CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1. Justification of the Research

Ethics is one of the most important foundations of human society and religion. It really plays a very indispensable role in the social, political, economic and religious life of human beings. In the history of mankind, society could not flourish and live in harmony without the fundamental ethics and there is no religious system which does not include the moral teachings. The quality and nature of the nation follow from the mettle of the people. Laws cannot impart morality but they can only control external situations. Good intentions promote honesty and bad intentions breed corruption. Proclivity to vice is a natural tendency in human nature. Human dignity is a part of humanity – intrinsic to man. A person promoting the welfare of humanity can be trusted because he possesses the quality of truth. By aiming at the well-being of society it also aims at the well-being of oneself. No society can be stable without some moral principles. Every religion has laid down rules of conduct for its followers.\(^1\) It is due to the differences in geographical conditions, social background and development of man’s level that the concepts of ethics such as morality, virtue, equality, right, etc., or criteria of social ethics vary from society to society. Nowadays, ethics is applied not only in the sphere of human behavior and conduct, but also has stretched out its arms to every sphere of natural and social sciences as well.

In the sixth century BCE, there was the age of the great sages and teachers who not only reformed the society but also helped the

---

humankind in regeneration of virtues and moral behaviors. The Buddha and Mahāvīra of India, Lǎo Zǐ (老子) and Kǒng Zǐ (孔子) of China, Zoroaster of Persia, and Pythagoras and Heraclitus of Greece, etc. taught the values and virtues of life to humanity. The peace in the world, the harmony amongst the societies, the happiness of families, and the sincerity of man towards his duties heavily depend on ethical values. The world cannot afford to bypass and ignore the ethical teachings of the great sages and saints as they have potential to make human truly humane. Though, during the last 2550 years the world society has changed beyond imagination, yet, the moral values and virtues taught by all these great sages are still afresh and are as relevant as they were at that time.

The Buddha (566-486 BCE.) is very honored as a spiritual teacher, an outstanding philosopher, a social reformer and a practical moralist. For almost half century, the Buddha walked on the dusty paths of the Indian subcontinent to teach the Dhamma to the people in which he condemned and discarded the discriminating castes system, raised the position of women, extolled the ideology of equality and above all showed the gateway to freedom from all kinds of sufferings for sentient beings. The essence of his doctrine and discipline (Dhamma-Vinaya) is the ethical teachings and the philosophy of life, which is expressed in a very convincingly and in concise manner as under:

“Not to do evil, to perform good,
And to purify one’s own mind,
That is the teaching of the Buddha.”

Buddhist ethics are traditionally based on the enlightened perspective of the Buddha and he revealed it to the world for the benefit of all beings. It is the truth which the Buddha realized as the Four Noble

---

2 *Sabbpāpassa akaranam, kusalassa upasampadā.*
*Sacittapariyodapanam, etam buddhāna sāsanam.* (Dh. verse.183).
Truths that He preached to humanity. Thus the Four Noble Truths are regarded as the cardinal foundation of Buddhist ethics. This means that all ethical principles of Buddhism are included within the Four Noble Truths. Buddhist ethics is, therefore, based on the truth; it does not rely on any conventional authority or on any extraneous sanctions from any other authority. Again, Buddhist ethics is not founded upon the command of the divine will. Lord Buddha’s mission was to enlighten men as to the true nature of things and advise them how best to act for their own happiness and for the benefit and welfare of others. Consequently, Buddhist ethics is not founded on any commandment which a man is compelled to follow. It emphasizes upon the purposive actions of man, both good and bad, which involves choice and will.

According to the Aggañña Sutta\(^3\) that ethical corruption will lead to corruption of physical beauty, human character and the fruits by the nature. As a practical moralist, the Buddha very clearly taught that the ethical principles are the basic foundation of building the life of happiness, harmony and freedom to human beings. M.G. Chitkara says: “In Buddhism the structure of the universe is ethical and as other actions produce their own results, ethical action too produces its own proper results sooner or later. Buddha stressed the very important philosophical principle of the purity of means. The ends must be pure and so should also be the means.”\(^4\) As regards the social ethics, Lee Yearly says: “Most modern ethics in the West has attempted to do exactly that. The rationalist position attempts to replace religious principles and still present acceptable reasons why people should not commit unethical behavior, at least in its most horrible forms. The crisis of ethics in the later part of the twentieth century is that this position has left many kinds

\(^3\) DB. III, p. 77.
of actions without any guidance whatsoever. You have these very general principles, but so much of what people do how they treat their families, how they deal with minor theft, how they deal with their anger seems not to be covered at all.”

At the same period, we find Lǎo Zǐ (604 BCE) in China, who is known as an old sage, as a natural hermit, and as a social philosopher par excellence. He is a central figure of Taoism and traditionally regarded as the founder of Taoism and as the author of Dào Dé Jīng or Tao Te Ching (道徳经) which is a short text of around 5000 Chinese Characters in 81 brief sections. His philosophy has much influenced to the Chinese tradition and civilization throughout more than two millennia. Its impact on the neighboring countries especially Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Malaysia is very much perceptible. It played an important role in formation of the cultural milieu of all these countries. The contribution of Lǎo Zǐ to ethics is so great that his posterity have honored him with the nobly famous titles as “The Holy Sage,” (Xiān Gōng, 仙公), or as “the Great Teacher of Ying-Yang.” (Tiān Di Dà Shī, 天地大師). Besides, he is revered as a god in religious forms of Taoism such as “The Universally Honored One of Tao and Virtues” or “The Universal Lord of the Way and its Virtue” (Dào Dé Tiān Zūn, 道德天尊) and “Ultra Supreme Elder Lord” (Tài Shàng Lǎo Jūn, 太上老君), is a title for him in the Taoist religion which refers to him as “One of the Three Pure Ones”. His ethical doctrine has not only become one of the two systematical foundations of Chinese culture and thought, but also has strongly influenced the spiritual life of people by its natural law, transcendental nature, metaphysics, and so on, as Zhuāng Zǐ (莊子) says: “How complete was (the operation of Tao) in the man of old! It made them the equals of spiritual beings, and

---

subtle and all-embracing as heaven and earth. They nourished all things, and produced harmony all under heaven. Their beneficent influence reached to all classes of the people. They understood all fundamental principles, and followed them out to their graduated issues; in all six directions went their penetration, and in the four quarters all things were open to them. Great and small, fine and coarse; all felt their presence and operation.”

