Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is among the major prominent religions of the world. Gotama Buddha, known as 'Siddhattha' before the attainment of Buddha-hood, was the founder of Buddhism. In the past it marked a remarkable progress and made an impact on the life and ideas of the people of India, the birthplace of Buddhism. His message of truth, compassion and non-violence crossed the boundaries of the country and spread almost throughout the Asian continent. It is one of the methods discovered by the Buddha and taught to the world for the welfare and happiness of the world. Those who have been following Vipassana Meditation have been escaped from the circle of life in the time of the Buddha up to date.

The Buddha was an extraordinary human being born to human parents in a specific period of history in six centuries B.C. He quested for the Truth as they really are and finally he discovered it. He attained Enlightenment and appeared in the world as a Buddha, the Awakened One. He shared His experience by delivering the way and means of happiness for both in this life and the life after and ultimate liberation to mankind. He pointed out the true things to every walk of lives, both external and internal freedom from mental intoxicants in life and a unique path for the deliverance of all ill of suffering.

During His long career as a religious preacher He had ample time to repeat his teachings and principles over and over again to His disciples who with their excellent memory, carried on the same for centuries to the followers through at a number of places. The account of Gotama Buddha's life and works are found in Pali and Sanskrit texts and also in the literatures of China, Tibet, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Japan, Indonesia, etc. The
Pali Canon is the most reliable and oldest sources for the information and the events of life of Gotama Buddha, for His teachings and valuable discourses. In spite of alterations and additions, the followers never lost the sight of the Master. Biographical accounts found in the Canon are scattered in both the Vinaya and Sutta Pitakas.

He spent and carried out His missions for forty-five years in the world. Almost half a century's ministry, He fulfilled his noble task to the satisfaction of both himself and necessary actions to his earnest followers both the householders and the homeless ones. They were not only firmly established His teachings, but also we're capable of expounding them to others.

There is a vast variety of evidence to uphold the fact that the Buddha was a truly historical personage and that He actually lived. The scattered fragments of biographical accounts are found here and there in whole of the Canon which gives us the real life of Gotama Buddha possessed of human characteristic, who acquired knowledge by struggle and spread it to the masses. As the Great Man in history, the Buddha occupied the foremost place among those great people who adorned human history. Another section called Theravada Tradition will trace the historical background how and why the schism appeared after one hundred years after the demise of the Buddha and the main schools of Buddhism up to date called Theravada Buddhism and its method which is the ways and means of liberation from the circle of life will be discussed in this work.

Out of forty-five years, the present study Vipassana Meditation and Theravada Tradition: A Historical Perspective is to trace the ways and means of Vipassana rediscovered by the Buddha and after the demise of the Buddha the schism among the
Bhikkhus, the disciples of the Buddha appeared one hundred years later. The aim of the present work is to focus on the historical background of the *Sutta* with the aspects of socio-religious, ethico-philosophical and cultural ideas that prevail from the time of the Buddha till the present situation.

**CONTEXT FOR RESEARCH**

Buddhism is a religion of kindness, humanity and equality. While the religion of Vedas allowed animal sacrifice to propitiate the gods, Buddhism set its face against such sacrifices; on the contrary, it waged a merciless campaign against this practice. Though Gotama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, belonged to an aristocratic family, his life and work were those of a democrat. He served the interests of the masses and was concerned with their happiness.

People continually seek ways to increase their happiness, inner peace and harmony. The catch is that most people adopt the wrong methods to find peace and harmony. They seek them outside themselves into the external world, instead of looking within themselves. Many are beginning to discover the real source of their happiness and troubles: the mind. And to turn their attention to the ‘inner man’, the mind, meditation is the way.

Today meditation appeals to so many people from all walks of life and amongst various races and religions for the mind works regardless of the race or religion a person belongs to. The task of meditation is to understand the nature of the mind and to use it effectively in daily life. The mind is the key to happiness, and also the key to misery. To understand the mind and use it well is a task that transcends racial, cultural and religious
barriers. Meditation can indeed be practiced by anyone, regardless of his or her religious label.

There are two types of meditations; Samatha (concentration) and Vipassana (Insight) taught by the Buddha. The benefits of meditations can be enjoyed in this life and the life after and step by step one can reach the final goal, the total eradication of defilement, Nibbana. The technique and the ways leading to the realization of Nibbana have been practiced in Theravada school of Buddhism so the context for research in the topic Vipassana Meditation and Theravada Tradition: A Historical Perspective is to shed light on the old path to those who wanted to seek real happiness.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The purpose of this work is to trace the salient features of Theravada doctrinal method, the technique known as *Vipassana Bhavana* (Insight Meditation). It is the unique method discovered by the Buddha over 2600 years ago and due to this technique people in those days and the present days as well have been enjoyed the taste of the teaching of the Buddha. Most of the people around the world have been searching for the real happiness on their ways following the guidance of their secular and spiritual leaders, but majority of them could not find the quest they search due to wrong views and ways. This work could solve the problem for those who are searching for the real happiness.

The importance of the proposed topic is to identify the proper tool for meditation from the Buddhist perspective. Generally the concept of Kammathana means workplace. It logically means that the aspect of workplace refers to the mind of meditator who wish to attain spiritual meditation with perfection. In case of Buddhist tradition, the concept of
Bhavana is used to refer to what we have mentioned as a workplace. The concept of bhavana means mental development. Related to this, the word meditation from the perspective of Buddhist derived from a Pali word Bhavana. Generally there exist two types of bhavanas. They are Samatha-bhavana which means tranquility meditation and Vipasana-bhavana which refers to insight meditation. Finally, its benefits can be gained by practicing the method as directed by the Buddha. Their benefits can be attained in this very life. As mentioned above, the two methods have their significant benefits. The significance of Vipassana has been explained in the Visiddhimagga. It has been suggested that there exist five benefits of Vipasana which are:

1) Purification of beings;
2) Overcoming of sorrow and distress; 3) Disappearance of pain and sadness; 4) Accomplishment of rights path and 5) Realization of the stage of Nirvana.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Ven. Sayadaw U Dhammapyiya 'Nibbana in Theravada Perspective' is a good work. He is a renowned Burmese monk doing his missionary around the world. He traced this specific work because he is the master and instructor of meditation method, especially, Vipassana Meditation technique to the people at home and abroad. This is his specialized subject and devoted his life to Buddhism, especially Theravada Buddhism so he emphasized this subject because the only Buddhist way of life can be successful for everyone.

He has ventured upon a subject which is difficult in Buddhism, i.e. Nibbana. He writes with clarity and convincingly so that the reader can follow him with ease. After the introduction, he gives us the concept of Nibbana from different perspective- from
Buddhists as and non-Buddhists, and also from the East as well as from the West, and he quotes the Burmese Sayadaws such as Shwe Gyin Sayadaw, Ledi Sayadaw, Taungpulu Sayadaw, Mahasi Sayadaw, Sayadw U Thittila and Pha Auk Tawya Sayadaw, some of which are not available in English.

