Ordinarily faith is regarded as a theistic concept – faith in Personal God. But a little reflection discloses that it can not be confined to theism only. Non-theistic religions like Buddhism and Jainism also endorse the concept of faith in their metaphysics and ethics. *Nirvana* is a matter of faith for all the followers of Buddhism till they themselves realize it. Similarly for all the followers of Jainism faith in *Moksha* or *Kaivalya* is a matter of faith. However, faith in personal God and that in the ultimate state of one's being are not exactly of the same type. The difference in the objects of faith in the cases of theistic and non-theistic religions put a constraint to approach the concept of faith differently in different cases. Faith in the case of non-theistic religions appears to be a sort of pure rational postulate in which no element of emotional involvement is present. But belief in *Nirvana* or *Moksha* is not ontological postulates for the Buddhist and Jaina religions. For a Buddhist believing in Nirvana is not a matter of supposition: it is an actual possibility that Buddha and many *Arhatas* realized in past and to actualize it for himself is extremely valuable for him. The same is true for the belief in Moksha for the Jainas: it is valuable for them. For them not to believe in such a transcendent state is to take away the real worth of human life. So it is an evaluative belief for them. A theist's faith in a personal God also is an evaluative belief but the way he gives value to his belief is not the same as the followers of atheistic religions give value to their belief. Despite being evaluative, belief in the two cases needs to be approached differently.

The evaluative belief manifests itself in very different forms even in theistic religions. Believing in God as the supreme master and believing in Him as father is not the same. They are not even similar. Believing in God as mother and as friend add further attributes to evaluative belief. All these variations make it clear that the concept of faith, which appears to be homogeneous due to its evaluative nature, is not so and needs thorough scrutiny about its various types. This scrutiny forms the content of this chapter. This chapter is an attempt to present the conceptual distinctions among various forms of evaluative beliefs.
3.1 Conceptual Distinctions in Various Forms of Evaluative Belief

Religious faith is an evaluative belief but it varies in forms in different religions. It becomes, therefore, necessary to understand the distinction between various sorts of evaluative beliefs. H. H. Price¹ has presented a thorough analysis of the distinction between various sorts of evaluative and descriptive beliefs by examining the distinction between two types of uses of 'belief'—'belief in' and 'belief that'. Ordinarily the term 'belief in' is used to express evaluative sense of belief and substituted for faith. 'Belief that' is considered to be factual in nature. It is used to express a propositional attitude. When someone says that he believes that Tajmahal is situated at Agra, he only wants to say that he believes that the proposition 'Tajmahal is situated at Agra', is true. He expresses only the truth of a proposition. A person may not have any reason, or may not have sufficient reasons to believe that the proposition is true. So what he believes is not his knowledge. It is only his belief. He only believes that it is so (i.e. Tajmahal is situated at Agra).

Ordinarily a scientist's belief in a theoretically postulated entity falls in this sort of belief. A scientist's belief that there is such an entity remains only a belief based on insufficient reasons till it is confirmed by empirical tests. After confirmation it is accepted on the basis of the heuristic power of his theory in which such an entity figures. But before that it remains only the scientist's (or the group of scientists') belief and this is a belief about the truth of a proposition. In this sort of belief, ordinarily, no personal attachment to the object of belief is said to be present. It is very difficult to actually find a case of this sort of scientific belief since a scientist who whole-heatedly pursues his research can't help attaching some sort of value to his endeavor. Whatever be the fate of his belief after empirical test, his theory assumes at least a sort of emotional value for him. This emotional element is not necessary from the epistemic point of view (it may be regarded as a hindrance for the objectivity of the pure cognitive endeavor) and it is expected that a scientist ought not attach any emotion to his cognitive quest (since it proves to be a hindrance to the pure objectivity of cognitive endeavor) but it is not uncommon. So Price holds that persons may have an evaluative belief in theories².
This situation makes the task of delineating the distinction between various sorts of evaluative beliefs further complicated. We can't make a general statement that a scientist's belief about his theory is a case of pure factual belief and expresses nothing more than a propositional attitude. However, it does not lead to the conclusion that there are no cases of pure descriptive beliefs that are ordinarily referred to by the phrase 'belief that'. Price has shown in his discussion that surprisingly some examples of 'belief in' (as contrasted to 'belief that') phrase refer to such cases. So to continue our scrutiny regarding the conceptual distinctions between various sorts of evaluative belief it can be accepted that there are cases of belief that are only descriptive in nature although they might not be referred to by 'belief that' phrases.

