

**The Evolution of the Concept of the Buddha within the Pali Canon and  
Commentaries**

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I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted  
as an exercise for a degree at any other institution,  
and that it is entirely my own work.

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**Dedication**

To late Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge

With great respect

and

For My parents

K. S. Perera & Marji Biatris Tennakoon

For giving me utmost happiness

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Makola Mangala Thero

## Abstract

### **The Evolution of the Concept of the Buddha within the Pāli Canon and Commentaries**

By

Makola Mangala Thero

This dissertation focuses on examining the concept of Buddha within the *Pāli* canon and commentaries in Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Buddhist literature. It is very significant as it depicts the *Gautama Buddha* as a superhuman being who possessed incomparable extraordinary human qualities. The information found in the early Buddhist literature, such as the *Pāli* canon and the commentaries, provide ample examples about the great superhuman qualities of the *Gautama Buddha*. The historicity of the Prince *Siddhārtha*, such as his birth, marriage, great renunciation, and the strenuous effort made to attain self-enlightenment, is well depicted in the *Pāli* canon. After the enlightenment, he was popularly known as the *Sammā Sambuddha* or *Bhagavā*. The important incidents, such as his first discourse to five ascetics, the conversion of various ascetics, individuals and followers of various rights and rituals as well as the meeting of various contemporaneous kings in this time, his rainy season, daily routine, instances of sicknesses and finding the medical advice, vicissitudes of life faced by him, old age, and final demise etc., are well depicted in the *Pāli* Canon. Throughout the *Pāli* Canon, one can observe the nature of his teaching that was basically founded on the Three Characteristics, which is a significant doctrine different from all the contemporary traditional teachings. His meetings with the people of all walks of life in his time, the support given to him by them, and the instructions given to them by him

on many social, economic, political, and family issues etc. also can be examined in the *Pāli* Canon. The type of moral language used by him, his pleasant nature and the admiration and veneration received by him are also other significant aspects of his life described in the *Pāli* Canon. As he reached the highest spiritual attainment, he was able to perceive any problem i.e., mundane, religious, or spiritual, with wisdom, loving-kindness, great compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity. As a result of his incomparable spiritual attainments, he has been venerated by the addition of many epithets that glorify his spiritual attainments and personality. Nonetheless, there isn't any trace in the Sri Lankan *Pāli* Canon, where he was regarded as an almighty god, Supernatural Being or any microcosmic or macrocosmic Universal Power or someone who taught such doctrine.

The *Buddhavamsa*, *Cariyāpitaka*, *Jātakapāli* and *Jātakatthakathā* are also very important with respect to studying the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* concept of the Buddha and *Bodhisattva*. Although they are regarded as the *Theravāda* texts of later development, the information found in those texts clearly signify the historicity of the *Gautama* Buddha from many perspectives. Although there is a trend in those texts about the development of much adoration of the *Gautama* Buddha, yet he still remains a superhuman being who possesses great spiritual qualities. Hence, our conclusion is that the *Gautama* Buddha is found in the early *Theravāda* canonical literature as a person of great wisdom and great compassion with less adoration of his extensive and colorful physical description. It is his great wisdom (*mahāpaññā*) and great compassion (*mahākaruṇā*) that made him a superhuman being in early Sri Lankan *Theravāda* canonical literature.



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## Abbreviations

<i>An.</i>	<i>Anguttara Nikāya</i>
<i>Ap.</i>	<i>Apadana</i>
<i>Bv.</i>	<i>Buddhavaṃsa</i>
<i>BvA.</i>	<i>Buddhavaṃsa Atthakatha</i>
<i>Chp.</i>	<i>Cariyapīṭaka</i>
<i>Cup.</i>	<i>Chullavaggapali</i>
<i>Dha.</i>	<i>Dhammapadaṭṭhakatā</i>
<i>Dhat</i>	<i>The Commentary on the Dhammapada</i>
<i>Dma.</i>	<i>Dhammapada</i>
<i>Dn.</i>	<i>Dīgha Nikāya</i>
<i>Gs</i>	<i>Gradual Sayings</i>
<i>Jāp</i>	<i>Jātaka Pāli</i>
<i>Jln.</i>	<i>Jinalankaradīpani</i>
<i>Jtc.</i>	<i>Jātaka, Together with Its Commentary</i>
<i>Khṇ.</i>	<i>Khuddakapāṭha</i>
<i>Kta.</i>	<i>Kathāvtthupparakaraṇaṭṭhakathā</i>
<i>Mhn.</i>	<i>Mahaniddesa</i>
<i>Mlp.</i>	<i>Milindapaṇha</i>
<i>Mn.</i>	<i>Majjima Nikāya</i>
<i>Mp.</i>	<i>Manorathapūraṇī</i>
<i>Mv.</i>	<i>Madhurattha-vilāsini</i>
<i>Mv.</i>	<i>Mahavaṃsa</i>
<i>Mvp.</i>	<i>Mahavagga pali</i>
<i>Pd.</i>	<i>Paramatthadīpanī</i>
<i>Pj.</i>	<i>Paramatthajotikā</i>
<i>Pup.</i>	<i>Puggala-Paññatti</i>
<i>Sap.</i>	<i>Sāratthappakāsini</i>
<i>Sn.</i>	<i>Suttanipāta</i>
<i>Sp.</i>	<i>Samanta-pāsādikā</i>
<i>Suv.</i>	<i>Sumaṅgala-vilāsini</i>
<i>Thag.</i>	<i>Theragātha</i>
<i>Thig.</i>	<i>Therī-gāthā</i>
<i>UvA.</i>	<i>Udanathakatha</i>
<i>Vm.</i>	<i>Visuddhimagga</i>
<i>Vn.</i>	<i>Vinaya</i>

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Introductory Paragraph

The study of the concept of the Buddha as depicted in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* school of Buddhist thought will be examined based on evidence found in the canonical and post canonical Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Buddhist literature with a view to examine whether there is any deification of the Buddha in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* School of Buddhist Thought. As there is enough evidence to prove that the Buddha is regarded as a superhuman being in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition, this will be studied from several points of view such as his historicity, enlightenment, way of life and the physical characteristics etc. and we will clearly establish at the end of this research with enough evidence the non-deification of the concept of Buddha as found in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Tradition.

#### 1.2 Background of the Problem

Concept of the Buddha has been deified in some schools of Buddhist thought, such as the popular *Mahayāna* tradition although such is not found in Sri Lankan *Theravāda* school of Buddhist thought. Although such assumptions could be drawn very clearly based on the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* canonical and post canonical Buddhist literature, there is much evidence where some divine qualities have been ascribed to the Buddha although Buddha was not regarded as a divine being. This has led some scholars to make wrong assumptions about the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* concept of the Buddha. As there are overlapping issues pertaining to the historicity,

superhuman qualities and the divine qualities ascribed to the Buddha in Sri Lankan *Theravāda* canonical and post canonical literature, it is necessary to clearly unravel such issues to see a real mental image of the concept of the Buddha. Hence, we attempt to clearly develop the exact Sri Lankan *Theravāda* theory of the Buddha based on available evidence. As we have identified the issue, we will review the special canonical and post canonical literature belonging to Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition and discuss the research questions related to the above assumption in detail.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem, *Ankur Barua's* Theory and Why It Needs Further Examination**

Many researchers have carried out studies about the origin and the gradual development of the concept of Buddha both in the *Theravāda* and *Mahayāna* traditions. Among them one of the prominent figures is *Prof. Ankur Barua*, whose research is based on the development of the concept of Buddha in *Theravāda* tradition in his “*Deification of Buddha in Theravāda Tradition.*”<sup>1</sup> According to his analysis of the commentarial literature, the *Theravāda* tradition also deified the Buddha as in the *Mahayāna* tradition although there are some differences. However, a close study of the early Buddhist and Sri Lankan *Theravāda* literature would lead to a quite different conclusion. Although the *Theravāda* tradition ascribes some supernatural qualities to the Buddha, there is no evidence of such deification.<sup>2</sup> The two most important texts, *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* of Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition, signify adoration

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<sup>1</sup> Ankur Barua, “*Deification of the Buddha in Theravada Buddhism,*” Blogspot.com, last modified October 26, 2009, <https://introductiontoappliedbuddhism.blogspot.com>.

<sup>2</sup> Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: It's Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikaya Theory* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 8.

not deification. It seems that the above researcher has been unable to identify the difference between deification and the ascriptions of such qualities to the Buddha. Hence, the proposed study seeks to refute above study with adequate evidence.

#### **1.4 Objective of the study**

To explain the origin and evolution of the concept of Buddha within the *Pāli* canon and its commentaries, *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka*.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is important to establish the place of the Buddha in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Buddhist literature and to challenge some theories developed about the deification of the Buddha in the *Theravāda* tradition. Furthermore, it will be used to see the Buddha as a superhuman being who established a new philosophy of life based on Dependent Origination and Middle Path and was critical of then existing religious teachings and practices.

#### **1.6 Literature Review**

Every book on Buddhism, including basic introductory works, has touched on the life and personality of the Buddha and discussed how the Buddha is represented in literature and viewed by practicing Buddhists. Early pioneering scholars like Oldenberg (1870), Kern (1896), Kenneth Saunders (1920) and Huston Smith as well as those who relied on *Pāli* sources saw the Buddha as a human being. But those who observed Buddhism in practice, even in South and Southeast Asia, were convinced that the Buddha was subjected to apotheosis at a very early stage. Accordingly, a variety of views have been expressed in such works as *Indian Buddhism* (1980), *Gotama Buddha: A Biography based on the Most Reliable Texts* (2005) by Hajime



Nakamura, *Buddhahood* by Phiroz Mehta and John Snelling (1980), *Buddhism: Beliefs and Practices* by Lynn A. de Silva (1980) *Picturing God* by Jean Holm and John Bowker (1994), *Our Religions* by Aravind Sharma (1995), and *Ethics of Early Buddhism* by David Kalupahana. Among the writers who dealt with the issue of apotheosis and deification of the Buddha, the following have presented arguments based on a variety of sources: *Historical Evolution of the Buddha legend* by Sarla Khosla (1989), *New Light on Early Buddhism* by Balakrishna Govind Gokhale (1994), *The Naked Buddha Speaks* by Adrienne Howley (2002), *A Survey Buddhism: its Doctrines and Methods through the Ages* by Sanghrakshita (2004), *Art and Iconography of the Buddha* by Shailendra Kumar Verma (2007) and *The Best Spiritual Writings* by Philip Zaleski (2010). More recent scholars who see Buddhism as a system of varying traditions and schools have shown a tendency to consider the issue as affecting all three traditions and as such more questions appear to be raised than answered. Of special interest are *The New Buddhism* by David Brazier (2002), *Buddha* by Karen Armstrong (2004), *Rediscovering the Buddha* by Hans H. Penner (2009) and such electronic sources as *Guide to Buddhism A to Z* by S. Dhammika, *My God, Your God, Our God, and No God* by Walpola Wimalagñana and *The Buddha: The Buddha: Teacher of Gods and Humans*. Two of the most insightful discussions of the subject are in *The Human Buddha: Enlightenment for the New Millennium* by Aziz Kristop (2000) and *Old Path White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha* by Thich Nath Hanh and Nguyen T. Hop (1991). Further, another significant work by Dr Tochiichi Endo: *Buddha in Theravada Buddhism: A Study of the Concept*

of Buddha in the Pali Commentaries (1997), discusses especially the evolution of the concept of Buddha in the *Pāli* commentarial literature.

This research aims at revealing the supreme human qualities reflected in the concept of the Buddha as found in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Buddhist literature, in which the Buddha has not been subject to any deification.

### 1.7 Main Research Question about the Concept of Buddha

The term “Buddha” is a common and an appellative terminology that signifies *Sākyamuni Buddha* (563-483 B.C.).<sup>3</sup> The accurate meaning of the terminology “Buddha” indicates “one who has attained Enlightenment.”<sup>4</sup> The meaning of the terminology “Buddha” should be understood in its application and usage and therefore, a close examination of the original meaning of the term in different contexts of the *Pāli* canon and its commentaries are important. There are two categories of Buddhas according to the *Pāli* canon and commentaries. The first is designated the *Sammāsambuddha* (the Fully Enlightened Buddha) or *sabbavidu* or *sabbaññu* Buddha (the Omniscient Buddha).<sup>5</sup> *Pacceka Buddha* is the second category and is a fully enlightened one yet is unable to enlighten others by preaching *Dhamma*.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the fully self-enlightened Buddha known as *sabbavidu* or *sabbaññu* is endowed with the ten powers (*dasabala*), namely

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<sup>3</sup> Richard A. Gard, *Buddhism: Great Religions and Modern Man* (New York: George Braziller, 1961), 59; Kenneth K.S. Chen, *Buddhism: The Light of Asia* (New York: Barrons Educational Inc, 1968), 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Pāli English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1998), s.v. “Buddha.”

<sup>5</sup> Nathan Katz, *Buddhist Images of Human Perfection* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982), 98.

<sup>6</sup> *Pāli English Dictionary*, s.v. “Pacceka Buddha.”

He has the knowledge of knowing what is appropriate and impossible, He has a perfect knowledge of the nature, foundation, and the operation of *kamma*. He has a knowledge of the various forms of existence and path that leads to *Nibbana*, He has a knowledge of the elements of existence, He has a knowledge of the various tendencies of beings, He has a knowledge of the faculties in beings, He has a knowledge of the factors that lead to the purification, deliverance, attainment of beings etc., He has a knowledge of the faculties in beings, He has a knowledge of the path of purification and eradication of cankers, He has a knowledge of the two ways of deliverance.”<sup>7</sup>

Buddha’s mission is based on the proclamation of the truth to all beings to attain reality (*Nibbana*) and therefore he is known as “*satthā*.”<sup>8</sup> (‘Teacher’ or ‘Master’) Buddha is known as the Blessed one i.e. (*Bhagavā*) because he does not have any saṃsāric flaws. He can be compared to a Universal Monarch (*Rāja Chakkavattī*); and a lion as well (*sīha*). Buddha is a physician (*bhisakko*) as he diagnoses the causality of suffering and prescribes the medicine needed for the cure. He is a ‘Kinsman of the Sun’ (*Ādicca-Bandhu*) as he dispels the darkness of ignorance and a (*Buddhavīra*) as he gives protection to all beings; an (*Anuttara*), as he is incomparable; a “*Brāhmana*” is a specific sense as he carries a sacred tradition of all Buddhas. In short, a “Buddha is superior to all other beings – human or divine – by his knowledge of the truth” yet he is not a God or a representative of God.<sup>9</sup>

It should be noted that although such adorations are found in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Buddhist tradition the application of the terminology “Buddha” in the *Pāli*

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<sup>7</sup> *Mn.*, 1:69.

<sup>8</sup> *Dha.*, 1:14.

<sup>9</sup> *An.*, 4:340; K. N. Jayatillake, *Early Buddhist Theory of knowledge* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1963), 381.

literature is generally restricted to *sabbavidu* or *sabbaññu* Buddha. As the *Gotama* was a *sabbavidu* Buddha, he too is adorned with the common epithets of a self-enlightened one; and bears all other epithets applicable to any other Buddha. Hence, the concept has not taken any noticeable change in the *Theravāda* tradition.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1.1: Popular Nine Epithets and Designations of the Buddha**

(Pāli terms by order of appearance in the canon)

Pāli Terms	Meaning and Reasons	Designations
<i>Arahant</i>	He has eradicated all types of defilements without a trace	One who realized the suchness ( <i>Tathāgatha</i> )
<i>Sammā sambuddho</i>	He is a self-enlighten one ( <i>sammāsambuddho</i> ),	The Fully Enlightened One ( <i>Sammā-Sambuddha</i> )
<i>Vijjā-carāṇa-sampanno</i>	He is fully skilful in both wisdom and conduct ( <i>vijja-carāṇa-sampanno</i> ).	Expert in Dhamma ( <i>Vedagu</i> )
<i>Sugato</i>	He has well reached the ultimate truth ( <i>sugato</i> )	The purest ( <i>Nimmalo</i> )
<i>Loka-vidu</i>	He knows all worlds ( <i>loka-vidu</i> ) because of his practice and experience.	The unstained ( <i>Vimalo</i> )
<i>Anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi</i>	He is known as a unique charioteer because he tames those who can be tamed ( <i>anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi</i> )	The wise ( <i>Ñāni</i> )
<i>Satthā, deva-manussānam</i>	He can be called a leader of gods and men ( <i>satthā deva-manussānam</i> ). <sup>11</sup>	The emancipated One ( <i>Vimutto</i> ) <sup>12</sup>
<i>Buddho</i>	He knows the Four Noble Truths and is an awakened one. ( <i>Buddho</i> )	The awakened one ( <i>Buddha</i> )
<i>Bhagavā</i>	He is a blessed one ( <i>bhagavā</i> ) because, he has no any traces of saṃsāric weaknesses	Recluse ( <i>Samāna</i> )

These epithets and designations are frequently mentioned in the discourses, yet

Buddha is not treated as an omnipotent being.

<sup>10</sup> Xing, *Concept of the Buddha*, 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Sn.*, 103.

<sup>12</sup> *An.*, 4:340.

Although various schools of Buddhist thought view Buddha differently, the *Theravāda* standpoint is that the Buddha was a super human being, who developed certain psychic powers through meditational practices.<sup>13</sup> Especially all the aggregates (*khandhās*) of the Buddha are impermanent and subject to change, just as the common people.<sup>14</sup> His physical body is not unconditional. However, a Buddha realizes the three characteristics of the phenomenal world, which is an exceptional teaching in Buddhism and is a common philosophy in all schools of Buddhist thought.<sup>15</sup>

The *Theravāda* Canon and commentaries signify that the *Gotama* was born as a human, and he later became a self-enlightened one as he had the saṃsāric foundation of spiritual progress and merits as a *Bodhisattva* in his saṃsāric life.<sup>16</sup> As a result of his self-enlightenment, he was able to transcend all human weaknesses. His conversation with *Brahmin Dona* clearly indicates this reality. *Aṅguttaranikāya* includes this conversation with *Brahmin Dona*:

Sir, are you a *deva*? No indeed Brahmin. I am not a *deva*.

Are you a *gandhabba*? No indeed Brahmin. I am not a *gandhabba*.

Are you a *yakkha*? No indeed Brahmin. I am not a *yakkha*.

Are you a human being? No indeed Brahmin. I am not a human being.

You may call that I am a Buddha, *Brahmin*.<sup>17</sup>

He has grown up in the world and has gone beyond the world. Hence, he is not tainted with the impurities of the world just as a lotus that grows from the water but

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<sup>13</sup> *Dn.*, 2: 212.

<sup>14</sup> *Mn.*, 2:124.

<sup>15</sup> *KtA.*, 33.

<sup>16</sup> *Bv.*, 21.

<sup>17</sup> *Gs.*, 2:44.

blossoms above it, uncontaminated with the impurities of a pond.<sup>18</sup> Although the *Theravāda* school does not emphasize the supernatural and divine aspects of the Buddha, the foundation of such elements of Buddha are found in the canon. The two special terminologies found in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta*, such as: *Dhamma* (*Dhammassāmi*) and the bestowed of immortality (*Amatassa-dāta*) clearly indicates his uniqueness.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, in the *Anurādhāsutta* Buddha is known as “the *Tathāgata* - the supreme man (*uttamapuriso*), the superlative man (*paramapuriso*), attainer of the superlative attainment (*paramapattipatto*).”<sup>20</sup> The term *Tathāgatha* is a common terminology used by the Buddha and has no embellishments. This term clearly indicates that he has realized the ultimate truth, thatness, suchness (*Tathāgata*). It can be regarded as a special non-embellished terminology that signifies the superhuman nature of the Buddha as one who realized the true nature of the world of phenomena.

The term does not occur as a synonym for *arahant*, identifying one who has attained the ultimate in the holy life. Although arahants are also great, they are not loosely called *Tathāgata*. The terminology *uttama-purisa* can be used for both arahants and the Buddhas but whereas the Buddhas are concerned terminology (*uttama-puriso*) has to be understood in a special sense.<sup>21</sup> It is clear according to the early Buddhist discourses that a *Tathāgata*, or *arahant*, has a very profound wisdom and they are “immeasurable,” “inscrutable,” “hard to fathom,” and “difficult to be apprehended.” A *Tathāgata* is someone who has completely eradicated the attachment

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<sup>18</sup> *An.*, 2:38.

<sup>19</sup> *Mn.*, I:111.

<sup>20</sup> *Sn.*, 3:17.

<sup>21</sup> *Dma.*, 27.

to *skandhās* (five aggregates) and is free from all sorts of defilements.<sup>22</sup> The five aggregates such as form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are unsatisfactory and impermanent. Therefore, those who attain enlightenment do not have the burden of five aggregates. The latent tendencies are a fundamental teaching in early discourses and an individual can be measured in accordance with the latent tendencies. It is the latent tendencies that motivate an individual towards clinging of the world of objects. As the enlightened ones have completely eradicated such mental dispositions, they cannot be measured based on the latent tendencies. Hence, such a person is beyond such measurements.<sup>23</sup>

According to the canonical explanations, Buddha's mind is immeasurable and cannot be fathomed even by himself.<sup>24</sup> It is recorded that the condition of the *Tathāgatha*, after his enlightenment and great passing away cannot be explained by the ordinary language. This concept is clear according to ten unanswered questions.<sup>25</sup> At the attainment of *Nibbāna*, he attained the complete cessation of all sorts of attachments, especially hatred, craving and delusion that were "eradicated without a trace of them."<sup>26</sup> When the Buddha was asked about what would happen to his (*Tathāgatha*) physical body after his passing away, his reply was "And so, *Anurādha* - when you can't pin down the *Tathāgata* as a truth or reality even in the present life - is it proper for you to declare, 'Friends, the *Tathāgata* - the supreme man, the superlative man, attainer of the superlative attainment - being described, is described otherwise

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<sup>22</sup> *Sn.*, 83.

<sup>23</sup> D. J. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis* (Honolulu: University Press, 1976), 95.

<sup>24</sup> *Dn.*, 62.

<sup>25</sup> *Mn.*, I:426.

<sup>26</sup> *Khp.*, 5.

than with these four positions. “A *Tathāgata* comes to be after death; or he does not come to be after death; or he both comes to be and comes not be after death; or he neither comes to be nor comes not to be after death.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, in the *Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta*, we find that the ascetic *Vaccha* asks the Buddha about many metaphysical issues. When *Vaccha* asks about what happens to an *arahant* after death, the Buddha, using the example of fire, explains the question. *Vaccha* replies that the question, “Does not fit the case Gotama for the fire that depended on fuel of grass and wood. When that fuel has all gone, and it can get no other, being thus without nutriment, it is said to be extinct.”<sup>28</sup>

There, the Buddha was able to explain the issues clearly with that example as follows: “In the same way...., all form by which one could predicate the existence of the saint, all that form has been abandoned, uprooted, pulled out of the ground like a *Palmyra-tree*, and become non-existent and not liable to spring up again in the future. The saint who has been released from what is styled form is deep, immeasurable, and unfathomable, like the mighty ocean. The same is then said of the other aggregates. Similar passages found in the *Upasīvasutta* clearly indicate that the metaphor “gone out, he cannot be defined” refers equally to liberation.<sup>29</sup>

According to the explanations, it is clear that the sages who have attained complete liberation cannot be measured in terms of general concepts that the ordinary people have. The attributions found in the ordinary language to explain the nature of a

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<sup>27</sup> *Sn.*, 117.

<sup>28</sup> *Mn.*, I:483.

<sup>29</sup> *Sn.*, 207.



liberated saint are always misleading and do not signify the true nature of him.<sup>30</sup> The explanations found in the *Dhammapada* are good examples that describe the disposition of an *arahant* and it is said that: - “They are without trace (*ananuvejja*) or ‘trackless (*apada*), like the birds in the sky.”<sup>31</sup> In this regard, the *Vakkali Sutta* is also important where the Buddha identifies himself with the *Dhamma*: “O Vakkali, whoever sees the Dhamma, sees me (the Buddha).”<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, the *Aggañña Sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, clearly signifies the relationship between the Buddha and the *dhamma*: “O Vāsetṭha! The Word of *Dhammakāya* is indeed the name of the *Tathāgata*.”<sup>33</sup> According to some discourses, *Gautama* Buddha was popularly known as a “teacher of the gods and humans,” and he was able to direct the competent individuals towards the path of *Nirvāna* or the greatest bliss. From above data, we come to know: How the Buddha viewed himself; how his disciples viewed him; and how the followers of other faiths viewed him.

### **1.7.1 Research Concern on the *Mahāpurisalakkhaṇa* and *Anuvyañjana***

Another significant area for the study of the humanity of the Buddha is his physical characteristics. According to the early Buddhist sources, there are 32 (thirty-two) main characteristics which make the Buddha a physically perfect one. The

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<sup>30</sup> *Sun.*, 207.

<sup>31</sup> *Dma.*, 26.

<sup>32</sup> *Sn.*, 3:120.

<sup>33</sup> *Dn.*, 2:84.

"Discourse of the Marks" contains these 32 (thirty-two) physical characteristics.<sup>34</sup>

These are also found in the *Brahmāyusutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*.<sup>35</sup>

According to the *suttās*, these 32 (thirty two) main characteristics are as follows: Level feet, Thousand spokes wheel sign on feet, Long slender fingers, Pliant hands and feet, Toes and fingers finely webbed, Full-sized heels, Arched insteps, Thighs like a royal stag, Hands reaching below the knees, Well-retracted male organ, Height and stretch of arms equal, Every hair-root dark colored, Body hair graceful and curly, Golden-hued body, Ten-foot aura around him, Soft and smooth skin, Soles palms shoulders and crown of head well-rounded, Area below armpits well-filled, Lion-shaped body, Body erect and upright, Full round shoulders, Forty teeth, White Teeth even and close, Four canine teeth pure white, Jaw like a lion, Saliva that improves the taste of all food, Tongue long and broad, Voice deep and resonant, Eyes deep blue, Eyelashes like a royal bull, White *ūrna* curl that emits light between eyebrows, Fleshy protuberance on the crown of the head.

A close observation of the above is needed to decide why such characteristics are attributed to the Buddha. However, it is obvious some of the characteristics seem to be odd and some are not. The reason behind this is that some characteristics are the normal features of a human being whereas some signify extraordinary characteristics. In this thesis, I hope to discuss them in detail and the intentions behind the attribution of characteristics. *The Suttanipāta* mentions that Brahmins take these great

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<sup>34</sup> *Dn.*, 3:143.

<sup>35</sup> *Mn.*, 2:136.

characteristics into consideration when designating a superhuman being.<sup>36</sup> There is no doubt that the attributions of such characteristics have uplifted him to a special human being.<sup>37</sup> However, what is important is that the Buddha is not uplifted to the state of a god or any other supernatural being in such literature.

The 80 (eighty) secondary marks on his physical body (*anuvyañjana*) are related to the main characteristics. They give the reader a vivid picture of the Buddha's bodily features.<sup>38</sup> The minor characteristics are found in the *Milindapañha*. The minor characteristics seem to be very normal body features whereas the main characteristics are extraordinary.

### 1.7.2 Previous Lives and Related Issues

In addition to the *Jātaka* describing 447 previous lives in verses in the *Khuddakanikāya*, *Jātaka* legends occur both in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* and *Sutta Piṭaka*. For example, the *Tittira Jātaka* is to be found in the *Chulla-Vagga*<sup>39</sup> and the *Chariyā-Piṭaka*, which belongs to the *Khuddakanikāya* that contains 35 *Jātakas* in verse-form.<sup>40</sup> In addition, there are several *Jātakas* found in the canonical texts although they are not integrated in the canonical *Jātaka* or the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* authored by *Buddhaghosa*. It is said that *Buddhaghosa* translated those texts from Singhalese, as he could not find any good sources in India.<sup>41</sup> It is important to note that the *samsāric* lives of the Buddha as a *Bodhisattva* describe his compassionate, wise, and heroic

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<sup>36</sup> *Sn.*, 196.

<sup>37</sup> David V. Fiordalis, *Miracles and Superhuman Powers in South Asian Buddhist Literature* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2008), 23.

<sup>38</sup> *Mlp.*, 339.

<sup>39</sup> *Vn.*, 2:161.

<sup>40</sup> *Chp.*, 1-37.

<sup>41</sup> *Mv.*, 18.

deeds in order to save or to show the right path to others. He has had a variety of births in the past and almost had been born as all kinds of beings except a few. All those stories signify that he had passed all kinds of births and finally was born as a human, the birth during which he realized the ultimate truth. All *Jātaka* stories aim at the development of his two great qualities, great compassion, and wisdom.<sup>42</sup> We may divide his various births mainly under the following three categories:

- Human
- Gods
- Animals

### 1.7.3 The Concept of *Pāramitās* and Its Significance in the Study of the Concept of Buddha

Another important conceptual theme about the Buddha is his fulfillment of *Pāramis* as reflected in the *Jātaka* tales. The *Pāli* word *pārami*, (*param+i*) "gone to the beyond," indicates transcendental direction of these qualities.<sup>43</sup> But the equivalent Sanskrit *pāramita*, the word used by the *Mahāyāna* texts, according to Robert Buswell is derived from *parama*, "supreme," and signifies the great spiritual qualities that are fulfilled by a *Bodhisattva* for the attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>44</sup> The *pāramis* found in the *Pāli* tradition are not the same as those found in the *Lalitavistara*, *Bodhicaryāvatāra* etc. The six *pāramis* found in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* are giving, virtue, patience, endeavor, meditation, wisdom, resolution, skillful means, power, and

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<sup>42</sup> Kevin Trainor, *Buddhism: The Illustrated Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 91.

<sup>43</sup> *Pāli-English Dictionary*, "pārami."

<sup>44</sup> *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, Vol. 2, (2004), "Great spiritual qualities of Bodhisattva."

knowledge.<sup>45</sup> Later *Mahāyāna* texts may have added the last four to fill any disparities in the perfections. Thus, it is obvious that the *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* works are concerned there is some difference in the lists of perfections; for instance, in *pāli* literature, we find giving, virtue, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, truthfulness, determination, loving-kindness and equanimity; and in the *Sanskrit* Buddhist literature, we can only find the perfections of giving, virtue, patience, endeavor, meditation and wisdom. When we compare *Pāli* and Sanskrit list of perfections, five of the *Pāramitās* are common in both traditions and it is possible that wisdom or knowledge of *Pāli* incorporates mental concentration.

As a matter of fact, the *Theravāda* has developed a theory of categorization of the *pāramis* into three levels such as: elementary level, average level, and supreme level.<sup>46</sup> Just as the other Buddhist schools of thought, it is evident that the *Theravāda* school of Buddhist thought has added some important elements of perfections in order to create a well-established spiritual background of the evolution of concept of Buddha as a *Bodhisattva*. Thus, in the popular *Theravāda* Buddhist literature, *Bodhisattva* has become a very special human being although he is not venerated in the same way that the Buddha is venerated. *Theravādins* introduced this concept along with the *Bodhisattva* ideal as a conservative school of Buddhist thought but they did not regard him as a godly being as found in the *Mahāyāna* literature and did not add any supernatural powers to the concept of *Bodhisattva* at all. However, it is obvious that this concept has been gradually developed in the school of *Mahāyāna* Buddhist

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<sup>45</sup> Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London: Kegan Paul Trench Trubner Co Ltd), 167.

<sup>46</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:73.

thought in a quite different way even before the rise of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. This notion is clear according to the *Mahāyāna* literature.<sup>47</sup> and according to some dissention among schools of Buddhist thought found in *Katāvattupprakaraṇa*.<sup>48</sup>

There is an early Buddhist foundation for the development of the *Bodhisattva* ideal and two important teachings have led to its gradual development. One is the terminology "*Bodhisattva*" found in the early Buddhist teachings and the other is the reference to the previous Buddhas.<sup>49</sup> According to the early Buddhist discourses, *Sākyamuni Gotama* is the most recent Buddha in the lineage of the Buddhas. The concept of the seven Buddhas, including the *Sākyamuni Gotama*, is found in the *Dīghanikāya*.<sup>50</sup> The *Theravāda* text *Buddhavaṃsa* mentions the advent of the *Metteyya*, who would reveal to the world *Dhamma* when the *Dhamma* is vanished in course of time.<sup>51</sup>

From the aforementioned notions of, the early Buddhist terminology of "*Bodhisattva*" and the reference to the "seven Buddhas", it becomes evident that the early Buddhist teachings have laid the foundation for further development of the concept of the Buddha. Accordingly, *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* Schools of Buddhist thought have developed such concepts in their own unique way. The *Jātaka* tales of Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition have developed the *Bodhisattva* ideal especially signifying his spiritual practice based on the *pāramita* concept.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand,

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<sup>47</sup> Bibhuti Baruah, *Buddhist Sects and Sectarianism* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2000), 192.

<sup>48</sup> *Kta.*, 41.

<sup>49</sup> *Mn.*, 3:119.

<sup>50</sup> *Dn.*, 1: 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:75.

<sup>52</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:2.

*Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpitaka* developed the concept of the lineage of the Buddhas. These two Sri Lankan *Theravāda* texts have laid a very impressive foundation for the gradual development and evolution of the concept of the Buddha. In the *Buddhavaṃsa*, with the introduction of aspiration (*abhinīhāra*), the story of the ascetic *Sumedha* is recited. He made the aspiration of becoming the future Buddha at the feet of *Dīpaṃkara Buddha*.<sup>53</sup> Although the *Ascetic Sumedha* was able to attain *Nibbāna* on that occasion, he did not proceed due to his strong desire for becoming a Buddha and to show path of purification for gods and men.<sup>54</sup> It was the Buddha *Dīpaṃkara* who gave instructions of the fulfillment of spiritual qualities and confirmed his attainment of Buddhahood in future. Thus, we find the introduction of the ten *pāramis*, which are the necessary requirements or the prerequisites of Buddhahood for the attainment of enlightenment (*bodhisambhāra*).<sup>55</sup>

The previously mentioned two Sri Lankan texts have gradually developed the concept of *Bodhisattva* ideal and Buddha with the introduction of ten *pāramitas*, *Abhinīhāra*, and *Jātaka* tales. These have not led to the upliftment of the concept of *Bodhisattva* or Buddha to the position of a metaphysical being. During the stories related to the concepts of *Bodhisattva* or Buddha ideal, they have attempted to only signify his spiritual qualities. As we do not find a complete concept of *pāramita*<sup>56</sup> or lineage of the Buddhas in the early Buddhist discourses, the *Pāli* texts such as, *Jātaka*, *Buddhavaṃsa*, *Cariyāpitaka*, etc. have fulfilled the above need. There is no need to

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<sup>53</sup> *Jāp.*, I:2.

<sup>54</sup> *Bv.*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 100.

<sup>56</sup> Sangharakhita. *The Bodhisattva Ideal: Wisdom and Compassion in Buddhism* (Birmingham: Windrose Publications, 1999), 88.

reiterate that these texts have provided a well-established foundation for some adorations with respect to the gradual development of the concepts of *Bodhisattva* or Buddha ideal. The main themes of the *Buddhavamsa and Cariyāpiṭaka*" are based on the spiritual qualities that should be fulfilled for the attainment of Buddhahood.

#### 1.7.4 Twenty-four *Vivaraṇas*

The term *vivaraṇa* means the open proclamation that a *Bodhisattva* makes before a Buddha to get enlightenment by himself. The history of the *Bodhisattvās* clearly signifies that each has taken *vivaraṇa* before a Buddha.<sup>57</sup> With the introduction of the *vivaraṇa*, the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition has added much more significance to the concepts of *Bodhisattva* and Buddha. The solemn ledge is known as *abhinīhāra-karaṇa*, which should be made before a Buddha.<sup>58</sup> The *Gotama Buddha* did this solemn declaration before *Dīpaṃkara* Buddha when he was the ascetic *Sumedha* and the *Dīpaṃkara* Buddha confirmed his firm resolution with the assertion (*vyākaraṇa*). "The asertic Sumedha will become a future Buddha."<sup>59</sup> During the period of the Buddha *Kondañña*, the ascetic *Sumedha* was born as a *Chakkavattī Bodhisattva*, and he received his second *vyākaraṇa* for the becoming of a future Buddha. Thus, until the twenty-fourth time, he has received the confirmation from different Buddhas, and they can be pointed out as follows:

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<sup>57</sup> *Jāp.*, I:2.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 1;2

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.



**Table 1.2: Assertion (*vyākaraṇa*) with Previous Buddhas**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Name of the Buddhās</b>	<b>Name of the Bodhisattvās</b>
First	<i>Dīpaṅkara</i>	Ascetic <i>Sumedha</i>
Second	<i>Kondaṅṅa</i>	<i>Chakkavattī Bodhisattva</i>
Third	<i>Mangala</i>	<i>Suruchi</i>
Fourth	<i>Sumana</i>	<i>Atula</i>
Fifth	<i>Revata</i>	<i>Atideva</i>
Sixth	<i>Sobhita</i>	<i>Sujāta brahmana</i>
Seventh	<i>Anomadassi</i>	yakkha chief
Eighth	<i>Paduma</i>	a lion
Ninth	<i>Nārada</i>	a sage
Tenth	<i>Padumuttara</i>	<i>Jaṭila</i>
Eleventh	<i>Sumedha</i>	<i>Uttara</i>
Twelfth	<i>Sujāta</i>	an emperor
Thirteenth	<i>Piyadassi</i>	<i>Kassapa;</i>
Fourteenth	<i>Atthadassi</i>	<i>Susīma</i>
Fifteenth	<i>Dhammadassi</i>	<i>Sakka (Indra);</i>
Sixteenth	<i>Siddhattha</i>	<i>Mangala</i>
Seventeenth	<i>Tissa</i>	<i>Sujāta</i>
Eighteenth	<i>Phussa</i>	<i>Vijitāvi</i>
Nineteenth	<i>Vipassi</i>	<i>Atula</i>
Twentieth	<i>Sikhi</i>	<i>Arindama</i>
Twenty-first	<i>Vessabhū</i>	<i>Sudassana</i>
Twenty-second	<i>Kakusandha</i>	<i>Khema</i>
Twenty-third	<i>Konāgamana</i>	<i>Pabbata</i>
Twenty-fourth	<i>Kassapa</i>	<i>Jotipāla</i> <sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Bv.*, 9-95.

It is only after receiving *Vivaraṇa* that the great being can completely dedicate his life to the practice of spiritual qualifications known as “*Buddhakāradhamma*” needed for Buddhahood. There, his main aim is to complete the ten perfections “*pārami*” i.e., *dāna* (charity), *sīla* (right-conduct), *nekkhamma* (dispassionateness), *pañña* (wisdom), *virīya* (steadfastness), *khanti* (forbearance), *saccha* (truthfulness), *adhiṭṭhāna* (pledge), *metta* (loving compassion), and *upekkhā* (non-attachability).<sup>61</sup> The *Jātaka* tales clearly signify how the *Bodhisattva* fulfilled the ten perfections and the *jātaka* tales such as *Ekarāja*, *Kshantivādi*, *Chulla Sankhapāla*, *MahāJanaka*, *Mahāsutasoma*, *Mugapakkha*, *Lomahaṃsa*, *Satthubhatta*, *Sasa*, *Sutasoma* and *Vessantara Jātakas*, etc. clearly indicate the way the *Bodhisattva* fulfilled the perfections.

## 1.8 Hypothesis

While the adoration of the Buddha has resulted in the enhancement of his personality, qualities and characteristics, the Sri Lankan *Theravāda Pāli* tradition has sustained the humanness of the Buddha and continue to influence the prevailing concept of the Buddhahood in Southern Buddhist countries of South and Southeast Asia.

## 1.9 Theoretical Framework

- **Step one:** - Hypothesis: - Buddha has not been deified in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition.
- **Step two:** - The research questions are: - use of epithets ascribed to the Buddha, discourse related to the special physical characteristics, marvels performed, lineage of the Buddha, psychic power of the Buddha, etc.

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<sup>61</sup> *Jāp.*, I, 73.

- **Step three:** - Historicity of the Buddha, personality, nature of his teachings, his involvement in social change, daily routine, old age, and great passing away
- **Step four:** - Some teachings of certain Buddhist schools have led to the development of the theories of the concept of the Buddha as a universal reality or ever existing phenomenon. While some Buddhist literature belonging to various schools of Buddhist thought hold the theoretical view that he was a superhuman being, some researchers have found that the Buddha, even in the Buddhist traditions that hold the Buddha as a superhuman being, have led to the deification.
- **Step five:** - The assumption is that the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition has not deified the concept of the Buddha, although such elements are available in their literature. Hence, a theory will be built to come to that decision of non-deification of the Buddha.
- **Step six:** - In this step, we use the related evidence found in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* literature as the independent variable and the non-deification of the concept of the Buddha will stand as the dependent variable
- **Step seven:** - Based on the evidence found after the data analysis, we would justify the hypothesis and summarize the outcomes.

### 1.10 Methodology

The methodology to be followed in this research is qualitative analysis of the Sri Lankan canonical and commentarial literature. The original Canonical *Pāli* texts in the *Vinaya* and the *Sutta Piṭaka* of the *Pāli* Canon and the relevant *Pāli* commentaries will be subjected to a thorough investigation, especially to determine whether Buddhas

has been deified. These texts will be analyzed to identify and interpret remarks attributed to the Buddha with a focus on exploring how the Buddha recollected events of his life and responded to day-to-day situations. A similar search will be made of views and opinions expressed on the Buddha by his contemporary disciples as well other interlocutors. In the process, the prevailing conclusions of scholars will be critically examined to verify whether their observations accurately reflect the data in the original texts.

### **1.11 Presentation of Results and the Tentative Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation will tentatively be organized as follows: -

#### **1.11.1 Chapter One – Introduction on the Statement of the Problem, Hypothesis, Objectives, Methodology, Anticipated Results.**

There are many studies on the development of the concept of Buddha both in the *Theravāda* and *Mahayāna* traditions. One such study is the “*Deification of Buddha in Theravāda Tradition*” by Prof. Ankur Barua. According to his analysis of the commentarial literature, the *Theravāda* tradition also deified the Buddha as in the *Mahayāna* tradition though there are some differences. But a close study of the early Buddhist and Sri Lankan *Theravāda* literature would result in a different conclusion: while the *Theravāda* tradition ascribes some supernatural qualities to the Buddha, there is no evidence of deification. As Sri Lankan *Theravāda Pāli* literature provides ample evidence of the human qualities of the Buddha, such details need to be further clarified for the justification of the uniqueness of the Buddha as a great superhuman being.

### **1.11.2 Chapter Two. Sources for the Study of the Concept of the Buddha and the Influential Elements of Indian Religious Background.**

Special attention will be given to the Sri Lankan *Theravāda Pāli* literature such as *Tripitaka*, and its commentaries while the influential elements of Indian religious background and the *Mahayāna* source literature are discussed in brief for a better clarification of the concept of Buddha depicted in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* literature as a unique human being.

### **1.11.3 Chapter Three. Historicity and the Supper Human Nature of the Buddha.**

The terminologies such as: “Buddha,” “*Tathāgata*” other epithets and the origin of the concept and how it is reflected in the *Pāli* canon are the main concerns in this chapter.

### **1.11.4 Chapter Four. Reconstruction of the Biography of the Buddha as Found in the Early *Pāli* Canonical Sources.**

Main focus will be paid to reconstruct the concept of the Buddha as depicted in the Early *Theravāda Pāli* canonical sources with an emphasis on his unique human characteristics as a fully enlightened human being.

### **1.11.5 Chapter Five. Tendency towards a Hagiography of the Buddha in the *Pāli* Canon and Commentaries.**

The major incidents of the life of *Siddhartha Gotama* such as his birth, great renunciation, self-enlightenment, etc. will be discussed to examine whether there is a Hagiography of the concept of the Buddha in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Buddhist literature.

