



**THE BUDDHA-NATURE IN THERAVĀDA  
BUDDHISM AND MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

Bhikkhunī: Nguyen Thi Kim Tuyen  
(Thich Nu Hoa Duc)

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirement for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Buddhist Studies)

Graduate School  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University  
Ayutthaya, Thailand

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The Graduate School of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University has approved this dissertation entitled, “The Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism: A Comparative Study” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Buddhist Studies.

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## **Abstract**

This research is a qualitative study based on the Buddhist concept of Buddha-nature and focused on Theravāda and Mahāyāna Sūtras with three main objectives: 1) to study the Concept of Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism, 2) to study the Concept of Buddha-Nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism, and 3) to compare the Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

The study that addressed the first objective established the concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism. Although the concept of Buddha-nature appears in some other terms in short paragraphs of Theravāda Sūtras as “luminous mind”, “emptiness” and “purity”, those concepts emphasize the liberation of mind as the Buddha experienced.

The study which addressed the second objective found that the concept of Buddha-nature with the terms such as “luminous mind”, “emptiness”, “purity” in Theravāda Buddhism are accepted and deployed widely in different forms by Mahāyāna Buddhism. All Mahāyāna Sūtras or the content of the whole Sūtras are surrounded by the concept of Buddha-nature. The Zen sect, Pure Land School aims at developing this concept through practice and experience to realize it. It is a core concept; it is the ultimate enlightenment and is the ultimate goal of practice in Mahāyāna Buddhism. The third objective revealed the similarities about pure mind, absolute tranquil essence, the ultimate reality (paramattha-sacca) of the concept of Buddha nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism and differences about realizing Buddha nature, the gradual enlightenment and sudden enlightenment, all beings have Buddha nature and propagating Buddha Nature of the two traditions.

Generally the essential Buddhism of both Theravāda and Mahāyāna is to practice to achieve a pure state of mind, to live with Buddha-nature so all defilements are absent, suffering ceases and the practitioner still lives in life but realizes all things for what they really are in the present reality.

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Bhikkhunī Nguyen Thi Kim Tuyen

July 15, 2016

## List of Abbreviations

### Primary Sources

A	Āṅguttara Nikāya (PTS edition page number).
D	Dīgha Nikāya
M	Majjhima Nikāya
S	Saṃyutta Nikāya

### Other Abbreviations

BPS	Buddhist Publication Society
CA:	California
CBETA	Taishō Tripitaka, Chinese Electronic Tripitaka Collection. Version June 2016.
Dhp.	Dhammapada
ed (s).	Edited (s) by
etc.	others
Ibid.	Ibiden/in the same book
MCU	Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University
Ms	Miss
NY	New York
op.cit.	opere citato/ as referred
p (p)	page (s)
Ph.D	Doctor of Philosophy
PTS	Pāli Text Society
tr.	Translated
USA	United States of America
vol(s)	volume(s)



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# Chapter I

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Significance of the Problems

Theravāda and Mahāyāna are two branches of Buddhism. Theravāda is called the main stream of Buddhism and was spread to countries like Sri Lanka and others in Southeast Asia.<sup>1</sup> Buddhist Councils were set up in order to advance propagation of the dharma to correspond with conditions of different environments as well as habits and customs of every country, or according to the skillful means to convert every person. From that time Mahāyāna arose in many countries in Northern India and Central Asia.<sup>2</sup> Hence there are different and similar points between the two schools. Although Buddhism is divided into two branches, Theravāda and Mahāyāna, they are considered as two sides of a coin, indispensable in practice and spreading the dharma. However the training of the two schools is different, nevertheless they are still based on morality, concentration and wisdom and their final goal is to convert body and mind, attain a purified mind, a radiant mind and liberation from

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<sup>1</sup> Choong Mun-keat, **The Fundamental Teachings of Early Buddhism: A Comparative Study based on the Sutranga portion of the Pali Saṃyutta-Nikāya and the Chinese Saṃyuttatagama**, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1.

suffering and reach Nibbāna. To research the Buddha-nature means to understand the purified mind or the realm of Purity, the truth in Theravāda and Mahāyāna. This is also the most profound doctrine of the two traditions of Buddhism.

The Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism is different in words and practices. Actually in Theravāda there is neither the concept of Buddha-nature nor the concept that sentient beings have Buddha-nature but the Theravāda school accepts purified mind, luminous mind without affliction, defilement and free from suffering. According to Pāli, “pabhassara” is used to describe the mind (citta) that has attained concentration (samādhi) and is considered as deep samādhi when attaining the intrinsic luminosity of the mind. The mind freed from the five hindrances is luminous (pabhassara).<sup>3</sup> An empty, luminous and infinite potential mind can be understood as having five basic qualities: emptiness, mobility, clarity, continuity and stability.<sup>4</sup>

Practice in the Theravāda school goes through four stages: attainment of Arahant is described as luminous and is considered as the highest realm of Theravāda Buddhism. Pratyeka Buddha (Sanskrit) is an ‘Independently Enlightened One’ which is a term for an Arahant who attains enlightenment through his own efforts or has realized Nibbāna. In the earliest Buddhist literature the Buddha is portrayed in two aspects: the

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<sup>3</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.), (b) **The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), p. 1598.

<sup>4</sup> Kalu Rinpoche, **Luminous Mind: The Way of The Buddha**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997), p. 67.

human and the superhuman or supernormal.<sup>5</sup> The Buddha had thirty two physical marks of a great man (mahapurisa) with eight qualities. The two body theory of the rupakāya and the dharmakāya are mentioned in the Saṃyuttaniikāya.<sup>6</sup> Theravāda retained this concept of the dhammakāya until the time of Buddhaghosa.<sup>7</sup> Dharmakāya is true body, reality body or absolute body. The term dharmakāya is used in various places in the earliest strata of Buddhist literature as practice for realizing ultimate reality. According to the commentary it is Freedom from Desire, absolute deliverance from all future rebirth, old age, disease and death, from all suffering and misery.<sup>8</sup> Buddhist Nirvāṇa assumes the individual overcomes desire, hate and delusion i.e. the three poisons and is no longer subject to the dictates of karma. This formulation is found throughout the Pali scriptures<sup>9</sup> e.g. the Majjhima Nikāya mentions how the destruction of the five lower fetters are due to reappear spontaneously in the Pure Abodes and there attain final Nibbāna without ever returning from that world.<sup>10</sup> In Nibbāna the illumined mind is freed.<sup>11</sup> The Nirvāṇa of the

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<sup>5</sup> Guang Xing, **The Concept of the Buddha in Early Buddhism: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikaya Theory**, (NY: Routledge Curzon, 2005), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Fitzpatrick Crangle, **The Origin and Development of Early Indian Contemplative Practices**, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1994), p. 144.

<sup>9</sup> Edward A. Irons, **Encyclopedia of Buddhism**, (NY: Facts On File, Inc., 2008), p. 370.

<sup>10</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.), and (tr.) **The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha (Majjhima Nikāya)**, (Kandy: BPS, 1995), p. 942.

<sup>11</sup> Maurice Walshe, (tr.) **The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīgha Nikāya**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995), p. 271.

Arhats and Pratyekabuddhas is merely fractional because it remains a state lacking the totality, immeasurable purity and inconceivable merit.<sup>12</sup>

Different from Theravāda, Mahāyāna tradition accepts and dignifies the concept of Buddha-nature and is the most important concept in the Mahāyāna school. Mahāyāna develops the dharmakāya concept through its identification with a number of key terms which they introduced such as Tathāta, Tathāgatagarbha and Buddhadhātu.<sup>13</sup> The Sanskrit word Tathāgatagarbha is a compound of two terms, tathāgata and garbha. The Tathāgatagarbha as the innate essence, the absolutely pure mind of sentient beings.<sup>14</sup> Scholars now generally agree that the Sanskrit equivalent is Buddhadhātu i.e. 1) the nature (dhatu = dharmatā) of the Buddha and thus equivalent to the term dharmakāya and 2) the cause (dhatu= hetu) of the Buddha.<sup>15</sup>

The Buddha-nature is permanent<sup>16</sup> and Buddha-nature is all existence. Buddha nature is not only in sentient beings but also in insentient beings. All human beings have Buddha-nature and thus are assured the realization of Buddhahood. Not only human beings but all beings born and reborn in the six destinies of hells, hungry ghosts,

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<sup>12</sup> Brian Edward Brown, **The Buddha Nature: A Study of The Tathāgatagarbha And Ālayavijñāna**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1991), p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Sallie B. King, (c) **Buddha Nature**, (Albany: State University of NY, 1991), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, Brian Edward, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Crangle, Edward Fitzpatrick, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>16</sup> Joan Stambaugh, **Impermanence is Buddha Nature: Dogen's Understanding of Temporarily**, (Usa: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), p. 21.



animals, fighting demons, human beings and gods,<sup>17</sup> whole-being is Buddha-nature,<sup>18</sup> at a suitable time so inside and outside of sentient being becomes Buddha-nature totally.<sup>19</sup>

The way of cultivation of the Mahāyāna school for the benefit of human beings emphasizes the Bodhi mind and practice of a Bodhisattva path to attain Enlightenment and liberation. All sentient beings can completely liberate themselves in the grimy world like a lotus flower in troubled water and dirty mud. Accordingly He appeared in the world for one great reason:<sup>20</sup> to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings, to sanction them to attain purity, to live in pure mind. The Buddha wanted to save human beings and He depended on their level to preach the Dharma and according to sickness He gave medicine and used many expedient examples and skillful means to lead human beings across the sea of suffering to reach the shore of Nibbāna.

With boundless compassion He saw human beings diving into the sea of the cycle of birth and death, running after pleasures of form, sound, smell, flavor, touch, dharma.<sup>21</sup> He spread His heart to use any means for guiding human beings to leave the burning house of greed, hatred and delusion; like a householder who lied in order that his children get out of the burning house. He lied telling them there were many kinds of

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<sup>17</sup> King, Sallie B., (c), *op.cit.*, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> Masao Abe, **A Study of Dōgen: His Philosophy and Religion**. (ed.) Steven Heine, (Albany: Suny Press, 1992), p. 46.

<sup>19</sup> Carl Olson, **Original Buddhist Source: a Reader**, (Rutgers University Press, 2005), p. 342.

<sup>20</sup> Burton Watson, (tr.) **The Lotus Sutra**, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 138.

beautiful and precious toys outside.<sup>22</sup> Buddha meant to show human beings the truth of nature so they could realize and live in their own Buddha nature. Everybody who lives in Buddha-nature or lives in his own pure mind, Bodhi mind in this grimy world will be transformed into a pure land and greed, hatred and delusions will be absent and the cloud of ignorance will be swept away by the wind and a profound, ingenious moon will appear shining brightly on the spaces. If we behave with Buddha-nature there will be no killing, stealing, slyness, lying, swindling, envy and hatred that lead to massacres or people killing each other. Living in Buddha nature is to live with morality, concentration and wisdom, liberation and liberation of wisdom. Human beings can live as the Buddha lived and do what the Buddha did and then Buddha-nature will appear and they will also be Buddhas in the present.

On the other hand Mahāyāna school practices to realize the truth, e.g. in the Nīkāya: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self,’<sup>23</sup> no ego or without ego’. Mahāyāna Buddhism terms this concept śūnya (empty) or śūnyatā (emptiness). Mahāyāna clarified the concept of non-self and emptiness by teaching two kinds i.e. the non-self of sentient beings (pudgala-nairātmya), the emptiness of the self and the non-self of the dharmas (dharma-nairātmya), the emptiness of the dharmas. The

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<sup>22</sup> Tsugunari Kubo and Akira Yuyama, (tr.) **The Lotus Sutra**, (California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007), p. 57.

<sup>23</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi (tr.), (a) **The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Saṃyutta Nīkāya**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), p. 616.

substance of all dharmas is empty and therefore the essence of the sentient and the insentient are one.<sup>24</sup>

The two schools use the mind for cultivation. According to Theravāda Buddha-nature is the purified mind, luminous mind. Depending on level of purity of mind is called Jhanacitta. The fourth Jhana is the highest level and is called supreme Enlightenment. If training in accordance with the Buddha-dharma one attains the Buddha-way with effort, zealously devoted to the highest goal.<sup>25</sup> One cannot become a Buddha without attaining “The realm of the Tathāgatas” and “The most perfect enlightenment.”<sup>26</sup> Mahāyāna dignifies Buddha-nature as potential for enlightenment through the way of practice by cultivation of six virtues of perfection (Paramitas) thus realizing that the Buddha-nature is in one’s own self. In other words, the Buddha introduced the “great vehicle”<sup>27</sup> of perfect Enlightenment to all human beings with a state of being equal to his own.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, any way of practice in both traditions has the purpose to live with a purified mind.

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<sup>24</sup> Shuman Chen, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, Chinese Tiantai Doctrine on Insentient Things’ Buddha-Nature, (Taipei: Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2011), p. 78.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>26</sup> Ming-WoodLiu, **The Doctrine of the Buddha-Nature in the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa-Sutrā**, from *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, (USA: University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1982), p. 67.

<sup>27</sup> A form of Buddhism that developed in India around 100 BCE and which exalts as its religious ideal the bodhisattva, great beings who aspire to enlightenment on behalf of all sentient beings. Kubo, Tsugunari and Akira Yuyama, (tr.) *op.cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>28</sup> Harvey Kraft, **Secrets of the Lotus Sutra: Legacy of Perfect Enlightenment, Book One**, (EverLife: EveLife Buddhist Education Center, 1998), p. 6.

Many Theravāda and Mahāyāna doctrines from the distant past have been researched by scholars who analyzed them in detail. The doctrine of Buddha-nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism has been developed widely by researchers. However, comparisons of Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions are not found because the Theravāda school only emphasizes the pure mind. This is the key the researcher can use to make a comparison through words to explain and comment on excerpts from The Three Baskets (The Pali Canon) to point out the luminous mind in Theravāda doctrine. Buddha-nature is a core doctrine in Mahāyāna sutras.

The aim and significance of the research are to understand Buddha-nature in the two schools and most importantly to compare Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. It will prove that this is a fresh and important and indispensable study resulting in a deep understanding of luminous mind in the two traditions of Buddhism.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Research**

1.2.1 To study the Concept of Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism.

1.2.2 To study the Concept of Buddha-Nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

1.2.3 To compare the Buddha-Nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism and Theravāda Buddhism.

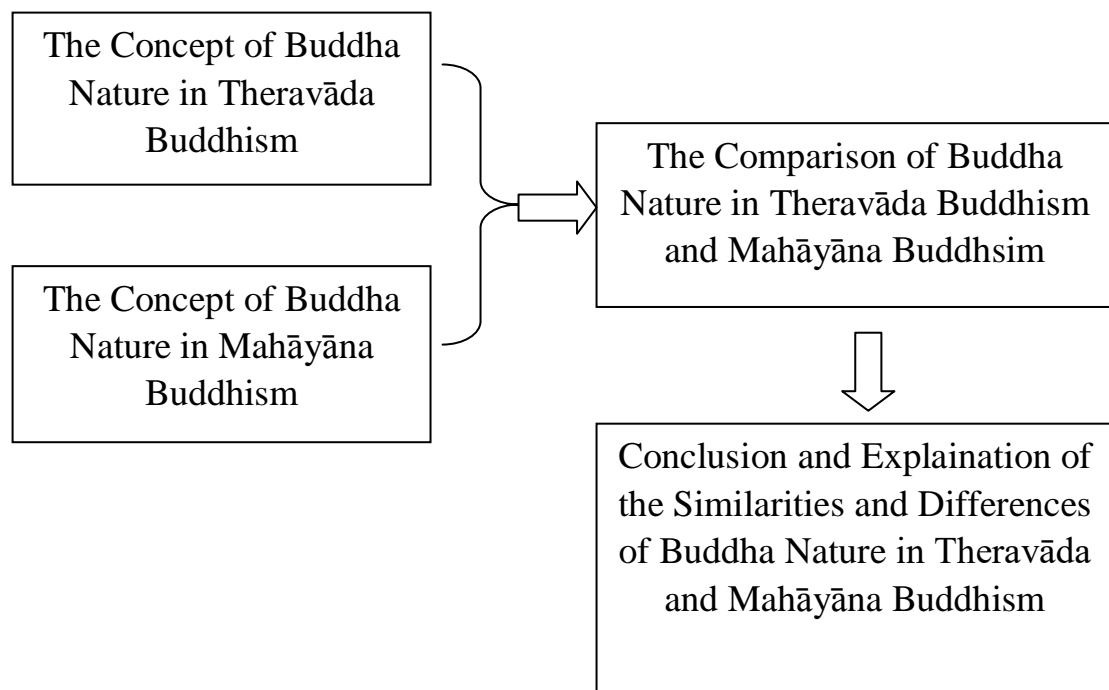
### 1.3 Statements of the Problems

1.3.1 What is the Concept of Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism?

1.3.2 What is the Concept of Buddha-Nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism?

1.3.3 What are the Comparisons of the Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism?

### 1.4 Conceptual Framework and Research Process



## 1.5 Definitions of the Terms Used in the Research

**Buddha-Nature:** refers the seed leading to enlightenment, is the original nature of all people, is the foundation, the path and the fruition. The following terms refer to the same thing: Self Nature, True Nature, Original Nature, Dharma Nature, True Mark, True Mind, True Emptiness, True Thusness, Dharma Body.

**Theravāda:** means school of the elder monks, is a branch of Buddhism that uses the Buddha's teaching from the Tipitaka or Pali Canon as Dīgha-nikāya, Majjhima-nikāya, Aṅguttara-nikāya, Saṃyutta Nikāya to reveal the pure mind of persons, and show the dwelling of emptiness of the great Ones.

**Mahāyāna:** means Great Vehicle, is one of two main branches of Buddhism, and it refers to the path of the Bodhisattva seeking complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Mahāyāna Buddhism spread from India to various other Asian countries, about the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, Mahāyāna Buddhism appeared and developed in many centuries later. Especially in five sūtras namely: the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, the Sri-Mālā Sūtra, the Lankāvatāra Sūtra, the Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra, the Lotus Sūtra.

**Dharmakāya:** means the true body, the reality body, or the absolute body and is one of the three bodies of the Buddha as appears in early Buddhism.

**Bodhicitta:** means the awakening mind or the mind of enlightenment.

## 1.6 Review of Related Literature and Research

1.6.1 Douglas S. Duckworth, “**Mipam on Buddha-Nature: The Ground of the Nyingma Tradition**”, Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2008.

In this book the author discusses Mipam’s views of Buddha-nature and uses clear metaphors describing Buddha-nature in the Nyingma tradition of Tibet, e.g. Buddha-nature as the Unity of Appearance and Emptiness, Buddha-nature as the Definitive Meaning, Buddha-nature as Heritage, Buddha-nature as the Ground. He investigates to be clear about Buddha-nature and differences between Sūtra and Mantra. The author commented that Mipam has incorporated an extraordinary wide range of discourses to make a systematic interpretation of Buddhist doctrine.<sup>29</sup> Hence Buddha nature’s aspect was analysed in detail and in different ways.

1.6.2 Kim, Young-Ho, “**Tao-sheng’s Commentary on the Lotus Sutra: A Study and Translation**”, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990.

A part of this book’s focus is on the idea of the Lotus Sutra that the three vehicles do not exist; in reality there is only One Vehicle. The theme of Three in One appears as the topic of the initial eleven chapters (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18 and 22). They are the key chapters in Tao-sheng’s view. The limited capacities of human beings forced the Buddha

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<sup>29</sup> Douglas S. Duckworth, **Mipam on Buddha-Nature: The Ground of the Nyingma Tradition**, (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), p. vi.

to think of a method that would attract them on to the path to enlightenment because a sentient being at the first stage of the process is unable to comprehend the ultimate reality represented by the One Vehicle.<sup>30</sup>

1.6.3 Sallie B. King, “**Buddha Nature**”, Albany: State University of New York, 1991.

In this book the author mentions the history of Buddha-nature as the concept of Buddha-nature and discusses that it is not only human beings but all beings born and reborn in the six destinies—hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, fighting demons, human beings and gods are promised that Buddhahood awaits them.<sup>31</sup> In addition the author analysed and discussed Buddha-Nature as the practice of Buddhism.<sup>32</sup>

1.6.4 Chih-mien Adrian Tseng, “Buddha-Nature and Dao-Nature of Medieval China: A Comparison of the Concepts of Buddha-Nature and Dao-Nature of Medieval China”, **PhD. Thesis**, McMaster University July 2014.

A small part of this book analysed the idea in medieval Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism that insentient things are able to possess Buddha-nature. In Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism the concept of Buddha-nature was originally defined as a potential possessed by all sentient beings. This Buddha-nature enabled them to achieve Buddhahood and insentient

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<sup>30</sup> Kim, Young-Ho, **Tao-sheng’s Commentary on the Lotus Sutra: A Study and Translation**, (NY: State University of NY Press, 1990), p. 124.

<sup>31</sup> King, Sallie B., (c), *op.cit.*, p.1.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57.



things were also able to possess Buddha-nature<sup>33</sup> An analyses, an examination of Zhanran's (湛然) and discussion of Buddha-nature<sup>34</sup> cleared up this concept.

1.6.5 Gampopa, **The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, The Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Noble Teachings**, translated by Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, edited by Ani K. Trinlay Chodron, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998.

Part one of this book mentions the Buddha-nature which is the primary basis of attaining Buddhahood<sup>35</sup> and how many problems of suffering and the ways to solve them by understanding cause and effect; karma. At the same time the author also mentions many disciplines for living with the Bodhi mind i.e. awareness, perfecting tolerance, perseverance, moral ethics, attaining concentration and achieving Buddhahood.

1.6.6 Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche, **Opening to Our Primordial Nature**, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2006.

In this book the author mentions the Bodhi mind; the practice of compassion to open the mind to tolerate and forgive others. Compassion

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<sup>33</sup> Chih-mien adrian tseng, Buddha-Nature and Dao-Nature of Medieval China: A Comparison of the Concepts of Buddha-Nature and Dao-Nature of Medieval China, **PhD. Thesis**, McMaster University, July 2014, p. iii.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>35</sup> Gampopa, Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, (tr.) **The Jewel Ornament of Liberation, The Wish-fulfilling Gem of the Noble Teachings**, (ed.) Anik. Trinlay Chodron, (NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998), p. 18.

is the power to convert bad people to be good people. This is the way the Buddha experienced during the time he practiced Bodhisattva's way to reach true enlightenment. Practicing compassion will bring about the recognition of emptiness as the true nature of the mind.<sup>36</sup>

1.6.7 Harvey Kraft, **Legacy of Perfect Enlightenment, Secrets of the Lotus Sutra**, EverLife: Buddhist Education Center, 2001.

In Volume One of this book the author writes about the historical Buddha: He was born and grew up, found the true dharma and attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. Moreover, through the Lotus Sutra as well as the teaching of Buddhas, the author points out a new way of the truth of the reality of all existence. But it is not easy for everybody to comprehend this teaching because the Buddha taught that there was only one vehicle instead of three and many people in the assembly doubted and left. The Lotus Sutra itself embodied the secret means for actualizing enlightenment, the "One direct vehicle of Buddhahood" with which all Buddhas revealed their true selves.<sup>37</sup> At the same time through discussion the Buddha revealed that He had three bodies: Manifest-Buddha, Wisdom-Buddha and Cosmic-Buddha.<sup>38</sup> The Cosmic body housed the treasure of Perfect Enlightenment.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche and Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche, **Opening to Our Primordial Nature**, (NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2006), p. 52.

<sup>37</sup> Kraft, Harvey, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 89.

1.6.8 The Venerable Khenchen Thrangu, Rinpoche, **The Uttara Tantra: A Treatise on Buddha-nature A Commentary on The Uttara Tantra Sastra of Asariga**. Delhi India, 1994.

The content of this book clearly explains ten aspects of the Buddha-nature in detail and at the same time the author describes Buddha-nature through nine specific examples so readers can understand every detail. Also, the author puts forward the importance of Buddha-nature and ways to correct mistakes because without understanding Buddha-nature it will be easy to do wrong. Moreover there are many ways to perfect enlightenment. All qualities of Buddhahood or activities of the Buddha are mentioned in detail as well.

1.6.9 Guang Xing, **The Concept of The Buddha Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikaya Theory**, NY: Routledge Curzon, 2005.

The concepts of the Buddha in early Buddhism are discussed and analyzed clearly through lively descriptions of the historical Buddha and the super Buddha<sup>40</sup> who had liberation of mind and wisdom. In addition there are many concepts of the Buddha collected from Sutras as well as from analysis of scholars and the concept of the Buddha in the early Indian Buddhist schools.

1.6.10 Dǒng Jǐng Yí, **A Study of Buddha-nature of the Master Dào shēng** (Chinese version), MA. Thesis, Hsuan-Tsang's Human Social University, 2004.

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<sup>40</sup> Xing, Guang, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

This research examines the Buddha-nature of Master Dàoshēng, the author analyzes the ideas of Master Dàoshēng who relied on the Mahāparinirvāna-Sūtra to deploy Buddha-nature through many different aspects and simultaneously he points out the method of practice to cultivate and live with one's own Buddha-nature.

The books mentioned above relate to the concept of Buddha-nature that scholars have researched, analyzed, explained and compared to the concept in other doctrines in order to find similarities and unity or Buddha Nature as researched by the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism. Hence we see that Buddha-nature appears not only in Mahāyāna Buddhism but also it is subtly hidden in other traditions with different forms and words. In addition the book, 'The Concept of The Buddha Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikaya Theory' provided the concept of Dhammakaya (another form of Buddhahood) from the origin and development of this concept. Thanks to these brilliant scholars researchers in today's world can easily understand the concept of Buddha-nature in the Buddhist tradition as well as compare the concept of Buddha nature in Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

The methodology of this research summarized in two parts: data and analysis.

The thesis will analyze the following data from primary and secondary sources.

1.7.1 Gathering data from primary sources such as Theravāda texts and Mahāyāna texts.

1.7.2 Collecting data from secondary sources such as books, letters, writings, lectures, journals, theses and on-line.

1.7.3 Analyzing the relevant concepts of Buddha-nature from books, theses and reports of Buddhism from Buddhist Scholars.

1.7.4 Drawing conclusions and suggestions for further research.

## **1.8 Advantages Expected to Obtain from the Research**

18.1 Understanding the concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism.

1.8.2 Understanding the concept of Buddha-nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

1.8.3 Clarifying the similarities and differences of Buddha-nature between Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

## **Chapter II**

### **The Concept of Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism**

What are the most profound teachings of the Buddha after Enlightenment and the Devas request he accepted preaching? What is Buddha-nature that many scholars want to research? In this chapter the researcher will examine the concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism to clarify the profound teachings of the Buddha.

#### **2.1 The Concept of the Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism**

Here in this part the researcher states the meaning of synonyms of the Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism: 1) Awakened mind, 2) Luminous mind, 3) Viññāṇa, 4) Emptiness or Void.

##### **2.1.1 The Awakened Mind**

The Buddha was a human being who was awakened:

He teaches the Dhamma for awakening. The Lord is tamed, he teaches the Dhamma for taming. The Lord is calmed, he teaches the Dhamma for calming. The Lord has crossed over, he teaches the Dhamma for crossing over. The Lord has attained Nirvāna, he teaches the Dhamma for attaining

Nirvāna.<sup>41</sup>

He taught what was needed to preach and converted beings during forty five years. His way, his experience and his thoughts are shared in the Three Buddhist Canon Baskets handed down through generations. However, he also declared that he only showed the way and taught: “You should exert yourself, Tathāgatas are only masters to show the way”<sup>42</sup> and “You should light a torch to go, light with Dharma.” Hold a torch of Dharma which can awaken suffering people from the darkness. He taught Ānanda: “You should live as an island for yourself. Be your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as your refuge, with no other refuge.”<sup>43</sup>

He taught the Dhamma for awakening all beings even while the six Sense Organs contact with the Six Objects. Dwelling in mindfulness and awareness in the four postures are the first step to enter into the tranquil world, the bright and pure world of the inner mind. When a practitioner keeps isolated to meditate he will gradually purify the inner mind to manifest the luminous mind from attainment in absorption and the ever-shining mind at the final stage of the four jhāna. The highest result as aimed at by Theravāda tradition is called an Arahant. The Buddha was called this title in Dīgha Nikāya:

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<sup>41</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>42</sup> K.R. Norman, (tr.) **The Word of the Doctrine (Dhammapada)**. (Oxford: PTS, 1997), p. 41.

