CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY
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1.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Buddhism is a production of Indian mind\(^1\). Various grounds for such a judgement can be cited. Born in Indian soil, Buddhism is one of the three great world religions. Its Founder is Gautama - the Buddha, universally recognized as the perfect Enlightened Being. Buddhism is the greatest of non theistic faith and it has left its influence on other systems as well. Buddhism affords the unique spectacle of a doctrine of salvation propagating itself on a hitherto unprecedented scale entirely by way of peaceful means.

In the cause of its long history it has given the world an ethics based on the ideal of absolute altruism a psychology that explores heights and depths of whose existence dimly to be aware, while its literature and its art are among the supreme levels of human consciousness. There needs no explanation that Buddhism is evolved from its own inner resource.

During the last century and a half Buddhism has received increasingly respectful attention of western students of comparative religions as well as the psychologists, philosophers and lovers of art\(^2\).

Number of popular and semipopular books on Buddhism have been published during recent years\(^3\). Number of alternative approaches to Buddhism have been developed such as traditional, scientific, sectarian and
synoptic. The scientific approach is modern and is of western origin reflected through the works of classical orientalists. Traditional approach is that of the masses learned or unlearned, taking refuges in *Triratna*: the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma* and the *Sangha* which contain the means of freedom from suffering and attainment of Nibbana, the *Buddhahood*. The sectarian approach is limited being either repudiated or ignored. The synoptic approach recognizes the essential authenticity of the entire Buddhist tradition. It assumes that the doctrine of the Buddha comprises of all teachings linked to the original teaching⁴.

Buddhism is characterized due to its richness, profusion, amplitude and diversity. It consists of an immense number of schools, all of which are branches of within the one Sangha, sharing in the common heritage have their own distinctive doctrines and practices. Morality, meditation and wisdom have been the means of deliverance. The differences among the branches of schools produced ambiguity. But with differences and divergences of doctrine, all schools of Buddhism aim at enlightenment. The unity in Buddhism is not only rational but it is transcendental. The specific differences are due to the different aspects of Buddhism associated with the evolutionary process. This is well understood by the five spiritual faculties found in early literature. The five are: *faith, vigour, mindfulness, concentration* and *wisdom* Full development of all these faculties makes one an *Arahanť⁵*.

After the Buddha's Mahaparinibbana different schools tended to specialize in one particular faculty with direction of enlightenment.
Thus, the Abhidhammikas and the Madhyamikas developed wisdom, Yogacarins concentration and the tantric tradition vigour. It is not at all surprising that between the different schools of Buddhism, there is and was relation of mutual respect and tolerance. It does not mean that the differences were not debated or that sectarian feelings did not run high sometimes. Such differences were settled peacefully. Such a harmony, that monks of different schools observed the common rule and shared the same monastic life, each one devoting to his special studies and meditations.

From various points of view, Buddhism has been divided in different schools in different part of the world as: "Northern and Southern Buddhism", Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, "Guhyayana and Vyaktoyana" and Sahajyana and Kathinayana etc. For, Mahayana and Theravada, the former is geographical and formed by European scholars of Buddhism, while latter is doctrinal formed by men of certain school of Buddhism in certain times. Theravada (Hinayana) nowadays preferably called Theravada or school of elders after the second council in Vaisali. This form now prevails in Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Cambodia and Laos.

While Mahayana, was formulated by the Buddha's disciples after his Parinibbana. Many scholars are of the opinion that the founder of Mahayana Buddhism is Nagarjun. This opinion is not without contradiction also. According to Pali Scriptures the Buddha recognized no essential difference between his own insight and that of his disciples. The only difference was the accidental one
of relative priority and posteriority of attainment of Buddhahood. Mahayanists upheld the universal validity of the Bodhisattavayana maintaining that every Buddhist ought to aspire to supreme Buddhahood. Making the distinction between Theravada (Hinayana) and Mahayana ideals, Theravada gives emphasis on individual enlightenment and that Mahayana on universal enlightenment. Possibly, contradictory doctrines leading to the same transcendental realization. The charges leveled against Theravada at the time of rise of Mahayana are that Theravada is conservative, scholastic, monastic and individualistic in its approach.