### **1.11.6 Chapter Six. Development of *Bodhisattva* Ideal & its Relation to the Concept of Buddha in *Jātakapāḷi*, *Jātakatṭhakathā* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*.**

As the *Bodhisattva* ideal is very important in the study of the concept of the Buddha, The *Bodhisattva* ideal and its uniqueness will be the focus in this chapter as reflected in the *Jātakapāḷi*, *Jātakatṭhakathā* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*.

### **1.11.7 Chapter Seven. Development of the Concept of Buddha in Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Tradition as a Supreme Human Being.**

Special attention will be paid to the development of the Concept of Buddha in Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Tradition to examine whether the details found in the *Buddavamsa* and *Cariyāpīṭaka* have paid undue reverence out of devotion for deification while overlooking his Supreme Human qualities after self-enlightenment. The following is the kind of information that will be searched for and analyzed: -

The Buddha's rebuke to *Ambaṭṭha* wherein he asked whether the young *Brahmin* would have behaved in such an impolite manner in front of an elderly *Brahmin* teacher.<sup>62</sup> According to the *Hemavatasutta*, Buddha has a lean body. He eats little, well restrained and does not have attachment. He enjoys leisure and engages in *dhyāna* in the forest.<sup>63</sup> In many discourses, the ethical aspect of the Buddha is reflected. According to *Selasutta*, it is said that Buddha is a person who is restrained and calm and values serenity. This puts lights on his solemnity as a person of high dignity. It further shows some underlying nobleness of his great character and the nature of whole personality. It is difficult to reach the Buddha who prefers little noise,

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<sup>62</sup> *Dn.*, 1:87.

<sup>63</sup> *Sn.*, 27.

walks step by step just as a lion and lives in isolation.<sup>64</sup> His understanding and the attitude towards the followers are reflected on numerous occasions. The *Chundasutta* mentions that the Buddha has equated the two alms givings offered to him, saying that they have equal significance. The first alms giving offered to him under the *bodhi* tree after which he attained enlightenment and the one that was offered to him when he made the solemn resolution of his great *Parinibbāṇa*, after which he became seriously sick. These two have been equated by him saying that they have the same significance. This indicates his great quality of humanness as a religious leader of many followers. Such are very rare qualities and add more glamor to his noble character and indicate some underlying uniqueness.<sup>65</sup>

It is obvious according to the *Mahāparinibbāṇa sutta*, that the Buddha became seriously sick during the last phase of his life.<sup>66</sup> This episode of his life shows us that he had to face the vicissitudes of life just like any other being living in human society even though he was not subjected to human weakness. It emphasizes that even the Buddha is not free from such illnesses, and he too had the same feelings of sickness just as any other human being.<sup>67</sup> These events of his life promote his nobleness while trying to upgrade his uniqueness by giving the metaphysical adorations of him. This is a unique feature of *Theravāda* tradition.<sup>68</sup> It has not attempted to describe the metaphysical facts of his life but instead uplifted his greatness through the mundane events of his day-to-day life. For instance, the mention in the sutta about the Buddha

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<sup>64</sup> *Sn.*, 111.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>66</sup> *Dn.*, 2:99-128.

<sup>67</sup> *An.*, 4:358.

<sup>68</sup> Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 32.

fainting and the Venerable *Chunda* having to sit beside him, listening and attending to his requisites, generates some sort of solemn yet apologetic feelings in the reader.<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, the solemn utterances of the Buddha signify another aspect of his way of life. He is a person who has gone to the other shore and for him there is no use of the well-made raft to swim over floods. Such great exclamations symbolize his understanding of the human world and his attitude towards the other beings.<sup>70</sup> The indirect meanings of such sayings indicate the nature of his wisdom and what he has realized. Such does not add any exaggerated glamor to him yet depicts an underlying in-depth meaning. The understanding of the very nature of the world of phenomena is the required thing and he had this realization.<sup>71</sup>

The solemnest of a great human being is reflected in the saying that the well-made raft has already been finished making, having swum over four floods and went to the other shore, there is no use of the raft, if wishes rain as you like. Another important ethical aspect of life is reflected in his remarks of the things on different occasions. It is mentioned that it is not suitable to eat the milk received after uttering verses, it is not the custom of Buddhas to receive such way who follows right livelihood, and the Buddha looks down upon such. Buddha's livelihood is dependent on *dhamma*.<sup>72</sup> This shows that he was a man of unique principles. Such qualities are only reflected in great human beings who have crossed over to the other shore according to his own words.

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<sup>69</sup> *Sn.*, 4:81.

<sup>70</sup> *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Vol.7, (1998), "Buddha" Routledge.

<sup>71</sup> *Sn.*, 8.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.



On the other hand, it is mentioned in the *suttas* that merits are of great significance especially for ordinary beings to lead a life with less problems. They are essential things for the beings of different realms. Nonetheless, as far as those who have attained the ultimate reality is concerned, merits have not much relevance due to the fact that they make the *samsāric* journey of beings lengthened even though they are the most important driving forces of ordinary beings and are very much needed. Here the Buddha's view of them is reflected in the following saying: "There is no use of an iota of merits. If merits become meaningful to someone, go and tell them Māra."<sup>73</sup> This could be regarded as a very important saying due to the fact that such is need only by those who are to cross over the flood of *Samsara* to go to other shore, yet those who have eradicated defilements have no use at all.

Then another saying of similar importance is found in the *Ariyapariyesanasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya*, where it is clearly mentioned who Buddha is. According to the explanations, there are basically three aspects of his knowledge. He has realized what should be realized, practiced those that should be practiced and eradicated those which should be eradicated. These are the basis for things perfected by the Buddha. According to his own explanation, it is obvious that there is no mention of the supernormal powers or any other metaphysical attainments.<sup>74</sup> The implied meaning here is related to the phenomenal world, and it is obvious that there are fundamental things that a human being should realize if he is to put an end to *Samsara*. According to the *suttas*, though Buddha is described in many ways, here we

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<sup>73</sup> *Sn.*, 75.

<sup>74</sup> *Mn.*, 1:67.

find that he introduces himself as having great wisdom and there is no reference to any supernormal powers or his abilities to perform such miracles. This does not mean that he did not possess such skills, yet in comparison to his great wisdom, such are insignificant. This could be regarded as one of the most important early discourses in which we find the Buddha has not been uplifted to the state of Almighty God or any other supernatural being who is beyond causality, space, and time.<sup>75</sup>

The comparison of him to a physician reveals another significant fact of his life in the *Selasutta*. He was a physician who attended to the ills of the beings and not a superhuman being that appeared as an incarnation or one who revealed the message of Omnipotent Being. Hence, birth of such a human is rare in the human world. He had the ability of understanding the ills of beings and to prescribe a suitable method in order to make the beings free from such ills of the world. It is important to note that he could very correctly identify the human weaknesses and thereby address the problem to prescribe the most suitable method to get rid of it. In general, a full understanding of the covert and overt nature of a being cannot be done even by great humans of the world; nonetheless, Buddha had this rare ability due to his unique and incomparable wisdom. Some may understand the cause yet fail to prescribe a suitable method and solution; or some may understand the matter, yet do not know how to apply a suitable method but Buddha has been perfected in all such.<sup>76</sup>

Another fact is that many become argumentative when they are said to have realized the ultimate truth. This was a very common feature in his time. It was the

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<sup>75</sup> *Sn.*, 109.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

character of that period to argue over physical and metaphysical matters. Some had no significance, but were interested in speculative views of life, *Samsara*, being, *Tathāgata*, *Kamma*, after life etc. It is significant that the Buddha had no dilemma regarding such speculative views.<sup>77</sup>

The textual search is expected to bring to light much more data which will show whether the deification or the apotheosis of the Buddha took place within the period reflected by the growth of the *Pāli* Canon. To the extent possible, these texts will be treated as historical documents and their relative dates determined.

The data in the *Pāli* Commentaries are expected to show how the concept of the Buddhahood evolved in Sri Lanka through interaction with later developments in Buddhism and significantly influenced how the Buddha is viewed and adored in South and Southeast Asia on account of the impact of the Sinhala Reform in the region. Right through the study, interpretations and conclusions of scholars referred in the survey of literature will be re-examined.

#### **1.11.5 Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope (Delimitations)**

Historicity of the Buddha is found throughout the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition, especially his personality, nature of his teachings, his involvement in social change, etc. can be clearly observed. Furthermore, daily routine, old age and the great passing away are also well reflected in the literature.

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<sup>77</sup> *Sn.*, 207.

The research is limited to the observation and analysis of Sri Lankan *Theravāda* *Pāli* cannon and commentarial literature and the scope of the research is confined only to the data that are directly important to examine the non-deification of the Buddha.

### 1.13 Definition of Terms

Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition: Buddhist tradition that developed in Sri Lanka. Buddha: Gautama Buddha born in India. Canonical literature: *Dīgha Nikāya*, the "long length" discourses. *Majjhima Nikāya*, the "middle-length" discourses. *Samyutta Nikāya*, the "connected" discourses. *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the "numerical" discourses. *Khuddaka Nikāya*, the "minor collection". Commentarial literature: commentaries written to the above canonical texts. Discourses: *Pāli Suttas* found in the canonical texts. Lineage of the Buddhas: Genealogy of the *Gautama* Buddha. Epithets: attributions that explain the qualities of the *Gautama* Buddha. Special and minor characteristics: special physical characteristics of the *Gautama* Buddha. Miracles: psychic performances. Great demise: attainment of Nibbana. *Pāramita*: spiritual qualities needed for a *Bodhisattva* to become a Buddha.

### 1.14 Summary, Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Studies

Was the Buddha subject to apotheosis or deification? If so, when? Taking into consideration the above, it is hoped to examine whether the Buddha was subject to deification or apotheosis in the *Theravāda* tradition as represented by the *Pāli* Canon and Commentaries. It is anticipated that the research as described above will establish the hypothesis in spite of the hagiographical developments resulting from glorification and adulation by growing numbers of adherents in the Asian continent.

The proposed research will clear many areas of controversy and misinformation on the concept of Buddhahood in early Buddhism and in its continuation in the form of Southern Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia. The new knowledge that would result will be a contribution to the understanding of the way the Sri Lankan *Theravāda Pāli* tradition had preserved some of the characteristics of the original teachings of the Buddha.

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## Chapter 2

### Sources for the Study of the Concept of the Buddha and the Influential Elements of Indian Religious Background

In the study of the concept of the Buddha, many sources can be found both in the *Theravāda* and *Mahāyāna* traditions. On the other hand, the Indian cultural, religious, and philosophical background is also important as they greatly influenced the concept of the Buddha. In particular, the terminologies such as *Bhagavat Sramaṇa*<sup>1</sup> and the *Buddha*<sup>2</sup> have been used in ancient Indian literature although Buddhism has its own interpretations regarding those terminologies.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the sources for the study of the concept of Buddha can be classified as primary and secondary. As the primary source, *pāli* canon is of prime importance as much information could be drawn regarding the life of the Buddha from it. The discourses as well as the *Vinaya* texts are also important for this purpose. With respect to secondary sources, *Buddhavaṃsa*, *Cariyāpiṭaka* and *Pāli* commentarial literature of *Theravāda* tradition are very useful sources in the study of the gradual development of the concept of the Buddha. With regards to *Mahāyāna* sources, they also contain the valuable information of the life of the Buddha; however, they can be regarded as secondary due to the fact that life of the Buddha has been presented with many noticeable exaggerations in the texts such as *Lalitavistara*, *Buddhacarita* of Asvaghosha and in the *Mahāyāna* discourses.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Stevko, *Before Philosophy* (Hampden: Graven Image Publishing, 2014), 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, "Buddha."

<sup>3</sup> Xing, *Concept of the Buddha*, 8.

On the other hand, another important aspect of the concept of the Buddha is found in Buddhist art and sculpture, which are also very important in the study of the previous life, birth, practice of penances and austerities, enlightenment, preaching of Dhamma and other important incidents of the life of the Buddha. A perfect study in this regard is found in the article written by Dr. Ananda W.P. Guruge's Buddha without the Buddha.<sup>4</sup>

All of these texts are important in the study of the second phase of the development of the concept of the Buddha based on the early sources. This study is purely based on the *Theravāda* sources. However, the *Mahāyāna* sources are taken into special consideration wherever it is necessary.

## 2.1 Snippets in the Discourses of the *Pāli* Canon

It should be noted that the records of the life of the Buddha appear in many forms, and it is evident that the earliest are the discourses found in the *Pāli Nikāya* texts. In the discourse the Buddha recounts his events of life, especially his birth, renunciation, Buddhahood and his life after the attainment of Buddhahood. The suttas such as *Pabbajjā*,<sup>5</sup> *Nālaka*,<sup>6</sup> *Acchariyabbhūta*,<sup>7</sup> are useful as they denote the *Theravāda* interpretation of the concept of the Buddha. They are regarded as canonical texts belonging to the *Khuddakanikāya* of *Theravāda* tradition. In the *Buddhavaṃsa*, the opening two chapters are dedicated to the explanation of the *Gotama* Buddha and the second chapter is used to explain his previous life as the ascetic *Sumedha*.

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<sup>4</sup> Ananda W. P. Guruge, "Buddha without the Buddha" *Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism* 1 (2000): 85.

<sup>5</sup> *Sn.*, vs 405.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vs 679.

<sup>7</sup> *Mn.*, 3:118.

Thereafter, it describes the stories of previous Buddhas. It starts with the Buddha *Dīpaṃkara* and ends with the explanation of the Buddha *Gotama*. Last Chapter of the *Buddhavaṃsa* is known as “*Buddhapakiṇṇakakaṇḍa*” in which the names of all the 28 Buddhas are given. Here, the most important is the reference to the future Buddha *Maitrī* and other three Buddhas, *Taṇhaṃkara*, *Medhaṃkara* and *Saraṇaṃkara*. Thus, in the *Buddhavaṃsa*, there is no description of the above three Buddhas. In the canonical literature of *Theravāda* Tradition, there are names of seven Buddhas including the above three. However, *Buddhavaṃsa* is important in many ways since it has clearly given a full account of the lineage of the Buddhas with some exaggerations. According to the text, it is accepted that the Buddhas are born in the human world as ordinary human beings and thereafter attain enlightenment.<sup>8</sup>

However, it is almost the same with respect to their doctrine although the places of birth, attainment of enlightenment and his disciples, etc. are different. Thus, in the study of the concept of the Buddha, *Buddhavaṃsa* is a very important text. On the other hand, *Cariyāpiṭaka* is also important in the study of the Buddha and his fulfillment of *pāramitas*, or perfections. The term “*cariyā*” signifies the different performances made by him in the form of ten perfections with the explanation of the attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>9</sup> All the perfections are directed at helping others for their own benefit without any expectations other than the achievement of Buddhahood.

However, according to the *Theravāda* tradition, the very foundation of perfections is the “*Abhinīhāra*” as mentioned *Theravāda* literature. i.e, *Buddhavaṃsa*, its *aṭṭhakathā*, *Apadānapāli*, etc. When one has the above foundation, then only one

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<sup>8</sup> *Dn.*, 2:212.

<sup>9</sup> *Pali-English Dictionary*, “Buddhahood.”



could fulfill the path of a *Bodhisattva* which is the fulfillment of ten perfections and *Aṭṭhadhamma* i.e., being human, male, privilege of the attainment of arahantship, meeting a living Buddha, monkhood, power of attaining *abhinīhāra*, devotion and dedication extreme to Buddha, effort or *chanda*. These have been highlighted in the story of the *Sumedha* and he perfected all of the above qualities and reached great knowledge by the attainment of *abhinīhāra* and the understanding of the world of experience going from home to homelessness which represents the *nekkhamma pāramita*. His firm resolution of becoming a Buddha and the *virīya* in the clearing of the path for *Dīpaṅkara* Buddha and excelling others in his loving kindness for others etc is clearly indicated.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in the text just as in the *Buddhavamsa*, more priority has been given to *aṭṭhadhamma* and the explanation of the concept of *pāramita*, which is important for the attainment of Buddhahood. Thus, *aṭṭhadhamma* not only depicts the privilege that one should have one to become the Buddha but also the background of the ten perfections. It is said that Buddha gets a perfect personality due to the practice of the *pāramitas* and in their three subcategories i. e. *pāramita*, *upapāramita* and *paramatthapāramita*.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1.1 *Pāli* Commentaries and *Jātaka* Stories

It is evident that the *Pāli* commentaries and the *Jātaka* stories are important sources for the survey of the development of the concept of the Buddha. They clearly signify the second phase of the development of the concept of the Buddha. While the *Pāli* commentaries have attempted to highlight the spiritual attainments of the Buddha,

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<sup>10</sup> *Bv.*, 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Jāp.*, I:73.

the *Jātaka* stories give much more priority to the enhancement of the concept of *Bodhisattva* ideal especially by the introduction of his various qualities far reachable by a human. In the *Jātaka* stories, one may find the various acts of generosity, compassion, heroism, concentration, mindfulness, morality, intelligence, indomitable courage, tolerance, and renunciation, etc. Although they are the qualities of a good human being, *Bodhisattva* is special in the practice of them as he practices them in a special way. This makes him different from other human beings, just as the Buddha is different from the other ordinary human beings. In the canonical teachings, there is reference to the concept of *Bodhisattva*, but it has not received a special significance in comparison to the *Jātakapāli*, *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*. What is found in the early teachings and the commentarial literature is the significance and the unique qualities of the Buddha and his lay life as a prince. In the *Jātaka Pāli* of the *Khuddakanikāya*, the early development of the concept of *Bodhisattva* is reflected without much adoration. In the *Jātakapāli* and its commentary of *Theravāda* tradition more emphasis is given on the moral qualities of *Bodhisattva* and the fulfillment of perfections by him in which various facets of the moral qualities as well as his wisdom has received a dominant place. *Jātakapāli* and the commentary has developed the concept of *Bodhisattva* giving prominence to his wisdom and compassion.<sup>12</sup> Morality and wisdom could be regarded as the corner stones of the ten perfections which are the subject matters of *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpīṭaka*. On the other hand, *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* also has provided the necessary foundation for the development of *Bodhisattva* ideal. There too the perfection of great moral qualities

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<sup>12</sup> Kevin Trainor, *Buddhism: The Illustrated Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 91.

along with his great wisdom is reflected.

According to *Theravāda* tradition *Bodhisattva*'s sole intention is to serve all beings to get rid of their unsatisfactoriness, devote whole life for the happiness of all beings and to endeavor for the culmination of great compassion and wisdom. The culmination of above two must be fulfilled by way of ten perfections.<sup>13</sup> In the *Theravāda* tradition, the theoretical basis of the ideal of *Bodhisattva* is found in the *Jātakas*, its commentary and the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* whereas in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* the systematic development is found. The life of *Bodhisattva* signifies many great unique qualities of human life that should be practiced by a person who aspires to become *Bodhisattva*. After the completion of *Abhinīhāra*<sup>14</sup> the foundation to become *Bodhisattva*, one may fulfill ten perfections throughout his life. Thus, it denotes a very specific being quite different from other beings. This specialty comes because of the fulfillment of great qualities as a being, not on any other supernatural powers or supernormal makings. The meaning of the term "*Bodhisattva*" signifies heroic being or spiritual warrior.<sup>15</sup> However, it should be noted the two terms; *bodhi* and *sattva* are original *Pāli* terms which denote the spiritual being who is engaged in a special spiritual journey to attain Buddhahood. "*Bodhi*" signifies the highest knowledge, insight, the knowledge only achieved by the Buddha.<sup>16</sup> It basically consists of seven factors of enlightenment call *sambojjhaṅga* (*Bodhipakkhiyādhammā*)

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<sup>13</sup> *Jāp.*, I:22.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:14.

<sup>15</sup> Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Mn.*, 1:356.

which are often mentioned in the discourses.<sup>17</sup> They are attained based on the gradual practice of perfections. In the *Samyuttanikāya*, it is said that, "catusu satipaṭṭhanesu supatiṭṭhitacittā satta bojjhaṅgā yathābhutaṃ bhāvētha anuttaraṃ sambujjhisu."<sup>18</sup>

In the study of the *Bodhisattva* ideal and the ten perfections found in the commentarial literature of *Theravāda* above statement is of prime importance because it indicates that seven elements of enlightenment and the fulfillment of ten perfections are interrelated. The seven elements of enlightenment are much significant among the thirty-seven (37) factors of enlightenment, contributive to *bodhi*.<sup>19</sup> The foundation of moral qualities, perfections found in the *jātakas*, its commentary, *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* can be regarded as a further development of the seven elements of enlightenment found in the discourses. The term *Bodhi* when qualified with the additional term *satta* thus signifies a being destined to attain full enlightenment, Buddhahood.<sup>20</sup> Thus, he passes through many existences fulfilling the great qualities along with his wisdom before his last birth in which he achieves the result of his previous training.<sup>21</sup>

These are the moral lessons given in the *Jātakatṭhakathā* and the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*. However, although *Bodhisattva* comes as the most important character of the story, but more importance is given to the moral lesson. This is very much significant in the *Jātakapāli* because without giving much significance to the character of *Bodhisattva* the moral lessons are given. In the commentary too, this has

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<sup>17</sup> *An.*, 3:70.

<sup>18</sup> *Sn.*, 5:160.

<sup>19</sup> *Vm.*, 678.

<sup>20</sup> *An.*, 3:300.

<sup>21</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:1.

been well maintained without the adoration of the character of *Bodhisattva*.<sup>22</sup> However more importance is highlighted of morality with the inclusion of past and present happenings of life. Although same significance is maintained in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* in comparison to the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*, but the present incident that led to the narration of the story is given some more significance with its moral theme.

The motto is presented with the present and the past story and the theme is given at the beginning. More concern is given on the theme and the valuable advice imprinted in it. *Bodhisattva* is the foremost character in the stories with respect to his moral behavior. However, if the story is presented due to the immoral or moral behavior of a person or a monk, it is also given much significance. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* as well as the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* does not give more embellishment to the Buddha. Further, in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, there is no special reference to the fulfillment of perfections as well. The sole purpose is to give the moral lesson with explanations to its background that led to such human weaknesses or some immoral behavior.

The characters of individuals found in the stories differ from each other based on the quality of moral or immoral behavior nothing else. The most important fact is that all the difficulties have been overcome by the power of morality and wisdom not by any other miraculous happening or power. This is common to both texts. Although miraculous happenings are there, they are not the primary concern in the stories. A

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<sup>22</sup> *Jāp.*, 6:595.

close study of the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* shows the neatness of the historicity of the development of both concepts, i.e., concept of Buddha and *Bodhisattva*.

## 2.2 Vedic Concept of Moral Standard and Enlightenment

In the Rig Vedic hymns; called *Brahman* (what makes to grow), there is glorification and personification of the natural objects of the nature and phenomenal changes. The sacrifice and the religious rites were performed to obtain rewards from them as an assistance to wield power over their enemies. Thus, they especially expected victory in war to maintain their authority. Furthermore, they wished for wealth in the form of many cattle, much gold, rain for agriculture children and longevity. However, it should be mentioned that there is no reference to salvation in the *Rig Vedic* hymns. The reference to the kingdom of *Yama* where the *Pitaras*<sup>23</sup> or ancestor spirits dwell reflects their belief in an afterlife in the Vedic hymns signifying their belief of reincarnation.

The concept of moral standard which was introduced by the Bramanical tradition is related to the *Rig Vedic* teaching on *ṛita*. The term *ṛita* signifies the truth and the term *anṛta* denotes immoral conduct.<sup>24</sup> If someone is given to such immoral conduct, he is punished by the god *Varuna*.<sup>25</sup> In many a *Rig Vedic* hymn, one may find the moral qualities such as kindness, generosity, charity, and elimination of carving etc. According to the *Rig Vedic* teaching, the evils or the vices are sorcery, witchcraft,

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<sup>23</sup> Jan A. Gonda, *History of Indian Literature* Vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975), 330.

<sup>24</sup> K. R. Pruthi, *Vedic Civilization* (New Delhi, Discovery Publishing House, 2004), 150.

<sup>25</sup> *Rig Veda*. 8:41.7; John Mckenzie, *Hindu Ethics: A Historical and Critical Essay* (London: Forgotten Books, 2012), 6.

adultery, and gambling. There are about forty hymns that extol the significance of charity known as *Danastuti*.<sup>26</sup> Moreover another very important concept that can be observed is the praise of ascetic practice. The above stands as evidential for the assumption that prior to the *Rig Vedic* teachings became the monopoly of a religious class, it emphasized the significance of not only moral conduct but also the ascetic practice for the self-experience of the ultimate truth. Especially the reference to carving and the ending of craving signifies a deep philosophical background. However, in course of time *ṛita* was equated to *Yajna* or sacrificial ritual and it is found in the voluminous literature of the *Brahmans*. The result was the gradual disappearance of the spiritual qualities of life such as ascetic practice, ethical norms etc., of the people which gave much opportunity for the superficial performances of sacrifices.

However, when it comes to the *Upanishad* period there is much emphasis on the relationship of ethics and salvation. In the *Kathopanisad* one may find the two terms i.e., *Sreyas*<sup>27</sup> (the higher and conducive to good) and *Preyas*<sup>28</sup> (pleasurable or pleasant) which signifies its opposite. The moral qualities that are found in the *Upanishad* are *sāma* (calmness of mind) *dāma* (control of self), *titikshā* (patience), *sraddhā* (faith), *uparati* (detachment) and *samādhāna* (concentration). Moreover, three important ethical concepts are mentioned in a parable, and they are the *Damyata*

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<sup>26</sup> Gonda, *A History of Indian Literature* I:170.

<sup>27</sup> S. Radhakrisnan and Charles A. Moore, *Indian Philosophy* (New Jersey: Princeton University, 1967), 43.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

(control oneself), *Dāta* (generosity) and *dayāvaham* (be compassionate). These are kinds of gridlines of life given to the students at the end of their studies.<sup>29</sup>

After the explanations of after-life and the ethical practices, the following concepts are given much priority i.e., Role of *kamma*, *Ātman* etc. It is said that one can be reborn on earth or in another world. There is reference to the *Pretaloka* (discarnate spirit in an intermediary state) and the *Pitri-loka* (ancestors-spirits), *Swarga* (heaven), *Brahmaloka* (the highest planet) etc. The salvation which is called *Moksha* is attained in *Brahmaloka*. It is of two kinds as *karmavimukti* (progressive liberation) and *sadyovimukti* (instant liberation) The *Moksha* is known as *Brahmanirvāna* which means re-absorption of the *Ātman* in its source and the formula *Tatvamasī* signifies the experience of the ultimate essence called *Brahman*. It is a state of mind experienced in the present life and the one who has attained it is known as *Jivan-mukta*<sup>30</sup> (liberated while alive).

### 2.2.2 Ethical Perfection and Yogic Practices

The *Sramana* tradition has given much prominence to the Yogic meditation and the ethical perfection. The strict ascetic practice by the *Ājīvaka*<sup>31</sup> such as fasting and the *Niganṭha*<sup>32</sup> such as nudity, *paribrājaka*<sup>33</sup> such as wondering etc signifies the strong belief they had about such practices for their salvation. These two traditions coexisted and there is no doubt that they absorbed each other's teachings and practices which led to the nourishment of both traditions. As a result, common vocabulary has

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<sup>29</sup> S. Yatiswarānanda, *How to Seek God* (Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 2013), 51.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>31</sup> *An.*, 3:276,384.

<sup>32</sup> *Mn.*, 1:370-375.

<sup>33</sup> *Vn.*, 1:342.



come into existence. *Ajīvakaś* signify a predominant religious moment in the time of the Buddha, and they had no permanent abodes. They believed the cycle of reincarnation of the soul and their philosophy was based on determinism. Thus, they did not believe in the doctrine of kamma. *Makkhali Ghosāla* is regarded as the founder of *Ājīvaka* traditions and *Pūrṇakassapa* was another leading figure of the *Ājīvaka* tradition. Their religious theory is presented in the *Sāmaññaphalasutta* of *Dīghanikāya* as follows: - “Natthi mahārāja hetu natthi paccayo sattānaṃ saṃkilesāya. ahetu appaccayā sattā saṃkilissanti. natthi hetu natthi paccayo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā. ahetu appaccayā sattā visujjhanti.”<sup>34</sup>

O great king! There is no reason or condition for the defiling of beings, without reasons and conditions beings get defiled. There are no reasons or conditions for the purity of beings, without reasons and conditions beings get purified.” This indicates that they were strict determinists and denied the power of human will and ethical significance of *kamma*.

The *paribrājaka* traditions are another significant religious movement and they wandered from one place to another in the quest of ultimate truth. *Ajitakesakambala* can be quoted as belonging to *Paribrājaka* tradition.<sup>35</sup> It is a common terminology used for all the wandering ascetics. An explanation to the term has been given in the book; *Buddhist India* quoting from *Vasistha Dharmasāstra* as follows: -

The term “*Paribbājaka*” may require a word of explanation. It is stated in the *Vasistha Dharmasāstra* (Chap.10) that a *Paribbājaka* should shave his head, clothe

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<sup>34</sup> *Dn.*, 1:53.

<sup>35</sup> *The Dharmasāstra* 1, ed. Manmatha Nath Dutt (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 1988), Chap 10.

himself with one piece of cloth or antelope skin or cover his body with grass plucked by cows. He should sleep on bare ground.”<sup>36</sup>

According to the Buddhist sources, there were two traditions of *Paribrājakās*. The first was known as the *Aññatitthiya Paribrājaka* and the second traditions was known as the *Brāhmaṇa Paribrājakas*.<sup>37</sup> The *Brāhmaṇa Paribrajakās* were interested in the discussion of material things of life and thus they came to be known as *Lokāyata*, or *Brahaspratya*. It is said that they discussed the *Sandiṭṭhikadhamma*<sup>38</sup> which signifies the mundane affairs of life. However, the *Aññatitthiya Paribrājakas* dedicated their life for the self-realization in thought and conduct. Thus, their philosophy was based on the realization of the true essence of human life and the external world.

### 2.2.3 Spiritual Attainments Identified in Jainism and Buddhism

The Jainism took its root in the time of the *Jaina Mahāvīra* (599 B.C.-527 B.C.).<sup>39</sup> However, he presented himself as the 24<sup>th</sup> predecessor of the lineage of Jains. The Jain’s name *Pārsava* can be identified as a historical figure out of them. It is said that he had the moral code of nonviolence (*ahimsa*), Trust (*satya*) non-stealing (*achaurya* or *asteya*) celibacy/chastity (*brahmacariya*), non-attachment (*aparigraha*).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India* (Calcutta: Susil Gupta Private Ltd, 1959), 141-148.

<sup>37</sup> *An.*, 1:157.

<sup>38</sup> *Dn.*, 1:93.

<sup>39</sup> Thornton D. M. Parsi, *Jaina and Sikh* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003), 10.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

Different levels of spiritual attainments are also mentioned in Jainism. For instance, in the formula of *pañcanamaskāra* (five to be bowed) and the five persons of high spiritual attainments are mentioned as follows: -

- *Namoarihantānam*
- *Namosiddhānam*
- *Namoācariyānam*
- *Namoupajjhāyānam*
- *Namoloesavvasāhunam*
- *Esopanchanamokāro*
- *Savvapāvapanāsano*
- *Mangalānam cha savvesim*
- *Padhamamhava mangalam*<sup>41</sup>

They are the *Arahants*, *Siddhās*, *Ācariyas*, *Upadyāyas* and *Sādus*. In the Buddhist vinaya, the terms *Ācariya* and *Upadyāya*<sup>42</sup> are often mentioned. The term *Sādhu* signifies a generic term conveying the meaning of good people who have some spiritual qualities rather than the spiritual attainments. One significant character is that although the term *Arhat* is there, the terms *Jina* or *Tīrthamkara* are not found. However, the term *Arhat* conveys the above meaning well. Buddhism has not borrowed many terminologies from the prevailing traditions because it has its own terminology although such have influenced the nourishment of Buddhism. Nonetheless the terms such as *Bhagavat* and *Satthā* were common terms of the

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<sup>41</sup> Vensus A. George, *Paths to the Divine: An Ancient Indian* (Washington: Library of Congress, 2008), 376.

<sup>42</sup> *Vn.*, 1:60; *Vn.*, 2:231; *Vn.*, 5:130.

*Sramana* tradition. The terms, *Buddha*, *Sammāsambuddha*, *Tathāgata* and *Pacckabudda* and the *sotāpanna*, *sakadāgāmi*, *anāgāmi* which denotes the different stages of spiritual development are purely Buddhist terms.

#### 2.2.4 Theoretical Difference in the Two Traditions

The Brahmanical tradition which developed based on Vedic teachings had a quite different interpretation of the phenomenal world and was strongly based on a theistic foundation whereas the *Sramana* tradition preferred to give an idealistic or materialistic explanation of the world of phenomena. Thus, the way of life and their teachings were quite different from each other.<sup>43</sup>

The Brahmanical tradition is based on the path of sacrifice and attempted to find propitiation of gods as an ultimate solution to the problem of life whereas *Sramana* tradition followed the path of knowledge and attempted to find an ultimate solution to the problem of human unsatisfactoriness, represented by such terms *arta*<sup>44</sup> and *dukkha*<sup>45</sup> in Sanskrit and *Dukkha* in *Pāli*<sup>46</sup> and Prakrits. It is obvious that these two traditions are different in theory and practice. Nonetheless the different views of the phenomenal world held by these two traditions of thought led to further development of Indian philosophy in course of time.

The Brahmanical thought is often regarded as traditionalist and is based on the belief of the authenticity of Vedic teachings. *Sramana* tradition was based on logical

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<sup>43</sup> Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Press, 1974), xv.

<sup>44</sup> *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, “arta “

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Pāli English Dictionary*, “dukkha”

reasoning or empiricism. There were at least four ways of observation of the world of phenomena in the time of the Buddha and they can be classified as follows: -

**Table 2.1: Foundation of Knowledge and Practice**

Foundation of Knowledge	Type of Practice
Traditionalism	Sacred Texts
Rationalism	Logical Reasoning
Empiricism	Spiritual Practices
Ritualism	Mere Penances and Sacrifice <sup>47</sup>

At the time of the Buddha, many thought that the Vedas were revealed (*apauruseya*-not of human origin) texts and their traditional contained the self-realized ultimate truth of the phenomenal and individual world.<sup>48</sup> Rationalism,-based on logical reasoning of the individual and phenomenal world, on the contrary, preferred to be investigated various concepts, diversity views on good and bad, cause and effect, life after death, universe etc. Their interpretation of the moral and ethical principles sometimes had adverse effects on traditional beliefs and practices. According to *Samgārawa sutta*,<sup>49</sup> it is obvious that most of rationalists were materialists.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Dn.* 1:33.

<sup>48</sup> *Encyclopedia of Religion* Vol. 12, (1924) "Vedas Ultimate Truth" Charles Scribner's Sons, 313.

<sup>49</sup> *Mn.* 2:209.

<sup>50</sup> Raj R. Singh, *Bhakti and Philosophy* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), 36.

In this context, the empiricists had a quite different view of the individual and the phenomenal world. Some of them had spiritual attainments and assigned greater significance to morality and ethics. As against materialism, their empirical knowledge, further utilizing extra sensory perception, had idealism as its foundation.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to the above three major traditions of thought, the Brahmanical sacrifices and the austere fasting and *Hatha Yoga* elements of the *Sramana* tradition fell into the category of mere ritual and penances, which were performed in the hope of attaining spiritual objectives such as realizing the ultimate truth or attaining salvation.

The *Sramana* tradition concentrated on two basic questions i.e., what is true knowledge (*sacca*) and what is skillful or wholesome (*kusala*). Here, *Sacca* signifies the knowledge of the reality of the universe<sup>52</sup> whereas *kusala* refers to the skillfulness to reach that knowledge and act accordingly.<sup>53</sup> The practitioners of the *Sramana* tradition were motivated by curiosity and enthusiasm to see the true knowledge.

The various views of the phenomenal and individual world came into being because of the above traditions had a great impact on the life of prince *Siddhārtha*. On being disillusioned by his life of self-indulgence and luxury, he sought ultimate happiness through the *Sramana* tradition. He studied and investigated many theories and practices concerning the nature of phenomenal world and human life. The *Brahmajālasutta* enumerates sixty-two views of various kinds, which he as the

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<sup>51</sup> *Dn.*, 3:281.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:182.

<sup>53</sup> *Mn.*, 1:226.

Buddha rejected on a practical and logical basis as erroneous and not leading to the realization of ultimate truth and to one's consequent deliverance.<sup>54</sup>

### 2.2.5 Ideals of Spiritual Attainments in the Brahmanical and Sramana Traditions

The ideals of the spiritual attainments of the two traditions have a big difference in theory and practice. The path selected by the *Brāhmaṇa* tradition for the attainment of goal is the *karma mārga* whereas the *sramanas* followed the *gñānamārga*. Thus, the Brahmanism prescribes different kinds of sacrifices such as the five great sacrifices<sup>55</sup> for the realization of the ultimate reality of universe which is *Brahman*. Further kind of deep observation of the ultimate reality is also found in the *Brāhmaṇa* teachings. For instance, advice is given to concentration as follows: -

“Great indeed are the *devās* who have sprung out of Brahman.” *Atharva Veda* thus implies that there is some tendency towards deep observation of the *Brahman* reality. It is believed that after one's death one can be one with the *Brahman* which is beyond time, space, morality, and causality. However, their spiritual attainment was totally based on the sacrifices. The *sramana* tradition had a quite different approach towards realization of the ultimate truth the *sramanas* who were not materialists gave priority for the spiritual development based on various ascetic practices. *Brahmajālasutta*, *D.N.* mentions how they described the realization of ultimate truth according to their attainment of the different spiritual states of mind. They described that it is the final goal and the ultimate realization. However, they perceived that attachment to the mundane world is a stumbling block for the spiritual attainments. Thus, they gave

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<sup>54</sup> *Dn.*, I:39.

<sup>55</sup> *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (2002). “Karma mārga and Gñānamārga.” The Rosen Publishing Group Inc, 124.

priority for the practice of rigorous asceticism. The *Sāmaññaphalasutta* also gives a clear account of the different spiritual attainments that could be reached by such practices. However, most of the *sramanas* when they attained certain mental states of mind thought that it is the ultimate reality and cannot go beyond that state of mind. Thus, some had developed the *nevasaññānasaññāyatana* state of mind which is the highest mental development described in the *suttās* and with such spiritual attainments they had developed the higher knowledges. In the *Pāli* Canon, the higher knowledges are often enumerated in a group of six including the extinction of cankers (*āsavakkhayañāna*).<sup>56</sup>

The six kinds of higher attainments (*chaḷabhiññā*)<sup>57</sup> are: -

1. "Higher powers" (*iddhi-vidha*) ability to walk on water and penetrate through walls.
2. "Divine ear" (*dibba-sota*) that is, special faculty of hearing far away voices, popularly known as clairaudience.
3. "Mind-penetrating knowledge" (*ceto-pariyañāna*) ability to read others' mind.
4. "Remember one's former abodes" (*pubbe-nivāsānussati*) ability to recall one's own previous lives.
5. "Divine eye" (*dibba-cakkhu*) ability to perceive how beings are born in accordance with their *kammās*.
6. Extinction of all cankers without a trace (*āsavakkhaya*) full emancipation.

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<sup>56</sup> *Dn.*, 1:156.

<sup>57</sup> *Sn.*, 2:217-222.



The sixth higher knowledge is the new contribution done by the Buddha towards the *sramana* tradition. The spiritual attainments of all the sramanas before the Buddha had confined to the above higher knowledges. However, according to the Buddha, *Brahmins* as well as *Sramanas* were extremists and followed the path of sense-gratification and the self-mortification.

### 2.2.6 Transition from the Brahmanical Tradition

In the Rigvedic hymns, the recitation of its hymns, called *Brahman* (what makes to grow) and thereby glorifying nature gods to increase their power and the worship of such gods were religious rites to obtain such rewards as help against enemies, victory in war for fame and booty, wealth in the form of many cattle and much gold, rain for agriculture, many children and longevity.<sup>58</sup>

No concept of salvation occurs in the Rigvedic hymns even though a kingdom of Yama where the *Pitaras* or ancestor spirits went to reflect their belief in an afterlife. As Anada Guruge states, “The moral standard which was upheld in the Brahmanical tradition dates to the Rigvedic *rita*.<sup>59</sup> *Rita* meant the truth while *Anṛta* as falsehood included immoral conduct,<sup>60</sup> which was punished by *Varuṇa*, *Rigveda* in several hymns spells out the moral values observed in such a way of life as kindness, generosity, charity, and elimination of craving. The vices condemned are sorcery, witchcraft, adultery, and gambling.<sup>61</sup> As many as forty hymns extol charity and are

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<sup>58</sup> *A History of Indian Literature* Vol. 1, ed. M. Winternitz (New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 2010), 61-72.

<sup>59</sup> Ananda W. P. Guruge, *The Society of the Ramayana* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1991), 275.

<sup>60</sup> *Rigveda* 3:3; 3:34.

<sup>61</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, and Charles A. Moore, *Indian Philosophy*, 1:11.

listed as *Danastuti*.<sup>62</sup> *Rigveda* also has hymns in praise of ascetic practice. There is no doubt that before the early *Vedic* religion became the monopoly of a priestly caste, it had not only an ethical system to govern the lives of the people but also had a place for ascetic practices. When *ṛita* was equated to *yajna* or sacrificial ritual in the voluminous liturgical literature of the *Brahmaṇas*, ethical and ascetic aspects of the old *Dharma* gradually disappeared from the spiritual life of the people”<sup>63</sup> A significant emphasis on ethics and salvation is to be noted in the *Upanishads*. *Kathopanishad* distinguishes between *Sreyās* (the higher and conducive to good) and *Preyās* (pleasurable or pleasant) which is its opposite.<sup>64</sup> The moral qualities highlighted in the *Upanishad* include *sāma* (calmness of mind), *dāma* (control of self), *titiksā* (patience), *sraddhā* (faith), *uparati* (detachment) and *samādhaāna* (concentration). In a parable, three ethical concepts as *Damyata* (control oneself), *dāta* (give or be generous) and *dāyadhvam* (be compassionate) are mentioned<sup>65</sup> The traditional admonition to students at the end of their studies provided guidelines for life:

With initial discussions on after-life in a cycle of birth and death and the role of Karma, the undying atman, in after-life, was presented as being able to be reborn on earth, or in another planet, as a *preta* or discarnate spirit in an intermediary state, in the *Pitri-loka* with ancestor spirits, in *naraka* (hell), in *svarga* (heaven, or passing through *sūryadvāra* (gate of the sun) in *Brahmaloka* and attain *moksa* (salvation.) either through *kramavimukti* (progressive liberation) or through *sadyovimukti* (instant liberation). *Moksa* is also called *Brahmanirvana* meaning reabsorption of the *Ātman* in

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<sup>62</sup> *A History of Indian Literature* Vol. 1, ed, M. Winternitz, 104-107.

<sup>63</sup> Ananda, W. P. Guruge, *Society of the Ramayana*, 276.

<sup>64</sup> Yatiswarananda, *How to Seek God*, 291.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

its source, which in the formula *Tattvamasi* is *Brahman*. It is a state that is achieved here and now in life and one who has attained it is called *Jīvan-mukta* (liberated while alive).<sup>66</sup>

### 2.3 Later Sanskrits Works of the *Mahayāna* Tradition

In addition to the above sources, later Sanskrit works of *Mahayāna* tradition are also important in the study of the concept of the Buddha, though they have a quite different attitude towards the concept of the Buddha.<sup>67</sup> However, they are very useful sources as it is not impossible to see the human qualities of the Buddha amidst the huge exaggerations. The Sanskrit works such as *Mahāvastu*, *Lalitavistara* and *Buddhacarita*.

For instance, The *Mahāvastu* is a very important text belonging to the *Lokottaravāda*.<sup>68</sup> The texts while describing the Buddhist monastic codes have given much prominence for the description of *Jātaka* and *Avadāna* tales. They give details of the earlier existences of the Buddha and other *Bodhisattvas*. They have been written between the 2nd century BCE and 4th century CE. As known, it is the *Lokottaravāda* Buddhist school that attempted to give a metaphysical significance to the concept of the Buddha.

