pandurang had played a practical joke to make him understand his bad habit.

He was pleased with Pandurang's joke and accepted his weakness in the right spirit. Thus, young and witty Pandurang taught a lesson in a humorous way!



(12)

PRESENCE OF MIND

Pandurang was still a school student.

Once celebrations were planned in his school.

Guests were invited.

Students were to perform various items of the programme.

Pandurang and his friends thought to perform a novel item.

So they decided to perform a drama in Sanskrit.

Pandurang knew Sanskrit very well so the main character was to be played by him.

They rehearsed very hard and prepared well.

The D' day came.

Everyone was thrilled about the programme.

But luck would have it otherwise!

Pandurang, so sharp and smart, became nervous and blank on seeing the audience.

He got gripped with stage-fear.

Pandurang could not recall any of the dialogues that he had prepared so well.

He tried to recall but in vain.

Poor Pandurang ! What would he do now?

Run away from the stage? Start weeping?

No, not at all.

He was not a boy of that type.

Then what did he do?

Pandurang was so smart and clever that he framed his own dialogues and started speaking them.

He had a good command over Sanskrit language.

He also knew the drama well.

He delivered his own dialogues and gave clear clues to others !

The other characters spoke their prepared dialogues and again when it was Pandurang's turn, he would be ready with self framed dialogues.

He did it so smartly and promptly that the audience could not even make it out.

In fact the drama was performed so well that Pandurang and his group received a lot of applause.

But the ones who are really impressed and amazed were the writers and the director of the drama.

They were the people who knew that if Pandurang had not used his presence of mind, the drama would have been a total mess !

Pandurang received wide appreciation. Such was his presence of mind !



(13)

BABU A FLUTE PLAYER

Pandurang was a clever student.

He was a strong boy ready to help others.

He was jovial. He was upright.

He was a good dramatist with good presence of mind.

But do you know, Pandurang was also fond of music.

The little Babu of Rukmani played flute very sweetly.

Playing flute was his hobby. And for the listeners it was a treat to the ears.

Young Pandurang played flute daily.

The neighbours enjoyed listening to his flute.

One day he did not play flute.

His usual time of playing flute passed out but he did not play flute, may be he was busy with something else, may be he was out of mood.

A young girl from the neighbourhood came to his house.

She asked him why he had not played the flute.

She told him that she was enchanted by his flute and everyday she craved for him to play the flute.

She was very much upset as Pandurang had not played the flute that day.

How thrilling it is to receive such a compliment!

But our Pandurang got disturbed instead.

He had his own way of thinking.

He felt that if his hobby was becoming an addiction and attachment for somebody, that too a young girl, it was not worth it. He not only stopped playing the flute but broke it and threw away.

What does this episode show?

It reveals that from a very young age he was clear of the path he wanted to tread on. He was also alert of the pitfalls on his way of sadhana.

The episode also shows how tremendous his self control was.



(14)

HONEST AND BOLD

Once Pandurang and his fast friend Harisprasad (remember the incident of wooden sword !) were on an evening walk. The young boys were chatting, enjoying and moving along.

Just then Hariprasasad saw a walking stick lying on the road.

A nice attractive cane with a silver hilt!

“What should we do?” asked Hariprasasad.

“Let us take it”, said Pandurang.

“We will give it to its owner.

He must be searching for it”

Hariprasasad said “Let it be lying there, why take hassles?”

“We are sure we don’t want to keep it with us. We are taking it so that we can give it to its owner”, said Pandurang.

They took the cane and moved forward waving it.

There came a man who, seeing the cane in their hands, shouted, “You thieves, where have you stolen this from?”

The man was Collector’s peon searching the cane frantically (Collector is a senior government official).

On hearing the peon’s words, Pandurang lost his temper.

Shouting back he said, “Are you calling us thieves? Who is running away?”

The peon continued “You have the cane, so obviously you are the thieves.”

Pandurang was in no mood of giving up.

He asked “Do we look like thieves?

Why can’t you use your common sense?

If we were to steal it, why would we wave it so openly?

