CHAPTER - II

Growth of Early Buddhist Philosophy

The religion which Buddha preached was the result of his personal meditation and realisation. Buddha was inspired to take up the path of meditation for the realisation of true causes of the sufferings. People have to undergo in this world in the forms of disease, old age and death. Moreover, the existing philosophical and religious situation of his time also forced him directly or indirectly to preach the religion and philosophy that he propounded. The Vedas and the Vedic ritualism in particular had captured the mind of the people everywhere. The worship and prayer of so many gods and goddesses and brutal sacrifice of so many animals to these gods were rampant everywhere. Moreover, there were class-distinctions under which certain people were given very high status while others were regarded as the lowest social stratum. Brahmins had got all kinds of rights while the Sudras were denied all kinds of privilege. Brahmins used to preach and in the name of religion they misguided people in their own interest. Buddha disliked all these things. He disliked the distinction between man and man and abhorred the killing of so many animals in the name of religious worship and prayer. He wanted in place of such things to preach a religion of pure morality which was applicable to each and
every human being without any distinction. Gautama, the Buddha revolted against the existing Brahmanical system predominated by rituals and the ceremonies involving animal slaughter. He also deprecated the caste supremacy of the Brahmins.¹ This is why Buddha along with the Lokayatās revolted against the Vedic ritualism and the Hindu Varna Dharma. Moreover, such superstitious rites of the Vedic people really shocked the Buddha.

But inspite of this reaction, against the Vedas, Buddha was knowingly or unknowingly influenced much by some other aspects of the Vedas and especially by the Upanisads. Buddhism and its schools were probably influenced by the Upanisadic thoughts. They used their own terminology but the basic concepts conveyed through them were derived from Upanisads.² Dr. Radhakrishnan also said that the teaching of Buddha is considerably influenced by the thought of Upanisads. Indifference to Vedic authority and ceremonial piety, belief in the law of Karma, rebirth and the possibility of attaining Moksa or Nirvāṇa and the doctrine of the non-permanence of the world and the individual self are common to the Upanisads and Buddha.³

Buddha could not ignore or could not get rid of the tradition of which he was a product. The influence of the Vedas and Upanisads was tremendous at that time and,
therefore some of the key concepts that we find in Buddhism had been taken either knowingly or unknowingly from the Upanisadic tradition. For example: the concept of suffering and birth was very much present in the Upanisads and these concepts form the corner-stone of Buddha's Philosophy. Similarly, the idea of Nirvāṇa was just another name for the Upanisadic concept of Moksa. Moreover, it is from the Upanisads or from the general Upanisadic atmosphere that Buddha could understand that ignorance was the root cause of suffering and that it could be removed by the direct realisation of true knowledge. Meditation or tapas was taken as a path for attaining true knowledge or what is known as Prajñā or Bodhi in the Upanisads. It is very likely that Buddha took the path of meditation for realising Bodhi under the influence of the Upanisadic teachings. It is, of course, a fact that while teaching people about the pathway to liberation he emphasised morality more than knowledge but then prajñā also forms an important part of his eightfold path. Moreover, meditation or samādhi seems to be the ultimate means to nirvāṇa or enlightenment in the eightfold path. And this seems clearly to be an influence of the Upanisads on Buddha.

Buddhism can be regarded as a philosophy of existence, because it discusses about the empirical phenomena of the existing world. This is a religion of
ancient India which promised to deliver people from suffering. Hence, the particular doctrine of Buddha was the whole problem of the annihilation of suffering.

Buddha was born in Lumbini Garden at Kapilavastu of the present Nepal in 563 B.C. His father's name was Suddhodana who was the king of Sakya and his mother was Maya. After seven days of his birth, his mother died and so his aunt Mahaprajapati looked after him. The word Gautama was the name of his gotra, and his personal name was Siddhartha. Gautama was married with a princess named Yasodhara and had a son called Rahula. He died at Kusinagar (Eastern U.P.) at the age of eighty about 483 B.C. Unlike the Christian Era which was started reckoning from the date of the Buddha, the Buddha era is reckoned in 543 B.C. (in his 80th year), according to the record of Narada's book 'Buddha' and not from his birth. There is academic debate over the exact year of the death of the Buddha, the majority opinion favouring 486 B.C. Which is also traditionally accepted in Sri Lanka provides the basis for dates in the Buddhist era.

As the legends go, Gautama Buddha was dejected by the illness and miseries of the worldly life. As a result of this, one night at the age of twenty nine, he renounced his home (534 B.C.) and went out in search of the truth of his
awareness. Hence, at last he went to Bihar for his meditation in search of the truth. After the meditation of forty-nine days, he got Salvation in about 528 B.C. under the Bo-tree at Bodhagaya. Then he became known as the "Buddha" or the Enlightened One. He was also known as Sakya-Muni which derived from his Sakya clan and also called the Tathagata by the Master himself. In his meditation he realised the ways and means of removing the sufferings. Then he propounded his doctrine, the four noble truths. They are:

(i) There is suffering,
(ii) It has a cause,
(iii) It is possible to stop suffering,
(iv) There is a path that leads to the end of suffering.

These are known as the Four-Noble-Truths (catvāri aryā satyani) in Buddhism.