Modern Theravada, by reason of fidelity with which it continues to represent in original Theravada attitude, may, in fact, be regarded as constituting a kind of living evidence of the necessity of Mahayana movement.

Mahayana as a movement, compelled to emphasize the qualities and characteristics as follows:

1. Progressive and liberal minded, caring more for spirit than for the letter of scriptures willing to accept the change.

2. More highly emotional and devotional in attitude with a deeper understanding of the value of ritual acts and

3. More positive in its conception of Nibbana.

4. While continuing to cherish the monastic ideal it gave importance to a dedicated household life; and

5. It developed altruistic aspect of Buddhism.
Theravada and Mahayana may be representing two tendencies one centripetal and other centrifugal in the teaching of the Buddha. While first prevents disintegration, the second preserves from petrification. In Buddhism we see a constant interplay of these two tendencies or forces influencing each other in subordinate manner.

Both Theravada and Mahayana respectively exert over the doctrines and methods constituting the Dhamma (Dharma). Looking into the philosophy of both Theravada (Hinayana) and Mahayana we generally speak about the fundamental principles of Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Dependent Origination, the law of Kamma, Nibbana, Bodhisattava ideal, remain the focal points of both schools.

The spirit non-violence, tolerance, liberty and friendliness are also retained. But their difference is in the emphasis and interpretation. Theravada keeps faithfully to the original teaching as preserved in the Pali Canon and holds together in single unified tradition, the Mahayana has made free and varied interpretations of the doctrine and the discipline under differing circumstances, turned the original scriptures into Sanskrit incorporating in them later texts by later teachers, and continued to divide into many new sects and subsects.

While the Theravada is an intellectual, rational and transcendental religion that requires personal self-effort, the Mahayana believes in salvation through faith and devotion. In Theravada the Buddha is a discoverer who points out the path, but in the Mahayana he becomes a saviour by whose grace beings
can hope to be redeemed. The emphasis of the Theravada is on wisdom and practical insight as the key virtue on the path of self reliance towards the ideal state of being an Arahant. The Mahayana stresses in on compassion, the key virtue of the Bodhisattvas, who vow to save all beings and work for the good of all suffering beings. Moreover, the Mahayana, takes much interest in philosophical speculations and ritualism. While the original doctrine of Theravada regards these as useless.

Buddhism, whether, Theravada or Mahayana, is based on Right motive of correct attitude of mind. Bodily and vocal actions are regarded as true expressions of over subjective selves, as the externalization of the innermost thoughts and desires, and are judged accordingly.

There are opposite motives, bad as well as good attitudes mentally with which the study of teaching may be taken up.

Right motive with which the study of Buddhism can be undertaken is the hope that through such study a good may ultimately be attained.

"Just as the great ocean, O' monks has one taste, the taste of salt, said the Buddha, even so, O' monks, this doctrine and Discipline have one taste, the taste of emancipations."

Therefore, wrong mental attitude can result in the gravest misunderstanding. At the same time we should not discard the scientific study of Buddhism. But it should be given a proper place in the hierarchy of disciplines, where it may continue to perform its useful duty. Philosophy as it is said, often
dull but the lessons that are drawn from it are generally excellent. There is of course no reason why our sciences and our doctrine should not both be sound. Nowadays Buddhism needs more protection from its friends than from its enemies.

It is, therefore, emphasized to avoid the use of literature produced by non Buddhists, and the whole reliance must be upon the actual word of the Buddha and on the sayings and writings of his enlightened disciples throughout the ages.