Moreover, Taoist ethics have the rules of moral dimension, which contain both the personal values in the individual morality, and the common norms in the social ethical organizations. Its basic moral rules against killing, stealing, lying, and sexual misconduct are of universal value. Fritjof Capra said that “From the notion that the movements of the Tao are a continuous interplay between opposites, the Taoist deduced two basic rules for human conduct. Whenever you want to achieve anything, they said, you should start with its opposite.” Thus, Lǎo Zǐ says:

In order to contract a thing, one should surely expand it first.
In order to weaken, one will surely strengthen first.
In order to overthrow, one will surely exalt first.
In order to take, one will surely give first.
This is called subtle wisdom.”

On the other hand, whenever you want to retain anything, you should admit in it something of its opposite:

Be bent, and you will remain straight.
Be vacant, and you will remain full.
Be worn, and you will remain new.

---

6 TT. Part II, pp. 215-216.
8 將欲歙之, 必固張之; 將欲弱之, 必固強之; 將欲廢之, 必固興之; 將欲奪之, 必固與之; 是謂微明 (TTC. Chapter.36).
9 直則曲, 圓則直, 敝則新 (TTC. Chapter.22).
It is of very realistic significance to explore what role the Taoist ethical thought plays in the process of building a harmonious society. To maintain the peace and harmoniousness of a society, people must at first keep to the inward harmoniousness and the peace of mind, and pursue a healthy way of life. It is very important for people to understand thoroughly what one’s life imports and how his lot matters, and then not to seek things, which is unnecessary to his life or unobtainable by his lot. Only if one keeps quietness and cleanness, and minimizes the thought of self and makes his desires few, he can preserve good psychological condition, maintain a harmony between material and spiritual life, and make his life ample and peaceful.

Thus, we find that the ethical and moral values taught by the Buddha and Lǎo Zǐ are still relevant and fresh for human civilizations as they were at their time of promulgation. The teachings of both schools have become very popular not only in India and in China but also in the other parts of the globe. The ethical teachings of both Buddhism and Taoism have many similarities and resemblances. In the light of the above facts, an attempt would be made not only to study the ethical values in Buddhism and Taoism but also would compare the similarity and dissimilarity in between them, which would have obviously crept into them due to their geographical, cultural and religious differences. We find a large number of books on the themes “Ethics in Buddhism” or “Buddhist Ethics” and “Ethics in Taoism” or “Taoist Ethics” separately by various distinguished scholars, but till date, not a single attempt has been made to study on Buddhist and Taoist Ethics in comparative light. As we live in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society it becomes incumbent upon us to do the comparative study of the ethical teachings of different religious traditions of the world which in turn will help us to know each other culture and religion.
2. Ethics and Its Different Concept

2.1. Definitions of Ethics

The term Ethics is derived from the Greek word ‘ethikos’, which pertains to ethos, or character. It is also called “moral philosophy” from the Latin custom. Popularly, ethics is described as “the science treating morals”\textsuperscript{10} but since precise definition of the term is lacking. It is necessary to state the ground that a consideration of ethics is intended to cover. G. E. Moore, in his Principia Ethica, refusing to take it as an adequate definition of ethics as dealing with “the question of what is good or bad in human conduct,” declares: “I may say that I intend to use “ethics” to cover more than this-a usage for which there is, I think, quite sufficient authority. I am using it to cover the general inquiry into what is good.”\textsuperscript{11} It is generally accepted that the word “ethics” is derived from the Greek adjective “ethica” which comes from the substantive “ethos” which means character, custom or habit. Another synonym of ethics is the term “moral philosophy”, which is based on the Latin word “mores” which means habits or customs.\textsuperscript{12} In order to grasp the full meaning of the word ethics, various opinions about the term ought to be analyzed. According to John S. Mackenzie, “Ethics…discusses men’s habits and customs, or in other words their characters, the principles on which they habitually act, and considers what it is that constitutes the rightness or wrongness of those principles, the good or evil of those habits.”\textsuperscript{13} William Lillie has defined ethics as “the normative science of the conduct of human beings living in societies - a science which judges this conduct to

\textsuperscript{12} I. C. Sharma, Ethical Philosophies of India, Ghaziabad, International Publishing 1991, p.31.
be right or wrong, to be good or bad, or in some similar way.”

K.N. Jayatilleke believes that “ethics has to do with human conduct and is concerned with questions regarding what is right or wrong, what are justice and what are our duties, obligations and rights.”

Henry Sidgwick states that “[e]thics is sometimes considered as an investigation of the true moral laws or rational precepts of conduct; sometimes as an inquiry or into the nature of the Ultimate End of reasonable human action - the Good or “true Good” of man-and the method of attaining.”

A more detailed description is given by Rev. H.H. Williams: “In its widest sense, the term “ethics” would imply an examination into the general character and habits of mankind, and would even involve a description or history of the habits of men in particular societies living at different periods of time.” Observing the exceptionally wide field that would be covered by ethics, the author concludes: “Ethics then is usually confined to the particular field of human character and conduct so far as they depend upon or exhibit certain general principles commonly known as moral principles. Men in general characterize their own conduct and character and that of other men by such general adjectives as good, bad, right, and wrong, and it is the meaning and scope of these adjectives, primarily in their relation to human conduct, and ultimately in their final and absolute sense, that ethics investigates.”

We are therefore concerned with certain term as they are used in a particular connection and also with their meaning in the absolute sense. In conjunction with these aspects, the opinion of Professor Muirhead may be cited: “We have two kinds of sciences… those concerning themselves with our judgments upon them. The former class was sometimes been called “natural,” the latter

“normative,” or, as is better, “critical” sciences. Ethics is critical in the sense explained. Its subject-matter is human conduct and character, not as natural facts with a history and causal connections with other facts, but as possessing value in view of a standard or idea."\(^{18}\) The various ethical systems are therefore more likely to show divergence when one comes to consider the standard or ideal that furnishes the value of human conduct rather than the prescriptions for the conduct itself. For example, killing, thieving, and lying are in general considered to be evils, whether they are at any time justifiable will depend on the terms of the ideal; on the other hand, happiness is invariably associated with good.

