CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
Buddhism is one of the oldest religious traditions of mankind and it continues to be a major faith in today’s world. It is a complete civilization of Man; a system of faith and reason and an institution of creative self-culture and social welfare. It has been described as a ‘heterodox’ system by the Indian culture and religious thoughts. Buddhism has been studied in modern times largely from the Brahmanical or Hindu standpoint. In fact, some of the Brahmanical puranas claim that the Buddha is the 9th Avatara or incarnation of the great God Vishnu.

The term ‘Buddha’ means ‘enlightened one’ and the ultimate goal of Buddhism is enlightenment for each and every individual. Although ‘the Buddha’ is used to refer to Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, but the term ‘Buddha’ originally is a common noun used by the Jains. For example, in the Jaina text ‘The Isibhasiyaim’, the forty-five sages (rsk) are “All Buddhas who will not return to this world”\(^1\). In addition to this, both Buddhism and Jainism share certain terms. The Jains used the term ‘Jina’ (spiritual victor) to refer to their founder Mahavira. The term Jina is also found in Buddhist texts, especially in Mahayana tradition. Another term used by both Jains and Buddhists was ‘arhat’ or ‘arahant’ (worthy). Moreover the followers of Jainism were known as ‘arhata’. In Buddhism, it is used to refer to those followers of the Buddha who had attained enlightenment. While the term ‘Buddha’ was used to refer only to
Sakyamuni Buddha. Because Sakyamuni’s followers often used the term ‘Buddha’, their religion was called Buddhism. Other terms commonly used by both Jainism and Buddhism are muni (sage), Bhagavat (lord), etc.² However, the history of Buddhism started with the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha who was born towards the middle of the 6th century B.C.

There are two traditions regarding the birth date of Gautama Buddha. The northern tradition suggests 566-486 B.C., while, the Pali tradition, the Buddhist Era now based in Theraveda countries, suggests 624-544 B.C. However, there seems to be no dispute to the fact that Buddha lived in Indian soil for eighty years.

The family name of Gautama Buddha was Siddhartha. He was born on the full-moon day in May (Vaisakha Purnima) in 624 or 566 B.C. at the Lumini Garden. This holy spot is on Indo-Nepal border in the district of Basti in Uttar Pradesh. It is marked by a stone pillar. Gautama’s father was the Ksatriya king Suddhodana, and mother, Queen Mahamaya. Suddhodana was the Head of the Republic of Sahaya. His headquarters was at Kapilavastu (perhaps identical with modern Tilaurakot in the Deoria District of U.P.). Siddhartha lived and grew up in luxury, away from the miseries of worldly life. Later, when he saw an old man, a sick man and a corpse, he was moved to the core. He left his royal home with all its pleasures at the age of 29 years, and became a mendicant monk³. He set out in search of a solution for the ills of life. Initially, he practised rigid austerities and carried out different kinds of physical self-torture including
fasting. He continued on with this idea for six long years. This reduced his physical self to a skeleton. Finally, he realized that physical torture was not the correct way to achieve enlightenment and decided to partake of food again. On the full-moon day of May (Vaisakha Pumima), he became a perfect Buddha 'the Awakened one', by attaining bodhi or supreme knowledge. That night, Gautama discovered the law of causation, a cycle of twelve causes and effects that governs the universe. This law had not been thought of before by any philosopher. Its authorship raised Gautama from his status of Bodhisattva to that of a Buddha. He exclaimed solemnly –

Truly when things grow plain
To the ardent, meditating Brahmin,
Routing the hosts of Mara does he stand
Like as the sun when lighting up the sky

Buddha was a practical and popular teacher. "Not as a theoretical thinker, but as a great educator of humanity. He went his own way between knowing and not knowing and not having a desire of knowing; looking forward alone to the only highest goal of deliverance with an unwavering faith in attainment of knowledge which lead to this goal". In the sixth century B.C., Indian thought that was trapped in the net of craving (tanha) and attachment (upadana) was liberated from its old extreme lines by the Buddha, the Awakened one. He is, therefore, said among the contemporary thinkers "to
Buddhism has had a profound impact on the major civilizations of Asia. Moreover, Buddhism enjoys a modest yet growing presence in the elsewhere outside of Asia. Twenty six centuries ago, Buddha gave his teachings. His teachings were compiled after his death and were presented by different schools of Buddhism in their own way. This produced some amount of vagueness in Buddha’s teachings. The teachings of Buddha are to be found in the Tipitaka (Tripitaka), Vinayapitaka and Suttapitaka and the Abhidhammapitaka. The teachings of Lord Buddha may be divided into two – Philosophical and Moral. His teachings focus on the four fundamental themes which are known as the four Noble Truths (Arya Satya). These are –

1. There is a fact of misery which should be understood.
2. There is an origin of misery which should be destroyed.
3. There is an ending of misery which should be realized.
4. There is a way leading to the cessation of misery and it should be cultivated.

A doctor always tries to discover the cause of malady before administering a remedy. The Buddha, the great spiritual doctor also tried to find the ultimate cause of worldly suffering. He found the cause of suffering of not only the human being but also of all animate creatures. He found that this cause is nothing but ignorance or craving arising from it. Again, the doctor removes
the cause of the patient's sufferings and thus cures it. Similarly, the Buddha encourages the people to remove their ignorance of truth and their cravings for happiness. The cessation of suffering is called Nirvana, the *summum bonum*. It is an unconditional state that is raised by the mind. Dr. Rhys Davids says, "If this Buddhist idea of the perfect life is remarkable when compared with the thought of India at that time, it is equally instructive when looked at from the comparative point of view".

