

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“The Influence of Buddhism on Jack Kerouac’s *The Dharma Bums and Some of the Dharma*”

The texts which are selected for research have confirmed that how Buddhism influenced Jack Kerouac. The writer, Jack Kerouac, is celebrated as the pioneer of Beat Generation. The shadow of Buddhism is perceptible in his magnum opus, *The Dharma Bums and Some of the Dharma*. In 2007, Kerouac was awarded posthumously with degree, Doctor of Letters, for his outstanding prose writing. With the publication of *On the Road* in 1957, Jack Kerouac became famous as Beat icon. He acquired worldwide acclaim as the pioneer of the Beat Generation and his advocacy for the spontaneity of thoughts, rebellion against the post World War American society in the 1950s made him the precursor of the Beat Generation. But it is before the popularity as a Beat writer, Kerouac inculcated a strong interest in the Eastern religion, Buddhism. And it is the growing interest in Buddhism that made Kerouac practitioner of Buddhism. The works such as *The Dharma Bums and Some of the Dharma* are therefore selected for this research.

At the outset, the chapter, introduction, has taken a look at the writing by Beat Generation. The Beat Generation is a term used to describe both a group of American writers who came to prominence in the late 1950s and the early 1960s and the cultural phenomenon that they wrote about. The Beat writers emphasized an ardent engagement in worldly experiences and many of them developed a strong interest in Buddhism. The members of the Beat Generation were Alen Ansen, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, William Burroughs, Hurbert Hunke, Neal Cassady, Lawrence Ferlighetti and older poet like Kenneth Rexroth.

The chapter on Jack Kerouac’s interest in Buddhism focused on what made the son of ever devout family delve into Buddhism. An attempt has been made to know the backdrops of the things that made the pioneer of the Beat Generation engross into Buddhism. It is doubtless that Kerouac evolved Buddhism into the consciousness of many North Americans, but with the help of writers such as Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder and Philip Whalen, Buddhism began flourishing in America in general and California in particular. Hence, the second chapter attempted to throw light on Jack Kerouac and Buddhism.

The Dharma Bums, one of the best novels is based upon Kerouac's life between 1956 and 1957. Kerouac devoted *The Dharma Bums* to Gary Snyder, a poet, an ecologist and Zen Buddhist. *The Dharma Bums* reflects the scenes of spiritual seriousness and meditation which projects Kerouac's interest in Buddhism. The discussion between Ryder and Smith about Buddha's principles and their approaches towards it shows the awareness of the writer's knowledge of Buddhism. Therefore this chapter made holistic attempt to find the influence of Buddhism on *The Dharma Bums*.

In the chapter on Some of the Dharma: A Buddhist Text, the attempt was made to find the impact of the basic principles of Buddhism in the text, *Some of the Dharma*. The recurring theme of the book is taken from the Diamond Sutra, Form is emptiness, emptiness is form or everything is empty and awake. The form, the material and ideas were also a departure from most of the works of the post world war era. But Kerouac's *Some of the Dharma* can be considered as the book starting with The Four Noble Truths, one of which Kerouac was profoundly in agreement with-life is suffering.

Thus, the Minor Research Project on "The Influence of Buddhism on Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* and *Some of the Dharma*" attempted to register the views about how the writers of Beat Generation worked to inculcate the religious ideas amongst the people belonging to the lost generation.