'Belief in' is ordinarily taken to be the expression of evaluative belief and used for persons. 'I believe in my doctor' is an example of this sort of belief. By saying -'I believe in my doctor', the person doesn't mean to state only that there is a doctor. He wants to express his confidence in him: he trusts him. He knows his abilities and on this basis he believes that his diagnosis would be correct and he would cure his disease. These qualities make a doctor respectable for his patient or for any common man. Since the sense of respect is understandably ascribed to persons only it is regarded that evaluative belief, which is generally expressed with the 'belief in' phrase, is applied to persons only.

However, Price points out that it is just over-simplification to say that 'belief in', is always an attitude to a person-- human or divine. It is perfectly possible that one may believe in non-human or material things. For example, one may believe in machine or one may have confidence in his car break. Even one may believe in event such as 'I believe in the victory of my country'. Expressions being used in ordinary language such as 'I believe in Railways' or 'I believe in waiting list, etc. represent an attitude to non-person. In such sentences people not merely express that there is such a thing or such an event takes place. They attach some value to that thing or to the happening. A person's assertion that he believes in his car he expresses his confidence in his machine. By saying that he believes in it he states that finds it dependable for various important reasons, for instance, he may travel any distance in it without trouble etc. Similarly believing in railways may mean to a person a comfortable,
homely and secured means of traveling. It may be comparatively a better way of traveling for a person. So it is not a matter of believing merely that among other means of traveling railway also is a means. The person attaches some value to it. The value aspect becomes clear if we take into account the corresponding phrase ‘disbelieving in’ or ‘not believing in’. In the corresponding sense of ‘disbelief in’ where attitude to a person: or a thing is alike. One may say, for example, ‘I do not believe in Railways’. It is obvious that he doesn’t want to say that railway doesn’t exist or there is no such thing as railway. He only means to say that for various reasons he thinks that railways is not a good means of transportation, or prefers some other mode of transportation to it.

It is important to note that evaluative belief either for a person or for a thing is not a matter of personal liking or disliking only. Evaluation is always an inter-subjective process. There is nothing exclusively personal in it. When a person says that he believes in his doctor, he intends to say that he trusts him but doesn’t intend to say that the trust-worthiness of his doctor is for him only. Some other person may not have belief in that doctor but he can very well understand why that person, who trusts his doctor, finds him trust-worthy. He may not agree with reasons of trust-worthiness put forward by the person who believes in his doctor, but he can understand the reasons. The possibility of disagreement between two persons on the question of trust-worthiness of a doctor shows it clearly that it is an inter-personal matter; it is not merely a person’s liking.

Evaluation is done with reference to certain accepted standards. If the object of evaluation turns out to be up to mark on that standard then it is valued; otherwise it is not given value or disvalued. The qualities due to which it is valued can be said to be the reasons for a person’s believing in a person or a thing. So very often it is argued that evaluative ‘belief in’ can be reduced to purely descriptive or factual belief and can exhaustively be reduced to ‘belief that’ phrase by explicitly presenting the reasons for valuing or giving importance to a person or a thing. It is generally held that by introducing a suitable value concept evaluative beliefs expressed through ‘beliefs in’ can be completely reduced to factual beliefs or ‘belief that’.
Although evaluative belief is generally expressed through ‘belief in’, not all ‘belief in’ phrases express evaluative beliefs. There are instances of ‘belief in’ that express nothing more than a mere ‘belief that’. For instance, if some one says that he believes in ghost then this can be reduced to the statement that he believes that ghosts exist. The person doesn’t intend to attach any value to ghosts by saying that he believes in ghosts. The expression such as ‘I believe in the mughal emperor Akbar’ can be substituted by the statement ‘I believe that there was a mughal emperor called Akbar’, nothing more than this. Here there is nothing like esteem, trust and loyalty. It is merely a case of believing in the existential proposition. Believing in existential proposition means that to believe that there is a person or thing to which certain description could be applied. Price delineates other cases also where ‘belief in’ means nothing more than a mere factual ‘belief that’ although a proposition which the reduction yields need not be an existential proposition. For example if one believes in the combustibility of nylon and incombustibility of asbestos then it means merely that nylon is combustible but asbestos is not. It is also to be noticed that the converse rendering of ‘belief that’ statement into ‘belief in’ statement is also possible. For example believing that all whales are mammals could be equally described as believing in mammality of whales. From this analysis we find that there are two different sense of ‘belief in’ phrase- factual and evaluative. The factual senses of ‘belief in’ is reducible to ‘belief that’. Although it is suggested by some people that its evaluative sense, where it is equivalent to something like esteeming or trusting, also can be reduced to ‘belief that’ by introducing suitable value concept but this position cannot be universally accepted till it is settled that valuing an object of belief is not possible without accepting an existential proposition about it. Price, therefore, proceeds to examine the question of relation between ‘belief in’ and ‘belief that’.

