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A Comparative Study on the Difference and Interplay between the Philosophy of Theravāda and Mahayana Buddhism

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Abstract
After the Buddha's death, Buddhism was spread, developed, and evolved in different ways, giving rise to three main schools: Theravāda, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Theravāda Buddhism is the oldest and most traditional school of Buddhism. This may also be named Stavaravada Buddhism, which emphasizes individual spiritual progress in the attainment of individual enlightenment or Nirvana. It is practised predominantly in Southeast Asia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Vietnam. It is focused on the teachings of the Buddha in the attainment of Enlightenment through personal effort and self-cultivation. On the other hand, Mahayana Buddhism, also known as the Great Vehicle, is a more expansive and inclusive form of Buddhism that developed in India and later spread to China, Korea, Japan, and other parts of East Asia. It mainly emphasizes the idea of the Bodhisattva or enlightened being who helps others achieve enlightenment. It also includes the concept of emptiness or the idea that all things are lacking in inherent existence. Thus, both of these Buddhist schools differ in their emphasis and approach to the spiritual path. They also differ in their historical origins and many of their teachings. The main purpose of this research study is to identify the main differences between Mahayana and Theravāda Buddhism. Other than that, this will be subject to the study of the origin and occurrence of Mahayana Buddhism and Early Buddhism and the key teachings of both traditions have been discussed in detail. Several philosophical methodologies, such as comparative, textual analysis, and critical methods, were used to analyze and develop this research. Mainly, primary and secondary sources have been used for thematic analyses of this research study. According to the comparative analysis of this research, it can be seen that Theravāda and Mahayana Buddhism have differences in their emphasis and approach to the spiritual path and they also differ in their historical origins and many of their teachings such as the process of enlightenment, concept of Bodhisattva, doctrines, three bodies of Buddha (concept of Trikāya), practices, sacred texts, selfishness vs. altruism, devotional practices and women's roles. But it is important to remember that while early Buddhism and Mahayana are unique, both sects agree on the fundamentals of Buddhism, such as the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the non-existence of the soul, the gradual stages of spiritual advancement, and the doctrine of Karma. Therefore, finally, we can conclude that, even though both traditions were unique in their teachings and practices, both traditions are closely related to each other; thus, the study of one entails the study of the other.

Keywords: *Theravāda, Mahayana, Buddhism, Bodhisattva, Nirvana .*

I. INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy that originated in Ancient India and has since spread across the modern world. Buddhism is based on the teachings of the Buddha or Siddhartha Gautama, and he lived in Ancient India in the 5th century BCE. However, he became deeply troubled by the suffering he saw around him, and he made a vow to try to find a solution to this problem of suffering (Berkwitz, 2003). So, Prince Gautama left his family and all his worldly possessions behind and began a search to overcome suffering and to find the source of true and lasting happiness. After years of intense contemplation and study, including many years of severe privation, the Buddha attained enlightenment or Nirvana. He found what he was looking for, the source of true and lasting happiness, from this moment. On the Buddha devoted himself to sharing his insights with others.

After the Buddha's death, his teachings were transmitted horribly and eventually written down in the form of scriptures known as the Pali Canon (Berkwitz, 2003). From the early centuries CE, Buddhism spread throughout India and into other parts of Asia, including Southeast Asia, central Asia, and East Asia. As Buddhism spread it developed and evolved in different ways, giving rise to three main schools: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

Theravada Buddhism is the oldest and most traditional school of Buddhism. It is focused on the teachings of the Buddha in the attainment of Enlightenment through personal effort and self-cultivation. Stavaravada Buddhism emphasizes individual spiritual progress in the attainment of individual enlightenment or Nirvana. It is practiced predominantly in Southeast Asia, Cambodia,

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Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Vietnam. On the other hand, Mahayana Buddhism, also known as the great vehicle, is a more expansive and inclusive form of Buddhism that developed in India and later spread to China, Korea, Japan, and other parts of East Asia. Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes the idea of the Bodhisattva or enlightened being who helps others achieve enlightenment. It also includes the concept of emptiness or the idea that all things are lacking in inherent existence. Thus, both of these Buddhist schools differ in their emphasis and approach to the spiritual path. They also differ in their historical origins and many of their teachings.

