



## THE ROLE OF BUDDHA AS A TEACHER

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### Abstract

The Religious Teacher (Shāstru) of every religion convention originated in the world can be regarded as a teacher. In the Indian religious field, there had been many such teachers. The Buddha was one of them. ‘Teacher of gods and men’.<sup>1</sup> In this manner, it has been mentioned about the Buddha. When he introduces who he was, he has introduced himself as “I’m the incomparable Teacher.”<sup>2</sup> From the expressions like the above, it is obvious that the Buddha has been accepted as a great Religious Teacher and a teacher at that time and he also has expressed about it.

The history has created many persons. But, at present, no one has become so interested and memorable like the Siddhartha Gautama or Buddha. No one has achieved a state like him. He, a Sākyan prince, was the greatest spiritual teacher in the world.<sup>3</sup> ‘There is no any suspicion about the ancient Buddha was a greatest teacher.’<sup>4</sup> The Buddha holds the main position among those who knew education science and education psychology. Buddhists introduce him as the teacher of gods and men.<sup>5</sup> From the ideas of the intellectuals from the West and East, it is obvious that there was a great acceptance and honour about the state of the Buddha as a Religious Teacher.

There were many external features and internal virtues of the Buddha’s character to be the honourable, exemplary and the greatest character in the world. The country of his birth, race and time was prepared or good enough to form a great character. For the compilation of his great character, the virtues like compassion spread throughout the world, loving-kindness, desirelessness, courage with determination, self-sacrifice, uprightness in words or expression and action, patience to bear accuses and dishonour, the ability to converse with kings, ministers, courtiers, wealthy men and also with poor working farmer community, humble nature or modesty, none-greediness for fourfold basic needs (cloth, food, residence and medicinal drinks) or (catuppacca) and not treating for injustice were helpful or they were the reasons.

<sup>1</sup> ‘stthā devamanussānaṃ’

Aṅguttara Nikāya, ii, PTS, 33 page.(sīha sutta)(4.1.43)

<sup>2</sup> Ahaṃ satthā anuttaro

Majjhima Nikāya, i, PTS, 160-175 page.(Ariyaparitesana (26) Sutta)

<sup>3</sup> Francis Story, Dimensions of Buddhist Thought, 1976, page 03

<sup>4</sup> Richard, A, Gard, Buddhism , 63 page

<sup>5</sup> Saranankara.Rev., Ganagama, The Buddha, M.D.Gunasena, Colombo, 1973, 14 page.

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### 1. Compassion and Loving-kindness

The entire beings were the pupils of the Buddha. Human being is chief among them. It is a great virtue of a teacher to be kind, sympathetic towards the pupils. The pupils have expressed that the Buddha had this great virtue with him in his character. When the Buddha advises pupils, he does so in a friendly manner and with compassion. It is clear from the expression, “Out of compassion the rightfully Enlightened One advises others.”<sup>6</sup> The Buddha’s expression to Venerable Cunda, “Cunda, I have done, what should be done out of compassion, by a Teacher to his disciples,”<sup>7</sup> proves this fact further.

Though the teacher is so clever and has the expertise about the subject taught and used techniques, if he does not have compassion and love towards students, education will not take place in its real nature. When the things or the subjects are taught with love and compassion in the mind of teacher towards the students, they are conceived well by the students. If the teacher is someone without compassion, he is not interested or does not like him. As a result of it, the teacher cannot do the teaching activity well. The Buddha’s compassionate nature can be seen from the following advisory expression, “Bhikkhus, be the inheritors of my Teaching and not the inheritors of my material. There’s my compassion towards you. Whatever it is, be the inheritors of my Teaching not the inheritors of my material.”<sup>8</sup>

The Buddha advises to his fellow students to improve their good abilities or qualities and to subjugate their bad qualities like a father advises his children with a compassionate heart.

“Bhikkhus, dispel demerit, it is possible to dispel demerit. If it is not possible to dispel demerit, I will not tell you. “Dispel demerit.” As it is possible I say. “Bhikkhus, dispel demerit.” If dispelling demerit is conducive to harm and unpleasantness, I will not tell, “Bhikkhus, dispel demerit.” As dispelling demerit is conducive to well being and pleasantness I say “bhikkhus, dispel demerit.”<sup>9</sup> In this manner, with great compassion towards students, having addressed them attractively, the Buddha advises them, so they can’t go against them.

