Chapter 2
UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF FAITH

It is indeed true that people belonging to different nations, cultures, races, and religions are coming together in the age of modernization and globalization. This situation has created the possibility of actualization of the concept of one world. However, there is an obstacle in the actualization of the concept of one world and that obstacle is faith.

It is because people belonging to different cultures, different religions have different kinds of faith. These people are proud of their own culture and religion. This sometimes brings in the conflict and unrest in the society. Of course, this is not the only reason that brings unrest and conflict in the society but there is another reason as well. That reason is the controversy between scientists and religious leaders. Scientists as giving importance to rationality accuse the religious leaders who accept the reality of supernatural being. Scientists and religious leaders provide the strong arguments in support of their positions. Thus, this way of adhering with their own positions and having strong faith in what they say is the only truth creates the problems for society as there is always tension between scientists and religious leaders. Besides that, trying to find out the solution for these problems, philosophers have also advocated different positions regarding the faith with a view to solve personal problems such as old age, disease, dying, grief, lamentation, anguish, tribulation, despair and social problems such as conflict between
individuals, different religious leaders, religious leaders and scientists. Accordingly, we have different definitions and interpretations of faith that are used to solve the conflict or tension between different religions and scientists. Hence if we want to change this situation and to establish interfaith dialogue, it is necessary to study the nature of faith. Consequently, many attempts have been made to understand the meaning of faith and its nature in religion as well as in science and philosophy.

Hence, it is necessary to critically evaluate the different definitions and interpretations of faith and further to make an attempt to show that such definitions and interpretations do not help us to solve such conflict, and hence we require another kind of faith that will help us solve such problems and will create the possibility for the actualization of one world and further the actualization of interfaith dialogue.

Generally, the meaning of faith is interpreted as individual's confidence or trust in person or thought. These definitions tell us that, faith is a relational term, that is, faith has two components, namely, believer and the object. Hence, when we try to understand the nature of faith, it is necessary to know the nature of the individual who has faith and the nature of a person or thought in which the individual has faith.

Furthermore, nature of faith is determined in the field to which it belongs. For example, the nature of the religious faith is quite different from the nature of the scientific faith because the religious faith is associated with devotion while the scientific faith is associated with reason and experience.

It is also necessary to see why an individual has faith in a particular person. It is because in order to have confidence in that person, serious doubt is necessary. The serious doubt motivates inquiry. Then, the inquiry makes the individual acquainted with that person. This kind of inquiry enables the individual to evaluate whether the faith of an individual is a blind faith or not. Hence, his reason permits him to have faith in that person or not. Therefore,
when we try to understand the concept of faith, it is necessary to consider all these points. The study of the concept of faith in Buddhism is not an exception to this.

Gautama Buddha has made an attempt to solve the problem of suffering that comes to human life. According to the Buddha, ignorance, craving, and grasping are the major causes of suffering (see infra, p. 220). The Buddha further said that by eradicating them one could make oneself free from suffering and attain nirvāṇa. The Buddha also advocated that, ignorance, craving, and grasping could be eliminated through the realization of the Four Noble Truths that he had preached. However, if we are interested to attain nirvāṇa, it is necessary for us that we should have faith in the Buddha and his teachings. Without having faith in the Buddha one cannot become a follower of the Buddha. Naturally, understanding the nature of faith is the crux of understanding and internalizing the thoughts of Buddhism.

Let us see whether the available definitions and interpretations of the word ‘faith’ in the extended literature on faith are useful to understand the concept of faith in Buddhism. While doing this exercise, we will discuss two points. Firstly, we will see what are the meanings and interpretations of faith in extended literature. Secondly, we will see whether they are useful for us for understanding the Buddhist concept of faith.

2.1. Different Meanings of Faith

Concept of faith is mainly related to the religious sphere. Hence many times, the different meanings of faith are given with reference to religion. Different

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20 According to Theravāda Buddhism, there are two kinds of nirvāṇa, namely, (1) the lifetime or partial (sopādhiśēsa) nirvāṇa is annihilation with some residual substratum and (2) the lifeless or final (nirupādhiśēsa) nirvāṇa is annihilation without any residue. See Kv. II.11. S. Z. Aung & C. A. F. Rhys Davids, trans., Points of Controversy or Subjects of Discourse: Being a Translation of the Kathavatthu from Abhidhamma Pitaka (London: PTS, 1979) 136-8. Th. Stecherbatsky, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, Part II (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999) 193.
scholars have defined faith in different ways. Accordingly, there are various meanings of faith. Generally, faith can have any of the following meanings: belief, hope, trust, dependence, faithfulness, and obedience.

2.1.1. Faith as Belief

Faith is conventionally defined as belief. In this sense, faith is a mental attitude of man towards a proposition that may not be rational. Hence, faith as belief is accepted as one of the most important components of religion.\(^{21}\)

Madan and Mujumdar while elaborating the origin and nature of primitive religion have pointed out that, there are two components of religion, namely, belief and practice.\(^{22}\) Primitive people were not aware of the reasons behind the natural phenomena, such as the cycle of seasons, day and night, months, years, heavy rains, drought, lightning, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and so on. They thought there can be a supernatural being or power that controls these natural phenomena and the life of man. It is because of this that they have love, fear, and respect for such power. They expressed their feelings by performing the rites and rituals. This ritualism is called practice.

In short, an individual's non-rational feeling towards the supernatural being or any principle is called belief. Let us see whether this meaning of faith can be used to explain the nature of the Buddhist faith. Gautama Buddha while talking about the suffering that comes to human life has said that, man himself is responsible for his suffering and also removal of suffering.\(^{23}\) It means the Buddha does not accept any supernatural being or any principle

\(^{21}\) According to Dewey Hoitenga, belief manifests itself as a mental attitude on the one hand and on the other hand as an object of mental attitude. When the belief manifests as an object of a mental attitude, it is a proposition, i.e., whatever the believer believes in, and when the belief manifests as a mental attitude, it is an attitude towards a proposition. Dewey Hoitenga, *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga* (USA: University of New York Press, 1991) 17.


\(^{23}\) See Dh. vv. 1, 2; S. Radhakrishnan, ed. & intr., *The Dhammapada* (Delhi: Oxford India Paperbacks, 1996) 58-9.
that controls the life of man and whatever that happens in his life; similarly, the Buddha has protested the rites and rituals that were performed in order to propitiate and to please the supernatural being. It is because, according to the Buddha, the belief in the supernatural being or power is irrational, and further, it is not related to our experience.