The main objective of this research is to identify the main differences and similarities between Mahayana and Early Buddhism (Pali Canon). Other than that, this will subject to study the origin and occurrence of Mahayana Buddhism and Early Buddhism, and how their interplay would help to grow Buddhism.

II. METHODOLOGY

This is qualitative research, and hence, an appropriate method is the desktop research method. Therefore, primary and secondary sources have been used for thematic analyses of this research study. Despite these, academic journals, websites (online resources), and other sources will be used as they are available. Likewise, the help of experts in this field will be obtained by discussing it with them when needed. Several philosophical methodologies, such as comparative, textual analysis, and critical methods, were used to analyze and develop this research.

III. DISCUSSION & RESULTS

Origin and spread of early Buddhism (Theravāda Buddhism)

Early Buddhism is something that is in flux, it is something that we are learning about all the time, it is something that remains controversial that their remains difference of opinion about what early Buddhism really is, and it is also kind of fluid we are learning new things all the time early Buddhism and so it is best not to be too rigid about what we consider early Buddhism to be because something that we may think very rigidly about we might find is not the case. When we do the actual research, which is what is ongoing nowadays, and what we do want to say about early Buddhism is that it is different from any of the contemporary Buddhist schools. It is not the same, for example, as Mahayana; it is not the same even as Theravada. Theravada is the contemporary Buddhist school that is the closest to early Buddhism, but even in that case, there is a difference, and we have to keep that in mind. There are places we can find about early Buddhism place a resource that we can use on the internet. It is different from any of the contemporary Buddhist schools that we are going to find, and some people do indeed believe that there isn't any such thing as early Buddhism.

Mainly, the term 'early Buddhism' is now used primarily to describe the basic teachings of the Buddha. The idea that the original teachings of the Buddha were spread in Theravada was first suggested by European scholars. In order to describe the basic teachings of Buddhism, they used various terms such as Primitive Buddhism, Pre-canonical Buddhism (Pre-sectarian Buddhism), Original Buddhism, and Early Buddhism (Gnanaratana, 2005). The European scholars say the early doctrine of Buddha is fallen with the Theravada tradition. Theravada is also the oldest existing school of Buddhism, and its followers are known as Theravadins is an analogy to Christianity. Theravada Buddhism would be to other forms of Buddhism as Catholicism is to other forms of Christianity. Theravadins strictly follow the teachings of Gautama Buddha as recorded in the Pali Canon.

The Pali canon is the most complete collection of Buddhist scriptures in the classical Indian language of Pali (Gombrich, 2006). It is the primary scripture of Theravada Buddhism and is also known as the Tipitaka, which means three baskets in Pali. The Tripitaka is so named because it is divided into three main sections or baskets.

1) Vinaya Pitaka: the rules of the monastic community. The discourse given by the Buddha and his close disciples.

2) The Abhidhamma Pitaka is the technical analysis of Buddhist doctrine and philosophy.

The Pali canon is considered by Theravadins as the complete and only true source for the practice of Buddhism. In the other schools of Buddhism, such as, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, have additional scriptures which is not recognized by Theravadins. This is because in contrast to Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism. Theravada is much more conservative in matters of doctrine and monastic discipline.

The Theravada Buddhism first became established in Sri Lanka before it moved to Southeast Asia. The Sri Lankan King Devanampiyatissa invited Buddhist monks from India to the island of Sri Lanka in the 3rd century. Theravada Buddhism has since remained the dominant form of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and is to this day an important part of its culture and identity. Also, in the 3rd century, Sri Lanka began to introduce Theravada Buddhism into Southeast Asia. Buddhist missionaries from Sri Lanka spread Theravada Buddhism to Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos (Gombrich, 2006). Theravada Buddhism became very influential in Thailand, where it is still the dominant form of Buddhism Today. In Cambodia and Laos, Theravada Buddhism, though prominent, existed with other religions, particularly.

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Origin and spread of Mahayana Buddhism

As we saw in the introduction, there are three main schools of Buddhism. These schools are Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Here, we will examine Mahayana Buddhism, although it is difficult to determine the exact date of the emergence of Mahayana Buddhism. It seems to have been some centuries after the death of the Buddha. The Buddha is believed to have died around 400 BCE. In the early texts, based on the direct teachings of the Buddha, known as the Pali Canon, are the texts upon which Theravada Buddhism to this day has its foundation (Ruegg, 1990). It is believed that the Mahayana tradition developed out of this early form of Theravada Buddhism sometime between the 1st century BCE (100-1 BCE - 1-100 CE) in the 1st century CE.

