Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE MODERN WORLD AND THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

One of the most important attributes of man is faith. This faith may be faith in oneself or in the other, such as in a person, in a supernatural being, in a religious doctrine, in a metaphysical doctrine, in a transcendental reality, or in a scientific truth. Faith has been the single most important element of human existence since ancient times. It has directed the material and spiritual life of each individual. If faith is rational it may make him successful; on the contrary, if faith is irrational, it may make him unsuccessful.

In ancient times, when people were not aware of the reasoning behind the natural phenomena such as the cycle of day and night, the cycle of months, the cycle of seasons, the longer time-frames, heavy rains, drought, lightning, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, etc., they would place their faith totally and completely in a supernatural being. They thought that whatever that happens either good or bad is caused by that supernatural being. So they composed hymns and performed rites and rituals to please, to express gratitude, or to keep such being under control. Hence, it can be said that, their faith in a supernatural being was reflected in their ritualism and also in the occupational practices, such as hunting, fishing, food-gathering, agriculture, and commerce. Such kind of faith gradually took the form of religion and was transmitted
through the successive generations. With the emergence of many sects, religious, and due to the presence of many seers and prophets, instead of having faith in a supernatural being, people started to place their faith in the teachings of such sects and in the thoughts of seers and prophets. This kind of faith started directing their ways of life and ways of thinking. It made them think about right and wrong, good and bad. As a result, faith has been associated with reason.

Gradually, the advancement of science and technology helped scientists to have enough evidence and procedure to re-examine the natural events; the faith in a supernatural being underwent a major metamorphosis. The eighteenth century witnessed a movement of intellectuals called the Enlightenment first in Europe and later in the American colonies, in which scientists laid the foundation for the modern sciences, such as mathematics, philosophy, and archaeology. Its purpose was to reform society using reason and it led to a new definition of faith. The natural world was to be understood solely on the basis of reason without clinging to the old religious belief. At its heart, there was a conflict between religion and the inquiring mind that understood reason and proof. It can be said that, the Enlightenment period is the mature stage of the human race. The scientists untied themselves to overthrow the divine authority and enthrone reason in every aspect of research. They started to place their faith in scientific discovery that they had invented.

This brief survey shows that, at every stage of the development of human civilization and society faith is unavoidable. Such faith has always played an important role in every aspect of human life. However, faith seems to be problematic in the context of the modern world. Due to the modernization and globalization, the people in the world are coming together. Through emerging technological communication and transportation, people have acquainted with
various cultures, religions, civilizations, and with development of science. No doubt, such phenomena have enriched their faith, but they have also created various problems. The advancement of scientific technology and communication has led to globalization. The globalization has brought the people belonging to different cultures, civilizations, and religions together. These people have faith in their own cultures, civilizations, and religions. Consequently, the globalization has made society multi-cultural, multi-religious. Most of the people are proud of their race, culture, and civilization. Hence, it could be said that, although the globalization has enriched the society, it has also led to the conflicts with regards to ethical, cultural, social, ethnic, and religious values. As a result, terrors came into being in the forms of the holy war, humane war, and so on.

Here the following questions arise: What kind of faith is necessary for the extinction of suffering caused by such problems? What kind of faith is necessary for promoting the inner peace, self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-respect? What kind of faith is indispensable for bringing unity among the people who are belonging to different races, cultures, civilizations, economics, politics, and religions? The concept of faith in Buddhism gives answers to these questions.

1.2. THE CONCEPT OF FAITH IN BUDDHISM: A PROPOSED SOLUTION

If we glimpse at the history of Indian philosophy, we will see that, many attempts have been made to solve, resolve, and dissolve the issues that come to human life. Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, is not an exception to this. While trying to solve the problem of suffering that comes to human life the Buddha found that, ignorance (avidyā), craving (trṣṇā), and grasping (upādāna) are the origin and genesis of suffering (duḥkha). In this context, the Buddha advocated that, man can overcome suffering by removing
ignorance, craving, and grasping. It means that, man is responsible for the problems that come to his life, and he also has the solutions for his problems.

