CHAPTER FOUR  
RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND OF MAHYÀNA BUDDHISM

The earliest religion in India was the Vedic religion that took shape and crystallized over an extremely long period of time and particular stages of that process are reflected in various Vedic writings. Vedic religion can be regarded as well-defined system, a whole complex of religious beliefs together with corresponding rites and ceremonies. It also reflected the development of Vedic society itself in the period when the first Indian states were taking shape.

Mahàyàna Buddhism emerged in the most developmental stage of the Vedic religion and both were developing abreast without exclusion.

(1) Development of Brahmanism in Indian countries

All scholars agree that firstly Vedic Aryan conquered the aborigines of Punjab and settled on the banks of the Indus and its tributaries. In recent years the interesting archeological findings have brought to light the concrete evidence on the Indo Aryan of the Vedic age.

K. Antonova¹ affirms that Vedic Aryan extended throughout Punjab, in the upper reaches of the Yamuna and Ganges and the valleys of these rivers. R.C. Dutt² also holds that before the rise of Magadha, Brahmin was only a number of colonist tribes on the Ganges but after the rise of Magadha that brought all Northern India to the rule of a nation and Brahmanism was spread the whole north India.

D.N. Jha³ gives a more detail report that after the spread of Brahmanism to Magadha, its surrounding areas such as Anga, Vanga, Berares, Kosala accepted this religion. And in subsequent centuries, Brahmanism spread to Bengal, Orissa, Assam and other provinces of western India. These places received the first rays of Vedic civilization. According to R.C. Dutt⁴, by the end of the fourth century B.C., Bengal, Orissa and the whole western India belonged to Vaisnavism and Shaivism (two branches of Brahmanism). Gujarat was early colonized by Vaisnavism and it would appear from

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¹ KHI, p. 32.
² RAI, pp. 138-9.
³ DAI, p. 65.
⁴ RAI, p. 139.
the legends of Krishna in the Mahābhārata that the country was colonized from the banks of the Jumna by some the races, who had fought in the great war and by the fourth century B.C., the Surashtra of Gujarat had been powerful nation of Brahmanism. Malwa too was early assimilated by Brahmanism and the kings of Ujjain were reckoned among the civilized Brahmin powers after the fourth century B.C.

The waves of Brahmanism continued to roll further and the Vindhyā mountain was crossed. In Andhra, a great and powerful kingdom of Brahmin was founded in the country between the Narbada and the Krishna rivers and capital of this southern empire was near modern Amaravati.

And the country beyond the Krishna river received the Aryan civilization and religion. Three kingdoms (the Chalas, the Cheras and the Pandyas) had arisen in the extreme southern part of India also followed Brahmanism.

R.C. Dutt holds that wherever Aryan came, they introduced cultivation, manufactures and arts. They spread the Sanskrit language, Vedic religion and rites. And they founded the school of law, religion and learning. Upto the third century B.C., the Vaisnavism and Shaivism developed in the whole country. Though R.C. Dutt holds that these new religions aimed at the image worship, rites and ceremonies but the image worship, in fact, started from the first century B.C. and it was certainly influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Vedic Brahmanism

An important element of the Vedic religion is polytheism. According to K. Antonova, Vedic Brahmanism had no image worship and its gods and goddess are related to the phenomena of nature. In Rig Veda, the classification of gods was made according to heaven, earth, and space. The heaven gods include Śārya (the sun god), Usha (the goddess of dawn) and Varuna (the upholder of moral order). The earth gods were Agni (the god of fire) and Soma (the god of the holy intoxicating drink). The gods

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5 DAI, p. 65.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 RAI, pp. 69-72.
10 JBC, p. 348, RPHEI, p. 147.
11 KHI, p. 47.
of space were Rudra (the god of storm), Vayu (the god of wind) and the mighty Indra (the god of thunderbolt). Brahman, Visnu, and Siva (Rudra) were the most important gods, who became trinity of Hinduism later. And many hymns and the sacrifices were offered to these gods.

The Vedic people believed that by performing sacrifices, gods would send them more cattle, victory in battle, good harvest or to free them from disaster and ruin. Apart from benevolent gods, Vedic people believed in existence of evil spirits and demons such as Rakshases and Asuras.

In the later Vedic age, there emerged a group of abstract divinities whose functions were vague and they were not connected with the tripartite model of the world like the previous Vedic faith.

K. Antonova\textsuperscript{12} maintains that a characteristic feature of the Vedic beliefs was the absence of any clear individualization of gods or clear distribution of their functions.

\textbf{The Works of Brahmanism}

The important works of Brahmanism are four Vedas, Brahmans, Aranyaka, Epic literature and Upani–ads. Four Vedas are Rig Veda (the collection of hymn or samhitas), Sama Veda (a collection of chants), the Yajur Veda (a collection of incantations and formulas for magic). And Artharveda (a collection of rites and ceremonies).

In Rig Veda\textsuperscript{13}, many of hymns describe nature and human motions in such poetic form and such rich imagery that they can be regarded as models of poetry. The gods in Vedic literature were represented as the phenomena of nature and many hymns address to them. The authors of Vedas described their own experiences and feelings, telling of their joys and sorrow. Some scholars rightly regard Rig Veda as the initial source for the heroic Epos that is a salient feature of the Epic literature.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 47.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 52.
S. Radhakrishnan\textsuperscript{15} affirms that four \textit{Vedas} themselves were arranged and systematized during the period of the \textit{Aryan} expansion in the \textit{Ganges} valley.

\textit{Brahmanas} is the second important work of \textit{Brahmanism}. The work talks of sacrificial rites. God, Prajapaty, who was the god of creatures in the \textit{Vedas}, was represented as the god of sacrifice in the \textit{Brahmanas}. The work says that those, who perform sacrifice, will attain immeasurable virtue.\textsuperscript{16} As a result, the rites of sacrifice gradually became more and more intricate and led to the emergence of several groups of priests, who conducted various types of religious and ritualistic ceremonies. According to \textit{Brahmanas}, sacrifice and incantation made possible not only for gods but also for man to attain immortality. And gods pleased with sacrifices bring to man wealth, descendants and happiness.\textsuperscript{17} This concept is not different from that of \textit{Vedas} in the previous time. In the \textit{Brahmanas}, the legends and tales such as the Indian version of the flood legend together with prosaic interpretations of religious rituals were also mentioned.

Epic literature, according to S. Radhakrishnan\textsuperscript{18}, consists of two main works, i.e., the \textit{R\={e}m\={e}yana} and \textit{Mah\={e}bh\={e}rata}, mostly occurred in the \textit{Vedic} period when the early \textit{Aryans} from \textit{Punjab} to the \textit{Ganges} valley and settled down in the \textit{Kurus} round Delhi, the \textit{Pa\c{c}c\={e}\={e}las} near \textit{Kanos}, the \textit{Kosala} near \textit{Oudh} and the \textit{K\={e}sis} near \textit{Benares}. The \textit{Mah\={e}bharata} was, perhaps, composed in the same period that the great war between the \textit{Kurus} and the \textit{p\={E}\c{c}\=cavas} appeared. S. Radhakrishnan\textsuperscript{19} maintains that the \textit{Mah\={e}bh\={e}rata} represents a period when the \textit{Vedic} hymns had lost their original force and meaning. And a ceremonial religion was appealed to the people, simultaneously the distinction of caste grew into prominence. The \textit{R\={e}m\={e}yana}, a second important work of Epic literature, deals with wars of the \textit{Aryan} with the natives of India, who adopted the \textit{Aryan} civilization later on.

