Chapter 4
THE CONCEPT OF FAITH IN
MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

4.1. THE THEOLOGICAL DEVIATION FROM THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

The Mahāyānists believe that, the genesis of Mahāyāna Buddhism took place at the time of the Buddha. Their belief is based on the evidence proved in the Prajñāpāramitā literature and related systems. However, according to some scholars, the process of the Mahāyāna movement was started at the time of the Buddha’s Mahāparinirvāṇa. The Mahāyāna movement has investigated and developed more fruitful ideas of the Buddha. This movement had two stages. At the initial stage, the Buddha’s doctrines were advocated, and at the later stage, the arguments were made against Early Buddhism. The first stage is known as the religious movement of Mahāyāna. It was almost complete at the end of first century BCE. Mahāyāna sutras which are also known as Vaipulya sutras introduce religious aspect of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The second stage is known as the doctrinal development of Mahāyāna. It was formulated during the period from the first to the six

267 The term Mahāyāna for the first time was used by Aśvaghoṣa in the Mahāyāna-
śraddhotpatti-sūtra. It was not used as a proper name of any religious doctrine but used in
designating the highest principle of the universe through which all sentient and non-sentient
beings can attain nirvāṇa; see D. T. Suzuki, Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism (Delhi: Munshiram
Manoharlal, 2007) 7.
77.
century CE. During this period, the important Mahāyānist philosophers like Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Diṇṇa, and Dharmakīrti had contributed to the development of Buddhism and Buddhist logic. In this way, the movement of Mahāyāna Buddhism lasted for more than eight centuries.\(^{269}\)

The root of Mahāyāna Buddhism is found in its deviation from Sthaviravāda or Theravāda Buddhism. The Buddha had discussed lots of social, moral, and political problems through his sermons. The Buddha’s teachings were not being written but they were kept alive in the form of oral transmission. When the Buddha was alive, if any dispute among the monks regarding the Buddha’s thoughts arose it was immediately explained by the Buddha and the monks were satisfied themselves. After the Buddha’s Mahāparinirvāṇa, due to the lack of the authority, there was a dispute among the monks regarding the appropriate meaning of the Buddha’s teachings. This dispute made the division among the community of the Buddha’s disciples. According to some disciples, the teachings in Nikāyas are the thoughts of the Buddha himself, so they thought that, nobody has right to make any change to his thoughts. Some other disciples thought that, in order to preach and spread the thoughts of the Buddha it was necessary to interpret them according to the context and situation. On this point of debate, Buddhism was first split into two schools, namely, Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The Theravādins were not interested to make changes to the thoughts of the Buddha. Consequently, they preserved the Nikāyas as the original teachings of the Buddha. On the contrary, the Mahāyānists interpreted the thoughts of the Buddha according to the context and situation. The standpoint of each school attached on its philosophical and religious positions. Thus, we

find that, Mahāyāna Buddhism is a reaction to the standpoint of Theravāda Buddhism.

The reaction of Mahāyāna Buddhism is reflected in Mahāyāna literature. For the Mahāyānists, the disciples of the Buddha had attained *Arhatship* were referred as the *Śrāvakas*, who devoted their lives solely in the pursuit of *nirvāṇa* for themselves but not for others. Such individuals were considered to be pursuing the letter, rather than the spirit, of the Buddha’s teachings, and were criticized for self-centeredness in ignoring the sufferings of others in their withdrawal from the world.

The *Pañcavimsatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* criticizes the virtue and wisdom of the *Śrāvakas* that, the Disciples and *Pratyekabuddhas* indeed do not think that after they have known full enlightenment, they should lead all beings to *nirvāṇa*, into the realm of *nirvāṇa* which leaves nothing behind. The wisdom of the Disciples and *Pratyekabuddhas* cannot be compared with the wisdom of a Bodhisattva. Because the Bodhisattvas are those who have practised the six perfections, have brought beings to maturity, have purified the Buddha-field, have fully gained the ten powers of a *Tathāgata*, who have possessed the four grounds of self-confidence, the four analytical knowledge and the eighteen special Dharma of a Buddha, after they have known full enlightenment, they shall lead countless beings to *nirvāṇa*.\(^{270}\)

The *Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-śāstra* points out that, the Mahāyanists regard Theravādins’ virtue of comprehensiveness as the lower one and hold in the highest regard to virtue of comprehensiveness of Mahāyāna, the text relates: that of Mahāyāna contains that of Theravāda, while that of Theravāda

cannot contain that of Mahāyāna.\textsuperscript{271} The *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* elaborates the argument that, the *Arhatship* is a lower stage and the *Arhats* are the average beings who are not fully emancipated. The *Arhats* should be called conceit or overbearing arrogance if they do not take an earnest vow to reach the perfect enlightenment.\textsuperscript{272}

In order to differentiate themselves from the *Śrāvakas*, the Mahāyānists have criticized the Theravādins on the following grounds:\textsuperscript{273}

(1) Theravāda, that is, *Śrāvakayāna*, is the way of the *Śrāvakas* and not of those who comprehend it. It is the way of those who cling to difference as ultimate, and this amounts to imaging separateness as absolute. Although the capability of putting an end to ignorance and passion is inhered in the *Śrāvakas*, their wayfaring is conditioned by fear of birth and death and not inspired by the ideal of Bodhisattva.

(2) Because the *Śrāvakas* cling to separateness as ultimate, they do not understand the emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of the basic elements (*dharmaḥ*) and so they do not see these as determinate expressions of the unconditioned. They fall short of comprehending the truly ultimate, the undivided being.

(3) There is certain self-absorbedness in the *Śrāvakas*. They seek to realize the ultimate good. They fare on the way in order to put an end to passion and gain freedom. But they lack the deep fellow-feeling, the unbounded compassion, which inspires the farers on Mahāyāna from the very beginning.


The Mahāyānists advocated the idea of reconstructing the monastic disciplines in accordance with their specific circumstances and needs. This idea is based on the Buddha’s teaching of revoking all the lesser and minor precepts.\textsuperscript{274} For example, the Mahāyānists proposed the following ten practices (\textit{dasa vatthūni}):\textsuperscript{275}

(1) Carrying salt in an animal horn – violated a rule against the storing of food;

(2) Taking food when the shadow on the sundial is two fingers past noon – violated a rule against eating after noon;

(3) After eating, travelling to another village to eat another meal the same day – violated a rule against overeating;

(4) Holding several fortnightly assemblies within the same boundaries (\textit{sīmā}) – violated procedures requiring all monks within the \textit{sīmā} to attend the same fortnightly assembly;

(5) Confirming an ecclesiastical act in an incomplete assembly and obtaining approval from absent monks afterward – violated the rules of procedure at monastic meetings;

(6) Citing habitual practice as the authority for violations of monastic procedures – violated the rules of procedure;

(7) Drinking whey milk after meals – violated the rule against eating special food when one was not sick.

(8) Drinking unfermented wine – violated the rule against drinking intoxicating beverages;


(9) Using a mat with fringes – violated the rule concerning the measurements of rugs; and

(10) Accepting gold and silver – violated the rule prohibiting monks from receiving gold and silver.

The grouping as *dasa vatthāni* is known as the motive of the theological deviation of Mahāyāna from Theravāda Buddhism. However, according to the *Samayabheda-paracanacakra* (Chinese *I-pu-tsung lun lun*),²⁷⁶ the motive of the theological deviation was the difference of interpreting the doctrine in connection with the qualities attained by an *Arhat*. It is pointed out in the *Samayabheda-paracanacakra* that, more than one hundred years after the Buddha’s *Mahāparinirvāṇa*, Mahādeva subjectively proposed the five points of doctrine, which were added to the controversy surrounding the first schism. They say that:²⁷⁷

(1) *Arhat* may have impure discharge due to sexual temptation;
(2) *Arhat* may have a residue of ignorance;
(3) *Arhat* may have sceptical doubts;
(4) *Arhat* may attain enlightenment through the help of others; and
(5) *Arhatship* is obtained with an exclamatory remark.

Perhaps basing themselves on the Mahādeva’s five points of doctrine the Mahāyānists had a deviation from the Theravāda concept of *Arhat*.

The five points of doctrine were taken into consideration to controvert at the Third Council as the Andhakas’ arguments and counter-arguments relating to the *Arhatship* as well as the Four-staged Path. The Theravādins emphatically denied all of these arguments and made counter-arguments. The Theravādins argued that, the *Arhats* are enlightened ones who possessed both *kṣayajñāna* (the knowledge that they have no more

kleśa) and anutappadajñāna (the knowledge that they will have no more rebirths). The Arhats therefore will not have a fall from Arhatship.\textsuperscript{278}

Furthermore, in Pāli works of Theravāda literature, the term Arhatship is used to refer to the stage of final liberation from the round of existence.\textsuperscript{279} The Saṃyutta-nikāya elaborates that, there is no difference between the Buddhas and the Arhats in their liberation (vimutti),\textsuperscript{280} the Buddhas are superior to the Arhats only on account of the fact that the Buddhas are promulgators of Dharma while the Arhats are only the followers of the same.\textsuperscript{281} Incidentally, the Theravadins hold that Gautama Buddha is the sole Buddha and the Arhats stood for the social reform, teaching goodness, amity, the simple life, the abolition of sacrificial and other slaughter, and of the barriers of rank and caste.\textsuperscript{282}

While the Theravadins placed the Nikāyas at the central position, the Mahāyānists wrote fresh ones with intent to conserve more for the spirit than for the letter of the scriptures. True, there were in existence many works against the doctrine of Theravāda. For instance, the Mahāvastu, one of the Sanskrit works of Early Mahāyāna literature, relates an argument that the Buddhas are sarvākārajñā, who possess a complete and detailed knowledge

\textsuperscript{278} See Kv. II.1-6; S. Z. Aung & C. A. F. Rhys Davids, trans., Points of Controversy or Subjects of Discourse: Being a Translation of the Kathāvatthu from Abhidhamma Piṭaka (London: PTS, 1979) 111-24. Of these five points of doctrine, the first four are primarily concerned with the implications of the qualities attainable by an Arhat and the rest one is concerned with that of the Four-staged Path that is referred to in the Kathāvatthu as the controversies of Articulate Utterance and Inducing by Saying “Sorrow!”


of everything, while the *Arhats* can at the most have sectional knowledge. As a result, between Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism, there are a wide variety of the views of *nirvāṇa*. While the Theravādins conceive that the Path of three stages of training, that is, Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā is the gradual path to *nirvāṇa* Mahāyānists believe that *nirvāṇa* can be achieved either through the gradual or the sudden path (see infra, p. 170). According to the Mahāyānists, the sudden path is the way of achieving perfect wisdom through the realization of the true nature of universal, that is, Suchness (*tathatā*); while the gradual path is the way of awakening to the Truth through practice of the six perfections, namely, Dāna (giving); Śīla (morality); Kṣānti (patience); Vīrya (energy); Dhyāna (concentration); Prajñā (wisdom). Despite the refutations, the Mahāyānists pursue patiently to advocate their arguments and philosophy. Let us see the thoughts of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The hallmark of Mahāyāna is the doctrine of *Ekayāna*, that is, all yānas in one. The Diamond Hermit’s Treatise (Chinese *Chin-kang-hsien-lu*) has elaborated four distinctive characteristics of this doctrine, whereby it is named Mahāyāna. These characteristics are as follows:

1. The great essence: it holds that Mahāyāna embraces all merits, avoids the lesser destinies of the five Vehicles (*pañcayāna*).
2. The means of Great men: it holds that through the Mahāyāna the great Bodhisattvas can attain the same enlightenment as the Buddha has attained.
3. The realization of Great men: it means only the Buddhas ultimately comprehend the Mahāyāna doctrine.
4. The ability for realization of the many: it means the Buddhas exist eternally in order to teach and to bring salvation to all living beings.

---

284 See T. 25, No.1512, fol. 805a.
Furthermore, according to this treatise, the Mahāyānists divide the Buddha’s teachings into five Vehicles (pañca-yāna):

(1) The Vehicle of human beings is suitable for the lay believer, who rightly receive and keep the five lay precepts are reborn as the celestial beings.

(2) The Vehicle of the celestial beings is suitable for the celestial beings who rightly practice the ten good deeds, ensuring rebirth in a higher realm.

(3) Śrāvakayāna is suitable for the Śrāvakas, who rightly understand the Four Noble Truths and through diligent practice become the Arhats.

(4) The Pratyekabuddhaya is suitable for the Pratyekabuddhas, who are able to attain Buddhahood through independent practice without teacher but with right understanding of the principle of Pratītya-samutpāda.

(5) The Bodhisattvayāna is suitable for the Bodhisattvas, who are capable of attain Buddhahood whereby the practice of the six perfections (pāramīs).

The Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra interprets that, to rescue all living beings from the ‘threefold world’ the Buddha has skilfully expounded the teachings of the Triyāna (three Vehicles), namely, (1) Śrāvakayāna, (2) Pratyekabuddhayāna, and (3) Bodhisattvayāna. However, when all living beings are ready to leave the ‘threefold world,’ the Buddha taught the doctrine of Ekayāna to them.  

According to the Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-śāstra, the Mahāyānists also divide the Buddha’s teachings into only two Vehicles, namely, Śrāvakayāna and Buddhayaña. The former is lesser while the latter is great; the former is self-centerededness while the latter is altruism; the former holds that all living beings from the ‘threefold world’ the Buddha has skilfully expounded the teachings of the Triyāna (three Vehicles), namely, (1) Śrāvakayāna, (2) Pratyekabuddhayāna, and (3) Bodhisattvayāna. However, when all living beings are ready to leave the ‘threefold world,’ the Buddha taught the doctrine of Ekayāna to them.  

beings have no self-essence while the latter holds that all things have no self-essence.\textsuperscript{286}

The Mahāyānists avoid the lesser Vehicles, because they hold that these Vehicles are suitable for the Śrāvakas only. They advocate the Bodhisattva path as the only true path leading to enlightenment, and thus the doctrine of Ekayāna. They set the six perfections (ṣaṭ-pāramitā) to be the fundamental practices. The Mahāyānists consider those who embody the great resolve of instruction to all sentient beings (bodhicitta) as the incarnation of the Bodhisattvas. The three natures of great loving heart (mahā-karunā-citta), intelligence (prajñā), and non-grasping (anupādāna) are essence of the Bodhisattvas.

In this regard, the Mahāyānists accepted the Bodhisattvas as incarnations of the indestructible Dharmakāya, one of the aspects of the Buddha, who themselves were enlightened and vowed to remain in the world to succour unperfected living beings. Therefore, all the Mahāyānists’ strivings were solely for a Bodhisattva (the Enlightenment Being) but not for an Arhat (the foe-destroyer or the vanquisher of enemies).

Besides, the Mahāyānists emphatically argued that, the aim of the Bodhisattvas is to achieve together the attainment of the Buddhahood and to work together for the good and happiness of the many. Keeping this ideal in mind, the Mahāyānists have put forward principles of development such as:\textsuperscript{287}

(1) Progressive and liberal-minded, caring more for the spirit than for the letter of the scriptures, willing to write fresh ones whenever the need of recasting the outward from of the teaching arose;

\textsuperscript{286} See Mahā-prajñāpāramitā-śāstra, T. 25, No. 1509, fol. 85b.