The Buddha had preached the *Dharma* with a view to solve the problems of the pain and affliction that are encountered in human life, but merely by hearing the *Dharma* it is impossible to solve the problems. This is because if an individual wants to make himself free from suffering, faith in the Buddha (*Tathāgata*), the Buddha’s teachings (*Dharma*), the Buddhist community (*Saṅgha*), the morality (*śīla*), the noble knowledge (*ārya jñāna*), and the noble emancipation (*ārya vimukti*) is a prerequisite. The faith in the Buddha and the *Dharma* makes up one’s mind to have confidence in a possibility to getting rid of suffering while the faith in the Buddhist community, the morality, the noble knowledge, and the noble emancipation creates in one’s mind the confidence that he has the capability of self-realization. In other words, if the individual want to make himself free from suffering, it is necessary that he should have faith in the Buddha and his *Dharma* on the one hand and on the other hand he should have faith in the Buddhist community, the morality, the noble knowledge, and the noble emancipation.

The term faith is English translation of Sanskrit word *śraddhā* (Pāli *saddhā*) that is rendered as rational faith, trust, or confidence. In Buddhism, faith is used to refer to rational belief, trust, commitment and reliance on the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Saṅgha*.

Such kind of faith in Buddhism is necessary. This is because it enables the individual to have knowledge of the characteristics of universal existence, namely, impermanence (*anitya*), non-self (*anātman*), and suffering (*duḥkha*). Furthermore, if a man, who has suffered, does not know the origin of suffering and the ways leading to the extinction of suffering, he thinks that, it is a continuation of his unchanging destiny; thus, he becomes helpless. And if he judges by himself that the destiny can be changed, he will make himself
free from suffering. However, at this moment, he needs that kind of person who has an experience of resolving suffering to convey him the reasons behind his suffering as well as shows him the ways by following which he will make himself free from suffering. In this context, faith in the Buddha makes him confident, because the Buddha is the person who has not only the knowledge and experience of the suffering but also the knowledge of the extinction of suffering and the way leading to the extinction of suffering. The Buddha’s teachings can show the ways for resolving the problems of suffering.

The Buddha may be either Gautama Buddha or an Enlightened One. The Dharma is considered the means for the attainment of truth (saccānupatti) and the way of solving the problem of suffering, and further it is a way for nirvāṇa. The Saṅgha is a community of those who have attained the same levels of spiritual experience, or observed a common rule of monastic discipline, or simply the whole body of the faithful going for refuge to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha.

Faith in the Buddha generally is the acknowledgement of the Buddha’s enlightenment; this makes man aware of the fact that, each human being has an equal opportunity to eliminate suffering and attain the enlightenment. He can become an Arhat or the Buddha as Siddhārtha Gautama was. Siddhārtha Gautama was a prince, a common man, like any one of us, but by self-confidence and cultivating a sincere aspiration to benefit all sentient beings for doing meditation, he eliminated suffering and attained the enlightenment. Faith in the Buddha, on the one hand, creates in the individual the confidence that, the Buddha is the Enlightened One, the way of salvation that was taught by the Buddha is true, is gorgeous in its origin, in its progress, and in its consummation. On the other hand, it makes up confidence that, there is a possibility of his being the Buddha. Thus, the attribute that can make the individual successful in eliminating suffering is faith in the Buddha.
Once an individual confronts the problem of suffering, the following questions arise: What is the true nature of suffering? What is the true origin of suffering? What is the true extinction of suffering? And what is the true path leading to the extinction of suffering? The Dharma gives answers to these questions. The Dharma itself illuminates the Buddhist view of life through the teachings of the Four Noble Truths (catvāry-āryasatyāṇī) with reference to the principle of Dependent Origination (pratītya-samutpāda), the Three Characteristics of Existence (trilakṣaṇa), the theory of Karma, and the Middle Way (mādhyamā-pratipat) or the Noble Path has eight factors, namely, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right mode of livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness, and right concentration, which ultimately leads to the attainment of nirvāṇa. They are very humane and fitting regulations for love towards the world. By following these theories, the individual can overcome his suffering. Thus, the faith in the Dharma is the attribute that can make the individual a moral person, who has to do with personality, gives respect to other individuals, and behaves towards others as towards himself on the basis of compassion and friendship.

Faith in the Saṅgha makes the individual aware of his duties towards himself and others, because the Saṅgha is ideally organized with the sincere aspiration to improve Śīla, Samādhi, and Prajñā and to promote peace and harmony among members of Buddhist practitioners. It is the duty of the individual to practise and preach the thoughts of the Buddha to the others in order to make them free from suffering. Gautama Buddha had encouraged his disciples that they should be his heirs of the Dharma, not be heirs of material things. He had advised his disciples to go around and preach his thoughts with the view for the good and happiness of the many. Hence, the faith in the Saṅgha makes the individual cultivate ethical values and raise altruistic concerns for his comrades as well as harmonious attitude towards others.
In this way, faith in the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha enables the individual how to respect himself, his ways of life as well as life of other individuals. It teaches us how to respect the cultural and religious values of other people. Hence, faith in Buddhism will enable us to solve the problems that arise in the scenery of multi-religious faith.

