Chapter 3
THE CONCEPT OF FAITH IN
THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

3.1. THE ORIGIN AND GENESIS OF FAITH IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

Siddhārtha Gautama, the Buddha, was the founder of Buddhism. He is said to have been born as a prince sometime between the seventh and the fifth centuries BCE. 76 He achieved the Supreme Enlightenment (abhisambhodhi) at the age of thirty-five. On the night of his Enlightenment when he was a Bodhisattva, he saw with his spiritual eye (dhamma cakkhu) all living beings to be constantly in the cycle of birth and death (samsāra).

After achieving the Supreme Enlightenment, due to compassion for all living beings, the Buddha decided to preach and spread the newly found Truth in order to make them free from samsāra. He surveyed the world with the eye of the Buddha and saw that, the people are under the influence of different religious and philosophical thoughts. The different philosophical and moral thoughts created the confusion in the mind of the people. Therefore, the people did not understand which the proper way was, which the ultimate

76 According to Nakamura, the Buddha’s Mahāparinirvāṇa was dated at 383 BCE, thus the Buddha’s birth was dated at 463 BCE; see Hajime Nakamura, Indian Buddhism (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007) 14; Hajime Nakamura, A Comparative History of Ideas (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992) 195fn.
goal of life was. So, they were in need of proper guidance. Accordingly, the Buddha decided to remove the confusion from the mind of the people.\textsuperscript{77}

In this context, it was necessary for the Buddha to make it known that, to have faith in Vedic tradition, ritualism, different philosophical traditions are nothing but bad faith. Hence, the Buddha tried to show how Vedic tradition is based on blind faith. Before going into the detail, it is necessary for us to see the religious and philosophical contexts in which the Buddha lived and preached his thought.

\textbf{3.1.1. Religious and Philosophical Contexts of India at the Time of the Buddha}

The Buddha lived and disseminated his thought in northeast India, a multi-caste, multi-religious, and multi-racial society. It was the time when Vedic-Brahmanism flourished and the Vedic thought profoundly influenced the religious and social life of the people.

The Vedic-Brahmanism upheld the doctrine of caste.\textsuperscript{78} According to this tradition, the salvation or \textit{mokṣa} could only be attained by \textit{bhakti-yoga}. The essential features of \textit{bhakti-yoga} are devotion to God (\textit{madbhakta}), worship of God (\textit{madyāji}), and offering salutations (\textit{namaskāra}).\textsuperscript{79} This type of religious belief was based on blind faith, and due to this belief the natural wealth had been wasted and exploited.

At that time, there were many ascetics and sages who were not interested in the ritualism but were seeking for metaphysical understanding.


\textsuperscript{78} Society was divided into four castes, namely, the brāhmaṇas (priests), the kṣatriyas (warriors), the vaiśyas (cultivators), and the śudras (servants); see S. Radhakrishnan, \textit{Indian Philosophy}, vol. 1 (Delhi: Oxford UP, 2008) 82-3.

One of those was Kapila, the Sāṃkhya teacher. Kapila advocated rationalism. According to Kapila, there are three valid means of knowledge (pramāṇas), namely, perception, inference, and testimony. He did not uphold the theory of the creation of the universe by a Supreme Being or God. He maintained that, everything has a cause, but the cause itself is the entity.

Besides that, there were also six doctrines of non-Vedic-Brahmanic tradition, which were advocated by recluses, who were the contemporaries of the Buddha. They are as follows:

(1) The doctrine of non-action (akiriya-vāda) was advocated by Purāṇa Kassapa. According to Kassapa, the soul is not affected in any way by karma, that is, he did not believe in the law of karma, he argued that, neither good nor bad karma has any effect upon the soul; body and soul do not survive after death.

(2) The doctrine of destiny (niyati-vāda) was advocated by Makkhali Ghosāla. He propounded that, no one can change destiny, things happen by themselves, no one can make them happen, due to destiny one can be happy or unhappy; all living beings, whether wise or foolish, were destined to pass saṁsāra and their misery would end at the completion of saṁsāra.

(3) The doctrine of nihilism (uccheda-vāda) was advocated by Ajita Kesa Kambalin. He argued that, bhakti-yoga does not affect the soul; there is no result or effect of bhakti-yoga to be enjoyed or suffered by the soul; there is neither heaven nor hell for the man after death.

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81 See Radhakrishnan 291.
82 See Radhakrishnan 235.
The doctrine of non-action (*akiriya-vāda*) was advocated by Pakudha Kaccāyana. According to Kaccāyana, there are seven elements that make up all living beings, namely, earth, water, fire, air, happiness, unhappiness, and soul; they do not affect one another, they exist eternally and independently. Kaccāyana asserted that, after death, body is ultimately dissolved into these elements.

The doctrine of scepticism (*vikkhepa-vāda*) was advocated by Sañjaya Belaputta. He upheld that, he would not give categorical judgements about the questions on metaphysics. When he was asked, for example, whether there is a heaven, if he felt there was he would say ‘yes,’ if he felt there was not he would say ‘no.’

The doctrine of four-fold restraint (*cātu-yāmasaṃvara-vāda*) was advocated by Nigaṇṭhanāthaputta. This doctrine upheld four moral precepts of restrain, namely, (1) not to kill, (2) not to steal, (3) not to tell lies, and (4) not to own property and to observe celibacy. This is only school that still survives today called Jainism.

The ancient thinkers as Makkhali Ghosāla and Ajita Kesa Kambalin had criticised the features of *bhakti-yoga*, namely, devotion to God (*madbhakta*), worship of God (*madyāji*), and offering salutations (*namaskāra*), but they were not successful to provide an alternative belief system. This is because, perhaps, they were not interested to solve the social problems and the problems of suffering that comes to human life. Instead of that, they were interested to think over the metaphysical problems, such as Ātmā, eternality, rebirth, etc. Hence, they were unable to provide philosophical background to their attempt of criticizing the features of *bhakti-yoga*.

In short, when we study the religious and philosophical thoughts at the time of the Buddha, we find that the people had blind faith with regards to supernatural power and supernatural being. We also find that, such kinds of
faith are blind faith, dogmatism, superstition, ritualism and the philosophers and the thinkers were discussing on metaphysical issues and such discussion.

### 3.1.2. The Buddha’s Criticism of the Authority – Āgama

There were many kinds of authority in the multi-religious society at the time of the Buddha. Jayatilleke while talking about Pre-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems has classified authority of religion at that time into four kinds, namely:  

(1) The authority of Vedic scriptures;  
(2) The authority of tradition that is related with the Vedas;  
(3) The authority of non-Vedic traditions; and  
(4) The authority of any reliable person.

The Buddha has advised laymen should not accept any thought or teaching blindly as true because it is maintained by the oral tradition (*anussava*), hereditary lineage (*paramparāya*), report or hearsay (*iti-kirāya*), scripture (*piṭaka-sampadānena*), pure reason (*takka-hetu*), inference (*naya-hetu*), reasoned thought (*ākāra-parivitakkena*), acceptance of a view after pondering on it (*diṭṭhi-nijjhāna-kkhantiyā*), eminence of the speaker (*bhavyarūpatā*), and recluse status as one’s own personal teacher (*samaṇo no garu*).

The Upaniṣads are the culmination of the Vedic culture. Where, there is discussion on Brahmana, atmama, jagat and their relations. Though the Upaniṣads claim nobody has experience of Brahman, still people believe that there is ultimate of Brahman. However, according to the Buddha, this

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kind of faith is blind faith (amūlikā saddhā). The Buddha argued that, none of the Brahmans and their teachers up to seventh generation, not even a single one of the Brahmans and the teachers of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas had had a direct knowledge of vision of Brahmā; they had not claimed to have seen Brahmā face to face. Furthermore, those ancient Rishis of the Brahmans versed in the Three Vedas, the authors of the verses, and the Brahmans belonging to the time of the Buddha were chanting again and again the hymns in the Three Vedas, they did not say that they knew or saw where, or whence, or whither Brahmā is.86

The Brahmans belonging to the Buddha time had faith in the authority of the Vedas. They took interest in oral tradition, in hereditary lineage, in hearsay, etc. However, on the basis of this, they could not come to conclude that, “this alone is the truth, all else is falsehood.” The Buddha had criticised this kind of faith. He argued that, neither the present Brahmans nor their teacher, nor their teachers’ teacher up to several generations nor even the original seers who composed and uttered the hymns claimed that, they have direct personal knowledge of the truth of their statements like that.87

Although the Buddha had criticized authority, it does not mean that, he was against all kinds of authority. The Buddha was against only that kind of authority, which is based on blind faith and it is not based on one’s own experience. The Buddha repeatedly said that, “what I am talking about, monks, I know not from hearsay of any recluse or Brahmin.”88

Hence, it could be said that, faith in connection with authority of religion at the time of the Buddha is not based on experience, reason, and

critical scrutiny but is merely based on oral tradition, hereditary lineage, hearsay, etc. Therefore it is called the blind faith (amūlikā saddhā).

3.1.3. The Buddha’s Criticism of Reason – Takkī

In the systems of Pre-Buddhist Indian philosophy, the reason was used to preserve their thoughts. The thinkers of these systems had founded their metaphysics and theories on the basis of reason. They used reason as a rational defence of their theories.

There were sixty-two philosophical positions that were prevalent at the time of the Buddha. Although they were holding different philosophical and metaphysical thoughts, they were making either one of the following arguments:89

1. Sassatavāda: it was the sect of the Eternalists who advocated the position that, the self and the world are real and eternal.
2. Ekaccasassatavāda: it was the sect of the Semi-eternalists who argued that, the self and the world are partial eternal and partial non-eternal.
3. Antānantavāda: it was the sect of the Extensionists who accepted the finitude and infinitude of the world.
4. Amarāvikkepavāda: it was the sect of the Eel-Wrigglists who resort to equivocation, to eel-wriggling when a question is put to them on this or that.
5. Adhiccasamuppannavāda: it was the sect of the Chance-Originationists who proclaim the chance origin of the self and the world.
6. Saṅñīvāda: it was the sect of the Fatalists who proclaim a doctrine of Conscious Post-Mortem Survival.
7. Asaṅñīvāda: it was the sect of the Materialists who proclaim a doctrine of Unconscious Post-Mortem Survival.

(8) Nevasaññī-nāsaññīvāda: it was the sect of the Semi-Fatalists who proclaim the doctrine of Neither-Conscious-Nor-Unconscious Post-Mortem Survival.

(9) Ucchedavāda: it was the sect of the Annihilationists who proclaim the annihilation, destruction and non-existence of beings.

(10) Diṭṭhadhammanibbānavāda: it was the sect of the Optimists who proclaim nibbāna here and now for an existent being.

The Buddha had criticized all these ways that were talking about the nature of world and self. All these views according to the Buddha are the wrong views. This was because these kinds of speculation were inadequate to solve the problems of suffering. They were not interested to investigate the causes behind the suffering and the way through which these causes could be removed. Furthermore, the supporters of these thoughts never thought about overcoming these positions. This was because they had craving with regards to their positions. Here, the Buddha wanted to say that, although any philosophical position is based on reason, if it is not relevant to solve the problems of human life, it is wrong position. He also argued that, although any philosophical position that is based on reason, if such reason is associated with the six sense-bases, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind such philosophical position is the wrong position.\(^{90}\)

The Buddha criticized a case of baseless faith (amūlikā saddhā), which is known as an analytic gradation of knowledge of those who have faith but there is no confidence in whatever they have placed their faith in. The Buddha asserted that, it is not proper for a recluse or a Brahman who comes categorically to the conclusion that, “I know this, I see this: this alone is the

truth, all else is falsehood.” This is because there is a possibility that, the situation, and accordingly, the thought and position of the recluses and the Brahmans may be changed.

Thus, the Buddha had criticized those philosophical positions, which are based on reason on two grounds. On the one hand, with the help of such philosophical positions, it is not possible to solve the problems of suffering that come to human life. On the other hand, these positions do not create confidence in individual’s mind.

3.1.4. The Buddha’s Criticism of Experience – Pacchakka

Pre-Buddhist Indian philosophical systems gave importance to experience. This experience plays an important role in individual’s social life as well as spiritual life. Although this is the case, the individual’s experience that is related to his social life is quite different from the individual’s experience that is related to his spiritual life. This is because the experience that is related to individual’s social life is associated with attachment and expectations but the experience that is related to the individual’s spiritual life is not. Understanding the difference between these two kinds of experience, the philosophers and thinkers at the time of the Buddha divided experience into two kinds, namely, mundane experience and supermundane experience.

The mundane experience is related with individual’s day to day life while the supermundane experience is related with an individual’s experience of nibbāna. The Buddha analyzed the mundane experience by the five aggregates (pañca-kkhandhā), namely, aggregate of forms (rūpa-kkhandhā), aggregate of sensations (vedanā-kkhandhā), aggregate of perceptions (saññā-kkhandhā), aggregate of volitional formations (sañkhārā-kkhandhā), and

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aggregate of consciousnesses (*viññā-ikkhandhā*). According to the Buddha, the five aggregates are called “the five aggregates of grasping” (*pañca-upādāna-ikkhandhā*) because they are rooted in desire (*taṇhā*), and where there is desire, there is also grasping (*upādāna*). In regard to this kind of experience, the Buddha stated that, the grasping to five aggregates is suffering. The Buddha asserted that, the kind of experience of his contemporary recluses and Brahmanas was the experience of mundane life, because it was made up of perceptions through sense organs.

The supramundane experience, in contrast, is characterized as the experience of the attainment of *nibbāna*. This is the experience of an Arahant for the Four Noble Truths, namely, the reality of human suffering, the reality of the origin of human suffering, the reality of the extinction of human suffering and the reality of the path leading to the extinction of human suffering.