In the Epic literature, Vi–\=\={u} is associated with Indra and is vested with rare powers. He was considered as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world. It is interesting to say that three functions of creation, preservation, and destruction of the world attributed to Brahman, Vi–\=\={u} and Siva in the \textit{Upani–ads}, but in Epic literature

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\item \textsuperscript{15} RIP\textsuperscript{1}, p. 271.
\item \textsuperscript{16} KHI, p. 52.
\item \textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 49.
\item \textsuperscript{18} RIP\textsuperscript{1}, p. 271.
\item \textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 272.
\end{itemize}
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these functions were attributed to Vi–ṣu alone. The figure of Krishna was considered as the incarnation of Vi–ṣu. Krishna was portrayed not only as the leader of a tribe of the pṛṣṭhaṇḍa but also as a Supreme being and finally as a God who was the creator of the world.\(^{20}\)

Upani–ads are considered as the Vedanta or the end of the Vedas. They consist of a group of texts that interpret the Vedic myths and rites. In the fields of philosophy, the Upani–ads recognize two kinds of truth, the conventional and absolute truths. The absolute truth stands for Brahman or Ītman that exists in the variety of existence.

The conventional truth is about all external objects including man’s body and soul. In the Rig Veda, Ītman is understood as the breath or the vital essence, gradually it is developed into the essence of soul. In Rig Veda, Brahman is considered as the god of creatures, but in the Upani–ads, Brahman is considered as the ground of all existences. Specially Brahman is identified with Ītman in the Upani–ads: $Ītman$ is Brahman and Brahman is $Ītman$.\(^{21}\) The identification of Ītman (the inner ego of each being) with the Brahman (the impersonal all embracing divine essence of the entire world) is the special feature of the Upani–ads.

Apart from these, Upani–ads consider the creator of the world (Īsva) as the cosmic Brahman, who is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. Svetasvatara Upani–ad identifies Īsva with Rudra or Siva. In the Rigveda Rudra was considered as the god of storms and lightning whereas He is the creator of the world by his māyā in the Upani–ads.\(^{22}\)

According to the Upani–ads, the world is real though it has its imperfect manifestations. Brhadāranyaka Upani–ad\(^ {23}\) says that all creatures come from Brahman as sparks that come from fire, as plants shoot forth on the earth and as the threads come out from a spider. The bondage and the liberation of man’s soul, and the means to the liberation are mentioned in details, in the Upani–ads. The so-called doctrine of karma

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\(^{20}\) KHI, p. 50.  
\(^{21}\) RPU, p. 603.  
\(^{22}\) SIP, p. 17.  
\(^{23}\) RPU, p. 190.
which is later to permeate not only orthodox doctrines but also such religious teachings like Jainism and Buddhism.\textsuperscript{24}

It is clear that the *Upaniads* reveal marked differences with *Vedic* teachings precisely because their authors found the *Vedic* teachings insufficiently profound in the religious sense and practice.

**Main Sects of Brahmanism**

From the time of Maurya to Gupta age, the orthodox *Brahmanism* was to be divided into two main sects. One was *Vaisnavism* that worshipped Viṣṇu and second was *Shaivism* that worshipped Siva. D.N. Jha\textsuperscript{25} holds that *Shaivism* and *Vaisnavism* emerged as early as the Maurya period but *Vaisnavism* only became widespread during the Gupta age.

**Vaisnavism**

Through data that are gleaned from literary sources and material found in epigraphic documents, *Vaisnavism* worshipped Viṣṇu and his incarnations like Vasudeva, Krishna, etc. K. Antonova\textsuperscript{26} holds that in the grammar book composed by Pâṇini (fifth or fourth century B.C.) reference is made to the worship of Vasudeva, who was traditionally held to have been a heroic *Kshatriya*. Patanjali (C2 B.C.) also mentioned the worship of *Vasudeva* in his book and in the *Bhagavadgītā* *Vasudeva* appears as one of the manifestations of the Supreme god *Bhagavata*. The Megasthene’s records testify to *Vasudeva* worship in the early Maurya period. Apart from that, the worship of *Vasudeva*, according to Indian sources, was particularly popular in *Mathura*. The Greek writer also depicted that in the period of early *Vaisnavism*, *Vasuveda* was already deified but had not yet equated with the figure of *Krishna*.

In the famous *Heliodorus* inscription\textsuperscript{27} at Besnagar (C2 B.C.) *Vasudeva* was revered as god of gods and according to this inscription the worship of *Vasudeva* was widespread not merely among Indians but also among the Greeks inhabiting north west India.

\textsuperscript{24} RIP, p. 271.
\textsuperscript{25} DAI, p. 108.
\textsuperscript{26} KHI, p. 145.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
In the early centuries A.D., many temples were erected for the *Vaisnavite* deities (Vi–‡u), *Vasudeva* and *Shankershana*. This is a characteristic feature of medieval *Brahmanism*.

The main divinity of *Vaisnavism* is Vi–‡u, who appears in the early text namely *Narayane* as a god worshipped by the native tribes of northern India. In the *Brahmanas* (book) he is revered as the mighty God sometimes he is placed higher than *Vedic* god *Prajapati*, the god of all creatures. The worship of Vi–‡u was incorporated with god Krishna, who was soon to become one of the most popular gods in the *Upani–ads*.

*Vaisnavism* attached special importance to incarnation of Vi–‡u. The earlier literature mentions four incarnations of Vi–‡u but in later accounts there are twenty nine. Even the Buddha is considered as the ninth incarnation of Vi–‡u. This element led to the incorporation of diverse cults into *Vaisnavism* and the followers of Vi–‡u referred to him not only as the custodian of the universe but also as its creator and destroyer. And goddess laxmi, a spouse of Vi–‡u, is worshipped by this sect.

**Shaivism**

Side by side with *Vaisnavism*, *Shaivism* and *Saktism* also gained great popularity in the period. K. Antonova affirms that Siva had gone down in *Brahmanic* literature as Rudra, a god of thunder-storms and hurricanes. The equation of Siva and Rudra, it seems, took place at a very late stage. In fact, it was only a question of the incorporation of a local deity into *Brahmanism* and the cult of Siva was to coincide with the religious beliefs of the people of Southern India. According to K. Antonova, Siva, the god of asceticism and animal sacrifice, is also the protector of man in his ordinary life.

Evidence of the spread of *Shaivism* during the Maurya and Shunga ages is to be gleaned from the writings of PÈnini, Patanjali, and Megasthenes. In the grammar book, PÈnini writes about the followers of Siva and Patanjali refers to idols erected in his honour. In Megasthenes’ writing, Siva is described as a god popular among mountain-dwellers who arrange special ceremonies involving the beating of drums and sacrifices.

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29 JBC, p. 6.
30 KHI, p. 146.
Two His devoted sons are Ganesha and Skanda, who always appear as independent gods in their own rights. And Uma or Parvati or Kali, the wife of Siva, is also worshipped as a goddess.

(2) Hinduism

R.C. Dutt\textsuperscript{32} holds that the growing popularity of Buddhism, Jainism and other heterodox sects led to positions against the \textit{Vedic} sacrifices involving animal slaughter. The heretical attacked on \textit{Vedic} institutions and animal sacrifice seriously; it was this attack undermined the prestige and authority of Brahmin. Brahmanism therefore underwent some important changes. Hinduism, a variant of Brahmanism, emerged in the time of Guptas.\textsuperscript{33} This variant looked different in outward forms but the faith and observance were not different from their ancestors.

\textit{Hinduism} is only an incorporation of \textit{Vaisnavism}, \textit{Shaivism}, \textit{Saktism} and various local beliefs and ceremonies of worship. The term \textit{Hinduism} was not found in any religious or historical book prior to Guptas. Nevertheless, later on, R.C. Dutt assimilated Brahmanism into Hinduism and his discrimination is known as \textit{Vedic Brahmanism} and \textit{Pur\textae}nic Brahmanism.\textsuperscript{34} And according to R.C. Dutt, Hinduism was founded on the base of eighteen \textit{Pur\textae}nas.\textsuperscript{35} Those, who were supporters of what today we call Hindu sects, used their sectarian labels to identify their religions. Speaking of Hinduism, it is necessary to know that the Hindus have never been disloyal to their past religion and in the cardinal doctrines there is little difference between these two forms of faith.