(2) More highly emotional and devotional in attitude, with a deeper understanding of the value of ritual acts;

(3) More positive in its interpretation of nirvāṇa and the Path;

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

(5) It developed the altruistic aspect of Buddhism and preached the Bodhisattva ideal.

Due to these five principles, the Mahāyānists advocated many theories regarding the human nature and morality. Typically, there are the theories as follows:

(1) The theory of Perfect One’s Matrix (tathāgata-garbha) of the Buddha Nature School (bhūtatathātā) founded by Aśvagoghha;

(2) The theory of Emptiness (śūnyatā) of the Mādhyamika School founded by Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva; and

(3) The theory of Karma of Yogācāra School founded by Vasubandhu.

The Mahāyānists later gave special importance to these theories as the essences of Mahāyāna concept of spirituality – the mind of non-discrimination or Suchness.\textsuperscript{288}

It is because of the view for the good and happiness of the many that the movement of Mahāyāna Buddhism was naturally compelled to emphasize the importance of the turning against Theravāda Buddhism. The appellation ‘Mahāyāna’ was openly introduced in the Early Mahāyāna scriptures as the reaction against the Theravādins’ reservations of doctrine. The term Mahāyāna for the first time was used in the Mahāyāna-śraddhotpatti-śāstra as the name that was used to designating the highest principle of the universe through which all sentient and non-sentient beings can attain nirvāṇa.\textsuperscript{289}

\textsuperscript{288} See B. P. Harvey, \textit{An Introduction to Buddhism} (UK: Cambridge UP, 1990) 114ff.

At the end of the doctrinal development, the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature together with its related systems was composed and three main schools came to be differentiated.²⁹⁰

(1) The Buddha Nature School (*bhūtatathatā*) founded by Aśvaghoṣa in about the first century CE;

(2) The Mādhyamika School founded by Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva in about the first and second century CE; and

(3) The Yogācāra School founded by Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in about the fourth century CE.

While giving different interpretations to thoughts of the Buddha, the Mahāyānists had faith or confidence in the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Sāṅgha* or going for refuge in the Triple Gem; and it was considered as the determination to advance towards perfection, and as the embryonic form of wisdom. This faith was cognized to be diverging according to its altruistic aspect even at the time of the Buddha. This movement primarily involved to lay devotees (*upāsaka* and *upāsikā*) of the Buddhist *Sāṅgha*. For the lay devotees, the seeking shelter in the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Sāṅgha* was an act of faith, which is the major constituent of the attitude called *bhakti* (see infra, p. 235).²⁹¹

Here, it is necessary to make clear that, although the Mahāyānists had faith in the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Sāṅgha* their interpretations of these objects are different from that of the Theravādins.


In short, the Mahāyānists claimed their theories to be superior in comparison with the theories of Theravāda because of the hallmarks as follows:²⁹²

1. The theory of Bodhisattva and Perfect Virtues (pāramitās);
2. The theory of Plurality of Buddhas and of their divinity;
3. The theory of worship (bhakti) of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas;
4. The theory of authority as salvation by faith only;
5. The theory of Emptiness (śūnyatā) as a new ontological theory;
6. The theory of Totality (dharma-dhātu) as a new phenomenal theory;
and
7. The theory of Repository Consciousness (Ālaya Vijñāna) as a new psychological theory.

This kind of deviation from Theravāda Buddhism made Mahāyāna Buddhism advocate different philosophical position. Consequently, we have different interpretation and understanding about faith, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

4.2. THE NATURE OF GOOD FAITH IN MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

The Mahāyānists assume that, just as the two wings of an eagle, so faith (śraddhā) and wisdom (prajñā) are two fundamental essences of a Buddhist. Faith is the capability for wisdom, and wisdom is the capability for accomplishment of the Buddha’s teachings. Accordingly, faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism does not lack features of right view or valid knowledge of the Buddha’s teachings. In other words, this kind of faith possesses three fundamental characteristics, namely, the experience (pratyakṣa), the reason (tarka), and the authority (āgama).

4.2.1. The Experience – Pratyakṣa

Experience (pratyakṣa) manifests itself as basis of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Like in Theravāda Buddhism, the experience is used to verify the authenticity of the Buddha’s enlightenment, and then the individual can achieve pure confidence in the Buddha and his teachings. Further, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the experience is also used to verify the authenticity of the Mahāyāna doctrines.

In this regard, the Mahāyānists believe that, the Mahāyāna doctrines are authentic and can be put to a practical test in this life because they know that, the Buddha was reliable, and those doctrines have been passed as the practical test in the process of the Buddha’s enlightenment. The Mahāyānists hold that, the pragmatic test need not actually be applied to every doctrine to determine whether it is practical or not. Because the Mahāyānists maintained that, there are two means of valid knowledge, namely, the knowledge gained by means of perception (pratyakṣa) and the knowledge gained by means of inference (anumāna). For example, if an individual knows that a previous person has been waded across a river in a shoal, then the individual can draw the conclusion that, the shoal in the river is possible to wade cross, and he does too. Thus, the pragmatic test has not been applied by the individual but the authenticity is verified because it has been performed by the previous person.

As it is mentioned in the Ratnagotra-vibhāga of the Tathāgata-garbha literature that, “The Highest Truth of the Buddhas can be understood only by faith. Indeed, the eyeless one cannot see the blazing disk of the sun.” This means that, the Tathāgata-garbha is obscure for the average individuals who are fallen in erroneous conception maintaining the existence of individuality, who are attached to delusion, and those whose mind has

---

deviated from the conception of Non-substantiality. Precisely, the Matrix of the Tathāgata (Tathāgata-garbha) is beyond the capability of the six sense organs, namely, sense organ of eye, of ear, of nose, of tongue, of body, and of mind. Nevertheless, the passage indicates that, if the individuals want to understand the Highest Truth of the Buddha, they have recourse to faith concerning the authenticity of the Mahāyāna doctrines.

4.2.2. The Reason – Tarka

The Mahāyānists hold that, the teaching of the One Vehicle (ekayāna) is beyond the comprehension of all the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, except the Bodhisattvas, who have the power of controlling faculty of faith (śraddhābala).294

Accordingly, the Mahāyānists cultivate their faith in the Three Jewels through performing the acts of religious devotion (bhakti) like worship of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha; honour, copy, preserve, recite, and revere the teachings of Buddha as well as expound the profound meaning of them for the sake of others.295

The Mahāyānists believe that, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha are the three supreme jewels. The Buddha is the embodiment of wisdom and compassion, the Dharma is the great vehicle that gives them the opportunity to develop the Buddha’s qualities, and the Saṅgha is the

---

294 This Law is inexpressible, it is beyond the realm of terms. Among all the other living beings, none can apprehend it. Except the bodhisattvas who are firm in the power of faith, or “all the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas cannot by their powers attain this sūtra. Śāriputra! Even you into this sutra Can [only] enter by faith.” Bunno Katō, et al., trans., The Threefold of Lotus Sutra (New York: Weatherhill, 1975) 53, 103; cf. Bukkyō Dendo Kyōkai, et al., trans., The Lotus Sutra (USA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007) 24, 72-3.

example of successful practitioners, who protect all living beings and lead them toward enlightenment. So, they hold that, the worship of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha can make up their mind the great resolve of instruction to all sentient beings (bodhicitta). Furthermore, to fortify their faith in the doctrine of Ekāyāna, they need to have a deep comprehension of the excellent qualities of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. In order that, it is necessary to perform the acts of bhakti.

In the Śiṅga-samuccaya, Śāntideva quoted Ratnamegha to give special emphasis to the ten acts of bhakti that are frequently performed by the Mahāyānists. The ten acts of bhakti are (1) to manufacture an image of the Buddha; (2) to rebuild up a decayed shrine; (3) to give perfume and ointment to the shrine of the Buddha; (4) to give scented water to the images of the Buddha; (5) to sweep and anoint the shrine of the Buddha; (6) personal attendance on parents; (7) personal attendance on teachers and instructors; (8) personal attendance on companions in the holy life; (9) all that with a heart disinterested and free from any thought of gain; and (10) the dedication of the merit from all this with the intense mind: “By result of this meritorious action let all beings be born unstained by the impurity of matrix.”

It is more obvious in Mahāyāna literature, where the acts of bhakti reached its pinnacle. For example, it is elaborated in The Meditation on Buddha Amitāyus Sutra that, faith in the salvific power of the pure land and the Buddha Amitābha’s grace is a root of goodness. According to this Sutra, those who resolve to be born in that land have to perfect faith in the Buddha Amitābha. The process of bringing forth a resolve to the perfect faith is the training in three folds of thought, namely, (1) the upright thought means having right view of Suchness (tathatā), (2) the profound thought means

---

rejoicing to study everything that is good and to practice it; and (3) the great pitiful thought means desiring to deliver all living beings from their sorrow. These three folds of thought are considered as the three concrete consequences of faith, which occurs in every Buddhist sect and tradition as the resolve to entry into nirvāṇa. In other words, the threefold thought is the embodiment of the Noble Eightfold Path or the volition in the training of Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā. Therefore, faith in the Mahāyāna doctrines does not lack reason.

4.2.3. The Authority – Āgama

The Mahāyānists hold that, the Buddha for rescuing living beings from the ‘threefold world’ skilfully expounded his thoughts in three Vehicles (triyāna), namely, (1) Śrāvakayāna, (2) Pratyekabuddhayāna, and (3) Bodhisattvayāna. However, all Vehicles are eventually subsumed under One Vehicle (ekayāna) called Mahāyāna. Accordingly, the Mahāyānists had tried to explain the thoughts of the Buddha according to the doctrine of Mahāyāna. However, this doctrine is hard to believe and difficult to understand. In order to pursue the doctrine of Mahāyāna, the Mahāyānists must have recourse to the authority of the Buddha and the Mahāyāna doctrine.

Keeping in mind this ideal, the Mahāyānists regarded the authority of the Buddha as a requirement for applying the Mahāyāna doctrine. For example, the authority of the Buddha is expressed by Dignāga in his opening stanza of pramāṇa-samuccaya by saying: “Saluting the Buddha, who is the..."
embodiment of valid knowledge (pramāṇa-bhuta), who seeks the benefit of all living beings, who is the teacher, the sugata, the protector. It is easy to see that, the Mayāyāna sutras possessed this kind authority. The most prominent among the Vaipulya sutras, for example, was the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra, the Lotus of the True Teaching, which is well known as the sacred book of the authority of the Buddha. In this sūtra, the Buddha is illustrated metaphorically with regard to the authority in different figures, such as father, skilled physician, and Dharma King, and so on. Here, the first two figures are the embodiment of compassion while the third figure is the embodiment of wisdom. The teachings of the Buddha in this sūtra are considered as the most supreme teachings in the world. The Buddha as described in this sūtra is never at rest. He is always adapting his teachings in order to liberate living beings from the degeneration of this world.

Besides, in order to establish and confirm the Buddha’s teachings as authentic words, the Mahāyānists tried to legitimate their new literature, for example, the Mahāyānists gathered the Buddha’s teachings into structured collection called āgama in the sense of authority. The Mahāyānists maintained two kinds of authority of the Mahāyāna doctrine, namely, exoteric and esoteric authority. (1) The first kind is authority of the external teachings of the Buddha expounded in the sutras that are actually perceptible. For

301 Saluting Him, who is the personification of the means of cognition (pramāṇa-bhuta), who seeks the benefit of [all] living beings, who is the teacher, the sugata, the protector, I shall, for the purpose of establishing the means of valid cognition, compose the [Pramāṇa]-samuccaya, uniting here under one head my theories scattered [in may treatises]; Masaaki Hattori, trans. & annot., Dignāga, On Perception: Being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga’s Pramāṇasaṃccaya from the Sanskrit Fragments and the Tibetan Versions (Cambridge, Mass; Harvard University Press, 1968) 23; q.v. Malcolm David Eckel, Jñānagarbha on the Two Truths: An Eighth Century Handbook of Madhyamaka Philosophy (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992)108.

302 See Burton Watson, trans., The Lotus Sutra (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1999) 59, 82.
303 See Watson 227, 231.
304 See Watson 87, 109, 207.
305 See Watson 92.
306 See Watson 60-1.
example, the authority of the Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra is reflected in the excellence of Amitābha Buddha’s inspirations and the excellence of the natural results of those inspirations. Consequently, the authority of the Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra is expressed in the form of recollection (anusmṛti) as the formula “Namo Amitābhāya Buddhāya,” that is, homage to Amitābha Buddha. (2) The second kind is authority of the mysterious teachings of the Buddha concerned with supermundane capability that can be understood only by a proper training after having faith.

4.3. DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF FAITH IN MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

In Mahāyāna literature, the Sanskrit terms śraddhā, prasāda, and bhakti are used to express the qualities of man. These terms are rendered into the English with the words, such as faith, belief, trust, and confidence. Although this is the case, each Saṅskrit term has different meaning and interpretation. These different interpretations of faith expose different aspects of faith. Let us see different interpretations of faith according to Mahāyāna literature.

4.3.1. Faith as Śraddhā

In the Mahāyāna scriptures, the word śraddhā is frequently used to refer to having faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

According to the Abhisamaya-alaṅkāra (Ornament of Realization), śraddhā is elaborated as the belief in perfect wisdom (prajñāpāramitā), the trusting confidence, the resoluteness, the deliberation, the weighing up, the testing – and that in the absence of any form or any other skandhas.

---


In the Śikṣā-samuccaya, Śāntideva quotes the Akṣhayamati-sūtra, where it says that, śraddha is demonstrated as acknowledgment of the four authentic things (dharmas), namely, (1) the ripening of action (karma), (2) the Bodhisattva Path, (3) the Mahāyāna doctrines, and (4) the Buddha’s Abhisambhodhi.\(^{310}\)

4.3.2. Faith as Prasāda

The word prasāda means the purity of mind, which is equivalent to adhimukti (Chinese hsin-chień – faith and understanding, aspiration). Prasāda combine with avetya (having understood or realization) in the compound avetya-prasāda (Chinese cheng-ching) to indicate the stage of purity of mind based on right view about the true Dharma.

4.3.3. Faith as Bhakti

The word bhakti (Chinese ching-hsün) means loving devotion. The elements of bhakti are more obvious in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The acts of bhakti may be performed in various forms, such as taking refuge in the Three Jewels by practising of Ti-sarana (Threefold Refuge), making offerings to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, ritual worship of Cetiya (stupa) and Dhātu (holy relics), worship of the Deities and the Bodhisattvas, and making up one’s mind the great resolve of instruction to all sentient beings (bodhicitta). The Mahāyāna texts as the Saddharma-pundarīka-sūtra and Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra have elaborated the importance of bhakti. In the Śikṣā-samuccaya,

\(^{310}\)云何信根。謂於四法深忍樂欲，一者於生死中，行世正行信於業報。
由造業故依報定有。乃至失命終不作罪。二者信樂菩薩所行正行。不求餘乘不隨諸見。三者於勝義中，了知無我眾生業者補特伽羅。於空無相無願
諸法深能信解，四者於佛功德力無畏等。生決定信斷除疑網。是名信根。
Sāntideva quotes the *Sāgaramati-pariprcchā-sūtra* to say that, performing the acts of *bhakti* for the Buddha is the thing without superior. That is the development of three folds of thought; namely, (1) the enlightenment thought, (2) the profound thought, and (3) the great pitiful thought (see supra, p. 152).311

To sum up, śraddhā, prasāda, and bhakti appear side by side in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Hence, they were declared as the very grounds of a religious life and have played the vital role in the emergence of the Mahāyāna doctrines. Consequently, faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism moved in highly devotional but rational in nature.