The characteristic of the the five aggregates of grasping were understood by the Buddha through his supramundane experience. After achieving the Supreme Enlightenment (*abhisambhodhi*), the Buddha claimed that, he has fully understood the characteristic of the five aggregates of grasping, he has fully understood the arising of them, and he has fully understood the way they would cease. By fully understanding the characteristic of the five aggregates of grasping, the Buddha ceased from them and the claimed himself as one fully

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95 See Vis. XXII.127; Bhikkhu Nanamoli, trans., *The Path of Purification* (Colombo: R. Semage, 1956) 817.
enlightened with the supreme enlightenment. The Buddha advised that, the five aggregates of grasping are suffering, which must be fully understood.98

Furthermore, the Buddha claimed that the “all” – the six senses and their objects, and the types of consciousness arisen from them and the related contacts and feelings by which mundane experience is made up are “on fire,” and the way to liberate from suffering is to see that the “all” is burning with the fires of defilements and suffering, and the extinction of suffering is being repelled by the “all.”99

Then, what the Buddha wants to say is that faith in any philosophical position that is related with experience of mundane life is baseless faith (amūlikā saddhā). This is because experience of mundane life is associated with ignorance, craving, and grasping.

In this way, by elaborating the nature of faith which was related with the authority of Vedas, ritualism, and with extreme views like eternalism and non-eternalism, the Buddha had pointed out that this kind of faith is bad and blind faith, because it was based on invalid authority, reason, and experience. Furthermore, such kind of faith did not help people at the time of the Buddha to solve the problems of suffering and did not talk about morality. It did not help them to become independent and courageous. The Buddha had elaborated the nature of blind faith and had criticized it because he wanted to make all human beings free from suffering. The Buddha wanted to establish the society on the basis of Dhamma that is morality. However, it was also his responsibility to elaborate the nature of good faith with the help of which an individual as well as society can solve their problems and will also become

moral. To serve this purpose, the Buddha had elaborated the nature of good faith. Let us see the nature of good faith in Theravāda Buddhism.

3.2. THE NATURE OF GOOD FAITH IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM

In Theravāda Buddhism, faith is not something that is imposed on the individual externally by tradition, authority, or through hearsay, but it is cultivated and developed by individual himself after hearing the teachings of the Buddha through experience and through critical scrutiny. The Buddha had advised laymen and women that they come to him, listen what he was teaching, think it over, and take experience of it. If they were satisfied, then they might accept it. Further, the Buddha had insisted that, should not accept views out of respect for him, but only when they have themselves attained full understanding of the topic on their own with experience. In this sense, the Buddha indirectly expressed the nature of faith in Buddhism. This means that, with mere experience, reason, or authority, the individual does not have capability for cultivating and developing faith in Buddhism. Hence, it could be said that, experience, reason, and authority conjointly form the nature of Buddhist faith.

3.2.1. The Experience – Pacchakka

Faith of an individual in the Buddha is considered as rational faith (ākāravatī saddhā). Inasmuch as the faith is rational, it must be in accordance with one’s own understanding supported by reasons rooted in vision (ākāravatī saddhā dassana-mūlikā dalhā, M. I.320). This is because, according to Buddhism, the faith of the individual in the Buddha is developed gradually in accordance with the processes of inquiry on the Buddha’s bodily action.

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through the eye and his speech through ear. The gradual development of faith in the Buddha follows the following steps:\textsuperscript{101}

(1) After enquiring, the individual knows that those impure states that are cognisable through the eye and the ear do not exist in the Buddha.

(2) The mixed states that are cognisable through the eye and the ear do not exist in the Buddha.

(3) The absolutely pure states that are cognisable through the eye and the ear do exist in the Buddha.

(4) The skilled state is in possession of the Buddha for a long time and not for a short time.

(5) The fame and won renown have been achieved by the Buddha.

(6) Although attained the fame and won renown, the perils do not exist for the Buddha.

(7) The Buddha refrains out of fearlessness, he does not refrain out of fear.

(8) The Buddha does not follow pleasures of the senses because he is without attachment.

(9) The Buddha, whether staying in an Order or staying alone, whether those near him are progressing well, badly, leader of a group, engaged with or unstained by material things, he does not despise them.

(10) After knowing the Buddha’s qualities, the individual draw near the Buddha to hear the \textit{Dhamma}.

(11) Before hearing of the \textit{Dhamma}, he makes a study of the Buddha so as to distinguish whether the Buddha is a fully Self-awakened One or not.

(12) After having acknowledged that, the Buddha teaches him the \textit{Dhamma} from further to further, from excellence to excellence, what is dark and what is bright with their counterparts.

(13) Hence, he comes to conclude that, the Buddha teaches the *Dhamma* to him in this way, through direct knowledge of a certain teaching here in that *Dhamma*.

(14) And finally, he places confidence in the Buddha thus, “the Buddha is a fully Self-awakened One, the *Dhamma* is well proclaimed by the Buddha, the *Saṅgha* is practising the good way.”

The Buddha’s teaching (*buddhavacana*) is rational, systematic, analytic and thoroughly intelligible. It is taught for the sake of an individual’s making himself free from suffering. The Buddha preached the *Dhamma* is lovely at the beginning, in the middle as well as at the ending, with the spirit and the letter; therefore, the individual having heard that *Dhamma*, he gains faith in the Buddha.¹⁰² It means the faith in the Buddha is gradually developing in the individual.

Thus, authenticity in Buddhism cannot be represented by a mere tradition or reason but by experience and reason. It is examined on the basis of perceptual experience. As David Fontana has rightly pointed out that, “There is, in fact, no authenticity for the individual in Buddhism unless it has been verified in the light of personal experience.”¹⁰³

This shows that, it is accepted in Buddhism that, faith is gradually developed in the individual’s mind through experience, reason, and authority. Concerning the role of experience in developing faith in the Buddha’s teaching, we read in the *Therīgāthā* about a woman who was preparing food in the


kitchen. A flame burnt the food. That experience taught her that, all things are impermanence (*anitya*). Then, she realised that, the Buddha’s teaching on *anitya* is real. In this sense, that woman had faith in the Buddha’s teaching on *anitya* because she had that experience and she had thought it over.\(^{104}\)

### 3.2.2. The Reason – Takka

The other aspect of faith in Theravāda Buddhism is especially known as reason. Here, reason means not having doubt about the Buddha and his teachings but have confidence that whatever that the Buddha has said is true. An individual has this confidence because he had thought over the Buddha’s teachings.

‘Faith’ in Theravāda Buddhism is not the word that is commonly understood as a system of worship, because there is no anthropomorphic figure, no supernatural being, and no creator in Theravāda Buddhism. Further, ‘faith’ here is not the word that is used to conceive a system of dogmatic theory. This is because there is the free enquiry into the teachings of the Buddha in Theravāda Buddhism. So, ‘faith’ is understood as rational faith (*ākāravanti-śraddhā*) in Theravāda Buddhism. It is the perception and degree of trustful confidence in the spiritual attainment, knowledge, and salvation of the Buddha as well as the supernatural features of his Dharma, the solemn and pure construction of the *Saṅgha*.

An Ariyan disciple (*ariyasāvaka*) who has achieved the attainment of truth (*saccānupatti*) has as much confidence in the teachings of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*) as he has confidence in the Buddha. It is pointed out in the *Samyutta-nikāya* that, if the Ariyan disciple has perfect faith in the Buddha,\(^{104}\)


In order to gain faith in the Buddha or his teachings, it is necessary that the Ariyan disciple should have serious doubt. Because the serious doubt motivates inquiry, inquiry causes the Ariyan disciple comes close to the Buddha, to hear him, to concentrate and reflect to realize what he has said is true and what he has done is right experience. And hereby, he has full confidence in the Buddha and his teachings. For example, in the passage addressed to the \textit{Kālāmas}, the Buddha had advised that, one may well doubt if the teachings or thoughts are not thought over. When he know for himself that, “These things are unprofitable, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the intelligent, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to loss and sorrow,” then indeed he rejects them.\footnote{See A. I.189; E. M. Hare, trans., \textit{The Book of the Gradual Sayings}, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2006) 171-2.} Thus, the passage indicates that, one has faith after rational thinking.

### 3.2.3. The Authority – Āgama

Generally, authority means accepting the words of person who has the mastery over a specific subject. Its locus of control is external. But in Buddhism, the word ‘authority’ is used in two different senses. Firstly, authority means the capability of the individual to recognise that the Buddha is authentic. Secondly, the authority is decided on the basis of the experience and knowledge of the
Buddha that is derived from critical scrutiny and the physical signs of the Buddha. In both senses, the locus of control of this authority is internal. In order to understand why locus of control of this authority is internal, let us see the Vakkali-sutta and the Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta.

In the Vakkali-sutta, the authority of the Buddha is characterized as the essence of the attainment of truth (saccānupatti) or acquisition of spiritual vision (dhamma cakkhu). The sutta tells that, the monk Vakkali was gravely ill, probably dying. Before his death, he wanted to have a personal interview with the Buddha to pay homage to him. Hence, he requests a fellow monk to go to the Buddha and express his intention. The Buddha consented and went to inquire after the monk Vakkali with the praise that: “whoever sees the Dhamma, sees the Buddha; whoever sees the Buddha, sees the Dhamma.”

In the Mahāhatthipadopama-sutta, there is another well-known passage, where it is said that, in order to express the essence of developing and continual practicing for the Buddha’s teachings, Sāriputta repeated the Buddha’s teachings and asserted that: whoever sees the principle of Paṭicca-samuppāda sees Dhamma, whoever sees Dhamma sees the principle of Paṭicca-samuppāda.

In both the suttas, the verb passati (Saṅskrit paśya), derived from the root pas and means “to see.” Passati in this sense is not the functionate of the organ of sight (cakkhu) as the perception of the material, gross and subtle factors (rūpa) but it is the functionate of the spiritual vision (dhamma cakkhu)

109 We know in the Śālistambha-sūtra one well-known passage: “Whoever sees the conditioned arising sees Dharma, and whoever sees Dharma sees the Buddha.” This passage, according to Noble Ross Reat is known as a conflation of the two passages in the Vakkali sutta (S. III.120) and in the Mahāhatthipadopama sutta (M. I.191). See N. Ross Reat, trans., The Śālistambha Sūtra (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993) 27.
as the attainment of the insight into the Buddha’s teaching on impermanence (anicca), non-self (anattā), and suffering (dukkha).

Furthermore, the verb passati used in these passages does not mean that ‘to see’ the Buddha as his authority but ‘to realize’ the insight into the Buddha’s teaching (buddhavacana). In this regard, the authority of the Buddha is derived from the essence of the realization of the Buddha’s teachings while the authority of the Dhamma is derived from the essence of the realization of the principle of Paṭicca-samuppāda. Accordingly, the locus of control of this authority is internal.

Besides that, in Theravāda Buddhism, the Buddha was respected by his followers as a great physician. To best understand the authority of the Buddha as the great physician let us turn the first words of the Buddha in the Dhammacakka-pavatana-sutta.\(^\text{110}\) Just as the physician understands the physical and mental diseases, the cause of diseases, the curability of diseases, and the remedy employed for the treatment of diseases. Similarly, the Buddha instructs his followers the Truth of suffering, the Truth of the origin of suffering, the Truth of the extinction of suffering, and the Truth of the path leading to the extinction of suffering. And the remedy employed for the treatment of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore, the confidence of the followers in the Buddha and his teachings is referred to as the confidence of a patient with respect to his physician.\(^\text{111}\)

Moreover, the authority of the Buddha was derived from his grace and skilfulness that are attributed to be the capability for achieving a complete success in preaching of the Dhamma. The Mahāpadāna-sutta and the Lakkhaṇa-sutta in the Dīgha-nikāya point out that, the Buddha is endowed


with thirty-two marks of the Great Man (mahāpuruṣa laksānas) and endowed with these marks the Buddha was not liable to obstruction from any foe or adversary within or without, out of lust or hate or illusion, whether recluse, or Brahmin or deva or Māra. Furthermore, the Mahāsihanāda-sutta in the Majjhima-nikāya informs that, the Buddha has ten powers and four convictions or modes of fearlessness and endowed with these powers and convictions, the Buddha claimed the leader’s place, roared his lion’s roar in assemblies, and set rolling the Brahma-wheel. The distinguishing physical marks and spiritual insights of the Buddha are considered as the authority that makes the hearer after having heard the Dhamma acquire faith in the Buddha.

The Mahāparinibbāna-sutta records that, before the Mahāparinibbāna, the Buddha anticipated that his disciples wanted to know who will be their teacher after his passing away. So, the Buddha told that, at his passing away, for what he has taught and explained to his disciples as Dhamma and discipline will be their teacher. After the Mahāparinibbāna of the Buddha, the Theravādins, because of their great affection for the Buddha, decided to preserve and restore the Buddha as the source of authority along with the Dhamma. Moreover, they decided not to bring any change in the teachings of the Buddha.

In a nutshell, the Buddha did not want people accept his views out of respect for him or any religious illusions. So, he discarded the divine authority and dogmatic element in his religion. In this way, to have faith in the Buddha

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and his teachings means to accept the authority of the Buddha and his teachings after critical scrutiny and experience. It is because of this that faith in Theravāda Buddhism is not blind faith but rational faith.

3.3. **DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF FAITH IN THERAVĀDA BUDDHISM**

The word ‘faith’ is a blanket term that covers different shades of *saddhā* in Theravāda Buddhism, such as, *pasāda, pema, bhatti*, etc. In Theravāda literature, these words occur in different contexts and situations. Accordingly, they are used and interpreted in sense of *saddhā*. Jayatilleke has rightly pointed out that, the words *saddhā, pema*, and *pasāda* are used to express different dimensions of faith and combination of these terms itself increases intensity of faith.\(^{\text{115}}\) For instance, *tathāgatassa vā tathāgatasāvakassa vā dhammassavanāya gacchati niviṭṭhasaddho niviṭṭhapemo ekantagato abhippasanno*, that is, a person endued with faith, endued with piety, sure in appreciation will go to see the Tathāgata or the Tathāgata’s disciple.\(^{\text{116}}\) In order to understand the concept of faith in Theravāda Buddhism, let us examine different meanings of faith.

3.3.1. **Faith as Saddhā**

In the Pāli scriptures, the word *saddhā* is frequently used to refer to having faith in the Buddha and his qualities. The word *saddhā* is first formulated systematically in the great scholastic syntheses of the *Abhidharma*.