Both Brahmanism and Hinduism recognize one great god, the all-pervading breath or the universal soul that is mentioned in the \textit{Upani\textae}s. Both recognize the law of karma, rebirth, the bondage and liberation of soul, and the means to the final liberation. Brahmanism had no image worship, Brahmin performed their sacrifices at fireside and their offerings were often animal sacrifices, sometimes human sacrifices.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{32} RAI, pp. 138-140.
\textsuperscript{33} DAI, p. 112.
\textsuperscript{34} RAI, p. 137.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{36} DAI, p. 108.
Whereas, *Hindus* do not use the blood sacrifices and they perform their sacrifices at the temples and shrines.\(^{37}\)

**Image Worship in Hinduism**

The gods worshipped by *Hindus* are Brahman, Vi–\(^{\ddagger}\)u, Siva and other gods.\(^{38}\) The god Prajapati (god of prayer) in *Vedic Brahmanism* is replaced by Brahman, who is considered as the creator of the world. R.C. Dutt\(^{39}\) maintains that Brahman and goddess Sarasvati, the consort of Brahman, were worshipped by *Hindus*. Really, the concept of Brahman’s wife is not found in the *Upani–ads* and Brahman is not the object of worship; he is only considered as the base of all existences and he had no wife.

Vi–\(^{\ddagger}\)u\(^{40}\), the sun-god in the *Rigveda*, was appropriately chosen to designate the preserver of the world. Krishna is considered as the incarnation of Vi–\(^{\ddagger}\)u and his wife Laxmi, the goddess of harvests and wealth, to be worshipped.

Rudra\(^{41}\), the thunder-storm god in *Rigveda*, was appropriately chosen for the destroyer of the world, who is called Siva or Mahesvara in the *Upani–ads*. UmÈ, the daughter of the Himalayas, was his amiable consort and she was also called DurgÈ, Kali or Sakti is to be worshipped. In the time of Guptas, many temples erected for Vi–\(^{\ddagger}\)u and Siva, there was no temple for Brahman.

Siva, the god of animal or human sacrifices in the *Shaivism*\(^{42}\), was considered as a benevolent god in the *PurÈnas*; he loves living beings as his sons and he is also the protector of man in his ordinary life.\(^{43}\)

The blood sacrifices offered to Siva by the followers of the *Shaivism* were replaced by vegetation. This reason it seems might be disappearance of the *TheravÈdin* Buddhism, a religion of non-veg eating, from India during the Sixth century A.D. It became the main religion in Srilanka later.\(^{44}\)

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\(^{38}\) RAI, p. 141.

\(^{39}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{40}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{41}\) DCCAI, p. 102.

\(^{42}\) KHI, p. 146.

\(^{43}\) RIP, p. 605.

\(^{44}\) RAI, pp. 137-8.
Library Works of Hinduism

The well-known works of Hinduism are the eighteen Purênas or Itihasa purênas. Their contents are influenced by Mahêyêna thoughts, especially the thought of the Saddharmapu¶Çarika sêtra and the Lankêvatêra sêtra. Certainly the vegetarianism of the Hindu followers is influenced directly by the Lankêvatêra sêtra of Mahêyêna and their vegetarianism might have started from the Gupta age (6th c. A.D.).

D.N. Jha affirms that Purênas were compiled from the sixth century A.D. to the age of Vikramêditya and Sêladitya even after the conquest of India by Mahammada in the seventh century A.D.

According to R.C. Dutt, Purênas fill with sectarian disputes and upholding the supremacy of the special deity chosen from the Vedic pantheon and they present rather the religion and customs of Hindus in a new period.

Another important work was Dharmasêtra, the great work of Manu. This was the standard and authoritative work for all Hindus for centuries. Apart from these, the Tantra, poems, dramas, novels were also composed. These works faithfully reflected the religion and the manners of the time.

(3) Limitation of HÎnayêna

HÎnayêna Buddhism is not only Theravêda school but also consists of eleven other schools, viz. Mahêsêsakas, Sêrvastivêda, Vâtsêputriyas, Dharmottaras, Bhadrayanikas, Sammûîîya, Sannagarika, Dharmaguptas, Kêsyapiyas, Sautrêntika and Vaibhêsika.

Generally, their doctrines are confined to the relative sphere, which can not answer to one’s spiritual life and the religious practice in new stage, a stage of development of society, politics, economy and culture; especially economy of commodity occupied an important position in the social life. And the religious life in the stage also developed a lot. Those limitations are manifested through the thought and the practice.

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45 DAI, p. 112.
46 Ibid.
47 RAI, pp. 139-40.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 WIM, p. 192.
**Limitation of Thought**

_HÍnayÁnà_ laid emphasis upon the renunciation of the world and the attainment of _NirvÁna_. This is one of the weaknesses of _HÍnayÁnà_ since they try to achieve _NirvÁna_ for themselves, not for everybody. K. Antonova\(^{51}\) says that the _HÍnayÁnà_ic _Arhat_ is unable fully to surmount the differences between himself and others and to achieve the state of his own ‘non being’ while _MahÁyÁnà_ _Bodhisattva_, who turns his face on worldly life in order to help others. Out of great compassion for creatures and the whole world, he denies attainment of _NirvÁna_.

In the _Saddharmapúṣṭa_ _Çarika_ _sÉstra\(^{52}\), _Bodhisattva_ does not seek _NirvÁna_ for himself but for the happiness of all creatures. _Bodhisattva_ Ksitigarbha, in the _Ksitigarbha_ _sÉtra_\(^{53}\), vows that he never attains _NirvÁna_ so long as all living beings to be salved from Hells.

On the other hand, _HÍnayÁnà_ists consider _NirvÁna_ of _Arhat_ as the perfect liberation.\(^{54}\) _MahÁyÁnà_ists reject it and regard it as the magic city\(^{55}\) or relative _NirvÁna_ that only achieves _pudgala_ _sÉnyata_, _dharma_ _sÉnyata_ still not yet completed. _MahÁyÁnà_ists’ absolute _NirvÁna_ is one’s real nature that is the general property of all beings. _MahÁyÁnà_ic _Bodhisattva_ abides in this absolute _NirvÁna_ while he works for happiness of others. _MahÁyÁnà_ists teach that there is no difference between _SamsÁra_ and _NirvÁna_.

Speaking of _NirvÁna_, S. Radhakrishnan\(^{56}\) emphasises that in _HÍnayÁnà_ doctrines, _NirvÁna_ becomes negatively interpreted as extinction of all being. It is not possible for ordinary man, who falls in love with annihilation. And according to him, the negative philosophy of _HÍnayÁnà_ could not become a popular religion…

_HÍnayÁnà_ists, moreover, maintain that only monks can attain _NirvÁna_ after making a complete break with worldly life, laymen and laywomen can not.\(^{57}\) But

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\(^{51}\) KHI, p. 140.
\(^{52}\) SSLF, pp. 289-90.
\(^{53}\) TSBKV, p. 5.
\(^{54}\) NBT, p. 291.
\(^{55}\) SEL, p. 115.
\(^{56}\) RIP, p. 590.
\(^{57}\) NBT, p. 312.
Mahāyānists open the door of immortality (Nirvāṇa) for all without discrimination between monks and laity since Nirvāṇa is essence of all beings.\(^58\) It is the highest principle that harmonizes all contradictions. It is bodhi or highest wisdom that removes all defilements and brings the final liberation to the suffering hearts.

Hīnayānists look upon the Buddha as a real historical figure, who was born and died like any ordinary people and had nothing extraordinary about him.\(^59\)

Clearly Hīnayānic teachings have distorted the reality and wronged the spiritual side of man as they ignored the groping of a higher spiritual state. The famishing and thirsting souls sought to the spiritual satisfaction from the Buddha’s supernatural blessing in order to placate their suffering but Hīnayānic atheism caused despair to them.

The concept of Buddha in Mahāyānic doctrines is more trustworthy. In the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra\(^60\), the Buddha is looked upon as a god higher than gods and he never died. He can salve all beings from their disease and destitution through his power.

Speaking on Hīnayānic atheism, S. Radhakrishnan\(^61\) comments: §The philosophical atheism of Hīnayāṇa as the skeleton in the box, the diseased worm in the beautiful flower.\(\)}

This appreciation is completely correct since among Indian gods the Buddha is supreme. He has enough compassion and wisdom and he can salve all beings from their sufferings through his supernatural powers.