If this is the case, how faith in Buddhism can be defined as belief. Hence, with the help of this definition, it is impossible either to understand the concept of faith in Buddhism or to define faith in Buddhism as belief.

2.1.2. Faith as Hope

Faith is defined as hope with reference to religious attitude. This definition tells us that faith is a positive attitude of man towards his future. For example, an individual who has hope thinks that, although at present it is impossible for him to achieve the goal, in future the goal may be achieved. This means that, he has hope that he will be successful in the future.

Solomon has defined that, hope is a passive anticipation of a positive fortune, which is beyond one’s own control but always possible. In the case of hope, an individual believes that situation may be changed. According to Muyskens, hope is rationally justifiable, because one can provide the evidence to prove his belief. So, the difference between hope and belief is that, while belief may not be rationally justifiable hope is always rationally justifiable.

In short, an individual’s positive attitude towards his future is hope. And if we accept faith is hope in this sense then we have to accept that faith means passive anticipation of positive future.

Let us see whether this meaning of faith can be used to explain the nature of the Buddhist faith. Though hope is rationally justifiable and talks about the possibility for positive future, it does not give us guarantee that the positive future will come into existence. On the contrary, the Buddha gives a guarantee for the removal of suffering. According to the Buddha, if one’s ignorance (avidyā), craving (trṣṇā), and grasping (upādāna) are eradicated, then he realizes the extinction of suffering (duḥkha-nirodha) that is the state of nirvāṇa. The Buddha further said that, it is possible for man to achieve nirvāṇa during his very own life. The Buddha asserts this fact; hence, faith in Buddhism cannot be understood and interpreted in terms of hope.

2.1.3. Faith as Trust

Faith is defined as trust. In this sense, faith is a mental attribute when an individual has a strong belief in the providential care of a supernatural being. According to Martin Luther, to have a faith in God is nothing else than to trust and believe in him with one’s whole heart. It means we do not have doubt in someone in whom we have trust. We have a guaranty that, whatever is said by that person is always reliable. Thus, the individual may have faith in a supernatural being only when he trusts and believes in such being.

For example, some people presuppose a pattern of divine guidance on the basis of their past experience to make them safe and conclude that, there would be a continuity of such guidance in the future. Once the basis of such pattern is established the trust in divine guidance develops. Trust implies that the vicissitudes of the moment could not undermine the confidence, and thus ultimately the object of that trust would be justified. Therefore, many of the conventional figures of the divine in the various traditions, for

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example, river, mountain, rock, tree, creature, moon, sun, and so on, have served as the divine objects, which would prove worthy of human trust. The maintenance of religious practices like divination, worship, sacrifice, and prayer can be called as the expressions of the trust in the supernatural being that controls everything and has a concrete plan for the future.

Thus, the definition of faith as trust tells us that, faith is an unconditional expectation on the reliability of divine providence. Hence, it could be said that, trust in something or somebody is like a presupposition that somebody can control everything and has a concrete plan for the future. However, we do not have evidences for such presupposition; and hence, it is inconclusive. It lacks the details of its specific intent and might not be discernible at any given moment. Consequently, such presupposition is difficult to be conceived on scientific ground. That is why Immanuel Kant advised that, the man should not accept the propositions like that the world has a beginning or the world has no beginning.\textsuperscript{29}

The definition of faith as trust is unable to interpret the nature of the Buddhist faith. This is because the Buddhist faith is not mere trust in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. Mere trust in the Three Jewels does not enable the individual to attain nirvāṇa but in addition to this, the individual has to take the efforts for the spiritual training, that is, the training of Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā. It means that, the trust in the Three Jewels shows the way for nirvāṇa and by following their guidance, the individual has to follow the way. In other words, the trust in the Buddha as well as his Dharma does not give liberation or make any individual free from his suffering, because the Buddha is merely a guide and his Dharma is the way, which leads to the extinction of suffering (duḥkha-nirodha). Mere trust in the Buddha does not make an individual self-confident and also does not make him spiritual.

independent. Hence, defining faith in terms of trust is totally contrary to the nature of the Buddhist faith.

2.1.4. Faith as Dependence

Faith is defined as dependence. According to this definition, we may say that, faith is spiritual or psychological dependence of individual on a supernatural being. Vasudha Narayanan, while elaborating the definition of “devotion,” stated that the devotee often expresses total dependence upon his idol by feelings, attitudes, gestures, or acts of submission. Likewise, Schleiermacher defined faith in God is “nothing but certainty about the feeling of absolute dependence as such – that is, as conditioned by a being posited outside us, and as expressing our relationship to that being.”

In some religious traditions, where the supernatural being is seen as creator or preserver, the theory of dependence is an interpretation of the origin and derivation of man and of the world. As Migliore and Calvin have opined that, the world as a whole and all existences are radically dependent on God; God is creator and that all creatures are his creations. Every moment of our experience is his gifts. He let us live and die, let his wisdom and will preside in all our actions, let every part of our lives be directed. Accepting such theory is the affirmation of the dependence of human being on God. It shows the helplessness of man.

Faith in Buddhism is neither psychological dependence nor the spiritual dependence. Accepting faith as dependence is contrary to the nature of the

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Buddhist faith; because the faith in Buddhism gives in individual’s mind rise to self-confidence and effort. The Buddha advised his disciples that, they must use all opportunities with all their abilities to practice the Dharma, to improve themselves. Further, the Buddha assured that, people should live as islands unto themselves, as refuges unto themselves, take none other as their refuge; live the Dharma as their island, with the Dharma as their refuge, take none other as their refuge. The Buddha said that, if an individual takes enough effort, then he can attain nirvāṇa. In order to attain nirvāṇa, anybody’s help or regress is not required. Hence, the definition of faith as dependence is unable to explain the nature of the Buddhist faith.