4.4. ROLE OF FAITH IN THE MORAL LIFE OF MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

Nāgārjuna in his famous *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra* asserts that, the Buddha’s teachings are difficult to realize and accomplish, just like the Great Ocean is difficult to enter and arrive at the other shore. Faith (śraddhā) and wisdom (prajñā) are two fundamental essences of the Buddhists, just like the two wings of an eagle. Śraddhā is the capability for prajñā, and prajñā is the capability for accomplishment of the Buddha’s teachings.312 Vasubandhu in the *Trīṃśikā* and the *Mahāyāna śatadharmā-prakāśamukha-sūtra* points out that, śraddhā is the first of the eleven morally good qualities (kuśala). The eleven morally good qualities are as follows: (1) faith (śraddhā), (2) shame (hriṣ), (3) embarrassment (apatrapā), (4) non-greed (alobha), (5) non-hatred (adveṣa), (6) non-delusion (amoḥa), (7) being

---

312 佛法大海，信為能入，智為能度。T. 25, No. 1509, fol. 63a1-2.
4.4.1. Faith is Regarded as a Morally good Quality – Kuśala Dharma

In the Sanskrit scriptures, there are frequently two compounds, namely, śraddhendriya (Chinese hsin-gen, controlling faculty of faith) and śraddhābala (Chinese hsin-li, power of controlling faculty of faith). They are regarded as the phases in connection with the essence and the maturity of faith.314

In the Mahāratanakūta-sūtra, the controlling faculty of faith is defined in different ways as follows:

(1) To practice the righteousness without attachment of things, this is called the controlling faculty of faith.315

(2) To practice the path leading to nirvāṇa with confidence in all the Buddha’s teachings, this is called the controlling faculty of faith.316

(3) To admire Buddhism without hesitation, this is called the controlling faculty of faith.317

(4) To transcend all hindrances and free from defilement, this is called the controlling faculty of faith.318

(5) To practise the charities with the abandonment of all malicious qualities, this is called the controlling faculty of faith.319

(6) To observe the morality without obstinacy, this is called the controlling faculty of faith.320

---

314 五根 (信根、念根、精進根、定根、慧根)。五力 (信根 増長名五力)。X. 24. No. 0449, fol. 48c18-19.
315 不受諸法而修道義。是為信根。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665a13.
316 罪信 一切諸佛之法。順從道跡。是為信根。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665a17.
317 慕佛道不懷疑豫。是為信根。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665a21.
319 減除一切諸非善本。修行顯德。是為信根。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665b7.
And in the Śīkṣā-samuccaya, Śāntideva cites the Akṣhayamati-sūtra to explain that, śraddhendriya is demonstrated as individual standing firm in quiet confidence with respect to four things as follows.\(^{321}\)

(1) He acknowledges the transmigration in the world of birth and death; he becomes confident in the ripening of action (karma); he knows whatever he does he shall have its effect, hereafter even for life’s sake he commits no sin.

(2) He believes in the virtue of a Bodhisattva, and having entered into this life he does not wish for any other Vehicle. In other words, he pursues neither in accordance with Vehicle of Hearers (sravakayāna) nor Vehicle of Solitary (pratyekayāna) but in accordance with One Vehicle (ekayāna), which has not returned.

(3) Having all the doctrines consisting in the principle of Pratitya-samutpāda, real, clear and profound; consisting in behaviour according to selflessness, not-being, not-living, not-personality, consisting in void, absence of attribute, sinlessness, he comprehends and has faith in them.

(4) He follows none of the heretical sects; he has faith in all qualities of the Buddha, confidence in his strength and the rest; whereby, his sceptical doubts gone, he attains those qualities of the Buddha.

In the Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra, the meaning of the power of controlling faculty of faith (śraddhā-balā) is defined in different ways as follows:

\(^{320}\) 使所選而無所惑。是為信根。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665b1.

(1) Those who if plan on that, the five controlling faculties, pursue continuously to relinquish four kind of ties (māras), do not accord with Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekayāna but accord with only Ekayāna that have not returned, consume defilement of desires and toil on the earth, their vow is firm, mind is liberated, pursuance is strong, the body is peaceful, strength and possessed of insight, the organs tranquilize, not rotten, confidence, good man (kula-putra), this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith.  

(2) Those who have clear comprehension of the Buddha’s teachings not due to the help of others, this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.

(3) Those who have insight of rational faith with highest efficiency, this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.

(4) Those who have the capability of getting rid of the defiling disaster, this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.

(5) Those who released completely potential causes for backsliding, this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.

(6) Those who left from the genesis of competition and rivalry, angry and rage; this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.

---

322 又信力者。不從他教而有所受。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665b18-22.
323 又信力者。不從他教而有所受。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665b27.
324 又信力者。則能具足誠信之勢。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c2.
325 The defilements of mind are stated as follows: Greed and covetousness, malevolence, anger, malice, hypocrisy, spite, envy, stinginess, deceit, treachery, obstinacy, impetuosity, arrogance, pride, conceit, indolence, M. I.36-7; I. B. Horner, trans., *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 46.
326 又信力者。能制禦貪染之難。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c5-6.
327 又信力者。除一切賢慧之業。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c9.
328 又信力者。離於諸貪染患之本。T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c12-3.
(7) Those who have abandoned negligence, laziness, adventitious defilements (āgantuka-kleśa); this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.\textsuperscript{329}

(8) Those who are practicing transforming the adventitious defilements and iniquitous deeds, this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.\textsuperscript{330}

(9) Those who have abandoned the views of defiling mind, this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.\textsuperscript{331}

(10) Those who are sincerely possessed of seven kinds of treasure (sapta-dhanani),\textsuperscript{332} this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith too.\textsuperscript{333}

(11) Furthermore, those who are living in eight wrong paths (that is the contradictions of Eightfold Path) without producing defiling attachment, their mind is not corrupt but remains always pure, this is called the power of controlling faculty of faith.\textsuperscript{334}

And in the Śikṣā-samuccaya, Śāntideva cites the Ratnolka-dhāraṇī to demonstrate the meaning of the power of controlling faculty of faith as follow: the Bodhisattvas at very beginning of arisen bodhicitta raise ten kinds of morally good qualities. Those who possessed the ten kinds of morally good qualities achieved the power of controlling faculty of faith.

\textsuperscript{329} 又信力者。棄捐懈怠眾煩惱垢。 T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c16-7.

\textsuperscript{330} 又信力者。消化諸垢眾邪之行。 T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c20.

\textsuperscript{331} 又信力者。棄於諸見所識眾垢。 T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c24.

\textsuperscript{332} According to the Madhyamagama (T. 12, No. 0374, fol. 433c.15-8) and the Mahāratnakūṭa-sūtra (T. 01, No. 0026, fol. 649c.22-5), these treasures are listed as follows: (1) treasure of faith (財信), (2) treasure of virtue (戒財), (3) treasure of conscientiousness (財懺), (4) treasure of repentance (財懺), (5) treasure of listening (財聞), (6) treasure of bounty (財施), (7) treasure of wisdom (財慧). However, according to the Aṅguttara Nikāya, these treasures are listed as follows: (1) treasure of faith, (2) treasure of virtue, (3) treasure of conscientiousness, (4) treasure of fear of blame, (5) treasure of listening, (6) treasure of bounty, (7) treasure of wisdom; (Sanskrit: sradhdha, sīla, hriṇa, apatrapa, srutadha, tyāga, prajñā; Pāli: saddhā, sīla, hiri, ottappa, suttadha, cāgadha, pāṇīdha, A. IV. 4); E. M. Hare, trans., The Book of the Gradual Sayings, vol. 4 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006) 3.

\textsuperscript{333} 又信力者。常得至誠七財之貨。 T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 665c27.

\textsuperscript{334} 過於八邪而無著也。無能破壞心常清淨。是為信力。 T. 11, No. 0310, fol. 666a2.
The ten kinds of morally good qualities are (1) the friendship quality, (2) the happiness quality, (3) the pity quality, (4) the affection quality, (5) the kindness quality, (6) the help quality, (7) the protection quality, (8) the justice quality, (9) the teacher quality, and (10) the instructor quality.

In a nutshell, like in Theravāda, śraddhābala is the mature of śraddhendriya. However, the Mahāyānists believe that, those who possessed such śraddhābala were supported and not crushed by all kinds of tie (māras), not captivated by Śrāvakayāna or Pratyekayāna, not diverted from Ekyāṇa.

4.4.2. The Advantage of Faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism

Śāntideva in the Śikṣā-samuccaya quotes the Ratnolkā-dhāraṇī to say that, śraddhā is able to cause all merry heart even in renunciation, by which one delights to enter the Buddha’s teachings; faith generates pre-eminence in knowing virtues, guides and brings to realize the Truths. Because of its keenness and clearness (the characteristics of śraddhendriya), śraddhā is not vanquished by the passions; and because of its stability (the characteristic of śraddhābala), śraddhā is not extinguished, only an unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. Śraddhā at the moment of attachment and non-attachment is separated from all defilements, śraddhā is able to go beyond the realm of Māra that reveals the path of supreme deliverance, śraddhā is not a decay deed of virtues, that is, it can cause the

\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Bendall1981}}}
\]

\[\text{\footnotesize{\cite{Bendall1981}}}
\]
sprout of enlightenment to grow, śraddhā generates the felicities of perfect knowledge, shows all the Buddhas of the ten directions.\(^{337}\)

Śāntideva further quoted the *Ratnolka-dhārani* to elaborate the advantages of having faith in the Three Jewels as follows:\(^{338}\)

(1) Who have faith and respect for the Buddha they reject all immoral conduct; who have rejected all immoral conduct they are without jealousy to praise those who possess the virtue.

(2) Who have faith and respect for the Dharma they are unsatiated in hearing of the Buddha’s teachings; who are unsatiated in hearing of the Buddha’s teachings they aspire to an inconceivable realization of the Buddha’s teachings.

(3) Who have faith and respect for the Saṅgha they are resolutely devoted to the Saṅgha; who in the Saṅgha have resolute devotion they will never fall from śraddhābala.

### 4.4.3. Faith as the Prerequisite Condition for the Spiritual Development of Human Beings

Faith is called the mother of virtues, nourishing and growing in all good ways, cutting away the doubtful system, freeing from the torrent of passion, revealing the unsurpassed road of ultimate peace. Faith is an important component of the five cardinal virtues. Faith is able to clear up the obstacle

---


of defilements (*kleśāvaraṇa*), namely, attachment, aversion, and delusion; which act as an obstacle in the way towards the realization of *nirvāṇa*.

In the *Śikṣā-samuccaya*, Śāntideva quotes the *Daśadharma-sūtra*, where faith is considered as the supreme vehicle, whereby the leaders escape from the world of birth and death. For this cause, the wise men are full of faith and act accordingly. The Buddha’s doctrine does not flourish among the faithless men, just as scorched seeds do not germinate. The *Akṣhayamati-sūtra* is also quoted to assert that, faith governs the whole process of developing the five controlling faculties, namely, faith (*śraddhā*), energy (*vīrya*), mindfulness (*smṛti*), concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*). The affections of *śraddhā* for the other faculties are elaborated as follows:

1. *Śraddhā* is known as confidence in the ripening of *karma*, the virtue of a Bodhisattva, the profound *Dharma*, the Buddha and his qualities.
2. *Vīrya* is one’s courageous diligence without interruption in bringing about in him the morally good qualities by means of *śraddhā*.
3. *Smṛti* is one’s preventing the morally good qualities which he attains by means of *vīrya* from being destroyed by forgetfulness.
4. *Samādhi* is one’s fixing his thought by concentration on the qualities those he keeps from destruction by means of *smṛti*.
5. *Prajñā* is one’s realization of the characteristics of universal existence, that is, impermanence (*aniṭya*), suffering (*duḥkha*), and non-self

---

339 See T. 09, No. 0278, fol. 433a26-27; T. 10, No. 0279, fol. 72b18-19; Thomas Cleary, trans., *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of Avatāraṃsaka Sūtra* (Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, 1993) 331. This is a poem by Hsien-shou Bodhisattva found in chapter 8, the *Ta-fang-kuang fo-hua-yen ching* or *Flower Ornament Scripture*, translated by Buddhahadra into Chinese in 422 AD;


(anātman), which is attained from investigating and learning of himself by means of samādhi.

Faith thus manifests itself as a preparatory element of transformation from knowledge (jñāna) into wisdom (prajñā). In other words, faith is a means for achieving the end of Awakened Path. Let us see how faith helps the individual to develop the five controlling faculties.

4.4.3.1. The Position of Faith in the Spiritual Growth

It is pointed out in the Mahāyāna-sraddhotpatti-sūtra that, the progress of practice of doctrine of Ekayāna (the idea that all three Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekayāna, and Bodhisattvayāna are only the skilful means (upāya) to lead people to the Buddhaya) is stated into three steps, namely, growth of perfect faith, growth of intelligent practice, and growth of attainments.

In the Śikṣā-samuccaya, Śāntideva quotes the Tathāgata-guhyasūtra, where faith is considered as one of four conditions to accomplish the moral qualities of a King. Possessing with these conditions, the King goes ahead in the path leading to attainment of enlightenment without falling away. The four conditions are faith (sraddhā), reverence (pūjā), humility (vinaya), and courage (vīra); which are continually growing and being nurtured by those who are established in the doctrine of Ekayāna. The four qualities are counted as follows:
(1) Faith is able to convince the individual to pursue the path of Bodhisattva without falling away; by faith he approaches to sainthood and he does not do what he ought not to do.

(2) Reverence is able to convince the individual to pursue the path of Bodhisattva without falling away; by which he hears a thing well said, and desires to hear it, and hears the law without closing the ears.

(3) Humility is able to convince the individual to pursue the path of Bodhisattva without falling away; by which he shows respect and honour to the saints, and so will do.

(4) Courage is able to convince the individual to pursue the path of Bodhisattva without falling away; by which he gets readiness of body and mind, and safely performs all that has to be done.

