Chapter-V: Conclusion

Different aspects of Buddhism in the South-East Asian countries are discussed in the previous chapters. Now it is necessary to make a general estimate of the previous chapters and the cultural influence of Buddhism on the South-East Asian countries.

Buddhism originates in India as a protestant religion against the Vedic Hindu religion. Once Buddhism developed and flourished in India by the great patronisation of Indian rulers and occupied an unique position in the religious history of India. Emperor Asoka at the end of the 'Third Buddhist Council', sent nine missionaries in different regions of India and abroad for the propagation of Buddhism. Among the nine missionaries two missionaries viz, Soña and Uttara went to Suvaṇṇabhūmi for the propagation, proliferation and development of Buddhism. By their cherished endeavour Buddhism spread and developed in Burma (Myanmar) and Siam (Thailand) also. In later time Sinhalese Buddhism (Theravāda Buddhism) reached in Burma and also in Siam (Thailand). Generally from the 11th century AD and onwards Buddhist countries in South-East Asia came into close contact with Ceylon and Ceylon played a vital role in introduction, flourishment and development of the Theravāda Buddhism in South-East Asia. It is also mentionable that the Sinhalese Buddhism originates from Indian Buddhism and Asoka's earnest effort was the main cause for the establishment and the development of Buddhism in Ceylon. So, it can be said that Buddhism of Burma (Myanmar) and also Siam (Thailand) were well-nourished by the influence of Indian and Sinhalese Buddhism. Again, it is found that Buddhism spread in Cambodia, Laos, Campā (Vietnam), Malay and some island of Indonesia (Sumatra, Java, Bali, Bornio, Celebes etc.). In this regard it is a matter of fact that Indian, Burmese, Siamese and Sinhalese Buddhism entered on the above mentioned countries in different times and in different ways. Again, it is undeniable that Buddhism spread and developed in the South-East Asian countries by the patronisation of rulers. The rulers of Burma (Myanmar), Siam (Thailand), Cambodia

2961. See Chapter-I, PP. 5-6.
2962. Buddhism which as much as developed in India before the Mahāparinibbāna of Buddha, then it is more developed in India after his Mahāparinibbāna by the great patronisation of Indian rulers. See Chapter-I, PP. 6-7.
2964. See Chapter-I, P. 9, Chapter-III, P. 38.
2966. See Chapter-III, PP. 49, 63, 73ff., 82-84, 101, 104, 134.
2967. Banerjee, Anukul Chandra - Buddhism in India and Abroad, P. 183 [Buddhism was first introduced in Ceylon by the earnest efforts of king Asoka. The Sihaqale Chronicles referred that on the advice of Moggaliputta Tissa, Asoka sent his son Mahinda and Mahinda's companions (they were Therās Iṣṭhīya, Utiya, Sambala, Bhaddasāla and Sumana Sāmanera, the son of Saṅghamīttā and Bhaṇḍuka Upāsaka, a lay disciple who was the son of the daughter of his aunt). For their earnest efforts and also personality Buddhism introduced and developed in Ceylon.]
2968. See Chapter-III.
2969. See Chapter-III.
2970. See Chapter-III.
(Kamboja), Laos, Campā (Vietnam), Malay, Sumatra, Java etc. spent their valuable times and others for the propagation, proliferation and development of Buddhism in their own countries as well as neighbouring countries.

Not only rulers, some eminent scholars, like Buddhaghosa, Buddhagatta, Dharmapāla, Elder Paññāsāmi, Mahāthera Bodhirāmiśi, Dharmakitti, Mahāthera Ratanapaññā, Somdet Phra Wannarat etc. of different ages had great contribution for the development of Buddhism and Pāli literature in the South-East Asian countries. They wrote many Buddhist Texts, commentaries and sub-commentaries on different aspects of Buddhism. Among the scholars, Buddhaghosa first translated the Buddhist texts into Burmese language which he brought with him from Ceylon in the 5th century AD. For his untiring efforts Buddhism became more understandable and acceptable among the peoples of Burma and other countries.

