
Spread of Buddhism and Peace in Southeast Asia

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Abstract: *Buddhism developed from the teachings of the Buddha, whose origins are believed to be in North India between the 6th and 4th centuries. Spreading from India to Central and Southeast Asia, China, Korea and Japan, Buddhism has played a central role in the cultural and social life of Asia. Presently, Buddhism has reached every corner of the world through its teachings. The main reason for this is the message of world peace. Peace is the basic foundation of human civilization. Without the ideals of peace, human civilization cannot exist and human civilization will become meaningless without peace. However, peace has been troubled by various forms of war and violence at various stages of human history. Thus, alternatively, Buddhism teaches real feeling and peace as a feeling that must come from inside and not from outside sources. Buddhist precepts always inspire harmony between human beings, though dependent on inner companions. Buddhism believes in helping others as a good deal. Therefore, peace has a very important role in human life and civilization. For that reason, the main objective of this paper is to examine the spread of Buddhism and peace in Southeast Asian countries and its new dimensions in today's era.*

Keywords: *Buddhism, Peace, Southeast Asia, Inter-religious issues, and the Contemporary era.*

1. Introduction

Siddhartha Gautama, who lived before 2500 years ago. With the passage of time, Buddhism spread throughout Asia, Europe and America. After Buddha got enlightenment, he preached his 'Dhamma' for nearly 45 years. He visited different places in order to instill the right knowledge among the people. It has been argued that his effort to establish a new religion brought a significant change to a large section of the population. However, some scholars are of the view that his philosophy poses a political and religious problem. Most of the teachings of the Buddha's life and philosophy are available in Pali language. However, the problem is that his teachings are not in chronological order and not in a combined form. According to Pali sources, the story of the Buddha and his followers is very interesting and it is very important (Dhammika, 1989). In Buddhism, one can purify his life, by various methods. After the inspiration from the Buddha and his philosophy, millions of people followed him.

On the basis of archaeological sources, people living in regions of Southeast Asia who were skilled in "making casting metals and pottery" date to around 3000 BCE (Osborne 2002: p. 21). On the basis of historical evidence, it has been proved that the civilizations of Southeast Asia are as old as Egypt, Greece, India and China. The region has maintained a long historical record, known as the Golden Age of Southeast Asia. In this way, Buddhism is one of the most ancient traditions of the world which was founded by Gautama Buddha, before 2500 years, in India. Buddhism developed from the teachings of the Buddha, whose origins are believed to be in northern India

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between the 6th and 4th centuries. Spreading from India to Central and Southeast Asia, China, Korea, and Japan, Buddhism has played a central role in the cultural and social life of Asia. Buddhism has turned into a worldwide religion with followers all around the world. It has spread the message of peace and harmony and has introduced the idea of humanism into the world. Buddhism with its simplest teaching of peace and tolerance has paved its way for a huge number of followers in the entire world and has given the new vision of life to the world.

Buddhism has long been celebrated as non-violence and peace. With its increasing power, the world is doing relief and guidance for the people of Buddhism. Currently, Buddhism has reached every corner of the world through its teachings. The main reason for this is the message of world peace, because, peace is the basic strand of human civilization. Without the ideals of peace, human civilization cannot exist and human civilization will become meaningless without peace. Though in different phases in human history peace has been disturbed by different forms of war and violence, but later on peace has been restored with the realization that without peace human civilization will be extinct. Thus, alternatively, Buddhism teaches genuine happiness and peace as a feeling that must come from inside and not from outside sources (Olson, 2005: pp. 16-17).

Many human beings today trust that peace is a sense of contentment brings about the conditions around them including feeling safe, successful, or fortunate. Therefore, Buddhist teachings are always inspiring harmony amongst human beings, although majoring at the inner fellow. For example, Buddhism trusts in assisting others as a good deal as they can as a source of happiness. Buddhism believes that each time one helps others; they shift from viewing their struggling as a large disaster and cognizance of the bigger struggling of the one they intend to help. Therefore, peace has a very essential and significant role in human life and human civilization. Peace has also tremendous ramifications in the animal world. In view of the modern world scenario, which has been marred by colonialism, two world wars, cold war, religious confusion and sometimes barbarism, crumbling down of ethics and morals, etc. peace has held the only light. Peace has been restored through agreements and engagements (Panjvani, 2013: pp. 36-37).