3.11 Relation between ‘Belief in’ and ‘Belief that’

Does the ‘belief in’ statement necessarily presuppose a ‘belief that’ statement? Ordinarily the answer seems to be positive. For example I cannot believe in my doctor unless I believe that there is a person to whom the description ‘being my doctor’ is applied. It means that ‘belief in’ in evaluative sense presupposes ‘belief that’ in factual sense. It is not necessary that in every case of believing in a person we first give a definite description of that person.
Norman Malcolm pointed out that believer might have just a personal acquaintance with the person whom he believes in. In Malcolm’s view to believe in a doctor one may not necessarily know his abilities but one must personally know that doctor. If one doesn’t know that doctor (i.e. if one doesn’t know that there is such a doctor) then, according to Malcolm, one can’t say that one believes in him.

Price, however, holds that personal acquaintance is not a necessary condition for all the evaluative sense of ‘believe in’. He quite insightfully argues that a Managing Director may believe in a waiting list (e.g. of persons who are to get promotion) so long he has no experience of being put on waiting list himself. Price shows that the M.D believes in the waiting list (i.e. he thinks that it is helpful in managing the employees) only because he has no acquaintance with the list. Had he experienced the painful situation of waiting for long, he would perhaps not have believed in it, i.e. he would not have attached value to it. On the other hand by having a personal experience of being in a waiting list for a thing that one needs to be repaired immediately, one begins to disbelieve in waiting list. There is also a possibility of opposite conversion from disbelief in to belief in it. For example many people disbelieve in air travel so long as they have not actually tried it but after having personally experienced it their disbelief may turn into a firm belief in it. So Price makes it amply clear that personal experience is not at a necessary condition for believing in.

In the light of above clarification it is important to note that the possibility of believing in evaluative sense without believing in the existence of the object can’t be denied. One may believe in any speculative theory or hypothesis (like Plato’s theory of ideas) without necessarily believing that that ideas do really exist in a different world of ideas. This position gets further strengthened by the fact that in recent times most scientists and philosophers of science don’t accept the old realistic view of theories, in which it was believed that theoretically postulated entities do really exist. Many theoretical entities are not only beyond sense experience but their experience is just physically impossible. But the scientists believe in them because of the heuristic power of the theory in which such entities figure. Such cases of ‘believing in’ are very well reducible to ‘believing that’ in terms of its power of predictions and explanation. But as it is stated a person may believe in a theory in the evaluative sense, and it becomes
obvious when it is found that they keep on believing in a theory even after it is refuted. The failure of its prediction or falling short of explaining some newly discovered phenomenon that lead to its refutation, are not accepted by such a person as sufficient reason to stop believing in it. They think that it can again prove its power after some time. This can actually happen: in the history of science many abandoned theories have staged a come back in a different form. But till this coming back actually takes place the person’s belief in that theory is only an evaluative belief without any factual basis.

Above discussion presents a complex picture of the relation between ‘belief in’ and ‘belief that’ that can be stated as follows:

Some cases of ‘belief in’ are the expressions of evaluative beliefs that are based on certain factual conditions and can be completely reduced to ‘belief that’ phrase.

Some cases of ‘belief in’ not actually evaluative beliefs: they are purely factual belief that can be completely presented in ‘belief that’ phrase.

Some cases of ‘belief in’ are the cases of pure evaluative beliefs that don’t presuppose any factual basis and can’t be reduced to ‘belief that’ phrases.

This last category is very important for the consideration of belief in God in particular and religious belief in general. That forms the central theme of this chapter. However, before entering into that it would be helpful for us to examine the attempts to reducing evaluative ‘Belief in’ into ‘belief that’.