2.1.5. Faith as Faithfulness

Faith is defined as faithfulness. According to some scholars, faith means faithfulness. Stephen, while elaborating the definition of “believe,” has said that, faithfulness is a psychological attribute of human nature, which is characterized as the reciprocal fidelity or loyalty and has carried over into its use for the relationship between idolater and idol. As an attribute of an idol, faithfulness is trustworthiness, constancy, and dependability. The faithfulness of an idol is reflected when he keeps his word with whom he has made commitments, and particularly, when he acts on behalf of his idolaters. As an attribute of idolater, faithfulness is dependence on, trust, and belief in an idol. The faithfulness of an idolater is reflected when he appeals to an idol’s faithfulness for help.}

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Faithfulness is also interpreted as mental attitude of an individual towards a faithful divine. In this regard, Pelikan explained, wherever the divine promises on something in the relationship between him and human, the faithfulness of the divine is a witness for him to keep and fulfil the promise. Conversely, the faithfulness of human is an appropriate term for them to have loyalty. Therefore, the consequences of faithfulness gradually formed the basis for practices of discipline, punishment as well as reinstatement, purgation of many religious traditions. Pelikan concluded that, the definition of faith as faithfulness pertains to the concept of adhering to the practices, structures, obligations, or beliefs of any particular way of having faith.\footnote{35 See Jaroslav Pelikan, “Faith,” Encyclopedia of Religion, vol. 5, eds. Lindsay Jones, et al. (USA: Thomson Gale, 2005) 2955a.}

The definition of faith as faithfulness is also unable to interpret the nature of the Buddhist faith. This is because the Buddha did not give promise to any individual that, he will give nirvāṇa or salvation to him, but he did preach the Truths, whether there is an arising of the Buddhas or not arising of the Buddhas, the Truths still persist.\footnote{36 See S. 11.25; C. A. F. Rhys Davids, trans., The Book of the Kindred Sayings, vol. 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005) 21; A. 1.286; E. M. Hare, trans., The Book of the Gradual Sayings, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006) 264.} According to Buddhism, the Buddhists do not expect nirvāṇa or salvation but they liberate themselves from the world of becoming, disease and suffering through realizing the Truths. In this regard, the meaning of faithfulness does not reflect the nature of the Buddhist faith. It, therefore, cannot be used to define faith in Buddhism.

2.1.6. Faith as Obedience

Faith is also defined as obedience. This definition tells us that faith is the individual’s psychological attribute that links individual’s action to a concrete purpose. Milgram asserted that, obedience is the dispositional cement that
binds men to an authority or a management system; a prepotent impulse overriding training in ethics, sympathy, and moral conduct.\textsuperscript{37}

With respect to the ordinary purposes, the obedience points to the constant and necessary relationship between people and management or political systems. William Meninger in The Committed Life says that, "a suspicious, mistrustful, disobedient attitude is often the result of pride. People with this attitude are often unpleasant and difficult to work with."\textsuperscript{38} Milgram, therefore, argued that, obedience is a basic element in the structure of society, which should be cultivated by the individual on the one hand, and on the other hand the requirement of all communal livings, the system of authority, which is of only those who are dwelling in isolation, not to be forced to respond through defiance or submission, to command others.\textsuperscript{39} In relation to religious purposes, obedience carried both ritual and moral connotations. Obedience is recognized as the faithfulness in respect of moral behaviour in conformity with divine commands. Meninger assumed that, "obedience for the sake of the well-being of our society and personal lives is obedience to God, who graces us with this virtue to facilitate the practice of charity through the tranquility of order."\textsuperscript{40} Voluntary obedience to a command, therefore, presents conditions of the affection and conation, but it lacks the cognitive basis in both ordinary and religious spheres.

According to Buddhism, an action is correct if and only if it is in accordance with propriety or right action (\textit{samyak-karm\=anta}). The Buddha has advised his disciples should abandon the qualities that are unskilful,

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\item \textsuperscript{39} See Stanley Milgram, \textit{Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View} (London: Harper & Row, 1974) 1.
\item \textsuperscript{40} William A. Meninger, \textit{The Committed Life: An Adaptation of the Introduction to the Devout Life by St. Francis De Sales} (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003) 91.
\end{itemize}
blameworthy, and are criticized by the wise.\textsuperscript{41} Further, those qualities once are adopted and carried out, lead to harm and to suffering. On the contrary, man should have those qualities that are skilful, blameless, and are praised by the wise. Further, those qualities once are adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and happiness. That is the Buddha has advised that, an individual has either to cultivate good or eradicate bad qualities on the basis of his reason and experience. Hence, the definition of faith as obedience, therefore, cannot be used to define faith in Buddhism.

In this way, we have seen how the word ‘faith’ has been defined in various ways. However, as we have seen, these meanings are incongruous with the concept of faith in Buddhism. Buddhism accepts that, there are two kinds of faith, namely, the good faith and bad faith. The faith that is adopted in Buddhism is the rational faith (mūlikā-śraddhā) that arises from the acknowledgment of true nature of its objects with reference to the three aspects of consciousness, namely, cognition, affection, and conation. It can be said that, the rational faith is based on experience, understanding supported by good reasons, intellectual evaluation or questioning. The kind of faith that is discarded in Buddhism is the irrational faith (amūlikā-śraddhā), which is based on revelation. The man who has this kind of faith does not have a clear and comprehensive understanding of its reality and cannot understand the nature of the objects in which he places his faith.

This critical analysis of different meanings of faith tells us that, with the help of these meanings, it is impossible to comprehend the real nature of the Buddhist faith. Hence, it is necessary to understand the concept of faith in Buddhism by studying every context in which the word ‘faith’ occurs. We will take this task in the next chapters. Like the different meanings of faith,

there are different interpretations of faith that are available to us through literature. Now we will see whether these interpretations are useful for us to understand the Buddhist concept of faith or not.

2.2. **Different Interpretations of Concept of Faith**

Every human being, independent of considerations, whether he is scientist or religious man, has faith. Faith is inseparable part of his personality. Although this is the case, the faith of a scientist is quite different from the faith of a religious man. This is because their ways of understanding and interpretations are quite different from each other. Let us see how scientists, religious leaders, and philosophers interpret the faith.

2.2.1. **Faith from the Religious Perspectives**

To study the nature of the Buddhist faith, we need to investigate the nature of religious faith in the development of social life. In this way, let us investigate into two kinds of religion, namely, religion of primitive people and religion of civilized people.

2.2.1.1. **Faith from the Perspective of Primitive Religion**

The primitive religion means religion of the primitive people. It is also called animism. The primitive religions were conceived by Tylor as the belief in spiritual beings. The souls and the spirits can be considered as those of a supernatural being but need not be conceived as the souls of dead men.\(^{42}\)

Such primitive religions affected the tribal culture; they also moulded the personality of the primitive people. Hence, the primitive people try to

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relate every event that occurs in their private and social life to religion. Tribal life was associated with the nature and depended on nature. The primitive people, therefore, were attracted by the beauty and variations that they observed in nature on the one hand, and on the other hand they were afraid of natural calamities, such as drought, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and other natural phenomena. They had different sorts of feelings about the nature. For example, they had love, reverence and awe with nature. It means that, the primitive people, without scientific knowledge, were unable to understand the reasons behind natural calamities. Therefore, they believed that, there is a supernatural power or being that controls over all things in the world and their lives.