What you could have done had we run away with this cane? We are much more honest than you, better mind your language”

He continued “Take it if it is yours.

We have taken it as it was lying on the road. We had decided to give it to its owner. We were looking for the owner.”

The peon does not give up either.

Backed by his boss's power, he was arrogant and rude.

He asked them to come to the Collector. He thought that his boss would punish them. Pandurang was least scared.

Why should one be afraid when he is not wrong?

He and his friend went along with the peon to the Collector.

The peon presented them before the collector as if he had caught criminals.

He waited for the collector's reaction, expecting that the boys would be punished.

But the thing turned out to be totally otherwise.

On getting the cane back, the collector was very much pleased.

He thanked the boys and gave twenty five paisa as prize to them.

They, of course, humbly refused to take it.

The peon was surprised.

The moral of this episode is that when your intentions are good, you need not fear anybody as God is with you.



(15)

A TRUE BRAHMIN

Pandurang was proud of his religion and customs.

He followed the rules and rituals as observed by a Maharashtrian Brahmin.

He put on the sacred thread on the shoulder and a tilak on the forehead.

He got his head clean shaved and kept a pigtail (choti) on the head.

He was now grown up and due for appearing in Matriculation exams.

He had to take written as well as oral test.

The oral test was in English language. Mr. Robertson, principal of Gujarat College, was to take oral test. He was an English man known for strict discipline and sharpness in English. The students were, therefore, afraid of Mr. Robertson. But Pandurang was not scared and was confident to appear for the oral test. Knowing Pandurang's nature, his friends warned him not to act smart with Mr. Robertson or he may fail him. 'Let us see' said Pandurang fearlessly. "So as the question, such will be answer. I will play the game according to the circumstances."



(16)

Quick-witted Pandurang

It was the day when Pandurang had to appear for the oral test.

Mr. Robertson arrived to take the oral test. Students went in the room to give the test as their names were called one by one.

“P.V. Valame”- came the call for Pandurang Vitthal Valame.

His friends once again warned him to give straight answers.

Pandurang entered the room and bowed down his head.

Robertson was surprised to see a boy with clean shaved head, choti (pigtail), sacred thread, rosary in the neck and striking eyes.

Robertson was amused.

There came the first question of the test:

‘Are you a Brahmin?’

‘Yes sir’, answered Pandurang.

“Why do you put on the sacred thread on your shoulder.”

Our Pandurang smartly asked “Do I need to give the direct answer or can I raise a counter question?”

Robertson said “As you like”.

Pandurang asked him straight, “Why do you put on collar and tie?”

The sir said: “Both these things remind me that I am a Christian”.

“So is the case with me” came a firm reply from Pandurang.

He continued, “The sacred thread reminds me that I am a Hindu Brahmin.”

“If you do not wear this thread will you cease to be a Hindu?” asked the English man.

At once came the counter question “Will you cease to be a Christian if you don’t put on tie and collar?”

Robertson got taken aback. But he was clever too.

He said ‘No, no. But it just reminds me to live like a true Christian.

It makes me remember Lord Christ and that will prevent me doing any wrong.”

Pandurang quickly said “This sacred thread also reminds me that I am a Brahmin and helps me to lead a holy life.”

Robertson was enjoying the dialogues.

He cherished the smartness and firmness of the young boy.

He extended the talk and further asked, “Ok. Tell me then why have you got your head clean shaved and why this choti (pigtail)?”

Pandurang smiled and said politely:

“Sir, our nation is poor and so are we. We can’t afford to spend on haircut often. Getting clean shaved is much cheaper.”

Robertson, pleased with the talk continues, “What is the advantage of this?”

“First of all the head remains cool, secondly we get good thoughts, thirdly we need not waste time combing the hair.

There are many more advantages” said Pandurang.

In a lighter vein he added “Sir, why don’t you give it a try yourself, you will experience the gains ”

“What if I do not gain?” asked Robertson. Pandurang, fully confident, asserted “It is not possible. Declare me fail if you do not gain”

Robertson was very much pleased with Pandurang’s smart and ready witted replied.

He was impressed by his confidence, boldness and logical arguments.

