

Buddhism Its History and Civilization

By

Rekadahene Chandajoti Maha Thero

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BUDDHISM
ITS
HISTORY.
AND
CIVILIZATION

BY

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THE HISTORY
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CIVILIZATION

VENERABLE BIKADARANE CHANDRABATI MASA THEKAI
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DIBRU GURU
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This Book is dedicated to
The Venerable Ampegama Sri Piyadassi
Maha Thera, Sri Priyadarsana Rama
Vihara, Manampita, Baddegama,
whose noble life and sermons on the
Dhamma inspired me to proceed
further in higher studies,

and
to

My Father and Mother,

whose principles and way of life
have been worthy of emulation.

MAY ALL OF THEM

attain the Supreme Consummation of
the Religious life.

The Author.

This book is dedicated to
The Venerable Acharyas Sri Piyadasa
Maha Thero, Sri Piyadasana Rama
Vihara, Mandalay, Ceylon,
whose noble life and sermons on the
Dhamma inspired me to proceed
further in higher studies.

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The Author

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CONTENTS

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Permission to reprint or to translate this book may be
obtained from the Author.

The Author.

ABOUT THE BOOK AND ITS AUTHOR

By

Ven. Dr. Kaluwachchimulle Mahaṇama

The author of this book, the Ven. Rēkadahēne Chandajoti Thero, is an experienced teacher with a scholarly mind. He is known to have a deep knowledge of Buddhist Philosophy and Culture, as well as a mastery of Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhala and English. I consider myself fortunate to have been a student under him when he was the Principal of Sāstrodaya Pirivena, Sandalankāwa.

His book, "Buddhism, its History and Civilization", has a threefold significance. Firstly, it can be used as a handbook by those who are interested in the Buddha's teaching as it covers all the important aspects of Buddhism. It begins with the Five Precepts and gradually develops into a discussion of those deep philosophical aspects such as the Four Noble Truths, Kamma, Re-birth, Patīccasamuppada and Nibbāna.

It also discusses the Māhayānic concepts of Bodhisatva Vāda, Trikaya Siddhanta etc. Secondly, the book is useful as a short history of Buddhism. It gives a brief account of the historical and social conditions that gave rise to Buddhism, and describes the important stages in its subsequent development.

The chapters dealing with the patronage of the Emperor Asōka for Thēravāda and that of Kanishka for Mahayāna contain a lot of information. The section on the role played by the Buddhist monks of Sri Lanka in propagating the Master's word, both within the country and internationally, illustrates the valuable service that they have rendered through the years.

Thirdly, this book is valuable as an introduction to Buddhism for foreign students, especially for the Western reader. At present there is a great demand for Buddhist literature in the western world. Judging from my own personal experience during the past nine years, which I spent among European peoples, I can confidently state that any attempt to introduce Buddhism to them in an appealing manner can render a great service, since (when understood and practised properly) it paves the way for emancipation from the miseries of life.

The Ven. Pandit Chandajoti Thero's book is written in a simple and straightforward manner so as to cater for the needs of the general reader. His lucid style makes the book pleasant and readable. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I recommend this valuable publication to all students of Buddhism.

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Nugegoda, Sri Lanka.

FOREWORD

By

Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge

A demand certainly does exist for short introductory treatises on Buddhism in modern languages for a growing population of interested general readers who are fascinated by the freshness and the relevance of the Buddha's message of peace in today's world of trouble and turmoil.

Although many such treatises written by eminent western scholars are already in circulation and they can definitely be rated very high both in terms of authenticity and sincerity of purpose, the new generation of readers show a distinct partiality in favour of interpretations of Buddhism by practising Buddhists of traditionally Buddhist countries. It is, therefore, not by chance that a large number of general books on various aspects of Buddhism came to be written in recent years by scholars of South and South East Asia. Sri Lanka, with her millennia of leadership in the Buddhist world and with her pre-eminent galaxy of competent students of Buddhism, has a very impressive record in this connection.

Venerable Rekadahene Chandajoti Thero's "Buddhism - its History and Civilization" is a lucid presentation of the development of Buddhism. Commencing with the social, religious and philosophical background in which Buddhism arose, the book, in ten chapters, deals with the principal doctrines of Buddhism as well as the growth and spread of Buddhism as a world religion. The author concentrates on the history of Buddhism in India, and Sri Lanka.

Being a teacher of Buddhism in a premier school in Colombo, Venerable Chandajoti Thero displays a well-developed facility to explain even the most abstruse ideas in very simple terms. He quotes authority in support of his views. The brevity of the book does not prevent him from mentioning and disposing of different points of view and controversies.

The author has in mind the young western intellectuals as his reading public. The first draft of the book has actually been prepared for the use of such a group that sought his aid in making a serious study of Buddhism. They will, no doubt, find this book both interesting and useful.

Unesco,
Bangkok,
Thailand.

PREFACE

It is only by constant study and practice that we can realise the excellence of the Buddha's doctrine. In this respect it is like a piece of sandalwood, the sweet odour of which becomes intensified the more and more it is served piece by piece. The Buddha's view of the world as well as his doctrine is a realistic one. Although some represent Buddhism as a religion and also as a philosophy, it is essentially a way of life based on the Middle Path. It is therefore more than a religion or a philosophy in the commonly accepted sense of these terms.

This Middle Path is identical with the Noble Eightfold Path, which falls into the three categories of Sila (virtue), Samādhi (concentration) and Pannā (wisdom). There is no place in the Buddha's teaching for a Creator or Brahma. This is well brought out in the Dhammapada text, "attahi attano nātho" — "by oneself is one emancipated".

The Buddha's doctrine postulates no rituals and ceremonies, although Mahāyānism tends towards devotionism and ritual. Thēravāda, however, is different in this respect. Thus it is that we have Buddhism manifesting itself in two forms, Thēravāda and Mahāyāna.

The Great Teacher

The life of the Buddha was distinguished by special features not discernible in that of any other religious teacher of the world. It was a life dedicated to the service of others. When we reflect on his life, remembering that he was born in a public park, gained Enlightenment under a tree, and attained Parinibbāna (Demise) once again in a public park, we see his true significance. He was indeed a most excellent teacher, who ministered to the spiritual needs of all in common.

Born to the purple and bred in the lap of luxury, he became a homeless and wandering ascetic who went begging for alms, fraternizing with the poor and lowly. Thereby, he incurred the wrath and hostility of the privileged and priestly Brahmin caste. The Buddha exhorted his disciples too to follow his example, and minister in common to both the rich and the poor, the high and the low. He taught by both example and precept, always practising what he preached - "Yatā Vādi, Thatā Kāri". Most exalted among religious teachers, he shines as a great and noble example to mankind for all time.

The Doctrines

The Buddha's doctrine shows us the way to the attainment of true wisdom and understanding, "Yatā bhūta gnāna dassanam" (knowledge and vision based on Reality). It is characterised as "Ehi passika" — "to be critically examined and evaluated". It is also "atakkāvacara" — transcending formal logic and rationalism. It is therefore

ultimately transcendental in nature. The doctrine of "Paticca samuppāda" (dependent origination) teaches the conditionality of all physical and psychical phenomena, and explains the operation of the laws of cause and effect. This is set out in the Patthāna, the last book of the Abhidhamma Pitaka, where the Patthāna Pakarana — the twenty four modes of conditionality—are described. It is by the realisation of the truth of such an exalted and noble doctrine that man can attain Nibbāna. This is the noble path of the Buddha.

Theravāda and Mahāyāna

For a hundred years after the Buddha's Parinibbāna no changes were effected in his teachings. This began to occur only after the second Buddhist Council held at Vaisāli during the time of King Kālāsoka. We shall deal with this at considerable length in the following pages. However, for the convenience of the reader we give below a brief introduction to the two main Schools of Buddhism, Thēravāda and Mahāyāna.

Theravāda (Hinayana) or Southern Buddhism

Thēravāda, which literally means "Doctrine of the Elders", is considered to be the oldest form of the Buddha's teachings that has been handed down to us in the Pāli language. According to tradition it was so named because it is said to have been defined and set down by five hundred Holy Elders of the Order soon after the death of the Buddha. Indeed it was the Thēravāda school which made

it possible for the original doctrine of the Buddha to be preserved.

It was in the Southern part of India that Thēravāda Buddhism spread as a major influence. It is therefore also referred to as Southern Buddhism, and prevails to this day in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

The doctrinal works of the Thēravāda school constitute what is called the Tripitaka or the Three Baskets, namely (1) Sutta Pitaka, the Basket of Discourses (2) Vinaya Pitaka, the Basket of Disciplinary rules and (3) the Abhidhamma Pitaka, the Basket of Philosophy.

Each of these Pitakas or Baskets consists of many books which have their own particular generic names. Those which constitute the Sutta Pitaka are called Nikāyas, while the Vinaya Pitaka consists of Pāli and the Abhidhamma Pitaka of Pakarana.

The Sutta Pitaka contains the sermons and discourses of the Buddha and consists of five Nikāyas.

- (1) Dighanikāya
- (2) Majjhimanikāya
- (3) Samyuttanikāya
- (4) Anguttaranikāya
- (5) Khuddakanikāya

The Vinaya Pitaka, consisting of Vinaya rules, was compiled to enforce discipline amongst Bhikkhus (monks) and Bhikkhunis (Nuns) of the Order. It too has five sections or Pali.

- (1) Pārājikapāli
- (2) Pācittiyapāli
- (3) Mahāvaggapāli
- (4) Cullavaggapāli
- (5) Parivārapāli

The Abhidhamma Pitaka contains all of the Buddha's profound teachings regarding Citta (Mind and Consciousness) and Cētasika (Mental Factors). It consists of seven sections or Pakarana.

- (1) Dhamma sanganipakarana
- (2) Vibhangapakarana
- (3) Dhātukathāpakarana
- (4) Puggalapannattipakarana
- (5) Yamakapakarana
- (6) Patthānāpakarana
- (7) Kathāvatthupakarana

The Tripitaka of the Thēravāda was compiled over a long period of time and reached its complete form after the three Buddhist Councils had been held. Later in Sri Lanka, at the Mahāvihāra in Anuradhāpura, scholars such as Dhammapāla and Upasēna under the direction of the

Thera Buddhaghōsa compiled Atthakathas and Tikas or commentaries on the original texts of the Tripitakas to elaborate further the Buddhist canon. We are able to ascertain from historical evidence that still later Mahāyāna ideas came to be incorporated into these subsidiary texts of Thēravāda Buddhism, which thus came to have a Māhāyana admixture.

The highest goal of Thēravāda is the attainment of Nibbāna. This can be achieved only through self-discipline and enlightened knowledge. As stated in the Pāli text "Paccattam veditabbō vinnuhi" — "It must be clearly comprehended by the wise".

Mahāyāna (Northern Buddhism)

It is not possible to state with any certainty when precisely Mahāyānism originated. However it is evident that Mahāyāna doctrines were in existence at the time of the second Buddhist Council. In this process the Mahasanghikas had a pioneering role. Perhaps it is also likely that Sarvāstivāda Buddhists helped in the process of developing Mahāyāna teachings.

The chief feature of Mahāyānism is the worship of Bodhisatvas. This is known as the Bodhisatva cult. Among the chief features of Mahāyānism are the perfection of the Pāramitās, the gaining of enlightenment and the ten devotional forms of worship. The ultimate goal is the attainment of •Buddhahood, which, according to

Mahāyānism, is within the reach of every human being. Corresponding to the Nibbāna of Thēravāda we have Sukhāvati in Mahāyāna, which is the abode of those who attain Buddhahood. Mahāyāna thus differs in many ways from Thēravāda.

The attaining of Buddhahood and the service of others are the two main aims in Mahāyāna. However, Mahāyānism has developed and progressed on the basis of Devotionalism. Mahāyāna also contains many philosophical ideas. Mahāyāna really began to make headway after the Fourth Buddhist Council held during Kanishka's time.

Most of the Mahāyāna works are in Sanskrit. "Aṣṭasāhasrika Praṅnāpāramita" is regarded as the oldest extant Mahāyāna work.

There are a great many works in Mahāyāna such as Saddharmapundarika Sūtra, Lankavatāra Sūtra, Dasabhumika and Gandabbyūha. The learned scholars who helped to promote Mahāyānism were Nāgarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Āryadeva, Asvaghōsa, Padmasambhava and Kamalasila. Mahāyānism has spread by interaction with the cultures of China, Japan, Korea and even (Sarvāstivādi) Tibet.

It can be said that Buddhism has spread throughout the world on the basis of these two schools of thought. Buddhism, which originated over two thousand five hundred years ago in the Madhya Dēsa (Central Region) of Bharatadēsa (India), is today a world-wide religion numbering over five hundred and fifty million adherents.

I hope that this little book will in some modest measure help to promote a knowledge and understanding of Buddhism, especially amongst Western peoples, at a time when there appears to be an awakening and growth of interest with regard to Buddhism in the West. I also trust that this effort of mine will help to create an awareness of and stimulate interest in Buddhist culture and its history as well as in the Buddhist doctrine.

During the course of last year, I had the opportunity of meeting quite a number of young foreign students who had come to Sri Lanka after studying in the University of Oxford. I learnt from them that they had considerable difficulty in finding teachers and books in their countries for the purpose of studying Buddhism. This fact encouraged me in the writing of this book.

I also wish to emphasise the fact that it was in the midst of many difficulties and hardships, and at a time when there were many drawbacks regarding printing, that this book was written. It had to be done, too, within a comparatively short period of time to satisfy the purpose for which it was intended.

I have to thank Dr. Ananda Guruge of the UNESCO for contributing a foreword to this work, which he read through in manuscript soon after it was written. I am very happy that he has brought to bear his great scholarship and understanding of the subject in making his comments on the book.

A special word of thanks is due to my devoted pupil Ven. Dr. Kaluwachchimulle Mahanama, Lecturer in the Dept. of Language & Culture at the Vidyodaya Campus

of the University of Sri Lanka, for kindly contributing a clear and concise statement of his opinion about the interest and significance of this book. I owe much to his encouragement.

I have also to thank two colleagues of mine on the Ananda College staff for all the assistance given to me so kindly and ungrudgingly in the writing of this book. Mr. Neil Kuruppu helped in no small way in enabling me to write this book in English, while also offering useful advice regarding its contents. I am especially and deeply indebted to Mr. V. Thanabalasingham, who so kindly and readily helped in the reading of the proofs, besides giving me invaluable advice on some points of English usage.