Although this is the case, the nature of faith has been explained and elaborated differently in different schools of Buddhism. For example, in the Nikāyas, faith is treated as one of the seven attributes of a moral man. The seven attributes are faith, morality, modesty, decorum, learning, renunciation, and wisdom. It is further considered one of the five mental spiritual powers of a moral man. The five powers are faith (śraddhā), energy (vīrya), mindfulness (smṛti), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (prajñā). Thus, in Theravāda Buddhism, faith is treated as an initial part of human nature, which has an important role to play in the spiritual growth and the psychological development of an individual.

Mahāyāna Buddhism interprets faith in a different way. Like the Theravādins, The Mahāyānists accept that, faith is the belief in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha but they treat this faith as a positive virtue, they consider that a person who has faith is superior to one who lacks it. Mahāyāna Buddhism further holds that, faith along with other spiritual practices enables the individual to become Bodhisattva and thus leads him to the attainment of nirvāṇa.

Although Mahāyāna Buddhism gives different interpretations of faith, these interpretations are complementary to the nature of faith, which is advocated by Theravāda. This is because Theravāda talks about faith with reference to the nature of man while Mahāyāna Buddhism explains how and when this nature of man will become virtuous. Thus, both the traditions talk about faith with reference to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha but give
different interpretations to faith. Furthermore, both Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism accept faith as the prerequisite condition for realizing the Buddha’s teachings and self-realization.

Hence, it could be said that, the cultivation of this kind of faith enables the individual to bring peace and happiness in the society on the one hand and on the other hand it enables the individual how to give respect to the faith of other people. Hence, it is very interesting to see how the concept of faith in Buddhism enables us to solve the problems that the modern world is facing today.

Understanding the importance of faith in Buddhism, the Buddhist commentators and the modern scholars have made an attempt to understand and interpret the nature of the Buddhist faith. Let us see how these modern scholars have interpreted the nature of the Buddhist faith.

1.3. Review of Literature

Buddhism is well known for its successful practical experiments with reference to the rational faith as its prerequisite for more than twenty-five centuries. Although there have been several articles and works written on Buddhist faith, there are few monographs on the concept of faith in Buddhism that may be inadequate to solve the problem of self-realization and the problems in the modern world.

1.3.1. Aśvaghoṣa on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna Doctrine

Among Mahāyāna literature, the first treatise on development of the concept of faith in the Mahāyāna Buddhism is Mahāyāna-śraddhotpatti-śāstra – The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna Doctrine.\(^1\) It is mostly attributed

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to Aśvaghoṣa, who was one of the well known Indian philosophers at the time from the latter half of the first century BCE to about 50 or 80 CE.²

The aim of the text is to encourage the Buddhists to attend the long and rigorous practice of the six perfections (śaṭ-pāramitā) in order to attain the perfect faith. Faith then is conceived as the awakening and nurturing of the three folds of thought, namely, (1) upright thought, that is, the right thought of Suchness (tathatā); (2) the profound thought, that is, the rejoicing to study everything that is good and to practice it, and (3) the great pitiful thought, that is, anxious to deliver all living beings from their sorrow.

The thought of this text connects the primary thoughts of Mahāyāna sūtras, namely, the Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra), the Avatamsaka-sūtra (the Flower Ornament Scripture Sutra), the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra (the Lotus Sutra), and the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra (the Sutra recounts a teaching primarily between the Buddha and Bodhisattva Mahāmati). This text exposes many Mahāyāna theories, like the theory of Emptiness (śūnyatā), the theory of Totality or Universal Realm (dharma-dhātu), the theory of Bodhisattva, etc. in order to communicate the theory of Tathāgata-garbha. Furthermore, the text lays out the Mahāyāna theories in a logical succession from theoretical basis to practical realization; however, there is no general discussion on faith or extensive explanation of the theories.

It is so concise that without having appropriate knowledge of Buddhism it is impossible to realize the great value of whatever this text provides. Hence, the discussion on faith in this text is not useful to solve the problems of the modern world.

1.3.2. Jan T. Ergardt on Faith and Knowledge in Early Buddhism

Besides the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpatti-śāstra*, there is a work entitled Faith and Knowledge in Early Buddhism written by Jan T. Ergardt. In his work, Ergardt has elaborated the fundamentals of faith in Early Buddhism and called them *Arhat* formulas. The *Arhat* formulas are as follows:

(1) Destroyed is birth, brought to a close is the Brahma-faring, done is what was to be done, there is no more of being such or such.