After the attainment of his Nirvāṇa Gautama wanted to preach his newly propounded doctrine in the world. At first he proceeded to Benaras where he met the five ascetic Brahmanas who had formerly been his associates. He performed his first sermon to the five followers namely,
(i) Aṇṇāta-kondaṇṇā or Ajñāta-kaundinya, (ii) Bhaddhiya, (iii) Assaji, (iv) Vappa and (v) Mahanama, near a deer park called Isipatana (sarnath). Then he converted the five monks into Buddhism.
At first he asked the five disciples to avoid the two extreme views of hedonism and asceticism and also explained to follow the middle path between the two views. Then he explained: "There is a Middle Path avoiding these two extremes - a path which opens the eyes and bestows understanding which leads to peace of Mind, to the Higher Wisdom, to Full Enlightenment and to Nirvāṇa". He also stressed the views not to be served by a wonderer that the pursuit of desires and the pursuit of pain and hardship. Having discussed all these points, he explained the so-called Four-Noble-Truths (aryā-satyaṇi), the Eightfold Path (astāṅgikamārga), the Middle Path (majjhima patipāda) and the Theory of Dependent Origination (pratītyasamutpāda). The doctrine which was discoursed in the first sermon was the most essential and important part in the development of later Buddhism. Because the later development of the religion were centred on the first sermon. The discourse of the first sermon was known as the "Dhamma-Çakkha-Pavattana-Sutra" or "the Foundation of the kingdom of Righteousness" or "Turning of the Wheel of the Law".

Buddha with the help of the five disciples preached his teachings in many different places. He collected a large number of devotees and formed a new monastic order and also the general rules of the Buddhist monks. Buddhism arose in the Eastern part of India and spread over the
Indian sub-continent and subsequently became an important religion of the world. This religion played a significant role in many parts of Asia, the Middle-East and Far-East. N. Gangulee points out that "the essential teachings of Buddha can make a profound not only towards greater cohesion among Asian people but also to an enduring peace". The following are the basic principles of Buddhism as taught by the Buddha:

Four-Noble-Truths:

(i) There is suffering (duhkha): The first Noble Truth deals with the nature of suffering. In his first sermon Buddha explained the nature of sorrow thus "Birth is painful; decay is painful; death is painful; union with the unpleasant is painful; the separation from pleasant is painful. In brief, the five aggregates which spring from attachment the conditions of individuality and their cause are painful". 

According to Buddha, the whole empirical existence consisting of changing states and repeated process of birth and death are phenomena. All phenomena - pleasures, pains, sensations which belong to the senses, ideas, concepts, impulses, volitions. These pleasures, pains and sensations again lead to the nature of human sorrows. In brief, every constitutive part of human being is subject to sorrow. That
means all worldly created things cause sorrow, when they are detached from an individual or when the individual does not find those desired objects. And this kind of sorrow exists only in the human being.

Buddha says that the chief cause of sorrow is the acceptance of impermanence as permanence. For according to the doctrine of the Buddha, every existing thing in the world is impermanent and changeable every moment. Moreover, whatever is changeable is destructible. Therefore, impermanent substances are unreal and temporary. According to him, the desire for unreal things not only cause suffering in this life but also in other life. Likewise, an individual also is an aggregate of the psycho-physical organs which is an impermanent existing substance, and so he suffers.

(ii) It has a cause (duhkha-samudaya) : According to Buddha, the cause of suffering is the thirst or craving causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction, that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the passions or the craving for a future life, or the craving for success in the present life. The soul is tormented by craving and desires which bind it and reduce it to a servitude from which it would fain escape. That thirst leads to desire which is
unlimitedly accompanied by pleasure and lust, finding its delight here and there. Hence, suffering arises from craving, which leads to rebirth, which brings delight and passion and seeks pleasure - viz. desire for pleasure, desire for existence, desire for prosperity etc. Thus, Buddha says that the world is enveloped in ignorance and its greatest detraction is sorrow. He finds out that birth is the cause of our suffering which is because of our ignorance. If one understands that all existing things in the universe are temporary and changeable every moment, he will not have the 'will' to rebirth. Rather, if he was not born, he will not possess suffering. Since the present situation depends upon the past deeds and the future on present. In connection with this situation he discovered Twelve Links (dvadasa nidanās).

(iii) It is possible to stop suffering (duhkha-nirodha) : The third Noble Truth is deduced from the second Noble Truth that the misery depends on some conditions and it will surely stop if its conditions are completely removed.

Buddha says "This is the Truth to the ending of sorrow : it is the putting an end to craving, giving up that desire-attachment abondoning that pleasure - seeking and craving for happiness".⁸
Buddha stresses that there is nothing permanent that we perceive. Everything is flux and changing every moment. Hence men are ignorant of the Truth that there is no persisting self. When an individual removes this ignorance he is free from this worldly sorrow and gains nirvāṇa, which is the Great Peace. Thus the third Noble Truth is the complete extinction of craving so that no passion remains after that. After getting release from sensual craving and from craving for existence one does not enter again into the world of existence. Then he will be free from this worldly existences. Thus comes about the cessation of the whole mass of suffering.

(iv) There is a path that leads to the end of suffering (duhkha-nirodha-gamini-pratipat) : Buddha ends his first sermon with this description of the way to the cessation of pain and suffering and provides the following the path of stopping the suffering to his fellow monks -

"Now this, O monks, is the noble truth of the way that leads to the cessation of suffering : This is the noble eightfold path, namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration". This is the path that Buddha himself founded during his time of meditation. Buddha maintains that one who follows this path can remove
self-indulgence and self-mortification. Then he becomes an enlightened person or a perfect man who has conquered of all sufferings in this world. That is the stage of Nirvāṇa. This is the essence of Buddhism for freedom from suffering. The Eightfold Path can be discussed as follows:

(i) Right View (sammā-ditthi) : The first step deals with the true nature of knowledge. This step states that one should have the correct knowledge about the Four Noble Truths.

(ii) Right Intention (Sammā-saṅkappa) : The second step refers to the right motivation. It is the removal of all prejudices and evil intentions from one's thoughts. According to this rule one should cultivate a friendly attitude towards all sentient beings.

(iii) Right Speech (sammāvācā) : Right Speech is to abstain from lies and slander from unkind words and from gossip. According to this law every man should avoid bad and adopt good language.

