CHAPTER I

1.1. Introduction

Over 2550 years ago, an important occurrence that would go down in history turned out India. This was appearing of a person who claimed himself as Buddha proclaiming a new religious belief. The new religious doctrine proclaimed was none other than the *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta*\(^1\). Being the first sermon delivered, it is also considered as important. It reveals the right ways for attainment of real peace which all human and living-beings are seeking for.

Similar to the ways a new government or organization has in order to announce its plans and policies to the public, this first sermon also serves as a declaration that a new and true religion known as Buddhism had appeared. Therefore, people who really like to know about Buddhism should study this prime discourse.

The Buddhist canon has three main divisions- (baskets or *TipiÔaka* in PÈÄi)

1. The Sutta PiÔaka or the sermon basket
2. The Vinaya PiÔaka or the discipline basket
3. The Abhidhamma PiÔaka or the analytical and philosophical basket.

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\(^1\) S. N. MahÈvagga PÈli. PTS. P. 420
The discourse on the wheel of dhamma (the first sermon of the Buddha) is included in the Sutta Piṭaka which is made up of the five Nikāyas, namely:

i. the Dīgha Nikāya
ii. the Majjhima Nikāya
iii. the Sañyutta Nikāya
iv. the Aṅguttara Nikāya
v. the Khuddaka Nikāya.

Among them, the Suñyutta Nikāya is divided into five groups known as Vaggas:

a. Sagathē Vagga
b. Nidēna Vagga
c. Khandha Vagga
d. SaĀyatana Vagga
e. Mahēvagga.

Out of these five, the Mahēvagga is divided again into twelve sub-groups such as Maggasañyutta, Bojjha-gasañyutta, satipaṭṭhānasañyutta, etc, the last of which being Saccasañyutta.

The wheel of dhamma (dhammacakka in Pāli) as the first discourse in the second vagga of the sub-group Saccasañyutta, and it was recited as such in the proceedings of the sixth great council. In the sixth great council of the Tipiṭaka, it is recorded on the Sañyutta Nikāya of Sutta Piṭaka. The introduction to
the discourse reads: ‘Evañ me sutañ, ekañ samayañ. . thus have I heard, at one time.’

These were the introductory words uttered by the Venerable CœnandÈ when asked by the Venerable MahÈkassapa at the first council, held just over three months after the passing away of the Buddha. The Venerable MahÈkassapa said to the Venerable CœnandÈ:

"Friend CœnandÈ! Where was the dhammacakkapavattana Sutta delivered? By whom was it delivered and on whose account? And how was it delivered?" The Venerable CœnandÈ answered, "My Lord, Venerable MahÈkassapa! Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at the sage's resort, the pleasance of Isipatana in the deer sanctuary, in the township of Benares. Then the Buddha addressed the group of five Bhikkhus (PaÒcavaggÊ in PÈÄi), "these two extremes, bhikkhus, should not be followed by one who has gone forth from the worldly life."

This introduction lacks a definite date of delivery of the discourse. As in all other suttas, the date was mentioned merely as "Once" or "At one time". A precise chronological data as to the year, the month and the date on which each discourse was delivered would have been very helpful. But chronological details would appear to be an encumbrance to committing the

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2. S.N. MahÈvagga PÈli. PTS. P. 420
3. Vin. CjÄavagga pÈÄi. PTS. P. 287
suttas to memory and to their recitation. Thus, it is not easy to place an accurate date for each of the suttas.

It should, however, be possible to determine the exact date on which the dhammacakkapavattana sutta was delivered, because it was the first sermon of the Buddha and also because reference could be made to internal evidence provided in other suttas and the vinaya Piṭaka— the Buddha attained supreme enlightenment on the night of the full moon of the Vesākha in the year of 588.B.C. Then he preached this dhammacakkapavattana sutta in the early evening on the full moon day the following Āsalhā. It is exactly 2552 years since the Buddha's final parinibbāna. Taking into account his 45 years of dispensation before parinibbāna, it totals up to 2597 years. So, it was on the first watch of the full moon of Āsaṭhā, 2597 years ago that this first sermon was delivered by the Buddha.