The study of ethics as particular discipline contributing to philosophical inquiry as a whole can be traced back to Aristotle, since he distinguished between “first principles,” or the investigation of the ultimate nature of existence as such, and the subsidiary disciplines which, though having the same purpose, dealt with only a particular approach to it. Ethics constituted one such approach and, of the hundreds of Aristotelian writings, three major works on ethics have come down to us. Aristotle maintained through out his writing the fundamental doctrine of Socrates and Plato that “virtue is happiness”. In the Elegy to Eudemus of Cyprus he praised the man who first showed clearly that a good man and a happy man are the same, and in the Hymn in memory of Hermias he opined: “Virtue, difficult to the human race is the noblest pursuit in life.”\(^{19}\) Two of Plato’s successors at the Academy cherished the same belief in the necessity of virtue although opinion is delivered the view as to what good is on what constitutes the “good”. Returning to Aristotle, the proposition that happiness is activity is contained in two of his most


authoritative works, the Metaphysica and the De Anima, as well as in the three ethical treatises, the Nicomachean Ethics, the Eudemian Ethics, and the Magna Moralia. In Nicomachean then Aristotle stated that “the highest happiness is the speculative life of the intellect…but that happiness as a human also includes the practical life of combining prudence and moral virtue; and that, while both live needs external goods as necessaries, the practical life also requires them as instruments of moral action.” The treatise concludes with the means of making men virtuous; contending that virtue requires habituation, habituation into law, law into legislative art, and legislative art into politics. Ethics thus passes into politics. The Eudemian Ethics and Magna Moralia continue to expound the idea of good fortune and gentlemanliness, the latter being regarded as perfect virtue, containing all particular virtues.

Hence, there is no indication of an ultimate or transcendental state, and for this one must look at the later developments of the science of ethics. Whether they arise in logical continuity or exist merely as arbitrary attachments introduced for the sake of convenience. Only the former condition would provide justification for considering ethics as a genuine contribution to the science of philosophy proper. In this connection Professor Wolf in his article on ethics in Encyclopedia Britannica, wrote that: “Ethics is not a positive science but a normative science - it is not primarily occupied with the actual character of human conduct but with the ideal. Many moral philosophers, indeed, have stated explicitly that the business of ethics merely consists in clearing up current moral conceptions and unfolding the ultimate presuppositions involved in them, and it is not its function to discover any new moral ideas. It may be remarked that even the ethics of Aristotle attempted no more, although he

was not bound by anything like this authority, and the traditions of the
Christian Church.”

Professor Wolf then states that the main problems of
ethics “turn chiefly on the following conceptions: (1) the highest good of
human conduct, or its ultimate ideal aim, which may serve as the ultimate
standard of right conduct; (2) the origin or source of our knowledge of the
highest good or of right or wrong; (3) the sanctions of moral conduct; (4)
the motives which prompt right conduct. Another problem discussed by
moral philosophers is that of Freedom of the Will.”

2. 2. Concepts of Morality and Virtue

Morality is primarily concerned with the behavior of people insofar
as that behavior affects others; it prohibits the kind of conduct that harms
others and encourages the kind of conduct that helps them. Any definition
of morality must include as two of its necessary features that (1) everyone
about whom a moral judgment is correctly made, knows what morality is
and (2) it is not irrational for any of them to use morality as a guide for
their own conduct. If a person agrees that moral judgments can be
correctly made about all rational persons, then he holds that morality is
universal.

“Morality” is an unusual word. It is not used very much, at
least not without some qualification. People do sometimes talk about
Christian morality, Nazi morality, or about the morality of the Greeks, but
they seldom talk simply about morality all by itself.

Consistent with this way of talking, many anthropologists used to
claim that morality, like law, applies only within a society. They claimed

21 Abraham Wolf, “Ethics,” James Louis Garvin (Editor in Chief), Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. VIII,
23 Ibid., p.3.
that “morality” refers to that code of conduct that is put forward by a society. However, even in small homogeneous societies that have no written language, distinctions are made among morality, etiquette, law, and religion. So, even for these anthropologists “morality” does not often refer to every code of conduct put forward by a society. Morality is often distinguished from etiquette, law, and religion, all of which are, or involve, codes of conduct put forward by a society. Etiquette is sometimes included as a part of morality, but it applies to norms that are considered less serious than the kinds of norms for behavior that are part of morality. Law or a legal system is distinguished from morality or a moral system by having explicit written rules, penalties, and officials who interpret the laws and apply the penalties.

Religion differs from morality or a moral system in that it includes stories, usually about supernatural beings, that are used to explain or justify the behavior that it prohibits or requires. There is often a considerable overlap in the conduct prohibited or required by religion and that prohibited or required by morality, but religions always prohibit or require more than is prohibited or required by guides to behavior that are explicitly labeled as moral guides. Sometimes morality is regarded as the code of conduct that is put forward by religion, but even when this is not the case, morality is thought by many to need some religious justification. However, just as with law, some religious practices and precepts are criticized on moral grounds, e.g., discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or sexual orientation.24

Morality is only a guide to conduct, whereas religion is always more than this. When “morality” is used simply to refer to a code of conduct put forward by any actual group, including a society, whether or

not it is distinguished from etiquette, law, and religion, then it is being used in a descriptive sense. It is also being used in the descriptive sense when it refers to important attitudes of individuals. Morality concerns actions that should and should not be performed and rules of conduct that should and should not be followed. It also comprehends motives for actions that people should and should not have and character traits or habits that people should and should not try to develop.25

The word virtue (arete) means “excellence” in Greek. It is regarded as moral excellence and categorized in various aspects. In western virtue there are four classical virtues called Cardinal Virtues: Temperance, Prudence, Fortitude and Justice. Plato identified them with the classes of the city described in The Republic, and with the faculties of man. Temperance was associated with the producing classes, the farmers and craftsmen, and with the animal appetites; fortitude with the warrior class and with the spirited element in man; prudence with the rulers and with reason. Justice stands outside the class system and divisions of man, and rules the proper relationship among the three of them.26 In the philosophical theories the popular characteristics of virtue are as follow:

1. Virtues are admirable and praiseworthy.
2. Most virtues are primarily psychological states.
3. Virtues are based on humanity.
4. Virtues are connected.
5. Virtues are always in a person’s best interests.
6. Practical wisdom or knowledge is the foundational virtue.
7. Virtue requires freedom.27