The Buddha, as a compassionate guide or teacher, did not wait till the students came to him. Instead, he went in search of talented students and paved the way for them to improve their talents and develop them to the best. For examples, the characters like, Aṅgulimāla,<sup>10</sup> Ālavaka,<sup>11</sup> Kasībhāradvāja,<sup>12</sup> Sunīta,<sup>13</sup> Sōpāka<sup>14</sup> can be presented. Aṅgulimāla and Ālavaka

<sup>6</sup> Saṃyutta Nikāya, i, PTS, 248 page (Māra saṃyutta, rājawagga, patitupa sutta – 4.2.4)

<sup>7</sup> hitānukampī sambuddho yadaññāmanusāsati

Majjhima Nikāya, i, PTS, 46 page.(Salleka(8)Sutta)

<sup>8</sup> Dhammadāyādā me bhikkhave bhavatha mā āmisadāyādā. Atthi me tumhesu anukampā kinti me sāvakā dhammadāyādā bhaveyyuṅ no āmisadāyādā’ti. Tumhe ca me bhikkhave āmisadāyādā bhaveyyātha no dhammadāyādā.

Majjhima Nikāya, i, PTS, 12 page.(Dhammadāyādā(3)Sutta)

<sup>9</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, i, PTS, 58 page. (Dukanipāta dubbhikarāna vagga, 2.1.2.8.9)

<sup>10</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, ii, PTS, 97-98 pages.(Aṅgulimāla(86)Sutta)

<sup>11</sup> Sutta Nipāta, PTS, 31 page.(Ālavaka sutta)

<sup>12</sup> Sutta Nipāta, PTS, 28 page. (Kasībhāradvāja sutta)

even threatened to kill the Buddha. The Brahmin Kasībhāradvāja at first spoke with the Buddha disgracefully. But, the Buddha having shown great incomparable compassion and loving-kindness to them, paid attention to them and gave the benefit to them. Having eradicated their weaknesses, the Buddha explained them the facts in a manner that they could improve their creative ability. Sunīta and Sōpāka, who were neglected from the society, were two miserable ones from outcast families. The Buddha pointed out the way to deliverance or Nibbhāna with a companionate heart without any difference to anyone.

This great Religious Teacher or the Buddha, full of willingness of other's welfare and with the compassionate intentions, worked with compassion towards the followers or students till the Great Passing away.

“It may be, Bhikkhus, that one of you is in doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Dhamma, or the Saṅgha, the path or the practice. Then question, Bhikkhus! Do not be given to remorse later on with the thought: 'The Master was with us face to face, yet face to face we failed to ask him.'”

The Buddha having said like above and then, "It may be, Bhikkhus, out of respect for the Master that you ask no questions. Then, Bhikkhus, let friend communicate it to friend."<sup>15</sup>

This expression is such a great expression that it has been recorded in the history of Religious Teachers as a great, compassionate expression of a Religious Teacher. The story about Subhadra, a wandering ascetic (Paribrajaka), is also a place that shows the great kindness of the Buddha as a Religious Teacher. Subhadra who came to see the Buddha was stopped by Venerable Ānanda. Having seen this, he called the Venerable Ānanda and said: "Stop, Ānanda! Do not refuse Subhadda. Subhadda, Ānanda, may be allowed into the presence of the Tathāgata. For whatever he will ask me, he will ask for the sake of knowledge, and not as an offence. And the answer I give him, that he will readily understand."<sup>16</sup> In this asking of Subhadda to come to him for asking the things clearly shows that even at his last time of lifespan he has acted with courage, without considering his physical pains and he subjugated them. He tried to fulfil his duty towards the destitute and those who are suffering. He had determined to do his service to the world and in the same way he encouraged his students to follow him as an example. He acted with a firm determination towards making his students without doubts and to the positions of Tiṇṇavicikiccha, and Vigatakathankatha. He did all those activities because of his compassion.

## 2. Profitless Service

One of other characteristics of Buddha as a Religious Teacher is not expecting profits, honour or praise. The Buddha for forty five years gave education to students belonging to various categories or positions without hoping any profit or praise. The only objective was the spiritual and external development and also the well-being of student community. He also advised his students to serve without considering profit, honour or praise etc.

