

The Refuge in Buddhism: a comparative perspective

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis entitled “**The Refuge in Buddhism: a comparative perspective**”” carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. V.M. Ravi Kumar, Department of History, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow is an original work and it has not been previously submitted in part or full for any other degree or diploma in this or any other University.

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The thesis submitted to the Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University Lucknow (A Central University) satisfies all the requirements as stipulated in the Doctor of philosophy regulations- 1999 as amended in 2008/2010/2013 and it is fit for submission and evaluation for the award of the Degree of *Doctor of Philosophy* of the University.

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CHAPTER 1

This chapter presents conceptual, thematic and methodological aspects of this study. Besides, mention has been made on objectives, hypothesis, methodology, review of literature and brief note on chapters of study.

CHAPTER -1

1.1: INTRODUCTION

This study is about capturing the idea and practice of the concept of refuge in the universe of religion with particular reference to Buddhism. The main objective of this study is to analyze and document how and why human beings often seek refuge in religion and what is unique about Buddhism so far as treating human beings as refuge is concern. The proposed study attempts to demonstrate the question of how Buddhism engages itself with human beings as refuge without being forcing him/her to accept beliefs of Buddhism. In other words, the proposed study attempts to capture the discourse and practice of Buddhism towards and theological and sociological category of refuge. This endeavor is undertaken by focusing on comparative method of studying various religions of the world.

In the language and spirit of religion, everybody in this world aspires to achieve tranquility and personal fulfillment desires. At the same time, it is also being proposed that to acquire a satisfied life one may need to conceive authentic principles prescribed by religion. In this sense, all religions attempted guide human beings to realize the purpose of life and being able to live with contentment and accept the limitations imposed by nature and society. The proposed study attempts to capture the role of religion in attracting the human beings by the way of promising better life than the harsh realities that they are subjected to in actual life. This is however is done by comparing different religions with Buddhism.

This study also proposes that Buddhism as religion and thought expounded in 623 BC by the Buddha still has refreshing relevance in the contemporary world in the area of social phenomenon like health, education, economics and politics and several

other. This is the reason why Buddhism as social and spiritual discourse attracted the attention world over.¹ This study proposes that how Buddhism in general and the concept of refuge in particular is capable of influencing phenomenological aspects of human beings in modern era and capable of moulding their attitude and behavior in bringing about social harmony at one level and harmony between human beings and nature at another level.

If we treat the phenomenon of religion as guiding force of humanity, besides several fascinating religions, Buddhism happens to be one of the shining exemplary religions based on human ethics and compassion. The master Buddha was one of the prominent figures from Asia whose fascinating philosophical knowledge overwhelmed the entire South East Asian Countries and some part of the world. His teaching is compiled in three sections in Pali known as Tripitakas. Most of his discourses are based on human ethics and life. One of the eminent ethics he has advocated is that the human being himself is the refuge for his life. Only human can create whether good things or bad things and has to be responsible for what had oneself done. Blessings and happiness can be getting to those who are industrious for achieving that blessing and happiness of life. The proposed study attempts to construct the trajectory of how the spiritual category of self-emancipation transcends to sociological category of emancipation of communities and groups under the guidance of the teachings of the Buddha.

The proposition this study advances is that like many religious masters, the teachings of master Buddha play an important role in influencing human societies in the past, the present and the future on account of their fascinating universality towards

¹ Maguire, Jack. *Essential Buddhism: A complete guide to beliefs and practices*. Simon and Schuster, 2001.

emancipation of human beings from misery. His teachings attempted to console mankind's worries along their lifetime and inspired it to make progress to do right things for well-being all. There is no doubt that his teachings back up a universal appeal because they are concerned with problems which created by human beings and lived in fear in their daily life.²

One of the centralities of this study is that the teachings of the Buddha in general and on the concept of refuge in particular are have critical relevance in a global society troubled by petty quarrels, hatred, lust, greed, envy and jealousy, unhealthy competition among different levels of human society starting from individuals, communities, races and nations. The noble teachings of the Buddha are one of the remedies for the ills of modern society wherein the concept of love and compassion are replacing by hate and exploitation.³ This study proposes the fact that the ideas of Buddhism on refuge are in fact a fascinating training process of human mind to achieve the objective of harmony among living species and among human beings.

This study attempts to put forward refuge perspective with regard to Buddhism, taking into account the entire spectrum of encompassing facts learnt from available Buddhist literature. This study proposes that the conceptual and spiritual category of Buddhist perspectives on refuge can be adopted for all and should be applied for one's life as well. Not only this practice creates happiness but also speeds up the spirit of hardworking in right way. In a way this study attempts to bring out one

² Robert Wright, *Why Buddhism is True? The Science and Philosophy of Meditation*, Simon & Schuster, London, 2017.

³ Saddhatissa, Hammalawa, and Maurice O'C. Walshe. *Buddhist Ethics: Essence of Buddhism*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1970.

of the less explored spiritual phenomenon i.e. refuge from Buddhist perspective with particular reference to Myanmar. The main objective of this study is to highlight the structural and functional features of the concept of refuge from the perspective of Buddhism however with the method of comparative study of world religions.

The relevance of Buddhist perspective of refuge is that unlike many religions of world, Buddhism focus upon the phenomenological world of human beings and attempt to bring about transcendental change in the ideas and practices of human action and experience. This kind of interventions by spiritual systems acquired prominence world over on account of march of civilizations and increase of complexity of human affairs. Regarding the role of Buddhism in effecting the phenomenology of a human beings, an author passed the following comment: “To a Buddhist, Buddhism is not a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood; but to him or to her Buddhism is a practical method of life – to show how to live rightly there by, happily and peacefully in spite of the unrest that is prevailing in the world.”⁴

It is generally believed that in the ancient world, the teachings of the Buddha unleashed a revolution in the way human mind think and operate. He has created a vast universe of ethics and laid down a path for humanity to follow in order to achieve harmonious life in human society. His teachings were compiled into Three Baskets or Three Sections known as ‘Tri-Pitka’ in term of Pali. Most of the discourses on record are especially based on Human ethics. The universe of Buddhist ethics was based upon the foundation of *Bahujana Sukhaya and Bahujana Hitaya* (happiness to many and welfare to many).⁵

⁴ Ashin Thittlila, *Essential themes of Buddhist Lectures*, Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon 2000, p-30.

⁵ R. C. Dutt, *Civilization in Buddhist age, B.C 320-A.D 500*, Low Price publication, New Delhi, 2004

The Buddha as a teacher has consoled the mankind's worries along their lifetime in doing right things and right livelihood with the age of time, the law of righteousness, the universal law, the law of cause and effect (Dhamma Niyama) by proclaiming the message that man is the master of his own destiny. Buddhism as a spiritual value system proposes method to remove the fear of suffering, decay and death which haunt every untrained mind. It is also popularly being said that Buddhism proposes a way of life which is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. The teachings of the Buddha thus possess universal appeal can be followed by entire humanity.⁶The proposed study is thus aims at capturing the trajectory of refuge preached and practiced by Buddhism and its comparison other established religions of the world.

1.2: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The modern world has brought about several advances in terms of science and technology. This unprecedented material progress has also brought about misery between human beings, among nations and between human world and non-human world. This crisis explicitly manifested in the form of conflicts among nations, trade wars, ecological crisis, global terrorism, poverty, inequalities and several other problems that are threatening the beings of human society. It is in this context that the teachings of the Buddha had critical relevance to reformulate the ethical values of humanity and prepare it for more harmonious life. The proposed study is an attempt to explore the socio-ethical path proposed by Buddhism with particular reference to the Buddhist way of refuge life.

Academic subjects which are part of social science and humanities recognize the importance of religion as a phenomenon having deep impact on the physiology of people, their behavior and formation of social process. Religions thus became an

⁶ Lord Chalmers, *Buddha's Teachings: Being Sutta Nipata or Discourse Collection*, Cosmo, 2014.

important source for exploring and ushering changes in society. It has been proposed by some studies that all religions propose a method of becoming refuge of its teachings and way of life.⁷ As it is clear from the teachings of the Buddha, Buddhism does not ask for blind faith from its adherents. Here, mere belief is dethroned and is substituted by the confidence based on knowledge, which in Pali, is known as 'Saddha'. The confidence placed a disciple or a follower on the Buddha is like that of a sick person by a noted physician or a student by his teacher. A Buddhist seeks taking refuge in the Buddha thanks to his find-out towards the path of the deliverance from all sufferings in life guided by Lord Buddha.

The apparent fact is that a Buddhist does not seek refuge in the Buddha when happened to being in times of trouble with the hope that he will be saved by His (i.e. Buddha's own) personal purification. In fact, it is an explicit fact that the Buddha never gives such guarantee to anyone. He makes it clear that it is not within power of the Buddha to wash away the impurities of others. According to Buddhism one could neither purify nor defile other. The Buddha as a teacher instructs us but we ourselves are directly responsible for our purification. Even though a Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha, he/she generally not expected to surrender to any authority. Nor does a Buddhist sacrifice his freedom of thought by becoming a follower of the Buddha. He can exercise his own free will and develop his knowledge even to the extent of becoming a Buddha himself.⁸

1.3: CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK OF THE STUDY

⁷ Eliade, Mircea. *Patterns in comparative religion*. University of Nebraska Press, 1996.

⁸ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, London; George Allen & Unwin 1915, p.41.

The proposed study is essentially an attempt to capture the concept of refuge in major religions of world with particular reference to Buddhism. However, it has been done from the perspective of spiritual and theological perspective. This task has been performed with the comparative method of studying religions. At the same time, this study mainly focus on the concept of refuge enunciated in the teachings of Buddha preserved in Pali literature and its relevance in the contemporary times in general and Myanmar in particular.

This study is mainly a theological based history of Buddhism with particular reference to the concept of refuge. In order to construct the historical trajectory of the concept of refuge from theological, sociological, philosophical and phenomenological perspective, a conceptual framework of multiple voices of refuge has been evolved. This conceptual framework is mainly inspired by socio-theological hermeneutic approach developed by Wilhelm Dilthey⁹ which enables us to capture the social meanings of religious language coupled with the concept of archeology of knowledge by Mitchell Foucault which proposes that the structure of knowledge on any concept travels through time and acquire several new meanings than that of original meaning.¹⁰ So the combination of socio-theological hermeneutics with archeology of knowledge we have formulated a framework of ‘multiple narratives’ on refuge from the past to present in the domain of religion. This task was achieved by using the method of comparative study of religions.

This study proposes that the domain of refuge which happens to be one of the foundational doctrines of Buddhism did not receive serious academic attention. By using the conceptual framework of multiple narratives analysis the proposed study attempts to construct the epistemic structure on the concept of refuge from socio-

⁹ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Formation of Historical World in Human Sciences*, Princeton University Press, 2002.

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge and Discourse on Language*, Vintage, 1982.

theological and historical perspective. In short, this study attempts to construct discourse and practice on the concept of refuge in Buddhism from historical perspective.

The proposed study aims to trace historical, popular religions of the world and their conceptions of offering refuge to human beings. This study attempts to explore major religions of world and compare them with Buddhism at one level and compare with different sets of Buddhism at another level. Recording the Buddha's teachings was perhaps the most important inheritance left to us by the Buddha's followers of monks and nuns. The Tripitaka (its name in Sanskrit) or Tipitaka (in Pali) are a large frame of the Buddha's teachings that were recorded after the Buddha's passing away. It was at the First Buddhist Council that the Buddha's teachings were first evoked and committed to memory. The Tripitaka (also known as the Pali Canon) is composed of the Vinaya, Sutras and Abhidhamma (or Abhidharma). These form the foundations for what are considered some of the most important Buddhist scriptures. There is no single book that can be pointed to as a Buddhist bible, rather there are volumes of teachings that are attributed to the Buddha, and we would need a whole bookcase to house them all. Fortunately, there is no requirement for a Buddhist practitioner to read the whole Pali Canon, and Buddhist literature is not limited to the Pali Canon alone, but they possess some of the most fundamental teachings required for a basic Buddhist education (namely, The Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path).

The texts of the Tripitaka consisting of teachings of the Buddha are organized into three major sections — the Vinaya-pitaka, containing the rules of communal life for monks and nuns; the Sutra-pitaka, a collection of sermons of the Buddha and senior disciples; and the Abhidharma-pitaka, which contains interpretations and analyses of Buddhist concepts. In Pali, these are the Vinaya-pitaka, the Sutta-pitaka,

and the Abhidhamma. The proposed study focuses on Buddhism in accordance with scriptures of Buddha and its commentaries and sub-communities and their views on the concept of refuge.

1.4: OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main objective of this study is to construct a historical trajectory of the concept of refuge in Buddhism, however from comparative perspective with major religions of world with particular reference to Myanmar. The study has been structured with the following objective at the helm:

- To capture the concept of refuge in the major religions of world.
- To explore the theological and historical roots of the concept of refuge in pali texts of Buddhism.
- To decipher the phenomenological meaning of the concept of refuge from Buddhist perspective.
- To track the evolutionary trajectory of the concept of Buddhism and its historical journey in the history of Buddhism.
- To explore the spiritual and social dimension of the concept of refuge.
- To encourage the ones to get profound understanding and practice the code of right moral conduct and behavior in order to avoid a false religion and refuge.
- To follow and practice a way of applying the true ethics of a religion and refuge.
- To explore the concept of refuge in different Buddhist traditions in Asia.
- To analyze the Burmese concept of Buddhist refuge as an idea and practice.

1.5: HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY

This study mainly deals with the historical and theological trajectory of the concept of refuge in Buddhist universe. While exploring this universe, the proposed study revolves around the following points represent the hypothetical observations:

- The concept of refuge as spiritual and social category was carefully evolved by the Buddha as a way to handle the crisis of humanity.

- The concept of refuge is a theological and ethical response of Buddhism to the crisis brought about civilization process in ancient India wherein struggle for control over human and nature begun to take shape.

- The concept of refuge evolved by the teachings of the Buddha intends to train the mind of human beings to lead harmonious and happy life in this world.

- The original concept of refuge evolved by the Buddha acquired several new meaning in the due course of time.

- There exists difference of opinion on the concept of refuge among different sets of Buddhism.

- Theravada Buddhism which is the form of Buddhism practiced by people of Myanmar historically evolved a distinctive concept of refuge however with adherence of the teachings of the Buddha.

1.6: METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

Methodology in the study of research design assesses the various points of view in studying religion and refuge. The proposed study essentially follows the descriptive and analytical model of history writing. The compiles of existing literature on refuges are being collected and analyzed. The proposed study follows the historical method consisting of empirical and hermeneutic method to document the history of concept of

refuge in Buddhism. For so doing depends upon both primary and secondary sources. So far as primary sources are concern, attempt has been made to collect wide range of primary consist of the following:

Anguttara-pali, *Anguttara-Nikaya. Vols,I,II,III*, Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1994.

Anuroddha-thera, Baddanta. *Abhidhamma-sangaha*, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1993.

Apadanapali, *khuddaka-Nikaya. Vol. II*. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1991.

Bodhi, bhikkhu, trans. *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the SamyuttaNikaya. Vols. I and II*. Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2000.

Buddhaghosa-thera. Baddhanta. *Khuddakapatha-atthakatha*. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1958.

Visuddhimagga-atthakatha. Vols. I and II. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1993.

Silakkhandhavagga-Pali & Atthakatha, Digha-Nikaya. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1993.

Mahaniddeasa-Pali, Khuddakanikaya. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1990.

Culavagga-Pali, Vinayapitaka. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1995.

Maha-vagga Pali, Vinaya-Pitaka. Khuddaka-Nikaya. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1972.

Milindapanha Pali, Khuddaka-Nikaya. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1991.

Sayadaw, Shwe Kyin, *Gambhiragambhira Mahanibbuta-Dipani*. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 2000.

Sayadaw, U Silanada. *The Four Foundations of Mindfulness*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1990.

Sariputta, Ashin, *Vimatitika (I)*. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1979.

Sariputta, Ashin, *Sarattha Tika (I)*. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1979.

Kathawutthu Pali, Abhidhammapitaka, Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1972.

Buddhagaosathera, *Parajika-atthakatha*, Vinaya-Pitaka. Rangoon, Burma: Department of Religious Affairs, 1986.

The teachings of Buddha, Published by the Department for the promotion and Propagation of Sasana, Printed in the Union of Myanmar P.277.

Burma Gazetteer, Thaton District, Vol.A Rangon Government Printing. 1931.

Sirisobana-Thera, *Sasanavamsa-Dipani*, Leidimandaing press Yangon 1336.

The Chattha Sangayana Souvenir Album, Union Buddha Sasana Council press, Yegu, Rangon, Union of Burma.

Patisambhida magga atthakatha. Yangon, Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1992.

Atthasaliniatthakatha. Yangon, Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1993.

Suttanipata Pali. Khuddaka-Nikaya. Yangon, Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1990.

Khuddhakapatha pali, Khuddha-Nikaya, Yangon, Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1972.

Uparipannas Atthakatha, Majjhima Nikaya, Department for the promotion and propagation of the sasana, Yangon, Myanmar 1957.

Nanavibanga atthakatha, Yangon Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1992.

Sammohavinodari (vibanga) Aatthakatha. Department for the promotion and propagation of the sasana, Yangon, Myanmar 1986.

Itivuttaka Pali, Khuddaka-Nikaya. Yangon, Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1972.

Baddanta Buddhaghosa thera, Dhammapada-atthakatha. Yangon, Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1986.

KyaukThinBawVadaVinicchaya, Yangon, Burma, Department of Religious Affairs. 1981.

The aforementioned sources are either translated from Pali to Burmese language or from Pali to English language. Attempt has been made in this study construct a historical trajectory of Buddhist perspective of refuge by using these sources. Besides this, the study also uses published books and articles which give information on various aspects of Buddhism in general and Buddhist perspective of refuge in particular.

The aforementioned sources are carefully used in order to access genuine information. While using information careful attention was paid understand the hermeneutic meanings of concepts and words from Buddhist literature. Thus by using historical methods a narrative of history of the concept of refuge has been constructed in this study.

1.7: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Buddhism as spiritual system and philosophy attracted the attention of academicians' world over. This interest could be seen in the Euro-American world as well as Asian

countries. Several fascinating studies have been published by Buddhist monks and scholars pursuing Buddhist studies. The studies on Buddhism generally aimed at the following points: various aspects of Dharma, peace, nonviolence, ethics, environment and Buddhism, nirvana and virtuous life thought by Buddha, Buddhist councils, historicity of Buddhism and several others. In short wide range of topics in Buddhist studies are being explored and documented by studies.¹¹ However, not many studies have been published on the perspective of refuge in Buddhism. This study attempts to explore the Buddhist perspective of refuge by focusing on teachings of the Buddha and subsequent commentaries put forwarded by Buddhist scholars.

In spite of robust advancement of science and technology and rational thinking, religion remained to be one of the important factors that conditions the consciousness and existence of human beings. Huston Smith's masterpiece explores the essential elements and teachings of the world's predominant faiths, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the native traditions of Australia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. Emphasizing the inner—rather than the institutional—dimension of these religions, Smith devotes special attention to Zen and Tibetan Buddhism, Sufism, and the teachings of Jesus. He convincingly conveys the unique appeal and gifts of each of the traditions and reveals their hold on the human heart and imagination.¹² The fact is that religion as a transcendental reality, continued to hold grip on the mind of human beings as a space for spiritual shelter.

Comparative study of religions has been one of the important methods to explore the nature of engagement most of the established religions had with their followers and commonalities and differences among them. Author Y.Masih's *A*

¹¹ G.P. Malalasekera, *Dhamma, Man and Law*, The Buddhist Research Society, Singapore, 1988: A.K. Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1980.

¹² V. Ferm, *Religion in the 20th Century*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1948.

Comparative Study of Religions attempted to discontinue religious conflict between all religions in India. His book's main objective was to document origination of religions, their goal, essence and ethic which can lead to happiness, enjoyment and peace of mankind.¹³ He divided his book into 11 chapters and mentioned the world where living beings live in, people, final goal of them, the life after death, the position of spirit after death, believing in everlasting, disappearing after death, cycle of birth and death etc. In addition, he remarked that religions originated in India and east middle region.

Comparative method for study religions at global level acquired prominence in the context of globalization which necessitated the need for knowing about unknown. It is this context created a surge in study of religions in different regions and countries. The main objective of this method is to document the spiritual and theological systems and similarities and dissimilarities among them.¹⁴

Attempt has been made by some studies to document the religious systems of South Asia. The obvious fact is that South Asia happens to be one the region where several major religions flourished. Attempt has also been made to present the history, doctrines, practices and contemporary status of each religion in South Asia. This analysis is useful as society in South Asia still given critical importance to religious belief systems strongly.¹⁵

Buddhism indeed played a crucial role in guiding humanity towards knowing higher reality. His Holiness the Dalai Lama first proposed an approach to ethics based on universal rather than religious principles. With his book *Beyond Religion*, he returns to the conversation at his most outspoken, elaborating and deepening his vision for the nonreligious way—a path to lead an ethical, happy, and spiritual life.

¹³ Dr Y.masih, *A comparative study of Religion*. Delhi: Harper, 1976.

¹⁴ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Global Religions: An Introduction*, 2003, Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ S. Mittal and G. Thursby, *Religions of South Asia: An Introduction*, Rutledge, 2006.

Transcending the religion wars, he outlines a system of ethics for our shared world, one that makes a stirring appeal for a deep appreciation of our common humanity, offering us all a road map for improving human life on individual, community, and global levels. This ethical vision is needed as we face the global challenges of technological progress, peace, environmental destruction, greed, science, and educating future generations. The intention of this book is to cultivate human principles that are highly needed nowadays, and from my opinion the author made them clear and enjoyable to understand.¹⁶ The subsequent section deals with Buddhist perspective of refuge represented in studies on Buddhism.

Broadly speaking, three categories of studies could be seen with the regard to representation of Buddhist perspective of refuge implicitly or explicitly. These studies as follows:

- 1). General studies on Buddhism and refuge
- 2). Buddhist philosophy and refuge
- 3). Myanmar perspective of refuge

The first category of studies on general perception of Buddhism and refuge mainly deals with literature of Buddhism. The Buddha's advice to the laymen who asked him how to seek truth is certainly unique in the history of the religious thought of mankind. This famous advice occurs in three different suttas of the Anguttara Nikaya, III & IV.¹⁷ The Buddha rejected blind faith, tradition, hearsay, divine inspiration, authority and wishful thinking in favor of an empirical investigation of every doctrine. He told the monks not to accept his teaching merely out of respect of him. He was reluctant to welcome any one who wished to embrace his Dhamma (Skt-Dharma) on the spur of the moment. When two prominent Jains were so much

¹⁶ Lama, Dalai. *Beyond religion: Ethics for a whole world*, Random House, 2012.

¹⁷ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *The numerical discourses of the Buddha: Anguttara Nikaya*, Wisdom Publications, New York, 2012.

motivated by his sermon that they expressed their desire to become his disciples, he advised them to think twice before taking such a step. Indeed, the Vinaya pitaka prescribes a probationary period of four months for new converts prior to their joining the Buddhist holy order. If according to the Buddha, even his contemporaries who heard the Dhamma direct from him should accept it only after due deliberation, we have much more reason to study intelligently his more-than-2000-year-old teaching that was preserved by word of mouth for nearly five centuries after his death. A critical study of the Pali pitaka is necessary if only because there are discrepancies that confuse us and raise doubts about the authenticity of some teachings, let us consider, for example, a popular Buddhist belief about (Skt-Parnirvæ¼a) or the passing away of the Buddha.¹⁸

Several studies attempted to present the basic tenants of Buddhism and attempted to convey the core doctrines of Buddhism. The book by Rahula represents classic example of this genre of Buddhist studies.¹⁹ This book provides a comprehensive picture on teachings of the Buddha and the religion founded based upon his teachings. Attempt has been made by some studies to capture the essence of Buddhism by using the discourses of the Buddha in Pali literature. In a way the aim was mainly focused on highlighting the essential teachings and preaching of the Buddha.²⁰ This genre of writings is aimed at conveying basic information to the interested readers on Buddhism.²¹ The main contributing of this category of studies is that documentation of core literature on Buddhism and presentation of teachings of the Buddha and Buddhism in a simple way. Besides highlighting the basic tenets of

¹⁸ Ashin Janakabhivamsa, *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*, eikkaung Press, Yangon, 1999.

¹⁹ P.D. W. Rahula, *What Buddha Taught*, One world publication, 2019.

²⁰ Bhikku Bohi, *In the Buddha's word: An Anthology of Discourse from Pali Canon*, Wisdom, 2005.

²¹ T. N. Hanh, *The Heart of Buddha's Teachings: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy and Liberation*, Ebury, 2002.

Buddhism, these studies have also been touches upon the concept of Buddhist refuge as category to get into the Buddhist world to escape suffering.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's *the Buddha and His Dhamma* is also useful work which presents the essential teachings of Buddhism and its usefulness to Indian society. He highlights the emancipatory potential of Buddhism as spiritual thought for downtrodden sections of Indian society.²² Even though this books do not present an exhaustive study of Buddhism, but present a simple and coherent picture of Buddhism and enable even a common man to grasp the complex ideas and ideals of Buddhism.

The second category of studies which reflect upon the category of refuge in religion in general and Buddhism in particular are spiritual and philosophical in nature. Several religions attempted to look at the spiritual and philosophical dimension of refuge. Some studies attempted to explore the refuge tradition in Islam and various belief systems associated with it.²³ Attempt has been made by some studies to explore the document the concept of Buddhist perspective refuge by the way of focusing on the doctrines of Buddhism.²⁴

It has been proposed by some studies that the concept of refuge happens to be one of the core principles of Buddhism. At the same time, it is proposed that Buddhist belief system offers true comfort to people who seek refuge in the teachings of the Buddha.²⁵ The fact is that more than any other religion, Buddhism gives importance to taking refuge in the teachings of the Buddha, the Sangha established by him and the

²³ Z. Tahir, *Islamic Traditions of Refuge in Iraq and Syria*, Parvage Macmillan, 2016.

²⁴ S. Boriharnwanaket, *Taking Refuge in Buddhism*, Zolong, 2000.

²⁵ Tara Brach, *True Refuge: Finding Peace and Freedom in your own Awakened Heart*, Hey House, 2001.

Dharma preached by him.²⁶ The concept of refuge thus occupies one of the central doctrinal pillars of Buddhism.

The fact is that some studies attempted to take the concept of Buddhist perspective of refuge to a higher philosophical level. It has been proposed that the philosophical and spiritual dimension of refuge in Buddhism is capable of providing more enlightened shelter to human beings than any other religion.²⁷ The spiritual category of refuge is thus acquired prominence in Buddhism as a means to take shelter by the way of discovering self rather than being constantly guided by scriptures and religious men.

Many Western Buddhist scholars acknowledge that Buddhism is the most tolerant of all religions.²⁸ The Buddha was firmly opposed to all kinds of bigotry. He repeatedly warned the monks against thinking, 'Only this view is right and all the others are wrong.' Indeed, attachment to a belief is one of the ten fetters which a disciple must cast off for enlightenment. It is certainly a major obstacle that tends to influence the interpretation of the Buddha's teaching. Thus, the student of Buddhism who loves science will interpret the Dhamma in terms of scientific concepts. Western intellectuals were fascinated by ideas of Buddhism and their potential in giving direction to human lives.²⁹

The third category of studies on Buddhist perspective of refuge is that of Buddhist studies on Myanmar. Being a predominantly Buddhist country, Buddhism continued to be a defining factor of life in Myanmar. Several studies are being carried

²⁶ K.K. Rinpoche, *Taking Refuge: A Teaching on Entering the Buddhist Path*, K.T.D. Publications, 2013.

²⁷ S. Robyn, *Coming Home: Refuge in Pure Land Buddhism*, Wood Smoke, 2019.

²⁸ Ristuccia, Nathan J. "Eastern religions and the West: The Making of an Image." *History of Religions* vol..53.2, 2013, pp: 170-204.

²⁹ D. R. Loy, *A Buddhist History of the West: Studies in Lac*, Sunny, 2002.

out on various aspects of Buddhism.³⁰ Some studies attempted to explore and document the history of Buddhism in Myanmar. The main objective of these studies is to trace the origin and development of Buddhism in the soil of Myanmar.³¹ Some studies attempt to document the trajectory of development of Buddhism in Myanmar by focusing on literature.³²

Another group of studies attempted to explore the link between the teachings of the Buddha and life in Myanmar. Attempt was made by them to show the way Buddhist values continued to condition the life of people in Myanmar.³³ The fact is that life in Myanmar influenced by Buddhist values, ethics and even economic outlook of people. This fact was highlighted by some studies.³⁴ The history of Burma thus is essentially influenced by Buddhist value systems.³⁵

Attempt was made by some studies to explore the concept of refuge from Buddhist perspective in Myanmar. It is proposed that the Theravada Buddhism evolved a sound doctrine on the perspective of refuge in Buddhism as a means to offer shelter to human beings who wants salvation in the Buddha, the Sangha, and the Dharma.³⁶ In the contemporary times Buddhism continued to provide value system to people of Myanmar in different ways.³⁷

Having presented a brief review of literature on the proposed topic, we would like to make the point of our focus which is an intervention in the field of literature on Buddhist perspective of literature. This study focus on the following less explored areas in the domain of Buddhist perspective of refuge: firstly less attention has been

³⁰ V.P,Varma, *Early Buddhism and its Origins*, Maunshiram Manoharlal, Delhi.1973.

³¹ W.S. Desai, *A Pageant of Burmese History*, Orient Longmans, New Delhi, 1961.

³² Ashin Thittila, *Essential Themes of Buddhist Lectures*, Bangkok, 1986.

³³ Ashin Janakabhivamsa, *Abhidhamma in Daily Life*,

³⁴ J.R. Andrus, *In Burmese Economic Life*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

³⁵ Myint Aung, *Revealing Myanmar's Past*, Tun Foundation, Yangon, 2010.

³⁶ Sokthan Yeng, *Refuge and Refugees in Myanmar: A Theravada Buddhist Response*, *An Interdisciplinary Journal* Vol. 101, No. 4 (2018), pp. 291-321.

³⁷ S.K. Naidu, *Buddhism in Myanmar*, Kalinga, 2009.

devoted to the concept of spiritual refuge in established religions of the world which this study attempts to document, secondly, in case of Myanmar the concept of spiritual category of Buddhist refuge is less explored domain which the proposed study attempts to expand with penetrating focus and finally this study attempts to create a picture of Buddhist perspective from global to local dimension by focusing on global religions in general and Buddhism in particular.

1.8: BRIEF NOTE ON CHAPTERISATION

In order to narrate the Buddhist perspective of Buddhism, the proposed study is divided into six chapters. The following section presents a brief description about the chapter of the proposed study:

CHAPTER-I

This chapter presents thematic and schematic introduction to the proposed study. This chapter deals with introduction of the topic, objectives, hypothesis, methodology, context of study, review of literature and mention of sources and conceptual framework of the thesis. In short this chapter proposes synoptic view of this study.

CHAPTER-II

The second chapter of this study entitled 'Religion and Refuge' traces the conceptual and hermeneutic meaning of the concept of refuge in religious discourse of major religions of the world. Attempt has also been made to explore how religious world treats the concept of refuge as a means to handle the crisis of humanity and offer solace to the people who take refuge in spiritual world as a means to get out the misery of real world.

CHAPTER-III

The chapter three entitled conceptual meaning of refuge in classical texts of Buddhism' explore, analyze and document concept of refuge as represented in the classical text of Buddhism consist of teachings of Buddha preserved in the form of Pali canon. This chapter has been divided into two sections: section one deals with the factual and philosophical meaning of refuge and the second sections deals with hermeneutic meaning of refuge in the Buddhist philosophy and its evolution in history.

CHAPTER-IV

The fourth chapter of this study entitled concept of refuge: a comparative study of Buddhist and non-Buddhist religions documents how the human beings is treated as refuge in different religions of the world and how such comparison is different with Buddhism. In other words, this chapter also deals with how major religions of word address the issue of refuge in their own way and how such way is different in Buddhism.

CHAPTER-V

The fifth chapter of this study is an attempt to capture the way the concept of refuge is thought and practiced in Myanmar. The main aims of this chapter is to explain what real refuge cultural is and religious domains of Burmese life are significantly influenced by Buddhism, and how monastic life of Buddhism in Myanmar perceived the concept of refuge and practicing it.

CHAPTER -VI

The sixth chapter of this study entitled conclusion suggests conclusion and certain broad observations that the study attempted to reflect upon. After comparing the concept of refuge in different religions at one level and Buddhism at another level, this study proposed certain generalization regarding the spiritual meaning of refuge.

Having narrated schematic and thematic aspects of the proposed study along with conceptual and philosophical meaning of Buddhist refuge, the next chapter of this study attempts to navigate to explore the conceptual meaning of refuge in the world of religion from historical perspective.

CHAPTER 2

TITLE OF CHAPTER:

THE CONCEPT OF REFUGE IN THE WORLD OF RELIGION

ABSTRACT OF THE CHAPTER

The main aim of this progress is to trace religion and refuge. Religion is experience of spirituality. Most of decisions are influenced by the religion. According to Ambedka's analysis of religion, every religion contains primarily a system of ideal scheme. This chapter traces meaning of and context of the concept of refuge in general and the spiritual and theological meaning of refuge in the domain of religions of world in particular. It sketches the trajectory of meaning of refuges in theological domain spirituality and its relevance to the contemporary world.

CHAPTER- II

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Human beings always aspire for life security and stability for both in physical and psychological domains. While material world provides them physical security and spiritual world provide psychological security. The journey of human society is thus a pendulum between material and psychological worlds. But between the two it is the spiritual world which is important for it provides psychological state of refuge from the harsh realities of the actual life. On account of this, religion as a force has been a critical component of human existence. This chapter attempts to capture the multiple meanings and contents of the category of the refuge in the domain of religion from historical perspective. The main objective of this chapter is to propose the structural and functional meaning of the category of refuge in the religious world of human beings.

The general and popular meaning of the idea of refuge is that taking shelter in a safe place. The term acquired more prominence in the context of two world wars and displacement and misery created by them. These human crises have been accentuated low level economic development in different parts of world.³⁸ The wide spread displacement world over resulted in refuge problems in different parts of world. The political and sociological meaning of refuge is that of taking shelter in safe place by human beings. This chapter however is not concern with political category of meaning of refuge rather its spiritual meaning in religion in general and the Buddha and his teachings in particular. This chapter has been divided into three sections. The first section of this chapter deals with context for emergence of the spiritual concept of refuge, the second section captures the emergence of refuge as concept in spiritual

³⁸ S.S. McPherson, *Global Refuge Crisis: Fleeing, Conflicts and Violence*, Twenty First Century, 2019.

domain world over and the third section documents the spiritual meaning of refuge in the contemporary times.

2.2 REFUGE AND GENERAL MEANING

The concept of refuge became popular in the post war period on account of raising issue of refuge world over. It has become an international and critical problem to be handled by UNO and its allied bodies. The subject acquired wider popularity so much so that several exclusive centers and agencies were established for study of refuge problem. The Association for Study World Refuge Problem established in 1950 and Oxford University has established a separate center for study the problems of refuge from multidimensional point of view are few notable among many. In the global academia studies begun to emerge to explore, analyze and document the category of refuge. Thus, a field of refuge studies became one of the fascinating fields of interdisciplinary studies in global academia.³⁹

Initially refuge studies mainly focused on empirical details and their documentation in order to sensitize the world on the problems of refugees. In fact, a journal entitled *International Migration Review* published scholarly papers regularly. Several global level reports have been published on refuge problem and attempt has been made to evolve sensible policies and problems to mitigate the problems of refuge world over. These studies generally define refuge as a person who was forced to move out of his/her country and take shelter in another country for safety point view.⁴⁰ It is this context that inspired the category of refuge studies world over. But this study is mainly interested in application of the concept of refuge in the domain of

³⁹ Richard Black, 'Fifty years of Refuge Studies: From Theory to Practice', *International Migration Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2001, pp. 57-78.

⁴⁰ E. Marx, 'The Social World of Refugees: A Conceptual Framework', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 3(3), 1990 pp. 189-203.

religion and its theological and spiritual meanings in different religion and especially in Buddhism.

2.3 SPIRITUAL MEANINGS OF REFUGE

It is general trend that refuges initially take the shelter of religious places in alien courtiers. Historically it could be seen that religion always provides shelter to destitute and refuges world over. It has been proposed by some refuge studies that religion can play a vital role in handling the problems of refuges as it provide not only comfort but also play a major role in social allocation of resources and providing acceptability to refuges in host countries. It has thus been proposed that religion can be an effective link between refuge problem and their progress.⁴¹

The recent refuge crisis in Europe has brought back the linkage between the problem of refuge and its relationship with religion and civilization. The concept of co-existence of different religions initiated a debate on how religion looks at refuge and how such perspective is important for broadening the domain of refuge studies.⁴² The spiritual meaning of refuge thus acquired popularity in western academia. The point these studies propose is that religion is one of the important domain in which the aspects of refuge can be perceived and understood the complexities of the problems of refuges. Having unveiled the relationship between religion and refuge, this study goes beyond political, academic and popular concept of category of refuge. The subsequent section of this chapter focuses on the transcendental and philosophical meanings of refuge as proposed by religions.

⁴¹ Horstmann, Alexander (Ed.), *Building Noah's Ark for Migrants, Refugees, and Religious Communities* Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.

⁴² L. Mavelli and E. K. Wilson, *The Refuge Crisis and Religion*, Rowman and Little Field, 2016.

2.4. TRANSCENDENTAL MEANING OF REFUGE

While the general meaning of refuge is taking safe shelter, the transcendental meaning of refuge is much deeper and phenomenological. It is away from the physical world and seeking refuge inner world. The spiritual meaning of the concept refuge is therefore is something to do with emotions and experiences. Taking shelter from danger is an intrinsic part of human society ever since human beings begun to live in society. The primitive man was unable to comprehend the overpowering forms of nature, beastly animals, astronomical objectives and other visible forms of nature. He was always scared the fact that such forces may harm his existence. Several historical and anthropological studies pointed out that primitive man's association with form of nature origins form his fear and hope to propitiate them as a means to survive. Taking shelter of refuge to natural forms thus begun in early period of human progress which in a created foundation for emergence of mystic worship and religion.⁴³

Since it happened to beginning of the world, human beings had been looking for the various means to take refuges because they became frightened by the wrath of nature like great fires, flood, rumbling of the earth, the earth quake, the clap of thunder, diseases and other unusual dangers. Moreover, they believe that all natural things such as plants, animals, rocks, thunders, and earthquakes have spirits and influence human events. Thus they ask for forgiveness not to be bothered and feel frightened then they take refuge in them to get their lives at ease. When they found the enormous trees, forests, woods, mountains, they also took them as their refuges. Again, only then they came to undergo such powerful natural forces as loud roaring river, wide sea and ocean, they worshipped them out of fear and hoped that such a

⁴³ Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, Forgotten Books, 2012.

aggressive forms of nature should not trouble them.⁴⁴ The journey of human has thus begun with taking shelter in venerating the forces of nature.

The fear of natural anger of nature and its forms and veneration to them resulted in emergence of the phenomenon of animism which means worship of animals and other forms of nature. The worship of animism by human beings occurred since time immemorial. Some of the mighty wild animals such as lion, leopard, tiger, horse, dragon-snake and several others were worshiped. Along with this, worship of many visible objects also came into being. They sought for more powerful objects of veneration and so they took refuge in the Sun, the Moon, the planets, the stars, and other astronomical entities. Most of the ancient civilizations worshiped visible astronomical entities.⁴⁵ This process took further turn when they took refuge in guardian spirits of forests, mountains, rivers, creeks, streams, seas, oceans, fire, water and wind. Besides they believed in god of glory, god of love, god of providence, and god of destruction, which these spirits and deities were created by their own imagination. In that way, they observed various seasonal sacrifices, feasts, rituals, and festivals in respect and veneration of the dedication to spirits and deities. At there, they offer food, drinks, flowers, candles, scents, and cloth. These practices have gradually been developed as incantation, recitation, and chanting in the forms of religious rites and rituals.⁴⁶ All sorts of worship aforementioned as refuge out of fear and by thinking of their routine destroyed are considered early primitive ages in bygone societies all over the world ranging from Stone Age to 19th century as under chart.⁴⁷ The primitive human beings thus took refuge in visible entities with life and lifeless to escape from fear and uncertainty. It is

⁴⁴ The religious department, the teaching of the Buddha (higher level), religious department print, Yangon, 2001, p-196.

⁴⁵ E.E.V. Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion*, Oxford University Press, 1965.

⁴⁶ H. Jennings, *Nature Worship*, Cosmo Classics, 2007.

⁴⁷ Sein Tun, *Seeking the lord Buddha along the world*, Yangon press, 2000, p-18

this fear and taking refuge gradually resulted in emergence of nature worship in different parts of globe and different civilizations.

The common feature of ancient belief systems is that worshipping the objectives which provide utilities to human beings at one level and threatening their existence at another level. The following table demonstrates the way in which attempt was being made by human beings in different part of world to take refuge in supernatural powers:

2.5 NATURE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS REFUGE IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF WORLD

Countries Or Specific Area	Chronology	Name of god/goddess	Believed to be Supernatural Power
Egypt	5000 BC 4000 BC	Egypt Patas (Ugly God) Anubist (Black dog God) Sebest god (Crocodile God) Sun God and Water God	The creation of “Heat and Light and water and silt”
Sumerian	4500 BC	Only Each Guardian God that take care of Sun, Mon, Thunder, Heaven, forest, water and earth even cattle etc., Cow goddess	Guard at temple
China	1122-249 BC (Chaug Dynasty) 206 BC – 220AD (Han Dynasty)	Earth god, Wind god, Water god, Fire god, River god Chinese Buddhism	
India	5000-3000-1750 BC	Three Faces’ god	The creation of crops
Austi-Asia Known as Mongoloid	2000 BC	Earth god in plot farm, Heaven god And Snake god	The creation of rewards of grains
Babylonian	1948-1905 BC	Venus goddess known as Adfrodis goddess	Inspiration
A-Syrian	3000-606 BC	Asu War god Arsa Sun god	Power of War
Chadian in Egypt	600 BC	Piya goddess and Vitasha goddess Sunday god Monday god	Power of fulfillment for wishes

Hebrew	2500-2000 BC	Storm god and his wife Sun goddess	Power of stormy rain
Phinshan At Northern Syrian	3000 BC	Sacrificed gods and goddesses of earth, sun and fertilizer	Flesh of human or animals being sacrificed
Greek	3000-2500 BC 1400-1100 BC	Zeyu god Each god or goddess out of nature or natural elements, plat, stream, bird, animal etc.,	Natural Power
Greek (Poet Homer)	Before 800 BC	Saidrawn, god for sea Hayar, goddess of Zayu Queen Ayest, god for War Apolo, god for light Damatel, God for farm Dirawnisiyut, god for intoxication Athina, god for commerce Halmet, god for diplomacy Arfridata, god for love Pluto and Palsailni, gods for hell Ziyu, god for heavern etc.,	
Rome	1000 BC 15-49-23 BC	12 gods Tania god of thunder and light Poram god	Human beings regarded as sacrifice at risk Statue God in public
Aryan	2000 BC	god of earth, fire and intoxication god of water, celestial king, and rain god of Sun, dawn and dusk Creator or god of creation to world	
India	1800-1200 BC	Brahman	The origin of caste system

Source: U Sein Htun, Seeking Lord in world-wide”, 1992.