Before the era of mass tourism, trade was a major resource by which people from different religions and scriptures came into contact with each other. Although Buddhism is not traditionally a religion that actively seeks convertibility, it nonetheless extends to Southeast Asia and has a large number of Buddhist merchants in Central Asia in many countries in the 'Middle Ages Religion' was widely followed. Buddhist monks also traveled on merchant ships, to go on pilgrimage, thus taking their religious practices too far. Appropriately, based on the evidence, it can be said that through its propagation, Buddhism has done an important task of bringing peace in Southeast Asian region (Heine, and Prebish, 2003: p. 21-22). The main reason for the spread of Buddhism in this region was the local interest in the beliefs of Buddhists among foreign traders. Therefore, Buddhism developed organically in these areas. Sometimes rulers adopted Buddhism to help bring morality to their people, but no one was forced to convert. By making Buddha's message available to the public, people were free to choose what was helpful to them (Ibid: p. 26).

2. History of Buddhism in Southeast Asia:

Historically, the Buddha's teaching got divided into two fundamental orders namely, the 'Mahayana and the Theravada'. Theravada is known as the original form of Buddhism and Mahayana is known as the created form of Buddhism (Laumakis, 2008: pp, 190-99). Mahayana

Buddhism is followed in Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia. Mahayana Buddhism is not a single tradition, but it is a collection of Buddhist traditions like Zen Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism which are types of Mahayana Buddhism (BBC, 2002: 02/10/2002). Theravada Buddhist traditions are followed in most of the South-Asian countries and it is also spread in Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos (Silananda, 1997: pp. 29-30).

In Southeast Asia, Hinduism and Buddhism both were practiced in the first century BC. One of the Chinese travelers was established as a center of Buddhist education in the 7th century in Indonesia. Indonesia built-in central Java in the 9th century is still the largest Buddhist temple, called Borobudur. After the end of Srivijaya's kingdom in the 13th century, Buddhism also declined in the region, and Borobudur was abandoned. It was situated in an area of active volcanoes, Borobudur remained buried under the volcanic ash and forest growth until it was discovered by British explorers in the 19th century (Braun, 2009: p. 37).

Angkor Wat, another huge temple complex of Buddhism, was built in Cambodia by the Khmer people in the 12th century. Its history tells us how Buddhism developed in the region. Originally dedicated to the Hindu deity Vishnu, this temple was finally dedicated to Angkor Wat by 'Mahayana Buddhism' by the Khmer kings. In the 13th century, missionary monks, after joining Sri Lanka, introduced 'Theravada Buddhism' to the Khmer person, which remains in Cambodia to this day. Sri Lankan missionaries established 'Theravada Buddhism' in Laos and Thailand. It is believed that the Buddha himself came to Myanmar, there is archaeological evidence of Buddhism in southern Myanmar, which dates back to the 4th century CE, but most of the people of Myanmar accompanied the king there in the middle of the 11th century adopted Buddhism and made it their state religion (McGovern, 1919: pp. 17-18).

Southeast Asia is geographically and religiously divided between major regions. It encompasses Buddhism on a large scale, and is followed by Muslims. Sunni Muslims in this region represent the majority religion with estimates of over 40 percent. Buddhism (mainly Theravada Buddhism) comes second, followed by Christianity in Southeast Asian countries, with the majority of its members living in the Philippines. Thus, while almost all countries in Southeast Asia are religiously pluralistic. Ethnicity is an issue in religious conflict here because in Southeast Asia religious identity is often inseparable from ethnic identity (Kosuta, 2017: p. 24).

Today, Buddhism has become the predominant religion of the southeastern nations and spread the message of peace. However, it is a minority religion among the people of the island except for Singapore. People from many parts of Asia, who have settled in Singapore for centuries, bring various forms of Buddhism, and Buddhism is the most widely practiced religion in that country today.

3. Inter-religious Tensions in Southeast Asia:

The growing tension between Buddhist heads of Southeast Asian countries and Muslim minorities is a major challenge for peace and security within these countries and in the wider region. Amid such increasing tension, it will not be sufficient to implement the rule of common law in any country. In such a stressful time, only the deep understanding of Buddhist nationalist discourse can reduce complaints to a great extent. In this way, Buddhism is most important for improving mutual coexistence in the region. As such, Buddha's emphasis on the moral duty of a ruler inspired

Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE to use public power to improve the welfare of the public (Bhikkhu, 2012: pp. 36-39).