Of course Nibbana can be understood only by those who have experienced knowledge like Buddhas, Paccekabuddha and disciples who have attained it. Nibbana is, to give you a crude example, like chili. Unless and until you eat it, you do not know its flavor. In the same way, Nibbana can be fully understood only when you realize it experientially.

What he said Nibbana is an unconditional reality in the Buddhist philosophical doctrine named Abhidhamma. As Nibbana is the unconditional reality, it is critical to interpret what it really is. Eventually the concept of Nibbana becomes a vital issue in Buddhism due to many interpretations and many contradictory definitions for that reality. This study attempts to explore the Buddhist concept of Nibbana. The main purpose of the proposed study is to reevaluate the phenomenon of Nibbana with particular reference to established Buddhist theological texts, commentaries and sub-commentaries. The particular emphasis however is given to the Theravada Buddhism, which is followed in Burma. This study would like to propose that the aspect of Nibbana does not refer to absolute cessation as conventionally believed, rather it meant for absolute peace to human species. He quotes copiously from Theravada books to show the way to Nibbana. Only when one realizes it through personal experience will one know Nibbana.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the methods and techniques of Vipasana tradition;
2. To study the Theravada tradition in Myanmar
3. To understand the similarities and dissimilarities in these two traditions
4. To compare and contrast Vipasana and Theravada traditions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the present study historical method and literary criticism were used. Historical data have been gleaned from encyclopedias and articles. In order to establish the facts, all collected data have been analyzed and compared. Texts composed in Burmese (Myanmar) have also been consulted.

ASSUMPTIONS

1) Vipassana is the essence of Buddhism that everyone should follow who wanted to enjoy eternal peace.

2) This Vipassana method has been preserved by Theravada Buddhist monks.

3) Nibbana preserved by the disciples of the Buddha is known as Theravada Samgha.

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The present work is based on the study of Pali Canonical texts, their commentaries, sub-commentaries and the works of Burmese monks compiled in Burmese with the view of crystallizing the technique of Vipassana meditation in Theravada tradition. So far as the
concept of Vipasana meditation within the framework of Theravada Buddhist tradition is concerned, the importance of Nibbhana has been understood from the perspective of personal experience acquired from meditation process.

**SOURCES**

The study is based on the Pali literature basically three baskets; the *Vinaya*, the *Sutta* and the *Abhidhamma*. The *Sutta Pitaka* consists of the five *Nikayas* namely *Digha, Majjhima, Samyutta, Anguttara* and *Khuddaka Nikayas*. This work is mainly based on a study of Pali *suttas* and their commentaries, sub-commentaries and other related modern works that refer to Theravada Pali canonical texts with a view of crystallizing historical, social and cultural thoughts of Buddhism. An attempt has been made to focus on the socio-cultural and historical perspective the themes found in the Pali literature. The sources are divided into two parts: primary and secondary sources. The *suttas* as the present study has been profusely used. The other *suttas*, connected with this topic found in especially in *Sutta* and *Vinaya Pitaka*, have been applied as a primary one. Apart from the Pali canonical sources, other primary sources such as post-canonical, commentary and sub-commentary have been considered as the primary sources. As secondary sources, various relevant books written by different scholars have been used in this work.

**IDEOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT THAT PROPELLED BUDDHISM**

Every system of thought embodies and reflects the tendencies of the time. India never saw before or during the sixth century B.C., an eruption of new dogmas leading to the
rise of new philosophical ideas and religious sects. Buddhist texts mention a long list of the religious sects and the philosophical and religious dogmas professed by these sects that were in vogue in the sixth century B.C. Why did such a number of sects emerge? Most of them faded away and a few have left a permanent impression. Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism and Saivisam made a great impression and survived up to date.

Moreover, a new religion or philosophy arises when there is a failure in the existing socio-economic and political system to provide social and spiritual fulfillment. The sudden mushrooming of numerous religious and philosophical ideas in the 6th century B.C. alludes to the fact that the socio-economic and political system of the time could not satisfy the needs of the people. One inherits views regarding his environment and culture. Many scholars have observed Buddhism through their viewpoint. Some of them were persuaded to believe that Buddhism is an offshoot or one segment of Hinduism. For example, Radhakrishnan says that “Buddha was born, grew up, and died a Hindu”.¹ There is little need to argue whether the Buddha was a Hindu or not. Since Hinduism was systematized only in the 7th century A.D. by sankaracaya.

- Did Buddha discover a new philosophy?
- Did the prevailing ideas of the time influence the Buddha?
- What is the identification of the Buddhist philosophy?

An impartial and comparative analysis of these questions may serve as parameters in delimiting the essential features of Buddhism. However, to understand

¹ P.V. Bapat, 2500 Years of Buddhism, (Government of India Publication Division), 1987, p.IX.
the characteristic features of Buddhism it is also necessary to examine the main stages of development of Indian religious and philosophical ideas as a whole.

Brahmanical religions developed more than one thousand five hundred years ago. The literature of this period consists of the four Vedas; Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvan each of which has four parts known as Mantra, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanisads. The Mantras (hymns), especially the later ones in the Rig veda constitute the actual beginning of Indian Philosophy. What influence brought about such an evolution of thought? According to Engels, “All religions are nothing but the fantastic reflection in men’s mind of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces”. According to this viewpoint, it can be suggested that these four strata of Vedic religion may be derived from the spontaneous social forces. An astonishing resemblance between the four strata of thought and the social and political stages of these periods can be noted in the following.

**POLYTHEISM**

The Aryans who came to India have no relationship with the Mohenjodaro civilization. “Their cultural level was lower; they were a semi-nomadic pastoral tribe with a developed patriarchal clan system and military democracy, the transitional form between a pre-class and a class society. A warrior aristocracy emerged with princes, Rajans who led the Aryans tribe into battle with the native population. At first they

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2 Frederick Engels, Anti During, (Moscow; Progress publishers, 1971), p.382.
conquered the Indus basin, Northwest India, and later the Ganges basin and Northeast India. This transitional system was also reflected in Rg Veda and other Veda”.

The basic feature of religions is the belief in the supernatural. Being dependent on nature’s forces, men ascribe supernatural properties to them, make them into gods and spirits. They believed that if these beings were not appeased, they could inflict harm and suffering on them. Buddhism agrees with the above idea. In the Dhammapada “Men, threatened with fear, go many arefuge to mountains and forests, groves, trees and Cetiyas. This is not the safe refuge nor is this the highest refuge.

