PREFACE

There is a growing interest in Buddhism the world over because many informed people have grown rather weary of religious dogmatism and superstition, on one hand, and greed and selfishness arising from materialism, on the other. Buddhism can teach humanity to walk the Middle Path of moderation and have a better understanding on how to lead a richer life of peace and happiness.

The study of religious and other aspects of Buddhism, one of the most dominant cultural treasures of Eastern societies, has been contributed by many scholars, Western as well as Eastern. Some of them, especially the Western, are inclined to conclude irrespectively with their personal backgrounds of one sided view that Buddhism is concerned only with secular existence, and that the best things good and benevolent to the rest of mankind.

The essential spirit of Buddhism represents “The Middle Way of Life”, dialectically rejecting the evil aspects of the above mentioned extremisms; or rather transcending them. Buddhism stands for the welfare and well-being, physical as well as mental, of all mankind. The need for physical or material welfare is acknowledged, but in the final analysis of human existence it is not made the ultimate end of humanity; the highest, deepest, and absolute of human value lies in the moral, mental, and spiritual.
Those who seek to understand how the Buddha looked at various forms of social stratification such as caste, colour, wealth, etc., could benefit much by reading the thesis on the same subject. The Buddhist attitude becomes clear when it is presented in the context of Indian development shows the difference between how the Buddha perceived social stratification and how traditional Indian thought viewed such social phenomena as caste, colour, etc.

How much could Buddhism contribute to peace and social harmony which would be of great importance to all those living in the present world. Various strategies for social harmony and peace are pursued relentlessly by academics, policy-makers, thinkers, etc. in this context, it could be interesting to read what the Buddha has to say in this vital area. A living example of translating such strategies to action is exemplified in the reign of the great king Asoka in India. No one thus state that the Buddhist strategies in this area are only confined to theory and not related to the practical order of life.

In Buddhist countries, the values taught by the Buddha are gradually disappearing not solely due to social change, but more due to the ignorance both of the Buddhist clergy as well as the laity about their importance. This thesis suggests the importance of these values and indicates how such values could even become useful in a non-Buddhist society.
Very often people, particularly scholars, emphasise the ‘other-worldly character, of buddhism and go on to declare that the Buddha had nothing to say on mundane matters particularly economic matters. This has been refuted by a number of scholars, particularly by Schumacher who in his book ‘Small is Beautiful’ wrote a chapter on Buddhist economics. Professor Nandasena Ratnapala in his book ‘Buddhist sociology’, the same theme is economics theory is laid down. This Thesis gives a bird’s eye view of the Buddhist economic theory, clearly explaining its fundamental principles.

In the world today, to be more precise in the third world, the problem of poverty and the solutions to deal with it take precedence in any agenda on development. It is because of this importance attached to poverty that the Thesis’s incisive analysis of the Buddhist attitude on poverty becomes meaningful.

I have discussed in this thesis almost everything which is commonly accepted as the fundamental teaching of the Buddha in the society. These are social, ethical, economic and political ideals.

Chapter (1) Social Ideal in PÊli Literature

In my thesis, the Chapter 1 deals with Social Ideal the situation in the pre-Buddhist India in brief referring to the Indus Valley Civilisation and Hinduism. And then I discuss Buddhism with a brief biography of the Buddha and Buddha’s point of view
on caste (VarÓa) system, women’s statue in the society and the bhikkhunÊ order in Buddhism.

**Chapter (2) Social Relationship in PÊli Literature**

In Chapter 2, I discuss Social relationship between parents and children, teachers and pupils, husbands and wives, friends and companions, employers and employees and monks and laities. I mention the duties and obligations of each and every individual member in any family and also in the society in according to Si~galovÈda sutta.

**Chapter (3) Buddhist Ethics in PÊli Literature**

The Chapter 3 examines Buddhist Ethic. I mention Eightfold Nobel Path (Ariya- AÔÔha~gika -Magga) which is called the way of life in Buddhism. And also there are Ten evils (Dasa Akusala) and Five precepts described in this chapter.

**Chapter (4) Buddhist Economics in PÊli Literature**

In the Chapter 4, I mention Buddhist economic. According Byaggapajja sutta, there are four kinds of way to achieve on wealth and four kinds of happiness to be won by the lay people who enjoy the pleasures of sense from time to time. Especially I discuss Right Livelihood (SammÈ ŒjÊva) which is the most important one in the Buddhism according to Vasala sutta and PrÈbhava sutta.

**Chapter (5) Buddhist Political Ideal in PÊli Literature**
In the Chapter 5, I discuss Buddhist political ideal which described in the PÊli text. I mention the nature of kingship, five qualities of king and Ten duties of king (Dasaraja Dhamma). And also there are two systems of government existed in India during the Buddha’s time. One is monarchical and the other is republican. Espically I discuss Maurya Dynasty and the life of King Asoka and his work on Buddhist religion.

Chapter (6) Conclusion

In last Chapter 6, I conclude all my work according to all chapters as mentioned above. This chapter brings together all the references to the essence of the Buddhist social, ethic, economic and political ideals, how it is essential for man to live happily and peacefully in the modern society.

In my research work, I have given the references mostly from the TipiÔaka books, the Sixth Buddhist Synod (6th Buddhist Council) versions, printed in Myanmar.