The Eightfold Path is also called the Middle Path or Way (*Madhyama-pratipad*). Buddha says that enlightenment can be attained by following the Middle Path, which consists of elements such as right views, right thoughts and right concentration. The Middle Path is aptly set forth in the following verse –

*Of all sin the avoidance*

*Of merit the acquisition*

*Of mind the purification*

*This is the Buddha's admonition*.

Buddha says that everything is subject to destruction, everything is full of suffering and everything is substance less. To explain this, he has put forward the history of causation or the law of dependent origination or *Pratityasamutpada*. The term 'Pratityasamutpada' means arising (*samutpada*) after getting (*pratitya*). It means the production of an effect out of a complement of cause and conditions. The law of dependent origination is one of the most
valuable theories in Indian Philosophy and the Whole Universe of Phenomena is subject to it. According to it, life itself is like a wheel of cause and effect. Again, the Buddha says, “That being present, this becomes, from the arising of that, this arises. That being absent, this does not become; from the cessation of that, this ceases”\textsuperscript{10}. Thus, the law of dependent origination applies to the past, the present and the future. It is without beginning or end. It is applicable to all composite entities (\textit{sanskrt\textit{a dharma}), mental and physical. It is not applicable to non-composite entities (\textit{asanskrt\textit{a dharma}). The world is dynamic; not static. The Sarvastivadin says that the cause never perishes but only changes its name, when it becomes an effect, having changed its state. They give example: clay becomes a jar having changed its state, and in this case the name clay is lost and the name jar arises.

\textit{Avidya} or ignorance is the main reason of all our sufferings. From \textit{Avidya} arises the action (the \textit{Sanskara) and from action arises the consciousness and its contact, feeling, craving, grasping birth, suffering, etc. arise one after the other depending on the previous link of the chain of causation. It is known as the twelve links of Dependent Origination –

1. Ignorance (\textit{avidya})
2. Mental formation (\textit{sanskara})
3. Consciousness (\textit{vijnana})
4. Name and form (\textit{namarupa})
5. Six sense organs (\textit{sadayatana})
6. Contact between sense organ and sense object (sparsa)
7. Sensation (vedana)
8. Desire (trsna)
9. Grasping (upadana)
10. Coming into existence (bhava)
11. Birth (Jati)
12. Old age and death (janamarana)

In Early Buddhism, the word 'person' can be used for ordinary purpose, but in ultimate sense person is not other than five aggregates or khandha. As according to stance of Early Buddhism, "The human subject can be deconstructed into these five categories (khandha) without any reminder". Khandha is simply divided into two groups Nama and Rupa. The first khandha is Rupa which stands for matter or materiality, and the next four in the group of the five aggregates (pancakhandha) is termed as Nama. Nama stands for mind. Again, in Buddhist philosophy, Rupa supports the mind or Nama. Nama and Rupa are intermingled and interwoven, and it is by a process of analysis and abstractions that matter can be separated for purpose of understanding.

Rupa stands for 'matter' in Buddhist philosophy. Rupa is made up by primary materiality (bhuta) and secondarily derived materiality. Primary materiality is defined as the dharma which automatically takes its own course on account of being dependent on the four great elements (Mahabhuta).
Vedana is the second khandha. It is the connection with a particular sense organ and its contact with the subsequent object. It includes all kind of feelings and their conditions. So, its functions are to experience the flavor of the object. The third of the five khandha is sanna or perception. It is said to recognize an object that has once been perceived by the mind through the sense as for example perception of various object as blue object, long, short, square object, etc. Sanna is interpretation of the data before these are actually sensed through sense faculties.

Fourth khandha is sankhara or volitions. Sometimes sankhara or volitions are discussed as Cetana. But cetana is a key term that gives special significance to the actions of people and “it cannot in all context be adequately rendered by the English words ‘will’ or ‘volition’”. It is the presence of some of these co-nascent factors that determines the specific and developed function of cetana.

The last khandha is Vinnana and it is commonly translated as ‘consciousness’ but sometimes it seems as ‘cognition’. However vinnana khandha represent the entire formation and its function. In Early Buddhism, the word mind, vinnana (consciousness), citta (mind, consciousness), mano all are interchangeable without any risk of unintentional change of the meaning.

From ancient times in India, besides good, virtue and truth, the term dharma was used to refer to the customs and duties to the social order. In
Buddhism also, it is used with similar meanings. The term *Dharma* (*Dhamma*) comes from the root 'dhr' which means 'to hold or to keep'. So, the term came to mean "that which does not change"\(^{20}\). Buddhists also made the term more liberal. Before the Buddha, the term was used to refer to the Good and the Truth. That which was bad and not good was called 'adharma'. However, Buddhists classified even defilements (*klesa-dharma*) and evils (*papaka-akusaladharma*) as *dharmas*. Thus, a new and broader explanation of *dharma* as an element of existence was developed\(^ {21}\).

The great commentator Buddhaghosa says that the term 'dharma' has five meanings – *desana* (teaching), *pariyatti* (scripture), *hetu* (cause), *guna* (characteristic) and *nissatta* (thing).