In the *Atthasālinī* and the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa defined *saddhā* as ‘the acknowledgement of the Three Jewels by which one believes

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in, or one believes in the Three Jewels oneself, or it is merely the action of having faith in the Three Jewels – this is called saddhā.\(^{117}\)

It is found in the Nikāyas that, Saddhā as a quality of the Ariyan disciples who have faith in or acknowledgement (saddhahati) of the Buddha’s enlightenment (tathāgata bodhi). The passage says that, the Ariyan disciple has faith he has confidence in the enlightenment of the Tathāgata. He acknowledges that: “He is indeed the Exalted One, Arahant, Perfect Buddha, endowed with knowledge and right conduct, welfare, knower of the world(s), incomparable charioteer of men to be tamed, teacher of devas and mankind, a Buddha, a Lord.”\(^{118}\)

Thus, saddhā is the term that is used as the rational faith to be produced by the heartfelt acknowledgment of the fact that, the Buddha is indeed the Exalted One. Sangharakshita has pointed out that, such kind of faith is grounded on cognition, affection, and conation – the trilogy of mind. Cognition gives direction and method to the will; it keeps saddhā from the exuberance and gives to it the true objects. Affection is the vitalizing and purposive factor in intellectual understanding; it keeps saddhā from slackening. Conation prevents intellectual understanding from stopping short at mere theoretical appreciation; it frees saddhā from the barrenness and dangers of emotional self-indulgence.\(^{119}\)


3.3.2. Faith as Pasāda

The word *pasāda* literally means purity, but it also means beauty, serenity, as when the mind is unclouded and free from doubt, receptivity to faith, as characterized by awe and veneration.\(^{120}\)

In the Pāli scriptures, the word *pasāda* is rendered as mental appreciation. When an individual has no doubt, his mind is clean and clear, and this doubtless mind gives great appreciation to him. For example, in the *Madhupiṇḍaka-sutta*, Venerable Mahākaccāna explains in detail how bad qualities of the individual are developed and removed. Because of this kind of comprehensive explanation, the bhikkhus had come to have a full understanding of the *Dhamma*; and because of the full understanding of the *Dhamma* their mind was clean and clear. When the bhikkhus were satisfied with the thought of the Buddha, they had the feeling of satisfaction on the one hand and on the other hand they had appreciation in their mind with the Buddha’s teachings. It is because of this that *saddhā* is interpreted as *pasāda*.\(^{121}\)

In the *Puggalapaññatti-āṭṭhakathā*, Buddhaghosa observes that, *pasāda* and *saddhā* are equated. It means that, whenever an individual has *saddhā*, he has *pasāda* and whenever the individual has *pasāda* he has *saddhā*.\(^{122}\)

In the *Abhidharmakośa*, however, Vasubandhu defines *saddhā* as *adhyātma-sampaṇṇa*, that is, inner serenity of an individual.\(^{123}\) It is elaborated in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* that, at the stage of the second *jhāna*, the practitioner produces a profound faith: he admits that the spheres of absorption

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\(^{123}\) 内 淨 即 信 根。T. 29, No. 1560, fol. 324a21.
themselves can be abandoned. This saddhā is called adhyātma-saṁpasāda. It is because saddhā has serenity for its basis that it is called saṁpasāda, and it has renunciation of externals that it is called adhyātma, and so, saṁpasāda when it arises with adhyātma it is called adhyātma-saṁpasāda. 124

The Abhidharmakośa 125 elaborates four objects of pasāda, namely, the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, and the Śīla. The pasāda of the Dhamma and the Śīla result from the realization of the first three Noble Truths, namely, the Noble Truth of suffering, the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering, and the Noble Truth of the extinction of suffering. The pasāda of the Buddha and the Saṅgha result from the realization of the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the extinction of suffering. From the viewpoint of substantial entities, these four, however, are two things, namely, saddhā and sīla.

Pasāda when it arises with avecca (having understood) it is called aveccappasāda. It means the serenity based on knowledge. 126 In the Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam, it is pointed out that, the essence of aveccappasāda refers to two things. In connection with the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha, aveccappasāda takes pasāda to be essence; while that relating to the Śīla (precepts dear to the Ariyans), it takes the Śīla to be essence. 127


The Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra demonstrates that, the essence of this state of mind at the second jhāna is purity (pasāda) and it is a result of the realization of the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the extinction of suffering, hence it is called aveccappasāda.  

The Abhidharmakośa and the Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra point out four objects of aveccappasāda, namely, the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, and the Sīla. It is also pointed out in the Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra that, aveccappasāda is called indestructible faith (abhedya-pasāda), because it cannot be destroyed by doubt and misconducts, hence it is called indestructibility (abheda); the essence of aveccappasāda is pure, hence it is called purity (pasāda). There are two characteristics of aveccappasāda, namely, pasāda and sīla. It is because the aveccappasāda by its pure nature is pasāda, and as having pure nature of the great seeds (mahābhūta) it is sīla.

3.3.3. Faith as Pema

The word pema means affection or emotional attachment. In the Nikāyas, the word pema is frequently used to express the appreciation of the Buddha and his teachings. The Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam elaborates that: ‘All intelligent persons who reflect on the threefold perfection of the Buddha necessarily produce a profound affection (pema), a profound respect with respect to them.’ The threefold perfection consists of the perfection of the causes

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129 證淨有四種。謂佛法僧戒。見三得法戒。見道兼佛僧。法謂三諦全。菩薩獨覺道。信戒二為體。四皆唯無漏。T. 29, No. 1560, fol. 322b11-14.
130 綠彼無漏信名佛證淨。此中法者。謂獨覺身中三無漏根等學無學法。菩薩身中二無漏根等諸學法。及苦集滅三諦緣彼無漏信名法證淨。此中僧者。謂聲聞身中學無學法。緣彼無漏信名僧證淨。諸無漏戒名戒證淨。自性淨故依證起故亦名證淨。T. 27, No. 1545, fol. 533b21-26.
131 此應名不壞淨。言不壞者。不為不信及諸惡戒所破壞故。淨謂清淨信是心之清淨相故。戒是大種清淨相故。T. 27, No. 1545, fol. 534c17-19.
which consists of the provisions of merit and knowledge; the perfection of
the result which consists of the Dharmakāya; and the perfection of the benefit
which consists of service to all beings. In the Theragāthā, the term pema
is used in the sense of affection to the Dhamma, for example, the psalm
says that: ‘Whoever knowing his teachers’ utterance should dwell in it,
firm, and should produce affection.’ Thus, when faith is used to render
the meaning of pema, it is understood as saddhā in accordance with the
affection only.

3.3.4. Faith as Bhatti

The word bhatti means devotion and affection. It is recommended as the
most effective path to reach to God in most of the canonical texts of Pre-
Buddhist Indian philosophical systems.

Bhatti is a way to display the saddhā with God. It is prescribed for
those who are unable to get knowledge required for liberation. It is believed
that, God has all auspicious qualities; through devotion, one can cultivate
such qualities in oneself.

In the Pāli scriptures, bhatti is not frequently used for the sense of the
morally good qualities of the followers to the Buddha as saddhā, pasāda, and
pema. It is more frequently used in the later works, such as the Khuddaka-
nikāya and some works of the Abhidhamma-piṭaka in the sense of devotion,
service, or affection to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. Thus,
saddhā is expressed through bhatti; through bhatti, the followers show their
faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha.

133 See Leo M. Pruden, trans., Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu, vol. 2 (Calif.: Asian
Humanities Press, 1991) 1236.
134 Thera. 370; K. R. Norman, trans. & intr., The Elders’ Verses I: Theragāthā (London: PTS,
1969) 40.
135 See V. V. S. Saibaba, Faith and Devotion in Theravāda Buddhism (Delhi: D. K. Printworld
(P) Ltd., 2005) 167.
The expressions of bhatti presented in Early Buddhism, such as the recollection of the Buddha, the practice of Ti-sarana (Threesfold Refuge) and offering to the Three Jewels, etc. For example, Piṇīiya was widely claimed by the Buddha as a Brahman who liberated due to the affection for the Buddha and his teachings (see infra, p. 105). In the Visuddhimagga, Buddhaghosa quotes the Majjhima-nikāya to say that: a meditator with absolute confidence who wants to develop, firstly, the recollection of the Buddha, should go into solitary retreat and recollect the special qualities of the Buddha as follows: “He is indeed the Exalted One, Arahant, Perfect Buddha, endowed with knowledge and right conduct, welfare, knower of the world(s), incomparable charioteer of men to be tamed, teacher of devas and mankind, a Buddha, a Lord.”136 Further, in the Theragāthā, the psalm says that: “Whoever knowing his teachers’ utterance should dwell in it, firm, and should produce affection.”137

Thus, when faith is used to refer to the meaning of bhatti, like pema, it is understood as saddhā in respect of affection only. Bhatti arises in the human heart a belief in an external agency that can help the individual spiritually and devotion explicates a deep gratitude for the source of that help.

### 3.4. Role of Faith in the Moral Life of Theravāda Buddhism

When we consider the concept of faith, it is necessary to discuss about the aspects of faith. Faith has two aspects: subjective and objective. The subjective aspect of faith is an individual who has faith and the objective aspect of faith is an object in which the individual has faith. The subjective aspect of faith deals with the nature of an individual who has faith and tries to investiagate whether or not faith is natural and how faith plays a role in the psychological

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and spiritual development of man. Both these aspects are important for understanding the concept of faith. Hence, first let us see the subjective aspect of faith that is human nature as root of faith.

3.4.1. Faith is Regarded as a Morally Good Quality – Kusala Dhamma

While studying the concept of faith in religion we see that, every religion talks about the object of faith. That is, it talks about faith of man with reference to supernatural being or power, God, faith in hell and heaven, etc. But as it seems, no religion gives answer to the question: why human being alone has faith? Buddhism gives answer to this question. According to Buddhism, faith is the potentiality of man. It is part of human personality. It is because of this that only man has faith. In order to explain this point, let us see the nature of man in Buddhism.

According to the Buddha, every human being, independent of the consideration of caste, class, sec, or gender is composed of five aggregates (pañca-kkhandhā), namely, aggregate of forms (rūpa-kkhandhā), aggregate of sensations (vedanā-kkhandhā), aggregate of perceptions (saññā-kkhandhā), aggregate of volitional formations (saṅkhārā-kkhandhā), and aggregate of consciousnesses (viññāṇa-kkhandhā):

1. The rūpa-kkhandhā is an aggregation of the four great essentials (mahābhūta), namely, earth, water, fire, and air. Human body and the first five sense organs, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body are made up of these four great essentials.
2. The vedanā-kkhandhā is an aggregation of the sensations based on the contacts between the six sense organs, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind and their corresponding sense objects. There are three sensations, namely, painful, pleasant, and neutral sensation.
(3) The saññā-kkhandhā is an aggregation of the perceptions of six objects of the six sense organs, namely, perception of visible object (rūpa-saññā), perception of sound (sadda-saññā), perception of smell (gandha-saññā), perception of taste (rasa-saññā), perception of touch (phoṭhabba-saññā), and perception of mental object (dhamma-saññā).

(4) The sañkhārā-kkhandhā is an aggregation of the executive volitions that involve with either moral action (kusala-kamma), immoral action (akusala-kamma), or neutral action (abyākata-kamma). There are three executive volitions, namely, volition of the body, volition of speech, and volition of mind.

(5) The viññāṇa-kkhandhā is an aggregation of consciousnesses of both physical and metaphysical phenomena that arise when there are the contacts between the six sense organs and these phenomena. There are six consciousnesses, namely, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and mind-consciousness.

Over and above these five aggregates, there is not eternal principle like Ātmā or soul that resides in the human mind and controls over his body. Amongst these five aggregates, sañkhārā-kkhandhā plays an important role in moulding human personality. It is because physical action (kāya-sañkhārā) and verbal action (vacī-sañkhāra) reflect one’s mental action (citta-sañkhārā). For example, if one has good or bad qualities these are reflected in his bodily action and speech. On the basis of this, we come to know one’s personality. In like manner, we can come to know whether an individual has faith or not.

Faith is one of the attributes of human beings. This is because only human beings have the extraordinary capability to engage in the executive volitions (sañkhārā) that shapes their consciousnesses (viññāṇa). It is because of this that everyone has faith. Whether this faith is good or bad, it is dependent on other factors. For example, if one’s belief in God is not
based on reason or personal experience, it may be called bad faith. Instead, if it is based on reason and personal experience it is good faith. Within Buddhist framework, faith is good if it is conjointly based on authority, experience, and reason.

Faith as a potentiality of man, every human being has faith. But merely possessing potentiality does not mean that he has faith. This potentiality has to be developed, and further, it should be actualized and utilized. Accordingly, Buddhism has made the distinction between sa[ddhā], s[addhindriya], and s[addhābala] in the context of human nature. Sa[ddhā] means the potentiality by which one believes in the Three Jewels. S[addhindriya] is also translated as the controlling faculty of sa[ddhā], and s[addhābala] means the power of controlling faculty of sa[ddhā]. Thus, sa[ddhā], s[addhindriya], and s[addhābala] are related with human nature.

In the Dhātukathā, the controlling faculty of faith and the power of controlling faculty of faith are categorized under the twenty-two faculties and mentioned as a mental factors present at fifty-nine beautiful consciousnesses. However, in the Dhammasaṅgaṇī of the Abhidhamma it is stated that, the controlling faculty of faith and the power of controlling faculty of faith exercise lordship over the fifty-six associated states of wholesome consciousness. The treatise does not manifest different definitions of these two compounds, instead, both the controlling faculty of faith and the power of controlling faculty of faith are interpreted as s[addha], which on that occasion is a trusting in, the professing confidence in, the sense of assurance, faith, faith as a faculty, and faith as a power. It may be because s[addhindriya] and s[addhābala] are required for the actualization of sa[ddhā].

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In the *Atthasālinī*, Buddhaghosa observers *saddhindriya* and *saddhābala* as two species of faith and listed them into fifty-six associated states of morally good consciousness. However, in this work, only *saddhindriya* is defined as belief in the virtue of the Buddha, the *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha*.

In the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-śāstra*, it is said that, the controlling faculty (*indrya*) is the capacity to develop good merit (*kusala-mūla*) and the power of controlling faculty (*bāla*) is the capacity to prevent defilements (*kilesa*). Precisely, *indrya* is the unshakable ability to the five hindrances (*pañca-nīvaraṇā*) and *bāla* is the ability to control these hindrances.

The *Kathāvatthu* points out that, the average man of the world possesses *saddhā* but not *saddhindriya*. In the other words, an average person can have *saddhā* of a kind, which may be different from those of an adept (*ārya*), but *saddhā* that he possesses is not developed into *saddhindriya*. The progress form *saddhā* to *saddhindriya* requires the practice of the Path of three stages of training, *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Paññā*.