The aforementioned table clearly demonstrates the fact that in the early stage of human development, natural forms and entities were venerated by human beings and believed that such entities uphold of the life of worshipers and facilitate their daily lives. Ancient human beings believed and in fact took refuge in forms of nature consisting of visible astronomical objectives, terrestrial entities such as mountain, rivers etc. and powerful animals. Worshipped them piously and devised elaborate rituals to propitiate them for saving those lives and stability for their existence. Early humans thus took shelter in worship in forms of nature and believed that such workshop save them from wrath of nature.⁴⁸

In the due course of time, the complexity of human imagination improved and gave them more confidence in searching for new forms of spiritual life. This search was aimed at simplified and universally practicable forms of spirituality. As religious culture and philosophy evolved their emerged belief in a Supreme Creator, a Supreme Destroyer and other forms of supreme entity. These practices give rise to the Doctrine of Trinities. The worshipper took themselves refuge in the Trinitarian Divinities by sacrificing animate and inanimate offertories as well. In that way they begun to sacrifice horse, cattle, sheep, goats, chicken and even occasionally human beings to the Supreme Deities or gods thinking that these all dwelling in the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, heavenly garden are superior to human beings. Their desire wishes to be reborn or reincarnated as a great powerful man after death.⁴⁹

The primitive people gradually upgraded their refuges as if their own religion ranging from material things to spiritual things, from there and then on, from spiritual

⁴⁸ E. Norbeck, *Religion in Primitive Society*, Harper and Row, 1961.

⁴⁹ J. Kirsch, *God against Gods: The History of War between Monotheism and Polytheism*, Penguin, 2005.

things to eternity and from the earth to the heaven.⁵⁰ These above mentioned are the belief of bygone ages and ancient beings searching for their refuges due to their fearful and dreadful desire. Such imaginary refuges are not real refuges where ones cannot escape from the sense of perfect security and cannot ward off dangers and harm even all sufferings that they face at present and in the future. Thus the aforementioned natural phenomena come into men's mind as their real Religion and Refuge and even run diversity of the several religions and refuges taken place all over the world.

2.6 THE BEGINNING OF THE RELIGION

History of religion is one of the important sources for capturing the progress of human mind and emotions. Social theorists and historians explain the fact that human beings started their existence in lonely family which gradually developed into groups or a society. At this period, human life was dominated by fear and wishes. It is true that human life has been full of fearful events and things that created by desire and longing. For example, overflowing of stream and rivers due to tides, storms and other natural disasters, the harm of snakes, leopards, tigers, wild elephants, enemies, etc. are called dangers of living beings, and there exist troubles of human existence itself which are painful to life itself such as illness, old age, disease, death. Seeing and experiencing all kinds of dangers and troubles, man began to have a sense of fear. Consequently, in order to overcome such troubles and pains, man sought some kind of

⁵⁰ Wunn, Ina, 'Beginning of religion', *Numen: International Review for History of Religion*, 47.4, 2000, pp. 417-452.

religion. They wanted peace and security. Hence out to fear and desire, man searched for refuge.⁵¹

Generally, in the primitive societies human beings were used to take refuge in animals, forms of nature, visible entities of sky and several other entities. Such animism gradually begun to be replaced by more enlighten human centric thought which believes in abilities of human beings in saving themselves. Such trend could be seen world over. We do have some examples such as Jewish belief system which emphasis on strict monotheism, emergence of rationalist thought in Greek Islands,⁵² ascendancy of Confucius in China. In a way this suggests a global trend in advancing the frontiers of human knowledge from refuges of fears to emancipators of self. The teachings of the Buddha need to be seen in this perspective. In fact, the teachings of the Buddha show the maturity of human abstraction on abilities of human beings rescuing from the fear of existence.

2.7 THE THREE TREASURES OF REAL REFUGE

A religious rather a spiritual revolution in ancient Indian emerged in 6th century BC which begun to question the religious systems of Vedic Brahmanism which ensured moksha only if an individual follows regimented way of life prescribed by its priestly class. This process resulted in emergence of enslavement of human spirit by imposing restricting on human ability of imagination and creative abilities.⁵³ The social unrest caused by such belief system created a context for emergence of more rational religious and spiritual thought in ancient period. Emergence of heterodox sets which have questions the irrational belief systems as redeemers of human suffering. The most famous sets happen to be Jainism and Buddhism which had advanced new

⁵¹ Paul Radin, *Primitive Religion: Its Nature and Origin*, Dover, 1937.

⁵² J.R. T. Pollard, *Seers, Shrines, Sirens: The Greek Religious Revolution in 6th Century BC*, A.S. Barnes, 1965.

⁵³ R.S. Sharma, *India's Ancient Past*, Oxford University Press, 2006.

paradigm of spiritual thought by the way of replacing supernatural entities with human effort as redeemers of human sufferings.⁵⁴

2.8 A BRIEF NARRATION ON BASIC TENANTS OF BUDDHISM

Buddhism is one of the five largest religions in the world. Buddhism follows the teachings of the Buddha with the awaked one. All the teachings of the Buddha are aimed solely at liberating sentient beings from suffering with right action and with right mindset we can end our suffering. Buddhist teachings mainly resolve around human suffering and ways to end it. For example, the four Noble Truths are that life often in fact always involves suffering the reason for the suffering is we want things to be a certain way the cure to this suffering is to rise above the desire and the way to rise above this desire is to follow the Noble eightfold path practices which help us change our minds and the noble eightfold path is another one the main Buddhist staples that if we take right view ,right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration then we can begin to understand the four noble truths we can understand our suffering and reach Nirvana.

Now Nirvana isn't just a famous band from the 90s. it's a supreme state of being in Buddhism. It means the complete letting go of desires and suffering as we can see. the Buddhist believe the most problems in the world are due to suffering. A lot of our suffering is caused by our desires. Buddhist practices are focused on removing our desire and living in the present moment. The one who has conquered himself is a far greater hero than he was defeated a thousand times a thousand men, this has been a brief summary of Buddhism. Buddhists do not believe that people should look to God to save them or bring them enlightened rather individuals should

⁵⁴ U. Singh, *The Idea of Ancient India: Essays on Religion, Politics, and Archeology*, Sage, 2015.

work at their own path. They focus removing their desire to achieve spiritual happiness.

2.9: GENERAL HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

The founder of Buddhism in this world is Buddha Shakyamuni. He was born as a royal prince in 624 BC in a place called Lumbini, which was originally in northern India but is now part of Nepal. 'Shakya' is the name of the royal family into which he was born, and 'Muni' means 'Able One'. His parents gave him the name Siddhartha and there were many wonderful predictions about his future. In his early years he lived as a prince in his royal palace but when he was 29 years old he retired to the forest where he followed a spiritual life of meditation. After six years he attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya, India.

2.10: MODERN ASIA AND BUDDHISM

Having been originated in India, Buddhism gradually spread to different parts of Asian continent. In northern Asia, Mahayana form of Buddhism remains the most common form of Buddhism in China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Singapore. The Theravada form of Buddhism predominates in most of Southeast Asia, including Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, as well as Sri Lanka. The Vajrayana form of Buddhism is predominant in Tibet, Mongolia, portions of Siberia and portions of India, especially those areas bordering Tibet. Kalmykia, while geographically located in Europe, is culturally closely related to Mongolia and thus its Buddhism is more properly grouped with Asian than with Western Buddhism.

While in the West Buddhism is often seen as exotic and progressive, in the East Buddhism is regarded as familiar and part of the establishment. Buddhist organizations in Asia frequently are well-funded and enjoy support from the wealthy

and influential. In some cases, this has led critics to charge that certain monks and organizations are too closely associated with the powerful and are neglecting their duties to the poor. The fact however is that Buddhism as spiritual belief system was expansionist and missionary in nature and expanded rapidly to many parts of globe. It continued to offer new form of taking refuge in spirituality not with fear but with wisdom and conviction. The new forms of taking refuge into spiritual offered by Buddhism attracted the attention of the West.

2.11: BUDDHISM AND THE WEST

In the latter half of the 19th century, Buddhism (along with many other of the world's religions and philosophies) came to the attention of Western intellectuals. These included the pessimistic German philosopher Schopenhauer and the American philosopher Henry David Thoreau, who translated a Buddhist sutra from French into English. German writer Hermann Hesse also showed great interest in the eastern religion, even writing a book entitled Siddhartha. Spiritual enthusiasts enjoyed what they saw as the exotic and mystical tone of the Asian traditions. At first Western Buddhology was hampered by poor translations (often translations of translations), but soon Western scholars began to learn Asian languages and translate Asian texts. In 1880 J.R. de Silva and Henry Steel Alcott designed the International Buddhist flag to celebrate the revival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Its stripes symbolize universal compassion, the middle path, blessings, purity and liberation, wisdom, and the conglomeration of these. The flag was accepted as the International Buddhist Flag by the 1952 World Buddhist Congress.

In 1899 Gordon Douglas became the first Westerner to be ordained as a Buddhist monk. The first Buddhists to arrive in the United States were Chinese. Hired as cheap labor for the railroads and other expanding industries, they established

temples in their settlements along the rail lines. Thus Buddhism spread into the land of America. So far as Europe is concern, the Buddhist Society, London was founded by Christmas Humphreys in 1924. The cultural re-evaluations of the hippie generation in the late 1960s and early 1970s led to a re-discovery of Buddhism, which seemed to promise a natural path to awareness and enlightenment. Many people, including celebrities, traveled to Asia in pursuit of gurus and ancient wisdom. Buddhism had become the fastest-growing religion in Australia and many other Western nations by the 1990s.

A distinctive feature of Buddhism has been the continuous evolution of the practice as it was transmitted from one country to another. This dynamic aspect is particularly evident today in the West. Chšgyam Trungpa, the founder of the Shambhala meditation movement, claimed in his teachings that his intention was to strip the ethnic baggage away from traditional methods of working with the mind and to deliver the essence of those teachings to his western students. Another example of a school evolving new idioms for the transmission of the dharma is the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, founded by Sangharakshita.⁵⁵ Why Buddhism able to spread to different parts of world and continued to expand further? The answer to this question lies in the very nature of teachings of the Buddha and subsequent systematization of his teachings into form of Buddhism. The next section deals briefly with the Buddha and concept of refuge in offered in his teachings.

2.12: The Buddha

Historically and traditionally the word "Buddha" refers to a person named Siddhartha Gautama who lived in India around the 5th century BC. On taking refuge in the Buddha, we take refuge in this person for He is the teacher and founder of Buddhism.

⁵⁵ Kulananda, *Western Buddhism: New Insights into west Fastest growing Religion*, Thorsons, 1997.

However, in asking Him for refuge, we do not take refuge in Him merely in the physical being. The Buddha becomes a refuge because of His attainment of Supreme Enlightenment as believed by many Buddhist. It is also believed that the Buddha is the enlightener of others. Those who realize and attain this state are called Buddha. This is the supra-mundane aspect of the refuge-object. So when taking refuge in the Buddha, we rely on Him as a prime refuge because He embodies supreme enlightenment or Buddha hood which is the total sum of the qualities possessed by those who attain supreme enlightenment, namely: The destruction of all defilements totally (every defilement destroyed without residue) and finally (can never arise again).⁵⁶

It is generally claimed that the Buddha's virtues are numerous but two stand out as paramount: great wisdom and great compassion. It is believed that both of which the Buddha utilized for the welfare of others. When we take refuge in the Buddha, we resort to Him as the supreme embodiment of purity, wisdom and compassion, the peerless leader who can guide us to safety out of the unsafe ocean of Samsara.

2. 13: BUDDHISM AND REFUGE

With his missionary form of teachings, the Buddha was able to attract large number of followers. His teachings acquired Throughout the Pali Canon, a source of the oldest extant Buddhist teachings first written down over 2,000 years ago, learners of Buddha proclaim their aim to follow his teachings by saying out loud that they take refuge in

⁵⁶ M. Smith and C.N. Rinpoche, *Buddhahood in this life; The Great Commentary by Vimalamitra*, Wisdom, 2016.

the Buddha Dhamma and Samgha. Here's one example from the Kalama Sutta as follows:⁵⁷

Glorious, lord! Magnificent! as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has the Blessed One — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. We go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of monks. May the Blessed One remember us as lay followers who have gone to him for refuge, from this day forward, for life’’⁵⁸

At normative level, taking refuge in Buddhism goes through three simple stages. In a way, it has been general observation that “taking refuge” for these first Buddhists was simpler than it was for subsequent generations. In this first stage, Buddhists were expected to follow a particular person – the enlightened Buddha, who exposed a path to developing, freedom, and peace of mind. They were impressed by what he said and how he performed. At this state the followers of the Buddha carefully listening to him and ask him questions. They were going to try following his guidance to see if it allowed them to realize and manifest what he had understood and manifested. The first step of taking refuge in Buddhism thus starts with exposing oneself to the wisdom of the Buddha.⁵⁹

The second stage of taking refuge in Buddhism starts with belief in the phenomenon of Dharma which generally means the sum of teachings of the Buddha. Buddhists thus take refuges in the teachings that the Buddha he gave, which in Pali are known as the “Dhamma” (in Sanskrit and other languages, this is “Dharma”). The

⁵⁷ Bodhi, Bhikkhu, and Nyanaponika Thera. *Numerical discourses of the Buddha: An anthology of Suttas from the Anguttara Nikaya*. AltaMira Press, 2000.

⁵⁸ Walshe, Maurice. *The long discourses of the Buddha*, 1995.

⁵⁹ Sangharakshita, *The History of My Going for Refuge: Reflections on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Western Buddhist Order*, Windsor, 1988.

people who were seen as the most learned and practiced in the Dhamma were the Buddha's disciples, who were (ideally) leading exemplary lives and were qualified to teach the Buddha's path of practice to others. For people who take refuge in Buddhism have to depended upon the path laid down by the Buddha popularly known as Dhamma which means the words of wisdom that the Buddha left for his followers to follow. Understanding and following the teachings of the Buddha has been one of the important components of taking refuge in Dharma.⁶⁰

The third stage of taking refuge in Buddhism is that of living with Sangha instituted by the Buddha. The Buddha's community of monks and nuns was called the Sangha. It is the sangha that provides congenial atmosphere according to Buddhist belief to realize the true teachings of the Buddha. It is perceived as a sacred space for taking refuge in the teachings of the Buddha. The three stage of taking refuge in the teachings of the Buddha constitute core of Buddhism and its spiritual and philosophical dimension of human emancipation.⁶¹

Apparently, in pre-Buddhist phase there exists some genuine search for offering a simple form of refuge to the toiling masses. The philosophical version of Vedanta teachings offers gana marga (path of knowledge) for salvation, in fact shamanic tradition practiced by forest based wanders also attempted to offer philosophical and ascetic based forms of taking refuge. But the strength of teachings of Buddha lines in evolving a middle path between elaborate ritual forms of religion and stoic ascetic based religion. His teachings show the simple way to take refuge by the way of self-realization with dedicated practice of self-control and gaining knowledge.

⁶⁰ 6. Kenneth W. Morgan (ed.), *The Path of the Buddha*, New York, 1956.

⁶¹ S.B. Cogan, *The Buddha's Three Jewels: The Buddha, The Dharma and The Sangha*, Create space, 2011.

The fact is that since long time, people want to seek happy and safe life by taking refuge in visible entities of nature. Their search for refuge took them to mountains and forests, to park and tree shrines and several other forms of nature. The Buddha, with his teachings proposes that such forms of refuge are not secure refuge, not the supreme refuge, that's not the refuge, having gone to which, you gain release from all suffering & stress. He also proposes that 'having gone to the Buddha, Dhamma & Sangha for refuge, human beings would be able to see with right discernment the four noble truths —The cause of suffering, the transcending of suffering, & the noble eightfold path, the way to the stilling of suffering: that's the secure refuge, that, the supreme refuge, that is the refuge, having gone to which, we will gain release from all suffering & stress'.⁶²

The teaching of Buddha proposes that the world can be a threatening place for human beings and their happy life. It would be more dangerous particularly if we are working on spiritual practice for attaining emancipation. The Buddha preaches that if we want to be awakened, let go of attachments, get past your obstructions, become wiser and compassionate, etc. Buddhism proposes that there are a lot of temptations, distractions, practical worries, and, generally speaking, not a lot of understanding or peer support for your efforts. It also says that the world in which human being life be it natural or manmade always make them to feel miserable on account of their craving, attachments and emotions. These conditions according to the Buddha do not allow human being attain secure refuge.⁶³

The teachings of the Buddha offer revolutionary solutions to several unanswered questions that humanity subjected to in the 6th century BC. Human were mainly prisoners of the elaborate ritualistic symbolism which done not offer

⁶² Egge, James. *Religious giving and the invention of Karma in Theravada Buddhism*. Routledge, 2013.

⁶³ J. Smith, *Radiant Mind: Essential Buddhist Teachings and Texts*, Riverhead Trade, 1999.

emancipation to human mind. The main point of the Buddha's teaching is that your experience of life – whether it is relatively peaceful and unselfish, or whether it is miserable and destructive – depends largely on the state of your own mind and heart. The Buddha thus offer a different notion of refuge which means acquiring capacity to escape the misery that this world offer to human beings by taking refuge in the teachings of the Buddha, taking refuge in the path of Dharma and taking refuge in life of Sangha. The essence of Buddhism is thus taking refuge in proper place.⁶⁴

The teachings of the Buddha attempts to explore the inner and transcendental factors which rob the happiness of human beings. The real dangers – the things that threaten your happiness no matter what your external circumstances according to Buddhism are greed, hate, and delusion and all the problems that flow from them pride, envy, anger, hypocrisy, dishonesty, stinginess, complacency, etc. The Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha can help protect us from these internal dangers, which are seen by Buddhists as being even more significant than external ones, at least most of the time. Buddhism is thus mainly aimed at finding the root cause of human suffering, rather than offering mythical solutions to human problems.

The doctrine of taking refuge in the three gems in Buddhism is not about blind and dogmatic advocacy to follow the teachings of the Buddha. The observable fact is that the Buddha himself actually counseled against that kind of blind faith, and against dogmatism. An often-cited example of this aspect of the Buddha's teaching comes from the Kalama Sutra– it's little long because it was passed down through oral tradition, but it reflects a good sense of views on the original Buddhist teachings. The following conservation reflects the ideas of the Buddha on rational belief:

⁶⁴ G.F. Halls, *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Wisdom: A Complete Introduction to the Principles and Practices of Buddhism*, Quest books, 2000.

As they sat there, the Kalamas of Kesaputta said to the Blessed One, “Lord, there are some Brahmans & contemplatives who come to Kesaputta. They explain & elevate their own guidelines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deplore other religion or teachings, revile other’s believe, show contempt for teachings of others, & disparage them. And then other Brahmans & contemplatives come to Kesaputta. They expound & glorify their own doctrines, but as for the doctrines of others, they deprecate them, revile them, show contempt for them, & disparage them. They leave us absolutely uncertain & in doubt: Which of these venerable Brahmans & contemplatives are speaking the truth, and which ones are laying?”

The Buddha replied ‘Kalamas: ‘Don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, “This contemplative is our teacher.” When you know for yourselves that, “These qualities are unskillful; these qualities are blameworthy; these qualities are criticized by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to harm & to suffering” — then you should abandon them.’

“Now, Kalamas, don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, ‘This contemplative is our teacher.’ When you know for yourselves that, ‘These qualities are skillful; these qualities are blameless; these qualities are praised by the wise; these qualities, when adopted & carried out, lead to welfare & to happiness’ then you should enter & remain in them.⁶⁵”

⁶⁵ The Anguttara Nikaya, general books,2010 pp. 188-193

So the Buddha tells the Kalamas to authenticate things for themselves, and to trust only when they know for themselves the outcomes of a particular teaching or exercise. He even tells them not to believe just because their teacher says it! The Kalamas know the difference between hurt and misery on the one hand, and welfare and happiness on the other. The Buddha encourages them to trust their own experience in deciding whether someone is a legitimate spiritual teacher, or whether a particular teaching is beneficial. The fact need to be noticed here is that Buddha bestowed human agency in realizing and experiencing things rather than prescribing infallible blind belief. So the Buddhist perspective of taking refuge is not about venerating visible forms of nature rather exploring oneself and convincing oneself on realization of reality.

The Buddha was ruthless and dismissive of personal cult with blind belief. He also emphasized that after his pass away, his followers should take refuge in his teachings, (not personal refuge) and that they no longer needed him. According to the Pali Canon's "Maha-parinibbana Sutta: Last Days of the Buddha" when the Buddha was 80 years old and dying, one of his foremost disciples, Ananda, was upset and wondering what the Buddha's followers were going to do once he was gone. The Buddha replied:

The last words of Buddha to Ananda as follows: 'be islands onto yourselves, refuges onto yourselves, seeking no external refuge; with the Dhamma as your island, the Dhamma as your refuge, seeking no other refuge'.⁶⁶ The Dharma is the teachings of the Buddha, which clearly include verifying things through our own direct

⁶⁶ The Aṅguttara-nikāya, 5 vols. ed R. Morris, I, 1961; II (1976); E. Hardy III (1979); IV & V. (1979).

experience. So taking refuge is not blind faith or dogmatism, and it's not about surrendering our will-power to, it's not about surrendering our intelligence or personal responsibility. It is all about exploring and understanding reality with the help of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Buddhist perspective of refuge is thus about transcendental reality not based upon metaphysics, rather rational and comprehensible reality to human mind and thus gain supreme tranquility.

2.14: WHY WE NEED REFUGE?

Even though the Buddha advocated a ruthless advocacy for individual rationality, he did recognize the fact that human beings do require to take refuge. Taking refuge also require a process and training. In order to explain the process of becoming refuge, I would focus on Sangha and its way of life. The emphasis is need as Sangha as a space is important for Buddhist for it offer training to human beings on how to overcome misery and look for safe refuge.

Factually, the structure of Sangha is the fourfold community of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen, as well as the other fundamentals that support its existence. In Myanmar there is a famous saying that when a tiger leaves the mountain and goes to the lowlands, he will be caught by humans and killed. When a practitioner leaves his Sangha, he may abandon his practice and 'die' as a practitioner. Practicing with a Sangha is essential." The space of Sangha is thus a domain of practicing the teachings of the Buddha.⁶⁷

The basic idea behind taking refuge in the Three Gems is that it can be hard to practice. Let's say your aspiration is something along the lines of developing greater awareness, wisdom, compassion, selflessness, appreciation for your life, and freedom from afflictive emotions. To work on this aspiration is going to take time, diligence,

⁶⁷ S. Putuwar, *The Buddhist Sangha*, University Press of America, 1991.

and effort. You're going to have to be willing to face your delusions and give things up, and to try new ways of being and perceiving. In the midst of such practice, it's hard not to get waylaid by doubt, discouragement, distractions, laziness, confusion, and misunderstanding of the teachings.

According to Buddhism we're unlikely to achieve our full spiritual potential without taking refuge in the Three Gem. Its main concern is to eliminate the suffering of man by directly pointing at his own mind as the only answer to his problems. Mind, according to Buddhism, is the forerunner of all phenomena.⁶⁸ Everything comes from idea and from the idea can create what we want to be in our daily life. So, important point is to keep purified mind in heart. Who is a good person and who is a bad person depends on his good mind in accordance with Buddha's teachings. So the structure of Sangha provides a space for the followers of the Buddha to realize their full potential and thereby get attain enlightenment.⁶⁹

Having discussed about Sangha, I would now briefly like to elucidate concepts of Buddha, Dharma and Samgha a little more which might make "taking refuge" make more clear. It is noticeable fact that the triple gems have many different levels of meaning, from the concrete to the profound. Exploring the meanings of triple germs enables us to grasp more penetrating means of Buddhist perspective of refuge.

Starting with the Buddha: Obviously, once the historical Shakyamuni Buddha is passing a way— what do we do? Is refuge about faith that he lived? For some people, this may indeed be the case. Many Buddhists find it very inspiring to think that someone, at least one person, was completely and totally enlightened. However,

⁶⁸ *The Dhammapada*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

⁶⁹ Bechert, Heinz, and Richard H. Gombrich, *The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture*, London, Thames & Hudson, 1984.

refuge does not necessarily have anything to do with the historical existence of Gautama Buddha, or about believing that he – or anyone else – achieved a rarefied state of impeccable enlightenment that’s beyond the imagining of most of us. After all, the existence and level of insight of Buddha is not something we can verify for ourselves as the Dharma instructs.⁷⁰

Essentially the concept of refuge in Buddhism is about faith that Buddha hood – or at least a strong belief in the fact that some significant level of awakening is possible for individuals wanted to follow the teachings of the Buddha. Taking refuge in Buddhism is thus about an attempt to acquired awakening by the way of following the teachings of the Buddha and leading the way of life shown by the Buddha.

The fundamental question however is that of what does it mean to be “enlightened” or “awakened in Buddhism? These terms may sound rather grand or esoteric, but the Buddhist concept of enlightenment is very similar to the ideal of the saint or sage in many other spiritual traditions. The features of enlightenment as follows:

- Free from self-centeredness; self-transcendence; awareness of – and living in harmony with – the truth that all beings are interconnected; free from what Buddhism calls obsession with “I, me and mine”.

- Moral – taking responsibility for one’s own behavior, recognizing the fact that actions have consequences and seeking to bring about benefit instead of harm.

- Generous, compassionate and patient.

- Possessed of equanimity – having a larger perspective, insight into the nature of life that allows one to be less at the whim of afflictive emotions like anger, fear, envy, etc.

⁷⁰ Trainor, Kevin, ed. *Buddhism: The Illustrated Guide*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2004.

In Buddhism, the idea is that these ideals are not just describing special people who by nature were especially wise or saintly. Through spiritual practice any of us can approach – and eventually attain – a way of being that’s much more “enlightened.” (Even if we don’t know if we’ll ever attain perfection, in a way it doesn’t matter, because we know we can improve, at least a little)

When we take refuge in “Buddha” we’re really taking refuge in – relying on – this potentiality within ourselves. Ideally refuge goes beyond simply cultivating faith in it, although faith helps (and interacting with people we feel embody this ideal better than we do can help inspire faith). Zen and many other forms of Buddhism encourage you to work toward a direct experience of your own Buddha-like nature, and your own natural interest in being selfless, responsible, compassionate, and at peace. Broadly speaking, the aspect of Buddhist refuge is nothing but exploring and discovering oneself with the path shown by the Buddha and cultivating virtues which enable human beings to attain right perspective.

Typically, in Buddhism, refuge in Buddha also means taking refuge in teachers – that is, people who seem wiser and more compassionate than you happen to be at the moment. Sometimes such teachers communicate with us through writing... so we may be able to take refuge in a teacher we’ve never even met. Also, someone doesn’t have to be a perfectly realized, enlightened “Buddha” in order to teach us something. If we turn toward wisdom wherever we find it, we may end up learning from a neighbor, or child, or from nature. The next section of this chapter explains the concept of refuge in Buddhist perspective in more detailed way.

2.15: REFUGE IN THE DHARMA

Taking refuge constitutes one of the important factors in Buddhism. The fact is that there are different uses and meanings of the word “dharma” before/outside of/and

within Buddhism, including “right way of living” (in Hinduism) and “phenomena” in Buddhism (generally spelled with a small “d”). In Buddhism, Dharma with a capital D, in the most literal sense, refers to Shakyamuni Buddha’s teachings, and to the teachings of his disciples. Over the centuries, Dharma came to refer to all kinds of Buddhist teachings, judged on whether they relieve suffering and bring welfare and happiness and to some extent also whether they were consistent with certain foundational Buddhist teachings like impermanence, no-self, and karma.

At a deeper level, though, Dharma is about a deeper truth – an underlying Truth or pattern in the universe, kind of like the Tao. This is the kind of truth that’s not dependent on a particular religion or set of teachings. The Dharma is the truth of interdependence; the benefit of compassion and the fact that selfishness leads to suffering even for the one being selfish; that our actions have consequences, visible and invisible; that there are forces at play in the universe much larger than our own individual wills and concerns; that phenomena tend to fall into certain patterns, and we are far from a random collection of elements spewed out of the Big Bang.⁷¹

The premise of Buddhism is that we don’t need an external authority to tell us what is true. We instinctively, intuitively know the difference between suffering and happiness, just like a seed knows the difference between up and down when it sprouts. In general, actions out of accord with the deeper Truths of existence cause suffering, while actions in accord bring peace and happiness. Of course, this is over the long term. We can fool ourselves in the short term, when we let greed, hate, and delusion control us (this is what practice is for).

Taking refuge in the Dharma, then, is relying on the Buddhist teachings to guide you, but even more importantly it is relying on your own ability to recognize

⁷¹ K.S. Kumar, *Thus Speak the Buddha*, UBS, 2003.

truth. We have to be willing to look carefully, and question ourselves – so in a way this isn't about taking refuge in a bunch of teachings outside yourself, it's a vow search for the truth within your own experience.⁷²

2.16: REFUGE IN THE SANGHA

The institution of Sangha is an organic part of Buddhism. As the Thich Nhat Hanh suggests, for Buddhists Sangha is an essential structure in which the teachings of the Buddha can be practiced without disturbance. Originally, in the Pali Canon, the term Sangha was used in two ways, according to Thanisaaro Bhikku who has written a fabulous book entitled *Refuge: An Introduction to the Buddha, Dhamma, & Sangha*, the “conventional” use of the term referred to Shakyamuni Buddha’s ordained disciples (monks and nuns). The “ideal” use of the term referred to any of the Buddha’s students, lay or ordained, who had attained a certain level of awakening. This meant the two definitions overlapped but were different; there might be ordained disciples who weren’t yet awakened, and non-ordained disciples who were.⁷³

In the Pali Canon the Buddha also referred, however, to the “four-fold assembly,” of ordained men, ordained women, lay men, and lay women. Over time, particularly in Mahayana traditions, the term “Sangha” came to be applied to the four-fold assembly. At the most literal level for us, in Zen – especially for modern practitioners – the term “Sangha” refers to the community of people, lay and ordained, who study and practice Buddhism together. The Sangha is the people with whom we share spiritual aspirations, and with whom we work to understand and manifest the teachings and practices of Buddhism.

⁷² Friedlander, Peter Gerard. ‘Dhammapada traditions and translations’, *Journal of Religious History* vol. 33, no. 2, 2009, pp. 215-234.

⁷³ Thanisaaro Bhikku who has written a fabulous book entitled *Refuge: An Introduction to the Buddha, Dhamma, & Sangha*, The Dhammayut Order, 2001

Why Sangha is necessary for Buddhists? It is indeed an important question to be explored. The following advantages could be found with being in Sangha: with Sangha you don't have to explain why you spend your vacations in silent meditation retreats staring at walls: you don't have to convince fellow Sangha members that lying and cheating is a bad idea, you generally don't have to ask them to value silence and for the most part you can count on Sangha members to take responsibility for their own actions and reactions. On account of these facts, Sangha as a space is a domain wherein the teachings of the Buddha can be followed without interruptions.

Buddhist Sangha as a space and community creates an environment in which we can relax – in which we see practice meditation, get inspired and challenged to greater aspirations, feel safe enough to explore vulnerability as we engage the practice deeply. When Sangha doesn't work this way, then we get to learn from our efforts to heal and take care of Sangha, because a harmonious Sangha doesn't stay that way without some care and attention.

The fact is that the treasure of Sangha is an acknowledgement of the fact that we human beings are social animals. In part, we come to know who we are through our relationships with others. People serve as support, teachers, friends, and mirrors (helping us see our own behaviors and tendencies). Buddhists also fully admit people are also training opportunities – which means, essentially, that people tend to hug one another. A famous Zen analogy compares a bunch of people training together in a Sangha as sharp rocks being thrown against one another in a rock tumbler. Eventually, all the rocks get polished by smashing into one another. The rhetoric I had offered is mainly aimed to prove the fact that Buddhist Sangha provides a congenial atmosphere

for pursuing the ideals and practices suggested by the Buddha to be followed by his followers.⁷⁴

Even if we feel we don't need other people in order to awaken, we definitely need other people to test our realization. In Buddhism it is said, "It's easy to be enlightened in a remote cave." You can realize all kinds of profound things about the nature of self and the universe in your meditation and study, but how does that realization hold up when you're back in traffic? How does it hold up when you're with your family of origin, or with your siblings, or at work? If your "spiritual awakening" doesn't manifest as greater compassion, generosity, patience, etc. in real life, it isn't much good. We test ourselves within our relationships – and some of the easiest relationships to start practicing with are our Sangha relationships, where at least in theory we share common aspirations and a language to describe our practice.⁷⁵

At an even deeper level, however, all living beings are part of our Sangha. Taking refuge in Sangha in this way is about waking up to and taking refuge in your interdependence with all life. It also means being in a company of similar individuals who are pursuing similar goals and aspirations. To return to the Three Treasures taken together: There's a beautiful explanation of how the Three Gems have many different levels of meaning in the version of the Buddha's scripture. The following expression shows the gravity of teachings of the Buddha: "We take refuge in the Buddha as our true teacher; we take refuge in the dharma as the medicine for all suffering; we take refuge in the Sangha as its members are wise and compassionate."⁷⁶

Buddhist literature proposes that in the three gems there are three merits. The first is the true source of the three treasures; the second is their presence in the past,

⁷⁴ G. Roscoe, *Buddha, Dharma and Sangha: Buddhism and Buddhist Life in Thailand*, Orchid Life, 2002.

⁷⁵ K.L. Hazara, *Constitution of the Buddhist Sangha*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1988.

⁷⁶ K. Dhammananda, *What Buddhists Believe*, Buddhist Educational Foundation, 1993, p. 438.

the foundation of our tradition; the third is their presence at the present time. At the level of sources: the highest truth is called the Buddha gem; immaculacy is called the dharma gem; harmony is called the Sangha gem.⁷⁷ In the past period it is generally accepted that: those who realized the truth totally are called the Buddha gem; the truth realized is called the Dharma gem; those who have transmitted this dharma are called the Sangha gem. In the present condition: those who teach and give the way to devas and humans in the sky and in the world are called the Buddha gem; that which appears in the world and in the scriptures, becoming good for others, is called the dharma treasure; they who release their suffering and embrace all beings are called the Sangha treasure.”

On account of the aforementioned facts taking refuge in the teachings of the Buddha, and his Dharma and his Sangha is a way to have liberation from all sorts of misery. It is also a means to take a safe refuge. The question of why such refuge is required for human beings is explained further in the following section of this chapter.

2.17: TAKING REFUGE IN BUDDHA

Generally, it is the observable fact that in many religions, people worship their god by asking for favors to be granted to them. Generally, Buddhists do not worship the Buddha for worldly favors, but they respect him for his supreme achievement. Whilst Buddhists respects the Buddha, they indirectly elevate their own minds so that one day they also can gain insight to the same enlightenment to serve mankind. On account of this it is being popularly said in Buddhism that “Buddhist takes refuge in

⁷⁷ San Lwin,U *The History of a Person who believe in Triple Gem*, Pitakabyuha Organization, Yangon, 1999.

the Buddha not out of fear of Him, but out of gaining inspiration and right understanding for their self-purification.”⁷⁸

The Buddhist perspective of refuge has captured the imagination of intellectuals and poets.

Sri Rama Chandra Bharati, an Indian poet, gives another meaningful explanation for taking refuge in the Buddha.

“I seek not the refuge for the sake of gain,
Not fear of thee, nor for the love of fame,
Not as thou hailest from the solar race,
Not for the sake of gaining knowledge vast,
But drawn by the power of the boundless love,
And thy all-embracing peerless ken,
The vast Samsara’s sea safe to cross.
I bend low, O Lord, and become thy devotee.”⁷⁹

The aforementioned poetic expression shows a fabulous literary representation on taking refuge in Buddhism not for favors but to see the true world full of love, peace, eternal happiness and contentment of life.

In the due course of time, the Buddhist perspective of life also captured the intellectual imagination of western intellectuals and practicing Buddhists. Francis Story, a well-known Buddhist scholar, gives his views on seeking refuge in the Buddha in the following words: “I go for refuge to the Buddha. I seek the presence of the noble teacher by whose compassion I may be guided through the torrents of Samsara, by whose serene countenance cravings, seeing there in the very assurance of

⁷⁸ Mascaro, Juan, ed. *The Dhammapada*. Vol. 284. Penguin UK, 1973.

Nibbanic Peace, which He himself attained. In sorrow and pain I turn to Him and in my happiness I seek his tranquil gaze. I lay before His image not only flowers and incense, but also the burning fires of my restless heart, that they may be quenched and stilled. I lay down the burden of my pride and my selfhood, the heavy burden of my cares and aspirations, the weary load of this incessant birth and death. He was an extraordinary and incomparably holy person who possessed Supreme Enlightenment and great compassion toward every living being. He was a man freed from all human weaknesses, defilements and even from ordinary human emotions. Of him it has been said, “There is none as godless as the Buddha, and yet none so godlike.” In the Buddha is embodied all the great virtues, sacredness, wisdom and enlightenment.⁸⁰

From spiritual point of view, it is to be noticed that Buddhists never take refuge in the Buddhism with belief that He is a god or son of god. In fact, it is obvious that the Buddha never claimed any divinity. He was the Enlightened One, the most Compassionate, Wise and Holy One who ever lived in the world. Therefore, people take refuge in the Buddha as a Teacher or Master who has shown the real path of emancipation. They pay homage to Him to show their gratitude and respect, but they do not ask for material favors. Buddhists do not pray to the Buddha thinking that He is a God who will reward them or punish or curse them. They recite verse or some sutras not in the sense of supplication but as a means of recalling His great virtues and good qualities to get more inspiration and guidance for themselves and to develop the confidence to follow His teachings.⁸¹

In his teachings, the Buddha advised against the futility of taking refuge in hills, woods, groves, trees and shrines when people are fear-stricken. According to him no such refuge is safe, no such refuge is supreme. Not by resorting to such a

⁸⁰ <http://www.thebuddhadhamma.wordpress.com>

⁸¹ T. Page, *Buddha and God*, Nirvana Publications, 2000.

refuge is one freed from all ill. The real refuge for Buddha would be available to the one who has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha sees with rights knowledge the Four Noble Truths – Sorrow, the cause of Sorrow, the transcending of Sorrow, and the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the cessation of Sorrow. The Buddha also says that by seeking such refuge one is released from all sorrow.⁸²

In the Dhajagga Suttam, it is mentioned that by taking refuge in Sakra, the king of gods or any god, the followers would not be free from all their worldly problems and fears.⁸³ The reason is, such gods are themselves not free from lust, hatred, illusion and fear, but the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha (i.e. the community who has attained perfection) are free from them. Only those who are free from un-satisfactoriness can show the way to lasting happiness. The Buddhist perspective is thus a journey of human beings from misery to happiness by following the teachings of the Buddha.

According to the Buddha, if people follow His advice by leading a religious life, they would certainly receive blessings. Blessing in a Buddhist sense means the joy we experience when we develop confidence and satisfaction. The Buddha once said, “if anyone wishes to see me, he should look at my Teachings and practice them.” (Samyutta Nikaya) Those who understand His Teachings easily see the real nature of the Buddha reflected in them. The image of the Buddha they maintain in their minds is more real than the image they see on the altar, which is merely a symbolic

⁸² K. Armstrong, *Buddha*, Penguin, 2004.

⁸³ International Therāvada Buddhist Missionary University. Paritta Pāḷi & Protective Verses: A Collection of Eleven Protective Suttas, an English Translation. Government of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Religious Affairs, International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University, 2000.

representation. “Those who live in accordance with the Dhamma (righteous way of life) will be protected by that very Dhamma.” (Thera Gatha) One who knows the real nature of existence and the fact of life through Dhamma will not have any fear and secure a harmonious way of life.

Taking refuge in Buddhism also means respecting and accepting the Buddha as Master. However, this respect does not imply an attachment to or a dependence on the Teacher. This kind of respect is in accordance with His Teaching which is as follows:

Monks, even if a monk should take hold of the edge of my outer garment and should walk close behind me, step for step, yet if he should be covetous, strongly attracted by pleasures of the senses, malevolent in thought, of corrupt mind and purpose, of confused recollection, inattentive and not contemplative, scatter-brained, his sense-faculties uncontrolled, then he is far from me and I am far from him”.

Monks, if the monk should be staying even a hundred miles away, yet he is not covetous, not strongly attracted by the pleasures of senses, not malevolent in thought, not of corrupt mind and purpose, his collection firmly set, attentive, contemplative, his thoughts be one-pointed, restrained in his sense-faculties, then he is near me and I am near him.”⁸⁴

2.18: Why do Buddhists workout taking of Refuge in Buddhism?

This section deals with the practical process of taking refuge in Buddhism. Most of the Buddhists believe in working out “Taking of Refuge in Buddhism” thanks to cause and effect of the Law of Kama as 1- Suffering-the truth of suffering, 2- Cause-truth regarding the cause of suffering, 3- No suffering-The truth regarding the

⁸⁴ Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā, Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, 1986

cessation of suffering, 4- Cause-The Truth regarding the way of suffering and they appreciate and follow up these philosophical ideas through eight/8 factors as “Taking of Refuge” in Buddhism. These eight factors are as follow;

1. Meaning of Refuge (Sarana)
2. Origin of Taking of Refuge
3. Act of Taking Refuge
4. Why We Need to Take Refuge
5. The Three Refuges
6. Factors that Enhance the Taking of Refuge
7. Corruptions and Breach of Refuge
8. Benefits of Taking Refuge.

