

What the Buddha thought about Superstitions

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Avoid from wrong views

A suggestion can be made due to the research on occultism. It is accepted that superstitions exist in every religion¹. Similarly Beliefs and wish fulfillment are common elements in all religions at the ideological level. All religions are led to practice them for the accomplishment of ambitions of the followers. But there are diverse rituals among Buddhists. The foregoing definition is inapplicable to the Buddha's teaching. As K. Sri Dhammananda denotes superstitions could not be found in the original teaching of the Buddha². There are no invisible forces like magic based on occultism beside the five orders or processes " *niyāma*" operating surrounding us³.

1 seasonal laws (*utuniyāma*)

2 the biological laws (*bijaniyāma*)

3 the kammic law (*kammaniyāma*)

4 natural phenomena laws (*dhammaniyāma*)

5 psychological laws (*cittaniyāma*)

Buddhism remarks that man can manage and control those processes with his spiritual power and intellectual methods but not with magical power. Oneself indeed, is one's own savior, for what other purpose savior would there be?³. Comprehensively, the Buddha's discourses rejected the superstitions of the contemporary people in India and guided them to avoid from wrong views. As the Buddha denoted worldliness is ignorance (andhabhuto ayamloko)⁴. A Palitechnical term *Micchā-dīṭṭhi* also mean that magical beliefs and customs which are intrinsically operating on human mind that hindrance on the path of liberation. Another aspect, wrong view (Micchā-dīṭṭhi) indicates similarity with the ignorance in meaning.

It is the greatest teaching of Buddhism given to avoid from superstitions and guidance to observe the reality of what our beliefs are. In the *kālamāsutta* Buddha emphasizes that one should not come to judgment upon doubt criteria. The *sutta* indicates that eight criteria which people cling to strongly may cause to close the truth we expect.

1. Do not accept anything based upon mere reports, tradition or hearsay,.
2. Nor upon the authority of religious texts,
3. Nor upon mere reasons and arguments,
4. Nor upon one's own inference,
5. Nor upon anything which appears to be true,
6. Nor upon one's own speculative, opinions,
7. Nor upon another's seeming ability,
8. Nor upon the consideration " this is our Teaching, it should not be taken as"⁵.

¹ *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*. Vol.111.1935. New York. Macmillan company. p.618.

² Dhammananda. K. Sri. 1998. *What the Buddha Believe*. Malaysia. Buddhist Missionary Society. p.57

³ Jayawardena R.G.D 1996. *Niyama Dharma Wivaranaya*. Kandy. Sri Lanka. Buddhist Publication Society. p.2.

⁴ Dhammananda. K. Sri. 1998. p.372

⁵ *Majjhima Nikāya*. vol.1.1954. London. PTS. Vimansaka Sutta. p.379

In this matter the problem is that there are no scientific techniques which can be applied to a method of verification and more reliable to our beliefs. There is a few endeavors of man involved in the investigation and observing the reality of belief that they have acknowledged without experience⁶. *Bhayabheravasutta* describes how the ascetic Gautama was moved from superstitions which were deeply rooted in his mind by investigating belief of horrible spirits which was held by people during his time in India.

Right view, the first step of the noble eight path direct us that we should not judge or reject without perusing the information obtained through our sense organs. It may be a challenge to one who has habitual practice of the superstitions. Similarly Buddhism directs us to avoid indiscriminate imitation as mentioned in the *cankisutta*⁷.

Wrong view is a cause of all nuisances and calamities. *AlagaddupamaSutta* describes how the wrong grasp lead us for a long time to woe and sorrow. For example, take a water – snake held by coil or by its tail, may bite him or his hand or arm or another part of his body, wrong view lead to sorrow. Buddha denoted that even we should not grasp the Dhamma without examining same. On the other hand wrong view is a demeritorious deed. So that is one of the ten meritorious deeds that we call straightening one's own views. Micchā ditthi, wrong view is abandoned by realizing what we see with the eye, objects, seeing etc.⁸

The whole teaching of the Buddha was based on the fundamental of *pat.iccasamuppāda* or dependent origination discovered and revealed by himself. Theoretically, the first chain of dependent origination - ignorance is a root cause of all mass of suffering. For one who follows superstitions who achieved his wishes this discovery indicates that he must first eradicate ignorance which is the root cause of the origin of suffering⁹. So bearing and grasping the views is more dangerous as catching a snake by hand in the wrong way¹⁰. Dhammapada states that the established mind with wrong view does harm to him; likewise an enemy does harm to an enemy.

The path to realization exposed by the Buddha realized the truth who said to himself as pointing out the path to ignorance one who became a destitute (*mulhassavamaggamacikkheyya*) or who is in darkness like getting an oil lamp (*andhakarevatelapajjotam*) like one who sees the picture by one who has eyes (*cakkhumantorupanidakkhinti*)¹¹. This means that the Buddha's teaching is a key to open the door to search for the truth and reject mysticism, fortune – telling, charms, talismans, mantras and prayers. In accordance with Ariyapariyesanasutta, the duty of the Buddha and his first sixty Arahants correspond to preaching the Dhamma to purified beings from the lust of the eye and ignorance. To convert the people from wrong views to right views was the first step of missionary service of the Buddha and his disciples. But many Buddhists use the term “embrace” when people accept the Buddha's teaching or entered to the Buddhist society, in the Pali texts we find another name which the Buddha gave a Buddhist as a stream enterer (*sotapanna*). Stream enterer or one who embraced Buddhism could not believe superstitions. The Buddha named two kind of Buddhists based on their beliefs, namely Upasaka *Pundarika* and *Upāsaka Candāla* or real Buddhist and ordinary Buddhist. If a believer by curious ceremonies (*kotūhala - man'galika*) he believes in luck (*man'galanpacceti no kamman. man'galanoloketi*), not deeds he seeks outside for a gift – worthy person and there first he offers service¹².