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<sup>13</sup> Theragātā Pāli, PTS, 63-64 pages.(Sunīto thero)

<sup>14</sup> Theragātā Pāli, PTS, 50 page.(Sopāka thero)

<sup>15</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, ii, PTS, 154 page.(Mahā parinibbāna Sutta)

<sup>16</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, ii, PTS, 150 page.(Mahā parinibbāna Sutta)

“O! Monks, profit, honour and praise are rough, cruel, sharp and unbeneficial for the attainment of Arahantship.”<sup>17</sup>

“Those who offer with incense, flowers and other things are the ones who are offering me. Only those who live according to the doctrine offer me.”<sup>18</sup> From the ideas like above, it is possible to understand who the Buddha is. According to the education method at that time in India, the student who finished his education had to give thousand pieces of gold or something assigned by the teacher as Teacher Fee.<sup>19</sup> If the Buddha needed profits, he could get anything by making the devotees wonder with using his power of miracle. But, he used his power only to make the student community better.<sup>20</sup>

The Buddha did not expect to get the worship and honour of thousands of students who were blind with false devotion and from those who are attracted to his bright body, beautiful figure, sweet voice, high respect, leadership or incomparable personality etc. But, he wanted to create a society with discipline, courage, brave, not backward, lawful, direct, respecting doctrine, experiencing doctrine, living according to doctrine and considering doctrine as their livelihood etc.<sup>21</sup>

The Buddha did not appreciate that even his doctrine is respected or made offerings without putting the doctrine into action or following. He did not like taking his doctrine or Teaching as Wrong Views. His Teaching is comparable to a raft for the purpose of crossing over and not for getting hold of.<sup>22</sup> But, it must be mentioned here that the Buddha considered and respected doctrine as his teacher. The Buddha did not appreciate making offerings to him and the doctrine because it does not help his expectation of giving the salvation to person by ending suffering.

When a service is done or fulfilled, if reputation and praise are expected, that kind of service cannot be done properly. Since the Buddha did his service without any such expectation, he could do a service that is affecting for centuries ahead. Therefore, it can be considered as a necessary virtue.

### **3. Unshaken Virtue**

Patience or the power staying without changing is a great characteristic of a teacher. Patience or unshaken nature can be defined as the ability of mind without changing when it sees the eight worldly conditions (Aṭṭha Loka Dhamma).<sup>23</sup>

The Buddha started in India a great non-violent struggle about social customs and behaviour patterns. It became so popular quickly since it was with kindness and loving-kindness and it was put into action in a calm manner. It became popular even among the other Religious Teachers. Under this condition, there were some who became jealous about it and they became opponents to him. They accused the Buddha in various ways like,

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<sup>17</sup> Saṃyutta Nikāya, ii, PTS, 225-226 pages. (Dāruṇa sutta, 5.1.1)

<sup>18</sup> Nahi mayaṅ mālagandhādini pūjaṅ karontā pujaṅ karonti nāma dhammānudhammaṅ patipajjantā evapana maṅ pūjenti nāma  
Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Dhammārāmattherassa vatthu.

<sup>19</sup> Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, Aṅgulimāla Story

<sup>20</sup> Vinaya Pitakam, i, PTS, 24-25 pages.

<sup>21</sup> Saranaṅkara, Ganegame, Rev., The Buddha, MD Gunasena, Colombo, 1973, 32 page.

<sup>22</sup> Majjhima Nikāya i, PTS, 134 page. (Alagaddūpama(22)Sutta)

<sup>23</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya iv, PTS, 157 page. (Atthaka nipāta, mettāmagga, pathama loka dhamma sutta, 8.1.1.5)

“The Samano Gotamo causes fathers to beget no sons; the Samano Gotamo causes wives to become widows; the Samano Gotamo causes families to become extinct.”<sup>24</sup>

He was unshaken like a stone and answered, “It is by means of the true Doctrine that the great heroes, the Tathāgata, lead men who will murmur at the wise, who lead men by the power of the Truth?”<sup>25</sup>

By accusing like this, they did not stop. They used women like Sundari, the wife of a wandering ascetic or Paribrājikā,<sup>26</sup> and Cinchimānavikā<sup>27</sup> to disgrace the Buddha by saying to the society that he abuses them and kills them. A Brahmin called Aggikabhāradvāja<sup>28</sup> having seen the Buddha approaches to his house for alms food blamed in front of him like, “outcast, oh, shaven headed one”.

In this manner, not only from outside society but also he had to face many troubles from among his pupils too. A relative of his lay life and a student in Ordination, Venerable Devadatta having created problems among the community of monks planned even to kill the Buddha and it is reported that he left with a group of monks.<sup>29</sup> When one student monk called Bahubāndikatthera acts or goes against the doctrine, the Buddha advised him. Having got angry with it, he threw the robes aside and behaved nakedly. This was a disgrace done to the Buddha by him. But the Buddha did not lose his patience. The Buddha being patient with kindness showed him the correct path.<sup>30</sup>

When the Buddha provides his service to the world, he had to face not only respect and praise but also accuses and disgraces. He did not care any of those and he strengthened his service further. He advised the student community in the same manner. The way he faced accuses and disgraces are given in the following manner.