First, in the context of the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), *dharma* means "the teaching". It refers to the truth or to *nirvana* that is shown through the Teaching. Second, when *dharma* is used to refer to the nine-fold classification of the Teaching (*navanga-sasana*), it is used in the sense of scripture. The third meaning of *dharma* occurs when it is used in the sense of cause (*hetu*) as in good or evil *dharmas*. Such *dharmas* produce effects. When *dharma* refers to something which is neither good nor evil (*avyakrta*), it is not used in the sense of cause. In the same way, something that was not a real entity might be called as 'preynapti dharma' (expedient *dharma*), but it would not be a *dharma* in the sense of cause. The fourth meaning of *dharma* is characteristic (*guna*). This is found in the list of eighteen characteristics
possessed only by the Buddha (astadasa-avenika buddhadharmah). Finally, the use of dharma to mean 'thing' (nissath) is peculiar in Buddhism, and this does not occur in the Vedas and the early Upanishads. Buddhism regards dharmas as 'unsubstantial'. They are subjected to the law of dependent origination (pratityasamutpada). They are also subjected to the inexorable law of Becoming, appearance and disappearance.

Dharma is sometimes used in the sense of truth or reality. Phrases such as "insight into Dhamma" (dhammavipassana) and 'the eye of Dhamma' (dhamma-cakkhu) are used. Sometimes Dhamma denotes more than mere truth. It signifies the essence of things or the reality. "The way of Dhamma takes the place of the way of the Brahman"\(^\text{22}\). The eightfold path is called the Brahmayana or the Dhammayana. The Dhamma is used as a synonym of the Brahman or the Absolute.

The Early Buddhism maintains that dharmas are the fundamental existence of which Phenomena (such as objects and individuals) are composed. They give example – the five aggregates are considered to be dharma because it is composed of form, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness. However, the aggregates of form (rupa) and mental phenomena (sanskara) can be further subdivided into additional dharmas. Rupa refers to both the body and material objects. For the body, five dharmas refer to the five sense organs – eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. Here, the body refers to the basis of tactile sensation.
The materials of the external world are also divided into five categories that are the objects of sense perception (*panca-visayah*). They are — forms (*rupa*), sounds, smells, tastes and tangible objects. The four basic elements of earth, water, fire and wind are included in the category of tangible objects. Here, *rupa* refers only to visual objects, things with form and colour like blue, yellow, red and white. These elements exist as a *dharma*. The *dharmas* related to the mind were included in the category of mental formations (*samskara*). *Dharmas* such as attention (*manaskara*), intellect (*mati*) and mindfulness (*smriti*) were also enlisted in this group. Attitudes such as belief (*shraddha*) and assiduous striving (*vinya*) influence the mind. Thus, they were considered in this group. Defilements (*klesa*) such as lust (*raga*), hatred (*pratigha*), pride (*mana*), doubt (*vicikitsa*) and wrong views (*drsti*) were *dharmas*. Thirst (*trsna*) and ignorance (*avidya*) were considered to be *dharmas* because they had specific powers of the mind. Thus, we see that *dharmas* were classified according to the five aggregates (*skandha*), the twelve bases (*ayatana*) and the eighteen elements (*dhatu*).

**Buddhist Ethics and Social Ideas**

Buddha’s profound belief of promoting common good and interest, mutual welfare and well-being, nobility of life and its perfection, justifies his great compassion for the humanity. Out of these sublime truths, Buddha evolved a genuine code of ethics and morality, the practical side of his Philosophy in the form of a simple yet practical system of human life. They are
the five noble precepts known as *Pancasila*. This is considered as a basic teaching of Buddha and it is accepted by all schools of Buddhism. The *Pancasila* includes:

1. Not to kill
2. Not to steal
3. Not to tell lies
4. Not to live immoral life
5. Not to consume intoxicants

Buddhism suggests that the best way of human life is the idea of universal order of state with internal unity of its constituent parts, which is based on compassion and non-violence. Without it, the noble aim of world-peace is impossible. The members of the Buddhist community, both laymen and mendicants, observe many ethical rules to conquer temptations. Among these, there are three main rules of Buddhist life. These are –

(i) Chastity (*brahmacharya*)
(ii) Non-possession (*anupadana*)
(iii) Non-violence (*ahimsa*)

For the laity, chastity (*brahmacharya*) consists of being faithful to one's own spouse. But, for the mendicants it means complete abstinence from sexual intercourse. For them, non-possession means not to have any personal belongings other than those permitted in the *Vinaya*. For the laity, it means to live a simple life, to help the poor and to earn as well to protect wealth for the
sake of community. The practice of chastity and non-possession aims at the removal of the craving for sense gratification (*kamatsana*).

The Buddha's disciples were divided into two types — lay believers and mendicants. A layman was called an *upasaka*, and a laywoman was called *upasika*. The term 'upasaka' refers to one who waits upon or serves (another person). Thus, an *upasaka* served mendicants by supplying the items, such as food and robes that they required for their religious lives. The mendicants instructed the lay believers how to practice Buddhism while living as lay devotees.

A male Buddhist mendicant was called a monk (*bhiksu*) and a female Buddhist mendicant was called a nun (*bhikṣuni*). The term "bhiksu" refers to a man who lives by begging. Thus, the *bhiksu* performed the religious austerities, while his requisites were given to him by lay believers. Once a person became a monk by receiving the full ordination (*upasampada*), his life was strictly regulated by the approximately 250 precepts for the monks. The four groups (*catus parisad*) of Buddhist were the monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen.