The *Saṅgītiparyāya* defines *śraddhābala* as the rational faith (*ākāravanti-śraddhā*) that is bent on, rooted in, rest on the Tathāgata, it is

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142 The faculty of faith – it is ‘faith’ as belief in the virtue of the Buddha, etc.; or ‘faith’ is the habit of believing in the Three Jewels, the Buddha, . . . ‘Trust’ is [the behaviour of mind which] has faith. It dives into the virtues of the Buddha, etc. as though breaking them and entering into them – this is ‘confidence.’ By this, beings have abundant assurance in the virtues of the Buddha, etc. – this is ‘assurance.’ Ath. 145. P. M. Tin, trans., *The Expositor (Atthasālinī)*, ed. C. A. F. Rhys Davids (London: PTS, 1976) 191; cf. Beni Maddhab Barua, “Faith in Buddhism,” *Studies in Buddhism*, ed. Binayendra Nath Chaudhury (Calcutta: Saraswat Library, 1974) 226.

143 能生善法故名根。能破惡法故名力。有說。不可傾動名根。能摧伏他名力。T. 27, No. 1545, fol. 726b16-7.


146 *Saṅgītiparyāya* is one of the seven *Sarvāstivāda Abhidhamma* scriptures, which is attributed to Mahakausthila (according to the Sanskrit and Tibetan sources) or Sariputra (according to the Chinese sources). The Chinese version was translated by Xuan-zang; see T. 26, No. 1536.
strong, not to be uprooted by any recluse or Brahmin or Deva or Māra or Brahmā, or by anyone else in the world is called śraddhābala.\textsuperscript{147}

In a nutshell, saddhindriya and saddhābala are interpreted as two inseparable aspects of saddhā. Saddhindriya is one’s ability to understand, wear out and abandon the five lower fetters (orambhāgiya-samyojana), namely, (1) personality-belief (sakkāya-ditthi), (2) sceptical doubt (vicikicchā), (3) clinging to mere rules and ritual (sīlabbata-parāmāsa), (4) sensuous craving (kāma-rāga), and (5) ill-will (vyāpāda). Its steadfastness is matured due to the attainment of truth (saccānupatti). Saddhābala is one’s ability to understand, wear out and abandon the five lower fetters (uddhambhāgiya-samyojana), namely, (1) craving for fine-material existence (rūpa-rāga), (2) craving for immaterial existence (arūpa-rāga), (3) conceit (māna), (4) restlessness (uddhacca), (5) ignorance (avijjā). Its steadfastness is matured due to the cultivation of the five controlling faculties (pañc’indriyānī).

In the Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta, for instance, saddhā occurs in initial position in the course of cultivating the five controlling faculties (pañc’indriyānī) as well as in the course of transferring the five controlling faculties into five powers (pañca balāni). An individual develops saddhindriya leading to tranquillity, leading to awakening. Likewise, he develops the controlling faculty of energy (viriyindriya), the controlling faculty of mindfulness (satindriya), the controlling faculty of concentration (samādhindriya), the controlling faculty of wisdom (paññindrya), leading to tranquillity, leading to awakening. And the individual develops the power of controlling faculty of faith, leading to tranquillity, leading to awakening. Likewise he develops the power of controlling faculty of energy (viriyabala), the power of controlling faculty of mindfulness (satibala), the power of controlling faculty of concentration (samādhibala), the power of controlling faculty of wisdom

(paññābala), leading to tranquillity, leading to awakening. Thereby, many disciples of the Buddha abide having reached the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge.\textsuperscript{148}

The \textit{Upanisa-sutta} describes faith as the prerequisite of skilful qualities, which arise to trend towards gnosis about extinction of suffering (nibbāna). The course was taught that: comprehension of suffering is the condition of faith, faith of joy, joy of rapture, rapture of serenity, serenity of happiness, happiness of concentration, concentration of knowledge and vision into things as they really are, knowledge and vision into things as they really are of repulsion, repulsion of passionlessness, passionlessness of liberation, and liberation is the prerequisite of gnosis about extinction.\textsuperscript{149}

### 3.4.2. The Advantage of Faith in Theravāda Buddhism

An Ariyan disciple has unwavering confidence in the Three Jewels – the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha because he has acknowledged the qualities of the Three Jewels, understood the Buddha’s teachings on the Four Noble Truths (cattāri-ariyasaccāni), and acquainted with the Middle Path (majjhimā-paṭipada), that is, the Noble Eightfold Path. When he possessed such a good faith, it would be reflected in physical action (kāya-saṅkhārā), verbal action (vacī-saṅkhāra), and mental action (citta-saṅkhārā). The Buddha taught that, one has faith with acknowledgment of the Buddha’ enlightenment and his qualities, he achieves five humanity factors as follows:\textsuperscript{150}

1. He is little troubled by sickness and disease;


(2) He is furnished with digestive power not too hot or too cold, but even and suitable for striving;

(3) He is honest, not a deceiver, he is one who shows himself as he really is to the Buddha, to his discerning co-mater in the brahma-life;

(4) He dwells resolute in energy, ever striving to abandon bad qualities, stout and strong to acquire good qualities, not shirking the burden in good qualities; and

(5) He is a man of insight, possessed of insight for tracing the rise and fall of things, insight that is Ariyan, penetrating, going on to the utter destruction of ill.

One of the actions of one who has faith is taking refuge in the Three Jewels (tiratanā). According to Buddhism, tiratanā is the one great need of the Buddhists; it is the one sane action that springs from having confidence in the Buddha’s teachings of the Four Noble Truths. He take refuge in the Three Jewels because he has comprehended that, impermanence (anicca), non-self (anattā), and suffering (dukkha) are qualities of conditioned existence. He believes that, the refuge in the Three Jewels will help him to overcome from the problems in this worldly life. In short, the Buddhists express their faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha not by confessions but by practices through exerting themselves on the training of Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā. Conversely, these three stages of the spiritual training are valuable qualities of the Buddhists who have faith, these stages are either causes, or medium, or effects of each other in their practice of Buddhism.

One who has faith in the Three Jewels believes in the enlightenment including four moral qualities, namely, wisdom (paññā), truth (sacca), relinquishment (cāga), and tranquillity (upasama).¹⁵¹ It was informed by the Buddha that, one who has faith and confidence in the enlightenment,

such a one is called “walker in faith” (saddhānusārin), one who has entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of superior persons. He is incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the domain of ghosts; he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of the Stream-winning.\footnote{See S. III.224; F. L. Woodward, trans., The Book of the Kindred Sayings, vol. 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005) 177; Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000) 1004.}


(1) The person who is striving after faith (saddhānusārin) is abiding without having apprehended with his own person those peaceful deliverances, which are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, yet, having seen, by means of wisdom, his cankers (āsava) are not utterly destroyed. However, if he has enough faith in the Tathāgata, enough devotion to him, then he will have these qualities namely the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.

(2) The person who is striving for the Dhamma (dhammānusārin) is abiding without having apprehended with his own person those peaceful deliverances, which are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, but he has seen, by means of wisdom, his cankers are not utterly been destroyed. The teachings proclaimed by the Tathāgata are moderately approved by him through intuitive wisdom, although he has the qualities namely the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom.
(3) The person who is freed by faith (saddhāvimitta) is abiding without having apprehended with his own person those peaceful deliverances, which are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, yet, having seen, by means of wisdom, some of his cankers are utterly destroyed, and his faith in the Tathāgata is settled, genuine, well established.

(4) The person who has won to view (diṭṭhipatta) is abiding without having apprehended with his own person those peaceful deliverances, which are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, yet, having seen, by means of wisdom, some of his cankers are utterly destroyed. Those things that have been proclaimed by the Tathāgata are fully seen by him through intuitive wisdom and fully practiced.

(5) The person who is a mental realiser (kāyasakkhin) is abiding, having apprehended with his own person those peaceful deliverances, which are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, and having seen with wisdom, some of his cankers are utterly destroyed.

(6) The person who is freed by means of intuitive wisdom (paññāvimitta) is abiding without having apprehended with his own person those peaceful deliverances, which are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, yet, having seen, by means of wisdom, his cankers are utterly destroyed.

(7) The person who is freed both ways (ubhatobhāgavimitta) is abidingly having apprehended with his own person those peaceful deliverances, which are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, and having seen, by means of wisdom, his cankers are utterly destroyed.

These stages are classified as two paths, namely, the path of Sekho and Asekho. The path of Asekho (adept no more learning) comprises the person who is freed both ways (ubhatobhāgavimitta) and the person who is freed by means of intuitive wisdom (paññāvimitta), this is the category of those who become Arahant. The path of Sekho (learner) comprises the first five
stages, namely, *saddhānusārin, dhammānusārin, saddhāvimutta, diṭṭhipatta,* and *kāyasakkhin.* In this category, the *saddhānusārin* and the *dhammānusārin* consist of those who on the practicing for the realization of the fruit of stream-entry (*sotāpattiphala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanna*), the first of the eight Ariyans persons whose controlling faculty of faith (*saddhindriya*) is well developed. The *saddhāvimutta,* the *kāyasakkhin,* and the *diṭṭhipatta,* consist of those who are in the six intermediate levels, from the stream enterer (*sotāpanna*) to the one practicing for arahantship (*arahattāya paṭipanna*).\(^{154}\)

3.4.3. Faith as the Prerequisite Condition for the Spiritual Development of Human Beings

Faith has its role to play in the entrance to wisdom or the access to *nibbāna.* It is described as a basic principle of all virtuous deeds (*puññakiriyā vatthūni*).\(^{155}\) Faith frequently occurs in initial position of the Ariyan disciple’s morally good qualities and embraces during the course of his endeavour. Faith is the basis of a righteous edifice.\(^{156}\) Thus, in order to understand thoroughly the role of faith in the spiritual development, let us see what role this faith plays in an Ariyan disciple’s life.

3.4.3.1. The Position of Faith in the Spiritual Growth

The Theravādins accept that, the attainment of truth (*saccānupatti*) does not come directly but through advancement. The *Mahāsakuludāyi-sutta* elaborates the course of spiritual development as the mental movement into steady state of intellectual meditation, that is, the transferring the five controlling

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faculties (pañc' indriyāni) into five powers (pañca balāni) during process of training in the triad Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā.\textsuperscript{157} This course systematically operates as follows: faith, approach, drawing close, lending ear, hearing the Dhamma, remembering the Dhamma, testing the meaning, approving of the Dhamma, desire for truth, making an effort, weighing, striving, attainment of truth.\textsuperscript{158} Thus, faith is conceived as essence of the attainment of truth (saccānupatti).

This point is elaborated in the Majjhima-nikāya by classifying the nature of believer. It is mentioned that there are basically three kinds of believer, namely:\textsuperscript{159}

(1) The preservation of truth (saccānurakkhaṇā) is the kind of believer who has faith and says: “such is my faith,” speaking thus he preserves truth. Thus is a provisional acceptance of a statement for the purpose of verification without the definite conclusion that, “this alone is the truth, all else is falsehood.”

(2) The discovery of truth (saccānubodha) is the kind of believer who has affection for the Buddha or a teacher after beholding that, “he is purified of states of confusion.” Because of this affection he reposes faith in the Buddha or a teacher, closes him, hears his teachings, remembers his teachings, and tests the meaning of things which he has remembered. While testing the meaning of things are approved of, desire is born, he makes an effort, weighs it up, strives, then he realizes with his person the highest truth itself, and penetrating it with intuitive wisdom.


(3) The attainment of truth (saccānupatti) is the kind of believer who has acquainted with the nature of the teachings of the Buddha. Because of this acquaintance he dwells in the teachings of the Buddha with repetition, development, and cultivation.

Herein, the preservation of a truth (saccānurakkhanā) and the discovery of truth (saccānubodha) are two extents of ordinary order. They can also be seen as the categories of amūlikā saddhā. In these extents, the believer strives after faith (saddhānusārin), by the report without acceptance or rejection, moral inquiries into the conduct and behaviour of the teacher, without following, developing and continually practicing those things himself which he has heard, has seen. Therefore, they are unable to conclude that, “this alone is the truth, all else is falsehood.” Saccānupatti is the extent of supramundane order, which can also be seen as the category of ākāravatī saddhā. Only in this extent, the believer strives for the Dhamma (dhammānusārin) with the definite conclusion that, “I know this, I see this: this alone is the truth, all else is falsehood.” He follows, develops and continually practices for those things that he has known and seen. Thus, he will never fall away from the truth.

3.4.3.2. Role of Faith in the Spiritual Growth

Faith manifests itself as the prerequisite quality in the process of training in the triad Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā, in which, faith has its role to play as a mental activity. In the Nettipakaraṇa, it is said that: “The absence of impurity is the mark of assurance and tranquility or satisfaction its consummation. Solicitation is the mark of faith, and unflinching devotion its basis. Steadiness is the mark of assurance, and faith its basis.” In this regard, the role of

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161 Okappanalakkhaṇā saddhā adhimutti-paccupaṭṭhānā ca. Anāvilalakkhaṇo pasādo sampasīdana-paccupaṭṭhāno ca. Abhipatthiyanalakkhaṇā saddhā. Tassā aveccappasādo
faith is divided into two states, namely, tranquillization (sampasādana) and aspiration (sampakkhandhana).

a. The Sampasādana

Sampasādana is viewed as the function of faith. This is because faith has the capability for clarifying the adventitious defilements (āgantuka-upakkilesa) from one’s mind, just like the water-cleaning gem that has the capability for depositing mud, sandy atoms, etc. from water. An Ariyan disciple who is possessed with unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, springs up in the heart to break through the first three of the five lower feeters (orambhāgiya-samyojana), namely, personality-belief (sakkāya-ditthi), sceptical doubt (vicikicchā), and clinging to mere rules and ritual (sīlabbata-parāmāsa). Then his heart becomes clear, serene, untroubled, he is the Stream-winner (sotāpanna), who has entered the stream to nibbāna.

Therefore, the Buddha has admonished his disciples should abandon sceptical doubt (vicikicchā) about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, the Sīla, angry and displeased with his companions in the holy life; severe lust, desire, affection, thirst, and craving for pleasures in the heart. Otherwise, they should never come to growth, increase, and fulfilment in the Dhamma and the Sīla of the Buddha.