As the Buddhist evidences there are so many Buddhist pagodas, monasteries, statues, icons, Pāli inscriptions, terracotta works etc. were discovered in the different places of the South-East Asian countries. Most of the archaeological evidences were showing the time of early Christian era and were mostly influenced by Indian cultural arts. Among the Buddhist centres, Hmawza, Prome, Thaton, Pegu, Pagan of Burma; Nagara Prathama or Nakorn Patom (Capital of Dvaravatī), P'ong Tuk, Korāt, Lopburi, Haripuñjaya, Lanna of Siam (Thailand); Luang Prabang of Laos; Funan of Cambodia (Kamboja); Dong-Duang of Campā (Vietnam); Kedah, Perak, Wieng Sra, Caiya, Wieng Sra of Malay; Palembang of Sumatra; different places of the Middle Java; Kota Bangun of Borneo; Sempaga of Celebes are worth mentioning. Most of the places are very popular as the Buddhist cities and monastic town. At present, these are the historical sites of the South-East Asian countries.

After the introduction of Indian culture then their own culture or mixed culture regarding Buddhism developed in some certain places (like, Pagan in Burma; Lopburi, Haripuñjaya in Siam etc.) of South-East Asian Buddhist countries. Not only Indian culture, Sinhalese cultural influence also introduced in some countries, like Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Laos etc.

Again, the socio-cultural activities of the South-East Asian Buddhist countries are more influenced by the Buddhist religious thoughts and customs. All the South-East Asian Buddhist countries are observed gorgeously some ceremonial activities, like Buddha's Birthday Celebration, worship of Buddha Images and Symbols, New Year Festival (Trānt Thai), Sōngkran Holidays Festival, Upasotha days Festival (Wān Phra), Ordination Ceremony, Vassaśāsa Ritual etc.

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2971. See Chapter-III, P. 41; Chapter-IV, Part-II, PP. 194ff.
2972. Banerjee, Anukul Chandra - Buddhism in India and Abroad, P. 193; Hāra, Kanai Lal - History of Theravāda Buddhism in South-East Asia, PP. 64-65.
2973. See Chapter-IV, Part-I.
2974. Most of the archaeological evidences are influenced by the Indian style, i.e. Gupta style, Amarāvati style, Pallava style, Ajantā style, Pāla style etc. Though Burmese style, Mōn style, Hellenistic style (Pompien style), Khmer art, Thai art, Cambodian art, Javanise art are also found in the above mentionable sites.
2975. See Chapter-IV, Part-I.
2977. See Chapter-IV, Part-I.
according to the Buddhist monastic customs and disciplines. All Buddhist monks, Buddhist householders as well as foreigners participated in the above ceremonies. Among the festivals Buddha's Birthday Festival observed very much pompously. Even birth ceremony, marriage ceremony, cremation ceremony and also royal ceremonies (like, the aniversarys of birth, coronation etc.) are organised according to the Buddhist monastic rules and customs.

Monasteries are also played as an educational institution. Very early stage of life boys are entered in the monasteries and the monks teach them moral, social and religious education and also about some community activities. For the attraction of the monastic activities, some monastery-boys stayed in the monastery forever and lead the monastic life as a monk. The sculptural works of the monasteries can be treated as visual aids of education. In this regards the sculptural works of 'Borobudur Stūpa' of Java; 'Ananda Pagoda', 'Seinnyet Pagoda', 'Kubyukkgyi Pagoda' of Burma are worth mentioning.

Besides these, the Buddhist idealism found in the architectural and sculptural works, educational activities, community activities, daily life of the South-East Asian Buddhist countries. From the above discussion it can be said that Buddhism deeply had taken its root in the soil of the South-East Asian countries.

Probably, the following causes are more effective behind the inclination of adoption Buddhism and its popularity among the people of South-East Asian countries.

All casts are welcomed into the Buddhist Samgha and considered them equal. There is no provision to preserve one cast's own interest in the society.

There is no chance of jealousy.

There is no provision of ruthless customs, like animal sacrifice etc.

There is no provision of complicated form in the religious activities.

The teaching of Buddha did not involve the people any expense.