In Buddhist community, a lay-member learns five precepts. These ‘five precepts’ include —

(i) Abstinence from taking life

(ii) Abstinence from theft

(iii) Abstinence from adultery
(iv) Abstinence from telling lies  
(v) Abstinence from taking intoxicants  

Among these, the first precept inculcates the virtue of non-violence, the second teaches non-possession and the third prescribes chastity. The last two precepts stress the speaking of truth and help to practice the first three rules. The Dhammapada says, “Whoever in the world takes life, speaks untruth, takes that is not given to him, and commits adultery, and a man who is addicted to intoxicant drinks, digs up his own roots in this very world”.

Again, a mendicant member of Buddhism is initiated with ten precepts (dasasila), which are as follows –

1. Abstinence from taking life  
2. Abstinence from theft  
3. Abstinence from sexual intercourse in any form  
4. Abstinence from telling lies  
5. Abstinence from taking intoxicating things  
6. Abstinence from eating at the wrong hour  
7. Abstinence from enjoying vulgar shows such as dancing, singing and instrumental music  
8. Abstinence from using unguents and ornaments  
9. Abstinence from sleeping on a high (luxurious) bed  
10. Abstinence from taking money
The first five precepts of a mendicant member of Buddhism and all of the five precepts of Buddhist laymen are called 'pancasila' or five fold integrity. The other six precepts complete the Buddhist code of morality. These are –

1. Abstinence from slander
2. Abstinence from impolite speech
3. Abstinence from talking senselessly
4. Abstinence from covetousness
5. Abstinence from malevolence
6. Abstinence from false views

These six rules, together with the first four rules of Buddhist laymen and mendicants, are called dasasila or ten-fold integrity. They are found in Hinduism also. In the list of ten-fold integrity, the first three refer to physical actions, the next four to verbal actions and the last three to mental actions. Therefore, the ethical ideology of Buddhism mainly consists of practice of non-violence in action – physical, verbal and mental.

The ethics of ahimsa (non-violence) is the key note of Buddhism. The Dhammika Sutra says, "Let one refrain even from hurting any creature, both those that are strong and those that are tremble in the world". Buddhism states that hatred should be conquered by good. We should be tolerant with the intolerant, mild with the fault-finders, free from passion among the passionate. We should not offend anyone by body, word or thought. A man is not just if he carries a matter by violence; he is just if he leads others, not by violence, but by
law and equity. Non-injury in thought, word and deed, love, goodwill, patience, endurance, and self-purification constitutes the Buddhist morality.

The Buddhist system of mortality does not attach importance to the ideas like a caste, a race, a nation, etc. Its aim is to establish a universal order of mankind. The growth of nationalism on modern times tends to wipe out not only Buddhism but every other movement of world unity.

The Dhammapada says –

"Na tena ariyo hoti, yena panani himsati
Ahimsa sabdapananam, ariyo’ti pavucati”

[One does not become a noble (arya) because one kills living beings.

By non-violence towards all living beings one becomes noble]

Buddhism regards that nobility is attained by perfect non-violence (ahimsa). All wealthy persons are constantly offering sacrifices for attaining heavenly life. They are enjoying here the boons of prosperity. Hence, they are ordinary beings, for they have not cultivated non-violence physically, verbally and mentally. The perfection of non-violence implies the purification of the instinctive life of man and a transformation of his inner life.

The path of purification implies a passage from a condition of disturbance to a condition of peace. He who is free from the delusion of ‘eternity of the self’, the idea of the efficacy of ritualistic actions as well as austerities, and is free
from doubts is called 'srotupanna'. He has entered the stream of life leading to peace. A person who attains this condition is a noble one (Arya).

Lord Buddha says –

"Pathavya eka rajjena, saggassa gamanena va
sabbalokadhipaccena, sotapattiphalani varam"

(Dhammapada Gatha, 178)

["The reward of the first step in holiness is better than the sole sovereignty over the earth, better than going to heaven, and better than lordship over all world"]

A noble person does not come back to the world of men again. In this stage, he is not entirely free from the cravings for the world with form and without form, pride, mental instability and ignorance of the true nature of things. Finally, when these mental fetters are annihilated, he becomes a worthy saint, an arhat. Arhat means a worthy being that has conquered the enemy residing in the mind. This is the highest stage of non-violence. Arhathood is attained by the annihilation of ten fetters. These are –

1. Satkaya –drsti (the idea of self-eternity)
2. Silavrataparamarsa (the idea of efficacy of purification by ritualistic acts as well as by austerity)
3. Vicikitsa (doubts about the triple gem)
4. *Tratigha* (malice)

5. *Kama-raga* (sensuality)


7. *Arupyaraga* (lust of heaven, having no form)

8. *Mana* (pride)

9. *Audhatya* (instability of mind)

10. *Avidya* (ignorance)

The freedom from these fetters is *nirvana*. One can experience this condition in this life and in this body. The Buddha's *dharma* is *ehipasyika*; because it invites everyone to come and see. In Buddhism, there is no sacramental mystery, there is no priest-craft, there is no myth, and there is only truth and the way to the realization of truth.