25 Ibid.
According to religious point of view there are various classifications. In Christianity, the theological virtues are faith, hope and charity or love. The Muslim virtues are: prayer, repentance, honesty, loyalty, sincerity, frugality, prudence, moderation, self-restraint, discipline, perseverance, patience, hope, dignity, courage, justice, tolerance, wisdom, good speech, respect, purity, courtesy, kindness, gratitude, generosity and contentment. Hinduism reveals its virtues that a person in the mode of Sattva (goodness, creation, stillness, intelligence) has that mode in prominence in his nature, which he obtains by following the virtues of the Dharma such as altruism, restraint and moderation, honesty, cleanliness, protection and reverence for the Earth, Universality, Peace, Non-Violence or Ahimsa, Reverence. Buddhist practice as outlined in the Noble Eightfold Path can be regarded as a progressive list of virtues: (1) Right View - Realizing the Four Noble Truths, (2) Right Intention - Commitment to mental and ethical growth in moderation, (3) Right Speech - One speaks in a non hurtful, not exaggerated, truthful way, (4) Right Action - Wholesome action, avoiding action that would do harm, (5) Right Livelihood – One’s job does not harm in any way oneself or others; directly or indirectly, (6) Right Effort - One makes an effort to improve, (7) Right Mindfulness - Mental ability to see things for what they are with clear consciousness, and (8) Right Concentration - Wholesome one-pointedness of mind.28

Buddhism’s four Brahmavihāra, “Sublime States” can be more properly regarded as virtues in the European sense. They are: (1) Mettā: loving-kindness towards all; the hope that a person will be well; (2) Karuṇā: compassion; the hope that a person’s sufferings will diminish; (3) Muditā: altruistic joy in the accomplishments of a person, oneself or other; (4) Upekkhā: equanimity, or learning to accept both loss and gain.

28 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (CDB. II. p.1844).
praise and blame, success and failure with detachment, equally, for oneself and for others. There are also the Pārimita “perfections”. In Theravada Buddhism, the Ten Perfections are: (1) Dāna Pārami: generosity, giving of oneself (2) Sīla Pārami: virtue, morality, proper conduct (3) Nekkhamma Pārami: renunciation (4) Paññā Pārami: transcendental wisdom, insight (5) Vīrya Pārami: energy, diligence, vigour, effort (6) Khanti Pārami: patience, tolerance, forbearance, endurance (7) Sacca Pārami: truthfulness, honesty (8) Adhiṭṭhāna Pārami: determination, resolution (9) Mettā Pārami: loving-kindness and (10) Upekkhā Pārami: equanimity, serenity.

In Chinese philosophy, particularly Taoism “virtue”, translated from Chinese “Te” (德), is also an important concept. Te originally meant normative “virtue” in the sense of “personal character; inner strength; integrity”, but semantically changed to moral “virtue; kindness; morality.” Confucian moral manifestations of “virtue” include humanity, “Rén” (仁) filial piety, “Xiào” (孝), and loyalty, “Zhōng” (忠). The Taoist concept of Te, however, is more subtle, pertaining to the “virtue” or ability that an individual realizes by following “the Tao” (道), “the Way”. Joseph Wu made question about individuality. Individuality is the embodiment or particularization of Tao. The Taoist call it by Chinese term “Te” (德) which has been translated into English as “virtue”, “character” or “power”. Te is the principle underlying each individual existence. Zhuāng Zǐ explains: “When things obtained that by which they came to existence, it was called their “Te”. Another ancient Chinese philosopher, Guān Zǐ calls it “the dwelling place of Tao.”

As the key element of ethical thinking, virtue ethics is an approach to ethics that emphasizes the character of the moral agent, rather than

---

29 Tevijja Sutta (LDB. I. p.194).
rules or consequences. Virtue ethic, in the view of its proponents, promised a reconciliation of morality and self-interest. If, for example, generosity is a virtue, then a virtuous person will desire to be generous; and the same will hold for the other virtues. If acting morally is acting as a virtuous human being would act, then the virtuous human beings will act morally because that is what they are like, and that is what they want to do. But this point again raised the question of what human nature is really like. If virtue ethicists hope to develop an objective theory of the virtues, one that is valid for all human beings, then they are forced to argue that the virtues are based on the common human nature; but, it is doubtful that human nature can serve as a standard of what one would want to call morality correct or desirable behavior. If, on the other hand, virtue ethicists wish to base the virtues on a particular ethical tradition, then they are implicitly accepting a form of ethical relativism with other traditions or with those who do not accept any tradition at all.\footnote{“Ethics,” \textit{The New Encyclopedia Britannica}, 15th edition, vol. XVIII, USA: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc, 2007, p. 517.}

A rather different objection to virtue ethics is that it relies on an idea of the importance of moral character that is unsupported by the available empirical evidence. There is now a large body of psychological research on what leads people to act morally, and it points to the surprising conclusion that often very trivial circumstances have a decisive impact. If character plays less of a role in determining moral behavior than is commonly supposed, an ethics that emphasizes virtuous character to the exclusion of all else will be on shaky ground. Any version of virtue ethics gives primacy of place to moral character over action, and sees the individual’s development of virtues and elimination of vices as the best assurance that good deeds will be forthcoming. It focuses on rightness or obligation and it concerns only actions and their consequences, saying
nothing about moral judgments concerning persons, character, and character traits.32

2.3. Differences between Ethics and Morality

Morality and ethics are terms often used as if they have the same meaning. At other times, they are used as if they have no relationship to one another. The meanings of the terms “ethics” and “morality” can be differentiated based on their origins in ancient Greek and Latin, respectively. Ethics comes from the Greek word ethos - moral character or custom. Morality comes from the Latin word moralis- custom or manner. The both words deal with the customs or the manner in which people do things. Their modern meanings relate to the way people act - either good or bad. Ethics is used to refer to the formal study of those standards or conduct. Sometimes, one refers to the study of conduct as moral philosophy, but that is less common than just saying “ethics.” Morality, strictly speaking, is used to refer to what we would call moral conduct or standards. Morality is looking at how good or bad our conduct is, and our standards about conduct. The term ethics and morality are closed related. It is now common to refer to ethical judgments or to ethical principles where it once would have been more accurate to speak of moral judgments or moral principles. These applications are an extension of the meaning of ethics. In earlier usage, the term referred not to morality itself but to the field of study, or branch of inquiry, that has morality as its subject matter. In this sense, ethics is equivalent to moral philosophy. Although ethics has always been viewed as a branch of philosophy its all-embracing practical nature links it with many other areas of study, including anthropology, biology, economics, history,

politics, sociology, and theology. Yet ethics remains distinct from such disciplines because it is not a matter of factual knowledge in the way that the sciences and other branches of inquiry are. Rather, it has to do with determining the nature of normative theories and applying these sets of principles to practical moral problems.\(^{33}\)