(iv) Right Action (sammā-kammanta) : Right Actions are those which are always well done in any action. That means one should not commit any wrong deed. He should restrain himself from bringing remorse and sorrow. One should perform action with skill and sympathy.
(v) Right Livelihood (samma-ājiva): The necessity of this rule reveals that one should not try to transgress the laws of morality. He should avoid the cruel means of living.

(vi) Right Mindfulness (samāsati): This rule states that the aspirant should constantly remember the perishable nature of things. If he thinks the body, the mind, the sensations and the mental states are permanent and valuable, his behaviour and action will be based on false notions. Such a state of mind will create a great difficulty in life. If he understands that all things are transitory and changeable every moment, then he will not possess attachment to objects. Then he will be free from bondage and misery. This state of thing is true mindfulness. It is through this right mindfulness that one can control one's thoughts, feelings and acts.

(vii) Right Endeavour (sammāvāyāma): This rule is the constant effort to restrain all wicked tendencies in the mind and to be replaced only by the good ones. One cannot gain enlightenment unless he maintains a constant effort to root out all evil thoughts and prevent evil thoughts from arising anew.

(viii) Right Concentration (samma-samādhi): This is the practice of meditation resulting in the final wisdom.
Theory of Dependent Origination:

Pratītyasamutpāda or Theory of Dependent Origination is one of the principal doctrines of Buddha. It is included in the Second Noble Truth. The main point of this theory is to understand the interdependent relation between consciousness (vijñāna) and psycho-physical existence (nāma-rūpa), the internal and the external. The theory of dependent origination states that everything in the world has a cause which follows an effect. There cannot be anything without a cause. This doctrine can be expressed by the formula, when this exists, that occurs, when this does not exist, that does not exist; when this is destroyed, that is destroyed. This means that each antecedent factor is followed by a succeeding consequent. The antecedent is the cause and the consequent will be the effect. The word 'pratītya' means 'because of' or 'dependent upon' 'samutpāda' means 'arising' or 'origination'. Thus the literal meaning of the term is 'arising because of' or 'dependent arising or origination'.

The Hinayanist Srilabha maintains that 'pratītyasamutpāda' means the appearance of all immediately disappearing things. He admits that the verb 'i' means 'to go', 'to disappear'; 'itya' meaning 'fit to disappear'; and the preposition 'prati' generalises 'pratītya' which is derivative noun (meaning that everything is momentary).
The Mahayanist Buddhapatita explains the term 'pratītyasamutpāda' as meaning 'manifestation', 'dependent' or 'every cause', or relative existence. He maintains that the 'prati' has a generalising sense, the verbal root 'i' the sense of relativity, and the word samutpada the sense of existence or origination. This theory discusses the process of birth and death of a being. This doctrine states that there is a chain of causes with their effects bind the self in the world. These two factors together make an individual's chain of bondage.

The theory of pratītyasamutpāda also discusses the interdependence of all things and their processes of dependent origination in the universe which is governed by five orders.

(i) The Physical Inorganic order: This is the unchanging order of seasons which causes wind and rains, and the nature of heat.

(ii) The order of Germs and Seeds: The physical organic order, the scientific theories concerning cells belong to this order.

(iii) The order of Act and Result: This order deals with the desirable and undesirable acts which produce good and bad results.
(iv) The order of the Norm Gravitation: This order explains the natural phenomena occurring at the advent of a Bodhisattva in his last birth.

(v) The order of Mind or Psyche: This law includes the processes of consciousness, the arising and perishing of consciousness etc.

Thus the five laws embrace everything in the world. Within the universe governed by these five orders, life also goes in a cycle which is governed by the law of dependent origination. Thus Buddhism gives the underlying reason of the whole process of birth and rebirth that extends to the past, present and future lives with the help of the theory of causality. The reason consists of the Twelve Links (nidānas) beginning with the link ignorance, and ending with the link old age and death. Then it leads in turn, back again to ignorance of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold path. The Twelve Links in the chain of Causation (dvadasa nidānas) are given below:

(i) ignorance (avidya),
(ii) predisposition (sāṃskāra),
(iii) consciousness (vijñāna),
(iv) name and form (nāma-rūpa),
(v) six-sense-organs (sadayatana),
(vi) sense-object-contact (sparśa),
(vii) sensation (vedanā),
(viii) craving or desire (trsṇa),
(ix) clinging (upādana),
(x) coming-to-be (bhāva),
(xi) birth (jāti) and
(xii) old age and death (jarā-marana).

Out of the twelve links, the first two i.e., ignorance and disposition refer to the previous life. While, consciousness, name and form, six-sense-organs, contact, feeling, craving and clinging cover the present life. They are the formations of the physical and psychical factors of an individual. And becoming, birth, old age and death are concerned with the future life (rebirth). The repetition of the chain ending with old age and death to be followed again by another round.

According to the Suttas, birth is the cause of suffering as decay and death and traced the chain back to ignorance. Hence, the cause of suffering is ignorance and that destruction of ignorance leads to the end of suffering. Buddha maintained that man's ignorance is due only to lack of right knowledge of the truth of the interdependent causation or Pratītyasamutpāda. Thus the doctrine of the Twelve Links in the chain of causation
explains about the whole process of human being. This doctrine is known as the Pratītyasamutpāda or Theory of Dependent Origination.

Buddha maintains that human being is a combination of the five constituent elements called 'panca skandhas' of the following:

(i) rūpa (material form or body),
(ii) vedanā (feeling),
(iii) samjñā (perception),
(iv) samśkāra (volitional forces) and
(v) vijnāna (consciousness).

The Buddha said: "All corporeal phenomena, whether past, present or future, one's own or external...all belong to the group of corporeality; all feeling belong to the group of feeling; all perception belong to the group of perception; all mental formations belong to the group of formations; all consciousness belong to the group of consciousness (Majjhima Nikaya log)".13

The Buddha describes that there is no permanent entity like soul except the ceaseless flow of these five skandhas (panca-skandha-pravata) or of consciousness (vijnāna-santana). He added that the idea of an individual
or a living being is merely empirical, formed under the law of dependent origination and there is no atman or soul in its eternal sense.