I must also thank Col. G. W. Rajapaksa, the Principal of Ananda College, for having given me all encouragement in my activities both curricular and extra-curricular.

Finally, I have to thank most sincerely my own brother Mr. A. B. T. Kariyawasam and his wife for having so generously helped me in the printing and publishing of this book.

Mr. Bertie Wanigasekere and the staff of the Felix Press were indeed most helpful, and to them too I am very grateful.

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Rēkadahēne Chandajōti

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Manila, Philippines
1952

THE MASTER'S ADVICE

Sabbapapāssā Akaranāṃ •
Kusalassa Upasampadā
Sacittapariyōdapanam
Etam Buddhana Sasanam

(*Dhammapada*)

DO GOOD AND BE GOOD

- Not to do any evil
to cultivate good
to purify one's mind
this is the Teaching of the Buddha.

(*The Buddha's Advice*)

handā dāni bhikkhavē amantayāmi vō, vayadhammā
sankhārā appamādena sampādētha'ti.

(*Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta*)

Verily, I say unto you now, O monks, all things are
perishable, work out your deliverance with earnestness.

(*The Buddha's last words*)

SCHEME OF THE TEXT

1. Ancient Indian Society and its Religious Development (The Social Background)
2. The Six Teachers and their Doctrines-6th Century B.C. A Comparative Study. (The religious environment in Buddhist India)
 - (a) The Coming of the Buddha
 - (b) The Doctrine of the Buddha
 - (c) The Noble Eightfold Path
 - (d) The Four Noble Truths
 - (e) Trilakshana (Anicca -Dukkha-Anatta)
 - (f) Paticca Samuppāda
 - (g) Kamma and Cētanā
 - (h) Nibbāna
3. Emperor Asoka and his Buddhist Missions Abroad
4. The Establishment of the Sangha - Spread of Buddhism in North India
5. King Kanishka and Theories of Mahāyāna Buddhism
6. Foreign Relations of Mahayānism in Sri Lanka
7. Mahāyāna Buddhism in Sri Lanka - Its rise and development
 - Appendix I - Early Buddhist Texts
 - Appendix II - Development of Buddhist Sects
 - Appendix III - Some of the Master's Words.



NAMO TASSA BHAGAWATO ARAHATO
SAMMA SAMBUDDHASSA

Homage to Him, the Exalted, the Worthy, the Fully
Enlightened One.

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

In Northern India, and particularly in the region where Buddhism originated (i.e. the area where the Magadha Kingdom arose), society had evolved on the basis of a caste system with four main divisions or Varnas (the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra). In this society as it evolved from Rigvedic and Vedic times the Brahmins came to be the privileged caste, claiming the highest social status. They were the popularly acknowledged intermediaries between man and the supernatural forces that were believed to control his fate.

• Thus it was that the common people resorted to reciting hymns of praise to the Gods through Brahmins, in order to achieve their own objectives. They began to deify the common objects like the sun, the moon, rain and fire. They used to present their offerings to such Gods through the medium of Brahmin priests. According to the Brahmin priests, these offerings known as 'Yāga' were the most superior of such methods of worship, and consequently they were offering what satisfied the Gods most. It is solely for the advantage of the Brahmins that offerings of such articles of food as milk, meat, cereals and ghee are mentioned in the Vedas. The supply of the articles needed for these Yāgas was the duty of the common people, while their use was the exclusive privilege of the Brahmins. Those who belonged to the lowest caste, namely, the Sudras, had to provide firewood and such other material. In this manner, the masses were subjected to utter misery and suffering on account of the rituals conducted by the Brahmins. Those of the so-called low castes were down-trodden and treated as such.

•

The Buddha's appearance at a time like this was thus a great relief for the people. In order to save society from the prevalent evils, such an event as the appearance of a Supreme Being had to happen. The caste system kept the so-called low castes isolated from the rest of society as far as social intercourse was concerned, and the low castes had to be the slaves of the higher castes, their behaviour itself being regulated by those castes. The Brahmins, according to the social structure, were debarred from having any sort of matrimonial connection with the people of the low castes and this gave an opportunity to them to exploit the people of the low castes and subject them to extreme misery. Such mean practices were often resorted to by the corrupt Brahmins. These practices contributed a great deal to the condemnation of Brahmin society. It was owing to these reasons that Gautama's philosophy and the fundamentals of His teachings were hailed by contemporary society.

Further, even political developments in Northern India favoured the rise of Buddhism. There were at first the sixteen Mahajanapadas, Anga, Magadha, Kasi, Kosala etc., but subsequently Magadha was able to impose its supremacy on all these states. Thereby the traditional Rigvedic and Brahminic society in the new Magadhan State began to experience internal social conflicts, especially between the Brahmins and the Kshatriya clan, the latter of whom we are told had ethnically a Mongolian strain. Hence it would appear that the common people, dominated and exploited by the Brahmins, were readily susceptible to the liberating influences of new teachings originating from Kshatriya sources and exposing the hollowness of the Brahmin claim to a privileged and sanctified status in society.

When we consider the first discourse of Gautama the Buddha and analyse its basic objectives, we can conclude that it served to ridicule the other religious beliefs prevalent at the time. This is manifest when we consider the three elements, Sila (virtue), Samadhi (concentration) and Panna (wisdom) which enable us to attain the ultimate goal of Sthaviravadha Buddhism, namely Nibbana.* At that time, Brahminic society modelled itself on the lines of the behaviour pattern known as Self-indulgence, while at the same time there was another class of people devoted to various penances and observances, namely Self-mortification, which they thought would lead to their ultimate salvation. Gautama trod the intermediate path that lies between these two extremes. This is the Middle Path, which is the crux of Theravāda Buddhism.

* Gautama the Buddha condemned indulgence in sensual pleasures as a mean, crude and irrational practice. The practice of self-mortification, which causes immense pain and suffering, is regarded as too vulgar a mode of behaviour. The basic teaching of the Buddha stresses the necessity to engage in virtuous practices on the basis of the Middle Path and thereby attain salvation. Contemporary society realized from these teachings of Gautama the Buddha that the followers of the other two extremes, which he shunned, were misguided beings guilty of misleading the masses.

THE RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT IN BUDDHIST INDIA

In India, where for centuries the common people had been attuned to the atmosphere of Brahminism, the Buddha occupies a most exalted position. He promoted freedom of thought and an intellectual revolution by propounding new ideas and a new outlook. A contemporary of the Buddha, the founder of Jainism, Nighanta-nātha putta or Vardhamāna Mahāvira appears to have been highly esteemed in Indian society. Both these great teachers succeeded in dealing a heavy blow to the Brahminic society and doctrines which at that time had taken firm root in India.

Both of them proved that the Brahminic doctrines were a meaningless deception, irrelevant to both this and the next world. Both belonged to the Kshatriya clan. Many critics believe that this was the main reason why Brahminism was dealt such a heavy blow.

As already pointed out, society at that time was divided into four sections called Varnas. It is clear that the teachings of both these great teachers denounced this Varna or Caste system.

Indian society of that time especially benefited from the doctrines of the Buddha because it was the first time that the rigid system of casteism was denounced. It would appear that the people of India, steeped in ignorance, received great consolation from this new socialist doctrine of the Buddha. Owing to this important fact the great transcendental doctrine of the Buddha began to spread throughout all India.

There is a great store of varied information contained in the Buddhist literature of the Tripitaka concerning the complex society of India during the 6th Century B. C., when the Buddha lived and when many philosophies were expounded. Founders of different religions and philosophies preached diverse ways of salvation to be followed by human beings. The intelligentsia engaged themselves in the search to discover which of these proclaimed the truth.

In the meantime the Brahmins fulfilling the religious needs of those times won the favour of this intelligentsia, and secured power and privileges for themselves. Because of the power they thus came to wield, the Brahmins spread many heresies among the people. On account of this fact it appears that the Brahmins came to occupy a high place in society while the Kshatriyas were deprived of their due status. The Kshatriyas (the warrior-caste) therefore began to propound teachings contrary to the Brahminic doctrines.

This religious struggle developed in the Kingdom of Magadha and its neighbouring territories. Concerning these Brahminic ideas and these religious movements a learned authority, Vincent Smith, is of the view that the rulers of Magadha and the neighbouring states were not of Indo-Aryan origin but were descended from Mongolian dwellers of the mountainous regions. They were not therefore fully Hindu.

The main reason why liberal ideas concerning religion and philosophy arose was that there were racial distinctions between the Hinduised Sākyas and Licchavis on the one side and the Brahmins of Aryan origin among whom they lived. These clans regarded the Brahmins as a totally different group, and rose up against the Brahminic system and its doctrine of Salvation.

In this manner, as a result of the religious revolution of the 6th Century B.C. in India, many philosophies and religious sects arose. Of these in the end only two survived. These were Jainism, preached by Nighantanāthaputta, and the teachings of Gautama Buddha. Both of them have to be regarded as anti-Brahmin manifestations.

Religious and Philosophical Awakening in the Buddhist Era

From ancient times in India the religion of its people came to be built on the basis of faith in the Divine, and gradually during the Vedic, Brahminic, Aranyaka and Upanishad periods assumed different forms of philosophical speculation. It is evident that there were many who during the Vedic period rose up in opposition to the power acquired by the Brahmins and the caste system devised by them to stabilise their power. By the time of the Upanishad period all the primitive ideas had so evolved that the Karmakhānda (religious devotion through works) in the Vedas followed by Vedic man was completely overlooked and his mind was directed again towards Dhyānakhānda (meditation).

On account of this their ideas came to be oriented towards another path. Out of such an intellectual realisation there arose the doctrines of the Six religious savants. According to the Pali chronicles, therefore, many ideas came to be propounded, especially those classified under the sixty-four heresies mentioned in the Brahmajāla Sutta in Buddhist literature. Of these, four doctrines were regarding creation, while all others were connected with the Soul theory.

In this manner, of those who propounded different ideas the chief place came to be occupied by the six who are known as the Sextet of teachers. Their teachings are well dealt with in the Sāmannaphala Sutta of the Dīghanikāya in the Tripitaka. The names of these teachers and their doctrines are briefly as follows :

- (1) Pūrana Kassapa - Akiriya Vāda (doctrine of inefficacy)
- (2) Ajitha Kesakambala - Uchchēda vāda (materialist doctrine of annihilationism)
- (3) Pakuda Kaccāyana - Akruntatavāda (nihilism)
- (4) Makkhali-Gosāla - Daiva Vāda (Fatalism)
- (5) Sanjaya Bellatthiputta - Anischitatā Vāda (doctrine of impermanence)
- (6) Nighantanāthaputta - Chātuyama Samvara Vāda (doctrine of Ahimsa)

Of these six teachers, information regarding four i. e. Pūrana Kassapa, Ajitha Kesakambala, Pakuda Kaccāyana and Sanjaya Bellatthiputta, is given in the Sāmannaphala Sutta of the Dīghanikāya. Information regarding the other two is given in both Jaina and Buddhist literature. The teachings of these six teachers can be divided into two categories :

- (1) Āsthika Vāda - (Belief in the existence of the soul and the next world)
- (2) Nāsthika Vāda - (non-belief in a soul and the next world, and in the results of good and bad deeds).

(1) Purana Kassapa

His clan name was Kassapa. He was born as the thousandth slave in his master's household. Therefore he was called Pūrana Kassapa as recorded in the Commentaries. When he ran away from home he had to go unclothed and nude, since thieves had stolen his garments. As stated in Buddhist literature his doctrines are as follows :

“No sin accrues to any person who performs any action, destroys another, oppresses another, brings sufferings to others, causes such things to happen through the instrumentality of others, kills living beings, steals, breaks into houses, harasses households, engages in highway robbery, commits adultery, or utters falsehoods.

If any person with a sharp weapon were to kill all living beings and pile up one heap of heads he is not guilty of sin. If any person were to give alms or cause to give alms as far as the Ganges or perform Yāga he acquires no merit therefrom. The giving of alms, control of the senses, self-control and speaking the truth give rise to no merit whatsoever”. This in brief was his teaching.

(2) Ajitha Kesakambala

Ajitha was his distinctive name. Because he had a blanket made of hair he was known as Kesakambala. His teaching was known as Nāsthika Vādaya (i.e. non-belief in a next world) or Nihilism. He may therefore be regarded as an extreme materialist. It is evident that during his time there developed a materialism originating from the Vedas. He teaches that Dana (giving of alms), Yāga and Hōma (sacrificial rites and ceremonies) are of no avail.

There is no such thing as sin or merit. There is no next world. There are no deities and there need be no Brahmin priesthood. Man was created out of the four elements. When a living being dies he merely dissolves into these elements. The element of Pathavi (extension) combines with the earth, the element of cohesion with water, the element of heat with fire, and the element of motion with air. The senses are assimilated into the air. Both fools and sages are annihilated by death. Ideas pertaining to Karma and the ceasing of a being's existence are expounded in this manner in this materialist philosophy.

(3) Pakuda Kacchāyana

Pakuda is his distinctive name. Kacchāyana is his clan name. His teaching is as follows. The four above-mentioned elements and in addition three others, joy (Sukha) suffering (Dukkha) and energy (Jīva), have not been created by anyone nor evolved. The soul constituted of these seven elements is a fixed and permanent entity. They are never destroyed. There can be no destroyer nor destroyed. There can be no listener nor one who causes to listen. There can be none who knows or causes to know. No one dies by being cut with a sharp weapon.

It is difficult to gather much information about this teacher. He is briefly dealt with in the Samannaphala Sutta of the Dighanikaya. In later times he figures as a founder of the Vaibhashika tradition. Based on his teaching of the seven elements it is propounded that there is neither Karma nor the effects of Karma.

(4) Sanjaya Bellatthiputta

Sanjaya is his distinctive name and Bellatthi (Vairāta) is his father's name. Information regarding him is very scanty. The main points in his teaching are as follows:

He gives no definitive view about the existence or non-existence of a next world. Stating that no definitive conclusion can be arrived at regarding anything he propounded a strange doctrine. His method was to give no clear and proper answer to any question put to him.