2.19: MEANING OF REFUGE (SARANA)

The meaning of ‘Sarana’ in Pali denotes ‘refuge’ defined as ‘a shelter or protection from danger or trouble; a person, thing or course that gives protection’. The late Most Venerable Ledi Sayadaw in his “Uttama Purisa Dipani”, meant ‘sarana’ as follows: “If one pays respect or reverence to a certain object or person, and if that act of respect or reverence amounts to a kusala kamma (Wholesome action), which has an effect on the one from the danger of rebirth in the woeful plane of abode, then that object or person amounts to ‘sarana’ and thus is worthwhile deserving reverence and respect. “On the other hand, if one pays respect or reverence to a certain object or person with the idea that it will save one from the danger of rebirth in the woeful plane, but indeed act of respect or reverence does not amount to a kusala kamma of strength enough to possess the quality of saving one from rebirth in the woeful plane

of existence, then that object or person does not amount to a ‘sarana’ and is not worthy of paying respect or reverence.”⁸⁵

The Venerable Sayadaw then offers similar explanation on the concept of refuge in Buddhism in the following paragraph:

The virtues of untainted morality (sila), concentration (samadhi), and wisdom (panna) may be compared to the fertility in the soil. The refuge-objects such as the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha may be compared to the soil itself wherein that quality of fertility exists. The volition (cetana) arising in the mind of an individual through taking refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha are like seeds planted in the fertile soil. Individuals or objects that do not possess. Untainted sila, samadhi, and panna, are like barren soil devoid of fertility. To approach them and to pay one’s respect or reverence to them is like sowing one’s seeds on barren soil. They do not amount to kusala kamma and thus are futile.⁸⁶

2. 20: ORIGIN OF TAKING OF REFUGE

The origin of the concept of refuge was actually origin from the real life incidents of the Buddha. It is believed that soon after Enlightenment the Buddha spent seven days each at the Bodhi Tree, as well as other spots in the vicinity, viz: the Goatherds’ Banyan tree, the Mucalinda Tree and lastly, the Rajayatana Tree. At the last location, two merchants, Tapussa and Bhalluka from Ukkala (Burma) fed him rice cake and honey. After the Buddha had accepted their offering eaten, the two merchants respectfully said: “We go for taking refuge to the Blessed One (Buddha), and to the Law (Dhamma). Beginning from today let the Blessed One reassure us as followers

⁸⁵ Dhammapada-mahāṭīkā, Varasambodhi Resagyo Sayadaw, Sasanalankara Press, Yangon,

⁸⁶ Abhidhammattha singhaha , Government Press, Yangon,

who have gone to him for refuge for as long as breath lasts.” Since they were the first followers in the world, they took only two refuges because the Order of monks or Sangha was not yet set up. Later the Buddha traveled to Deer Park in modern-day Sarnath where He preached the First Sermon to the five ascetics who later attained Arahantship. The Buddha also expounded His Dhamma to a rich young man, Yasa and his fifty-four friends who joined the Holy Order and became Arahants. Yasa’s parents and his wife also became Sotapannas becoming the first lay disciples to take the Three Refuges of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha because the Holy Order had come into being.⁸⁷

2:21: ACT OF TAKING REFUGE

Taking refuge is the pathway or gateway into the Buddha Sasana (Buddha’s Dispensation or Teaching). After thrice reciting the Opening Salutation of ‘Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma-Sambuddhassa’ which means ‘Homage to Him, the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the Supremely Enlightened One’, refuge is taken by reciting the formula of refuge three times:

Buddham Saranam Gacchami: I take refuge in the Buddha.

Dhammam Saranam Gacchami: I take refuge in the Dhamma.

Sangham Saranam Gacchami: I take refuge in the Sangha.

Dutiyampi, Buddham Saranam Gacchami.

For the second time, I take refuge in the Buddha.

Dutiyampi, Dhammam Saranam Gacchami.

For the second time, I take refuge in the Dhamma.

⁸⁷ Bhikkhu, Thanissaro. "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion." Samyutta Nikaya 56 (1993)

Dutiyampi, Sangham Saranam Gacchami.

For the second time, I take refuge in the Sangha.

Tatiyampi, Buddham Saranam Gacchami.

For the third time, I take refuge in the Buddha.

Tatiyampi, Dhammam Saranam Gacchami.

For the third time, I take refuge in the Dhamma.

Tatiyampi, Sangham Saranam Gacchami.

For the third time, I take refuge in the Sangha.⁸⁸

According to Khuddakapatha Commentary, the Buddha proclaimed this formula in Deer Park, Isipatana for the aim of admitting new disciples into the Order when He dispatched the sixty Arahants in various directions to propagate the Dhamma. It is to be recited by the new disciples before admission into the order.

2. 22: Why We Need to Take Refuge?

On the question of what is the need for taking refuge, Buddhism proposes that all sentient beings, except the Noble disciples who gain realized the Four Noble Truths, are covered in ignorance and become generally unaware of the dangers of existence, taking what is impermanent, non-ego and suffering as permanent, self and pleasurable. The Buddha came to arise in the world to teach beings the Four Noble Truths, the complete comprehension of which will liberate them from all kinds of suffering.

2.23: DANGERS OF PRESENT LIFE

Based on the Noble Truth of suffering, birth heads for the law of reality supposed old age, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. At any moment, our

⁸⁸ Khuddakapatha, kabaray, Government Press, Yangon. 1992, p 1-9

body is surely subject to disease, accident and injury. Natural disasters such as fire, flood, drought and earthquake can happen anytime and cause immense hardships and death. At anywhere, man is exposed to accidents, crime, exploitation, war, health hazards, economic failures and all sorts of crises. Even if we can escape these dangers, there is one thing that we would not escape from death. Even then, we cannot be sure where or when death will have a fatal blow.

2.24:Dangers of Future Lives

The harm and dangers besetting upon us do not end with our death. Owing to Buddha's Teaching, beings who have not eradicated craving run subject to rebirth that can take place either in happy or woeful states, namely: happy existences in the human or heavenly.

Realms called Sugati or woeful existences in hell, animal, ghost and demon realms called Duggati. The danger of future lives lies rebirth in the woeful states, not only because of their inherent suffering, but also because of escaping, therefore being extremely difficult. A fortunate rebirth rests totally on the performance of meritorious actions. Beings in the woeful stages have very little opportunity to acquire merit, so the tendency is to be reborn again and again in such circle of states. The Buddha states that: "If a yoke with a hole were floating at random in the ocean, and a blind turtle living in the ocean were to surface once every hundred years - the chance of the turtle pushing his neck through the hole in the yoke would still be greater than that of a being in woeful destination regaining human status."

Therefore, rebirth in the woeful state paves a grave danger in future lives, from which we need protection. We cannot obliterate these woeful realms so the only way is to steer clear of them. According to the Law of Kamma, wholesome actions create desirable results while unwholesome actions produce undesirable results. In

order to avoid unhappy rebirth, we must avoid generating unwholesome kamma. In this, we need the guidance of someone who truly appreciates how the Law of Kamma functions. Even when we discriminate wrong, our actions do not always follow the wholesome path because it is difficult to control the mind. To learn the right course of discipline, we need guidance from someone who understands the subtle workings of the mind and who is able to teach us how to free from the bad mind.⁸⁹

2.25: DANGERS OF THE GENERAL COURSE OF EXISTENCE (SAMSAARA)

The dangers to which we get uncovered are much more than those of the present life or the risk of a fall into the woeful state in future lives. The real danger is the suffering, existence after existence, of birth, ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Besides this intrinsic suffering, there is also suffering due to change and suffering due to the conditioned nature of existence. No relief can be traced anywhere, neither in Heaven nor in the form or formless realms because life there is also impermanent and subject to decay conditions. This implies only one way of escape: to turn away from all forms of existence, even the most sublime. True to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, it is the craving for existence (bhava-tanha) that has rebirth which in turn gives ground for craving to resume and perpetuate the cycle of Samsara. At the hub of this wheel of existence is ignorance (avijja), the underlying cause of craving. To eradicate craving, defilement, the ignorance that support, it has to be dispelled by wisdom, the penetrating knowledge that allows us to

⁸⁹ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. "A Critical Examination of Nanavira's A Note on Paticcasamuppada', *Buddhist Studies Review* 15 (1998): 43-64.

‘see things as they really are’. To develop such wisdom; there need the proper methods and someone who can guide us.⁹⁰

From thence on, we definitely need to take refuge to protect us from the three types of dangers threatening us. The commentary uses another Pali word ‘himsati (to crush)’ to explain the word ‘sarana (refuge)’ as following: ‘when people have gone for refuge, that going for refuge, it crushes, dispels, removes, stops their fear, anguish, suffering, risk of unhappy rebirth and defilement’.

2.26: THE THREE REFUGES (TRIPLE GEMS) (TISARANA)

There are three refuges in Buddhism that together can have protection from the three types in dangers mentioned. They are: The Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. They are not separate refuges, but relevant matter: each sufficient in itself but inter-related members of a single effective refuge. As a simple analogy, if we were sick and wanted to get well, we need a doctor to diagnose our sickness and prescribe a remedy. It needs medicine to cure for our sickness and needs attendants to look after our requirements. The doctor and attendants alone cannot cure us. They can give the right medicine and make sure we should take it. The medicine is the actual remedy that restores our health. In a similarity to seek relief from suffering, we rely on the Buddha as the physician who found out the cause of our suffering and show us how to get well. The Dhamma is the medicine to cure our affliction and the Sangha are the attendants who guide us to take the medicine. To get it well, we must take the medicine ourselves. So to get rid of suffering, we must practice the Dhamma, for the Dhamma is the actual refuge that leads to the cessation of suffering. The efficacy of

⁹⁰ P. Mishra, *An End to Suffering: The Buddha in this World*, Picador, 2005.

the act of taking refuge is proportional to the degree of understanding of the Three Refuges and our confidence in them.⁹¹

2.27: THE DHAMMA REFUGE

The concept of Dharma I Buddhism consists of two essential aspects: the mundane level and signifying the Teaching of the Buddha as found in scriptures called the Tipitaka. These discourses serve as guiding principle for a course of practice called the Noble Eightfold Path, which consists of a mundane path and a supra-mundane path, the latter being reached at realization of the Four Noble Truths. The supra-mundane path consciousness uproots the associated defilements, arising only once at each of the four stages of enlightenment, namely: Sotapanna (stream-enterer), Sakadagamin (once-returner), Anagamin (nonreturner) and Arahant or final stage of sainthood. Each path consciousness is followed by several moments of fruition consciousness marking the tranquillization of the defilements uprooted by the preceding path moment. Both path and fruition consciousness form the supra-mundane aspect of the Dhamma. In that way, it is said that the Dhamma is the actual refuge.

2.28: THE SANGHA

Practically Sangha means the Bhikkhu Sangha, the community of ordained monks who observe the 227 monastic rules promulgated by the Buddha and share the same view.⁹² The fascinating fact is that the Bhikkhu Sangha forms an unbroken lineage

⁹¹ B.D. Kyokai, *The Teachings of Buddha*, Sterling, 2006

⁹² Horner, Isaline Blew. "The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Pitaka) Vol. IV, Mahavagga." London: Pali Text Society. Reprinted (1982).

extending back 2500 years and in fact serving as custodians of the Dhamma. The bhikkhu (almsman) lifestyle allows the Sangha to fulfill the function of preservation, perpetuation and practice of the Buddha's teaching. But, the Bhikkhu Sangha is not the Sangha Refuge. The Sangha Refuge is the Ariya Sangha, the noble community made up of those persons who get attained any of the four stages of sainthood. The noble disciples (Buddhist saints) are permanently free from wrong views and doubt, the Buddha's teaching has taken root in them and they do not have to count on others for any remaining work to be done to reach the final goal. By virtue of this inner mastery, they possess the qualifications to guide others towards the goal.

2.29: FACTORS THAT ENHANCE THE TAKING OF REFUGE

The taking of refuge means an expression of one's commitment to the Triple Gem and become a bona fide Buddhist. However, this is only the verbal expression of taking refuge. The scriptures make it clear that taking refuge involves more than reciting the formula of refuge. The commentaries define the act of taking refuge as a mental act, namely: 'An act of consciousness devoid of defilements, motivated by confidence in and reverence for the Triple Gem, taking it as the supreme resort'. So the taking of refuge should be undertaken with confidence and reverence in the Triple Gem taking it as the supreme refuge that it is the sole source of deliverance. Three factors play essential roles in the act of taking refuge.

It is through total understanding the Truth of Suffering that makes one look for a refuge. The mind must also be able to grasp the supreme attributes of the Three Refuges in order to arouse confidence in them. Such understanding will bring a deeper commitment to the refuge and spur one towards the course of practice. Taking refuge refers to an act of volition too. It is a voluntary decision based on a wholesome

desire to get rid of suffering. The stronger the desire, the more is the urgency to practice the Buddha's Dharma.⁹³

2.30: CONFIDENCE & REVERENCE

Buddhism believes in the fact that wisdom must be balanced by faith. Having wisdom without faith can make one easily skeptical while faith without wisdom can make one easily gullible. In taking refuge, one's faith must be based on confidence or trust in the protective power of the three triple gems. Higher degree of confidence gives rise to reverence, veneration born from a growing awareness of the sublime and lofty nature of the Triple Gem. As one experiences the transforming effects of the Dharma in one's life, reverence awakens devotion to the Triple Gem, making the mind more inclined and devoted to the practice of the Buddha's teaching. Frauds of refuge lead to the facts that make refuge taking impure, insincere and ineffective. There are three factors that defile the act of taking refuge, namely: Here one does not understand the reasons for taking refuge, then leaning of taking refuge or the qualities of the refuge-objects.

2.31: WRONG VIEWS

Wrong view essentially means a wrong thought of taking refuge or the refuge-objects. Here one thinks that the mere act of taking refuge is a sufficient guarantee of liberation- or one believes that the Buddha is a god with the power to save one; - or the Dhamma teaches the existence of an eternal soul; - or the Sangha functions as an intermediary body who can mediate one's salvation. However, even though the refuge act is defiled by these frauds, the refuge act is still intact and one remains a Buddhist follower as long as one regards the Triple Gem as his supreme resort. But one's

⁹³ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Dhammapada: with Introductory essays, Pali text, English translation and notes*, Oxford University Press, 1997.

attitude is wrong and has to be corrected by seeking proper advice from a teacher who can help one to overcome the ignorance, doubt and wrong views.

Breach of refuge is to break one's commitment to the Three Refuges. This can only happen to ordinary person but not to Ariyas or Noble Disciples whose confidence in the Triple Gem is permanently established and unshakable. For the same reason, the Ariya's refuge act would not be corrupted too. In the case of an ordinary worldlying, breach of refuge occurs when the person dies and he cannot take refuge anymore. Such breach is considered faultless.

Faulty or reprehensible breaches occur when one regards another teacher as superior to the Buddha, another religious system as superior to the Dhamma or another spiritual community as superior to the Ariya Sangha. Breaking commitment to any one of the three refuge-objects breaks commitment to all of them. By adopting an attitude that bestows the status of supreme reliance upon anything outside the Triple Gem, one cuts off the taking of refuge and relinquishes one's claim to be a disciple of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. In order to become valid once more, the act of taking refuge must be renewed, preferably by confessing one's lapse and then by going through the entire act of taking refuge.⁹⁴

2.32: BENEFITS OF TAKING REFUGE

By taking refuge in the Triple Gem, one declares one's well-wishes to be guided by the Buddha's teaching. But once we have made the initial commitment by taking refuge, it is necessary to put the teaching into actual practice because the Buddha's teaching is not a system of salvation by faith. As discussed earlier, the simple act of

⁹⁴ P. Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values and Issues*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

taking refuge enables one to balance the wisdom faculty with confidence and devotion in the practice, thereby acting as a condition for the realization of Nibbana.

For those who regularly take refuge in the Triple Gem with understanding, confidence, and reverence that very act of refuge crushes, dispels, removes and stops their fear, sorrow, suffering, defilement and risk of unhappy rebirth. For the newcomers to the religion, the simple act of taking refuge arouses faith or saddha, the leader of wholesome mental position. In times of urgency, great distress or fear, just the chanting of “Buddham Saranam Gacchami” is sufficient to calm the mind by anchoring it to a powerful wholesome object. It is generally prescribed that Buddhist children should be taught to take refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha every night before they sleep to develop confidence and ensure freedom from nightmares and other disturbances. Once, the author asked the members of his Sutta study class, some of whom are experienced yogis, what they would do if the airplane they were traveling in was about to crash. Would they close their eyes and meditate or recite the Three Refuges? The majority said that it would be easier to chant “Buddham Saranam Gacchami” to keep calm in such a terrifying situation. Such is the power of the Three Refuges, simple yet effective in times of need.⁹⁵

2.33:THE COMMON PRAYER

Most common prayer observed by Buddhist as follows: I raise both hands in reverence folding above my forehead; and worship, honor, greet, and humbly pay homage to the three Precious jewels-the Lord Buddha, the Holy Law of Dhamma, and the Holy Order of Sangha; once, twice and thrice I pray, O my Lord, Sir. Reciting Okasa, Okasa, Okasa, the Three world and then;

⁹⁵ Payutto, Phra Prayudh, *The BuddhaDhamma: Natural laws and values for life*, Sunny Press, 1995.

Buddhampujemi = May I worship the Enlightened One

Dhammampujemi =May I worship the law of Dhamma

Samghampujemi =May I worship the Order of Samgha

By this seemly act of saluting Buddhist pray that may I be excuse now and forever from the Four Apaya States of Woe; the Three Kappa Scourges; the Eight Atthakkhana Wrong Conditions; the Five Vera Enemies; the Four Vipatti Deficiencies; the Five Vyasama Misfortunes; the Ten Danda Penalties; the Sixteen Upaddava Punishments; the Twenty Five Bhaya Horrors; the Thirty Two Kammakarana Tortures; the Ninety Six RogaDiseasea and Ailments. And may I, in my final existence, pretty soon, attain the Four Transcendental Paths of Magga, the Four Transcendental Fruition of Phala and the Ultimate Bliss of Nibbana.⁹⁶

2.34: IDOL WORSHIPER BUT IDEAL WORSHIPER

Although it is customary amongst Buddhists to keep Buddha images and to pay their respects to the Buddha, Buddhist is not idol worshippers. Idolatry generally means erecting images of unknown gods and goddesses in various shapes and sizes and to pray directly to these images. The prayers are a request to the gods for guidance and protection. The gods and goddesses are asked to bestow health, wealth, property and to provide for various needs; they are asked to forgive transgression.

The “worshipping” at the Buddha image is quite a difference matter. Buddhists revere the image of the Buddha as a gesture to the greatest, wisest, most benevolent, compassionate and holy man who has ever lived in this world and has done a great service to mankind. The worship of the Buddha really means paying homage, veneration and devotion to Him and what He represents and not to the stone or mental figure.

⁹⁶ A. Selby, *Buddhist Prayers and Mantras*, Create space, 2016.

The image is a visual aid that helps one to recall the Buddha in the mind and to remember His great qualities which inspired millions of people from generation to generation throughout the civilized world. Buddhists use the statue as a symbol and as an object of concentration to gain of the Buddha, they put aside thoughts of strife and think only of peace, serenity, calmness and tranquility. The statue enables the mind to recall this great man and inspires the devote Buddhists feel the living presence of the Master. This feeling makes their act of worship become vivid and significant. The serenity of the Buddha image influences and inspires them to observe the right path of conduct and thought.⁹⁷

An understanding Buddhist never asks favors from the image nor does he request forgiveness for evil deeds committed. An understanding Buddhist tries to control his mind, to follow the Buddha's advice, to get rid of worldly miseries and to find his salvation. The Buddha images are nothing more than symbolic representations of His great qualities. It is not unnatural that the deep respect for the Buddha should be expressed in some of the finest and most beautiful forms of art and sculpture the world has ever known. It is difficult to understand why some people look down on those who pay respect to images which represent holy religions teachers.

The Buddha image is the symbol, not of a person, but of Buddha-hood – that to which all men can attain though a few do for Buddha-hood is not for one but for many; “The Buddhas of the past age, the Buddhas that are yet to come, the Buddha of the present age; humbly I each day adore.”

⁹⁷ A.K. Coomaraswamy, ‘The Origin of the Buddha Image’, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Jun., 1927), pp. 287-329.

2.35: IS BUDDHISM A RELIGION?

It is neither a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, for it is not a system of faith and worship owing any allegiance to a supernatural being." Buddhism does not demand blind faith from its adherents. Here mere belief is dethroned and is substituted by confidence based on knowledge, which, in Pali, is known as saddha. The confidence placed by a follower on the Buddha is like that of a sick person in a noted physician, or a student in his teacher. A Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha because it was he who discovered the path of deliverance.

A Buddhist does not seek refuge in the Buddha with the hope that he will be saved by his (i.e. the Buddha's own) personal purification. The Buddha gives no such guarantee. It is not within the power of a Buddha to wash away the impurities of others. One could neither purify nor defile another. The Buddha, as teacher, instructs us, but we ourselves are directly responsible for our purification. Although a Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha, he does not make any self-surrender. Nor does a Buddhist sacrifice his freedom of thought by becoming a follower of the Buddha. He can exercise his own free will and develop his knowledge even to the extent of becoming a Buddha himself.

This chapter attempted to present the discourse pertaining to the concept of refuge from the perspective of spirituality in general and Buddhism in particular. Two kinds of refuges shown in this chapter: firstly taking refuge out of fear in primitive religion and in fact in many other religions and secondly taking refuge to get rid of misery and attachment with more confidence as proposed in Buddhism. The chapter also presents the doctrinal and practical aspects of Buddhist refuge. Having explored the concept of Buddhist perspective of refuge the next chapter attempts to explore the essence of Buddhism by focusing on literature in Pali language.

CHAPTER III

TITLE OF THE CHAPTER: CONCEPT OF REFUGE IN CLASSICAL TESTS OF BUDDHISM.

ABSTRACT OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter traces the history of the conceptual refuge and early tests of Buddhists. It also attempts to track the essence of Buddhism by focusing on the Pali literature in which the teachings of the Buddha were made and preserved. In order to gain proper understanding on Buddhist perspective of refuge it is necessary to explore spiritual domain of Buddhism.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Generally, religion in some form or other has been an essential element in the life and culture of humankind throughout the ages, going back far beyond the threshold of history. Moreover, many of the beliefs and practices of the later and higher religions, both ancient and modern, are rooted in their prehistoric prototypes of the Old Stone Age, a period lasting roughly from about 500,000 BC to 10,000 BC. This phase therefore has its place and significance in any study of the religions of the world, past or present. The difficulty, however, about such an inquiry is that nearly all the available data are confined to those concrete survivals like graves, sacred places and their contents, sculptures, bas-reliefs, engravings and paintings that have escaped the ravages of time. Their interpretation must be to some extent conjectural, but much of the material has survived, little changed, in everyday occurrence among the peoples who live today under conditions very similar to those of early humans. If employed with proper caution such evidence can be useful and provide illuminating clues to the purpose and meaning of prehistoric religion.

Since of all mysterious events the most prominent, puzzling, disturbing and arresting is that of death, it is not surprising that the earliest traces of religious belief and practice have clustered round the burial of the dead, centered on what was to become a highly developed cult. Various forms of this phenomenon seem to go back in China to a very early period in the Old Stone Age, estimated by Professor Zeuner as being in the region of 500,000 years ago. Thus, in the caves near Peking, indications have been found of the cutting off and preserving of the heads of some of those interred, either to keep them as trophies or to abstract their contents to be eaten in order to obtain the vitality of the deceased. And this is by no means an isolated instance, skulls having been treated in a similar way in Europe before the arrival of

the species *Homo sapiens*, towards the end of the fourth phase of the Pleistocene Ice Age, about 70,000 BC.

Skulls found in the Placard cave in Charente in France had been made into drinking cups, which suggests that they were used for sacramental purposes. Similar vessels have been found in the Dordogne, near the village of Les Eyzies, now well known as a center for decorated caves, and again at Puente Viesgo not far from Santander in Spain, in a cave called Castillo, full of paintings. In this phase of the Old Stone Age the corpse was often laid in a grave containing red ochre us powder, sometimes with quantities of shells and other objects in bone and ivory. The ochre represented blood, the life-giving agent, and there were often shells, like cowries, in the grave, shaped in the form of the portal through which the child enters the world. These emblems were associated with the female principle, and were widely used as fertility charms and givers of life. Therefore, if the dead were to live again in their own bodies, to color the bodies red was an attempt to revivify them and make them serviceable to their occupants in the hereafter.⁹⁸

It is hardly likely that early people would have gone to all this trouble in the disposal of the dead, which often involved reburial, providing them with what they were thought to need after death, unless survival, whether temporary or permanent, was the intention. The point the aforementioned discussion highlights are that primitive man engaged in mystical aspects of life and attempted to seek belief in life after death. This tendency was expressed in the forms of burial practices which provide evidence in belief after death. The journey of religion had thus begun with the quest of man in satisfying himself on the question of life after death. Taking refuge of

⁹⁸ Kng, Hans, *The Beginning of all Things: Science and Religion*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008.

religion out of fear and the quest for rebirth or eternal life is foundational principle of origin of religion.

Most of the Buddhists do put their faith in the general version of refuges with their daily devotion against all odds in their living struggle and all evils. There are Three Mainstream Refuges called Tisarana in Pali Myanmar titled Triple gems or threefold jewel. The phenomenon of Ratana itself reveals an invaluable delight and pleasure which everyone enjoys and pleases. But actually, of the nature of worldly material, the ones in the world regard Ratana as ornaments but not as refuges; on the one hand, the threefold jewel taken as Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha giving them real spiritual pleasure and therefore the Buddhists take these three not as ornaments but as refuges going against ill will, ignorance, hatred and greed of the evil power. It is thus famously said in Buddhism that: ‘The task of each and every Buddhist is first to make the Buddha, Dhamma a living reality by studying, practicing it in everyday life and secondly his duty is to help the Sangha who devote their whole lives to study, practice and spread the pure Dhamma – which is excellent in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end. Thereby the Buddhists become helpers of humanity and messengers of peace and happiness’⁹⁹.

The undisputed fact is that Buddhism unlike many religions does offer a more rational and balanced way of practicing refuge. The secure safe refuge in Buddhism does not dependent upon blind belief, surrender of self to supreme deity, offering gifts to clergy etc rather it depends upon dedication of oneself in removing misery from inside. The next section of the chapter documents the spiritual roots of Buddhism in the teachings of the Buddha.

⁹⁹ Yun, Venerable Master Hsing, et al. "The Triple Gem." (2011): 40. (full details)

3.2 THE CONTEXT OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA IN 6th CENTURY BC IN INDIA

It would be useful for the further discussion to capture the context from which the thought of the Buddha emerged and gained prominence. It would also be useful to track the Pali literature in which the teachings of the Buddha are preserved. The Pāli pitaka (literally 'basket') that we have in Myanmar originally came from Sri Lanka. According to the Mahavamsa, the ancient Sinhalese chronicle, Buddhism was introduced into Sri Lanka by the Buddhist missionaries from North India in the third century BC. As in India the Sinhalese monks preserved the piṭaka through oral tradition till the end of the first century AD when it was committed to writing. Thus Sri Lanka was the first Asian country where Buddhism became firmly established and from there the Pāli writings appear to have spread to other Asian Buddhist countries.

In the due course of time, the Sinhalese monks wrote many commentaries but the pitaka itself shows little trace of their influence. There is ample internal evidence for the Indian origin of the Pāli canon. It abounds with the name of Indian rivers and towns, e. g. Ganges, Benares but the geographical names of Sri Lanka are nowhere to be found. It mirrors the social conditions and religious thought in India of 6th century BC but tells us nothing about contemporary Sinhalese society.

On the Indian Buddhist monuments of 3rd century BC there are names of donors inscribed on pillars, rails and bas-reliefs. To these names are attached certain epithets such as Dhammakathika (preacher of the Dhamma), Suttantika (one who knows a sutta by heart), Pancanekāyika (one who knows the five Nikāyas by heart), etc. These titles clearly a certain stage in the development of the pitaka at some time before the date of the inscriptions, perhaps before the King Asoka. It was a fairly

advanced stage when the pitak had divisions known by the technical names of suttanta., nikaya and so forth.¹⁰⁰

In his Bhabra edict Asoka exhorts the monks and lay men to study certain selected passages in the pitaka; he mentions the titles which enables modern scholars to identify the respective sutta.¹⁰¹ Moreover, on the gates and railings of the great stupas at Bharhut and Sanchi there are sculptures depicting scenes that can be easily identified with events mentioned in the pitaka. These archaeological remains point to the existence of the Pāli canon before the time of Asoka as is borne out by the absence of any reference in the pitaka to the Indian emperor who was revered by all Buddhists.¹⁰²

The Pali pitaka belongs to Theravāda, one of the numerous Buddhist sects that arose in India as a result of the schism in the Sangha about 100 years after the death of the Buddha. We do not have a clear picture on doctrinal differences that led to the dissensions. Perhaps each sect had its own set of scriptures but it would be a mistake to exaggerate the extent of their disagreement. Here we should consider the Sarvāstivādin, the well-known ancient Buddhist sect that had its Sanskrit texts in Chinese and Tibetan translations. Many of their canonical writings have been edited by Prof. Waldschmit and other German scholars.

Prof. Waldschmit has made a comparative study of the Sanskrit text of Mahāparinibbāna-sutta and its Pāli version and he shows that three quarters of the contents have a common basis. Many other scriptures of the Sarvāstivādins agree almost word for word with the corresponding Pāli texts. This clearly indicates their common origin before the breakup of the original Sangha. True, later on some

¹⁰⁰ B.C. Law, *A History of Pali Literature*, Bharitiya Publishing House, 1974.

¹⁰¹ D.C. Sircar., *Inscriptions of Asoka*, Publications Division Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 1975.

¹⁰² J. Irwin, *True Chronology of Asokan Pillars*, *Artibus Asia*, 44, (4), pp. 250-264.

Buddhist schools developed new doctrines but they did not confuse them with primitive teachings. The old doctrine might not have as much appeal for them as the new but they did not deny its origin in the lifetime of the Buddha. They preserved it intact and never thought of distorting the texts.¹⁰³

There can be no denying, however, that the Pāli pitaka does not agree with the Sanskrit texts on some basic teachings. Thus it lays much emphasis on self-reliance whereas the Sanskrit books insist on the need for complete faith in the Buddha as the only way to salvation. This brings us to the question of which pitaka represents the original doctrine of the Buddha more faithfully. For as Mrs. Rhys Davids says, "A scripture is a much later thing than the birth of a religion and it is not always justifiable to say this and that in it is the real birth message." And she speaks for most of the western Buddhist scholars when she says: "In the Pāli books we have a nearer approach to what the birth-message may have been than is yielded by the Sanskrit sūtras."¹⁰⁴ The conclusion of Rhys Davids' is based on a thorough analysis of the language and contents of each pitaka. The peculiar, artificial wording of the Pāli suttas suggests that they were spoken before they were set down in writing. On the other hand, the Sanskrit sūtras were first composed only after writing had apparently come in, for the style is not crude or stiff as in the Pāli books but flowing and at times very florid. This shows the relative lateness of the Sanskrit texts.

The priority of the Pāli pitaka in Buddhism was clear on account of the life of the Buddha which was associated with it.¹⁰⁵ Apparently the founder of Buddhism is

¹⁰³ D. Lopez, *Buddhist Scriptures*. Penguin UK, 2004.

¹⁰⁴ C.A. Davids, and F. Rhys, *A Manual of Buddhism: For Advanced Students*. Asian Educational Services, 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Johannes, Bronkhorst. "Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit: the original language." *Aspects of Buddhist Sanskrit: Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Language of Sanskrit Buddhist Texts*. Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1993.

portrayed as down-to-earth, historical teacher who refuses to perform miracles, disclaims omniscience and says that he is only the guide for his followers. This kind of trend is different in the accounts of the Sanskrit which depicts the Buddha as the infinitely powerful Lord of the universe who appears on earth to save mankind. Thus, the wider the time gap between a chronicler and a famous religious teacher, the greater is his tendency to dehumanize the latter.

It has generally accepted that the earliest record of the Buddha's teaching preserved in Theravada pitaka literature is more reliable than that of other schools but here we speak of the pitaka as a whole same cannot be said of each and every sutta in it words, the priority of the Pāli canon is no reason should have a low opinion of Sanskrit piṭaka. Many agree that the Sanskrit texts preserve a very old tradition that both pitakas should be studied for the deeper standing of Buddhism.

In fact, the Pāli pitaka itself admits that some of the teachings did not originate with the Buddha. For instance Kathāvattu, an important Abhidhamma book is ascribed to Thera Moggaliputtatissa. The Parivāra, which happens to be the last book of the Vinaya division is said to be the work of a monk called Dīpa. Similarly the Dīgha and Majjhima nikāyas contain over twenty discourses attributed to Sāriputta (Skt. Śāriputra), Ananda and other eminent disciples. The commentaries describe some passages in the pitaka as additions made by the Elders of the Sangha who took part in the Buddhist Councils.¹⁰⁶

48 Bode, Mabel Haynes. *The Pali Literature of Burma. Vol. 2.* London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1909.

The fact appears to be case that in the early days of Buddhism, the Sangha and the lay followers made no clear distinction between the word of the Buddha and the preaching of his chief disciples. They regarded the sermons of the apostles as substantially equivalent to the Buddhadhamma. But when the Buddha became old and his chief disciples passed away one after another, the need for fixing the teaching became imperative for existence of Buddhism as religion. Initially the Dhamma was preserved in the form of summaries called uddesa. The uddesas which preceded the suttas are still to be found here and there in the nikāyas. But after the death of the Buddha there appeared signs of disagreement over his teachings and so an attempt was made to record his discourse verbatim in so far as they were remembered by his surviving disciples. It was a collective effort made by communities of monks in the major cities of North India. Most of the Buddha's sayings were fixed in Sāvasthi (Skt. Śrāvastī) as is evident in the introductory sentence "Sāvasthi nidānaṃ" at the beginning of the suttas.

The monks who participated in this cooperative work were called bhāṇakas. The word means repeater and refers to groups of monks who specialized in a particular nikāya and occasionally recited the suttas together. The bhāṇaka groups carried on their work independently and of course this lack of coordination accounts for the recurrence of the same suttas in two or three Nikāyas.¹⁰⁷

We do not know when the work of the bhāṇakas came to an end. The Pāli canon was not closed for two or three centuries after the demise of the Buddha for one whole book, Kathāvatthu was added as late as the time of Asoka. In any event the Pāli texts were not canonized all at the same time and according to T. W. Rhys Davids, the

¹⁰⁷ J. Kim, *Respectable of Sacred: Illustrated Manuscripts and the Buddhist Book Cult in South Asia*, University of California Press, 2013.

following is the chronological table of Theravada Buddhist literature from the time of the Buddha to that of Asoka.¹⁰⁸

1. The simple statements of Buddhist doctrine now found in identical words, in paragraphs or verses recurring in all the books.
2. Episodes found in identical words in two or more of the existing books.
3. The Silas, the Parāyana, the Cetades, the Pātimokkha.
4. The Dīgha, Majjhima, Anguttara and Samyutta Nikāyas
5. Suttanipāta, Thera and Theri-gathās, Udāna & Khuddaka Nikāya
6. Jātakas and Dhammapada
7. Niddesa, Itivuttaka and Paṭisambhidā
8. Peta and Vimāna-vatthus, Apādāra, Cariyāpitaka and Buddhavamsa
9. Abhidhamma books, the last of which is Kathāvathu and the earliest probably Puggalapaññati.

There is some basis for the view of some Western Pāli scholars that the Abhidhamma books came into being at a very late stage in the evolution of the Pāli canon; not mentioned in the proceedings of the first two Buddhist Councils as narrated in Mahavamsa, Dipavarsa and Vinaya pitaka.¹⁰⁹ In Buddhaghosa's account of the first Council the disciples of Sāriputta, Kassapa and other eminent theras were entrusted with responsibility for preserving the Vinaya texts and the nikāyas but there is no mention of Abhidhamma Milindapañha and other post-canonical works as well as the inscriptions at Sanchi and Bharhut mention Dīgha, Majjhima and other bhāṇakas but there is no reference to Abhidhamma bhāṇakas.

¹⁰⁸ Snodgrass, Judith. "Defining Modern Buddhism: Mr. and Mrs. Rhys Davids and the Pāli Text Society." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27.1 (2007): 186-202.p-84-50.

¹⁰⁹ Clarke, Shayne Neil, ed. *Vinaya texts*. National Archives of India, 2014.

The Sarvāstivādins too had seven Abhidhamma books and there are Chinese translations of these works. Their authorship is ascribed to chief disciples like Kassapa and their contents differ considerably from those of Theravāda Abhidhamma. This lack of agreement clearly points to the emergence of different Abhidhammas after the rise of various Buddhist schools rather than to their common origin as in the case of Suttanta piṭaka.

Admittedly, the word Abhidhamma often occurs in the Nikāyas. But there it refers to the more abstruse tenets of Buddhism and has little to do with the contents of the Abhidhamma books. The Anguttara-nikāya mentions the nine fold division of the Buddha's sayings such as sutta, geyya, gāthā, jātaka, etc. but the division is far removed from the threefold division of the piṭaka. The jātaka in it refer not to well-known birth-stories of the Buddha but to the fables and parables that are to be found occasionally in the Nikāyas.¹¹⁰

According to the Dipavamsa, an ancient Sinhalese chronicle, the Mahasanghikas who broke away from the Theravada tradition, repudiated the Abhidhamma and certain other teachings as apocryphal.¹¹¹ In his introduction to Atthasālini Buddhaghosa refers to the skepticism of some Buddhist monks about the authenticity of the Abhidhamma. The author insists that it is in effect the genuine teaching of the Buddha because it is based on the mātikā laid down by the Teacher.

The concept of the Mātikā means the list of topics dealing with the substance of the Dhamma and as such it occurs in the first two divisions of the piṭaka. In all probability Abhidhamma was born of the scholastic exegesis or elaboration of what the early Buddhists believed to be the higher aspects of the Buddhadhamma. The

¹¹⁰ La Vallée Poussin and Louis de, *The Buddhist Councils*, K.P. Baagchi, Calcutta, 1976.

¹¹¹ Law, Bimala Churn, ed. *The Chronicle of the Island of Ceylon: Or the Dipavamsa; a Historical Poem of the 4th Century AD*. Printed at Saman Press, 1959.

Chinese pilgrims who visited India in the 4th century AD found the Abhidhamma teachers in the monastic centers of learning. Perhaps it was these monastic centers and ancient Indian Buddhist universities like Nālanda which produced the Abhidhamma books.

As a relatively very late addition to the Pāli canon, Abhidhamma is certainly not the sole repository of the higher Buddhist teachings. To say the least, knowledge of Abhidhamma is not more essential to the study of higher Buddhism than that of other Pāli texts. Says Mrs. Rhys Davids, “Let it then be clearly understood that our present knowledge of such philosophy as is revealed in the Pāli canon would be practically undiminished if the whole of the Abhidhamma pitaka were non-existent. That philosophy is all to be found in the Sutta Pitaka.”¹¹² Indeed the best works on Buddhism by Western scholars seldom contain any reference to the Abhidhamma.

The Khuddaka Nikāya is composed of, among others, Cariyāpitaka, Buddhavamsa and Jātakas. There was from very early times a difference of opinion over the exact number of books to be included in this Nikāya, a disagreement which would have been scarcely possible if all its components had been as old as the Sutta and Vinaya books. Vimāna and Peta Vatthus came very late into the Pitaka as is borne out by their emphasis on the Buddha cult and alms-giving to monks. In fact many Khuddaka books were not recognized by the Dīgha bhāṅakas, says Prof. B. M. Barua and neither were they included in the Pāli Piṭaka which the King of Thailand donated to the libraries of Western countries in 1894.¹¹³

Nikāya is called Agama in Chinese Pitaka which contains only the first four Āgamas. A comparative study of the two Pitakas sheds some light on the development

¹¹² Hastings, James, and John Alexander Selbie, eds. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics: A-Art*. Vol. 1. T. & T. Clark, 1913.

¹¹³ B.M. Barua, *Prolegomena to a Buddhist Philosophy*, Pilgrims, 2003.

of the Pāli scriptures. The contents of the first Nikāya are very much like those of the first Āgama. The Majjhima and the Samyutta also agree with the respective Agamas but differ in the number and arrangement of the suttas. The extra suttas in the Sanskrit Majjhima occur in the Pāli Anguttara and Samyutta. The Pāli Anguttara does not accord with the Sanskrit Agama as much as the other Nikāyas.¹¹⁴

So there is reason to believe that Digha is the oldest and Anguttara the youngest of the first four Nikāyas. But this also applies to the two Nikāyas collectively and not to each sutta separately. In fact, every Nikāya contains more or less early teachings as well as later additions and there is internal evidence in some suttas for this assumption. Thus king Pāyāsi mentioned in a Digha sutta reigned 200 years after the passing away of the Buddha. In reality even passages in the same sutta do not seem to have come into existence all at the same time. Thus Mahāparinibbāna-sutta is a patch work, partly made up of suttas from other Nikāyas and as such it might have gone through several recessions before its inclusion in the Pitaka. As a whole Khuddaka Nikāya is a later development in the Pāli canon but on the other hand, in the view of many Western scholars one of its books, the Suttanipāta contains very early and authentic teachings of the Buddha.

True, in the study of Buddhist scriptures the early teachings should take precedence over others but it is up to every serious student to examine every sutta critically. For it is safe to assume that a collection of recorded sayings preserved orally for many centuries cannot in its entirety represent the original teaching perfectly. No critic would like to charge the compilers of the Pitaka with distortion or fabrication but we cannot rule out the possibility of faulty memory, misunderstanding

¹¹⁴ L. B. Churn. *A history of Pāli literature*. Vol. 1. K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Company, Limited, 1933.

and bias among them. Human memory is deceptive: ¹¹⁵ We tend to remember well the things we like and easily forget those we dislike.

In any case it would be a mistake to overrate the intellectual power of the bhānakas or reciters. We read how the Buddhist Sangha gained new converts by hundreds in a single day but we have no reason to credit all these monks with a deep understanding of Buddhism. Indeed, the Pitaka makes no secret of the ignorance of some monks. Thus when prior to his joining the Sangha, Sariputta asked the monk Assaji about the essence of the Buddhadhamma, the latter admitted that he knew little about it.

Presumably most of the reciters might have been intelligent monks who knew the Dhamma thoroughly. Nevertheless, as Mrs. Rhys Davids puts it, "No intelligent man is mere automaton. In reciting the sayings of the Buddha, he would be an automaton but as an exponent of the doctrine, he would have to express something of himself and this would tend to bring about changes both in selection, in emphasis and even in word or clause. This tendency to interpret in one's own way combined with relative isolation of his group would inadvertently result in certain omissions, alterations or interpolations." (Mention here source)

Unfortunately the orthodox Buddhists do not consider this possibility because they believe that the Pāḷi Pitaka was officially proclaimed to be authentic by the Buddhist Sangha at the three Councils held after the demise of the Buddha. ¹¹⁶ Although they regard the Councils as important landmarks in the history of their religion, modern scholars are skeptical about their historicity or significance, in the history of Pāḷi literature. For instance, the Mahāparinibbāna-sutta does not mention

¹¹⁵ Frackowiak, Richard S.J. *Human brain function*. Elsevier, 2004.

¹¹⁶ Frasch, Tilman. "Buddhist councils in a time of transition: globalism, modernity and the preservation of textual traditions." *Contemporary Buddhism* 14.1 (2013): pp. 38-51.

the first Council which is said to have occurred shortly after the passing away of the Buddha. Similarly, the Northern Schools of Buddhist recognize only the first Council. At the same time, there was no mention of the third Council in Asoka's inscription although it is said to have been held under his patronage. The Pāḷi accounts about it are found only in commentaries and Sinhalese chronicles that came out some 600 years after the death of King Asoka.

The Vinaya pitaka tells us how while the first council was in session at Rājagaha (Skt. Rajagrha), a bhikkhu called Purāṇa arrived and he was urged by other monks to see the elder theras who had sponsored the meeting. Purana replied that the Dhamma and Vinaya were being well recited by the theras but that as for him he would rather bear in mind what he had heard direct from the Buddha.¹¹⁷ This clearly shows that the council was not unanimously supported by the Theravada monks in India.