The elements of individuality are distinguished into two divisions nāma and rūpa. Of the five constituents rūpa (body) refers to the physical and the remaining four elements are the psychical components of the personality. Because impermanent and conditioned these constituent parts cannot be self or atman. Therefore, an individual is really a composition of these five elements of mental and material forces. They are changing all the time, and not remaining the same for two consecutive moments yet continues in an endless number of existence without being completely different from itself.

According to Buddha, rebirth is the same series of mental processes. The term 'rebirth' means only the psychophysical process which stops at death and continues immediately somewhere else. It is the passing away of the present consciousness and that the present condition makes a fresh one in another life. Hence, what we called rebirth is merely a transmigration of the impermanent physical series. According to Buddhism, death is a momentary incident and rebirth is immediate. It is not the complete annihilation of a being but only the outward physical form
is changed. It is because of only the karmic forces. When a being dies and is reborn, what transmigrates is not a person, but is karma. Karma is nothing but a 'series' of aggregate of the five elements. Buddha says that Karma is a kind of energy which produces its result. The actions of the past and present, determine his future outlook. Hence, rebirth is possible through the law of action and result (karma-phala-vyavastha). In this way, Buddha expresses the whole process of existences in his theory of Dependent Origination. The Buddha said: "who so understands the dependent origination, understands the Law; who so understands the Law understands dependent origination (Majjhima-Nikaya 28)". This understanding of dependent origination makes clear the three fundamental characteristics of all existence i.e. impermanent, substanceless and full of suffering.

Nirvāṇa:

Buddhism has an abiding faith in the theory of salvation. Salvation has been called Nirvāṇa. The state is obtained when a man is free from the psychical states which are responsible for his birth and rebirth. As the flame blown out by the violence of the wind goes out and cannot be reckoned as existing, even so a muni delivered from mind and body disappears and cannot be reckoned as existing. Likewise, the person who obtained Salvation cannot be bound
by the circumstances of the world. "Final deliverance is declared by the sage Buddha to be nothing other than a flow of faultless states of consciousness". By "Nirvāṇa" Buddha means only the extinction of false desires and not of all existence. According to him, Nirvāṇa is the sinless calm state of mind, the freedom from desires and passions, the perfect peace, goodness and supreme wisdom which continues self-culture and can endeavour for man. All the Buddhist hold that Nirvāṇa is the ultimate goal that all the human beings should seek. In the Dhammapada it is said that Nirvāṇa is a spiritual state attainable in this life and compatible with intellectual and social work. The word 'Nirvāṇa' literally means 'blowing out' or 'cooling'. Blowing out suggests extinction, while cooling indicates not complete annihilation, but only the dying out of hot passion. Nagarjuna describes:

"Nirvāṇa is that which is neither abandoned nor acquired, it is neither a thing of annihilation, nor a thing eternal; it is neither destroyed nor produced".  

The Pāli term 'Nibbāna' is derived from the root 'ni' and 'vana'. 'Ni' is a negative particle and 'vana' means craving or selfish desire. Hence Nibbāna literally means absence of craving or selfish desire. And 'Nirvāṇa' is a Sanskrit term which is derived from the root 'nir' which means 'off' or 'out' and 'van' means blow. Therefore
Nirvāṇa in Sanskrit means 'the blowing out'. It is to mean the blowing out of the flame of personal desire. In the Pāli tipitaka Nirvāṇa is defined as the Highest Refuge, Safety, Unique, Absolute, Purity, Supramundane, Emancipation, Peace and the like. Nirvāṇa is used in the Pāli tipitaka in a negative sense that 'blowing out' of man's desires just like the blowing out the flame of a candle, thereby making it impossible for other candles or fires to be started from this flame. The flame is the flame of desire which, once extinguished, can never rise again.

Several Buddhists take exception to the characterisation of nirvāṇa as either negative or positive. The Theravāda monk Walpola Rahula say:

"It is incorrect to say that Nirvāṇa is negative or positive. The idea of 'negative' and 'positive' are relative, and are within the realm of duality. These terms cannot be applied to Nirvāṇa, Absolute Truth, which is beyond duality and relativity". 18

Nirvāṇa, is thus the freedom but not freedom from the circumstances. It is the freedom from the bondage which an individual bound himself to circumstances. The person who has freed himself from this bondage has discarded the whole world and nothing exists for him. Thus, the cessation
of these particular elements which are responsible for passion is 'Liberation'.

Professor Max Muller pointed out that Nirvāṇa does not mean death, but only the extinction of that sinful condition of the mind, that thirst for life and its pleasures which brings on new births.

Rhys Davids also describes that the Buddhist heaven is not death, and it is not on death, but on a virtuous life here and now, that the Pitakas lavish those terms of ecstatic description which they apply to Arhatship, the goal of the excellent way, and to Nirvāṇa as one aspect of it. Venerable Nāgasena said, "Nirvāṇa is known by the freedom from distress and danger, by confidence, by peace, by calm, by bliss, by happiness, by delicacy, by purity and by freshness."¹⁹

According to Buddha, there is a Middle Path which leads to Nirvāṇa. It is the Noble Eightfold path. But before going to this path one has to avoid the indulging sensuous pleasure and indulging self-torture.

The Great Master said to the five recluses: "There is a Middle Way, O recluses, avoiding these two extremes discovered by the Tathāgata—a path which opens the eyes
and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment to Nirvāna".  