<sup>43</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

The Blessed Lord is an Arahant, a fully-enlightened Buddha, perfected in knowledge and conduct, a Well-Farer, Knower of the worlds, unequalled Trainer of men to be trained, Teacher of gods and humans, a Buddha, a Blessed Lord. He proclaims this world with its gods, māras, Brahmas, the world of ascetics and Brahmins with its princes and people, having come to know it by his own knowledge. He teaches the Dhamma that is lovely in its beginning, lovely in its middle, and lovely in its ending, in the spirit and in the letter, and he displays the fully-perfected, thoroughly purified holy life. And indeed it is good to see such Arahants.<sup>44</sup>

The Buddha taught to always live in mindfulness and self-possession. He taught:

You should train thus: We will be possessed of mindfulness and full awareness. We will act in full awareness when going forward and returning; we will act in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; we will act in full awareness when flexing and extending our limbs; we will act in full awareness when wearing our robes and carrying out outer robe and bowl; we will act in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; we will act in full awareness when defecating and urinating; we will act in

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<sup>44</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 111.



full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.<sup>45</sup>

The daily life of the Buddha is evidence that we must practice and train qualities and character until we feel true peace, perfect Enlightenment and live with the True Dharma. The Buddha lived a simple life with pure and noble characteristics. He had perfect enlightenment. His mind was at perfect peace, his wisdom was perfectly aware of reality.

### **2.1.2 The Luminous Mind (*Pabhassara Citta*)**

The luminous mind is a conscious mind to recognize all things, all phenomena as they really are and as they happen according to the natural law of the universe: formation, stability, dissolution and void. And with beings: birth, stability, change and death. But the true mind is still permanent, still available, with no attachment; the awakened mind sees and hears but it is not attracted to outside things.

The Buddha realized the bright mind or the Buddha-nature under the Bodhi tree. He propagated Dhamma to show this mind. He taught the method to lift the veil of ignorance, affliction and craving to eliminate the stains of mind so the moon's mind appeared to attain the liberation of mind, wisdom of mind of Arahant.<sup>46</sup> Consequently the realization of the shining mind or the Buddha-nature of the Buddha and Arahants are the same. Although the enlightened mind is equal the Buddha is the person

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<sup>45</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, pp. 365-366.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p. 120.

who discovered the way of enlightenment and his virtues and wisdom also prevail, manifesting the full thirty two great features and eighty splendors of a super human.

### 2.1.3 Viññāṇa (Consciousness)

The Buddha-nature is also understood as pure Viññāṇa (consciousness, discriminative consciousness, rebirth consciousness, cognition, intellect, intellection, and intelligence) as discriminating awareness,<sup>47</sup> as the mind but mind in itself is the essence of what really is. In the Nikāya Sūtras the Buddha always emphasized three karmas to transform but the mind or consciousness is the origin, is a basis to be happy or receive suffering; Mind (consciousness) intends to do good or evil and it follows that it produces a bad or good result.

The mind is an important term in Buddhist text because for 45 years of conversion and rescue of beings the Buddha aimed at conversion of the mind. To understand the mind there are two verses at the beginning of Dhammapada mentioning the mind: all things originate from the mind. In the Dharmapada the Buddha taught:

1) Mental phenomena are preceded by mind, have mind as their leader, and are made by mind. If one acts or speaks with an evil mind, from that sorrow follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox.

*(Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā-mano seṭṭhā manomayā*

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<sup>47</sup> Frank J. Hoffman, **Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987), p. 48.

*Manasā ce paduṭṭhena-bhacati vā karoti vā*

*Tato nam dukkhamanveti-cakkam va vahato padam)*

2) Mental phenomena are preceded by mind, have mind as their leader, and are made by mind. If one acts or speaks with a pure mind, from that happiness follows him, like a shadow not going away.<sup>48</sup>

*(Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā-mano seṭṭhā manomayā*

*Manasā ce pasannena- bhāsati vā karoti vā*

*Tato nam sukhamanveti- chāyāva anapayinī)*

Three karmas of body, speech and mind that are pure or impure are produced by the mind. If the mind is defiled, action or speech will be defiled too. And the mistakes of three karmas will lead to suffering in the present and future and continuing in the cycle of birth and death. On the contrary, when the three are purified this will be the cause of liberation and happiness in the present and future. This is the teaching as well as the purpose of the Buddha's appearance as expressed through verses:

To do good.

To shun evil.

To purify the mind.

This is the teaching of the Buddhas.<sup>49</sup>

To win the battle in the mind is harder than to win over thousands of enemies. So in the *Dhammapada* 103 the Buddha taught: One who

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<sup>48</sup> Dhp.1,2; Norman, K.R., *op.cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Bhikkhu Ananda, **Theravāda and Zen**, (Colombo: M.D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., 1962), p. 11.

conquers thousands of enemies is not greater than self-conquest, self-conquest is a great glorious feat,<sup>50</sup> self-conquest means to control one's action, speech and thought. One who is attacked, offended, vilified, libeled, criticized, defamed, vituperated from an evil person but who is still calm, satisfied, without pain, suffering, anger and feud. To win over oneself is the conquest of desire, hatred and delusion that arise and we recognize them but do not follow them. This is the Buddha's mind, luminous mind, the Buddha-nature appears.

The Greater Series of Questions and Answers (*Mahāvedalla sūta*) mentions:

Friend, what can be known by purified mind-consciousness released from the five faculties?

Friend, by purified mind-consciousness released from the five faculties the base of infinite space can be known thus: 'Space is infinite'; the base of infinite consciousness can be known thus: 'Consciousness is infinite'; and the base of nothingness can be known thus: 'There is nothing.'<sup>51</sup>

Friend, with the fading away of ignorance, with the arising of true knowledge, and with the cessation of craving, renewal of being in the future is not generated.<sup>52</sup>

However, we should know how to observe so that the mind is not attracted even to the present things so Buddha taught as follows:

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<sup>50</sup> Dh. 103; Norman, K.R., *op.cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>51</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 389.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p. 390.

And how, bhikkhus, is one invincible in regard to presently arisen states? Here, bhikkhus, a well-taught noble disciple, who has regard for noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, who has regard for true men and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma, does not regard material form as self, or self as possessed of material form, or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He does not regard feeling as self... perception as self... formations as self... consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how one is invincible in regard to presently arisen states.<sup>53</sup>

Observing until the deliverance of mind that is the goal of this holy life, its heartwood and its end.<sup>54</sup>

The Buddha taught in Mahākaccāna and One Fortunate Attachment 132 (*Mahākaccānabhaddekaratta sūtta*) that we need to practice the method of being present:

Let not a person revive the past, or on the future build his hopes, for the past has been left behind, and the future has not been reached, instead with insight let him see, each presently arisen state, let him know that and be sure of it, invincibly, unshakably.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1040-1041.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1045.

We should observe this until the deliverance of mind. That is the goal of this holy life which abides in absolute emptiness as Buddhas and Arahants do and escape Samsara forever.

To sum up, the Buddha-nature is a luminous mind, it is emptiness, consciousness and free from passions (*Ni-klesa*) and attachment from “my, mine, myself”. That mind only observes all physical and mental phenomena to happen as they really are through conscious thought. Therefore it is to dwell in absolute emptiness, to penetrate the state of Nibbāna and escape Samsara forever.

#### **2.1.4 Emptiness or Void (*suññatā*)**

The Buddha-nature is also understood by a different word: “emptiness”. Emptiness is a path to understand reality; the emptiness is not empty but contains everything. The emptiness is the reality that the existing thing is operating, happening through time. The emptiness is as a form of ultimate consciousness without suffering and neither afflictions nor the concept of my, mine, myself. When the mind clearly realizes all are empty, nothing is myself, all are from a condition for harmony then it is understood that ‘from the arising of this, that arises, from the ceasing of this, that ceases’. Thus our mind dwells in emptiness as the Buddha attained the realm of absolute emptiness and dwelled in that emptiness as the Shorter Discourse on Voidness (*Cūlasuññata sūtta*) says:

Certainly, Ānanda, you heard that correctly, learned that correctly, attended to that correctly, remembered that

correctly. As formerly, Ananda, so now too I often abide in voidness.<sup>56</sup>

Thus he regards it as void of what is not there but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: ‘This is present.’ Thus Ananda, this is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.<sup>57</sup>

Ananda, whatever recluses and Brahmins in the past entered upon and abided in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all entered upon and abided in this same pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness. Whatever recluses and Brahmins in the future will enter upon and abide in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all will enter upon and abide in this same pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness. Whatever recluses and Brahmins in the present enter upon and abide in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness, all enter upon and abide in this same pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness. Therefore Ananda, you should train thus: We will enter upon and abide in pure, supreme, unsurpassed voidness.<sup>58</sup>

The Buddha abided in the emptiness meaning He lived with the Buddha-nature and penetrated Nirvana, dwelled in Nirvana a stage without rebirth. A practitioner who cultivates to attain this stage should train in the method of insight meditation to realize impermanence, no-self of phenomena and people, observing all things as they really are; that

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<sup>56</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 965.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p. 967.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 970.

they are happening and changing all the time. So gradually he gets rid of the concept of attachment, distinction, dwelling in the emptiness as that of the Buddha.

## **2.2. The Ideal of Practice of Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Tradition**

All the people following the Theravāda Buddhist tradition consider the Arahat ideal as the culmination of the practice. In the Buddha's time countless people after hearing the Dhamma had sudden Enlightenment and eliminated evil karma forever, liberated from blemishes, without clinging or grasping and attained Arhatship e.g. In the Sermon of Emergency the Buddha taught the Venerable Bāhiya: In seeing, we only see, in hearing, we only hear, in feeling, we only feel...<sup>59</sup>

Moreover, in the method of gradual cultivation, of gradual awakening, one needs to spend four stages to destroy all chains to attain Arahantship. One who attains one of four Sainthoods will be considered as a sainted returnable person. The four degrees of saintliness are as follows:

### **Stream-enterer (*Sotāpatti*)**

This stage also is called Stream-entering; the first stage where one begins to enter the Holy Stream. The condition to enter this holy Stream

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<sup>59</sup> Bāhiya Sutta: Bāhiya” (U. 1.10), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. Access to Insight (Legacy Edition), 3 September 2012, <<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/ud/ud.1.10.than.html>>, viewed on October 06, 2015.



is to eliminate three fetters: Illusion of the body, Upholding forbidden religious practices and Doubt.

The personality view is the seeing and understanding of the ego-body through questions and answers between the Buddha and a bhikkhu about the personality view in the *Mahāpunnaṃ Sūta* (The Greater Discourse on the Full-moon Night):

Venerable sir, how does personality view come to be?

Here, bhikkhu, an untaught ordinary person, who has no regard for and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, who has no regard for true men and is unskilled and undisciplined in their Dhamma, regards material form as self, or self as possessed of material form, or material form as in self, or self as in material form. He regards feeling as self...perception as self...formations as self...consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. That is how personality view comes to be.<sup>60</sup>

The personality view is divided into three cases as follows:

1. The Extreme View is to see just one side about the limited body and seeing this body will be lost forever after death is called the annihilation-view (p: *ucchedaditthi*), or, on the contrary, seeing the soul exists after death is called the permanence view. The Buddha taught we should go beyond clinging to the permanence view and clinging to

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<sup>60</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi (ed.), and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 889.

annihilation-view and to give up the two extreme thoughts, practice the middle way, realize emptiness of all things in the universe, that all is formed by Causes and Conditions and that Suffering (*Dukkha*) arises from ignorance. In *Samyutta sūta* the Buddha taught:

With ignorance as condition, volitional formations come to be, with volitional formations as condition, consciousness; with consciousness as condition, name-and-form; with name-and-form as condition, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as condition, contact; with contact as condition, feeling; with feeling as condition, craving; with craving as condition, clinging; with clinging as condition, existence; with existence as condition, birth; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair arise. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is called dependent origination.’

But with the dispassion and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations, with the cessation of volitional formations, cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, cessation of name-and-form; with the cessation of name-and-form, cessation of the six sense bases; with the cessation of the six sense bases, cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact, cessation of feeling; with the cessation of feeling, cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving, cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging, cessation of existence; with the cessation of existence, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain,

displeasure, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.<sup>61</sup>

2. The Wrong View (*micchā-ditṭhi*) is to see wrongly and to understand wrongly that people and the universe are built and organized by a Creator and this body exists forever. Or a person with a wrong view does not see the nature of life is suffering, impermanence, no-self but thinks it is joy, permanence and sovereignty. He does not understand the cause and effect so he makes many mistakes. All wrong intentions, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration arise from this wrong view as follows:

Bhikkhus, for a person of wrong view, whatever bodily kamma, verbal kamma, and mental kamma he instigates and undertakes in accordance with that view, and whatever his volition, yearning, inclination, and volitional activities, all lead to what is unwished for, undesired, and disagreeable, to harm and suffering. For what reason? Because the view is bad.

Suppose, bhikkhus, a seed of neem, bitter cucumber, or bitter were planted in moist soil. Whatever nutrients it takes up from the soil and from the water would all lead to its bitter, pungent, and disagreeable flavor. For what reason? Because the seed is bad. So too, for a person of wrong view... all lead to what is unwished for, undesired, and disagreeable, to

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<sup>61</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (tr.), (a), *op.cit*, pp. 533-534.

harm and suffering. For what reason? Because the view is bad.<sup>62</sup>

To break this wrong view the Buddha taught that all human beings are the owner of their karma, are heirs of their karma. Karma is the womb, relatives, fulcrum and Karma divides all living beings into low and high states.<sup>63</sup>

3. The right view is to see correctly; seeing this body is false, illusory, conditioned by the five aggregates (Skandhas) of bodily form, feeling, perception, mind functioning and that consciousness are impermanent, ego-less and are dominated by the law of impermanence.

According to Buddha's teachings when a practitioner destroys extreme views and wrong view and sees the body with the right view as above, they see goodness and wickedness, see cause and effect. This is one of the prerequisites to enter Sotapanna.

Upholding forbidden religious practices (*Sīlabbatupādāna*) is clinging to the practice of wrong methods leading to suffering e.g. the method of external practice: acting like a cow as Punna or like a dog as Seniya. They lived like cows and dogs and after death they were reborn as cow or dog. It was wrong to practice like that when they wanted to be reborn in heaven. Also Zoroastrianism, worship of the dragon, worship of the moon, the sun, to be happy and liberated after death all these forbidden religious practices must not be followed. Generally speaking

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<sup>62</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>63</sup> M III 203; Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu & Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 1053.

any method without the Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthāna sutta*) and the Noble Eightfold Path are considered upholding forbidden religious practices. When a practitioner comes into the Stream entry he knows which path leads to suffering and which path leads to nirvana through observing name and form (Nama rupa), realization of the truth of suffering and impermanence, causation without self-nature and no-self of things so the practitioner abandons wrong cognition about ego and practices the Noble Eightfold Path and he will escape upholding forbidden religious practices.

Doubt is hesitation, lack of confidence in the practice method when the practitioner doubts that their own-self cannot practice and reach the holy results. To give up the doubt-mind the practitioner needs to contemplate the nature of Dharma, realize the truth of suffering and the cause of suffering, the extinction of suffering and the way of extinction of suffering without doubt or hesitation about the Buddha's teachings.

When the practitioner destroys the three restraints of the personality view, upholding forbidden religious practices and doubt he enters the stream-entry as written in a paragraph in the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta: "For me, there will not be hell, not be reborn in the realms of animals, hungry ghosts, in downfall realms, evil incarnations. I am a Stream Winner certainly without falling into evil paths, and will attain Nibbāna."<sup>64</sup>

In the Buddha's time as well as monks there were many men and laywomen who gave up the three chains and attained this result. In the

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<sup>64</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 241.

Stream-entry there are at most seven rebirths then one can continue practice to attain Arahantship.

### **Once-return (*Sakadāgāmi*)**

When the practitioner attains the Stream-Entry he still continues to practice to reach Sakādagami because he is on the way of practice to reduce craving and hatred but still has subtle craving and hatred. Sakādagamiphala is the second of the four degrees of saintliness, “A person who is working for the destruction of attachment to sensual pleasure and malevolence is one working for realization of stage of a once returner.”<sup>65</sup> Attaining this result the practitioner will be reborn only one time more in heaven or among people, thereafter he will not be reborn again thus ending the cycle of birth and death by attaining Nibbāna. So this fruition is called Once-Returner.

### **Non-return (*Anagāmi*)**

The Never-Returner is the person who fulfills the full moral and the practice of concentration but has not yet completed the practice of insight.<sup>66</sup> In other words to reach this fruition the practitioner must destroy two restraints of subtle craving and hatred. This time he destroys the causes and conditions of the world without rebirth in the world again.

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<sup>65</sup> Bimala Churn Law, **Designation of Human Types: (Puggala-Paññatti)**, (Oxford: PTS, 1997), pp. 26-27.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 53.

Or in other words to reach this fruition the practitioner must destroy two bonds of subtle craving and hatred and this time he destroys causes and conditions of the world without rebirth in the world again.

In summary, the practitioner who destroys the five bonds i.e. the personality view, upholding forbidden religious practices, doubt, craving and hatred will attain the third fruit of Never-Returning.

### **Worthy One (*Arahatta*)**

When the practitioner attains the third fruit he continues to destroy the five higher fetters as the Sūta teaches: “Desire for form, desire for formlessness, pride, restlessness, ignorance. Bhikkhu, those things are the five higher bonds.”<sup>67</sup> After completion he enters into the highest fruition called Arahantship. The Arahant is the person who is dispassionate before every change and completes the practice.<sup>68</sup> Complete liberation and enlightenment are also the final purpose of the practice so the practitioner is not rolled in the roundabout of birth and death again, “Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.”<sup>69</sup> He can fly anywhere at will. When thinking of a place he immediately flies to that place without difficulty,<sup>70</sup> he can enter nibbāna any time”.

The ideal of the practitioner is to attain Sainthood like a practitioner who cultivates gradually as above, step by step passes the

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<sup>67</sup> S V 251.

<sup>68</sup> Law, Bimala Churn, *op.cit.*, pp. 47- 53.

<sup>69</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.), and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>70</sup> Doan Trung Con, **The Buddhist Philosophy** (Vietnamese version), (HaNoi: Religion Publishing House, 2014), p. 118.

levels to eradicate the bonds in order to reach Arahatsip that is Buddhahood because the Buddha had also the name Arahata. The state of the mind of Arahata as well as the state of mind of Buddhas is the mind without pollution and afflictions, dwelling alone for meditation, which is characteristic of a practitioner following this tradition.

### **2.3 The Practice Philosophy in Theravāda Tradition**

The doctrine of practice in Theravāda Buddhism was preached and taught to monks as well as to lay Buddhists but not outside the four characteristics: impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), non-ego (*anattā*) and impurity (*subham*). Those are also the methods of practicing contemplation on Four Kinds of Mindfulness which is the sole way to termination of suffering and attaining Nibbāna. A practitioner cannot lack those four characteristics and because of this importance they are always featured in Theravāda scriptures as well as Mahāyāna scriptures.

#### **The Characteristic of Impermanence**

The characteristic of impermanence is transformation, i.e. change from this state to another state. All things and phenomena in the world are impermanent including all mountains and rivers, animals, plants and trees, dust and the human body and mind are always changing.

Buddhism's focus on impermanence is to emphasize the body and mind of a person because a person is a combination of the five aggregates (*five skandhas*): the physical body of the four elements (matter aggregate) belongs to form; the spirit consists of feeling (*vedanā*), ideation (*saṃjñā*), reaction (*samskara*); consciousness (*viññāna*) belongs to Mind (*Nama*).



The five aggregates of Mind and Body (*Namarupa*) are always in a state of continuous change as a constant flowing river in human life.

The Venerable Rāhula paid homage to the Blessed One and sat down to one side. The Blessed One then said to him:

What do you think, Rāhula, is the eye permanent or impermanent?

Impermanent, venerable sir.

Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?

Suffering, venerable sir.

Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self’?

No, venerable sir.

Are forms permanent or impermanent?... Is eye consciousness... Is eye-contact... Is anything included in feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness arisen with eye-contact as condition permanent or impermanent?

Impermanent, venerable sir.<sup>71</sup>

This is analogous to a city made of bones with a plaster of flesh and blood wherein old age and death and pride and hypocrisy are deposited.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> S IV 106; Bhikkhu, Bodhi (a), *op.cit.*, p. 1195.

<sup>72</sup> Norman, K.R., *op.cit.*, p. 22.

According to the Malapariyaya Sūta (The Root of All Things) the Buddha taught his followers the root of all things using four kinds of people as examples: the uneducated ordinary person who has no knowledge of the noble One, true men, no training of dharma and has wrong understanding about the dynamics of the earth, water, fire and wind. He perceives all things from the material world that he can see, to the immaterial world that he can not see because he does not have full understanding but conceives everything to be “mine”. The Buddha taught that the origin of suffering was from ignorance, desire, attachment to self and mine: “This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my-self.”<sup>73</sup>

The disciples of higher training have better training than the first kind of person. However, he has not yet reached the goal but enjoys the supreme security from bondage and right understanding helps him look at anything as it is, he has no conception of all things to be “mine”.

The Arahant always reaches the true goal and lives a holy life, destroying taints, fetters, desire, hatred and delusion through total understanding about everything in the world and the immaterial world.

The Tathāgata who lives in liberation, in final knowledge, realizes all roots of sufferings through birth, ageing, death and to give up cravings, to put them away with his own fully enlightenment.

As a Buddhist we should practice the Buddha’s teachings in everyday life because it is very important. If we do not study, do not listen, do not understand the dharma then how to apply them to have a

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<sup>73</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 616.

good lifestyle? Because we regard everything as that of ourselves and if they are lost we will suffer pain and sorrow without understanding the dharma clearly through the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and no-self from birth, aging and death. This is the first kind of person. By practicing meditation we can observe everything in this world always changes. With time nothing exists eternally but for a short instant. Everything follows the impermanence of the law of transformation as birth, maturity, transformation and destruction. The Sūtra of the *Aṅguttara-nikāya* taught: “The last three kinds of people who have higher training in the dharma have a full understanding to realize everything is ‘not mine’ then it is very easy to give up and destroy all defilements, understanding clearly the roots of suffering, freedom in craving, hatred, delusion with a full knowledge toward liberation and attaining total enlightenment.”

In summary, the last two kinds of people have higher training in the dharma, have a full understanding to realize that everything is not “mine”. Consequently then they find it very easy to give up anything, to destroy all defilements, understand clearly the roots of suffering; they have freedom from craving, hatred and delusion with full knowledge of liberation and attaining total enlightenment.

On the other hand the Buddha explained dependent origination to show that all phenomena arise and cease through conditions. If we can understand this clearly we do not suffer loss or attachment. Only karma will be with us when we die therefore we should act carefully in body, speech and mind (Sāleyyaka and Veranjaka Sāttas) and then the good realm will welcome us.

## The Characteristic of Suffering

During forty five years of teaching the Buddha focused on a sole problem: suffering and the path to end suffering.

The Pali word for ‘suffering’ is Dukkha which is the sense of suffering, oppression, uncomfortable burning desire and restlessness. Suffering in human life is immeasurable and includes eight basic causes : suffering of birth, suffering of old age, suffering of disease, suffering of death, suffering of living with those we dislike, suffering of separation from loved ones, suffering of not being able to obtain what is desired; all suffering is because of the burning intensity of the five aggregates.<sup>74</sup>

And

When a bhikkhu has no I-making, mine-making, and an underlying tendency to conceit in regard to this conscious body; when he has no I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit in regard to all external objects; and when he enters and dwells in that liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, through which there is no more I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit for one who enters and dwells in it, he is called a bhikkhu who has cut off craving, stripped off the fetter, and, by completely breaking through conceit, has made an end of suffering.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> S.V.421; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 1844.

<sup>75</sup> A I 134; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, pp. 229-230.

Suffering was taught by the Buddha in the first sermon of the Four Noble Truths in the Deer Park; all seeds of suffering originate from ignorance and craving. Ignorance arises when we do not see the constant change of things and the body and mind but we assume that they exist forever so from that mistaken recognition we have suffering. When realizing suffering in worldly life we should be brave enough to face it to solve, transform or overcome desires. Destroying desires means suffering stops. The path of practice of eight factors from sammā diṭṭhi (right view) up to sammā samādhi (right concentration) also lead to cessation of dukha.<sup>76</sup> The basic teachings in Buddhist Sutras are about suffering and the path to end suffering.

The Buddha taught:

One who lives and observes the five aggregates, will understand the true nature of the five aggregates. By understanding, he liberates from the five aggregates. The liberation of the five aggregates is that from birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, pain, suffering and trouble. I say that he is free from Suffering.<sup>77</sup>

### **The Characteristics of Impurity**

Impurity is the own self-observation to see that this body is impure, it crystallizes from the sperm of father and the blood of mother. From the start it is an impure form of the human body in the mother's womb. After

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<sup>76</sup> Pa Auk Sayadaw, Compiled and (tr.) U.Dhamminda, **The Practice Which Leads to Nibbāna** (part 1), 1998, p. 156.

<sup>77</sup> S III 41; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 882.

escaping the mother's womb it is fed, this physical body secretes unclean, filthy and smelly things from nine holes. The nine holes are: stool hole, urine hole, two eye holes, two ear holes, two nostril holes, and the mouth hole. Right up to old age and when those holes sick automatically secrete stinking substances.

A practitioner must contemplate every day to see clearly this body which is impure so as not to have desires or perversions and avoid overindulging and nursing it. On the other hand when contemplating the impure body we should not put an end to it as the monks who after hearing what the Buddha taught about the body destroyed themselves. The way is to use this body is for practice to attain enlightenment and liberation by seeking purity for this impermanent and impure body.

In summary, the Buddha taught that contemplation of impure mind is to no longer crave own self form as well as form of others but should not destroy own self; rather to use this body to practice intently, to realize true nature, to realize purity in the own self mind.

### **The Characteristic of Selflessness**

Non-self (*anatma*) is the specific doctrine, the important seal of Buddha-truth of Buddhism; it is the realization that all things are formed by Dependent Arising. With causes and conditions they will arise, without causes and conditions they will decay; they are dominated by the law of impermanence without Self. The Buddha taught:

Bhikkhus, material form is impermanent, feeling is impermanent, perception is impermanent, formations are

impermanent, consciousness is impermanent. Bhikkhus, material form is not self, feeling is not self, perception is not self, formations are not self, consciousness is not self. All formations are impermanent; all things are not self.<sup>78</sup>

And

Bhikkhus, form is non-self. For if, bhikkhus, form were self, this form would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to have it of form: ‘Let my form be thus; let my form not be thus.’ But because form is non-self, form leads to affliction, and it is not possible to have it of form: ‘Let my form be thus; let my form not be thus.’<sup>79</sup>

Meditating on the unreality of self is also meditating to the full understanding of the five aggregates<sup>80</sup> in order to realize their true condition. Their true condition is the void: “Perceive the five skandhas are empty and, thereby, overcome all ills and suffering.”<sup>81</sup>

And the path of seeing the five skandhas in order to abandon all suffering is also the path of meditation through morality, concentration and wisdom. The Buddha taught in the Sūttas that:

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<sup>78</sup> M I 228; Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu & Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 322.

<sup>79</sup> S III 66; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, pp. 901-02.

<sup>80</sup> Dharma Master Lok To, **The Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism**, Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc., 1998, p. 696.

<sup>81</sup> Dharma Master Lok To, (tr.), (ed.) K'un Li, Shih and Dr. Frank G. French, **The Prajna Paramita Heart Sūtra**, (NY: Davidson Ave, 2000), pp. 17-18.

Whatever any kind of material form, whatever feeling, whatever perception, whatever formations, whatever consciousness, whatever past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, etc. all things should be seen “this is not mine, this is not me, this is not myself.”<sup>82</sup>

Thanks to meditation techniques seeing and knowing a bhikkhu comes to know detested forms, detested feelings, detested perceptions, detested volitional formations and detested consciousness.<sup>83</sup> From this disgust he abandons desires, abandons lust,<sup>84</sup> attains liberation and liberation of knowledge.

In a short paragraph of the Aṅguttara Sūtra the Buddha revealed that one who attains the first, second, third and the fourth Jhana will dwell with Devas and with their observations as follows:

He contemplates whatever phenomena there pertain to form, feeling, perception, volitional activities, and consciousness as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a boil, as a dart, as misery, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as non-self. With the breakup of the body, after death, he is reborn in companionship with the devas of the pure abodes.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Nāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p. 989.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 872.

<sup>85</sup> A II 128; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 507.



“He should dwell engrossed in revulsion towards form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. One who dwells engrossed in revulsion towards form and consciousness, fully understands form, feeling, perception, volitional formations and consciousness. One who fully understands form and consciousness is freed from form, feeling, perception, volitional formations and consciousness. He is freed from birth, aging, and death; freed from sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair; freed from suffering, I say.<sup>86</sup>

Indeed the teaching of non-self is the core teaching of Buddhism. It is the second sermon the Buddha preached to his disciples at the Deer Park where He emphasized the five aggregates (*five skandhas*). The nature of the five aggregates is empty, is non-self because it is the combination of elements, causes and conditions. Due to the conditions and by the practice of contemplation about five aggregates we realize clearly their nature in order to illuminate reality to destroy delusion, craving, wrong views so that we can easily overcome all clinging and attachment; thus the achievement of mind in cultivation of the spiritual life can easily encourage and easily separate from greed, anger, ignorance, reaching liberation, ending suffering.