Robertson rated him high and gave him good marks.

The head master of Pandurang’s school and the teachers were elated.



(17)

COLLEGIAN PANDURANG

Pandurang passed matriculation exam with first class.

Now he was a collegiate.

He took admission in a college at Ahmedabad, so he had to leave the town of Godhara.

Due to some reasons, after completing a term (six months), he left Ahmedabad.

He came to Baroda and got admitted in a college at Baroda.

He proved himself a good student in college as well.

He worked hard and passed the first year exams conducted at the college level with good marks.

The next was Inter exams.

These exams were conducted centrally at the University level. Hence the second year was considered to be a difficult one.



(18)

**WHERE THERE IS A WILL,
THERE IS A WAY.**

The university exams were conducted at Ahmedabad.

Pandurang had prepared well for the exams. But what a bad luck! Examination was due shortly and he fell sick.

It was a serious illness and Pandurang became very weak.

A vaidya (Ayurvedic doctor) of Baroda treated him but failed to cure him of illness. He was bedridden and too feeble to prepare for the exams.

He therefore came to Godhara to his mother. In spite of his mother taking care nicely, he could not recover fully.

Each and everyone advised him not to appear in the exams.

His mother also suggested the same.

She felt that it was better not to appear than to fail.

During this period, one of his friends came. He was a Bengali astrologer so he advised on the basis of the stars and planets.

He said it was a bad period for Pandurang, the stars were not favorable, so he should not appear in the exams.

But our Pandurang was strong and firm. He was not deterred by any circumstances or suggestions.

Pandurang had great faith in his GURU MAHARAJ.

Due to physical weakness, he took assistance of a writer and passed with reasonably good marks.

Thus he proved his will and succeeded inspite of unfavorable circumstances.



(19)

FULL FAITH IN SADGURU

Pandurang passed his inter exams.

He was now in the third year of college which was called Junior B.A.

In the previous year he had to struggle at the end because of sickness.

This year a struggle loomed large in the beginning itself.

He had to pay Rs.150 as fees but did not have the amount.

We know he was a person who would never borrow from others.

Some friends advised him to apply for an aid.

A few asked him to borrow from someone. But he accepted neither of the suggestions. He remained carefree with full faith in his GURU MAHARAJ.

He was firm in his belief 'If God wishes me to continue the studies, he will make the necessary arrangements.'

The following day was the last day for paying fees.

Pandurang was not worried at all.

His faith in GURU MAHARAJ was ultimate.

Do you know what suddenly happened?

An unknown person came looking for him.

The visitor gave his identification.

“I am the son of Sirpotdar. Once your mother had given Rs. 300 to my father when he was in need. On his deathbed, my father’s last wish was to return this money. I had promised him then.

Today I have come to fulfill my father’s last wish.

Out of Rs.300, I can give you Rs.150 now. I will give the balance later”.

Just think of the situation.

It was the last day of paying the fees.

Pandurang needed Rs.150.

A stranger suddenly came and gave him exactly that amount !

Was it not a miracle?

Was it not the result of the full faith Pandurang had in his Guru Maharaj ?
His friends were astonished and speechless.
Once one puts full trust and faith in one's Guru, his problems no more remain his, they become his Guru's problems.
We have just to remember Him,
He is always ready to respond.



(20)

WISDOM AND PATIENCE PAY

Pandurang studied in the college at Baroda. Along with studies, he also did SADHANA (penance).

The right way for a true devotee is 'Keep all other facets of life known to others but pray privately'.

But usually people do it the other way round. Our Pandurang followed the correct way. He did sadhana secretly.

He was strong and firm.

He neither did anything wrong nor tolerated injustice.

Here is an episode.

In the college campus, students were playing cricket on the ground.

They were playing without disturbing anyone.

They were all engrossed in the game and enjoying every moment of it.

Suddenly an army officer came.

He had a big stick in his hand.

And his ego was even bigger than the stick.

Just to show off his power, he moved in the ground waving the stick.

The students playing cricket were getting hurt by his stick.