Gautama insisted that all individuals should end their sufferings, avoid future states of sufferings and attain in this world to a state of holy bliss and perfect sinlessness (Nirvāna). He maintains that if a man does not attain Nirvāna in this life, he is liable to future life. Moreover, Nirvāna is attainable in this very life by a strict self-culture of the individual, ownself without the help of the others. And it will be obtained only by a spiritual insight knowledge.

The Blessed one said to Ānanda: "Therefore, O Ānanda be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves, Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to any one except yourselves..."  

There are Ten Fetters (Samyojanas) which those who have entered upon the path (eightfold) have gradually to break. They are:

(i) Sakkaya - dittihi or delusion of Self,
(ii) Vicikiccha or doubt,
(iii) Silabbatapara-masu or of the efficacy of good works and ceremonies,
(iv) Kama or sensuality,
(v) Paligha or ill-will,
(vi) Ruparaga or the love of life on earth,
(vii) Aruparaga or desire for a future life in heaven (directly from the formless world),
(viii) Mano or pride,
(ix) Uddhacca or self-righteousness and
(x) Ignorance.

The paths leading to Arhatship are the last five of these fetters, beginning ruparaga and ending with avidya. And the idea of self-culture which is used during meditation called the Seven Jewels of the Buddhist Law are given below:

(i) The four earnest meditations - These are the meditations on the sensations, the ideas, and the reason.
(ii) The fourfold struggle against sin—— It is the struggle to prevent sinfulness, and to put away sinful states which have arisen, the struggle to produce goodness and the struggle to increase goodness.
(iii) The four roads to saintship - They are the will, the exertion, the preparation and the investigation.
(iv) The five moral powers -
(v) The five organs of spiritual sense - faith, energy, contemplation and wisdom.

(vi) The seven kinds of wisdom---energy, thought, contemplation, investigation, joy, repose, serenity.

(vii) The Eightfold path---right view, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right mindfulness, right endeavour, right concentration.

The Mahavagga says when he is liberated, there arises in him the knowledge "I am liberated". He knows that individual existence (jāti) has ended (khina), the holy life (brahmacariya) has been lived what ought to be done (karaniyam) has been done, there is nothing beyond (nāparam) this state (ilthataya). The liberated individuals are said to be immersed in the deathless (amatogadha).

Buddhism holds that the destruction of ignorance is the way of escape from the wheel of life. Moreover, the victory is to be gained by the destruction of ignorance. This is what is meant by the Buddhist Ideal of Arhatship. Etymologically, 'Arhat' means one who is 'worthy', 'deserving' of honour and offerings. The Buddhist interpretes the term 'Arhat' as one who has killed the enemies i.e. the defilements or one who is 'qualified' to help others. This is the state of an end itself and is blissful. It is also an emancipation from the whirl or re-births.
Anatmavāda or No Soul Theory:

In Buddhism the theory of Anatmavāda is deduced from its theories of Pratītyasamutpāda (theory of dependent origination), Ksanikavāda (theory of momentariness) and Anityavāda (theory of impermanence). The theory of impermanence states that everything that we find in the world is in flux and full of changes. Thus the world is ruled by a wave of constant change and destruction. The universe is a perpetual succession of becoming and constant change where one transient thing is followed by another. In the words of Dharmakirti everything is momentary. And whatever is produced must be destroyed. According to him, whatever comes into existence and afterwards ceases to exist is called momentary. Similarly, Shāntarakṣita also describes that all produced things are necessarily momentary because they do not depend for their destruction on any cause. Mrs. Rhys Davids pointed out that Buddha denied the two extreme views of eternalism and extreme nihilism. Buddha propounded his own view that the life is 'becoming or coming to be'. According to him the process of becoming has neither any origin nor any end. Neither being nor no-being is real. He also says that what is real is becoming. There is change; there is no changing thing. Thus impermanence is the law of nature. The process of becoming is the law of nature. Hence in Buddhism there is no permanent entity like self, soul or ego and no intervening
transcendental deity. According to Buddhism, the so-called self is merely an aggregate of psycho-physical organisms viz. body (rūpa), feeling (vedanā), perception (samjñā), disposition (saṃskāra) and vijnāna (consciousness). Of these five elements, the body is only the physical form whereas the other remaining four together make the psychical elements. The body or matter is a series of momentary atoms of earth, water, fire and air. On the other hand, the psychical organisms are unbreakable stream of changing consciousness. Buddha asserts that the so-called soul or self is nothing but a stream of changing moments of consciousness. He further describes that only body is temporary and destructible; the consciousness never ceased for it is a stream of unbreakable changing process. But none of these five elements is the soul or self. What the so called 'soul' or 'thing' is merely a name or symbol of a complex of constituents. Buddha says, "with regard to these five groups, I do not find any ego (atta), or something 'belonging to an ego' (attāniya). I am no longer subject to the thoughts of 'I am' or 'This I am'". Further he maintains that there is no conscious being; there is only consciousness. There is no one who feels; there is but feeling. Similarly, there are perceptions and dispositions; there is no individual perceiving or having dispositions. Buddha delivered in his first sermon: "The body (Rūpa), O Bhikkhus, is not the self. If the body O Bhikkhus, were the
self, the body would not be subject to disease, and we should be able to say: "Let my body be such and such a one, let my body not be such and such a one". "But since the body, O Bhikkhus, is not the self, therefore the body is subject to disease, and we are not able to say: Let my body be such and such..."23

Just as the chariot having its pole, the axle, the wheels, the spokes, the framework, the yoke and the good, similarly 'soul' or 'individuality' or 'being' or 'personality' is only a generally understood symbol, the designation in common use, for the five skandhas. There is no permanent soul involved in the matter. The Samyutta Nikaya states, "when one says 'I' he refers either to all the Skandhas combined or any one of them. And deludes himself that 'that' was 'I'. One could not say that the Rūpa was 'I' or that the Vedanā was 'I' or any other Skandha was 'I'. There is no where to be found in Skandhas, 'I am'".24

Just as there is no soul, there is no 'thing' too. A thing is nothing but an aggregate of sense-data. The so-called 'things' are aggregates of phenomena hanging together. According to Buddha, the self or thing is phenomenal and the world also is phenomenal. The process of psycho physical phenomena is composed of the five
aggregates and is called a being, moves from life to life. The process of psycho-physical phenomena is constantly moving and changing like the current of a river.