According to the descriptions in the text, the birth, going from home to homelessness, practice of self-mortification, enlightenment etc have been described

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<sup>66</sup> Yatiswarananda, *How to Seek God*, 291.

<sup>67</sup> Paul Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 20.

<sup>68</sup> *Mahāvastu* Vol. 1, Reprint, ed. J. J. Jones (London: Forgotten Books, 2015), X1.

without much more exaggerations which account for the superhuman qualities of the *Bodhisattva* and Buddha. For instance, the following prince replied,

Grant me father, these eight boons: that old age does not overtake my youth ; that disease does not overtake my health ; that death does not take away my life ; that I shall not be bereft of your company ; that this harem of women like the Apsaras and my numerous kinsfolk do not disappear ; that this kingdom and realm experience no reverse or any other evil vicissitude ; that those who at my birth were invited to partake of ambrosial joy should all have their lusts quelled, and that for me there be an end of birth, old age and death.....<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, *Lalitavistara* is another important source for the study of the concept of the Buddha. The *Lalitavistara* which belongs to *Mahāyāna* tradition relates full account of the Buddha from the *Tushita* heaven until his first sermon in the Deer Park near Benares.<sup>70</sup> However, this text is important as it has made a clear attempt to depict the Buddha as a metaphysical being. In accordance with the *Mahāyāna* view it makes clear that the Buddha's last manifestation is only a "display" or a "performance" given for the wellbeing of the beings in this world.<sup>71</sup> Quite contrary to the *Mahāvastu* and *Teravāda* view of the Buddha, it has tried given some supernatural significance to the Buddha basically it describes the Buddha before his birth in the human world, the birth and early life of the prince, his Marriage and Renunciation, his Enlightenment and the preaching of first sermon.

As a request made by the gods while he was in *Jetavana* Buddha tells the story of his previous life and his awakening for the benefit of all beings. The very beginning of the story clearly indicate that it has attempted to give some divine significance to

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<sup>69</sup> *Mahavastu.*,1:171.

<sup>70</sup> *Lalitavistara* Vol. 1, ed. Bays Gwendolyn (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1983), 124.

<sup>71</sup> Sarla Khosla, *Lalitavistara and the Evolution of Buddha Legend* (New Delhi: Galaxy Publications, 1991), 9.

the Buddha because it is said that the *Bodhisattva* has the full enjoyment of heavenly pleasures and it goes to say that as he had past aspirations, one day the musical instruments of the heavenly palace reminded him of his prior commitment to attain enlightenment. Thus, it is clear that in this text the concept of the Buddha has taken a new dimension. Even in the womb of the *Mahamāya*, he is engaged in meditation and enjoying the happiness of absorption.<sup>72</sup> However, just as in other sources, all the incidents that happened during his life until the attainment of the Buddhahood are described. Thus, it is clearly although attempt is there to exaggerate the most important incidents of his life, but still, it is not impossible to see real picture of the Buddha as a great human being.

The *Buddhacarita* of *Ācariya Asvaghosha* is another important work in which the author has tried to develop utmost devotion towards to Buddha. Just as the other biographies of the Buddha, it also describes the life of the Buddha starting from *Tusita* haven. It is said that he departed from the heavenly beings in *Tusita* heaven radiating the three worlds. Thereafter the most brilliant *Bodhisattvas* at once entered at a thought into her womb, like the *Nāga*-king entering the cave of *Nandā*.<sup>73</sup> In this way it goes on describing the life of Buddha with utmost devotion. However, it is not impossible to understand the true incidents of the life of the Buddha as well as the fundamental teachings preached by the Buddha. Hence, this text can be regarded as a great epic of the life of the Buddha in which true happenings are described with much more devotion and adoration.

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<sup>72</sup> Khosla, *Lalitavistara and the Evaluation of Buddha Legend*, 12.

<sup>73</sup> *Buddha Carita*, ed. Edward B. Cowell (Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1970), 1-20 Vs.

### 2.3.2 Jinacarita

The *Pāli* poem *Jinacarita* is another important biography of the Buddha which can be compared to the *Asvaghosa's Buddhacarita*. It is said that the monk named *Medhamkara* composed the *Jinacarita* in Ceylon, in a monastery built by King *Vijayabāhu*. The *Jinacarita* is the life of the Conqueror, the Buddha. The life of the Buddha is described with full of poetic embellishments for instance *Kālundāyī's* description of the way to *Kapilavastu* the beauty of *Māyā*, the Buddha's mother; depiction of the charms of *Yasodharā*, conflict with *Māra*, the descriptions of the *Lumbini* park and of the *Veluvana*, as well as that of the three palaces of young *Siddhārtha*. For instance, *Yasodharā* is said to have "beautiful eyes, like blue-lotuses" (*Nettanīlakamala-Yasodharā*) and in many passages the Buddha's face is compared to a lotus.<sup>74</sup> Thus it seems that the sole purpose of the text is to describe the life of the Buddha with poetic emblems. Just as other texts of this nature, it is not impossible to see the true picture of the Buddha through the art of poetry.

### 2.4 Sculptures of Gandhara Art, Borobudur

Sculptures of *Gandhāra* and *Bōrobudur* are also important in the study of the life of the Buddha because the true incidents of the life of the Buddha are well depicted in the *Gandhāriyan* art and *Borobudur*. Quite a commentary to the literary works, they depict all the incidents of the life of the Buddha in the form of artistic beauty. For instance, *Borobudur* which is entirely based on the *Lalitavistara* and *Avadāna* literature gives a clear picture of the Buddha in accordance with the *Mahāyāna* views. The focus on the *Borobudur* is on the Buddha's life is based on his

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<sup>74</sup> *Jin.*, vs 337.

birth and early life, his marriage and renunciation, and the attainment of Buddhahood and the preaching of his first sermon. All the Major incidents have been given in a story which are full of exaggerations and with view to generate some more significance on the life of the Buddha. For instance, it is depicted that the Indra's palace is situated on the peak of Mount *Sumeru* and the Buddha's lives among those clouds above the palace.<sup>75</sup> There the *Bodhisattva's* decision to be born in the world is conveyed to the gods surrounded. He is depicted as a person of high status, and he preaches the *dhamma* to the deities. There he offers his crown to the *Bodhisattva Maitri* who is the designated inheritor next. This he prepares to be born in human world. This way *Borobudur* in accordance with the textual stories of *Lalitavistara* and *Avadāna* literature has given a vivid depiction of the life of the Buddha.

## 2.5 Life of the Buddha without the Buddha's Image

The aniconic sculptures of *Bhārhut*, *Sāṃci*, *Amarāvati* and *Nagārjunakonda* are important in this regard.<sup>76</sup> In the early periods it is clear that the Buddha was not depicted in human form due to the utmost faith and veneration towards him.<sup>77</sup> Hence, various kinds of symbols have been used in order to describe the important incidents of the life of the Buddha.<sup>78</sup> Specially in the places such as : *Bhārhut*, *Sāṃci*, *Amarāvati* etc where such kind of art can be observed. For instance in order to depict the enlightenment of the *Bodhisattva*, the Bo-tree has been used and they can be seen

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<sup>75</sup> *Encyclopedia of Britannica*, (2015) "Borobudur" [www.britannica.com/topic/Borobudur](http://www.britannica.com/topic/Borobudur), Accessed April 18, 2018

<sup>76</sup> Avari Burjur, *The Ancient Past: A History of Ancient Indian Sub-Continent from 7000 B. C. to A. D. 1200* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 152.

<sup>77</sup> Ratan Parimoo, *Life of the Buddha in Indian Sculpture* (New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1982), 4.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Knox, *Amaravati: Buddhist Sculpture from the Great Stupa* (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 33.

in the *Bhārhut stupa*.<sup>79</sup> There not only the Gotama Buddha's enlightenment but also the enlightenment of the Buddhas such as *Vipassi*, *Sikhī*, *Vessabhu*, *Kakusanda*, *Konāgamana*, *Kassapa* are depicted by the use of the *Bo-tree*.<sup>80</sup> The enlightenment and the defeat of the *Māras* are all given by the use of the *Bo-tree* in *Amarāvati*. On the other hand, to foretell the preaching of the first sermon, the *Dharmacakra* has been used as a symbol. This can be seen in the ancient art of *Bhārhut*.<sup>81</sup> However, this has been used as a very important symbol to depict the Buddha in the places such as *Amarāvati*, *Sāṃci*, *Gandhāra*, *Bhārhut* etc. On the other hand, the great demise of the Buddhas has also been depicted in the form a symbol and thereby the sculpture have used the symbol of *Stupa*. For instance, in the *Sāṃchi* front spice, one may observe the symbolization of the great demise of the Buddha.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to the above major incidents, one may find that all the incidents have been depicted using one sculpture in some places. For instance, In *Amarāvati* and *Nārgarjunakonda*, *Bo-tree*, *Dharmacakra* and *Stupa* have been given in one frame of sculpture to depict the three incidents together.

In addition to the above incidents, some other important incidents of life of the Buddha such as his descending from heaven to earth, perambulation on water, *irddhiprātihārya* to control some recluses of other faith are depicted using some other symbols. For instance, in *Sāṃci*, one may find different symbols used for the depiction

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<sup>79</sup> A. Cunnigham, *Stupa of Bhārhut: A Buddhist Monument Ornamented with Numerous Sculpturs, Illustrated of Buddhist Legends and History in the Third Century B.C.* (Varanasi: Indological Book House, 1962), 4.

<sup>80</sup> B. Wiamalaratana, *Buddha before the Buddha Statue* (Nugegoda: Sarasavi Publishers, 2010), 48.

<sup>81</sup> Parimoo, *Life of the Buddha in Indian Sculpture*, 25.

<sup>82</sup> Kramrisch Stella, *Indian Sculpture* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), 152.



above incidents of his life.<sup>83</sup> On the whole, the use of symbols is another form of Buddhist tradition related to the concept of the Buddha. They are also important because they are very simple and plainly describe the happenings of the life of the Buddha. Whether it is *Mahāyāna* or *Theravāda*, it is not impossible to go deep into the true happenings of the Buddha as a superhuman being on the earth

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<sup>83</sup> B. Wimalaratana, *Buddha before the Buddha Statue*, 56.

## Chapter 3

### Historicity and the Superhuman Nature of the Buddha

Although the word ‘Buddha’ is a generic term that denotes all the Buddhās, sometimes it has been applied in the meaning of a proper name. Nonetheless it is the most appropriate name to describe him. The contextual usage of the term as well as its definition is important to understand the special characteristics of the Buddha. Many other terms have been used in order to depict the uniqueness of the Buddha in the early Buddhist discourses as well as the later Buddhist literature. Hence, the definition and the related meaning of the term needed to be discussed extensively in order to show the unique human qualities of the Buddha because sometimes some terms have been used in the sense of a god, or almighty being with different inner connotations. Some are of the view that the Buddha is regarded as a supernatural being in the *Theravāda* tradition as well.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to examine the other equivalent terms to understand their meaning. The Buddha has never been uplifted to the state of a god in the *Theravāda* tradition, though there is glorification that generates faith. In the early Buddhist as well as the *Theravāda* Buddhist literature out of respect for the Buddha many terms have been used in the sense of a god as well, yet still the human characteristics of him are not tarnished due to the application of such terms in the *Theravāda* Buddhist tradition. For instance, one can examine that he has been equated with the great *Brahma*, the then popular concept in the Vedic teachings and has tried to depict him as surpassing even the great *Brahma*. Though such have paved way in the *Mahāyāna* tradition to give a completely different picture of

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<sup>1</sup> Xing, *Concept of the Buddha*, 13.

the Buddha, but in the *Theravāda* tradition one cannot examine such a trend. Therefore, it is important to understand the variation between the adoration and the deification. In this regard, three important facts can be discussed as follows: -

- Significance the terminologies used for the Buddha
- Buddha's own explanations of the nature and characteristics of himself in the early period of his mission.
- The views of his close associates of him and the way they have perceived.

Therefore, in this definition, taking into consideration all the aspects it is hoped to point out the exact position of the Buddha in the *Theravāda* tradition.

### **3.1 The Terminology “Buddha”**

The common terminology “Buddha” signifies ‘The Awakened One’ - the One who realized the ultimate truth, *Nibbāna*.<sup>2</sup> Hence, Buddha is regarded an enlightened one, an unchanging state of mind attained after the eradication of defilements and a complete release from *dukkha*; the state of unsatisfactoriness.<sup>3</sup> This signifies that the Buddha is not a prophet, or a holy messenger that came to the world of humans for their salvation. He was born in the human world and attained *Nibbāna* due to his own effort and thus reached the highest level of wisdom and realized the suchness or thatness: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and soullessness known as the Three Characteristics in the early Buddhist discourses. Thus, he came to be known as *Acchariyamanussa*,<sup>4</sup> an extraordinary human being. According to the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition, this state of mind is

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<sup>2</sup> *Mhn.*, 458.

<sup>3</sup> *Suv.*, 1:60.

<sup>4</sup> *Dn.*, 2:17.

achieved by a *Bodhisattva* after the gradual development of spiritual qualities in his *samsaric* life.<sup>5</sup> It is said that the *Dhamma* or the ultimate reality always exists in the universe and when it disappears from the world, Buddhas from time to time reveal it to the world for the wellbeing of all beings. Thus, Buddhas appear in due times when the people can grasp the ultimate truth. There are three types of Buddhās in *Theravāda* tradition. i.e.

- *Sammā Sambuddha*; this signifies a self-enlightened Buddha. He realizes the truth (*Nibbāna*) by himself without any direction and instructions from others. Hence, he is called self-enlightened Buddha.<sup>6</sup> Further, he is fully capable for teaching the truth (the *Dhamma*) discovered by himself to others. Thus, the *Gautama* Buddha is a self-enlightened one and belongs to this class of Buddhas. (*Sammā Sambuddha*)
- *Paccèka Buddha* is also a self-enlightened one and has attained *Nibbāna*, yet he is unable to reveal the truth (the *Dhamma*) to the world.
- *Sāvaka Buddha or Arahats* are those who have attained *Nibbāna* under the direction of a *Sammā Sambuddha*<sup>7</sup> and can preach the *Dhamma* to the world.

The all the enlightened ones have attained the *Nibbāna* through different means and are fully emancipated. However, *Sāvaka Buddha or Arahats* need the full direction of a *Sammā Sambuddha* to attain the ultimate truth and the *Pacceka Buddha* though self-enlightened, cannot reveal the truth to the world. There are some special terms that imply utmost respect to the Buddhas *Theravāda* tradition and they are: -

- *Bhagavat* - The most fortunate one or the one who has eradicated all sorts of

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<sup>5</sup> *Suv.*, 2:427.

<sup>6</sup> *Mp.*, 1: 65.

<sup>7</sup> *Vm.*, 411.

*samsaric* weaknesses,

- *Tathāgata* - the one who has reached the thatness, or suchness (ultimate truth)
- *Sugatha* - the one who has reached the ultimate truth through the fulfillment of perfection. - (*pāramitas*)
- *Lokavidu* – the one who knows the worlds, world of five aggregates, its origin, causality, path, and cessation.<sup>8</sup>

Further, the Buddha is also known as having ten intellectual powers (*Dasa-bala*)<sup>9</sup> and they can be pointed out as follows: -

1. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing what is possible and impossible in doing something.
2. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing the all the aspects of volitional deeds in relation to past, present, and future.
3. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing all the aspects needed for enlightenment such as nature mental states, path of liberation, types of meditational practices etc.
4. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing various types of covert and overt personalities of individuals.

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<sup>8</sup> *An.*, 1:168.

<sup>9</sup> *Mp.*, 5:10.

5. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing the various expectations of individuals.
6. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing the different degrees of the faculties of individuals.
7. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing the different destinies of individuals.
8. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of remembering of his previous existences.
9. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) has the divine- eye with which he knows the appearance and the disappearance of being.
10. The one who reached the thatness or suchness (*Tathāgata*) is fully capable of knowing the nature and functions of defilements and the two kinds of deliverance i.e. "Deliverance of mind" and "Deliverance through wisdom."<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that these have ethical, psychological, philosophical, and spiritual significance. It can be depicted as follows: -

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<sup>10</sup> *Mv.*, 42.

**Table 3.1: Qualities of the Buddha as a Supra-Mundane Human Being**

<b>Ethical</b>	<b>Psychological</b>	<b>Parapsychological</b>	<b>Spiritual</b>
The possible as possible	The different inclinations in beings.	Remembering many former rebirths.	Knows all sorts of covert and overt cankers and the two kinds of deliverance i.e., "Deliverance of mind and "Deliverance through wisdom."
The outcomes of <i>karmic</i> actions	The lower and higher faculties in beings.	devine-eye with which he knows the appearance and the disappearance of being	
The path leading to the welfare of all.	The different faculties and whether they are high or low	-----	-----
The world with its many different elements.	The defilement, purity and rising with regard to the Absorptions, Deliverances, Concentration and Attainments.	-----	----- --

According to the above it is clear that the Buddha though a human being in terms of his spiritual attainments he becomes an extraordinary human being.

Although the Buddha is regarded as an extraordinary human being, it does not imply any state of exceptionality of his physical body. According to the sources, with his aging he underwent all sorts of physical changes, illnesses etc. The key physical

factors of aging and life requisites and the response to mental needs are well reflected in the discourses such as the: -

- His physical body underwent all sorts of changes common to any human being due to his old age until his *Pari-nibbāna* (complete *Nibbāna*).
- Becoming sick on some occasions, feeling of physical pain.
- Requirements of ordinary human needs, feeling of thirsty, etc.<sup>11</sup>

Regarding the question of the state of an enlightened being after his death, the Buddha has clearly clarified the issue and has clearly indicated that such a being does not have rebirth. Therefore, conventional ideologies regarding the afterlife of an enlightened being are irrelevant. It is obvious according to the teaching that it is a total cessation of the five aggregates of grasping and beyond the normal expressions of any language.

### 3.2 Nine Epithets

In the discourse, one can examine the use of ten epithets for the Buddha which is used as a method of mediation especially in *Thervāda* tradition. They are as follows:

- Worthy one (*araham*)
- Self-enlighten one without the assistance of any teacher (*sammā-saṃbuddha*)
- Skilful in knowledge and conduct (*vijjā-caraṇa-sampañña*)
- With spiritual practices, attained the supreme goal *Nibbāna* (*sugata*)

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<sup>11</sup> *Dn.*, 2:100.



- Perceiver the world of aggregates (*loka-vidū*)
- Incomparable (*anuttara*)
- Teacher that tames individuals who can be tamed (*puriṣa-dhamma-sārathī*)
- Teacher of gods and humans (*satthā deva-manussānaṃ*)
- The Blessed One who eradicated all human weaknesses (*bhagavā*)<sup>12</sup>

### 3.2.1 *Araham*

*Araham* is the one who has eradicated the cankers or the taints. There is a common appellation given to all those who attains *Nibbāna*. According to the discourses, one becomes an *arahant* due to the eradication of covert and overt cankers and thus possesses the following specialties: -

- Accomplished what should be accomplished
- Free from the burden
- Attained the highest
- Possesses profound knowledge
- Heart becomes unshaken
- No more future becoming (births)<sup>13</sup>

As these are unique qualities, they have been ascribed to the Buddha as well. In the *Visuddhimagga*, it mentioned that he is remote, his enemies and spokes destroyed is

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<sup>12</sup> *An.*, 1:168.

<sup>13</sup> *Mp.*, 1:112.

worthy of requisites. He has expunged covert and overt defilements through the practice of the path.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.2.2 *Sammāsambuddho*

There are three terminologies that frequently occur in the early Buddhist discourses and the commentaries, and they are the *Buddha*, *Sambuddha* and *Sammā-sambuddha*.<sup>15</sup> The terminology *Sammā-sambuddha* is used as a special epithet to denote his right-self-enlightenment. Especially in the early Buddhist discourses it is mentioned that there is only one right-self-enlightened being. In many contexts, we may find that the terminology is wrongly translated as self-enlightenment leaving aside the meaning of the *pāli* term *sammā* which denotes right as in the *sammā-dīṭṭhi*, *sammā-saṅkappa* etc.

Although these terminologies are frequently used as synonyms, one can find that they have specific meaning.<sup>16</sup> Although the epithet *Buddha* can be applied even to the *arahaṭṭs* based on the mental achievements, the epithet *sammā-sambuddha* and *sambuddha* cannot be applied. The terminology *sammā-sambuddha* clearly specifies that the Gautama Buddha can be distinguished from the other disciples. Thus, Gautama Buddha is *sammā-sambuddha*.<sup>17</sup> When this terminology is used, the contents of the attainment are not same as the *Sambuddha* or *Buddha*. This is clear according to the *Mūlapariyāyasutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*.<sup>18</sup> Another terminology that refers to his

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<sup>14</sup> *Vm.*, 198.

<sup>15</sup> *Sun.*, 177, 556, 559.

<sup>16</sup> *Sn.*, 1:140

<sup>17</sup> Hajime Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha* Vol. 11 (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1977), 79.

<sup>18</sup> *Mn.*, 1:5-6.

enlightenment is the *sammā-sambodhi* which also denotes the right self-enlightenment.

One becomes so due to the following skills that one is endowed with: -

- Abundance of five hindrances.
- Well-established the mind on the four kinds of mental practices
- Perfect training in the seven-fold factors of enlightenment.<sup>19</sup>

According to the *Theravāda* view these are the contents of *samma-sambodhi*.

However, in the *Theravāda* commentarial literature especially in the *Maṅorathapūraṇī*

four kinds of the Buddha are also given as follows: -

- *Buddha* (the Enlighten One)
- *Suṭabuddha* (the knowledgeable Buddha, anybody who has learned the three Pitakas,)
- *Caṭususaccabuddha* (one who realizes the four Noble Truths, the *Arahat*)
- *Pacchekabuddha* (lesser Buddha)
- *Sammā-sambuddha* (the right-self-enlightened Buddha)<sup>20</sup>

The *sammā-sambuddhās* are those who realized the *sammā-sambodhi*<sup>21</sup> and in them there is the *sabbaññuta gñāṇa* known as omniscience.<sup>22</sup> This, it is special knowledge,

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<sup>19</sup> *Dn.*, 2:83.

<sup>20</sup> *Mp.*, 1:115.

<sup>21</sup> *Pj.*, 1:72-73.

<sup>22</sup> *Pup.*, 73.

and it is special knowledge that only the *sammā-sambuddhās* possesses. There are some other aspects of this knowledge as well. They are the: -

- Discovered things that should be directly known.
- Discovered things that should be fully understood.
- Discovered things that should be abandoned.
- Discovered things that should be realized.
- Discovered things that should be developed<sup>23</sup>

This explanation is found in the early Buddhist discourses, and they well portray the inner qualities of various nature, i.e., morality, intelligence, skillfulness, and far-sighted wisdom. The explanation found in the *Selasutta* has not been altered in the *Visuddhimagga* or commentarial literature in order to depict him a supernatural being on a theistic aspect.

### 3.2.3 *Vijjācaraṇasampanna*

The term *vijjācaraṇasampanna* also occurs in the early Buddhist discourses and it signifies that the Buddha is endowed with knowledge and the conduct. The terminology *vijjā* signifies the incomparable knowledge and the *caraṇa* stands for the profound morality. If someone possesses such qualities, he becomes the highest among the gods and men.<sup>24</sup> According to the *Bhayabheravasutta*, *vijjā* comprises of three

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<sup>23</sup> *Vm.*, 201.

<sup>24</sup> *Dn.*, 3:97.

kinds<sup>25</sup> and according to the *Ambaṭṭha sutta* it comprises of eight kinds.<sup>26</sup>The eight kinds are important to be mentioned. They are the: -

- *Calabhiñṇā-gñāṇa*
- *Vipassanā-gñāṇa*
- *Manomaya-iddhi.*

According to the *Visuddhimagga*, the Buddha is known in terms of these two unique qualities, i.e., profound knowledge and great compassion and thus he can be called omniscient. Therefore, he became a unique human being. The application of omniscience to the *Gotama* Buddha in *Theravāda* tradition does not signify that he is the creator of the universe or wilding power over the world of phenomena. It is with respect to the deep knowledge or unique wisdom and great compassion he is known to be endowed with such knowledge.<sup>27</sup> Hence, this is not a kind of adoration and qualizing regarding his conduct and knowledge yet reflects deep respect for such uniqueness.

### 3.2.4 *Sugata*

The terminology is purely Buddhist and signifies the one who is well-gone. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, he is known so due to the following reasons: -

- Becoming of a manner of going that is good (*sobana-gamanattā*)
- Being gone to an excellent place (*sundarathānam gatattā*)
- Gone rightly (*sammāgatattā*)

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<sup>25</sup> *Mn.*, 1: 22.

<sup>26</sup> *Dn.*, 1:100.

<sup>27</sup> *Vm.*, 203.

- Enunciating rightly (*sammāgadttā*)<sup>28</sup>

It is clear the application of the epithet *sugata* has been used to emphasis his perfectness in all aspects of the uniqueness, knowledge, and conduct.

### 3.2.5 *Lokavidu*

According to the *Visuddhimagga*,<sup>29</sup> this terminology connotes that he perfectly knows the world because he has known the world in all aspects and respects. The three worlds are given as follows: -

- *Samkhāraloka* – world of formations
- *Sattāloka* – the world of beings
- *Okāsaloka* – the worlds of locations<sup>30</sup>

Thus, this signifies his wisdom over the different aspects of physical and mental world. It should be noted that a highly philosophical explanation of the world is found in the canonical texts, where the human body with its consciousness is compared to the world. Thus, it is clear that this signifies his wisdom over the different aspects of the phenomenal world.

### 3.2.6 *Anuttaro Purisadhammasārathī*

In this epithet, two qualities are included that is: *Anuttara* and *Purisadhammasārathī*. The term *anuttara* signifies the highest in all aspects i.e., ethical, intellectual, and physical. He came to be known as the tamer of humans just as

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<sup>28</sup> *Vm.*, 203.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-207.

<sup>30</sup> *Mp.*, 2:245.

a tamer of horses (*sāraṭhī*) which was common in the contemporary Indian society.<sup>31</sup>

This is very clear according to many discourses where one can find the significance of his knowledge, conduct and the physical features. This is one reason him to be called an incomparable teacher. According to *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, he becomes incomparable in the following spheres: -

- *Kusala-paññatti* - (skillfulness in his actions)
- *Āyatana-paññatti* – (bases)
- *Gabbāvakkantiyā*- (conceptions)
- *Ādesanā-vidāsu* - (mind-reading)
- *Dassana-sampatti* - (attainment of vision)
- *Puggala-paññatti* - (classification of persons)
- *Padhāna* - (effort)
- *Paṭipadā* - (path)
- *Bhassa-samacāra* - (conduct in speech)
- *Purusa-sīla-samacāra* - (good conduct in man's virtues)
- *Anusāsanī vidhāsu* - (in respect of instructions or teachings)
- *Parapuggala-vimutighñāṇa* - (knowledge of release of other people)
- *Sassatavāda* - (exposition of externalism)
- *Pubbe-nivāsa-gñāṇa* - (knowledge of former existences)
- *Dibba-cakkhu* - (knowledge of divine eye)

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<sup>31</sup> *Sp.*, 1:120.

- *Iddhi-vida* - (psychic power)<sup>32</sup>

According to the above, he becomes incomparable due to the possession such special qualities and can tame the humans. But an important feature is that he only tames those who are tamable, and this signifies that he does not possess any miraculous power to tame the people. It should be noted that according to the canonical texts *purisa* includes those humans, although in the *Visuddhimagga* the terminology *purisa* includes animals, humans, and non-humans as well.<sup>33</sup> One of the most important aspects of the use of the epithets is that it included the qualities that the *Gautama* Buddha had as a teacher, especially in respect of skillfulness.

### 3.2.7 *Satthā Devamanussānam*

The term *satthā* means a leader, teacher, and the *deva*<sup>34</sup> and *manussa* signify the gods and men. He becomes a leader due to three special reasons and they are: -

- He preaches *Dhamma* for the well-being of *diṭṭhadamma*, here and now,
- He preaches *Dhamma* for the benefit of *samparāyika*, life to come and
- He preaches *Dhamma yathābhūtam* – as it is.<sup>35</sup>

However, in the *saṃyuttanikāya aṭṭhakatā* it is said that if anyone i.e. Buddha or disciples is capable of preaching *dhamma* in the above capacities on account of

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<sup>32</sup> *Suv.*, 3:894.

<sup>33</sup> *Vm.*, 207.

<sup>34</sup> *Mn.*, 1:33. *Sammutideva* (gods by conventions such as royal person), *Upapattideva* (by birth such as heavily beings) *Visudhideva* (by purification-Buddha). This is important in many aspects because Buddha is also called *deva* due to his purification but not birth or convention.

<sup>35</sup> *Pp.*, 1:33.



wisdom can be called *saṅghā deva manussānam*.<sup>36</sup> One may see that while adoring the Buddha with such epithets, *Theravādins* have not sought to over exaggerations of the Buddha.

### 3.2.8 *Buddho*

The common epithet Buddha signifies; the awoken, the enlighten, the knower.<sup>37</sup> This indicates that the Gautama Buddha penetrated the *āryan* truths and as a result attained the complete cessation of defilements. This epithet is a common terminology for all those who reached the goal and awoken in supreme intelligence. In some *suttās*, the Buddha says why he is called a Buddha. Thus, it is clear one is so called due to the unearthing of Four Noble Truths and realization of it.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.2.9 *Bhagavā*

The term, *bhagavā* signifies the blessed on or the fortunate one.<sup>39</sup> However, the inner meaning of it denotes various qualities of his. According to *Visuddhimagga*, this term implies the type of veneration he had due to his supra-mundane qualities as a Buddha. According to the *Visuddhimagga*, the term *bhagavā* has four kinds of meaning as well. They are: -

- Denoting a period
- Ascribing a specific mark
- Signifying a specific acquirement
- Fortuitously arisen.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Sap.*, 2:11, 128.

<sup>37</sup> *Smv.*, 310.

<sup>38</sup> *Sp.*, 1:122.

<sup>39</sup> *Mhn.*, 142.

<sup>40</sup> *Vm.*, 411.

According to the text, he is ascribed with blessings, a possessor of what has been analyzed. He has frequented and has reacted going in the kinds of becoming. Hence, he is blessed. It is clear that he has been called so due to his unique mental achievements and physical characteristics. Under the epithet *bhagavā* the following qualities are well reflected.

- Moral practice-ten perfections
- Accumulation of merits
- Well-supported with knowledge
- Attainments pertaining to daily life
- Enjoys ultimate bliss always that cannot be enjoyed by others
- Eradicated all worldly passions, possessions, glory, good and bad<sup>41</sup>

These clearly indicate the application of the epithets has an inner meaning that reflects his mental achievements rather than the extraordinary physical characteristics that are depicted in some discourses. These are frequently mentioned in the discourses as well as in the commentarial literature of *Theravādas*, yet Buddha is not treated as an omniscient being based on these qualities. These qualities devoid of such characteristics and these nine epithets do not denote mere epithets, but they represent unique qualities of an extraordinary human being. The above comprehensive explanation of the nine qualities clearly indicates why he came to be known as an extraordinary human being.

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<sup>41</sup> *Ats.*, 372.

### 3.3 Origin of the Concept of Buddha

The root of the terminology is concerned; the root *budh-* means "to awaken," and its literal meaning is "awakening."<sup>42</sup> According to the canonical and the commentarial explanations a Buddha is one who has reached the enlightenment (*bodhi*); and the terminology *bodhi* signifies wisdom,<sup>43</sup> a supreme state of intellectual and ethical perfection which can be achieved by a human through purely human means.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the term Buddha connotes enlightened being, a perceiver. As far as the origin of the concept of Buddha is concerned, in addition to the early and later Buddhist literature, it is important to examine how far it has the basis of the two religious foundations of the contemporary Indian religious movements, i.e., the *Vedic-brāhmaṇa* tradition and the *Sramaṇa* tradition. When examined the concept of Buddha depicted in the early and later Buddhist traditions, we can observe it has been influenced by the two traditions. The term Buddha has an early connection with Vedic culture. It should be noted that several hundred years before the time of the *Gautama Buddha* that his birth was predicted in the *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*. According to the information found, we find that the Lord appear in the guise of Lord Buddha in the beginning of *Kali-yuga* and reveals the truth for the wellbeing of all beings.<sup>45</sup>

In the *Vedic-Brāhmaṇa* tradition very popular concept was the *Brahman* and regarded as the universal impressible being that is responsible for all the workings of the universe including the phenomenal changes and the working of beings. Although the Buddha has been equated with that Vedic concept *Brahma* or a reincarnation of God

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<sup>42</sup> *Ats.*, 217.

<sup>43</sup> *Suv.*, 2:427.

<sup>44</sup> Endo Toshiichi, *Buddha in Theravāda Buddhism* (Dehiwela: Buddhist Cultural Center, 1997), 51.

<sup>45</sup> *Bhagavatgīta*, 1:3.24,

*Vishnu*, but still he remained a human being and the ascribed meaning in the *Vedic* term of *Brahma* is quite different from the Buddhist meaning. The qualities, powers, his mode of conduct are compared; one can see that the Buddha is quite different concept from the *Vedic* view of the great *Brahma* or *Vishṇu*. *Brahman* is an impersonal representation and beyond space, time, and causality. He possessed the supernatural powers, knowledge and is presented as the knower of all. The origin of the concept of Buddha as well as its evolution is concerned, it is apparent that Buddha is not treated as a supernatural being in the *Theravāda* tradition or canonical texts. The interpretations given in the early Buddhist discourses and the commentarial literature in terms of his supreme achievements are a good example to understand the *Theravāda* view of the Buddha in addition to the other usages of it.

On the other hand, the concept of *Muni* is a very popular term in the ancient Indian religious traditions. Especially in the *Sramaṇa* tradition, we find the usage of the concept of *Muni*. Buddha is also regarded as a *Muni* just like the application of the qualities of *Brahma*. With the application of the term *muni*, such qualities also have been applied to the Buddha and particularly in the *Suttanipāta* one can see the Buddhist interpretation of the term *muni* and the Buddha speaks of the qualities of a *muni*.<sup>46</sup> Since the Buddha is also regarded as a *muni*, it is important to discover the reasons for the application of the term. According to the *sutta*, the following qualities can be examined in a *muni*.

- Vision of the sage is complete freedom from all sorts of bondages

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<sup>46</sup> *Sun.*, 207-221.

- Is in a complete the state of peace due to the total eradications of defilements
- A sage who has eradicated re-becoming and beyond measurements
- He knows all places of abode yet not attached to any place.
- No craving, no passion, hence there is no re-becoming
- Overcoming all, knowing all, wise regarding all things
- He is fully capable of seeing the causality, moral in conduct, mindful, delight in *jhānic* experience, free of all sorts of defilements
- The wandering solitary sage, uncomplacent, unshaken by praise or blame
- When others speak in extremes, he is like the pillar at a bathing ford
- He is without passion, his senses are well-centered
- The sage is self-controlled and never angered, he angers none
- He receives alms only for his existence and is happy with whatever he receives
- The sage who has gone from home to homelessness is fully abstained from sex and no bondage
- No pleasure seeking in intoxicants, mind-altering substances and is happy
- He has crossed over the ocean of *samsāra*, reached the highest, knows the world well

This may be the reason why the Buddha preferred this term. It is important to note that almost all the qualities that are ascribed to the Buddha in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* tradition can be seen in the *Muni sutta*.

### 3.4 Concept of Buddha Reflected in the Discourses

The early Buddhist teachings and the later *Theravāda* tradition have discerned the Buddha as a superhuman being. Though he is a human being, it is necessary to understand it quite differently with the other human beings.<sup>47</sup> For instance, Buddha's daily routine is concerned; there is no difference with the other human beings and the vicissitude of life that he faced.<sup>48</sup> But the difference lies on how he faced the challenges, how he behaved, his skills, attitude towards and understanding etc.

As far as the historicity of the prince *Siddhārtha* is concerned, there is no room whatsoever to regard him as a representation of a god. According to the textual evidence, it is obvious that before the *Bodhisattva* was born in the world of humans, he was a god and lived in the realm of *Tusita*.<sup>49</sup> But in the human world, he was a human and there is no difference whatsoever with the other beings.<sup>50</sup> With the attainment of enlightenment, he did not turn into a supernatural being or almighty god or did not appear in the human world to deliver a message of a god as well. Further, his specialty did not depend on the supernatural external physical qualities, or the miraculous powers endowed by him. His daily routine, meeting of various kings and ministers and the advice given to the Order, promulgation of *vinaya* rules, leadership qualities, his attitude towards ill-behaved monks etc. show the nature of his wisdom and great compassion.

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<sup>47</sup> B. G. Gokale, *New Light on Early Buddhism* (London: Sangam Books, 1994), 107.

<sup>48</sup> *An.*, 4:358.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:210.

<sup>50</sup> *Vn.*, 1:279.

Another important aspect is his knowledge of the universe and his doctrine. It is important to discuss his view of society, political and economic thought etc., because such do not have any theistic basis. Especially, his interaction with the contemporary well-known people is important to understand the human qualities of the Buddha. Most important are his view of the human existence and the very nature of beings and the psycho ethical explanation of human mind. Though all such qualities provide evidence of his superhuman qualities, when examined the physical feature of the Buddha, there is an attempt to present it with much more adoration.<sup>51</sup> There are some discourses where the extraordinary physical appearances of the Buddha are described. With the explanation of his extraordinary physical appearances, there is an adoration of his physical form, but such do not make him a god. They contribute to understand the unique characteristics of a superhuman being and not a god.<sup>52</sup> So, such physical qualities have contributed to the glorification of the Buddha but not deification. Nonetheless, his physical features are concerned; the most important is the first view of the *Upaka ājīvaka*, because there he sees some special positive and pleasant nature in him.<sup>53</sup>

When it comes to the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* there is further adoration of the Buddha due to the uniqueness of his wisdom and compassion. Specially, an attempt has been made to discover his past existences and to portray many special facts particular to him.

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<sup>51</sup> Xing, *Concept of the Buddha*, 13.

<sup>52</sup> *An.*, 4:340.

<sup>53</sup> *Mn.*, 1:170.

### 3.5 Buddha and the Most Common Usage of the Term *Tathāgata*

Although the view of the concept of Buddha different in many schools of Buddhist thought due to religious, social and cultural reasons, the concept of Buddha in the *Theravāda* Buddhism remained as a unique human being of exceptional wisdom.<sup>54</sup> However, Buddha, just like any other human being, had to face the vicissitudes of life and his body was subject to physical illnesses as well. Nonetheless, his great wisdom led him to live in the world unattached and unmoved. This view is common in the *Theravāda* school, and the other early Buddhist schools.

Statements from the modern *Theravādin* standpoint that the Buddha was a “human” is intended to point out the *Theravāda* standpoint of the Buddha and to signify how it differs from that of the *Mahāyāna*. The early sources clearly signify that the prince *Siddhārtha* was born as a highly developed spiritual human being due to his practice of perfections as a buddhahood aspirant being (*Bodhisattva*). After his self-enlightenment he was able to realize the true nature of the world of phenomena and attained ultimate bliss of *Nibbāna*. According to him, he is not a *deva* or a human, but an extraordinary human being and the best way to call him is Buddha. The simile of the lotus clearly indicates his way of life.<sup>55</sup> It is obvious that there are many attributions to the Buddha that signify some supernatural qualities of him, yet they have been applied only to denote his uniqueness. In the *Madhupiṇḍika Sutta*, we find that the Buddha is known as the Lord of *Dhamma* (*Dhammasāmi*) and also the giver of the deathlessness. (*Amatassadāta*).<sup>56</sup> Further, in the *Anurādha Sutta* following statement is found " the

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<sup>54</sup> *Dn.*, 1:215.

<sup>55</sup> *An.*, 11:38.

<sup>56</sup> *Mn.*, 1:111.



*Tathāgata* the supreme man, the superlative man, accomplisher of the superlative attainment." The Buddha's reply to the question of his state after his death (*Tathāgatha*) is as follows: -And so, Anurādha - when you can't pin down the Tathāgata as a truth or reality even in the present life - is it proper for you to declare, 'Friends, the Tathāgata - the supreme man, the superlative man, attainer of the superlative attainment - being described, is described otherwise than with these four positions: the Tathāgata exists after death, does not exist after death, both does & does not exist after death, neither exists nor does not exist after death?'<sup>57</sup> In the *Vakkalī Sutta* Buddha identifies himself with the *Dhamma*: "O Vakkalī, whoever sees the Dhamma, sees me (the Buddha)."<sup>58</sup>

Another reference from the *Aggañña Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, says to his disciple *Vasetṭha*: "O Vasetṭha! The Word of Dhammakāya is indeed the name of the Tathāgata."<sup>59</sup> It is evident that in the discourses *Gautama* Buddha is known as being a "teacher of the gods and humans," superior to both the gods and humans in the sense of having *Nirvāṇa* or the greatest bliss (whereas the *devās* (gods) are still subject to anger, fear, sorrow, etc.).

### **3.6 Indian Religious Background and the Concept of *Brahma***

As far as the Indian religious background is concerned, one of the most popular concepts was the *Brahma* and it has been interpreted as beyond space, time, ethical considerations, and causality. This leads to the understanding that he is a self-existing being. Although the term *Brahma* is seen often in the early Buddhist teachings and sometimes Buddha is equated with *Brahma* or his qualities have been ascribed to the

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<sup>57</sup> *Sn.*, 3:117.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>59</sup> *Dn.*, 3:84.

Buddha, Buddha was not regarded as an omnipotent being in the Buddhist literature. The terminologies such as: - *Brahma-cariya*,<sup>60</sup> *Brahma-vihāra*,<sup>61</sup> *Brahma-kāya*,<sup>62</sup> *Brahma-daṇḍa*,<sup>63</sup> *Brahma-jāla*,<sup>64</sup> *Brahma-cakka*<sup>65</sup> *Brahma-sāra*<sup>66</sup> and *Brahma-dāyāda*.<sup>67</sup> Are found to signify some special teachings or highest things. Further, the terminologies such as *Mahā-brahma*, *Brahma-sahampati*, *Brahma-sanamkumāra* are used to denote some powerful deities. However, these have been used in a quite different meaning in the the early Buddhist literature and new interpretations are given to the terminology “*Brahma*” and it is commonly used in the sense of “highest, greatest, or unique.” Therefore, a close observation of the early Buddhist application of this terminology is important in the study of the evolution of the concept of Buddha.

The 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. is important in many respects such as the origin of new religious movements, political powers, and new business class. Specially the different religious groups such as *Sramaṇas*, *Ajivakās*, *Paribbajakās*, and *Niganthās* followed the path of severe self-discipline while the *Brahmins* led a luxurious religious life. Although Buddha also belonged to the tradition of *Sramaṇas*, he totally rejected the path of severe asceticism (*Karma mārga*) as well as the self-indulgence and the practice of sacrifice (*Yājñā mārga*) as a way to attain ultimate salvation that was accepted by the religious leaders of his time. Thus, he was very much critical of the self-mortification, self-indulgence and the theory of a transmigrating soul and the existence of

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<sup>60</sup> *Dn.*, 1: 84,155; *Dn.*, 2:106,111,122.

<sup>61</sup> *Vm.*, 111.

<sup>62</sup> *Dn.*, 3:84.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:154.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:1.

<sup>65</sup> *Pj.*, 1:399.