To sum up, the practice philosophy of Theravāda Buddhism through the four characteristics above is to see clearly the body and mind are impermanent, non-self and impure. If we cling to them consider it as

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<sup>86</sup> S III 41; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 882.

my, mine, eternality, we will experience suffering. The above characteristics are the key to open the door of liberation, the foundation for the transformation of affliction, suffering, achieving insight and achieving the spiritual life and at the time we live with the own self true nature realizing they really are in the present moment.

## **2.4 Development of Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Buddhism**

To understand clearly the concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism the researcher will research:

- 1) Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism
- 2) The Luminous Mind and The Arahāt's ever shining Citta.
- 3) Emptiness in Theravāda Tradition
- 4) Purification of Mind (*citta –visuddhi*)
- 5) Nibbāna in Theravāda Tradition

### **2.4.1 Buddha-Nature in Theravāda Sūtras**

In Theravāda the researcher researched in turn, Dīgha-nikāya, Majjhima-nikāya, Aṅguttara-nikāya and Saṃyutta Nikāya to try to find the Buddha's teachings related to the finality of practice.

### 2.4.1.1 Dīgha-Nikāya

Before the Buddha's Nirvāna He taught his disciples: "As Dhamma and Vinaya will, at my passing, be your teacher."<sup>87</sup>

The Vinaya is the basis for cultivation to overcome the cycle of birth and death. When a bhikkhu observes full discipline he can enjoy pleasures and the internal mind is pure. However when his mind is impure for any reason or the mind-sense cannot control desires, sorrow and evil so unwholesome states arise. The monk can dominate those to protect the mind-sense thanks to the noble Vinaya and can enjoy pleasures and a pure mind.

In addition the Buddha taught Kassapa: "When a monk develops non-enmity, non-ill-will and a heart full of loving-kindness and abandons corruptions, realizes and dwells in the uncorrupted deliverance of mind, the deliverance through wisdom."<sup>88</sup>

The dwelling of the Buddha was an absolute dwelling so the inward mind dwells in meditation as the Buddha taught: "Gross or fine, things become the sage rejected, calm, composed, he burst becoming's shell."<sup>89</sup>

And the mind of the Buddha was praised by Pukkusa as follows:

It is wonderful, it is marvellous! These wanderers are so calm that though conscious and awake, a man neither saw

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<sup>87</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 270.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p. 247.

nor heard five hundred carts passing close by him<sup>90</sup> or It is wonderful, it is marvelous! These wanderers are so calm that they neither see nor hear when the rain-god streams and splashes, lightning flashes and thunder crashes.<sup>91</sup>

The Sūtra also describes the cessation of consciousness as follows:

Where do earth, water, fire and air no footing find? Where are long and short, small and great, fair and foul. ‘Where are ‘name-and-form’ wholly destroyed?’

And the answer:

Where consciousness is signless,’ boundless, all luminous,’ That’s where earth, water, fire and air find no footing, There both long and short, small and great, fair and foul-there ‘name-and-form’ are wholly destroyed. With the cessation of consciousness this is all destroyed.<sup>92</sup>

Or

There is, monks, an Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Uncompounded (*ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asankhataṃ*). If there were not this Unborn, then there would be no deliverance here visible from that which is born, become, made, compounded. But since there is this Unborn; Unbecome, Unmade and Uncompounded therefore a

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<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>92</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 180.

deliverance is visible from that which is born, become, made, compounded.<sup>93</sup>

#### 2.4.1.2 Majjhima-Nikāya

In the *Vatthūpama Sūtta* there is the simile of the cloth: the Buddha used the image of the piece of cloth to compare the difference between a defiled mind and a pure mind. He likened a pure mind to a piece of cloth and pure water to the dhamma of the Buddha. The piece of pure cloth dyed will get well dyed as everyone has to strive to wash their own cloth to make it clean and pure.

However, the piece of dirty cloth has been washed to be a piece of clean cloth. In other words the tainted mind has to be converted to a purified mind. By the experience of enlightenment the Buddha delved into the states of impurities of the mind which consists of sixteen qualities: covetousness, ill will, anger, hatred, deception, annoyance, envy, avarice, deceit, fraud, obstinacy, presumption, conceit, arrogance, vanity and negligence. When we know these are defilements of the mind and realize their dangers the defilements are destroyed.

No external power can cleanse our defiled mind and no external influence can afford to bring us our liberation. Nothing is equal to the internal power of mind and everyone has his own liberation. The wholesome realm is waiting for those with a pure mind. The practice of the mind's purity, of pure mind anytime and anywhere in daily life dominates the Cause and Effect and emancipation together:

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<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

For one who lives in purity,  
 Every day is a good day  
 For one who lives in purity,  
 Every day is a lucky day  
 The pure karmas that are pure  
 Always achieve right conducts.<sup>94</sup>

In the three Buddhist Canon Baskets Rathavināta Sutta is the twenty fourth Sutta of Majjhima Nikāya that states the seven stages of purity as follows:<sup>95</sup>

- 1) Purity of moral habit is of purpose as far as purity of mind.
- 2) Purity of mind is of purpose as far as purity of view
- 3) Purity of view is of purpose as far as purity through crossing over doubt
- 4) Purity through crossing over doubt is of purpose as far as purity of knowledge and insight into the way and what is not the way
- 5) And insight into the way and what is not the way
- 6) Purity of knowledge and insight into the way and what is not the way is of purpose as far as purity of knowledge and insight into the course
- 7) Purity arising from knowledge and insight is of purpose as far as utter nibbana without attachment.

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<sup>94</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 121.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, p. 243.

These seven stages of purifying the mind are displayed in the dialogue between Venerable Sāriputta and Venerable Punna Mantāniputta Thera. Purity of mind (*Citta visudhi*) is the second step in the seven stages of purity. The mind is the source of all suffering or happiness, the mind is the chief of all things, offence or merit, good or evil, all originate from the mind. The original awareness of the wonderful and profound mind is purity, giving up all illusory forms and clear from the practice thus overcoming the ignorance covering it. In order to make the mind pure the screen of ignorance must be gradually tamed by domination, training, casting off the defilements by cleansing the five interferences which obscure the mind so then the mind can abide in the jhanas.

The purpose of the Buddha was to instruct all his disciples in many different ways to realize the truth of luminous mind, liberated mind, as well as to practice to attain enlightenment i.e. in order to return to live with an empty mind as a result of training to give up desires, hatred and illusion to attain Nibbāna.

In the *Anuruddha Sūtta* venerable Anuruddha explained to the carpenter Pañcakanga about the difference between the immeasurable deliverance of mind and the exalted deliverance of mind.<sup>96</sup> Both these minds contemplate on the four boundless minds: kindness, compassion, joy and indifference<sup>97</sup> but the exalted mind is a mind drenched from the foot of a wide spreading tree to a village and a country. The immeasurable deliverance of mind is drenched with loving kindness, compassion, joy and indifference to the ten directions, magnified,

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<sup>96</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 1003.

<sup>97</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 194.

unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. When practicing meditation one makes the vow to be drenched with the limited or unlimited light, defilement or non-defilement and after death he arises in four kinds of rebirths: the Heavens of Lesser Light, Infinite Light, Heaven of Minor Purity and Heaven of Limitless Purity.

The exalted mind leads to rebirth in the Heavens of Lesser Light. The immeasurable mind leads to rebirth in Heavens of Limitless Light. When one practices meditation but has not yet got rid of sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, after death he will be born in the realm of the defiled light. The light and colors of every God who lives in different realms are different. When they gather the light mingles though the colors of light are different, like when thousands of lamps light up the room, the light becomes only one. When they disperse the light and color of everyone is different. It is because Heaven has Minor Purity or Limitless Purity as the mind has defilement or purity while meditating. As the lamp is lit with waste oil, a dirty wick, dirty fountain and bulb its light is not as bright as the one which is lit with pure oil, a clean wick, clean fountain and bulb.

Through this Sūta we can realize that the essence of mind is luminous. If a practitioner cannot empty suffering and defilements cleanly the mind is according to this level and must be purified and reborn into the suitable realm. The aim of practice is to clean defilements so the mind becomes luminous, natural and tranquil by practicing meditation. The Buddha taught that one who has gone forth from home into



homelessness<sup>98</sup> and makes efforts to cultivate Dhamma and Discipline through practice of meditation will destroy suffering.<sup>99</sup> And the Buddha taught more through verses:

One who knows the pure mind  
Liberation from the lust  
The birth and death have abandoned  
The holy life is complete  
One who understands all things  
(One) is called a Buddha.<sup>100</sup>

Abiding in Void is supreme abiding of Enlightened Ones as Buddha Sāriputta is described in the Sutra of the Greater Discourse on Void (*Mahāsunnata sūta*):

However, Ananda, there is this abiding discovered by the Tathāgata: to enter and abide in voidness internally by giving no attention to all signs.<sup>101</sup>

The Purity of Alms Food (*Pindapātapārisuddhi sūta*)

Sāriputta, your faculties are clear. The colour of your skin is pure and bright. What abiding do you often abide in now, Sāriputta?

Now, venerable sir, I often abide in void.

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<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>99</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 859.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 752-753.

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p. 972.

Good, good, Sāriputta! Now, indeed, you often abide in the abiding of a great man. For this is the abiding of a great man, namely, void.<sup>102</sup>

That abiding was not only abiding in meditation; The Buddha taught him ways in four forms of behavior in the time of begging for food and in activities of daily life.

### 2.4.1.3 Saṃyutta Nikāya

In three karmas the mind is the chief to make good or bad karma. In order to avoid getting unwholesome karma in the present or future the Buddha taught: “For a long time, this mind is defiled by desire, hatred and delusion. Because of the defiled mind, monks, human beings are defiled. Because of the pure mind, human beings are purified.”<sup>103</sup>

So everyone needs to observe and abide in contemplation of the body, feelings, mind, mind-object and be ardent, fully aware and mindful with pure mind, concentrating with one-pointedness of mind and get rid of all restraints and mind-objects.

In addition after his enlightenment the Buddha also realized that all beings are able to achieve Enlightenment. However the Buddha saw that the deep karma of beings always obscured them so it was very difficult to realize their Buddha-nature or to receive the mysterious, profound

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<sup>102</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 1143.

<sup>103</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 958.

Buddha-Dhamma. The *Samyutta Nikāya* recorded the thoughts of the Buddha after he attained Enlightenment as follows:<sup>104</sup>

This dhamma is attained by me. It is really deep, hard to see, to attain, peaceful, sublime, super reasoning, abstruse, only wise men can experience it. But people who like to love and desire, delight in love and desire, rejoice in love and desire, are difficult to see this theorem, which is the Causes and Conditions which arise all things. It is difficult to see this theorem, its mean all the mental formations are peaceful, all conditions are given up, leading to the destruction of craving, dispassion, stopping, Nirvana.<sup>105</sup>

The Buddha-Dhamma is deep, hard to see, etc. because it corresponds to the supernatural emptiness which is the state of Enlightenment of the noble One, the Great Being. The dhamma preached by the Buddha corresponds to the realm of self-attainment so it is very deep. A practice for dwelling in the emptiness of calm inward in the meditative realm is as follows:

Human life is limited or unlimited,  
 The sage gives up without extension,  
 The calm inward dwells in the meditation.  
 Like to put off a coat of armour he is wearing.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>105</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1725.

The Disciples of the Buddha are brightened at the present thanks to this dwelling. The truth of realization is in the inner mind not the outside. Practicing and converting to purify the mind to attain the unshakeable deliverance of mind is the core problem as Buddha points out:

For bhikkus who destroy taints, that are destroyed, are cut off at the root, made as the body of Sala tree, cannot have rebirth, cannot arise in the future. Venerable sir, for the measureless deliverance of mind, the unshakeable deliverance of mind is considered as supremacy. But this unshakeable deliverance of mind is empty, without lust, hatred, delusion.<sup>107</sup>

Practicing the mind is a practice with an open mind, a spontaneous mind, a bright mind.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, practicing the mind is also to see all things in their true form, their true nature.

#### **2.4.1.4 Aṅguttara-Nikāya**

In the Aṅguttara-nikāya the Buddha clearly defined Buddha-nature as ‘luminous mind’ so the bhikkhus could understand and efficiently cultivate to attain good results. Every being has this Buddha-nature or tranquil and luminous mind but defilements obstruct it. We only need to disentangle all kinds of suffering and defilements and the pure mind will appear. The term ‘Buddha-nature’ in this Sūta is used in another form

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<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1326.

<sup>108</sup> S.v, 276.

and also appears in the Pāli Canon where the term ‘luminous mind’ (*pabhassara citta*) or Buddha-nature is presented in detail:

Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is defiled by incoming defilements.

Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements.

Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is defiled by incoming defilements. The uninstructed run-of-the-mill person doesn’t discern that as it actually is present, which is why I tell you that- for the uninstructed run-of-the mill person- there is no development of the mind.

Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements. The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns that as it actually is present, which is why I tell you that- for the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones- there is development of the mind.<sup>109</sup>

On the other hand, like in *Majjhima Nikāya, chapter One Thing, V*. Luminous, the Buddha spoke about a person who had a defiled mind and how after death this person would go to an abode of evil, hurting and hell because his mind was filled with false views.<sup>110</sup> By the reason of the action of non-Buddhist teachings and the action of inequality, action of body, action of speech and action of mind lead to unhappiness and suffering in the lower world, in hell.<sup>111</sup> Conversely, if one has the right

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<sup>109</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), p. 97.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, p. 147.

view<sup>112</sup> by reason and action of Buddhist teachings and action of equality and uses a restful mind as a foundation he will be reborn after death into a good realm, a heavenly world.<sup>113</sup> His mind without suffering and defilement will attain qualities of the true man, of exalted knowledge and he deserves to become a Saint. If a person has the right view all of his decisions about actions of body, speech and mind lead to refinement, pleasure, good intentions, happiness and peace.

Depending on each individual's level the Buddha taught bhikkhus in many different ways about the cultivation of Buddha-nature and how then true mind will manifest itself and how the mind is trained, made full and brings about happiness.<sup>114</sup> If a person is unrestrained (*uddhaccam*) he makes the sublime teachings obscure because restlessness makes the mind heedless as the wind ripples a banner. The immediate reason for the turmoil is the lack of wise attention to the mind. With vigilance the mind abides in the sublime teachings, neither eclipsed nor vanishing.<sup>115</sup> One who perseveres in practice will have the sweetness of benefit, sweetness of Dharma, sweetness of liberation and the result of clarification and enlightenment. But the practitioner who observes sensuality, ill-will, laziness and lethargy, worry, fuss and doubt lives in turmoil:

Body and speech are purified

Pure mind - without taints

Stainless, in purity

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104.

One is called a pure person who has abandoned all evils.<sup>116</sup>

Similarly to imply the pure and bright mind the Buddha used the image of person who covered his head and his whole body with a piece of white cloth to compare with a bhikkhu who is pervaded with the pure and bright mind.<sup>117</sup>

Additionally in a part of the Great Chapter the Buddha taught Vyagghapajjās about the four factors of pure energy: the precept's factor of pure energy, the mind's factor of pure energy, the view's factor of pure energy, the liberation's factor of pure mind. Here we mention the mind's factor of pure energy as follows:

‘Vyagghapajjās, a monk who gets rid of desires to attain and dwell in the fourth dhyana this is called the pure mind with the vow: ‘If the pure mind like this is not full I will make it become full. If the pure mind is full I will learn more anywhere with wisdom. His wishes, efforts, striving, enthusiastic, non-regression, right mindfulness and awareness are called the mind's factor of pure energy’.

This mind contributes to the accomplishment of the four factors to become an Arahat i.e. overcoming sadness, stopping suffering, attaining the true Way, realizing Nirvāna.

Therefore in a chapter of the Celestial Messenger the Buddha taught about the pure mind that is summarized in the verse:

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, p. 353.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, p. 649.

Always in happiness of tranquility  
 The Brahmacharin gets eternal peace.  
 Not tainted with the desire  
 In clarity, the relinquishing of all attachments  
 All greeds are destroyed  
 The sorrowful mind is put aside  
 Calmness, the pleasant feeling  
 His mind has attained tranquility.<sup>118</sup>

Figure 2: Summary of the Buddha-nature concept in various Sūttas of Theravāda Buddhism

Sūtra's Names	Dīgha-nikāya	Majjhima-nikāya	Aṅguttara-nikāya	Samyutta-nikāya
The Appeared forms of Buddha-nature	The cessation of consciousness; the calm inward; an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated	Emptiness	Luminous mind	The calm inward; the unshakeable deliverance of mind

#### 2.4.2 The Luminous Mind and The Arahat's Ever Shining Citta

The Arahat is a person who eliminates all afflictions and defilements; his mind is perfectly purified when the six sense organs contact six objects. The reason why people always live in the cycle of

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<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p. 233.



birth and death is that the mind is governed, it is not pure, in other words the six sense organs are not purified. Because all sins arise from the six senses e.g. the eyes see a form and the mind starts to like or dislike it, the ears hear a sound and the mind starts to love or hate it and the nose, tongue, body and mind are the same.

So the mind of greed arises, the mind of hate arises too. The six senses attach six objects unsatisfactorily. On the contrary the six senses attach with six objects that arises with loathing. At that time hate also arises and means that the six senses are governed by six objects. But in fact greed and hate originate from afflictions and ignorance because we cannot see the empirical combination, the creation and destruction of forms of all phenomena. The three are greed, hate and delusion. When a person overflows with these three poisons his way of liberation is further and further away because he always lives in hate, affliction and suffering. For an Arahāt his mind escapes from Six Dusts, his six senses are pure to attach to the six objects and his mind is as bright as described in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*.

The Arahāt escaped the ten fetters of the world: 1) self-illusion 2) doubt 3) rule and ritual attachment 4) sensual desire 5) ill will 6) material-rebirth lust 7) immaterial-rebirth lust 8) conceit 9) restlessness 10) ignorance. The Buddha taught these in the Sūtra: All human beings should use Buddhist-wisdom to set fire to all low and high fetters. Because having set fire to all fetters, free from all fetters, the mind of the Arahāt is always bright. His purpose of the practice is achieved, the mind is perfectly liberated, free from the cycle of birth and death, in tranquil Nirvāna. Though the life is suffering, he still leisurely and tranquilly

lives, which is called incomplete Nirvāna (*savupadisesa-nibbāna*). He can enjoy nibbāna in the present life and when he enters nibbāna that is called Final Nirvāna. When he is at this level of enlightenment he can pass away any time. The Sūtra also mentions that many noble disciples asked for permission from the Buddha about their death before the Buddha passed away in three months. Sainthood (*Arahatta*) is the last and highest fruit in the four degrees of saintliness and when all cankers are destroyed the task is done, the burden is put down, the target is reached, fetters are destroyed, right knowledge is liberated: this is the goal of practice of the Theravāda tradition.

The Buddha was also an Arahat because in the ten titles of Buddha the Worthy One is the second title. An Arahat also means the Worthy One, meaning one who is worth offering. The mind of the Buddha and Arahat are the same but the Buddha was an enlightened One who discovered the way and guided his disciples to practice and follow that way so that they can attain the same result as the Buddha.

The result is the attainment of the Arahat's ever shining mind in the Buddha's time as the Buddha himself succeeded in meditation for forty nine days under the Bodhi tree. His disciples practiced to follow his guidance and they lived alone for meditation to develop the spiritual life and gradually give up all blemishes, restraints and then they accomplish the first Jhāna to the fourth Jhāna. Or a person who has a high level of character and only listened to the Buddha's teachings so their mind could escape shackles, give up defilements and afflictions can attain Arahantship at that moment.

The bright mind without defilement is a pure mind, a natural mind through the development of meditation, right mindfulness (*Sammasati*) in the four postures. An Arahāt attains an ‘awakening’ in the pure state of the mind<sup>119</sup> and realizes the impermanence and suffering of life to live with his own bright pure nature.

In summary, the Arahāt’s ever shining mind is the same as Buddha’s mind which has escaped all fetters and attained the stage of Nirvana in the defiled world and freed himself from the cycle of birth and death.

### 2.4.3 Emptiness in Theravāda Tradition

The practice Path of Theravāda Buddhism is clearly taught by the Buddha for every person who seeks liberation. His teachings are like remedies to cure serious diseases. With intellectual eyes He gave medicine so everyone after using medicine was not sick anymore but healthy and peaceful. Because of deep karma most beings have the same disease i.e. the illusion about the five aggregates of human beings. The five aggregates hinder the practice of the practitioner because of adherence to the five aggregates of this physical body thinking it is “mine” but one lives forever in the rebirth. But in the second sermon of the Not-Self Characteristic Discourse (*Anattalakkhaṇa Sūtta*), the Buddha preached the “not self”: opposite to the view of attachment of “ego”.

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<sup>119</sup> Peter Harvey, **The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvāṇa in Early Buddhism**, (NY: Routledge Curzon, 2004), p. 174.

The theory of No-self means no self and the five aggregates are impermanent, empty. One who sees this emptiness which is the conditional causation will escape from craving, get out of rebirth, be liberated.

“Emptiness” in the Theravāda period was called the nature of the Void, as mentioned in Chapter Two through two Sutras: the Lesser Discourse on Emptiness (*Cula-suññata Sūtta*) and the Greater Discourse on Emptiness (*Maha-suññata Sūtta*) The Holy Ones dwelled in emptiness. On the other hand, the Buddha taught that:

As this Palace of Migāra’s Mother is void of elephants, cattle, horses, and mares, void of gold and silver, void of the assembly of men and women, and there is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the Sangha of bhikkhus; so too, a bhikkhu-not attending to the perception of village, not attending to the perception of people- attends to the singleness dependent on the perception of forest. His mind enters into that perception of forest and acquires confidence, steadiness, and resolution. He understands thus: ‘Whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of village, those are not present here; whatever disturbances there might be dependent on the perception of people, those are not present here. There is present only this amount of disturbance, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of forest.’ He understands: ‘This field of perception is void of the perception of village; this field of perception is void of the

perception of people. There is present only this non-voidness, namely, the singleness dependent on the perception of forest.’ Thus he regards it as void of what is not there, but as to what remains there he understands that which is present thus: ‘This is present.’ Thus, *finanda*, this is his genuine, undistorted, pure descent into voidness.<sup>120</sup>

In the above passage “Emptiness” is considered as the cessation of passions or defilements of the mind. The mind does not attach to things e.g. elephants, cows, horses, gold, silver, houses, hamlets, etc. as one goes forth from the household life into homelessness only with whole mind for practice and a sole purpose that is to seek Enlightenment and liberation. This is the first liberation state of a renouncer when he gives up the household life. This concept of emptiness is not to worry, not to have troubles of the secular life as before.

This Emptiness does not have a profound philosophical significance as in the Madhyamaka philosophy of Nagarjuna.

The second concept of emptiness is the state of accomplishing meditation.

The states of “emptiness” in the levels of meditation are the Base of Infinite Space, of Infinity of Consciousness, the state of Non-existence, the Base of Neither perception nor non perception, those are the levels of meditation the Bodhisattva Siddhartha achieved during His seeking and

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<sup>120</sup> M III 104; Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.), and (tr.), *op.cit.*, pp. 965-66.

learning under the teachers Kamala and Udraka-rāmaputra. But He did not stop there, he determined with his whole mind to practice to step up to the higher level of Emptiness in order to attain the empty inside, empty outside, and empty inside and outside. This is described in the Sutra as the attainment of meditation from the first Jhana, second Jhana, third Jhana and the fourth Jhana:

Here, Ananda, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhana...the second jhana...the third jhana...the fourth jhana, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. That is how a bhikkhu steadies his mind internally, quiets it, brings it to singleness, and concentrates it. Then he gives attention to voidness internally..., voidness externally..., imperturbability.... While he is giving attention to imperturbability, his mind does not enter into imperturbability or acquire confidence, steadiness, and decision... If walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. He has full awareness of those.<sup>121</sup>

Abiding in Emptiness in the levels of meditation is taught again by the Buddha to disciples so that they also attain the same calm state of inner mind as that of the Buddha. In addition, the Buddha taught in the Greater Discourse on Emptiness (*Maha-suññata Sūta*) about the

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<sup>121</sup> M III 110-117; Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu & Bhikkhu Bodhi, (tr.), *op.cit.*, pp. 972-74.

awakening while walking, standing, lying and sitting. That is the sole method and the proper way of finding the inner happiness of Self-mind.

In addition, as the above analysis, the five aggregates (*pañca - khandha*) are no-ego but are the accumulated five elements to form a being including the body and mind.

What is the cause and condition, venerable sir, for the manifestation of the form aggregate? What is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the feeling aggregate?... for the manifestation of the perception aggregate?... for the manifestation of the volitional formations aggregate?... for the manifestation of the consciousness aggregate?

The four great elements, bhikkhu, are the cause and condition for the manifestation of the form aggregate. Contact is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the feeling aggregate. Contact is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the perception aggregate. Contact is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the volitional formations aggregate. Name and form is the cause and condition for the manifestation of the consciousness aggregate.<sup>122</sup>

And the five aggregates were explained more:

Form is like a lump of foam,  
Feeling like a water bubble;

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<sup>122</sup> S III 101-102; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit*, p. 925.

Perception is like a mirage,  
 Volitions like a plantain trunk,  
 And consciousness like an illusion,  
 So explained the Kinsman of the Sun.<sup>123</sup>

In the Sūtra on Questions of King Milinda (*Milidapanha Sūtra*) that is considered a Theravāda Sūtra also has a paragraph about the untrue essence of the vehicle through a discussion between the king Milinda and Bhikṣu Nagasena. Bhikṣu Nagasena asked the king:

Your Majesty, Your Majesty says that, you came here by the Chariot, Do you really mean it?

Venerable sir, I mean it.

Your Majesty, Your Majesty says that you came here in the Chariot. Do you really mean it?

Venerable sir, I mean it.

So, Your Majesty gives me the understanding clearly about the Chariot. Is the rim chariot?

No Sir, it is not

Is the axle the chariot?

No Sir, it is not.

Is the wheel the chariot?

No Sir, it is not.

...

What is the chariot?

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<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 952-53.



The king kept silent and did not answer. Bhiksu Nagasena told the king: ‘In sūtras, the Buddha taught: The combination of all rims, axles, wheels, etc. is temporarily called the chariot.’<sup>124</sup>

Through those above quotes we see this third concept of Emptiness is described through the five aggregates and things that are mentioned in the story of the Sūtra on Questions of King Milinda (*Milidapanha Sūtra*) because the ego and things are really ephemeral and shattered in every moment that temporary collection is called Emptiness.

To sum up, the four concepts of “Emptiness” were taught to disciples and lay Buddhists in the Buddha’s time but the concept of emptiness of the Dependent Origination is the basis to form the idea of Emptiness in the Madhyamaka philosophical system of Nagarjuna and the Mahāyāna Buddhist idea.

#### **2.4.4 Purification of Mind (*citta -visuddhi*)**

To understand clearly the teachings of the Buddha he used many means to help his followers realize life’s truth as well as living with the purification of mind. Most of his disciples trained purification of mind in three factors: morality, concentration and wisdom to liberate and escape from the cycle of birth and death.

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<sup>124</sup> Mil.3.11; Thich Phuoc Son, **The Brief Summary Buddhism**, (Vietnamese version), (HCM: the Saigon Culture Publishing House, 2009), pp. 212-13.

#### 2.4.4.1 Training Morality (*Sīla*)

Training morality is the first subject that the followers of the Buddha need to understand and practice. *Sīla* is the observance of physical and verbal actions of moral conduct. It is said in the *Visuddhimagga*: “A wise man, after establishing well in virtue, develops concentration, and understanding. Then as a bhikkhu ardent and erudite, He succeeds in disentangling this tangle”.<sup>125</sup>

The Buddha advised his followers with His whole heart to observe and train in precepts: “Bhikkhus, abide by virtue, abide by the Patimokkha, restrain with the restraint of the Patimokkha, perfect in conduct and resort and seeing fear in the slightest fault train by undertaking the training precepts.”<sup>126</sup>

*Sīla* serves as a firm foundation towards the attainment of insight knowledge which can lead to Nibbāna. It is fortunate for anyone to join the Buddhist Sangha because he has opportunities to learn dharma, to practice and apply discipline in order to live in the Vinaya purely. Even for a day it is very good because this present world is degenerating rapidly into impurity, aggression and grasping at resources consequently leading people to a state of tremendous anxiety.<sup>127</sup> However, we can see that bhikkhus who lived in the time of the Buddha practiced the disciplines diligently toward a pure life of the mind and gave up improper

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<sup>125</sup> Bhadantacariyabuddhaghosa, Bhikkhu nanamoli, (tr.) **The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)**, (Kandy: BPS, 1999), p. 8.