Getting into touch with the new inclination of society, the Buddha’s faithful disciples might have hesitated either to undergo modification or perish. As a result, these monks of new thought believed that they could capture the heart of people only by giving up the icy coldness of some forms of Hīnayānism and framed a religion that brings happiness to humankind. Mahāyānists offer to all beings in the world a salvation by faith and love as well as knowledge. The faith, which failed to quicken the flame of devotion,

\(^{58}\) BFLS, pp. 211-4.

\(^{59}\) NBT, pp. 1-58.

\(^{60}\) SSLF, pp. 320-2.

\(^{61}\) RIP\(1\), p. 590.
has been done and a transcendental Buddha has been taken shape. In Mahayanic literature, the Buddha and Bodhisattvas have become objects of worship. The ceremonial and ritual aspects of worship assumed particular importance in this period.

S. Raddhakrishnan\textsuperscript{62} says that the Mahayanic Buddha is no preacher of penance. He does not shut his eyes to the suffering world when he attains Nirv\`{e}na. He offers light to it so that it may reach its goal. According to the \textit{Lank\`{e}vat\`{e}ra s\'{e}tra}\textsuperscript{63}, the Mahayanic Buddha has three bodies, viz, \textit{dharma\k{e}ya}, \textit{sambhog\k{e}ya}, and \textit{nirmanak\k{e}ya}. \textit{Dharma\k{e}ya} or body of law is the cosmic manifestation or the substratum of all existences. \textit{Sambhog\k{e}ya} or body of enjoyment is the divine manifestation among supernatural creatures. And \textit{nirmanak\k{e}ya} or created body or material body (\textit{rEpak\k{e}ya}) is the manifestation of the Buddha in the image of man. K. Antonova\textsuperscript{64} says that by these three bodies, the Buddha brings salvation to all creatures in the cosmic, celestial, and terrestrial worlds... S. Radhakrishnan\textsuperscript{65} also assumes that with the manifestation of the Buddha’s \textit{trik\k{e}ya}, Mahay\`{e}na adopted to the various needs of the followers of Buddhism.

As mentioned above, the H\`{i}nay\`{e}nic Buddha has only a material body, after death, he has nothing more to exist. Simultaneously, the concept of H\`{i}nay\`{e}nic Nirv\`{e}na and the attainment of Nirv\`{e}na belong to relative truth. These limitations led to the emergence of Mahay\`{e}nism that purports to answer to the faith of the Buddhist in the new stage.

\textbf{The Limitation of Practice}

Generally, H\`{i}nay\`{e}nic sects only mention ethics, meditation and wisdom, without any mention of rites and ceremonies that attract and drag someone into religion.

\textit{H\`{i}nay\`{e}nic} ethics is, generally, not complete because it allows its followers to take meat. \textit{H\`{i}nay\`{e}nists} try to quibble that the Buddha allowing them to take meat if meat is not killed and cooked for them.\textsuperscript{66} But one, who practises compassion, cannot take meat even if it is not specially cooked for him. He should know that when an animal is

\textsuperscript{62} SSLF, pp. 320-2.
\textsuperscript{63} SLS, p. 308.
\textsuperscript{64} KHI, pp. 140-1.
\textsuperscript{65} RIP\textsubscript{1}, p. 590.
\textsuperscript{66} MN, p. 112.
slaughtered, it certainly feels the pangs of death and suffering. Instead, the monk ought to love all living beings and can not kill them even in thought. He is party to slaughters in order to eat for satiety.

Again, the rule of meat eating causes unfavourable comments among the other religions such as Jainism and Hinduism, etc because the Buddhists naturally opposed with the doctrine of *ahimsā* taught by the Buddha and other Indian saints. This change led to disappearance of the Theravādin school, the religion of non-veg eating, from India during the sixth century A.D. For this reason, the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* teaches that vegetarianism is the only proper means for a *Bodhisattva*. The Buddha, in the *Lankāvatāra sūtra* explains: “There may be some unenlightened followers of mine after my death, who, not knowing the spirit of my teaching and training, may wrongly conclude that I allowed them to eat meat and that I myself ate it.”

Clearly, the rule of meat eating was certainly not taught by the Buddha. It is, perhaps, added to *Pāli Tripitaka* later on. On the base of the *Lankāvatāra sūtra*, Mahāyānists also extended the scope of ethics to the relation between human beings and animals. According to the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, *Bodhisattva* can not endure the pain even to an ant for all animals are said to possess the potential Buddha-nature. Har Dayal observes that some animals possess a few human attributes. Some dogs, cows, buffaloes, etc are true to their masters and to shoulder some heavy works for them. Gautama Buddha is said to be born as a hare, a swan, a fish, a monkey, an elephant, etc in his previous existences. If one takes meat, he unintentionally eats the meat of the future Buddhas even meats of his father, mother, sister, etc, who is reborn in the state of woe. That is why the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* devotes a long chapter to this subject and several arguments are adduced in favour of vegetarianism. According to Har Dayal: it is the practice of meat-eating that makes one to become cruel and sensual. So the

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67 RIP, p. 605.
68 SSLS, p. 368.
69 Ibid.
70 SSLF, p. 21.
71 HBSL, p. 200.
72 Ibid.
73 SSLS, p. 368.
74 HBSL, pp. 200-1.
vegetarianism is the ethics of Bodhisattva who is going on the road to the Buddhahood in the future life.

Of meditation, Hinayânists advocate sitting-meditation. According to them, who ever wants to get spiritual progress, must renounce the world and practise sitting meditation. They hold that the life in home is narrow and full of hindrances, while the life of a monk is like the open air. It is difficult to lead a holy spiritual life as a householder. In order to practise meditation, meditator must give up family life and ordinary social intercourse and retire to a secluded spot in the forest and must lead a life as a celibate hermit and recluse. Such an interpretation certainly causes a major hindrance in the life of a laity, who is bustling in cultivation, commerce, and other social activities. The sitting meditation is only for monks and nuns, who have leisure time to practise it. On the contrary, Mahâyânists never ask their followers to renounce the world. They can practise meditation at any place and any time, even they can meditate while at their jobs. Because the purpose of Mahâyânic meditation is to experience and attain inner serenity and calm. That is always in the state of Nirvâna. If it is claimed that continuous and motionless sitting in meditation is right, it is the same as when Sariputra sat in meditation in the forest and was reprimanded by Vimalakirti. Hui Neng, the sixth patriarch of Chinese Ch’an school, also declares that the enlightenment comes from awakening mind and has nothing to do with sitting motionless in meditation.

In fact, if by sitting motionless in meditation one becomes a Buddha, the toad will become a Buddha early. According to Mahâyânists, one can practise meditation in walking, standing, sitting and lying. If he sits on meditation motionlessly, he will become a stone or wood, he can not get enlightenment. In the Saddharmapuṣṭaṁka sūtra, the Mahâbhijñânaḥbhibhû Buddha, before his enlightenment, kept sitting cross legged without moving his mind and body for ten small kalpas (eons), during that time the law of Buddhas did not come into his mind. Only after all defilements were removed from his mind, the law of Buddhas came to his mind and he attained the Buddhahood.

75 MN₁, pp. 27-8. 
76 Ibid. 
77 RHV, p. 24. 
78 LCZ, p. 87. 
79 SSLF, p. 117.
Thus, sitting motionless in meditation at a secluded spot in the forest or on the burial ground is not a positive means to enlightenment; it is only a possible means that keeps in defilements provisionally while practising meditation. After taking rest from meditation, defilements will develop higher. It is like some grasses are kept down by a piece of wood or steel and crushed, but soon after the grasses will grow up still higher and strong.

*Mahāyānists* give two new methods of meditation. First is the recitation of Amitabha’s name, and second is the uttering of *Dhāranis*. Practising these methods continuously and with undivided mind is also considered as meditation.