The Ratnagotra-vibhāga elaborates that, there are four hindrances, which the Bodhisattvas have to eliminate. The four hindrances are (1) the enmity (śnaṇba) to the doctrine of Mahāyāna, (2) the concept of self (ātma) on the separate elements, (2) the notion of suffering (duḥkha) in the phenomenal life, and (4) indifferent (nirapekṣatā) to the profit of living beings. The antidotes of these four hindrances are (1) the practice of faith (śraddhā) in doctrine of Mahāyāna, (2) the practice of supremacy in the transcendental intellect (prajñāpāramitā), (3) the practice of meditation (samādhi), and (4) the practice of great compassion (mahākarunā). Having practiced these four antidotes of the hindrances, the Bodhisattvas attain the four kinds of supreme virtue (guṇa-pāramitā), namely, purity, unity, bliss, and eternity; they become the sons of the Buddha.\(^\text{345}\)

In the Trimsikā-kārikā, faith is established at the prerequisite position of eleven profitable mental functions, namely, faith (śraddhā), shame (hrī),

---

dread of blame (apatrāpya), lack of greed (alobha), lack of hostility (adveṣa), lack of confusion (amoha), vigour (vīrya), tranquillity (prasrabdhi), carefulness (apramāda), equanimity (upekṣa), and non-harming (ahiṃsā).

In the Ratnolāka-nāma-dhāraṇī and the Śūraṅgama-sūtra, faith is also established as the prerequisite of ten kinds of mind of the Bodhisattvas who are dwelling in the Ground of Regulation (Chinese chih-ti). The ten kinds of mind are (1) the mind that resides in Faith; (2) the mind that resides in Mindfulness; (3) the mind that resides in Vigour; (4) the mind that resides in Wisdom; (5) the mind that resides in Vows; (6) the mind that resides in the Śīla; (7) the mind that resides in protecting the Dharma; (8) the mind that resides in Renunciation (Chinese pu-t’ui); (9) the mind that resides in Samadhi; and (10) the mind that resides in Making Transferences.

In the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra, faith is the initial condition of the ten practices that a great Bodhisattva needs to accomplish to arrive at formlessness nirvāṇa and non-possession. The ten practices are (1) perfect in faith, (2) perfect of pureness in the observance of the precepts, (3) make friends with various good friends of the Way, (4) quietude, (5) effort, (6) perfect in remembrance, (7) gentleness of speech, (8) protection of the Dharma, (9) provide what is required in the way of nursing for brethren who are upholding the same Śīla, and (10) perfect in wisdom.

---


347 见地住菩薩為諸眾生，先發十種心，何等為十？謂信心、念心、精進心，慧心、願心、戒心、護法心、捨心、定心、迴向心。T. 10, No. 0299, fol. 886c11-13; cf. X. 11, No. 0270, fol. 853b1-c19; Hsüan Hua, trans. The Shurangama Sutra with Commentary, vol. 7 (Malaysia; Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2003) 27ff.

These evidences show that faith plays an important position in the spiritual growth of human beings. Now let us see what the roles faith plays in such growth.

4.4.3.2. Role of Faith in the Spiritual Growth

According to Aśvaghoṣa, the cultivation in the doctrine of Ekayāna involves three processes of spiritual growth (Chinese fa-hsin), in which, the practice of faith is initial and indispensable process. The three processes are as follows:

1. The process of bringing forth a resolve to achieve perfect faith in the Mahāyāna doctrine;
2. The process of bringing forth a resolve to realize the Mahāyāna doctrine; and
3. The process of bringing forth a resolve to attain realization through the training in the doctrine of Ekayāna.

The achievement of the perfect faith in the Mahāyāna doctrine is in three folds of thought, namely, (1) uprightness (rjucitta), having right view of Suchness (tathatā), (2) profoundness (adhyāśaya), rejoicing to study everything that is good and to practice it, and (3) enlightened mind (bodhicitta), anxious to deliver all living beings from their sorrow and suffering. Let us see what role faith plays in the development of these three folds of thought.

a. The Role of Faith in Developing the Uprightness – Rjucitta

The uprightness is considered as function of faith in the first process of spiritual growth, because the essence of faith in Mahāyāna is the acknowledgment of the doctrine of Ekayāna.

---

The Mahāyānists take the doctrine of *Ekayāna* to be the Path leading to the realization of *nirvāṇa*. They upheld the theory of the *Tathāgata-garbha*, which says that, the *Tathāgata-garbha* is the cause from which everything is produced, and Suchness (*tathatā*) is just essence of all beings. They believe that, the *Tathāgata-garbha* can be understood only by faith. In this manner, faith manifests itself as the access to *nirvāṇa*. As L. de la Vallée Poussin states, 

“*nirvāṇa* meant a simple faith in soul’s immortality, its blissful survival in a paradise, a faith emerging from practices of obscure magic.”

In short, *nirvāṇa* is characterized as the cessation or the elimination of defilements (*kleśa*). It is the existence of a pure spiritual principle, in which, object and subject are coalesced, and along with it, a force of transcendental illusion produces the phenomenal world.\(^{352}\) While the Theravādins stated that, *nirvāṇa* is the realm of peace (*śāntipātha*), which is contrary to *saṃsāra*; the Mahāyānists rebelled against the dualistic conception of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra*. They assumed that, *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* are oneness.\(^{353}\)

In the *Saddharma-pundarīka-sūtra* the Buddha said, the wisdom of the *Tathāgata* is difficult both to understand and to believe for human beings, those who are dwelling in the ranks of *śrāvakas*.\(^{354}\) Hence, in order to have successful cultivation of the doctrine of *Ekayāna*, it is necessary to bring forth a resolve to have perfect faith in this theory. Without the light of faith, man


\[^{354}\] 為阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。此諸衆生，于今有住聲聞地者，我常教化阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。是諸人等，應以是法漸入佛道。所以者何？如來智慧，難信難解。T. 09, No. 0262, fol. 25c09-12; Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1999) 134.
is characterized as "from darkness proceeding to darkness."\(^{355}\) Nāgārjuna in his famous *Mahā-praṇāpāramitā-śāstra* says: "Faith is the entrance to the ocean of the laws of the Buddha, and knowledge is the ship on which one can sail in it."\(^{356}\) In this regard, faith is recognized as an access to the realization of *nirvāṇa*. That is why the *Avatāmsaka-sūtra* says, faith is the initial of the Path, the mother of virtues, growing all good ways, stop the doubtful system, getting rid of the torrent of passion, revealing the unsurpassed access to the realization of *nirvāṇa*.\(^{357}\)

**b. The Role of Faith in Developing the Profoundness — Adhyāśaya**

According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Path leading to realization is basically divided into two species pertaining to different capabilities of achievement of enlightenment, namely, gradual enlightenment (Chinese *chien-wu*) and immediate enlightenment (Chinese *tun-wu*). Those who advocate the immediate enlightenment doctrine or the immediate teaching (Chinese *tun-chiao*) introduced themselves as Patriarchal tradition or Patriarchal School (Chinese *tun-tsung*). On the contrary, those who advocate the gradual enlightenment doctrine or the gradual teaching (Chinese *chien-chiao*) that were called Doctrinal tradition or Doctrinal School (Chinese *chien-tsung*). Having faith in the Doctrinal School (Chinese *chiao-hsin*) and having faith in the Patriarchal School (Chinese *t'su-hsin*) were defined as follows:\(^{358}\)

(1) Having faith in the Doctrinal School is faith in cause and effect, this is the conviction that, the Buddhahood is an effect of gradual cultivation

---


of the pāramitās over three kalpas, the practice of the pāramitās is primary cause, and the realization of nirvāṇa is a suitable effect. Express differently, faith in the Doctrinal School is the commitment that “I can become Buddha.”

(2) Having faith in the Patriarchal School is faith in the Buddha nature, this is the conviction that all people intrinsically possess the perfect Buddha nature, and that the essence of nirvāṇa is perfectly complete in everyone. In other words, faith in the Patriarchal School is the affirmation that “I am already Buddha.”

The affirmation that “I am already Buddha” and the commitment to self-confidence that “I can become Buddha” make the Mahāyānists pursue themselves neither in accordance with Śrāvakayāna nor Pratyekayāna but in accordance with Ekāyāna, which have not returned.

c. The Role of Faith in Developing the Enlightened Mind – Bodhicitta

In very early days, the Buddha suggested practical ways (dharma) and means (upāya) to solve the pressing problem of human life, that is, the liberation from suffering or the realization of nirvāṇa. The Buddha’s teachings are predominantly practical, which liberates only those who have faith in and put in practice.

The Avatamsaka-sūtra says that, engendering pure confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha is prerequisite when the Bodhisattvas determined to seek enlightenment. Due to the pure confidence in the Three Jewels, the Bodhisattvas produce a broad and magnanimous mind or volition of the enlightenment (bodhicitta). It is not seeking objects of desire or positions of authority, wealth, personal enjoyment, or fame but only to deliver all living beings from their suffering and to benefit the world; keeping this idea in mind they rouse their will. It is to profit and gladden all beings, adorn lands and make offering to the Buddhas, accepting the true Dharma,
cultivating knowledge to realize enlightenment; keeping this idea in mind they rouse their will.\textsuperscript{359} That is why Fa-tsang (643-721), a Hua-yen scholar, described that: "Faith is the primary foundation for all kinds of practices. All practices arise from faith."\textsuperscript{360} Fa-tsang assumed that, the perfection of faith in the Buddha is proven through the practice of his teachings. If the resolute faith in the Buddha's teachings is absent, the understanding is mere confused thinking, intellectual discourse, differentiation, and lacking of affective and conative element. Thus, the understanding is not the right view, does not advance to practice.\textsuperscript{361}

The highest stage of faith thus is considered as the nonbacksliding faith (Chinese \textit{pu-t'ui-hisn}), the position that determined to pursue the Bodhisattva ideal to enlightenment, or the aspiration (\textit{adhimukti}) to become the realization of \textit{nirvāṇa}. In this stage, the perfection of faith in the Path is traditionally identified with the great resolve, the wish to fulfil the six perfections (\textit{ṣaṭ-pāramitā}) of Bodhisattva Path.

4.4.4. Faith as the Prerequisite Condition for the Psychological Development

Faith is a Bodhisattva's morally good quality to promote the four kinds of supreme virtue (\textit{guna- pāramitā}), namely, purity, unity, bliss, and eternity.\textsuperscript{362}


\textsuperscript{361} See Park 13.

\textsuperscript{362} J. Takasaki, trans. & intr., \textit{A Study on the Ratnagotra-vibhāga} (\textit{Uttaratantra}) (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966) 205-6.
That is why the Buddha stated: “we say that unsurpassed Enlightenment has faith as its cause. The causes of Enlightenment are innumerable, but if stated as faith, this covers everything.” In order to understand the important role of faith in the psychological development, first let us see how faith plays its role in spiritual life of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

4.4.4.1. The Three Aspects of Faith in the Psychological Development

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, faith in respect of affection and conation is stronger than that of cognition particularly. This is because meanings of Buddha’s teachings in the theory of Ekayāna are deep, wide, and subtle; and the qualities of Buddha are incomprehensible like the ocean. However, it is impossible to have a good faith without any accompanying cognition.

a. Cognitive Aspect of Faith

Cognitive aspect of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism is the appreciation of the Buddha’s enlightenment as well as his qualities, the super nature of the Dharma, and the vows of Bodhisattvas.

When an individual appreciates the Buddha’s enlightenment and his qualities, he has unwavering confidence in the Buddha’s teachings.

In the Śikṣā-samuccaya, Śāntideva quotes the Akṣhayamati-sūtra to elaborate the role of faith with reference to cognition. Here, faith is considered as the controlling faculty by which (1) the individual accepts the right view which assume a transmigration in the world of birth and death, (2) he puts his trust in the ripening of karma, (3) he knows that he will experience the fruit of any karma that he may have done, and (4) even to save his life, he

363  or 說阿耨多羅三藐三菩提信心為因，是菩提因雖復無量，若說信心則已盡。T. 12, No. 0374, fol. 573c29; Kosho Yamamoto, trans., The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra (Tony Page, 2007) 500.
does not do any evil deed, (5) he has taken up the Bodhisattvayāya and does not long for Śrāvakayāna or Pratyekayāna (see supra, p. 159).  

b. Affective Aspect of Faith

The affective aspect of faith is the reverence and reward for the Three Jewels (triratana); honour, copy, preserve, recite, and revere the teachings of the Buddha as well as expound the profound meaning of them for the sake of others, and so on.  

When the individual has acknowledgment of the Buddha’s enlightenment, acquainted with the super nature of the Dharma, dealing with the Bodhisattvas, the affection is arisen in him. According to the Śatapañcāśatakastotra, the reverence for the Buddha is issued from the acknowledgement that, the Buddha is never at fault in any way but all the virtues are established in him in every way.  

The affective aspect of faith is described in the Mahāyāna scriptures as the acts of bhakti for the Three Jewels (see supra, p. 156).

c. Conative Aspect of Faith

The conative aspect of faith is abiding firmly with resolute conviction of the Bodhisattvas in a state of clearness or the great resolve at the very start of their career to help all living beings called inexhaustible vows. For example, during his pass cultivation, Bodhisattva Samantabhadra made ten great vows of practice to achieve the attainment of Buddhahood. The ten great
vows are (1) to pay homage to all Buddhas; (2) to praise all the Buddhas; (3) to make abundant offerings; (4) to confess karmic obstacles; (5) to rejoice in all the merits of others; (6) to request (for the Buddhas) to turn the wheel of the Dharma; (7) to request for the Buddhas to say in their worlds; (8) to study always with all Buddhas; (9) to be in harmony with living beings at all times, and (10) to transfer all merits and virtues.

Besides, Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī made the great vows for innumerable Kalpas to help all living beings to achieve the attainment of Buddhahood. The great vows of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī are said as follows:

(1) As samsāra is endless from beginning to end, so long shall I live that holy life for the happy of all creatures; hereby, I raise the thought of enlightenment (bodhicitta).

(2) In the present life, I invite the entire world to deliver it from poverty, neither mind of malice and stubbornness, nor envy and grudging, I will cherish from this day as long as I have enlightenment.

(3) I will practice continence and avoid criminal lust and imitate the self-restraint and morality of the Buddhas.

(4) Confidence and aspiration to the enlightenment, not as one that is hurried do I undertake to gain enlightenment, I will remain until the end of the chain of being for one living being’s sake.


(5) I will purify a measureless, an unimaginable Buddha’s field when my name is not renowned in ten directions.

(6) Due to purification of three karmas of body, voice, and mind, I will purify all my works.

(7) Furthermore, due to full-time training of Śīla of the Buddhas; yea, I will never do anything which shall be bad.

The great vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra and Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī are the symbols of the practice of the six perfections (śat-pāramitā) in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Mahāyānists hold that, it is difficult to gain confidence in the perfection of wisdom for those who are endowed with little faith;\textsuperscript{369} however, with intense faith, the Bodhisattvas can make efforts about the six perfections with utter disregard for their body and life.\textsuperscript{370} Furthermore, when this deep perfection of wisdom is being preached, if the Bodhisattvas feel respect, affection, and serene faith for it, then they feel respect, affection and serene faith also for all Buddhas and Lords of the past, future, and present.\textsuperscript{371} In this aspect, faith manifests itself as a powerful means for the Bodhisattvas to penetrate into deep spiritual truths. Thus, faith has important place for the individual’s psychological development in the moral life in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Now let us see how it helps for such development.