Any dentition of morality must include as two of its necessary features that (1) everyone about whom a moral judgment is correctly made, knows what morality is and (2) it is not irrational for any of them to use morality as a guide for their own conduct. If a person agrees that moral judgments can be correctly made about all rational persons, then he holds that morality is universal. Only those who hold that a person cannot make any moral judgments about people in other societies can hold ethical relativism.\(^{34}\) A “man of principle” is sometimes thought of, with distaste, as a man who acts in accordance with a fixed set of rules, ignoring the complexities of the situation and failing to adapt his behavior to changing circumstances. The morality of principles and rules is sometimes contrasted with the morality of sensibility, which emphasizes such virtues as sympathy and integrity as against a rigid code of behavior. In either kind of morality, however, particular judgments will have to be made, based on a view of the situation in which the agent acts, and some factors in the situation will have to be regarded as reasons for acting in one way rather than another. There is, therefore, a more general sense of “moral principle,” which can be regarded as common to both views, in which a moral principle indicates some factor that is generally relevant to what ought to be done.\(^{35}\)


2.4. Relation between Conduct and Character

Etymologically, the term “character” comes from the ancient Greek term charaktēr, which initially referred to the mark impressed upon a coin. The term charaktēr later came to refer more generally to any distinctive feature by which one thing is distinguished from others. Along this general line, in contemporary usage character often refers to a set of qualities or characteristics that can be used to differentiate between persons. It is used this way, for example, commonly in literature. In philosophy, however, the term character is typically used to refer to the particularly moral dimension of a person. For example, Aristotle most often used the term ēthē for character, which is etymologically linked to “ethics” and “morality” (via the Latin equivalent mores). “Character is property. It is the noblest of possessions.” said Samuel Smiles.  

Besides, there are various definitions of character written down by psychologists:

Myerson: “Conduct is the fruit of character.”

Webb: “Character is the sum of all personal qualities which are not distinctly intellectual.”

MacDougall: “Character is an organization of sentiments.”

Prince: “Character is the sum total of the predominating dispositions or tendencies popularly called traits.”

Fernald: “Character is the quality of personality as opposed to intelligence which is the degree of personality.”

Watson, J.B.: “Character is used when viewing the individual as a whole from the standpoint of his reactions to the more conventionalized or standardized situations.”

Warren: “The specific attitudes which develop during the course of life affect one another and result in the formation of general attitudes.

These general attitudes constitute the various phases of the individual’s character,” and again, “character is the general rating of an individual in any specific phase of mental life.”

Kulp, D.H.II.: “The complex of habits gives characters; the complex of wishes gives will; the complex of the two gives personality.”

Allport, G.W.: “There is likewise confusion between personality devaluated and personality evaluated, that is between personality and character.”

Bagley: “Moral character certainly presupposes as its basis a multitude of effective specific habits. To paraphrase an ancient proverb one may safely say, “Take care of the habits, and moral character will take care of itself.’”

This conglomeration of definitions represents many different emphases and points of view. Some are definitely opposed to others, and yet there are certain relationships that run through all. These definitions may be summarized as follows:

1. Character has to do with those phases of man’s behavior other than the intellectual.
2. Character is observed in the crystallization of definite traits.
3. Character represents an organization of behavior.
4. Character is related to conduct. Some claim that character is a summation of conduct—others claim that conduct issues from character.
5. Character in a limited (and usual) sense refers to moral character, that is, one’s behavior relative to the conventions and standards of society.
6. Character is the result of an evaluation.

7. Character has to do with the outward expression of inner attitudes or dispositions.

8. Character in a limited sense refers to socialization, self-seeking and social participation.

Character is one of the greatest motive powers in the world. In its noblest embodiments, it exemplifies human nature in its highest forms, for it exhibits man at his best. Men of genuine excellence, in every station of life—men of industry, of integrity, of high principle, of sterling honesty of purpose—command the spontaneous homage of mankind. It is natural to believe in such men, to have confidence in them, and to imitate them. All that is good in the world is upheld by them, and without their presence in it the world would not be worth living in.\(^{39}\) The study of human character is the study of motive. It can be seen only the outside of a man; it is needed to know what goes on inside. His actions are the data from which it is started; from them that have to be inferred his thoughts and feelings, so as to realize the state of mind prompting the actions which are all that can be observed. The question is often fraught with insuperable difficulties. It is unknown why other people do certain things. It is often unknown why even one does the things that one does; though in one’s desire to be logical, one invents reasons for them, which are sufficient to satisfy one’s thirst for reason. The obsession of logic lies at the root of much misunderstanding of human character. One tries to explain actions by reference to logical motives: and one fails, because the motives are very commonly not logical, and are in fact more powerful than any logic is capable of producing. If one wishes to understand human character, the first and foremost proposition which one has to grasp is that motives do not spring from intellect but from feeling: that

---

the world of human life is governed, not by reason, but by passion, emotion, and sentiment.\(^{40}\)

The evidence of the nature of character is to be determined by experience. A man forms a judgment with respect to his own character by reviewing his past thoughts and actions; he estimates the character of his own fellow-men by interferences from their expressions of thought. In modern ethical science the place of character has acquired great importance, especially in connection with the doctrine of the will. For example, when the determinist, in defending his position, argues that the will is governed by motives which are beyond the control of the agent, it is affirmed on the contrary by the advocates of freedom that the effect of the motives is conditioned by the character, and that character determined the will. Character becomes in this way more or less identified with the person of a man, with his real self. For example, the case of a man whose desire is excited toward some object which he feels that he ought not to possess. The immorality of the pleasurable conduct which is suggested to him is weighted in comparison with the morality of the painful conduct. Now it is argued that the motives alone are not sufficient to determine his conduct, but that character conditions the determination.\(^{41}\)

It is clearly understood that ethics has to do with conduct and character, and that it differs from a physical or experimental treatment of the phenomena of human action in that its subject-matter is a form of judgment upon them. It seems natural to define conduct as “human action.” And this is a good definition if it is properly understood what is meant by “human action”, but this is clearly not included in conduct, for


there is no room to distinguish a good and a bad in automatic actions of this kind. In other words, the action is not distinctively human at all.42

It is a more easy as well as a more accurate method to characterize a man by what he does than by what he is—by his outward conduct rather than by his thoughts, feelings, and desire. If it is understood how a man has acted in the main situations of life—as a son, a brother, a husband, a father, as a citizen, as a friend and foe, as an inferior, an equal and superior, in business and recreation, in company and solitude, in prosperity and adversity, through youth, manhood, and old age—it shall be ensured to have almost a complete expression of his character, so far as it is possible for one life to test it; and it also seems to have a complete knowledge of man; and this is the method that is naturally applied whenever man’s powers of observation are stronger than man’s insight and introspection, as is usually the case. Hence, most of the terms that are used to describe character are based on observation, and denote modes of conduct.43 By a subtle logic, the effect has been to render morals unreal and transcendental. Since the world of actual experience does not guarantee this identity of character and outcome, it is inferred that there must be some ulterior truer reality which enforces an equation that is violated in this life. Hence, the common notion of another world in which vice and virtue of character produce their exact moral need.44