However, to understand the exact origin and the development of Mahayana Buddhism, it is important to go back to Buddha's death. After the Buddha's death, his teachings were continued as an oral tradition that was handed down from one generation of followers to another, which was maintained in their collective memory. During the 500 years of when teaching was continued orally, a number of assemblies or councils were convened to organize, systemize, and identify the commonly accepted version of the doctrinal teachings and the monastic discipline, or Vinaya (Books by Dr Peter D. Santina - the Tree of Enlightenment - Buddhist eLibrary, n.d.). There were mainly three councils and maybe more than six councils have been convened in these five hundred years of time in throughout India, which may have led to the emergence of many schools of Buddhism in India.

The first council was held on immediately after the death of Buddha in Rajagriha, the capital city of Magadha, where the treasurer Ven. Ananda and 500 arahants were participated, and the chief monk is Rev. Maha Kashyapa. In this council, Ven. Ananda revealed all the sutras which were preached by Buddha, and this sutra contains the philosophy of Buddha, the disciplines (parajika) given to his students (Books by Dr Peter D. Santina - the Tree of Enlightenment - Buddhist eLibrary, n.d.). In this council, Ven. Maha Kashyapa was asked whether the council should proceed to abolish the lesser percepts, as the Buddha had told Ven. Ananda to order might do if it saw fit. Unfortunately, Rev. Ananda did not ask about these lesser percepts from Buddha. Therefore, Rev. Maha Kashyapa presiding to recommend that the council retain all the rules of disciplines without any modification, even though Buddha preached it.

According to the Buddhist literature Cullavagga, after a hundred years, the 2nd Buddhist council was held at Vaisali, where the issue that dominated the debate, and that precipitated the calling of the council, was disciplinary (Books by Dr Peter D. Santina - the Tree of Enlightenment - Buddhist eLibrary, n.d.). A number of monks (Vajjian monks) were taken up practices which the elder monks considered breaching the monastic disciplines. The main monk who has taken up these practices is Ven. Vajjiputhtaka, which paved the way to having the 2nd council. In the council, other elder monks decided not to accept those ten practices, which are called as "Dasaakepawasthu" (dasa vatthuni). Some of those ten such practices including carrying salt in a hollowed horn, which was consider the breach of the rule forbidding the storage of food; seeking permission for an action after the action had already been done; and accepting gold and silver, which was considered a breach of the rule forbidding the accumulation of wealth (Books by Dr Peter D. Santina - the Tree of Enlightenment - Buddhist eLibrary, n.d.). However, this may be caused by the first separation of Sanga as Mahasangika or Mahayana or Sanskrit: "The Great Vehicle" (literally means majority) and Theravada or Stavaravada or Pali: "The School of the Elders" (lesser vehicle). When the third Buddhist council was held during the reign of Emperor Ashoka, in the third century BCE., there were at least eighteen schools that flourished with their own doctrines and disciplinary rules.

However, we can identify that Mahayana Buddhism has contributed a great deal to Buddhist thought and culture. Mahayana Buddhism spread to China in the 1st century CE during the Han Dynasty. The spread of Mahayana Buddhism to China was helped by the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. The most well-known of those who brought Mahayana to China around the 6th century was the Indian Buddhist monk Bodhidharma. But Bodhidharma was an Indian prince who renounced his Royal status to become a monk and traveled to China to spread the teachings of the Buddha. Bodhidharma is revered as the founder of Chan Buddhism, a further development of Mahayana Buddhism. Chan Buddhism, though based on the teachings of Bodhidharma, was directly influenced by Chinese Taoism and would come to be known as Zen Buddhism. When it spread to Japan, Bodhidharma taught a form of meditation called war gazing, which involved sitting in meditation facing a wall and focusing on the present moment.