(5) Makkhali Gōsāla

According to the commentaries and the Prakrit works Uvāsagadasāvo and Bhāgavatisutra, the more important facts relating to the life of Makkhali Gōsāla and the main features of his philosophy are as follows:

His clan name was Gōsāla, while his father was known as Gobahula (owner of many cattle) and his mother bore the name of Badhra. He lived in the Kingdom of Magadha. He is said to have received the name of Makkhali Gōsāla because of the following incident which occurred during the earlier part of his life when he was a servant in a household.

On a certain day his master sent him on an errand carrying a vessel of oil and warned him about a muddy swamp he would encounter, shouting to him "Makhali Gosala" (Gosala, fall not into the swamp). Despite this warning Gosala fell into this swamp, and fearing the wrath of his master, fled. •

In doing so he is said to have been compelled to run in the nude because his irate master had attempted to grab him by his garment and Gōsāla fled, breaking loose and leaving it in his master's clutching hands. The people who later saw only an unusual individual in the nude mistook him to be an arhant and he was thereafter treated with all the attention and respect due to such a person. Gosala is then said to have become a disciple of Mahavira whom, however, he later repudiated, and by whom he was predeceased by sixteen years.

The Pali term is Makkhali while in Sanskrit we have the term 'Mashkarin' which means an "Ajivaka (hermit) carrying a bamboo staff." Makkhali Gōsāla's teaching was briefly as follows :

He propounded a nihilist philosophy (nasthika vada), and as stated in the Sāmannapala Sutta of the Buddhist Canon, his teachings made out that :

"There is no cause or effect pertaining to the defilements of living beings. Defilement, therefore, occurs without cause or effect. Similarly beings become purified also without such cause or effect. There are no consequences following from the deeds of oneself or of others. Both the foolish and the wise have to go through the same cycle of births. There is no lessening or increase of Samsāra."

Makkhali Gōsāla was, therefore, a firm believer in the doctrine of rigid fatalism. This fact is stated in the Suttas as follows. He had four ways in which he answered questions :

- (1) "It is so" (Ēvam prakāra)
- (2) "That is so" (Tathā prakāra)
- (3) "It is different" (Anyathā prakāra)
- (4) "It is not so" (Nōnō Ithi prakāra)

This teaching disappeared after a short period.

(6) Nighantanāthaputta

He is the founder of Jainism. He is known as Vardhamāna Mahāvira. Born several years before the Buddha, he belonged to the Gñātha clan, a branch of the Licchavis of Vaisāli city in the Vajji country. It is said that he was about thirty years older than the Buddha. He is regarded as the last teacher in a line of twenty-four Tithankaras as stated in Jaina literature. His father's name was Siddhārtha, and by birth he belonged to the Kshatriya Clan. His mother's name was Trishala. He was born in 599 B.C. As a child he was called Vardhamāna and proved to be possessed of intelligence. At a suitable age he was married to Yasōdhā of the Kaundanya clan.

Having led the life of a layman till the age of thirty he renounced the worldly life, like Gautama Buddha, after the birth of his daughter Anōja. He engaged in an austere life of self-mortification for twelve years and then after a period of meditation gained the four-fold knowledge of

- (1) Mathi-Gnāna
- (2) Sruthi Gnāna
- (3) Avadhi Gnāna
- (4) Manakhpariyāya Gnāna

Developing this knowledge he realised the state of Kaivalya (Nirvāna). This is similar to the state of omniscience to which the Buddha attained. Having rendered a great service to the world Nighantanāthaputta died in 517 B.C. in the city of Pāvā.

The life-story of Nighantanāthaputta is very similar to that of the Buddha. Although these two great teachers were contemporaries, wandering and preaching in the same region, nowhere is it recorded that they met each other. Nighantanāthaputta preached in the Ardha Māgadhi language while the Buddha did so in Suddha Māgadhi (Pure Māgadhi). In later times Jainism came to be divided into two sects:

- (1) Svetāmbara Jaina (The white-clad sect)
- (2) Dighambara Jaina (The nude sect)

Nighantanāthaputta was not a believer in creation (Anishvaravādi). Never referring to the theory of 'Ishtāpurthi' (Creator) as given in the Vedas, he was a firm believer in Kamma and its consequences. Regarding this doctrine there is recorded in the Sāmannaphala Sutta, in the Buddhist canon, the 'Cātuyāma Samvara' and similarly in the Upālisutta there is mentioned the 'Tridanda'. As mentioned in these records, Nighantanāthaputta's doctrine is one of extreme non-violence. 'Tridanda' is divided into three types:

- (1) Kāyadande (Austere control and disciplining of the body)
- (2) Vāgdanda (Austere control and disciplining of speech)
- (3) Manodanda (Austere control and disciplining of thought)

According to this system the followers of Nighanta-nāthaputta have to be constantly following the path of self-mortification in the practice of their religion. As in Buddhism with its concept of Cētana (will or volition), Jainism believed in Kamma and its consequences. The people, to a very great extent, accepted this teaching. The Buddha had to lay down the 'Sikkāpada' (Vinaya Rules) because of the influence of Jainism.

More specifically, the Vinaya rules regarding the rainy season (Vassikkhāpada) were laid down by the Buddha owing to Jainism. From this it is evident that during that period Jainism was highly esteemed socially. According to the Jaina teaching even plants had a soul. Those who wear even a thread show an attachment to worldly comforts. All animate and inanimate things possess a soul. Hence owing to this belief Jains cover their mouth with a piece of cloth even when they go on a journey. The soul according to Jainism is of three kinds:

- (1) Nithyasiddhātmaya (This is similar to the Paramātma of the Hindus)
- (2) Mukhātmayā (This is similar to the Āsrava of the Buddhists)
- (3) Baddhātmaya (This is similar to the 'Kamma' of the Buddhists)

This Baddhātmaya is said to pervade the cells of an individual's body as long as the soul is steeped in Kamma. One cannot secure release from Samsara. It is only by self-mortification that one can rid oneself of Kamma. This teaching is not at all in accord with Buddhism, which explains Kamma in a very different way. Jainism teaches that there are one hundred and fifty eight different kinds of Kamma. Further, these one hundred and fifty eight fall into eight groups :

- (1) Gnānāvaranīya Karma (The Karma that deludes cognition)
- (2) Darshanavaraniya Karma (The Karma that defiles the soul)
- (3) Vedaniya Karma (The Karma that begets joy and sorrow) •
- (4) Mohaniya Karma (The Karma that causes an individual's rise and fall)
- (5) Ayukarma (The Karma that determines longevity)
- (6) Nāmakarma (The Karma that determines the organs of the body)
- (7) Gōthrakarma (The Karma that determines birth, clan, caste etc.,)
- (8) Antharakarma (The Karma that determines the changes in a person's life)

Karma accumulates owing to Mulāva (ignorance) Asamvaraya (undisciplined behaviour) Ragaya (lust) etc. Hence self-mortification is necessary to be rid of all Karma.

By this process one can attain the Nirvana of Jainism. There are six ways by which one could rid oneself of all Karma.

- (1) To be unclothed and naked (To wear clothes is to promote defilements)
- (2) Not to clean one's teeth
- (3) To refrain from eating as much as possible
- (4) To sleep on heated stones
- (5) To allow one's body to be covered with dirt
- (6) To sit on nails

Buddhism does not accept these views.

Jainism also has its Pancha Sila, which, however, is to a great extent similar to the Buddhist view.

- (1) To refrain from taking life
- (2) To refrain from uttering falsehoods
- (3) To refrain from stealing
- (4) To lead a celibate life
- (5) To be perfectly non-attached (Virati)

During the 6th Century B. C. it would appear that there was keen competition between Jainism and Buddhism. There are two main reasons for this.

- (i) The Buddha and Nighantanāthaputta both preached their doctrines in the regions of Northern India.
- (ii) Both recruited disciples from the same social groups.

Jainism appeared to have occupied a more important place in society at that time than Buddhism, while the rulers had also begun to patronise it.

Jainism and Buddhism arose in opposition to Vedic Brahminism with its manifold usages and rituals. Both these religions therefore were antagonistic to Brahminism. Buddhism differed from Jainism in that it did not advocate self-mortification and the doctrine of extreme Ahimsa. Both religions however were opposed to sacrificial rituals and the Hindu belief that Brahma was the Creator. However, the Jains did not accept the Buddhist theory of no-soul. By the 4th Century B. C. Jainism spread to South India.

After the second Buddhist Council Buddhism split into eighteen sects, but previous to that there were only the two main sects of Theravada and Mahayana. Jainism and Buddhism are not very dissimilar. This is because the Buddha and Mahavira were kinsmen, both being associated with the same Gurukula (School of thought). Furthermore, the sacred places of both these religions are situated close to one another.

However, during the period between the sixth and third centuries B. C. Buddhism emerged as a very influential and popular religion. There is evidence to indicate that from pre-Vedic times there were many philosophies such as Brahminism, the philosophies of Cārvāka and Sāṅkhya, which were opposed to it, and also the doctrines of the six heretical teachers mentioned earlier. Thus during such a period when people blindly followed their faiths there was the expectation that some great teacher would appear. Siddhartha Gautama came to be acclaimed as that teacher.

The Coming of the Buddha

Siddhartha Gautama was a prince of the Sakya clan, born in the year 623 B. C. at Kapilavāstu on the borders of Nepal. His father was King Suddhōdana, ruler of Kapilavāstu, and his mother Mahāmaya, who passed away within a few days of her son's birth. He married Princess Yasōdhara and had only one child, his son Rahula. For thirteen years after his marriage Prince Siddhartha led a layman's life of luxury and comfort. At the age of thirty, disillusioned by the fleeting pleasures of a royal palace he renounced the worldly life and became a homeless and wandering ascetic – a seeker after truth.

Intent on understanding the true nature of a life that is full of suffering, being subject to birth, decay, disease and death, he sought without success the advice of many a sage and teacher of his day. Thereafter for six strenuous years he underwent a spiritual struggle unaided and alone. He attempted first the path of self-mortification (Atthakilamatānu Yoga) and discovering that such a course was fruitless, he tried the other extreme of self-indulgence (Kāmasukallikhānu yoga). Realising that neither of these extremes helped him to realise the supreme truth Siddhārtha Gautama, by his own intuitive knowledge, gained wisdom and enlightenment, attaining Buddhahood in his thirty-fifth year at Buddhagaya.

Having rested for seven weeks he proceeded to Benares, where he preached his first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, to his five disciples, wherein he expounded the Middle Path consisting of the Noble Eightfold Path and the Four Noble Truths. Addressing his disciples he said, "Go ye, Bhikkhus, wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of Gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine, excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle and excellent in the end. Preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure". (Mahāvagga Vinaya Pitaka)

For forty-five years the Enlightened One worked incessantly and selflessly for the good and happiness of all, and in his eightieth year he passed away, attaining Nibbana at Kusinārā (Modern Kusinagar)

The Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path proclaimed by the Buddha was as follows :-

- (1) Right Understanding (Sammā Ditthi)
- (2) Right Thought (Sammā Sankappā)
- (3) Right Speech (Sammā Vācā)
- (4) Right Action (Sammā Kammanta)
- (5) Right Livelihood (Sammā Ajīva)
- (6) Right Effort (Sammā Vāyāma)
- (7) Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati)
- (8) Right Concentration (Sammā Samādhi)

The manner in which the Buddha has analysed the Eightfold Path indicates to us the excellence of the Buddhas' intellect and wisdom. Although other Indian religious teachings deal with the constituents of the Eightfold Path they do not provide us with such a systematic and penetrating analysis. Similar concepts are to be found in the Upanishads. In the Taittirīya Upanishad too we find a system similar to the Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

In the Gātuyāma Samvara of Jainism we discover similar concepts stated in connection with the methods of meditation set out therein. What we discern, however, through these similarities in other teachings, is that they all contain concepts implicit in the analysis of the Eightfold Path as given by the Buddha. Although there are such superficial similarities, the Noble Eightfold Path as taught by the Buddha has a specific meaning and significance which is not to be found in other teachings. ●

The Four Noble Truths

The first constituent of the Eightfold Path, Right Understanding, is explained as the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. Hence Right Understanding is of primary importance to Buddhists. Other philosophies give us a very different explanation regarding this concept of Right Understanding.

The Buddha's teaching regarding the Four Noble Truths deals with the knowledge of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation, and the way to the cessation of suffering. The truth regarding suffering tells us that all beings are subject to birth, decay, disease and death. In brief, the Five Aggregates (Skandhas) — Physical Phenomena (Rupa), Feeling of Sensation (Vedanā), Perception (Sannā), Volitional Activities (Samkhāra), Consciousness (Vinnāna), all constitute suffering. This is the truth regarding suffering, and the right understanding of it is Sammaditthi. This Sammaditthi is basically essential for the understanding of the real nature of the world. Of the Four Noble Truths, the understanding of suffering is of cardinal importance. Thus this is considered first.

The Second Noble Truth deals with the cause of suffering, and this is craving or attachment (tanhā). It is because of this craving that all beings continue to be born and reborn in Samsāra. What a being enjoys as happiness is really suffering, which springs from this craving or attachment. Man pursues many pleasures seeking happiness like the deer deluded by a mirage because of this craving or attachment. To be emancipated from Samsāra or the cycle of birth and re-birth one must understand the truth regarding craving. This craving assumes three forms:

- (1) Kāma Tanha (attachment to sensual pleasures)
- (2) Bhava Tanha (attachment to existence)
- (3) Vibhava Tanha (attachment to non-existence)

Kāma Tanha arises out of Sakkhāyaditthi or the idea that there exists an unchanging entity or a permanent soul – that there is such an entity as “I”.• A person who is under such a delusion always strives to pander to his five senses. It is because of ‘Kāma Tanha’ that happiness is regarded as enjoyment through the five senses. This is a delusion. As Kama Tanha increases, suffering arises. Thus Kāma Tanha is a cause of suffering.

Bhava Tanha is the craving that arises in a being for termination of life. This craving arises in a being who believes in the existence of a soul (Sāssataditthi).

Vibhava Tanha is the craving that arises in a being for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures as an end in itself. This craving arises because of the non-belief in an after-life (Ucchedaditthi). The Lokāyata theory of Cārvāka and Ajitha Kēsakambala belongs to this category. In the Brahmajala Sutta of the Buddhist canon seven types of Ucchedavāda are expounded.