On account of the aforementioned details, there was no reason to exaggerate on the importance of the councils in the history of Buddhism. After all the objective of every council was aimed at recording the recitations without any attempt to establish their authenticity through critical examination and deliberation. Furthermore, at least in the view of Western scholars the suttas collectively recited at the first council represent only a small portion of the Pāḷi Pitaka in its present shape.

It is the issue of commonsense that not all information preserved in Pitaka is the word of the Buddha. For there are several suttas that explicitly contradict what all well-informed Buddhists regard as the fundamental principles of the Buddhadhamma. For example, the suttas which encourage the worship of the Buddha are incompatible with the spirit of the Dhamma which stresses the need for individual effort and self-

¹¹⁷Trans.I.B.Horner, *The Vinaya Pitaka: the Book of the Discipline*, 5 vols. PTS, 1938-66

reliance. The Vinaya Pitaka records the Buddha's meeting with an ascetic while on the way to Benares shortly after his supreme enlightenment.¹¹⁸ It is said that on being asked who he was, the Buddha declared, "I am All-knowing and All-powerful. I have no peer in the whole universe." This saying does not accord with the suttas which, as we will see later, portray the Buddha as a very modest and unpretentious teacher. Again according to a saying of the Buddha in the Anguttara, a woman who acts like a slave in her relationship with her husband is the best wife but this is quite at variance with his view of the ideal wife in the Singalovādasutta.

These contradictions are to be differentiated from what some scholars of Buddhism see as inconsistencies in some teachings of the Buddha. In fact, such inconsistencies are quite understandable if we bear in mind the different intellectual levels of his followers. In one sutta, for example, the Buddha deprecated all speculations about future life while in another he emphasized the belief in rebirth as conducive to moral welfare. But these seemingly conflicting sermons need not perplex us if we note that one is meant for the monks and the other for the intellectually immature laymen.

Hence to understand the contradictions of some Buddhist teachings, we need to take account of many things. We should in particular have some knowledge of the background of Buddhism that helps deepen the understanding of it as a whole. In other words, we should know what kind of religious leader the Buddha was, his methods of teaching, his approach to the problems of life, the cultural heritage of the people in his time, their way of life and so forth. Above all a good knowledge of pre-

¹¹⁸The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-piṭaka): Mahāvagga. Vol. 4. Pali Text Society, 1962.

Buddhist Indian religious thought is indispensable to understanding some aspects of the Buddhadhamma.

For, whatever the creative genius and wisdom of the founder of a world-religion, after all he is in part the product of his cultural environment. He does not completely break away from it because every over-zealous teacher bent on a thoroughgoing revolution of religious ideas inevitably disappears sooner or later along with his teaching, as in the case of the Buddha's contemporary Makkhali Gosāla and his nihilism. The major key to the success of the founder of a world-religion lies in a wise, sensible and viable combination of the old and the new. His message reflects some new ideas intended for the select few as well as some old-established beliefs which he considers essential to the welfare of the common people. Therefore, it is necessary for us to be familiar with the historical background of Buddhism.

3.3 BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

3.3.1 Three Worlds (Loka) in Theravada Buddhist vision as follows:

There are the Three Worlds (Loka) viz; Satta Loka (World of Creature), Sankhara Loka (Impermanent World), and Okasa Loka (Present World). According to the Buddha's teaching, nowadays, we have been living in Okasa Loka which was not appeared by the creator. Everything is changing including the worlds. We can see natural phenomena of the world in which dissolution and evolution of things.

In Buddhism there is not creator and savior, it has only a teacher who can help other to overcome misery. Buddhist do believe that the analyzing phenomena are interconnected at causes and effects and all human being and the earth of world appeared due to the nature of causes and effects.

According to Buddhist philosophy describes appeared dissolution and evolution of the world and how to live in harmony in the world. Especially,

emphasized about Sankhara loka (Mental world). The Buddhist philosophy also emphasizes that the real purpose of living in human realm, man needs to understand how to do good action by following a religious faith. Faith in religion restrains human from evil action; and in many way encourages them to do good. Hence, one of the primary tasks of religion is to purify human mind. According to Buddhism there are five orders of processes–Niyamas which operate in the physical and mental realms and future more.¹¹⁹

The general belief of Buddhist is that ‘it’s not significant how the world appeared rather important thing is to end of all sufferings. Buddhists take into consideration of the firsthand refuge from The First Discourse of the Buddha. Here, have the Buddhists can be heard: The Buddha, the Blessed One was once living in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers) near Baranasi (Benares). There did He address the group of five Bhikkhus from the inference to Dhammacakkappavattan-sutta as following:

"Bhikkhus, these two extremes ought not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the household life. What are the two? There is devotion to indulgence of sense-pleasures, which is low, common, the way of ordinary people, unworthy and unprofitable: and there is devotion to self-mortification which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable. A voiding both these extremes, the Tathagata has realized the Middle Path: it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. And what is that Middle Path...? It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path: namely right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This is the Middle

¹¹⁹ Ledi Sayadaw, Niyamadipani, Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, 1970.

Path realized by the Tathagata, which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and which leads to calm, to insight, to enlightenment, to Nibbana'¹²⁰.

So far as suffering of human being is concern, it is said that "The Noble Truth of suffering (Dukkha) is this: Birth is suffering: aging is suffering: sickness is suffering: death is suffering: sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering: association with the unpleasant is suffering: dissociation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates of attachment are suffering."¹²¹

"The Noble Truth of the origin of suffering is this: It is thirst (craving) which produces re-existence and re-becoming, bound up with passionate greed. It finds fresh delight now here and now there; namely, thirst for sense-pleasures; thirst for existence and becoming; and thirst for non-existence (self-annihilation).

"The Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering is this: It is the complete Cessation of that very thirst, giving it up, renouncing it, and emancipating oneself from it.

"The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of suffering is this: It is simply the Noble Eight-fold Path, namely right view; right thought, right speech; right action; right livelihood; right effort; right mindfulness; right concentration.

"This is the Noble truth of Suffering (Dukkha): such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light, that arose in me with regard to things not heard before.

"This suffering, as a noble truth, should be fully understood: such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light, that arose in me with regard to things not heard before.

¹²⁰ Sayadaw, Mahasi, and U. Ko Lay. Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1997.

¹²¹ Dhammapada Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma, 1956.

"This suffering, as a noble truth, has been fully understood: such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light, that arose in me with regard to things not heard before.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Origin of suffering: such was the vision.

"This Origin of suffering, as a noble truth, should be abandoned: such was the vision.

"This Origin of suffering, as a noble truth, should be abandoned: such was the vision with regard to things not heard before.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of suffering: such was the vision"

"This Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, should be realized: such was the vision.

"This Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, should be realized: such was the vision with regard to things not heard before.

"This is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of suffering: such was the vision.

"This Path leading to the Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth should be followed (cultivated): such was the vision...

"This Path leading to the Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, should be followed (cultivated): such was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom, the science, the light that arose in me with regard to things not heard before.

"As long as my vision of true knowledge was not fully clear in these three aspects, in these twelve way, regarding the Four Noble Truths, I did not claim to have realized perfect Enlightenment which is supreme in the world with its gods, with its Maras and brahmas, in this world with its recluses and Brahman -as, with its princes and men. But when my vision of true knowledge was fully clear in these three aspects, in these twelve ways, regarding the Four Noble Truths, then I claimed to have

realized perfect Enlightenment which is supreme in the world with its gods, its Maras and Brahmas, in this world with its recluses and Brahman as, with its princes and men. And a vision of true knowledge arose in him thus: 'My heart's deliverance is unassailable. This is the last birth. Now there is no more becoming (rebirth).'¹²²

Thus did the Blessed One speak? And the group of five Bhikkhus became glad, and they rejoiced at his words. Moreover, while this discourse was being uttered, Dhamma-vision, dustless and stainless, arose to the venerable Kondanna that whatever is of the nature to arise, all that is of the nature to stop.

And when the Lord had rolled the Dhamma-wheel, the Earth-Devas made this sound heard: "The supreme Dhamma-wheel rolled thus by the Lord at Benares in the deer-park at Isipatana cannot be rolled back by a recluse or Brahmin or Deva or by Mara or by Brahma or by anyone in the world."

Having heard the sound of the Earth-Devas, the Devas of the Four Great Kings made this sound heard... the Thirty devas... Yamas Devas... the Happy Devas... the Devas who delight in creation... the Devas who delight in the creations of others... the Devas of Brahmas retinue made this sound heard: "The supreme Dhamma-wheel rolled thus by the Lord at Benares in the deer-park at Isipatana cannot be rolled back by a recluse or Brahmin or deva or by mara or by Brahma or by anyone in the world.'

Then the Lord uttered this solemn utterance: "Indeed, Kondanna has understood, indeed, Kondanna has understood.' Thus it was that Annata Kodanna became the venerable Kondanna's name."

Then the venerable Annata Kondanna, having seen dhamma, attained dhamma, known dhamma, plunged into Dhamma, having crossed over doubt, having

¹²² Hinuber, Oskar V. "The Udana Translated from the Pali." *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* vol; 116, no. 1 (1996), pp. 178-180.

put away uncertainty, having attained without another help to full confidence in the teachers 'instruction, spoke thus to the Lord:

"May I, Lord, receive the going forth in the Lords presence, may I receive ordination?" "Come, monk," the Lord said, "well taught is Dhamm, fare the Brahma-faring for making an utter end of ill." So this came to be this venerable one's ordination.¹²³

3.4 BELIEF AND PRACTICES IN ANCIENT INDIA

There was no reason at all for the Buddha to introduce another religion because at that time 2600 years ago there were already 62 religious cults believed to have existed in India. Since the existing religions during his time could not provide the answers to his questions he decided not to use the ingredients or concepts of these religions to introduce what he himself had realized.

It would be pertinent here the question of what was the religious thinking in India at the time? "God created everybody'; god is responsible for everything; god will reward; god can forgive all our sins; and god is responsible for our lives after our death; god will send us to heaven or he will send us to hell". The socio-cultural formations in ancient India were thus mainly dominated by the god centric view of outlook.

These however are the basic ingredients of if not all but most of religions even today. At the same time there were certain other religions also in India which taught that it was necessary for believers to torture their physical bodies, thinking that they could wash away all their sins during their lifetimes so they could go to heaven after

¹²³ Sayadaw, Mahasi, and U. Ko Lay. *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, Buddhadhamma Foundation, 1997.

death. Another religious group encouraged religious rites and rituals and ceremonies and animal sacrifices to please their gods. This group believed that through these practices they could go to heaven. Some others again introduced prayer and worship and asked forgiveness for the sins committed. Having given serious study of all these religions, the Buddha did not recognize the efficacy of all these belief systems.

3.5: BUDDHIST WAY

The question of how the ideas of the Buddha were different from that of the aforementioned religious belief systems. The ostensible fact is that the Buddha did not promise heavenly bliss and rewards to those who called themselves his followers and he also did not promise salvation to those who had faith in him. He believes in the fact that religion was not a bargain but a noble way of life to gain enlightenment not for reward and salvation. The Buddha did not want followers with blind faith; he wanted human beings to think and understand. Buddhism is a noble path for living. In his ideas humanism, equality, justice and peace reign supreme. Revengefulness, animosity, condemnation and resentment are alien to his teachings.

As several western thinkers already mentioned, the world is very much indebted to the Buddha for formulation of rationalism as a protest against the superstitions imposed by several religions. With his ideas and teachings, he attempted to emancipate man from the thralldom of the priests. It is he who first showed the way to free man from the coils of religious rites and rituals and hypocrisy and religious dictatorship. During the Buddha's time no religious practice was considered higher than the rites, rituals and sacrifice of living beings to the gods; but to the Buddha no practice could be more humiliating or degrading to man. A sacrifice is nothing more than bribery; and salvation won by bribery and corruption is not a salvation which any

self-respecting man would care to get. It would also be necessary to locate the philosophy of Buddhism in the religious views of the pre-Buddhist India.

3.6:RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN PRE-BUDDHIST INDIA

The sixth century before the Christian era was a remarkable period in the history of mankind. It was remarkable because in India and other countries there appeared spiritual leaders whose teachings were destined to have a profound effect on the religious thought of humanity. Indeed, it was the golden age of religious creativity.

Some famous examples could be seen in different parts of world. In Greece, Pythagoras advocated the belief in the transmigration of souls and asceticism. In China Confucius emphasized the importance of man's proper relationship with his fellow beings and his contemporary Lao Tzu taught his disciples how to achieve inner peace through quiescent mysticism.¹²⁴ In India there were speculations and discussions about the ultimate problems of life that subsequently led to the rise of two Major Indian religions, viz., Jainism and Buddhism.

The main authorities for our knowledge of pre-Buddhist Indian religious ideas are the Pāli Pitaka, the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upanishads. The Vedic period in India extends from 1500 BC to about 700 BC. The Aryans of the Vedic age believed in devas or gods. Their devas were the personified forces of nature and in the Vedas the religion of the early Aryans appears to be a sort of nature worship reflected in their love of life and the desire to satisfy their material needs through the help of gods. Their Vedas make no mention of the idea of rebirth and they had only a vague idea of life hereafter. They believed that the dead lived eternally in the kingdom of gods or in the abode of darkness.

¹²⁴ Drozdek, Adam, *Greek philosophers as theologians: the divine arché*. Routledge, 2016.

Later on the polytheism of the Vedas gave way to the teachings of the Brahmanas. These religious books point to the emergence of the Brahmins as a priestly class. The emphasis was not so much on the worship of devas as on the all-pervading importance of sacrifices. The sacred books insist on the punctilious performances and for this reason the Brahmins became powerful and in fact one text refers to them as human gods. They did not, however, officiate at the altar out of compassion for the people. On the contrary, they charged a high fee either in kind or money for their services and therefore they became very wealthy.

Perhaps it was the excessive greed of the Brahmins or, as some scholars say, the spread of Zarathustra's teaching from Persia that led some Indian intellectuals to have second thoughts about the nature and ultimate reality of life that form the subject matter of the Upanishads. The earliest Upanishads dates back to about 800 B.C. and by that time the theories of kamma (Skt. karma) and rebirth had become an integral part of Indian religions. According to Upanishads, the individual soul has to wander from one life to another, the quality of each life wholly depending on his past kamma or action. So he/she is bound to suffer ceaselessly until he returns to his original source and becomes absorbed in Atman or the Universal Soul.¹²⁵

It has been described in pre-Buddhist Brahmanism that the atman is the eternal source, the unmoved mover, the uncaused cause that transcends the illusory diversity plurality of the phenomenal world. As the unknowable lute, it defies intellectual approach and is to be described only in negations: "It is not this, it is not that. The concept of Atman was primarily sophisticated thinker. Nonetheless it is doubtful whether it would have appealed to the Indian masses even if there had been attempts to popularize it. The average Indian continued to worship the devas although his gods

¹²⁵ M.N. S. Chari, *The Philosophy of Upanishads*, Munshram Monoharlal, New Delhi, 2002.

were not all the same as those of the Vedic pantheon. He was dominated by animistic beliefs that formed the mainspring of necromancy, demonology, divination and the like to which he resorted to bring good luck and avert misfortunes. An ancient Pāli text (Brahmajālasutta) gives a long list of Indian occult practices current in the time of the Buddha.¹²⁶ The list might intrigue the anthropologists interested in primitive magic since it mentions some forms of black art wholly foreign to them.

The sutta literature describes these arts as highly lucrative business for some Brahmins. Indeed, the Brahmins capitalized on popular beliefs, accommodating them in their Atharvaveda that deals with incantations, spells, charms and other stock in-trade of a witch-doctor. So there is reason to believe that the Upanishads do not count for much in the religious life of people. The idea of Atman might have originated with the Brahmins but epigraphy and contemporary literature indicate that in the 6th century BC they had not yet become powerful in the middle Ganges valley (Majjhimadesa) which was later to become the cradle of Buddhism.¹²⁷

The middle country located in the present Indian state was then home of aristocratic class known as Kshatriyas who challenged the claims of the Brahmins and there was no love lost between the two cultural groups. Some suttas disparage the Brahmins and the latter showed no less contempt for the Buddhist monks. One of their sacred books expressly forbade their followers to reside in the middle country which then comprised the powerful monarchies of Magadha and Kosala.

The beliefs of the Brahmins recorded in the Pāli Pitaka do not reflect the basic teaching of Upanishads. They appear to be preoccupied with the Vedas, rites and ceremonies without being mindful of the need to realize their identity with the Atman.

¹²⁶ Dighanikaya- atthakatha Chatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma, 1956.

¹²⁷ Majjhimanikaya-atthakatha Chatthasangyana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma, 1956.

In Tevijja-sutta¹²⁸ a Brahmin youth asked the Buddha to help him achieve union with the Brahmā but the Brahmā whom he sought was personal God and not the Brahmā (other name for Atman) of the Upanishads. Brahmajāla-si gives a supposedly exhaustive list of soul theories but none of them exactly fits in with the Upanishad concept of the Universal Soul.

Whatever the response of the Indian people to Upanishadic teaching, virtually all of them believed in suffering inherent in all forms of existence, the law of kamma and samsara or the cycle of life. Some did not rely on the performance of rites, recitation of Vedas or good deeds for liberation; instead. They spent their time in meditation for enlightenment. It should be noted that the four jhānas (mental absorptions or trances) and the four Brahmavihāras were apparently known to the Indians as is evident in some suttas and jātakas.¹²⁹

The two kinds of spiritual aspirants prominent in the religious literature of the age were the self-torturing ascetics and the argumentative preachers. The suttas mention several kinds of self-mortification practiced by the would-be Buddha before his enlightenment. Some of them are so repellent that a learned Burmese monk dismissed them as interpolations by the compilers of the Pitaka. The Indian yogis believed asceticism to be essential to the attainment of wisdom and psychic powers. The belief seems closely linked to the idea of perpetual conflict between mind and matter and the public veneration for holy men known for their austerities.

In sharp contrast to the ascetics were the paribbājakas (Skt. parivrājaka). Although described as wandering ascetics by Western scholars, they did not practice asceticism and a sutta mentions one of them with a wife and children. Like the

¹²⁸ SamyuttaNikaya, *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*. Trans.C.A.F.Rhys Dadds and F.L.Woodward. PTS,1910-30.

⁶⁵ Jataka- atthakathaChatthasangayana (Six Great Council) edition; Rangoon, Burma,1956.

¹²⁹ A. Five Principal Upanishads, Delhi, Penman Publishers, 2004.

sophists in ancient Greece they travelled from one place to another and argued with their opponents. Perhaps they believed in the power of reason to solve the riddle of the universe but in the Pitaka they appear to be motivated not so much by the love of knowledge as by the desire to intellectual rivals in specious argumentation. Neither the ascetics nor the paribbajakas followed an organized religion like the Jains. In pali nikaya, the jains are called Niganthas.

Before the advent of Buddhism, Jainism was the only sect with a leader (Mahāvīra), a monastic order and other features of an institutional religion. The Jains were noted for their rigid adherence to the doctrine of Ahimsa or non-violence to all living beings including the lowest forms of life like insects. They rejected caste system, Vedic sacrifices and Atman. But they attached much importance to self-mortification which, they believed, would help them. Overcome their karmic impurities and achieve release from bondage to life cycle.

Apart from the sacred books of the Brahmins, Jains and Buddhists, there are no contemporary writings that shed much light on the views of their opponents. We know next to nothing about Ājīvakas or Gotamikas whom a Chinese monk in 500 AD found in India and described as the followers of Devadatta, the arch-enemy of the Buddha. The information available in the Pitaka is scanty and one wonders whether the compilers thoroughly understood their doctrines. According to the Pitaka, most of the non-Buddhist thinkers were interested in questions such as: Is life identical with or distinct from the body? Is the world eternal or not? Does the saint (Arahat) exist after death? Still, there were some who showed little interest in these metaphysical questions. Makkhali Gosāla rejected free will and moral responsibility while the Carvakas taught materialism and annihilation. The Pitaka also mentions the name of

an agnostic teacher who stubbornly refused to answer any question about soul, kamma or life after death.¹³⁰

Broadly speaking, during the 6th century B.C, India had agnostics, rationalists and free-thinkers that boldly questioned old-established beliefs and put forward their revolutionary doctrines. In fact, was the golden age of religious freedom in world history. When we think of the inquisition and religious wars in the history of the Christian Church and the persecution of Socrates in Greece which was then the cradle of European civilization, we cannot but marvel at the boundless tolerance of the Indian people. They met together and exchanged differ and religious views in a spirit of good will and understanding. Apparently there was no outcry even against radical thinkers like Makkhali Gosāla whose nihilistic teachings threatened to undermine the moral foundations of society. The people of ancient India certainly enjoyed religious freedom to a high degree unparalleled in the history of mankind. It was in this atmosphere that the ideas of the Buddha took shape.

3.7: TAKING REFUGE IN BUDDHA

Buddhists pay homage to the Buddha for taking refuge to His boundless compassion for suffering worry, anxiety, sorrow, disappointment, depression and so on. Because a Buddhist believes that the Buddha has given mankind the path of deliverance from all evils by His supreme ideals. In His life-time till now He as a living image has given people and mankind inspiration and encouragement to fight against all evils when it happens to it and overcomes it.¹³¹ Taking refuge in Buddhism thus constitutes an important duty of Buddhist to discover the path for deliverance from misery of life.

¹³⁰ P.P. Gokhele, *Lokayata/Carvaka: A Philosophical Inquiry*, Oxford University Press, 2015.

¹³¹ Silakhandhavagga Att. 1.16

3.8: TAKING REFUGE IN DHAMMA

Buddhists take refuge in Dhamma since it makes them to attain the end of all suffering and dissatisfaction through the achievement of wisdom, equanimity, and enlightenment. To follow practicing the good habit of His Dhamma runs paying homage to Him in this attitude. In getting the good habit of His Dhamma, there are three stages, study, practice and realization that one acquires with cultivation of Dhamma. It is expected from Buddhist refuge that to explore the pure Dhamma preached by the Buddha. The truth of law in the world is Dhamma, so Dhamma means Truth, the teachings of Buddha belonging to Three Division or Three Dhamma Baskets, entitled Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma. It is recommended that a Buddhist refuge study not only Pali canon but also the commentaries rewritten by Buddhaghosa as the old commentaries existed before his time to which he often referred in his commentaries which are not based on but are based Buddha's teachings. But a few of them scholars unfortunately have been translated into English. Of the scholars, Pali scholars like Miss Hoener*, 'there is a lot to be done in this respect. We must study it and spread it; as we run subject to be born, aged and suffered death. Buddha looks like physician and His Dhamma is compared with proper medicine. In this respect, many of us are in dire need of this medicine so as to cure our irritability, impatience, lack of sympathy and Metta loving-kindness. The elementary principles of Buddhism are right understanding, patient, tolerance, goodwill, and good-nature and loving kindness. From there onward, we can realize it up above, which is devoid of concept only by getting the habit of practice. Therefore, all Buddhists truly express their gratitude and veneration for the Buddha whose infinite compassion guided us on the road to cessation of sufferings by following the practice of His Dhamma.

3.9: TAKING REFUGE IN SANGHA

Last but not least, the Sangha, to which all Buddhists pay respect, is the living stream of the current flow of Dhamma. Sangha in Pali literally denotes a group of monks who have achieved the noble stage by staying together. But there are eight stages from its initiation to Arahatta stage, perfect monk. A Bhikku not having attained any of the stage must sincerely follow the Dhamma belonging to the Sangha.

As the Sangha order directly has an affair with humanity and mankind. It bridges the gap of being between living human and the absolute truth of the Dhamma greatly being emphasized its importance and as a vital institution for the sake of the well-being of humanity and mankind. No sooner had the Buddha passed away than the Sangha preserved the word of Buddha, the noble Teachings of His Dhamma via mere recitation driven home points into their brains and bearing in mind that the Sangha handed down from generation to generation. However, it cannot be still existing without the support of Upasakas and Upasikas, the lay devotees of Buddhism. In doing so they help keeping the Sangha to be alive and propagate the spread of the Light of Dhamma.

Thus it is obligated for each Buddhist to make living toward the Buddha Dhamma by studying and practicing it in reality in day-in and day-out. When our earning for living lives in accordance with the Dhamma, we can live by the pure Dhamma.. Then secondly the task of a Buddhist is to propagate the Buddha-Dhamma. Thirdly all Buddhists give their helping hands to the Sangha who devote to their lives to study, practice and spread of the Dhamma ---- where being excelled from the star to

the end. Hence the Buddhists, the helpers to the Sangha become the messengers of peace and harmony of the humanity.¹³²

The community of Sangha primarily consists of the monks are the ones who are practicing the good way (supatipanna), practicing the straightway (tu-upatipanna), practicing the true way (fidyapatipanna), and practicing the proper way (samicipatipanna). They belong to the four pairs of persons, the eight types of individuals who are called noble, (artya), as against the ordinary worldliness (puthi{tiana). They are the ones worthy of gifts of hospitality, of offerings, of reverential salutation, and they are the unsurpassed fields of merit for the world (anuttarain pufiakkhattam lokassa). So, high and elevated is the position of monks in the Buddhist society. This is because they are leading a speedier path to spirituality. This line is regulated by a special code of ethics for them. Though, they live in the society, their society is a closed one and membership of admission is obtainable only by those who are ready to abide by the `constitution' set up for the purpose. This is called the vinaya the code of discipline for monks and nuns.¹³³ Having described the three domains in which a person takes refuge in Buddhism, the next section narrates the need to take refuge.

3.10: THE REASON FOR TAKING REFUGE

When it is said that the practice of the Buddha's teaching starts with taking refuge, this immediately raises an important question. The question is: "What do we need for a refuge?" A refuge is a person, place, or thing giving protection from harm and danger. So when we begin a practice by going for refuge, this signifies that the practice is intended to protect us from harm and danger. Our original question as to the need for

¹³² Thondup, Tulku. *Enlightened journey: Buddhist practice as daily life*, Shambhala Publications, 2017.

¹³³ T. Boirchert, *Sangha*, Oxford University Press, 2012.

a refuge can thus be translated into another question: "What is the harm and danger from which we need to be protected?" If we look at our lives in review, we may not see ourselves exposed to any imminent personal danger. Our jobs may be steady, our health good, our families well provided for, our resources adequate, and all this we may think gives us sufficient reason for considering ourselves secure. In such a case the going for refuge becomes entirely superfluous. To understand the need for a refuge we must learn to see our position as it really is; that is, to see it accurately and against its total background. From the Buddhist perspective the human situation is similar to an iceberg: a small fraction of its mass appears above the surface, the vast substratum remains below, hidden out of view. Owing to the limits of our mental vision our insight often fails to penetrate beneath the surface crust, to see our situation in its underlying depths. The fact however is that there is no need to speak of what we cannot see and in fact even what is immediately visible to us we rarely perceive with accuracy. The Buddha teaches that cognition is subservient to wish. In subtle ways concealed from ourselves our desires condition our perceptions, twisting them to fit into the mould they themselves want to impose. Thus our minds work by way of selection and exclusion. We take note of those things agreeable to our preconceptions; from the standpoint of a deeper, more comprehensive understanding the sense of security we ordinarily enjoy comes to view as a false security sustained by unawareness and the mind's capacity for subterfuge. Apparently our position often appears impregnable because of limitations and distortions of our outlook which we possess. The real way to safety, in fact lies through correct vision of insight, not through wishful thinking. The Buddhist teachings teach that to reach beyond fear and danger we must sharpen and widen our vision. We have to pierce through the deceptions that lull us into a comfortable complacency, to take a straight look down

into the depths of our existence, without turning away uneasily or running after distractions. When we do so, it becomes increasingly clear that we move across a narrow footpath at the edge of a perilous abyss. In the words of the Buddha we are like a traveler passing through a thick forest bordered by a swamp and precipice; like a man swept away by a stream seeking safety by clutching at reeds; like a sailor crossing a turbulent ocean; or like a man pursued by venomous snakes and murderous enemies. The dangers to which we are exposed may not always be immediately evident to us. Very often they are subtle, camouflaged, difficult to we blot out or distort those that threaten to throw them into disarray. But though we may not see them straightaway the plain fact remains that they are there all the same. If we wish to get free from them we must first make the effort to recognize them for what they are. This, however, calls for courage and determination.¹³⁴

On the basis of the Buddha's teaching the dangers that make the quest for a refuge necessary can be grouped into three general classes:

- (1) The dangers pertaining to the present life;
- (2) Those pertaining to future lives; and
- (3) Those pertaining to the general course of existence. Each of these in turn

involves two aspects:

(A) An objective aspect which is a particular feature of the world; and (B) a subjective aspect which is a corresponding feature of our mental constitution. We will now consider each of these in turn.

Most of the Buddhist believes that the Buddha's ethical teachings play an important role in molding life of human beings in the past, here, and the future.

¹³⁴ Bechert, Heinz, and Richard H. Gombrich. *The World of Buddhism: Buddhist Monks and Nuns in Society and Culture*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1984.

Obviously the Buddha did not teach ethics to any particular man but to all human and he has attempted to console the mankind's worries along their lifetime in doing right things and right livelihood, the law of righteousness, the Universal law, the law of cause and effect (DhammaNiyama) and explicitly proclaiming that man is the master of his/her own destiny. Buddhism removes that fear of suffering, decay and death that haunt every untrained mind. Thus, there is no doubt that the teachings of the Buddha back up against a universal appeal because they are relevant to the problems which have harassed humanity. Especially in the present life, mankind perceives itself on the edge of the cliff of the destruction because of futility and petty quarrels, hatred, lust, greed, misery and sufferings.

The noticeable fact is that as a belief system Buddhism does not ask for blind faith from its adherents. Here, mere belief is dethroned and is substituted by the confidence based on knowledge, which in Pali, is known as 'Saddha'. The confidence placed in a disciple or a follower on the Buddha is like that of a sick person by a noted physician or a student by his teacher. A Buddhist seeks taking refuge in Buddha thanks to his find-out towards the path of the deliverance from all sufferings in life guided by Lord Buddha.

A Buddhist does not seek a refuge in the Buddha when happened to being over trouble with the hope that he will be saved by His (i.e. Buddha's) personal purification. In fact, the Buddha never gives such guarantee at all. Rather he often honestly confessed the fact that it is not within power of the Buddha to wash away the impurities of others. One could neither purify nor defile other. The Buddha as a teacher instructs us but we ourselves are directly responsible for our purification. Even though a Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha, he shall not make any surrender. Nor does a Buddhist sacrifice his freedom of thought by becoming a follower of the

Buddha. He can exercise his own free will and develop his knowledge even to the extent of becoming a Buddha himself.

CHAPTER IV

TITLE OF CHAPTER: CONCEPT OF REFUGE IN RELIGION: A COMPERATIVE STUDY OF BUDDHIST AND NON BUDDHIST RELIGIONS

ABSTRACT OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter attempts to capture the trajectory of refuge in different religions at one level and within different schools of Buddhism at another level. The main objective of this chapter is to present a narrative on the way major religions of the world treats a parson as refuge and how such treatment is different schools of Buddhism.

4.1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with a comparative perspective of the notion of refuge in different religions and Buddhism. The fact is that although there are many religions according to their country, race and nation, all are equal to escape from dangers and to have what they want. It means all religions in a way offer shelter to refuge in a different way. This chapter captures this diversity and compares the same with the notion of refuge treated in Buddhism.

Religion has always been a contentious domain wherein both positive and negative aspects are involved. The fact however is that the positive virtues of religions are less recognized in the rapidly changing material world. In fact, substantial sections of people perceive religion as epicenter of problems such as: inequalities in terms of political, economic, financial, criminal crises and other discriminatory aspects. At the same time, many people do believe in the fact that human beings need religion and practice according to religious instructions for better life. For them, religious practices are like remedy that can release themselves from mental and physical suffering of their daily life. Hence, the phenomenon of religion is perceived as safe refuge for both physical and mental problems posed by the material world. This has been the reason why religion becomes an important component of human existence.

The journey of human abstraction about metaphysical world started with animism. It believes that all things have a spirit or soul, including animals, plants, rivers, mountains, stars, the moon, and the sun.¹³⁵ Each being is considered a spirit that can offer help or harm to persons. It logically means that as such, spirits must either be worshiped or appeased. Animists practice practices such as sacrifices,

¹³⁵ Noss, John B., and D. S. Noss. *Man's Religions*, New York, 1980.

prayers, dances, or other forms of devotions to these spirits in hopes of blessing upon areas of life (crops, health, fertility, etc.) or for protection from harm.

Animism has been practiced since ancient times and is often mentioned in the Bible. Yet the Israelites, for example, were commanded to not follow the practices of the nations around them who followed other gods. The Egyptians who enslaved Israelites prior to their desert journey followed many deities as animists. The book of Daniel mentions that the people worshiped "the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone". The New Testament also includes accounts of people who worshiped idols and other inanimate objects. In the first Corinthians 8:4-6 the apostle Paul teaches that, "Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that 'an idol has no real existence,' and that 'there is no God but one.' For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords'—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."¹³⁶ Though many offered food for thought to inanimate objects as animists, Christians were to understand that these objects did not really have a spirit or exist as a god. In comparison with biblical Christianity, animism is a false belief in gods who are not truly gods at all. The verses in Isaiah 45:5 teaches, "I am the Lord and there is no other, besides me there is no God." In the Bible, animism is instead taught as a deception that leads people astray from the true and living God.

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In spite of tremendous progress, animism continues in most tribal religious movements, in Shinto, in eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, and in

¹³⁶ Blau, Tatjana, and Mirabai Blau, *Buddhist symbols*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 2003.

¹³⁷ Wiersbe, Warren W. "The Bible Exposition Commentary New Testament." Colorado Springs: David C. Cok, 2003.

Pagan/Neo pagan movements. In addition to believing inanimate objects have spirits, many believe in revering the spirits of ancestors who have an influence on those who are living. This is a noted practice in Shinto and forms of Native American spirituality, among others. It is important to note that not all religious scholars define animism the same way. Some view animism as a belief or practice while some classify as its own religion. Since many religions practice Animism, it is generally better to consider it a belief. In addition, most Animist cultures have an overall "religion" rather than understanding itself an Animistic Religion. The visible fact is that in the animistic religious belief system, human beings take refuge in false consciousness.

4.2: NDEGENIOUS RELIGIONS

An ethnic religion (or indigenous religion) is associated with a religion of a particular ethnic group. Ethnic religions are often distinguished from religions which claim to not be limited in ethnic or national scope, such as Christianity or Islam. Ethnic religions are not only independent religions but one localized denominations of global religions are practiced solely by certain ethnic groups. For example, the Assyrians have a unique denominational structure of Christianity known as the Assyrian Church of the East.

A number of alternative terms have been used instead of "ethnic" or "indigenous" religions. The term "primal religion" was coined by Andrew Walls in the University of Aberdeen in the 1970s to provide a focus on non-Western forms of religion as found in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. Terms such as "primal religion," "primitive religion," and "tribal religion" have been opposed by Walls' student, Jim Cox, who argues that such terms suggest an undeveloped religion which can be seen

as a preparation for conversion to Christianity. Cox prefers to use the term and expression "indigenous religion."

Another term that is often used is "folk religion," while "ethnic religion" and "folk religion" have overlapping uses, the latter term implies "the appropriation of religious beliefs and practices at a popular level." The term "folk religion" being used to speak of Chinese and African indigenous religions, but also referring to popular expressions of more multi-national and institutionalized religions such as Folk Christianity or Folk Islam.¹³⁸

4.3: The comparative study about the similarities and differences between Atheism & Buddhism

Atheism is defined by the lack of belief in a God and has really no other automatic consequences or attributes. The Atheists also accept belief in that no deities exist. On the one hand, Buddhism is the specific Dharma (religious doctrine) that aims to learn from the Tathagata, Siddhartha Gautama, and the historical Buddha. And it is not even necessarily atheistic; it just doesn't much encourage theism. Buddhism has a considerably specific group of teachings, in fact a whole tree of same, up to and including a variety of schools and even some "heresies" of sorts. At its core, though, it is pretty well-defined by the acceptance of the Four Noble Truths and of the Eightfold Path, as well as by the core concepts of Anatta (lack of a permanent self or soul), Interdependent Origination (it's very main teaching), Anicca (impermanence) and Dukkha (the permanent tendency towards spontaneous lack of satisfaction that arises from the nature of our existence).

The Buddha condemned those who use the word 'Atheism' often associate with a materialistic doctrine that know nothing higher than this world of the sense and

¹³⁸ Gilmore, George William. *Animism*. Nabu Press, 2010.

the slight happiness it can bestow. The Buddha regards this as atheistic, namely, in so far as, it denies the existence of an eternal omnipotent God who is the creator and ordained of the world.” Buddhism is thus a unique form of belief system which neither rejects nor endorses the notion of existence of supernatural and extra human power that controls universe. And thereby offer a unique space of refuge to human beings who are put to sufferings due to their ignorance and inability to come out of misery.

4.4:The rise of the Caste System: Brahmanism

Brahmanism closely associated with Vedic Aryan culture. The Aryan occupation of the Ganges valley in India had resulted in the form of a number of distinct principalities or states, some monarchical states ruled by hereditary rajahs at about the end of the 7th century B.C.¹³⁹ There were many still in the form of loose groupings of clans with the tribes governed by central councils of chieftains. The Aryans occupied the upper strata of a still fluid social order; below were the dark-skinned non-Aryans, in process of being submerged. Thus it occurred the rise of the Caste System, the separation between classes definitely coming into being four distinct social groups- the Kshatriyas or nobles, the Brahmins or priests, the Vaisyas or Aryan common people (peasants or artisans), and last the enslaved Shudras or non-Aryan blacks. There also existed a struggle for social prestige between the ruling nobles and the Brahmins; each group, in the name either of use and wont, or of the religion and supernatural prerogative, claiming final and supreme authority.

¹³⁹ E. Blunt, *The caste system of northern India*. Gyan Publishing House, 2010.

4.5: Comparative study between Brahmanism and Buddhism

It would be interesting to compare Brahmanism and Buddhism in the domain of refuge. Comparatively the Brahmanism is based on the religion that developed out of the historical Vedic religion, based on Vedas and Upanishads, and an outcome of ritualistic system led by the Brahmin priests as name suggested in the Hindu society whereas Buddhism, religion has developed from the teachings and philosophy of life of the Buddha. Buddhism denies all rituals and emphasize on self-development/self-exploration through the Dhamma, the precepts, the practice, the Four Truths and the Eightfold Path though whereas Brahmanism strongly advocates rituals as written in mentioned scriptures, to lead a good life. While Brahmanism offer refuge to followers with the condition of practicing elaborate rituals and offering gifts etc, Buddhism offer refuges by the way of imparting training in self-realization of individual with control over his or passions.

4.6: Sikhism: The Youngest of the World Religions

Sikhism as a religion origin in India and gradually spread to some regions of Europe and America. Initially it was fond and confined to mainly in the Punjab, in the north-western part of India. Its present form dates only from the 15th century. Its founder, Guru Nanak, was born in 1469. Guru Nanak spread a simple message of "Ek Ong Kar": we are all one, created by the One Creator of all Creation. This was at a time when India was being torn apart by castes, sectarianism, religious factions, and fanaticism. He aligned with no religion, and respected all religions. He expressed the reality that there is one God and many paths, and the Name of God is Truth.¹⁴⁰

Guru Nanak taught his followers bow only before God and to connect them to the Guru i.e. the Light of Truth, who lives always in direct consciousness of God,

¹⁴⁰ Khushwant Singh, *Hymns of Guru Nanak*. Orient Blackswan, 1991.

experiencing no separation. Through words and example, the Guru demonstrates to followers how to experience God within themselves, bringing them from darkness into light. Guru Nanak was a humble bearer of this Light of Truth. He opposed superstition, injustice, and hypocrisy and inspired seekers by singing divine songs which touched the hearts of the most callous listeners. These are selected and summarized for Sikhism as:

God is one. God wants a loving relationship with all people. God is within us all. Human are intended to have a relationship with God. To escape from the cycle of reincarnation, we need to unite our souls with God. This is made possible only through God's grace. Nanak was the first of ten Gurus, who were appointed by God to lead the Sikh community. After the tenth Guru, the scriptures-Adi Granth-became the living Guru which guides the community. Those committed to Sikhism are expected to wear the five K's – Kesh (Long, uncut hair), Kangha (Comb), Kach (Short drawers), Kara (Steel bracelet), Kirpan (sword)."¹⁴¹

4.7: Similarities

Apparently both the Buddha and Nanak sincerely tried to eradicate the caste system and other social evils and believed in the idea of brotherhood. Complete disregard for forms and rituals and emphasis on purity of the heart and sincerity in our dealings with others. Both preached in the spoken language of the people and did not believe in the sanctity of any one language. Both belief systems uphold the compassionate attitude of human being towards fellow human beings as well as all life forms. Both religions propose for self-discovery of human beings and practice rights things useful to society.

¹⁴¹ Nesbitt, Eleanor. *Sikhism: A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2016.

4.7.1 Differences

Buddhism does not believe in the need for God, in that sense Buddhist doctrine is absolutely atheistic. On the one hand, "By forgetting the Supreme Lord, all the ailments cling to the man. The non-believers in the Omnipresent Lord suffer separation from Him, birth after birth."¹⁴² There is joy, bliss and happiness in my home. I sing the praise of the Name, reflect on the Name and the Name is the support of my vital breath.¹⁴³ In case of Sikhism, it proposes that one must devote life for the ideals and teachings of Gurus in order to prepare him/herself to merge with God for eternal bliss. The strong belief in Sikhism is that "He who is devoted towards the Lord in his mind, he gets eternal bliss and realizes the Lord and the state of Nirvana" (Guru Ram Das, Asa, pg. 444). While Sikhism believes in devotion to God and Buddhism does not believe in God. In contrast to Buddhism, Sikhism does not have any order of monks or nuns. While Sikhism offers refuge to devotees who devote themselves to the teachings of the guru and follow a prescribed path, Buddhism offers refuge by enabling his/her to realize their potential for attaining enlightenment which is ultimate bliss.

4.8: A Study in Asceticism: Jainism

Both Buddhism and Jainism originated in the similar socio-economic and political conditions in India. Like Buddhism, Jainism was, at the time it came into being, as a reaction to, and in some part against, the tendencies set in motion by the Brahmanism. At the time (the 6th century B.C.), the caste system was still in the making, and when the priestly class put forward their broad claims to spiritual and social ascendancy, many in the ranks of the nobility, of whose caste Mahavira was a member, resisted

¹⁴² Singh, Pashaura. *Life and work of Guru Arjan: history, memory, and biography in the Sikh tradition*. Oxford University Press, 2006.p-135.

¹⁴³ Singh, Pashaura. "Recent Research and Debates in Adi Granth Studies." *Religion Compass* 2.6 (2008):p-1302

these claims actively by expressing their independent points of view. The Kshatriyas were at that time active and able in philosophic discussion, as the Upanishads bear witness; and many of them found in Brahmanism a system of thought which at a number of points gave them pause.”