4.4.4.2. Role of Faith in the Psychological Development

The role of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism is seen under two states, namely, prasāda (faith by learning) and avetya-prasāda (knowledgeable faith, unwavering loyalty). These two states are attributed to that so-called having

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{369} See The Holy and Blessed Perfection of Wisdom in 50 lines, Edward Conze, trans.,\textit{ Perfection Wisdom: The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts} (Totnes: Buddhist Publishing Group, 1993) 187.
\item \textsuperscript{370} See Edward Conze, trans., \textit{The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom} (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990) 331.
\item \textsuperscript{371} See Conze 484.
\end{itemize}
faith in the Doctrinal School (Chinese chiao-hsin) with reference to the commitment to self-confidence that “I can become Buddha” and having faith in the Patriarchal School (Chinese t’su-hsin) with reference to the affirmation that “I am already Buddha.” Let us elaborate this point further as follows.

a. The Role of Faith as Prasāda

Those who are possessed with prasāda have faith in the Buddha’s teaching (buddhavacana). With this faith they eliminate all the adventitious defilements (āgantuka-kleśa) and awaken nonbacksliding faith (Chinese pu-t’ui-hsin).

Prasāda provide good facility to transform mind of faith (sraddhā, Chinese hsin-hsin) into the arising the will of the enlightenment or the mind of wisdom (bodhicitta upāda, Chinese fa-p’u-t’i-hsin or fa-hsin).

One whose mind is possessed with prasāda is determined to pursue the doctrine of Ekayāna to achieve the enlightenment of Buddhahood. On the contrary, one whose mind is not possessed with prasāda is undetermined to pursue the doctrine of Ekayāna; thus, his faith is in retrogressive stage (aniyata-rāṣi, Chinese pu-ting-chū).

b. The Role of Faith as Avetya-prasāda

Those who are possessed with avetya-prasāda have confidence in the Buddha’s teaching (buddhavacana) or the doctrine of Ekayāna. They are able to transform faith (sraddhā) into wisdom (prajñā) and have fully perfected indestructible faith (abhedya-prasāda, Chinese pu-hoai-hsin) or infallible faith (amogha-prasāda, Chinese wo-lou-hsin). They have position that determines the pursuit to the Mahāyāna path and have the courageous step of the will (adhimukti) to become the realization of Buddhahood.

One whose mind is possessed with avetya-prasāda belongs to the determined class that is characterized by the nonbacksliding faith; he will have no fear of backsliding into unenlightened existence.
Thus, *prasāda* means having faith in the teachings of Buddha or the doctrine of *Ekayāna*. It is the capability of raising the volition of the enlightenment (*bodhicitta*). However, just having faith in the doctrine of *Ekayāna* is not the religious aim of the Mahāyānists. *Avetypa-prasāda* is the function of faith in this doctrine. Those who have *avetypa-prasāda* for the doctrine of *Ekayāna* are able to obtain the realization of Buddhahood or to become Suchness (*tathātā*) of the *Tathāgata* that is certainly the goal to aim at for the Mahāyānists.

In summing up, according to the Mahāyāna tradition, faith is a rational faith (*ākāravanti-śraddhā*). Although it is the affection in respect of *prasāda* and *avetypa-prasāda*, it is not the religious sentiment in respect of pure *bhakti*.\(^{371}\) Obviously, like in Theravāda literature, herein faith manifests itself sufficiently in all the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects for both spiritual growth and psychological development. That is why Nāgārjuna stated: “Through faith one relies on the practices, through wisdom one truly knows, of these two, wisdom is the chief, faith is its prerequisite.”\(^{373}\)

4.5. **VARIOUS OBJECTS OF FAITH IN MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM**

It is accepted in Mahāyāna Buddhism that, the objects of faith are the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Saṅgha*. In the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, it is pointed out that, when the *Bodhisattvas* determine to enlighten the many, this is not without cause, not without condition; engendering unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Saṅgha*, by this they produce a broad, magnanimous mind.\(^{374}\)


\(^{373}\) 菩薩發意求菩提，非是無因緣者，於佛法僧生懽信，以是而生廣大心。T. 10, No. 0279, fol. 72b8-09; 菩薩初發意，至心大功德。於佛及法僧，深起

Although it is generalized unwavering faith in the three objects, Mahāyāna literature gives different lists of the objects of faith on different occasions.

According to the Samyukta Āgama, there are four things, which are known as the unwavering loyalties (avetya-prasāda), namely, unwavering loyalty to the Buddha, unwavering loyalty to the Norm (Dharma), unwavering faith in the Buddhist community (Saṅgha) and the virtues loved by the Ariyans (Śīla).\textsuperscript{375}

According to the Mahāyāna-śraddhopatti-śāstra, there are four kinds of faith, namely, faith in Suchness (tathatā), faith in the numberless excellent qualities of the Buddhas, faith in the great benefits of the Dharma, and faith in the Saṅgha – whose members are able to devote themselves to the practice of benefiting both themselves and others.\textsuperscript{376} In other words, the four kinds of faith are faith in the Suchness (tathatā), the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

The difference between the two lists of the four objects of faith is that first list accepts unwavering loyalty to the Śīla while second list accepts unwavering faith in Tathatā. This difference is determined by the practitioners’ perceptions of the essence of the Mahāyāna doctrine.

Indeed, unwavering loyalty to the Śīla and unwavering faith in Tathatā are equal, because both manifests the confidence (śraddhā) and aspiration to the enlightenment (bodhicitta). In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Śīla has role to play in controlling misconduct. The Śīla is known as the kinds of purity, namely, bodily purity, verbal purity, and mental purity (see infra, p. 194).

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{375} See T. 02, No. 099, fol. 433a11-12; Thomas Cleary, trans., The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of Avatamsaka Sūtra (Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, 1993) 331.
\item \textsuperscript{378} See T. 32, No. 1666, fol. 581c08-14; Timothy Richard, trans., The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna Doctrine (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 2008) 35.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Tathatā is the ultimate nature of inherent existence that plays role of the source of an Enlightened One (Buddha) or the basis of enlightenment (bodhi). In short, the Śīla is the means to nourish the Tathāgata-garbha, faith in the Śīla is equal to faith in the essence of Tathatā, which is either the cause (hetu) or the medium (pratyaya) of the bodhi. Thus, the perfection of Śīla as well as the perfection of Samādhi on Tathatā is equal to the enlightenment.

Thus, the objects of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism are the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha, and the Śīla. Let us see what role these objects play in Buddhist faith according to Mahāyāna literature.

### 4.5.1. Faith in the Buddha

The Mahāyānists believe in Buddhakāya. They advocated the theory of Buddhakāya. It was conceived and expanded to the theory of the two, three, four, and even up to ten kāyas of the Buddha. However, the theory of trikāya (Three Bodies) of the Yogacāra School is mostly accepted.

Kāya means the corpus, the body, the tactile sense, bodily action, and any group. However, the word kāya in the context of the doctrine on the Buddhakāya refers to his actual body, primarily the physical body, and also to any group or collection of elements, which make up or in some sense, pertain to the Buddha.

According to the Mādhyamika, the embodiment of the Buddha is conceived as two kāyas, namely, the Nirmānakāya, called Rūpakāya, and the

---

Dharmakāya. The Nirmāṇakāya generally denotes the body of the Buddha that was born with the thirty-two marks of the great man (mahāpuruṣa). The Dharmakāya denotes the body of the Dharma (buddhavacana) on the one hand, and on the other hand it denotes the metaphysical principle underlying the universe – the Reality (tathatā/dharmatā).

The Yogācāra School later distinguished the three kāyas of the Buddha, namely, the Nirmāṇakāya, the Saṃbhogakāya, and the Dharmakāya. According to this School, the Nirmāṇakāya is the gross body or the body that was born with the thirty-two marks of the great man (mahāpuruṣa). The Saṃbhogakāya means the subtle body that was produced by the Dharma (Niśyanda-Buddha or Dharmā-nisyanda-Buddha).

4.5.1.1. Nirmāṇakāya

The Nirmāṇakāya is the form, which the Buddha manifested to render service to sentient beings of the world.\(^{380}\) The Mahāyānists see the Buddha as a spiritual principle, an archetype, than a historical figure, although the historicity of the Buddha cannot be denied. They hold that, the spiritual principle incarnated in the person of Gautama Buddha will incarnate periodically in the world when the need arises for such a manifestation.\(^{381}\) This is a metaphysical conception of Buddha, which certainly has a relationship with the theory of reincarnation. The incarnation of Gautama Buddha is treated as the Tathāgatas who have already come and gone in the past. Whatever is said to have been done and proclaimed by Gautama Buddha is accounted by the Mahāyānists as the apparent doings of a created body of

---

\(^{380}\) See Sūtrālankāra, fol. 45; N. Dutt, Mahāyāna Buddhism (Calcutta: Firma Kim Private, 1973) 159-60.

the Buddha \textit{(Nirmānakāya-buddha)} for a shadowy image created to preach the ways of the world or the Bodhisattva Path.\textsuperscript{382}

According to the \textit{Laṅkāvatāra}, the words as \textit{Nirmāṇa}, \textit{Nirmāṇika}, and \textit{Naṁrāṇika} are used to call a form of Buddhahood that is generally known as the \textit{Nirmāṇa-buddha} (the Transformation Buddha) corresponding to the \textit{Nirmāṇakāya}.\textsuperscript{383} The \textit{Pañcaviṃśati-sāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra} (25,000-line Perfection of Wisdom sutra) also uses the term \textit{Nairmāṇika-kāya} to indicate the body of a Bodhisattva, who after acquiring all the necessary Dharmas and practicing \textit{Prajñāpāramitā} became a \textit{Sambuddha}, renders service to beings of all worlds (lokadhātu) of the ten directions at all times by \textit{Nirmāṇa} clouds (nirmāṇamegha).\textsuperscript{384}

4.5.1.2. \textit{Sambhogakāya}

The \textit{Sambhogakāya} is the form in which the Buddha manifested, that is rendered as the reward body or body of enjoyment of the merits attained as a Bodhisattva. The \textit{Sambhogakāya} is also rendered as the glorious body, which is characterized by the thirty-two marks of great man (mahāpuruṣa), such as eighteen feet in height, a protrusion on the forehead (ūrṇā), golden colour, and heaps of illuminating light emanate from it.\textsuperscript{385}

The \textit{Śūtrālaṅkāra} says that, the \textit{Sambhogakāya} of the Buddhas enjoy the \textit{dharmas} and embodies differently according to various lokadhātus. The \textit{Trīṃśika-vijñāptimātratā-kārika}, that is, Treatise in Thirty Verses on Mer­consciousness, divides the \textit{Sambhogakāya} into two kinds, namely, the

\begin{itemize}
\item See N. Dutt, \textit{Mahāyāna Buddhism} (Calcutta: Firma Klm Private, 1973) 158.
\item See N. Dutt, \textit{Mahāyāna Buddhism} (Calcutta: Firma Klm Private, 1973) 159.
\item Around the body of the Buddha there is always a light, a fathom wide, on all sides, which shines constantly day and night, as brilliantly as a thousand suns, and resembling a mountain of jewels in movement, \textit{Vibhāṣa}; q.v. Moti Lal Pandit, \textit{Buddhism: A Religion of Salvation} (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2004) 25; cf. \textit{Lakkhana-sutta}, D. III.142-162; T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., \textit{Dialogues of the Buddha}, vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007) 137-53.
\end{itemize}
Parasambhogakāya (the reward body which gives enjoyment to others) and the Svasambhogakāya (the reward body which enjoys itself). The former is seen by Bodhisattva, while the latter is seen by the Buddhas of the various lokadhātus. The difference between these two kinds of the Sambhogakāya is that, the former has the mahāpuruṣa-lakṣāna but the citta is as unreal as the citta of the Nirmāṇakāya, while the latter has not the mahāpuruṣa-lakṣāna but the citta is real.

The doctrine of Sambhogakāya of the Buddha indicates an ideal body that is possessed by those Bodhisattvas who were highly advanced ones and awakened the Truth through practice the six perfections. One of the most important forms of Sambhogakāya is Amitābha (Infinite Light), also known as Amitāyus (Infinite Life), which indicates the universality of the Sambhogakāya, the spiritual activity and the influence of which are unlimited by space and time.

4.5.1.3. Dharmakāya

The Dharmakāya is a form of the true nature of the Buddha, which is identified with the Reality (tathatā), the essential laws of the universe. The Dharmakāya represents as the Dharma (the teaching expounded by the Buddha). It is considered to be the eternal indestructible truth, devoid of characteristics, and free from duality.
The Dharmakāya is the Reality which is not different from the things or beings of the worlds. The Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra calls it Śvābhāvikakāya, that is, Śvābhāvika-dharmakāya (the own-natural aspect of Dharma, the body of Dharma); it is foundation of the two other kāyas. It is common for all the Buddha.390

The Trimśika-vijñāptimātratā-kārika calls it Śvābhāvikakāya or Svabhāvakāya, that is, the own-nature body. It is pure dharmadhātu of the Tathāgatas, it is devoid of all the mahāpurusalakṣaṇas, it is immeasurable and illimitable, is subtle and inexpressible. It is the immutable support for the Sambhogakāya and the Nirmāṇakāya.391

The Laṅkāvatāra says, the Dharmatā-buddha is unconditioned, free from conditions, has nothing to do with all doings, senses, and measurements. It lies beyond the range of function of physical and sensual organs (indryas). It does not belong to the world of the ignorant, of Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, philosophers, and those who are always clinging to the notion of an ego. It can be realized within one’s own self only.392

The Trimśika-vijñāptimātratā-kārika explains the Dharmakāya as the transformed āśraya (substratum) – the Ālayavijñāṇa – the transformation being effected by knowledge and suppression of the two evils (dausthulyas), namely, obstruction by mental disturbances (kleśāvarṇa) and obstruction by that is [mistakenly] known (jñeyāvarṇa).393

Furthermore, the Ratnagotra-vibhāga also states that, the Dharmakāya takes the Alayavijñāna to be the medium to reveal itself.\textsuperscript{394}

The Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata is named “cessation of suffering,” it is not mere a philosophical abstraction, standing aloof from this world of birth and death, of joy and sorrow, calmly contemplates on the folly of mankind; however, it is the spiritual existence which is an absolutely one, real and true, and forms the raison d’être of all beings, transcends all modes of upāya; it is free from all desires and struggles or the veil of defilements (kleśāvarana), and stands outside the place of our finite understanding.\textsuperscript{395}

The Dharmakāya is thus conceived as the metaphysical principle of real citta and rūpa of Tathāgata, when not free from the store of defilement it equals to Dharmadhātu or Tathāgata-garbha.\textsuperscript{396} Though the Dharmakāya is free from avidyā (ignorance), kleśa (passion), and trṣṇā (craving), it is revealed in the finite and fragmental consciousness of human beings, that is, “the body of all beings is the Dharmakāya,” and “the Dharmakāya is the body of all beings.” Therefore, on the one hand, the Bodhisattvas aim to remove the avidyā, kleśa, and trṣṇā to understand and realize the fact that their body is equivalent to the Dharmakāya; on the other hand, the Bhodhisattvas have to achieve intelligence (prajñā), sympathy or love (karunā), and will (pranidhānabala); perform those functions themselves for all beings as the essences of Dharmakāya.\textsuperscript{397}


\textsuperscript{395} See Alex Wayman and Hideko Wayman, Introduction, The Lion’s Roar of Queen Śrīmālā, trans. & intr. id. (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1990) 98; Asanga’s General Treatise on Mahāyānism (Mayāñyasamparigraha); q.v. D. T. Suzuki, Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2007) 231.