<sup>126</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>127</sup> Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa Rinpoche, **Advice for Monks and Nuns**, Nicholas Ribush, (ed.) (Weston: USA, 1998), p. 14.

livelihood and chose to live in seclusion but still gathered together in the monastery on the day of Uposatha.<sup>128</sup> A monk observes four prohibitions: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct and no lying and these originate from the five precepts which the Buddha taught in the Vinaya.

If one does not observe the disciplines he will commit an offence. Living inappropriately for the precepts he will get five perils: he will suffer great loss of property through neglecting his affairs; get a bad reputation for immorality and misconduct; his mind will be diffident and ashamed and he will die in confusion. After death at the breaking up of the body he will arise in an evil state, a bad fate, suffering and in hell.<sup>129</sup> Buddhists need to avoid these five perils above and prevent even the slightest unwholesome actions because all slight faults as drops of water will make a big glass full in time. On the contrary, the fame of his virtue who dwells in disciplinary rules can spread in all directions and he can go anywhere without a fearful and hesitant mind. As the Buddha taught there are five advantages for a good moral person who observes and practices the precepts. These are: he always attends carefully to his affairs, so he will get wealth and a good reputation for morality and good conduct. He will be very confident when he goes to the assembly. He will die unconfusedly and after death at the breaking-up of the body he will be reborn in a happy realm.<sup>130</sup> It is said in the Dhammapada: “The scent of

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<sup>128</sup> Mohan Wijayaratna, **Buddhist Monastic Life: According to the Texts of the Theravāda**, (The United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 133.

<sup>129</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 236.

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, p. 237.

flowers cannot go against the wind but only the reputation of virtuous people can go against the world".<sup>131</sup>

#### 2.4.4.2 Developing Samathi

In daily life we are often day-dreamers and grieve over or regret the past that is gone and we also dream about a good future. When a practitioner cultivates meditation he needs to give up those two extremes and realize that we should live in the present, live with the present thought, with a pleasant and movable here and now, with reality that is flowing because the past is gone and the future is distant. They all are unreal imaginings. The Buddha taught:

Do not sorrow over the past,  
Nor hanker after the future.  
Maintain yourselves with what is present  
Hence the complexion is so serene.  
Through hankering for the future,  
Through sorrowing over the past,  
Fools dry up and wither away  
Like a green reed cut down.<sup>132</sup>

Meditation brings about many benefits for mind, body, work and study. Human beings' minds have evil thoughts as an ocean receives water from rivers. The mind fully contains everything; there is not any small thing the mind does not receive. The phenomena of attitude go in

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<sup>131</sup> Dhp.54; Norman, K.R., *op.cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>132</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 95.

and out and pass by the mind which occurs as in a wink without an interruption. Concentration is to return to the right mindfulness where all hindrances are eliminated, desires and defilements have been totally settled down, the mind has no illusive thoughts, it is calm and concentrating and conscious; then wisdom arises. Accordingly meditation means elimination, a necessary cultivation for all people. Only meditation can help us overcome difficulties, hardships, afflictions, hindrances to attain wealth and happiness in this world and the next.

Meditation in a cross-legged posture is for mindfulness on breaths, in dignity while going, standing, lying, sitting and working with a peaceful heart, gentle eyes of insight, and happiness in each footstep with a penetration of understanding themselves in each present moment. Nuns also practice mindfulness according to the Buddha's teachings:

“Bhikkhus, the sole path that leads to tranquility for human beings, overcome pains and sorrows, attain right wisdom, nibbāna, is the path of the four foundations of mindfulness”.<sup>133</sup> Right concentration is a stage of the eightfold path.<sup>134</sup>

There are four methods for contemplating which were taught clearly by the Buddha through Satipatthāna Sutta: contemplating the body, feelings, the mind and the dharma.

During meditation a bhikkhu's mind is sometimes unsettled. The Buddha shared his experiences and taught bhikkhus five methods for

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<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>134</sup> Paul Williams, **Buddhist Thought: A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition**, (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 81.

dealing with the unwholesome thoughts that might arise in the course of meditation (*Vitakkasaṅḥāna sutta*).<sup>135</sup> When practicing meditation the unwholesome thoughts are connected with cravings, hatred and delusion. The Buddha advised bhikkhus to think of a new object which was wholesome in order to abandon and destroy unwholesome thoughts. Because when a good thought arises in the mind the evil thought will disappear, so the mind will become steady internally and quiet leading to one-pointedness. But despite a new object to deal with them, desire, hatred and delusion still arose. He conceived and examined the danger in those thoughts that brought about suffering therefore we should give them up. But if unwholesome thoughts are still connected with the three poisons he tried to forget them, did not think of them, nor attended to them. This way was successful and he continued to attend to stilling the formation of those thoughts and thanks to dwelling these evil unwholesome thoughts connected to desire, to hatred and delusion are abandoned. His mind became steady internally and quiet but if evil unwhosome thoughts still appear the last way he should clench his teeth and press his tongue against the roof of his mouth, he should beat down, constrain and crush mind with mind until the evil unwholesome thoughts are abandoned and his mind is calm and pure. With the desire of contemplating on meditation the bhikkhu needs to apply from one to five ways above to abandon evil thoughts. The mind is quiet, pure and with breaking the fetters thus making an end of suffering. As the Buddha practiced hard and abode in mindfulness his body and mind were tranquil and untroubled, concentrated and unified. Therefore he entered from the

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<sup>135</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 211.

first jhāna to fourth jhāna and attained three fold knowledge of past lives, present lives and future lives of himself and other beings.

#### 2.4.4.3 The Perfection of Wisdom

Practicing morality and concentration will develop wisdom. According to the Eightfold Noble Path wisdom consists of right view and right thought. To have right view and right thought a practitioner needs to reread and practice following Sammāditṭhi Sutta.<sup>136</sup> Through this Sutta venerable Sāriputta explained in detail and pointed out the root of the unwholesome to abandon and the root of the wholesome to apply. Abandoning ten unwholesome basics: the actions of the body: killing, stealing, sexual conduct; the action of speech: false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, gossip; the action of the mind: craving, hatred and delusion; understanding the nutriment of the Four Noble Truths: suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering<sup>137</sup> and the way leading to cessation of suffering, the twelve factors of dependent origination<sup>138</sup> and the taints. Understanding them to know that all things in the world do not exist in isolation but are all combined from many causes or different factors.

According to Buddhism the links of twelve factors of dependent origination are the root of the cycle of birth and death so Buddhists need to destroy one of twelve factors of dependent origination and the line of cycle of birth and death also ends and it means suffering is abandoned,

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<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, p. 134; Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>138</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-35.

the mind is purified and we can escape every pain, sorrow, grief and lamentation. Hence the Brahmin Janussoni praised: “The Dharma was made clearly by the Buddha in many ways, as though he was turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost or to hold up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms.”<sup>139</sup>

The nature of the mind is pure and bright but because an ignorant cloud covers it cannot see the Truth of mind. The pure mind only appears when a practitioner diligently practices meditation or insight meditation.

#### 2.4.5 Nibbāna in Theravāda Tradition

Critics have suggested that Nibbana is a form of escape<sup>140</sup> but the person who has the mind of nibbāna is tranquil unruffled, happy, unblemished and secure anywhere and anytime.<sup>141</sup> Nibbāna is the ultimate good.<sup>142</sup> In other words nibbāna is “profound like an ocean, lofty like a mountain peak, sweet like honey”.<sup>143</sup> Nibbāna means the absence of pain and sorrow.<sup>144</sup> Nibbāna is also described as a mental state of exaltation, bliss, insight, and altruism.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>140</sup> K. N. Jayatilleke, **Ethics in Buddhist Perspective**, (Kandy: BPS, 1972), p. 13.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>143</sup> Vishwanath Prasad Varma, **Early Buddhism and Its Origins**, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1973), p. 239.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p. 242.

<sup>145</sup> T. W. Rhys Davids, LL.D., Pu.D. **Early Buddhism**, (New Delhi: Swarn Printing Press, 1976), p. 35.



According to Theravāda Buddhist literature Nibbāna is not a permanent reality or a reality of ego. Nibbāna is described as the attainment of a “transcendental timeless” state or highest happiness and can be attained in this very life.<sup>146</sup> A Tathā-gata has been born in the world, an Arahant fully-enlightened Buddha and the Dharma is taught which leads to calm and perfect Nibbana.<sup>147</sup> In the Aṅguttara Nikāya it states: “His Dhamma is for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the passing away of pain and dejection, for the achievement of the method, for the realization of Nibbāna.”<sup>148</sup>

Some definitions of Nibbāna are found in Sūtra Pitaka as follows:

“The complete silence of all things that are limited, the getting rid of all defilements, the extinction of desire, liberation, cessation, Nibbāna.”<sup>149</sup>

“The present practicality is Nibbāna.”<sup>150</sup> and nibbāna is such<sup>151</sup>

O Rādhu, “Practice for the destruction of craving, destroying craving is Nibbāna.”<sup>152</sup>

O Radha, “Nibbāna is the practice of pure living, nibbāna is the ultimate goal; nibbāna is finality.”<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Varma, Vishwanath Prasad, *op.cit.*, p. 242.

<sup>147</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (tr), *op.cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>149</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>150</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>151</sup> Shwe Zan Aung and Mrs. Rhys Davids, **Being a Translation of the Kathā-Vatthu from the Abhidhamma Pitaka**, (London: PTS, 1960), p. 232.

<sup>152</sup> Bhikkhu Bodhi (a), *op.cit.*, p. 985.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.*, p. 985.

“O Bhikkhus, what is the absolute without limit? It is, O bhikkhus, the extinction of greed, the extinction of anger, the extinction of illusive thoughts. O Bhikkhus, this is called the Absolute.”<sup>154</sup>

“The liberation of arrogance, the destruction of greed, the uprooting of attachment, the cutting off of continuity, the extinction of craving, emancipation, accomplishment, Nibbāna.”<sup>155</sup>

Abhaya, there are three purifications, destroying the heat and afflictions is proclaimed by the Blessed One, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One, for human beings to arrive at purity, overcome sorrow and lamentation, uproot pain and dejection, attain the truth, realize Nibbāna.<sup>156</sup>

When Parivrājaka asked Sāriputta what Nibbāna is, Sāriputta replied him with the same definition as that of the Buddha: “The extinction of greed, the extinction of anger, the extinction of illusive thoughts.”<sup>157</sup>

The destruction and breaking up of desire and craving for these Five Aggregates, (Pañcakkhandha: rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā,

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<sup>154</sup> S IV, p. 359.

<sup>155</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>157</sup> S (PTS) IV, p. 251.

viññāṇa): that is the end of dukkha.<sup>158</sup> The end of the cycle of birth and death is Nibbāna.<sup>159</sup> Or the Deathless (amata) is extinction (nibbāna).<sup>160</sup>

There are four possible interpretations of the concept of Nibbāna from Buddhist literature as follows:

- 1) At the primary level Nibbāna means the extinction of pain and sorrow.
- 2) At a more philosophical level Nibbāna means the extinction of empirical phenomena.
- 3) A third implication of Nibbāna sanctioned in some parts of Buddhistic literature is absolute extinction.
- 4) A fourth possible significance of Nibbāna is the implication of the being of an absolute real.<sup>161</sup>

Nibbāna is the fourth ultimate reality (paramattha dhamma). Whereas the other three realities—consciousness (citta), mental formations (cetasikā) and material phenomena (rūpa)—are conditioned, Nibbāna is not; it is neither created nor formed.<sup>162</sup>

The Buddha taught the kinds of Nibbāna as follows:

There are, O Bhikkhus, two elements of Nibbāna. What two?  
The element of Nibbāna with the basis (upādi) still

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<sup>158</sup> M I (PTS), p. 191.

<sup>159</sup> S II (PTS), p. 117.

<sup>160</sup> Bhikkhu Nanamoli, **The Minor Readings (Khuddakapātha)**, (London: PTS, 1978), p. 202.

<sup>161</sup> Varma, Vishwanath Prasad, *op.cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>162</sup> N.K.G. Mendis. **The Abhidhamma in Practice**, (Kandy: BPS, 1985), p. 41.

remaining and that without basis. Herein, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu is an Arahant, one who has destroyed the Defilements, who has lived the life, done what was to be done, laid aside the burden, who has attained his goal, who has destroyed the fetters of existence, who, rightly understanding, is delivered. His five sense-organs still remain and as he is not devoid of them he undergoes the pleasant and the unpleasant experiences.

That destruction of his attachment, hatred and delusion is called the ‘Element of Nibbāna with the basis still remaining.’ “What O Bhikkus, is ‘the Element of Nibbāna without the basis’? “Herein, O Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu is an Arahant... is delivered.

In this very life all his sensations will have no delight for him, they will be cooled. This is called ‘the Element of Nibbāna without a basis.’<sup>163</sup>

In summary, though the concepts are taken from definitions from Sūtras of the above Theravāda tradition we can see that Nibbāna is extinguishing craving and the perfect limitation of every suffering without false thinking, discrimination or illusion. The Nibāna realm is beyond the scope of the normal language of people and the definitions are also temporary definitions depending on levels of beings the Buddha used a temporary expediency. Nibbāna in Theravāda tradition consists of

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<sup>163</sup> Nārada, **The Buddha and His Teachings**, (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 2006), p. 338-9; Itivuttaka.II.7; As It Was Said, F.L. Woodward, (tr.), (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 143.

incomplete nirvāṇa and later this “the Element of Nibbāna without a basis” is developed in Mahāyāna and is called “Nibbāna of no-abode”.

## 2.5 Conclusion

Awakened mind, Luminous mind (*Pabhassara Citta*), Consciousness (*Viññāṇa*), and Emptiness or Void (*suññatā*) are synonyms of the Buddha-nature that have been proved and explained in the scriptures of the Nikāya tradition through the dialogues of the Sakyamuni Buddha and his excellent disciples e.g. Sariputta where the disciples discussed the dharma together to practice, to eliminate defilements and return to live with the luminous mind (*Pabhassara Citta*). The Buddha experienced and discovered it and during his forty-five years He taught sentient beings to eliminate the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance and live with one self’s pure nature.

A practitioner who achieves a luminous mind (*Pabhassara Citta*) passes the four stages from Sotapanna, Sakadagamin, Anagamin and Arahant. Arahantship is who attains the fourth stage of Sainthood, is not reborn anywhere and lives a monastic life in accordance with the Buddha’s teachings.

As in the above presentation the Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism is expressed through the four Sūttas and we see that each Sūtta Buddha taught about the Buddha-nature in different forms so that everyone can follow it for the purification of mind. The states of Arhat’s bright ever mind is the same with as Buddha’s mind because the Buddha also had this title. Nonetheless the practice of a person reaching the Fruit of Arhatship always practices three factors: morality, concentration and

wisdom. This is also the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path which has the capability of initiating the Holy fruitions of the Buddha available within every person. If the practitioner trains and cultivates strictly and exactly they will become resources to protect us, shelter us and others and they will help beings overcome the dull-witted shores of vulgarity and on to the free joyful realm, to have the opportunity of attaining Nirvana and liberation from Samsara.

The practitioner cultivates on the basis of Discipline-Meditation-Wisdom and through secret and strict practice the practitioner can easily see impermanence and selflessness and impurity; see the causes and conditions gathering and the decaying of human life and the universe. When the practitioner sees clearly their true nature at that moment the practitioner has absorbed the things and enters into the truth, departed from suffering, self-grasping. It is the Bhutatathata, the Wisdom (Paññā), Original face, Buddha nature.

The luminous mind (Pabhassara Citta) of the Arahant and the Buddha are the same: the Buddha is considered as the first Arahant because out of compassion He taught his disciples how to practice to attain liberation, enlightenment, Nirvāna in this life consequently when ending their present life all no longer rotate nor are reborn in the world.

In summary, the concept of Buddha nature in Theravāda is considered as a bright and empty mind, a mind without ruling or clinging to anything in the world while simultaneously dwelling in that brightness, in the emptiness of the multifold outside world. The practitioner also sees real as it is; sees the true nature of things.

## **Chapter III**

### **The Concept of Buddha-Nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism**

This chapter is the most important part of this research consequently the researcher divided it into three main parts:

- 1) The Concept of Buddha-nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism
- 2) Buddha-nature in Mahāyāna Sūtras
- 3) The development of the Buddha-nature concept from Theravāda to Mahāyāna Buddhism

#### **3.1 The Concept of Buddha-Nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism**

##### **3.1.1 The Essence of Buddha**

The Buddha-nature in the Mahāyāna view is neither disappearance nor appearance nor permanence. It is present in all phenomena from sentient beings to non-sentient beings.<sup>164</sup> The sentient beings are not only in the human realm but also all beings in the six realms of deities, humans, asuras, animals, hungry ghosts and hell. Buddhahood is awaiting them. Sūtras always say that all sentient beings possess the Buddha-

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<sup>164</sup> Irons, Edward A., *op.cit.*, p. 64.

nature. Rinpoche said, “The body of the supreme Buddha is all-pervading, the potential of Buddhahood exists in every sentient being.”<sup>165</sup> Buddha-nature is fully manifest, fully realized.<sup>166</sup>

The Buddha nature/ tathāgatagarbha shows the essence of Buddha. The Buddha’s enlightenment is the realization of this true nature. The Buddha preached Dhamma and used countless means in order to show how beings recognize and live with their own Buddha Essence to help all beings become Buddhas.

### 3.1.2 Buddha-Nature (*Tathāgata-garbha*)

In Mahāyāna Buddhism the term “Buddha-nature” has many various names and is also closely related to the meaning of Tathāgatagarbha: tatha + agata, “thus come”; or tatha + gata, “thus gone.” Garbha: embryo and womb. Tathāgata-garbha: embryonic Tathāgata” or “womb of the Tathāgata”,<sup>167</sup> The Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra (around 350-431 A.D) says: “All beings have the quintessence of the Tathāgata, like in the heart of a poor mother is a lovely child, like gold is hidden in a cesspool.” The Mahāparinibbāṇa Sūta also says: “Similar to butter mixed with milk, Buddha-nature is imbued in all beings.”

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<sup>165</sup> Arya Maitreya, **Buddha-Nature: The Mahāyāna Uttara Tantra Shastra Maitreya’s Root Text & Asanga’s Commentary**, (Vancouver, BC Canada: Zuru Ling Tibetan Buddhist Centre, 2001), p. 149.

<sup>166</sup> Sallie B. King, **Buddha Nature and the Concept of Person Buddha Nature and the Concept of Person**, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), p. 168.

<sup>167</sup> Sallie B. King, **Buddha Nature**, (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1992), p. 4.



### 3.1.3 Dhammakāya

Dhammakāya or Dharma body is no production, no destruction, no form of Buddhas, the Buddha-body of reality, the wisdom body of the Buddha. This wisdom brings about perfection and purification.<sup>168</sup> Dhammakāya is the synonym of Absolute Truth, Reality. Dhammakāya is everywhere in the entire universe, in every sentient being containing the Absolute Truth or Reality to integrate into the essence of Buddhas. Though practicing those beings that have not yet achieved enlightenment will not realize the Absolute Truth or Buddha-nature and cannot also integrate into the essence Buddhas.

All beings are equal in the pure nature and have a deep inner peace. Human beings can practice and cultivate or even have gradual evolution to reach this absolute peace.

### 3.1.4 Other Concepts

According to the *Avataṃsaka-sūtra* (Flowers Adornment Sūtra), the Buddha-nature is a Buddha seed,<sup>169</sup> is permanent<sup>170</sup> and all beings sentient and insentient have the Buddha-nature.<sup>171</sup> In a suitable time and

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<sup>168</sup> Geshe Tsultim Gyeltsen, (tr.) **Illuminating the Path to Enlightenment**, (CA: Thubten Dhargye Ling, 2002), p. 16.

<sup>169</sup> Hsuan Hua, **Flowers Adornment Sūtra**, (Dharma realm Buddhist Association, 1983), p. 35.

<sup>170</sup> Stambaugh, Joan, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>171</sup> Abe, Masao, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

situation everyone has the potential to become Buddha through a gradual process of faith, understanding, practice and enlightenment.<sup>172</sup>

Buddha-nature is the primary, original nature of all beings, the mind surpassing duality and is the Middle Way between truth and non-truth.<sup>173</sup> The following terms are synonyms of the Buddha-nature: Buddhadhātu,<sup>174</sup> Self-Nature, True Nature, Original Nature, Dharma Nature, True Mark, True Mind, True Thusness, Original Face, Prajñā, Nirvāna. It is always present expressing a perfect inactivity and indestructibility. We practice to reveal it by eliminating all defilements, overcoming temptations and discrimination in normal life to realize the truth of life and the Buddha-nature.

The Buddha-nature is always present in each individual. When we do something in the right direction of the Buddha nature (tathāgatagarbha) everything will be good. On the contrary although we have the Buddha-nature it is covered with three poisons and sometime we perform because of ignorance and three poisons and those actions lead to an unsatisfactory result; a decadent retribution. For insentient beings like plants and trees they are only a sense that is life; they spend evolution and can achieve enlightenment.

To summarize: the meanings of Buddha-nature indicate the essence of Buddha, abstract as well as profound, that appeared after the Buddha's death. It is the most important essential meaning in the thought of

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<sup>172</sup> Sung-bae Park, **Buddhist Faith and Sudden Enlightenment**, (Albany: State University of New York, 1983), p. 4.

<sup>173</sup> Irons, Edward A., *op.cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

Mahāyāna Buddhism including Zen Sect Pure Land School. Buddha-nature exists in all beings or in other words Buddha-nature is the tranquil essence of all phenomena in the universe; is the highest level that all will attain, that is Buddha's realm.

### **3.2 Buddha-Nature in Mahāyāna Sūtras**

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the Buddha-nature in Mahāyāna tradition from the development of the term Buddha-nature in the history of development of Buddhism. At the same time the researcher will delve deeply into the Mahāyāna Sūtras that mention the Buddha-nature because this is an important concept and pinnacle of practicing Enlightenment in Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition.

#### **3.2.1 Buddha-Nature as It Appears in Mahāyāna Sūtra**

Depending on the circumstance and time every Sūtra deploys various aspects but on the whole Sūtras are supposed to be step by step guides for beings to remove the shackles of ignorance, affliction, greed and anger in order to get out of the cycle of birth and rebirth and reach the shore of total liberation and integrate the essence of absolute truth and awareness or Buddhahood. The adaptation of each Mahāyāna Sūtra gives the idea with the philosophy of Buddha-nature to cure mental disorder of beings in a stage of that period: 1) The Avataṃsaka Sūtra, 2) The Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra, 3) The Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra, 4) The Lotus Sūtra, 5) The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra.

### 3.2.1.1 The Avataṃsaka Sūtra

The Avataṃsaka-sūtra is short for “The Great and Vast Buddha Garland Sutra” (s: Mahavaipulya-buddhavataṃsaka-sūtra). According to the research of some scholars this Sūtra appeared very early between 200 BC and 200 CE and was translated into Chinese in the third century CE. Another translation of the Avataṃsaka into Chinese was made by Bodhibhadra in 418–21 and a further complete translation was made by the Khotanese monk Śikṣānanda during the closing years of the seventh century.<sup>175</sup> It plays a major role in the development of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought.

According to the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* all things in the universe have an equal Absolute nature called Buddha-nature, or Absolute Truth. Although it is different in form between the Buddha, The Holy One, beings, animals and plants all have that same basic nature.<sup>176</sup> It is the base, the core of the practice of Mahāyāna Buddhism in general and the philosophy of the practice of The Avataṃsaka Sūtra in particular. Therefore the chapter of the Manifestation of the Buddha mentions the core of the first pure mind because only pure mind can contact the Buddha, the embryo of the Buddha. It is written as follows:

The Buddha-knowledge is also like this, appearing throughout the cosmos, not before, nor after: the Buddha appears in the clean mind-vessels of all sentient beings. If

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<sup>175</sup> Williams Paul, (b) **Mahāyāna Buddhism: The doctrinal foundations**, (NY: Routledge, 2009), p. 133.

<sup>176</sup> Doan Trung Con- Nguyen Minh Tien, **The Buddhist Schools**, (Vietnamese version), (HCM: Collection Publishing House), p. 77.

the mind is always pure, we always see the Buddha-body; if the mind is polluted, the vessel breaks, the Buddha cannot be seen.<sup>177</sup>

The Dharma nature of the Buddha is pure, no coming, no going, no performing, the minds of beings are:

The nature of things is uncreated, unchanging,  
Fundamentally pure, like space  
The purity of nature of Buddhas is like this  
Their fundamental nature is not a nature, is beyond beings  
and nonbeings.<sup>178</sup>

The Buddha's and beings' minds are equal, undifferentiated as the chapter of Ascent to the Palace of the Tushita Heaven says: "The Buddha's body is not limited, abiding in the bodies of beings."

The knowledge of Buddha is infinite and unobstructed, able to benefit all universes, fully inherent in the bodies of sentient beings but because of the ignorance caused by clinging to delusion one does not know it, is not aware of it and so does not benefit from it.<sup>179</sup> That is the knowledge of Buddha as equal, nondual, without discrimination but according to the differences in sentient beings' mental patterns the knowledge they obtain is not the same.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Thomas Cleary, **The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of The Avataṃsaka Sūtra, Book Thirty-Seven**, (Boston: Shambhala, 1986), p. 326.

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*, p. 311.

Although they are all of the same pure nature Karma-Cause forms various physical forms, for example, a quiet sea that sometimes has undulating waves, sometimes makes outbursts of deluges or tsunami. Although the shapes are different its nature is still water and has a salty flavor which represents the Buddha-nature. Deluded beings cannot see the knowledge of Buddha so the Buddha used Buddha's eye to observe and preach the Noble Path to beings to help them attain the available unlimited knowledge.

To attain the unlimited knowledge Sudhana should experience many ways to seek enlightenment. The Mahāyāna belief arose with aspiration: "As the large earth does not waver when it takes burden with the power of great compassion; as the treasure of intelligence rears the world, I hope to step up onto such supreme vehicle. That Vehicle is the Buddha-Vehicle, the foremost vehicle, the preeminent vehicle, the supreme vehicle, the highest vehicle, the unexcelled vehicle, the vehicle of benefiting all sentient beings."<sup>181</sup>

Besides the aspiration for seeking enlightenment he should have absolute belief because "Faith is the basis of the Path, the mother of virtues, nourishing and growing all good ways"<sup>182</sup> It determines to perform that aspiration by contacting wise advisors (*Kalyanamitta*) to learn without tiring to "seek Omniscience without withdrawal" and practice the Buddha's teachings to ride on the Great Vehicle the Buddha wanted to give us to abide in the Diamond mind into omniscience. Unlike

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<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>182</sup> Thomas Cleary, **The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of The Avataṃsaka Sūtra, Book Twelve**, *op.cit.*, p. 331.

Sudhana, Queen Śrīmālā realized the Great Vehicle, Tathāgata-garbha, and although she was a woman she vowed practicing the Bodhisattva's Way in her life to help all beings penetrate that Absolute Realm.

“All dharmas are from condition, they have no buttress, only arises from unity.”<sup>183</sup> But “dharmas are pure, formless as nothingness,”<sup>184</sup> they are in all things and phenomena so the whole core thought of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra is summarized in a clause: “All in One; One in All”.

All things in the universe are closely related. The Sketchy Interpretation of the Basic Categories explains: “This thing is the other thing, the other thing is this thing, one thing is present in all things, all things are present in one thing, one thing means all things, all things mean one thing. The Principle of Independent Arising shows that one thing itself cannot appear but thanks to innumerable other things gathering to constitute.”<sup>185</sup>

When the presenting of this, that presents

When the absenting of thing, that not absents

From the arising of this, that arises.

From the ceasing of this, that ceases.<sup>186</sup>

The Dharma-realm (*dharmadhātu*) is the universe seen correctly, the quicksilver universe of a visionary perspective wherein all is empty,<sup>187</sup> it is a Universe of Truth.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> *ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*, p. 377.

<sup>185</sup> Hanh Co, **The Sketchy Interpretation of the Basic Categories**, (Vietnamese Version), (HCM: TongHop Publisher, 2009), p. 24.

<sup>186</sup> *ibid.*, p. 24.

One is the Vehicle of Oneness as the light when the Buddha started to preach the Lotus Sūtra:

From the tuft of white hair between his eyebrows the Buddha emitted a ray of light illuminating all the eighteen thousand worlds in the east down as far as the lowest Avīci hell and up as high as the Akaniṣṭha Heaven. Beings of this realm can see those beings of the other six realms.<sup>189</sup>

The One Vehicle is the world of True emptiness and a wonderful existence. The existence is wonderful because all things are existing and operating but they are not everlasting because they arise from emptiness, no longer conditioned they will break up and its Reality is empty so it is called the True Emptiness as the Sūtra taught: “Buddhas the biped Kings know that the dharma has no nature, the seed of Buddhahood follows Dependent Arising, so the Buddha teaches One vehicle.”