⁶ *Majjhima Nikāya*.1954. Bahyabherava Sutta.p.21

⁷ *Majjhima Nikāya*. Vol.11. London.PTS.1951.Canki Sutta.p.164

⁸ Malalasekera.G.P.1960. *Dictionary of Pali Proper Name*. Vol.11.London.PTS.p.630

⁹ *The Book of the Discipline*. Vol.iv. 1951.London.PTS. “*evametassakevalassadukkhakkhandassanirodhoti*” p.2

¹⁰ *Majjhima Nikāya*.1954. Alagaddupama Sutta.p.167.

¹¹ Saddhatissa.H.1985. Kasibharadvaja Sutta.p.10

¹² *Anguttara Nikāya*. Vol.111.1961.Great Britain. p.151

Many of those who practice Buddhist rituals, very often do not presume the idea behind it. It is important to reveal the cause and effect between wish and fulfillment and sacrificial performance. Buddha's investigation and teaching of ritual practice theoretically presents a new interpretation and that leads to free will, wisdom and to moral conduct. The Buddha directed that one should not accept even his words without a critical examination of them. Also one should not ignore his faith towards the Buddha. The Buddha expected to develop penetrative vision and independent thinking in both laity and Bhikkhu. As the first step of the noble eight fold path, right view aims at the culmination of philosophical free will of ordinary Buddhist and to concern the meaning of our religious sacrifice.

Buddha's view of some beliefs

Many accounts of discourses which addressed the ordinary men aimed at removing their fanciful thoughts. Expecting safety from super human beings people in India during the Buddha's time day and night made offerings to the Yakkas (*divacarattocaharantiyebalim – tasmahinerakkhata , ratanasutta*)¹³. This convinced that offerings, made expecting safety is inconvenient for a Buddhist. For a Buddhist his safety is made by his own actions. Engage in good conduct of body, speech and mind, will protect themselves either internally or externally¹⁴.

Under the Brahmanic influence there was a strong belief that giving birth to a baby girl first may be unlucky. Queen Mallika has given birth to a daughter. King Pasenadi was displeased hearing that his queen had given birth to a baby girl while he had expected a boy. The Buddha disclosed the fault of superstitions confirming that such beliefs are meaningless.

“ A Woman, o lord of the people
May turn out better than a man:
She may be wise and virtuous;
A devoted wife, revering her mother –in – law,

“ The son to whom she gives birth
May become a hero ‘ O lord of the land
The son of such a blessed woman
May even rule the realm¹⁵ .

Ever lasting superstitious, no one can solve problems arising daily. The Buddha said, a female child, O Lord of men, may prove even to be a better offspring than a male. For she may grow up wise and virtuous, her husband's other reverencing, true wife, the boy that she may bear may do great deeds, and rule a great realm, yes, such a son of a noble wife becomes his country's guide¹⁶.

There is no alternative guidance to be achieved like welfare and happiness of life excepting well management of human resource. The four things that lead to the welfare and happiness of a family man in this very life are very close to the human resource management¹⁷ .

1. The accomplishment of persistent effort.
2. The accomplishment of protection.
3. Good friendship.
4. Balanced living.

¹³*The Sutta Nipāta*.1985. Printed in Great Britain. ratanaSutta. “diva carattocaharanti ye balim-tasmahinerakkhata.p.24

¹⁴ Acharya Buddhharakkhita.trans.1985.*Dhammapada*. Kandy. Sri Lanka. Buddhist Publication Society.p.3

¹⁵*Samyutta Nikāya*.part.1.1960.London.PTS.Kosala Samyutta.p.68.

¹⁶ ibid

¹⁷Hardy.E. ed. 1899. The A□guttaraNikāya..part iv. London.PTS.p.281.

Everlasting superstitions, no one can solve problems arising day- to-day. In the Buddhist view, a common character of peoples' behaviour is practice and follow the myths to achieve secular benefits though they are no always reliable. A lot of people are ignorant taking decisions or in track to reach their goal until they have heretical habitations. If we concentrate the natural operative of our mind we are able to justify that we are living on imaginative concepts and in a hallucinationworld .Most of our definitions are autosuggestions.

Once incapable gods and men who created a dispute about three fold signs(Ditttha – suta – muta - man' galenasamannāgato), in justifying the signs of auspicious and ominous they asked the Buddha to explained the meaning of this belief. Excepting the traditional beliefs Buddha presented those education, arts, highly trained, discipline such as socio ethical and self skillful as auspicious signs pertaining to this very life¹⁸. Also well practiced archery will bring comfort (dhammosucinno sukhamavahati)¹⁹.

Apart from this, many ancient Indians learned and practiced metaphysics those prohibited by Buddha for his disciples. The Buddha prescribed that “monks should not practice metaphysics. Whenever they practice them, there is an offence of wrong – doing ”. Sometimes the Buddha permitted learning of metaphysics for the laity at the same time. When several monks were living in a forest they did not know the position of the lunar mensuration, they did not know the divisions of the quarters. Thieves, having gone there, asked what is the day today according to a conjunction with the moon?. Which quarter is this?. The monks did not know. Then thieves decided they are not monks and started to harm them. Then the lord on this occasion, permitted a monk who is a forest dweller to learn the positions of lunar mensuration, either in whole or in part, he may also become skilled in the quarters²⁰. Generally people follow superstitions even on some particular occasion such as a sneeze. On one occasion when the lord surrounded by a long assembly, sneezed while he was preaching the Dhamma, the monks, exclaimed : “ lord , may the lord live long, may the welfare live (long) ” thus making a loud noise, a great noise; preaching Dhamma was interrupted by this noise. Then the lord addressed the monks, saying : Now, monks, when (thephrases); long life; is spoken to one who has sneezed, can he for this reason live or die?. Monks, householders like lucky signs²¹. This indicates that such belief of the people are of no consequence.