\textsuperscript{396} See Alex Wayman and Hideko Wayman, Introduction, The Lion’s Roar of Queen Śrīmālā, trans. & intr. id. (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1990) 98.

\textsuperscript{397} See D. T. Suzuki, Outlines of Mahāyāna Buddhism (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2007) 232ff.
In sum, the Mahāyānists believe in the theory of *Buddhakāya* or Buddha’s Bodies, that is, the Buddha has three forms of body, namely, the *Dharmakāya* (the Dharma body), the *Sambhogakāya* (the glorious body), and the *Nirmānakāya* (the transformation body). Gautama Buddha is viewed as the *Nirmānakāya* of the Buddha, the manifestation of the *Dharmakāya*, the reality, or the true nature of universal.

4.5.2. Faith in the Dharma

According to the Mahāyānists, the *Dharma* or *Buddhavacana* is taught with reference to two senses, namely, the ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*), that is, the truth in terms of ultimate fruit, and the conventional truth (*lokāsāmyrti-satya*), that is, the truth of worldly convention.\(^{398}\)

The *Dharma* in the sense of ultimate truth is inexpressible in language, which is beyond words and concepts. It can only be understood and shared between the Buddhas.\(^{399}\) Whatever has been spoken of, for example, the concepts of *Dharma*, such as Dharma-nature (*dharmatā*), Suchness (*tathatā*), Emptiness (*śūnyatā*), and Reality-limit (*bhūtakoti*) are conventional concepts, which are the means (*upāya*) to achieve the ultimate truth.

The *Dharma* in the sense of conventional truth is that can be known, can be expressed by words and concepts. In this sense, the term *Dharma* is

\(^{398}\) The doctrine of the Buddhas is taught with reference to two truths – conventional truth (*lokāsāmyrti-satya*) and ultimate truth (*paramārtha-satya*). Those who do not understand the difference between these two truths do not understand the profound essence (*tattva*) of the doctrine of the Buddha. Without dependence on everyday practice (*vyavahāra*) the ultimate is not taught. Without resorting to the ultimate, nirvāṇa is not attained. If emptiness is coherent then all is coherent. If emptiness is not coherent then likewise all is not coherent, *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, xxiv: 8-10, 14; Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations* (New York: Routledge, 1998) 69; cp. David Burton, *Emptiness Appraised: A Critical Study of Nāgārjuna’s Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2001) 97.

used in basically three senses, namely, metaphysical sense, philosophical anthropological sense, and ethical sense.

Besides, the *Dharma* in the sense of conventional truth is treated as having two aspects, namely, the speculative aspect and the practical aspect.\(^\text{400}\)

1. The speculative aspect is essentially a sort of metaphysics, where the intellect is engaged solely in ratiocination and abstraction. In this aspect, the *Dharma* is described systematically in ontological meanings.
2. The practical aspect deals with such the empirical reality that is usually accepted in everyday life. In this phase, the *Dharma* is admitted for practical purposes of communication that constitute the essence of the Mahāyāna system.

The theory of *tathāgata-garbha* indicates that, there is a possibility of every individual’s being Bodhisattva. Hence, the Mahāyānists believe that, if an individual wants to become a Bodhisattva he should have faith in these aspects of the *Dharma*. That is why Śāntideva in Śīkṣā-samuccaya quotes the *Akṣhayamati-sūtra* to say that, the theory of *karma*, the Bodhisattva ideal, the theory of *tathāgata-garbha*, the theory of Śūnyatā, the theory of *Dharma-dhātu* are the aspects of the *Dharma* in Mahāyāna Buddhism that should be realized and firmed in faith for the Bodhisattvas.\(^\text{401}\) Let us see how faith in these aspects of the *Dharma* leads the individual to become a Bodhisattva.

4.5.2.1. The Metaphysical Aspect of the Dharma

The *Dharma* in the sense of metaphysics talks about the theories concerning structure and constituents of the world, such as the theory of Universal


Realm (dharma-dhātu), the theory of Emptiness (śūnyatā) and the theory of Totality or universal realm (dharma-dhātu).

a. The Theory of Universal Realm – Dharma-dhātu

The theory of Universal Realm (dharma-dhātu) is based upon the principle of Dharma-dhātu-causation. The term dharma-dhātu literally means ‘the elements of the principle,’ which was conceived as two respects, namely, phenomenon and noumenon. From the viewpoint of noumenon, dharma-dhātu is the state of śūnyatā; from the perspective of phenomenon, it manifests as the world of all matter and phenomena. The principle of Dharma-dhātu-causation assumes that all things in the universe (matter and mind) arose simultaneously, they are dependent on each other, and they mutually permeate to make a universal symphony of harmonious totality. \(^{402}\)

According to the Hua-yen-ching kang-yao, the Dharma-dhātu is classified into four categories with respect to phenomenon and noumenon, which were later propagated as philosophical concepts of the universe by Master Tu-shun (557 – 640 CE, the founder of Chinese Hua-yen School). The four categories are expressed as follows: \(^{403}\)

1. The Dharma-dhātu of Shih (Chinese shih fa-jie). Shih is a rendering of the Chinese character 事, which means matter, phenomenon, or event. Thus, dharma-dhātu of shih may be understood as ‘the world of all matter and phenomena’ or ‘the world of actual life.’

2. The Dharma-dhātu of Li (Chinese li fa-jie). Li is a rendering of the Chinese character 理, which means principle, law, or noumenon. Thus, dharma-dhātu of li may be understood as ‘the world of the śūnyatā.’


\(^{403}\) See X. 8, No. 0240, fol. 720c4-10; T. 45, No. 1885; Garma C. C. Chang, *The Buddhist Teaching of Totality: the Philosophy of Hwa Yen Buddhism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1971) 208ff.
(3) The Dharma-dhātu of Li-shih-wu-ai (Chinese li-shih-wu-ai fa-jie). Wu-ai is a rendering of the Chinese characters 無礙, which mean non-obstruction. Thus, dharma-dhātu of li-shih-wu-ai may be understood as ‘the world of non-obstruction between noumenon and phenomenon.’

(4) The Dharma-dhātu of Shih-shih-wu-ai (Chinese shih-shih-wu-ai fa-jie) thus can be understood as ‘the world of non-obstruction between phenomena.’

In the world of actual life (Chinese shih fa-jie), individualism is apt to predominate; competition, conflict, dispute, and struggle too often will disturb the harmony. The usual philosophies regard those as natural. However, Buddhism with the principle of Dharma-dhātu sets up a world in which actual life attains an ideal harmony. The theory of Dharma-dhātu shows us that, no being will exist by itself and for itself, but the whole world will move and act in union as if the whole were under general organization. Faith in the theory of Dharma-dhātu makes up one’s mind to construct an ideal world called ‘the World One-and-True.’ The ideal world is not only an idea of Mahāyāna Buddhism but also the great aspiration of many thinkers. Immanuel Kant, for example, acknowledged conflict as the nature of the actual life, but he cherished hopes a ‘principle of union’ that may bring about the harmony.

b. The Theory of Emptiness – Śūnyatā

Emptiness (śūnyatā, Pali suññatā) is regarded as fundamental characteristic of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is identical with the ultimate nature of inherent
existence, the Enlightened One’s insight, and the ultimate truth. It can be said that, Suchness (tathatā) is the basis for enlightenment (bodhi) of the Buddhas and the principle of Pratitya-samutpāda is the content of enlightenment, and emptiness (śūnyatā) is the insight of the Buddhas.

The theory of Śūnyatā is not nihilism. This is because the nihilists argue that, “emptiness means that nothing exists or reality based on emptiness is unknowable, it will have nothing meaningful to say about or reality and the universe.” The theory Śūnyatā in Buddhism arrives at just the opposite. The Heart Sutra points out that, the Dharmas are marked with emptiness, that is, all things are non-arising, non-ceasing, non-permanence, non-annihilation, non-identity, non-difference, non-coming, and non-exiting. Through the view of emptiness, one can realize the temporariness of all existence and can have right view of the conventional world. Therefore, the Buddha said: “For this is the abiding of the great man, Sāriputta, that is to say emptiness.”

Vasubandhu in the Madhyāntavibhāga-kārikā says that, everything is described neither void (śūnya) nor non-void (cāśūnya). That indeed is the Middle Path, for, there is existent as well as inexistent, and again existent. Hui-yüan said: “Emptiness is that from which things arise and into which they cease. The existent does not return to the inexistent, and the inexistent

---

407 Here, O Sariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they are not produced or stopped, not defiled or immaculate, not deficient or complete; Edward Conze, trans. & comy., Buddhist Wisdom: The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra (New York: Vintage Books, 2001) 91.
409 Na śūnyam nāpi cāśūnyam tasmāi sarvam vidhiyate, sattvād-asaṭtvād sattvāc-ca madhyamā-pratipac-ca sā, that is, Neither void nor non-void: so is everything described, that indeed is the middle path, for there is existence as well as non-existence, and again existence, Madhyāntavibhāga, 1. 3; q.v. Thomas A. Kochumuttom, A Buddhist Doctrine of Experience (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989) 42, 236.
does not return to the existent, but both revert to emptiness. In this respect, emptiness is the ultimate nature of inherent existence.

Every inherent existence comes into existence due to the principle of Pratītya-samutpāda. In other words, the principle of Pratītya-samutpāda reflects the ultimate nature of the Dharmas. It is tightly penetrating into everything and every concept, through it, the Buddha explains positively the characteristics of universal existence, that is, impermanence (anitya), suffering or unsatisfactoriness (duhkha), and non-self (anātman). These characteristics are just foundations to understand the ultimate nature of all phenomena. Understand that, all phenomena are impermanence, because they are changing continuously due to the vital component of a train of causes and conditions; all phenomena are non-self, because they come into existence without an independent element. They are thus the entity of emptiness. And as Nāgārjuna said, “It is dependent origination that we call emptiness.”

The principle of Pratītya-samutpāda is the content of the Buddha’s enlightenment. The Buddha stated that, whoever realizes the principle of Pratītya-samutpāda sees the Dharma, whoever sees the Dharma realizes the principle of Pratītya-samutpāda. The Dharma herein indicates the

---


412 The content of the Buddha’s Enlightenment is given in some texts not as the Four Noble Truths and the destruction of the corruptions but as conditioned origination; Richard F. Gombrich, *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* (Delhi: Manohar, 2002) 46.

413 Yo paticcassamuppādaṁ passati so dhammam passati; yo dhammaṁ passati so paticcassamuppādaṁ passatiti, that is, whoever sees conditioned genesis sees dhamma, whoever sees dhamma sees conditioned genesis, M. I.190-1; I. B. Horner, trans., *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 236-7. On another occasion, the Buddha said: Dhammaṁ passati so maṁ passati; yo maṁ passati so dhammaṁ passati, that is, whoever sees the Dharma sees me, whoever sees me sees the Dharma, S. III.119; F. L. Woodward, trans., *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005) 103.
Dharmakāya, highest truth of the Buddhas, the ultimate truth or Tathatā. In the Avatāmsaka-sūtra the Buddha said, when the Bhuddhas attain true awakening, he acquires the body equal in extent to all sentient beings, equal in extent to all phenomena, equal in extent to Tathatā, equal to the ultimate calm realm of nirvāṇa, and so on. And upon attaining true awakening, the Buddhas see within their body all sentient beings attaining true awakening, and see all sentient beings enter nirvāṇa, all of the same nature, which is emptiness. In such a manner of speaking, the emptiness is identical with the essence of the enlightenment or the insight of Enlightened One.

In summing up, from the viewpoint of ultimate truth, the emptiness is inexpressible. To resort to the ultimate, emptiness is ontologized into the categories of conventional truth and the ultimate truth; however, their intrinsic nature is just ultimate truth. Emptiness is identical with ultimate truth because it is both a truth and a sacred object. Being the sacred object, emptiness is the door of liberation, the realization of emptiness is identify with the liberation from the cycle of birth and death (samsāra) or the realization of nirvāṇa. Being the truth, it appears in accordance with mode of existent and inexistent. Thus, when a mind realizes directly the emptiness, inherent existence does not appear at all; and when the ultimate truth is cognized directly, the emptiness does not appear to be existent and inexistent.

**c. The Theory of Karma**

The Saṃskṛt word karma (Pāli kamma) literally means action or doing. However, according to the theory of karma, it means volitional action, not all actions. In Buddhist terminology, karma never means its effect, because

---


its effect is known as the fruit or result of *karma* (*karma-phala* or *karma-vipāka*). That is why the Buddha taught that, volitional action is called *karma*, having volition, one commits *karma* by body, voice, and mind.\(^4\)

The teaching of *karma* was accounted as early as the first Buddhist scriptures, it is found in the *Vinaya-piṭaka* and the *Sūtra-piṭaka* of both the Pāli and the Sanskrit scriptures.\(^5\) In Buddhism, the concept of *karma* is not a fatalistic theory of causation or the idea of justice or reward and punishment. This is because the fatalistic theory of causation strictly implies that whatever one does have been preordained and the future is already fixed;\(^6\) while the theory of *karma* in Buddhism manifests itself as the law of cause and effect, of action and reaction. The theory of *karma* is actually a natural law. In Buddhism, it has nothing to do with the idea of justice or reward and punishment.\(^7\)

The theory of *karma* certainly implies that, there is always something resulting from a cause, according to it, nothing can perish without leaving its effect. Precisely, a deed whether morally good or bad, positive or negative, once committed to the inner mind or the physical body, will never fail to bring, not only on its owner but upon those intimately related.\(^8\)

The theory of *karma*, like the theory of Śūnyatā, is considered as another version of the principle of *Pratītya-samutpāda*. Furthermore, according to Buddhism, the cycle of birth and death of all living beings (*samsāra*) arises


\(^8\) See Dh. vv. 66, 194; S. Radhakrishnan, ed. & intr., *The Dhammapada* (Delhi: Oxford India Paperbacks, 1996) 80, 123.
in accordance with *karma*. So belief in the theory of *karma* presupposes the belief in the *samsāra*. Poussin considers the theory of *karma* to be “primarily a rationalistic and moral explanation of the conditions of living beings through many consecutive existences.”

Vasubandhu in the *Karmasiddhiprakaraṇa* elaborates that, the Buddha states in many places throughout the sūtras the three kinds of *karma*, namely, bodily *karma* (*kāyakarma*), vocal *karma* (*vākkarma*), and mental *karma* (*manahkarma*). Here, it is said, the *karma* that is done by the body (*kāyakṛta*) is called bodily *karma*, the voice (*vāc*) being action is called vocal *karma*; these two take expression (*vijñapti*) and non-expression (*avijñapti*) to be their natures. The *karma* that associated with the mind is called the mental *karma*; this *karma* has only volition (*cetanā*) for its nature.