Similarly, with a shining example of this principle, Emperor Ashoka resolved to live according to Dhamma and serve the entire humanity. Hence, Buddha should be considered as a social reformer. He did not agree with the caste system, he recognized the equality of the people, spoke on the need to improve socio-economic conditions, recognized the importance of the more equitable distribution of wealth between rich and poor. He raised the status of women, recommended for their welfare, incorporated humanism into government and administration, and taught that a society should be run not with greed but with consideration and compassion for the people (Berzin, 1996: pp. 15-16).

Theravada Buddhism served as the organizing principle of pre-modern states in Thailand, Myanmar and parts of Sri Lanka before European colonial integration in South and Southeast Asia in the late 19th century. These three countries, the scriptures, the monarchical states drew their legitimacy prominently by basing their rule on the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha and the support of Buddhist monks. Thus Monarchus was interested in supporting the nuns physically and politically and played the role of defenders and promoters of Buddhism. Buddhism played a historical role in legitimizing state rights. Buddhism has also played a major role in pre-colonial Burman and Sinhalese societies as a path to culture, language, law and education. Thus, Buddhism became a major component of modern nationalist self-concepts (Stein, 2014: pp. 2-3).

Transformative influences still exist in modern conceptions of nationalism brought about by Western education in Southeast Asian countries. Buddhism has played a historical role in legitimizing the rights of the states of these countries. Buddhism has played an important role in pre-colonial Burman and Sinhalese societies as the head of the path of culture, language, law and education. Thus Buddhism has become a major component of modern nationalist self-concepts. Despite the relentless efforts of Buddhism, many traditional institutions remained unchanged, which is being tried all over by Buddhism. Despite this, colonial encroachment in the region has challenged the religious legitimacy of the state. In order to secure sovereignty in an expanding system of nation-states, the ruling elites saw the need to build a modern 'Thai' nation. In this way, the Southeast Asian nation can be given a new identity through the 'teachings of Buddhism', and a great state can be created (Iselin, 2015: p. 2).

The emergence of modern Buddhist nations has expanded the traditional relationship between state and Buddhism in Southeast Asia to include a third powerful element. Thus, the danger to the state, to religion, and to the nation has now become interrelated. With the end of colonialism, sections of monks are continuing their mission to defend Buddhism against new threats. This is particularly true in Sri Lanka and Myanmar, where the traditional monarchy is not allowed to be restored. Here, monks have played an assertive and independent role in protecting the nation and religion. This includes increasing pressure on newly independent states to promote and support Buddhism. Politically active monks have also rejected religious minority rights for non-Buddhist minorities. Such activism gave rise to state policies, which have been criticized for being exclusionary and discriminatory against religious minorities. Therefore, Buddhism is becoming a distinct identity in the South Asian region (Schober, 1995: pp. 12-15).

Thus, Buddhism has served to reinforce the state's identity as well as the political, economic, military and cultural dominance of Burman and Sinhala ethnic majorities in both colonial Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Similarly, the same was true in Thailand, although here, the role of monks was less prominent. Nevertheless, Buddhism helped strengthen state sovereignty here, including territories in northern Thailand settled by non-Buddhist groups such as hill tribes. These are the main features of Buddhism (Ibid).

Therefore, mutual tension in this area cannot be ignored. Strengthening the rule of law and security in the region, a solution advocating some domestic and international voices, will not be sufficient. Furthermore, here, the question also arises as to how different the attitude of the concerned states is from the politically active clerics. Responding to these realities, several local and national efforts have been launched by the respective Buddhist and Muslim religious leaders and laymen to address the violence. These initiatives, with the support of international peace building, NGOs, dialogue and joint activities in faith groups as well as training of religious leaders including monks in conflict prevention and resolution have been included. In this way, mainly Buddhism has played a major role in organizing such incidents (Stein, 2014: pp. 3-4).