Although this faith of the primitive people in the supernatural being played an important role in their social and moral life, it could not be defended by good reasons. Furthermore, the rationality behind this speculation is not logical. In this regard, the faith of the primitive people is interpreted as blind faith.

Therefore, with this perspective, it is impossible to comprehend the nature of the Buddhist faith. This is because although it is true that people who have faith in the Buddha and his Dharma become Buddhists, and their social, moral, and economic lives are determined by such faith; this faith not developed in them out of love, reverence and awe with regards to the Buddha and his Dharma, its nature is totally rational and comprehensible. Hence, from the primitive religious perspective, the study of faith in Buddhism is not acceptable.

2.2.1.2. The Civilized Religious Perspectives on Faith

It is not the case that only the primitive people have faith in the supernatural being but the civilized and educated people also has faith in the supernatural
being. However, their concept of supernatural being is specific. It is reflected in their idea of God. Prophetic religions, for example, believe that, God is omniscient and omnipresent; there is the breath of God in man. Therefore, the idea of God is very important in shaping one’s life. Many people believe that whatever that happens in their lives are caused by the will of God. They believe God in many forms, such as father, mother, doer, creator, and so on. Then they try to relate themselves with God. Although these are some of the common features that are found in the civilized man’s faith in God, the people from different religions advocate different natures of God. Correspondingly, we have different religions in civilized society. Some of them are as follows: Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and so forth. Let us see the nature of faith in these religions.

a. Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the ancient religions in the world. Although it is rooted in the Vedic culture, it has developed and grown by reinterpreting its religious traits according to the changing situations and the contexts.

In Hinduism, there are many gods, goddesses, and deities. Among these, some gods and goddesses are supreme and some are subordinate. For example, god Śankar is accepted as supreme in Śaivism while goddess Śakti is accepted as supreme in Śāktism. It is accepted that subordinate gods and goddesses help the supreme gods or goddesses. For example, when god Śankar plays his roles, god Viṣṇu and goddess Śākti help him. It means god Śankar is supreme and god Viṣṇu and goddess Śākti are subordinate. This kind of gradation changes according to different cults. Max Müller\(^{43}\) has described this kind of faith in Hindu religion as henotheism. Henotheism is the reconciliation of polytheism and monotheism. Like monotheism, henotheism believes in

the existence of one god who is prime; and like polytheism, it accepts that there are many gods and goddesses, but they are subordinate. It is because of this kind of faith in God that Hinduism is called polytheistic, monotheistic.

Hinduism accepts that, God is the creature, maintainer, and destroyer of this world. He has created this world for the sake of his play. God is Sarvajña and all pervading. It advocates that every human being is ignorant because of which he has bondage, and consequently, he has to follow the cycle of birth and death. Man can make himself free from the bondage and the cycle of birth and death by attaining moksha or liberation. However in order to get moksha, the graces of God are required, because it is possible only through the grace of God.

Now let us see whether this kind of faith in Hinduism provides us a framework for understanding the nature of the Buddhist faith. When we try to evaluate the nature of the Hindu faith, we find basically three characteristics; first is (1) Hindus believe in God, (2) they believe that everything that happens in human life is according to the will of God, and (3) such faith is determined by the authority of the Vedas (see infra, p. 65). This kind of faith in Hinduism makes the individual dependent. It does not allow the individual to behave according to his will. Hence, although an individual takes enough efforts for liberation and to make himself free from suffering he could not get success. That is because everything is dependent on the grace of God.

Here somebody may raise the question that, if the Buddhists have faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha then is it not a blind faith? Answer to this question is no. That is because in the Kesaputtiya-sutta the Buddha advises that, one should not accept any teachings out of respect for the Teacher but rather out of investigation and experimentation. It means that, although

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the Buddhists have faith in the Buddha, their faith is determined by their personal experience and their own intelligent analysis (see *infra*, p. 72).

Furthermore, the Buddha does not make an individual dependent rather he makes them independent, which creates confidence in the individual’s mind. Hence, the concept of faith in Hinduism does not help us to understand the nature of the Buddhist faith.

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**b. Jainism**

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of India, which was revived by a lineage of the twenty-four enlightened ascetic leaders called Tirthankaras. The first Tirthankara was Risabhdeva and the twenty-fourth Tirthankara was Vardhamana Mahavira who lived, according to generally accepted dates, from 599 to 527 BCE.\(^45\)

Jainism is an atheistic religion, because it, in difference from other civilized religions, does not believe in God. It gives importance to the moral and spiritual purity of the individual in order to elevate people to the stage of perfection and Saint-hood. Although Jainism does not believe in God, it believes in Saint-hood that a man can attain by following the path of moral and spiritual discipline and by worshiping the Teachers.\(^46\)

Jainism believes in the theories of *karma, sāṃsāra*, and *mokṣa*. It holds that, *karma* is the consequence of all activities, which determines a life after death. *Sāṃsāra* is in the chain of birth and rebirth or the transmigration of the soul from the old body to a new one. And *mokṣa* is the final stage of liberation of the soul from the bondage of *karma* or the chain of birth and rebirth. Jainism states the right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct

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known as Three Jewels collectively provide the path for attaining *mokṣa*. Among these Three Jewels, right faith tops the order of Jewels, because without faith an individual cannot have the right knowledge, and then he cannot perform the right conduct. So, the order of these Three Jewels is fixed. Thus, the importance of faith in Jainism is that, it makes making man morally and spiritually pure. Furthermore, Jainism has elaborated eight essential characteristics of faith, namely, (1) absence of doubt, (2) absence of desire, (3) absence of disgust, (4) absence of faith in false values and ideas, (5) non-publicity of one’s own merits and other people’s shortcomings defaults, (6) helping others to keep on the right path or the straightening of the faltering, (7) deep affection for the righteous, and (8) the glorification of the creed, especially by one’s own righteous example.