3.12 Attempts of reducing Cases of ‘belief in’ into ‘belief that’

Reductionists maintain that evaluative ‘belief in’ can be reduced to ‘belief that’ by just replacing value-concept with suitable descriptive concepts. If it could be done then the difference between descriptive belief and evaluative belief turns out to be just a difference in the content of the proposition believed and not in the attitude of the believer. For example ‘believing in my doctor’ may be restated in two statements (i) ‘believing that the doctor is good at doing certain things such as curing diseases’ and (ii) it is good thing that the doctor is good in curing diseases’. It is worthwhile to note that when someone expresses a belief in another person it always appropriate to ask why does he believe in that person? Or what is there about him in respect to which he believes in that
person? According to the reductionists if anyone believes in a person it only means that he believes that the person is good at doing certain things. It means only that the person or the object of belief has an instrumental value for the believer. 'I believe in my doctor', according to reductionist's view, means that I believe in my doctor only because he is good at curing diseases. Therefore in this view 'believing in' has an instrumental value and it is conditioned by its instrumentality.

It is to be noted that some cases of believing in a person or an object need not be the cases of believing for any desired end. Price has given the example of believing in a friend as a typical case of this sort. A person believes in his friend not because he is good at bringing favorable result to him. A person believes his friend only because he is his friend. His friendship itself is valuable for him. He believes in him only for the warmth of this relation that involves his belief.

3.13 Religious Belief is a Non-reducible Evaluative ‘Belief in’

The last category of ‘belief in’ is very important in Price’s analysis because it helps us understand the actual nature of religious belief. Price puts the belief in God on par with belief in a friend. For a religious believer believing in God is valuable in itself. It could be seen as a purely evaluative belief that is not reducible to factual belief. Price is of the view that a belief in a person can be a pure evaluative belief in of this sort. Believing here means trusting. Trusting is the essential feature of all evaluative ‘belief in’. Trusting may be based on certain conditions but it can be unconditional also. Trust in a friend is unconditional. Moreover, one can trust his friend as the unique individual human being that he is. The concept of ‘good thing that’ is not relevant in the case of believing in friend. Belief in God also is an unconditional trust. Many people believe in God with the expectation for some worldly gains but some religious believer believe in God because this belief itself valuable for them. In faith alone a person becomes aware of the divine and that makes the believing in God valuable for him. Faith relates him with his God and that makes his belief exclusively important for him.

In above stated analysis we find that there are varieties of evaluative ‘belief in’. Broadly we could make a distinction between ‘believing in’ for
something else and believing in itself. Evaluative ‘believing in’ in the both sense is applicable in the religious discourse. If we examine closely we would find that ‘believing in’ God for something else may be used in this context where His existence would only be good as a means. Expressions such as ‘I believe in my Lord (God) because he provides me some worldly things as wealth, money, honor, prestige and etc.’ are used when one believes in God as a means to provide certain worldly gains. Here for believers the existence of god is meaningful so far as he provides certain worldly gains. But believing in God for God’s sake is also used in this context. In this sense the existence of God is important in itself. Here believers attribute God as loving, compassionate and merciful. He answers prayers. He gives his grace to us. He is a refuge to us in time of trouble. And at last believers say nothing could be more advantageous to us than the existence of God. The expression - ‘I believe in God because I get happiness in believing in Him’ or ‘I believe in God for its own sake’ in fact represents value of emotion in its purity. The analysis of evaluative ‘belief in’ in the case of friendship is very close to ‘belief in’ God. The feature of ‘warmth’ and ‘trust’ are present in the heart of believers of God.

It is shown in above discussion that ‘belief in’ in its evaluative sense can be used not only for persons but for theories and principles also. In non-theistic religions like Buddhism and Jainism followers believe in the principle of nirvana and moksha respectively. They believe that there is such a state of consciousness. They believe in it and for them this is a pure evaluative belief without factual basis. The essential features of these religions lie in the fact that although they put forward rational support for the object of belief, they don’t believe in such states of being due to those arguments or evidence. For a Buddhist nirvana is the most important state that he (and others also) ought to achieve. Nirvana is state of freedom from all suffering. End of all suffering is a desirable state for everybody without exception. It is desirable not for anything else; it is valuable in itself.
3.14 The Question of Reality of the Object of Belief