The primitive Aryan who came to India was busy making god in his image. It was a kind of anthropomorphism. Many of the gods represented phenomena of nature. This feature of the religion was very common all over the world in primitive society. The feeling of the incompleteness of this world, the weakness of man, the need felt for a higher spirit, a guide, a friend, a support on which man could rest, to whom he could appeal in distress is natural to the sick heart of man. At that early age nothing could answer to this feeling for the infinitive so well as the boundless and the brilliant firmament of heaven. The sun and the moon and the star, may change, stones and clouds roll away, but the sky abides forever.

Agni or fire was an important phenomenon of nature. It was second in importance only to Indra. Agni is related to the Latin Ignis. It was the object of much primitive mysticism and speculation. There were many other gods such as ‘Yama’ lord of the dead and Rudra, who was generally an object of fear. Vayu, the wind god,

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4 Dhamapada, vx.188,189.
5 A.L. Basham The Wonder That was India, p.237.
Maruts, storm-spirits, etc…From the point of view the Aryan warrior the greatest god was Indra who fulfilled the dual function of war and weather-god.\(^6\)

Indra has generally been referred as the destroyer of the fort, but his main epithet is virtual-slaver (Vitra-han). Now under this review it may be suggested that Indra, the hero of the Aryan’s was apotheosized later by the people. Indra was the favourite dominant god in the Rg Veda. We find the largest number of Hymans nearly 250 about him, in the Rgveda. Indra was the god of the atmospheric phenomena and was conjoined with this important object (natural phenomena). Radhakrishnan said that when the Aryans entered India, they found that, as at present, their prosperity was a mere gamble in the rain. The rain god has naturally become the national god of Indo-Aryans. Indra was the god of atmospheric phenomena of the blue sky.\(^7\)

There was many deities like Surya (sun), Agni (fire), Dyaus (sky or haven), Marut (storm), Vayu (wind), Apas (water), Usas (dawn), Prthivi (earth) and also Varuna, Mitra, Aditi, Visnu, Pusan, Rudra and Parjanya who were originally related to natural phenomena. This is the polytheistic stage of the Vedic religion. Thus the polytheistic tendency shows the encounter between the primitive man and the phenomena of nature. They believed that if these natural beings did not appear they could inflict harm, so they offered and apotheosized natural phenomena. It can be said that this is the period of polytheistic Anthropomorphism.

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\(^6\) Ibid.p.235-236.
\(^7\) S.Radhakarishnan. Indian Philosophy, vol I, p.85, Oxford University press, Delhi,1989.
HENOTOHEISM AND MONOTHERISM

Where there is a plurality of gods the worshipper obeys the god he worships and it serves his purpose. In such a system where there is a plurality of gods every god assume greatness in the eyes of the prayer because in praying for selfish benefit he gives greatest position to the god to which he is praying. Even minor gods sometimes assume the highest rant. Sometimes Varuna was the chief god, sometimes Agni, also sometimes Indra was greater than all gods. According to Radhakrishna, Henotheism is an unconscious grouping towards monotheism. This tendency is a transferring state of polytheism to monotheism. This also shows that some leaders of the tribes had overcome others. In such a movement it is possible that Vedic Aryans had thought that the gods also could be classified superior and inferior. This classification depended on their daily importance.

There was a wonderful similarity between gods and kings. Protection of the people was the sacred duty of the king. The word 'bali' is mentioned several times in the Rg veda in the sense of tribute of offering, to a god. (Rg.1. 70. 9, 1. 10). The king was also the 'balihrit' receiving tribute (VII. 6. 5, 1. 73. 6). The hostile tribes defeated in battle were forced to pay some kind of Bali to the victor. The king is described as devouring of the people in Rg. Veda 1. 65.

After the Rg Veda period monism was a conceptual development which saw its culmination in the Upanisads. During this period (i.e. after the 8th century B.C. and up to 6th century B.C.) the economic and political situation in North India rapidly
developed towards an imperialistic system. There were 16 'janapadas' (republics) in India which developed trade and agriculture. There development created better means of communication among the 'janapadas'. Then tribal kingdoms and janapadas were being subjugated by two main kingdoms, Magadha and Kosala. Even the autonomous clans were subjugated by them.

In this political evolution of an all conquering power, economic and cultural power came under one rule which was unseen by the ordinary person. This monarchical environment created an impact on the minds of the people and was expressed in the field through monism. Concepts of Karma, destiny, determinism, indeterminism, fatalism and skepticism arose in his mind which reflected the political and economic environment of the time. The unseen faces in the political realm were viewed through these conceptualizations.

THE SACRIFICAL SYSTEM OF THE BRAHMANS

The humanized gods in the Rg Veda indicate some human weaknesses and a susceptibility to flattery and gifts. The sacrificial offering came to the stage in this manner. These sacrifices pleased the gods and also profit men. Through the sacrifices, gods become man's friends. In the Rg Veda certain hymns were used at the birth, marriages and funerals. These ceremonies were called 'grihya karma' (home sacrifice) which were associated with sacrifices of the simplest types. It was the function of every head of a family to perform the necessary sacrifices. The sacrificial fire was quite common. They might have thought of 'Agni' as an intermediary and messenger of volitional offerings from men to gods. They threw burnt offerings (i.e. offering of milk,
grain, ghee or flesh) to the fire. Kosambi has pointed out the origins of sacrifice and how it might have been: "The original idea of sacrifice is not clear, but primitive man would have noted in his own way that it was the hind not eaten last season that produced another edible animal this year, the fat seeds cast away unconsumed sprouted the next grain or crop. Thus, it is possible to interpret the origins of sacrifice as the primitive magic forerunner of systematic agriculture and animal breeding.".  

In the earlier stage, sacrifice was offered by the householder himself. He officiated as the sacrificial priest and the single fire of the domestic hearth served as the altar. In the second step the patriarchal head of the family or the tribal chief of the head of the clan, or a dedicated medicine man was represented as the sacrificial priest. Later, the group of priests who performed the sacrifices for the laymen were called Brahmans. The Brahmana was so called because of his claim to be the specialist in dealing with Brahman, the impersonal absolute and the source of the world and its life. 

The second part of the Veda, the Brahmanas ritual textbooks was intended to guide the priests through the complicated details of sacrificial rites. "Brahman in the Rgveda means a hymn or a prayer addressed to God. From the subjective force which helped the seer to compose a prayer, it comes to mean the object prayer. From being the cause of prayer, we may say it came to mean the power of sacrifice and hence in the Brahmanas the whole universe is regarded as a product of sacrifice, Brahma came to signify the creative principle of the world.".

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Brahmanas claimed themselves as the human gods. There was another reason to consolidate the priestly class. It was the preservation of the Vedas by them. When the Brahmanas exploited the people by the sacrificial system, a movement which arose against it. They wanted to protect the great ideal meaning of the sacrifice. At the beginning of the sacrifice, it was simple as thanks giving ceremony to the gods. This simplicity soon disappeared. The simple sacrifices which everyone, rich or poor, performed according to his means consisted chiefly of prayers. In the second step one can see the grand sacrifices, especially in connection with the Soma-cult relating to Indra which only be undertaken by aristocratic and wealthy men, and especially by the kings.