People believed and engaged in astrology to fulfill their secure life, With regard to such engagement the Buddha questioned “ what can stars do?(nakkattanikimkarissati) ”.

“ The fool may watch for lucky days;
Yet luck shall always miss.
“This luck itself is luck's own star
What can mere stars achieve ?”²² .

The NakkhattaJatakaya indicates that fool misses luck believing superstitions. The story presents an example, having fixed a day to come and fetch the bride, whether the stars were favorable for holding the festivities that day. Do the stars matter, is not the lucky thing to get the girl, meanwhile the fool was waiting for an auspicious day, in the meantime another one married the girl.

Even Buddhists are engaged in astrology on special occasions of life such as examination, marriage proposals and for comparing horoscopes of the bride and groom for future luck before the ceremony. The story of *UmmaggaJataka* explains how a Buddhist should select a lucky spouse. The

¹⁸The Sutta Nipāta.1985.printed in Great Britain.p.29

¹⁹ Saddhatissa.H.Trans.1985.The SuttaNipāta.printed in Great Britain. “dhammosucinno sukhamavahati”p.19

²⁰ Horner I.B.1963.The Book of the Discipline. Vol.v. Great Britain.p.303

²¹ ibid

²² Robert Chalmers.Trans.1957.The Jataka or Stories of the Buddha's former births .London. Luzac& company LTD.Nakkhattajatakaya

BodhisattaMahoushadhatedAmaravathi's intelligence. Finally Bodhisatta understood that Amaravathi is the suitable spouse for him²³. Ordinary people who expect both happiness in this world and the other world are unable to understand immediate consequences of this procedure. But they follow traditional customs. They accept what is seen, heard or thought in the morning as auspicious. It is good, it means prosperous life for the day. The Buddha's interpretation on this aspect of auspicious belief is to reject the superstitions. If one develops socio – ethical qualities one will achieve his luck.

Sacrifice (Yāga)

The yāga which was performed by old Brahmanas to achieve both secular and transcendental wishes was excepted by the Buddha himself. The word “ *yajamāna* ” of the Sanskrit texts, which is the present participle middle voice of the verb *yaj* meaning to sacrifice. For the Hindu writers, sacrificer is a person who expects the effect of his acts to react on himself. Therefore prayers have been encouraged by priests to perform a particular sacrifice. We give the name “ sacrificer ” to the subject to whom the benefits of sacrifice accrue or who undergoes its effects²⁴. Sacrificial performances obviously assist the existence of religion and it is important to modify the family society and the individual life. The aim of some organized rituals is to offer solutions to problems of human life. Although rituals have a cultural value as in dancing, singing and music and concretizing the society yet they have no intellectual dimension. Distinction between culture and intellect is remarkable. Obviously rituals have been a necessary part of religion but they do not guide to intellectual dimension. Followers who practice rituals show deep faith and artificial behavior without empirical knowledge. Such specific behavior of people and their wish and fulfillment of it are unexplainable subjects. In the Brahmanic religion, sacrifice is called *yāga* and it means one who goes or moves. This implies asking, begging, entreating and soliciting²⁵. A technical name for these sacrificial ceremonies is called *Yāga*. Vedic sacrificial rites simply include offering fruit, seeds, milk and so forth²⁶. One aspect of this ritual is prosperity and another is purification²⁷. Brahmanic rituals include animal offerings too. All rituals are based on the concept of god. Indeed, it may be questioned whether there is a very clear apprehension of these rituals.

According to the Master's critique and explanation, wish and fulfillment shows itself a reciprocity in the ritual performance, devotee's perceptions towards the means of ritual is dull because he is not aware of the cause and effects of what he is doing. All of us have enormous wishes for our secular benefit and for transcendental life. Aspects of many ritual performances have been related to individual and common needs. The vow made offering fruits, rice, milk, animals, target wishes of some daily needs such as being free from sickness, healing, prosperity, peace and good luck. Expecting good luck or prosperity devotees lost large amount of his assets in the form of sacrifice. *Kutadantasutta* consist of a description of requisites refer to a great *yāga* of killing a number of domesticated animals for sacrifice and destroying the flora and fauna in the ritual performance was rejected by the Buddha. There is distinction of the ethical element in the ritual structure of the Brahmana rite. Once Buddha questioned that if one can achieve his wishes with praying and rituals, why is it hard to find in this world one who has perfected some wishes with everything he desired. This critique expresses what the Buddha's teaching directed towards the sacrificial deity and faith of the people. In the early rites of Brahmana period the ultimate objective of sacrifice was to join with Brahma or attain emancipation of the soul. Rites have been accepted by Brahmanas as a ladder to heaven.

The pray, wish towards integration with Brahma is an unachievable task. In the Brahmana tradition, it is strongly believed that this is only a way for liberation. Brahmanas present that it is the straight path to

²³Robert Chalmers.1957.Ummagga Jatakaya

²⁴ Alfred Hillebrandt.1897.*Ritual Literature*. Starsbourg.p.1

²⁵ Shiveram.Apte.1998.*The Practical Sanskrit English Dictionary*. Delhi. Printed in India.p.776

²⁶ ibid

²⁷ Maxmuller.F.ed.1885.*The Sacred Books of the East*. Vol .xxvi. Oxford University press.p.13

and is the affirmative direct way to make salvation. It leads to him who acts accordingly, into a state of union with Brahma²⁸. One young Brahmana Vāsettha and young Brahmana Bhāradvāja visited the Buddha and questioned him about the true path, and straight path to join with chief Brahma. The Buddha questioned, as to whether there is a single Brahmana versed in the three Vedas who has ever seen the chief Brahma?.