The introduction to the sutta says the Buddha preached the first sermon to the group of five bhikkhus while he was staying in the pleasance of the deer sanctuary in the township of Benares. The deer park, in which the deer were given sanctuary, must have been a forested area with deer wandering about harmlessly.

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4. Vin. Mahāvagga Pāli. PTS. P. 8
5. Name of a month (April-May)
6. Name of a month (June-July)
7. S. N. Mahāvagga Pāli. PTS. P. 420
1.2. Bodhisatta and Worldly Pleasures

After the Bodhisatta had passed away from TusitÊ heaven, he entered the womb of MahÈmÈyÈ DevÊ, the principle queen of king Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu. The Bodhisatta was born on Friday; the full moon of VesÈkha in the year of 623 B.C. in the pleasure-grove of sÈla tree called the LumbinÊ grove and was named Siddhattha. At the age of sixteen, he married YasodharÊ DevÊ, daughter of Suppabuddha, the royal master of Devadaha.

He was thus wholly given over to sensuous pleasure amidst ceremony and splendor. One day he came out to the royal pleasure grove for a garden dinner and merry-making accompanied by attendants. On the way to the grove, the sight of a decrepit, aged person gave him a shock and he turned back to his palace. On a second time, he saw a sick and diseased person and he returned greatly alarmed. When he set forth for the third time, he was troubled in his heart on seeing a dead man and hurriedly retraced his steps. The alarm and agitation felt by the Bodhisatta were described in the AriyapariyesanÊ Sutta8.

The Bodhisatta pondered thus: 'When oneself is subject to old age, disease and death to seek and crave for what is subject to old age disease and death is not suitable. Wife, children, slave, goats and sheep, fowls and pigs, elephants, horses, cattle, animate and inanimate, are subject to old age

8. M. N. MÌáapaÔÓÈsa PÈli. PTS. P.160
disease and death. Being oneself subject to old age, disease and death, to crave for these objects of pleasures, to be enveloped and immersed in them, it is not proper. What is not befitting and proper constitutes an ignoble quest \((AnariyapariyesanÈ)\).\(^9\)

'Being oneself subject to old age, disease and death, to go in search of that which is not subject to old age, disease and death constitutes a noble quest \((AriyapariyesanÈ)\)'\(^10\)

Thus, it occurred to the Bodhisatta to go in quest of \(NibbÈnic\) peace, which is free from old age, disease and death. That was a very brave aim and we shall consider it further to see clearly how it was so.

On his fourth tour to the pleasure-grove, the Bodhisatta met a monk. After that, he was very disappointed by worldly pleasures. So, he had determined to go forth from a worldly life and was engaged in meritorious pursuits, it occurred to the Bodhisatta to renounce worldly life, become a recluse and go in search of what is not subject to old age, disease and death. When he had gained what he had set out for, his intention was to pass on the knowledge to the world so that other beings would also learn to be free from misery of being subjected to old age, disease and death.\(^11\)

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid.

\(^11\) M. N. MajjhimapaÖÈsa PÈli. PTS. P. 90
1.3. The Renunciation of the \textit{Bodhisatta}

At midnight on the full moon day of \textit{ŒsaÄhÊ}, in the year of 594.B.C, the \textit{Bodhisatta} went forth on the great retirement riding the royal horse, kaÕÉîka, accompanied by his courtier, Channa. When they came to the river AnomÊ, he cut off his hair and beard while standing on the sandy beach. Then after discarding the royal garments, he put on the yellow robes and became a monk. The Bodhisatta was only twenty-nine years old then, an age most favorable for the pursuit of pleasures. That he renounced with indifference the pomp and splendor of a sovereign and abandoned the comfort and calm of his wife, YasodharÊ and retinues, at such a favorable age while still blessed with youth is really awe-inspiring.