<sup>66</sup> *Dn.*, 2:211, 227.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:81, 83.

unchanging universal being. While rejecting such extremisms, he introduced the middle path of purification and the Dependent origination which explains the causality of human suffering.<sup>68</sup>

Dependent origination and the middle path is the fundamental teaching in Buddhism and they exclude all sorts of extremisms. Thus, there is a remarkable difference between his teaching and the then popular religious practices and concepts of the world phenomena. Although the Buddha adopted some practices and concepts prevailed in his time, he gave a totally different interpretation to them. One such terminology is the *Brahma*. For instance, in Buddhist teachings, parents are called Brahmas. Further, if someone wants to go to *Brahmaloka*, it is said that it is only possible through the eradication of defilements. In this way, he gave a totally different view of the then popular concept of *Brahma* and *Brahmaloka*. The *Brāhmanavagga* of the *Dhammapada* clearly signify Buddhist standpoint of the concept of *Brahma* and the nature of a *Brahmin*. Further, concept of macrocosmic or microcosmic soul is totally rejected in Buddhist teachings, instead, it introduced the soullessness and impermanence which are the core teachings of early Buddhism. Further, *Muni sutta* found in the *Suttanipāta* clearly signifies characteristics of a sage as well.

Thus, it is clear that the Buddha's attitude towards the contemporary religious concepts were totally different. While rejecting the then existing religious concepts he gave new interpretations to them whenever such was necessary to enlighten the followers of various religions.

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<sup>68</sup> *Mn.*, 2:32; *Sn.*, 2:28.

Hence, it is obvious that Buddha or his teaching has a quite difference foundation and cannot be compared with Vedic or *Brāhmaṇa* teachings. As the Buddhist teachings are based on Three Characteristics, Middle Path, and the Dependent Origination, it is clear that there is no place any for the intrusion of any metaphysical elements into his teaching. Specially in this regard the *Tēvijja-sutta* of the *Dīghanikāya*, is important and in that *sutta* the attempt made to reach the unknown Brahma is compared to the effort of a line of blind men.<sup>69</sup>

All sorts of early Buddhist teachings reject the existence of any metaphysical elements microcosmic or macrocosmic and its underlying reality is explained based on Three Characteristics and Dependent Origination.<sup>70</sup> This can be well understood according to the theory of the short formula of Dependent Origination.

### **3.7 Buddhahood and Brahmahood**

The concept of Brahma existed throughout the Indian history, and it was a very influential concept, yet the Buddha rejected it while applying the great spiritual characteristics of the Brahma to human beings who are virtuous and lead a life of righteousness. In the Buddhist teachings we find reference to *Brahama-lokāś*, *Mahā Brahama*, etc., denoting a totally different meaning. For instance, first beings that appeared on earth were also called Brahmas. According to the Buddhist discourses, *Sahampatī*.<sup>71</sup> Is the greatest Brahma. However, he pays homage to the Buddha and possesses a spiritually advanced mind. This clearly indicates that Buddha is higher than

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<sup>69</sup> *Dn.*, 1:239.

<sup>70</sup> Robert G. Morrison, *Nietzsche and Buddhism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 121.

<sup>71</sup> *Vn.*, 1:5; *Sn.*, 1:137.

the *Brahma*. There are many instances in the early Buddhist discourses where the various types of *Brahmās* sought the advice of the Buddha. Some of them are *Sanamkumāra*, *Ghatikāra*, and *Nārada*.

According to the early Buddhist teachings, the path of eradication of defilements is the only way to reach the *Brahma World* and it signifies the attainment of Nibbāna. According to the *Tēvijja Sutta* if one is able to develop *jhānās*, one may reach the *Brahma World*.<sup>72</sup> *Suddhāvāsas* are the names given to *Brahma Worlds* in early Buddhist discourses.<sup>73</sup> This can be explained in the following table:

**Table 3.2: Jhana Attainments and Brahma Worlds**

<i>Jhāna</i>	<i>Brahma worlds</i>
<i>First jhāna</i>	<i>Brahama-pārisajja, Brahma-purohita and Mahā Brahma</i>
<i>Second Jhāna</i>	<i>Parittābha, Appamāṇabha and Ābhassara</i>
<i>Third Jhāna</i>	<i>Parittasubha, Appamānasubha and Subhakiṇṇa</i>
<i>Fourth Jhāna</i>	<i>non-anāgamins to Vehapphala and Asaññasatta Brahma-lokās</i>
	<i>The Anagamins to Aviha, Atappa, Sudassi and Akaniṭṭha Brahma-loka.</i>

This shows that early Buddhist teachings have a completely different concept of *Brahmās*, and it is based on the gradual eradication of defilements and as a result one is able to become *Brahmas*. This does not signify any eternity or everlasting happiness

<sup>72</sup> *Dn.*, 1:237.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:50.

that one enjoys after being born in the world of *Brahmas*. According to Buddhism, any concept of eternity is a mere mental projection, an illusionary state of mind.

This Buddhist teaching on the four *Brahma-Vihāras* (four Sublimes States) is also very important in this regard. What is meant by this *jhānic* attainment is the experiencing of a very high level of mental development through the gradual practice of *jhānic* process. The teaching on the four *Brahma-Vihāras* (four Sublimes States) is another instance which shows how the Buddha gave new meaning to another important aspect of the pre-Buddhist *Brahma* concept.

It is the early Buddhist view that the parents also have the loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity towards their children; they are also *Brahmās*. This is another instance where the Buddha gave a new interpretation to the then popular *Brahma* concept. It should be mentioned that the concept of sublime abodes is special in Buddhist teachings, and this is distinct according to the *Buddhaghosa's* definition of *Brahma-vihāra*:

Why are these called Brahma-vihāras? It is because they are supreme and faultless. These states constitute the best mode of conduct towards others. The Brahmās live with their minds freed of the five hindrances. The Yogins who are endowed with these states also live with faultless minds like the Brahmās.<sup>74</sup>

The path of purification that leads oneself towards *Nibbāna* is called the "*Brahma-faring*" (*Brahmacariya*). The Buddha used this terminology when he addressed the first disciples as follows: -"Come O! Monk, the doctrine is well taught. Practice this Brahma faring for the perfect ending of suffering."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> *Vm.*, 111.

<sup>75</sup> *Sn.*, 5:420.

This signifies that the terminology “*Brahma faring*” in Buddhism has a special connotation. On the other hand, we find the other common terminology i.e., “*Brahmacariya*” very often in early Buddhist teachings. These two were pre-Buddhist terminologies, but the Buddha has used them in a very special sense denoting the noble life or the practice of celibacy leading to the attainment *Nibbāna*.

The terminology “*Brahma*” is often used to in a general sense denoting the Supreme, Noble, Greatest, or Sacred. The Buddha has used this terminology to denote the path of purification in his newly found doctrine and thus applied a special meaning to it. This is clear according to the terms such “*Brahma-cakka*,”<sup>76</sup> “*Dhamma-cakka*,”<sup>77</sup> “*Brahma-bhūta*,”<sup>78</sup> “*Dhamma-bhūta*,”<sup>79</sup> “*Brahma-kāya*,”<sup>80</sup> “*Dhamma-kāya*.”<sup>81</sup> Here it is clear that the expressions; “*Brahma*” and “*Dhamma*” have a very special connotation in Buddhist teachings although they are pre-Buddhistic.

### **3.8 Historical Records of the Life of Prince *Siddārtha***

According to the historical records, prince *Siddhārtha* was born into an upper-class family in one of the cities belonging to kingdom of *Kosala* nearby the Mountain *Himālaya* in the north part of India.<sup>82</sup> His father was *Suddhodana* and his mother was *Mahamāya*. The prince by birth belonged to the *Kshatriya* caste of the *Ādiccha* clan<sup>83</sup>. According to the story of his practice of meditation under the *dabha* tree, it is evident that even in his childhood; he used to have a religious life and also often visited the

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<sup>76</sup> *Mn.*, 1:69.

<sup>77</sup> *Mn.*, 171.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>79</sup> *An.*, 5:226.

<sup>80</sup> *Dn.*, 3:84.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Sun.*, 73.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

place of farming with his father. His father aspired to see his son enjoy mundane happiness and lead a happy secular life. Hence, his father provided all the necessary things needed for a secular life.<sup>84</sup> His father specially built three palaces for him to spend the different seasons of the year.<sup>85</sup> Thus, he spent his life among these comforts luxuries and had all the desires of a teenage such as desire for health, desire for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures etc.<sup>86</sup> When he became sixteen years of age got married to a princess called *Yasodharā* of *koliya* clan.<sup>87</sup> But, as he had used to contemplate widely of the vicissitudes of life, he was able to understand the fleeting nature of the world of phenomena, old age, sickness and death that all beings have to undergo. Further, he realized that he is also not an exception from such conditions of life. As a result of his deep contemplation of the very nature of the phenomenal world, his desire for youthfulness, health and the gratification of sense pleasures gradually began to fade away.<sup>88</sup> Thus, he was able to realize the happiness of detachment and the harmfulness of indulgence in sense pleasures. The discourses mention his words as follows: -

I have seen those who are engaged in sense pleasures and yet I did not go after them. Before, I attained the Buddhahood as a saṃsāric being went after sense pleasures taking them as my and mine. Though I was subject to death, decay, old age, and sickness, yet still sought pleasure in them. But it came to me that my attitude towards sense pleasures was erroneous and realized that freedom from such is great and noble,<sup>89</sup>

Further he saw many followers of other religions such as *niganthas*, *paribrājeckās*, *ajīvākās*, and was able to have an adequate knowledge of the different

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<sup>84</sup> *An.*, 1:145.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Bv.*, 97.

<sup>88</sup> *An.*, I:147.

<sup>89</sup> *Mn.*, 1:163.



paths of deliverance and the various teachings of them.<sup>90</sup> He was able to realize that the lay life is full of bondages and the going forth has the full freedom just like living in space.<sup>91</sup> When he was motivated by such a vision of life, he was in the prime of his youthfulness.<sup>92</sup> When his parents completely opposed his idea of going forth with tearful faces, he still went from home to homelessness to lead a life of celibacy.<sup>93</sup> In accordance with the popular practices of the Indian religious leaders, who renounced the worldly life in seeking freedom from vicissitudes of life, he went to the teachers such as: *Alārakālāma* and *Uddhakarāmaputta* where he could attain the mental states of nothingness and the neither nothingness nor non-nothingness:<sup>94</sup> the highest states of the development of mind. Further, he practiced the various types of behavioral forms of mortification in the hope of seeking the ultimate truth. Especially, the self-mortification of six strenuous years practiced by him at *Uruwella* valley is a superhuman attempt made by him in the history of mankind though ended in vain.

After all, realizing the worthlessness of self-mortification and the futility of sense gratification, he decided to follow the Middle-path through which he could overcome the desire for existence, non-existence, and the sense pleasures and also the veil of ignorance where he attained the full enlightenment *Nibbāna*.<sup>95</sup> After his enlightenment he spent four weeks contemplating the freedom of detachment, goodwill and wisdom. In the first week under the *Bohdhi*-tree; he contemplated the Dependent Origination and in the second week he spent under the *Ajapāla* banyan tree.

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<sup>90</sup> *Dn.*, 1:1-86.

<sup>91</sup> *Sun.*, 72.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Mn.*, 1:163.

<sup>94</sup> *Mn.*, 1:164-165.

<sup>95</sup> *Sun.*, 74.

In the third week *Muchalinda*, *midella* tree and in the fourth week under the *Rajāyatana* tree enjoyed the freedom of *Nibbānic* experience.<sup>96</sup>

### 3.9 Extraordinary yet Human Nature after the Enlightenment

As a supreme human being, he attained the full enlightenment which is the highest state of mind that only a human being could achieve. Hence, Buddha was a great human being and does not represent any sort of super-natural power wielding over the universe.<sup>97</sup> As a human being, Buddha also had to face the vicissitudes of life that the ordinary beings undergo in their life yet his attitude towards such was quite different from those of the ordinary beings. This is well depicted in the following stanza: -

Bhikkhus, I do not dispute with the world; rather, it is the world that disputes with me. A proponent of the Dhamma does not dispute with anyone in the world. Of that which the wise in the world agree upon as not existing, I too say that it does not exist. And of that which the wise in the world agree upon as existing, I too say that it exists....Bhikkhūs, just as a blue, red, or white lotus is born in the water and grows up in the water, but having risen up above the water, it stands unsullied by the water, so too the Tathāgata was born in the world and grew up in the world, but having overcome the world, he dwells unsullied by the world.<sup>98</sup>

This clearly indicates his deep profound wisdom and how he regarded the world of experience. The remarks made by his contemporary close friends reflect another aspect of his life. For instance, the king *Pasenadīkosala* one day met the Buddha and said,

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<sup>96</sup> *Vn.*, I:1-5.

<sup>97</sup> *An.*, 2:38

<sup>98</sup> *Pj.*, 1:125.

“You are a citizen of Kosala, me too a citizen of Kosala, you are eighty years of age, me too eighty years of age.”<sup>99</sup>

On another occasion, when the Buddha became physically ill, monk *Chuṇḍa* preached the *Bojjhaṅga sutta* and blessed him due to which his illness was cured.<sup>100</sup> On one occasion, when the Buddha was staying on the mountain of *Gijjhakūtha*, evil-minded monk *Devadatta* tried to kill the Buddha by rolling a stone towards him. As a result of his wicked act, Buddha got an injury on one of his fingers.<sup>101</sup> After the application of medicine on it by the physician *Jīvaka*, the injury was cured. On another occasion, Buddha became seriously ill and the physician *Jīvaka* gave him medicine to cure his stomachache.<sup>102</sup> According to another interesting story, one day Buddha went to the preaching hall to preach *Dhamma*. At that time, he saw the monk *Nandaka* was preaching the *Dhamma* and the Buddha stayed at the doorsill without entering the hall simply making a simple gesture of his presence. When the door was opened Buddha said to the monks, “His discourse was very lengthy. When I waited till the sermon ended, I got back-ache.”<sup>103</sup> On another occasion the Buddha stayed his final rainy season at *Beluva* village. At that time, he got a serious illness in his stomach. But he was able to endure it with his spiritual power.<sup>104</sup>

The many incidents related to his ordinary way of life are mentioned in the early Buddhist discourses. Especially *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* is full of such incidents of his

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<sup>99</sup> *Mn.*, 2:124.

<sup>100</sup> *Sn.*, 5:81.

<sup>101</sup> *Vn.*, 1:269.

<sup>102</sup> *Vn.*, 271.

<sup>103</sup> *An.*, 4:358.

<sup>104</sup> *Dn.*, 2:99.

life. For instance, *Mahāpariṇibbāna sutta* gives a detailed account of his old age and the incidents occurred before his great passing away.<sup>105</sup> All these have a historical and authentic significance of the life of Buddha. On the whole, according to the *Theravāda* interpretation of the concept of the Buddha as reflected in the early Buddhist discourse and commentarial literature signifies that he was a superhuman being whose mind was not moved in the face of vicissitudes life as a result of the complete eradication of the defilements. The incomparable achievement reached by himself after abandoning the extreme paths of mental purification led to the glorification of him with many epithets and attributions in the schools of Buddhist thought. Nonetheless, *Theravāda* school of Buddhist thought preferred to glorify him as a super unique human being based on his mental achievements.

His teachings as well his view of the world of phenomena which is basically based on the Three Characteristics is a far-reaching and challenging philosophy in the history of Indian thought. As a superhuman being he gave new dimension to the then existed beliefs, practices and philosophies of the universe and life. Furthermore, his teachings on society, its evolution and formation of social intuitions clearly indicates that he was a social reformer of propound wisdom and great compassion. The historical records of his life that are found in the *Thearavāda* literature clearly signify that he was a super-human being of the human world that taught a doctrine devoid of any extremes.

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<sup>105</sup> *Dn.*, 2:100.

## Chapter 4

### Reconstruction of the Biography of the Buddha as Found in the Early Buddhist Sources

#### 4.1 Daily Routine of the Buddha

In the *Theravāda* canonical and post canonical literature it is not impossible to examine the greatness of prince *Siddhārtha*<sup>1</sup> (Buddha) after his enlightenment in his own words just as his life from childhood to self-enlightenment. The Buddha is reflected in the *Pāli* canon as a unique human being who reached the highest position of spiritual development as a result of eradicating defilements covertly and overtly functional in human mind.<sup>2</sup> However, with respect to his daily life he had a very normal and ordinary way of life. His way of sleeping, talking to others, eating, and doctrinal conversation with his disciples and others are well recorded in the canon. He has spent his life almost on traveling to teach his *Dhamma* for those who wished to listen to it. During the forty-five years of his life, he visited many places of India preaching his doctrine to the people. During the rainy seasons just as other recluses of the day, he stayed on a one place and gave necessary advice for his disciples. He had a very well planned and scheduled life during the forty fives of his journey. It is said that the night and day have been divided into basically three i.e., first watch, second watch, and third watch during which time he slept, meditated, met the people of divinity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:56.

<sup>2</sup> *Mn.*, 1:163.

<sup>3</sup> *Sap.*, 1:246.

The three watches of night are very important. First watch is dedicated to the monks to discuss the matters on *Dhamma* to get right objects of meditation.<sup>4</sup> It is in the middle watch that celestial beings such as *devās* and *brahmās* who are invisible celestial beings to ordinary people visit the Buddha to question him on *Dhamma*. In *Samyuttanikāya*, there are such special questions and the answers given by the Buddha.<sup>5</sup> There most of the questions raised by them are related to human world and life. Especially in the questions and explanations we find that they are of high moral and ethical significance. The well-known discourse i.e., *Maṅgalasutta*<sup>6</sup> which is one of such discourses explains how an ordinary individual should make his life a success. The last watch is important in many respects. This watch has is devoted to walking up and down, a kind of physical and mental exercise. He sleeps mindfully and towards the end of first watch. He attains to the fruits of *Arhatship*, and he enjoys the bliss of *Nibbāna*. However, the last hour of his watch as mentioned he spends in attaining to the ecstasy of Great Compassion. It is during which period he radiates through loving kindness towards all beings and surveys the world.<sup>7</sup>

It is recorded that in the early morning he surveys the world with his divine eye in order to see to whom he should extend support. Thus, when he comes to know that one needs his support, he goes there on foot uninvited to help the individual. If it is absolutely necessary, he would use his psychic power based on the circumstances in order to get the person onto the right path.<sup>8</sup> After enlightening the individual with

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<sup>4</sup> *Sap.*, 1:245.

<sup>5</sup> *Sn.*, 1:41.

<sup>6</sup> *Sun.*, 46.

<sup>7</sup> *Dha.*, 1:106.

<sup>8</sup> *Sap.*, 1:246.

spiritual advice he would proceed on his alms-round. If he is not invited to a place alone or with the *bhikkhūs*, he would go on his alms round.<sup>9</sup> Thus in the morning he would go to collect his meals and would then eat his meals seated under the shade of a tree in a suitable location. It is mentioned that he finished his meal before midday. Perhaps on such occasions too if he meets someone an appropriate sermon or discussion will be carried on. Thereafter he rests for a while. It is the evening that he advises and preaches his disciples. It is recorded that towards evening lay followers flock to him to hear *Dhamma*. The Buddha with the perceiving of their temperaments preaches them in a suitable way.<sup>10</sup>

Another special character of his life is that immediate after his meal, he would preach a suitable sermon to the meal provider in order to establish him on the right path. On most occasions he establishes such persons on the three refuges and advice to abstain from five kinds of immoral behavior, the basic moral principles of lay followers.<sup>11</sup> However, if he finds that the individual is spiritually matured enough, he would preach some higher theme in order to direct him towards the attainment of *Nibbāna*. Another important thing is that if someone wishes to get ordination, he would act accordingly.

In the afternoon session, he sits on a special seat prepared for him with the monks in the assembly to preach *Dhamma* to the assembled monks. On such occasions, some gets objects of meditations according to their temperaments and retire into suitable a place to practice meditation.

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<sup>9</sup> *Mn.*, 3:297.

<sup>10</sup> *Sap.*, 1:245.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

After such spiritual awakening given to monks, he himself retire into his privet chamber to rest. He lies to his right side and sleeps for a while with mindfulness.<sup>12</sup> Afternoon, he again surveys the world specially to see whether those who took spiritual advice from him needs any further assistance, if needed he would give further guidance.<sup>13</sup>

The above routine of his life mentioned in the *Theravāda* canonical and post canonical texts is devoid of any extraordinary ascriptions to his life. This reflects that how a human being raised above the other human beings of the world after eradication of defilements in mind acted and gave leadership not only to his disciples but also to all the beings irrespective of any difference. There are many incidents and stories recoded in the canon in which his daily routine is well depicted. Even though he is the Buddha, spared time to enjoy the bliss of *Nibbāna* in the last watch of night, a kind of mental and physical practice worthy of eminent in his life. However, according to the canon, what we find is not an ordinary or extraordinary human being, but a totally transformed personality and character of a human being who was not moved by the vicissitudes of human life.

#### **4.2 Cultural and Religious Aspects of Society and Buddha's View**

The era in which the Buddha was born had variegated dogmatic views of the world of phenomena and it is said that in addition to *Brahma* tradition there were many religious leaders and followers of various religious observances, and they had their own

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<sup>12</sup> *Sap.*, 1:245.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*



teachings and penances.<sup>14</sup> One of the almost important sections of the *pāli* canon i.e. *suttanipāta* gives a very compressive account of the religious atmosphere of then India. The names of great Brahmins such as *Bhāvarī*,<sup>15</sup> *Todeyya*<sup>16</sup> and also the youngsters of much intelligence such as *Ajita*, *Puṇṇaka*, and *Mettagu*<sup>17</sup> are mentioned and they have put towards the Buddha variety of questions of various facets and in turn we find that how the Buddha answered them. According to *Aṭṭhakavagga* Buddha has viewed life as an unending struggle between *Dukkha* and *Sukha*. It is a perpetual conflict, and the basis of this conflict has a psychological origin, such as craving, ill-will and ignorance. In a society where all other religious leaders traced back this conflict to some metaphysical origin; Buddha was able to see the psychology of its origin. However, according to him, the primary causes of all social and individual conflicts is the non-knowledge of clear vision and non-penetration into the causality of the world of phenomina.<sup>18</sup> Thus the Buddha while criticizing the attempts of metaphysical and the materialistic views of his time has shown the psychological origin of diverse dogmatic views which have no rational or empiricist foundation based on causality. Further, Buddha emphasizes the senselessness of the pondering over the contentious and speculative views for the spiritual edifications of the human beings. On an ethical foundation, human reason and experience have drawn the concern of the Buddha in understanding or realization of the very nature of the world of experience.<sup>19</sup> It is the early Buddhist view that the world is found in the fathom long body with its

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<sup>14</sup> *Dn.*, 1:24.

<sup>15</sup> *Sun.*, 190.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>17</sup> *Sun.*, 194.

<sup>18</sup> *Dn.*, 2:56.

<sup>19</sup> *Sun.*, 8.

consciousness. Hence unsatisfactoriness, its causality, path of emancipation and the emancipation is also to be found within the fathom long body with its consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

Buddha as a great human being has perfectly realized the nature of human condition and reasoning, its objective and subjective aspects, its rationality, and criteria as well.

### **4.3 Buddha's Wisdom Reflected in the Interpretation of Subjective & Objective World**

One of the discourses which depict the Buddha's typical knowledge of the subjective and objective world is *Khaggavisānasutta* of *Suttanipāta*.<sup>21</sup> According to the discourse that the Buddha does not deny the pleasures of the world and what he emphasizes is that they only give a temporary happiness for beings. His knowledge of the pleasure is clearly indicative of that he has a quite different view from the other religious traditions of then India.<sup>22</sup> He has pointed out three natures of the world of pleasures which have to be understood in order to have a gradual eradication of defilements from human mind. It is said that *Assāda*,<sup>23</sup> *Ādīnava*<sup>24</sup> and *Nissaraṇa*<sup>25</sup> are three standpoints of the Buddha of the world of pleasures. According to him, pleasure and pain are subject to change and is a result of causality.

However, Buddha mentions that pleasures give happiness on a conceptual basis, and they are temporary. As a great human being he has not denied the existence of objects of pleasures, because it represents one aspect of the world experience, yet it

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<sup>20</sup> *An.*, 2:48.

<sup>21</sup> *Sun.*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Sn.*, 1:22.

<sup>23</sup> *Mn.*, 1:85.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

does not represent the whole world. Here his attitude towards the subjective and the objective world is based on a psychological foundation. It is very important to distinguish him from other religious teachers as well as to get a knowledge of the typical character of the Buddha found in the canonical literature.

The *Mahātanhāsankhayasutta*<sup>26</sup> is another example of how the Buddha explained the objects of the world based on psychological foundation. It is recorded as follows: -

When he (whose view have reached a fair degree of maturity) has seen a material object with the eye he feels attached to agreeable material objects and feels repugnance with regard to disagreeable material objects and feels repugnance with regard to disagreeable material objects.<sup>27</sup>

According to the above, it is obvious that compliance and antipathy are two distinctive psychological foundations of human mind, and they are interrelated interdependent functions of mind which has a psychological basis. However, due to the two aspects of human mind the object that provides the foundation for one's utmost delight at one moment becomes the foundation of his utmost grief at the next instant. Hence, the Buddha views the world as a fleeting and impermanent phenomenon. Hence, the passionate clinging to the world of objects results only in the production of incessant psychological conflicts. This explanation of the Buddha is clearly indicative of his far-sighted knowledge of the phenomenal world quite different from those propagators of various teachings of his time.

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<sup>26</sup> *Mn.*, 1:256.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.4 Buddha as a Mahāpurisa

Another important facet of the Buddha is that he himself has given a comprehensive analysis of the then popular terms such as *Muni*,<sup>28</sup> *Brāhamaṇa*<sup>29</sup> and *Arahant*.<sup>30</sup> They have been used by the different religious traditions of India as specific terms to call those who attained emancipation. Such have been applied to the Buddha as well. Thus, it is obvious that these terms have been used by various religions and they do not belong to a particular religion. However, in the Buddhist literature they are used with a specific meaning and the Buddha has interpreted them with a specific sense.

As he is reflected as an embodiment of all the great qualities of human personality the term *Mahāpurisa*, the great person is used for the Buddha in the texts. According to the traditional Indian teachings, there are many criteria to observe a great human being. In that respect all the qualities of a great human being are collected in the personality of the Buddha. But according to the *Mahāpurisasutta*, Buddha had a quite different interpretation of *Mahāpurisa*, and it is reflected as follows: -

“Great man, great man, it is said, venerable sir. How, venerable sir is one a great man?” “One who has a liberated mind, I say, Sāriputta, is a great man. One who has an unliberated mind is not a great man, I say.”<sup>31</sup>

This sort of attitude is specially reflected in the life of the Buddha towards the accepted concepts in different teachings of the day. The above remark of the Buddha clearly indicates that his way of life was quite different from other beings. In the

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<sup>28</sup> *Sun.*, 36.

<sup>29</sup> *Mhn.*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> *Sn.* 1:169.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 5:158.

commentarial literature there is the tendency to depict him as a symbol of great compassion and great wisdom.

*Theravāda* tradition has well preserved the real meaning of those terms as found in their original sources without any addition to these terms' extraordinary significance. According to the *Aṭṭhakavagga*, sage (*muni*) is the person who renounces the pleasures of the world, and he appreciates solitude. The life of a *muni* is compared to the lotus which is sprung up in the muddy water but remains unsullied by it rising above its surface.<sup>32</sup> Prince *Siddhārtha's* renunciation does not denote any confinement from the social life of the world but signifies a self-restraint individual who lives in the world without becoming victim to his own covert and overt defilements. His view of the world of phenomena thus is depicted in the following verse. "Observe the world as conditioned with mindfulness. Thus, one can go beyond death."<sup>33</sup>

This is clearly indicative of the view of the sage. In the *Mogharājasutta*, this advice has been given by the Buddha for his disciples. The application of term "*suññatā*" is noteworthy and it clearly indicates how the Buddha views the world of phenomena as a supreme human being.<sup>34</sup> The term a *muni* is one of the oldest terms used to call the great sages and it has been used for the Buddha too with a specific sense."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Sun.*, 166.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>34</sup> *Sun.*, 217.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

In addition, another cognate term that has been used is "*mahesino*" which has a similar meaning with *muni*.<sup>36</sup> Here we find that due to the far-sighted knowledge of the Buddha others preferred to use the above term which was commonly used in that society for the religious propagators but with a quite different implication. This was due to the fact that his explanation of the phenomenal world was quite different from other sages of the world. There were various measures of the sages in different religious traditions. But here we find that Buddha stood as a living sage, among his disciple and the followers of the other religious traditions. The ascription of the term is not an application by the Theravada tradition, but it is how others called the Buddha. Thus, according to early Buddhist scriptures, the term "*muni*" is reflected as follows: - "Not on account of his views, learning or knowledge do the skilled here, Nanda, call one a sage. Those who live disarmed, undesiring, untroubled: those, I say, are called sages."<sup>37</sup>

Thus, a *muni* has a lasting happiness due to the fact of non-indulgence in worldly things. A *muni* is not a sage that has material tendencies. The Buddha is called a great sage because he detached from all conceptual constructions as well as worldly things. However, the most preferred term by the Buddha seems to be *Tathāgata* which signifies the one who came to the realization of suchness or thatness, the ultimate truth of the phenomenal world. When he met the five ascetics, he advises them not to call *Tathāgata* by the name *Āvuso*.<sup>38</sup> In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*<sup>39</sup> too, this term is used on many occasions.

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<sup>36</sup> *Sun.*, 35.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>38</sup> *Vn.*, 1:9.

<sup>39</sup> *Dn.*, 2:72.

#### 4.5 Buddha and His Far-Sighted Vision of Social Conflicts

*Kalahavivādasutta*<sup>40</sup> and *Sakkhapañhasutta*<sup>41</sup> are another important discourse to see different facets of the far-sighted vision of the Buddha. Buddha's analysis of conflicts in human society, their origin and causality signify another aspect of his great knowledge. On the other hand, it draws attention to the ills in the life of individual such as grief, lamentation, and despair etc. Further how immoral behavior brings about social evils such as murder, harm, hate, defamation etc., “From being too endeared (to objects and persons) arise contentions and disputes, lamentations, and sorrows along with avarice, selfishness and conceit, arrogance and slander. Contentions and disputes are linked with selfishness, and slander is born of contention.”<sup>42</sup>

There we find just as in the *Suttanipāta* some issues of psychological significance have drawn the attention of the Buddha when he was asked about the causality of conflicts and disputes, grief, conceit, and slander etc. The causality of the above issues has also been explained by the Buddha in the *Mahānidānasutta* as following:

Now, craving is dependent on feeling, seeking is dependent on craving, acquisition is dependent on seeking, ascertainment is dependent on acquisition, desire and passion is dependent on ascertainment, attachment is dependent on desire and passion, possessiveness is dependent on attachment, stinginess is dependent on possessiveness, defensiveness is dependent on stinginess, and because of defensiveness, dependent on defensiveness, various evil, unskillful phenomena come into play: the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies. "And this is the way to understand how it is that because of defensiveness various evil, unskillful phenomena come into play: the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies. If there were no defensiveness at all, in any way, of

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<sup>40</sup> *Sun.*, 168.

<sup>41</sup> *Dn.*, 2:263.

<sup>42</sup> *Sun.*, 169.

anything anywhere, in the utter absence of defensiveness, from the cessation of defensiveness, would various evil, unskillful phenomena - the taking up of sticks and knives; conflicts, quarrels, and disputes; accusations, divisive speech, and lies - come into play?<sup>43</sup>

The *sutta* signifies the farsighted knowledge of the Buddha of social issues as well as the philosophical speculations. There the principle of dependent origination has been used to explain the causality of social issues. Just as the way that the Dependent Origination has been applied to explain the causal process of death and birth, the same principle has been used to explain the causal process of human conflicts in society by the Buddha. Although dependent origination is popularly used to explain the existence and the emancipation of beings. Buddha taking into consideration its practical importance of the application of it explains how social issues take place in human society. There he says that social strife and related matters are originated in human society has a causal basis. According to the explanation found in the discourse common social issues, their basis, interrelationships are reflected. The first part of the causal foundation of strife and related issues clearly indicate that they have a psychological foundation.<sup>44</sup> In the second part how these psychological issues become diversified and affect whole society is explained. This explanation of the Buddha is very important because it clearly indicates how the human mind forms the whole social structure.

*Theravāda* view of the Buddha thus has not deviated from its connotations to the social functions and social institutions etc. Although Buddha is over and above all the ordinary human beings due to his mental attainments, yet he was a person born in human society and gave a comprehensive analysis of human society. “Just as a red,

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<sup>43</sup> *Dn.*, 2:56.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:61.



blue, or white lotus born in the water and growing in the water, rises up above the water and stands with no water adhering to it, in the same way the Tathāgata-freed, dissociated, and released from these ten things - dwells with unrestricted awareness.’<sup>45</sup>

Thus, in this discourse we find that how mental, physical, and verbal behavior affect the whole society without any reference to any metaphysical elements.

Among many discourses where his knowledge of the phenomenal world is found, *Sakkhapañhasutta*<sup>46</sup> is very important in many aspects. A question is raised in that sutta of similar types. The question is that despite the desire to live in peace and harmony, the individuals have fallen prey to enmities, hostilities, and conflicts in human society. The god *Shakra* requests the Buddha to clarify the causality for such hostilities and enmities. Human conflicts are multifaceted and appear in various forms despite of blood relationships, ethnic relationships, family relationships etc and developed into international wars and social conflicts as well.<sup>47</sup> Buddha as a great human being traces them back to the psychological nature of human beings and goes beyond a mere metaphysical of interpretation of such phenomena. According to the Buddha human mind is a dynamic function and there is the possibility for a complete transformation.<sup>48</sup> It is evident that without based on materialistic or idealistic foundation he was able to see the causality and the conditional nature of the phenomenal world. This has been preserved in the original teachings of the Buddha especially how he dealt with the common social issues. The rational approach of the

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<sup>45</sup> *An.*, 5:152.

<sup>46</sup> *Dn.*, 2:263.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

<sup>48</sup> *Pm.*, 1:131.

Buddha towards popular and much accepted views of the society is thus significant in the understanding of the inner personality of him. He was able to see the causality and conditions of such issues. Buddha's knowledge does not confine only to explain the highly philosophical issues, but similar importance was given to the social issues as well.

This sort of explanation clearly indicates that Buddha as a person of highest wisdom has a very comprehensive explanation of the social issues where there were multi-faceted extreme views rooted in society.

#### **4.6 Buddha's Repudiation of the Concept of Soul**

In the other part of the discourse, we find that how the Buddha repudiated the concept of soul. In this explanation based on the different views of them religious practices specially based on logics. For instance, some of the religious followers who attained certain mental attainments have described the existence of soul and its different aspects based on logics. However, no one was able to see it as changing phenomena and also its impermanent characteristics. For example, Buddha says that some are of the view that soul is feeling, but anyone can experience that feeling has basically three folds. It can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Therefore, changing phenomena like feeling cannot be taken as soul, as it is obvious that it is subject to change.<sup>49</sup> Hence, if someone to take feeling as soul then it should be natural that soul also has the above three characteristics i.e., pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. This clearly indicates that

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<sup>49</sup> *Mn.*, 2:64.

Buddha was logical as well a practical in his explanation of certain important issues of the day.

This is further well explained when some disciples of the Buddha going after the Vedic teachings wanted to explain *Viññāṇa* consciousness as soul or unchanging element of human existence. In this, the Buddha was philosophical in his explanation and based his teaching on dependent origination when the *Bhikkhu Sāti* was of the view that *Viññāṇa* transmigrate from one birth to another, and it is the deciding and unchanging element of human existence. Buddha was very much critical of it and his answer portrays his greatness as a unique teacher. There he says that, “Sāti has not even received the warmth of my teachings.”<sup>50</sup>

This indicates how a unique teacher of great wisdom and qualities describes the non-knowledge of some his disciples of his teachings. However, after saying he gives an analytical explanation of the wrong interpretation of the fundamentals of his teachings.

On the other hand, his explanation of the process of sense perception is another example of the repudiation of consciousness as an unchanging element of human existence. Learned disciples of the Buddha had well realized this fact. This is found in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*.<sup>51</sup> There Buddha has laid foundation for the process of sense perception and the conceptualization of the phenomenal world which is highly philosophical as well as psychological.

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<sup>50</sup> *Mn.*, 1:257.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

According to the account, the Buddha's clarification did not come to an end and therefore it has been further clarified by *Arahat Mahakaccāyana*.<sup>52</sup> The psychological process of sense perception beings with the arising of consciousness and it has been explained as follows: -

Dependent on eye & forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is contact. With contact as a requisite condition, there is feeling. What one feels, one perceives (labels in the mind). What one perceives, one thinks about. What one thinks about, one complicates. Based on what a person complicates, the perceptions and categories of complication assail him/her regarding past, present, and future forms cognizable via the eye.<sup>53</sup>

According to this explanation the sense perception which begins with the arising of *viññāṇa* is functional as a process and is based on sense data. The most important fact is that this process leads to the conceptualization of the collected sense data and final result is the subjugation of individual to already generated concepts in his mind. Thus, man loses the ability of the control of self-generated concepts where concepts control the individual. A very practical and theoretical explanation of the world of phenomena is found in this explanation.

#### **4.7 Buddha as a Firm Critic of Metaphysical Speculations,**

According to the *Pāli* canonical literature, although the Buddha was critical of microcosmic and macrocosmic speculations of eternal elements; he knew the boundaries of such things. This is well reflected in the questions which are termed as not answered by the Buddha. The *Aggivacchagottasutta*<sup>54</sup> records ten popular

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<sup>52</sup> *Mn.*, 1:110.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:111.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 483.

questions of his time which were not answered by the Buddha to the Brahmin *Vacchagotta* on that occasion knowing that he would come to a wrong understanding of them.<sup>55</sup> These questions very clearly indicate that broad view that he had about the phenomenal world and the different individuals that came to him for advice. Buddha explains that the dogmatic views result from the firm belief in one's own views while despising the other's views of the phenomenal world.<sup>56</sup> Even when advice was given to mundane issues such as political and economic etc., Buddha emphasizes that *dhamma* should be placed in the highest position and in all sorts of political affairs. In this regard, his emphasis on the *dhamma* is reflected in many ways.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, Buddha did not wish to stand as an authority over *dhamma*. It is the *dhamma*; the ultimate truth of human existence and the universe has been placed over and above any other thing.<sup>58</sup> Although Buddha was the greatest who established the order of monks and taught the doctrine, he did not wish to supersede it. This would have been the reason for him to receive a very special veneration within various traditions of Buddhist thought. Buddha on many an occasion emphasizes that he was only a teacher who discovered a hitherto unknown doctrine and only shows the path for emancipation.<sup>59</sup> According to above, it is obvious that in the *Theravāda* literature what comes first and foremost is the teachings of the Buddha. His teachings have been highlighted more than the Buddha and his personality. Even in the places where the Buddha's personality is

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<sup>55</sup> *Mn.*, 485.

<sup>56</sup> *Sun.*, 153.

<sup>57</sup> *An.*, 1:109.

<sup>58</sup> *Dn.*, 2:100.

<sup>59</sup> *Dma.*, 276.

reflected the underlying principle is his teachings. Thus, through the teaching Buddha has been seen in the *Theravāda* literature, and vice versa.

#### 4.8 Buddha and Dhamma

In the admonition given to the *Vakkhalī* another facet of his attitude towards his physical body is reflected. According to the story, he entered the order with the hope of living close by the Buddha so as to see the beauty of him always and did not devote time to practice *dhamma* and *vinaya*. When the Buddha came to know this, he was very strict on the behavior of *Bhikkhu Vakkhalī* and strongly admonished him to go away from him and to practice *Dhamma* and *Vinaya*.<sup>60</sup> What is interesting here is that he calls his body as subject to decay and a mass of filthily elements etc. The term used here is "*pūtikaya*" which signifies a heap of impure elements of changing.<sup>61</sup> With this admonition, he has given a highly philosophical explanation.

On the other hand, another exemplary statement indicates that he appreciates those who follow his path of *vinaya* and *dhamma* for their liberation. He did not praise those who venerated him with offerings of flowers and incense. Regarding this, it is important to note that the Buddha places *dhamma* above all. Whole personality of the Buddha is dependent on his teachings and nothing else. The term *Dhamma* signifies the universal truth of the elements of existence which puts lights on the conditioned phenomena, with no reference to any eternal force microcosmic or macrocosmic that exists in individual or universe.<sup>62</sup> It must be realized based in terms of Three

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<sup>60</sup> *Sn.*, 3:120.

<sup>61</sup> *Pj.*, 1:40.

<sup>62</sup> *Sn.*, 1:40.

Characteristics of the phenomenal world. On the other hand, *Vinaya* signifies the gradual path that the disciples should follow to attain the above knowledge of the world of phenomena. Buddha has emphasized on many occasions their significance. Thus, he says that his teachings and disciples become admired as much as they conform to *dhamma* and *vinaya*. This view of the Buddha clearly indicates that there is not any metaphysical foundation hidden in his teaching and it should go into the many folks for it to take significance.<sup>63</sup> Buddha's attitude towards *dhamma* is well reflected in the example in which it is compared to a boat. Just as a boat used to cross over a river, his teachings should be used to cross over the occasion of *samsāra*.<sup>64</sup> This admonition of the Buddha is clearly indicative of for what purpose his teachings should be used. Sometimes, ordinary life is given to various sorts of human weaknesses, and it is a natural phenomenon. The foundation of such mental dispositions is the ignorance. If ordinary people go to the extent of taking his teachings with a strong bondage, they are conditioned to the teaching which lays foundation for their emancipation. Such bondage diverts the individual from the very purpose. According to the *suttanipāta* many religious leaders and their disciples were argumentative of various issues which drive them away from the objective. It is mentioned that the multiplicity of philosophical views drew them not towards emancipation but towards confusion.<sup>65</sup> Thus many arguments of different themes took place among the holders of various speculations with sole intention of proving one's own standpoint to the opponent. As a

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<sup>63</sup> *Dn.*, 2:100.

<sup>64</sup> *Mn.*, 1:134.

<sup>65</sup> *Sun.*, 157.

great leader of the order of bhikkhu tradition, he did not prefer his disciples waste their time and energy with popular arguments carried out with no purpose at all.

#### 4.9 Buddha's Personality Reflected in the Exposition of Dhamma

This can be further adduced by the observation of the methods followed by the Buddha to discourse Dhamma to those who were interested in. One of the most significant characteristics of his method of explanation was the clarity in the beginning, middle and the end. In the many discourses we find that it is mentioned as follows: -

And I recall, Ananda, how I have attended each of these eight kinds of assemblies, amounting to hundreds. And before seating myself and starting the conversation or the discussion, I made my appearance resemble theirs, my voice resembles theirs. And so, I taught them the Dhamma, and roused, edified, and gladdened them. Yet while I was speaking to them thus, they did not know me, and they would enquire of one another, asking: 'Who is he that speaks to us? Is it a man or a god?'<sup>66</sup>

This clearly indicates that he had a very good method of explaining the *dhamma* for the different people who had different views, concepts, beliefs etc. On the other hand, he was competent of explaining things in the beginning based on moral foundation and then gradually he had the ability of motivating the individual towards the desired goal.<sup>67</sup>

In this regard the *Theravāda* commentarial literature has further explained why the Buddha used such measures. For instance, in the *sumāṅgalavilasini*<sup>68</sup> such have been described further without any glorification of the qualities of the Buddha. The following terms have been used in order to explain the ability of the Buddha in the

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<sup>66</sup> *Dn.*, 2:109.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:148.

(*anupubbīkathā*) "on generosity, on moral conduct, on the heavens, showing the danger, degradation and corruption of sense-desires, and the benefit of renunciation"

<sup>68</sup> *Suv.*, 1:132.



explanation of *Dhamma*. They are: - “*saddhājanānaṃ, paññajanānaṃ, sattho, sabyanjano, uttānagambhīro, kaṇṇasuko, hadayaṃgamo, antthukāsako, aparaṃbhato, kannapaṇṇavādato.*”<sup>69</sup>

The above description of the commentarial literature is a good example of the method of communication that the Buddha followed. Buddha had this quality and ability in the explanation of his teachings. After hearing his teaching some in word and deed appreciate his teachings and, in many discourses, we find how the happiness was expressed by the listeners.