The concept of *Bodhisattva* is ethical as well as scientific. The material world is governed by the law of dependent origination (*pratityasamutpada*). A *Bodhisattva* thinks that the cause of suffering is in the sufferer and in his surroundings. The Buddhists believe that there is no original sin. By nature, no man is sinful or virtuous. He is free from both sin and virtue like a child just born. Again, the philosophy of rebirth is not responsible for social inequalities such as being rich, poor, noble, lowly etc. Buddhism states that it is not possible to rectify suffering if the cause of the suffering is not present. The two main virtues of a *Bodhisattva* are perfection of wisdom and great compassion (*karuna*). To attain enlightenment a *Bodhisattva* has to practice great kindness leading to non-violence. He must move on the noble path which include the following –
1. **Mindfulness (smrtyupasthana):** One needs to be mindful of the body (kavanusmrti), of sensation (vedananusmrti), of mind (cittanusmrti) and of the state of existence (dharmanusmrti). These help him to realize the impurities within the body and to know the self-delusive and fickle nature of mind.

2. **Right exertion (samayak-prahana):** One should exert rightly to wipe out all present evils (akusal-dharma), and prevent all new evils from arising. One should make a start to perform meritorious deed (kusala-dharma) and then try to develop them.

3. **Bases of psychic abundance (rddhipada):** One should cultivate the habit of determining things through the fourfold basis of psychic abundance – will (chanda), energy (virya), thought (citta) and investigation (mimanisa).

4. **Faculties (indriya) and powers (bala):** One should derive all merit by means of five faculties which are – faith (shradha), energy (virya); awareness (smrti); concentration (samadhi) and knowledge (prajna). These are the chief organs and means for doing meritorious acts. Hence they are called faculties (indriya). Their impact on life is enduring. Therefore they are called powers (bala).
5. Limbs of enlightenment (Bodhyanga): Through moral faculties and powers one attain the limbs of enlightenment namely – awareness (smṛti); investigation of the law (dharma-vicaya); energy (bala); joy (priti); serenity (prāsrabdhī); concentration (Samadhi) and indifference (upeksa).

6. The Noble Path (Arya-marga): Once well equipped with the limbs of enlightenment, one moves on the path of the arhats. The noble eightfold path forms the keynote of the Buddha’s teachings for emancipating oneself from the ills of life. It consists of eight constituents which are –

a. Right view (samyak drṣṭi): The correct understanding of suffering (dukkha); the cause of suffering (dukkha-samudaya); the cessation of suffering (dukkha-nirodha); and the path leading to the cessation of suffering (dukkha-nirodha-gamini-pradpada) is called right view. It is not theoretical speculation which does not lead to dispassion, self-control and peace.

b. Right aspiration (samyak samkalpa): The thought of renunciation of craving (naiskramya) is the right aspiration. The idea of non-violence (ahimsa) is a right aspiration.

c. Right speech (samyak vak): Right speech is free from falsehood, backbiting (paisunya); confusion and senseless words (sambhinnapralapa).
d. **Right action** (*samayak karmanta*): The practice of chastity, abstention from killing, theft and non-violence constitute right action.

e. **Right livelihood** (*samayak ajivika*): The right livelihood is attainable when one gives up all impure means of earning a living, for example, hypocrisy (*kuhana*); boasting (*lapana*); indirect asking (*naimittikata*) and threat (*neispesikata*).

f. **Right effort** (*samayak vyayama*): It consists of constant vigilence, effort and activity which are necessary for self-control, self-restraint, and arrest of evil thoughts, stimulation of good thoughts and a concentration of the mind on universal good. Buddha says, "Let me one make haste on doing good, let me one check one's mind from evil, for if one is slow in doing good, one's mind delights in evil. Let one avoid evil as a merchant possessing great wealth, having few caravan followers avoids a way full of danger. One desirous to live avoids poison."^{25}

g. **Right mindfulness** (*samayak smrti*): A constant vigilance with special reference to the state of mind and body is needed in order to perform good deeds and avoid bad deeds in the right mindfulness. The
teaching of Buddha includes abstinence from all evil, the fulfillment of all that is good, and the purification of mind.

h. Right concentration (samyak samadhi): Right concentration consists of four stages of meditation. In the first stage, one experiences reflection (vitarka); investigation (vicara); delight (priti); bliss (sukha) and tranquility (ekagrata). The second is a state of joy born in deep tranquility, without reflection or investigation. The third is a state of neutral consciousness in which all passions are destroyed. The fourth state is complete tranquility and self-possession in which joy and sorrow are destroyed.

Now we will discuss the relation of Buddhism to the other Indian systems of thought, and indicate the main differences between the Hinayana and the Mahayana Buddhism.

Buddhism and the Upanishads: The Upanishads, indeed, occupy a unique place in the development of Indian thought. These are the original sources of Indian Philosophy as a whole and are regarded as the fountain head of different schools of Indian Philosophy. In fact, these can be termed as the Himalayas of Indian Philosophy. Just as different rivers have their origin in the Himalayas and then flow in different directions; so also, all the schools of Indian thought including Carvaka, Buddhism and Jainism are rooted in and influenced by Upanisadic Philosophy. There are many direct and indirect evidences to prove
that Buddhism has its roots in the Upanishads. The earlier Upanishads reject
the concept of transcendent personal God as the creator of the universe.
Buddhism also rejects the concept of God. The Upanishads stress the
knowledge of the Brahman or the Atman. ‘That thou art’. The individual soul is
identical with the universal soul.