At that time the Bodhisatta was not yet in possession of practical knowledge of leading a holy life so he made his way to the famous ascetic ÆÄÊera who was a great philosopher at that time. Bodhisatta practiced \textit{Dhamma} there. However, he was not satisfied by the way of ÆÄÊera. So, the Bodhisatta abandoned it and departed from ÆÄÊera’s meditation center.

After leaving ÆÄÊera’s place, the Bodhisatta was on his own for some time, pursuing the supreme path of tranquility to reach the undying state of \textit{NibbÊna}. Then the fame of Udaka or RÊmaputta (the son of RÊma or disciple of the sage RÊma) reached him. However, here also the Bodhisatta did not meet any way which he was looking for. So, he gave it up and departed from Udaka’s centre.
After he had left Udaka’s centre, the Bodhisatta wandered about in Magadha, searching on his own for the peerless path of tranquility, the undying Nibbāna. During his wanderings, he came to the forest of Uruvela near the village of Senanigama. In the forest he saw the clear, flowing river Nerañjarī. Perceiving thus a delightful spot, a serene thick grove, a clear, flowing stream with a village nearby which would serve as an alms resort, it occurred to him: “Truly, this is a suitable place for one intent on effort”, and he stayed on in the forest.  

At that time the Bodhisatta had not yet worked out a precise system of right struggle. Austerity practices were, of course, widely known and in vogue throughout India then. Concerning these practices, three similes came to the mind of the Bodhisatta.

A log of snappy wood freshly cut from a sycamore tree and soaked in water cannot produce fire by being rubbed with a similar piece of wet sappy wood or with a piece of some other wood. Just so, while still entangled with objects of sensual desires such as wife and family, while still delighting in passionate pleasures and lustful desires are not yet quieted within him, however strenuously someone strives, he is incapable of wisdom, insight and incomparable full awakening. This was the first simile that occurred to the Bodhisatta.

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12. M. N. Majjhimapaśīḷa Pāli. PTS. P. 93
13. M. N. Mālapāśīḷa Pāli. PTS. P. 240
Even if the sycamore log is not soaked in water but is still green and sappy, being freshly cut from the tree, it will also not produce any fire by friction. Just so, even if he has abandoned the objects of sensual desires such as wife and family and they are no longer near him, if he still delights in thoughts of passionate pleasures and lustful desires still arise in him, he is incapable of wisdom, insight or full awakening. This is the second simile.

The third simile concerns dry sapless logs of wood not soaked in water. These logs of dry wood will kindle fire when rubbed against one another. Similarly, having abandoned objects of sensual desires and weaned himself of lustful thoughts and cravings, he is capable of attaining wisdom, insight and full awakening, whether he practices extreme austerity or whether he strives painlessly without torturing himself.

This corresponds with the text in the Vitakka Saṅkhēna Sutta\textsuperscript{14}, but the method of crushing the thought with the mind as described in the Vitakka Saṅkhēna Sutta was one prescribed by the Buddha after attaining enlightenment. As such, it involves banishment of any lustful thought which arises of its own accord by taking note of its appearance as an exercise of Vipassanā meditation in accordance with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta\textsuperscript{15} and other similar texts. The method of crushing the thought with the mind as described here refers to the practical

\textsuperscript{14} M. N. Mālapāṭhapāṭha Pāli. PTS. P. 118
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. P. 55
exercises performed by the Bodhisatta before he attained the knowledge of the Middle Path and is, therefore, at difference with the Satipaṭṭhāna method.¹⁶

The Bodhisatta thought of the time when, as an infant, he sat alone under the shade of a rose-apple tree, entered and absorbed in the first jhānic stage of meditation while his royal father, king Suddhodana, was engaged in ceremonial ploughing of the fields nearby. He wondered whether this first jhānic method would be the right way to the truth.¹⁷

Then it occurred to the Bodhisatta: "It is not possible to attain the jhānic absorption with a body so emaciated. What if I take some solid food as I used to take? Thus nourished and strengthened in body, I'll be able to work for the jhānic state."¹⁸

The young Brahmins had gone forth from the world and banded together to form 'The group of five ascetics,' awaiting the great renunciation of the Bodhisatta. When news reached them later that the Bodhisatta was practicing extreme austerities in the Uruvela grove, they journeyed there and became his attendants, hoping 'when he has achieved supreme knowledge, he will share it with us. We will be the first to hear the message.'