The person who develops Right Understanding, the first constituent of the Noble Eightfold Path, realises that this craving is the cause of suffering. The second of the Four Noble Truths deals with the cause of this craving or suffering. Right Understanding gives the knowledge of how to end suffering. The Third Noble Truth deals with the cessation of suffering. This cessation of suffering is brought about by eradicating the three kinds of craving (Tanhakkhaya) which give rise to suffering. • This is Nibbana.

Right Understanding gives us the knowledge of the path to the cessation of suffering. The Fourth Noble Truth deals with the cessation of suffering (dukkhanirodagāmini patipadāghana). The Path to the cessation of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path. This is the Middle Path. It is, therefore, impossible to eradicate the three forms of craving which give rise to suffering without following the Middle Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path

1. Right Understanding (Sammāditthi)
2. Right Thought (Sammā Sankappa)
3. Right Speech (Sammā Vācā)
4. Right Action (Sammā Kammanta)
5. Right Livelihood (Sammā Ājiva)
6. Right Effort (Sammā Vāyāma)
7. Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati)
8. Right Concentration (Sammā Samādhi)

Right Understanding (Sammadīthi)

We have earlier dealt with Right Understanding. We shall now proceed to comment on the remaining seven.

Right Thought means right thinking (Samma Samkappa)

In this respect what is most important is Renunciation (Nekkhamma) or thinking directed towards the renunciation of the lay life. This means giving up all sensual pleasures. Hence Right Thought (Sammāsankappa) implies refraining from anger, the practice of Ahimsa, generating loving kindness (Metta), giving liberally to others and such other virtues. •

Right Speech (Sammā Vācā)

Right Speech implies refraining from sinful speech. By refraining from uttering falsehoods, unpleasant talk, inane chatter, and meaningless words Right Speech is attained.

Right Action (Sammā Kammanta)

Right Action means abstinence from physical action resulting in sinful deeds. By abstaining from killing, stealing and immoral conduct one can attain Right Action. Such a person will commit no sin.

Right Livelihood (Sammā Ājiva)

Right Livelihood means the leading of a virtuous life, which consists of righteousness in word and deed. Refraining from unrighteous conduct, injustice and from deeds harmful to others enables us to lead a life of Right Livelihood.

Right Effort (Sammā Vāyāma)

Right Effort consists of effort that is morally upright. This results in ridding oneself of laziness, abstaining from evil and performing meritorious deeds. The effort to abstain from sin consists in discarding evil that has already arisen and preventing the arising of unarisen evil. To accumulate merit one must endeavour to develop unarisen good and also promote the good that has already arisen.

Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati)

The mind never suffers from delusion when there is Right Mindfulness. There is also created a proper Mindfulness of what is done as well as of what is not done. These can all be recalled to mind again and again.

Right Concentration (Sammā Samādhi)

Right Concentration is one-pointedness of the mind. This can only be attained by preventing the mind from being distracted by various objects and directing its attention on one particular object.

Knowledge of the Noble Eightfold Path as explained above will result in liberation from Samsāra and the realisation of the Four Noble Truths. This is the only way by which one can attain Nibbana.

It is in accordance with the Eightfold Path that the method of Buddhist spiritual discipline is formulated. Sīla helps man to attain to ethical conduct. Sīla is of different types. A Buddhist can advance from the observance of the Five Precepts to the higher Sīla, which is possible only through the Higher Ordination with the Sangha. All these types of Sīla enable a person to lead a life of purity and spiritual discipline. Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration lead to mental purity or one-pointedness of mind. This has to be and can be realised only through meditation. It is then through this concentration of the mind that one can cast off the five Hindrances to spiritual development, namely, sensual desires (Kāmacchanda), hatred (Vyāpāda), sloth and torpor (thīnamiddha), restlessness and worry (uddhacca kukkuccha), and doubt and indecision (Vichikiccha). A person who is rid of these Five Hindrances is like one who has recovered from a disease.

Tilakkhana (The Three Characteristics)

Everything that the Buddha Dhamma teaches is clearly based on the Three Characteristics, Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta. This basic tenet of Buddhism teaches us that all things in this world subject to the law of cause and effect are transient (Anicca), full of suffering (Dukkha) and possess no soul (Anatta).

There is nothing in this world that is not subject to decay and extinction. In such a world where all things are transient, all our sensory experiences are bound up with suffering. Birth (Jati), decay (Jara), disease (Vyadhi), death (Marana), parting from dear ones (Piya vippayoga), association with what we dislike (Appiyal Sampayoga), and not obtaining what we desire : all these are full of suffering. The Five Aggregates are, all of them, full of suffering. What we regard as happiness is all full of suffering.

Many religious teachers of India propounded ideas regarding the existence of a soul that was uncreated, without a First Cause or Creator. The Buddha, however, pointed out that in a world full of transience and suffering there could not exist such a fixed entity as the soul. It is universally accepted that there was no religious teacher or philosopher before the Buddha who propounded the theory of 'no soul' which he did and so firmly substantiated. In such books of the Upanishads as the Brihadāranyaka it is possible to discern references to the idea that after death an individual leaves no trace. But this idea can in no way be compared with the Buddha's teaching.●

When we posit the existence of a soul, then we create the consciousness of "I" and "Mine". Such a view is untenable because the concepts of "I" and "Mine" refer to transient states. Everything is in a process of change. Thus even the physical body of an individual is not his permanent possession. It is because of this that man is subject to decay, disease and death, and such other forms of suffering. We can now realise why the teaching of the Buddha is recognised as one which is based on the no-soul theory.

Dependent Origination (Paticca Samuppāda)

The term Paticca Samuppāda is rendered in English as "dependent origination" because 'Paticca' means "dependent upon" and "Samuppāda" means "arising" or "origination". However, this term is applied to the whole formula of cause and effect which explains the process of birth and rebirth. This formula elaborates the whole chain of cause and effect.

The theory of Paticca Samuppāda was fully accepted not only by Theravada Buddhism but also by other schools of Buddhist thought. The Shūnyatā philosophy of Nāgarjuna was expounded on the basis of this theory of Paticca Samuppāda.

The Buddha reflected upon the theory of Paticca Samuppāda (cause and effect) on the very day he gained Enlightenment. On that day he thought upon all the aspects of this theory, which seeks to explain "the simple happening of a state, dependent on its antecedent state". Thus "this being so, that is, this being so, that is not" (imasmim sati, idam hoti, imasmim asati, idam nā hoti").

This theory sets out twelve interdependent causes and effects which are as follows :-

Avijjā	Vēdana
Samkāra	Tanhā
Vinnāna	Upādāna
Nāmarupa	Bhava •
Salāyatana	Jāti
Phassa	Jarā

Marana

Samkāra arises out of Avijjā (ignorance), which means ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. This does not, however, mean that Avijjā is the first in this chain of interdependent states. Even the Buddha stated that one could not discern the ultimate origins of Avijjā, which arises immediately because of the defilements (asava). Because of Avijjā, beings find themselves revolving within the wheel of Time in its three aspects of past, present and future. Therefore they undergo many births.

In this context Samkhāra connotes Kusala (moral) and Akusala (immoral) volitions, which go to constitute Kamma, which in turn produces rebirth. Out of "Samkhāra" (aggregates) arises "Vinnāna" or, more specifically, "patisandhivinnāna" or "rebirth consciousness". By this is meant the effect of the past Kusalākusala Kamma" (moral and immoral volitions).

Because of Vinnāna there arises Nāma-rūpa (mind and matter). By "Nāma-rupa" is meant a compound of both mind and matter. Nāma here includes Vedana (feeling), Sannā (perception) and Samkhāra (mental states). Rūpa refers to Rupaskandha (aggregates of Rupa), which includes the four elements mentioned earlier. •

Out of Nāma-rūpa arises Salāyatana (the six sense-bases), which is made up of 'Cakkhu' (eye), 'Sota' (ear), 'Ghāna' (nose), 'Jivhā' (tongue), 'Kāya' (body), and 'Mana' (mind).

Salāyatana is the cause of Phassa (sensory contact), which is produced by the coming together of sense-bases and sense-objects (Ārammana). As stated by the Buddha, visual consciousness arises because of the eye and its sense-objects (forms). The linking together of the eye, its sense-objects and the resultant visual consciousness constitutes contact (Phassa). Similarly with regard to the ear, nose, tongue, body and mind, and their respective sense-objects, different forms of consciousness and the resulting contact arise.

Phassa (contact) gives rise to Vedanā (feeling), which is produced by the contact between sense-bases and sense-objects. This Vedana, which is linked with the thought-process, consists mainly of three kinds, namely, Somanassa (pleasurable), Domanassa (unpleasurable) and Adukkhamasukha (neutral).

Together with Dukkha (physical pain) and Sukha (physical pleasure) there are five kinds of feelings. The neutral feeling is also termed Upekkhā (equanimity).

Vedanā gives rise to Tanhā (craving), which is produced through the six sense-objects. Here Tanhā (craving) signifies the threefold Kāma, Bhava and Vibhava as set out in the Four Noble Truths, and includes one hundred and eight types.

Tanhā (craving) is the cause of Upādāna (grasping). Tanhā (craving) produces desire for an object and Upādāna is the actual grasping of the object, which is caused by both attachment and wrong belief. It is that which gives rise to the false notions of 'I' and 'Mine'.

Upādāna gives rise to Bhava (becoming), which is of two kinds: Kāmabhava (active process of becoming) and the different planes of existence (Uppattibhava) - the passive process of becoming. Kāmabhava is composed of Kusalakusala Kamma (moral and immoral volitions), which cause rebirth. Uppattibhava (different planes of existence) is the state of being born in a certain plane of existence as a result of Upādāna (grasping).

Bhava (becoming) is the cause of being born, and it is the process of being conceived in the form of the Five Aggregates (Pancaskandha) in the womb of the mother. As a result of birth, decay, death, and such other forms of suffering arise. Therefore, to end suffering we must be free from birth and rebirth. This state can only be attained by the cessation of Bhava (becoming). This can be accomplished by getting rid of grasping (Upādāna). Thus by eradicating the causes and effects in the sequence by which they are linked together we are able to rid ourselves of ignorance (Avijjā). Hence, for total emancipation we must get rid of both craving (Tanhā) and ignorance (Avijjā).

To comprehend the Buddhist teaching regarding rebirth one must understand clearly the theory of Paticca Samuppāda (dependent origination). The doctrines of the Buddha do not stipulate that there is a need for an intermediate plane of existence or a fixed and permanent soul for rebirth to occur, as other religious teachings do. There is the recurrence of only birth and death. When one understands the theory of Paticca Samuppāda (dependent origination) this becomes clearly evident.

Avijjā (ignorance) and Samkāra (aggregates) are regarded as the two causes arising from the past. These two give rise to Tanhā (craving), Upādāna (grasping or attachment), and Bhava (active process of becoming). All these causes give rise to future rebirth as manifested in the effects of Vinnana (consciousness), Nāma-rupa (mind and matter), Salāyatana (six sensory spheres), Phassa (contact) and Vedanā (sensation). It is in this manner that a being is reborn. It is for this reason that this theory of Paticca Samuppāda (dependent origination) is termed the Bhava-cakra (wheel of life).

Kamma and Cetanā (Volition)

By Kamma is meant actions or deeds. Kamma originates from volition. This was well enunciated by the Buddha when he stated, “Cetanaham Bhikkhave Kammam Vadāmi” — “I declare, O Bhikkhus, that volition (Cetana) is Kamma. Having willed, one acts by body, speech and thought”. The Buddha’s teaching regarding Kamma is clearly and systematically stated. The teaching pertaining to Kamma is also to be found in other religions, especially in Jainism.

In the Cullakamma Vibhanga Sutta the Buddha states: “All living beings have actions (Kamma) as their own, their inheritance, their kinsmen, their refuge. It is Kamma that differentiates beings into low and high states”. There is further elucidation regarding Kamma in other parts of the Tripitaka.

In a thought process there are seven thought-currents. The volition associated with those seven thought - currents constitutes Kamma. Together with other mental states (Cētasika) they become merit (kusala) or demerit (akusala). Whatever one's Kamma may be, it has its fruits or due effects (Vipāka). This is termed Kamma vipāka or Kamma-phala. A being accumulates Kamma as a result of craving or desire (Tanhā). This is caused by ignorance (Avijjā).

According to the Buddha Dhamma both good (kusala) and bad actions (akusala) are performed owing to ignorance (avijjā). Good actions (kusala) promote the moral well-being of an individual and bad actions (akusala) his moral decline. Through the realisation of the Four Noble Truths the Kamma accruing from both good and bad actions (Kusalakusala Kamma) is eradicated. Buddhism does not teach that everything in one's life is the result of Kamma. Kamma is only one of the five-fold Nyāmadhamma (the five orders or processes operating in the physical and mental realms). In accordance with the time of operation of Kamma there are four categories, namely:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) Ditthadhamma vedaniya | (Immediately Effective Kamma) |
| (2) Upapajja vedaniya Kamma | (Subsequently Effective Kamma) |
| (3) Aparāpariya Vedaniya Kamma | (Indefinitely Effective Kamma) |
| (4) Ahōsi Kamma | (Ineffective Kamma) |

A salient feature of Buddhism is this teaching regarding Kamma, which explains to us why a being is subject to birth and rebirth.

Nibbana

In most Indian philosophies, especially in Hinduism, there is postulated the spiritual emancipation (Moksha) of beings. In the Vedic concepts as given in the Upanishads etc. there is contained a path of emancipation connected with the idea of "Brahman". The soul of a being enters into Brahman and thus gains eternal emancipation. According to Jainism the soul gains emancipation by attaining to the state of highest purification (Kaivalya). According to Buddhism Nibbana (Nirvana) is a state devoid of craving. It is, however, not a state that can be perceived by an ordinary being.

It is by ridding oneself of the "dependents" such as craving and lust (Tanhakkhaya) that one attains to Nibbana. The being who realises that all things are transient, full of sorrow and soulless enters the path of purification leading to Nibbana. Developing insight (Vipassana Pannā) enables a being to gain this realisation and enter the path. Nibbāna is not some pleasurable state enjoyed by the senses. Such a state would give rise to feelings through contact with sense-objects (Vēdanā). This is the cause of Dukkha (suffering and sorrow). Nibbāna therefore is a state in which by the eradication of defilements a transcendental emancipation of a being takes place. Indeed Nibbana is not a concept that can be explained by mere verbal description and definition. It is a state which a being cultivating insight has to realise and attain to by his own efforts, (Paccattam Veditabbo Vinnūhi).