Though Buddhism does not believe in the existence like soul ego etc. it believes in the theory of rebirth or transmigration. The term 'rebirth' or 'transmigration' means in Buddhism only the psycho-physical process, which ceases at death and continues immediately somewhere else. Here transmigration is not caused by the transmigration of soul but by the continuity of the same series of mental processes. Just as the flame of a lamp though appears the same yet is not the same because at every moment it is full of change, similarly, what actually takes place in rebirth is merely a transmigration of the impermanent psychical series. The new being is the same stream of karmic energy or life force of its predecessor and thus it is responsible for whatever its predecessor has done. The doctrine is that when a living being dies, a new being is produced according to the Karma of the being himself.

First Council:

The First Council was held immediately after the death of the Buddha (483 B.C.). The Council took place in the Sattapani Cave at Rajagriha in the second month of the rainy season. It was during the reign of king Ajatasatru.
the king of Magadha. The meeting continued consecutively for eight months. The Council was summoned by the three disciples of Gautama the Buddha namely: Kassapa, Ānanda and Upāli. The Venerable Mahākassapa was the president of the Assembly. In that Assembly seven hundred thousand monks were assembled, and of these Mahākassapa selected five hundred Arhat monks. The purpose of the First Council was to collect and rehearse the sayings of the Buddha for preserving and reproducing as written copies. The three followers collected the doctrines of the Buddha in three collections, called the 'Tipitaka' or 'Three Baskets'. The term Pitaka or Basket was used in the sense of tradition. They are: (i) The Vinaya Pitaka (rules of conduct), (ii) The Sutta Pitaka (sermons or discourses) and (iii) the Abhidhamma (philosophic discourses from psycho-moral standpoint). And all the three Pitakas together named theraveda i.e. Three Vedas or Knowledge.

The Vinaya Pitaka deals with the rules and regulations for the guidance of the monks and nuns of the Buddhist. These rules were promulgated by Gautama himself during his early period.

The second Pitaka involves the truths of the Religion itself. It also involves the discussion and elucidation of the psychological system on which those truths are based.
The last and the third Pitaka deals with the psychological ethics, metaphysics and philosophy. It contains a further supplementary and more detailed discussion of the psychological system of the religion and of various points arising out of it. The Venerable Mahākassapa asked many questions to Upāli and Ānanda. They also replied all the questions of the venerable monk whatever they remembered from their memory which was heard from the Great Master.

At first the Venerable Mahākassapa raised questions on the Vinaya to the Venerable Upāli. Thus the Council was opened with the rehearsal of the Vinaya by Upāli whom Buddha himself taught as a religious disciple. The elder disciple asked Upāli about each rule viz.:

(i) the subject of it,
(ii) The occasion of its being given,
(iii) the person concerned,
(iv) the rule itself,
(v) further rules resulting from it,
(vi) when it constitutes an offence and
(vii) when it does not etc.

A specimen of these questions may be given here. The elder Mahākassapa asked Upāli:
"Friend, where was the first Pārājika rule promulgated"?
"At Vesali! reverend sir".
"With reference to whom"?
"With reference to Sudinna, Kalandaka's son"
"In respect of What?
"In respect of sexual intercourse".25

Thus the Thera Mahākassapa asked Upāli about the subject-matter source, person, enactment, supplementary offence and innocence as to the first Pārājika. All the questions were related to the four Pārājikas, the matter, the occasion, the individual, the principal rule. Thereupon they arranged the collection thus: "Let these four Pārājika rules constitute the Pārājika section".26

Thus they collected the Vinaya Pitaka consisting of the following books: (i) Suttavibhanga, (ii) Khandakas, (iii) Parivara, (iv) Patimokha. The first is subdivided into (i) Pārājika and (ii) Pacittiya. The second comprises (i) Mahāvagga and (ii) Cullāvagga.

In the second time Mahākassapa interrogated Ānanda on Dhamma about the subject-matter of the Sutta Pitaka, in all the five Nikayas (sutras). These questions were about (i) where it was given, (ii) about when or to whom it was spoken. Ānanda gave all the answers about the five Nikayas
appropriately. A specimen of these questions is given below:

The elder Mahākassapa asked Ānanda:

"Friend, Ānanda, where was the Brahmajala spoken"?

"Reverend Sir, midway between Rajagaha and Nālandā in the king's garden-house at Ambalatthika".

"With reference to Suppiya the mendicant and his pupil Brahmadatta".27

The Mahākassapa questioned Ānanda about the source and person as to the Brahmajala Sutta.

He asked: "Friend, Ānanda, where was the Samaññaphala spoken"? and so on.

"Reverend Sir, at Rajagaha, at Jivaka's, mango-grove"

"To whom"?

"To Ajatasattu, son of Vaidehi"28

And at the end of the speech Ānanda said, "let the Dharma and Vinaya which I have preached and explained to thee, stand in the place of a teacher after my death."29 In this way they rehearsed the five Nikayas (Sutras) viz., (i) Dīgha-Nikāya, (ii) Majjhima-Nikāya, (iii) Sāmyutta-Nikāya, (iv) Aṅguttara-Nikāya and (v) Khuddaka Nikāya.

Having rehearsed the Vinaya and the Dhamma, they rehearsed the seven Abhidhamma treatises viz. (i) Dharmasaṅgani, (ii) Vibhaṅga, (iii) Dhatukatha, (iv)
At the end of the questions and answers, the five hundred Arhats repeated together all the three Pitakas: the Vinaya, the Abhidhamma and the Sutta.

