ABSTRACT

The Siddhattha Gotama was born at Kapilavatthu in India during the sixth century B.C. Faced with various problems of life, He experimented with different philosophies and religious systems current at the time. Finally, by his own exertion, he discovered a new way of life which he identified as the “Noble Eightfold Path” (Aṭṭhaṅgikamagga). This path enables one to understand the "Four Noble Truths" (Cattāri Ariyasaccāni) and thereby bring an end to one's sufferings in this world and in the empirical existence or countless other births. With purpose of the welfare and happiness of all beings, the Buddha served for forty-five years to the world delivering his teachings. Throughout his lifetime, what he taught is, according to social point of view, to be harmonious, equal and happy for all living beings. The new way of religious life which he recommends to his followers is under the name of brahmacariya. The moral conduct of monastic life is very important for the life of Buddha's disciples. The moral conduct of monastic life is promulgated by the Buddha containing in the tipiṭaka.

In the tipiṭaka, most of the speeches and addresses are attributed to the Buddha Himself. The great division of the tipiṭaka on modes of conduct, restraints on both bodily and verbal action of bhikkhus and bhikkhuṇīs, which forms rules of discipline for them, is called the Vinaya piṭaka. The general discourses and sermons intended of the Buddha for both the bhikkhus and lay disciples are known as Sutta piṭaka. The

1 Dīgha Nikāya II. 312; Majjhima Nikāya III. 251; Vibhaṅga 235.
2 Samyutta Nikāya V. 421; Vinaya I. 14; Vibhaṅga 99.
3 Dīgha Nikāya I. 62; Majjhima Nikāya I. 179, 267.
philosophical aspects of Buddha’s teaching are known as *Abhidhamma piṭaka*.

As we know that, the Buddha taught to the Buddhists the moral conducts which are contained in the *Vinaya* as a part of the system of training for the Buddhist disciples. It is a subject of absorbing interest not only for the study of Buddhist monasticism but also for the study of Buddhism as a whole. The Buddhist morality is not only an analysis of the moral concepts or a theory of right and wrong conduct, but also involves knowledge, understanding, and moral practice. This is particularly true of early Buddhism where the practice of monastic life as a means of attaining the religious goal is held in great esteem. Besides, like any other moral system, it further involves a set of values, which every person is supposed to inculcate and express them with altruistic motive in his conduct as demanded by a situation to the extent that he achieves excellence in their expression (*pāramitā*). His moral conduct, which constitutes his way of living, is nothing but the expression of his *Dhamma* (i.e. moral principles and ideals) and is the moral guide to his followers. In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*,¹ the Buddha, anticipating the confusion and sense of irreparable loss among his followers after his demise, clarifies that only the *Dhamma* will be their teacher, guide, and refuge. No external refuge, even the Buddha, can be of any help to them. So, he tells them, they have to work out their own path by holding fast unto the Truth as a lamp. This truth lies in the Noble Eightfold Path, the path of purified moral conduct.²

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¹ *Dīgha Nikāya* II. 154.
² *Tevijjasutta*, the Sutta No. 13 in *Dīgha Nikāya* I.
In addition, the Buddhist followers realize that their happiness and sufferings are self-created by themselves through the operation of the Law of *Kamma*. To minimize the occurrence of troubles and problems in their lives, they make the effort to refrain from doing evil. They perform good actions because they know that these will bring them peace and happiness.

Human beings are born to gain happiness and never get misery and all sentient beings also like happiness and dislike pain. The Buddha teaches his followers to do good and restrain them from evil. Furthermore, the uprooting of mental defilements, the source of all anti-social acts, will bring great benefits to others in society. Therefore, in helping oneself spiritually, one helps others to live peacefully. Thus, morality is very important for people to maintain the peaceful society and to get the final happiness. That is why the work also deals with morality concerned with lay people.