This is possible only when a being, having cultivated insightful wisdom (Vipassana nāna), has succeeded in eradicating the four defilements (Āsavas), namely: Kāmāsava (sense desires), Bhavāsava (becoming), Ditthi (false views) and Avijjā (ignorance).

However, although the transcendental state of Nirvanic Bliss cannot be adequately described in words, it should be remembered that it is not to be conceived of as some sort of state of nothingness. This is amply borne out by the fact that the Buddha himself has referred to it using such terms as the following: - "Non-Conditional" (Asaṅkhata), "Incomparable" (Anupameya), "Supreme" (Anuttara), "Highness" (Parama), "Beyond" (Pāra), "Safety" (Tāna), "Security" (Khema), "Abodeless" (Anālaya), "Absolute Purity" (Visudha), "Supramundane" (Lokuttara), "Immortality" (Amata), "Emancipation" (Mutti), "Peace" (Sānti).

EMPEROR ASOKA AND HIS BUDDHIST MISSIONS ABROAD

According to the Mahāvamsa Tīka, Asoka was the son of King Bindusāra and Queen Dharma. Another tradition, however, has it that his mother was Subhadrāngi. The Avadhānamālā states that Asoka's mother was born in the city of Champā but does not record her name. The Mahāvamsa also mentions that Asoka was the Yuva-rāja or sub-king during the time of his father, and the Dipavamsa tells us that as Yuva-rāja he was in charge of the collection of revenue in Ujjeni.

It was while he was at Ujjeni that he left for Pātali-puthra or Patna on hearing of his father's illness. There appears to have been a furious and bloody struggle for the succession in 269 B.C. on the death of Bindusāra. Asoka is said to have put to death Sumana, a son of Bindusāra by a concubine, and 98 of his recognised brothers, all of them sons of his father begotten of various queens. It was because of this ruthless massacre of his kin, and the subsequent Kalinga War, waged by Asoka, when the slaughter of men was so terrible that the river Godavari itself became one flowing, blood-reddened torrent, that Asoka earned the appellation of Chandāsoka (Asoka the Terrible).

For four years Asoka, though in fact the ruler of his domains, had to wage a relentless struggle to subjugate them and further enlarge his territories, bringing Kalinga too under his sway. This was Asoka's digvijaya or war of military conquest. It was only after the completion of this digvijaya of Asoka that, stricken by remorse at the terrible magnitude of the human slaughter involved, he embarked on a policy of Dharmavijaya or conquest by righteousness, imbued with the high ideals of love and compassion taught by the Buddha Dhamma. Thereafter he was known as Dharmasoka or Asoka the Righteous.

Asoka's service to Buddhism

Having turned to the path of righteousness, after embracing Buddhism, Asoka set about spreading the faith both in his empire and in far-flung lands abroad. He had his two children ordained, his son Mahinda and his daughter Sanghamitta, sending the former to propagate the faith in our own Sri Lanka, while Sanghamitta came later with the sapling of the Maha Bo Tree at Buddhagaya and established the Order of Buddhist Nuns.

The policy of Asoka (Asōka Dharma) was one which enjoined :

- (1) ahimsā to all beings
- (2) refraining from harsh and rude speech
- (3) respecting parents, teachers and elders
- (4) having regard for Brahmin priests and servants
- (5) leading of a life of righteousness, which entails compassion, generosity, truthfulness, purity, gentleness, gratitude and spending according to one's means

- (6) engaging in Dharmayāthra or pilgrimages
- (7) constructing of wells and ponds and the planting of fruits and medical herbs, and
- (8) having filial regard and affection for one's subjects. Thus we see that Asoka's Dharma was one imbued with a real tolerance and compassion far removed from any kind of persecutory sectarianism or fanaticism.

Asoka then founded not only a political empire but also a cultural one. This cultural empire, which had its origin in North India, extended as far as South East Asia through Sri Lanka in one direction, and the Middle East in the other. Asoka devoted all his time to the propagation of the creed he set up in a systematic form. Sri Lanka occupies a unique place among the countries which contributed to the rapid propagation of the Buddha's Teaching. The various countries connected with its spread are as follows :

- Syria of Antiochus II
- Egypt of Ptolemy Philadelphus II
- Macedonia of Antiochus
- Zasirania of Magas
- Epirus of Alexandra
- Chola country (Chode)
- Tambapanni (Ceylon)
- Pandya country (Pada)
- Yavana country (Greece)
- Cambodia (North Punjab)
- Nabhaka and Nabhaka realms (South Punjab)
- Bhoja country, or Modern Bihar

Pithika (North Western Deccan)

Andhra country

Gandhara country (Khandahar)

Kalinga (Orissa)

Kerala (Modern Travancore)

Rashtraka (Maharatta)

Shathīya Putra (The area of Western Deccan)

The Buddha's doctrine was thus not confined to North India alone. Thanks to the efforts of Asoka, it spread rapidly far beyond Bharatadesha. When he despatched Arahāt Mahinda with the missionaries to Sri Lanka his message to King Devanampiyatissa, the ruler of Sri Lanka, was: "I bestow on you the wealth I have inherited". Asoka also organised a well-planned system of sending Buddhist monks abroad with the Buddha's message, thereby increasing the international community of monks. He always selected pious and restrained monks for this responsible task. The Mahāvamsa attributes the glory attained by Buddhism in Sri Lanka to the ideal choice of monks made by Asoka.

Asoka made every effort to build up a cultural empire. This enhanced his prestige on the one hand and saved the political empire from external aggression on the other, thereby helping him to have cultural as well as political relationships with the rest of the world. This contributed in no small measure to the spread of Buddhist philosophy the world over. Today Buddhism is found in more than 20 countries both of the Eastern and Western worlds.

The history of man shows that no religion in the world was ever able to become a major influence in society without powerful political patronage. So it was with Buddhism, which found in Emperor Asoka of the Maurya Dynasty a great follower and redoubtable champion. He was indeed a remarkable monarch, perhaps unique, in the way in which as a Buddhist King he strove to uphold the tenets of his creed and spread the Buddhist faith, with its ideal of tolerance and compassion for all beings. H. G. Wells in his famous 'Outline of History', compiled as a "a plain history of life and mankind", pays this unusual and glowing tribute to Asoka:-

"Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne."

Sri Lanka gained a most prominent place in the missionary activities of Asoka. His campaign resulted in the propagation of the creed of Sakyamuni over a greater part of Asia. The Asoka era can be described as a Golden Era in the annals of the Buddha Sasana. In addition to the construction of Buddhist shrines and temples for the convenience of the laymen, he took every step to have a disciplined and dignified community of monks.

The post - Asoka Era is generally regarded as the period during which there was a waning of Buddhism. The Hindu revival that made great headway during the reign of Pushyamitra Sunga, at the expense of Buddhism, was strong enough to cause a suppression of Buddhist activities. This was perhaps the darkest period of Buddhism.

If we are to speak of any revival of Buddhism after the Sunga period, it will have to be in connection with the period of Kanishka of the Indo-Sikkhim Saka Dynasty. Kanishka was the greatest of the Buddhist Indian emperors after Dharmāsoka. He had his kingdom at Purushapura - modern Peshawar. He is reported to have conducted all his religious activities with Peshawar as the focal point.

Being an emperor of the Kushan Dynasty, he had sway over the Central Himalayan region, and a greater part of Central Asia - all outside his Indian Empire. By virtue of the pre-eminent position he held owing to his remarkable political achievements, Kanishka took immense pains to spread Buddhist philosophical thought throughout his Empire.

He is reported to have demanded tribute from various States of China and commanded the allegiance of its people as his subjects. His reign lasted 42 years from 120 A. D. to 162 A. D. according to some, while according to the more authentic records his reign seems to have lasted up to 178 A. D.

There were various differences of opinion among the Buddhist monks at the time of his accession, but he intervened successfully in settling these controversies to the fullest satisfaction of all concerned and effected a religious revival. Kanishka was a Sarvastivadi Buddhist. His contribution to the cause of Sarvastivada is comparable to what Asoka contributed to the cause of Sthāviravada Buddhism.

He had the image of the Buddha embossed on coins and circulated them throughout the kingdom. Like Dharmāsoka, he too had a regard for freedom of worship and for the rights of all the other religions existing side by side with Buddhism. However, being himself a Sarvasthivadi, it was natural that he should strive to bring about a more rapid progress of Sarvastivada in his empire. The great scholar monks such as Asvagoshā, Vasubandhu, Pārsa, and Nāgarjuna adorned his court.

The Vajji sect that defected after the Second Buddhist Council formed a new School called the Mahasanghika, which later divided into a number of less important groups. At the time of Kanishka's accession Buddhist philosophy had declined, with many undesirable ideas creeping into it. Thus a reformation was long overdue. Kanishka foreseeing the disaster that would befall the Sasana encouraged Bhikku Parsa to convene the fourth Buddhist Council.

After the fourth Buddhist Council, Mahayanism emerged as an important force, which spread far and wide through the rendering of the Pali religious works into Sanskrit and the consequent publication of a number of Mahayāna Buddhist texts. In Kanishka's time the Mahayāna text, Upadēsha Shāstra, was brought out incorporating the commentaries on Sutta Pitaka. This work contained a million stanzas or slōkas. The commentary on Vinaya Pitaka attributed to him was given the title Vinaya Vibhāshā. The commentary on the Abhidhamma Pitāka is called Abhidhamma Vibhāshā. A lexicon on the entire Tripitaka too was brought out. It was entitled the "Maha Vibhāsha."

Even though Mahayāna seems to profess ideas which Hinayana does not approve of, a close study of the Mahayana Buddhist works reveals that it is a mere elucidation of Sthaviravāda ideas. The Sthaviravādins deny the existence of "Ātma" (Soul) and consider 'Being' not as a person but as a state, the constituents of which are "Sikkhā", "Dhātu" and "Āyatana". The Mahayanists too give a similar analysis and state, that "Ātma" arises from within. While the Sthaviravada emphasises the achievement of internal purification by shunning the five evil acts and the tenfold demeritorious deeds, the Mahayanists advocate the observance of the virtues of compassion, sympathy and loving kindness in order to attain internal purification

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SANGHA AND THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM IN NORTHERN INDIA

After regular instruction from the Master, the first five disciples attained Arhanthood ere long. The next step was to expand the community of monks - the Sangha - and thereby spread the word of the Dhamma. It was in accordance with this aim that he admitted into the Order the fifty - four noble youths, the Yasas, even without the previous consent of their parents. This perhaps indicates to us today that the Buddha's teachings were for his times disturbingly radical to the conservative elements in society.

The Buddha, who begged His alms in the villages while preaching the Supreme Truth he had realised, exhorted his disciples to devote their lives to the benefit and happiness of the masses - that is, to the benefit of themselves and the others. This was a message which the disciples observed to the very letter and it explains clearly the object of its propagation.

Later, however, the patronage extended by the Magadha kings Bimbisara and Ajatashastru helped Buddha a great deal in His missionary work. His campaign was received with great acclaim even by the higher layers of society, on account of the admission to the Order of his own kinsmen such as Prince Nanda, the Sakya Prince Anuruddha, Baddiya and others and also His own son Rahula. With all these activities directed towards the achievement of the avowed object of universal emancipation and bliss, Buddhism spread rapidly far beyond India.

The main feature of the Buddha Dhamma is the basic recognition of the importance of intelligence and understanding. It is a religion of the rational being. Buddha, who appeared in a society which upheld rational thinking, declared that even His preaching should not be believed simply on the force of his own authority, if it is not supported by facts. In this way, He taught us how to be rational and how to think intelligently. He offered even His own teaching for critical discussion. The teachings of the Buddha came to be hailed not only by the society of His time, but also by us of the modern age. He condemned outright the Brahmins, who blindly made various kinds of offerings to the Gods. His teaching served as an attack on malpractices of this kind, which were resorted to at the expense of the ordinary people. The result was that the intelligent gave up the Brahminic practices and embraced the Buddha's teachings, and were soon engaged in striving with relish and fervour for its rapid propagation.

It was at this time that the great philosophers Confucius of China and Heraclitus of Greece also lived. Heraclitus of Greece though not a Buddhist declared that everything on earth was impermanent. Such a view could perhaps be attributed to the spread of Buddhism. Perhaps His teachings had spread to these countries (Greece and China) even during His lifetime.

The Buddha did not reject totally the practices of contemporary society. He lived in a society where meat and fish were used as items of food, but he did not prohibit their being consumed. Monks had to go round begging for alms to households where such items of food were in regular use. If He had opposed the taking of meat and fish by the bhikkus, they would have had to starve.

The decreeing of the Vinaya rules for the convenience of the ordinary layman, without disturbing the prevalent social order, contributed greatly to the rapid spread of His teachings in the Indian states such as Taxila, Orissa and Assam. The acceptance of the Buddha's teachings by the three Jatilas, the brothers Uruvela Kashyapa, Nadikashyapa and Gayakashyapa, who gave up the false beliefs which they had long adhered to, caused alarm among the contemporary ruling classes.

They began to look upon the Buddha as a superhuman being. Great kings like Bimbisara made every endeavour to propagate the Buddha's doctrine, having become Buddhists themselves. This leads us to conclude that by this time Buddhism had spread beyond the river Neranjana. The conversion of ascetics like Uruvela Kashyapa caused the rest of society to vilify the entire Brahminic community and this too contributed in no small measure to the rapid spread of Buddhism. The lands covered by the spread of Buddhism were so far-flung that, having gained full sway in North India, it also embraced the length and breadth of Sri Lanka.

In seeking to propagate the Dhamma, the Teacher ignored the circumstance of the monarch of a country being non-Buddhist. This is borne out very clearly by the Bimbisara episode. The spread of Buddhism was remarkable in the republics of the Licchavis, situated beyond the Ganges, and also in other republics, namely those of the Sakyas, Malla, Bhaggas, Koliyas, Moolas and Boriyas. King Pajjota of Avanti and King Udeni of Kosambi, though they were not strong adherents of the Buddha's teaching and though consequently indifferent to its spread, never discouraged it by adopting any anti-Buddhist policies.