Now let us see whether this kind of faith in Jainism provides us a framework for understanding the nature of the Buddhist faith. When we try to re-evaluate the characteristics of faith in Jainism we see that, firstly, faith means not having doubt; secondly, faith means clear and unconfusing vision. Although it tells us that faith in Jainism means not having doubt and it further means a clear and an unconfusing vision, it does not tell us how to remove the doubt from that mind and how to make the vision clear and unconfusing. Thus, it indirectly tells us that not having doubt means to accept the thoughts in the scriptures without critical scrutiny. It seems that, the Jainism accepts scriptures blindly. Consequence of this kind of faith is that an individual follows the right conduct because they are rules and rules, which cannot be broken. If individual breaks the rule, he is punished. Hence, it could be said that acceptance of this kind of nature of faith has made the Jain extremists. And it is because of this that Jain concept of faith is different

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47 See Hopkins 285.
from Buddhism. The Buddha has taught the Middle Path. He has also said that in every time avoid extreme positions, follow the Middle Path. Naturally, if we accept the nature of the Jain faith, we are unable to justify the thoughts of the Buddha.

Although the concept of faith in Jainism does not help us to understand the nature of the Buddhist faith, it is still a way of ethical life in the boisterous society. It plays an important role in inhibiting man from environmental extermination, speculation, and abusive exploration of natural resources. Of course, we are not interested to discuss this issue.

c. Judaism

Judaism is known as the religion of the Jews, which is based on a revelation made to Moses Maimonides, an Egyptian. The exact date of Judaism is a contemporary scholarly request. The Jews believe that their ancestors came from Ur in Sumeria about 2200 BCE. According to Kahler, the ominous date of 586 BCE, the time of the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, was in fact the historical birth date of true Judaism.

The Judaists have pure faith in God. They believe that God is the creator of the world and all living beings; he is the sole causal agent in the world. He recompenses those who keep his commandments and punishes those who transgress his commandments. The Judaists also accept the words of prophets as true.

The nature of the Jewish faith is expressed in thirteen articles that were regarded as fundamental principles of Jewish religion. It is pointed out in the first, the second, and the eleventh articles, the Jews were themselves obliged to confess that, they believe with perfect faith that, God who is the

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creator of all creatures, and that he has wrought all things, works, and shall work for ever; the creator is one, and that such a unity as in him can be found in none other; and that he alone has been their God, is, and forever shall be; God will recompense good to them that keep his commandments and will punish them who transgress them. Furthermore, the Jews take the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) to be the law of God, concretely, it is pointed out in the sixth, the seventh, and the eighth articles, the Jews were obliged to confess that, they believe with perfect faith that, all the words of the prophets are true; the prophecies of Moses were true; that he was the father and chief of all wise men who lived before him or shall live after him; all the law, which on this day is found in our hand, was delivered by God himself to Master Moses.\footnote{See Robert Adam, The Religious World Displayed: A View of the Four Grand Systems of Religion, Judaism, Paganism, Christianity, and Mohanmedism, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne and Co., 1809) 17-8; K. N. Tiwari, Comparative Religion (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 105-6.}

In a nutshell, Judaism accepts that God is one, and he has created everything in the world, including religion and human personality. So everybody has to follow the law of God. If somebody does not follow rules of conduct contained in the law of God, he will be punished. Judaism further accepts the prophet as a father and chief of the wise man. The prophet always speaks the truth.

Now let us see whether this kind of faith in Judaism provides the framework for understanding the nature of the Buddhist faith. When we evaluate this kind of faith in Judaism, we see that it advocates the authority of God and prophet. Every individual has to follow the law of God. It means that, man follows the rules of conduct contained in that law not out of will, but a consequence of persuasion and dread. Thus, the existence of man is neglected in Judaism.
Buddhism does not accept the existence of God as a creator who is omniscient and has the right to reward or punish others, and further, especially in the Mahāyāna tradition, gods and goddess are accepted in Buddhism not because they will reward or punish people, but because they are morally good. They are considered as the Bodhisattvas who resolve to protect the truth in order to liberate human being from the suffering. Whether people manifest themselves as morally good or bad acts, Buddhism gives full freedom to them. Thus, within this framework of faith in Judaism, it is not appropriate to understand the nature of the Buddhist faith.

d. Christianity

Christianity started in the beginning of the Common Era when the doctrine of Christianity was preached by Jesus Christ and a group of his faithful followers, who were seen as heretics within the context of Judaism.  

Christianity believes that there is only one Supreme God. It accepts that, there are three theological virtues, namely, faith, hope, and charity, which are interpreted and applied as directing man to God. These virtues are regarded as the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate and give Christianity its special character. Faith is an initial virtue. Faith precedes hope, and hope precedes charity. Charity precedes all virtues. Faith in God, therefore, is seen as a major virtue of the Christian tradition. The Christians need it in order to follow the road to Heaven. In the Christian tradition there have been various views on faith. A major constituent of faith, on most of the views, is “belief that” or “propositional belief.” The man who has faith in

52 See Emil Waler, New Discoveries in the Origin of Christianity (Baltimore, 1900) 9.
God, he believes that, there is a God and believes certainly in his proposition that there is a God.\textsuperscript{54}

In Christianity, Jesus is treated in various forms. He is so often regarded as the “Son of God” and the true image of God, therein he is messiah carrying his true image to men. He is also taken as the incarnation of God to give people the true divine message. Like Judaism, Christianity is also a revealed religion. Jesus himself is regarded as a manifestation of God, so that belief in Jesus is to believe in God.\textsuperscript{55} Jesus’ teachings, therefore, are the true divine message imparted to men. Man is created by God in the latter’s own image and so potentially man is great. But he has degenerated into sin by misusing the free will granted to him by God. Committing Original Sin by the first man Adam is the root cause of man’s suffering. Sin is nothing but disobedience to God. Nevertheless, God being essentially kind and loving wants man’s redemption and it is for this purpose that he sent Jesus on earth to educate people on proper lines. Thus, Jesus is the redeemer of man.\textsuperscript{56}

When we evaluate the faith in Christ, we see that it accepts man as a sinner. Man is a sinner because he disobeyed the God. It is because of this sin that man suffers in his life. And through the education of Jesus, a man can follow the proper way. This kind of faith in Christ does not provide us the framework for understanding the nature of the Buddhist faith. This is because Buddhism accepts that, it is the nature of man, that is the cause of human suffering, and that is the cause for his nirvāṇa. As Buddhism accepts that uncontrolled and unlimited trṣṇā of man gives rise to suffering and eradicated of this trṣṇā gives rise to nirvāṇa. Hence, if an individual wants


to free himself from suffering, he himself has to eradicate the trṣṇā. It means, Buddhism makes the individual independent and gives dignity to man, but there will be no such dignity and independence among Christians.

e. Islam

Islam was founded by Prophet Muhammad, who was called by his followers as the messenger (Rasul) of God (Allah). Muhammad was born in Arabia in the year 570 CE, during that time, Arabia was a land of polytheism. Muhammad preached his revelation as a religion of strict monotheism and a life of rigorous discipline devoid of any ritualism of idolatry at the age of forty.⁵⁷

Islam is a monotheistic religion, because it believes in one God, that is, Allah. It is totally opposed to polytheism, ritualism, idolatry, and priesthood. However, it venerates and believes in the reality and authenticity of prophets who are regarded as carrying the message of Allah to people.