Although the Buddha passed away before, more than 2500 years, the world is still entangled in greed, anger, and infatuation. The suffering of human kind still remains there as a question waiting for the answer. The past has passed, the future has not come yet, and the present is very vague with unlimited suffering. In addition, nowadays, human beings are facing with various troubles such as political tensions, war, regional conflicts, rampant violence, human rights, environmental and natural disasters and the lack of good morality in social life etc. which surpass spiritual power. Thenceforth, the search for solutions for them becomes more and more complicated. Therefore, to understand the importance of the moral value, and to understand the relationship between the *saṅgha* and the Laity, as well as the contribution of the Buddhist morality
towards modern crises, the researcher has chosen the topic: “A Study of Moral Value of Monastery in Early Buddhism vis-à-vis Modern Social Life” for his research work. With a great determination, the researcher believes that human beings can resolve all problems by understanding the morality itself and practising it faithfully. Because, the most basic crisis of individuals and society are the crisis of individual’s thought itself.

The title of the present work involves an important term, namely, ‘early Buddhism’. Early Buddhism has two distinct phases, the first phase being represented by the Sākyamuni Buddha’s original teachings in the forms of sermons and discourses, maintained by his Arhat disciples through oral traditions, while the second phase represented by the present-day Pāli tipiṭaka composed of a large collection of texts, written in Pāli. In the aspect of the historic period, therefore, early Buddhism was counted from the Buddha’s time to the time of King Aśoka. However, in the stance of Buddhist literature, Early Buddhism is known as Theravāda Buddhism, because, all Buddhist texts, which were being transmitted orally, were written down in Pāli in Sri Lanka in the first century B.C. The Theravādins follow only the Pāli traditions; hence, the Theravāda Buddhism is also known as Pāli Buddhism.¹ In brief, all material from this Sutta piṭaka and Vinaya piṭaka which I have selected for my study can be regarded as representing Early Buddhism.

In the area of research, the topic of the study is to examine and determine the moral values, the criterion of ethical judgment, good and bad, action, result, virtues, goal of human life etc, in early Buddhism. It is

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¹ Keiko Soda, Theravāda Buddhist Studies in Japan, p. 31.
analytical in the sense that it has critically and minutely analyzed ethical concepts and practice. Buddhist moral value forms the base of virtuous life in developing an ordinary man into a perfect social being, capable to generate social harmony, spiritual calm and mutual understanding.

In my research, an attempt is made to analyze the rules of discipline as found in the Vinaya piṭaka and the moral conduct in Sutta piṭaka. The moral value of monastery with special reference to the modern social life is investigated on the topic. As this work is an attempt to draw the ideas about morality from the Buddhist literature, the major sources of information on which the researcher has to rely on are the literary materials. There is, of course, a whole range of other sources which are examined and scanned to conduct this research in a satisfactory manner. In the first group are included the canonical sources of Buddhist scriptures and in the second, materials derived from the published and unpublished books, articles and essays published in various journals and other printed medias. Among the canonical sources, the researcher has drawn primarily from selected texts known as the Nikāyas and Vinaya of the Pāli Canon and the selection of some early Mahāyāna texts.

A note on the methodology adopted in the present work may be recorded here. We have employed the standard and time tested method of ‘researching by examining and analysing with an insight of critical comparison, in its historical perspective. For example, each conceptual entry in its initial introduction carries an analysis which is critical, comparative and at the same time historical. Further, regarding the terminologies, whenever and wherever, a technical Buddhist term is introduced (principally Pāli and Sanskrit), the researcher has retained the term in original form in some cases; but in most of the cases an English
rendering is preferred and accordingly employed following the general trend and practice on the basis of most standard and accepted forms.

This work consists of six chapters including introduction as follows:

**Chapter I: General Introduction**

The focus of attention of the Chapter One is on providing a clear statement of the reasons leading to the choice of topic; methodological aspects which include tools and techniques of research to be tested and verified. The researcher also explains the scope of the topic and the explanation of the title as well. All statements made here are attested and authenticated by quoting appropriate citations from the primary sources. Chapterization in the main body of the thesis and their interrelationships are also mentioned in this chapter.