In this phase, faith in the Three Jewels, namely, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha is primary motivation for both the beginners and expert disciples. A novice must take refuge first in the Buddha and then in the


Dhamma and the Saṅgha, and the expert disciples, who are walking according to faith (saddhānusārin) and emancipated through faith (saddhāvimutta), even those who emancipated through wisdom (paññāvimutti) are not totally lacking in faith in the Three Jewels. An Ariyan disciple acknowledges the qualities of the Three Jewels and has acquainted with the Three Jewels; it means that, he has confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. Just as a traveller does not know the way to his destination, through a brief conversation with one of the natives passing him on the street, he acknowledges that, a native is well acquainted with the place where he wishes to reach, and then he implicitly follows the direction of the native with faith. On arriving at his destination, he knows that his confidence in the native one was justified, and then the traveller was really acquainted with both the place and the route by the means that he has experienced. Whereas, another traveller who does not know the way to his destination, after a brief conversation with the native as such, he implicitly follows the direction of the native without faith, after a part of distance, he turns on the left or right. Finally, he arrives without destination and lacks of experience in respect to the destination.\footnote{164 See Gaṇakamoggallāna sutta, M. II.266-III.7; see also the Dantabhūmi sutta, M. III.128-137; I. B. Horner, trans., The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings, vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 52-7, 175-83.}

Thus, if an Ariyan disciple acknowledges the Buddha’s Enlightenment and has acquainted with the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, he comes to practice and growth, increase, and fulfilment in the Dhamma and the Sīla of the Buddha. He himself would attain certain corresponding stages of the Transcendental Path. In this way, his faith in the Three Jewels would be more and more fixed.

b. The Sampakkhandhana

Sampakkhandhana is considered as another function of faith. This is because faith has the capability of making up one’s mind the aspiring for the attainment of nibbāna, just as the setting out across a flood. Thus, a monk who is possessed
with faith aspires to leap up into the higher fruit of the first, second, or third stage in the Excellent Way, or to gain Arahantship. Then he applies himself to the attainment of what he has not reached, to the experience of what he has not yet felt, to the realization of what he has not yet realized. This characteristic mark of faith is compared to a brave man, who sets an example for others by leaping from one side of the overflowing brook to the other when he has known exactly his own strengths.

It is pointed out in the Indriya-sāmyutta and Bala-sāmyutta in the Samyutta-nikāya that, an Ariyan disciple can understand, wear out and abandon the five higher fetters (uddhambhāgiya-samyojana), achieve nibbāna out of the steadfastness of the five powers of controlling faculties (pañca balāni).\(^{165}\)

In this phase, faith in the Three Jewels is a ‘jump’ from the mundane to the transcendental stage.\(^{166}\) This kind of faith will be more useful for the spiritual movement of an Ariyan disciple especially when he is face to face with the Buddha. Because when an Ariyan disciple stands in the presence of the Buddha, his own embryonic form of wisdom starts vibrating. Furthermore, the germinating of his own Germ of Buddhahood not only happens when he perceives the physical body (nirmanakāya), but also when he exercises and practices meditation on the glory body (sambhogakāya) and the reality body (dharmakāya) of the Buddha which to be able to behold with a spiritual eye (dhamma cakkhu).\(^{167}\) This fact is based on evidence that is proved in a number of passages in the Nikāyas.\(^{168}\)

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\(^{168}\) For example, in the *Sutta-nipāta*, Bāvarī asks Pīṇīya, how can you a moment stay from the Buddha, and now, and not anon, for craving’s end and weal, which nowhere has a peer? Pīṇīya replies that, in fact, he does not stay from the Buddha even one moment; for he sees the Buddha in
Sampakkhandhana takes sampasādana to be the basis of function. This is explained with a simile of the cloth in the Majjhima-nikāya.\textsuperscript{169} Just as a cloth was pure and bright, a dyer can dipes it in good colour, whether blue or yellow or red or carmine. Similarly, the monk wants to make up his mind the aspiring for the attainment of nibbāna, he must get rid of the adventitious defilements (āgantuka-upakkilesa).

3.4.4. Faith as the Prerequisite Condition for the Psychological Development of Human Beings

Faith manifests itself as the prerequisite to appreciate the supreme Path leading to nibbāna.\textsuperscript{170} In the Saddha-sutta the Buddha states that, there are five advantages for a believing clansman, that is, the good and wise man feel compassion for, visit to, receive alms from, teach the Dhamma to, and after breaking up of the body after death arises in the happy world. The believing clansman is thus the rest of many fold, for monks and nuns, and both laymen and laywomen.\textsuperscript{171}

The Buddha taught that, lack of faith is a sign of decline in the religion preached by the Tathāgata.\textsuperscript{172} In this sense, the sceptical doubt about the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, and the Sīla are regarded as the bad quality of the Buddhists, because of which they should be perplexed, not meditation. See Sn. 1131-1149; E. M. Hare, Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists (London: Oxford UP, 1947) 165-7; H. Saddhatissa, trans., The Sutta-nipāta (London: Curzon Press, 1985) 131-3.\textsuperscript{169} The defilements of mind are stated as follows: Greed and covetousness, malevolence, anger, malice, hypocrisy, spite, envy, stinginess, deceit, treachery, obstinacy, impetuosity, arrogance, pride, conceit, indolence, M. I.36-7; see I. B. Horner, trans., The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 46.\textsuperscript{170} See Gaṇakamogallāna sutta, M. III.1-7; I. B. Horner, trans., The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings, vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 52-7.\textsuperscript{171} See A. III.42; E. M. Hare, trans., The Book of the Gradual Sayings, vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006) 34.\textsuperscript{172} . . . assaddhiyam kho pana Tathāgatappavedite dhammavinaye parihānāmetaṁ, A. V.158; E. M. Hare, trans., The Book of the Gradual Sayings, vol. 5 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006) 107; cf. Kashi Nath Upadhyaya, Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgītā (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983) 253.
convinced, not sure, and their mind will not incline to ardour, to continual application, to perseverance, to striving. Thus, the sceptical doubt in regard to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, and the Sīla is a great obstacle in the development of wisdom and in the pursuit of the Buddhist goal. Therefore, it must be replaced by faith (saddhā) for those who are living in the Dhamma and the Sīla of the Buddha.

There are the same descriptions in many places in the Majjhima-nikāya, wherein, the sceptical doubt is enumerated either in the five obstacles or mental barrennesses (pañca cetokhilā), in the five impediments (pañca nivaranā), or in the five fetters (pañc' orambahāgiyāni saṃyojanāni).

3.4.4.1. The Importance of Faith in the Psychological Development

Faith is one of the seven factors contributing to spiritual striving. Just like a deeply embedded, well dug in, immovable and unshakable pillar, one of the seven requisites of a fortress. With this pillar the rajah’s citadel in the marches is well provided for the protection of the inmates and for the warding off of outsiders. Faith is treated as one of the seven spiritual treasures of the wise man, the seven spiritual treasures are (1) treasure of faith, (2) treasure of virtue, (3) treasure of conscientiousness, (4) treasure of fear of blame, (5) treasure of listening, (6) treasure of bounty, (7) treasure of wisdom. In this sense, the importance of faith in Theravāda Buddhism is appreciated with respect to the development of the trilogy of mind, that is, cognition, affection, and conation.

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a. **Cognitive Aspect of Faith**

The cognitive aspect of faith is the comprehension of the truth (*sacca ṃāna*), for example, the comprehension of the Noble Truth of suffering, the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering, the Noble Truth of the extinction of suffering, and the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the extinction of suffering.

This aspect of faith has an important role to play in the psychological development, because when an individual has acknowledgement of these truths through his personal experience then he does not have any doubt about the Three Jewels. Consequently, his attempts to achieve the attainment of *nibbāna* become clear. Theravāda Buddhism has elaborated what are the results and consequences of having or not having clear understanding of the Buddha’s teachings.

It is said that, an Ariyan disciple is possessed of faith in the Buddha and his teachings, with faith as resolution, he abandons unrighteous ways, he performs righteousness, he abandons what is blameworthy, he exercises blamelessness, and he hears himself in pureness.\(^{177}\)


b. **Affective Aspect of Faith**

The affective aspect of faith is the acquaintance with the truth (*kata ṃāna*), for example, the acquaintance with the Four Noble Truths and their respective functions, which have been accomplished by the Buddha.

The faith mentioned in this aspect is the rational faith (*ākāravatī saddhā*); that is because it is based on acquaintance of the truth, just like the faith in the geometrical judgements: ‘A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.’ Consequently, this aspect of faith also plays an important role in the psychological development.
The Buddha made a special mention of the believers who have faith in connection with affection by assertion that: they were crossed over the morass, the realm of dying, passing hard to cross, having left behind this mortal frame, and passed into touch with things celestial in the far heavens of Aviha. Piṅgiya, for instance, is known as a Brahman who was liberated by faith (*saddhāvimutta*). After having affection for the Buddha and his teachings, he praises the Buddha in heartfelt terms: “They call him Buddha, Enlightened, Awake, dissolving darkness, with total vision, and knowing the world to its ends. . . . This man . . . is the man I follow.”¹⁷⁸ And since then he spent his nights revering the Buddha, there is not a single moment spent away from him.

**c. Conative Aspect of Faith**

The conative aspect of faith is the acknowledgment of the respective function of the truth (*kicca ſāna*), for example, the acknowledgment of the Buddha’s teaching leading to the attainment of truth (*saccānupatti*), those who hear the teaching of the Buddha see the impermanent, no self, and suffering as themselves.

The *Majjhima-nikāya* elaborates that, one who has no faith he cannot attain whatever is to be won by faith. The Buddha illustrated by a simile that: just as much as one who might come to a teacher skilled in elephant-riding and in the art of handling a goad and think, “the teacher knows how to ride elephants and the art of handling the goad, I will train myself in elephant-riding and the art of handling the goad under him.” If he has no faith then he will not be able to train himself in elephant-riding and the art of handling the goad under the teacher.¹⁷⁹

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In the *Bodhirājakumāra*-sutta, faith is considered as the indispensable requisite in progress of realization. It also asserts the fact that what must be done is to plant confidence and weed out the sceptical doubts. Although, here, the planning of confidence does not mean acceptance or surrender without respect to the value of reason.

3.4.4.2. Role of Faith in the Psychological Development

With regards to the function of faith in the psychological development, it is a morally good quality pertaining to cognition, affection, and conation – the trilogy of mind.

*a. The Role of Faith as Confidence based on Release – Aveccappassāda*

Faith in its cognitive aspect functions as *aveccappasāda*. Herein, the disciple is partly released by acknowledgement of the Buddha’s Enlightenment and practicing due to the Buddha’s teachings, that so-called freed by faith (*saddhāvimutta*). Whereby, he has seen by means of wisdom some of his adventitious defilements (*āgantuka-upakkilesa*) destroyed, and his faith in the Buddha, therefore, is settled, genuine, well established. In this manner, faith is stated to be appropriate as a person’s partner\(^{180}\) and the best wealth of man in this world.\(^{181}\)

*b. The Role of Faith as Pema and Bhatti*

Faith in its affective aspect functions as love (*pema*) and devotion (*bhatti*). In this respect, the disciple has affection towards the Buddha and his qualities by acknowledgment of the Buddha’s *Abhisambhodhi*. The Buddha is supposed

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to have observed that, because the *Dhamma* has been well taught by him thus, made manifest, opened up, made known, stripped of its swathing, all those who have enough faith in him, enough affection, are bound for heaven.¹⁸² In the *Majjhima-nikāya*, there are passages wherein the affective aspect of faith is apparent, for example, “when I heard that *dhamma* I gained faith in the Tathāgata,”¹⁸³ or “if faith is born, then he approaches.”¹⁸⁴ However, these passages may be mistakenly viewed if anybody supports for the notions that faith is only result of the learning the doctrine for the first passage, and faith is prior to investigation for the second one. Faith, precisely in the sence that it is depicted in those passages, is initial and consequent on checking the doctrine.¹⁸⁵

c. The Role of Faith as *Adhiṭṭhāna* or *Cetanā*

Faith in its conative aspect functions as the resolve (*adhiṭṭhāna* or *cetanā*) based on confidence. Herein, he strives after having faith in the Buddha’s instruction and lives in union with it (*saddhānusārin* and *dhammānusārin*, see *supra*). He makes a vow that: Gladly would I be reduced to skin and sinews and bone and let my body’s flesh and blood dry up if there come to be a vertex of energy so that which is not won might be won by human strength (*purisatthāma*), by human energy (*purisa-viriya*), by human striving (*purisa-parakkama*).¹⁸⁶ This resolve is just power of energy (*viriyabala*), which is to bridge the distance between faith and wisdom. Therefore, the Buddha taught

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that: “Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!”187

3.5. **Objects of Faith in Theravāda Buddhism**

The Buddha while talking about the problems of suffering has advocated that though suffering is unavoidable it can be removed by adopting the proper perspective and following morally good conduct. Now if an individual has to make himself free from suffering he has to have faith in the Buddha who himself is an example of Enlightened Being, the Dhamma that is morally good conduct, and the Saṅgha that is the society of individuals who attained the fruit of these four stages and who are practicing for the realization of the fruits of the four stages of the Path leading to nibbāna.188

Generally, the objects of faith are generalized unwavering faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha.189 Faith in these objects is traditionally known as the practicing of the formula of ‘Going for Refuge’ (saranattayāṁ) to the Three Jewels (tiratana).

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187 In the last sermon, the Buddha asked the brethrens of the community to issue question if there is any doubt or misgiving about Buddha, the doctrine, the path, or the method. Three times they are asked and three times they are silent. In the final silence, Ānanda turns to the Buddha and says “How wonderful is it . . . . . . there is not one brother who has any doubt or misgiving as to the Buddha, or the doctrine, or the path, or the method.” Hereon, Ānanda was rebuked that his speaking is issued out of the fullness of faith (pasāda), not out of the certainty of knowledge (ñāṇa); see D. II.155-6; T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007) 172-3.