Islam admits that Muhammad is the last, the greatest and the mightiest among prophets as Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, and his message is to be respected by all.

Islam believes in the sacredness and authoritativeness of Quran and takes that among many scriptures such as the Torah of the Jews, the Gospel of Jesus. Quran is the greatest and the most sacred. The Quran repeatedly reminds that man and around things are created by Allah.

Islam also expresses many other objects of faith, such as the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and so on. It comes to preach against the prevalent vices at the time of Muhammad in Arabia, in other words, to preach a holy war (jihad) against all those who are unbelievers. Jihad thus


In Islam, faith means belief in Allah, who is one, omniscient and omnipotent. He has created the world. One can realize this God only through Prophet Muhammad. According to Islam, everyone ought to surrender his whole life to God and to obey the laws of God. Islam further states that, an individual’s faith in God is reflected in the corresponding action of man. This action is expressed by four acts as follows:

1. To pray five times every day;
2. To observe fasting during the holy month of Ramadan;
3. To make a pilgrimage to Mecca; and
4. To give alms to the poor.

By performing these actions, a Muslim realizes his final destiny.

Islam believes in God, angels, prophets, and this belief or faith is expressed in action. When we evaluate the concept of faith in Islam, we find basically three characteristics; firstly, it has faith in God, which is not determined by reason. Secondly, it has faith in ritualism as it is believed that practising the four acts as above is leading towards the realization of destiny. Once man follows the ritualism then there is no room for the view that he may be better grounded and in a sense more rational. Thirdly, it has faith in Prophet, that is, an individual cannot have direct contact with God, but he can keep contact with God through Prophet. However, this Prophet may misguide the individual.

These characteristics show that, Islam does not accept independent existence of man. This kind of faith is not acceptable in Buddhism because
Buddhism is not only against God and blind faith, but it is against ritualism. Hence, the framework of faith in Islam is not useful to understand the nature of Buddhist faith.

2.2.2. Faith from the Perspectives of Philosophy of Religion

Philosophy of religion attempts to think deeply about the questions in religious faith, such as “Is there a God?” “What is the reason to have faith in God?” “Which is the God should be believed in?” While thinking about these questions, the philosophers of religion advocate different points of view. Accordingly, there are three major thoughts in philosophy of religion, namely, theism, atheism, and agnosticism.

2.2.2.1. Interpretation of Faith from the Perspective of Theism

The philosophers who advocate this thought believe that, there is God. God is an eternal, all pervading. God has knowledge of everything. God has all auspicious qualities. God is the creator of all things. God has imparted a large extent of inherent power for creating the world and all creatures. God is omniscient and omnipresent though without a body.

According to them, faith in God is for the benefit of society, disbelief in God is essentially dangerous for the social culture. According to Plato, religion is above all based upon rational convictions, on intellectual beliefs, on truths. A life aimed at salvation takes the form of a rational inquiry, a philosophical life. Reason, as well as soul, is found in the universe due to the action of God. According to Aquinas, faith is the first of the theological

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virtues, in the sense that its act is generated first and is the foundation for acts of hope and charity. He asserted, “Faith is not salvation, but without faith, one would not reach one’s end in God.”

The idea of faith in God for the benefit of human society is a vague intention. This is because, on the one hand, the basis of this kind of faith is merely based on revelation, and on the other hand, arguments given by these philosophers for the existence of God and his creativity have been deductive ones. Certainly, the believers will recoil from this kind of faith once they realize that God and his qualities that they believe in are irrational things.

2.2.2.2. Interpretation of Faith from the Perspective of Atheism

Atheism denies the existence of God. The atheist philosophers do not believe that, there is a Creator of the world and all creatures. Accordingly, the atheist philosophers took the stronger stand and affirmed that, God does not exist. Ludwig Feuerbach, for example, argued that, human beings have created the God in their own image rather than God creating human beings in the divine image. God is only the sum of the attributes that make up the greatness of man.

Here the following questions arise: What is the origin of all things? What is the nature of all things in the world? How do all things which happen come to be? While responding to the questions like these, the atheistic philosophers maintained different interpretations of the origin and the nature of all things. Some of them believe that, everything has its self-nature. It exists on its own. It is neither created by nor related to others. Keeping this in

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view, they held that, each individual has a self-nature of his own. In view of this, the individual can be both an individual egoist and a universal egoist. Conversely, some others believe that, everything has no inherent self-nature of its own. It exists co-dependently on some others. This means that, every individual does not have an independent nature of his own self. Keeping this in view, they held that, the individual may dispense altruism or otherwise behave cooperatively towards others.

2.2.2.3. Interpretation of Faith from the Perspective of Agnosticism

Agnostic philosophers believe that, the truth about the existence or non-existence of God either is impossible to know or is not known. If the agnostic philosophers believe that, the existence of God is impossible to know, that is, they reserve judgement about the existence of God on the questions; they are those who preserve the sceptical viewpoint that is often put forth as a middle ground between theism and atheism. If the agnostic philosophers believe that, human mind is limited to the mundane world and it is incapable of knowledge of the supramundane world, they could also preserve the theistic viewpoint or atheistic viewpoint.

There are different kinds of agnostic viewpoint of faith. Those who preserve the sceptical viewpoint particularly do not accept any authority in the religious sense, for them, faith is an abomination. However, the agnostic philosophers who preserve the theistic viewpoint do not affirm or deny faith in God. Immanuel Kant, for example, argued that trust in God is unconditional. He also asserted that, the dogmatism of metaphysics wars against morality.