4. Popular Traditions in Southeast Asian Countries:

In Southeast Asia, mainly two major communities are Muslim and Buddhism, followed by Christianity. If an event occurs in an area, it first affects its neighbors, after that the event or new idea starts spreading to other parts. Therefore, the process of propagation of any religion or sect is known as the spatial spread in geography. In this way, world communities share many different cultural traits. Hence, Buddhism can be accepted as a cultural and religious phenomenon. It gives rise to new forms of cultural and religious beliefs affecting the field of study of geographical factors and the attitudes of people of any community (Brown, 2001: pp. 7-8). The world's major religions are specifically associated with racial groups, cultures, political systems, and lifestyles. For example, it is difficult to imagine Thailand without Buddhism, without Hinduism in Nepal and India, and the British without Christianity. Religion has no limited boundaries. Buddhism is the best example of this because, at present, it has spread very rapidly in the western world (Park, 2004: p. 11).

Buddhism is accepted as a religion as well as a philosophy. Philosophy is a discipline, which encompasses the process of investigation, analysis, and development of ideas. It deals with a common understanding of values and reality. The use of discipline in Buddhism is based on the important ideas and concepts of the Buddha, moral obligation, knowledge, reason, issues, problems, logic, ethics, conceptual analysis, and a theoretical aspect. In Buddhism, the emphasis has been placed on reasoning and reasoning. It creates an atmosphere of equality and brotherhood in the society. Buddhism includes all traditions based on the teachings of the Buddha (Berzin, 1996: pp. 6-19).

Buddhism is divided into two main traditions (Theravada and Mahayana). Theravada Buddhism is one of these two major traditions, the word Theravada means 'teaching of the elders'. Its origins are closely associated with the history of Sri Lanka, Theravada Buddhism is also known as Southern Buddhism. It has 150 million followers, living in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. Mahayana Buddhism is one of the other and larger traditions of Buddhism. It is practiced mainly in East Asia in places such as China, Japan, Korea, and Tibet. Therefore, Theravadins follow

practices passed by senior monks since the time of the Buddha, such as living in the forests and meditating. The goal in Theravada Buddhism is an Arhat, a person, free from grief. It is also known as the Southern School (Alexander, 1996: pp. 36-37).

Presently, Theravada Buddhism is the most popular tradition in Southeast Asian countries. Therefore, the actual practices of Buddhism in Southeast Asian countries are still alive today. The main basis of the teachings of Buddhism is the 'Four Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path'. So of course, Theravada Buddhism of Southeast Asia is unlike other great historical religions, which define the moral perfection of Buddhism and the ideal goal of ultimate self-transformation and the means to achieve them. Therefore, Buddhism in South-East Asia provides equal rights and resources for all. With this, people can face the problems of life as well as the justification to vindicate all the activities of the world. Such goals have been accepted in the writings of the Pali canon, a discourse of Theravada Buddhism (Nunlist, 2014: pp. 4-9).

Theravada Buddhism is in the strongest position in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar in the ancient period. Therefore, Sri Lankan monks have greatly helped to revive Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asian countries (Bali, Indonesia, and Malaysia), where it gradually came to an end by the end of the fifteenth century. In Indonesia, Buddhism is officially considered one of the five state religions. The other four are Catholic and Protestant forms of Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. In Thailand, the Buddhist monastic community has supreme patriarchy and a council of elders, who take responsibility for maintaining the purity of this tradition. It has two types of monastic communities, one inhabiting forests, and the other living in villages. There is also a Buddhist university for monks. It is mainly opened for Buddhist teachings (Evers, 1991: pp. 63-64).

Similarly, in Myanmar, military rule ruthlessly destroyed the monasteries where disgruntled people lived, especially in the north of the country. Now, the government is giving big money to the monks to win their support and silence. The country has a long tradition of equal emphasis on meditation and study, particularly the 'Abhidhamma' system of Buddhist psychology, metaphysics, and ethics (McGovern, 1919). There are several meditation centers where monks and teachers instruct people in basic meditation practices. Similarly, in 2007, thousands of Buddhist monks took to the streets of Myanmar to protest peacefully against the military regime that ruled the country at the time. The 'saffron revolution', as the events showed, caused the colorful robes of the spiritual leaders of Myanmar to fall before the bullets of Myanmar's powerful army. Today, the images emanating from Myanmar are different. Around the country, monks are demonstrating in defense of Buddhism, which has been directed against the country's minority Muslim communities (Taylor, 1987: pp. 6-9).

Similarly, mutual tensions are also increasing in several Southeastern countries. Among these, in Sri Lanka, monk-led groups such as the 'Bodu Bala Sena' (BBS, Sinhalese for Buddhist Power Force) have attempted to reform similar campaigns. There have been demonstrations against the halal certification, along with the construction of mosques and churches. Similarly, in the south of Thailand, where the government is engaged in a century of conflict with the 'Malay Muslim Rebels', the monks are caught in conflict. Hence, the army has entered some temples, and rumors are circulating socially to 'military monks' (Butwell, 1969: pp. 3-7).