“As an elephant in the battlefield withstands the arrows shot from a bow, even so will I endure abuse; verily most people are undisciplined.”<sup>31</sup> According to this verse of the Buddha, he has faced the accusations in the same manner that an elephant bears the pain of arrow hot in a war. Another important idea, arising from this is that he had been to face a great battle in the society and how courageously and with determination he faced it. On one occasion, Venerable Ānanda, being unable to bear the accusations for no reason in one village, suggested the Buddha to leave that village and live in another city. The answer of the Buddha for that question was if the same thing happens there in the new city where would they go. And the Buddha asked him to be patient and not to be unshaken from those. From this, it is clear that when the Buddha serves, he did not like to escape from problems. By facing every

<sup>24</sup> aputtakāya paṭipanno samaṇo Gotamo vedhabyāya paṭipanno samaṇo Gotamo kulūpacchedāyapaṭipanno samaṇo Gotamo.

Vinaya Pitakaṃ i, PTS, 43 page.(Mahāvagga pāli)

<sup>25</sup> Vinaya Pitakaṃ i, PTS, 44 page. (Mahāvagga pāli)

<sup>26</sup> manussā dhammena kira samaṇa sakra puttīyā nettino adhammenāti’

Dhammapadatthakathā, 571 page.(Sundarī paribrājikā kathā)

<sup>27</sup> Dhammapadatthakathā, 434 page.(ciñcamānavikā kathā)

<sup>28</sup> Sutta Nipāta, PTS, 21 page.(Vasala Sutta)

<sup>29</sup> Dhammapadatthakathā, 419 page.(Devadatta therā kathā)

<sup>30</sup> Dhammapadatthakathā, 380 page.

<sup>31</sup> ahaṃ nāgo va saṃgāme - cāpāto patitaṃ saraṃ

ativākyam titikkhissam - dussīlohi bahujjano’

Dhammapada, 330 verse.(Nāga vagga)

problem and bearing them with patience, he did his service as a great Religious Teacher. The unshaken nature of the Buddha was a great reason for this.

### 3.1 Speaking the Truth

One of the significant characteristics of the Buddha is the truthfulness or speaking the truth. "If the Buddha preaches something, he does it so. If he does something, he says so."<sup>32</sup> From this, it is clear that if the Buddha sermonises something, he put it into action and vice versa. The social community at that time has accepted like this about the Buddha. So, the Buddha not only preached the doctrine but he also practised what he preached. Mainly, it is proven from this that he is an exemplary teacher. When the teacher is not exemplary, it is not possible to lead the student community for the betterment of their lives.

The Buddha criticised many conventionally accepted social norms at that time with good reasoning. Under it, criticising caste system and giving his ideas about not giving the equal status to women are considered important.

This is a social problem. It is important to give his ideas here in this regard. He put all his ideas into practice. He created the necessary background for anyone from the four castes to enter into the community of Saṅgha or get the membership of the great community of monks created by him. He gave freedom to all the membership of the society at that time. Upāli, a barber, who cut the beard of person from the Warrior Caste (kattiya), when ordaining with princes from Warrior Caste ordained first and according to his abilities, he was given position or title in the dispensation of the Buddha, Upāli was the Chief of discipline.<sup>33</sup> He gave the opportunity to become nuns to the women community and offered them also social positions. Khemā, Uppalavannā, Paṭācārā and Kisāgōtamī are said to have kept in Chief positions.<sup>34</sup>

In some occasions, when the Buddha imposed disciplinary rules, he himself put them into practice first and understands its results first. Only then, having explained their importance to the monks, he advised to follow them. In the discourses, Bhaddāli and Latukikopama,<sup>35</sup> these features can be seen. A matter connected with Disciplinary Rule on taking meals unscheduled time (vikālabojanā) is presented here. The Buddha having taken one meal a day describes the monks the easiness because of it and tries to carry out it with the monks. From this the Buddha's above mention virtue can be seen very clearly. When the teacher advises students, words and the actions should go together and character should be exemplary by words and actions. When guiding is done under this situation, he will not get defiled or polluted.