Mahayana Buddhism itself spread from China to Japan in the 6th century. During the next 600 years, Mahayana Buddhism spread throughout Japan, and various schools and sects were established. Two schools of Mahayana Buddhism were established in Japan in the 12th century. The first was a Tendai school, which was based itself on the Lotus sutra and on the idea of the 'one vehicle', which stated that anyone could attain enlightenment through a deep understanding of the Lotus sutra.

There are, of course, many Mahayana Buddhist schools outside of those of the Japanese Zen Buddhist schools (Ruegg, 1990). There are the East Asian Mahayana traditions, also known as Eastern Buddhism, which include China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. There are they're than those of Zen Buddhism; the Mahayana Buddhists in this area total around 360 million. There is also the Indo-Tibetan, also known as Northern Buddhism, which includes Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan, Northern India, and Nepal. These are other than those of Aryan Buddhists. The Mahayana Buddhists in these countries total around 18.2 million.

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Differences and Interplay between the Mahayana and Early Buddhism

Buddhism is broadly developed and divided into Theravada Buddhism, which means the school of the elder monks, and Mahayana Buddhism, which means the great vehicle. Even though, Mahayana and the Early Buddhism are two different schools of Buddhism both the doctrines emphasize the idea that our goal should be to escape from the dukka and eventually obtain nirvana, but they have fundamental differences in several areas such as, process of enlightenment, concept of Bodhisattva, doctrines, three bodies of Buddha (concept of Trikāya), practices, sacred texts, selfishness vs. altruism, devotional practices and women's roles.

The process of the Enlightenment

According to early Buddhism, liberation can be attained in three ways such as, Arahant (Worthy one), Semi-Buddha (Paccekabuddha), and Buddha (Samma Sambudhha). Theravada emphasizes that anyone can select any path from these three ways, and it does not persuade you to select it; it is up to you, you can decide to attain Nibbana.

- Arahant, which is translated as worthy one because the word Arahant itself derives from a root that means "to be worthy one". when a monk is an Arahant, his fermentations ended, he has reached fulfillment, done the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, totally destroyed the fetter of becoming, and is released through right gnosis (Bodhi, 2012). To become an Arahant needs to eradicate the both low and higher fetters (dasa-samyojanāni) which are explained in Dasa Samyojana sutta (Bodhi, 2012) as, sak kāya-ditthi (personality view), sīlabatta-parāmāsa (skeptical doubt), vicikicchā (clinging to rites and rituals), kāma-rāga (sensual desire), vyāpāda (ill will), rūpa-rāga (craving for fine), arūpa-rāga (craving for immaterial existence), māna (conceit), uddachcha (restlessness), and avijjā (ignorance). They also need to practice 10 paramitas (Dana, sila, ksanti, virya, dhyana, prajna, etc.) to attain Arahantship.

- Paccekabuddha, also known as Pratyekabuddha, which translates as Semi-buddha, is one of the three types of enlightened beings according to the early Buddhist text, and he can only occur in a time when there is neither Samma Sambuddha alive nor his Dhamma alive, which means that Paccekabuddhas occur when there is no Buddhism among the humans at all (Strong, 1975). Making of a Pacceka Buddha needs only a two-way practicing of the 10 virtues; their powers are relatively lower than Samma Sambuddhas and higher than those of the Arahants. It's aforementioned that Pacceka Buddhas realize the path to Nibbana themselves without the guidance of any teacher, similar to the Samma Sambuddhas; however, they lack the ability to teach that Dhamma to others or lead others to Nibbana (Strong, 1975). They need to practice 20 paramitas (paramita and upa paramita) to attain the Paccekabuddha.

- Samma Sambuddha, who is the highest form of being in the universe. He is higher than all gods and Brahmas and is only born in the human realm. According to the early Buddhism, to become a Sammasam Buddha needs to practice 30 paramitas (paramita, upa paramita, and paramaththa paramita).

On the other hand, Mahayana Buddhism tends to reject the hierarchical nature of early Buddhism, and they mainly emphasize that the only way to actualize Nibbana is to become Samma Sambuddha, and they reject both Arahant and Semi-Buddha as a liberated being because Mahayana views the Buddha as a transcendent being, an embodiment of compassion and wisdom. Mahayana places an emphasis on the enlightenment of all beings and aims for the attainment of Buddhahood. Mahayana Buddhism actually encompasses a very large set of various practices, but the general idea is that you might have help as you try to achieve Nirvana.