Excellent, O Lord, most excellent, O Lord! It is as if, Lord, one was to set upright what had been overthrown, or to reveal what had been hidden, or to show the path to one who had gone astray, or to light a lamp in the darkness so that those with eyes might see even so has the Blessed One set forth the Dhamma in many ways.<sup>70</sup>

However, some after listening his teachings had a quite different attitude towards him. For instance, in the *sāmaññaphalasutta* of *sumāmagalavilāsinī*, it is revealed that the *Brahma* was very pleased about his teachings. He stood up from his seat and adjusted his shoal and thereafter he worshiped the Buddha touching his feet saying that he is the *Brahmin Brahmāyu*. This is recorded in the commentarial literature neither highlighting the Buddha nor degrading the Brahmin but emphasizing the significance of his *dhamma*.

On the other hand, Buddha did not preach *dhamma* with purposeless or untimely. It is said that *Sīhinadānasutta* of *D.N.* that there are certain important

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<sup>69</sup> *Dn.*, 3:173.

<sup>70</sup> *Mn.*, 1:501.

qualities of his preaching.<sup>71</sup> He knows the following such as *bhūta*, *attha*, *dhamma* and *vinaya*.<sup>72</sup> It is important to note that Buddha enlightens people by expounding *dhamma* and he addresses to the intellect not to the emotions of the individuals concerned. There is specifically the ample opportunity for freedom of thought, conversations and to make discussions. There is no authority, but advice is given to exercise one's own reasoning and judgment for themselves whether something is right or wrong.<sup>73</sup>

The certain statements found in the discourses of the Buddha are reflected of his skills and qualities that do not upgrade him into a high position. He was always interested in the usefulness of the places of mediation. He says that as a teacher if he has to do something, he has done it. There are roots of trees, places of rest. Hence one should frequent in those places and practice the path of emancipation without mush delay. Statements of this nature signify that the Buddha did not wield any authority over his teachings but motivated his disciples to attain their desired objective.

#### **4.10 Buddha Reflected in the Doctrinal Conversations**

The Buddha's attitude towards different people is reflected in the *Ālavakasutta*.<sup>74</sup> There three times he obeyed *Ālavaka* but in the fourth time, he refused to follow his instructions and challenged *Ālavaka* to do whatever he could. In this context, Buddha's great inner personality is reflected. *Theravāda* tradition while giving some room for the explanation of the great physical qualities of the Buddha has also given priority on many occasions to depict the inner personality qualities of the

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<sup>71</sup> *Dn.*, 1:161.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:175.

<sup>73</sup> *An.*, 1:189.

<sup>74</sup> *Pj.*, 1:222.

Buddha. Although the *Lakkhaṇa*<sup>75</sup> and *Brahmāyusuttas*<sup>76</sup> are drawn the attention of the scholars as depicting his physical qualities with exaggeration but many discourses are there where the inner qualities of the Buddha are reflected. In addition to such discourses, there are certain incidents in which the great physical qualities of the Buddha are reflected and one such is the story of *Upaka*<sup>77</sup>. He was the first person met by the Buddha on his way to *Vārānasi* soon after the enlightenment, but the Buddha did not exaggerate himself of his great achievements just mentioned that he attained self-enlightenment and proceeding to *Vārānasi*. On the other hand, *Upaka's* remarks are also very important because he admits that the Buddha has a very pleasing look and personality.

A similar example is found in the story of *Pukkusāti*.<sup>78</sup> He had never seen the Buddha but wanted to follow the path. Hence, adorned himself as a bhikkhu and went in the hope of meeting the Buddha. On his way he stayed in a resting place one night with the permission of the owner of pottery house. However, Buddha too later came to the same dwelling place, and he too wanted to stay there in the night. However, the owner said that if the monk came first willing that he could stay there. Thus, he too stayed there, and, in the night, there started a conversation between the two recluses. In the conversation *Pukkusāti* told that he became a monk in the hope of meeting the Buddha and listen to his *dhamma* for emancipation. Then the Buddha asked him whether he had seen the Buddha before and if he has seen the Buddha, he could make him out. On that occasion he consented to listen to the teachings from the elderly monk

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<sup>75</sup> *Dn.*, 3:143.

<sup>76</sup> *Mn.*, 2:143.

<sup>77</sup> *Vn.*, 1:8; *Mn.*, 1:170.

<sup>78</sup> *Mn.*, 3:237.

not knowing that it was the Buddha towards the middle watch of the night. After listening, he knew that he was the Buddha and apologized to him and requested the formal ordination and higher ordination. *Dhātuvihangasutta* of *M.N.* mentions this story and *Pukkusāti* attained the *Anāgami* state though unexpectedly died due to a tragic circumstance.

These incidents and such stories found in the canonical texts is important because there is not any glorification added to the life of the Buddha. The owner of the pottery house as well as the monk *Pukkusāti* did not recognize the Buddha. This indicates that though in some discourses physical appearances of the Buddha are highlighted, Buddha became a unique figure and supreme being due to his spiritual qualities and attainments. Theravada tradition has maintained this throughout their canonical and post canonical texts.

In the *Kālāmasutta*, there emphasized the basic foundations of human thinking when comes to a certain decision.<sup>79</sup> According to the Buddha discussion making should have the quality of independence and one should not be conditioned to the conditions of different criteria. All the aspects of a theme should be taken into consideration when making decisions and forming views. Throughout his life the Buddha maintained this standpoint and gave his disciples too this guidance which was not practiced by then *Sramaṇa* and *Brāhmaṇa* traditions.

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<sup>79</sup> *An.*, 1:189.

#### 4.11 Buddha's Attitude towards Social Dogmatism

The way Buddha answered some questions clearly signifies that special attitude he had towards fundamental issues. Especially he was aware of the suitable occasions to answer such questions and when the Buddha was accused of with the term *Vasala* he gave a quite different analysis of the causes that make oneself a *Vasala*.<sup>80</sup> His standpoint was that one does not become a *Brāhmaṇa* or *Vasala* by birth, but it is decided by one's behavior. *Dhammapada*, mentions very clearly the true qualities of a monk or a Brahmin.<sup>81</sup> While being giving a constructive criticism of the life of then Brahmins and Sramaṇas, especially with regard to the essential behavior, he has emphasized the significance of self-control of one's physical, verbal and mental behavior which was a typical characteristic of his life.<sup>82</sup> This indicates that Buddha functioned as a constructive supporter of social reformation and was not hesitant to criticize the society with a rational approach based on morality if the occasion to that was suitable. If someone does not have the inner qualities of a Brahmin, the outward appearances such as the matted log, birth, physical appearances etc, were immaterial in deciding his position in society.<sup>83</sup> If one is true to his words and deeds, he becomes a Brahmin according to certain interpretation of the Buddha. As a unique human personality, always emphasizes the significance of the control of one's mental, physical, and verbal behavior. It is said that a true Brahmin has the quality of restrain with respect to his physical, mental, and verbal behavior. Not only that, but the Buddha was

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<sup>80</sup> *Sun.*, 21.

<sup>81</sup> *Dha.*, 101-118.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>83</sup> *Dha.*, 109.

also critical of the some of the dogmatic views in his time. For instance, in the *Dhammapada* he rejects the offerings practiced by some based on blind faith.<sup>84</sup> In the discourse of downfall the Buddha's knowledge of then unethical social behavior has been well reflected and on the other hand the discourse on the blessing, the positive or the progressive side of human life has been explained.<sup>85</sup> Thus, Buddha as a great human being had the knowledge of both positive and negative and qualities of social life. His teachings did not confine only to explain the defilements of mind instead a broad vision of politics, economics, social issues etc is found in the teachings. Another important aspect of his life is the understanding of the then social condition of individual and their livelihood. In the time of the Buddha the economic condition of the people dependent on agriculture, cattle breeding, and business ventures. In many Buddhist discourses Buddha has admonished them how to develop household economic conditions of the people as well as the responsibilities of a state in the promotion of the economic condition of the country.

#### **4.12 Buddha as an Ethical Teacher**

In the explanation of his *dhamma* on most occasions Buddha has used the instruments of cultivation and thereby he has enlightened the people on very important issues of life. One such discourse is the *Kasībhāradvājasutta*<sup>86</sup> in which many great characteristics of the Buddha is reflected. When the Buddha met the Brahmin *Bhāradvāja*, he was accused of by the Brahmin as he did not do any cultivation for his livelihood but depended on others for his livelihood. On this occasion Buddha says that

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<sup>84</sup> *Dha.*, 107.

<sup>85</sup> *Sun.*, 18, 46.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

“faith is his seed, austerity is rain, wisdom is his yoke and plough, modesty is his pale, mind the trap and mindfulness is his plowshare and goad.”<sup>87</sup> Further explaining he says that he is well restrained in speech and conduct, guarded indeed and speech, moderate in food and he makes truth his weed cutter, thus he has completed his deliverance. In this way taking the instruments of cultivation and the paddy field, Buddha gives a very comprehensive explanation of his deep doctrine. After hearing the teachings, the Brahmin was pleased and offered him food. However, the Buddha rejected the offers saying that it is not his custom to accept food by reciting verses and it is contrary to right livelihood. This episode clearly indicates several great qualities of the Buddha such as his knowledge of society and ability of the explanation of *dhamma* to the point by using examples suitable for a farmer. His behavior pattern self-control, restrain and wisdom are also reflected in. Above all the most importantly depicts the great personality of the Buddha. Here in this context Buddha is reflected as a great personality, a supreme being with no adoration whatsoever.

On the other hand, in the *Soṇadaṇḍasutta*,<sup>88</sup> we find that *Brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa* explains the Buddha to his followers. There says that Buddha is pure in birth on two sides, and he has a very beautiful physical appearance. He has eradicated craving and has a very respectable relation. He went from home to homelessness very young and is virtuous. His teachings are very pleasant and is a teacher of gods and men.

This simple explanation of the Buddha throws a light on his whole life. This is how a non- follower of his teaching viewed the Buddha. *Soṇadaṇḍa* too had the above

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<sup>87</sup> *Sun.*, 13.

<sup>88</sup> *Dn.*, 1:111.

qualities except some higher mental attainments. Thus, it is obvious that other Brahmins too had the physical appearance similar to the Buddha and there was not much difference in that respect. But the mental qualities are concerned there was a big difference. Therefore, in the *Theravāda* tradition there is an attempt to depict the great personality traits, spiritual attainments, and his knowledge of social issues etc with fewer glorifications of his physical appearances.

One of the significant descriptions in which such supreme mental qualities are collectively reflected is the nine epithets used to describe the Buddha. Thus, the *Theravāda* tradition has throughout its commentaries and canonical texts has attempted to highlight the supreme qualities spiritual of spiritual significance. He has obtained access to wisdom by the removal of defilements and then became a unique teacher of gods and men. He is regarded as a teacher of gods and men due to the spiritual qualities. *Theravāda* tradition maintains that even among the great gods or Brahmas who are regarded as great beings in the universe the Buddha remains over and above all especially due to the fact that he removed defilements without any trace of them.

However, although it is mentioned in the canonical texts that he has no teacher who directed to attain enlightenment, it has to be understood that it is only with respect to Buddhahood that he has no teacher.<sup>89</sup> Throughout his encounters we find that no one was able to direct him through a path of the eradication of defilements which leads to the end of suffering and the simultaneous realization of the ultimate truth. After the enlightenment he wanted to make known his new doctrine to his former teachers such

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<sup>89</sup> *Vn.*, 1:8.



as *Uddhakarāmaputta*, *Ālārakālāma* etc.<sup>90</sup> As they were not alive, he decided to teach it to the five ascetics who supported him in order to practice the sever austerities for the attainment of enlightenment. Thus, it is clear that Buddha had a great respect for those who helped him towards the path of enlightenment.

Another important part of the life of the Buddha is his strong opposition to the then prevailed caste system and the state of women. There, the Buddha was able to make a significant social change and made foundation for the eradication of social evils that prevailed in his day. One such strong social evil was the caste system that divided society and in which social structure many lost their social rights. As a unique personality Buddha was able to enlighten especially the then renowned Brahmins in this regard. The suttās such as *Vāsetta*,<sup>91</sup> *Sonadanda*<sup>92</sup> explains the social evils, their nature and how they create adverse effects on human life and society. It is said that it is the human knowledge and the ethical behavior that matter a lot in society and not that the physical appearance or the birth, caste, wealth etc. It is said that “Birth makes no Brāhmin, nor non-Brahmin make”<sup>93</sup>

According to the Buddha's explanation of the then prevailed social barriers that they have been enacted in order to obtain social privileges, otherwise they have no moral or mental foundation whatsoever at all. He saw the right path to scavengers, courtesans, worriers, and Brahmins to get enlightenment and to enjoy equal rights and privileges in the order of monks and nuns. Especially in the realm of spiritual

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<sup>90</sup> *Mn.*, 1:170.

<sup>91</sup> *Sun.*, 115.

<sup>92</sup> *Dn.*, 1:111.

<sup>93</sup> *Sun.*, 122.

attainments there is no such distinction although ordinary mundane people make distinction regarding birth, caste wealth etc.

A close examination the *Sonadaṇḍasutta* reveals that Buddha's physical and spiritual attainments are recorded on an equal foundation and neither side is exaggerated. Especially the Buddha's attitude towards physical appearances in his own words is reflected. However, Buddha gives more significance to the spiritual development and has a very negative attitude towards external appearances just as in other contexts. This can be well linked to the information found in the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*.<sup>94</sup> The incidents that took place towards the end of the *Mahāparinibbāna* of the Buddha is recorded in that discourse. His physical body is compared to a wrecked chariot.

Now I am frail, Ānanda, old, aged, far gone in years. This is my eightieth year, and my life is spent. Even as an old cart, Ānanda, is held together with much difficulty, so the body of the Tathāgata is kept going only with supports. It is, Ānanda, only when the Tathāgata, disregarding external objects, with the cessation of certain feelings, attains to and abides in the sign less concentration of mind, that his body is more comfortable.<sup>95</sup>

According to the information Buddha was not freed from the human frailties of life. However, physical illnesses did not affect the spiritual attainments of the Buddha at all. It is mentioned how the physical pleasantness of the Buddha has gradually vanished due to his old age and is assailed by the illnesses.

The best example in which unique qualities of the Buddha is compared is the lotus flower. In the Buddhist literature, the example of lotus flower has been used to

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<sup>94</sup> *Dn.*, 2:72.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

explain such great qualities of the Buddha and also the noble disciples of the Buddha. Lotus is rooted in the impure muddy water and when it is bloomed remains unsullied by the impurities of the pond. The noble too after the eradication of defilements live in the pond of the human society unsullied by the impurities of society.<sup>96</sup> He is not moved by the vicissitudes of life such as fame and disgrace, gain and lost etc. According to the teaching, Buddha is depicted as a person who already attained enlightenment and preaches others to attain it. It is mentioned as follows: - “*Buddho so bhagavā bodhāya Dhammaṃdeseti*, (The Blessed One is awakened and He teaches the dhamma for the sake of awakening) “*Danto so bhagavā damathāya Dhammaṃdeseti*, (The Blessed One is tamed /restrained and He teaches the Dhamma for the sake of taming/ restraining) “*Santo so bhagavā samathāya Dhammaṃdeseti*, (The Blessed One is at peace and he teaches the dhamma for the sake of peace) “*Tinno so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammaṃdeseti*, (The Blessed One has crossed over /has reached the final end and He teaches dhamma for crossing over/for reaching the final end) “*Parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṃdeseti*, (The Blessed One has attained *Nibbāna* and He teaches the *dhamma* for attaining *Nibbāna*).<sup>97</sup>

## Conclusion

On the whole, it is obvious that in the *Pāli* canonical texts Buddha remains a unique human being untouched by the vicissitudes of human life. He had well-arranged daily routine and rightly viewed the philosophical and social issues. Buddha attained

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<sup>96</sup> *An.*, 5:152.

<sup>97</sup> *Mn.*, 1:235.

*Nibbāna* at the age of thirty-five which also can be called the Self Enlightenment of the Buddha. Buddha is found in the *Theravāda* canonical literature as a person of great wisdom with less adoration of his extensive and colorful physical description. It is his great wisdom (*mahāpaññā*) and great compassion (*mahākarunā*) that made him a superhuman being in early canonical literature.

## Chapter 5

### Tendency Towards a Hagiography of the Buddha in the *Pāli*

#### Cannon and Commentaries

##### 5.1 Introduction

Although in the early Buddhist literature the life of the Buddha and his teachings have not been subject to much adoration and high admiration leading to add some metaphysical significance in the commentarial literature of *Theravāda* tradition; there is a tendency to depict the portrait of the Buddha with much adoration and hegemony.<sup>1</sup> This can be viewed as the first step of the hegemony of the concept of the Buddha in the *Theravāda* tradition. Nonetheless, there is limitation and much responsibility in the attempt of hegemony and adoration. There is not much more information of the early days of the life of prince *Siddhārtha* but in the commentarial literature one may find there is ample information of his early life.<sup>2</sup> According to the important incidents that happened in his early days as recorded in the commentarial literature, it is obvious that there is an attempt to elevate his status even before the attainment of enlightenment.

According to the commentarial descriptions, there are some states into which a *Bodhisattva* is not born, and such states are considered to be miserable. It is mentioned that he is never born blind, deaf, insane, crippled, among barbarians, as a slave or as a skeptic.<sup>3</sup> Another important fact is that he is never born as a female, is never given to five serious crimes which give immediate effects (*ānantariya-kamma*). Further, he never gets

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<sup>1</sup>Toshiichi Endo, *Buddha in Theravāda Tradition* (Colombo: Buddhist Cultural Center, 1997), 13.

<sup>2</sup>Jāp., 1:56.

<sup>3</sup>A. J. S. Kāriyawasam, *Bodhisattva Concept* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2012), 463.

infectious diseases or be born as an animal. Further it is said that he is never born bigger than an elephant or smaller than a quail. It is important to note that he is not born as a *peta* or in *avīci*, lowest states of suffering or in the hells known as *lokāntarika*, which have eternal darkness. Further it is said that he is not born as a *māra* or as a god of pure abodes, (*suddhavāsa deva*) or in the formless (*arūpa*) worlds, or in another *cakkavāla*,<sup>4</sup> a whole world system.

## 5.2 Birth of *Bodhisattva* in Human World and Marvels

Early Buddhist sources have attempted to emphasize that prince *Siddhārtha* had a very pure decent up to seven generations on the sides of mother and father.<sup>5</sup> The story of the two castes i.e., *khattiya* and *sākya* are also mentioned with much more implications. According to the commentaries in through marriages they developed their relationships in course of time.<sup>6</sup> Prince *Siddhārtha*'s father belongs to the *sākya* clan, and his mother belongs to the *koliya* clan. Hence, prince *Siddhārtha* had relationship to both clans. According to the stories of commentary of *Dīghanikāya*, it is mentioned that the *kapilavatthu* city is also of very special significance in the past.<sup>7</sup>

The *Jātakapāli* and *Apadānapāli* reveal that there should be a good foundation for the birth of a *Bodhisattva* and also, he should complete the perfections in his previous lives<sup>8</sup>. *Bodhisattva* before coming to human world takes into special consideration of the suitable time, country, place, caste, and the life span of the mother etc. This is known as

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<sup>4</sup> *Pj.*, 1:50.

<sup>5</sup> *Dn.*, 1:91.

<sup>6</sup> *Suv.*, 1:258.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>8</sup> *Ap.*, 6; *Jāp.*, 1:1.

*pañchamāhaviḷokana*.<sup>9</sup> The *Mahāpadānasutta* has laid the necessary foundation for the development of above background. *Mahāpadānasutta* mentions fifteen phenomena common to all *Bodhisattvas*.<sup>10</sup> They are: -

1. *Bodhisattva*'s mindfulness when he leaves *Tusita* heaven and enters into his mother's womb.
2. There causes great wonder when the *Bodhisattva* leaves the *Tusita* heaven and descends into his mother's womb, then in the world of the *devās*, *Mārās* and *Brahmās* etc., such as limitless splendor, limitless eminence.
3. When the *Bodhisattva* descends into his mother's womb, *devās* approach him and say: "Let neither mortals nor demons do harm unto the *Bodhisattva* or the *Bodhisattva's* mother!"
4. When the *Bodhisattva* is descending into his mother's womb, she is full of moral conduct and virtuous and observes precepts.
5. When the *Bodhisattva* is descending into his mother's womb, even her attendants are full of virtue and good conduct.
6. When the *Bodhisattva* is descending into his mother's womb, she is possessed of five types of pleasure.

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<sup>9</sup> *Dha.*, 1:84.

<sup>10</sup> *Dn.*, 2:12.

7. When the *Bodhisattva* descends into his mother's womb, his mother is full of health and sees the *Bodhisattva* transparently in the womb in full possession of all his limbs and faculties.
8. Seven days after the birth of the *Bodhisattva*, his mother died, and was born in the *Tusita* heaven.
9. *Bodhisattva* just remains ten months in his mother and is born.
10. *Bodhisattva* is born while her mother is standing.
11. At the time of the *Bodhisattva*'s, birth it is the *devās* who receive him first and then the humans.
12. When the *Bodhisattva* leaves his mother's womb, he does not touch the ground: four sons of the *devās* stand before his mother and receive him.
13. When the *Bodhisattva* is born, he is fully pure and clean.
14. Showers of water flows from the sky which are cool and warm required for the *Bodhisattva* and his mother.
15. The new-born *Bodhisattva* is able to stand upright on his feet and walks northwards with seven steps, holding over himself a white canopy, and looking forth in all directions utters the lion-like speech: -"I am the chief of the universe, I am the best in the universe, I am the eldest in the universe. This is my last existence: I shall now be born no more!"

The above have been given as the Buddha's own words and can be regarded that it has laid very strong foundation for the development of the concept of *Bodhisattva* in *Theravāda* tradition. It is mentioned that Prince *Siddhārtha* after he was born son to the



king *Vessantara* was reborn in the *Tusita* heaven by the name of *Santusita* god.<sup>11</sup> When *Bodhisattva* was there, there arose in *Brahmās*, *Manussās* and *divya* worlds the uproar of Buddha *kolahala*.<sup>12</sup> According to the commentaries, there are five kinds of uproars i.e. announcement of the end of the world, (*kalpa*), birth of a universal king, (*chakkavatti*), birth of a Buddha (Buddha), Buddha's pronouncement of the most auspicious (*mangala*), a monk's enquire of the Buddha after highest wisdom into the properties of a perfect character. (*moneyya*).<sup>13</sup>

In order to convey this message, it is said that after many years of the birth of a *Bodhisattva* in heaven, there will come into being a Buddha and in order to see him beings are advised to do good and acquire merits. The result of the uproar that takes among *Sramaṇās*, *Brāhmaṇa* humans and gods, they come in search of who this *Bodhisattva* is. Thus, they come before the *santusita* god and request the *Bodhisattva* to seek birth as a human being. With their request the *Bodhisattva* makes the five great investigations (*pañca-maha-vilokana*) regarding the time, the continent, the place of birth, his mother and the life span left to her.<sup>14</sup>

The second fact about the birth of *Bodhisattva* is the dream seen by *Mahāmāya*.<sup>15</sup> It is said that based on that dream in India there held a weeklong ceremony. On the seventh day *Mahāmāya* observed sill from *Asita* wandering ascetic and at home there practiced many religious observances.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Jāp.*, 6:482.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:48.

<sup>13</sup> *Kta.*, 121.

<sup>14</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:49.

<sup>15</sup> *Dn.*, 2:52.

<sup>16</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:50.

On that day night she saw the dream which signified the birth of a very great prince, and it is the first sign of his birth. The four guardian gods came and took the bed with her to *Himālaya* and placed it at the root of a Sal tree on a rock range. Then the goddesses of those gods came and took *Mahāmāya* to *Anotattha*<sup>17</sup> pond bathed and worn heavenly garments and perfumes etc. and took to a rocky mountain of gold. *Mahāmāya* slept on a prepared bed towards the west side. Then a white elephant walking through the gold and silver mountains from the north with a white lotus in its truck entered into the gold casket in which the *Mahāmāya* was sleeping. Thereafter, the elephant walked three times around her bed and through the rite side entered womb. This story is found in the *Jātaka*.<sup>18</sup> The next day king was informed of the dream seen by the *Mahāmāya* and king called upon sixty-six (66) Brahmins to interpret the dream. They explained that the conception took place of a male, and he would either be Buddha or a universal monarch. The *Jātakatthakathā* mentions that there about thirty-two (32) marvels things that took place during which prince was in his womb.<sup>19</sup> When it became ten months of the conception of prince, *Mahāmāya* requested the king *Suddhodana* that she wanted to go to *Devdaha* city.<sup>20</sup> Then the king informed it to her father *Amjana*<sup>21</sup> and sent her there with attendants and ministers on a *Vesak* day.

When princess *Mahāmāya* after crossing over the river *Rohini* said that she wanted to see *Lumbini* Park, and all went there. At that time *Lumbini* was very beautiful with the blossom of flowers and their fragrance. When she was walking in the park, she wanted to

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<sup>17</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:50.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>20</sup> *Mn.*, 2:214.

<sup>21</sup> *Ap.*, 538

pluck a flower where the bough of the *sāla* tree bended down towards her. She informed her attendants of her delivery of the baby, and they quickly made a necessary atmosphere especially covered with white clothes around. While she was standing gave birth to the prince.<sup>22</sup> The instance prince was born four *Brāhmaṇas* welcome him with a net made of gold and there after four guardians gods with *adundivasalu*<sup>23</sup> cloths. Thereafter people took the prince with soft clothes. When the prince alighted from them walked seven steps on which every footstep was welcomed by a lotus. On the seventh footstep prince made a solemn utterance as follows: - "I am the chief of the universe, I am the best in the universe, I am the eldest in the universe. This is my last existence: I shall now be born no more."<sup>24</sup>

Thereafter all who gathered from *Devdaha* and *Kapilavatthu* went back to *Kapilavtthu* in procession. It is said that on the date of the birth of prince there originated seven treasures and they are *Rahulamātā*, *Ānanda*, *Channa*, *Kāhudāi*, *Kanthaka* and *bodhivruksha*.<sup>25</sup>

### 5.3 Ascetic *Asita*'s Remarks

When the prince was taken to the palace ascetic *Kāladevala*<sup>26</sup> came there to see the prince. The ascetic has by that time attained *aṭṭhasamapatti* and *pañcha abhiññā* and the king became astonished and prepared a seat for him. All came and worshiped the ascetic and sat aside. When the prince was brought and closed to him to get him worshiped, prince's feet contacted the head of the ascetic. The ascetic foresaw that prince would in

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<sup>22</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:53.

<sup>23</sup> *Suv.*, 437.

<sup>24</sup> *Jāt.*, 1:53; *Dn.*, 2:15.

<sup>25</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:54; *Mv.*, 106.

<sup>26</sup> *Mn.*, 2:155.

future become Buddha, he worshiped the prince. When ascetic took prince into his hand and observed, he saw the thirty-two (32) special marks. Then he asserted that the prince would become Buddha and smiled but shed tears knowing that he would not live to see his enlightenment. When the reason for his smile and cry was asked, he explained the cause for it. At that moment king worshiped and it was the first worship of the father to son.<sup>27</sup> After leaving the palace ascetic *Asita* on his way went to *Nālaka*<sup>28</sup> his son in law and told him that *Suddhodhana*'s prince would become Buddha. Therefore, in his name to become a mendicant and after his enlightenment to end the unsatisfactoriness. On that day prince *Nālaka* too became a mendicant. This is known as the first ordination in his name.<sup>29</sup>

On the first day of his birth, the ceremony of naming prince took place when (one hundred eight)108 *brahamins* came.<sup>30</sup> Among them there were eight prominent *Brahmans* such as *Kondañña*. However, among the eight only the young *Kondañña* predicted that prince would definitely become Buddha while others said either he would become Buddha or a wheel rolling monarch. He was given the name *Siddhārtha* as he would do great service for world.<sup>31</sup> It is recorded that the *Bodhisattva mātudhammata* which signifies the death of his mother after seven days happened. She passed away in her sleep and born in *Tusita* heaven.<sup>32</sup> Thereafter, *Prajāpatīgotamī* attended him as mother.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:54.

<sup>28</sup> *Sun.*, 135.

<sup>29</sup> *Pj.*, 2:483.

<sup>30</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:55.

<sup>31</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:56.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>33</sup> *Ap.*, 538; *Mv.*, 14.

#### 5.4. Significant Incidents and His Mastery in Education

After five months of the birth of prince, there held a traditional festival of ploughing at the bank of *Rohinī* river in *Kapilavatthu* city.<sup>34</sup> As it was a royal festival king *Suddhodhana* too prepared to go there to take part in. Prince *Siddhārtha* too took to the venue and placed in a well-prepared temporary hut under a *Damba* tree with his attendants to look after.<sup>35</sup> After king went to the field for farming and the workers started the farming with singing and the attendants also came out of the temporary hut to see the ritual. On that occasion prince engaged in *anāpānasati* meditation on the bed and attained first *Jhāna*.<sup>36</sup> When the attendants came back and saw the incident forthwith informed the king. When king came and he too marveled and worshiped saying that it was his second worship.<sup>37</sup> When prince was in the age of learning, the king invited *Sarvamitra Brāhmaṇa*<sup>38</sup> to palace to teach him and he prepared ground for other relative princes as well to attend the teaching. Prince *Siddhārtha* quickly learnt all the necessary lore for a prince.

When the prince reached sixteen years of age he was always in pensive mood. One day the king *Suddhodhana* asked *Brāhmīns*, "What shall I do to make my son happy? He seems depressed and sad always." Their answer was that the son is sixteen (16) years old, and it is right time to find him a beautiful girl to marry. Thus he was married to *Yasodarā*.<sup>39</sup> She is the daughter of King *Supprabuddha* and *Pamitā*, sister of king *Suddhodana* at the age of sixteen. Her father was a *Koliya* chief and her mother came from

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<sup>34</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:57.

<sup>35</sup> *Jāp.*, 57.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:58.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>38</sup> *Mlp.*, 236.

<sup>39</sup> *Bv.*, 98.

a *Shākya* family.<sup>40</sup> The *Shākya* and the *Koliya* were branches of the *Ādicca* clan of the solar dynasty.<sup>41</sup> At the age of twenty-nine (29), she gave birth to their only child *Rāhula*.<sup>42</sup>

When he was at the age of twenty-nine, he had enjoyed a very luxurious life and it is mentioned that in his royal residence there were three ponds in which red, blue, and white lotus bloomed. In order to avoid dust, dew and other dirties always there held hand-fan by attendants. There were three palaces to suit climatic conditions such as *Hemanta*, *Gimhāna* and *Vassāna*.<sup>43</sup> When the raining period started, he went to suitable palace and enjoyed with woman. He resided in other palaces as well in accordance with the climatic conditions. Although the attendants were given low quality rice and curry in the other wealthy houses in his palace, they received high quality food.<sup>44</sup>

The palace of *Hemanta* had nine stories. The ground had been made with special plan in order to avoid cold and to keep warmth. The doors and windows were very well fixed not to get cold or hot weather. There were all the necessary comforts and decorations such as carpets, curtains, and mattresses etc. The *Gimhāna* palace is of five stories. It's too had been built with a special plan. *Vassāna* palace is of seven stories. It is a kind of mixture of decoration, comforts of others two palaces<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the luxurious life spent by the prince *Siddhārtha* is mentioned in the commentarial literature up to his teen-age. According to the descriptions it is obvious that they are not devoid of adorations which made a very special background for his life as a

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<sup>40</sup> *Mv.*, 14.

<sup>41</sup> *Sun.*, 74.

<sup>42</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:60.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>44</sup> *An.*, 1:145.

<sup>45</sup> *Mp.*, 2:238.

prince. However, no fact can be thrown away as false but, on some occasions, the true facts have been described with much more beautification. Especially the high regard for prince reached its pinnacle when it described his birth and the incidents that took place ahead of his birth.

A close study of the information found in the *Mahapadānasutta*<sup>46</sup> and the commentarial literature is important in this regard because it is the beginning of the domination of much adorations and decorations in the life of the *Bodhisattva* and Buddha. The enlightenment of whole world with the conception of *Bodhisattva* and the protection given by four guardian gods and the distinctiveness of mother can be regarded as the first attempt of such hegemony added to the Buddha. It is said that mother did not become tired and was able to see the prince in the womb with its full body is another step of such strangeness.<sup>47</sup>

The two waterfalls fell from sky simultaneously and one was cold, and the other was warm.<sup>48</sup> Some of these incidents are related to the prince and some are related to the mother. In those information efforts is made give more respect to his mother and the prince. Especially with the account of the observance of precepts it has attempted to cover up the sexual feelings that naturally are in a woman. It is said that other men did not entertain such feelings towards the princesses as well.<sup>49</sup> This is a kind of special endeavor to elevate the quality of princess *Mahāmāya*.

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<sup>46</sup> *Dn.*, 2:1-54.

<sup>47</sup> *Suv.*, 2:436.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:438.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 435.

The elevation of the eminence of the prince has been continued with the marvels that took place before and after his conception and birth. However, the mention of mother seen the prince in her own womb is another attempt of pre-eminence given to prince. The passing away of mother can be viewed as something natural, but it has also been narrated with some extraordinary way.

Therefore, it is obvious that although the conception and the before conception incidents have been elevated to a very higher degree still what is significant is that there is not any reference to the involvement of any eternal everlasting power or entity in the interaction. It is not unnatural to refer to the heavenly worlds and the involvement of gods because in the early Buddhist teachings there are references to such heavenly worlds and the hells as well. Another important fact is that the birth of prince and his conception have been described with an admixture of natural and unnatural flavor in order to convey the message of his uniqueness and the benefits that the beings would receive.

Further although Buddha was very much critical of Brahmanism still there is no exclusion of their service for some of the most important events of his childhood life as it was the custom of ancient India to seek their assistance in the important events of life. However, quite contrary to the Brahmanism found in the Buddhist literature, the *Brahmins* who are involved in the narrative of prince are of special quality and it seems that some have attained the higher spiritual attainments.<sup>50</sup> The observance of precepts reminds us of the age-old practice of Indian society on full moon day and it indicates that there was much developed religious practices in India even before Buddha appeared. It is not worthy

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<sup>50</sup> *Pps.*, 2:922.



to point out the worship of *Brahmin* and the father to the prince and this happened due to his mental attainments and the future enlightenment that he would be going to get. These incidents have laid a well-built foundation for his spiritual development. What is significant is that at the very inception there is an attempt to keep and elevate his position as a human being to the highest position devoid of any connection to supernatural and universal entities.

In the *Mahāpadānasutta*, although such marvelous things are recorded there is no any reference to the dream seen by the princess *Mahāmāya*.<sup>51</sup> The descriptive narration of the physical qualities recorded in *Sonadaṇḍasutta* of the *Dīghanikāya* is also in its commentary. However, it can be viewed as a descriptive explanation of the story found in the *Mahāpadānasutta*. All the information found therein is related to the environmental marvels such as the relation of birds, quadrupeds, blowing of winds, stillness of rivers where changes took place in the ponds etc. Some happenings are related to heavens where it is said that those who were blind were able to see and the limbless received limbs, dumb started to talk and the deaf heard sounds etc.<sup>52</sup> These can be regarded as exaggerative attempt to esteem the superiority of the prince. However, there is no such mentioning during or after his birth. It can be viewed that in the exaggerations it is not impossible to observe the true incidents and the happenings of prince's childhood life.

Although there is not any attempt to elevate him to the state of a supernatural power or entity still there is endeavored to explain his life in a way that generates some extraordinary perception, faith, and devotion. Sometimes most of the information are

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<sup>51</sup> *Suv.*, 2:431.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

against the early Buddhist teachings and is purely based on utmost faith. Especially the thirty-eight 38 happenings of related to his conception are very much evidential in this regard. The above information is not found in life of *Bodhisattva* and the Buddha found in early Buddhist discourses and the *Vinaya* texts. Perhaps for such explanations found in the commentarial literature would have received some *Vedic* and *Brāhmanic* influences in addition to the general belief prevailed in the Indian society. Possibly such have been explained even going beyond the description of *Vedic* gods and their power. However, what explained is the benefits that beings get and not any special divine power of the prince.

### 5.5 Renunciation and Going Forth

The story of the going forth is found in the commentaries. According to early Buddhist teachings as well as the commentarial literature we find the information of his luxurious life which led to dignify his life as a prince. Although there is not much description about his going forth in the commentarial literature the *Buddhavamsa* mentions "*nimitte caturo disva assayānena nikkhamim*" having seen the four marks, he went forth on the vehicle of horse.<sup>53</sup> However, according to the *Mahāpadāna sutta* there is description of how *Vipassī Bodhisattva* went forth and perhaps it has provided the basis for the narrative of Prince *Siddhārtha Bodhisattva's* renunciation as well.<sup>54</sup>

It is said that *Vipassī Bodhisattva* on a very decorative chariot, just as a royal chariot visited the park for enjoyment. While he was going on his way, he saw an old man and asked the charioteer what it was, and he explained it. He came back home. On another

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<sup>53</sup> *Bv.*, 98.

<sup>54</sup> *Dn.*, 2:22.

day while going on to park saw a sick person and came to know its causality through the charioteer. Once again came back. Then he saw a dead body in pyre and finally an ascetic. He met the ascetic and inquired into his life and thus he changed his mind and decided to follow that path. That day he went to the park and bathed long happily and when bathing was finished, a messenger from the king came and informed the birth of a prince.<sup>55</sup>

However, according to the *Jātakanidāna*, it is said that prince *Rāhula* was born one week before his renunciation (*rahulojāto bandanam jātam*).<sup>56</sup> But in the *Jātakanidāna* it is mentioned that when the prince was in his right age gods created the above incidents to happen.<sup>57</sup> It is obvious that the *mahāpadānasutta* has provided the foundation for above incidents of the *Siddhārtha Bodhisattva* as well. On four days the prince has seen the four signs which made a substantial change in his life.

According to the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* on the fourth day when the prince was coming back with a happy mind after seen the figure of ascetic, *Kisāgotamī* said the following. "Quenched and full of joy are they who are the royal mother and royal father of Prince Siddhārtha; quenched and full of joy is she who is his wife."<sup>58</sup>

When the prince heard above verse it is said that he was pleased with the term "*nibbuta*" and was deeply thinking of the meaning of it and as a gesture of his happiness he sent the pearled necklace worn by him later.<sup>59</sup> It is obvious that there is no common agreement in the commentarial literature on the four happenings that changed his life.

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<sup>55</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:59.

<sup>56</sup> *Jāp* 1:60.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>58</sup> *Dha.*, 1:85.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

According to the *Buddhavaṃsaṭṭakatā*,<sup>60</sup> it is said that he visited the park four years whereas the *Jātaṭṭhakatā* mentions that the above incidents took place within few days. There it is mentioned that *dīghabhānaka* mentioned that incidents took place on one day.<sup>61</sup> However, this clearly indicates that such incidents have happened in his life.

## 5.6 Canonical and Commentarial Description on Some Significant Incidents

These incidents can be viewed as directly related to his philosophy of life and what he reached after enlightenment. What he preached after his enlightenment are related to the four incidents, especially one of the main teachings of his philosophy was unsatisfactoriness,<sup>62</sup> Hence, above incidents cannot be thrown away as having no meaning but as some incidents that signify his doctrine of life. Such would have been in his deep thoughts that he often reflected with his experience of life. Therefore, the deep thinking of human life and his inquisitiveness to find a solution to unsatisfactoriness of life is the picture reflected in the above four incidents. He had a very comprehensive knowledge of the materialistic way of life, but a clear vision of spiritual side was not yet developed. However, with his own experience of the *Samatha* mediation in his childhood<sup>63</sup> and also the experience and knowledge he got in the process of his maturity, he would have deeply observant over the various aspects of human mind and life. It is evidential from his completely changed attitude towards the world of phenomena he had when he returned to the palace according to the *aṭṭhakathā*. As he was totally disgusted with the material life, he decided to sleep than to enjoy the music, songs, and dances of the entertainers of his

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<sup>60</sup> *Mv.*, 279.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Pāli-English Dictionary*, “Dukkha” 324.

<sup>63</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:57.

palace. When he was awakened in the mid-night, he saw the different postures of sleeping groaning and the babbles uttered in their dreams etc. and became very much disgusted.<sup>64</sup> This led to the firm determination of his objective to renounce the world. Thus ordered his charioteer to prepare the horse and at that moment there came to his mind the prince who was born on that day and went to see him in sleeping chamber of *rāhulamāta*.<sup>65</sup> Although the fatherly love of child struck his hearts yet with his unyielding determination controlled it and went forth from home to homelessness.<sup>66</sup> The *Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā* mentions that although gates of the city was closed with tight security the gods intervened and allowed the doors to keep opened for the prince's renunciation.<sup>67</sup> On that occasion *māra* said:- “Great hero, do not renounce the world, exactly seven days after, you will be the gifted with *dibbaratana*.”<sup>68</sup>

*Dibbaratana* is normally received by a king who rules the country on ten principles of universal Monarch. *Bodhisattva* discarded it with his firm determination of renunciation and in course of his journey he arrived at the riverbank of *Anomā*.<sup>69</sup> They crossed the river with the horse, and he decided to stay there. He himself cut his hair and threw it into air with firm determination thinking that if he is to become enlightened one, the hair should remain in the air. The hair stayed in sky. *Bodhisattva* knew that his determination of becoming Buddha would be a success. The *Sakkha* took those hairs in a gold casket and built *Siluminisāya* in *Tusita* heaven.<sup>70</sup> Then he ordered the charioteer *Channa* to go back

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<sup>64</sup> *Mv.*, 281.

<sup>65</sup> *Mv.*, 282.

<sup>66</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:63.

<sup>67</sup> *Mv.*, 282.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:64.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

with his ornaments. The horse *Kantaka* knew that his master would not go back with him and died on the spot.<sup>71</sup> On that occasion *Brahma Sahampati* came and offered *aṭṭapirikkhāra*. He has worn the robes became an ascetic.<sup>72</sup> However, this incident and the information found in the *Ariyapariyesanasutta* has not any connection because it is not mentioned in the *sutta*, and a quite different information is found in.

The *Accariyabbhūtasutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya* is also important in the study of the early days of the prince.<sup>73</sup> However, the *sutta* does not go beyond the explanation of the happiness of his renunciation. It is confined to the explanation of the marvels that happened during his conception and the delivery.<sup>74</sup> His early days and conception in the womb are concerned it is apparent that there is an attempt to depict it as a very special happening in the human world. It has been influenced by the then prevailed beliefs, customs and cultural and the social structure as well. Whenever something important happens in his life always there the involvement of gods, *sakkha*, *brahma*<sup>75</sup> etc, in addition to the marvels. Sometimes the whole universe is described in his favor in order to elevate his greatness and there is no mention of anything misfortune at all. Nevertheless, with all the adornments, elevations, and additions *Theravāda* tradition has been able to maintain his humanness and human being throughout the description of his life. Descriptions of his conception and birth, prince hood and household life, his renunciation and enlightenment are devoid of any relation to supernatural power. What has happened is that a god has become a human and thus that human in turn became a teacher of all beings. Austerities

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<sup>71</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:65

<sup>72</sup> *Mv.*, 284.

<sup>73</sup> *Mn.*, 3:118.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>75</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:52.

practiced by the Buddha for his enlightenment is amply mentioned in the discourses and in the commentarial literature there is not much addition to his austerities as they are fully described in the discourses. The austerities practiced by the Buddha have not been explained in an extraordinary way. Instead, his strict determination indomitable courage and dedication is always emphasized. The more concern is given to the fulfillment of perfection in his previous lives. In the commentary to *Mahapadānasutta* it is mentioned that he seated with the firm determination of becoming Buddha and not to rise from the seat without becoming the Buddha<sup>76</sup> which is in accordance with the information found in the *Mahāvaggapāli*.<sup>77</sup> It was the time of his maturity of wisdom which in due cause led him to the attainment of enlightenment. Commentaries give more significance to the early happenings of his life as a prince and about his conception whereas *suttas* give more emphasis on the austerities practiced by the *Bodhisattva*.