When the five ascetics saw the Bodhisatta partaking solid food, they misunderstood his action and became disappointed. They thought: "If living on a handful of pea soup had not led him

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¹⁶. Ibid.
¹⁷. M. N. Mājjanapāḷīsa Pāli. PTS. P. 246
¹⁸. M. N. Majjhimaṇṇapāḷīsa Pāli. PTS. P. 93
to higher knowledge, how could he expect to attain that by eating solid food again?" They misjudged him; thinking that he had abandoned the struggle and reverted back to the luxurious way of life to gain riches and personal glory. Thus, they left him in disgust and went to stay in the deer sanctuary in the township of Benares.\(^{19}\)

1.4. The Enlightenment

Early on the full moon day of Vesôkha, in the year of 588 B.C. i.e. 2597 years ago, the Bodhisatta rested the whole day in the forest glade near the bank of the river. As evening fell, he went towards the Bodhi tree, meeting on the way a grass-cutter named Sotthiya who gave him eight handful of grass. In India holy men used to prepare a place to sit and sleep on by spreading sheaves of grass. The Bodhisatta spread the grass under the Bodhi tree on the eastern side. Then with the solemn resolution "Never from this seat will I stir until I have attained the supreme and absolute wisdom", he sat down cross-legged on the grass cover facing east.\(^{20}\)

The departure of the five ascetics afforded the Bodhisatta the opportunity to struggle for final liberation in complete solitude. The Mûlapaôôa\(\tilde{\text{E}}\)sa\(^{21}\) gives a description of how, working alone with no one near him for a full fortnight, seated on the throne of wisdom, he attained omniscient, the enlightenment of a Buddha.

\(^{19}\) M. N. Majjhima\(\tilde{\text{P}}\)el. PTS. P. 93
\(^{20}\) Kh. N. Buddhavamsa a\(\tilde{\text{O}}\)hakath\(\tilde{\text{E}}\). PTS. P. 7
\(^{21}\) M. N. Mûlapaôôa\(\tilde{\text{E}}\)sa P\(\tilde{\text{E}}\)li. PTS. P. 167
The fifth week was spent under the goatherd (AjapÈla) banyan tree and while there he reflected on his abandonment of the austerity practices: "Delivered am I from the austerity practices which cause physical pain and suffering. It is well that I'm delivered of that unprofitable practice of austerity. How delightful it is to be liberated and have gained enlightenment." 22

The commentary also mentions that extreme practices such as scanty diet, scanty clothing, constitute self-torture. 23 That extreme austerity is a form of self-mortification should be carefully noted here for better comprehension of the Dhammacakkapavattana sutta 24 when we deal with it.

Having spent seven days each at seven different places, the Buddha went back to the goatherd's banyan tree on the fiftieth day. Seated under the tree, the Buddha thought of teaching his first sermon to someone who would quickly grasp it and when he considered CÈIÈra KÈIÈma, knowledge and vision arose to the Buddha that CÈIÈra KÈIÈma had indeed passed away seven days ago, (in the Lalitavistara text three days ago) 25 and had, by virtue of his jhÈnic achievements, attained the sphere of nothingness (Çkerineyatana Brahma Plane—the state of Immateriality). 26

Then the Buddha thought of teaching the first sermon to Udaka, son (pupil) of the great sage RÈma. The knowledge and