1.2. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHISM:

2500 years ago at Sarnath, India heard the greatest message of the Buddha which has revolutionized the thoughts and life of the whole human race. From here it went to all the corners of the world. Dedicating himself to the noble task of discovering a remedy for life's universal ill he practiced concentration applying himself to the attentive concentration on incoming and outgoing breath (ana + apana sati) entered the different meditative absorptions and finally became an enlightened one. Therefore on he spoke these words: "Being myself subject to birth, aging, diseases, death, sorrow and defilement, seeing danger in what is subject to these things; seeking the unborn, unaging, diseaseless, deathless sorrowless, undefiled, supreme security from bondage is Nibbana, I attained it. Knowledge and vision arose in me; unshakable that is my deliverance of mind. This is the last hint now there is no more
becoming, no more rebirth\textsuperscript{10}. For a week, immediately after his enlightenment, the Buddha sat at the foot of Bodhi tree experiencing the bliss of freedom. Then he thought over the Dependent arising (Pratityasamupada). And at the end of seven weeks he made up his mind to communicate the Dhamma. The Blessed One addressed the five ascetics;

"Monks, these two extremes ought not to be cultivated by the recluse by one gone forth from house-life. What two? Sensual indulgence and self mortification which led to no good. The middle way, understood by Tathagata, the perfect one after he had avoided the extremes, gives vision, and knowledge, and leads to calm, realization, enlightenment, Nibbana. And what monks, is that middle way? It is this Noble Eightfold Path namely: Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration\textsuperscript{11}.

Then the Buddha explained to them the four Noble Truths:

1. Suffering (Dukkha)

2. The arising of suffering (Dukkha Samudaya)

3. The cessation of suffering (Dukkha Nirodha)

4. The path leading to the cessation of suffering (Dukkha Nirodhagami Patipada Magga)

Anicca, Anatta and Nibbana are the three corner stones of Buddhism and form the core of Buddhist philosophy. No system of thought that
does not recognize these three principles can lay any claim to kinship with Buddhism.

ANICCA: Anicca means impermanence or temporal which indicates that all things are in a perpetual flux. All things are transient and impermanent. Nothing is permanent in the universe. Every thing is subject to change. Whatever that exists is made up of colours, sound, temperatures, spaces, times, pressures, ideas, emotions, volitions, they are connected with one another and are continually changing. Every thing is therefore momentary. All phenomena are relative, nothing is absolute and permanent culmination into impermanent for permanent is the source of sorrow (Dukkha). Fundamental scriptures describe that all things are the compositions of elements; materials or intangibles. In reality all those elements are in the form of the current or the stream of substances. All these streams of elements are naturally proceeding based on the different functioning process that strongly supports or cooperates with other streams functioning without any principle operator or any conductor. It is, therefore, denominated to the natural laws. It is understood that all conditioned states are impermanent.

ANATTA: The logical consequence of the doctrine of Anicca is the principle of Anatta or Anatmata, the soullessness. This principle shows that nowhere in the universe neither in macrocosm or in the microcosm, there is any unconditioned, absolute, transcendental entity or substratum. Among the many comparatively permanent complexes we find a complex of memory, volitions,
emotions, ideas, aspirations, linked to particular body which is called the ego or 'I', which in fact is not permanent. If 'I' appears to be permanent it is because the change associated with elements is slow, the Buddha believes that ideas of soul or I are false and empty. The Buddha tries to prove the theory of Anatta through two aspects of the **Four Noble Truths**. The first aspect is in terms of aggregates. That is man is made up of these four aggregates and nothing more or nothing less and hence there is no need for soul to exist. The same result is arrived at through the doctrine of conditional genesis which is the synthetic method\(^2\). Though the Buddha thought the doctrine of **Anatta** for 2500 years back, today the modern scientific stream of thought is flowing towards the Buddha's teaching of Anatta or No-soul.

In the eyes of modern scientists man is merely a bundle of ever changing sensations. Modern physicists say that the apparently solid substance is nothing but a flux of energy. They see that whole universe is a process of transformation of various forces of which man is a mere part. The Buddha was the first to realise this, that is why many unbiased scholars, psychologists and scientists uphold the theories of the Buddha. To them, Buddhism is unique when compared to all the other religions. Therefore, the Buddha teaches the three common characteristics of all things as follows.