One of the most conspicuous facts is that in the commentarial literature that they have not attempted to explain in detail the own words of the Buddha. For instance, *Ariyapariyesana sutta* is not a record of the information of the Buddha but what is found is the Buddha's own words.<sup>78</sup> The commentarial literature is of very much careful not to describe them with much more descriptions. In the commentarial literature what is significant is their enthusiasm to explain facts related to his previous life, conception, birth, and the history of *Bodhisattva* ideal.

The marvelous things that took place before and after the conception of the *Bodhisattva* have been explained on the basis of the doctrine of *niyāma dhammās* in the

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<sup>76</sup> Sv., 2:458.

<sup>77</sup> Vn., 1:1.

<sup>78</sup> Mn., 1:163.

commentary to the *Mahapadānasutta*.<sup>79</sup> According to the explanation of the doctrine of *niyāma dhammās*, there are five universal mechanisms such as *kammaniyāma*, *utuniyāma*, *bījanīyāma*, *cittanīyāma* and *dhammanīyāma*.<sup>80</sup> It is said that the marvels that took place during the conception of *Bodhisattva* is a result of *dhamma niyāma*.<sup>81</sup>

Nonetheless, again a significant place has been given to the *Panchamahāvīlokana* of *Bodhisattva*.<sup>82</sup> They are time, country, place, cast and longevity. Although these are insignificant things according to the teaching, we find that commentarial literature attempted to signify them with much more emphasis. It is said that time should be more suitable to preach *dhamma* because if the beings are full of cankers, they are unwilling to hear the teachings.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, the Buddha's teachings are based on three characteristics, and they should be matured enough to comprehend it and should be enjoying suitable life span and maturity.

### 5.6.1 Concept of *Vipassī Bodhisattva*

When referring to the Buddha *Vipassī* it is said that Buddha's are born only in the *Jambudīpa* and not any other *dīpa*.<sup>84</sup> The great beings such as *Buddhas*, *paccekabuddhas*, *aggasāvaka*, *mahasāvakas*, *chakavattirājās* and also great *Khattiyās*, *Brahmans*, *gahapati* etc. are also born in this part of the globe. So, the *Bodhisattva Vipassī* decided to be born in that part in the city of *Bandhumatī*.<sup>85</sup> Another significant fact is the observation of

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<sup>79</sup> *Suv.*, 2:432.

<sup>80</sup> *Suv.*, 2:432

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Dha.*, 1:84.

<sup>83</sup> *Vn.*, 1:6.

<sup>84</sup> *Mv.*, 54.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.



suitable caste (*kula*). It is said that normally *Buddhas* are born into the well revered *kula*, and it is the *khattiya kula*. *Bodhisattva* is also concern over the quality of mother.<sup>86</sup>

This information found in commentary of *Dīgha Nikāya* of Buddha *Vipassī* has provided the foundation for the development of the story of the *Bodhisattva Siddhārtha Gautama*. In the *acchariyaabbhutasutta*, we find that the above story is ascribed to the *Sidhartha Gautama Bodhisattva* as well.<sup>87</sup> However, it is obvious that ideals of *Bodhisattva* and Buddha have been in society time immemorial.

According to the historical facts of the life of prince *Siddhārtha*, he was born into a royal family *Khattiya*, mother and father had unblemished lineage etc. It is obvious that although the story of *Vipassī Bodhisattva* provided the basis for the development of *Bodhisattva* concept but perhaps based on the religious, cultural, social structure of the then Indian society it has been adjusted to suit the life of *Gautama Bodhisattva* as well.

Although the Buddha on several occasions has mentioned about his royal family and luxurious life spent by him<sup>88</sup> and also the austerities practiced by him to attain enlightenment etc.<sup>89</sup> there is no mention of the *pancamahāvilokana* and the marvels that happened on his conception in the womb of *Mahāmāya*.

The *Mahāparinibbānasutta*, mentions that some marvelous incidents took place when he decided to pass away after three months.<sup>90</sup> Further, when he was thirsty, he asked Venerable *Ānanda* to go and fetch some water which was refused by him thrice as the

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<sup>86</sup> *Suv.*, 2:429.

<sup>87</sup> *Pps.*, 4:167.

<sup>88</sup> *Mn.*, 1:173.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>90</sup> *Dn.*, 2:106.

water was muddy. But finally, *Ānanda* went to fetch water at the request of the Buddha and to his astonishment the muddy water was very pure and clear. When this was informed to the Buddha, he just reminded him of the power of the Buddha.<sup>91</sup> Although such special things of the life of the Buddha are recorded in the canonical texts, there is no mentioning by him about the marvelous things that happened during his conception.

In addition to the household life of the prince *Siddhārtha*, the Buddha mentions about his childhood incident of the absorption into the first *jhāna* at the festival of ploughing ceremony. Other than that, the information found in the *Mahāpadānasutta* such things are not mentioned in his own words.

Another important aspect of his life is seen in the explanations of thirty-two (32) marks and nine special qualities of the Buddha. The ideal of the Buddha has been elevated to a very higher position with the explanation of thirty-two (32) marks and nine special qualities in the commentarial literature of *Theravāda* tradition. It is important to note that in the commentary to the *Lakkhaṇasutta*, there is no further description of the thirty-two (32) marks of the Buddha but what is mentioned is that it should be understood as explained in the *Mahāpadānasutta* commentary.<sup>92</sup> According to the commentary to *Soṇadaṇḍasutta*, they represent the great qualities of a *mahāpurisa* and Buddha inherited them.<sup>93</sup> Just as the Buddha, some Brahmins also had the above great qualities like *Soṇadaṇḍa*. In the commentary it is said that just as the Buddha, *Soṇadaṇḍa* also had

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<sup>91</sup> *Dn.*, 2:129.

<sup>92</sup> *Suv.*, 2:445.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:285-290.

above special physical marks but whereas their knowledge is concerned there was a big difference.<sup>94</sup>

### 5.7 Special Epithets that Elevate the Quality of Buddha

It is important to note that some of the epithets used in the *suttas* and the commentarial literature and how they have been explained. However, in addition to the nine famous qualities used in the canonical texts and the commentaries, there are some special terms unnoticed used to denote the unique qualities of the Buddha and those have been described in the commentaries as well without much adoration. Some of the most important epithets ascribed to *Gotama* Buddha are alike in meaning.

One of such appellations signifies that he is the highest and the holiest of men (*loko anuttaro, lokassa aggo*).<sup>95</sup> It is mentioned that he is supremely wise, conquer of the powers of darkness, the teacher of gods, men and *yakkhās*.<sup>96</sup> Another important epithet signifies that he is the kinsman of the sun *Ādicchabandhu*<sup>97</sup> and is compared to a universal monarch (*rājachakkhavatti*)<sup>98</sup> and also having the attitudes of a lion.<sup>99</sup> In the *Terigāthā*, in addition to the common term of Buddha, it is said that he is *buddhavīra*.<sup>100</sup> Another important epithet signifies that he is an incomparable teacher *appaṭipuggala*.<sup>101</sup> His teaching leads to the self-conquest, to security and to deliverance.<sup>102</sup> He himself is not to be reborn and is

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<sup>94</sup> *Suv.*, 2:288.

<sup>95</sup> *Mn.*, 1:171.

<sup>96</sup> *Dn.*, 1:49.

<sup>97</sup> *Sun.*, 186.

<sup>98</sup> *An.*, 1:27-28.

<sup>99</sup> *Pāli-English Dictionary*, “rājachakkhavatti,” 714.

<sup>100</sup> *Thig.*, 138.

<sup>101</sup> *An.*, 1:22.

<sup>102</sup> *Sn.*, 3:42.

his last birth with his last body.<sup>103</sup> He has come to the end of sorrow and is freed from bondage and all fetters<sup>104</sup> and is full of compassion for all beings.<sup>105</sup> Buddha is known as physician (*bhisakkho*).<sup>106</sup> Another three specific epithets are *maggaññu*, *maggavidū* and *maggakovido*.<sup>107</sup> These are very important as they suggest that the Buddha is only a person of known path and well comprehended the path and the expert in the path of deliverance. The two specific terms i.e., *Khattiya* and *Brāhmaṇa* are also used for the Buddha in a definite sense. Although they do not directly imply any special spiritual quality of the Buddha, but they have been used in order to denote the spiritual quality of the Buddha and not in the general sense that they are applied in the then society. He is called *khattiya*<sup>108</sup> by birth and also called *Brāhmaṇa* as he carried on the sacred tradition and also, he excels in wisdom, self-control and virtue. This application is very important because then society gave prominence to Brahmins due to their physical and some mundane achievements and the position held in society. But the Buddha is so called with a specific meaning.

It is important to note that some commentarial literature gives priority to the *buddharasmi*,<sup>109</sup> which elevate the status of the Buddha as a human being. There are six rays shining from the Buddha they are of six colors.<sup>110</sup> It is said that *buddhavisaya* is unthinkable (*achintiyā*), i.e., sphere, range or the scope or power of the Buddha is unthinkable.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *Dn.*, 2:15.

<sup>104</sup> *Mvp.*, 1:21.

<sup>105</sup> *Ap.*, 2:352.

<sup>106</sup> *Mn.*, 1:506.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:8.

<sup>108</sup> *Mn.*, 2:124.

<sup>109</sup> *Suv.*, 3:3.

<sup>110</sup> *UvA.*, 412.

<sup>111</sup> *An.*, 3:80.

According to the above it is obvious that epithets have been used order to elevate the spiritual qualities of the Buddha. The epithets do not put much emphasis on the physical qualities of the Buddha but his spiritual attainments. In addition to the various kinds of epithets used, it is mentioned that Buddha is endowed with ten supernormal powers,<sup>112</sup> such as his ability of understanding what can be done and what cannot be done, covert and overt nature of kamma, path of purification, world of elements, different inclinations in beings, different faculties in beings, nature of defilements, purification, absorptions, attainments, recall of former rebirths, perception of being's states after their death according to their *kamma*, extinction of all taints, two kinds of deliverance i.e (*saddhā vimukta* and *paññā vimukta*.)<sup>113</sup> deliverance through mind and deliverance through wisdom.

### 5.7.1 Explanation of the Nine Qualities in the *Visuddhimagga*

The most common yet unique qualities of the Buddha are found in the discourses as well as in commentarial literature alike. They are *araham*, *sammāsambuddho*, *vijjācaraṇasampanno*, *sugato*, *lokavidū*, *anuttaraopurisadhammasārati*, *satthādevamanussānaṃ*, *buddho*, *bhagavā*.<sup>114</sup> The nine special above qualities of the Buddha have been extensively discussed in the *Visuddhimagga* with more explanations. It has become nine as the terms Buddha and *Sammāsambuddha* have been explained in separation. According to the text the qualities have been explained in the flowing manner and can be classified in the following way.

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<sup>112</sup> *Bv.*, 98.

<sup>113</sup> *Pps.*, 2:29.

<sup>114</sup> *Vm.*, 198.

**Epithet One, *Araham*:** - He is free from defilements and destroyed defilements with his wisdom and is suitable for four requests of life. Never does he any sin.<sup>115</sup>

**Epithet Two, *Sammāsambuddho*:** - He himself without a teacher got enlightenment. Realized four truths (*abhiññeyya, pariññeyya*). Eradicated unsatisfactoriness (*phātabba*) experienced *Nibbāna* (*sacchikātabba*) Developed skills (*bhāvetabba*)<sup>116</sup>

**Epithet Three, *Vijjācaraṇa sampanno*:** - Signifies the *trividyā* and *ashṭavidyā* and *carāṇa* implies morality (*sīla*). There are fifteen (15) qualities belonging to morality and they are: - *sīla, indriya, bhojanasamvara jāgariyānuyoga, saddhā, hiri, ottappa, bāhusacca, viriya, sati, pañña*. four *rūpāvacara dhyānas*. These two are also classified under his great compassion and wisdom. Thus, *vidyā* denotes his omniscient knowledge and *carāṇa* denotes his great compassion. Buddha with his omniscient knowledge comes to know the good and bad of the ordinary people and with his great compassion help people to abandon bad and to do well.<sup>117</sup>

**Epithet Four, *Sugata*:** - His followed the noble eight-fold path and defilements did not overcome his mind. Finally reached *Nibbāna*. Hence is *sugata*. He reached the pleasant place called *Nibbāna*. The defilements eradicated by him never emerged again. He did not come to the entertainment of externalism (*sassatavāda*) or materialism (*ucchedavāda*). Sense-indulgence (*kāmasukallikhānuyoga*) or self-mortification (*aṭṭahkilamatānuyoga*). He uses communication in a suitable way. There are six ways of his communication.

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<sup>115</sup> *Vm.*, 198.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

1. He knows something is false, generate harm, others dislike it, on such circumstances he did not make it known.
2. He knows something is truth, but it breeds harm and others do not like to hear it. On such circumstances he does not use reveal it.
3. He knows that something is true, and it is useful but breeds others dislike. On such circumstances, he knows the time to declare it.
4. He knows that something is not true and generates harm yet others like it to hear. On such circumstances, he does not reveal it.
5. He knows that something is truth, but generate harm, yet other like it to hear. On such circumstances he does not reveal it.
6. He knows that something is truth and is helpful for others, pleases other. On such circumstances he knows the right time to tell it.<sup>118</sup>

**Epithet Five, Lokavidū:** - He knows the world fully in its all aspects its nature, causality, cessation, and path. *Loka* in its' philosophical meaning, signifies the five aggregates of grasping. Further *Loka* can be divided into three as *samskāra loka*, *sattāloka* and *avakāsa loka*. *Samskāraloka* signifies causal world and *satvaloka* denotes how the extremist perceive world. (*sassasata*). *Avakāsaloka* means material world. Beings grasp world as my and mine due to their diffuseness. They have variegated characteristics such as *āsava*, *anusaya*, *carita*, *adhumukti apparajaka*, *maharajka*, *tikkindirya*,

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<sup>118</sup> *Vm.*, 203.

*mudindriya, svākāra, dvākāra suvinnapāya, divinnapāya, bhavya, abhavya* etc.

*Avakāsaloka* also signifies the material world, and it consists of many worlds.<sup>119</sup>

**Epithet Six, *Anuttara purisadhammasārathī***: - Whereas Buddha is concerned there is no one comparable to Buddha and is only incomparable to a Buddha. He is well trained in all the qualities of wisdom such as morality, concentration, *cessation* and *vimukti vimukti gñānadassana* etc. Such incomparable qualities have also been well explained in the early Buddhist *sutta aggapasāda*.<sup>120</sup> ***purisadhammasārathī***: - Many stories are found in the commentaries of such compassionate acts. Various kinds of beings who are tamable have been tamed by the Buddha and established in the noble path of liberation and made them realize the vanity of extremes.<sup>121</sup>

**Epithet Seven, *Sattādevamanussānaṃ***: - He is a teacher to the world of men and gods. He preached *dhamma* in the ways such as *diṭṭhadhamma, samparāyika* and *paramattha* depending on the ability of the understanding his teaching.<sup>122</sup>

**Epithet Eight, *Buddho***: - He realized the four noble truths and made others realize it. This is one of the reasons why he is called Buddha.<sup>123</sup>

**Epithet Nine, *Bhagavā***: - He realized the four noble truths and made others realize it. This is one of the reasons why he is called Buddha.<sup>124</sup> This signifies Blessed One, Exalted One. It is said that *bhagavā* denotes the *Nemittaka* name because it was not

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<sup>119</sup> *Vm.*, 204.

<sup>120</sup> *An.*, 2:34.

<sup>121</sup> *Vm.*, 207.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 209



given to him by anyone. It means his inner qualities of wisdom and great compassion. Among various meanings attached to the term, it also denotes that he has gone to the end of the cycle of existence. In addition to the above six specific meanings there are some other meanings are indicative by the term.

1. *Bhagavāti bhagava:* - denotes that he is skillful due to his previous completion of perfections.
2. *Bhagavo iti bhagavā:* - denotes that he has destroyed the defilements completely.
3. *Bhāgehi yutto iti bhagavā:* - he has well controlled his mind and has full authority over it.
4. *Vihātava iti bhagavā:* - denotes that he has well analyzed the teachings e.g., *skhandha, āyatana, dhātu, satya, indriya, pañicchasamuppāda* etc. noble *dukkha* as *pidana, saṁkhāta, saṁtāpa, vipariṇāma* etc.
5. *Bhattavo iti bhagava.* He has associated with *deva, brhama, ārya, vihāra* (dwell or abode).
6. *Bhavesu vantagamano iti bhagavā.* he has no craving in the existence *kāma, bhava* and *vibhava*.<sup>125</sup>

According to the above famous nine qualities of the Buddha many inner personas have been widely discussed. One of the most important facts is that there is no reference to any metaphysical quality in the nine epithets applied to the Buddha. Second important fact is that there is no mention of the social status of the Buddha. For

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<sup>125</sup> *Vm.*, 209.

instance, although many more things are attached to his mundane life as a prince there is no such reference in the nine qualities at all. The priority has been given to the elevation of inner qualities in terms of the early Buddhist teachings and behind such elevation there cannot be seen any other motive.

Another aspect is that Buddha is venerated in the tradition as a great human being of great wisdom and great compassion. The term *Mahā* is found in the explanation of his compassion which is not found in the early Buddhist discourses. The nine qualities have been extensively explained and sometimes it seems that the *Visuddhimagga* has attempted to explain it as eleven because some terms have been explained in variety of ways. The nine epithets found in the commentaries as well in the early Buddhist sources are alike and can be viewed as an attempt made to depict all the great qualities of the Buddha under wisdom and compassion. Therefore, all the qualities can be classified under the two specific terms *vidyā* and *caraṇa* as well.

Some terms like *sammāsambuddho* signifies how he attained the enlightenment. Other than that, all can be classified under the above two qualities of the Buddha. Another important fact in the explanation of nine qualities is that there is reference to his previous existence, especially the fulfillment of perfections. It is said that he has gained such wisdom and compassion due to the completion of perfections. This denotes that more than the austerities practiced by the Buddha for his enlightenment more emphasis is on his fulfillment of perfections in his previous lives.

Although he is elevated to the highest position among all beings but does not signify any eternal power according to the above epithets. It is his wisdom and great compassion that made him a special being among all beings. According to the

*Theravāda* view, all beings are subject to unsatisfactoriness, soullessness and impermanence. Hence, what is necessary is the full realization of above and lead a life of nobleness. Buddha as well as his noble disciples stays above all beings in that respect, and not in any other respect.

The nine epithets signify the above uniqueness of the Buddha as a reveler of an ancient path leading to *Nibbāna* and it is the responsibility of disciples to travel in that path and get enlightenment. He was not a person who preached on an ultimate universal power but his reference to previous *Buddhas* in the discourses as well as in the commentarial literature denotes his emphasis on human endeavor and power. The seven factors of enlightenment reminds that the commitment that a human being should maintain towards the achievement of emancipation or goal. They are: - mindfulness (*sati*), investigation (*dhammavicaya*), energy (*virīya*), joy or rapture (*pīti*), relaxation or tranquility (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samādhi*), equanimity (*upekkhā*).<sup>126</sup> This clearly indicates the applicability of human power to achieve emancipation. Buddha stays above all as a person who developed such skills to the fullest for the first time. His advice was: - “Be a lamp unto yourself. Do not take refuge in others.”<sup>127</sup>

By this, he emphasized the significance of above seven factors of enlightenment and the maintenance of them until one achieves the supreme goal of *Nibbāna*. Spiritual progress is a very difficult task for a weak person, but a dedicated person will overcome difficulties with the maintenance of the factors of enlightenment.

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<sup>126</sup> *An.*, 4:23.

<sup>127</sup> *Dn.*, 3:58.

### 5.7.2. *Upāyakausalaya* in the Commentaries

The skillfulness or the competency of the *Bodhisattva* or the Buddha is also enumerated in the discourses and the commentaries. It signifies the expedience (*upāya*)<sup>128</sup> and proficiency (*kausalya*).<sup>129</sup> It means one's expediency in the use of one's own proficiency. In the *suttanipāta* it is said that: -

But as one who's embarked on a sturdy boat, with rudder & oars, would mindful, skillful, knowing the needed techniques carry many others across, even so an attainer-of-knowledge, learned, self-developed, unwavering can get other people to comprehend if they're willing to listen, ready to learn.<sup>130</sup>

This signifies efficacy of intellect and skillfulness and the application of it to reach the goal. Many stories of the Buddha reveal this fact and in the *jātaka* tales and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* this quality has been well depicted. Although it is not mentioned directly, the specific terms and epithets signify the various aspects of his *paññā* and *karuṇa* and all those come under the scope of *upāyakausalayagñāṇa*. However, *upāyakausalayagñāṇa* is not included in the *trividyā* or *shadabiññā*. The term *Tathāgatha* also signifies that he knows the right time to instruct people. It is said that in the *Dīgha Nikāya* if something is not true, does not resound to one's good, concerning that *Thathāgatha* revels nothing of it to individuals. What is true, what fact and what does resound to one's good, concerning that *Thathāgatha* knows well the time to reveal it?<sup>131</sup> This sort of far-sighted knowledge has been given high priority in *Mahāyāna* Buddhist thought but *Theravāda* tradition has applied it in a more authentic and factual way without exceeding the human qualities of the Buddha.

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<sup>128</sup> *Pj.*, 2:274.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Sun.*, 316-323.

<sup>131</sup> *Dn.*, 1:134.

## 5.8 Commentarial Standpoint on the Concept of *Bodhisattva*, *Pacekabuddha* and *Buddha*

According to the *Theravāda* commentarial literature just as in the *Mahāyāna* tradition, concept of *Bodhisattva* has been given a high priority. In addition to the *Jātaka* and the *jatakaṭṭhakathā*, other commentaries also maintain the significance of *Bodhisattva*. It is mentioned that eight things that should be in the individual who aspires to become a Buddha. They can be classified as follows: -

**Table 5.1: Basic Qualities to Become a *Bodhisattva* (Buddha)**

<i>Manussatta</i>	Must be a human being ( <i>manussajāti</i> )
<i>Liṅgasampatti</i>	Masculinity ( <i>purisabhāva</i> )
<i>Hetu</i>	Sufficient spiritual qualities to become an <i>arhant</i> in that very life ( <i>upanissaya. Arahatta</i> )
<i>Sattāradassana</i>	Resolution made personally before a Buddha. ( <i>buddhavīrasammakdhassana</i> ).
<i>Pabbajjā</i>	Must be an ascetic at the time of the declaration. ( <i>anāgāriya</i> )
<i>Guṇasampatti</i>	Possession of <i>jhānas</i> ( <i>jhānādiguṇa paṭilābha</i> )
<i>Adhikāri</i>	Willingness to sacrifice even his life. ( <i>pariccāgo</i> ).
<i>Chanda</i>	unwavering resolution ( <i>kattukāmyatā</i> ). <sup>132</sup>

In the commentaries above things are highlighted as the basic qualities of becoming Buddha.<sup>133</sup> According to the above there is nothing extraordinary explained in

<sup>132</sup> Pj., 102.

the commentaries. Nonetheless, it is said that a female cannot become a Buddha due to some reasons. This has been extensively discussed in the *Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā*.

When it is said about the *paccekabuddha* the eight has been reduced to five as follows; *Manussatta, liṅgsampatthi, vigatāvadassanā, adhikārī* and *chanda*.<sup>134</sup> With these basic differences, there are some other differences of the two kinds of *Buddhas* and can be classified in the following way: -

**Table 5.2: Basic Differences between *Buddhas* and *Paccekabuddhas***

<i>Buddha</i>	<i>Paccekabuddha</i>
<i>Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa</i>	<i>Khattiya, Brahmaṇa, Gahapati</i> etc
<i>Viaṭṭamanekappe</i>	<i>Vivaṭṭappe</i>
<i>Sayamcabhujjati</i>	<i>Sayameva Bhujjati</i>
<i>Pareca bodeti</i>	<i>Aṭṭharasa na dhammarasa</i>
	<i>Nahi te lokuttara dhammānaṃ paññati</i>

It is obvious that there are some basic differences between the two kinds of *Buddhas*. According to these explanations, there is not any elevation of the Buddha to a state of some supernatural being or a person who possesses some special power at all. What is significant is that the accepted social norms, beliefs have greatly influenced in the formation of the background and dispositions of ideal of *Bodhisattva* and Buddha.

<sup>133</sup> *Pj.*, 48.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

However, in some description of the qualities of the Buddha there is elevation but not in the sense of a supernatural being.

The concept of *Bodhisattva* and *paccekabuddha* are explained in the *mahāpadānasutta* and its commentary.<sup>135</sup> There are six *Buddhas*: - *Vipassī*, *Sikhi*, *Vessabhū*, *Kakusanda*, *Konāgama*, *Kassapa* and the *Gautama* Buddha.<sup>136</sup> In its commentary there is a vivid description of the previous life of the *Vipassī* Buddha. It is said that the incidents happened in the life of the *Vipassī* Buddha is applicable to the other *Buddhas* as well. It is mentioned "*dhammatā esa*."<sup>137</sup> In the lineage of *Buddas*, *Vipassī* is the oldest and it has led to the development of the life of *Gautama* Buddha as well with some differences. For instance, when the *Bodhisattva Vipassī* going to park saw the four sings and asked the charioteer about them which led to his renunciation of the world. It is said that this incident is common to all *Buddhas*. This sort of belief would have been in society from time immemorial as legendary. When it is mentioned that he left household life while his parents were weeping in the canonical texts, the commentarial literature and some other texts have attempted to give a quite different picture of it. It is obvious in the *Theravāda* tradition that *Bodhisattva* is not elevated above the qualities of a human being. There is no mention of his special spiritual developments and the ability of performing miracles to save the beings. What he does is the great heroic acts and sacrifice for the wellbeing of others in the process of the fulfillment of ten perfections.

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<sup>135</sup> *Suv.*, 2:407.

<sup>136</sup> *Dn.*, 2:2.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:13.

The concept of *paccekabuddha* is found in the canonical texts itself. For instance, in the *Isigilisutta*, there mentions about Ninety-seven (97) a *paccekabuddha*. It is recommended that it is suitable to erect a *cetiya* in the name of *paccekabuddha*. *Dāna* offered to *paccekabuddha* is more meritorious than offering a *dāna* to more than hundred (100) *arahants*. The *dāna* offered to Buddha is more meritorious than offering to thousand (1000) *paccekabuddhas*.<sup>138</sup> Thus it is obvious that Buddha stands over and above *paccekabuddhas* and *arahants* in his eminence of wisdom and compassion.

### 5.9 Hegemony of the Concept of *Bodhisattva* and Buddha

According to the explanation found in the *Theravāda* tradition, the development of the concept of Buddha and the *Bodhisattva* is found without much adoration. The peak of the development of specially the *Bodhisattva* concept with its ten perfections can be found in the *jātaka* and *jātaka* commentaries. The *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* has developed to its fullest.

In the commentarial literature, what is significant is the development of much ornamented and supernatural foundation for the prince *Siddhārtha* as *Bodhisattva*. From the very conception of the prince, much needed background has been developed to elevate him to a very special position in society. In this attempt, common social structure and traditional beliefs have been taken into consideration with which normally a human being enjoys high regard in society. Thus, high priority has been given to the explanations of his lineage, wealth, marvelous happenings, caste, previous existence,

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<sup>138</sup> *Mn.*, 3:255.



bodily marks etc. Prince *Siddhārtha's* last birth in the human world is enumerated corresponding to the Indian cultural, political, and religious perception.

In the discourses in which Buddha himself mentions about his previous life, there are no such embellishments. Although this is reference to his parents, luxurious life etc. in the canonical texts. There is not much difference of it when compared to a luxurious life of any other prince of the time. It should be mentioned that there is remarkable development of the story of his conception and how he lived in the womb etc.

The special qualities described in the literature do not elevate the Buddha to a supernatural power. It is true that sometimes, there is much elaboration not adoration. The concept of *paccekabuddha* has been described with less emphasis and also *mahāsāvakas* as well. It is apparent that according to the commentarial literature, there have been Buddha in the past, yet incidents happened in their life is almost same. According to *Mahapadāanasutta* story of *Vipassī* Buddha have led to the foundation for such formation. Although there are differences among the *Bodhisattvas* with respect to their *virīya*, *paññā*, *karuṇā* etc., but what they preached to the world after gaining enlightenment are all the same. It is said that although *Buddhas* are born or not causality exists.<sup>139</sup> Concept of *Bodhisattvas* and *Buddhas* are not a new, such have been in society as an ideal just like *rāja cakkavatti* in society. The appearance of great kings and sages from time to time has been described in different religious traditions in various ways. However, above signifies how *Theravāda* tradition views this concept.

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<sup>139</sup> K. N. Jayatilaka, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 2015), 448.

## Chapter 6

### Development of Bodhisattva Ideal and Its Relation to the Concept of Buddha in *Jātakapāḷi*, *Jātakatṭhakathā* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*

#### 6. 1 Definition of the Term and Its Contextual Usage

Although in the canonical teachings there is reference to the concept of *Bodhisattva*, it has not received a special significance in comparison to the *Jātakapāḷi*, *Jātakatṭhakathā* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*. What is found in the early teachings *Jātakatṭhakathā* and the commentarial literature is the significance and the unique qualities of the Buddha and his lay life as a prince. In the *Jātakapāḷi* of the *Kuddhakanikāya*, the early development of the concept of *Bodhisattva* is reflected without many adorations. In the *Jātakapāḷi* and its commentary of *Theravāda* tradition more emphasis is given on the moral qualities of *Bodhisattva* and the fulfillment of perfections by him in which various facets of the moral qualities as well as his wisdom has received a dominant place. *Jātakapāḷi* and the commentary has developed the concept of *Bodhisattva* giving prominence to his wisdom and compassion. Morality and wisdom could be regarded as the corner stones of the ten perfections which are the subject matters of *Buddhavamsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka*.

On the other hand, *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* also has provided the necessary foundation for the development of *Bodhisattva* ideal. There too the perfection of great moral qualities along with his great wisdom is reflected. According to *Theravāda* tradition *Bodhisattva*'s sole intention is to serve all beings to get rid of their unsatisfactoriness and devote for the delight of all beings and to endeavor for the

culmination of great compassion and wisdom.<sup>1</sup> The culmination of above two has to be fulfilled by way of ten perfections. In the *Theravāda* tradition, the theoretical basis of the ideal of *Bodhisattva* is found in the *Jātakas*, its commentary and the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* whereas in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* the systematic development is found. The life of *Bodhisattva* signifies many great unique qualities of human life that should be practiced by a person who aspires to become *Bodhisattva*. After the completion of *Abhinīhāra*,<sup>2</sup> the basic foundation to become *Bodhisattva* one may fulfill ten perfections throughout his life.<sup>3</sup> Thus, it denotes a very specific being quite different from the other beings. This specialty comes as a result of the fulfillment of great qualities as a being, not on any other supernatural powers or supernormal makings. The meaning of the term “*Bodhisattva*” signifies heroic being or spiritual warrior,<sup>4</sup> however, it should be noted the two terms; “*bodhi*” and “*satta*” are original *Pāli* terms which denotes the spiritual being who is engaged in a spiritual journey to attain Buddhahood.<sup>5</sup> “*bodhi*” signifies supreme knowledge, enlightenment, the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Jātaka, Together with Its Commentary*, ed. V. Fausboll, and Rhys Davids (London: Trubner & Co, 1877), 14. ‘*Puthaviyaṃ nipannassa, evaṃ me āsi cetaso Icchamāno ahaṃ ajja, kilese jhāpaye mama. ‘Kiṃ me aññātavessena, dhammaṃ sacchikatenidha Sabbaññutaṃ pāpuṇitvā, buddho hessaṃ sadevake. ‘Kiṃ me ekena tiṇṇena, purisena thāmadassinā Sabbaññutaṃ pāpuṇitvā, santāressaṃ sadevake. ‘Iminā me adhiḱārena, katena purisuttame Sabbaññutaṃ pāpuṇitvā, tāremi janataṃ bahuṃ.*

*The Jātaka, Together with Its Commentary* Vol. I:14. “(Manussattaṃ liṅgasampatti, hetu satthāradassanaṃ; Pabbajjā guṇasampatti, adhiḱāro ca chandatā Aṭṭhadhammasamodhānā, abhinīhāro samijjhatī ti.)”

*The Jātaka, Together with Its Commentary* Vol. I:27. (“Ahaṃ dasa pāramiyo pūretvā kappasatasahassādhiḱānaṃ catunnaṃ asaṅkhyeyyānaṃ matthake buddho bhavissāmi” ti vīriyaṃ daḷhaṃ katvā adhiṭṭhāya nabhaṃ abhuggantvā himavantameva agamāsi.

<sup>4</sup> *Pali-English Dictionary*, “*Bodhisattva*,” 491.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, “*Buddhahood*,” 114. *fulfils his great destiny. The "amhākaṃ Bodhisattvo," or "our Bodhisatta" of the Buddhist Texts (e.g., Vism 419, (imasmiṃ kappe ayam eva Bhagavā Bodhisatta-bhūto); D.A. I.259) refers to Gotama, whose previous existences are related in the Jātaka collection. These tales illustrate the wisdom & goodness of the future Buddha, whether as an animal, a god, or a human being. In his last existence before attaining Buddhahood, he is a man. Reference is made to a Bodhisattva or the Buddha at very many places throughout the Canon. See e. g. Mn., 1:17, 163, 240; Sn., 2:5; 3:27; 4:233; 5:263, 281, 317.*

knowledge only possessed by the Buddha.<sup>6</sup> It basically consists of seven factors of enlightenment call *sambojjhaṅga* or *bodhipakkiyadhamma* which are often mentioned in the discourses.<sup>7</sup> They are attained as a result of the gradual practice of perfections. In the *saṃyuttanikāya* it is said that: - “*catūsu satipaṭṭhānesu suppatiṭṭhitacittā, satta bojjhaṅge yathābhūtaṃ bhāvetvā, anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambujjhimsu.*”<sup>8</sup>

In the study of the *Bodhisattva* ideal and the ten perfections found in the commentarial literature of *Theravāda* the above statement is of prime important because it indicates that seven components of enlightenment and the fulfillment of ten perfections are interrelated. The seven factors of enlightenment are much significant among the thirty-seven (37) factors of enlightenment, contributive to *bodhi*.<sup>9</sup> The foundation of moral qualities, perfections found in the *Jātakas*, its commentary, *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyapīṭaka* can be regarded as a further development of the seven factors of enlightenment found in the discourses. The term “*bodhi*” when qualified with the additional term “*satta*” thus signifies a being determined to attain full enlightenment, Buddhahood.<sup>10</sup> Thus, he passes through many existences fulfilling the great qualities along with his wisdom before his last birth in which he achieves the result of his past training.

<sup>6</sup> *The Pali English Dictionary*, “Bodhi” Vol. 2:14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, “In the older texts we do not find any numbered lists of the B.A. iii.70 only *indriyesu guttadvāratā, bhōjane mattaññutā* and *jāgariyānuyyoga* are mentioned in connection with *bodhipakkkhā dhammā* in general.”

<sup>8</sup> *Sn.*, 5:160.

<sup>9</sup> *The Pāli-English Dictionary*, “*Bodhisattva*” Vol.1:113-114.

<sup>10</sup> *Suv.*, 2:416. “*Tesu yassa yassa rukkhassa mūle catumaggañāṇasaṅkhātabodhiṃ Buddhā paṭivijjhanti, so so bodhīti vuccati.*”: *SnA.* 11, 20. “*Bodhisattasseva sattoti ettha bodhīti ñāṇaṃ, bodhimā satto Bodhisatto, ñāṇavā paññavā paṇḍitoti attho.*”

## 6. 2 Early Buddhist Foundation of *Bodhisattva* Ideal

Thus, the fulfillment of ten perfections is the main concern in the *Jātakas*, its commentary and the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* although it is not mentioned in an analytical and categorical way just as in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka*. It is important to see the relationship of seven factors of enlightenment and the ten perfections which is much popular in *Theravāda* tradition. However, the term “*bodhi*” is given a four-fold explanation in the commentary to *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka*.<sup>11</sup> They are:

1. Wisdom
2. The path of purification
3. Bliss of Nibbāna
4. Insight

Analysis of the elements of Thus, it is clear that in the above foundational explanation there is an attempt to give much prominence to the term especially with the special meaning of omniscience which is not given much significance in the discourses. However, throughout the *Jātakas* such quality has not been ascribed to *Bodhisattva*. The most common and significance quality that is reflected in his life is the endeavor made to complete the perfections. Among the perfections too, the wisdom and the compassion are conspicuous and can be regarded as the cornerstones of all perfections.

“The entire career of a *Bodhisattva* is governed by two major characteristics: wisdom

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<sup>11</sup> *Pps.*, I:54; *BvA.*, 55. “*Ayam pana bodhi-saddo rukkhamagga nibbāna sabbaññutaññāṇādīsu dissati.*

*CupA.*, 18, “*Bodhīti rukkhopi ariyamaggopi nibbānampi sabbaññutaññāṇampi.*”

The commentaries to the *Majjhima-Nikāya*, *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* generally give a fourfold explanation of the word *bodhi*: 1. The tree of Enlightenment, 2. The holy path (*ariya-magga*), 3. *Nibbāna*, 4. Omniscience of the Buddha. (*sabbaññutaññāṇa*).

(prajña) and compassion (karuṇa). Buddhahood is accomplished by wisdom, but the act of becoming a Buddha is accomplished by compassion.<sup>12</sup> However, the origin of the ten perfections can be traced back to the seven factors of enlightenment. The seven components of enlightenment are: -

1. One-pointedness of mind [*sati*]
2. existence [*dhammavicaya*]
3. Energy [*viriya*]
4. Tranquility [*passaddhi*]
5. Concentration [*samādhi*]
6. Equanimity [*upekkhā*]
7. Rapture [*pīti*]<sup>13</sup>

The ten perfections are: -

1. practice of detachment [*dāna*]
2. training in virtue [*sīla*]
3. going from home to homelessness [*nekkhamma*]
4. insight [*paññā*]
5. Energy [*viriya*]
6. Tolerance [*khanti*]
7. Honesty [*sacca*]
8. Firm determination [*adhiṭṭhāna*]
9. Lovingkindness [*mettā*]
10. Equanimity [*upekkhā*]<sup>14</sup>

*Pāramī* or the fulfillment of perfections becomes a part and partial of *Bodhisattva* life.<sup>15</sup>

After one becomes a *Bodhisattva*, throughout his existence he does not deviate from the aim of the attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>16</sup> Hence, the fulfillment of moral

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<sup>12</sup> Shantha Rathnayaka, "The Bodhisatta Ideal of Theravāda", *Journal of International Association of Buddhist Studies* No. 2, ed. (1985) A.K. Narain, University of Wisconsin, 90.

<sup>13</sup> *An.*, 4:23.

<sup>14</sup> *Bv.*, 1:76.

<sup>15</sup> *Jc.*, 1, 14.

qualities of perfections are the only objective of his life to materialize the final aim of the attainment of Buddhahood. These qualities are gradually practiced and brought to their full development by the *bodhisattva* in his past lives according to the *Jātaka* stories and the *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Cariyāpiṭaka*.

Apart from the seven factors of enlightenment, the evolution of the ten perfections can be traced back to the most important teachings of the four transcendent states i.e., loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity.<sup>17</sup> According to the *Visuddhimagga* it is said that one may reach ten perfections through the development of four sublime states. It is mentioned as follows: -

As the great being (*mahā-satta*) he is thoughtful of the wellbeing of living beings, wishing the happiness of all beings, therefore, they offer alms to all being to make them happy, without any differences of beings. Prevent doing any harm, and they observe morality.<sup>18</sup>

Though fulfillment of perfections cannot be fully seen in the early Buddhist literature, but a close observation of many moral concepts related to the good conduct of a human being above foundation could be traced back. In the threefold training, morality, concentration, and the wisdom are the most important for the attainment of enlightenment.<sup>19</sup> Another most important moral teaching is the ten meritorious deeds that should be followed by an individual in the path of moral perfection.<sup>20</sup> The common

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<sup>16</sup> *Pd.*, 278.

<sup>17</sup> *Mvp.*, 278-279.

<sup>18</sup> *Pd.*, 303. “*Dānapāramiyā tāva sukhūpakarānasarīra jīvitapariccāgena bhayāpanudanena dhammopadesena ca bahudhā sattānaṃ aṅgahakaraṇaṃ paṭipatti.*”

<sup>19</sup> *An.*, 4:241. “*Tīṇimāni, bhikkhave, puññakiriyavatthūni. Katamānitīṇi? Dānamayaṃ puññakiriyavatthuṃ, sīlamayaṃ puññakiriyavatthuṃ, bhāvanāmayam puññakiriyavatthuṃ.*”

<sup>20</sup> *JtcA.*, 5:378.

teaching found in the early Buddhist literature i.e., Five Precepts can also be regarded as another foundation for the development of the perfections.<sup>21</sup>

Another important aspect of the explanation of the endeavor made by the unenlightened prince *Siddhārtha* is his indomitable courage.<sup>22</sup> In the discourses in which his endeavor for enlightenment is described a special place has been given to highlight his effort for the achievement of enlightenment. It is similar to the advice given by the Buddha for the monks to follow the path of enlightenment.<sup>23</sup> The *Ālavakasutta* mentions certain methods that should be followed to put an end to the circle of rebirth.<sup>24</sup> It is mentioned that by effort one has to put an end to the unsatisfactoriness and an elaborative explanation of spiritual power can be seen in the *Suttanipāta* as well.<sup>25</sup>

In the *Ālavakasutta*, effort, wisdom, mindfulness, truthfulness, virtue, charity, and forbearance are given as the higher factors of moral perfection of individual.<sup>26</sup>

Although in the discourse there is no direct mention of renunciation, yet it is also reflected. This is a very important discourse in the development of the concept of *Pāramitā*. On the other hand, the going forth is always highly recommended in the discourses for the attainment of enlightenment. The great renunciation made by the prince *Siddhārtha* is also found in the canon.<sup>27</sup> Canonical texts would have greatly influenced the development of the *nekkhamma pāramitā* and *dāna pāramitā* of the ten

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<sup>21</sup> *Sn.*, 4:250.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:135.

<sup>23</sup> *Mn.*, 1:6.

<sup>24</sup> *Sn.*, 1:213.

<sup>25</sup> *Sun.*, 22.

<sup>26</sup> *Sn.*, 1:213.

<sup>27</sup> *Sun.*, 71.



perfections. The psychology of the seven factors is reflected directly related to enlightenment which is completely developed based on the above ten elements.

On the other hand, some discourses would have directly influenced the description of the various qualities of perfections. For instance, the *Mettasutta* is for loving-kindness and non-violence.<sup>28</sup> The advice is given to live with the thought of loving-kindness and harmlessness towards all beings of all kinds. The radiation of loving-kindness towards the entire world above below and across is emphasized.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the significance of nonviolence is emphasized in many discourses. For instance, the *Khandhaparitta* states the way that loving-kindness should be extended.<sup>30</sup> Just as in the *Mettasutta* with various ways significance of loving-kindness and harmlessness is explained. This clearly indicates such concepts are given great priority in the entire teachings. In many *Jātaka* tales just as the other qualities priority has been given on the non-violence and loving-kindness.<sup>31</sup>

Another important quality that is emphasized is the truthfulness in the teaching and it has been highly appreciated to avoid wrongdoing. According to the teaching the sweetest thing among the sweet things is the truthfulness.<sup>32</sup> In the *Theri* and *Theragāthā* the truthfulness is highly appreciated.<sup>33</sup> The underlying principle behind this explanation is that this quality is always important in the social interaction. It is said that one's wish should be not to deceive anyone or to despise anyone. Even a slightest

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<sup>28</sup> *Sun.*, 19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> *An.*, 2:72.

<sup>31</sup> *Jāp.*, 5:261.

<sup>32</sup> *Pj.*, 2:172.