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22. Ibid. P. 240
23. S. N. Khandhavagga aÔÔakathÈ. PTS. P. 296
24. S. N. MahÈvagga PÈli. PTS. P. 420
25. Lalitavistara. Trsl.by Bijoya Goswami. P. 368
26. M. N. MajjhimaÈsa PÈli. PTS. P. 93
vision arose to the Buddha that the hermit Udaka had indeed died the previous night in the first watch and by virtue of his jhënic achievements had attained the state of neither perception nor non-perception (NevasaÒÒÈnÈsaÒÒÈyatana Brahma Plane). Then the Buddha thought again to whom he should give his first sermon. The group of five ascetics appeared in his divine vision and he saw them living then in the deer sanctuary in the township of Benares.\textsuperscript{27}

The Buddha set out to Benares. The \textit{BuddhavaÑsa} commentary\textsuperscript{28} and the \textit{jÈtaka} commentary\textsuperscript{29} state that the Buddha started on the journey on the full moon of \textit{EsalhÊ}. As the deer sanctuary in Benares was eighteen \textit{yojanas} (142 miles) away from the Bodhi tree and the Buddha made the journey on foot, the distance could not have been covered in one day unless done miraculously. It would be appropriate, therefore, if we fixed the starting date on the sixth waxing of \textit{EsalhÊ}.

When the group of five ascetics saw the Buddha at a distance coming toward them, they made an agreement amongst themselves saying, "Friends, here comes the monk Gotama who had become self-indulgent, given up the struggle and gone back to a life of luxury; let us not pay homage to him nor go to greet him and relieve him of his bowl and robes.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid. P. 95
\textsuperscript{28} Kh. N. Buddhavamsa aÔÔhakathÊ. PTS. P. 18
\textsuperscript{29} Kh. N. JÈtaka aÔÔhakathÊ. Vol. 1. PTS. P. 81
However, as he is of noble birth, we will prepare a seat ready for him. He will sit down if he is so inclined".  

As the Buddha drew near to them, they found themselves unable to keep their agreement because of his illustrious glory. One went to greet him and received the bowl, the second one took the robe and the third one prepared the seat for him. Another brought water to wash his feet while the other arranged a foot stool. But they all regarded the Buddha as their equal and addressed him as before by his name Gotama and irreverently with the term "my friend" (ÕEvuso). The Buddha sat on the prepared seat and spoke to them:

"Bhikkhus, do not address me by the name Gotama or as friend. I have become a Prefect One, worthy of the greatest reverence (SabbaÒÒuta in pÈli). Supremely accomplished like the Buddhas of yore, fully enlightened. Listen to me, bhikkhus, the deathless has been gained, the immortal has been met by me. I shall instruct you and teach you the doctrine. If you practice as instructed by me, you will in a short time, and in the present life, through your own direct knowledge, realize, enter upon and abide in Arahantaship, the NibbÈna, the ultimate and the noblest goal of the holy life for the sake of which  

30. Vin. MahÈvagga PÈli. PTS. P. 8  
31. M. N. MÌlapaOÈsa PÈli. PTS. P. 170
clansmen of good families go forth from the household life into homeless one.”

Even with this bold assurance, the group of five ascetics remained doubtful and retorted thus: "Friend Gotama, even with the self-denying habits and severe austerities which you practiced before, you did not achieve anything beyond meritorious attainments of ordinary men nor attain the sublime knowledge and insight of the noble ones which alone can destroy the defilements. Now that you have abandoned the austerity practices and are working for gains and benefits, how will you have attained such distinction, such higher knowledge?"

With great compassion and pity for the group of five ascetics, the Buddha spoke to them thus:

"Bhikkhus, the Perfect One like those of yore is not working for worldly gains, has not given up the struggle, has not abandoned the true path which eradicates the defilements; he has not reverted to luxury" and declared again that he had become a Perfect One, worthy of great reverence, supremely accomplished and fully enlightened. He urged them again to listen to him.

Second time, the group of five ascetics made the same retort to him. The Buddha, realizing that they were still suffering

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32. Vin. Mahāvagga Pāli. PTS. P. 9
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
from illusion and ignorance and out of pity for them gave them the same answer for the third time.