Yet the defects of the method of observation as applied to the knowledge of character are plainly apparent. For all that strictly man whom is recognized only by observation is that his character is that from which his conduct proceeds—his conduct that seems so fully to characterize him. His character is the sum of unknown forces or

tendencies which are the source of his conduct. But what these are in themselves, how they operate, how they are related together, and how they develop and decay, of all this there is nothing to know. In practice we escape from this difficult. The same qualities that are derived from observation of a man’s conduct are afterwards attributed to his character, and this process seems to transform ignorance of it into knowledge.45

3. Concept of Ethics: Buddhism and Taoism

Ethics is a major branch of philosophy, encompassing right conduct and good life. It is significantly broader than the common conception of analyzing right and wrong. A central aspect of ethics is “the good life”, the life worth living or life that is simply satisfying, which is held by many philosophers to be more important than moral conduct. Most religions have an ethical component, often derived from purported supernatural revelation or guidance.

3.1. The Middle Way (Mijjimapāṭipadā)

Ethics in Buddhism are entirely based on Dhamma-Vinaya taught by the Buddha and his disciples. Moral instructions are included in Buddhist scriptures or handed down through tradition. Most scholars of Buddhist ethics thus rely on the examination of Buddhist scriptures, and the use of anthropological evidence from traditional Buddhist societies, to justify claims about the nature of Buddhist ethics. According to traditional Buddhism, the foundation of Buddhist ethics for laypeople is the Pañcasīla: no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and

intoxicants. In becoming a Buddhist, or affirming one’s commitment to Buddhism, a layperson is encouraged to vow to abstain from these negative actions. Buddhist monks and nuns take hundreds more such vows. The Buddha knows and understands morality. He conducts his life toward the realization of objectives of life. According to the Buddhist ethics man should live harmoniously with colleagues, associates and members of the society by willingly helping them in their duties. And bearing a courteous and respectful manner, both in their presence and helpful to his livelihood.

The sole reliance on traditional formulae or practices, however, can be questioned by Western Buddhists whose main concern is the practical solution of complex moral problems in the modern world. To find a justifiable approach to such problems it may be necessary not just to appeal to the precepts or the Vinaya, but to use more basic Buddhist teachings such as the Middle Way to aid interpretation of the precepts and find more basic justifications for their usefulness relevant to all human experience. This approach avoids basing Buddhist ethics solely on faith in the Buddha’s enlightenment or Buddhist tradition, and may allow more universal non-Buddhist access to the insights offered by Buddhist ethics. The Buddha provided some basic guidelines for acceptable behavior that are part of the Noble Eightfold Path. In Buddhism, holy-life consists of three stages i.e. Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā. Each of them serves as a sufficient condition for the others, Sīla is the basic foundation of ethical life and it prepares a congenial atmosphere for Samādhi rather it is conductive to Samādhi and Samādhi forms a background for Paññā which means Samādhi is conducive to Paññā. With the proper fulfillment of these gradual stages, the Buddhist holy-life is complete. However, though all the three stages are complementary to each other yet each of them has

46 Saṅgīti Sutta (LDB. p.495).
its limitation; Sīla provides training to the body and speech, Samādhi provides mental training and Paññā unfolds the nature of reality whereby the nature of the Dhamma, is clearly understood. In this way each stage has a definite function and a definite field of operation, though with congenial inter relation.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the Middle Way of practice that leads to the cessation of Dukkha. The Path has eight factors, each described as right or perfect: (1) right view or understanding, (2) right resolve, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness and (8) right concentration or unification.47 These factors are also grouped into three sections. Factors 3-5 pertain to moral virtue; factors 6-8 pertain to meditative cultivation of the mind; factors 1-2 pertain to wisdom. The eight factors exist two basic levels, the ordinary, which leads to good rebirths, and the transcendent or Noble, which builds on this preliminary development to go beyond rebirths. There is thus both an ordinary and Noble Eightfold Path.48

3.1.1. Sīla

Right speech, at the ordinary level, is the well-established abstaining from lying divisive or harsh speech, and empty gossip. At the transcendent level, each of the three factors relating to “virtue” is a person’s spontaneous restraint from wrong speech, action or livelihood, or immediate acknowledgement to another person when such acts are done. Right action is abstaining from wrong bodily behavior: onslaught on living beings, taking what is not given, and wrong conduct with regard to sense-pleasures. Right livelihood is avoiding ways of making a living

47 Dasuttara Sutta (LDB. p.518).
which cause suffering to other: those based on trickery and greed, or on trade in weapons, living beings, meat, alcoholic drink or poison.\textsuperscript{49}

3.1.2. Samādhi

The three last factors of the Path are of the Noble level when they are accompanied by other factors at this level. Right effort is directed at developing the mind in a wholesome way. The first effort is to avoid the arising of unwholesome states of mind which express attachment, hatred or delusion. The second seeks to overcome or undermine unwholesome states which nevertheless arise. The third is directed at the meditative development of wholesome states of mind, while the forth is the effort to maintain and stabilize wholesome qualities of mind which have been generated. Right mindfulness is a crucial aspect of any Buddhist meditation, and is a state of keen awareness of mental and physical phenomena as they arise within and around one, and carefully bearing in mind the relationship between things. Right concentration or unification refers to various levels of deep calm state of inner collectedness arising from attention closely focused on a meditation object.\textsuperscript{50}

3.1.3. Paññā

Ordinary “right view” relates mainly to such matters as kamma and rebirth, making a person takes full responsibility for his or her actions. It also covers intellectual and partial experiential, understanding of the Four Noble Truth. Noble right view is true wisdom, knowledge which penetrates into the nature of reality in flashes of profound insight, direct seeing of the world as a stream of changing, unsatisfactory, conditioned processes. Right resolve concerns the emotions, with thought rightly

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid. p.38.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. p.39.
channeled towards peaceful freedom from sensuality, and away from ill-will and cruelty to loving-kindness and compassion. At the transcendent level, it is the focused applied thought of one practicing the Noble Path.\(^{51}\)

### 3.2. The Way of Virtue (Tao Te, 道德)

Taoism has never been a unified religion, but has rather consisted of numerous teachings based on various revelations. Therefore, different branches of Taoism often have very distinct beliefs. Nevertheless, there are certain core beliefs that nearly all the schools share. Taoist doctrine emphasizes various themes found in the Dào Dé Jīng or Tao Te Ching (道德經) and Zhuāng Zǐ (莊子), such as naturalness, vitality, peace, “effortless action” (Wú Wéi, 無為), emptiness (refinement), detachment, the strength of softness (or flexibility), receptiveness, spontaneity, the relativism of human ways of life, ways of speaking and guiding behavior.