The oldest Digambara sacred text is the “Scripture of Six Parts” (Satkhandagama), which was written by Dharasena (a monk) in the second century CE.) There are;

- (1) Jainism is an ancient Indian tradition whose greatest religious leader was believed to have been a contemporary of the Buddha.
- (2) Mahavira (599-527 BCE) reacted against Hindu ritual and attained omniscience.
- (3) Jains believe that the universe is eternal; karma binds us to this universe.
- (4) The goal is liberations, which ultimately involves renouncing the luxuries of home and place to become a monk or a nun.
- (5) Non-violence is the central ethical obligation and extends to avoiding all harm to everything (animals included). This ethic of non-violence has an impact on every element of life to the extent that some Jains sweep the ground in front of them or wear masks in order to avoid inadvertently harming any insects or small creatures.
- (6) There are two major sects within Jainism that divided over the issue of material possession and liberation. The “Sky-clad” sect often avoids clothing as a sign of their renunciations of all earthly things.¹⁴⁴

Jains share much of the views of 6th century BCE in India. They believe in a soul, which seeks salvation from the impact of the embodied life. The goal of Jainism

¹⁴⁴ Carrithers, Michael. "Naked ascetics in southern Digambar Jainism." *Man*, 24, 2, 1989, PP. 219-235.

is to discover moksha (release) from the karmic bondage. This extract captures the essence of Jainism.

There are certain differences between Jainism and Buddhism such things as; Jainism is radically against non-vegetarian, but Buddhists consume meat. Buddhist monks wear one piece of robe, just as Jain Monks (Digambar) don't wear it at all. Jain Monks partake food or meal once in 24 hours, that too after following some instincts. Sometimes they do not have anything up to 5 days. Buddhist Monks do it twice a day one in the early morning and one before noon daily. Due to some rigidity and complexity, Jainism is mostly concentrated to India, whereas Buddhists are spread all over. The Buddha tried to attain salvation by giving up clothes like Mahavira but instead took to one piece of robe (Dhoti) after he found it too difficult.

There are certain similarities between Jainism and Buddhism such things as both aspects are inclined towards peace. Both believe that their ultimate goal is salvation. Both grew originated and spread in South Asia. Both follow celibacy (giving up house, possessions, and properties etc). Both believe in their faith that knowledge is most important and powerful. So far as the aspect of refuge is concern, there exists a fundamental difference. While Jainism perceives extreme torture of body and observance of extreme nonviolence leads to make human beings as refuge, Buddhism believes that knowing and practicing Dhamma is the way to achieve perfect refuge.

4.9: Zoroastrianism in Brief

Undoubtedly Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest religions in the world. In fact, it is definitely one of the first monotheist religions. It was founded by a prophet or a priest named Zarathustra or Zoroaster, as the Greeks called him. He was born in Iran at a

time when the Stone Age was gradually moving into the Bronze Age. Thus the teaching of Zoroaster reflects the transformative phase of human society from Stone Age to Bronze Age.¹⁴⁵

Zoroastrianism came into existence approximately about 1200 BCE and fundamentally believed in one God, Ahura Mazda (Wise Lord). The heart of Zoroastrian ethic is that only in “God thoughts, god words, and good deeds.” There are very few Zoroastrians in the world today but it still holds an important place. A large part of their population is divided between Iran and India. The Zoroastrians living in India are called Parsis. Most of the Zoroastrians believe only in “God thoughts, god words, and good deeds” as opposed to Buddhist point of view “Good deed, good result and bad deed bad result” by one’s own Kamma.

Buddhism as a religion has a considerably specific group of teachings, in fact a whole tree of same, up to and including a variety of schools and even some "heresies" of sorts. At its core, though, it is defined by the acceptance of the Four Noble Truths and of the Eightfold Path, as well as by the core concepts of Anatta (lack of a permanent self or soul), Interdependent Origination (it’s very main teaching IMO), Anicca (impermanence) and Dukkha (the permanent tendency towards spontaneous lack of satisfaction that arises from the nature of our existence). Joroasterism do believe in one supreme God and his importance in upholding goodness. At the same time like Buddhism it believes in importance of human behavior as foundation for good society. The emphasis on good thoughts and behavior by Joroasterism shows its focus on training and structuring the good character in human beings.

¹⁴⁵ Boyce, Mary, and Frantz Grenet. *A History of Zoroastrianism, Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule*. Brill, 1991.

4.10: Key Similarities and Differences between Judaism and Buddhism

Judaism is not only a religion, but also a way of life to many. Judaism begins with Abraham and the book of Genesis (Beginning) and the beliefs of Judaism are written within the Tanakh (what Christians call the Old Testament).¹⁴⁶ Judaism believes one mustn't consume unclean food and a member must ensure all their meals are Kosher or "clean." Judaism's history follows that of God's chosen people, the Tribes of Israel, and membership within is linked to one's heritage and ancestry. Eventually the process by which one may convert to Judaism was opened and members lacking Jewish ancestry were permitted. Further, the core of Judaism is following the God, a single all-powerful deity and His commandments (as received by Moses). Judaism strongly believes in loving thy neighbor as thy self, it is a service to God to serve one's neighbor.

4.11: Key Differences

Judaism begins with a point of faith, the belief that there is only one God, creator of the world and creator of all humanity. The fundamental belief in Judaism as follows: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." This core statement is also at the heart of Christianity and Islam as well. Whereas Buddhism begins with the idea that all such questions are irrelevant and unimportant compared to a task. The task at the center of Buddhism is to eliminate suffering and its causes while nourishing vitality, joy, peace, and the causes of these qualities. So, in this way, a key difference in Judaism is about belief in God, and Buddhism is not about belief, but about action, not about God, but about the cessation of suffering for people and for all beings.

¹⁴⁶ Chilton, Bruce, and Jacob Neusner. *Judaism in the New Testament: Practices and beliefs*. Routledge, 2006.

While Judaism offer refuge to human being on condition of unquestionable belief in God, Buddhism propose for enlightenment as means to achieve ultimate bliss and safe refuge.

4.12: Key Similarities

Buddhism, Judaism, and all other major religions have come across a realization that there are a set of fundamentally unhealthy activities that it is best not to do. Whether these are seen as commandments from God or as common-sense points of life may differ. The recommended way of life in relation to ourselves and others is very similar. The following activities are seen, in both Buddhism and Judaism, as being harmful: Murder, Lying, Stealing, and Screwing around (sexual misconduct)

Both Judaism and Buddhism have a profound respect for human rational thought, and for using our powers of thinking in humane, rational ways to reduce human suffering. Both also have a wide range of interpretation of their own teachings. For example, the principle “thou shalt not kill” (Jewish) or “to abstain from killing living beings” has a wide range of interpretations. At one end of the spectrum, there are both Jewish people and Buddhist practitioners who say this prohibits murder, but not war. As we progress down this line, there are those that say that we are being guided to eliminate murder, war, the death penalty, and other things that deprive people of life. Continuing this also moves towards vegetarianism and not taking animal life, at least without great need, in both Buddhism and Judaism. So far refuge is concern, while Judaism offers refuge in the supreme Gods scriptures and commandments, Buddhism offer refuge in the teachings of the Buddha, Sangha and Dhamma.

4.13: Shintoism in contrast to Buddhism

Factually Shintoism is a religion rooted in National Shrine at Ise Built in Japan since 5 CE.¹⁴⁷ It proposes that human life is a result of human union: so the creation of land and sea is a result of divine union: - a divine union of both male and female gods. One of the significant goddesses is Amaterasu – the goddesses of the sun which is favorite deity to the Japanese people. It is believed that the first human emperor of Japan descended from the Kami who is the central figure of Shintoism. The faith in patriotism is a major obligation in Shinto religion.

It is popularly being said that “Shinto is the way of Kami. Kami. However, is it difficult term to explain verbally. It certainly includes the gods, yet and it is more. Many things within the nature are Kami: the sun, rocks, and mountains are all described as Kami. The object of life is to cooperate with these reliable noteworthy forces. Trained priests who have cultivated a disposition of purity are able to communicate with the Kami. The term captures the transcendent element that affects all nature and life. The brilliant Shinto scholar Motoori Wonnaga had (17030-1801) describes Kami in brief “as the Kami are the forces (both supernatural gods and natural people and things) that pervade everything.

Buddhism and Shinto are separate "religions" (not really a "religion" like how people practice Christianity, Islam, etc.) in Japan but they are combined so people can practice both of them. Some people think Shinto is a type of Buddhism, but it is not. Apparently Shinto is not an organized religion, it is just a collection of all traditional Japanese beliefs. It contains the traditional Japanese legends and superstitions and has many gods (some western people also call them spirits). Virtually all Japanese people

¹⁴⁷ Toshio, Kuroda, James C. Dobbins, and Suzanne Gay. "Shinto in the history of Japanese religion." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 7.1 (1981).

"follow" Shinto, but there are very few fundamentalists who strongly believe the Shinto legends. Essentially, to follow Shinto, you just need to visit a shrine. Most Japanese do this at least once a year.¹⁴⁸

Meanwhile, Buddhism is a tradition from India. The Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) was a teacher from a Kshatriya family who developed his teachings based on Hinduism, like reincarnation and karma, but changed some things like the caste system. Then it spread throughout India, and Southeast Asia, then China. Some people just see Buddhism as a sect of Hinduism but after spreading to China, Tibet, Korea, and Japan, it changed a lot and was sort of influenced with the original beliefs and new sects formed, like Zen¹⁴⁹ (called Chan in China).

So in Japan, when Buddhism arrived, it was practiced together with Shinto until now. Most Japanese "practice" both religions by visiting the temples and they know the stories, but they aren't fundamentalists. Shinto or Kami-no-michi (the original traditional term) is the natural spiritual cult of Japan extensively followed by the Japanese people. Shinto or literally meaning the way of the Gods was originally adopted from the ancient Chinese inscriptions. The very word Shinto is the combination of the two terms, "shin" or 'shen' meaning gods or spirits and "do" denoting an idealistic path of study or path of existence. On the other hand, Buddhism is a tradition envisaged as the ultimate path of salvation which is to be achieved through an imminent approach into the absolute nature of reality and existence.

Shinto exemplifies the worship of the abstract forces of nature, the ancestors, nature, polytheism, and animism. The central focus remains on ritual purity which revolves around the honoring and celebration of the existence of Kami which is the ultimate spirit of essence. In a differing way, the foundation of Buddhism lies on the

¹⁴⁸ M. Yamakage, *The Essence of Shinto: Japan's Spiritual Heart*, Kodansha International, 2012.

¹⁴⁹ Clark, Walter E. "Hinduism and Buddhism." (1944): p-62.

performing of altruism and following the paths of ethical conduct. Some of the common practices of Buddhism are cultivation of wisdom through meditation and renunciation, invoking the bodhisattvas and studying the scriptures.¹⁵⁰ Buddhism has two main branches termed as Mahayana and Theravada. Mahayana includes the traditions of Pure Land, Nichiren Buddhism, Zen, Shingon, Tibetan Buddhism, Shinnyo-en and Tendai whereas Theravada centers on the thoughts from the earliest surviving School of Elders. But Shinto has no branches and exists as one single institution of ancient Japanese religion.

4.14: Summary about Shintoism and Buddhism

1. Shinto is an ancient religion from Japan whereas Buddhism is a tradition envisaged in India by Siddhartha Gautama.
2. Shinto originated from ancient Chinese inscriptions, whereas Buddhism has its commencement in the thoughts and teachings of Gautama Buddha.
3. Shinto lays importance to religious actions and rites rather than words and preaching whereas the foundation of Buddhism is the words and preaching of Buddha. Buddhism focuses on an altruistic life that leads to salvation.
4. Buddhism has religious branches in the form of Theravada and Mahayana whereas Shinto has no such religious sects.
5. Shinto worships the forces of nature, polytheism and animism whereas Buddhism is all about following an ethical code of conduct in one's life and practice meditation and renunciation.

¹⁵⁰ Gellner, David N. "Ritualized devotion, altruism, and meditation: The offering of the guru ma ala in Newar Buddhism." *Indo-Iranian Journal*, 34.3 (1991):

4.15: Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest of all the major religions. Around 4000 - 3000 B.C. near the river Ganges in India, a collection of religious songs and proverbs were developed called the Vedes.¹⁵¹ The holy book of the Hindu is therefore called the Veda. Within the Veda many gods are praised and worshipped. India's gods of today evolved from an immense number of gods of nature; family and tribal gods. The highest god of the Hindus is an impersonal known as the Brahman. This highest of the Hindu gods always appears as different creatures, gods, humans and animals. This continual rebirth is known as reincarnation. Therefore, Hinduism has an incredible number of gods numbering about 330 million. The most important forms, Brahman appears as, are: Brahman: The world creator.

Hinduism is an Indian religion, or a way of life, widely practiced in South Asia. Hinduism has been called the oldest religion in the world, and some practitioners and scholars refer to it as Sanātana Dharma, "the eternal tradition," or the "eternal way," beyond human history. Scholars regard Hinduism as a fusion or synthesis of various Indian cultures and traditions, with diverse roots and no founder. This "Hindu synthesis" started to develop between 500 BCE and 300 CE, following the Vedic period (1500 BCE to 500 BCE).¹⁵²

Although Hinduism contains a broad range of philosophies, it is linked by shared concepts, recognizable rituals, cosmology, shared textual resources, and pilgrimage to sacred sites. Hindu texts are classified into Śruti (heard) and Smṛti (remembered). These texts discuss theology, philosophy, mythology, Vedicyajna, Yoga, agamic rituals, and temple building, among other topics. Major scriptures include the Vedas and Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Agamas. Sources of

¹⁵¹ Staal, Frits. *Discovering the Vedas: origins, mantras, rituals, insights*. Penguin Books India, 2008.

¹⁵² Rosen, Steven. *Essential Hinduism*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006.

authority and eternal truths in its texts play an important role, but there is also a strong Hindu tradition of the questioning of this authority, to deepen the understanding of these truths and to further develop the tradition.¹⁵³

Factually the word Hindu is derived from the Indo-Aryan/Sanskrit the Sindhu, the Indo-Aryan name for the Indus River in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent (modern day Pakistan and Northern India). Hinduism generally includes a diversity of ideas on spirituality and traditions, but has no ecclesiastical order, no unquestionable religious authorities, no governing body, no prophet(s) nor any binding holy book. Hindus thus has liberty to choose to be polytheistic, pantheistic, monotheistic, monistic, agnostic, atheistic or humanist. Because of the wide range of traditions and ideas covered by the term Hinduism, arriving at a comprehensive definition is difficult. Hinduism has been variously defined as a religion, a religious tradition, a set of religious beliefs, and "a way of life. From a Western lexical standpoint, Hinduism like other faiths is appropriately referred to as a religion. In India the term dharma is preferred, which is broader than the western term religion.¹⁵⁴

4.16: The Worship of the Gods (Cults)

The essence of Hinduism is that in all things, especially in all living things - humans, animals, and plants, it sees the Brahman, the highest god. From this the deep worship of animals, especially the cow, originates. For centuries the cow has rendered good services of an inestimable value to the people: as a draught animal to plough the fields, as a supplier of milk and combustible materials for daily needs. The most widespread cults in Hinduism are that of Vishnu and Shiva. The high number of gods and the infinite ways of worship has not brought about any rigid commandments. In

¹⁵³ S. Knapp, *A Complete Review of Vedic Literature: India's Ancient Library of Spiritual Knowledge*, Vedic Friends Association, 2012.

¹⁵⁴ A.K. Majumdar, *The Hindu History*, Rupa, 2008.

fact, there are no guidelines such as the Ten Commandments. This naturally led to the development of many sects in the due course of time. The interesting fact is that these sects practice a great tolerance towards other sects and religions. Due to this, Hinduism also includes elements of Buddhism, Christianity and Islamic faith.

4.17: The Teachings of Hinduism

The Hindu essentially believes that all soulful life is subject to the becoming, the passing away, and the steady change to a higher form of being. It is believed that the soul always enters into a new form of being whether it be a plant, animal, human, or god. The life of Hindu controlled by the belief that every deed a person does have either a positive or a negative influence upon his soul: good or bad Karma. These deeds are decisive for their next life. The Hindu hopes for final redemption and the merging with Brahman.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, death is the greatest event for every Hindu, because it could be his redemption from reincarnation if he becomes one with the Brahman. At the end of their life every Hindu tries to journey to the holy city of Benares, which cleanses them and leads them at last to the Brahman. The structure of Hinduism is the simplest of all religions. In contrast to Christianity, Hinduism misses out on some essential points which often make Christian belief difficult.

4.18: The Religious Life of the Hindu

1. The aim:

The aim of the Hindu is to become one with the Brahman as often and as long as possible. This unity with the Brahman could be the redemption form rebirth for the Hindu. There is an ideal for a Hindu, which is asceticism, i.e. abstinence.

¹⁵⁵ Shattuck, Cybelle. Hinduism. Routledge, 2002.

2. The way:

Through yoga the Hindu tries to cut out all impressions of the mind, and to reach unity with the Brahman (yoga = physical exercises). The people who do yoga are called yogi. The faithful yogi relaxes in these old and often very difficult exercises; he frees himself from caste and family, he ignores all outward things in order to get closer to God. This is called meditation. Meditation is an important part in the life of a faithful Hindu.

4.18.1: The Castes

The classification of the Indian society into castes has two reasons:

- (a) Historical: In 2000 B.C., white-skinned people marched through the Indus valley and forced the dark skinned population of India to submit to their rule and to be divided into four social groups.
- (b) Religious: The castes are the result of the rebirth. Only through his death can the Hindu belong to another caste. His way of life decides whether he will rise or fall in caste in his next life.

The main divisions of castes are as follows:

- (1) Priests = Brahman
- (2) Aristocrats and Warriors
- (3) Farmers, Craftsmen and Tradesmen
- (4) Labors

The rest do not belong to castes and are cast out of normal society. These are outcasts, called the pariah or several other names in India.¹⁵⁶ Today, the castes have developed a great social meaning. The individual castes live in their own residential areas, strictly separated from the other castes. It is almost impossible for the outcasts

¹⁵⁶ Aṅguttaranakāya-aṭṭhakathā, I,1(957); II & III (1982)p-266

to be promoted in their jobs, even though any discrimination of castes is, by law, strictly forbidden.

4.18.2: Differences

1. Hinduism is based on the concept of atman and Brahman whereas Buddhism denies the existence of an eternal soul.
2. Buddhism emphasizes on sufferings in the existing world whereas Hindus believe that one can enjoy divine bliss through moksha or reunion with Brahman
3. Buddhism believes in attaining nirvana through the four noble truths and eightfold path whereas Hinduism believes there are several ways one can reach to God.
4. Hinduism believes in the existence of several gods whereas Buddhism reasons as to why one should seek a God which nobody is aware of.

These is a share about similarities and differences between Hinduism and Buddhism

4.18.3: Comparison between Hinduism and Buddhism

Similarities	Differences
Both believe in Samsara and Karma	Hinduism is not founded by a particular person, but Buddhism is founded by the Buddha
Both believe desire is the root cause of suffering	Hinduism follows Vedas (Hindu Scripture) while Buddhism does not
Both emphasize compassion and peace to all living beings (no violence to humans and animals)	Buddhism does not believe Hindu gods are as powerful as Buddha (They do not look up to them as they do Buddha)
Both believe in several heavens and hells (layers of heavens and hells)	Buddhists think the goal in life is overcoming sorrow. Hindus think there are four goals- Kama, Dharma, Artha, and Moksha
Both believe in multiple gods and diets	While Hinduism has several teachers, Buddhism

	has one supreme teacher.
Both believe in the spiritual practices of meditation, concentration, and cultivation of certain states of mind.	For Hindus cultivation of mind with yoga leads to discovery of God and in Buddhism cultivation of mind leads to enlightenment
Both believe in detachment, (leaving outside world) and rethink past life to enter spiritual life.	
Both religions started in India	Hinduism mainly confined to India, Buddhism spread across' globe.

Source: Eliot, Charles. Hinduism and Buddhism. Vol. 3. BoD–Books on Demand, 2019.

Having compared Buddhism with major religions from the perspective of refuge, the subsequent section focuses upon the different sets within Buddhism and their similarities and differences. Such exercise is useful in arriving at penetrating picture on the way Buddhism perceives at the concept of refuge.

4.19: Brief History of Hinayana (the Modest Vehicle), Mahayana (the Vast Vehicle), and Theravada (The greatest tradition)

There are two major divisions of Buddhism which are as follows: Hinayana (the Modest Vehicle), which emphasizes personal liberation, and Mahayana (the Vast Vehicle),¹⁵⁷ which stresses working to become a fully enlightened Buddha to be able to benefit others. Further both the modest and vast vehicles have many sub-divisions. At present, only the following two major forms survive: Hinayana form of Buddhism exists in Southeast Asia, known as Theravada, and Mahayana divisions, namely the

¹⁵⁷ Cohen, Richard S. "Discontented Categories: Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in Indian Buddhist History." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (1995): 1-25.

Chinese and Tibetan traditions. In spite of broader level of commonality, these sets had fundamental differences in terms of doctrines and practices.

The Theravada form of Buddhist tradition spread from India to Sri Lanka and Burma (Myanmar) in the 3rd century BCE. From there, it reached the rest of Southeast Asia (Thailand, Cambodia and Laos). On the other hand, the Hinayana school spread to modern-day Pakistan, Afghanistan, eastern and coastal Iran, and Central Asia. From Central Asia, it spread into China in the 2nd century CE. These forms of Hinayana were later combined with Mahayana aspects that came through this same route from India, with the Mahayana eventually becoming the dominant form of Buddhism in China and most of Central Asia. The Chinese form of Mahayana later spread to Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

The Tibetan Mahayana tradition started in the 7th century CE, inheriting the full historical development of Indian Buddhism. From Tibet, it spread throughout the Himalayan regions and to Mongolia, Central Asia, and several regions of Russia (Buryatia, Kalmykia and Tuva). In addition, from the 2nd century CE, Indian forms of Mahayana Buddhism spread to Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Sumatra and Java along the sea trade route from India to South China. In order to understand the doctrinal position of different sets of Buddhism we need to have proper understanding of what the Buddha had said and prescribed his followers to do. The next section of this chapter briefly discusses about the Buddha and his teachings.

4.20:Who is Buddha?

(a) His origin: many stories about his origin are essentially legends. The following course of his life from historical point of view has generally been accepted by scholars. He was born Siddhartha Gautama in 560 B.C. in what is now Nepal. With regard to his religion, he focuses on reality. As the son of a chief he belonged to the

aristocrat caste and was brought up in prosperity and wealth. Once he said that: 'I owned three palaces; one for autumn, one for winter, and one for summer. I spent the four autumn months at the autumn palace, surrounded by invisible music and I did not descend from my balcony'¹⁵⁸

(b) It appears the fact that Gautama was not satisfied with all his prosperity at home and left the palace against his father's will. During his journey he was confronted with human suffering for the first time in his life. It is being said famously that he saw sick and old people as well as the dead. After this he returned home again, but from then on he had constant unrest within him. Therefore, one day he left his family and started life as a begging monk. At this time, Gautama was 29 years of age.¹⁵⁹ (One can still recognize these begging monks today by their appearance: they have close-cropped hair and wear a saffron-colored garment.)

c) His aim: Gautama wanted to discover the meaning of life and find out about the so-called 'world mystery'. That 'world mystery', which all religions try to resolve, involves the question about suffering in the world. Where does the suffering and misery come from? Why is there good and evil? Gautama practiced strict asceticism together with five Hindu saints to the point of near starvation. Because he did not receive an answer to his questions, he abandoned asceticism, and in revolt the five saints left him. Gautama now searched for the middle way between asceticism and the luxurious life. Through meditation he waited for the so-called 'illumination'. First of all, he had to resist many temptations, but then he received the enlightenment he had hoped for and since then has been called Buddha, which means the 'Enlightened'.

The Buddha then moved to Benares, the largest Indian place of pilgrimage and there he met the five saints. He told them of his enlightenment and won them over as

¹⁵⁸Chopra, Deepak. *Buddha: a story of enlightenment*. HarperOne, 2008.

¹⁵⁹ Thera, Ven Narada. *Buddha and His Teachings*. Pariyatti Publishing, 2017.p-25

his first disciples. Together with these saints he founded a monastic order at the beginning of his work. Throughout his life the Buddha travelled throughout India, preaching the redemption of man through enlightenment. Then, after he explained to his pupils once again about the passing away of all earthly things, Buddha died as a result of food poisoning. His last advise to his followers as follows: "Avoid every evil; multiply the seed of good works; continually purify the spirit; this is the way, which Buddha shows."¹⁶⁰

4.21: The Message of Buddhism

It appears to be the fact that Buddhism was an uprising against the ancient religion of Hinduism (India's main religion). The Buddha essentially wanted to help mankind that was longing for recovery from the suffering and misery of this world. He also refused to accept the classification of castes as well as total abstinence (asceticism). To him all people were equal without any distinctions.¹⁶¹

(a) The doctrine of the four noble truths: Here Buddha shows the cause and effect for human passion. To remove this passion is Buddha's main task:

- 1) Passion is everywhere.
- 2) The cause for passion is egoism.
- 3) The elimination of passion through the elimination of egoism.
- 4) The way to achieve this is shown in the eight-fold path.

4.22: The doctrine of the eight-fold path

These paths show the Buddhist practical directions for their correct behavior in life:

- 1) The right faith.

¹⁶⁰ A. Skilton, A Concise History of Buddhism, Windhorse, 2004.

¹⁶¹ Udāna-aṭṭhakathā, Department of Religious Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Yangon, 1958. p-45

- 2) The right will.
- 3) The right speech.
- 4) The right performance.
- 5) The right life.
- 6) The right aim.
- 7) The right remembrance (memory).
- 8) The right meditation.

These words of the Buddha aimed at creation of a ethical and moral structure with which social harmony to persists. The underplaying principle in the teachings of eightfold path is that is love towards humans and animals alike. No living creature should suffer.

4.23: Nirvana - The Aim of the Believers

(a) To break the cycle of reincarnation and to reach 'Nirvana' is the aim of every authentic Buddhist. He has to exert himself and go through many lives until he achieves that aim. All worldly things are subject to change, and so Buddhists remove most bonds to this world.

(b) 'Nirvana' is unequal to 'Heaven' in Christianity. The Christian understands that heaven is personal fellowship with God, while Nirvana is only an impersonal state without pain and suffering; a state of rest and peace.

4.24: Buddha - Man or God?

The Buddha is rarely honored as God. For most Buddhists He is a common man who entered into Nirvana and due to this became an idol. They do not honor his person but an impersonal principle, which became reality. Therefore, you will not find any natural representations of Buddha. Buddha became the savior of mankind only to

some. Many relics are worshipped in Buddhist refuges. To be allowed to pray and sacrifice is a special honor. These temples are kept and looked after by monks and pagoda trustee.

4.25: The Monk - The Ideal Man

A monk lives an exemplary life to others. He can do without all the luxuries of life, which shows that only the way of salvation is of importance, and therefore spends all his life in the seclusion of the cloister. Besides the common directions are three special commandments:

- a) He has to be pure.
- b) He is not allowed to harm any creature.
- c) He has to remain unmarried.

The monk has only one garment and is not allowed to buy food. His income is what he receives from people. To give alms to a monk is a great honor. In some countries (Thailand, Burma) almost all young men spend time in cloisters for several weeks. It is part of their education.

4.26: How Buddhism Spread from India to other countries

It would be interesting to explore the process of the spread of Buddhism from India to other countries. There are many factors that contributed to the early spread of Theravada Buddhism throughout Southeast Asia. The main three ways in which the religion was transported into the region is through systems of trade, marriage, and missionary work. Buddhism has always been a missionary religion and Theravada Buddhism was able to spread due to the work and travel of missionaries. The Mon people are an ethnic group from Burma (Myanmar) that contributed to the success of Theravada Buddhism within Indochina. Buddhism was likely introduced to the Mon

people during the rule of Ashoka Maurya, the king of the Mauryan Dynasty (268-232 BCE) in India.¹⁶² Ashoka ruled his kingdom in accordance with Buddhist law and throughout his reign he dispatched court ambassadors and missionaries to bring the teachings of the Buddha to the east and Macedonia, as well to parts of Southeast Asia. India had trading routes that ran through Cambodia, allowing for the spread of these ideologies to easily occur. The Mons are one of the earliest ethnic groups from Southeast Asia and as the region shifted and grew, new inhabitants to Burma adopted the Mon people's culture, script, and religion.

The middle of the 11th century saw a decline of Buddhism in Southeast Asia. From the 11th to 13th century the Khmer Empire dominated the Southeast Asian peninsula. Hindu was the primary religion of the Khmer Empire, with a smaller portion of people also adhering to Mahayana Buddhism. During the Khmer Rule, Theravada Buddhism was only found in parts of Malaysia, northwest Thailand, and lower Burma. Theravada Buddhism experienced a revival under the rule of Anawrahta Minsaw (1014-1077 AD). Anawrahta was the ruler of the Pagan Empire in Burma and is considered to be the founder of the modern Burmese nation. Anawrahta embraced and revived the Mon people's form of Theravada Buddhism through his building of schools and monasteries that taught and supported Theravada ideologies the success of Theravada Buddhism in Burma under the rule of Anawrahta allowed for the later growth of Buddhism in neighboring Southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. The influences of the Mon people as well as the Pagan Empire are still felt today throughout the region. Currently, the Southeast Asian countries with the highest amounts of practicing Theravada Buddhists are Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia.

¹⁶² Bühler, Georg. *Three New Edicts of Asoka*. Printed at the Education Society's Press, 1877.

Vietnam continues to have a Mahāyāna majority due to Chinese influence. Indonesia was Mahāyāna Buddhist since the time of the Sailendra and Srivijaya empires, but now Mahāyāna Buddhism in Indonesia is now largely practiced by the Chinese Diaspora, as in Singapore and Malaysia. Mahāyāna Buddhism is the predominant religion of most Chinese communities in Singapore. In Malaysia, Brunei, and Indonesia, it remains a strong minority.

4.27: Spread of Buddhism to Asia

In the 2nd century BCE, Asoka's emissaries (perhaps including Asoka's son Mahinda) went to Sri Lanka, an island southeast of the Indian subcontinent. The tradition says that they were well-received by the local ruler, King Devanampiva Tissa, and Theravada Buddhism took hold there. This is when the Mahavihara monastery, a center of Sinhalese orthodoxy, was built. It was at the Sri Lankan royal city of Anuradhapura, in about 90 BCE, that the Tripitaka was put in written form in the Pali language. Although there are other versions of the Tripitaka available, the Pali Canon is the earliest written version.¹⁶³

Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhism continued to flourish over the centuries, producing notable Buddhist commentators such as Buddhaghosa (4th–5th centuries). Although Mahayana Buddhism gained some influence at that time, Theravada form of Buddhism appears to have ultimately prevailed, and Sri Lanka turned out to be the last stronghold of Theravada Buddhism, from where it would expand again to Southeast Asia from the 11th century.

In the areas east of the Indian subcontinent (today's Myanmar), Indian culture strongly influenced the Mons. The Mons are said to have been converted to Buddhism around 200 BCE under the proselytizing of the Indian king Ashoka, before the

¹⁶³ Ko Lay, U., and Burma Pitaka Association Editorial Committee. "Guide to Tipitaka." (1990): 153.

scission between Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism. Early Mon Buddhist temples, such as Peikthano in central Burma, have been dated between the 1st and the 5th century CE.

The Buddhist art of the Mons was especially influenced by the Indian art of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, and their mannerist style spread widely in Southeast Asia following the expansion of the Mon kingdom between the 5th and 8th centuries. The Theravada faith expanded in the northern parts of Southeast Asia under Mon influence, until it was progressively displaced by Mahayana Buddhism from around the 6th century CE.

There is also a legend, not directly validated by the edicts, that Ashoka sent a missionary to the north, through the Himalayas, to Khotan in the Tarim Basin, then the land of an Indo-European people, the Tocharian's.

The Buddha passed away in 543 B.C. 220 years after the Buddha's decease (323 B.C.) Asoka, the emperor of India, became the defender of the Buddhist faith and conferred the royal protection on the Sangha, causing all those heretical monks thus degraded numbered sixty thousand and the order was then restored to unanimity of communion and upheld the rules of sanctification. For the purpose of holding a further convocation the chief monk at that time Tissa, selected a thousand monks of sanctified character perfect in religious knowledge and versed in the Tipitaka. Under the auspices of the Emperor Asoka they held the third council at Patana according to the methods used by Maha Kassapa and Revata, who led the first and second convocations respectively and that council was brought to a close in nine months.¹⁶⁴

The Emperor Asoka gave his beloved son, Mahinda also his daughter, Sanghamitta, to the order and sent them to Ceylon to introduce the religion there. His

¹⁶⁴ Blando, John A. "Spirituality, religion, and counseling." *Counseling and Human Development* 39.2, 2006.

monks taught it throughout the whole of India and carried it to fourteen Indian nations outside its boundaries, also to five Greek kings, his allies with whom he made treaties to admit his religious preachers. The names of the five kings mentioned in the edicts of the Emperor Asoka and inscribed by him on stone pillars are Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedon, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirus, five of Asoka's monks were sent to the five divisions of China in the third century B.C. from whence Buddhism reached Korea in 372 A.D and Japan in 552 A.D. In the fourth and fifth centuries A.D it spread to Cochin China, Mongolia and other Asiatic countries and from Kashmir it spread to Nepal and Tibet, Sona and Uttara, two of Asoka's monks introduced Buddhism in to Burma and thence gradually it spread to Arakan and Cambodia. In the seventh century A.D 638, it spread from Ceylon to Siam where it became the state religions even as it still is today.

Towards the end of the first century of the Christian era the Buddhists in India were divided into two schools, one of which taught that all the individual had to do was follow out the pure doctrine of the Buddha and seek Nibbana; this was named Hinayana or the Little Vehicle, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Laos are said to belong to this school. The other taught special doctrines about the Buddha and some new metaphysical theories; this was styled the Mahayana or the Great Vehicle. However, the terms Hinayana and Mahayana are not mentions in the texts but they have become common among Western writers owing to their usage by Chinese pilgrims. One of the best known philosophers of the Mahayana school was Nagarjuna who founded and expounded the Mahayana philosophy. The end and aim of his philosophy was to bring about a compromise as it were between the Buddhists and the Brahmins and to find a mid-point where adherents of these two could meet and shake hands with one another. Since his time the Brahmins began to regard the Mahayana

Buddhists as their brothers in religion, and the Mahayana school had the predominant voice.

In the closing years of the eleventh century, however, India was overrun by the Mohammedants who destroyed the Buddhist monasteries appropriated the monastic lands for the use of soldiers, massacred monks by the thousand and burned libraries wherever found. Many monks fled across the borders into Tibet and other safe places of refuge carrying their books with them and so Hinayana was practically stamped out from India, while Mahayana lingered in nooks and corners for two more centuries before it was lost altogether.

4.28: Buddhism spread through in China, Tibet, and Mongolia

It has widely been accepted fact that the Chinese Buddhism has shaped Chinese culture in a wide variety of areas including art, politics, literature, philosophy, medicine, and material culture. The translation of a large body of Indian Buddhist scriptures into Chinese and the inclusion of these translations together with works composed in China into a printed canon had far-reaching implications for the dissemination of Buddhism throughout the Chinese cultural sphere, including Korea, Japan, Ryukyu Islands and Vietnam. Chinese Buddhism is also marked by the interaction between Indian religions, Chinese religion, and Taoism.¹⁶⁵ Various legends tell of the presence of Buddhism in Chinese soil in very ancient times. Nonetheless, the scholarly consensus is that Buddhism first came to China in the first century CE during the Han dynasty, through missionaries from India.

The Tibetan form of Buddhism is inspired by Buddhist Vajrayana doctrine and institutions named after the lands of Tibet. It derives from the latest stages of Indian Buddhism and preserves the Tantric status quo of eighth-century India. It gradually

¹⁶⁵ Heirman, Ann, and Stephan Peter Bumbacher, eds. *The spread of Buddhism*. Vol. 16. Brill, 2007.

spread outside of Tibet particularly on account of the Mongol power of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), founded by Kublai Khan who also ruled China. The Tibetan Buddhism applies Tantric practices, especially deity yoga, and aspires to Buddhahood or the rainbow body. Generally, the Tibetan Buddhism has four major schools, namely Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya and Gelug (developed out of Sakya). The Jonang is a smaller school, and the Rimé movement is an eclectic movement involving the Sakya, Kagyu and Nyingma schools. Among the prominent exponents of Tibetan Buddhism are the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, the leaders of Gelug School in Tibet.¹⁶⁶

Buddhism in Mongolia began with the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) with emperor's conversion to the Tibetan Buddhism. It appears that the Mongols returned back to their old shamanist forms of belief systems after the collapse of empire. The fact is that Buddhism begun to revive from 16th and 17th centuries. Apparently the form and nature of Buddhism in Mongolia derives much of its features from the Tibetan Buddhism of the Gelug and Kagyu lineages, however having its own unique characteristics. Traditionally, the Mongols ethnic religious belief systems involved worship of Heaven (the "eternal blue sky") and ancestors and the ancient North Asian practices of shamanism, in which human intermediaries went into trance and spoke to and for some of the numberless infinities of spirits responsible for human luck or misfortune.¹⁶⁷

4.29: Spiritual Basis of Asian Culture

Undoubtedly Buddhism exercised significant impact upon the cultures of Asian countries. It would be useful for us to dwell upon this aspect in a detailed way. It

¹⁶⁶ J. Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, Snow Lion, 2007.

¹⁶⁷ M.K. Jerryson, *Mongolian Buddhism: The Raise and Fall of the Sangha*, Silkwarm, 2008.

would be useful to have a comparative analysis of western and Asian cultures. Apparently western cultures influenced by several belief systems. Wide range of influences from the old magic of the dawn of time, persisting longer in the cold western climes; from the Greek tradition; from the Norse tradition; from the blending and play on those of the impacts of the Hebrews, the Huns and the Arabs, with Christianity as a molding force. At the same time, the culture of Asia is firmly rooted in the religions of Asia.

The genius culture of Asia is based mainly on the spiritual principles of its religions. The cultural life of the Asia countries would not exist without this spiritual basis. So much so that this highlights the difference in our culture as compared with Western culture, and has given rise to the myth of “the unchanging East”. Diversified cultures in different Asian countries deeply influenced by local belief systems and at the same time, Buddhism played an important role in this process in all most all countries. The cultural fabric of Asian countries remained deeply influenced by value systems emanated from spiritual systems of thoughts. At the same time, moral values of Asian culture played a major role which was product of spiritual systems. In this process Buddhism played an important role, its interaction with indigenous religious systems given raise to different forms Buddhism in different parts of the Asian continent.

4.30: Landmarks in history of Buddhism

The global expansion of Buddhism suggests essentially the fact that it is flexible, universal, and missionary religion. It origins in the soil of India and gradually spread to different parts of world. It gradually had strong and permanent footing in Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Siam, and the larger countries to the north, China, Korea, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia, and supplying these regions with some profoundly satisfactory

answers to universal human needs; but it was destined at length to die out in India itself, except upon the fringes of that amazing land. It would be useful for us to have trajectory on important millstones of Buddhism. The following table shows some of the important landmarks in history of Buddhism:

Some Landmarks in the History of Buddhism¹⁶⁸

Chronology of Buddhism

Years	The Spread of Buddhism
1500 B.C.	The Vedsa
800 B.C.	The Upanishads
563 B.C.	Birth of the Buddha
483 B.C.	Parinirvana of the Buddha The First Buddhist Council
383 B.C.	The Second Buddhist Council The Buddhist Sangha split into sects
269 B.C.	Asoka, the Emperor of India
247 B.C.	The Third Buddhist Council
25-60 AD	Buddhism spread to China
100 circa	The Sinhalese Pitaka committed to writing
220	Buddhism in Vietnam
372	Buddhism in Korea
420	Buddhaghosa
435-52	Buddhism in Sumatra, Java and Myanmar
629-45	Buddhism is Japan. Chinese pilgrims in India

¹⁶⁸ Bapat, Purushottam Vishvanath. 2500 years of Buddhism. Publications Division Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 1959.

642	Buddhism in Tibet
720	Thailand converted to Theravada Buddhism
1077	King Anuruddha Anawratha of Myanmar
1350-40	Theravada spread to Cambodia and Laos
1577	Mongolia became a Buddhist country
1819	Schopenhauer's "The World as Will and Idea"
1879	Sir Edwin Arnold's "The Light of Asia"
1881	Pali Text Society, London
1891	Mahabodhi Society founded for the revival of Buddhism in India
1898	Fielding Hall's "The Soul of a People", a book about Burmese people that led many Western readers to take interest in Buddhism
1826	The First Buddhist Society in London
1928	French Buddhist Society, Paris
1934	The First European Buddhist Congress held in London

Source: Bapat, Purushottam Vishvanath. 2500 years of Buddhism. Publications Division Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 1959

4.31: Vegetarianism and Buddhism

It would be interesting and useful to have a picture on how everyday life is conducted in Buddhism. Food could be one of the important domains which show the core nature of belief systems. This section attempts to show the engagement of Buddhism with dietary habits with particular reference to food. When the Buddha was asked to introduce vegetarianism amongst His disciples, He refused to do so. It clearly shows that the Buddha had not considered this as a very important religious observance. The

Buddha did not mention anything about vegetarianism for the lay Buddhists in His Teaching. The firm belief of the Buddha was that one should not judge the purity or impurity of man simply by observing what he eats.¹⁶⁹ The views of the Buddha on this process could be captured from the Amagandha Sutta where he said the following words:

Neither meat, nor fasting, nor nakedness,
Nor shaven heads, nor matted hair, nor dirt,
Nor rough skins, nor fire-worshipping,
Nor all the penances here in this world,
Nor hymns, nor oblation, nor sacrifice,
Nor feasts of the season,
Will purify a man overcome with doubt ¹⁷⁰

The Buddha believes that consuming fish and meat by itself does not make a man become impure. He also believes in the fact that a man makes himself impure by bigotry, deceit, envy, self-exaltation, disparagement and other evil intentions. Through his own evil thoughts and actions, man makes himself impure. There is no strict rule in Buddhism that the followers of the Buddha should not take fish and meat. The only advice given by the Buddha is that they should not be involved in killing intentionally or they should not ask others to kill any living being for them. However, those who take vegetable food and abstain from animal flesh are praiseworthy. People who criticize Buddhists who eat meat do not understand the Buddhist attitude towards food. The essential fact is that a living being needs nourishment to survive. The undisputable fact is that we eat to live. As such a human being should supply his body with the food it needs to keep him healthy and to give him energy to work. However,

¹⁶⁹ Saṃyuttanaikāya-aṭṭhakathā, I & II (CV) Yangon, Myanmar, 1957

¹⁷⁰ Hopkins, E. Washburn. "The Buddhist rule against eating meat." *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 27 (1906): pp. 455-64.

as a result of increasing wealth, more and more people, especially in developed countries, eat simply to satisfy their palates. If one craves after any kind of food, or kills to satisfy his greed for meat, this is wrong. But if one eats without greed and without directly being involved in the act of killing but merely to sustain the physical body, he is practicing self-restraint.