Of wisdom, *Hīnayānists* reveal three kinds of wisdom, that is, heard wisdom, intellectual wisdom and experiential wisdom.\(^{80}\)

Generally, these three kinds of wisdom belong to relative wisdom possessed by an *Arhat*. In other word, these are the cognition of sense organs or conventional wisdom. It is not intuition or the absolute wisdom that arises from one’s pure mind. With the sensual knowledge, one can cultivate the good roots for attaining the *Nirvāṇa* of *Arhat* (the relative *Nirvāṇa*). He absolutely never becomes a Buddha with such a relative wisdom.

The absolute wisdom, which is the Buddha’s wisdom, is mentioned in all *Mahāyāna sūtras*. According to the Heart *sūtra*, the absolute wisdom or *prajñāpāramitā* is not created, not annihilated, not pure, not impure, not increasing and not decreasing.\(^{81}\) This absolute is called by many names in the *Mahāyāna* doctrines such as Buddha-knowledge, original *bodhi*, great mirror wisdom, *śunya*, *prajñāpāramitā*, etc.

Hui neng (8th c. A.D.)\(^{82}\) maintains that the absolute wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) comes from one’s pure nature, it does not come from outside. Yung Chia\(^{83}\), a Chinese *Ch’an* master (8th c. A.D.) presents four kinds of wisdom of the Buddha, that is, the great mirror wisdom, the profound observing wisdom, the wisdom of equality, and the perfecting wisdom. According to him, the great mirror wisdom comes from pure

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80 HAL, p. 74.
81 SBS, pp. 134-5.
82 LCZs, p. 33.
Èlayavijñāṇa; the wisdom of equality from pure manas, the perfecting wisdom from five pure previous consciousnesses and the profound observing wisdom from pure manovijñāṇa.

As mentioned above, the wisdom, which is mentioned in Hñayāṇa doctrines, is the relative wisdom that can see the forms, sizes and colours of all phenomenal objects, simultaneously it can also know the impermanence, suffering and selflessness of them. Whereas, the wisdom, which is mentioned in Mahāyāna sūtras consists of both the relative and the absolute wisdom. The relative wisdom can know forms and attributes of all conditioned things whereas the absolute wisdom can know the nature of them. In short Hñayāṇists only talk of the relatives wisdom while Mahāyāṇists have both the perception of relative wisdom and the absolute wisdom.

(4) Harmonization of Buddhism and Brahmanism

One of the characteristics of Mahāyāna Buddhism is harmonization with other religions. Mahāyāṇists advocate that there should be no praising of one’s own religion and decrying of other ones but on the contrary a rendering of honour to other religions for whatever reasons honour may be due to them. Mahāyāṇists look upon all religions as the revelation from the dharma-kāya and each of them tries to bring out some aspect of truth that is the all pervading spiritual force and the supreme principle of life. So wherever Mahāyāṇism prevailed (India, China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Tibet, Vietnam, etc.) the respective indigenous religions were tolerated. Especially Mahāyāṇism never seriously opposed the Brahmanical doctrines and practices. The Brahmanism also looks upon the Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Mahāyāṇists have still deified all gods and goddess of Brahmanism as Bodhisattvas who are the protectors of Dharma. The Mahāyāṇists returned the compliment by identifying Viṣṇu with Bodhisattva Padmapāni called Avalokitesvara. The Brahmin ascetics were looked upon as the brethren of the Buddhist Srāmanas. On the other hand, Brahmanism and Mahāyāṇism have close correlation of thought and the religious practice. Specially Mahāyāṇists not only respected the local religions and beliefs but it also took care to teach them a new

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84 RIP, p. 605.
85 JBC, p. 6.
86 RIP, p. 607.
aspect of life, kindness to animals and patient but they did not teach of a grim, austere, self-repressive doctrines and to open the immortal gate for all without discrimination between members of different religions.

By these reasons, many scholars condemn that Mahêyêna convinced at religious superstition excessively and they themselves caused Buddhism to decline in India.  

This condemnation is beyond the purpose of Mahêyênism, whose main purpose aims at the salvation of all beings and not to attack other religious beliefs. So it offers to all beings world over the salvation by faith and love as well as knowledge. Mahêyêna, moreover, does not expect everyone to renounce the world. It wants people to be part of evolving new social and religious ideals.

S. Radhakrishnan also condemns that the so-called Mahêyêna Buddhism really a collection of various Bodhisattvas, saints, gods, goddess, who are only the ancient gods of Vedic Aryans thinly disguised by Buddhist symbolism.

This condemnation is completely correct because Mahêyêna always looks upon all living beings as the future Buddhas, the Brahmânical gods and goddess are, therefore, merely living beings and they will become Buddhas in the future lives. By this reason, Nêgarjuna, a master of Indian Madhyamika school in the second century A.D., taught that the Brahmânical gods, i.e. Brahman, Vi–Êu, Siva, Kêli, Laxmi, etc had the attributes assigned to them in the Brahmânical scriptures and were proper objects of propitiation.

The reconcilable attitude of Mahêyêna religion may be brought out by close relationship with Brahmânism as follows.

**Harmonization of Thought**

**The Concept of Absolute Truth**

87 Ibid.  
88 Ibid., p. 596.  
89 Ibid., p. 598.  
90 Ibid.
The definition of Brahman in the BrhadÈranyaka Upani–ad\(^91\) is similar to that of sÈnyatÈ\(^92\) in the Heart sÈtra. Both of them affirm that brahman or sÈnyatÈ is never gross or fine… without eyes, without ears, without tongue, without taste and smell… no within, no without, etc. The concept of Ètman in the Upani–ads is considered as the Buddha-knowledge or intuition that constitutes the essence of man. It is not created by cause and conditions; it is the same between the Buddha and living beings. Due to ignorance, living beings have not yet recognized it and commit evil karma therefore they are governed by the wheel of samsÈra. Brahman is sometimes, considered as dharmakÈya, the essence of all existences. The Mundaka Upani–ad\(^93\) says that from Brahman all things spring up as thread from spider, as small sparks come forth from fire, etc.

MahÈyÈnic and Brahmanical doctrines show that the Absolute is beyond the conventional concepts. NÈgarjuna (2 c. A.D.)\(^94\) holds that things, in their fundamental nature, transcends the duality of being and non-being. The creation and destruction, purity and impurity, permanence and impermanence are attributes of all conditioned things. The Absolute has no such attribute and it only can be described by negation and not by a clear definition and demonstration. The Ètman or Buddha-nature is also a substratum of a soul or consciousness or gandhava. Both MahÈyÈnists and Brahmanas affirm that the Absolute is not influenced by birth, old-age, sickness, death, sorrow and suffering while the body is influenced by them. Though the absolute does not enter into samsÈra, soul or consciousness brings it into transmigration because it is potential in the soul or consciousness. It is like the wave and its moisture. The wave is high or low but its moisture is the same.

\(^91\) RPU, p. 232.
\(^92\) SBS, pp. 134-5.
\(^93\) RPU, p. 673.
\(^94\) KBC, p. 84.
The Concept of Soul

Both Mahāyānasists and Brahmanas recognize one’s soul or spiritual entity. It is the subtle body that is neither different nor having resemblance to the body. According to both, soul or consciousness enjoys the result of karma, suffers suffering and sorrow.