Concept of Bodhisattva

The concept of Bodhisattva is mainly emphasized by the Mahayana Buddhism, and according to them, a Bodhisattva is a being who seeks enlightenment not just for oneself but for the benefit of all beings. In other words, a Bodhisattva is a being who is on the way to Buddhahood (enlightenment) but has not yet to be obtained it (Banerjee, 1990). In order to remove suffering of the external world, a Bodhisattva desires to he should stay as long as the sky and the world exist. He also emphasizes that let him alone experience all the worldly miserable and, let all other beings of the world enjoy happiness owing to the meritorious deeds done by him as a Boddhisattva (Banerjee, 1990). There are several Bodhisattvas mentioned in the Mahayana texts, such as Avalokiteshvara (Bodhisattva of compassion), Manjusri (Boddhisattva of wisdom), Kshitigarbha (savior of beings in hell), Mahasthamaprapta (the power of wisdom), Samantabhadra (Bodhisattva icon of practice), and etc.

However, according to the Theravada, one can rarely become Buddhahood in this life, and it is does not encourage people to become a Bodhisattva. On the distinct feature of Mahayana Buddhism concerns its teaching about an enlightened being or Bodhisattva, which is the ultimate way for any Buddhist to live in this world. Mahayana emphasizes the generated bodhicitta or the spontaneous desire to achieve the state of being enlightened (Banerjee, 1990). According to Mahayana, the practice of the six paramitas with the development of Bodhicitta which is compulsory for becoming a Bodhisattva, because practicing the six paramitas, his mind rises higher in the path of spiritual progress and ultimately becomes Buddha.

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Doctrines

Theravada and all the Mahayana sects have a set of teachings that are unequivocally accepted as the teachings of the Buddha. The teachings of the Buddha are generally accepted by both Theravada and Mahayana sects, including the Four Noble Truths, the Tilakkhana, which are Anicca, Dukka, Anatma, Dependent Arising (the Paticcasamuppāda), Kamma and Reincarnation, and the Threefold (categories) of disciplines called Sīla, Samādhi, and Puñña (Gnanarama, 1996). Apart from this, many other teachings, such as secular ethics, are common to both groups. However, the various Mahayana sects have contributed greatly to the development of Buddhism by providing interpretations and studies of certain concepts belonging to the above basic teachings with special emphasis. Especially, Mahayana adds the concept of sunyata, voidness or emptiness (B. A. Bogoda, 2015) and promotes the idea of skillful means to adapt teaching to individual capacities.

Three Bodies of Buddha (Concept of Trikāya)

The concept of Trikāya or three bodies of Buddha we did not see in the early Buddhism. But the Mahayana Buddhism proposes that the Buddha like all the Buddhas exists in three forms namely dharma-kaya (truth body), sambhoga-kaya (enjoyment body) and nirmana-kaya (earthly body) (Banerjee, 1990).

- Dharma-kaya – Buddha in his true nature, also known as truth body, he is the eternal essence of the universe, which is equivalent in Buddhist lore to absolute truth or absolute nature of all beings. When Buddha was preaching his Dharma, he takes one of two forms according to his audience. This is not a body at all it is simply the 'void', the sunyata which can be equated with tathatā, tathagatagarbha and dharmadātu (Banerjee, 1990).

- Sambhoga-kaya – Buddha in his enjoyment body, manifest in a sublime celestial form in which he teaches the vast number of Bodhisattvas and spiritual beings in the setting of exquisite splendor in multiple Buddha lands. In this form, the body that experiences the bliss of enlightenment is an aspect of Buddhahood.

- Nirmana-kaya – When Buddha teaches human beings, he manifests himself as his Emanation or earthly body, which to avoid frightening his audience (Hamilton&Suzuki, 1933). In this nirmana-kaya is the physical body that undergoes birth, inhabits the world, and dies in the end.

However, in comparison to Theravada, the Buddha is regarded as a human being, though remarkable in his achievements.