Is there, a single one of the teachers of the Brahmanas versed in the three Vedas who has seen Brahma face to face?.

Is there a single one out of the pupils of the teachers of the Brahmanas versed in the three Vedas who has seen Brahma face to face?.

Is there then, a single Brahmana up to the seventh generation who has seen Brahma face to face?.

None of them had seen Brahma personally. Then this talk about Brahma is foolish. As a string of blind men are clinging on one to another, the first cannot foremost see, nor can the middle one nor can the one behind. Then the teaching of the way of unity with Brahma is ridiculous, mere words are vain and empty.

The Buddha compared the Brahmanas' way of unity with brahma in several fables. One is that as a man say he long for, and love the most beautiful woman in the land, yet he did not know her physical appearance or her name and the caste. His wish is to have such a beautiful woman. His talk of women was foolish. The Buddha compared that story to Brahmanas' path to liberation. Most critiques of the Buddha pointed out to rejecting those contemporary teaching of the Brahmanas which instruct us to search for the truth and not to accept hearsay.

When if a man makes a staircase in a place where four roads are crossing, to mount up into a mansion, other people will tell him, well good friend this mansion to which you are making the staircase, do you know whether it is in the east or the south or the west, or the north, whether it is high or low or of medium size?. If the river Aciravati is full of water even to the brim, and overflowing, a man with business on the other side, making his way for the other side come to cross over, he was standing on the bank, he starts invoking the God to send the other bank to his side, and, says; come hither. With the man's invoking praying and praising, will it ever come over to this side?²⁹.

In Buddhist practice, if one wishes to corporate with Brahma he should cultivate inner qualities of compassion, loving kindness, be soft spoken and equanimity. Parents are the visible Brahma who protects children and they should be worshipped. Sigalovadasutta compares one's parents with teachers and they are called first teachers³⁰.

If one practiced and perfected his own knowledge resulted to be of value and benefit than sacrifice done in a forest for a thousand years.

“ Though for a hundred years one should tend
The sacrificial fire in the forest, yet if
Only for a moment one should worship those
Of developed mind, that worship is indeed
Better than a century of sacrifice”³¹.

²⁸Somaratne.G.A. ed.*The Samyutta Nikāya*. Volume 1.1998. Oxford .PTS. Yajamana Sutta. p.500.

²⁹*The Dīgha Nikāya*. Vol. 1.T.W.Rhys Davids.ed.1949. London. LUZC & Company LTD.Tevijja Sutta..p.235

³⁰*Dīgha Nikāya*.Part 111.Stede. W. ed.London.PTS.S□ gālovāda Sutta.p.941.

³¹ Acharya Buddharakkhita. 1985.*The Dhammapada*.Kandy. Sri Lanka.Buddhist publication Society.P21

Though month by month or hundred years one should offer sacrifices by thousand times, yet, if only for a moment one should worship those of developed mind, that honour is indeed better than a century of sacrifice³². Although many religions do not consider how the mental culture bring happiness, Buddhism recognizes thoroughly that wonderfully, indeed, it is to subdue the mind, which is difficult to subdue, ever swift, and seizing whatever it desires. A tamed mind brings happiness, also let the discerning man guard his mind, so difficult to detect and extremely subtle, seizing whatever it desire. Also a guarded mind brings happiness. And developing one's mental culture will bring happiness than *yāga* .

Once Bodhisatta accepted ritual performance when he was a ruler in the Benares. In those days Benares folk have given much to festivals of Gods, and used to show honour to Gods. It was their desire to massacre numbers of sheep ,goats, poultry, swine and other living creatures and perform their rites not merely with flowers and perfumes but with gory carcasses.

After Bodhisatta succeeded as viceroy and succeed to his inheritance after his father's death, he devised some clever strategies whereby evil shall be stopped without harming a single human being. People gathered together at a holy Banyan – tree praying to the fairy who had been reborn in that tree, to grant them sons and daughters, honour and wealth, each according to his heart's desire.

During his rule Bodhisatta expected to shunning the four evil courses and practicing the ten royal virtues, he ruled his people in righteousness, that was his vow³³. But people are addicted to the fire since, to wit the slaughter of living creatures and so forth.

Throughout the Bodhisatta's reign not a man was convicted of transgressing. Bodhisatta made them observe the commandments and at the close of a life of alms – giving and other good work he passed away with his followers to throng the city of Devas³⁴. We have further evidence of Lord Buddha rejecting *Yāga* and God cannot protect the donor' while God cannot protect thing which offered to him³⁵.

“ Once on a time when Brahmadata was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was born a Brahmin in the North country, and on the day of his birth his parents lit a birth – fire. In his sixteenth year they addressed him thus, “ Son , on the day of your birth we lit a birth – fire for you. Now therefore choose. If you wish to lead a family life, learn the three Vedas; but if you wish to attain to the Brahma Realm, take your fire with you into the forest and there tend it, so as to win Mahā – Brahmā's favour and hereafter to enter into the Brahma Realm”.

Telling his parents that a family life had no charms for him, he went into the forest and dwelt in a hermitage tending his fire. An ox was given him as a fee one day in a border – village, and when he had driven it home to his hermitage, the thought came to him to sacrifice a cow to the Lord of Fire. But finding that he had no salt, and feeling that the Lord of Fire could not eat his meat – offering without it, he resolved to go back and bring a supply from the village for the purpose. So he tied up the ox and set off again to the village.