Such developments are opposite to the concept of Buddhism, which prohibits the killing of any living being. These types of developments predict a growing rift between Buddhist and Muslim

communities in the most populous Theravada Buddhist-Muslim countries, which leads to such a sense of development. This kind requires an appreciation of the historical role of Buddhism in legitimizing political authority in Theravada Buddhist societies. It also calls for an understanding of Buddhist nationalist discourses, which claim that the state belongs to a majority nation, be it Burman, Sinhalese, or Thai, this nation would naturally be a Buddhist nation. Only, if the driving force behind these discourses is understood can the growing interrelated tensions in South and South East Asia be addressed constructively (Hipsler, 2011: pp. 6-15).

5. Present Circumstances of Buddhism in Southeast Asia:

The historical development of Buddhism has been full of complexities. Buddhism is not meant to be a philosophy with only a defined doctrine and a set of rituals but includes a whole range of human activities, including literature and art. The influence of Buddhist ideas on social institutions creates an important network of mutual relationships. Today, Buddhism has spread to almost the entire region of Asia, extending from Afghanistan as a western border to Java in the south and Japan, Korea, and China-Mongolia in the north. Southeast Asia comprises 11 countries; covering an area of 4,545,792 sq. km. Islam and Buddhism are the two most prevalent religions for this reason. Apart from the unique people of Hinduism, animism, Tai folk, Taoism, Vietnamese folk live here. Approximately 190–205 million Buddhists live in this area (Abhayawansa, 2019: pp. 37-38).

The most notable fact of the spread of Buddhism in Southeast Asia was that its mode of transmission was important for the ease with which it was received. Buddhism came peacefully as a missionary or riding on the sailors and merchants, which spread here completely. After this, Buddhist literature gradually reached Asian countries. Buddhist missionaries and scholars, who were also tireless travelers, did important work in the affairs of the Southeast Asian states. More important for the development of Southeast Asian states was the fact that Buddhism became a demonstrative system of beliefs operating in India along with Hinduism. The role of Buddhism as a magnetism force was growing on average much higher than that of Hinduism. The main reason for this was the main principle of Buddhism (Birodkar, 1998: pp. 36-37).

When Buddhism arrived in Asia, the multiplicity of beliefs and practices was in full swing. Buddhism and Hinduism made this stream of diverse beliefs a part of their respective religions and strengthened their hold over them. Simultaneously, Mahayana and Theravada were undergoing popularization in Buddhism as a sect. These were conditions that sustained Buddhism in Southeast Asia, even in India that faded in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Buddhism found a more receptive society in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, and Cambodia. Countries, that to date consider Buddhism as the core of their social ethos and where the circle of Buddhist customs focuses on social relationships even at the rural level. These are the main features of Buddhism, which remain today (Banerjee, 1990: pp. 32-33).

6. Influence of Buddhism and Peace in Southeast Asia:

Peace as a concept has had a variety of understanding in different cultures. It can be said to exist when people resolve their differences or work together without any conflict. Scholars would claim pithily that peace is not just the absence of war (Galtung, 1969). The term peace has been articulated almost as frequently as terms like truth, beauty, and love. It has been argued by scholars that the

concept of peace has emerged since the birth of humanity and is most of the time linked with Chinese, Indian, Arabic and other cultures. The concept of peace is not so much concerned with how certain individuals or leagues conceptualized the realization of an eternal dream and the investigation of peace and how to change the world in socio-political institutions.

Serious academic engagement with the concept of peace began around the 1960s (Matsuo, 2007). In the 1960s', Galtung articulated the idea of peace and violence in the context of indirect or structural violence. According to Grewal, such an attempt by Galtung was a direct test to establish ideas about the nature of peace (Grewal, 2003). In conceptualizing the term 'peace' and to measure its complexity, Galtung employed two perspectives such as peace value and peace sphere. Galtung argued that "an important task in peace research has always been and always be the exploration of the concept of peace" (Galtung, 1981).