When the group of five ascetics persisted in making the same remonstrance, the Buddha spoke thus: "Bhikkhus, consider upon this. You and I are not strangers. We had lived together for six years and you had waited upon me while I was practicing extreme austerities. Have you ever known me speak like this?" The ascetics reflected on this. They came to realize that he had not spoken thus before because he had not attained higher knowledge. They began to believe that he must have acquired the supreme knowledge now to speak to them thus. They replied respectfully, "No, reverend Sir. We have not known you speak like this before."³⁵

Then the Buddha said, "Bhikkhus, I have become a perfect one worthy of the greatest respect (Arahanta in pÊli), supremely accomplished like the Buddhas of yore (TathÈgata in pÊli), by my own effort I have become fully enlightened (SammÈsambuddho in pÊli), have gained the immortal, the deathless (AmatÈdhigataÑ in pÊli). Listen to me, bhikkhus, I shall instruct you and teach you the doctrine." Thus the Buddha gave them above the assurance again.

The five ascetics got into a receptive mood then and prepared themselves to listen respectfully to what Buddha
would say. They waited with eagerness to receive the knowledge to be imparted to them by the Buddha\textsuperscript{36}.

1.5. The First Sermon

The time was the evening of the full moon day of \OESaÅhÊ, 2597 years ago. The sun was about to set but still visible as a bright, red sphere; the moon bright yellow, was just coming up in the eastern sky. The commentary on the \textit{MahÊvagga saÑyutta}\textsuperscript{37} mentions that the first sermon was given while both the sun and the moon were simultaneously visible in the sky.

The audience consisted of only the five ascetics from the human world, but the brahmÊs and the devas, according the \textit{Milinda PaÒhÈ}\textsuperscript{38}, innumerable. They were fortunate enough to hear the first sermon, respectfully waiting with absorbed attention, the Buddha began teaching the \textit{Dhammacakkapavattana sutta} with the words: "\textit{Dve me, bhikkhave, antÊ pabbajitena na sevitabbÊ.}''\textsuperscript{39}

"\textit{Bhikkhus, one who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in these two extreme parts (portions, shares) which will be presently explained (Ime dve antÊ).}"

\textsuperscript{36} Vin. \textit{MahÊvagga} PÊli. PTS. P.10  
\textsuperscript{37} S. N. Khandhavagga aÔhakathÊ. PTS. P. 297  
\textsuperscript{38} Kh. N. \textit{Milinda}PaÒhÈ. PTS. P. 19  
\textsuperscript{39} S. N. \textit{MahÊvagga} PÊli. PTS. P.421
According to the interpretation of the commentary, the word *anta* means *koÔÔhÈsa* or *bhÈga* which means share or portion or parts of things. However, in view of the doctrine of the middle path taught later in the sermon, it is appropriate also to render *anta* as extreme or end. Again, "part or portion of things" should not be taken as any part or portion of things, but only those parts that lie on the two opposite ends or extremes of things. It should be noted briefly first that "one who has gone forth from the worldly life should not indulge in two extreme parts or practices."

What are the two extreme parts or practices? Delighting in desirable sense-objects, one pursues sensuous pleasure, makes efforts to produce such pleasures and enjoys them. This extreme part (practice) is low (bad), vulgar being the habit of village and town folks. It is not clean, ignoble, hence not pursued by noble ones. Besides, it is also profitless and not pertaining to the true interest's one is seeking after. Such pursuit after sensuous pleasures is one extreme part (practice) which should be avoided.⁴⁰

The other extreme part or practice which is concerned with attempts to inflict torture upon oneself can result only in suffering. Abstaining from food and clothing, to which one is normally used to be is a form of self-torture and unprofitable. This practice of self-mortification, the other extreme part of practice, should also be avoided. Avoiding these two extremes,

⁴⁰ S. N. MahÈvagga PÉli. PTS. P. 420
one arrives at the true path known as the Middle Path (Majjhima-पàipadÈ).