Lord Buddha's personality, His self-restraint, high intelligence and His systematic method of preaching to the masses in an appealing way - all these factors contributed to the lasting influence of His teachings on society and also to the spread of Buddhism. The community of monks from the chief disciples Sariputta and Moggallana down to the raw novices - all acted with zeal in its propagation. They all extended their co-operation in spreading the doctrine of the Buddha.

The Buddha recognised the rights of the female sex in religious matters. This is apparent from his admission of women to the Order of Nuns, even though it was after some hesitation. He finally yielded to the persistent entreaties of Venerable Ananda, who acted as the agent of the noble ladies of the Court. With the admission of women to the Order, the discrimination shown by Brahaminic society against women ceased, contributing again to a social revival.

The Bhikkunis thus enrolled formed the Order of Nuns and it is to the credit of the Bhikkuni Sasana that those pre-eminent among them, Visakha, Bandula, Mallika and Sujatha, devoted their whole lives to the propagation of the Sasana. Among those who embraced Buddhism by seeking refuge in the Triple Gem were courtesans like Ambapali, who later entered the Order of Nuns. This shows that the Message of the Great Teacher came to be widely accepted by all sections of society.

According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Buddha even in the period immediately preceding his demise devoted himself to the task of propagating what he had realised. This discourse states that he delivered a number of sermons during this period such as the Sutta-aparihaniya Dhamma. Thus we can conclude that the Teacher in His last days directed all His activities towards the establishment of His doctrine in the regions mentioned above.

The history of Buddhism in the period between the Buddha's demise and the accession of Asoka does not seem to record any rapid progress in the spread of the Buddha's teaching. The community of monks may have absorbed many of the objectionable features of the other prevalent religions during the last days of Gauthama the Buddha. The irresponsible statement of Bhikku Subhadra effected a revolution in Buddhism.

It appears that the contemporary community of monks had various differences of opinion, which gave rise to disputes of varying character. During the time of Asoka, these disputes became so aggravated that the Sangha divided themselves into 18 fraternities. Nevertheless, all these fraternities consider the Great Teacher as their only Leader in their quest for Emancipation, while in their principles there are no basic differences.

KING KANISHKA AND MAHAYĀNA BUDDHISM

After the age of Asoka, owing to the widespread political unrest that arose in Central as well as North Western India, there was a migration of various peoples to India from neighbouring countries. There took place an interaction of the different cultural traditions of these peoples, who came to India from China, Greece, Turkey, Persia and Iran. In this process, the Kushan dynasty, which had its origin in N.W. China, came to occupy a predominant place. King Kanishka of this dynasty may be regarded as one of the greatest Buddhist rulers after the time of Asoka.

The precise period of his reign, however, has not been properly recorded. Dr. Fleet is of opinion that his reign began in the first year of the Vikrama Era, which is 58 A.D. Professor Bhandarkar states that it was 277 A.D., while Marshall and Smith are of the view that it was 125 A.D. Other Indian scholars have rejected all these views. According to Thomas and Rapson, Kanishka's reign began in 78 A.D., inaugurating the Saka Era.

King Kanishka belongs to the Kushan and not to the Saka dynasty. However, since both these dynasties have close connections in their origins, it is possible to regard Kanishka as the founder of the Saka Era. Although he was of a different faith earlier in life, it is quite evident from the coins he issued that he later embraced Buddhism and also became Emperor. One of his important achievements resulting from his 'digvijaya' or territorial conquests, effected both in and outside India, was the subjugation of various countries.

At the beginning of his reign, he annexed Kashmir and then proceeded to extend his sway over the territories bordering the Indus River. According to Chinese and Tibetan records, Kanishka went to war with the Kingdoms of Sāketa and Pataliputra. There is evidence from various inscriptions that he extended his domains up to Peshawar and Yusupshāi in the North West and up to Mathura and Benares in the East. From these facts it is evident that Kanishka's Empire extended from Gandhāra in the West to Benares in the East.

Purushapura or Peshawar is regarded as having been the capital of Kanishka. It is recorded that he warred with countries on the West, subjugating the Parthians, while also fighting with the Chinese on the East. Outside India, he first annexed E. Turkestan, which included the territories of Kashgar and Bhotan, which had been paying tribute to China.

From available records it is believed that Kanishka met with his death while crossing the high Pamir range in the course of a military campaign. His reign lasted about 23 years, and his fame is to a large extent connected with the spread of Buddhism. The large Buddhist Stupa at Purushapura, praised by many a traveller, bears ample testimony to his religious zeal. For the purpose of clarifying many controversial issues that had arisen with regard to the Buddha Dhamma, Kanishka, like Asoka, held a Buddhist Council - the fourth of its kind - in Kashmirakundalavana. Works such as the Vinaya, Abhidhamma and Maha Vibhasha were compiled.

It would appear that in this task Kanishka secured the collaboration of great Mahayana Buddhist savants like Asvaghosha, Vasumithra, Pārsva and Nāgarjuna. It has been said, in this connection, that commentaries on the texts were prepared and recorded on bronze tablets and deposited in a Stupa so that they may be conserved and protected. Kanishka, whose fourth Buddhist Council is of great religious importance, may be regarded as a Sarvāsthivada Buddhist. This is evident from the works of the Chinese traveller Huyen Tsang.

The fourth Buddhist Council brought about the growth and spread of Mahayana Buddhism. It may be remarked that the phenomenal development of the Sanskrit language which had been attained by the time of Kanishka contributed towards this process. Beginning in N. W. India, Mahayana Buddhism mingled with Greek and Hindu doctrines and also with various faiths of Central Asia and spread along the Northern plains of Bharatha.

In this process, many of the original and traditional notions of Mahayana Buddhism underwent a change, causing it to assume a new and altered form during its diffusion. It is clear that it was after the fourth Buddhist Council that the Sarvasthivadi Sect, and all other Sects which had broken away from the Sthaviravada of pre-Kanishka times, came to be moulded as one tradition called the Mahayana. The word 'Mahayana' first occurs in the Mahayāna Sraddhōthpada Sutra composed by the great author Asvaghosha. A large part of Mahayanism is polytheistic and tends towards Devotionalism.

The chief feature of Mahayānism is that it regards the Buddha as a divine personage and his followers as Bodhisatvas. It does not have the older rigid belief that to realize the essence of Buddhism one has to enter the Sangha, but teaches that even a layman can attain Buddhahood by fulfilling the Paramithās.

Owing to this teaching, it appears that Mahayānism became rapidly popular among the common people. In later times, what came to be regarded as pure Mahayānism was a form of it mingled with such religions as Jainism and Hinduism. This led to the Buddha's being placed in the same category as Rama and Krishna. This, in turn, gave rise to the belief that there is always a living Buddha to bring about universal salvation and emancipation.

At an even later time, persons like the Gautama Buddha were recognized as Buddhas. Thus, there arose the notion that since one Buddha alone was unable to effect the salvation of beings in the world from samsara, there were other Buddhas in existence in the world. They were all described as "Dhyāni Buddha", while Amitābha, Ratna Sambhava, Vairochana and such other "Dhyāni Buddhas" are said to be in existence in "Sukhāvati" till all beings attain Nibbana or Nirvana.

In this manner, owing to the Mahayāna doctrine, there spread gradually the system of belief in Bodhisatvas. Hence the numerous stories and legends that arose about Avalokitesvara, Manjusri, Samantabhadra, Maitri and such other Bodhisatvas. Eulogistic and metaphorical descriptions were specially invented to bring out the superhuman nature of the Buddha.

It was in this way that, like the Yōga systems in Hindu philosophy, various yāna systems such as Vajrayāna and Tantrayāna arose. The "No Soul" theory expounded in Sthaviravāda began gradually to turn away from true Nihilist philosophy. The "Nirvāna" it described came to be regarded as a sort of "Sukhāvati".

Although at first Mahāyāna philosophy, which became fully established between 120 A. D. and 162 A. D. during the age of Kanishka, differed only a little from the Theravāda form, there appeared very great differences later. What we see today is not the Mahāyānism of Kanishka's time but a new tradition which has been mixed up with beliefs already prevalent in China, Japan, Korea, Tibet and Central Asia.

It is evident that the shaping of the Mahāyāna tradition was based on the theories of the Mahā Sanghikās and Andakās. The meaning of the word Mahāyāna is as follows :- "Yāna" means the path, and especially the path that leads to the ultimate goal, while "Mahā" connotes a highly exalted state.

The Sthaviravādi School aims at reaching the ultimate goal by attaining Arhañthood, Buddhahood and Pacchēka Buddhahood. Regarding this, much controversy has taken place. The meaning of the Term "Yāna" is given at length in the Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra.

We see five main theories in the original Mahāyāna teaching, as follows :-

- (1) Bodhisatva Vāda
- (2) Thrikāya Siddhānta
- (3) Bhaktikalpanā
- (4) Nirvāna Siddhānta
- (5) Nava Dharma Kalpanā.

Of these five, the first, Bodhisatva Vāda, which states that one can attain Nibbāna through Buddhahood, is an important Mahāyāna theory. One who is endeavouring to become a Buddha is called a Bodhisatva. The meritorious code of conduct followed to attain the exalted state of Buddhahood is regarded as the final stage in the process.

The moral virtues which have to be fully realised for the purpose of accomplishing that supreme task are known as "Bodhi Chariya". The "Bodhi Chariyā" is the first stage in the development of "Bodhi Citta". This "Bodhi Citta" is twofold:

- (1) Bōdhipranidhi Citta
- (2) Bōdhiprasthāna Citta.

For the achievement of "Bōdi Citta" religious observances of a sevenfold nature are most essential.

These are :

- (1) Vandanā
- (2) Pūjanā
- (3) Pāpa Desana
- (4) Punyānumodanā
- (5) Buddhadēsanā
- (6) Buddhayāchanā
- (7) Bōdhiparināmanā.

According to Mahayāna teaching, the Buddha's physical nature is of a threefold character (Trikaaya). According to the Theravāda view, however, the Buddha is physically an ordinary human being in a society of ordinary human beings. Accordingly the Buddha is also human. His body like that of all other human beings is made up of the five Skandhas and, as such, is liable to suffer the ills that can befall the average man. But the Mahāsaṅghikās, who also conceived of the Buddha's physical nature as threefold, regarded his body as being supra-mundane in character.

It took many centuries for the "Trikaaya" theory to be developed. In the "Ashtasāhashrika Pragnā Pāramithā" a twofold physical nature is predicated, consisting of

- (1) Rūpa Kāya
- (2) Dharma Kāya.

The Vinnāna philosophy holding a similar view speaks of

- (1) Sthūla Rūpa Kāya
- (2) Sukshma Rūpa Kāya.

The former is also called *Nirmāna Kāya** and the latter *Sambōgha Kāya*. According to the *Lankāvatāra Sutra* these are known as *Sambōgha Kāya* and *Nishandha-buddha*.

The pāli Tripitaka contains a view dissimilar to that of the Mahāyāna. However, the threefold nature of Kāya is stated there as follows :-

- (1) Chāturmahā Bhauthika Kāya
- (2) Mānōmaya Kāya
- (3) Dhārma Kāya.

Of these Chāturmahā Bhauthika Kāya refers to the physical body subject to decay, created out of the four main elements — Patavi, Āpo, Tējo, Vāyo and conceived in the mother's womb. Of the eightfold knowledge possessed by the Buddha, one is "Manomaya Irdiya", by the power of which he could transform himself into any physical form he desired. This is regarded as "Manomaya Kāya". "Dharmakāya" refers to the Dhamma and Vinaya preached by the Buddha. The Buddha's name "Aurasa Putra" is used with reference to the Sākyaputrīya (sons of Sākya Clan) Sangha because they originated from this Dharmakāya.

The Sthaviravadi School accepts totally the supra-mundane concept of the Buddha. However, they believe that although born in the world, the Buddha was not bound up with it. The Theravāda School accepts the beliefs about certain special qualities that belong to the "Bhauthika Kāya" (physical nature) of the Buddha.

Although Theravāda accepts such beliefs as those about various miraculous phenomena connected with his conception in the womb and the thirty - two great characteristics (Mahā Purusha Lakshana) of his physical body, it does not believe that the body of the Buddha is supra-mundane. ●

Although the Tripitaka records that the Buddha is endowed with supra-mundane attributes, it accepts the fact that He is an Exalted and Extraordinary Man amongst men. After the Parinibbāna of the Buddha, however, the Buddha's disciples who turned devotional, that is to say the Mahayānists, made him out to be a superhuman being.

According to Mahāyāna teachings the Buddha is "Devāti Dēva" (God of Gods), Jagath Pithru (Father of the world) and Svayambhū (Omniscient).

Bhakthi Kalpanā

• The fostering of the Devotional Way (Bhakthi Mārgaya), both in ritual and beliefs, can be regarded as a very important element of the Mahayānist doctrine. The production of such great Mahāyāna works as the "Saddharmapundarika Sūtra" was the result of the system of Devotionalism (Bhaktivāda). The Mahāyānists made up many legends and fables about the superhuman nature of the Buddha and Bodhisatvas.

It is said in the Saddharmapundarika Sūtra that even a small child or any imbecile could attain Buddhahood by the performance of such an insignificant act as the drawing on a wall of the Buddha form with a stick. Many such myths are contained in the Saddharmapundarika Sūtra, giving pride of place to Devotionalism or the Bhakthi Mārgaya.

Nava Dharma Kalpanā

There are nine works known as the Nava Dharma Kalpanā, which contain the main teachings of the Mahayāna philosophy and are replete with typical Mahayāna ideas. These are also known by the name of "Vaipulye Sūtra". These nine are :

- (1) Ashta Sahashrika Pragnā Pāramithā
- (2) Saddharma Pundarika Sūtra
- (3) Lalitha Vistara
- (4) Lankavatāre Sūtra
- (5) Svarna Prabhāsha
- (6) Ghandha Vyūha
- (7) Tathāgata Grikhya
- (8) Samādhi Rāja
- (9) Dasa Bhumisvara

These are the chief Dharmas belonging to the Nava Dharma Kalpanā. Of these the ones widely known in Sri Lanka are the Pragnāpāramithava and Lalitha Vistara. The importance attached to them is borne out by the fact that certain texts from the Pragnāpāramithava have been set down in golden tablets and treasured, while many ideas taken from the Lalitha Vistara are to be seen in such works as the Buthsarana, Milinda Panna and the Jāthakathakathā.