"Let one first establish oneself in what is proper, and then instruct others. Such a wise man will not be defiled."<sup>36</sup>

The topics 'Who is the teacher worthy of criticism?' and 'Who is the teacher not worthy of criticism?' are mentioned in the discourses.<sup>37</sup> Enquiring about this will be relevant to the

<sup>32</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, ii, PTS, 224 page. (Mahā govinda Sutta)

<sup>33</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, i, PTS, 25 page. (Ekka nipata, 1.14.4.1-16)

<sup>34</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, i, PTS, 25 page. (Ekka nipata, 1.14.5.1-13)

<sup>35</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, ii, PTS, 437- 447 pages. (Bhaddāli(65)Sutta)

<sup>36</sup> attānameva paṭhamam - patirūpe nivesaye  
atññāmanusāseyya – na kilisseyya paṇḍito  
Dhammapada, 158 verse. (Atta vagga)

<sup>37</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, i, PTS, 230-232 pages. (Lohicca Sutta)

topic. There has mentioned about three teachers worthy of criticism. And one teacher is there not worthy of criticism according to the discourse.

There are three sorts of teachers who are worthy of criticism in the world according to Lohicca Sutta. Those are not presented here in this research paper in detail. Those mentioned three sorts of teachers are worthy of criticism. They are to be accused. They are not suitable for teaching because of their weaknesses or something lacking with them.

The fourthly presented teacher is not worthy of criticism and the reasons for it also have been presented. As given in the discourse,

"There is, Lohicca, a teacher who is not worthy of criticism in the world."

"But which teacher, Master Gotama, is not worthy of criticism in the world?"

"There is the case, Lohicca, where a Tathagata appears in the world, worthy & rightly self-awakened. He teaches the Dhamma admirable in its beginning, admirable in its middle, admirable in its end. He proclaims the holy life both in its particulars & in its essence, entirely perfect, surpassingly pure."

According to this description, the fourth teacher presented is the Buddha and it is proven that he gives an education with all the necessary factors. Therefore, the Buddha is not worthy of criticism or to receive a criticism.

The truthfulness of the Buddha in a suitable way to a Religious Teacher is done with constant attention and it is important that he paves the way intelligently for his students. It is clear from the following expression found in Sabbāsava Sutta. "Bhikkhus, I declare the restraining of the mind from all desires, knowing and seeing, not without knowing and seeing."<sup>38</sup> In Udumbarika Sihanāda Sutta,<sup>39</sup> there are some important facts about this. They are as follows,

1. The Blessed Lord is enlightened and teaches a doctrine of enlightenment,
2. He is self-restrained and teaches a doctrine of self-restraint,
3. He is calm and teaches a doctrine of calm,
4. He has gone beyond and teaches a doctrine of going beyond,
5. He has gained Nibbāna and teaches a doctrine for gaining of Nibbāna.

From these ideas, it is said that the Buddha being enlightened, self-restrained, calm, gone beyond and gained Nibbāna advises others to come to the same position.

#### 4. Teaching without the Closed Fist of a Teacher (Ācariyamutṭhi)

Another significant feature of the Buddha is that he taught the doctrine that he understood to the students without secret teaching given only to trusted pupil. A teacher with love for the

<sup>38</sup> jānato ahaṃ bhikkhave passato asavānaṃ khayāṃ vadāmi. no ajānato no apassato  
Majjhima Nikāya, i, PTS, 7 page.(Sabbāsava(2)Sutta)

<sup>39</sup> Buddho so bhagavā bodāya dhammaṃ deseti.  
Danto so bhavā damatāya dhammaṃ deseti.  
Santo so bhagavā samatāya dhammaṃ deseti.  
Tiṇṇo so bhagavā taraṇāya dhammaṃ deseti.  
Parinibbuto so bhagavā parinibbānāya dhammaṃ deseti.  
Dīgha Nikāya, iii, PTS, 54 page.(Udumbarika sīhanāda Sutta)

students must possess this virtue since he expects the benefit of them. It says in the discourse, “A teacher must teach all he knows to the students.”<sup>40</sup>

On one time, the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda like this. “I have set forth the Dhamma without making any distinction of esoteric and exoteric doctrine; there is nothing, Ānanda, with regard to the teachings that the Tathāgata holds to the last with the closed fist of a teacher who keeps some things back.”<sup>41</sup> From this, he intends that he preaches the doctrine to the students without keeping any part as secret. If one teaches with the closed fist of a teacher, he is jealous that his pupil would come to a great place than to himself. That feeling should not be with the teacher. There will be the possibility of accusing Buddha by considering Views and Unsolvable Questions (Avyākatapañha) that he did not teach all he knew and did not answer all the questions. But, since his objective of education was to give the liberation to person, it should not be forgotten that all the teachings necessary for it were taught. If something is kept as the closed fist of a teacher, it is the spirit or the most important part of a particular subject. But, there isn't a most essential part that the Buddha was hiding.