<sup>33</sup> *Thig.*, 147.

wrong should not be done in this aspect as it is not admired by the wise. Various aspects of truthfulness is explained very much in the stories found in the *Jātaka* tales.

The *Sālyyeakasutta* gives a very comprehensive account of truthfulness.<sup>34</sup> It has shown the nature of falsehood and advice is given to avoid it. Falsehood should not be uttered in an assembly among people, relatives organized community and courtyard. In the *Jātaka* tales there are many stories related to such incidents.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, it is said that one gives false evidence for one's own benefit, for others benefits or with a view to take advantages.<sup>36</sup> According to the teaching person who is subjugated to falsehood is a weak person and does not have any means to stand by and look after himself.<sup>37</sup> According to the rules of monks, it is a serious offense to give false evidence. Advice is given not to tell lies, not to cause others tell lies and not to approve of telling lies and it is said as follows: - “*Musāvādam pahāya musāvādā paṭivirato hoti saccavādī saccasandho theto paccayiko avisamvādako lokassa.*”<sup>38</sup>

Truthfulness is valued highly, and it has been developed with its necessary background in the *Jātaka* stories as a perfection.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, it is held in high esteem in the character of a person. It is one of the great qualities of the Buddha as well.<sup>40</sup> The term *Tathāgata* signifies nothing but suchness, thatness, or truthfulness.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Mn.*, 1:285-290.

<sup>35</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:213-214.

<sup>36</sup> *Dma.*, 94.

<sup>37</sup> *Mhn.*, 152.

<sup>38</sup> *Mn.*, 1:179.

<sup>39</sup> *Jāp.*, I:20.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

The control of noble behavior not only confines to the expression of truthfulness but also there is a very broad background around it.

Advice is given to abstain from using harsh words, frivolous babble, and the useless words as well as the words of disunion etc.<sup>42</sup> It is regarded that telling falsehood is a grave offense and the person who tells lies intentionally can do any harm and any anti-social activity. The intention of the use of such words is to fulfill one's expectations within a short period of time. The term used for such person is *gūṭhabhāṇī* (of foul speech).<sup>43</sup> The use of falsehood misleads the society. Harsh words make society destructive; the words of disunion make interpersonal disputes and the useless words waste time and energy. There is a very broad background behind the truthfulness, and this has led to the development of the concept of perfection in truthfulness in the *Jātaka* stories.<sup>44</sup> Always advice is given to abstain from such use of words, and it is a good quality of developed personality. Falsehood should not be uttered because of oneself or others or because of advantages. Hence, one should utter words that lead to union and friendship in society.<sup>45</sup> In the *Aṅguttaranikāya* there is a very special explanation of the use of speech. The harmonious communication is a very effective method in order to keep society progressive and to maintain interpersonal relationships and such person is named as *Pupphabhāṇī*<sup>46</sup> or *Madhubhāṇī*.<sup>47</sup> For

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<sup>41</sup> *Jāp.*, 1:20

<sup>42</sup> *An.*, 5:204.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:128.

<sup>44</sup> *Buddhist Dictionary*, (1980) "Jātaka," 36-37.

<sup>45</sup> *Mn.*, 3:234.

<sup>46</sup> *An.*, 1:128.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

instance, the person who has the skill of controlling one's behavior has the following characteristics.

1. Communication in suitable time.
2. Communication of right words.
3. Communication in a soft manner.
4. Communication of meaningful words.
5. Good-will & harmony should be the final result.

Thus, in the above characteristic one may find four stages, types of behavior and the special view of the *Bodhisattva* in different stages. It can be shown as follows: -

**Table 6.1: Stages, Types of Behavior, and the Special View**

<b>Stages</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>View</b>
Stage One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Significance of good behavior</li> <li>● Good interpersonal relationships</li> <li>● Resolution of conflicts</li> <li>● Good family life</li> <li>● Good social life</li> </ul>	Social centric view
Stage Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintenance of good mental and physical health</li> </ul>	Selfless centric view
Stage Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Truthfulness and honesty in acts</li> <li>● Benevolence towards the needy</li> </ul>	World centric view
Stage Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoidance of extremism</li> <li>● Universal love and compassion</li> <li>● Wisdom</li> </ul>	Universal centric view

In the *Jātaka* stories we find that the above characteristics of the *Bodhisattva* are given in his deeds and sometimes life has been sacrificed for the preservation of truthfulness.<sup>48</sup> The two terms applied to the Buddha are *yathāvāda* and *tathākāra*.<sup>49</sup> These two terms express the special quality of the Buddha related to his behavior and the use of speech. According to above there is no contradiction between his words and deeds. This special character is reflected in many *Jātaka* stories.<sup>50</sup>

### 6.3 Fundamental Moral Concepts and *Bodhisattva* Ideal

According to the *Theravāda* tradition follower of *Bodhisattva* ideal mainly includes the perfection of ten *pāramitā* which has been influenced by the early Buddhist teachings. The ten perfections found in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyapīṭaka* are as follows: altruism (*dāna*), moral conduct (*sīla*), going forth (*nekkhamma*), insight (*paññā*), perseverance (*virīya*), forbearance (*khanti*), honesty (*sacca*), willpower (*adhiṭṭhāna*), loving kindness (*mettā*), and equanimity (*upekkhā*).<sup>51</sup> According to *Jātaka* stories one may find that the above perfections reflect the wisdom or knowledge, skillfulness, and the attitude of the *Bodhisattva* towards of world of phenomena.

For instance, giving morality, compassion and equanimity indicates the attitudinal change that he possesses. The renunciation, courage, patience, determination show his skillfulness in the execution of certain things. Wisdom indicates the knowledge that *Bodhisattva* has towards the world of phenomena. Hence, according to the *Theravāda* tradition the underlying philosophy of the perfections reflect the completion of the above

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<sup>48</sup> *Jtc.*, 5:456.

<sup>49</sup> *Dn.*, 2:229.

<sup>50</sup> *Jtc.*, 5:456.

<sup>51</sup> *Bv.*, 299.

most important factors of human life. Quite contrary to the other traditions, there *Bodhisattva* does not possess any ability of performing miracles whatsoever. Sometimes the celestial beings come in for his assistance on the occasions when he failed.<sup>52</sup> Other than that *Bodhisattva* is not presented as a being who possesses some metaphysical or miraculous power. He is a social being when born in the human world and is a great being when born in the animal kingdom. When born in the celestial worlds he is a great celestial being. On all circumstances what is reflected is the great moral qualities. Although in the *Jātakapāḷi*, such qualities are given in without much adoration whereas in the *Jātakatṭhakathā* and the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* they are enumerated with much more emphasis. Hence, basically the development of the concept of *Bodhisattva* has four foundations.

1. Influence of early Buddhist teachings
2. Concepts found in *Jātakas*
3. Development in the *Jātakatṭhakathā* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*
4. Systematization in the *Buddhavamsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka*

After the early Buddhist foundation of the *Jātakas* of the Buddha, most important is the *Jātakapāḷi* in which the basic concept of perfections is found in very short detail. However, in the beginning of the *Jātakapāḷi* the descriptions are given in very sort formula<sup>53</sup> but towards its gradual flow, more descriptions are added.<sup>54</sup> In the *Jātakapāḷi*, they are not given in a story type but just the moral themes and the basic facts are the main

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<sup>52</sup> *Jtc.*, 2:253.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:1.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:357.

concern.<sup>55</sup> Hence, it is easy to understand the underlying principles of *Bodhisattvā*'s intention. More concern in the *Jātakapāḷi* is to emphasis the basic moral concepts and there is not much description at all. It is almost similar to the simple and profound way of life of Buddha found in the canonical texts. There are no exaggerations, enumerations pleasingly added to upgrade the quality of the *Bodhisattva* at all in the *Jātakapāḷi*. As an early source of *Theravāda* Buddhist literature, it is evident that *Theravāda* tradition has not given much concern on the supernatural qualities of *Bodhisattva* at all. In the *Jātakas* although the ten perfections are not mentioned namely yet the ten perfections such as *dāna*, *sīla*, *nekkhamma*, *paññā*, *virīya*, *khanti*, *sacca*, *adhiṭṭhāna*, *mettā* and *upekkhā* are reflected. In the perfections, his great wisdom, skillfulness, attitude to the world of experience is reflected without exaggerations. For instance, the following verses of the *Jātaka* stories directly give a spiritual picture of *Bodhisattva*.

“*Hiriottappasampannā sukkdhammasamāhit*

*Santo sppurisā loke devadhammāti uccare ti.*” (*Devadhammajātaka 6*)

“*Uttamaṅgaruhā ime jātā vayoharā*

*pātubhūtā, pabbajjāsamayo mama*” (*Makhādevajātaka 9*)

“*Yo ca pubbe karaṇīyānī paccha so katumichati*

*Varaṇakaṭṭhabhaṅgo va sa pacha-m anutappatīti.*” (*Varaṇajātaka 30*)

“*Akataññussa posassa, niccam vivaradassino*

*Sabbaṃ ce pathaviṃ dajjā, neva naṃ abhirādhayeti.*” (*Sīlavanāgajātaka 31*)

“*Yan te pavikatthitaṃ pure atha te pūṭisarā saranti pacchā ubhayaṃ na sameti*

*bhīmasena udhacathā ca idam ca te vihaññanti*” (*Bhīmasenajātaka 32*)

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<sup>55</sup> *Jtc.*, 1:1.

The above stories of the past life of *Bodhisattva* are devoid of any exaggerations or his super normal powers. More concern is on giving a moral lesson based on some perfections such as morality, giving, patience, truthfulness, gratitude etc. Hence, although they represent the stories of past life of the *Bodhisattva* almost similar to the discourses preached by the Buddha in which some special doctrine is found.

#### 6. 4 Social Implication of *Bodhisattva* Ideal

However, it is important to note that highly philosophical teachings are not found in the *Jātaka* stories. More concern is about the social wellbeing and also the wellbeing that one gets after one's demise. Although the stories are about an animal, human deity etc., the lesson given is always related to human society. The stories are also given excluding exaggerations especially in the *Jātakapāli*. Another significant fact is that although perfections are given as 10 in the *Cariyāpiṭaka*,<sup>56</sup> but according to the information found in the *Jātaka* stories, it can be developed more than ten and also can be reduced to a minimum as well. The concept of ten perfections perhaps found in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* is a result of the minimization of all the moral qualities into a maximum number. Hence, in the observation of the *Jātakapāli*, *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* or *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* one cannot come to the conclusion of only ten moral qualities that should be perfected. The moral qualities are numerous and cannot be numbered as well. However, as the ten perfections represent almost all the moral qualities, they have been numbered in that way in the *Theravāda* tradition.

Another phase of the development of the concept of *Bodhisattva* based on *pāramitā* is reflected in the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā*. Just in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, one may

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<sup>56</sup> Pj., 278.



find that attempt has been made to give more significance to a certain moral quality of the *Bodhisattva*. In the *Jātakapāli*, the moral quality is precise but in the *Jātakatṭhakathā* and *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* they are given with many sub-stories. This can be studied when examined some stories related to ten perfections.

The first *Pāramita* in the classification of perfections in *Theravāda* tradition is the *dāna* or *pariccāga* and is one of the most significant concepts.<sup>57</sup> The term *dāna* signifies the kind of offering or giving for the benefit of others<sup>58</sup> and the *pariccāga* basically signifies the contribution or welfare activities done for the benefit of others.<sup>59</sup> However, the term *dāna* has some religious meaning whereas the term *pariccāga* has some broad meaning such as social significance or implication. In the *Jātaka* tales heroic sacrifices that the *Bodhisattva* has made for the wellbeing of others are found. In the discourses under the concept of wheel rolling monarch and the four kinds of welfare actions these two have been given a priority. However, when it's its simple meaning is considered, it implies that some kinds of welfare activities that lead to the lessening or reduction of harmful mental qualities such as hatred, vendetta, stinginess etc.

On the other hand, it leads to the development of inter-personal understanding and relationships as well. More than that it is prescribed as one of the foremost steps of the path of enlightenment. This makes individual gets used to the giving up of I-ness and My-ness. According to the teaching, hoarding of wealth develops attachment to it and it further creates series of harmful things in one's life. This is very well explained in the

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<sup>57</sup> Pj., 299.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 281.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 175.

*Mahānidānasutta*.<sup>60</sup> The final result is a very serious complicated one. Therefore, the practice of letting go things has a very important mental or physical effect which is helpful to change one's personality totally. This is found in the stories of *Jātakas* as well.

However, according to the teachings this has to be practiced gradually by the *Bodhisattva* who aspires to become and enlighten one. In the commentaries, it is said that Bodhisattva has made great sacrifices in this regard leading to the giving away of his entire life, limbs, blood, and eyes etc.<sup>61</sup> Although in the discourses more trend is towards the giving away of material possessions of the individual, in the *Jātaka* stories what is significant is the giving away of one's life for the wellbeing of others. It is said that, “*So sāgare jaladhikam rudhiram adāsi - Bhūmiṃ parājiya samamsamadāsi dānaṃ Meruppamāṇamadhikañca samoḷisīsam-Khe tārakādhikataram nayanam adāsi*”<sup>62</sup>

*Jātaka* stories have made special emphasis to highlight the almost utmost sacrifice that a human being could do for the wellbeing of humanity, leading to the sacrifice of one's life. The concept of *Bodhisattva* in *Theravāda* tradition can be considered as the highest ethical system in Buddhism.

This has been presented in many *Jātaka* tales of the *Bodhisattva*.<sup>63</sup> The main resolution of *Bodhisattva* is to control the defilements in mind basically *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* and with the control of them, he is going to help the others. The above defilements always motivate ordinary being into doing something wrong. But the *Bodhisattva* although he has such defilements, he does not do any evil act. Instead, he controls them and do something good for the wellbeing of all beings. *Dāna* signifies the giving away of

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<sup>60</sup> *Dn.*, 2:61.

<sup>61</sup> *Mv.*, 50.

<sup>62</sup> *Jnl.*, vs 31.

<sup>63</sup> *Jtc.*, I:23.

something belonging to oneself or to others. When doing so compassionate thoughts are functional in one's mind such as non-craving, good-will and the non-ignorance. Thus, it makes inward and outward ethical transformation. A total control of behavior mental and physical is the result of practice of *dāna*. However, the *Bodhisattva* who aspires to become Buddha completes this in an extraordinary way different from the other ordinary human beings. Quite contrary to the other beings. He does not have anything that is not given and even goes to the extent of giving away his wife, children and even his limbs and life.<sup>64</sup> The famous story of *Vessantara* signifies this. However, he is not satisfied with that and is dedicated to give away his limbs and life. This is the third degree of the practice of giving away.

In the *Jātaka* story of *Sivi*,<sup>65</sup> he is not happy with the giving away of his material wealth and external belongings. He is thinking of giving some spiritual *dāna*. He thinks that if someone asks for his heart, he gives it and if some wants his flesh, he will give it. If someone wants his blood, he will give it also. If someone wants his eyes, he will give it as well. This is how the *Bodhisattva* think of giving away of his things. For instance, in this story, *Sakkha* comes as a blind beggar asking his eyes and the king advises the royal doctor to remove his two eyes and to donate it to the beggar. This indicates that how the *Bodhisattva* completes the *upapāramī*; second level of his giving away. However, he is going to the extent of given away his body as well and in the *sasajātaka* such story is found.<sup>66</sup> This is the highest form of given away. It is known as *paramattha pārami*. Another important fact is that in the fulfillment of perfections he enjoys the highest social position

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<sup>64</sup> *Jtc.*, 6:479.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:401.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:51.

such as a king, leader etc.<sup>67</sup> on such occasions he is not thinking of holding of such wealth and wielding power or the collections of taxes from the citizens to enrich himself and his treasury. His main objective is to rule the subjects with a good moral foundation. In course of time, he is not happy with what he has done and thinks what had been done is not enough and by being a king cannot reach the spiritual development. Hence, decides to give away everything and fulfills the *dāna* in its highest degree.

This quality of *Bōdhisattva* is also seen in the fulfillment of the *sīla pāramitā* as well. *Sīla* signifies the control of mental, verbal, and physical behavior.<sup>68</sup> However, *Bodhisattva* completes this as a perfection and is quite different from the following of morality by an ordinary being. In the commentarial literature,<sup>69</sup> it is said that morality should be followed in eight ways. i.e., observance of them continuously (*akhaṇḍa*), not breaking away them in the middle (*aviccinna*), not breaking precepts in the beginning, middle gradually develop precepts in the beginning (*asabala*), forbearance of precepts as directed by the Buddha (*viññuppasattha*), observance of precepts without expecting material benefits (*aparāmatṭha*), observance of morality in the way that concentration is maintained (*samādhi samvatthanika*). Thus, *Bodhisattva* observes morality although material wealth is lost, then further he follows it although his limbs are lost. Moreover, they go to the extent of observing it even if their life is at stake.

For instance, in the *Samkhapārajātaka* the great qualities of the *Bodhisattva* are reflected.<sup>70</sup> *Bodhisattva* was born as a *Samkhapālanāga* king and was disgusted of his life as a *nāga*. He decided to observe *sīla* on the full moon days. Thus, on the full moon day, he

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<sup>67</sup> *Jtc.*, 5:495.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:319.

<sup>69</sup> *Vm*, 212.

<sup>70</sup> *Jtc.*, 5:161.

comes down from the world of *nāga* to human world. He observes Sill in a forest in an anthill and next day he goes to *nāga* world. One day some hunters were coming back as they did not receive any hunting with empty hands and saw the *nāga*. They wounded and weakened it and took back after binding them with canes. On that occasion, *nāga* king even did not look at them with anger as he observes *sill*. This is how Bodhisattva fulfils sill at the risk of his life.

*Nekkhamma pāramita* is also very important morally in the life of a *Bodhisattva*.<sup>71</sup>

This signifies going from home to homelessness without adherence to gratification of sense indulgence which is very a common characteristic of the ordinary folk. It is not possible to follow celibacy by the ordinary people. However, it is a most important thing for the person who aspires the spiritual development. In the noble eightfold path one of the right thoughts is *Nekkhammasamkappa*. Advice is given to fulfill this in a gradual way.<sup>72</sup>

1. First step is the absence from sexual misconduct.
2. Second step is the practice of celibacy by observing sila on the full moon days.
3. Third step is the going forth from home to homelessness to follow it fully.

Just as other *Pārmitas Bodhisattva* follows it in the three degrees. One such *Jātaka* is the *Makhādeva*.<sup>73</sup> It is said that at that time life span of people were very long and the *Makhādeva* prince enjoyed princely happiness for a long period of time. As a prince, as a second king and also as a full king. One day when he saw gray hair got disgusted and understood the nature of sense indulgence and came to know that real happiness cannot be

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<sup>71</sup> *Pd.*, 299.

<sup>72</sup> *Smv.*, 117-118.

<sup>73</sup> *Jtc.*, 1:137.

expected by leading a princely life of a king and handed over the kingship to his son and went to forest to live as a hermit. By the practice of meditation, he attained higher mental attainments and after death was born in the *Brahmaloka*. This indicates the great sacrifice that he made while having kingly status.

Another objective of the *Bodhisattva* is to develop his wisdom fully.<sup>74</sup> Without wisdom, no knowledge can be attained of the world of phenomena. According to the commentaries there are two ways of viewing a certain thing. One is the ordinary understanding that one gets after seeing a certain object (*sammuti*). The other thing is the full perception of a certain thing from an ultimate sense (*paramattha*). By seeing a certain thing, one can get an understanding of the external qualities of it without having the right knowledge of it. Always it is confined to half-baked knowledge of the world of phenomena, but, if someone perceives things with wisdom it is quite different and the true nature of the world of phenomena is presented before him. This is well reflected in the *Mūlapariyāyasutta of Majjhimanikāya*.

Almost all beings have the first category of knowledge. Many *Jātaka* stories give evidence of such knowledge. Even this category of knowledge is prevalent in the animals as well. This can be developed by three ways. i.e., *sutamaya*, *cintāmaya* and *bhavanāmaya*.<sup>75</sup>

However, in order to attain Buddhahood wisdom has to be developed fully. In many *Jātakas* the nature of wisdom he possessed is reflected. For instance, the

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<sup>74</sup> *Jtc.*, I:21.

<sup>75</sup> Ledi Sayadaw, *Manual of Insight* (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1986), 53-55.

*Ummaggajātaka*<sup>76</sup> his wisdom is reflected. *Bodhisattva* never uses his power of wisdom to obtain his personal gain. This is a very special quality of the life of *Bodhisattva*. His life is dedicated towards the wellbeing of others. Others get lot of benefits because of his wisdom. In many *Jātaka* tales, serious matters have been solved due to *Bodhisattva*'s wisdom. So many lives are saved because of his wisdom. On some occasions life of an animal or people is saved due to his far-sighted wisdom. Thus, in many ways his great wisdom is reflected. This has been admired in many places and the wisdom is compared to a precious jewel (*Paññā narānam ratanam*).<sup>77</sup> This is absolutely necessary to understand the world of objects as well as to do good for the benefit of all beings. According to *Jātaka* stories, one finds how the *Bodhisattva* perfected this as perfection. Courage is another important quality that a person should have and one's progress is dependent on the quality of mental and physical courage.<sup>78</sup> According to the teaching, if our objectives and the aspirations are to be successful there should be three kinds of effort i.e., they are *ārambhadhātu*;<sup>79</sup> courage in the beginning, *nikkhamadhātu*;<sup>80</sup> courage in the enjoyment and *parakkhamadhātu*;<sup>81</sup> courage in the completion. These are the three foundations that one should have in order to complete something successfully. However, courage could be applied for the good things as well as to do bad things. *Bodhisattva* applies his courage in order to do good for the wellbeing of others whatever the obstacles that comes on his way. One of the *Jātaka* stories in which the courage of *Bodhisattva* is found

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<sup>76</sup> *Jtc.*, 6:357.

<sup>77</sup> *Sn.*, 1:36.

<sup>78</sup> *Mn.*, 1:168.

<sup>79</sup> *An.*, I:04.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

*Vaṇṇupathajātaka*.<sup>82</sup> A group of merchants with their carriers were traveling through a desert when their water reserved ran out. They tried to find out a place where a well could be dug out. As they saw a place where there were some grasses, they started digging it. However, when they dug up deep, they saw a huge rock and disappointed. All the merchants gave up the effort and, on that occasion, *Bodhisattva* closely observed the rock and keeping closely his ear on it knew by the underlying sound that there is water underneath it and with his companions they broke the rock. They were able to get water. This indicates the effort of *Bodhisattva* where he kept it until the result is achieved. The special quality of courage of *Bodhisattva* is that when all were discouraged and gave up effort he did not do so. He gives leadership and engages himself in the act. Sometimes even goes to the extent of giving up his life or some physical parts because of courage.<sup>83</sup> This lesson is well depicted in the effort that he made in his last birth for the attainment of Buddhahood. In the Noble Eightfold Path too. This is highlighted as a very special request for the attainment of enlightenment. However, more concern is on the mental or the spiritual side.

Patience or forbearance is another important foundation of enlightenment.<sup>84</sup> This signifies that one does not allow anger or any other defilement to function instead he will merge it with forbearance. According to the teaching anger prevails until one attains the *anāgāmi* state of human mind.<sup>85</sup> When one attains the state of *sakadāgāmi* only its dynamic nature is reduced. However, anger generates much harm in human society, and it

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<sup>82</sup> *Jtc.*, I:106.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:51.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>85</sup> *An.*, 5:17.



leads to even the death of beings. Hence, forbearance is given as a very special quality practiced by *Bodhisattva* for the attainment of Buddhahood. In the story of the king *Kalābu* one may find that how the *Bodhisattva* practiced patience.<sup>86</sup> The King *Kalābu* got angry with the ascetic and cut his limbs. The ascetic said that his patience is not in his limbs but in his heart. Then the king *Kalābu* kicked his chest with his foot. On the face of such harsh atrocities, he did not generate anger, instead he wished the king's wellbeing. This reflects how the *Bodhisattva* practices patience.

This quality is important for the wellbeing and harmony of society. When a person who is tolerant does not do any harm to society. According to the *Jātaka* tales there are two ways of controlling one's anger. One is just thinking that person who does something wrong to another does so due to his foolishness. Another is that one may think that this happens due to his fault in this life or in one of his past births. However, it is said that even if life is at stake and danger, *Bodhisattva* does not get angry. This is well depicted in many *Jātaka* tales and even in *Vessantarajātaka*<sup>87</sup> one may find how the *Bodhisattva* controls his anger when the children were taken away from him by the *Brahmin* beating them.

Truthfulness is another important quality of *Bodhisattva*, and this has been valued throughout the canonical texts.<sup>88</sup> In the five precepts this has been included as one of the precepts.<sup>89</sup> Even in the code of ethics prescribed for monks this is a very important moral quality. It is said that the person when given to falsehood can do any harm. This is related to the social disharmony and also reflects the nature of corrupted character and behavior.

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<sup>86</sup> *Jtc.*, I:37.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:479.

<sup>88</sup> *Pj.*, 172.

<sup>89</sup> *Sn.*, 4:245.

Whole path of Buddhist teachings is based on the finding of ultimate truth. Just as other moral qualities: *Bodhisattva* whatever he loses does not deviate from this moral quality.

In the *Jātaka* story of *Sutasoma*,<sup>90</sup> this quality of *Bodhisattva* is significantly reflected.

This quality signifies that the person given to truthfulness does not breakaway it.

Determination is another quality practice by the *Bodhisattva*.<sup>91</sup> This signifies the kind of immovable thought that one has in order to reach ultimate goal. This thought should be maintained throughout the process of *Bodhisattva* ideal. This functions as the foundation for the fulfillment of other perfections. The *Jātaka* story of *Temiya*<sup>92</sup> signifies the quality of determination that *Bodhisattva* had. The prince *Temiya* was the only son that king *Brahmadatta* had. Prince was disgusted with kingship in his childhood and decided to go away from the palace in secrecy. In order to make his ideas get fulfilled he behaved as a dumb, cripple and deaf of hearing. His parents knowing that his physical features are perfect and cannot have such deficiency decided to examine it by various means of tactics. However, with whatever the tactics they used could not change his behavior pattern until he was to send away from the palace. Thus, he was able to maintain his determination. This indicates the nature of determination that *Bodhisattva* had.

Loving kindness is another important quality of the life of *Bodhisattva*.<sup>93</sup> This is a kind of mental quality that could permeate towards all beings. However, when it is perfected as a moral quality it becomes a code of ethics more than a kind of mediation.

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<sup>90</sup> *Jtc.*, 5:495.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 6:68.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:485.

This has been explained in three classifications i.e., *mettena-kāyakamma*,<sup>94</sup> *mettena-vacīkamma*<sup>95</sup> and *mettena-manokamma*.<sup>96</sup> This is a kind of quality that should be practiced by the three doors. The term *manokamma* signifies the loving-kindness and putting into practice such thoughts signifies the *kāyakamma*, talks about the value of loving-kindness is known as *vacīkamma*. This indicates that what is available in mind must be put into practice by mind, word and deed.

The person who practices loving-kindness developed it without any distinctiveness such as enemies, friends etc. Hence, though *Bodhisattva* has enemies, he does not think any ill of them at all. The *Jātaka* tale of *Mahākapi*<sup>97</sup> signifies how the *Bodhisattva* practices this great quality of loving-kindness. As an animal he was able to practice loving-kindness.

This story tells us that a monkey helped a man who got into jungle and lost his way and fall into a pit. He was helpless and crying in order to come out of the pit. This was heard by a monkey. The monkey helped the man come out of the pitfall after a very strenuous work. In order to get rid of tiredness the man kept his head on the monkey's lap and slept for a while. However, as he was in hunger decided to kill the monkey and eat its meat. He took a stone and hit it on the monkey, and it made a severe injury on the monkey, and it escaped and jumped on to tree with blood oozing wound. However, the monkey jumping from one tree to another with the oozing wound directed the way to the

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<sup>94</sup> *Dn.*, 3:191.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Jtc.*, 3:369.

man to go to his village. This is how the *Bodhisattva* as a monkey developed loving-kindness towards the beings.

Another special quality of *Bodhisattva* is the practice of equanimity.<sup>98</sup> Equanimity signifies the equal unbiased even mindedness towards beings and the material wealth. He does not behave in a biased way towards the conventionally accepted lovable passionate objects of the world and also towards dispassionate objects as well. The *Jātaka* tales of *Lomahamsajātaka*<sup>99</sup> tells how the *Bodhisattva* practiced this as a perfection. The ascetic *Lomahamsa* came to a village where ill-behaved children were living. Village boys going after the ascetic made fun of him and some inflicted harms as well. He went to a cemetery to stay there, but the ill-behaved children came there too and did the same. However, the ascetic did not make any difference towards them. The people who saw the great quality of the ascetic were pleased and respected very much. However, the ascetic did not show any special regard towards them as well. This is how the *Bodhisattva* practiced equanimity towards happy happenings as well as unhappy happenings of life.

### **6.5 Unique Human Qualities Reflected in the *Bodhisattva* Ideal.**

The *Jātaka* stories are not confined to the highlighting of the popularly known ten perfections but also many other qualities are also highlighted. The bad qualities as well as the good qualities of beings are highlighted. It is a very natural phenomena when the great qualities of the *Bodhisattva* are highlighted the bad qualities such as ignorance, greediness, unfaithfulness, ingratitude and ill-will etc. in others are reflected. However, according to the *Theravāda* tradition good qualities are concerned, they have emphasized the above ten

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<sup>98</sup> *Jtc.*, I:24.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, 24.

foundations of a good moral life. What is important is that they are practiced by the *Bodhisattva* in an extraordinary way not as the way that ordinary people practice it. This is a significant aspect of the life of the *Bodhisattva*.

In the *Jātakās* although some extraordinary happenings are there with metaphysical implication, but *Bodhisattva* always remains as an ordinary individual in many respects. The above qualities are fulfilled by him as a human, god, or an animal within the capacity that such beings have.

However, when examined the important literature of the *Bodhisattva* ideal, it is obvious that there is some development in upgrading the life of *Bodhisattva* with some extraordinary and marvellous doings. However, he remains as an extraordinary being without any metaphysical abilities. In all his acts what is obvious is his moral qualities fulfilled by him.

A comparison of the above three literature indicates how the concept of *Bodhisattva* ideal is developed without deviating from the qualities that a being has as a human, animal, or deity. Among many instances, there is an important verse in the *Dīghītikosalajātaka* that depicts the moral quality of *Bodhisattva*. In the *Jātakapāḷi* it is said that: - “*Nahi verena verāni - sammantīdha kudācanaṃ. Averena ca sammanti - esa dhammo sanantano.*”<sup>100</sup>

In the above verse a moral lesson is given of the significance of loving-kindness and the disadvantage of hatred is emphasized. There is not any story attributed to the moral lesson. The whole propose is to emphasis the moral lessons and even there is not any reference to *Bodhisattva* as well. In the *Jātaka* story it is said that well-behavior is

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<sup>100</sup> *Jtc.*, 3:210.

protected even in the face of death. When one is at the threshold of death, gems, gold, pearls are not there to protect as they can do nothing. Hence well behavior, harmonious good words are the things that should be maintained in one's life.

It further goes to say that one should not harbor hatred, ill-will thinking that he defeated me, stole my wealth, scolded me etc. If so, hatred will not be appeased by hatred.<sup>101</sup> The opposite should be practiced in order to appease hatred. Finally, the motto, given in the verse is that hatred is not appeased by hatred in the world but by it is appeased by non-hatred or living-kindness. This is an eternal law.

According to the above what is obvious is the moral lessons of loving-kindness, good words, good behavior etc. in contrast to hatred, ill-will, ill-words ill- behavior, etc. This is a very special characteristic of the *Theravāda* concept of *Bodhisattva*. When the certain past stories of *Bodhisattva* is presented his character is upgraded with high moral qualities. He is given as an extraordinary being whatever kind of the birth he takes. These moral qualities are practiced without expectations of any personal advantageous at all. The act is done solely for the very purpose of wellbeing of the person.

Between the connection of the present life and the past life of the *Bodhisattva* what is emphasized is that *Bodhisattva* does all those moral acts with the expectation of getting *Sabbaññutañāṇa*<sup>102</sup> special knowledge of the true nature of the world of experience. In the process of the fulfillment of moral qualities, all the acts done by him only carries his firm determination and devotion towards the practice of the course of *Bodhisattva* ideal.

When he is in danger there are gods or someone to help him and, in this way, others help him to achieve his goals. Even when he is born in the kingdom of animals, he

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<sup>101</sup> *Dhat.*, 43-44.

<sup>102</sup> *Sn.*, 2:9.

surpasses all other animal in morality and wisdom. Another significant character is that always there is an antagonist for him and with the power of moral qualities he always wins over the atrocities directed towards him. This is almost similar to the life story of the Buddha because in his life even after enlightenment there are many incidents of atrocities directed towards him which he overcomes with equanimity, loving-kindness, compassion etc. The same is found in the *Jātaka* tales.

Another significant element is that vicissitudes of life is well presented in the stories towards which he shows great compassion, loving-kindness, equanimity, and altruistic joys. They are practiced in their highest degrees, and they become the prominent moral principles of his life. In the *Vessantarajātaka*,<sup>103</sup> it is mentioned that *Bodhisattva* was displeased after giving away his children to the *Brahmin* as the *Brahmin* beat the children in his eyes. At that moment the thought occurred in his mind of taking his sword or bow and arrow to punish the *Brahmin*. But he controlled that idea. This indicates that *Theravāda* tradition has been very much practical and authentic in the way in developing the character of *Bodhisattva*. It is not going to the extent of the out of the ordinary in the description of the concept of *Bodhisattva*. The concept of Buddha as well as the *Bodhisattva* is presented based on moral and philosophical significance in the *Theravāda* literature. It can be viewed that above concepts have the foundation of Noble Eightfold Path.<sup>104</sup> Hence the *Bodhisattva* ideal is nothing but the practice of Noble Eightfold Path in *Theravāda* tradition. However, more concern is given to highlight the ten qualities than the Noble Eightfold Path. When it comes to the *Jātakatṭhakathā* basic moral ideal has been further commented. For instance, it has been developed into a story with the explanation

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<sup>103</sup> *Jtc.*, 6:479.

<sup>104</sup> *Mn.*, I:162-163.

of the reason for the Buddha to narrate the past story of *Dīghāyu*, the reason is given in a very short way as follows: - ‘‘*Bhikkhave, tumhe mayhaṃ orasā mukhato jātā puttā nāma, puttehi ca pitarā dinnam ovādam bhindituṃ na vaṭṭati, tumhe pana mama ovādam na karittha, porāṇakapaṇḍitā attano...*’’<sup>105</sup>

Based on a present cause or incident the past story has been given. Thus, in the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* every past story is narrated due to a certain incident that took place in the time of the Buddha. Most of the incidents evolved around monks, some kings, etc. At the end of each story, it has been connected to the Buddha and the other disciples involved in the incident. The common phrase occurs as Buddha saying is that: ‘‘*Satthā imam dhammadesanam āharitvā...*’’<sup>106</sup> Thus, *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* narrates the *Bodhisattva* ideal without much adoration or exaggerations.

When it comes to the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, however all the stories that are presented in the *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* are not described. However, it seems that it has selected the most important stories found in the *Jātakapāḷi*. Just as in the *Jātakapāḷi* and *Jātakaṭṭhakathā* the primary objective is to give a moral lesson of much significance for the society. The following moral lessons are the fundamental themes in the *Theravāda Bodhisattva* ideal. Significance of good behavior.

1. Good interpersonal relationships.
2. Resolution of conflicts
3. Control of behaviour
4. Significance of good edification

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<sup>105</sup> *Jtc.*, 3:210.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:8.



5. Maintenance of good mental and physical health.
6. Good family life
7. Good social life.
8. Truthfulness and honesty in acts
9. Benevolence towards the needy
10. Avoidance of extremism.

These moral lessons are reflective of different types of stages, types of behavior and the view of the *Bodhisattva* and can be pointed out as follows: -

**Table 6.1: Bodhisattva Stages, Types of Behavior and Views**

<b>Stages</b>	<b>Types of Behavior</b>	<b>View</b>
Social relationship stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Significance of good behavior</li> <li>● Good interpersonal relationships</li> <li>● Resolution of conflicts</li> <li>● Good family life</li> <li>● Good social life</li> </ul>	Social centric view
Ideological stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Maintenance of good mental and physical health</li> </ul>	Selfless centric view
Spiritual stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Truthfulness and honesty in acts</li> <li>● Benevolence towards the needy</li> </ul>	World centric view
Universal stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoidance of extremism</li> <li>● Universal love and compassion</li> <li>● Wisdom</li> </ul>	Cosmic view

These are the moral lessons given in the *Jātakatṭhakathā* and the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*. However, although *Bodhisattva* comes as the most important

character of the story, but more importance is given to the moral lesson. This is very much significant in the *Jātakapāli* because without giving much significance to character of *Bodhisattva* the moral lesson is given. In the commentary too, this has been well maintained without the adoration of the character of *Bodhisattva*. However, more importance is highlighted of morality with the inclusion of past and present happenings of life. Although same significance is maintained in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* in comparison to the *Jātaṭṭhakathā*, but the present incident that led to the narration of the story is given some more significance with its moral theme.

The motto is presented with the present and the past story and the theme is given at the beginning. More concern is given on the theme and the valuable advice imprinted in it. *Bodhisattva* is the foremost character in the stories with respect to his moral behaviour. However, if the story is presented due to the immoral or moral behaviour of a person or a monk, it is also given much significance. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā* as well as the *Jātaṭṭhakathā* does not give more embellishment to the Buddha. Further, in the *Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā*, there is no special reference to the fulfillment of perfections as well. The sole purpose is to give the moral lesson with explanations to its background that led to such human weakness or some immoral behavior.

The characters of individuals found in the stories differ from each other based on the quality of moral or immoral behavior nothing else. The most important fact is that all the difficulties have been overcome by the power of morality and wisdom not by any other miraculous happening or power. This is common to both texts. Although miraculous happenings are there, they are not the primary concern in the stories. A close study of the

*Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpiṭaka* shows the cleanness of the historicity of the development of both concepts, i.e., concept of Buddha and *Bodhisattva*.

## Chapter 7

### Development of the Concept of the Buddha in the Sri lankan

#### *Theravāda* Tradition as a Superhuman Being

##### 7.1 Significance of *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpitaka*

It is obvious that the concept of Buddha found in the *Jātaka* tales, its commentary and the *Dhammapadatthakathā* has a significant development especially with the introduction of the concept of *Pāramita*. However, very systematic development of the concept of *Pāramita* with a historical reference to the twenty-nine *Buddhas*<sup>1</sup> including the *Shākyamuni Gotama* Buddha is found in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Cariyāpitaka* of *Theravāda* literature. These two texts are also regarded as canonical texts of the *Khuddakanikāya* of *Theravāda* tradition. The *Buddhavaṃsa* in which there are twenty-nine sections in verse narrates the historical foundation of *Gotama Buddha* and the other twenty-four previous Buddhas. According to the text they all have prophesied his attainment of Enlightenment.

The name of the great disciple Venerable *Sāriputta*<sup>2</sup> appears in the first section asking the Buddha about his first resolution for the attainment of the Buddhahood and the types of spiritual practices (*pāramitas*) that should be fulfilled to achieve his goal of self-enlightenment. In the second section, we find the *Gotama Buddha*'s explanation of his resolution as the *Sumedha* the ascetic and how he was encouraged, by *Dīpaṃkara* Buddha. Further, he goes to describe the prediction made by the

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<sup>1</sup> *Bv.*, 3-10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

Buddha *Dīpaṃkara* of his self-enlightenment after a lapse of four *asankheyya* and a hundred thousand *kappās* and how he was blessed.<sup>3</sup>

Thereafter *Bodhisattva Sumedha* engaged in the fulfillment of ten *pāramitas*.<sup>4</sup> The *Gotama Buddha* describes how he perfected in each perfection in their three degrees in his *saṃsāric* life and also the other Buddhas that attained enlightenment after *Dīpaṃkara* Buddha at different interval of world cycles.<sup>5</sup>

In between the section three and twenty-seven, we find the historical account of the twenty-five Buddhas including *Gotama* Buddha. These sections provide a vivid detail of each Buddha such as : their birth, status, names of their parents, names of their wives and children their life-span, their way of renunciation, duration of their efforts to attain Buddhahood, their first sermon of the *Dhammacakkasutta* in *Isipatana*, the names of their chief disciples and their chief lay disciples are found in order.<sup>6</sup> It is noteworthy to mention that at the end of each section there gives a full account of the *Buddhas* ' passing away.

The twenty-eighth section is dedicated to mention the names of the Buddhas such as *Tamhaṃkara*, *Medhaṃkara* and *Saranaṃkara* who were the predecessors of *Dīpaṃkara* Buddha at different intervals of the same world cycle.<sup>7</sup> In this section what is important is the prediction given by the Buddha Gotama about the self-

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<sup>3</sup> *Bv.*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

enlightenment of *Metteyya Buddha*.<sup>8</sup> Going in accordance with the other sections, we find the details of the Buddha's passing away.<sup>9</sup>

Last chapter of the However *Buddhavaṃsa* is known as “*Buddhaparipākata*”<sup>10</sup> in which the names of all the twenty-nine (29) *Buddhas* are given. Here, the most important is the reference to future It is clear that the *Buddhavaṃsa* contains the various stories of previous Buddhās and starts with the Buddha *Dīpaṃkara* and ends with the explanation of the Buddha *Gotama*, Buddha *Maitree*<sup>11</sup> and the other three *Buddhas*. i.e., *Tanhaṃkara*, *Medhaṃkara* and the *Saranāṃkara*.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in the *Buddhavaṃsa*, there is only special reference to the *Gotama Buddha* as found in the canonical literature of *Theravāda*. Nonetheless, in the other canonical literature there mentions only names of seven Buddhas including the above names.<sup>13</sup>

However, *Buddhavaṃsa* has mentioned the prophecy of *Dīpaṃkara Buddha* perhaps because the *Gotama Buddha* got his *vivaraṇa* (confirmation of his self-enlightenment) at the feet of Buddha *Dīpaṃkara*.<sup>14</sup> This canonical text is important in many aspects specially to study the place of *Gotama Buddha* among the other Buddha and also to see whether the other Buddhas who lived in the history received the place of a Supernatural Universal Being. It is obvious in the very beginning that the text there is much glorification of all Buddhas<sup>15</sup> but there is no room left whatsoever for the

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<sup>8</sup> *Bv.*, 101.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Thag.*, 51.

<sup>14</sup> *Bv.*, 13.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-7.

*upliftment* of any Buddhas to the state of an almighty being. The other fact is that in response to inquiry made by Venerable *Sāriputta*,<sup>16</sup> the Buddha narrates the history of Buddhas, and the role played by him in different times in the past.

## 7.2 How his Personality is Developed.

However, the first chapter of the *Buddhavaṃsa* is important in many aspects specially a trend towards the glorification of the Buddha is found in the text. According to the text, there are two important powers of the Buddha i.e.

1. Power of performing miracles<sup>17</sup>
2. Power of wisdom<sup>18</sup>

These two are highlighted in the text and it is said that in order to convince all beings he has made *Irddhiprātihārya*<sup>19</sup> and even the beings in Brahma world were joyful of his powers of *iddhi*.<sup>20</sup> As a result of his *iddhi* human, celestial and all other worlds including *Avāchinaraka* received light. It is said that Buddha thus is incomparable because of his great qualities and the power of *iddhi* he possessed.<sup>21</sup>

## 7.3 Cariyāpitaka and Concept of Pāramitas

On the other hand, the counterpart text *Buddhavaṃsa* the *Cariyāpitaka* also bears similar significance with respect to the fulfillment of perfections.<sup>22</sup> Its main

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<sup>16</sup> *Bv.*, 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-20.

concern is to present the perfections in the light of different *Jātaka* stories to enlighten the qualities of the Buddha in his previous lives.