The concept of soul in the Upani–ad is considered as consciousness or ĖlayavijṆāna or patisandhi vijṆāna in the Buddhist doctrines. After death the elemental body is dissolved but soul or consciousness remains. Both the Upani–ads95 and Kṣitigarbha sūtra96 agree that soul or consciousness passes through from one body to another and owing the past karma soul assumes different bodies in the different times. When the soul or consciousness identifies itself with the Absolute (brahman or sānyatā), the liberation is attained. Simultaneously both Upani–ads97 and Kṣitigarbha sūtra98 give a detailed descriptions of manner in which the dead man can be reborn. Both agree that man, who is reborn, is the heir of karma of the dead man but he is a new being. The Buddhist Nirvāṇa is not different from the immortality of soul in the Upani–ads because it is an eternal state of being. The absolute Nirvāṇa is the unity of soul with the Absolute. Both affirm that if there is no soul, there will be no rebirth or no attainment of Nirvāṇa. It is called real soul when it gives up all evil karma and becomes one with the Absolute.99

The Concept of World

Both Mahāyānism100 and Brahmanism101 believe that the world is real though it has imperfect manifestations. Brahmanism, nevertheless, considers that the world is created by God with his māyā.102 Whereas Mahāyānists deny the role of God in the creation of the world and they hold that the world was made by cause and conditions.103

95 RPU, p. 460.
96 TSBKV, p. 32.
97 RPU, p. 267.
98 TSBKV, p. 35.
99 RPU, p. 100.
100 BFLS, p. 70.
101 RPU, p. 190.
102 Ibid., p. 673.
103 RIP1, p. 623.
According to YogÈcÈra doctrine\(^{104}\), God is only a personalization of the creative power of universe or Èlayavij°Èna, the cosmic mind (the whole of universe) from which all things spring up. Yasomitra\(^{105}\) argues that God cannot be the cause of the world. If he were the cause of the world, all things in it would be produced simultaneously but they are produced in succession. Both agree that the world is always governed by the rule of impermanence, suffering, and selflessness and change is the attribute of conditioned things.

The Concept of Bondage and Liberation

Both MahÈyÈnism\(^{106}\) and Brahmanism\(^{107}\) agree that ignorance and craving are the causes of bondage. It is ignorance that produces selfishness and knots in the heart that is fundamentally not bound by external objects. Samkara\(^{108}\) maintains that it is ignorance that is the cause of attachment and aversion. Both MahÈyÈnists and Brahmanas agree that so long as ignorance dominates mind, the liberation can not be attained.\(^{109}\) Because of ignorance and craving, one makes new karma by which after death his soul or consciousness is led to samsÈra. MaitrÎ UpanÈ-ad\(^{110}\) asserts that by the result of past karma after death one’s soul is led into the womb of mother where a new body arises and is endowed with growth in darkness before final delivery. Ksitigarbha sÈtra\(^{111}\) also says that by the result of past evil karma, one’s consciousness is led to rebirth in evil worlds or to be punished in Hells.

Liberation is freedom from bondage. When one shakes off ignorance, he becomes free from all selfishness, enjoys all bliss in the life, whereas when he lives in ignorance, he attaches himself to worldly things and to sufferings. The Full Enlightenment sÈtra\(^{112}\)

\(^{104}\) STTMc, pp. 115-6.
\(^{105}\) RIp, p. 631.
\(^{106}\) SSLS, pp. 118-9.
\(^{107}\) RPU, p. 464.
\(^{108}\) SIP, pp. 572-3.
\(^{109}\) RIp, p. 413.
\(^{110}\) RPU, p. 807.
\(^{111}\) TSBKV, pp. 17-20.
\(^{112}\) LCZ, p. 39.
and B. hadaranyaka Upani–ad\textsuperscript{113} say that self-bondage will be continued until a man realizes the inherently enlightened nature or the absolute brahman in him.

There are two kinds of liberation mentioned in the Upani–ads. First is the liberation during the life and second is the liberation after death. In the Upani–ads the liberation during the life is called jīvamukti and the liberation after death is called videhamukti. Two kinds of Hīnānic Nirvāṇa, Upadesesa and Anupadhisesa Nirvāṇas are but jīvamukti and videhamukti in the Upani–ads. Apart from these Nirvāṇa, Mahāyānists give the ontological Nirvāṇa called non-dwelling Nirvāṇa or the absolute Nirvāṇa. Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas depend on the absolute Nirvāṇa to salve all living beings from their sufferings.\textsuperscript{114} The absolute Nirvāṇa in Mahāyānic doctrine is the same with \textit{tman} in the Upani–ads. \textit{tman} or the absolute Nirvāṇa is one’s own eternal essence that is neither to be created nor to be exterminated though his body is subject to generation and cessation. When passion and ignorance be absent from mind, the absolute Nirvāṇa or \textit{tman} naturally appears no need to seek it from outside.

The liberation where the individual soul or consciousness becomes one with \textit{tman} or absolute Nirvāṇa it becomes immortal. Both Brahmanism and Mahāyānism agree that the liberation from birth and death does not mean flee from the world of becoming. He continues to live and act in the world though with a different outlook and the world also continues though it is no more alien to him.

The Concept of Knowledge

Three kinds of knowledge in the Lankāvatāra śāstra\textsuperscript{115}, e.g. imagined knowledge (parikalpita), analysed knowledge (paratantra) and absolute knowledge (parinishpana) are equivalent to three kinds of knowledge in the Upani–ads\textsuperscript{116}, viz sensual perception, logical perception and intuition.

\textsuperscript{113} RPU, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{114} AIB, p. 377.
\textsuperscript{115} SSLS, pp. 157-60.
\textsuperscript{116} RIP, pp. 173-9.
Imagined knowledge or sensual perception is sensual cognition or relative knowledge that is possessed by the ordinary people whose thinking is determined by ideas of being and non-being. This knowledge knows only the form, colour, size of all existences. Both Mahāyānaism and Brahmanism agree that this knowledge can not perceive the absolute truth or essence of all things. Sensual perception or imagined knowledge is that which generates one’s imagination. For example, in darkness a rope is mistaken as a snake. Such an illusion not only misunderstands the essence of existence but it also falsely imagines of existence.

Analyzed knowledge or logical perception is possessed by Hīnayānists, who can not go beyond the categories of particularity and generality. This knowledge only analyses existences into their material elements, it can not perceive the real nature of existences. The rope was imagined as a snake in a specific situation, now on analysis it turns out to be a piece of rope that is made by many small ramie fibers, and its nature is not known by this knowledge.

Kena Upaniṣad\(^{117}\) says that the real nature of all things is not known by reason but by renunciation of intellect and to live an innocent life as a child. The Lankāvatāra Sūtra\(^{118}\) also has similar appraisal: The more going to analysis of the truth, the more going far from it.

Logical knowledge is also the relative knowledge. By means of logical knowledge some Hīnayānists finally come to the realization of egolessness of all existences and to attain Arhatship, cutting down the circle of rebirth.

Intuition or absolute knowledge is the highest knowledge. Both agree that the absolute truth is grasped by intuition that is the transcendent wisdom or prajñāparamitā. This knowledge comes from the real nature of man. This knowledge is

\(^{117}\) RPU, p. 585.
\(^{118}\) SSLS, p. 135.
possessed by the Buddha and *Mahasattva*. By means of this wisdom, the Buddha knew the universe, its existence and its real nature clearly.\textsuperscript{119}

*Katha Upaniṣad\textsuperscript{120}* says: Not by the speech, not by the mind, not by sight can he be apprehended the absolute but by intuition.

When all desires dwelling within the heart are cast away, the intuition takes shape and reveals the real nature of all existences and the final liberation is attained.

\textsuperscript{119} TFOS, pp. 10-25.
\textsuperscript{120} RPU, p. 646.
The Harmonization of Worship

It is said that the image-worship had no place in the Vedic pantheon. It has come to being after advent of Mahêyêna Buddhism in the first century A.D. D.N. Jha maintains that after coming of foreigners (1st B.C.), the images of the Buddha, Siva, Viṣṇu, etc were produced and worshipped in anthropomorphic form. The presence of various figures of Buddha and Śêrya in Gandhara and Mathura arts is the evidence of image worship in ancient India.

R.C. Dutt holds that rites and ceremonies of Hinduism borrowed from Mahêyênism finally it supplanted Buddhism in India. According to him, Mahêyênism effected a great change in the manners and religion of Hindus and during the time of Mahêyêna, image-worships and ceremonies became popular. The harmonization between Mahêyênism and Brahmanism is remarkable. According to L.M. Joshi, in Kasmir, Mahêyênism and Brahmanism though had their apparent differences, remained very close to each other. In the time of Kusênas, the Budha and Siva were worshipped by the members of the same family. In the Karandavyêha sÊtra, Mahasvara (Siva) is respected by the devotees of Avalokitesvara and he himself is addressed as Mahêsvara (Siva). In the Saddharmapundarîka sÊtra, it is stated that in order to convert and preach the people, Avalokitesvara assumes the form of Mahasvara. L.M. Joshi says that in emperor Harsa’s family, the Buddha was worshipped along with Siva and Śêrya.