Though the Buddha did not advocate vegetarianism for the monks, He did advise the monks to avoid taking ten kinds of meat for their self-respect and protection. They are: humans, elephants, horses, dogs, snakes, lions, tigers, leopards, bears hyenas. Some animals attack people when they smell the flesh of their own kind¹⁷¹ (VinayaPitaka). JivakaKomarabhacca, the doctor, discussed this controversial issue with the Buddha: 'Lord, I have heard that animals are slaughtered on purpose for the recluse Gotama, and that the recluse Gotama knowingly eats the meat killed on purpose for him. Lord, do those who say animals are slaughtered on purpose for the recluse Gotama, and the recluse Gotama knowingly eats the meat killed on purpose for. Do they falsely accuse the Buddha? Or do they speak the truth? Are your declaration and supplementary declarations not thus subject to be ridiculed by others in any manner?'

The reply of the Buddha to the aforementioned question as follows: 'Jivaka, those who say: 'Animals are slaughtered on purpose for the recluse Gotama, and the recluse Gotama knowingly eats the meat killed on purpose for him', do not say according to what I have declared, and they falsely accuse me. Jivaka, I have declared that one should not make use of meat it is seen, heard or suspected to have been killed on purpose for a monk. I allow the monks meat that is quite pure in three respects: if it

¹⁷¹ Apadanatthakatha 2, Version, Department of Religious Affairs,

is not seen, heard or suspected to have been killed on purpose for a monk.'¹⁷²
(JivakaSutta)

In some countries, the followers of the Mahayana school of Buddhism are strict vegetarians. While appreciating their observance in the name of religion, we should like to point out that they should not condemn those who are not vegetarians. They must remember that there is no precept in the original teachings of the Buddha that requires all Buddhists to be vegetarians. We must realize that Buddhism is known as the Middle Path. It is a liberal religion and the Buddha's advice was that it is not necessary to go to extremes to practice His Teachings.

The message of the Buddha is that vegetarianism alone does not help a man to cultivate his humane qualities. Apparently there are kind, humble, polite and religious people amongst non-vegetarians. Therefore, one should not condone the statement that a pure, religious man must practice vegetarianism.

4.32: Chinese Religion: Religions and Beliefs in China

China has been a multi-religious country since the ancient times. It is well known that Confucianism is an indigenous religion and is the soul of Chinese culture, which enjoyed popular support among people and even became the guiding ideology for feudal society, there are two dominant traditions in China. They Are Confucianism and Taoism.

4.33: Confucianism, Confucius (552-479 BCE)

The phenomenon of Confucianism, not a religion by definition, rather is an ethical and p

¹⁷² Chen, Thomas SN, and Peter SY Chen. "Jivaka, physician to the Buddha." *Journal of medical biography*, 10.2 (2002): 88-91.

philosophical system, which developed from Confucius' thoughts and later was treated as a kind of belief to educate common people for greater good. It obtained its stable position under the reign of Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD), and became the ideology of the society in the feudal system since then. Based on the Four Books and Five Classics, the traditions and principles in the Confucianism played an important role in the formation of Chinese people's thinking patterns and teaching methods. For instance, Doctrine of the Mean can be seen on communications among people. Now, to some extent, where Chinese people stay or live, there will be Confucianism.

Historically speaking, Confucius (552-479) was a genius who stressed the need for mutual respect between the importance of people as a gentleman who cultivate the virtues and the necessities of the rulers to provide a good ethical example. It is important for Confucius, to practice five forms of relationship (with Li, courtesy, reverence, and the correct social and religious convention), ruler, and subject: father and son: husband and wife: eldest son and younger brothers: and the elders and the juniors. Let's study the Table between Buddhism and Confucianism with its facts and figures as follow:¹⁷³

Comparison between Buddhism and Confucianism

	Buddhism	Confucianism
Place of worship	Buddhist monasteries, temples, shrines.	Temple.
Practices	Meditation, the Eightfold Path; right view, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right	Visit to temples to pay homage to Ti'en(God or Heaven), Confucius, and ancestors; To practice

¹⁷³ De Bary, Wm Theodore, and Tu Weiming. "Confucianism and human rights." (1999).

	Buddhism	Confucianism
	concentration	('Jing zuo, ') or 'Quiet Sitting
Place of origin	Indian subcontinent	China
Goal of religion	To attain enlightenment and be released from the cycle of rebirth and death, thus attaining Nirvana.	To have a structured society.
Founder	The Buddha (born as Prince Siddhartha)	Kong Qiu (Confucius)
Use of statues and pictures	Common. Statues are used as meditation objects, and revered as they reflect the qualities of the Buddha.	Permitted.
Literal Meaning	Buddhists are those who follow the teachings of the Buddha.	Disciple of Confucius.
Life after death	Rebirth is one of the central beliefs of Buddhism. We are in an endless cycle of birth, death and re-birth, which can only be broken by attaining nirvana. Attaining nirvana is the only way to escape suffering permanently.	To be worshipped as ancestors.
Clergy	The Buddhist Sangha, composed of bhikkhus (male monks) and bhikkhunis (female nuns). The sangha is supported by lay Buddhists.	Bureaucrats.
Belief of God	The idea of an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent creator is rejected by Buddhists. The Buddha himself refuted the theistic argument that the universe was created by a self-conscious, personal God.	One God. Ancestors also worshipped, though.
Human Nature	Ignorance, as all sentient beings. In the Buddhist texts, it is seen that when Gautama, after his awakening, was asked	Humans should respect those who are superior to

	Buddhism	Confucianism
	whether he was a normal human being, he replied, "No".	them.
Status of women	No distinctions between men and women. Women are equal to men, and men are equal to women in the Sangha. The Buddha gave Men and Women equal rights and a major part in the Sangha.	Socially inferior to men.
View of the Buddha	The highest teacher and the founder of Buddhism, the all-transcending sage.	<u>Buddha</u> is followed by many Confucians.
Scriptures	Tripitaka - a vast canon composed of 3 sections: the Discourses, the Discipline and the Commentaries, and some early scriptures, such as the Gandhara texts.	Analects of Confucius and Mencius; I Ching; Doctrine of Mean, etc.
Concept of Deity	n/a. According to some interpretations, there are beings in heaven realms but they are also bound by "samsara". They may have less suffering but have not yet achieved salvation (nibbana)	Most believe in One God.
Followers	Buddhists	Confucianists
Original Language(s)	Pali(Theravada tradition) and Sanskrit(Mahayana and Vajrayana tradition)	Mandarin or Cantonese
Principle	This life is suffering, and the only way to escape from this suffering is to dispel one's cravings and ignorance by realizing the Four Noble Truths and practicing the Eightfold Path.	Confucianism all about the brotherhood of humanity.
Goal of Philosophy	To eliminate mental suffering.	Social Harmony.
Geographical distribution and	(Majority or strong influence) Mainly in Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India,	Asia.

	Buddhism	Confucianism
predominance	Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Japan, Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Vietnam, China, Mongolia, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Other small minorities exist in other countries.	
Holy days/Official Holidays	Vesak day in which the birth, the awakening, and the parinirvana of the Buddha is celebrated.	Chinese New Year, Teacher Day, Ancestor Day.
View of other Dharmic religions	Since the word Dharma means doctrine, law, way, teaching, or discipline, other Dharmas are rejected.	Confucianists usually follow Buddhism, which is a Dharmic religion.
Time of origin	2,500 years ago, circa 563 B.C.E. (Before Common Era)	Approx. 550 B.C.E.(Before Common Era)
Can atheists partake in this religion's practices?	Yes.	Yes.
Views on Other Religions	Being a practical philosophy, Buddhism is neutral against other religions.	Confucianists see no contradiction in following more than one religion.
What They Believe	The principle of equality: that all living entities are equal	Confucianism is a system of thought based on the teachings of Kong Zi, Master Kong

4.34: Taoism: Taoist (200 BCE)

Taoism is one of the belief systems existed in China. It has history of more than 1,800 years' and originated in the Warring Period and came into being in Eastern Han

Dynasty (25 - 220). According to Taoism, life must be lived in accordance with the way of nature (Tao). There are two main sections or types included in Taoism firstly, philosophical Taoism which proposes that repair the damage we do to life, by knowing about Tao and conserve the vitality of life rather than draining it out and secondly, popular or religious Taoism which stress on magic as a mean to unlock obstacles to higher power.

Taoism still has wider presence in China. This is attested by the fact that about 300 Taoist Temples are scattered around China, in which about 30 thousand Taoists lived in. Around 5 Taoist schools exist in the country.¹⁷⁴ In the 1,800 years, Taoism influenced the local culture deeply, especially on traditional medicine and literature. Based on some theories of alchemists such as Wei Boyang in Eastern Han Dynasty, different kinds of medicine prescriptions were created by Sun Simiao and many other doctors. In literature, many fictional characters are closely related with Taoism, such as the Jade Emperor. Apart from Mainland China, many Taoists live in Hong Kong, Macau and some foreign countries.

4.35: Comparative study on Taoism and Buddhism with its underlying concepts as; History

Buddhism finds its roots in Nepal at a time when religious and social turmoil was prevalent. A sect of people who shunned the traditions of the Brahminical religion followed the path led by Gautama Buddha. Indian Buddhism is categorized into five periods. Mauriya emperor Ashoka was a big supporter of this religion and put his efforts in spreading the Buddhist philosophies and ideologies. It spread to Central Asia and to Sri Lanka and eventually to China. Some forms of Taoism find its roots in Chinese prehistoric folk religions. Laozi is regarded as the founder of this philosophy

¹⁷⁴ Little, Stephen, et al. *Taoism and the Arts of China*. Univ of California Press, 2000.

and Taoism gained official status in China. Many Chinese emperors have been instrumental in spreading and propagating the teachings of this religion.

4.35.1: Underlying Concept

Buddhism as a religion believes in Karma and has unique spiritual, physical and metaphysical beliefs which are well grounded in logic, belief and meditation. Taoism is a philosophy of harmony with nature by way of use of principles like acceptance, simplicity, compassion, relying on experience, wuwei, living in the moment beside others.

4.35.2: Important Beliefs

The tradition and practice of Buddhism emphasizes the Three Jewels that include the Buddha, The Dharma and The Sangha. Buddhist ideologies vests on the Four Noble Truths (Life ultimately leads to suffering, suffering is caused by craving, suffering ends when craving ends and the liberated state can be reached by following the path etched by Buddha) and the Noble Eightfold path which when adhered to is believed to put an end to the suffering. And Ethics of Taoism lays stress on the Three Jewels of the Tao that include moderation, humility and compassion. Reverence for immortals and ancestor spirits is important in Taoism. Chinese alchemy, Feng shui, many Chinese martial arts, Zen Buddhism, Chinese traditional medicine and breath training find their roots in Taoism.

4.35.3: Branches

There are two major branches of Buddhism: Theravada is the School of the Elders and Mahayana is the Great Vehicle.¹⁷⁵ The former is the oldest surviving branch and is widely popular in Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka. Mahayana is popular in East Asia. Vajrayana is a sub category of Mahayana which is also accepted as the third branch.

¹⁷⁵ Rahula, Walpola. "Theravada-Mahayana Buddhism." *Gems of Buddhist Wisdom*. Kuala (1996).

Buddhism is recognized as the world's fourth largest religion. Livia Kohn categorized Taoism into three branches: a. Philosophical Taoism that is based on texts Zhuangzi and Dao De Jing, b. Religious Taoism that originated from the Celestial Masters movement, c. Folk Taoism that is the Chinese folk religion.

4.35.4: Ethics

Buddhism defines ethics as Sila which is the overall principle of ethical behavior. There exist five precepts in this religion that are pre-determined training rules to lead a happy and better life. These precepts include:

- refraining from violence / adherence to non-violence or ahimsa
- refraining from taking what is not given to one (committing theft)
- refraining from sexual misconduct
- refraining from the act of lying
- refraining from intoxicants that makes one lose his mind.

The basic ethics or virtues of Taoism are the Three Jewels or the Three Treasures: Compassion, Moderation and Humility that can also be referred to as kindness, simplicity or modesty.

4.35.6: Texts or Scripture

Buddhist scriptures are written in Pali, Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese languages. A few others include Sanskrit and Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit. There is no single central text that is referred to by all traditions.

Tao TeChing or Daodejing is the most influential Taoist text. The other Taoist texts include Zhuangzi, Daozang and a few other significant texts.

4.36: What is Zen?

It is one of the important forms of Buddhism which is the heart of the Japanese culture and broadly belongs to a school of Mahayana Buddhism. Zen is, first and foremost, a practice that was uninterruptedly transmitted from master to disciple, and that goes back to the Awakening of a man named Siddhārtha Gautama (Shakyamuni Gotama in Japanese) - The Buddha - 2500 years ago in India. Defining Zen is like trying to describe the taste of honey to someone who has never tasted it before. The same goes with Zen because Zen Buddhism is a practice that needs to be experienced, not a concept that you can intellectualize or understand with your brain.¹⁷⁶ The information that we'll give here won't cover all of what of Zen is, but is a starting point to the Zen experience.

Zen Buddhism is not a theory, an idea, or a piece of knowledge. It is not a belief, dogma, or religion; but rather, it is a practical experience. We cannot intellectually grasp Zen because human intelligence and wisdom are too limited - the dojo (the hall where Zazen is practiced) is different from the university. Zen Buddhism is not interested in metaphysical theories and rituals and focuses entirely on the mindful practice of Zazen. Zen is very simple. It is so simple, in fact, that it's very difficult to grasp. Zen is not a theory, an idea, or a piece of knowledge. It is not a belief, a dogma, or a religion...Zen is not a moral teaching, and as it is without dogma, it does not require one to believe in anything. A true spiritual path does not tell people what to believe in; rather it shows them how to think; or, in the case of Zen - what not to think.

4.36.1: Zen meditation

The practice of Zen meditation or Zen - za meaning sitting, and Zen meaning meditation in Japanese), is the core of Zen Buddhism: without it, this is no Zen. Zen

¹⁷⁶ Fromm, Erich, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, and Richard De Martino. "Zen Buddhism and psychoanalysis." (1960).

meditation, is a way of vigilance and self-discovery which is practiced while sitting on a meditation cushion. It is the experience of living from moment to moment, in the here and now. It is through the practice of Zen that Gautama got enlightened and became the Buddha. Zazen is an attitude of spiritual awakening, which when practiced, can become the source from which all the actions of daily life flow - eating, sleeping, breathing, walking, working, talking, thinking, and so on.

In the silence of the dojo or temple, quietly sit down, stop moving, and let go your thoughts. Focus just on your Zazen posture and your breathing. Keep your back straight. Let your ego and your unconscious mind melt away, merge with the universe. Along with comparison of Buddhism with several indigenous religions in Asian countries, the subsequent section compares Buddhism with other major established global religions however from the perspective of refuge.

4.37: A Brief Introduction to Christianity

Christianity happens to be widely practiced religions across the globe. The teachings of Christianity emanated from Jesus of Nazareth. He was a Jew who lived in Palestine approximately 2,000 years ago. He died as a criminal on a cross, but believed to have risen from the dead three days later. Jesus is the incarnation of God, and believed to be there is a God, who has been revealed in the person of Jesus the Christ, God is a trinity of three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirits. The mastery of the Trinity involves a separateness in a complete unity. For Christian, the scriptures are made up of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament. There is some agreement between Christians over the status of a small number of books called the Apocrypha.

Initially, Christianity was derived from Judaism, as Jesus Christ was a Jew, as were his twelve disciples. Christianity is based mainly around the life, death and

resurrection of Jesus Christ, and is monotheistic. Christians believe in the Bible being the word of God, and although some choose to take it more literally than others, it is generally considered to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.

4.38: Beliefs and Principles:

Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the anointed savior of the world and that his presence on earth was the fulfillment of the prophecies made in the Old Testament about the Messiah who was to come and save humanity from their sins. Human have a tendency toward selfishness, which God in Christ can overcome through the atonement.¹⁷⁷ At death God desire a relationship of love to develop for eternity in heaven. However, those who persist in selfishness will not be forced to respond. This is known as hell.

4.39: Differences between Buddhism and Christianity

Buddhism and Christianity were both founded by great Spiritual Masters who sought to offer a path to salvation however from different perspectives. The terminology they used was often quite different. Also given the different circumstances they incarnated in, they taught different paths and emphasized different approaches to spirituality. Neither the Buddha nor Jesus Christ wrote down their own teachings. In both cases, their teachings were written down many years after they had left the world. This gap between their teaching and the written version means there is always potential for error and misunderstanding of their teaching. Also, as the new religions developed they evolved in different ways.

Buddhism is centered upon the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha, whereas Christianity is centered on the Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ. Buddhism

¹⁷⁷ Manson, Thomas Walter. *The Teaching of Jesus: Studies of Its Form and Content*. CUP Archive, 1935.

is a non-theistic religion, i.e., it does not believe in a supreme creator being a.k.a. God. Christianity is a monotheistic religion and believes that Christ Is the Son of God.

Buddhists do not talk of a Creator God.¹⁷⁸ In Christianity the concept of God occupies a central state for all preaching. Buddhism emphasizes the endless cycle of birth and rebirth and the idea of reincarnation. Christianity teaches we have one life and one chance. God appears as a dispenser of Divine Justice; this is a concept largely absent in Buddhism.

4.40: Salvation and liberation

Christianity emphasizes the concept of ‘salvation’ comes through the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the savior. For those who trust in Jesus Christ and the way shown by him it is believed that gain eternal life in heaven. Buddhists have a different emphasis; they believe that an individual has to work for his personal liberation – a discipline that may take several lifetimes. A Buddhist believes that belief in the Buddha is not enough, in fact the seeker has to experience nirvana for himself. While Christianity offer refuge in the order and word of God, Buddhism offer refuge in self-realization by follow the teachings of the Buddha,

The following similarities between Buddhism and Christianity could be found:

1. Founded by Spiritual Master who accepted disciples.
2. Taught through the use of simple parables.
3. Both Jesus Christ and the Buddha sought to reform existing social / religious practices which had denigrated into ritualistic forms with no spiritual meaning. Christ criticized the money lenders in the temple. Buddha criticized the caste system and hypocrisy of the Brahmins.

¹⁷⁸ Rāhula, Walpola. What the Buddha taught. Vol. 641. Grove Press, 1974.

4. Both were egalitarians. Buddha accepted all castes into his sangha. Christ taught his philosophy was not just for a small race.
5. Shared values, the Five Precepts of Buddhism (abstention from killing, lying, stealing, sexual immorality) would be welcomed by most Christians.
6. Both religions stress ethical living, compassion / love to other people.
7. Both taught to overcome the forces of hate through the power of love. The Buddha 'hatred cannot be overcome by hatred' The Christ 'Love your enemy'
8. Like Buddhism, Christianity also encourages followers to take steps to improve their well-being. Like Christianity, Buddhism has a strong devotional aspect. This is characterized by faith in the Buddha. This is especially marked in traditions such as Pure Land Buddhism, which stresses prayer to the Buddha.
9. Both religions encourage its followers to be charitable towards the poor.
10. Both religions have both a monastic and lay approach. Though the monastic element is largely absent in contemporary Protestantism.
11. Both aspire to greater spiritual perfection. Though they may have different approaches they are both seeking a higher spiritual perfection.
12. Both seek to transcend the material world. They believe real happiness is to be gained from spiritual values and spiritual consciousness.
13. The Divine Consciousness. It is true the Buddha did not talk about God. He felt the Supreme Consciousness could never be expressed in words. But, Buddha did talk about the infinite peace, infinite light and infinite bliss of nirvana.¹⁷⁹

4.41: Islam and Refuge

Islam happens to be one of the important global religions. It has spread across globe and Muslim population spread to all most all countries of world. Islam as a faith and

¹⁷⁹ Theragatha Version, Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon,

practice was founded in the 6th century by a man called Mohammed.¹⁸⁰ The word Islam comes from Arabic word Al-Islam which means submission. It is a monotheistic religion believed in one God (Allah). All of its teachings and beliefs are written out in the Quran (also spelled Qur'an or Koran), the holy scripture of Islam. Believers and followers of Islam are called Muslims. They believe that the Quran was spoken to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel, and that it is the word of Allah. Muhammad is regarded as an important prophet. Other beliefs and rules about what Muslims Muhammad taught, or hadith. It is believed that for Muslims there were many other prophets before Muhammad since dawn of humanity, beginning with the Prophet Adam and including the Prophet Noah (Nuh), the Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim), the Prophet Moses (Musa), and the Prophet Jesus (Isa). They believe that all these prophets were given messages by God of the oneness of God to their communities at different times in history of mankind, but Satan made the past communities deviate from the message of oneness and other social codes. Muslims believe that the content of the Quran (written in Arabic) is protected by Allah as mentioned in the Quran and is the final message of God for all of mankind until the Day of Judgment.

The founder of Islam Mohammed was born in 570 A.D. in Mecca (in Arabia) and happened to be the son of an esteemed family. At that time the city of Mecca was a thriving city of trade upon the 'spice route' between Syria and India, and was therefore the centre-point for many different religious trends, e.g. Jews, Christians, and the Bedouinic religions. Mohammed, therefore, had the opportunity to get to know many different religions. Mohammed said to be of very contemplative person by nature from the beginning. He often went alone into the mountains and became

¹⁸⁰ Sayyid, Salman. *A fundamental fear: Eurocentrism and the emergence of Islamism*, Zed Books Ltd., 2015.

absorbed with religious problems (meditation). He was most impressed by the 'One God belief' of the Jews and Christians, in contrast to the belief in many gods of the Bedouins. It is believed that one day, during these meditations, the archangel Gabriel supposedly appeared unto him, and told him to write down all these revelations. They are now written down in the Koran, the holy book of the Muslims.

4.42: Teachings of Mohammed

Mainly encouraged by his wife Chadidscha, Mohammed soon announced the revelations of the archangel Gabriel in Mecca.¹⁸¹ In the due course of time he could find disciples there. But as Mohammed condemned idolatry which was common amongst traders, he was forced to flee to the city of Medina which was 350 kms away from Mecca. This happened in the year 622 A.D. In Medina, Mohammed was soon accepted as a political and religious leader. The date of migration, July 16th, 622 A.D. was declared the beginning of Islamic Chronology.

4.43: Mohammed's Fight for Acceptance

The disciples Mohammed found in Medina organized themselves into a military group which marched back into Mecca with Mohammed. In 630 A.D. Mohammed finally entered Mecca triumphantly after a short battle. He destroyed the idols, but pronounced the Kaaba, which according to heathen legends fell from the heavens as a black meteorite, as his main relic. Mohammed increasingly developed from being just a prophet to a general and politician. Mohammed died in 632 A.D. There was heavy fighting for his succession. The Kalif Abu Bekr became the victor of this struggle. From this time, Mohammed's successors have been called Kalifs (Arabic for successor).

¹⁸¹ Hale, William, and Ergun Ozbudun. Islamism, democracy and liberalism in Turkey: The case of the AKP. Routledge, 2009.

4.44: The Teachings of Islam

- a) Islam and Muslim believer believes in Allah and submit completely him/herself to Him. Mohammed declared that Allah was the highest and the only God and that Mohammed's words were the last divine revelation to mankind. They were written down in the Koran to complement the Bible. According to Mohammed, the Bible also declares the revelations of God, but not completely. Mohammed sees himself as the last and greatest of the prophets. He also recognized Jesus, but only as one of many prophets and not as the Son of God.
- b) Mohammed declared Mecca as the Holy City. Today, it is the spiritual centre of Islam. To go on a pilgrimage to Allah is a special privilege and duty of every Muslim. It is the duty of every Muslim to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his life-time, if the way is safe. The Kaaba, the main symbol of Islam, is also in Mecca.
- c) The teaching of Islam is simple, clear and life-accepting. In Islam the human is imperfect, and needs to be redeemed. Through faith and good works, he will be saved. There is a resurrection and judgment. The fate of the people is decided by Allah (Kismet).

4.44.1: The Commandments of Islam

The demands Mohammed put to the people were minimal. Every Muslim (the followers of Islam) has to keep to the most important ones:

- a) Confession to the only God.
- b) Praying to Mecca five times a day.
- c) Giving offerings.

- d) Fasting in the month of Ramadan.
- e) One pilgrimage in their life to Mecca.

In addition to these, there are some complementary demands in the Koran (e.g. the abstention from every unclean thing: pork, alcohol). The fasting in the month of Ramadan lasts from dawn until dusk. The law of Islam depends principally on the Koran.¹⁸²

4.44.2: Qur'an

The Al-Qur'an is the holy book of Islam and contained words of Allah and is conveyed to the Prophet Muhammad by the archangel Gabraeel, who had been tasked since Adam as the conveyor of the words of God as guidance to mankind. The Holy Quran is the central point of reference and is a link which connects humanity with God.

The Koran: The holy book of Islam is the Koran, which the believing Muslim reads only in the Arabic language. The Koran includes many biblical and Arabic traditions. The Koran describes Allah as the highest god who, as the judge on judgment day, rewards the good and punishes the bad. Paradise and hell are vividly represented in countless colorful pictures.

4.44.3: Beliefs and practices

The book of Qur'an is the holy instruction to Muslims. They believe it holds the revealed word of Allah. The Five Pillars of Islam as follows:

1. Tawheed: The Testimony (faith in English) is the core of the Muslim belief that there is no god but Allah himself, and that Muhammad is his last messenger.

¹⁸² Ali, Prophet Noble Drew. The Holy Koran. Lulu. com, 1975.

2. Salaat: Muslims expected to pray five times per day, at special times of the day. At the time of pray, they face Kaaba which is a large cubic structure located at the holy city of Mecca. Salat is essentially namaz in Persian, Turkish and Urdu. Shia Muslims can pray the afternoon and evening prayers right after each other.
3. Zakaat: It is mandated that Muslims who have money must give 1/40th of their money (charity in English) to help people who do not have money or need help.
4. Sawm or Siyam: Fasting during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic year. Muslims do not eat or drink from dawn till sunset for one lunar month. After Ramadan, there is a holiday called Eid al-Fitr (which means "festival of end-fast" in English). On Eid al-Fitr, Muslims usually go to the mosque in the morning for a special religious service, and then have a party with families and friends.
5. Hajj (Pilgrimage in English): During the month of Zulkaedah, the 12th month of the Islamic Calendar is the pilgrimage season where many Muslims go to Mecca, the holiest city of Islam. However, should a Muslim is financially unable to perform the Hajj, he or she is unnecessary to do so, as those who possess great financial capacity were the most obligated to perform the Hajj.

4.44.4: Place of worship

Muslims pray in a place of worship called the mosque. A mosque is called a masjid in Arabic, such as this located at Jerusalem. Most mosques were mostly recognized at least a single dome, and some have one or more towers. However, many mosques were built without either dome or towers. Muslims must take their shoes off before

entering the masjid to pray. Prayer is one of the most important things that a Muslim does.

4.44.5: Islam in the world

Most Muslims live in Asia and Africa. Around 62% of the world's Muslims live in Asia, with over 683 million followers in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. In the Middle East, non-Arab countries such as Turkey and Iran are the largest Muslim-majority countries; in Africa, Egypt and Nigeria have the biggest Muslim communities.¹⁸³

4.44.6: Two groups of Muslims

Most Muslims belong to two groups. The most common is Sunni Islam (71–80% of all Muslims are Sunni Muslims). The second is Shia Islam (10–20% of all Muslims are Shias – also called Shiites).¹⁸⁴ But there are also many more groups like the Alevis in Turkey. With about 1.8 billion followers (24% of the world's population), Islam is the second-largest religion in the world. Islam is also the fastest-growing religion in the world. The country Indonesia has most Muslim people in the world.

4.44.7: The Role of the Woman

Mohammed accepted the Arabic customs, but introduced some improvements to the benefit of women. For example, he limited the number of wives to a person to four. However, after the death of his wife Chadidscha, he himself had nine wives who he was allowed through a particular revelation. The fact that Islamic women had absolutely no rights for a long time, cannot be traced back to Mohammed's time, but to later Islamic legislators. Today, women are breaking away more and more from the

¹⁸³ Eickelman, Dale F., and Jon W. Anderson. *New media in the Muslim world: The emerging public sphere*. Indiana University Press, 2003.

¹⁸⁴ Kasrav, Amad. "On Islam And, Shiism." (1990).

shadow of the men. They succeed in stepping out in public in many Islamic countries, in the professions of science and politics. Often women can attend schools of further education, can take part in elections. In Islam, the husband can divorce his wife at any time, with or without her consent. He can forbid her to leave the house without his permission. If the husband is a Muslim, the children born in the marriage will automatically be Muslims. In court, the statement of one man is equal to that of two women. According to Islam, men should have more privileges than women (as they are responsible for them), because Allah endowed some people with advantages and these people were men. Righteous women should be obedient, faithful and discrete, so that Allah protects them. However, women whose attitude upsets men are to be withdrawn from, locked in their rooms and punished.

4.45: Comparative Study between Buddhism Overview and Islam Overview

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, or the Buddha, who renounced his royal heritage to find the cause of human suffering. When seated under the famous Bodhi tree, where he had been for several years, the Buddha attained enlightenment.

Islam was founded by the Prophet Muhammad, who believed to have received revelations from the Angel Gabriel. These revelations are collected in the Quran, which is the Muslim holy book. The core of Muslim theology is that there is only one God, eternal and indivisible, and that Muhammad was the last prophet of God.

4.45.1: Similarities

Buddhism and Islam are very far apart religiously, but there are some similarities. Both religions share a faith in their founder, believing that he has earned the authority to teach others about the most important things in life. The Buddha was revered for his knowledge and attainment of enlightenment, while Muhammad was beloved

because he was chosen by God to receive and interpret the Quran. Both religions also feature a set of ethical standards -- the Buddhist Eightfold Path and the Muslim Sharia.

4.45.2: Major Difference: God

While Muslims shape their entire lives around God -- praying to him, reading his words in the Quran and following his law in their daily lives -- Buddhists are unconcerned with the notion of a god. While a Muslim can pray to God and look to him for peace, a Buddhist can only rely on himself, wisdom and the teachings of the Buddha. Buddhists, however, should not be confused with materialist atheists, who do not believe in any transcendent reality.

A Muslim's goal is to live on, but a Buddhist's goal is to halt the cycle of life. Muslims hope for a positive judgment from God when they die, and the reward is entrance into eternal paradise -- a person is still who she was, but she is in a better place. For Buddhists, the ultimate goal is the exact opposite -- Buddhists seek to end what they believe is a never-ending cycle of birth and rebirth called reincarnation, and the only way to do this is by attaining enlightenment.

4.45.3: Eastern Religions vs. Western Religions

In studying world religions, there will inevitably be a difference in the types of religions that are in different areas. Typically, the world is divided into two areas when speaking of religions; those that are Eastern and those that are Western. There are few similarities between speaking of Western and Eastern religions other than there are some people who live in the western world and have Eastern religions, and there are those who live in the East and believe in Western religions. Both the Eastern

and Western world religions were greatly impacted throughout history, and there were many wars fought over religious influences across the world.

Eastern religions are typically described by those religions that are practiced in areas like China, India, Southeast Asia, and Japan. Eastern religions are also typically polytheistic, whereas typically Western religions are monotheistic in that only one God is worshipped. Western religions are those religions that are practiced in most other countries outside of the East. Just a few of the Eastern religions that are followed in India are Buddhism.

Buddhism is based on dharma where the goal is to liberate oneself from the suffering of the life. It was established in the 5th century BCE by the famous Siddhartha Gautama. Hinduism is based around the beliefs of dharma, samsara, karma, and moksha. It is one of the oldest religions in the world and bases its teachings around the Bhagavad Gita. Sikhism is the belief of preaching to enlightenment based on honesty, giving, and chanting for God. Jainism is based around the need to be pure, free of violence in all aspects of life.

East Asians also have many religions, such as; Shinto, Taoism, Confucianism, and another form of Buddhism. Taoism focuses on love, moderation, and humility in everyone who seeks to achieve enlightenment. Shinto focuses on divination, spirit possession, and the healing power of faith. Confucianism is based on merit, nobility, and rituals. Typically, Eastern religions are polytheistic, meaning that there is more than one God that is worshipped by the people.

Some of the religions that are practiced in the Western world include Christianity, Catholicism, Puritanism, Protestantism, Judaism, and Evangelicalism. The locations these religions are practiced depends upon their historical impact by

followers of particular religions. Western religions are not driven so much by certain principles and ideals, rather everyday good and bad behavior to reach Heaven.

There are many differences in Eastern and Western religions that are fitting to different people across the world. The commonality is that there is faith of some form in the belief that there is religion among people.

4.46: Summary:

1. Eastern and Western religions are different not only in that they are practiced in different areas of the world, but there are different religions in both areas.

2. Eastern religions are practiced in India, Southeast Asia, Japan, and China. Western religions are found in the Americas and throughout Europe. It is common to find people from eastern or western countries that practice religions from across the world.

3. Eastern religions include: Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Confucianism. Western religions include Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism, Puritanism, Judaism, and Evangelicalism. Eastern religions are polytheistic and Western religions are monotheistic.

4.47: How distinct are these major religions?

In looking at these major belief systems and their views of God, we find tremendous diversity:

Hindus acknowledge multitudes of gods and goddesses.

Buddhists say there are banyan tree spirit deity.

New Age followers believe they are God.

Muslims believe in a powerful but unknowable God.

Christians believe in a God who is loving and approachable.

The world's major religions (Hinduism, New Age, Buddhism, Islam, following Jesus Christ) are each quite unique. And of these one affirms that there is a personal, loving God who can be known, now in this life. Jesus Christ spoke of a God who welcomes us into a relationship with him and comes along side us as a comforter, counselor and powerful God who loves us.

In Hinduism a person is on their own trying to gain release from karma. In New Age a person is working at their own divinity. In Buddhism it is an individual quest at being free from desire. And in Islam, the individual follows religious laws for the sake of paradise after death. In Jesus' teaching, you see a personal relationship with a personal God -- a relationship that carries over into the next life.

This chapter attempted to present a comparison of religions of the world with Buddhism at one level and comparison within different sets of Buddhism at another level. This is however done from the perspective of taking refuge in the world of spirituality. This chapter also highlights the multiple ways in which different religions offer refuge to human beings and how such a refuge is different from that of Buddhism.

CHAPTER - V

TITLE OF CHAPTER: REFUGE IN MYANMAR AND BUDDHIST WAY OF LIFE

ABSTRACT OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter attempts to record the refuge in Myanmar and Buddhist way of the Theravada Buddhism. The main objective of this chapter is to acquire how Buddhism in daily life stay in peace and after becoming the Buddhist followers, way to conduct their acts and manners in accordance with Buddha's teachings.

CHAPTER - V

5.1: INTRODUCTION

Belief systems acquired prominence in social research in the last three decades. Religious studies as a field of academic study consider religion an overall social phenomenon in human life. Religious ethnology studies belief systems of each ethnic and religious group as a cultural characteristic in the development of each ethnic. This chapter deals with the way in which Buddhism evolved and practiced in Myanmar. This is done with particular reference to Buddhist perspective of refuge being practiced in Myanmar.

While narrating the Buddhist perspective of refuge in Myanmar this chapter touches upon the following aspects: Theravada Buddhist philosophy practiced in Myanmar, the procedural aspects of Buddhist belief system, Buddhism as base for socio-cultural and ethical systems of Myanmar and finally how Buddhism offer refuge in Myanmar in the domain of spirituality.

The general trend is that some social groups, on account of access to material and political power have constantly been trying to gain the upper hand in politics, business, social, religious and cultural conditions. For these reasons, different problems against the peace arise among the human beings. Ever since the dawn of civilization, the conflicts and problems have been arousing communities, among societies, countries and even among the members of family which is called the smallest society in the world. For twelve years till the Buddha gained the enlightenment, not only human beings but the divine beings too had been trying to seeking different ways for the strict application of the auspicious and principle things in order to be eradicated those problems which make the different beings suffer in

daily life. But the accurate way could not be found except for the Buddha for resolution of those problems like no medicine to cure the unknown diseases. That's why the roots of the problems have been kept hidden within beings and of course cannot be found easily without knowledge.¹⁸⁵

Refuge in Myanmar and Buddhist way is especially related to how and why Buddhists take refuge in the social welfare conception of the sermon delivered by Buddha in revealing these concepts and the way in which Buddhism influence the socio-cultural and ethical values of Myanmar. The concept of social welfare in Buddhist way highlights how Myanmar Buddhists take refuge in Buddhism as a communal religion and undertake several welfare programs. The Buddha preaches the concept of “Attahi attano natho” which means “self-reliance for self-liberation”. There are many discourses in His Dhamma teachings which vividly guide us to do ‘Parahita’ (altruism) good deeds for mankind with the pursuit of self-interest ‘Attahita’. Buddha himself as the Bodhisattha got strongly inspired and motivated by social welfare consciousness in his relentless endeavor to attain the enlightenment.¹⁸⁶

To gain the enlightenment which is an essential objective of every Buddhist, there are three ways proposed by the teachings of the Buddha. Those as follows:

- (1) Lokatha Cariya, the way of practice for the benefit of all sentient beings.
- (2) Nnatatha Cariya, the way of living practice the interest of all kits and friends.
- (3) Buddhatha Cariya, the way of practice for the sake of Himself to attain Buddha-hood.

¹⁸⁵ P. Lehar, *Militant Buddhism: Raise of Violence in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2018.

¹⁸⁶ J. Hornfield, *The Teachings of the Buddha*, Penguin, 2007.

Thus it can be viewed that social welfare in Buddhist way is the pillar of the top priority in taking refuge in Buddhism.¹⁸⁷ Buddhists in Myanmar learn the social welfare deeds, services and works from discourses by the Buddha as a part of socialization. For instance, Jataka stories teach us moral lessons to practice the teachings of the Buddha about the animation of material and spiritual good deeds, merits of communal services and social welfare works in common as Buddhist way that His kinship and friendship in previous existences increased the material and spiritual benefits from the social welfare deeds even the demerits suffered by the ones who were totally self-centered by their severe egoism going odds against communal services and social welfare for the sake of mankind.

5.2: Buddhist way of life in Myanmar

Generally, all Buddhists in Myanmar abide by in accordance with teachings delivered by the Buddha, aiming to Singala young man. The question of how the teachings of the Buddha are important for having health socialization can be demonstrated by the following information from the Singala sutta which is part of Buddhist literature.¹⁸⁸

Besides philosophical discourses, the Buddha also preached the practical code to his followers which are expected to be ethical guide for development of healthy individual and society. The ethical prescriptions of the Buddha can be captured from a legend recorded in the canon of Pali literature. The legend of the story as follows: on one time, the Buddha was staying near the town of Rajagaha at a place in the Bamboo Wood called the Squirrel's Feeding Place. Then, a young householder named Sigala get up early and set out from Rajagaha with newly washed dresses and hair. He was

¹⁸⁷ Gyatso, Kelsang, *Introduction to Buddhism: an explanation of the Buddhist way of life*. Tharpa Publications US, 2008.

¹⁸⁸ Thera, Narada. "Sigalovada Sutta: The Discourse to Sigala." *The Layperson's Code of Discipline* [on line] available from <http://www.accesstosight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn31.0.nara.html> [30January2019] (1996).

paying respect to the six directions: that is east, south, west, north, lower and upper. For the moment the Buddha robed himself in the early morning, took his alms bowl and robe and went to Rajagaha on alms round. On the way, he saw Sigala worshipping the six directions. Seeing this, the Buddha said to him: "Young man, why have you risen in the early morning and set out from Rajagaha to worship in such a way?"

"Dear Sir, my father on his deathbed advised me, 'My son, you must worship the directions'. So, dear sir, realizing, respecting, and holding sacred my father's request, I have risen in the early morning and set out from Rajagaha to worship in this way."

"But, young man, that is not how the six directions should be worshipped according to the discipline of the noble ones."

"Then how, dear sir, should the six directions be worshipped according to the discipline of the noble ones? I would appreciate it if you would teach me the proper way this should be done."

"Very well, young man, listen and pay careful attention while I tell you."

"Yes, dear sir," agreed Sigala

The Buddha said this:

"Young man, by abandoning the four impure actions, a noble disciple refrains from harmful deeds rooted in four causes and avoids the six ways of squandering wealth. So, these fourteen harmful things are removed. The noble disciple, now with the six directions protected, has entered upon a path for conquering both worlds, firmly grounded in this world and the next. At the dissolution of the body after death, a good rebirth occurs in a heavenly world.

"What four impure actions are abandoned? The harming of living beings is an impure action, taking what is not given is an impure action, sexual misconduct is an impure action, and false speech is an impure action. These four are abandoned." That is what the Buddha said.

Summing up in verse, the sublime teacher said:

"Harming living beings, taking what is not given,

False speech and pursuing the loved one of another:

These the wise surely do not praise."

"What are the four causes of harmful deeds? Going astray through desire, hatred, delusion, or fear, the noble disciple does harmful deeds. But, young man, not going astray through desire, hatred, delusion, or fear, the noble disciple does not perform harmful deeds."

That is what the Buddha said, summing up in verse, the sublime teacher said:

"Desire, hatred, delusion, or fear: Whoever transgresses the Dhamma by these has a reputation that comes to ruin, like the moon in the waning fortnight.

Desire, hatred, delusion, or fear:

Whoever transgresses not the Dhamma by these, has a reputation that comes to fullness,

Like the moon in the waxing fortnight."

"And what six ways of squandering wealth are to be avoided? Young man, heedlessness caused by intoxication, roaming the streets at inappropriate times, habitual partying, compulsive gambling, bad companionship, and laziness are the six ways of squandering wealth.

. "These are the six dangers inherent in heedlessness caused by intoxication: loss of immediate wealth, increased quarreling, susceptibility to illness, disrepute, indecent exposure, and weakened insight.

"These are the six dangers inherent in roaming the streets at inappropriate times: oneself, one's family, and one's property are all left unguarded and unprotected; one is suspected of crimes; then rumors spread; and one is subjected to many miseries.

"These are the six dangers inherent in habitual partying: You constantly seek, 'Where's the dancing? Where's the singing? Where's the music? Where are the stories? Where's the applause? Where's the drumming?'

"These are the six dangers inherent in compulsive gambling: winning breeds resentment; the loser mourns lost property; savings are lost; one's word carries no weight in a public forum; friends and colleagues display their contempt; and one is not sought after for marriage, since a gambler cannot adequately support a family.

"These are the six dangers inherent in bad companionship: any rogue, drunkard, addict, cheat, swindler, or thug becomes a friend and colleague.

"These are the six dangers inherent in laziness: saying, 'It's too cold,' one does not work; saying, 'It's too hot,' one does not work; saying, 'It's too late,' one does not work; saying, 'It's too early,' one does not work; saying, 'I'm too hungry,' one does not work; saying, 'I'm too full,' one does not work. With an abundance of excuses for not working, new wealth does not accrue and existing wealth goes to waste."

That is what the Buddha said.

Summing up in verse, the sublime teacher said:

1. "Some are drinking friends,
Some say, 'Dear friend! Dear friend!' But whoever in hardship stands close by,

That one truly is a friend. Sleeping late, adultery, Hostility, meaninglessness,
Harmful friends, utter stinginess: These six things destroy a person.

Bad friends, bad companions,

Bad practices — spending time in evil ways,

By these, one brings oneself to ruin,

In this world and the next things

Seduction, gambling, drinking, singing, dancing,

Sleeping by day, wandering all around untimely,

Harmful friends, utter stinginess:

These things destroy a person.