(2) Abiding alone, aloof, diligent, ardent, self-resolute, not long afterwards, by his own super-knowledge, having precisely here-now realized that matchless culmination of the Brahma-faring for the sake of which young men of family rightly go forth from home into homelessness, abided in it.

(3) Canker-waned, who has lived the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained his own goal, whose fetters of becoming are utterly worn away, who is freed by perfect profound knowledge.

(4) Unshakable is freedom for me, this is the last birth, there is not now again-becoming.

These *Arhat* formulas are generally known as the statements of the Buddha regarding the qualities of an Enlightened One or the Buddha, which were demonstrated in the *Majjhima-nikāya*. Precisely, these formulas describe the qualities of *Arhat*, the final stage of the Ariyan disciples (*ariyasāvaka*). It seems that Ergardt formulated the *Arhart* formulas parallel to the theories of the *Mahāyāna-śraddhotpatti-śāstra*, because these formulas demonstrate nothing but the Buddha’s nature, which is identified with the Reality or the

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4 See Ergardt 3.
5 See Ergardt 3.
6 See Ergardt 3.
7 See Ergardt 4.
Suchness (tathatā). Thus, formulas are exactly not whole but only one of the many objects in respect of faith. Consequently, the perception of the so-called Arhat formulas could not be helpful to common people, especially for those whose interest is almost ignored in the Early Buddhist theory of enlightenment. This is because instead of doing an analysis of faith in the qualities of the Buddha or an Arhat, Ergardt specially formulated them in a very abstract way.

Hence, it could be said that, the Arhat formulas gave us the partial interpretations of faith. Therefore, this kind of work may be good for scholars and academicians but it is not inadequate to solve the problems in the modern world.

1.3.3. Sung-bae Park on Buddhist Faith and Sudden Enlightenment

Sung-bae Park has written a work on the relation between faith, practice and enlightenment in East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism entitled Buddhist Faith and Sudden Enlightenment. In his work, Park tries to give an analysis of faith in Zen Buddhism in order to investigate the philosophical basis of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Park’s analysis of faith is based on a selection of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese texts. He has explained faith by making the distinction between the Doctrinal faith and Patriarchal faith in the Zen Buddhism. The term Doctrinal faith vs. Patriarchal faith was perhaps earliest used by Park to render the Chinese terms “t’su-hsin” vs. “chiao-hsin” in the East Asian Mahāyāna tradition. T’su-hsin means to have faith in the theory of Sudden Enlightenment of Tao-sheng (c. 360 – 434) while chiao-hsin means to have faith in the theory of Gradual Enlightenment, which is used by the Patriarchal School’s

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10 Park 3.
followers to indicate the theory of Preliminary Doctrine (Chinese shih-chiao) of the other Schools in Early Buddhism. Furthermore, these terms may be very difficult to keep a foothold among contemporary scholars.

It can be said that, although Park has not studied thoroughly the concept of faith in Buddhism, it is an invaluable contribution to the knowledge of faith in Zen Buddhism. However, with the help of this work, it is impossible to find out the solution for the problems that arise with regards to multi-religious faith.

1.3.4. V. V. S. Saibaba on Faith and Devotion in Theravāda Buddhism

V. V. S. Saibaba has written a work entitled Faith and Devotion in Theravāda Buddhism. In this work, he skilfully elucidates the meaning and scope as well as the objects of faith (saddhā) and devotion (bhatti) in the Theravāda Buddhism.

This work is an authentic account of faith, devotion, and worship in Theravāda Buddhism, but it is not an exhaustive study of the concept of faith. It is because. This work elaborates the Theravāda conceptions of God and the Buddha but does not give an analysis of the concept of faith in detail. Furthermore, along with the analytic study of faith, it also talks about devotion and worship in Theravāda Buddhism.

In short, this work is a research on that kind of faith, which is related to the concept of devotion in Theravāda Buddhism. No doubt, this work is an important contribution to our knowledge of Buddhism. Even so, it was the kind of work that does not give us any key by which we can understand that, Buddhist faith is a solution which respects the cultural and religious values of different people.

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Besides these works, there are some articles on the concept of faith in Buddhism. Let us see whether they are helpful for our purpose.