Buddhism is a revolt against ritualism and ceremonialism. It preaches the
religion of ahimsa and universal love and good-will. It inculcates the purity of the
heart, ethical purity and intuition. The Upanishads teach that ignorance (avidya)
is the cause of bondage, because it is the spring of desire. The knowledge of
the identity of the individual soul with Brahman removes ignorance. Buddhism
also holds ignorance as the cause bondage, because it is the cause of craving,
thirst or will-to-live (trsna) which is the root of all desires. The knowledge of the
noble truths, right conduct, right concentration and insight eradicate ignorance
and craving. The Upanishads regard individuality (upadhi) due to ignorance as
the cause of bondage. Individuality is due to manas, buddhi, ahankara, the
sense-organs and the vital forces. Similarly, Buddhism also regards individuality
(upadhi) or the five aggregates (skandhas) or the mind-body complex (nama
rupa) due to ignorance and craving as the cause of bondage. So, both regard
ignorance (avidya) as false knowledge. Again, both believe in the law of karma
and transmigration. The Upanishads believe in the transmigration of the
individual soul (jivatman) from one body to another. Buddhism believes in the
continuity of the individual stream consciousness and transmigration of the last
cognition (Vijnana) to another body appropriate to its moral equipment.
Though there are superficial points of resemblance between the Upanishads and the Buddhism, but they are radically opposed to each other. The Upanishads stress the reality of Brahman, the eternal Absolute. While Buddhism stresses the impermanent Phenomena and rejects the reality of the permanent self and the eternal Brahman. The former advocates eternalism and absolutism while the latter advocates phenomenalism and philosophy of change and flux. Buddhism advocates the doctrine of Pratityasamutpada or dependent Origination which is a form of Astakaryavada. For them the Phenomena are real and produced by their antecedent causes and conditions. However, the Upanishads advocate the doctrine of Vivartavada and suggests that the Phenomena are unreal appearances (Vivarta) of Brahman and that the cause is real but the effect is unreal appearance. Thus, Buddhism is the antithesis of Upanishadic absolutism.

Buddhism and the Samkhya: Both Samkhya and Buddhism are pessimistic in their outlook. Both hold that life is full of suffering and that ignorance is the cause of sufferings. Both regard liberation as total extinction of sufferings. The Buddhists recognize the constant changes in the world process and look upon the world as dynamic. But the Samkhya regards the impermanent phenomena as changes of the gunas-sattva, rajas and tamas which are the eternal substances constituting prakrti. While early Buddhism regards them as impermanent changes with permanent elements of earth, water, fire and air underlying them. The Samkhya regards ignorance as non-discrimination between the eternal self (purusa) and the prakrti and its evolute buddhi in which
it is reflected. However, Buddhism regards ignorance as the false knowledge of the impermanent stream of consciousness and bodily processes as the permanent self or the delusion of individuality. Again, Buddhism regards the group of the five aggregates (skandha) as the self and rejects the eternal self while the Samkhya recognizes the reality of the eternal spirits (purusa).

Both believe in transmigration of the empirical self (jiva). The self limited by the adjuncts of the sense-organs, manas, ahankara and buddhi bearing the impressions of the previous deeds, from one body to another, but the transcendental self (purusa) is not affected by birth and death. Though Buddhism denies the eternal self, yet it believes in the transmigration of the last vijnana of the stream of cognition, modified by the impressions of the previous deeds from one body to another.

The Samkhya regards bondage and liberation as apparent only because it is transcendental. Egoism (ahankar) binds it to prakrti and entangles it in apparent bondage. Similarly, Buddhism regards bondage and liberation as real. Egoism, the delusion of individuality, the sense of “I” and “mine”, due to ignorance, is the cause of suffering and bondage. Ignorance can be destroyed by knowledge of the truth. Buddhism emphasizes good conduct and purity (sīta) along with concentration (Samadhi) and intuition (prajna).

Though the Samkhya and Buddhism are similar to some extent, yet there are important differences between them. The Samkhya believes in the eternal
mutable prakrti and the eternal immutable purusas while Buddhism rejects both of them and recognizes the reality of the impermanent series of psychical and bodily processes and the impermanent world process.

**Buddhism and the Yoga:** The influence of Yoga on Buddhism has been supposed to be potent. The Yoga agrees with Buddhism in pessimistic outlook. The Yoga holds that all is suffering to the discriminating. There is suffering, there is a cause of suffering, there is extinction of suffering and there is a way to stop suffering. So, this resembles the four noble truths of Buddhism. Buddhism considers that ignorance (avidya), which generates egoism and thirst (trsna) for the continuance of individuality, is the cause of bondage. It is destroyed by right knowledge. Like Buddhism, Yoga also holds that ignorance is the cause of suffering.

The Yoga ethics of non-killing (ahimsa); truthfulness, non-stealing, sex-restraint and non-covetousness (yama) which are universal and unconditional duties (sarvabhauma mahavrata) obligatory at all times, in all places, under all circumstances corresponds closely to the Buddhist ethics.

The Yoga ethics of friendship (maitri) for all creatures, joy (mudita) for the virtuous, compassion (karuna) and indifference (upeksa) to the vicious corresponds exactly to the Buddhist ethics of sublime meditations (brahma-vihara). Though the Yoga ethics is ascetic and Buddhist ethics advocates the morality of the middle path between asceticism and hedonism, self-denial and
indulgence, yet there is resemblance between them. The Yoga affections 
(klesa) correspond to the Buddhist defilements (klesa). The term 'citta' and 
'nirodha', 'impermanence', 'impure', misery, not self, etc. occur in both systems. 
Both also recognize the necessity of the five qualities of faith (sraddha), energy 
(virya), recollection (smrti), concentration (Samadhi) and intuition (prajna) for 
trance. Actually both the Yoga and Buddhism give a dynamic view of the 
world.