In the next item of the Assembly, the members said Ānanda not to break the lesser and minor precepts which were said by the Blessed One. After considering for a while about the matter, the Assembly adopted Mahākassapa's proposal to follow all the precepts laid down by the Buddha. Next, the members asked Ānanda why he did not give water to Buddha when he wanted to drink in his last day. Ānanda replied that there was no holy water nearby at that time. So he did not want to give dirty water to him. Then the Assembly did not allow Ānanda to be a member of the Council. Because Ānanda did not attain Nirvāṇa. And the attainment of Nirvāṇa was a pre-condition of being a member of the Council. For Buddha gave instructions to some of his disciples for their attainment of Nirvāṇa before his death. Ānanda was one of them. Besides he was the most closely related disciple of the Master. Hence the meeting forced him to attain the state of Nirvāṇa, Ānanda confessed his fault. Then the members excused him. The same punishment was also given to Channa, the charioteer of Buddha. For
Ananda revealed the fact to the Assembly that Buddha said at the last moment of his life, "Let then the Sangha, Ānanda, when I am dead, impose the higher penalty on Channa, the Bhikkhu". 30

As a final decision, the Council adopted the following four resolutions:

(i) the settlement of the Vinaya (rules of the monks) under the leadership of Upāli,
(ii) the settlement of the text Dhamma under the leadership of Ānanda,
(iii) the trial of Ānanda and
(iv) the punishment of Channa.

Then the conference ended with Buddha's last doctrine to his disciples, which was given under the Sal tree at Kushinara.

"Bhikkhus! I now conjure you earthly things Are Transitory - seek eternal rest," 31

The First Council was named or recognised as the Sutra-Vinaya-Samgrahini Sabha, or Pancha-Satika-Sangham (Synod of Five Hundred) or First Council (Prathama-Sangham). The Second Council which saw the emergence of two
Third Council:

A hundred and thirty-five years after the second council, a third council of the Buddhist monk was held at Pātaliputra (Bihar). The conference was held under the patronage of the Emperor Asoka, the Great, who was the king of the Maurya Dynasty about 242 B.C. He was the son of the king Bindusara.

The occasion of the Third Council was the establishment of the Buddhist canon in order to finally settle the religious works of Pitakas. Moreover, for seven years neither the Uposatha nor the Pavārāma could be held in any Buddhist monastery. Hence, in order to solve these two problems a Third Council was held in Pātaliputra. The Council was composed of sixty thousand Bhikkhus (monks). The Venerable Moggaliputra Tissa was elected as the president of the Assembly. It was his suggestion that the Assembly continued for nine months.

On the advice of the Venerable Tissa king Asoka asked the monks to expound the teachings of the Buddha. The monks proclaimed their own doctrines as the doctrine of the Buddha and carried out their own practices even as they...
wished. Besides, they had their wrong beliefs such as the doctrine of the eternal soul and so on. Then after hearing their own wrong views of the different sects king Asoka expelled these sects from the order. In that council Asoka aimed 'the uprooting and destruction of all false doctrines'. Thereafter the king questioned the true believers about the teaching of the Buddha. When the theras of the Vibhajjavādins gave the true answer to the king, the king was satisfied, and ordered them to perform the Uposatha ceremony, so that the whole community might be purified of evil elements. Then the king declared that the Vibhajjavādins were the only true followers of Buddha. In that conference, Tissa Moggaliputra also presented the treatise, called the Kathāvatthu, refuting the dissenting views.

Thereafter the Thera Tissa selected a thousand monks out of the sixty thousand monks who were well learned in the three Pitakas. Then the monks recited the three Pitakas, such as the Vinaya, the Sutta and the Abhidhamma Pitakas. They held the Sermon just as the same manner as those Mahākassapa and Thera Yasa. Thus the Third Council could establish the purity of the canon that was creating doubts, among the eighteen sects. The name of the Third Synod called by the monks as the "Sahasrika Sangiti" or "Synod of One thousand".
The Third Council decided to send missionaries to spread Buddhism in different countries. Tissa Moggaliputra suggested to spread this religion (Buddhism) to the foreign countries, so that Buddhism could be a world religion. Then under the advice of the Thera Tissa king Asoka sent his son Mahendra and his daughter Sanghamitra to preach the religion to Ceylon. There they preached the Dhamma (religion) and Buddhism spread so rapidly that within this period, Ceylon became a stronghold of the religion.

Fourth Council:

The Fourth Buddhist Council was held at the time of king Kaniska, the great emperor of Kushana dynasty at about c.100 A.D.). Because, the king was perplexed with the different and contradictory interpretations of the various sect. Hence, he had a desire to perform an Assembly to explain the Tipitaka according to the tenets of the various schools. Then the king decided to convoke a council in which various sects would be represented. It was in order to bring unity in the Sangha, among the various sects of Buddhism. The chief aim of the conference was to collect manuscripts and to compose new commentaries on the Sutta, the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma. According to Sarvāstivādin books, a general Buddhist council was held, under the authority of Kaniska at Kashmir and at the Council commentaries on the three baskets of the canon were
composed, those on the Vinaya and the Abhidhamma being called Vibhasa and those on the Sutta Pitaka known as Upadesa. Five hundred ascetics selected by Vasumitra participated in the Conference. Asvaghosa, Nagarjuna and Parsva were also included in the Council.