### 1.3.5. Louis de la Vallée Poussin on “Faith and Reason in Buddhism”

Louis de la Vallée Poussin has written an article entitled “Faith and reason in Buddhism” and published in the Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions.\(^{12}\) This article is known as the scholarly monograph on faith.

In this article, with his philosophical insight and historical information, Poussin not only depicts the general nature of the Buddhist faith but also gives a framework for the study of religious faith. Generally, it is accepted that, Buddhism is not a creed, because the Buddhist conviction is not based on the authority of the Buddha or of the Dharma. However, according to Poussin, Buddhism is a faith and creed.\(^{13}\) He argues that, documents and theories point to two conflicting statements: the old Buddhism pretends, and rightly, to be a creed, but in particular, Buddhism considers critical inquiry as one of the keys to the comprehension of truth. Moreover, Poussin clarifies the role and the importance of faith in Buddhism. He assumes that, faith is not the highest power or virtue, but it is the root of the correct view.

It can be said that, this is the adjacent study on faith to the Mahāyāna-śraddhotpatti-śāstra. With scholarly and systematic study, Poussin reactivates the trend of study on the concept of faith in Buddhism.

### 1.3.6. Beni Maddhab Barua on “Faith in Buddhism”

Beni Maddhab Barua has written an article entitled “Faith in Buddhism.” It was originally published in the Buddhistic Studies edited by Bimala Churn

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\(^{13}\) Poussin 34.
Law and afterwards it was collected in a compilation entitled *Studies in Buddhism* edited by Binayendra Nath Chaudhury.

According to Barua, the Pāli terms *saddhā* (faith), *saddhindriya* (controlling faculty of faith), and *saddhābala* (power of controlling faculty of faith) are not exactly synonyms but are slightly different from one another in their connotation. He asserts that, the so-called *saddhindriya* and *saddhābala* are two higher degrees of *saddhā*. He also called them as ‘the faith as a controlling faculty’ and ‘the faith as a power of controlling faculty.’

This article is a psychological analysis of faith in Buddhism, because Barua primarily analyzes the factions of faith in the Buddhist practices from the psychological and conceptual viewpoints. This article of Barua is important, because it throws light on those aspects, which were not exposed yet. However, this article explains the nature of faith on theoretics but it does not give us a practice or technique for applying this kind of faith in our day to day life.

1.3.7. N. Dutt on “Place of Faith in Buddhism”

N. Dutt has written the article entitled “Place of Faith in Buddhism” that was published in *The Indian Historical Quarterly*. This article is a monograph on faith in Buddhism with a new perspective.

Dutt points out three processes coursing in perfect wisdom called ‘*sīla-citta-pañña*’ process, ‘*satipaṭṭhana*’ process, and ‘*aveccappsāda*’ process. He formulates the place of faith in Buddhist wisdom with respect particularly to the technique of tranquillization (*sampasādana*). He illuminates the position and the importance of faith in Buddhist practices of both monastic and secular

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16 N. Dutt, “Place of Faith in Buddhism,” *Indian Historical Quarterly* 16 (1940): 639-646.
orders. Finally, he introduces the process of *aveccappsāda* as a technique of tranquilizing mind.

Although this is a brief article it is a complement to study on the concept of faith in Buddhism in general and the concept of faith Theravāda Buddhism in particular. It is because in this article, Dutt gives us a logical framework of technique for cultivating Buddhist faith and wisdom. This article is the primary material not only for the research on faith but also for all the Buddhist studies. It throws light on an aspect of practice, but it does not tell us a philosophical aspect behind this practice. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of faith in Buddhism both theory and practice are required. So, it is unable to solve the problems of the modern world.

**1.3.8. Frank J. Hoffman on “The Pragmatic Efficacy of Saddhā”**

Frank J. Hoffman has written the article entitled “The Pragmatic Efficacy of Saddhā” and published in the Journal of Indian Philosophy. This article is a monograph on the efficacy faith in Buddhism.

Hoffman traces the outline of the concept of faith in Early Buddhism on the pragmatic point of view. Concretely, he demonstrates the function and importance of faith, the relation between confidence and learning the doctrine, between confidence and practical results, and interpretation of the rational faith (*ākāravatī saddhā*) and the irrational faith (*amūlikā saddhā*). He further exposes the keys which philosophers of religion can learn from Early Buddhism are the inquiry and personal meditative experience.

Although this is a scholarly and systematic monograph, it devoted only to the pragmatic efficacy of faith in Theravāda Buddhism. It does not

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tell us the nature of the Mahāyāna faith. Hence, it is unable to present the comprehensive account of faith in Buddhism.