Price’s analysis of ‘belief in’ gives us a great deal of clarity regarding the nature of religious (at least theistic) belief. However, his attempt to show the pure evaluative nature of this belief is basically prompted from his empiricist inclination that stops him from taking clear stand regarding the question of existence of the object of religious belief (i.e. God). He only helps us see that one can believe in God even if one does not commit oneself to hold that such a being exists. In another word belief in God is valuable irrespective of the debate regarding the existence of God. This position is not very much helpful in understanding particularly the theistic belief. A believer in personal God attributes the object of his faith with so many qualities and does explicitly hold that such a person exists but by all the attributions he implicitly acknowledges that it exists. It would not only be ridiculous but also wrong to think that a believer in personal God believes that his God has so many attribute but he doers not care if his God does not exist. This feature of belief in God can’t be overlooked at all. An appropriate analysis of faith in God must take note of this feature.

A theistic believer believes in the existence of God. Some believers are not very clear about the kind of existence his God has but hardly any believer holds that God exists in space-time like other entities of the world. Belief in God is an evaluative belief for any believer but along with this they are all committed to accept His existence also. This is what makes any belief religious belief. One may believe in God as an ideal combination of all high moral value without believing in his existence but it is doubtful whether such a belief could be called religious belief in the ordinary sense. A theistic believer, despite his difficulty to substantiate his claim, holds that God exists.

In non-theistic religions like Buddhism and Jainism, Nirvana and Moksha is held to be the highest state of being (or non-being) respectively. In the light of the analysis presented by Price it is easier to accept the belief in Nirvana or Moksha as pure evaluative belief having no factual reference at all but that would also be inappropriate. A follower of either of these religions does believe that such a state of being is real state and it is not merely an ideal that is accepted to lead good social life. It should be noted that belief in Nirvana or
Moksha involves the belief in the reality of such a state not once but twice. This point needs some elaboration.

A follower of Buddhism believes that there is really such a state of being that is called Nirvana and he also believes that Lord Buddha actually attained this state. For a Buddhist Buddha is a living instance of Nirvana. For any Buddhist Nirvana is an idea that he receives from his tradition. Buddha assumes the central position in that tradition. Despite the fact that Buddha is neither a God nor is he the giver of Nirvana he believed to be the enlightened one who attained it for himself and showed the path of its attainment to others. Thus believing in a state called Nirvana essentially involves the belief in Buddha as an enlightened master. Practically we can’t find a person who believes in Nirvana but does not believe in Buddha. But it is not merely a practical problem. Even in the conceptual history of the idea of Nirvana a Buddha as a preceptor is inextricably linked. Anyone can believe in a state like Nirvana only if one believes that someone in the tradition of the preceptor had actually attained this state. Without this conceptual link the belief in it would lose its significance completely.

In Jainism also the belief in Kaivalya is a belief in a real state of human consciousness. It is believed by the followers of Jainism that a man can attain Kaivalya although the path of its attainment very difficult. Every body does not attain it but every body can actually attain it. So it is believed not only as an ideal to govern the life of people but as an actual state of consciousness that anyone can attain. Thus it is a real state of man’s being; real as contrasted to that which is an ideal only. Moreover, the belief in such a state involves the belief that all the twenty-four Tirthankaras had actually attained it and showed the path to others for its attainment. In fact the path of attainment of Kaivalya, as stated in Jainism, is so difficult that one can believe in it only due to the belief that at least a few (the Tirthankaras and Jinas) have actually conquered their desires and physical needs and achieved it in their life.

It is clear from above discussion that in non-theistic religions a believer has to believe twice in the reality of what he believes. In other words a believer, who does not believe in a personal God, believes in the reality of a highest pious state of human consciousness only through the belief in a person who
has actually attained that state. Believing in that person is an inextricable aspect of his belief in such a state. Believing in such states of consciousness (or emptiness) is an evaluative belief but it necessarily involves believing in the reality of such states.

An analysis of religious belief must take stock of this feature. Price's analysis needs to be accepted with this clear stand regarding the object of faith. The object of religious belief – be it a personal God or a higher state of one's being (or non-being) or consciousness – is believed to be real and not merely an ideal construct. Believing in either case manifest in certain factual consequences in the life of the believer but it can't be reduced to those factual consequences. In that sense these belief are not factual beliefs. But endorsement of reality of the object of belief is essentially contained in them.