All conditioned things are impermanent
All conditioned things are Dukkha - sufferings,
All conditioned or unconditioned things are soulless or selfless\(^3\).
NIBBANA (Nirvana):

Nibbana according to Pali texts\textsuperscript{14} is unconditioned, the end, the unpolluted, the truth, the beyond, the subtle, the very hard to see, the No-decay, the stable, the taken leave of, the unindicated, the unimpeled, the peace, Beathless, the excellent, the fortune, the security, the destruction of caving the wonderful the astonishing, the freedom, the extinguished, the harmless, the non-attached, the purity the donaway with (carving), the island, the cave, the shelter, the refuge and the ultimate goal. And according to Phra Rajavaramuni\textsuperscript{15}:

\textit{Nibbana} means the \textit{extinction of fire of greed of hatred and of ignorance}, the unconditioned the supreme goal of Buddhism. The extinction of all defilements and sufferings. Nibbana in ultimate nature is transcendent to empirical thought. It cannot be perceived by the empirical means through which we perceive empirical realities. It is inexplicable and indeterminable. It is beyond language or the limit of empirical experience. It is the state to which Tathagata (the Enlightened one) attains after death\textsuperscript{16}.

These are, in short, the basic principles of Buddhism on which Buddhism is founded. This teaching of truth was discovered, realized and proclaimed by the Buddha. It was the discovery of the highest truth known ever to man on the earth.

\textbf{1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY}:
Buddhists consider that their religion has three jewels: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. They begin any ritual or religious ceremony with three times of chanting that they 'take refuge' in these Three Jewels which are therefore also called the Three Refuges. Indeed, the taking of the Refuges is what defines as Buddhist. Every Buddha realizes and preaches the Truth. But not all of them ensure that Truth will be long be available to men. Thus, in a metaphor central to Buddhism, the Buddha is the great physician, the Dhamma is the remedy prescribed and the Sangha is the nurse who administers that remedy. The word Dhamma is variously translated into English. In so far as it is what the Buddhas teach, the intellectual content of Buddhism it is aptly translated 'Doctrine'. This doctrine both describes and prescribes so it is both 'Truth' and 'Law'.

The Mahayana stands firmly on the two legs, Panna and Karuna, transcendental idealism and all-embracing affection for all kinds of beings, animate as well as inanimate. In Mahayana the attainment of wisdom is for the sake of the practice of compassion. What is one's own enlightenment worth, asks Mahayana if it is not to help others to the same *Summum bonum*? Individual enlightenment is not the goal of Mahayana so much as universal enlightenment while the emphasis of the Theravada is on wisdom and practical insight as the key virtue on the path of self reliance towards the ideal state of being an Arahant. The Mahayana stresses on compassion as the key virtue of the Bodhisattvas. The core of Theravada teaching (*Dhamma*) is the Four Noble
Truths and the Eightfold Path. Mahayana also acknowledges these. What the Buddha taught was known as the doctrine, the Dhamma.

At the first council sections of the Dhamma were assigned to the elders (Theras) and their pupils to commit to memory. Therefore Dhamma was passed on from teachers to pupils orally, no additions or omissions were made at this council. At the second council, one hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha, only the Vinaya was discussed, not the Dhamma. However, the other monks differed and disagreed and said nothing could be changed. In consequence a group of monks left the council and formed Mahasanghika. During Emperor Asoka's regime, 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} century B.C., the third council was held to discuss the Dhamma. The teaching approved and was accepted by most of the monks of this council that come to know as Theravada. The first mention of the terms Mahayana and Hinayana is found in the Lotus Sutta (Saddhammapundarika Sutta). But these Yanas are not found anywhere in Pali Canon, the Tripitaka.

The term Mahayana was clearly defined and designated about 2nd century B.C. and Nagarjuna developed the Mahayana philosophy emphasizing on the importance of Sunyata, void. So about 700 years after the passing away of the Buddha the terms Mahayana and Theravada were introduced.

Today, Mahayana and Theravada are the two great Buddhist schools existence in the world. And they are penetrated to all the corners of the globe.
The principal teachings of both Mahayana and Theravada are almost the same. Both schools follow Sakyamuni Gautama the Buddha, as their teacher. The Four Noble Truths, the essence of the Buddha dependent arising (Pratityasamupada), the three characteristics (Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta), the Noble Eightfold Path, and Nibbana, are the same, with some differences. Some think that Bodhisattava ideal is exclusively Mahayana, and Theravada speaks only of Arahantship, personal attainment. However, a careful and dispassionate student of Buddhism will finding Bodhisattava ideal in Theravada literature.