1.3.9. Ellison Banks Findly on “Ānanda’s Hindrance: Faith (saddhā) in Early Buddhism”

Ellison Banks Findly wrote an article entitled “Ānanda’s Hindrance: Faith (Saddhā) in Early Buddhism” that was published in the Journal of Indian Philosophy. It deals with the historical layering of the Buddhist tradition that is reflected in the Cullavagga of the Vinaya-piṭaka and the implications of the rebuking for Ānanda in some of the Pāli narratives to trace again destructive aspects of faith in Early Buddhism.

In this article, Findly pointed out the negative aspects of faith in Early Buddhism that are indicated in comparison to three aspects of śraddhā in the Rg Veda. The first aspect of śraddhā is its focus on the Vedic god for blessings and prosperity; concerning this theme is the sensitivity to the authority of the Buddha. Ānanda, for example, was one of the main disciples of the Buddha. He had devotion to the Buddha with especial fervour and he served the Buddha as his personal attendant (upaṭṭhāka). However, Ānanda could not gain liberating insight out of his affection for the Buddha but he did owing to the meditation to become an Arhat on the eve of the Council after the Buddha entered Mahāparinirvāṇa.

The second aspect of śraddhā is its importance to the maintenance of the sacrificial system of Veda; concerning this theme is the zeal for the maintenance of the Dharma. Ānanda, for example, was rationally pious and zealous to maintain the Dharma, though the Dharma system did not work effectively for Ānanda because he had misdirected faith in the Dharma.

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The third aspect of śraddhā is its description of a posture or attitude which fills the believer and makes him receptive to religious transformation; concerning this theme is the affection or emotional attachment (pema) to the Buddha. Ānanda, for example, who was grounded in his own personal experience, had an emotional attachment to the Buddha. It is because of this attribute that Ānanda was perplexed with the Buddha’s pronounce on his death and failed to ask the Buddha to live out his appointed kappa though Ānana has known that, the Buddha could remain in the same birth for one kappa or more than one kappa. Ānanda, therefore, was rendered a judgment of his fault that offended out of the emotional attachment to the Buddha.

This article also gives us a partial interpretation of faith in Buddhism. It gives an inadequate picture of Buddhist faith. Hence, it is not useful.

In this way, the literature on faith in Buddhism so far reviewed highlights meanings, characteristics, role, uses and perspectives of faith in Buddhism. It brings about philosophical, psychological, or religious knowledge of faith, but there is no any particular work or article that can give us comprehensive and holistic understanding nature of faith and its importance in connection with the teachings of the Buddha. Hence, it is necessary to study the concept of faith in Buddhism in such a way that can expose the philosophical, psychological, and religious aspects of faith in Buddhism. Hence, the present study attempts to bring out the philosophical, psychological, and religious aspects of faith in Buddhism.

1.4. Material and Method

The present study concentrates on the nature of the Theravāda and Mahāyāna faith. Hence, the primary literature of both schools has been used for the study.

The thought of Theravāda was mostly expressed in Pāli literature, which is composed of the Vinaya-piṭaka (the basket of the rules of monastic
or homeless life), the *Sūtta-piṭaka* (the basket of the Buddha’s teachings), and the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* (the basket of the systematic explanation or treatise on the Buddha’s teachings).

The *Vinaya-piṭaka* is the textual framework upon which the Buddhist *Saṅgha* is built. It contains the code of rules of the monasticism by which monk and nun are to conduct themselves and a multitude of procedures and conventions of etiquette that support harmonious relations among community as a whole. It is said that, three months after the *Mahāparinibbāna* of the Buddha, at the First Council, Venerable Upāli, one of the principal disciples of the Buddha, who was famous for his knowledge of the *Vinaya*, recited and thereby compiled the *Vinaya*.

The *Sūtta-piṭaka* is composed of the five *Nikāyas*, the collections of Discourses delivered by the Buddha and his close disciples during and shortly after the Buddha’s forty-five years of his life teaching the *Dhamma*, which represent inestimable value of a vivid picture of different phases of life and thought of the age. The five *Nikāyas* are *Dīgha-nikāya* (the long discourses), *Majjhima-nikāya* (the middle-length discourses), *Sāmyutta-nikāya* (the connected discourses), *Aṅguttara-nikāya* (the numerical discourses), and *Khuddaka-nikāya* (the minor collection).