The *Cariyāpitaka* begins with the Buddha's explanation of his practice of *pāramitas* in terms of tales of his past existences. There are thirty-five (35) such tales given in around three hundred fifty-six (356) to three hundred seventy-one (371) in the form of verses.<sup>23</sup> There are three sections in the known as *Cariyāpitaka* (*vagga*), and they describe the *dāna*, *sīla*, and *nekkhamma* of the ten *pāramitās*. They are as follows: -

- Section One (*dāna pāramita*): ten (10) stories about the fulfillment of offering (*dāna*)
- Section Two (*sīla pāramita*): ten (10) stories about the fulfillment of morality (*sīla*)
- Section Three (*nekkhamma pāramita*) five (5) stories.

It should be noted that 15 stories distributed among five other perfections, as follows: -

- Going from home to homelessness - (*nekkhamma pāramita*): five stories
- Strong will-power - (*adhiṭṭhāna pāramita*) - one story
- Honesty (*sacca pāramita*) - six stories
- Loving-kindness (*mettā pāramita*) - two stories
- Equanimity (*upekkhā pāramita*) - one story

The other three *pāramitas* i.e. Wisdom (*paññā*), energy (*virīya*), patience (*khanti*) are mentioned at the end<sup>24</sup> without any related stories of perfections. Hence

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<sup>23</sup> *Chp.*, 62-65.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.



the two texts could be regarded as the highest development of the concept of Buddha and *Bodhisattva* in *Theravāda* traditions.

#### 7.4 Elaborated Background Reflected in the Beginning of *Buddhavamsa*

In the beginning the *Buddhavamsa* quite contrary to the description found in the discourses and the *jātakas* stories, narrates the way that the Buddha demonstrated his supernatural powers and created a jeweled walkway in the sky.<sup>25</sup> In seeing this marvelous walkway, *Arihant Sāriputta* raises the following question from the Buddha: -

Of what kind, great hero, supreme among men, was your resolving? At what time wise one, was supreme awakening aspired to by you? Of what kind wise one leader of the world were your ten perfections? How were the higher perfections fulfilled? How the ultimate perfections?<sup>26</sup>

In the explanation given, the terminologies are used such as *Acchhariya abbhuta* and *Lomahansa*.<sup>27</sup> Thereafter, the Buddha narrates the story of his coming to the human world. However, in addition to his “*iddhisvikubbana*”<sup>28</sup> it is said that there are many other marvels in the world. Such happens on the time of his conception in the womb and when his birth etc.<sup>29</sup>

This clearly indicates that Buddha has himself glorified his conception and birth saying that is cause for the move of the world. At that moment, i.e., Buddha is still in the air preaching, Venerable *Sāriputta* requests the Buddha to reveal his “*Abhinīhāra*” which specially signifies the exact time of his aspiration to become the Buddha.<sup>30</sup> Thus he further questions of his ten perfections i.e., *Dāna*, *Sīla*, *Nekkama*, *Paññā*, *Viriya*,

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<sup>25</sup> *Bv.*, 5.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

*Kanti, Saccha, Adhitthāna, Mettā* and *Upekkhā*<sup>31</sup> and the different degrees of his perfections as *pārami*, *upapārami* and *paramattha pārami*.<sup>32</sup>

Among the various types of his skillfulness, it is said that the Buddha possessed three kinds of *iddhi* i.e., *Ādesana, Iddhi* and *Anusāsana* and *iddhipātiharya*<sup>33</sup>. Buddha as a teacher is compared to a *Ketu*, a flag, *Yagastmaha* a lamp.<sup>34</sup> In the descriptions, especially how gods came to worship him are highlighted and their paying homage and respect to the Buddha is mentioned with much solemnness.<sup>35</sup> (*svayambhur lokanāyakam*). In the second stage of the glorification of the Buddha, names of some of the great disciples of the Buddha are mentioned and among them Venerable *Sāriputta* is presented as the most supreme among other five hundred (500) *Arahants*.<sup>36</sup> The Buddha stands among them as the greatest being in the world and he says that there are immeasurable things of the world, i.e., being, space, planets, and the knowledge of Buddha.<sup>37</sup>

### 7.5 Historicity and Lineage.

The other important fact found in the *Buddhavaṃsa* is the lineage of the *Buddhas*. As a result of the request of the Venerable *Sāriputta*, Buddha starts the narration of the lineage of Buddha.<sup>38</sup> It is obvious that the very beginning of the *Buddhavaṃsa* a clear background is created for the Buddha to depict himself as the

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<sup>31</sup> *Bv.*, 6

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

highest and the greatest being of the universe. The Buddha has been fully glorified based on the following incidents, and they can be classified as follows: - As a person possessed of the incomparable *iddhīs* <sup>39</sup>

1. *Buddhas* stays in the sky traveling on the jeweled surrounded by all kinds of gods including great Brahma worshiping him with the heavenly flowers of *parasatu* and *madārā*.<sup>40</sup>
2. As a result a great radiance pervades in the world of humans, *devās* and *avīchi* and being are marveled at it.<sup>41</sup>
3. He is surrounded by the five hundred (500) *arahants* among them are Venerable *Sāriputta* etc and the Buddha stays just like rising sun in the morning.<sup>42</sup>

The Buddha is glorified with the above ways which can be regarded as the highest form of glorification in the *Theravāda* literature because no other text of *Theravādas* gives such a prominent glorification of the Buddha *Gotama*. The terminologies that are used are the *Svayambhu*, *lokanāyaka*, *Satthuma*, *Vināyaka* and *Mahānubhāva*.<sup>43</sup> These are special terminologies that highlights his greatness and uniqueness among the world of men, gods *Brahmās*, *Nagās* and other beings.

The Buddha is presented surpassing all beings in wisdom compassion and the power of his *iddhi*. However, it is very clear that even among such abilities of the Buddha, the most highlighted factor is his power of *iddhi*. All the beings of the universe

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<sup>39</sup> *Bv.*, 7

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 6.

even including the great disciples of the Buddha such as *Sāriputta*, *Moggallāna*, *Anuruddha* etc. who are skilful in performing miracles and marvels the Buddha's skillfulness of making miracles is supreme and other others cannot supersede him.<sup>44</sup> Thus, it is obvious that there is extraordinary glorification as well as prestige attached to his main incidents of life in the human world. This clearly indicates that he is incomparable in all respects and surpass all beings in the world though does not stand as a metaphysical being. It is very clearly indicated in the *Buddhavaṃsa* commentary. Therefore, it is very clear that the Buddha depicted in the *Threavāda* literature is an exceptional human being.

### **7. 6 All Buddhas as Exceptional Human Beings**

According to the *Buddhavaṃsa*, there are eight factors that do not resemble any other being. They are: -

1. Lineage of life.
2. Size of body.
3. Case.
4. Time of his exertion to become Buddha.
5. Radiance.
6. Going from home to homelessness.
7. Bodhi tree.
8. *Paryamka pramāna*.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Bv.*, 6.

<sup>45</sup> *BvA.*, 296.

These are presented as uncommon factors of the *Buddhas* and there is no resemblance among the *Buddhas* with regard to the above factors. On the other hand, there are four factors common to all the Buddhas i.e.: -

1. The place of *Bodhiparyanka* is common to all the Buddhas and has one place.
2. They are preaching of Dhammacakka at *Isipatana*.
3. They ascend to the heaven at the city of *Samkassa*.
4. The *gandhakuti* of *Jetavana* is in one place.<sup>46</sup>

In addition to the above four major factors, there are thirty (30) factors common to all the Buddhas. They are as follows: -

1. *Bodhisattva* comes out of his mother's womb with mindfulness
2. Sits cross-legged in the womb
3. In the posture of standing, mother gives birth to *Bodhisattva*
4. Gives birth to in a park
5. The instance of his birth, he goes on seven steps and make a solemn utterance
6. Make his great renunciation on the day of the birth of his son and after seeing four omens
7. After becoming an ascetic, at last seven days make the great effort
8. On the day of his enlightenment eats milk rice
9. He sits cross-legged on the seat of grass and get enlightenment

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<sup>46</sup> BvA., 298.

10. He practices *ānapānasati* for enlightenment
11. Defeat of *māras*
12. Under the *bodhi tree* he attains *trividyā*
13. Spend seven weeks
14. With the invitation of *Mahābrahma*, he decides to preach *dhamma*
15. At *isipatana*, he preaches the *dhammacakka*
16. On the *navam* full moon day, they make *pātimokkha desanā*
17. At *jetavanarāmavihāra* he spends most of his time
18. *Displyas yamāmahapelahara* at *Srāvasti*
19. Preaches *Abhidhamma* in *Tusita* heaven
20. Comes down from heaven to *samkassapura*
21. Always engages in *samāpatti*
22. Observation of beings with his *dhyāna* power
23. Promulgation of rules where there arises a cause
24. Preaches *Jātaka* based on its meaning
25. Preach *Buddhavamsa* among relations
26. Conversation with the guest *bhikkus*
27. With intention resides rainy season and does not go away without asking them
28. Everyday arises on a schedule based on his timetable and never changes it
29. Eating of meat on the day of his passing away
30. After entering *dhyānic* bliss passing away.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> BvA., 298-299.

The above have been presented as common to all the *Buddhas*. What is significant here is that the incidents of the life of the Buddha that are found in the other *Theravāda* texts have been presented as a collection. Nonetheless some of the qualities and incidents that are attributed to the Buddha seem to have received the influence of *Mahayāna* Buddhist thought as well.

This indicates that *Buddhasvamsa* is a text written taking into consideration all the happenings of the life of the Buddha. Among those factors it is obvious that there are not some marvelous elements that glorify the Buddha or uplift him to a celestial being. They denote just common factors of all the Buddhas. The *Yamāmahapelahara*<sup>48</sup> displays of his great psychic power to convert beings, the way he stays in the womb, going to *Tusita* heaven etc., though signify some metaphysical significance still they are mentioned in other places as the special happening of his life.

However, it seems that in the building up of the lineage of the Buddha all the factors have been taken as common to all Buddhas. When the incidents are taken on the whole, the following things could be observed basically i.e.

1. Common incidents,
2. Incidents of metaphysical significance.

Hence almost the glorification of the life of the Buddha is a very common element in the texts. On the other hand, the eight uncommon factors do not make any special significance to the life of the Buddha. However, what is remarkable is that

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<sup>48</sup> *BvA.*, 288-289.

though the incidents have a metaphysical significance, but they do not make the Buddha metaphysical.

The thirty factors mentioned above are given as the “*Dhammatā*”<sup>49</sup> meaning “would not change, “phenomenal law of the world.” When it is said that it is the *Dhamatā* they are presented as phenomenal happenings and there is not any influence of universal power. Although, Buddhas comes to enlightenment with the attainment of the Four Noble Truths, the background that makes them to attain the Buddhahood cannot be all the same. In the discourses, there occurs the names of some of the previous *Buddhas*, however, there is no mention in the discourses about the other incidents of their life. Especially, the following statement is of great significance in understanding the nature of truth of the world of phenomena. It is mentioned that, “*uppādo va tathāgato anuppādo va tathāgato, dhammathititā, dhammaniyamatā, idappcchayatā* etc.”<sup>50</sup>

This clearly indicates that the nature of truth attained by them is all the same. Therefore, this is the main focus in the *Theravāda* Buddhist literature although embellishment is a common feature.

Another important fact is that at the enlightenment, he says that he has discoursed a path which was unknown hitherto<sup>51</sup> and also it is mentioned that the advice of all the *Buddhās* are to calm down one’s mind.” *Sacittapariyodapanam*,

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<sup>49</sup> *BvA.*, 298.

<sup>50</sup> *Kv.*, 321.

<sup>51</sup> *Sn.*, 1:422.



*etambuddhanusāsanam.*”<sup>52</sup> Hence, there is not any difference in the realization of the ultimate truth by the previous Buddhas. As there is reference to some previous Buddhas in the discourses, it is obvious that they had lived many Buddhas in the past, but however, it is obvious that most of the incidents that took place in the life of the Buddha have been taken as a format to build up the lineage of the *Theravāda* concept of the Buddha.

### **7.7 Historicity of the *Gotama* Buddha.**

The composition of the *Buddhavaṃsa* can be regarded as the pinnacle of the *Theravāda* concept of the Buddha. However, it should be noted that a cosmic or metaphysical concern is not ascribed to the Buddha especially in terms of his self-enlightenment or the power of *iddhi*. It is a common feature in Buddhist literature that the Buddha uses his *iddhi* only to make background for the individuals to realize the Four Noble Truths and does not represent a creator or almighty being. He does not even enjoy the place of a demigod.

However, it is very clear that some of the previous stories have led to the development of the lineage of the Buddha, because as well as the common elements there are many uncommon elements in the explanation of the *Buddhavaṃsa*. Therefore, this signifies that the information of the life of the Buddha *Gotama* Buddha in the building up of the lineage of the Buddha is only a one source and there would have been many other sources for the compilation of the lineage of the Buddha. Therefore, the concept of the lineage of the Buddha is not meant just a conceptual creation but it

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<sup>52</sup> *Dma.*, 52.

has some historical significance as well. When excluding the ornamental and adorable elements found in the stories, it is obvious that it is not devoid of its historical significance. It is natural that some uncommon elements of the life of the Buddha are scattered here and there in the text. They have to be regarded as the literary embellishments nothing else because *Buddhavaṃsa* is work composed in the form of verse.

Thus, regarding the life of the Buddha, there are many distinctive differences as well. In addition to the above main unparalleled incidents, there are many other remarkable differences such as their passing away, span of life, etc.<sup>53</sup> These significant differences of the Buddha suggest that there is some historical background for the above development. However, in all circumstances, there have maintained throughout the *Buddhavaṃsa* the *Bodhisattva*'s aspiration and the confirmation given by all the Buddhas in his future attainment of the self-enlightenment. The following chart clearly indicates the lineage of all Buddhas and their: -

**Table 7.1: Lineage of the All Buddhas**

<i>Pāli Name</i>	<i>Caste</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Bodhi</i>	<i>Rebecoming</i>
1   <i>Tanhamkara</i>			<i>Sunandha, and Sunandhā</i>	<i>Rukkaththana</i>	
2   <i>Medhamkara</i>			<i>Sudheva, and Yasodhara</i>	<i>Kaela</i>	
3   <i>Saranamkara</i>			<i>Sumaṅgala, and Yasawathi</i>	<i>Pulila</i>	
4   <i>Dīpamkara</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Rammawati nagara</i>	<i>Sudheva, and Sumedhaya</i>	<i>Pipp hala</i>	<i>Sumedha or Magha Mānava,</i>
5   <i>Kondañña</i>	<i>Kastriya</i>	<i>Rammawati nagara</i>	<i>Sunanda, and Sujatā</i>	<i>Salakalyana</i>	<i>Vijitawi a Chakravarti in Chandawati nagara</i>
6   <i>Mamgala</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Uttaranagara</i>	<i>Uttara, and Uttarā</i>	<i>a nāga</i>	<i>Suruchi</i>

<sup>53</sup> *Bv.*, 9-99.

7	<i>Sumana</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Mekhalanagara</i>	<i>Sudassana and Sirimā</i>	<i>a nāga</i>	<i>King Atulo, a nāga</i>
8	<i>Revata</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Sudhannawati nagara</i>	<i>Vipala and Vipulā</i>	<i>a nāga</i>	<i>A Veda-versed Brahmin</i>
9	<i>Sobita</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Sudhamma nagara</i>	<i>Sudhamma and Sudhammā</i>	<i>a nāga</i>	<i>Sujata, a Brahman (in Rammavati)</i>
10	<i>Anomadassi</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Chandawati nagara</i>	<i>Yasava and Yasdara</i>	<i>ajjuna</i>	<i>A Yaksha king</i>
11	<i>Paduma</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Champaya nagara</i>	<i>Asama, and Asama</i>	<i>salila</i>	<i>A lion</i>
12	<i>Nārada</i>		<i>Dhammawati nagara</i>	<i>King Sudheva and Anopama</i>	<i>sōnaka</i>	<i>a tāpaso in Himalayas</i>
13	<i>Padumuttara</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Hansawati nagara</i>	<i>Anurula, and Sujatā</i>	<i>salila</i>	<i>Jatilō an ascetic</i>
14	<i>Sumedha</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Sudassana nagara</i>	<i>Sumedha and Sumedhā</i>	<i>nipa</i>	<i>Native of Uttaro</i>
15	<i>Sujāta</i>		<i>Sumangala nagara</i>	<i>Uggata, and Pabbāvati</i>	<i>welu</i>	<i>a chakravarti</i>
16	<i>Piyadassi</i>		<i>Sudanna nagara</i>	<i>Sudatta, and Subaddha</i>	<i>kakudha</i>	<i>Kassapa, a Brahmin</i>
17	<i>Attadassi</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Sonanagara</i>	<i>Sāgara and Sudassana</i>	<i>champā</i>	<i>Susino, a Brahman</i>
18	<i>Dhammadassi</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Surananagara</i>	<i>Suranamaha, and Sunanada</i>	<i>bimbajāla</i>	<i>Indra, the leader of the gods</i>
19	<i>Siddhārtha</i>		<i>Vibhara nagara</i>	<i>Udeni, and Suphasa</i>	<i>kanihāni</i>	<i>Mangala Brahman</i>
20	<i>Tissa</i>		<i>Khema nagara</i>	<i>Janasando, and Paduma</i>	<i>assana</i>	<i>King Sujāta of Yasawati nagara</i>
21	<i>Phussa</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Kāsi</i>	<i>Jayasena, and Siremaya</i>	<i>amalaka</i>	<i>Vijīatvi</i>
22	<i>Vipassi</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Bandhuvati nagara</i>	<i>Vipassi and Vipassi</i>	<i>pātali</i>	<i>King Atula</i>
23	<i>Sikhi</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Arunavatti nagara</i>	<i>Arunavatti, and Paphavatti</i>	<i>pundariko</i>	<i>Arindamo</i>
24	<i>Vessabhu</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Anupama nagara</i>	<i>Suppalittha, and Yashavati</i>	<i>sāla</i>	<i>Sudassana</i>
25	<i>Kakusanda</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Khemavati nagara</i>	<i>Aggidatta and Visakha</i>	<i>airisa</i>	<i>King Khema</i>
26	<i>Konāgamana</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Sobhavati nagara</i>	<i>Yannadatta the Brahman, and Uttara</i>	<i>udumbarā</i>	<i>King Pabbata in Mithila</i>
27	<i>Kassapa</i>	<i>Brahmin</i>	<i>Bāranasi Nagara</i>	<i>Brahmadatta Brahman, and Dhanavati</i>	<i>nigroda</i>	<i>Jotipala</i>
28	<i>Gautama</i>	<i>Kshatriya</i>	<i>Lumbini</i>	<i>King Suddhodana, and Māya</i>	<i>peepal (Ficus religiosa)</i>	<i>Siddhartha Gautama, a Kshatriya</i>
29	<i>Maitreya</i>	<i>future Buddha</i>	<i>Buddha of the future</i>	<i>Buddha of the future</i>	<i>nāga</i>	

This has been the main focus of the stories of the lineage of the Buddhās. Thus, the significance of *Bodhisattva* in many ways have been highlighted. The historical foundation of the Gautama Buddha is depicted as follows.

According to the stories of the lineage of the Buddhās the distinctive differences among them are clear. Thus, the significance of *Bodhisattva* in many ways has been highlighted. The historical foundation of the Gautama Buddha is also well depicted in the evolution of the concept of the Buddha.

Thus, it is obvious that Gautama Buddha has been born in the time of the different Buddhas and received the confirmation of his future enlightenment. Although the beginning part of the *Buddhavamsa* offers much adoration of the Buddha is dedicated to the explanation of the story of *Sumedha* the underlying motive is to present the core principles of the Buddha's teachings. It is said that although *Sumedha* was a *Brahmin* expert in Vedic teachings his way of thinking diverted towards the *Nibbāna* because he thinks that birth, sickness, decay are common factors of life and no one free from such calamities of human life.<sup>54</sup> What is significant in this description is the fundamental concept of Buddhist thought is highlighted, that is: Unsatisfactoriness, Cause of Unsatisfactoriness, Path and the Cessation.

Especially more concern is on the causality of human *unsatisfactoriness*, and it has been well depicted in a very practical way for instance: - *Nimitte caturo disvā assa yānena nikkhami, Anāsava vitaraga santacitta samāhita*<sup>55</sup> This reminds us of the

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<sup>54</sup> *Bv.*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

relative existence of the phenomenal world. The causality of human issues has been well depicted.

On the other hand, there is much reference to defilements, and it is clearly indicated that causality of human unsatisfactoriness is due to the defilements of human mind.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, sort of meditational observation of the unsatisfactoriness and filthy nature of human body has become the concern of *Sumedha*.<sup>57</sup>

As a result of the above understanding, the ascetic renouncing the homely life and goes to forest, based on his ascetic practices of mental development, he attains the higher knowledges. During this period, Buddha *Dīpaṃkara* was born in the world and before whom, he got the confirmation of his self-enlightenment as a Buddha in future. Although he had the ability of attaining *Arahanthood* and attain *Nibbāna* he waited to have Buddhahood.<sup>58</sup>

The term used here is “*sabbaññu*.”<sup>59</sup> It is said that by that time he has completed the necessary eight factors for the attainment of enlightenment.<sup>60</sup> When he received the confirmation of his future Buddhahood, it seems that it has been described with some adoration. For instance, Great Brahma has confirmed his future Buddhahood with joy and happiness and many environmental changes took place as

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<sup>56</sup> *Bv.*, 9

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 55,56.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

evidence for his future achievement. It is said that with this confirmation ten thousand worlds became enlightened.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, many marvelous things have happened due to the above factors. This chapter gives a very descriptive explanation about the confirmation given by the Buddha *Dīpaṃkara*, especially the various kinds of marvels that took place due to the above reason. This is explained with much more adoration which exceeds the adoration attached to the birth of prince, *Sidhārtha*. Such is the high regard accorded to the proclamation of his future Buddhahood.

Thereafter, the concept of ten (10) *Pāramitas* are mentioned which are given as the qualities that should fulfilled for the achievement of Buddhahood. In this chapter quite different from the fourth chapter priority has been given to the fundamental teachings of the Buddha while adoring the life of *Sumedha*. Thus, the basic concerns of the chapter are: -

1. Psychic abilities of the ascetic
2. Fundamental Buddha teachings
3. Marvels this that took place due to the proclamation by the Buddha *Sumedha*'s further Buddhahood.
4. Eight factors necessary for one to become a Buddha (refer to page 228)
5. Ten perfections

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<sup>61</sup> *Bv.*, 92.

It is obvious that this chapter has made a very good background including all the necessary factors to narrate the qualities, skillfulness, and kind of knowledge of all Buddhas.<sup>62</sup> However, it is obvious that objective is not the depiction of lineage of the Buddha, but the resolution of the *Bodhisattva*. This has been mentioned throughout the text and especially every Buddha has confirmed his attainment of Buddhahood and all the information related to his Buddhahood are mentioned. For instance, the place of his attainment of Buddhahood, names of mother, father, two great disciples, his attainment etc. Such have been mentioned without any adoration which is a very remarkable in the text.

The *Buddhavaṃsa* is also important to get the clear information of the Buddha i.e., his background of family, his homely life etc.<sup>63</sup> which is very important to have a clear picture of the various aspects of the Buddha *Gotama*. Especially, the lineage of the Buddha Gotama is presented quite different from the other Buddhas because it seems there is a very comprehensive explanation of the all the aspects of his life and the practice of perseverance. However, just as in the first two chapters, where the life of the Buddha and the *Sumedha Tāpasa* is described with utmost glorification in this chapter, there is no such high adoration of the Buddha. The main concern in this chapter is to narrate the lineage of the Buddha Gautama and it is not different from the way that other Buddhas have been narrated. There mentions about his parents, city, how long he stayed at home, the three castles, his son and wife, reason for his great renunciation, his first sermon, chief, disciples, and attainment etc. are very clearly mentioned.

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<sup>62</sup> *Bv.*, 1-187.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

However, it is mentioned that the rays of the Buddha rise sixteen meters high, and he possessed of thirty-two marks of body and ten special powers.<sup>64</sup> These factors are not uncommon because they are found in the early Buddhist discourses with much more explanations. Another important fact is that it is said that all the composite things are subject to decay and impermanence, and it is common to him as well.

On the other hand, his attainment of Buddhahood is a result of his great effort and the terminology used is: - “*padhānam padahitvāna.*”<sup>65</sup> The concept of the impermanence is a very common teaching, and it is mentioned by all the Buddhas as found in the *Buddhavaṃsa*. This clearly indicates that although the Buddhas are great and supreme and stay above all beings, they do not appear as everlasting, eternal universal beings of the phenomenal world in whatever way. *Theravādas* have mentioned this universal truth in every literature of them along with the others main teachings of the Buddha. Although glorification is a natural phenomenon in their literature it has not superseded the main teachings of the Buddha in whatever way or form.

The ten powers of the Buddha is a very special gift possessed by him due to his previous commitment to the fulfillment of his aspiration. However, it is important to note that the text mentions about the future Buddha *Metteyya* as well.<sup>66</sup> But quite different from the descriptions of the lineage of the Buddha his lineage is not given in the text. It is important to note that in the *Buddhavaṃsa* name of the prince *Sidhārtha*'s wife is *Bhaddakacchāna* in the *Atthakathā* name given is *Yasodharā*.

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<sup>64</sup> *Bv.*, 98.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.



It is notable that in the *Buddhavaṃsa attakathā* the term “*Sabbaññu Bodhisattva*” is for the Buddha in some places. This indicates that although *Theravāda* tradition has used the above term *Sabbaññu*, in the description of *Bodhisattva* such quality is not given a special place or highlighted. Although *Buddhavaṃsa* has maintained the highest glorification of the concept of the Buddha such glorification does not uplift the Buddha to a metaphysical state whatsoever.

This terminology has been used in the *Theravāda* Buddhist literature in a special sense. Here the translation for the term is given as Omniscience. The term *sabbaññu* signifies all and the knowledge. Hence, it literary means knower of all or the knowledge of all. In Buddhist teachings all signifies the five aggregates. Hence, it signifies the Buddha knows the world of five aggregates its origin, cause, and emancipation and path leading to. In this sense the term has to be interpreted in the Buddhist teachings. However, in the other traditions, it has a quite different meaning. Thus, *Bodhisattva* path is directed at the gaining of knowledge of the origin, cause path and emancipation from the *panchupādānakkhandhā*. Thus, in the two prominent texts of *Theravāda* tradition the priority is given to the doctrinal aspects as well as the lineage of the Buddha. The lineage of the Buddha and the *Bodhisattva* concept is presented in terms of the fundamental teachings of the Buddha.

### **7.8 *Cariyāpitaka* and the Foundation of the Concept of *Pāramita***

Next to the *Buddhavaṃsa*, the most important text is the *Cariyāpitaka* in which more concern is on the concept of Ten Perfections. The term, “*cariya*” signifies the different practices fulfilled by him in terms of ten perfections with the expectation of

the attainment of Buddhahood.<sup>67</sup> All the perfections are directed at the helping of others for their benefit without any expectation other than the achievement of Buddhahood. However, according to the *Theravāda* view, the very foundation of perfections is the “*abhinīhāra*.”<sup>68</sup> This concept is found in the *Theravāda* literature i.e., *Buddhavaṃsa*, its *Atthakathā*, and *Apadanapāli* etc. When one has the above foundation, then only one could fulfil the path of *Bodhisattva* which is the fulfillment of ten perfections. The *Abhinīhāra* is also known as *Atthadhamma* i.e.

1. A human being. (*Manussatta*)
2. A male. (*Lingasampatti*)
3. He should be able to attain *Arahantship* in this very life. (*Hetu*)
4. He should be able to see living Buddha (*Satthāra dassana*)
5. When there is a Buddha, he should be an ascetic (*Pabbajjā*)
6. He should possess the qualities to develop *Jhānas* (*Gunasampatti*)
7. He should completely devote his life to the Buddha (*Adhikāra*)
8. There should be his commitment to follow the *Bodhisattva* Path (*Chandatā*)<sup>69</sup>

These have been highlighted in the story of *Sumedha* and he possessed the above all qualities, for instance, he is described as an ascetic who had *Isipabbajjā*<sup>70</sup> and attained higher mental attainments. As he had utmost devotion towards the Buddha,

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<sup>67</sup> *Chp.*, 1.

<sup>68</sup> *Bv.*, 6.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

with the consent of others he cleared one side of road for *Dīpaṃkara* Buddha to arrive in. He is depicted as an unparalleled philanthropist that gives away all his wealth for the wellbeing of others.<sup>71</sup> It is mentioned that he had the ability of becoming an *Arahant* and put an end to the circle of *samsāric* existence but with the great expectation of Buddhahood he has not traveled in that path.<sup>72</sup> Thus, in the description of the life of the *Sumedha* one may find the factors necessary for becoming a *Bodhisattva*, the first step for Buddhahood. Thereafter gradually other factors are presented well.

In the stage of *Sumedha* there is no glorification of his life. Nonetheless, it seems that all the ten perfections are noticeable even before he become a *Bodhisattva*. Hence, his character is not only given as having the most important eight (8) factors for the achievement of *Bodhisattvahood*, but also there reflected the ten perfections as well. For instance, his practice of giving away, great knowledge by the attainment of *Abhiññā* (wisdom) and the understanding of the world of experience, (wisdom) going from home to homelessness which remind the (*Nekkhamma pāramita*-giving away).<sup>73</sup> His firm resolution of becoming of Buddha (effort, determination) in the clearing of path for *Dīpaṃkara* Buddha which exceeds others, (loving-kindness) are all reflective of the concept of perfections.

Therefore, the *atthadhamma* not only depicts the privileges that one should have to become Buddha but also the background of ten perfections. It is said that Buddha gets a perfect personality due to the perfections of *Pāramita* in their three degrees i.e., *pārami*, *upapārami* and *paramatthapārami*. This signifies the essential qualities that

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<sup>71</sup> *Bv.*, 10.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

should be fulfilled to the fullest. Thus, such a person should have a very strong background and that background is presented in the explanation of the *Abhinihāra* in *Theravāda* literature which is devoid of any metaphysical elements or glorification. An appropriate background is created in accordance with the ten perfections. According to *Jātaka* stories, an ordinary being cannot fulfill the perfections in their three degrees specially the second and the third aspects of them. After the confirmation of his attainment of enlightenment by a Buddha his only objective is to fulfill the perfections. According to the *Buddhavamsa atthakathā*, thereafter the *Abhinihāra*, he is never born blind, deaf, lunatic, and cripple etc. on the other hand, he is never born as a person of other faiths or servant, there is no transformation of sex and does not commit five heinous crimes.<sup>74</sup> Though, he is born in a *Tiracchānayani*, he is not born bigger than an elephant and smaller than a bird *watu*. He is never born in *petaloka*, *avīchi* the different states of purgatories. According to the *Aṭṭhakata* of *khaggavisāna sutta* of *Suttanipāta*, some other special things are also explained.<sup>75</sup> However, they are devoid of any special metaphysical flavor or glorification. They are used to create a very authentic way of life. According to the *Cariyāpitaka* it is obvious that perfections signify the gradual development of one's behavior or personality which is based on compassion and great wisdom. However, it is said that those who aspire Buddhahood should sacrifice five great things i.e., wealth, limbs, life, sons, and wife which are the dearest to an ordinary individual.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> *An.*, 3:436.

<sup>75</sup> *Pj.*, 42.

<sup>76</sup> *Chp.*, 7-8.

According to the *Theravāda* belief, that one time there exists only one Buddha and in the same way there exists only one *Bodhisattva* as well. One of the significant factors of *Bodhisattva* life is that he is not depicted as a savior of others. Thus, there is not the uplift of *Bodhisattva* to the state of a savior, instead he leads an exemplary life full of great qualities who is venerated by many due to his great human qualities. The *Bodhisattva* character depicts a life in *Theravāda* which can be followed by others as an exemplary way of life.

### 7.9 Classification of *Jātaka* Stories under Different Perfection

The *Cariyāpitātaka* has a number of *jātaka* stories to depict the ten perfections of the *Bodhisattva*. Thus, stories dissimilarity to the name “*Jātaka*” are presented under the name of “*cariyā*.” Which signifies behavior.<sup>77</sup> Hence, one may find various kinds of behaviors that were aimed at the fulfillment of required qualities to their highest degree under the different perfections. Some of the perfections are classified under different perfections as follows: -

<b><i>Perfections</i></b>	<b><i>Related Jātaka Tales</i></b>
<b><i>Dāna</i></b>	<i>Akirti, Saṃkha, Kurudhamma, Mahāsudassana, Mahāgovinda, Nimiraja, Nandakumar, Siviraja, Vessantara, Sasapandita</i>
<b><i>Sīla</i></b>	<i>Mātuposaka, Bhūridatta, Campeyyanaga, Cullabodhi, Mahisarāja, Rurumiga, Mātamgha, Dhammadevaputta, Alinasatta, Saṃkhaphala</i>
<b><i>Nekkhamma</i></b>	<i>Yudhanjaya, Sōmanassa, Ayoghara, Bhisā, Sōnapandita</i>
<b><i>Adhittāhna</i></b>	<i>Tēmiyapandita</i>

<sup>77</sup> Chp., 7-8.

<i>Saccha</i>	<i>Kapirāja, Sacca, Vattpōtaka, Maccharāja, Khandipayōna, Sutasoma</i>
<i>Mettā</i>	<i>Suvannasoma, Ekarāja</i>
<i>Upekkhā</i>	<i>Mahālomahamsa</i>

The remaining three perfections i.e. Wisdom (*paññā*), energy (*virīya*), patience (*khanti*) are mentioned in a closing stanza but no related *Cariyāpitaka* stories have been given. According to the classification of the *Jātaka* stories under *cariyā* in the text more prominence is given to the *dānapāramita*.<sup>78</sup> Thus, stories of various significance has been enumerated to point out how the *Bodhisattva* perfected the *pāramita* in their three degrees.

#### 7.10 Psycho-Ethical Significance Attached to the Concept of *Bōdhisattva*

The *Pāramita* is descriptive of the giving away of food, wealth, royal elephant, great alms giving etc. It is said that he gives away things not because that he dislikes them but because he aspires enlightenment for instance, in the *Mahāgovinda jātaka* it is mentioned that: - "*Sabbaññutaṃ piyṃmyham tasmāddemi varam dhananti*"<sup>79</sup> After explanation of the giving away of wealth, almsgiving etc., there mentions how *Bodhisattva* gave away his life. For instance, *Civirāja jātaka* mentions how he gave away his eyes.<sup>80</sup> The *Vessantara jātaka* is highlighted to point out how he offered his

<sup>78</sup> *Chp.*, 1-13.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

children and his wife.<sup>81</sup> The *Cariya* of *Sasapandita* is presented to point out how the *Bodhisattva* sacrificed his life for the *Brahmin*.<sup>82</sup>

The *sīlapāramita* is also based on the same way as the *dānapāramita* is explained in the text.<sup>83</sup> In the beginning his well-controlled behavior is highlighted and it is said that by body, mind, and the words he did not do any harm due to his self-controlled behavior. On the other hand, in the explanation of the *sīla*, there after his power of patience is well depicted and there are ten *Jātaka* stories. This would have been the reason for not describing the *Khanti* as a separate *cariya*. For instance, it is said that: - “*Sahakope samuppanne-Sīlabbatamanussarim tatthave kopam niggahhim-Nadesi vaddhitupari.*”<sup>84</sup>

This clearly indicates that *sīla* is based on *khanti*, an inner quality of practicing *sīla pāramita* at the risk of his life which is the ultimate degree of *sīla*. Thereafter, *Nekkhamma pārami* is given to emphasize his going from home to homelessness giving away all the household wealth in the quest of *Sabbaññutagñāna*. It is mentioned that he has abandoned kingship in order to have *Sabbaññutagñāna*<sup>85</sup>. Here more explanation is on his realization of the vanity of mundane life and the importance of *Sabbaññugñāna*. In the story again and again the vanity of sense gratification is mentioned.

The *Adhitthāna pārami* is explained in order to emphasis his firm determination<sup>86</sup> and the *Themiya Jātaka*<sup>87</sup> is given as an enumeration of his effort. The

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<sup>81</sup> *Chp.*, 7.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-22

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

*Saccapāramita*<sup>88</sup> is given to emphasize his truthfulness. It is mentioned that he has governed the world based on truthfulness and was able to harmonize people.

The *mettā pāramita*<sup>89</sup> is presented to show the *Bodhisattvas* loving-kindness towards all beings and the *upekkhā pāramita*<sup>90</sup> to depict his equanimity. It is said that those who inflict suffering on him are equally treated just as those who refrain from such atrocities. He had a balanced and equal disposition towards all of them. Thus, the *Cariyāpitaka* has given a very vivid description of perfections completed by the *Bodhisattva*. The most important is that there are no supernormal or metaphysical elements in the explanation of his *cariyā*.

### **7.11 Depiction of the Buddha as Supreme Human Being**

Thus, the *Buddhavamsa* and *Cariyāpitaka* explain the important historical background of the Buddha in presenting his great behavior in his former births without any reference to metaphysical elements. They stand as evidence for the history of the Buddha and on the other hand, the great qualities perfected by him in the *samsāra*. *Theravāda* standpoint is that Buddhahood is a result of great human endeavor, and it has to be reached by the sacrifice of almost everything and the fulfillment of great qualities. This is a superhuman practice that should be engaged in and in the practice, one has to give away all the things including the life as well. The practice is aimed at the development of spiritual qualities and the mundane things are to be given up. Especially the foundation of Buddhist teachings such a great wisdom, compassion,

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<sup>88</sup> *Chp.*, 30.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.



going after, truthfulness, detachment etc., have to be perfected to their fruition in the process of the achievement of ultimate knowledge. However, it is obvious that every human cannot train in this way because it needs a great sacrifice to do so. Only a Supreme Human Being can fulfill the above practices and also attain the knowledge of the ultimate reality. Especially the story of *Sumedha* found in the *Buddhavaṃsa* clearly indicates that every human being cannot become the Buddha although ultimate truth can be realized by becoming *Arahath* or *Pacceka Buddha*. It mentions that even before one becomes a *Bodhisattva*, there are many special practices that have to be followed. In addition to the fulfillment of eight *Abhinīhāra* one should have pure dedication and devotion to go through the process. The *Abhinīhāra* describes one's utmost dedication towards the attainment of enlightenment. Thus, it seems that even before one becomes a *Bodhisattva*, almost all the qualities should be reflected in his character.

*Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpitaka* in *Theravāda* tradition stand as two texts in which the superhuman qualities of *Bodhisattva* have been enumerated under different themes.

The spiritual life of the Buddha and *Bodhisattva* have to be examined in terms of the foundation of *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpitaka* as well. Especially the doctrines such as doctrine of *kamma*, *samsāra*, rebirth and its causality, suffering, Noble Eightfold Path are the main themes in the above two texts though they are presented in different ways. According to the above it is obvious that *Bodhisattva* ideal in *Theravāda* tradition has not deviated from the above fundamentals of Buddhist Thought. Thus, it signifies a great human endeavor for the realization of ultimate truth for the wellbeing of all.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

In the *Theravāda* sources, the Buddha is popularly known as the *Gautama* Buddha and his historicity as a human being has been well depicted. According to the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* sources, his birth, special incidents of his life, such as his early childhood, marriage, and birth of *Rāhula*, his great renunciation, attainment of Buddhahood, and the dissemination of *dhamma*, about his disciples, followers, contemporary kings, and after forty-five years of service, his great passing away etc. have been well depicted in the *Theravāda* Buddhist sources. His birth, early childhood, marriage etc., have been sometimes highlighted with extraordinary happenings without any deification or reference to the involvement of any metaphysical universal power. The extraordinary happenings that are depicted in his early life have aimed at pointing out that he was a special human being. On the other hand, we find that he was always inquisitive about understanding the reality of life and the world. He was not satisfied with the mundane achievements and luxurious life spent as a prince that belonged to a royal family.

His achievement of the Buddhahood is none other than a purely human effort. He has achieved the Buddhahood due to his devotion and dedication to find out the truth of life and the reality of the world. The Buddhahood is a complete mental transformation that is achieved due to the eradication of defilements without any trace of them. Thus, he was skillful in the realization of the true nature of the world of phenomena and facing the vicissitude of life with a well-balanced mind. Gautama Buddha became a superhuman being in the spiritual world due to his loving-kindness,

great compassion, empathetic joy and equanimity known as *brahmavihāras*, "(sublime" or "divine abodes)."

The Buddha's practice of sublime" or "divine abodes led to the complete turning away, calmness, eradication, quieting, empirical knowledge, full self-enlightenment, and bliss of *Nibbānic* experience-specifically the Eightfold Noble Path. Thus, he always remained with these great qualities where he engaged in active goodwill towards all, helping others where necessary, the feeling of joy because others are happy, even if he did not contribute to it, even-mindedness, and serenity, treating everyone impartially. Throughout his career as a superhuman being we may find these great qualities.

It is noteworthy that the many incidents related to his ordinary way of life are mentioned in the early Buddhist discourses. *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* is full of such incidents of his life. For instance, *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* gives a detailed account of his old age and the incidents that occurred before his great passing away. All these have a historical and authentic significance of the life of Buddha.

Although he was a superhuman being with extraordinary human qualities, he was also subject to worldly happenings that any has to face such as old age, sickness passing away and also a change of circumstances or fortune, typically one that is unwelcome or unpleasant. But such could not make any change as he had a well-balanced mind. It is evident that the incomparable achievement reached by himself after abandoning the extreme paths of mental purification led to the glorification of him with many epithets and attributions in many schools of Buddhist thought. Nonetheless, Sri Lankan *Theravāda* school of Buddhist thought preferred to glorify him as a super

unique human being based on his mental achievements. The special physical features that are depicted in some discourses are due to the influence of then *Brāhmaṇa* tradition and they do not make a god or messenger as we well but add special physical characteristics to his unique personality.

His experiences as well his understanding of the world of phenomena which is basically based on the Three Characteristics is a far-reaching and challenging philosophy in the history of Indian thought. As a superhuman being, he gave a new dimension to the then existing beliefs, practices and philosophies of the universe and life. All sorts of theistic terminologies that were in vogue at that time received new interpretations in his teachings. Furthermore, his teachings on society, its evolution and formation of social intuitions and his admonitions to the kings and ministers clearly indicates that he was a social reformer of profound wisdom and great compassion.

The philosophical and social view of the *Gautama* Buddha is well reflected in the discourses, and he had farsighted understanding of the human issues, their nature and have provided practical and practicable solutions to those issues. Without reference to any metaphysical entity either macrocosmic or microcosmic he was able to point out the causality of human suffering and nature of phenomenal world. The social issues such as economic, political, and cultural and religious have well been explained based on moral principles of the individual.

The gradual evolution of the concept of Buddha and the *Bodhisattva* ideal is found without reference to many metaphysical supernormal powers and an attempt has been made to depict his unique superhuman qualities. The peak of the development of specially the *Bodhisattva* concept with its ten perfections can be found in the *Jātakapāli*

and *Jātaka* commentaries. The *Buddhavaṃsa* and *Cariyāpitaka*. Although there is an adoration, it reflects his super human qualities and not any metaphysical power.

Lineage of Buddhas clearly indicates that he was not a messenger of any metaphysical power, or he did not possess such powers at all. Whatever he had achieved was a result of the eradication of defilements that led to a cosmo-centric view of the world.

Our study the Buddha's lineage, birth, ascetic life, enlightenment, especial happenings of his life, doctrine, and the way he passed away as presented in the Sri Lankan *Theravāda* Buddhist literature provide the evidence for the assumption of the non-deification of the *Gautama* Buddha. Ascetic *Siddhārtha* who attained *Nibbāna* at the age of thirty-five preached a doctrine based on soullessness. He is found in the early *Theravāda* canonical literature as a person of great wisdom and great compassion with less adoration of his extensive and colorful physical description. It is his great wisdom (*mahāpaññā*) and great compassion (*mahākarunā*) that made him a superhuman being in early canonical Buddhist literature.

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