They play with dice; they drink spirits;

They consort with lovers dear to others.

Associating with low-life and not the esteemed,

They come to ruin like the waning moon.

Whoever is a drunkard, broke, and destitute,

Dragged by thirst from bar to bar,

Sinking into debt like a stone in water

Into bewilderment quickly plunges.

When sleeping late becomes a habit

And night is seen as time to rise,

For one perpetually intoxicated,

A home life cannot be maintained.

'Too cold! Too hot!

Too late!': they say.

Having wasted work time this way,

The young miss out on opportunities.

For one regarding cold and hot

As not more than blades of grass,

Doing whatever should be done,

Happiness will not be a stranger."

The Buddha further said that: "Young man, be aware of these four enemies disguised as friends: the taker, the talker, the flatterer, and the reckless companion.

"The taker can be identified by four things: by only taking, asking for a lot while giving little, performing duty out of fear, and offering service in order to gain something.

"The talker can be identified by four things: by reminding of past generosity, promising future generosity, mouthing empty words of kindness, and protesting personal misfortune when called on to help.

"The flatterer can be identified by four things: by supporting both bad and good behavior indiscriminately, praising you to your face, and putting you down behind your back.

"The reckless companion can be identified by four things: by accompanying you in drinking, roaming around at night, partying, and gambling."

That is what the Buddha said.

Summing up in verse, the Buddha said:

"The friend who is all take,

The friend of empty words,

The friend full of flattery,

And the reckless friend;

These four are not friends, but enemies;

The wise understand this
And keep them at a distance
As they would a dangerous path"

The Buddha also further said to the Young man that to be aware of these four good-hearted friends: the helper, the friend who endures in good times and bad, the mentor, and the compassionate friend.

The helper can be identified by four things: by protecting you when you are vulnerable, and likewise your wealth, being a refuge when you are afraid, and in various tasks providing double what is requested.

The enduring friend can be identified by four things: by telling you secrets, guarding your own secrets closely, not abandoning you in misfortune, and even dying for you.

The mentor can be identified by four things: by restraining you from wrongdoing, guiding you towards good actions, telling you what you ought to know, and showing you the path to heaven.

The compassionate friend can be identified by four things: by not rejoicing in your misfortune, delighting in your good fortune, preventing others from speaking ill of you, and encouraging others who praise your good qualities."

That is what the Buddha said.

Summing up in verse, the sublime teacher said:

The friend who is a helper,
The friend through thick and thin,
The friend who gives good counsel,
And the compassionate friend;
These four are friends indeed,
The wise understand this

And attend on them carefully,
Like a mother her own child.
The wise endowed with virtue
Shine forth like a burning fire,
Gathering wealth as bees do honey
And heaping it up like an ant hill.
Once wealth is accumulated,

The component of family constitutes an important part in human history which provides a basic unit of society. Buddha has some useful advice to his followers. These advices narrated in the following section.

By dividing wealth into four parts,
True friendships are bound;
One part should be enjoyed;
Two parts invested in business;
And the fourth set aside
Against future misfortunes"

And how, young man, does the noble disciple protect the six directions? These six directions should be known: mother and father as the east, teachers as the south, spouse and family as the west, friends and colleagues as the north, workers and servants as the lower direction, and ascetics and Brahmans as the upper direction. "In five ways should a mother and father as the eastern direction be respected by a child: 'I will support them who supported me; I will do my duty to them; I will maintain the family lineage and tradition; I will be worthy of my inheritance; and I will make donations on behalf of dead ancestors.'

The Buddha said that the mother and father so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: by restraining you from wrongdoing, guiding you towards good actions, training you in a profession, supporting the choice of a suitable spouse, and in due time, handing over the inheritance. In this way, the eastern direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

In five ways should teachers as the southern direction be respected by a student: by rising for them, regularly attending lessons, eagerly desiring to learn, duly serving them, and receiving instruction. And, teachers so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: by training in self-discipline, ensuring the teachings are well-grasped, instructing in every branch of knowledge, introducing their friends and colleagues, and providing safeguards in every direction. In this way, the southern direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

In five ways should a wife as the western direction be respected by a husband: by honoring, not disrespecting, being faithful, sharing authority, and by giving gifts.

Similarly, the wife so respected reciprocates with compassion in five ways: by being well-organized, being kindly disposed to the in-laws and household workers, being faithful, looking after the household goods, and being skillful and diligent in all duties. In this way, the western direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

In five ways should friends and colleagues as the northern direction be respected: by generosity, kind words, acting for their welfare, impartiality, and honesty. And, friends and colleagues so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: by protecting you when you are vulnerable, and likewise your wealth, being a refuge when you are afraid, not abandoning you in misfortunes, and honoring all your descendants. In this way, the northern direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

In five ways should workers and servants as the lower direction be respected by an employer: by allocating work according to aptitude, providing wages and food, looking after the sick, sharing special treats, and giving reasonable time off work. And, workers and servants so respected reciprocate with compassion in five ways: being willing to start early and finish late when necessary, taking only what is given, doing work well, and promoting a good reputation. In this way, the lower direction is protected and made peaceful and secure.

In five ways should ascetics and Brahmans as the upper direction be respected: by kindly actions, speech, and thoughts, having an open door, and providing material needs. And, ascetics and Brahmans so respected reciprocate with compassion in six ways: by restraining you from wrongdoing, guiding you to good actions, thinking compassionately, telling you what you ought to know, clarifying what you already know, and showing you the path to heaven. In this way, the upper direction is protected and made peaceful and secure."

That is what the Buddha said. Summing up in verse, the sublime teacher said: "Mother and father as the east, Teachers as the south, Spouse and family as the west, Friends and colleagues as the north, Servants and workers below, Brahmans and ascetics above; These directions a person should honor in order to be truly good.

Wise and virtuous, Gentle and eloquent, Humble and accommodating; such a person attains glory. Energetic, not lazy, not shaken in misfortune, Flawless in conduct, and intelligent; such a person attains glory.

A compassionate maker of friends, Approachable, free from stinginess, a leader, a teacher, and diplomat; such a person attains glory. Generosity and kind words, Conduct for others' welfare.

Impartiality in all things; these are suitable everywhere. These kind dispositions hold the world together, like the linchpin of a moving chariot. And should these kind dispositions not exist,

When all was said, the young householder, Sigala, exclaimed to the Buddha. He replied in the following words:

"Wonderful, dear sir! Wonderful! It is as though you have set upright what was overturned, or uncovered what was concealed, or shown the path to one gone astray, or brought an oil-lamp into the darkness such that those with eyes could see. So too has the Buddha made clear the Dhamma by various ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha and to the Dhamma and to the monastic community. May the exalted one accept me as a lay-follower gone for refuge from henceforth for as long as I live." ¹⁸⁹

The reason for such a lengthy discussion was devoted in the preceding paragraphs for two reasons: firstly, to present the useful teachings of the Buddha to his followers aimed at promoting individual progress and social harmony and secondly to demonstrate how such teachings are relevant to the Buddhists in Myanmar as well as in different countries. In Myanmar, most of the Buddhists follow the practice of the Sigalovada Sutta in which social obligation, between the members of the family and the members of the community, was prescribed by the Buddha. There are many duties or many obligations meant to between husband and wife, between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, between teacher and pupils, students, between master and servants, between monk and disciples, between Monarch and his subjects, etc. Thus with regards to the practice of the Sigalovada Sutta, everyone of Myanmar Buddhists is obliged to get these social duties or

¹⁸⁹ Thera, Narada. "Sigalovada Sutta--the Layman's Code of Discipline."

obligations done as should be since each of them is socially bound to the family and the community.

Further the teachings of the Buddha could also be seen in the Mingala Sutta. There, as above mentioned, Buddhist preached this Mingala Sutta not all for Buddhist alone but all for all sentient beings regardless of gender, creed, race, and religion. The Buddha emphasizes anyone who observes and practices 38 Ways of Mingala Sutta, Code of conduct in daily social welfare works and services shall gain an enjoyment of getting happy mundane life then free from all worries, anxieties even immune from all harms and dangers.

The Practice of Mingala Sutta as Refuge for social, business and political affairs is critical for the people in Myanmar. There is vital for Buddhists to exercise the aspect of the spectrum of Mingala Sutta which is clearly prescribed as way of practicing and way of following social welfare concept by the Buddha. The Mingala Sutta comes into being in order to gain merits in the name of Eleven Sutta discourses.¹⁹⁰ As an essential module in Myanmar Monastic education, the Mingala Sutta runs functioning 38 ways of Buddhism to conduct religious social welfare work of beatitude. 38 Ways of Mingala Sutta, Code of conduct or 38 Ways of Blessing. Auspiciousness stand still practicing as following featured;

1. To not associate with the foolish
2. To associate with the wise men
3. To honor the ones being worth of honor
4. To dwell in a proper shelter
5. To have done good deeds since in the past
6. To set oneself with strenuous effort on the right course

¹⁹⁰ Morris, Richard, and E. Hardy. "Anguttara Nikaya, 5 vols." London: Pali Text Society 1900 (1885).

7. To acquire wide yawn-deep knowledge
8. To get proficiency in technology, art and craft
9. To be cultivated in discipline
10. To speak what is good, pleasant and true
11. To care and support the parents' need
12. To care and support the children' need
13. To earn right livelihood with no complicated matter and without demerits
14. To do act of charity
15. To have law been abided by
16. To lend a helping hand to one's relatives
17. To make blameless actions mainly dealt with social and welfare services
18. To steer clear away from evil
19. Top abstain from such five evils as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, falsehood and intoxication
20. Top abstain from intoxications
21. To neglect not in doing good deeds and merits
22. To be respectful
23. To be modest
24. To be contented
25. To be grateful
26. To listen to Buddha Universal Dhamma very often
27. To be tolerant
28. To be amenable to advice
29. To see often through the monkhood, Samanas
30. To occasionally and frequently talk about Dhamma

31. To practice austerity
32. To practice purity in mind
33. To try to gain the perception of the Ariya (Saint) Truths
34. To realize the deliverance from all sufferings named Nivarana through Asahalta-phala
35. To get the sense that an Arahat's mind is unshaken when it happens to be touched by pain and pleasure
36. To gain insight of mind being free from sorrow
37. To gain insight of mind being pure and secure
38. To realize those who have fulfilled these things are invisible everywhere, safe and happy anywhere

The aforementioned ideals are prescribed to Buddhists of Myanmar. The careful observation on them reveal the fact that such principles were designed mainly to create a society and individual free from fear, and capable of becoming a good agent of healthy society.¹⁹¹

5.3: The goal of Buddhism

The main objective of a Buddhist is to escape from all worldly sufferings, carvings and sensual pleasures of the mundane life through the practice of the Four Noble Truths and by following the real habit of the Eightfold Noble Paths guided by the Buddha to achieve the goal of Nivarna as an eternal Supra-mundane peace.¹⁹² As for the sentient being as in the mundane world, no one survives in an island because we are communal creatures. As such, we are social creatures bound by social communal obligations. Before going to attain Nivarna, Buddha had preached us many Suttas by

¹⁹¹ Sayadaw, Myaing Gyi Ngu. "Question and Answer on Mingala Sutta." English version by U Than Htun (Shwebo).

¹⁹² Sumedho, Ajahn. "The four noble truths." (1992): 70.

touching social communal aspects of the mundane life. So if not all but majority of Myanmar Buddhists attempt to adhere the social and communal aspects that are being prescribed of Buddhism. The Myanmar Buddhists try to revive Buddhism through the regular processes of learning, memorizing and imparting its discourses to the posterities and cultivating the practice in day-in and day-out.

5.4: Conveying the knowledge of Buddhism from generation to generation

Generally, all venerable monks and nuns in Myanmar impart the knowledge of Buddhism assumed as their religious and social obligation from generation to generation by preaching and propagating the teachings of Dharma. Although they all have renounced their worldly mundane life, they hand the religious and social welfare services down to the Buddhist community or their generation. With respect to this, the locality of the Buddhist community and their generations realize the beauty of religious social welfare services and communal aspects of Buddha, Dharma and His Sangha by offering the monks and nuns as Alms-food, Robes, Shelter and medicine since looked like Buddha lifetime. Therefore, Buddhists consider that State, Palace, Monastery, Government and Sangha become independent for the welfare of the people. Traditionally Buddhists call Kyaung, esp. monastery for monks or the residence for monks and nuns, in which monks or nuns teach disciples and laity.¹⁹³ In the aspect, the first priority favors the understanding of Buddhism, its literacy then learning literacy, numeracy, way of Buddhist ethics mainly functions of the Buddhist monks and nuns as a must in Myanmar.

Whereas monks and nuns have to teach, guide and instruct morals in Buddhist way of life to both young and adult alike apart from imparting religious secular

¹⁹³ Gil, Sylwia. The role of monkhood in contemporary Myanmar society. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung [Internat. Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, Ref. Asien und Pazifik], 2008.

knowledge and even giving literacy, and numeracy education. Each generation is trained in the cultivation of the seeds of taming character, behavior, manner, and social etiquettes and training civics, social duties, services, community based social welfare and so on. Much respected as literati turned regarded and held in high esteem to the products of monastic schooling in the olden days. That was why; a lot of learned scholars from there were employed in the royal services then some of them rising to become State Counselors and Ministers. It is also noted that every Myanmar monarch got graduated from monastic schooling education.¹⁹⁴

5.5: Social Welfare in Buddhist way

There, as above mentioned, Buddhist preaching from the Mingala Sutta not all for Buddhist alone but all for all sentient beings regardless of gender, creed, race, and religion. The Buddha emphasizes anyone who observes and practices 38 Ways of the Mingala Sutta, Code of conduct in daily social welfare works and services shall gain an enjoyment of getting happy mundane life then free from all worries, anxieties even immune from all harms and dangers.

5.6: Buddhist Way of life in Myanmar

The expression of the Buddhist way of life in Myanmar implies the Buddhist attitude toward life, in every Buddhist household whether it is grand or humble, there has a certain corner or attic or shrine usually higher daily devotion. A Buddhist whether he or she is average or devoted commonly and usually offers alms-food, flowers, water, and candles, incense and even pay homage to and recite certain devotional verses in Pali by Myanmar to the Buddha at least once a day.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ Lorch, Jasmin. "The (re)-emergence of civil society in areas of state weakness: the case of education in Burma/Myanmar." *Dictatorship, disorder and decline in Myanmar* (2008): 151-176.

¹⁹⁵ Grubb, Norton W. "Lessons from education and training for youth: five precepts." *Preparing youth for the 21st century: The transition from education to the labour market* (1999): 363-383.

For a Buddhist to be taken for granted, he or she takes a vow to get the habit of the Five Precepts as a Daily devotion before the image of Buddha for traditionally and usually Myanmar Buddhists bear the Five Precepts and its consequences in a Buddha way of life. Here explains the exposition to Five Precepts and Its Consequences in details;

5.7: Moral Conduct for a lay Buddhist

The five precepts are the fundamental moral conduct for a layperson in Buddhism, through which bodily and verbal actions are controlled. The five precepts provide good qualities of life such as prosperities, grace, courage, mindfulness and birth in the happy states after death. Individual and social harmonies also depend on it. There are many kinds of moral precepts: namely- the five precepts, the eight precepts, the ten precepts and the fourfold purity of monastic moral precepts etc. Of these, the five precepts which is fundamental moral conduct for every Buddhist layperson would have been studied from canonical point of view. The original Pali word of five precepts is Pañca Sīla. Here, Sīla means restraint in physical and verbal actions. It means purity in thought, word and deed. The two basic helpful foundations for moral precept (Sīla) are hirī (shame to evil) and Ottappa (fear to do evil). These two causes are the proximate ones to get moral restraint or discipline in moral life. Although there are many kinds of Sīla given by the lord Buddha, on the whole, it is of two kinds: Cāritta Sīla, fulfilling the moral codes prescribed by the Buddha and Vāritta Sīla refraining from immoral conducts prohibited by the Buddha.¹⁹⁶

5.8: Caritta Sīla

The concept of Cāritta Sīla means certain obligations that must be fulfilled by Buddhist community. In Buddhist ethical world, certain moral obligations are incumbent on one

¹⁹⁶ C. Humphreys, *The Buddhist way of Life*, Mandala, 1980.

such as paying respect, welcoming, making obeisance, showing reverence, attending on one's elders, who may be senior in age or in status and not behaving rudely before the Bhikkhus, teachers and parents. Every Buddhist lay person is to fulfill them. Such fulfillment is called Cāritta Sīla. Furthermore, fulfilling the duties of parents, sons, daughters, teachers, pupils, wives and husbands etc shown in the Singalovāda Sutta also mean Cāritta Sīla.

A person who is endowed with conviction (Saddhā) and effort (Vīriya) can follow the practice of Cāritta Sīla. Here, conviction means believing that one who practices Cāritta Sīla will enjoy its benefits because it is good practice. Effort means making a vigorous attempt to overcome laziness and to keep up the practice of moral conduct patiently. Only when a person can practice the moral conduct out of conviction and effort, can one be called a person who is fully endowed with Cāritta Sīla.

5.9: Vāritta Sīla

The concept of Vāritta Sīla means avoiding immoral conduct or demeritorious actions that the lord Buddha prohibited. Abstaining from immoral conducts and observing the five moral precepts constantly can lead one who follows it to Nibbāna. Whereas, committing evil conduct can really lead one who commits it to Apāya-neither abode. Therefore, constant observance of the five precepts, etc. should be fulfilled through abstention (Virati)

5.10: Three kinds of abstention

Virati means abstaining from evils in deed and speech. In keeping the moral precepts well, Virati plays an important role. Virati is of three kinds which are as follows.

(1) Abstention from three physical evil actions: telling falsehood, slandering harsh speech, idle talk not relating to livelihood is called MicchāvācāVirati.

(2) Abstention from three physical evil actions: killing, stealing, committing sexual misconduct not relating to livelihood is called MicchāākammantaVirati.

(3) Abstention from three physical evil actions and four verbal evil actions mentioned above relating to livelihood is called MicchājivaVirati.

There are three practical aspects of each three kinds of Virati mentioned above. They are

- (1) Sampatta virati
- (2) Samadana virati
- (3) Samuccheda virati¹

SamādānaVirati means undertaking to observe five or eight or nine moral precepts before the Buddha image or a Bhikkhu and refraining from doing evil actions.¹⁹⁷ For example, if a person get a chance to kill an animal but spare it because he or she has taken the precept of abstention from killing, it is called Samādāna Virati. It also means that a person has made up one's mind not to do any evil before he or she actually encounters evil and refrains from doing evil actions.

Once, there was a layman who, after taking precepts from a Bhikkhu, went to the fields to search for his lost cow. While he was ascending a hillock, a big python entwined his legs. As he was about to kill the snake with his sword, he remembered he had taken Sīla (precepts) from his teacher and thought "I shall accept death. I shall not take other's life. Breaching of moral precepts resembles destroying the Dhamma it is best for me to give up my life." So he did not harm the snake and dropped his sword.

¹⁹⁷ Sayādaw, Ledi. The manuals of Buddhism. Rangoon, Burma: Union Buddha Sasana Council, 1965.

Then, he reflected on the moral precepts he was observing. Due to the power of Sīla, the snake let him free and went away.

Like that lay person, everyone should keep the moral precepts at the risk of one's life and give up one's life instead of breaching one's moral precepts. There is no question about giving away one's property and dignity for the sake of keeping one's morality. The invisible good results always exist behind every relinquishment.

Sampatta virati means instantaneously refraining from committing evil actions when one is confronted with the cause and the object for committing evil actions.

Once in **Sri Lanka**, a youth named Cakkana was tending to his sick mother whose physician recommended the fresh meat of a rabbit as a cure. So the youth went into the forest in search of a rabbit. He caught a small one in a paddy field. When he was about to kill it, he suddenly felt pity for the timid or frightened animal and set it free. When he was back home, he told his sick mother the incident and then made a solemn utterance; "Ever since I came to know what was right and what was wrong, I had never taken the life of any living being with a will to do so".¹⁹⁸

Due to this solemn truth, his mother recovered from her ailment as if the illness was removed and thrown away from her. In this incident, the youth had not observed any Sila beforehand. But at the time he caught the rabbit, instant compassion made him refrain from killing. This is a case of Sampatta Virati.¹⁹⁹ The abstention that is associated with Maggacitta(Path consciousness) is called Samucceda Virati, because when Magga-citta is attained, the abstention at that moment is for the sake of total cutting off of moral defilements.

When a poisonous tree together with its roots was ground into powder and burnt to ashes, it will no longer produce any fruits. In the same way, noble persons

¹⁹⁸ Byron, Thomas. *The dhammapada: The sayings of the Buddha*, Random House, 2010.

¹⁹⁹ The Dhammapada, Oxford University Press, 1987.

(Ariyas) are free from immoral actions all times because they have eradicated all defilements through Samucceda pahāna. Even a stream-winner (sotāpanna) needs not specially observe the five precepts in this life as well as in his next existence. The moral precepts have already been established in him forever.

5.11: Impurity and purity of Sīla

In observing the five precepts, if the first or last precept is breached, the Sīla is said to be broken, if one of the middle precepts is breached, the Sīla is said to have a hole in it. If alternate precepts are breached, the Sīla is said to be spotted. If two or three precepts are breached in a row at the beginning, the middle or the end, the Sīla is said to be striped. These broken, punctured, spotted and striped Sīla are impure Sīla.

Sīla that is unbroken, intact, spotless and unstriped is pure morality. It is called Bhujissa Sila because it can lead one to liberation from slavery to craving (tanhā). It is also called Vinnupasattha Sīla because it is praised by the wise. It is also called Aparāmattha Sīla” because it is devoid of strong desire to gain the great wealth and happiness of human beings or devas and devoid of bigoted belief that one can realize Nibbāna by mere moral practice. Therefore, Sīla that is unbroken, intact, spotless, unstrained, able to resist craving, praised by the wise and untarnished by craving and wrong view is the pure morality.

Sīla endowed with these seven factors is conducive to concentration of mind. Therefore, one who wants to develop concentration must exert oneself to be endowed with these seven factors. One should safeguard the moral precepts well just like a female pheasant safeguarding her eggs at the risk of her life. Or just like a yak safeguarding its feather at the risk of its life, or just like a person who has one and only son or daughter looks after him or her tenderly and fondly, or just like one whose one eye is blind safeguarding the remaining eye.

5.12: The Five Precepts-Pañca Sīla

The five precepts prescribed in the Pālicanon for every lay Buddhist are:

- (1) Abstaining from killing a living being
- (2) Abstaining from taking what is not given
- (3) Abstaining from sexual misconduct
- (4) Abstaining from telling lies
- (5) Abstaining from taking intoxicants

5.13: First Precept

The first of the five Precepts is to refrain from killing a living being. Killing of any living being with intention means a breach of the first precept of non-killing. By observing the first precept of non-killing, we save the lives of one, two, three and other countless beings. Sīla ensures the safety of all living beings and augments the flourishing of Metta, karunā, and Muditā towards all living beings. Thus the world will become a more auspicious peaceful and enjoyable abode where all sentient beings will live happily ever after.

Suppose, if a man is killing living being, the victim will suffer terribly. All beings are crying, shaking in fear of death. If we observe this first precept, we save their lives, make them happy and give them freedom. They will live peacefully and harmoniously in the world.

However, some people are killing living beings. The worst thing is that people are fighting and killing each other, waging civil wars, regional wars and world wars where many people die, some become handicapped, some homeless. In some countries people kill each other claiming “ethnic cleansing”. Actually these unpleasant things are created by people who ignore the first precept of abstaining from killing living beings.

Motivated by anger and hatred, they kill. They should control their anger in order to keep this precept by cultivating loving kindness and compassion. Moreover, they should reflect on universal law of kamma, the law of action and reaction. According to this law, if one kills others, he will be killed in this life or in the next life. If he abstains from killing, he will have advantages such as being healthy and having longevity of life.

5.14: Five factors of the first Precept

There are five factors of the first Sīla, which are able to make a decision whether it is Panātipāta Kamma or not. Which are-

- (1) The one to be killed is a living being
- (2) One knows that the one to be killed is a living being.
- (3) One has the volition to kill.
- (4) One makes the effort to kill.
- (5) The being dies because of that effort and action.²⁰⁰

Any action performed in accordance with the above five factors is called Panātipāta Kamma. The penetrator will suffer the bad consequences in this life and he will also be reborn in the four miserable realms after his death.

If anyone of the above five factors is missing, the action can't be called Panātipāta Kamma. For instance, if one steps accidentally on insects and kills them as one walks along the road, one does not commit Panātipāta Kamma because this incident happens unintentionally. It is just a demeritorious action. For this action, although the penetrator will not be reborn in miserable realms, he may suffer the evil consequences of his demeritorious action commensurately.

²⁰⁰ Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma--the Abhidhammattha Sangaha of Acariya Anuruddha (introduction only)*. Buddhist Publication Society, 1993.

5.15: The consequences of killing living beings

Whosoever kills any living being will be reborn in one of the four lower abodes after death. Even when he is freed from there and is again reborn as a man, he will encounter the following evil consequences:

- (1) Having physical deformities and disfigurements,
- (2) Being ugly,
- (3) Being pale and feeble
- (4) Being dull and inactive
- (5) Being easily frightened when confronted with danger
- (6) Being killed by other or facing death in youth,
- (7) Suffering from many diseases
- (8) Having few friends and
- (9) Being separated from beloved ones.

The consequences of killing a living being may be great or small depending on different situations. According to the size and moral virtue of the victim, the consequences may be great or small. With regard to animals naturally, lacking in morality, if the size of the animal is small, the consequence is small; if the size of animal is large, the consequence is great. With regard to human beings, if the victim is of low morality, concentration and wisdom, the consequence is small, if the victim is of high morality, high concentration and great wisdom, the consequence is great. Where the victims are of equal size and of equal morality, the consequence is small if the killer's motive and effort are weak, and the consequence is great if the killer's motive and effort are strong.

5.16: The Benefits of abstaining from killing

A person who abstains from killing any living being will be reborn after his death in a good destination either as a human being or as a celestial being. If he is reborn as a man he will possess good health, longevity etc. All living beings are afraid of death. No one wants to have a headache. Physical pain and lack of organs are the consequences of torturing and killing living beings. So everyone should refrain from torturing and killing others by being considerate to them. On the other hand, the one who abstains from killing living beings will enjoy the benefits which are the opposites of the consequences of killing living beings.

5.17: The story illustrating the consequence of killing living beings

Once, a housewife went to the market to buy meat in order to feast a special guest. As she could not get meat from any place she killed a little sheep which was bred in her house. The guest and her husband were very satisfied with the meat. But when she died, she was cast into hell where she had to suffer for a long time. After that, she was born as an animal as many times as the number of hair on the little sheep she had killed. In every animal life, she was killed being cut at the throat as she had killed the little sheep.

5.18: Second Precept and Its Consequences

The second precept is Adinnādāna Virati. It means abstaining from taking what is not given. Taking other's things without asking for permission of owner and taking other's properties by force or by cheating or by trick or by trading with false weight, false measuring basket, or false scale or adulteration are Adinnadanakamma.

If everyone observes this precept, we could keep our house open and unlocked. We wouldn't need the police for our security. Nevertheless, there are some

people who violate it, and we live under heavy security forces. Reflecting on world history in the nineteenth century, some powerful countries colonized other countries. Their policy was obviously against this precept. The colonial countries lived unhappily under imperial countries because they had lost their country, their culture, their civil rights and their nationality. They did not have freedom and were oppressed in many ways. About a hundred years ago, the English took over our country, Myanmar and dethroned royal king, Sibaw. Since then, the country has suffered for many years without independence. Countries often ruled by corrupted governments become poor. The government officials put the revenues of tax- payers into their own pockets without using them for the welfare of their country. People, therefore, suffer from a shortage of basic needs such as food, medicine, electricity, water, communication and transportation.

People also violate this moral precept because of their extreme greed which motivates them to do corrupt acts. They should try to control greed in order to keep the precept of abstaining from stealing. In order to control greed, they should reflect on the disadvantages of stealing as mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures.

5.19: Five factors embedded in the second precept

- (1) The thing stolen is possessed by other.
- (2) One knows that it is other's property.
- (3) One has the intention to steal it.
- (4) One makes bodily or verbal actions and effort to steal it.

Any action accompanied by these five factors is called Adinnādāna kamma.

5.20: The consequences of taking what is not given

Buddhism believes that the one who commits stealing will suffer evil consequences in this life and he will also be reborn in Apaya-lower abodes when he dies. Even when he

is freed from there and is again reborn as a man, he will encounter the following evil consequences:²⁰¹

- (1) Being poor
- (2) Having bodily and mental suffering
- (3) Being tortured by hunger and starvation³
- (4) Having unfulfilled wishes
- (5) Having unstable and easily perishable fortune
- (6) Having properties destroyed by the five enemies, namely, food, fire,

thieves, bad inheritors and bad rulers.

The consequence of theft may be grave or minor depending on the morality and virtue of the owner and the value of the stolen properties. Stealing things from the one who is endowed with morality and virtue is a grave consequence whereas stealing things from one who lacks morality and virtue is a minor consequence. If the stealing thing is of less value, the consequence of theft is minor whereas if the stealing thing is of great value, the consequence of theft is grave because if the property stolen is of less value, the amount of loss is small to the owner, whereas if the property stolen is of great value, the amount of loss is great to the owner. Therefore, the consequence of stealing the valuable thing is greater than the consequence of stealing the property of less value.

In a case of theft that one steals two things of different value from two owners, if stealing things are of equal morality and virtue, the consequence of theft may be grave or minor depending on the condition of defilements in the thief, if the defilements in the thief are strong, the consequence of theft is grave, whereas the defilements in the thief are weak, the consequence of theft is minor.

²⁰¹ Nyanaponika. *Abhidhamma studies: Buddhist explorations of consciousness and time*. Simon and Schuster, 1998.

5.21: The Benefits of Abstaining from stealing

One who abstains from stealing others` properties will be reborn in a celestial abode after his death, and in whatever existence he may be, he will enjoy the following benefits:

(1) He is wealthy,

(2) He does not have to work hard for a living,

(3) He has plenty of food and drinks,

(4) He easily gets what he wants;

(5) He is skillful in trade and prosperous

(6) His wealth is not destroyed by the five elements, namely flood, conflagration, tyrant, thief, and son and daughters who are unworthy heirs.

The following story illustrating the consequences of stealing other`s properties.

Once upon a time, four women in Rājagaha amassed riches through malpractice of short changing and adulteration in selling their goods. They died in their prime life and became Petas, miserable being, outside the city. At night they entered the city looking for scattered food remnants or saliva or phlegm spat out by human beings. As they went along one street after another, they came to their former houses and saw their husbands enjoying with new wives. They felt so painful that they cried out. “We have been suffering miserably for having amassed wealth unlawfully while our husbands are enjoying to their heart`s content with their new wives.”

5.22: Third Precept and Its Consequences

The third precept is abstaining from committing misconduct in sexual relations. A man having sex with a woman other than his wife, or a woman having sex with another man

other than her husband is sexual misconduct, Kāmesumicchācāra, which is, indeed, a heinous crime in the moral universe of Buddhism.

This precept is very effective in making a perfect family life. If the husband and wife are faithful to each other without committing sexual misconduct, their marriage will be solid and happy. Otherwise, they will have a family feud. This precept seems particularly weak in big cities, because news of sex scandals is heard often from televisions and newspapers. People are living in danger of rapists. Extreme sexual desire is the cause of violating the precept of abstaining from committing sexual misconduct.²⁰²

To control this desire, one should contemplate on the thirty-two parts of the body. He has to contemplate like this; “This body has hairs of the body, hairs of the head, nail, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, bowels, stomach, excrement, brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, spittle, nasal mucus, oil of the joints, and urine.

5.23: Four factors of third Precept

(1) The woman belongs to one of the twenty types of women whom one should not have sexual relationship.

(2) One desires to have sex.

(3) One makes the effort to have sex.

(4) One takes pleasure in having sex.

If these four factors are involved in committing adultery, one is said to have committed Kāmesumicchācārakamma.

²⁰² Case, Peter, and René Brohm. "Buddhist belief and living ethics." *Belief and organization*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2012. 51-68.

Twenty types of women whom one should not have sexual relationship. A man observing moral precepts must avoid twenty types of women in order to keep his moral precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct. The twenty types of woman are

- (1) A woman who is under the guardianship of her mother,
- (2) A woman who is under the guardianship of her father,
- (3) A woman who is under the guardianship of her parents,
- (4) A woman who is under the guardianship of her elder and younger brothers,
- (5) A woman who is under the guardianship of her elder and younger sisters,
- (6) A woman who is under the guardianship of her relatives,
- (7) A woman who is under the guardianship of her tribe or clan,
- (8) A woman who is under the guardianship of her Dhamma friends,
- (9) A woman who has been engaged to a certain man,
- (10) A woman who is to be married to the king,
- (11) A woman who has been purchased by a man and living with him as his wife,
- (12) A woman who is willingly living together with a man,
- (13) A woman who on being given properties is living together with a man,
- (14) A woman who on being given clothing is living together with a man,
- (15) A woman who is married to a man with the approval of the elders,
- (16) A woman who formerly has to gather firewood and carry water but has now been taken as a wife,
- (17) A woman who is a slave as well as a wife,
- (18) A woman who is an employee as well as a wife,
- (19) A woman who is a prisoner of war who has been forced to become a wife,

(20) A woman who is a prostitute.¹ If a man has sex with any woman who is under the guardianship of someone, he commits Kāmesumicchācāra, which is a heinous crime. The perpetrator will suffer the evil consequences such as being reborn in the four miserable realms, being reborn as a sexual pervert in the human world for many existences, and being separated from his loved ones.

5.24: The consequences of sexual misconduct

Whosoever, has sexual relation with any person other than one's spouses is said to have committed sexual misconduct. That person will be reborn in one of the lower abodes when he dies. Even if he is freed from there and is again reborn as a human being, he will encounter the following evil consequences: -

- (1) Being disgusted by others,
- (2) Having many enemies,
- (3) Lacking of wealth and property,
- (4) Being deprived of happiness,
- (5) Being reborn as a woman,
- (6) Being reborn as a sexual pervert,
- (7) Being reborn in the inferior lineage,
- (8) Encountering disgrace,
- (9) Having physical deformities
- (10) Being separated from beloved ones
- (11) Being inflicted with the loss of wealth.³

The consequence of sexual misconduct may be grave or minor depending on the morality and virtue of the person whom one has sexual relationship. If one commits adultery with a person of high morality, the consequence is serious; if the person has no morality, the consequence is not

serious. For example, the youth Nanda who committed adultery with a female Arahāt, Uppalavanna, fell into a fissure in the earth and was immediately reborn in Avīci niraya. Even if the victim lacks morality, the consequence will be serious if the adultery is committed forcibly.

5.25: The benefits of abstaining from sexual misconduct

A man who never has sex with another man's wife or with a damsel under someone's guardianship, and a woman who ever has sex with another man other than her husband will enjoy the following benefits:

- (1) They have no enemy
- (2) They are loved by all beings
- (3) They get food, drinks, clothing, etc.
- (4) They sleep soundly
- (5) They wake up peacefully
- (6) They will not be reborn in the four miserable realms
- (7) They will not be reborn as a woman or as a sexual pervert
- (8) They can control their temper
- (9) They can act and speak boldly and frankly
- (10) They can live in dignity
- (11) They can live cheerfully and happily without having to cast down their eyes
- (12) They love and adore only the opposite sex.
. They never become homosexual.
- (13) They are born with complete sets of organs and limbs
- (14) They possess prominent marks and features
- (15) They can live in confidence

- (16) They can live happily
- (17) They have no anxiety and no worry
- (18) They are free from danger
- (19) They are never separated from their loved ones.

The story illustrating the consequences of committing adultery Ānanda, the younger brother of the lord Gotama Buddha fulfilled ten perfections for la hundred thousand worlds. In one of his lives in this world, he became a rich goldsmith's son. In this life he associated with bad companions and committed adultery several times.²⁰³

When he died he was cast into Roruva Hell where he was tortured for many years. After that he was born as a monkey who had its genital bitten off as soon as it was born. After that life, he was born as a goat and then as a calf which were castrated when they grew up. In the next existence he regained the human life but was born as a sexual pervert. After that he attained celestial existences as female deities for five lives with the support of wholesome kamma, but he did not attain male hood because of unwholesome kamma of committing adultery. Then he was born as princess Ruca in the human realm. Only after that he regain man hood.

5.26: Fourth Precept and Its Consequences

The fourth percept is abstaining from telling lies, cheating or deceiving. Telling what is not true by gesture or by words with malicious intention is committing the fourth precept. A lot of people speak untruths, more or less, so it is said that lying is common. Telling a lie, nevertheless, degrades one's moral value because he is not a trustworthy person. People do not want to associate and work with him. Being kept away by people he will live a lonely life.

²⁰³ Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā, Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, 1986

In addition, everyone should be aware of self-cheating which is more dangerous than cheating others because we would be hypocrite. A hypocrite won't achieve in practice of morality and spirituality. That's why a meditator should practice meditation honestly and report and discuss honestly his experience with his teachers. Apparently hatred and greed are the causes of telling a lie, some people never tell the truth to those whom they hate and dislike: some deceive their rival business men or politician.

5.27: Four factors of fourth precept

There are four factors which make this action complete...

- (1) The statement is not truth.
- (2) There is intention to lie
- (3) It is actually spoken and
- (4) Others understand what has been spoken.

If these four factors are involved in committing telling lies, one is said to have committed Musāvāda Kamma.

5.28: Consequences of telling lies

Telling lies with malicious intent can lead one to Niraya. The gravity of that offence corresponds to the amount of harm done on others. The liar will have to suffer in miserable realms after his death. If he were to be reborn in the human world, he will be afflicted with the following defects:

- (1) Poor enunciation
- (2) Uneven teeth
- (3) Foul breath
- (4) Unhealthy complexion

- (5) Poor eye sight and hearing
- (6) Defective personal appearance
- (7) Lack of influence on others
- (8) Harshness of speech and
- (9) A flippant mind

On the other hand, the one who abstains from stealing will enjoy the benefits which are the opposite of the above consequences.

5.29: The benefits of abstaining from telling lies

- (1) One who refrains from telling lies will reach a good destination.

Moreover, one will enjoy the following benefits:

- (2) Clear pronunciation
 - (3) Even teeth
 - (4) Sweet smelling breath
 - (5) A well-built physique
 - (6) Good eyesight and hearing
- Good features, and fair complexion
- (7) Influence on others
 - (8) Effective speech
 - (9) Calmness of mind.

5.30: The following story illustrating the consequences of falsehood:

In the time of KassapaBuddha, in Kimila, there lived a male lay-devotee who was a stream winner. He did the meritorious deed of planting trees, building bridges and monasteries etc..., with his five hundred followers who were of the same view. This group lay –devotees went to the Buddha’s monastery frequently to listen to the

Dhamma. Their wives also went to the monastery occasionally to listen to the Dhamma and to make offerings.

One day, some drunkards saw them and were attracted by them. They argued among themselves as to who would be able to destroy the morality of those women. One of them said that he would be able to do so. This man tried to seduce the wife of the leader of the lay devotees in many ways and finally succeeded.

The drunkard who lost the bet informed the leader of the lay devotees about the matter. And the latter asked his wife whether she had committed adultery. She lied that what he had heard was not true. As her husband did not believe her, she pointed to a black dog nearby whose ears were cut off and swore: "If I have committed adultery with another man, may I be eaten by this black dog in the next life." Still, he husbands did not believe her and he inquired her companions. Although her companions knew the truth, they also swore. "We do not know, if this is not true, may we become her slaves."

When they died, they all became miserable beings near the lake Kannamunda in the Himavanta forest. Because of their meritorious deeds in their past lives, they enjoyed the celestial luxury in a very grand golden mansion in the day time. But at night the leader of the group, in accordance with her swearing to her stream. Winner husband was eaten by a black dog. Her five hundred companions also became her servants as they had sworn in lie in their past lives. Moreover, although they could enjoy the luxury of Devas they did not get married. They felt lonely and boring for being apart from men.

Falsehood is the greatest de meritorious deed while truthfulness is the most beneficial meritorious deed!

5.31: Fifth Precept and its Consequences

Fifth precept is abstaining from taking intoxicants. Everyone should observe this precept because if we break it, we would violate other precepts too. We have found many criminals who committed drug-related crimes in the world. Drug addicts dare to kill, to rape, or to lie, and they are socially and morally unacceptable people. Because of them, there is no peaceful environment.²⁰⁴

Being addictive substances, we should not even try to test the drugs. We can see many patients who are suffering from drug abuse. We should, therefore, avoid using drugs and drinks in order to be healthy mentally as well as physically. According to the Buddhist scriptures, the alcoholic or drug addict, having mental weakness, cannot distinguish right from wrong, he is careless, does not express gratitude to those who gave him help, is shameless and fearless in doing evil, dares to do any evil, and is afflicted with mental illness.

Generally, people with a temperament of ignorance and delusion enjoy using drugs. In order to avoid the suffering of their lives, some of them drink alcohol to be drunk, some use cocaine or heroin to dream a fantasy world. To be free from the situation of drug use, one has to control and subdue ignorance and replace it with wisdom. He should practice mindfulness meditation regularly for increasing wisdom which leads him on the right path.

Four factors of the fifth precept

There are four factors which make this action complete.

- (1) It is on alcoholic drinks or intoxicants
- (2) One has the intention to take it
- (3) One makes the effort to take it

²⁰⁴ Keown, Damien. *The nature of Buddhist ethics*. Springer, 2016.

(4) One actually takes it

If these four factors are involved in taking intoxicants, one is said to have committed Surameraya kamma.

5.32: The consequences of indulging in intoxicant

Intoxicants and narcotic drugs such as alcoholic, liquors, opium, cocaine and heroin are addictive. Consuming any of these leads to the drunkenness, forgetfulness and lack of common sense. These in turn lead to murder, lying and adultery.etc. Moreover, the user of intoxicants or narcotic drugs will enjoy poor health, die young and will be reborn in woeful abodes.

Even when he is freed from there and is again reborn as a human being, he will encounter the following evil consequences:

- (1) Lack of intelligence
- (2) Being lazy
- (3) Lack of mindfulness
- (4) Being ungrateful
- (5) Lack of moral shame and moral dread;
- (6) Insanity and
- (7) Tendency to commit all evil deeds.

Six evil effects of taking intoxicants

The Buddha told the youth Singāla about the six evil effects of taking intoxicants which the perpetrator has to suffer in this present life. They are

- (1) Loss of wealth
- (2) Quarreling and fighting with others.
- (3) Suffering from various diseases
- (4) Lack of fame

- (5) Lack of moral shame and moral dread and
- (6) Lack of knowledge and wisdom.¹

5.33: The benefits of abstaining from taking intoxicants

If one abstains from taking alcoholic drinks and narcotic drugs, one will attain a blissful existence after one is dead, and also enjoy the following benefits

- (1) Being intelligent
- (2) Being diligent
- (3) Being mindful
- (4) Being grateful to one's benefactor
- (5) having propensity to do good deeds.²

The following story illustrating the consequences of indulging in intoxicants

Once, the Bodhisatta was born in a wealthy family possessing eighty crores of silver coins. He performed the meritorious deeds of giving charity and keeping good morality. When he died, he was reborn as Sakka, the king of Devas, in Tāvatiṃsā.²⁰⁵

His son squandered the wealth left behind by him indulging in intoxicants. When the son had used up the forty crores of silver coins, he dug up the forty crores buried under ground. He built a liquor house and led an easy life associating with drunkards and indulging in intoxicants. When he was drunk, he let acrobat and dancers entertain them and presented one thousand silver coins to each.