**Chapter II: The Biography of the Buddha**

The purpose of this chapter is to give the biography of the Buddha from his early days to nibbāna in order to understand that the Buddha was born in the world for the welfare of the manyfolk, for the happiness of the manyfolk, out of compassion for the world, for the good, the welfare, the happiness of devas and men;¹ he served for forty-five years to the world delivering his teachings; throughout his life, what he taught is to lead harmony, equality and peace for all living beings.

**Chapter III: The Historical Establishment of the Saṅgha**

The saṅgha, the order of Buddhist monks, forms an important part of the doctrine and the way of life (morality) preached by Gotama

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¹ *Majjhima Nikāya* I. 83.
Buddha as understood by his disciples. Many studies on Buddhism have appeared in past and are still coming. However, studies on the Buddhist saṅgha alone and its various aspects are still required. In this chapter, hence, the researcher is not only informative but also analytical in various matters. His purpose is to state in detail the history of the Buddhist saṅgha by a careful study of various records available to him. On the other hand, the establishment, position and importance of the Laity towards Buddhism are mentioned carefully.

Chapter IV: The Origin and Development of Vinaya Piṭaka

As we have known that Buddhism cannot be thought without the saṅgha and the saṅgha cannot be imagined without the Vinaya. The Pāli tipiṭaka is considered as the most reliable and important text in Buddhism. In this chapter, therefore, the researcher presents a brief description of Pāli tipiṭaka in which Vinaya piṭaka is one.

The ultimate goal of Buddhism is liberation, realization of nibbāna. And morality (sīla) is one of very important factors which lead to liberation. Understanding of morality is also discussed clearly under various aspects such as the reason of the promulgation of Vinaya, the characteristic of Vinaya, and the morality for gahaṭṭha and pabbajita as well. The chapter ends with the importance of morality, benefits of morality and misconception about morality.

Chapter V: The Moral Value of Monastic Life in Early Buddhism

In this part, the researcher presents a penetrative study of the moral value of monastic life in early Buddhism. The part begins with the practice of tisso-sīkkhā. Because, threefold trainings are the basic
teachings which lead the human beings from the passion to dispassion, the darkness to light and the suffering to happiness.

The saṅgha had to be an ideal society and should not under any circumstances cross the boundaries of propriety. Bhikkhus who lived in society and for the society should get on well with the society. Therefore, they have set out to achieve higher goals and they should learn to live in harmony with one another within the order. The chapter contains the survey of the ideal life of the saṅgha in early Buddhism under the various headings: Ethical values in early Buddhism, the life of the saṅgha in monastery, the Buddha’s daily life as the standard for monks, the mission of propagation, moral rituals and ceremonies. The ethical life specially applicable to the Lay Buddhists is discussed cautiously in the end of the part.

Chapter VI: Contribution of Buddhist Moral Value towards Modern Life

The researcher continues to provide a comprehensive analysis of the contribution of Buddhist moral value towards modern life and in this context, an attempt has been made to deal with some solutions for current crises such as environmental, ethical, educational, and morality crises.

Morality is considered as a value of life created by man's thinking or self-thought. It is understood as the "should do's" and the "should not do's" for an individual, for his family, community and country which really are the production of man’s thinking. So, when “thought crisis” appears, “morality crisis” comes into existence.

The researcher continues to assert the contribution of moral value towards some practical aspects such as Morality as the basis of a matter
of ideal society, how moral value tries to solve the problem of modern man, modernizing the *Vinaya*, Social charity activities, Morality and happiness, etc. The end of the chapter is the closing marks.

We have to know that once this life is gone and accomplishments are none, it is too late for regrets. Hence, through the work, the researcher believes that if we want to achieve a happy life, we have to adopt a lifestyle that springs from morality.

The researcher hopes that this topic when completed will reflect a new interpretation, application and practical contributions of moral value in the light of modern trends.

The work contains a select bibliography and few relevant indices.

*Signature of the Guide*          *Signature of the Researcher*

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