It is fairly obvious that what chiefly helped Mahāyāna Buddhism to spread and attain a position of social importance was the work of the great Savants who lived in the time of King Kanishka. The foremost of them were Nāgarjuna, Asvaghōsha and Vasumitra. They compiled Sanskrit Buddhist works, participated in many controversies, and actively promoted the spread of the Dhamma. In this connection Nāgarjuna and Vasumitra rendered a very great service. Nagarjuna's Pragnāpāramithā can be regarded as the most outstanding work of Mahāyāna philosophy. Vasumitra's Mahā Vibhāshā Sāstraya is also highly esteemed. Of similar value are Asvaghōsha's Buddha Charitaya and Suthrālankaraya.

The Buddhism which the Mahā Thēra Mahinda brought to Sri Lanka was of the Sthaviravāda form, then prevailing in Ujjeni. Apart from the eighteen Sects mentioned earlier, there arose nine more after the third Buddhist Council held in the time of Emperor Dharmasōka.

The Thēra Buddhaghōsha has written about the Pubhasēliya, Aparasēliya, Rajagiriya and Siddhattha Sects, which arose later, referring to them as Andaka. Apart from these various Sects which arose in India, we find three others which were in Sri Lanka :-

- (1) Mahāvihāra
- (2) Dhammaruci (Abhayagiri)
- (3) Sāgalika (Jētavana)

The Mahāvihāra Sect was founded about the middle of the 3rd Century A. D., the Dhammaruci in the 5th Century A. D. and the Sāgalikas about the 9th Century A. D.

FOREIGN RELATIONS OF MAHAYĀNISM IN SRI LANKA

Important information is given in certain Sanskrit Buddhist works about the Mahāyāna Buddhism of Sri Lanka and its foreign relations. Similarly much valuable information is given in foreign rock inscriptions. It is clear from what is recorded in a Sarvāstivādi work called the Mahāvīyūthpatti that the Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri and Jētavana Sects of Anurādhapura were very well known in India and other countries. Names of Sects such as :-

- (1) Ārya Sarvāstivāda
- (2) Mahā Sarvāstivāda
- (3) Kāshyapiya
- (4) Pragnāptivada
- (5) Āriya Sthaviravādi Mahāviharaya
- (6) Jētavanaya
- (7) Abhayagiriya

are mentioned here.

The Vamsakathās have no record of any special event connected with religious changes in the time of King Mahinda in Sri Lanka. However, there has been revealed recently a stone inscription of contemporary Jāva containing record of international events connected with Abhayagiri. The Ratavaka inscription of Jāvā speaks of the Abhayagiri Vihāra to which belonged Sinhala Bhikkhus in foreign lands. This inscription belongs to the period between 779 A.D. and 793 A.D., the time when King Sailēndra of Jāva came to power. Historians accept the fact that bhikkhus of Abhayagiri came to Jāva seeking the patronage of this king, who was inclined towards Mahāyānism.

They also show us that from time to time teachers of Mahāyāna came to Sri Lanka. It is recorded that a Thēra called Vajrabhōdi came to Sri Lanka about the latter part of the 7th Century A. D., resided at Abhayagiri and preached Mahāyāna philosophy. Another Bhikkhu called "Amōghavajra" is said to have been sent to China and it is possible that he was an inhabitant of the Pallava country. Inscriptions in Pallava characters have been found in Mihintale and Tiriyāya, as stated by Professor Senarath Paranavitāne.

It is also recorded that the Chōla invaders of Sri Lanka caused much damage and destruction to Vihāras and Dāgobas while also harassing to a great extent both the Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri. Owing to this many Bhikkhus are said to have left Sri Lanka. There is evidence that the Chōla invaders converted Buddhist holy places into Hindu Devāles. Gradually therefore as a result of the Chōla invasions Hindu cultural influences gathered strength.

MAHAYĀNA BUDDHISM IN SRI LANKA ITS RISE AND DEVELOPMENT

From a critical survey of the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka it is clear that, of the changes that took place during the Anurādhapura period, the major one was the spread of Mahāyāna Buddhism. At first this was known as Vaitulyavādaya, as mentioned in Buddhist historical texts.

Most books introducing Mahāyāna Sūtras use the term Vaitulya or Vaipulya. Of the Sutrādharmas highly regarded by the Mahāyānists, nine distinguished works characterized as Vaipulya are known as the Nava Dharma Sūtra. The Mahāyānists say that the Buddha preached these Vaitulya Sūtras.

The Thēra Asan̄ga states in his Samuccaya that all these terms referring to Vaipulaya connote one and the same thing. He uses an explanatory term Bodhisattvapitaka in place of the word Vaipulya. Professor Senarath Paranavitāna has told us that what is indicated by Vaitulyavāda is Mahāyānism.

According to our historical writers Mahāyānism had its beginnings in Sri Lanka in the time of King Vohāratissa. Another view is that the seeds of Mahāyānism were sown during the time of King Valagambā. Owing to the disturbances that took place in the time of King Mahāsēna, there appeared another trend in Sri Lanka's religious life. Finally the Bhikkhus divided into three Sects. Sirimeghawanna, who became king after Mahāsēna, restored the Mahāvihāra, which had been destroyed.

Further, during the reign of Dathōpatissa (659–667 A. D.), two learned bhikkhu teachers residing in two Pirivenas of the Jethavanārāmaya and belonging to the Sāgalika Sect known as Dathāvēda wrote books on the Vinaya. Charges were made against the Mahāvihāra in these books and we see that the disputes between the two Vihāras were aggravated.

Later, during the reign of King Sēna I (833 - 853 A.D.), there came to Sri Lanka a Sect called the Vājirivāda, who were introduced, we are told, by a bhikkhu of the Vājraparvata Nikāya residing at Vēdānkura Monastery in Anurādhapura. It was declared that the leader of the Vājiri Sect preached a secret doctrine. This new Dhamma was accepted by King Sēna

Religious works such as the Ratnakūta Sūtra were brought to Ceylon during this time. Of the divisions that took place at first in the Vājiri Sect one is only of a nominal character. As the teachings of this Sect were regarded as secret and as the names of these two Sects were very similar, it would appear that they were Vajrayānika.

A sect of bhikkhus known as Pānsakūlikas, bound by the vow to wear only robes made out of discarded garments collected from various places, broke away from Abhayagiri in the reign of King Sēna II (853- 887 A.D.). It is not clear how religious life was affected by this. A Sect that existed in the time of the Vājirivāda was the Nīlapata Darsana, which was inclined towards Tāntrism. The followers of this Sect wore blue robes instead of yellow ones. What they regarded as the "Triple Gem" was not the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha but liquor and sex.

It is clear from inscriptions that the facts given in books regarding the arrival in Ceylon of adherents of Mahāyānism and Tantrism are true. The Dhāraṇī or esoteric Mantras used by these Sects are recorded in these inscriptions in Nāgari characters well-known in N. E. India.

Bronze tablets containing texts of Mahāyāna works including the Ratnakūtasūtraya have been discovered and also various stone and metal images of Mahāyāna and Tāntric deities. What is evident from the many large Mahāyāna images found in Weligama and Buduruvagala is that there is good proof that there existed a large number of followers of Sects opposed to the Sthaviravāda during the latter part of the Anurādhapura period. As a result of the conquest of Ceylon by the Cōlas during the beginning of the 11th Century Buddhism came to be increasingly subject to foreign influences.

After the second Buddhist Council there arose about eighteen Sects including Thēravāda, of whom eleven were Sthaviravādins and the others Mahāsaṅghikās. The Chinese writer, It sing, who came to India in the 7th Century A. D., states that the Sarvāstivādi Sect spread in the Northern, the Sammitiya in the North Western and Sthaviravāda in the Southern parts of India.

By the 7th Century A. D., of the eighteen Sects there remained only the Sthaviravāda, Mahasaṅghika and Sarvāstivāda Sects. The Sarvāstivādi Sect with its centre at Mathurāpura spread as far as Kashmir. The Mahāsaṅghikās had their centre in India while the Sthaviravādi with its centre in the Magadhan Kingdom spread as far as Ujjeni and Kōsambi.

The growth of the Tripitaka, whose three parts are known as Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma, helped people of varying nationalities and races, holding different views, to accept Buddhism without much effort. The growth of Hinduism caused hardship to the adherents of Buddhism. This situation prompted the Mahāyāna leaders to take every possible step to develop their religion in the philosophical aspect as well.

The various philosophical tendencies underwent a gradual development, appearing as four different groups with the dawn of the Gupta Era.

They were :-

1. Vaibhāsika
2. Sautrāntika
3. Mādhyamika
4. Yōgācāra.

In the records of the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien, who was in India in the fifth century A.D., there are references to the existence of Sthaviravāda ideas.

According to Fa-Hien, Mahāyānism spread over Gandhāra, Ujjaini, Kōsambi and Afghanistan. The other Chinese pilgrim Hieng Tsang, who came to India in the seventh century A. D., found that even the Buddhist temples in areas like Gandhāra and Taxila were abandoned and that Buddhists lived only in Vaisāli. Hieng Tsang further says that the Sabbattiya Sects had spread over Sankassa, Sāvatti, Kapilavāstu, Vārānasi, Vaisāli, Kanna-suvanna, Hayamukha, Sindu and Avantipura.

We also hear from Hieng Tsang that even in Nepal, the birthplace of Gautama Buddha and once an entirely Buddhist country, Buddhism later degenerated and experienced a downfall. Originally Sthaviravāda Buddhism had full sway in this country, but due to its geographical proximity to Tibet, Mahāyānism took the place which Theravāda had occupied there.

Buddhism spread in Nepal mainly owing to the existence of the Buddhist centre known as "Svayambhūnāth". Mahayānism spread in North India under the name of "Northern Buddhism", while Thēravāda spread in the South as its Southern counterpart. But by the seventh century A.D. Buddhist activities in the South were confined to the principal sects, namely Kānchipura, Nāgarjūnakonda and Amarāvati.

Even though passing mention is made of monasteries in the Velgam region of Mysore, about the year 1055 A.D., Buddhism failed to emerge victorious after the encounters with Jainism and Hinduism in the sixth century A. D. The great monk Padmasambhava, who was the Chief Incumbent of the Nalānda University in North India, where Yogic practices and Tāntric ideas existed, engaged in missionary activities and the composition of religious texts in the Himalayan countries, namely Ladhāk, Sikkhim, and Bhūtān.

Fa-Hien records with grief the degeneration of Buddhism in India by the 5th Century A.D. Buddhism in India received a fatal blow from the anti-Buddhist activities of the Sunga King Pushyamithra. However, it should be admitted that the total disappearance of Buddhism which took place eventually was the result mainly of the Muslim conquest of India many centuries later.

Buddhism was well founded on the basis of Gautama Buddha's supreme Philosophy. Owing to His untiring efforts and proper organisation, it spread in various parts of India in different forms, almost at the same time as His demise. It survived vigorously, shaping the character and life of the people owing to the efforts of Emperors Asōka and Kanishka.

A universal religion similar to what Asōka established in India during his reign, was introduced to Sri Lanka too, during the reign of King Dēvānampiyatissa. Both these countries were greatly benefited on account of Buddhism. Among other benefits, neither country needed to maintain an army for defence purposes. Both Buddhist monks and laymen did their best to bring about a high standard of life for the common man through a many-sided cultural advancement.

King Dēvānampiyatissa following His Indian counterpart and greatly inspired by him, achieved peace, order and progress through the tenets of Buddhism. Following Asōka and using Buddhist philosophy as his base, he laid a solid foundation for a Buddhist way of life. Our culture, art and literature were all enriched and developed on this foundation. Our culture took on an entirely religious outlook. We learn a great deal from literary, historical and archaeological sources and also from foreign records about the dignified way of life that prevailed in the Anurādhapura period.

King Dēvānampiyatissa dedicated the Mahāmēghavana, situated on the bank of Kolom Oya to the south of the City, for the use of the community of monks. The vast monastery built on this park came to be known subsequently as the Mahāvihāra. As it developed it acquired so much importance that eventually it became the only centre of learning in Sri Lanka to achieve worldwide recognition. Thereafter, monasteries were built as abodes of monks. Strict discipline was observed in these monasteries.

The story behind Queen Anula explains the importance attached to the amount of freedom the female sex gained on account of Buddhism. The Mahāvihāra came to be the pivot of Thēravāda Buddhism and the centre of Buddhist studies.

Ever since Buddhism became established here, Sri Lanka has enjoyed the privilege of propagating it to the rest of the world. It was Sri Lanka that set in motion the inauguration of the Order of Nuns. The basic foundation for the expansion of Higher Ordination in the Order of Nuns introduced by Bhikkuni Sanghamitta was laid centuries ago. From about the 13th century, there was a close relationship between Sri Lanka and other Buddhist countries.

The cardinal factor in this connection is the ready adherence of the people to Thēravāda Buddhism and its rapid spread in Sri Lanka. Siam or Thailand is prominent among the countries which had cultural relations with Sri Lanka. Originally the Thēravāda system of administering Higher Ordination extended to Thailand. But unfortunately, as Sri Lanka underwent a dark age over a number of centuries, we were compelled to re-introduce Higher Ordination from Thailand. The Siamese Sect, which survives to this day as the continuation of the Order of Mahāvihāra, had its beginning there. This cemented the cultural relationship between Thailand and Sri Lanka, culminating in religious co-operation.

Burma can be described as the country where Thēravāda Buddhism as found in the East is best preserved. The Sinhala Buddhist Monks of Sri Lanka lost no opportunity in spreading the Buddha Dhamma in South East Asia including Cambodia and Western Laos. The Jinakālamālini composed in 1516 A.D. by Thera Ratnapanna, who was one of the Order of Sinhala monks resident at Mahābodhyarāma in Western Laos, is a reflection of the cultural relations between South East Asia and Sri Lanka. It is also believed that the Siamese script was introduced to that country by the Sinhala monks. There is sufficient proof that there existed long standing religious and cultural relations between Burma and Sri Lanka.