Animal sacrifices are indicated by the apri-suktas and horse sacrifices (asvamedha) was undoubtedly performed (Rg. II, III, VI, VII). But human sacrifice was not described in the Purusa-Sukta. The Sunahsepa hymns of the Rg veda I. 24-30 and IX.3) does not indicate exactly that human sacrifices are either allowed or encouraged in the Vedas. But it was performed in prehistoric times. Radhakrishnan has indicated that the opposite movement against such a sacrifice.

This cry of revolt is taken up by the Upanisads and carried on by Buddhist and Jaina Schools. D.D. Kosambi describes the blood sacrifices and its disaster. "The sacred books deal overwhelmingly with yajna blood sacrifices. Such collective sacrifices were made to other Vedic gods besides Agni though always in the presence of the sacred fire. The duration and complication of the ceremony began steadily to increase. The number and variety of animals sacrificed seems incredible today. The highest ranking sacrificial 'beasts were men, bull, stallion': but almost every beast and bird were killed at these
iguanas, according to the Yajurveda and the Brahmanas. Such monstrous preoccupation with unlimited ritual killing proves that society had begun to exhaust its means of subsistence. The prayer cited earlier shows that increase of cattle, food, and prosperity were the main purpose of the sacrifice. The sacrifices were considered indispensable for victory in way, as for the war chief's success in general. The horse, sacrifice for example, was no longer the simple killing and eating of an animal so important to the Aryan economy.

“All were subject to the influence of the sacrifices. Without them the sun would not rise. We can depose Indra from his throne in heaven if we perform a hundred horse sacrifices. The sacrifices pleased the gods and profit men. The sacrifices were made as a rule for gaining earthly profits and heavenly bliss. A rigid soul-deadening commercialist creed based on contractual motive took the place of the simple devout religion of the Veda”.11 Kosambi has elucidated how sacrifices badly affected the new developing social system.

“The greatest fruit of sacrifice (yajna) was success in war; fighting was glorified for its own sake as the natural mode of life for satriyas while the Brahmin’s duty and means of livelihood was the performance of Vedic sacrifices. The other two castes had the task of producing the surplus which priest and warrior took away by natural right, originally for the good of the tribe, but soon for the good of the upper castes. Even the most passive of the sects above repudiated the use of ritual sacrifice while that most active like Jainism and Buddhism based them upon ‘ahimsa’ (non-violence) as strongly opposed to ritual sacrifice.

In the six century B.C. the priestly class of the Brahmanas lived in a luxurious way and claimed a social supremacy for themselves as specialists in religious affair. Having knowledge of sacrifice they claimed that they only should perform sacrifice. It must be remembered that Brahman’s rituals then served only the kings, nobles and rich traders. It is clear that the Brahmanas were awarded lands by the kings for these ritual services.

As mentioned earlier there was an opposed movement to sacrifices, even in the Vedic times. This tendency developed in the Upanisads. In the pre-Buddhistic, Chandogya Upanisad, we can see certain moral qualities placed on par with certain aspects of the sacrificial procedure. “Among these moral states ‘ahimsa’, the practice of causing no injury to any living thing, is specially mentioned. Rhys Davids has pointed out the ‘ahimsa’ doctrine of Upanisad was taken up by the Niganthas, the Hains of the Buddha’s time. Also he mentions that “though the Buddhists did not accept this extreme position, there would seem therefore to be no valid reason for doubting the accuracy of the Buddhist tradition that their view of sacrifice was based on a very ancient belief which was in fact common ground to the wise, whether inside or outside the rank of the Brahmanas.

With regard to the Kutadanta Sutta, Trevor Ling also mentions that “there is no direct criticism of the Brahmnical theory of sacrifice; only an indirect allusion to its practical aspects.” Kutadanta asks the Buddha how a sacrifice should be performed. The Buddha narrated to Kutadanta an ancient story of a great sacrifice which had been performed by the wise Brahmana chaplain of King Maha Vijita. “At that sacrifice neither were any oxen slain, neither goats nor fowls, now did not fat pigs, nor were any
kinds of living creatures put to death. No trees were cut down to be used as posts. No Dabbha grasses mown to strew around sacrifice spot and the salves and messengers and workmen there employed were driven neither by rods nor fear, nor carried on their workweeping with tears upon their faces. Who chose to help, he worked; who chose not to help, worked not. What each chose to do, he did; what they chose not to do, that was left undone. With ghee and oil and butter and milk and honey and sugar only was that sacrifice accomplished.  

Trevor Ling further comments, “what emerges as the point of the story is a critique of brahmanical sacrifice on the grounds of economic wastefulness, cruelty to animals, forced labor, with harsh treatment of the labourers, and oppressive taxation of the people in order to pay for it all. It is clear, too, that the supposed efficacy of the sacrifice is being quietly dismissed. By implication, this heightens the objection to the lavish expenditure, cruelty and social oppression”. In this (sutta) the Buddha has explained according to the Buddhist view the five sacrifices that should be performed by a layman. Beyond this is the sixth and great sacrifice, namely to give up the household life and become a member of the Sangha. In this period, especially in the Madhayadesa or In the Gangetic valley there arose various sects opposite Rg Vedic sacrifices. According to D. D. Kosambi such a movement was necessary because brahmanical ideas were obstructing the newly developing society.

The Vedic sacrifices, of animals had practically been given up when the log struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism reached its climax. Isolated instances of such sacrifices have been reported from the Madhayadesa or Gangetic valley. It is clear, then, that the Buddhist view of sacrifice is a criticism of the brahmanical sacrifices. It is also clear that the Buddha believed in the efficacy of sacrifice and supported it, as is evident from the following sutta:  

sacrifices are known even down to the Muhammedan invasion. But the battle was really
won by the Buddhists and their allies. The combined ridicule and earnestness of our
Sutta have had its share in bringing about the victory.

PHILOSOPHIES OF THE UPANISADS

The Aranyakas (Forest texts) have been represented as a stage between the Brahmana
and the Upanisads. There were again some parts of the sacrificial lore which were of an
occult and mystical nature and which could be imparted to the initiated only in the privacy of the forest.
They were mainly devoted to an exposition of the mysticism and symbolism of the
sacrifice and priestly philosophy. Aranyakas show us a transition linking the ritual of
the Brahmanas and the philosophy of the Upanisads.

The pupils sat near the teacher to learn the truth at the time of instruction.
The Upanisads are in fact the legitimate development of skepticism, the earliest traces of
which are found even in the Rg Vedic hymns. The spirit of their contents being anti-
ritualistic, it may be quite legitimate to suppose that the earlier philosophical activity
originated with those outside the pale of the priestly class. As noted above the sacrificial
system of the Brahmanas had been suppressing people in both the social and spiritual
ways. It was a necessity for such a philosophy to emerge which gave a new
interpretation to the sacrifice.