#### 3.2.1. Tao (道)

“Tao” is pronounced and also spelled “Dao” usually translated as road, channel, path, way, doctrine, principle, reality or nature.\(^{52}\) According to Tao Te Ching, the word “Tao” can also mean the proper path in life and it is one that works in harmony with reality, the essence of the natural universe.\(^{53}\) Wing Tsit Chan stated that Tao meant system of morality to Confucianists but the natural, eternal, spontaneous, indescribable way things began and pursued their course to Taoists.\(^{54}\)

---

\(^{51}\) Ibid.


\(^{53}\) TTC. chapter.1-37.

Cane asserts Tao can be roughly stated to be the flow of the universe, or the force behind the natural order, equating it with the influence that keeps the universe balanced and ordered.\textsuperscript{55} Martinson says that Tao is associated with nature, due to a belief that nature demonstrates the Tao. The flow of Qi (氣), as the essential energy of action and existence, is often compared to the universal order of Tao. Tao is compared to what it is not, which is similar to the negative theology of Western scholars. It is often considered to be the source of both existence and non-existence. LaFargue asserts that Tao is rarely an object of worship, being treated more like the Indian concepts of atman and dharma.\textsuperscript{56}

The core of Taoism is the “Tao,” which maintains order and balance in the universe. There are several levels of the Tao. Among them are the Great Tao, the Tao of nature, and the Tao present in each person’s life. The Great Tao is the invisible force behind all creation. The constant Tao is the beginning of everything, and everything returns to the Tao in an eternal cycle. This Great Tao is also mysterious and cannot be explained in words. Rather, it can only be felt. The Tao of nature is the controlling rhythm of the natural world. A third type of Tao is the way in which each human being lives his or her life, meaning how the Great Tao affects each person. The goal of Taoism is to become one with the Great Tao. Tao Te Ching states that humans are faced with the basic problem of knowing who they really are. By accepting that humans are all part of the Tao, they can live in unity with it. Nature, in Taoism, is not something to be conquered or controlled. Instead, people need to live in harmony with


the nature. By focusing on the Tao, people can awaken themselves to this eternal rhythm and reach enlightenment, or spiritual understanding.\textsuperscript{57}

\textbf{3.2.2. Te (德)}

Tao is also associated with the complex concept of Te “power, virtue and integrity”, which is, the active expression of Tao. Te is the active living, or cultivation, of that “way.” Thorough out Taoist texts, moving water is used to represent the flow of Tao in people’s lives. The flow of water plays a key part in the concept of “Te.” Te is the second element in Tao Te Ching, the Tao within people. Numerous chapters of that book are devoted solely to an explanation of how Te works in people’s lives.\textsuperscript{58} Thus, Te deals with informed action of conscious and aware choices and virtuous behavior. Virtuous behavior is when one acts morally, with respect and consideration for others. The Three Jewels also associated with “Te” are three types of virtues: compassion, or consideration of other people and their feelings; moderation, or self-control and restraint; and humility or humbleness. These are called the Three Jewels.\textsuperscript{59} Taoists believe that people are kind and considerate by nature. If left to themselves, they will naturally develop into good human beings. By practicing the Three Jewels, a person can get closer to the Tao.

Wú Wéi (無為) is a central concept in Taoism. The literal meaning of Wú Wéi is “without action”. It is often expressed by the paradox Wéi Wú Wéi (為無為) meaning “action without action” or “effortless doing”. The practice and efficacy of Wú Wéi are fundamental in Taoist thought, most prominently emphasized in Taoism. The goal of Wú Wéi is alignment with Tao, revealing the soft and invisible power within all

\textsuperscript{58} TTC. chapter.38-81.
\textsuperscript{59} TTC. chapter.67.
It is believed by Taoists that masters of Wú Wéi can observe and follow this invisible potential, the innate in-action of the Way. In ancient Taoist texts, Wú Wéi is associated with water through its yielding nature. Water is soft and weak, but it can move earth and carve stone. Taoist philosophy proposes that the universe works harmoniously according to its own ways. When someone exerts his will against the world, he disrupts that harmony. Taoism does not identify man's will as the root problem. Rather, it asserts that man must place his will in harmony with the natural universe.

Pǔ (朴), “uncut wood” is translated “uncarved block”, “unhewn log”, or “simplicity”. It is a metaphor for the state of Wú Wéi and the principle of Jiǎn (儉). It represents a passive state of receptiveness. Pǔ is a symbol for a state of pure potential and perception without prejudice. In this state, Taoists believe everything is seen as it is, without preconceptions or illusion. Pǔ is seen as keeping oneself in the primordial state of Tao. It is believed to be the true nature of the mind, unburdened by knowledge or experiences. In the state of Pǔ, there is no right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. There is only pure experience, or awareness, free from learned labels and definitions. It is this state of being that is the goal of following Wú Wéi.

The most recognizable symbol of Taoism is the Yīn Yáng (陰陽), a circle divided by a curving line into equal white and black spaces. Each of these halves, in turn, has a small circle of the other color in it. This symbol speaks of the balance between opposites in the universe. The Yīn (陰) is the softer element, the feminine, dark and open aspect of the universe. The Yáng (陽) is male, light, and controlling. For Taoist, it is best to have Yīn and Yáng as balanced as possible. The Tao is based on the traditional Chinese virtues of simplicity and sincerity. To follow the Tao is not a matter of observing any set of duties prohibitions, but rather
of living in a simple and honest manner, being true to oneself, and avoiding the distractions of ordinary living. Lǎo Zǐ’s classic book of Tao Te Ching, consists only of aphorisms and isolated paragraphs, making it difficult to draw an intelligible system of ethics from it. Perhaps this is because Lǎo Zǐ was a type of moral skeptic: he rejected both righteousness and benevolence, apparently because he saw them as imposed on individuals from without rather than coming from their own inner natures. Lǎo Zǐ found the things prized by the world—rank, luxury, and glamour—to be empty and worthless when compared with the ultimate value of a peaceful inner life. He also emphasized gentleness, clam, and nonviolence.