While he was gone, a band of hunters came up and, seeing the ox, killed it and cooked themselves a dinner. And what they did not eat they carried off, leaving only the tail and hide and the shanks. Finding only these sorry remains on his return ,the Brahmin exclaimed, “ As this Lord of Fire cannot so much as look after his own, how shall he look after me? . It is a waste of time to serve him, bringing neither good nor profit.” Having thus lost all desire to worship Fire, he said – “ My Lord of Fire, if you cannot manage to protect yourself, how shall you protect me? The meat being gone, you must make shift to fare on this offal.” So saying, he threw on the fire the tail and the rest of the robbers' leavings and uttered this stanza:-

³²Ibid .p.21

³³Robert Chalmers.1957. DummedhaJatakaya

³⁴ -do- Kulavakajatakaya

³⁵ -do- NanguttaJatakaya

Vile Jātaveda, here's the tail for you;
And think yourself in luck to get so much!
The prime meat's gone; put up with tail to –day.

So saying the Great Being put the fire out with water and departed to become a recluse . And he won the Knowledge and Attainments' and ensured his re – birth in the Brahma Realm ³⁶.”

It is better to include another instance regarding how Lord Buddha wanted to reject sacrifices which were unethical.

“ Once on a time when Brahmadata was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisatta was reborn in the womb of the Queen Consort. When he was born, he was named Prince Brahmadata on his name – day. By sixteen years of age he had been well educated at Takasilā, had learned the Three Vedas by heart, and was versed in the Eighteen Branches of Knowledge. And his father made him a Viceroy.

Now in those days the Benares folk were much given to festivals to 'gods, and used to show honour to 'gods,. It was their wont to massacre numbers of sheep, goats, poultry, swine, and other living creatures, and perform their rites not merely with flowers and perfumes but with gory carcasses. Thought the destined Lord of Mercy to himself, “Led astray by superstition, men now wantonly sacrifice life; the multitude are for the most part given up to irreligion: but when at my father's death I succeed to my inheritance, I will find means to end such destruction of life. I will devise some clever stratagem whereby the evil shall be stopped without harming a single human being.” In this mood the prince one day mounted his chariot and drove out of the city. On the way he saw a crowd gathered together at a holy banyan – tree, praying to the fairy who had been reborn in that tree, to grant them sons and daughters, honour and wealth, each according to his heart's desire. Alighting from his chariot the Bodhisatta drew near to the tree and behaved as a worshipper so far as to make offerings of perfumes and flowers, sprinkling the tree with water and pacing reverently round its trunk. Then mounting his chariot again, he went his way back into the city.

Thenceforth the prince made like journeys from time to time to the tree, and worshipped it like a true believer in 'gods'.

In due course, when his father died, the Bodhisatta ruled in his stead. Shunning the four evil courses, and practicing the ten royal virtues, he ruled his people in righteousness. And now that his desire had come to pass and he was king, the Bodhisatta set himself to fulfil his former resolve. So he called together his ministers, the Brahmins, the gentry, and the other orders of the people, and asked the assembly whether they knew how he had made himself king. But no man could tell.

“ Have you ever seen me reverently worshipping a banyan- tree with perfumes and the like, and bowing down before it?”

“ Sir, we have,” said they.

“ Well, I was making a vow; and the vow was that, if ever I became king, I would offer a sacrifice to that tree. And now that by help of the god I have come to be king, I will offer my promised sacrifice. So prepare it with all speed”.

“ But what are we to make it of?”

“ My vow,” said the king ,“ was this:- All such as are addicted to the Five Sins, to wit the slaughter of living creature and so forth, and all such as walk in the Ten Paths of Unrighteousness, them will I slay, and with their flesh and their blood, with their entrails and their vitals, I will make my offering. So proclaim by

³⁶ Robert chalmers.1957. NanguttaJatakaya.

beat of drum that our lord the king in the days of his viceroyalty vowed that if ever he became king he would slay, and offer up in a sacrifice, all such of his subjects as break the Commandments. And now the king wills to slay one thousand of such as are addicted to the Five Sins or walk in the Ten Paths of Unrighteousness; with the hearts and the flesh of the thousand shall a sacrifice be made in the god's honour. Proclaim this that all may know throughout the city. Of those that transgress after this date," added the king, " will I slay a thousand, and offer them as a sacrifice to the god in discharge of my vow. However, obedient to the king's commands, the ministers observed five precepts and were aside in sacrifice³⁷ .

In the Yaññasutta Buddha reflected reduction ad absurdum of animal sacrifice supposed by kingPasenadi to act on the advice of Brahmins in order to avert the effects of his evil dreams³⁸. The Buddha hearing of it, declared that such sacrifices never produce good results. There are other sacrifices " which harm no one and by which the celebrant are blessed and the Gods pleased. Very often Buddhists express alternative sacrifice for the benefit of human life. A poem of twenty-one stanzas which Bhuridatta describes to his brother Arittha have rejected various kinds of sacrifices and described their futility. Another important point in the KutadantaSutta criticized fruitless ritual performance, describes what the Buddha's attitude towards wish and fulfillment. At that time Brahman Kutadanta was staying at the village Khānumata, a place teeming with life, with life, with much grassland and woodland and water and corn. On a royal domain presented him by SeniyaBimbisara the king of Magadha, as a royal gift, with power over it as if he were the king. As gratitude to king, Brahman Kutadanta organized a great sacrifice with hundred bulls, hundred steers, hundred heifers, hundred goats, and a hundred rams. They had been brought to the post for sacrifice. Listening this ritual Buddha expressed alternative successful performance of sacrifice for the benefit of the king and the public.