The search of the truth was the central theme in the Upanisads. There was
freedom of thought in this period. The Upanisads show invaluable records of this
freedom of thought. There were not satisfied with the prevailing ideas of the Veda. The
speculation of the Upanisads differs from each other quite considerably. But their main purpose is the same. They variously expressed their findings in the identity of Brahman. Brahman is the pure Absolute. It is viewed as the constitutive reality of the many or the cause of the world. Brahman is the human soul of Atman, the Self. When a man realizes this fact fully he is wholly freed from transmigration. His soul becomes one with Brahman. When man reaches Brahma, he is free.

According to the Upanisads the soul passes at death into another body whose character is determined by its former deeds. There is no interval between the end of one life and the beginning of the next. The soul passes from one body to another as a caterpillar comes to the end of a blade of grass and climbs over to another. This soul is Brahman. It consists of consciousness, mind, breath, sight, hearing, earth, water, air, space, heat, desire, non-desire, anger, non-anger, dharma, non-dharma, everything.

It is difficult to present the Upanisadic teachings, because they belong to different authors of different dates. They present to us, not as a finished system but the beginning of thought the vague struggle of the earnest minds first grappling with the great problems of life. The philosophy of Upanisads made a great impression in the history of thought and it was ferment to the Sramana cults including Buddhism and Jainism.

**THE SRAMANAS AND THE MENDICANT PHILOLOGY**

The word Sramana is mixed in mourning with the wanderer, recluse, religious, mendicant ascetic etc. Even in the Indus civilization, one can discern the seed of the Sramana tradition which germinated at a later date. In the Rg Veda we read about a
class of holy men called ‘munis’ (silent ones), different from the brahmanas. S.R. Goyal has mentioned that the most important group of people who stood on the boundary line of the non-Vedic religious ideas was the munis. Some scholars believe that the two brahmana and sramana traditions belong to the Aryans and non-Aryans of which Sramanas belonged to the non-Aryans. But the Vedic Aryans were filled with a certain sense of wander and awe at the sight of miracle performing monies. “There can hardly be a doubt that the muni was to the Rg Vedic culture an alien figure.”

In the 6th century B.C. outside and inside of the sramana movement a large number of separate schools of philosophy developed. Why did such an amount of philosophical sects arise during this period? According to some historians those ascetic movements arose as a result of the breakup of the tribal economy and other socio-economic changes which were concomitant with the second Urban Revolution. Basham also has mentioned this critical situation. Radhakrishnan also narrated the social and the political situation and the temper of the people in this period. As a result of this crisis, people were compelled to resort to an atheistic solution.

The special characteristic of the period was the freedom of religious speculation. It was the first fruit in the Upanisads. On this occasion under the new social crisis a large number of sects arose e.g. Those individual ascetic, homeless, wanderers known as Ajivakas. Trevor Ling cited a quotation from A.K. Warder about Ajivakas that “by many who wished to escape the need to work, or the responsibility of family life, not to speak of conscription, forced labor or slavery, and was a carefree existence very

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different from the life of strenuous asceticism complicated discipline, and intensive study required of members of most of the organized sects afterwards. This opting-out of the social and economic life of the time seems to have been the one feature common to men of otherwise widely varying viewpoints, all of whom, however, were skeptical or critical of the accepted religious philosophy of the brahmanas”.

In general, the Sramanas claimed to teach men how to live, how to attain real happiness, or how to attain some higher state of experience, either in this life or in some future life, considered to be supremely blissful or peaceful or in perfect freedom. They rejected the Vedic tradition and the rituals of the Brahmanas. “Their special views depended on their perception of the nature of the universe which varied greatly. They agreed, however, in treating it as a natural phenomenon with ascertainable natural laws, not as the creation or a plaything of gods or a God.

This transitional age was an age of religious freedom. People were free to choose their way of life. This freedom of thought gave rise to several sects of Sramanas. These Sramanic ideas penetrated into the minds of the people because of their simple way of life and teachings. The new social and political situation also was serviceable to spread the Sramana tradition. According to the Jaina canon there were 363 cults. Pali literature refers to the existence 62 doctrinal views. Anguttara Nikaya mentions a number of Sramanic sects such as Ajivaka, Nigantha, Muda-savaka, Jatilaka, Paribbajaka, Magandhika, Tedandika, Aviduddaka, Gotamaka and Devadhammika. Many of these religious sects were short time off, and gradually faded away. Buddhism

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16 Trevor Ling. The Buddhap. 77.
17 Warder A.K. Outline of Indian Philosophy. p. 31, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971.
18 Dha.II 55, A.III.276.
(Gotamaka) and Nigantha (Jaina) religious made an outstanding contribution to the ideas of man, giving to Indian culture a philosophy that has influenced the whole world. In the Brahmajala Sutta, some views of the Parivrajakas are discussed. Some of them such as Sanjaya are described as Eel-wrigglers and hairsplitters.

This was a remarkable period for freedom of thought and inquiry. There were a number of facilities available for the wanderers to gather and to discuss in Kosala and Magadha kingdoms “such as those at Mallika’s Park at Sravasti and the Kutagarasala at Vesali.” Sometimes special places were set apart for them in the groves near the settlements as at Champa on the bank of the Gaggari Lake at Moranivapa in Rajagaha and the banks of the Sappanika. It was in such places that the Paribbajakas met each others, and in the course of their journeys would visit each other in order to exchange greetings of courtesy and engage in profitable discussion.19

This prevailing system of the wandering life for the search of truth was followed by the Parivrajakas. This is clearly indicated in the conversion of Sariputta, with Moggallana the two chief male disciples. Kolita and Upatissa were their earlier names. They were Brahmanas by birth. After being disgusted of home life they embraced the wandering life and became Parivrajakas under Sanjaya. They went from place to place seeking the truth, finally Upatissa met a Buddhist monk named Assaji who was one the members in the first missionary group to the Buddha. First Upatissa (Sariputta) was converted by him to the faith of Buddha and later Kolita (Moggallana) was converted and became the second chief disciple of the Buddha.

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The Parivrajakas and other wanderers reveal a special feature in this period. Barua has observed that “It is generally accepted opinion that a spirit of toleration is one of the fundamental features of the religious life of India. As the existence of an institution, such as that of the wanderers proves this spirit of toleration was not confined to religion or matters of belief but permeated also every department of life and thought.”

This common feature greatly facilitated the emergence and spread of a new philosophy such as Buddhism.