188 They are the stream-enterer (sotāpanna) and the one practicing for realization of the fruit of stream-entry (sotāpattiyāya sacchikiriyāya patipanna); the once-returner (sakadāgāmi), and the one practicing for realization of the fruit of the once-returning (sakadāgāmiṣṭhāya sacchikiriyāya patipanna); the non-returner (anāgāmi), and the one practicing for realization of the fruit of the non-returner (anāgāmiṣṭhāya sacchikiriyāya patipanna); the arahant (arahā), and the one practicing for arahantship (arahattāya patipanna), A. IV.192; q.v. Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000) 385.

However, according to Theravāda Buddhism, there are six things by which a householder disciple of the Buddha has gone to the end, seen the deathless and has his being in the realization of the deathless; that is, he achieved the attainment of nibbāna.\textsuperscript{190} It is mentioned in the teachings in the Aṅguttara-nikāya that, there are six unwavering faith in the Buddha, in the Dhamma, in the Saṅgha, in Ariyan virtue (ariyena sīlena), in Ariyan knowledge (ariyena ūnānena), and in Ariyan release (ariyāya vimuttiyā).\textsuperscript{191}

Besides that, according to Samyutta-nikāya, there are four morally good qualities. If an Ariyan disciple is possessed of these four qualities, he is released from purgatory, he is releases from the womb of an animal, he is released from the realm of ghosts, he is released from Hell, the Way of Woe, from the Downfall. The four qualities are unwavering loyalty to the Buddha (buddhe aveccappasādena), unwavering loyalty to the Dhamma (dhamme aveccappasādena), unwavering faith in the Saṅgha (saṅhe aveccappasādena), and unwavering faith in the Sīla loved by the Ariyans (ariyakantehi sīlehi).\textsuperscript{192}

According to different practical stages, the objects of faith hold the varieties on their term and form. The objects of faith for the lay order are counted in the six objects of faith while the objects of faith for the monastic


\textsuperscript{191} Buddhe aveccappasādena, dhamme aveccappasādena, saṅhe aveccappasādena, ariyena sīlena, ariyena ūnānena, ariyāya vimuttiyā, A. III.450; q.v. E. M. Hare, trans., The Book of the Gradual Sayings, vol. 3 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006) 313.

order omit the last two. This difference is due to the perception of the training of *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Paññā* between both sects is normally unequal.

In this way we see that, the objects of faith in Theravāda Buddhism are the Buddha, the *Dhamma*, the *Saṅgha*, Ariyan virtue (*ariyena sīlena*), Ariyan knowledge (*ariyena ūnānena*), and Ariyan release (*ariyāya vimuttiyā*). Let us see how these objects could play an important role in Buddhism according to Theravāda literature.

### 3.5.1. Faith in Buddha

Faith in the Buddha means faith in the Buddha’s Enlightenment and his qualities. Faith in the Buddha encourages the individual for his spiritual development. The disciples of the Buddha rely on him because he is an authority for them. Hence, they meditate upon the Buddha and his teachings. If faith in the Buddha is weak and wavering, faith in the *Dhamma* is fragile, they will lack earnestness or effort in the Path leading to the extinction of suffering.

The disciples of the Buddha express their faith in the Buddha by the praise: “He is indeed the Exalted One, Arahant, Perfect Buddha, endowed with knowledge and right conduct, welfare, knower of the world(s), incomparable charioteer of men to be tamed, teacher of devas and mankind, a Buddha, a Lord.”

Originally, the Theravādins believe that the Buddha was essentially an *Arhat* who attained *parinirvāṇa*, the state that is beyond the reach of mortals; they assume that, there is only one Buddha in this world system.

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The Theravādins later invoked and developed the concept of the Buddha. For example, they conceived two kinds of perception of embodiment of the Buddha (rūpakāya):

(1) Embodiment in one man (purisa), Gautama Buddha was physically like any other human being, who had undergone the ruling of the laws of nature, which made him vulnerable to fatigue, illness, ageing, decay and death.\(^{195}\)

(2) Embodiment in one superman (mahāpurisa), the Buddha possesses the thirty-two characteristics of a superman, possessing with these marks, the Buddha was not liable to obstruction from any foe or adversary within or without, out of lust or hate or illusion, whether recluse, or Brahmin or deva or Māra.\(^{196}\)

The acceptance of the Buddha embodiment into an object of faith as the mahapurisa was derived from various elements, like religious elements, etc.\(^{197}\) The devotion (bhatti) played a vital role in Buddhism from its very inception. The Buddha, consequently, accepted the bhatti as a practical means primary of believing clansmen. Thereafter, the Buddha is acknowledged as the supreme object of bhatti for the both monastic and lay orders.\(^{198}\) The


\(^{197}\) Gokhale asserted that, “... the religious milieu in which Buddhism arose and developed was a world peopled by various kinds of god, godlings, yakshas, nagas, asuras. There are constant references to these divine and semi-divine beings. They were the Brahmās (Sahampati and Sanankumara), gods of the various abodes (Tusita, Nimmanarati, and parinimmavasavatti) of Sakka-Indra and of devatas. All of these become a part of the developing Buddhist religion,” B. G. Gokhale, “Bhakti in Early Buddhism,” Tradition and Modernity in Bhakti Movements, ed. Jayant Lele (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981) 17.

\(^{198}\) See Richard F. Gombrich, Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo (USA: Routledge, 2006) 120ff; Sukumar Dutt assumes that there is co-existence in Buddhism of two cults, namely, Buddha cult and Bhagavā or Bhakti cult; see S. Dutt, The Buddha and Five After Centuries (Calcutta: Shishu Sahitya Samsad, 1978) 206.
Buddha has expressed that his mortal remains should be treated as king of kings’ remains are treated.\textsuperscript{199}

Reverence to the relics of the Buddha was originally practiced for calm and peaceful mind. This action, in itself, is a good deed as such it must result in good \textit{kamma}. The same result might be attained by pious pilgrimage to the four places that are associated to the four great events that are occurred in the Buddha’s life. The four places are as follows:\textsuperscript{200}

(1) The place at which the Buddha was born;
(2) The place at which the Buddha attained the supreme and perfect insight;
(3) The place at which righteousness set on foot by the Buddha; and
(4) The place at which the Buddha finally passed away.

This practice is justified in the \textit{Dīgha-nikāya} as the Buddha’s direction for devotion of the clansmen.\textsuperscript{201} The Buddha has stated the importance of \textit{bhatti} in the \textit{Mahāparinibbāna-sutta} in order to accommodate for the practical purpose to ordinary intelligences. Thus, the \textit{bhatti} has become an “integral part of Early Buddhism as a religion of the laity.”\textsuperscript{202}

Gautama Buddha is historically a \textit{purisa}. His Supreme Enlightenment (\textit{abhisambhodhi}) is the unprecedented event in the course of history of

\textsuperscript{199} As they treat the remains of a king of kings, so, Ānanda, should they treat the remains of the Tathāgata. At the four cross roads a cairn should be erected to the Tathāgata. And whosoever shall place there garlands or perfumes or paint, or make salutation there, or become in its presence calm in heart—that shall long be to them for a profit and a joy, D. II.142; T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., \textit{Dialogues of the Buddha}, vol. 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007) 156.
\textsuperscript{201} Hinder not yourselves, Ānanda, by honouring the remains of the Tathāgata. Be zealous, I beseech you, Ānanda, in your own behalf! Devote yourselves to your own good! Be earnes, be zealous, be intent on your own good! There are wise men, Ānanda, among the nobles, among the brahmins, among the heads of houses, who are firm believers in the Tathāgata; and they will do due honour to the remains of the Tathāgata, D. II.140; T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., \textit{Dialogues of the Buddha}, vol. 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007) 154.
humanity that has proven by reasoning through the Buddha’s teachings. That event brought home the *Dhamma* to all of human beings. Therefore, the presence of the Enlightened One is regarded as the embodiment of the *Dhamma*, which includes a system of the theories those absolutely contain realization value to people in the world, such as the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri-ariyasaccāni*), the Middle Path (*majjhima-patipada*), that is, the Noble Eightfold Path, the principle of *Paticca-samuppāda*, the theory of the Three Characteristics of Existence (*tilakkhana*), the Law of Moral Causation (*kamma*), the Consequence of Actions (*vipāka*), and so forth.

Faith in the Buddha is equivalent to the acknowledgement of the Enlightenment of the Buddha. This is the result of a rational faith grounded in reason and experience. Therefore, faith in the Buddha is the rational faith (*ākāravatī saddhā*). It primarily is an emotional motive for the spiritual development of the Ariyan disciples in both the monastic and lay orders.

### 3.5.2. Faith in the Dhamma

In Theravāda literature, the term *Dhamma* is used with reference to the scriptures (*pariyatti*), the (Four Noble) Truths (*sacca*), concentration (*samādhi*), wisdom (*paññā*), nature (*pakati*), things endowed with a specific nature

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(sabhāva), emptiness (suññatā), merit (puñña), a discipline offense (āpatti), the knowable (neyya), and so forth.\textsuperscript{207} The Dhamma includes the teachings that were expounded by the Buddha and his close disciples during and shortly after the Buddha’s forty-five years of teaching, which were compiled in the Sūtta-piṭaka (the basket of the Buddha’s teachings).\textsuperscript{208}

According to the Theravādins, the Dhamma is one of the most essential objects of faith. The Dhamma is considered as the embodiment of the Buddha in the Theravāda tradition, and inculcating the observance of the Dhamma as the most important force for the material and moral progress of mankind.\textsuperscript{209} That is why the Buddha encouraged that, his disciples should be his heirs of the Dhamma, not be heirs of material things (āmisa).\textsuperscript{210}

Faith in the Dhamma means unwavering confidence in the Dhamma (dhamme aveccappasādena). In order to have unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, it is necessary that an Ariyan disciple should have right view (sammā-diṭṭhi) about the true Dhamma (saddhamma). The unwavering confidence in the Dhamma is equivalent to right view about the true Dhamma.\textsuperscript{211}


\textsuperscript{210} \textit{Dhammadāyādāme, bhikkhave, bhavatha mā āmisadāyādā}, that is, monks, become my heirs of Dhamma, not heirs of material things, M. I.12; I. B. Horner, trans., \textit{The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings}, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 16. Āmisa means material goods or gains, such as the four types of requisites, namely, food, flesh, bait, and gain.

\textsuperscript{211} Your reverences, it is said, ‘Perfect view, perfect view.’ To what extent indeed, your reverences, does a disciple of the ariyans come to be of perfect view, one whose view is upright, one who is possessed of unwavering confidence in Dhamma, who is come into this true Dhamma? M. I.46; I. B. Horner, trans., \textit{The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings}, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 57.
The true Dhamma has sixteen aspects, which are considered as the moral standards. The Ariyan disciple who has faith has to comprehend these aspects. These aspects of the Dhamma are as follows:

(1) Unskill, skill, the root of unskill, and the root of skill. 
   (a) The unskill includes ten facts, namely, onslaught on creatures, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, lying speech, slanderous speech, harsh speech, gossip, covetise, wrath, and wrong view. 
   (b) The skill is a restraint from the ten facts of unskill. 
   (c) The root of unskill includes three facts, namely, greed, hatred, and confusion. 
   (d) The root of skill is three contraries, namely, non-greed, non-hatred, and non-confusion.  

(2) Sustenance, the uprising of sustenance, stopping of sustenance, the course leading to the stopping of sustenance. 
   (a) The sustenance includes four kinds, namely, material food, coarse or fine, sense impingement, volition, consciousness. 
   (b) The uprising of sustenance derives from the uprising of craving. 
   (c) The stopping of sustenance is due to the stopping of craving. 
   (d) The course leading to the stopping of sustenance is Noble Eightfold Path (ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo), which is, right view (sammā-diṭṭhi), right thought (sammā-saṅkappa), right speech (sammā-vācā), right action (sammā-kammanta), right mode of livelihood (sammā-ājīva), right endeavour (sammā-vāyāna), right mindfulness (sammā-sati), right concentration (sammā-samādhi).  

(3) The Four Noble Truths, that is, the Noble Truth suffering, the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering, the Noble Truth of the extinction of suffering, and the Noble Truth of the path leading to the extinction of suffering. 
   (a) Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, disease is suffering,
dying is suffering, grief, lamentation, suffering, tribulation and despair are suffering, one does not get what one wants that is suffering; in short, the five aggregates of grasping are suffering. (b) The origin of suffering is craving, which is connected with again-becoming, accompanied by delight and attachment, finding delight in this and that, namely the craving for sense-pleasures, the craving for becoming, the craving for annihilation. (c) The extinction of suffering is whatever to be the stopping, with no attachment remaining, of that selfsame craving, the giving up of it, the renunciation of it, the release from it, the doing away with it. (d) The path leading to the extinction of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path. \(^{214}\)

(4) Ageing and dying, the origin of ageing and dying, the extinction of ageing and dying, the path leading to the extinction of ageing and dying. (a) Whatever of various beings in various groups of beings is called ageing, that is, decrepitude, broken teeth, graying hair, wrinkly skin, the dwindling of the lifespan, the collapse of the sense organs. (b) Whatever is called dying, that is, the falling away, the passing away, the breaking up, the disappearance, the death and dying, the action of time, the breaking up of the groups, the laying down of the body. (c) The uprising of ageing and dying derives from the uprising of birth. The extinction of ageing and dying is due to the extinction of birth. (d) The path leading to the extinction of ageing and dying is the Noble Eightfold Path. \(^{215}\)

(5) Birth, the origin of birth, the extinction of birth, the path leading to the extinction of birth. (a) Whatever of various beings in various groups of beings is called birth, that is, the conception, the production, the


descent, the coming forth the appearance of the groups, the acquiring of the sense-bases. (b) The uprising of birth derives from the uprising of becoming. (c) The extinction of birth is due to the extinction of becoming. (d) The path leading to the extinction of birth is the Noble Eightfold Path.216

(6) Becoming, the origin of becoming, the extinction of becoming, the path leading to the extinction of becoming. (a) There are these three kinds of becoming, namely, becoming as to sense-pleasures, becoming as to fine-materiality, becoming as to non-materiality. (b) The uprising of becoming derives from the uprising of grasping. (c) The extinction of becoming is due to the extinction of grasping. (d) The path leading to the extinction of becoming is the Noble Eightfold Path.217