The development of Theravāda literature underwent different external influences, such as the influences of social, economical, political, religious elements. The development of Theravāda literature was enhanced by the debates with Brahmanical rivals and other heretics. Accordingly, the Theravādins defined principles of the Buddha’s teachings in clear-cut theoretical terms, arranged and systematized in the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and the post-canonical texts.19

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In the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, the Dhammas usually appeared in conceptual schemes and most of them were frequently mentioned in an intimate relation. It is because of this that the contemporary Buddhist scholars sought to expound the Dhammas that are beyond the reach of average range. Consequently, many commentaries on the Abhidhamma-piṭaka were compiled.

The primary sources used in studying the concept of faith in Theravāda Buddhism consist of the following English translations of the Pāli texts:

1. *Vinaya-piṭaka*: the Basket of Discipline;
2. *Dīgha-nikāya*: the Long Collection or the Dialogues of the Buddha;
3. *Majjhima-nikāya*: the Medium Collection or the Collection of the Middle Length Sayings;
4. *Samyutta-nikāya*: the Collection of Groups or the Book of the Kindred Saying;
5. *Aṅguttara-nikāya*: the Collection of Expanding Groups or the Book of the Gradual Sayings;
6. *Dhammapāda*: the Verses on Dhamma;
7. *Sutta-nipāta*: the Collection of Suttas;
8. *Theragāthā*: the Verses of the Male Elders;
9. *Therīgāthā*: the Verses of the Female Elders;
10. *Jātaka*: the Birth Stories;
11. *Nettipakaraṇa*: the Guide;
12. *Milindapañha*: the Questions of Milinda;
13. *Dhammasaṅgani*: the Enumeration of Phenomena;
14. *Atthasālinī*: the Commentary on the Dhammasaṅgani;
15. *Kathāvatthu*: the Points of Controversy;
16. *Puggalapaññatti*: the Classification of Hunan Types;
17. *Puggalapaññatti-aṭṭhakathā*: the Commentary to the Puggalapaññatti;
18. *Visuddhimagga*: the Path of Purification.
Accordingly, several English translations of the Sanskrit texts and their corresponding Chinese translations composed in the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* such as *Abhidharmakośa*: the Treasury of the *Abhidharma*, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*: the Commentary on the Treasury of the *Abhidharma*, *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra*: the Commentary on the *Jñānaprasthāna* – Basis of Knowledge, *Saṅgitiṣṭityāya*: the Recitation Together, etc. are also used as the primary sources, because they are necessary to explain the concept of faith in Theravāda Buddhism.

The primary sources used in studying the concept of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism consist of the English translations of the Sanskrit texts and their corresponding Chinese translations composed in the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* and the *Shinsan Dainihon Zoku Zōkyō*. They are as follows:

1. *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*: the Vajra Cutter Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra;
2. *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*: the Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom or the Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 Lines;
3. *Avatamsaka-sūtra*: the Flower Ornament Scripture;
4. *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*: the Lotus Sutra;
5. *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*: the Sutra recounts a teaching primarily between the Buddha and Bodhisattva Mahāmati;
6. *Yogācāra-śāstra*: the Discourse on the Stages of Yogic Practice;
7. *Trīṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā*: the Thirty Verses on Consciousness-only;
9. *Mādhyamika-śāstra*: the Treatise of the Middle Way;
10. *Ratnagotra-vibhāga*: an Analysis of the Jewels and Lineages or the *Uttaratantra*: the Treatise on the Supreme;
11. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-śāstra*: the Treatise on the perfection of Great Wisdom;
(12) Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra: the Commentary on the Fundamentals of Mahāyāna Buddhism;
(13) Śiksā-samuccaya: a Compendium of Buddhist Doctrine;
(14) Mahāyāna Śatadharmā-prakāśamukha-śāstra: the Lucid Introduction to the One Hundred Dhammas, etc.

Faith is scattered in most of the scriptures in Theravāda and Mahāyāna literature. Although Theravāda literature intensely focuses more on practical method than on elaboration of nature of faith, it is sufficient enough to represent whole source material for the study of the concept of faith in Theravāda Buddhism. However, Mahāyāna literature attaches special importance to faith, but herein it is difficult to find an interpretation of the meaning of faith. Nevertheless, this is an invaluable source material to understand the concept of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Besides, a vast number of the modern texts that are used in my investigation into the concept of faith in Buddhism are considered the secondary sources.

With regard to such source materials, the analytical methodology is very suitable for investigating the research problem. Furthermore, the research problem is pursued in both Theravāda and Mahāyāna literature and a larger category of religious faith. Hence, I have made comparisons between the nature of the Buddhist faith and that of other religions and also made a comparative study of the concept of faith in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

1.5. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters including this introduction (Chapter 1) and the conclusive chapter (Chapter 5).