However, there are certain fundamental differences between the Yoga 
and Buddhism. The Yoga believes in God, the eternal soul (purusa), and the 
eternal prakrti underlying the phenomena of nature while Buddhism rejects all 
these eternal realities. Buddhism rather recognizes the reality of impermanent 
qualities (dhamma) or phenomena - mental and physical.

Again the Yoga advocates Satkaryavada which considers effects as 
modifications (parnama) of the permanent substances, sattas, rajas and tamas. 
While Buddhism advocates Pratityasamutpada or Asatkaryavada which regards 
effects as non-extent in their causes and conditions by which they are 
produced.

Buddhism and Jainism: Both Buddhism and Jainism inculcate the universal 
and unconditional duty of ahimsa and non-killing and non-injury in thought, 
words and deeds. Both enjoy truthfulness, non-stealing, sex-restraint and non- 
covetousness. Both lay down rules of morality for lay disciples and monks and
nuns. Both regard universal good-will and friendship for all creatures, compassion for the distressed, joy for the saints and indifference to vicious persons. Both enjoy meditation and concentration. Both repudiate the authority of the Vedas, deny the existence of God, and recognize the self-existence of the world which is without beginning or end. Actually, both are religions without God. They are the religions of self-help.

Early Buddhist and Jaina writings use a number of common words and expressions though not always in the same sense. Thus, Samavayanga sutra 10 speaks of the five kamagunas which are often referred to in the Nikayas. The term 'Asrava' is common to both literatures though used differently. The idea of past and future Enlightened ones is Buddhist as well as Jaina. The case is similar with the ideal of impermanence of worldly pleasures and the futility of pursuing them. Samsara is, in both systems undesirable, without a first beginning and without a personal creator or controller of destiny. Both systems see the roots of Samsara in an ignorance of true nature of reality, kama and karman. Both, again, are opposed to Ekantadrsti, and stress the importance of Ahimsa and Dhyana. Both regard self-effort as the principal force in spiritual advancement and advocate 'Apramada'.

There are some fundamental differences between the ontology of Jainism and that of Buddhism. Jainism believes in the eternal souls (jiva), while Buddhism rejects them and believes in impermanent streams of consciousness. Buddhism believes in Asatkaryavada, while Jainism believes in Satkaryavada or
Parinamavada. Buddhism believes in impermanent qualities (dhamma) only, while Jainism believes in permanent substances which are partly different from, and partly identical with their qualities and modes. The Buddhist Nirvana is indescribable and ineffable, while the Jaina moksa is the omniscience of the eternal soul attended with infinite bliss and infinite power. Thus early Buddhism is more radically opposed to Brahmanism than Jainism.

Another important difference between early Buddhism and Jainism relates to the nature of karma and transmigration. The former regarded it as a psychological and moral concept, while the latter regard it as a quasi-material substance. Jainism believes that bodily, verbal and mental acts produce subtle karma-matter which envelopes the soul and produces retribution. While Buddhism believes that they produce impressions in the stream of consciousness and bear fruits.

Finally, Buddhist asceticism is self-discipline, while Jaina asceticism is self-mortification. The difference arises, again from the difference in the conception of karma. Buddhists stress on the active aspect of karma as a doing while Jaina stresses the mechanical aspect that comes forward in the karmaphala.

The similarities between early Buddhism and Jainism are thus to be understood as the product of a common cultural milieu, while their differences are attributable.
Buddha’s solutions to human problems were more or less empirical rather than metaphysical. He was not much concerned about metaphysical problems like “existence of soul”, “nature of world and Reality”, etc. He has emphasized on the moral aspects of human conduct. He was not interested in establishing any philosophical system. Hence, he has not built any particular sect or school of thought. But his successors interpreted his teachings differently and subsequently established different philosophical systems. Buddhism, thereafter, came to be divided into two important sects – Hinayana and Mahayana. Hinayana is the small vehicle. It is called Southern Buddhism, since it flourished in Ceylon and Burma. The Mahayana is the great vehicle. It is called Northern Buddhism, since it prevailed in Tibet, China and Japan. Vaibhasika and Sautrantika are two famous schools of Hinayana Buddhism while Madhyamika and Yogacara belong to Mahayana Buddhism.

The origin of the term Mahayana is traceable to an earlier school known as Mahasanghikas. In the Vaisali council certain monks differed widely from the opinion of other monks on some important points of Buddha’s teachings. They interpreted Buddha’s teachings in a broad way. These monks who revolted against narrow minded and selfish monks are called Mahasanghikas because they might have been followed by a majority at the council. These revolutionary monks are denounced as ‘papabhiksu’ (sinful monks) and ‘Adharmavadins’ (propagators of untruth) of Asvaghosa. The word Mahayana is to be found in the Mahayana raddhotpadasastra (Awakening of the faith) of Asvaghosa. Asvaghosa is known as a systematic expounder of the Mahayana school. He
says that there are very few persons who could understand the real implications
and the manifold teachings of the Buddha. “His main aim is to unfold
fundamental teachings of the Buddha as against the errors of layman
(prthagjana) and of the Hinayanists”30.