4. Scope and Methodology of the Research

4.1. Scope of the Research

As regards the scope of research, both Buddhism and Taoism have a very rich literature, which have become plentiful and more complicated in due course of time. A comprehensive study of the literature and philosophy of these two systems is actually very cumbersome task for the researcher. Keeping in mind the limitation of time and availability of source materials, the researcher, therefore, would like to confine the work to the Theravāda Buddhist scripture or Primitive Texts especially the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Moral Disciplines for the Order of Monks and Nuns and the Sutta Piṭaka, a basket of the Buddha’s discourses of Buddhism only. In this research work, therefore, the ethical concepts particularly taking in mind Theravāda scripture in the light of current moral problems will be examined and analyzed. Criterions for judging the moral and the
highest virtue or the highest goal of life are discussed in the light of Theravāda scripture and other related documentaries according to the Theravāda scripture.

With respect to the Taoism, an attempt would be made to base the study on the texts compiled by the holy sage Lǎo Zǐ, namely Tao Te Ching, the Classical Book of Way and its Ethics, which contains the transcendent knowledge of nature. Beyond Tao Te Ching, this work will cover numerous sets of behavioral guidelines and texts of Taoism in which both ethics such as the personal values of the individual and the social values of the organization are originated. The principle of social, individual and community ethics of Taoism will also find place in this work. Criterions for judging the moral and the highest virtue or the highest goal of life will be discussed in the light of Taoism and other related documentaries according to the Taoist Texts.

4.2. Structure of Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters which contain introduction and conclusion. Chapter One initiates with the justification of the research and concludes with the scope and methodology of the research as the framework of the thesis. In the middle, chapter one deals with the introductory note to the ethics and its different concepts which highlight the fundamental terms such as virtue, morality, conduct and character, etc. Moreover, this chapter includes a general investigation into Buddhist and Taoist concepts of ethics.

Chapter Two deals with the historical background of the Buddhism and Taoism. It includes the religious, cultural, political and economic situation of India and China at the time of the Buddha and Lǎo Zǐ, and the
life and work of the Buddha and Lǎo Zǐ. Besides, the establishment and development of Buddhism and Taoism is analyzed in detail.

Chapter Three deals with the foundation of the Buddhist and Taoist ethics. In this chapter the origin and nature of Buddhist and Taoist ethics are explained in detail. It also contains an analysis on Buddhist Law of Conditionality and Taoist Nature Law, Kamma in Buddhism and Wú Wéi in Taoism, and wholesome and unwholesome nature in Buddhism and Good and Evil in Taoism.

Chapter Four deals with the judgment of moral and immoral actions in Buddhism and Taoism. It emphasizes on the voice of conscience and consequence or result of action in the Buddhism and Taoism. Besides, ethical views on doctrine of harmlessness and judging of a case of killing in the Buddhism and Taoism are examined in this chapter.

Chapter Five deals with social ethics in Buddhism and Taoism. It focuses on the social and reciprocal relationship and personal and community ethics. It also has an emphasis on ethical responsibility for family and society. Ethical views on politics in Buddhism and Taoism are also included in this chapter.

Chapter Six deals with classification and characteristics of ethics in Buddhism and Taoism. This chapter focuses on the moral training and classification of morality which highlights the ethical precepts of Buddhist and Taoist communities. It also emphasizes on the classification of individuals and intellectual development and ethical attainment in Buddhism and Taoism.

Chapter Seven deals with the conclusion which mainly contains the summary of the work done in the previous chapters. This chapter discusses similar and dissimilar aspects of ethics between Buddhism and Taoism as a comparative mode in order to highlight the cross-traditional
and cross-cultural ethical inquiry with critical, constructive, and theoretical dimensions of Buddhism and Taoism.

4.3. Methodology

In the light of comparative studies the main aim is to compare the origin, structure, and characteristics of two major religions of the world, with the view of determining their genuine agreements and differences, the measure of relation in which they stand one to another, and their relative superiority or inferiority when regarded as types. Setting two religions side by side, it is compelled to believe that one of them is better than the other; but, the usual tests having been applied, the verdict which it renders is relative merely, not absolute. It does not undertake to say that either religion is “the best,” for even the “better” of the two may manifestly be very defective. Hence additional facts are constantly sought for the knowledge of the origin, nature, and laws of religion in the present inquiry. The special field of comparative religion strives to determine the relation of the two religions of mankind to one another, and the mutual relation of conceptions current within a single religion, but at different periods in its history. Moreover, comparative religion seeks to determine the relation of two religions alike to a common fundamental instinct in man.

In this thesis, the task is not to emphasize upon the data-collection or its mere elaboration in a descriptive manner, but to work out a comparative study of the two systems i.e. Buddhism and Taoism. While doing the study on the topic several methods of Social Science research such as analytical method, historical method, critical method and especially comparative method are utilized. This work is mainly based on
the Vinaya Piṭaka and Sutta Piṭaka of Buddhism and Tao Te Ching of Taoism along with their respective translations in English and Chinese. Other available texts on ethics in both English and Chinese languages are also utilized as to make the work more copious and comprehensive.

This is text-based research that aims to go into the depth of the moral world of Buddhism and Taoism. The research is based on primary as well as secondary texts, which provide the ethical features of the tradition in detail. Though a number of works has been done on the issue but my endeavor is to examine, interpret, and outline the basic and significant nature of the ethics of the both traditions in term of current moral problems. Footnotes and references are produced in the entire thesis at required place. In brief, the following are the parts of the methodology of my research:

1. Collecting the relevant and adequate material for the thorough study of ethics in Buddhism and Taoism from different sources.
2. Having the required ideas and references for thesis writing in the consistent manner.
3. Discussing the doubtful points with the supervisor and persons having adequate knowledge of the subject matter.
4. Writing thesis in accordance with the proposed topic and getting it corrected by the supervisor.

This study throws sufficient light upon the ethical features of the Buddhism and Taoism from the different perspectives for better understanding of the tradition existing in several countries. Since the thesis is a literature review-based research therefore, its outcome might be a complete and compact account of the both traditions. It may encourage the readers to have a better insight of the ethical life of layman, monks and their monasteries. However, from the practical point of view, it makes clear that the moral life is good for the humanity. The present
problems of the world can be resolved by the practice of moral rules. The moral rules help to get mental peace, happiness, and prestige not only the agent of an action but the other persons too. Moreover, the outcome of the thesis may encourage the new scholars for further research and turn out to be a reference material for the scholars and budding scholars of Buddhism and Taoism.