Many historical facts are contained in the accounts of the introduction of Higher Ordination to Burma from Sri Lanka in the Kotte period, and the emergence of an order of monks in that country by the name Sinhala Sangha. Our great Chronicle, the Mahāvansa, further testifies that even as early as the Polonnaruwa period Thēravāda Buddhism, as it existed in Sri Lanka, was instrumental in the promotion of Buddhist activities in South East Asia.

The religious connection between Sri Lanka and other Thēravāda countries is clear. Besides these countries, even the Mahāyāna countries looked upon Sri Lanka with respect and reverence. Thus, Sri Lanka still remained the centre of inspiration.

Historical evidence indicates that the Sinhala Buddhist Monks, besides devoting themselves to the promotion of religious and cultural relationships, engaged in literary activities too. Among the gigantic Buddhist monasteries in Nāgarjunakonda in South India, there was a Sinhala monastery. Similarly, the Sinhala Monks who settled in the shadow of the Great Bo Tree at Buddha Gaya in North India erected a monastery for themselves and called it Lankārama.

Moreover, Amarāvati remained a centre of Buddhist missionary activity. According to the records from Amarāvati, the Sinhala monks journeyed to China via Kashmir, Gandhāra and Aparantaka, for the purpose of propagating the Buddha Dhamma. The great philosopher Āryadēva is said to have been a Sinhala monk from Sri Lanka. In this way the people of Sri Lanka and particularly the Sinhala Buddhist Monks are looked upon by Mahāyānists as well as Thēravādists as having contributed much to the cause of Buddhist religion, culture and literature.

We may next consider the most recent expansion of Thēravāda Buddhism, its record in the 20th century. This Holy Land of ours, made sacred by the footprint of the Exalted One, is considered today as the only seat of Thēravāda Buddhist studies. It occupies a prominent position as a centre of learning for the study of the Buddhist Scriptures in the Pāli medium.

Just as Venerable Buddhaghōsa landed in Sri Lanka and rendered the commentaries into Pāli, even so Venerable Kāshyapa, who came here from the Magadha country in North India, entered the Order of Monks and achieved the maximum possible in the field of orthodox Buddhist studies in India after his return. He is now attached to the Nālanda University of North India, in the capacity of its Director.

The great Temple at Nālanda, which is considered to be the only centre of Pāli studies in the whole of Asia today, is adorned by this scholar of great eminence. Moreover, it has gained great worldwide recognition on account of its pioneering the study of Pāli and Thēravāda Buddhism. It was this great scholar who transformed this famous Institution, which was once the only seat of Mahāyāna studies, into a Thēravāda Buddhist centre.

After a period of publicity, it declined rapidly and the revival came only under Venerable Kāshapa, who provided it with a new outlook and direction as the centre of Pāli learning. Thanks to the foresight of this great monk, this Institution attracts scholars of varying capabilities from all the quarters of the world for the study of Thēravāda Buddhism and Pāli.

The Nālanda University survives to this day as an Institution not only of North India, but also of the whole world. It is a fount of religion. This memorial, which was erected after the Venerable Kāshyapa had spent all his labour, wealth and intellectual energy, could be regarded as the only tie which constitutes a close cultural link between Sri Lanka and Buddhist India.

In the meantime, Sri Anagārika Dharmapāla, a twentieth century son of Sri Lanka who was later known as Sri Dhēvamitta Dharmapāla, contributed much to the propagation of Thēravāda Buddhism. His contribution in this respect is not second to that of any other champion of Buddhism since Asōka. It was through the efforts of Sri Dhēvamitta Dharmapāla that people in England, America, Germany, Sweden, France and many other European countries understood what Thēravāda Buddhism meant.

Venerable Jagdip Kāshyapa, the present Director of the Nava Nālāndā University, which is affiliated to the Bihār University, pioneered the cause of Thēravāda Buddhism and the study of the Pāli Language in India. The Thēravāda countries especially owe much to him and we the people of Sri Lanka too are grateful to him for the honour conferred on us.

The various stages in the development and spread of Buddhism that I have tried to sketch, and its final emergence in the twentieth century as one of the most powerful forces in the life and thought of mankind, will, I hope, impress on the mind of the reader the vitality of its teaching and its perennial character. The Doctrine of the Buddha is indeed timeless, and I trust I have done some justice in these few pages to its history and content.

THE EARLY BUDDHIST TEXTS

Arhant Mahinda, who introduced Buddhism to Sri Lanka, translated the Tripitaka and its *Āttakathās* or commentaries into Sinhala. Similarly the present Pāli commentaries are re-translations of those into the original Pāli. One fact has to be mentioned in this connection and that is the way in which the translation of Sinhala commentaries into Pāli adversely affected the Sinhala language, thus causing its decline.

If it had not been for the rendering of the Sinhala *Āttakathās* into Pāli, the Sinhala language could definitely have reached the position of an international language. However, even after the rendering of the commentaries into Pāli, the *Sihalatthakatha* continued to exist until the Polonnaruwa period. This is best shown by the inclusion of extracts from various *Sihalatthakathās* in the *Dhammapadatthakathā*. Glossaries came to be composed in the Polonnaruwa period by the translation of the extant *Sihalatthakathās* into Pāli.

The most significant event in the literary field as well as in the field of philosophy was the committing to writing of the Tripitaka at the *Āloka Vibāṣa* in Mātale. This was perhaps the beginning of a memorable revival in the annals of Thēravāda Buddhism. The message of the Teacher, which had hitherto been transmitted orally by

monks who had committed it to memory, was henceforth available in written form. Up to this time, there had never existed the practice of maintaining written records of religious works for the sake of their preservation. Thus, this step taken at Āloka Vihāra is regarded by historians as a remarkable event in religion as well as in literature.

This novel process created a situation whereby anyone could preserve Thēravāda Buddhist doctrine in its orthodox form. This further enabled the Buddhists to undertake missionary activity throughout the world by the mere publication of the Buddhist texts. Taking all in all, we are inclined to conclude that the revolution wrought at Āloka Vihāre in Mātale started a new era in the history of Buddhism, Buddhist literature and the propagation of the creed through missionary activity.

It is an undisputed fact that after this remarkable task was completed, Sri Lanka became world famous as a country where Thēravāda Buddhism was preserved in its pristine purity and where Buddhist studies enriching the Pāli language were carried on. This reputation was further promoted by the decision of Buddhaghōsa's teacher to send to Sri Lanka his famous pupil who had started the compilation of commentaries on the Pāli texts. Buddhaghōsa by completing the task of rendering the Sinhala atthakathās into Pāli, which Mahinda commenced, effected a revival in his own mother tongue, Māgadhi.

The other scholar monks, Dhammapāla, Buddhadhate and Upasēna, who encouraged Buddhaghosa in his enterprise also wrote commentaries on most of the Pāli texts.

The following comprehensive list indicates to what heights this scholarly activity reached in so short a span of time :-

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Visuddimagga | 14. Itivuttakattha kathā |
| 2. Samanthapāsādikā | 15. Sutthanipātatthakathā |
| 3. Sumangalavilasini | 16. Vimānavatthu Atthakathā |
| 4. Papancasūdani | 17. Pētavattuattakathā |
| 5. Sāratthappakāsini | 18. Thēragathā Atthakathā |
| 6. Manorathapūrani | 19. Thērigāthā Atthakathā |
| 7. Paramatthajothikā | 20. Jātaḥ Atthakathā |
| 8. Saddhammapajjotikā | 21. Cariyāpitaka Atthakathā |
| 9. Saddhammappakāsini | 22. Atthasālini |
| 10. Visuddhajanavilāsini | 23. Sammoha Vinōdhani |
| 11. * Madhuratthavilāsini | 24. Pancappakaranatthakathā |
| 12. Dhammapadatthakathā | 25. Catubhānavāratthakathā |
| 13. Udānatthakathā | 26. Kankāvitarani |

We have in Pāli Literature a special feature not found in any other oriental literature. This is the literary form of the Chronicle. The Sinhala monks of Sri Lanka are credited with the introduction of this novel item into our literature. These Chronicles contain the most authentic records that could be collected about the history of the Buddha Sāsana and the Sinhala nation. Foremost among these Chronicles are the Mahāvansa, the Cūlavansa, and the Dīpavansa, which occupy a prominent place both as histories and as works in the literature of verse.

The Buddhist monks of Sri Lanka made an important contribution to the enrichment of Buddhist literature. This was done through the formation of a common language suitable for the writing of commentaries and other literary works, out of the language of the original texts. This was carried out at Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura, where texts in the original language were converted into Māgadhi or Pāli. By working out a grammar for that language our scholars brought into being an international language suitable for use in Theravāda countries.

Moreover, the commentaries, chronicles and other works mentioned above were brought out in the same language. As a result of this creditable achievement, an island as small as ours gained a predominant position amongst the Theravāda Buddhist countries. It is an undisputed fact that Sri Lanka remains the only centre for the diffusion of pure original Buddhism to the rest of the world.

The claim of Sri Lanka that she is the only country where the original preachings of the Teacher survive, is confirmed by the fact that the great majority of her population are Buddhists. In South East Asia particularly, and in the Buddhist countries the world over in general, Sri Lanka and its Buddhist priests command great respect and reverence. Historians are of opinion that this attitude is similar to the respect that is shown towards the people of India, as the inhabitants of the birth place of Buddhism and of its Teacher, the Enlightened One.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST SECTS

As a result of the clashes among the Mahā Sangha after the Buddha's demise and also owing to the unwarranted and unwelcome words of Bhikkhu Subhadra, the First Great Council of Buddhist monks was summoned under the leadership and patronage of Ven. Mahākashyapa, Upāli and Ānanda.

At this time, the Buddhist Bhikkhus were scattered all over India and for this reason could not be controlled by a single individual from one centre alone. Owing to the difficulties connected with the problem of centralized control of the Sangha, many undesirable practices that were taboo for monks began to creep into their daily routine.

The purpose of the First Buddhist Council was the preservation of the Creed of Buddhism and the Vinaya rules in their pristine form. But barely a century had elapsed, before the Sāsana encountered further signs of dissension. These clashes, however, contributed to the spread of Buddhism more than to its downfall. Despite the fact that the Sthaviravāda branch of Buddhism was far removed from the principles of the rival factions that emerged, some of the more influential of the other sects such as the Mahā-sanghikas, who regarded the Buddha as the architect of Emancipation, held sway in many quarters.

During this period it had occurred to the monks that they should change with the times. The Second Buddhist Council could be regarded as a protest against these new ideas that emerged among the Bhikkhus. It was unavoidable that ideas contradictory to the teachings of Lord Buddha should arise among the community of monks. Thus, the Theravāda monks immediately showed their willingness to make a revision of the Tripitaka. A certain amount of unrest was created among the contemporary community of monks by the ten objects presented as suitable for them to accept from laymen. The outcome of all these petty disagreements and controversies was the division of the priesthood into Eighteen Sects within so short a span of time as one hundred and thirty six years, the period between Kālāsoka and Dharmāsoka.

It is evident that the division of the Sthaviravāda amongst themselves into these various sects was in one sense an impediment to the development of Buddhism. However, in another sense it helped the spread of the Buddhasāsana by promoting debate and controversy and the production of various commentaries and learned texts.

The most marked effect of the Second Council was the emergence of a faction of Bhikkhus who defected from Sthaviravāda at Kōsambi, giving rise to a new sect named Mahāsaṅghika. This leads us to conclude that this sect was the original cause of the Buddhist Schism which later developed as Mahāyāna. Even though there were only trivial differences in this new sect, as regards the philosophy it propagated, this division contributed to the spread of Buddhism.

This sect relaxed some of the strict Vinaya rules of the Community of Monks, and in order to attract as many adherents as possible, did its utmost to instruct society in its own concepts and doctrines.

With the lapse of time, there was a defection among the Mahāsaṅghika, so that in no time it was transformed into five different sects. The doctrines of the new sects also showed a slight deviation from Sthaviravāda. The Sthaviravādas too, it should be noted, divided into eleven different sects. Of the eighteen sects mentioned earlier, at least four, the Sthaviravāda, Mahāsaṅghika, Dharmaguttika and Sarvāstivāda spread to Sri Lanka. Some of them extended much farther to various other countries, influencing their philosophical thought, but they could not make much headway. Nevertheless, it should be admitted that these various factions in the Community of Monks did bring about a great revival in the Sāsana.

The fact that there existed clashes among the Saṅgha even at the time when Asōka became a true Buddhist and devoted himself to the promoting of the Sāsana with zeal, is best indicated by the division of the Mahāsaṅgha into various schools. This situation prompted Asōka to hold the Third Buddhist Council under the patronage of Venerable Moggaliputtatissa. Some historians are of opinion that this Council cannot be attributed to the initiative of Asōka.

Those who are reluctant to attribute it to Asōka go by the paucity of any epigraphical evidence to support such a view. But we cannot take only what is contained in epigraphy as historical because not all the activities of Asoka are recorded in these inscriptions and edicts, and because it is possible that those records which contain references to many others of his deeds are yet to be traced. Moreover, if we are to accept the first two Councils as historical, by their mere mention in the Mahāvansa, there is no satisfactory ground for rejecting altogether the historicity of the Third Buddhist Council.

Among the historical records of Sri Lanka, the word 'Devānampriya' occurs for the first time in the Mahāvansa, and Mahāvansa Tikā. Thus, it is not desirable to question the validity of all that is stated in the Mahāvansa. One result of this Third Council was that all the monks expelled from the Sāsana after this convention held an assembly in close proximity to Nālanda to protest against the high-handed acts of the Sthaviravādins. But it was a futile attempt. They subsequently met at Kōsambi, re-entered the order through the sects of such factions as the Mahā-sanghikas and formed nine separate sects.

Even though our chronicles Mahāvansa and Dīpa-vansa record that Asōka embraced Buddhism, he seems to have been a patron of all the existing religions. However, Asōka's Dharma, as incorporated in all his famous edicts erected throughout his empire, is entirely based on the teachings of the Buddha.

The Three Refuges

I take my refuge in the Buddha,
I take my refuge in the Dhamma,
I take my refuge in the Sangha.

The Five Vows

I vow not to kill,
I vow not to steal,
I vow not to lie,
I vow not to engage in wrongful
indulgence of the senses,
I vow not to take anything intoxicating.

Jessie R. Kent