What is the Middle Path (Majjhima-पàipadÈ)? It is simply the Noble Eightfold Path; namely,

1. Right understanding
2. Right thought
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration.41

This is the Middle Path discovered by the Buddha conducive to vision, wisdom, tranquility, advanced knowledge, understanding, and to NibbÈna. It will be discussed in detail, in the next chapters. In this first sermon (Sutta), the paragraphs were divided into thirty-one by the Theras at the first council. Among them, paragraphs first to twenty-four are essential as they deal with the Dhamma. The Buddha had mainly explained the Four Noble Truths in the first sermon. After that he preached about eighty-four thousand discourses42 within forty-five years throughout his life. Although he delivered these Dhammas to different persons in different places, the main objective of the Buddha is to get NibbÈna, to be free from all

41. Ibid. P. 421
42. In portion (DhammakhandhÈ)
sufferings or to know the real truth. So we may say that all the further discourses can be included in the first sermon (\textit{Dhammacakka pavattana Sutta})\textsuperscript{43}. We can surely say that the Buddha's teaching is only this one which is sufficient for all human beings to know and to practice.

Everybody in the world wants happiness and peace. That is the reason why people seek the true path which can lead them to the cessation of suffering. All religions in the world arise because of this search. One of the great religions in the world which leads to the cessation of suffering is \textit{Therav\'eda} Buddhism.

After one century of the Buddha's \textit{parinibb\'ena}, a conflict came out among the Bhikkhus with regard to some \textit{Vinaya} rules. Starting from that time, the Bhikkhus were divided into two parts by that problem. So, nowadays, there are mainly two sects in Buddhism; \textit{Mah\'y\'ena} and \textit{Therav\'eda}. \textit{Therav\'eda} means those \textit{Dhammas} which were decided, at the first council, by many \textit{Theras} or the main disciples of the Buddha, like Venerable Mah\'E Kassapa, Venerable Ænand\'E etc. as it is exactly preached by the Buddha himself. So, those who followed the instructions of the \textit{Therav\'eda} texts were considered Therav\'Edins. At present, \textit{Therav\'eda} is remaining only in the five countries, namely; Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. Nowadays, in these countries this \textit{Dhammacakka pavattana Sutta} \textsuperscript{44} was recited to many

\textsuperscript{43} S. N. Mah\'Evagga P\'eli. PTS. P. 421
\textsuperscript{44} S. N. Mah\'Evagga P\'eli. PTS. P. 420
people together in the temples at the full moon day of ÆsaÄÊ, respecting as a holy discourse. This first sermon, therefore, is the most important for TheravÄÈdins, because it is explained by the Buddha, as the way to escape from all sufferings. The Buddha described in brief the four noble truths namely;

1. *Dukkha saccÈ* The Truth of Suffering,
2. *Samudaya saccÈ* The Truth of the Cause of Suffering,
3. *Nirodha saccÈ* The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering,
4. *Magga saccÈ* The Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of suffering in his first sermon.⁴⁵ Later on these four truths were discussed in detail and in various ways in various Buddhist scriptures such as:

(1) *MahÈ satipaÔÔhÈna sutta* of M|la paÓÓÈsa PÈli ⁴⁶
(2) *Sacca kathÈ* of PaÔisaÑbhidÈmagga PÈli ⁴⁷ and
(3) *Sacca vibha~ga* of Vibha~ga PÈli ⁴⁸ etc.

If we study the Four Noble Truths with the help of these references and explanations, we get a fairly good and accurate

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⁴⁵. Ibid.
⁴⁶. M. N. MIlapaÔÔÈsa PÈli. PTS. P. 62
⁴⁷. Kh. N. PaÓIsambhidÈmagga aÔÔhakathÈ. Vol. 2. PTS. P. 103
⁴⁸. Vibha~ga PÈli. PTS. P. 97
account of the essential teachings of the Buddha according to the original texts.

In this dissertation all these truths are discussed in detail with the references of main Buddhist original texts in the chapters II, III, IV & V respectively.