THE SIX THINKERS AND THEIR PHILOSOPHIES IN SIXTH CENTURY B.C

PURANAKASSAPA

Buddhist records contain clear accounts of the famous six teachers and their teachings who were contemporaries of the Buddha. The most detailed accounts about these six religious teachers and doctrines are contained in the Samannaphala Sutta of the Digha Nikaya. Each is described by the same adjectival phrase “(Sanghi ceva gain ganacariyo nato yasassi titthankaro sadhusammato bahujanassa rattannu cirapabbahito addhagato vayo anupatto)” the head of an order of a following the teacher of a school well known and reputed as a sophist, revered by the people a man of experience who has long been a recluse, old and well stricken in years. This phrase indicates that they were celebrities who influenced society of that time.

20 Benimadhap Burua, Pre Buddhistic Indian Philosophy, p. 192, Motilal Banarasidass, 1970.
Commentaries tradition as recorded by Buddhaghosa presents Puranakassapa as a slave by birth. But he could not have been a slave, because he bore the name Kassapa. Most probably he was born in a Brahmana family. The name Purana shows that he had attained perfect wisdom (purananana). The doctrine of Purana Kassapa is expounded in The Samannaphala Sutta thus “To him who acts, O king, or causes another to act, to him who mutilates or causes another to mutilate, to him who punishes or causes another to punish to him who cause grief or torment, to him who trembles or causes others to tremble, to him who kill a living creature, who takes what is not given, who breaks into houses, who commits dacoity, or robbery, or highway robbery, or adultery, or who speaks lies, to him thus acting there is no guilt. If with a discus with an edge sharp as a razor he should make all the living creatures on the earth one heap, one mass of flesh, there would be no guilt thence resulting, no increase of guilt would ensue. Were he to go along the south bank of the Ganges striking and slaying, mutilating and having men mutilated, oppressing and having men oppressed there would be no guilt thence resulting, no increase of guilt would ensue. Were he to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving sacrifices or causing them to be offered, there would be no merit thence resulting no increase of merit.22

In generosity, in self-mastery in control of the senses, in speaking truth there is neither merit, nor increase of merit. According to the above passage Purana Kassapa had exposed the ‘no action’ theory (Akiriyavada). Venerable Buddhagosa also admits that Kassapa discarded the theory of action “Kammam patibahati”.23 It is possible to attribute the theory of fortuity (adhicca-samuppada) and the theory of non-causation

22 Ibid.p.69-70.
(ahetu-appaccaya-vado) to Purana Kassapa. G.C. Pande mentions that “There is little reason to suppose that Purana Kassa held the doctrine of ‘Adhiccasamuppada’ theory of fortuity)."24

MAKKHALI GOSALA

Makkhali Gosala was the third leader of the Ajivakas. Before him there were two leaders named Nanda Vaccha and Kisa Sankicca in the Ajivaka sect. Makkhali Gosala was also a contemporary of the Buddha. Gosala by his conduct laid himself open to the charge of insincerity, in that he practiced religious mendicancy not as a means of gaining salvation (moksa) but as a means of gaining a livelihood. This accusation was directed by their opponents.25 According to Rhys Davids Ajivaka means “those who claimed to be especially strict in earning their means of livelihood. But Ariyaswami Sastri mentions that astrology was almost a profession with the Ajivakas. They earned their livelihood by some profession, such as fortune telling, astrology, divination.26

The philosophy of Makkhali Gosala is presented in the Sammanaphala Sutta as a doctrine of samsarasuddhivada. He has stated Gosala’s teachings thus “There is no cause either ultimate or remote for the depravity of beings; they become depraved without reason and without cause. There is no cause, either proximate or remote, for the rectitude of beings; they become pure without reason and without cause. The attainment of any given condition, of any character, does not depend either on one’s won act, or on the acts of another, or on human effort. There is no such thing as power or energy, or human strength or human vigor. All animals, all creatures, all beings, all souls (Sabbe

26 Ibid, p.394.
satta, sabbe pana, sabbe jiva) are without force and power and energy of their own. They are bent this way and that by their fate, by the necessary condition of the class to which they belong, by their individual nature; and it is according to their position in one or other of the six classes that they experience ease or pain.\textsuperscript{27}

According to the Samanaphala Sutta his philosophy was that all beings are subject to a fixed series of existence which is unchangeable (Niyati sangatibhava). Everything every beings are getting transformed by the fate (niyati) by the necessary condition of the group to which they belong and their individual nature (bhava-parinata). In this way herejected human effort, human energy, human power and human courage. (Purisa bala purisa-viriya etc) Makkhali Gosala denied the karma theory and he established fatalism which is called niyativada.

If Makkhali Gosala said that one cannot create a spiritual development by his own observation of morals, then why did he practice moral observances? Ariyaswami Sastri says that “it is likely that Gosala approved in pursuance of time-honored fashion, the moral and religious observances even though they were ineffective in doing any good. This may be evident from his strong plea that one gained final deliverance solely by virtue of transmigrations (samsara-suddhi)”. One can presume that Gosala may have held that their observances were also being decided by fate.

The whole universe was conducted and determined to the smallest detail by an impersonal cosmic principle Niyati, or destiny. It was impossible to influence the course of transmigration in any way. He denied Karma through which a man’s present

\textsuperscript{27} Rhys Davids. Dialogues of the Buddha, p.71, Motilal Banarsidass, Pvt.Delhi, 2000
condition was determined by his past action, and man’s present action could influence his future life.

Makkhali Gosala drew the conclusion that all that have breath, all that are born, all that have life, are without power, strength or virtue, but are developed by destiny, chance and nature and experience joy and sorrow in the six classes. There are 8,400,000 great aeons (mahakalpa), through which fools and wise alike must take their course and make an end of sorrow. There is no (the question of) bringing up ripe Karma to fruition, nor of exhausting Karma already ripened, by virtuous conduct, by vows, by penance, or by chastity. That cannot be done. Samsara is measured as with a bushel, with its joy and sorrow and its appointed end. It can neither be lessened nor increased, nor is there any excess or deficiency of it. Just as a ball of string will, when thrown, unwind to its full length, so fool and wise alike will take their course, and make an end of sorrow.28 According to the above teaching the main point of Makkhali Gosala’s doctrine is that everything is predetermined by fate. So, man has no chance of changing his fate. There is no independent action to be done by beings. Fate is supreme, impersonal and inflexible.

PAKUDHA KACCAYANA

According to the Samannaphala Sutta, Pakudha Kaccayana is another among the six heretical teachers (titthiyas). He too was famous and highly esteemed by the people. He was born to a Brhma family. Buddhagosa says that Pakudya is his personal name and Kaccayana his family name. The philosophical ideas of Pakudha are mentioned in the Samanaphala Sutta thus “The following seven things are neither made, nor commanded

to be made, neither created nor caused to be created. They are barren (so that nothing is produced out of them) steadfast as a mountain peak, as a pillar firmly fixed. And what are the seven? The four elements: earth, water, fire, air, pleasure, pain, and the soul as a seventh. So there is neither slayer nor causer of slaying, hearer or speaker, knower or explainer. When one with a sharp sward cleaves a head in twain, no one, thereby deprives any one of life; a sword has only penetrated into the interval between seven elementary substances”.