3.2 Non-Homogeneity of Faith: Level-Difference between the Believers

The question of reality of the object of faith in either case (theistic faith or non-theistic faith) puts a challenge for the believer. The believers have to face this challenge and they meet it in various ways. In different religions the reality of the object of religious faith is made intelligible in many ways but the appeal to the authority is the most common way. This is, in fact, a way to make faith intelligible on the basis of faith itself. It ends up in circularity and needs to be made intelligible in a way other than appealing to faith. Such a demand can't be fulfilled in the sense of verification of the object of faith in sense experience. Proper understanding of the domain of religious discourse (as presented in the last chapter) helps in understanding the illegitimacy of such a demand. The object of religious faith is the foundation of the domain of religious discourse and is revealed in the experiences of the people of faith only. Therefore, revelatory experiences of religious believers are generally accepted to be an independent way of understanding the reality of the object of religious faith. However, the experiences of ordinary believers also, who don't have a revelatory experience but feel the indirect presence of or proximity with the object of faith, need to be taken in consideration to have a comprehensive understanding of the reality of the object of faith. In view of the difference between the experiences of a believer of a higher level and that of ordinary level religious faith acquires a feature of non-homogeneity. Proper understanding of
faith must take into account this of this feature also. Although the experience of an ordinary believer does not contradict the experience of the believer of a higher level and the former gains final support from the latter only the importance of faith in the worldly life of human being could be assessed in and through the former. The non-homogeneity of faith, in view of the level difference of the believers, enables us to understand the irrationality, rationality and non-rationality of faith. An ordinary believer finds in his experiences of the some events of this life an indirect proximity with object of his faith. He may take these experiences as a proof of the reality of the object of faith and adopt a rigid posture to defend his faith. This shows his irrationality in respect of faith. Another ordinary religious believer may use his experience of certain events of his life in an appealing way to convince others. This shows his rationality in respect of faith. Still another ordinary believer may see that his experience of certain events of his life gives an indication of his indirect proximity with his object of faith but can’t stand as a proof if rational doubts are raised against that. In all these cases faith of ordinary believers is a means to lead his life with an inner support or strength. Emotional satisfaction and internal balance that is the natural outcome of faith is valuable for the believers this level. Value of faith as a valuable state of self-awareness is not inaccessible but far from his stage. Value of faith as an end in itself is the state of the higher level of believers. For them the reality of the object of faith is a matter of direct awareness. Non-homogeneity of faith, in view of the level difference between the believers would be discussed in subsequent chapters under the headings ‘Faith as Means’ and ‘Faith as End.'
Buddha is considered to be (bhagavan) God endowed with power and perfection. He possess in entirely all power splendour fame wealth knowledge and act. For Buddhists or followers of Buddhism, he has completely eliminated all passion and karma and the two obscurations (kleśāvarna and jñeyavarna) having full knowledge of absolute truth. His wisdom is spoken of as consisting of five varieties- (1) the perfectly pure intuition of Absolute there being no bifurcation into 'is' and 'is not' (advaya jñānam). (2) The knowledge resembling a mirror wherein every thing is reflected (ādarsa jñāna). (3) The discriminative knowledge precisely cognizing all the separate objects and elements without confounding any of them (pratyavacakṣaramāna). (4) The cognition of unity the equality of oneself and of others as possessed of the unique essence of Buddha hood (samañajñāna). (5) The active wisdom pursuing the welfare of all living being (kṛtyanuśaṅgajñāna). Accordingly even in Buddhism as a non theistic religious religion there is no valid objection against the existence of an omniscient person. Buddha as god is also compared to wish fulfilling precious stone citamani and kalpataru tree both of which give out the different favors sought of them by different votaries. Especially in Mahayana Buddhism sunyata and karuna are the two essential characteristic what make Buddha a loving god. This is his great compassion mahakaruna and his active and abiding interest in the welfare not only suffering humanity but of all beings, which amounts to say that he is loving god. His karuna is great as if knows no limitation of any kind his mercy is for all the deserving and undeserving of lowly creature. The quality of karuna is intense and pure his love is more intense than that love of mundane relationship like father for his dear son. Sunyata is prajna non dual intuition and having this the tathagata is non different from Absolute (Tathata sunya). As identical with prajna paramita Buddha is absolute and belong to the region of the paramartha. But at the same footing as possessed of karuna and owing to his essential equality with all beings he is in the region of phenomena samvriti he is thus amphibious being having one foot in the absolute and the other in phenomena.