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64 Kant said: “I therefore had to annual knowledge in order to make room for faith. And the true source of all the lack of faith which conflicts with morality – and is always highly dogmatic – is dogmatism in metaphysics, i.e., the prejudice according to which we can make progress in
Instead, they accept faith in God as a moral conduct to live a life of service to God; they issued the existential-religious attitude as the basis of morality to live a life of service to humanity. This view is called existentialism. In this manner, like the theistic philosophers, they upheld non-speculative faith in God. Søren Kierkegaard, for example, argued that religious faith is more important than reason in achieving human happiness. He asserted: "Faith belongs to and has its home in the existential, and in all eternity it has nothing to do with knowledge." ⁶⁵ Using faith in God in the service to humanity was a provisional solution. This is because the basis of this kind of faith is based on revelation.

Thus, in philosophy of religion, the aforementioned theistic, atheistic, and agnostic philosophers do not give us a methodology for studying the concept of faith in Buddhism. This is because on the question of the existence of God the Buddha remained silent. According to him, all phenomena are subject to the principle of Dependent Origination (pratītya-samutpāda). The principle of Dependent Origination is stated that, ‘if this is, that comes to be; from the arising of this, that arises; if this is not, that does not come to be; from the stopping of this, that is stopped.’ ⁶⁶ It is noteworthy that, in philosophy of religion, the atheistic philosophers who uphold that everything has no inherent self-nature of its own and exists co-dependently on some others can not help us to realize the concept of faith in Buddhism. This is because their statement is just a theory or a viewpoint; they really do not give us a right understanding of the reality of things and the human nature.

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Therefore, from the perspective of atheism, it is impossible for us to have a methodology for studying the concept of faith in Buddhism.

2.2.3. Faith from the Perspectives of Social Science

Social science attempts to study several phenomena in society and culture systematically on the scientific ground. Accordingly, the concept of faith is used to study the nature of these phenomena. While using the concept of faith to study these phenomena, the scientists like sociologists, anthropologists, and philosophical anthropologists interpreted faith in different ways. Let us see whether these interpretations of faith can give us a methodology for studying the concept of faith in Buddhism or not.

2.2.3.1. Interpretation of Faith from the Perspective of Sociology

Faith and ritualism are two aspects of religion. Hence, when sociologists study religion, they also study faith. So the sociological study of religion is a sociological study of faith.

The sociological study of religion as a branch of sociology attempts to study the social structure and interrelation between different parts of the society. However, while studying the society it attempts to understand the role of religion in the society and tries to see whether religion has role to play in creating social integration. It further tries to discover the general principle that elaborates the relation of religion with society in general and faith in particular. It tries to investigate the importance of faith in one God or many Gods. Hence, it is very interesting to see how sociologists study faith. So let us see views of some prominent sociologists on faith.

Auguste Comte pointed out that, religion provides the firm foundation to social groupings. Hence, religion has an important contribution to social
integration. Here, Comte wants to bring out the formation of social groups on the basis of religion. This is because the individuals who share common religious faith easily create their own groups. For example, in secular community, these various social groups are founded on various religious systems. Thus, Comte defended polytheism. However, according to him, monotheism or faith in one God is more superior because such faith brings all citizens under its umbrella. This faith brings stronger integrity in the society. Comte insisted that the aim of religious faith is to regulate the individual and to unify the individuals.\(^\text{67}\)

Herbert Spencer while elaborating on the religious ideas of primitive people assumes that, their faith in 'Mana,' the ghosts of their ancestors plays a key role in spiritual life. They believe that such spirits have power and this power can be used either to benefit the people who worship them or to create the obstacle and suffering in the life of those who do not worship them. This kind of faith also brings social continuity and social cohesion.\(^\text{68}\)

Karl Marx has also talked about religion and religious faith in relation to society. Marx asserted, “Man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is indeed the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet won through to himself or has already lost himself again.”\(^\text{69}\) Here we see that Marx did not accept religion as an essential factor that brings integrity and solidarity in the society rather than he tried to show how religion creates an obstacle in the rational thinking of the individual. According to Marx, religion plays a crucial role in moral agency, Marx expressed: “Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression


of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." Thus, Marx believed that, man is essentially a creative being whose thought, action, and fellowship are determined by reason. Marx held that, religion is opium of the people due to which they become happy; the happiness created by religion is an illusion. So, it is necessary to see that such illusory happiness must vanish.

Another major figure of social science was Sigmund Freud. According to Freud, faith is a quality of one's relation to the past. Without faith no cure is possible. Therefore, Freud recognized that, faith is the necessity and inevitability. However, he disagreed with the arguments hold that, the existence of God is necessary. Freud admitted religious faith as wishful-thinking; it means that, God is only a wish and not a reality. He asserted that, if God is real, he must retain his threefold task:

1. To exorcise the terrors of nature;
2. To reconcile men to the cruelty of fate, particularly as it is shown in death; and
3. To compensate them for the sufferings and privatizations which a civilized life in common has imposed on them.

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70 Marx 141.
72 In the Letter to Eduard Silbersten, Freud writes: “I can hardly convey to you how greatly my faith in what is generally held to be correct has shaken and how much my secret learning toward minority views has grown. Ever since Brentano adduced such ridiculously simple arguments in favour of his God, I have been afraid that one fine day I will be taken in by the scientific proofs of the validity of spiritualism, homoeopathy, by Louise Lateau, etc. In short, I have been too little of the dogmatist, adhering to all I believed in out of logical conviction alone. . . . When we allow the God concept we start down a slippery path. We shall have to wait and see how far we fall.” Sigmund Freud, *The Letters of Sigmund Freud to Eduard Silberstein, 1871–1881*, ed. Walter Boehlich, trans. Arnold J. Pomerans (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990) 106-7.
Thus, the social scientists have highlighted the social dimension of religious faith and religion. It is true that such faith brings social integration and solidarity in the society and hence plays an important role in the development of the society. However, sociological study does not play the role for the self-development of an individual. It almost neglects the importance of faith in individual's own life.

Now if we study the concept of faith in Buddhism from sociological point of view, we will see the importance of this kind of faith with reference to society. It means that, we see only the importance of faith in the Saṅgha that is one of the objects of faith in Buddhism for the social cohesion. In this manner, we are unable to bring out its importance for individual's self-realization. This is because the faith of an individual in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha enables him to make himself free from suffering. This dimension of Buddhist faith cannot be understood if we study the Buddhist faith from sociological point of view. Hence, it is impossible to study the concept of Buddhist faith from sociological perspective.