The king asked KutadantaBrahmanato give instruction to him to welfare for a long time. Then kutadanta mentioned that King's country is harassed and harried so there are dacoits abroad who should pillage the villages and townships' and that made the roads unsafe. The king's opted to levy fresh tax, verily his majesty acted wrongly. But perchance his majesty might think according to this advise, that I'll soon put a stop to these scoundrels' game by degradation and banishment, and fines and bonds and death! But their license cannot be satisfactorily put to a stop. The remnant left unpunished would still go on harassing the realm. Now there is one method to adopt to put a thorough end to this disorder.

1. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to keeping cattle and the farm, to them let his majesty the king give food and seed-corn.
2. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to trade, to them let his majesty the king give capital.
3. Whosoever there be in the king's realm who devote themselves to government service, to them let his majesty the king give wages and food³⁹.

Then those men, following each his own business, will no longer harass the realm; the king's revenue will go up; the country will be quiet and at peace; and the populace' pleased one with another and happy, dancing their children in their arms, will dwell with open doors⁴⁰ .

³⁷Robert chalmers.1957.Dummedha Jatakaya

³⁸*Dīghanikāya* .Vol.1.1949. Kutadanta Sutta.p.127

³⁹*Dīghanikāya*.vol.1.1949. Kutadanta Sutta.p.127.

⁴⁰*Dīghanikāya*.Vol.1.1949. KutadantaSutta

Then the king's wide-realm accepted the word of his chaplain and did as he said. And those men, following each his business, harassed the realm no more. And the king's revenue went up. And the populace, pleased one with another and happy, dancing their arms, dwelt with open doors.

Avoiding Brahamanicāyāga System Lord Buddha expresses other sacrifices step by step with more fruits and more advantage than this.

There is another sacrifice less difficult and less troublesome with more fruit and more advantageous than this. The perpetual gifts kept up in a family where they are given specifically to virtuous recluses.

1. The putting up a dwelling place (Vihāra) on behalf of the order in all the four directions. There is another sacrifice better than putting up a dwelling place, as he who with trusting heart takes Buddha his guide once and the truth, and the other.
2. If someone observes the precepts-abstinence from destroying life; abstinence from taking what has not been given to him, abstinence from evil conduct in respect of lust; abstinence from lying; abstinence from strong intoxicating, maddening drinks, and the root of carelessness.

The next step of sacrifice is to train morals step, mercy and kindness to all living beings. Advantages are visible in this life. Honesty, charity, truthfulness, peacefulness courtesy, good sense in speech. Abstinence from luxury of twelve different kinds, freedom from trickery, non violence, not injuring plants is the next step of sacrifice.

In such sacrifice one can develop his own mind step by step to first, second, third, fourth, and fifth concentrations. In the steps of concentrations, the five hindrances will vanish and eradicated by concentration of mind putting away the hankering after the world, he remains with a heart that hankers not, and purifies his mind of lust putting away corruption of the wish to injure. He remains with that free from ill temper, and purifies his mind of malevolence. Putting away proper heart and mind, keeping his ideas alight, mindful and self-possessed, he purifies his mind of sloth, putting away flurry and worry. He remains free from fretfulness, and with heart serenity within. He purifies himself of irritability and vexation of spirit putting away wavering, he remains as one passed beyond perplexity, purifies his mind of doubt. His psychological experiences himself, to be fruitful to use as identification of his own mind.

1. The passionate mind to be passionate and calm.
2. The angry mind to be angry, and the peaceful mind to be peaceful.
3. The dull mind to be dull, and alert mind alert.
4. Attentive mind to be attentive, and the wandering mind to be wandering.
5. The broad mind to be broad, and the narrow mind to be narrow.
6. The mean mind to be mean and lofty mind lofty.
7. The steadfast mind to be steadfast and the wavering mind to be wavering.
8. The free mind to be free and the enslaved mind enslaved.

The way he gains spiritual power as the heavenly ear-hearing heavenly sounds, seen with the heavenly eye. He recognizes the passing away from one form of existence and taking shape in another. The immediate fruit of the *Yāga* which the Buddha recommended are knowledge of others thoughts, memory of his own previous birth, and knowledge of other people's previous births. He knows as it really is: this is the path that leads to the cessation of pain. He knows these are the deadly floods and this is the origin of the deadly floods. Finally he perceived that this is the cessation of the deadly floods.

By the above perception there rises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows rebirth has been ceased. The realization of the inclinations, and attainment to Arahant is the ultimate gain of Buddhist sacrifice .

Accordingly Buddha's interpretation led to the sacrifice, though some rituals of Buddhists performed today are rituals of white – magic. This was not similar in the Historic – rite and ceremony of Buddhism in India. With the concept of commemoration early pilgrims visited and worshipped the three sacrificial places where the Buddha was: place of birth, attained enlightenment and delivered the first sermon, and attained *nibbana*⁴¹. when commemorating such places Buddhists gradually developed the symbolical monuments Bo tree, Stupa, Image to represent the Buddha. All these symbols have been created with the mean of social aspects as well as ethical concepts. This was understood by emperor Asoka. There is a definite puritanical streak in Asoka's character suggested by his disapproval of festivals and of religious rituals many of which while being of little value were nonetheless harmless . He adopted this view to inform the people of Asoka's reforms and to encourage them to avoid useless religious festivals. The fourteenth rock edict notices “ beloved – of – the – God , king Piyadassi, has caused this Dhamma edict to be written . Here (in my domain) no living beings are to be slaughtered or offered in sacrifice. Nor should festivals be held. For beloved – of – the Gods, king Piayadassi, sees much objection to in such festivals, although there are some festivals that loved – of – the Gods: king Piyadassi does approve of. Rather fourteenth rock edict declares that “ Beloved –of – the – lords, king Piyadassi, speaks thus: in times of sickness, for the marriage of sons and daughters, at the birth of children, before embarking on a journey, on these and other occasions, people perform divers ceremonies. Women in particular perform many vulgar and worthless ceremonies. This type of ceremonies can be performed by all means, but they bear little fruit: what does bear great fruit, however, is the ceremony of the Dhamma. Dhamma ceremony involves proper behavior towards servants and employees, respect for teachers, restraint towards living beings, and generosity towards ascetics and Brahmanas. These and other things constitute the ceremony of the Dhamma. Therefore a father, a son a brother, a master, a friend , a companion, and even a neighbor should say: This is good, this is the ceremony that should be performed until its purpose is fulfilled, this I should do, other ceremonies are of doubtful results for they may achieve their purpose, or they may not, and even if they do, it is only in this world. But the ceremony of the Dhamma is timeless. Even if it does achieve its purpose in this world, it produces great merit in the next, where as if it does achieve its purpose in this world, through the ceremony of Dhamma one gets great merit both here and there. Rock edict of Asoka indicates that necessity of rendering the Dhamma ceremony introduced by the Buddha when overlap superstitions with Buddhism during his time⁴² .