The nature of beings’ minds and all dharmas are emptiness (Sunyata) i.e. the real character of all things. Realizing that we can see Dharmakāya of Buddhas. In the Diamond Sūtra the Buddha taught about emptiness: “Seeing that marks and forms are not marks and forms, means we can see the Tathāgata.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Williams, Paul (b), *op.cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>189</sup> Watson, Burton, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>190</sup> Hsuan Hua, **The Diamond Sūtra- A General Explanation of the Vajra Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra**, (San Francisco: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1974), p.95.



Abiding in emptiness means to penetrate the sphere of the Tathāgata. In order to penetrate this sphere we should practice the ten great vows of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. Then attaining the great vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra is attaining the world of Avataṃsaka.

To sum up, according to the spirit of Avataṃsaka the practice of the Bodhisattva's way and cultivation to follow the great vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra will lead to the realm of Absolute Truth, to see the Conditioned Arising of Dharmas and the same one nature of all. The Buddha saw this and he skillfully preached so that the beings' minds unite with the Buddha's mind. We live with the Buddha-nature, that is we get into the One Vehicle and abide perfectly in emptiness.

### **3.2.1.2 The Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra**

Both Theravāda and Mahāyāna schools mention the Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra (MPNS). However in this chapter the researcher will set out Buddha-nature and correlate it with the Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra (MPNS) of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

This Sūtra appeared between 100 CE and 220 CE. The academic researcher Hodge summarizes the proof of its origin as follows: "There is strong evidence that MPNS, or one part of its core together with relative texts, was compiled in South India during the second half of the 2nd century CE, in a Mahāsāṃghika environment. Maybe this was one of

their centers along the western coastal region such as Karli the Amaravatī-Dhanyakataka region.”<sup>191</sup>

In this Sūtra the Buddha emphasized essentially the Buddha-nature i.e. all beings have the Buddha-nature.<sup>192</sup> But afflictions cover the Dharmakāya so it is not known. We should diligently cultivate the Dhamma to destroy all afflictions. Because we often live in fantasy and see everything as permanent and unchanging the Buddha taught us to observe the impermanence and consequently not to attach to anything. Only the Dharmakāya, the Buddha-Body is the permanent Body, indestructible body, the Diamond-body, not the omnivorous body. The Tathāgata-Body is really the Dharma-body.<sup>193</sup>

To avoid being miserable, to end all suffering we need to return and live with the available Buddha-nature. We can change ourselves and that means we change our thinking, ideas and actions. Everything outside the mind like environmental circumstance or others’ thoughts we cannot change according to our wish. If we change our minds all will change. Happiness or suffering in our life is in us, in every moment in the present. When we return to live with our pure natural-mind we will not have afflictions because the natural mind is empty, clear bright, pure, permanent and immutable and beyond the common thinking of life, therefore it is called inconceivable mind. That Essence inundates

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<sup>191</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mah%C4%81y%C4%81na\\_Mah%C4%81parinirv%C4%81%E1%B9%87a\\_S%C5%ABtra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mah%C4%81y%C4%81na_Mah%C4%81parinirv%C4%81%E1%B9%87a_S%C5%ABtra), reviewed 26 October 2016.

<sup>192</sup> Kosho Yamamoto, **The Mahayana Mahaparinirvana Sūtra**, (PDF e-book, 1973), p. 101. **Taisho Tripitaka**, vol. 12, No. 374.

<sup>193</sup> Thich Tu Thong, (ed.) **Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra**, (Vietnamese version), (HaNoi: Religious Publisher, 2013), p. 69.

everywhere, ever-ready, calm and present in quietness and is called Tathāgata.

Because of the cluster of cloud ignorance we cannot see the clearance of the sun of wisdom. This is how the Sūtra describes it: ‘In the house of a poor girl there is a big treasure but she doesn’t know. A guest who has compassion shows the place where the treasure is hidden. The guest skillfully knows the place represents the Tathāgatha, the poor girl represents beings and the treasure is the Buddha-nature’.<sup>194</sup>

Human beings are covered with boundless afflictions and greed, anger and ignorance, consequently we cannot know the Buddha-nature. If we end afflictions the Buddha-nature will be revealed just as an athlete looks in a mirror and sees his highly cherished body as a pearl.<sup>195</sup> The Buddha-nature is powerful and cannot be damaged, nobody can sabotage it and is also called the Tathāgata-garbha.<sup>196</sup>

The Tathāgata-nature is pure and unblemished as the transformation body. The Tathāgata’ body is Dharmakāya and is omnipresent. So it is said the Tathāgata attained Nirvana. In fact the Tathāgata did not enter Nirvāna. His appearance made seven steps and said: “In the heavens above and earth beneath, I alone am the Honoured One”<sup>197</sup>.

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<sup>194</sup> *ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>196</sup> *ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>197</sup> *Shimen guijingyi* 釋門歸敬儀 (Chinese version). **Taishō Tripitaka**, vol.45, no. 1896, p. 855, a20.

In the seventh chapter He also clearly said the Self is mainly Tathāgata, the Real mind, the Buddha-nature, the indestructible diamond body; not the self of Crown Prince Siddhattha. In the time of converting beings He introduced the Buddha-nature and guided all beings to it and showed beings the way of integrating the unchanged permanent essence leading to complete liberation. According to the world He performed countless foundations of karma-root<sup>198</sup> and then passed away as an appearance of passing away. Tathāgata is permanent, unchanged.<sup>199</sup>

The Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra (MPNS) mentions the profound, ultimate place which is permanent, quiet and indestructible. It is Tathāgata-garbha, Buddha-nature in every being as described more clearly in the images familiar and easier to understand than in the Avataṃsaka Sūtra. In this sūtra He appeared in the physical body, lived like a normal person until he appeared to pass away. During the time He existed in the world He showed the ultimate truth to beings which is the available Buddha-nature but because of defilements beings cannot realize it. He took off the veil of ignorance and affliction so that everybody can see and realize the Buddha-nature through practice to attain the result of the Buddha's way as he did.

### 3.2.1.3 The Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra

The *Sri-Mālā sūtra* (Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā) is one of the Mahāyāna Sūtras that states the realization and penetration of Lay Buddhists' Buddha-nature and the appreciation of Laywomen's practice

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<sup>198</sup> Thich Tu Thong, *op.cit.*, p. 271.

<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*, p. 271.

of Bodhisattva's way. This Sūtra appeared in the 3rd century CE. and was translated into Chinese in 436 CE by Guṇabhadra (394-468) and later by Bodhiruci (672-727).

All the Mahāyāna Sūtras reveal the ultimate practice that is to attain the supreme Bodhi e.g. anyone who comes to a stupa and a small temple and recites the Buddha's name has certainly attained the path of the Buddhas. This attainment of Buddha should be understood; his mind integrates with the Buddha-nature, the Buddha's mind and beings' mind are one which is bright and immutable. The *Sri-Mālā sūtra* describes Buddha-nature in another form but it still has the same meaning as Tathāgatagarbha:

The Tathāgatagarbha is neither life nor death. The Tathāgata garbha is separate from the conditioned. The Tathāgatagarbha is eternal and unchanging. Therefore, the Tathāgatagarbha is the basis, the support, and the foundation. O Lord, the Tathāgatagarbha is not separate, not severed, not liberated from, and not different from the inconceivable Buddha-Dharmas. O Lord, the basis, support, and foundation of conditioned phenomena, which are severed from, separate from, and different from the Buddha-Dharmas, also are the Tathāgatagarbha "O Lord, if there were no Tathāgatagarbha there would be no revulsion toward suffering, nor aspiration to seek nirvana. Why? Because the seven mental phenomena- the six sense consciousnesses and the knowledge of their accompanying mental phenomena- do not continue even momentarily and do not accept the

impressions of suffering, there cannot be revulsion for suffering nor aspiration to seek nirvana. The Tathāgatagarbha is without any prior limit, is non-arising, and is indestructible, accepting suffering, having revulsion toward suffering, and aspiring to Nirvana. O Lord, the Tathāgatagarbha is not a substantial self, nor a living being, nor ‘fate,’ nor a person. The Tathāgatagarbha is not a realm for living beings who have degenerated into the belief of a substantially existent body or for those who have contrary views, or who have minds bewildered by emptiness.<sup>200</sup>

That Tathāgatagarbha always exists but afflictions can cover it so we cannot see it. The Tathāgatagarbha is also Dharmakāya:

The Dharmakāya of the Buddha has the perfection of permanence, the perfection of pleasure, the perfection of self, the perfection of purity. Whatever sentient beings see the Dharmakāya of the Tathāgata that way, see correctly. Whoever see correctly are called the sons of the Lord born from his heart, born from his mouth, born from the Dharma, who behave as manifestation of Dharma and as heirs of Dharma.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Diana Y. Paul; John R. McRae, (tr.) **The Sūtra of Queen Śrīmālā of the Lion’s Roar/ The Vimalakīrti Sūtra**, (CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2014), pp. 45-46.

<sup>201</sup> Alex Wayman, and Hideko Wayman, (tr.) **The Lion’s Roar of Queen Śrīmālā: A Buddhist Scripture on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007), p. 102.

The Chapter Dharmakāya states: “The Dharma body of the Tathāgata is called the Tathāgatagarbha when it is inseparable from the stores of defilements.”<sup>202</sup>

Queen Śrīmālā understood the Tathāgatagarbha, “The Tathāgata-embryo is the Tathāgata’s knowledge of emptiness,”<sup>203</sup> or Dharmakāya and realized the Buddha-nature in herself. Even as a woman she still extensively vowed to take responsibility to practice Bodhisattva’s way with three great vows for immeasurable benefits for beings as follows:

By the power of my earnest aspiration, may I bring peace to innumerable and unlimited living beings. By my virtuous deeds, throughout all rebirths may I attain the wisdom of the True Dharma.” This is called the first great vow. “Having attained the wisdom of the True Dharma for the sake of all living beings may I explain the Dharma without wearying.” This is called the second great vow. “In accepting the True Dharma, may I abandon body, life, and wealth and uphold the True Dharma.” This is called the third great vow.<sup>204</sup>

Bodhisattvas who vow to practice Bodhisattva’s way also serve these three great vows. Queen Śrīmālā was a typical woman who practiced the Bodhisattva’s way in a modest and respectful, affectionate, refined way. She did very normal things such as respecting the elders,

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<sup>202</sup> Paul, Diana Y.; John R. McRae (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>203</sup> Garma C.C. Chang, (tr.) **A Treasury of the Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūta Sūtra**, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), p. 378.

<sup>204</sup> Paul, Diana Y.; John R. McRae (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 15.

was courteous to younger people, took care of the lonely with love and compassion relieving pains and bringing happiness to everyone. A Bodhisattva engages in the way of Buddha for the purpose and benefit of others, householder Vimalakirti also expressed the Bodhisattva's way by roaming freely with a leisurely free life irrespective of name and form.

Bodhisattvas clearly see that the true nature of all beings and of the Buddha is never different. But the Buddha is the supreme One who escaped the stream of Samsara while beings dive and sink in the sea of suffering. Their afflictions abound and they cannot develop the power of available Buddha-nature because their defiled-mind is attached to six objects and phenomena therefore they cannot see the intrinsic essence of all things. The Sound-hearer (Sravakas) sees the impermanence, the vanity of the physical body and phenomena so they try to destroy defilements, greed, hatred and bondages. However Bodhisattvas can see the True Nature and see things which cover the lucid True Nature therefore Bodhisattvas can undertake the lofty mission of the Tathāgata.

The Buddha-nature is equal in all beings so any woman can also practice the Bodhisattva' way just as Queen Śrīmālā undertook the heavy responsibility of propagating Mahāyāna, realized Tathāgatagarbha and lived with her own Buddha-nature.

Mahāyāna is mainly the Buddha Vehicle, the One Vehicle, the Universal Truth, The Great Vehicle transporting freely and like Buddha-dharma it can transport beings from ignorance to the shore of Enlightenment thus leaving the three realms of suffering, of birth and death. They can see the Buddha- Knowledge where the Buddha wanted to



show the Truth to all beings to penetrate inherent intelligence as the Lotus sūtra describes.

The Buddha-nature in Queen Śrīmālā Sūtra is explained clearly by the term Tathāgatagarbha which Queen Śrīmālā found in a profound mysterious place, hard to see and difficult to understand. She also vowed to preserve Mahāyāna and to enlighten the spirit of the Great Vehicle to beings. Her vow of Bodhicitta and her practice of the Bodhisattva's way demonstrated that monks and lay Buddhists have a duty and ability to shoulder, to undertake and propagate Mahāyāna.

### 3.2.1.4 The Lotus Sūtra

The *Lotus Sūtra* written between 100 BCE and 200 CE<sup>205</sup> was originally translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Dharmarakṣa, aka Zhu Fahu in 286 CE in Chang'an during the Western Jin Period (265-317 CE), and translated by Dharmarakṣa in 286 CE and also translated by Kumārajīva in 406 CE.

In *Majjhima Nikāya* the Buddha taught that He appeared in the world out of compassion, peace and happiness for gods and men.<sup>206</sup> His appearance was considered a great revolution transforming the whole Indian caste systems, removing long-standing severe castes. He also declared that there is no class when the tears are saline and the bloodstream is red:

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<sup>205</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddha-nature#Buddha-nature>, reviewed September, 2016.

<sup>206</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 104.

When the four social classes- khattiyas, brahmins, vessas, and suddas- go forth from the household life into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Buddha they give up their former names and clans and are simply called ascetics following the Sakyan son.<sup>207</sup>

The Buddha realized the truth, wisdom and permanence after meditating under the Bodhi tree. Because his teachings were deep and incomprehensible he used skillful means to show human beings. The method of the Buddha-Dhamma is like drops of rain and depending on their size trees absorb different amounts of water but all of them are imbued. He realized that all beings also have a pure nature so when there was Dhamma-rain the Bodhi-citta would be gradually opened and developed and true insight would be revealed. The Buddha appeared in the world only to enlighten beings with the Buddha-Knowledge to introduce the guidance of awakening and penetration of the view of the Buddha to all beings. Here the Buddha-Knowledge is the Insight of Buddha; the Buddha-nature that all beings have in themselves:

It is like the rain falling from that great cloud upon all the plants and trees, thickets and groves, and medicinal herbs. Each, depending upon its species and nature, receives its full share of moistening and is enabled to sprout and grow.<sup>208</sup>

He realized that beings also have pure nature when the Dhamma-rain irrigates Bodhi-citta will be gradually opened up and developed, the

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<sup>207</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 1144.

<sup>208</sup> Watson, Burton, *op.cit.*, p. 99.

true insight will be revealed. The Lotus Sūtra taught He appears in the world with only one great cause; introducing guidance for awakening penetration of view of the Buddha for all beings as follows:

The Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, wishes to open the door of Buddha wisdom to all living beings, to allow them to attain purity. That is why they appear in the world. They wish to show the Buddha wisdom to living beings, and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to cause living beings to awaken to the Buddha wisdom and therefore they appear in the world. They wish to induce living beings to enter the path of Buddha wisdom and therefore they appear in the world. Sāriputra, this is the one great reason for which the Buddhas appear in the world.<sup>209</sup>

Here the Buddha-Knowledge was Insight of Buddha, the Buddha-nature that all beings have in them. Because all human beings have the potential to be Buddhas all beings have Buddha-nature. This fact was clearly recognized when the historical Buddha spent years of asceticism and became the Buddha. We are also ordinary human beings like the historical Buddha and if we follow his footsteps we will become Buddhas and realize Buddha-nature in ourselves. It is false if we seek outside and we will be farther and farther away from Dhamma. The most special thing in the Lotus Sūtra is the seven examples which clearly show the real mind, the Buddha-nature. These examples are closer to daily life and so easily understood. The Buddha also defined that wise people understood

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<sup>209</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31.

these examples and through these means they can prepare for an awakened enlightened life on the way of practicing liberation.

First, the Buddha used the image of a burning house to make an example in the Chapter of the third Example. This example refers to a burning house,<sup>210</sup> where the householder wanted to save his children from the burning house. He used every method to urge them out but his children did not understand and instead indulged in pleasure, running and joking in the burning house and just looked at their father. He finally used deceit and told them that there were many toys outside, many kinds of the strange precious vehicles; a goat cart, a deer cart, a buffalo cart and that they should quickly run out and get what they wanted so they ran out and escaped from the fire and all were saved.

The householder is like the Buddha, his children are like human beings, the burning house is misery of beings like the three realms<sup>211</sup>; birth, aging, illness and death. The three vehicles (*Triyana*) are considered as Sravaskas and Pratyeka-Buddhas and Bodhisattva. Thanks to the allure of the three vehicles the children ran out of the burning house of the three worlds, of the impermanence of human life. However the householder just wanted to give a great vehicle that was a buffalo cart, a Buddha Vehicle (*Buddhayana*); it means the Buddha only gave his wealth that is the Buddha Vehicle, the One Vehicle, Buddha-mind, Buddha-nature.

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<sup>210</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>211</sup> Desire World (*Kamavacara*), Form World (*Rupavacara*), Formless World (*Arupavacara*).

Everyone has available pure Buddha-nature like that of the Buddha. By skillful means and depending on human levels He taught and divided the three vehicles but there is really only the single Buddha vehicle<sup>212</sup>. We should follow his instructions directly or indirectly and then we will finally reach realization of Enlightenment that is the Buddha vehicle. These teachings were all for the sake of the single Buddha vehicle. All these sentient beings hearing the Dharma from the Buddhas finally attained omniscience.<sup>213</sup> We should look back and return to live with pure nature that is a precious treasure, we need to discover and use it. This is the purpose of the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition.

The second example refers to the poor son in the Chapter of the Fourth Willing Acceptance. Human beings are like the poor son drifting in many kalpas of the cycle of birth and death. The poor son with many years of wandering, living in hunger, seeking food and clothing and having many trials and tribulations was desolate in a strange land. The father of the poor son always expected him to return and sought the son. Then when the son met his father living in wealth he was given inheritance of property but the poor son still had a view-attachment and was satisfied with a lowly and destitute life, satisfied to be a humble servant. Finally he realized that the householder was his father who was lost for fifty years and then he inherited those great properties. This is described in the sūtra as follows:

‘The householder is like the Buddha, the poor son is like a being. Because of compassion the householder appeared to convert human

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<sup>212</sup> Watson, Burton, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>213</sup> *ibid.*, p. 30.

beings. He used skillful means, he wore filthy cloth, His hands held the crummy tool to be close to the poor son and considered he was father of the poor son, “I am just like your father.”<sup>214</sup> But the poor son still considered himself a despicable servant and lived in a thatched hut. This is understood that all of us have a Mani stone in the corner of a coat which is the true mind, real mind, view of the Buddha, an invaluable heritage but he left home to wander with his six objects outside. Getting away from the householder to wander is a divergence from the pure nature, divergence from the permanent Buddha that has neither appearance nor disappearance in our mind. All phenomena are ephemeral, impermanent, they appear and then disappear and without seeing the eternal reality we still live with that illusion.

Gradually the character of the poor son became stronger and the householder entrusted him with other important things. Before death the householder told everyone that the poor boy was his son who would inherit all his fortune. These properties were an unexpected gift and they came suddenly. The Buddha used any means so that beings gradually realized the view of the Buddha, believed and knew their origin to inherit the properties of the Buddha-nature in themselves.

The third example is the chapter of the fifth medicinal herbs. The Sūtra mentions trees and medicinal herbs of many different kinds which grew from great thousand worlds, mountains, hills, caves, trenches and lands. Then black clouds appeared and rain fell permeating all the

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<sup>214</sup> *ibid.*, p. 82.

medicinal trees and depending on their nature they could absorb enough water, so things were born, grew up, bloomed and bore fruit.

The kinds of medicinal herbs are divided into three: small, medium and large medicinal herbs. According to the order of examples for Man-Deva vehicle (s: *Narayana- Devayana*) they are small medicinal herbs. For the Sound hearer Vehicle and Middle conveyance Vehicle (*Sravakas – Pratyekabuddha*) they are medium medicinal herbs and for a Bodhisattva Vehicle they are large medicinal herbs. A heavy rain is compared to the Buddha's preaching of the One vehicle-Dharma and according to the level of beings they absorb different teachings of Five vehicles or Three Vehicles (*Three yanas*). One vehicle is the presentation of Buddhahood, the Buddha-Knowledge, the recognition of the final purpose of practice of Buddha Dharma to wipe off all disputes, conflicts, sadness, defilements and distinctions; ordinary beings and the universe are one in the Buddha-nature.

The fourth example in the Sūtra is the Illusion City. A guide leads an expedition to find a treasure but because of many obstacles, dangers and distance everyone was tired, depressed and wanted to stop. The guide felt pity; he wanted them to get the treasure and so he created a place for the expedition to rest. After that they continued their itinerary and he encouraged them that the jewels were near. The Illusion City was only an imaginary place to rest (not the destination).

The Buddha used the Illusion City to allure beings because the practice path is full of arduous obstacles and human beings' will for liberation is too weak so they need the Illusion city as a place to stop for a

rest. It means the Buddha taught a method to overcome the temptation of the Six Dusts, defilements and leaving the three poisons i.e. practicing the Four Noble Truths. After the fatigue was gone He destroyed the Illusion City and human beings continued the path to find precious things. The purpose of enjoying the treasure is to live with Buddha Knowledge.

The fifth example is about the pearl in the garment. It is in the sixth chapter of Prediction. All beings have available Buddha nature (tathāgatagarbha) but because of ignorance they do not recognize this truth, they forget Bodhi Citta, forget the great vow and wander in the weary round of rebirth and suffering. It is like we have a pearl in the corner of a coat but we do not know and cannot use it. We wander to try to earn our living and small thinking is enough. When we meet a friend who gave the pearl he reminds us to exchange the pearl for any things we need so we can live in sufficiency.

The sixth example is the precious stone worn in the coiled hair on top of the king's head in the fourteenth chapter of the Peaceful and Joyful Practice. The king appointed soldiers to conquer other countries and he rewarded according to the soldiers' effort. Only a Mani stone was given to the person with a brilliant feat of arms. This is like the Buddha who dominated the three worlds but the king of Māras was not obedient so he taught his disciples to destroy the five Māras, the afflictions of Māras, the three poisons of Māras, the three realms of Māras. According to the effort of each disciple all were rewarded and elated. The precious stone worn in the coiled hair was only given to the one who destroyed the king of Māras meaning he was not defiled any more by the three poisons, he deserved to receive Mani stone; it means he was worth receiving the teaching of the



Dharma-flower, the highest Dharma of the Buddha, the One-vehicle, the Buddha-nature.

The seventh example is the Physician in the sixteenth chapter of the Lifespan of the Tathāgata. The Buddha was considered as a physician and the patients were human beings who were infected with the toxins of greed, anger and ignorance causing sorrow and suffering. The Buddha assessed their sicknesses in order to give medicine. Some who took the medicine survived but others did not take it. Because of his pity He declared entering into his nirvana; these beings suffered but used medicinal Dharma so they could survive. These were skillful means of the Buddha for preaching the dharma and converting beings whereby the Buddha could save all sentient beings.

Whatever this form or another all Mahāyāna Sūtras show the absolute Truth, Buddha-nature and Buddha Knowledge which is formless, shapeless. To preach it to everyone we should use metaphorical images like the seven examples in the Lotus Sūtra. We can realize this Truth only when the curtains of ignorance and defilements are drawn to show our full good roots. This knowing and understanding of Tathāgatagarbha is gained through practice, experience and mindful-awareness; not through reading word by word. We need the practical application of the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra to reveal the Buddha-Nature which is to practice the Bodhisattva's way for the benefit of all beings.

Everyone has the Buddha nature (tathāgatagarbha) so we can promote the great compassion from Lay Buddhists to monks and nuns. Bodhisattvas take great compassion upon all beings. Even if we receive

and observe the Sūtra only and then further propagate the Lotus Sūtra our six bases are purified<sup>215</sup> and we can return to live with Buddha Knowledge and purity. Observing the Lotus Sutra is to return to life with Omnipresent Dharma Kaya without form and substance, no birth and death and with boundless merit. We should propagate the Dhamma as the Never-Despise Bodhisattva (Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta): “I dare not belittle you, because you will definitely become Buddhas.” With strong faith he lived among people to awaken Buddha-nature in them.

However, their response was mocking, libel and insults but he still endured them all. Thanks to his faith in the Buddha-Nature in all of us he kept patient to convey the message and awaken their Buddha-mind. Thanks to his generosity he kept altruistic determination and practicing Bodhisattva way he gradually achieved eloquent wisdom and attained pure faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. At the same time anyone who defamed him were all later saved by him.

The Never-Despise Bodhisattva (Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta) practiced to liberate beings from delusions and awaken them to know Buddha-nature in themselves. His way is guidance of practice in our daily life for us to live with the Buddha-nature as the brightness of Buddhahood within us as well as in the Never-Despise Bodhisattva.

When we are enlightened with the Buddha Knowledge we need to practice to integrate into Buddha-nature. The path of integration the Lotus Sutra teaches is to have compassion to practice the Bodhisattva’s way for the benefit of others just as Samantabhadra Bodhisattva went into places

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<sup>215</sup> *ibid.*, p. 265.

of suffering and difficulties to convert beings. In the chapter on the Universal Gateway of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Kuan-Shi-Yin) he appeared in thirty-two bodies and always listened to understand and convert suffering of beings. So when we listen to hear the sound we turn to our nature of hearing: only hear but not follow the sound so the thought is stopped without suffering; at that time we penetrate the Buddha Knowledge and the mind is pure, tranquil. Or as Malyasri, an intelligent laywoman, she understood the Great Vehicle, decided to guide little boys and girls to practice Buddha-Dhamma of the Great Vehicle to solemn Buddhahood.

The practice of Bodhisattva's way is the path to live with Buddha nature (tathāgatagarbha) which is indispensable to a practitioner. He should pursue enlightenment for himself and then enlighten others and then it will be the required completion. However, in Mahāyāna spirit it does not mean to dig up the past but in the present everyone, both monks and Lay Buddhists vow to observe Bodhisattva practice. The practice is not only in floral offerings, chanting Sūtras but also in all areas of life. However, according to the spirit of Mahāyāna we try to cultivate with the criteria "All worldly Dhamma are Buddha-Dhamma" but so far it has not fully manifested in society.

To sum up, through the seven examples of the *Lotus Sūtra* the Buddha used every method to reveal the Buddha-nature in every human being. He really was a good father who always wished His exiled children to return home to receive the heritage of Dharma treasure. He tried to guide beings step by step to move towards the place of precious things, the happy nirvana. The diligent practice of beings did not stop at

the three vehicles, the Buddha wanted beings to accomplish the One Vehicle, integrate into Buddha Knowledge, live with the Buddha-nature - This is the core of *Saddharma Pundarika Mahāyāna Sūtra*.

### 3.2.1.5 The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra

The ideas of the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra uphold the Mahāyāna doctrine; heighten the spirit of the Bodhisattva's way, the unattached spirit, fights against ego-attachment, dhamma-attachment and especially mentions the doctrine of Tathāgatagarbha. Tathāgatagarbha is Buddha-nature. One who wants to achieve this Buddha-nature needs to remove stubbornness, dualistic distinction i.e. clinging to the idea that things are real, clinging to the idea that things are unreal.

Tathāgatagarbha in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra is called the germ-nature of Buddha and is synonymous with dhamma-nature, Dharma-kāya, Buddha-nature, no appearance nor disappearance, calm original nature, Nibbāna-self-nature,<sup>216</sup> all the above terms demonstrate the Tathāgatagarbha.

Tathāgatagarbha is the Tathāgata-store, Tathāgatagarbha typifies liberation-nibbāna. All sentient beings have Tathāgatagarbha and they can become Tathāgata if they know how to disentangle all hindrances of knowledge (*Jneyavarana*) and hindrance of passions (*Klesavarana*). The concept of Tathāgatagarbha in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra is described through the words of Bodhisattva Mahāmati:

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<sup>216</sup> **The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra**, vol. 2 (Chinese version 楞伽阿跋多羅寶經). **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol.16, no. 670, p. 489, b5-6.

Now the Blessed One makes mention of the Tathāgatagarbha in the Sūtras, and verily it is described by you as by nature bright and pure, as primarily unspotted, endowed with the thirty-two marks of excellence, hidden in the body of every being like a gem of great value, which is enwrapped in a dirty garment, enveloped in the garment of the Skandhas, Dhatus, and Ayatanas, and soiled with the dirt of greed, anger, folly, and false imagination.<sup>217</sup>

In the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra Bodhisattva Asvaghosha also has the same thought as that found in Tathāgatagarbha: “All defilements of Samsara in the world rely on the Tathāgatagarbha and all things are not detached from the True Thusness.”<sup>218</sup> In the Sūtra of Heroic One (*Surangama Sūtra*) the Buddha said about the Tathāgatagarbha:

All the Laws of this world and the Spiritual Law arise from Tathāgatagarbha-mind. Your bodies are things in the profoundly enlightened mind, why you forget that profoundly enlightened mind, but accept illusion in the enlightenment.<sup>219</sup>

It means all compounded things arise from the Tathāgatagarbha.