They shouted and pleaded “Please stop waving the stick. We are getting hurt”.

The students were right.

Their request was not undue.

But the man was egoist due to his authority.

His ego got hurt as the boys spoke back to him. He felt they should not have dared to speak to him.

And he started beating with the stick harder than before.

The students cried loudly and opposed strongly.

They also went to a professor and complained. But the professor kept mum. He was too meek to raise his head against an army officer.

What could the students do now?

They were all furious due to the misbehaviour of the army officer.

And they were all very young, their blood boiling to take revenge.

They knew there was only one person among them who could find a solution.

And they went to Pandurang and narrated to him what had happened.

Pandurang was the last person to tolerate such non sense.

He declared boldly that whoever the person might be, may be even a Governor or a Collector, students would not bear such tyranny.

Pandurang declared a strike.

But he told the students that the strike should be non violent.

No mischief, no breaking of things, only a silent opposition to oppression.

The very next day students went on strike.

They wrote slogans on the wall during the night against the unjust torture.

Atmosphere of strike grappled the entire campus.

The principal came to know.

He called the students.

Pandurang explained cleverly and clearly all the facts.

He briefed the Principal about autocracy and tyranny of the officer.

The principal appreciated the silent strike.

He called the person who had misbehaved.

He made him give an apology letter.

The letter was put on the notice board.
The students felt that they got justice.
Positive approach to fight for the right can
win over any power.
The motto is: do not do wrong, do not
tolerate wrong either.



(21)

THAT'S THE SPIRIT

It is this time when India was still under the
British rule.

The independence movement was gathering
momentum.

Gandhiji had established 'Gujarat
Vidhyapeeth' at Ahmedabad.

It was an educational institute for studies
based on Indian value system.

It was a parallel arrangement as against the
government colleges under the British.

Student leaders from different cities came here for discussions and gatherings.

Pandurang, the beloved of all students, was the student leader from Baroda.

He came to Ahmedabad.

It was his first meeting with Gandhiji.

Gandhiji asked his name.

“P.V. Valame” came the reply.

“From where do you come?” asked Gandhiji.

“I am a student leader from Baroda” replied Pandurang.

“What is the proof that you are the student-leader from Baroda.

How do I believe?” asked Gandhiji lightly.

Pandurang, as we know, always replied with respect and honor.

At the same time he did not allow anybody to play with his self esteem.

Politely but firmly he said, “Bapu, there is no reason for raising such a doubt.

It is not an issue at all unless anybody complains that Pandurang is not the student-leader of Baroda.”

He further added with his usual boldness and sharpness, “Have you ever heard of the crowning ceremony of lion as a king of jungle? Who crowns a lion? A lion is always self made king of the jungle.

One who needs to be enthroned is not a lion.”



(22)

A TRUE PATRIOT

Pandurang was now in the final year of college.

Only one year was left for graduation.

On graduating, he could get a good job.

But who knows what is in store in one’s destiny.

Gandhiji gave a call to the nation for the non co-operation movement.

The call was to the people of India to leave everything and dedicate their lives for the freedom of motherland.

Government employees left their jobs, lawyers left their practices, students quit studies—it was a different tempo altogether.

Our Pandurang had lots of love and dedication towards motherland Bharat.

He also decided to sacrifice his career for the freedom of motherland.

He left his college career and went to Godhara.

He moved in the villages of Panchmahal District to create awareness.

He appealed to the people to join the freedom movement.



(23)

A STUDENT OF VIDYAPEETH

A huge number of students (plural) left government colleges and joined Gujarat Vidyapeeth.

The philosophy here was to think of all and not of self only.

Students were taught how to preserve self-esteem, how to enhance the pride of the nation.

Hundreds of students who were dedicated to the nation joined this institute.

One of them was our Pandurang.

He lived in ‘Swaraj Ashram’ set up by Gandhiji.

He studied in Vidhyapeeth and undertook activities for the freedom of the nation.

He had two other fellow man: Ambalal Vyas of Godhara and Amrutlal Modi of Nadiad.

All the three stayed together.

They were self reliant. They did all their work like cooking, washing clothes, cleaning utensils etc. themselves.