Besides being a Buddhist monk, one householder could observe easily Buddha's teachings in their daily life and a person could attain Nirvāṇa by regulating his life.

The philosophical thought of Buddha was a simple code of conduct which never require the employment of priests and expenditure of money.

The teaching of Buddha is so simple and so heart-captivating to the people that they want to transmit these to their sons from the very childhood.

There is a good chance to receive the Universal Education and also opportunity to participate in every religious festivals. In this regard it can be said that Buddhism is not limited only in listening and performing the religious advices. It gives the people opportunity to organise different festivals in which people meet with each other, exchange their own opinions and attained joy and pleasent.

There are natural environments among India and the South-East Asian countries which are

2982. See Chapter-IV, Part-III, PP. 210-211.
probably influenced to brought up the people of both region of their same mentality and nearly 
same life-style. Probably, it is one of the causes for making Buddhism more attractive and 
appreciable among the people of the South-East Asian countries.

Above all, Buddha's high-mindedness and good characteristic qualities and his firm 
mindfulness draws attention of the people who feel attraction towards Buddhism.

On account of these, the people of the South-East Asian countries adopted Buddhism easily 
and also heartily.

From a thorough analysis we can arrive at the result that Buddhism has a great power to 
established the equality and brotherhood among the people. Actually, the people of the South-
East Asian countries gain equality and brotherhood-relations after receiving Buddhism. No 
doubt, Buddhism is influenced by the omnipotent principles of non-violence and friendship. For 
this extraordinary quality Buddhism united the people of the South-East Asian countries in one 
string. It is a matter of fact that several wars happened among the South-East Asian countries 
in several times2985 but Buddhism never extinct there. The rulers of the South-East Asian 
countries accepted Buddhism heartily and with their earnest efforts many monasteries, pagodas 
or shrines, stūpas, images were built and terracotta-works, inscriptions and education regarding 
Buddhism were done in different places of the South-East Asian countries. Perhaps, existence 
of Buddhism in some areas of the South-East Asia in the glorious condition throughout the 
centuries after centuries. Even, somewhere it became the main religion (like, Burma, Siam, 
Cambodia, Laos, Campā etc.) of the state.

In this regard it is also mentionable that Buddhism has a great power of adoptibility of any 
social environment. The rules of this religion are very simple and also touches the innermost 
feelings. The discipline and idea of Buddhism was so elegant and impressive that one could not 
give up Buddhism after taking once.

This is why that the socio-cultural history as well as the political history of the South-East 
Asian countries are lighted by Buddhism. The socio-cultural activities which once originated, 
developed and flourished centering round Buddhism, at present also it is uninterrupted there. 
So, it can be said that Buddhism which once footed in the South-East Asian countries, firmly 
rooted on its soil.

2985. Several wars were happen among the South-East Asian countries, like war between Pegu (Hamsāvati) in 
Lower Burma and Ávā in Northern Burma, war between Pegu in Lower Burma and Nabbisipura in 
Northern Siam, war between Pegu in Lower Burma and Kamphaeng Phet in Central Siam, war between 
Pegu in Lower Burma and Ayuthia in Southern Siam which were happen in between the last quarter of 
the 14th century AD and 1st quarter of the 15th century AD (Hazra, Kanai Lal - History of Theravāda 
Buddhism in South-East Asia, P. 104); the wars between the kings of Nabbisipura in Siam and the rulers 
of Cambodia which were held in the 14th and the 15th century AD (Hazra, Kanai Lal - History of 
Theravāda Buddhism in South-East Asia, P. 154). In the 13th century AD Cambodia engaged warfare with 
Sukhodaya in Siam (Hazra, Kanai Lal - History of Theravāda Buddhism in South-East Asia, P. 180). The 
rulers of Campā were engaged with continuous warfare with Annamites, Khmers, Mongols from about 
the close of the 10th century AD to the 15th century AD (Majumdar, Ramesh Chandra - Hindu Colonies 
in the Far East, PP. 136ff; Hall, D.G.E. - A History of South-East Asia, PP. 206-210) etc.
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