There is a great difference between not teaching having kept as the closed fist of a teacher and not teaching due to its irrelevance. In the old Indian education system, there prevailed a system with the closed fist of a teacher according to Upanishad. Without teaching every student, in the Upanishad age, teaching has been done to very trustworthy students and even it has been done keeping them very closely. Upanishad expression, “Upanishad Iti rahasyaṁ” says that ‘secret teaching given only to the most trusted pupil’. The Buddha does not have such secret teaching or teaching for the selected students. He taught doctrine to all in common in just manner.

“All the other Religious Teachers, Saviours, Creators, Leaders etc did not point out about the origin or creating a similar person to them. But, the Buddha wished if all in the world become Buddhas like himself. He taught the way to become a Buddha. His honest wish was that all should achieve the greatness, and all-knowing nature (sammā sambuddha) that he had reached. The Buddha preached that if one tries, encourages himself, everyone can become a Buddha.”<sup>42</sup> From this, it is obvious that the Buddha acted with the great pure thought of making other to the great position he achieved by teaching without the closed fist of a teacher.

As a significant characteristic of the Buddha, it is possible to see that the Buddha let a student to ask any question from him and get to know about it and solve it. One such example can be illustrated from Ti-pitaka. The story about Sabhiya reveals some facts about this. A certain deity or god approached Sabhiya and asked some questions and then told him to ordain under a person who is capable of solving those questions. Then, Sabhiya went to various old Religious Teachers in India at that time. Some didn't give a chance even to ask questions. Some expressed displeasure about them. Thereafter, though he was young in age, he

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<sup>40</sup> sabba sippa suta samakkhāyino bhavanti  
Digha Nikāya, iii, PTS, 189 page.(Siṅgālovāda Sutta)

<sup>41</sup> natthānanda tathāgatassa dhammesu ācariyamuttṭhi  
Digha Nikāya, ii, PTS, 100 page.(Mahā parinibbāna Sutta)

<sup>42</sup> Saranankara Ven. Ganegama, The Buddha, M.D.Gunesena, Colombo, 1972, 24 page.



remembered the Buddha and deciding that it is better to meet the Buddha and went to see the Buddha. The Buddha let him ask any question.<sup>43</sup>

From the fact that he was asked to enquire any question, Sabhiya's intention for truth became more developed. It became an encouragement for developing creativity. One of the main factors that should be fulfilled by a teacher has completed here. It is the giving of the opportunity. The same opportunity was given to the Demon, Ālavaka.<sup>44</sup>

Having taken the opportunity that the Buddha gave to question, some have asked embarrassing questions from the Buddha. Some of them are Saccaka,<sup>45</sup> Upāli, the layman<sup>46</sup> and Abhayarājakumāra.<sup>47</sup> Students were so happy and satisfied with this that it is clear through the expressions of delight and praise of them at the end of solving questions.<sup>48</sup> If the student is not given the chance to question and solve problem willingly, his abilities will get vanish. The Buddha has not hidden any fact even about his character. He has openly expressed everything. The Buddha gave the opportunity to question even about himself if there are questions to be asked and it can be seen from Vīmaṅsaka Sutta. "Bhikkhus, by the Bhikkhu who could examine the thought processes of another the Thus Gone One should be examined on two things, on things cognisable by eye consciousness and ear consciousness."<sup>49</sup> In the above manner, it has been given in the discourse. Unlike any other teacher, the Buddha let the others know about himself.

All these facts show that the Buddha engaged in education without keeping the closed fist of a teacher.

### 5. Dedicating to Service

Dedicating for the service with the noble and great purpose of making those who are suffering happy is a significant characteristic of the Buddha. Even the Brahmins who were considered great and respected in the society at that time accepted without any argument and confirmed that the Buddha dedicated himself for the service of mankind or the entire beings by going forth into a religious life, giving up much money and gold, and by giving up the great clan of his relations at the young age.<sup>50</sup> The doctrine understood by him doing a great sacrifice was given to the public without considering his own benefit or happiness. This has been done by him according to a schedule or timetable (daily routine) without letting his valuable time to waste. In the Buddha's timetable, there were mainly five periods. There were eighteen extra small time periods. Except the time to do the activities with regard to the body, to go for alms food and have meals and Attainment of Extinction (nirodhasamapatti), he used the rest of the time towards the betterment of students. He slept only for one hour and twenty

<sup>43</sup>puccha maṅ sabhiya pañhaṅ - yaṅ kiñci manasicchasi  
tassa tasseva pañhassa - ahaṅ attañ karomi te.