The prospect of Buddhist ritual and ceremony are not intricate accounts as other religions. Buddha indicated that conduct (*pratipatti*) is more fruitful than offering thing in a sacrifice (*āmisā*). Objective of Buddhist rituals relate to socio cultural aspects; primarily support and control of immoral conduct of the ordinary men. In the Buddhist culture the ritual appears as a norm regarding social identity as well as existence itself. All rituals and ceremonies of Buddhism are performed around the sacred symbols like Bo tree, statue, Stupa and relics. Buddhist ritual was originated with the Buddha showing his gratitude to Bo tree spending a week gazing at it called *animisalocanapūja* and his advice to the devoted Buddhists as mentioned in the *Parinibbanasutta*. Devoted Buddhists should memorize and salute Lord Buddha visiting the four places where the Buddha was born, attained enlightenment and the place where He passed away. When the body of the Exalted one had been burnt up, the Mallas of Kusinārā brought water scented with all kinds of perfumes, and extinguished the funeral pyre of the Exalted one. Then the Mallas of Kusinārā surrounded the remains of the Exalted One in their council hall with a lattice work of spears, and with a rampart of bows, and there for seven days they paid honour, and reverence, respect and homage to them

⁴¹*DīghaNikāya*. Vol.111.T.W Rhys Davids.ed.1910. Oxford University press..Parinibbana Sutta.p.79

⁴²RadhakumudMookerji. 1928.*ASOKA*. London. Macmillan AND Company Limited.Kalsi.ix.p.229.

with dance, song, music with garlands and perfumes⁴³. It's remarkable that Buddhist rituals are not based on the myth and are based on the socio and psychological meaning. We have enough evidence from the Buddha's last deliverance. At the four cross roads Stupa should be erected to the Thatāgata. And whosoever shall there place garlands, perfumes or paint, or make salutation there, or became in its presence calm in heart that shall long be to them for a profit and a joy.

Alternative teaching for superstitions

The auspicious or *maṅgala* concepts explained in Buddhism as socio ethical practices devoted to human welfare: activity not to associate with fools, but to associate the wise, to honour those who are worthy of honour to reside in a suitable locality, to have done meritorious deeds in the past, to set oneself in the right course, much understanding of wife and abstain from evil, to abstain from intoxicants, and steadfastness in virtue, reverence, humility, contentment, gratitude and opportunity hearing of Dhamma, patience, obedience, sight of the Samanas and timely religious discussions and self – control, holy life, perception of the noble truths and realization of liberation, sorrowless, stainless, and secure – these are the highest blessings and they will bring luck to man⁴⁴.

According to Buddhists, the concept of merit, which results in behavior giving clothes, food, medicine and dwellings is the way or ladder to heaven. It is expected to distribute things which benefit others. Such socio – ethical affairs are considered to be good conduct and wholesome action which will result in rebirth in the heaven. Cultivating inner qualities compassion, love, sympathy, right speech, avoiding harsh words and slander is a ladder to heaven was what the Buddha thought to himself. Advantage of good character and welfare work give results rather than rites. Lord Buddha rejected traditional yāga system which was offered to the fire God, which was converted to beayāga of non violence. Once, God Sakka asked the Buddha how best it is to offer gifts, so as to gain great rewards. The Buddha replied that gifts should be offered to the monks. In Buddhism it is the right way to heaven. Once the Master explained that how social service will result after death. The Boddhisatta fulfilled these seven injunctions – to cherish ones mother, to cherish ones father, to honour ones elders and speak the truth, and avoid harsh speech, slander, and shun niggardliness.

Whosoever supports his parents, honours, age.
Is gentle, friendly – spoken, slandering not.
Chaste, truthful, lord – not slave – of wrath.
He earns the thirty three heaven as God⁴⁵.

Such was the praise which explains the worthy state to which he grew, and at the end of his life he passes away to be reborn in the realm of the thirty three as Sakka, king of Deva. His friends are also reborn in that realm. Having cultivated merit the result was to be reborn as a God. They kept the five commandments. Young noble Boddhisatta known as Maghawas reborn as Sakka⁴⁶.

For secular prospect, one who was vocationally trained, well experienced competent and strained every way will perfect his wishes himself. Buddha's answer to the questions of goblin Alawakawhat practice will bring happiness for, is well trained will bring him happiness⁴⁷. Determination and training of one will make a path to produce wealth. Reflecting his previous life Lord Buddha showed how determined perfect one's wishes. Boddhisatta drove in a caravan with brother merchants on a long trading way in a horrendous desert. They found it difficult to replenish the pots of water in the desert. Looking a tuft

⁴³Dīgha Nikāya. Vol.111.1910.p.79.