2.2.3.2. Interpretation of Faith from the Perspective of Anthropology

Etymological meaning of anthropology is the science of man and his works. It is a study of man in totality. It elaborates different aspects of humans, such as the origin and evolution of humans, the organization of human social and cultural relations, human physical traits, human behaviour, the variations among different groups of humans, how the human evolutionary past has influenced its social organization and culture, and so forth.

Anthropology has worked to develop an objective understanding of man and his culture. In its attempt to study man, anthropology attempts to study physical as well as cultural aspects of man. Physical anthropology studies the physical aspects of man, including the origin of man, race, health
and diseases while cultural anthropology studies the cultural aspects of man from two perspectives. Firstly, assuming that, culture is man-made part of an environment; it attempts to elaborate the creativity of man. Secondly, assuming that, culture is learned; it attempts to elaborate imitativeness of man. Taking into account these two considerations in mind anthropologists attempt to interpret every aspect of culture. Anthropological study of culture is based on empirical data. The religious aspect is not an exception to this.

According to early anthropologists, religion and religious faith are central to culture. Basically, they were interested to study how religion is evolved. In this context, they advocated different theories like Manaism, Animatism, Animism, and so forth. Through these theories, they have tried to show that religious faith originated out of fear, respect, awe, reverence towards supernatural power, being and spirit of ancestors. They further advocated that this religious faith continued from one generation to another through taboos, totems and rituals.

Anthropology teaches man how to study any phenomenon by placing man at the centre. Thus, when anthropologists study religion and religious faith, they give importance to man. However, there is an important point with regards to anthropology, that is, though man is the centre of study, it does not study the nature of man. It is accepted that man has religious faith and it is caused by fear, respect, and so on. However, anthropology does not give us a concrete answer to the basic problem of faith, that is, why man and not animals alone has faith.

Here, a question arises, is it possible to study Buddhist faith with the help of anthropological methodology? The answer is no. This is because the Buddha gives importance to man, he talks about the nature of man. In his philosophy the roots of faith are in human nature, as he accepts that faith is morally good quality, the controlling faculty of faith controls good and bad qualities while the power of controlling faculty of faith eradicates bad
qualities. This aspect of the Buddha’s teachings cannot be studied with the help of anthropological methodology.

If the concept of faith in Buddhism cannot be studied by methodologies in sociology and anthropology, then, how can it be studied? Answer to this question is one can study the concept of faith in Buddhism with the help of perspective of philosophical anthropology.

2.2.3.3. Interpretation of Faith from the Perspective of Philosophical Anthropology

Philosophical anthropology is a distinctive social science of looking at a man and his actions. It is a recent development yet its seeds can be traced back in the writings of Plato. Plato said that man is a measure of all things. After Plato, Kant has elaborated this perspective under the heading of pragmatic anthropology. Kant assumed that, philosophical and anthropological perspectives on man are incomplete if they are considered independently.75 As aforesaid, anthropology is a systematic study of man, it elaborates different aspects of humans, such as the origin and evolution of humans, the organization of human social and cultural relations, human physical traits, human behaviour, the variations among different groups of humans, and how the evolutionary past of humans has influenced its social organization and culture, and so on. While elaborating these aspects of man, anthropologists observe different belief systems, customs, rites and rituals, which are being performed in particular culture.

According to Kant, although anthropologists present a systematic account by providing the description of such events, it cannot be a science, in the true sense of the term. This is because a bit of information does not

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necessarily have a conceptual framework. And without the conceptual framework the bit of information becomes fragmentary.

Similarly, when philosophy explains and elaborates different aspects of man, it provides merely the conceptual framework. It presents a picture of man who is coloured by generalization. Hence, it is perhaps a need of the time to find out such a perspective or a discipline which will attempt to reconcile both the perspectives of looking at a man in such a way that an appropriate and holistic picture of man will be brought out.

Thus, philosophical anthropology is a perspective of looking at a man and his actions. Philosophical anthropology as an anthropology that attempts to study a man and his actions as its central theme, and philosophical anthropology as a philosophy that attempts to investigate the rational and conceptual framework behind it.

When we try to find out whether philosophical anthropology enables us to study the concept of faith in Buddhism, we see that, it can provide a methodological framework for the study. In Buddhism, faith is discussed in the light of human nature. Similarly, Buddhism tells us how bad faith cause suffering and how good faith cause *nirvāṇa*. Not only that but by advocating the theories and the principles of personality as the theory of *Pañcaskhanda*, Buddhism tries to show that having faith, either good or bad, is not a monopoly of a particular individual but it is the potentiality of every human because of which he is either still in *samsāra* or attained *nirvāṇa*.

To sum up, the interpretations of faith in religion try to show how faith is part and parcel of religion, because such interpretations revolve around the nature of God and his relation with human being. The social scientists take the interpretations of faith to be tools to understand the social and cultural phenomena, because such interpretations essentially reflect social and cultural phenomena. So, keeping faith at the centre, the social scientists try to comprehend social phenomena. In these interpretations, faith
is equated with religion. The philosophers of religion interpreted faith with respect to the existence of God. One of the important issues in philosophy of religion is whether God exists or not. This means that, faith is interpreted in metaphysical question rather than questions related to man – God relation or morality, and so on. Therefore, the philosophical anthropology only provides a methodology for studying the concept of faith in Buddhism. Hence, in this thesis, the Buddhist concept of faith has been studied from the perspective of philosophical anthropology.

2.3. A LEAP AHEAD

We have seen that, the Buddhist concept of faith cannot be understood with the help of different meanings and interpretations that are available in the literature on faith. Hence, it is necessary for us to investigate its meaning in Buddhism. There are basically two schools of Buddhism, namely, Theravāda and Mahāyāna. The basic difference between these two schools is that, according to Theravāda, ultimate goal of moral life is to comprehend, understand, wear out and abandon the adventitious defilements (āgantukā-upakkilesa), liberate from samsāra, attain the highest stage of enlightenment that of an Arhat in this very life, while according to Mahāyāna the ultimate goal of moral life is to accomplish the six perfections (ṣaṭ-pāramitā) and attain the highest stage of enlightenment that of the Buddha in many lives. Thus, both the schools hold different positions while talking about the ultimate goal of life. Consequently, they hold the different concept of faith. It seems that, though both are interested to interpret the thoughts of the Buddha they have given different interpretations to the Buddha’s thought. Accordingly, we have basically two different interpretations of the concept of faith in Buddhism. In following chapters, we will discuss the concept of faith in accordance with Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.