In short, body, voice, and mind are the sources of *karma*. The motive that encompasses the *kāyakarma*, the *vākkarma*, and the *manahkarma* is the *cetanā*. Accordingly, the *karma* is always characterized in accordance with the characters of the *cetanā* that has important role to play in accumulating *karma*. If the *cetanā* coordinates the *akusala-citta*, it certainly motivates body, voice, and mind to encompass ten kinds of immoral *karma* (*akusala-karma*), namely, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, harsh speech, vain talk, covetousness, ill will, and wrong view, that lead to rebirth as a hell dweller, as an animal, or as a hungry ghost. If the *cetanā* coordinates the *kusala-citta*, it certainly motivates body, voice, and mind to

---

encompass ten kinds of moral karma (kusala-karma) that lead to rebirth as a human or as a heaven dweller (see supra, p. 128).

Thus, for Buddhism, the understanding of the theory of karma, like the understanding of the principle of Pratītya-samutpāda, urges a thoughtful man to refrain from the misconducts, when man comprehends moral causation, he knows well that it is his own actions that make his life miserable otherwise. He knows that, the cause of the differences and inequalities in present life are due to the moral and immoral karmas of past existences, then he resolves to promote moral and spiritual life. In short, as Rewatadhamma asserted, this kind of understanding paves the way toward the realization of the Four Noble Truths.\(^4\)

4.5.2.2. The Philosophical Anthropological Aspect of the Dharma

The Dharma in the sense of philosophical anthropology talks about the theories concerning potential and nature of human beings. It attempts to elaborate the essence of man that makes him capable for following the doctrine of Ekāyāna. This aspect of Dharma is reflected in the theory of Perfect One’s Matrix (tathāgata-garbha).

Tathāgata is interpreted as the combination of tathā and gata (thus gone and thus come) which is used for the Supreme or Excellent Person (uttama-puriso or parama-puriso),\(^5\) one who has destroyed the cankers, whose foot-prints are untraceable (ananuvejja);\(^6\) garbha means either an


embryo, or a womb, or other container. The compound *Tathāgata-garbha* thus means Perfect One’s Matrix. The term *Tathāgata-garbha* implies the meaning that the Buddha potential resides latently within the existence of living beings. The *Tathāgata-garbha* is a reservoir of things good and bad, pure and defiled, where the cycle of birth and death of all living beings begins; in principle, the mortal and the immortal coincide with each other. It is also the source out of which the Buddha, the Law, and the Brotherhood can come out. In other words, the nature of *Tathāgata-garbha* is originally immaculate, but because of the adventitious defilements (*āgantuka-kleśa*) it is soiled.

The theory of *Tathāgata-garbha* says that all paths of existence are generated by the *Tathāgata-garbha*. Whether the *Tathāgatas* appear in this world or not, these living beings are always possessed of the *Tathāgata-garbha*.

The characteristics of *Tathāgata-garbha* are as follows:

1. The own nature (*svabhāva*) of the embryo;
2. The cause (*hetu*) of its purification;
3. The result (*phala*) of its purification;
4. The function (*karman*) towards the purification;
5. The union (*yoga*) of the embryo;
6. The manifestation (*vrtti*) of the embryo;

---

429 T. 16, No. 0670, fol. 510b. The *Tathāgata-garbha* holds within it the cause of both good and evil, and it all forms of existence are produced. Like an actor it takes on a variety of forms, and [in itself] is devoid of an essence and what belongs to it; D. T. Suzuki, trans. & intr., *The Lankāvatāra Sūtra* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009) 190.
(7) The various states (avasthapra-bhedā) of its manifestation;
(8) All-pervadingness (sravatraga) of the embryo;
(9) Unchangeability (avikāra) of the embryo through various states; and
(10) Non-differentiation (abhedā) of the embryo with the Reality.

Especially, the own nature of the embryo has three meanings correspond to Dharma-kīya, Tathātā, and Tathāgata-gotra.\textsuperscript{432}

(1) The Dharma-kīya of the Tathāgata penetrates all living beings.
(2) The Tathāgata being the tathātā, is the undifferentiated whole.
(3) There exists the Tathāgata-gotra in every living being.

The nature of the Tathāgata-garbha, moreover, is elaborated metaphorically through three particular natural categories, such as the wish-fulfilling jewel, the sky, and water. First of all, the nature of the Absolute Body of the Tathāgata is illustrated through the particular characteristic of the wish-fulfilling jewel, such as the own nature of powers, fulfilment of desired objects, and so on. The nature of Reality of the Tathāgata is illustrated through the particular characteristic of sky, that is, the own nature of identity at everywhere. The nature of the embryo of the Tathāgata is illustrated through the particular characteristic of water, that is, its moist nature of mercy towards living beings.

The Ratnagotra-vibhāga also explains it with metaphors that are used to illustrate the relationship between the intrinsically pure Tathāgata-garbha and the stains of the adventitious defilements (āgantuka-kleśa), for example, the germ of a seed inside the fruit of trees, a precious image of the Buddha made of jewels wrapped in the tattered rags of bad smell, an inexhaustible

treasure under the ground within the house of a poor man, and so on.\textsuperscript{433} Just like the poor man who lives in that house might not know about that treasure, so the living beings of the world are unable to see the intrinsically pure Tathāgata-garbha and the stains of adventitious defilements through their mind.\textsuperscript{434} However, the pure Tathāgata-garbha intrinsically exists since ‘beginningless time.’\textsuperscript{435}

The Tathāgata-garbha cannot be seen for those who are fallen into the erroneous conception maintaining the existence of individuality (satkāyadrṣṭipatīta), for those who are attached to delusion (viparyāśābhīrata), and for those whose mind has deviated from the conception of Non-substantiality (śūnyatā-vikṣipta-citta). The Ratnagotra-vibhāga elaborates four kinds of individual who have not a perception of the Highest Truth. The four kinds of individual are the ordinary beings, the Śravakas, the Pratyekabuddhas, and the Bodhisattvas. Nevertheless, they can understand this Truth only by faith.\textsuperscript{436}

The conviction in the genuineness of Tathatā depends upon the nature of faith. If faith is weak and fragile, the conviction of the revelatory insights of the Tathāgata and the Tathāgata-garbha will be wavering. At the first stage of the progress of liberation, faith represents a provisional state of knowledge. Faith enables the practitioner to open his mind and to start his searching. Faith, therefore, is elevated to an indispensable condition of

\textsuperscript{433} See Rv. 96-8; J. Takasaki, trans. & intr., \textit{A Study on the Ratnagotra-vibhāga (Uttaratantra)} (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966) 269.

\textsuperscript{434} See Rv. 112-4; J. Takasaki, trans. & intr., \textit{A Study on the Ratnagotra-vibhāga (Uttaratantra)} (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966) 272-3.

\textsuperscript{435} See Rv. 149; J. Takasaki, trans. & intr., \textit{A Study on the Ratnagotra-vibhāga (Uttaratantra)} (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966) 288.

\textsuperscript{436} The Highest Truth of the Buddhas can be understood only by faith. Indeed, the eyeless one cannot see the blazing disk of the sun, Rv. 153; J. Takasaki, trans. & intr., \textit{A Study on the Ratnagotra-vibhāga (Uttaratantra)} (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966) 296; cf. Alex Wayman and Hideko Wayman, trans. & intr. \textit{The Lion’s Roar of Queen Srimālā} (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1990) 96.
liberation, the initial step towards the acquirement of Gnostic Wisdom in any Preliminary Doctrine or Final Doctrine.\footnote{But see Moti Lal Pandit, \textit{Buddhism: A Religion of Salvation} (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2004) 218.}

The Preliminary Doctrine holds that, the mature knowledge or wisdom cannot be reached in a day or two. The practitioner has to work strenuously, over a long period of life, for the process of liberation. During that process, faith is indispensible. In other words, faith presents in the three stages of training, that is, \textit{Śīla}, \textit{Samādhi}, and \textit{Prajñā}. The Mahāyāna Final Doctrine holds on the theory of Perfect One’s Matrix (\textit{Tathāgata-garbha}), which states that all of living beings are already Buddha nature. The theory of Immediate Enlightenment denies the stages of the progress of liberation, but the progress called “to roll up” the veil of defilements (\textit{klesāvarana}) to burst forth the Buddha nature is obviously a necessary progress.

In any way, faith is the initial motivation to break up egoistic self-reliance to practice the path of liberation; however, the final realization is the effect of insight but not faith.

4.5.2.3. The Ethical Aspect of the Dharma

The \textit{Dharma} in the sense ethic talks about practical principles, such as the six perfections (\textit{sat-pāramitā}) of the Bodhisattva doctrine, moral and immoral actions (\textit{karma}). This aspect gives importance to the purity of mind and discussed how an individual will have pure mind with the help of which he will be developed spiritually as well as morally. The ethical aspect of \textit{Dharma} is reflected in the concept of Bodhisattva.

Bodhisattva is one of the important concepts of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The term Bodhisattva (Pāli \textit{bodhisatta}) has occurred frequently in the Pāli
Nikāyas.\textsuperscript{438} However, it was developed into the doctrine of Bodhisattva in Buddhist Sanskrit literature.

The term Bodhisattva is derived from two words, namely, bodhi, that is, enlightenment and sattva, that is, substance, existence, or being. The compound Bodhisattva is rendered as ‘one who has perfect wisdom as his essence.’\textsuperscript{439} The essential natures of a Bodhisattva are great loving heart (mahā-karunā-citta), intelligence (prajñā), and non-grasping (anupādāna).

The Bodhisattva ideal originally emerged as the highest aspiration to achieve the attainment of Buddhahood (bodhicitta).\textsuperscript{440} According to the Bodhisattva doctrine, if the Bodhisattvas want to become bodhi they have to become expert in the six perfections (ṣaṭ-pāramitā). The six perfections are as follows:\textsuperscript{441}

1. **Dāna** (giving, generosity, liberality): to accomplish the quality of generosity;
2. **Śīla** (virtuous conduct, morality, righteousness): to accomplish the quality of harmlessness;
3. **Kṣānti** (forbearance, patience): to accomplish the quality of not to be perturbed by anything;
4. **Vīrya** (energy, diligence): to accomplish the quality of joy in what is virtuous, positive, or wholesome;
5. **Dhyāna** (rapt musing, concentration): to accomplish the quality of not to be distracted; and

\textsuperscript{438} The Majjhima-nikāya repeatedly records the term Bodhisatta in the language of the Buddha that: sambodhā anubhisambuddhassa bodhisattasseva sato, that is, before my awakening, while I was still the Bodhisattva, M. 1:17, 92, 114, 163, 240; I. B. Horner, trans., The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 22, 120, 148, 207, 295.
\textsuperscript{441} See T. 31, No. 1604, fol. 627b21-26; S. V. Limaye, trans., Mahāyānasūtraśāstra (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 2000) 286.
(6) Prajñā (wisdom): to accomplish the quality of perfect discrimination of phenomena, all knowable things.

The six perfections were also increased to ten. The four supplementary perfections are as follows:

(7) Upāya (skillfulness in the choice adaption of means for conversion or succour);
(8) Pranidhāna (aspiration or resolution).
(9) Bala (strength, power); and
(10) Jñāna (knowledge).

The first of the six perfections are really the major factors in Bodhisattva principles. The six perfections are fundamentally related to the triad Śīla (virtuous conduct), Samādhi (concentration), and Prajñā (wisdom), which are known as the tri-śikṣā (three trainings), namely, adhi-śīla (higher virtue), adhi-citta (higher mind), and adhi-prajñā (higher wisdom); or the tri-skandha (three groups), namely, śīla-skandha (moral discipline group), samādhi-skandha (concentration group), prajñā-skandha (wisdom group).

The first three perfections (dāna, śīla, and ksānti) correspond to the training in the order of śīla; the fifth and sixth (dhyāna and prajñā) correspond to

---

42 According to the Jātaka, the ten previous birth perfections (dasapāramīs) required for the Buddhahood are described in corresponding the length of stories (Serivanija (J. 3), Rohini, Ārāmadīśaka, Vedabbha (J. 45-7), Guttīla (J. 243), Sasa (J. 316), Kusa (J. 531), Ummagga (J. 546), and Vessantara (J. 547)) as follows: śīla (virtuous conduct), nekkhamma (renunciation), paññā (wisdom), viriya (energy), khanti (forbearance), sacca (truthfulness), adhi-paññā (resolution), metta (love or friendliness), and upakīmhā (equanimity); see Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999) 167.


44 See Mahā-vyūtpatti, section 4; q.v. Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999) 168. Pañca-skandha formula in the Ugraparipṛcchā (The Inquiry of Ugra) consists of the śīla-skandha, samādhi-skandha, prajñā-skandha plus two additional components, i.e., vimukti-skandha (liberation group) and vimukti-jñāna-dārsans-skandha (insight and vision into liberation group); see Jan Nattier, trans., *The Bodhisattva Path: Based on the Ugraparipṛcchā, a Mahāyāna Sūtra* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007) 238.
the two trainings in the orders of *citta* and *prajñā*; while the fourth (*vīrya*) is a neutral principle which corresponds to all of the three trainings.\(^{445}\)

The *dāna*, *śīla*, *kṣānti*, *vīrya*, *dhyāna*, and *prajñā* are stated in this order for three reasons:\(^{446}\)

1. They are produced in this order as the cause and the effect, that is, due to the accomplishment of the quality of the *dāna* (being indifferent towards body and wealth), one is engaged in the *śīla*; due to the accomplishment of the quality of the *śīla* (being harmless to others), he comes capable of the *kṣānti*; due to the accomplishment of the quality of *ksānti* (to be not perturbing by anything), he undertakes the *vīrya*; due to the accomplishment of the quality of the *vīrya* (being joy in what is virtuous, positive, or wholesome), there is origination of the *dhyāna*; due to the accomplishment of the quality of the *dhyāna* (to be not distracting), one has adequate knowledge of principles.

2. They are produced in this order for the lower and the higher order, that is, the former is lower and the latter is higher: the *śīla* is higher than the *dāna*; the *kṣānti* is higher than the *śīla*; the *vīrya* is higher than the *kṣānti*; the *dhyāna* is higher than the *vīrya*; and the *prajñā* is higher than *dhyāna*.

3. They are produced in this order for the gross and the subtle order, that is, the former is gross, the latter is subtle: the *dāna* is gross, the *śīla* is subtle, the *śīla* is gross, the *kṣānti* is subtle, and so forth. Being gross because they are easy to develop and follow. Being subtle because they are difficult to develop and follow.


Among the four supplementary perfections, the *upāya* is the most important. It is especially related to a Bodhisattva’s function. This is because the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi* writes that, the duty of Bodhisattva is an effective preacher. All perfections are fulfilled by preaching. The object of the *upāya* is “the conversion of those who are hostile or indifferent to the faith, and the development and liberation of those who already profess Buddhism.”