Sutta Nipāta, PTS, 94 page.(Sabiya Sutta)

<sup>44</sup>Sutta Nipāta, PTS, 32 page.(Ālavaka Sutta)

<sup>45</sup>Majjhima Nikāya i, PTS, 227-237 pages.(Cūla saccaka(35)Sutta)

<sup>46</sup>Majjhima Nikāya i, PTS, 371-387 pages.(Upāli(56)Sutta)

<sup>47</sup>Majjhima Nikāya i, PTS, 392-396 pages.(Abayarājakumāra(58)Sutta)

<sup>48</sup>Sutta Nipāta, PTS, 100-102 pages.(Sabhiya Sutta)

<sup>49</sup>vīmaṅsakena bhikkave bhikkhuṅ parassa cetopariyāyaṅ ajānantena dvīsu  
dhammesu tathāgato samannesi tabbā. Cakkhu sota viññeyyesu dhammesu  
Majjhima Nikāya i, PTS, 318 page.(Vīmaṅsaka(47)Sutta)

<sup>50</sup>Dīgha Nikhāya, i, PTS, 115 page.(Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta)

minutes. For forty five years, according to this timetable,<sup>51</sup> he taught students how to build up a successful life. Even when he was about for the Great Passing Away and sick, he always tried to fulfil all the duty that should be done by him.<sup>52</sup> From this, the great virtue of dedicating for the service with determination is so clear.

According to the acceptance of that time, one of the qualifications that a teacher should possess is that he should be in social position by being a member of great clan or generation. The Buddha had this to the maximum level. He belonged to Warrior Clan in both sides of parents, mother and father and even possessed great wealth.<sup>53</sup> He was great among other Religious Teachers and had a great student community. He was a teacher of the teachers of many. Even the gods take refuge in him. Kings like Kosala and Brahmins like Pokkharasāti accepted the Buddha as their teacher. Because of this, many from far away villages, various students came in search of him.<sup>54</sup>

### **6.Curtsey**

It is necessary for a guide or a teacher to be with good conduct or ethics. The Buddha was a component of all those features. The Buddha, who was with nine virtues like Arahāṃ, (worthy of respect), was a complete figure with discipline or virtue (sīla). He had eradicated all defilements. He was a person who accepts the results of merit and demerit. He accepts the action (kamma) and the results of action.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, he is a suitable person to make a community of students. He had the curtsey that should be in a teacher. He was always right or without doing wrong. He was not talkative. He was speaking soft and sweet words. The above mentioned are some of the characteristics that a teacher must possess. It is because many educational activities are mainly done by means of speech. In the speech of the Buddha and a special feature of curtsey is that whoever the person came to see him, he accepts that person with a smile and with speech. It is clear from the expression of the Sonadaṇḍa Sutta.<sup>56</sup>

If the community of students are engaging in some sort of discussion, the Buddha does not approach to them before they finish it. When a discussion is over, having knocked at the door, after opened it he enters the classroom (the place where the doctrine is preached) and speaks with the students. It was customary of the Buddha to do so. It is possible to prove this virtue of curtsey with the Buddha from the Nandaka Sutta.<sup>57</sup>

### **7.Humble Nature**

The humble nature is another great feature of an exemplary teacher. From the various occasions in the Buddha's character, this can be proved. The Buddha had a great happiness because he found out the truth that was tried to understand by the various people connected to various religions, Philosophers and Thinkers. But, he has pointed out that it was not a new thing discovered by him but it was something that earlier teachers had found. He said that

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<sup>51</sup> Sumangala vilāsini, 35-38 pages.(Bhahmajāla sutta vaṇṇā)

<sup>52</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, ii, PTS, 150 page.(Mahā parinibbāna Sutta)

<sup>53</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, i, PTS, 116 page.(Sonadaṇḍa Sutta)

<sup>54</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, i, PTS, 117 page. (Sonadaṇḍa Sutta)

<sup>55</sup> Dīghā Nikāya, i, PTS, 116 page.(Sonadaṇḍa Sutta)

<sup>56</sup> samaṇo khalu bho Gotamoehi sāgatavādi sakhilo sammodako abbhākutiko uttānamukho pubbabhāsī

Dīgha Nikāya, i, PTS, 116 page. (Sonadaṇḍa Sutta)