The friendship built here lasted for lifetime.

Amrutlal Modi of Vidyapeeth was none else but our beloved Modikaka.

Bapji also addressed him as ‘Tapasi’ at a later stage.



(24)

WINS GANDHIJI'S HEART

Pandurang was now a student of Gujarat Vidyapeeth.

He was a trainee of Basic education.

He stayed in ‘Swaraj Ashram’.

He wore clothes made of Khadi and ate simple food.

The philosophy here was: ‘Simple living and high thinking.’

Gandhiji came to Vidyapeeth to stay in the company of students.

Pandurang had already met Gandhiji once before.

During his stay at Vidyapeeth, Pandurang impressed Gandhiji by his discipline, cleverness, efficiency, true devotion and enthusiasm.

Gandhiji was the leader of the freedom movement.

He worked with hundreds of volunteers.

A person of such a stature said, “If I have only hundred dedicated volunteers like Pandurang, freedom can be achieved within no time.”

How impressed was Gandhiji by Pandurang!



(25)

DEALS WITH HIS EGO

Pandurang was devoted to the nation.

He was a ‘Sadhak’.

He was a firm and faithful devotee of God.

He had love for Sanskrit and ‘Sanskriti’ (culture).

Sanskrit was his favorite subject since early school day.

He himself wrote dialogues and verses in Sanskrit.

His love and knowledge of Sanskrit got further enriched during college days.

He developed pride of having a good command over Sanskrit language.

He therefore liked to meet learned persons and saints.

There lived a gentleman in Baroda popularly called ‘Bhagvan’.

Bhagvan came to know about Pandurang’s knowledge of Sanskrit.

Once he asked Pandurang, whether he had read any book in ‘PRAKRIT’ language (Regional languages like Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil etc are Prakrit languages).

Pandurang boldly said : ‘Why to be after branches and leaves instead of catching hold of the roots. He who does not know Sanskrit, reads Prakrit’.

Bhagvan, however, humbly insisted to read ‘Prakrit’.

He said that reading Prakrit would lessen his pride of being a scholar.

This was a subtle hint that knowledge of Sanskrit had enhanced the ego of Pandurang.

Ego is one’s biggest enemy.

Pandurang readily accepted the hint.

For five years, therefore, he did not look at Sanskrit book nor did he speak even a word of Sanskrit.



(Conti. from title page no.4)

*Virtuous deeds always do, Wicked
never.*

*Wish welfare everyone's,
Not only to ownself!*

*Look always at own faults,
Praise always others' merits.
Earn your bread by self labour
always!*

*On the tongue Eternal Almighty's
Name,*

*With hands noble deeds and
In the heart a resolute courage
Hanumanji- like,*

*Rush forward and forward sure.
Success is yours! Success yours is!*

*Vairani Prasamam Yantu Sauhardam Vardhatam Mithah !
Kalaha Vilayam Yantu Bhavayantu Jana Mithah !!*

*May enmities be tranquilled,
Friendliness be thriven,
Quarrels be dissolved,
And*

*Love supreme be prevailed.
Om! Let Divine Peace Prevail.
Peace Physical! Peace Mental!!
Peace Spiritual!!!*

World-Friend,

RANGA AVADHUTA

OM

MESSAGE ETERNAL

॥ PARASPARADEVO BHAVA ॥
INVOKE THE DIVINE UNTO
ONE ANOTHER

*Look at one another with Divine-Eye,
Not with devil's look.*

*Feel the Divine Attribute in Each-one
and*

*Wishing welfare mutually, bestow
welfare all around!*

*Practise integrity in Thought, Speech
and Action.*

Bless each-other, Curse not.

Wish well, Wicked not.

*Do good, Crooked not! Supporter be,
Exploiter not.*

Saviour be, Detrimental not.

Helpful be, Harmful not.

Speak less, Do more.

*Keep head cool, Let there be warmth
in hands and feet.*

*Cultivate tolerance towards everyone,
Not hatred!*

Speak always Truth, Falsehood never.

(Conti. to title page no.3)