(7) Grasping, the origin of grasping, the extinction of grasping, the path leading to the extinction of grasping. (a) There are these four kinds of grasping, namely, grasping after sense-pleasure, grasping after view, grasping after rites and customs, grasping after the theory of ‘self.’ (b) The uprising of grasping derives from the uprising of craving. (c) The extinction of the grasping is due to the extinction of the craving. (d) The path leading to the extinction of grasping is the Noble Eightfold Path.218

(8) Craving, the origin of craving, the extinction of craving, the path leading to the extinction of craving. (a) There are these six kinds of craving, namely, craving for material shapes, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for flavors, craving for touches, craving for mental objects. (b) The uprising of craving derives from the uprising

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of feeling. (c) The extinction of craving is due to the extinction of feeling. (d) The path leading to the extinction of craving is the Noble Eightfold Path.219

(9) Feeling, the origin of feeling, the extinction of feeling, the path leading to the extinction of feeling. (a) There are these six classes of feeling, namely, feeling arising from sensory impingement on the eye, on the ear, on the nose, on the tongue, on the body, and on the mind. (b) The uprising of feeling derives from the uprising of sensory impingement. (c) The extinction of feeling is due to the extinction of sensory impingement. (d) The path leading to the extinction of feeling is the Noble Eightfold Path.220

(10) Sensory impingement, the origin of sensory impingement, the extinction of sensory impingement, the path leading to the extinction of sensory impingement. (a) There are these six classes of sensory impingement, namely, sensory impingement on the eye, on the ear, on the nose, on the tongue, on the body, and on the mind. (b) The uprising of sensory impingement derives from the uprising of the six bases of sense-impressions. (c) The extinction of sensory impingement is due to the extinction of six bases of sense-impressions. (d) The path leading to the extinction of sensory impingement is the Noble Eightfold Path.221

(11) Six bases of sense-impressions, the origin of six bases of sense-impressions, the extinction of six bases of sense-impressions, the path leading to the extinction of the six bases of sense-impressions. (a) There are these six bases, namely, the basis for eye, for ear, for nose, for tongue, for body, and for mind. (b) The uprising of six

bases of sense-impressions derives from the uprising of mind-and-matter. (c) The extinction of the six bases of sense-impressions is due to the extinction of mind-and-matter. (d) The path leading to the extinction of six bases of sense-impressions is the Noble Eightfold Path.\textsuperscript{222}

(12) Mind-and-matter, the origin of mind-and-matter, the extinction of mind-and-matter, the path leading to the extinction of mind-and-matter. (a) Feeling, perception, volition, sensory impingement, reflectiveness, this is called mind. The four great elements and the material shape derived from the four great elements, this is called matter. (b) The uprising of mind-and-matter derives from the uprising of consciousness. (c) The extinction of mind-and-matter is due to the extinction of consciousness. (d) The path leading to the extinction of mind-and-matter is the Noble Eightfold Path.\textsuperscript{223}

(13) Consciousness, the origin of consciousness, the extinction of consciousness, the path leading to the extinction of consciousness. (a) There are these six classes of consciousness, namely, visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, olfactory consciousness, gustatory consciousness, bodily consciousness, mental consciousness. (b) The uprising of consciousness derives from the uprising of formations. (c) The extinction of consciousness is due to the extinction of formations. (d) The path leading to the extinction of consciousness is the Noble Eightfold Path.\textsuperscript{224}

(14) Formations, the origin of the formations, the extinction of formations, the path leading to the extinction of formations. (a) There are these


three kinds of formations, namely, activity of the body, activity of speech, activity of mind (see infra, p. 194). (b) The uprising of formations derives from the uprising of ignorance. (c) The extinction of formations is due to the extinction of ignorance. (d) The path leading to the extinction of formations is the Noble Eightfold Path.\(^\text{225}\)

(15) Ignorance, the origin of ignorance, the extinction of ignorance, the path leading to the extinction of ignorance. (a) Whatever is not-knowing in regard to suffering, not-knowing in regard to the origin of suffering, not-knowing in regard to the extinction of suffering, not-knowing in regard to the path leading to the extinction of suffering, this is called ignorance. (b) The uprising of ignorance derives from the uprising of cankers. (c) The extinction of the ignorance is due to the extinction of cankers. (d) The path leading to the extinction of ignorance is the Noble Eightfold Path.\(^\text{226}\)

(16) Cankers (āsavas), the origin of canker, the extinction of cankers, and the path leading to the extinction of cankers. (a) There are these three cankers, that is to say, the canker of sense-pleasures, the canker of becoming, and the canker of ignorance. (b) The uprising of cankers derives from the uprising of ignorance. (c) The extinction of cankers is due to the extinction of ignorance. (d) The path leading to the extinction of cankers is the Noble Eightfold Path.\(^\text{227}\)

These truths are well known as the basic doctrines of Buddhist view of man. They are considered the content of the Buddhist enlightenment. Whole of these truths are represented symbolically by the principle of

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Paṭicca-samuppāda. The principle of Paṭicca-samuppāda is summarized as follows: 228

(1) The very first is avijjā, that is, ignorance of all kinds that play their part in the mental formations of afflicted virtues and non-virtues.

(2) Conditioned by avijjā, saṅkhārā (mental formations) come to pass.

(3) Conditioned by saṅkhārā, viññāṇa (consciousness) comes to pass.

(4) Conditioned by viññāṇa, nāmarūpa (name-and-form) comes to pass.

(5) Conditioned by nāmarūpa, saḷāyatana (six sense organs) comes to pass.

(6) Conditioned by saḷāyatana, phassa (sensory impingement) comes to pass.

(7) Conditioned by phassa, vedanā (sensations) comes to pass.

(8) Conditioned by vedanā, tanhā (craving) comes to pass.

(9) Conditioned by tanhā, upādāna (grasping) comes to pass.

(10) Conditioned by upādāna, bhava (becoming into existence) comes to pass.

(11) Conditioned by bhava, jāti (birth) comes to pass.

(12) Conditioned by jāti, jarāmarāṇa (ageing and dying, grief, lamentation, anguish, sorrow, and despair) comes to pass.

In these twelve links, it is impossible to point out which one is the first cause, because they make the endless continuum or the wheel of life. However, in the speculative phase, the cycle of life of a sentiment being is ontologized into causes of effects in three tenses of past, present, and future as follows: 229

(1) Avijjā and saṅkhārā are called two causes of the past. They are causes of the past when regarded subjectively from the present life. However,

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they were effects of whole the past lives. Also, the causes of the past of the past lives themselves were the effects of whole the past lives in the past.

(2) Viññāṇa, nāmarūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, and vedanā are called five effects of the past appearing in the present, which are successively formed corresponding to various stages of formation of an individual. The individual is formed in those stages, but it is not entirely responsible for its own formation, because the causes of the past have effectuated the development of these stages. In other words, the formation of an individual is effectuated by its causes (hetu) and objective conditions (paṭiccā).

(3) Taṇhā, upādāna, and bhāva are called three causes of the present. Through vedanā the individual experiences the sorrow, pleasure, suffering, enjoyment, or neutral feeling. When the feeling is sorrow, suffering, or neutral, the individual will hate and endeavor to reject it, but when it is pleasure or enjoyment, the individual will love and try to make it his own. The endeavors from both hate and love attitude are functions of the taṇhā, it produces attachment. The first stage of this attachment is upādāna, the effort to retain the object of the taṇhā. The last stage of this attachment is bhāva.

(4) Jāti and jarāmarana are called two effects of the future. They are effects when regarded subjectively from the three causes in the present, but when viewed in the light of the continuous wheel of life, they are considered as causes, because the future has the same constituent stages as those of the present. Furthermore, the effects of the future contain in themselves causes for the life still further in the future.

In the light of the continuous wheel of life, a present sentient being is explained particularly with eight stages of the present, but in truth the two
causes of the past and the two effects of the future have the same constituent stages as those of the present. Thus, of these twelve links of causal relation when regarded subjectively from the present moment, \textit{avidyā}, \textit{trṣṇā}, and \textit{upādāna} are called delusions; while \textit{saṃskāra} and \textit{Bhāva} are called effect-causing actions; all the rest (\textit{vijñāna}, \textit{nāmarūpa}, \textit{saḍāyatana}, \textit{sparśa}, \textit{vedanā}, \textit{jāti}, and \textit{jarāmarāṇa}) are called suffering or the effects which result in suffering.

The Ariyan disciple who has right view, one whose view is upright, one who has unwavering confidence in the true \textit{Dhamma}, who has come into this true \textit{Dhamma} has to internalize these moral standards.\textsuperscript{230} The comprehension of the true \textit{Dhamma} is essential for the hearer; because the vague notion of the true \textit{Dhamma} is equivalent to wavering confidence. Therefore, the Buddha insisted that one should not accept his views out of respect for him, but only when they have themselves attained full understanding of the topic on their own with experience.\textsuperscript{231}

\textbf{3.5.3. Faith in the Saṅgha}

The Pāli term \textit{Saṅgha} means a community of practice, where each individual is living with a view to sharing interest, experience, and profession. In Buddhism, the \textit{Saṅgha} is created specifically in order to share realization of the Four Noble Truths among the members of community. Through the knowledge that the members learn from each other, they have an opportunity to develop themselves personally in practicing Buddhist teachings for the good and happiness of the many. It is often referred to in the Buddhist scriptures as the harmonious order (\textit{samagra-saṅgha}).


The *Saṅgha* has eight wonderful qualities (*aṭṭha abbhutā dhamma*) that were compared to the ocean. The eight analogies are as follows: 232

1. Just as the ocean becomes gradually deeper, so does study in the order gradually progress.
2. Just as the waters of the ocean never exceed its shores, so do the Buddha’s disciples never break the precepts.
3. Just as the ocean never keeps a body and always casts it back on shore, so does the order always charge those who violate the precepts with their offenses.
4. Just as various rivers flow into the ocean and lose their names, so do those who enter the order abandon their social classes and lay names to be called only “disciples of the Buddha” or “monks.”
5. Just as the ocean does not increase or decrease no matter how many rivers flow into it, so does the order not increase or decrease no matter how many of its members enter *nibbāna*.
6. Just as a salty taste is diffused throughout the ocean, so is the “taste” of salvation diffused throughout the order.
7. Just as a variety of treasures is hidden in the ocean, so are profound teachings and precepts found in the order.
8. Just as great fish live in the ocean, so do illustrious disciples of the Buddha live in the order.

These eight qualities were used to explain the unique character of the *Saṅgha*. It is because of this character that the term *Saṅgha* in Buddhism is defined as harmonious community (*samagga-saṅgha*), which has important role to play in promoting peace and harmony in society.

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In Pāli literature, it is said that, there are two ways to indicate the components of the Saṅgha. According to the Aṅguttara-nikāya, the body of the Saṅgha consists of the four pairs of persons comprising eight individual types, that is, those who have attained the fruit of these four stages of the Path and who are practicing for the realization of the fruits of the four stages of the Path. The eight individual types are the stream-enterer (sotāpanna) and the one practicing for realization of the fruit of stream-entry (sotāpattipala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanna); the once-returner (sakadāgāmī) and the one practicing for realization of the fruit of the once-returning (sakadāgāmipala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanna); the non-returner (anāgāmī) and the one practicing for realization of the fruit of the non-returner (anāgāmipala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanna); the arahant (arahā) and the one practicing for arahantship (arahattāya paṭipanna).233

However, the Majjhima-nikāya points out that, the body of the Saṅgha consists of seven types of persons in the disciples of Buddha. They are the one who is freed both ways (ubhatobhāgavimutta), the one who is freed by means of intuitive wisdom (paññāvimutta), the one who is a mental realiser (kāyasakkhin), the one who has won to view (diṭṭhipatta), the one is freed by faith (saddhāvimutta), the one who is striving for the understanding of the Dhamma (dhammānusārin), and the one who is striving for having faith in the Dhamma (saddhānusārin).234

Furthermore, in Early Buddhism, there were also two phrases that have been used popularly to indicate the body of the Saṅgha.235 The two phrases are (1) Cātuddisa Saṅgha, that is, the Saṅgha of the Four Quarters

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235 See S. Dutt, Early Buddhist Monachism (Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1960) 69.
stands for “the ideal confederation of the followers of the Buddha,” and (2) Cātuṛḍisa Bhikkhu-saṅgha, that is, the Bhikkhu-saṅgha of the Four Quarters stands for “the real Saṅgha, the resident body of monks who were capable of receiving and holding property.”

In short, Saṅgha is the community of those who have attained the same levels of spiritual experience, who observe a common rule of monastic discipline, or simply the whole body of the faithful going for refuge to the Three Jewels, including enlightened and unenlightened, monastic and lay, real and nominal. 236

The Saṅgha has the pivotal importance in Buddhism, because it plays the role in the preservation of Dhamma and in preaching the thoughts of Buddha. When the Saṅgha was established, on the one hand, preceptorial role of monk has been taken over by lay community, on the other hand, the monks are considered as “good friend” of each other in the Order of Buddha’s disciples. Therefore, Buddha has insisted that, “Good friendship is like the dawn; the noble path along with insight, arisen by relying on good friendship, is like the appearance of the sun.”237

The Buddha’s teaching in this context presents the good friendship of the confederation of the Ariyan disciples’ community. The good friend, who provided for himself the leadership, will set an example of the proper

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237 Bhikkhus, this is the forerunner and precursor of the rising of the sun, that is, the dawn. So too, bhikkhus, for a bhikkhu this is the forerunner and precursor for the arising of the Noble Eightfold Path, that is, good friendship. When a bhikkhu has a good friend, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate this Noble Eightfold Path. And how does a bhikkhu who has a good friend develop and cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu develops right view, which is based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release. . . . He develops right concentration, which is based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release. It is in this way, bhikkhus, that a bhikkhu who has a good friend develops and cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path, S. V.29-30; Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans., The Connected Discourses of the Buddha (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000) 1543, 1896en; cf. F. L. Woodward, trans., The Book of the Kindred Sayings, vol. 5 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005) 27.
practical principles for the disciple only as far as he has gone in the attainment of the four stages of the Path, namely, the stream-enterer (sotāpanna), the once-returner (sakadāgāmi), the non-returner (anāgāmi), and the arahant (arahā). A disciple is possessed of faith in the Saṅgha that is due to their characters as well their role of a good friend, a good teacher; by confidence in the Saṅgha he is firm his footstep on the Path.\(^{238}\)

### 3.5.4. Faith in the Ariya-sīla

The Ariya-sīla (noble moral discipline), or briefly the Sīla, consists of the fundamental moral principles of the Buddhist ethical practice. The term ‘sīla’ means precept, morality, or practice of moral virtue. The Sīla has the capability to make individual desist from committing sinful actions and make him assure himself that he is on the right path.\(^{239}\)

In the Noble Eightfold Path, the Sīla manifests itself as right speech (sammā-vacā), right action (sammā-kammanta), and right mode of livelihood (sammā-ājiva). In other words, the Sīla is the practical expression of right view (sammā-diṭṭhi), the outcome of spiritual attitude, and the harmony between spiritual attitude and actions, that is, inner truthfulness of individual.