In accordance with this passage Pakudha believed that a being is composed of seven elements – earth, water, air, fire, pleasure (sukha), pain (dukkha) and the soul (jiva). They are permanent and eternal, neither created nor caused to be created. These elements do not change and do not affect one another in any way. Some scholars think Pakudha Kaccayana had presented a theory which is somewhat similar to the atomic theory. “Consequently, such supposed action as injuring or hearing or being conscious of anything, or causing other persons to do such actions does not exist, since the supposed action passes ineffectively between the uncuttable, unchangeable substances. This evidently is an atomic theory, of atoms of these ultimate substances to which nothing can happen and between which all ‘action’ pass harmlessly. It is also a theory that the matter of the universe is eternal in its atoms, whist their transient combinations are of no real significance.”

Buddhism criticized the doctrine of Pakudha as an eternalism (sassatavada) and also kind of Annihilataionism (ucchedhavada). According to Buddhism he was an

Akiriyyavadin (A moralist) because he said that when one with a sharp sward, cleaves a head in twain, no one is thereby deprived of life, a sword has merely penetrated into the interval between seven elementary substances, also he said that there is no such act as killing or hearing or knowing also no conception of good and bad action.

Malalasekara states that Pakudha followers did not hold him in high esteem in contrast to the devotion felt for the Buddha by his followers.\textsuperscript{31} But the references on which he bases his statement repeat the same phrases for each of six heretical leaders. Those six teachers were greatly respected by the many.

**AJITA KESAKAMBALA**

He is also described as a Takkika (heretic) teacher and was held in great honor by the masses. Ajita was his personal name, and he was also called Kesakabalin, because he wore a blanket of human hair. He was the earliest representative of Indian Materialism. The teachings of Ajita were narrated by Ajatasatu to The Buddha in the Sammaphala Sutta as follows.

A human being is built up of the four elements. When he dies the earthly with him returns and relapses to the earth, the fluid to the water, the heat of the fire, the windy to the air and his faculties (indriyani) pass into space.

The four bearers, on the bier as a fifth, take his dead body away; till they reach the burning ground men utter forth eulogies, but there his bones are bleached, and his offerings end in ashes. It is a doctrine of fools that talk of gifts. It is an empty lie, mere

idle talk, when men say there is profit therein. Fools and the wise alike, on the
dissolution of the body, are cut off annihilation, and after death they are not. According
to this idea Ajita Kesakambala was a materialist in Buddhist parlance; he had a
Lokayata view. Ajita was a nihilist in metaphysics and antinomian in ethics. His attitude
about ethics shows us from the paragraph below.

There is no such thing… “As alms or the sacrifice of offering, there is neither
fruit nor result of good or evil deeds. There is no such thing as this world or the next.
There is neither father nor mother, nor beings sprigging into life without them. There
are in the world no recluses or Brahmanas who reached the highest point who worked
perfectly, and who, having understood and realized, by themselves alone both this
world and the next, makes their wisdom known to others”.

This doctrine of Ajita clearly indicates that he did not agree with both
Brahmanic and Sramanic ideas which prevailed at the time. The materialistic ideas of
Ajita close to the Brahaspatya school of thought and also it is similar to Carvaka’s
philosophy. The materialistic teachings of Ajita Kesakambalin and Carvaka, strongly,
influenced the political theory of the Madya Desha or North East India, Kosambi
Believes that the Lokayata School, from which the brutal practical theories of
Magadharn statecraft were to develop, seems to have taken a great deal from this
Ajita.

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32 Dialogues of the Buddha.I.55.
SANJAYA BELATTIPUTTA

Sanjaya was the son of Belatti. Sanjaya is grouped also along with the other five teachers. He also was a well known, (nato) celebrated (yasassi) teacher and the leader of a sect (titthamkaro), was held in high esteem by the common folk (sadhu sammato). He is also said to have had a following (sanghi; gani).\(^{34}\) Malasekara mentions that he is evidently identical with Sanjaya, the paribbajaka who was the original teacher of Sariputta and Moggallana. It is said that when these two disciples left Sanjaya to become pupils of the Buddha they were joined by two hundred and fifty others. Sanjaya then fainted and hot blood issued from his mouth.\(^{35}\)

“If you asked me whether there is another world well, if I thought there were, I would say so. But I don’t say so. And I don’t think it is thus or thus. And I don’t think it is otherwise. And I don’t deny it. And I don’t say there neither is, nor is not, another world. And if you ask me about the beings produced by chance; or whether there is any fruit, any result of good or bad actions; or whether a man who has won the truth continues, or not, after death – to each or any of these questions do I give the same reply.”\(^{36}\) He is generally described as an agnostic, (ajnanavadi) as he was unwilling to give any definite answer to the questions. He was reputed for an opinion which was skepticism on the one hand and a primitive stage of criticism of knowledge on the other, like that of the sophists in Greek philosophy. His doctrine is described as Amaravikkhepavada in the Brahmajala Sutta.

\(^{34}\) D.I.p.150, M.I.4.
\(^{36}\) Dialogues of the Buddha,p.75.
NIGANTHA NATAPUTTA

Nigantha Nataputta was also known as Vardhamana Mahavira. Though born to a noble Kshatriya family related to the ruling families of Vaisali and Magadha, the exact dates of his birth is not known. It is certain that he was born in the reign of Bimbisara and died in the reign of Ajatasatru. There is a great similarity with the family background of the Buddha and Mahavaira. The government of Vaisali was a confederation of eight small clans. Nigantha Nataputta belonged to the Nata or Naya clan, which was one of the eight. The Vajjins where the republican government, which included the eight clans. “It is important to note that the Buddha also came from a similar republican clan the Sakyas of Kapilavastu. In the light of this fact, we can easily trace the source from which both Mahavira and the Buddha derived their democratic tendencies.