The controversies among the Buddhist sects were discussed in the Fourth Council and all those belonging to the eighteen schools together jointly purified the law and codified the Vinaya. Then the king ordered the five hundred monks to write commentaries on the three Pitakas. The commentary on the Sutta-Pitaka consisted of 100,000 slokas, the Vinayavibhasa, a commentary on the Vinaya 100,000 slokas and the Abhidhamma vibhasa also consisted of the same as the two formers. The proceedings of the Council were thus confined to the composition of the commentaries. These treatises were written out on copper plates. Then the king put these commentaries in stone boxes and deposited them in a stupa. According to Taranatha the Council further put to writing the whole of the three pitakas which had not yet been written out. 32 Thus in the Fourth Council the three commentaries were called Vibha-sastra-s, were collected and each of them enclosed three Pitakas.

Hiuen Tsang writes that during Asoka's rule there was a dissension among the Buddhist monks in the teachings of
Buddha. There were some Buddhist monks who were "a subtle investigator of mind and matter" who put their extraordinary thoughts in a treatise which taught heresy. They believed that mind and matter are real and are divisible in 64 elements which exist for ever (sarvam asti). On the other hand, Asoka did not want to break the original teachings of the Buddha. As a result of this, he wanted to give punishment to those monks who broke the teachings. Then the king ordered the monks who wanted to break the original teachings of the Master to be drown into the Ganges. Then the monks jumped into the river but escaped themselves with their skillful spiritual yoga and fled to Kashmir. There some of them settled on the hills and some in the valleys. Then during the time of Kaniska the Sarvástivāda became a powerful school. Because the king himself was not only a great devotee of the Sarvástivāda teachings but also a great supporter. That is why, this school became a powerful. But after the death of king Kaniska the Sarvástivāda vanished from India.

We may thus hold that the chief business of the Fourth Council was to collect the canonical texts, and prepare elaborate commentaries on them, with a view to reconcile the tenets of different sects. The effect of the council could cease the old quarrels and dissensions among the Buddhist monks. At the time of Asoka, Sarvástivāda
school decreased in its strength in Magadha. But during the reign of king Kaniska, this school became a very powerful in that part of the country. There is an independent history of developing of the Sarvāstivāda school.

The four Buddhist Councils have provided with some insight into the dogmas and the heresies of developing Buddhist thought. As for example: The Tipitaka or Three Baskets of the Vinaya, the Sutta and the Abhidhamma which are still present in bold type.

As a patron of Buddhism, king Asoka gave much emphasis upon the monastic establishments of the Buddhists. Moreover, as a Buddhist monk he himself tried to spread the religion to various countries of the world. Hence, as an effect of his effort Buddhism could spread in-side and out-side India. Thus, the effect of the Third Council could spread Buddhism in various countries of the world, such as Gandhara, Kashmir and the Himalayan regions in the North; Vanarasi, Mysore and further South as Ceylon and Suvarnabhumi etc. Thus the rapid expansion of Buddhism during the reign of Asoka resulted Buddhist sects into eighteen.

The reign of king Kaniska can also be regarded as an epoch-making in the development of Buddhism. Like Asoka,
Kaniska also did a great effort for the spread of Buddhism. Many old monasteries were repaired and many new ones were built. A large number of stupas were also sent to foreign countries. During his lifetime the Indo-Greek of Buddhist art achieved its greatest development. It was his effort that Buddhism could spread to China, Japan, Tibet and Central Asia.

During the time of king Kaniska, a new school of Buddhism called Mahayanism also came into existence. Nagarjuna was the great exponent of this new sect. When the Mahayana school came, there was a change in Buddhism. This means that the old Hinayana form of Buddhism was replaced by the new Mahayana religion. Then after some years the Hinayana form of religion became downfall. Moreover, the coming of the new sect brought Buddhism nearer to Hinduism and this made Buddhism decreased in India. There were some reasons for the declining early Buddhism in India. Briefly speaking, Buddha was not worshipped by the early Buddhists. The Mahayana first introduced the idol worship of Buddha in Buddhism. The Hinayana gave emphasis on good actions, while the Mahayana gave much emphasis on idol worship of the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas. Thus the vast empire of Kaniska in Central Asia could help to the growth of Mahayanism. It was this Mahayanism that spread in Central Asia and other parts of the world.
After king Kaniska, Harshavardhana began to favour the Mahayana form of Buddhism. In 643 A.D. Harshavardhana summoned an Assembly at Kanauj. The object of the Assembly was to preach the teachings of the Buddha. Both the Hinayana and the Mahayana monks were present at the Assembly. The decision of the meeting was a one-sided preaching of Mahayanism. Then the Mahayana sect gradually developed with its strength.

The growth of Mahayanism was one of the most important cause for the decline of Buddhism in India. Moreover, there were few persons interested in monastery religion like Buddhism. Therefore, there were a few Buddhist monasteries. During his reign, a famous Chinese pilgrim called Yuang Chwang came to visit India. He travelled in this country from 630 to 644 A.D. The Chinese pilgrim wrote many records on the conditions of Buddhism especially the Buddhist arts found in such regions; Mathura, Sarnath, Nalanda, Ajanta, Bagh etc. With the departure of the Chinese pilgrim, Harshavardhana as a Buddhist ruler became downfall. Thus the development of Buddhism was going on upto the tenth century.

The rise of Mahayanism was not only one of the causes of the declining of Buddhism in India but it also made Buddhism nearer to Hinduism. Formerly, the early Buddhists
used the Pāli language as their canon, whereas, the Mahayana system used the Sanskrit language as their canon. The adoption of Sanskrit was the cause of the rise of Hinduism. Because Sanskrit language was used by the Brahmanas. This made the Mahayana Buddhists could easily dominant by the Brahmanas. This fact also brought Buddhism nearer to Hinduism. Hence, the chances of merging Buddhism into Hinduism.

From the eight century to twelfth century, most of Northern India was governed by the Rajputs princes. They were interested in Hinduism. Thus Buddhism practically disappeared from the whole of Northern India. Then South India also followed the Brahmanical faith and, therefore, consecutively the Buddhism declined in India and spread to the far eastern and western countries - like China, Korea, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and other countries.
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