On the other hand, in the modern Hindu culture, it contains the important elements of Buddhist thought such as ahimsê, karunê, dhyêna, prajïê, etc. especially Hindu vegetarianism is influenced by the LankÊvatÊra sÊtra of Mahêyêna. Hindus, moreover, consider Buddha as a maker of Hinduism and worship him as an incarnation

121 DAI, p. 108.
122 Ibid., p. 90.
123 Ibid.
125 JBC, p. 16.
126 Ibid.
127 SLFS, p. 289.
128 JBC, p. 16.
of Vi–ṭu. L.M. Joshi observes that Hindus worship Buddha because their religion is largely based on the teachings of Buddha. The doctrine of *ahimsā* is practised broadly among the followers of *Hinduism*. The animal sacrifices practised by followers of *Shaivism*, *Saktism* and other sects of *Brahmanism* were replaced by veg sacrifices.

### The Harmonization of Practice

*Brahmanism* shows three means by which the final liberation can be achieved. These three means are *jñayoga, bhaktiyoga* and *karmayoga*. *Mahāyānism* also contains similar concepts, i.e. *prajñā* (wisdom), *bhakti* (devotion) and *anābhogacarya* (service without rewards).

Three means mentioned in the *Upani–ads* and *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* are different only in terms used. However, their essence is the same. Both recognize the role of wisdom that is considered as a prerequisite condition for the final liberation. The duty and devotion are performed on the basis of wisdom. Without wisdom the performance of duty and devotion will degenerate into superstition and egoism.

*Prajñā* (wisdom) mentioned in the *Mahāyāna* is also considered as the *Brahmaknowledge* in the *Upani–ads*. *Maitrī Upani–ad* says that one who has *Brahmaknowledge* (intuition), gets liberated from evils and attains complete union with the Absolute. *Mundaka Upani–ad* mentions two kinds of knowledge, lower knowledge and higher knowledge. The lower knowledge mentioned in the *Mundaka Upani–ad* is equivalent to sensual knowledge (*parikalpita*) and logic knowledge (*paratantra*) in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*. And higher knowledge (*parinishpana*) mentioned in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra* is synonymous with the absolute knowledge or intuition in the *Upani–ads*.

Both recognize that *bhakti* (devotion) prepares the pure mind for liberation. J. Sinhē says that devotion is the means to the union of the finite soul with the Absolute.

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131 SIP, p. 169.
132 SSLS, p. 216.
133 RPU, p. 811.
135 SIP, p. 222.
Suzuki also states that devotion generates knowledge that can cause one’s mind to unify with the Absolute through the Other powers (adhisthÈna) of Buddhas that issue from their original vows (praØidhÈna). Both recognize that in devotion there is interaction between self-power and Other-power. Without this Other power that issues from the Buddhas or gods, one, who though has enough power and intelligence, can not be experienced his self-nature and the final liberation can not also be attained.

Both agree that through devotion, the devotee expresses his eager and sincere heart to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas or gods by which all passions are suppressed, all thinking and actions become good, the egoism and attachment are extinguished and his mind is full with lasting peace.

The B.hadÈranyaka UpaniÈad and the LankÈvatÈra sÈtra show two kinds of offering, the material and moral offerings. And both assume that the material offering is only equal to 1/16th of moral offering, the desirous devotion is the cause of bondage and the desireless devotion can lead to the union between soul or consciousness with Ītman or Buddha-nature.

Duty or purposeless action is the third characteristic of MahÈyÈnism as well as of Brahmanism. It is interesting to say that anÈbhogacarya (the service without rewards) mentioned in the LankÈvatÈra sÈtra and karmayoga (duty) in the Īsa UpaniÈad have the same meaning. It means that both call for service without rewards. Through performance of selfless actions, one can attain the union of his mind with the Buddha’s mind or god’s mind by which the selfishness and attachment to possessions are gradually eliminated and the liberation is obtained.

The LankÈvatÈra sÈtra and Pra.,na UpaniÈad teach two kinds of karmayoga or actions, the desirous and desireless actions. The former is the cause of bondage and the latter is the means to liberation. MahÈyÈnena Bodhisattvas always

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136 SSLS, pp. 202-5.
137 Ibid.
138 SIP, p. 196.
139 RPU, p. 314.
140 SSLS, pp. 273-5.
141 RPU, p. 314.
142 SSLS, p. 216.
143 RPU, p. 653.
plead that a living being must sacrifice himself for the happiness of others; his work need not be concerned with fame and advantage; he must work for good and welfare of the world. The Upani–ads and the LankÈvatÈra sÊtra emphasize the importance of purposeless actions, though intuition is still considered as the determined factor of the final liberation. MahÈyÈnists also state that two elements which create a Buddha is wisdom and merit; wisdom comes from meditation and merit from selfless action. Purposeless action itself can not lead to salvation but it prepares pure heart for liberation. The spirit of selfless service is one of the basic characteristics of MahÈyÈnism and Brahmanism.

(5) Patronage of Rulers towards both Buddhism and Brahmanism

Several rulers of India, who flourished from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D., took pride in following Buddhism and at the same time they patronized either Vaisnavism or Shaivism. These kings are known as the Sakas, the KusÈnas, the SÈtavÈhanas, the Salankyanas, the Ikshvakus and the Guptas. They imitated king Asoka, who had already introduced and zealously practised the policy of religious tolerance and inter religious understanding, patronized both Buddhism and Brahmanism. In the Guptas period, the rulers patronized Buddhism and Brahmanism zealously as a result both these religions had close relationship during the sixth century A.D.

King Kaniska (A.D. 78-102)\textsuperscript{144}, one of the KusÈna emperors, became a Buddhist. He particularly patronized both MahÈyÈna and SarvastivÈda in his kingdom. According to A.K. Warder\textsuperscript{145}, Kaniska’s empire was centered on Gandhara and Kasmir with two capitals, the former was at Purusapura in the KubhÈ valley and the latter at Mathura in SÈrasena. Kaniska supported Buddhism and tolerated other religions, these evidences were displayed on his coins in which beside the image of Buddha, the gods of Brahmanism and the gods of Greek religion are also found. D.D. Kosambi\textsuperscript{146} also informs that the images of Buddha and Siva appeared on the KusÈnas’ coins. According to him, in the KusÈna empire, there was no religious discrimination, the historical interaction between Buddhism and Brahmanism could be recognized.

\textsuperscript{144} AIB, p. 329.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{146} DIH, p. 260.
S. Radhakrishnan\textsuperscript{147} affirms that Kaniska moved his centre of power from the east to the west. He is said to have built a tallest temple (more than 600 feet in height) at Purusapura.\textsuperscript{148} Under Kaniska’s patronage, the fourth Buddhist council was held in Kasmir where the great split of Buddhism was acknowledged.\textsuperscript{149} Taran̆tha\textsuperscript{150} places the rise of Mah̆y̆nism during the time of Kaniska and his son Vasiska. Kamiska used Sanskrit as the state language. So P̆eli gave place to Sanskrit from the first century A.D.

A.K. Warder\textsuperscript{151} maintains that during the time of Kaniska, a section of the Mah̆sanghika school was led by Mah̆deva from Magadha to the Andhra country where the Caitika Sāila, one of the previous sects of Mah̆sanghika, was founded. From this sect emerged the Apara Sāila and Uttara Sāila (purva) schools. The Caitikas in Andhra produced two sub-sects, the Rajaritikas and the Siddhartikas. According to A.K. Warder\textsuperscript{152}, during the time of Kaniska as many as eighteen Buddhist sects came into being. Kaniska not only support Buddhism but he also supported other religions. Romila Thapar\textsuperscript{153} asserts that king Kaniska supported Brahmanism to develop at Surkhkotal and Mat in Mathura, where many temples were built for deities. Though the later rulers of Kus̆na converted to Vaisnavism and came to accept the presence of Bhagavata and Shaiva deities, they also supported Buddhism to grow in their empires.