HIS PHILOSOPHY

Jainism, like Buddhism, is fundamentally atheistic in that, while not denying the existence of gods, it refuses them any important part in the universal scheme. The world, for the Jaina, is not created, maintained or destroyed by a personal deity, but functions only according to universal law. Also, both Mahavira and the Buddha strongly opposed the Brahmanical sacrificial system. Mahavira’s chief contribution was the popularization of the principle of Ahimsa (non-injury). Many scholars believe that Mahavira was not the last representative of Jains, not the first. Again in contrast to the Buddha, Mahavira never declared to have received through his enlightenment the

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understanding of any new philosophical principle or any special insight not already familiar to his period.\footnote{38 Heinrich Zimmer. Philosophies of India Delhi, p.224. Motila Banarsidas,1990}

However, the summary of his teachings is found in the \textit{Samannaphala Sutta} “A Nigantha O King, is a man restrained with a fourfold self-restraint. He lives restrained as regards all water; restrained as regards all evil; all evil has he washed away; and he lives suffused with the sense of evil held at bay. Such is his fourfold self-restraint. And since he thus tied with this fourfold bond, therefore is he the Nigantha (free from bonds) called Gatatta (whose heart has gone; that is, to the summit, to the attainment, of his aim) Yatatta (whose heart is kept down; that is under command) and Thitatta (whose heart is fixed).\footnote{39 Dialogues of the Buddha.p.74.}

Nigantha Nataputta taught that past deeds should be extirpated by severe austerities; fresh deed should be avoided by inaction. By expelling through penance all past misdeeds and by not committing fresh misdeeds, the future becomes clear. From the destruction of deeds results destruction of dukkha; this leads to the destruction of Vedana (feeling). Thus, all dukkha is exhausted and one passes beyond (the round of existence). It is said that Nataputta did not employ the term ‘Kamma’ in his teaching; he used instead, the word Danda and that according to him the physical danda was far more criminal than the dandas of word and mind.\footnote{40 G.P. Malalasekara, Dictionary of Pali Proper Names.p.62.}

The \textit{Devadaha Sutta} of the \textit{Majjhima Nikaya} gives details of the beliefs and teachings of Nigantha Nataputta. According to this Sutta he was a determinist as regards
Kama. The quotation mentions that whatsoever the individual experiences it comes from former actions.\textsuperscript{41}

Nigantha Nataputta claimed the omniscient knowledge “whether I walk or stand or sleep or wake my knowledge and vision are always, and without a break present before me. This view was frequently criticized by the Buddha.\textsuperscript{42}

According to the Jains every soul possesses the potentiality of becoming as great as it could. The whole cosmos is alive and the basic law of its life is constant throughout. One should, therefore, practice ‘Nonviolence’ (ahimsa) even upon the smallest, mutest, least, conscious living being. So Jaina monks followed non-violence ‘ahimsa’ in an extreme way. This ‘ahimsa’ teaching greatly penetrated the Indian Culture, and hence Jainism could survive up to the present day. According to this description sixth century B.C. was an age vitalized by intellectual observation, and it was a period of philosophical abundance. It was discussed that the social consciousness was also inclined to new objects of philosophy due to the socio-economic and the political environment.

There are many references in the Buddhist texts to the doctrine of Lokayata. Ajita Kesakambala preached a thoroughgoing materialist doctrine. Pakudha Kaccayana also had similar ideas. But outstanding in Indian Materialism is Carvaka. His exact date is unknown; we do not even know whether it is a personal name or only descriptive epithet. But the teachings associated with this name have been partially preserved.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{M.II.214.}
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{M.I.372, M.II.214.}
The teaching of Makkhali Gosala reminds us of Charvaka’s doctrine. He denied the free will of man and moral responsibility for any good or bad. Ajita Kesakambalin propounded the theory of four elements (catummahabuthiko yam puriso). The Brahmajala Sutta in the Digha Nikaya mentions ‘ayam atta rupa catummahabuhtiko’ which can briefly describe Ajita’s beliefs: A person is composed of the four elements and there is no soul. There is no value in sacrifice, in giving or good or evil action, etc. There are no afterlife and reward in action as there is neither value or vice. Life is only for enjoyment.

Now we know there were two extreme philosophical movements that influenced the social consciousness. On the one side was the Sramana movement which followed the self-mortification system; on the other side was the Lokayata materialist system. Both emerged under the new socio-economic environment. In this circumstance Buddhism arose rejecting both these extremes.

SOCIAL STATUSES

The stratification of society can be traced through Brahmanical influenced and the Brahmins divided the status of man into caste. Before the advent of the Buddha, Indian society was organized under the Brahmanical influence. It was based on caste system. The Buddha through His Doctrine tried to refute the Brahmanical thoughts and establish the unity of mankind and equality.

According to the Brahmanical opinion, he gets social status, social duties, mainly on the basis of his birth. Anyway, Buddhism presents a social-scientific basis, on which

43 D.I.55.
44 D.I.p.34.
depends the social development of the person. There, the spiritual aspect of the person is more important than his outer aspect. According to the Brahmanical opinion, the men are divided according to their birth. They were allotted their social duties on the basis of their respective birth. The Manusmrti clarifies the above statement as below:

To the Brahmanas, he assigned teaching and studying (the Vedas), sacrificing for their own benefit and for others, giving and accepting (of alms). He, the Ksatriyas commanded to protect the people, to bestow gifts to offer sacrifices, to study (the Vedas), and to abstain from attaching himself to sensual pleasures. The Vaisyas to tend cattle, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Vedas), to trade, to lend money and to cultivate land. One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudra i.e. to serve meekly these three castes.

In so far as culture and biology are concerned, no discrimination can be made between man and man. The distinction between man and man does not biologically or culturally affect human mental development. Human beings, as far as biological facts are concerned, are born alike. There may be a distinction between man and man through climatical as well as environmental changes. Nevertheless, mankind all over the world, undergoes almost the same psychological experience. The feelings, sensations, tendencies, temperaments and desires, impulses are shared equally everywhere without any difference. Dr. G.P. Malalasekera and Dr. K.N. Jayatilake have pointed out that as society is divided on the basis of caste, its lower strata are deprived of special privileges. The privileges that are not given to the lower strata of the society are as follows:

\[\text{G.P. Malalasekera and K.N. Jayatilke, Buddhism and Race Question, United Nations, 1958}\]
• Not granting of equal political rights.

• Not giving equal economic benefits and opportunities.

• Not granting equal social rights.

• Not giving equal religious rights.

• Not giving equal opportunities.

The problems mentioned above were in vogue in India, in the 6th century B.C. at this juncture, the Brahmans had formed unjustifiable social stratification into four categories. These four categories of the social stratification were assigned certain duties respectively. Excepting three upper castes, the fourth caste, i.e the Sudras were deprived of their religious rights. They were separated from the other castes just and to serve upper classes.

Because of this, social stratification, the Sudras became victims of oppression. Traditionally rich families had Sudra as their servants hired for them. Thus, Sudras were deprived of their freedom of those rich people. These Sudras were liable to get disposed of by their masters. They could be bought by any master. The final decisions about the Sudras were in the hands of the masters. The Brahmans believed that the Sudras were incapable of spiritual improvement. Therefore, reading and listening to the Vedas by they were deemed to be a grave offense. As Dr. G.P. Malalasekera and Dr. K.N. Jayatilleke point out in their book, Buddhism and the Race Question, the Sudras were deprived of such privileges.
AN EQUALITY IN BUDDHISM PHILOSOPHY

The Buddha has drawn attention to some facts in the Vasettha sutta. He did so, mainly to destroy the age-old social structure that was based on the narrow principle of caste, creed, clan and injustice. He wanted to establish a new society that was based on equality, brotherhood and social justice.