The tendency to depend on the assistance of a compassionate Buddha for salvation is perhaps a kind of devotion to personal god for some higher ends. Especially in the Japanese Buddhist tradition of Jodo Shin Shu founded by Shinran (1173-1262), devotion to eternal Amida Buddha who has vowed to save all sufferings sentient beings, is clearly witnessed. This is because all attempts to acquire liberation by ones power (jīniki) are trained by selfish pride which is only eliminated by giving oneself up to other power (tariki) of Amida. The devotee s overcome their egosism and hubris by admitting that they are unable to lift themselves out of the mire of greed, hatred and ignorance, because the very effort to do so produces conceit. In short, their devotion to Amida is sign of and strengthens their humanity; they give up the stubborn insistence of self effort and release themselves into the helping hands of their savior. Buddhist tradition such as pureland Nichiren, Tantra and so forth that place great emphasis on faith in and devotion to - and the need for the saving grace of transcendental Buddha or bodhisattva who is thought to be still accessible and able to assist devotee. Here faith is very similar to bhakti the loving devotion to the personal god that is found so commonly in popular Hinduism. (Buddhism Knowledge and Liberation A Philosophical Study, David Burton, Ashgate Publishing House England pp 170-171)Practitioners of Buddhism, place a great emphasis on faith as necessary condition in the journey of salvation. It is commonly identify as one of the five spiritual faculties (indriya) along with energy (virya) mindfulness (smrti) concentration (Samadhi) and understanding wisdom (prajna) which needs to be developed in order to achieve awakening. In this context sraddha is described as faith in the tathagata that is Buddha. Thus someone who has faith in the Tathagata has confidence or trust in Awakened person’s teaching and also in this very fact that he gained awakening. Even it is more important to note that this faith admits of degree. That is one can have great confidence or trust which is more provisional practitioner in order.
to progress on Buddhist path need to have confidence in the way of Awakening taught by the tathāgata. This means that practitioners must have faith in the Buddhist teachings and practice as efficacious in bringing about liberation from suffering and must also trust that human beings are indeed capable of cutting off their craving and attachment that if there needs to be faith in the possibility of Awakening and that Buddhist teaching can enable one to achieve it. Without such confidence the un-awakened Buddhist would be left in the uncomfortable and frustrating position of knowing that craving and attachment cause of suffering. In the very beginning of Buddhist path faith functions as a great motivator. (Samyutta Nikaya 5, trans Bodhi 2000, pp 1668-70).

For the practitioner of Buddhism Buddha is not merely historical person he is indeed the essence of all being (dharma-kāya), he has glorious divine form (sambhoga-kāya) and assumes at will various forms to deliver beings from delusion and to propagate the dharma (nirmanakāya). The salistamba sutra says ‘whosoever sees the pratyasamutpada sees the Buddha, and whosoever sees Buddha sees pratyasamutpada- causal law regulating the rise and subsidence of the several elements (dharma-sanketa). Especially in Mahayana traditions, it is believed that there are countless Buddhas, all of one essence—that of “Tathāgata” (“suchness” or “that-ness”)—and it is in this sense that the Buddha proclaims himself as “Tathāgata” and exalts himself in theistic terms beyond all other “gods” when he declares, (Lalitavistara Sutra), “I am the god above the gods, superior to all the gods; no god is like me—how could there be a higher?” There are also many examples in the Pāli Canon, where the Buddha shows his magical superiority over the Brahma class of gods. So this was already present in the Pāli scriptures/ agamas. His realm (“dhatu”), of which he is the “Holy King”, is further said to be inherent in all beings. This indwelling, indestructible, incomprehensible, divine sphere or essence is called the “Buddha-dhatu” (Buddha-sphere, Buddha-nature, Buddha-realm) “thagatagarbha” in such sutras as the “Mahaparinirvana Sutra” and the Anunata-Apurnta-Nirdeśa (Nirvana Sutra). The idea of an eternal, all-pervading, all-knowing, immaculate, uncreated and deathless Ground of Being (the dharmadhatu, inherently linked to the sattvadhatu, the realm of beings), which is the Awakened Mind (bodhicitta) or Dharmakaya (“body of Truth”) of the Buddha himself, is promulgated in a number of Mahayana sutras and in various tantras as well. Occasionally, this principle is given a personification as a primordial buddha such as Samata-abhadra, Vajradhara, Vairochana and Adibuddha, Adibuddha, among others.