Soon he had spent all the money and was reduced to a poor beggar. Finally he died miserable. The following story illustrating the consequences of keeping the five precepts

²⁰⁵ Dhammapadatthakatha, Ed HC, and H. Smith Norman. "Pali Text Society, London, 1906-15." Tr.(Buddhist Legends), EW Burlingama

Once in a village in Kāsī Province, all the villagers gave charity, maintained good morality and kept Sabbath on Sabbath day. Consequently, they never died young. They usually died in their old age.

The son of the headman in that village went to study at Takkaśīla city. While he was studying there, a young son of the professor died. The young Dhammapāla inquired why the professor's son died young. The others asked him: "Don't you know that everyone must die one day either in the early age or in the old age?" The young Dhammapāla replied, "of course, they die but they never die young." When the professor heard the strange words of the young Dhammapāla, he was surprised and he wanted to find out what the young Dhammapāla said was true or not. So he left the youth to look over his pupils while he himself went to the Dhammapāla village, taking along some bones of a goat. On reaching there, he went to Dhammapāla's father, and showing the bones) having moral shame and moral dread and said "Your son Dhammapāla has passed away and has been cremated. Here are his bones." His father and other relatives replied laughing: "These bones cannot be my son's. They must be the bones of a goat or a dog." "Although every man is subjected to death at any age, why are you an exception to his rule?" asked the professor.

The headman explained thus: "Here in our village of Dhammapāla, all the villagers usually give charity and keep the precepts; we abstain from all evil deeds. Beside the youth obey the elders. We all perform voluntary work for welfare of our community. Thus no one dies young in our village.

Then the professor paid obeisance to the headman and admitted; "Your son doesn't die I came here to inquire the truthfulness of your son's remark that no one dies young in this village". The professor inquired about the meritorious deeds performed by Dhammapāla villagers in further detail and returned home. If the

precepts are conscientiously and faithfully observed, we will have to surely reap the fruits of strenuous effort sooner or later.

5.34: In Buddhist mindset

When one becomes Buddhist, he or she must take refuge in The Three Refuges (Known as TISARANA), the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha with profound wisdom and insight survived approximately 2500 years ago. This Buddhist mindset emphasizes faith in the sense of “Confidence” rather than the acceptance of “Blind faith.” To become a Buddhist, if so, means to undertake the practices of training mind, and contemplate Dhamma under the teachings of Buddha nad His Sangha rather than accepting mere set of creeds or doctrine. The Buddhist as a way of cultivation guided by Buddha has rejected many doctrines of authority that are rested upon by other dogmatic religious traditions and practices called “religious authority” as “Don’t go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scriptures, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, ‘This contemplative is our teacher.’ When you know yourself that, “These qualities are skillful; blameless; praised by the wise: these qualities, when adopted and carried out, heads for welfare and happiness” – you should enter and remain in them.”

Why, so, does it happen to the household shrine, stupas, offerings and recitation?

As for a non-Buddhist and non-Myanmar, such custom seems contradictory since Buddhist develops not by prayer to God, not by any feasts and ceremonies to any worship nor by appeal to a Supreme Being. In reality, Myanmar Buddhists never worship the likeness of Buddha or the stupa without a pray in the truse sense of word because Myanmar Buddhists believe in Him, His Dhamma and His Sangha. Thus a

Buddhist recites before Buddha Image at the household shrine with three times daily or at random day;

I take refuge in Buddha

I take refuge in Dhamma

I take refuge in Sangha

They believe in which Buddha Himself claimed not to be any other than a human and not to have no inspiration from any external power. It is believed that He himself he discovered the path to Liberation, cessation of all sufferings through own effort and endeavor that we Myanmar Buddhists should tread this path.²⁰⁶

The first step toward the path is to make daily offerings and recitations at the household shrine. Offerings of flowers, water and candles satisfy one's aesthetics sense. Recitations in praise of Buddha come conducive to mental serenity. If you asked a Buddhist why you take refuge in Buddha at the household shrine and at the pagoda with offerings as daily devotion, he/she answers; "I do this to gain merit and finally to attain the goal of Nirvana." An average Buddhist will say this is that he/she will one day attain the final cessation of suffering, Nirvana. You might ask this above mentioned due to this doubt in mind as "No Supreme Being and external power to grant it to you and no Omnipotent Being to take notice of you." A Buddhist answers that all are according to the Law of Karma or Kam in Myanmar epithet by daily expression. Yet there are adages like; you can depend on you Kam of Karma as your own parents. In true sense in Buddhist concept, it means action whether good or bad deed action. Karma refers to all sorts of internal actions whether mental, verbal or physical, i.e. all thoughts, words and deeds.

²⁰⁶ Causton, Richard. *The Buddha in daily life: an introduction to the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin*. Random House, 1995.

A Buddhist believes in “Good deed, good result and bad deed, bad result” meaning he did in the past life or in the present existence, which is determined the Law of Karma or Kam. So every average Buddhist accepts this law of Karma, his lot whatever it may be rich or poor, handsome, or plain. He will receive it not because of fatalism but because of true sense in Buddhism. Supposing one being born and brought up destitute, disease-ridden, this is due to not doing any good deed and today is the result of what he has done in the past lives. For instance, a parable tells the story of a leprous beggar in the precincts of a pagoda. He lived by the scrap of food given to him. As he crawled about, he picked up and litter and scraps so that the ground must be clean, contemplated his lot accepted it as of his own wrong doing deeds in the past. He had nothing but loving-kindness for those who were better place than he was; for such those having done good deed deserved their lot. The beggar by his good thoughts and deeds was born into celestial abode after his passing.

As mentioned above, Buddhists were born and brought up on the parables as guideposts for the moral conduct. Thus the acceptance of rebirth and the future lives give the Buddhists hope and a sense of responsibility as well. In Buddhist faith, there accept the hope of round of rebirth in future lives. But it is up to doing good deeds instead of moaning over a present lot, gone past yet been the present in hands. So by now one should make investments for the future. He or She has to go on an unending round of rebirth to perfect himself/herself until attaining the cessation of suffering,

5.35: The goal of Nivarana

As for an average Buddhist, the act of Danna is easy for Myanmar Buddhist to practice because much depends on the attitude of mind. However, a Buddhist gives a little, but with loving kindness, good will even most important of all, he giving something of himself. In every act of giving, there is an act of giving up something of

one's own possession being detached from the thing having been given away; in other words, absence of clinging to one's possession. The act of Danna being detached and not clinging is taught by the Buddha for it is possible for a Buddhist to achieve Nirvana with an ardent effort of the complete elimination of clinging and attachment which is the root causes of all suffering. So, by giving away whatever one can, one practice non-clinging, non-attachment little by little to make it perfect oneself.

At first step, a Buddhist practices the act of Danna, giving within the reach. However poor he might be, he can do it with awareness that such deeds help him attained the Goal even while giving a morsel of alms-food to a monk who comes every morning on daily alms round; he can offer putting a few fern at the household shrine. He has an opportunity to go up the ladder of existence. Thus as a conceptual theme in Buddhism, the act of Danna gives way to the insight to the goal of Nirvana.

5.36: Myanmar Buddhist Monk

Now it turns about Buddhist Monk. Casting down the eyes-lids on the ground, Buddhist Monks go on their alms-round for alms-food barefooted unobtrusively pausing outside the layman's house. They are seen either in groups of five or more or all alone on their noble yellow robes yet each cradling a black-alms-bowl on the road early in the morning. But they cannot go in if not they invited by the housekeeper. That way, they stand outside; if someone comes out and offers alms-food or offerings, they receive it reciting the word "Well done" 3/three times but mostly in silence. Unless one comes to make an offering, they keep on their way round. Still some households daily wait alms-food for their coming. Each monk is offer a morsel of rice accompanied by a spoonful of alms-food like rice meal, dishes, boiled peas, crispy or whatever can be taken though uncooked things being not offered on such an early round occasion.

In Buddha time, Buddha allows monks to receive alms-food sent to them by families, relatives, or donors and they can also accept invitations to laymen's houses to partake of alms-food. Even some are not required to go on alms round, they can usually do so. This is done as an act of humility then giving the poor a chance to do merit. So the Buddhists who cannot afford to invite monks to their own homes can gain merit by offering a morsel of food to the monks on their daily rounds. Offering alms-food to the monks on their daily rounds is considered as Dhana greater merit than sending alms-food to the monastery or inviting monks to one's home to partake of alms-food for inviting monks to one's home can be done occasionally, but offering a morsel of alms-food can be done daily.

If a Buddhist cannot offer alms-food to the monks before his house, he says "No alms-food today, your revered, please receives only my respect" as in common practice of Buddhism.²⁰⁷ But this practice is thanks to one of the incidents that happened not long after the Buddha's demise. A monk, one of His disciples, took care to stop on his alms rounds at a high caste Brahman every morning for 16 years but no one ever came out to wish him well, let alone offer him alms-food. One day, after seeing that familiar figure for so many years, the Brahman's wife felt a twinge of conscience, so she said "No alms-food today, your revered, please receives only my respect" as mentioned above.

In that way, the monk went on his way round then he happened to meet Brahman who asked him whether he had to stoop at his door. The monk replied him "yes". And Brahman got an unexpected question into his brain and kept him on asking "Did you get alms-food?" The irate Brahman got angry, then went home and scolded his wife for giving alms-food to a Buddhist Monk. His wife told him that she

²⁰⁷ Schober, Juliane Sybille. Paths to enlightenment: Theravada Buddhism in upper Burma. Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1989.

had not given him anything. The Brahman went to the monastery and called the monk a liar and threatened to expose him as such in public. The monk told his wife confession that she said something ---- words she heard the Buddhists say only when they could not offer any alms-food. Brahman went back to the monastery and asked the monk the reason why he said he had been offered alms-food from the house; merely because of the woman saying “No alms-food today, your reverend, please receives only my respect” The monk explained to the Brahman that according to the Buddha’s teachings, Dana does not have to be something material. If one had a desire or an inclination to make an offering but then has merely his respects to offer, if he expresses them in the words; “No alms-food today, your reverend, please receives only my respect” in this way, gaining merit without spending anything.²⁰⁸

Carrying the torch of Buddha teachings, and also carrying the tradition of going on alms-rounds as done by the Buddha Himself and His disciples, the monks live a life of austerity on the alms-food people offer them. So that the poor might have the chance to do a meritorious deed by offering alms, even just a handful of rice or a spoonful of gruel, even though could the Buddha have the best choice of food at the King’s palace or at rich men’s homes. The spirit of Dhana---alms giving is strong in Myanmar. Should you go to the humble wayside teashop and order a cup of tea, the shopkeeper will include it a pot of green tea as – free of charge even you can stay over a pot of green tea as long as you like and listen to the local gossip. When you go to the pagoda and buy flowers and candles from the stalls alongside the stairs, the shopkeeper will take charge of your slippers and things that you bring and no tip are expected.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Milindapanna-aṭṭhakathā, Department of Religious Affairs, Yangon, 1986

²⁰⁹ Yalman, Nur. "On the meaning of food offerings in Ceylon." *Social Compass* 20.2 (1973): 287-302.

5.37: Way of life as a Buddhist in Myanmar

Way of life as a Buddhist in Myanmar is to live among lay people according to the tenets laid down in Sangala Sutta, a discourse given a Brahman, Sangala* by name. That discourse is concerned with his relationship with his family, relatives, teachers, and community by the layman's conduct in daily life. There specifically lay down reciprocal duties between the members of the family within a community. One of the most obligations is to look after the parents when they turn old age.

In India thought, it assumes the Buddha called the parents Brahma, a word which denotes the most and the highest sacred. After that, here come the teachers, elders, relatives and non-relatives alike next to the parents as a worthy of reverence. "Those who do not have parents do not let themselves lack persons for reverence; this is an essential ingredient in a good life, to have ones to revere and respect" highlighted by Sercond Uruvela Sutta, Anguttra Nikayas catukka nipata. With this concept in mind, the younger seniors often play a part of well-bread youths by paying respects to some elder in the clan or in the community. The beautiful custom of paying respects to elder is also spiritual strength. him to go home asking his wife whether she had said anything. Back again, the Brahman heard his The Ritual Ka-daw

As can be seen today, the Ritual Ka-daw meaning the ritual paying respect to the elders is a significant symbol of the features in school and communal activities. When it falls on the full-moon day of Thadingyut in October school children of all ages and sizes pay respect to their parents, teachers and the elders. As it happens, the elders of the community never fail means of moral support on important occasions. When it happens to an orphan wishing to pay respect these above, the senior members of the community is ready to accept his ritual Ka-daw on behalf of his late parents. In

this way, the elderly people play a pivotal role in family and community as communal affairs. Though old ages are regarded as a sense of inadequacy and uselessness in other society, younger person of the family and the community regard them showing courtesy and respect, above all giving them a sense of being needed. But then the teachings of Buddha instruct the elders how to practice ways of proper conduct so that they be worthy of respect and reverence.

There are many judicious and forceful admonitions in Buddhism. According to Dhammapada, a man who has learn little grows old like an ox, his flesh increase, but not wisdom. Not, an elder, therefore, is a man thanks to his gray hair. Though he be ripening for year she is still called old in vain.

A man in whom dwell truth, right conciseness, non-injury, temperance, steadfast and self-control, he himself gets rid of faults is truly called an elder. In this way, receiving respect and reverence place the elders in a responsible position. So the blessings of old age have to be cared by one's own good conduct and practice.

Refuge for the old When it comes to the old age especially for the elders in Buddhist way of life, it is essential, natural and usual for them to take refuge in monastery. There goes saying "When a Burma grows old, to certain quiet corner of a monastery he goes." It is quite common for some irascible elder, who is no longer by the antics of the young to say, "One of these days, I will go into monastery." This is not mere ranting. The elders put faith in that the monastery, the shrine of Buddha's Dhamma will offer them solace and comfort and above all, peace and quiet place forever.

According to Add Life to Years, an article written by U San Ngwe, a Myanmar writer, scholar and researcher in his seventies gives a recipe for a healthy old age, which includes mental strength and the tenacity to go on working; he says;

“Do not pollute your mind with vapors of greed, anger envy and resentment; do not let other people affairs get into your head. Whenever I feel worried, annoyed, or depressed, I just take a book from the shelf, any book, opening any page and read it. The first five lines may not do me any good, but by the time I get to ten, fifteen lines, then twenty, all my unsavory feeling die away. After that I can hardly remember what I was upset about.

According to this teaching of the Buddha, craving is the major course of immorality. It leads individuals to their mental and physical decline. Besides this teaching shows the close relationship between morality and nature. It also is worthwhile nothing that because of private property, a new set of vices like stealing appears in the world. Teaching illustrates how the mental changes produce the creation of material changes and how those material changes. Thus the Agganna sutta reveals an early social organization. Society appeared among human beings in this way.

Yet Buddhist Society follows up ‘The Fundamental Social Ethics’ taught by Buddha ethical Doctrine aiming at an individual.

5.38: Social Ethics

Buddha did not ignore the relationship between individuals of society. Society is made of a group of individuals. Without individuals a society does not exist. So the behavior of a person is very important role in a society. It is obvious that personal development is important for social development. The Buddha emphasized reciprocal relations among various members of a society so that there would be a perfect harmony.

CHAPTER: VI

CONCLUSION

This thesis attempts to capture the essence of the perspectives of Buddhism on religion and refuge. Attempt has been made to demonstrate how it is pivotal for a man to live by peace and harmony with the applicable practices of true and real religion and refuge into the world today. Besides these factors, attempt has also been made to capture the entire keys of Buddha's philosophy and conception of religion even notion of refuge for the ones who aspires to attain the grasp of the pragmatic applicability on the right moral ethics and conduct and even to achieve real happiness, true harmony for their lifelong span with the passage of time together with entire surroundings in the community of the society through the mankind.

Main object of this study is to highlight religion and refuge according to Buddhist teachings, however in a comparative way. It is being popularly perceived that religion means believe in the existence of a god or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them or one of the systems of faith that are based on the belief in the existence of a particular god or gods. In view of Buddhism, religion means dispensation or teachings of enlighten master.

This study perceives the concept of religious refuge as a conceptual structure which is central to all belief systems world over including Buddhism. Each belief system essentially offers refuge to human beings in their own method and way. The main objective of this study is to capture the trajectory of notion of refuge offered by various established religion world over and comparison with the notion of refuge offered by Buddhism. In this sense the essence of this study is to capture the

difference between non-Buddhist religions and Buddhism in terms of treating human beings as refuge.

The core finding of this study is that while the non-Buddhist religion essentially treats human beings as refuge and offer solace by imposing restrictions and prescribing numerous ways achieve salvation. In case of Buddhism, the notion of refuge is neither instructed nor offered to any followers. Rather he or she was allowed to seek their own path to become refuge under the broad teachings of the Buddha. While in non-Buddhist religions refuge is a space offered and controlled by mediators between God and devotees, Buddhism teach self discovery of person by fathoming inner moral strength and build capacity to lead sorry free life. In order to prove this hypothetical line of argument, this study has been organized into six chapters. The study uses both primary and secondary sources. Several pali translations from English and Burmese were being used in this study. Besides this, several books and articles published by authorizes on various aspects of Buddhism are being used.

The chapter one proposes the thematic aspects of study, including the relevance of the topic, objective of the topic, hypothesis of the topic and methodology of the topic. This chapter provides a decent review of literature on the conceptual theme of refuge. Although studies on Buddhism from the perspective are few, but several studies do make implicit reference to the concept of Buddhist refuge. By using diversified sources, attempt has been made to construct conceptual framework of the study.

The second chapter of this study presents the relationship between religion and the concept of refuge in general and Buddhism in particular. The question why people take refuge in religion has been discussed in this chapter. Several ways of taking refuge were discussed in this chapter. As a Buddhist, real refuge is in vital of

importance in his life. No matter whatever the name of Buddhist, if applied incorrectly or deviation with the Buddhist path, cannot tell a really good Buddhist. An attempt has been explained religion to everybody is to understand well attitude of Buddhism. Second part of this chapter focus upon the real Buddhism and the role of Buddhist followers by kings doing good deeds, involving charity, morality, meditation, paying respect to elders, doing for others sharing one's good deeds to others, gladness of others 'good deeds, listening to Dharma, preaching the Dharma and believing in karmic result.

The chapter three entitled conceptual meaning of refuge in classical texts of Buddhism' explore, analyze and document concept of refuge as represented in the classical text of Buddhism consist of teachings of Buddha preserved in the form of pali canon. This chapter has been divided into two sections: section one deals with the factual and philosophical meaning of refuge and the second sections deals with hermeneutic meaning of refuge in the Buddhist philosophy and its evolution in history. This chapter proposes that the teachings of the Buddha propose a complex philosophical and spiritual code for who seek refuge in his teachings. The Buddha constantly reminds his followers that one has to be self seekers of refuge by the way of practicing rightful path.

The fourth chapter of this study analyses the process of emergence of religions in the world and believe system of other countries. There cannot be 100% similarities among religions, nationalities, any opinions, cultures, philosophies, skin hues, mental attitudes, gender, language, political, social origin, property, visions, of people in the World. There would be more beneficence from performance of seeing with love and sympathetic mind (with optimistic view) for a particular thing rather than blaming or

extreme criticize (with a pessimistic view) in contrast to others. There are different kinds of countries, races, thoughts, religions, such as China, India, Burmese, England, Japan, American and Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim. But the essential factor is not races, religions, positions, China, India etc. All the teachings concerning culture, thoughts, beliefs and practices are valuable in their own ways.

The fifth chapter of this study documents and analyzes the impact of the refuge in Myanmar in Buddhist way. In this chapter, an analysis of Buddhist way of life has been offered with particular reference to Myanmar. Each one is responsible for being a human. If each father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife, son, daughter, relative, friend and teacher will take responsibility for everyone, the world will be full of peace of mind. Buddhism is not ordinary religion. It is very different from other religions because Buddhism has not consisted of creator (God). Buddhism as many scholars felt is true scientific religion because it unveils causal relation, true systematically, universal truth, verification and logical arrangement. One must love and respect for one's own country, religion, literature, family, culture, and nationality for all in the same way. The chapter five deals with the way Buddhism remained bedrock for socio-cultural and political formations of Myanmar. It also deals with how Buddhism plays a major role in developing harmonious attitude among people of Myanmar by the way of promoting the teachings of the Buddha.

The main essence of this study is that Buddhism does not promise any guarantee of salvation by its founder. All Buddhist thus does not total reliance on an external force or third party for help or salvation. Buddhism proposes that all persons must take responsibility for their actions and behaviors, whether good or bad. According to Buddhism, Buddha is only teachers to show the way. He is not savior

and He also has to try to achieve His enlightenment. That is why He shows only way for His followers.

By examining the Buddhist perspective of refuge this study proposes that Buddhism is not a religion that consist of the God like other religions which believe that all bad and good result come from God and the one who creates bad and good things is a powerful God. Buddhism is based on the rational thinking and leads to happy life even present life. Anybody who practices teachings of the Buddha can liberate from the suffering of the life. Buddhist perspective of refuge is thus a way to lead a spiritual life without fearing about all powerful God.

The Buddha's Teachings has ever taught us the practices to follow up in daily life. We can simply see three main principles routines: Dana, Sila and Bhavana. Someone who follows these practices can attain real happiness, peace of mind and liberation from all sufferings sooner or later. It may be swift for some and for others it may be slow. But there should not be any doubt these practices and habits of how to live in a good-will and take refuge in Dharma in the world will lead to one's satisfaction, real happiness of mind and supreme happiness of Nirvana, the end of all mundane sufferings. There is an obligation to seek true beliefs on religious matters both in order to discover whether we have other obligations (e.g., to worship and serve God), and in order to teach the truth about religion to those whom we have an obligation to educate. It is also good (though not obligatory) to seek such true belief both for its own sake, and in order to discover how to attain deep and lasting well-being, that is salvation. However, we should seek to acquire only those beliefs about religion which adequate investigation shows to be probable, and (barring special circumstances) not attempt to induce religious beliefs by irrational means

Taking these reasonable and logical practices and habits of human will build the reliable refuge in making foundation of real peace of mind. People have to apply themselves with the energy, mindfulness and knowledge to attain the final goal meant toward Nirvana. When or if you wish to build the foundation of peaceful realm of human, you should not forget these practices and habits laid down by the Buddha as routines as sources of refuge in everyday life. Religion has and continues to impact almost every aspect of human civilization in both positive and negative ways. The great spiritual masters from all traditions, have taught that we need to adopt and develop higher qualities of love, mercy, generosity, kindness and so on. These higher qualities are natural, by product of developing a deeper connection with our spiritual nature and so in this respect religion can be thought of as a vehicle to support our spiritual development and our re-connection with divinity. In this way, human beings will be better at working together to create a better and more harmonious world. Not based on religion but on the basis of human existence, we will have peace of mind. Lord Buddha points out that morality is more valuable than wealth and health. An idea of mutual respect between the religions in which we probably see the earliest example of a conception of religious toleration and respect.

The Buddha says-

Be your own island of refuge,

Be your own shelter,

Seek not for any other protection!

Let the truth be your isle of refuge,

Let the truth be your shelter,

Seek not after any other protection!

May all be able to live happily in the way genuinely Buddhist.

Hate is not conquered by hate:

Hate is conquered by love. This is eternal law.”

This study is a humble attempt towards discovering the ocean of Buddhist perspective of Buddhism. Attempt has been made here to explore, analyze and document the way the concept of religious notion refuge is evolved in history, how different religions addressed this issue by offering different methods and how Buddhism deals with the issue of refuge. This study also proposes that Buddhist perspective of refuge is not about devoting one's entire energies to discover the power of God. It is a training offered by Buddhism to tame the mind of human beings by making them aware of the inner potential energies for good cause. Buddhist perspective of refuge is thus training for human beings on how to live happily and let others (including all species) to live happily. In other words Buddhist perspective of refuge is can be summed up as love for all, compassion for all, comradeship for all and peace and happiness for all.

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S.K Sharma

(S.K. Sharma)

Refuge in Myanmar Buddhism: A comparative study

VEN. PANDA WANTHA

Ph.D. Scholar

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ABSTRACT

World, though they flow through different waterways, but have one and the same destination. The religious leaders all over the world have a major role in national as well as international combination for bringing peace on earth. Religion in any form is a potent factor for peace. A world without religion will be an inflexible place to live in. It is religion that keeps in chain the brute in man. The role and contribution of religion to the world is for peace. The various religions of the world are **agreed with** the opinion of harmony among religions and benevolence among men. All religions have one and the same goal, like different rivers going in the same sea. Most of people cannot escape form tradition, custom and cannot try to be free from ritual derive from traditionally through past generations. All religions are founded by religious leaders, aiming at creating peace that everyone much wants. Buddha taught with full consideration to have generous spirit on different religions. No religions taught his followers any violence.

Key Words : Buddhist tradition, Attitude of Buddhist, Real refuge, Religion

INTRODUCTION

Culture, idea and religion are important facts and foundation of development and steady of one country and one nation. Without superficial mind on the religion, it must be serious consideration or weighty conviction. The each leader of all religions teaches their followers and beings in the world to be clever and cultural. No God encouraged and supported to destroy this world. The real religion shows and guides the people to create better world and the religious men and women too love and put kindness on each one. There is a motto “every man has religious believe “therefore, since appearing human in this world, men sleeked religious beliefs. From the era of dawn of the history, until these present days, everybody has political beliefs, spiritual beliefs and various beliefs in numerous fields. There is no one who has belief about religion and everyone has belief on religion. How much higher education a man has, he believes in religion without thinking and his knowledge on the religion is youthful. Most of today’s people used to accept religious belief with no consideration but what a scientist says, they accept only after examination. Everyone should prefers the religion to the science. Some are free thinkers and they have no any belief on creed and stay outside of circle of religion. We can say that it is also a kind of religion. Everybody can’t help losing in touching with religion.

Buddhist traditions :

The traditions and customs have either irrespective of sex or any religion according to their way and faith. It is nature that everyone is searching for depend for their achievement such as, good health, happiness and being well in business as well as the persons who have none such as success, economy, mental peace are searching for great expectations under the powerful God. It means that the person, who has already perfected with everything, wants more and more, and the person who has lacked properties, tries to get what he needs. Everyone has different thoughts, opinion and vision. People's desire and longing are not same with each other. Apart from that, everybody cannot be the same as each one because of their past karma. So they differ from one's outcome and behavior in accordance with the Karma did in their past life. Although Myanmar people are Buddhists (in 85%) and very religious devotees, they are also subject to prefer to traditions and customs of ancestors. They can't be free form In these days, we can see those who belief in the deities, dragons, animals and magical power or possessor of science and those who are paying respects to (Taung pyone Nyi Naung called) devas (young and elder brother Devas). The both upper and lower people in Myanmar came to Taung Pyone village and greatly celebrate deity festival. Such taking refuge is not Buddhist way. Everyone is seeking for taking refuge for their wishes in various ways. The purpose of searching for taking refuge is to be danger less and to perfect what they want in their daily life. Especially taking refuge is because of the craving and ignorance. For their reliance, they go to mountains, caves and big trees to fulfill wishes, to be happy and good health for their family membership and themselves and make obeisance to powerful Devas.³ in Buddhism; there are so many seasonable festivals in relation to religious ceremony. Myanmar people celebrate pagoda festivals once a year at famous pagodas such as Shwe Da Gon, MaHaMuNi, Pyi Shwe San Daw pagodas etc Indeed, Buddha does not support doing so and He encourages and teaches His follower to practice Dharma only.

Attitude of Buddhists :

Buddhists are subject to give in charity generously their properties to the needy, by doing so; they used to believe that they will have good results in return at next life. Buddhist people accept Karma, So they donate many things and thousands of money to the poor. In particular, they understand well that all things are impermanent or will not last, and cannot control. Everything will disappear someday according to Buddha's teachings.

Buddhists accept and agree that there is the past life and future life or reincarnation and so they do good conduct and action while they are alive." If one acts or speaks with a pure mind, then, happiness follows him, like a shadow never going away" Buddha taught in Dhammapada. So Buddhists incline toward offering and that is why Myanmar is the most generous country in the world, even though Myanmar is materially deprived. And also they regard that human's life span is very short and is full of suffering. Human's life is struggling and not stable day after day; so they keep Buddha's Dharma in heart and live peacefully according to Buddha's way of life. They share loving-kindness and have the greatest respect for each other keeping good heart in mind. Buddhists have no discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, or sexual orientation and regard that all beings in the world are same and no difference between them. Buddhists are in favor of mental development than material development

Beginning of religion :

Human beings are always facing man-made natural disasters such as unpleasant events,

accidents, floods, fire that perished many people or caused a lot of damages, and then people became afraid of all dangers in various forms come to them and felt unhappiness and disappointment. Since then, both primitive human beings and today's human beings started searching for refuge. Although we couldn't say correctly the time started religion, it can say that all religions begin because of fear and unsatisfied.

Awareness of religion probably began at the time of higher Paleolithic revolution about 50000 years ago. Religion is deeply regarded by people that it is very important one in the history of mankind and nobody can have any safety without religion or refuge. It is not really true; indeed, being dominated by fear, the Paleolithic men presume that a supernatural power sends dangers and sufferings to them. The Paleolithic people were unfamiliar with natural law such as storm, thundering, rumbling, over flood happened due to natural disaster etc... They become afraid of nature and started searching for refuge. There are two ways in search of religions; depending on wisdom and on faith. The Buddhism doesn't depend on faith but depends on wisdom can distinguish what is wrong and what is right. It means that one must accept one's refuge by intelligence experienced by one. Mere faith cannot see real truth and it is just first step of the path to walk on it. If only a single wisdom is not enough to go to one's destination. Faith and wisdom must be balance at our daily life and too much wisdom is a kind of imperfection and too much faith is a kind of imperfection. Perhaps the one who has a lot of faith is lacking in wisdom and the one who has a lot of wisdom is lacking in faith. Therefore the faculty of Faith should be balanced with that of wisdom. Some persons extremely believe in the powerful God without thinking anything and consequently they commit greatest evil such killing people, slaughtering innocent civilians. Besides hanging weapons such as bombs on their body and assassinated and killed other people because of religious believe. It is that extreme believes is liable to appear extremists. The extremism stems from horrible events, killing of a large number of people badly in a cruel way.

Refuge in Buddhist Perspective :

Real refuge is oneself and no need to seek outside. In accordance with Buddha's guide, our refuge is in our body. Once upon a time, After venerable Sariputtara, Buddha's disciple-arhat who sits on the right flank of the Buddha, passed away, Venerable Ananda, who serviced the Buddha, felt worry about passing away of Ven sariputtara, then, Buddha asked him, did Sariputtara take your morality, concentration and wisdom together with him (sariputtara) ? Ananda replied, No sir, he didn't take my morality, concentration and wisdom together with him,. Buddha said, if so, why did you feel so much? Ananda, you don't take refuge in individual person. There were no permanent things in the world. Everybody will die someday. Only Dharma will be your refuge and savior. Don't seek other refuge in outside. Only Dharma will lead you to Nirvana, liberated from sufferings.

Conclusion :

As a Buddhist, the reason to take refuge in Buddha, is knowing real truth taught by Buddha: what is wholesome and what is unwholesome? Appearing the Buddha in the world is to give Dharma talk or Dharma intelligence and to show only way: what is wrong way and what is right way. There is no more than. Taking refuge in Dharma is to practice and follow practically Dharma discovered by Buddha. Dharma is like medicine instructed by the doctor for a patient And If the patient takes medicine according to the doctor's advice, his disease will be relieved slow and quick, if not so, and his illness will not be recovered. Here it is noticed that the Buddha and Dharma mean the Doctor and medicine respectively. Dharma taught by Buddha is not only for Buddhists or His

followers but also for living beings over the world. So dharma is like medicine. The effective medicine is vital importance for a patient. After recovering from his disease, there is no need to check and know from where this medicine comes? From whom comes medicine? Who produces this medicine? Etc... Especially it is to recover one's illness. Moreover, to take refuge in Sanghas (Buddhist monks) are to donate offerings that one has food, robe, medicine and dwelling because Sanghas too practice and live under religious life in accordance with dharma vinaya(disciplines) laid down by Buddha (227 precepts in brief, over 9000,0000000 precepts in enlarge) So Sanghas are like a good paddy- field in which rice is grown by farmers. Here it is understood that Samghas are like paddy-fields And Things to be offered are like paddies and crops. Supposing; you have a field but you don't grow paddy and crop in it. You don't use the paddy-field and neglect it. Then how will you get good crop and paddy without growing in this paddy-field? That is why we Buddhists take refuge in Sangha also to offer four requisites. What is more, after Lord Buddha passed away, Samgha maintained tri pitaka well taught by Buddha, without losing as well as shared it throughout the world till today.

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S.K. Sharma

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Did the Image of Buddha originate in Gandhara state or in India?

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ABSTRACT

The debate on the problem of appearing the statute of the Lord Buddha is not much special cases of studies for Indian people. Because, between B.C 2500 and 1500, taking refuge in statues carved by Indian people in ancient times during Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa era, has been already developed. But for Buddha statue, the sculptors have carved yet neither at the time of Lord Buddha, nor the time of King Asoka. Besides, Buddha's statue has not been carved yet till 2nd century B.C. In the context of mention above, It was proved that Sanchi stupa built by King Asoka in 3rd century BC we can see symbols of Sunflower, Bodhi tree, and footprint carved instead of Buddha and we can see some symbols on its commemorative pillars erected beside a gateway of Sanchi stupa. Later, another Buddhist sect came up and split from the majority Mahasamghikas Sect after unsuccessfully trying to modify the Vinaya after second council (approximately in 383 BC) and that Sect defined according to their understanding the meaning of the Buddha's teachings. Since then, within the Buddhism appeared a separate religious Sect. At the present time, among the different sects, Mahayana and Theravada Sects are most popular. Tow hundreds later, Mahayana Buddhist sect mixed up teachings of the Buddha with Hinduism which is in favor of idols. Since then statue of Load Buddha was carved as the great man form and took refuge in image of the Buddha. The main purpose of carving and taking refuge in the statue of the Buddha is to understand and realize profound teachings, loving-kindness, great compassion and wisdom of the Load Buddha

Key Words : Origination of Buddha image, Activities of King Asoka, Former situation of northern part of India, Symbols

INTRODUCTION

A Study of the Buddha's statue is to give some knowledge to Buddhists and the people who interested in Buddhism. The Buddhism was established by Gautama Buddha who realized four noble truths and eight paths. His teachings and guidance are not supported to depend on Him personally and He encouraged his followers to be favor of His ways only. In this case, for obvious reasons, I would show some evidence "there was a monk who had the greatest respect for Buddha while the lord Buddha was alive. "His name was "Vakkali". After he was born by his mother, the baby" Vakkali" was offered by his parents to the Lord Buddha, because of afraid of Giant. The Lord Buddha also accepted the offering with aim of saving the life of the boy. At the age of 7, he became a novice and his was named venerable "Vakkali" in religious title .After he became a monk

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, he never went and stayed away from the Lord Buddha. For he was not content to behold appearance of the Lord Buddha covered in glory. Then, the Lord Buddha reminded venerable Vakkali, “Dear Vakkali, why do you love so much the body adored by the foolish men only? If you know Dharma taught by me, you will see me ,without knowing Dharma ,you will never see me, even though you see me personally “ And then Buddha continuously taught as follow, the body has endless sufferings, the body is like a tree grow fruits of poison, the body is like a place where is full of disease and it is like a place where collects sufferings . That is why you don’t depend individually on me and depend on Dharma shown and revealed by me. Nobody exists permanently in the world and everything is impermanent, impersonality and sufferings. It is very clear what Buddha said. So the Lord Buddha didn’t support to take refuge in Him individually, in same way, He didn’t encourage to take refuge in the statue of Him .He however, admonished his followers to practice Dharma only taught by the lord Buddha himself.

It can see that thoughts, writings, cultures of Myanmar are considerably influenced by Buddhism. In the same way, both Buddhism rose up various sorts of arts and encouraged and developed sculptured of the Buddha’s image. So, in enquiring Buddha’s image, it needs to observe background of northern part, (Gandhara State before, now known as peshawar state in Pakistan) of India ,where Buddha’s teachings developed and prospered in successful way and where the place carved Buddha’s image earliest. It is said that this place (Gandhara State) was the earliest region where Buddha’s image was carved as first .The earlier supporting evidence discovered on Gandhara State is Behistun inscription of King Darius (B.C. 516). According to the inscription, Gandhara state included in Persian weapon territory of king Darius .It is clear that Gandara state was dominated by culture of Persian because of subordinate country of Persian. But some B.C 327-326, The Alexander the Great, Ancient Greek kingdom fought, marching over Indus river site, northern part of India. The Alexander the Great however, withdrew from that place because weather of northern part of India was so hot in summer and other reasons. Seleucides, commander in-chief, who appointed by Alexander the Great to administer Babylon, fought again until India

Chandragupta and his Maurya Empire (reign: 321-297 BCE) :

After that, some BC 324, Chandragupta retaliated against an attack to Seleucides, Greece commander in-chief who invaded India and conquered his invasion with throughout India country. And then, the King Chandragupta founded Maurya weapon country.

The northern land under the monarchical kings :

After 144 years later, the Maurya weapon country disintegrated, experiencing various reasons and Demertios, Bactria sub divisional officer, became a king who controls northern part of India. Again a Greek captain named Eukratides, rebelled against Demertios and seized state power of northern land of India. In addition to, a Greek captain also known as Eukratides, took over the Bectria country, since then, the county was in control of Eukratides. After that, Panjab and northern part of India were under Scythian, Kushan races and Mongol empire.

The place where the image of Buddha originates :

Here, there is one point that we should be aware, since several years, it is that northern part of India was under the rule and influence of Greek –for northern part of India has been Indu river site and Panjab state which are well fertile regions. Because those places have been under the Greeks’ domination, we can see there not only Greeks’ culture and arts but also an art of carving the image

of Buddha, mixing with Persian style, Greek style and Indian thoughts.

Missionary work of King Asoka (Maura dynasty) :

At the time of king Asoka, (B.C. 272-232) Maura dynasty, as king Asoka extended his missionary works into Yona (The Yona is mentioned in the Asoka's inscription, along with the Kamojas, as two societies where there are only nobles and slaves) and Gandhara north-west of India. Therefore, Buddha's teachings quietly flourished in that region by the agency of King Asoka. When the Greek cultures and arts were being flourishing since the time of the Alexander the Great in Gandhara encountered with Buddhism, it became an extraordinary Greco-Buddhist School of Art. As a result of emerging the Buddhist arts in that region, it was found the sculptors who carved the image of Buddha in style of Greek differed from Indian style about one century A.D.

Did the sculptors carve the image of Buddha earlier A.D. one century? :

It is needed to scrutinize that, was Buddha's image carved earlier than one century or after one century A.D.? Before Christian, at B.C. 623, Buddha was born and passed away at 543 B.C. It is important fact to know whether Buddha's image was carved at the time of Buddha or not?

The vatinguli raja story included in Yun pannasa was taught by the lord Buddha? :

Here We Myanmar educated monk, Mon wyaySayadaw mentioned in his " Samantacakkhu Dipani" tittle Vol. 1, page 414 to 419 as the following .

At the once upon, While the Buddha toured Dharma journey, King Kosala came to Jetavana monastery to make a pay respect to the Buddha, holding flowers and aromatic substance in his hand, then, he felt alarmed, having not seen the Buddha .After that he had to come back, paying respect to Buddha's place or the sacred throne only, saying so "there was nothing to take refuge in the world". When the Buddha got back from Dharma touring to jetavana monastery, King Kosala came to the Buddha and informed the Buddha with following words,

"Venerable Sir, when you passed away, there won't have anything of refuge for us, so allow us to make the pattern similar to your form for taking refuge instead of you" Then, Buddha said, "the great king, according to his ability or attribute, either small form or, middle form or large form should be made by the lump of solid or hard thing and in the same way, former wise men also have ever done so". In this regard, the Buddha wanted to show the past story and taught "vatinguli raja story". Having heard Buddha's teaching, King kosala came back from the Jetavana monastery .It is known that King kosala sculpted the Buddha's image carving of sandalwood and took refuge in it. Mon wyaysayataw, however, commented that vatinguli raja story comes from yunpannasa (fifty jatakas not taught by Buddha) but also it does not include holding Buddhist council so, wise men and Theravada Buddhist monks did not accept that story.

Important points on the Lord Buddha's image :

Let us consider the facts, there was denying the fact that took refuge in Buddha's image since the time of the Buddha. Some scholars moreover, said that taking refuge in Buddha's image can be during the one century after appearing Jesus, making an evaluation of art work and Buddha's statue, Gandara work carved in Gandhara state, north-west of India.

Besides, there were not valid documents to say that there was taking refuge in Buddha's statue since lifetime of the Buddha. Therefore, there was full of suspects to accept that king kosala took refuge in Buddha's image carved with sandalwood.

Why we didn't see the Lord Buddha's statue earlier than one century A.D.?

We needed to study in detail whether the statues were ruined after carving or statues have been carved with easy materials to be broken or the statues have not been carved at all then? To my knowledge, there is the fact we can consider in Dighanikaya scripture taught by the Lord Buddha. It is mentioned as the following,

“Ucchinnabhavanettikobhikkhavetathâgatassakâyoti?hatiYâvassak
âyothassatitâvana?dakkhanatidevamanussâkâyassaBhedâuddha?j?
vitapariyâdânâna?dakkhanatidevamanussâ

As long as my Body exists in the world, you all will behold my body, after I pass away, you all won't behold my body anymore. When we consider above words of Lord Buddha, even Lord Buddha is subject to death certainly and nobody can escape from death and all living beings are mortal, so it is clear that in Buddhism's earlier literature, taking refuge in Buddha's image carved as living Buddha was not mentioned. Truly speaking, it cannot have been Buddha's image carved as the Great man earlier than one century A.D. Before the pillars of the Buddhist era, there have already been statues of deity (Deva), statues of ogre (yakkha) and statues of dragon, since then, old Indian people took refuge in the statues. But there is some doubt about taking refuge in statues of deity in human form and there are more with the symbolic qualities of the spiritual figure. Later, we have founded some traces and documents of images and idols in Brahman scriptures, sutras, and poem of epic proportions. Once again, Patanjali, the author of the mahabhasya, an ancient treatise on Sanskrit Grammar, mentioned in his book about the statue of Shiva and sakhanda, the general of Deva etc.....Broadly speaking, we may remark that Dravidians people began taking refuge in idol and image and Aryan people began taking refuge in symbols.

The following images of the Buddha took from google



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