The Mahayana lays the greatest stress on the conception of Bodhisattva.
Literally the word ‘Bodhi’ in Bodhisattva means enlightenment of transcendental
wisdom. ‘Sattva’ means essence. It means essence of enlightenment or
essence of wisdom i.e. one whose essence is supreme wisdom. A Bodhisattva
is a future Buddha. All human beings are future Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattva
ideal of Mahayanists is protest against ‘Arhatship’ of Hinayana. Arhatship of the
Hinayana is the ideal of individualism while Bodhisattva ideal is universal
enlightenment. A bodhisattva takes four vows to liberate all beings, to destroy
evil passions, to learn the Truth and to teach it to others and to lead all beings
to Buddhahood. He must be full of love and compassion (mahakarunacitta) for
all creatures. He must practice six perfections viz. good conduct (sila),
generosity (dana), patience (ksanti), energy (virya), meditation (dhyana) and
wisdom (prajna).

Bodhisattva is one who is free from his individual desires, passions,
attachment and egoism. He is freed one; he is a mukta or liberated soul. But it
does not mean disappearance of his physical body. He lives and acts for
universal welfare, not for himself but for the upliftment of others. Bodhisattvas
come ahead to help all the needy and helpless people in task of attaining Buddhahood.

The justification of the term Mahayana is as follows:

i. The greatness of the support (Alambana) of vast expense of Buddhist sutra literature.

ii. The greatness of understanding for oneself and making others understand it.

iii. The greatness of two kinds of knowledge i.e. pudgalanairatmya (non-substantiality of soul) and dhamanairatmy (non-substantiality of elements).

iv. The greatness of doing good-deeds constantly at all times.

v. The greatness of not giving up worldly existence and no getting trouble by impurities.

vi. The greatness of complete knowledge of perfect Buddha.

vii. The greatness of the activities of Buddha and seeing again and again, the final enlightenment.

It is generally believed that Hinayana is original Buddhism, which gradually evolved into Mahayana. But this idea is refuted by Asanga in his “Mahayana Sutralankra”. He states, “Real teaching is properly understood by Mahayanists only, and Mahayana is the only real teaching of the Buddha”. The Mahayanist proves that neither religiously nor philosophically can Hinayana be called Mahayana (great vehicle).
However, both Hinayana and Mahayana schools are similar in that enlightenment is the goal of Buddhism. They aim at removal of ignorance and achievement of enlightenment. Both accept that all phenomena are subject to the law of causation. For them, nothing is permanent, everything is impermanent and flux. Hence there is no Being, only Becoming. They support the law of *Karma* which governs moral phenomena and transmigration is possible due to *karma*.

Though Hinayana and Mahayana are similar to some extent, they differ in the following aspects:

1. The Hinayana Buddhism is conservative, whereas the Mahayana is catholic and progressive.

2. The Hinayana regards the Buddha as a historical person, while the Mahayana regards Him as the transcendent, eternal and absolute, who saves all beings through His triple body (*trikaya*) – *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*. Simply, for the Mahayana, Buddha is God.

3. The Main goal of Hinayana is the attainment of *Arhathood* or individual liberation while Mahayana aims at attainment of *Bodhisattvahood* to liberate all.
4. The *Nirvana* of Hinayana is an escape from birth, old age and death. For them, *Nirvana* is completely different from *Samsara*. But Mahayana believes that *Samsara* is not the negation of *Nirvana* which has to be achieved in and through *Samsara*. The former regards *Nirvana* as cessation of transmigration, while the latter regards it as transcendental experience of *Sunyata*.

5. For Hinayana, everyone cannot achieve *Nirvana*: It is meant for only a few ascetics. But, according to Mahayana everyone can achieve *Nirvana*. Every individual potentially carries a bud of Buddhahood from the very beginning. For them, *Nirvana* is nothing but realization of this potentiality which is within us. Thus, everyone is entitled to attain *Nirvana*.

6. The Hinayanist is realistic, whereas the Mahayanist is idealistic. The former believes in the reality of the eternal world and individual minds or stream of consciousness. While the latter believes only in consciousness.

7. The Hinayana believes in the impermanence of all phenomena – physical and mental. While the Mahayana believes in the *Sunyata* or emptiness, which is the *noumena* behind the impermanent phenomena.

*Prajnaparamitas* are known as the first treatise of the Mahayana school of Buddhism. *Astasachasrika prajnaparamita* is known to be the earliest work of this school (200 – 100 B.C.). *Satasahasrika prajnaparamita*,
pancavimastisahasrika, prajnaparamita hrdayasutra are other well known works among the Mahayanists. In Mahayana Buddhism, the word ‘Paramita’ stands for virtues and perfection while ‘Prajna’ stands for wisdom or knowledge. So, Prajnaparamita emphasizes on perfect knowledge. Prajnaparamitas influenced both the Madhyamika and Vijnanavada. The Madhyamika of sunyata and pure consciousness (vijnana) are found in this work. The Mahayanasradhotpadasastra (the Awakening of Faith) of Asvaghosa is another important work which plays a pivotal role in the development of Madhyamika and Vijnanavada. The special contribution of this work to Mahayana school is its absolutistic approach towards Reality.

Another important work on the Mahayana Metaphysics is Lankavatara sutra. The predominant note in the book “is that the Mind-only” (cittamatra) is real, and the external world is not real. The external objects are unreal like illusions, hallucinations and dreams. They are mere imaginary constructions of the mind. The five aggregates (skandhas), the five elements (dhatu), the five sense-organs and the five sensible objects and the intelligible objects are said to be produced. They are nothing but imaginary constructions of the mind. It seems that the Mahayanists took inspiration from the utterances of these works. Some of them emphasized the negative aspect and some of them the positive and thereby established their own schools of thought known as Madhyamika (sunyavada) and Yogacara (Vijnanavada).

In the next chapter, we will discuss in details about these schools.
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