On the other hand, king Kaniska\textsuperscript{154} donated the cultivated land to Buddhist monks and he also granted the villages to Brahmanas in northern and eastern Bengal and the eastern part of modern Madhya Pradesh. Along with the land grants, the king also granted seeds, cattle, workers and exemption of taxes to Buddhist monks and Brahmanas.\textsuperscript{155}

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\textsuperscript{147} RIP, p. 590.
\textsuperscript{148} DIH, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{149} AIB, pp. 325-30.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., p. 355.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., p. 278.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., pp. 277-334f.
\textsuperscript{153} RPHEI, p. 223.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., p. 186.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., pp. 86-71.
D.N. Jha\textsuperscript{156} maintains that during the reign of Kaniska many trade routes were established. Through these trade routes, \textit{Mah\={E}y\={E}nism} and other Buddhist sects traveled into Western and Central Asia, China and South-eastern Asia.

A.K. Warder affirms\textsuperscript{157} that during the period of Kaniska, many missions of \textit{Mah\={E}y\={E}na} and \textit{Sarvastiv\={E}da} were sent abroad and Buddhism came in contact with the foreigners. In the process of contact, Buddhism received new data from the native people and studied their customs and habits to adjust themselves to new life. A special feature is acknowledged here that \textit{Mah\={E}y\={E}nists} did not destroy all indigenous religions but they still assimilated the gods of native religions into \textit{Mah\={E}y\={E}na Bodhisattvas} who protected the Buddha’s \textit{Dharma}. According to Warder, the indigenous support to Buddhism came mainly from the mercantile communities that were by all accounts prosperous. As a result, many \textit{st\={E}pas}, monasteries, caves of Buddhism were built in native countries during the period from the first century B.C. to the sixth century A.D.

The S\={E}tav\={E}hanas are said to be supporters of \textit{Mah\={E}y\={E}na} Buddhism and \textit{Brahmanism}. A.K. Warder\textsuperscript{158} says that \textit{Mah\={E}y\={E}nism} was most prosperous and many \textit{st\={E}pas}, monasteries and caves were built in the S\={E}tav\={E}hana empire. According to K. Antonova\textsuperscript{159}, the earliest of the S\={E}tav\={E}hana was Satakarni, who followed Shaivism, supported Buddhism and Jainism. It is said that the S\={E}tav\={E}hanas were the most direct successors to the policy of Asoka to honour and support all religions. King Gautamiputra Shatakarni\textsuperscript{160} donated the land to the Buddhist monasteries; at the same time, he also granted villages to the \textit{Brahmanical} temples and exemption from taxes was also given to Buddhist monks and \textit{Brahmanas}. Such references to land grants are also found in a S\={E}tav\={E}hana inscription of the second century A.D.\textsuperscript{161}

Romila Thapar\textsuperscript{162} holds that king Vasishthiputra, the son of king Gautamiputra, who ruled in the early second century A.D., helped in the spread of

\textsuperscript{156} DAI, p. 86.  
\textsuperscript{157} AIB, p. 278.  
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., pp. 311-2.  
\textsuperscript{159} KHI, p. 131.  
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{162} RPHEI, p. 227.
Buddhism in his kingdom. A.K. Warder informs that Nāgārjuna, the famous philosopher was associated with king Vasishthiputra. The king became his disciple later on. This evidence was recorded in inscription of a temple at Amaravati and Hsuan Tsang also writes that Nāgārjuna lived at the Sëtavēhana court. Clearly, under the Sëtavēhanas’ patronage, Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism flourished in his kingdom. Specially, Andhrē Pradesh was one of the cradles of Mahēyēnism that grew up during the times of Sëtavēhana-Gupta. The Amaravati school of art, which was influenced by Mahēyēna, was also founded during the reign of the Sëtavēhanas.

Apart from that, further south of the peninsula, the kingdoms of the Shalankyanas, Brihatpalayanas and Ikshvakas were founded in about the third-fourth centuries A.D. The first two ruled in the west Godavari district and in the Masuliputum area. The Ikshvakas, empire was located further south in the Krishna valley. The Ikshvakas built the manificent city of Nēgarjunakonda. The kings supported Brahmanism while the women of the royal family supported the Buddhist Sangha.

During the time of Guptas, all religions were honoured and supported by the rulers. Though the Guptas followed Brahmanism, they supported Buddhism. It could be seen in prosperity of Mahēyēnism during the period. Vasubandhu, the famous philosopher of Yogēcēra school, was patronized by the king Samudragupta. L.M. Joshi informs that most of the Gupta kings were Vaisnavas by faith, they were tolerant and benevolent towards other faiths and patronized the learned and men of letters.

On the basis of above evidences, L.M. Joshi comes to conclusion that: The common patronage of two faiths naturally brought Buddhism near Hinduism. This assessment is not acceptable because the so-called Hinduism was a collection of quintessence of Mahēyēna doctrines and the local worships of Vedic

163 AIB, p. 357.  
164 Ibid.  
165 Ibid.  
166 KTHB, p. 87.  
167 KHI, p. 174.  
168 RPHEI, p. 228.  
169 DAI, p. 97.  
170 JBC, p. 7.  
171 Ibid.
Brahmanism. In other word, Hinduism was entirely influenced by the doctrines and ritual forms of Mahâyâna Buddhism. Even the Hindus’ vegetarianism also comes from the Lankâvatâra sûtra of Mahâyâna.

It is said that Brahmanism and Buddhism developed side by side in the time of Guptas. Among all Brahmanical sects, Vaisnavism became most popular during the period of Guptas; it spread in different parts of the country and even traveled across the sea to South east Asia. Purânic Brahmanism or Hinduism was established in the time of Guptas, it is considered as a new religious form. Mahâyâna Buddhism had its special feature in image worship and elaborates ceremonial ritualism. The cult of the Amitabha Buddha and his world of Sêkhavati had attracted the masses. Even eminent philosopher like Vasubandhu II, the master of Dînaya, was attracted by the doctrine of pure-land. Beside the image worship and ceremonial forms, the practice of reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name and that of Dhêranis for sacred and secular purpose were the most notable features of Mahâyânism during the period of Guptas.

Under the patronage of the Gupta rulers, Buddhism in both Sêrvastivâda and Mahâyâna continued to flourish. And North Western India and Kasmîr gradually became the centres of Mahâyâna Buddhism. Many stîpas, viharas, caityas continued to be built and maintained except at old sites like Kapilavastu, Srîvasti, and Gaya, which are, according to Fa Hien, appeared in desolate and ruinous states. The monasteries at Mathura and Pêtaliputra were active centres of Sêrvastivâda and Mahâyâna, the great university of Nêlandê, founded by king Kumêragupta Mahendrêditya (A.D. 415-455), became the great centre of art, literature, philosophy and Buddhist learning in Asia. The highest achievements of the Gupta sculpture are the Buddha image from Sarnath, the best contemporary paintings at Ajanta have Buddhist

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173 SSLS, pp. 368-71.
174 DAI, p. 108.
175 JBC, p. 8.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid., p. 9.
178 KHI, p. 143.
179 JBC, p. 55.
Eighteen *Purāṇas of Hinduism* are said to be composed during the time of Guptas.\(^{181}\)

On the other hand, the Gupta rulers also practised the grants of land and villages without taxes to *Brahmanical* priests and Buddhist monks.\(^{182}\) The missionary and literary activities of Buddhist monks such as Fa Hien, Buddhabhadra, Dharmakṣena, Kumārajīva, and Paramārtha greatly contributed towards the growth and diffusion of Buddhist literature during the period.\(^{183}\)

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\(^{180}\) DAI, p. 114.
\(^{181}\) Ibid., p. 112.
\(^{182}\) JBC, pp. 8-9.
\(^{183}\) DAI, p. 100.