In the Chapter 2, entitled “Understanding the Concept of Faith,” I have tried to see how the concept of faith in Buddhism can be studied. In this context, I have elaborated different interpretations and meanings of faith
that are available in extended literature on faith and argued that, with the help of these interpretations and perspectives, it is impossible to comprehend the nature of the Buddhist faith. Furthermore, I have also elaborated how faith has been studied from different perspectives where I have discussed how faith is perceived by religious leaders, philosophers, and scientists. In this context, I have argued that, faith in Buddhism can be studied from the perspective of philosophical anthropology.

In the Chapter 3, entitled “The Concept of Faith in Theravāda Buddhism,” an attempt is made to elaborate the concept of faith in Theravāda Buddhism. I have tried to point out the origin and genesis of faith in Early Buddhism in order to reach the best understanding of the concept of faith in Buddhism in general and the concept of faith in Theravāda Buddhism in particular. Here, I have argued that, the origin and genesis of faith in Early Buddhism can be traced in the Buddha’s criticism of Pre-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems. In the succeeding section, I have shown the nature of faith in Theravāda Buddhism in accordance with the pramāṇa theory of Early Buddhism. Here, the pramāṇa theory of Early Buddhism was referred to as three kinds of valid means of knowledge, namely, experience (pacchakka), reason (takka), and authority (āgama). I have given further the explicit interpretations of faith corresponding to the Pāli term saddhā and its connotations to show that their usage is interchanged in the Pāli scriptures. Moreover, the root of faith in human nature has also been elaborated here in elucidating the Theravāda attitude toward faith. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that, the Theravādins regard faith as a morally good quality (kusala dhamma). According to them, faith is indispensable for the training of Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā; thus faith stands at the initial position in the course of cultivating the five controlling faculties (pañc' indriyāni) as well as in the course of transferring the five controlling faculties into five powers (pañca balāni). In addition, I have described in detail the characteristics of man who has faith as well as the
importance and function of faith in spiritual growth and psychological development from Theravāda perspective. Finally, in this chapter I have referred to the essential objects of faith.

In the chapter 4, entitled “The Concept of Faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism,” I have argued that the origin and genesis of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism are found in the deviation from Early Buddhism as well as the criticism of the Theravāda position. I have explained the nature of faith from the perspective of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In this context, I have argued that, like the Theravādins, the Mahāyānists, also treat the three kinds of the pramāṇa as the necessaries of the nature of faith; however, the Mahāyānists have attached special importance to the authority (āgama). This phenomenon is further illuminated by investigations into authority of the Buddha and his teachings through some of the Mahāyāna scriptures. I have also made an attempt to give the explicit interpretations of faith corresponding to the Saṃskrit term śraddhā and its connotations in the Mahāyāna scriptures. Moreover, I have tried to give an elaborate account of the root of faith in human nature according to the Mahāyāna scriptures in order to elucidate attitude of the Mahāyānists towards the faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism. In this context, I have advocated that, for the Mahāyānists, faith is also viewed as a morally good quality (kuśala dharma) that is presented frequently in the Mahāyāna scriptures as the Saṃskrit terms śraddhendriya and śraddhābala and their corresponding Chinese terms 信根 – hsin-gen and 信力 – hsin-li (controlling faculty of faith and power of controlling faculty of faith). Besides, I have advocated that, the theory of Tathāgata-garbha refers to the theory of human nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Mahāyānists believe that all sentient beings have Buddha nature or Tathāgata-garbha and hence they can become the Buddhas. Furthermore, I have elaborated the characteristics of man who has faith along with the importance and function of faith in spiritual growth and psychological
development in accordance with the Mahāyāna theories. Finally, in this chapter I have tried to elaborate the essential objects in which the Mahāyānists place their faith.

In the chapter 5, entitled “Conclusion,” I have discussed the main problems that the modern world faces today within the framework of Buddhism. It is argued that, faith in Buddhism pertains to the realization of the Four Noble Truth as well as the three characteristics of existence, the comprehension of the principle of Pratītya-samutpāda, the confidence in the nirvāṇa, and the attachment to the Eightfold Path. It is further argued that, faith in Buddhism is always accompanied by experience, reason, and authority. Finally, I have mentioned the practical consequence of faith in Buddhism as a need to play the decisive role of Buddhist faith in dealing with the most urgent problems on the world.