The Bodhisattava ideal of becoming Buddhas to save others in Samsara is not denied in the Theravada system of thought. However, there are no hard and fast rules for becoming Buddhas.

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH:

So far as Buddhism is concerned, personal religion covers the study of understanding and practice of the teachings pertaining to morality, meditation and wisdom. At intellectual levels contradictory conceptual indications of transcendent realities as the doctrines - the Mahayana is opposed to the Theravada. These contradictions finally resolve into a state of mutual solution. There have been times where doctrinal deviations from the teaching of the Buddha took place. This gave rise to Mahayana. It is important to renew the whole Theravada attitude towards the rise of Mahayana. Therefore, a
comparative study of Theravada (Hinayana) and Mahayana, their origins and
differences, should enlighten the Buddhist world. With this view in mind, the
objectives of this research are:

1. To compare two divisions of Buddhism Theravada and Mahayana.
2. To study deeply is the distinction between Theravada and Mahayana in
their emphasis and interpretation of the teaching of the Buddha.
3. To show the significance of the two sects which are divided, each others, in
context of world peace, happiness and co-existence.

1.5. DATA COLLECTION:

This research is mainly based on the data collected from libraries.
The area of interest whose literature is under survey is "A comparative study of
Theravada and Mahayana in
Buddhism; their origins and differences".

The data collection is specifically made for the title of the thesis and
also for the related sub-topics. A deep study has been made in the areas for
which the material was collected from various libraries.

One primary sources for this topic were mainly Pali Tripitaka and
other texts. The primary sources of the data are from Vinaya Pitaka,
Cullavagga, Kathavatthu, Jataka and Atthakatha. Related literature on the
topic in English was from the library of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada
University, Aurangabad, India.
Secondary sources were obtained from different places and universities such as, Delhi and Pune University libraries. The literature was collected from both the sources English and Thai.

This research will certainly put-forth new ideas and opinions in old and new context of comparative study of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism in their origins and differences.

1.6. HYPOTHESIS OF RESEARCH:

It is not surprising that between the different schools of Buddhism there was a relationship of mutual respect and tolerance. This is not to say that doctrinal differences were not keenly felt and vigorously debated or that sectarian feeling did not sometimes run high. But the unity of Buddhism consists in the fact that through differences and divergences of doctrine innumerable all schools of Buddhism has the same aim, the aim of enlightenment. Unity is not rational but transcendental. This is to say that, the various schools tend to represent either different aspects of Buddhism or different stages of spiritual evolution with in it.

Indian Buddhism passed through three great phases traditionally known as the Theravada, the Mahayana and the Vajrayana each having its own characteristics and schools. The Theravada teaches the attainment of salvation of one-self alone. Its ideal is Arahant. The Mahayana teaches salvation of all. Its ideal is Bodhisattava, the Vajrayana is the adamantine way. Its ideal is the
Siddhartha. Much has been produced and debated on these schools. While the Mahayana and the Theravada demand much more attention and evaluation, synthesis and resynthesis. Hence the hypothesis for this research is forwarded as: A comparative study of Theravada and Mahayana in Buddhism: Their origins and differences. This hypothesis has been explored through extensive study in different areas of the Mahayana and the Theravada. In all, six chapters are devoted for this study. Chapter I contains introduction and methodology. Chapter II gives the historical background of origins of both the doctrines of the Theravada and the Mahayana. Chapter III gives emphasis on different concepts of both the doctrines. Chapter IV discusses the role and influence of Theravada and Mahayana at present day. Chapter V presents a case study about the status of Theravada and Mahayana in Thailand and Chapter VI is devoted to conclusion. Through all these chapters the hypothesis is discussed and conclusions are drawn to satisfy this research work.
REFERENCES

11. Vinaya, i. 10, S.V. 420.
12. Dr. W. Rahula, What the Buddha Thought, p. 52.
16. Dr. Sunthorn Na-Rangsi; Karma and Rebirth, p. 243.