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<sup>217</sup> Daisetz Teitarō Suzuki (tr.), (a) **The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra: A Mahāyāna Text.** (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2011), p. 69.

<sup>218</sup> Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna, vol 1大乘起信論. **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol.32, no. 1666, p. 579, c4-10.

<sup>219</sup> Śūraṅgama Sutra, 首楞嚴經 vol. 4. **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol.19, no. 945, p. 119, c15-p. 120, a4.

Tathāgatagarbha is bright, pure naturally, untainted, eternal, permanent as the gem hidden in each human being and in all places and yet the Buddha-nature is considered as emptiness. The Tathāgatagarbha is void (Sunya) of the adventitious defilements but not void (aṣunya) of the highest properties of the Buddha.<sup>220</sup> T.R.V. Murti says, “The Absolute is very often termed śūnya, as it is devoid of all predicates”.<sup>221</sup> In the Tathāgatagarbha the Buddha answered the question of Mahāmati about how Buddha-nature is different from ego of the different philosophers:

The Blessed One replied:

No, Mahāmati, my Tathāgatagarbha is not the same as the ego taught by the philosophers; for what the Tathāgatas teach is the Tathāgatagarbha in the sense, Mahāmati, that it is emptiness, reality-limit, Nirvāṇa, being unborn, unqualified, and devoid of will-effort; the reason why the Tathāgatas who are Arhats and Fully Enlightened Ones, teach the doctrine pointing to the Tathāgatagarbha is to make the ignorant cast aside their fear when they listen to the teaching of egolessness and to have them realize the state of non-discrimination and imagelessness. I also wish Mahāmati that the Bodhisattva Mahasattvas of the present and future would not attach themselves to the idea of an ego imagining it to be a soul.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Brian E. Brown, **The Buddha Nature: A Study of the Tathāgatagarbha and Ālayavijñāna**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers PVT. LTD., 1991), p. 161.

<sup>221</sup> T.R.V. Murti, **Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of Mādhyamika System**, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 2003), p. 228.

<sup>222</sup> Suzuki, Daisetz Teitarō (a), *op.cit.*, p. 69.

The reason why the Buddha taught Tathāgatagarbha is to help the fool not fear when they heard of the doctrine of non-ego so that they can attain the stage of non-discrimination and no illusion. Another reason is to awaken the contemporary philosophers not to cling to the concept of ego. So, “Mahāmati, to get rid of illusion which is venerated by philosophers, you should try to practice the doctrine of non-ego and Tathāgatagarbha.” It is difficult to describe the nature of Tathāgata because the true nature of Tathāgatagarbha goes beyond language, thought and discrimination. We cannot use consciousness to see it but we need to penetrate (Pativijhāti) into it and then we can just realize it. However, the Buddha used words to describe that realm of no appearance nor disappearance. According to the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra the Buddha-nature has two characteristics: Individuality and universality.<sup>223</sup> Individuality is understood thus: the Buddha-nature is called Tathāgatagarbha when it is uncovered from defilements and fully revealing the Buddha. When it is covered with defilements of greed, anger and ignorance it is called Ālayavijñāna, Universality. The Buddha-nature is called by different names in order to refer to the absolute reality of all things. As the quotation about the Tathāgatagarbha with the Ālayavijñāna from the LVS as follows:

Mahāmati, the Tathāgatagarbha holds within it the cause for both good and evil, and by it all the forms of existence are produced. Because of the influence of habit-energy that has been accumulating variously by false reasoning since

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<sup>223</sup> Nguyen Dac Sy, *The Thought of Buddha-Nature in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, **PhD. Thesis**, The University of Delhi, 2012, p. 134.

beginningless time, what here goes under the name of Ālayavijñāna is accompanied by the seven vijñānas which give birth to a state known as the abode of ignorance. It is like a great ocean in which the waves roll on permanently but the deeps remain unmoved; that is, the Ālayavijñāna body itself subsists uninterruptedly, quite free from fault of impermanence, unconcerned with the doctrine of ego substance, and thoroughly pure in its essential nature.<sup>224</sup>

The Ālayavijñāna is like the vast ocean which is rippled by waves of the arising and extinguishing consciousness but the nature of Ālayavijñāna is not still discontinued; it is perfect purity beyond the falsehood of impermanence. The true nature of the Ālayavijñāna is the Tathāgatagarbha. All compounded things are the same, subsequently behind the cover of non-ego is a pure, permanent nature without arising and extinction; that is the Tathāgatagarbha.

In brief, Buddha-nature is understood as a pure mind hidden in all sentient beings and covered by unreal defilements and also known as Tathāgatagarbha; a fully exposed state of Buddha-nature in an enlightened One, a Buddha. The Tathāgatagarbha in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra illustrates the misconception of the Sravaskas and Pratyeka-Buddhas and the philosophers about those complications such as discrimination, dualism, clinging to the idea that things are real, clinging to the idea that things are unreal, getting rid of illusions. The concept of Tathāgatagarbha and the various Mahāyāna Sūtras, although presentation

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<sup>224</sup> Suzuki, Daisetz Teitarō (a), *op.cit.*, p. 190.



of each Sūtra is different, all show the enlightenment seed in every being. Because in every being the Gem of the Tathāgata Nature is hidden so the Buddha advised all should practice to get rid of intolerant discrimination, liberate all the hindrance of knowledge (Jneyavarana) and the hindrance of passion (Klesavarana) and then Buddha-nature will be revealed. That should be done by Buddhists on the way to liberation and enlightenment.

Figure 3: Summary of Buddha-nature concept in various Sūttas of Mahāyāna Buddhism

Sūtra's Names	Avatamsaka Sūtra	Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā	Lotus Sūtra	Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra	Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra
The Appeared forms of Buddha-nature	Dharma realm (Dhamma-dhātu)	Tathāgatarba, Dhammakāya	The great Vehicle, Buddha-nature	Buddha-nature	Tathāgatarba

### 3.2.2 Buddha-Nature in Zen School and Pure Land School of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

In this small part the researcher will mention two main schools which have been flourishing in the present time, 1) Buddha-nature in Zen School, 2) Buddha-nature in Pure Land School.

#### 3.2.2.1 Buddha-Nature in Zen School

Zen is considered as a sect with:

A special transmission outside the scriptures;

No dependence on words and letters;

Direct pointing to the mind of man;  
Seeing into one's nature and attaining Buddhahood.<sup>225</sup>

The Buddha Śākyamuni is considered as One who established this meditative method and transmitted it to Mahākāśyapa. Instead of speaking to an assembled multitude the Buddha held up a flower. While the audience awaited teachings only Mahākāśyapa grasped the essence of the Law: “I have the right Dharma of eye treasury, the Nibbāna of wonderful and profound mind, I transmit to Mahākāśyapa”<sup>226</sup>

Then Mahākāśyapa became the first patriarch of Indian Zen. There were twenty eight Indian patriarchs; the last patriarch was Bodhidharma who went to China and continued to hand down teaching : to Hui-k'o (487-593), Seng-Tsan, Tao-Hsin, Hung-Jen and Hui Neng (638-713A.D.). From Hui Neng Zen the sect was divided the two main branches; in the South Hui Neng transmitted according to the method of Sudden Enlightenment and in the North Shen Hsiu transmitted according to the Gradualist School.

Because the comprehension of each person was different there was a division in Zen sect. Hui Neng was enlightened in meditation when he heard a verse from the Diamond Sūtra. He sought Dharma to practice from the Fifth Patriarch Hung-Jen and broke down the view-attachment between the South and the North by realizing that everyone has the Buddha-nature and all can practice and become a Buddha e.g. through the

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<sup>225</sup> Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, **Zen Buddhism**, (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 1996), p. 174.

<sup>226</sup> Record of the Transmission of the Dharma in the True School, vol. 1. (Chinese version). **Taishō Tripitaka**, vol. 51, no. 2078, p. 717, c26-28.

Questions and Answers between the Fifth Patriarch and Hui Neng, as follows:

The Grand Master asked: “Where are you from, and what do you want?”

I replied, ‘I am a peasant from Hsin Province in Ling-nan. I have come from far away to pay my respects to you only because I seek to be a Buddha, nothing else.’

The fifth Patriarch said, ‘You are a southerner, and an aborigine; how can you be a Buddha?’

I said, ‘People may be southerners or northerners, but the Buddha-nature originally has no south or north. As an aborigine, my social status is not the same as yours, but what difference is there in our Buddha-nature?’ <sup>227</sup>

Through those answers Hui Neng shows he had realized the Buddha-nature in himself and in others and that practice is to awaken Buddha-nature in the mind.

Shen Hsiu was an excellent disciple of the Fifth Patriarch Hung-jen. He wrote verses to show the interpretation of Buddha-Dharma with the metaphor of ‘The Mirror’ but that meant he was only at the door of Dharma:

The body is the Bodhi-tree,

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<sup>227</sup> Thomas Cleary, *The Sūtra of Hui-Neng Grand Master of Zen With Hui-neng’s Commentary on the Diamond Sūtra*, (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1998), p. 6.

The mind is like a clear mirror.  
 At all times we must strive to polish it,  
 And must not let the dust collect.<sup>228</sup>

The Buddha-nature Hui Neng realized is expressed in the verse:

There is no Bodhi tree,  
 The bright mirror is nowhere shining.  
 Since there is void from the first,  
 Where can the dust alight?<sup>229</sup>

Through verses the fifth Patriarch saw Hui-Neng had entered ‘the room of enlightenment’, realized his own self nature was always pure, that it is not appearance nor disappearance, unchanging permanence therefore no dust of life can collect.

In the sixth century Chinese Zen thought was transferred to Vietnam for the first time by Zen Master Vinītaruci (? -594) who gained the Dharma from the fifth Patriarch Seng-Tsan (?-606). In the 9th century, Vo Ngon Thong (?-826), a disciple of the Pai-Chang-Huai-Hai came to Vietnam to transmit the Zen sect of the Sixth Patriarch Hui-Neng. Hereafter this Zen sect developed in Vietnam and until the Tran Dynasty Zen had distinct nuances due to a combination of Zen– Pure Land–Tantrism. Hence Truc Lam Buddhism existed for a long time and entered the life of people of every class in society, from intelligentsia to common people. Those ideas of Zen–Pure Land– Tantrism were a

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<sup>228</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>229</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

response to the era but the core is still based on the Buddha-nature, i.e. to turn back and reflect upon own-self to live with pure nature which is the treasure in the house of the five kinds of skandhas (pañcaskandha)<sup>230</sup> as stated: “The treasure is in your house; don’t search any more. Face the scenes, and have no thoughts; then you don’t need to ask for Zen.”<sup>231</sup>

Today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we practice Zen and Pure Land at the same time and this is an indispensable method. Sudden Enlightenment is still prevailing and attained by true monks and practitioners. Dharma is thus living in the present, living with a normal mind and a pure and noble life.

To sum up, realizing and living with Buddha-nature through Zen practice was transmitted from the Buddha’s time. When Bodhidharma transmitted Zen to China it was still not prevalent. From the sixth and seventh centuries onwards it was strongly developed and transmitted to many countries. Every country acquires, combines and becomes a separate Zen sect of that country. But the truth, the pure nature is still the core of the practice. Because Sudden Enlightenment develops in the mind not through words the Zen sect has silently survived and developed until today in spite of many ups and downs in history.

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<sup>230</sup> Form (*rūpa*), feeling or sensation (*Vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*), formations (*saṃskāra*), consciousness (*viññāna*).

<sup>231</sup> Nguyen Giac, (ed.) **Tran Nhan Tong: The King Who Founded a Zen School**, (CA: Thien Tri Thuc Publications, 2010), p. 55.

### 3.2.2.2 Buddha-Nature in Pure Land School

According to the concept of Pure Land School the practitioner should have absolute trust in Buddha Amitabha. Although each practitioner has his own karma, with the power of the Buddha Amitabha and through His forty-eight vows he can practice to have rebirth in the World of Bliss. In the *Vimalakīrti sūtra*, he said:

The straightforward mind is the Pure Land of Bodhisattvas. When Bodhisattvas become Buddhas, beings do not flatter them to be reborn in his land. The profound mind is the Pure Land of Bodhisattvas and when Bodhisattvas become Buddhas, beings are full of merit, will be reborn in his land. The Bodhi mind is the Pure Land of Bodhisattvas. When Bodhisattvas become Buddhas, beings have Mahāyāna mind, will be reborn in his land.<sup>232</sup>

So the mind decides rebirth in the Pure Land or not. With a clear and one-pointed mind from one day to seven days a person will be reborn in the Pure Land. Reciting the Amitabha Buddha's name means to return to live with the Amitabha Buddha's Self-Nature as well as live with the practitioner's self-nature. The Amitabha Buddha is the Buddha of Infinite Light, Infinite Compassion and Infinite Wisdom and that is the same with the self-nature of every individual.

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<sup>232</sup> Sutra of the Discourse of Vimalakīrti (*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*). (Chinese version). **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol. 14, no. 475, p. 538, a29-b5.

Mentioning Tathāgata is to praise the nature, the pure essence of Buddhas as well as that of beings. Praising the Tathāgata is to praise the nature-virtue of reality and nature of oneself. Self-nature is the Tathāgata, the only mind is also the Tathāgata.

Because the nature of the Buddha and sentient beings are not different from each other when practitioners recite the Buddha's name and remember the Buddha then the mind has the Buddha's image and the mind becomes pure. We live with the Buddha-nature and all defilements will be destroyed. Thinking of the Buddha and praising the Tathāgata instead of thinking about human beings is to eradicate defilements.

Reciting the Buddha's name until one mind, no thought, without seeing the subject and the object needs a long process and assiduous practice of reciting the Buddha's name. The result of achieving a clear one-pointed mind is welcomed and escorted by Amitabha Buddha. In fact that one mind is the mind without suffering and afflictions, absent from illusion images of the worldly dust; it is the clear bright mind revealing the same state with infinite Light of the Buddhas of the ten directions. Mixing the infinite Light of Amitabha Buddha and the Buddha-nature of Amitabha Buddha and of sentient beings makes one light, not two.

In Vietnam in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries when the Tran Dynasty reigned, King Tran Thai Tong (1218-1277) and Tue Trung Thuong Si (1230-1291) taught the method of Buddha recitation to refine the mind, destroy evil karma and manifest Dhamma-kāya and Buddha-nature as follows:

For a person of lower level he needs to recite the Buddha's name, the mind wishes to see the appearance of the Buddha, he vows to be reborn in the Buddha realm. Day and night he should practice without withdrawing. After death, depending on his wholesome thoughts, he will be reborn in the Buddha realm then hearing the Buddha teaching he will attain Enlightenment and reach the Buddha's position.<sup>233</sup>

Tue Trung reflected on the Amitabha Buddha as the mind of every one, as Dhamma-kāya appearing anywhere like a marvelous moon that appears on every pond, lake, river or sea on a cold autumn night through the poem:

Amitabha really is our Dhamma-kāya  
 Dazzling in the south, north, east and west,  
 Like the autumn moon is in the immense sky  
 Brightly shining in the quiet night ocean.<sup>234</sup>

At the end of Tran dynasty of King Nhan Tong and Anh Tong the method of reciting the Buddha's name became more popular in the common people because King Anh Tong on the day becoming the King's father allowed casting of three bronze statues of Amitabha Buddha, Sakyamuni Buddha, Future Buddha and every statue was seventeen metres high.<sup>235</sup> In this world the reciting of the Amitabha Buddha starts a story and "Amitabha Buddha" is a greeting among Buddhists. Through the ups

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<sup>233</sup> Nguyen Lang, **Essays on the History of Vietnamese Buddhism**, (Vietnamese version), (HaNoi: Literature Publishing House, 2000), p. 489.

<sup>234</sup> *ibid.*, p. 489.

<sup>235</sup> *ibid.*, p. 407.



and downs of history reciting of Amitabha Buddha is to return to live with self-nature instead of evil thoughts, is to acquire a one pointed mind together with Buddha's mind to be reborn in the Western world. In this era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the method of reciting of the Buddha's name still exists and is widely and deeply upheld in the world.

Consequently in daily life we recite the Buddha's name to purify three karmas, destroy defilements and illusive thoughts, to keep body and mind pure and calm; the most decent way is to recite the self-nature of Amitabha Buddha. This method comes from a pure mind, equal mind until a clear and one pointed mind is attained; that is when the achievement is complete and we will be escorted by Amitabha Buddha. In other words, we return to live with our own-self accessible tranquil nature.

To understand clearly the forms of Buddha-nature in the two main schools are summarized below:

Figure 4: Summary of Buddha-nature in the two main schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism

Main school	Zen school	Pure Land school
Appeared forms of Buddha-nature	Beholding the Buddha-nature	The clear one-pointed mind

### 3.3 Emptiness in Māhāyana Tradition

In each stage of historical development this concept of emptiness has a different meaning. Those differences describe the process of happening and development of Buddhism. As mentioned above the

concept of Emptiness in the Dependent Origination is a basis forming the Mahāyāna Madhyamika philosophy. Nagarjuna applied the Dependent Origination to form Eight Negations.

Neither arising nor passing away,  
neither permanence nor destruction,  
neither one nor other,  
neither coming nor going.<sup>236</sup>

(不生. Anutpāda, 不滅. Anirodha, 不常. Aśāsvata , 不斷.  
Anuccheda , 不一. Anekārtha, 不異. Anānārtha , 不來.  
Anāgama, 不出. Anirgama, 因緣. Pratītyasamutpāda, 戲論.  
Prapañca , 諸說中 = 諸說法者中. Vadatām)

Four doubles of the birth- death, permanence- destruction, one– other and coming- going are the dual concepts used in recapitulation’s by Nagarjuna whereby it points toward the philosophical contents of His Emptiness-idea. That idea has a profound influenced on later Mahāyāna Sūtras.

Duality (s: *Dharmadvaya*) is the reality of life. On the way of practice we should practice how to go beyond a dualistic category so that the mind has only the calm state, emptiness, although the dualistic scenes always exist in our daily life.

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<sup>236</sup> Anirodham anutpādam anucchedam aśāsvataṃ, Anekārtham anānārtham anāgamam anirgamam Yaḥ pratītyasamutpādam prapañcopaśamam śivaṃ, Deśayāmāsa sambuddhas taṃ vande vadatām varam. The Middle Way (Madyāmaka-śāstra), vol. 1. **Taishō Tripitaka**, vol.30, no. 1564, p. 1, b14-16.

In the Prajnaparamitahridaya Sūtra it is written, “O Shariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness. They do not appear nor disappear, are not tainted, nor pure, do not increase nor decrease.”<sup>237</sup> The Buddha discovered the Middle Path; it means to avoid two extremes because both will lead beings to trouble and suffering. The Middle Way is the true practice path in which there is no shadow of pleasure or suffering. Because all concepts of happiness and suffering, good or bad, birth and death, coming and going, increasing and decreasing are still in the consciousness category of the dualistic distinction.

Seeing, hearing, understanding and knowing are reflected from the pure mind. If one runs after external manifestations and make a sound to pray to the Buddha it means to pray to the Buddha outside the mind. In The Diamond Sutra the Buddha taught: “Whoever saw me through forms or through sounds are on deviant paths and will not be able to witness Buddha.”<sup>238</sup>

The Buddha wanted to show us that the Buddha is the permanent nature of awareness of people. We want to pray to the Buddha but we should turn around the own-self nature of awareness and immediately we will see the Buddha. Seeing Tathāgata means realizing the nature of awareness, living as the owner of own-self.

The idea of emptiness appears in the Laṅkāvatārasūtra as: “If one sees people and things do not have the true Ego, the defilements are like

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<sup>237</sup> Sūtra of the Great Perfection of Wisdom (摩訶般若波羅蜜經). **Taishō Tripitaka**, vol. 08, no. 223, p. 223, a15-16

<sup>238</sup> The Diamond of Perfect Wisdom Sutra (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, 金剛般若波羅蜜). **Taishō Tripitaka**, vol. 08, no. 235, p. 752, a17-18.

waves of the sun, all are only pure formlessness, one will easily attain the compassionate mind”<sup>239</sup>

And

You asked why it was that the Tathāgata should lie in bed and not sit up, why he should not call for food, teach, and give injunctions to family people to work for a living. But, O Kasyapa! The Void does not do anything such as sitting up, calling for food, giving injunctions to family people to work for a living. There is nothing of the kind such as going or coming, being born or dying, becoming old or being middle-aged, appearing or disappearing, being harmed or broken [injured], being emancipated or being bound. Also, there is no talking of one’s own accord or talking to others. Also, there is no understanding of my own accord or understanding others; there is no peace, no illness.<sup>240</sup>

When the mind is pure completely then the lucid mind appears. At that time, the true mind is calm and shiny and covers the whole of ten worldly directions. At that time you return and see the present sceneries in this world as well as in a dream.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> The Lañkāvatāra Sutra (楞伽阿跋多羅寶經), vol. 1. **Taishō Tripitaka**, vol.16, no. 670, p. 480, b4-5.

<sup>240</sup> Yamamoto, Kosho, (tr.) *op.cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>241</sup> Hoa, Thich Thien, *op.cit.*, p. 574.

The quotes of the above Mahāyāna Sūtras explain that “emptiness” in Mahāyāna originates from the true mind and the gloomy nothingness cannot appear because it is covered by ignorance.

### 3.4 Nibbāna in Mahāyāna Tradition

In the Lotus Sūtra the characteristic of Nibbāna is described as Emptiness (*suññatā*): “The Tathāgata teaches the Dharma of one aspect and character; that is to say, the character of liberation, dispassion, and cessation which ultimately leads to omniscience.”<sup>242</sup>

The Buddha spoke about the true mind as follows:

It is marvelous, silent, lucid over the worlds, the true mind is marvelous, silent, it is always lucid, illuminating<sup>243</sup>

And in the Saṃyuttāgama the Buddha showed clearly Nibbāna:

It is, friend, in just this fathom-high carcass endowed with perception and mind that I make known the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation of the world.<sup>244</sup>

In Mahāyāna Buddhism the concept of Nibbāna is not appreciated but that is also the highest purpose that Mahāyāna tradition aims for. Mahāyāna Buddhism emphasizes the Bodhisattva idea but with

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<sup>242</sup> Kubo, Tsugunari and Akira Yuyama (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 96. (**Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol. 9, no. 262).

<sup>243</sup> Lengyan jing tongyi (**CBETA**, X12, no. 279, p. 567, c16 // Z 1:19, p. 79, b3 // R19, p. 157, b3)

<sup>244</sup> S. I. 62; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, p. 158.

Bodhisattvas they enter into Nibbāna after completing and achieving vows. Mahāyāna tradition has also two kinds of Nibbāna: Nibbāna of No Abode (zh. 無住處涅槃, sa. apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa) and Nibbāna of Abode (zh. 住處涅槃, sa. pratiṣṭhita-nirvāṇa) with fixed and immovable meaning.

### 3.5 The Ideal of Practice in Mahāyāna Tradition

Buddhahood is the practice purpose of practitioners to cultivate to follow the Mahāyāna tradition through practicing the Bodhisattva's way. Those are the vows of Bodhisattvas. All Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and ordinary people have the same amount of Buddha-nature. Because of ignorance, craving and deep karma ordinary people cannot realize the Buddha-nature in themselves. So we study the Bodhisattva practices to see that ordinary people can also cultivate the same as Bodhisattvas and attain enlightenment as that of Buddhas.

The Bodhisattvas' practice path is the path to reach Buddhahood, subsequently each action, word and thought are directed to beings and they will not lapse when they meet obstacles. Although there are many ways to practice, Bodhisattvas are summarized in only Six Virtues of Perfection (Six Paramitas, 六波羅蜜), those are the qualities of the Bodhisattvas on the way of practice.

When an ordinary being practices the Bodhisattva's way he follows the example of Bodhisattvas in the past and present hence he is a Bodhisattva based on growing faith, development of Bodhi-mind for the benefit of other sentient beings: without distinction between relatives and

strangers, practice and help based on compassion, real tolerance, helping with altruism and is unconditional. A Bodhisattva vows to attain the supreme Bodhi including six perfections as follow: Perfection of Generosity, Perfection of Morality, Perfection of Patience, Perfection of Energy, Perfection of Meditation and Perfection of Wisdom.

### **Perfection of Generosity (*Dana-paramita*)**

Dana is the first vow of the Bodhisattva; it is the first vow of the four elements of popularity: Charity, Kind talk, Useful deeds, Engaging in the same work. And what is accomplished in generosity? Here a noble disciple dwells at home with a mind free from the blemish of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. This is called accomplishment in generosity.<sup>245</sup> In the chapter of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* the Buddha taught: “Bhikkhus, there are two kinds of charities: the charity of material goods and the charity of the Dhamma. Of these two kinds of charities, the charity of the Dhamma is foremost.”<sup>246</sup>

In the development of Mahāyāna tradition Dana includes the offering of goods, offering of dhamma and offering fearlessness. The offering of goods (*danaparamita*) includes internal goods and external goods. The external goods are things that can be shared with needy people. The Buddha taught in chapter seven of *Aṅguttara Nikāya*:

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<sup>245</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 450.

<sup>246</sup> *ibid.*, p. 182.

Bhikkhus, there are these seven kinds of wealth. What seven? The wealth of faith, the wealth of virtuous behavior, the wealth of moral shame, the wealth of moral dread, the wealth of learning, the wealth of generosity, and the wealth of wisdom.<sup>247</sup>

And what is the wealth of generosity? Here, a noble disciple dwells at home with a heart devoid of the stain of miserliness, freely generous, generous, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing. This is called the wealth of generosity.<sup>248</sup>

That is offering without expecting a reward from the receiver, without wishing to enjoy the worthy fruits, without clinging and waiting for the good result of the act of generosity.

The offering of internal goods is an offering higher than external goods; offering what is in our body is great generosity. The practice of this great generosity is extremely difficult, e.g. kalpa of Sariputra strongly cultivated with Bodhi mind on offering his eyes but after that he withdrew the mind knowing the Deva tried his courage and he felt ashamed and then he tried to practice offering more. Before enlightenment the Buddha spent countless kalpas practicing Bodhisattva's way, renouncing life to participate in the conversion of beings. All those were recorded in the Jātakas. His full offering led to perfection of quality of generosity and led to Enlightenment. In modern

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<sup>247</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1000.

<sup>248</sup> A IV 6; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 1001.



times, blood donation, offering internal organs or body to science is one method of offering internal goods.

Whether offering internal goods or external goods, what to give, how to give and the psychology of giving are the important factors that Buddhists should aim at as taught clearly in chapter eight of *Āṅguttara Nikāya* as follows:

Bhikkhus, there are these eight gifts of a good person. What eight? 1) He gives what is pure 2) He gives what is excellent 3) He gives a timely gift 4) He gives what is allowable 5) He gives after investigation 6) He gives often 7) While giving he settles his mind in confidence and 8) Having given, he is elated. These are the eight gifts of a good person.<sup>249</sup>

Offering with a generous mind is like the smell of incense that spreads everywhere, as in the *Dhammapada* the Buddha taught: “The smell of flowers does not go against the wind, but the smell of a good person does go against the wind spreading in all directions.”<sup>250</sup>

An outstanding aspect of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra’s vows is boundless mind without compare. This aspect is different from the Six Paramitas of Bodhisattvas; he vows to offer all Buddhas in ten directions. With him offering to one is offering to all; donating to a Buddha is like donating to all Buddhas because “one is all, all is one.”<sup>251</sup> With this boundless mind one can completely escape discrimination and

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<sup>249</sup> A IV 244; Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, p. 1172.

<sup>250</sup> Norman, K.R., *op.cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>251</sup> Irons, Edward A., *op.cit.*, p. 528.

limitation. He donated beautiful things, flowers, garlands, musical instruments, perfumes and parasols, lamps and incenses and the finest clothes. The amount of each is as much as the Polar Mount to donate to Buddhas. According to the Lotus Sūtra, Bodhisattva Earth-Holder (*Dharanimdhara*) cultivated offerings and Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara also offered precious stone, one part to Shakyamuni Buddha and presented the other to the tower of the Buddha Many Treasures<sup>252</sup> but still within limits. In all offerings offering the dharma is ‘supreme’ because only the Buddha-dharma can help people reject the illusion of the transmigrational worlds and enter into Nirvana, Enlightenment that transforms ordinary beings into sages. So Dharma should be respected as much as the Buddhas. The Buddha taught: “You should observe the dharma and disciplines as Master (*Dīghanikāya Mahavagga*)’.

On the other hand, in offering-dharma, “following the dharma to practice is true offering, or in the Incensed Vow: “Five parts are offered completely to the *Tathāgata*.”<sup>253</sup> All merits and virtues of cultivation are offered; this is supreme offering to Buddhas.

In *Samyutta Nikāya*, the Book with Verses (Sagathavagga) there is a story about a Deva who came and asked the Buddha:

Giving what gives strength?