Practices

Mahayana Buddhism was a response to what was perceived as the elitism of the Theravada tradition, but particularly the Theravada's monastic tradition, which focused most on intense meditation and aesthetic practices. Mahayana Buddhism sought to make the teachings of the Buddha more accessible to ordinary people, not just to monks and nuns. It is best understood as a school of Buddhism that teaches that all people have the capacity to become awakened and realize the nature of reality (Ruegg, 1990). Mahayana Buddhism emphasizes compassion on the path to enlightenment. This is best illustrated by the Mahayana ideal of the Bodhisattva or the enlightened being who postpones their enlightenment for the salvation of all beings not just humans, but animals as well.

Sacred Text

Important too is that while Theravada Buddhism recognizes only the Pali Canon as being the true teachings of the Buddha. Mahayana Buddhism includes texts called sutras, which is also the true teachings of the Buddha. Many of these sutras are known to have come into existence long after the lifetime of the Buddha. But they are still considered to be the recorded words of the Buddha. These sutras contain teachings on a wide range of topics, including ethics, meditation, and the nature of reality. The most well-known collection of Mahayana sutras is the Lotus Sutra, which is considered to be one of the most important texts in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition (Ruegg, 1990). Other important sutras include the Diamond sutra, the Heart sutra, the Vimalakirti sutra, Lankavathura sutra, as well as these sutras. Mahayana Buddhism also includes other texts such as treatises, commentaries, and histories. These texts were written by Buddhist scholars and monks. Many of which are recognized as having attained an enlightenment equal to that of the Buddha himself and thus speak and teach with an equal authority.

Selfishness vs. Altruism

Someone who achieves Nirvana is known as an Arhant in Theravada Buddhism which is actualized through a kind of personal journey which indicates kind of a selfish approach. But in Mahayana Buddhism, the pursuit is not necessarily to get to Nirvana as quickly as possible, it is to get close to Nirvana but then to help others try to achieve that same state. So, the real goal is to be a Bodhisattva. So, Mahayana places greater emphasis on the concept of altruism, because individuals who postpone their own enlightenment to help others achieve liberation is the practice of Boddhisatva.

Moreover, Theravada tradition tends to emphasize monasticism and renunciation, with a focus on personal liberation and withdrawal from worldly affaires. On the other hand, Mahayana places greater emphasis on engaged Buddhism, encouraging practitioners to actively work for the well-being and liberation of all beings, often through compassionate actions and social

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involvement. Positively Mahayana believes equally every human being have seed of Buddha nature and therefore everyone have potentiality to become Buddha. In other words, anyone can find in hidden Buddhahood within themselves.

Devotional Practices

Theravada generally has fewer elaborate devotional practices and rituals, with a greater emphasis on personal meditation and direct insight. On the other hand, Mahayana incorporates a wider range of devotional practices, including chanting, prayers, and the veneration of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and celestial beings.

Women's Roles

Theravada or early Buddhism traditionally has stricter gender roles and limitations on the ordination of women, with the lineage of fully ordained nuns (Bhikkunis) being lost in many Theravada countries compared to the Buddha's time. Theravada believes that men are the only beings who can become Buddhahood, and women cannot achieve that level. On the other hand, Mahayana has been more open to the ordination of women, with active communities of fully ordained nuns in some Mahayana traditions.

IV. CONCLUSION

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy that originated in Ancient India and has since spread across the modern world. The Buddhist world today is kind of divided into two distinct spheres of activity, such as Theravada Buddhism (the school of elders) and Mahayana Buddhism (the great vehicle). According to the Buddhist literature Cullavagga, after a hundred years later of the Buddha's Mahāparinibbana, dissension arose among several monks (Vajjian monks) regarding the breach of the rules of disciplines as laid down in the Vinayapitaka. This laid the foundation for the origin and occurrence of the Mahayana schools of thought.

Early Buddhism and Mahayana have differences in their emphasis and approach to the spiritual path, and they also differ in their historical origins and many of their teachings, such as the process of enlightenment, concept of Bodhisattva, doctrines, three bodies of Buddha (concept of Trikāya), practices, sacred texts, selfishness vs. altruism, devotional practices, and women's roles. But it is important to remember that while early Buddhism and Mahayana are unique, both sects agree on the fundamentals of Buddhism, such as the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, the non-existence of the soul, the gradual stages of spiritual advancement, and the doctrine of Karma. Therefore, finally, we can conclude that, even though both traditions were unique in their teachings and practices, both traditions are closely related to each other; thus, the study of one entails the study of the other.

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