According to Galtung, the following are the main three principles of the idea of peace. "The term peace will be used for social goals at least verbally agreed to be many, if not necessarily be the most. These social goals may be complex and difficult, but not impossible to attain. The statement of peace is the absence of violence will be retained as valid" (Galtung, 1969). The third conviction makes it clear that the concept of peace and violence are interlinked concepts because peace can be achieved in the absence of war (Ibid). Coming to the Indian context, it could be seen that in contemporary India, violence and conflict take place in many parts of Indian society such as religious, political and economic conflicts and violence against human rights (Matsuo, 2007).

Though almost all the religions of the world believe in the ideals of peace, in Buddhism, it is the first and foremost essence of life. Peace is the most important part of Buddhism. Peace in Buddhism can be traced to Buddha's teachings and his lifestyle. Buddha's ideals of peace are based on his teachings and his lifestyle. Buddha's teaching and lifestyle are not only very simple but also very practical. In Buddha's philosophy, peace is the way of achieving salvation. A person has to follow certain rules of morality to attain salvation (Loomba, 2013: pp. 11-12). Buddha has focused on certain moral principles that are very much essential for leading a meaningful and disciplined life that will guide one towards Nirvana. During Buddha's time, the followers of Buddha were leading a very moral, truthful, and peaceful life which was based on freedom, justice, and love. Buddha also focused on the requirement of fellow felineness among people and the communal service in human life. Buddha also focused on equality among people and justice in the society.

As Haynes observes,

"Peace is one of the important aspects of any developed country. Without peace, no country can develop, whether economically, socially or politically. ...Peace is essential for social harmony, economic equality, and political phenomena. The spiritual and religious leaders like Buddha, Jesus, Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama were lovers of peace and they considered it an essential part for any society. There are some people, who interact with those who may dislike and be jealous of them, but still, they try to maintain peace. Many philosophical, religious, and cultural traditions have mentioned the peace in its positive and negative sense". (Haynes, 2009: Pp. 52-75)

So, without peace, no country can progress in this present day world scenario. Peace can be conceptualized in terms of political stability, economic security, social equality and justice and the sharing of love among human beings. 'Love your neighbour' should be the marking principle of the countries of the world, which will help in the establishment of peace among the comity of nations.

Buddha had never believed or felt that he was founding or declaring a new religion. Buddha did not start a new religion. It stood as a reaction to Hinduism. He gave new light on the old ideals of the Indo-Aryan civilization. Buddhism focused on high moral principles and strict ethical ideals. Certain values that Buddhism focused on were very much unknown to the people of Indo-Aryan civilization. The moral and spiritual ideals, as well as ideals of Ahimsa, Moksha, Karma, and rebirths, were completely unknown to pre-Upanisadic Vedic religion or Indo-Aryan civilization (Joshi, 1970: pp. 1-35).

One of the significant codes in Buddhism is the principle of Karma. The principle of Karma states the connectedness that exists among the whole being of things and the mutual dependence of human life. Karma teaches people the growth of a strong sense of responsibility in life and at the same time, it also teaches people to develop a philanthropic sense in life. It focuses on the sense of kindness and consideration for others. It helps them understand the essence of peace in their Karma as well as their interconnectedness to the outer world. Buddhists mostly prefer peace in every sector of society such as in schools, families, or the environment (Der-Ian Yeh, 2006: pp. 91-112).

The development of the philanthropic temperament and kindness in people are very much crucial to the ascertaining of peace among various people, families, and countries of the world. Applying the ideals of peace to the contemporary world scenario Der-Ian Yeh states that the Buddhist interpretation of establishing peace is possible only when it will start through person to person, rather than, through discussions between the world powerful countries on the table. To establish peace, efforts should continue, until it is established (Der-Ian Yeh, 2006: pp. 91-112). As well as, it has been mentioned above, peace in Indian philosophy and religion has been present from an ancient period even before the advent of Buddhism. Buddhism heightened and polished the notion of peace. Jayatillake states that another aspect of these practices of compassion on the part of Buddhism, in fact, those other philosophical traditions in India (Jayatillake, 1962: pp. 1-16).

Buddha's conviction of spreading peace in the world is quite praiseworthy. And also Buddha's methods of spreading peace are quite appealing. Buddha inculcated a sense of missionary zeal among his followers to spread the message of peace in various corners of the globe. Buddha had realized that it is the peace that will only hold the world for long. Power will only destroy the world. So, to teach people the essence of peace in different parts of the world and different corners of India Buddha sent his disciples. Even after Buddha this method of preaching peace was more popularized. This was indeed a very good method of making people aware of peace and certitude in life. Buddhism also preached to people about self-restraint and discipline. Buddhist monks through their self-restrained and controlled life gave the message of the importance of discipline in life. Buddha sent the message of peace to the world through missionary monks (Dharmakosajarm, 2000, pp. 1-10).