<sup>57</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, iv, PTS, 351-352 page. (Nibbāna Sutta, saṃbodhi vagga, 9.1.1.4)

what he did was to reveal the doctrine that was submerged or hid in the world. It was said by the terms, “Purāṇaṃ Añjasaṃ”. This reveals the humble nature of the Buddha. It can be further proven from the expression ‘though a Buddha was born in the world or not, the truth remains in the world and it is an eternal law.’<sup>58</sup>

“Bhikkhus, I am free from all the fetters whether they were god or human. You are also free from all fetters.”<sup>59</sup>

This clearly shows that the Buddha has compared himself similar with the disciples who have attained Nibbhāna which is the end of religious activities. And also, having trusted that his followers can point out the correct path for liberation to people, they were set forth for preaching doctrine. Not behaving like a leader of a community surrounded by him and also from speaking that he is similar with the disciples clearly illustrates the humble nature of the Buddha. Once, Sacra’s musician, (the universal monarch’s musician) came to meet the Buddha and sang a song composed about his fiancée by playing the violin. Though there wasn’t anything connected with the doctrine, the Buddha patiently listened to it and even thanked him.<sup>60</sup> It can be seen that the Buddha as a great teacher has seen compassionately about the questions or the matters posed by the students of any position or nature. He could act so because of his humble nature.

It must be mentioned here that though the Buddha was from the Warrior Clan, he went in search of even the socially accepted low caste or outcaste people and provided the benefit for them. He did so because of his humble nature. It won’t be mentioned here since it has been reminded earlier.

## 8. Personality

When the facts are examined about the Buddha as a great Religious Teacher, it must be examined about his personality. For the personality of a person, both virtues, internal and external virtues are included. It is possible to say the Buddha’s eye-catching and very beautiful body<sup>61</sup> with 32 signs of a Great Being as external body. The wealthy lay person, Uggaha,<sup>62</sup> who went to meet the Buddha, has expressed that the body of the Buddha is wonderful and attracts the minds of those who see it. He liked or pleased about the Buddha because of his personality. Thereafter, having associated the Buddha, after listening to the doctrine, he understood the reality. Some students who were pleased with his external personality liked very much to see continuously about it.<sup>63</sup> On some occasions, due to the external personality, he happened to face troubles.<sup>64</sup> It is possible to get an understanding about the external personality of the Buddha through these expressions.

The mental factors play a major role regarding personality of a person. The external personality depends on this. When the personality of the Buddha is examined, specially, the facts about his power of wisdom should be considered. There are several sections that must

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<sup>58</sup> Saṃyutta Nikāya ii, PTS, 40 page. (Saccaya Sutta, abhisamaya Sutta, 1.2.10)

<sup>59</sup> Vinaya Pitakam i, PTS, 8 page. (Mahāvagga pāli)

<sup>60</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, ii, PTS, 267 page. (Sakkapañha Sutta)

<sup>61</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, i, PTS, 116 page. (Sonadaṇḍa Sutta)

<sup>62</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, v, PTS, 209 page. (Vesaliya vagga sutta, atthaka nipāta, gahapatuvagga, 8.1.3.1)

<sup>63</sup> Saṃyutta Nikaya, iii, PTS, 120 page. (Vakkali Sutta, khanda sayatta, theravagga, 1.2.4.5)

<sup>64</sup> Paramatthajōtikā, Sutta Nipāta Atthakatā, Māgandi Vannanā, 436-440 page.

be paid attention here in this regard. They are Catuvesārajja<sup>65</sup> (fourfold expertise), Dasa bala<sup>66</sup> (tenfold power) and Asādārana Gnāna<sup>67</sup> (incomparable wisdom). Though the wisdom of the Buddha has been divided into many categories, all of them include into “Sammā Sambuddha” (the perfectly Enlightened One).

When the facts presented in this research paper are examined about the role of Buddha as a teacher, he is exceedingly suitable to it by the real sense of the word, “Teacher of gods and men” (“sathā devamanussānaṃ”). He has acted with the virtue of ‘knowledge and conduct’ (Vijjā carana saṃpanno) and it is very clear from the fact mentioned in this work. At present and in the past, all the accepted physical, psychological or mental features of a good teacher were with the Buddha. So, Buddha is the only teacher with all the good qualities discussed in this research paper.



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<sup>65</sup> Majjhima Nikāya i, PTS, 71 page.(Mahā sīhanāda(12)Suta)

<sup>66</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, i, PTS, 69 page. (Mahā sīhanāda(12)Suta)

<sup>67</sup> Patisambhidā Magga, PTS, 121-134 pages.

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