In order to become *bodhi*, the Bodhisattvas have to progress through the ten stages (*bhūmis*). These stages are as follows:

1. First stage is called *pramuditā* (Chinese *huan-xi*, that is, enjoyment) because a Bodhisattva feels keen delight (*moda*) when he knows that he will soon attain Enlightenment (*bodhi*) and promote the good of creatures (*arthā-caryā*).
2. Second stage is called *vimalā* (Chinese *li-gou*, that is, free from impurity or maculate world) because the Bodhisattva is free from the defilements of unrighteous conduct. He is now straightforward, tender-hearted, active, self-controlled, calm, beneficent, incorruptible, noble, magnanimous, and free from desire.
3. Third stage is called *prabhākarī* (Chinese *fa-guang*, that is, light-giving or luminous world) because the Bodhisattva diffuses the great light of the Doctrine among the living being. His thoughts are now pure, constant, unworldly, dispassionate, firm, resolute, ardent, ambitious, noble, and magnanimous.
4. Fourth stage is called *arcīmatī* (Chinese *yan-hui*, that is, radiant or effulgent world) because the rays of the [thirty-seven] wings of...
Enlightenment (*bodhipakṣya-dharmas*) consume the veil and obstruction of sin and ignorance. The Bodhisattva now gains entrance to the light of the Doctrine by reflecting on the nature of the Worlds of things and living beings, of Space, of Consciousness, of the Truth, of the three realms of sensuous Desire, Form and Formlessness, and noble and magnanimous of Aspiration.

(5) Fifth stage is called *sudurjayā* (Chinese *nan-sheng*, that is, difficult to conquer or unconquerable) because the Bodhisattva performs the difficult feat of maturing others and surveillance of his own mind, the suffering is won over.

(6) Sixth stage is called *abhimukhi* (Chinese *xian-qian*, that is, face to face or looking straight in face of the world) because the Bodhisattva, practicing the Perfection of Wisdom, now stands face to face with both transmigration (*saṃsāra*) and liberation (*nirvāṇa*).

(7) Seventh stage is called *dūraṅgamā* (Chinese *yuan-xing*, that is, far-going) because it leads to the end of the Uniform-path of One Vehicle (*ekayāna*), to the consummation of the Discipline.

(8) Eighth stage is called *acalā* (Chinese *bu-dong*, that is, immovable or steadfast) because the Bodhisattva cannot be disturbed by the two ideas of Cause and Absence of Cause. He now acquires the patience (*kṣānti*) called patient endurance of uncreated (*anuttapatti-dharma-kṣānti*).

(9) Ninth stage is called *sādhumaitī* (Chinese *shan-hui*, that is, good mind or good though) because the Bodhisattva has good thought on account of the discriminating knowledge (*pratisamvīda*)⁴⁵¹ that he acquires.

(10) Tenth stage is called *dharma-meghā* (Chinese *fa-yun*, that is, cloud of the doctrine) because it is pervaded by the modes of concentration

---

(samādhi) and continuance in rectitude (dhārani), as space is occupied by clouds.

In this way, the Bodhisattva’s practice is a way by which an individual becomes bodhi for himself and for others at one and the same time; as the saying of Bodhisattvas’ resolution, the Bodhisattvas are to regenerate and return to this world; this is called “not dwelling in samsāra and nirvāṇa” (apratiṣṭhita-saṃsāra-nirvāṇa).⁴⁵² So, if an individual has faith in the Bodhisattva doctrine, he is encouraged to develop himself spiritually as well as morally.

Inheriting from early Buddhism, as Theravāda, Mahāyāna regards the Dharma as the words of the Buddha (buddhavacana), especially Mahāyāna treats the Dharma as the Dharmakāya. In order to preserve the Dharma, the Theravādins placed the Nikāyas at the central position while the Mahāyānists argued that the preservation of the Nikāyas is a deviation from the spirit of the original teachings of the Buddha, and then the Mahāyānists wrote fresh ones with intent to conserve more for the spirit than for the letter of the scriptures. As a result, between Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism arose in various thoughts of the path to nirvāṇa. Establishing on the Path of the three stages of training, that is, Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā, Theravāda Buddhism conceived the gradual path to nirvāṇa. According to Mahāyāna Buddhism, nirvāṇa can be achieved through two paths, namely, the gradual and the sudden path. The latter path is the way of achieving perfect wisdom through the realization of the true nature of universal, that is, Suchness (tathatā) while the former path is the way of awakening to the Truth through practice of the six perfections (ṣat-pāramitā, see infra, p. 200).

⁴⁵² See Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra, XVII.32; S. V. Limaye, trans., Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 2000) 357.
4.5.3. Faith in the Sangha

The meaning and essence of the *Saṅgha* in Mahāyāna Buddhism, basically, is understood as the community of the Bodhisattvas who are ordained the *Bodhisattva-sīla*.

In the Mahāyāna tradition, both *Bhikṣu* and *Bhikṣunī* are ordained completely at the same time together the *Pātimoksha-sīla* (Rules of monastic community) and the *Bodhisattva-sīla*. The *Bodhisattva-sīla* is especially applied to both the monastic and lay orders of this tradition. The community of those who have ordained together the *Pātimoksha-sīla* and the *Bodhisattva-sīla* thus is called *Bodhisattva-saṅgha* or *Bodhisattva-gana*. The practice of this order, consequently, carries out more scrupulous fashion than the Śrāvaka counterpart.

The body of the *Saṅgha* in the Mahāyāna tradition is understood in two ways. From the perspective of the Śrāvakas, that is, the body of the *Saṅgha* that includes those who attained the fruit of these four stages of the Path and who are practicing for the realization of the fruits of the four stages of the Path. From the perspective of the Bodhisattvas, the body of the *Saṅgha* includes all Bodhisattvas are abiding on any of the ten *bhūmis*. Consequently, the notion of the body of the *Saṅgha* in the Mahāyāna tradition is broader than in the Theravāda tradition, it is not mere *Bhikṣu* and *Bhikṣunī* of the Four Quarters of both Śrāvaka and the Bodhisattva but of the lay Bodhisattva order also.

According to the Mahāyāna tradition, the *Saṅgha* not only plays the role in preservation and preaching the Buddha’s teachings but also bringing into play the Mahāyāna thought. In this regard, the *Saṅgha* takes over preceptor role on the one hand, and on the other hand individuals of the *Saṅgha* are the spiritual friends (*kalyāṇa-mitra*) of each other. Gempopa in
The Jewel Ornament of Liberation states that, a Bodhisattva is known as a spiritual friend who is endowed with the qualities as follows:453

(1) To possess the Bodhisattva-śīla in ethics and manners;
(2) To be well versed in the Bodhisattvapitaka;
(3) Fully comprehend the ultimate real;
(4) To be full of compassion and love;
(5) To possess the four intrepidity;
(6) To have patience;
(7) To have an indefatigable mind; and
(8) To use the right words.

The Bodhisattva cult that has seen in the Mahāyāna tradition is just a style of faith in the Saṅgha. Normally, the Bodhisattvas of that cult came from the Saṅgha Order, and each of the Bodhisattvas is a personification of a specific characteristic of the Buddha, for instance, Avalokiteśvara is the personification of Mercy (karunā) and Mañjuśrī is the personification of wisdom (prajñā). Those who dedicate themselves corresponding to their characteristics to bring about great benefits for others that are honoured with reward names as the Bodhisattvas. They may be recollected and worshiped as the Bodhisattva cult thereby the noble conducts.

The Saṅgha is the doorway for those who wish to reform themselves. Those who, whether from the monastic order or lay order, are possessed of faith in the Saṅgha due to the acknowledgment and acquaintance with its qualities, they will possess many benefits. From the viewpoint of social ethics, the Saṅgha is the embodiment of an ideal community. Having faith in the Saṅgha is equivalent to the conviction in the harmonious totality. Once the followers are possessed of unwavering faith in the Saṅgha themselves, soft

---

power of harmonious nature will be increased in their life, and then, its influence will be deeper and wider to the society, social disagreements will be mediated, and day by day, social relationships will become more and more common.

In a nutshell, the Saṅgha is considered as an ideal entity in both the Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions. The meaning and essence of the Saṅgha are basically unified between these two traditions but their notions of the structure of the Saṅgha are varied. Concerning this aspect, the Theravādins perceive that the Saṅgha is a spiritual community, wherein the faithfuls are only those who are going for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha, who are pursuing the range of virtues as well as cultivating the three trainings in Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā. The Mahāyānists expand the sphere of this structure to the Bodhisattvas of both monastic and lay orders.

4.5.4. Faith in the Śīla

Most the Mahāyānists take the Pātimoksha-śīla of the Dharmaguptakavinaya (250 precepts for Bhikṣu and 348 precepts for Bhikṣunī) to be the basic principle to practice the monastic life, especially Tibetans follow the Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya (253 precepts for Bhikṣu and 364 precepts for Bhikṣunī). Together with the Pātimoksha-śīla, both Bhikṣu and Bhikṣunī, as aforesaid, have to ordain the Bodhisattva-śīla to be the means to perform the Bodhisattva ideal. According to the Brahmajāla-sūtra, the Bodhisattva-śīla consists of ten major and forty-eight minor precepts. The ten major principles or the Pārajikas of the Bodhisattva-śīla are counted as follows:

---


455 T. 24, No. 1484, fols. 1004b11ff. The Tibetan Bodhisattva-śīla consists of sixty-four principle, eighteen major and forty-six minor principles; see Sangharakshita, The Three Jewels:
(1) To forbid from taking life of any living being;
(2) To forbid from taking what is not given;
(3) To forbid from any kind of sexual activity;
(4) To forbid from lying and false speech;
(5) To forbid from selling intoxicants;
(6) To forbid from discussing the faults of the fourfold the \textit{Saṅgha};\footnote{\textit{Bhiksus}, \textit{bhikṣunīs}, \textit{Upāsakas}, and \textit{Upāsikās}.}
(7) To forbid from praising oneself and disparaging others;
(8) To forbid from stinginess and abuse;
(9) To forbid from anger and resentment; and
(10) To forbid from slandering the Triple Jewel.

Of these principles, the first four are identical with the four \textit{Pārājikas} of the \textit{Pātimoksha-śīla};\footnote{See Charles S. Prebish, \textit{Buddhist Monastic Discipline} (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996) 11, 50-3.}

(1) To forbid from sexual intercourse;
(2) To forbid from taking what is not given;
(3) To forbid from slaying one who is in human form; and
(4) To forbid from false proclamation of superhuman faculties.

It is noteworthy that, in the \textit{Pātimoksha-śīla}, the forbidding from sexual intercourse is ranked in the first of the four \textit{Pārājikas}. However, in the \textit{Bodhisattva-śīla}, the forbidding from taking life of living beings is ranked in the first of the four \textit{Pārājikas}. Thus, it is defined because the \textit{Śrāvakas} strive and struggle themselves for liberation (\textit{bodhi}) by cease of rebirth (\textit{saṃsāra}), for which, lust is the major cause. Whereas, the practice of all Bodhisattvas is derived from the compassion; the liberation of living beings can be achieved by accomplishing their merit and virtue from many lives.

\textit{The Central Ideals of Buddhism} (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006) 199. The \textit{pārājikas} (defeats) are rules entailing expulsion from the \textit{Saṅgha} for life. If a monk breaks any one of these rules he is automatically defeated in the holy life and falls from monkhood immediately. He is not allowed to become a monk again in his lifetime.
Thus taking the life of living beings is identified with cutting of the seeds of liberation.

Especially the Bodhisattva-śīla is also applied to the householder Bodhidattva (grhapati-bodhisattva); therein, there is the opening in some of these precepts that in order to correspond to objective conditions of a society. However, the first five precepts are absolutely not opened for any case.

In summing up, the Śīla has a very important role to play in the Buddhist ethics. It is attached especially in the Buddhist spiritual training. In the Theravāda tradition, the Śīla appears as the prerequisite for the training in the triad Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā. In the Mahāyāna tradition the Śīla takes the second place in the practice of six perfections. This is because the Śrāvakas strive and struggle themselves for liberation (bodhi) by cease of rebirth (samsāra), for which, the adventitious defilements (āgantuka-upakkilesa) are the major causes, which can be dominated only by the Śīla. The Bodhisattvas endeavour to enlighten the many. Accordingly, the quality of generosity or not-self giving is essential. Generosity or Dāna is the key virtue in development of altruistic intentions. The accomplishment of this quality engages in the quality of the Śīla and the rest ones.

It is important to remark that, in Buddhism whether Theravāda or Mahāyāna; the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha are the Three Supreme Jewels (triratana), the Three Refuges (triśarana). The Three Supreme Jewels are symbolized as three elements of the Wheel of Enlightenment, of which, the Buddha is the radiant centre, the Dharma is the radius, and the Sangha is the perfect circumference.\textsuperscript{458} The Mahāyānists view the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the Śīla as the four objects of faith while the Theravādins increased more two objects of faith, that is, the noble knowledge

(Ārya-jñāna, Pāli Ariya-ñāṇa) and the noble emancipation (Ārya-vimukti, Pāli Ariya-vimutti). The Ārya-jñāna refers to the controlling faculty of wisdom (prajñā-indriya), that is, individual understanding of the Dharma that is called the wisdom of right view. The Ārya vimukti refers to the power of wisdom (prajñā-bala), that is, individual ultimate knowledge of the true nature of life and world or the non-discriminative wisdom (prajñāpāramitā). These actually are the qualities of the Buddha or an Enlightened One. Just like the final goal of the Śrāvakas, both Ārya-jñāna and Ārya-vimukti therefore were attached special importance to as the objects of faith in Theravāda tradition.

All of these objects, six according to the Theravāda tradition and four according to the Mahāyāna tradition, are absolutely essential. As the pair of wings of a bird, the two complementary qualities, that is, Śīla and Jñāna are essential for the expert Buddhists to have unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Generally, the novices take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha only. This is because the Buddha represents the qualities of the Ārya-śīla, the Ārya-jñāna, and the Ārya-vimukti; the Dharma includes the ways leading to those qualities; and the Sangha has the ambition of those qualities. Therefore, faith in the Buddha and his qualities represents the acknowledgement of the Buddha’s Enlightenment on the one hand, and on the other hand faith in the Buddha and his qualities engages the achievement of the Ārya-śīla, the attainment of the Ārya-jñāna, and the accomplishment of the Ārya-vimukti for every being. Faith in the Dharma guarantees the individual understanding of the realities of universal existences and human life, that is, impermanence (anītya), non-self (anātman), and suffering (duḥkha). Faith in the Sangha assures the individual realization of purpose and duty of himself as well as of the other members in the organization of the Sangha.
4.6. A LEAP AHEAD

Faith according to the Mahāyāna tradition is associated with bhakti but it is a rational faith (ākāravanti-śraddhā). This is because it is associated with prasāda and avetya-prasāda.\(^{459}\) Obviously, like in Theravāda literature, herein, faith manifests itself sufficiently in all of the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects for spiritual growth. That is why Nāgārjuna asserts that: “Through faith one relies on the practices, through wisdom one truly knows, of these two, wisdom is the chief, faith is its prerequisite.”\(^{460}\) The rational faith is a morally good quality to perform every affair. The fantastic goal is the success with lucid planning. It manifests itself as resolution to put the training to test the experience for our intention. Experience is a consequence of long and enduring practices. It is not something innate. If we want to practice something, the prerequisite is to have rational faith in our teacher or guide. In order solve the problems that the modern world is facing today, such as the problem of self-realization and the problem of interracial, interethnic, intercultural, and interreligious dialogues, it is necessary to choose the correct means to succeed faithfully.