After Buddha's death gradually the difference of opinion arose among the different Buddhist scholars about the understanding and interpretation of Buddhist texts. However, some of the historical records point out that both the adherents of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism were sitting side by side and studying the Buddhist scriptures in the same monastery. In the world conference of Buddhists, Mahayanists and Theravadas come together, even though they have a difference in their opinions. Though the scholars on Buddhism disagree on the interpretation of

Buddhist texts they all agree on the Buddhist essence of peace. So, the notion of peace is a very significant contribution of Buddhism into the Southeast Asian reason (Core, 1973: pp. 13-14).

Buddhism not only tried to bring about a transformation in the human mind and soul through the preaching of its ideals and its focus on peace in human life but also tried to bring about a social and political transformation in the society. Buddhism believed in an equalitarian society where every man in the society has a say and equity in the status. At the outset, it must be made clear that Buddhism focused on a simple life with no materialistic wants. Followers of Buddha emphasized the simple and truthful life to achieve enlightenment. From the very beginning of the advent of Buddhism, it brought about social, political, and economic changes in the society of that period (Olson, 2005: pp. 68-70).

The social transformation was to be marked in all the spheres of the society ranging from a small village to a kingdom. The political modification included the changes in the structures of the village administrations to the administrations of the kingdoms. In the economic sphere, it brought about changes in the agricultural patterns. It focused on agriculture which was considered the backbone of the economy. The use of iron was prevalent during this period which greatly facilitated agricultural activity. Trade was also focused during this period. A trading community had emerged during Buddha's period. During this period the skill development of the people was also focused on (Core, 1973: pp. 22-23).

Apart from these changes in the social, political, and economic spheres of the social changes were also to be marked in the spheres of language and literature. As it is a very well-known fact that Buddhism had touched a new height during the reign of Asoka. Asoka had sent his son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra to preach Buddhism in Sinhala (present-day Sri Lanka) and different parts of South and East Asian countries. During Asoka's period, the Pali language was of dominance. During this period Buddhism was spread through the Pali language. Buddhism was spread through the Pali language. Many Buddhist works of literature were also written during this period (Schober, 1995: pp. 15-16).

At different phases of its history and development, Buddhism brought about changes in the social, political, economic, linguistic, and literary spheres of the society. Both the Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhists tried to bring the transformation in the society in different ways. As Jayasuriya observes, Buddha's teachings affected every sector of society whether it is social, political, or economic. Therefore, Buddhism had shown extraordinary efforts to change the social and geographical conditions of the people in the Southeast Asian reason (Jayasuriya, 2008: pp. 41-44).

7. Conclusion

This paper has summarized the tradition of peace in Buddhism in Southeast Asian reasons. It has also provided a brief status of the social and political relations towards the goal of Buddha's social unity and unity of peace in Southeast Asian reason. Buddhism has enlightened every aspect of humanity like social, political, economic, psychological, and religious fields. Buddha's philosophy of peace is one of the important mediums, through which the world can establish peace. If Buddhists will follow his teachings practically, then Buddha's philosophy will become the platform on which present society can establish peace and prosperity. However, the contradiction

is noticed at present that in various countries Buddhists have avoided the main teaching of Buddha's philosophy, i.e. non-violence, and adopted the policy of violence. In the contemporary period, Burma is one such example, where followers of Buddha had killed thousands of Muslims. This is totally against the teachings of Buddha. Buddha believed that though the religion, caste, region, and colour of all human beings within this universe are different, peace is the common and one of the main principles to be followed by every individual.

It has been seen that human beings tend to fight wars. Buddha wanted to make peace in the world for which in Buddhism being at the peace is the pre-requisite. As per Buddha, peace is the source of happiness. However, most of people search for peace in the wrong ways. They believe that wealth and money are sources of happiness, which is against the norms of Buddhism. To lead a successful life, Buddhism wants people to be happy with minimal wants which will result in peace. In this way, Buddha's gospel of peace has been stressed and popularized in Southeast Asian reasons.

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