Buddhaghosa has considered the meaning of the Sīla with reference to different aspects of kamma as follows:\(^{240}\)

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\(^{238}\) He, thinking: ‘Possessed of unwavering confidence in the Awakened One am I,’ . . . Thinking: ‘Possessed of unwavering confidence in the dhamma am I,’ . . . Thinking: ‘Possessed of unwavering confidence in the Order am I, he acquires knowledge of the goal, acquires knowledge of dhamma, acquires the delight that is connected with dhamma; rapture is born from that delight, being rapturous, his body is impassible, with the body impassible, joy is left, because of joy the mind is well concentrated, M. I.37-8; I. B. Horner, trans., *The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings*, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004) 47.

\(^{239}\) See Bruno Petzold, *The Classification of Buddhism, Bukkyō-Kyōhan, Comprising the Classification of Buddhist Doctrines in India, China, and Japan*, ed. Shohei Ichimura (Germany: Harrassowitz, 1995) 463-4.

(1) *Cetanā-sīla*: virtue as volition is the volition presents in one who abstains fully from all of precepts (*vatta*). Furthermore, his volition accompanies the first seven of the ten courses of *kamma*, that is, three kinds of bodily misconduct, namely, killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; four kinds of verbal misconduct, namely, lying, malicious speech, harsh speech, and idle chatter.

(2) *Cetasika-sīla*: virtue as the consciousness concomitant is the abstinence in one who abstains fully from all of precepts (*vatta*). However, his consciousness concomitant with three remaining of the ten courses of *kamma*, that is, three kinds of mental misconduct, namely, covetousness, ill will or volition, and wrong view.

(3) *Saṃvara-sīla*: virtue as the restraint that is understood here as the restraint in five ways:

   (a) *Pāṭimokkha-saṃvara* is the restraint by the rules of monastic community, observance of which liberates the observer from the calamities of desire, of becoming, of error, and of ignorance.

   (b) *Sati-saṃvara* is the restraint by mindfulness, which means keeping close guard over the doors of the six sense organs, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

   (c) *Ñāna-saṃvara* is the restraint by knowledge, which means control of the mind with insight so that the current of defilements (*kilesas*), such as greed, hate, delusion, conceit, speculative view, sceptical doubt, mental torpor, agitation, consciencelessness, and shamelessness, which morally follow to incessantly stop flowing.

   (d) *Khanti-saṃvara* is the restraint by patience, which means controlling the mind so that no defiling thoughts disturb it when enduring extreme heat, cold, and so forth.

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(e) *Viriya-saṃvara* is the restraint by energy, which means strenuous mental exertion to prevent the arising of unwholesome thoughts, such as sensuous thought (*kāma vitakka*), hateful thought (*vyāpadā vitakka*), and cruel thought (*vihimsā vitakka*).

(4) *Avītikkama-sīla*: virtue as the non-transgression is the non-transgression by body and speech of precepts of virtue that have been undertaken.

Buddhaghosa concluded that, what is called ‘*sīla*’ should be understood to have the function of stopping misconduct as its function in the sense of action, and a blameless function as its function in the sense of achievement.²⁴¹

Thus, the *Sīla* consists of there kinds of purity, namely, bodily purity, verbal purity, and mental purity. It takes conscience and shame as its proximate causes. In Early Buddhism, the *Sīla* has five main orders of precepts, namely:

1. The five precepts (*pañca-sīla*).
2. The eight precepts (*aṭṭhaṅga-sīla*).
3. The ten precepts (*dasa-sīla*).
4. The ten good paths of action (*dasa-kusala-kamma-patha*).
5. The monastic disciplinary code (*pātimokkha*).

The householder code is contained in the first four sects. The *Pañca-sīla* forbids killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, taking intoxicants. The *Aṭṭhaṅga-sīla* and the *Dasa-sīla*, which are supplemented on the basic of the *Pañca-sīla* with additional restrictions, namely, on the time when meals may be taken; to abstain from dancing, singing, playing music; to abstain from using garlands, perfumes and other toiletries; to abstain from using high, grand, and luxurious seats, beds, and beddings, and so on. Those are


commonly adopted as additional commitments on holy days (*uposatha*). The *Pāṭimokkha*\(^{243}\) is regarded as the beginning of the life of purity. The number of precepts in the *Pāṭimokkha* corresponds to ordination traditions. Buddhists in the Northern tradition follow the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*.\(^{244}\)

According to the Buddha, freedom of remorse is definite benefit for those who have perfected the training in *Sīla*.\(^{245}\) On one occasion, the Buddha stated that, there is the fivefold gain of householder, who is the well doer through his practice of rectitude.\(^{246}\)

(1) He comes into a large fortune as a consequence of diligence.
(2) His fair name is spread abroad;
(3) He enters an assembly, whether of *khattiya* (warrior noble) or Brahmans or householder or ascetics, he does so without fear or hesitation;
(4) He dies unconfused; and
(5) On the breakup of the body, after death, he reappears in a happy destiny, in the heavenly world.

On another occasion, when householder *Anāthapiṇḍika* and five hundred lay disciples visited the Buddha, the Buddha said that: any white frocked householder, whose acts controlled in the *Pañca-sīla* and obtains at will, easily and without difficulty the four very purposive abodes of ease.

\(^{243}\) *Pāṭimokkha* (Śaṃskṛt *Prātimokṣa*) means that which should be made biding, a promise to be redeemed, obligatory, or obligation; see Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature: Buddhist Literature and Jaina Literature*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993) 22fn.


\(^{245}\) Freedom from remorse is the profit of good conduct, A. V.1; E. M. Hare, trans., *The Book of the Gradual Sayings*, vol. 5 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006) 1.

Here, should he desire, declare just the state of self by the self, saying: “Destroyed is hell for me; destroyed is animal-rebirth; destroyed is the realm of ghosts; destroyed for me is the wayward way, the ill way, the abyss; I am he who has won to the Stream, not subject to any falling away, sure and bound for enlightenment.”

It is pointed out in the Gaṇakamoggallāna-sutta that, the Buddha in response to the question of spiritual training puts establishing morality (sīla) first, he teaches: “Be perfect in conduct and manner, and seeing fear in the slightest fault, train by undertaking the training precepts.” Buddhaghosa in the Visuddhimagga places Sīla as an initial stage of the Path of the three stages of training, that is, Sīla, Samādhi, and Paññā, the training in higher virtue is shown by the Sīla, the training in higher consciousness is shown by Samādhi, and the training in higher understanding is shown by Paññā. In the Ambapāli-vaggo of the Saṃyutta-nikāya, there is a passage in which the Sīla is treated as the basis in the beginning of dispensation’s goodness. The passage says: “Well then, monk, you must purify the rudiments in good states. And what are the rudiments in good states? They are virtue that is truly pure, and straight view.”

Thus, the Sīla holds a distinctive role in religious life, especially in Buddhism. Accordingly, to fulfil the training in Sīla, the practitioner has to

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249 See N. Dutt calls sīla-citta-pañña path or process; see N. Dutt, “Place of Faith in Buddhism,” Indian Historical Quarterly 16 (1940): 640.


be equipped with a deep comprehension and pure confidence in the Sīla. To accomplish the training in Sīla, he has to be possessed with energy, avoidance, and mindfulness.

### 3.5.5. Faith in the Ariya-ñāṇa

The *Ariya-ñāṇa* (noble knowledge) means liberating knowledge. It is the knowledge and insight (*ñāṇa dassana*) of things ‘as they really are.’ The *Ariya-ñāṇa* is well known as the product of the effort on the first two of the Path of three stages of training, that is, *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Paññā*.\(^{252}\)

According to the *Anattalakkhaṇa-sutta*, the liberation is the practical consequence of the understanding of *anattā* (not-self),\(^ {253}\) in other words, the experiences of the training in the triad *Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Paññā* depend upon the reality of *anattā*, and conversely.\(^ {254}\) Thus, the *Ariya-ñāṇa* is the transcendent knowledge of the individual who has the knowledge of *anattā*.

In the *Majjhima-nikāya*, the process of the training in *Samādhi* is elaborated in the scheme of the four stages of *jhāna*. The four stages of *jhāna* are demonstrated as follows:\(^ {255}\)

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\(^{253}\) Seeing thus, bhikkhus, a wise noble disciple becomes dispassionate towards material form, becomes dispassionate towards feeling, becomes dispassionate towards perception, becomes dispassionate towards formations, becomes dispassionate towards consciousness. Becoming dispassionate, his lust fades away; with the fading of lust his heart is liberated; when liberated, there comes the knowledge: ‘it is liberated.’ He understands: ‘Birth is exhausted, the holy life has been lived out, what was to be done is done, there is no more of this to come,’ S. III.68; Bhikkhu Nanamoli, trans., *The Life of the Buddha: According to the Pali Canon* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1992) 47; cf. F. L. Woodward, trans., *The Book of the Kindred Sayings*, vol. 2 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005) 60.


(1) The first jhāna is the state of consciousness where the mediator secluded from sensual pleasures and bad qualities, which is accompanied by thought and examination, with rapture and happiness born of seclusion.

(2) The second jhāna is the state of consciousness where the mediator subsided of thought and examination, which is associated with internal confidence and unification, without thought and examination, has rapture and happiness born of concentration.

(3) The third jhāna is the state of consciousness where the mediator faded out of rapture and happiness, whose mind is mindful and composed; he experiences with body the ease of the man who is equanimous and mindful.

(4) The fourth jhāna is the state of consciousness where the mediator attains the deliverance of mind, which has neither pain nor pleasure; with the getting rid of joy and sorrow, by the going down of his former pleasures and sorrows, which includes the purification of mindfulness by equanimity, has neither pain nor pleasure.

There are six types of supernormal capacity (abhiññā), which are attainable after the attainment of fourth jhāna. They are as follows:256

(1) The knowledge of performing miracles (iddhi-vidhā-ñāna);
(2) The knowledge of celestial ear (dibba-sota-ñāna);
(3) The knowledge of penetrating minds (ceto-pariya-ñāna);
(4) The knowledge of recollecting previous lives (pubbe-nivāsanussati-ñāna);
(5) The knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings (dibba-cakkhu-ñāna); and
(6) The knowledge of the extra-ordinary visual perception attainable through the eye of wisdom (āsavakkhaya-ñāna).

See D. I.77-84; Vis. XII.2; Bhikkhu Nanamoli, trans., The Path of Purification (Colombo: R. Semage, 1956) 409.
Of these six types of abhiññā, the iddhi-vidhā-ñāna, dibba-sota-ñāna, ceto-pariya-ñāna, and pubbe-nivāsanussati-ñāna are the direct knowledges (pañcābhiññā). The āsavakkhaya-ñāna is the supermundane knowledge; only by means of this knowledge the cankers (āsavas) are utterly destroyed.  

3.5.6. Faith in the Ariya-vimutti

The Ariya-vimutti (noble emancipation) is the final liberation from suffering or the realization of nibbāna by the achievement of two categories of emancipation called ubhatobhāgavimutta. The two categories of emancipation are demonstrated as follows:

1. Paññavimutta (emancipation through wisdom), this category belong to asekho, those who have their wisdom associated with the arahantship. Although without having apprehended with his own person the peaceful deliverances that are incorporeal having transcended material shapes, he having seen, by means of wisdom, his cankers (āsavas) are utterly destroyed.

2. Cetovimutta (emancipation of mind) is described as the mundane suppression of the defilements (kilesas). This kind of emancipation

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258 Herein a monk, by destroying the āsavas, himself in this very life comes to know thoroughly the heart’s release, the release by insight which is without āsavas, and having attained is abides therein, A. I.236; E. M. Hare, trans., The Book of the Gradual Sayings, vol. 1 (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2006) 215.


261 There are ten stages, namely, (1) greed (lobha), (2) hate (dosa), (3) delusion (moha), (4) conceit (māna), (5) speculative view (diṭṭhi), (6) sceptical doubt (vicikicchā), (7) mental torpor (thīna), (8) agitation (uddhacca), (9) consciencelessness (anottappa), and (10) shamelessness
may be achieved by reason of measureless concentration (appamāna-samādhinā)\textsuperscript{262} of the learner’s course (sekho pātipado).\textsuperscript{263} It will culminate in release when the Ariyan disciple attained the trainings in the noble emancipation, namely, the training in the higher morality (sīla), the training in the higher thought (samādhi), and the training in the higher insight (paññā).\textsuperscript{264}

Consequently, the ultimate emancipation in Buddhism is not a paradise or a heaven but a freedom from the bondage of worldly existence and the realization of the supreme truth, which is identified with nibbāna – an ideal state of “extinction of afflictions” or “blowing out of attachment to things.”

To sum up, one can say, the Buddhists generally have faith in the three pivotal components, that is, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha, which are treated as the Three Jewels (Triratana), the latter objects of faith such as morality (śīla), wisdom (prajñā), and emancipation (vimukti) were increased as the supplements.

3.6. A LEAP AHEAD

In this way, faith, according to Theravāda Buddhism, is the reconciliation of faith in authority, reason and experience, and it is rooted in human nature. Due to faith, the spiritual development and nibbāna of human being become possible. Faith, as such, is an essential preliminary for the holy aspirant, besides, it is one of the five powers, which is taken together to define the


Arahant. Faith thus is necessary but somewhat inferior to the experience of knowledge, it is insufficient for knowledge and salvation. With this analysis of faith in Theravāda Buddhism, in the next chapter, we will discuss the concept of faith in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

266 See Francis Brassard, The Concept of Bodhicitta in Śāntideva’s Bodhicaryāvatāra (USA: State University of New York Press, 2000) 100.