⁴⁴ Saddhatissa.1985.p.28

⁴⁵ Robert Chalmers.1957. Kulavakajakataya

⁴⁶Robert Chalmers.1957. Kulavakajakataya

⁴⁷Dines Andersen and Helmer smith. Ed.*Sutta-Nipāta*. 1965.London.PTS.Alavaka Sutta.p.31.

Bodhisatta began to dig the ground and met with a rock. Their enthusiasm with right endeavor lead to drill the rock and obtained underground water⁴⁸. This story disapproves that human requirements will not fulfill in ritual performance but it can only fulfil in effort and determination. Best management and mindfulness of a person in an industry will advance his industry. The story of small millionaire (ChullaSetti) reveals that one who wishes to be a millionaire, should earn and save property step by step with the help of his knowledge of economic⁴⁹.

Laymen who enjoy worldly pleasure, lead a life encumbered by wife and children, they use sandal wood of Kasi, they deck themselves with garlands, perfume. and unguents, they suffer due to the use of gold and silver. To such people, Buddha preached the doctrine about things that lead to wealth and happiness, in this life and to the happiness of the other world. In Buddhism cause of worldly progress depends on people's themselves but not on rites. Buddha taught these four things to Vyagghapajja, conducive to the good and happiness of a clansman in this very life.

1. The achievement of persistent effort.
2. Refrain from wariness.
3. Finding suitable companionship.
4. Balanced livelihood.

By achievement of persistent effort one can acquire much property with whatsoever activity, a clansman earns his living, whether by the plough, by trading, by watching cattle, by archery, by ministering to the king, or by any other kind of craft that he becomes skillful and not lazy. He is endowed with reasoning the ways and means thereof. he is able to manage (his job) – collected by the strength of his arms, and by the sweat of his brow⁵⁰.

The treasures obtained by dint of effort, collected by strength of arms, by sweat of his brow just acquired by right means. Such husbands who guard and watch such treasure so that kings would not seize them, thieves would not steal, fire would not burn, water not affect, nor ill- disposal takes place.

In whatever society, a clansman dwells, stands together, converses, engages in discussions with householders' sons, cultured, full of faith, full of virtue full of charity, full of wisdom will achieve social acceptance. He acts in accordance with faith of those full of virtue. These full of virtue, with the charity to those full of charity, and wisdom based on conduct.

A clansman knowing his income and expenses leads a steady life, being neither too extravagant nor too sordid, thinking that thus his earning will stand in excess of his income. “ Just as the goldsmith, or his apprentice, knows on holding up a balance, that by so much of it as little expenses A clansman knowing his income and expenses, leads a steady life, being neither too extravagant nor too sordid, thinking that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income. This way a clansman can expect a luxurious life, even with a little income. But a clansman cannot expect a luxurious life with a little income to lead a wretched life. There are four sources of destruction of his earning in following ways.

1. Debauchery
2. Drunkenness
3. Indulgence in gambling
4. Friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

⁴⁸Robert Chalmers.1957. ApannakaJatakaya

⁴⁹Robert Chalmers.1957.ChullasettiJatakaya

⁵⁰DīghaNikāya. .ByagghapajjaSutta

These four decisions define whether one can achieve or decline his prosperity. This expresses through an instance as, in the case of a great tank with four inlets and one outlet. If a man closes the inlets and open the outlets there should be no adequate rainfall, decrease of water is to be expected in that tank; such as there are four sources for the destruction of accumulated wealth debauchery, drunkenness, indulgence in gambling, and friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil – doers and vice versa – there are four sources for the development of mass wealth abstain from those sources. For instance, in the case of a great tank itself with four inlets and four outlets, if a person to open the inlets and close the outlets is employed. Then there would be adequate rainfall, increase of water is certain. So the four above – mentioned are the sources of development of amassed wealth. This explanation determines sacrifice make impossible to conduct the good and happiness of a noble son in this life itself. But the responsibility of developing wealth is in his own hands.

In the traditional societies, very often people believe in occult science which came through their mysterious culture .At the Buddha's time when Singala householder's father was dying, he said to his dear son, that you should worship the quarters of earth as sky. In Buddhism, six quarters should not be worshipped as such but advices to conduct them do as much, avoid these fourteen evil things as a cover of the six quarters , he has practiced so as to conquer both worlds; he tastes success both in this world and in the next⁵¹. At the dissolution of the body, after death, he is reborn to a happy destination in heaven. These are the four vices of conduct that should be put away.

1. The destruction of life
2. Taking what is not given
3. Licentiousness
4. Lying in speech

Who avoids from motives of partiality, enmity, stupidity and a fear made him as perfect moon and full good name and fame became to brighter as the waxing moon.The six channels for dissipating wealth should be moved. They are;

1. Being addicted to intoxicating liquor
 2. Frequenting the streets at unseemly hours
 3. Haunting fairs
 4. Being infatuated by gambling
 5. Associating evil companions
- 6 The habit of idleness.

Habit of idleness leads to many impede advancement. Usually we postponed our daily work thinking it is too cold, it is too hot, it is too early, and too late. Also too hungry and sleepy leads to delays in work not completed. In those cases the work remains undone not accumulating more wealth and such wealth he has, dwindles away.

However with secular aspects many people wish their luck addressing and seeking assistance from the unknown Gods. It is believed that omnipotence is able to fill all their wishes. Buddhism indicates that one's Master and his onus will be himself no other than himself.

⁵¹Dīgha Kikāya.Part.111. London.PTS.Si□gālovāda Sutta.p.941.