Giving what does one give beauty?

Giving what does one give ease?

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<sup>252</sup> Watson, Burton, *op.cit.*, p. 303.

<sup>253</sup> HT. Thich Tri Quang, **Nghi Thuc Tung Niem [Reciting Mode]**, (HaNoi: Hong Duc, 2012), p. 7.

Giving what does one give sight?  
 Who is the giver of all?  
 Being asked, please explain to me.  
 [The Blessed One:]  
 Giving food, one gives strength;  
 Giving clothes, one gives beauty;  
 Giving a vehicle, one gives ease;  
 Giving a lamp, one gives sight.  
 The one who gives a residence  
 Is the giver of all.  
 But the one who teaches the Dhamma  
 Is the giver of the Deathless.<sup>254</sup>

As mentioned above apart from offering goods the offering of dhamma is the highest noble offering because offering Dhamma will lead to annihilation of suffering through seeing clearly that the nature of life is impermanence, suffering and unselfishness so our mind is not dominated by them and the immortal fruit will be reaped.

Offering of dhamma will help the receivers realize the right way, the wrong path, understand the body and mind and the external environment so their life increasingly channels intelligence and morals and they behave according to the Buddha's teachings hence they will have a peaceful life in the present as well as the future.

Apart from offering goods and dhamma offering of fearlessness is also very important in the practice of Bodhisattva's way. The offering of

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<sup>254</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (a), *op.cit.*, pp. 120-121.

fearlessness offers fearlessness to beings to help others have a confident mind and not afraid when they are in unacceptable situations.

The virtue of the offering of fearlessness is very difficult to gain; it requires the giver to practice successfully so he can just use his own self power of fearlessness to protect others. Looking back on life there are many worries: when in childhood we fear reprimands, when adult we fear failure in career, when we have money, we fear loss of it, when we age, we fear loneliness, sickness and death. Consequently with caution and sympathy for them, fear and worry will be diminished. The Buddha was the great being who discovered the way for all people to follow calmly, without fear of loss, of heart-break, or even without fear of giving up body to ashes and dust. The body is just a combination of the four great elements (Catudhatuvavatthana). Because all are impermanent, arising and extinguishing; position and fame like career is ephemeral, like a cluster of clouds; money belongs to “five houses”: floating water, fire, a robber’s stolen state, a spoilt child. The Buddha disseminated the dhamma of fearlessness by practical teachings i.e. nothing is me, is mine, thus consoling others who have anxieties and fears.

In the Diamond Sūtra Buddha taught:

In the practice of charity, Bodhisattvas should abide in nothing whatsoever. That is, to practice charity without attachment to form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or dharmas. Subhuti, Bodhisattvas should practice charity this way, without attachment to anything. Why? If Bodhisattvas

practice charity without attachment, their merits are immeasurable.<sup>255</sup>

This is the offering of complete abandonment without thought of distinction, without dwelling in forms and is appropriate to the deep meaning of Pāramī offering.

In summation: offering is a concept of life arising from loving-kindness. But to practice perfectly Parami offering is the most perfect offering, reaching the goal of offering which means when helping we do not distinguish givers and receivers. As such we support or help others with a pure mind without calculation. This was practiced by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who practiced it for the benefit of all beings.

Making a vow of offering according to the vow of Bodhivattva Samantabhadra is very strong and the benefit is also incomprehensible. Anything offered to the Buddha has great reward.<sup>256</sup> In Sūtras the Buddha taught the practice of offering is to destroy the avaricious mind as Bodhisattva's practice of offering is to abandon an avaricious mind and vowing the attainment of supreme Bodhi.

We are following in the steps of Bodhivattva Samantabhadra and we are living in social community where the closest to us are our mother and father. In the Agama Sūtra the Buddha taught there are two methods

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<sup>255</sup> **The Diamond of Perfect Wisdom Sutra**, vol. I (金剛般若波羅蜜經). **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol. 08, no. 235, p.749, a12-16.

<sup>256</sup> Aung, Shwe Zan and Mrs. Rhys Davids, *op.cit.*, p. 321.

of offering of the uncouth that gain great merit, great achievement and amrita, coming to non-activity.<sup>257</sup> That is offering to father and mother.<sup>258</sup>

When giving in practice of blessing then give heartily, personally, sincerely and confidently knowing about the karma of giving. Why? Because we do not want to distinguish between the giver and the receiver of the offering like king Pāyāsi in Setavyā. This king did not heartily offer and consequently he was reborn into an empty palace in Nhung Tho forest at a narrow place of Four Heavenly Kings.”<sup>259</sup>

The Buddha taught about benefits of giving from intrinsic motivation in the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*:

Bhikkhus, there are these five benefits of giving. What are the five? 1) The one who makes offerings is loved by many people. 2) Accompanied by good people. 3) Acquires a good reputation. 4) Is not deficient in the layperson’s duties. 5) After death is reborn into a good realm, in a heavenly world. These are the five benefits of giving.<sup>260</sup>

### **Perfection of Precept (*Sīla-paramita*)**

Second is to uphold the Pāramī precepts which means practicing the morality laid down by the Buddha to Four-fold disciples. The

<sup>257</sup> Uncreated, uncaused, non-active; free from ties, independent; free from the passions and senses, tranquil; non-activity; perfect calm, beatitude, complete satisfaction

<sup>258</sup> Thich Đức Thang, *The Agama Sūtra*, (Hcm: Phuong Đông Publisher, 2005), p. 252.

<sup>259</sup> Tue Sy, *Collection of Middle-length Discourses: Majjhima-Nikāya*, (HaNoi: Ton Giao Publisher, 2008), p. 537.

<sup>260</sup> Bodhi, Bhikkhu (b), *op.cit.*, pp. 660-661.

morality is used to make solemn the Dhamma-kāya and is the fundamental basis for the development of concentration and wisdom. Disciplines not only benefit the practice of everybody but they are also needed for solidarity and peace in the Order of Monks. So the Buddha taught: “After I pass away, you should use Dhamma and Disciplines as the Master.”<sup>261</sup>

According to the Mahāyāna perspective morality is divided into three types:

- 1) The pure precepts which include all rules and observances (P: Saovara-zila, 攝律儀戒).
- 2) The pure precepts which include all wholesome dharmas (Kuzala-dharma-saograhakazila 攝善法戒).
- 3) The pure precepts which include all living beings (Sattvārthakriyā-zila, 饒益有情戒).

Or it is called three accumulations of pure precepts (Pham:Tri-vidhāni Zīlāni, 三聚淨戒). These pure precepts include all rules and observances thus we do not do evil by keeping the precepts.

For the pure precepts which include all wholesome dharmas we learn and practice all the wholesome dharmas in order to follow the Buddha’s teaching.

For the pure precepts which include all living beings we practice the four kinds of boundless mind (S: Catvari-apramanani) for benefit of

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<sup>261</sup> Walshe, Maurice, *op.cit.*, p. 255.

all sentient beings taking purpose of blessing and joy (利樂) to all sentient beings as precepts.

Anybody, whether monks or nuns or lay people practice morality naturally without seeing ourselves keeping morality but also not seeing morality to keep. But those moralities usually appear in the body, speech and mind upholding the Pāramī precepts and leading to Parami concentration and wisdom.<sup>262</sup>

### **Perfection of Patience**

Patience is endurance of suffering of the body from heat, cold, hunger, etc. that the mind should endure against will. The endurance of Purna was praised by the Buddha through the dialogue of a short story as follows:

A disciple of the Buddha, Purna, asked the Buddha to go propagating the Dhamma in Chronaparanta where the people were very cruel. The Buddha asked him:

You vow to propagate my dhamma to the people of Chronaparanta. If they do not listen, even use the cruel words to scold you, what do you think?

My Lord, I think they are still good persons, because they do not use the stick to beat me, or throw stones at me.

The Buddha continued:

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<sup>262</sup> Thich Quang Nhuan, **Summary Buddhism** (Vietnamese version), (HaNoi: Religion Publishing House, 2004), p. 79.



If they use the stick to hit you, or use stone to throw at you, what do you think?

My Lord, I think they still have benevolence, because they do not kill or beat me to death.

The Buddha asked:

If they kill or beat you to death, what do you think?

My Lord, I think they are my benefactors, because owing to them I escape the suffering-body, leave the mucky body, give up this miserable life.

The Buddha praised him:

Very good! If you are patient like this, you can go to that place to spread the teaching.<sup>263</sup>

The patience of Purna was Pāramī patience because he practiced patience from outside the body to the internal mind without seeing his own patience as well as the object to endure.

During practice of the Bodhisattva's way The Buddha was also a patient antecedent (s: *Ksantyrasi*) when He practiced patience on a tranquil mountain. We practice to follow the Buddha's conduct wearing the liberation yellow robe of the Buddha and correspondingly we are wearing a patient and gentle robe revealing an extraordinary energy rising from the Four boundless minds (s: *Catvari-apramanani*) i.e. immeasurable loving kindness, immeasurable inner joy, immeasurable detachment.

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<sup>263</sup> Thich Thien Hoa, **General Buddhism** (Vietnamese version), (HaNoi: Religious Publication, 2012), pp. 600-601.

### **Perfection of Energy**

Effort means diligence, to be ardent and hardworking. This means the Four Supreme Efforts of Thirty Seven Aids to Enlightenment on the path to reach Enlightenment. These are: the effort to prevent ascending of unformed evil states, the effort to discard evil states that have risen, the effort to develop unformed wholesome states, the effort to augment arisen wholesome states. The road to success cannot lack effort and practice with a true and pure mind. The Buddha taught: “O, Bhikkhus try to make efforts to reach liberation.” Buddhas and Bodhisattvas provide examples of effort for Enlightenmen. In his time of seeking the truth the Buddha accomplished meditation of Ārāḍa-kālāma and Udraka-Rāmaputra but He was dissatisfied with this practice and realized that practice could not help get out of the cycle of birth and death. Therefore He continued the ascetic effort but He still did not seek Enlightenment. Finally, with diligent determination while sitting under the Bodhi tree He vowed: “Without attaining Enlightenment I definitely will not leave here.” After Enlightenment He made his determination to propagate the teachings of liberation to all beings. So all His life was full of effort; no one else could do the same. Following the Buddha Bodhisattvas also made an effort of practicing Bodhisattva’s way and vow to save sentient beings. Though the road is long the pilgrim will also get to the destination but only with effort. The path of Enlightenment is difficult but is powerless to prevent anybody from practising diligently because without effort things cannot be completed. The process of effort in practicing Bodhisattva’s way without seeing four objects of the ego the effort will be successful.

Bodhisattvas' spirit of tolerance manifests clearly in their benevolence, righteousness and in the way they help others through difficulties and misfortunes. This Buddhist spirit of compassion and generosity has had a great impact on the lifestyle of many people. The majority of people think that the Great Compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, Perceiver of the World's Sounds,<sup>264</sup> is the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin (Bodhisattva of Mercy). The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara manifests as a mother who is always ready to protect children. Many people who are miserable and lost go to pray to Kuan-yin hoping to get liberation from suffering. Many women do so because they live their lives in darkness.<sup>265</sup> What is more here is the image of a mother who cares. People are born and grow up in their mother's hands. According to the Lotus Sutta if innumerable hundreds of thousands of multitudes of sentient beings who experience suffering hear of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and wholeheartedly chant his name the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara will immediately perceive their voices and free them from their suffering.<sup>266</sup> An image of the Bodhisattva and his vows of compassion has been deeply etched into people's minds.

### **Perfection of Meditation (*Dhyana-paramita*)**

The perfections of the Pāramīs above are the methods of practicing blessings to support concentration and development of wisdom. Meditation is one of the important methods that Buddha taught to his

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<sup>264</sup> *ibid.*, p. 301.

<sup>265</sup> Asvaghosa, **Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts**, vol. I, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), p. 4.

<sup>266</sup> Kubo, Tsugunari and Akira Yuyama, *op.cit.*, p. 295.

disciples because thanks to meditation He attained the highest perfect bodhi. Meditation is to return to live with the mind: not running after illusive things outside of mind. Thanks to meditation Bodhisattvas can abide in the mind; a calm mind without wavering. The mind of Bodhisattvas can listen to the call for help, the sound of suffering of beings, to appear for salvation. When practicing Bodhisattva's way for benefit of beings a Bodhisattva will have countless dissatisfying experiences; accordingly if Bodhisattva does not reach perfections of the Pāramīs meditation he cannot benefit people fully.

### **Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajnaparamita*)**

Pāramī Wisdom, also called Prajna Pāramī; is right and clear understanding, thorough realization of all things in the universe through the truth of Suffering (Dukkha), Emptiness (Sunya), Impermanence (Anicca), Ego-less (Anatma). Owing to this wisdom a Bodhisattva uses many and various means depending on levels of beings to convert them effectively.

Bodhisattvas contemplate the five aggregates and that all things in the universe are Empty, Ego-less and because they clearly see its reality in this impure life Bodhisattvas do not distinguish between subject and object but both are integrated and identified in the absolute state. Bodhisattvas see beings as entities for teaching to seek liberation. They use perfection of wisdom to complete the career of Self-benefiting and benefiting others as was Bodhisattvas's intention.

In summary, the above Six Pāramīs are ideals of practice of Bodhisattavas in Mahāyāna Buddhism based on the will of the mind of

Bodhisattvas for the benefit of themselves and the benefit of others. At the same time through practice to achieve those things Bodhisattvas can reach Buddhahood. That is the ultimate purpose and Bodhisattvas' goal.

### **3.6 Development of the Buddha-Nature in Practice**

Researching the concept of Buddha-nature in the Nikāya Sūta the researcher sees that no Sūtra mentions the Buddha-nature clearly. Aṅguttara Nikāya mentions the luminous mind clearly and the concept of Buddha-nature is an important concept the Buddha paid attention to. All He taught was only to control the mind. Happiness or suffering, condemned to hell or becoming a Buddha is all from the mind. The mind is pure but the dust of affliction and craving cover it. Practising in many different forms is to remove that dust. For His renouncing disciples the practice of meditation is the sole method to have a pure mind and abiding in right mindfulness with awareness is to see the nature of mind, as Ajahn Chah says:

But really this mind of ours is already unmoving and peaceful-really peaceful! Just like a leaf which remains still so long as the wind doesn't blow. If a wind comes up, the leaf flutters. The fluttering is due to the wind-the fluttering of the mind is due to those sense impressions; the mind follows them. If it doesn't follow them, it doesn't flutter. If we know fully the true nature of sense impressions, we will be unmoved. Our practice is simply to see the "Original Mind." We must train the mind to know those sense impressions and not get lost in them, to make it peaceful.

Just this is the aim of all this difficult practice we put ourselves through.<sup>267</sup>

We practice to see the mind consciousness is unmoving; we are always peaceful and see nothing is my, mine, myself, to see ego is also empty because it is formed by conditions causes and when the cause is ended it will break up. “No ego” is formed in Theravāda thought and the Buddha taught emptiness (*Sunyata*) which is the Buddha’s abode in The Lesser Discourse on Voidness (*Cula-Suññata Sūtta*) and The Longer Discourse on Voidness (*Mahāsunñata sūtta*); this nothingness is emptiness, without filling or storing anything. The purpose of the practice is to see all are empty, so the mind does not attach to any object. The awakened mind will see all as they really are. Formation, development, dissolution and void are all natural, all are dominated by the law of impermanence, all from conditions uniting and also from conditions breaking up. Looking at the emptiness of all things we should not worry or cling. When we dwell in emptiness our mind escapes time and space and we only have the present mind. And we look at all things in the present, they always change and are freshened, affliction and suffering in the past or wishes for the future therefore have been prevented and ended.

The concept of emptiness of self in Theravāda was developed in Mahāyāna thought about egolessness and emptiness of all things. This concept gradually formed the core concept of Mahāyāna thought and appeared in many Sūttas, particularly in Prajnaparamita Hridaya Sūtta (The Heart of Prajna Paramita Sūtta), Vajracchedika-Prajna-Paramita

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<sup>267</sup> Ajahn Chah, **Food for the Heart**, (Boston: Wisdom Publications 2002), p. 41.

(Sūtra of the Diamond-Cutter of Supreme Wisdom). With the Mādhyamika established by Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva in the second century AD this concept became more final from the third and fourth centuries with the appearance of countless Sūttas and the appearance of the Mind-Only School founded by Asanga. This shift formed and developed Vajrayana (The Diamond Vehicle) and Zen School for a long time.<sup>268</sup>

The pure mind or emptiness is an experience of feeling about the ultimate reality of all phenomena. In the formation and development of the Mahāyāna a series of concepts of similar meaning appeared and among them there was a Buddha-nature concept.

So the concept of the Buddha-nature became a concept in Mahāyāna tradition and it holds an essential role in all other Mahāyāna traditions Zen School, the Pure Land School, the Tantra School.

The concept of Buddha-nature is the form for the later development of the Mahāyāna tradition. Its origins can be seen as the form of Tathāgata-garbha, that is a combination of the Tathāgata and garbha which originated from Indian. Mental telepathy is permitted and developed and became the specific thought of Tathāgata as the focus. At first Tathāgata appeared with his disciples in the world and they listened to the dhamma from him. After the Buddha passed away his disciples used Dhamma and Disciplines as their Master. Dhamma and Disciplines are considered as the Dhamma-kāya, the eternal body of Tathāgata.

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<sup>268</sup> Hoang Phong, (tr.) **The Concept of Emptiness in Buddhism**, (Vietnamese version), (HaNoi: Hong Duc Publisher, 2013), p. 8.

Ekottara-Āgama says: “The Buddha is our Master, appears in a short life span in the world, His physical body died but His Dharma body (dhammakāya) is alive.”<sup>269</sup>

One hundred years after Buddha entered into Nirvāna Buddhism started to gradually divide into eighteens sects. Each sect advocated a different ideology and of course always consolidated their own doctrine which was different from the teachings of the Buddha.<sup>270</sup> In that situation the way of life and practice of monks were different from the people and they did not know what sect to follow and practice. While the philosophy of Brahmanism was developing it had many disputes with Buddhists at that time so it was necessary to have practical teachings applied in social life.

Mahāyāna appeared in that context in about the first century BC to the first century AD. The emergence of Mahāyāna Buddhism was an indispensable respond to the demands of the spirit of Era. The strongest development of Mahāyāna was from the second century onward. The thought of Buddha-body continued to develop according to the trend of Mahāyāna and formed three bodies: Dharmakāya, Nirmanakāya Sambhogakāya Dharmakāya is the formless body which is deployed clearly in the Sūtra later.

About six or seven hundred years after the Buddha entered into Nirvāna the new doctrines such as the doctrine of the Tathāgata, the

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<sup>269</sup> Ekottara Āgama (“Numbered Discourses,” Zēngyī Ahánjīng, 增壹阿含經 **Taishō 125**).

<sup>270</sup> Nalinakaha Dutt, **Mahāyāna Buddhism**, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 1.



Alaya-vijnana, the Buddha-nature and the permanent Dhamma-body all mention the Buddha nature (tathāgatagarbha) inherited and promoted from the previous ideological foundation. The concept of Buddha-nature began to be formed clearly and repeated in the Sūtras. The words used in the Sūtras are the other names of Buddha-nature e.g. The Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra, 200 AD, called Tathāgatagarbha; The Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra, the third century, called Tathāgatagarbha-Naturally pure mind; The Mahāparinirvana-Sūtra, called Buddha-nature; The Avataṃsaka Sūtra, the 3rd century, called Dharma realm (*Dhamma-dhātu*); The Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, the 3rd century, called consciousness; The Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra (The Sūtra of the Lotus Flower of the Wonderful Law) called the Great Vehicle, One Vehicle; the Vimalakīrti Sūtra, called no-abode-fact v.v. Many Sūtras appeared to mark a maturing period of Mahāyāna Buddhism around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Many Mahāyāna Sūtras appeared in turn to promote the ideal of Mahāyāna as expressed positively and popularly in the teachings of the Buddha. Mahāyāna appeared on the basis of Theravāda Buddhism deepening the philosophy of the Buddha-nature of Theravāda Buddhism through the philosophy of emptiness that was applied and expanded in Mahāyāna teachings. Although there are similarities and differences Theravāda Buddhism is considered as the basic foundation for the development of Mahāyāna's later thought of Buddha-nature. Until the Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra appeared there was a harmonious and generous attitude healing and knitting thought between Theravāda and Mahāyāna through the philosophy of Buddha-nature which is in every

being, the philosophy of practice of thought of the Lotus Sūtra brings all to the way of the Buddha-Vehicle.

From the beginning of Mahāyāna until the prevalence of Sūtras of the concept of Buddha-nature in every situation and different aspects of every period and in whatever way the Buddha-nature is deployed and realized the purpose of practice is toward enlightenment, is to live with permanent pure essence, is to reach the Buddha-nature in every individual.

In the fifth century the Abhidharma Piṭaka appeared as Uttarantra-sastra, or Ratnagotravibhaga. The book clearly and extensively and profoundly deploys the concept of Buddha-nature or the essence of Buddha. This book maintained a core role leading to formation of the Vajrayana (Diamond Vehicle) at the end of the fifth century or early sixth century.

In the period of the seventh and eighth centuries many Mahāyāna Ābhidhārmika appeared and formed large schools e.g. Madhyamika-sastra, Mind-Only School and Zen School. All inclined towards the ultimate goal for the practice of liberation to recognize the Buddha-nature; a key characteristic of Buddhism.

Figure 5: Summary of the terms of Buddha-nature Concept in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism

Theravāda Sūtra's Names	Dīgha-nikāya	Majjhima- nikāya	Aṅguttara- nikāya	Samyutta Nikāya			
The Appeared forms of Buddha- nature	The cessation of consciousness; the calm inward; an unborn, unbecome, unmade, unfabricated	Void (Emptiness)	The luminous mind	The calm inward			
Mahāyāna Sūtra's Names	Avatamsaka Sūtra	Mahāparinirvna Sūtra	Lotus Sūtra	Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā	Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra	Main school	
The Appeared forms of Buddha-nature	Dharma realm (Dhamma- dhātu)	The Buddha- nature	The great Vehicle, Buddha- nature	Tathāgata- garbha	Tathāgata- garbha	Zen school	Pure Land school
						Beholding The Buddha- nature	The clear one- pointed mind

Throughout the meaning of Buddha-nature in the Theravāda and Mahāyāna tradition, from the concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda sūttas to the development of concept of Buddha-nature in Mahāyāna sūttas, we see that there is no antagonism of schools but all have mutual complementary points to perfect the concept of Buddha-nature's emergence. In other words the meanings and concepts in Theravāda tradition are basic for the development of Mahāyāna tradition. While on the contrary the concept of Mahāyāna tradition lights up and brings to a focus through more understandable images than the Theravāda Sūttas described.

### 3.7 Conclusion

From the foundation of Buddha-nature in the Theravāda tradition Buddha-nature was formed and developed in the Mahāyāna scriptures. Every Mahāyāna Sūtra deploys Buddha-nature in different forms, however, Mahāyāna practitioners need to have deep faith as a basis to step onto the way of liberation because faith is the mother of merit (The Avataṃsaka Sūtra). Also in this Sūtra the Buddha preached to Bodhisattas about the Realm of the Buddha. In addition, in other various Sūtras the Buddha used metaphors to show Buddha-nature of every being and made it easy to understand. But one should still believe; believe that his own-self has Buddha-nature and so practice and will become a Buddha.

In addition to the application of the four characteristics of Mahāyāna tradition, the teachings of permanence, bliss, ego, purity are the dhamma adapted to the practice of each practitioner in the period of Mahāyāna Buddhist development.

As well, two Mahāyāna schools, Zen School and Pure Land School also developed the Buddha-nature under different forms i.e. beholding the Buddha-nature or the clear one-pointed mind.

In any tradition the practice always uses the mind as the root so purifying the mind, or realizing the available Buddha-nature is the way, the cultivation of Buddhism. But Theravāda is directed to the fruit of Arhat while the Mahāyāna ideal is to practice the Bodhisattva's way to become a Buddha. Moreover, both schools practice to dwell in emptiness. The practice of No-Ego and Emptiness of all things are Mahāyāna

tradition and all doctrines are adapted to each level of everyone in society of every period.

## Chapter IV

### Comparison of Buddha-Nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism

This chapter is the most important chapter in the dissertation, the researcher will discuss the similarities and differences of the concept of Buddha-nature between Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions.

#### 4.1 Similarities

##### 4.1.1 Pure Mind

Pure Mind is ‘Buddha mind’ or ‘awakened mind’; ‘luminous mind’; ‘radiant mind’ is the ultimate experience ‘brightly shining mind’ (pabhassara citta) that exists whether the mind is defiled or is liberated. Buddhaghosa refers to this radiant mind or luminous mind as ‘the naturally pure’ (pakati parisuddha) bhavaṅga, citta.”<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Piya Tan, (tr) **The Radiant Mind, the Nature of the Mind and the Subconscious according to Early Buddhism**, Living Word of the Buddha SD vol 8 no.3, 2004, p.29. <<http://ibsc.mcu.ac.th/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Radiant-Mind.pdf>>

Research of Buddha-nature and its meaning in the early period of Buddhism is primarily based on the Theravāda tradition that originated in India i.e. all arises from the mind. The human's habit is to always be insecure and disturbed with a bustling mind because the mind is easily reckless to follow this world. The mind is always thinking about the past or towards the future so the mind lacks awakening in the present moment. But Buddhism is awareness and Buddha taught awareness of mind in all activities in daily life, dwelling in mindfulness and awareness of the body, feeling, mind, dharma. The following is how that awareness was taught:

Again, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu is one who acts in full awareness when going forward and returning; who acts in full awareness when looking ahead and looking away; who acts in full awareness when flexing and extending his limbs; who acts in full awareness when wearing his robes and carrying his outer robe and bowl; who acts in full awareness when eating, drinking, consuming food, and tasting; who acts in full awareness when defecating and urinating; who acts in full awareness when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, and keeping silent.<sup>272</sup>

We can observe in the four postures to know clearly dharma arises in what is presenting, happening fully in each present moment. Right mindfulness and awareness are the core practices in Theravāda tradition.

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<sup>272</sup> Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.) and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 147.

By living right mindfulness and awareness a practitioner overcomes desires and grief in the world as the Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipatthana Sūta*) teaches:

Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. He abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.<sup>273</sup>

When overcoming desires and grief in the world the practitioner is steady to support the six Sense Organs while the six Sense Organs contact with the Six Objects three karmas are purified and the bright mind appears as *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* describes. Besides, to realize the original face as well shows the available pure mind as Ven. Ajahn Mun taught:<sup>274</sup>

The mind is something more radiant than anything else can be, but because counterfeits – passing defilements – come and obscure it, it loses its radiance, like the sun when obscured by clouds. Don't go thinking that the sun goes after

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<sup>273</sup> *ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>274</sup> Found in Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Amaro, **The Island: An Anthology of the Buddha's Teachings on Nibbāna**, (CA: Abhayagiri Monastic Foundation, 2009), pp. 212-213.



the clouds. Instead, the clouds come drifting along and obscure the sun.

So meditators, when they know in this manner, should do away with these counterfeits by analyzing them shrewdly. When they develop the mind to the stage of the primal mind, this will mean that all counterfeits are destroyed, or rather, counterfeit things will not be able to reach into the primal mind because the bridge making the connection will have been destroyed. Even though the mind may then still have to come into contact with the preoccupations of the world its contact will be like that of a bead of water rolling over a lotus leaf.” From Ven. Ajahn Mun, ‘A Heart Released.’

From the idea of the luminous mind emerged the idea that the awakened mind is the pure, undefiled mind.<sup>275</sup>

In the early Buddhism the radiant mind is referenced Accharā Saṅghāta Vagga (2.4.1.4 A above) and in the “Kilesa Sutta (S 46.33/5:92): the radiant mind does not arise on account of the five mental hindrances.’; ‘Jāta, rūpa Sutta (A 3.100.12/1:257): keeping up concentration, effort and equanimity in meditation keeps the mind radiant.’; ‘Upakkilesa Sutta (A 5.23/3:16): the radiant mind does not arise on account of the five mental hindrances; the radiant minds is the basis for superknowledge.’<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddha-nature#Buddha-nature>, reviewed September, 2016.

<sup>276</sup> Tan, Piya, (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 29.

When we live in pure mind or luminous mind we feel ourselves as a unique being. In the process of practicing to purify all defilements keeping the pure mind is the most necessary essential because the mind is the source, the mind is the Master of the dharma; everything is from the mind that creates a life of suffering or happiness. In the simile of the cloth (The *Vatthūpama Sūtta*) mentioned above the Buddha taught clearly through the image of the cloth that the pure cloth is such as the pure mind, that the essence of the mind is pure but because of defilements and a dust cover we cannot see well because the cloth is smudged and unclear. The person who determined to cultivate will try to eradicate and eliminate the defilements so the mind become pure. In addition through *The Path of Purification of Philosopher Budhaghosa* (Bhikkhuni Thích nữ Trí Hải translated) there is a quote from the Buddha as follows:

On seeing a form with the eye, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty. On hearing a sound with the ear...On smelling an odour with the nose... On tasting a flavour with the tongue...On touching a tangible with the body...On cognizing a mind-object with the mind, he does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the

way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty.<sup>277</sup>

Human beings live in the cycle of birth and death because the six bases are not purified. Thus, to have a pure mind, when the six senses contact with the six objects without the defiled notion meddle, will not desire and greed.

Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) shows that Dhammakāya of Tathāgata is a long time purity hidden in the body of defilement of all sentient beings but it is not defiled by affliction and the nature is still absolute purity and permanently everlasting.

Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) in the Mayāyāna Sūtras is the same idea as luminous mind (Pabhassara Citta) in Therāvada Buddhism. However Mahāyāna Sūtras develop the concept of Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) widely and are easily understandable, e.g. the Tathāgata-garbha Sūtra which cites nine examples of Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) as follows: The lotus has the incarnate Buddha (Nirmanabuddha), there is sweet honey in the thick forest, pure gold goes into a cesspool, the poor house has germs, there is potential sprouting in seed, the gold image is covered by a rag, a poor girl carries her precious son, a wheel-turning king and the golden image in the black dirty mold. All those examples explain the meaning of Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) hidden in affliction. Out of compassion the Buddha appeared and

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<sup>277</sup> M I 181; Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu, (tr.) and Bhikkhu Bodhi, (ed.), and (tr.), *op.cit.*, p. 274.

used many ways to show all beings they can realize Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha).

The Tathāgata-garbha, the Buddha-garbha, the Saṃbodhi-garbha, the dharma-dhātu-garbha, Lokottaragarbha, etc., are the womb of the fetus. Every being has the Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) or luminous mind (Pabhassara Citta) but it is covered by affliction, greed and ignorance. All sentient beings carry the body of defilement and go in and out of the six roads that still have Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) because it is not defiled. The virtue of Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) is full as the same I.<sup>278</sup> To enter the Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) one needs to be able to enter the truth, let go of ego-attachment and dhamma attachment, go beyond two extremes and look directly at the mind to see the mind is always pure and bright.

The Sri-Mālā sūtra said: “That Tathāgata-garbha is the garbha of Dharma realm, is the garbha of Dhamma Body (dhammakāya), is the garbha of the supramundane, is the garbha of Natural purity” or Dhamma Body (dhammakāya) of Tathāgata does not separate afflictions-garbha, called Tathāgata-garbha.”<sup>279</sup> So the Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) is an another term of Dhamma Body (dhammakāya), the luminous mind (Pabhassara Citta) is also closely related Dhamma Body (dhammakāya). As mentioned above before the Buddha attained nirvana, He taught the disciples used Dhamma and Vinaya as dhammakāya of the Buddha. And

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<sup>278</sup> Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra (大方廣如來藏經), **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol. 16, no. 667, p. 461, c4-7): 「眼見一切有情欲、瞋、癡、貪、無明、煩惱。彼善男子、善女人，為於煩惱之所凌沒，於胎藏中有俱胝百千諸佛，悉皆如我。」

<sup>279</sup> **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol 31, no. 1597, p. 344, a4-7.

he taught: “One who sees dependent arising sees the Dhamma; one who sees the Dhamma sees dependent arising”<sup>280</sup> the term dhammakāya simply means the teachings of the Buddha. But Mahāyāna develops the Dhammakāya showing the everlasting body, Dharmakāya as the true self of the Buddha present within all beings. The Buddha abides in the everlasting state but beings are covered by defilements and cannot see the Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) so Dharmakāya cannot be displayed. But when defilements are destroyed Dharmakāya then luminous mind, the Buddha-nature (Tathāgata-garbha) appears.

In the Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment it says that ‘If our mind is pure, shadow-Bodhi will appear’.<sup>281</sup> Such as the mirror when a person looks they will be a rising figure in the mirror. But when the person goes that image disappears in the mirror. The mirror returns to normal. The pure mind of beings is the same: it is always quiet, silent, no greed, anger or delusion whether ordinary or subtle.

Buddhaghōṣa also commented on the word dhammakāya in the passage in the Dīghanikāya, states:

Why is the Tathāgata said to have a dhammakāya? Because the Tathagata, having thought or devised in his mind the Buddha-word, which is the three Piṭakas, aspired to words.

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<sup>280</sup> M.28; PTS: Mi. 190.

<sup>281</sup> Thich Thien Hoa, **The General Buddhism, Book 3**, (Publishing House: Tôn Giao). <<http://www.hoalinhthoai.com/buddhistbook/detail/book-145/index-2899/Phat-Hoc-Pho-Thong-quyen-3.html>>

Therefore, that body is the Dhamma, because it is made of the Dhamma.<sup>282</sup>

‘Kasmā Tathāgato Dhammakāyo ti vutto? Tathāgato hi tetipīṭakam Buddhavacanam hadayena cintetyā vācāya abhinīhari. Ten’ assa kāyo Dhammamayattā Dhammo va.’

According to Paul Williams, the concept of the Dharmakāya in the Prajnaparamita sutras as followings:

First, the dharmakāya is the collection of teachings, particularly the Prajñāparamita itself. Second, it is the collection of pure dharmas possessed by the Buddha, specifically pure mental dharmas cognizing emptiness. And third, it comes to refer to emptiness itself, the true nature of things. The dharmakāya in all these senses is contrasted with the Buddha’s physical body, that which lived and died and is preserved in stupas.<sup>283</sup>

To summarize, the pure, luminous mind or Buddha-nature, the Dhamma Body (dhammakāya) shows the true mind, always shining, pure, and empty. Thus beings who practice the teachings of the Buddha to eliminate defilements will recognize and live with the never-ending mind.

#### 4.1.2 Absolute Tranquil Essence

The teachings of the Buddha have only a salty taste which is the taste of liberation, Enlightenment and to return to live with a pure, bright

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<sup>282</sup> Sumangalavilasini, iii, 865. **Dighanikaya Commentary**. iii. 865 cited by Guang Xing, 2005, p. 71.

<sup>283</sup> Williams, Paul (b), *op.cit.*, p. 177.

mind in every being. In the Kevatta Sutta (or Kevaddha) is a Buddhist scripture, one of the texts in the Digha Nikaya (Long Discourses Collection) of the Pāli Canon as followings:

Where does the water or earth, or fire or air not find a place ?

Where does the long or short, minute or coarse, good or evil?

Where do the name and form (i.e., mind and matter ) cease totally ?

Where does water or earth or fire or air not find a place ?

Where does long or short, minute or coarse, good or evil find no place ?

Where does the name or form (*nama-nipa*), i.e., mind and matter cease totally ?

*[Kattha āpo ca paṭhavī te jo vāyo na gādhati ?*

*Kattha dīghañ ca rassañ ca aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubhaṃ*

*Kattha namañ ca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhatī?*

*Tatra veyyākaraṇaṃ bhavati:*

*Viññāṇam anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ,*

*Ettha āpo ca paṭhavī tejo vāyo na gādhati.*

*Ettha dīghañ ca rassañ ca aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubhaṃ,*

*Ettha nāmañ ca rūpañca asesam uparujjhati.*

*Idam avoca Bhagavā. Attamano Kevaddho gahapati-putto bhāsitaṃ abhinandīti.]*

In the above sutra we see that ‘Pure consciousness’ is infinite shining like a bright jewel and water or earth or fire or air does not exist. Here long or short, minute or coarse, good or evil, name and form cease absolutely.

The Essence of Buddha symbolizes a satisfied potential in the mind of every human being. The reason why people always live in suffering is because this potential is temporarily obscured by the three poisons of greed, anger and delusion. The Essence of Buddha is like a mirror and three poisons are like dust on that mirror. The Buddha guided them to follow the teachings to wipe off the dust of three poisons so the Buddha-nature can be revealed.

The term Tathāgatadhatu means the form of Tathāgata in order to designate the Buddha’s Essence. It has two different forms as follows:

The first form is “*sattvadhatu*”, the form of beings, *sattva*: being. It means the general form of all unenlightened beings.

The second form is “Dharmadhatu”, the form of Dharma, also called the realm of reality which is the enlightenment of the Buddhas.

As the purpose of practicing Buddhism is to attain liberation from the sufferings of the cycles of birth and death. The state of enlightenment or the absolute tranquil essence is unthinkable and only experienced by those who have enlightened as the Buddha and Arahans.



### 4.1.3 The Ultimate Reality (*Paramattha-sacca*)

The mind is an important term in Buddhist text because for 45 years of conversion and rescue of beings, the Buddha aimed at the conversion of the mind. To understand the mind there are two verses at the beginning of Dhammapada revealing the mind: all things originate from the mind. When the mind consciousness is purified, seeing is only seeing, hearing is only hearing, mind consciousness is still luminous, pure. Because of that reason the mind consciousness has no clinging on anything, the mind is as space as the Buddha taught and he was in Emptiness, Sāriputta was also home there too. Emptiness is the ultimate dwelling place of the great One. This state is the ultimate purpose of all human endeavors.

The ultimate Reality in both traditions is from the same source and they explain emptiness from the Buddha's teaching built on the basis of the doctrine of Independent Arising. Then Theravāda Buddhism practices that teaching to give up ego and dhammas. Both ego and dhammas are empty; all things are produced by causal conditions (*Paticcasamuppada*). Although the senses contact the objects no desires arise because there is no interference of the ego. Therefore Theravāda meets with the Mahāyāna idea: return to the true mind, live with the knowing nature and abide in the Emptiness as that of the Buddha.

The ultimate Reality or the Emptiness is the home of the Buddhas. The Buddha's disciples who attain the pinnacle of the practice also dwell in there i.e. the realm of enlightenment, the realm of liberation from birth and death. Realizing the ultimate Reality or attaining the stage of

Nibbāna is the ultimate purpose of practice of all Buddhist schools. Through both Nibbāna aspects of Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions we can see that both have the concept of Nibbāna which is an indescribable realm for language to express. It is the state of cutting off suffering and afflictions in the mind. Any lay Buddhist as well as a renouncer can practice and achieve Enlightenment by realizing the Buddha's knowledge with self-effort.

## **4.2 Differences**

### **4.2.1 Realizing Buddha-Nature**

All the Buddha's teachings were taught to help his disciples cultivate, practice and experience for their own deliverance. The Dhamma of impermanence, suffering, non-self and impurity taught in the beginning to the established congregation were easily spread among the Indian masses because the teachings were adapted and applied to the wish and transformation of suffering of mankind. After Mahāyāna developed the above characteristics of Theravāda have been accepted and practiced by Mahāyāna tradition too; Buddhist teachings that do not contain those above and are considered as Non-Buddhist cults.

The practice of the teachings of impermanence, suffering, non-self and impurity above really affected the masses in society at that time as well as now. Thanks to this application the practitioners gradually realized the truth, the natural rule of a person's life and all dharmas. When we lose something heart break occurs but we can easily awake and sorrow is gradually extinguished. From understanding from end to end

the concepts and knowledge we gradually see the true nature of dhammas, of each phenomenon in the present. When realizing the truth it means understanding thoroughly noumenon, we start to experience the reality of the ultimate truth beyond two extreme views (s: *Dharmadvaya*) of noumenal and phenomenal aspects. All are in harmony and only one, the mind and scenery are one. So at that time though the practitioner lives the impure life he still according with conditioning cause, follows the dhamma, does not diverge from the real nature of higher truth, and always lives with the pure mind, the bright Buddha-nature, attaining Nibbāna and not to establish any reasoning system.

The Buddha-nature gradually developed in Mahāyāna thought, such as luminous mind is the mind without a disconcerting cover, the mind completely purified meaning pure consciousness, accordingly Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra appeared to describe pure consciousness and expanded more; pure consciousness is the basis and foundation as well as the seed to attain Buddhahood, the seed of Buddha all beings have is the true state of the mind. The Lotus Sūtra mentions all have the potential to become Buddhas and that Buddha-nature is available in everybody including Devadatta and Dragon daughter. In addition, this Sūtra also describes the realm of the Buddha (Dharma-dhatu) when He appeared the first time. However, the realm of the Buddha is described in Avataṃsaka Sūtra very clearly and the theme of the Sūtra also talks about penetration into universal beings. When the mind is pure all things are the Dharma-kāya of the Buddha, an absolute unity without a separate division; “all in one, one in all” is the thought that arises from the bright and pure mind. In other words we enter and abide in freedom of mind, freedom of wisdom and enter the Buddha-nature, the unity of our mind, of all beings,

all are Dhammas. Consequently there is a sentence ‘Dharma is not separated the dhamma in the worldly dhammas for enlightenment’.

As well, one can subdue afflictions with the mind by practicing meditation so the mind tolerates a subject, or attains an unshakeable liberation of mind. This is Pure Land School that responded to all levels of everybody at that time as well as in society then, this is the method of reciting the Buddha’s name. Reciting the Buddha’s name until the clear one-pointed mind attains the highest realm of reciting the Buddha’s name without subject and object to recite.

Theravāda Zen was taught by the Buddha: focus on the body, feelings, mind and dhamma-objects, apply dhamma in order to live in the present, have a luminous mind. Zen sect uses the other method for practice but also to recognize things as they are; that is to return to the available pure nature, to return to live with the bright pure mind, live with the Buddha-nature, live with the Original face: this is the purpose of Zen, as realizing Buddha nature in Mahāyana idea.

#### **4.2.2 The Gradual Enlightenment and Sudden Enlightenment of Buddha-Nature**

In the Theravāda tradition, the practitioner practices the four characteristics of impermanence, suffering, non-self and impurity in order not to cling to the five aggregates but aims to give them up, looking at a person full of mess, impurity, evil, impermanence, non-self to realize gradually the Four Noble Truths: the Truth of suffering, the Cause of suffering, Extinction of suffering, the way of extinction of suffering. One

needs to practice gradually to transform old habits (vasana) and afflictions to reach the full realization of Arhatship.

One needs to practice to spend the Successive Stages of Sixteen Knowledges in the Visuddhimagga of the Theravāda tradition for describing the series of insight knowledges that lead to the first look of Nibbāna as followings:<sup>284</sup>

1) ‘Knowledge of Name-and-Form’; 2) ‘Dependent Origination’, Paccayapariggaha ñāṇaṃ; 3) ‘Knowledge of Comprehension by Groups’, Sammasane ñāṇaṃ, is mostly referred to the Paṭisaṃ bhidāmagga; 4) ‘Knowledge of Contemplating of Rise and Fall’, Udayabbaya ñāṇaṃ, is referred in the Paṭisaṃbhidāmagga; 5) ‘Knowledge of Dissolution’, Bhanga ñāṇaṃ, is explained in exegesis in the Visuddhimagga through the Paṭisaṃbhidāmagga and Dhammapada, 6) ‘Knowledge of Appearance as Terror’, Bhaya ñāṇaṃ, is explained and referred to in the Paṭisaṃbhidāmagga, 7) ‘Knowledge of Danger’, Ādīnava ñāṇaṃ, is explained and traced back by referring the analogy by the Buddha's word; 8) ‘Knowledge of Disenchantment’, Nibbidā ñāṇaṃ; 9) ‘Knowledge for Desire for Deliverance’, Muñcitukamyatā ñāṇaṃ; 10) ‘Knowledge of Reflexion’, Paṭisaṃbhidāmagga, ñāṇaṃ; 11) ‘Knowledge of Equanimity about Formations’, Saṃkhārupekkhā ñāṇaṃ, 12) ‘Knowledge of Conformity’, Anuloma ñāṇaṃ. 13) ‘Change-of-Lineage’; 14) ‘Path Knowledge’; 15) ‘Fruition Knowledge’; 16) ‘Reviewing Knowledge’

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<sup>284</sup> Mrs. Sudarat Bantaokul, Vipassanā-Ñāṇa (Insight Knowledge): An Analytical Study of Soḷasañāṇa (The Successive stages of Sixteen Knowledges) In Theravāda Buddhism, **M.A. Thesis**, Graduate School Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, B.E.2546.

Theravāda Zen was taught by the Buddha: focus on the body, feelings, mind and dhamma-objects to develop Knowledge and attain Knowledge of liberation in order to live in the present, have a luminous mind, know things as they really are.

But in the Mahāyāna tradition, the Buddha revealed that all sentient beings have the Buddha nature, the seed of Buddha, each one is a Buddha in the future, can attain the sudden enlightenment as Hui-Neng was an inheritor of the lineage of meditative Truth the fifth Patriarch silently taught the Diamond Sūtra to him. When listening to the part “Do not act on sight. Do not act on sound, smell, taste, touch or Dharma. One should act without attachments”<sup>285</sup> he had a great realization and burst out:

How unexpected! The self-nature is originally pure in itself.  
How unexpected! The self-nature is originally neither produced nor destroyed.

How unexpected! The self-nature is originally complete in itself. How unexpected! The self-nature is originally without movement.

How unexpected! The self-nature can produce the ten thousand dharmas.<sup>286</sup>

The idea of Sudden Enlightenment Meditation of Hui Neng developed in the South of China. Later there were famous Zen Masters

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<sup>285</sup> The Diamond Sūtra, vol. 1. (金剛般若波羅蜜經). **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol 08, no. 235, p. 749, c21-23.

<sup>286</sup> The Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sūtra (六祖大師法寶壇經). **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol. 48, no.2008.

such as Ma Tsu Dào-Yī (709-788), Pai-Chang-Huai-Hai (720-814), Zhao-Chou-T'sung-Shen (?- 897), Lin-Chi-I-Hsuan (?-867) and this idea was transmitted to Vietnam, Japan and Korean. Another Zen Sect, Shen-Hsiu, that advocated “Gradualist school” developed in the north but existed for only a short time.

Mahāyāna tradition believes that apart from the impure body a person still has a noble mind, as the lotus flower rises from the mud in ditch-water. Every being has an available lucid Buddha-nature (the four qualities of nibbāna) and because the afflictions and defilements cover lucidness so the practitioner does not attach to the body but uses it for practice to reach liberation.

To sum up the differences between Theravāda and Mahāyāna traditions: in the practice in order to recognize the Buddha nature or the radiant mind the practitioner who cultivates to follow Theravāda Buddhism should spend time refining the mind, cultivating gradually and hence the wisdom arises and finally enlightenment, the perfect radiant mind. On the contrary Mahāyāna Buddhism advocates Buddha nature is available when returning back see the original face or Buddha nature. This is called sudden enlightenment without spending time practicing and is the sudden enlightenment of Zen Buddhism advocated and in vogue.

### **4.2.3 All Beings Have Buddha-Nature**

In the Theravāda tradition the Buddha taught the disciples different ways to eliminate afflictions to realize and live with the luminous mind (Pabhassara Citta). That is a practical cultivation to experience and attain reality from the diligent effort of the practitioner. However in the

Mahāyāna tradition the Buddha revealed that all sentient beings have the Buddha nature, the seed of Buddha, each one is a Buddha in the future. Therefore the Mahāyāna tradition guides how to enter into the gate of the Noble Path by faith and when the faith is strong the practitioner's efforts to eradicate defilements they will gradually enter into Buddha-knowledge that the Lotus Sūtra taught 'living with Buddha nature available.'

The Buddha taught: "I am a Buddha, all human beings will become Buddhas."<sup>287</sup> The Buddha appeared in the world to show beings their own Buddha-nature, including Unbeliever<sup>288</sup> (Atyantika) has also Buddha nature '一闍提等悉有佛性'<sup>289</sup> and creature as dog, in the meditative story as followings:

In addition, the Buddha nature has also in insentient beings that the Avataṃsaka Sūtra mentioned and summarized in a clause: "All in One; One in All" above.

Through the above quotation we see that all sentient being and insentient being have Buddha-nature but the reason they do not become the Buddha is because of ignorance obscuring it. Thus when removing the ignorance of greed, anger and delusion the Buddha nature will be revealed.

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<sup>287</sup> Watson, Burton, *op.cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>288</sup> The Unbeliever is person who is extremely evil and wicked, having lost all senses of goodness.

<sup>289</sup> Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, **Taishō Tripiṭaka**, vol 12, no. 374, p. 524, c3-4.



The Mahayāna Buddhist tradition reveals that all beings, both sentient beings and insentient beings, have Buddhahood and through the process of progress and practice they will become Buddha whereas the Theravāda Buddhist tradition only shows that human beings can cultivate in many different ways to be liberated and attain enlightenment i.e. shining of the mind everlastingly free from the cycle of birth and death.

#### **4.2.4 Propagating Buddha-Nature**

The Mahāyāna idea is widely spread and developed because the Buddha nature in each person idea creates a firm belief in each being that they will become a Buddha in the future just as the Buddha appeared in the world to show beings their own Buddha-nature; that everyone has Buddha nature including an Unbeliever (Atyantika) and creatures such as a dog. Propagating dhamma like the Never-Despite Bodhisattva (Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta) is an inspiration: “I dare not belittle you, because you will definitely become Buddhas.” With his strong faith he went into the world to waken Buddha-nature in people. However their response was to mock, libel and insult him but he still endured to accept all. Owing to his faith that had Buddha-nature he kept patient to convey messages and touched their minds. Owing to his generosity he always retained altruistic determination practicing the Bodhisattva’s way and he gradually achieved eloquent wisdom in the pure faculties of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Despite their actions the ones who defamed him were saved by him later.

The Never-Despite Bodhisattva (Bodhisattva Sadāparibhūta) practiced like that to liberate beings from delusion and waken them to

realize the Buddha-nature in themselves. His deed was guidance for practice in our daily life for people to live with the Buddha-nature as the brightness of Buddhahood within us just as in the Never-Despite Bodhisattva.

In Theravāda Buddhism the aims and the goals of individual liberation, attaining enlightenment. It gradually teaches the practice way through each level of training of four states but does not teach beings by showing that the Buddha nature is available as in the Mahāyāna idea.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

Luminous mind (*Pabhassara Citta*) and Buddha nature (*Tathāgata-garbha*) are two words used in the two major traditions of Buddhism and the similarity of the two is the true nature of mind that is always available but how we need to exclude defilement so the purity of mind will appear.

The essence of Buddhism as well as the practice of the two traditions of Buddhism is that nothing whatsoever should be clung to so the mind does not contain worry, greed, anger and the mind is liberated and purified.

The practitioner following Buddhism in one way or another is to attain the ultimate reality, meaning he sees the arising and passing away of the dharmas, to see human beings and the universes are non-self, dwelling in emptiness and Nibbāna.

However the difference of the two traditions is the clarity of mind: in the Theravāda tradition the practitioner experiences it by the diligent practice of the teachings to eliminate defilements; while the Mahāyāna tradition the practitioner enters the gate of the Noble Path with the belief that oneself and all beings have Buddha Nature and then make an effort to practice in various forms to recognize and live with own Buddha nature.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

In this final chapter the researcher will conclude the major findings from the documentary sources about the Buddha-nature concept and the comparison of Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism and also include suggestions for further study regarding this issue.

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Buddha-nature as a concept appears in Mahāyāna Buddhism where it is seen as the purpose of practice, the state of the quiet, calm mind of emptiness which is intended by Buddhism. But Theravāda Buddhism does not have the concept of Buddha-nature; it stresses what the Buddha discovered and taught and is also directed to the state of purified mind without clinging to anything in life. Therefore, there are different forms of the Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna however the researcher wanted to find out the similarities and differences in the practice of the two schools. This research is documentary and the study is divided into two parts:

In first part the researcher studied the concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna on the basis of the Buddha's teachings i.e. all sentient beings can liberate completely if they apply the Buddha's teachings in daily life. All beings have the seed of liberation and can become Buddhas consequently the Buddha appeared in the world to save all sentient beings and He preached the Dhamma depending on their levels and bestowing medicine for their illness. He used many examples, all of which were expedient and skillful means to guide sentient beings practice to destroy defilements, suffering and give up attachment to anything in the world; realize the true nature of all things, realize their own-self Buddha-nature. The researcher collected the information from Theravāda and Mahāyāna Sūtras, textbooks, essays, related papers, ethics and also information from the Internet.

The second part is a study concerned with the comparison of Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. By amassing relevant information from the Sutras of the two main traditions of Buddhism, textbooks, relevant papers and the Internet relating to comparisons between Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism. After studying the information the researcher then concludes the comparison of Buddha-nature in Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

This research has the following objectives:

1. To study the Concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism.
2. To study the Concept of Buddha-nature in Mahāyāna Buddhism.

3. To compare the Buddha-nature in Theravāda Buddhism and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Results of Buddha-nature nor the concept that sentient beings have Buddha-nature from studies that addressed the first objective found that in Theravāda there is neither the concept however the Theravāda school accepts purified mind, luminous mind (*pabhassara citta*) without affliction, defilement and freedom from suffering. Pabhassara is considered as deep samādhi which attains the intrinsic luminosity of the mind. The mind freed from the five hindrances is luminous (*pabhassara*) and in addition emptiness is another form of the concept of Buddha-nature expressing an absolute truth. The Buddha taught that His disciples should dwell in emptiness in the Cūlasuññata Sūta and Mahāsuññata Sūta and His disciple Śāriputra dwelled in a void in meditation but he applied four forms of behavior and in every daily life lived free from treasuring and infatuation. Liberation of mind is synonymous with the immovable mind which is detached from defilement, given up, destroyed, abandoned by seeing, restraining, using, enduring, avoiding, removing and developing the mind without clinging to greed, anger, ignorance or anything in life. To purify the mind by the training of Discipline-Meditation-Wisdom is the state of enlightenment of Arahats who lived with the ever-shining mind ending rebirth.

Results from studies which addressed the second objective found the concept of Buddha-nature in Theravāda texts under terms such as: purified mind, luminous mind and void (developed in Mahāyāna tradition under another term) although any term for this concept is also the absolute truth, is the beginning and the firm foundation for development

of the concept of Buddha-nature in the Mahāyāna school with terms such as Dharmakāya, Tathāgata-garbha, the Great Vehicle, Buddha Vehicle, Beholding the Buddha-nature of the Zen school, the clear one-pointed mind in the Pure Land school. These concepts are the centre of practice of all Sūtras aims and are the core concept in Mahāyāna tradition; living with Buddha-nature as well as attaining liberation in the present.

Results from studies which addressed the third objective revealed the similarities as luminous mind (pabhassara citta), absolute tranquil essence, the ultimate reality (Paramattha-sacca) and differences as: realizing Buddha nature, the gradual enlightenment and sudden enlightenment of Buddha-nature, all beings have Buddha nature, propagating Buddha nature of two traditions.

From this research the researcher sees that the simple concepts in Theravāda express the absolute truth; pure mind, ever bright mind but these were developed in Mahāyāna thought with a different diversified concept and forms nonetheless they implicitly mean Buddha-nature and that Buddha-nature is available in every being. Today the thought and concept of Buddha-nature is no stranger to practitioners according to Mahāyāna Buddhist thought through reciting, teaching the thoughts of the Lotus Sūtra. Buddha-nature is all existence; Buddha-nature is not only in sentient beings but also in insentient beings. All human beings have Buddha-nature and thus are assured of the realization of Buddhahood. Despite this grubby world everybody who lives in Buddha-nature or lives in his own pure mind, Bodhi mind can transform into a pure land where greed, hate and delusion are absent.

Buddha-nature is the pinnacle of practice in Buddhism. It was discovered by the Buddha. Purified mind, luminous mind (pabhassara citta), Emptiness (suññatā), these are the concepts that the Mahāyāna tradition uses to develop and connect the ideas as well as the external forms in Theravāda and Mahāyāna schools. The practice is to return and live with Buddha-nature so that practitioners or indeed any person of any age in any society can lead a boundless happy life.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

In this era of industrialization and modernization and as a response to social needs people always run after the external ephemeral things and think that they can grasp them and that they will have full and satisfactory happiness, however all visible things people grasp for provide only a faint and unsettled happiness. Accordingly the Buddhist life is a slow life; it means living involvement with nature and seeing things as they really are. At that time we return to live with the bright and pure mind and the Buddha-nature shines in every second in the present. Therefore the concept of Buddha-nature is a core concept; a truth for practicing Buddhism.

Consequently the researcher hopes that this research will benefit those who are seeking the enlightened shore. However, the researcher would like to render some additional suggestions as follows:

- 1) Future research ought investigate the Buddha-nature in insentient beings in Mahāyāna Buddhism.



2) The Buddha-nature is the concept and is also a theory which is applied in the practice of Mahāyāna tradition. Therefore future study should investigate the Buddhist Texts in Mahāyāna Buddhism and compare it with Confucianism in order to discover the similar points in practice in accordance with the Buddha's teachings.

3) Buddha-nature is the core of practice and is a necessity in the way of practice therefore a further study should be a comparative study on the way to practice to attain Buddha-nature clearly in two traditions of Buddhism.

Finally, the researcher sincerely hopes that this research will provide people with guidelines to consider the practice in daily life which leads to the end of suffering and finally to Nibbāna and live with Buddha-nature in every moment, in every living act.

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